

UNIVERSITY OF TURKU
Faculty of Humanities
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Master's Thesis

GLOCALIZED RADICAL DEMOCRACY:
THE TV SERIES "BRON/BROEN" ("THE BRIDGE") AND MOTIVES FOR
POLITICAL ACTIVISM.

Igor Davydychev
Turku
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("The Bridge") and Motives for Political Activism

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This thesis investigates what political theory ideas of activism / agency can be found the popular Swedish-Danish TV show "Bron/Broen" ("The Bridge"). Its Mexican-American ("The Bridge") and French-British ("The Tunnel") remakes are used as intertexts for this investigation. I offer a methodological framework for my analysis, building on the interpretivist methodologies of political science and the methods from TV studies. The main method is narrative analysis, that I apply to the show and its remakes.

I show how the TV series construct more unified cross-border spaces, by presenting the two nations in each case as being much closer to each other, than they probably are. I illustrate, how the show utilizes the narrative that initially presents the actions of the antagonist as being a dark form of social critique and then reveals them as the pursuit of own goals / agenda. This narrative device is then reused in each of the following seasons of the original show. The remakes also deploy it, adapting it to their local settings.

Eventually, present the two theoretical concepts, which I have dissected from the shows' narrative. Firstly, the idea of Everyday Makers – people who bring about social change in the world around them through their everyday actions, even if they are being alone in this process. Secondly, I argue that the narrative gives us an example of the radical democracy model. The political arguments presented by the antagonists in each season of the shows are powered by their personal goals. They are a continuation of their identities, and the conflicts between them and their main victims / targets cannot be reconciled. This is essentially plurality of political identities, which is at the core of radical democracy, but applied to the grim settings of thriller TV drama. The successful application of the same narrative to other cross-border environments in the remakes makes this radical democracy glocalized.

Keywords: TV studies, political philosophy, narrative analysis, discourse, radical democracy, Everyday Maker, interpretivism, intertextuality, glocalization, Bron/Broen, The Bridge, The Tunnel

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1. INTRODUCTION

Today's vanguard of political thought offers several concepts and models that are supposed to improve the quality of democracy in the Western societies. The most prominent of them is probably deliberative democracy (its another name is discursive democracy) (e.g. Bohman 1997; Dryzek 2000; Elster 1998). It's dominance, however, is being contested by other currents of political theory / philosophy, such as dialogic democracy (e.g. Flecha and Soler 2014; Giddens 1996), radical democracy (e.g. Laclau and Mouffe 2001; Mouffe 2005a), grassroots democracy (e.g. Kaufman and Alfonso 1997; Stout 2010; Wang and Yao 2007), digital democracy (e.g. Dahlberg 2011; Hacker and van Dijk 2000; Hague and Loader 1999) and some others. The majority of those concepts are trying to raise citizen's involvement in the political life and suggest various instruments to achieve that goal, utilizing some of the technological advancements of our age and taking into account the globalizing nature of our world. Much of this discussion stays, however, in the academic circles, occasionally making its way to policy development processes. The ordinary people, who are not already involved in politics, remain oblivious to these new idea(l)s. Or so one would think at the first glance.

Enter the popular / mass culture. The arts have more often than not been in the very midst of the debates of reforming the society, reflecting upon useful (good) practices and harmful (bad) ones (an illuminating account of such processes and cultural effects can be found, e.g. in Greene 2006 or Johnston 2006). The arts were definitely one of the forces of change, influencing the minds and worldviews of those, who had access to them. The popular culture we face these days virtually everywhere is in a way a child of the more sophisticated arts of the past. For many years the popular culture's educational function had been heavily debated (good overview of the main points of criticisms could be found, e.g. in Cawelti 1985), as it mainly strived to satisfy the entertainment desires of the masses. However lately we see somewhat of a trend of bringing former artistic ideals to the popular culture forms, making its products, so to say, smarter and more enlightening (a phenomenon described in a thought-provoking manner in, e.g. Johnson 2006). The popular culture becomes more artistic; the "sophisticated" arts become more popular. This is particularly true for TV series. Their audiences are massive numberwise, and their emotional influence on the viewers is equally huge. Some people even say that what we have today is the golden age of the

TV (see e.g. Molloy 2016; Reese 2016). Film studies have favored films over TV series as the research subject for quite some time, but lately this imbalance has seemingly been corrected. Now the scholars are eager to know what messages and meanings do TV series contain in them. The political scientists are no exception here. Recently they started to turn their gaze towards films and TV series, trying to uncover the political messages of practically any form (e.g. Deylami and Havercroft 2014; Dyson 2015; Kiersey and Neumann 2013).

This development brings us to the subject of the present thesis – the Swedish-Danish TV series "Bron/Broen" ("The Bridge"). The Öresund Bridge that was completed in 2000 and connected the cities of Malmö in Sweden and Copenhagen in Denmark gave the TV story its name. The show's plot revolves around series of crimes committed in the Öresund region, comprised of the two mentioned cities and the territories around them. The main idea behind the construction of the bridge was perhaps the economic benefit that the two cities would yield from it. However, a project of such scale never brings results in just one dimension, its effects encompass variegated aspects of a community's life. The sphere of politics is no exception. The TV series in turn is a brilliant and fascinating piece of popular culture that has gained massive popularity in Scandinavia as well as across the globe, as it was imported to more than 170 countries. It was even remade in the USA (Juares –El Paso as the scene) and by the UK and France (the Channel Tunnel connects the two polities in this case), albeit the popularity of the remakes was far humbler than that of the original (comparing their scores on imdb.com, for example). All in all, it is most certainly interesting to reveal the TV series' sociopolitical meanings and underpinnings.

The main *question* of the present thesis goes as follows: What current theories of (socio)political agency/activism are most dominant in the chosen TV series? I started my research with a hypothesis that the TV show is presenting a narrative that reflects one or several such concepts from political theory, pertaining to the nature (the whys) and characteristics (the hows) of political actions or agency of the common people, the masses, in the contemporary social realities. These are first and foremost urban multicultural settings (especially true for cross-border regions), increasingly complex and constantly widening networks of social connections between the people and global sociopolitical problems / challenges. Consequently, the aim of my research was to establish which political theory or theories of individuals' sociopolitical agency one

could see in the TV show, to show what kind of political philosophy is built into foundation of the TV series. The analysis of the remakes, I believe, will complement the analysis of the original show and I will present its role in my approach in the chapter on my methodological framework.

I also had an assumption that the TV series spreads the political culture of Sweden-Denmark (a culture that is more or less common for all the Nordic people), countries that traditionally score high on many sociopolitical ratings, igniting the envy of the others. I suspected that a heavy presence of the Nordic cultural values and codes could equip the TV series with a function of indirectly promoting this specific culture. It is, of course, a separate question, what such promotion would bring about in the audiences, and to answer it would require much additional research. There is at the moment a growing number of studies done on the topic of audiences' perception of TV shows and films and on the influences the latter have on the former. A brief overview of the audience studies could be found, for example, in works of Gunter (1999) and Gorton (2009). The analysis of the effects of the chosen TV series on its viewers is beyond the scope of this thesis. However, I hold an assumption, that if the Nordic culture is indeed promoted through "Bron/Broen" and if it affects the audiences' worldviews, it might lead to its expansion to other parts of the world, improving thus sociopolitical conditions in those areas.

During my work I utilized a large variety of sources, spanning across multiple academic disciplines, that could be roughly divided into several categories. Firstly, some studies of the TV series, researching it from different angles and investigating many of its aspects, have actually appeared during the last few years. None of them deal with the topics of political theories underpinning the show's narrative. The closest thematically positioned papers include the work of Åberg, where he investigates how Bron/Broen depicts and works with ideas of national identity, that are mutating and/or evolving in the context of this new cross-border sociopolitical space (2015), as well as the paper by Saunders, who looks at the role of global issues in the show's and remakes' narrative and the geopolitical arguments that shows contain explicitly or implicitly (2017), and the paper by Chow, in which she studies the discrepancies between how transnational interactions are portrayed in the show and how the situation actually looks like in reality (2015).

Other themes and subjects that interest researchers in Bron/Broen move somewhat away from the realm of political science as such but are nevertheless worth noting for their informative nature. Eichner and Waade investigate how the physical place – Öresund region – is used as a tool of the show’s narrative, what role does it play and what affects does it achieve in terms of the story’s meaning and aesthetic (2015). Gray lays out a number of arguments, to show that Bron/Broen can be seen as a cultural artefact of a long-standing tradition of Gothic storytelling with its distinct set of narrative tropes (2014). Several papers have delved into the intricacies and narratological mechanics of the remakes, and how they have worked with the original series’ material. Steiner studies how the US’ Bridge and the Anglo-French Tunnel have interpreted and contextualized Bron/Broen seen as a piece of the Nordic Noir genre (2018). Forrest and Martinez investigate how the remakes have adapted the not so universal aspects of the spatially confined Scandinavian/Nordic culture, whose concrete social embodiments could be seen in the TV show’s story (2015). Close to this subject is the work of Avis, in which she researches how each of the remakes have modified their spatial settings – Juarez / El Paso region as well as cities/municipalities on both sides of the Anglo-French tunnel – to interplay with the shows’ narratives and how do these adaptations compare to the place’s role in the original series (2015). Askanius in her works have analyzed how the story of Bron/Broen interacts with the audience and what impressions of civic connections (2017a) does it evoke, as well as what sentiments related to the physical space of Öresund does it convey (2017b). A very strong character of the Swedish detective Saga Norén has deservedly caught attention of the scholars, who investigate feminist aspects of cultural artefacts, as hers is the type of character that was traditionally been represented by men and she manages to contest quite a few of presuppositions that may have been causing this gender discrepancy in the first place (McCabe 2015 McHugh 2018).

Secondly, I have consulted other papers, that try to analyze different movies and TV series from the perspective of political science. This fascinating trend of combining the popular culture and political science, which has emerged in the past few years, has seemingly taken firm roots in social sciences and humanities. The Journal of Popular Culture regularly publishes articles that aim to analyze all things political about various popular culture artifacts, contributing to our understanding of the discourses, narratives and ideas that they directly or indirectly promote. Another great example of political

science's attention to mass culture is a book series called "Popular Culture and World Politics" that is being published by Routledge. Both the journal and the book series cover not only films and TV-series, but also literature, advertisements, fashion, design, music, sports and all the other facets of culture consumed on a mass scale. I have mostly drawn inspiration for my train of thought from a few specific sources here, which do not represent an exhaustive overview of this field of studies, but which are very good examples of it. Wodak studies how politics are narrated in the TV series "The West Wing" and how this narration transforms the local particularities of American politics into a global phenomenon (2010). Nikolaidis investigates how two British TV shows treat and conceptualize the same political institution – the position of the Prime Minister – in two very different ways (2011). The series that ignited a rather substantial interest on the part of social scientists is "The Wire" – an American crime drama, which has been a massive hit with the audiences across the globe and which tells the many stories of narcotics-related crimes in the city of Baltimore. Whole volume in the aforementioned series by Routledge was devoted to it (Deylami and Havercroft 2014). Wheeler published a study on "The Wire", where he looks at how the show challenges the dominating discourse of the narcotics problem in the US and how it instead offers a deep contribution to the discussion on that issue and to the understanding of the American democracy in the broader view (2014).

One more source, that should be mentioned here, is not strictly scientific but a very thought-provoking one, nevertheless. Youtube channel "Wisecrack" has a series of videos titled "The philosophy of everything", where the channel's writers and authors mostly analyze different movies and TV shows, but sometimes also games and celebrity personas, to see if they can be viewed as a representation of certain ideas from social sciences, humanities or from the domain of philosophy in its broader understanding ([youtube.com/wisecrack](https://www.youtube.com/wisecrack)). Their work served for my thesis as a potent source of inspiration and gave me a richer toolset for viewing popular culture through the prism of the humanity's diverse philosophical tradition.

Using pieces of popular culture as primary sources for political analysis might seem counterintuitive and even downright questionable for a scholar with more of a positivist background. Some researchers have given this issue much thought and have come up with very convincing justifications for the usage of these, as they called them, "low data" sources (e.g. Weldes 2015). Just like the traditional "high data" – official

documents, statements and interviews – popular culture materials have their place in a modern scholar's toolkit. Weldes states that the mass culture is so ubiquitous and inescapable that one cannot simply remain unaffected by the ideas ingrained in it (e.g. Weldes 2006 in Yanow and Schwartz-Shea 2006, 176-185). Indeed, the interplay between popular culture and politics through the influence of former on the people's worldviews and opinions is a fruitful topic for future research, that should probably be conducted on the intersection between social sciences, psychology and humanities.

The third category of my sources consists of the works by political theorists and social philosophers, that explain the dynamics of political participation of individuals in the society and the nature of individual agency. As I started investigating current dominant theories related to this issue, I first looked at the field of deliberative democracy, which has a rich and voluminous research base. However, I chose to focus on the works of Bohman (1997), Dryzek (2000) and Elster (1998), recognizing that they do not define the entire field, but serve as good entry points to it. In short, deliberative democracy theory recognizes that conflicting interests in politics are absolutely natural social phenomena and are thus unavoidable. The goal of politics and various political processes and procedures is thus to mitigate the conflicts and arrive at solutions for certain issues that would satisfy all/most parties.

Other theories of political agency are somewhat less established and have fewer researchers devoted to them but are nevertheless worth investigating. Closely related to deliberative theoretical tradition is the theory of dialogic democracy, described in the research by, e.g., Flecha and Soler (2014) and Giddens (1996). It builds upon the same idea of conflicting interests but interprets the mechanics and goals of political processes in a slightly different way. According to it, achieving a consensus about an issue at hand requires giving up certain parts of one's own political desires, whereas deliberative democracy theory supposes that in the process of deliberation participants will actually change their positions on the issue to be more in line with the common denominator, once they learn about the worldviews and arguments of other parties. Another popular concept is grassroots democracy, presented in the works of, e.g., Kaufman and Alfonso (1997), Stout (2010) and Wang and Yao (2007). It claims that the main political agency should occur at the lowest levels of societal structure, i.e. between individuals, as only there it can produce proper policy solutions, suitable for the issues these people are facing. Role of the traditional political institutions should be to accommodate such

practices and spread them to as many locations as possible. The technological advancements that we have today prompted research into digital democracy. Interesting works by Dahlberg (2011), Hacker and van Dijk (2000) and Hague and Loader (1999) investigate how we can use these technologies to increase participation of as many people as possible in politics in order to deliver better quality governance for everyone involved.

The theory that I eventually focused all of my attention on was radical democracy. Developed by Laclau and Mouffe in numerous volumes (e.g. Laclau and Mouffe 2001; Mouffe 2000, 2005a, 2005b), it continued the theoretical traditions of several philosophers and theorists of communism. Those theorists saw the conflict between classes as the main force for political processes in society, but in radical democracy the conflict – “antagonism” as the authors call it themselves – is much more omnipresent, as it lies between all the people, and arriving at any sort of a compromise is virtually impossible without some position dominating over the others. The antagonisms are insurmountable by nature and the conflict of everyone versus everyone is the natural order of things, according to Laclau and Mouffe. This short introduction to their multifaceted theory should suffice for now, as I will elaborate on its other aspects during the later chapters, where the theoretical material coupled with the illustrative points from the TV show should be altogether more descriptive.

The final category of the utilized sources is the works on the methodology of social sciences, namely about those used in the interpretivist camp, and on the methods employed by the scholars in the film and popular culture studies. The in-depth presentation of my methodological frameworks comes in the next chapter, so I will just mention here that the main works were those by Bordwell (2012), McKee (1997), Wagenaar (2011) and Yanow and Schwartz-Shea (2006). I also tried to find examples of the researches, where those two domains converge their methods. Mostly the studies mentioned above, that combine politics and TV series, contribute also to the methodological sphere of this thematic fusion, but there are also some specifically methodological papers that address it, e.g. works by Feldman et al. (2004) and Heinen and Somner (2009).

Lastly, I would like to discuss the *usefulness* of the present study. Firstly, it will contribute to the understanding of the relations between popular culture and political

science. Secondly, it will show whether one of the most popular TV series of our days supports the ideas promoted by the contemporary political science. The audience of the former is much greater than the audience of the latter, so it seems to be interesting to know what kind of ideas people are exposed to.

My thesis has a few *limitations*, which should be mentioned. Firstly, it does not provide too much information about the real-life situation in Öresund region and the regions of the remakes, as going into this direction was beside the aims and the scale of my work. Some connections to the real world will be drawn, but only to underline or illustrate specific points. Secondly, the interpretivist nature of my approach determines the dominance of my own analytical view on the questions that I have chosen for this thesis. Methodology will help my chain of ideas to be transparent in terms of why I make certain conclusions about specific elements of the TV show, but it does not exclude other interpretations of the same material.

The popularity of the original TV show and its story has just recently led to the creation of even more remakes. An Estonian-Russian version is an almost frame by frame copy of the Swedish-Danish production, Malaysia and Singapore also reused a lot of the parts and scenes in their version, Germany and Austria created an adaptation with seemingly substantial changes, retaining however the main plot. All of these series will remain outside of the scope of this thesis, even in the parts where I compare the original and the remakes. The British-French and Mexican-American versions are much more interesting, as they came out shortly after the original show and managed to gain some level of popularity, as well as cause media interest and media coverage. These newest remakes are too recent for this thesis and seem to be more of a domestic product for the specific countries that produced them.

The thesis is comprised of six chapters, the first one being the current introduction. In the second chapter I will navigate my work through the sea of available methodology to the shores of the framework I have eventually chosen for my research. In the third chapter I will present the main events of the TV shows' plots and outline what elements of their narrative can be seen as the most salient, taking the original show as the main focal point and drawing comparative references to the remakes. The fourth chapter will explore the representation of political issues, namely the concept of

Everyday Makers and the theory of radical democracy, in the shows' narrative. In the final fifth chapter I draw the conclusions from my research.

2. METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. Interpretive science

To understand how one can answer the proposed question, we need to turn to the thesis' *methodological framework*. I will be building my thesis on the grounds of qualitative (interpretive) analysis, different approaches of which as they pertain to the sphere of politics were very comprehensively and extensively described by Wagenaar in his monograph *Meaning in Action* (2011). The field of interpretive analysis in political science is relatively young and is only starting to gain the scale of application it deserves. The present thesis is thus also a contribution to it.

Interpretive political science and interpretive social sciences in general are based on different ontological and epistemological principles than traditional scientific approaches that use mainly quantitative methods. Scholars from the interpretivist camp (e.g. Bevir and Rhodes 2015; Wagenaar 2011; Weldes 2015; Yanow and Schwartz-Shea 2006), and I personally share their views here, believe that there really is no ironclad truth about most of the subjects of social sciences. They are only units that are instrumentally useful for our research. For example, all the people and the buildings in a city are real, but the urban community is what those people make it out to be through their everyday lives and it does not exist independently of the people's perception of it. The same goes for any level of human collective units. From an interpretivist standpoint it is thus more scientifically valuable to focus on the processes of this, generally speaking, social creation. A scholar should strive to reveal all the hidden mechanics of people's actions that bring social concepts into being. This way one can assess, among other things, how democratic are some taken-for-granted elements of social reality and potentially suggest means of improving the situation.

2.2. Narrative analysis

Now, applying this ontology to the TV series analysis, I will be using several concrete *methods*. Firstly, the more classical narrative analysis of the story per se. It is what has been used traditionally in literary studies and then in film studies. For example, most of the TV series analyses in the *Journal of popular culture* deploy this method. In order to make my analytical process transparent and to uphold the scientific quality of this narrative analysis I will be using extensive descriptions of the plot or the

plot's elements followed by my interpretive conclusions. Thus, it will be clear how I came to certain ideas.

Just like many interpretive methods narrative analysis has risen to scientific fame in social sciences over the past years. Because of this it has followed the path of discourse analysis: an increase in its usage led to a greater variation in its practical applicability. In other words, how people deploy narrative analysis in their studies may differ significantly from scholar to scholar. A whole field of research – narratology – has emerged to deal precisely with the theories, methodologies and practices of narratives. The most current trends and intricacies of the narrative analyses have been summarized very concisely by, for example, Heinen and Somner in their book *Narratology in the Age of Cross-Disciplinary Narrative Research* (2009), which covers quite a wide range of scientific fields in their varying styles of approaching narrative. It definitely inspires interesting ideas for any potential analysis, as it invites creative contemplation over peculiarities one would probably be unaware of, if one did not leave the environment of one's scientific field.

Transformation of the term narrative analysis into such an umbrella term necessitates a presentation of the narrative approach a scholar has chosen in the case at hand. The way I will be approaching narrative analysis is somewhat dictated by the main data sources that I will be using, i.e. the TV series. Culture studies have a long and rich history of analyzing literature and films narratively. The methodological guides are so abundant and voluminous, that there is something for every imaginable scientific need. The most detailed description of the basics of narrative analysis that I had during my research came from two sources. The first one was a monograph by Bordwell, where he explains in-depth the phenomenon of narrative itself and all the practical sides of analyzing narratives (2012). The second one was a very famous screenwriting guide by a Hollywood guru McKee, in which he teaches the art of storytelling, which in turn is very narrowly intertwined with the idea of narrative (1997). Despite the main goal for McKee's work – to teach how one should go about creating a fascinating story – his book can help narrative scholars immensely, as it deepens the understanding of narratives' logic and structure. Building upon these basics, I was able to further refine my understanding of narrative with the help of the aforementioned volume by Heinen and Somner (2009).

Putting all the pieces of the puzzle together, I came to the following framework for my narrative analysis. I focused on the story, its structure and the ways it was presented. I always kept in mind the classical questions of narrative analysis: what is happening in the story, what are characters doing or saying, why are they doing or saying that, what does the story presuppose and emphasize, what does the story downplay or exclude.

With these questions in my toolkit I concentrated thus on the events of the story, leaving stylistic aspects of the shows outside of my analysis' scope. Here lies a distinction between narrative analysis and auteur analysis. The latter requires a researcher to look for the stylistic traits that could be attributed to the film's authors. It covers such moments as: how scenes are shot in terms of camera position, colors, light etc., how the montage is used to segue between scenes, how music is used to create an atmosphere and other moments that do not deal with the story, but fine-tune the style (see e.g. Villarejo 2013, 24-52; Monaco 2000, 22-427). Analyzing all these aspects of the "Bron/Broen" series and its remakes might be an interesting task for a separate paper, but I will refrain from such work within the current thesis.

The narrative of the TV shows could be regarded as an interpretation of the real world, which is a similar kind of material as what a scholar would get from an interview, working with a more traditional data. Both present a picture of the world, which a scholar subsequently strives to unravel. By this logic, we still work with the double hermeneutic outlined by Giddens in his paramount work *Constitution of Society* (1984), which is mentioned so often in interpretive research these days (see e.g. Feldman et. al. 2004, Yanow and Schwartz-Shea 2006). We still endeavor to interpret the interpretation from our data material, wherein lies the "doubleness" of the methodology in use. This is one more argument for the "low data's" right to be used in scientific analysis. The only difference is that in the interview scenario the agent of the first interpretation – the interviewee – is explicitly known, whereas in the case of the TV series and "low data" in general the agency is not that unequivocal. One cannot simply attribute the whole narrative to the intentions of a TV show's creators – writers, directors and producers. Bordwell argues, that the relation between them and the narrative is far more complex (2012, 48-50). Ultimately, the most pragmatic way to deal with this issue of agency is to treat the narrative as a standalone unit, without forcing the narrative authorship on anyone of the creators.

Be it "low data" or "high data", narrative analysis contributes greatly to political science's goals. As Wagenaar notices, when a researcher digs into narratives, she aims to show how political positions / identities are created and how consciously or subconsciously created story-like narratives influence people's interactions with the social world. To make sense of the world around them people attest emotional value to certain moments / elements in their lives, which narrative analysis helps to uncover. The narratives become most evident, when there is a conflict, as the narratives will clash revealing their incompatibilities. Since politics are full of conflicts and conflicting views, narrative analysis becomes an extremely useful tool for a political scientist (Wagenaar 2011, 208-216).

2.3. Intertextual comparison

The second method I will be deploying is what I would call intertextual comparison. Narratives of the remakes provide a valuable point of reference for the narrative of the original Swedish-Danish TV series. Putting all of them side-to-side reveals the moments of commonality and divergence. Common traits hint at the more universal, global nature of certain elements of the narratives. The differences between the stories effectively highlight regional specifics, characteristic for each individual case. These specifics are, in my opinion, closely tied to the sociopolitical culture of each region. Thus, their comparative analysis is of great value, when it comes to distilling the cultural aspects of the analyzed narratives.

This is not going to be a detailed and complex comparative analysis in its purest form. That could serve as a topic for a separate paper. Instead the way I will be utilizing comparison as a method here is more referential in its nature. I will provide the descriptions of certain aspects of the remakes' plots, juxtaposing them against each other and against the original TV show. The remakes represent a viewpoint of their authors – coming from different sociocultural environment – on the narrative of the original story. In this sense they can be viewed as intertexts and their analyses seems to be of instrumental value for my thesis' goals, as they will shed even more light from even more angles on the elements of the narrative I will analyze.

2.4. Grounded theory

The third method concerns the meat and bones of my analysis, namely the way I approached my data. The algorithm of my actions resembled a heuristic that in methodological terms is called grounded theory. Some scholars view it as an interpretive method in itself on a par with narrative analysis, discourse analysis, frame analysis and other interpretive approaches (see e.g. Yanow and Schwartz-Shea 2006: xx). At the same time, other scholars treat it as an intermediary heuristic between raw data and the chosen method of analysis (see e.g. Wagenaar 2006, 260-272).

Both of the positions, however, converge on what grounded theory entails in practice. An analysis deploying this method goes through several stages. In the beginning no detailed exploration of the existing research on the topics related to the data is done. The purpose of this exercise in avoidance is to prevent the existing research from influencing the researcher's creativity. She should start her work by going through her data, appending certain codes to the parts she finds relevant and simultaneously with it writing memos that summarize her initial analytical conclusions. Only after this first round of analysis the researcher would turn to relevant studies and juxtapose her preliminary findings with the results of the scholars' research. Subsequently, she would work through her codes and memos, elaborating them on the basis of the knowledge she just gained from the relevant research and looking for moments, where her data aligns with it and deviates from it, as those will be the foundation of her analytical conclusions in this specific case. A scholar might go back and forth between the data materials and the scientific literature, refining her own research, until she arrives at the point, where all the peculiarities seem to be accounted for. This way the conclusions – presented ideally in the form of a theory that explains the dynamics of the case at hand – become grounded, hence the name of the approach (Wagenaar 2006, 260-262).

In the present thesis I utilized this method in assistance for my narrative analysis, without going all the way to creating a brand-new theory. I will describe a bit later what I eventually did with my data and my findings during the final step of my approach. In the beginning I simply watched "Bron/Broen" and wrote some very general memos on which elements of the plot seemed to me to be dealing with sociopolitical questions of agency / participation and which aspects seemed to represent political culture of the region. After that I turned my focus towards different political

theories, which dealt with increasing people's involvement in politics as their main point of interest. I went through works on varying versions of participatory democracy: deliberative democracy, direct democracy, grassroots democracy, radical democracy, digital democracy and dialogic democracy. All of them have some aspects in common, while differing significantly on other issues and assumptions. This range was by no means exhaustive, but in my view, it covered the main theoretical trends of academic significance.

The radical democracy theory struck me as the one that had the most similar philosophical underpinnings, conceptual elements and points of attention to the story told in the TV series. Consequently, I zoomed in my research on the details of this theory, which were represented in the show's narrative, and the ways, in which they found their representation. I worked through the literature on radical democracy, mainly research by Laclau and Mouffe (2001) and Mouffe (2000; 2005a; 2005b), in order to gain a better comprehension of the theory they developed.

With this framework in mind I began the second round of the TV show's viewings. To make my analytical efforts more effective I transcribed all the elements of "Bron/Broen", which were related to the topics of my research. I also appended new memos and codes to specific points of the transcript, where the narrative had kindled the most relevant thoughts and ideas. The majority of the memos were inspired by the acquaintance with the scientific literature and the second round of the TV series' viewings, however some of them were written already during the first time of watching the TV show. Eventually, after analyzing these codes and memos, I came to realization that they all revolved around two major themes. The first one was representation of space in the TV show and included the following elements: representation of the languages, representation of social connections and networks and representation of global challenges / problems. The second theme was representation of the political in the broader sense of the term, which in its turn included: representation of motivations to political actions, representation of political engagement / activism and representation of political identities' construction with practically unavoidable antagonisms. These two themes served as a logical foundation for the present thesis' structure, where each chapter and subchapter deals with one of those representations.

During this second round of analysis of my popular culture data I also watched and worked through the remakes, making occasional notes and memos, but not doing the full transcription as the remakes only served as comparison points for the main – "Bron/Broen" – show's narrative.

2.5. Narrative as discursive instance

When I only began my work, I was much more drawn to the discourse analysis as the main method for studying my data. Eventually, my grounded approach led me to the idea, that discourse was not the best unit of analysis for my material and narrative was a much better suit for my task. It did not mean, however, that I set discourse completely aside, as I saw both of the concepts closely intertwined and would describe my understanding of narrative as an instance of some broader discourse.

The discursive approach, that informed my analytical endeavor, presents itself as a complex methodology with many differing ways of applying it. Wagenaar has one classification of possible discourse analyses, but other ways to classify them are also valid (see e.g. Barker 2008). My understanding of discourse is closer to the post-structuralist one: it is the combination of knowledge and comprehension practices that are prevalent in a certain setting/situation. For example, the prevalent in today's western countries discourse of state being the provider of services to its citizens is different from the discourse of state as paternalistic force guiding its citizens towards certain ideals. This discourse has certain "power" over the people, as Foucault suggested (Wagenaar 2016, 112-117). Not in a negative sense, but rather in a neutral one, as it both renders certain actions and ideas meaningless and enables people to act out other, quite often positive, ideals. Classic structuralism, however, robs people of the ability to act against the discourse prevailing in a society, while post-structuralism believes that such agency does take place and it is the driving force of social change. That is where so many deconstructionist attempts stem from. They endeavor to show the arbitrariness of a certain understanding or knowledge and therefore make people rethink their views (Wagenaar 2016, 138-141). Many blockbusters of the past years are built around deconstruction of certain widespread stereotypes. For instance, the TV series *Breaking Bad* shows us how drug lords are not born into such a role, as would be the dominating perception, but instead easily transformed into it from such an ordinary man as a humble chemistry teacher.

The abovementioned example of two discourses about the role of the state is obviously from the high – state / national or even transnational – level, quite often one such discourse is the most widespread and only marginal minorities try to contest it. However, when it comes to individuals and the discourses they represent on lower social levels, the plurality arises. Post-structuralist theorists call it "deep pluralism" (Wagenaar 2006, 141), as they believe that in politics even on the most local level there will be different discourses clashing in conflict. The widely known concept of deliberative democracy appeared from this logic of thinking. It suggested deliberation as the most effective way for arriving at conflict resolutions under these pluralistic circumstances. That is why deliberative democracy bears also the name of discursive democracy.

Positioning the TV series' narrative within a specific political theory will in a way mean giving it a discursive connection to the political science ideas on the subject of individual agency, acquired through critical analysis of the respective literature (mainly of the works off Laclau and Mouffe). This approach is not something completely alien to the scientific world and similar ideas have been expressed previously, when discourse was seen as a context for a narrative (Heinen and Sommer 2009, 73) or when narrative was seen as a discourse in creation (Wagenaar 2016, 210-214).

Narrative and discourse analysis may formally be two different approaches, but I believe that they are compatible, as they share many philosophical underpinnings and stem from the same interpretivist camp of social sciences' methodology. While conducting both of the analyses it is instrumentally useful to focus on certain key concepts and bear them in mind at all times. For me such concepts will be agency, identity, pluralism, conflict and story. I will also bring the concept of space(s) from urban studies in order to highlight the urban dimension of the people's actions.

Finally, one last useful theoretical notion, that came from the field of discourse analysis is the idea of "deep structures" – discursive elements that affect every aspect of a human's social existence. They are part of her cultural mentality, part of her socio-political actions, part of the results of her creative or other work and so on. Wagenaar mentions them when he talks of discourse (2011, 109, 142), McBride and Toburen – in their vision on the influence of popular culture (1996). This concept, in my view,

underlines the *feasibility* of my thesis' methodological approach. In a way, the TV series is imbued with the deep structures that its writers and directors share. This is supposed to be the subconscious level, while on the conscious one they try to put certain meanings in their work. This brings us to the classic question – How much of our readings are actually put into a piece of art by its creator(s)? Well, some of the meanings we uncover will be intentionally put, some will be the projections of the author's deep structures and some might actually be the representations of our deep structures. It will be up to the reader to decide to which one each reading pertains, if she desires to do so. For the interpretive science they all are valuable.

3. THE ELEMENTS OF THE NARRATIVE

3.1. Two nations – one space

The series begins with an unusual and disturbing crime: someone put on the Öresund bridge a lower and an upper body of a woman in such a position that it would resemble a "regular" corpse. As the further investigation would show, the upper body belonged to a local Swedish politician, while the lower body – to a Danish prostitute. It would also turn out that, whoever did it, found the perfect spot – the exact borderline between Sweden and Denmark (Season 1, Episode 1).

At the crime scene we are introduced to the two protagonists – Saga Norén from Malmö and her Danish counterpart Martin Rohde. This is also the point when they meet each other for the first time. Since the body parts belonged to the citizens of both nations, the investigation becomes international, cross-border if you will, making Saga and Martin partners, who would have to learn to cooperate effectively if they are to solve this case.

The corpse from the first episode can be seen as a powerful metaphor. Like the murderer created it out of two bodies, so does the TV show construct a picture of a single unified space of the Öresund region out of two national spaces/cities. This is not to say that there is no unity at all in the real life's Öresund. The bridge definitely sparked new cross-border interactions on the micro level, i.e. between people in general, and added more cohesiveness to the region (The Øresund Bridge and its Region: 15 years). Indeed, it could take a separate research paper to establish how accurately the level of regional unity is portrayed. However, for the sake of the current thesis I would like to claim that the TV series, intentionally or not, gives an impression of a very interconnected and unified region.

This construction / depiction occurs through a number of narrative elements. Firstly, the language barrier does not seem to exist. Yes, Swedish and Danish are extremely close to each other, but they are still two different languages. In the first episode, when Martin comes to the Malmö police station for the first time, his new Swedish colleagues have a somewhat difficult time understanding his Danish, so he has to repeat his speech a bit slower. Also, Saga struggles to pronounce correctly his surname – with a typical Danish soft "-de" at the end – and it becomes a sort of a

running gag for the good part of the first season. Apart from these couple of incidents, however, the issue of languages does not come back at all. All the Swedish characters understand the Danish language and all the Danish characters understand the Swedish language. It is the case even for the occasional countryside farmers, who get interviewed by Saga and Martin in some episodes.

My personal experience of the Öresund region tells me that this is not quite the case. Some people do understand the language of their respective Nordic neighbor, but many people do not. Some film industry commentators have also noticed that peculiarity. For example, Tove Idström mentioned that in one interview and then spoke about such a concept as "suspension of disbelief" (Idström 2016), which points to the necessity of some elements of a story for its further development that the viewer just has to accept for granted, even though they might be unrealistic per se. The mutual comprehension of the languages is namely an example of this concept. The narrative of the TV show omits the possible language barrier from the story, contributing to the construction of a unified space.

If we look at the remakes, we will see a different linguistic situation. In the case of Juarez – El Paso the Mexican version of Martin – Marco Ruiz – uses English more than his mother tongue. His American colleague – Sonya Cross – understands Spanish well and can in fact speak it to some extent. However, if Marco talks to other Mexican characters in Sonya's presence, he uses English. People in this show only use Spanish when they do not know a word of English, or when there are only Mexicans present in the scene. Sometimes Mexican characters even use English when there is no need to, as, for example, in a scene where Marco talks with his son tête-à-tête in English (Season 1 Episode 6 10:40). Similarly, in the British-French remake Saga's French counterpart – Elise Wassermann – has to switch to English when she communicates with her British partner – Karl Roebuck, whose French is rather poor. Elise uses her mother tongue in Karl's presence only if what she says does not relate to him in any way. Otherwise, the depiction of languages is very close to that of the American-Mexican production. Of course, English is not so close to either French or Spanish, as Swedish and Danish are to each other, but the narrative could have been much more bilingual. The main characters could have been, for example, somewhat fluent in their partners' languages. That would have taken away the language barrier, like it did in Bron/Broen, or at least shifted the narrative much closer in that direction.

Secondly, the construction of a unified space can be seen in how continuously the actual physical space is shown in the TV series. The characters move easily and somewhat seamlessly from one point to the other, from Malmö to Copenhagen, as if they were operating in just one city. There are no titles that would tell us right away in which city the specific scene takes place. The only thing that separates the cities is the bridge, and whenever our protagonists cross it in a car the scene of that crossing resembles much of the other car scenes, as if they were just moving from one part of Malmö to another one or from one neighborhood in Copenhagen to another one. The show offers many beautiful urban landscape shots. A viewer familiar with the cities can certainly recognize the landmarks and thus understand where the following scene will take place. A viewer who has never been to the Öresund region will not read these shots and will probably have to guess the location from the language of the supporting characters in that following scene. I would imagine that for people with no ear for languages, who are not familiar with either Sweden or Denmark, or even Nordics in general, who watch the TV show with subtitles or even dubbed, the two-nation space of Öresund seems like one and the same city / country.

Looking again at the remakes, we can notice a visible difference. In *The Tunnel* Elise and Karl have to cross the channel every so often. In reality the whole trip one-way might easily take up to 50-60 minutes (Eurotunnel.com). They have to board a special train shuttle with their car(s), which will then take them to the other side. We never see them, however, waiting in the car line for boarding or going through passport control, which narratively shortens the journey. Still, the scenes in the shuttle underline the cross-border transition, as they show the protagonists sitting inside a car inside a train, waiting to get to their destination. Such a shuttle is a pretty unusual method of transportation, especially within a single urban locale. The impression of the existing barrier is also amplified when either one of the protagonists says "I will spend the night on this side". A phrase, which is totally unimaginable in *Bron/Broen*. In the *American-Mexican Bridge* we simply see the most real of barriers – the state border with the security and passport control. The physical space here is far from being united into a one borderless community.

The third and last element of narrative construction I would like to point out is the complex network of interconnections between all the characters in the story. This is true for both the original TV show and its adaptations. From the get-go we start to

follow not only one storyline, with the protagonists in it, but also several other narrative lines. We see, for example, in the first season Charlotte Söringer and her dying millionaire husband, social worker Stefan Lindberg and a woman he is trying to help, Stefan's homeless and mentally unstable sister – Sonja. Eventually, the main line absorbs these stories, but new supportive storylines are then introduced. Interestingly, in most cases it is unclear in the beginning how a particular sideline relates to the main narrative, and yet there is always a connection. Just like in most of them there is an element of cross-border interaction. The abovementioned Charlotte Söringer is Danish, but her husband is Swedish and they live in Malmö. Stefan Lindberg is helping people on the both sides of the straight. In my view, this storytelling tactic creates a picture of a tightly intertwined and complex community. The threads of relations run across the state borders, which as we established previously is non-existent in the physical sense. Since it is the people and their routine relations that constitute a community, the Öresund region is indeed portrayed as a very unified communal space.

Interestingly enough, the remakes also aim at utilizing this narrative tool in order to portray / construct a tightly intertwined urban space. Analogues of the original show's characters appear in other remakes, contributing to the creation of the same sensation of social networks and human relations spanning across state borders, which in turn seem evermore arbitrary under these circumstances. This also unveils how omnipresent these characteristics are in the modern globalized world, as this story element seems to fit quite naturally in any geographical context presented in the remakes. Deylami and Havercroft argued in their paper that HBO's TV show "The Wire" has contextualized modern day urban cultures as unequivocally global and local at the same time (2014). I would say that Bron/Broen does the same with the urban realities portrayed in it, which are very much imbued with the socioeconomical problems and dilemmas, due to the narratological foundations of the show's plot.

These three elements work powerfully together. The constructed / depicted unified space becomes a vibrant setting – local context – for the story's other elements. To some extent, as we have seen, this local context is specifically characteristic for Öresund. On the other hand, I have tried to show how it is a result of narrative choices and tactics. The creators of the remakes could have downplayed the role of the border and of the transitional space between the two cities in each respective case, but they chose to represent it the way they did. Just like they handled the issue of language, as I

have previously mentioned. That is why the Eurotunnel region and Juarez – El Paso look like regions not as continuous and solid as the Öresund region.

3.2. Universal story

Now we need to go further in the first season's plot. The corpse on the bridge turned out to be the beginning of a bigger chain of events. The murderer contacted soon a Swedish journalist, Daniel Ferbé, to spread his message to the public. He also created two websites – one in Swedish and one in Danish – where he posted audio and video materials to draw even more attention. Both websites are called "the truth (dot) se/dk", which later in the series leads to people calling him the “truth terrorist”. He promises to point to five problems that ail the society.

The first problem is inequality before the law, which he represented by juxtaposing a prostitute and a politician in such a gruesome manner, which I have described previously. The second problem is the blind eye, that society turns towards certain social groups – namely homeless, or in the words of the “truth terrorist” himself – these people are “visible but invisible”. To prove this point he first poisons several homeless people and then kidnaps one homeless man, straps him to a chair, cuts him, so the man would slowly bleed out, and starts streaming this man’s ordeal through his websites. He demands that four rich people from the Öresund region (two from Malmö and two from Copenhagen) would pay a ransom of 20 million for the homeless man’s life. The fact that the currency is not mentioned at all only stronger underlines the overall feeling of a unified socio-economic continuity. Initially, the four rich people decide not to go with the terrorist’s demands, just like the terrorist had planned, as it shows “what a human life is truly worth”. Eventually, the widow of one of the chosen rich people, who died just in the previous episode, agrees to pay the entire sum. This is quite a generous social action, taken out of context, it would seem full of compassion for another human being, but in reality, we see, that the main motive for her is to avenge her late husband, who as she just found out had an affair. She knows that he would never agree to pay, and that is exactly why she would like to use his money in such a way. Her motives could not be more personal than that. The terrorist was not expecting that his ransom demands would be met, but he holds up his end of the deal and stops the homeless man’s bleeding. However, when the police eventually find him at the place, where he was held hostage, it is already too late to save his life.

The next issue that the terrorist brings up is the way society treats people with psychological problems. He has found several people, who have been receiving psychiatric help and were prescribed some medication, among them a man with a schizophrenia-resembling condition (the actual ailment was never mentioned), who we follow directly in the show (other cases are not shown, but only mentioned). The terrorist convinces the man and probably other people too to stop taking medication, which causes their cognitive abilities to deteriorate again, and then manipulates them into killing some random people with various cold weapons. The man we see in the episodes, for example kills his doctor with a samurai sword. The antagonist claims that a tap on the shoulder and a pill is all these people receive (Season 1 Episode 5), which is not enough to truly help them overcome their issues. The entire psychiatric industry is poorly managed, and the government does not allocate enough resources to it, while the general public is silently indifferent.

The fourth societal problem revealed by the “truth terrorist” is unsuccessful integration of immigrants into the local communities. We see two men – Saif Hurani and his father, who immigrated to Denmark at some point in time supposedly from somewhere in the Middle East. They are trying to overcome the death of Saif’s brother, who died some time ago in police custody after being arrested for some mischief. The policemen who were involved in that arrest and subsequent death of the young man, were facing criminal trial, which Saif’s father had seemingly very high hopes for, but the court found all the policemen not guilty in any way for what had happened. Saif is angry about the court’s decision, but it seems like he was not even expecting a fair ruling, as his trust in the system is very low. The story hints that Saif is now expressing his anger by joining the same kinds of rebellious proto-gangster groups as his brother did. All changes drastically when the show’s antagonist abducts one of the officers who were involved in Saif’s brother’s death – Henning Tholstrup – and cuffs him to a pipe in Saif’s father’s shop’s cellar, which is usually locked by presumably the landlord, but Saif receives the key to it in the mail from the antagonist. He discovers the handcuffed policeman and contemplates what to do with him for quite some time. Eventually, the father finds Saif in the cellar with Henning and a heated scene between the three takes place, where at some point it even seems that Saif’s father may give up his loyalty to the rule of law, of which he spoke previously so much, and actually avenge his son right there and then. Saif manages to de-escalate the situation and they let Henning go.

Outside, immigrant protestors are fighting the police across the entire neighborhood, and he stumbles upon a masked uniformed right police officer, thinking that he found a colleague, but that officer just shoots Henning dead point blank.

Soon after this, the show's protagonists start to develop a theory where the victims of the "truth terrorist's" actions are not just random people, but instead meticulously chosen candidates that must have some personal relation with the antagonist, so much so that he would want them dead. Meanwhile, he unveils his fifth and last truth – the inequality of children's lives' value between the western world and the developing countries, where they often are exploited by the transnational corporations in order to reduce labor costs. He kidnaps a bus with several school kids and then publishes a list of industries, where such immoral practices take place. He starts a countdown clock, saying that in order to save each child people have to set an office or another property of a company from each industry on fire before the 2 hours on the clock run out. He then publishes a list of specific companies, that he wants to be the targets. The antagonist takes the first step and burns down a warehouse of one of the companies on the list, an event that gets broadcast on the TV. Inspired by the noble cause of saving children's lives, people start to take action and actually set afire other companies' property. At the police headquarters everyone cheers, when they hear that all of the targets were hit and all the children get saved, even though technically the reason for their happiness is that people have committed several crimes, which is something that Saga has a tough time understanding (Season 1 Episode 7 42:40). The dark irony here is that the "truth terrorist" also uses children in quite a similar way as the big international companies do – to achieve their own goals. The children are just a means to the antagonist's ends.

Eventually, the investigation comes to the only plausible suspect that could be connected to all of the victims involved – Martin's former colleague Jens. The meticulously prepared series of crimes was instigated by the personal drama that happened with his family. His wife and son died in a car crash a few years ago on the Öresund bridge. An allegedly drunk driver hit their car, causing it to fall into the waters. The emergency services found his wife's body later on, but his son was never found. Jens thought that she was on her way to her parents, but he learned some time after the crash that she was actually on her way to Martin – one of the show's main protagonists and a very good friend of Jens. Going through her notebooks, he found out that they had

an affair and that she planned to leave Jens for Martin on that tragic day. He became infuriated and decided to avenge Martin at any cost. He staged his own suicide by finding a corpse and making it look like he shot off his head. His trick worked, his colleagues did not try to identify the body with any DNA tests or autopsy out of respect for a fellow policeman, who suffered through such a horrible loss. After the staged suicide Jens spent several years planning and preparing his vengeance. All the events of this first season were just an elaborate scheme with the only goal – to punish people who wronged him, and the main target was Martin.

The social critique that he put forward as the “truth terrorist” was just a cover-up for his extreme personal vengeance. Most of the people that fell victim to his actions related to the five social problems were people he wanted to get back at. The local politician whose upper body was used in the first episode used to be a judge. She ruled a decision in favor of the man who caused the car crash, his wife died in, supposedly because he simply bribed her. He was from a rich and influential family, so he had the resources to do so. He died in another car crash a few years after the one with the Jens’ family, so he was not part of the revenge plan, but his mother owns all the companies, which premises were set on fire during the reveal of the fifth problem – child labor. The journalist that Jens was in contact with from the first episode onwards – Daniel Ferbe – was covering the court case of the crash involving Jens’ family. He too was supposedly bribed by a lucrative job in the capital, that he quickly accepted, dropping the crash story. Jens could not forget him either, and after the acts related to the five problems, he gassed him in his car. The man he abducted for ransom brawled with Jens at some point after the tragic crash, when Jens was going through a depression period in his life and had to visit social services, where that homeless man also went. The police officer – Henning – who was a prisoner in Saif’s basement, wrote a report to the police chief, where he expressed concern for Jens and suggested that he is no longer suitable for duty. Jens had to see a psychiatrist – the one killed by the man with mental problems in front of our eyes, when the “truth terrorist” revealed the problem of people with mental issues. The psychiatrist found Jens traumatized, prescribed further treatment and advised his suspension, which along with Henning’s report caused Jens to lose his police officer’s job.

The last person who falls victim to the elaborate revenge is August – Martin’s son. Jens kidnaps him and drowns him in sort of a coffin hidden behind a wall in Jens’

mother's house, which Saga eventually discovers, but all too late. The plan was that Martin would never know what happened to August, just like Jens has no way to reconcile with the loss of his own son, not even getting a body to bury. In the first episodes August was actually somewhat sympathetic for the arguments of the "truth terrorist". It becomes a rather dark irony that he ended up paying the price of his own life for this terror. This can be seen in some light as an argument that regular people often get to pay the price for the political events, to which they most of the times remain as mere spectators, especially if they do not see the entire picture, like in August's case. Coupled with the unexpected reveal of the real reasons of personal vengeance behind the façade of social concerns in the "truth terrorist's" actions, this potential subtle detail, I would argue, enriches the canvas of theoretical underpinnings and underlying ideas of the show.

As the social problems brought up by the "truth terrorist" and other characters in the TV series can easily be contextualized in other cross-border regions, and even generally in other western societies, the story is indeed universal. Because of that, I would contest that the social critique present in the narrative becomes glocalized, as do the ideas about the mechanics of politics, which I will analyze in the next chapters. Ruth Wodak made a similar observation in her analysis of the TV show "The West Wing". She found many of the sociopolitical issues and cultural values, contextualized in the settings of the Washington politics, being in fact shown applicable and relevant for other similar locations. In her view, it can be attributed to the role of glocalization in the modern world, which makes many problems very local and very global at the same time (Wodak 2010).

In a similar fashion, the "truths" of the terrorist in Bron/Broen are very intensely felt in the Öresund region, as is evident from how people support his messages, not supporting his methods. Even Saga at one point recognizes that what he says is indeed true and the murders he commits do not make it less true. This is the local end of the equation. The remakes represent its global end. They adapted the same storyline in terms of problems and narrated them again as truths. This shows us just how global they thus are.

3.3. Reusing the narrative

The other seasons of Bron/Broen utilize to varying extent the same plot device – actions aimed at raising awareness of certain societal issues, albeit criminal in their nature, turn out to be the instruments of complicated plans of the shows’ antagonists, driven by very personal motives. I will later give it a more precise positioning in the field of political theory – as a representation of the radical democracy theory, but for now I would like to present also the plots of the other seasons.

The second one starts with a ship that mysteriously drifted into one of the pillars of the Öresund bridge. Aboard the ship Saga and other police officers has found several people, all noticeably sick. As it turned out three of them were Swedish nationals and two – Danish. Shortly after one of them dies in the hospital, just when the test results come back from the laboratory – they all are infected with pneumonic plague. The people behind this incident soon reveal themselves through a video they post online. Four people wearing animal masks explained the reasons for their act – the disproportion between the value of human lives in the west and in the developing countries. They use Angola as a reference point, saying that 319 people died from the plague there, while the medical corporations pushed for the destruction of pirated medicine that could have saved many of those lives just before the outbreak. The world, as they express it, did nothing about this corporate greed, as it affected only some distant poor country. They wonder, if it will be different now, when people from Europe start dying from the same disease (Season 2 Episode 2 10:10).

As their second attack they poison random people with plague-infected food, getting even more media attention. The group becomes labeled as eco-terrorists, because the food they chose for the poison’s transport in one form or another represents examples of how human influence harms nature. For example, fishing of tiger prawns on an industrial scale destroys mangroves or transport of apples from South Africa entails massive environmental damages due to the length of the journey. The group even chooses golden toad as their symbol – the species that went extinct in Costa Rica in 1989 because of anthropogenic influences (Season 2 Episode 2 43:30). They leave a pin with a golden toad at each of their crime scenes.

For their third act, the group decided to blow up a truck full of gasoline in Copenhagen's harbor. However, both the protagonists of the show – Saga and Martin, and we the viewers are only left to wonder what their message was, as the group gets gassed by their “coordinator”, which we see revealed in Episode 3. The specific word “coordinator” is not used in the show, instead other characters use more plot specific words to refer to that person. However, for the sake of simplicity I refer to the character “coordinator” here in this thesis. In the beginning, we only saw the eco-terrorists and how they prepare and execute their missions, and we were under the impression that their actions are independent and indeed inspired by the issues that they cite in the videos. However, now we see that they were mere pawns in someone's bigger game, and that someone was not happy with their third action, which they did on their own initiative. The coordinator decided to get rid of the activist group, and so, Saga and Martin find their lifeless bodies in a container in Malmö's harbor.

The work off the eco-terrorist soon gets continued by another group, who also wear animal masks. They abduct a researcher and draw attention to the problem of experiments done on animals in the scientific industry and elsewhere. They demand a promise of a law, that would ban such trials, to be given in the next 12 hours, otherwise they threaten to kill their hostage. Saga and Martin manage to find the place, where they keep the poor researcher locked in a cage and save her. The activists were not there with the hostage, so the search for them continues, but not for long, as they attack Saga the same night at a hotel, where she stays, but she fights back and actually apprehends them. During the interrogation it becomes clear, that they are not related in any direct way to the initial group of eco-terrorists or to their “coordinator”, whom the police is now looking for. They are just copy cats, who felt incredibly strongly about the arguments and the social critique of the first group and decided to take actions as well. The show again points to the fact that these actions, albeit drastic and radical, are deeply relatable for other people. It does not even require a coordinator to arrange similar activist groups, they get inspired by the very deeply felt message of fighting human negative influence on the environment.

Meanwhile, another attack of the real eco-terrorists occurs. The initial group, now dead, planned and arranged this one beforehand, so it did not even require their physical control to happen. They hacked the internal system of a chemical plant, that was presumably polluting the environment, and made it break down. This caused a fire

and a chemical leakage, which contaminated the water system going through the plant. The dark irony of the show becomes evident again, as we see how activists fighting for the cleaner and safer environment cause new dangers for it with their actions. We do not know for sure, if they were aware of these coming consequences, or was it just the way that their “coordinator” used them.

Putting all the pieces together Saga, Martin and their colleagues come to the realization that too many threads in this investigation lead to a biomedical company called “Medisonus”. Soon new information comes to light along with a vital witness testimony. The hitherto invisible “coordinator” is Oliver Nordgren, brother to the CEO of “Medonius” Viktoria Nordgren, who is terminally ill with cancer and only has half a year to live. Turns out Oliver has been secretly in love with his sister and was trying to do everything in his power to protect her and the company. The plague crisis and the media attention it gathered increased the company’s stock prices. One of the poisoned people had a prestigious opportunity to give a speech at an EU-summit in Copenhagen that was about to happen, but after his death the speech was given to Viktoria, who was the runner up for that role from the beginning. The attacked chemical plant belongs to “Medisonus” main competitor on the medical market. Oliver also “managed” to cause troubles for Viktoria school time boyfriend, as the boat from the first episode belonged to his company. Oliver confesses to all of these and some other crimes, because they have a fight with Viktoria, who says that she does not have time for pathetic people like him anymore, which evidently hurts him deeply. He tells Viktoria about all these things he has done for her throughout the years, but then tries to suffocate her with a pillow. Oliver’s wife – Gertrud, however, comes just in time to her rescue, hitting him dead with a lamp (Season 2 Episode 9 21:00).

Oliver, however, arranged one more attack, that should benefit “Medisonus” and make its stock value go up. He persuaded an airplane mechanic, who works at Copenhagen’s airport, to install a tank full of some sort of a plague on one of the aircrafts. Plan was that by tweaking some of the plane’s security procedures, the poisonous gas from the tank would be delivered through oxygen masks to the passengers, who would then go on with their journeys infecting other people around them. Saga and Martin interrogate the mechanic, demanding he tells them which flight it was. They point to him, how he was manipulated by Oliver into doing this, because apparently Oliver told him that it would be some sort of revenge for the damaged

environment in Thailand, which airplane traffic is the prime contributor to (Season 2 Episode 9 45:20). They manage to get through his defensive psychology, and he tells them, which flight it was. Timely quarantine and medicine rescue all the passenger on board, leaving the mechanic as yet another abused environmental activist in this season.

Saga soon realizes, that not everything matches in this case, and there was most certainly someone helping Oliver with his plans. Turns out it was his wife, and she killed him to save Viktoria, as she had other plans for her. Just before the summit Gertrud poisons Viktoria with the plague, hoping that once the virus activates, she would infect other around her. The police manage to evacuate the building, isolate Viktoria and save almost everyone. Gertrud, however, has just enough time and luck to flee from the police, coming to some abandoned warehouse, where she records a video for the general public thinking that the summit attack was successful. She makes some arguments about the severity of the environmental problems. A man walks into the warehouse and tells her that the plan failed, that everyone is only talking about Oliver, and that an unknown third party he represents is/are very unhappy and then he kills Gertrud. However, the show never continues this thread in later seasons, so we do not really know what the story arc with the unknown man was and others behind him. They might be also people, who pursue their own goals, just like Oliver did, misusing Gertrud, or they might be some genuine eco-terrorists. The overall impression of the public in the tv show's world and of us watching the tv show is that all of the events in this season were driven by Oliver's personal interests and ideas, misusing really important issues of the environmental discourse, which is so widespread in today's societies.

The show continues to implement this story arc also in the next – third – season, albeit adding a little twist to it. The first ring in the chain of crimes this time is a Danish homosexual woman, who was an active citizen of Copenhagen, striving for more modern views on gender, by arranging to open a new gender-neutral kindergarten, first of its kind in Copenhagen. She is found dead and the crime scene is set up to represent a more traditional family – a man, a woman and two children – sitting at a table. She was criticized by a Danish vlogger with strong conservative views – Lise Friis Andersen, who was not very fond of the gender-neutrality idea. Soon another victim is found dead – a Danish priest, who was also criticized by the same vlogger for marrying homosexual people in his church. The main hypothesis in the investigation is that someone, who

shares similar conservative values is trying to enact their own sort of social justice. Soon the antagonist also abducts Malmö police station's crime department's chef – Saga's boss and good friend, a character that was in the show since the first episode of the first season. Saga and her new partner officer from Denmark – Henrik – manage to find him, but his condition is just too severe and a few episodes later he eventually dies.

The police apprehend their main suspect – a young man, who was working as a home cleaner for Lise Friis. He was secretly obsessed with her and wanted to draw her attention, although his full plan remains unclear. He murdered the priest and tried to make it look like it was the same killer as with the first murder, but not all the details matched. He had nothing to do with the police chef's abduction either. He was just a lone wolf, caught up in the ideas that Lise Friis was popularizing on her vlog, but ultimately wanted to use his socially “just” actions for personal ends – to gain Lise Friis' favor.

The chain of the murders continued with the next victim – a school teacher from Sweden, who was reported multiple times throughout his career for inappropriate sexual behavior towards his students but was never legally charged or punished in any way. After him, the killer murders an old man and his wife, and the police has a very hard time finding the link between all off the murders. They still are working under the premise that it is some type of social critique from some crazy radical and we the audience expected to think within similar frames.

The investigation comes to the point, when the only linking force between all the victims is a Danish businessman and art collector Freddie Holst. All the crime scenes were made to look like some of the art objects from his private collection, and thus the killer is probably trying to get to him first and foremost. Saga and her colleagues now abandon the social critique hypothesis altogether and suspect personal motives of some kind. Eventually the killer is revealed – Emil Larsson – a young Swedish man who is trying to avenge everyone who wronged him deeply during his life. His main target is Freddie – his biological father, who donated his sperm many years ago at a fertility clinic owned by the victim from the first episode. His mother died and he was put in a foster family – the pair of old people killed in this season. They were treating him horribly, locking him up in a prison-like room in their basement. He tried to flee once, but the late police chef found him and brought back to the foster parents. The murdered

teacher has abusing him in the school. He also killed the social worker, who could not or did not want to see, that they were treating the children very badly. Emil blames Freddie for being born and wants to correct “that mistake” by killing him and himself, but Saga and Henrik find them in the nick of time.

The final season starts with a woman being stoned to death under the – symbolic for the show – Öresund bridge. She is the director for Denmark’s immigration service and she recently has received a lot of critique and negative comments from the public due to a video recently leaked on the internet. Her direct employees – immigration service officers – celebrate with champagne the deportation decision that was just ruled. An Iranian homosexual man should get deported back to his home country, where he says, he faces certain capital punishment for his sexual orientation. The police think that a recently active radical left group called “Red October” could be behind the murder. They have expressed their disappointment with the immigration system in a video they published on the internet.

Henrik who is the lead investigator on this case meets with a Swedish journalist, who is an expert on radical left groups and has studied “Red October” to some extent. He expresses his doubts that the group could have done it. His brother soon becomes the next victim of the killers, as he gets electrocuted in a jacuzzi. The police now suspect even more seriously that “Red October” is behind these crimes. However, the journalist makes a public announcement, saying that he was contacted by them and that they have nothing to do with these murders. Confronted by Saga and Henrik, he comes clear and admits that there never was any “Red October” and that all the publication on their behalf were made by him. He wanted to gain extra publicity from the position he created for himself, where he appeared to be a unique expert on the subject.

The police now have to start their investigation from scratch having virtually no leads in this case. They still work under the premise, that someone is seeking social justice with these crimes and it very much still looks like that is the case from certain angles. However, as more murders take place, the focus of the investigation shifts towards the hypothesis of personal revenge as the main motive. In the episode 5 Henrik realizes that the thread that weaves all the victims together is a former police informer Tommy, who was killed by the mob 4 years ago. Eventually, we learn that it was his son and ex-lover, who were behind all these crimes. They killed loved ones of those

people who betrayed Tommy or contributed to his death in some way. The immigration service director's husband is a psychiatrist, who used to work for the police and handled Tommy's psychological state as an informant. Just before his death Tommy begged him to write a report saying that he should be transferred under the police protection, that he was not suited for informant's field work anymore, but the psychiatrist refused to do so, claiming that Tommy was perfectly healthy mentally and doing such a report would be an act of falsification. The journalist took Tommy's interview and printed his story in the newspaper, which the gangsters read and thus realized that someone is leaking information to the public. Unfortunately, the reporter revealed a vital detail, that gave Tommy away and the gangsters quickly found out that it was him. Among other targets was also one of the protagonists – Saga's partner Henrik, as he was Tommy's main contact during those times and did not do enough to get him out of the field. In the end, the police manage to capture Tommy's ex-lover and put her in jail, and Saga manages to kill Tommy's son just when he was about to kill Henrik's newly found daughter.

The last two seasons spend much more time on developing the main characters and their story arcs and the main investigations are taking thus a bit less screen time. Nevertheless, the show implements the same plot device – social critique and actions that initially represent attempts to fix the injustices, from the antagonists' points of view at least, turn out to be a scheme to cover deeply personal goals with these crimes. This practice of reusing this storyline twist represents in my view the proof that the idea of political actions being more often than not instigated by personal reasons strikes very powerfully with the creators of the show either consciously or subconsciously. They could have abandoned it after the first season and moved in a different direction with the plot, instead they made a choice to stick to it, albeit ever more loosely with each next season.

3.4. Local narration

In order to compliment and widen the investigation of the narrative of the “Bron/Broen” show I would like to turn my gaze now to the two remakes, chosen for my analysis. The American-Mexican version starts with the same scene – two parts of two women's bodies laid on the bridge between Juarez and El Paso and look like one whole body. We see counterparts of all the same characters from the original show present also in these settings. However, soon the remake starts to incorporate local

specificity into the narrative. The American version of Charlotte Söringer – the wife of a rich man, who will eventually be asked to pay part of the ransom that the antagonist will demand, finds a secret tunnel on her late husband’s property that leads across the border from their American side to the Mexican one. She soon learns, that her husband had a deal with the head of the local Mexican cartel – Fausto Galvan – and now he wants her to take over the “maintenance” of this tunnel. The storyline of the cartel will get bigger and bigger as the show goes on.

The main antagonist of the first season does not get the name the “truth terrorist” in these Mexican-American settings. He is simply called “the bridge butcher” after the specifics of his first crime. He does, however, point to the same problem of inequality before the law, but adds extra complexity to his arguments, as the important government official, whose upper body he used for the bridge scene, is a judge famous for her anti-immigration stance. Illegal immigration as one of the most pervasive problems of this specific region comes thus rather fast into the show’s narrative. Immediately the second “act” of the antagonist is aimed to highlight it as brightly as possible. He leaves poisoned water on the route, where illegal immigrants will be coming across the border from Mexico to the USA, killing almost of them. The message he conveys through the local version of Daniel Ferbé – the journalist who was in contact with the “truth terrorist” in the original show – is that these immigrants are as helpless and defenseless as human beings can be. In the Swedish-Danish show the antagonist poisoned homeless people, but they were not given much screen time, whereas this version depicted them rather vividly. The show tried to transmit the feeling of being forced onto this path of crossing the border in secret, of how scared these immigrants were. It also depicted how there were innocent children among them, contributing to the total impression that this part of the episode made.

The “butcher” captured one of the immigrants and used her for his third attack. He tied her up in the open desert and set up a live stream, showing her suffering from the burning Mexican sun, essentially dying slowly and painfully from all the burns. He demanded a ransom of 1 million dollars to be delivered to a designated spot, so that he would tell the police her location in order to save her. This is an adaptation of the original show’s ransom scene, where the “truth terrorist” demanded that chosen wealthy people from the region would pay for a homeless man’s live. However, the remake turns this story arc onto a different path, when the ransom is delivered to the antagonist.

He requested, that the delivery would be made by the FBI and then killed the agent who brought the money. Later when he talks with Sonya – Saga’s counterpart in this remake – he points out, that this agent was known for his "passion" for Mexican prostitutes by the FBI’s management, but they did nothing to stop it. He says, that "institutions know, and they ignore, and they protect" (Season 1 Episode 6 27:30). With this the antagonist’s action shift to the next problem – and another theme prevalent in the remake overall – the corruption of institutions.

The next victim of the “butcher” is a psychiatrist, which again in a way resembles the original show, where people with mental issues attacked different people, including one psychiatrist. Except this time, the killing is done by the antagonist himself and aimed to highlight a different problem – a mixture of drug-trafficking and corruption. The murdered man was not only helping people work through their psychological issues, but also pushed some drugs. The “butcher” killed him in a rather particular gory way, characteristic for Colombian drug cartels. He was the last victim, that kept the police believing that the murders were representing certain social critique. Soon after that the protagonists gain valuable information and learn that the main connection between the victims is supposedly killed former FBI agent David Tate, who is trying to avenge the deaths of his wife and son, bringing the remake again in unison with the original show with regards to the main story arc.

We see, that the Mexican-American remake successfully adapted the storyline of the Swedish-Danish show, spicing it up with its local seasoning. The 5 problems of the “truth terrorist” were rethought in a much more natural way for these spatial settings. The themes of drug cartels, illegal immigration and corruption are brought essentially to the forefront. The chief of the police department in Juarez shown to be in really good relations with the cartel’s head - Fausto, and the practices of the Mexican police are somewhat “favorable” for the cartel’s operations, turning the blind eye when needed. Even Marco – one of the protagonists, Martin’s Mexican doppelganger – has to be nice to Galvan. They have a somewhat special relation, as their fathers were apparently close friends, but Marco tries now to stay on the path of the law, though even he sometimes has to pretend like there is no issue with the cartel, but such are his conditions in these specific circumstances. At the same time, the line of the narrative, which reveals the initially sociopolitical arguments of the antagonist to be extremely personal, is still strongly visible in the story.

The second season of the Mexican-American “Bridge” does not utilize the material of the original show, but instead develops its own story, continuing with many characters from the first season, and putting the fight against cartel on the main stage. Apparently, the creators decided to dig deeper into the issues presented in the first season, and came up with a plot, that involves brave and resolute Mexican prosecutor who attempts to fight corruption, “dirty” CIA and DEA agents trying to secure their interests and most prominently Fausto Galvan, fighting against everyone, who tries to cross him. The entire season is dedicated to the interplay of their fights with against each other, and resembles more the traditional American series and films, interested in the dark deeds of influential forces, not visible to regular people living in the American society.

The French-British remake stayed more in line with its source of inspiration – the original show – throughout all of its three seasons. In the first one, the same storyline of the “truth terrorist” is reenacted against the local social landscape. The first crime scene takes place in the tunnel under the English Channel, which is only used by the people whose job is to maintain it, and so the remake starts to show its adaptive capabilities already starting with the challenge posed by this fact. In “Bron/Broen” there was an ambulance trying to cross the bridge, closed by the police, which had Charlotte Söringer and her dying husband in it. Martin let them pass, despite Saga’s orders to other police officers to not let anyone through. In “The Tunnel” there could not be any ambulances or cars in the tunnel, where the body was found, so we get introduced to Charlotte’s counterpart through other storylines. The French Charlotte verbally threatened the murdered French politician, whose upper body was used for the first truth by the series’ antagonist. In this version, her husband dies under a train, after being chased by some people, who later turn out to be agents of a multinational intelligence task force. The remake will mention secret services a few times, as the story unfolds and even more in the second season. I think, this is also a sort of retreat to tropes, familiar for the British audience, just like in the case of the Mexican-American remake, as there are so many films and series, revolving against the work of intelligence units, be it a thriller, or a procedural TV series.

For his second act the antagonist in “The Tunnel” targets the elderly, as he poisons the medication that they receive at their retirement home, killing everyone who took it. This is thus a third version of defenseless people after the homeless in the

original show and the illegal immigrants in the American remake. The third act in the remake is very similar to that of the original, as the “truth terrorist” manipulates a young man with mental problems to kill seemingly random people, including his psychiatrist, but we know from the original show, the role of this late doctor in the “truth terrorist’s” plan.

The French-British remake diverges from the original story in the antagonist’s fourth act, that points to a new social problem. Using an extremely flammable chemical, he sets a few young people on fire, causing their horrible deaths. All of these people took part in 2011 England riots and were sentenced too harshly for that, according to the “truth terrorist”. With the final act, however, the show comes back to the original series’ material and has the antagonist abduct a bus of schoolchildren. He then releases a list of department stores to be burned by someone, in order to save each child’s life, just like in the “Bron/Broen”.

Eventually, Karl and Elise – the protagonists of this remake – figure out, who is the “truth terrorist” and what are his real motives. He was also part of the multinational intelligence task force, that had somewhat legally grey objectives and utilized dubious methods. Apart from that, however, the remake copies very much the original show in that he is also avenging his wife’s and son’s deaths, and most of the victims were chosen for the same reasons here, as they were chosen in the “Bron/Broen”.

The second season is a much looser adaptation of the original show’s second season, as it also features a group of people committing acts of terror in the name of certain social goals and values, but the details around the story are quite different. Without going too much into them, let’s look at their attacks. First, they hack an airplane, taking full control over it and crashing it into the open sea. This is a sort of a service that they get paid for by people with for now unclear stories. The money they earned this way allows them to carry out the “real” attacks. One of the group members goes to a cross-religion camp, where children of different confessions are supposed to spend time together, participating in workshops and debates to help them better understand people of other religions. The terrorist shoots a Christian priest, a rabbi and a teenage Muslim girl. He is driven by the hatred towards Jews and Muslims and wants to send the message to the society, that Christian culture is under attack, as revealed by his dialogue with another terrorist cell member (Season 2 Episode 2 40:0).

We soon learn that another member of the group is a daughter of a professor of either social sciences or philosophy, the show does not express it explicitly, whose former student is also the leader of this terrorist group. He describes his daughter to the police as a very politically conscious, and he thinks that she might be part of some anarchist group – and indeed she is, part of the terrorist cell, but the police do not tell the entire story to the professor. Throughout the episodes she is shown genuinely concerned with getting their social critique loud and clear, but we do not get a chance to see their other planned acts, as soon she and the man, who was the shooter at the cross-religion camp, die fighting the police. The only member of the cell left is its leader, professor's former student.

At this point the story shifts its focus towards secret services and international mafia. As the police investigate the airplane crash and the role of the terrorist cell in it, they get on the track of a Georgian arms dealer, who is currently in prison, but whose son is apparently trying his best to get his dad out and, in the meantime, fills his criminal role. He ordered the airplane crash and now harbors the surviving leader of the terrorist group. However, the show reveals, how his reasons are more egotistic, as he mostly wants to gain more publicity with his horrific crimes, than really convey some political message. After being denied the chance to take the responsibility for the crash, he tries to flee mafia's premises, but gets caught and killed. Meanwhile, the protagonists who are trying to find this arms dealer are faced with resistance from MI5, the British domestic security agency, who have their stakes in this case and their plans how to resolve it. Eventually, the arms dealer is arrested, and even though the plane's hijacking will not be made public to not stir social panic, the MI5 agents promise, that he will face justice.

In this season, the series thus shows us, how an egotistic man, sponsored by international crime syndicate, founds a terrorist cell to gain dark fame. The other members of his group, powered by their perceptions of social justice, follow him on this path, but get destroyed. He too is killed off by his creators, when he starts to get out of their control. The mafia, of course, pursue their own interests and do not care for a second for the terrorist group's goals. Albeit in a slightly blurrier way, but here too, the initially portrayed as political, the drivers for the acts of terror get revealed as being mainly pursuits of personal goals of different kinds by different characters.

For the final season, the authors of the remake came up with a totally new story, not based on the original show's materials. The antagonist(s) this time call themselves the "Pied Piper" after the famous legend character. For their first attack, they set a boat on fire, that was transporting illegal refugee children from France to the UK, taking with them the children that were on board this time and cutting off the tongue of the man who was transporting them, a known human trafficker. They then abduct all the children of a middle-class British family and put the refugee children from the boat in their beds. The story hits the media, and the nationwide search for the children is immediately commenced. The antagonists post a video, where they draw the public's attention to how different the lives of the British children are valued against the lives of the refugee children and urge the police to find a boy by the name Saban Kasanović. The children are soon found and returned to their parents safe and sound. Elise and Karl find out that Saban was rescued from human traffickers in the 90-s in the aftermath of the Bosnian conflict but died soon after.

As the second attack, the "Pied Piper" hacks the computer of a man, who has been bullying others on the internet in racist and sexist ways, and posts his private videos online, ruining his life and career. This way they wield their own type of social justice against him. Then the antagonists abduct him and kill in a very macabre way. They lure some people to this "event": a refugee lawyer, who only helps people when they have enough money and kicks them out if they do not, a local priest, who sexually abuses children in his congregation, and a married man, who is willing to cheat on his pregnant wife at the first possibility. The people are drugged and burned with marks, like cattle. Eventually, the police figure out who is behind these attacks – it's the mother of Saban and her lover, a young British man – Anton, whose brother-in-law was the married man, they stamped during their last attack. It is also revealed, that Anton was a victim of the priest's sexual assaults, and the lawyer refused Saban's mother his services. In an attempt to stop them, Karl tells Saban's mother, that the boy is dead and that there is nothing the police can do about it at this point. However, they manage to flee from Karl and later attack again as a revenge for Saban's life.

They abduct 11 random people and put them in a meat truck, that slowly gets filled with poisonous gas. They also take Elise hostage and put her with the other people, but with a gas mask on, so she could stay conscious. Karl investigates Saban's case further and finds out, that he is actually alive, as he was adopted under an alias by a

French man. He is now a grown up, living happy normal life, quite soon getting married. Karl looks for the truck with Elise and other hostages and manages to eventually find it. Anton leaves him with a choice: if Karl presses a button that would detonate a bomb on Elise's neck, the hostages will be rescued. If he does not kill Elise, the people in the truck will die from the gas. Karl says, that there is no need for this as he has found Saban, and that the antagonists should surrender to the police. Anton, however, does not seem to care. At this point the show reveals, how Anton did all of these crimes, just to please Saban's mother, whom he genuinely loves, and does not to leave her. He chooses not to tell her, that Karl found Saban, as he knows she would indeed surrender to see her son. As time runs out, Elise chooses to take her own life to save all those people in the truck and detonated her bomb. The truck opens automatically up, and people get saved. Angered by Elise's death, Karl rushes in pursuit of Anton and Saban's mother and eventually stops them and tells her that Saban is found and that Anton chose to hide that from her. She shoots Anton and gets arrested.

This remake made the same adaptive twists on the original show's story, like the Mexican-American version. Some of the social problems, have been replaced by the ones that strike more naturally with the changed spatial settings. Bigger emphasis on narcotics, illegal immigration and corruption in the American "Bridge", along with the themes of refugees and the fresh focus on the people involved in the riots in "The Tunnel" make for a captivating take on the narrative introduced in the original show. Despite these adaptations, the core arc of the narrative is kept across both remakes, albeit only in the first season of the American version. The sociopolitical actions and arguments, presented by the antagonists in all cases, are always set in motion either directly by theirs or indirectly by their leaders' / "manager" personal motives.

I would also like to cautiously offer another idea here, that the choice of incorporating to such extent secret services and a drug cartel / an arms dealing syndicate into the remakes' plots, is in a way indicative of the cultural differences between Northern Europe and the regions of the remakes. Sticking to the plot, where individuals are the main agents of action in the original show, represents the belief that individual can have enough influence on the world around him, whereas in the remakes the invisible actors are much more influential. This is a very raw idea, that requires perhaps a separate study to be developed into something more substantial.

4. THE THEORIES BEHIND THE NARRATIVE

4.1. Everyday makers

When watching the TV series, I saw a resemblance of certain parts of the narrative to some ideas from political theory and in general social sciences. The first is the concept of “Everyday Makers”, developed by Bang and Sørensen (1999). It builds upon the ideas of Putnam, pertaining to social capital (1995 and 2000), who among other things underlines the correlation between the scale of people’s participation in big voluntary state-level organizations / communities and the prosperity and cohesiveness of the society within the same spatial frames. The more people participate in such activities, the better their lives will be, to put it in a very simplified manner. However, Bang and Sørensen take this idea further and, with an empirical evidence at their hands, argue that successful social activism can occur solely on the local level, without the relations to nationwide projects or communities. They introduce a model of Everyday Makers – individuals, who through their own actions, manage to make a difference in the world around them, however local that difference may be. Putnam’s famous formula of “bowling alone”, when people end up alone in their attempts to sustain engagement in their communities and thus get frustrated, becomes disputed, as the factor of being alone in this process does not have such a direct impact on these attempts. Everyday Makers do successfully bring about change in their social environments through their day-to-day actions, sometimes interacting with other like-minded people from the same or across other local settings.

Some of the characters can be seen as Everyday Makers too. The most prominent example is Stefan Lindberg from the original show. He is a social worker from Malmö, who is helping people in much broader capacity than his job requires him to. He spends a lot of time on the street, looking out for homeless people. When asked, why he does it, he says “Because I can” (Season 1 Episode 1 47:20). He also helps out a woman, whose husband gets often drunk and beats her up. Stefan arranges a getaway house for her and her son in the Swedish countryside, where her husband would not be able to find her. His story too gets somewhat dark, when the husband comes to Stefan’s apartment looking for his wife and starts fighting with him. Stefan kills him and eventually as the season progresses gets arrested for it. Interestingly, the remakes had their own versions of Stefan Lindberg. In the Mexican-American “Bridge” we see

Steven Linder, who is also a social worker and who we see help a Mexican girl to escape from her abusive gangster boyfriend. In “The Tunnel” there is Stephen Beaumont, who runs a safehouse for asylum seekers, who either have just come into the country or were refused the asylum. The show focuses on him helping a Colombian girl and her son, who are being chased by a local pimp.

The fact that the character could be so successfully adapted in varying socio-cultural settings underlines how natural such character looks across these settings. The shows thus demonstrate us, how Everyday Makers like Stefan can be found in many places across the globe, and their actions seem reasonable and understandable. Some other characters too can be broadly speaking considered Everyday Makers, like Lise Friis, a conservative vlogger from the third season, or like all of the antagonists in all seasons of the original show, as they too tried to change some social statuses, albeit in their own perverse and criminal way.

4.2. Radical democracy

The other theory that, as I would argue, can be found behind the narrative of the chosen TV series is, as I mentioned in the introduction, that of radical democracy, developed by Laclau and Mouffe. Their book called “Hegemony and Socialist Strategy”, in which they introduced the concept of radical democracy, first came out in 1985 and has since become one of the most prominent works in the field of post-Marxism.

They build their argument on the early Marxist concepts and ideas developed by Rosa Luxemburg, Karl Kautsky, Eduard Bernstein, Antonio Gramsci and others. They take the idea of hegemony, that was at the root of Marxist throughout the entire history of the ideological left, and recontextualize it for the postindustrial society. Instead of the capitalist class, as being the hegemonic force over the class of workers, they turn their focus to discourses and identities tightly related to them as the points of hegemonic influence. The entire political sphere of any society becomes the battleground for these conflicting identities to enter the position of hegemony. What is important for their theory, however, is the recognition that these conflicts cannot be resolved in any way, and instead they constitute the very essence of the political relations in any society. The antagonism between people and their identities is thus the natural order of things.

Laclau and Mouffe criticize the left movements of their day for not being able to see that and adopt into their practices and policies (Laclau and Mouffe 2001).

Mouffe also criticizes the adepts of deliberative democracy for believing that procedures and processes can help overcome the omnipresent antagonism of the identities in society. She argues that the only way to reach a conclusion is to deny certain parties the right to participate in this deliberative process. If a democracy strives for equality off all its members, it should acknowledge its conflictual nature, what Mouffe herself calls agonistic democracy (Mouffe 2000, 80-120). The term is used interchangeably with the term radical democracy. It is agonistic, because the democracy cannot exist without the struggles and conflicts between the agents and they should instead be welcomed in the social sphere. It is radical, because sustaining it requires radical acceptance of the pluralism of identities, which is the root of all the antagonisms. At the same time, despite some negative connotations these concepts of never-ending conflicts within a society, they can have very positive influence on the quality of the communities we build. Accepting pluralism as unavoidable can help us uncover more identities, that are in conflict over certain issue, and through dialogue and compromise achieve a more balanced solution, which would exclude least amount of people (Laclau and Mouffe 2001). Part of accepting the radical democracy is accepting that achieving solutions that would not leave out some positions / identities is utopian, and the bigger the problem, the more interests have to be sacrificed.

Finally, the cradle of most of the identities according to Laclau and Mouffe is the human experience of each individual in its entirety. This is the reason for the pluralistic nature of social identities. They can be grouped into bigger entities, like left, right, eco, nationalist, globalist etc., but only with instrumental goals in mind, as they can be broken down at any time into much smaller fragments, since each of the members will eventually have her own identity, however, small the difference of that will be compared to the one of her closest fellows. This is why the identity can ultimately come from any sphere of human life, even from the most private experiences, and the personal interests and worldviews serve as its main blocks. The political antagonisms in radical democracy are conflicts of essentially personal matters in the pluralistic field of the political life of any democratic society (Laclau and Mouffe 2001).

As I have tried to show in my analysis, the show and its remakes deploy the same narrative device season in and season out (except for maybe the second season of the Mexican-American version). They portray the antagonists' actions as being very much aimed at bringing about social change or at least drawing public's attention to certain problems ailing the modern societies. Yet, eventually, the shows reveal those actions as enactments of their personal agendas or as being indirect instruments of achieving someone else's personal goals.

Moreover, the antagonisms between the main villain and the main target / victim cannot be reconciled. In the first season, Jens wanted to hurt Martin, blaming him for the death of his family. His identity, seen from the radical democracy perspective as being that of a man betrayed by his colleague and friend, who lost his wife and son because of that betrayal excludes any coexistence with Martin's identity, that of an honest policeman, who only followed his nature when he had an affair with Jens' wife. Oliver in the second season is a man, who loves his sister deeply and is prepared to do anything to make her work look even more successful, while she is a woman with her own standards and morals, who places very little value on people like her brother. In the third season, Emil wishes to have never been born and blames his biological father Freddie for his unpleasant existence, whereas Freddie is only really a father to his newborn baby and does not see his fault in Emil's ordeals. In the final season, Tommy's son and lover are people deeply hurt by his death, who blame their victims for this tragedy. The people who they held responsible, however, see themselves as human beings who acted within given circumstances and did not want such an end for Tommy.

Yes, all of these cases are rather exceptional for the real world with its more "normal" conflicts and antagonisms, but the genre of the show demands for the presence of such criminal attributes. Ultimately, the choice in favor of the subversion of political arguments to personal goals is the one that really matters for the connection between the narrative and the theory of radical democracy, and I believe that it is very prominently noticeable for any viewer of the show. Since this element of the narrative was so successfully adopted by the remakes, I would argue that radical democracy too becomes glocalized by the chosen TV shows, just like the social critiques of the "truth terrorist".

5. Conclusions

In my thesis I have outlined, what I believe to be a very solid framework for blending together the political analyses with the analyses of the popular culture artefacts. Building upon interpretive analytical tradition within political science and utilizing such cross-domain methods as narrative analysis and / or discourse analysis we can conduct very insightful investigations, that would widen our understanding of the ideas from both fields.

After the presentation of my methodological framework, I went on to outline the main elements of the narrative of the chosen TV series. The first one being the semi-artificial creation of a unified space out of two locales divided by a border (either invisible like in the Sweden-Denmark and the France-Britain cases, or a very real one like in the case of Mexico-USA). I illustrate, how it is presented to be more coherent than it probably is in reality.

The second element of the narrative is the story arc itself, where we follow police officers as they investigate various crimes, which we see initially as being dark forms of sociopolitical critique or activism, but that ultimately are revealed as being driven by very personal motives or goals. This plot device is used across all seasons of the original show to different extents with different types of political issues brought to the fore in each of them.

The third and final element of the narrative, that I dissected in my analysis is the local color, evident from comparing the original show its intertexts – the Mexican-American and the French-British remake. They utilized the plot of the first season almost in its entirety, but made interesting adaptations in the details, for example with regards to the social problems brought up by the truth terrorist. The second and third season of “The Tunnel” had the same story arc of acts of social justice being driven by the desires of personal gain. I also cautiously suggested, that the heavy presence of intelligence services in the remakes’ stories might indicate lower trust in the power of individuals’ action in the regions of the remake (especially in the Mexican-American settings), compared to the situation in the Öresund region. Without further analysis, however, this is just a hypothesis.

Subsequently, I outlined two concepts from the field of social sciences and political science in particular, that I found to be the most evident in the analyzed narrative. The first one is the concept of Everyday Makers, developed by Bang and Sørensen. It postulates that people can affect the social realities around them, even when they act alone, through the actions such people do on a daily basis. In my view, the character of Stefan Lindberb and his counterparts in the remakes are the best example of Everyday Makers in the show, but not the only one.

The most dominant connection is in my opinion between the shows' narrative and the theory of radical democracy. Developed by Laclau and Mouffe this theory offers a new, more modern vision of the Marxist tradition, and as such it has become one of the milestones in post-Marxist thought. It presents the sphere of political as the place of endless conflicts between inexhaustible plurality of identities. It denies the probability of consensus that would reasonably satisfy all parties and instead urges democracies to embrace plurality to make the society as much inclusive as possible. As the identities, according to radical democracy theory, are shaped by the totality off human experience they can come from any sphere of human life. I argue, that the shows' narrative demonstrates the same idea, when it reveals the political critique of the antagonists as the transport for their personal agendas, unequivocally tied to their identities. By recreating the same narrative within different spatial settings across the globe in the remakes, the narrative makes the radical democracy glocalized.

Finally, I would like to mention, that I do not insist on the analysis in my thesis as being the only possible one for the chosen TV shows. On the contrary, I believe there might be other reading of the same popular culture material, either along the same thematical lines or totally different. I hope, however, that the way I presented my analysis shows, why I came to these specific conclusions, underlining the usefulness of the chosen methodological framework.

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