

# Malmö in the Public Imaginary: *Thin Blue Line*, Dialect Television Drama, and Local Patriotism

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Malmö is Sweden's third largest city with a population of 350.000. In the 2010s, the city made headlines nationally and internationally for shootings and crime and became emblematic for a segregated welfare state in decline. Located in the far south of Sweden, close to the Danish capital Copenhagen, Malmö used to be an industrial city, dominated by the huge shipyard Kockums and construction companies such as Skanska. In the 1970s, the oil crisis led to unemployment and even depopulation in the late 1970s, 1980s, and early 1990s. An effort was made to rebrand the postindustrial city as a "knowledge city", with a newly started university in 1998, the construction of the bridge across Öresund to Copenhagen which opened in 2000, and the landmark high rise Turning Torso, by famous architect Santiago Calatrava, finished in 2003. In the 2000s, Malmö on the one hand moved forward as a "creative city" (Florida 2002), home to the successful gaming company Massive Entertainment as well as several other film, music, and gaming studios, and on the other hand continued to have a reputation of ethnic segregation, crime, shootings, and an informal economy.

In this article, I address the local press and media reception of recent television series *Tunna blå linjen* (*Thin Blue Line*, 2021-) and how it relates to a local sense of Malmö as the peripheral underdog vis-à-vis Stockholm, the capital of Sweden. Although originally intended to take place in Stockholm, the screenplay was rewritten to fit Malmö when southern-Sweden based production company Anagram took on the show. In several ways, this seems to have been a lucky choice – the setting of *Thin Blue Line* provides much of its color, its soundscape, and its ambience as well as gaining it a large and enthusiastic following in southern Sweden.

In order to chart the reception of *Thin Blue Line*, I have used "Svenska dagstidningar", a database administered by the Royal Library, consisting of digitized Swedish newspapers from 1645 to now (Kungliga biblioteket). By entering the search term "tunna blå linjen", and then filtering by year (2021 and 2022), and then by newspapers, it is possible to get an overview of how a (searchable) phenomenon or event appears over time and space in Swedish press. For instance, for 2021, the search term yielded 8.127 hits, the absolute majority of these in the first three months of the year, while the series was airing. Due to the number of editions for some newspapers, however, several of these hits were duplicates. Moreover, the search engine finds any mention of the word or phrase in any of the digitized newspaper pages, which means that all television schedules are included in the search. Consequently, such a

search can only give an indication of press attention. For instance, the Stockholm-based, nationwide evening newspaper *Expressen* had most hits (286), the local daily *Sydsvenskan* the second most (242), and Stockholm-based, nationwide daily *Dagens Nyheter* the third most (227). However, about a fifth of the Stockholm-based papers' mentions were duplicates, whereas only about a tenth of the smaller, local newspaper's came from the same article in a different edition.

In spite of some commentary that the series was apologetic in relation to the police, that it reproduced racist stereotypes, and that it aligned itself, through its title, with the American anti-Black Lives Matter movement which constructs the police as the “thin blue line” between chaos and civilization (Pahnke 2021; Krutmeijer 2021; Tapper 2021), it mostly received positive attention. However, as I argue below, even the negative commentary in the local newspaper is grounded in a sense of lived experience in this particular city.

For the purpose of this article, I adapt the concept of “dialect cinema” (Martin 2020). Dialect cinema is an apt term in this context, because one of the most highlighted aspects in the reception of *Thin Blue Line* was that most characters spoke the southern dialect, *skånska*, which is prevalent in Malmö. However, dialect cinema does not exclusively or even necessarily refer to the sound of the dialogue. Instead, it can be seen as extending or paralleling Hamid Naficy's concept of “accented cinema”. In contrast to accented cinema which signifies filmmakers in exile or diaspora, whose film styles reflect dislocation, displacement and movement and thus are marked as different from majority, mainstream or classical cinema (Naficy 2001; Martin 2020:63), dialect cinema “retains the visual and audio character of its place of origin” (Martin 2020:62, in reference to Goldberg 2008).

However, both accented and dialect cinema share several similarities, not least that both, at their best, concern identity “as a process of becoming” (Martin 2020: 63; Naficy 2001). In the case of *Thin Blue Line*, I would argue that the connections rather than the differences between accented and dialect cinema provide the distinctive audio-visual ambience of Malmö that the local reception responded to. Not least because Malmö is a melting pot, with a third of its population born outside of Sweden, most commonly in Iraq, Syria, or Denmark (Malmö stad, befolkning), and that this is both a point of pride and something highlighted in the external negative image of Malmö.

*Thin Blue Line*, quite obviously, is not cinema, and several of the parameters Naficy draws for accented cinema and of those Martin demonstrates in dialect cinema rely on the notion of the filmmaker as auteur, as the creative artist behind the film. Nevertheless, bringing the theoretical perspective of a dialect into the analysis of the reception of *Thin Blue Line* can more specifically explain some of the response it stirred. As a dialect television drama, it “renders its scenic and cultural origins visible and audible” (Martin 2020:64). The reception in the local press can be understood

in the light of a perception of having previously had such a dialect audio-visual representation repressed, which in its turn is connected to the construction of a center and periphery, not least in Swedish film and television history.

## Representations of Malmö in Film and Television History

Urban representations on film and the relationship between cities and cinema is a vast and nebulous field of study, spanning across disciplines and encompassing explorations of specific directors', or auteurs', relationships to cities, the representations of specific cities on film, sociologically inspired studies of class, ethnicity, and (urban) space, architecture's relation to cinema, modernity, memory, and history, and much more (Stigsdotter & Koskinen 2018). Many of these studies are devoted to large cities or capitals such as New York, Rome, Stockholm (e.g Rhodes & Gorfinkel 2011; Koskinen 2016). Malmö, however, falls a bit through the cracks. It is large in a Swedish context but tiny in relation to the urban sprawls or giant skyscrapers of international big cities. Also, Malmö has historically not been particularly represented in fiction film or in television.

The relative non-existence of Malmö representations until around the turn of the millennium is at least partly a result of the centralized film production in Sweden. In 1911, Sweden's biggest film company, Svenska Biografteatern, moved from Kristianstad in the south of Sweden to Stockholm, and between the years 1912 and 1995, the domestic film industry was based in Stockholm. Although films sometimes were shot outside of the capital, the studios, the money, and the power was concentrated to the capital, a tendency that was even further reinforced with the induction of the Swedish Film Institute, the institutionalized center of power of the national cinema, in 1963. "For more than eight decades Swedish film was accordingly basically synonymous with Stockholm," film scholar Olof Hedling observes, and indicates Sweden's entry into the European Union in 1995 as a starting point for a decentralization of Swedish film production (Hedling 2006:19-20). The EU membership entailed new possibilities for regional production, and beginning with "Trolleywood", the production facilities in Trollhättan, run by Film i Väst, where Lars von Trier as well as Lukas Moodysson made films, various regional film centers began to break up the hegemony of Stockholm (Hedling 2006).

Similarly, the public service model with a broadcast monopoly chosen for Swedish television when it was introduced in 1956 offered one channel with its production base in Stockholm. With the second channel, introduced in 1969, production diversified and was outsourced to various districts around the nation, but decision making was still located in the capital. In 1987, Swedish television reorganized the two channels, creating one "Stockholm channel" (Kanal 1) and one "Sweden channel" (TV2). Tellingly, TV2 was quickly nicknamed the "hillbilly channel" (bonnakanalen), evoking various

stereotypes of the countryside being a bit “behind” the modern, sophisticated urbanites of the capital (Furhammar 2006:20-22).

Glimpses of Malmö can be seen in some silent films with actor and movie star Edvard Persson. In 1958, Jan Troell, made a short documentary film, *City* (*Stad*, 1958/1960), which was inspired by Arne Sucksdorff’s famous, Oscar-winning *Symphony of a City* (*Människor i stad*, 1947) but portrayed Malmö instead of the Swedish capital. *City* was broadcast on Swedish television in 1960. Malmö came to be featured more consistently in the early 1960s, with Bo Widerberg’s two first films, *The Pram* (*Barnvagnen*, 1963) and *Raven’s End* (*Kvarteret Korpen*, 1963). Significantly, Edvard Persson, Jan Troell, and Bo Widerberg were all from Skåne, the southern county of Sweden. In the 1970s, a television series about a property manager, *N.P. Möller* (1972–1980) took place and was shot in Malmö, showing not only the streets, squares, and buildings of the city but also letting the southern dialect be heard in the dialogue.

Because of the decentering of Swedish film production and the new regional film centers (Hedling 2006), by the 2000s and 2010s, Malmö was one setting among many in Sweden for film and television makers. As such, it formed a location for productions such as some of the Wallander films, Jan Troell’s *Everlasting Moments* (*Maria Larssons eviga ögonblick*, 2008), and *The Yard* (*Yarden*, 2016). The Nordic Noir television series *The Bridge* (*Bron*, 2011–18) was also shot and took place in Malmö and Copenhagen. Arguably, the decentering of Swedish film and television production can be seen, to some extent, as a democratization of audiovisual representation, but although these productions awoke some regional pride – not least when *The Bridge* was exported as well as remade in several different versions around the world – they did not stir the same local frenzy as *Thin Blue Line* would do. As a television show which methodically constructed a sense of authentic connection to its location, to its place, it raised the stakes for local viewer involvement and recognition.

### *Thin Blue Line* and its Reception

*Thin Blue Line* is a police television series, made by the production company Anagram for Swedish public service television. At the time of writing, it has been released in two seasons with a third planned for release in the fall of 2024. The first season of ten episodes premiered on January 17, 2021, and the second with eight episodes on September 18, 2022. These episodes were broadcast on regular, scheduled television but were also made available on Sveriges television’s streaming platform SVTplay. Unlike other Swedish police dramas, such as *The Bridge*, it does not focus on the solution of one case per season, but follows a handful of police officers on patrol duty and their everyday encounters with small-time criminals, lost children, suicide attempts, drug dealers, crime victims, intoxicated and disorderly people, domestic abuse, drunk teenage parties, accidents and much else. One of the

officers, a young woman from northern Sweden, is new both to the profession and the city, another one struggles with an older relative and her own ambivalence to the job, a third has an anger management problem that likely comes out of his bitter and resentful father, formerly on the force himself, who is in a wheelchair. There is a clandestine lesbian couple and a boss who goes through a painful divorce. The series shows them at work and at home, illustrating how the stress and tragedies of their daily encounters bleed over into their private lives and vice versa. As such, the parallels drawn by reviewers to *Hill Street Blues* (1981–1987) are apt: *Thin Blue Line* uses the same kind of genre mix of police procedural and soap opera, but it also inevitably aligns itself, too, with series such as *The Wire* (2002–2008) and Nordic Noir productions like *Forbrydelsen* (*The Killing*, 2007–2012) (cf. e.g. Wilson, 2015; Vint, 2013; Redvall, 2013). With a layered “double storytelling” (Redvall, 2013), the personal lives of the protagonists provide continuity while events in their work life frequently are presented as fragmented and disrupted.

So far, the series has been extremely well received. Not only was it popular with the audience (reportedly, the first episode had been streamed 2.395.000 times by March 19, 2021, which, according to newspapers, was a “viewer record”, *Expressen* March 19, 2021). It won the national annual television award, Kristallen (“the crystal”), for best tv drama and best tv program, in 2021, and received much favorable publicity, in particular for its first season. Already in December 2020, about three weeks before the premiere, the local evening paper *Kvällsposten* published a rave review:

it is the television series of the year, if you can say that now before 2021 has even begun. It is Malmö, it is love, it is pain, it is laughter, it is the place where we live, the world we live in, the life we live in it. [---] I watch episode after episode, with a strong sense of THAT’S IT: This is how it is. This is what I see. [---] THIS IS HOW IT REALLY IS (Rydhagen 2020).<sup>1</sup>

A week after the first episode had been broadcast, the local daily newspaper *Sydsvenskan* headlined a page with “Malmö smells, gasps, moans, and smiles”. The journalist, Maria G. Francke, describes that “the sense of Malmö is genuine” in the series, and that she admittedly is “easy prey for all kinds of Malmö lyricism”, but that the genuine sense of Malmö does give the series “a surplus value for all of us who live here”. Stockholm, she observes, is “over-represented in relation to Swedish film and television” (Francke 2021).

In Francke’s article, several aspects of the series that create this sense of genuineness are mentioned: that geographical verisimilitude has been maintained, that the music is made by local artists, that much of the dialogue is in dialect, and that several of the actors are a part of the city and known from their work on the stage of the City Theater. She raises a warning finger

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<sup>1</sup> All translations of quotes from the Swedish reviews and articles are made by me.

that such authenticity may create expectations of documentary truth but ends the article with a “congratulations to us” (Francke 2021).

Outside of the local context, journalists were enthusiastic but in a more toned-down manner. One of the evening papers highlighted in an early pre-review Gizem Erdogan (Leah), the most known of the actors, and newcomer Amanda Jansson (Sara) (Andersson 2021). Although the praise is well-deserved, neither of these two are Malmö-based and neither of them speak the southern dialect. The series is “believable” and “accurate”, and script-writer Cilla Jackert is given credit for “a bull’s eye” (Andersson 2021). In the regular review in the same evening paper, the assessment that this “contemporary urban narrative” is something “beyond the usual” and “of a kind we have not really seen in Swedish before” (Fjellberg, 2021).

In Sweden’s largest daily newspaper, *Dagens Nyheter*, the reviewer also praises the series, stating that although the name associates to the US expression, this fiction is “steadily rooted deep in the Swedish soil” and a “somewhat irresistible mix of horror and feel-good” (Lindblad 2021). She – like many others – draws parallels to *Hill Street Blues*, and she points out that the police force has been used as “a battering ram in political debates” and therefore, “a narrative that keeps to the ground and gives space to both small and large crimes” is something of a relief (Lindblad 2021).

Nonetheless, the political discourse about the police found its way into reviews, too. In the other large Stockholm paper, *Svenska Dagbladet*, the reviewer pointed out the uncritical view of the police: “What is ‘Thin Blue Line’? A PR-film about Malmö’s uniformed police?” (Gentele 2021). The reviewer observes that the expression “the thin blue line” in the US and the UK symbolizes the “frontier in the war that the police feel they wage on barbarism and for civilization” and that the ten hours of *Thin Blue Line*’s first season seem to be an illustration of this idea. “Is it true that Sweden is threatened by anarchy and that the only thing stopping the complete societal breakdown is the police? Here, that conception is presented without any question” (Gentele 2021). The review gives accolades to the actors’ performances and to the use of dialect and locations but is on the whole critical to its avoidance of any in-depth analysis and its negative portrayal of Swedish society.

Although *Thin Blue Line* overall was well received, objections such as the ones made in *Svenska Dagbladet* were made in *Sydsvenskan* as well. “It creates an excuse for police brutality,” claimed the headline for an article in the arts and entertainment section by Elina Pahnke. Describing how the series does show when police cross the line into excessive force, she points to how, nevertheless, the viewers get to know the individual police officers guilty of such excess and thereby find excuses for their behavior (Pahnke 2021). Accordingly, she finds the series “manipulative” and observes that “people are always assumed to know too little about police work. In the hierarchy of credibility, there is no room for the opposite narrative” (Pahnke 2021).

Similarly, a month later, Malin Krutmeijer responds to an in-depth article by Hynek Pallas in *Göteborgsposten*, where he charted a historical “blue line” in Swedish crime fiction. With references to several film and television scholars, Pallas described this line from the novels of Maj Sjöwall and Per Wahlöö where a critique of Swedish welfare society from the left grows increasingly sharp in installment after installment to *Thin Blue Line*, claiming that the new television series “awakes a more profound ethical struggle with what may be accepted – maybe even sometimes must be accepted – in the name of the monopoly on violence” and that it “thereby, in a new way, brings back critical crime fiction to its roots” (Pallas, 2021). In *Sydsvenskan*, Krutmeijer states that she cannot see this ethical struggle in *Thin Blue Line*, only that the series conveys that “police are just human beings” and that “nothing is really their fault. If they make mistakes, it is because they have been pressured too hard” (Krutmeijer 2021).

In July that same year, after the first season concluded, Michael Tapper reflects on the expression “the thin blue line”, its origin, and its political baggage, finding it remarkable that although Sweden often imports terminology and debates from the US, Swedish journalists have not seemed to take in the problematic aspects of the term (Tapper 2021). He describes how it was used during Nixon’s “war on crime” and Reagan’s “war on drugs”, becoming a symbolic border between “us” (wealthy white people) and “them” (poor people of other ethnic groups) and how the symbol of the thin blue line has been used by rightwing extremists and during the storming of the Capitol on January 6, 2021 (Tapper 2021).

Such objections draw attention to the seriousness of a popular culture phenomenon, how *Thin Blue Line* not only can be understood in the context of fiction and entertainment – as Krutmeijer points out – but also in the context of the reality it purports to portray and the society in which it is produced and received. That Malmö forms the setting for the series provides it with a rich background of actual events that are explicitly and implicitly reflected in the series, and that the producers have taken care to retain aural and geographical verisimilitude in the production further reinforces that connection to Malmö itself. At the same time, as the Malmö-based writer Charlotte Wiberg observes in her review in *Dagens ETC*, a national, left-oriented paper: “the police we get to follow in *Thin Blue Line* is the police as we wish it would be” (Wiberg, 2021).

Nonetheless, Wiberg also points out that “as a Malmöite, I take pleasure in the locations and the lovely, flawless Malmö dialect from many of the actors” (Wiberg 2021). There is a qualitative difference in how *Thin Blue Line* is received by the local as compared to the national newspapers: the capitalized exclamations in Rydhagen’s review, the sensuous description of a Malmö that “smells, gasps, moans” by Francke, the reference to actual events in the more critical pieces such as Pahnke’s and Wiberg’s all have a more personal note than the more detached reviews from other parts of Sweden.

## Dialect Television Drama

The disparity between the local and the national media attention quite clearly originates from *Sydsvenskan*. Not only are most of the articles about *Thin Blue Line* from the local paper, but there was also other material. *Sydsvenskan* held “after talks”, videos with invited guests that commented on each episode, and during the second season, a chronicle about the latest episode was published every week. Moreover, the Facebook group Snacka om Tunna blå linjen (“Talk about Thin Blue Line”), consisting of approximately 7.400 members, was started, and is administrated, by *Sydsvenskan*. At the time of writing, there is little activity in the group. However, while the seasons were being broadcast, the group was very active, commenting on events and developments, arguing about the realism and the politics of the series, discussing characters and so on. The discussions of the group generated an article by the editor of the arts and entertainment section, commenting on how it was like a “corona-safe reading group” and thanking the readers for their contributions (Ölmedal 2021).

There are several reasons why *Thin Blue Line* came to receive so much attention in the south. Very likely, the Covid19 pandemic, which was still in full force the first few months of 2021, contributed to this. *Thin Blue Line* offered “an escape to reality”, as the headline to Ölmedal’s article stated, not least because the first season was shot before the pandemic and so the urban life portrayed was unaffected by social distancing, working-from-home, face masks, and closed bars. Nonetheless, although the pandemic may very well have contributed to the engagement of the audience, the opportunity for local engagement arose because the series emphasizes its own verisimilitude, its sense of authenticity, as well as its sense of place.

Clearly a work of fiction, labeled “drama” by SVT, various stylistic choices still serve to underline the sense of realism, of documentary. For instance, the production took advice from active police officers. Almost all the actors were relatively unknown prior to the first season, and scenes are often shot with a handheld camera that pans for dialogue and reaction shots.

More importantly as an example of dialect television drama is that locations are the streets, parks, squares, and homes of Malmö. As pointed out by the location scout, they wished to retain actual geographical continuity so that people familiar with Malmö would recognize the place. This distinguishes *Thin Blue Line* from other crime fiction shot in Malmö – in both *The Bridge* and in the Wallander film series for instance, characters can turn a corner and be in another part of town (or even another town) which disrupts the continuity for those in the know and may alienate local viewers. Another, essential, aspect of the sense of authenticity of the show and its strong sense of place, was the spoken dialogue. Most of the actors spoke *skånska*, the regional dialect in southern Sweden. Of the six main characters in the first season, four hail from southern Sweden: Oscar Töringe (Magnus), Per Lasson (Jesse), Sandra Stojlijkovic (Danijela) and Anna Sise (Faye).



Dialect is commonly defined as a variety of a language from a specific part of a country and is as such an indication of origin (see *Encyclopedia Britannica*; Martin 2020: 66; *Cambridge Dictionary*) and can also connote class or occupation. By using the dialect of *skånska* in *Thin Blue Line*, the production added to the sense of verisimilitude by creating a soundscape which was very distinctly and recognizably Malmö with its rhythms and intonations and the variations related to background, class, gender, and age. Thereby, the spoken dialogue in the series included both traditional *skånska* and the more modern sociolect developed with immigration, sometimes called “Rosengårdssvenska”, after the suburban area of Rosengård in Malmö. Furthermore, that a few of the characters did not speak *skånska* only seemed to add to the sense of Malmö as melting pot, consisting of people shaped by their respective backgrounds. The streets, parks, squares, and buildings were not just a backdrop for actors; their speech integrated them firmly with their environment.

Only the year before, a true crime drama about the disappearance and murder of a young girl in central Skåne, *Jakten på en mördare* (2020), had been lauded for its realist environments but received criticisms for how people spoke – although the southern dialect was used, it sounded fake to viewers, according to Sveriges radio (Frithiof, 2020). And during the time *The Bridge* was broadcast on Swedish television, viewers commented that very few people, and none of the major characters, spoke the southern dialect. Likewise, Kurt Wallander, in his various reincarnations by Rolf Lassgård and Krister Henriksson, spoke standard Swedish or even the Stockholm dialect.

Moreover, the music of Malmö in *Thin Blue Line* functioned to anchor the series in its regional context. Composer Irya Gmeyner who had lived in neighboring Lund and been a part of the southern music scene for many years was hired to create the soundtrack together with Martin Hederos (Gillberg & Brundin 2021). Much of diegetic and non-diegetic music in the series is made and/or performed by local artists.

The theme music, “Urban City”, that accompanies the introduction of each episode, is a mainly wordless, melancholy, swelling tune with a brief motif of Arabic-sounding strings recurring at the beginning and at the end. In many ways, it sets the tone for both the vignette sequence and for the series as a whole and cues the viewers’ emotional response. In addition, it sets up an audial framework for not only the television series but for Malmö itself, by juxtaposing the soundtrack with several diverse images of the city. The introduction sequence is 44 seconds long and shows 22 different city views, with brief shots from each. In several of the shots, the people displayed react to the camera by glancing towards it, waving to it, or extending a middle finger. About halfway through the sequence, a line of shop windows reflects a police car, and the viewer can draw the conclusion that all these views are from the inside of the car. Connecting the music to the images provides, somewhat paradoxically, an audial sense of authenticity: this is what Malmö

sounds like, as if the music has sprung from the concrete, the fog, the sea, the railroad, the skaters, the blondes, the women in hijab, the hot dog stands, the graffiti, the squares, the apartment complexes, the townhouses, the parks. Although the images are shot in varying light and weather – dusk, daylight, rain, sunshine – and portrays people in many different situations, the melancholy sense of the music also infuses those shots which could be seen as idyllic, like for instance people bathing in Västra hamnen (the West Harbor).

Furthermore, accented cinema and dialect cinema both thematize means of transport, travelling, and wandering (Martin 2020:69). Already in the introduction sequence of *Thin Blue Line*, the theme of moving around in the city is established, and the vehicle for this movement is the police car, in which most of the characters spend much of their days. The reactions of the people that the car passes in different parts of the city are in a way the reflection that creates the identity process Martin points to as important to both accented and dialect cinema, which are about identity “as a process of becoming, as a performative act” (Martin 2020:69). Here, that process takes place continuously, underlining the performativity of the police identity, as it develops in relation to actions and reactions of the inhabitants of the city and the public.

### The Underdog?

A significant difference between accented and dialect cinema, Martin claims, is that accented cinema expresses the experience of displacement, of dislocation, of exilic and diasporic filmmakers while dialect cinema is based in its place of origin (Martin 2020:63). This could open dialect cinema, or dialect television drama, for accusations of a kind of regional (even ethno-) nationalism or local patriotism, a special interest placing group identity foremost and connecting such a group identity to a specific geographical region. If accented cinema comes out of the experiences of the itinerant, the migrant, the transnational and the displaced, exploring identity at the disjunction of loss and belonging, dialect cinema might be understood as firmly rooted in its place of origin, with the identity process resolutely connected to belonging in this place.

Such an implicit tendency can be discerned in the local reception, further aggravated by an underlying perception of Malmö as misunderstood by the rest of the country and, indeed, the world. However, a vital part of the self-perception of this specific geographical region is that its identity is diverse and multi-ethnic, a place for the displaced, a destination for the transnational, itinerant, and migrant – in short, a kind of melting pot, precisely a local identity at the disjunction of loss and belonging. As such, the democratization of audiovisual representation that the series is a part of, is matched by a local self-perception of Malmö as a place which includes these aspects of dialect and accented cinema that are expressed in *Thin Blue Line*.

Using Malmö and anchoring this setting with geographical, actual continuity, the southern dialect, and the use of local music artists, *Thin Blue Line* put “its place of origin center stage” (Martin 2020: 68) and can, consequently, be regarded as a kind of dialect television drama. As such, it spoke to a local sense of being the underdog, while at the same time it employed the reputation of Malmö to provide a resonance to the events unfolding in the fiction.

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