

On the Circulation of European TV Crime Series: A Case Study of the French Television Landscape (1957–2018)

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Despite the advent of over-the-top platforms, linear television still remains the dominant medium in European markets. This article provides a case study of the circulation of non-French European crime series in the French televisual landscape. It is based on a diachronic analysis of the flow of TV crime shows produced in Europe and broadcasted in France from 1957 to 2018. The data was collected from the official French TV archives as well as from experts and professional sources such as TV programme guides, databases, newspaper articles or amateur sources. All national channels were taken into account, be they state television, mainstream commercial channels or cable channels, except for OTT platforms. The analysis, based on format studies, provides three main results. First, the circulation of European TV crime series in France is rooted in an industrial process. It entails a process of indigenization performed through human mediation in order to fit into the culture and industry of the broadcasting territory. The second result tempers the ideal of European cultural diversity. Indeed, a diachronic perspective highlights the limited cultural diversity in this field, as German, British and Nordic Noir productions dominate European TV crime series. Lastly, data indicate continued issues with gender and ethnic equality in media industries, as crime narratives are still construed by a white and male-dominated creative industry.

Keywords

TV crime series
French linear television
Archives
Format studies
European circulation

DOI

[10.13130/2036-461X/16387](https://doi.org/10.13130/2036-461X/16387)



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INTRODUCTION¹

Introducing the 2012 issue of *Cinema & Cie* dedicated to European television series, Alice Autelitano and Veronica Innocenti stated that studies on television serial narratives mainly focus on US productions.² Almost ten years later, this observation still proves relevant in the French case, though some exceptions stand out, as the French academic and critic interest in television series increasingly consider national productions. However, as far as Europe is concerned, this geographical scale still remains largely unexplored in French academia, except for certain case studies. For instance, Spanish and/or Catalan television series are largely forgotten by French scholars from both media and Spanish studies.³ Moreover, the European scale is considered an uneasy framework due to its strong heterogeneity.⁴



To answer such a methodological challenge, this article studies the circulation of non-French European television crime series within the French territory. Which European series have been broadcast on French screens? When and where were they released? Which transcultural patterns emerge from access to these television series? Though sometimes vague due to its general stance, the concept of 'circulation' is interesting as it avoids the tendency towards homogenization (assuming that globalisation only means imperialism), as well as the drawbacks of the liberal viewpoint obsessed with individual agency.⁵

Thorough academic research tackles the issue of European televised circulation, be it according to the crime series TV genre⁶ or from the viewpoint of transnational television⁷, sales of formats⁸ and European co-productions.⁹ Recent data shows that, in 2017, despite the incentive of the Creative Europe programme (2014-2020), few co-productions were broadcast in Europe¹⁰ whereas 58% of TV scripted titles originate from the EU28. Though not specific to crime series, these figures highlight the key-role of European circulation for the television industry. European TV fiction benefits from the 1986 French broadcasting obligations law,¹¹ which makes mandatory for French channels, on behalf of cultural diversity, to broadcast 60% of European films and series — among which at least 40% must be originally in French language — during the high audience rates hours.

According to Castelló¹², television fiction plays an important part in the process of national culture building as a fictional nation is a politically conceptualized stage on which stories can take place. As such, foreign TV crime series broadcasted in France can be defined as 'mediated cultural encounters'.¹³ In the European context of strong nation-states, and an important public service broadcasting tradition correlated with the absence of an integrated European TV market, the circulation of crime television series can thus be understood as a transcultural flow circulating within the French television landscape. Based on the French national television archives (INA), this case study provides a diachronic exploration of the market structure, highlighting its evolution regarding industrial factors. To this end, the first section shortly presents the framework of the study and the second section explains the methodology used. The four following sections display results regarding the transcultural circulation of television crime series on French screens.

KEY CONCEPTS

Historically, crime series have existed long before the advent of television: they first belonged to the realm of printed media, and were produced for the radio and as serials for the cinema before reaching TV screens. Crime series are strongly linked to the development of French television. As



early as 1950, the state television channel RTF (Radiodiffusion-télévision française) broadcasted *L'Agence Nostradamus* (Claude Barma) featuring two male detectives and *Les cinq dernières minutes* is commonly considered as the first long French television crime series.¹⁴ Crime series on French television present a historical picture of both local and international titles available for French viewers. Such an historical approach of crime series enables to label it as a genre. Indeed, genre can be analysed as 'an historical practice' ubicated in the media interdiscourse.¹⁵ This definition of TV genre circumvents the textualist assumption that there is a proper taxonomy of a genre which can be found from its internal operations.¹⁶ On the contrary, it highlights the need to understand cultural artefacts throughout 'the materiality of its communication'.¹⁷

According to François Jost¹⁸, analysing TV genres as a 'communicational reality' implies to focus on the relation that is built between producers, broadcasters, intermediary mediations and audiences. TV genre operates as a 'promise' that triggers repertoires of expectations amongst the viewers. These repertoires of expectations depend on the social and cultural background of the audience as well as the programming strategies at stake. For example, expectations differ when watching daytime crime series on the DTT (Digital Terrestrial Television) and prime time crime series on the cultural channel Arte. Consequently, the definition of crime series as a communicational reality implies to focus on its materiality. In other words, if the characteristics of a genre aren't intrinsic to the TV programme, then it becomes necessary to 'locat[e] genres within the complex interrelations between texts, industries, audiences, and historical contexts'.¹⁹

To achieve such an aim, this study relies on the concept of format in order to describe the communicational reality of European crime series genre(s) broadcasted in France. Format studies are an internationally emerging field of research in television studies²⁰ and the concept of format is still largely discussed. Marie-France Chambat-Houillon, who provided an analysis of the uses of the notion in the academic and professional TV spheres, highlights the diversity of its uses and definitions.²¹ According to her, it can refer to a standard of production, a standard of programming or an interpretive model. In a similar perspective, Kira Kitsopanidou and Guillaume Soulez underline that format is studied either from a political standpoint focusing on power relations, as a framework for partners' cooperation or as an interpretive instrument for audiences. They insist on the culture of formats that prevails in the audiovisual landscape.²² Lastly, Hélène Monnet-Cantagrel explains that studying television serial narratives from a format perspective enables to articulate the commercial logics of media industries, the creative process at stake and audiences.²³

While Albert Moran's book *Copycat TV*²⁴ is a landmark, this short review of French theorizations confirms that the concept has moved from its definition as a 'cooking recipe' towards a more complex reading. Based on Chalaby's four dimensions of television format²⁵ (legal dimension, recipe,



proof of concept, method of production], Keinonen defines format as 'a technology of economic and cultural exchange'.²⁶ As such, it has proven really useful in the field of adaptation studies, as it enables to tackle both the level of production with its various mediations and the reception by local audiences of the format adaptation. In this paper, I argue that the concept of format is also relevant to study transnational TV content circulation. The international circulation of TV products is commonly divided between adaptations and canned programming. The later refers to ready-made contents sold and distributed abroad. "Canned" programming is typically the output of a specific national TV and media system, but it spills across borders when licensed into different territories, sometimes even globally.²⁷ But, though ready-made, canned TV products also undergo adaptation procedures, as for example with dubbing. Luca Barra states that there is 'a series of sophisticated routines, on both the production and consumption side, that mediate between the cultures of countries of origin and destination, giving birth to a new, specifically created, product'.²⁸ In other words, canned programming also implies adaptations, though they might operate on a more invisible level.

The concept of format here proves useful to interrogate the characteristics of European crime series broadcasted in France, because it focuses on industrial and cultural negotiation. It also operates as a methodological tool to work on a transnational basis. Regarding European media transnational history, Jérôme Bourdon describes its main framework as the 'mental jail of the nation'.²⁹ Indeed, 'methodological nationalism'³⁰ constitutes a recurrent feature in the study of transnational television. Strong national traditions, linguistic diversity in Europe as well as the belief in national sovereignty of postcolonial nations³¹ can explain the strength of the nation framework. Focusing on the marks of cultural negotiation from the format perspective rather than the national characteristics conveyed by media contents is a way to identify the simultaneous dynamics of international and national, global and local that constitute the entangled layers of television broadcasting. Format operates as a methodological tool to debunk the nation framework: while the indexation of data relies on the country of production and destination, the analysis aims at subverting the national lens from within as it integrates other territorial layers.

COLLECTING METHODOLOGY

The corpus of European TV crime series imported in France is built both from the official French national archives (INA), experts and professional sources such as TV programme guides, databases, newspaper articles or amateur sources (e.g. fan webpages). All national channels were considered, be it state television, generalist commercial channels or cable channels, except for online streaming platforms such as Netflix or Amazon



Prime. The empirical material includes the title of the series both in French and in its original language, the country of production, the original broadcasting channel and year as well as the length of the episodes, the date and channel it was first released in France, and the 'creators' of the series, identified by their name, gender and race assignments. This category needs to be explained. As the workings of production differ according to the period and the national organization of media industries,³² 'creator' is an umbrella designation which can refer, according to the UNESCO,³³ either to the screenwriter, the producer or the director of the series.

The label crime series includes mostly 'cop shows', however, spy and action TV series as well as legal drama were excluded from the corpus. Indeed, police TV series work properly on the European exportation market.³⁴ As for seriality, the definition referred to in this study encompasses long-running dramas, as well as very short mini-series. European coproductions, including France, were not taken into account. These operate from a different industry strategy regarding the targeted audiences, which include French audiences as one of the main goals.

This collecting methodology has provided a corpus of 315 titles broadcasted in France between 1957 and 2018. It is impossible to assert that it encompasses all European TV crime series broadcasted in France since the beginnings of television. Indeed, the logics of archives management, be it the criteria of broadcasting rights, the pre-1995 archives or the human factor in the indexation process as well as the scope of serialization would make it highly unrealistic to claim for exhaustivity.

EUROPEAN CRIME SERIES IN FRANCE: SCHEDULING PERSPECTIVE

From its beginnings, non-French European crime series have supplemented the development of French television. From the state monopoly to the process of privatization triggered in the 1980s and the subsequent new channels until the advent of the terrestrial digital television (TDT) in 2005, crime series have played a pivotal role on French screens. Due to their tasks and obligations, the main providers of non-French European crime series are public broadcasters (29% of the imported titles). While the corpus includes a large time-scale, this number does not imply a homogenization of the history of French television. Indeed, most of the data was collected since the 1980s (for instance only eight titles could be identified during the 1970s). Besides, this result coincides with a 2015-2016 four weeks' analysis of television fiction in Europe: it states that public channels play an active part in the circulation of TV series in Europe.³⁵

The second French providers of crime series are culturally-oriented channels, which broadcasted 22% of the titles imported. Thematic channels



such as Canal Jimmy (e.g. *Trial & Retribution*, UK, ITV; *Code 37*, Belgium, VTM) or *13^{ème} Rue* (e.g. *Doppelter Einsatz*, Germany, RTL; *Annika Bengtzon: Crime Reporter*, Sweden, TV4) have played an important part in bringing non-French European titles to France. It is also interesting to notice that the major generalist private channel TF1 has only played a minor role in this process of internationalization. Indeed, its editorial line focuses rather on movies, American drama and French series, the latter starting again to trust the biggest annual audiences in 2017 according to Mediametrie.

As for TDT-born channels, they imported only 16 new titles between 2005 and 2018. NT1 (TF1 group) imported eight titles: *Ein Starkes Team*, ZDF; *Polizeiruf 110*, ARD; *Delitti e segreti*, Rai 1; *SK Kölsch*, Sat.1; *The Knock*, ITV; *Il capitano*, Rai 2; *SOKO Rhein-Mai*, ZDF; *The Guilty*, ITV. W9 (M6 group) imported three new titles (*GSG 9 - Die Elite Einheit*, Sat. 1; *Vermist*, VT4; 48 Ore, Canale 5) and Direct8/C8 (Bolloré then Canal Plus group) brought four titles (*Der Letzte Bulle*, Sat.1; *Ripper Street*, BBC One; *Partners in Crime*, BBC One; *Bancroft*, ITV). As for Virgin 17 (Lagardère), it imported one new title (*SOKO Donau/Wien*, ORF) during its two years of existence. These private commercial TDT-born channels run with low budget, hence making it difficult to invest in new broadcasting licenses. However, this does not mean that they do not feature European crime series, as these low-budget channels vehemently broadcast police drama reruns. For instance, a recent study from the CSA on TV fiction between 2015 and 2019 highlights that reruns on TDT channels TMC and TF1 films et series (formerly called HD1) of *Poirot* (ITV, 1989-2013) still make it one of the twenty non-French TV fiction titles most broadcast in 2019 on French TV.³⁶

Crime narratives, previously defined as mediated cultural encounters, play a part in the process of Europeanization both through first broadcasting and reruns. Though their share tends to be lower, due to their lack of novelty and subsequent location in the scheduling grid, reruns form a constant layer of European crime series on French television. As such, they contribute to the sedimentation of a social imaginary through repetition. Audiences are acquainted to reruns to such an extent that they belong to a common perception of Europe, hence performing a 'banal Europeanization'³⁷ process. Applying this concept to European TV drama, Bondebjerg asserts that '[b]y looking into the everyday life of other Europeans, past and present, our national reality is challenged and expanded. We experience diversity and difference, we get a new perspective on our own life and history, and perhaps we also discover that Europe is not just something over there in Brussels.'³⁸ Looking at reruns from that perspective enables to shift the focus from the idea of European identity as a conscious political identification to the role of popular media in shaping a shared experience for many European citizens.



A CONTAINED CULTURAL DIVERSITY LED BY UNITED-KINGDOM, GERMANY AND NORDIC COUNTRIES

The analysis of the main channels broadcasting crime series has revealed some patterns in their circulation: public channels as well as thematic channels play an important part while TDT-born channels form another actor of this 'banal Europeanization' through reruns. A closer look at the geographical origin of imported titles reveals that the UK, Germany and, related to the more recent spread Nordic Noir titles, the Nordic countries dominate the picture.

Regarding all type of TV fiction, the European Audiovisual Observatory (2019) highlights that UK leads in terms of number of episodes and hours.³⁹ Besides, UK productions are available in the largest number of countries of EU28. In 2017, eighteen out of twenty-one TV scripted shows present in at least seven countries were produced or co-produced by the United Kingdom. For instance, *Sherlock* (BBC One) was broadcasted in twelve countries, *Midsomer Murders* (ITV) in ten and *Wallander* (BBC One) in nine countries. Historically, the UK television landscape is organized around a private-public system, which is reflected in the France import with the BBC and ITV as the main sources of crime series.

Regarding Germany, the European Audiovisual Observatory establishes that, all formats considered, it is the runaway lead fiction TV-producing country, in terms of number of titles and number of hours. Both in France and Germany, the crime series genre is the most important of the twenty biggest audience in TV fiction: in 2018, sixteen out of twenty titles were *Krimi* (CSA/Médiamétrie / Eurodata TV Worldwide). Not only does Germany broadcast successfully crime series, but it has also been exporting titles to France since *Hafenpolizei* (Das Erste, RDA) was broadcasted in 1967 on the State channel ORTF. Titles such as *Derrick* (ZDF), *Der Alte* (ZDF) or *Alarm für Cobra 11 Die Autobahnpolizei* (RTL) were huge audience success and have been rebroadcasted endlessly on French screens.

Regine Chaniac states that German television producers in the 1970s successfully developed crime series inspired by foreign blockbusters rather than adapting national crime fiction literature, which may have influenced its intercultural exchange opportunities. She states that German series 'answer the format, length and 'neutrality' criteria which ensure a good circulation in Europe',⁴⁰ an observation shared by Henry Larski according to whom *Derrick* and *Alarm für Cobra* convey the stereotype of 'a nowadays respectable country, were effort, work and success sum up both from an individual and a collective path. They operate like "diplomates of a too normalized Germany"'.⁴¹

Moreover, from an industrial perspective, both countries benefit from important economic resources⁴² and from a televisual landscape that



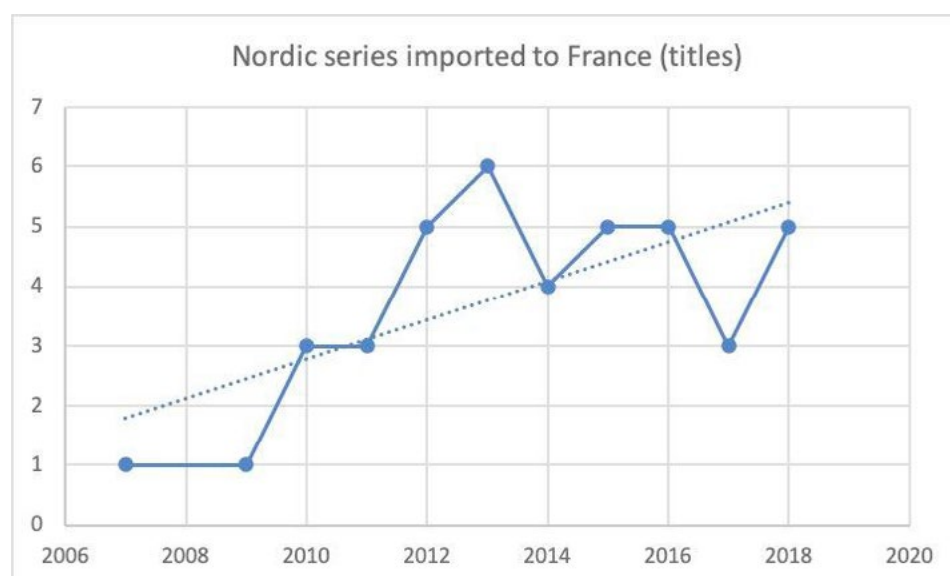
matured earlier than in France, giving them a head start regarding both internal production and export possibilities. Instead, the history of French television is characterized by late development followed by state monopoly and a subsequent progressive privatization. The market was a concentrated and quite isolated audiovisual landscape for a long time. For instance, in 1939, there were about 20.000 TV sets in UK and Germany, whereas this number was achieved in France only in 1950. In 1992, there were only one million French homes connected to cable TV whereas there were more than ten millions in Germany.⁴³ The corpus of this study encompasses this long history, from the state RTF in the 1950s to the current richer supply of television programming. This pre-history, as well as the legal quota obligations, are reflected in the increasing number of new European titles imported to France.

In 2007, Nordic crime series appeared on French screens. In only a decade, the number of Nordic titles on French television has increased dramatically and was in 2018 only surpassed by the number of titles from the UK and Germany, which have been dominating the history of French crime television series imports.

The development of the Nordic Noir brand has modified the structure of the market, starting in the first decade of the 2000s. Interestingly, a similar pattern appears at the same time in the French press regarding Noir novels from Northern Europe. The Nordic Noir label is constructed by the media as a key-actor of the noir novel industry.⁴⁴

The arrival of a group of Northern European countries as a third leader in the market of TV crime series needs to be contextualized regarding the French television landscape. The development of digital television, the multi-channel system and delinearisation of the viewing experience have resulted in an increase of shows, as well as a simultaneous erosion and specialization of audiences. As a consequence, in France, most Nordic noir titles were broadcast on pay-tv channels (e.g. *Livvagterne*, Denmark on Canal Jimmy or *Sorjonen*, Finland on Polar +) or the cultural channel Arte

Fig. 1: An increasing number of Nordic Noir titles imported to France (2007-2018)





(e.g. *Øyevitne*, Norway; *The Lava Field: Hraunið*, Iceland). The increase in number of channels has caused an increase in import of new titles, as much as twenty-four in 2018. However, the following fragmentation of audiences means that, excluding the audience of platforms such as Netflix, Nordic crime series are consumed by a smaller percentage of the global TV audience than other crime series imported to France. If we compare the audience share of the first episode of two non-French European series broadcasted in 2018, for instance, it appears that *Elven* (TV3, Norway) broadcasted on the cultural channel Arte reached a 5.80% share for a 992.188 global audience while *Maltese – Il Romanzo del Commissario* (Rai Uno, Italy) broadcast on France 3, a public channel with a popular and ageing audience, reached a 14.10% share for a 2.626.380 global audience. This indicates that such exported titles tend to become niche-programmes in foreign territories like the French. In other words, the number of titles imported does not equate strictly an extension of cultural diversity for all viewers.

THE MULTI-LAYERED MEDIATIONS OF CRIME SERIES CIRCULATION

The format studies perspective lays the emphasis on the mediations that provide cooperation for canned products broadcast. Dubbing plays a pivotal role in this market. Relying on an ethnographical study of Italian editions of two sitcoms *The Simpsons* and *How I met your mother*, Luca Barra highlights the key-role of adaptation and dubbing mediations in the global circulation of media products.⁴⁵ Dubbing is crucial to a successful export/import of TV drama, and so in the efficiency of crime series to be appropriated by a wide audience, not restricted to its literacy and cultural capital. As such, the success of non-French fiction in programming strategies, as well as the development of a VOD offer, has increased revenues for dubbing and subtitling industries. In the French audiovisual sector, it is the third market (15%) of all technical industries in 2017.⁴⁶

Besides, it is interesting to notice that these mediations don't operate strictly at the national level. On the contrary, the adaptation process can provide relevant insights into the sites of negotiation between various territorial scales. From a format perspective, not all German crime series are marketed for a national German audience. To interact with local audiences, the ARD group produces different local versions of *Tatort*, another famous *krimi* on French screens. Besides, the international level is also relevant as crime series can also be adaptations of American drama. For example, *Post Mortem* (RTL, Germany) is an adaptation of *CSI*, and *Law & order* has a London version (ITV, UK). At the European scale, *Countdown – Die Jagd Beginnt* (RTL, Germany) is an adaptation of the Spanish crime series *Cuenta Atrás* (Cuatro).

All these series — both originals and adaptations — were exported to



France and appropriated for local French audiences via dubbing/subtitling and scheduling. Scheduling a crime series may re-negotiate its cultural status. For example, *Vis a vis* (Antena 3), a Spanish crime series that originally targeted a national Spanish audience, was aired during summer 2018 at a 'graveyard slot' in France on Teva, a private channel targeting a popular female and family-oriented audience. As a result, the scheduling of the series caused a drop in the series' cultural status. Also, episodes were cut from the Spanish standard of seventy-five minutes to fifty minutes instead, increasing the number of episodes in the first two seasons of the show. Consequently, there are eleven episodes in the original first season of *Vis a vis* whereas the French version encompasses sixteen.

Lastly, in France, the consumption of TV series is strongly structured by cultural hierarchies.⁴⁷ The two channels best embodying this feature are the private pay-TV channel Canal Plus and the German-French culturally-oriented channel Arte. Yet, they represent respectively only 9 and 10% of European importations. Launched in 1984, Canal Plus based its editorial line on sport, humour and sex for an upper-class male audience. 'While you're on Canal Plus, at least you're not watching TV' stipulated the 1996 motto, echoing HBO famous tagline. Canal Plus has not really laid the emphasis on TV series until the 2000s. It then launched its own series label 'original creation' inscribed in the distinction strategy of the channel.⁴⁸ As for Arte, created in 1992, it only broadcasted few titles during its first years. The two first imported European titles found were *Die Gerichtsreporterin* (ARD, Germany) and *Monaco Franze – Der ewige Stenz* (ARD, Germany), both in 1995. More recently, the interest of cultural elites, both academics and critics, for 'quality television', as well as the trend of the Nordic Noir are reflected in Arte grid. Since 2009, the scheduling of newly-imported crime series has increased with titles such as *Norskov* (TV2, Denmark) in 2016 or *Elven* (TV3, Norway) in 2018. To put it in a nutshell, dubbing as well as the scheduling strategies of the channels perform 'invisible mediations'⁴⁹ that reshape both the form of the product as well as its symbolic, and therefore economic, value. Thus, crime series circulation implies a process of 'indigenization'⁵⁰ to fit into the local industrial and cultural pattern.

CIRCULATING TV SERIES, CIRCULATING INEQUALITIES: INDICATIONS OF A WHITE, MALE-DOMINATED CREATIVE INDUSTRY

While various European countries as well as the European Commission reflect on the possibility of conditioning funding to gender equality, the corpus provides an insightful mirror of the inequalities at stake in media industries in Europe. Though the 1995 Beijing Conference on the Rights of Women has provided a framework to achieve gender equality in the media, women in media industries still suffer from precarity, low wages,



vertical and horizontal segregation, sexist and sexual harassment.⁵¹ Nowadays numerous European countries provide indicators about gender representation in the media, yet data regarding women in creative industry are still scarce. The 2013 European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) report was the first to deliver comparable data on the number of women in decision-making positions in European media, hence highlighting that 'the organisational culture of media remains largely masculine'.⁵² In 2018, the European Platform of Audiovisual Regulatory Authorities (EPRA) issued a report on the representation of women in the audiovisual media industry which also emphasizes the existence of pervasive disparities.⁵³ Lastly, the 2020 European Audiovisual Observatory report on female directors and screenwriters in European film and audiovisual fiction production states that women were involved only in the direction (*i.e.* directed or co-directed) of 16% of all episodes of audiovisual fiction between 2015 and 2018.⁵⁴

The circulation of non-French European crime series in France is shaped by this prevailing gender gap. Based on data from non-French European crime series aired in France, it appears that television fiction remains a male-dominated industry. Only 18% of creators of European crime series broadcast in France are female, giving a clear impression of a lack of gender equality. Unsurprisingly, the crime series created by women broadcast in France mainly derive from the main providers, UK (thirty-nine women) and Germany (eleven women). Besides, Nordic countries, described as 'leaders on gender equality',⁵⁵ by OECD stand out with fourteen female creators, most of them from Norway (eight), in a short time lapse. A diachronic perspective based on the first original release year of each title reveals a pattern regarding the dynamics of gender equality and innovation. Indeed, we can observe that women are present in the early years of television creative industries. For instance, Hannah Weinstein, famous for inventing and producing the television series *The Adventures of Robin Hood* (1955–59), was the female producer of *Colonel March of Scotland Yard* (ITV, UK) as early as 1956. Yet, they tend to become increasingly invisible whilst the field gains in maturity. Such a pattern has already been identified by the film historian Ally Acker⁵⁶ and more recently Deborah Gay⁵⁷ showed its recurrence in the French web series industry.

In the period 1956–1999, there are only five female creators/producers in the sample. June Wyndham Davies produced *Sherlock Holmes* (ITV), Pat Sandys produced *The Agatha Christie Hour* (ITV), Lynda La Plante created *Prime Suspect* (ITV), Jenny Reeks and Michelle Buck were executive producers for episodes of *Wycliffe* (ITV) — whose producers were all men — and Beatrice Kramm produced *Helicops* (Sat.1, Germany). Most of these female creators appear repeatedly in the corpus. There is no clear pattern of improvement in the process of gender equality until 2014. From 2014 to 2017, the number of female creators rose to seven in 2014 and 2015, and ten titles were produced by women in 2017. This slight improvement is correlated with the increasing number of Nordic Noir titles broadcasted in France.



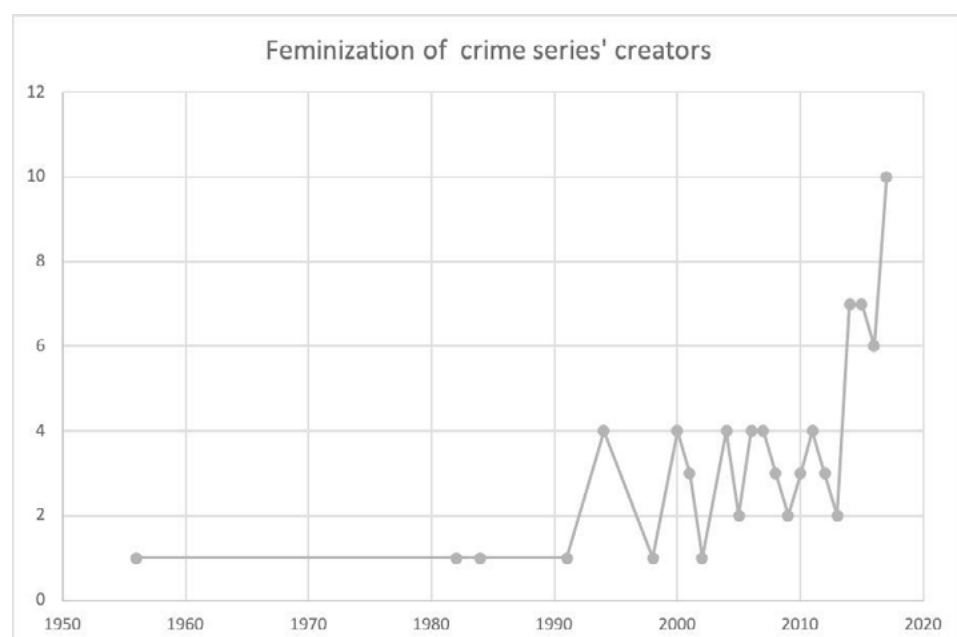
Moreover, it is remarkable that female creators most often work in collaboration with men, as opposed to female pair-working or a unique male creator. For instance, Stephen Smallwood et Emma Kingsman-Lloyd produced *DCI Banks* (ITV, UK), Anne Sewitsky and Hans Christian Storrøsten created *Monsters* (NRK1, Norway), etc. A similar pattern appears in the recent report of the European Audiovisual Observatory (2020): women are proportionally more likely than men to work in gender-mixed teams. In other words, while men possess fully their power positions, women often share the creative process with a man, be it due to individual career development or to gender mainstreaming legislation pushing for gender parity.

Lastly, it is important to notice that the cultural industry circulating popular products in Europe also contribute to the normalization of whiteness in Europe 'behind the camera.' 'Critical white studies' imply that whiteness is a social experience of domination characterized by an hegemonic position within race power relations.⁵⁸ Here, data collection supports that assumption. Only 1% of the creators come from ethnic minorities, which means that there is almost no ethnic diversity among the creators of crime series. While European history and culture are strongly entangled in postcolonialism, the market of imported crime series remains characterized by its lack of diversity.

CONCLUSION

Two sets of conclusions may be drawn from this study. First-of-all, the contribution of this research lays in its theoretical framework. According to Jérôme Bourdon,⁵⁹ there are two main drawbacks to the study of television in Europe. The first one is the *topos* of the Americanization of

Fig. 2: First appearance of female creators amongst crime series sold to France





culture. Looking at the circulation of non-French European crime series broadcasted in France between 1957 and 2018 has shown a long history of cultural exchanges through France, hence debunking that assumption. The second drawback is the hegemony of the national frame for a transnational analysis. Following Heidi Keinonen's definition of television format as a 'technology of economic and cultural exchange'⁶⁰ has provided a relevant theoretical framework to discuss the entangled layers of circulation through the French television landscape. Applied to this case study, this approach has given insights into the French television flow, for instance regarding the multi-layered mediations at stake in the circulation process. As such, this article also works as a programmatic basis for future research. Another contribution comes from its transferability. Indeed, both the framework and the results can be used for further or comparative analysis.

The second set of conclusions stems from data analysis. Three main results may be drawn from this study. Firstly, the circulation of crime series is rooted in an industrial process. It always entails a process of indigenization performed through human mediations in order to fit into the culture and industry of the broadcasting territory, while the import/export pattern indicates an increasing interest in non-French European titles on the French television market. Secondly, transcultural identities signaled in the increasing exchange of series appear heterogeneous in nature, although Germany, the UK and the Nordic region dominate the image. However, it is important to emphasize that such heterogeneity in the circulation of European titles still display a rather traditional view on cultural diversity, as the data indicates continued issues with gender equality in European media industries, including the production of crime series. If crime narratives disseminates such a thing as a transcultural culture, they are still construed by a white and male-dominated creative industry.



Notes

¹ The research presented here has been financed by the research project *DETECT* — *Detecting Transcultural Identity in European Popular Crime Narratives* (Horizon 2020, 2018–2021) [Grant agreement number 770151]. I also would like to thank the INA office in Toulouse.

² Alice Autelitano and Veronica Innocenti, 'Introduction,' *Cinema & Cie: International Film Studies Journal*, XII.19 (2012), 9–14 (p. 9).

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⁴ François Jost, 'Webséries, séries TV: allers-retours. Des narrations en transit,' *Télévision*, 5.1 (2014), 13–25 (p. 13).

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