A study of the reality game show concept “Survivor” – how national identities are represented in a transnational reality format

Av: Anastasia Malko
Handledare: Gregory Goldenzwaig
Abstract

Author: Anastasia Malko

Tutor: Gregory Goldenzwaig

Title: A study of the reality game show concept “Survivor” – how national identities are represented in a transnational reality format

Since TV became the most influential medium globally, the media content followed and as a result, a variety of programmes became international. When it came to entertainment, reality game show Survivor became a pioneer in crossing national borders when the programme’s format was licensed and sold worldwide. The ability of a single reality TV show format to appeal to different nations is remarkable and noteworthy, which consequently makes it an interesting field of research. Therefore, this essay focuses on analysing the narrative structures of the Survivor format productions in Sweden, the USA and Russia in pursuance of revealing representations and reproductions of the nations. It answers the questions about the narrative structures of the programmes, as well as about their common construction, and describes how the national identities are portrayed in a transnational reality game show format. In order to make the study extensive but at the same time significant, a structural narrative analysis with a comparative approach was chosen as a method. The selection was based on the importance of analysing the content of narratives in order to comprehend their illustrations of reality and, among other things, national identities. Mainly referring to a theory of nations as “imagined communities” and a theory about “banal nationalism”, the essay presents an analysis of the narrative structures. These structures, in their turn, expose the nation-specific elements that represent and reproduce the idea of nation. It is argued that national expressions are in general based on traditions and rituals of the nations. These representations are frequently unnoticed in everyday life; however they become noteworthy in the context of reality TV game shows such as Survivor.

Key words: Survivor, reality game show, TV, format, narrative analysis, nation, globalization.
# Table of contents

Abstract .......................................................................................................................... 2

Table of contents .......................................................................................................... 3

1. Introduction ............................................................................................................... 5

2. Aims ............................................................................................................................ 7

3. Background ................................................................................................................ 8
   3.1 Reality TV – the rise and formation of a genre .................................................... 8
   3.2 The business of reality TV .................................................................................. 10
   3.3 TV format ............................................................................................................. 12
   3.4 The reality game show format *Survivor* and the story behind it ..................... 14
      3.3.1. Feedback and reception of the programmes in Sweden, the USA and Russia ... 15

4. Previous research ..................................................................................................... 17

5. Theory ...................................................................................................................... 20
   5.1 Nationalism and imagined communities ............................................................ 20
   5.2 Banal nationalism ............................................................................................... 21
   5.3 Globalization ..................................................................................................... 22
   5.4 De-westernizing Media Studies ......................................................................... 23

6. Methodology and research data .............................................................................. 26
   6.1 Method ................................................................................................................ 26
   6.2 The research data ............................................................................................... 27
   6.3 Validity and reliability ....................................................................................... 28
   6.4 Course of action ................................................................................................ 28
   6.5 Definitions .......................................................................................................... 29

7. Analysis and discussion ........................................................................................... 31
   7.1 Sweden: *Expedition Robinson* ........................................................................ 31
   7.2 The USA: *Survivor Borneo* ............................................................................. 33
   7.3 Russia: *Poslednij geroj 1* ............................................................................... 35
7.4 The common narrative structure of the reality game show *Survivor*......................... 37
7.5 National identities in the transnational reality game show format *Survivor*........... 39
    7.5.1 “Swedishness” in *Expedition Robinson*................................................. 44
    7.5.2 “Americanness” in *Survivor: Borneo* .................................................. 44
    7.5.3 “Russianness” in *Poslednij Geroj 1*....................................................... 46
7.6 Discussion ........................................................................................................... 48
8. Conclusion ............................................................................................................. 52
    8.1 Suggestions for further research ...................................................................... 53
List of references ...................................................................................................... 54
Printed sources .......................................................................................................... 54
Online sources .............................................................................................................. 54
Programmes ............................................................................................................... 56
1. Introduction

In the era of globalization and transnationalism people can proudly call themselves “global citizens”. They learn foreign languages and travel to distant locations in order to broaden their horizons. They watch American movies while eating Italian pizza and drinking South African wine. Sharing is no longer just a manner of behaviour one is taught as a child – it now stands for a shared universal community, where everything from one’s own thoughts to diverse commodities is distributed. However, one does not need to spend much time, energy or funds to play a part in this global community. In fact, one does not even have to leave one’s own living room, all due to the power of the almighty television. What was once a luxury has now become an almost indispensable necessity in every household. Television is visually stimulating, and one of the best advantages of using it as a means of communication is that it allows the flexibility of reaching large audiences, making it possible to share a range of TV concepts internationally.

Television became the most influential medium since its introduction to the public in the 1920s, and it has been growing ever since.\(^1\) Its main aims were (and still are) to inform, educate and entertain the viewers. The popularity of the medium was maintained by a continuous launch of new television programmes and concepts. Numerous programme genres have been introduced to the public since the 20\(^{th}\) century – drama, comedy, animated, news, documentaries, talk shows etc. However, a particular genre tends to attract audiences and create high ratings for broadcasters all over the world even today. That genre is reality television. It emerged during the 1990s and served originally as a cheaper production alternative in comparison to already existing programmes as e.g. dramas and sitcoms (Hill, 2005:39). Furthermore, shifts in media industries such as deregulation and marketization (mostly in USA and Western Europe) increased the popularity of the reality genre in multichannel environment (Moran & Malbon, 2006:10). Purchase, adaptation, recycling and even plagiarism of reality TV programmes globally have led numerous networks to success as well as to failure, but the fact that reality formats have been reformed into industrial commodities remains permanent.

An increase of reality show competitions during the 2000s contributed to a formation of a sub-genre “reality competition” or so-called “reality game shows”, where participants are filmed competing to win a main prize while often living together in a restricted environment.

\(^1\) [http://www.historyoftelevision.net/](http://www.historyoftelevision.net/)
(Hill, 2005). One of the many shows based on this successful formula that got a positive response from the audience was *Survivor*. Originally produced and broadcasted in Sweden by the public service broadcaster SVT as *Expedition Robinson* in 1997, the concept has been adapted by the American network CBS and has since been imported to various countries (Brenton & Cohen, 2003). Hence, a national concept became a worldwide phenomenon, while still being customized for each country to fulfil the desires and expectations of various audiences.

The ability of a single reality TV show format to appeal to different nations is remarkable and noteworthy, which consequently makes it an interesting field of research that yet remains unexplored. Therefore, this essay is considered to be unique as it will focus on analysing the narrative structure of the *Survivor* formats in Sweden, USA and Russia in pursuance of revealing representations of the nations. By conducting this analysis it would be possible to detect a specific pattern that the shows are built upon, and to discover the nation-specific components that are featured in the reality programmes. The choice of countries is not haphazard and has significance for this study: Sweden was the first country in the world to adapt the *Survivor* format in 1997; USA introduced *Survivor* in 2000 and it immediately became a success both nationally and internationally. Russia was probably the first post-Soviet country to adopt and introduce the format to the audience in 2001. Another motive for choosing these three countries is the interest in global dissimilarities in American, Northern European and Eastern European media spheres and therefore their unique constructions of national identities in the *Survivor* reality TV game show format. Finally, my personal interests with Swedish, American and Russian media spheres as well as my knowledge of Swedish, English and Russian languages additionally contributed to the choice.
2. Aims

This section presents the main aim of this essay and reveals three study questions that would be answered in further sections.

The main purpose of this study is to analyse the concept of reality game show *Survivor* by looking at the programmes made in Sweden, USA and Russia. All three countries adapted the same format, where a group of people are stranded on an island and are struggling to survive and win the main game prize. However, there are specific features that are introduced in each countrywide production in order to make a transnational concept into a national one. By conducting a structural narrative analysis with a comparative approach it is possible to detect particular structures in the narratives of the programmes. As a result of the comparison, a common narrative pattern of the game shows can be presented, as it simultaneously exposes nation-specific elements of the narratives. In this study I attempt to distinguish and analyse those nation-specific characteristics of the reality game shows in order to demonstrate how national identities are represented and reproduced in national productions of a transnational TV format. Eventually, this essay aims to answer the following questions:

- What are the narrative structures of reality game shows based on the *Survivor* format in Sweden, the USA and Russia?
- What is the common narrative structure of the reality game show *Survivor*?
- How are the national identities portrayed in a transnational reality game show format *Survivor*?
3. Background

What is reality TV? Where and how did it emerge? How did it affect media industry? There is probably no detailed definition that could help in answering these questions. The most basic description would be “television programmes in which real people are continuously filmed, designed to be entertaining rather than informative”\(^2\). In addition, being almost entirely unscripted reality TV tends to document actual events and features regular people rather than professional actors. This part of the essay provides a description of the background of reality TV in order to offer a better understanding of the term and its essential meaning.

3.1 Reality TV – the rise and formation of a genre

The general public assumes that reality TV is an extensive category of programmes that includes a wide range of shows that intend to be both factual and entertaining. Yet, there are various definitions of the term. There are also numerous studies and analyses of historical background on the theme of reality TV and its origins. The first reality show Candid Camera was created in 1948, which in fact transferred from radio to television.\(^3\) However, my intention in this section is to focus primarily on the history of the “breakthrough era” of reality programme television and an evolution of reality TV as a genre. According to Annette Hill (2005) various reality TV shows have had three “waves” of popularity (mainly due to their prime time scheduling): the first “wave” of reality programmes came in the late 1980s to early 1990s as the shows were based on themes of crime and emergency, the second “wave” included observational documentaries or emotional “docu-soaps” in the middle to late 1990s, and the third “wave” during the early 2000s brought to light “social experiments” programmes (2005:24).

There is no straight answer to the question of reality TV origin, although it can be concluded that this genre derives from three main areas of earlier media productions: tabloid journalism, documentary television and popular entertainment. Reality TV is a hybrid of these three categories and it was born as a consequence of deregulation and marketization of media industries, and even the dominance of commercialism in the media environment (Hill, 2005:15). In order to grasp reality TV as a separate genre it is worth looking at what influences it picked up from its originators. Tabloid journalism focused on producing the


extraordinary media content, while blurring the verge between public and private spheres and providing the “raw” footage of occurrences. Reality TV inherited this narrative feature of telling stories about ordinary people doing extraordinary things in real life. For that reason it is not surprising that the two genres still collaborate in e.g. sharing consumers, who switch between reality show and tabloid news to learn more about the show or vice versa (Hill, 2005:18).

Documentary television’s relation to and impact on reality TV are complicated because both genres are based on realism. However, as Hill puts it “… the reality genre as a whole is designed for entertainment value” (2005:19), while documentaries are aimed primarily to educate and inform the audiences. The two types of realism that documentary television was built upon are “observational realism”, or a so called “fly-on-the-wall” perspective, and “expositional realism”, or an expression of accurateness and truth. These perspectives can easily be traced in reality TV programmes, e.g. the “observational realism” has a strong presence in reality game shows as Big Brother. What is problematic here is the fact that documentaries as a genre have become weakened by the popularity of reality TV shows, mainly because documentaries were designed for broadcasting on public service networks, which lost many viewers with the emergence of commercial channels that offered “popular factual television” (Hill, 2005). Another dilemma lies in the fact that, due to several similarities, it can be difficult to draw a clear line as to where the documentary genre ends and real TV begins. By contrast, popular entertainment’s influence on reality TV is for the most part based on the adaptation and alteration of pre-existing programme formats. Popular entertainment includes all types of TV shows, from talk shows to sports, with a key purpose to amuse the viewers. These programmes contain such features as interaction between regular people and celebrities, and interaction with the audience. Moreover, the programme formats, if successful, can be sold on the international market to either be broadcast directly, or be adopted and produced locally (Hill, 2005: 21). As a result, reality TV has adopted the same features and commercial techniques from popular entertainment. In conclusion then, the emergence of reality TV, or as Hill puts it “popular factual television”, can be compared with self-cannibalism where in order to survive television is forced to feed upon already existing formats, and by mixing them create new hybrid programmes that would further emerge into a new genre (2005).

Trying to define the reality TV genre results in a few difficulties. There are certain mandatory elements that have to be present in a programme for it to be associated with reality TV, such
as regular people as participants instead of professional actors, unscripted dialogues, surveillance recordings etc. Since the definition of “reality” has changed during past decades, and television has offered a range of programmes that refer to almost every theme possible, it has become even more challenging to categorize reality TV, which as a genre is strongly influenced by changes and new trends in the global media environment. Traditionally, reality TV is defined as “factual entertainment” or “popular factual television”, which in the media industry functions as an umbrella term for various types of shows, either with a determined format or belonging to different formats (Hill, 2005). The media industry is open with categorization of reality TV as it adapts different meanings depending on the situation.

Scholars have also debated the term reality TV and suggested different definitions, e.g. John Corner implies that reality TV is more about the treatment and representations of realities when blurring the line between fact and fiction (Hill, 2005: 48). Jane Roscoe and Craig Hight expand the theory further and suggest “a fact-fictional continuum” as a way of thinking about programmes’ relationships between factual and fictional discourses (Hill, 2005:49). The audience’s definition of reality TV is less complex than what the industry and scholars suggest. The definition is as simple as “cameras following people around” (Hill, 2005:50). Despite the simplicity, the audience categorizes reality TV shows depending on how truthful those realities are. They judge the performance of the contenders by deciding whether their behaviour is natural or just an act for cameras. As demonstrated, it is rather problematic to give a single definition to reality TV genre. Nonetheless, Hill argues that one particular characteristic connects all possible programmes that fall under reality TV genre – “to let viewers see for themselves” (2005:55). The essence of her argument is that this feature makes the reality TV genre popular, while at the same time allowing the audience to be critical and to judge the program from “a fact-fictional continuum”, where infotainment and docu-soaps are leaning towards fiction and game shows lean towards fact (Hill,2005).

3.2 The business of reality TV

It is vital to demonstrate how reality TV revolutionised the media industry as a business (with a starting point in USA) in order to illustrate all sides of reality TV genre. Ted Magder points out that at first, critics were sceptical to this kind of “alternative programming” and mostly thought of it as a temporary amusement (2004). Regardless, reality TV accelerated and took its rightful place in prime time television on the majority of networks. Survivor gained an audience of fifty-one million people while airing the final episode (Magder, 2004:137). Yet,
television remains a business, and as in any other area of “capital and labour” it is important to meet the wants and needs of the consumers. In addition, its administration directly influences the processes of choosing, financing and producing of programmes. In that sense reality TV “…also looks good on the books and balance sheets of those whose business is television” (Magder, 2004:138). In other words, Magder believes that reality TV shows manage to please the audience while making a profit for broadcasters and owners.

As mentioned earlier, reality TV shows grew in both popularity and numbers, which led to the fact that the majority of programmes aired on prime time. However, to see the whole progress one has to take into consideration both the revenue from and the costs of production in the business of television. In the USA, NBC has dominated Thursday nights with hit programmes like the comedy Friends and the drama ER, but at a considerably high cost: one half-hour episode of Friends costs $5.5 million and a one-hour episode of ER costs $13 million, all in 2001. Such expensive price tags are the result of a business model, which implies that the broadcaster (in this case, NBC) does not own the show and instead licenses the right to put it on air from the production company (in this case, Warner Bros. Television) (Murray & Ouellette, 2004:139). If the show airs successfully, the contract and the license for broadcasting would be extended, while its cost would be higher with every renewal. This is the common feature for sold scripted programmes because of the cost of the means of creation, including actors, playwrights and directors (Magder, 2004:140). In comparison, reality TV shows like Survivor introduce another business strategy, where the broadcaster CBS does not pay for the production and instead shares the show’s advertising profits with the producer Mark Burnett, who in his turn secured sponsorship from companies such as General Motors and Visa. Simply put, the sponsors pay for making the show in exchange for adverts and product placement, even when its cost rose from $1 million to approximately $1.5 million per episode (Murray & Ouellette, 2004). Consequently, Survivor contributed to a shift in business strategies on the media industry market and the rise of reality television in general, as it has been recognized as a new genre of TV programming and not a passing-by trend.

However, there are not only positive aspects to this shift in the media environment, especially in the field of advertising that is crucial for TV programmes. Magder (2004) discusses how the TV industry in the USA “masterfully” balances between the wants and needs of the advertisers and of the viewers. However, television networks schedule their airing space in a way that benefits the advertisers, taking financial revenue into more consideration than the satisfaction of the viewers. The ambition is to broadcast the programme that the audience
wants to watch, or at least to have the audience stay tuned to the same channel. There are two problems that follow, according to Magder: the first one is the problem of creativity, i.e. the possibility to create a unique hit, not one or two, but dozens or even hundreds of programmes that would be able to succeed. The second problem is the unpredictability of the rating successes, or a “nobody knows principle” in Richard Cave's meaning (Magder, 2004:143).

Networks developed solutions to these problems, i.e. to use already tested TV formats, to not alter the genre as changes can fall short of audiences’ expectations, and finally to always search for new concepts as trends come and go. Adaptations of programme concepts from European media spheres, such as Big Brother, contributed to the further increase and popularity of reality TV shows in the USA, and simultaneously initiated global collaboration and interaction for the future.

Television is an unsteady business with its constant uncertainty and abrupt shifts in trends. However, the trend of reality TV turned out to be more than a temporary solution to reduce the high costs of programme production, and has successfully been established in media industries globally. Reality TV as a genre proves to be consistent and valuable, and its expansion indicates new tendencies such as “the growing internationalization of television production” and improved partnerships with foreign companies (Magder; 2004:151). Reality TV indirectly suggests the obsolescence of old business strategies as well as demonstrates the new possibilities for progress and transformation of business modelling in the new era of media industry.

3.3 TV format

To fully grasp reality TV as a genre of television programming it is necessary to understand what constitutes a TV programme format. New structures and agendas in media industry have surfaced because television today is so different from what it was decades ago. The multi-channel landscape introduced new systems of interaction with the viewers, who initially became consumers of the TV content (Moran & Malbon, 2006:10). A number of corporations entered the television market as it expanded in different directions, from increasing the amount of advertisers and sponsors to introducing telecommunication companies, which are starting collaboration with TV industry due to the growth of technological convergence.

The most effective strategy of making a hit TV programme has become the adaptation of an already existing format in hopes of repeating past successes. Yet, what is a programme format and how adoptable is it? According to The Oxford English Dictionary the word “format”
derives from Latin (liber) formatus and means “a book formed in such and such a way” (Moran & Malbon, 2006:19). Hence the term has several definitions, but in a context of the television industry it refers to the principles of programme making. However, these principles can be employed in two ways. As Albert Moran and Justin Malbon suggest, a format can be compared to a recipe with “the idea of a structuring centre”, or to a “piecrust”, which serves as a framework with possibility of alterations of the content (2006:23). What is crucial to understand at this point is that a programme format is not a single entity, but in fact a collection of different units, that, if combined correctly, shape a format. Therefore, instead of asking what a format is, it is worth looking at what it is allowed to be. Moran & Malbon refer to a TV programme format as “…an interconnected parcel of particular knowledges that will be galvanized in the production, financing, marketing and broadcasting of a TV programme. Putting together a TV programme format involves a process of aggregation and accumulation that begins with a simple programme idea and ends with a full programme format.” (2006:25).

The stages of creation of a format are divided into devising, development and distribution (Moran & Malbon, 2006). Devising involves an original idea that, if identified as a potential format concept, is refined and drafted into a paper format. The next step is development, which firstly means further brainstorming and editing of the paper format before the project is pitched to broadcasters. After the approval, the programme often receives a trial period and produces “pilot” episodes to test how well the programme performs on screen. If the show fulfils the expectations it goes on to production and broadcasting. However, it is far from over once the programme has aired. The last vital step of format creation is distribution. It starts with gathering of programme knowledge and continues with writing of a so-called “format bible”, a complete manual for the buyer that should be able to answer every possible question about the format, and “… which allows another television company in a particular territory to bypass development mistakes and pitfalls and reproduce the success of a programme that was originally made elsewhere.” (Moran & Malbon, 2006:27). It is also worth notifying that if individual elements of a format have no particular significance per se, it is their unique combination that makes a successful format. In the present day, the trade of TV formats occurs on a global scale, and therefore it is essential to be familiar with the rules of the market in general and with the terms of an individual industry, e.g. the license costs or the flexibility in the appliance of the format (Moran & Malbon; 2006).
3.4 The reality game show format *Survivor* and the story behind it

The reality game show *Survivor* has already been mentioned in the text several times. This section will tell the story behind the format. It all began with Charlie Parsons, a British television producer, who is now the CEO of Castaway Television Productions Ltd, which controls all aspects of *Survivor* as a business worldwide, including format trade and merchandising. The idea of a multimillion TV show was born when Parsons worked on *Network 7*. A desert island sketch, where five members of the public were filmed as they adapted to being castaways, planted the first seed in his mind, and therefore it can be said that the inspiration for the new concept was found in an already existing model. Parsons instantly detected the appealing aspect of this type of reality entertainment, where a group of ordinary people in an extraordinary situation are forced to survive without the luxuries of the modern world (Brenton & Cohen, 2003). He initiated a collaboration with Bob Geldof and Waheed Ali to develop the concept originally named *Survive!*, and together they established a production company Planet 24 (Moran & Malbon, 2006). The team worked hard on improvement of the format, and ultimately came up with the features that became its centrepieces such as contestants voting off each other from the island, which added the amount of complexity to the game show. Eventually, the *Survivor* format was finished and presented as a reality game show, where the contestants were divided into two “tribes” that competed for immunity from the elimination at a so-called “tribal council” with three-day intervals. Once a number of players has been eliminated, the tribes merge and the game turns from tribal rivalry to “all-against-all” war, which switches the game atmosphere from friendly team spirits during the first days on the island to dishonest betrayals, disloyal alliances and even paranoia closer to the final. The fact that the previously eliminated contestants decide who will be the prize winner allows them to retaliate by pay-back. Therefore, to be able to play this complicated game it requires the contestants to think of the strategies that can help them to survive and win (Brenton & Cohen, 2003).

The completed *Survivor* format turned out to be a hybrid of several genres, such as e.g. game shows and observational documentaries. However the “reality” aspect in this particular format differs from the type of reality that was previously shown to the audience. The “fly-on-the-wall” perspective that was frequently used in reality TV programming, received a new meaning from Parsons, who with *Survivor* showed how to build up the very walls on which

---

4 [http://www.castawaytelevision.com/about_us/](http://www.castawaytelevision.com/about_us/)
the fly sits. He accomplished the formation of the game’s “pocket world”, which became a sole universe and reality for its contestants (Brenton & Cohen, 2003). On account of this innovation Parsons’ format became a global phenomenon. However, he had some troubles selling it since four UK networks refused to buy his idea and American buyers were sceptical of the product. Finally, in 1997 the Swedes believed in the idea and produced *Expedition Robinson*, the first version of the *Survivor*, which aired on SVT during the same year. After a while Parsons received an offer from Mark Burnett, an American producer who convinced CBS to commission the format. With a few minor alterations, as e.g. the change of the title from *Survive!* to *Survivor*, the show aired during the summer of 2000 (Brenton & Cohen, 2003). Despite the success of previous productions in Sweden and Germany, it was the triumph on American television that turned the formerly rejected format into a multimillion dollar business (Moran & Malbon, 2006). The show became an instant hit in the USA and immediately increased the ratings of CBS in public popularity and in revenue due to the new business model, described in earlier part of this essay. By selling Planet 24, Parsons, Ali and Geldof created Castaway Television Productions, which today stands as a holder of all rights to *Survivor* format and the business around it.

While Parsons pitched and sold the *Survivor* format around the world, a Dutch company Endemol, the masters of providing format licensing globally, created the reality TV programme *Big Brother*. Earlier in 1996, the company bought an option of Parsons’ *Survive!* together with Strix Television, the producers of *Expedition Robinson*. Endemol struggled to find customers for the idea on the market, and for that reason Parsons refused to renew the contract after twelve months. He believed that Endemol used the *Survive!* format idea in order to create their own goldmine *Big Brother* as he could detect several similarities between the formats (Brenton & Cohen, 2003). Parsons took the matter to the court and in fact received the copyright on the format of *Survivor*, but the jury disagreed with Parsons’ argument of plagiarism of the format and as a result declined his appeal against Endemol. After the success of *Survivor* (and even *Big Brother*) the popularity of reality TV programmes, and especially reality game shows, increased rapidly as the majority of television networks were willing to either repeat or copy the hit formula.

**3.4.1. Feedback and reception of the programmes in Sweden, the USA and Russia**

The differences between Swedish, American and Russian productions of the *Survivor* format are undisputed, however they are rather expected. These programmes have been produced in
countries that differ from each other in several ways. Though, what they have in common is the success of the reality game show concept *Survivor* and that aspect is in focus here.

*Expedition Robinson* was made in 1997 and was broadcasted on a Swedish public service channel SVT, which could bring along several limitations. The programme was heavily criticised, especially after the first eliminated contestant Sinisa Savija committed suicide. After the show’s premiere on September 13th the decision was made to pause the broadcast and to make an additional editing to make the show “kinder”. It resumed broadcasting a few weeks later and received positive feedback from the audience and the critics (Lindberg, 2003). *Expedition Robinson* can therefore be seen as the first successful production of Charlie Parsons’ format.

As for the USA, *Survivor: Borneo* was a brand new type of entertainment which got mixed reviews in the media. However, the response from the American public was mainly positive. The broadcasting network CBS increased their public ratings and turned the show into an instant national success, leaving the competitors who declined an earlier offer from the programme’s producer Mark Burnett kicking themselves (Brenton & Cohen, 2003). The situation in Russia was similar to the one in the USA due to the fact that the post-Soviet audience was not very familiar with the concept of *Poslednij Geroj* (in translation: last hero), apart from the earlier production of *Baltic Robinson* during 2000 in the Baltic region. The reaction to the game show was positive, as it also brought high rating numbers to the broadcaster ORT, which bought the license for the format. *Poslednij Geroj* was often compared to other programmes imported from the Western world and even criticised for conveying the ideology of meanness, the denial of selfless solidarity and the skills of treachery (Ivanov, 2001). Despite all criticism, the game show was very popular and successful (Zuenko & Chumachenko, 2002).

To summarize, this chapter shed light on the main issues of reality TV in general: the term itself and its meaning, and the influence of reality TV on media industry. Since a programme format is an indispensable part of every TV programme genre, it is essential to understand the term along with its use and content. Finally, given that this essay will mainly focus on one programme format from the reality TV genre, it is beneficial to know how this particular format was created and what respond its local productions received in order to understand why it makes such an exciting subject of research for this study.
4. Previous research

In this section, previous research on the topic of reality TV that has some degree of relevance to this study is presented and discussed.

After attempting to find previous research on the topic of reality game show format with focus on national representations, I came to a conclusion that this subject of research is rather distinctive. However, whether it is a positive or negative aspect to my research is too soon to declare. What I discovered instead was a range of essays and academic articles on various topics within the field of reality TV shows studies: for example about their popularity, the viewers’ perceptions, the race and gender representations, etc. In addition, I noticed that the reality TV show *Big Brother* is the one that has mainly been analysed and debated. Nonetheless, I managed to come across several articles that are similar and/or pertinent to the essay I am writing.

*Flagging Finnishness: Reproducing National Identity in Reality Television* was written by Minna Aslama and Mervi Pantti where they look at a Finnish adventure show *Extreme Escapades* and argue that national television still plays an important role in constructing national identities (2007). They use the term “banal nationalism”, which is a part of the nationalism theory by Billing I too intend to apply in my study. Aslama and Pantti analyse the game show with the main purpose of locating “*reality television within the push-and-pull dialectic between national identity and cultural globalization and interprets it as a way in which nationhood is recreated in everyday context of a popular culture*” (2007:50). By examining different levels of the programme, such as location settings and communications, they were able to discover the “unflagged” elements of Finnishness, the most banal and often unnoticed features that reproduce national identity. Moreover, it has been argued that because of the profit-oriented function of the media, this type of reality game shows, when produced locally, can become a useful marketing tool in order to differ from a range of other TV programmes and continue to maintain the need for a national belonging (Aslama & Pantti, 2007).

Emma Price (2010) analyses the construction and representation of Australian identity and myth in reality TV in her article *Reinforcing the myth: Constructing Australian identity in ‘reality TV’*. She examines the reality TV show *Bondi Rescue* and even brings up the discussion of the terms “reality” and “myth”, arguing that both contain elements of illusion as
she states: “Both myth and ‘reality TV’ are sites of liminality where the everyday is stretched and blurred through dominant ideals and representation techniques, constantly evolving as open and ambiguous spaces of national narratives and ideals, not quite fact or fiction.” (Price, 2010:453). Price discusses the myth of “Australian-ness” and how it is (re)produced by depicting the beach and lifeguards as “a performance of national identity”. Additionally, she aims to explain how the acknowledgment of the illusions in reality TV formats, by combining specific cultural values and representations on television, enables to construct an entertaining TV programme that appeals to the audience (Price, 2010).

Similarly to Price, Graeme Turner (2005) has built his research on the case of Australia. In his article Cultural Identity, Soap Narrative, and Reality TV he discusses the issue of locally produced docusoaps being threatened by the global formats of reality TV programmes, which was originally brought up by Latin-American scholars (Turner, 2005). The main aim of Turner’s research, as he states, is “to address three interlinked issues: the relation between television soap opera and cultural identity, the relation between the two formats of soap opera and reality TV’s Big Brother, and the degree to which the discursive influence of the soap opera on Big Brother in Australia reconnected it to discourses of cultural identity.” (Turner, 2005:416). He examines similarities and differences between the two formats, and arrives at the conclusion that both construct communities through the representative narratives, which is the central feature of these formats. Turner also concludes that these transnational formats are, in fact, flexible while illustrating how narratives of a local everyday life can arrange nationally appealing and familiar TV shows (2005).

“In Search of Community on Reality TV: America’s Most Wanted and Survivor” by Gray Cavender aims to look at how reality TV handles the concept of community and how reality TV shows, that seem to preserve and encourage the idea of belonging to a society, in reality can consequently weaken and damage it (Cavender, 2004). He describes how the game show Survivor suggests a sense of belonging to a community by e.g. dividing the contestants in tribes with a common purpose, where they have to connect by necessity. The audience can also take part in the community by cheering or interacting with other viewers on various media platforms. By incorporating the game show into daily lives it is possible to see the contestants appear on the news or talkshows, and read about them in the newspaper, all in order to keep the community “alive”. However, Survivor is a game show and it does not fully allow true interdependence – instead of the promised “new societies” the game produces secret pacts, false alliances and centres selfishness and egoism. Surely, there are moments in
the show when a feeling of a true community emerge, but unfortunately they do not last that
long (Cavender, 2004). In conclusion, Cavender acknowledges that *Survivor* uses the most
idealized definition of community concept, which assumes the community “as a coherent unit
which is threatened by external and internal forces” (Cavender, 2004:170). From this follows
that although the programme is supposed to entertain and offer an escape from daily
problems, it reproduces anxieties instead and emphasizes the concepts of rivalry and
individualism, which in turn causes further tension between “us” and “them” (Cavender,
2004).

All previous research presented above has a certain degree of relevance to my enquiry.
However, these studies do not really relate to the subject discussed in this essay. They discuss,
among other things, the notions of a national identity and a myth, cultural identities and the
concept of community. The study that comes closest is probably the article *Flagging
Finnishness: Reproducing National Identity in Reality Television* by Minna Aslama and
Mervi Pantti as they attempt to analyse the presence of “Finnishness” in reality TV. However,
their study focuses on the programme filmed in Finland as they give examples of local
surroundings as representations of “Finnishness”. This aspect is one of the main points in the
article, and I can only imagine that the conclusion would differ if the programme would have
been made on another location.

The research in this essay is unique as it goes further and conducts a macro level analysis,
which means that it has a generalizing perspective and strives to demonstrate a wide range of
various aspects while being as detailed as possible. The discussed subject of the research is
rather rare, hence I consider my essay to be one of its kind. As proof, I did not manage to find
any similar pieces of writing where transnational reality TV show formats have been analysed
and compared, especially while using the narrative analysis. One reason for that might be the
broadness of the research sector, which may lead to the wrong type of conclusions and the
undermined validity of the results. Another one might be the choice of methodology for
conducting the analysis. Nevertheless, I have to point out the fact that while I personally could
not find any similar research does not necessarily have to mean that it does not exist – there
can very well be an ongoing study on the subject. As for my own research, it is too soon at
this stage of the essay to announce whether the choice of writing about reality game show
concept *Survivor* and analysing how national identities are represented in a transnational
reality format will turn out to be a significant or insignificant study.
5. Theory

It is possible to retrieve diverse theoretical readings from several sources in the research area of reality TV. However, the ones that are most pertinent to this study are the theory of nations as imagined communities and the theory about banal nationalism; both discuss the terms nation and nationalism and can help to give explanation to the formation and reproduction of national identities on reality TV shows. Theories about globalization and de-westernizing of media studies add to the further understanding of the global opposed to the national.

5.1 Nationalism and Imagined communities

What is a national identity? Political scientists, sociologists, anthropologists, historians and literary scholars are becoming concerned about the concepts of nationalism and national identity. Much of the expressed interest can be explained by some factors of the modern age, such as the enlargement of the EU, the Yugoslavian dissolution wars, the fall of communism and the reunification of Germany, to name a few. The historian Benedict Anderson wrote his reflections on nationalism before the map of Europe started to be redrawn during the 90s. Primarily, he sees nationalism as a person’s way to imagine her own life, instead of perceiving it as a political action. Preferably, Anderson (2006) speaks of several nationalisms as of historically different ways to build and imagine the life of the nation. He also enlivens the debate by taking the overseas colonial reality as a starting point instead of Europe, which is very common otherwise (Anderson, 2006).

In an often quoted phrase Anderson (2006) has called a nation an “imagined community” that emerged in the modern era. By this term he means that members of the community will never meet, know or hear of most others in this community. In spite of this, they all live with a perceived sense of an existing community. In addition, Anderson claims that a nation is imagined as limited due to its restricted boundaries, beyond which other nations exist; it is also imagined as sovereign with the freedom of spirit, and lastly, as a community where a comradeship is present among its members, in spite of societal inequalities (2006:6-7).

However, one should keep in mind that Anderson does not suggest that nations are the only existing imagined communities. He argues that each community that is so large that it is impossible for its members to personally know most of the others in the group is an imagined community (Anderson, 2006). Its opposite is not a real and genuine community, but a
concrete one, where all members are more or less acquainted with each other. Furthermore, nation is just one form among other possible imagined communities. The origins of the idea of a national community is the subject of Anderson's theory, which focuses mainly on the art of printing, public development of languages, and how “the printed word” allows for an imagined community among its’ readers (Anderson, 2006). The explanation of nationalism can then be summarized by stating that if written communication allows for a broad imagined community, then the linguistic boundaries would generally become community’s frontiers (Anderson, 2006:76-77).

Media sphere is a central aspect in producing a national imagined community. Even Anderson (2006) himself offers an example of reading a newspaper as a ritual, which is performed by many community members. This type of rituals create a feeling of belonging to a society by sharing the similar experiences and knowledge with other members. However, it would be impossible without the newspaper medium. Today, similarly to Anderson’s era, the medium of television offers a new method of creating the sense of belonging to a nation. The production of TV programmes, featuring recognizable national qualities and attributes, enables members of the imagined community to associate themselves with the characters on screen, and thus share a sense of familiarity and “connectedness” to the other inhabitants of the nation. For that reason it is important to study how the media assists in creating national identities, even if they appear to be imagined.

5.2 Banal nationalism

Michael Billig, a British social psychologist, suggests that nationalism is more than merely an extreme idea expressed by separatists, who seek to form their own states based on similar standpoints such as e.g. language. He suggests that nationalism is omnipresent and frequently unexpressed; however it is constantly ready to be mobilized (Billig, 1995). The term “banal nationalism” is taken from Billig’s eighteen-year-old book, and is aimed at the everyday banalities that maintain national identities, primarily in Western states. Billig (1995) wants to shift the focus of nationalism research from the exotic margins, such as nationalism in the Balkans or in the right-wing parties, to a political centrepiece. He acknowledges that instead of seeing problematic nationalism of the others, people should see nationalism of themselves. While they are appalled at any kind of extreme nationalistic ideas and reject them strongly, they simultaneously make daily contributions to the reproduction of sharp boundaries between “our” and “their” national identities. Therefore Billig places greater emphasis on many
“unflagged” examples of banal nationalism, which can be found in practically every daily activity, e.g. news reports and sport broadcasting, in order to see how nationalism is embodied in seemingly non-political contexts (Billig, 1995). He writes:

"In many ways, this book itself aims to be a reminder. Because the concept of nationalism has been restricted to exotic and passionate exemplars, the routine and familiar forms of nationalism have been overlooked. In this case, ‘our’ daily nationalism slips from attention. There is a growing body of opinion that nation-states are declining. Nationalism, or so it is said, is no longer a major force: globalization is the order of the day. But a reminder is necessary. Nationhood is still being reproduced: it can still call for ultimate sacrifices; and, daily, its symbols and assumptions are flagged." (Billig, 1995:8)

In making this comment, Billig urges us to reflect on the role of national identity in today’s society. He surely is right about globalization being a major force because, as it has been discussed in previous chapters of this study, the universal industry of import and export of various commodities worldwide has made it possible to forge a new type of global community. Still, Billig’s observations show that national identities continue to frequently appear in beliefs, images, and languages of many nation-states (Billig, 1995). Therefore, it is not surprising that, for instance, the USA produces a large amount of hit television programmes that construct and/or reinforce the sense of nationalism and patriotism by featuring small and often almost invisible national elements. By locating and analysing these specific elements it can be possible to obtain an understanding of how television assists in reproducing of nationhood.

5.3 Globalization

A rapid development of the media sphere has contributed to the expansion of dimensions of globalization, especially the cultural and national ones. Referring to Anderson’s concept of “imagined communities” Arjun Appadurai in his book *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (1996) extends the theory of radical transformation of modernity, according to which the major factors of the change are electronic means of communication and mass migration, which in cooperation affect the “work of the imagination” that forms subjectivity of the modern era. On account of the multiplicity of its forms and an intensive penetration of the everyday life, mass media provides new resources and a new framework for imaginative construction of personal identities and social worlds (Appadurai, 1996).
Certainly, mass migration alone is not new, but when the intensification of migration is imposed by the electronically mediated flows of images and emotions, broadcast by media, a new order of instability takes shape in the production of subjectivity of the modern era (Appadurai, 1996). For example, when Turkish guest workers watch Turkish movies, sitting in their apartments in Germany, as well as Koreans living in Philadelphia, watch the Olympic Games in Seoul in 1988, moving images encounter a “deterritorialised” audience, forming a new transnational public sphere (Appadurai, 1996:4). Thus, electronic mass media and mass migration, in interaction, characterize today's world not as new technical forces, but as the forces that reorganize the work of social imagination. As a result, the audience and the images are simultaneously in motion, so they both lose their territorial attachment to local, national or regional spaces (Appadurai, 1996). Unquestionably, there are large numbers of viewers who do not migrate, and about as many images floating around locally, e.g. in cable TV networks. Nevertheless, almost every popular movie, TV show or news programme relates to distantly occurring events; the vast majority of people have at least one acquaintance on the move, someone who either left or arrived, and who embodies the opportunities available for the other.

This fickle and unpredictable relationship between moving media images and migratory audiences defines today’s relationship of globalization and modernity. Social imagination, if considered in this context, is not just a force of liberation or discipline, but a space of struggle, in which individuals and groups are trying to incorporate a global dimension into their own experience of the modern (Appadurai, 1996:4). However, one of the main points made by Appadurai (1996) is that interaction between modernity and globalization, where cultures and even nations are inevitably perceived as both local and global, contribute to “the work of imagination”.

5.4 De-westernizing Media Studies

Myung Jin Park and James Curran make an attempt to broaden the global media theory and enhance the importance of the countries outside the Western Anglo-American circle (2000). Their book *De-westernizing Media Studies* offers an explanation of why the same few countries have constantly dominated theoretical discussions of globalization during a long period of time. Since the 1950s media theories have mainly been debated by Western philosophers, who consequently contributed to this domination and the perception of the world through “Western eyes”. Soon after, theorists argued that the rest of the universe should
imitate the West in order to repeat the successful system of media communication and step into the era of “modernization” (Jin Park & Curran, 2000). Media imperialism that followed during the 1960s received strong critique due to its negative influence on national identities in smaller societies because of Western media homogeneity on the market. Therefore, a new idea of a global “decentered” society came forward. In the words of Jin Park and Curran “the focus of this perspective has shifted from the modernization or exploitation of developing societies to a view of globalization as a universal phenomenon that is transforming the entire world” (2000:7). This transformation contributed to compressing time and space and facilitated the new types of communication in the society that McLuhan named a “global village”. However, this solution is not ideal. Both cultural and political economical theorists agree that nations are threatened by this total globalization – nations can no longer solely be in charge of their own future in politics and economy, as well as they are losing the sense of imagination as “imagined communities” (Jin Park & Curran, 2000:11).

In spite of these arguments, Jin Park & Curran believe that the concept of nation is not passing away – on the contrary, it is more important than ever, but it is underplayed by the theory of globalization (2000). The authors suggest that by looking at the role of television as the most influential medium, it can be concluded that the majority of the programmes are locally produced, which supports their thesis. Nations, in their meaning, are also significant in constructing media communication systems and they serve as “markers of difference” (Jin Park & Curran, 2000). For that reason, the book offers a number of essays describing the media systems in various countries, aiming to express the authors’ argument that media studies should pay equal attention to the rest of the world instead of a few selected Western societies, which have excessively influenced the understanding of global media organization already (Jin Park & Curran, 2000:15).

To summarize the main arguments of this chapter, it is worth pointing out that it is crucial for this essay to incorporate several theoretical arguments in order to see to all the aspects of the research. Firstly, it is necessary to turn to the theory about national identities in order to be able to detect nation-specific features during the analysis of the reality game show format Survivor. Even though the concept of the show is fundamentally similar in Sweden, the USA and Russia, there are some cultural and national differences that are of significance. Michael Billig’s Banal nationalism provides a useful insight on how national identities are structured.

---

5 http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/global+village
in everyday lives. He looks specifically at how nationalism is reinforced in daily lives and where these traditions derive from. Another theory about nationalism is described by Benedict Anderson in *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. In this book he tries to answer the questions about nationality, the spread and creation of the “imagined communities” and their influences on people. Another theory that would contribute to my study is about globalization of media content. Arjun Appadurai’s *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* describes different dimension of globalization phenomenon and provides an understanding of its functions. Lastly, as both an addition and contradistinction to the globalization theory, *De-westernizing Media Studies* by Myung Jin Park and James Curran raises the question of the dominant Anglo-American media perspective and the fact that in order to make progress media studies have to look outside the Western media context and preserve the national ones. These theories are also relevant to my research since I intend to analyse and compare a product of western media with its Northern European and Eastern European analogue.
6. Methodology and research data

The purpose of this chapter is to give an understanding of how the study is going to be conducted and what considerations and strategies underlie the analysis. The choice of research data will be presented and motivated. In addition, concepts of validity and reliability are discussed. Finally, the course of action is presented along with a list of definitions.

6.1 Method

Since the early days stories have been recognized as the main source of knowledge about the world and the perception of it. Therefore, it is important to analyze the ways these stories have been reproduced in society to form its values and main beliefs. In addition, stories produced in media (or media narratives), that are supposed to illustrate reality, should be examined to understand how they “provide mental schema and templates that mould our ways of perceiving, knowing and believing” (Gillespie & Toynbee, 2006:82). In order to make my analysis of the Survivor concept extensive but at the same time significant, I decided to conduct a narrative analysis. Narratives convey different stories, experiences, thoughts and even identities. In those narratives the events are linked in a logical, non-random way so that they build a complete story (May, 2010). A narrative is also a fundamental way of human communication, which surrounds people in almost every aspect of their daily lives. For that reason it is important to analyse the content of narratives to comprehend their illustrations of reality and, among other things, national identities.

In view of the fact that narrative analysis is interdisciplinary by nature, it contains a variety of methodological approaches, which may be influenced by various philosophies or even several theories at once. The approach in this study is influenced by the structuralism-inspired works of Vladimir Propp, who was keen on the theoretical perspective that focused on the whole instead of particular pieces and parts, and the idea that every structure should be explained on its own basis. In his Morphology of the Folktale (1968) he identified and analyzed basic narrative components of Russian folk tales. In this major study 31 functions of the narrative elements have been identified by using the “syntagmatic” structural analysis, to borrow the term from the study of language (Propp, 1968: XI). In other words, by following the chronological order of events and identifying them one after another it is possible to describe the narrative structure as a linear structure that follows the same sequential order. Similar to this is the method I intend to use when conducting an analysis in this study to establish the
base structure of the reality game show format *Survivor*. I plan to observe the functions of events in the game shows in order to create templates that will serve as a tool to consequently establish a common structural pattern for all the programmes from Sweden, the USA and Russia.

The type of narrative analysis described in this section will become essential to my research due to the need for establishing a pattern in the foundational structure of the analyzed reality game shows. Furthermore, this particular pattern will be used while examining whether the programmes in Sweden, the USA and Russia are constructed in a similar way, and to be able to discover the (dis)similarities and nation-specific characteristics. Other types of analysis, e.g. discourse analysis and case study, have been considered thoroughly before selecting narrative analysis as the final option. It was chosen due to the flexibility in research methods and because of the appropriateness of the answers to the research questions that will be received by conducting such an analysis.

6.2 The research data

The data for this research on the *Survivor* format will consist of the episodes of the game shows from Sweden, the USA and Russia. As a consequence of the shows’ enormous popularity, there are several seasons of the *Survivor* programmes that have been made by each country. Therefore I came to a decision to limit the research data and to focus only on the first seasons produced. The Swedish *Expedition Robinson* from 1997 consists of 12 episodes, the American *Survivor: Borneo* from 2000 has 13 episodes, and so does Russian *Poslednij Geroj* 1 (in translation: Last Hero). I am aware of the research restrictions that are caused by this choice of data. Nonetheless, I believe that by evaluating the first seasons of the reality game shows from each country I can discover several significant features and nation-specific characteristics to analyse since, generally, the first attempt of making a new and original TV hit programme is usually the most thrilling and dynamic one. I am also convinced that first seasons of the shows can reveal the primary intentions of creating a programme that appeals to a whole nation. Another reason for this limited data selection is the time aspect – it would be impossible to conduct a successful study of all seasons from the three countries in such a short amount of time. Consequently all the episodes from the first seasons will be watched and reviewed in order to describe narrative structures of the reality game shows, and not to miss any specific details by e.g., randomly choosing the episodes to study. The episodes from the USA and Russia are accessed on the Internet and reviewed online, and sources are
introduced in references. Only a few episodes of the first season of the Swedish game show are available on the Internet, and therefore an application has been sent to The Swedish Media Database (SMDB) in order to loan the material needed for this study. The permission has been granted by SMDB and they sent two DVD discs where the episodes are recorded to Södertörn University’s library, where these discs can be viewed. After reviewing each season of the Survivor game shows, I attempt to compose templates of the shows’ structure for each country in order to compare them. By doing so it will be possible to detect similarities and differences between the game shows; this will be of assistance when exposing nation-specific features.

6.3 Validity and reliability

In every scientific study the researchers must keep in mind the concepts of validity and reliability. Not only is the research required to be conducted properly and accurately, it must also allow the possibility of being repeated by another researcher and receiving similar results. This can emphasize the conclusions made in the study and additionally ensure that the hypothesis will be accepted by other scientists.6

It is vital to be objective when conducting any kind of scientific research. Still, I am fully aware that my personal preferences and beliefs can interfere when trying to analyse and discuss the chosen topic in an objective way. As a criticism of the chosen method of the study it can be said that narrative analysis is a method that requires researchers to follow their own understandings and interpretations in their pursuit of knowledge, and it is therefore impossible to remain objective. For that reason, my research can contain subjective interpretations of the narrative features. At the same time I intend to remain critical when conducting this research by questioning and motivating the choices that have been made.

6.4 Course of action

It has been mentioned earlier that in order to conduct the analysis of the game show Survivor the first seasons of the programmes made in Sweden, the USA and Russia would be reviewed. After spending quite a few hours in front of the screen of my laptop, observing all 38 episodes, I ended up with certain new insight and a great deal of notes. In order to combine and present the gathered data I decided to compose templates of the programmes for each

http://explorable.com/validity-and-reliability
country in form of tables. The thought behind the tables is that they should, in an uncomplicated way, illustrate the shows’ constructions and provide a better understanding of how the game shows are built. In addition, there is a special table that describes other significant events that occurred in the episodes. The information transcribed in this table is used with the aim of spotting and distinguishing nation-specific characteristics of the reality game shows in order to analyse them.

Prior to analysing and discussing the representation of national identities, it is necessary to compare the programmes from Sweden, the USA and Russia in order to detect the basic narrative structure of the reality game show Survivor. Propp analysed the narratives of Russian folk tales by identifying specific narrative functions of tales’ characters that are used to structure those stories (1968). He identified the functions of the narrative elements by using the “syntagmatic” structural analysis, which involves following the chronological order of events and identifying them in order to describe the narrative as a linear structure that follows the same sequential order. Bearing this analysis technique in mind, I have transcribed each episode of the game show Survivor in order to construct templates for narrative structures of the programmes. Following Propp’s syntagmatic approach I managed to group the elements by their main functions in the programme. As a result, every table consists of a rather detailed description of each episode in terms of their narrative composition. These structures are described and compared below in the next chapter with the intention of illustrating how the programmes in Sweden, the USA and Russia are built and whether they have any differences or similarities.

6.5 Definitions

The explanations of the concepts are presented below to avoid any possible confusion because the terms may have different meanings in other contexts. These definitions are based on my own knowledge on the basis of having seen the game show Survivor and generalizing the translations of the definitions from Swedish and Russian.

- **Reward challenge** – an opportunity for the tribe or a single contestant win a reward that can include food, survival equipment like fishing gear, luxury items or getaways from the camp.
- **Immunity challenge (the USA, Russia)/ Robinson challenge (Sweden)** – provides the winning tribe or contestant with immunity from Tribal council.
- **A presentation (Sweden)** – short video segments about the contestants’ lives at home.
Tribal council – an elimination ceremony that generally happens after the immunity challenge. The host usually discusses the previous events, and the tribe votes one competitor off the island.

Elimination – the contestant with the largest number of votes leaves the game.

The final voting – the final tribal council, where the winner of the game show is selected by previously eliminated competitors.

Core group – a jury consisting of previously eliminated contestants, which votes for the winner of the game show at the final tribal council. In the USA the jury is present during the other tribal councils.

Disclosure of votes and comments from the eliminated contestant (USA) – all votes casted during the tribal council and comments from the eliminated contestant are shown as the titles roll at the end of the show.

Comments from the eliminated contestant (Russia) – the eliminated competitor shares his/her emotions with the viewers and reviles his/her last vote.

The right of the last vote (Russia) – the eliminated contestant gives his/her vote to save another contestant if there is a tie in the voting at the next tribal council. However, after the merger of the two tribes into one this vote is left as a black mark in order to eliminate the chosen contestant in case of a draw.

Alliance – a group of contestants who bond to form a pact together for strategic reasons.

There are also some translations of the concepts from Swedish and Russian into English along with their original names.
7. Analysis and discussion

This chapter describes the empirical research data that is presented and compiled in form of tables. Being the main means of the analysis, the tables contain the information necessary for obtaining the common narrative structure of the reality game shows and for further analysis of the nation-specific elements. Firstly, this section presents the narrative structures of the programmes from Sweden, the USA and Russia and later, a description and an illustration of the common narrative structure is presented as well. Secondly, the nation-specific elements are illustrated and analysed. Finally, the concluding discussion on the subject of national representations in a transnational game show format is presented.

7.1 Sweden: Expedition Robinson

Expedition Robinson was produced and aired during 1997 and could be seen as the first programme prototype made following the Survivor format. 16 Swedes arrived to Babi Tengah in Malaysia, where they were instantly divided into two tribes. The first episode covers the first week of the contestants’ stay on the island and therefore differs in the narrative structure from the majority of other episodes. By looking at Figure 1 (see next page) it can be concluded that the first episode contains two immunity challenges followed by two eliminations, while each other episode (except for the final one) covers one reward challenge and one immunity challenge during a three-days period. Episodes two to eleven have the same narrative structure, where the episode starts with the opening sequence of the show followed by a short summary of the previous events in the programme and the remaining contestants by the host Harald Treutiger. It continues with a reward challenge, an immunity challenge and the tribal council in each of the episodes, where one contestant is eliminated. However, there is no elimination in the 6th episode due to the illness of contestant Christin who was forced to leave the competition according to the rules. The final episode differs from the others by including two immunity challenges and two eliminations, followed by the final voting where the winner is selected. Conclusively, the final episode ends with the after-the-show footage of the final four contestants back in Sweden, mainly concentrating on the winner’s comments and thought about life after the show and the future.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Episode №</th>
<th>Episode Title</th>
<th>Air Date</th>
<th>Narrative Structure of The Episodes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1         | -             | Sep 13 1997 | - Arriving to the island Babi Tengah  
|           |               |          | - Brief introduction of the contestants  
|           |               |          | - Reward challenge  
|           |               |          | - Robinson challenge*  
|           |               |          | - Tribal council → elimination Sinisa  
|           |               |          | - Reward challenge  
|           |               |          | - Robinson challenge  
|           |               |          | - Tribal council → elimination Anna  |
| 2         | -             | Oct 4 1997 | - Intro & Previously**  
|           |               |          | - Presentations*** Ola, Peter, Kent, Suzanne  
|           |               |          | - Reward challenge  
|           |               |          | - Robinson challenge  
|           |               |          | - Tribal council → elimination Peter  |
| 3         | -             | Oct 11 1997 | - Intro & Previously  
|           |               |          | - Presentations Christin, Johan, Marie-Louise  
|           |               |          | - Reward challenge  
|           |               |          | - Robinson challenge  
|           |               |          | - Tribal council → elimination Suzanne  |
| 4         | -             | Oct 18 1997 | - Intro & Previously  
|           |               |          | - Presentations Zai, Camilla, Jürgen, Markus  
|           |               |          | - Reward challenge  
|           |               |          | - Robinson challenge  
|           |               |          | - Tribal council → elimination Zai  |
| 5         | -             | Oct 25 1997 | - Intro & Previously  
|           |               |          | - Reward challenge  
|           |               |          | - Presentations Åsa, Erika, Martin  
|           |               |          | - Robinson challenge  
|           |               |          | - Tribal council → elimination Camilla  |
| 6         | -             | Nov 1 1997 | - Intro & Previously  
|           |               |          | - The merger of the two tribes into one  
|           |               |          | - Reward challenge  
|           |               |          | - Robinson challenge  
|           |               |          | - Tribal council → no elimination  |
| 7         | -             | Nov 8 1997 | - Intro & Previously  
|           |               |          | - Reward challenge  
|           |               |          | - Robinson challenge  
|           |               |          | - Tribal council → elimination Johan  |
| 8         | -             | Nov 15 1997 | - Intro & Previously  
|           |               |          | - Reward challenge  
|           |               |          | - Robinson challenge  
|           |               |          | - Tribal council, first tie between Kent & Erika → elimination Erika  |
| 9         | -             | Nov 22 1997 | - Intro & Previously  
|           |               |          | - Reward challenge  
|           |               |          | - Robinson challenge  
|           |               |          | - Tribal council → elimination Jürgen  |
| 10        | -             | Nov 29 1997 | - Intro & Previously  
|           |               |          | - Reward challenge  |
### 7.2 The USA: Survivor Borneo

*Survivor: Borneo* was filmed and aired during 2000. It was the first season of the American version of the *Survivor* format and it brought immediate attention to the show nationally and internationally (Hill, 2005). 16 Americans arrived to the remote Malaysian island of Pulau Tiga where they were divided into two tribes. The first episode shows the marooning and the arrival to the island, where the first challenge is both for reward and immunity, followed by the first elimination. During the episode’s titles the final comments from the eliminated contestant are shown, and all votes from the tribal council are revealed. *Figure 2* (see next page) shows that almost every episode has the same narrative structure: it begins with a brief game summary, followed by the review of events from the last week’s episode by the host Jeff Probst and the game show’s opening sequence featuring all the contestants. Naturally, there are some exceptions that do not follow the pattern precisely, like episodes two and seven without reward challenges. The final episode is also an exception in the narrative composition – it starts with the full game summary, followed by two immunity competitions and two elimination before it comes to the final voting, where the winner of the game prize and the sole survivor is selected by a core group of previously eliminated contestants. The episode ends with the winner’s thoughts and comments on the victory and the future.
The USA: *Survivor: Borneo, 2000* (Host: Jeff Probst)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Episode №</th>
<th>Episode Title</th>
<th>Air Date</th>
<th>Narrative Structure of The Episodes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1         | "The Marooning" | May 31 2000 | - Arrival to Malaysia  
- Intro*  
- Introduction of the contestants  
- Reward/immunity challenge  
- Tribal council → elimination Sonja  
- Disclosure of votes & final comments from the eliminated contestant ** |
| 2         | "The Generation Gap" | June 7 2000 | - Game summary, last week, intro***  
- Immunity challenge  
- Tribal council → elimination B.B.  
- Disclosure of votes & final comments from the eliminated contestant |
| 3         | "Quest for Food" | June 14 2000 | - Game summary, last week, intro*  
- Reward challenge  
- Immunity challenge  
- Tribal council → elimination Stacey  
- Disclosure of votes & final comments from the eliminated contestant |
| 4         | "Too Little, Too Late?" | June 21 2000 | - Game summary, last week, intro  
- Reward challenge  
- Immunity challenge  
- Tribal council → elimination Ramona  
- Disclosure of votes & final comments from the eliminated contestant |
| 5         | "Pulling Your Own Weight" | June 28 2000 | - Game summary, last week, intro  
- Reward challenge  
- Immunity challenge  
- Tribal council → elimination Dirk  
- Disclosure of votes & final comments from the eliminated contestant |
| 6         | "Udder Revenge" | July 5 2000 | - Game summary, last week, intro  
- Reward challenge  
- Immunity challenge  
- Tribal council → elimination Joel  
- Disclosure of votes & final comments from the eliminated contestant |
| 7         | "The Merger" | July 12 2000 | - Game summary, last week, intro  
- The host tells about the merger  
- The merger of the two tribes into one  
- Immunity challenge  
- Tribal council → elimination Gretchen  
- Disclosure of votes & final comments from the eliminated contestant |
| 8         | "Thy Name Is Duplicity" | July 19 2000 | - Game summary, last week, intro  
- Reward challenge  
- Immunity challenge  
- Tribal council → elimination Greg  
- Disclosure of votes & final comments from the eliminated contestant |
| 9         | "Old and New Bonds" | July 26 2000 | - Game summary, last week, intro  
- Reward challenge  
- Immunity challenge  
- Tribal council → elimination Jenna  
- Disclosure of votes & final comments from the eliminated contestant |
| 10        | "Crack In the" | Aug 2 2000 | - Game summary, last week, intro  
- Reward challenge |
<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Alliance** |   | - Immunity challenge  
|   |   | - Tribal council → elimination Gervase  
|   |   | - Disclosure of votes & final comments from the eliminated contestant  
|   |   | - Game summary, last week, intro  
|   |   | - Reward challenge  
|   |   | - Immunity challenge  
|   |   | - Tribal council → elimination Colleen  
|   |   | - Disclosure of votes & final comments from the eliminated contestant  
| 12 | "Death of an Alliance" | Aug 16 2000  
|   |   | - Game summary, last week, intro  
|   |   | - Short summary of the previous events  
|   |   | - Immunity Challenge  
|   |   | - Tribal council → elimination Sean  
|   |   | - Disclosure of votes & final comments from the eliminated contestant  
| 13 | "Season Finale" | Aug 23 2000  
|   |   | - Full game summary, intro  
|   |   | - First immunity challenge  
|   |   | - Tribal council, tie between Richard & Sue → elimination Susan  
|   |   | - Second Immunity Challenge  
|   |   | - Tribal council → elimination Rudy  
|   |   | - The final voting → Richard becomes the sole survivor and wins the prize  
|   |   | - Richard's comments on the victory, footage from his return to the USA  

*Intro – game show opening sequence intro, featuring all the contestants.  
** Disclosure of votes & final comments from the eliminated contestant – all votes are revealed & final comments from the eliminated contestant are shown as the titles roll at the end of the show.  
***Game summary, last week, intro – at the beginning of every episode first follows a brief game summary, followed by the review of events from the last week's episode by the host Jeff Probst and finally, the game show opening sequence intro, featuring all the contestants.

### 7.3 Russia: Poslednij geroj 1

Poslednij geroj 1 from 2001 is the Russian version of the Survivor concept. 16 contestants from the post-Soviet arrived to Panama to be marooned on archipelago Bocas del Toro. They were divided into two tribes and stranded on separate islands. The first episode shows the marooning and arrival to the islands, followed by a challenge for both reward and immunity. Next comes the first elimination, where at the end of the episode the eliminated contestant gets to share her thoughts and leave her last vote to the other competitor in order to save him/her if there is a tie in the voting at the next tribal council. Almost all other episodes share the same narrative structure, where first comes the host’s report about the past events of the game followed by the opening sequence of the show; next comes a reward challenge and an immunity challenge, and finally there is a tribal council where one of the contestants is voted off the island leaving his/her last vote. The possibility of saving a contestant changes after the merger and instead becomes a black mark to eliminate someone in case of a draw at the next tribal council. The final episode presents the full summary of the game, two immunity challenges and two eliminations before the final voting, where the previous contestant come back to vote for the winner and the sole survivor, can occur. The episode ends with the comments from the winner and his expectations for the future (see Figure 3 on the next page).
Russia: *Poslednij geroj 1*(Last Hero 1), 2001 (Host: Sergei Bodrov, Jr.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Episode №</th>
<th>Episode Title</th>
<th>Air Date</th>
<th>Narrative Structure of The Episodes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1          | *Cherepahi i jawericy* (Turtles and Lizards) | Nov 17 2001 | - Short opening with a brief introduction of the game  
- Introduction of the contestants  
- Reward/immunity challenge  
- Tribal council → elimination Yelena Kravtsenko  
- Comments from the eliminated one & the right of the last vote* |
| 2          | *Vozhdi i izgoi* (The leaders and outcasts) | Nov 24 2001 | - Game summary, intro**  
- Reward challenge  
- Immunity challenge  
- Tribal council → elimination Olga Kortsevskaja  
- Comments from the eliminated one & the right of the last vote |
| 3          | *Ljubov' v tropikah* (Love in the tropics) | Dec 1 2001 | - Game summary, intro  
- Reward challenge  
- Immunity challenge  
- Tribal council → elimination Boris Ivanov  
- Comments from the eliminated one & the right of the last vote |
| 4          | *Zagovor* (Conspiracy) | Dec 8 2001 | - Game summary, intro  
- Reward challenge  
- Immunity challenge  
- Tribal council → elimination Aleksandr Morozov  
- Comments from the eliminated one & the right of the last vote |
| 5          | *Anarxija i diktatura* (Anarchy and dictatorship) | Dec 15 2001 | - Game summary, intro  
- Reward challenge  
- Immunity challenge  
- Tribal council → elimination Sergej Terestenko  
- Comments from the eliminated one & the right of the last vote |
| 6          | *Novye vozhdi* (New leaders) | Dec 22 2001 | - Game summary, intro  
- Reward challenge  
- Immunity challenge  
- Tribal council → elimination Irina Furman  
- Comments from the eliminated one & the right of the last vote |
| 7          | *Akuly* (Sharks) | Dec 29 2001 | - Game summary, intro  
- The merger of two tribes into one  
- Immunity challenge  
- Tribal council → elimination Nadezhda Semjonova  
- Comments from the eliminated one & the right of the last vote |
| 8          | *Aukcion* (Auction) | Jan 5 2002 | - Game summary, intro  
- Reward challenge  
- Immunity challenge  
- Tribal council → elimination Snezhanna Knjazeva  
- Comments from the eliminated one & the right of the last vote |
| 9          | *Romantiki i pragmatiki* (Romantics and pragmatists) | Jan 12 2002 | - Game summary, intro  
- Reward challenge  
- Immunity challenge  
- Tribal council → elimination Aleksandr Tselovanskij  
- Comments from the eliminated one & the right of the last vote |
| 10         | *Zhertvoprinosenie* (The Sacrifice) | Jan 19 2002 | - Game summary, intro  
- Reward challenge  
- Immunity challenge  
- Tribal council → elimination Snezhanna Knjazeva  
- Comments from the eliminated one & the right of the last vote |
| 11         | *Shtormovoe* | Jan 26 | - Game summary, intro |
| Preduprezhdenie (Storm Warning) | 2002 | - Reward challenge  
- Immunity challenge  
- Tribal council → elimination Natalya Ten  
- Comments from the eliminated one & the right of the last vote |
|--------------------------------|------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|
| Uragan (Hurricane)           | Feb 2 2002 | - Game summary, intro  
- Reward challenge  
- Immunity challenge  
- Tribal council → elimination Sergej Sakin  
- Comments from the eliminated one & the right of the last vote |
| Ostat'sja v zhvyh (Stay alive/Survive) | Feb 9 2002 | - Game summary, intro  
- First immunity challenge  
- Tribal council → elimination Anna Modestova  
- Second immunity challenge  
- Tribal council → elimination Inna Gomes  
- The final voting → Sergej Odintsov becomes the sole survivor and wins the prize  
- Comments from the winner |

* The right of the last vote – the eliminated contestant gives his/her vote to save another contestant if there is a tie in the voting at the next tribal council.
** Game summary, intro – The host tells about the past events of the game followed by the opening sequence of the show.

### 7.4 The common narrative structure of the reality game show *Survivor*

After reviewing the contents of the three tables in *Figure 1*, *Figure 2* and *Figure 3* and by comparing the narrative structures of the programmes made in Sweden, the USA and Russia it becomes obvious that they have more similarities than differences. After all, all three shows are based on the original concept created by Charlie Parsons, which means that the semblance of the programmes was expected. It can be stated that the overall structure of the three shows is built on the same principal of 16 marooned contestants, who are forced to survive while competing in various challenges until only one can become the winner of the game prize and crowned the title of sole survivor. There are, however, minor differences in the narrative structures that are worth noting before a common construction can be established.

In the Swedish version of the game show, for instance, there is not much attention given to the eliminated contestant after the tribal council, in comparison to the American or Russian shows. The eliminated contestant follows the host Harald Treutiger to the boat, which takes him/her away from the island, while mostly talking about food. This trend can, in all probability, be devolved upon the fact that there is a number of presentations of the contestants during the course of the programme, which suggest that the audience is already familiar with the contestant and does not need to observe the additional reaction besides the one that the producers have allowed for. However, it can also mean that the reactions on eliminations could not be shown fully due to some restrictions that had to be made after the programme received some harsh criticism. Another, more stylistic difference in the narrative
construction, is the opening sequence of *Expedition Robinson* that comes before the host’s summary of the previous events, whereas it is vice versa in the other two programmes.

When it comes to American *Survivor: Borneo* and Russian *Poslednij Geroj 1* it can be stated that the two shows are so similar in their narrative structures that they are practically identical. For that reason I managed to spot only two significant differences between these programmes. First, the revelation of the votes from the tribal council at the end of each episode in the USA while all the votes are shown to the viewer during the tribal council in the Russian game show. Second, there is an added element to the show in *Poslednij Geroj 1* – the right of the last vote, which means that the eliminated contestant gives his/her vote to save another contestant if there is a tie in the voting at the next tribal council. However after the merger of the two tribes into one, this vote is left as a black mark in order to eliminate the chosen contestant. Neither the American nor the Swedish programmes have this game element. Instead, these game shows include a repeated voting, which allows to only vote for one of the contestants in a draw, and, if the contestants receive the same number of votes again, it is the host that gets to decide the faith of the castaways by randomly choosing the name of the leaving contestant. Again, even these differences discussed above are more stylistic in their nature and consequently, they do not cause any major distinctions in the narrative structures.

To state the obvious, all three programmes were produced at different periods, in different locations and by different producers to satisfy the needs of various national audiences. Therefore there are unquestionably some differences in the narratives of the game shows that can be spotted. However, there is a clear pattern that can be found in all three productions, which is not unexpected given the fact that they are made from the same reality game show format. What is more important is that the common narrative structure of the *Survivor* format can, without particular difficulties, be found in all three programmes and arranged as illustrated in *Figure 4* (see next page).

Still, I need to point out that this common narrative structure is only based on the first seasons of the show made in Sweden, the USA and Russia. Therefore it can be seen as a core template for building a game show *Survivor*. In addition, it is important to mention that following productions of the *Survivor* format include diverse variations and added twists, which contribute to estrangement from the original concept. Fortunately, the lack of these variations and additions in the reviewed programmes from Sweden, the USA and Russia contribute to efficient discoveries of the narrative patterns in this study.
7.5 National identities in the transnational reality game show format *Survivor*

As the common narrative structure of the game show *Survivor* has been presented, it is now possible to look beyond the show’s construction and analyse the remaining narrative elements that are present in the programmes. Because this study aims to analyse how national identities are portrayed in the game shows produced in Sweden, the USA and Russia, the narrative elements for the analysis include nation-specific components that are featured in the reality programmes. These often unnoticed elements are particular for one or another nation as they consequently can reveal what is typical for a given country and, as a result, illustrate how the concept of nation is represented and reproduced in the programme.

*Figure 5* contains a transcription of other significant events that occurred in the episodes of the chosen programmes besides their main structural narrative features, which has been discussed previously. These events do not affect the narrative structures of the shows – instead, they are more likely to complement the storyline about castaways by making it more attractive and thrilling for the audiences. The events transcribed in *Figure 5* have been chosen from a range of the narrative features in the national productions from Sweden, the USA and Russia. These events are the earlier mentioned nation-specific elements, which are valuable for conducting the analysis of the national representations in the *Survivor* format productions. Because the analysis in this essay is to some extent comparative, the table in *Figure 5* has been constructed in a way that allows to both see the features of the separate nation and distinguish the difference between all three nations.
**Figure 5.**

### Other Significant Events in Survivor

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Episode No</th>
<th>Sweden Expedition Robinson</th>
<th>The USA Survivor: Borneo</th>
<th>Russia Poslednij geroj 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1          | - The trip from Sweden to Malaysia  
- Division into two tribes Nord (North) & Syd (South)  
- Setting in on the island  
- Building the shelters  
- Missing coffee, falukorv (sausages), toothbrush etc. (Syd)  | - The marooning from the boat  
- Division into two tribes: T agei wears orange, Pagong wears yellow  
- Arrival to the island, both tribes start to build shelter & attempt to get fire  
- Treemail – the only contact with the outside world  
- Fire means life on the island  | - The marooning from the boat  
- Two tribes emerge: Tortugas/turtles (orange) & Lagartos/lizards (blue)  
- Singing while building shelters  
- Treemail – the only contact with the outside world  
- Attempts to start fire  
- T catches lizards, L finds turtle eggs  
- Fire means life on the island |
| 2          | - June 6th – Swedish National day  
- The search for food  
- Syd builds a toilet  
- Sunday church service with Kent (Syd)  
- Nord wins living chickens – builds a hönsgård (chicken-run)  | - Pagong is still building shelter  
- Richard is gay & his friendship with the ex-Navy SEAL Rudy (Tagi)  
- Greg & Colleen relationship (P)  
- B.B.’s conflict with other tribe members (Pagong)  | - First conflict when Nadezhda threw away the crabs Natalya & Boris gathered (Tortugas)  
- Sergej T. refuses to compete against Inna at the immunity challenge  
- Sergej Odintsov’s birthday, gets beer & champagne (Lagartos)  |
| 3          | - Second service with Kent (Syd)  
- Trading between the tribes  
- Johan vs. Camilla conflict (Syd)  
- Fleet building (Syd)  | - Dirk’s religiosity – virgin at 23 (Tagi)  
- Pagong found mud volcano  
- Richard catches first fish (Tagi)  
- Both teams built stretcher for the challenge  | - Sergej S. wants to write a letter to another island, his roman with Anna M. is reviled (Lagartos)  
- Aleksandr T. tries to brew moonshine  
- Sergej S. makes large letters ANNA & sets them on fire so that she sees them  |
| 4          | - Johan vs. Camilla clash continues (S)  
- Hunger  
- Kent as a leader? (Syd)  
- Mysterious Jürgen (Nord)  
- Barbecue (North)  | - Pagong has to move shelter into the jungle after the rain; discusses Ramona’s laziness.  
- Richard, Sue & Kelly alliance emerges (Tagi)  
- Sean makes a bowling alley (Tagi)  | - Tortugas catch a snake to eat it  
- Conspiracy by Aleksandr M. against Inna (Lagartos)  
- Tortugas celebrate the victory by saying toasts, making costumes & jumping through the fire  
- Lagartos: Sergej S. & Sergej O. form an alliance  |
| 5          | - Thoughts about the merger  
- N message to S: “Doomsday is near”  
- Camilla and Martin go on a date  
- Top 5 list from contestants  
- 3rd church service with  | - Sean & Dirk fishing is a waste of time (Tagi)  
- Pagong is tired & depressed  
- Dirk lost a lot of weight (Tagi)  
- Pagong enjoys the chickens after victory  | - Lagartos lost the last challenge on purpose to vote out Aleksandr M.  
- Tortugas are hungry  
- Cameras for confessions  
- Lagartos are divided into two groups  |
| Kent (Syd) | 6 | - New tribe is "Expedition Robinson"  
- New camp on the North’s side  
- Christin is sick, has to leave the game  
- Åsa’s 23rd birthday  
- “Traditional” Midsummer celebration  
- Richard goes around naked (Tagi)  
- Pagong intends to eat up chickens before the merger  
- Gervase’s comment: "girls are the stupidest things next to cows" (P)  
- Natalya teaches Sergej T. waltz  
|  |
| - Inna is invited for dinner to Tortugas, sailed on a chest  
- Natalya’s birthday (Tortugas)  
- Lagartos finds a sea turtle on the beach & helps it back to the sea  
- Aleksandr T. confronts the tribe (Lagartos)  
|  |
| 7 | - Shelter building continues  
- Alliance of Syd exposed & terminated  
- Åsa calls her boyfriend  
- Jürgen builds a bathtub  
- Kent’s 4th church service  
- The ambassadors from each tribe meet and decide on the future of the new tribe: name, flag, beach  
- The tribes merge into Rattana and settle on Tagi beach  
- Revealing stories at the fire during the first night  
|  |
| - The ambassadors Anna & Sergej S. meet to decide on the name & location for the new tribe  
- Lagartos moved to the Tortugas  
- Tiburones/sharks emerge (green)  
- The right of the last vote is now a black mark to eliminate someone  
|  |
| 8 | - Speculations about the finale  
- Martin builds a gym  
- The tribe starts to build a boat  
- At the tribal council they get a sail  
- Kent suspects a secret alliance  
|  |
| - Suspcion on an alliance within the tribe  
- Jenna misses her kids: didn’t get any video from home  
- Greg wins the video from his sister and answers on it  
|  |
| - Discussions about tactics & strategy  
- Auction  
- The tribe buys news for Aleksandr T. for 300$ - he will become a father  
- Talks & toasts at the bonfire  
- Tropic arm-wrestling  
- Sergej S. helps Anna win immunity  
|  |
| 9 | - The boat is ready – the tribe takes a trip to another island  
- The host brings two kittens, they get named Svea & Sven  
- Kent’s 5th church service  
|  |
| - Sue & Richard lie about the alliance, Kelly wants to leave it  
- Richards 39th birthday, celebrates it naked  
- New alliance: Colleen, Jenna & Gervase  
- Sean votes in alphabetical order  
- Core group begins with Greg, he returns to follow the voting  
|  |
| - Snowhanna & Sergej O. go to barbeque  
- Phone to call home, but only 15 min for the whole tribe  
- Sergej S. & Anna call to ask for a blessing to get married  
- Confrontation between Sergej O. & Aleksandr T.  
- War paint at tribal council  
|  |
| 10 | - Voting strategy talks  
- Martin "The policeman" describes other contestants  
- The tribe members get a mirror and scales – shocked by their appearances  
- Martin meets his girlfriend Lena  
|  |
| - Sean thinks to abandon his voting strategy  
- Richards catches less fish to make others appreciate him more  
- Gervase becomes a father, gets a cigar, wins a phone call home  
|  |
| - Inna teaches Natalya the model walk  
- Map to a waterfall  
- Discussions of the voting  
- Aleksandr T. gets to meet his wife Oksana: invites Ivan for breakfast  
- Ivan’s birthday: he gets a bucket of beer & gifts from |
| 11 | - Åsa & Martin get massage  
- Kent's 6th church service  
- Auction  
- More strategy talk | - The tribe is weak and hungry  
- Sean wins a night on a yacht & gets to meet with his father  
- Richard joined Sean for breakfast  
- Packages from home  
- Kelly is a "double agent" | - Sergej O. & Sergej S. learn how to catch lobsters  
- Sergej O. gets to see a video from his family and makes one for them  
- Rain season starts  
- Epidemic of dengue fever  
- Ivan builds a table |
| 12 | - The host describes the rules for the last three days  
- During the 2nd challenge Kent makes a deal with Martin to go to the final voting  
- On the last day Martin & Kent make a monument "Expedition Robinson 1997"  
- Core group comes back to vote for the winner, first gets to ask questions | - Opinions on whether the tribe exist as a group  
- New voting alliances emerge  
- Sean, Sue & Richard miss home  
- Kelly gets to see the first episode of the programme  
- Who will make it to the final four? | - Storm is coming  
- Breakfast in bed for Sergej O.  
- Singing while competing for immunity  
- At the tribal council Sergej S. & Anna get married, witnesses Sergej O. & Inna  
- A couple cannot compete, therefore one must leave the competition |
| 13 | - | - Appearance changes  
- All about the money at this stage  
- Jeff picks up contestants early to perform an ancient ritual, to think about all what happened in the past  
- Richard drops early from the challenge and discusses tactics with the host Jeff Probst  
- Kelly & Richard burn the camp  
- Core group returns to the last tribal council, asks questions and votes for the winner | - Earthquake  
- Discussions on what to do with the prize money  
- Contestants get a mirror to see the appearance changes  
- The final two Ivan & Sergej O.: 15 min to take leave of the island  
- Core group comes back to the last tribal council, ask questions and vote for the winner and the sole survivor |

7.5.1 “Swedishness” in *Expedition Robinson*

*Expedition Robinson* has been debated and criticised multiple times, but in spite of all negative reviews the programme has become one of the most beloved entertainment TV shows in Sweden. Nonetheless, some critics claim that this reality game show reflects the Swedish society of the 90s. In a TV debate programme freelance journalist Per Svensson compares the show to a Swedish workplace with fixated norms of integrating with each other, where some do not fit and therefore have to leave. He even compares *Expedition Robinson*’s contestant Kent to an old department manager, who is challenged by younger employees.
(SVT, 1997). Nonetheless, the question here lies in the notion of “Swedishness” represented in this game show.

By looking at Figure 5 it is possible to detect some narrative elements that can be discussed in terms of nationality. Already in the first episode there is a fragment at the tribal council where contestants of Syd tribe are asked what they miss the most from home – Kent names coffee, Erika talks about husmanskost (home cooking) and falukorv (a type of sausage) and Åsa misses the toothbrush (S01E01). The given answers can be interpreted as a longing for special national “objects” such as home cooked meals and especially the typical Swedish meals as falukorv; coffee represents a sacred ritual for many Swedes as they love to drink their coffee at home and take fika (coffee-brakes) at work. Åsa’s toothbrush is slightly different in its meaning due to the fact that it may stand for personal hygiene and the unspoken rules and norms of the modern society, which is demonstrated by an example from the second episode when the tribe builds a toilet, which is an invention of the modern civilized society. The same can apply to the seventh episode where Jürgen builds a bathtub – it is no actual bathtub, but its notion satisfies his hygiene needs of feeling clean by bathing, the ritual performed in the whole world.

The description of the second episode in Figure 5 starts with Sweden’s National Day, which is celebrated by singing the national anthem, which is the excellent example of the banal representation of the nation state according to Billig (1995). It is also an example of the ritual performed by an “imagined community” (Anderson, 2006) – it is a tradition to sing the national anthem on the national day as the thought that everyone else across the country does the same creates a special bond and a feeling of belonging, even if the person is marooned on a deserted island at the moment (S01E02). Another partial demonstration of national beliefs is connected to religion as Kent carries out a church service every Sunday while he is on the island. This ritual is an additional example of Anderson’s “imagined community”, which in this context actually stretches out beyond Sweden and includes the global religious beliefs (S01E02, S01E03, S01E05, S01E07, S01E09, and S01E11). The sixth episode includes one of the most banal representations and reproductions of “Swedishness” – the celebration of Midsummer. Even on a tropical island the contestants perform the same ceremonies as they would have back in Sweden, e.g. raising the maypole. They even get to compete in typical Midsummer games for some classic Midsummer foods as potatoes, fresh dill, soured cream and herring (S01E06). This example illustrates how the preservation of a national tradition serves as both formation and reproduction of the Swedish national identity.
In the ninth episode of *Expedition Robinson* the host Harald Treutiger brings two little kittens to the tribe. These kittens get names Svea and Sven, which can be interpreted as an expression of a longing back home to Sweden and the expression of a national character (S01E09). During the eleventh episode the host leads an auction for the contestants, where a variety of typical Swedish products are sold, such as liquorice and a caviar sandwich. The auction not only shows how some food items can be strongly connected to the concept of “Swedishness” but it also illustrates the rules in the society as contestants start to trade money and food with each other in order to benefit more from the exchange (S01E11).

There are multiple nation-specific characteristics in *Expedition Robinson* that can be analysed and discussed. The elements of the programme analysed above are a few examples which I believe illustrate the idea of “Swedishness” in a best possible way. However, it does not indicate that other aspects are insignificant – sooner, it means that there is a lot of room for further research.

7.5.2 “Americanness” in *Survivor: Borneo*

*Survivor: Borneo* brought its broadcaster CBS exceptionally high ratings and became an instant hit among the audience (Carter, 2000). The thrill of watching 16 ordinary Americans trying to survive on a stranded island while competing for the main prize attracted more and more viewers to each new episode. The ultimate game show, with the elements of reality show and docusoaps, is created in accordance with the format but also includes some specific elements that the American audience would relate to. These elements are considered as tools to represent and reproduce “Americanness” in the game show.

By examining the second column in Figure 5, a range of nation-specific characteristics can be spotted. To start with the first episode of *Survivor: Borneo*, treemail that contestants often receive is introduced as the only contact with the outside world. This concept can be understood as the only link to and a reminder of a modern civilised world outside the island and an illustration of the communication in the society. As a contradiction, fire represents life on the island, reminding the contestants of remote times of a pre-modern era (S01E01). In the second episode, Richard’s sexual orientation is revealed – he is a homosexual. For that reason his friendship with an “old-school” ex-NAVY seal Rudy is centred (S01E02). This situation is a clear illustration of the American society as it is divided in opinions about sexual minorities. Moreover, the second episode brings up the issue of “the generation gap” as both Rudy and B.B., who are the oldest competitors on the show, start to have problems with their tribe.
members due to differences in opinions. Even this example shows the nationally existing problem, where the older generation is having trouble to understand the youngsters and vice versa. However, it is worth to point out that both examples are not only existing in the USA – they are also recognisable in other societies. On the other hand, these issues have been chosen to be shown to the audience in order for it to relate to the subject, which can indicate that these matters were current in the American society when the game show was aired.

The third episode shows Dirk and his unconditional dedication to religion, which can be seen as a representation of a religious community, which Anderson (2006) would account for an imagined one (S01E03). The sixth episode shows Gervase making a condescending comment about women – he states “girls are the stupidest things next to cows”, a phrase that creates several discussions on the themes of inequality between men and women (S01E06). This incident is reminiscent of an everlasting debate in society that once again divides the population by different opinions. This dispute is still relevant today and the question of women being treated with less respect than men is debated on a global level.

Going from global to more narrow national representations, the following narrative elements can serve as examples: Sean builds a bowling alley in the fourth episode as a representation of the entertainment culture in the USA (S01E04), Richard goes around naked and even wants to celebrate his birthday nude, which can be interpreted as a sign of liberation and independence (S01E06 & S01E09), and finally in the seventh episode the contestants share their revealing stories with each other as they sit around the fire after the merger, which can be seen as an old national tradition of telling stories at the campfire (S01E07).

The narrative element discussed above represent a certain part of “Americanness”. Though I discovered that a whole lot of other significant narrative elements may not represent the nation per se, they may instead illustrate various relationships and real life situations, which in turn might be familiar and relatable for the American audience. Such examples can be Jenna’s overwhelming emotions as she misses her family and as a result breaks down on national TV (S01E08), or Gervase who becomes a father while being on the island (S01E10). Obviously it does not mean that other audiences would not react or relate to similar elements. However I believe that in this particular context the presence of these features indicates a certain way of being that is recognizable among many Americans. Naturally, there might be an easier explanation as e.g. these elements could solely be used by the producers to get the audience hooked on the show in order to keep the high ratings and to make profit. Another distinctive
feature in the narrative elements that is worth pointing out is the fact that almost every episode focuses more or less on discussions about game strategy, tactics and alliances. Such a feature can without a doubt represent a certain kind of “Americanness”, but whether this particular representation is true or false is a new should be a theme for discussion for further research of the subject.

7.5.3 “Russianness” in Poslednij Geroj 1

Poslednij Geroj 1 became one of the most popular reality TV game shows among the post-Soviet audience. The novelty of programme’s Western format and the exotic location invited the viewers to experience something extraordinary together with 16 competing contestants. Nevertheless, the narrative elements of the show beyond the basic narrative structure can reveal a little something about “Russianness” and how it has been reproduced in Poslednij Geroj 1, a programme about people’s nobleness and integrity (Zuenko & Chumachenko, 2002).

Figure 5 contains descriptions of the narrative elements that can be discussed in terms of nation-specific features. In the first episode of Poslednij Geroj 1 elements like treemail and fire serve as different reminders – the treemail reminds of the global civilisation that still exist outside the island, while fire becomes the main tool in order to survive (S01E01). Another nation-specific element that is easily recognizable among the post-Soviet audiences is singing, which is present in various situations in the game. Singing is one of the most banal representations of the nation as it is the most common tradition among people – they sing songs on almost every occasion to create a feeling of belonging together and to express certain emotions.

Moving on to the second episode, where the first weighty conflict emerges after Nadezhda’s decision to throw out the crabs that Natalya and Boris have gathered earlier (S01E02). This conflict triggers the issue of respect to another person’s labour, a very delicate and typical subject for the Russian nation. Even the notion of dignity is presented in the same episode as Sergej T. refuses to compete against Inna, which can easily be interpreted as an issue of moral and inequality, especially in physical strength, between a man and a woman. This is one of the most traditional and easily recognisable beliefs in the post-Soviet societies, where the unspoken rule is that a man should never compete against a woman, especially when the difference in strength is overwhelming; therefore it is only noble to refuse the competition. The third episode reveals a romantic twist as the romance between Sergej S. and Anna is
exposed and his attempts of letting her know about his feelings are shown to the viewers (S01E03). Such element has little to do with Russia specifically, and much more with the global idea of love that overcomes any obstacle. This idea is reinforced during the twelfth episode when a couple decides to register a civil marriage directly on the island during the tribal council (S01E12).

To come back to more nation oriented elements, the attempt of brewing moonshine by Aleksandr T. is both clichéd and typical, as it is also a globally known stereotype of Russia as “the drinking nation”. Therefore, this element can be interpreted as a banal reproduction of the nation. Alongside with brewing, the celebrations of birthdays and victories are pictured as traditional national celebrations in less traditional environment, e.g. Sergej O. gets a beer he longed for and a bottle of champagne for the tribe for his birthday and Ivan gets a whole bucket of beer and some presents from home. These elements clearly simulate the national traditions of celebrations, which are in fact features of Billig’s concept of banal nationalism (1995). Another type of nationalism is demonstrated when the tribe members join forces to accomplish certain result and show goodness and selflessness, e.g. in the eighth episode the tribe chooses to buy news from home for Aleksandr T. instead of a cake to feed everyone (S01E08), and in the sixth episode the Lagartos tribe helps a sea turtle back to the ocean instead of taking it for food (S01E06). Naturally, there are some narrative elements that are more concentrated on showing the game and not the national characteristics, e.g. multiple confrontations and conflicts. However, the majority of these clashes resolve after a while as the contestants show understanding and forgiveness to each other. Whether this is done on purpose to once again reinforce the human goodness and nobility in attempt to illustrate the beliefs of the whole society or to produce a nicer TV programme is debatable.

Undoubtedly, Poslednij Geroj 1 represents the main notion of “Russianness” and aims to illustrate the national “soul and heart” at once. However, I question the producers’ ambition to highlight the good and noble side of the game more than the raw nature of the competition. My own opinion is that this was done on purpose from the production’s side to show the audience their certain version of events, sooner than it actually was an illustration of the real national identity. I guess when it comes to it, it is really a matter of personal taste as each person chooses freely what so see and what to ignore when looking at the TV screen.

In conclusion, I wish to notice that after analysing the narrative features of the shows from Sweden, the USA and Russia on a macro level, I discovered several interesting narrative
elements in all three productions of the *Survivor* format, which can be noticed and analysed in terms of national representations. However, because of the essay’s length limits, I have striven to include only the most significant elements that I consider to be the best examples of the representations and reproductions of national identities in a transnational TV format.

### 7.6 Discussion

The discussion can begin by acknowledging the fact that all three programmes, which are analysed in this study, have been edited by production teams with their specific aims. Therefore it is safe to say that each show represents a particular point of view and allows the viewer to see what the producers want the public to see. Obviously, the producing teams strive to satisfy the desires of the audiences and for that reason it is not a completely negative aspect. Then again, depending on the aims of the programme, the producers present what they consider being the most successful – some are convinced that sex sells, other may concentrate on personal rivalry and intrigues, while others show the human decency and goodness.

After analysing the *Survivor* format programmes made in Sweden, the USA and Russia and focusing on the portrayals of the national identities, I can state that the nation-specific representations are repeatedly based on national rituals, traditions and beliefs. To refer to Billig’s idea of banal nationalism (1995) the narrative elements that can be interpreted as the typical national qualities are “unflagged”, which means that they are in fact a part of the daily nationalism that for the most goes unnoticed. Perhaps it is a shift in contexts caused by a transfer from a natural environment into an exotic one that makes the banal nationalism more noticeable than usual, or perhaps it is yet again the intentions of the producers to create a certain idea of existing nationalism that can be interesting to the audiences.

Paradoxically, Anderson’s “imagined communities” (2006) are still relevant on the remote island, where all members are acquaintances to some extent, which means that they actually are a part of a real community. In spite of this, the contestants came to the island with certain enduring personal quality, e.g. religious beliefs and sexual orientations. This results in a fact that the castaways belong to different imagined communities while actually living in a real one. What is more interesting here is that because the programmes are shown on TV, they assist in creation of new “imagined communities” as fan clubs of the shows or a certain contestant. Moreover, because TV is a global medium, these “imagined communities” spread across the countries’ boarders and establish themselves on a transnational level. Speaking of
globalization, Appadurai means that the major factors of the change in the modern era are electronic means of communication and mass migration (1996). Assuming that this is the case, the reality show *Survivor* and all its international productions subsequently allow for further expansion of globalization while simultaneously increasing the importance of locality on the international scene. Judging from my own experience, it is generally easier to adapt and become accustomed with the ways of being in a new country when it is possible to recognize some familiar features, like, for instance, TV programmes that are created from a transnational format. Familiarizing with the new nation in such a way results in the principle of local becoming global and vice versa, thereby reproducing the notion of globalization while maintaining the position of the locality.

I feel the need to discuss a few narrative elements, which have been discovered in the process of reviewing the programmes. Mainly because they not only represent national identities, but also highlight the contrasts between Western, Eastern and European societies. In the ninth episode of *Poslednij Geroj 1* the couple Sergej S. and Anna call Anna’s mother to ask for a blessing to get married on the island. It is a rather common habit in post-Soviet countries to ask for parental consent, and even the American society, to some extent, is no stranger to the tradition. However, this ritual is considered to be rather old-fashioned and even strange to practise in today’s Sweden. It can depend on different historical background of the country, but also on the more preferable alternative among the Swedish couples that is the choice of living together without entering into a marriage, or as the Swedes call it “sambo”.

In *Survivor: Borneo* a contestant walks around naked and it immediately creates a debate as some of the fellow castaways are offended and feel uncomfortable. In terms of national representations it can be interpreted in several ways: first, it can indicate prudishness due to the negative reactions; second, it can represent the inability to accept “the other way of being” and finally, it can be interpreted as the expression of free will and independence. Whether the fact that the contestant who triggered this debate was homosexual and that his sexual orientation had something to do with this controversy can be discussed further. The point to make here is that the issue of nakedness drew a lot more attention in the American production of the *Survivor* format then it did in the Swedish or Russian versions, where it surely was present. What it means in terms of representing “Americanness” can be debated.

Even though the issue of increased alcohol consumption is more of a stereotype when it comes to Russia, there can still be some food for thought. If I am to look at all three
programmes of the Survivor format from Sweden, the USA and Russia, it is clear that for the most part alcohol is present in Poslednij Geroj. Naturally, it may be a simple coincidence since there are several birthdays celebrated during the show and it is when alcohol is usually present in the episodes. It can also depend on the fact that alcohol is not overstated and therefore is not seen as something extraordinary. However, this particular feature still enforces the myth about Russians’ drinking habits and adds more weight to the already existing stereotype of the nation, where vodka is cheaper than water.

Clearly, the representations of the nations vary from each other, if compared. It can even be stated that the programmes in fact illustrate the social structures of the societies, which is not that remote from the truth. Swedish Expedition Robinson offers the stereotypical view on “Swedishness” as the show portrays the contestants as rather calm and moderate, avoiding any direct conflicts and expressing their opinions mostly to the camera. In contrast, American Survivor: Borneo paints a picture of a vibrant and diverse society in every possible way. Some may even say that there is no middle way: it is either the one or the other, as actually showed in the show – there is either a presence of cheerful team spirit or gloomy discord, honest loyalties or deceiving betrayals. In its turn, Poslednij Geroj 1 was mostly aimed to illustrate people’s nobility and decency, to see the contestants at their best in spite of the difficult conditions in which they were put. Even the heated arguments and confessions were reduced to the explanations and motivations followed by forgiveness and consolation. By doing so, the producers succeeded in creating the most positive representations of the Russian nation, which is a rather distinctive difference from the national portrayals of Sweden and the USA in their productions. There is however no denial that the Western influences occur in Poslednij Geroj 1 – the license for the programme was purchased directly from West.

Although, it is still rather interesting to analyse how Eastern media corporation handles the Western format and actually turns it into a national product. Similarly, it corresponds with the previous study of Jin Park and Curran (2000) who address the issue and encourage to pay more attention to the countries outside the Western Anglo-American circle. They acknowledge the importance of the TV as a global medium, but at the same time they imply that the idea of nation is still significant in spite of the more relevant debate about globalization.

As a final point of the discussion it is necessary to mention the complexity of the analysis conducted in the essay. To agree with Sonia Livingstone, the transnational comparisons are interesting but problematic (2003). Because globalization is constantly debatable, not the least
in media sphere, it is only natural to aim the research on similarities and differences between the nations. However, there are several difficulties that accompany the research, such as the possibility of reviewing the nations through the “Western lens” or simply the problematic notion of “the nation” (Livingstone, 2003). Even though the international comparative research is hard and sometimes even impossible, it is still essential and necessary in the globalized world. The macro analysis conducted in this study is a comparative one, and it required the finding of balance between the view of “the insider” and “the outsider” at the same time. Being the most difficult aspect of the analysis, the dialog between the two is the key to a successful and significant examination and comparison. I do believe that I achieved the required balance in the perspectives, even if it in fact was challenging to remain objective during the process.
8. Conclusion

This concluding chapter presents the findings obtained from the results of the conducted analysis. It also provides with several suggestions for further research on the study’s subject.

Reality game show format Survivor is a transnational phenomenon that managed to change global media industry. This essay dealt with several aspects of the phenomenon, such as, among others, its background and the process of global expansion. The original interest in Survivor format was based on the curiosity about the ability of a single reality TV show format to appeal to different nations. For that reason I sought to analyze the aspects of representation and reproductions of the nation in the programme. To make the study more exciting I made a decision to conduct the analysis of three nations that essentially are very different from each other. The choice of Sweden, the USA and Russia turned out to be very successful as the analysis remarkably illustrated both similarities and differences between the national productions. I also believe that the obvious contrast between the countries emphasized the nation-specific characteristics that were presented.

It can be stated that the choice of the narrative analysis with a comparative approach as a method of study allowed for certain flexibility and liberty. Following Propp’s folk tale structure, I managed to present my own narrative constructions of the programmes. By comparing their narrative compositions, I was able to spot a common narrative structure for all three productions which served as a tool in the analysis of national identities. As a result, the analysis demonstrated that the majority of nation-specific representations of the nations are actually the illustrations of national rituals and tradition, which in real everyday life often go unnoticed of “unflagged”, to borrow the term from Billig (1995). To name a few examples of the most banal national representations, the most obvious “Swedishness” in Expedition Robinson is illustrated through the Midsummer celebration with certain rituals and traditional national foods; typical “Americanness” in Survivor: Borneo is demonstrated through Richard’s choice to walk around naked as a symbol of physical and moral liberty, and finally, the traditional notion of “Russianness” in Poslednij Geroj I is represented via men’s dignity of Sergej T. who refuses to compete against a woman due to strength inequality.

Even though the national representations in game shows’ narratives are nation-specific, in my view the programmes still produce somewhat stereotypical images of the nations. Whether such a feature is an intentional act or a coincidence remains a mystery as I can solely speculate on the subject.
8.1 Suggestions for further research

As I performed this study and gathered more and more insight in the field of reality TV shows and *Survivor* in particular, a wide range of ideas for further research passed my mind. I believe it is significant to share them in this final section of the essay as they might inspire subsequent inquiries that can come up with new conclusions significant for the field of Media and Communications Studies.

My own research was inspired by a structuralistic approach; therefore one of the suggestions for further studies is to conduct a structural analysis of the characters in the game show. Another one might be to analyze the programme as a social structure of the society in detail. Because this study conducted a macro perspective analysis it would be interesting to explore the subject of national representations on micro level in one or more national productions.

Similarly to Aslama and Pantti, who analyzed representations of Finnishness in reality TV (2007) it is possible to conduct similar research for every nation and to seek for national expressions. The option of comparing the nations can be considered, but may be confusing and complicated. Though, a comparison of notions of “good” and “evil” in the show, in a similar way that Cavender (2004) discusses that *Survivor* sends mixed messages at the same time, could be very interesting due to the contrast of oppositions.

Further research can undoubtedly be centred on analyzing behaviours and reactions. Audiences and contestants could be observed in interaction with each other or separately. This type of research would definitely be able to produce some debatable conclusions that could shed light on some hidden aspects of human nature.

There can be multiple further studies on the sole subject of national representations in the *Survivor* format, and even more about reality TV shows. I intended to suggest some interesting themes for further research as the subject still remains rather unexplored. I sincerely believe that by analysing transnational TV formats such as *Survivor* from both macro and micro perspectives it would be possible to attain new finding that could answer many questions within Media and Communication Studies.
List of references

Printed sources


Online sources


http://www.castawaytelevision.com/about_us/ (accessed on 5 April 2013)


(accessed: 16 May 2013)

Available on:
http://www.aftonbladet.se/nojesbladet/tv/dokusapa/article177333.ab
(accessed: 16 May 2013)

May, Vanessa (May, 2010). What is ... Narrative Analysis? Methods@Manchester. Realities
(Part of the ESRC National Centre for Research Methods) and Morgan Centre
for the Study of Relationships and Personal Life. Available through:
http://www.methods.manchester.ac.uk/methods/narrative (accessed: 19 March 2013)

Oxford Dictionaries. Reality TV. Available on:

Price, Emma (2010) 'Reinforcing the myth: Constructing Australian identity in 'reality TV”.
Continuum, 24: 3, 451 — 459. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10304311003703157
(accessed: 19 March 2013)

Saperecom LLC (2013). A Brief History Of Television. Available on:
http://www.historyoftelevision.net/ (accessed on: 18 March 2013)

http://www.svtplay.se/klipp/74146/robinson-1997-debatt
(accessed: 16 May 2013)


**Programmes**

*Survivor: Borneo*. Season 1, episodes 1-13. Available to watch online on: [http://www.tubeplus.me/player/1353190/Survivor/](http://www.tubeplus.me/player/1353190/Survivor/)


*Expedition Robinson*. Season 1, episodes 1-12. An order from *Svensk mediedatabas* (SMDB). Recorded on D 8555 & D 8556 and sent to Södertörn University’s library.