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Casting Shows and Culture: How Different National Cultures Define Who Wins or Loses *Pop Idol*

Pop Idol is one of the world's most famous casting formats. Debuting in Great Britain in 2001, it was spread throughout the whole world and became one of the most popular shows all over the globe. Although the standardized TV format has its cross-national rules and regulations, the national spin-offs are often stamped by national characteristics.

This paper focuses on the candidates' careers with special reference to the fans' behavior towards their supported candidate, during the corresponding program's seasonal run and immediately *after*. Taking culture into consideration, the research is based on certain cultural characteristics and standards in a society, as defined by, e.g., Hofstede, Trompenaars or House et. al. Why does the US American society often enables its superstar to live the American dream "to rise from rags to riches" while not one of the German winners did successfully initiate some kind of longer-lasting career? The paper starts from the assumption that cultural values rather than economical conditions are key in this context.