Cultivation
J201 Introduction to Mass Communication
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① As you turn in written assignments remember: Copying or paraphrasing text, including from fellow students, without proper quotation and citation is PLAGIARISM. This includes “patchwriting,” the piecing together of different sources into a paper, often with minimal editing. Plagiarism may be sufficient grounds for failing a student in the entire course.
Last class main points

① Media focus our attention (a different way of thinking about media effects that receives strong support).

② Forces shaping media’s agenda include: powerful external actors, media routines and organization, professional norms and ideology.

③ Obtrusiveness of issues, political talk, personal interests and declining trust can limit agenda setting capabilities of media.

④ New communication environment, emergence of issue publics and partisanship, challenge media’s agenda setting role.
① Overview of the cultural indicators & cultivation projects

② Mean-world syndrome

③ Mainstreaming

④ New media and cultivation
Humans inhabit a world of stories that are told and retold. Most of what we know we have not experienced directly.

Television transformed the cultural process of story-telling by making it into a centralized, standardized system, coordinated by the advertising market.

“Today” television tells the largest number of stories to the largest number of people most of the time.
• Cultivation does not privilege the impact of one specific show, or its production quality, nor audience contingent interpretations of it.

• TV is understood as a message system that exposes a community to an aggregate and repetitive system of images that a community can adopt over time.

• A singularity of this story-telling system is that it operates outside the democratic system of political decision making.
Antecedents of the cultural indicators project


• George Gerbner’s content analysis of prime time television: by the age of 12 a child has “witnessed” 8,000 homicides and 100,000 violent acts.

• Project expands from violence to other themes such as gender roles, stereotypes, health, science and politics.
• Institutional analysis (How are messages produced and distributed).

• Message system analysis (What is the recurring media content).

• Cultivation analysis (How television exposure molds perceptions about the “real” world).
• Pasive activity (critical of selective exposure)
  - 3 hours on average in the 80s…
  - Routine and prime time shows.
  - An important component of rating is what shows comes before…

• Remote control, cable, VHS, Youtube?
On average how many hours of television/videos do you watch per day.

Poll locked. Responses not accepted.
Leisure time on an average day

- Watching TV (2.8 hours)
- Total leisure and sports time = 5.0 hours
- Relaxing and thinking (18 minutes)
- Other leisure activities (16 minutes)
- Playing games; using computer for leisure (26 minutes)
- Participating in sports, exercise, recreation (18 minutes)
- Reading (19 minutes)
- Socializing and communicating (39 minutes)

NOTE: Data include all persons age 15 and over. Data include all days of the week and are annual averages for 2013.

• Characters are young, energetic and appealing.

• Older people rare and often portray sick or dying characters.

• Women make up a third or less of the characters in all samples except daytime serials.
The television world

• Violent crime involves more than half of all characters. For every male victim of violence there are seventeen female victims.

• Villains are disproportionately male, lower-class and foreign.

• The "lower classes" are mostly invisible on TV.
The world of the heavy television viewer

• Overestimate crime statistics.

• Underestimate # old people in society, think that they are in worse health conditions and live less.

• Believe in more traditional roles for females.

• Have a stronger orientation towards consumption.
• Believe luxury items are more easily available.

• Less likely to have knowledge of environmental issues.

• Hold erroneous and unhealthy views of nutrition.
The mean world syndrome
The mean world syndrome

**FIGURE 1**
Violent and property victimization, 1993–2014

- **Violent crime rate per 1,000 persons age 12 or older**
  - 100
  - 75
  - 50
  - 25
  - 0

- **Property crime rate per 1,000 households**
  - 400
  - 300
  - 200
  - 100
  - 0

Source: US Department of Justice
The mean world syndrome


Is there more crime in the U.S. than there was a year ago, or less?

- % More
- % Less
- % Same

GALLUP
The mean world syndrome

Assumptions and Rationale

Figure 2.1 Percentage of light and heavy viewers giving “TV answer” to question about chances of being involved in violence (Gerbner and Gross, 1976)
The mean world syndrome

Figure 3. Mean feeling that we are not doing enough about crime in US, by TV viewing and year (1 = not doing enough, 2 = about right, 3 = doing too much)

Mainstreaming Effects

(Adapted from Gerbner et al., 1980)
Heavy television viewing and mainstreaming of attitudes

**FIGURE 2** Comparisons on political self-designation by amount of television viewing within parties.
Heavy television viewing and mainstreaming of attitudes

Figure 1
Mainstreaming of Attitudes Toward Environmental Sacrifice, in Political Subgroups

Heavy television viewing and mainstreaming of attitudes

Figure 4. Acceptance of homosexuality, by TV viewing and year
Cultivation of global attitudes?

• Australians exposed to U.S. TV perceive Australia as a more dangerous place to live.

• South Koreans and Japanese heavy viewers of U.S. TV have more liberal values about women and families.

• Heavy viewing of U.S. TV in India resulted in feelings of deprivation and dissatisfaction.

• Israeli viewers of American television gave estimations of occupations according to TV portrayal.
Cultivation – new directions
Table 3 Within-Group Ordinary Least Squares Regression Results: Change Score for the Likelihood of Assault with a Weapon

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>β</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>7.91 (5.73)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender (female = 1)</td>
<td>−3.72 (3.98)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>−0.06 (.22)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>−0.56 (1.14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race, Black</td>
<td>−16.72 (19.50)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race, Hispanic</td>
<td>27.70 (11.35)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total hours played</strong></td>
<td><strong>0.14 (.04)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Model: $F = 3.48, p < .005, R^2 = .094$

*Note: The dependent variable is the change score for the treatment group for the likelihood of robbery with a weapon. The table entries are unstandardized ordinary least squares regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.*

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .001$. 
Cultivation – main points

1. Media cultivate in viewers interpretations of the world in line with the TV world.

2. Heavy doses of violence in television result in a mean-world syndrome.

3. Among heavy TV users political attitudes tend to converge.

4. New interactive settings may enhance the cultivation of attitudes.
See you Wednesday!