Cultivation

J201 Introduction to Mass Communication
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A media effect is a cognitive, affective, physiological, attitudinal or behavioral response to media content.

Early studies found little support for magic bullet notions of media effects.

Early studies show some effects, but they tend to be contingent and limited.

This led to a limited effects view...
Early studies – Voting Behavior (The People’s Choice - Lazarsfeld)

• Study of how media influence the electoral process.
  - Political predispositions
  - Media effects

• Found media mostly reinforced people’s beliefs. Very limited conversion
  - Selective exposure
  - Two step flow of communication
Limited Media Effects Paradigm
Cultivation - today’s class plan

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.

• 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).
Watching television

• Passive 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?
Leisure time on an average day

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

Total leisure and sports time = 5.0 hours

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 are rare and often portray sick or dying characters.

• Women make up a third or less of the characters in all samples except daytime serials.
• 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 (Class Poll)
The mean world syndrome

Public perception of crime rate at odds with reality

% saying there is more crime in the U.S. than a year ago

Violent crimes per 1,000 persons ages 12 and older

Note: 2006 BJS estimates are not comparable with those in other years.
Source: Gallup, Bureau of Justice Statistics.

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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)
Heavy television viewing and mainstreaming of attitudes

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

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.
RESEARCH ARTICLE

Virtual Cultivation: Online Worlds, Offline Perceptions

Dmitri Williams
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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>0.14 (.04)**</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.  
  * $p < .05$. ** $p < .001$.  
  

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.

① New interactive settings may enhance the cultivation of attitudes.
See you Friday!