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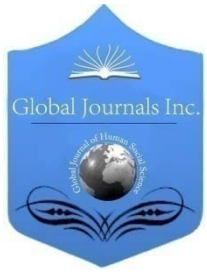

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All you Need to Know About: The Cultivation Theory

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Introduction- In this paper, the researcher comprehensively examines the cultivation theory. Conceptualized by George Gerbner in the 1960s and 1970s, the theory has been questioned with every media technological development. In the last six decades, the mass communication field witnessed the propagation of cable, satellite, video games and most recently social media. So far, the theory seems to have survived by continuous adjustment and refinement. Since 2000, over 125 studies have endorsed the theory, which points out to its ability to adapt to a constantly changing media environment. This research discusses the theory since its inception, its growth and expansion, and the future prospects for it. In the first section of the paper, an overview is given on the premises/founding concepts of the theory. Next is a presentation of the added components to the theory and their development over the last sex decades including: The cultivation analysis, the conceptual dimensions, types and measurement of cultivation, and the occurrence of cultivation across the borders.

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All you Need to Know About: The Cultivation Theory

Eman Mosharafa

I. Introduction

In this paper, the researcher comprehensively examines the cultivation theory. Conceptualized by George Gerbner in the 1960s and 1970s, the theory has been questioned with every media technological development. In the last six decades, the mass communication field witnessed the propagation of cable, satellite, video games and most recently social media. So far, the theory seems to have survived by continuous adjustment and refinement. Since 2000, over 125 studies have endorsed the theory, which points out to its ability to adapt to a constantly changing media environment. This research discusses the theory since its inception, its growth and expansion, and the future prospects for it. In the first section of the paper, an overview is given on the premises/founding concepts of the theory. Next is a presentation of the added components to the theory and their development over the last sex decades including: The cultivation analysis, the conceptual dimensions, types and measurement of cultivation, and the occurrence of cultivation across the borders. Both sections are followed by a discussion on the ability of the theory to meet changes in the media environment in light of recent developments in the media field.

II. Overview

Cultivation theory tackles the long-term effects of television on viewers. The theory proposes that the danger of television lies in its ability to shape not a particular view point about one specific issue but in its ability to shape people's moral values and general beliefs about the world. The theory stands on a number of concepts: the symbolic environment, story telling, the symbolic function of television, the television traits, the cultural model, the cultivation of value system, the multi-directional process, and the cultural indicators.

a) *Symbolic Environment*

Human beings are the only creatures that we know of that live in a world beyond the threats and gratifications of their immediate environment. Our knowledge is acquired not from personal experiences, but from a variety of stories.[1]

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b) *Story Telling*

According to Gerbner there are three types of stories: *How things work:* These are fictional stories that reveal the invisible dynamics of human life. *How things are:* These are stories of the news; they confirm the visions, rules, goals of a particular society. *What to do:* These are stories of value and choice, such as laws and religion. These three types of stories together constitute culture, which is increasingly disseminated by television.[2]

c) *The Symbolic Function of TV*

TV has become an essential source in providing individuals with information about the surrounding world, as it proffers to them basic facts about life, people, society, and authority. For, situations depicted in fiction, drama, and news whether in realistic, fantastic, tragic, or comic way presented in fiction, drama, or news offer the best context for the dissemination of values and moral in an acceptable and enjoyable fashion.[3] *Gerbner* says that cultivation is some sort of desultory learning that results from the accumulation of exposure to *TV*. And what the viewer sees on the screen becomes the basis of a mental image that the individual forms about the social practical status of values, population characteristics, and the various cultural standards common by the society's classes, categories, and individuals.[4]

The cultural influences of *TV* are embedded in all kinds of the content it presents, and not restricted to "cultural programs", which refer to programs that deal with art, science, and literature. Conventional program division into news, cultural, entertainment, educational, children, woman, etc, is used only to facilitate management or research. But all these programs may influence cultural formation of individual and masses. Furthermore, TV drama of films and series may leave

[1] Morgan, Michael (2002). On George Gerbner's Contributions to Communication Theory, Research, and Social Action. *Against the Mainstream*. Ed. Michael Morgan. Peter Lang Publishing, Inc., New York. P 7.

[2] Gerbner, Goerge (2002). Advancing on the Path of Righteousness. *Against the Mainstream.* Ed. Michael Morgan. Peter Lang Publishing, Inc., New York. P 215.

[3] Morgan, Michael (2002). On George Gerbner's Contributions To Communication Theory, Research, And Social Action. *Against the Mainstream.* Ed. Michael Morgan. Peter Lang Publishing, Inc., New York. P 189.

[4] Morgan, Michael (2002). *Ibid.* P 7.

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cultural impact stronger than that of the serious programs, studies, and seminars.[5]

Melvin Defleur and *Sandra Ball-Rokeach*, founders of the *Dependency Theory*, suggest that the "information quantum" presented through "entertainment" may be equal to that presented through "news". The belief that "news" is relevant to information, whereas "entertainment" is not, is a wrong one. Most often a person uses entertainment contents in comprehending his world, and all what extend beyond his direct experience. Consequently, entertainment materials help him or her normalize with society, and to discern how he or she should behave, and how should his or her interactions be with others. [6]

There seems to be a risk in having the masses dependent on media means, especially TV, in constructing the image of the surrounding environment. For, the media does not reflect reality. The media may present untruthful information, distorted stereotypes or misguided positive images. So, if the recipient has no means for comparing what is presented to him or her through media with other sources of information, his or her perception becomes distorted, stereotyped, and biased.

The cultivation theory empathizes that television does not reflect what is happening in the outside world, but it presents an artificial world that focuses on certain issues depending on the will and interest of those controlling the media. Eventually, the accumulation of exposure to TV and the lack of direct experience in various issues, create an artificial world, which becomes more and more real to the recipients.[7]

d) Television Traits

This symbolic function is based on three traits for TV: [8]

i. *TV is pervasive.* It penetrates people's lives as it exists in most households and people spend long times in front of it.

ii. *TV is accessible.* It does not require precedent skills to be exposed to it, such as literacy, nor does it require effort, as there is no need to leave the house as in the case with cinema.

iii. *TV is coherent.* For the messages it presents about society are homogeneous through out its various programs and times.

III. Cultural Model

Culture is defined as the knowledge that regulates and reproduces social relations and that one must possess to function adequately as a member of society. The cultural model suggests that television is capable of shaping viewers' perception at a cultural level. Studies showed that heavy television viewers have a high degree of consensus concerning numerous cultural aspects presented on TV, such as perceptions of women and how materialistic people are, whereas light television viewers do not share the same degree of consensus. Moreover, heavy viewers of a particular genre of TV might share a distortion in their cultural understanding. For example, recent research suggests that heavy viewing of the romance genre of TV such as romantic comedies, soap operas, daytime talk shows, and reality-based shows about relationships idealized expectations of marriage and failed to present it as effortful, difficult, or risky.[9]

IV. Cultivation of Value Systems

Cultivation theory suggests that the entire value system made of ideologies, assumptions, beliefs, images and perspectives is formulated, to a great extent, by television. TV portrays hidden and pervasive values, rules, and moral for what is right, what is important, and what is appropriate in a social discourse in an invisible manner. The repetitive 'lesions' we receive from television, starting with childhood, would become the basis for our broad worldview. Various studies have confirmed this concept. For instance, people who spend long time watching television, in which violence is casually presented, suffer from the "mean world" syndrome -perception of the world as mean and dangerous. In another study investigating a relationship between TV portrayal of women and prejudice against them, most groups of heavy viewers -with other characteristics held constant- scored higher on the "sexism scale."[10]

V. Multi-directional Process

Cultivation is not a synonym for TV effect, for the public contribute in shaping TV content just as television contributes in shaping publics' views. TV neither creates nor reflects the social, personal, and cultural elements presented on its screen. First, television doesn't create as these elements do not originate out of void, but derive from a dynamic process in which society, the public, media institutions, and interest groups influence

[5] Labeeb, Saad (1985). *TV planning in Gulf states*. Riyadh, Gulf TV system, P 11.

[6] Stanley J. Baran, Dennis K. Davis (2003). *Mass communication Theory: Foundations, Ferment, and Future.* 3rd ed. Canada: Wadsworth.
P 320.

[7] Maccawi, Hassan Emad, Laila Hassan El Sayed. *Communication and Its Contemporary Theories.* Third Edition, Cairo, El Dar El Masreya El Lubnaneya. P 165.

[8] Miller, Katherine (2002). *Communication Theories: Perspectives, Processes, and Contexts*, USA: McGraw-Hill inc. P 270.

[9] Roskos-Ewoldsen, Beverly, Davies, John, & Roskos-Ewoldsen, David (2004). "Implications of the Mental Models Approach for Cultivation Theory." *Communications.* V 29. PP 356-359.

[10] Gerbner, Goerge, Gross, Larry, Morgan Michael, & Signorielli, Nancy (2002). Growing up with Televison: The Cultivation Perspective. *Against the Mainstream.* Op. Cit. P 203.

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the creation and distribution of mass-produced messages. These messages, in turn, would generate, influence, and suit the needs, values and ideologies of the public. For example, presenting a somewhat realistic image of an adolescent female member of a given social class may help viewers define and form various distinct identities. Second, television doesn't reflect these social, personal, and cultural elements, as interest groups and media institutions influence the sorties presented. For example, gate keepers in media institutions formulate policies that control and direct the massive flow of media messages.[11]

VI. Cultural Indicators

The notion of cultural indicators is an important theoretical component in cultivation theory. In fact, the original project led by Gerbner and his associates in 1969 was titled "the Cultural Indicators Project." According to the cultural indicators concept, TV content and systematic message patterns not only reflect underlying cultural values in society but also act as a reference of the direction of social change in society.[12]

In a recent study titled "A return to cultural indicators," the author James Shanahan examines the notion of cultural indicators in relation to issues of portrayals of violence on television and portrayals of minority groups. The research concludes that in relation to social representation of some groups such as gays, African Americans, or women, TV programs and their messages do reflect social change and act as strong cultural indicators. Though television's representations may be delayed in comparison to the actual rate of social change regarding the acceptance of marginalized groups, eventually, TV programs, start to catch up and even over represent the groups in question. On the other hand, the case of violence as a cultural indicator was not as clear. While FBI crime index show decline in violent crimes, the overall rate of violence per program and per hour measured by the 'Violent Index'[13] seems constant. Shanahan rationalizes that the validity of violence levels as a cultural indicator needs more sophisticated thinking than simply "counting ' violence, such as examining types of violence and their relation to social context and to audience reactions.[14]

VII. Discussion

Many core concepts of the cultivation theory are presumed to be still valid. People will continue to live in a world beyond their physical environment. Television will continue to disseminate stories about their symbolic environment. Television content will continue to be derived from multi-directional processes that involve society, the public, media institutions, and various interest groups. Television message patterns will continue to be an indicator of the direction of the ongoing social change.

However, even with the assumption that all these propositions will remain valid, we still can't answer the central question of whether television will continue to influence viewers' perceptions about the world and their cultural and social values. I.e. will television be able to exert a cultivation effect in presence of massive choices for information and entertainment?

The answer of this question lies on the validity of two premises in relation to television traits: 1) Television is pervasive 2) Television messages are coherent.

a) Television is pervasive

To examine this premise, we pose a couple of questions. Are people watching more or less television in the world of video games, Internet, and social media? Can television exert a cultivation effect in the presence of other sources for information and entertainment?

Nielsen, a leading global information and measurement company, reported that Americans are spending more time watching video content on traditional TVs, mobile devices and the Internet than ever before. In addition, Nielsen data shows that television remains the dominant source of video content for all demographics with an average increase of 22 minutes per month per person over last year. The report however detects a trend led by young consumers, ages 18-34, in which light television viewers stream more internet videos and heavy internet steamers under-indexing for television viewership (Nielsen, 2011).[15]

Video games are played by the majority of Americans (Ipsos-Insight, 2005). Previously considered a youth-oriented activity, now 32% of players are reported to be older than 35 (Engle, 2001). Does cultivation apply to video game worlds? If yes do the images portrayed in video games conform or contradict those portrayed on television? Mierlo and Bulck (2004) argued that video games have become so realistic that they have begun to resemble reality, making cultivation possible. The online database www.allgame.com lists descriptions of 35,400 different games across 93 different game machines plus computers, which offers a

[11] Morgan, Michael (2002). *Op. Cit.* P 197.

[12] Shanahan, James (2004). A Return to Cultural Indicators. *Communications.* V 29. PP 277-294.

[13] The Violent Index or the VI is a combination of different measurements that provide an overall assessment of the level of violence in prime-time and weekend-daytime network television programs in any given year, across variety of categories and over time.

[14] Shanahan, James (2004). *Op. Cit.,* PP 277-294.

[15] Nielsen (2011, June 15). *Cross Platform Report Americans Watching More TV, Mobile and Web Video.* Retrieved August 3, 2014 from http://www.nielsen.com/us/en/insights/news/2011/cross-platform-report-americans-watching-more-tv-mobile-and-web-video.html

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variety of genre and narratives. However, Knowlee et al. (2001) and Smith, Lachlan, & Tamborini (2003) notes that most studies on video games show that -consistent with television content- the most popular games propagate violence and sexist imagery. This concludes that game programmers and television producers generate similar content.

Social media was considered a medium that could potentially eat away time spent on television. Patel, Kunur, Slutsky, Irina (2011) in their article "Is Social Media Killing TV?" stated that social media are actually doing the opposite. Social media are boosting television viewing, especially live programming. The article reads: "After years of declines in live tune-in, Twitter, Facebook and some mobile startups appear to be luring audiences back to appointment TV. While DVRs unglued us from TV schedules, the desire to tap into the tweets, posts and check-ins in real time may just bring us back," (Patel and al 2011). A recent Nielsen study seems to back this proposition as it shows that fans tweeting about programs during live broadcasts lead to increased viewership (Nielsen 2013).[16] On a different note, social media seem to be breaking the monopoly on information and influencing media coverage of news. For instance, during the coverage of the Israeli and the Palestinian conflict during the war on Gaza in July 2014, the Palestinian side was given more attention on mainstream media compared to previous conflicts. Social media was accredited for opening the door for them to voice their sufferings. Benjamin Wallace-Wells from the New York Magazine writes: "Social media have helped us to see more deeply inside war zones in this case, inside Gaza, and allowed viewers much fuller access to the terror that grips a population under military attack."[17]

b) Television messages are coherent

Does television content of drama, commercials, news, and other programs really presents a coherent system of images and messages?

Similarly Online video games particularly offer much more variety that television.

Dmitri Williams (2006) argues that online video games might might break this homogeneity as much of the proceedings of the game depends on the actions of the players. Online ''networked'' video games on both console and PC systems are on the rise. According to Pew Internet and American Life Project (2004), 75% of Americans who use Internet play games, half of whom do so online (Fallows, 2004). Online gaming is different from television is that unlike the scripted programming of television, game programmers can create games which are driven to a high extent by the players. Thus game content depends not only on the coding of the programmer, but also on the actions of the players. Hence the cultivation that might occur from online video gaming would stem from players' actions. Williams (2006) proposes that repeated interaction patterns among players online could fuel perceptions of offline life. For example, a virtual world in which players see cheaters move ahead might start to think that people who are successful in the real world are probably unethical. In contrast, one that rewards ethical behavior might lead to the perception that the real world is virtuous. Ultima Online, for example, is a game that preaches ethical behavior.

In online gaming, players from around the globe interact in a shared fantasy that can involve competition, collaboration, or socialization.

VIII. Cultivation Analysis

Gerbner cited four steps to be followed when conducting a cultivation research[18]:

a) Message System Analysis

In this step, the researcher tries to identify the most repeated, steady and standing out patterns of TV content including images, portrayals, and values presented across different types of programs. The identified messages should be embedded in TV as a system rather than in certain programs, types or genres.

b) Assessing Exposure Time

In this step, the researcher notes the amount of time respondents spend watching TV on an "average day" then compares heavy viewers with light viewers.

c) Investigating People's Views about the World

In this step, the researcher asks respondents to answer a list of questions without making any referral to TV.

d) Establishing Relationships

In this step, the researcher examines whether amount of viewing is related to tendency to respond to these questions in similar to the dominant and repetitive facts, values, and ideologies of the world of TV. These relationships would reflect TV's contribution to viewers' conceptions of social reality. Different groups typically have different opinions, so television influences are detected not when people give similar answers but when heavy viewers across these groups give less different answers.

[16] Nielsen (2013, October 7). *Nielsen Launches 'Nielsen Twitter TV Ratings'*. Retrieved on August 4, 2014 from http://www.nielsen.com/eg/en/press-room/2013/nielsen-launches-nielsen-twitter-tv-ratings.html

[17] Wallace-Wells, Benjamin (2014, July 20). 'Telegenically Dead Palestinians': Why Israel Is Losing the American Media War. *New York Magazine*. Retrieved August 4, 2014 from http://nymag.com/daily/intelligencer/2014/07/why-israel-is-losing-the-american-media-war.html

[18] Gerbner Goerge, Gross, Larry, Morgan Michael, & Signorielli, Nancy (2002). *Op. Cit.* P 199.

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IX. Conceptual Dimensions

a) Perceived Reality

According to Robert Hawkins the portrayal of TV content as being real acts as an 'intervening' variable mediating the effects of television' on viewers, i.e. the more 'real' viewers perceive programs to be, the greater the influence of these programs is likely to be on their behavior and/or attitudes.

Perceived reality has been argued by Robert Hawkins to be a multidimensional concept where various dimensions influence the viewers' judgments about whether an object, character, event or setting on TV is 'real'. Among the most famous dimensions are Hawkins' Magic Window and Social Expectations dimensions.[19]

i. *The magic window.* This dimension is defined as the degree to which television permits viewers to observe ongoing life whether in another place in the real world or in the set itself through fictional drama. Alternatively, Aimée Dorr uses the term '*Fabrication*'[20] and Marguerite Fitch and colleagues use the term '*Factuality*'[21] to refer to whether a television programs is perceived by the viewer as 'made up' or to be portraying events that actually happen in real life.

The reality of the magic window dimension is perceived based on two subcomponents[22]. First is the *Syntax* subcomponent, which refers to a belief in the reality conveyed by the style of the message. It is drawn from the visual program elements and closely relates to the background or contest in which a narrative occurs, e.g. clothes, actors' accent, etc. Second is the *Semantic* subcomponent, which refers to a belief in the reality of embodied meaning or substance of the message. It is more related to narrative and the occurring themes and behaviors. It is suggested that when viewers judge realism of programs, the focus of their assessment tends to be on the narrative rather than the syntactic details.[23]

ii. *Social expectations or social realism*. Hawkins' social expectations dimension, on the other hand, refers to "the degree to which the viewers believe television characters and events do or do not match their expectations about the world."[24] It stresses the notion that despite the fictional nature of content, characters and plots may be perceived as similar to people and events in the real world, e.g. Lion King.[25]

So, whereas the Magic Window dimension deals with perception of the TV program itself, the Social Expectations dimension deals with the viewer's experience of the world and whether a person or event shown on television is known to exist or happen in real life. Correspondingly, scientists developed three criteria for assessing social expectation or 'social realism.'

First is the criterion of *Physical Actuality* which is used by children to assess whether TV material is real or not. For example, young children would cite TV material to be real if they considered that a person or event on TV existed or happened in the real world rather than considering if it is about something that could exist or happen in the real world. Second is the criterion of *Possibility,* which refers to whether something could happen in real life. For example, portraying people flying with wings could easily be detected as *physical impossibility.*[26]

Third is the criterion of *Plausibility* or *Probability,* which is similar to the possibility criterion but considered to be more refined.[27] Plausibility relates to whether the phenomenon observed on television could exist in the real world while probability refers to the likelihood of something observed on TV existing in the real world or the frequency with which it occurs. Another term is *Typicality,* which refers to the extent to which people or situations were like most people or situations in the real world. Typicality is a combination between plausibility and probability.[28] Other scholars prefer the term '*Representativeness,*' which refers to the viewers accepting people and/or events in a TV program as

[19] Hawkins, Robert P. (1977). 'The Dimensional Structure of Children's Perceptions of Television Reality'. *Communication Research.* V 4. N 3. P 299.

[20] Dorr, Aimée (1983). 'No Shortcuts to Judging Reality'. In Jennings Bryant & Daniel R. Anderson (Eds.). *Children's Understanding of Television: Research on Attention and Comprehension.* New York: Academic Press. PP 199-220.

[21] Fitch, Marguerite, Althea C. Huston & John C. Wright (1993). 'From Televison Forms to Genre Schemata: Children's Perceptions of Television Reality'. In Gordon L. Berry & Joy Keiko Asamen (Eds.). *Children and Television: Images in a Changing Socio-cultural World.* Newbury Park, CA: Sage. PP 38-52

[22] Potter, James (1988). Perceived Reality in Television Effects Research. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media.* V 32. N 1. PP 27-28.

[23] Busselle, Rick, Ryabovolova, Alina, & Wilson, Brian (2004). Ruining a Good Story: Cultivation , Perceived Realism and Narrative. *Communications.* V 29. N 3. P 374.

[24] Hawkins, Robert P. (1977). Op. Cit. P 299.

[25] Busselle, Rick & Greenberg, Bradely (2000). The Nature of Television Realism Judgments: A Reevaluation of Their Conceptualization and Measurement. *Mass Communication & Society.* V 3. P 257.

[26] Kelly, Hope (1981). Reasoning About Realities: Children's Evaluations of Television and Books. In Hope Kelly & Howard Gardner (Eds.). *Viewing Children Through Television*. New Directions for Child Development. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass. P 67.

[27] Morison, Patricia, Hope Kelly & Howard Gardner (1981). 'Reasoning about the Realities on Television: A Developmental Study'. *Journal of Broadcasting.* V 25. N3. P 236.

[28] Chandler, Daniel (1997). *Children's Understanding of What is'Real' on Television: A Review of the Literature.* [WWW document] URL http://www.aber.ac.uk/~dgc/realrev.html (July10, 2007). P 9.

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fictional, but still considering them to be representative of every day reality.[29]

Equally to Hawkin's division of the Magic Window and Social Expectations dimensions is Hodge and Tripp's definition of internal and external criteria.[30] *External* criteria involve comparisons with the viewer's knowledge and experience of the world. Whereas *Internal* criteria, also referred to as 'formal features of the medium,' deal with medium-specific cues used by the viewer to determine how real a program is, ranging from TV genres (news, sports, documentaries, cartoons, etc) to physical features (presence or absence of stunts, camera tricks, costumes, props, editing deceptive techniques, etc) and performance features (which includes whether the program was acted, scripted, rehearsed, live or filmed, etc).[31]

b) The Modality Judgments

Modality, developed by Hodge and Tripp, refer to the reality status attributed to television programs by viewers. Television has 'weak modality' if the programs aired are perceived to be far from everyday reality while TV is considered to be of 'strong modality' if the programs aired are perceived to be presenting a 'window on the world.' In accord with the cultivation theory and the presence of the 'perceived reality' as an 'intervening variable', in making modality judgments, the more reality you attribute to a message, the more likely you will be affected by it in some way[32].

A number of empirical research support the idea that 'perceived reality' or 'strong modality judgments' enhances cultivation, including Feshback's widely-cited experiment, in which subjects who were told that the violent clip they watched was from the news showed significantly more aggression than the control group who was told that the clip was fictional. [33]

i. The Modality Judgment: Social Perspective. According to James potter (1988), perceived reality is associated with two types of Variables[34]:

a. Active variables. These include real life experiences, exposure to television, motives for exposure, and IQ.

b. Attribute variable. They act as classifiers of individuals such as demographic indicators of gender, race, and socio-economic status.

a. Active variables.

- *Real life experience.* According to the cultivation theory there is no relationship between personal experience and the perception of the portrayals of particular groups (families, policemen, businessmen) as being real.[35] Here we introduce the term *Identity*, which seems to play a more important role. *Identity* refers to the degree to which a person sees a match between situations and characters on television and people and situations experienced in real life.[36] Two ideas were later added to the identity concepts *closeness* and *superficiality. Closeness* refers to the number of times a viewer thinks or talks about a character, or the extent to which he or she thinks of a character as a close friend. Hence identity is closely related to the degree of involvement the viewer has towards a program or character.[37] *Superficiality,* on the other hand, is defined as the extent to which a program is considered to be dealing with trivial matters in a repetitious manner, i.e. feelings portrayed by actors to be too shallow to be real. [38]
- *Television exposure.* First of all we need to highlight the fact that there is no *pre-exposure* period. Children begin viewing several years before they begin reading and even before talking.
- Secondly, cultivation theory assumes that viewers who are heavily exposed to TV are more likely to perceive TV as being realistic then lighter viewers[39]. Recently however, a study that examines the cultivation course of action revealed a more complex pattern. Conducted by Amir Hetsroni and Riva Tukachinsky,[40] this study investigates the relationship between the amount of TV viewing and viewers' account of TV–world estimates as well as real-world estimates in regards to three topics: criminality prevalence, the share of violent crimes, and the number of old people. Results show that the lightest viewers are able to give correct estimates for the real world but do not recognize the right TV answer, hence they are considered to be

[29] Howard, Susan M. (1993). 'How Real is Television? Modality Judgments of Children', *Media Information Australia*. V 70 [November]. P 44.

[30] Hodge, Bob & David Tripp (1986). *Children and Television: A Semiotic Approach.* Cambridge: Polity Press.
PP 100-131.

[31] Chandler, Daniel (1997). *Op. Cit.* PP 11-12.

32 Hodge, Bob & David Tripp (1986). *Op. Cit.* P 130.

[33] Feshbach, Seymour (1972). 'Reality and Fantasy in Filmed Violence'. In John P. Murray, Eli A. Rubinstein & George A. Comstock (Eds.). *Television and Social Behavior 2: Television and Social Learning.* Rockville, MD: National Institute of Mental Health. P 333.

[34] 34 Potter, James (1988). *Op. Cit*. P 29.

[35] Greenberg, Bradley S. & Byron Reeves (1976). 'Children and the Perceived Reality of Television', *Journal of Social Issues*. V 32. N 4. P 95.

[36] Potter, W. James (1984). Elaborating the Relationship between TV Viewing and Beliefs about the Real World: Possible Contingent Variables. *The Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication. Annual Meeting.* Gainesville, FL. P 1.

[37] Potter, W. James (1988). *Op. Cit.* P 28.

[38] Elliot, W.R., Rudd, R.L., &Good, L. (1983). Measuring *Perceived Reality of Television: Perceived Plausibility, Perceived Superficiality, and the Degree of Personal Utility.* Paper presented at the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication Convention, Corvallis, OR. P 14.

[39] Greenberg, Bradley S. & Byron Reeves (1976). *Op. Cit.* P 94.

[40] Hetsroni, Amir, Tukachinsky, Riva (2006). Television-World Estimates, Real-World Estimates, and Television Viewing: A New Scheme for Cultivation. *Journal of Communication*. V 56. PP 133-156.

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experiencing *distorted no cultivation.* If viewing slightly increases, viewers give correct estimates for both the real world and the TV world, which is referred to as *simple no cultivation.* In the next level of viewing, respondents are divided into two groups. First is *the Simple cultivation group,* which refers to viewers who give accurate estimates for the TV world but tend to exaggerate estimates for the real-word. Second is *the double distortion group,* which refers to viewers who can distinguish between TV-world and the real-world but tend to exaggerate both estimates. The third and last group constitutes of the heaviest viewers and is referred to as *the over-cultivation group*. People in this group have extremity of perception and fail to distinct between the real world and the TV world.

- *Instructional motives or perceived utility.* Some motives were found to be linked to levels of exposure and of perceived reality. For instance, people who believe television portrays real life will expose themselves to it more than others to acquire information and instruction. Instructional motives refer to the degree to which a person considers information or events observed on TV useful in real life and uses television to seek social knowledge. This construct is developed from uses and gratifications studies.[41]

c) *Attribute variables.*[42]

- *Age.* Research conducted with children and adolescents shows that while the magic window perception decreases linearly with age (i.e. the belief that television content is real decline as children grow), there is a curvilinear trend in regards to social expectations (i.e. the belief that television content resembles real life decreases from nursery school age to young adulthood, and then increases again).
- *Sex.* Results about gender are mixed. Some research suggests that females have higher perceptions of reality than males. Some research suggests that males have higher perceptions of reality than females. Other research didn't find significant distinction due to gender difference.
- *Socio-Economic Status.* Most findings show that out of all demographic variables, socio-economic factors seem to be the most influential when it comes to how viewers perceive TV reality.

d) *Summary of social perspective*

Most cultivation studies do control for a variety of variables be it active variables related to TV viewing such as exposure, genre viewing, concentration and other methods of estimation, or attribute variables, such as sex, age, income, education, minorities, occupations, etc. When comparing studies, using different methods for assessing, results tend to reveal generally similar effect sizes. It is noticeable however that smaller samples and studies, which sensitize respondents by mentioning TV at the start yield somewhat higher effect sizes. Also it was noticed that political ideology is a significant mediating factor. This diagram by Shanahan and Morgan illustrates the average cultivation effect sizes for various data subgroups and clearly shows that liberal people show a higher cultivation effect size.[43]

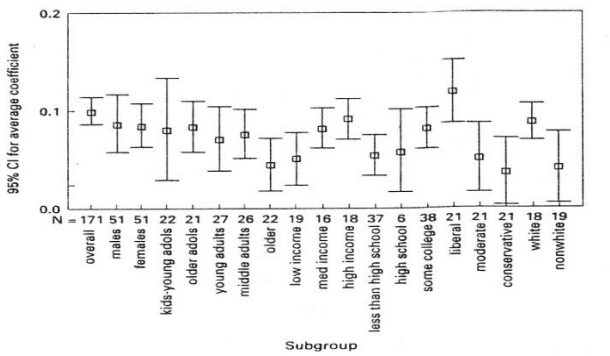

Figure 1: Average cultivation effect sizes for various data subgroups

e) *The modality judgment: psychological perspective*

Whereas cultivation is considered to be a social rather than an individual process, some researchers maintain, that psychological perspective investigating individual processes must be integrated to the cultivation concept.

It is suggested that 'realism is the default,'[44] i.e. accommodating fictional information as true is the default cognitive mode for human beings. Disbelieving requires effortful critical evaluation. Although thorough analysis can be activated under special circumstances, most of the time viewers are not provoked to think critically as it may interfere with 'following the narrative, emotional involvement and the pleasure of the experience.' In the next sections, we will present five models illustrating when and how people make modality judgments.

Model 1. In this model, the cultivation process involves three steps:[45]

1. Encoding and Storage of TV information
2. Inferences about the 'real world'

[41] Potter, W. James (1988). *Op. Cit.* P 33.
[42] Ibid. P 31.
[43] Shanahan, James & Michael Morgan. Shanahan, James & Michael Morgan (1999). *Television and its Viewers: Cultivation Research and Theory.* Cambridge University Press. P 130.
[44] Busselle, Rick, Ryabovolova, Alina, & Wilson, Brian (2004). *Op. Cit.* P 372.
[45] Bilandzic, HeLena & RÖssler, Patrick (2004). Life According to Television. Implications of Genre-Specific Cultivation Effects: The Gratification/Cultivation Model. *Communications.* V 29. P 294.

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3. Retrieval and construction of cultivation judgments

This model explains how steps one and three, which involve encoding, storage, and retrieval of information and construction of judgments, function.[46]

f) Encoding and Storing

This process involves three steps. *Selection* refers to people attending to the information and choosing it for processing. *Rehearsal* refers to having the information kept in working memory and potentially sent to long-term memory. *Elaboration* refers to people adding their own interpretations and opinions to the actual information.[47]

g) Construction and Retrieval

Researchers Wyer and Srull invented the *Bin Model of Memory,*[48] which suggests that human memory resembles a storage bin. People store information and continue to add to them, placing the most recent information on top. When asked to make a judgment, the person uses that information which is most accessible. Accessibility is highly affected by frequency, recency, and vividness. When a person recalls information about a topic, the contents of the bin are searched from top to bottom. Thus information that has been frequently repeated, recently obtained, dramatically presented has more chance of being retained.[49]

Based on "bin model" of memory, Shrum and O'Guinn (1993) suppose that heavy viewers have a higher probability of being exposed to repeated TV messages and of having these messages fresh in their minds, which will put TV messages on top of the 'storage bin' making them the most accessible. Consequently, the person might base his or her judgment of social reality on them.[50]

Model 2: The event-indexing situation model.[51]

According to this model, the process of comprehension necessarily involves the mental representation of narrated events. When people encounter a narrative they automatically take note of characters, their goals and desires, and the characters' location within a spatial-temporal context. People process these mental representations and connections among them based on the five dimensions stated above: Time, place, causality, intentionality (the motivation of the characters) and antagonists/protagonists (i.e. agents involved in the situation). The model further assumes that events are the fundamental units of situation models and those events can be linked to each of these five dimensions. Moreover, people continuously monitor the five specified dimensions and any discontinuity along any of these dimensions requires a person to update their situation model to reflect the change that happened. The event indexing model predicts that heavy viewing of TV influence judgments regarding the circumstances of an event such as what types of events are likely to occur, what kind of people are likely to be involved, how would people act in certain situations and why, and where the events are likely to occur, and when.

Model 3: Levels of specificity.[52] Greenberg and Reeves suggest perceived reality is judged at three levels: Television in general, such as people on television; specific subject groups, such as minorities, families, doctors on television, and specific characters such as James Bond. But, Bussel and Greenberg note that this measurement fails to detect potential bias. First, whether respondents 'awareness is based on their most recent exposure, such as the characters in the last program they watched, or their most frequent exposures e.g. characters in their favorite programs, or some mental averaging of all past exposures leading to their perceived prototype of TV people. Second, whether viewers are considering only a subset of characters such as older viewers focusing on odder characters when making their judgments. Busselle and Greenberg offer an alternate way of measurement based on four or more levels of abstraction:

1. Global level: How much people on TV match people in real life?

2. Genre level: How much people on Soap Operas match people in real life?

3. Series level: How much people on Friends match people in real life?

4. Episode level: How much people in the program that was just viewed match people in real life?

The fourth level can further be extended to more specific program elements, such as a single scene, incident, or person.

Model 4: Objects of realism. These are categories determined by the focus of the portrayal or the focus of the realism judgment e.g. people, behaviors, issues, and settings. For instance, in sitcoms, TV people may seem real, but the issues confronting them may seem unrealistic like. These judgments were suggested to have been made through the semantic (substance) vs. syntactic (presentation) realism dimensions. But in 1978,

[46] Ibid. P 296.
[47] Ibid. P 297.
[48] Wyer, R. S., Jr., & Srull, T. K. (1981). Category accessibility: Some theoretical and empirical issues concerning the processing of social stimulus information. In E. T. Higgins, C. P. Herman, & M. P. Zanna (Eds.), *Social Cognition: The Ontario Symposium*. Hillsdale, N J: Erlbaum. V 1. PP 161-197.
[49] Shrum L.J. (2004). The Cognitive Processes Underlying Cultivation Effects are a Function of Whether the Judgments are On-line or Memory-based. *Communications.* V 29. N 3. P 333.
[50] Hyung- Jin Woo and Joseph R. Dominick (2001). Day Time Television Talk Shows and the Cultivation Effect among U.S. and International Students. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media.* V 45. N 4. PP 599.
[51] Roskos-Ewoldsen, Beverly, Davies, John, & Roskos-Ewoldsen, David (2004). *Op. Cit*. PP 354-356.
[52] Busselle, Rick & Greenberg, Bradely (2000). *Op. Cit.* P 260.

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Reever found two dimensions in making realism judgments. First dimension refers to pro-social behaviors: "the way people help each other on TV is just lie the way people help each other in real life." Second dimension refers to anti-social behaviors: "TV stars yell at each other the same way people yell in real life." [53]

Model 5: Cultivation occurs when television information is used to make a judgment. This could occur when encountering the information: on line judgment or in retrospect: offline judgment also called memory based judgment.

- *Online judgments.* Those are made while relevant information is being encountered and acquired. Factors operating during on line judgment may be attention, elaboration, and involvement. Attention during viewing is measured using Rubin, Perse, and Talyor's five-item Viewing Attention Scale. Elaboration is measured using Epstein, Pacini, Denes-Raj, and Heier Need for Cognition (NC) scale. Need for cognition relates to the extent to which people enjoy thinking and solving puzzles. Studies that used these scales revealed that those higher in attention while viewing exhibited greater cultivation effect than those lower in attention. Likewise, those who were higher in NC showed a much stronger cultivation effect than those lower in NC. [54]
- *Offline judgments or memory based judgment.* These judgments happen when persons recall and use information that originated from past viewing to make consequent judgments about the real world. Researchers suggest that respondents use memory based judgments in answering questionnaires as they are asked to reflect back and judge the realism of content previously viewed. Factors influencing their judgment might include the ability to recall information, the consideration of other viewing experiences occurring at different points in time, or the willingness to expend the effort to recall. So online realism judgments are influenced by one set of program elements while off line based judgments are influenced by a different set. [55] Moreover researchers claim that respondents are subject to heuristic processing conditions rather than the systematic processing conditions. Heuristics tend to be used when ability to make the judgment is impaired whether because of time constrained- respondents usually want to finish the questionnaires as soon as possible- or lack of knowledge of the topic in question or when systematic processing, the process involves the exertion of effort to carefully scrutinize the message presented. The strength of argument, the credibility of the source, and relevance of the information play an important role in constructing judgments. [56]

h) Summary of Psychological Perspective

The following diagram summarizes the process of cultivation from a psychological point of view.

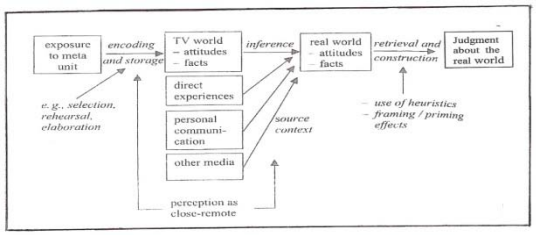

Figure 2 : The Cultivation Process [57]

X. Types of Cultivation

a) Mainstreaming

TV essentially reflects society's cultural mainstream. There are differences among audience groups due to multiplicity of cultural, social, and political circumstances of such groups. *TV*, by imposing one trend, that is the mainstream, minimizes such differences, or furthermore, eliminates them completely, especially among heavy viewers. Whereas mainstreaming promotes coherence and homogeneity among society individuals, it increases resistance to change in some aspects of culture and life, which might be in the interest of society. Hence is the importance to investigate under which social circumstances does mainstreaming occur and in which direction. [58]

Shanahan & Morgan suggest that mainstreaming flaws toward "*the cultural center of gravity,*" i.e. the most common homogeneous, dominant stream in society rather than toward conservative views or liberal views. Groups who deviate from the cultural mainstream pose the greatest threat to the stability of the social system, and hence are pressured toward the center. Thus regardless of whether the distance is in the conservative or liberal direction, groups who are furthest from the social-ideological "center of gravity," are the ones mostly subjected to mainstreaming. In cases where the groups furthest from the core position are toward the liberal side, the mainstreaming would flow toward the conservative side. Similarly, in cases where the distance is toward the conservative side, the mainstreaming would flaw in the liberal direction. [59]

[53] Reeves, B. (1978). Perceived Reality as a Predictor of Children's Social Behavior. *Journalism Quarterly*. V 55. P 689.
[54] Shrum L.J. (2004). *Op. Cit*. P 336.
[55] Busselle, Rick & Greenberg, Bradely (2000). *Op. Cit.* PP 263.
[56] Ibid. P 297.
[57] Bilandzic, Helena & RÖssler, Patrick (2004). *Op. Cit.* P 310.
[58] Miller, Katherine (2002). *Op. Cit*. P 273.
[59] Shanahan, James & Michael Morgan (1999). *Op. Cit.* P 143.

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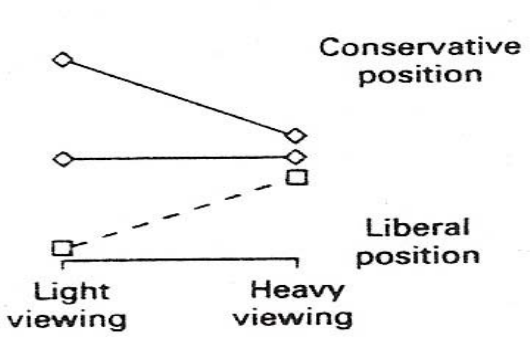

Figure 3 : Mainstreaming toward cultural center of gravity[60]

Gerbner, on the other hand, predicts that mainstreaming occurs in the direction targeted by media owners and gate keepers. Gerbner refers to the dynamics of mainstreaming as "*the 3Bs: Blurring, blending, and bending.*" Blurring refers to the fusion of traditional distinctions. Blending refers to the emergence of new conceptions into television's cultural mainstream. Bending refers to shifting the mainstream to the institutional interests of the medium and its sponsors.[61]

i. Resonance

Sometimes television severely influences perceptions within particular groups of society in comparison to other. These groups are more receptive to TV content, whether due to direct experience with such issue, or as a result to a special interest in it. For instance, women may be more vulnerable to TV content dealing with violent and aggressive crimes, as they are more frightened than men of becoming victims to such types of crimes.[62]

XI. Measuring Cultivation

Cultural cultivation could be measured by two manners: "first order" and "second order":[63]

a) First Order

This is a quantitative measure, where subjects are asked about their quantitative expectations about the occurrence of some phenomena in the society, such as the possibility of becoming a victim of a violent crime. The answers of light and heavy viewers are then compared to infer the presence or lack of a cultivation effect. First order judgments are likely constructed off-line (based on memory). For few people spontaneously generate percentage estimates of set-size or probability during viewing.

b) Second Order

This is a qualitative measure investigating the perception of people' s beliefs regarding a phenomenon in the society. In this measure, various phrases are designed to describe the world, for example portraying society as ethical, or wicked, etc. Viewers are then asked which of these phrases they agree with. Then the responses of light and heavy viewers are compared to depict the occurrence of a cultivation effect. Second order judgments are made either on-line or off-line. Updating beliefs and attitudes about the world, women, minorities, etc are likely to occur while viewing. Whereas attitudes and references about TV content that is not relevant to everyday reasoning or impression formation are likely to occur if and when provoked. [64]

XII. Sixth: cultivation Across Borders

a) International Cultivation Analysis

This concept deals with American cultural invasion. American TV programs are exported to many places in the world. Embedded with these programs are values, ideologies, and life patterns that differ and sometimes contradict what is prevailing in the recipient cultures. The discrepancy between the imported production and that of the local production would cause a conflict in the cultivation process. [65]

b) Cultural Hybridity

Many researchers now strive for formulating theories that address the process of cultural hybridity. These theories are based on the premise that globalization will lead to fusion among cultures, which will lead towards the creation of new culture or cultures superior than any of these separate cultures that led to its/their creation.

Whereas most theories presume that the age of the open skies would lead to "globalizing" local cultures and confining them, the hybridity premise predicts that the world will experience "localization" of the global culture to form national cultures. For instance, some eastern artists would take some elements of world music and arabize it into special local hybrid. The new hybrid is local, because such hybrid can not be created in other country, as it is a fusion between world culture and Arab culture in specific.[66]

XIII. Cultivation About the Other

TV can, through what it presents of stereotypical and national images of a group or people, create a mental image in the mind of the individual (viewer) about "the other".

[60] Ibid.
[61] Gerbner, Goerge (2002). *Op. Cit.* P 223.
[62] Miller, Katherine (2002). *Op. Cit.* P 273.
[63] Hassan Emad Maccawi, Laila Hassan El Sayed *Op. Cit.* PP 309, 310.
[64] Shrum L.J. (2004). *Op. Cit.* PP 339-340.
[65] Ibid.
[66] Stanley J. Baran, Dennis K. Davis (2003). *Op. cit.* P 364.

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a) Mental Image

The mental image is an image that a person or a group of people would have when perceiving another person or group of people. Its importance lies in that it influences the social interaction between people. For this image determines whether a person or group would deal positively, negatively, or neutrally towards the other person or group, particularly when that 'other' belongs to a different culture, race, or religion. [67]

b) Stereotype Image

It is necessary to distinguish between the mental and stereotype image. For these two concepts are not identical. The media do not portray mental images, as mental images formulate in the mind of the individual. Media may present a stereotype image that leads the audience to formulate a mental image about some individuals, groups, or peoples, which would be described then as stereotype.[68]

c) National Image

There is an overlap between the concept of national image and stereotype image, but the national image conception is peculiar to the impressions a people forms about the features of another people or country. Since it is difficult for any individual to travel to all world countries, the principle source for formulating a national image takes place through exposure to different means of communication. [69]

XIV. Critiques for the Cultivation Theory

a) Imprecise Content Measure

Cultivation measures the total time a person is spending viewing TV. According to Potter and Chung, unless the content is wholly uniform, the content in question should be program specific. Because if the repetition of certain messages is more frequent in certain genre, exposure to a genre would be a better predictor of a cultivation effect than overall TV would.[70] Three types of genre were thoroughly studied in cultivation research: crime drama, soap operas, and talk shows. And some studies suggest that viewers are differently cultivated according to genre.[71]

In a study titled *Examining Effects of TV News Violence on College Students through Cultivation Theory*, the authors investigated responses to a discrete event which is TV news coverage of the September 11, 2001 attacks. The authors examined whether the amount of TV news viewing in the wake of the attacks have influenced perceptions of violence initiated by people outside the United States and cultivated negative personal emotions and attitudes towards Muslim peers. Questionnaires were distributed on a sample of 234 college students six weeks after the September 11th attacks. Results showed that the greater the time individuals spent in viewing TV news coverage following the terrorist attacks, the more negative personal emotion students held towards their Muslim peers and the strongest is their rejection to developing friendships with them. The results extend the work of Rossler and Brosious (2001) who, after examining daytime talk programs, found that cultivation effects are due to repeated viewing of specific content or genre-based programs. This was also consistent with the work of Chorly-Assad and Tamborini (2001), who found that portrayals of TV physicians varied by genre. The importance of this study lays in broadening previous work to another non-fictional genre and for studying responses to a distinct event rather than a generalized coverage of an issue.[72]

But Gerbner renounces the use of genre-specific measures based on two assumptions. *The content of TV is homogeneous*, so whether the viewed content is comedy, crime, or news, it typically contains the same mix of images and messages that conforms to the norms and values of the people. *The use of TV is ritualistic and unselective*; viewers fit their viewing into their time schedule rather than choosing according to content. Heavy viewers are usually those who watch three or more hours of prime time. Therefore, it is unlikely that they would miss the frequent and significant patterns of TV content. Hence a measure of total viewing rather than specific selections is more efficient in cultivation analysis.[73]

Meta-narratives: Meta-narratives substitute division of content based on genres with division according to the underlined message. For example, crime drama and situation comedy would be classified together if they were seen to share the same meta-narrative, such as 'no matter what problems occur, everything will turn out just fine,' 'truth always wins out,' or hard work yields reward.' Meta-narratives cross borders between program genres freely, for traditional genre categories are considered irrelevant.[74]

[67] Hamada, Basyouni (2000). Arab Image in the Minds of Western policy Makers. *Egyptian Journal Public Opinion Research.* V 1. N 3. P 8.

[68] Ibid. P 9.

[69] Ibid. P 11

[70] Potter, W. James, Chang, Ik Chin (1990). Television Exposure Measures and the Cultivation Hypothesis. *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media*. V 34. N 3. P317.

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[73] Gerbner, Goerge (2002). Advancing on the Path of Righteousness. *Against the Mainstream.* Ed. Michael Morgan. Peter Lang Publishing, Inc. New York. P 219.

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b) Imprecise Exposure Measure[75]

a. The measurement doesn't consider exposure over time; the focus is kept on here and now and doesn't account for the accumulation of viewing. Compare a 17 year old watching 4h/day of TV versus a 70 year old who have been watching 2h/day for the last 40 years. Following the cultivation analysis model the 17 year old would be classified in the heavy-viewers' group while the 70 year old would be classified in the light-viewers' group. In this case, such a division isn't so logical.

b. The measurement makes an assumption of linearity. The person with the most amount of TV exposure should be the most cultivated; the person with the second most amount of TV exposure should be the second most cultivated, and so on. In reality, people differ; the time of viewing needed for one to be cultivated could vary from one person to another. It is possible that on some issue, a heavy viewer doesn't get cultivated while a light viewer does. Following the cultivation analysis model, the measures taken from these two people will cancel each other. This could explain the persistently weak cultivation coefficients witnessed over the years with research on the Cultivation Theory.

An alternative for the Cultivation Theory is the Media Gravitation Theory developed by James Potter. This theory substitutes the micro-level measurement with a macro-level measurement. In other words, a person is not the unit of analysis, but groups of people are. This theory seems to be a progressive development for the Cultivation theory and is very tempting to use had it not relied so much in its constituent on public data that is not always available in developing countries.

c) Ambiguity between 'Media' and 'Real' Answers[76]

As cited by D. Williams, researchers have given respondents choices between 'television-world' answers and 'real-world' answers without addressing how and why their choices match respondents' conceptualizations (Potter 1991). These choices often disregard the circumstances of the events or actions within the media world (Newcomb 1978). This imprecision in the answers in relation to the real and media worlds would deter any study.

d) Fake Causation

A link between exposure and attitudes is not necessarily causal. For a correlation to be solid, first, there must be a clear time order and second, possible alternative explanations must be ruled out.

According to Paul Hirsch (1980), the mainstreaming effect of cultivation theory could be the result of a statistical artifact known as "regression to the mean." Regression to the mean occurs when a single group of respondents is questioned twice "pre-test, post-test." After the first test, the groups scoring extremely well or extremely badly are singled out. Their performance is then compared with their result on the second test. Subgroups scoring extremely poorly will, on average, almost always seem to perform better the second time, while the high-scoring subgroups will which Gerbner detects "mainstreaming" carries a clear resemblance to regression to the mean. Gerbner and his associates look for mainstreaming effects by selecting subgroups for both light and heavy viewers. They then compare the difference between the mean of the subgroups' scores of the heavy viewers to the mean of the subgroups' scores of the light viewers. If the variation in the answers of the heavy viewers is significantly smaller than the variation in the answer of the light viewers, the researchers speak of a mainstreaming effect of television. Hirsch, however, view the mainstreaming effect caused by the difference among the subgroups to be caused by random effects.[77]

Some studies have stretched their criticism of the mainstreaming effect to deny its presence all together. For instance, in a study that expanded the range of dependent variables subjected to mainstreaming to include: current public affairs issues, general attitudes and beliefs about human nature and the state of society, and beliefs about one's personal status, results revealed that media create a diversity of public opinion or 'scatter-streaming' rather than 'mainstreaming.'[78]

However, Jan Van Bulck in a recent study has defied all this criticism. He was able to prove that mainstreaming does exist and that even though it is calculated in a way similar to regression to the mean, the resemblance is only superficial. First, regression to the mean is typically associated with panel research where a group is studied twice, once before the occurrence of an event and second after the occurrence of that event. In contrast, cultivation analysis measures two measurements of one variable and two groups rather than two measurements of the same group. Second, and most importantly, in cultivation research, respondents are grouped according to various binary variables such as gender, race, political orientation, etc. They are not grouped based on their presentation of extreme elements like in the case of regression of the mean in which subgroups are formed of outliers. Thus

[74] Bilandzic, HeLena & RÖssler, Patrick (2004). *Op. cit.* P 309.

[75] Potter, W. James (2005). Media Gravitation Theory. *International communication Association.* Annual Meeting, New York, NY. PP 5-7.

[76] Dmitri Williams (2006). Virtual Cultivation: Online Worlds, Offline Perceptions. *Journal of Communication* V 56. N 1. P 72.

[77] Jan Van den Bulck (2003). Is the Mainstreaming Effect of Cultivation an Artifact of Regression to the Mean? *Journal of_Broadcasting & Electronic Media*. V 47. N 2. PP 289-295.

[78] Atkin, David J., Kimberly Neuendorf, and Leo W. Jeffres (2001). Expanding the Range of Dependent Measures in Mainstreaming and Cultivation Analysis. *Communication Research Reports*. Fall 2001. P 1.

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extreme scores are to be present in each and every subgroup.[79]

Other scientists such as Shanahan state that even though the process might be to complex for a casual order to be established, if the variables are "functionally interdependent" they could reflect other meaningful patterns of relationships. What he refers to as the Interaction Model.

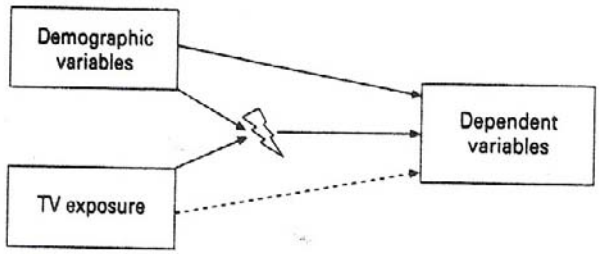

Figure 4 : The Interaction Model[80]

In Shanahan model depicted above, television viewing does affect dependent variables, but is influenced by other factors (hence presented by the dotted line). Demographic variables also cause direct effects, but they are more resistant to influences (hence presented by the solid line). Additionally, television viewing "interacts" with demographic and other control variables, and these interactions are significant within the context of multiple control, showing the existence of provisional associations (again, presented by the solid line). Frequently the interactions cause mainstreaming patterns.

XV. Future of Cultivation in the World of Cable and Satellite Channels

As ownership concentrates, cultivation assumptions strengthened even as programming channels increase number. More channels provide and intensified opportunity for cultivation, not a variation of the conditions under which cultivation occurs. Gerbner's point is that the mere availability of more channels does not fundamentally change the socio-economic dynamics that drive the production and distribution of programs. On the contrary, that dynamic is intensified by increased concentration of ownership and control and by the dissolution of the traditional barriers between and among networks.[81]

XVI. Conclusion

Findings of tremendous number of studies, conducted in the past twenty years, support the idea that cumulative exposure to television assimilates worldviews and cultivates images and ideas matching what is seen on TV, and that long-term television exposure do influence social change. Studies conducted by Gerbner and associates found an average cultivation effect size of 0.078, while those conducted by others averaged 0.10. [82]

While cable and satellite might not have left a change a change in the media institution system, the DIY (Do It Yourself) technology might change the dynamics of the media environment. Online gamming and social media will influence mainstream content as it will be influenced by it. For instance, during the Israeli-Palestinian crisis of July 2014, CNN and NBC correspondents Diana Magnay and Ayman Mohyeldin were both removed from their assignments in Gaza over a tweet considered to be Pro- Palestinian.[83] Two days later, NBC reversed its decision, which was attributed to a social media outcry.[84] The fact that Mohyeldin was removed over a posting on social media and was returned as a result of social media pressure marks a shift in the media institution system currently in place. This however still functions within the parameters of the cultivation theory as the "multi-directional" component of the theory states that the media both influences and is influenced by a complex interface among society, the public, media institutions, and interest groups.

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[79] Jan Van den Bulck (2003). *Op. Cit.* PP 289-295.
[80] Shanahan, James & Michael Morgan (1999). *Op. Cit.* P 140.
[81] Ibid. P 206.
[82] Ibid. P 130.
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