

Cultivation

Communications & Media

Heavy viewing, over years, nudges beliefs toward television's world.

The claim

- Heavy viewers absorb repeated patterns
- Estimates of crime and risk drift up
- Mainstreaming pulls groups together
- Resonance amplifies lived experience
- Effect is gradual, not episodic

The criticism

- Effect sizes are small
- Direction of causation is unclear
- Anxious people may watch more
- Original measures were coarse
- Fragmented media weakens the premise

THE DIFFERENCE THAT MATTERS

Small, fairly consistent correlations. Persuasive as a description of drift; weak as proof of cause.

Educational reference. Treat cultivation as a partly supported hypothesis about cumulative exposure, not as a settled causal law.