

Article

Communication Across Epochs: A CCH Framework for Cultural and Historical Transformation

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Abstract: Communication is a dynamic force that actively shapes historical events and cultural identities, not just a means of disseminating information. The transformative impact of communication in history and culture is still not well understood in academic discourse, despite its crucial role. In order to bridge this gap, this paper presents the Communication-Culture-History (CCH) model, a novel framework for examining the interactions among historical development, cultural evolution, and communication processes. Through feedback loops where cultural practices and historical contexts influence and are influenced by communication technologies, the CCH model emphasizes the crucial role that communication plays in forming cultural norms and historical trajectories. Digital media platforms today reshape global cultural narratives and amplify marginalized voices, just as the shift from oral traditions to literacy revolutionized societal organization and collective memory. Through an analysis of significant historical turning points, including the invention of the printing press, the emergence of mass media, and the current digital revolution, this paper shows how communication technologies can spark cultural shifts and rewrite history. It also looks at the social and ethical ramifications of new technologies like artificial intelligence, which are causing problems for privacy, equity, and identity while also speeding up cultural change. This study provides a comprehensive viewpoint on the function of communication as a dynamic force behind historical and cultural change. By connecting theoretical understandings with real-world case studies, it lays the groundwork for further research into cross-cultural and global dynamics, highlighting the persistent impact of communication on human societies' past, present, and future.

Keywords: Historical Development, CCH, Communication Technologies, Cultural Narratives

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1. Introduction

Although communication has long been seen as essential to human development and societal organization, its significant impact on the course of history and culture necessitates closer examination. The complex connections between communication and societal change have been examined by influential theorists like McLuhan, Innis, Habermas, and Carey. The well-known statement by McLuhan (1964), "The medium is the message," highlights the revolutionary power of communication technologies in general rather than just the information they transmit. Similar to this, Innis (1951) looked at how writing and printing establish monopolies of knowledge and radically change power dynamics. While Carey's (1989) ritual view of communication frames communication as a cultural process that unites communities through shared meaning, Habermas (1984) investigated communicative rationality as a means of promoting societal cohesion.

Expanding upon these viewpoints, this study investigates communication as the crucial element linking historical development and societal change. In addition to being a means of idea transmission, communication has been a dynamic force in establishing social structures, forming cultural norms, and creating historical narratives throughout history. Communication has continuously fueled the development of human societies, from oral traditions that preserved collective memory to digital platforms that currently define global consciousness.

Traditional historiography frequently downplays the active role of communication in historical and cultural developments, despite its critical role. Current research typically treats communication as a passive medium rather than a transformative force, concentrating on political, economic, or technological aspects. The dynamic interaction between communication technologies, cultural evolution, and historical change is largely ignored by models such as McLuhan's medium theory and Carey's ritual view, which highlight the cultural functions of communication and its structural impact, respectively.

Furthermore, a large portion of the conversation is still Western-centric, ignoring the various innovations and communication practices that influence non-Western societies. African oral traditions, like griot storytelling, have served as essential conduits for historical continuity by historically preserving and transmitting cultural knowledge. The early dissemination of philosophy, literature, and administrative records was made possible by Chinese woodblock printing, which also predates Gutenberg's press and greatly influenced East Asian intellectual and cultural exchanges. This Western bias is criticized by academics like Melkote (2001) and Appadurai (1996), who stress the importance of recognizing marginalized narratives and incorporating non-Western perspectives. Studies of communication run the risk of maintaining outdated conceptions of its function in historical and cultural contexts if they lack this inclusivity.

By presenting the Communication-Culture-History (CCH) framework, which reframes communication as an active, reciprocal force that simultaneously shapes and is shaped by cultural and historical processes, this study expands on previous models. The CCH model examines how communication technologies catalyze cultural shifts and historical turning points, integrating these viewpoints into a more comprehensive analytical framework than McLuhan's focus on mediums or Carey's emphasis on rituals. This study fills in the gaps by taking into account global and cross-cultural contexts, providing a more inclusive and thorough understanding of the long-lasting impact of communication.

Research Questions

To address these gaps, this paper explores the following research questions:

1. How has communication influenced the trajectory of cultural and historical developments across epochs?
2. What feedback loops exist between communication technologies and cultural identity?
3. How do modern digital communication tools alter traditional patterns of cultural evolution?

Statement of the Thesis

Communication is a transformative force that actively shapes historical events and cultural identities, not just a means of disseminating information. This study offers an integrative framework for examining the reciprocal role of communication in cultural and historical processes by presenting the Communication-Culture-History (CCH) model. By providing insights into the impact of communication on human societies' past, present, and future, this study establishes a framework for future research into global and cross-cultural dynamics.

Literature Review

The body of research on how communication shapes historical and cultural development is extensive and includes both modern and foundational theories. Nevertheless, despite mounting criticism of this bias, a large portion of the discourse is still based on Western paradigms. In order to address this, the review that follows arranges the conversation around important themes and historical periods and, when feasible, incorporates a variety of viewpoints. This method seeks to emphasize the transformative power of communication in all cultures and historical contexts, both universally and specifically.

Foundational Theories: Communication as a Structural Force

The foundation for comprehending communication as a transformative societal force was established by early scholarship. According to McLuhan's medium theory (1964), communication technologies have a greater influence on how people perceive the world and how society is structured than the information they convey. His art emphasizes how changes like the shift from oral to written cultures can have a profoundly transformative effect. Similar to this, Innis (1951) highlights how dominant communication technologies, such as writing and printing, create monopolies of knowledge that reorganize cultural hierarchies and power structures.

Moving beyond models that are centered on transmission, Carey (1989) introduces a cultural dimension by presenting communication as a ritual that upholds shared values and collective identity. The sociopolitical function of communication in promoting democratic participation and settling disputes, especially in the public domain, is further highlighted by Habermas' communicative action theory (1984).

Global Perspectives: Communication Across Cultures

Despite their contributions, foundational theories frequently overlook the diversity of communication practices around the world in favor of Western viewpoints. Melkote and Steeves (2001), for instance, highlight how indigenous communication practices in non-Western societies have the capacity to empower people. Griots are prime examples of African oral traditions, which have functioned as dynamic archives of historical knowledge by preserving cultural memory through storytelling. Similar to this, East Asia's knowledge distribution was transformed by the invention of Chinese woodblock printing centuries before Gutenberg, which made it easier for poetry, administrative texts, and Confucian ideas to proliferate.

In an increasingly interconnected world, Appadurai's concept of "mediascapes" (1996) explores how communication technologies mediate cultural imagination, bridging local and global contexts. By recognizing the distinctive contributions of non-Western practices to the development of communication, these viewpoints emphasize the necessity of placing communication studies within larger cultural and historical contexts.

Communication's Role in Historical Epochs

The development of communication technologies has continuously signaled important changes in the structure of society and the course of history. A more coherent narrative thread connecting theoretical viewpoints is produced by structuring the review according to significant historical periods.

Orality and Literacy: Ong's (1982) examination of the cognitive and social changes brought about by the shift from orality to literacy provides a fundamental understanding of how written communication brought about abstraction, individualism, and the ability to preserve knowledge over time and space. Strong communal ties were fostered by oral cultures that relied on collective memory and storytelling, such as ancient Greek or indigenous African societies.

The Printing Press: Eisenstein (1979) and Innis (1951) describe the revolutionary effects of the printing press, which upended established power structures and democratized information access. The scientific revolution, the Enlightenment, and the Reformation were all made possible by this technology. Chinese block printing, on the other hand, which existed before Gutenberg's press, followed a different course and was primarily concerned with administrative control and cultural preservation.

Mass Media: The emergence of mass media, such as radio, television, and newspapers, brought about new forces in forming public opinion and bolstering national identity. While Postman (1985) criticizes mass media's shift toward entertainment, which reduces its potential for meaningful discourse, Carey (1989) sees it as a cultural ritual that brought societies together through shared experiences.

Digital Communication: Castells (2009) looks at how social interactions have been reshaped by digital networks, which have increased inequality and given voice to underrepresented groups. Zuboff (2019) warns against the effects of surveillance capitalism on cultural autonomy while criticizing the commodification of personal data in the digital age. In the meantime, Boyd (2014) emphasizes how social media platforms influence younger generations' sense of identity and belonging, mirroring more general changes in cultural norms.

Contemporary Gaps and Emerging Paradigms

Even though the literature is extensive, there are a number of important gaps in it. The dominance of Western media systems, which frequently marginalize non-Western narratives, is criticized by postcolonial scholars such as Schiller (1976) and Hamelink (1997). While highlighting how globalization is changing cultural identity, Appadurai (1996) warns against homogenization that undermines regional customs.

For communication studies, emerging technologies like artificial intelligence (AI) offer both new opportunities and challenges. Noble (2018) investigates how AI systems can reinforce systemic biases, while Crawford and Calo (2016) address the moral ramifications of algorithmic decision-making. These viewpoints call for a reexamination of conventional theories in order to take into consideration the moral and societal ramifications of quickly developing technologies.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Global Focus in Methodology

By taking a global and inclusive approach, this study makes sure that the analysis incorporates both Western and non-Western contexts. The methodology emphasizes the universality and diversity of communication's transformative role by analyzing communication practices from various cultural and historical contexts. For instance:

Non-Western Situations:

The study investigates African oral traditions, such as griot storytelling, to explore how collective memory and cultural identity were preserved through verbal communication.

In order to show how various regions used early printing technologies for particular societal needs, the function of Chinese woodblock printing is examined as a parallel to Gutenberg's press.

Indigenous storytelling practices from Native American and Aboriginal Australian cultures are studied to understand how oral communication sustained intergenerational knowledge transfer.

Western Situations:

Important events like Gutenberg's printing press, its contribution to the democratization of knowledge, and its influence on movements like the Reformation and Enlightenment are all included in the analysis.

Alongside the globalization of these technologies, the 20th-century rise of mass media—particularly in forming national identities in North America and Europe—is critically examined.

By including these viewpoints, the study seeks to provide a more comprehensive analysis while reversing the historical Western-centric bias in communication studies.

2.2. Data Collection

The study uses a thorough multi-method approach to gather data, integrating network analysis, ethnographic and content analysis, and archival research. Every technique is designed to capture the depth and breadth of communication's impact throughout cultures and eras:

1) *Archival Research:*

Scope: Media, artifacts, and historical documents from various historical and cultural contexts.

Source Examples: European manuscripts, including the first printed books from the Gutenberg press.

Woodblock printing was used to distribute Confucian texts and Chinese administrative records.

Griot performances captured by cultural preservation organizations are included in African oral history archives.

Ethnographers and cultural anthropologists who have transcribed indigenous oral histories.

Purpose: The goal is to document the ways in which communication technologies have influenced cultural practices, power dynamics, and societal organization.

2) *Quantitative Network Analysis:*

Scope: Charting communication networks from the past and present to find trends in the sharing of knowledge and cultural interactions.

Examples of Dataset:

World heritage communication practices are documented in UNESCO databases.

Maps of historical trade routes, like the Silk Road, that emphasize how communication technologies have enabled cross-cultural interactions.

Datasets from social media that examine the growth of online activism movements such as Black Lives Matter and #MeToo.

Purpose: The goal is to examine how communication technologies have influenced cultural integration or diversification over time and enabled global connectivity.

3) *Ethnographic and Content Analysis:*

Scope: Ethnographic studies and media analysis focusing on cultural contexts and their interaction with communication technologies.

Examples of Focus Areas:

- Ethnographic accounts of Indigenous storytelling practices and their modern adaptations in digital formats.
- Comparative analysis of cultural artifacts like African griot tales, Japanese ukiyo-e prints, and European medieval texts.
- Digital content analysis of online platforms amplifying marginalized voices in contemporary settings.

Purpose: To explore how communication reinforces or challenges cultural norms, particularly in non-Western societies.

2.3. Analytical Tools

The main analytical framework is the Communication-Culture-History (CCH) model, which combines knowledge from these approaches to investigate the dynamic interactions among historical developments, cultural practices, and communication processes. The following are some specific uses for the CCH model:

Comparisons of Case Studies:

The effects of Chinese woodblock printing versus Gutenberg's press on social structures and the spread of knowledge.

The contribution of radio to the preservation of cultural identities during colonization during World War II in contrast to Indigenous oral traditions.

Current Situations:

social media's impact on international activism campaigns and its dual function of spreading false information and empowering communities.

A thorough and inclusive understanding of how communication shaped culture and history is ensured by this integrated approach.

3. Results

3.1. Epochal Transformations

Throughout many eras, the development of communication technologies has significantly influenced historical and cultural developments. This section highlights transitions and grounds abstract claims by examining important transformations with concrete examples.

1) *Orality to Literacy:*

In oral societies, such as those found in pre-colonial Africa, griots preserved cultural memory and societal values through storytelling. This oral tradition fostered communal identity and collective knowledge.

Griots used storytelling to preserve cultural memory and societal values in oral societies, like those in pre-colonial Africa. Collective knowledge and a sense of community were nurtured by this oral tradition.

Because it made it possible to record information beyond human memory, the invention of literacy signaled a sea change. For example, the development of centralized government and intricate bureaucracies was aided by Mesopotamian cuneiform and ancient Egyptian hieroglyphs.

Transition: Literacy added to oral traditions, creating new opportunities for cultural expansion and preservation, rather than completely replacing orality.

2) *The Printing Revolution:*

Gutenberg's invention of the printing press in the 15th century revolutionized European society by democratizing access to knowledge. This technology played a pivotal role in the Reformation, enabling Martin Luther's theses to spread rapidly and challenge the Catholic Church's authority.

In East Asia, Chinese woodblock printing, which predated Gutenberg's invention, facilitated the dissemination of Confucian texts and administrative documents. Unlike Gutenberg's press, which disrupted power structures, Chinese printing primarily reinforced existing cultural and political systems.

Transition: The printing revolution illustrates how similar technologies can produce different cultural outcomes depending on their societal context.

3) *Mass Media:*

The emergence of radio and television in the 20th century unified societies through shared cultural experiences. For example, Franklin D. Roosevelt's "fireside chats" during the Great Depression used radio to foster national solidarity and trust.

However, mass media also centralized control over information, as seen in propaganda campaigns during World War II. These examples underscore the dual potential of mass media to unify or manipulate populations.

Transition: Mass media paved the way for the digital age, where decentralization and user-generated content have transformed traditional media hierarchies.

4) *The Digital Age:*

Digital communication platforms like Twitter and TikTok have redefined cultural and historical engagement. For example, digital activism campaigns such as #MeToo and Black Lives Matter have empowered marginalized voices, challenging entrenched power dynamics.

At the same time, digital platforms pose challenges, such as the spread of misinformation and the commodification of personal data, as discussed by Zuboff (2019) in *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism*.

Transition: The digital age highlights the tension between empowerment and control, underscoring the need for ethical frameworks to navigate its complexities.

3.2. Communication as Catalyst

In the course of cultural and historical development, communication serves as a unifying and disruptive force. With particular examples and implications for modern contexts, this duality is examined.

Unifying Factor: Through the facilitation of shared cultural experiences, communication technologies promote collective identity. For instance: During the Enlightenment, the printing press promoted national unity by standardizing languages. Events that were broadcast on television, like the Apollo 11 moon landing, brought people together.

Practical Implication: By integrating digital tools that foster collaborative learning and intercultural understanding, educational systems can take advantage of the unifying power of communication.

Force of Disruption: In the past, communication technologies have put established power structures to the test. For example: The Catholic Church's monopoly on knowledge was challenged by the printing press. In addition to exposing users to algorithmic manipulation and surveillance, social media platforms have magnified grassroots movements like the Arab Spring.

Practical Implication: In order to combat the disruptive potential of digital platforms, policymakers must enact laws that protect privacy, minimize misinformation, and give priority to transparency.

3.3. Practical Implications

Digital Regulations:

Research from the digital era shows how urgently ethical standards for data privacy, social media content moderation, and AI algorithms are needed. To make sure that new technologies are instruments for empowerment rather than oppression, policymakers can learn from past experiences.

Adopting transparency laws for algorithmic decision-making, for instance, could ensure equitable representation of marginalized groups by reducing biases in the dissemination of information.

Systems of Education:

To encourage media literacy and critical thinking, educational institutions can incorporate the history of communication technologies into their curricula. Students can gain a better understanding of the societal effects of communication innovations by researching transitions like the rise of digital activism or the shift from orality to literacy.

Digital tools can also improve cross-cultural and collaborative learning, which promotes inclusivity and global awareness in the classroom.

4. Discussion

4.1. Theoretical Contributions

An important theoretical development is the introduction of the Communication-Culture-History (CCH) model, which offers an integrative framework for examining the mutually reinforcing relationship between history, culture, and communication. The CCH model captures the dynamic interplay between communication technologies and societal transformation across epochs, in contrast to existing models that frequently emphasize either the medium (McLuhan) or the ritualistic aspects (Carey).

A conceptual diagram has been created (see Figure 1) to highlight the model's essential elements and improve its readability and relevance:

- **Communication Technologies:** Communication technologies are the instruments and channels (such as digital platforms, printing presses, and oral traditions) that make it easier for people to share information.
- **Cultural Practices:** Cultural practices are customs, beliefs, and ways of behaving that are impacted by and shaped by communication technologies.
- **Historical Contexts:** Social and temporal elements that influence and are influenced by the dynamics of communication.

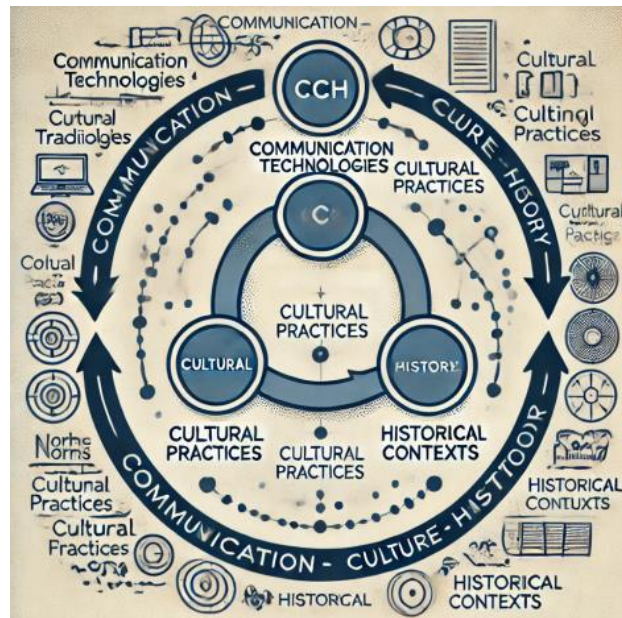


Figure 1. Conceptual Diagram of the CCH Model.

4.2. Hypothetical Applications of the CCH Model

1) Historical Analysis

Application: The printing press's effects on 16th-century Europe, where historical circumstances (such as the escalating dissension against the Church) and cultural changes (such as the Reformation) interacted with the new technology, can be examined using the CCH model.

Outcome: This application shows how communication innovations strengthen new cultural movements and upend established power structures.

2) Contemporary Situations

Application: In the digital age, the model aids in explaining how grassroots activism (cultural practices) is amplified by social media platforms (communication technologies) in political contexts like the Arab Spring (historical events).

Outcome: This illustration shows how digital platforms can both empower underrepresented voices and present problems like surveillance and false information.

3) *Global Relevance*

Through the inclusion of non-Western and Indigenous practices, which both challenge and enhance prevailing paradigms, the CCH model tackles the historical Western dominance in communication studies.

African Traditions:

In West Africa, griot storytelling exemplifies how oral traditions functioned as dynamic means of conserving cultural identity and history. Griots, in contrast to written records, modified their stories to fit modern settings, illustrating the adaptability and durability of communication.

Challenge to Dominant Paradigms: By highlighting the continued significance of orality in the transmission of knowledge, Griot traditions highlight the shortcomings of print-focused theories.

Asian Practices:

Chinese woodblock printing, which existed before Gutenberg's press, demonstrates how communication technologies were employed to preserve culture rather than to upend society. The printing press's revolutionary impact in Europe stands in contrast to this.

Enrichment of Paradigms: The Chinese example shows how technological innovation can act as a stabilizing force, extending the CCH model's application beyond narratives that are centered on disruption.

Indigenous Knowledge Systems:

Indigenous oral traditions, like those of Aboriginal Australians, combine spirituality, environmental stewardship, and communication. These methods provide comprehensive viewpoints on the connection between cultural sustainability and communication.

Expansion of Paradigms: Indigenous frameworks emphasize communication's role in promoting harmony between humans and nature, challenging reductionist views of it as merely transactional.

4.3. *Implications for Future Research*

The CCH model's interdisciplinary and worldwide applicability points to a number of directions for further research:

Comparisons Across Cultures: For instance, comparing the function of oral traditions in Indigenous Australian and African societies can highlight both distinctive and commonalities in communication styles.

New Technologies: Examining how culturally specific AI translation tools for endangered languages alter communication practices is one example.

Ethics and Policy: Using the CCH model to guide digital platform policies that prioritize equity and cultural diversity preservation.

5. *Conclusion*

Human societies' historical and cultural developments have been significantly shaped by communication. Communication has always been a transformative force, from the oral traditions that preserved collective knowledge to the digital networks that characterize contemporary connectedness. It has actively influenced the spread of ideas, the creation of cultural identities, and the restructuring of social structures, not just reflecting but also driving societal changes. Oral traditions, the printing press, mass media, and digital technologies have all contributed to significant changes in how societies function and view themselves.

The significance of reconsidering communication as an active change agent as opposed to a passive means of transmission is emphasized by this study. By doing this, the deeper mechanisms through which communication both influences and is influenced by cultural and historical forces can be revealed. A thorough framework for examining these dynamics was introduced with the Communication-Culture-History (CCH) model, which sheds light on how communication innovations both reflect and redefine historical contexts and societal norms.

Call for Further Exploration

Even though this study emphasizes how communication has shaped historical and cultural paths, new technologies like blockchain, virtual reality, and artificial intelligence offer additional avenues for investigation. Future studies could concentrate on the following topics to further the field:

1. *Cultural Preservation through Technology*: How can endangered languages and oral traditions be preserved, especially in underserved communities, using cutting-edge technologies like artificial intelligence and digital archiving tools?
2. *Ethics of Algorithmic Communication*: What effects do AI-powered communication tools like chatbots and recommendation algorithms have on public discourse, cultural narratives, and societal trust?
3. *Global Communication Equity*: How can digital platforms be created to respect cultural diversity and autonomy in underrepresented regions while bridging the global digital divide?

These focused questions provide a starting point for researchers to explore the ethical, cultural, and societal implications of evolving communication technologies.

Final Thoughts

Humanity's cultural and historical fabric has continuously been shaped by communication, which has both unifying and disruptive effects. Communication technologies have fueled advancement while upending conventional wisdom, from the preservation of oral histories in ancient societies to the democratization of knowledge through the printing press and the emergence of digital activism.

In the future, these changes will probably be accelerated by emerging technologies. The fields of artificial intelligence and machine learning have the potential to revolutionize cultural expression by facilitating highly customized narratives and content production. While virtual reality may transport users to shared experiences that cut across geographical and cultural boundaries, blockchain technology has the potential to completely transform media ownership by guaranteeing that creators maintain control over their intellectual property. But there are drawbacks to these developments as well, like algorithmic bias, false information, and privacy erosion, which call for close ethical monitoring.

These technologies may have significant long-term effects on society. In addition to reshaping cultural identities in ways that make it harder to distinguish between local and global narratives, they may promote previously unheard-of levels of global interconnectedness. The way society handles the development and application of communication technologies will determine whether they have the potential to empower or marginalize people.

By situating communication as an active agent of cultural and historical transformation, this research not only addresses existing gaps in scholarship but also establishes a foundation for understanding the complexities of communication in a rapidly changing world. The imperative to expand cross-cultural studies and ethical frameworks remains central to ensuring that communication technologies benefit humanity as a whole.

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