# The Importance of Culture and Communication

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It is my honor to be the inaugural section editor of *Culture and Communication,* a new section of *Frontiers in Communication.* I was uncertain about taking on this role when I was first approached by Frontiers. However, after discussing the opportunity with colleagues and family, and thinking about the potential for such a venture, I happily accepted this challenge and opportunity. Being the inaugural section editor of *Culture and Communication,* it was my responsibility to develop the scope for this section. In consultation with the Associate Editors, we developed the following Scope for the new section:

Culture and Communication aims to publish research that emphasizes the varied intersections of culture and human communication. The section is theoretically and methodologically interdisciplinary, welcoming social scientific, humanistic, critical/cultural, rhetorical, performative, and other approaches. Culture and Communication is an international platform that explores how "culture" in its myriad forms intersects with those of "human communication." This section broadly defines culture to include the ideas, customs, social behavior, and norms of societies. Communication is broadly defined as the exchange of information. All areas of research that discuss the relationship between culture and communication are encouraged, including (but not limited to):

· Intercultural communication
· Cross-cultural communication
· International communication
· Inter-ethnic communication
· Cultural studies
· Post-colonial studies

By including research on the intersection between culture and communication, this section seeks to promote interdisciplinarity and to enhance our understanding of global and glocal issues. Culture and Communication places culture at the center of research. The section is interested in furthering both our theoretical and methodological understandings of culture and communication.

I've been asked many times over the past few weeks as the Associate Editors and I prepare for the section launch, what makes a quality submission to *Culture and Communication*? There are six indicators of a strong submission, and one that the Associate Editors, myself, our reviewers, and our future readers will want to read: (1) Culture is at the center of the research, (2) the work advances our understanding of communication, (3) the work is theoretically and/or methodologically innovative, (4) the work has societal and/or practical significance, (5) the work is timely, and (6) the work follows open science practices.

As this section is *Culture and Communication*, it is critical that culture is at the center of all submissions. What does this mean? For a submission to fit this section the research, no matter what the theoretical or methodological approach must place culture at the center of the communication process. In this sense, researchers can approach culture from a more cultural sensitivity approach

where culture is seen as the shared values, beliefs, and practices (Brislin and Yoshida, 1994; Croucher et al., 2015). Or, researchers may approach culture from a culture-centered approach, where culture is articulated in the meanings co-constructed by the cultural participants, and these meanings are located within the local context of the culture. Culture includes a continuous component that flows through the history of the culture, and a dynamic component that continually shifts as the culture responds to statewide, national, and global shifts in politics, economic, and communication flow (Dutta, 2007, p. 311).

Either way, the key is to critically interrogate the role of culture in communication within all pieces submitted to *Culture and Communication.*

Research submitted to this section must advance our understanding of communication. While the Associate Editors and I recognize and appreciate the interdisciplinary nature of communication as a discipline, all works must further our understanding of communication, this is a given that cannot be under-estimated. Whenever I am reviewing a piece, I always ask myself what have I learned about communication from this manuscript. This question must be addressed, and readers should come away from reading all pieces with a better understanding of communication. In addition, we cannot learn from studies that do not use valid measurement. It has been the norm in communication for too long to focus on reliability, and for many to ignore validity (Croucher and Kelly, 2020). Thus, validity is a key part of advancing our understanding of communication, and all pieces will rigorously be reviewed for validity.

This section is interested in pieces that are theoretically and/or methodologically innovative. Too often I hear stories of editors who are only interested in theory driven pieces. In fact, I can personally attest to how editors of top communication journals have desk rejected pieces for being methodologically innovative but not theory driven. As a discipline I would say we are still learning about methodology. Unfortunately, many editors have a tendency to pigeon-hole method pieces to method journals. This will not be the case in this section. We are very interested in methodological pieces. We are also interested in theoretically driven pieces. We recognize that the study of culture and communication can be approached from many different angles. Thus, we encourage theoretically and/or methodologically diverse pieces from all paradigmatic approaches.

This section strongly encourages all submitters to discuss the societal and/or practical implications of their research/findings. We live in a world that can no longer only publish for fellow academics. We should be publishing research that

has societal and/or practical implications and translates into socially meaningful discussions, particularly regarding culture and communication. As I write this introduction, the world is in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic, and the US is in the midst of the Black Lives Matter movement. We as researchers have a responsibility to not only produce sound theoretical and methodological research, but also research that makes a difference.

This section will also strive to publish timely research. One thing that has impressed me about Frontiers is its review to publication process. Most manuscripts are decided on within 3–4 weeks and if accepted the manuscript is up for anyone to read within 2 months of being submitted. Compare that to a "typical" non-open-access journal. By the time a manuscript finishes the review process and is accepted the timeframe can be 4–6 months, if you're lucky. However, only subscribers to the journals (individual or institutional) can read the work after those 6 or more months. Typically, many people around the world who do not have access to the journal cannot read your results for 18–24 months after the piece is submitted. How timely is the data then? I am proud to be working with an open-access publisher that facilitates open access to information, which allows all people to receive access to key findings in a timely manner.

The sixth and final indicator is that of respect for open science. While there have been extensive debates about open science in other social sciences, communication as a discipline has not engaged in these debates as extensively (Bowman and Keene, 2018). In this section we encourage all submitters to make their data available when requested by others. Recognizing some data has privacy, sensitive material, and/or intellectual property concerns, we will work to follow ethical practices as set forth by the American Psychological Association, Frontiers, and author institutions. It is critical we foster an atmosphere of openness and access to information.

My primary goal as editor of *Culture and Communication* is to publish the best research on the varied intersections of culture and human communication. All methodologies, theoretical approaches, contexts, and philosophical approaches are welcome. Similar to the call from Afifi (2017), in her editorial statement, I want to publish research that matters. On behalf of the Associate Editors, we look forward to your submissions and are proud to inaugurate this section of *Frontiers*!

## AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

The author confirms being the sole contributor of this work and has approved it for publication.

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