

Communication in the Development of Constitutional Law

Asiimwe Kyomugisha T.

Faculty of Business, Kampala International University, Uganda

ABSTRACT

This paper examines how communication underpins the historical, structural, and interpretive development of constitutional law. Constitutional law is a multifaceted domain shaped not only by judicial decisions but also by socio-political discourse, international exchange, and symbolic expression. Communication through judicial opinions, public discourse, and technological mediums facilitates the construction, interpretation, and transmission of constitutional meaning. From pre-constitutional charters to modern-day transnational legal borrowings, communication processes allow constitutional values to evolve, migrate, and adapt to new contexts. The study also considers the interplay between judicial communication, legal pluralism, and public engagement in constitutional democracies, highlighting how law is made intelligible and authoritative through language, symbols, and discourse. Drawing on interdisciplinary approaches from law, linguistics, and anthropology, this work underscores the indispensable role of communication in shaping the legitimacy, accessibility, and adaptability of constitutional frameworks.

Keywords: Constitutional development, Legal communication, Judicial opinion, Constitutional interpretation, Public discourse, Pre-constitutional texts, Transnational constitutionalism, Legal semiotics.

INTRODUCTION

Constitutional law is a vast and ambiguous discipline, with varying interpretations among scholars and educators regarding its scope. Historical perspectives expand this field to include materials or issues often deemed irrelevant by contemporary viewpoints. This ambiguity arises because constitutional law intersects with various fields, including public law, political science, history, and even economics or philosophy, all of which face scrutiny. Regardless of interpretation, the variety of materials is extensive and continually growing. The canon of constitutional law, primarily consisting of judicial opinions and the lower courts from which they originate, presents its own challenges. The volume of opinions is staggering; the Supreme Court alone has produced around 35,000 opinions in its history. Additionally, numerous federal and state courts contribute to an overwhelming number of opinions each year, often containing intricate details like charts and extensive citations that can be difficult to interpret. Moreover, the complexity of issues addressed in these decisions further complicates matters. The accuracy and universality of what constitutes an issue are uncertain, as courts can resolve whether something qualifies as a legal issue without a definitive framework. The nature of constitutional law remains troubling, as courts interpret statutes and precedents that are concise and approachable for non-lawyers, while government policies tend to be more ambiguous, evolving, and less clearly defined [1, 2].

Historical Context of Constitutional Development

Recent scholarship on constitutional culture often emphasizes single national cultures, but exploring how constitutional values communicate across polities is beneficial. This communication involves a two-part process: production, focusing on institutional, intellectual, and popular roles, and migration, which studies the travel of meanings. Research on migration has highlighted the comparative reception of state instruments. However, it is crucial to examine how constitutional meanings are produced and debated within varying domestic and international structures. Factors like national protectionism, local nativism,

and international censorship significantly influence communication channels. Drawing from sociology and anthropology, concepts like semiotic scarcity can help elucidate the dynamics of constitutional meaning's production and reception. It's essential to analyze how local communication types can flourish through channels that allow comparative discourse. Expanding the focus beyond national boundaries to include non-territorial polities can reveal global opportunities and challenges for plural governance. A richer comparison arises when observing how states derive constitutional law from others, with distinctions between translation and imitation potentially enhancing analysis of similarities and untranslatability in bespoke constitutions. Additionally, examining how significant constitutional changes, such as revolutions or coups, "travel" across contexts can deepen understanding of governance evolution [3, 4].

The Role of Communication in Law

Essentially, the same procedure must be conducted with respect to all high-level consensual rules of communication. It must be shown that these rules and what they prescribe can be borrowed in the analysis of national systems of courts, statutes, and ordinary rules of law for which similar propositions are believed to hold. The necessary information is off-the-shelf material that is already available in valuable contributions to the theory of law. That information will be employed to justify the statements last made about the system of law regarded as postulating rules of communication. The basic theory of communication is also all-important for the analysis of the development of a pluralistic system of justiciable and enforceable rule of law by and before the Commission on Human Rights, a body composed of more than forty governments. Hence, the species of consensual communication with respect to mode or symbol systems not language, in addition to propositional content of a consensual mould, is also crucial for this latter purpose. In short, this is a specification of the rules, protocol symbol systems, rules of meaning, etc. which must be generally accepted and available to all parties who shape the utterance content of any legal system. Further, as against communication for their own sake such rules systems, and levels of understanding must, in the view of legal scholars, confer powers, rights, duties, etc., on the subject of communications or utterances or the group to which they belong. Additionally bijuridical systems of law-forcings and rule-ensuring must be generally accepted, understood, and available for the communication of all public orders. This means that both the speech act and utterance content levels must ground one another, but moreover that some abilities must, of necessity, be general as well as individualized. In the absence of such mutuality of levels, speech act content in utterance cadences of messages cannot by itself be law at any level of the communication and won't be validly orderable, utterable or enforceable, observable or otherwise. Essentially these levels are includable logic premises in a formulation of propositions, i.e. 'Example A of x is only law if, 1 . . . (sic.)'. Symbol systems and bilingualism or multi-linguality phenomena would have to be controlled if this communication is possible, but additionally the rules and meanings for pa(1), Pa(2), (sic.) would also be fundamental. Otherwise, in diaglossia or speech aberration cases the need for clarity is made, if there are relatively independent levels of understanding, then other understandings, 'like and unlike', would have to be mutually acceptable [5, 6].

Key Historical Documents and Their Impact

Pre-constitutional documents, such as proclamations, charters, and resolutions, share key characteristics. They are often the first codifications of a budding political community's constitutional structure, serving as preliminary texts that hint at the development of a more formal constitution and embody the aspirational goals of the community. Typically celebratory, their commemorative essence reflects both the presentation style and the optimistic outlook towards the future of the political entity. These documents target the political community and aim to educate those unfamiliar with its constitutional framework. They often contain detailed accounts of the circumstances leading to their creation and the objectives they aim to accomplish. In contrast to constitutions that delineate government powers, functions, and duties, pre-constitutional documents are more fluid and focused on aspirational ideals, the rationale for forming a new government, fundamental rights, and objectives for governance. While statutes are usually complex and less often used to mark a political community's inception, proclamations and charters are crafted with a celebratory intent and recognize the emergence of a new political identity. Unlike formal laws that assign duties or regulate behavior, these documents serve as historical symbols of a community's founding, often characterized by grandiose language to emphasize their significance. While constitutions and statutes are strictly applied by courts, pre-constitutional documents hold a more dynamic and flexible role in politics and law. For instance, it is challenging to envision proclamations as mechanisms to

dismantle territorial occupations; similarly, charters are generally viewed as honorary rather than legally binding. Pre-constitutional texts could assume a law-like status only if recognized as fundamental law of the community, with subsequent legal texts regarded as subordinate [7, 8].

Influential Thinkers and Their Contributions

Three influential thinkers in constitutional law are analyzed for their intellectual roots, limitations, and innovative approaches. The discussion includes Warren, analyzed by a contemporary historian, while Ginsburg and Rattanachott recently addressed earlier figures. Although these thinkers would recognize their contributions, the modern context and interplay among their ideas, as well as their political environment, stem from current academic efforts. Each author summarizes the thinkers' contributions without over-interpreting or trivializing their insights while ensuring elaboration where necessary. The need to summarize without delving into deeper exploration is stressed. Each account concludes with the thinker's legacy, considering interpretations that may prevail a century and a half later. The exploration of legacy limits and differing perspectives related to significant thinkers is advised, with a focus on the "hermeneutics of discernment" to guide historical analysis. This approach enhances clarity in competing interpretations and can foster constructive inquiry into the nuances of legacy. Precise paraphrasing is recommended to keep ideas accessible for new interpretations. Ultimately, conclusions on legacies should be largely agreeable, fostering discussions about each thinker's influence on constitutional law. Disparate views may arise when considering the thinkers collectively, particularly regarding aspects like Taney's bureaucratic efficiency, precedent adherence, and inclination for deference, which have historically been undervalued [9, 10].

The Evolution of Constitutional Interpretation

The evolutionary history of constitutional interpretation is a rich and complex story, with many seminal events that have given rise to a plethora of theories. Inescapably intertwined with the antecedent history of the constitutional text itself, the interpretation of the Constitution has been central to and has occupied a conspicuous place in the American experiment in constitutional government. The debate over the correctness of this or that construction of the Constitution can only rarely be separated from the discussion of the question of the validity of the interpretative process employed in reaching that conclusion. The questions of interpretation and construction, while distinct, especially in terms of their focus and approach, are fundamentally interrelated and entwined in a manner that attest to the interplay of event, thought, and history in the development of constitutional law. There are at least two major historical developments that suggest a more limited approach to the question of the evolution of constitutional interpretation. The textual history of the Constitution is replete with instances of amendments that were suggested to, and explicitly debated by the convention, that have nevertheless not been adopted. Yet the Constitution is not thereby rendered a text confronting constitutional actors. Or more pointedly, it is arguable that the non-adoption of specific provisions has not resulted in a lack of these provisions' constitutional text under originalism. More properly speaking, upon the initial dilemma of the framing of a national charter for government, questions must have arisen that confined the contours of that project. No constitution would have been preferable to the imposition of one that would have rendered government impossible. There is much to be said for the view that in framing a constitution, a deliberative assembly's procedures, and not any other substantive issues or matters, must therefore be questioned [11, 12].

Judicial Communication and Its Role

Judicial communication refers to how a judge conveys the court's decisions and is a core part of a judge's duties. Judges are tasked with publicly announcing their decisions, and much of their work revolves around effective communication. The public pays close attention to these pronouncements, while clerks invest significant time in crafting written opinions that explain rulings. A court opinion reflects the preceding work and serves as a public communication detailing the rationale behind the court's decisions. However, the most noteworthy aspect of a judicial opinion is the unique process of its creation, revealing both the complexities of the judicial system and the individual judge's thought process. This process, known as "opinion drafting," involves a judge producing a document that informs the public on how a case was resolved. Typically, this culminates in a written opinion named the "majority opinion," signed by the authoring judge. Given the jury's pivotal role in American law, written opinions are crucial throughout the judicial process. Jurors must base their verdicts on evidence and legal guidance provided in the judge's instructions but often need to understand complex legal reasoning articulated in these

opinions, as it helps empower citizens to hold the government accountable by clarifying why certain evidence is deemed irrelevant [13, 14].

Public Discourse and Constitutional Law

In a constitutional democracy, the members of the political community agree to regulate their mutual conduct in a state. It presupposes a community or state whose members are deemed equal in moral worth, in that no member may be treated as a mere means. The questions of what the state ought or ought not to do are therefore questions of law, and members of the political community ought to conduct their deliberations and actions in terms of the legal doctrine of the state. This is not a question of coercion, but of guaranteeing equal protection of the citizens' fundamental condition of existence. Procedural assurance of equal citizenship is thus foregrounded, and the discernment of substantive content is considered a continuing process. There remain questions of interpretation, although these do not pertain directly to the meaning of the document but concern the conditions of its legitimate interpretation. Disputants therefore seek to instruct public officers on how to carry out their public functions. Dissimulation and mendacity prevent the public spirited response of any disputant from being unchallenged, for each disputant has motives other than the legal status of the draft. Inquiries must be structured in such a way as to increase the likelihood of a genuine and public spirited response. This requires venue, manner, and context to guarantee an adequate degree of publicity, as well as occasion for rebuttal in the event of a mendacious response. The requirements of public response are already compelling in the context of constitutional draft, and this is not simply the result of some prior dominion of public discourse. It is the nature of the constitution which ensures it must be publicly deliberated. Simple appeals to right or might cannot expect to sway a sovereign community of reasonable citizens. In well ordered polities, persons are drawn to assure each other that each is a duly constituted member of the community. It is not the case that parties know some better than others, for the terms on which deliberations proceed are subject to the knowledge of all citizens [15, 16].

International Perspectives on Constitutional Law

A decade ago, public lawyers from Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the UK began discussing 'constitutional law' as superior legal norms to 'ordinary' law, prompted by various constitutional crises in their regions. Key issues included the Australian governor-general's power to dismiss the government, Canada's Constitution Act and its amending processes, the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act, and controversies regarding constitutional authority in New Zealand. Despite differences in their legal systems, the perceived importance of constitutional law was a unifying concern. Over time, participants faced challenges like health issues and differing views, yet they recognized the significance of the topics they explored. The focus shifted towards examining constitutional law, inspired by a recent property law book, and aimed to analyze literature from common law traditions. Involving public lawyers from civil law countries was encouraged, aiming to stimulate discussion and collaboration to refine or emulate this model. The emphasis is on selecting materials for analysis and evaluating them in relation to the specified constitutions. Furthermore, it is crucial to clarify the nature of this initiative [17, 18].

The Role of Technology in Legal Communication

Law, legal institutions, and legal actors are made up of symbols, many of which are recorded in some material form. In turn, these symbols create the legal knowledge that shapes law itself. Some technologies make particular kinds of symbols easier to create and find and hence enable these symbols to play their role in the generation of legal knowledge. Other technologies, through their affordances, enable some forms of legal reason and communication but inhibit others. Technology interacts with both formal legal institutions and the events giving rise to legal issues. Law, as an institution, is usually agent-dependent in which the nature of law depends on the incumbents in its various roles, in the same way that technology is agent-dependent. Seeking insight into the historical, sociological, and cultural factors underlying the relationship between law and technology usually starts with identifying technologies considered particularly important at a particular time and place. New technologies introduce new affordances for communication, record-keeping, or transportation, while old technologies are sometimes progressively replaced but are also rediscovered and repurposed. Technological change alters the balance of powers inside and outside of the legal order. Legal actors become better able to find information about prior cases with similar facts, drawing some of the power away from judges and magistrates. Technologies that help litigants comprehend law offer little help if the records of legal conversations cannot be easily located or accessed. Accordingly, litigation and lobbying may rescale or redistribute dependent on the information technologies available to affected communities. It is still necessary to distinguish between shifts in the

legal knowledge orders of a particular time as determined by the available technologies and other non-technological factors, and the nature of the technology itself. The law in large part depends on the type of technologies available in its time. There are distinct laws of large and small technology, of code and of structure, control and access, and of access and automation, each of which is relevant to an understanding of a specific way in which technology shapes law [19, 20].

Case Studies of Constitutional Communication

In this paper, I present a case study of the design and drafting of a constitution, illustrating previously discussed concepts. It explores a unique resolution of a constitutional conflict through a communicative approach regarding the Titanic's constitution, drafted in the 1970s and amended until its loss in 1997. The case highlights the emotional and entertaining dimensions of communication in the constitutional process, performative acts, implicit communication, and the connection between constitutional sentiment and institutional strength. It focuses on a constitutional convention's performance and its textual output, including the surrounding performances. In 1997, the U.S. faced a dual crisis: a plane crash in New York City and the Supreme Court ruling on Bush vs. Gore. The crashes involved commercial airliners and resulted in the loss of innocent lives, while the Supreme Court's indecision affected the presidential election. As votes were tallied over four days, public attention was captured by the Titanic disaster film. On the fourth evening, television stations aired clips of the film alongside vote updates from Florida. The Titanic, which had embarked from Southampton on April 10 and sank on April 15, serves as a poignant backdrop to the political turmoil. The initial draft described the ship's grand launch, a moment filled with both celebration and foreboding. The Concordia's maiden voyage ended tragically, leaving a legacy entwined with both pride and loss for Britain [21, 22].

Challenges in Legal Communication

In a modern world where preventive measures to reduce the risks of communication failure are imperative, such risks can be categorized into various forms, each emphasizing different concerns. Core ideas include a range of communication attributes and stakeholder comprehension or perception of legal content. Experts on legal communications have sometimes suggested interventions to rectify quality problems or misperceptions. These efforts reflect a one-size-fits-all approach to interventions and tend not to account for the structuring of communication. The circumstances of communication rigidity can be of many different forms or complexities, and some burdens may be out of the control of public communicators. Monetary or technological constraints can prevent attention-consistent drafting of communications. The knowledge-context alignment that facilitates understanding across general communication may be highly context-evanescent and thus unpredictable across situations, even where both sides are attempting to accommodate communication for diverse knowledge groups. A fuller categorization of instances of communication rigidity goes beyond conventional barriers between social groups or within a single domain. Instead, it can also encompass instance-restricted communication structures and offers a conceptual basis for identifying batching or temporally-accommodative routes. A focus on such structuring helps to streamline the acquisition of a priori knowledge about suitable interventions for reducing risks in the context of stakeholder-informative legal developments on issues where adaptation is warranted. Initial training for engagement with anticipative communication is a possible strategy to maximize learning when there will be a potentially-limited number of communications on a topic whose scope may nevertheless often change rapidly. In such cases, knowledge PDA may start, as a matter of routine, with the drafting of wider-horizon communication for more extensive interrogation to help identify points of improvement before signals are seized upon publicly to limit performance issues or address feedback. In turn, if appropriately aware of the nature of spontaneously-volatile knowledge PBCs and their bearing on prevarication anticipation, there runs the possibility that ex-ante preparatory efforts could be directed to condensing-scope mapping [23, 24].

Future Trends in Constitutional Law Communication

As communication and technology evolve, new methods of dueling may arise. A race of almost entirely furry humans could emerge, hampering clear communication. This furry population will create a kinship across wooded parks scattered with artifacts, favoring chat boards for sharing "shquestions." Without a unifying narrative, various forms like zines, digizines, and numerous digital programs will proliferate. Institutions capable of molding information will surface, accompanied by spambots operating purely on inputs. Formerly, interactive spaces will shift to allow for widespread influence. Debates will ignite over names and identities, leading to a flood of low-quality discourse balanced by occasional clarity. Numerous channels will attract lovers, but deep connections may remain elusive. Furry institutions will lack

coherence and reproduce without a unified identity. Despite variations among furs, concerns about authoritarian control may arise, highlighting the need for representation. Questions of true power will surface: Should it reside with individuals, groups, or a collective? Calls for rights akin to historical ones, previously controlled by authorities, will emerge from struggles over language. Should there be an urge for representation, the constitution's format will dictate its impact. Conflicting desires for clarity will produce varied interpretations of choices; isolated injustices may seem unthinkable when viewed collectively. Each reason for unity will unfold into distinct challenges; social tensions will continually develop, narrowing focus on a single inquiry within a cycle of yearning, with consistent discourse expected to take years before achieving agreement [25, 26].

CONCLUSIÓN

Communication lies at the heart of constitutional law, not merely as a means of articulating legal norms but as the very foundation of their creation, legitimacy, and transformation. Whether in the form of foundational texts, judicial opinions, or public deliberations, constitutional meaning is constructed and conveyed through structured communication. The comparative migration of constitutional ideas, the framing of rights through public dialogue, and the evolving methods of judicial expression underscore the dynamic relationship between law and communication. Furthermore, technological advancements continue to reshape how legal knowledge is produced and accessed, thereby influencing the democratization of constitutional interpretation. Ultimately, understanding constitutional law as a communicative enterprise enriches its analysis and opens new pathways for inclusive, pluralistic, and globally informed governance.

REFERENCES

1. Epstein L, Segal JA, Spaeth HJ, Walker TG. *The Supreme Court Compendium: Two Centuries of Data, Decisions, and Developments*. 6th ed. Washington, D.C.: CQ Press; 2021.
2. Chandra A, Kalantry S, Hubbard WHJ. *Court on Trial: A Data-Driven Account of the Supreme Court of India*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; 2023.
3. Al-Tarawneh A, Al-Badawi M, Hatab WA. Translating governance and legal compliance: Exploring the role of translation in facilitating corporate reporting and policy implementation. *Corp Law Gov Rev*. 2024;6(3):1–12.
4. Johnson RL, Pistilli G, Menéndez-González N, Duran LD, Panai E, Kalpokiene J, et al. The ghost in the machine has an American accent: value conflict in GPT-3. *arXiv* [Preprint]. 2022 Mar 15. Available from: <https://arxiv.org/abs/2203.07785>
5. Box-Steffensmeier JM. Engaged pluralism: The importance of commitment. *Perspect Polit*. 2022;20(S1):250–2.
6. Sierra A, Serrano-Puche J. Perceptions of journalism and trust in news among traditionalist and digitalist media users: A comparative analysis of Denmark, Spain and USA. *Anàlisi*. 2023;68:7–25.
7. Scholtes J. The abuse of constitutional identity in the European Union. *Eur Const Law Rev*. 2023;19(4):709–29.
8. Wahiu W. Constitution-building court actors in South Africa and Kenya. *LSE Blogs*. 2023. Available from: <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk>
9. Barton G, Yilmaz I, Morieson N. Authoritarianism, democracy, Islamic movements and contestations of Islamic religious ideas in Indonesia. *Religions*. 2021;12(3):160.
10. Mosse GL. *The Crisis of German Ideology: Intellectual Origins of the Third Reich*. New York: Howard Fertig; 2021.
11. Hasbrouck B. The antiracist constitution. *BUL Rev*. 2022;102(4):1301–45.
12. Preston MN. The tweet test: Attributing presidential intent to agency action. *Belmont Law Rev*. 2022;9(1):89–114.
13. Kazim T, Tomlinson J. Automation bias and the principles of judicial review. *Judicial Rev*. 2023;28(1):35–54.
14. Vettters L. Making sense of noncitizens' rights claims in asylum appeal hearings: Practices and sentiments of procedural justice among German administrative judges. *Citizenship Stud*. 2022;26(3):319–38.
15. Bulman-Pozen J, Seifter M. State constitutional rights and democratic proportionality. *Colum Law Rev*. 2023;123(2):305–72.
16. Tan SH. Radbruch's formula revisited: The *lex injusta non est lex* maxim in constitutional democracies. *Can J Law Jurisprud*. 2021;34(1):125–47.

17. Harding MS. Judicializing everything?: The clash of constitutionalisms in Canada, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom. *Const Polit Econ*. 2021;32(4):465–89.
18. Catalano M, Chan A. Common law systems and COVID-19 policy response: Protective public health policy in the United States, Canada, New Zealand, and Australia. In: Greener I, editor. *Government Responses to the COVID-19 Pandemic: Between a Rock and a Hard Place*. Cham: Springer; 2023. p. 197–222.
19. Chen Z, Lu M, Zhao M, Luo G, Withey B, Yong S, et al. Empowering farming communities through information tracking: A design approach to crop planning and management. In: *Proceedings of the Extended Abstracts of the CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems*. 2025 Apr 26. p. 1–8.
20. Konstantopoulou Z, Mikalef P. Enhancing traceability in the Norwegian fish supply chain: Blockchain adoption. In: *Conference on e-Business, e-Services and e-Society*. Cham: Springer Nature; 2024 Sep 10. p. 383–93.
21. Kim KC. Before *Parasite* and *Squid Game*: The history, policy, and dynamics of the South Korean film industry. In: Xu K, Chan J, editors. *Global Development of Asian Cinema in the Film Industry*. Hershey: IGI Global; 2025. p. 33–54.
22. Denley TJ. Originalism v. dynamic constitutionalism: Implications of religious beliefs on constitutional interpretation. *Univ Md Law J Race Relig Gender Class*. 2022;22(1):77–102.
23. Olajiga OK, Olu-lawal KA, Usman FO, Ninduwezuor-Ehiobu N. Conceptual framework for effective communication strategies in high-risk industries: Insights from the energy sector. *World J Adv Eng Technol Sci*. 2024;11(2):80–90.
24. Jamil Z, Nordin SM, Isha AS. Enhancing SCT in high-risk work environments: A comprehensive framework for effective communication. *ASEAN J Appl Lang*. 2023;2:49–66.
25. De Varennes F. Language, minorities and human rights. *Maastricht J Eur Comp Law*. 2021;28(2):123–42.
26. Ishay MR. *The Human Rights Reader: Major Political Essays, Speeches, and Documents from Ancient Times to the Present*. 4th ed. New York: Routledge; 2022.

CITE AS: Asiimwe Kyomugisha T. (2025). Communication in the Development of Constitutional Law. *IAA Journal of Arts and Humanities* 12(1):55-61.
<https://doi.org/10.59298/IAAJAH/2025/1215561>