Diffusion of Innovation

I. Overview of Readings
      i. Main Idea: success of the spread of social phenomena is dependent on a few people with particular social gifts.
         1. Connectors: people who span worlds, gives access to opportunities, and are connected to opinion leaders in various networks
         2. Mavens: people accumulate knowledge to share it with others, provide the message
         3. Salesmen: highly persuasive, skilled communicators
      ii. Success vs. Failure:
         1. Character profiles
            a. Paul Revere (Connector/Maven)
            b. William Dawes (neither)
      iii. Methodology
         1. Gladwell took research that had been done by others and wrote about it in a very engaging manner
            a. Not a scientific research project
            b. Highly effective storyteller
               i. Who tells the story?
               ii. Who gets the credit for the idea?
         2. Applications for research
            a. Who is representing your work?
            b. How much time do you want to spend focusing on getting ideas out?
            c. Importance of needing an idea first
            d. What kind of society are you functioning in?
      i. Innovation: must be perceived as new, though it doesn’t need to actually be a new idea
         1. Characteristics:
         2. Most diffusion research has analyzed technological innovations
         3. Re-invention
      ii. Diffusion
         1. Messages about an innovation are communicated through channels over time.
      iii. In public health: “health communication” subfield separates innovation diffusion from actual research
         1. Designated Driver:
            a. Came out of Harvard
               i. Was it research based?
            b. Chose something that didn’t fight drinking itself
            c. Communication channels
i. Television and movies were a significant channel to spread it through popular culture faster.

   i. See response notes.
   ii. Cultural innovations
      1. What produced the move away from foot-binding in China?
         a. How do such innovations take place?
         b. Political forces as a factor?
            i. Importance of political innovation?
               1. Role of trust between citizens and state
               2. Practice related to political behavior, political meaning
      2. Meme: concepts and practices have a self-replicating tendency
   iii. Critical point: Innovations are practices. They are a new way of doing things.