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Disperse and Connect: Impacts of Communication and Transportation Technologies on Group Connectivity

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Disperse and Connect

Impacts of Communication and Transportation Technologies on Group Connectivity

Figure 1. The History of Transportation in St. Louis, by Frank Nuderscher (1889-1959)

Timothy Daniel Geary

Senior Capstone

School of Humanities and Communication

Concentration in Practical and Professional Ethics

Dr. Umi Vaughan

Spring 2019

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<p align="center">**Project Proposal**</p>

1. **Timothy D. Geary - Concentration in Practical and Professional Ethics**

2. **Focus:**

   a. This essay will address the following question(s): "As communication and transportation technologies evolve, how, if at all, do they influence diasporic ties, status, or identity?"

   b. I chose this focus because people are always moving and the type or frequency of travel combined with evolving communication/information technologies may help explain why a group is more diasporic than another.

3. **Alignment with Common Theme**

   a. This project directly aligns with the shared theme of inquiry because it addresses two major factors in ways a group is dispersed and how communicative transactions of shared values, traditions, or culture take place.

4. **Purpose:**

   a. The primary purpose of this project is to explore how communication or transportation improvements affect a group's diasporic identity. I hope to accomplish two primary goals through this project. First, provide working answers to the primary questions. Second, draw connections with the HCOM major to inform the primary purpose of the project.

5. **Capstone Title:**

   a. Disperse and connect: Impacts of communication and transportation technologies on diasporic identity.

6. **Working summary:**

   a. The mass movement and communication of people from homeland to host land has continually evolved. Exploring the impact of communication and transportation on a groups level of connection as a diasporic community provides a novel lens to look at this phenomenon.

7. **Sources:**

   a. Knowledge on what diaspora is, various types of communication and transportation technology as they evolved through time, specific groups at various

<p align="center">Geary 1</p>

times in history with the communication and transportation technologies in that context.

    b. Research skills to organize and complete this project.

    c. Gather vital tools to conduct research

    d. I will use primary oral histories of specific populations, secondary sources, stats, peer-reviewed articles, books, and websites. To more clearly understand what diaspora is I found this additional resource:

        i. Grossman, Jonathan (2018). "Toward a definition of diaspora." Ethnic and Racial Studies

8. **Next Steps:**

    a. Continue to ask clarifying questions to identify specific group(s) of people to study and sub-questions to flesh out primary question.

    b. Identify specific case study groups to compare

    c. Detailed weekly plans to create paper and poster

9. **Timeline:**

    a. Week 5 – Continue to clarify specific project goals and purpose

    b. Week 6 – Literature review, meet with Dr. Vaughan

    c. Week 7 – Literature review and paper outline/draft (3 pages)

    d. Week 8 – Literature review and draft paper (6 pages)

    e. Week 9 (Spring break) – Continue to research and write paper (9 pages)

    f. Week 10 – Research and write (12 pages)

    g. Week 11 – Apply class feedback, research and write (15 pages)

    h. Week 12 – Research and write (18 pages)

    i. Week 13-   Write and edit paper (22 pages)

Research Essay

Since the beginning of time humans have tended to wander. The impulse to travel to new lands and discover new ways to improve means of life is rife throughout the annuls of all recorded history. This view of the movement of peoples and cultures is one that most of western civilization shares. There is also the impulse to communicate back to your place of origin. For most of all recorded history we relied upon oral, physically recorded, or learned knowledge. These were conveyed through the transport methods of those days and only now, in the past 100 years, have we seen the tremendous change brought about by the Information Age. These changes combined with the impulse to wander and discover new lands have forever altered how we live, think, and connect with ourselves and others.

However, there is also movement of people and culture from their points of origin that goes against their free will and autonomy. This could be caused by natural disaster, war, or racial oppression. This results in the uprooting of one from their homeland and subsequent transportation to a new host land.

Within these ideas, there is much discussion on the topic of diaspora. Diaspora means to "scatter" or to "disperse." In this instance, it is the dispersion of people from their place of origin and relocation into a new host land.

An obvious component of the dispersion is the transport of human bodies and communicative channels to preserve group connection. Many of the ancient and middle age diaspora groups transported with primitive transportation methods and their means of communicating with each other and those in the homeland was limited. Dominant methods of travel were by foot, horse, or boat, and communication were limited to physical proximity or shared written word. Today, there is railroads, various land transport vehicles, and air travel. For

most of the world, the internet now connects people across the world instantaneously and the wealth of thousands of years is available to billions at the click of a button. In addition, improvements of transport reinforce and improve novel communication technologies.

This project explores how the evolution of transportation and communication technologies impact group connectivity and diaspora status. It traces the African diaspora through different time periods and explores how communication and transportation apparatuses were employed in the initial dispersion and post dispersion. The primary question driving this project is: "As communication and transportation technologies evolve, how, if at all, do they influence homeland orientation and community within the African diaspora?"

Looking at diaspora group formation and connection over time through the lenses of travel and communication provides important insights on human experience. I argue that the "how," or means, of transporting bodies through time and space plays an important role in the diaspora experience. More specifically, it influences connections between people and their original homeland. Additionally, the types of communication technologies may also play an integral role in conjunction with transportation technologies. This essay does not seek to find definitive answers but merely provide an exploration into this domain.

Defining Diaspora

The concept of diaspora originated in the Greek. It is a composite of "dia" and "speirein" which translates into "to scatter" or to "disperse" (Baumann, pg. 315). The term is closely related to the Jewish people in the Old Testament. After their exile from Egypt and occupation of the Promised Land, God commanded them to follow His laws or suffer the consequences. These ideas are clearly laid out in Deuteronomy 28:64-68:

> "Then the Lord will scatter you among all peoples, from one end of the earth to the other, and there you shall serve other gods, which neither you nor you fathers have known---

wood and stone. And among those nations you shall find no rest, nor shall the sole of you

foot have a resting place; but there the Lord will give you a trembling heart, failing eyes,

and anguish of soul. Your life shall hang in doubt before you; you shall fear day and

night, and have no assurance of life" (Bible).

In the words of Willem Unnik "diaspora had an unfavorable disastrous meaning" (Baumann, pg. 16). In the Jewish context, the disastrous consequences were exile from the "Promised Land." Through time, the concept also took on meanings in Christian communities as well. From these origins, we can trace the evolution of diaspora to its present form.

It was not until the 1960s that the diaspora term transcended the "Jewish and Christian traditions and their diaspora communities" (Baumann, pg. 320). The concept of diaspora slowly took roots within African studies, was fueled by African studies scholar George Shepperson. "Analogous to the expulsion of Jews in early times, the dispersion of the sub-Saharan Africans through the colonial slave trade was described as an enforced expatriation, accompanied by a longing to return to the homeland" (Baumann, pg. 321). The "expulsion" from a "homeland" and settling in a new "host land" accompanied by a "longing to return to the homeland," are foundational linguistic roots that provide the base for modern conceptions of the term. Instead of confinement to the Jewish and African tradition, the term now relates to "expatriate national, cultural, or religious groups and communities" (Baumann, pg. 322). From the generalized and broad usage of "diaspora," the journal *Diaspora* was launched in 1991. Editor Khachig Tololyan declared: "We use 'diaspora' provisionally to indicate our belief that the term that once described Jewish, Greek, and Armenian dispersion now shares meanings with a larger semantic domain that incudes words like immigrant, expatriate, refugee, guest worker, exile community, overseas community, ethnic community" (Tölölyan).

From this, we can further explore the major elements of diaspora and delineate a working definition. The work of Baumann, Safran, Cohen, Butlter, and Grossman provide a general framework to understand this highly contested concept. Cohen claims that not everyone truly meets the requirements of a diaspora, simply because they say they do. "Diasporas are formed and mobilized in certain circumstances," and the "wisdom of hindsight or passage of time allows us to see if they are a diaspora" (Cohen, pg. 15-16). To find out if a group is a diaspora we can compare it to a list of 'common features' shared by most or all diasporas: dispersal to two or more locations, collective mythology of the homeland, alienation from host land, idealization of return to homeland, and an ongoing relationship with the homeland (Safran, Cohen, Butler). Cohen also sets forth qualitative adjectives for various groups, such as "victim, labor, trade, and deterritorialized" (Cohen, pg. 16). These specific elements of various diasporas embody separate areas of research. However, a consolidated definition of the term helps to define common themes.

Can the concept of diaspora be put into one statement? Jonathon Grossman claims to have done just that. He synthesized over 220 authoritative diaspora articles to work towards a "decontested" definition. By "decontested", Grossman claims his methods put all scholars in conversation with each other. The definition is as follows: "diaspora is a transnational community whose members (or their ancestors) emigrated or were dispersed from their original homeland but remain oriented to it and preserve a group identity" (Grossman, pg. 5). This definition takes the keywords in all major articles and condenses them into one complete statement. However, each defining term is within itself a topic of debate and study while simultaneously many of these terms are interrelated.

Within the defining elements of a diaspora, there are many different genres and texts that convey this unique experience. *Carlos Aldama's Life in Batá,* by Umi Vaughan and Carlos

Aldama, is a biographic account of Carlos Aldama and the connection to the African diaspora and culture through the Batá drum tradition. Aldama is the link between the sacred Batá drum tradition and the next generation of drummers. Through the Batá drum tradition, a relationship is maintained with the homeland and a group identity preserved (Vaughan). *Perfume Dreams,* by Andrew Lam, is a collection of short stories that portray the Vietnamese diaspora after the war. Lam struggles with his identity as an exiled Vietnamese and American journalist. His memories of his childhood home and idealization of a return to that time are beautifully expressed in these short stories (Lam). *The Warmth of Other Suns,* by Isabel Wilkerson, is a journalistic epic that tells the story of the Great Migration. Wilkerson's work captures a time in American history that moves beyond the original dispersal from Africa (Wilkerson). *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao,* by Junot Diaz, is a fictional account of the Dominican Republic diaspora and raises many questions of where home is, along racial and national identity (Diaz).

Each of the previous examples show the nuance and complexity of this human experience. Not only do these represent radically different time periods and genres, they outline the various permutations within the exile experience. In each instance, they are either meeting the requirements of diaspora or exhibiting ways to preserve connection to their original homeland.

African and Jewish diasporas

After looking at diaspora as a concept and experience, it is important to trace the two groups that dominate the literature. As noted previously, these groups are chosen because of the time frame and the corresponding levels of communicative and transportation technologies available at the time. The Jewish diaspora refers to the 1400 BC through 70 AD time periods, while the African diaspora encapsulates the 15th through 20th century.

The Jewish state came to an end in 70 AD after the Romans began to drive them from their home of over one thousand years. Previously, in the year 1446 BC, the Exodus from Egypt began and the Israelites settled in the promise land around 1406 BC. In 722 BC the Assyrians conquered Israel and the "Hebrew inhabitants were scattered all over the Middle East" (Jewish Virtual Library). The year 597 BC onward marks three distinct groups of Hebrews "a group in Babylon and other parts of the middle east, a group in Judaea, and another group in Egypt. Thus, 597 is considered the beginning date of the Jewish Diaspora" (Jewish Virtual Library). Through their exile, the majority of them retained their religion, identity and social customs leading to the "Hebraic religion and its new-found core document, the Torah" (Jewish Virtual Library). In 63 BC, Judaea became a protectorate of Rome, but under an oppressive regime leading to a failed revolt in 70 AD. The Romans destroyed Jerusalem and drove the Jews from Palestine. Hebrew history became "the history of the Diaspora as the Jews and their world view spread over Africa, Asia, and Europe" (Jewish Virtual Library).

The African diaspora is mostly attributed to the transatlantic slave trade. Starting in the middle of the 15th century, massive forceful displacement of Africans for slave labor moved over 11 million people from their homeland (BBC). The majority of these people were from modern Benin, Nigeria, and Cameroon. In fact, between the early sixteenth and late nineteenth centuries, "more than 10 million African came to the New World pre- dominantly from the region au- etching south from the Senegal River through the vicinity of present-day nation such as Sierra Leone, Liberia, Ghana, Togo, Benin, Nigeria. and down through Angola-the majority of them arriving in the Caribbean and Latin America" (Vaughan, pg.67). Given these diverse points of origin, much of the diaspora is attributed to the Yorùbá people from southwestern Nigeria (Butler, pg. 198). It is important to note that "Dispersal started before the Transatlantic slave trade by earlier slave trade to Egypt and across the Indian Ocean while still happening

intermittently today" (Cohen, pg. 40-42). Many in the the Diaspora maintain links to the African continent through culture, traditions, music, and religious practices. The dominant homeland image perpetrated in the massive consciousness is Ethiopia. Ethiopia is seen as the origin of all dispersed people while simultaneously a site of redemption. It is "the heartland of all civilization" (Cohen, pg. 63). It is important to examine the main ways a linkage is maintained with the homelands.

An integral component of the African diaspora is religious and musical practice. In all the homelands listed above, "music was organized and performed as an important part of everyday life" (Vaughan, pg. 67). The most prolific instrument is the drum, which supported many religious and sacred healing ceremonies. "Drums have come to symbolize African-descended spiritual practices in the Caribbean and Latin America" (Vaughan, pg. 68). Music was also part of religious practices and propelled any sacred healing ceremonies. "Their religions include Candomblé , Umbanda, , and Batuquein in Brazil, as well as " Santería," or Ocha, and Palo Mayombe in Cuba and in all the American countries where Cubans and Caribbean Latino music have traveled" (Matory, pg. 75). These are religions of spirit possession, divination, and healing that "Define peoplehoods called 'nations,' which link them with specific places in Africa," "by obedience to shared gods, shared ritual standards, shared language, and, in some, sense, a shared leadership" (Matory, pg. 75). These religious and musical traditions will provide the focal point when considering how transportation and communication technologies evolved.

Transportation

We will trace how and why our transportation methods and systems evolved as they did present day. The story is far too long to include in detail so we will limit it to general timeframes. We will frame this evolution around the natural impulse of survival. In his book, *An Outline History of Transportation*, Lewis Bouton strings together the evolution of transportation

technologies and notes the major impacts individually, societally, and globally. The primary thread holding this all together is how civilization advanced through transportation. Bouton argues that viewing human history through how we travel paints a fascinating narrative. "How all this came about---how the human race has developed from a nomad tribe breaking camp to seek fresh pasture lands into a society where you can step into your own car and go where you will---is an intensely interesting story. It lends life and colors to every page of history" (Bouton, pg. 9). Moving from walking, domestication of animals, building roads, boats, land vehicles, the personal automobile, aviation, and smart transportation systems covers a 10,000 year history.

Hunger for new land, discoveries, and survival are some of the primary motivations to travel. Most importantly was the desire for efficient trade, which motivated individuals and societies to improve ways to transport their wares (Bouton, pg. 11). Before efficient means of trade, nomad tribesman would raid cities on horseback and sell the goods elsewhere. However this was not an effective means to be profitable. "Gradually, they gave up their sporadic raids and went in to business for themselves" (Bouton pg. 12). This theme of goods, services, and information sharing is part of the primary motivation behind improving these systems.

With this firmly in mind, we will now trace changes in transport chronologically from the beginnings of world history. From about 10,000 BC till 8000 BC, humans first means of transport involved walking, running and swimming (Bouton, pg. 23). Domestication of animals to haul heavier loads and humans at greater speed and duration started around 7800 BC. The first forms of road transport involved animals, such as horses (domesticated in the 4th or the 3rd millennium BC), or oxen (from about 8000 BC) or humans carrying goods over dirt tracks that often followed game trails (Watts, pg. 4). War also prompted early super powers such as the Persian and Roman empires to build roads that allowed armies to travel quickly. "By the end of the second century A.D. there were 372 important marked highways in the Empire, of which 29

started at Rome. The total length of the system was about 48,000 miles" (Bouton, pg. 15). This super network originally designed to extend the Roman empire soon became routes for world trade. Rome's powerful war galleys were used as trading vessels as well.

It was not till the industrial revolution in the 19th century that any fundamental change in land, or water transport took place. The key difference was the introduction of mechanical means of power instead of animal, human, or wind. For thousands of years both speed and capacity were limited to human and animal power. The steam engine, which was then applied to railroad transport and steam boats, sparked global transport and trade. What was once limited to natural power and resources was augmented by reliable mechanical power and connectivity. The biggest improvement in trade and economic growth was the slow, reliable tramp steamers. These sturdy boats "made it possible for the man in the street to draw upon the products of the farther corners of the earth for daily comfort and enjoyment…they can haul anything and everything. They work for me and you. No longer is transportation a luxury. It is a necessity, a vital factor in our daily living… and with a degree of luxury that monarchs of the past have never equaled" (Bouton, pg. 33-39). Railroads also snaked across the Indian, African, and Western continents, making trade and human transport efficient and rapid compared to animal or manpowered land vehicles.

The final components of this journey are the proliferation of the personal automobile and airplanes. The first gasoline combustion motor car was called the Oldsmobile, and was created in 1895 (Bouton, pg. 39). At first these "horseless carriages" were limited by production, cost, and availability of road infrastructure, but overtime, with private contracts, Britain and America had interstate freeways connecting the entire continent. Land travel was limited and dangerous but "the automobile made complete luxury in personal transportation with availability to the great mass of common people" (Bouton, pg. 36). In short, the single largest change was that of the automobile. It opened up the free will of the common man and with the creation of massive

interstate and federal highways, hundreds of millions now go places, in a way no one could even dream of 100 years ago.

Aviation made global connectivity a reality. What used to take months crossing the ocean now takes a few hours. Incredible distances are traversed with modern airplanes and have truly made our planet a connected global village. We are now bound by ideas, goods, and culture through these new and innovative technologies.

Communication

How human communication evolved from primitive methods to modern technological marvels is a long and fascinating journey. In his book, *Introduction to the History of Communication: Evolutions & Revolutions,* Terence P. Moran not only documents this journey, but explains why humans desire to improve communication capacities. "More than any other senses, sight and sound have provided the central media that we have used for communication to enhance our survival and to promote cultural evolution and revolution" (Moran, pg. 4). Additionally, Moran contends that "A general assumption underlying most work in human communication is that what people need is more and better communication to improve their understanding of other people and, thus, their own lives, thereby improving their chances for survival" (Moran, pg. 6). "The key to understanding changes in communication techniques and technologies is survival---physical survival, economic survival, social survival, and cultural survival" (Moran pg. 7). We can see that the primary motivation to improve the sharing of our internal thoughts is the survival instinct. This motivation transformed us Homo sapiens to the current state of Homo Cyberians, or technological beings. From this driving force we can explore what communication actually is and survey major evolutions in communication techniques and technologies.

Before exploring each major change in communication it is important to define key terms; communication, culture, techniques, and technologies. Communication "consists of the sharing of information between and among humans and the systems they construct by means of agreed-upon-conventional signs, symbols, and structures" (Moran pg. 9). Simply put, we find means to reliably convey our inner thoughts to fellow human beings. Culture "is the totality of ways and means that people in groups develop and sustain themselves over time in order to survive in given environments. It includes customs, mores, norms, and taboos, providing both the ways people are expected to believe and behave and the reasons for these beliefs and behaviors. In essence, culture consists of the shared communication of a group of people" (Moran, pg. 9). Techniques "are the ways that people and cultures employ to communicate information in specific media systems" (Moran, pg.10). Finally, technologies "are the specific tools and technical systems that people and cultures use to encode, store, transmit, receive, and decode information" (Moran, pg.10). Each of these terms help frame major changes in communication and will also aid us in analyzing diaspora groups.

Language makes all communication possible. Language is "the instinctive ability to conceptualize reality in symbolic structures and to use outward manifestations of those structures to communicate thoughts to other people" (Moran, pg.12). Therefore, the first major stepping stone towards externalizing our internal thoughts is the acquisition of language. Moran calls this the stage of "Becoming Human---The Evolutions and Revolution in Language that spawned Speech and Visual Communication" (Moran, pg. 8). People in those times lived in oral cultures. Traditions, religions, and important information was passed down by telling stories and storing information in human memory (Moran, pg. 68-72).

After humans acquired language, we became literate. Development of writing and reading became the backbone of civilization, history, literature, and the beginnings of science.

The origins of all history started at the advent of writing. Literacy began in Egypt and Sumer some 5,000 years ago (Moran, pg.9). For over a thousand years, only the elite and scribes could manipulate the complex symbolic systems. The first consonant alphabet originated by the Canaanites some 1500 B.C.E and was improved upon by the Phoenicians, Greeks, and Romans (Moran, pg. 90). This alphabetized system would lead to an improved and simplified version accessible to most of the worlds population. According to Albertine Gaur, "All writing is information storage" (Guar, pg. 218). If communication is the exchange of information within agreed upon parameters and symbol conventions, then writing and reading is an extension of the basic foundation of language ability.

Although we learned to write and read, there was still a lack of print technologies. Therefore, the third revolution was becoming typographic.

"Manifestations of literacy began in Sumer and Egypt some 40,000 to 50,000 after *Homo sapiens* acquired language and only existed in a few cultures until the latter half of the 20th century. It then took almost 5,000 years from the beginning of true literacy around 3100 B.C.E for true typography to be created in the 1450s in Mainz, Germany. The past 550 years have not only brought us the Age of Print but also the Modern World with all the subsequent developments that have extended communication techniques into graphic, electric---electronic, digital, and cybernetic media" (Moran, pg. 110).

The invention of printing is usually attributed to Johann Gensfleisch zum Gutenberg, but actually originated in China 105 BC with the invention of paper. "The motivation was simple: to produce a more efficient and cheaper substitute for writing than the expensive silk, clumsy bamboo, stone, slate, and clay…" (Moran, pg. 126). This new system of externalizing thoughts and culture became the new method of memory storage instead of the human brain. Interestingly, although only "12% of the people in the world could read and write in 1820, today this has

reversed: only 17% of the world population remains illiterate. Over the last 65 years the global

literacy rate increased by 4% every 5 years – from 42% in 1960 to 86% in 2015" (Roser, pg.1).

This revolution combined with graphics, photography, and cinematography, are the foundation

of modern telecommunication systems that ushered in the global Information Age.

     Tapping into the power of electricity sparked the age of electric communication. Instead

of limiting the exchange of information to personal or manuscript form, electricity extended our

senses of sight far beyond our imagination. "In the main, sound continued to be the carrier of

dialogue between individuals or among small groups, with public dissemination largely confined

to the same roles played in Artistole's Athens some 2100 years in the past." Additionally, "Print

had extended written words for almost 500 years since Gutenberg's revolution, with books and

libraries providing storage systems for a culture's most memorable information, and popular

magazines and newspapers providing extensions in space that were still limited to transportation

systems" (Moran, pg. 193-194). The next step was utilizing the force of electromagnetism to

carry signals. Benjamin Franklin discovered how to harness the power of electricity and how it

operated, which ultimately powered the creation of electric type writers, telephones,

phonography, wireless phones, radio broadcasts, TV, and cable systems. All of these innovations

sparked the rise of modern mass media.

     The final and most important revolution was becoming cybernetic through digital

communication. Many scholars identify this revolution as the "Information Age" with the

birthdate being in 1992, with the emergence of the World Wide Web, which provided the

possibility of electronic connection to everyone else on the internet (Moran, pg. 254). The power

of this new system was the promise of a "new Information Superhighway to unite all media of

communication, from speech, writing, and printing to graphic and hyper graphic imaging to

electrographic and electrophonic signals, into on supra-system that used digitalization to reduce

all messages to binary codes." (Moran, pg. 255). Most importantly "the convergence of audio, video, text, and still and moving images into one system that standardized all information encoding-decoding, sending-receiving, storing-sharing as on-off (1-0) binary digits turned time and space into cybertime and cyberspace, reducing, if not eliminating, all distinctions between now and then and between here and there" (Wriston, pg. 89). Additionally, "While we have not been able to be physically in more than one place at one time or move backward and forward in time at will, we have used communication media to symbolically be present everywhere at the same time and receive messages from the past and send messages to the future" (Moran, pg. 298).

Analysis

After clearly defining diaspora, outlining the African diaspora, and tracing transportation and communication development through time, we can now apply this context to explore ways these changes may influence community and homeland orientation.

With the ability to move information and bodies effortlessly, this creates new ways to form community and remain engaged in the homeland. "Homeland orientation exists when a group not only resides outside its real or imagined homeland but also maintains material and symbolic ties with it (Brubaker, pg. 5). These ties can also "include actions that concern the whole nation, at home and abroad, such as participation in homeland political parties or lobbying for the homeland" (Grossman, pg. 11). There is the movement of people, goods, resources, ideas, and information between the homeland and diaspora with some ties as "predominantly spiritual and symbolic" (Grossman, pg. 11). Additionally, tourism, participation in homeland national or subnational politics, economic, and cultural and religious exchanges are specific domains of orientation. While these are all important, we will focus on the cultural and religious exchanges within the African diaspora.

Trade is a vital means of transporting culture and religion between host and homeland. Without modern boats, land transport, or paper, the proliferation of the musical and religious traditions of Africans would be limited.

"…during the African cultural renaissance in turn-of-the-century Lagos, Africans and at least one European wrote numerous books, pamphlets, and newspaper articles describing and dignifying so-called Yorùbá traditional religion. However, the effectiveness of these texts as vehicles of trans-Atlantic Yorùbá identity depended on their mobility and benefited greatly from their service to the commercial interests of the Afro-Brazilian travelers" (Matory, pg. 95)

As opposed to many other nations or religious practices, this cultural renaissance and connectivity made the Yorùbá maintain higher levels of connectivity and homeland orientation. It most likely had to do with modern communication and transportation. "Recall, for example, that the government of colonial Lagos itself subsidized direct steamship service between Lagos and the cities of coastal Brazilin 1890 and 1891" (Matory, pg. 96). This steady stream of reliable transport and literature is vital to Yorùbá group community and orientation.

The African cultural renaissance in Lagos combined with steamship service forged strong bonds with those in the community. For example, "Even in these supposedly remembered, preserved, and traditional cultures, written texts have become major and transformative vehicles of such cultural transmission and identity formation" (Matory, pg. 97). Additionally, "Text, voice, and video chat websites instant messaging applications, and social networks have made it easier for immigrants and their descendants to communicate not only with their homelands but also with one another, in their host countries and elsewhere" (Leurs 2015). From the oral traditions, drum and religious ceremonies there is now the movement of these connections to the

cybersphere. "Indeed, the Yorùbá-identified worshipers of Brazil and the United States have begun propagating their legacy on the internet" (Matory, pg. 97).

Moving from oral, written, and musical communication to the internet, created different ways of homeland orientation. There is a relatively new movement of group mobilization through the cyber sphere. As noted above, homeland orientation refers to how one influences politics and culture in their original homeland. In the words of Wisdom J. Tettey, "This refers to the organization of social groups outside their countries of origin as communities of action, not primarily according to the necessities of physical propinquity, but rather by the possibilities presented by the boundlessness of the new technological architecture of the internet" (Tettey, pg. 4). This could help explain why internet cultural practices and religion pushes connective boundaries.

Conclusion

It is interesting to consider the impacts of transportation and communication advancements and the impact on homeland orientation. While this essay explored the evolution of transportation and communication technologies, it also linked together the concept of diaspora and how the spread of information through these technologies could impact human connection. Because constant movement and travel is such an integral part of the human experience, a topic such as this is important to study. This essay is merely a primer, and hopefully will spark deeper insightful analyses of not only the African diaspora, but the Jewish, Irish, and Syrian diasporas.

Looking to the future, we can only speculate as to how we will travel and communicate. If teleportation or implanted head chips become readily available, then the ways we view travel and human interaction will be radically different. In a future with virtual reality or complete communication abilities, many may view their past and connections with a homeland sufficient without actual physical proximity or face to face interaction. But even if such technologies exist,

humans will still continue to crave connection to their roots, while still maintaining a constant need to push known limits and explore our infinite universe. The histories of both Africans and Jews show the importance and complexity of this phenomenon. When viewed through the lens of the diaspora experience, this history is enriched and facilitates a deeper understanding of all peoples. Even though they are dispersed from an ideal homeland, connections through transport and communication will prevail.

Annotated Bibliography

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www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/abolition/africa_article_01.shtml.
        Adi's work weaves a historical thread through the African Transatlantic Slave Trade
        while providing context and reasons for the slave trade. This condensed work provided
        excellent material for the African diaspora section.

"Ancient Jewish History: The Diaspora." Jewish Virtual Library ,
www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/the-diaspora.
        The Jewish Virtual Library is an authoritative online scholarly archive which documents
        the Jewish people's history. I chose this source because it simplifies the complex topic of
        diaspora while providing the key broad ideas for the Jewish diaspora section.

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Numen, Vol. 47, No. 3, Religions in the Disenchanted World (2000), pp. 313-337. *JSTOR,*
www.jstor.org/stable/3270328
        This source provides an excellent definition of diaspora by presenting the origins of the
        term. It was particularly helpful by providing context for the section on defining diaspora.
        I needed a source that discusses the foundation of this concept.

Bouton, Archibald Lewis. *An Outline History of Transportation*. Fisher Body Craftsmans Guild,
1935.
        This source outlines how and why transportation systems evolved from ancient to modern
        times and impacts on society. It not only traces the chronological evolution of
        transportation, but also the primary motivations. I chose Bouton's work because it
        provides the key ideas for the section on transportation.

Butler, Kim D. "Defining Diaspora, Refining a Discourse." Diaspora, 2001.
        Butler's work solidifies and synthesizes much of the dialogue surrounding diaspora and
        provides an excellent theoretical foundation for this highly contested field of inquiry.
        This source contributed to the section defining diaspora.

Cohen, Robin. *Global Diasporas*: *An Introduction*. Abingdon: Routledge, 2010.
        This work encapsulates diaspora as a global concept and traces it's origins, definitions,
        conditions, and major groups. This was particularly helpful in the section defining
        diaspora.

Díaz, Junot. *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*. Faber and Faber, 2012.
        This novel helped me understand the various shapes and experiences people have
        regarding national identity, and homeland orientation. It helped provide context for the
        rich diaspora experience.

Grossman, Jonathan. "Toward a Definition of Diaspora." Ethnic and Racial Studies, 2018.
DOI: 10.1080/01419870.2018.1550261

This article synthesizes and presents the definition of diaspora in one definitive sentence. Condensing the term was helpful because I could pull specific terminology to aid in my analysis.

Gaur, Albertine. *A History of Writing*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1984.
This source provides excellent historical context and evidence for the transformative nature of writing. In conjunction with Moran's work on communication, Gaur's scholarship explores why writing evolved and how it changed ways we encode, store, and transmit information across time and space.

Holy Bible: Containing the Old and New Testaments: King James Version. American Bible Society, 2010.
Deuteronomy 28:64-68 is the earliest account of exile and longing to return to a homeland. The Holy Bible documents the Jewish people's role as God's chosen people and vividly paints the blessings and consequences of choosing to obey or disobey God's Holy law. I chose this source because it represents the traditional origins of diaspora.

Lam, Andrew. *Perfume Dreams: Reflections on the Vietnamese Diaspora*. Heyday Books, 2005.
This collection of short essays beautifully sketches the nuances and complexities of national identity in the Vietnamese diaspora. Lam's short stories transport the reader into the daily struggle of living in America after your cultural and spiritual roots are left in Vietnam. I chose this book because it provides another lens to appreciate and understand diaspora.

Matory, Lorand J. "The English Professors of Brazil: On the Diasporic Roots of the Yoruba Nation." Cambridge University Press. Comparative Studies in Society and History, Vol. 41, No. 1 (Jan., 1999), pp. 72-103.
This source gave critical context and background to origins of the African diaspora as well as insights for analyzing how communication methods and transport impact group connection over time. I chose this source because it helped me analyze impacts of transportation on religious and cultural ties.

Moran, Terence P. *Introduction to the History of Communication: Evolutions and Revolutions*. New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2010.
This work gave a clear outline of communication techniques and technologies while explaining how communication advancement is deeply rooted in physical, spiritual and cultural survival. Moran's scholarship is the foundation for the section on communication.

Roser, Max, and Esteban Ortiz-Ospina. "Literacy." Our World in Data, 13 Aug. 2016, ourworldindata.org/literacy.
This article summarizes key statistics regarding global literacy. It was helpful because I wanted to compare modern and ancient literacy rates. This helped give concrete statistical evidence for how and why literacy forever changed human communications.

Safran, William. "Diasporas in Modern Societies: Myths of Homeland and Return." Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies, Volume 1, Number 1, Spring 1991, pp. 83-99.

This is a foundational article in diaspora studies and presents a theoretical framework cited in all following scholarship. Safran's work outlines the key elements of a diaspora. Therefore, it was helpful in my section on defining this term.

Tölölyan, Khachig. "Rethinking Diaspora(s): Stateless Power in the Transnational Moment." Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies, vol. 5, no. 1, 1996, pp. 3–36., doi:10.1353/dsp.1996.0000.
This article helped define diaspora as a concept and states the ultimate purpose of this term. I learned how and why the term encapsulates many different ethic groups and cultures. Most importantly, it gave me closure on the most important theoretical paragraph.

Vaughan, Umi. *The Routledge History of Latin American Culture*. Routledge, 2019.
Umi's work on African music traditions was particularly helpful in creating the section on the African diaspora as well as the analysis sections. The specific religious, and musical traditions and methods helped me in the analysis and grounded my work in this fundamental part of the diaspora experience.

Vaughan, Umi and Aldama, Carlos. *Carlos Aldama's Life in Batá: Cuba, Diaspora, and the Drum.* Indiana University Press, 2012.
This book provided an excellent biographical and theoretical underpinning for the section that discussed carious permutations of this concept. The Batá drum is the link from hostland to homeland. This also helped me understand diaspora as a concept by providing real world examples and theory alongside each other.

Watts, Martin. *Working Oxen*. Shire Album. 342. Princes Risborough, Buckinghamshire: Osprey Publishing, 1999.
This book provides a detailed account of animal domestication and is the foundation for modern transportation. This work helped me construct the transportation section and give context for modern technologies.

Wilkerson, Isabel. *The Warmth of Other Suns*. Random House, 2010.
Wilkerson's work captures a time in American history that moves beyond the original dispersal from Africa. This is helpful to guide the interested reader in the direction of excellent journalistic literature in an American context.

Wriston, Walter. *The Twilight of Sovereignty: How the Information Revolution is Transforming Our World*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1992.
This source guided my thinking in the final sections of communication evolutions and revolutions section. It was helpful to provide critical context of the modern information age from a vantage point at the dawn of the internet. Wriston's scholarship helped me understand the work of Moran and Bouton.

Final Synthesis Essay

My time in this seminar course over the past four months has been a tremendous struggle and challenge. Studying the concept of diaspora pushed me to think globally, broadly, and critically about how and why people move from one place to another. I gained many important insights by studying the theme of diaspora and my chosen project allowed me to explore this theme with increased depth and focus. Prior to this course, I never gave any real thought into why or how people leave one area and travel to another.

Through my time in the seminar I directly contributed to my classmates' ability to identify and describe major issues, differentiated multiple points of view, and raised critical questions about the section's shared theme. I demonstrated an ability to work collaboratively, as well as independently. Additionally, my project helped me gain a deeper understanding of the theme of diaspora. Finally, my project meets the mechanical and substantive content criteria for both publishing and assessment. This essay seeks to weave together the entirety of my experience in constructing the capstone achievement of my undergraduate degree.

Citing historical books and documents was the major way I helped peers identify and describe major issues related to this theme. To create a successful project, it is vitally important everyone share and understand a common theoretical framework. Employing independent research and curiosity, I culled academic databases for additional articles and case studies to discuss with three classmates. Generally, it was difficult to contribute, given that not all class mates came prepared and were afraid to speak their minds. This minimized the overall learning experience, but I did my best to identify and describe relevant information.

Reading multiple sources for differentiating points of view, helped me contribute to a broad base of critical thinking about the shared theme. For example, I found six articles that

attempt to define the definition of diaspora. Although they all agree on major elements, the fine details create fertile ground for discussion and debate.

I raised critical questions about the shared theme by connecting all class readings and responses to the theoretical framework outlined in diaspora. Most of these questions emerged through the group presentations. For example, I asked "can a group still be a diaspora moving to a new host land when they are already outside of their original homeland in a new host land?" This was referring to the Great Migration, when over six million African Americans migrated from southern to northern states. This question helped present a different perspective for both me and my peers.

Success of this project would not be possible without balancing collaborative and independent work. Realizing this from the outset, helped me finish the final project and demonstrates my ability to complete both group and individual work. From the first day in class I started building relationships with Dr. Umi Vaughan, Meghan Weston, Robin Mchammel, Patrick Garza, and Napoleon Miranda. These wonderful people supported me and helped me develop my ideas throughout the semester as my infantile ideas began to grow. I attended class early to discuss the project and stayed afterwards to better clarify new material and identify next steps. One clear example of collaborative work took place while Dr. Vaughan was on sick leave. Even though class was canceled, I met with Meghan and Robin for the entire class period to work on our projects. This forged strong peer relationships and also helped me work independently. Additionally, I met with Dr. Vaughan briefly after each class meeting and brought a draft to office hours to move towards a finished product. In these meetings I asked questions, tested ideas, and worked through problems or doubts in the drafting phase.

Successful independent work only came after the collaborative. To balance this large project I had to research organizational strategies, time management skills, reading, outlining, and

writing deliverables. The most important factor was systematically identifying, evaluating, and taking notes on relevant sources and storing this data in an elaborate folder system on my MacBook Air. Through this method, I learned how to search electronic and physical libraries and place multiple texts in conversation with each other. This independent work was only possible through self-discipline and grit.

My project demonstrates a deepened understanding of this section's shared theme in three steps. First, the connection of communication and transportation evolutions to group connectivity is a more specific, practical means to look at how a group physically moved and how they preserved homeland orientation through those technologies. Second, I have a rich section defining the shared course theme. I draw on ancient, modern, and contemporary works to provide a holistic view of this theme. In doing so, I now understand this theme in a more nuanced, practical way. Third, from this theoretical base, I explore the linkage between the complex diasporic experience and communication/transportation innovations.

This project met publishing criteria because I carefully followed the "Senior Capstone Portfolio Content Guidelines" and Dr. Umi's instructions for proper page numbering and cover pages. For standards of assessment, I believe this project meets the major mechanical and substance/content criteria falling into the "Exemplary" point range. Regarding mechanics, I incorporated highly reliable and relevant sources, consistent MLA citations, an "Annotated Bibliography," and successfully incorporated peer review feedback. For substance and content, I forged a strong relationship to the shared seminar topic, constructed the essay around a clear thesis statement(s), and demonstrated original thinking by introducing a new and interesting way to analyze the experience of diasporic groups.

Overall, this seminar class proved to be one of the most challenging and rewarding experiences of my undergraduate career. As a Human Communication major at CSUMB, I have

learned history, literature, philosophy, communication theories, and gained critical reading and writing skills. All of this knowledge was put to work in this final capstone project. This was challenging because of the sheer volume of components required to successfully complete the project. The reward came from hard work and determination to do my best to understand the shared theme. Studying such dispersion of peoples and the connections they have with one another taught me to better appreciate human resilience. I learned that what makes us so resilient is our ability to build societies and preserve and disseminate information vital to our survival.