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ABSTRACT

“Examining the Transnational through the Transatlantic:
An Assessment of the Muslim Diaspora in Europe and
North America through World System Analysis”

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The engagement of Muslims in the modern world is the subject of considerable scholarship. In recent years, world systems theory has emerged to examine the social and historical processes that have shaped the modern landscape. Scholars such as Fernand Braudel, Immanuel Wallerstein, Janet Abu-Lughod and Walter Mignolo have been pioneers in this attempt to define and describe a series of mechanisms that have developed over the past five centuries - coincident to the era of increased interaction with the Muslim world - to understanding communities, migration and identity. The Muslim experience, with its concept of the global *ummah*, appears to be well-suited to the employment of world systems theory, particularly in examining the diasporic communities in the West, where Muslims are minority populations. These groups, separated by the Atlantic Ocean, have unique and parallel developmental histories, yet with certain common and shared socio-historical experiences irrespective of country of origin in the Muslim world. This paper will employ world systems theory to an examination of the Muslim diasporic community in North America and Europe. By using a Braudelian model of a geographic of nexus, e.g., the Atlantic Ocean instead of the Mediterranean; Wallerstein's core-versus-periphery conception and Mignolo's local histories global design approach; this paper will assess whether this theory is applicable to the Muslim experience in the West. Moreover, this paper will examine how such a theoretical construct explains the manner in which Muslim diasporic communities inform and affect the global Muslim narrative, through its engagement with the majority societies where they reside as well as with the larger Muslim world. Finally, the transnational nature of the Muslim diaspora experience shall be explored through the impact of new and emerging modalities of technology in facilitating and mediating Muslim engagement within the diaspora, and within the broader *ummah*.