Teaching Beyond September 11th
Module 14

Islamophobia in Global (Non-US) Contexts

Masking Islamophobia: The Danish "Ghetto Laws"

Module 14, Lesson 1

Denmark is a Scandinavian country in Northern Europe, consisting of several islands referred to as the Danish archipelago

A part of the European Union, it is surrounded by the Baltic and North Sea, with Germany, Norway and Sweden as neighboring countries

Greenland and the Faroe Islands are part of the Danish commonwealth

General population
of Denmark:
5.831 million
people (2020)

Approximately
320,000* are
Muslim
(5.5% of total
population)

Estimated figure

The country is governed by a constitutional monarchy, in which the head of the government is the Prime Minister

Denmark is generally known for its welfare state

A welfare state is one where the government plays a key role in the protection and promotion of the economic and social well-being of citizens.

Denmark's comprehensive social welfare system means that the state accepts responsibility for the provision of comprehensive and universal welfare for its citizens (i.e., unemployment, health care, disability, social security benefits, etc.).

History of Migration to Denmark

Denmark experienced an economic boom during the 60s & 70s, which led to workers coming to the country from Turkey and Pakistan, among other countries

These migrants were termed "guest workers" or "foreign workers", to imply that they were staying temporarily

During the 80s and early 00s, refugees from several war-torn and conflict-ridden nations, (many from the Middle East and Global South), came to Denmark

Over time, the ethnic and racial makeup of the country has changed leading to serious public debates on integration and who can consider themselves Danish

This led to the development of the "Ghetto Plan"

Key Terms

Ghetto: an area of a city, especially a very poor area, where people of a particular race or religion live closely together and apart from other people. Historically, an area of a city where Jewish people were forced to live. It it considered a racist term in many contexts.

Key Terms

Ghetto: an area of a city, especially a very poor area, where people of a particular race or religion live closely together and apart from other people. Historically, an area of a city where Jewish people were forced to live. Is considered a racist term in many contexts.

Ghetto (Definition according to the Danish government): A public housing area with at least 1,000 inhabitants, where the proportion of immigrants and descendants from **non-Western countries exceeds 50%,** and which meets at least two of four criteria based on employment, crime rates, education, and gross income.

Key Terms

Almen bolig (public housing):
The public housing associations are non-profit organizations that build homes that are jointly owned by those who live there. The public housing sector has a long and proud tradition of building good, affordable housing, which is characterized by resident democracy and social housing responsibility

Text reads: "Stop the Ghetto Laws" and "Defend Public Housing" in Danish.

Key Terms

Non-Western immigrant and descendant: According to Danish law, an **immigrant** is a person who was born abroad to parents who are neither Danish citizens nor were born in Denmark.

A **non-Western descendant** is someone who was born in Denmark to parents who are **neither Danish citizens nor were born in Denmark.** When one or both parents born in Denmark obtain Danish citizenship, their children will not be classified as descendants. However, if Danish-born parents both maintain a foreign citizenship, their children will be classified as descendants.

Migrant Ghettos in Denmark
Video by Sahar Zand
from BBC Our World

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AWsELvvjEJg

The Danish "Ghetto Plan"

Small Group Discussion Questions

In your groups, discuss the following questions based on the New York Times article and BBC video:

1. Why did the former Danish Prime Minister Lars Løkke Rasmussen introduce the "Ghetto laws"? What reasons or justifications did he imply or state to introduce this law?

2. How does the Social Democrat politician Sine Heltberg view the so-called "Hard Ghetto" Mjølnerparken, and how does that differ from the locals' perception?

The Danish "Ghetto Plan"

Small Group Discussion Questions

3. In what ways does anti-Muslim racism manifest in the "Ghetto Plan?

4. What other connections might you make between Denmark's "Ghetto Package" and the restriction of housing to other groups/events in history?

Masking Islamophobia: The case of the French "Burqa ban"

Module 14, Lesson 2

Opening Activity

On a piece of paper, write down the first thing that comes to your mind when asked to describe a French person.

These can be things such as physical characteristics, customs, values, daily life, etc.

Opening Activity

Where did these perceptions of French people come from?

Are they based on personal experience, something you saw or read, or something else entirely?

What is "Frenchness"?

The notion of "Frenchness" is used to define what being French encompasses or entails. It is used to refer to common characteristics attached to an understanding of France or French people. It is an example of a term that is used to designate and describe a collective or national identity.

This sculpture represents "Marianne", the national personification of the French Republic since the French Revolution. She symbolizes liberty, equality, fraternity and reason.

How "Frenchness" is promoted by the government and media

But, "Frenchness" also includes:

Photo of a youth activist gathering within Lallab, a feminist and anti-racist organization in Paris (2019)

Photo from a protest against a legal proposal by deputies to ban women that wear the headscarf from school trips in France (2020)

Photo Credits: Oumaima Dermoumi

Teaching Beyond September 11th © 2022 The University of Pennsylvania

And, "Frenchness" also includes:

Photo from a protest against a legal proposal by deputies to ban women that wear the headscarf from school trips (2020)
Sign reads:
"Yes to critiquing religion, no to hating believers
Liberty, Equality, Fraternity"

Photo from a protest against Islamophobia in France (2020)

Photo Credits: Oumaima Dermoumi

Teaching Beyond September 11th © 2022 The University of Pennsylvania
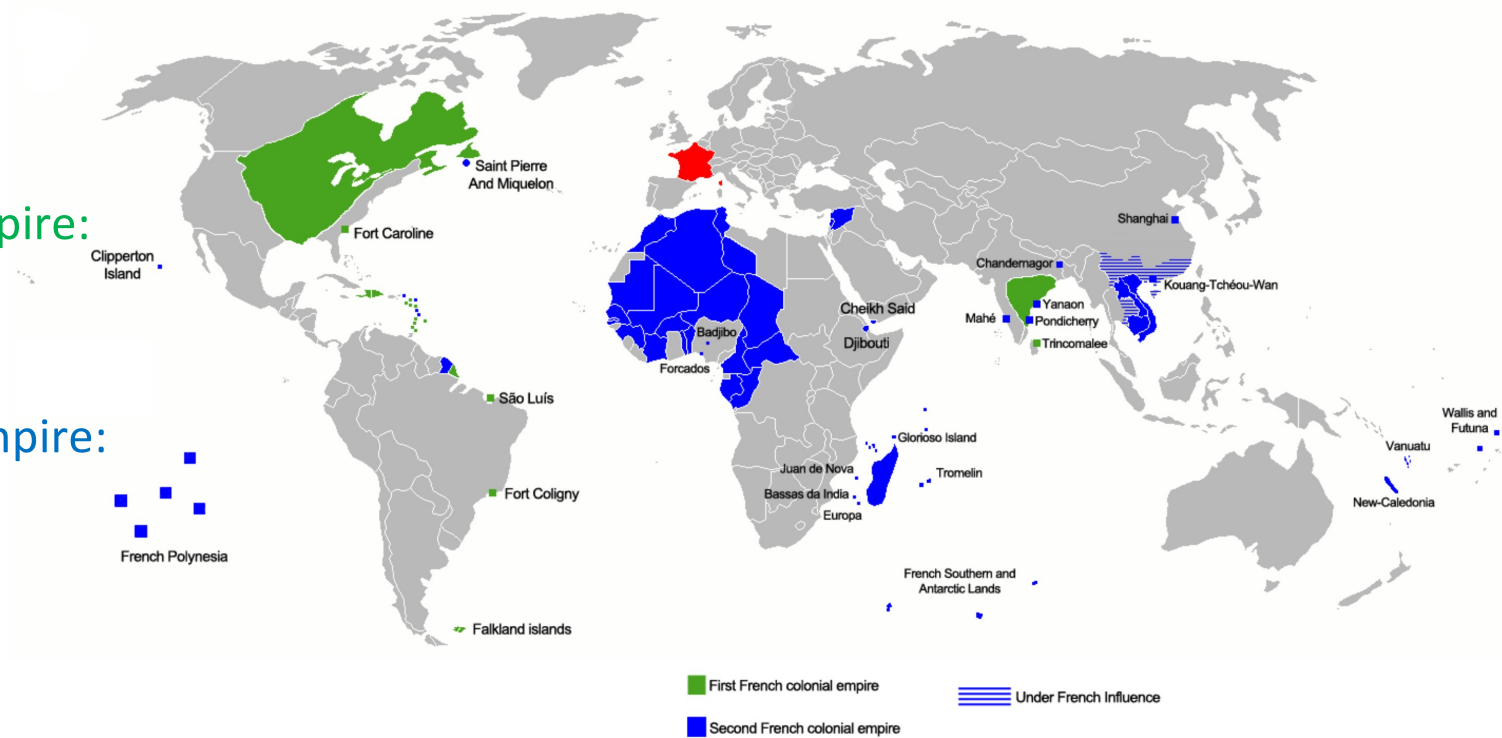
And, "Frenchness" also includes:

Photo from a protest against Islamophobia in France and the ban on full-face coverings in effect in the country since 2011 (2020)

Photo Credits: Oumaima Dermoumi

The French Colonial Empire

1st colonial empire:
1546 to 1763

2nd colonial empire:
1763 to 1962

First French colonial empire
Second French colonial empire
Under French Influence

Muslims in France

According to the Pew Research Center, France has **one of Europe's largest Muslim populations**, with an estimated:

5,720,000 Muslims representing about

8.8% of France's total population

(2016 estimate, Pew Research)

<u>Note</u>: These statistics are unofficial because **the French state does not collect census data on religion and race** under the pretext that the state has to be colorblind and that collecting such information could lead to treating some citizens differently from others.

The "Burqa Ban" in France

What is the ban and who did it target?

The ban went into effect in 2011.

It banned all forms of face-coverings in public with a few exceptions (like medical masks for people proving they need it).

It was termed the "Burqa Ban" for targeting primarily Muslim women who wear Niqab/Burqa.

How do states justify Islamophobic practices?

Material Public Order

Material public order is a term associated with French legal culture.

It refers to **safety, health, and order** within the public space.

Example: In a public park, material public order refers to the ability of the people in the park to go about their day safely and without worry of being disturbed.

How do states justify Islamophobic practices?

Material Public Order

Arguments relating to material public order use security as a way to paint Islam and Muslims as **threats to public safety.**

*For example: A central argument for the Burqa Ban in France portrayed **any form of face covering as a security threat** due to the inability of "identifying the person behind the burqa."*

How has this rationale been challenged with COVID-19 and the masking regulations?

How do states justify Islamophobic practices?

Immaterial Public Order

Immaterial public order is a term associated with French legal culture.

Here it refers to "order" in terms of **morality and dignity regarding social interactions** that happen within a public, shared space.

Example: In a public park, immaterial public order refers to the possibility of engaging in social interactions in the park with dignity and without any kind of disturbance.

How do states justify Islamophobic practices?

Immaterial Public Order

Arguments relating to immaterial public order **use social order to alienate Muslims and Islam** and put them in a position of outsiders to common social norms or values.

For example:

- The argument that the Burqa **violates the requirements of dignified life in society** in France.

How has this rationale been challenged during COVID-19 when socialization continued despite full-face coverings?