Module 14: Islamophobia in Global (Non-US) Contexts

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Note to Educators

The Teaching Beyond September 11th curriculum project seeks to capture the events of the two decades (2001-2021) following 9/11 as a means for youth to understand the post-9/11 global order. Developed by a team of educators from the University of Pennsylvania in collaboration with inter/national scholars, practitioners, and community activist leaders, each stand-alone module is grounded in at least one of six identified themes and is anchored in an event in a particular year following 9/11. The curriculum does not need to be taught sequentially. Lessons within a module may be taught sequentially or individually unless specified.

The curriculum is ideal for advanced high school and early college students. Educators are encouraged to adapt lessons to meet the needs of their classroom and student academic level. The curriculum framework at the end of this document highlights guiding questions for students to grapple with and enduring understandings that we wish for students to glean from these lessons.

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Module 14: Islamophobia in Global (Non-US) Contexts

Primary Theme: Democracy and Rights
Secondary Theme: Public Opinion, Perception, and Anti-Muslim Racism
Grades: 12 & first-year college+
Entry points (subject area): Global/World History; European History; Government and Politics; Asian Studies; Political Science

Module Context
2014 marked the 13th year since the US began the War on Terror. Despite ending the War in Iraq (Operation Iraqi Freedom) in 2011 and the declining influence of al-Qaeda, the US reentered Iraq in 2014 due to a new threat: Daesh (also known as ISIS, ISIL, and the Islamic State). Daesh was an offshoot of al-Qaeda that controlled large parts of Iraq and Syria, and which had increasing influence in other parts of the world. Al-Qaeda had also inspired other terrorist groups, such as Boko Haram in West Africa. In 2014, Boko Haram garnered the world’s attention with the kidnapping of 276 Chibok girls in Nigeria. The ensuing #BringBackOurGirls social media campaign built on the victimization narrative and once again called for Western masculinity to intervene and save women from the hands of oppressive Muslim men.

2014 was also the year that brought renewed anti-Muslim sentiments in several parts of the world: Narendra Modi’s right-wing and anti-Muslim government to power in the world’s largest democracy, India. In addition, “re-education camps” (internment camps) for Uyghurs, a Chinese ethnic group that is predominantly Muslim, were established in the Xinjiang province of China. In Europe, anti-Muslim sentiments were at an all-time high, and two significant policies were the center of conversation: the “Burqa ban” in France and the “Ghetto Laws” in Denmark. Government actions in India, China, Denmark, and France were presented in a way to mask institutionalized and government sanctioned anti-Muslim racism. Collectively, these policies had significant impact on the lives of Muslims in these various contexts.

Module Goal
Students will be able to use their independent learning to understand how the 9/11 world order played out in different parts of the world. They will understand how governments used discriminatory concepts of national identity to justify and institutionalize anti-Muslim racism, as well as how the media further amplified Islamophobia.

Module Overview
This module provides students with an understanding of the far-reaching impact of the 9/11 world order on the rights of Muslims worldwide. In each of the stand-alone 50-minute lessons, students will use videos, texts, and images to engage in discussion to understand the ways in which Islamophobia is
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manifested through policies supposedly designed around the notion of national identity. Throughout this module, students will interrogate these notions of collective identity and analyze how they actually further institutionalized anti-Muslim racism.

Lesson 1 – Masking Islamophobia: The Danish “Ghetto Laws”
In this lesson, students will examine how Islamophobia manifests in a masked or implicit manner by examining the Danish “Ghetto Plan” to address issues of immigrant integration. While Denmark perceives itself as a post-racial country and is proud of its welfare egalitarian model, the treatment of so-called “Non-Western Migrants” (the majority of whom are Muslim) raises questions of state-sanctioned discrimination. This lesson examines the origin and impact of the discriminatory “Ghetto Laws”, which specifically target Muslim communities’ residential opportunities without explicit mention of religion.

Lesson 2 – Masking Islamophobia: The Case of the French “Burqa ban”
In this lesson, students will learn how policies and media can influence everyday experiences of particular groups, in this case, visible Muslims in France. Specifically, students will understand that mechanisms such as political propaganda and biased media actively amplify an imagined version of French reality rather than a more nuanced and complicated reality. The lesson examines how Islamophobia is upheld by lawmakers and through claims about national/collective identities. The lesson examines the 2011 “Burqa ban” in France as a case example that was upheld in 2014 by the Judges at the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) accepting the French Government’s argument that the ban encouraged citizens to "live together".

COMING SOON! Lessons 3 – Masking Islamophobia: Modi’s Rise in India and the “Citizenship Amendment Act”

Additional lessons in development.

Curriculum Connections
Module 4: Civil Liberties after 9/11
Module 5: Freedom of Speech
Module 7: Understanding Islamophobia
Module 8: Islamophobia and the Oval Office
Module 10: Youth Activism in Global Perspective
Module 17: The Muslim and African Ban
Lesson 1. Masking Islamophobia: The Danish “Ghetto Laws”

Overview, Background Resources and Materials Needed

In this lesson, students will examine how Islamophobia manifests in a masked or implicit manner by examining the Danish “Ghetto Plan” to address issues of immigrant integration. While Denmark perceives itself as a post-racial country and is proud of its welfare egalitarian model, the treatment of so-called “Non-Western Migrants” (the majority of whom are Muslim) raises questions of state-sanctioned discrimination. This lesson examines the origin and impact of the discriminatory “Ghetto Laws”, which specifically target Muslim communities’ residential opportunities without explicit mention of religion.

Background reading for educators before Lesson 1:
It would be beneficial for educators to review the following articles and videos. These resources may also be used as supplementary information for students in higher level courses:

1. Lesson 1 Educator Resource: Background knowledge on Denmark (provided in supplementary materials)

Recent articles highlighting the impact of the Danish “Ghetto Laws”:

7. Facing Eviction, Residents of Denmark’s ‘Ghettos’ Are Suing the Government (2021 NPR article that addresses the concept of "Danishness" as it relates to the “Ghetto Laws”, and also connects to the 2005 Danish Cartoon Controversy): https://www.npr.org/2020/08/15/900874510/facing-eviction-residents-of-denmarks-ghettos-are-suing-the-government
8. Denmark accused of racism after anti-ghetto law adapted for Ukrainians (2022 article from the Guardian that calls out the hypocrisy of creating exemptions in the “Ghetto Laws” for Ukrainian refugees) https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/may/02/denmark-accused-racism-anti-ghetto-law-ukraine-refugees
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Key Terms in Lesson 1:

- **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 Jews were made to live. Considered a racist term in contemporary usage.

- **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. (Source: Danish Government)

- **Welfare state:** A form of government in which the state plays a key role in the protection and promotion of the economic and social well-being of citizens. It is based on the principles of equality of opportunity, equitable distribution of wealth, and public responsibility for those unable to avail themselves of the minimal provisions for a good life.
  - Denmark is an example of a welfare state. 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.).

- **Non-Western immigrant and descendant:** According to Danish law, an immigrant is a person who was born outside of Denmark to parents who are neither Danish citizens nor born in Denmark. A non-Western descendant is someone who was born in Denmark to parents who are neither Danish citizens nor 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. (Source: Integrationsbarometer)

- **Almen bolig (public housing):** In Denmark, 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. (Source: Almen Modstand)

- **Islamophobia:** A phobia or exaggerated bias, hatred, or fear of Islam as a religion and those who practice Islam, Muslims. Islamophobia extends to other communities and individuals who are perceived to be Muslim as well. Also known as anti-Muslim racism.

- **Parallel Society:** Self-organization of an ethnic or religious minority, often but not always immigrant groups.

- **Parallel Society (Danish Government definition)** A parallel society is physically or mentally isolated and follows its own norms and rules, without any significant contact with the host society and without a desire to become part of it. It challenges the cohesion of the host society, which has been built up and developed over generations via, among other things, association life, joint teaching and training institutions, good neighborliness and cooperation with colleagues at the workplace. (Source: The Danish Government)

- **Post-racial:** a society in which racism, racial prejudice and discrimination do not exist.
Social housing tenants: People with low-income living in housing owned by local government or other non-profit organization. Tenants may pay a subsidized rent. In the case of Denmark’s Almen Bolig, they may also co-own the housing.

Far-right: Far-right politics is characterized by “radical nationalism”, in which groups are excluded on racial, ethnic, or cultural grounds. The far-right is a global phenomenon with implications for local, national, and transnational politics. The far-right takes on multiple organizational forms and features different variants of a shared ideological core: the belief that inequalities are natural and therefore some groups are superior to others, which informs their nativist and authoritarian views of society.

Islamization: The process of bringing someone or something into a state of harmony or conformity with the principles and teachings of Islam. It may also be negatively used to refer to the perceived imposition of an Islamist social and political system on a society with an indigenously different social and political background.

Integrate: Ostensibly a two-way process of mutual adaptation between migrants and host societies in which migrants are incorporated into the social, economic, cultural, and political life of the receiving community. Laws in the name of integration can be used to mask assimilation policies (that can also be Islamophobic, xenophobic etc.).

Materials Needed for Lesson 1
1. Lesson 1 Slide Deck (download as separate file)
2. Newspaper article links to share with students:
   b. The Guardian 2020 article: How Denmark's 'ghetto list' is ripping apart migrant communities linked to
3. Lesson 1, Handout 1: The Danish “Ghetto Laws” Discussion Questions (1 per student or student pair/group)
4. Projector to show the following video (only 10 mins to be shown)
   a. Migrant Ghettos in Denmark | BBC Our World | SAHAR ZAND from min. 4.22 to 13.16
Lesson 1. Masking Islamophobia: The Danish “Ghetto Laws”

Learning Plan

Pre-lesson homework:
Instruct students to read the following articles in preparation for the upcoming class and to make a list of keywords from the readings and anything else that surprised them.


2. The Guardian 2020 article: *How Denmark’s ‘ghetto list’ is ripping apart migrant communities*

Opening – 5 minutes
Ask students to reflect on words that come to mind when they think of “immigrant communities”.

Anticipated answers:
- Ethnic enclave
- Chinatown
- Koreatown
- Greektown
- Little [name of region/country/city e.g., Little West Africa, Little Italy, Little Manilla]
- Westside / Southside / Northside (depending on city)
- Inner city
- Ghetto (this may come up given the readings)

Next, ask them what surprised them about the two readings they read.

Anticipated answer:
It is likely students will express shock and surprise at the “Ghetto Laws”.

As a transition, explain to students that the focus of the day’s class is to introduce students to the lived reality and impact of the “Ghetto Laws” on Danish people, but first they’ll need a little more background on Denmark.

Key concepts overview – 10 minutes
[Lesson 1 Slide Deck, Slides 2-4] Depending on student knowledge, introduce students to Denmark as a country and what it offers as a welfare state, in that the state accepts responsibility for the provision of
comprehensive welfare (e.g. health, unemployment, disability, and social security benefits) to all citizens. It is recommended to move quickly through these 3 slides.

[Lesson 1 Slide Deck, Slide 5] Next, talk about its history of migration. Explain to students that today’s session will focus on the “Ghetto Laws” that they read about for homework and that they will be exploring the impact of this law on everyday life in Denmark.

[Lesson 1 Slide Deck, Slides 6-7] Begin by introducing the definition of *ghetto* to students – especially *since the word has very particular connotations, including racist connotations.* Student may express surprise that this term has such a specific yet broad definition (and does not refer to a particular group). They may also be surprised to learn that it originated in an anti-Semitic policy that specifically targeted Jewish people.

*Educator note:* Educators are encouraged to refer to the BBC article *Is the term “ghetto” racist?* in the educator resources to answer questions and clarify misconceptions about the term “ghetto”. It is important to clarify that for many communities, this is a racist term and should not be used lightly.

*Now show students the definition of ghetto from the Danish government.* Explain that in Denmark, *ghetto* has a very specific legal use, which is why it is being used in class even though it is deemed a racist term in many countries, such as the United States.

[Lesson 1 Slide Deck, Slide 8] You may also wish to define “public housing” in the Danish context for students as well (in many contexts, public housing is not co-owned whereas in Denmark it is).

**Ask students why they think the Danish government has moved to designate certain areas as “Ghettos”***? (This is an opportunity for them to connect to the homework readings.)

Anticipated Answers:
- Right-wing and/or conservative politics
- Popular belief that immigrant communities are problems or cause problems or do not wish to integrate
- Government’s attempt to integrate or assimilate immigrants
- Racism
- Islamophobia or anti-Muslim racism
- Welfare politics of protection

At this stage, you may wish to ask students to provide additional keywords from the readings and ensure that everyone has an understanding of these words (see educator background reading and glossary of terms for additional words that may come up and that you wish to address).

[Lesson 1 Slide Deck, Slide 9]. The term, “*non-Western immigrants and their descendants*” is especially important to address.
Before introducing the content of this exercise to the students, explain that the upcoming exercise requires dialogue-based skills, such as asking open questions, active listening, and mirroring. Explain that they will be watching a video showcasing the impact of the Danish “Ghetto Laws” after which they will go over the following questions.

Pass out Lesson 1 Handout 1: The Danish “Ghetto Laws” Discussion Questions and assign a starting point to each group (they will answer all four questions but will be responsible for one):

1. Why did the former Danish Prime Minister Lars Løkke Rasmussen (a member of Denmark’s left-leaning liberal party) introduce the “Ghetto Laws”? What reasons or justifications did he imply or state to introduce this law?
2. Social Democrats are architects of the welfare state. How does the Social Democrat politician Sine Heltberg view the so-called “Hard Ghetto” Mjølnerparken, and how does that differ from the locals’ perception?
3. In what ways does anti-Muslim racism manifest in the “Ghetto Plan”? (connect to video and articles)
4. What other connections might you make between Denmark’s “Ghetto Package” and restriction of housing to other groups/events in history?

[Lesson 1 Slide Deck, Slide 10] Play the following 10-minute video excerpt for the class (from min. 4.22-13.16): Migrant Ghettos in Denmark | BBC Our World / Sahar Zand.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AWsELvvjEjg

As students are watching the video, be sure to point out PM Rasmussen (5.15m) and Sine Heltberg (6.15m) when they appear and to focus on what they say as they are the focus of two of the questions on the graphic organizer.

Next, ask students to work in triads to complete the discussion questions. Instruct students to assign roles to each group member: timekeeper, task manager, and spokesperson. Remind students that while they have each been assigned one of the four questions and will be reporting out on their assigned question, they should try to answer all four. Give students 10 minutes to answer the questions. It’s okay if they do not get to all of the questions, they should try to answer at least 2 questions.

[Lesson 1 Slide Deck, Slide 11-12] Briefly go over the responses with the students, inviting the spokesperson for each question group to share 1-2 points. [10 minutes]

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?

Answer key:
- Lars Løkke Rasmussen seems to believe that the crime rates in the so-called “Ghettos” are threatening society outside of it, and thereby implying that these “Ghettos” are “holes” in the map of Denmark and essentially non-Danish.
- He further positions the “Ghettos” as threatening Danish values such as “equality, broad-mindedness and tolerance”.

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However, he is overlooking the fact that certain areas with higher crime rates than average are not categorized as “Ghettos” because they do not house 50% or more ethnic minority citizens.

2. Social Democrats are architects of the welfare state. How does the Social Democrat politician Sine Heltberg view the so-called “Hard Ghetto” Mjølnerparken, and how does that differ from the locals’ perception?

Answer key:

Heltberg’s views:
- She argues that children should not be raised in an environment where the majority of adults are unemployed (but does not address how they might solve the unemployment issue).
- She brings up all the benefits of being in a welfare state (free medical care, free schooling, free elderly care, free libraries, pension, and other benefits) and asserts that’s why people should be working.
- She implies the plan is not racist and that they really want to help the children – they want people to live peacefully together.

Locals’ views:
- Some locals argue that most of them are working and that this perception that they are unemployed is simply not correct.
- They question why people who are unable to work should be kicked out (another person mentions that many of the unemployed are from war torn countries and might not have the right qualifications but again, does this mean they should be kicked out?)
- They accuse the party members of wanting to help but doing little to actually help – for example, what job-finding assistance or university admissions assistance are they providing?
- Their children speak better Danish than the Danish themselves (implying this is just about racism).
- It doesn’t matter what you do, you will never be considered Danish – unless you’re white.

3. In what ways does anti-Muslim racism manifest in the “Ghetto Plan”? (connect to video and articles)

Answer Key:
- Targeting only places that are Muslim majority
- Using the term “non-Western immigrants and descendants” as a euphemism for Muslims

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

Answer Key:
- Redlining in the US, which especially impacted Black Americans
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- Anti-Semitism in Europe (connect back to the original use of the term “ghetto” applied to Jewish people)

Debrief – 5 minutes
Close the lesson by asking the students which aspects of the “Ghetto Laws” or “Ghetto Package” caught their attention most, and why.

Remind students that these “Ghetto Laws” are still ongoing, and some housing complexes are currently in the process of demolition. It is important to highlight that socio-economic issues have various models of being addressed. However, forcefully evicting people based on their ethnic background is discriminatory as the UN has confirmed (ref: Guardian article).
Lesson 1. Masking Islamophobia: The Danish “Ghetto Laws”

Student Handouts and Supplementary Teaching Materials

1. Lesson 1 Slide Deck Preview (12 slides) [Please download separate slide deck file]
2. Lesson 1 Educator Resource: Background knowledge on Denmark
3. Lesson 1 Handout 1: The Danish “Ghetto Laws” Discussion Questions
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Lesson 1 Slide Deck Preview (12 slides)

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Lesson 1. Masking Islamophobia: The Danish “Ghetto Laws”

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 (2023)
Approximately 320,000* are Muslim (5.5% of total population)

* Estimated figure

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.).

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 70s and early 80s, 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”.

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 is considered a racist term in many contexts.

Key Terms
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Lesson 1. Masking Islamophobia: The Danish “Ghetto Laws”

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 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.

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.

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.

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 Helberg view the so-called “Hard Ghetto” Mjølnerparken, and how does that differ from the locals’ perception?

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?
Denmark is a Scandinavian country in Northern Europe, consisting of several islands referred to as the Danish archipelago. A part of the European Union, Denmark is surrounded by the Baltic and North Seas, with Germany, Norway, and Sweden as neighboring countries. The general population of Denmark is 5.8 million people, approximately 320,000 of whom are Muslim (5.5% of the total population in 2020) (Hassani, 2020). The country is governed by a constitutional monarchy, in which the head of the government is the prime minister, with Greenland and the Faroe Islands as part of the Danish commonwealth. Denmark is generally admired for being a welfare state (i.e., where the state accepts responsibility for the provision of comprehensive and universal welfare for its citizens).

Introductory text on the “Ghetto Plan”:
During the 1960s and 1970s Denmark experienced an economic boom, which led to workers coming to the country from Turkey and Pakistan, among other countries. Denmark called them “guest workers” or “foreign workers,” to imply that these workers were staying temporarily. During the 1980s and early 2000s, refugees from several war-torn and conflict-ridden nations – predominantly in the Middle East and other countries in the Global South – also found their way to Denmark. As a result, the ethnic and racial makeup of Denmark and several countries in Europe slowly changed, and with this change came intense public debates about citizenship and who can consider themselves Danish.

Statistics Denmark, a governmental organization under the Danish Ministry of the Interior and Housing, collects statistics on Danish society in areas such as employment and demographics, producing data that is used in various policies. Using Danish citizens' social security numbers (CPR), Statistics Denmark categorizes citizens into “immigrants” and “descendants of immigrants”, further specifying whether they originated from Western countries or non-Western countries. In other words, without citizen approval, a citizen’s ethnic origin is used as a basis for their statistical grouping, while not including their birthplace. This effectively classifies citizens who are born and raised in Denmark and hold a Danish passport as “non-Western”, according to the birthplace of their parents, if their parents were born outside the EU countries, the US, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand.

During the traditional New Year’s speech in 2010, the Prime Minister at the time, Lars Løkke Rasmussen, announced the implementation of the so-called Ghettolist. Residential areas were included on this list if they met two out of three criteria related to:
1. The percentage of “non-Western minorities” in a neighborhood
2. Employment rates
3. Crime rates

Over the years, this list expanded to five criteria: education, income, employment rates, crime rates, and the proportion of “non-Western minorities” (i.e., “ethnic” minorities) residing there. The “non-Western” category is pivotal as to whether an area is determined to be a “Ghetto” or not: if 50% of the residents are so-called “non-Western”, then the area is determined to be a “Ghetto”. This category was used as a political instrument in 2018 when the right-wing majority ruling government voted in a law known as the “Ghetto Plan” (aka the “Ghetto Package”), titled “One Denmark without parallel societies - No Ghettos in 2030”. The “Ghetto Package” increased the focus on ethnic minority enclaves by categorizing these spaces as parallel societies that had created “punch holes in the map of Denmark" as Prime Minister Rasmussen announced in his 2018 New Year’s speech.
The “Ghetto Plan” created a set of laws targeting citizens residing in these so-called “Ghettos”, with the goal of decreasing the proportion of ethnic minorities in “Ghettos” by 30% (Danish Government, 2018). One method proposed was by forcefully evicting residents and terminating their leases in so-called “Hard Ghettos” (areas that have met the Ghetto criteria for at least four years). Many of these residents live in public housing and this housing provision was to be replaced by private investment. For example, in November 2021, public housing in the area of Vollsmose in Odence was demolished (FYN, 2021).

In 2020, Danish Minister of Immigration and Integration Mathias Tesfaye added a subcategory to the already existing non-Western immigrants and descendants’ classification to further highlight parental background from MENAP countries (The Middle East and North Africa (inc. Turkey and Pakistan) – all countries with Muslim majority population (Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, n.d.)). The Ministry of Integration claims the use of the narrow definition will be of aid in identifying socio-cultural challenges related to the integration of ethnic minority Danes, thereby equating integration challenges with Danes who have a Muslim background and those who originate from countries with a Muslim majority population.

In 2021, Danish Minister of the Interior Kaare Dybvad replaced the word “Ghetto”, citing its derogatory tone, with parallel societies. However, the “Ghetto Plan” and its laws are still in place.

Sources:

Lesson 1 Handout 1: The Danish “Ghetto Laws” Discussion Questions

Pre-reading:
2. The Guardian 2020 article: How Denmark’s ‘ghetto list’ is ripping apart migrant communities

DIRECTIONS: Drawing from the class discussion so far, the video you just watched, as well as the two newspaper articles you read for homework (see above), discuss and respond to the questions further below.

Each pair or small group may be assigned a different question to start with; the goal is to try and answer all four questions.

You will have about 12 minutes for this so keep an eye on the time. Assign a timekeeper, task manager, spokesperson.

As you are going through these questions, remember to practice the following:

- **Open questions**: asking open ended questions to each other that do not result in a yes or no answer. For example: What do you mean when you say..?
- **Active listening**: Listening attentively to what is being said and using non-verbal language to showcase your attentiveness. For example: keeping eye contact, and not looking elsewhere.
- **Mirroring**: Paraphrasing and acknowledging what the other person is saying.

Discussion questions:

1) Why did the former Danish Prime Minister Lars Løkke Rasmussen (a member of Denmark’s left-leaning liberal party) introduce the “Ghetto Laws”? What reasons or justifications did he imply or state to introduce this law?
2) Social Democrats are architects of the welfare state. How does the Social Democrat politician Sine Heltberg view the so-called “Hard Ghetto” Mjølnerparken, and how does that differ from the locals’ perception?

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?
In this lesson, students will learn how policies and media can influence everyday experiences of particular groups, in this case, visible Muslims in France. Specifically, students will understand that mechanisms such as political propaganda and biased media actively amplify an imagined version of French reality rather than a more nuanced and complicated reality. The lesson examines how Islamophobia is upheld by lawmakers and through claims about national/collective identities. The lesson examines the 2011 “Burqa ban” in France as a case example that was upheld in 2014 by the Judges at the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) accepting the French Government’s argument that the ban encouraged citizens to “live together”.

Background reading for educators before Lesson 2
It would be beneficial for educators to review the following resources. These resources may also be used as a supplementary reading list for students in higher level courses:

News Articles

Journal Articles
Teaching Beyond September 11th


Podcast


Key Terms in Lesson 2

- **Burqa**: A face covering worn by some Muslim women. Unlike a niqab, a burqa covers the entire face including the eyes.
- **Colorblind**: Not influenced by differences of race or racial prejudice.
- **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.
- **Hijab**: A cloth head covering worn by some Muslim women as a symbol of their faith and practice. Different from the burqa and niqab in that it does not cover a woman’s face.
- **Islamophobia**: A phobia or exaggerated bias, hatred, or fear of Islam as religion and those who practice Islam, Muslims. Islamophobia extends to other communities and individuals who are perceived to be Muslim as well. Also known as anti-Muslim racism.
- **Logics of Islamophobia**: The categories of arguments used to justify or mask Islamophobia.
- **Niqab**: A face covering worn by some Muslim women. A niqab covers the entire face with the exception of the eyes, whereas a hijab covers a Muslim woman’s hair and head.
- **Public Order**: A term associated with French legal culture.
  - **Material public order**: French law has traditionally relied upon a narrow, or “material”, conception of public order – a tripartite notion composed of peace, health, and public safety. For example, in a public park, material public order refers to the ability of the people in the park to move safely and without disturbance.
  - **Immaterial public order**: In the latter half of the 20th century, the definition of public order was expanded to include two broad concepts: morality and human dignity. In this context, it refers to order within the social interactions that happen within the public space. For example, in a public park, immaterial public order refers to the ability for people to engage in social interactions with dignity and without disturbance.

Materials Needed for Lesson 2

1. Lesson 2 Slide Deck (download as separate file)
2. Post-its or Quarter sheets of paper and tape (1-3 per student) OR access to online world cloud tool such as [https://wordart.com/create](https://wordart.com/create)
3. Lesson 2 Handout 1: **Graphic Organizer. Masking Islamophobia. The case of the French “Burqa ban”** (1 per student)
4. Article: [Coronavirus exposed the real reasons behind France’s ‘burqa ban’](https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/04/28/coronavirus-exposed-the-real-reasons-behind-frances-burqa-ban) (link to Al Jazeera article for students to access on their electronic devices or one printout per student)
Lesson 2. Masking Islamophobia: The case of the French “Burqa ban”

Learning Plan

Educator note: In the opening activity of this lesson, you will be making a word cloud. To make the word cloud, use a free digital tool such as wordart.com. Input words (including repeated words – this is important) to the list on the left side of the screen. Once all words have been added, click “Visualize.” This will generate the word cloud on the right side of the screen. The website includes options for customization, including fonts, colors, angles, and relative size of words. The more times a word is entered, the larger it appears. Other tools that can be used for this include Kahoot, Mentimeter, and Poll Everywhere. With these tools, students can enter words directly from their electronic devices.

Opening – 10 minutes

Set up the class by explaining you will be discussing how policies and media can influence everyday experiences. Explain you will be using France as an example of this.

Provide students with a post-it or invite students to take out a piece of paper and respond to the prompt on the slide [no tech alternative is to write the question on the board].

[Lesson 2 Slide Deck, Slide 2] Write down the first thing that comes to mind when asked to describe a French person (it can be related to physical characteristics, customs, values, daily life, etc.)

[No-tech option] Collect the post-its or half sheets to create a word cloud, clustering similar words together. You may need help from a few students to do this. Note: this will likely take more time.

[Tech options] Ask students to share their answers popcorn style and input their answers into an online word-cloud generator (see educator note above). Alternatively, if you have set up a Kahoot, Mentimeter, or Poll Everywhere (see note above), you may invite students to respond on their electronic devices.

[Lesson 2 Slide Deck, Slide 3] Once the students are done sharing answers and the word cloud is complete, ask students what they notice – what words are larger (if using digital tool) or which ones occur more frequently (if hand making the cloud). Ask students where they get their perceptions of French people from.

Anticipated student responses:
It is likely that the larger words on the word cloud will be stereotypical words such as accent, fashionable, sophisticated, artistic, food (croissant, baguette, cheese, wine). In terms of where these perceptions arise from, they may respond: the news, movies, TV shows, friends etc.
Key Concepts – 10 minutes

Introduce students to the concept of Frenchness, explaining how it is used to refer to one form of French national identity and defining what being French entails.

Note to educators relating to image on Slide 4: Marianne is often cited as the symbol of what a French woman should look like and embody: she should uncover her hair and face and be subscribed to the Republican values of liberty, equality, and fraternity. Marianne was used as the symbol of a media campaign done by the government after the 2011 ban on the burqa entitled: “The Republic Lives with Its Face Uncovered” — promoting the rationale behind the ban on full-face coverings.

Explain to students how the notion of Frenchness is an example of a national or collective identity, which is promoted by a state to create a sense of a nation or a collective amongst different people/citizens. Draw parallels to the idea of “the American dream” and how that concept is used as a symbol for the notion of Americanness and a facet for what being American entails.

Explain to students how their answers are likely to relate more to the image of Frenchness promoted by the media and how that image is usually very stereotypical and different from reality. While croissants and beret caps are part of what constitutes French identity, there are other facets to that identity as well.

Introduce students to images from civil society and protests in France to give a more nuanced understanding of the idea of Frenchness. Explain to students the limitations of mainstream notions of national or collective identity and their likelihood to exclude or make invisible certain groups in favor of others (in this case Islam and Muslims and their place within Frenchness). In other words, the narrow definition of Frenchness serves to exclude many groups that consider themselves French, for example, members of former French colonies who began immigrating to France in the 1950s as French Colonialism came to an end.

Optional: Optionally, you may wish to show the map of French colonies to remind students that France had colonies in North America, parts of South America and the Caribbean, several African countries, Syria, Lebanon, parts of India, and Southeast Asia.

Explain to students that there are mechanisms in place (like political propaganda, biased media, etc.) that actively amplify the first, simplistic view of Frenchness, versus the second more nuanced one, which is more reflective of reality.

Before going to the next slide, ask students to guess the proportion of Muslims in France.

- Show the slide on the estimated number/proportion of Muslims in France in order to explain to the students how despite being a significant body of French society (estimated at 8.8%), Muslims are often excluded from the notion of Frenchness that is promoted by the state.

- Make parallels with how Muslims are often excluded from the idea of Americanness, making reference to how the false allegations that Obama was Muslim were used to discredit and question Obama’s legitimacy as president of the US and his belonging to the country. (Educator note: For more on this, see Module 8 of this curriculum: Islamophobia in/and the Oval Office)
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Time permitting:

- Explain to students that the statistics shared earlier are unofficial because the French state does not collect census data on religion or 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. Educator note: If you have taught Lesson 1 in this module, you can refer to Denmark where this is also the case.
- Make parallels with how this approach is different from the one used in the US where the census questions collect information on race and religion. Explain to students that one of the ways France tried to make “amends” with its colonial past (where race was central to justifying the superiority of the colonizer) was to negate the concept of race and deny the existence of systematic racism.
- Explain how ignoring race and racism feeds into the systemic exclusion of Muslims and Islam from the notion of Frenchness by making them invisible.

Application – 20 minutes

Explain to students that the lesson will focus on understanding the logics or arguments and justifications of Islamophobia and how these logics manifest through the notions of national/collective identities—taking the 2011 “Burqa ban” in France as a case example.

[Lesson 2 Slide Deck, Slide 11] Give students some background/context about the 2011 “Burqa ban” in France. Speak briefly about when the ban was instituted and its repercussions.

- The “Burqa ban” was drafted in 2010 by the French senate in response to a speech made by former president Nicolas Sarkozy where he denounced “Islamic veils” (like the burqa or the niqab) and deemed them incompatible with the values and ideas of the French state. Many see the ban as a way through which Sarkozy sought to increase his popularity amidst the economic repercussions of the 2008 financial crisis. French politicians have had the tendency throughout history to divert attention to identity politics and migration in times of economic or political instability.

- This ban went into effect in 2011 taking the form of an umbrella ban on all forms of full-face coverings in public. Although the ban claimed not to be anti-religious, the context in which it was passed made it clear that it targeted Muslim women who wear the niqab/burqa [hence the unofficial appellation “Burqa ban”].

- At the time of the ban, there was a very small minority of Muslim women who wore full-face coverings in France, which made many wonder about the validity of the urgency with which such ban was portrayed. In some ways, this is similar to the Trump administration’s “Muslim and African ban”, which was officially presented as a security measure (Executive Order 13769: Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry). [Educator note: For more on this, see Module 17 of this curriculum: The Muslim and African Ban].

Divide students into pairs or small groups and give each member a copy of the Module 14, Lesson 2 Handout 1: Graphic Organizer. Masking Islamophobia. The case of the French “Burqa ban” and link (or provide paper copy) of the Al Jazeera article by Rokhaya Diallo, Coronavirus exposed the real reasons behind France’s ‘burqa ban’.

Module 14: Islamophobia in Global (Non-US) Contexts
Lesson 2. Masking Islamophobia: The case of the French “Burqa ban”
After reading the article, instruct students to answer the questions on the graphic. Students do not have to answer questions in order and should record their responses on the worksheet. You may wish to assign a particular “square” (question) of the worksheet for each group to focus on.

As students read the article, they should think about/answer the following:

1. What types of arguments have been used by the French state to justify the “Burqa ban”?
2. What view of Frenchness do the arguments in #1 promote? (cite specific characteristics, values, principles, etc.)
3. In what ways does the “Burqa ban” clash with the view of Frenchness in #2?
4. What did the COVID-19 pandemic expose about #2 and #3?

Ask different groups of students to share the answers they wrote down for each question.

- Anticipated answers for #1 can include: “security and safety reasons”, “symbol of oppression”, “infringing upon the minimum requirements of life in society”
- Anticipated answers for #2 can include: “liberty is expressed through exposing one’s face”, “saving oppressed women is a collective duty”, “the requirement of life in society are superior to some individuals’ needs”
- Anticipated answers for #3: “Burqa/Niqab violates the principle of liberty”, “Burqa/Niqab threatens the social life”
- Anticipated student answers for #4: “Covering one’s face does not put an end to social life”, “the “Burqa ban” was motivated by Islamophobia”

Explain to students the Islamophobic nature of the arguments in #1, #2, and #3 and their limitations. For example, the French government portrays wearing the burqa/niqab as a symbol of oppression and as antifeminist, while refusing to listen to the narratives of Muslim women and their perspectives, instead preferring to control how they dress. In effect, the French government denied personal choice for Muslim women in not permitting them to wear a burqa or niqab by claiming to uphold women’s dignity, choice, and French values. Be sure to let students know that the policy was upheld in 2014 by the Judges at the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) accepting the French Government’s argument that it encouraged citizens to “live together”.

Educator note: The following is optional material, more suited for more advanced/higher-level students. Depending on your class, you can cover this material or skip to the debrief.

Guide students to understand that there are two broad categories of arguments usually used to justify or cover-up Islamophobia, these are known as “public order” in French legal terms:

- [Lesson 2 Slide Deck, Slides 12-13] Arguments relating to material public order: arguments around security are used to paint Islam and Muslims as a threat to public safety.
  - The French government portrays wearing a long beard or not kissing as signs of terrorism and radicalization and hence unsafe.
  - In the US, wearing a “hoodie” by a Black person is often perceived as something negative or as a security concern (making the link to anti-Blackness).
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- One of the main arguments for the “Burqa ban” (which the article mentions briefly) is the claim by French politicians that any form of full-face coverings is a security threat due to the inability of “identifying the person behind the burqa/niqab.”
  - Remind students how this has been challenged with the COVID-19 pandemic and the masking regulations, which proved that covering one’s face does not make one a security threat.

- [Lesson 2 Slide Deck, Slides 14-15] Arguments relating to **immaterial public order**: arguments pertaining to social order are used to alienate Muslims and Islam and put them in a position of outsiders to common social norms or values.
  - For example, the promotion of the burqa/niqab as incompatible with French identity and the Republican principles of liberty and fraternity.
  - Islam in the US is often tied to negative rhetoric around immigration, by which Muslims are represented as outsiders to a country despite the fact that many Muslims arrived in the US as part of the transatlantic slave trade
    - Remind students how the first argument has been challenged during COVID-19 where socialization continued with full-face coverings.
  - Explain to students how both of these categories of arguments feed into two main elements: fear and the collective.
    1. The arguments (logics) used to mask and justify Islamophobia often create and promote a distorted national or collective identity in relation to which Muslims and Islam are deliberately positioned as “outsiders”; and in which Muslims are viewed as threats (the fear element) to the security and stability of these distorted collective identities.
    2. Uncovering (or demasking) these justifications of Islamophobia requires looking critically at the construction of collective or national identities and how Muslims are positioned and portrayed within them.

Debrief – 10 minutes

**Key takeaways to stress for students:**

- The “Burqa ban” is unique in that it stirred controversy around what “visible signs” of Islam and Muslims belong and don’t belong within the notions of national/collective identity like that of Frenchness. This debate is still going on in France as well as other countries in Europe, such as Denmark, and is present in the US and other parts of the world.
- It was marked by heavy state intervention and propaganda in shaping the national/collective identity in France.
- It was upheld by the European court and led to similar bans being passed by other European countries.
- It exposed the ways in which Muslims are made invisible, and the hypocrisy of some of logics of Islamophobia (which became very visible during the COVID-19 pandemic).

Ask students to identify other contexts where they see the justifications of Islamophobia (logics of Islamophobia) that were discussed above emerging.

- Give students the example of the War on Terror in the US. Explain to students how post-9/11, US foreign and domestic policies portrayed Muslims and Islam as a threat to national security and as outsiders.
In Denmark, the controversial “Ghetto Laws” also portray Muslims as members of society that live off the welfare state but do not contribute to it and refuse to “assimilate” (see Lesson 1 in this module).

Time permitting, ask students to identify other justifications of Islamophobia they see/have seen around them.

Give students the example of the colonial justifications of Islamophobia, where Islamophobia is expressed through the portrayal of Islam and Muslims as backwards and incompatible with modernity and science.

**Extension Activities or Homework**

Ask students to listen to this episode of NPR's podcast, *Rough Translation* (a transcript of the podcast can be found [here](#) if needed) that relates closely to the topic of the Al Jazeera article by Rokhaya Diallo read in class. Based on what was discussed in class, ask student to reflect in writing or through other creative means on the following questions:

- What justifications of Islamophobia emerge from this reporting on the “Burqa ban” and its clash with COVID-19 regulations in France?
- What justifications of Islamophobia have pushed many French journalists to describe the NPR podcast as “opportunistic” and “irrelevant”?
- Are these justifications of Islamophobia present in the US and in what ways?
- Why does NPR correspondent Diaa Hadid’s husband, Emmanuel, think that covering one’s face with a burqa/niqab is very different from covering it with a facemask? Why does he think that wearing a facemask is “normal” and legitimate and wearing a burqa/niqab is not?
- Who decides whether the burqa/niqab should be worn or not in the public space?
- Where are the voices of Muslim women who wear the burqa/niqab in all of this?
Lesson 2. Masking Islamophobia: The case of the French “Burqa ban”

Student Handouts and Supplementary Teaching Materials

1. Lesson 2 Slide Deck Preview [Please download separate slide deck file]
2. Lesson 2 Handout 1: Graphic Organizer. Masking Islamophobia. The case of the French “Burqa ban”
3. Lesson 2 Handout 2: Coronavirus exposed the real reasons behind France’s ‘burqa’ (printed out or link shared electronically with students).
Module 14: Islamophobia in Global (Non-US) Contexts
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Lesson 2 Handout 1: Masking Islamophobia. The case of the French “Burqa ban”

Directions:
1. Read the Al Jazeera article titled “Coronavirus exposed the real reasons behind France’s ‘burqa ban’” by Rokhaya Diallo.
2. With your partner or group, discuss the questions below and record your answers on this worksheet. Questions do not need to be answered in order.
3. Be prepared to share your answers with the class.

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Module 14: Islamophobia in Global (Non-US) Contexts
Lesson 2. Masking Islamophobia: The case of the French “Burqa ban”
Appendix to Module 14: Islamophobia in Global (Non-US) Contexts

Curriculum Framework

Goal
Students will be able to use their independent learning to understand how the 9/11 world order played out in different parts of the world. They will understand how governments used discriminatory concepts of national identity to justify and institutionalize anti-Muslim racism, as well as how the media further amplified this form of Islamophobia.

Essential questions
1. How is Islamophobia manifested in global policies covered in this module? (e.g. the French Burqa Ban or the Danish Ghetto Laws).
2. How were certain concepts and ideals around citizenship used to justify Islamophobic policies in countries around the world? (e.g. China, Denmark, France, India)
3. How did world events expose the hypocrisy behind some of the policies? (e.g. The Covid-19 pandemic and the Burqa Ban in France; Ukrainian refugees in Denmark and the Ghetto Laws; democracy in India and the Citizenship Amendment Act, etc.)
4. How do lawmakers produce and maintain narratives around particular communities in order to justify their policies?

Understandings
Students will understand that...

1. Efforts of integration by politicians produce and reinforce an “us” and “them” discourse, which is embedded in Islamophobic sentiment and anti-Muslim racism.
2. Political leaders often justify Islamophobic policies and practices through arguments related to material public order and immaterial public order.
3. People who are Muslim and those perceived as Muslims have been systemically excluded as citizens through the rhetoric of national identity propagated by politicians.

Knowledge
Students will know...

1. How the notions of “Frenchness” and “non-Western minorities” have shaped the daily experiences of Muslims and those perceived as Muslim in France and Denmark.
2. How visible Muslims in France and “non-Western immigrants” in Denmark were denied basic freedoms through the implementation of Islamophobic policies.
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Skills
Students will be able to...
1. **Recognize** how certain world events exposed the hypocrisy behind several of the policies covered in this module.
2. **Examine** the rhetoric used by politicians to promote Islamophobic policies.
3. **Communicate** the impact of policies on the lived experiences of (racialized) Muslims in several contexts.
4. **Analyze** the impact of the classification of “non-Western immigrants,” “citizen” etc.

Summary of Performance Tasks (Assessment)
1. **Representations of Muslims: Debriefs and whole-class discussions:** In each lesson, students will apply key concepts in groups or individually, then return to the whole class space to articulate their findings and takeaways.
2. **Group discussion:** In small groups, students will discuss the implications of Denmark’s “Ghetto Laws.”
3. **Application worksheet:** After reading an article about France’s “Burqa Ban,” students will work in small groups to answer questions about the arguments used to justify the ban and how notions of “Frenchness” interact with the ban.
4. **Podcast reflection** (extension activity): Students will respond in writing or through other creative means to a series of questions based on a podcast episode titled “From Niqab to N95”

Common Core Standards

History/Social Studies 11th and 12th Grade

Key Ideas and Details:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.1
Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, connecting insights gained from specific details to an understanding of the text as a whole.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.2
Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.7
Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.9
Integrate information from diverse sources, both primary and secondary, into a coherent understanding of an idea or event, noting discrepancies among sources.
About the Contributors

**Fatima Awad** is an Egyptian-Danish educational anthropologist interested in educational equity, learning and community building. She currently works as a freelance educator, with former experience as a research assistant at Århus University, and as a workshop coordinator at The Centre for Muslims Rights in Denmark (CEDA). She views injustice through a sacred/spiritual activist lens, that engages with issues holistically, and draws upon divine guidance. Her passion lies in exploring alternative paradigms for authentic and sustainable living.

**Walid Hedidar** is from Tunis, Tunisia. He recently completed an MSEd in International Educational Development at the University of Pennsylvania Graduate School of Education where he was a UNESCO Fellow. His research has focused on the use of public education systems to influence, shape, repress individual and social identities and transformations.

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