

ISLAMOPHOBIA IN
DENMARK
NATIONAL REPORT 2021

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Executive Summary

This year's Islamophobia report shows worrying signs of how structural barriers for Muslims are increasing through new policies and legislation in Denmark. One particularly disturbing development is the new statistical category of MENAPT, which is an abbreviation for "Middle East North Africa Pakistan Turkey". This category enables the government to specifically target Muslim citizens by inferring their Muslimness based on their countries of origin. The category was officially introduced in late 2020, but it has quickly become an important part of political rhetoric. As such, the new citizenship restrictions implemented in 2021, indicated that MENAPT applicants would be categorised separately from "non-Western" applicants; this will allow politicians to explicitly discriminate against Muslim citizenship applicants with little public oversight.

The citizenship requirements and restrictions are particularly worrying since a report published in 2021 by the Danish Institute of Human Rights demonstrated that 35% of all descendants of migrants – many of whom are Muslim and born in Denmark – do not have Danish citizenship and can therefore not participate on equal footing as their Danish peers in the Danish democratic system. They now face increased barriers in access to social housing as the government has introduced new "ghetto" policies to regulate the demographic make-up of neighbourhoods with more than 30% "non-Western" immigrants and descendants, as opposed to previously where they only focused on neighbourhoods with more than 50% "non-Westerners".

This year's EIR report demonstrates how the government has become emboldened to further distinguish Denmark's Muslim population in statistical data with the implementation of the MENAPT category. In the coming year, it will be important to closely monitor the ways the government and public institutions will implement the MENAPT category as a new "Muslim" category based on people's origin in Muslim-majority countries and how this will create barriers for Muslims' access to public services, housing, employment, education, and their treatment within the judicial system.

Sammenfatning

Islamofobi-rapporten i år viser bekymrende tegn på, hvordan nye politikker og lovgivning er med til at øge de strukturelle barrierer for muslimer. En særlig foruroligende udvikling er den nye statistiske kategori MENAPT, som står for "Middle East North Africa Pakistan Turkey". Denne kategori gør det muligt for regeringen at målrette deres politik og lovgivning mod muslimer ved at udlede deres muslimskhed baseret på deres oprindelseslande. Kategorien blev officielt introduceret i slutningen af 2020, og er hurtigt blevet en vigtig del af den politiske retorik. MENAPT-kategorien anvendes bl.a. i forbindelse med statsborgerskabsansøgninger, hvor MENAPT-ansøgere nu vil blive kategoriseret separat fra "ikke-vestlige" ansøgere; dette vil give politikere mulighed for eksplicit at diskriminere muslimske statsborgerskabsansøgere med meget lidt offentligt tilsyn.

De nye indfødsretskrav er særligt bekymrende, idet en rapport offentliggjort i 2021 af Institut for Menneskerettigheder påviste, at 35 % af alle efterkommere af indvandrere – hvoraf et stort antal udledes at have muslimsk baggrund - ikke har statsborgerskab. De kan således ikke deltage i det danske demokratiske system på lige fod med deres danske jævnaldrende. De møder nu øgede barrierer i adgangen til almene boliger, idet regeringen har indført nye regler i parallelsamfundsloven for at regulere den demografiske sammensætning af nabolag med mere end 30 % "ikke-vestlige" indvandrere og efterkommere, i modsætning til tidligere, hvor de kun fokuserede på boligområder med mere end 50 % "ikke-vestlige".

Dette års EIR-rapport viser, hvordan regeringen formår at være mere eksplicit i sin differentiering af den muslimske befolkningsgruppe i både statistiske data og politisk retorik ved hjælp af implementeringen af MENAPT-kategorien. I det kommende år vil det være vigtigt at nøje overvåge, hvordan regeringen og offentlige institutioner implementerer MENAPT-kategorien som en "muslimsk" kategori baseret på folks oprindelse i lande med en muslimsk majoritet, og hvordan dette vil skabe barrierer for muslimers adgang til offentlige serviceydelser, boliger, beskæftigelse, uddannelse samt i retssystemet.

Country Profile EIR 2021

Country: Denmark

Type of Regime: Constitutional monarchy

Form of Government: Unitary parliamentarism

Ruling Parties: Social Democratic Party (single-party minority government with possibility of creating political alliances with parties on both the left and right of the political spectrum)

Opposition Parties: Venstre-Denmark's Liberal Party, Danish People's Party, Liberal Alliance, Conservative People's Party, The New Right, The Alternative, Danish Social Liberal Party, Red-Green Alliance, Socialist People's Party, independent MPs

Last Elections: 2019 General Elections: The Social Democratic Party won 25.9% of the vote against 23.4% of Venstre.

Total Population: 5.8 million

Major Languages: Danish

Official Religion: Evangelical-Lutheran Church in Denmark (Church of Denmark)

Statistics on Islamophobia: The 2021 Hate Crime Report by the National Police of Denmark (Rigspolitiet) has not been published yet, and so statistics on Islamophobia in 2021 are not available.

Statistics on Racism and Discrimination: Similar to above, statistics on racism and discrimination are currently not available.

Major Religions (% of Population): Protestant Christians (74.7%), Islam (est. 5.5%), Catholics (0.6%)

Muslim Population (% of Population): est. 320,000 (5.5%)

Main Muslim Community Organizations: Dansk-Tyrkisk Islamisk Stiftelse, Det Islamiske Trossamfund (DIT), Dansk Islamisk Center (DIC), Muslimsk Ungdom i Danmark (MUNIDA), Dansk Islamisk Trossamfund, Minhaj-ul-Quran Denmark, Dansk Muslimsk Union (DMU), Dansk Islamisk Råd, Imam Ali Moskeen, Muslimernes Fællesråd

Main NGOs Combatting Islamophobia: Centre for Muslims' Rights in Denmark (CEDA), Sameksistens.dk, SOS Racisme, Kvinder I Dialog (Women in Dialogue), European Network Against Racism-Denmark (ENAR Denmark), Center for Forebyggelse af Eksklusion (Centre for Prevention of Exclusion), DEMOS

Far-Right Parties: Danish People's Party (Dansk Folkeparti), The New Right (Nye Borgerlige)

Far-Right Movements: Generation Identitær, For Frihed (former Pegida Danmark), Nordfront, Nordisk Modstandsbevægelse (Nordic Resistance Movement)

Far-Right Terrorist Organizations: Feuerkrieg Division

Limitations to Islamic Practices

- **Hijab Ban:** No. The Parliament rejected a bill-proposal to ban public servants from wearing religious symbols in December 2020.
- **Halal Slaughter Ban:** No, although there is a ban on slaughtering a non-stunned animal, which to some Muslims is a crucial part of halal slaughter.
- **Minaret Ban:** No
- **Circumcision Ban:** No
- **Burka Ban:** Yes, it is illegal to cover one's face without a valid reason in public places; religion is not considered a valid reason.
- **Prayer Ban:** No

Introduction

In late 2020, the integration minister, Mattias Tesfaye, introduced a new statistical category to further differentiate between Denmark's so-called non-Western population: MENAPT (an abbreviation for "Middle East North Africa Pakistan Turkey") is a list of countries that only include Muslim-majority populations.¹ By specifically including countries in the Middle East, North Africa, Pakistan, and Turkey, but excluding countries in the same region such as Israel, Ethiopia, and Eritrea, which are not predominately Muslim, the government's intention to create policies and sanctions that explicitly target Muslims is clear. The category "non-Western", although often assumed to be Muslim, includes several non-Muslim countries that seem to obscure the government's intent to single out Muslims in public statistics.²

With the MENAPT category, Tesfaye has been able to make politically explicit what was already popularly known: when politicians make policies regarding "non-Westerners", they in fact mean Muslims and with this new terminology, the government has a stronger tool to create statistics and policies that enable their Islamophobic rhetoric. The MENAPT category has quickly become an important category in 2021 to distinguish between people originating from Muslim-majority countries and others from non-Muslim countries. To pre-empt new policies that will potentially replace the "non-Western" category with the MENAPT category to regulate Muslims access to housing, social services, benefits, etc., this year's EIR chapter on Denmark will include more examples of how the "non-Western" category, and particularly the MENAPT category, has been used to introduce and implement both ethnically racist and Islamophobic policies.

There have been several political developments in 2021 that have made it more difficult for Muslims in Denmark. This includes making it tougher for people from Muslim-majority countries to get citizenship and increasing barriers for them to access social housing. These points will be expanded below. At the same time, there has been significant progress in anti-racist mobilisation, which has also been an important development for anti-Islamophobia work. One win for the anti-racist struggle has been that the government with the support of left-centre parties approved a national action plan against racism. It is not entirely clear what this action plan will entail, however, it has inspired municipalities to continue in a similar direction by including local versions of an action plan against racism where civil society organisations are invited to collaborate with local authorities to work towards a more inclusive city.

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1. Michala Clante Bendixen, "Denmark: New statistics category for migrants from Muslim countries", *European Commission*, (December 11, 2020), retrieved June 27, 2022, from https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/news/denmark-new-statistics-category-migrants-muslim-countries_en
 2. Kim Kristensen, "Så mange fra ikke-vestlige lande kommer fra muslimske lande", *Berlingske*, (November 2020), retrieved July 12, 2022, from <https://www.berlingske.dk/danmark/hver-femte-ikkevestlige-indvandrerkristen>

Discussion of Islamophobic Incidents and Discursive Events

Physical and Verbal Attacks

Like previous years, Muslims experience a high number of physical and verbal attacks. Muslims are more vulnerable to hate crime because many people of colour are assumed to be Muslim as well. In this sense, ethnic minority Muslims risk both racist attacks on their assumed foreignness and Islamophobic attacks based on their assumed Muslimness. The national police force has not yet released its yearly hate crime report for 2021, and there are currently no other civil society organisations which collect data on Islamophobic attacks, so the following section relies on media reports on Islamophobic hate crime attacks. In this regard, there has been an increased number of news reports in 2021 particularly about Muslim women experiencing physical and verbal attacks,³ as well as Muslim-owned businesses which experienced harassment and vandalism.⁴ The amount of media reports on violence against Muslims in 2021 instigated a hearing with Justice Minister Nick Hækkerup who declared that the police must be attentive to hate crime particularly against Muslims.⁵

This is an important recognition and progress, as the police force has previously been criticised for neglecting reports of hate crime, mainly because Danish law has been unclear on what can be categorised as a racially motivated hate crime. In other words, the reason for assault must be motivated by apparent racist reasoning and cannot be accompanied by any other reason for assault. One such example in 2021 was of a young Muslim woman who was severely physically and verbally assaulted by a white Danish man in his 60s. Though the man clearly used racist slurs, the court ruled that there was not sufficient evidence to rule it a racially motivated hate crime. The woman's lawyer was surprised with the court's decision and remarked: "It is difficult to get someone convicted of a hate crime, if it is not enough that the accused himself admits it in court"⁶ – thereby highlighting how the accused had admitted in court that he had said something racist.

3. "Minister efter overfald på Muslimer: Politiet skal blive mere lydhøre overfor hadforbrydelser", *Arbejderen*, (April 9, 2021), retrieved June 24, 2022, from <https://arkiv.arbejderen.dk/indland/minister-efter-overfald-pa-muslimer-politiet-skal-blive-mere-lydhore-overfor-hadforbrydelser>
4. Louise Bruun Høfler, "12 pizzeriaer og kebabhuse chikaneret af nazister: Falske smiley-rapporter hængt i vinduerne", *Amtsavisen*, (March 15, 2021), retrieved July 5, 2022, from <https://amtsavisen.dk/artikel/12-pizzeriaer-og-kebabhuse-chikaneret-af-nazister-falske-smiley-rapporter-haengt-i-vinduerne>
5. "Minister efter overfald på Muslimer: Politiet skal blive mere lydhøre overfor hadforbrydelser", *Arbejderen*, (April 9, 2021), retrieved June 24, 2022, from <https://arkiv.arbejderen.dk/indland/minister-efter-overfald-pa-muslimer-politiet-skal-blive-mere-lydhore-overfor-hadforbrydelser>
6. Ditte Lyng, "Mand dømt for at overfalde muslimsk kvinde på parkeringsplads: I retten brød hun grædende sammen", *Heartbeats*, (May 19, 2021), retrieved June 24, 2022, from <https://heartbeats.dk/mand-doemt-for-at-overfalde-muslimsk-kvinde-paa-parkeringsplads-i-retten-broed-hun-graedende-sammen/>

In another instance, a young Muslim family recorded a white Danish man spewing racist and Islamophobic slurs against them and their young children.⁷ The video went viral and instigated a public debate on the rise of hate crime against ethnic and Muslim minorities. The blatant racist barrage was addressed by the prime minister who admitted that this sort of behaviour should not be tolerated.⁸ As these cases culminated in public debate, the organisation “Protect Minorities” (Beskyt Minoriteter) collected over 50,000 signatures to mobilise left-centre parties to request a clarification of the hate crime legislation.⁹ A majority in Parliament – mainly left-centre parties – voted to specify the hate crime legislation to include hate crime that is only partially motivated by hate, thereby potentially making it easier to charge and convict people of hate crime.¹⁰

Employment

In last year’s EIR report, we highlighted how people with Muslim-sounding names and particularly hijab-wearing women are discriminated against in Danish employment.¹¹ While not much progress has been made in tackling this discrimination in 2021, Danish job centres, which are public services to help unemployed people gain employment, came under increased scrutiny for using an algorithm to categorise their unemployed customers according to their ethnic heritage since 2015. The Danish Agency for Labour Market and Recruitment (STAR), a subdivision of the Ministry of Interior and Employment, was using a catch-all category of “non-Western heritage” to categorise unemployed citizens, who are migrants or descendants of migrants from “non-Western” countries.

In our EIR report from 2019, we demonstrated how the job centres accessed the information provided by STAR about a jobseekers’ ethnic background through their CPR number (social security number), rather than jobseekers volunteering this information themselves.¹² In so doing, neither agency nor the job centres gave jobseekers the choice to opt out of this data-gathering tool that supposedly creates algorithms

7. Casper Fauherholdt, “Video deles igen og igen – familie overfuset på gaden på grund af deres etnicitet”, *TV2 Nyheder*, (May 24, 2021), retrieved June 24, 2022, from <https://nyheder.tv2.dk/samfund/2021-05-24-familie-overfuset-paa-gaden-hvorfor-pisser-i-ikke-af-til-jeres-eget-land>
8. Freja Sofie Madsen, “Mette Frederiksen reagerer på opsigtsvækkende video”, *TV2 Nyheder*, (May 25, 2021), retrieved June 24, 2022, from <https://nyheder.tv2.dk/samfund/2021-05-25-mette-frederiksen-reagerer-paa-opsigtsvaekkende-video>
9. Dina Hashem and Cecilie Fjeldberg Hjarsen, “Beskyt Minoriteter: Alle skal have lovgivningen i ryggen”, *Respons*, (December 9, 2021), retrieved July 5, 2022, from <https://www.responsmedie.dk/om-hadforbrydelser-13/>
10. Ministry of Justice, “Regeringen og støttepartier vil ændre straffelovens bestemmelse om hadforbrydelser”, (November 11, 2021), retrieved June 24, 2022, from <https://www.justitsministeriet.dk/pressemeddelelse/regeringen-og-stoettepartier-vil-aendre-straffelovens-bestemmelse-om-hadforbrydelser/>
11. Amani Hassani, “Islamophobia in Denmark: National Report 2020”. In: Enes Bayraklı & Farid Hafez, *European Islamophobia Report 2020*, Vienna, Leopold Weiss Institute, 2021.
12. Amani Hassani, “Islamophobia in Denmark: National Report 2019”. In: Enes Bayraklı & Farid Hafez, *European Islamophobia Report 2019*, Istanbul, SETA, 2020.

to help determine risk factors in long-term unemployment. In a study published in 2021, it became clear that the algorithm puts “non-Western” jobseekers in an unfavourable position compared to their Western counterparts.¹³

Confirming the study’s statistical results, one job centre manager confirmed that if the algorithm predicts a risk of long-term unemployment, a jobseeker would be called in for a meeting twice a month instead of only once a month. The argument here is that the job centres are offering added support to jobseekers at risk of long-term unemployment. Nevertheless, the Institute for Human Rights Denmark has pointed out that there is significant risk in employing algorithms to public services such as the one used in the Danish job centres; one important risk factor being indirect discriminatory practices.¹⁴

The main contributing factor in the algorithms used by STAR, which predicts “non-Western” migrants’ and descendants’ long-term unemployment, is ethnicity regardless of levels of education or employment experience. This is an important point to emphasise given the fact that studies highlighted in last year’s EIR report have shown that jobseekers with Muslim-sounding names and who are visibly Muslim are discriminated against in the Danish job market.¹⁵ The job centres’ argument of providing added support for these jobseekers to learn to write better CVs seems to put the responsibility on the jobseekers for the discrimination they experience in the Danish job market based on their ethnic and/or religious background. Instead, it would seem more productive if the agency focused on Danish employers becoming less discriminatory and more inclusive of minorities in their search for new employees. A recent and positive development in this case has been that STAR have ceased the use of this algorithm since March 2022.¹⁶

Education

In 2018, the Social Democrats, the current governing party, promised to reduce the number of “non-Western” students in primary schools with a high number of minority students. In 2021, the government received criticism for not following through with their pledge. Parties from the right and left criticised the government for their lack of planning and vision to see this pledge to fruition. The Danish People’s Party (Dansk Folkeparti, DPP) leader, Morten Messerschmidt, criticised the Social Democrats, stat-

13. Therese Moreau & Frederik Kulager, “Vi har skilt jobcentrenes algoritme ad”, *Zetland*, (June 10, 2021), retrieved June 24, 2022, from <https://www.zetland.dk/historie/sOMVZ7qG-m8yvMbm4-83f81>

14. The Danish Institute for Human Rights, “Risiko for discrimination i det offentlige brug af profilerings modeller”, *Menneskeret.dk*, (October 11, 2021), retrieved June 24, 2022, from <https://menneskeret.dk/udgivelser/risiko-diskrimination-offentliges-brug-profileringsmodeller>

15. Amani Hassani, “Islamophobia in Denmark: National Report 2020”. In: Enes Bayraklı & Farid Hafez, *European Islamophobia Report 2020*, Vienna, Leopold Weiss Institute, 2021.

16. European Commission against Racism and Intolerance, “ECRI Report on Denmark (sixth monitoring cycle)”, *Council of Europe*, (June 9, 2022), retrieved July 14, 2022, from <https://rm.coe.int/6th-ecri-report-on-denmark-/1680a6d5e4>

ing, “This is very lacking. Everyone knows that it is highly damaging to the teaching and to the calmness in the classroom that there are so many bilinguals, especially Muslims, in certain primary schools.”¹⁷ The education spokesperson for the Danish Social Liberal Party (Radikale Venstre), Lotte Rod, pointed out, “So far, too little has happened. This is very unfortunate, I think, because it is important that we attend school with each other. That the classes are mixed, so we meet each other across the board, and the schools are not so divided.”¹⁸ While parties across the political spectrum may disagree *why* so many Muslim students are allegedly problematic, they certainly agree high numbers of Muslim and “non-Western” students within a school pose a challenge for the school setting, which the government is responsible for solving.

In the hopes of diversifying the ethnic make-up of schools, several school districts - particularly in the second largest city, Aarhus - have been busing “non-Western” primary school children to schools outside of their catchment areas.¹⁹ This practice has been going on in Aarhus since 2006, yet according to one recent report by researchers from Aarhus University, these minority students are lagging in their education compared to their white school peers and the national average.²⁰ The schools they attend offer very little academic support to help these students and there is a significant attainment gap that is not adequately dealt with. Socially, these students often experience feelings of exclusion and connect better with other “bus children” (i.e., other racialised children) instead of their white classmates.²¹

A broad consensus across the political spectrum in the Danish Parliament agreed to start regulating student intake in the country’s high schools as well. One important component of the policy is to distribute the number of “non-Western” students enrolled in high schools with a large intake of minority students. The policy has meant that several high schools had to completely stop the enrolment of new students for a full year to ensure a better distribution of “non-Western” students.²² The Islamopho-

17. Morten Henriksen and Rasmus Bøttcher Christensen, “Tre år efter S-løfte: Andelen af skoler med over 30 procent ikke-vestlige elever er uændret”, *DR*, (August 5, 2021), retrieved June 24 2022, from <https://www.dr.dk/nyheder/politik/tre-aar-efter-s-loefte-andelen-af-skoler-med-over-30-procent-ikke-vestlige-elever-er>

18. Morten Henriksen and Rasmus Bøttcher Christensen, “Tre år efter S-løfte: Andelen af skoler med over 30 procent ikke-vestlige elever er uændret”, *DR*, (August 5, 2021), retrieved June 24 2022, from <https://www.dr.dk/nyheder/politik/tre-aar-efter-s-loefte-andelen-af-skoler-med-over-30-procent-ikke-vestlige-elever-er>

19. Heikke Yding & Flemming Nielsen, “Aarhus sender stadig flere tosprogede børn med bus til andre skoler”, *DR*, (April 13, 2021), retrieved June 26, 2022, from <https://www.dr.dk/nyheder/regionale/oestjylland/aarhus-sender-stadig-flere-tosprogede-boern-med-bus-til-andre-skoler>

20. Damm, Anna Piil, Elena Mattana, Helena Skyt Nielsen, and Benedicte Rouland. “Academic achievement and wellbeing of dual language learners: Evidence from a busing program.” *Journal of Urban Economics* 126 (June, 2021), p. 1-31. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jue.2021.103358>

21. Martin Littau Herlevsen, “Trods mistrivsel blandt busbørn: 48 kommende skoleelever tvinges væk fra den lokale skole”, *TV2 Østjylland*, (April 13, 2021), retrieved June 26, 2022, from <https://www.tv2ostjylland.dk/aarhus/trods-mistrivsel-blandt-busboern-48-kommende-skoleelever-tvinges-vaek-fra-den-lokale-skole>

22. Signe Julie Andersen, “Ny aftale kan lukke for optag på flere gymnasier i hovedstadsområdet”, *TV2 Lorry*, (June 10, 2021), retrieved June 26, 2022, from <https://www.tv2lorry.dk/lorryland/ny-aftale-kan-lukke-for-optag-paa-flere-gymnasier-i-hovedstadsområdet>

bic reasoning for reducing the number of “non-Western” students in particular high schools is clearly expressed by the DPP’s education spokesperson, Maria Krarup, who points out, “The DPP wants to combat the consequences of a failed foreign policy in high schools, in order to avoid French and Swedish conditions with parallel societies and Islamification [...]”.²³

In general, there has been little critique in Danish public discourse of the government’s rationale behind its attempts to forcibly diversify schools. There seems to be political consensus that high numbers of “non-Western” students make a school disadvantaged and threaten the social cohesion of society.²⁴ In turn, there is little scrutiny into what schools and the school system in general do to contribute to the attainment gap among racialised students, and how schools can be hostile environments for students of colour, particularly Muslim students. The introduction of busing, closing of local high school admissions, and other initiatives to forcibly scatter minority ethnic children and youth into white schools seem to be an ill-informed political decision that refuses to learn from the traumatic racial histories of the UK and US, which implemented forced busing on racial minorities in the 1960-80s to the detriment of these students’ social and academic well-being.²⁵

Politics

Since 2018, the Danish government has implemented several housing policies focused on neighbourhoods with more than 50% “non-Western” residents. To change the demographic make-up of these neighbourhoods, housing blocks have been demolished; residents have been evicted and relocated; the police are given power to temporarily implement double penalty zones in which crimes committed in designated zones could lead to double sentencing; and compulsory 25-hours-a-week nursery for 1-year-olds have been implemented.²⁶ These policies have been internationally criticised by the UN for their discrimination against “non-Western” residents.²⁷

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23. Ministry of Children and Education, “Ny aftale om elevfordeling bremser polarisering og parallelsamfund og hjælper gymnasier i yderområder”, *Ministry of Children and Education*, (June 10, 2021), retrieved June 26, 2022, from <https://www.uvm.dk/aktuelt/nyheder/uvm/2021/jun/210610-ny-aftale-om-elevfordeling-brems-er-polarisering--parallelsamfund-og-hjaelper-gymnasier>
 24. Morten Henriksen and Rasmus Bøttcher Christensen, “Tre år efter S-løfte: Andelen af skoler med over 30 procent ikke-vestlige elever er uændret”, *DR*, (August 5, 2021), retrieved June 24 2022, from <https://www.dr.dk/nyheder/politik/tre-aar-efter-s-loefte-andelen-af-skoler-med-over-30-procent-ikke-vestlige-elever-er>
 25. Olivier Esteves, *The “desegregation” of English schools: Bussing, race and urban space, 1960s–80s*. (Manchester University Press, 2018).
 26. Regeringen, “Ét Danmark Uden Parallelsamfund. Ingen Ghettoer i 2030”, *Regeringen*, (March 1, 2018), retrieved July 5, 2022, from https://www.regeringen.dk/media/4937/publikation_ét-danmark-uden-parallelsamfund.pdf.
 27. Press Release, “UN human rights experts urge Denmark to halt contentious sale of ‘ghetto’ buildings”, OHCHR, (October 23, 2020), retrieved June 27, 2022, from <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2020/10/un-human-rights-experts-urge-denmark-halt-contentious-sale-ghetto-buildings>

Nevertheless, in June 2021, a broad majority in Parliament voted to expand the policies' outreach to include neighbourhoods "at risk of becoming parallel societies", which means any residential area with more than 1,000 residents which has more than 30% "non-Western" residents. The aim of this expansion is to change the residential demographic so there are no neighbourhoods with more than 30% "non-Western" residents by 2030.²⁸

In practice, the policy will now restrict municipalities' ability to offer social housing to people who are not Danish/EU/EEA citizens, as well as people who have been convicted of a crime in the past or have received social benefits in the last two years. Even more controversially, municipalities are now allowed to demolish residential housing blocks if they feel they must do so to change the residential demographic. Furthermore, there are elements of a privatisation of the affordable housing market in the new agreement, as municipalities will be allowed to refer up to 30% of housing applicants to private housing associations if they deem it necessary to change the demographic make-up of these neighbourhoods at risk of becoming "parallel societies".²⁹

While the government has been focused on expanding the reach of the ghetto policies, thereby rendering socio-economically vulnerable "non-Western" residents even more precarious, there have been significant wins in the mobilisation efforts against these policies. Residents in one targeted neighbourhood, Mjølnerparken, who are suing the Ministry of the Interior and Housing and its ghetto policies for ethnic discrimination, had their case approved to proceed to national court. The Ministry of the Interior and Housing had attempted to get the case rejected, but the national court found the residents should have their case heard in court. According to the lawyer representing the residents, their case is focused on whether these policies are legal since the defining criteria to be regarded as a "ghetto" is the number of "non-Western" residents in an area.³⁰

Media

Danish mainstream media play an important role in reproducing and reinforcing stereotypes of the Muslim population. One such example was depicted by the na-

28. Daniel Bue Lauritzen, "Aftale på plads: Sådan vil partier forebygge parallelsamfund", *Altinget*, (June 15, 2021), retrieved June 27, 2022, from <https://www.alinget.dk/by/artikel/aftale-paa-plads-saadan-vil-partier-forebygge-parallelsamfund>

29. Indenrigs og boligministeriet, "Aftale mellem regeringen (S), V, DF, SF, KF, og LA om: Blandede boligområder – næste skridt i kampen mod parallelsamfund", *Indenrigs og boligministeriet*, (June 15, 2021), retrieved June 27, 2022, from [https://im.dk/Media/637593535640548234/Aftale%20om%20Blandede%20boligområder%20-%20næste%20skridt%20i%20kampen%20mod%20parallelsamfund%20\(forebyggelsesområder\)%20-%2015.%20juni%202021.pdf](https://im.dk/Media/637593535640548234/Aftale%20om%20Blandede%20boligområder%20-%20næste%20skridt%20i%20kampen%20mod%20parallelsamfund%20(forebyggelsesområder)%20-%2015.%20juni%202021.pdf)

30. Ritzau, "Beboere vinder delsejr i kampen mod regeringens ghettoplan", *Politiken*, (December 15, 2021), retrieved June 27, 2022, from <https://politiken.dk/indland/art8528943/Beboere-vinder-delsejr-i-kampen-mod-regeringens-ghettoplan>

tional broadcasting network DR, which during a news segment on more immigrant women getting jobs showed an illustration of a niqab-wearing woman with two children. The network received heavy criticism from citizens arguing that the picture was not representative of the subject because very few women wear niqab in Denmark. More importantly, the image enforces the stereotype that Muslim women are *choosing* not to work and instead stay at home with their children and live on social benefits. Conflating newly arrived migrant women's difficulties in gaining employment in Denmark with Muslim citizens is a common occurrence in both media and political discourse, where Muslims are often represented as foreigners leeching on Danish welfare society. DR later apologised for the mistake in representation and admitted the illustration should never have been published.³¹ Nonetheless, the debate demonstrates how editorial rooms are still white spaces, with very few racial and religious minorities represented. This is an important insight that is becoming increasingly noticeable as mainstream media often refuse to critique or challenge political discourse regarding minority groups – particularly Muslims – in the country.



Figure 1: A screenshot of a news segment on the national broadcasting channel, DR, cited in *journalisten.dk*³²

As a response to this bias in media rhetoric and representation, the organisation Responsible Press (Ansvarlig Presse) was formed in 2007 and gained more traction and popularity in 2021. By offering affected communities media training and workshops to understand how the Danish media landscape operates and communicates, they work to empower minoritised communities to better tackle media representations and media narratives.³³

31. Nanna Bay Madsen, "DR i brøler: - Det er en kæmpe fejl", *Ekstra Bladet*, (June 3, 2021), retrieved June 27, 2022, from <https://ekstrabladet.dk/underholdning/filmogtv/dr-i-brøler-det-er-en-kaempe-fejl/8608388?ilc=c>

32. Kerstin Bruun-Hansen, "DR beklager: Grafik med niqab-klædt kvinde var 'helt ved siden af skiven'", *Journalisten.dk*, (June 3, 2021), retrieved July 14, 2022, from <https://journalisten.dk/dr-beklager-grafik-med-niqab-klædt-kvinde-var-helt-ved-siden-af-skiven/>

33. Ansvarlig Presse, retrieved July 5, 2022, from <https://ansvarligpresse.dk>

Justice System

In May 2021, the government introduced new policies to make it even more difficult to acquire Danish citizenship.³⁴ The policies include further restrictions and requirements on gaining Danish citizenship, as well as increased possibilities of having one's citizenship revoked.³⁵ These guidelines seem to dismiss a report published by the Danish Institute of Human Rights in February 2021 which highlights the democratic problems of a growing number of people who are struggling to gain citizenship and thus excluded from participating in national elections.³⁶ The report emphasises that the number of citizenship allocations is already the lowest it has been in 40 years. On average, it takes 19 years to gain Danish citizenship, and more gravely, 35% of descendants of immigrants – people who are born or raised in Denmark – do not have citizenship and must apply through the same harsh requirements as more recent migrants.³⁷ Many of these descendants are of Muslim background.³⁸ The Danish Institute for Human Rights conclude that Denmark is breaching international obligations by not easing the citizenship process for people born or raised in the country.³⁹

The new citizenship requirements make it difficult for people in precarious employment as well as students to become eligible for citizenship, as they need to prove full-time employment for over 3.5 years and financial self-sufficiency, meaning they also must have paid back any student debts. Furthermore, a prison sentence (regardless of length) will exclude one from ever being able to apply for citizenship, and a fine above 3,000 DKK (approx. 400 EUR), depending on the reason, will put a 6-year quarantine before one is allowed to apply for citizenship. With the implementation of these new requirements, applicants will be categorised in the following groups: Nordic countries, other Western countries, MENAPT countries, and other “non-Western” countries.⁴⁰ The number of applicants from non-European countries will be monitored, so these do not

34. Udlændinge- og Integrationsministeriet, ”Cirkulæreskrivelse om naturalisation”, *Retsinformation*, (May 6, 2021), retrieved July 5, 2022, from <https://www.retsinformation.dk/eli/retsinfo/2021/9298>

35. Michala Clante Bendixen, ”Krav til dansk statsborgerskab strammes igen”, *Refugees*, (April 22, 2021), retrieved July 5, 2022, from <http://refugees.dk/aktuelt/2021/april/krav-til-dansk-statsborgerskab-strammes-igen/?fbclid=IwAR38rPHITJwHyzezpMNYypGFWIhSahGn7gK4tTBZ5TAz2HV2vaOVavzRmlc>

36. Ligebehandlingsafdelingen, ”Fremmed i eget land”, Danish Institute for Human Rights, (February 8, 2021), retrieved July 5, 2022, from https://menneskeret.dk/sites/menneskeret.dk/files/media/document/Statsborgerskab_Fremmed%20i%20eget%20land.pdf

37. Ligebehandlingsafdelingen, ”Fremmed i eget land”, Danish Institute for Human Rights, (February 8, 2021), retrieved July 5, 2022, from https://menneskeret.dk/sites/menneskeret.dk/files/media/document/Statsborgerskab_Fremmed%20i%20eget%20land.pdf

38. Mattias Tesfaye and Anette Görtz, ”Spørgsmål nr. 32”, *Udlændinge- og Integrationsministeriet*, (October 20, 2020), retrieved July 13, 2022, from <https://www.ft.dk/samling/20201/almdel/uu/1/spm/32/svar/1703380/2266598.pdf>

39. Ligebehandlingsafdelingen, ”Fremmed i eget land”, Danish Institute for Human Rights, (February 8, 2021), retrieved July 5, 2022, from https://menneskeret.dk/sites/menneskeret.dk/files/media/document/Statsborgerskab_Fremmed%20i%20eget%20land.pdf

40. Michala Clante Bendixen, ”Krav til dansk statsborgerskab strammes igen”, *Refugees*, (April 22, 2021), retrieved July 5, 2022, from <http://refugees.dk/aktuelt/2021/april/krav-til-dansk-statsborgerskab-strammes-igen/?fbclid=IwAR38rPHITJwHyzezpMNYypGFWIhSahGn7gK4tTBZ5TAz2HV2vaOVavzRmlc>

exceed more than 25% of the average of last four year.⁴¹ With these categories (particularly the focus on applicants from MENAPT countries, i.e., Muslims) and the citizenship test, which will now include several questions on “Danish values” related to freedom of speech and religion, it is clear that there is a targeting of Muslim citizenship applicants, attempting to limit the number of citizenships allocated Muslims in the country.⁴²

These new citizenship requirements are creating a racialised class of second-class residents, who may even have been born in Denmark, but who will never be able to gain citizenship, and whose children who will not be Danish by birth.⁴³ This will curb these people’s political agency in participating in Danish democracy since they are banned from participating and voting in national elections. Furthermore, given the expansion of housing policies to limit the possibility of non-Danish or EU/EEA citizens getting social housing in areas with more than 30% “non-Western” residents (see Politics section), it is apparent that the growing number of non-citizens who are born and raised in Denmark, will not only be excluded from participating in the democratic processes in Denmark, but will also face barriers in accessing social services. To raise public awareness around the growing difficulties in acquiring Danish citizenship, the new organisation *Us Outside* (*Os Udenfor*) has been set up to focus especially on young people born or raised in Denmark who are not eligible to apply for Danish citizenship because of these new rules.⁴⁴

As of 2021, there were still 19 Danish children in the North Syrian al-Hol and al-Roj camps. The Danish government refused to allow their mothers to return to Denmark, and consequently let the children remain in the camps under bleak and dangerous conditions. In 2021, a majority in Parliament agreed to bring the children back to Denmark but without their mothers.⁴⁵ Yet, this has been a politically controversial case, with several politicians arguing that the mothers, three of whom have had their Danish citizenships revoked and three of whom remain Danish citizens, should be able to return to Denmark with their children to face court proceedings.⁴⁶

41. Udlændinge- og Integrationsministeriet, ”Cirkulæreskrivelse om naturalisation”, *Retsinformation*, (May 6, 2021), retrieved July 14, 2022, from <https://www.retsinformation.dk/eli/tetsinfo/2021/9298>

42. Michala Clante Bendixen, ”Krav til dansk statsborgerskab strammes igen”, *Refugees*, (April 22, 2021), retrieved July 5, 2022, from <http://refugees.dk/aktuelt/2021/april/krav-til-dansk-statsborgerskab-strammes-igen/?fbclid=IwAR38rPHITJwHyzezpMNYypGFwIhSahGn7gK4tTBZ5TAz2HV2vaOVavzRmlc>

43. Kåre Kildall Rysgaard, ”Mor og datter er begge født og opvokset i Danmark, men er ikke danske statsborgere: ’Det er en dybt bekymrende udvikling’”, *DR*, (November 25, 2021), retrieved July 5, 2022, from https://www.dr.dk/nyheder/indland/mor-og-datter-er-begge-foedt-og-opvokset-i-danmark-men-er-ikke-danske-statsborgere?cid=soc_facebook_drnyheder_post_m6xw2u2e&fbclid=IwAR27ZXkUKt3F8cgwySaU9Zr3iyExdd5F-WybCEPWuUhxz4ik8_jDnOAmQEe8

44. *Os udenfor*, retrieved July 5, 2022, from https://www.facebook.com/osudenforbevaegelsen/about/?ref=page_internal

45. Maiken Brusgaard Christensen, ”Aftale om børn i fangelejre i Syrien på plads”, *TV2 Nyheder*, (March 30, 2021), retrieved July 5, 2022, from <https://nyheder.tv2.dk/politik/2021-03-30-aftale-om-boern-i-fangelejre-i-syrien-paa-plads>

46. Emilie Haaber Lynggaard and Morten Nielsen, ”Dele af Venstres bagland vil have Syrien-børn hjem: Uværdigt for Danmark”, *TV2 Nyheder*, (March 25, 2021), retrieved July 5, 2022, from <https://nyheder.tv2.dk/politik/2021-03-25-dele-af-venstres-bagland-vil-have-syrien-boern-hjem-uaerdtigt-for-danmark>

Internet

For the first time in Denmark, a digital algorithm has mapped out the occurrence of hate speech on Facebook.⁴⁷ It concludes that Muslims are often the main target of online hate and the three politicians who have most comments from the public expressing hatred towards Muslims are three MPs from the Danish People's Party. This is unsurprising, since the DPP is outspoken in their hatred of Muslims, migrants, and refugees in general. The algorithm has analysed over 63 million comments on Facebook, focusing on 199 different politicians and several media outlets' posts. According to the results, 3.3 million comments were classified as verbal attacks that were stigmatising, insulting, derogatory, or threatening. In discussions on Islam, Muslims, immigrants, or integration, 13% of comments are classified as an attack.⁴⁸ According to the algorithm, Muslims are clearly the population group that experience the most hatred on Facebook.

Central Figures in the Islamophobia Network

In 2021, the previous integration minister (2015-2019), Inger Støjberg, was impeached and put on trial for instructing her staff in 2016 to indiscriminately separate Syrian asylum-seeking couples in refugee centres, if one or both parties were under 18 years old. In total, 34 couples were forcibly separated without having their individual cases reviewed.⁴⁹ The courts convicted Støjberg of breaching the Ministerial Accountability Act and Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights, and she was sentenced to 60 days in prison.⁵⁰ In response to the verdict, Støjberg told reporters, "I think it wasn't just me that lost today, it was Danish values that lost today", thereby making her abuse of power and illegal decision to separate young Syrian couples a symbol of Danish values.⁵¹ Støjberg became internationally infamous in her time as integration minister for publishing ads in Lebanese newspapers discouraging people from seeking asylum in Denmark,⁵² and introducing a law that would

47. Analyse & Tal, "Angreb i den offentlige debat på Facebook", *www.ogtal.dk*, (May 2021), retrieved June 27, from <https://strapi.ogtal.dk/uploads/966f1ebcfa9942d3aef338e9920611f4.pdf>

48. Ritzau, "Algoritme kortlægger had på facebook: Muslimer er skydeskive", *Journalisten*, (May 23, 2021), retrieved June 27, 2022, from <https://journalisten.dk/algoritme-kortlaegger-had-paa-facebook-muslimer-er-skydeskive/?fbclid=IwAR3DJR1zU3CNU6V8c4TyZX6lrjBs8apVKyYqFhkhPW7JC22rhT89gm7GGys>

49. Mads Pedersen, "Grafik: Her er de 34 unge asylpar, som Støjberg ville skille ad – og deres alder", *Politiken*, (May 22, 2017), retrieved July 5, 2022, from <https://politiken.dk/indland/politik/art5962175/Her-er-de-34-unge-asylpar-som-Stoeborg-ville-skille-ad-og-deres-alder>

50. Rigsretten, "Rigsretten har afsagt dom i sagen mod fhv. minister Inger Støjberg", *Rigsretten*, (December 13, 2021), retrieved July 5, 2022, from <https://rigsretten.dk/aktuelt/2021/12/rigsretten-har-afsagt-dom-i-sagen-mod-fhv-minister-inger-stoeborg/>

51. Charlie Duxbury, "Ex-Danish minister convicted over 2016 asylum ruling", *Politico*, (December 13, 2021), retrieved July 5, 2022, from <https://www.politico.eu/article/ex-danish-minister-inger-stoeborg-convicted-asylum-policy/>

52. Stav Ziv, "Denmark Places Anti-Refugee Ads in Lebanese Newspapers", *Newsweek*, (July 9, 2015), retrieved July 5, 2022, from <https://www.newsweek.com/denmark-places-anti-refugee-ads-lebanese-newspapers-369492>

allow Danish authorities to seize jewellery and cash from asylum seekers and other migrants who do not have a right to remain in Denmark.⁵³

While Inger Støjberg belonged to the right-centre party Liberals (Venstre) during her ministerial period, her replacement, Mattias Tesfaye from the left-centre Social Democrats has not shied away from continuing with the harsh Islamophobic and anti-migration policies and discourse.⁵⁴ What is important to highlight with these politicians and their different ideological approaches to vilifying Muslims and Islam, is that Islamophobia and anti-Muslim sentiments have become a mainstream political point to gain popularity amongst electorate across the political spectrum.

Observed Civil Society and Political Initiatives to Counter Islamophobia

According to a survey released in 2021 by Megafon, 42% of the Danish public agree or partly agree that racism is a widespread problem in Denmark. This is an increase from only 32% the previous year. Several hate crime incidences that were recorded and went viral on social media have helped increase awareness of the ongoing issues of racism particularly against Muslims.⁵⁵ This increased recognition of racism among civil society is an important development and may have influenced a greater political interest in condemning racist abuse in public.

The development has meant that both the government and Copenhagen Municipality have pledged to establish an action plan against racism and discrimination engaging with several civil society organisations to help develop the action plan. It is important to notice that several organisations working against Islamophobia have been invited to engage with political officials on these action plans, including the Centre for Muslim Rights in Denmark (CEDA), which has been campaigning for Muslims' rights in Denmark since 2016. It has been rare for Danish officials to be willing to meet and work with organisations explicitly campaigning against Islamophobia, so this is a step in a positive direction.

Conclusion and Policy Recommendations

This year's EIR report on Denmark shows some worrying signs of how structural barriers for Muslims are increasing with new policies and legislation. One particu-

53. Rick Noack, "Denmark wants to seize jewellery and cash from refugees", *Washington Post*, (December 18, 2015), retrieved July 5, 2022, from <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2015/12/17/denmark-wants-to-seize-jewelry-from-refugees/>

54. Amani Hassani, "Islamophobia in Denmark: National Report 2020", in: Enes Bayraklı & Farid Hafez, *European Islamophobia Report 2020*, (Vienna: Leopold Weiss Institute, 2021).

55. Cæcilie Dohn Christensen, "Flere danskere ser racisme som et udbredt problem", *TV2*, (June 7, 2021), retrieved June 27, 2022, from <https://nyheder.tv2.dk/samfund/2021-06-07-flere-danskere-ser-racisme-som-et-udbredt-problem>

larly worrying development is the new statistical category of MENAPT, which enables the government to specifically target Muslim citizens by inferring their Muslimness based on their countries of origin. By creating statistics that differentiate between “Western” and “non-Western”, and now “MENAPT”, the government has the tools to make policies that specifically target Muslims. The MENAPT category was introduced in late 2020, so we are only seeing the beginning of how this new category will play out in future legislation and policies. Nonetheless, there were already indications in 2021 that this new category will have a detrimental effect on Muslims’ access to public services, particularly with the expansion of the ghetto policies and the new restrictions on citizenship applications.

In terms of the new ghetto policies, municipalities seen as at risk of becoming parallel societies because of the number of “non-Western” residents, will now be able to decline housing applicants who are not Danish or EU citizens. This will particularly affect socio-economically vulnerable “non-Western” residents. Furthermore, these new housing policies must be considered in connection with the new citizenship application requirements, which will make it difficult for “non-Western” applicants, particularly those from MENAPT countries, to acquire citizenship. This development is very worrying as it became apparent in 2021 following a report by the Danish Institute of Human Rights that 35% of descendants of migrants are not Danish citizens. This is an incredibly high number of people born, raised, and living in Denmark who not only do not have the right to vote in national elections – thus deeming them politically insignificant for politicians in Parliament – but who are now facing barriers to affordable social housing.

The 35% of descendants of migrants who are not Danish experience heightened citizenship barriers with the new citizenship policies. These new policies will in the future distinguish between MENAPT and “non-Western” applicants, and potentially limit the number of citizenship allocations non-European applicants, if these exceed the average of previous years. It will be important to closely monitor the ways the government and public institutions will implement this new Muslim category based on people’s origin in Muslim-majority countries and how this will limit Muslims’ access to public services, housing, employment, education, and the justice system.

Many of the following policy recommendations draw on the work of colleagues at the Centre for Muslim Rights in Denmark (CEDA)⁵⁶ and other anti-racist coalition reports on Denmark.⁵⁷

56. Centre for Muslim rights in Denmark, “Anbefalinger til Handlingsplan mod Racisme”, *CEDA.nu*, (June 2022), retrieved July 5, 2022, from https://www.ceda.nu/_files/ugd/198d48_98996a9218d447748ed52a6d05355282.pdf

57. Coalition of anti-racist civil society organisations, “Alternative Report on Denmark 2020 to the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination”, *CERD*, (2020), retrieved July 5, 2022, from https://www.ceda.nu/_files/ugd/198d48_437422eadf3b4221ac5ae1ed6a8097ae.pdf

- A national coordinator should be appointed with the responsibility for coordinating the Danish efforts against Islamophobia and racism. They should be well-acquainted with Muslim communities to uncover experiences of Islamophobia.
- Politicians should recognise Islamophobia as a type of racism that affects Muslims and place particular emphasis on the prevention and combatting of Islamophobia in the National Action Plan against Racism.
- Politicians should recognise that there is structural racism in Denmark and identify conscious and unconscious structural racism and discrimination in norms, routines, algorithms, attitudes, and behaviours in public institutions and spaces.
- The government should simplify the requirements for permanent residence permits and Danish citizenship, and it should be made less difficult to become a Danish citizen.
- The right of all foreign nationals born and raised in Denmark to be naturalised by declaration should be reintroduced.
- The ghetto policy and all its contents should be repealed.
- Equal access to the affordable rental housing market (*almene boliger*), including for non-EU/EEA citizens should be ensured.

Chronology

- **14.01.2021:** Parliament votes to impeach previous integration minister Inger Støjberg for illegally separating young asylum-seeking couples.
- **22.04.2021:** Harsher requirements to attain Danish citizenship introduced.
- **07.05.2021:** Denmark is criticised by the UN, particularly for its treatment of foreigners and asylum seekers.
- **15.06.2021:** New policies to prevent parallel societies are implemented.
- **13.12.2021:** The previous integration minister, Inger Støjberg, is found guilty and sentenced to 60 days in prison for breaking the ministerial oath and human rights.
- **15.12.2021:** Resident affected by the racist ghetto policies and are suing the government for discrimination, get their lawsuit approved to proceed in court.