Discourses around Racism in Spain

Bakdid K and García Escribano JJ*

Sociology, University of Murcia, Spain

***Corresponding author:** Juan José García Escribano, Sociology, University of Murcia, Murcia, Spain, Email: escriba@um.es

Abstract

This article aims to discover the discourse on racism in Spain among the participants of awareness-raising workshops against racism in the Community of Madrid within the framework of the COCO (Against Everyday Hate) project. For this purpose, a mixed methodology was used, using the focus group technique complemented with the Pettigrew and Mertens test of subtle and manifest prejudice, adapted by Frías-Navarro. The literature review discusses racism as a concept, its origin, and typology and analyzes and discusses results and conclusions.

Keywords: Racism; Prejudice; Immigrants; Racialized People

Introduction

Everyday racism, also known as modern or contemporary racism [1], is a social problem we have lived with since colonization (without considering the previous proto-racism). Racism permeates our society, expanding internationally, nationally, and locally, often developing as institutional racism, "the result of the policies of governments that have the support of broad sectors of the population" [2]. It is influenced by globalization, which not only increases migratory flows but also gives it a worrying tinge due to the predominance of neoliberal policies, accelerated technological progress, and the obstacles placed in the way of immigration by public policies.

Moreover, racism has been able to adapt to the characteristics of our society, as it manifests itself more subtly due to the social cost that is proclaiming oneself to be a racist person still entails today. However, the rise of the extreme right in recent years is once again legitimizing racist expressions and attitudes, with all the consequences that this entails for the population that suffers from it [3]. The difficulty of this phenomenon lies in the fact that racism

has been able to adapt even to "anti-racist approaches" in an unconscious way [4] which makes it an essential and even urgent subject to detect these new forms of racism, how they affect immigrants and racialized people and what measures can be taken in this regard.

This study aims to discover the discourse on racism towards immigrants and racialized people in Spain among the participants of awareness-raising workshops against racism in the Community of Madrid, given as part of the COCO project (against everyday hatred). For this purpose, we opted to use a qualitative methodology complemented by a quantitative one using focus groups and the Pettigrew, et al. [5] scale of subtle and manifest prejudice, adapted by Frías-Navarro D [5]. A total of seven focus groups and 65 tests were carried out and applied to the same people who participated in the groups.

Racism: Origin, Definition, and Typology

In its origins, racism stems from the idea of a stigma, a stain, or a sin that generations can inherit without limit to a particular human group [6]. Some authors have placed

the birth of racism in the Iberian Peninsula at the end of the Middle Ages and the beginning of the Modern Age with the presence of "proto-racism" linked to "purity of blood," which the Catholic monarchy used to persecute Muslims and Jews during the colonial conquest of the territory known as Al-Andalus" [7]. However, for the Latin American decolonial group of thought, racism emerged as a category from the European colonizing process that began in the 15th century because, before the "discovery," the humanity of Jews and Muslims was not questioned. From 1492 onwards, with the arrival of Columbus in the Americas, racism was not challenged. At that moment, Europe began to construct this narrative of the superiority of Christian-European civilization over the rest of the world, "dehumanizing the newly "discovered" populations, whose members were placed closer to the animal world than to the human world" [7].

This dehumanization is the turning point that marks the historical moment of the emergence of racism as the first social category invented by Modernity [7]. Since then, the West has generated a new ethnic-racial hierarchy that divides the earth into modern Europe as civilized space and the rest of the savage and "pre-modern" world as uncivilized, introducing language, a collective imaginary, new identities (blacks, mestizos, whites, Indians, etc.) and new concepts of geopolitical classification (West, East).

There is no single definition of racism today. The IOM defines it as an "ideological conception that assigns to a certain race or ethnic group a position of superior strength, based on physical or cultural qualities and economic or other dominance." It can also be defined as "a doctrine or belief based on racial superiority. This includes the belief that race determines intelligence, cultural characteristics, and moral attitudes". This feeling of superiority defines and differentiates racism from other forms of exclusion [8]. This view suggests power relations, where one group exercises domination over another, assigning specific positions and rights according to observable physical, cultural, or origin differences [9].

Troyano identifies two main difficulties in defining racism. On the one hand, "racism" refers to a category that does not exist. On the other hand, it refers indistinctly to ideas, attitudes, and behavior towards that race category. However, despite the non-existence of the race category, its consequences are still experienced by many people, making it a problem that makes it necessary to know what is at work there since race does not explain it [9].

According to Gimeno L [9], the manifestations of racism are very heterogeneous, varying according to the historical, sociological, and political context and fluctuating in content

and severity. Alonso R, et al. [3] distinguishes between classic racism and modern racism, in which the former is expressed in the manifest dimension and the latter in the latent dimension. Aguilar M, et al. [4], for their part, call it old racism and modern, contemporary, or subtle racism, whose manifestations are less explicit and whose expression is through institutional racism.

Due to its scope, different authors have distinguished different types of racism:
- Subtle racism: Pettigrew, et al. [4] call it subtle prejudice, defining it as "a non-overtly racist attitude [...] based on the defense of traditional values, the exaggeration of cultural differences, and the denial of positive emotions towards the stigmatized group" (p. 5), even perceiving them as a threat [10]. This prejudice, according to Frías Navarro D [5], "serves to mask and justify discrimination towards other groups in a way that is not aggressive but just as harmful as traditional prejudice" (p. 2).
- Overt racism: here, Pettigrew, et al. [4] also name it "prejudice," defining it as that which "includes the belief in the genetic inferiority of the ex-group and, through it, justifies the rejection of its members and their disadvantaged position in society" (p. 5).
- Symbolic racism: according to Fernández I, et al. [10], "consists of the consideration that the other violates the traditional values of the receiving society" (p. 130) and is characterized by "antagonism and resentment towards minorities who rise too fast, or towards particular alleged concessions made to 'minorities,' as well as 'positive discrimination' towards them" [4].
- Aversive racism: according to Fernández I, et al. [10], it occurs when "there is a conflict between egalitarian values and negative feelings towards the other" (p. 130) and reflects a theoretical proposal "that allows us to identify the racism of people who consider themselves progressive [...]. It is produced unintentionally, the person is often unaware of this type of prejudice" [4]. The feeling aroused by "the others" is not hatred or hostility but disgust, discomfort, and even fear. People who fall into aversive racism know that prejudice is not good and do not consider them prejudiced.

These forms of racism result in avoidance, stigmatization, isolation, marginalization, and social and moral exclusion; due to discriminatory behavior towards "negative" others exercised at different levels of severity [3]. Gimen L [9] states that the elementary forms of racism are prejudice, segregation, discrimination and violence, and within the levels of action he establishes four levels, these are: infra-racism as a disjointed phenomenon, i.e. operating in different spheres in a disorganized and overlapping manner without any hint of systematisation; fragmented racism, in which violence is no longer considered as an isolated phenomenon,

and discrimination and segregation become more evident, with consequences at the level of spatial distribution; political racism insofar as the political "is the mortar that integrates racism and constitutes it into a political instrument or strategy, brings together opinions and prejudices and orients them, is inscribed in an ideological tradition and proclaims measures"; and, finally, total racism, "where the state is organised entirely under the racist idea: it develops policies and programmes of exclusion, destruction demands from intellectuals ideological systems of legitimization etc" [9]. The latter can be framed within institutional racism, understood as a "set of policies, practices and procedures that harm an ethnic or racial group, preventing it from achieving a position of equality" [4].

In short, racism can nowadays be compatible with anti-racist discourses. Racism is explained by its complex and multidimensional character and its four interrelated dimensions (attitudinal, practical, ideological, and structural) without all of them being present in a given situation [11,12].

Results of the Research

Main Discursive Approaches

Three discursive approaches have been detected, i.e., an explicit racist discourse, a non-racist discourse, and a critical anti-racist discourse (Table 1).

Type of discourse	Critical Anti-Racist Discourse Egalitarian and pro-change discourse	Non-Racist Discourse	Explicit Racist Discours
How racism is understood	Racism is a social emergency whose solution must be coordinated from different spheres and in the long term.	Racism is a problem that has an easy, individualized, and concise term solution.	No real awareness of racism as a problem
Predominant groups	Predominant in GD2, GD3 and GD7. Profile: university students, mainly in Social Sciences.	Predominant in GD1, GD5 and GD6. Mixed profile with and without university degrees.	Occasionally predominant in GD4 and GD5. Mixed profile with and without university degrees

Source: Own elaboration.
Table 1: Discursive approaches found in the focus groups.

The critical anti-racist discourse is mainly found in groups in which a profile of university students with a degree in social sciences predominates. They see racism as a structural problem and its eradication as a task that must be coordinated from all areas to see long-term changes. They claim that racism is something we have been brought up with; it is not innate but learned and linked to male sexism. It means that it is internalized and sometimes manifests itself unconsciously. This is why there is generally awareness that anti-racist discourse can be compatible with subtle thoughts or acts of racism, which they call micro-racism. Statements recognize that when people call themselves non-racist, they have either had "a process of deconstruction over a long time" or are unaware that they may have such "intrusive thoughts." Furthermore, within this approach, racism is conceived as an institutionalized problem, recognizing that "the real problem is the institutions and the system itself. They also envision it as a social emergency as it affects many people in Spain, proposing actions in this respect.

The non-racist discourse predominates mainly in GD1, GD5, and GD6. The first comprises university-educated professionals, the second of students of different university and non-university levels, and the third of people with primary education. Racism is conceived as a non-structural phenomenon, as discourses emerge which are very

much in line with what Gimeno L [9] calls infra-racism, with emerging expressions affirming that in Spain, there is more classism than racism, situating the latter as an unconnected phenomenon with no signs of systematization. The explanations for racist situations are independent of racism, as they attribute it to "more complex" aspects. In this approach, racism is also separated from politics.

On the other hand, within this approach, there have also been some expressions closely linked to the concept of fragmented racism [9] which goes a step further in understanding racism, in which violence is no longer considered an isolated phenomenon. Discrimination and segregation become more evident, with consequences at the level of spatial distribution. However, racism is not seen as a structural problem. The explanations given for racism have a very individualistic component. Thus, expressions closely related to the human need to classify, categorize, and label are provided. Their explanations of racism remain superficial and denote doubts in their own opinion.

As for the explicit racist discourse, this is a minority discourse, as it occurred in two specific groups as a non-predominant discourse since, in general, the responses of the rest of the members of both groups showed attitudes of rejection towards their discourses. In both groups, there

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was an openly racist discourse. In GD4, the explicit racist discourse revolves around defending Nazi ideology. As for GD5, there were both overtly racist expressions and racist prejudices within the group, where the person who declared himself to be openly racist judged one of the participants by his phenotype.

Predominant Types of Racism

According to the results of the subtle and overt prejudice test together with the incorporated racist self-perception scale, we obtain the following results:

- As far as self-perception of racism oneself is concerned, 57.1% consider themselves somewhat racist, 36.5% not at all racist, and 6.3% very racist. If we take gender into account, we observe that within the category "not at all racist," there is a higher percentage of men (22.2%) than women (14.3%). In contrast, in the "not very racist" response category, these values are reversed, with more women (33.3%) than men (19%) and 4.8% of people of non-binary gender. As for the "very racist" response category, only men responded, with a percentage of 1.6% of respondents (Table 2).

	Women	Men	Non-Binary Gender	Total
Fanatic	9,2%	10,8%	1,5%	21,5%
SUBTLE	35,4%	20,0%	3,1%	58,5%
EGALITARIAN	7,7%	3,1%	0,0%	10,8%
Error	3,1%	6,2%	0,0%	9,2%
Total	55,4%	40,0%	4,6%	100,0%

Source: Own elaboration.
Table 2: Subtle and Overt Bias Test Results.

As for the results of subtle and overt prejudice, it can be seen that 58.5% of respondents show subtle racism, which is more prevalent among women than men and people of non-binary gender. As for militant racism, this accounts for 21.5% of respondents. There are hardly any significant differences in the distinction between men and women, although the percentage is slightly higher in men (10.8%) than in women (9.2%). In terms of egalitarian values (9.2%), there is a very significant difference concerning gender, being higher in women (7.7%) than in men (3.1%).

Let's compare the variable self-perception of racism oneself and the final results of the subtle and manifest prejudice test. We obtain that the percentage of people who consider themselves not very racist (57.1%) is very similar to the percentage we finally get from the test as a group of people in which subtle prejudice predominates (58.5%). However, this is not the case for the rest of the results, as more people

consider themselves not at all racist (36.60%) than those who finally give a similar effect (10.8%), just as fewer people consider themselves very racist (3.2%) compared to those who, according to the results, are fanatics (21.5%). Viewing these results by level of education, 56.8% of people with a university education fall into the subtle category, followed by 25% of fanatics. Only 13.6% of these are egalitarians. As for people with a non-university education, the results are as follows: 65% within the "subtle" category, 15% "fanatic," and 5% egalitarian.

Comparison between Qualitative and Quantitative Results

In this section, we will compare and complement the results of the focus groups and the subtle and overt prejudice tests (Table 3).

Order of predominance	Discursive approaches	Self-perception of racism	Type of prejudice
1st	Apparently non-racist discourse (GD1) (GD4) (GD5) (GD6) Critical anti-racist discourse (GD2) (GD3) (GD4) (GD7) Both are given more or less equally.	57,10% not very racist	58,10% subtle
2nd		36,60% not racist at all	10,80% egalitarian
3rd	Explicit racist discourse (GD4) (GD5)	3,20% very racist	21,50% fanatic

Source: Own elaboration.
Table 3: Comparison of the focus group results and the subtle and manifest prejudice test.

More than half of the people who participated in the focus groups know they may have a subtle prejudice towards immigrant and racialized people. As can be seen in the table, the percentage of people with subtle prejudice (58.1%) is almost the same as their self-perception as somewhat racist people (57.1%). However, for the number of opinions that fall within the critical anti-racist approach, only 10.8% of people happen to be egalitarian. It is true that, in the focus groups with the critical anti-racist view, they recognize that they are unconsciously prejudiced and show a predisposition to be racist (57.1%).

There were also responses in which 3.2% self-determined themselves as very racist, consistent with the results of the explicit racist approach, i.e., it is a minority discourse. However, the results of the test show that 20.5% of the respondents were in the category of overt prejudice, indicating that there are more racist people than is shown in the speeches and the scale of self-perception as a racist person.

Conclusion

Three discursive approaches emanate from the focus groups, i.e., critical anti-racist discourse, apparently non-racist discourse, and explicit racist discourse. The first two are almost equally prevalent, while the latter is in the minority. The critical anti-racist view was found to a greater extent in groups of people with university degrees in the Social Sciences, the non-racist discourse in groups made up of professionals with university studies, students of different universities and non-university levels, and people with primary studies. As for explicit racist discourse, it was found to a minority in mixed groups, i.e., with and without university studies.

According to the test results, almost 60% of the people participating in the anti-racism workshops showed that subtle prejudice is predominant, followed by extreme prejudice (21.5%) and egalitarian prejudice (9.2%). Despite these results, 57.1% of the participants are aware that racism is present, even if only minimally. The justification is that they have been socialized in a racist society that promotes micro-machisms and have micro-racisms that, occasionally, appear as intrusive thoughts and unconsciously. On the other hand, there is a more significant imbalance between people who say they are not racist and the equal test results: while the former is 36.5%, the latter is only 9.2%. It is similar for people who state being very racist (6.3%) with the fanatic results (21.5%).

On the other hand, after comparing the results of the focus groups with the subtle and overt prejudice tests, it can be seen that, for the number of opinions that fall within

the critical anti-racist approach, only 10.8% of people are egalitarian. It is true that, within the same groups framed within the critical anti-racist approach, they recognize that they are unconsciously prejudiced and are predisposed to change. However, the percentage of egalitarians is still much lower. There were also responses in which 3.2% of respondents described themselves as very racist, consistent with the results of the explicit racist approach, i.e., it is a minority discourse. However, the results show that 20.5% of the respondents were within an overt prejudice category, which may indicate that there are more racist people than is shown in the speeches and the scale of self-perception as a racist person.

It is striking that, within the groups that fall within the critical anti-racist discourse, only one (GD3) shows a coherence between the focus groups' results and the subtle and manifest prejudice test results. In the remaining two (GD2 and GD7), there is no apparent coherence between the two results since, despite having an anti-racist discourse, both of them have high percentages of bigotry (30% and 20%) and null results in the egalitarian category (0%). This result can be explained by the following reasons: social desirability bias, that the test is not adapted to the research context, or that the sample is too small in number so that when it is segmented, it loses even more statistical significance. In a way, this comes close to what Aguilar M, et al. [4] claim, i.e., that everyday racism has been able to adapt even to anti-racist approaches.

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