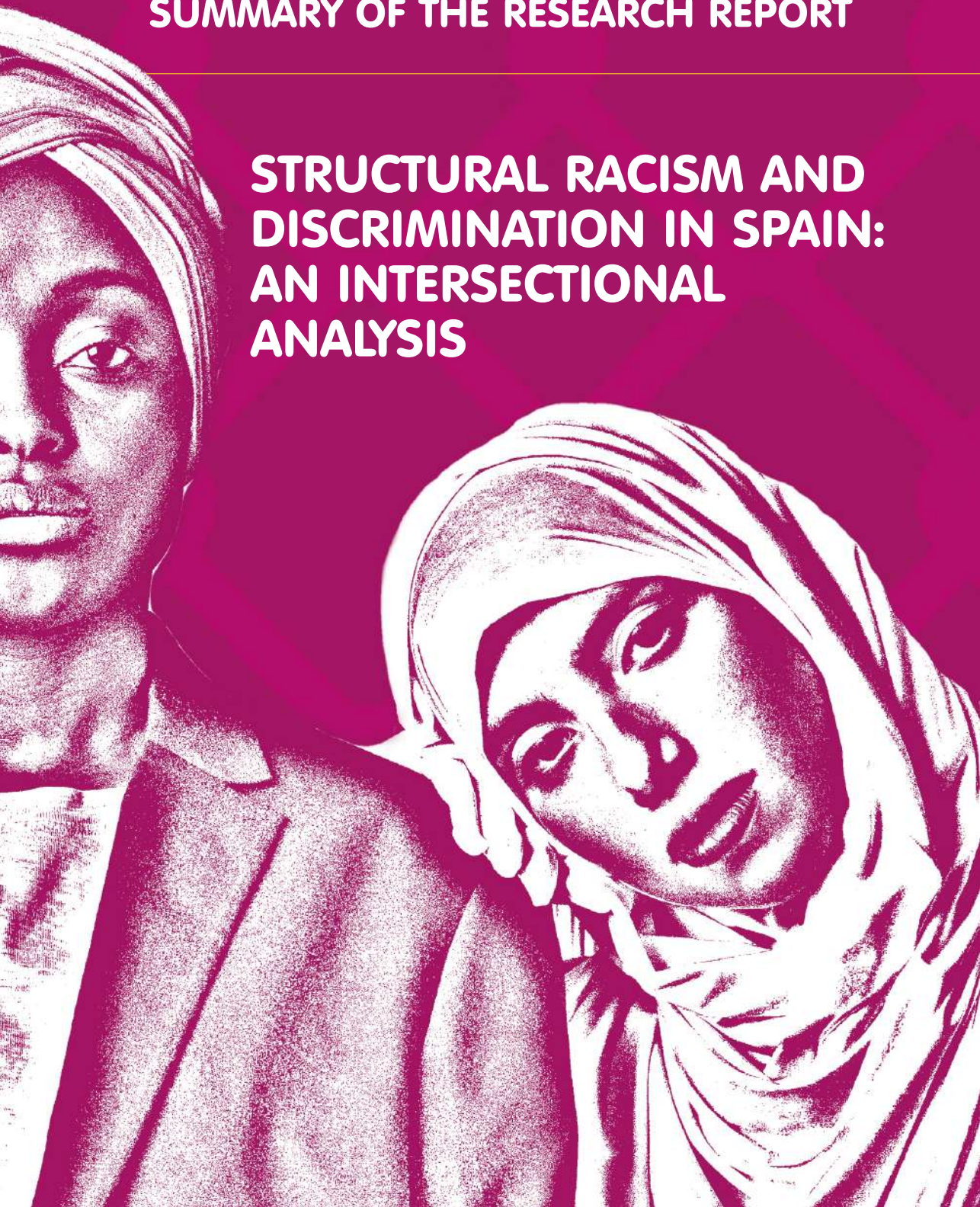










SUMMARY OF THE RESEARCH REPORT

**STRUCTURAL RACISM AND
DISCRIMINATION IN SPAIN:
AN INTERSECTIONAL
ANALYSIS**





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para la Integración de Inmigrantes

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1. INSTITUTIONAL PRESENTATION

The Moroccan Association for the Integration of Immigrants is a non-governmental organization (NGO) established in 2003 by a group of Moroccan university students. In 2012, it was declared an Entity of Municipal Public Utility, a recognition granted by the Honorable City Council of Málaga, thanks to its work supporting the immigrant population and its strong commitment to solidarity and human rights.

Since its inception, the organization has been characterized by a strong social commitment and a dedicated vocation to work for the public interest. It is an association independent of any political ideology, striving to build egalitarian societies where all individuals, regardless of their origin, beliefs, or gender, can access the same opportunities.

With its central headquarters in Málaga, the association also has delegations in Seville, Almería, Granada, and Algeciras. However, its scope of action is much broader, as it conducts information, training, and awareness-raising activities throughout Spain.

The organization's main objective is the relentless fight to eradicate all forms of social exclusion and injustices linked to migration. Its social activities have contributed to making social inclusion a reality for many individuals from other countries, fostering coexistence and promoting awareness of diverse migratory realities among the Spanish population.

Over the years, its social focus has expanded with new programs, such as those aimed at international cooperation, enabling the implementation of projects in the countries of origin of immigrants. The organization has also diversified its efforts with programs for socio-legal advice, volunteering, children and youth, training and research, awareness-raising, intercultural mediation, linguistic translation, intercultural community engagement, and gender equality. Every year, dozens of projects are carried out at the European, national, regional, and local levels—some in collaboration with other entities and institutions, and others exclusively managed by the association.

The Moroccan Association engages in activities that provide support, training,

and awareness about migratory processes and the realities faced by the immigrant population in the country. Due to its social commitment and defense of immigrants' rights, it has received several awards, including the Málaga Volunteer Award in the International Cooperation category in 2011 and 2016, and the Solidarity Action Award in 2021, granted by Diario SUR and Fundación La Caixa.

Additionally, it received an Honorable Mention in the Andalusian Migration Awards in 2020.

The present study aligns with the actions outlined in its strategic plan (2021-2024). Aiming to understand the reality faced by migrants and to analyze the discrimination they endure, this project, *“Structural Racism and Discrimination in Spain: An Intersectional Analysis”*, was developed. The project is funded by the Ministry of Social Rights, Consumer Affairs, and the 2030 Agenda, through allocations from the Personal Income Tax and Corporate Tax contributions.



2. OBJECTIVES, SAMPLE AND METHODOLOGY

According to data revealed during the third meeting of the Monitoring Commission for the Second Action Plan Against Hate Crimes, such incidents increased by 33.1% in 2023 compared to the previous year. The majority of these incidents are motivated by racism and xenophobia (Ministry of the Interior, 2024). The *Report on the Evolution of Hate Crimes in Spain (2022)* also points to this trend, observing a steady rise in these incidents compared to previous years.

All these studies agree in indicating a clear increase in this type of crime, with racist incidents accounting for 43.5% of all reported cases (SOS Racismo, 2023). The primary targets of these attacks continue to be the Spanish and Moroccan populations.

The Moroccan Association for the Integration of Immigrants aims to continue this analytical effort, seeking to shed more light on the causes of the structural inequalities faced by the foreign population in Spain. Therefore, it proposes an in-depth investigation with the overarching goal of conducting an intersectional analysis to collect disaggregated information and data. This will document the structural racism and discrimination experienced by the Arab-origin population residing in Spain across key sectors such as education, employment, healthcare, housing, and technology, as well as the risks associated with the use of artificial intelligence-based techniques.

OBJECTIVES

This research sets out one general objective and two specific objectives.

GENERAL OBJECTIVE:

To develop an intersectional analysis that facilitates the collection of information about the structural racism and discrimination experienced by the Arab-origin population residing in Spain, focusing on areas such as education, employment, healthcare, housing, technology, and the risks associated with the use of artificial intelligence.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES:

1. To analyze, in a cross-cutting manner, the racism and structural inequality, as well as the violation of rights faced by the Arab-origin population. This analysis will be conducted through the lens of discourse, perception, and societal opinions held by the Spanish population about Arab people.
2. To identify strategies and potential recommendations to improve the management, design, and implementation of public policies that ensure the rights of the Arab-origin population.

Regarding the second objective, a series of proposals will be developed that may prove useful both for future public consultations and for the drafting of the forthcoming Organic Law against Racism, Racial Discrimination, and Related Intolerance.

STUDY POPULATION

The target population of this study comprises individuals of Arab origin residing in Spain. To define this group, the study uses the classification of an Arab person as someone originating from one of the 22 countries within the Arab League: Algeria, Bahrain, Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates, Yemen, and Syria.

Additionally, the study includes individuals born in Spain who are part of the so-called second-generation migrants, meaning those whose parents were born in one of the countries of the Arab League.

METHODOLOGY

This research employs a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative techniques to collect, categorize, correlate, and analyze data, forming the backbone of the final report.

Specifically, the following methods were used:

- Surveys: A total of 570 surveys were conducted (30 per autonomous community and city).

- In-depth Interviews: 19 interviews were carried out (one per autonomous community or city).
- Focus Groups: 11 focus groups were organized.

Following the design of these tools and the execution of fieldwork, the collected data was validated, digitized, and coded. The final report presents an analysis of this data, along with conclusions, recommendations, and improvement proposals to identify instances of discrimination and racist violence faced by the Arab-origin population. A dedicated chapter focuses specifically on the experiences of women.

3. RESULTS, CONCLUSIONS, AND IMPROVEMENT PROPOSALS

The data revealed by this research regarding the phenomenon of structural racism experienced by the Arab-origin population in the areas of housing, healthcare, education, employment, technology, and artificial intelligence are alarming. A total of 47.5% of participants reported having felt discriminated against at some point in these spaces.

The main source of structural racism at the national level stems from language barriers and deeply rooted ethnocentrism in the collective imagination of Spanish society. This manifests as a rejection of religious and cultural differences, leading to the tendency to enforce an assimilationist integration model in which migrants are expected to conform to the “Spanish mold.”

From a gendered and intersectional perspective, women face higher rates of discrimination than men across nearly all areas, with the exception of housing searches. A possible explanation for this exception is that women participants have shown less interest or have been less involved in seeking housing. Additionally, hijabi women report being particularly vulnerable and recount discriminatory experiences, both compared to Arab-origin men and to Arab-origin women who choose not to wear any form of veil.

Below are the most relevant findings in each of the areas studied in this research:

3.1. RACISM IN ACCESS TO HOUSING

Access to housing is the area with the highest rate of perceived discrimination (74.82%), with key triggers being an individual’s name, language, and accent. The most significant violations of rights occur through the following dynamics: direct refusal by real estate agencies or private landlords to engage with or rent to Arab-origin individuals and the imposition of stricter conditions, including higher prices, deposits, and long-term commitments.

This discrimination in finding a dignified place to live can lead to even more se-

vere consequences, such as underreporting (13.5%) or overcrowding (21.31%), which are increasingly common issues among the Arab-origin population. Most participants in this study live in rented accommodation (63.16%), compared to a smaller percentage owning homes (14.32%) or living with relatives (13.86%).

To address housing discrimination, the following proposals are made:

- **Relaxing eligibility requirements** for access to public housing.
- **Increasing investment** in residential resources. Currently, Spain invests only about 2% in this sector, compared to the European average of 9%.
- **Facilitating dialogue** between social organizations, real estate agencies, and landlords to raise awareness about the housing rights of immigrants.

3.2. RACISM IN ACCESS TO EMPLOYMENT

Regarding access to employment, 44.35% of participants perceive discrimination. Among the sample, 77.71% have work experience, mostly in sectors like hospitality and caregiving, traditionally associated with job instability and precarious conditions.

When it comes to promotion and career advancement, 61.6% believe that their origin creates additional challenges in advancing within their jobs. Furthermore, during their professional activities, Arab-origin workers report a 49.55% discrimination rate.

This sector is particularly challenging for Arab-origin women, with 53.25% identifying difficulties in accessing, retaining, and advancing in their jobs, as opposed to 22.85% of men and 30.40% of women overall.

Proposals for improvement in employment include:

- **Streamlining immigration policies** and expediting work permit processes.
- Encouraging companies to **hire hijabi women**, addressing their heightened vulnerability in this area through incentives and awareness campaigns.

3.3. RACISM IN HEALTHCARE

In relation to access to healthcare services, 39.65% of participants report perceiving or experiencing some form of discrimination when accessing or being treated at health centers. Within this context, 38.05% of respondents stated that they received differential treatment from healthcare personnel compared to non-Arab-origin individuals.

Regarding the violation of rights, approximately 16% of participants reported that they were not allowed to choose their family doctor, while around 10% received comments, insults, or mockery from healthcare professionals. A smaller percentage were forced to remove their hijab or other religious symbols without any apparent reason. Additionally, 59.64% of participants experienced issues with medical attention due to language barriers, and 44% did not receive any translation or mediation services. This issue affected women (51.82%) more than men (36.43%).

The key recommendation for improving healthcare services is the establishment of a nationwide policy that mandates and promotes tele-translation services in medical settings. This would involve formalizing and unifying criteria for the implementation of this improvement across all health centers.

3.4. RACISM IN EDUCATION

Regarding the Spanish education system, 36.67% of participants report perceiving or experiencing discrimination in access to education or within the classrooms. Nearly 50% of respondents (47.86%) expressed dissatisfaction with the education system, with 18.81% reporting that they were “completely dissatisfied.”

This dissatisfaction was notably higher among women, which could be linked to the recognized higher levels of difficulty for women to access and remain in the Spanish educational system, despite their generally higher levels of education in non-compulsory stages.

The primary manifestation of racism and discrimination identified in this research was the underestimation of academic abilities by teachers, often resulting in the silencing and exclusion of Arab-origin students in classrooms. Simul-

taneously, language barriers and the inefficiencies within the education system regarding responses to aggression towards immigrant students contribute to the exclusion of this population.

To address these issues, the following recommendations are made:

- Implement **welcome plans for immigrant students** that incorporate an anti-racist, intercultural perspective involving the entire educational community.
- Establish **anti-bullying protocols** specifically for racist behavior, with a special focus on the prevention of such attitudes.
- Address the **legal gap concerning the use of any type of veil** in educational settings nationwide.

3.5. RACISM IN TECHNOLOGY AND ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Regarding racism in technology and artificial intelligence systems, the research reveals that almost half of the population sample encounters difficulties in using technological resources. While no significant results were found in relation to the first digital divide (access to the internet and devices), there are notable differences in the second divide (skills) and the third divide (utilization). Information gathered reveals barriers to the integration of people of Arab origin in these areas, particularly due to a lack of awareness of the opportunities offered by technology.

However, for those who manage to overcome these barriers, it is essential to highlight that technological systems and artificial intelligence algorithms are considered tools of racialization in all their areas of application. This technology, based on the development of human logic digital systems, reproduces these racist biases in every field.

Of particular concern is the governmental use of Automated Decision Systems (ADS) for sensitive processes such as the application for social benefits or the prediction of criminal behavior. In essence, this digital exclusion, resulting from the aforementioned digital divides and, in cases where they are overcome, the applied algorithms, not only implies institutional marginalization but also social

disintegration, as it denies the right to participation and the potential benefits that these resources can provide.

The proposal is to design and implement public policies that approve technological investments encompassing not only universal accessibility but also continuous and up-to-date training on the skills and competencies necessary for productive use of these tools. Regarding artificial intelligence, it is crucial to eliminate racist and sexist biases. This can be achieved by, on one hand, hiring women and racialized individuals with anti-racist and interdisciplinary perspectives for designing algorithms, and, on the other, ensuring greater transparency in the data and codes used in various operations and technological platforms, particularly those with a governmental nature. Large companies operating in these markets must be able to code in line with human rights principles. Thus, State intervention is necessary through non-discriminatory legal regulation and the evaluation of its application to ensure better control and adjustment of algorithms.

General Conclusions

After gathering the reflections of participants through surveys, interviews, and focus groups, we can conclude that people of Arab origin continue to face discrimination in their daily lives, which, at times, hinders their ability to build life projects in welcoming, diverse, and tolerant spaces.

We confirm that people of Arab origin are victims of structural racism that perpetuates a racist migratory model and assimilationist tendencies, continuing to produce inequalities. These racist aggressions also directly affect Arab women, influencing their decisions regarding their professional and personal futures.

We conclude that respect for cultures must be a fundamental premise upon which we can establish a mindset based on respect and equality. We also believe it is essential to recognize the value of immigrants in the social, cultural, political, and economic dynamics of the country.

4. GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Finally, the following paragraphs suggest a list of general recommendations gathered from the interviews and focus groups with the Arab-origin population residing in Spain.

- **Promote intercultural values** through socialization and the acquisition of knowledge regarding other cultures, in order to establish a position against prejudice.
- **Overcome ethnocentrism** and foster mutual efforts between different cultures to improve coexistence, culminating in the creation of shared cultural expressions.
- **Raise awareness and sensitize the general Spanish society**, including the migrant community, about racist attitudes and behaviors directed towards the Arab-origin population, both in private and public spheres.
- **Change the narrative** about immigrants by overcoming the limiting view that portrays them as victims without agency.
- **Implement communication campaigns** on the rights of the immigrant population in strategic areas, such as real estate agencies.
- **Exercise the right to vote consciously**, considering the need for commitment from civil society by studying and understanding political programs and their consequences.
- **Encourage greater participation** of Arab-origin personalities in political spaces, promoting the presence of role models who can help raise awareness and defend the rights of immigrant populations.
- **Promote education as a driver of change** to create anti-racist awareness, based on basic principles of respect, tolerance, equality, meritocracy, and interculturality. This requires a review of both the formal and hidden curriculum, particularly in the stages of compulsory education.

- **Implement mechanisms** to ensure that reporting racist incidents is a safe avenue for victims. This requires fostering trust in institutions.
- **Undertake awareness-raising and training actions** to support institutional efforts in ensuring that Arab-origin populations receive adequate attention.

The results obtained from this research suggest the need to continue exploring the causes and consequences of these discriminations. Access to housing remains a concern for the *Asociación Marroquí para la Integración de los Inmigrantes*. Therefore, in 2025, with a gender and intersectional approach, the organization plans to launch the project *“Structural Racism and Discrimination in Spain II: The Intersection of Gender, Race, and Class in the Access to Housing for Arab People in Spain”*.







