

Access to the European Labor Market for Immigrant Women in the Wake of the Covid-19

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Economic crises and instability during the Covid pandemic mean a huge additional workload and uncertainty for women. The virus COVID -19 has spread extremely rapidly; mobility and migration are severely limited, at least in the short term. The virus not only has a significant impact on the health of people from migrant and refugee backgrounds, but also on their access to the labor market. According to EUROSTAT, 2.4 million immigrants from third countries entered the Euro-Zone in 2018. In addition, 1.4 million people who previously resided in an EU Member State migrated to another Member State, and almost half of this population are women. Migrating women are particularly exposed to a number of specific consequences of the pandemic. Approximately 42 percent of all migrant workers worldwide are women. Migrant women are disproportionately the first to be laid off and the last to be rehired. This is due to gender discrimination and precarious working conditions, such as low wages, the greater burden of care work and the alternative costs of employment, especially given the gender wage gap, and the difficulty of accessing the formal economy. The aim of this article is to examine the challenges that many migrant women experienced in accessing the Eurozone labor market during the Covid pandemic. Based on this main objective, the theoretical perspective of this research relies on a segmentation theory. This theory refers to the division of the labor market into internal and external, permanent and marginal. Due to the segmentation of the labor market, women - together with other population groups such as young people or foreign workers - are predestined for jobs in the external segment. The data used in this paper come from research conducted by EUROSTAT, ILO, UN, UNDP and UN MIGRATION. The findings suggest that the impact on female migrant workers during the COVID -19 pandemic is exacerbated by a segmented labor market rooted in a capitalist context and among undocumented workers in EURO countries. Migrant workers in the cleaning and care sectors are among the most vulnerable groups. In a capitalist context, they would be over-represented in the informal economy due to segmented labor market policies and would be at the forefront of redundancies during the pandemic as they have little access to the European labor market.