

The impact of COVID-19 pandemic on double marginalisation of women in Kosovo

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Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic worldwide has revealed the scale of social inequalities even in some of the most developed economies, exposing the existing vulnerabilities. Particularly, gender inequality and economic empowerment of women were a challenge even before the COVID-19 pandemic. This article investigates the "double marginalisation" effect of COVID-19 pandemic on women in Kosovo, through the analysis of gender implications of COVID-19 and participation of women in the labour market. Double marginalisation is analysed through the prism of the lack of institutional actions to prevent the further marginalisation of women during the pandemic crisis. Governmental preventive and recovery measures have particularly neglected women by failing to recognise the threats and vulnerabilities they are exposed to. Thus, the intentional negligence leads to the emergence and development of the phenomenon of double marginalisation of women. It is also a result of traditional vision of the role of women in society and cultural stereotypes combined with the COVID-19 pandemic crisis.

Keywords: double marginalisation, COVID-19 pandemic, gender equality, labour market, Kosovo, economic empowerment, exclusion

Wpływ pandemii COVID-19 na podwójną marginalizację kobiet w Kosowie

Streszczenie

Ogólnoświatowa pandemia COVID-19 ujawniła skalę nierówności społecznych nawet w niektórych najbardziej rozwiniętych gospodarkach, obnażając istniejące słabości. Nierówność płci i wzmocnienie pozycji ekonomicznej kobiet były wyzwaniem jeszcze przed pandemią COVID-19. Niniejszy artykuł podejmuje problem efektu „podwójnej marginalizacji” kobiet, który wywołała pandemia COVID-19, na przykładzie Kosowa. Analizą objęto udział kobiet w rynku pracy. Zjawisko podwójnej marginalizacji analizowane jest przez pryzmat braku działań o charakterze instytucjonalnym za-

pobiegających dalszej marginalizacji kobiet na rynku pracy, zwłaszcza podczas pandemicznego kryzysu. Rządowe środki zapobiegawcze i naprawcze nie były dostosowane do specyficznych potrzeb kobiet, nie przeciwdziałały zagrożeniom i wykluczeniu, na które jest narażona ta część społeczeństwa. Tym samym zdefiniowane zaniechanie ze strony elit rządzących prowadzi do powstania i rozwoju zjawiska podwójnej marginalizacji kobiet. Nakłada się ono na tradycyjną wizję roli kobiety w społeczeństwie oraz kulturowe stereotypy. W połączeniu z brakiem działań wspomagających w obliczu kryzysu pandemicznego COVID-19 dochodzi do podwójnej marginalizacji kobiet w Kosowie.

Słowa kluczowe: podwójna marginalizacja, pandemia COVID-19, równość płci, rynek pracy, Kosowo, wzmocnienie pozycji ekonomicznej, wykluczenie społeczne

Since the first cases of COVID-19 appeared in China (ProMED 2019), it has not been anticipated that it would bring a multi-dimensional worldwide collapse. The impact of the global pandemic on global physical and mental health, economy, human rights, gender relations has been higher than even developed countries had capacity to act upon. The current evidence worldwide has demonstrated that the impact of COVID-19 has been both short and long term. While the impact on the global economy is still revealing its effects, the impact on gender relations and gender equality has had a regressive effect (Madgavkar et al. 2020: p. 2–9). The United Nations Secretary-General Policy Brief *The Impact of COVID-19 on Women* raises the concern that COVID-19 has even had a reversing impact on the limited progress on gender equality that was made in the entire last decade (see: United Nations 2020).

While developed countries are concerned about the impact of COVID-19 on the progress of gender equality, this article will elaborate on the concept of the double marginalisation effect of COVID-19 on less developed countries and countries with a fragile economy, which are striving towards the consolidation of democracy, where participation of women in political, social, economic life and decision making has been low even before the pandemic crisis (United Nations 2020). Through the case of Kosovo, and a comparative analysis of the position of women in the society before and during the pandemic crisis, this article aims to analyse facts and data that define marginalisation not only in its classical meaning based on defined features but also on situations and circumstances. Of particular importance is the impact of COVID-19 in the labour market, where deep gender segregation had existed even before the appearance of the pandemic (Veraschchagina, Bettio 2009: p. 8–10). Nevertheless, the impact on the economy that 'forced' governments to enforce curfews, the bankruptcy of small businesses, and unequal impact on different sectors of the economy, where women are more represented, have increased gender segregation in the labour market further (Alon et al. 2020: p. 10–20).

The analysis of the situation will be presented in pre- and current statistical data available in Kosovo, particularly the comparison between market indicators and the impact of the pandemic effects on men and women. We will also demonstrate the effect that different policies undertaken by the government in Kosovo to prevent further spread

of the pandemic disregarded gender mainstreaming or failed to take into consideration implications that the measures would have on women's health, employment, ability to provide for their families, gender-based domestic violence, and life-threatening situations. Therefore, women have not been marginalised only before the pandemic crisis, but have been marginalised all over again during the pandemic, by being entirely left out and relegated to unimportant corners of attention, in a life-threatening pandemic crisis. Linda Carli in her paper *Women, Gender equality and COVID-19* wrote about four ways that the pandemic impacted gender employment, including the greater exposure of women to infections, the responsibility of child care and domestic unpaid work, as well as the impact that the COVID-19 pandemic would have on parental share of responsibilities, as a result of the new "working from home" mode took over the labour market (Carli 2020: p. 647–648).

Marginalisation of women in pre-COVID-19 Kosovo

There are several definitions of the concept of marginalisation in the scholar literature. Ferguson et al. (1990) explain it as a process, where any group can become marginalised, ignored, neglected or excluded, by shifting their position from centre to periphery of the society. Even the Merriam-Webster dictionary defines marginalisation as a process of relegation "to an unimportant or powerless position within a society or group" (Merriam-Webster WWW). However, Alakhunova et al. (2020: p. 2) define marginalisation as "a condition and a process that prevents individuals and groups from full participation in social, economic and political life enjoyed by the wider society". This exclusion uses sex, gender, race, language, background, beliefs and other features as a ground for discrimination. Feminist theories moreover have raised the concern that when more than one feature is used as a ground for discrimination, individuals or groups become victims of double marginalisation. This phenomena is explained through the example of women of colour, or women of ethnic minorities, who are discriminated for being women and belonging to a certain ethnic group or race (Eneyew, Mengistu 2013: p. 105–112). However, the empirical research has demonstrated that women can be victims of double marginalisation even if race or ethnicity or any other feature is not taken as a reference, but when women are discriminated on gender basis, which can be as a result of cultural and traditional stereotypes, and institutional negligence that are responsible to create the environment for gender equality through the rule of law and respectability of international human rights standards and domestic legal infrastructure that guarantee equal rights for women. This type of discrimination and marginalisation in feminist literature is called "victimisation", where women are left out intentionally (Connell 1997), which this article will analyse in the light of COVID-19 pandemic crisis in the Western Balkans and in Kosovo.

Western Balkan states compared to the EU and other developed countries are characterised by high rates of gender inequality in all aspects of life. Participation of women in decision-making and political life is absent, as well as participation of women

in labour market. It is evident by labour market indicators and statistics in the last two decades. Gender equality, according to European Parliament research, is one of the aspects which societies in the Balkans have failed to address, regardless of culture or ethnic differences (European Parliament 2019). The case of Kosovo is taken as a reference particularly because participation of women in the labour market is the lowest in comparison with other Western Balkan states (see *Table 1*), although the country has adopted its national legal infrastructure levelled with International Human Rights Standards on the rights of women. Although Kosovo is not a member of the United Nations, neither Council of Europe, nor European Union, the Constitution of Kosovo adopted in 2008 has incorporated the international human rights standards that derive from international treaties and conventions on human rights, including *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)*, which directly obliges parties to eliminate traditional stereotypes that hinder the realisation of the women's human rights (see: Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo 2008; CEDAW – UN General Assembly 1979). However, institutional mechanisms have failed to take concrete steps towards elimination of discriminatory practices against women, allowing the establishment of grounds for discrimination and double marginalisation of women.

Table 1: Labour market indicators: activity rate, employment rate, and the unemployment rate of women for 2019 and Q3-2020 in Kosovo, Albania, North Macedonia, Montenegro, and Serbia¹

WOMEN	Kosovo		Albania		North Macedonia		Montenegro		Serbia	
	2019	Q3 2020	2019	Q3 2020	2019	Q3 2020	2019	Q3 2020	2019	Q3 2020
Labour Force Surveys Data										
Activity Rate	21.1	21.5	61.6	61.8	46.6	45.5	59.1	53.2	61.3	47.1
Employment Rate	13.9	14.4	54.4	54.2	38.1	38.2	49.7	42.6	54.3	42.7
Unemployment Rate	34.4	33.1	11.8	12.3	18.4	15.9	15.9	19.9	11.5	9.4

Source: Labour Force Surveys of the official statistical agencies in Kosovo, Albania, North Macedonia, Montenegro, and Serbia (KAS 2020a,d; Instat 2020a,b; Makstat 2019, 2020; Monstat 2020a,b; SORS 2020a,b).

¹ Note: The data of market indicators from Labour Force Surveys of the official statistical agencies in Kosovo, Albania, North Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia were extracted to evaluate the negative and positive growth of activity rate, employment rate and unemployment rate of women between 2019 and 3rd quarter of 2020, with the purpose of analysing the impact of COVID-19 on women.

The labour market indicator statistics from the official statistics agencies of Kosovo (KAS 2019 – Q3-2020) Albania (INSTAT 2019 – Q3-2020), North Macedonia (MAKSTAT 2019 – Q3-2020), Montenegro (MONSTAT 2019 – Q3-2020), and Serbia, of 2019 and third quarter of 2020 (SORS 2019 – Q3-2020) demonstrate that Kosovo has the lowest rates of participation of women in the labour market (see more: KAS 2020a,d; Instat 2020a,b; Makstat 2019, 2020; Monstat 2020a,b; SORS 2020a,b).

Low participation of women in the labour market has been in the focus of civil society in Kosovo since 2015, particularly high percentage of inactive women in the labour market, which is the first indicator of intentional negligence of state institutions towards women's inclusion and economic empowerment of women (Gashi, Rizvanolli 2015: p.7–25). The Labour Force Surveys of Kosovo Agency of Statistics from 2015 to first quarter of 2020 demonstrate that the percentage of inactive women is from 81.4% the highest and 79.9% the lowest, which comprises the highest rate of inactive women in the region. In real numbers, 483,251 women of working age are neither employed, nor unemployed, yet highly discouraged to actively seek for jobs (see: KAS 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020a,b; Krasniqi 2021). Moreover, research has demonstrated that the main reasons of this phenomena are traditional stereotypes and domestication of women, gender segregated professions, and cultural profile of women, considered to engage in unpaid domestic work, children and elderly care (Gashi, Rizvanolli 2015: p. 12–23; Krasniqi 2021: p. 26–40; GAP Institute 2020).

The research of the Democracy for Development Institute (D4D) in Kosovo has shown that although the statistics demonstrate minimal positive progress of 1.5%, the reality is that from 2015 to Q1-2020 the number of inactive women increased for approximately 7000 more inactive women (Krasniqi 2021: p. 20–38). Moreover, the research demonstrates that from 2015 to Q1-2020, an average of 68.39% of women of working age were inactive, which in combination with unemployed women result in an average of 75% of women were out of the labour market, or an averagely of 37.17% of working-age population from 2015–2020 (Krasniqi 2021: p. 26).

Gender implications of COVID-19 and double marginalisation of women in Kosovo

The impact of COVID-19 in Kosovo economy is not gender neutral. Moreover, the pandemic implications on the economic wellbeing of women in Kosovo did not have only economic dimension. This is particularly due to the gender discriminatory situation and conditions, in which women in Kosovo have lived prior to pandemic situation, and the high share of women concentrated in the economic sectors that have been affected by the governmental preventive measures (GAP Institute 2020: p. 4–19). Partial and total closure of businesses and curfews imposed by the government did not result only with loss of jobs and closure of small businesses, causing deep loss for families where women are the main financial providers, but has resulted with increase of domestic violence and gender based violence, deeper traditionalisation of gender roles, double and multiple

burden for women, who are considered traditionally as carers of the family, children and elders (see more: Ross, Taylor 2020: p. 39–40; Azcona 2020: p. 11). Therefore, in order to estimate the impact of COVID-19 on the livelihood of women in Kosovo, it is important to analyse the situation from the perspective of the pre-pandemic gender discrimination context, where women have been largely ignored and marginalised even before the pandemic situation.

The main gender implications of COVID-19 in Kosovo are evident in several areas, such as health, social, educational and economic. These implications are interrelated and have chain effect on each other. Social implications have been revealed especially to the shock presented to the existing gender equality state and the transformation of gender roles (King et al. 2020: p.80). In Kosovo, women are to a large extent subject to traditional and cultural stereotypes of the main carriers of family care. Although the participation of women in public and political life has increased in the last two decades (Hajdari 2019: p. 193–197), they continue to face the stigma and guilt of abandoning their primary duties towards their families and children, to pursue their careers or actively participate in political life. The socialisation of women to a large extent has happened only on the surface, covered with a cloth of "modernisation", however the traditional duties of women continued to lie underneath, which increased the burden and the prejudice for women in the society. This is demonstrated also in the research of Kosovo Center for Gender Studies (KCGS), where women in politics are encouraged to impersonate men in being courageous, ambitious, and eloquent, before being self-confident or charismatic. The KCGS's researchers wrote: "The fact that characteristics such as 'courageous', 'ambitious', 'eloquent', etc., are attached more importance for a woman politician in Kosovo reflects the idea that in order for women to give their full contribution in politics they should be endowed with traits which are traditionally associated with men." (Vuniqi et al. 2009: p. 32).

Occupational gender segregation generates particular vulnerabilities for women concerning COVID-19 (Alon et al. 2020: p. 11–18). Particularly Kosovo labour market demonstrates a deep gender segregation of professions, due to traditional stereotypes and division of professions that are suitable for women and men. Statistically this is evident by the high percentage of representation of women in human health and social work (12.7%), as well as education sector (18.4%), while women are almost entirely absent from other sectors, such as mining (0.3%) or real estate (0%), where men are entirely dominating (KAS 2020d: p. 21). While the statistical data of Kosovo Agency of Statistics shows that there was a slight increase on women's employment between 2019 and 2020, the real numbers demonstrate that more than 10,000 women became inactive between 2019 and Q3-2020, while 347 women more added to the pool of unemployed women (KAS 2020a; 2020d). Nevertheless, labour market indicators do not indicate that one of the reasons why increase of participation of women in the labour market, is due to large percentage of migration of men, particularly since 2015 (Hajdari, Krasniqi 2021: p. 3–6).

The pandemic situation has impacted particularly women economically due to their large share in informal economy, which (according to European Commission's Report on

Kosovo for 2020) doesn't allow women to participate in the mitigating COVID measures taken by the government (see: European Commission 2020). Moreover, there is no institutional official report on the size of informal economy in Kosovo, which penalizes particularly women and their employment rights. In parallel, women in Kosovo spend approximately seven hours per day for unpaid domestic work, compared to men who spend one hour and ten minutes per day for the similar work (MCC Kosovo 2018). Therefore, with closure of schools and day-care centres, the burden of unpaid work for women tripled for both working and unemployed women (Krasniqi 2020: p.7–15).

Furthermore, "the economic arrangement, policy frameworks, and market forces that determine the distribution of paid and unpaid labour across society are powerful structural determinants of health" (King et al. 2019: p. 80). "Evidence from infectious disease outbreaks similar to COVID-19 indicates that women and girls can be affected in particular ways, and in some areas, face more negative impacts than men" (The World Bank Group 2020: p. 3). Moreover, as Ausin et al. (2020: p. 29–36) note, the COVID-19 pandemic measures globally have had a greater psychological impact on women, particularly resulting in depression, anxiety and loneliness. Women experienced more difficulties in seeking health services (58%) compared to 53% of men (MCC Kosovo 2018).

Additionally to the difficulties that women have faced with COVID-19 pandemic in their social roles, economic losses, discrimination against women is apparent in the burden and responsibility to take care of children during homeschooling period. While in the world there are about 1.5 billion children out of school (see: UNICEF 2020), and women are traditionally perceived to be responsible for taking care of the children. Homeschooling has been one of the main implications and burdens added to the long list of responsibilities and unpaid domestic care of women during the pandemic restrictions, seriously jeopardising women's mental health (see: Azcona 2020: p. 2, 8; Ross, Taylor 2020: p. 37–38). In the Balkans and in Kosovo, homeschooling has been even more difficult for children and women, since the educational system is not familiar with the concept, methods, modality, and other details related to efficiency of homeschooling. Therefore, women in Kosovo alongside the unpaid work, have been exposed to the burden of discovering and defining the homeschooling situation on their own, while the institutional support has been entirely absent. While according to UNDP survey 96% of the respondents were able to participate in distance learning classes, this has been particularly challenging for Egyptian, Ashkali and Roma communities. The UNDP survey demonstrate that in one of Kosovo municipalities, where this community is largely concentrated, 52% of pupils were not able to attend classes (see: UNDP 2020).

Division of labour and gender roles

One of the major implications of COVID-19 for women in Kosovo was switching to home-based working, considered as one of the aspects that revealed the level of gender inequality in the family. According to UN Women's Rapid Gender Assessment *The Impact of COVID-19 on Women's and Men's Lives and Livelihoods in Europe and Central*

Asia, 42% of women compared to 19% of men switched to home-based working during the outbreak. Unpaid care work increased for 67% of women and unpaid domestic work for 71%, compared to 58% and 59% of their male counterparts (see: Ross, Taylor 2020). According to the publication of the Democracy for Development Institute (D4D), 12.7% of women in Kosovo spent 6–8 hours per day caring for the family and unpaid domestic work, compared to 1.5% of men, while only 3.3% of women did not spend any time on household chores compared to 23.5% of men (see: Krasniqi 2021: p. 9).

Table 2: Proportion of respondents spending more time on unpaid domestic chores, by gender, between April - May 2020²

Kosovo	%	
	Women	Men
Gender		
at least one unpaid domestic chore	71	59
at least two unpaid domestic chores	59	43
at least three unpaid domestic chores	38	26
at least four unpaid domestic chores	19	11

Source: Ross, Taylor 2020.

While the concept of homeschooling introduced during COVID-19 for the first time, provided with temporary solution for children, in societies where traditional and patriarchal elements are strong, in long term it can be a harmful option for girls, especially in rural areas. It is important to underline that social norms and traditions, especially in rural areas, only a few years back did not see women's education as a necessity. Nevertheless, the increasing importance of education has influenced the border definition between urban and rural in the Western Balkan countries to melt, mainly as there was no alternative to education and the only way to make sure that women can contribute financially to family budget. However, for women and girls from rural areas, school is the only real social environment that they attend. Nevertheless, with the introduction of the option of "homeschooling", where all the lessons and communication with the school is virtual, the danger is that many parents who are not in favour of sending their daughters to school might consider this as an option after COVID-19 pandemic. A situation can appear, where women will receive an education but in their house confinement.

According to UN Women, while the responsibility for domestic work increases and the burden for women is multiplied, the participation of men in domestic care decreased, making the situation even more difficult for women to handle. Particularly the difficulty is felt more among employed women, with one and more children, where the care from grandparents is reduced, because they qualified as a more risked category, and

² Note: The data from the survey of UN WOMEN are used to present the difference between men and women in Kosovo and their engagement on unpaid domestic work during April and May 2020, as the most critical months of health emergency crisis caused by COVID-19 (Ross, Taylor 2020).

educational institutions and day-care centres were closed due to imposed curfew (see: Ross, Taylor 2020: p.7–28). The UN Women study demonstrates that women and men in Kosovo spent more time taking care of the children during 2020 due to closures of school and day-care centres. However, the D4D research demonstrates that only in 28.1% of the cases, women and men shared equal responsibility for child care. In 5.8% of the cases, women carried full responsibility of care and support of children's homeschooling, compared to only 1.2% of men (see: Krasniqi 2021: p. 9).

Table 3: Unemployment Rate in Kosovo, by gender - Labour Force Survey - 2020 Quarters 1, 2 and 3.³

%	Men	Women
Q1-2020	23,0	30,6
Q2-2020	25,7	31,4
Q3-2020	21,5	33,1

Source: Kosovo Agency of Statistics (see: KAS 2020b,c,d).

The difference between women's and men's participation in domestic and household chores during the critical months of the outbreak (March-May 2020) reveal the real gender-biased system in Kosovo, where gender equality is still a subject to traditional and cultural interpretations. Thus the concept of double marginalisation of women happens due to the revealing of traditional gender-based stereotypes on the domestic role of women, which role women 'are obliged' to uphold. The second argument on double marginalisation is directly related to the definition of Alakhunova et al. (2015: p. 8–19), where the obligation of women towards domestic and care chores prevents them from full participation in social life enjoyed by the wider society. While women are initially obliged to switch to home-based working, spend between 6–8 hours in unpaid domestic chores and child care, this condition prevents them from fulfilling their working obligations or participate in any other aspect of social, economic, or political life.

The gender impact of COVID-19 on the labour market

The impact of COVID-19 in economy and job losses is higher among women than men in global scale. The research conducted in the United States and India demonstrated that unemployment and female job loss rates due to COVID-19 are 5.7% while among men is 3.1%, approximately 1.8% higher among women than job losses of men (Madgavkar et al. 2020: p.2). While Kleven et al. (2019) have noted that the gender pay gap is closely related

³ Note: The unemployment rate data from Labour Force Surveys of three quarters of 2020, published by Kosovo Agency of Statistics, demonstrated that between January-March (Q1-2020) and July-September (Q3-2020) the unemployment rate of men in Kosovo marked positive decrease while for women market negative growth (see: KAS 2020b,c,d).

to childbirth, in the countries where child care is considered primarily a responsibility of women and one of the main factors that cause high inactivity rates of women and their absence in the labour market, the situation of COVID-19 and imposed curfews particularly in less developed countries, where traditional and gendered discriminatory stereotypes on gender roles prevail, causes further discouragement and exclusion of women from the labour market (Kleven et al. 2019: p. 181–207).

Economic implications of COVID-19 for women in Kosovo starts with the overrepresentation of women in the informal sector, overrepresentation in the sectors that were hit by the pandemic preventive measures (such as retail, health, and education sectors), where the majority of employed women in Kosovo are concentrated (KAS 2020a). According to UN Women, 5% of women compared to 9% of men in Kosovo lost their jobs until June 2020 (see: Ross, Taylor 2020: p. 14), while according to D4D's publication, 5.3% of women suffered from unilateral contract termination, 26% of them were sent to unpaid leave, while 19.5% of them did not receive their full payment during most critical months of the outbreak during 2020 (see: Krasniqi 2021: p. 35). While there are no official statistics on the size of informal economy in Kosovo, European Commission's Report on Kosovo in 2020 raised the concern on high share of women in informal economy (see: European Commission 2020). According to the UN Women's Rapid Gender Assessment of the impact of COVID-19 for April–May 2020, women with children experienced more difficulties paying the rent due to the impact of the pandemic in their earnings (see: Ross, Taylor 2020). While the unemployment of women in Kosovo is highest among countries of the Western Balkans, the official statistics of KAS Labour Force Survey of three quarters of 2020 have shown that while the unemployment of men has positively decreased by 1.5%, the unemployment of women has increased for 2.5% (see: KAS 2020b,c,d).

The last element of double marginalisation of women in Kosovo during COVID-19 is in the orientation of national policies towards economic resurrection. Kosovo government adopted the Fiscal Emergency Package, which included measures and payments for companies and registered unemployed persons, who were affected by the COVID-19 outbreak (Office of the Prime Minister 2020). The lack of gender mainstream in state policies and preventive measures is an indicator of the lack of institutional willingness to tackle the gender discrimination in rising during the pandemic crisis (Farnsworth et al. 2020). The data of Labour Force Survey of Q2-2020 demonstrated that 11.4% of women had unstable employment, while the majority of employed women are concentrated in wholesale and retail trade (19.1%) education (20.7%), and health and social work (14.9%). From employed women, 36.2% are professionals while 20.5% are service and sales workers in shops and markets, which is one of the sectors which was hit the most by the pandemic crisis. In employment models, 6.1% of women work part-time, 25.4% of which due to family reasons (see: KAS 2020c). The unfavoured economic position of women in Kosovo is not considered a problem that needs attention, nor was encouraged by special measures of governments in Kosovo to address the deep gender gap in the labour market. Therefore, during the economic crisis caused by the COVID-19 outbreak, women received little or no attention from state institutions, that

were to be delivered through state policies that prevent further gender discrimination and marginalisation of women.

Conclusions

The COVID-19 pandemic was not gender neutral (GAP Institute 2020). Its impact in economy, society and all aspects of life impacted women and men differently. Particularly, the difference was felt in developing countries and countries with fragile economy, where gender equality is not a standard of living (United Nations 2020). Moreover, the pandemic situation revealed the hidden inequalities, which had not been solved, but only covered. Through the case of Kosovo in this article we have elaborated the concept of double marginalisation of women, a phenomena that appeared as a result of the current unequal participation and discrimination of women in the labour market before COVID-19, and the added factor of gender negligence by the state institutions in addressing the health emergency crisis during 2020 (see: Farnsworth et al. 2020). As a result, in addition to the burden of unpaid work of child care and domestic care, gender traditional stereotypes and discrimination against women that already existed, the COVID-19 pandemic revealed an intentional negligence by relevant authorities that are obliged to take into consideration the position of social groups in the society, particularly in the situation of crisis (Krasniqi 2021).

Kosovo has the lowest rates of participation of women in the labour market, highest unemployment and highest inactivity rate of women compared to other Western Balkan countries (KAS 2020a; 2020d). Women are mainly concentrated in Education and Health sectors, which are traditionally deemed as professions suitable for women. Participation of women in other sectors of economy is low, while women in business comprise a very small rate. However, the impact of COVID-19 on the lives of women has been devastating beyond the economic factor (Ross, Taylor 2020). Due to imposed curfews, women more than men switched to home based working, where they engaged in unpaid domestic work up to eight hours per day, and took care of children's homeschooling, as the schools and day-care centres were closed. Women faced more risk from gender based violence and inability to provide for their families, due to unilateral breach of contracts from their employers (Ross, Taylor 2020: p. 7-24). Therefore, due to the lack of gender sense on governmental policies, to provide special incentives for women, considering their high rate of vulnerability before COVID-19, women in Kosovo as a marginalised social group, were pushed towards double marginalisation and deprived from the standards that the rest of the society has, which caused their double marginalisation.

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