

The vulnerable position of women with a non-western migration background

The influence of the COVID-19 pandemic

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1. Introduction

In December 2019 the first symptoms of what was then classified as an unknown 'long infection' were observed in Wuhan, China. Only three months later, on the 11th of March 2020, the WHO officially characterized COVID-19 as a pandemic (WHO, 2020). Since these events COVID-19 has had an enormous effect globally with governments being urged to take far-reaching measures such as imposing lockdowns, travel restrictions and social distancing measures to reduce the spread of the virus. These protective measures to contain the pandemic have had profound economic and social consequences all across the world. Therefore, COVID-19 cannot only be classified as a global health crisis, but also has to be acknowledged as a societal and economic one. The economic crisis is clearly visible when looking at the data: from the middle of March 2020 onwards the economic downturn has been substantial in many areas, with a negative EU economic growth of 5,9%, which is more than during the global financial crisis (Eurostat, 2021; VOXEU, 2021). In the Netherlands the first known COVID-19 case was reported on the 27th of February 2020 (Ministerie van Algemene Zaken, 2020). This marked the starting point of a long period of restrictive measures which had, amongst others, an enormous impact on the Dutch labor market. A negative economic growth in 2020 of 3,8% (CBSa, 2022) has been accompanied by an unemployment rate which rose from the beginning of the crisis until august of 2020 by 56% (CBSb, 2021).

1.1 Vulnerable groups on the Dutch labor market

During a recession certain sectors, and consequently certain workers, are hit harder than others, the recession following the COVID-19 pandemic is no different. According to the Netherlands Institute for Social Research (SCP) (Muns et al., 2020) the group that has been hit the hardest in the Netherlands are those who already had a vulnerable position on the labor market prior to the pandemic. This same institute has concluded that workers with a temporary or flexible contract experienced the biggest risk of losing their jobs in the Netherlands.

The Netherlands is a very interesting case to discuss as 22 per cent of its workers has a flexible contract, a percentage which is almost two times as high as the average of all OESO countries (OESO, 2020). Moreover, the number of flexible contracts, and the number of self-employed for that matter, increases faster than any other country in the EU (Ewauls et al., 2016). A flexible contract is beneficial for employers as in times of economic decline, it is easy to cut back on workforce. However, this also means that in times of an economic crisis those who have a flexible employment have the greatest risk of losing their jobs. Moreover, these flexible jobs are not equally distributed among the working population. Specific groups have, for example because of a certain level of education, position in the household, discrimination, etc., more often a temporary contract (Oltshoorn, 2015). The groups that are often working in flexible employment in the Netherlands are people with a low level of education, young people, migrant groups and people with a work disability (Oltshoorn, 2015; Vrooman et al, 2018; Hoff et al., 2019; Van der Torre et al., 2019).

Next to flexible employment, also certain sectors have been hit harder than others by the pandemic and corona-specific changes in demand on the labor market. These sectors are recruitment, travel agencies, aviation, the hospitality industry, floriculture, and the culture, sports and recreation industries (UWV, 2020). While persons with a non-western migration background are overrepresented in flexible employment, they are also overrepresented in these vulnerable sectors. The report of the Netherlands Institute for Social Research (Muns et al., 2020) shows that both people with a first and second generation non-western migration background are more likely to work in a vulnerable sector in flexible employment. Whereas 4.6% of people without a migration background has flexible employment in a vulnerable sector, 14.4% (first generation) and 12% (second generation) with a non-western migration background has flexible employment in a vulnerable sector (Muns et al, 2020). While the report does look at the difference in gender, concluding that women tend to work more often in flexible employment than men whereas men are overrepresented in the vulnerable sectors,

interestingly the report does not specify whether this also applies for men and women with a (non-western) migration background.

From the previous passages we have seen that there are certain groups which have been experiencing a more severe negative impact from the corona pandemic on their labor market position. The College voor de Rechten van de Mens (2021) therefore claims that there is a reason for concern as the COVID-19 pandemic does not only create new problems on the labor market, but also intensifies already existing structural problems. In their yearly report they have called on the Dutch government to ask them to give priority to the prevention of a structural increase in the divide between the privileged and underprivileged on the Dutch labor market. Other scholars have also argued that the economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic have led to an increase in inequality when compared to pre-pandemic times (Alfani, 2020; Haase, 2020; Montenegro et al., 2020; Ryan and El Avadi, 2020), and that this interacts with already existing inequalities related to for example gender (Eaves and Al-Hindi, 2020).

This increase in inequality is, however, not only apparent in the Netherlands, instead the increase of inequality on the labor market is a phenomenon that is cross-national. The World Bank (2021) argued that the inequality within countries is likely to increase as the pandemic disproportionality hits the vulnerable groups. Therefore not only national governments, but also the European Union, the supranational government, has a role to play here. The European Union has already formulated 'The European Pillar of Social Rights' before the pandemic. This pillar of social rights is 'a shared political commitment and responsibility of the EU institutions together with national, regional, and local authorities, social partners, and civil society to create a strong social Europe that is fair, inclusive and full of opportunity' (European Commission, 2017). The pillar consists of 20 principles, of which 'equal opportunities and access to the labor market' is an important one (European Commission, 2016). Within the framework of this social pillar of rights, the European Union spearheaded and prioritized the position of women on the labor market during the COVID-19 pandemic (European Union, 2022). Moreover, the European Union has committed itself to a gender-sensitive response to different policy areas in which especially the needs of migrant women are addressed. This has been both formulated in the EU Gender Equality Strategy (2020-2025) and in the Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion (both 2016-2020 and 2021-2027) (EMN, 2021).

1.2 The gendered aspect to the crisis

This gendered focus of the European Union can also be seen for example by looking at the European Parliament which commissioned a Flash Eurobarometer survey to gather women's opinions on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on, amongst others, women's working lives. The results of this survey show that 4 out of 10 respondents claim that the pandemic has had a negative effect on their income (38%), on their work-life balance (44%), and on the amount of time which they allocate to paid work (21%) (European Union, 2022).

Yerkes et al. (2020) also discusses the gendered component to the crisis as they show that particularly in the Global North, the pandemic further divides an already gendered labor market due to multiple factors. First of all, women are overrepresented in public sector occupations such as health care, education, and childcare (Queisser, Adema and Clarke, 2020). Data shows that in European health care sectors alone, 76% of the workers are women (EIGE). These occupations are commonly underpaid and undervalued, but became essential during the COVID-19 pandemic, continuing many women (and thus mothers) to work outside of the home dealing with difficult labor circumstances such as long hours and physically demanding labor.

At the same time, due to the measures taken by governments to contain the spread of the virus, there has been a significant drop in the demand for services. As women are concentrated in service

occupations, they have been hit disproportionately by the cutbacks that followed the drop in demand (Albanesi and Kim, 2021). These sectors are for example retail, food and beverage services, and accommodation services (Queisser, Adema and Clarke, 2020). While typically men are more likely to lose their jobs during a recession, the recession following the COVID-19 pandemic manifests itself differently (Albanesi and Kim, 2021; Queisser, Adema and Clarke, 2020).

Thirdly, there has also been a shift in work-life balance as COVID-19 restrictions included office closures, which resulted in an increase in working from home. In Europe, more than one third (37%) of employees were working from home at the height of the first wave of the pandemic, and of those working from home in April 2020, one third were parents with children under the age of 18 (Eurofound, 2020). As childcare centers and schools were also temporarily closed during the lockdown, and social distancing measures discouraged other caregivers such as grandparents from taking care of their grandchildren, the responsibilities of both care and home-schooling fully fell onto the parents. A phenomenon which may have an impact on the ability to perform paid work, on the division of childcare and household work, and the quality of life among parents in gender unequal ways (Yerkes et al., 2020). Initial evidence from countries as Australia, the UK, the US, and Germany confirm an increase in existing gender inequalities as women's caregiving roles are reaffirmed (Adams-Prassl et al., 2020; Cooper & Mosseri, 2020; Carlson et al., 2020). Albanesi and Kim (2021) show, for example, that many mothers opted to exit the labor force to take care of and homeschool their children, meaning that not only the demand of female labor but also the supply have been affected during the pandemic. This also has an effect on the financial stability and position of households.

Yerkes et al. (2020) have investigated how the gendered component of the crisis has manifested itself in the Netherlands. With the use of representative survey data which they collected from Dutch parents in April 2020, thus in the beginning of the crisis, they have explored the differences between mothers and fathers in 1) paid work, 2) the division of childcare and household tasks, and 3) work-life balance. The results show that parents were impacted in a gendered way as mothers continue to do more childcare and household work, and they also reported a larger decline in leisure time than fathers. Moreover, evidence is found that suggests an increase in gender inequality in relation to paid work and quality of life when compared to the situation prior to the lockdown.

1.3 The response of the Dutch government and the European Union

As has been mentioned, national governments have taken restrictive measures to limit the health risks, however they have also taken additional measures in order to alleviate the negative effects on the society and economy. Not only the Dutch national government, but also the European Union has adopted support measures to help the economies of its member states to recover from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Dutch government put into place the NOW-fund (Noodmaatregel Overbrugging Werkgelegenheid) for employers, and the TOZO-fund (Tijdelijke Overbruggingsregeling Zelfstandige Ondernemers) for the self-employed (de Vries, 2021). The European Union has established, amongst others, the Coronavirus Response Investment Initiative and the Support to Mitigate Unemployment Risks in Emergency (SURE) instrument, which funds national attempts to counter unemployment and protect jobs (Ando et al., 2022).

While these support measures were adopted in order to alleviate some of the negative consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, we have already seen that these negative consequences were not evenly distributed over the Dutch population. Therefore it is interesting to see how the support measures have affected the group that has been identified as most vulnerable on the labor market, namely those working in flexible or temporary employment. Besides these types of employment, in which persons with a non-western migration background are overrepresented, we have also seen that there has been a gendered aspect to the economic crisis ensuring that the COVID-19 crisis has had an especially negative impact on women. Therefore this thesis will focus on women with a non-Western migration

background on the Dutch labor market. This is of importance as a gendered focus is often missing, especially when regarding the segments of society that have a migration background. Moreover, we have seen in the previous section that policies and instruments have been adopted by the government and the EU in order to mitigate the negative effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, which makes it interesting to see whether these instruments are also pointed towards those groups that we have just determined to be vulnerable.

1.4 Research Question

How does the COVID-19 pandemic influence the vulnerable position of women with a non-Western migration background on the Dutch labor market?

Sub questions:

1. What are the characteristics of this group of women?
2. What factors influence (or cause) the vulnerable position of these women on the labor market?
3. What are the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Dutch labor market and specifically on the sectors that typically employ our subgroup?
4. What Dutch and European instruments and policies have been used to counter the negative consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic?
5. What is the experience of the researched group?

Each of these subquestions represents a chapter in this thesis. In chapter 2 a sketch will be made of the group of women that will be the focus of this thesis, namely women with a non-Western migration background on the Dutch labor market. There will be an investigation of their labor market position, with a focus on education and employment levels and in what sectors these women are frequently employed. Moreover, attention will also be paid towards the history of these women and the integration trajectories they have undergone as this has had effect on the support they have received from the Dutch government and thus on the support to enter the labor market. Chapter 3 will take a look at the factors that influence the labor market position of this group. The factors will be studied on two levels, namely impeding factors that impact all women, and impeding factors that specifically have an effect on women with a migration background. When a sketch of the group is made and their vulnerable position of the labor market is explored, the specific consequences of the COVID-19 crisis on the labor market, and the subgroup, will be discussed. This will be followed by chapter 5 which will review the policy responses of the Dutch government and the EU and investigate whether these responses were aimed at and/or effective for the subgroup. In the last chapter, the research question will be answered in a different way, namely with the use of input given directly by women that are part of the subgroup. By interviewing women that have diverging labor market positions, an attempt is made to give an insight into their experience. The thesis will be ended by a conclusion in which an attempt will be made to answer the research question, give recommendations, and discuss the shortcomings of this research in order to point towards possible future research.

1.5 Theoretical framework

In this thesis the focus lies on the experience of women with a non-western migration background. This group has experienced the societal consequences following the COVID-19 pandemic in their own unique way as they have not only faced the consequences of the pandemic as women, but moreover also as persons with a non-western migration background. Both categories, and perhaps more importantly, the intersection of these categories, bring along implications for the labor market position of these women.

The guiding concept of this thesis is the concept of intersectionality. This term was first coined in the late 1980's by Kimberlé Crenshaw, an American civil rights advocate and leading scholar of critical race

theory. While the concept was first adopted in the fields of critical race theory and feminist and queer studies, it has since been used in many other academic fields such as history, sociology, philosophy, anthropology, legal studies, and many others (Cho et al., 2013). The concept acknowledges that everyone has their own unique experience of discrimination and/or inequality and argues that we must consider every characteristic of a person's identity that can marginalize people, such as gender, race, class, sexual orientation, age, physical ability (Crenshaw, 1989). Especially the intersections of these characteristics are of interest as they can have a multiplying effect when disadvantaged positions intersect in the same person. Crenshaw herself points towards the experience of black women and their double struggle as both a woman and a black person, who consequently experience a different form of inequality than white women or black men.

When using the theory of intersectionality it is thus important to look at the way in which different aspects of the identity of the researched group intersect and create a unique position. Maestriperi (2021) has used the theory of intersectionality on the case of COVID-19 and argues that the impact of the exposure to COVID-19 and its societal consequences is the result of multiple and interrelating structures of inequality. Moreover, she argues that in order to gain a deeper understanding of the profound impact of COVID-19 an intersectional approach needs to be taken. Moreover, she argues that up until now, the research in the social sciences has underestimated the role of intersectionality in analyzing the social and economic consequences of this pandemic.

Also other scholars have argued that the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on society need to be studied in an intersectional way. For example, Milliken et al. (2020) have studied the impact of COVID-19 on the society in the USA, and they have pointed towards a focus on the experience of essential workers, women of color (as they are disproportionately employed as an essential worker in the USA), and (single) mothers, as they have been groups that have been understudied and their exposure to the impact of COVID-19 on society are the result of the intersections of their identity characteristics. For this thesis and thus the Dutch context the choice has been made to look at women with a non-western migration background as the positions of women and of people with a (non-western) migration background intersect, and affect their positions on the labor market. This theory can thus help us to understand how the multiple characteristics of the subgroup shape their experience.

Stavenuiter et al. (2020) have looked at barriers for women on the labor market, and have formulated barriers on 4 different levels: 1) the personal level, 2) the social network, 3) the demand side of the labor market, and 4) the systematic side (f.e. what specific support is offered by the government). These barriers are a comprehensive way of sketching all barriers that women face because of the characteristics deriving from their identities and the intersections of these identities.

The personal level concerns problems with (mental) health and caretaker's responsibility (of both children and housework). Women experience more often than men (mental) health problems, and especially women with children point towards caregivers' responsibilities as a barrier to work. Age is also a limiting factor in some cases as older women are less likely to find new employment. Specifically women with a migratory background experience language difficulties, a lack of work experience or (recognized) qualifications, and mental health problems. Secondly, the level of the social network can be either stimulating or a barrier for women to start employment. Traditional gender roles make it difficult for women to start employment. Moreover, when other women or people in your network do not work, the opportunities that a social network can offer are slim. Additionally, newly arrived women with a migration background often have a small (Dutch) social network. Thirdly, when considering the demand side of the labor market, employers often expect flexibility of the employees, which may be hard for women which also have caregiving responsibilities. And fourthly, when looking at the support offered by, for example, municipalities, an intersectional approach which takes into account all characteristics of these women, especially when looking at women with a migration background, is often lacking.

As we have seen, women face multiple barriers on the labor market, and they face additional barriers when they have a migratory background. But more importantly, the discussion of these barriers on different levels shows how identities within the subgroup intersect. However, as this classification of barriers is hailing from 2020 and concerns a research period that pre-dates the COVID-19 era, it would be interesting to see how these barriers play out on a labor market and a society that is influenced by the impact of COVID-19. It would generate new insights to apply the theory of intersectionality and the barriers listed by Stavenuiter et al. (2020) to effects of the COVID-19 pandemic to the labor market position of the subgroup.

1.6 Methodology

As has been discussed, the central focus of this thesis is the experience of the subgroup. By investigating the impact of the corona pandemic (and its consequences on society) on women with a non-western migration background and their position on the labor market, the aim is to gain an in-depth understanding of how the crisis and responses by policy-makers have been felt on the microlevel. Therefore in addition to a review of existing literature and data published by organizations such as the Netherlands Institute for Social Research, the choice has been made to turn towards a qualitative method, namely interviews.

The first part of this thesis will consist of, as already mentioned, a literature and data analysis. This analysis will focus on the research questions that have been formulated in the previous section. The focus will be on creating an image of the subgroup; to analyze the barriers that these women face on the labor market (or when entering it); how the COVID-19 pandemic has influenced these barriers and consequently their labor market position; and on the way in which the instruments and policies that have been adopted in order to mitigate the negative consequences of the crisis following the COVID-19 pandemic have affected the subgroup.

The second part of the thesis will consist of semi-structured interviews with women who are part of the subgroup. The interviews will be a supplement to the literature section. The aim is to gain a deeper understanding of the experience of these women to deepen our understanding of the subgroup and the barriers which they face on the labor market, when encountering a shock such as the COVID-19 pandemic, and especially in what way the policies and instruments have affected them. The interviews will be held with women from different positions on the labor market, therefore the interviewees exist of 1) two unemployed persons that are trying to re-enter the labor market, 2) two persons that are working for an employer, 3) two persons that are self-employed, and 4) two newcomers to the Dutch labor market which have recently completed their naturalization. The total numbers of interviews will therefore be 8.

In order to do reliable research, a choice has been made to look at these aforementioned interviewees as they hail from different positions on the labor market, in this way creating a representative image of our subgroup. However, a sidenote has to be made that this thesis is limited in scope and does not offer enough room for a multitude of interviews and thus enough interviews in order to create full representation. Moreover, all interviews will make use of an interview guide which will be published as an attachment to the final thesis version, and on demand all transcripts and recordings of the interview can be made available, albeit anonymized.

2. Sketch of the subgroup

In the introduction of this thesis, we have seen that certain sectors, such as the recruitment sector, travel agencies, the aviation sector, the hospitality industry, the floriculture, and the culture, sports and recreation industries, and consequently, certain workers, those working in flexible employment, have been hit harder by the COVID-19 pandemic than others. Moreover, we have seen that not only workers employed in certain sectors, but also people working in flexible jobs are in a more vulnerable position. Persons with a non-western migration background are overrepresented in both flexible employment and these sectors that have been hit the hardest. There is also a gendered component to the crisis as women have been overrepresented in frontline jobs (f.e. the health care sector), and in the service industry which saw a large drop in demand. Moreover, an increase in working from home has been combined with the closure of schools and daycare facilities, leaving parents with the hard task of balancing work, care, and home-schooling. This burden was not equally shared between men and women, but instead existing gender inequalities and women's caretaking roles have been reaffirmed by the crisis.

We have thus seen that person with a non-western migration background and women have experienced a noticeable impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on their labor market position. However, while these two identity markers are often studied separately, little research has been done to see how women with a non-western migration background have experienced the pandemic. In this thesis the attempt is made to combine the components of gender and migration background to see how they intersect and have an influence on a labor market position. Therefore, it is important to introduce the group that will be the focus of this thesis, namely women with a non-western migration background on the Dutch labor market. The focus of this chapter is the introduction of the subgroup, and will in this way answer the first subquestion: 'What are the characteristics of this group of women?' This first chapter will focus on these women and their position on the Dutch labor market pre-COVID-19.

2.1 Migration background

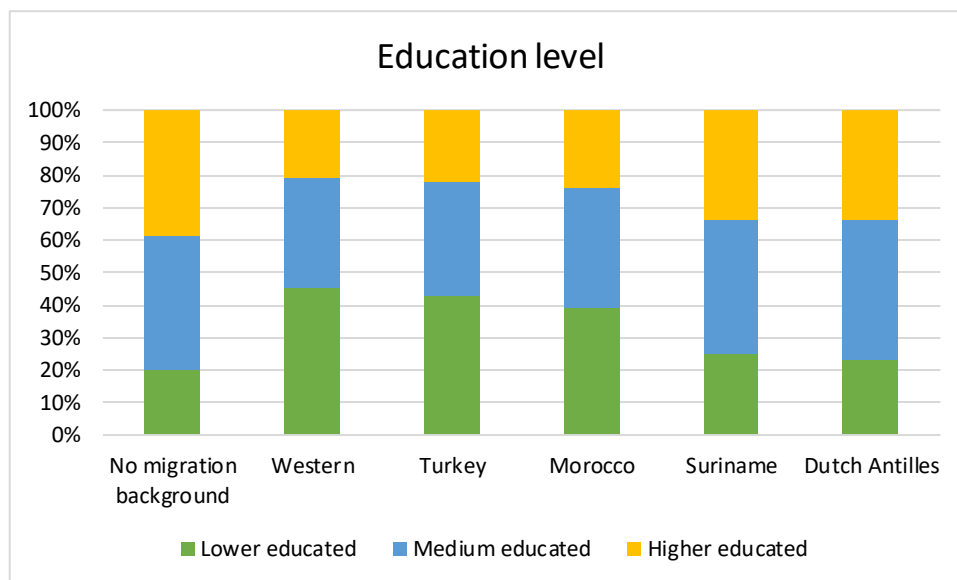
First it is important to define 'migration background' and make a distinction between western and non-western. Persons with a migration background are either persons that have been born in another country than the Netherlands (first generation) or people whose parents (both or one) have been born in another country (second generation). When someone has a western migration background they are born in Europe (excluding Turkey), North America, Oceania, Indonesia, or Japan. A non-western migration background points towards countries of origin in Africa, Latin-America, Asia (excluding Indonesia and Japan) and Turkey. Statistics Netherlands has used this distinction since the 1990s and based it on social, economic, and cultural factors of a country. While Statistics Netherlands has decided in April of 2022 to stop using these categories and replace them with categories which point to the continents that the migrants originally come from (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek, 2022c), the existing data on the COVID-19 pandemic does still use these categories. Moreover, existing research up until now does use these categories and shows that people with a non-western migration background are more often employed in flexible jobs and more often work in vulnerable sectors. Besides the evidence showing that people with a non-western migration background are more often employed in flexible jobs and vulnerable sectors, also other data show that the labor market position of these people are more vulnerable. This group is more often unemployed, the unemployment rate is 8,6% in 2021 for persons with a non-western migration background versus 3,3% for persons without a migration background, have a lower participation grade, 63,2% in 2021 versus 72,1%, and work under poorer working conditions compared to persons without a migration background (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek, 2022d; Van der Werff et al., 2018). This group is therefore often categorized as a group that has a distance from the labor market.

2.2 Countries of origin: the biggest groups

In the Netherlands there were 4,3 million people with a migration background in 2021 of which 58% had a non-western background. Of all people with a non-western migration background, 49,7% are women (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek, 2021a). The four biggest non-western migrant groups in the Netherlands are Turkish, Moroccan, Surinamese, and Antillean. These four groups make up to 8% of all women in the Netherlands, and 63,9% of all women with a non-western migration background (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek, 2021a).

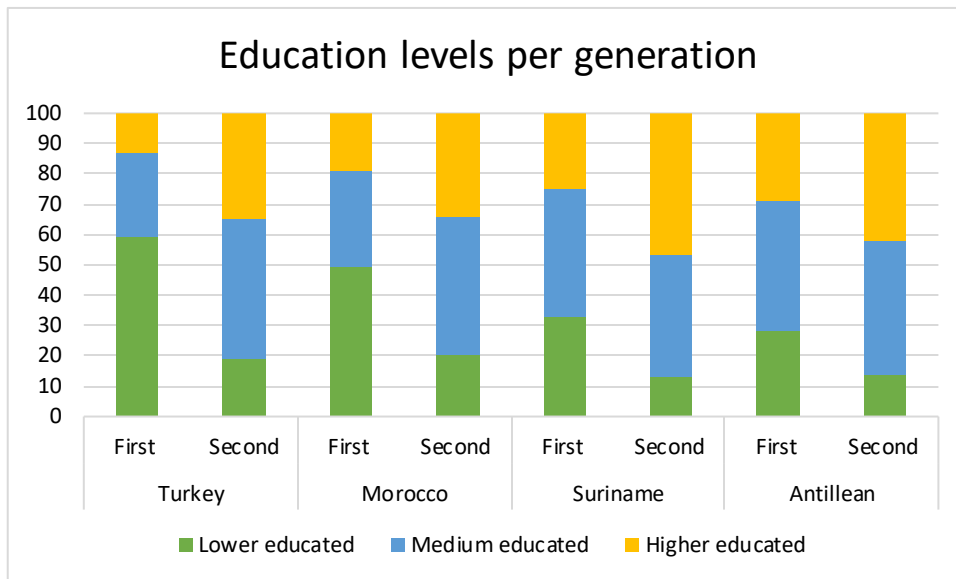
2.3 Education levels

Women with a non-western migration background are, when compared to autochthonous women or women with a western migration background, often lower educated and have lower employment rates. This makes these women less economically independent (Van den Brakel et al., 2020). The highest obtained education level of women with a non-western migration background is lower than that of women with a Dutch background. Among women with a non-western migration background, women with a Turkish background comprise the largest share of lower educated, followed by women with a Moroccan background (respectively 42,7% and 38,5% of these women are lower educated).



Source: CBS Statline (2020); CBS m/v-stat (2020a) & CBS m/v-stat (2020b).

It is important, however, to distinguish between the first and second generations as the second generation, so those that are born in the Netherlands, are more often higher educated than their mothers. Especially the second generation of Surinamese and Indonesian women have a more equal position to women with a western migration background when considering education levels. While the education for the second generation of Turkish and Moroccan women differs less from women without a migration background than that of their mothers, it is lower than that of the Surinamese and Dutch Antillean women.



Source: CBS Statline (2020); CBS m/v-stat (2020a) & CBS m/v-stat (2020b).

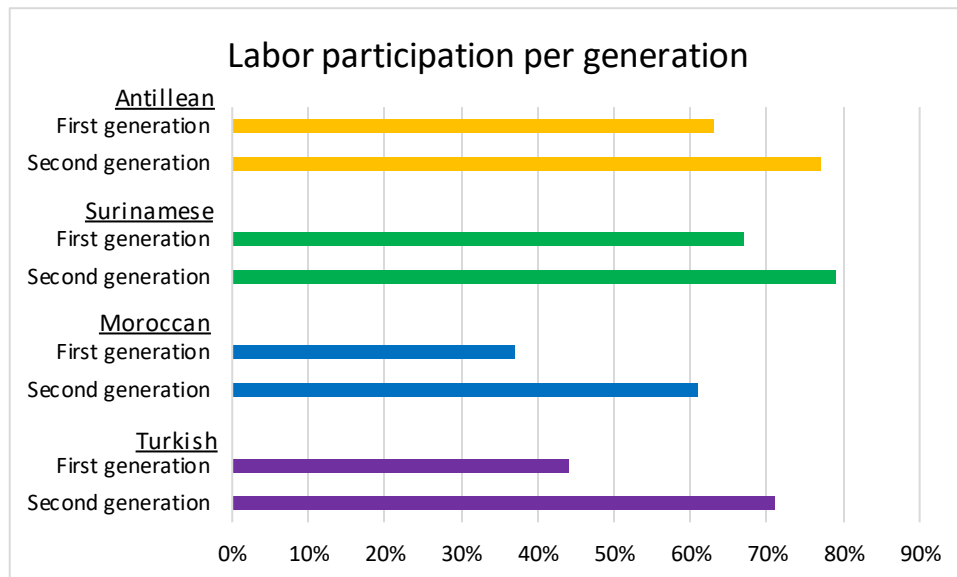
2.4 Labor participation

In 2019, around 79% of autochthonous women and 73% of women with a western migration background worked in paid employment. This figure is lower for non-western migrants, but there are significant differences depending on the country of origin. When looking at the four biggest non-western groups the Surinamese and Antillean women have the highest rates with 71% and 68%, whereas Turkish and especially Moroccan women are among the lowest of the non-western migration groups, with respectively 55% and 46%. These two groups are thus significantly less often employed than women with a Surinamese or Antillean background.



Source: CBS (2020)

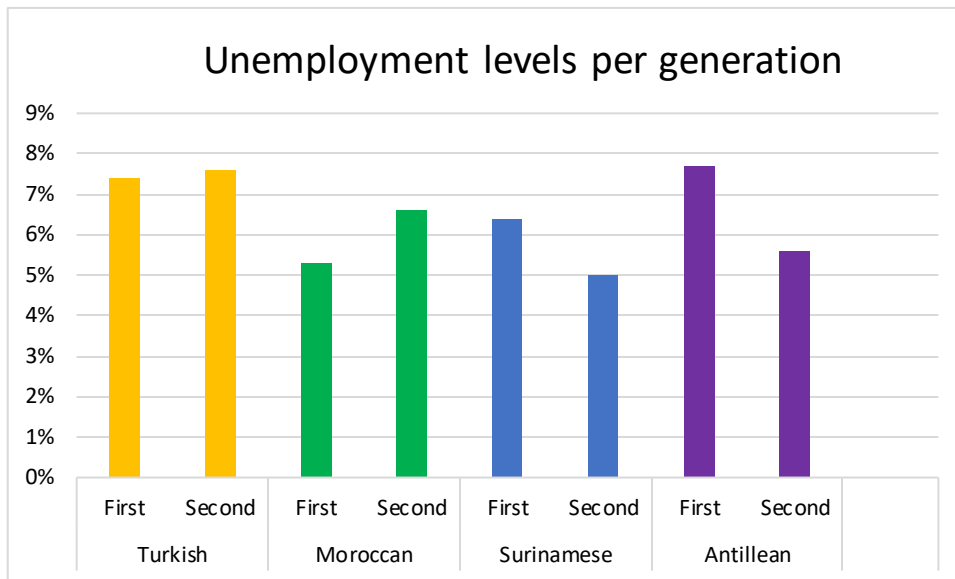
Again, there is a difference between the first and second generation of women, with the second generation having a significantly higher labor participation than the first generation. This difference is especially visible when looking at the data of the Moroccan and Turkish groups where the difference in labor participation between first and second generation is the greatest. Interestingly, when looking at the next figure, we can see that the second-generation Surinamese and Antillean women, just like women with a western migration background, have a higher labor participation than autochthonous women. On top of that, these groups also work more hours than autochthonous women (Van den Brakel et al., 2020).



Source: CBS (2020)

2.5 Unemployment

Next to labor participation, unemployment is also an interesting figure to discuss. Unemployment, as defined by the Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek (2022), comprises the group of people between the ages of 15 and 75 who are currently not in paid employment, but who are available and are actively seeking for work. As already discussed, unemployment levels are higher among non-western migration groups. In 2019, on average 2,9% of the women in the Netherlands was unemployed. The group with the lowest unemployment levels were autochthonous women with 2,1%, and the percentage among Turkish women was the highest with 7,5%. Of the other biggest groups Moroccan, Surinamese and Antillean women respectively had unemployment levels of 5,9%, 5,8% en 6,9%. Interestingly, whereas Surinamese and Antillean women scored better on education levels and labor participation, this is not true for unemployment levels. This will be further investigated in the next chapter which discusses the barriers of the subgroup on the labor market.



Source: CBS (2020)

When looking at this figure, it is striking that among women with a Turkish or Moroccan migration background, the unemployment levels of the second generation were higher than among the first generation while the reverse is true for women of a Surinamese or Antillean background. A possible explanation for this is that on average the unemployment rate is higher among the younger segments of society, and the second generation of Turkish and Moroccan women are relatively slightly younger than Antillean and Surinamese women (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek, 2017; Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek, 2018).

2.6 Sectors of employment

While there is data on the labor participation, unemployment, and education levels of these women with a non-western migration background. It is difficult to see which sectors they are most often employed in. There are many reports (Van der Werff et al., 2018; Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau, 2020; Ministerie van Sociale en Werkgelegenheid, 2020; Atlas voor Gemeenten, 2020) on the labor market position of different groups in the Netherlands, and employment sectors are also discussed here, but they are only discussed in such a way that a focus is put on either the dichotomy between men and women or on the difference between autochthonous people, persons with a western migration background or persons with a non-western migration background. The intersection of the identities 'woman' and 'migration background' are therefore missing.

As has already been mentioned in the introduction, people with a non-western migration background are often employed in temporary jobs and in vulnerable sectors (Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau, 2020). Also, Atlas voor Gemeenten (2020) looks at the sectors in which people with a non-western migration background are employed in. These sectors are so-called business services, which includes amongst others agency workers, security guards, and cleaners, and the hospitality industry. They are less often employed in the healthcare industry. Women, on the other hand, are overrepresented in the health care industry. They also work often in the rental and other business services, educational services, and other service sectors (Ministerie van Sociale Zaken en Werkgelegenheid, 2020).

2.7 Conclusion

Concludingly, the subgroup, the group of women with a non-western background, is diverse with the biggest groups being women from Turkey, Morocco, Suriname, and the Dutch Antilles. These groups differ greatly when looking at education levels, labor participation, and unemployment. The Turkish

group and the Moroccan group have a somewhat similar position with lower education levels and lower labor participation than the Surinamese and Antillean groups that have higher education levels and a higher labor participation. However, the non-western migration groups are all lower educated and have a lower labor participation than autochthonous women or women with a western migration background. This can also be seen when looking at the unemployment levels which are remarkably higher than those of autochthonous women.

It is important, however, to make a distinction between the first generation and second generation as the second generation tends to have a better position on the labor market, especially with regards to education levels and labor participation. The second-generation Surinamese and Antillean women have the highest education levels and labor participation, which at some instances equals or even surpasses that of western migrants and autochthonous women. Therefore, in this thesis the focus will lie on women with a non-western migration background from the first generation as they are the ones that, as we have seen, have the most vulnerable position.

The next chapter will focus on the factors which influence this vulnerable position, in this way explaining the lower labor participation and education levels, and higher unemployment among the subgroup.

3. Barriers to the labor market position pre-COVID-19

As we have seen in the previous chapter, first generation women with a non-western migration background have a vulnerable position on the labor market as they tend to have a lower labor participation and education levels, and higher unemployment levels. We also have seen, however, that there are significant differences between the different groups of women, this can be seen when looking at the four largest groups of non-western female migrants as Moroccan and Turkish women have a more vulnerable labor market position than the Antillean and Surinamese women. It is, however, also important, especially when looking at the first generation of migrants, to distinguish between different migrant types and consequently the different integration trajectories that are followed by these women. This determines the amount and type of support offered by governments and municipalities which in turn has an influence on their labor market position. These migrant types will be discussed in section 3.1.

Besides the difference in support depending on migrant types, also other factors influence the labor market position of these women. This rest of this chapter will therefore focus on these other factors, using the comprehensive model of Stavenuiter et al. (2020) which divides the barriers for women on the labor market in four different levels. Moreover, these barriers will be complemented by barriers which are specific to migrant women in section 3.3.

3.1 Migrant types

Wet inburgering 2013

Over the last 20 years, there have been different integration trajectories, based on changes to the national law on integration. Most recently, on the 1st of January 2022, the Wet inburgering 2021 came into effect, before this the Wet inburgering 2013 (in effect until end 2021), and Wet inburgering 2007 (in effect until end 2013), were in force. These integration acts are all different in the support that is offered to migrants and in the way in which the role of municipalities is shaped. Whereas Wet inburgering 2021 and Wet inburgering 2007 make municipalities the agents of the integration policy in the Netherlands, giving them the responsibility of offering migrants integration trajectories and supporting them, Wet inburgering 2013 is different. Wet inburgering 2013 makes migrants responsible for their own integration, giving only a small role to the municipalities as monitors. In this system, migrants must choose their own integration trajectory and finance this with a loan offered by the state which, in the case of asylum migrants but not for family reunification of regular migrants ('gezinsmigranten') can be waived when the integration obligation is fulfilled (Roelofs et al., 2020).

As the Wet inburgering 2021 has only very recently come into effect, this thesis will focus on the Wet inburgering 2013 to show how the structure of this system has had an influence on the opportunities and barriers female migrants have experienced when integrating in the Netherlands and consequently on the labor market. As was mentioned in the last paragraph, under the Wet inburgering 2013 a distinction was made between asylum migrants and gezinsmigranten. Female asylum migrants are women that have an asylum residence permit, and female gezinsmigranten are women who have received a residence permit to reunite with a person (mostly their partner, also called the 'referent')¹ who already lives in the Netherlands. These women do not have an asylum residence permit and their residence permit is, for the first five years, dependent on their referent. After these five years these migrants can choose to alter their residence permit to make it permanent (De Gruijter et al., 2021).

¹ A gezinsmigrant migrates to the Netherlands to join the referent, a person that already lives in the Netherlands for quite some time, albeit their whole life. This means that the referent can either be a native or someone that already has fulfilled the integration trajectory. The referent is mostly the partner of the gezinsmigrant, but it can also be the case that minors are migrating to the Netherlands to join their parents. Before a gezinsmigrant can join the referent, the referent has to meet a certain income level as they are responsible for the gezinsmigrant and are expected to financially support them as a gezinsmigrant is not able to apply for social benefits (De Gruijter et al., 2021).

While the support offered under the Wet inburgering 2013 is smaller than under the Wet inburgering 2007 and the Wet inburgering 2021, municipalities still have a role in the integration of migrants, especially in the integration of asylum migrants, as they are the first point of contact and can choose to offer personal guidance to certain migrants that need this (Ministerie van Sociale Zaken en Werkgelegenheid, 2021). This support is limited for gezinsmigranten as this type of migrant is expected to rely on the social network of their referent, which can be problematic as this referent can either be an autochthonous person or someone that has just finished their integration procedure themselves. Moreover, a gezinsmigrant can also not apply for social benefits whereas asylum migrants can (De Gruijter et al., 2021). The differences in social network, financial assets, and consequently the opportunities which gezinsmigranten have in the Netherlands can therefore differ significantly from one person to another.

These barriers for asylum migrants and gezinsmigranten will be further explored in section 3.3, first the model of Stavenuiter et al. (2020) on the barriers for women on the labor market will be discussed.

3.2 Barriers for women on the labor market in general

In the previous section we have seen that there are different integration procedures for different types of migrants and that these different procedures entail different levels of support offered by municipalities. This can influence the ability of women with a non-western migration background to strengthen their labor market position or to enter the labor market altogether. This aspect fits in the theoretical framework of Stavenuiter et al. (2020) which has already been introduced in the introduction. Stavenuiter et al. have looked at barriers for women on the labor market and have formulated barriers on four different levels: 1) the personal level, 2) the social network, 3) the demand side of the labor market, and 4) the systematic side.

When looking at the personal level, women experience more often than men (mental) health problems (Portegijs & Van den Brakel, 2018; Cloin, 2010), and especially women with children point towards caregivers' responsibilities as a barrier to work (Ommeren et al., 2011; Portegijs & Van den Brakel, 2018). Age can also be a limiting factor in some cases as older women are less likely to find new employment (Ministerie van Sociale Zaken en Werkgelegenheid, 2018). The social network, the second level in the model, can be either stimulating or a barrier for women to start employment. Traditional gender roles make it difficult for women to start employment. Moreover, when other women or people in their network do not work, the opportunities that a social network can offer are limited (Razenberg et al., 2018). Thirdly, when considering the demand side of the labor market, employers often expect flexibility of employees, this may be hard for women which also have caregiving responsibilities (De Gruijter & Hermans, 2019). Lastly, when looking at the support offered by, for example, municipalities, an intersectional approach which considers all characteristics of these women, especially when looking at women with a migration background or women who also have caregiving responsibilities is often lacking (Koning et al., 2018).

The support offered by municipalities in the integration process, as mentioned in section 3.1, is a good example of the fourth level, namely the systematic side. However, Stavenuiter et al. have designed these levels specifically for women in general and not specifically women with a migration background. Therefore, in the next paragraph the specific barriers for women with a (non-western) migration background will be discussed.

3.3 Barriers for migrant women

In the last section the barriers which women can experience on the labor market have been discussed by looking at four different levels: the personal, the social network, the demand side of the labor market and the system in which these women find themselves. Now it is important to see how these different levels and barriers specifically apply to women with a non-western migration background.

While the group of women with a non-western migration background is diverse there is a common experience. This section will start off with a discussion on the main barriers that apply to (asylum) migrants, and after this we will take a closer look at the special case of the gezinsmigrant and the additional barrier of the dependence on the referent.

Barriers on the four levels

On the first level, the personal level, an important barrier to discuss is the language barrier. The language barrier makes it more difficult to find employment, but it is also a reason migrants do not yet want to start working as they want to improve their language skills first. While this reason applies for both male and female migrants, an additional reason for female migrants is that they want to wait before they start working until their children are a bit older (De Gruijter and Hermans, 2019). Traditional gender roles are a reason why women do not or to a smaller extent participate on the labor market (Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau, 2018b; Stam et al., 2014) as Dutch women with a non-western migration background tend to have more traditional gender norms than autochthonous women, these women occupy themselves more often with housework and raising their children (Khoudja, 2018). Research has also shown that women with a non-western migration background prioritize their children and their husband, meaning that they wait to find employment until their husband has a job and the children are going to school to create a stable home environment (De Gruijter and Hermans, 2019; De Gruijter, Sikkema and Verloove, 2021). Besides gender roles and the language barrier, female migrants of a non-western descent also tend to have little work experience in their country of origin. This makes it more difficult to envision what career prospects they have in the Netherlands, and thus to produce an efficient search strategy (De Gruijter and Hermans, 2019). Lastly, female migrants (or refugees) experience more often than male migrants (sexual) violence when fleeing their countries (Amnesty, 2016). Moreover, research has shown that the physical and mental wellbeing of (female) migrants can be a barrier to the integration process and to the integration on the labor market. A limited understanding of the Dutch language can be a reason why these women do not seek help (Ruiz and Vargas-Silva, 2017; Razenberg & Asmoredio, 2019).

When looking at the second level, research has shown that the social network is of great importance when finding employment, and that people with a non-western migration background benefit especially from contact with autochthonous people (Weustink, 2018). Due to a language barrier and cultural differences it is hard for non-western migrants to get into contact with Dutch citizens. Female migrants even tend to have less contact with Dutch people than male migrants, and especially in the period when migrants have just arrived in the Netherlands, migrants tend to have more contact with people from the same country of arrival instead of with autochthonous persons (Ferrier et al., 2017; SCP, 2018a; SCP, 2018b; De Gruijter and Hermans, 2019).

Thirdly, the demand side of the labor market tends to be a big barrier as research has shown that discrimination on the Dutch labor market is a persistent problem. Especially people with a Middle Eastern, (North-)African or Latin-American heritage are discriminated against (Thijssen, Coenders and Lancee, 2019). These people are less likely to get invited to a job interview than autochthonous people even when they have the exact same qualifications (Merckens, 2020). Moreover, diplomas obtained in the country of origin are often not recognized in the Netherlands or not valued in the same way. This means that in order for migrants to resume work in their own occupations they have to follow an education, which may be rather costly (Sterckx et al., 2014).

Lastly, the system in which the migrants operate, meaning for example support offered by municipalities is extremely important. Research has shown that municipalities more often focus on male migrants than on female migrants as so-called 'klantmanagers', client managers, those who guide migrants through the integration procedure, tend to focus and prioritize those who they see as the most promising in the family. Often the man is seen as the most promising as he had previous employment and it is assumed that the woman wants to take care of the children (De Gruijter and

Razenberg, 2019). Research among Syrian asylum migrants has shown that women even tend to have less contact with a klantmanager than men, namely respectively 36% of Syrian women in the Netherlands had contact with a klantmanager compared to 50% of all Syrian men (Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau, 2018a). Besides this focus of klantmanagers, the way in which support towards work is organized tends to disadvantage women. When both the man and woman of a family are unemployed, they both receive social benefits and support from the municipality to help them find a job. Moreover, when a person receives social benefits they are obliged to actively seek employment. However, when one of the partners finds employment, the support for the other partner is stopped even when no employment for the other partner is found, and there is no longer any external obligation to find employment. As men tend to migrate first to the country of destination and women tend to arrive later, the man already has a better understanding of the language and a bigger social network. Therefore, men tend to find employment before their partner, meaning that support for the female migrant is cut off and there are no external motivating or supporting forces to help her find employment.

The gezinsmigrant: the special role for the referent

Gezinsmigranten, as mentioned in section 3.1, are different from asylum migrants and thus the barriers on the labor market also slightly differ. While there are many overlapping barriers, such as a language barrier and labor market discrimination, the dependence on the referent is particularly important to discuss as the presence of the referent can either be stimulating or a barrier which makes it harder to climb out of a vulnerable labor market position.

In the beginning of this chapter, it has been explained that gezinsmigranten come to the Netherlands to join someone, mostly a partner. This person is called the 'referent' and can either be an autochthone or someone that has already lived in the Netherlands for some time. The referent is responsible for the gezinsmigrant, and this person has to meet a certain income demand before the gezinsmigrant is allowed to migrate to the Netherlands. As the referent has to meet a certain income demand, the gezinsmigrant is not entitled to social benefits, meaning that they are not obliged to seek for employment after migrating to the Netherlands and that there is thus no direct need for it. This also means that they are not offered support in finding employment by municipalities (De Gruijter and Van den Toorn, 2013; Sterckx et al, 2014).

A gezinsmigrant is very dependent on the referent and on the social network of the referent to find employment. A SCP report from 2014 shows that the role of the referent is essential when finding work for the gezinsmigrant (Sterckx et al., 2014). This is problematic as referents are, just like gezinsmigranten, diverse. Some referents have been living in the Netherlands their entire life, while others just finished their integration procedure and are less able to support a gezinsmigrant and help them towards finding employment (De Gruijter, Sikkema and Verloove, 2021). Moreover, there can be a cultural component in which the referent prefers traditional gender roles and does not encourage but might even prevent the gezinsmigrant from working in paid jobs. On top of this, research has shown that for some male 'referenten,' also for autochthonous men, the reason to find a wife abroad has been the preference for traditional gender roles (Sterckx et al., 2014).

The labor market position of the gezinsmigrant is thus very dependent on the referent who may not always be able or equipped to help them find employment or who might not want the gezinsmigrant to work due to a preference for traditional gender norms. This is combined with only a marginal role for municipalities and little to no support offered to the gezinsmigrant in finding employment.

3.4 Conclusion

Looking back on this chapter, and in answering the second subquestion, namely 'what factors influence (or cause) the vulnerable position of these women on the labor market?', it is important to make a

distinction between asylum migrants and gezinsmigranten. While many barriers overlap, such as a language barrier, labor market discrimination, a lacking social network, and traditional gender roles, there is also a remarkable difference: namely the dependence of the gezinsmigrant on the referent. Whereas asylum migrants are offered support by the municipalities, the gezinsmigrant is dependent on support from the referent who may not always be equipped or who may not always want the gezinsmigrant to find employment. While the asylum migrant is, in many cases, offered support by the municipality, this support tends to be more focused on male migrants and gets cut off whenever the partner, often men, has found paid employment.

As we have seen, women face multiple barriers on the labor market, and they face additional barriers when they have a migratory background. But more importantly, the discussion of these barriers on different levels shows how identities within the subgroup intersect. However, as this classification of barriers is hailing from 2020 and concerns a research period that pre-dates the COVID-19 era, it is interesting to see how these barriers play out on a labor market and a society that is influenced by the impact of COVID-19. It would generate new insights to apply the theory of intersectionality and the barriers listed by Stavenuiter et al. (2020) to effects of the COVID-19 pandemic to the labor market position of the subgroup. Therefore, the next chapter concerns the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the labor market position of the subgroup.

4. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Dutch labor market

In the last two chapters the subgroup of this thesis has been introduced and their (vulnerable) position on the labor market. Moreover, their labor market position has been explained by using a model which presents barriers that these women might face when entering or while on the labor market. However, in doing so the period up until the beginning of 2020 has been discussed, meaning that the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on these women, their labor market position, and the barriers they experience have not been taken into account. Therefore this chapter will focus on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Dutch labor market, and more specifically on women with a non-western migration background. In this way this chapter attempts to answer the third subquestion: 'What are the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Dutch labor market and specifically on the sectors that typically employ our subgroup?'

4.1 The COVID-19 pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic and the measures taken by the government to prevent the spread of the virus caused for a shock to the Dutch labor market. Social distancing measures, implemented by the government, made it hard for people in some occupations and sectors to remain working, especially when working from home was not possible. While the government provided financial aid which helped to preserve jobs, many jobs were lost in the sectors that were hit the hardest (Velthuisen, 2021). This can be seen when looking at the rise in the unemployment rate during the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, as up until August 2020 the unemployment rate in the Netherlands rose with 56%. This figure was combined with a stark drop in the number of vacancies in the Netherlands (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek, 2022b).

As already mentioned in the introduction, not everyone is hit by the pandemic and the measures that were taken to counter its negative effects in the same way. Especially young, lower educated employed persons and persons with a non-western migration background, are negatively impacted by the pandemic (Bastiaanssen et al., 2020; Muns et al., 2020). As these groups already had a more vulnerable position on the labor market, the effects of the pandemic increased their vulnerable position (Weterings et al., 2019; Bastiaansen et al., 2020). It is therefore often argued that the pandemic increased the already existing problem of inequality on the labor market (Intelligence Group, 2020; Alfani, 2020; Haase, 2020; Montenovio et al., 2020; Ryan and El Avadi, 2020). In order to explain these inequalities, it is important to look at the way in which certain types of employment are divided over the Dutch workforce and which groups are more represented in which sectors.

4.2 Flexible employment

One of the characteristics shared between the groups mentioned in the previous section is that they are frequently employed in flexible employment, this means that they often have temporary contracts, zero-hours contracts or min-max contracts in which there is little job and income security. During times of an economic crisis or external economic shock, like the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, those in flexible employment have the greatest risk of losing their job as it is the easiest for employers to fire them in order to cut back on their workforce (Oltshoorn, 2015). However, flexible employment is not evenly distributed among the Dutch workforce, instead young people, lower educated persons, and persons with a (non-western) migratory background are overrepresented in this type of employment, making them rather vulnerable (Oltshoorn, 2015; Vrooman et al, 2018; Hoff et al., 2019; Van der Torre et al., 2019). The recruitment sector, including employment agencies, especially sees an overrepresentation of persons with a non-western migration background, namely 23% of temporary staff in 2019 were persons with a non-western migration background (UWV, 2020; Smits, 2019). This means that these persons often have temporary contracts. Moreover, persons with a non-western migration background are also overrepresented in zero-hours contracts and min-max contracts, the so-called on-call contracts, 16% of these contracts belong to persons with a non-western migration background (Smits, 2019).

As has been argued in the previous paragraph, the labor market positions of persons with a non-western migration background is relatively sensitive to economic fluctuations. While the unemployment rate of these persons was already higher than persons with an autochthonous background, there was also a stronger increase in unemployment for this group in the first 8 months of 2020. Especially among the younger segments of society, both the segment without a migration background and the segment with a non-western migration background, unemployment has significantly increased. This can be explained by the fact that young people tend to work more often in temporary or flexible jobs (Gielen et al., 2021).

While this rise in unemployment in the first 8 months of 2020 among young persons is true for both persons with a (non-) western migration background and with an autochthonous background, this is, however, not true for people over the age of 27. Where unemployment rose with 2,3% for the non-western persons above the age of 27, the unemployment rate remained approximately at the same level for autochthonous people (Gielen et al., 2021). This can be explained by the fact that while autochthonous persons work relatively often in flexible employment while they are young, this is less true for autochthonous persons above the age of 27. This is not true for persons with a non-western migration background who are overrepresented in flexible employment regardless of their age (Gielen et al., 2021). Moreover, research has shown that the number of temporary contracts has even increased for persons with a migratory background in 2020 when compared to 2019, while this number has decreased for persons with no migratory background, increasing the vulnerable position of persons with a non-western migration background and thus increasing the inequality on the labor market (Intelligence Group, 2021).

4.2 Vulnerable sectors

Next to flexible employment, when assessing the impact of the COVID-19 measures, it is also important to take a look at the occupation types that people employ as this determines their ability to work during the heights of the pandemic. Persons with a frontline job (or vital profession; approximately 35% of Dutch workers) are the least impacted by the measures, as these measures will not cause them to lose their job. This also applies to persons who can work from home (33%), and are thus not dependent on the severity of the COVID-19 measures. For the rest of the workers it depends on whether or not they are able to keep a distance, and thus whether they have a low-contact profession (25%). This group can work as long as they are allowed to travel to their jobs. People in a non-vital profession that are not able to keep distance, and thus have a high-contact profession (7%), are the most impacted by the COVID-19 measures (Bastiaanssen et al., 2020).

Similar to the distribution of flexible employment among the Dutch population, the distribution of these types of occupations (vital, non-vital, able to work from home, high-contact and low-contact) are not equally distributed. There are, amongst others, differences in education level, age, and migratory background. When looking at the migratory background, the focus of this thesis, it becomes clear that, just like the younger segment of the Dutch society, persons with a non-western migration background tend to have a non-vital profession which cannot be done from home. Of these persons 15% has a high-contact profession, a percentage that is rather high when compared to persons without a migratory background (Bastiaanssen et al., 2020). This means that especially for these persons, it will be harder to perform their jobs during the COVID-19 measures. This is also true for women. Whereas women tend to more often have a vital profession than men (relatively 40% to 30%), those women that do not have a vital profession often have a high-contact profession. Therefore, the share of women in a vulnerable position due to the COVID-19 restrictions is higher than for men (Bastiaanssen et al., 2020).

So as we have seen, the vital sector and non-vital jobs that can be either performed from home or are low-contact are the least impacted by the social-distancing measures. Therefore the sectors that have been hit the hardest fall in the category of non-vital and high-contact occupation type. Persons with a non-western migratory background, and women, tend to be overrepresented in this occupation type. The sectors that correspond with this occupation type are the hospitality industry, the construction industry, (non-medical) contact professions, the cleaning industry, and the catering industry (Vermeijen and Arikoglu, 2021).

4.3 The gendered aspect

As this thesis is not only concerned with persons with a non-western migration background, but more specifically with women with a non-western migration background, the aspect of gender needs to be considered. The recession following the COVID-19 pandemic, meaning the period of significant economic downturn during the six months up until August 2020, is an interesting case in this respect, as it manifests itself differently than other recessions in the past. Whereas men are more likely to lose their jobs during a recession, evidence suggests that the reverse is true for the recession following the COVID-19 pandemic (Albanesi and Kim, 2021; Queisser, Adema and Clarke, 2020).

Besides looking at unemployment rates, research also shows an increase in gender inequality in relation to paid work and quality of life when compared to the situation prior to the lockdown (Yerkes et al., 2020). We have already seen from the previous section that there is a difference in occupation types between men and women, however the COVID-19 measures have also impacted men and women differently in other ways. In the introduction research has been discussed that shows how in the Global North the pandemic further divides an already gendered labor market (Yerkes et al., 2020) due to multiple reasons. First of all, women are overrepresented in public sector occupations such as health care which became frontline jobs during the pandemic (Queisser, Adema and Clarke, 2020). This meant that it was essential that they continued working outside of the home in difficult labor circumstances, and in generally undervalued and underpaid jobs. Next to this, the service sector, a sector in which women are overrepresented, saw a significant drop in demand, hitting women disproportionately (Albanesi and Kim, 2021). Lastly, the matter of work-life balance has been discussed in the introduction. Due to office closures, and the temporary closure of schools and childcare centers, parents started working from home where they were suddenly also responsible for the home-schooling and care of their children. This had an influence on their ability to perform paid work and on the division of childcare and household work. According to Yerkes et al. (2020), in the Netherlands mothers continued to do more childcare and household work than fathers, and, moreover, they also reported a larger drop in leisure time for mothers than for fathers. An increase of existing gender inequalities as women's caregiving roles are reaffirmed can also be seen in countries such as Germany, the UK, Australia, and the US (Adams-Prassl et al., 2020; Cooper & Mosseri, 2020; Carlson et al., 2020) as data shows that many mothers opted to exit the labor force altogether in order to be able to take care of and homeschool their children.

However, the unequal distribution of caregiving responsibilities is not only gendered, but also racialized. Women with a migratory background take up the largest chunk of (unpaid) care work (Terlien and Scheepers, 2016). While these women are often seen by society as rather inactive or passive on the labor market, they do take up a lot of work which is hardly visible. They take up these unpaid care tasks as it is hard for them to find access to paid work (Vermeijen and Arikoglu, 2021). Moreover, women with a higher socio-economic status are able to outsource their care tasks to other women, for example in the forms of nannies and cleaners. These jobs are mostly performed by women with a migration background, and are often informal jobs, meaning that they are paid off the books, or underpaid jobs. These jobs are often accompanied by much uncertainty as there is often no contract, or temporary or flexible contracts (Ella Kenniscentrum Gender en Etniciteit, 2015).

As these positions are often characterized by informal employment, meaning jobs which are not registered by the government and not subject to the protection of labor laws, which has no pension scheme or protection against unemployment, or flexible employment, these workers are vulnerable during the COVID-19 pandemic. Especially when you take into account that these sectors that were just mentioned, the cleaning industry and childcare facilities, were hit rather harshly by the pandemic. Childcare centers, as already mentioned, were closed during lockdowns, and with the closures of offices more people started to work from home making the cleaning industry one of the sectors which lost the most jobs. Between February and December of 2020 around 10.700 jobs were lost in this industry, this is a decline of 8,4% (Kalkhoven, 2021; NOS, 2021).

4.4 Impact of the pandemic on the labor market barriers

Besides the aspects of an overrepresentation of the subgroup in flexible employment, and sectors that have been hit harshly by the pandemic and high-contact jobs, the subgroup deals with already existing barriers to the labor market that were discussed in the last chapter. These barriers have been used to analyze the barriers for women with a non-western migration background. However, as we are discussing a labor market which is impacted by consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is important to 'update' these barriers to the situation of the COVID-19 pandemic. These barriers will be discussed according to the four levels model of Stavenuiter (2020), namely the personal, the social network, the demand side of the labor market, and the systematic level.

The personal level

When the barriers were discussed in the last chapter, on the personal level multiple barriers were identified, among which gender roles, the language barrier, and physical and mental health problems. In the former section of this chapter, the increase of gender inequality due to the upholding of gender roles has already been discussed. However, it is also important to discuss the health risks following the COVID-19 virus, and the disproportionate way in which persons with a migration background have suffered from this. During the first wave of the pandemic, the percentage of persons dying from the virus was about 1,5 times higher for persons with a migration background than for persons without a migratory background. There were also about 2 to 3 times more hospitalizations among this group. These figures can be explained by a poorer general health already before the infection as for example obesity and diabetes are more common among certain migrant groups, such as the Turkish and Surinamese groups. However, also other factors need to be taken into account such as a tendency to wait longer before seeking medical care, the inability to work from home (and thus face more exposure to the virus), the fact that these groups often tend to live in smaller spaces with more people where social distancing is more difficult, and a limited understanding of the Dutch language which makes it harder to understand the Dutch measures and communication on the health risks (Stronks et al., 2021). These higher health risks do not only affect a person's personal life but also the ability to work, it can be an additional barrier.

The social network

As we have seen in the last chapter, the social network is of great importance when trying to find employment (Weustink, 2018). This is especially true for persons that have not been in the Netherlands for a long time who may not be able to speak the language, and who are not yet familiar with the Dutch labor market. Contact with autochthonous persons is especially important. This has become more difficult during the COVID-19 pandemic, especially during the lockdown phases in which strict social-distancing measures were upheld and community centers were closed.

The demand side of the labor market

When looking at the demand side of the labor market, it is important to note that research among municipalities has shown that during the COVID-19 pandemic there were fewer internships and work experience places available. While internships and work experience places are often used as a tool to

help people to (re-)enter the labor market, this was thus harder during the COVID-19 pandemic (De Gruijter et al., 2021). Moreover, it is also important to mention that labor market discrimination has increased during the pandemic. Research has shown that during times of a labor surplus, which was true during the first months of the pandemic up until August 2020 when there was a significant drop in the number of vacancies, discrimination on the labor market increases as employers are able to choose between more candidates for the job (Auer, 2022; Grijpstra, 2019).

The system

On the fourth level, the systematic side, we see that municipalities were less able to support both persons in the integration process and persons dependent on social benefits in finding work, and that the contact between municipalities and these persons has greatly decreased during the pandemic due to social-distancing measures that have been taken (De Gruijter et al., 2022).

4.5 Conclusion

Looking back on this chapter, and in answering the third subquestion, we can see that certain groups have been hit harder by the COVID-19 measures than others in terms of their labor market position. The groups that have been hit the hardest often already had a vulnerable position on the labor market, a position that has become even more vulnerable during the pandemic. Persons with a non-western migration background often work in non-vital professions where remote work is not possible and which are high-contact. This makes it harder for them to continue performing their jobs. Moreover, these persons are also overrepresented in flexible employment, regardless of their age, which makes their position vulnerable during a time of economic recession and shock.

Besides the aspect of the migratory background, the aspect of gender, also in its intersection with ethnicity or migratory background, has been discussed. As has been shown, the position of women on the labor market during the COVID-19 pandemic differed from that of men. Of special importance was the increase of existing gender inequality as caregiving roles were increasingly assigned to women during the pandemic. It has also been shown that the labor market was not only gendered, but also racialized, with women with a non-western migration background taking up most of the (unpaid) care work, working in the informal sector in flexible jobs or for example in the cleaning industry which shrunk immensely during the first phase of the pandemic.

Lastly, the chapter also revised the barriers to the labor market which were presented in the last chapter in order to see how the COVID-19 pandemic had impacted them. Especially the health risks, the limited social network due to social distancing measures, labor market discrimination, fewer internships and work experience places, and lastly less guidance by municipalities to find work, are important factors which made it harder for women with a non-western migration background on the labor market.

In the next chapter the support that has been offered by the Dutch government and the European Union will be discussed which was intended to counter the negative consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic. Of special importance here is the focus that these policies and instruments were designed with and at which segments of the society and workforce they were targeted. This is done in order to investigate whether and how this support has had an impact on the subgroup.

5. The response of the Dutch government and the European Union

In the last chapters the subgroup has been introduced, the barriers on the labor market which members of the subgroup face have been discussed, and the effect that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on their labor market position has been analyzed. In this chapter, therefore, subquestion 4 will be addressed, namely: 'What Dutch and European instruments and policies have been used to counter the negative consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic?' The focus will especially be on the effect that the support measures of both the Dutch government and the European Union have had on the subgroup, namely those who have been hit the hardest by the COVID-19 pandemic.

5.1 The response by the Dutch government

National governments have taken restrictive measures to limit the health risks of the COVID-19 pandemic, however they have also taken additional measures in order to alleviate the negative effects on the society and economy. In the Netherlands, the government chose an approach which was mostly focused on employers and businesses. While the support offered by the government has been evaluated by the Netherlands Bureau for Economic Policy Analysis (CPB, 2021) as effective, and around 65.000 to 180.000 people have been able to keep their job because of it, there has also been criticism on the differences that have been made between employers and employees on the one side and flexible workers and the self-employed on the other side (Haegens, 2021). The self-employed are the most critical of the government support as 79% grades the policy lower than a 5 (out of 10), the most-heard argument is that the government treats self-employed persons in an unequal manner as they are only offered the bare minimum (social minimum) out of which they can barely make a living (Zwart, 2022).

The support measures were established by the government at the end of March 2020 in order to help employers and employees during the crisis. Employers are entitled to the NOW-fund (Noodmaatregel Overbrugging Werkgelegenheid) and the self-employed are entitled to the TOZO-fund (Tijdelijke Overbruggingsregeling Zelfstandige Ondernemers). The NOW is meant for employers as a means to compensate their loss in revenue so that they can keep paying their employees and prevent the loss of jobs and a surge in unemployment (de Vries, 2021). All companies with a loss of revenue of at least 20% can get a reimbursement of their loss to the maximum of 90% of their revenue (Hofman, 2021). While persons with a flexible contract or temporary workers were also included in the NOW, and employers could decide to keep these workers on, employers often did not wait until they had lost at least 20% of their revenue and thus when they could apply for the NOW-fund to cut back on labor costs (Rompelberg, 2022). The TOZO was a means to supplement the income of the self-employed to the social minimum (meaning €1052 a month for a single person and €1503 for a couple), however this instrument was only meant as a temporary tool and self-employed persons could call on this for a maximum of 3 months, from March 2020 to June 2020, after this they had to apply for it again (de Vries, 2021). TOZO 2.0 ran from June 2020 to October 2020, and the last TOZO, TOZO 3.0 ran from October 2020 until the end of June 2021 (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek, 2021b).

Persons with flexible employment were also, as has been mentioned in the previous chapter, among those that have been hit the hardest by the crisis. They were often the first ones to get fired, and people with a zero-hours contract, which are on-call workers who are called up by their employer when there is enough work, would often just not get any work shifts anymore. For these two groups, namely people with flexible employment and the self-employed, the support measures of the Dutch government were the least beneficial and even led to an increase in the already existing structures of inequality between the most vulnerable and those with a permanent contract. While the Dutch approach is similar to other countries in the Eurozone, there are also countries who have chosen a different approach. The USA, for example, focused on income support for all citizens. While companies and employers were able to receive government support, the focus was thus on the citizen level, regardless of their type of employment (Fischer & Schmid, 2021). This has different implications on the

structures of inequality, and might have been a greater support for those most vulnerable in society, and thus our subgroup.

5.2 The role of the European Union

While national governments are primarily responsible for the overall design of integration and social policies such as education, employment, housing and healthcare, the EU plays a key role in supporting them and all other integration actors through funding, developing practical tools, coordinating actions and establishing relevant partnerships (European Commission, 2020). The EU has played an extremely important role during the COVID-19 crisis not only with regards to the health crisis by coordinating for example the access to vaccines, border controls, and protective equipment, but also by providing EU funds in order to counter the negative impact of the crisis on the economy and the labor market. For example, financial support has been made available to protect worker salaries and businesses to help facilitate a return to a functional economy (Ando et al., 2022).

As the pandemic's impact has been highly uneven not only across groups and sectors within countries, but also between European countries (IMF, 2021), the instruments established at the EU level were rather flexible in use. A total of €37 billion has been allocated to the Coronavirus Response Investment Initiative to support healthcare systems, small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), and labor markets. The small- and medium-sized enterprises were an important focus in the support offered by the Commission and the European Investment bank (Europese Commissie, n.d.). Especially Poland, Hungary, Italy, Spain, and Romania are the biggest beneficiaries of EU support. Altogether, the EU and its Member States have mobilized 2% EU GDP in fiscal measures with 13% EU GDP in liquidity support (Goniewicz, 2020).

The SURE is one of the most important examples in the approach of the EU. The SURE is the temporary Support to Mitigate Unemployment Risks in Emergency (SURE) instrument which funds national attempts to counter unemployment and protect jobs (Ando et al., 2022) by measures such as the NOW in the Netherlands. The SURE has been made available to all Member States, in the form of a loan, that needed to mobilize significant financial means to fight the negative economic and social consequences of the coronavirus outbreak (Goniewicz, 2020). As a result of these efforts to protect jobs in the European countries, job shedding was contained to about the same as during the Great Financial Crisis, which is remarkable as there has been a much sharper decline in economic activity during the COVID-19 pandemic (Ando et al., 2022). Interestingly whereas Belgium did apply for the SURE, the Netherlands did not.

The Netherlands does receive around €25 billion extra through the Coronavirus Response Investment Initiative to support the SMEs, the healthcare industry and the labor market. Next to this they receive around €6,75 billion in the next two to three years from the Next Generation EU Recovery Plan which does not have to be paid back and is meant to help the economy to recover from the shocks following the crisis. Moreover, in the long run the Netherlands is allowed to use circa €5,6 billion from the Recovery and Resilience Facility (between 2021 and 2023) and €417 million from React-EU (Algemene Rekenkamer, 2021). The last three initiatives are more meant to help the Dutch economy to recover in the long run whereas the first instrument was intended as a short-term instrument.

However, while the EU has helped its member states by providing funds to help counter the socio-economic effects of the pandemic, its further scope of action is rather limited as social policy is a shared competence and not an exclusive competence of the EU. Therefore, as there is a limited legislative competence in the social policy domain the possibilities within EU law to enhance social rights of vulnerable workers are limited (Safradin, De Vries & De Heer, 2021). Whereas the EU has thus focused on, for example, the protection of small- and medium-sized enterprises and on preventing massive unemployment, a focus on the protection of vulnerable groups in society is more difficult to achieve,

as this lies in the competence of the member states themselves. Thus, while the EU has shown a certain commitment to the integration of both women and migrants in European labor markets, as we have seen in the introduction by for example looking at the Social Pillar of Rights and the Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion (both 2016-2020 and 2021-2027), they are unable to push this agenda due to their limited scope of action.

5.3 Conclusion

Just like the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on society, the impact of the support measures is not equally distributed over the different segments of the Dutch society. The focus of the Dutch governmental instruments have been mostly on the compensation of employers for the loss in revenue in order to prevent a massive surge of unemployment. However as companies could only apply for this fund, the NOW-fund, when there was already a loss in revenue of at least 20%, many companies had already cut back on their labor costs, meaning that flexible and temporary employees had already lost their jobs. This is especially true for those jobs that could not be done remotely, are high in contact and not-vital, and as we have seen in the previous chapter, women with a non-western migration background are overrepresented in this type of employment, just as in flexible employment. Therefore, not only was our subgroup more likely to experience a negative impact from the COVID-19 pandemic, the benefits from the governmental support measures were also rather limited. Next to this, whereas there has been support for self-employed persons, the TOZO-fund, this support was limited when compared to the NOW-fund as it only compensated the self-employed up to the social minimum, and only temporary.

On the level of the European Union, funds have been made available which could be used on the national level. As member states are rather diverse, these funds were made in such a way that they could be used in a flexible manner so that member states could decide how they would benefit the most from them. This also meant that the focus of the member states, in this case the Netherlands, was dominant. Moreover, the focus of the EU and the Dutch government were rather compatible as they both made a priority out of the small- and medium-sized enterprises.

All in all, the instruments of both the Dutch government and the European Union lacked an explicit commitment to the wellbeing of the most vulnerable on the labor market, and to the prevention of an increase in inequality. As those in flexible employment have little rights to fall back on, they are rather vulnerable, especially when during a recession they are the first ones to become unemployed.

6. Research Design and Methodology

In answering the research question of this thesis, namely 'How does the COVID-19 pandemic influence the vulnerable position of women with a non-Western migration background on the Dutch labor market?', I used existing literature, data and research. Up until now, the subgroup has been introduced, the barriers which the subgroup faces on the labor market and their labor market position have been presented, and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the instruments of both the government as well as the European Union to counter this impact have been discussed. However when researching a certain subgroup, it is of vital importance to include the perspectives and experience of members of the subgroup in order to create a more complete image of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on them. Moreover, whereas research has been conducted concerning the labor market position and barriers which the subgroup faces prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, and research has been conducted on the impact of the pandemic on women or on migrants, this intersection has not yet been studied into depth. Therefore, the research method that has been chosen in this thesis are a qualitative content analysis of data collected from semi-structured interviews with women from our subgroup, namely women with a first generation non-western migration background. Before the results of these interviews are presented in the next chapter, this chapter aims to justify and shed light on the research design and methods used.

This chapter consists of, first of all, a discussion of the case selection. Secondly, a description of the process and method of data collection. Thirdly, the interview technique will be elaborated upon, followed by the method of analysis, and lastly, this chapter ends with a discussion of the validity and reliability of the methodology and research design.

6.1 Case selection

The choice for the case of the experience of women with a non-western migration background and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on their labor market position in the Netherlands has been informed by multiple factors. As already mentioned, research has shown that both women and migrants have been hit disproportionately by the socio-economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the intersection of these two groups, namely women and persons with a migratory background, is largely absent. Special attention is paid to the barriers which these women experience on the labor market which already existed before the pandemic, and how the pandemic has influenced these barriers and the labor market position of these women. Moreover, the experience of these women with the support of the Dutch government and the European Union (which facilitated governmental support) is also a focus point.

Besides this first factor, arguments have been made by multiple research organizations, already mentioned in the first parts of this thesis, that the inequality on the labor market between persons with a migratory background and persons without a migratory background has grown due to the COVID-19 pandemic in multiple EU countries. One of these reasons are the use of flexible contracts and an overrepresentation of flexible employment among persons with a migratory background. The choice for the Netherlands as the focus of this thesis is therefore not only informed by my proximity to the subgroup, but also by the fact that this country has, as we have already seen, one of the highest number of flexible contracts in the EU. Whereas the Netherlands is thus an extreme, it is informative for other countries who are struggling with the same increase in inequality to look at this case.

Lastly integration of migrants on the labor market is becoming more and more important due to the ageing of the workforce in many Western European countries. Whereas migrants can be a source of the needed labor, this source is often not efficiently used due to a lack of integration into society. The EU has therefore formulated the sustainable integration of migrants into the societies of its member states as a spearpoint. Moreover, the EU has also emphasized the disproportionate effect which the COVID-19 pandemic has had on women.

6.2 Data Acquisition through Qualitative Content Analysis

The research strategy is an in-depth case study method, in which a large body of qualitative data is gathered. In order to answer the research question fourteen semi-structured interviews were conducted, both face to face, via telephone, and via MS Teams. These interviews were held with women belonging to the subgroup, namely women with a non-western migration background who were born outside of the Netherlands. This means that these women are first-generation migrants. The choice to interview these women directly, instead of professionals or experts, has been made to ensure that their experience is the focus of this thesis. This is done due to the reason that most research that has been obtained up until now, research which has been discussed in the previous chapters of this thesis, is of a quantitative nature.

The women that have been interviewed have a diverse background and cover many labor market positions. This has been done in order to see how the COVID-19 pandemic has had an impact on the different segments of the labor market. Four categories can be distinguished, namely 1) employees who are working for an employer, 2) women that are self-employed, 3) women that are in search for work or were until recently searching for a job, and 4) women that find themselves in the integration process. Out of the 14 interviews, 5 interviews were held with women who are employed by an employer, 2 interviews were held with women who are self-employed, 7 interviews were held with women who are searching for or have until recently (not longer than a month ago) been searching for a job, and 2 interviews were held with women in the integration process.

Respondent	Labor market position
R1	Employee
R2	Searching for a job
R3	Searching for a job
R4	Employee
R5	Employee
R6	Employed
R7	Self-employed
R8	Searching for a job
R9	Self-employed
R10	Searching for a job
R11	Employed
R12	Integration process
R13	Integration process
R14	Searching for a job

These interviews were arranged in different ways, namely by approaching organizations such as 'Taal doet Meer' who have started a project named 'Eigen Kracht' in which unemployed persons with a migration background are aided in their search for a job. Besides this the Bibliotheek Utrecht, an organization which encompasses all libraries in the city of Utrecht, organizes office hours for different organizations which help people towards jobs, such as the UWV and the Werkwinkel in Utrecht, but also the municipality of Utrecht has fixed timeslots in some libraries in Utrecht where questions are answered concerning finding employment. By attending these office hours and consequently approaching women from the subgroup, some interviews were arranged. These ways have been used to find women who are searching for a job or who were searching for a job during the pandemic. Employees have been found by addressing women with a non-western migration background in my own social network, for example in my current job or previous job, or by asking persons around me if they knew women with a migratory background who I could interview. Lastly, women who are self-

employed were found by approaching women who own their own businesses and by visiting these businesses.

6.3 Interview Technique

The interviews were semi-structured. A topic list was used as a means to structure the interview (see Appendix A and B for a Dutch and English version). The questions were mostly open-ended, and interviews had a certain flexibility. This is very important as the experience of all women are different and only open-ended questions could capture their experience, whereas the semi-structured nature of the interviews allows for a comparative angle of the analysis, and ensures that all necessary topics are discussed (Bryman, 2012). The interview consisted of 4 topics: 1) an introduction in which the interviewees were asked to introduce themselves and their migratory background, 2) questions about the experience of these women about barriers on the labor market prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, 3) questions on the experienced influence of the COVID-19 pandemic on the labor market position of these women, and 4) the support offered by the government and the EU. This last topic consisted of questions on the visibility of these support measures as well as the way in which they are experienced by the respondent. Moreover, respondents were invited to share their opinions and feedback on the support measures.

All interviewees have been asked and have signed an informed consent form (see Appendix D) in which they agree to a recording of the interview, and to the use of the data in this thesis albeit in an anonymous way, moreover by signing the informed consent form they agreed that they voluntarily take part of the research. These recordings were transcribed, and these transcripts can be made available to the university professors who are supervising this thesis. The transcripts are labelled R1-R14 and the interviews are referenced in the analysis in the same fashion.

6.4 Data analysis

After the interviews were transcribed, the interviews were analyzed with the use of codes. By using codes certain patterns become visible, and can consequently be discussed in the results section. Gibbs (2018) describes coding as the process in which the researcher searches for and identifies concepts and consequently finds relations between them. While the issues or topics that were mentioned by multiple or all respondents were examined in the greatest detail, also specific issues, meaning issues brought up by a smaller section of the respondents are included in the results section in order to create a comprehensive picture of the experience of the respondents.

This process of coding has been done with the use of the software program NVivo, which makes it possible to upload transcripts and consequently manually add codes to certain parts of the transcripts. After the coding is done it is possible to get an overview of the parts of the transcripts that were assigned certain codes and patterns will become visible.

Consequently, a coding scheme (see Appendix C) has been created in order to help organize, categorize and analyze the data and codes which has been gathered from the interviews. The coding scheme includes concepts which were already discussed in the first parts of this thesis and which were translated into the interview topic list. In addition new concepts are added which respondents mentioned on their own due to the flexible nature of the interviews.

6.5 Validity and reliability

The concept of reliability tells us whether the results of a study are repeatable. Validity is about the accuracy of a measure, thus it questions whether the method really measures what it claims to measure (Bryman, 2012).

First of all, as mentioned, reliability is based on the question if the results of a study are repeatable. We can distinguish internal reliability, namely whether another researcher with the same set of previously generated concepts would match them with the data in the same way, and external reliability, concerning the question if another researcher would discover the same themes in a similar setting. This thus concerns the reliability of the analysis of the data and the collection of data. An attempt has been made to optimize the reliability of this research by giving a detailed display of the operationalization, including the topic lists, both in Dutch and English, and by describing in what way the sources have been found and in what way the interviews have taken place. This has contributed to the transparency of this research, and makes it feasible to repeat it. However, a shortcoming to the reliability of this thesis is that the identities of the respondents cannot be made public, due to the reason of anonymity. Moreover, the interviews were semi-structured, which makes an exact repetition of these interviews not possible as the preferences of the researcher are influential (Bryman, 2012). An attempt has been made to counter this shortcoming by providing the coding scheme that has been used in the analysis. However, the coding of data will always remain to some extent subject to interpretation. Therefore, transcripts will be stored and made available when need be.

Besides the issue of reliability, there is the issue of validity. This concept concerns itself with the integrity of the conclusions that derive from the research. Similar to the concept of reliability one can distinguish internal validity and external validity. Internal validity refers to the quality of the match between the theories and the observations, which is accounted for in the results section, and external validity refers to the generalizability of the results (Bryman, 2012). However, many researchers (for example: Golafshani, 2003) have disputed the applicability of this evaluative concept to qualitative research. This type of research has the aim to understand a phenomenon by interpreting its workings. Therefore, this means that per definition the results of this research cannot be directly generalized towards other contexts. In the case of this thesis, the experience of women with a non-western migration background on the Dutch labor market are researched. The experience is specific to the context of the Dutch labor market and cannot be directly generalized towards other countries. However, the experience of the Dutch labor market can inform research on labor markets with similar characteristics, and for example the EU labor market.

In the next section, the results of the interview analysis will be presented.

7. Results

In this chapter the main research findings will be presented. In the previous chapter the methods of data collection of analysis has been introduced, namely semi-structured interviews with women with a first generation non-western migration background and the use of the coding program NVivo to analyze the data that has been gathered through these interviews. In order to create a coherent answer to the main research question, the codes that were discerned in the analysis have been used to create a coding tree (see Appendix C). This coding tree will also be used to structure this chapter. Therefore this chapter consists of 3 parts, all concerning the experiences of our subgroup, namely 1) barriers which the subgroup experienced on the labor market before the COVID-19 pandemic, 2) the experienced impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on their labor markets and labor market barriers, and 3) the financial support offered by the government and the EU to counter the negative socio-economic impact of the pandemic. A distinction between these parts has been made to show which factors had an influence on the labor market position of our subgroup already before the pandemic, how the pandemic impacted these factors and consequently the labor market position of the subgroup, and consequently to show whether or in what way the persons in the subgroup have experienced the impact of the financial instruments that were put forward by the European Union and the Dutch government on their labor market positions.

7.1 Barriers on the labor market before the COVID-19 pandemic

The third chapter includes a discussion of the existing literature on the barriers on the labor market which women with a non-western migration background face when they find themselves already on the labor market or when they are trying to enter it. These labor market barriers have posed an important part of the data that was gathered through the interviews, as the respondents were asked to share their experiences about the four categories of barriers that were distinguished in the third chapter, namely the social network, personal barriers, support offered to these women by (governmental organizations), and lastly, barriers on the demand side of the labor market. These experiences will be presented in the first section of this chapter, starting of with the barriers and opportunities that a social network can offer women with a non-western migration background in the four different labor market positions.

Social network

As has been mentioned, the social network was already discerned in chapter 3 of this thesis as very important in finding employment. Research has shown that a social network can be either a barrier in finding employment, for example when it is normal not to work as most persons in your social network do not work either, but a social network can function as a motivator as well. For example, when persons in your social network do have a job, they are in a better position to also help other persons find employment. On top of that, when the majority of the persons in your social network work, this can function as a motivator for persons that do not work, and normalizes searching for a job. Especially contact between the subgroup and persons without a migration background were found to be an important factor in finding employment. While it was confirmed by the experiences of the respondents that the social network was very important, many respondents (R5, R6, R8, R9, R11, R12, R13, R14) have experienced support not from persons without a migration background, but from persons with the same migration background.

Especially in the first period after arrival in the Netherlands it was experienced to be important to have persons who speak the same language or who are originally from the same country. One respondent (R13) explained that she and her friends, who were from the same country of origin and found each other via Facebook groups, were helping each other to find a job by searching for job offers on websites for each other. Another respondent, respondent 14 even mentioned that this support was necessary and she stated that she and her friends needed each other and found each other to survive together as Dutch persons do not seem to have the time for new friends which they need to help. Respondent

9, who has an Iraqi background, explained that while they did not know their Iraqi friends already in Iraq they found each other in the Netherlands because they spoke the same language and that made the transition to another country easier.

However, interestingly there is a difference between women who already had families connections in the Netherlands upon arrival and women who came alone or with their partner and/or children and did not have any family connections yet. Women who came to the Netherlands, whether alone or with a partner and/or children, and who already had family connections in the Netherlands tended to depend on these family connections for support and tended not to reach out to a bigger community, whereas those who did not already have a family connection in the Netherlands found support from a community of persons with the similar migration background. When asked about their social network, women who already had family connections in the Netherlands, especially in the first years after arrival (R1, R4, R6) but also after living for a long time in the Netherlands (R2, R3, R8, R10, R11), described their families as their entire social network. However, some of the respondents who did not have any family connections upon arrival mentioned that as they were not able to have immediate contact with persons with the same migratory background, who spoke the same language, this had a negative impact on their social wellbeing (R5, R13, R14) due to a lack of social contact.

The respondents who were already in the Netherlands for a longer period of time stated that their social network still predominantly consists often of women with a migration background (R6, R7, R8, R9, R10, R11, R14), and many respondents (R8, R10, R11, R12, R13, R14) stated that they found their jobs 'via via', which means with the help of a person in their social network who knows other persons that are searching to hire someone. Most respondents, both working or searching for a job, said that their environment mainly consists of persons who are working (R4, R5, R6, R7, R8, R10, R11, R13, R14), and some respondents explicitly stated that they were encouraged by their social network to work (R4 and R14) or that it was normalized by their family to work so that's why they expected it also from themselves (R11).

Personal barriers

Besides social network, the literature has shown that personal barriers are also very important in determining the barriers on the labor market for our subgroup. These personal barriers range from language barrier, caretaking duties, mental wellbeing, to other barriers such as age.

Almost all women who migrated to the Netherlands as an adult pointed towards being able to proficiently speak the Dutch language as an important barrier to their integration onto the labor market (R1, R2, R3, R5, R7, R8, R9, R10, R12, R13, R14), some called it even the most important barrier (R12, R13). An insufficient proficiency in the Dutch language is not only influential on the labor market position of these women, but it also has effect on their mental wellbeing. Women without family connections in the Netherlands pointed towards a certain feeling of loneliness which they experienced as they were not able to talk to other people in the Netherlands at the beginning of their stay (R1, R12, R13). There is also an instance where one of the respondents referred to the husband of a friend who migrated to the Netherlands and struggled to learn the language, who was then consequently not able to find a job, and therefore suffered from depressed feelings (R6).

Mental wellbeing, not only due to loneliness or an inability to work as mentioned in the last paragraph, has been mentioned also by other respondents, especially when they had not been in the Netherlands for a long time. One respondent mentioned that she suffered from excessive stress after she had fled her country to come to the Netherlands (R12) which ensured a delay in her integration, and another respondent found it hard to get used to the Dutch climate, did not have any family here and was homesick, therefore she was unwilling to learn the language and find a job in the first year of her arrival (R1). Besides this, another respondent mentioned that she suffered from a low self-esteem when she was unable to find a job in the Netherlands for which she has the qualifications, and needed to

continue working in underpaid jobs. This made her stop searching for a job on her level until she got help from an organization that helps women with a migration background to find a job and help her restore her self-esteem (R14).

Some women have also experienced an excessive workload due to caretaking duties which are consequently a strain on their mental wellbeing (R11). These care responsibilities also make it harder for some women to integrate into society and thus on the labor market. Respondent 5 fled to the Netherlands from Iran as a political refugee without a partner and with two children, aged 2 and 14. She did not have any social network which she could fall back on for support as she could rely on her family to take care of her children in Iran. This meant that she had to combine learning a language, and taking care of her children, making it harder to find a job. Moreover, there are also women who came to the Netherlands but put off their integration on the Dutch labor market because they were first having children, this is true for respondent 7 who came here in 1999 from Sudan and now owns her own business, but it is also true for respondent 10 who fled here from Armenia via Ukraine where she had studied economy at the university. Right after she obtained her degree, she was forced to flee, then was not able to use her diploma in Ukraine, and when she came here she had children and stayed home for them. Now it is too long since she has studied, and she is not able to find a job with her degree. Care responsibilities are, however, not only about housework or taking care of your children. Respondent 3 took on the role of caregiver for her mother when she got sick and was therefore unable to work for a long period. This makes it very difficult for her to find a good job as there is a long period unaccounted for on her resume.

Support government and municipality

Support offered by the government and municipalities, for example during the integration process but also later on, for example during the process of finding employment, can offer support to the subgroup to enter the labor market. However, as already discussed in the literature, support has been offered in varying degrees to different types of migrants, and also in the different integration laws over time.

The respondents have experienced the support given by the municipality in different ways. Respondent 1 is very positive about the support that was offered by the municipality, while the communication was not always clear and she relied on her social network for information about the integration process, an experience shared by respondent 12, she did receive both help in the form of language education and in support to find a job. She was offered a language internship at the Bibliotheek Utrecht, an organization in Utrecht which encompasses all city libraries, where she could learn the language and get work experience. Respondent 12 has a similar experience as she has been offered both support in the form of language education and a consultant who has helped her to find a job. While she was very positive about this support, respondent 5 stated that the only bad experience that she had during the integration process was with an integration coach who pushed her to find employment as a cleaner. She felt that this integration coach pushed her towards this job as she was a migrant and did not know the language proficiently. However, respondent 5 was a trained child psychologist in Iraq and already had work experience, she therefore wanted to improve her language skills, find employment which is relevant to her work field, and slowly work towards a job on her level of training.

A difference in the degree of support offered to migrants was also based on the type of migrant, a 'gezinsmigrant', meaning a migrant of family reunification, are offered less support by the municipalities than regular migrants. Among the respondents there are two women who came as a gezinsmigrant to the Netherlands and one woman whose husband came to the Netherlands, and who thus experienced the integration procedure as a referent. The woman who acted as a referent, (R4) so who was responsible for the integration process of her husband, shared the experience that she had to accompany her husband to every meeting that he had with either the municipality or other organizations. Also, respondent 6 mentioned that many of her friends have a Turkish nationality and

that their husbands came to the Netherlands as a gezinsmigrant and that these women were all very busy with the integration process. Respondent 1 and respondent 14 are both gezinsmigranten themselves. Respondent 1 recalls that her partner had a great responsibility in her integration process and that she was very much dependent on him in the first period after her arrival to the Netherlands. Respondent 14 recalls that she was not offered much support by the municipality and was only offered a language education, but not an integration coach. However, there is also a difference between the different time frames in which migrants through family reunification were offered support. Respondent 1 came to the Netherlands during a time where an older integration act was in force which, even though the respondent was reliant on the partner, offered more support in terms of language training and support towards a job. Respondent 14 has come to the Netherlands more recently, and more importantly, when another integration act was in force which offered less support.

Besides support in finding a job, another important aspect of the integration process is language education. Respondent 1 looks back on her language education in a very positive way. As she learned the language quickly she was offered, as already mentioned, a language traineeship at the Bibliotheek Utrecht. This was, however, an exceptional experience among the respondents. Many respondents (R2, R3, R5, R10, R12, R13, R14) see the language education offered by the municipality as limited, and chose to continue their language education. This was done voluntarily and with the help of societal organizations. These societal organizations prove to be very important in the integration of the respondents on the labor market, especially those who have come to the Netherlands in the last 10 years (R12, R13, R14).

Labor market barriers

Often, women from the subgroup had already obtained diplomas in their country of origin. However, it was not always possible for them to use these diplomas. As already mentioned, respondent 10 had studied economics at the University in Armenia, but because she had to flee and had children, she did not use her diploma for 30 years and has no work experience in her field. It is now not possible for her to use this diploma in the Netherlands. There is also the case of respondent 2 who fled to the Netherlands from Iraq 24 years ago. She had obtained a diploma in Iraq, but was unable to bring it with her. During the war the university where she obtained the diploma burned down, making it impossible for her to receive her diploma. There are also respondents who have their diplomas, but whose diplomas were not recognized. Respondent 13 got a degree at the university of Istanbul in philosophy. Her degree qualified her in Turkey to work as a secondary school teacher, however in the Netherlands she cannot use this diploma to work as a teacher. Moreover, Respondent 9 comes from Iraq where she followed an education to become a hairdresser, however she was not able to use this diploma in the Netherlands as the hairstyle techniques are very different here. Therefore she had to go back to school and learn the European hairstyles.

There are also some instances where diplomas were recognized in the Netherlands, in some cases partly as were the cases of respondent 1 and 5, meaning that a choice had to be made what diploma could be recognized or that only a few years of a bachelor's degree were recognized. Respondent 1 came to the Netherlands from Morocco at the age of 24 and had already studied in Morocco to become a teacher. However, she could not get her diploma recognized, so she followed another education in the Netherlands. Respondent 5 obtained a degree in child psychology in Iraq but was only able to get it recognized up until the second year of her bachelor's degree. Therefore she had to get an additional education in the Netherlands to be able to carry out her profession.

In some cases the diplomas were recognized fully, as is the case of respondent 12 who has a bachelor's degree and a master's degree in psychology which she obtained from the University of Marmara in Turkey. She is able to use these degrees to work as a psychologist in the Netherlands, however she has fled to the Netherlands only two years ago and is still in the process of learning the language. Respondent 14, was also able to get her diploma fully recognized. She came to the Netherlands from

Venezuela almost 10 years ago and has a bachelor's degree in engineering. However, whereas a bachelor's degree was sufficient in Venezuela to find work in her field of expertise, this is not true in the Netherlands. She states that in the Netherlands she needs a master's degree to find good employment, but the university fee for obtaining a master's degree is 40.000 euros for a non-EU citizen, which she could not afford.

Besides the matter of (full) recognition of diplomas on the Dutch labor market, there is also the issue of labor market discrimination. This discrimination is not only focused on migration background, but also on gender. Respondent 4 came to the Netherlands at the age of 10. In the Netherlands you go to primary school from the age of 4 until the age of 12. After this period, a test, called the CITO test, in combination with the judgement of the child's teacher, decides what level of secondary education a child should follow. Respondent 4 also made that test, but her result was never shared with her. She wanted to go to the same school as her brother, this was the 'mavo' (general secondary education), but her teacher did not agree to that. He told her to choose between the so-called 'huishoudschool', a lower education which primarily prepares one to be able to carry out domestic chores, or the 'LBO', which is a lower secondary education. His argumentation was that she would get married anyway so that there was no point in sending her to another school. This was not the only time she experienced discrimination. Later when she applied for the job she has currently been working in for over 30 years, during her interview the interviewer remarked that he hoped that she would not get married soon, because if she would get married then she would have children and stop working, and they had to find another person for the position.

Two respondents also mentioned that they were not hired because they wear an Islamic headscarf. Respondent 11 applied for a job with a bank but she was not hired because she was not representative as she wore an Islamic headscarf. Moreover, respondent 11 experienced the same thing when she wanted to become a hairdresser. Both the institution which offered the education and the internships she needed to arrange before applying told her she could not become a hairdresser if she wore an Islamic headscarf as she needed to be a representative for her function. Respondent 6 has a similar experience. At the age of 18 she applied to a call center and was invited for an interview based on her cv. She was asked together with a group of other applicants to come in for an interview. While she was waiting with the others, she was picked out of the group and asked to leave because they wouldn't hire someone with an Islamic headscarf.

Respondent 9, who fled to the Netherlands from Iraq and who owns her own hair salon, has never experienced labor market discrimination herself. However, she states that she knows that many of her interns that have a migration background, have experienced it. She has heard many experiences of interns at other hair saloons where they were only allowed to clean up and are not allowed to have contact with the customers. Also her sister has a similar experience. While she is a fully trained hairdresser with work experience, she was not allowed to help customers.

While these examples are visible occurrences of labor market discrimination there are also women who are not sure whether they have been discriminated against as it is not always very clear why one is not invited for a job interview. Four respondents (R3, R12, R13, R14) suspect that they have been discriminated against during the application process, but are not entirely sure about it.

7.2 The experienced impact of the COVID-19 pandemic

In the previous paragraph the experiences of the subgroup concerning the barriers on the labor market before the COVID-19 pandemic were discussed. As these barriers are also influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic, it is important to show how the subgroup has experienced these barriers during the pandemic. This section will start with the barriers that were experienced by the respondents in all four labor market positions. Therefore the first part of this section looks at the impact of the COVID-19

pandemic on social network, caretaking responsibilities, and mental wellbeing. In the second part of this section a distinction will be made between the four labor market positions that have been discerned in this thesis, namely 1) respondents who are employed by an employer, 2) respondents who are self-employed, 3) respondents who are or were in the integration process during the COVID-19 pandemic, and 4) respondents who are or were searching for a job during the COVID-19 pandemic. This has been done in order to see how the respondents have experienced the impact of the pandemic on their specific labor market position.

Social network

Many respondents experienced that the pandemic made it harder to invest in their social network. Especially the respondents that came to the Netherlands during the COVID-19 pandemic (R12 and R13) mentioned that the COVID-19 pandemic, and the imposed social distancing measures, ensured an extra barrier to their integration. Moreover, they experienced a certain feeling of loneliness due to this. Also women who were searching for a job experienced the social distancing measures as an extra barrier which made it harder to use their social network in order to find new employment. Respondent 3 mentioned that it was hard to find new contacts and that she only had contact with her immediate family as people were frightened and cautious, which made it also harder to find new employment. Respondent 2 had a similar experience, and also mentioned the fear of the virus. Moreover, the social distancing measures following the pandemic were not necessarily only a barrier to their labor market position, but more also had an impact on the mental wellbeing of some of the respondents due to a loss of social contact. For example, respondent 10 mentioned that the loss of social contact was the hardest impact of the pandemic on her. Respondent 11 also experienced the loss of social contact as an extra strain on her mental wellbeing. Her mental wellbeing was already impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic due to extra care tasks as the responsibility of homeschooling her children mainly fell on her, and she had to work from home. On top of that, she could not use her social network to unwind and relax. In the end, respondent 11 suffered from a burnout which can partly be explained by this. In this example, it becomes visible how the social network, caretaking duties and mental wellbeing are interconnected.

Extra care responsibilities

Other women with younger children also reported extra caretaking duties, a few employed respondents with younger children (R1 and R4) even explicitly stated that it became more difficult for them to carry out their job due to the extra caretaking duties caused by the pandemic or the measures taken to counter its health risks. Four respondents took on the extra responsibility of their children's homeschooling, namely respondent 1, 2, 10 and 11. Respondent 6 experienced extra caretaking duties not because she was now responsible for her children's homeschooling, but because all children and her husband were now also at home, she started facilitating breakfasts, lunches and snacks, whereas she did not do this before the pandemic. She noticed that the line between her professional life and her private life became more blurred as she also started doing domestic chores during her work hours. Lastly, respondent 4 mentioned that she struggled with the care of her children when they were infected with the COVID-19 virus, which they were multiple times, and that it was hard for her to continue her job during these periods.

Mental wellbeing

As already mentioned, both a lack of social network and extra caretaking duties have been experienced by some of the respondents as an extra strain on their mental wellbeing. This can be the case due to loneliness, the need for human contact, and because social contact can be a means of relaxation which was needed in times of increased caretaking responsibilities. In two other instances the mental wellbeing was also mentioned. Respondent 7, who owns her own restaurant, mentioned that it is especially hard on her to see how the pandemic impacted other businesses, and that it was stressful to see other businesses going down. Moreover, respondent 5 experienced a sense of insecurity at the

beginning of the pandemic as she was afraid of the way in which the COVID-19 pandemic would impact our lives and society in general.

We have seen that the experienced decline in social contact, increased caretaking responsibilities and negative impact on mental wellbeing are shared by the respondents from all four labor market positions. However, there are also effects which solely experienced within a certain labor market position. Therefore, in this second section the four labor market positions are discussed separately.

Labor market positions

First of all, the self-employed portion of the respondents were hit quite harshly by the pandemic. Respondent 7 owns her own restaurant and was forced to close her restaurant during the lockdowns, and could only offer take-out. Respondent 9, who owns her own hair salon, was also obliged to close her business due to government regulations, and as she could not offer any other service and could not work remotely, she lost all of her income.

The respondents who were applying for a job were also hit quite harshly as it became more difficult to find employment, and some of them lost their jobs due to the pandemic. Respondent 14 had just finished a software education before the start of the pandemic and she had multiple job interviews lined up for the beginning of March 2020, but they were all cancelled due to COVID-19. First as it was not possible to do job interviews face-to-face, and afterwards because there was a hiring stop. Instead of working in her own field, she decided to keep working in retail. However, she was only offered temporary contracts, and as soon as lockdown measures were enforced and shops were closed, she lost her job. This happened multiple times. She also mentions that it was hard for her to search for a job in the work field that she has studied for as there weren't many job openings, and as many people had lost their jobs there was much competition and people accepted jobs that were beneath their level. Also respondent 10 lost her job due to the pandemic. She was a cleaner for a small firm, and when the COVID-19 pandemic started in the Netherlands, this firm lost all its clients. Even though she had a permanent contract, she lost her job. Also respondent 2 and 3 mentioned that it was hard to find employment during the pandemic. They turned to the municipality of Utrecht to ask for support in finding employment, but this was more difficult than before the pandemic, as contact with the municipality was difficult and it took a long time to get a reply.

This difficulty to call on (governmental) organizations for support is also experienced by the respondents who were in the integration procedure during the pandemic. Respondent 12 mentioned that it was more difficult to get in contact with the COA (Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers) who are responsible for the reception and guidance of asylum seekers in the Netherlands. Normally, she would have to visit this organization monthly to sign certain documents, but now it was not possible to visit the COA physically, and other forms of contact seemed to be difficult to achieve. Moreover, due to the COVID-19 pandemic there was a delay in obtaining her residence permit which meant that it took a longer time until she could start her integration procedure. She wanted to start her integration into the Netherlands, but was unable to do so. The integration into society of respondent 13 was also held back by the COVID-19 pandemic, but more because she was now unable to go outside and practice her language skills which she learned in her online classes. During the COVID-19 pandemic, language classes were taught online, there were certain drawbacks to that as internet connections are not always stable, and possibilities for holding conversations were limited as online classes tend to be a bit more static. Besides this, respondent 13 found it difficult that what she learned in her online class, for example how to do groceries in Dutch, was not possible as social contact was kept to a minimum.

Of the respondents that were employed during the pandemic, most had permanent contracts. Seven respondents were working for an employer when the pandemic started, of whom five had a permanent employment, and two did not. Those who had permanent employment were able to keep their job,

whereas those who had temporary employment lost their jobs due to the pandemic. These are respondent 10 and 14, who were discussed in the last paragraph. Most of the respondents who had permanent employment (4 out of 5: R1, R4, R5, R6) did not see an effect on their job security. However, respondent 11 had a different experience. At one point during the pandemic she was infected with the virus, and became very sick. She was unable to work for a long time, and this was combined with burn out symptoms caused by an excessive workload, which can be partly explained by the extra care responsibilities due to the homeschooling and care for her children in combination with remote working. Even though she had a permanent contract, her absence from work caused for a greater job insecurity and the possibility of losing her job. Remote working was not only experienced by respondent 11, but by all respondents who had a permanent contract during the pandemic (R1, R4, R5, R6, R11). Respondent 1, 4 and 6 mentioned that this impacted their job performances in a negative way.

7.3 Financial support from the government and the EU

As discussed in the fifth chapter of this thesis, policy instruments have been designed by both the European Union and the Dutch government in order to counter the negative socioeconomic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic that have been discussed in the last section. The experiences of the subgroup with these instruments are rather diverse as the different labor market positions were impacted by this support in different ways, and some even not at all.

Self-employed and the TOZO-fund

Persons who are self-employed were among those that were hit the hardest by the pandemic. Consequently, a support measure was designed on which they were able to fall back on, namely the so-called TOZO-fund (Tijdelijke Overbruggingsregeling Zelfstandige Ondernemers). This measure was offered to self-employed persons who experienced a loss of income due to the COVID-19 measures, and was meant as a means to supplement their income to the social minimum. This social minimum was set to €1052 euros a month for a single person and €1503 for a couple. The first TOZO started in March of 2020 and covered a maximum of 3 months after which one had to reapply to continue receiving the support. The last support ran until the end of June in 2021. Both of the respondents that are self-employed have received the TOZO-fund. However, their experiences with this support measure are very different.

Both respondents that are self-employed have their own business, both businesses were obliged to close due to the government regulations. Respondent 7 has her own restaurant which meant that she was not able to have persons dining inside during most of the pandemic, but that she was able to start offering take away meals to make up for a part of the income that was lost. Respondent 9, who owns a hair salon, was not able to offer any other service, and was unable to work from home. Consequently, at the height of the pandemic when lockdowns were imposed, the hair salon was obligated to close down. Both respondents, as mentioned, relied on the TOZO-fund for support. Respondent 7, the restaurant owner, has experienced this support in a very positive manner. She states that she does not know whether she was able to keep her business if she was not helped out by the TOZO-fund. She has received the TOZO fund during the entire pandemic, as long as she was able to receive it, and does not have to pay a certain part of it back.

Respondent 9, on the other hand, has experienced the TOZO-fund very differently, and states that the amount of support which they were offered in the form of the TOZO-fund was not sufficient to cover the costs of her business. Her business is a family business where both her parents, and two of her sisters are also working. The amount of money that was granted to them through the TOZO-fund was not sufficient to cover their rent, let alone costs for utilities, such as water and electricity. Moreover, during the pandemic they were unable to grant themselves the salaries which they normally receive. Moreover, in this case the TOZO fund had to be paid back to the government. Respondent 7 argues

that she was unaware that they had to pay back the TOZO-fund as they were not properly informed by the municipality. This was also the reason why they stopped applying for the fund after two or three times. They have to start paying back the TOZO-fund from the beginning of July onwards, ensuring that the negative effects from the pandemic are not yet over in this case. Respondent 7 is rather critical of this instrument both due to the fact that she was not properly informed about its terms, but mostly about the amount of support, which was not sufficient to cover all expenses of the business, let alone to pay the salaries of her family. She argues that the support for the self-employed should have been revised and altered depending on the type of business, a family business is not the same as someone that works as a freelancer.

Respondent 7 has heard similar experiences in her social network as many of her clients are self-employed and have suffered during the pandemic, and are now in the process of paying back the support which they have received. Also other respondents have seen that the self-employed have been hit quite harshly by the pandemic, and heard negative experiences about the TOZO-fund. For example respondent 1 has persons in her social network who are self-employed, who have told her that they experienced a great loss of income, and were unable to make up for this loss by the TOZO-fund. Moreover, respondent 4 has friends in her social network who have taken over a restaurant during the pandemic, and were not eligible to receive the TOZO-fund at all, as this fund was only designed for persons who were already working for themselves before the pandemic and could prove a certain loss of income. However, these persons still had to pay their employees, and have currently not yet recovered from the financial setback.

Employed and the NOW-fund

Besides the TOZO-fund, there is also the NOW-fund which was designed for employers as a means to compensate their loss in revenue in order to be able to continue paying their employees and prevent a loss of jobs. All companies with a loss of revenue of at least 20% can ask for a reimbursement of their loss to a maximum of 90% of their revenue. Remarkably, the respondents that were working for an employer during the COVID-19 pandemic (R1, R4, R5, R6, R11) are not aware of this support measures by any other means than through news channels, and are not sure whether their employer was offered governmental support.

While the respondents working for an employer were familiar with the support to some extent, respondents that were searching for a job (R2, R3, R8, R10, R14) were often not aware of any support that was offered at all. Moreover, when asking the respondents that were aware of any support that was offered, all respondents mentioned that they only knew about the support offered by the national level, and that the support offered on the EU level was not something that they were aware of, rendering the EU level rather invisible in this matter.

7.4 Conclusion

Looking back on this chapter the main research question has been answered with the use of three sub questions. The main research question: 'How does the COVID-19 pandemic influence the vulnerable position of women with a non-Western migration background on the Dutch labor market?', has been researched by asking the respondents about the barriers on the labor market which they experienced already before the pandemic, informing us about the 'vulnerable position of women with a non-Western migration background' already before the pandemic. Next, the respondents were asked about the experienced impact of the pandemic on these barriers and directly on their labor market position. Lastly, the attempts by the European Union and government to negate the negative socioeconomic effects of the pandemic on the vulnerable labor market position of women with a non-western migration background were discussed with the respondents in order to see whether and in what way they have experienced this support.

When looking at the results that have been discussed in this chapter, it becomes clear that the experienced impact of the pandemic by women with a non-western migration background is very diverse, and moreover, that their experience can in some cases also be shared with other groups in society. However, there are certain aspects which signal a specific impact of the pandemic on the subgroup.

Looking at the first section, meaning the experienced barriers on the labor market before the COVID-19 pandemic, factors such as a language barrier, governmental support in the integration process, qualification of diplomas, and labor market discrimination are of specific importance due to the migratory background of the women in the subgroup, and are not necessarily shared with persons without a migratory background. The language barrier was, for example, identified by most of the respondents as the most important barrier on the labor market. Furthermore, when looking at the governmental support offered during the integration process and the aspect of labor market discrimination, we can see not only how migratory background is of importance, but instead how the two aspects of womanhood and migratory background intersect and create a unique experience. This can be seen by the experiences of a 'gezinsmigrant'. A gezinsmigrant, a migrant through family reunification, receives significantly less support by the government, and this type of migrant is, according to the Netherlands Institute for Social Research more often a woman than a man (CBS Statline, 2018). Moreover, the instances of labor market discrimination experienced by respondents was often based on both gender discrimination and discrimination due to the migration status of the respondents. For example, some of the women were denied employment due to wearing an Islamic headscarf, which is both a symbol of femininity and the Islam, and there were also cases of pregnancy discrimination where the idea was prevalent that female migrants would not return to work once they got married and started having children, a stereotype that is not only informed by stereotypes about gender, but also by certain cultural norms.

Factors such as social network, mental wellbeing and care responsibilities, on the other hand, are barriers which can also apply to other segments of society, for example women without a migration background. However, these factors play out differently due to the migratory background of the subgroup. Mental wellbeing, for example, can be a barrier to the integration of any person on the labor market due to multiple reasons. However, a trauma that was experienced by the need to flee one's country of birth or a feeling of homesickness are specific to persons with a migration background. Besides this, care responsibilities are also experienced by persons outside of the subgroup, both by parents but also by children taking care of their parents. However, women in the subgroup, especially during the first period after arrival, do not have an extensive social network to fall back on which can help them to alleviate some of the care tasks. Besides this, a lack of social network is also a possible barrier to the labor market which is shared among a bigger population than the subgroup. However, specific to the subgroup is the fact that this social network often consists of persons with a similar migratory background as they were able to speak the same language and provide them with the information on their integration and job opportunities after arrival in the Netherlands. However, this was not only the case in the first years after arrival but also after many years of staying in the Netherlands.

The second section of the analysis, the experienced impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the labor market position of the subgroup, was divided by the impact felt by all respondents and the differences between the respondents in the different labor market positions. Many of the experienced negative consequences of the pandemic by all respondents are not necessarily specific to the subgroup: extra care responsibilities due to the homeschooling of children, taking care of children who contracted the virus, and taking on extra domestic chores due to a blurring between the professional and private life as many started to work from home. These consequences can also be experienced by women without a migration background, and are thus gendered in a certain way. This is also true for the negative impact of these extra care responsibilities on mental wellbeing. The impact of the pandemic on the

ability of the respondents to use their social network, and job insecurity, are also not necessarily specific to the subgroup. However, when for example looking at the job security of persons with a flexible contract, a type of contract where persons with a migration background are overrepresented in, it is important to note that all respondents with a flexible contract lost their job due to the pandemic. After losing their jobs, they had a hard time finding new employment during the pandemic, and most have only recently found new employment, but once again this employment is of a flexible nature. This means that their position on the labor market is still rather vulnerable. Besides this, the inability of the respondents to use their social network is an experience that is shared with the rest of society, however, when looking at for example women who relied on their social network to alleviate some of their care responsibilities or women who had just come to the Netherlands and had an increased need for their social network or a need to build up a social network in the first place, this impact plays out differently. This last group of women felt the impact of the pandemic also in other ways, such as the difficulty of learning the language due to online classes and fewer possibilities to practice their language due to social distancing measures. While these experiences are specific to the subgroup due to the migratory background, the other three labor market positions experienced the pandemic more or less in the same way as other persons with the same labor market positions outside of the subgroup.

The third and last section of the analysis concerns the experienced support by the government and EU in order to counter the negative socioeconomic impacts on society, and the negative impacts of the pandemic on the labor market positions of the respondents. Both on the national and supranational level there has been no specific support offered to the subgroup, and the experienced support is not specific to our subgroup because of their migration background or because they are women. Most respondents were not aware of any possible support, and especially the NOW-fund on the national level was not familiar or only through news channels. Even the employed section of the respondents were not aware whether their employers had applied for the fund, and thus were not aware whether they had indirectly been affected by the fund. Only the self-employed respondents experienced a certain level of support in the form of the TOZO-fund, albeit in two very different ways: one positive and the other rather critical. Whereas the support offered on the national level was visible to some degree, albeit mostly through news channels and not by own experience, the support offered by the EU was not visible and no respondent had any knowledge about it.

8. Discussion and conclusion

8.1 Conclusion

This thesis has made the experience of women with a non-western migration background in the Netherlands with regards to their labor market position and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic visible. The experience of this group was omitted from existing research as a focus was primarily put on either women in general or persons with a migration background. In line with the theory of intersectionality it has been argued that exactly the intersection between womanhood and migratory background ensures that the impact of the pandemic is experienced in a distinct way. The value of an intersectional approach in which the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the labor market position of women with a non-western migration background is researched is twofold. In the academic field there is a call for a more intersectional approach in the social sciences (Maestriperi, 2021), while at the same time policy makers on both the national and the level of the European union are in need for ways to counter the inequality on the labor market in an intersectional manner.

In making the experience of women with a non-western migration background with regards to the impact of the pandemic on their labor market position visible, the following research question was answered:

How does the COVID-19 pandemic influence the vulnerable position of women with a non-Western migration background on the Dutch labor market?

This question was divided into five subquestions, namely:

1. What are the characteristics of this group of women?
2. What factors influence (or cause) the vulnerable position of these women on the labor market?
3. What are the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Dutch labor market and specifically on the sectors that typically employs our subgroup?
4. What Dutch and European instruments and policies have been used to counter the negative consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic?
5. What is the experience of the researched group?

In this conclusion the main research question will be answered by directly integrating the answers from these subquestions as separate conclusions have already been given at the end of every chapter.

In order to see what causes the vulnerable position of the subgroup before the pandemic and how the pandemic has impacted this position, the theory of Stavenuiter et al. (2020) has been used. Stavenuiter et al. (2020) have formulated barriers which women experience on the labor market. These barriers are divided between four different levels, namely 1) the personal level, 2) the social network, 3) the demand side of the labor market, and 4) the support offered by (governmental) organizations. In addition to the theory of Stavenuiter et al. these barriers have been complemented by research on the specific barriers that migrants face on the labor market, and by research on the impact of the pandemic.

According to this research, the most important barrier which these women generally experience is on the personal level, namely the language barrier. Language proficiency is very important when finding a job, and for creating a social network at the first period after arrival. At the same time, this is one of the most difficult barriers to overcome. Besides this, the personal level also consists of the barriers of mental wellbeing influenced, for example, by trauma because of the need to flee from a war or due to a feeling of homesickness. Lastly, care responsibilities for children or other family members make it harder to find or carry out work. These barriers are not separate from one another but overlap and

interact with one another as many women with children have reported that their care duties was a strain on their mental wellbeing, just like a lack of social network can be. During the COVID-19 pandemic respondents reported extra care responsibilities due to the homeschooling of their children and the closure of daycare facilities and the inability to fall back on their social network due to social distancing measures. In this thesis, we have seen that these extra care responsibilities mostly fall on women. This means that the impact of the pandemic, and in this case the extra care responsibilities caused by social distancing measures, impacts women disproportionately. Moreover, the mental wellbeing of the subgroup has been affected by these extra care responsibilities as well as concerns about job security and uncertainty about the way in which the pandemic would develop.

The social network is the second level of the theory of Stavenuite r et al. The literature acknowledges the social network to be essential in finding employment and found it to be beneficial when the social network consisted of persons without a migration background. The social network was in the literature pinpointed as essential in finding employment and especially social contact with persons without a migration background was seen as beneficial. The experience of the respondents has shown, however, that most women have a social network that is build up out of women with a similar migratory background. This is the case for women who have just arrived in the Netherlands as well as for women who have been here for more than a decade. These women are actively searching for each other, sometimes even through social media channels, and help one another to find employment and navigate the Dutch society and labor market. Their labor market strategy is thus not focused on finding persons without a migratory background, but by combining forces and helping each other out. Interestingly, this strategy was not feasible during the pandemic due to the social distancing measures that were invoked. This was especially hard on the women that were in the integration process during the pandemic, as they were unable to build a social network on which they could fall back, and on the women that were searching for employment. Social media became more important in this regard.

On the third level, the demand side of the labor market, two important factors have been identified with regards to the subgroup, namely labor market discrimination and the qualification of diploma's. Labor market discrimination was experienced in many ways, for example women being denied employment or an internship due to wearing an Islamic headscarf, but also in the form of assumptions based on the stereotype that migrant women will get married and stay home for the children which led to a lower school advice or a warning during a job interview. We can see here that the experience of discrimination is both informed by the migratory background, but also by the fact that the subgroup consists out of women. The second factor in this level is the qualification of diplomas. Many respondents had an issue with this as some respondents only got their diplomas qualified partly, others not at all, and there were also respondents that were unable to bring their diplomas to the Netherlands due to a war.

The fourth level concerns the support offered by (governmental) organizations. This support was mostly experienced during the integration procedure through language courses, and in some cases in the form of support in finding employment. The support was experienced by the subgroup in different ways depending on both the integration act under which they had to integrate, meaning the time frame in which they migrated to the Netherlands, and the type of migrant they were. A 'gezinsmigrant', a migrant through family reunification was offered less support than an asylum migrant. As around 2/3 of the total number of migrants through family reunification are women, this means that this integration act plays out in gender unequal ways. Besides this, most respondents experienced the language education that was included in the integration process to be insufficient to be fully able to participate in society, let alone carry out their profession on the same level as they used to in their country of departure. This meant that they voluntarily sought help from other societal organizations in order to become properly proficient in the Dutch language. The support from (governmental) organizations was hindered due to social distancing measures during the pandemic. Especially women in the integration process suffered from less support due to the pandemic as some experienced a

certain delay in their integration process due to a lack of contact with the government or municipality. Moreover, language courses were now taught online. Also women that were searching for a job but who were not in the integration process experienced less contact due to the fact that it was more difficult to research the organizations that would normally help them find employment, such as the municipality.

Besides the respondents that were in the integration process, the pandemic has also impacted other labor market positions in a specific way. Such as the self-employed section of the respondents that experienced a substantial loss of income due to governmental regulations that obliged them to (partially) close their businesses. Moreover, research has shown that especially a person that works in flexible employment in a non-vital profession where remote work is not possible and which is high-contact, such as for example a cleaner or a shop assistant, were vulnerable during the pandemic. Moreover, research has also shown that persons with a non-western migration background are overrepresented in this type of job. This was also reflected by the respondents. All respondents who had flexible jobs before the pandemic lost their job due to the pandemic. During the pandemic they had a hard time finding employment due to the social distancing measures and the small number of vacancies. When they were interviewed all these women had found new employment, however all of them had a flexible contract. This means that their position on the labor market is at least as vulnerable now as it was before the pandemic. Data has also shown that while persons with a non-western migration background were already overrepresented in flexible contracts before the pandemic, this share has only increased after the pandemic. On the other hand, persons that were employed but who had a permanent contract, suffered the least from the pandemic, and most did not experience any job insecurity because of it.

To counter the negative socioeconomic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and the measures taken to negate its health risks, both the Dutch government and the European Union have set up a set of policy instruments. Policy instruments are always created with a certain focus, in the case of the Dutch government this focus was on the self-employed segment of society and on employers (thus mainly small and medium enterprises). The self-employed were aided by compensating their loss of income up to the social minimum via the TOZO-fund. Existing literature already showed that this instrument was met by criticism as compensating to the social minimum would be insufficient. This sentiment is partly shared by the respondents. Most respondents only knew of this support indirectly as they had heard from persons in their social network that this support was not sufficient to compensate their losses. However, the two respondents that directly experienced this support were divided. Next to this, the NOW-fund was designed to compensate employers for the loss in revenue to prevent a massive surge of unemployment. However, companies could not apply for this fund until there was a loss in revenue of at least 20%, meaning that employees with a flexible or temporary contract would often still lose their job. This is also visible when looking at the subgroup as all respondents in flexible employment lost their jobs due to the pandemic.

Interestingly, whereas the TOZO-fund was to some extent visible as respondents had a (in)direct experience with it, this is not the case for the NOW-fund. The NOW-fund was mostly visible through news channels, and employees were not aware whether their employees had used this type of support. The support on the level of the European Union was even less visible by the subgroup as none of the respondents were aware of it. Whereas the European Union has spearheaded both the aim to counter social inequality on the EU labor markets, and has put a specific focus on the position of women and migrants in this regard, this was not visible in the way in which they shaped their support. The European Union provided funds that could be used on the national level. These funds were made in such a way that they could be used in a flexible manner so that member states could decide how they would use them. The focus of the member states, meaning in this case the Netherlands, was thus dominant in shaping the support. Therefore this support was not specifically aimed at those groups in

society which were the most vulnerable already before the pandemic, and which were consequently hit the hardest during the pandemic.

To conclude, the impact of the pandemic on the labor market position of women with a non-western migration background is experienced in many different ways based partly on the labor market position that these women were in during the pandemic. The severity of the impact of the pandemic was also determined by the vulnerable position of these women already before the pandemic as those who were already in a vulnerable position before the pandemic, were also the ones that were hit the hardest during the pandemic. The vulnerable position of these women was influenced by the labor market barriers that they were facing. Whereas the impact of the pandemic was experienced by the subgroup at times in a similar way to other groups in society, for example women without a migratory background, women with a western migration background, or male migrants, the impact of the pandemic was also experienced in a way that was specific to the subgroup and specifically their vulnerable position. However, the support that was designed on both the national and supranational level to counter the negative socioeconomic impact of the pandemic did not have a specific focus on the most vulnerable groups in society such as the subgroup to counter the social inequality that has increased due to the pandemic. Moreover, the visibility of this support, especially on the level of the European Union, was lacking.

It has become clear that the approach of intersectionality in this study has been of great importance as it has shown that the pandemic has had different consequences on the labor market position of both women and migrants, but also of migrant women. It was necessary to make these consequences visible not only because of the fact that migrant women have been a blind spot in research on inequality on the labor market so far, but also because their experience of the pandemic and of the support which they did or did not receive is able to inform future policy choices. Moreover, by making the experience of the subgroup visible their needs can be put on the political agenda of both the Dutch government and the European union. We have seen that social inequality has increased on the labor market due to the pandemic. In order to counter this, policies must be adopted which are not looking only at the impact on migrants and the impact on women, but on migrant women as a group in itself.

8.2 Future research

This thesis has taken the shape of a broad overview of the experiences of women with a non-western migration background on the Dutch labor market, and the way in which they have experienced the COVID-19 pandemic. As there was little research already done on this subgroup this broad overview was necessary to form a starting point for possible further research. Due to the fact that the thesis is limited in both time and resources, it was only possible to interview 14 respondents. Moreover, these 14 respondents were divided into four different labor market positions, ranging from 2 to 5 respondents per labor market position. This made it possible to see how the impact has been experienced in a different way by women in different labor market positions, however, it has also prevented an in-depth examination per labor market position. Especially the self-employed segment of the respondents and the segment of women that was in their integration process during the pandemic offer as an interesting starting point for further research, as the number of respondents in these two segments were the smallest. The two respondents that I interviewed from the self-employed segment, moreover, both owned their own business. This means that self-employed persons who are working as a freelancer, are not included in this thesis, and could offer a good possibility for further research.

Besides labor market positions, there are also differences in countries of origin. Researching women with a non-western migration background ensures that women who have come to the Netherlands from a country within the European Union have not been included in this research. However, this means that there are still many differences between the respondents when looking at their country of

origin. Women who have fled their countries, such as women from Iraq or Syria, face different barriers on the labor market than women who have come to the Netherlands to join a family member. These differences can be explored further to examine how they have had an effect on the barriers on the labor market.

Also, the respondents that were approached through these interviews were women which were easy to reach as an outsider. I have reached them through organizations such as 'Taal doet meer' which provides support for these women or, for example, via my own social network. This means that these women were already to at least a small degree integrated into the Dutch society or had approached an organization to help them integrate in society. I am aware, however, that this is not the case for all women who have migrated to the Netherlands and that many women of the subgroup are not as visible for an outsider such as myself. Therefore, in order to include also the perspectives of these women more resources are needed, such as the support of insiders of the subgroup and a budget.

So far, three suggestions have been made to create a more in-depth understanding of the experience of the subgroup. However, also other approaches can be taken such as a quantitative approach which could complement this qualitative overview. At the moment, however, it is rather difficult to conduct a quantitative research with the same research question as I have experienced that data on the topic is limited due to the fact that often no distinction is made between male and female migrants in the available data. Besides this, there is a possibility for a comparative approach in which the social inequality and barriers on the Dutch labor market are compared to a labor market in another European Union member state. This last approach would not only be beneficial for that specific member state as this research could offer a starting point, but also for the European Union itself who have spearheaded the impact of the pandemic on social equality, and social equality on the labor market in itself in their policies on the supranational level as well.

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10. Appendices

Appendix A: Interview Questionnaire (Dutch)

1. Introductie:

- Zou je jezelf voor willen stellen?
- Wat is je leeftijd?
- Vanuit welk land ben je naar Nederland geëmigreerd en wanneer?
 - o Ben je een gezinsmigrant of een statushouder?
- Heb je een opleiding gevolgd?
 - o Heb je deze in Nederland gevolgd of in het land van herkomst?
- (Indien een baan:) wat voor baan heb je?
 - o Is dit flexibel of vast dienstverband?
 - o Heb je belemmeringen ervaren in de zoektocht naar een baan?

2. Belemmeringen op de arbeidsmarkt

2.1 Persoonlijke factoren

- Heb je de beheersing van de Nederlandse taal ooit gezien als een belemmering in het vinden van of het uitvoeren van je baan?
- Heb je naast je baan ook zorgtaken, bijvoorbeeld door het hebben van kinderen of het verzorgen van het huishouden?
 - o Hoe zijn deze zorgtaken thuis verdeeld?
- Had je al werkervaring voordat je naar Nederland kwam?

2.2 Sociaal netwerk

- Heeft je omgeving jou geholpen in het vinden van een baan/op de arbeidsmarkt?
 - o Moedigt (of moedigde) je omgeving je aan om een baan te zoeken?
 - o Zijn er veel werkenden in je omgeving die je mogelijk aan een baan kunnen helpen?
- Zou je jouw sociale netwerk willen omschrijven?
 - o Waaruit is je sociale netwerk opgebouwd? (vrienden/familie, etc.)
 - o Omvat jouw sociale netwerk zowel mensen met een migratieachtergrond als mensen zonder een migratieachtergrond?

2.3 Vraagzijde van de arbeidsmarkt

- Heb je ooit te maken gehad met discriminatie op de arbeidsmarkt?
- (Eventueel bij behaalde diploma's in het land van herkomst) Konden jouw diploma's ook in Nederland gebruikt worden?

2.4 Steun vanuit de overheid/gemeente

- Heb je een inburgeringstraject doorlopen?
 - o Heb je steun vanuit de gemeente of overheid gekregen in het zoeken naar een baan tijdens je inburgeringsproject?
 - o (Gezinsmigrant:) hoe was de rol van de referent in het inburgeringstraject
- Heb jij steun vanuit de gemeente of overheid gekregen in het zoeken naar een baan buiten het inburgeringstraject?
- Heb jij een beeld van de hulp die door gemeenten of de overheid wordt aangeboden bij het zoeken naar een baan?
- Zou je bij het zoeken naar een baan geneigd zijn om hulp te zoeken bij de gemeente/overheid? Waarom wel/niet?

3. De invloed van de coronapandemie

3.1 Heeft de coronapandemie invloed gehad op je arbeidsmarktpositie?

- Arbeidsmarktpositie:

- Iemand met een baan:
 - Heeft de coronacrisis invloed gehad op jouw baanzekerheid?
 - Heeft de crisis ervoor gezorgd dat je op een moment hebt moeten thuiswerken? Zo ja, hoe heb je dit ervaren?
- Iemand die op de arbeidsmarkt wil integreren, bijvoorbeeld doordat diegene net de inburgering heeft voltooid:
 - Hoe heb je de steun vanuit de gemeente of overheid ervaren? Heeft de coronacrisis invloed gehad op de kwantiteit en kwaliteit van dit aanbod?
 - Heeft de coronacrisis het lastiger gemaakt om een sociaal netwerk op te bouwen of om dit sociale netwerk te gebruiken voor het vinden van een baan?
- Heb je tijdens de coronacrisis ook extra zorgtaken opgenomen, bijvoorbeeld door thuischoling van de kinderen?
 - Hebben deze zorgtaken het lastiger gemaakt om je werk uit te voeren of te zoeken naar werk?

3.2 Schat je jouw kansen op de arbeidsmarkt hetzelfde in als voor de uitbraak van de coronacrisis?

4. Steun van uit de Europese Unie en de overheid

- Ben je op de hoogte van de steun die vanuit de EU en de overheid is gegeven om de verliezen die geleden zijn door de coronacrisis te compenseren voor bijvoorbeeld werkgevers en ZZP'ers?
- Heb je hier zelf steun van ervaren?
- (Eventueel) Wat vind je van de manier waarop deze steun is vormgegeven?

Appendix B: Interview Questionnaire (English)

1. Introduction

- Can you introduce yourself?
- What is your age?
- From which country did you migrate to the Netherlands and when?
 - o Are you an asylum migrant or did you come to the Netherlands for family reunification?
- Do you have any diploma's?
 - o Did you obtain them in the Netherlands or in the country of origin?
- Are you employed?
 - o What kind of a job do you have?
 - o Is it flexible or fixed employment?
 - o Did you experience any barriers when searching for a job?

2. Barriers on the labor market

2.1 Personal factors

- Did you ever experience your Dutch language skills to be a barrier in finding or carrying out a job?
- Besides your job, do you also have other caretaking responsibilities such as taking care of children or housework?
 - o How are the caretaking responsibilities distributed in your family?
- Did you already have any previous experience on the labor market before you came to the Netherlands?

2.2 Social network

- Did your social network help you in finding a job or on the labor market in general?
 - o Did your immediate environment encourage (or discourage) you to find employment?
 - o Are there many people in your social network or immediate environment who are working and able to support you in finding a job?
- Can you describe your social network?
 - o What persons does it exist out of? (Family, friends, etc.)
 - o Does your social network consist out of as much persons with a migration background as of persons without a migration background? Has this changed over time?

2.3 Demand side of the labor market

- Have you ever experienced discrimination on the labor market?
- (When a person has obtained a diploma in the country of origin:) Were you able to use your diploma's in the Netherlands?

2.4 Support from the government/municipality

- Did you have to go through an integration trajectory?
 - o Did you experience any support from the government and/or municipality in the search for a job during your integration trajectory?
 - o (When talking to a migrant who has come to the Netherlands because of family reunification:) What was the role of the referent in the integration trajectory?
- Did you experience any support from the government/municipality in the search for a job after or outside of the integration trajectory?
- Do you know what support municipalities and the government offer persons who are searching for a job?

- Would you ask the government and/or municipality for help when trying to find employment? Why (not)?

3. The influence of the COVID-19 pandemic

3.1 Did the COVID-19 pandemic influence your labor market position?

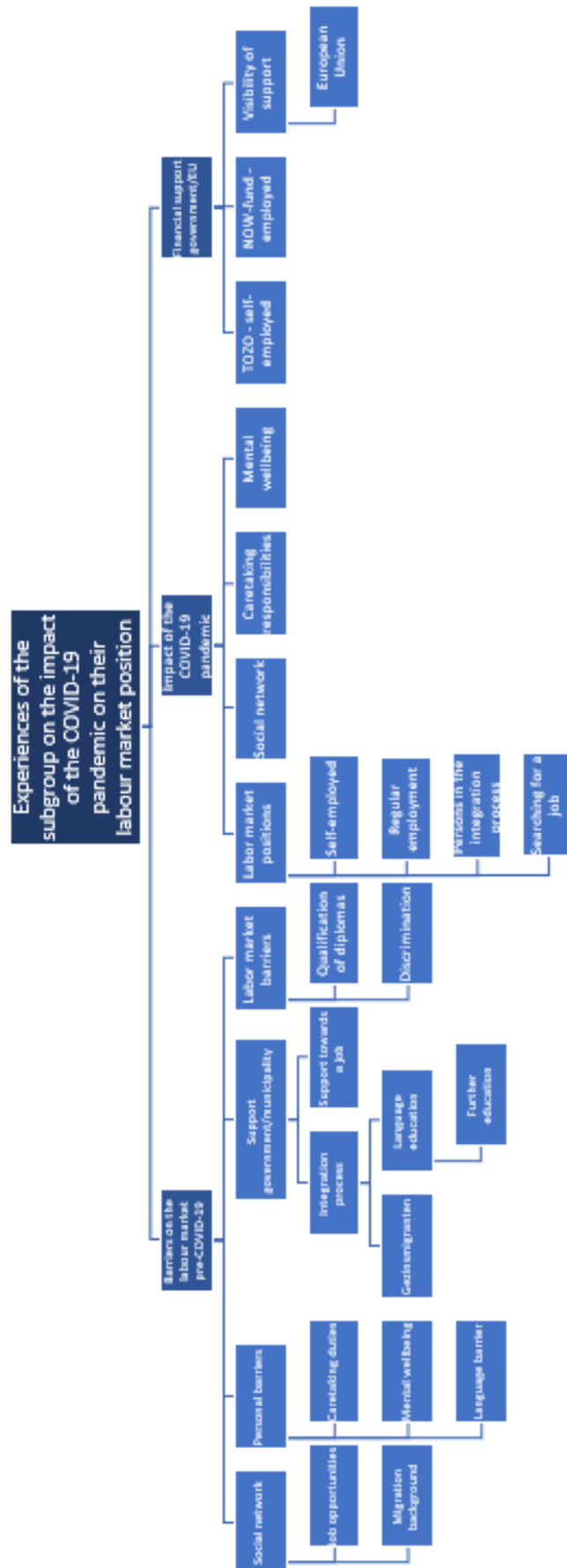
- Someone with a job:
 - o Did the COVID-19 pandemic influence your job security?
 - o Did the crisis make it necessary for you to work from home at some point? If yes, how did you experience this period?
- Someone who wants to integrate on the labor market/is seeking for employment:
 - o How did you experience the support from the government or municipality? Did the COVID-19 pandemic influence the quality and quantity of the offered support?
 - o Did the pandemic make it harder for you to build a social network or to use your social network in finding employment?
- Did your caretaking responsibilities increase during the pandemic, for example because of the homeschooling of your children?
 - o Did these caretaking responsibilities make it harder for you to carry out your work or to find work?

3.2 Do you think that your chances on the labor market are the same as before the COVID-19 pandemic?

4. COVID-19 support measures from the European Union and the Dutch government

- Are you aware of the support offered by the European Union and the government to compensate for the losses which employers, employees and the self-employed suffered following the COVID-19 pandemic?
- Did you experience any support yourself?
- What do you think about the way in which this support has been designed?

Appendix C: Coding Scheme



Appendix D: Informed consent forms

TOESTEMMINGSFORMULIER (informed consent)

Betreft: *het afstudeeronderzoek naar de invloed van de COVID-19 pandemie op de arbeidsmarktpositie van vrouwen met een niet-westerse migratieachtergrond van Eva van den Hazel, studente European Governance aan de Universiteit Utrecht en Masaryk U niversiteit Brno.*

Participant:

Ik verklaar hierbij op voor mij duidelijke wijze te zijn ingelicht over de aard, methode en doel van het onderzoek.

Ik begrijp dat:

- ik mijn medewerking aan dit onderzoek kan stoppen op ieder moment en zonder opgave van reden
- de gegevens anoniem worden verwerkt, zonder herleidbaar te zijn tot de persoon
- de opname vernietigd wordt na uitwerking van het interview

Ik verklaar dat:

- ik geheel vrijwillig bereid ben aan dit onderzoek mee te doen
- de uitkomsten van dit interview verwerkt mogen worden in een verslag of wetenschappelijke publicatie
- toestemming geef om het interview op te laten nemen door middel van een voice-recorder, mobiele telefoon of andere applicatie

Handtekening:

Naam:

Datum:

Onderzoeker:

Ik heb mondeling toelichting verstrekt over de aard, methode en doel van het onderzoek. Ik verklaar mij bereid nog opkomende vragen over het onderzoek naar vermogen te beantwoorden.

Handtekening:

Naam:

Datum:

NB: All informed consent forms are in the possession of the author and can be made available when necessary, they are not included in this thesis for privacy reasons and anonymity.