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Abstract

This article seeks to analyze the Colombian labor market during the COVID-19 crisis to explore its effect on labor market gender gaps. The country offers an interesting setting for analysis because, as most countries in the Global South, it has an employment market that combines formal and informal labor, which complicates the nature of the pandemic's aftermath. Our exploration offers an analysis that highlights the crisis's effects as in a downward staircase fall that mainly affects women compared to men. We document a phenomenon that we will call a "female staircase fall." Women lose status in the labor market; the formal female workers' transition to informal jobs, occupied women fall to unemployment, and the unemployed go to inactivity; therefore, more and more women are relegated to domestic work. We also study how women's burden of unpaid care has increased due to the crisis, affecting their participation in paid employment.