THE JANUSFACE OF ACTIVATION POLICY

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Abstract: The paper aims to discuss if activation policies can support immigrant women’s inclusion into the Swedish labour market. A paradigmatic change in welfare policies has taken place in Europe during the last decade with the shift from welfare to workfare or activation policies. Some researchers claims that activation policies is the only way to inclusion in the labour market, for them excluded from the labour force. Other researchers claim that only a universal welfare state could lead to that result. This paper on the other hand is based on the presumption that activation policy contains the possibility to both support an inclusion and to further marginalize. The outcome will bee related to the implementation of and the locally administration of the activation policy. The paper is based on a completed case – study in four districts in a middle – range Swedish city. The empirical study enclose about hundred interviews with administrators and immigrant families. The study shows that activation policy can lead to both a process towards inclusion in the labour market and to further marginalize the immigrant women. The process is depending on differentiation patterns in the categorization of clients in the administration of activation policies. A stereotypical discourse based on racialised and genderised presumptions in some of the districts tends to create a stereotypical differentiation which support to further marginalize especially Muslim women from the labour market. While the pragmatic differentiation that takes place in one of the districts promote the immigrant women inclusion in labour market. This illustrates the Janusface of activation policy that is based on locally related differentiation processes.