

Use of time and value of unpaid family care work: a comparison between Italy and Poland

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This study provides a comparison of the size and value of unpaid family care work in two European member States, Italy and Poland. Using the Italian and Polish time use surveys, the opportunity cost and the market replacement approaches are employed to estimate the value of family childcare and care of the elderly. The results show that in Italy the number of people performing family care work is higher, also due to the larger population. Italians participate somewhat less than Poles in child care, but substantially more in care of the elderly because of demographic factors. However, the huge difference in the value of unpaid family care work, which in Italy exceeds the value of Poland by about eight times, is largely to be attributed to the discrepancy in average hourly earnings, Polish earnings being about one fifth of those of Italians. In GDP terms, instead, the value of unpaid family care work is more similar, ranging between 3.7 and 4.4 per cent of the Polish GDP and 4.1 and 5 per cent of the Italian GDP, depending on the estimation approach. The country differentials in family care-taking are interpreted in terms of differences in culture, economic development and institutions.