

Cooking, caring and volunteering: Unpaid work around the world ^[1]

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Abstract:

Household production constitutes an important aspect of economic activity and ignoring it may lead to incorrect inferences about levels and changes in well-being. This paper sheds light on the importance of unpaid work by making use of detailed time-use surveys for 26 OECD member countries and 3 emerging economies. The calculations suggest that between one-third and half of all valuable economic activity in the countries under consideration is not accounted for in the traditional measures of well-being, such as GDP per capita. In all countries, women do more of such work than men, although to some degree balanced -- by an amount varying across countries -- by the fact that they do less market work. While unpaid work -- and especially the gender division of unpaid work -- is to some extent related to a country's development level, country cross-sectional data suggest that demographic factors and public policies tend to exercise a much larger impact. The regular collection of time-use data can thus be of tremendous value for government agencies to monitor and design public policies, and give a more balanced view of well-being across different societies.

Related link: News: "Women's contributions in unpaid work unrecognized: study" ^[3]

Region: International ^[4]

Tags: economics ^[5]

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