

**Abstract submitted to ESPAnet Conference 2010, Social Policy and the Global Crisis
Stream 12.1: Transnational care markets: European care regimes in the age of
migration**

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Title:

Varieties of migrant care work:

contrasting patterns of migrant labour in social care in Italy and England

Abstract:

Throughout Europe, immigrants are becoming increasingly important as employees in caring occupations. In some countries, such as the United Kingdom, migrant workers are employed formally by public and private care providers. In others, such as Italy, families engage migrant workers privately to care for a dependent family member. This paper compares the characteristics of migrant workers employed as elderly carers in the English^[1] formal institutional context with those employed in the Italian informal family context. The first aim of the paper is to find and explain common patterns in the employment of migrant workers in these different settings. Are there commonalities in the employment circumstances of migrant workers in Italy and England? Do their circumstances differ from native workers? Why are migrants employed in elderly care in both these countries? The second aim is to identify and explain cross-country variation. Why are migrants more often employed formally in England, while in Italy they are very often employed directly by families?

The paper is based on an analysis of micro-level data from the *Italian Indagine Multiscopo sulle Famiglie* and the British *Labour Force Survey*. In addition, it relies on expert interviews and a variety of secondary sources. Theoretical accounts from both welfare regime and migration research are applied to understand the employment of migrant care workers. It is concluded that migrant workers in both countries do not necessarily earn less than their native counterparts, but they do work longer hours under more vulnerable circumstances. The differences between the two countries can best be explained by cross-national differences in both employment and care regimes.

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[1] The paper focuses on England instead of the entire United Kingdom, because social care policies differ significantly by UK region.