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OUTSOURCING DOMESTIC CHORES IN SLOVAK HOUSEHOLDS - PRECONDITIONS AND BARRIERS

Abstract:

The article deals with the outsourcing of 11 types of domestic chores in order to better understand consumer behavior of Slovak households in a group of market services which could replace the unpaid work done in households. On the basis of data obtained by a primary research in Slovakia on the sample of 1,142 households, we have identified that Slovak households outsource mainly catering the food, vehicle maintenance services, services connected with reconstruction and repairs of dwelling and catering and preparing fuels for heating. On the other hand, activities such as cleaning and ironing are outsourced rarely. We have also investigated what factors households perceive as important for making decisions about outsourcing domestic chores for each category of housework. The outsourcing of certain domestic chores could be partially explained by household resource argument and also by demand capability argument. The barriers to outsourcing domestic chores are in categories catering the food, cleaning and laundry and ironing affordability and in all categories strong orientation of Slovak households toward self-service economy.

Keywords:

outsourcing, domestic chores, household economics, barriers to outsourcing, consumer behaviour

JEL Classification: D13, D12

1 Introduction

In Slovakia people traditionally devote lots of time to perform a variety of work in their households. An example of such activities includes cooking, ironing, taking care of children, etc. In the literature, these types of activities done in a household, for which a provider does not receive a direct financial reward are referred as unpaid work (e.g. Hirway, 2015), or domestic chores (e.g. Windebank, 2010). Despite the term unpaid work has a broader meaning than domestic chores, taking into consideration the activities which are investigated in this paper, we will use these terms interchangeably.

A lot of goods and services, which households produce themselves, are offered by the market as well, so households can buy them, instead of doing them by their own. For example, they can eat in the restaurants instead of cooking at home. The process of replacing unpaid household production with market substitutes is known as 'domestic outsourcing' (Bittman, et al., 1999).

At the first sight, the domestic outsourcing does not seem to be much significant variable both in terms of microeconomic and macroeconomic research. However, we will argue in this paper that the issue has an impact on each level of the national economy. Starting from households themselves, the research on outsourcing domestic chores leads to better understanding how households evaluate their time and what factors influence them in decision making about their time use. These influence partially their welfare and partially their financial situation. The effect is particularly visible for women, which are to larger extent burdened by domestic work – it leads either to a reduction of free time or to a reduction of income. Lower availability of time and career breaks leads often to substantial gender differences in income.

The implications for business sector are twofold. Firstly, households form a labour force, therefore the knowledge about the factors, which influence them in time-use decisions, imply availability of various groups of employees (or potential employees). Moreover, they are important inputs for corporate social programmes mainly in terms of work–life balance. Secondly, the households are consumers of services, which can substitute domestic work, therefore understanding their consumer behaviour is important for identifying business opportunities and developing this sector of services.

On the regional and national level, the outsourcing offers an opportunity to decrease unemployment mainly in the group of a low-skilled labour force. There are some countries like France, Belgium and Denmark which have already implemented programmes supporting outsourcing domestic chores by simplifying the procedure how to legally employ domestic help. The programme is designed to address two problems on the labour market – employing low-skilled workers and eliminating of disadvantageous position of women on the labour market, as there is more burden by performing domestic

chores. Moreover, the programmes are supported by public finance and costs of households are partially tax-deductible (Windebank 2006, Williams *et al.* 2012).

In this paper, we are focusing on the process of outsourcing domestic chores in Slovak households. In Slovakia, this issue has not deserved enough attention as well as the other topics connected to household economics.

The aim of this paper is twofold. Firstly, to investigate the outsourcing of 11 types of domestic chores in Slovak households in terms of volume of outsourcing and number of households which outsource certain activity. Secondly, on the one hand, to determine the main factors which drive the outsourcing and on the other hand, identify main barriers which prevent households from outsourcing domestic chores. The rationale behind the aim is following. We suppose that outsourcing domestic chores is far below its potential in Slovakia, i.e. Slovak households do not outsource as much as it would be rational from the economic point of view. To back it up with data we tried to measure the current state of outsourcing and compare it with so-called latent demand, i.e. theoretical willingness of household to pay for certain service in the future. In a further step, we investigate the reasons why the households decide to buy a substitute and what prevent them from doing so.

The analysis is based on data collected within a unique primary research in Slovakia which was made by the research team in Faculty of Economics, Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica. It offers an empirical evidence of the level of outsourcing domestic chores in Slovak households. The paper contributes to the knowledge in the field of household economics, which is significantly underdeveloped in this region.

The remainder of this paper is organised as follows. The following section, Section 2 brings literature review about outsourcing, barriers and preconditions to outsourcing domestic chores. Section 3 describes the data and methods used, section 4 presents the results and discussion and then section 5 concludes.

2 Barriers and Preconditions to Outsourcing Domestic Chores

Domestic outsourcing can take various forms, from ready-made meals, babysitting, and child-care facilities to housecleaning and maintenance services. In the process of outsourcing domestic chores, two sides are always involved. The one who outsources certain domestic task by demanding the product or service from a supplier, a household, and the one who provides either a service or a product to a household, a provider or a supplier.

Researchers focus on both sides. Many studies of domestic outsourcing have focused on providers/suppliers (e.g. Cancedda, 2001; EC, 2013; Angermann and Eichhorst 2013). Fewer researches concentrate on consumers, i.e. households (e.g. Cornelisse-Vermaat *et al.* 2013; Windebank, 2010; Craig and Baxter 2016). However, these researches are focused mainly on those households, which have already outsourced some housework

(e. g. Craig, Baxter, 2016; Cornelisse-Vermaat at al., 2013). Windebank (2010) contributes to the debate by concentrating on those who have not outsourced regular domestic tasks until now in order to understand the barriers to domestic outsourcing.

Despite the volume of outsourcing is still quite low, researchers are vividly interested in this issue. A wide set of hypotheses has been tested in order to describe the roots of outsourcing. The literature explains why households outsource by following arguments. A growing body of literature suggests that the outsourcing of household chores and caring responsibilities are increasingly used by couples as a strategy for better combining work and family life (De Ruijter and Van der Lippe, 2007; van der Lippe et al., 2012). The time availability explanation of outsourcing argues that paid employment reduces the time available for housework. In this case, the increase in female activity rate is a driver for outsourcing several domestic tasks and creates a demand for personal and household services (Farvaque et al., 2013, p. 19, Tijdens et al., 2003). However, various studies come to different results. Some studies find that available time decreases the use of housekeeping services (Bittman et al., 1999; Cohen 1998), but others do not (Oropesa 1993). The demand capability argument argues that the volume of housework raises the demand for time-saving domestic services. Some studies find that young children affect the use of services such as housecleaning (Bittman et al., 1999), but others disagree (Cohen 1998). Other researchers report that age is associated with greater expenditures on housekeeping but lower spending on eating out (Cohen 1998; Bittman et al., 1999), while others find no age differences (Zick et al. 1996).

The household resources argument says that finances influence the volume of outsourcing. The higher the household income is, the more of domestic services are used (e.g. Bittman et al., 1999; Oropesa 1993). This argument assumes that time allocation and outsourcing decisions are taken simultaneously (Tijdens et al. 2003).

The economic specialisation theory, which assumes an efficiency of an implicitly gendered division of labour, has implications for outsourcing by couples. At one extreme, neither partner does domestic work and outside help is necessary to provide essentials (e.g., clean clothing, adequate nutrition and reasonably hygienic surroundings). At the other extreme, one partner specialises in household chores, and there may be little, if any, need for outside help.

Our approach stresses the fact, that one of the most significant factors of outsourcing is inability of households to provide certain types of domestic work by themselves – either because of the fact that given work requires abilities of higher standards (e.g. constructions and reconstructions, maintenance of cars and machines...) or because of their time capacity. Demographic trends seem to be an important variable in this issue – mainly ageing of the population, changes in family and household types, e. g. increased number of 'atypical' families (compared with the traditional model of a couple with children) or single person households. Some atypical households or elderly households

are simply forced to outsource selected chores, even those that do not require special skills because they cannot make them by their own.

The most obvious barrier to the outsourcing of domestic works is their affordability because of the fact that households can only purchase such services if they have sufficient resources (Windebank, 2010; Cancedda, 2001). Next barrier is connected with the supply side. It is a lack of access to services of an appropriate quality. Even if time pressures and financial resources come together to make domestic outsourcing a realistic prospect, when an appropriate supply of services is not available, the extent of the use of paid services for domestic chores is limited (Windebank, 2010). The other barrier is connected with the fact that in outsourcing such tasks as cleaning an outsider enters the privacy of the household and takes over tasks of special value. De Ruijter and van der Lippe (2009) point out, that the outsourcing of household tasks to outsiders involves substantial trust problems that may deter households from outsourcing. Households' orientation towards self-supply (the self-service economy) (Cancedda, 2001) also denotes barrier to outsourcing. This phenomenon is mainly the result of traditions and social reproduction. An experience shows that a lot of households are not considering outsourcing domestic works because of the fact that they are convinced that these activities should be done by household itself. Moreover, care work is traditionally seen as a part of women identity (Windebank, 2010).

Attitudes towards performing the unpaid work also play a significant role in the outsourcing. In the literature, one can find different contradictory theories explaining those attitudes. Relative resource theory and time availability theory posit that housework is a necessary but undesirable task (Bonke et al., 2007). In these circumstances, the outsourcing of domestic chores is desirable. On the other hand, some authors present the ideas that people are deriving pleasure from performing the unpaid work. This may be seen as a barrier to outsourcing. For example, Van der Lippe et al. (2012) find out, that if partners enjoy maintenance, cleaning, cooking, or child care, they are less likely to outsource these tasks, controlling for time, monetary resources and gender-role expectations.

3 Data and Method Used

In the paper, analysis of data collected within the project VEGA 1/0935/13 „Unpaid work as a potential source of socioeconomic development of society and the determinant of individual`s well-being” carried out at Faculty of Economics, Matej Bel University, is done. The data concerning outsourcing were collected in 2014 using a questionnaire survey. Unit of analysis was a household, defined as a group of people who shares the same dwelling but even more important, the same budget. The questionnaire was filled in by one representative of the households, however, he was asked to provide data for the whole household. Therefore, we will use the terms respondent and household interchangeably. The researcher gained questionnaires, which could be used for further

processing, from 1142 respondents. For further analysis, the questionnaires reaching extreme values were removed from the dataset. After applying weights, the research sample is representative for Slovak households according to two criteria – number of household members and regions they live in.

The questionnaire consisted of 5 modules. The first one was focused on characteristics of a household, the 2nd module asked the respondent to specify the town and region, he lived in. The 3rd module focused directly on the issue of outsourcing. For a certain category of unpaid work, it identified if the household used outsourcing in this category. The use of outsourcing is likely to vary across different kinds of tasks (Killewald and Gough 2010), so the questionnaire included also questions connected to the volume of outsourcing. Outsourced alternatives are produced in the industrial sector (e.g., take-out dinners) and the service sector (e.g., nannies, carpet cleaners), therefore it is impossible to use single measure for each type of outsourcing. Therefore, the respondents were either asked to express the amount of time they are paying for the third party's work or to express the frequency how many times per selected period they have used a substitute to the unpaid work.

In order to better understand household consumer behaviour, we asked respondents to set reasons, why their household used a service substituting certain category of unpaid work or in case it did not, again the respondent was asked to choose the reasons which prevent their household from using a substitute. The following table lists the reasons for using (or not using) given substitute of unpaid work from which respondents could choose 1 to 3.

Table 1 Factors and barriers of outsourcing domestic work in Slovak households

| Reason for outsource | Reasons for not outsource |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| These services are professional and of good quality | These services are not professional and of poor-quality |
| These services are flexible and fast | These services are inflexible and slow |
| These services are affordable | These services are not affordable |
| These services are available (distance, variety, capacity...) | These services are not available (distance, variety, capacity...) |
| These services save our time | We are able to provide these services within our household or within the family |
| We are not able to provide these services by our own or within the family | We are able to provide these services reciprocally within our friends and acquaintances |
| Other | These services do not save our time |
| | This category of work is not done in our household |
| | We want to do this work by our own |
| | Other |

Source: own processing.

The outsourcing of following categories of unpaid work was examined: food management (catering the food); household upkeep, including cleaning dwelling and garden; making and care of textiles, including laundry and ironing; delivery and preparation of fuel; gardening; repairs of dwelling; repairs of furniture, equipment etc.; repair of automobiles,

household machines etc.; shopping; child care and adult assistance care. The categories were chosen in such a way that they describe mainly activities which are traditionally done in a Slovak household, except some special activities like repairs of automobiles. The list is also inspired by Eurostat methodology concerning measuring the amount of unpaid work in a household.

The 4th module described a latent demand, i.e. theoretical willingness of household to pay for certain service in the future (in this case, next year). It asked a respondent to set reason why his household was theoretically willing to outsource given category of unpaid work (the household did not have to necessarily use certain service substituting domestic chore until that moment) and what amount of money was able to sacrifice for this purpose. The 5th module examines the attitude of the respondent to performing domestic works.

The following methods and statistical tests were used in processing the data: Friedman test, Wilcoxon Signed Ranks test, Mann-Whitney test, Spearman's coefficient. The assumptions have been verified on the significance level 0.05.

4 Results and Discussion

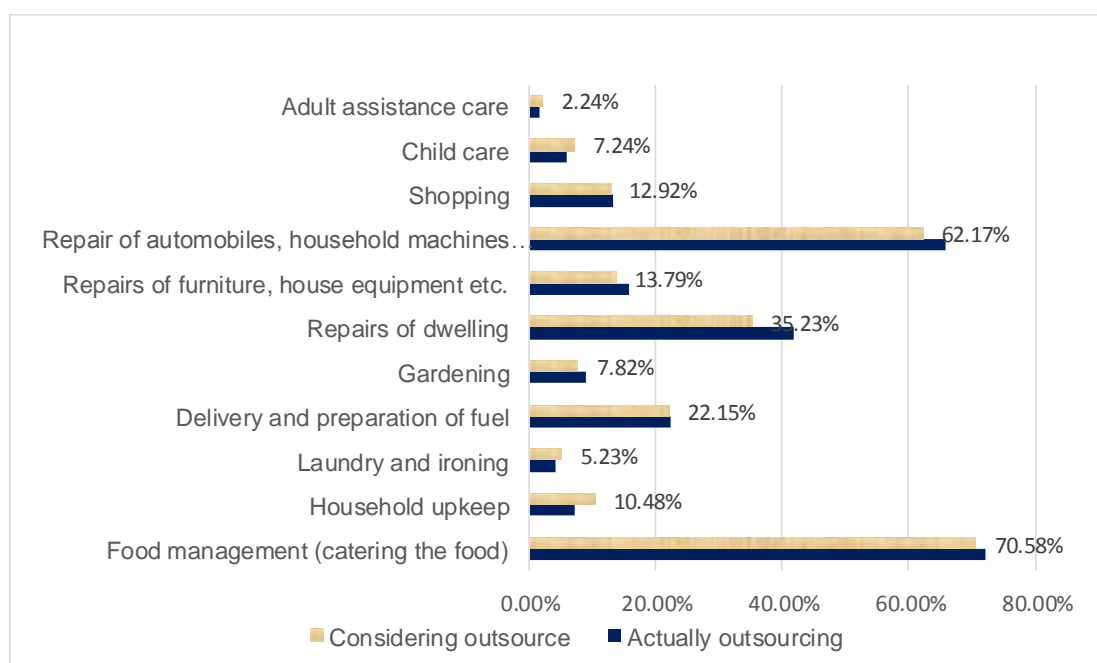
The results are presented as follows. Firstly, we describe the current state of outsourcing in Slovakia by percentage of households which substitute certain types of domestic works. We compare the numbers with latent demand for substitute with actual demand. In the further step, we introduce a time for which the households pay into analyses (in order to make given services relatively comparable) and using Friedman test and Wilcoxon Signed Ranks test we prepare a ranking of the most outsourced house works. To explain usage of the substitutes, we firstly analyse the correlation between income of the households and outsourcing domestic works, which seems to be the most straightforward. The next step is examination of the ranking of the factors which encourage or prevent households from outsourcing. Finally, we compare and contrast the obtained results with similar studies and discuss the conclusions.

The state of outsourcing domestic works is described by the figure 1. It shows the portion of households which have outsourced selected household chores in 2013 and the portion of households which are planning to use the outsourcing of selected types of activities in the following year.

As it is obvious from the figure, the most common bundle of goods is those replacing home cooking – 70.6 % respondents declare, that they use the services of food delivery. Moreover, the questionnaire did not consider eating out in restaurants or cantinas as a substitute for unpaid work because of the fact that this kind of outsourcing is unavoidable for some people. Therefore, allowing for this fact, we can conclude that preparing meals can be undisputedly seen as a domestic work which is outsourced by the largest percentage of households. On the other hand, the service receiving the most attention in

the literature (e.g. Cornelisse-Vermaat et al., 2013; Windebank, 2010, Bitman et al., 1999; Tijdens et al. 2003), household upkeep (or cleaning) is outsourced only by 7.3 % of asked households. According to our previous research on unpaid work of Slovak households, preparing food and household upkeep belong together with childcare to activities to which Slovak households devote the highest portion of their time (Kika and Martinkovičová 2015). In spite of the fact that both represent a significant burden for households, the willingness of the respondents to outsource them varies significantly. A similar result was also shown by Bittman et al. (1999) on Australian data from 1993-94. Nearly 90 percent of households declare that they use substitutes of food preparation in comparison to 4 percent of household willing to use household upkeep services. The main reasons for this phenomenon are discussed below. Finally, it is noteworthy, that the latent demand is nearly identical with actual demand. It points out certain rigidity of household consumer behaviour.

Figure 1 Actual and latent demand for substitutes of domestic services



Source: own processing.

To illustrate the demand for outsourcing domestic services more exactly, we enrich the analysis by the time variable, i.e. in the further step of the analysis, in addition to considering the number of households which outsource certain domestic work, we take into account the time for which the households pay to a third party. Because of the fact, that for food delivery, the frequency was observed instead of time, this category of work was excluded from the analysis. Ranking of the most demanded categories of activities in Slovak households was verified using Friedman and the Wilcoxon Signed Ranks test. Based on results of these tests we can say that Slovak households in general mostly

outsource vehicle maintenance, followed by the repairs of a dwelling. Cartage and preparing fuels for heating and repairs of furniture are next in rank. On the other hand, the least outsourced activities in Slovak households are making and care of textiles, including laundry and ironing and adult assistance care.

One possible explanation of outsourcing domestic chores is the household resources argument, which says that finances influence spending. The higher the household income, the more of domestic services are used (e.g. Bittman et al., 1999). Using Spearman's coefficient we have tested whether there exists a correlation between household income and volume of outsourcing in Slovak households. The results show that there exists positive correlation between income and the volume of outsourcing in following categories: food management (catering the food), household upkeep, including cleaning dwelling and garden, making and care of textiles, including laundry and ironing, gardening, repairs of dwelling and automobiles, household machines etc. and shopping. Based on the results, we can conclude that outsourcing those domestic chores in Slovakia could be partially explained by household resource argument.

In order to determine, on the one hand, the other factors that drive outsourcing of domestic chores different from household resources argument, and on the other hand, to identify main barriers which prevent households from outsourcing domestic chores, we apply Friedman and Wilcoxon rank test. Based on these tests, we have compiled the ranking of the most frequently indicated reasons, both for decisions to outsource and not to outsource certain domestic work. We consider this method preferable to setting a percentage of the population, who chose certain reason, as it is more illustrative and suitable for comparison. The ranking for selected domestic work is presented in table 2 and table 3.

As is apparent from the tables in some case two or more reasons were selected by respondents with statistically similar frequency. In the same manner, those reasons that were chosen with similar frequencies are grouped together. As described above, some categories of domestic chores (namely household upkeep, including cleaning dwelling and garden, making and care of textiles, including laundry and ironing, gardening, shopping, child care and adult assistance care) are rarely outsourced, therefore it was not possible to run the statistical analysis for them. The results for selected activities, for which the analysis was possible, are in Table 2.

The most frequently selected reason, why the respondents use a substitute for food preparation (the most outsourced domestic work) is time saving. The results are in line with the surveys (Kaščáková and Nedelova 2014, Kika and Martinkovičová 2015) which identifies food preparation as an activity to which households devotes the largest volume of time. The results point out the demand capability argument in the area of food preparation i.e. the fact that outsourcing tends to increase with increasing amount of unpaid work.

Table 2 Ranking of the reasons for outsourcing in chosen categories of domestic works.

| | Rank | Reason |
|------------------------------------------------|-------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Catering the food | 1. | These services save our time |
| | 2. | These services are flexible and fast |
| | | These services are affordable |
| | 3. | These services are available (distance, variety, capacity...) |
| | 4. | These services are professional and of good quality |
| 5. | Other | |
| Delivery and preparation of fuel | 1. | We are not able to provide these services by our own or within the family |
| | 2. | These services are available (distance, variety, capacity...) |
| | | These services are affordable |
| | 4. | These services save our time |
| | | These services are flexible and fast |
| 5. | Other | |
| Repairs of dwelling | 1. | These services are professional and of good quality |
| | 2. | We are not able to provide these services by our own or within the family |
| | | These services are available (distance, variety, capacity...) |
| | 3. | These services save our time |
| | | These services are flexible and fast |
| 4. | Other | |
| Repair of automobiles, household machines etc. | 1. | These services are professional and of good quality |
| | 2. | We are not able to provide these services by our own or within the family |
| | 3. | These services are flexible and fast |
| | | These services save our time |
| | 4. | These services are available (distance, variety, capacity...) |
| 5. | Other | |

Source: own processing

The results also show the importance of supply side in decision making on outsourcing domestic chores. The availability, flexibility and quality of the services are present as important arguments for most of the selected activities. The quality of the supply side takes even higher importance for the services which are demanding for professional knowledge as reconstructions and car maintenance.

Finally, the dominance of affordability supports the idea, that available resources strongly determines the willingness of the households to outsource domestic chores, especially in the category food preparation. However, as Windebank (2010) explains the affordability is

a relative term in connection to domestic work. It is not a matter of objective value of the service (costs to income), but subjective value.

The ranks of most often selected reasons in categories delivery and preparation of fuel, repairs of dwelling and automobiles support our idea that the ability to provide a certain domestic work strongly determines their outsourcing in mentioned categories.

Knowing the reasons why the respondents decide not to outsource certain activity to the third party, offers an important insight into the development of this kind of service sector. Table 3 shows result of selected activities. Only the households which perform certain category of domestic work, however, decide not to outsource are included in the analysis. As is obvious from the table, for each category, the argument that the household is able to provide these services by itself is in the first position. This could suggest Slovak households' strong orientation towards self-supply (the self-service economy).

Noteworthy is also the group of activities which include repairs of dwelling, repairs of furniture, gardening and car maintenance. In these categories the second most frequently chosen reason for not to outsource was, that household is able to provide these services reciprocally within their friends and acquaintances. Two possible explanations why it arose are – firstly, an effort to decrease the price of the service by not declaring the transaction for tax purpose (shadow economy) or secondly, strong orientation toward informal help within the circle of relatives mainly because of trust. The insufficient quality, availability and flexibility of these services are mostly in lower ranks.

Interesting results are in categories catering the food, cleaning and laundry and ironing. The second place in the order of most frequently identified reasons for not outsourcing catering the food is occupied by two reasons (i.e. “These services are not affordable” and “We want to provide this work by our own”). This is because these two reasons were chosen (selected) by respondents with (statistically) similar frequency. In the same manner, the reasons that were chosen with similar frequencies are grouped together also in other categories. This suggests that both price affordability and attitude to the performing these domestic chores appear to be very important for outsourcing. Regarding the affordability reason, Windebank (2010) come to similar results in the UK. Among the two main reasons not to outsource examined domestic chores, the first reason was not being able to afford it. Oropesa (1993) found that in the US, higher income households hire more paid household help than lower income households. This is also true in Dutch households (Lambriex and Siegers, 1993 in Cornellise-Vermaat et al. 2013).

Table 3 Ranking of the reasons for the decision not to outsource for chosen categories of domestic works in Slovak households.

| Service | Rank | Reason |
|----------------------------------------|------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Catering the food | 1. | We are able to provide these services within our household or within the family |
| | 2. | These services are not affordable |
| | | We want to provide this work by our own |
| | 3. | These services are not available |
| | | We are able to provide these services reciprocally within our friends |
| | | Other |
| | | These services are not professional and of poor-quality |
| | | These services do not save our time |
| These services are inflexible and slow | | |
| Cleaning | 1. | We are able to provide these services within our household or within the family |
| | 2. | These services are not affordable |
| | | We want to do this work by our own |
| | 3. | These services are not available |
| | | We are able to provide these services reciprocally within our friends |
| | | Other |
| | | These services are not professional and of poor-quality |
| | | These services do not save our time |
| These services are inflexible and slow | | |
| Repairs of dwelling | 1. | We are able to provide these services within our household or within the family |
| | 2. | We are able to provide these services reciprocally within our friends |
| | 3. | These services are not affordable |
| | 4. | We want to do this work by our own |
| | | Other |
| | | These services are inflexible and slow |
| | | These services are not professional and of poor-quality |
| | | These services are not available |
| These services do not save our time | | |
| Delivery and preparation of fuel | 1. | We are able to provide these services within our household or within the family |
| | 2. | Other |
| | 3. | We are able to provide these services reciprocally within our friends |
| | | These services are not affordable |
| | 4. | These services are not available (distance, variety, capacity...) |
| | | These services are inflexible and slow |
| | | These services do not save our time |
| | | We want to do this work by our own |
| Child care | 1. | We are able to provide these services within our household or within the family |
| | | Other |
| | 3. | We are able to provide these services reciprocally within our friends |
| | | We want to do this work by our own |
| | 4. | These services are not affordable |
| | | These services are not available |
| | | These services are not professional and of poor-quality |
| | 5. | These services are inflexible and slow |
| These services do not save our time | | |

Source: own processing

If we look closely at affordability reason, one would expect that the fall in prices could cause an increase in demand for such market substitutes in these households for which the price is an important determinant, since domestic services are very price sensitive because they must compete with self-provisioning which has no direct financial costs. (Cancedda, 2001).

On the other hand, the selected reason "we want to provide this work by our own", identify those households with very low price sensitivity, since the other factors than price are important in their decision not to outsource. Further research will clarify whether this attitude is influenced mostly by a pleasure derived from the provision of these activities as van der Lippe, Frey (2012) suggest, or by trust problems that may deter households from outsourcing (de Ruijter and van der Lippe 2009). Strong orientation toward self-service economy or toward informal help within the circle of friends and acquaintances is evident from the order of reason not to outsource child care. Bittman et al. (1999) bring similar results. They point out, that informal child care' provided without payment by relatives, friends and neighbourhood, accounts for almost half of all child care in Australia.

5 Conclusion

The findings of the research suggest that Slovak households in general mostly outsource food preparations, vehicle maintenance, followed by the repairs of a dwelling, while the least outsourced activities are making and care of textiles, laundry and ironing and adult assistance care. We have also investigated what factors households perceive as important for making decisions about outsourcing domestic chores for each category of housework. The outsourcing of certain domestic chores (esp. catering the food, household upkeep, laundry and ironing, gardening, repairs of dwelling and automobiles) could be partially explained by household resource argument and the outsourcing the food preparation also by demand capability argument. Factors that are particularly important as barriers to the outsourcing of domestic chores in Slovakia are strong orientation of Slovak households toward self-supply economy. Another barrier, mainly in catering the food, cleaning, laundry and ironing, is also their affordability. In general, with some exceptions, we can conclude that Slovak households are mainly oriented on self-supply and if they are not able to provide certain work by themselves, they seek for the help of family, friends and acquaintances. The business sector is often seen as the last subject for securing household needs.

The comparison of actual and latent demand for substitutes to domestic work shows that Slovak households are highly conservative in this area. We can conclude, that domestic chores still represent a significant load on households, especially women. However, there are some households, which appreciate benefits of specialisation. The benefits occur both on the side of demand and supply. On the one hand, a firm specialised on certain type of service can provide it in good quality, relatively cheaper and faster (the users of outsourcing often highlight quality, availability and promptness of the supply). On the

other hand, the users of outsourcing appreciate their time (either working or free) more than money paid for certain service (dominance of the answers that certain service saves time and is affordable).

The results show two important implications for business sphere. Firstly, as to the labour force, there are groups of employees (especially women), who do not dispose of time flexibility, but on the other hand, they tend to be stable in terms of job fluctuations. Secondly, the business opportunity in the area of the services substituting domestic chores are limited, as no direct financial costs connected to self—provision are often preferable to service of any quality. A major innovation would be necessary to increase trust of households and make the services attractive to them. The example of such innovation could be representative trade bodies which would ensure the quality of services (Williams et al., 2012).

On the level of national economy, the results indicate quite a high extent of shadow economy. It is disputable if legal changes meant to simplify process of employing domestic workers would have impact on the situation. The reason is price sensitivity of the households which prefers self – provision and legalising labour contract would hardly help.

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