

NEIGHBOURHOOD HELP IN REGIONS OF SLOVAKIA



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Abstract The aim of this article is to describe „neighbourhood help” as a part of unpaid work performed by households and individuals, to identify extent of the unpaid work performed by individuals/ households in other households in Slovakia and in Slovak regions (NUTS II level) and different kinds of municipalities (NUTS V level). In the article, I use data from field research from 2016, concerning the unpaid work in Slovakia and its attributes. By the means of non-parametric statistical tests, I tested four hypotheses based on the theoretical papers and previous economical and ethnological researches. It is evident that unpaid work in other households (neighbourhood help) represents an important part of everyday life of individuals and whole households. Concerning the extent of the unpaid work performed in other households, I confirm statistically significant differences between the rural and urban areas. However, I did not confirm assumption about the negative correlation between the extent of paid work and unpaid work in other households.

Key words: *unpaid work, neighbourhood help, Slovak regions, paid work, households, individuals, non-parametric tests*

Formulation of the problem

The aim of this article is to describe „neighbourhood help” as a part of unpaid work performed by households, to identify extent of the unpaid work performed by individuals/ households in other households in Slovakia and in Slovak regions (NUTS II level) and different kinds of municipalities (NUTS V level). In the article, I verify following research questions/ problems: 1. Less than 20 % of households /individuals do not help other households at all (do not perform unpaid work in other households); 2. Less time individuals spend in paid work, more unpaid work these individuals perform in other households; 3. Households perform more unpaid work in other households (neighbourhood help) in rural areas than in urban areas; 4. There are statistically significant differences between the amount of unpaid work performed in other households in Slovak regions (NUTS II level).

Analysis of recent research and publications

In Slovakia, neighbourhood relationships (including neighbourhood help and do it yourselves activities among the neighbours) were typical mostly in the rural environment. There are many studies and theoretical works that focus on the neighbourhood relationships, their importance and influence. Many studies belong to the anthropology, ethnology, and sociology area. According to Štefánek [11, p. 79], neighbourhood is the most typical sociological phenomenon in the village. Neighbours help each other and respect each other. Neighbours not only live close together, but they also participate in the economic area.

According to Slavkovský [10, p. 123], neighbours are not connected through the blood relations, but they are connected through the production, property, and social relations.

We can distinguish two important milestones in the development of neighbourhood relationships in Slovakia in the twenties century. Torsello [12, p. 110] stated that beginning of the socialism and forced collectivisation changed significantly social and economic relationships in the rural environment. Level of education increased significantly, infrastructure was improved, and increased mobility of the employed population

led to the more dynamic social relations inside and outside the community.

Another milestone was year 1989. According to Rochovská and Majo [9, pp. 7-30], the most important changes in the rural environment were linked with the change of the structure of the employment (due to the destruction of the socialistic common economy and beginning of the private business sector; appearance of the unemployment, losing of the work habits and traumatising of the relationships within the family and community).

Reciprocity is very often a characteristic feature of the neighbourhood relationships. According to Acheson [2, pp. 405-413], reciprocity in Slovak households is linked with the mutual exchange of the food (or components of the food produced by other households), but also exchange of the products bought in the shops. Important part of the reciprocity is the exchange of the work (for example help with the building and construction works), with agricultural activities, such as tillage, small maintenance works in the household. According to Brown and Kulcsar [3, pp. 157-180], mutual exchange of the work (help) could replace paid work and can increase social solidarity in the rural environment.

According to the field research results of Rochovská, Majo, and Káčerová (In: Chorvát, T. [5, p. 44]), neighbourhood relations and mutual help decline. Households do not help each other very often. About 14 % of all households do not help any other household. About 20 % of households help other household once a week in average.

According to many foreign and Slovak researches, neighbourhood help can be considered as a part of the unpaid work activities performed by households (e.g. Uramová, Orviská et al. [14, pp. 314], Budlender [4, pp. 256], Miranda [8, pp. 40]). Unpaid work is a household work performed by households' members. Unpaid work has social as well as economic importance. Individuals and households perform unpaid work every day (in their own households and in other households) and many times they even do not consider how much time they spend by unpaid work activities. Abroad, there are many studies and research papers focusing on the unpaid work (such as Antonopoulos and Hirway [1, pp. 336], Miranda [8, pp. 40], Anderson and Kelliher

[6, pp. 83-106]). On the other side, many countries (including Slovakia) do not stress importance of this phenomenon, yet. In Slovakia, unpaid work was officially analysed only roughly, in respect to the interaction between jobs and family life, equality or inequality of men and women and division of the work within the family or in respect to voluntary work. From time to time, there are partial researches regarding the relationship between the unpaid work and labour market. However, these researches focused more on the labour policy, labour market equilibrium, non-paid or mal-paid work and problems of the primary and secondary labour market.

Starting from 2011, multidisciplinary team of researchers from Faculty of Economics, Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica, focused on unpaid work in more details. This article is part of the VEGA project no. 1/0621/17 "Decision-making Process of Slovak Households about Allocation of Time for Paid and Unpaid Work and Household Strategies' Impact on Selected Areas of the Economic Practice".

Methodology

Within the unpaid work, we analysed 13 categories of activities: food preparation, housekeeping - cleaning, preparation and maintenance of cloths, growing ornamental plants, pet care, preparation and maintenance of equipment, shopping and services, growing agricultural plants, breeding farm animals, building and reconstructions, children care, adults care, volunteer activities. Members of household can perform these activities either in their own household, or they can perform them also in other households. In this article, I focus particularly on the unpaid work activities performed by individuals or households in other households. Data for this article are from the field research which our multidisciplinary team realised in 2016 (data were collected for the year 2015). In the research, 1743 households and 4818 individuals participated. Research was representative and adequate according to the number of households' members and according to the number of households in the regions (NUTS III) in case of households, and according to the gender and age (seven age categories) in case of individuals. For the purpose of the article I checked and tested four research questions/ hypothesis: 1. Less than 20 % of households /individuals do not

help other households at all (do not perform unpaid work in other households); 2. Less time individuals spend in paid work, more unpaid work these individuals perform in other households; 3. Households perform more unpaid work in other households (neighbourhood help) in rural areas than in urban areas; 4. There are statistically

significant differences between the amount of unpaid work performed in other households in Slovak regions (NUTS II level). To test the hypothesis, I used non-parametric tests, mostly Mann-Whitney Test and Kruskal-Wallis test. I also used binomial test. I tested hypothesis on the probability level $\alpha = 0,05$.

Results and main findings

From 4818 individuals included in the research, 4452 were involved in paid working activities (paid work includes paid dependent work performed by employee for employer under the employment contracts or other similar working contracts, independent work performed by entrepreneurs – sole proprietors, freelancers, traders, and other activities, for which person gets official payment (e.g. according to civil law or business law contracts, and intellectual property rights activities). Paid work includes work in main job (full time job) and all the subsidiary or part time jobs. All individuals answered that they perform unpaid work both in their own household as well as in other households (however, in the answer, there was possible to pick also 0 hours per week. It means, this data refers only to answered question, not to real data about the extent of the unpaid work performed by individuals in own or in other households. I used more detailed data for testing hypothesis in the text below.). All 1743 households involved in the field research performed both paid and unpaid work (all of them also answered that they performed unpaid work in other households -however, answer could be also 0 hours per week). To calculate average time spent by households in paid and unpaid work, we considered only those members of households that are older than 15 years of age (according to Slovak legislation, it is not allowed to conclude employment contract with minor child younger than 15 years and it is not possible to start working relationship before finishing compulsory education). Table 1 displays extent of the paid and unpaid work performed by Slovak households and individuals (all individuals and households in average who were involved in the field research).

Table 1 Paid work and unpaid work (in own household and in other households) performed by Slovak households and individuals (hours/week)

work performed by huseholds		paid work performed by household (hours/week)	unpaid work performed by household in own household (hours/week)	unpaid work performed by household in other households (hours/week)
N	Valid	1743	1743	1743
	Missing	0	0	0
Mean		71,3883	63,2670	8,7366
work performed by individuals		paid work performed by individuals (hours/week)	unpaid work performed by individuals in own household (hours/week)	unpaid work performed by individuals in other households (hours/week)
N	Valid	4452	4818	4818
	Missing	366	0	0
Mean		30,2236	26,0371	3,5153

Source: own elaboration.

Individuals spent almost the same time by performing unpaid work (cumulatively in own and other households) than in paid work per week. Households spent even more time by performing unpaid work than by paid activities. It is an interesting finding showing interest (or necessity) of individuals and households to perform unpaid work in their free time. Our research already confirmed that non-economic reasons of performing unpaid work are sometimes more important than economic reasons (more in Uramová, Orviská et al. [14, pp. 314]). According to Kika and Martinkovičová [7, pp. 10], non-economic influences include traditions and habits in families, enjoyment of performing specific unpaid work activities, etc.

To test hypothesis 1, I used binomial test. Original hypothesis, "less than 20 % of households /individuals do not help in other households at all (do not perform unpaid work in other households)" was based on the results of Rochovská, Majo, and Káčerová (In: Chorvát [5, p. 44]). According to their findings, neighbourhood relations and mutual help decline, and households do not help each other very often. About 14 % of all households do not help any other household and about 20 % of households help other household once a week in average. That is why I assumed that our research can confirm similar results. However, according to our research, 665 individuals from 1743 respondents (it is more than 38 % of all respondents) do not perform any unpaid work in other households. That is why I was not able to test original hypothesis no. 1, and I redefine hypothesis 1 as following: I assume that 40 % of individuals in Slovakia do not help in other households (do not perform unpaid work in other households). By using the binomial test, I confirm this hypothesis on the probability level $\alpha = 0,05$. In the following table, there are results of the binomial test.

Table 2 Binomial test for testing redefined hypothesis 1

Category	N	Observed Prop.	Test Prop.	Exact Sig. (1-tailed)
do not perform unpaid work in other households	665	0,38	,4	,060 ^a
perform unpaid work in other households	1078	,6		
	1743	1,0		

Source: own elaboration.

Our research showed, that high ratio of the individuals performs unpaid work only in their own households, but do not help in other households at all. It is even worse result, as was discovered in ethnological studies in 2014.

Second hypothesis "Less time individuals spend in paid work, more unpaid work these individuals perform in other households" is based on the statement of Brown and Kulcsar [3, pp. 157-180]. According to them, mutual exchange of the work (help) can replace paid work and can increase social solidarity in the rural environment. This statement, as well as my hypothesis no. 2 assume negative correlation between the extent of paid work and extent of unpaid work performed by individuals in other households. However, hypothesis 2 was not confirmed. I found out, that there is an opposite situation, it means a positive correlation between the extent of paid work and unpaid work performed in other households (correlation is not strong, but is obviously positive). Table 3 displays results of non-parametric test of the correlation between the extent of paid work and extent of unpaid work that individuals perform in other households.

Table 3 Non-parametric test of correlation between the extent of paid work and unpaid work performed by individuals in other households

	individuals who have paid work	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
unpaid work in other households (hours per week in average)	individuals who do not have paid work	1745	2,38640639702	8,694708554632	,208140845043
	individuals who have paid work	3073	3,41403595901	12,427270953225	,224178772730
				unpaid work in other households (hours per week in average)	pracuju
Spearman's rho	unpaid work in other households (hours per week in average)	Correlation Coefficient	1,000	,136**	
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	,000	
		N	4818	4818	
	individuals with paid work	Correlation Coefficient	,136**	1,000	
		Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	.	
		N	4818	4818	

Source: own elaboration.

Research shows, that individuals who have paid work perform more unpaid work activities in other households (neighbourhood help – in average 3,4 hours per week) than individuals who do not have paid work (only 2,39 hours per week in average). It is in contrary to the previous researches, according to which mutual exchange of the unpaid work (help) can replace paid work.

In the hypothesis 3 "Households perform more unpaid work in other households (neighbourhood help) in rural areas than in urban areas", I focus on the differences between the rural and urban environment. As stated above, many researches showed that unpaid work is typical for the rural environment (Štefánek [11, p. 79], Rochovská and Majo [9, pp. 7-30]). In the table 4, there are results of the statistical non-parametric Mann-Whitney test.

Table 4 Non-parametric test of hypothesis 3
(difference in the extent of unpaid work in other households performed in towns and villages)

Ranks				
	town_village	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
unpaid work in other households (hours per week in	towns	3094	2373,63	7344024,00
	villages	1724	2473,87	4264947,00
	Total	4818		
Test Statistics^a				
	unpaid work in other households (hours per week in average)			
Mann-Whitney U	2556059,000			
Wilcoxon W	7344024,000			
Z	-2,624			
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	,009			
a. Grouping Variable: town_village				

Source: own elaboration.

Using the Mann-Whitney test, I confirmed that individuals in Slovakia perform more unpaid work in other households in rural areas (villages) than in urban areas (towns). I confirmed it on the probability level $\alpha = 0,05$. This finding is in accordance with the previous researches and it confirms importance of the neighbourhood relationships (including unpaid work performed in other households) in Slovak villages.

Hypothesis 4 focuses on the differences in the extent of unpaid work performed in other households in different regions of Slovakia. In this case, I considered unpaid work performed by households (not individuals). Firstly, I compared situation in eight regions (NUTS III level – Bratislava region, Trenčín region, Trnava region, Nitra region, Banská Bystrica region, Žilina region, Košice region and Prešov region). There were no statistically significant differences in the extent of unpaid work performed by households in other households between them. Consequently, I compare also extent of unpaid work (neighbourhood help) in four regions (NUTS II level – Bratislava region, Western Slovakia, Central Slovakia, Eastern Slovakia). By the means of the Kruskal-Wallis test I confirmed, that there are statistically significant differences between the Slovak regions (NUTS II level). Table 5 displays results of Kruskal-Wallis test for four regions.

Table 5 Kruskal-Wallis test for NUTS II regions in Slovakia

Ranks			
	region NUTS2	N	Mean Rank
unpaid work of households in other households (hours per week in average)	Bratislava region	342	728,11
	Western Slovakia	481	875,05
	Central Slovakia	444	938,48
	Eastern Slovakia	476	910,29
	Total	1743	
Test Statistics^{a,b}			
	unpaid work of households in other households (hours per week in average)		
Chi-Square		40,736	
df		3	
Asymp. Sig.		,000	
a. Kruskal Wallis Testb. Grouping Variable: oblasť N			

Source: own elaboration.

By comparing every two regions and by using non-parametric Mann-Whitney test, I confirmed that there are statistically significant differences between the Bratislava region and other three regions (in Bratislava region, households perform significantly less unpaid work in other households than in other Slovak regions). It confirmed previous results of our research team (more in Uramová and Knapková [13, pp. 183-241]), that Bratislava region is specific, and households and individuals perform less unpaid work in Bratislava region, than in the rest of Slovakia.

Conclusions and recommendations for further research

Neighbourhood help in Slovakia and in Slovak regions shows a declining trend. According to our research, there are, however, still about 60% of individuals who perform unpaid work in other households. In this article, I tested four assumptions/ hypotheses which are based on the previous anthropological and ethnological researches. Based on the data from field research from 2016, I was able to confirm two hypotheses (in rural areas there is more neighbourhood help performed than in urban areas; there are statistically significant differences in the extent of the unpaid work performed in other households between the Slovak regions). On the other side, I did not confirm assumption about negative correlation between the paid work and unpaid work performed in other households. My findings are, however, limited by lack of theoretical information about the neighbourhood help. In Slovakia, there is no legal definition and any legal regulation of the neighbourhood help. In Slovakia, there is also no any economic analysis of the importance of the neighbourhood help and estimations of the economic value of the neighbourhood help. There is also no appropriate information about similar researches abroad.

In the future researches, it will be necessary to focus in defining neighbourhood help in more details and to find a method for evaluating economic value of the neighbourhood help.

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