

EXPLORING THE DEMAND FOR PAID DOMESTIC WORKERS IN SLOVAKIA THROUGH THE INTERSECTION OF WELFARE AND GENDER REGIMES

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Drawing on interviews with both providers and employers of paid domestic work, this article focuses on the emerging market for paid domestic workers in Slovakia. Analyzing hiring strategies and practices of employers, I examine the role of welfare and gender regimes in the employment of paid domestic work. I demonstrate that, while the welfare regime sets the structural conditions for the employment of paid domestic workers, individual motivations for employing one are related to the contradictory pressures of parenthood and employment among the Slovak middle classes. The second part of the article argues that ideas and practices related to who is a suitable caregiver are to a large extent driven by local cultural practices of childrearing and conventional patterns of gendered identity. In particular, employers hire elderly women as nannies because their gendered biographical experience—as mothers of now grown-up children—makes them culturally acceptable nannies, as they can serve as “granny substitutes,” providing children with expert care without threatening the mother’s role as primary caregiver.

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While being a paid domestic worker was a common occupation in Slovakia before 1948 (see, e.g., Paříková 1990), the employment of paid domestic workers was disrupted during the socialist period. Socialist Czechoslovakia was characterized by the long-term and extensive participation of women in the labor market, dual career households, and widespread use of institutional preschool childcare (nurseries and

kindergartens) (e.g., Dudová and Hašková 2010; Gašparová and Miňová 2009; Hašková 2007). While both men and women worked, ideas about gender roles remained conservative: men were seen as breadwinners, and women as responsible for housekeeping and childcare. This has not changed much since 1989, as a large number of women still fulfill both of these roles (e.g., Bahna and Kvapilová 2007; Bútorová et al. 2008; Chorvát 2002, 2006a, 2006b; Filadelfiová 2007, 2008; Holubová 2011; Potančoková 2009). On the other hand, ideas, practices, and social policies related to childcare have changed significantly since the fall of the socialist regime. Since the 1990s, there has been a tendency to replace institutional childcare for very young children with care based at home: while the number of nurseries providing care for children younger than three years old decreased rapidly in Slovakia (only 3 percent of the pre-1989 places remained available), financial support for parental leave has been extended to three years (Hašková 2005:24; Maříková and Uhde 2008; Saxonberg and Sirovátka 2006). Ideas about parenting are characterized by intensive mothering and a consequent refusal of institutional care for children under three years of age: 63 percent of respondents in 2005 claimed that it is bad for a child to be in institutional care, and 42 percent considered the mother to be the best possible care provider (Marošiová and Šumšalová 2006). However, women also agree that being a full-time housewife permanently is less satisfactory than being employed (Čermáková 1994). Thus the most common scenario is that, after three years of parental leave, new mothers return to full-time employment and their children enter state or private kindergartens. Nevertheless, some women do not wish to or cannot afford to stay on parental leave for three years and have to look for alternative models of childcare consisting of unpaid care by other family members, hardly available state or hardly affordable private nurseries, or nannies.

The employment of paid domestic workers in present Slovakia has not been studied yet. While there are studies on Slovak migrants working in the care industry abroad (e.g., Bahna 2005, 2014, 2015; Búriková 2006; Búriková and Miller 2010; Hess 2000–2001; Sekeráková Búriková 2014, 2015; Sekulová 2013), there is no literature focusing on the employment of paid domestic work in Slovakia itself. Paid noninstitutional care is mentioned only in passing in texts on the participation of mothers in the labor market (e.g., Marošiová and Šumšalová 2006; Potančoková 2009). There are three reasons for this disregard. Firstly, paid domestic work is usually undertaken by migrant women (e.g., Anderson 2000; Ehrenreich and Hochschild 2003; Henshall Momsen 1999; Lutz 2008b, 2011) and consequently is studied as an aspect of migration. In Slovakia, on the other hand, demand for paid domestic workers is filled mostly by local women. Neither they nor their employers are migrants working as domestic workers abroad. As such, the employment of paid domestic workers in Slovakia does not correspond with the usual conceptual frameworks as, for example, the global care chain (Hochschild 2000; Parreñas 2000, 2001) and has been therefore omitted by researchers. Adéla Souralová (2012b) identifies a second reason: within the local version of the global care chain (Hochschild 2000; Lutz 2011), researchers most commonly conceptualize women from Central and Eastern Europe as employees, not as employers of paid domestic work. Thirdly, the use of paid home-based childcare is not

a dominant form of childcare—most women in Slovakia take maternity leave for three years, and their children attend kindergarten afterwards. The aim of this article is to begin mapping the employment of paid home-based childcarers in contemporary Slovakia. Its focus is not only the result of my personal interest in commodified childcare and housework but follows structural changes in both Slovak society and postsocialist countries in Eastern and Central Europe more generally. The development of a market for paid domestic work and childcare in Slovakia is related to neoliberal politics, the withdrawal of the state from providing care for children under three years, the changing lifestyle of the Slovak middle and upper classes, and transformation of ideas and practices related to both gender and childcare. This makes the Slovak situation closer to that of previously studied countries and provides interesting material for comparison.

Drawing on interviews with both providers and employers of paid domestic work in Slovakia between 2013 and 2015, this article focuses on the emerging market for paid domestic work in the country. For the purposes of this article I have principally focused on home-based care, in particular on full-time and part-time nannies and babysitters. Specifically, I will look at the hiring strategies and practices of employers. What are their motivations for hiring paid domestic workers? What characteristics or what kind of persons are they looking for? How are particular relationships organized around specific ideas about who is fit to do particular kinds of care? Inspired by Helma Lutz's (2008a, 2008b) concepts of care and gender regimes, I will show how the demand for paid home-based childcare and relationships between providers and employers are constructed in relation to welfare state regulations and local gendered identities.

After the introduction of my theoretical perspective, research methods, and local context, I will describe the dynamics involved in the employment of paid domestic work in Slovakia. I will illustrate how my interviewees decided to employ particular types of domestic workers under specific welfare regimes. Usually starting with either a full-time or a part-time nanny before children enter kindergarten, they continued to employ a childcarer to accompany children to their after-school activities and ended having a cleaner and occasional babysitter. Then I will show how ideas and practices related to who is a suitable care provider correspond with local cultural practices of childrearing and the logic of conventional patterns of gendered identity.

CONCEPTUALIZING PAID DOMESTIC WORK: MIGRATION, WELFARE, AND GENDER REGIMES

In the introduction to *Migrant Domestic Workers in Europe* Helma Lutz excludes domestic work from the discussion of labor markets, because it is performed within the domestic sphere, is constructed as a female job, the relationship between employer and employee is highly emotional, and care work has a specific logic (2008a:1). Lutz identifies three regimes organizing social policies and practices (i.e., gender, care, and migration regimes) in which the relationships of domestic care are articulated and negotiated. While care regimes consist of welfare state regulations, migration

regimes control and regulate the employment of migrants in domestic work, and gender regimes organize care work according to specific practices and ideas about gender.

Because of the restrictive migration policy in Slovakia, combined with the relatively low economic attractiveness of the country, the demand for paid care is supplied not by migrants but, rather, by local women who are not coded as racially or ethnically different. Under these circumstances, I focus on the intersection of care and gender regimes. This enables me to expand upon previous studies focusing mostly on the employment of migrants, as well as to point at the fact that ethnicity (e.g., Anderson 2007; Cock 1980; Lutz 2011:78–110; Pratt 1997; Rollins 1985; Romero 1992) and migration status (Anderson 2000, 2013, 2014; Hochschild 2000; Parreñas 2000, 2001; Yodanis and Lauer 2005) are not necessarily the variables around which relocation of paid domestic work is organized.

The welfare regime denotes “a (multitude) of state regulations according to which the responsibilities for the wellbeing of national citizens is distributed between the state, the family and the market” (Lutz 2008a:2). Following Lutz, Fiona Williams and Anna Gavanas (2008) examine how state policies and migration trends shape the employment of migrant women in home-based childcare. They argue that unlike in the United States, in Europe not only the lack of public provision but also particular types of available state support shape the demand for paid care. In particular, the shift from providing public care for children, elderly, or disabled people to cash payments enabling individuals to buy services through the private market encourages the employment of low-paid migrant domestic workers (Williams and Gavanas 2008). Analyzing the caring strategies of informal home care providers in Britain and in former West and East Germany, Prue Chamberlayne and Annette King demonstrate how “cultural and social patterns relating to particular welfare regimes produce typical and recognizable adaptations to the challenge of care” (2000:3). I have found their work particularly inspiring: the authors do not focus on particular intersection of welfare and migration regimes but, rather, emphasize the interplay of structural conditions set by welfare regime and the individual lives of caregivers—an interplay that can also be observed in the Slovak case.

In gender regimes, “household and care work organization can be seen as the expression of a specifically gendered cultural script” (Lutz 2008a:2). Within this script, the division of labor within the household is gender specific despite the involvement of women in paid employment. Lutz, among others, identifies family or care work as

a gendered activity of a very special kind that creates identity and, as a core part of “doing gender,” maintains the gender order of society (where “doing gender” describes gender as an ensemble of everyday actions; as routines of perception, representation and attribution). Heterosexual gender-binarism is taken not as an ontological starting point but an effect of social practices. Since the social order is unstable, it has to be repeatedly produced through the routine of “gender display.” (2011:28)

Thus, in dual-earning families the housework and childcare are considered women's tasks and, if these tasks are not performed by the mother, they are outsourced to another woman (Ehrenreich and Hochschild 2003; Lutz 2011). Lutz argues that "the re-allocation of household and care work to another woman conforms to the logic of conventional patterns of identity, and these need never be scrutinized" (2011:28). While Lutz uses the concept of the *gendered cultural script* to reveal the logic behind the fact that domestic work is relocated—*why* there is demand and supply for such work—I would like to shift focus and look at the gendered cultural script behind particular arrangements and relationships between employers and providers of paid care—*how* the work is relocated, and *who* is seen as suitable for particular types of domestic work.

This study uses qualitative research methods allowing for deeper insight into the practices and interpretations of research participants. Research methods include ethnographic interviews and participant observation. During the years 2013–2015 I interviewed 22 employers (20 females and 2 males) and 10 providers of paid domestic work (full- or part-time nannies, babysitters, and cleaners).

Twenty-five interviews took place in Bratislava, the country's capital, and seven in Banská Bystrica, a city in central Slovakia. Bratislava is the largest and wealthiest Slovak city, known for having a large number of state kindergartens that, nevertheless, are not able to provide places for all children. As the main destination of internal migrants, Bratislava is also the home of numerous parents who cannot depend on their extended families to provide childcare. These characteristics make Bratislava an obvious place to study the employment of paid home-based childcare. I decided to do interviews also in Banská Bystrica, a regional center. I chose Banská Bystrica out of convenience: my mother and sister live there, so I could stay in their home and use their contacts for finding interviewees.

Since both cleaning and paid care in Slovakia are done mostly informally (only one full-time nanny I interviewed had a formal employment contract), I found snowball sampling to be the most effective way of finding research participants. While the main source of data was interviewing, participant observation provided a deeper understanding of informants' practices. During participant observation I informally met with employers (mostly mothers) and nannies on various occasions—at playgrounds, in cafés, or in homes.

In interviews and during participant observation I tried to follow the personal stories of hiring or working as a domestic worker. I was interested in informants' motivations for employing or being employed as a domestic worker, means of recruitment, and particular working arrangements and relationships. I have not only focused on the employment of a domestic worker but also wanted to investigate how the employment of paid domestic work within an individual household changes over time and how this change might correspond with the biographies of individuals and life cycles of families. This approach enabled me to investigate how, in the employment of paid domestic workers, the structural conditions of the particular welfare regime meet the ideas and practices of individuals.

When analyzing interviews, I used thematic content analysis (Silverman 1993; Spradley 1979, 1980). I followed the themes my interviewees found important and

looked for repeating motives, similarities, and differences. Then I analyzed the content of interviews in relation to theoretical concepts, looking at the relationship between the employment of paid childcarers and migration, welfare, and gender regimes. Empirical material and interview quotes presented in this article are representative examples of the data, illustrating well the theoretical discussion. All names of research participants appearing in this text are pseudonyms.

LOCAL CONTEXT: EMPLOYMENT OF PAID DOMESTIC WORK IN SLOVAKIA

Within research on paid domestic work, intersectionality provides an important analytical frame for analyzing the unequal relationship between paid domestic workers and their employers. Researchers have identified gender, class, immigration status, ethnicity, and live-in or live-out status as factors structuring the relationships involved in paid domestic work (e.g., Anderson 2000; Cock 1980; Ehrenreich and Hochschild 2003; Henshall Momsen 1999; Lutz 2011; Näre 2013; Parreñas 2001; Rollins 1985; Romero 1992). Usually, migrant (and/or lower-class) women of different ethnicity fit well with employers' ideas about who should undertake this kind of low status work. In the following section I will briefly introduce paid domestic work in Slovakia through the lens of intersectional theory (e.g., Lutz, Vivar, and Supik 2011; Salem 2016).

Interviewed employers can be broadly characterized as middle and upper class. They belong to professional dual-earning families, although two mothers employing part-time nannies and cleaners became housewives after having children. The interviewees work in both private and public sectors and are well-off, although not necessarily affluent (e.g., one employer of a full-time nanny works as nurse, another as a primary school teacher). Their motivations for employing paid care are related to the contradictory expectations and pressures of parenthood and employment among Slovak middle and upper classes. In particular, mothers believe in intensive motherhood (Macdonald 1998, 2011; Marošiová and Šumšalová 2006; Potančoková 2009) but at the same time want to continue on their career paths or need more financial resources in order to sustain a middle-class standard (e.g., pay their mortgages); their children are involved in various time-consuming leisure activities and someone has to accompany or drive them there; they want to have "quality time" with their families and either do not want to spend their free time doing housework or need someone to look after their children during their evenings out.

The formal market for private paid care is organized around agencies that mediate contacts between providers and employers of paid care. Agencies supply primarily students as part-time nannies and babysitters. They specialize in providing mostly part-time professional nannies with specific characteristics and qualifications, such as first aid certificates or knowledge of foreign languages (Souralová 2012a). These nannies belong to various age groups. There are also internet portals advertising both formal and informal arrangements. My interviewees found their employers or employees either by using informal personal contacts (sometimes through social

media such as Facebook) or through advertising on specialized internet portals, mainly at Domelia.¹

Providers of paid domestic work include full-time or part-time nannies, babysitters, and cleaners. Unlike employers, providers usually specialize in one type of service (e.g., people who work as full-time nannies usually do neither cleaning nor occasional babysitting, cleaners do not babysit, etc.). Nannies earned 2.5–5 euros per hour in Bratislava and 2–3 euros per hour in Banská Bystrica; cleaners earned 3–7 euros per hour in Bratislava. While this is slightly above minimum hourly gross income in Slovakia (2.023 euros in 2014) (*Minimálna mzda 2015*), it is still less than the average hourly wage (7.1 euros) (*Finančné centrum o peniazoch 2015*). Low wages and the need to pay for social and medical insurance make employment in paid domestic work precarious and attractive to specific groups of women, who either have some other source of income or at least have their insurance paid by the state (see also Suralová 2014).

For this reason students and retired women commonly work as part-time or full-time nannies. Some full-time nannies are formally registered as long-term unemployed. Only few nannies work formally as self-employed persons. Full-time nannies are usually needed during normal working hours, so they cannot hold other full-time jobs. Compared to childcare, cleaning work is more flexible regarding time, and, unlike nannies, cleaners often have other jobs and cleaning provides them with supplementary income. Although cleaners do not necessarily belong to specific age groups, students and pensioners also prevail.

Being a paid domestic worker is often conceptualized as a specific and temporary biographical experience rather than as a career (Anderson 2009; Sekeráková Búriková 2014; Suralová 2014). Part-time nannies are mostly students, who tend to find other employment after finishing their studies, or retired women. A couple of full-time nannies interviewed had started nanny work shortly before their retirement, when they were unemployed and missed having children in their lives. They expected they would end up working as nannies after retirement or once they had their own grandchildren.

Within my research, it is easier to characterize paid domestic workers by their age or biographical phase than by their class. Interestingly, there is not necessarily a difference between the class or class position of middle-class employers and providers of paid domestic work, especially when students are employed as nannies or babysitters. Differences in class position are more visible between cleaners and their employers, cleaners being of lower-middle-class or working-class origin. However, sometimes middle-class students will work as cleaners.

Globally, paid domestic work tends to be carried out mostly by migrant women or women who are coded as ethnically or racially different (e.g., Anderson 2000; Lutz 2008b, 2011). Paid domestic work is often racialized and paid domestic workers seen as inferior (Anderson 2000; Cock 1980; Hondagneu-Sotelo 2001; Rollins 1985; Romero 1992). Unlike in most other countries, in Slovakia domestic workers are mostly

¹ <http://www.domelia.sk>.

citizens and not migrants, and they are usually the same ethnicity as their employers. Usually, when employers think about hiring someone as a cleaner, nanny, or a babysitter, they think of a local woman. Only one interviewee, herself a former au pair, explicitly stated a preference for a migrant nanny, complaining that there is not a tradition of having paid domestic service in Slovakia and it is difficult to find someone who knows how to “serve.” However, she did not know how to recruit one, so ultimately employed a series of local women. I have met several families wanting to help their children with foreign language learning by employing as babysitters foreign au pairs or foreign students studying in Slovakia. Slovak families look for au pairs on international websites, evidence that there is some interest in attracting migrant domestic workers. Two of my interviewees had employed at some point a Ukrainian cleaner. I have met (but not interviewed) a family who employed a Chinese nanny, since they thought Chinese would be the language of the future and wanted their children to speak it fluently. I have informally interviewed one Filipino nanny. She said there were some, but very few, Filipino nannies working for affluent families in Bratislava. Wanting her daughter to learn Hungarian, one interviewee had employed a member of a Hungarian minority group as part-time nanny. However, these were exceptional rather than common cases.

As in other countries, both paid and unpaid domestic work is socially constructed as feminine (e.g., Cox 2006; Ehrenreich and Hochschild 2003; Lutz 2011). Indeed, with one exception,² all paid domestic workers in my research sample are females (cf. Ehrenreich and Hochschild 2003; Lutz 2011). Also, their work is organized by and they interact mostly with their female, not their male employers.

Like elsewhere, most paid care in Slovakia is done informally, without any written contracts. Employers among my interviewees hired cleaners, full-time or part-time nannies, babysitters, or various combinations of these types of services either simultaneously or in sequence. Most arrangements are part-time. In particular, cleaners usually work once a week for a particular employer. Part-time nannies work either several days a week, or they work less than eight hours daily from Monday to Friday. Full-time nannies work eight hours daily during working days.

Whether paid domestic workers live out or in the households of their employers crucially shapes the relationships and arrangements involved in paid domestic work (see Anderson 2000; Cox and Narula 2004; Sekeráková Búriková 2015). All arrangements I have seen consisted of paid domestic workers living out. Childcarers and cleaners involved in my research come to the homes of their employers for agreed-upon hours and go to their own homes afterwards. This gives them much more independence and control over both their working hours and their free time than is usual for live-in arrangements (e.g., Anderson 2000; Búriková and Miller 2010; Constable 1997). Negotiations of intimacy and private space are not as difficult as when paid domestic workers live in (e.g., Búriková 2006; Cox and Narula 2004).

² One family interviewed was paying a male friend to cook for them during the mother's illness.

PAID CARE AND THE WELFARE REGIME

Unlike in Western European countries where an increase in the employment of paid care followed the move away from the male breadwinner model for welfare provision to the “adult worker” model promoting dual participation in the labor market (Williams and Gavanas 2008), employment of paid care in Slovakia is related to a different and even opposite trend. In particular, after 1997 Slovak childcare policy shifted to an “explicit familism” model that encouraged women to temporarily leave the labor market to provide care for their children in their own homes (Szelewa and Polakowski 2008; cf. Saxonberg and Sirovátka 2006, 2008). The Slovak family policy has been shaped by assumptions about gendered roles within the family and by the specifics of the labor market during the postsocialist transformation, and it discourages mothers from returning too soon to the labor market. In particular, “good” care for children under three years has been associated with intense mothering provided at home³ (Marošiová and Šumšalová 2006; Potančoková 2009). Accordingly, the welfare regime in Slovakia provides long leave for the parent providing childcare (i.e., either mother or father) and does not provide sufficient public care for children under three years (most public nurseries were closed in the 1990s). However, long leave for a parent providing childcare is not only a nod to particular ideas about childcare. The implementation of extended maternity leaves in both the Czech Republic and Slovakia is an outcome of a policy endeavoring to reduce high unemployment (Višek 2006, quoted in Uhde 2009:22).

In particular, women receive six months of maternity leave, during which employees, self-employed persons, and other health insurance contributors receive a maternity benefit (65 percent of their gross earnings, up to a maximum of 40.6 euros per day). Maternity leave must be “related to delivery and care for a newborn” (§166, par. 1 law nu. 311/2001).⁴ After maternity leave, a mother or father can take parental leave supposed to “enhance childcare” (§167 par.1 law nu. 311/2001) and receive a monthly parental allowance of 203.2 euros until the child is three years old. Men only rarely take maternity or parental leave.⁵ The parent can also receive the parental al-

³ According to the representative quantitative research undertaken by the Institute for Public Affairs in 2005, 42 percent of respondents expect mothers to stay with their child at home until the child reaches three years, and 39 percent think that mothers should stay with a child at home longer than three years. Only 2 percent believe that a mother should stay at home with their child for a year. The average time seen as suitable for home childcare provided by the mother is 3.9 years (Marošiová and Šumšalová 2006:7–8). Within my research, the idea that the care provided by mothers at home is best for children was shared by both employers and nannies, including nannies who had grown up and cared for their own children under the socialist welfare regime.

⁴ A father can take maternity leave when father and mother agree upon that (in such cases the child has to be at least six weeks) or in the case of a mother’s death. If a father takes maternity leave, it is called parental leave like the leave designed to “enhance childcare” for parents of children from six months to three years.

⁵ While the number of persons on parental leave oscillated around 69,000 in 2004–2013, the average number of men was only 480 (Hanzelová and Kešelová 2014:13). The number of fathers taking parental leave has never exceeded 3 percent at any time (Holubová 2011:29).

lowance if she or he does not provide childcare personally, returns to full-time employment, and the child is cared for by another person or institution. The parental allowance is below the legal minimum salary, 339 euros net in 2015 (Minimálna mzda 2015). Ninety-two percent of respondents participating in quantitative representative research agree that maternal benefits and parental allowances are not sufficient for families with small children (Marošiová and Šumšalová 2006:18).⁶

This social policy focuses on enabling parents to provide care for very young children at home. On the other hand, it provides hardly any public care for children under three years: only 4 percent of children under three years were in public nurseries in 2012 (Hanzelová and Kešelová 2014:5). Instead, the expenses for professional childcare can be reimbursed: if a child younger than three years is in professional care (e.g., a nursery, kindergarten, or nanny), the parent can decide between taking the parental allowance or the monthly childcare allowance. Childcare allowance (a monthly maximum of 230 euros) reimburses childcare expenses. In contrast, state kindergartens provide care for preschool children above three years. Their costs are relatively low due to state subsidies. However, they do not necessarily have enough places for all children.

While long parental leave is the norm in Slovakia,⁷ it is not generally accepted by employers and has a negative impact on the employability of women (Hanzelová and Kešelová 2014; Marošiová and Šumšalová 2006; Piscová 2006; Šumšalová 2008). According to OECD Family Database (OECD 2014), 18.7 percent of women with children younger than three years, 63.1 percent of women with children between three and five years, and 79.1 percent of women with children between six and fourteen years were employed in 2011 (Hanzelová and Kešelová 2014:18). Even though parents have the right to return to the workplace after maternity (§157 par.1 law nu. 311/2001) or parental leave (§157 par.2 law nu. 311/2001), employers are often reluctant to take them back. Mothers of young children generally have a hard time when they are looking for jobs, because employers expect them to take time off when their children are ill or prioritize their families over work. Furthermore, even though legislation enables flexible working hours or part-time work, these are not supported by employers. In general, people agree that society does not create suitable conditions for working mothers (an opinion shared by 86 percent of respondents participating in the representative research on the position of mothers in society in 2005) and that it is very difficult for women to balance a career and family life (76 percent of respondents in the same research) (Marošiová and Šumšalová 2006:17).

Thus, employment of paid home-based childcare is related to the fact that the welfare regime in Slovakia does not offer mothers of very young children suitable possibilities for combining work and childcare. If women want to return to the labor market before their children turn three, they soon realize that there are not enough

⁶ Gross expenditures of private households averaged 377.99 euros per person in 2014; gross expenditures of private households with two children averaged 311.05 euros in 2014 (Štatistický úrad Slovenskej Republiky 2016).

⁷ Eighty-six percent of people agree that it is damaging for children if their mothers do not stay with them at home for three years (Marošiová and Šumšalová 2006:17).

places in state nurseries (or the state nurseries have been closed where they live) and they have to turn either to the private market (private nurseries, childminders, and nannies) or other family members for childcare. Now I am going to demonstrate the relationship between the welfare regime and employment of home-based childcare in interviews with the employers of nannies.

Elena is a good example of a woman who employs a nanny because she wants to have both children and career at the same time and faces a lack of state nurseries providing care for very young children. Elena managed to establish her own audit company. While this was an achievement she had long dreamed for, she also wanted to have a child. She got pregnant shortly after her firm started operating. She did not want to abandon the business she had invested so much of her time and all her finances into, so she decided to take only three months of maternity leave. She started looking for a place in a mininursery, but the nurseries she visited were already full and she could not find a place for her son. She decided to employ a nanny instead.

Sometimes a nanny is not a solution to the lack of nurseries but, rather, reflects individuals' ideas about public childcare. Parents employing nannies often do not consider institutional daycare for children under three years to be ideal care and often feel that such care can be damaging to children. Slovak mistrust towards nurseries is very similar to ideas about preschool childcare in the Czech Republic: Steven Saxonberg, Hana Hašková, and Jiří Mudrák (2012) demonstrate that the Czech public, policymakers, and experts consider nurseries providing care for children younger than three years as a negative legacy of communism, as institutions damaging the child's relationship to the mother, and as places contributing to the bad health of very young children (cf. Hašková and Saxonberg 2012). My interviewees frequently preferred individual home-based care: a nanny working as a mother substitute in the child's home. Employers emphasized the fact that the child could stay in the comfort of their home, that there is one person providing care for one child or for siblings, that children do not have to wake up early in order to get to the nursery or kindergarten on time, and that the nanny will provide childcare even when the child is sick. According to parents, interaction with other children is necessary but can be sufficiently satisfied at playgrounds or in community "mother centers." Similarly, nurseries are not seen as necessary for the development of special skills such as painting, knowledge of foreign languages, or gymnastics because such skills can be achieved through paid extracurricular activities.

Several employers stressed that they "did not leave their child somewhere," as if institutional care meant abandoning a child or was a maternal failure. When her son Jozef was two years old, Alena got an offer for a job she had long dreamed about. She decided to accept the offer and employed a nanny to look after Jozef:

He was very attached to me. I was looking forward to maternity leave and I enjoyed it very much. And we were together, it was fine. *I just could not leave him somewhere.* For me, it was clear that I would find someone. To be with him at home. (emphasis added)

As with many other parents, Alena stressed that home-based care was the healthier option:

Also, during maternity leave I took him to a private nursery in the neighborhood. I left him there to play with children and went to the gym for an hour. He always got ill there. We went there three or four times. And when he was always sick afterwards, I decided not to go there anymore. I do not have good immunity myself, I might have passed it on to him. And immunity evolves until children are seven years old. So I did not consider a nursery for health reasons also.

While Alena uses Jozef's underdeveloped immune system as the reason for her refusal of nursery care, the idea that nurseries have a bad impact on children's health has its roots in the socialist era, when pediatricians reported an increased rate of sickness among children in nurseries (Saxonberg et al. 2012).

Often, women do not want to return to full-time employment before their children turn three but prefer to do some temporary work or part-time projects alongside maternity or parental leave. Unfortunately, private nurseries and kindergartens usually do not offer care (or affordable fees) for only a few days a week or few hours a day. Consequently, mothers usually employ part-time nannies when they want to take on part-time work or short-term projects:

Interviewer: Would you explain to me how it [an employment of paid domestic workers] started and what kind of paid domestic work it was?

Ivona: I was on maternity leave for four months with my first son, when I got an offer from the Academy of Fine Arts to organize a series of workshops. And I really wanted to do this project. Firstly, I was interested in the topic. Secondly, I was so happy to get the offer. You know, while I had a fantastic four months with my baby and it was not too difficult to provide care for him, I was not completely ready for motherhood. I needed some distraction, even an escape, and some other fulfillment. I don't know, I was delighted [with the offer]. But this forced me to look for help with the baby. This meant someone who would be with Hugo while I was at the Academy. And I was looking around in my neighborhood, searching for an elderly lady. Of course, I was scared, because I needed someone with references. And as it happened, I found a lady willing to come to look after Hugo twice a week.

Paid care is related not only to the career choices of mothers but also to the availability of state kindergarten places for children over three years. There were 9,682 (6 percent) unsuccessful applications for placement in all state kindergartens in 2013 (Herich and Urban 2016). Working mothers also have problems finding care for preschool and school children during the children's illnesses. In Slovakian culture generally childhood illnesses, including colds and coughs, are taken seriously and are seen as valid reasons for taking the ill child out of care or school for the duration of the illness. Sometimes, children with runny noses or coughs are not allowed to attend kindergarten. If a child in institutional care suffers frequent illness, parents can find it difficult to get a sufficient amount of leave time to care for him/her at home. Some of my informants decided to employ a part-time nanny when their child gets

sick too frequently. One mother decided to withdraw her child from kindergarten completely, hoping that after a year at home with the nanny the child's immunity would improve and they could reenroll.

Thus far I have argued how the employment of nannies providing care for children under three years relates to the welfare regime, filling gaps in insufficient public care. Yet the employment of paid domestic workers does not necessarily end when children enter kindergarten. Indeed, households employing paid in-home childcare tend to employ various types of domestic workers over time. The employment of paid domestic workers sometimes starts with a full-time or part-time nanny and ends when the child enters kindergarten. However, more often the households continue employing other types of domestic workers, mostly cleaners or babysitters, and later childcarers accompanying schoolchildren to their after-school activities. Households employing only cleaners tend to do so more or less permanently.

The employment of domestic workers—other than nannies looking after children younger than three years—is not related to the welfare regime. Rather, it is connected with class-based ideals about childcare and leisure time. In particular, the employment of paid domestic workers results from “competitive parenting,” in which parents try to ensure their children's advantages in a competitive environment (Cox 2011; Tronto 2002), and the ideology of intensive mothering (Macdonald 1998, 2011; Potančoková 2009). According to Cameron L. Macdonald (1998), the ideology of intensive mothering defines mothers as the primary caregivers of their children: the idea is that mothers have a specific bond with their children, who need time-consuming and emotionally intense attention. On the other hand, doing housework does not correspond with the concept of leisure and quality time that developed in tandem with changing consumption patterns in the 1980s (Gregson and Lowe 1994). Leisure and quality time are opposed to time spent at work, being constructed as the time for oneself “in activities which men and women both want to do and value doing” (Gregson and Lowe 1994:95). Corresponding with both the ideology of intensive mothering and the concept of quality time, some of my interviewees employ a cleaner to give them time to spend *with* their children without needing to do housework. On the other hand, babysitters are employed to allow parents some quality time *without* their children. While after-school clubs are common in Slovakia, children (especially middle- and upper-class children) are involved in numerous free-time activities, interpreted by Joan Tronto (2002) as an expression of competitive mothering. The parents are at work, so they employ a paid childcarer to accompany or drive their children to activities that are situated sometimes in other parts of town.

PAID CARE AND THE GENDER REGIME

In the previous section of the article I have focused on the question of *when* paid domestic workers are employed. In particular, I have illustrated the circumstances under which households decide to employ paid domestic workers and what motivations employers have for employing them. In this section I will concentrate on *who* is doing paid domestic work, outlining what kinds of people are seen as suitable do-

mestic workers and what characteristics are seen as important in a particular type of paid domestic worker (whether a nanny, babysitter, part-time nanny accompanying children to their after-school activities, or cleaner).

There are many published studies describing the role of race, nationality, and ethnicity in the employment of paid domestic workers (e.g., Anderson 2000, 2007; Cock 1980; Hondagneu-Sotelo 2001:55–60; Lutz 2011:78–110; Macdonald 2011:66–84; Pratt 1997; Rollins 1985; Romero 1992). In general, these researchers agree that the demand for paid domestic workers is highly racialized. In particular, employers classify workers of particular nationality or race as more or less suitable for work as nannies, au pairs, or cleaners (e.g., Anderson 2007:253). There are racialized hierarchies in paid domestic work, and through distinctions such as skin color, ethnicity, nationality, and religion different women are seen as being suited to different types of domestic work (Anderson 2000:152–158).

While ethnicity, nationality, and race are not relevant categories for examining paid domestic work in Slovakia, it is clear that employers prefer people with specific characteristics for particular types of paid domestic work. These characteristics are related to specific gendered experiences based on age (or rather, life stage) and reproduction (see also Anderson 2009; Souralová 2012b). When asked about their expectations and relationships, employers of full-time or part-time nannies repeatedly compared what they saw as two available pools of nannies: On the one hand, there are women who have already had children and are older than their employers, and on the other, there are younger women, often students, who have not yet had children of their own. In these discussions, older women with mothering experience were identified as the better option. Only rarely do employers choose their nanny based on characteristics other than age and motherhood. When they do so, they prefer professional nannies with specific qualifications, such as foreign languages, first aid certificates, expertise in Montessori pedagogy, or a preference for vegan food.

Drawing on research with Vietnamese families employing Czech nannies in the Czech Republic, Adéla Souralová (2012b) demonstrates how the supply of care work coincides with nannies' own gendered biographies of care. Inspired by Chamberlayne and King's (2000) concept of care as a biographical project, she argues that by working as nannies, Czech (usually elderly) women are doing both gender and grandmothering. She identifies five ways in which nannies relate their involvement in paid care to their own biographies. In particular, they make their biographies of care more intense (e.g., by providing care for another child); they are differentiating their biographies of care (e.g., by looking after a child while also looking after a disabled husband); they continue their biographies of care (e.g., they loved caring for their own children and want to continue doing so after their children are grown up); they are supplementing their biographies of care (they experience what they have not with their children or grandchildren); and they are compensating for incomplete biographies of care (they need to be needed) (Souralová 2012b). While Souralová clearly illustrates how nannies' motivations relate to their biographies of care, employers of paid childcare in my research differentiate between particular types of workers according to their gendered biographies. In particular, employers hiring older women

as nannies see both their experience with motherhood and their age as necessary qualifications for their work:

Interviewer: What were your expectations? What did you look for?

Tatiana: I have to mention age. Perhaps it is not only a question of age, but *for me, the ladies near retirement work best*. We had a young woman when our lady [pani] was ill, but it was nothing in comparison. That young woman was not careful enough, did not give the children the right clothes in bad weather, did not feed them properly, and that kind of thing. She was horrible. It was completely different with this older lady.

Interviewer: Was it the question of age then?

Tatiana: *Not only. Age and experience.... She had raised her children.* (emphases added)

The interviewed nannies also considered experience with mothering as a relevant, though not the only qualification for being a nanny:

Anežka: If I had children, I would feel much more secure, more self-confident in the relationship to both Lina [the child] and her parents. But it does not mean I cannot do the job. It is about other things—whether you click with the child and parents, I think.

In Slovakia, the employment of nannies is related to the local model of childrearing in which grandparents are involved: the nanny is usually employed when a grandmother does not want to or is unable to be intensively involved in caring for her grandchildren. Traditionally, the extended family was involved in childcare, especially in peasant families (Botíková, Švecová, and Jakubíková 1997; Švecová 1986, 1989). Nowadays grandparents are expected and expect to be involved in caring for their grandchildren. Quantitative research undertaken in 2005 demonstrated that 70 percent of respondents considered grandmother's active involvement as second best option for childcare (after care by the mother herself). Fifty-two percent of respondents even considered care provided by grandmothers as *superior* to splitting care between the mother and father (Bútorová and Filadelfiová 2008:100). Similarly, 57 percent of women and 59 percent of men wanted to ideally spend their retirement providing care for their life partners, children, and grandchildren (107). The fact that the current generation of grandmothers had children at an earlier age and can retire earlier than is usual in Western Europe enables this involvement. It is common for grandmothers to babysit, stay at home with ill children, or spend time with children during school holidays. Indeed, when talking about the need to employ a paid care provider, the mothers usually mentioned the children's grandmothers as the ideal, but unavailable, option:

Marína: The only thing I wanted was an older lady [as a nanny]. I thought it would be perfect, because my mother-in-law was in Paris and my mother does not live in Bratislava either. So I said to myself, God, please let it be an elderly, mature woman, that would be fantastic! I was not prejudiced against students, but I know they have other demands on their time, they are not flexible. And

their sense of responsibility ... If it rains, they do not come, that kind of thing. I was afraid of this. And I needed someone responsible, someone stable, fixed. So I decided—an older woman. *And my desire was to have someone, who would be like a grandmother to my children.... [Our nanny] is a mother of two and grandmother of five. That was the main qualification for me.* (emphasis added)

Domestic labor is deeply gendered, both performed by females and seen as constitutive of femininity (e.g., Cox 2006; Ehrenreich and Hochschild 2003; Lutz 2008, 2011; Widding Isaksen 2010). My interviewees speak of grandmothers in particular. The presence or absence of grandfathers does not seem to have any influence on the employment of nannies.

Thus nannies are employed when, for example, grandmothers do not live in the same city (or the same country, as in Marína's case above) or they are still working and cannot easily provide daily care for their grandchildren. One interviewee was upset because her mother already provided care for her brother's child and did not want to change the arrangement to also look after her daughter. In some cases, the decision to hire a nanny is related to difficulties either in relationships with grandparents or in negotiating ideologies and practices of childrearing between mother and grandmother. For example, Júlia's parents are deceased and her parents-in-law do not accept her and her children, since they could not accept that their son had divorced and remarried. When she needed someone to accompany her children to their free-time activities after school, she decided to employ a part-time nanny. Similarly, in our interview, Petra explains the employment of a part-time nanny by referring to the complicated relationship she has with her parents and parents-in-law:

While we both [my husband and I] have parents in Bratislava, the truth is that we both have very complicated relationships with them. It is really difficult with my Mom. And my husband's parents started to help us a bit only after the birth of Janko, our fourth son. I think only then did my mother-in-law realize that I really needed help. It was very rare before.... Even if we really tried, it did not work. My mother always wanted to have her way in everything, she was not able to accommodate. She has never come when we needed it and came only when she decided to come, without any consideration of our preferences. Then she felt rejected when we did not have time, because she showed up when we were just about to go out or when we had visitors. It just does not work.

Sometimes even if grandmothers want to provide care for their grandchildren, they have different ideas about childcare. In such cases the parents' efforts to control their children's activities or diets can result in the decision to employ a nanny. Some mothers decided to hire a nanny in order to end quarrels about parenting styles with their mother or mother-in-law. For many mothers, the ideal nanny would be like a grandmother but more accommodating and accepting of the mother's ideas about childcare. A good example is drawn from an interview with Lucia, in which she describes why she decided to employ a nanny:

I kept complaining to my husband that *I would like to have a granny at home who would do what I tell her and would not take it personally*. Then I realized: this is a job description. (emphasis added)

In this preference for a nanny who would do what mothers want, employers follow the logic of delegating care in the context of intensive mothering as described by Cameron L. Macdonald (1998, 2011). Macdonald argues that in this context

[the] nanny represents the medium through which the mother's child rearing beliefs and practices are transmitted, she is viewed as an extension of that mothering practice, not as an individual with her own particular relationship with the children. (1998:34)

Thus, while a nanny is employed as a substitute grandmother, by doing "what mother wants" she serves to reinforce the ideal of mother as primary caregiver. The combination of a local model preferring the involvement of grandmothers in childrearing with the ideology of intensive motherhood makes women over 50 with adult children the most preferred nannies. It is not only employers who want nannies to be like grandmothers to their children. In such relationships, some nannies also consider themselves as doing grandmothering (see also Souralová 2012b, 2015):

Interviewer: What would you call your occupation? What do you do?

Helena: It is called a care provider [*opatrovatelka*]; it is also advertised as a care provider's position. But I do not feel like that. It is not what I do.

Interviewer: And what do you feel like?

Helena: *I feel like a granny. That's what I do. I do "grannyng" for them.* (emphasis added)

Interestingly, women of the same age as the mother with parenting experience are rarely employed, perhaps because of the danger that they will become not a granny but a mother substitute. The lack of demand here combines with a lack of supply: mothers with young children usually do not work as nannies but, rather, tend to work as childminders, providing care for children in their own homes, as childminding enables them to look after their own child at the same time. I have also met women on parental leave working as cleaners or doing ironing for other households, since these activities enabled them to both provide care for their children and earn income.

On the other hand, younger and childless women, mostly students, are usually considered good and affordable babysitters or childcarers who drive or accompany children to their after-school activities:

Lena: I needed someone to take my twin babies for a walk twice a week so that I could spend some quality time with my three-year-old son. The twins would sleep in the stroller, I did not need anybody special for pushing the stroller; *I did not need someone who would step in for a granny, just someone who would push the stroller and come back with the babies safely. I think that's a perfect job for a student.* (emphasis added)

Parents employing students as part-time nannies or babysitters often try to find someone who is somewhere between the maturity of adulthood and the playfulness of childhood, expecting that such a person will be responsible enough to be left alone with children and playful and energetic enough to provide children with fun and educational activities. Compared to older nannies, employers are more concerned about the reliability of students. In this respect, relationships based on previous acquaintance or shared values work very well—such as recruiting the student from within one’s religious community (two interviewees) or folk-dancing ensembles (two interviewees). Renata recruited her part-time nanny from her church, after Lujza, her former student, suggested she would like to help her with children. In this case Renata sees her young part-time nanny as complementary to care provided by the children’s grandmother:

Renata: It started so informally, in the church. She is a very mature person, I did not have to explain to her what to do with children, she had four siblings herself, she had already done that in her family. She knew how to make children happy, how to engage them, and have fun with them. *She went outside with them, ran with them, that’s what their granny was afraid of doing...* We talk a lot too. She is my contact with the world of people of her age, I learn from her about children and adolescents. (emphasis added)

There is also the possibility of constructing suitable qualifications for a nanny outside of biographical categories: Adéla Souralová (2012a) reveals how agencies in the Czech Republic actively create demand for a specific type of childcare, deconstructing childcare as a “natural” female activity and reconstructing it as an activity requiring particular professional skills. In Slovakia nannies employed on the basis of their professional qualifications are expected to have a good command of foreign languages or first aid certificates. They see themselves—and are seen by their employers—as experts in education, providing care beyond parents’ capacities (Souralová 2012a). For example, one of my interviewees was hired because she is a psychologist and her employers wanted an expert to deal with difficulties they perceived in communicating with their children.

CONCLUSION

This article has examined the demand for paid domestic work in Slovakia. Analyzing the hiring strategies and practices of employers, I have focused specifically on the role of the welfare and gender regimes in paid employment of domestic work. I have argued that, unlike in Western Europe where an increase in the employment of paid care followed the shift from “breadwinner model” to “adult worker” models of welfare provision (Williams and Gavanas 2008), in Slovakia the employment of nannies follows the opposite trend. In particular, Slovak childcare policy has adopted the “explicit familialism” model, providing insufficient public care for children and granting, instead, long maternity and parental leave, encouraging mothers to care for infants at home. Thus the employment of paid home-based childcare is related to the fact

that the welfare regime in Slovakia does not offer mothers of very young children suitable possibilities for combining work and childcare. However, while

mainstream characterisations of welfare regimes ... have direct implications for gender patterns and caring practices ... patterns of informal caring emerge as a cultural phenomenon in their own right. (Chamberlayne and King 2000:3)

I have illustrated how the employment of nannies dovetails with ideas about what is best for children (e.g., staying at home, not being exposed to infections in kindergartens). The employment of babysitters, nannies looking after children over three years, and cleaners is not connected to any particular family policy. Rather, it is connected to class-based ideals about work and family balance, childcare (competitive parenting, intensive mothering, and ideas of healthy development), and leisure time (Cox 2011; Gregson and Lowe 1994; Macdonald 1998, 2011; Tronto 2002). This article has also examined who is seen as a suitable domestic worker and what characteristics employers see as important in hiring particular types of domestic workers. Interestingly, ethnicity is not a relevant category for deciding who is suitable for domestic work or for distinguishing among particular types of care providers. For employers, the most important characteristic for a paid home-based childcarer was the childcarer's age, life stage, and experience (or lack of experience) with motherhood.

In the second part of the article I focused on the role of the Slovak gender regime in this process. When Helma Lutz (2008a, 2011) describes gender regimes, she concentrates on the specific gendered cultural script influencing gender dynamics in an employer's household that results in outsourcing paid care to another woman. I have extended this discussion, arguing that the ideas and practices related to who is a suitable care provider are to a large extent related to local cultural practices of childrearing and the logic of conventional patterns of identity Lutz describes.

In Slovakia the employment of nannies is related to a local model of childrearing in which grandmothers are intensively involved. A nanny is usually employed when a granny does not want to or cannot be involved in caring for her grandchildren or when the grandmother and mother do not have compatible ideas about childrearing. It is not just, as Lena put it, that nannies "step in for" unavailable grannies. The ideas of what a granny should be often shape expectations of what kind of persons should work as nannies. The gendered biographical experience of motherhood is seen as the most important qualification for a nanny. Employers hire older women as nannies because of their particular gendered biographical experience (Souralová 2012b, 2014). Being mothers with grown-up children makes them culturally the most acceptable nannies, as they can serve as granny substitutes, providing children with expert care without threatening the mother's role as a primary caregiver (Macdonald 1998, 2011). Younger nannies, mostly students who do not have experience raising their own children, are often seen as deficient in providing proper full-time childcare but are considered good part-time nannies and babysitters.

The material presented in this article shows that the geography of employment of paid domestic workers is shifting: there is growing employment of paid domestic workers in Slovakia, which, as a postsocialist country, used to be conceptualized

(Lutz 2008b, 2011) and researched (e.g., Bahna 2014, 2015; Búriková and Miller 2010) as a country of supply, not of demand for paid domestic workers. Processes leading to the employment of paid domestic workers are changing. As neither domestic workers nor their employers are migrants, it is not possible to explain the employment of local women as paid domestic workers in Slovakia by references to regional inequalities nor to global or local care chains (Hochschild 2000; Hondagneu-Sotelo 2001; Lutz and Palenga-Möllnbeck 2011, 2012; Parreñas 2000, 2001; Williams 2012). Ideas about who is suited for domestic work are not structured around race, ethnicity, or migration status of workers (Anderson 2000, 2007). I have demonstrated that while the welfare regime sets structural conditions for the employment of paid domestic workers, individual motivations for employing one are related to contradictory expectations and pressures of parenthood and employment among the Slovak middle and upper classes. The hiring practices of employers—related to a local model of childrearing involving the help of extended family, particularly grandmothers, and ideas about what kinds of persons should work as nannies or babysitters—are shaped more by ideas about a domestic worker's life stage than her ethnicity or race.

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СПРОС НА ОПЛАЧИВАЕМЫЙ ДОМАШНИЙ ТРУД В СЛОВАКИИ: НА ПЕРЕСЕЧЕНИИ РЕЖИМА СОЦИАЛЬНОГО ОБЕСПЕЧЕНИЯ И ГЕНДЕРНОГО РЕЖИМА

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Статья представляет результаты моей работы над проектом «Оплачиваемый уход за детьми и работа по дому в Чешской Республике и Словакии», осуществленным при помощи постдокторского гранта GAČR 13-11062P. Результаты этой работы были представлены также на конференции «Домашние работницы в странах Центральной и Восточной Европы и бывшего СССР: постсоциалистические миграции и неравенства» в апреле 2015 года в Центре независимых социологических исследований в Санкт-Петербурге (Россия).

Эта статья, основанная на интервью как с домашними работницами, так и с их нанимателями, посвящена находящемуся на стадии становления рынку оплачиваемого домашнего труда в Словакии. Анализируя стратегии найма и практики работодателей, я исследую роль режима социального обеспечения и гендерного режима в трудоустройстве домашних работников. В этой работе показано, что, несмотря на то, что режим социального обеспечения создает структурные условия для найма домашнего персонала, непосредственные причины, по которым частные лица нанимают помощника по хозяйству, обусловлены противоречивыми ожиданиями в отношении бремени родительства и карьеры, распространенными в среде словацкого среднего класса. Во второй части статьи сделан вывод о том, что идеи по поводу того, кто именно больше всего годится в помощники, определяются в основном местными культурными практиками воспитания детей и логикой традиционных стереотипов гендерной идентичности. Так, в качестве нянь обычно нанимают пожилых женщин, потому что их гендерный и биографический опыт (опыт матерей уже выросших детей) делает их наиболее приемлемыми с точки зрения преобладающей нормы кандидатами в няни. Они могут заменить детям бабушку и обеспечить квалифицированный уход, не подрывая при этом авторитета матери как основного воспитателя.

Ключевые слова: оплачиваемый домашний труд; уход и обслуживание; Словакия; няни; бебиситтеры; режим социального обеспечения; гендерный режим; платный уход за детьми