

Involved fatherhood in Russia

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Abstract

Involved fatherhood in Russia is defined and evaluated using a time diary. In one-third of the surveyed households, fathers devote more (or the same) time to childcare than mothers on weekends. Additionally, in one-third of households, fathers spend more than two hours with their children on weekends. An important characteristic of involved fatherhood is care diversity – they provide almost all types of care. However, they continue to play a secondary role, not performing the accompanying routine household services necessary for the full and independent care of the child, such as cooking and subsequent cleaning, washing clothes, etc. In only 3-4% of households, fathers take care of the child and household, but even in this case, they remain in the position of helpers since household management remains primarily a female activity. Involved fatherhood is facilitated by urban living, a higher level of education, and a higher income level for both parents.

Keywords

time budgets, involved fatherhood, gender equality

JEL codes: J16, B52, J22, D13, J13

Introduction

Involved fatherhood is a relatively recent phenomenon. Back in the middle of the last century, the primary and often sole responsibility of fathers was earning an income. Even though mothers in the Soviet period actively participated in paid labor (unlike in the West), they shared unpaid domestic work not with their husbands but with the state, which provided childcare and some other household services (Rebrey 2023). Consequently, an imbalanced model of the division of domestic labour emerged, highlighting the incomplete gender transition in Russia (Kalabikhina 2009) and resulting in a double burden on the female half of the population. Working mothers spent 11.5 hours a day on both paid and

unpaid work.¹ According to the Social Insurance Fund, only 2% of fathers in Russia take parental leave.

Nevertheless, in recent decades, there has been an increase in fathers' involvement in family affairs and childcare, which has gained recognition by both science and society. Due to the novelty of this phenomenon, there have been relatively few studies on this topic. However, their number, as well as interest in them, is rapidly growing, particularly in sociological sciences (to a lesser extent in economics).

Research has revealed positive outcomes associated with involved fatherhood, such as increased fertility (Myrskylä et al. 2011; Da Rocha and Fuster 2006; Duvander et al. 2019; Lacalle-Calderon et al. 2017; Zhou and Kan 2019; Rebrey et al. 2023) and human development (Cabrera et al., 2000; Flouri and Buchanan 2003; Lamb 2010). The rise in the birth rate is linked to an increased likelihood of marriage registration, a decrease in the likelihood of divorce, and a generally more stable family environment, which increases the likelihood of having second and third children.

The development of human potential is associated with the positive impact of involved fatherhood on the intellectual and psychophysical development of the child, leading to improved school performance, the development of social skills, and emotional intelligence. Positive effects are also observed in the mental health and marital satisfaction of mothers (Cowan and Cowan 1999; Tu et al. 2014) and in fathers themselves, including increased job satisfaction, reduced stress, and improved physical health (Palkovitz 2002; Lamb 2010).

Most studies have pointed out that the term “involved fatherhood” lacks clarity, as well as the factors and consequences of this new phenomenon (Kletsina 2009; Avdeeva 2012; Rimashevskaya et al. 2016; Ildarkhanova 2019; Yanak 2020). This study aims to address this gap by providing a clear definition of the term “involved fatherhood” through an analysis of the gender distribution of childcare time in Russian households.

The purpose of this study is threefold: to describe the concept of involved fatherhood in the context of Russia; to identify the primary determinants of involved fatherhood; to examine the impact of involved fatherhood on the quality of life and opportunities for women and children².

Critical Literature Review

Parenting practices, often referred to as traditional, are in a constant state of flux, influenced by the social and economic context of the household (Coltrane 1997). In ancient societies, a wide array of models for dividing household duties and childcare between parents existed. This diversity was so extensive that the only universally female function across all societies was breastfeeding and caring for new-borns (Rosaldo 1980; Tiffany 1982; Johnson 1988). In agrarian societies, households produced most of the products consumed, leading to the absence of a clear division between the public (productive) and private (reproductive) spheres, a characteristic of modern society. Both mothers and fathers, along with children,

¹ For a working father, the total daily workload amounts to 10 hours and 38 minutes, with only 1.5 hours dedicated to unpaid domestic work. In contrast, women spend 5 hours and 47 minutes on unpaid domestic work.

² Gender equality – is equality of rights and opportunities of women and men. The concept of equality of opportunities instead of income is developed by A. Sen (Sen 2016).

contributed to the household, resulting in a wide variety of models for dividing responsibilities and labor. However, some common features were observed, particularly in Christian culture. In agrarian societies, fathers assumed the role of the family's head, imparting high moral standards to their children (Degler 1981; Rotundo 1985). Fathers primarily worked at home, actively participating in child-rearing, especially in education and passing on skills and crafts.

As industrialization progressed, the manufacturing sector separated from the home, leading to the distinction between public and private spaces. Urbanization and the nuclearization of families further reinforced the household as a predominantly female domain (Coltrane 1997). Moreover, at the turn of the century, there was a significant re-evaluation of attitudes toward children and childhood, resulting in the development of a concept of the value of childhood and a distinct approach to children. Mothers began to play a more prominent role as moral guides in child-rearing, while public institutions such as schools and kindergartens, and in the Soviet experience, pioneer and Komsomol organizations, played an increasingly significant role. Consequently, the traditional division between male public and female private spheres originated not in ancient or agrarian societies but in modern industrialized urbanized societies.

In recent decades, there has been a gradual increase in fathers' contributions to domestic work. This change is attributed to the more active participation of women in paid work on the one hand and, the growing interest of fathers in family matters and their desire and ability to bond with their children on the other. (Coltrane 1997). In the 1980s and 1990s, the phenomenon of fatherhood began to pique the interest of researchers, some of whom, like S. Coltrane, became involved fathers themselves and sought to understand their own experiences, while others examined domestic work through the lens of feminism.

The term "involved fatherhood" emerged during the 1980s and 1990s. An involved father exhibits several key characteristics, including:

- a significant re-evaluation of fathers' life priorities, emphasizing physical and emotional care for the child (Coltrane 1997);
- consistent and regular involvement of the father in childcare (Sayer 2005);
- attention to the needs and individuality of the child, along with a full acceptance of responsibility for the child (Kletsina 2009);
- sharing the responsibilities of household chores (Craig 2006);
- establishing fundamental trust and bonding with the child during the earliest stages of their development, particularly during the first three years of life, and active participation in the upbringing of a one-year-old child (Rimashevskaya et al. 2017). Research supports the notion that men who are actively involved in childcare from infancy are more likely to remain involved fathers;
- the transmission of egalitarian values to future generations.

Belarusian scientists have proposed categorizing fathers into three distinct groups: "classic," "authoritarian," and "modern." Here's a breakdown of these categories:

"Classic" fathers (45% of fathers) tend to hold traditional views and have an average level of tolerance. They exhibit a weak tendency towards aggressive behaviour within the family. They are more likely to discuss relationships with their children, engage in activities like taking their children to classes or clubs, and are less inclined to believe that children find the mother more interesting than the father. Physical violence as a method of discipline is rarely used. They are reasonably involved in household duties, and their level of involvement did not significantly change during the pandemic.

“Authoritarian” fathers (36%) are more likely to approve of aggressive behaviour by men within the family and consider men to play a key role in decision-making. A qualitative measure of father involvement is care diversity, where involved fathers engage in almost all types of childcare activities. They are less supportive of emotional equality between sexes and freedom of opinion within the family. Typically, they are older, less educated, and have a larger number of children. They place a greater emphasis on the father’s role in the family (only 4% of the answers) but also seek more obedience from their children. They are more inclined to resort to physical violence as a disciplinary method. They spend less time with their children, communicate less, and are less involved in planning their children’s social activities. Additionally, they are less likely to participate in household chores compared to women.

“Modern” fathers (18%) represent those with a tendency towards tolerance, emotional equality between sexes, and a rejection of authoritarian and traditional views. They are typically younger, live in urban areas like Minsk, have higher income and education levels, and often work in fields like IT and entrepreneurship. They desire to spend more time with their children and communicate more, although they may struggle to understand how their children want to spend time due to their relative inexperience. They are actively involved in specific household duties, such as cleaning the refrigerator or grocery shopping. (Yuodeshko et al. 2021: 19–20). In this categorization, “modern” fathers correspond to the concept of “involved fatherhood.” It’s noteworthy that in Belarus, this category tends to be younger, while in Western contexts, it often includes older fathers.

Involved fathers are characterized by their active and comprehensive engagement in caring for their children from birth. They are familiar with their child’s daily routine and can independently provide various forms of care, ensuring the child’s comfort without relying on the mother’s assistance. Involved fathers seek to be actively involved in child care from the earliest stages, including accompanying their pregnant partner to medical appointments and parenting courses, attending childbirth, and understanding the physical and emotional experiences of the mother during childbirth. The experience of being an observer rather than a central actor in the birth process is also notably challenging and unfamiliar for new fathers. This experience is often cited as a common reason why some prospective fathers are reluctant to be present at the birth (Coltrane 1997). Additionally, unexpected caesarean sections and the resulting limitations on the mother’s ability to care for the new-born can also contribute to increased involvement by fathers (Döblin et al. 2023). In-depth interviews with involved parenting households show that such families are generally child-centric (Coltrane 1997).

Sociological research measures this involvement through in-depth interviews and surveys, allowing for a deeper understanding of the dynamics of involved parenting households (e.g., Shevchenko 2019; UNFPA Belarus 2021).

The study on gender imbalances in unpaid domestic labour is grounded on the use of time diaries, a specialized survey method that enables a relatively accurate recording of individuals’ daily activities. Research on time use has consistently found that, worldwide, women dedicate more time to unpaid domestic labour compared to men (Bianchi et al. 2000). Moreover, this disparity is closely linked to the gender wage gap (Rebrey 2023). The Russian Federal State Statistics Service collects data on the population’s time allocation through “Sample observation of daily time use by the population” (Rosstat 2019). Notably, women primarily contribute to caregiving responsibilities, which are influenced more by cultural factors than economic ones (Coltrane 2000; Hochschild and Machung 2012; Kalabikhina

and Shaikenova 2019). This means that regardless of their income level, women tend to allocate more time to domestic labor than men, even in the face of external shocks (Kalabikhina and Rebrey 2020). Cultural factors encompass gender stereotypes entrenched in society and patterns of gendered behaviour passed down through generations. The spouses' level of education (Raley et al. 2012), health, and the number and age of children (Kalabikhina and Shaikenova 2019) also play significant roles.

This study seeks to define the concept of "involved fatherhood" by employing Time Budgets. It aims to calculate how much time an involved father dedicates to childcare, the types of care provided, and how this impacts the mother's time allocation and the household as a whole.

Data and Research Methods

The study is based on the "Sample observation of daily time use by the population" in 2019. It covers 45,000 households across the entire Russian Federation, encompassing urban and rural areas with varying population sizes and specific socio-demographic groups. The sample focuses on households where both the father and mother live with one or more children aged 14 or younger, and both parents have completed time diaries. Data for each household are consolidated into a single dataset, enabling the calculation of gender disparities in time allocation within the same household. After eliminating families where both parents reported zero minutes of childcare, the database retained 5,267 households (comprising 10,534 respondents).

Involved fatherhood is a multifaceted phenomenon, necessitating several indicators for measurement.

Emotional and physical connection with the child and prioritization of fatherhood over other aspects of life are reflected in the number of hours the father spends with the child, especially on weekends (Saturday and Sunday). Weekends are chosen because, in many Russian households with working parents, weekends are devoted to family matters. Fathers who spend more than three hours per day on childcare, or more time than mothers do on weekdays, are typically unemployed or work on a rotational basis. Hence, weekends are considered a suitable measure of family time.

Determining what constitutes a sufficient amount of time for an involved father requires examining how the nature and diversity of caregiving tasks change with the duration of childcare. Data are categorized based on the number of hours fathers spend on childcare (Table 1). High involvement is characterized by a greater diversity of caregiving tasks and the presence of quality time, such as talking, reading, teaching, helping with homework, rather than passive supervision. Care diversity is measured by the number of different types of childcare activities performed by the father (or mother). If care diversity significantly influences involved fatherhood, then the combination of childcare duration and diversity could serve as an integrated measure of involvement.

However, the number of hours by itself, without considering the mother's relative time spending, does not fully indicate the father's level of responsibility. Responsible fatherhood implies that the father does not require constant supervision, reminders, instructions, and assistance from his wife while caring for the child; in other words, he independently manages these responsibilities, thus relieving her of some of the workload. Therefore, the father's contribution to childcare is calculated relative to the total time spent on childcare

Table 1. Types of unpaid domestic work (childcare and domestic services) performed by super-involved, involved and non-involved fathers, minutes per day off

	Mean				Median			Maximum			
	**	*	-	mother	**	*	-	**	*	-	mother
<i>Childcare:</i>											
Basic care (nutrition, washing, physical care)	38	28	11	83	20	0	0	330	410	440	730
Medical care	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	20	40	60	140
Education, training	11	16	4	19	0	0	0	190	220	150	430
Conversations and reading	14	14	5	13	0	0	0	240	340	280	410
Games and sports	42	54	22	24	20	40	0	240	440	360	380
Babysitting (passive care)	23	26	10	20	0	0	0	270	390	310	430
Other activities	4	2	1	4	0	0	0	180	180	230	220
Family travel	5	5	1	3	0	0	0	140	590	220	250
Accompanying children	10	10	2	7	0	0	0	220	330	240	420
<i>Domestic chores</i>											
Cooking	38	11	9	89	30	10	0	180	180	350	420
Serving food	4	1	1	7	0	0	0	60	60	70	160
Cleaning up after cooking/eating	17	7	5	42	10	10	0	70	110	200	220
Cleaning	13	8	6	43	0	0	0	170	180	350	310
Housing renovation	8	5	14	2	0	0	0	280	390	710	460
Laundry	1	0	0	8	0	0	0	40	90	120	240
Drying	1	0	0	5	0	0	0	30	30	60	100
Ironing	1	1	0	15	0	0	0	60	60	90	190
Care of clothes/shoes	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	20	50	120	100
Paying household bills	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	40	50	70	70
Household management	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	50	70	70	50
Shopping	21	18	16	17	0	30	0	140	220	450	430
Other chores	3	1	1	0	0	0	0	370	370	500	240

Source: author’s calculations based on data from a “Sample observation of the daily time use by the population” (Rosstat 2019). Here and further in the tables and graphs the same data source is used

Notes:

** Super-involved fathers are fathers who both contribute to childcare and household services equal to or greater than mothers on a weekend. Total – 173

* Involved fathers are fathers whose contribution to childcare is equal to or greater than the mother’s on a weekend. Total – 1558

- - Uninvolved fathers (the contribution is less than the contribution of the mother). Total - 3709

Mother – for comparison, the average and maximum time costs of mothers from households with uninvolved fathers are given. Total – 3709

by both parents. This calculation involves the ratio of the difference between the time spent by the father and the time spent by the mother to the sum of the time spent by both parents. To illustrate, if the father spends more time than the mother on childcare, the indicator is positive, and if the father is solely responsible for caring for the child, the indicator is equal to one, and vice versa. However, in cases where there is more than one child in the family or a new-born, the mother's time expenditure may remain greater than that of the father, even if the father spends more than 5 hours a day caring for the child. Consequently, it is necessary to develop an integrated indicator of involved fatherhood, comprising the three variables described above.

Another aspect of responsible involved fatherhood is not only the father's direct participation in childcare but also his engagement in all related household chores, such as cooking (for the child), cleaning (after cooking and after the child), washing, and ironing the child's clothing, among others.

Correlation and regression analysis are used to identify the determinants of involved fatherhood. Two main variables are employed: a binary variable indicating involved fatherhood (where 1 is assigned to fathers whose contribution to childcare equals or exceeds that of the wife), and a categorical variable representing super-involved fatherhood (with 1 assigned to households where fathers contribute as much or more than the wife to childcare and housework, and 2 assigned to households where fathers contribute as much or more than the wife to both childcare and housework). The non-linear relationship between variables guides the selection of appropriate models for evaluation. Decision trees demonstrate the highest accuracy. For numerical target variables, a regression model of the decision forest (Decision Tree Regressor) is utilized, while for binary and categorical variables, classification models such as random forest (Random Forest Classifier) and decision tree (Decision Tree) are applied, implemented using the Scikit Learn library. Decision tree training employs the decision tree as a predictive model, a common approach in statistics, data analysis, and machine learning (Breiman et al. 2017).

A limitation of the study is the small number of households categorized as super-involved fathers. Their scores are used for comparison with involved and non-involved fathers, offering insights into potential areas for future research. The limited sample size also prevents the measurement of regional differences, apart from the urban/rural distinction. The choice of analyzing weekends rather than weekdays is influenced by both the quantitative limitations of the sample and the emphasis on unemployment as a key factor in involved fatherhood.

In summary, the time-based method for measuring engagement may seem limited in its ability to assess the quality of time spent. However, care diversity encompasses a qualitative dimension.

Scientific hypotheses:

1. Involved fathers spend more than 3 hours with their kids on a weekend.
2. Involved fathers alleviate the mother's workload.
3. Involved fathers are capable of providing the full range (or most) of childcare.
4. If involvement is a personal trait, it should manifest not only in childcare but also in caring for other household members.
5. Involved fathers regularly share the burden of childcare and housework with their wives.
6. Involved fatherhood is influenced by the spouses' level of education, age, and income, as well as their residence in urban areas, and the age and number of children.

Results

In 29.6% of households, fathers spend as much time on childcare on weekends as mothers or even exceed it. However, their involvement does not extend to other domestic chores, with only 14% of households where men spend equal or more time on domestic chores on weekends. Super-involved fathers, those who dedicate the same or more time to both childcare and chores on weekends, make up 3.2% of households.

When calculating the absolute contribution of fathers and classifying households based on the number of hours fathers devote to childcare per day (see Table 2 in the Annex), the following structure emerges: 29.7% of households have fathers spending 0 minutes with the child, while in 40.5% of households, fathers spend less than 2 hours. Using a threshold of more than 2 hours to define involved paternity, a similar share, 29.8%, falls under the category of involved fathers. Super-involved fathers, who spend more than 5 hours a day caring for a child, constitute 4.5% of households according to this classification.

To understand the nature of involvement more comprehensively, let's closely examine the types of childcare and domestic services performed by involved and super-involved fathers (Tables 1-2). For comparison, we will use the average and maximum values of time spent by women from households with uninvolved fathers. On average, involved fathers spend 158 minutes on childcare, super-involved fathers 151 minutes, non-involved fathers 56 minutes, and their wives 175 minutes. In terms of household services, they spend 114, 209, 125, and 266 minutes, respectively. This indicates that even super-involved fathers contribute significantly less than the average mother.

The most common category for involved and super-involved fathers is play and sports, whereas for mothers, it is basic care. This supports the idea that fathers are more inclined to engage in enjoyable childcare activities. Only for super-involved fathers does the difference between basic care and play and sports narrow down to just 4 minutes.

Diversity in caregiving is higher among involved and super-involved fathers but remains lower than among mothers (similar to medical care). Diversity increases with every additional hour. Involved fathers engage in nearly all types of care, including qualitative tasks

Table 2. Types of parental childcare depending on the total number of minutes spent by the father on childcare on a day off (less than an hour, etc.), in minutes

	0 < 60	60 ≤ 119	120 ≤ 179	180 ≤ 239	240 ≤ 299	> 300
Share of households in the sample, %	18,9	21,6	13,4	7,5	4,2	4,5
Games and sports	12	37	55	73	80	105
Basic care (nutrition, washing, physical care)	5	11	22	39	52	97
Babysitting (passive care)	1	7	23	39	64	93
Accompanying children	1	3	7	10	19	22
Conversations and reading	7	9	14	17	17	20
Education, training	5	10	13	15	13	12
Family travel	1	2	4	5	7	11
Other activities	1	1	2	3	3	6

Source: author's calculations

like education and reading, as well as passive ones like accompaniment, movement, and supervision. Overall, the distribution of responsibilities between spouses varies significantly. When childcare exceeds five hours, the time spent on basic care increases sharply, indicating a new level of caregiving that is more routine, complex, and variable, requiring participation in everyday tasks, justifying the categorization as super-involvement.

Play and sports remain the most time-consuming category of paternal care, and only fathers who spend more than 5 hours a day on childcare see a significant reduction in the difference between play and sports and basic care (although it is still maintained).

Regarding domestic chores, the participation of both involved and non-involved fathers is extremely limited. Super-involved fathers are more active in household chores, but their contribution is 2–3 times less than that of the average mother. They spend 15 minutes on cooking and 12 minutes on cleaning after cooking, while mothers spend 350 and 200 minutes, respectively. Most super-involved fathers are involved in cooking, cleaning, and shopping (Table 1). Shopping and renovations are common among both involved and uninvolved fathers. In general, there is an extremely weak relationship between participation in housekeeping and childcare (with a correlation of only 0.01, as shown in Table 3). The father's relative involvement in childcare is positively correlated with caregiving diversity, time spent on childcare during weekends and weekdays, other forms of care, education, urban living, and negatively correlated with the time men spend on home production, paid employment, and commuting. Conversely, involvement in household chores is only inversely correlated with the time wives spend on such chores, as well as the time husbands spend on home production, employment, and commuting. In other words, socioeconomic factors

Table 3. Correlation of father's time spent on childcare and housekeeping

Variable	Time, father spend on childcare	Time, father spend on domestic chores
childcare_gap	1,00	0,05
childcare_diversity_H	0,63	0,07
childcare_H	0,60	0,01
other_care_H	0,24	0,01
edu_H	0,11	0,02
childcare_hours_a_week_H	0,11	0,07
city	0,11	0,02
house_chores_W	-0,02	-0,25
get_to_work_H	-0,19	-0,21
employment_H	-0,19	-0,22

Source: author's calculations

Notes: decoding of variables - Annex, table. 1

Red indicates a direct correlation, blue indicates an inverse correlation, and the gradations of each colour (from lighter to darker) characterise the magnitude of the correlation coefficient (from weak to strong correlation)

do not significantly impact men's participation in household chores; cultural factors and gender stereotypes appear to play a more significant role.

Household management, which includes budgeting, family affairs planning, and organizing various aspects like nutrition, logistics, recreation, and shopping, remains primarily the responsibility of wives in all types of households under consideration. Consequently, even in the case of super-involved fathers, their participation in household management cannot be considered equal. Household management remains a predominantly female occupation.

In the labour market, management positions are among the highest paid because they involve significant responsibility for overseeing production and sales processes, managing personnel, and handling various organizational aspects to ensure quality and efficiency. Similarly, in housekeeping, management is an essential component that dictates the functioning of all household processes. This includes a wide range of functions, such as budget management and planning, organizing childcare, coordinating educational processes (selecting schools, teachers, sports activities, maintaining contact with teachers, arranging or facilitating a child's participation in extracurricular activities, etc.), overseeing sports and additional developmental activities for the child (choosing trustworthy organizations and coaches, considering factors like location and schedule, etc.), providing meals for family members and children (tailoring to individual preferences and nutritional needs), organizing healthcare (ensuring timely clinical check-ups and treatment for children, etc.), planning family leisure activities, and much more.

Let's paint a picture of households with uninvolved, involved, and super-involved fathers based on their relative contributions to childcare and household responsibilities. The average age of fathers and their wives remains the same across all three types. However, when classified by the number of hours fathers spend on childcare, the age of fathers tends to decrease as their involvement increases. This contrasts with the notion that involved fatherhood is more common among older individuals and those with later childbirths (Coltrane 1997) but aligns with the Belarusian image of the "modern" father. As involvement increases, the average number of children in the household tends to decrease. Super-involved fathers are more likely to reside in urban areas.

Regarding education levels (Table 4), families with super-involved fathers have a higher percentage of wives with advanced qualifications, such as candidates and doctors of sciences. Education emerges as a significant determinant of involved fatherhood, particularly super-involvement.

The income of fathers in this sample, contrary to studies on the "paternal penalty," actually increases with their level of involvement, and this trend is mirrored in the income of their wives as well. Additionally, the proportion of both spouses working in corporate roles grows as their involvement in childcare and household duties increases. It's worth noting that while the number of hours worked per week increases for mothers, it decreases for fathers. These figures specifically pertain to weekend data. For wives, the situation is quite the opposite - as their involvement in childcare and household activities increases, the number of hours devoted to paid work on weekends rises significantly.

When considering the occupational groups of spouses (refer to Table 5) based on the degree of involvement of the husband, it becomes evident that the proportion of managers decreases as the involvement of both spouses increases. Conversely, all other employment categories increase in representation, except for the least skilled ones.

Table 4. Education of husband and wife depending on the type of household (practicing super-involved, involved or non-involved fatherhood), in %

Level of education	husband			wife		
	–	*	**	–	*	**
Doctorate degree	0,08			0,13		0,57
Master's degree	3	2	5	3	2	2
Bachelor degree	11	9	6	11	6	5
Incomplete higher (incomplete higher) - completed 3 courses or more	11	10	9	5	5	7
Secondary vocational, secondary special	35	32	36	30	28	39
Initial vocational	2	2	2	2	2	2
Secondary education	6	6	5	10	9	6
Primary education	31	37	34	39	47	36
No education	1	2	3	1	1	2

Source: author's calculations

Notes:

– Households where non-involved fatherhood is practiced. Total – 3709

* Households where involved fatherhood is practiced. Total – 1558

** Households where super-involved fatherhood is practiced. Total – 173

Table 5. Group of occupations of husband and wife depending on the type of household (practicing super-involved, involved or non-involved paternity), in %

Group of occupations	husband			wife		
	–	*	**	–	*	**
0 Unemployed	12	10	8	43	32	22
1 Managers	4	4	2	4	3	2
2 Professionals	20	17	22	1	2	2
3 Technicians and Associate Professionals	18	18	19	2	3	5
4 Clerical Support Workers	10	8	11	10	11	22
5 Services and Sales Workers	1	2	2	5	7	7
6 Skilled Agricultural, Forestry and Fishery Workers	11	11	14	8	10	16
7 Plant and Machine Operators and Assemblers	18	23	18	25	30	22
8 Elementary Occupations	6	7	6	2	3	3

Source: author's calculations

Notes:

– Households where uninvolved fatherhood is practiced. Total – 3709

* Households where involved fatherhood is practiced. Total – 1558

** Households where super-involved fatherhood is practiced. Total – 173

Concerning childcare, it is expected that as a father's involvement grows, the time he spends on childcare both on weekends and weekdays will increase, and correspondingly decrease for the wife. It's worth noting that the time an involved father spends caring for other members of the household also increases, while it decreases for the wife. Furthermore, care diversity among involved fathers tends to grow, whereas for wives, it declines.

Involved fathers generally demonstrate more effective time management compared to others. They allocate time for activities such as sleep, exercise, and hobbies more efficiently. Interestingly, only super-involved fathers manage to socialize more and earn more. These traits align with the notion that involved fatherhood is a sign of maturity, reflecting the stages of human development according to Erikson, which involve self-knowledge and acceptance, awareness of one's value system, family history, and emotional baggage (Hawkins et al. 1993; Erikson 1994; Cowan and Cowan 1999).

Fathers with infants under 1.5 years of age deserve special attention. Among this group (comprising 821 individuals living with their children and mothers in the database), 26.5% spend zero minutes with their children on weekdays, while an equal share (26.5%) spends between 30 to 60 minutes. On average, fathers spend 67 minutes a day with their infants, with a maximum of 560 minutes. Only 8 fathers in the entire database spend 6 or more hours with their infants, with 3 fathers spending 9 hours, two of whom are on parental leave. Fathers who spend more than 2 hours with their infants account for 18.4%, or 151 individuals, while more than 3 hours are spent by 7.7%, or 63 individuals.

An assessment of the importance of determinants, analysed separately for three target variables (the number of minutes devoted to child care by the father, the relative contribution of the father, and super-involved fatherhood), revealed that the most characteristic feature of involved fatherhood is care diversity (see Table 6). For the first target variable, only three determinants were identified: in addition to diversity, there is a weak correlation with children under 1.5 and under 3 years old, as expected with the accuracy of the model measured by the least squares method - 3471.3 - this means that the predictions wrong by about 1 hour). For the other two models, the weight of determinants is also relatively low, but the father's characteristics are slightly more important than the mother's (income, health, age, etc.), with the exception of education, where the level of both spouses is equally significant. This confirms the results of previous studies. Therefore, an integral target variable was created from the three main variables using the principal components method, and the determinants for it were calculated. The most important determinants were the father's age, the variability of mother's care, and the presence of a child under 1.5 years of age.

The impact of involved fatherhood on the time allocation of spouses shows the following picture (Table 7). The time spent by fathers on play and sports with a child and by mothers on basic care has the greatest impact on fathers' involvement. For fathers, in descending order, the following types of care matter: upbringing and education, basic care, and talk, which indicates the prevalence of quality care among involved fathers. For wives, after basic care comes household chores (cooking, cleaning, etc.), which again confirms the thesis that involved fatherhood covers only activities directly related to childcare, as well as more pleasant activities. In general, the time spent on recreation and leisure is more strongly associated with involved fatherhood than household chores.

Table 6. Determinants of involved fatherhood

	Involved fatherhood*	Super-involved fatherhood**	Involved fatherhood by time***	MSE****
Model accuracy	0,8655	0,8126	2,0298	2,0298
CH_0_14_H	0,0239	0,0258	0,0000	0,0000
HAVE_D_1_5_H	0,0145	0,0141	0,0346	0,1010
HAVE_D_1_5_3_H	0,0108	0,0123	0,0034	0,0427
city	0,0118	0,0127	0,0000	0,0784
married	0,0052	0,0064	0,0000	0,0187
age_H	0,0768	0,0835	0,0000	0,2502
age_W	0,0747	0,0822	0,0000	0,0235
income_H	0,0594	0,0668	0,0000	0,0188
income_W	0,0426	0,0486	0,0000	0,0052
health_H	0,0229	0,0260	0,0000	0,0000
health_W	0,0192	0,0224	0,0000	0,0000
edu_H	0,0350	0,0395	0,0000	0,0473
edu_W	0,0350	0,0391	0,0000	0,0000
GR_ZAN_H	0,0471	0,0520	0,0000	0,0000
GR_ZAN_W	0,0340	0,0391	0,0000	0,0000
childcare_diversity_H	0,2574	0,2312	0,9620	-
childcare_diversity_W	0,2096	0,1763	0,0000	0,4142
LM_entreprise_W	0,0099	0,0105	0,0000	0,0000
LM_entreprise_H	0,0104	0,0117	0,0000	0,0000

Source: author's calculations

Notes:

*Involved Fatherhood. This variable is calculated for the “involved fatherhood” target variable, where an involved father is defined as one whose contribution to childcare is equal to or greater than that of his wife. This target variable is converted into binary format. The method used to analyse this variable is the Decision Tree Classifier. The accuracy is measured using accuracy score, which compares the predicted labels with the actual labels, providing a measure of how well the model performs.

**Super-Involved Fatherhood. For this variable, a value of 1 is assigned to households where the contribution of fathers to childcare is equal to or greater than the contribution of the wife, and 2 is assigned to households where the contribution of fathers to both childcare and household work is equal to or greater than that of the wives. The method and accuracy measurement for this variable are the same as for Involved Fatherhood.

***Involved Fatherhood by Time: This target variable focuses on the time spent by fathers on childcare. The method used for analysis is the Decision Tree Regressor, and the accuracy is measured using Mean Squared Error (MSE). MSE quantifies the average squared differences between predicted and actual values, providing a measure of how well the model predicts the time fathers spend on childcare.

****PCA (Principal Component Analysis): This is an integral target variable composed of several factors related to fatherhood, including father's time spent on childcare, father's contribution to childcare relative to the total contribution, and father's childcare variability. The method used for analysis is the Decision Tree Regressor, and the accuracy is again measured using Mean Squared Error (MSE).

Decoding of the variables - appendix, table. 1

Table 7. Which activities of the husband and wife impact involved fatherhood: the weight of the coefficients in the decision tree.

Code	Activity	Husband	Wife
K_311	Cooking	0,011	0,021
K_313	Cleaning up after cooking	0,009	0,017
K_321	Cleaning	0,007	0,014
K_371	Shopping	0,010	0,010
K_380	Travel, movement, transport or escort of goods or people in connection with the provision of unpaid household services to members of the household and family	0,010	0,011
K_411	Childcare, including food, washing, physical care	0,026	0,032
K_413	Education, training, preparation of children and assistance to children	0,027	0,015
K_414	Talking to children and reading to children	0,020	0,012
K_415	Games and sports with children	0,043	0,014
K_416	Babysitting (passive care)	0,018	0,011
K_419	Other activities related to childcare	0,006	0,006
K_441	Movements related to the provision of services for the care of household and family members	0,007	0,00
K_442	Accompanying own children	0,015	0,00
K_711	Discussions, conversations, conversations	0,011	0,011
K_842	Watching/listening to TV programs and videos	0,016	0,015
K_850	Activities related to reflection, rest and relaxation	0,013	0,011
K_911	Night sleep/core sleep	0,016	0,019
K_921	Meal / light snack	0,016	0,017
K_931	Personal hygiene and personal care	0,015	0,016

Source: author's calculations

Note: Model – Decision Tree Classifier, Model Accuracy 0.76 (accuracy score)

Conclusion

In this paper, we have examined various methods for measuring involved fatherhood, including the absolute time fathers spend on childcare, relative input, and care diversity. According to the first method, fathers who spend more than 2 hours with their child on a weekend are considered involved fathers, constituting approximately one-third of households.

The second method defines involved fathers as those who devote no less time to the child than the mother, and they also account for about a third of households.

A qualitative measure of father involvement is care diversity, where involved fathers engage in almost all types of childcare activities. The diversity of care increases with each ad-

ditional hour of childcare and escalates particularly after 5 hours. For involved fatherhood, quality care is prioritized.

Involved fathers generally demonstrate effective time management skills, allowing them not only to spend more time with their children but also to allocate time for sleep, sports, communication, hobbies, and even personal study. Additionally, involved fathers tend to have higher incomes and are more likely to work in medium and large businesses. Overall, involved fathers display a higher level of care not only for their children but also for other relatives. This is reflected in their reduced caregiving time for their wives, as they take on more responsibilities in caring for other family members.

In general, the determinants of involved paternity are the age, level of education, income of the spouses, and residence in the city.

Although involved paternity is more common in Russia than one might expect, practiced in about a third of households, the degree of involvement remains relatively low. This is supported by a preference for more enjoyable forms of care (such as play and sports), an uneven contribution to basic care and related chores, and a lack of participation in household management, suggesting that involved fathers still require supervision, control, and assistance from their wives. Only in 3.2% of households does the father share the burden of all domestic work with his wife. However, even in such cases, they often remain in the position of assistants, while the management of the household remains an exclusively female prerogative.

Wives tend to spend their free time on paid work, which indicates the influence of economic factors on increasing egalitarianism in the family.

The modest contribution of fathers to infant care is especially concerning, as it can negatively affect bonding, the child's basic trust, and consequently, their psychophysical development. However, the gender pay gap and the low parental ceiling often force young fathers to spend more time in paid employment. Therefore, improving family policy and the parental leave system, such as introducing flexible parental leave with increased payments for reduced leave duration and implementing exclusive paternal leave, should become essential tools for promoting gender equality, stimulating birth rates, and harnessing the innovative potential of the nation.

Furthermore, achieving women's empowerment and instilling egalitarian values among the younger generation greatly depend on equalizing the gender balance in domestic labour. This requires promoting and shaping a positive image of fathers and gender neutrality in domestic work within popular culture. Encouraging sons' involvement in domestic tasks and rejecting gender stereotypes in labour (technology) lessons at schools are also crucial components of this endeavour.

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Annex

Table 1. Decoding of variables

	Meaning	Variable type
age_H	Husband's age	Numeric
age_W	Wife's age	Numeric
CH_0_14	Number of children under 14 living in the household	Numeric
childcare_diversity_H	Number of husband's childcare types	Numeric
childcare_diversity_W	Number of wife's childcare types	Numeric
childcare_gap2	Father's contribution to childcare Calculated as the ratio of the male contribution to the time expenditure of both spouses	Numeric
childcare_H	Husband's time spent on childcare, in minutes on a weekend	Numeric
childcare_hours_a_week_H	Husband's time spent on childcare, in hours, per week	Numeric
childcare_hours_a_week_W	Wife's time spent on childcare, in hours, per week	Numeric
childcare_W	Wife's time spent on childcare, in minutes on a weekend	Numeric
city	City -1, village - 0	Binary
edu_H	Husband's education (Table 3)	Categorical
edu_W	Wife's education (Table 3)	Categorical
employment_H	Husband's time spent on paid employment, in minutes on a weekend	Numeric
employment_W	Wife's time spent on paid employment, in minutes on a weekend	Numeric

Continuation of the table 1

	Meaning	Variable type
get_to_work_H	Husband's time spent on the road to work, in minutes, on a day off	Numeric
GR_ZAN_H	By occupational groups of respondents (Table 4)	Categorical
GR_ZAN_W	By occupational groups of respondents (Table 4)	Categorical
HAVE_D_1_5_3	There are cohabiting children aged 1.5 to 3 years	Binary
HAVE_D_1_5	There are cohabiting children under the age of 1.5 years	Binary
health_H	Assessment of the husband's health status, where 1 is very good, 5 is very bad	Numeric
health_W	Assessment of the state of health of the wife, where 1 is very good, 5 is very bad	Numeric
hobby_H	Husband's time spent on hobbies, in minutes on a weekend	Numeric
hobby_W	Wife's time spent on hobbies, in minutes on a weekend	Numeric
house_chores_gap	Husband's contribution to the household Calculated as the ratio of the male contribution to the time expenditure of both spouses	Numeric
house_chores_H	Husband's time spent on household chores, in minutes on a weekend	Numeric
house_chores_W	Wife's time spent on housework, in minutes on a weekend	Numeric
in_hurry_H	Husband feeling rushed	Binary
in_hurry_W	Wife's sense of urgency	Binary
income_H	Husband's income	Numeric
income_W	wife's income	Numeric
LM_entreprise_H	The husband works at an enterprise, in an organization (or a separate division of an organization) with the status of a legal entity	Binary
LM_entreprise_W	The wife works at an enterprise, in an organization (or a separate division of an organization) with the status of a legal entity	Binary
married	Marriage registered	Binary
other_care_H	Husband's time spent caring for other members of the household, in minutes on a weekend	Numeric
other_care_W	Wife's time spent caring for other members of the household, in minutes on a weekend	Numeric
sleep_H	Husband's sleep time, min. on a weekend	Numeric
sleep_W	Wife's time spent sleeping, in minutes on a weekend	Numeric
social_capital_H	Husband's time spent on communication, in minutes on a weekend	Numeric

End of the table 1

	Meaning	Variable type
social_capital_W	Wife's time spent on communication, in minutes on a weekend	Numeric
sport_H	Husband's time spent on sports, in minutes on a week-end	Numeric
sport_W	Wife's time spent on sports, in minutes on a weekend	Numeric
study_W	Wife's time spent studying, in minutes on a weekend	Numeric
unpaid_labour_gap2	Husband's contribution to unpaid domestic work Calculated as the ratio of the male contribution to the time expenditure of both spouses	Numeric
unpaid_labour_H	Husband's time spent on unpaid domestic work, in minutes on a weekend	Numeric
unpaid_labour_W	Wife's time spent on unpaid domestic work, in minutes on a weekend	Numeric
working_hours_a_week_H	Husband's time spent in paid employment, in hours, per week	Numeric
working_hours_a_week_W	Wife's time spent in paid employment, in hours, per week	Numeric

Source: compiled by the author

Table 2. Means for super-involved, involved and uninvolved households

	Super-involved	Involved	Uninvolved
age_H	37	37	37
age_W	34,68	34,69	34,10
CH_0_14_H	1,43	1,52	1,63
childcare_diversity_H	2,34	2,23	1,00
childcare_diversity_W	1,06	1,55	2,44
childcare_gap2	0,59	0,41	-0,65
childcare_H	151,56	157,73	56,18
childcare_hours_a_week_H	22,28	19,32	17,66
childcare_hours_a_week_W	39,37	40,70	46,28
childcare_W	53	84	175
city	0,82	0,79	0,72
edu_H	5,88	5,97	5,67
edu_W	6,05	6,40	6,09
employment_H	5,78	9,63	53,13
employment_W	208	32	7
get_to_work_H	1,27	1,65	10,91

End of the table 2

	Super-involved	Involved	Uninvolved
HAVE_D_1_5_3	0,11	0,12	0,14
HAVE_D_1_5	0,07	0,08	0,16
health_H	3,71	3,75	3,74
health_W	3,75	3,74	3,70
hobby_H	215,72	251,34	236,68
hobby_W	145	168	145
house_chores_gap2	0,37	-0,44	-0,44
house_chores_H	209,25	114,25	124,60
house_chores_W	114	274	266
in_hurry_H	2,14	2,22	2,24
in_hurry_W	2,36	2,40	2,42
income_H	40212	38837	35459
income_W	26882	25955	23585
LM_entreprise_H	0,85	0,81	0,77
LM_entreprise_W	0,68	0,63	0,52
married	0,94	0,96	0,93
medical_care_H	2,66	2,39	2,32
medical_care_W	5	4	2
other_care_H	20,29	17,34	4,23
other_care_W	1	4	11
sleep_H	548,38	571,07	557,99
sleep_W	513	557	547
social_capital_H	53,58	51,46	49,00
social_capital_W	53	49	42
sport_H	3,12	6,61	5,94
sport_W	2	4	2
study_W	4	0	0
unpaid_labour_gap2	0,43	-0,13	-0,47
unpaid_labour_H	381	289	185
unpaid_labour_W	168	361	452
working_hours_a_week_H	42	42	43
working_hours_a_week_W	41,01	38,81	38,51

Source: author's calculations

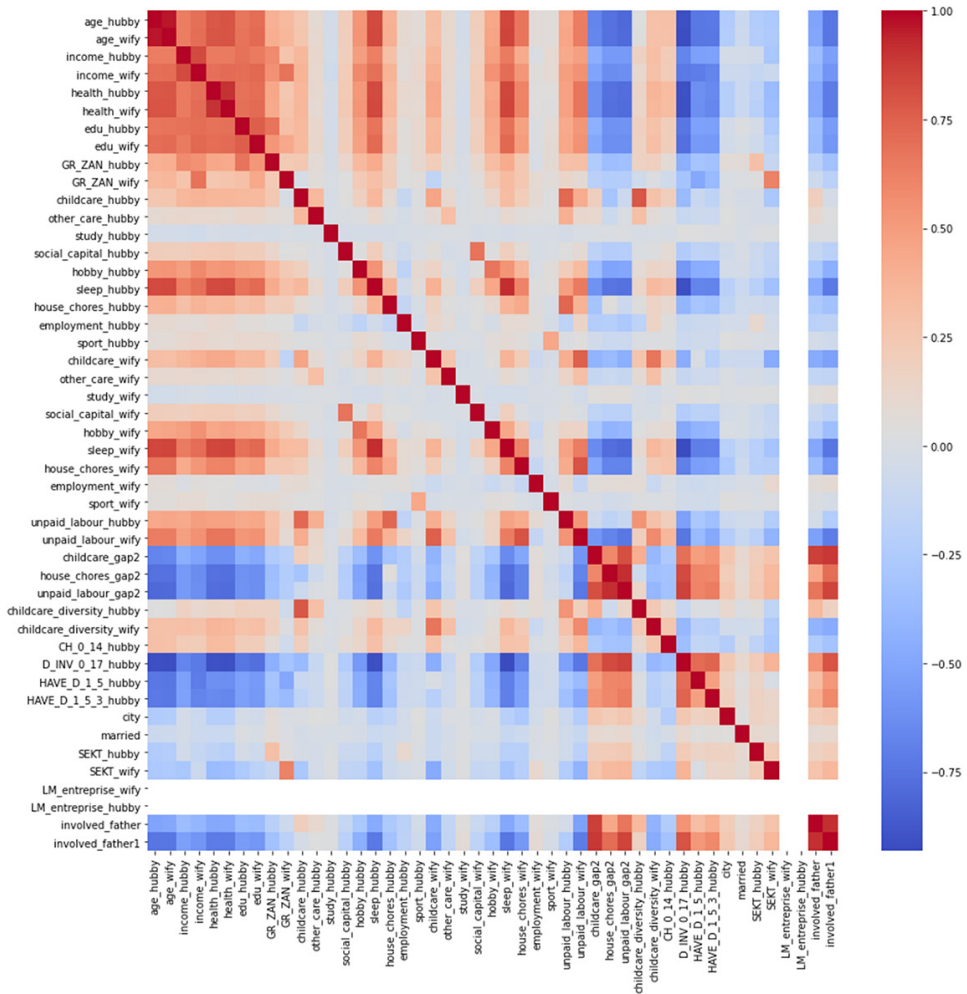


Figure 1. Correlation heatmap. Source: author’s calculations

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