



In 2005 I had my first daughter. In Russia we have 1.5 years of paid maternity leave and 1.5 years of unpaid leave to take care of a child. At that time the maximum size of paid maternity leave was limited to the funny small sum of money per months and majority of women return to the labour market within the first one year and a half (up to 70-80%, see more Karabchuk et al. 2012, Karabchuk and Nagernyak 2013). So in 2006 I was back to my main position at CLMS and was looking for extra sources to earn money. Luckily Higher School of Economics was developing and expanding fast, they were creating new research units and laboratories as well as expanding the number of students. It allowed me to become a part-time lecturer at the sociology department and receive another part-time research fellow position at the Laboratory for Socio-Economic Studies, headed by the top economic sociologist Vadim Radaev. My double affiliation with economists and sociologists was extremely fruitful and beneficial as I learned a lot from both disciplines what allowed me to broaden my research interests, theoretical approaches and perspectives. Till now I am applying the knowledge of survey research tools and statistical data analysis from sociology and logic and rational research approach from economics.

By the end of 2008 I completed my PhD with successful defence and 22 votes “for” out of 22 academic council members. At that moment, I had a 3 year old daughter, I was pregnant with my second child and I had three jobs. In 2008-2009, I received two grants from EERC (based in Kiev) and HSE grant on studies of non-permanent employment and job stability in Russia. The key focus was on the gender differences in the non-standard arrangements. Job instability is one of the special characteristics of the Russian Labour market with 30% annual turnover (Karabchuk 2008). Unlike European countries, temporary work is more typical for men than for women in Russia (Karabchuk 2009), but the discovered wage gap both for part-timers and temporary workers (in comparison with permanent full-time contracts) was close to western economies (Karabchuk 2012c.). These grants experiences gave me opportunity to learn how to publish academic articles in English in the peer-reviewed journals.

In 2009 my second daughter was born and a year after I had to come back to work to help my husband to provide for the young family. As you might guess, the work life balance, the combination of job with childcare, female employment after childbirth, fertility intentions, second and third child planning as well as the subjective well-being of mothers became my second life topic. Shortly, I received a big two-year project to study women in the labour market with five research assistants and PhD students which was successfully completed with 5 articles published. The results of the 28 collected individual face-to-face in-depth interviews with women of different ages across Russian regions were used as basis for the further hypotheses to test with the nationally representative households’ panel, Russian Longitudinal Monitoring Survey (known as RLMS). Indeed, the labour market was restricting the career paths and job selection. We showed the necessity for women to return fast to the labour market on the one hand, but huge job mobility for them, on the other hand, due to childcare adjustments (Karabchuk et al. 2012, Karabchuk and Nagernyak 2013).

In January 2011, because of my good job accomplishments and excellent reputation I was offered a deputy head position of the first-time created international research unit, Laboratory for Comparative Social Research (LCSR), at HSE at that moment, headed by famous scientists Ronald Inglehart and Eduard Ponarin. The starting point was the first mega grant programme 2010, launched by the Russian government to bring foreign established scientists to Russia and create labs, schools, scientific groups of scholars working on the projects under their guidance within Russian universities. It was highly

competitive and our lab was the first and only one (out of 40 grants) to receive such a grant in social sciences (later on in 2011 and 2012 there were two more grants in economics and sociology received by other institutions). The HSE was really happy and proud to gain the grant but it was highly responsible to implement and spend this huge sum of money efficiently. As foreign scientists could come only for the short-time period of 4 months per year in total and they knew nothing about Russian university administration and management culture, each of the lab had the Russian director to coordinate the activities and reports. Our LCSR was unique in the sense that the director was based in Saint-Petersburg branch of HSE, coordinating sociology program there and could not come to manage all the processes in Moscow.

Thus, I was appointed to manage and coordinate the LCSR in Moscow, with a special mission to succeed in this academic mega grant. Half of the lab was in St. Peterburg (15 people) and another half was based in Moscow (15 people). It was really a blessing for me to receive this position with huge opportunities for personal development as a researcher and manager. It has broadened my field of interests a lot and allowed me to meet and learn from so many fabulous scientists in cross-national sociology, methodology, cross-cultural social psychology, political economy and etc. I invested all my time and energy into this project and together with Eduard we managed to establish the most successful and efficient international research unit in the university. This new, I call it, 24-hours position helped me to go through my divorce smoothly and not to concentrate on personal stress and depression. I love the people with whom I worked, I truly believed in the amazing team with huge academic potential and it worked out. Thanks to all our student research assistants and young and senior research fellows who took the challenge and were contributing so much to the LCSR development. It was really excellent experience with hard work but also a lot of fun and international friendships from more than 40 countries (see for more information <http://lcsr.hse.ru/en>).

The funds of the LCSR were enough to invite regularly (at least three times per year) best senior scientists, young scholars, and PhD students to the workshops and to have intensive sessions with lively discussions on the presented projects that would turn into the published articles within two-three years. Once in the fall of 2012, I managed to invite prof. Kazuhiro Kumo to give a talk as a plenary speaker at our conference. Since that time we started to cooperate closely on our mutual research interests. This is one of the many examples of how efficient the LCSR was in the fruitful collaborations between scholars.

Just for the illustration, LCSR has now as many followers on its facebook page as the whole World Association for Public Opinion Research (WAPOR), established more than 70 years back. And according to 2015-2016 internal records we brought university the biggest number of publications in sociology and political science as a unit, which helped HSE to be ranked in the 100 top Universities by QS and Shanghai subject rankings (in sociology and political science) in 2017-2018. Moreover, the LCSR received successfully many individual and several prolongation grants, so that in the economically hard times of 2015 the HSE decided to keep funding it almost in full amount from university profit funds. Later on LCSR was first HSE research unit to receive unlimited bank endowment and this year two more huge grants were gained from Russian Foundation. So I am very proud and really happy for my "baby".

As for me I challenged myself to try to work abroad in a completely different environment and moved to the UAE University in 2016. I applied for the professorship position in several universities in the Gulf countries but was first contacted by the UAE University for the job interview. Now I am happily working in Al Ain city in the university which got my heart from the first sight. It is an amazing country and a lovely university, with a lot of opportunities and challenges for the academicians like me. I came to be the first Russian in this university to work as a professor and the first woman in the department for many years. I must reassure you that I faced zero gender related issues or problems in the university. UAE

demonstrates total respect and equal attitude to both genders. My LCSR working experience helped me a lot to adjust to the international UAEU environment and contribute to the department and College of Humanities and Social Science development.



The personal challenges for me were 1) big teaching load which was new for me as I had mainly research position at HSE and had taught only two courses per semester with one class a week. Here in UAEU, we teach 3 + 4 courses per year with two classes a week for each course; 2) the new more hierarchical administration culture of the university; 3) new courses for me to teach for the first two semesters, so that I had to prepare all lectures from scratch. My children adaptation to the new environment of British school (where all classes were taught in English) was another personal challenge. At the same time, my colleagues' help, great department chair and inspiring Emirati female students' motivation helped me to go through the challenges and begin to contribute to the department growth. I managed 1) to establish myself as a reputable professor, teaching high level Research Project and Applied Sociology classes; 2) to complete and publish a book on demography together with prof. Kazuhiro Kumo in 2017 and several academic articles in the peer-reviewed journals with high impact factor; 3) to receive big two-year university grant for 2017-2018 within the Centre for Public Policy Research and Leadership to establish ambitious first panel Emirati youth survey on subjective well-being, employment, family formation and values in the country, which I am currently trying to implement; 4) to re-launch regular research workshop series; 5) to launch training field trips to professional organizations for our students; 6) to bring several key-speakers for the public key-note lectures at the university and many initiatives are on the go. The geography of my research interests shifted a bit to the Central Asian countries, MENA region and Gulf countries, but the focus on fertility and labour market remained.

Finally, thanks to prof. Kumo invitation, this summer I received a golden opportunity to complete my research stay at the IER Hitotsubashi University. It is my third experience of coming to the IER, but the previous two visits were only for one-two weeks in 2015 and 2017. Now I had more time to learn about Japanese people, culture, working environment and more. I should admit that first time in my life I got 100% of my working time dedicated to the research and writing. The working environment is really amazing at the IER. I liked the private office very much and enjoyed working till late night. And believe me, I was not alone to come to the office over the weekend and stay here till 9 or 10 pm, the Japanese colleagues are really hard working people. Fantastic, kind and very caring people are working in the secretary offices and this is one of the most valuable assets of the IER. A very rich library is at the disposal as well as outstanding Japanese professors are available for discussions and consultations. What else you need to be productive in academia?

As I mentioned above, we already completed one joint book-project together with prof. Kumo on, which was first empirical book on Russian Demography in English published by Palgrave McMillan in 2017. The book was well recognized and appreciated by the academic society and received the award of Japan Consortium for Area Studies (<http://www.jcas.jp/en/consortiumaward/selection.html>). Now we are working on a new book on 'Gender Studies in Post-Soviet Economies', which is ambitious and highly

demanding project in the comparative socio-economic research field. It is a cooperation between many researchers from 6 countries.

Additionally to that we started working on another interesting international project, which will allow us to measure the ideal number of children for the young generations in Germany, Japan, Russia, Ukraine and UAE, as well as predictors of the fertility intentions in these countries. It is based on the advanced methodology of factorial survey and involves scholars from five countries to work on it. Despite of the different culture, value systems, economic conditions, labour legislation and welfare systems, all the five countries are facing fertility declines. Furthermore, Germany and Japan have lowest low fertility rates for the last several years. The project is aimed to investigate the relationship between ideal number of children and fertility intentions of the current youth, on the one hand, and gender differences in the employment, education, household labour division and childcare facilities availability on the other hand.

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