*Proposal:* ***Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Conference 2012***

*Work Title:* ***Impact of transition economy on gender composition in employment in the Russian heavy industry***

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The emergence of the Russian Federation, as an independent country, has resulted in vast social, political and economic change, including women’s participation within the labour market.

Through in-depth interviews with the senior managers, employees and Trade Unions of a case study organization, this research examines the social and economic dimensions which impact on gender composition of employment in the Russian coal industry. It will also explain continuity and changes of gender composition within a period of transition, which has major implications for both female and male employment within the East Siberian mining company. Through the theoretical lens of patriarchy, this research draws attention to the experiences of women, their interaction with the environment and explores their employment and work experience subsequent to transitional restructuring in Russia (main authors: Cynthia Cockburn, Sylvia Walby, Catherine Hakim, Heidi Hartmann, Jeni Harden).

The preliminary results of fieldwork suggest that economic instability has led to the diminution of women’s labour market participation. The most affected industries were government structures such as transport, education and medicine sectors and heavy industry such as mining, steel working which had been under total government regulation.

Most (65%) of work placements are legally prohibited for females under the National Labour Law of the Russian Federation as they are classified as professions with harmful or dangerous working conditions for women’s reproductive health. As a result of this protective legislation women are often excluded from numerous skilled jobs. Women become a second class group of workers who require more social benefits and following of strict rules for their employment.

Experiences of gender discrimination appear to be strongly influenced by respondents’ age. Employees over 50 years old had no concept of gender discrimination, while younger workers age 23-35, and reported cases of gender discrimination on the workplace.

Additionally this research shows that pressure of the double burden for women workers during the transition time is not only preserved, but also increased. Gender inequality was present in Soviet Union before, and during the transition period it has been reinforced not only by objective problems of the transitional period, but also by women's conservative views and patriarchal system of the society.

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