Session: **FAMILY AND HOUSEHOLDS**
Provisional title: **WOMEN'S ECONOMIC INDEPENDENCE AND RISK OF UNION DISRUPTION IN RUSSIA**

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Preliminary abstract

Research issue to be addressed The aim of this presentation is to address the question if women's economic activity influences the propensity to divorce in times of economic hardship and high uncertainty. In the last decades, women's growing labor force participation in the developed countries has been accompanied by rise in divorce rates. As a result, the high risk of union disruption is often related to the growth in women's earning potential. According to the 'independence hypothesis', if woman's earnings are high enough to maintain a separate household, the economic gain of marriage for woman decreases. As a result both the propensity to marry, and the stability of unions decreases (Becker, 1991).
Methodology and data to be used The data comes from the Generation and Gender Survey conducted in Russia in 2004. We employ event-history models to analyze the risk of union disruption. The following explanatory variables are used as an approximation of women's income: main employment, additional work activities, educational level, and place of residence. In addition, we test the hypothesis concerning unobservable characteristics of a woman that influence both economic independence and the propensity to divorce.
Envisaged outcomes We can expect that in times of economic hardship and high uncertainty on the labor market, women's economic activity has a limited effect on the union disruption risk. Couples would be more prone to remain in an unsatisfactory relationship as the financial gain from marriage is higher; the insecurity level lowers as well as the costs of living together are lower than the costs of the maintenance of separate households.