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## STREAM 2

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### Striving for Gender Equality: One Step Forward, Two Steps Back?

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#### STREAM CHAIRS :

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Submissions to the conference can be in the form of long abstracts (up to 1500 words), developmental papers (3000-5000 words, including references) or full papers (8000 to 10000 words including references) by the deadline of **April 30th 2018**.

Submissions should be made via the EDI website: <https://www.edi-conference.org/index.php>

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Gender equality is a fundamental human right. Article 1 of the UN Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women defines discrimination against women as: “any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field.” It is essential that women are provided with equal access to essential public services, including education, housing and healthcare. Yet, too often women and girls are restricted or denied access from such services. There is still much work to be done to overcome discrimination and gender disparities in these areas.

Research suggests that women remain hugely disadvantaged, with the austerity agenda disproportionately affecting women.<sup>1</sup> In addition to this, women are continually under-represented in senior positions within both the public and the private sector and the gender pay gap also remains stubbornly high.<sup>2</sup> Sexual violence, harassment and overt sex discrimination are still apparent and, arguably, have increased due to the seeming legitimisation of misogynist behaviour by those with power in public spheres, such as Donald Trump, Nigel Farage, Milo Yiannopoulos. The #MeToo campaign took off on social media in 2017 and increased awareness as to the scale of sexual violence and harassment.

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<sup>1</sup> See for example Keen, R and Cracknell, R (Dec 2017) ‘Estimating the Gender Impact of Tax and Benefit Changes’ House of Commons Library Briefing Paper No. SN06758; De Henau, J Himmelweit, S Reis, S Stephenson, M (Nov 2017) ‘A Chancellor Tinkering at the margins Women’s Budget Group Response to Autumn Budget 2017’ Women’s Budget Group <https://wbg.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/WBG-response-Autumn-Budget-2017-FINAL.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Fawcett Society (Jan 2018) ‘Sex Discrimination Law Review Final Report’ <https://www.fawcettsociety.org.uk/sex-discrimination-law-review-final-report>



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However, these issues are not new and yet, with the #MeToo and #Everydaysexism campaigns, have only recently become part of the public discourse.

The aims of this stream are to discuss gender disparities, sexual violence and discrimination both within public services and the private sector. This includes defining and challenging existing conceptions of empowerment and dominant discourses relating to gender equality. Too often research and discourses around gender equality view women as primary changemakers and problem solvers and require women to take action to address the disadvantages and discrimination they endure. This approach ignores the responsibility of men in addressing gender inequalities and violence as well as trivialising the role of historical, engrained disadvantage and institutional discrimination. The stream aims to discuss the extent and nature of progress in relation to gender equality. There has been more publicity and media attention recently, but this is reactive and is unlikely to provide solutions. Once the media furore dies down, how far will we have actually come in moving gender equality forward?

We would welcome papers which showcase research and activism around gender inequalities, particularly if they have implications for transforming organisational policies, procedures and structures and attempt to address institutional discrimination and gender based violence.

References:

Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women  
<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/text/econvention.htm>

De Henau, J Himmelweit, S Reis, S Stephenson, M (Nov 2017) 'A Chancellor Tinkering at the margins Women's Budget Group Response to Autumn Budget 2017' Women's Budget Group <https://wbg.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/WBG-response-Autumn-Budget-2017-FINAL.pdf>

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