

**JUSTIFYING WOMEN'S POVERTY:
CHALLENGING THE
CONSTITUTIONAL PERMISSIBILITY
OF WOMEN'S POVERTY**

**1 September 2026
12:30–13:30 CEST
ZOOM WEBINAR**

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ABSTRACT

If women have a right to equality, why do courts keep holding that it is constitutionally justified to pursue laws that entrench women's poverty? This lecture seeks to answer this question by exploring the mechanics of justifying infringements of rights in the context of women's poverty. It argues that justification concepts are misappropriated and misused to trivialize the harms of gendered economic inequality and to inflate the strengths of neoliberal logic. Through enriching justification criteria with women's substantive equality, the lecture explores how any arguments that women's poverty is justified are not illogical, implausible, unfair or rooted in patriarchal attitudes and systems.

BIOGRAPHY OF THE SPEAKER

Meghan Campbell is a Reader in International Human Rights Law at the University of Birmingham and Deputy-Director of the Oxford Human Rights Hub. Her research focuses on women's economic inequality and overlooked aspects of women's equality including on rurality, the procedural rules on international access to justice and temporality. Her first monograph, *Women, Poverty, Equality* (Hart 2018) examined women's poverty in the CEDAW and her second, *Hanging in the Balance: The Function of Justification in Achieving Women's Equality* (Hart 2025), looks at the relationship between women's equality and limits on rights. She has acted as an independent expert advisor to the Council of Europe on comprehensive sexuality education and the UK Cabinet Office on Equal Pay.

The Gender Lecture Series is organized by the Gender Team of the World Trade Institute – Know the GAP!, led by Prof. Elisa Fornalé, in collaboration with the Faculty of Law of the University of Bern

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Participation is open to the public and free of charge.

For further information please email Dr Simone Ferrari: simone.ferrari@unibe.ch

