

U7+ Intergenerational Roundtables

Part Two: Social Sciences to Tackle the Global Gender Gap

Co-hosted by Sciences Po and Université Mohammed VI Polytechnique (UM6P)

Convened by Northwestern University and the U7+ Student Leaders Board

According to the World Economic Forum's 2021 [Global Gender Gap Report](#), the next generation of women will have to wait for gender equality: as the impact of the pandemic continues to be felt, closing the global gender gap worldwide has increased by a generation from 99.5 years to 135.6 years.

Gender inequality is a characteristic of most societies. Recent years have seen slow progress in closing the economic participation gender gap, and to some extent backlash against women's rights. The collapse in GDP brought about by the Great Recession in 2008 had [gendered implications](#): while women's employment was said to have been preserved relative to men's in the early stage of the economic crisis, austerity plans implemented in several countries to limit public deficits and debts ultimately affected female workers more deeply. A decade later, another global economic crisis caused by the global outbreak of Coronavirus Covid-19 exposes, and in many cases exacerbates, latent gender inequality. [According to the World Bank](#): "There is a risk that gender gaps could widen during and after the pandemic and that gains in women's and girls' accumulation of human capital, economic empowerment and voice and agency, built over the past decades, could be reversed".

Hence, both the global South and North share a common challenge of tackling gender inequality and bridging the gender gap. Social sciences aims to respond to this challenge through knowledge production and dissemination. By assessing discrimination schemes and analysing the sexual division of labour — whether at the national, supra-national or global-level — social sciences shed light on and help better understand the underlying mechanisms driving gender inequality. Scientific knowledge also engages in the evaluation of gender-sensitive public policies, and by so, participates in the effort to tackle gender inequalities in different settings and environments (historical, cultural, political, economic, ...).

Discussion Questions:

1. To what extent can education be considered as a pathway towards gender equality?
2. The market economy (capitalism) is now the dominant form of economic and political organisation worldwide. Can we achieve gender equality within this framework, while articulating gender equality with other forms of discrimination (based on social class, race, etc.)?
3. How can we effectively build a women's leadership narrative?
4. To what extent can entrepreneurship be considered as a leverage towards women's economic empowerment?
5. How can we effectively involve the participation of young people and the U7+ Alliance in wider conversations about women's rights and gender equality?