

Notes taken by students
International Symposium
Education and Gender Equality
Wellesley College, October 20 & 21, 2017

Plenary Session – Saturday, 8:30 a.m. – 9:30 a.m. – “Gender-based statistics”

Speaker:

- H  l  ne P  rivier, Director of Research and Academic Program on Gender of Sciences Po (PRESAGE)

Moderator:

- Alyson Gounden Rock, Innovations in Government Research Fellow at the Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation at the Harvard Kennedy School

Main points:

- H  l  ne P  rivier spoke about Marie P  gard, a 19th century female statistician who used statistical research to understand the role of women on a macro level, such as participation in the economy, literacy levels, education, salaries, segregation, etc. Her goal was to create sympathy between higher- and lower-class women, and general solidarity between women of different backgrounds.
- The advantage of using statistics is that a graphic speaks for itself.
- However, the statistics are not comparative between men and women, because P  gard wanted to show that women are earning and doing a lot for their communities, to shed light on women’s capabilities, instead of drawing comparisons between men and women.
- Statistics are not objective; they are a social construction and they show very specific things that we choose to show. Gathering gendered statistics is important, but the data is not always used appropriately.

Best practices evoked regarding public policies, corporate actions, civil society or academic initiatives:

- Policies should focus on the participation of women in the workplace based on statistics and data.
- Numbers are evidence and they need to quantify what women do at home.
- Use statistics to better understand people’s motives in different historical times.