

Some Data on the Underrepresentation of Women in Philosophy in Italy

An update with data from 2023

Francesca Ervas

Introduction

The Italian Society for Women in Philosophy (SWIP Italia) conducts periodic surveys to monitor trends in the representation of women in Italian University ranks in Philosophy compared to other scientific areas. In 2023, we conducted a comprehensive update of the data available in December 2022. In 2024, we proposed an update of the data on the (under)representation of women in Philosophy in the Italian Universities we gathered at the end of 2023. All collected data are available at the following osf address, in the spirit of Open Science: <https://osf.io/tnmah/>

Methodology

We gathered the data at the end of December 2023 at the following public web page provided by MIUR: cercauniversita.cineca.it/php5/docenti/cerca.php.

As classified by the Italian Minister of Instruction, University and Research (MIUR) (L. 240/2010, art. 5; <https://miur.gov.it/settori-concorsuali-e-settori-scientifico-disciplinari>), Philosophy is not a single scientific area but it is scattered in three scientific areas: area 11 (History, Philosophy, Education and Psychology), area 12 (Law), and area 14 (Political and Social Sciences). We therefore included under the label “Philosophy”, the following scientific sectors:

- 11 C1:** Theoretical Philosophy
- 11 C2:** Logic, History and Philosophy of Science
- 11 C3:** Moral Philosophy
- 11 C4:** Aesthetics and Philosophy of Languages
- 11 C5:** History of Philosophy
- 12 H3:** Philosophy of Law
- 14 A1:** Political Philosophy

The data collection aims to understand whether there is a difference in the distribution of women vs. men in the following Italian University ranks (a tentative translation of titles is provided in parentheses):

Professoressa Ordinaria vs. Professore Ordinario (Female vs. Male Full Professor: FP F vs. FP M);

Professoressa Associata vs. Professore Associato (Female vs. Male Associate Professor: AP F vs. AP M);

Ricercatrice vs. Ricercatore a tempo indeterminato (t.i.) (Female vs. Male Permanent Researcher: PR F vs. PR M);

Ricercatrice vs. Ricercatore a tempo determinato di tipo B (t.d. B) (Female vs. Male Temporary Researcher type B: TRB F vs. TRB M);

Ricercatrice vs. Ricercatore a tempo determinato di tipo A (t.d. A) (Female vs. Male Temporary Researcher type A: TRA F vs. TRA M).

Results

As regards Philosophy (up to December 2023), there were still significantly more men (N=859) than women (N=393) employed in permanent positions ($p < 0.003$; women: 31.39%, men: 68.61%), but no significant difference between women (N=231) and men (N=319) employed in precarious staff ($p = 0.1425$; women: 42.00%, men: 58.00%) as in previous SWIP ITALIA reports.

In the case of permanent staff, the results still showed a significant difference between women and men, due to the greater number of men employed as Full Professor ($p = 0.0019$; $N_{\text{women}}=123$, $N_{\text{men}}=315$), Associate Professor ($p = 0.0011$; $N_{\text{women}}=182$, $N_{\text{men}}=405$) and Temporary Researchers with tenure track (TRB) ($p = 0.0133$; $N_{\text{women}}= 56$, $N_{\text{men}}= 104$). There was instead no significant difference between women (N=32) and men (N=35), when employed as Permanent Researchers (PR) ($p = 0.8142$) (see Fig. 1).

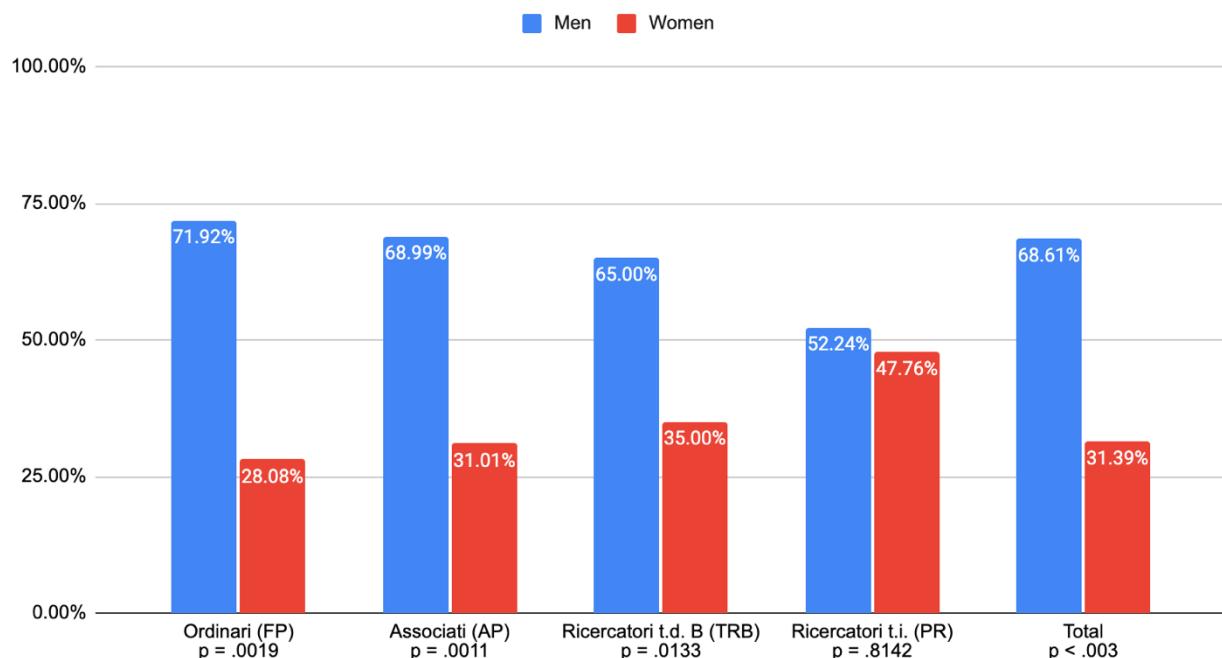


Fig. 1 Percentage of women and men employed in Philosophy as Permanent Staff (including Temporary Researchers with tenure track)

In the case of precarious staff, the results presented a significant difference between women (N=45) and men (N=96), as Temporary Researchers without tenure track (TRA) ($p = 0.0055$) and no significant difference between women (N=186) and men (N=223), when employed as postdoctoral researchers ($p = 0.1425$) (see Fig. 2).

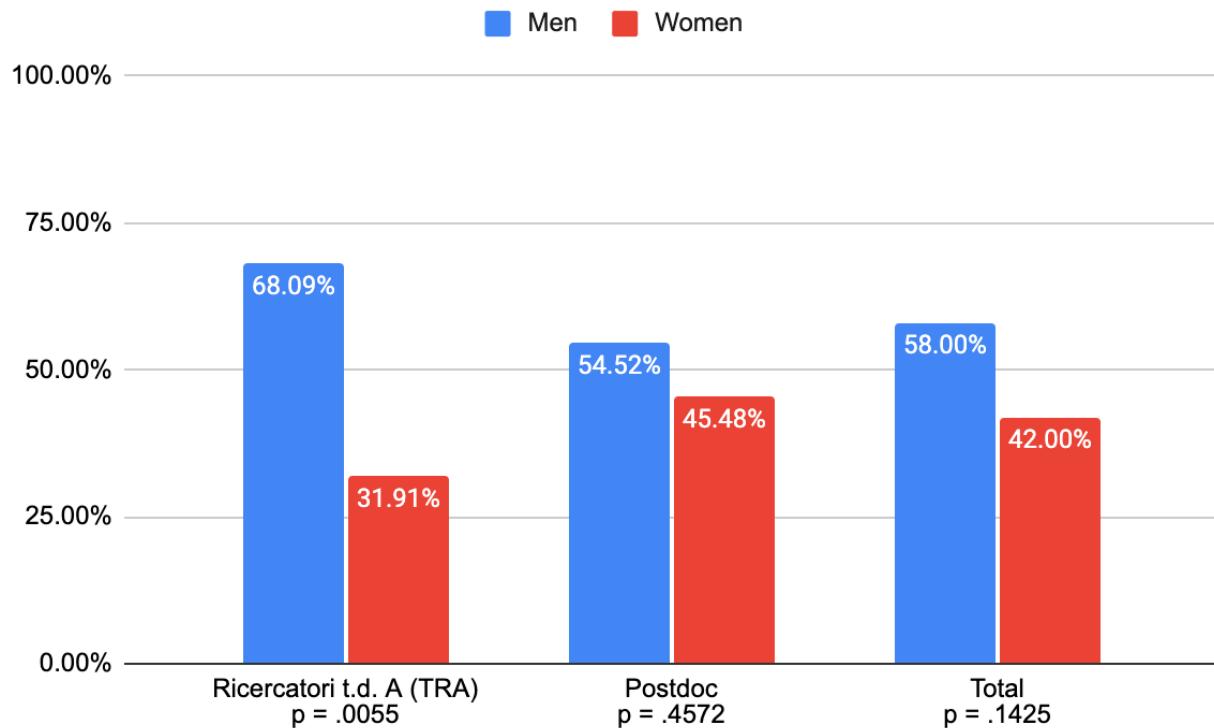


Fig. 2 Percentage of women and men employed as Precarious Staff

Discussion

Overall, the results in the Philosophy area at the end of 2023 are similar to the results presented at the end of 2022: in the ranks with more academic power or possibilities of career (FP, AP, TRB ranks), women are significantly less than men and the statistical significance of the difference increases as the status of the rank increases. The PR rank still represents an exception, with no significant difference between women and men, confirming that the staff in the PR rank have less career possibilities when compared to TRB staff (who become AP staff when obtaining national qualification and positive evaluation of the Department).

Conclusion and further research

Overall, the results of this research show that women are underrepresented in Philosophy in Italy, specifically in those ranks or roles where they could have more possibilities of career and their research could be independent. The next report will discuss data collected at the end of December 2024 and will consider the representation of women in Philosophical Societies (in the role of President, Member with appointment, Member of the Board, Member), including the Italian Society for the History of Philosophy (Società Italiana di Storia della Filosofia, SISF). It will also monitor trends of development in the representation of women in Philosophy compared to other scientific areas.