

GENDER, WORK AND ORGANIZATION

10th Biennial International Interdisciplinary Conference
14-16 June, 2018, Darling Harbour, Sydney, Australia

STREAM

Beyond the glass ceiling? Women professors between recognition and Marginalization

EVOLUTION OF PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY IN ACADEMIC WOMEN

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INTRODUCTION

We present the results of a study whose **objective** is to analyze, from the gender perspective, the professional identity of university professors, comparing two temporal moments 1993 and 2017.

Using the main questionnaire of my doctoral thesis carried out in 1993, 24 years later we were able to analyze (in the Final Degree Work of Elena, one of my students) the different evolutions of Professional Configurations and Equilibrium in women and male.

The **instrument** used in both temporal moments has been the M.I.S.P.E. (Intra and Interpersonal Matrix of Professor Professional Self) by Ada Abraham. It is a questionnaire with psychodynamic fundamentals, consisting of 30 items repeated 4 times in different order and different professional positions: real, before the student, before the academic authorities and ideal.

Both **samples** -1993 and 2017- were taken at the University of Seville, one of the largest and oldest universities in Spain and therefore quite representative, founded more than five hundred years ago and with almost seventy-five thousand students and more than four thousand professors.

METHODOLOGY

Participants 1993: 282 subjects, 198 men and 84 women
2017: 60 subjects, 30 men and 30 women.

Instrument* Intra and Interpersonal Matrix of the Professors Professional Self (MISPE-r), created by Ada Abraham (1985) to study the conscious and implicit interactions of professors with the people of your professional environment. It consists of 4 sub-questionnaires of 30 items each: Real, Before the authority, Before the students, and Ideal. It is a Likert scale of 7 ratings, which is completed in approximately 15-20 minutes.

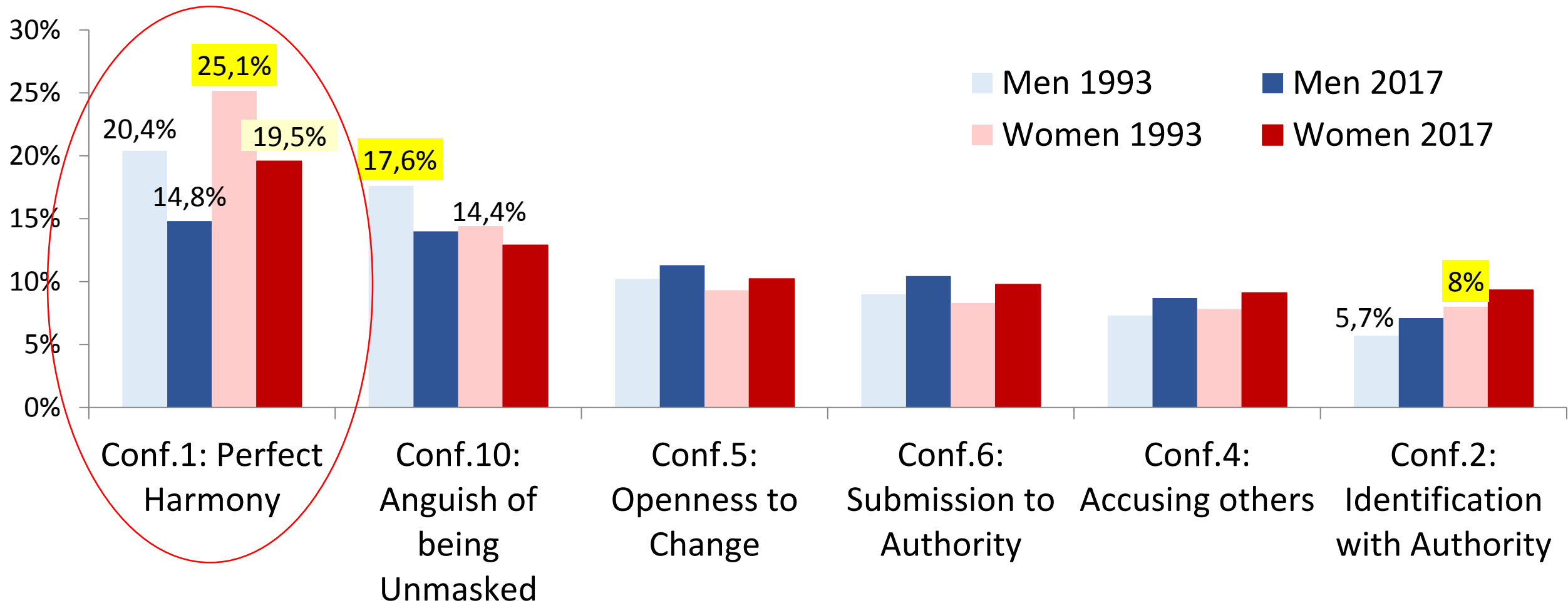
Procedure The 12 configurations were obtained by comparing the answers to the same items, from the different positions (real, before the authority, before the students and ideal); the 4 possible equilibrium were obtained analyzing the greater or lesser presence of 2 always more frequent configurations: “Perfect Harmony” (the 4 positions are coincident) and “Anguish of being Unmasked” (others see me better than myself).

* Regarding the reliability and validity of this instrument, the data found in the research carried out in Canada by Cofsky (1996) shows that Cronbach's alpha of the different sub-questionnaires is: Real: 0.83; Ideal: 0.90; Before the students: 0.90; Before the authority: 0.87

RESULTS

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Graph 1: Most frequent **CONFIGURATIONS** (Universidad de Sevilla 1993-2017)

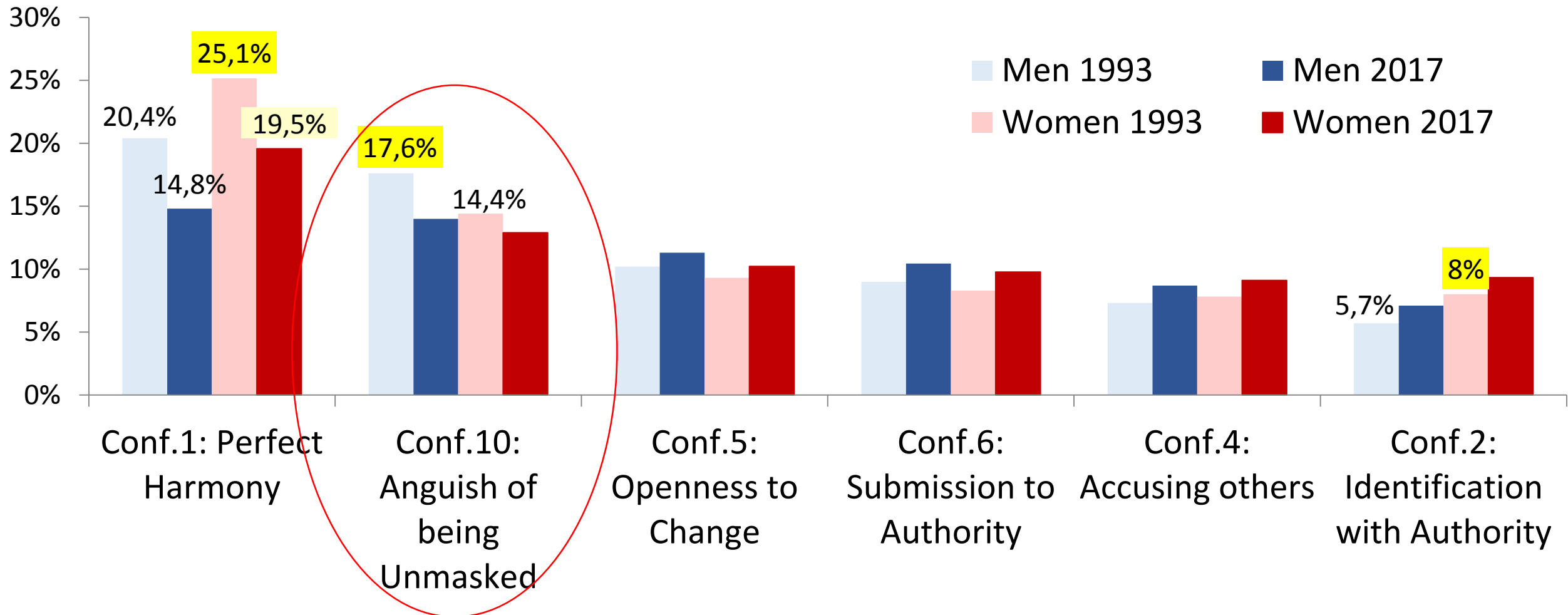


In the 20 years elapsed between one application and another, the "Perfect Harmony" (coincidence between the 4 images of the self: real, ideal, before authorities and before the students) has decreased a lot and **the significant differences in favor of women begin to disappear.**

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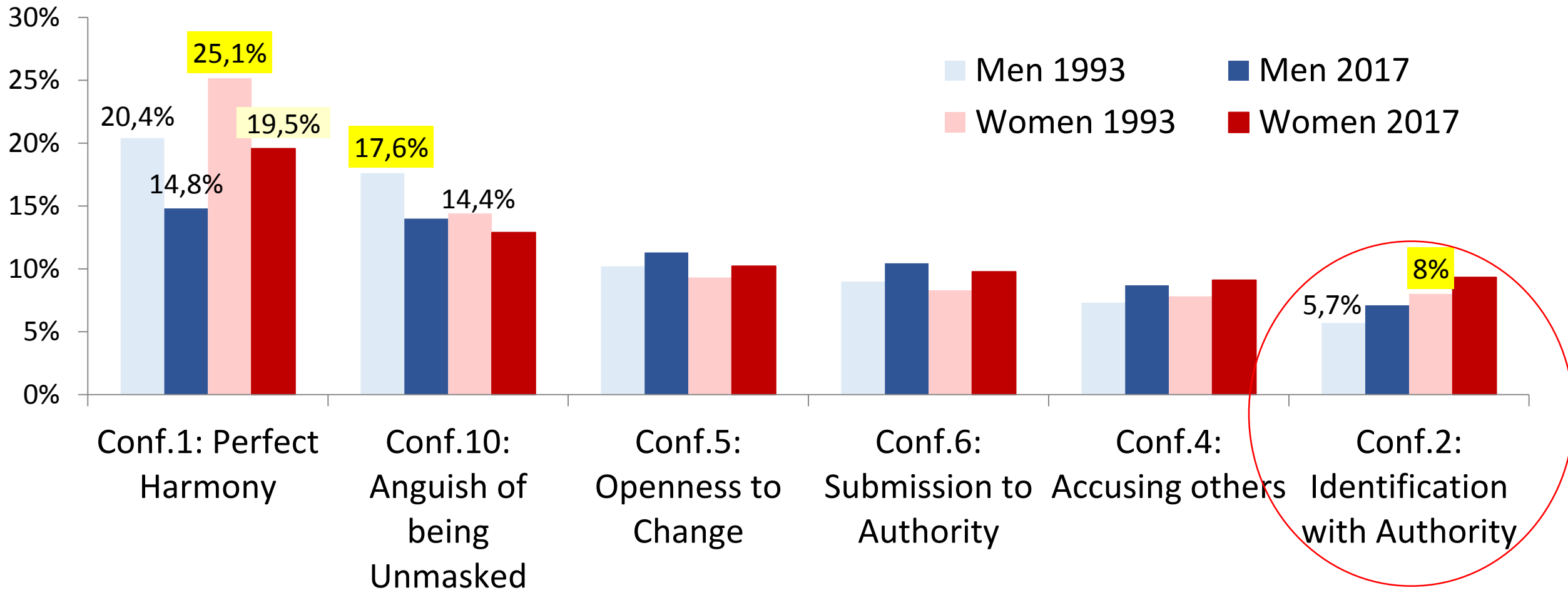


The next most frequent configuration, the **"Anguish of being unmasked"** ("I think that students and authorities see me better than I am") **has decreased a lot in men**, who are no longer significantly different from women.

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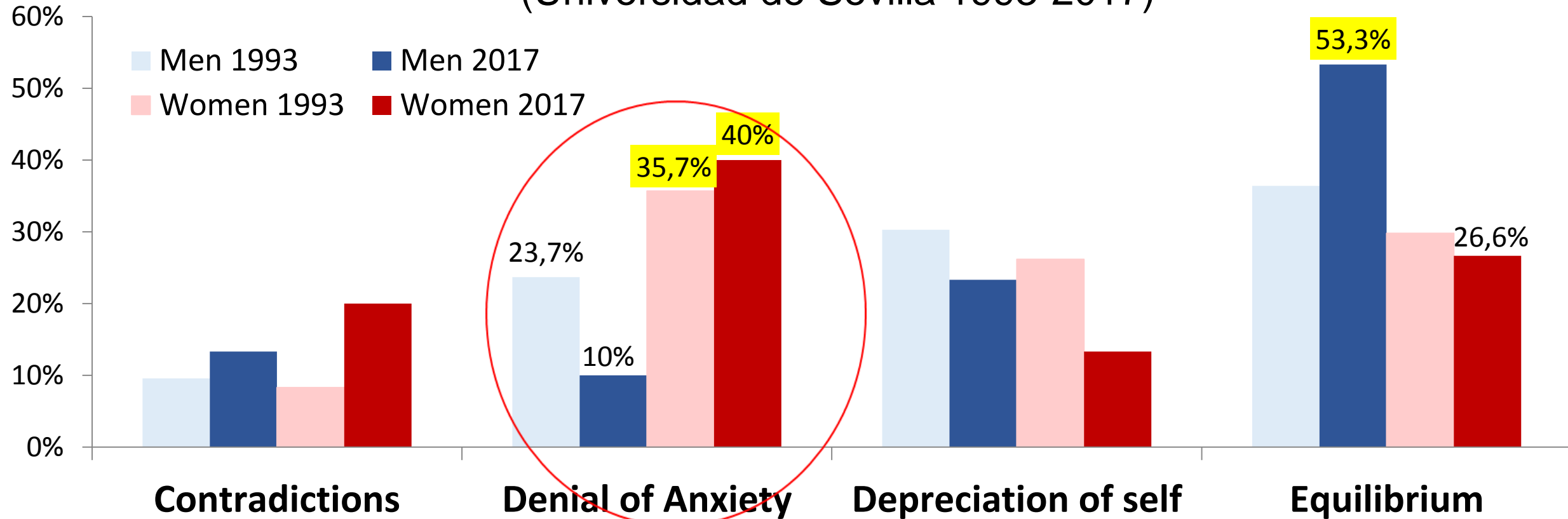


The "Identification with authority" of some women is maintained, but there are no statistically significant differences with respect to men.

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Graph 2: Professors **BALANCES** between the 2 most frequent configurations (Universidad de Sevilla 1993-2017)

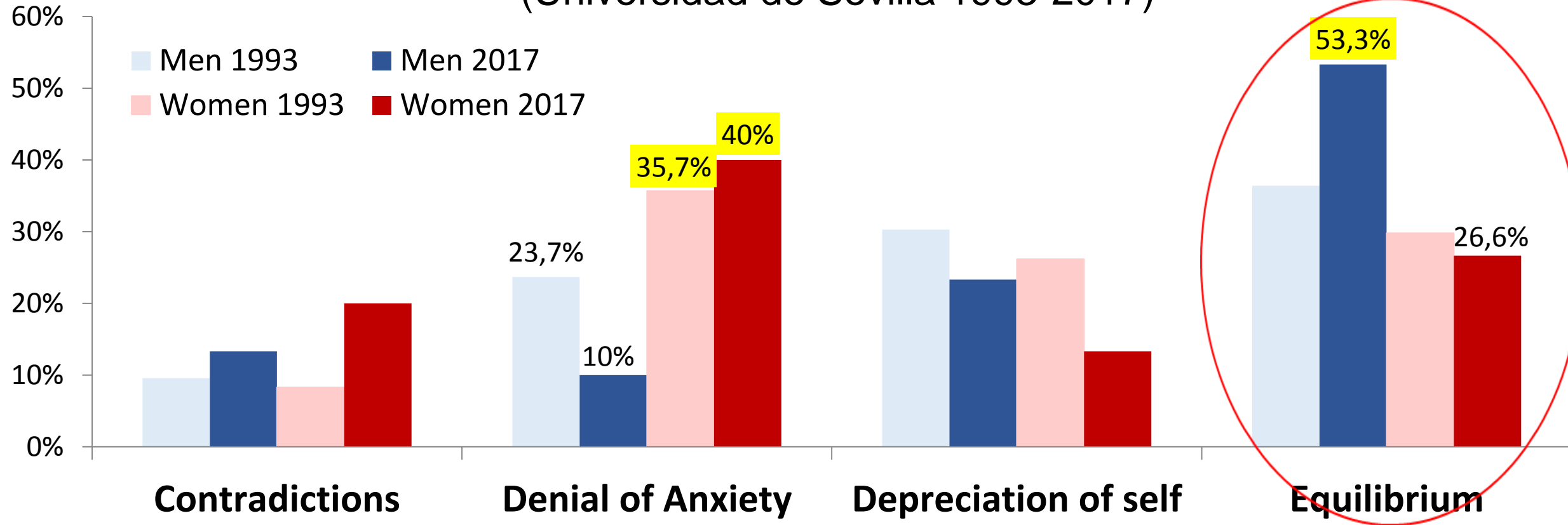


Comparing the predominance of "Perfect Harmony" or "Anguish of being unmasked", **the Balances show that the levels of "Denial of Anxiety" in women, not only are still significantly higher than men, but have increased.**

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Graph 2: Professors **BALANCES** between the 2 most frequent configurations (Universidad de Sevilla 1993-2017)

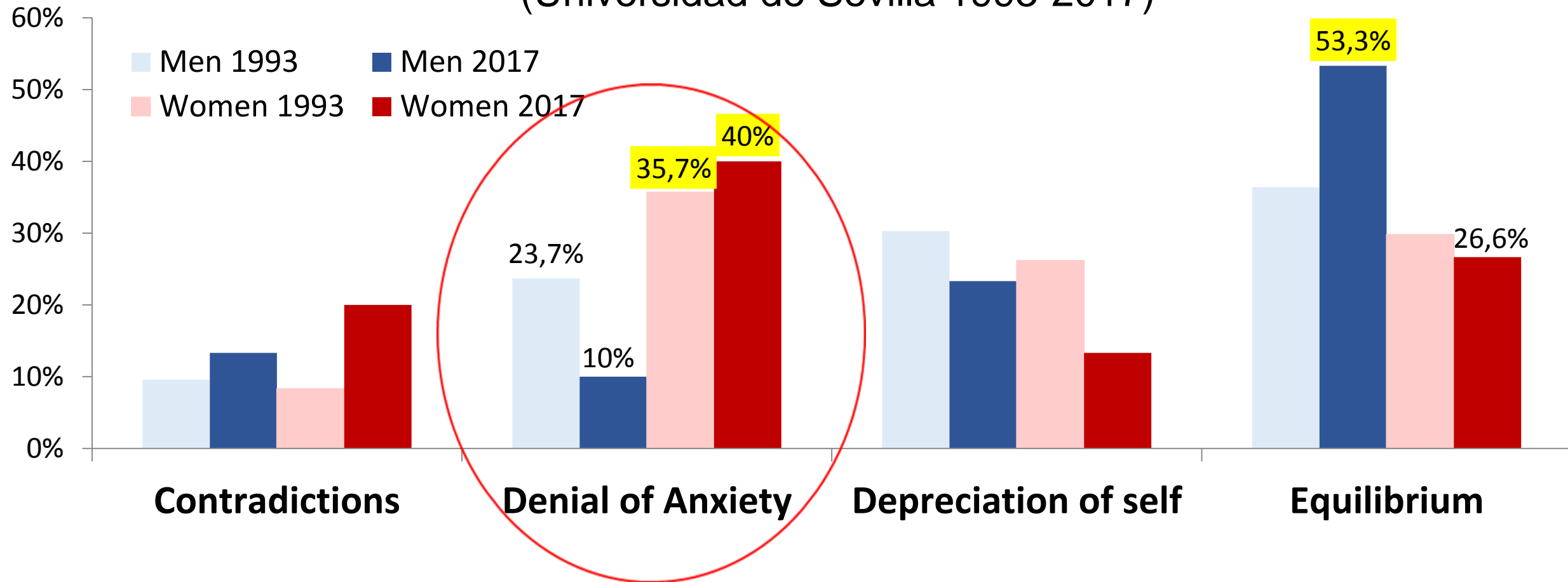


The “Equilibrium” and confidence to overcome, has increased a lot in men decreasing slightly in women, so that the differences between both are now statistically significant compared to 20 years ago.

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Graph 2: Professors **BALANCES** between the 2 most frequent configurations (Universidad de Sevilla 1993-2017)



Finally, the "Denial of Anxiety" of women has increased even more with the passing of time while in the case of men it has diminished notoriously.

DISCUSSION & CONCLUSIONS

Configurations 1 and 10 are still the most abundant, coinciding with previous results, although the 1st has decreased a lot in both men and women. The configuration 1 perfect harmony, much more frequent among women as expected -without being significant- indicates that they feel good in their interactions with students and authorities, being closer to their ideals. The configuration 10 Anguish of being unmasked, more frequent as expected in males -without now being significant differences-, indicates that they are far from their ideals, but believe that others see them better than they are, feeling uncomfortable about the possibility that someone can unmask them.

A deeper analysis (Balances, between Config, 1 & 10), shows clearly significant differences between men and women:

- **Women have higher levels of Denial of Anxiety**, which indicates that their Harmony is not as Perfect as it appears to be, something that they hide with a great effort to achieve Harmony
- **Men show greater Balance**, which compensates their Anguish to be unmasked and gives them enough Confidence to overcome and approach their ideal. But **the Balance decreasing slightly in women.**
- Women also start to use professional masks, but **maintain their Anxiety, although they deny it and, consequently, maintain her high levels of self-demand.** We interpret this in direct relation with the lower social support received by women, which seems not to have changed over time.

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