

Gender occupational segregation and job satisfaction in Spain[∇]

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ABSTRACT

In the last years, Spanish women consistently report higher overall job satisfaction than men, giving support to the “paradox of the contented female worker”. We also find that women are happier in occupations dominated by women worker. However, these both results disappear when considering the different influence across genders that objective and subjective characteristics may have. Specifically, we obtain that self-perceived variables capturing job characteristics, as benefits from firms or flexibility in reconciling work and family, explain a large portion of job satisfaction differences, suggesting that paradox may be simply a problem of omitted variables.

Keywords: gender gap; job satisfaction; employment conditions; occupational segregation

JEL classification: J24, J28; C25;

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1. Introduction

The study of gender differences in the labour market has consistently provided evidence on gender occupational segregation, by which women are primarily sorted into occupations with labour conditions worse than those of men, and on gender wage gap in favour of men, which, among other reasons, may be explained by such occupational segregation (Bayard et al., 2004). Two main lines of reasoning may explain this evidence. First, the existence of discrimination, either in the labour market or previous to the entrance the labour market (including the different socialization of men and women due to social norms or stereotypes),¹ against women. Second, rationality of women which lead them to choose such kind of occupations, either because of lesser accumulation of human capital or because of preferences of women for such occupations providing certain desired amenities. Whereas, according to the first argument, it is expected that women are less happy than men at work, the second may give rise to women be happier at work.

In this context, a common finding in empirical work is the “paradox of the contented female worker” according to which women, despite their worse labour market conditions, declare more satisfaction with job than men. Under the assumption that subjective measures of well-being proxy reasonably well utility or satisfaction (Clark, 1997, Blanchfower and Oswald, 2004; Hamermesh, 2001, Clark et al., 2009), this unexpected result deserves some explanation. A first hypothesis, Groot and Maasen and van den Brink (1999), Donahue and Heywood (2004), Bender et al. (2005), suggest that each job comprises a vast array of characteristics or attributes, so that men and women may differ in their preferences over such attributes. Thus, habitual lower earnings of women may be counterbalanced with some other job characteristics so that women feel happier with their jobs than men. Additionally, it may be argued that higher satisfaction for women may be due to the omission of explanatory variables that are unobservable and/or immeasurable. A slightly modified version claims that men and women differ, not only in job conditions, but also in the perception of the own job conditions. This may be related with differences in personality, in psychological terms (Diener et al., 1999; Sousa-Poza and Sousa-Poza, 2000a; Del Giudice et al., 2012).

Alternatively, according to Clark (1997), women expect less from their jobs, and then is it easier for them to fulfil such “low” expectations. Finally, the “paradox” may

¹ Akerlof and Kranton (2000), Clark (2003).

be explained by a sample selection problem, according to which only successful women remain in labour market, whereas less satisfied women leave it much more frequently than men.²

Literature has also shown a link between job satisfaction and gender occupational segregation. Specifically, Clark (1997) and Sloane and Williams (2000) have been the first in providing evidence on women job satisfaction increasing with the proportion of women in the workplace. Recent work (Bender et al., 2005; Haike, 2012) confirm previous results. This evidence, joint with the satisfaction paradox, gives support the idea that women sort themselves into occupations with characteristics that are preferred for them.

The release in 1999 of the Spanish Work-Life Quality Survey (WLQS),³ has allowed researchers in Spain to investigate diverse aspects related to employment and labour relations, using both objective and subjective-type information. Progressively, economists have become aware that “self-perceived happiness and/or satisfaction provides a meaningful and consistent numerical way of measure (them)” Ferrer-i-Carbonell (2013, p. 1). With data from the 2009 wave, the aim of this paper is studying the existence of the “paradox of the contented female worker” and, more importantly, the relationship between this paradox and gender occupational segregation, what, to our knowledge, has not been previously addressed in Spain. The case of Spain is especially appealing because of the following reasons. First, job satisfaction in Spain is low as compared with most of EU countries. Second, rough data on differences in job satisfaction across sexes, the sample average value has changed, over the last decade, from negative (men more satisfied than women in 1999) to positive (women more satisfied than men in 2009). Third, there is no conclusive evidence on the paradox of the contented female worker in Spain, since several authors have found statistically significant higher satisfaction for women (Álvarez-Llorente, 2004; Kaiser, 2007), with some others finding statistically non-significant differences (Gamero, 2004; Sousa-Poza and Sousa-Poza, 2000); and, finally, others with statistically significant higher job satisfaction for men (Ferrer-i-Carbonell, and Mora, 2009). Fourth, gender occupational segregation is quite elevated in Spain, in international perspective (European Commission, 2009).

² However, this is hipótesis is consistently rejected by empirical work (Clark, 1997; Sloane and Williams, 2000; Sanz de Galdeano, 2001).

³ *Encuesta de Calidad de Vida en el Trabajo, ECVT*. It is elaborated by the corresponding Spanish ministry with competences in labour (in the last wave available, the Ministry of Labour and Immigration).

We follow Bender et al. (2005) by regressing job satisfaction on a set of objective individual and job characteristics and, progressively, adding to this basic specification, a variable expressing gender occupational composition, and then, sets of self-perceived variables capturing financial aids at job, certain job characteristics and flexibility. The results obtained show that the gender job paradox exists with the basic specification, but it disappears when controlling for these set of characteristics. Additionally, it is found that women work in female dominated jobs, because they provide conditions that are preferred for women, and not because of the willingness of working with other women.

The structure of the paper is as follows. In section 2, we provide statistical information about job satisfaction in Spain. In Section 3, we present a brief summary of the literature and develop the empirical model that serves for estimation. Section 4 shows our estimated results, and Section 5 concludes.

Table 1.

Nickname	Definition
Sat_Job	Overall job satisfaction
Sat_Firm	work organization in your firm or organization
Sat_Promotion	the possibility of promotion within your company or organization
Sat_Superv	assessment of their supervisors of the work done
Sat_Activity	activity done at the job
Sat_Achieve	the sense of achievement gets from his/her work
Sat_Initiative	the scope for using his/her own initiative
Sat_Decision	his/her involvement in decision making
Sat_Motivation	his/her motivation level in the current job
Sat_Day	the length of the working day
Sat_Flexibility	schedule flexibility
Sat_Rest	rest time during the working day
Sat_Daysoff	holidays and permissions
Sat_Stability	job stability
Sat_Health	health and safety in his/her workplace
Sat_Training	the training he/she receives
Sat_Payment	the amount of pay he/she receives
Sat_Benefits	social benefits provided by his/her company or organization

2. Data and variables

The data used in this paper come from WLQS 2009. It is a continuing annual programme with the first survey in 1999, and a missing year in 2005, which is aimed to focus on employment relations and, more importantly for our research, on the valuation and attitudes of employees towards employment and different aspects related to the job. The survey is addressed to employees living in households older than 16 being representative of total employed population, and covering a number of issues relating to job conditions, allowing control on a battery of individual and job attributes.

Specifically, the topics covered have to do with: a) socio-demographic variables of employees, with especial interest on work-family reconciling; b) job conditions and attitudes of employees towards work; and c) self-perceived life-quality of employees. Therefore, it combines objective information concerning labour, family and individual characteristics, with pure subjective information in what refers to satisfaction with different aspects of the job. Whereas the sample size is 9,600 employees we limit it to those employees not in agriculture, not in public sector and not self-employed, eventually leading a sample of 4,502 employees, of which 1,864 (41,4%) are women and 2,638 (58,6%) are men, with these values being representative of the population proportions.

Workers are asked a number of questions concerning different aspects of job satisfaction, which are reported in Table 1. There is a general question about job satisfaction at the current job, and up to 17 additional questions concerning specific aspects of the job. Specifically, the interviewed is asked to “*indicate the satisfaction degree in their current (main) job*”, by rating – on an eleven-point scale - from 0 (*no satisfaction*) to 10 (*very high satisfaction*). Similar questions are asked for the 17 aspects concerning job conditions. All measures are defined in Table 1, with sample average values reported in Table 2.

Table 2. Mean values of satisfaction measures. Total, male and female, and test on statistically significant differences.

	Total	Men	Women	t-statistics over differences *
Sat_Job	7,34	7,28	7,39	1,98
Sat_Firm	7,00	6,95	7,07	1,91
Sat_Promotion	4,90	5,14	4,56	6,07
Sat_Superv	7,03	7,00	7,08	1,08
Sat_Activity	7,57	7,53	7,62	1,69
Sal_Achieve	7,36	7,37	7,34	0,61
Sat_Initiative	7,26	7,26	7,26	0,00
Sat_Decision	6,51	6,49	6,55	0,81
Sat_Motivation	6,93	6,95	6,89	0,94
Sat_day	6,95	6,90	7,00	1,42
Sat_Flexibility	6,13	6,07	6,22	1,66
Sat_Rest	6,43	6,51	6,32	2,36
Sat_daysoff	7,35	7,30	7,42	1,76
Sat_Stability	7,18	7,15	7,23	1,18
Sat_Health	7,29	7,25	7,34	1,30
Sat_Training	5,80	5,93	5,61	3,37
Sat_Payment	5,86	5,99	5,66	4,93

Note: * It tests whether mean differences are statistically significant. If $t > 1,96$ they are at the 5%.

The following results are worth mentioning. Almost of measures are over the central value of 5. General job-satisfaction is rated over 7. The aspects more valued are satisfaction with the activity developed, with the sense of achievement, with holidays and permissions, with job-security and with initiative at work. Regarding differences across sexes, they are in a few cases statistically significant, and always on favour in the case of men, except for the overall definition of job-satisfaction, for which the men average is 7.279 as against 7.393 for women. With this rough data, it can be said that the gender/job-satisfaction paradox holds in Spain.⁴ However, the behaviour of the other measures related to satisfaction makes us more cautious in putting forward such clear-cut conclusion. This suggests some additional exercise to assess whether the overall measure of job satisfaction is related to the set of additional measures. In Table 3, it can be seen the correlations between the overall measure and each of the additional measures, as well as the estimated coefficients of a pair of regressions (OLS and ordered probit) where the overall domain of satisfaction is run against all additional domains. Results show that it can be safely stated that there is certain relationship between the different domains of job satisfaction and the overall measure.⁵ From now on, we study the determinants of satisfaction focusing only in the overall measure.

Table 3. Correlation between job satisfaction and estimates

	Correlation			OLS			Probit	
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
Sat_Firm	0,50	0,52	0,11***	0,11***	0,12***	0,10***	0,09***	0,10***
Sat_Promotion	0,36	0,27	-0.00	-0.00	-0.02	-0.01	-0.00	-0.01*
Sat_Superv	0,51	0,51	0.07***	0.08***	0.04**	0.06***	0.07***	0.05***
Sat_Activity	0,60	0,56	0.24***	0.26***	0.21***	0.20***	0.22***	0.17***
Sal_Achieve	0,56	0,55	0.06***	0.07***	0.04	0.05***	0.07***	0.04*
Sat_Initiative	0,40	0,44	0.01	-0.00	0.03*	0.01	-0.01	0.02
Sat_Decision	0,41	0,40	-0.03**	-0.02**	-0.05**	-0.02**	-0.01	-0.03**
Sat_Motivation	0,59	0,62	0.18***	0.16***	0.20***	0.13***	0.12***	0.15***
Sat_day	0,42	0,39	0.05***	0.07***	0.02	0.05***	0.07***	0.03**
Sat_Flexibility	0,35	0,36	0.00	-0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Sat_Rest	0,35	0,35	0.00	0.00	-0.00	0.00	0.00	-0.00
Sat_daysoff	0,36	0,42	0.02**	-0.00**	0.07***	0.02**	0.00	0.05**
Sat_Stability	0,39	0,41	0.03***	0.05***	0.02	0.03***	0.04***	0.01
Sat_Health	0,37	0,37	0.04***	0.04***	0.04**	0.03***	0.03**	0.03***

⁴ Since year 2001, the average values in the ECVT showed higher values for men than for women until 2006, swapping their behaviour after that year. See the Appendix for the evolution over time. In 2005 ECVT was not conducted. In 2006 the questionnaire was modified, so no direct comparison with information prior to 2005 is valid (see Gamero, 2004).

⁵ Both the R², 0.50, and the pseudo-ratio R², 0.20, are quite elevated in a context of cross-sectional data.

Sat_Training	0,34	0,37	-0.00	-0.01	0.01	-0.00	-0.01	0.01
Sat_Payment	0,41	0,43	0.10***	0.10***	0.11***	0.09***	0.09***	0.09***
Sat_Benefits	0,20	0,17	0.02**	0.02*	0.02*	0.01**	0.02**	0.01

The domains of job satisfaction most concurrent with the overall concept are those related with the type of work carried out, the sense of achievement, motivation, organisation and interaction with supervisors. We observe some differences by gender, with promotion and activity developed being most influenced in the cases of men, and satisfaction with holidays being more important for women. This is in line with previous findings that men are more concerned with participation in the job market, with the aim of developing a successful professional career, whereas women derive satisfaction from combining participation in the labour market with family tasks.

3. Job satisfaction and gender occupation segregation

At the international level, job satisfaction in Spain is clearly ranked among the lowest within the EU countries, and clearly below the EU average, whatever the data base used (ISSP, ECHP, ESWC-Eurobaremeter). The 2006 EWCS has served to Davoine et. Al. (2008) for classifying EU-27 countries into 4 groups of countries, where Spain is sorted into the Mediterranean cluster, which show higher levels of job satisfaction than the New Member Countries, but clearly lower than those of the Northern (Nordic and the UK) and Continental countries.⁶ Kristenssen and Anderson (2008), with data for seven countries drawn from an identical questionnaire administered through the internet for a total of 5988 respondents in 2004, and after controlling for cultural differences in the way individuals from different countries perceive subjective questions about job satisfaction through a Chopit model, rank Spain at the seventh position.⁷

Concerning differences between men and women in job satisfaction, evidence in Spain is quite ambiguous, what can be explained by the data used and/or the period analysed. One of the first references is the double work by Sousa-Poza and Sousa-Poza (2000a, 2000b). They find, with international data from the 1997 ISSP, that Spain is the country, among the 21 analysed, with the largest difference between job satisfaction for men and women using as a measure the proportion of individual who respond they are

⁶ In the worldwide context, with data from the International Survey Research (1995, 2001 ISR) job satisfaction in Spain is quite similar to that of North America (US, Canada) and greater than Asian countries (Japan, China).

⁷ The countries studied were, in order of the final ranking, The Netherlands, Greece, Denmark, Finland, France, UK and Spain).

satisfied with their job. This is the only case in which job satisfaction difference in favour of men is statistically significant, since in most of the case either it is not significant or there is a significant difference in favour of women (UK, US and New Zealand).⁸ Using a bottom-up psychological model for estimating an ordered probit in which objective and subjective variables are included, the gender variable in Spain is, however, not statistically significant, in explaining differences in job satisfaction.⁹ They conclude that the gender gap on job satisfaction is basically due to worse employment conditions and perspectives that women have.

With data from the 1999 WQLS, Gamero (2004) observes, first, that job satisfaction is higher for men, and, estimating an ordered probit with the gender variable as the unique regressor, that it is not statistically significant. In his basic specification, controlling for observable variables, this variable turns negative and significant meaning that job satisfaction is lower for women. However, when including subjective variables relative to the length of the working day, physical effort or payment, the gender variable results non-significant. He concludes that expectations and omitted variables may explain the contented gender paradox in Spain and that is, therefore, necessary controlling for these variables.

Following the same approach as Sousa-Poza and Sousa-Poza (2000a) with cross-sectional data from the ECVT, waves 2001 to 2004, Álvarez-Llorente (2004-5) shows that in an ordered probit analysis, women are more satisfied than men. Using simulations, women get more satisfaction from interpersonal relationships within the firm, as well as, the delivery of financial aids from the firm. Kaiser (2007), with international data from the ECHP waves 1994 to 2001 and, again, with ordered-probit regression models, find that the gender job paradox exists globally for the 14 countries analysed.¹⁰ When testing individually, in ten countries (including Spain), the hypothesis cannot be rejected.¹¹ With data from recent university graduates (year 2000) in a Spanish region (Catalonia), what provides a very homogenous database, Ferrer-i-Carbonell and Mora (2009) show that the gender variable in an order-probit model is negative for some domains of job satisfaction, that is to say, women are less satisfied,

⁸ In 12 out of 21 countries job satisfaction is higher for men.

⁹ Globally, the contented women paradox seems not to exist in the 21 countries analysed. Taken individually, there is evidence on favour of this hypothesis only in liberal countries (US, UK and Switzerland).

¹⁰ This result also found by the seven countries analysed with a specific questionnaire in Kristensen and Johanson (2008).

¹¹ The gender job paradox vanishes for most of countries, including Spain, when only employees with a supervisory position are considered.

and non-significant for some other domains. They conclude this is due to worse employment conditions.

There is ample evidence showing that the job satisfaction of women increases with the amount of women in a particular occupation (Clark, 1997, Sloane and Williams, 2000, for the UK, Donahue and Heywood, 2004 for the US). To study this in the Spanish case, we follow Bender et al. (2005) and report average values on the different aspects of job satisfaction considering the proportion of women in the corresponding occupation (2 digit *CNO* 1994 classification). The variable indicating the share of women in each occupation is aggregated into 6 large groups: share equals to 0%; between 1 and 25%; between 26 and 50%; between 51 and 75%; between 76 and 99%; and 100%. Results are shown in Table 4.

Tabla 4. Distribution of men and women by women share in occupations.

Women share	0%	1-25%	26-50%	51-75%	76-99%	100%
Women	0.00	6.01	15.77	29.88	47.85	0.43
Men	9.48	52.35	20.96	10.69	6.52	0.00
Total	5.58	33.16	18.81	18.64	23.63	0.18

We investigate next the relationship between the satisfaction degree in each of the domains of job satisfaction and the six groups considered in analysing women distribution. Results, that are now shown to save space but available from the authors, suggest that working women job satisfaction increases when the female share is higher, with men being more satisfied, in general, also in female dominated occupation.¹² Next, we describe the objective job conditions shown in the WQLS (see Table 5).

¹² For a similar result with other data sets, see Ibañez-Pascual (2010).

Table 5. Variable definitions and average values.

Variable	Definition	Total	Men	Women
Sat_Job	Satisfaction with the current job (0: no satisfy., 10: very sati.)	7,27	7,23	7,33
Personal characteristics				
Gender	1: man, 0: woman	0,59		
Age	Age in years	40,14	40,80	39,21
Age ² /100	Age Squire divided per100	17,19	17,73	16,44
Nationality	1: Spanish , 0: foreigner	0,87	0,87	0,88
Education1	Compulsory studies	0,44	0,48	0,39
Education2	Non-compulsory secondary studies	0,36	0,35	0,38
Education3	Degree/university studies	0,20	0,17	0,24
Population1	City size lower than 10,000 inhabitants	0,19	0,20	0,17
Population2	City size between 10,001 and 50,000 inhabitants	0,28	0,29	0,26
Population3	City size between 50,001 and 100,000 inhabitants	0,12	0,11	0,13
Population4	City size between 100,001 a 1,000,000 inhabitants	0,33	0,33	0,32
Population5	City size higher than 1,000,000 in habitants	0,09	0,07	0,11
Children	1: there are children or elder people to take care.	0,18	0,17	0,21
Single-earn	He/she is the unique income earner in the family*	0,43	0,52	0,31
Job characteristics				
Hours ≤ 25	Up to 25 hours worked per week	0,11	0,03	0,21
Hours26-35	Between 26 and 35 hours worked per week	0,09	0,05	0,15
Hours36-40	Between 36 and 40 hours worked per week	0,56	0,61	0,49
Hours41-45	Between 41 and 45 hours worked per week	0,10	0,12	0,07
Hours > 45	More than 45 hours worked per week	0,14	0,18	0,08
Income1	Up to 1,200 euros per month (net)	0,57	0,44	0,76
Income2	Between 1,201 and 2,100 euros per month (net)	0,35	0,46	0,20
Income3	Between 2,101 and 4,500 euros per month (net)	0,07	0,09	0,04
Income4	More than 4,500 euros per month (net)	0,00	0,01	0,00
Permanent	Permanent contract: 1, fixed-term contract: 0	0,79	0,80	0,77
Training	The firm has provided some training in the last 12 months	0,47	0,50	0,43
Sector1	Industry	0,25	0,32	0,15
Sector2	Construction	0,12	0,19	0,02
Sector3	Trade activities	0,16	0,12	0,20
Sector4	Accommodation and food service activities	0,08	0,06	0,12
Sector5	Transport, information and communications	0,09	0,12	0,06
Sector6	Financial, insurance and real estate activities	0,04	0,03	0,05
Sector7	Profesional, scientific and technical activities	0,04	0,04	0,05
Sector8	Administrative and support service activities	0,08	0,06	0,11
Sector9	Education	0,03	0,01	0,06
Sector10	Human health and social work activities	0,05	0,02	0,09
Sector11	Cultural, sports and other service activities	0,05	0,03	0,08
Linked personal and job characteristics				
Tenure < 1	Tenure smaller than 1 year	0,12	0,11	0,13
Tenure 1-5	Tenure between 1 and 5 years	0,40	0,36	0,45
Tenure 6-10	Tenure between 6 and 10 years	0,20	0,20	0,20
Tenure 10	Tenure higher than 10 years	0,28	0,33	0,22
First_job	1: This is the first job	0,17	0,16	0,17
Overeducation	0: upper-than-required qualification; 1 no overeducation	0,19	0,16	0,23
Union	The employee is unionised	0,17	0,20	0,12
Organization	High knowledge (more than 7 in a 0-10 scale) of firm organization	0,57	0,56	0,58

Note: All are dichotomic dummy variables, save job-satisfaction and age variables

* It has been obtained by comparing individual income with family income. When both belong to the same income range, it has been considered that additional earnings in the family are of minor relevance, and thus the earnings of the employee is the main source of income to the family.

Comparing average values, women show higher educational levels than men, use to live in larger cities, are more likely to take care of children or elders, and less frequently are the main income earner in the family. As regards job characteristics, women work fewer hours in paid-job (more often they are involved in part-time or in shorter working days) and have lower access to on-the-job training. Thus, it is not surprising they are massively included in the lowest income range (less than 1,200 euro per month). Women also show lower tenure, more often they are overeducated and less often they are unionised. They are primarily allocated into service industries such as clerical, education and health-related activities, with men working mostly in industry and construction.

In order to consider differences in the perception of job attributes, we now include different sets of variables capturing several aspects related with work, which are defined in Table 6.

Table 6. Definition of self-perceived variables

Nickname	Definition
Aid_House	Firm provides financial aid for the house (0-10)
Aid_Training	Firm provides financial aid for training (0-10)
Aid_Transport	Firm provides financial aid for transport (0-10)
Aid_Health	Firm provides financial aid for expenses in health (0-10)
Degree_Routine	Degree of monotonous/routine job (0-10)
Degree_Effort	Degree of physical effort in job (0-10)
Degree_Risk	Degree of risk in job (0-10)
Diff_daysoff	Difficulty to ask for days off due to family reasons (0-10)
Diff_leave	Difficulty to ask for leaves due to family reasons (0-10)
Diff-reduced	Difficulty to ask for a reduction of the working day due to family reasons (0-10)
Diff_absent	Difficulty to absent from the job for solving particular affairs (0-10)
Mother_father	How has affected (or would affect) to its professional career mother/fatherhood? (0-10)
Leave	How has affected (or would affect) to its professional career ask for a leave or a working day reduction? (0-10)
Subordinates	Has the employee have subordinates in the job? (Yes/No)
Teamwork	Does the employee work, or sometime worked, in teams? (Yes/No)
Agreement	Is the employee covered by some type of collective agreement? (Yes/No)

4. Results

Controlling for all these characteristics makes it possible to take into account differences on the employment conditions, which may be helpful in explaining differences in self-perceived job satisfaction. As usually applied in empirical work, we estimate ordered probit model to assess the existence of the contented female worker paradox, as well as the relationship between the differences in job satisfaction, and the vast array of objective work conditions and subjective job perceptions of employees,

which we have just described. In a first step, we estimate the relationship between each of these variables and the overall measure of job satisfaction, first, for all employees and then, distinguishing between men and women. The fact of working with cross-sectional data makes it not possible to control for causality (Sousa-Poza and Sousa-Poza, 2000). Results are shown in Table 7.¹³

Tabla 7. Ordered probit estimates of job satisfaction.

Satrab	Total		Men		Women	
	Coef,	z	Coef,	Z	Coef,	z
Gender	-0,08	-2,15				
Age	-0,02	-2,04	-0,04	-2,62	0,00	-0,25
Age ² /100	0,04	2,68	0,05	2,93	0,02	0,86
Nationality	-0,30	-5,99	-0,28	-4,31	-0,35	-4,34
Education2	-0,06	-1,71	-0,10	-2,04	-0,01	-0,19
Education3	-0,14	-2,78	-0,16	-2,30	-0,09	-1,12
Population2	-0,04	-0,86	-0,06	-0,95	-0,02	-0,21
Population3	-0,10	-1,79	-0,12	-1,61	-0,07	-0,75
Population4	-0,09	-1,95	-0,14	-2,43	-0,01	-0,08
Population5	-0,27	-4,19	-0,29	-3,24	-0,24	-2,50
Children	0,13	2,14	0,08	1,01	0,20	2,15
Single-earn	0,07	2,27	0,09	2,14	0,06	1,18
Hours ≤ 25	-0,06	-1,09	-0,16	-1,37	-0,06	-0,89
Hours26-35	0,06	0,97	0,06	0,64	0,05	0,66
Hours41-45	-0,13	-2,45	-0,12	-1,93	-0,14	-1,46
Hours > 45	-0,20	-4,18	-0,18	-3,19	-0,26	-2,83
Income2	0,10	2,66	0,13	2,71	0,06	0,89
Income3	0,15	2,09	0,23	2,59	0,02	0,17
Income4	0,43	1,86	0,36	1,41	1,01	1,76
Permanent	0,13	2,83	0,11	1,71	0,14	2,06
Training	0,19	5,76	0,18	4,22	0,21	3,94
Sector1	-0,20	-2,61	-0,16	-1,10	-0,20	-2,00
Sector2	-0,16	-1,86	-0,11	-0,73	-0,04	-0,17
Sector3	-0,08	-0,98	-0,03	-0,20	-0,08	-0,82
Sector4	-0,09	-1,05	0,09	0,52	-0,17	-1,54
Sector5	-0,18	-2,09	-0,11	-0,74	-0,25	-1,95
Sector6	-0,15	-1,42	-0,10	-0,58	-0,15	-1,07
Sector7	-0,22	-2,14	-0,19	-1,10	-0,22	-1,65
Sector8	-0,10	-1,09	-0,14	-0,88	-0,02	-0,19
Sector9	0,03	0,30	-0,05	-0,25	0,07	0,54
Sector11	0,01	0,09	0,31	1,60	-0,10	-0,88
Tenure1-5	-0,13	-2,33	0,00	0,00	-0,28	-3,43
Tenure6-10	-0,12	-1,83	0,00	0,00	-0,26	-2,64
Tenure > 10	-0,19	-2,81	-0,04	-0,49	-0,38	-3,60
First_job	-0,07	-1,50	-0,04	-0,68	-0,09	-1,30
Overeducation	0,49	11,72	0,54	9,42	0,45	7,18
Union	-0,15	-3,56	-0,11	-2,02	-0,23	-3,12
Organization	0,38	11,64	0,36	8,45	0,41	7,91

¹³ For robustness, we also proceeded to re-classify the ten point-scale into three point-scale (0-3 very dissatisfied; 4-7 neither satisfied nor dissatisfied; 8-10 very satisfied), with results of the estimation remaining unaltered.

/cut1	-2,47		-2,64		-2,13
/cut2	-2,31		-2,49		-1,96
/cut3	-2,16		-2,31		-1,85
/cut4	-1,91		-2,07		-1,59
/cut5	-1,68		-1,84		-1,34
/cut6	-1,11		-1,28		-0,75
/cut7	-0,63		-0,81		-0,27
/cut8	0,04		-0,10		0,35
/cut9	0,87		0,76		1,16
/cut10	1,35		1,22		1,67
Observations	4.502		2.638		1.864

In this first approach, the contented gender paradox is not rejected for Spain. Age variables have the typical U shape (Clark et al., 1996) indicating that in the first years satisfaction reduces, until the age of 31 in our sample, and then increases.¹⁴ However, this is only sure in the case of men, whereas age shows no influence in explaining women job satisfaction. Foreign workers, men and women, are more satisfied, *ceteris paribus*, than native Spanish workers. As usually found in the literature (Clark and Oswald, 1996; Sloane and Williams, 2000), higher education is associated with lower job satisfaction, but again only in the case of men. Larger population city sizes are associated with lower job satisfaction.

The family structure and the need of reconciling family, labour and chorus tasks are all relevant elements in shaping job satisfaction. We include two variables, one controlling for the presence either of children under 14 or elder people, and a second one controlling for the existence of additional earnings in the family. Both variables exert a negative influence on job satisfaction, capturing the more difficulty in adjusting labour decisions of individuals with children or elders, and of those with only one source of income.

However, the negative relationship is different across sexes. Taking care of children or elders diminishes satisfaction for women, but not for men; whereas having only one source of income reduces men's satisfaction but not women's satisfaction.¹⁵ Regarding work-related variables, it must be noted that job satisfaction and hours of work may be two-directionally related. Job satisfaction may influence hours worked, provided the employee has some capacity of manoeuvre in choosing the number of hours, the length of the working day and the type of contract (full or part-time). Provided that we have

¹⁴ An explanation of this is shown in Clark et al. (1996), according to which the initial satisfaction is high, it reduces since expectations are compared to that of the reference group, which it not always can be fulfilled and, finally, workers internalise their own situation, increasing levels of satisfaction.

¹⁵ This is related with the prevalence of these groups in the sample (see Table 5).

discarded self-employed in our analysis, that the typical working week in Spain is between 35 and 40 hours, which is set in collective bargaining (see Table 5), and that only less than 10% of workers in part-time choose this possibility as preferred to full-time, it seems that endogeneity may not be of great relevance in our analysis.

One additional problem may be the simultaneous inclusion of these three variables which might lead collinearity. To avoid it, we introduce the number of weekly worked hours in different dummies and not other variables. Taking the typical 35-40 hours per week as reference, working more hours result in lower satisfaction, especially when working more than 45 hours.

More income is positively associates to higher job satisfaction, both in the total and in the male samples. This is not entirely true for women, since only in the upper income range is statistically significant at the 10%. As typically found in the literature, this would confirm the greater link between pay and job satisfaction for men (Drakopoulos and Theodossiu, 1997; Clark and Oswald, 1996; Clark et al., 2009). Labour stability and training at work both lead to increases in job satisfaction in the three subsamples (in other countries, see Sousa-Poza and Sousa-Poza, 2007; Green and Heywood, 2008; Origoa and Pagarib, 2009). With respect to activity branches, workers are generally less satisfied in industry and in construction. Job satisfaction decreases with tenure in both total and female samples. The fact of working in the first employment is negatively related to job satisfaction but is not statistically significant. Overeducation and unionisation reduces job satisfaction (see also Cabral Vieira, 2005), whereas having a good knowledge of the firm organizational structure allows augmenting it.

Summarising, in addition to confirming the existence of the contented female worker paradox in Spain, it is found that job satisfaction increases with income and decreases with education, city size, hours of work and tenure. Those with permanent contract, those who have no dependent persons at home, those receiving training, those having good knowledge of firm functioning, and those who are not overeducated, are all more satisfied, whereas Spanish employees and those who are unionised are less satisfied. Differences between men and women are especially remarkable in age and education, negatively significant only for men; and tenure, negatively significantly only for women. Men get more satisfaction when their earnings are not the unique source of income in the family and when payment increases. On their side, women obtain satisfaction from having no dependent persons at home, and holding a permanent contract.

Now, we investigate the robustness of the gender/job satisfaction paradox when adding different sets of variables. We start by including dummy variables controlling for female distribution across occupations, with results reported in Table 8. In this and the next tables, estimated coefficients of the basic specification are not shown to save space. They generally remain unaltered when adding new sets of variables, with respect to those presented in Table 7. In a first step, these dummies are included in levels finding that, when the proportion of women exceeds 50%, satisfaction increases, even though this is only statistically significant when the share is greater than 75%. This result is valid for female and also male job satisfactions.

Table 8. Ordered probit estimates of job satisfaction with female share.

	Total		Mans		Women		Total	
	Coef	t	Coef	t	Coef	t	Coef	t
Gender (1 man, 0 woman)	-0,05	-1,21						
Women 1-25%	0,00	-0,02	0,01	0,14	-0,09	-0,26		
Women 26-50%	-0,01	-0,09	0,01	0,12	-0,09	-0,26		
Women 51-75%	0,05	1,66	0,01	0,08	0,00	0,00		
Women 76-99%	0,06	1,80	0,12	1,97	0,04	1,96		
Women 100%	0,64	1,98			0,49	2,12		
Women 1-25% x woman							0,05	0,45
Women 1-25% x man							0,03	0,48
Women 26-50% x woman							0,07	0,73
Women 26-50% x man							0,03	0,31
Women 51-75% x woman							0,15	1,77
Women 51-75% x man							0,04	0,45
Women 76-99% x woman							0,14	1,94
Women 76-99% x man							0,13	1,18
Women 100% x woman							0,72	1,99

All regressors in Table 7 are also included.

To take into account that the influence on job satisfaction may be different for men and women, we estimate in a second stage, total job satisfaction on the set of dummies capturing female share, interacted with the dummy variable indicating gender. It is observed that only for the females who work in occupations exceeding 50% share, interacts are statistically significant. Altogether, results suggest that women are more satisfied at work, when they are majority in the occupation, and as the female share increases. An important consequence of the inclusion of these variables is that the gender variable is not longer individually statistically significant, vanishing the contented female worker paradox. The immediate conclusion hence would be that women are happier than men because they work in occupations that are typically female-dominated (see Alonso-Villar and Del Rio, 2010). However, we may wonder

whether women are more satisfied working with women either because indeed they do work with women or because women join occupations with certain characteristics that are most preferred by them. We investigate this by considering different sets of variables capturing financial aids or benefits at work, self-perception of some job attributes, and the provision of family-friendly flexibility characteristics. These sets of variables are in turn added to the specification estimated in Table 8, with results being presented in Tables 9, 10 and 11, respectively.

Table 9. Ordered probit estimates of job satisfaction with female share and financial aid variables

	Total		Men		Women		Total	
	Coef	t	Coef	t	Coef	T	Coef	t
Gender	-0,06	-1,32						
Aid_House	0,15	1,85	0,06	0,61	0,37	2,47	0,15	1,90
Aid_Training	0,15	3,43	0,18	3,09	0,13	1,53	0,15	3,44
Aid_Transport	0,09	2,39	0,15	3,00	-0,01	-0,08	0,09	2,36
Aid_Health	0,12	2,20	0,04	0,67	0,25	2,82	0,12	2,23
Women 1-25%	0,00	0,03	0,01	0,22	0,00	0,01		
Women 26-50%	0,00	-0,06	0,02	0,21	0,00	0,01		
Women 51-75%	0,06	0,70	0,02	0,16	0,12	0,34		
Women 76-99%	0,07	0,90	0,13	1,20	0,08	0,22		
Women 100%	0,63	1,36			0,64	1,24		
Women 1-25% x woman							0,04	0,35
Women 1-25% x man							0,04	0,51
Women 26-50% x woman							0,07	0,7
Women 26-50% x man							0,03	0,35
Women 51-75% x woman							0,16	1,21
Women 51-75% x man							0,03	0,35
Women 76-99% x woman							0,15	1,28
Women 76-99% x man							0,12	1,16
Women 100% x woman							0,71	1,38

All regressors in Table 7 are also included.

Table 9 shows estimates when variables of financial aids/benefits are included. Gender variable remains insignificant. Comparing with estimates in Table 8, variables capturing female share turn now non-significant, whereas the new set the variables added are all statistically significant (see the 1st and 4th pair of columns). Financial aid in training and transport increases male job satisfaction, with benefits for housing and health lead to higher female job satisfaction. Overall, financial aid helps in stimulating job satisfaction, albeit in a different way for men and women, with segregation variables resulting unimportant.

In Table 10, self-perceived job characteristics are included instead of those capturing benefits. As before, the gender and female share variables are not statistically significant

(1st and 4th pair of columns), while the new set of variables have different impact on job satisfaction. Monotonous/routinely work and be covered by a collective agreement both reduce satisfaction at work, whereas lower physical effort, less risky jobs and teamwork increase it. The presence of subordinates also augments job satisfaction but it is not statistically significant. By gender, having subordinates, work in teams and holding less risky jobs is positively related with male job satisfaction, with female job satisfaction responding positively to low physical effort and negatively to be covered by collective agreement. This result is common in the literature for all employees, but it should be more carefully assessed in the case of women.

Table 10. Ordered probit estimates of job satisfaction with female share and self-perceived job characteristics

	Total		Men		Women		Total	
	Coef,	z	Coef,	z	Coef,	z	Coef,	z
Gender	-0,04	-0,98						
Subordinate	0,07	1,47	0,05	1,98	-0,08	-1,08	-0,06	-1,45
Physical effort	0,10	1,86	0,09	1,37	0,13	2,41	0,10	1,87
Risk	0,11	2,10	0,11	2,39	0,08	1,44	0,11	2,11
Teamwork	0,11	2,42	0,14	2,28	0,08	1,17	0,11	2,43
Agreement	-0,09	-2,56	-0,01	-0,24	-0,21	-3,85	-0,09	-2,56
Women 1-25%	-0,01	-0,19	0,00	0,06	-0,06	-0,17		
Women 26-50%	-0,04	-0,54	-0,02	-0,22	-0,04	-0,11		
Women 51-75%	0,00	-0,02	-0,04	-0,42	0,02	0,06		
Women 76-99%	0,03	0,32	0,08	0,79	-0,01	-0,04		
Women 100%	0,62	1,43			0,55	1,08		
Women 1-25% x woman							-0,01	-0,07
Women 1-25% x man							0,01	0,20
Women 26-50% x woman							0,02	0,19
Women 26-50% x man							-0,02	-0,26
Women 51-75% x woman							0,08	0,89
Women 51-75% x man							-0,03	-0,26
Women 76-99% x woman							0,08	0,94
Women 76-99% x man							0,07	0,63
Women 100% x woman							0,68	1,29

All regressors in Table 7 are also included.

For considering the set of self-perceived variables reflecting family-friendly characteristics of jobs, we proceed to include in turn, since they all are highly correlated among themselves. The general view derived from Table 11, apart from the statistically non-significance of the gender variable, is that these variables are always statistically significant – except the variables representing difficulty in taking a leave or absence in the case of men. The main difference now is that some of the interaction variables between being woman and female shares over 50% remain significant.

Women 51-75% x woman						0,14	1,52	women40							0,14	1,55	
Women 51-75% x man						0,05	0,46	women41							0,04	0,41	
Women 76-99% x woman						0,12	1,37	women50							0,13	1,56	
Women 76-99% x man						0,14	1,27	women51							0,14	1,29	
Women 100% x woman						0,66	1,74	women60							0,69	1,80	
	Total	Men		Women		Total			Total	Men		Womeneres		Total			
	Coef	t	Coef	t	Coef	t	Coef	t	Coef	t	Coef	t	Coef	t	Coef	t	
gender	-0,11	-1,55							gender	-0,06	-1,32						
Mother_father	0,34	8,39	0,32	5,21	0,34	6,33	0,34	8,41	Leave	0,27	8,25	0,24	5,60	0,32	6,19	0,27	8,24
Women 1-25%	0,01	0,16	0,01	0,19	0,07	0,21			women25	0,01	0,15	0,01	0,18	0,06	0,18		
Women 26-50%	0,00	-0,01	0,01	0,14	0,05	0,16			women50	0,02	0,23	0,03	0,33	0,04	0,11		
Women 51-75%	0,06	0,78	0,01	0,08	0,16	0,46			women75	0,07	0,89	0,02	0,19	0,14	0,40		
Women 76-99%	0,08	0,97	0,13	1,19	0,13	0,37			women99	0,09	1,10	0,16	1,41	0,11	0,30		
Women 100%	0,72	1,88			0,72	1,4			women100	0,61	1,59			0,56	1,09		
Women 1-25% x woman							0,12	1,00	women20						0,10	0,83	
Women 1-25% x man							0,04	0,54	women21						0,04	0,60	
Women 26-50% x woman							0,12	1,32	women30						0,10	1,07	
Women 26-50% x man							0,03	0,33	women31						0,05	0,57	
Women 51-75% x woman							0,22	1,51	women40						0,18	2,03	
Women 51-75% x man							0,04	0,43	women41						0,07	0,67	
Women 76-99% x woman							0,20	1,41	women50						0,17	1,94	
Women 76-99% x man							0,14	1,28	women51						0,18	1,61	
Women 100% x woman							0,85	2,23	women60						0,70	1,82	

All regressors in Table 7 are also included.

In Table 12, the three sets of variables are incorporated simultaneously into the estimation.¹⁶ Once more, the gender variable is insignificant, as are the variables capturing the share of female employees. By contrast, the set of additional variables are all found statistically significant in the total sample (1st and 4th pair of columns). However, there are differences between men and women, in line with the results obtained when the sets of variables are included one at time. Focusing on the case of women, they get more job satisfaction from benefits for housing and health, working in jobs requiring low physical effort and holding positions providing more family-friendly characteristics.

Tabla 12. Ordered probit estimates of job satisfaction with female share, financial aid, self-perceived job conditions and family-friendly job characteristics

	Total		Men		Women		Total	
	Coef.	t	Coef.	t	Coef.	t	Coef.	t
Gender	-0,05	-1,06						
Aid_House	0,16	1,90	0,05	0,53	0,35	2,31	0,16	1,92
Aid_Training	0,12	2,63	0,16	2,72	0,07	0,99	0,12	2,64
Aid_Transport	0,11	2,85	0,16	3,16	0,04	0,54	0,11	2,82
Aid_Health	0,12	2,17	0,05	0,72	0,27	2,88	0,12	2,19
Subordinate	0,09	2,07	0,08	1,90	-0,10	-1,28	0,09	2,05
Physical effort	0,10	2,74	0,10	1,39	0,11	2,00	0,10	2,73
Risk	0,10	2,88	0,12	2,65	0,04	0,69	0,10	2,89
Teamwork	0,11	2,41	0,12	1,93	0,11	1,37	0,11	2,41
Agreement	-0,10	-2,80	-0,02	-0,43	-0,22	-3,97	-0,10	-2,79
Difficulty	0,23	5,32	0,12	2,04	0,39	5,86	0,24	5,34
Women 1-25%	-0,01	-0,19	-0,01	-0,10	0,13	0,35		
Women 26-50%	-0,03	-0,37	-0,01	-0,18	0,11	0,29		
Women 51-75%	-0,02	-0,22	-0,07	-0,67	0,17	0,46		
Women 76-99%	0,03	0,38	0,09	0,82	0,15	0,42		
Women 100%	0,59	1,56			0,71	1,34		
Women 1-25% x woman							0,02	0,17
Women 1-25% x man							0,01	0,14
Women 26-50% x woman							0,03	0,31
Women 26-50% x man							-0,01	-0,11
Women 51-75% x woman							0,07	0,74
Women 51-75% x man							-0,04	-0,43
Women 76-99% x woman							0,09	0,99
Women 76-99% x man							0,09	0,78
Women 100% x woman							0,66	1,12

All regressors in Table 7 are also included.

5. Conclusions

The “paradox of the contented female worker” in Spain is merely a problem of omitted variables bias. With data from the 2009 WQLS, the ordered probit estimation of a basic specification including the gender variable and a large set of objective working

¹⁶ In the case of the family-friendly variables we use the Father_Mother variable.

conditions (individual and job characteristics) finds that women are in fact more satisfied with work than men. However, when variables capturing the proportion of female workers in a particular occupation are included, the significance of the gender variable vanishes, suggesting that women are happier at job, when they work with other women.

Nevertheless, it might be that the reason by which women are happier working with other women could be due to women sort into jobs that offer, for women's perception, some attributes that are more demanded. Were this true, women are happier in female dominated occupations because women largely are willing to work in such those occupations. To test this hypothesis, self-perceived variables capturing benefits from the firm, job characteristics and family-friendly attributes are added to previous specification, first, separately and then, altogether. The results are clear: the gender variable and the dummies capturing female share by occupation are no longer statistically significant, whereas the sets of variables added are all relevant in explaining job satisfaction.

The impact of these variables is different across sexes. Variables representing benefits for transport and promotion, with working in less risky jobs, in teamwork and with subordinates stimulates male job satisfaction. Benefits for housing and health, working in jobs exerting low physical effort augments female job satisfaction. The existence of family-friendly measures at job increases job satisfaction for both men and women, whereas working in monotonous/routinely jobs reduces it.

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Appendix

