Dissatisfied and Gone? Gendered Patterns in Job Satisfaction and Employment Histories*

Monika Oczkowska[1,2,†]

[1]SGH Warsaw School of Economics, Niepodległości 162, 02-554, Warsaw, Poland
[2]Centre for Economic Analysis, CenEA, Cyfrowa 2, 71-441, Szczecin, Poland

This version: May 15, 2026
<Work-in-progress: do not cite>

Abstract

Existing evidence consistently reports higher job satisfaction among women, but typically focuses on satisfaction with the job held at the time of survey. This approach overlooks individuals who are not employed when surveyed — most often women, who are more likely either to enter the labour market later or exit earlier in their careers. This study addresses this limitation by examining job satisfaction over the working life. Using retrospective data from the Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe (SHARE), we analyse gender differences in satisfaction with the main job across the careers of individuals who ever worked, covering 26 European countries. We find that, once the full employment history is accounted for, women in fact report lower job satisfaction than men in the job they identify as central to their working lives. This pattern appears to be shaped by regional differences, likely reflecting variation in prevailing gender norms across societies. We further investigate life-course employment histories in order to examine the behavioral consequences of job dissatisfaction over time. Our analysis reveals that dissatisfaction may have different long-run consequences with respect to labor market attachment by gender and institutional context.

Keywords: gender gap, job satisfaction, labour market attachment, life-course, gender norms, SHARE

JEL Classification: J16, J28, J22

*I gratefully acknowledge the support received at the early stages of this project from the FROGEE program funded by the Swedish International Development Agency, Sida; the opinions expressed are solely those of the author, and all errors remain my own. I am grateful to Michał Myck for his continuous guidance and encouragement. I thank Piotr Lewandowski, Magdalena Smyk-Szymańska, Lieke Voorintholt, Hamid Oskorouchi, Eszter Zólyomi for valuable discussions, and Andrea Bonfatti for generously sharing his expertise on the analysis of historical wages from SHARE-Life data. A preliminary version of this paper was presented at research workshops in Halle (BeWell, 2026), Trier (Workshop in Labour Economics, 2026), Rome (Mend the Gap in Economic Opportunities, 2026), Lisbon (IWSEA, 2025), Yerevan (Closing Gender Gaps, 2025) and Szczecin (FROGEE, 2025); I thank participants for their comments and suggestions.

†Corresponding author: monika.oczkowska@sgh.waw.pl. ORCID: 0000-0001-7252-838X.

1 Introduction

Gender differences have been documented with remarkable consistency for a number of labour market outcomes. A large empirical literature provides evidence of persisting substantial gender gaps in wages, but also occupational choice, career progression, or employment stability ([Goldin et al., 2017, Goldin, 2014, 2006, Card et al., 2016, Bertrand and Hallock, 2001, Blau and Kahn, 2007, 2017]). By contrast, the literature on gender differences in job satisfaction offers far less consensus. Since the earliest considerations of the gender gap in job satisfaction, a striking phenomenon puzzled researchers for at least four decades now. In late 1980s in his theoretical work Hodson asked *Why aren't women more dissatisfied?* (1989). A seminal contribution in this strand of literature is Clark's slightly refrased: *Why are women so happy at work?* ([Clark, 1997]). On the British Household Panel Survey dataset from 1991, and controlling for a large set of usual confounders, such as salary, hours worked, union membership, tenure, company size, industry, occupation, commuting time, or work values, Clark established a large and positive difference in job satisfaction between women and men. This counterintuitive pattern has been reported repeatedly in many later studies and became widely known as the "gender–job satisfaction paradox". It has been confirmed for a wide range of countries, settings and datasets that despite lower pay, fewer promotion opportunities, and poorer working conditions women often declare higher levels of job satisfaction than men [Sousa-Poza and Sousa-Poza, 2003, Sousa-Poza and Sousa-Poza, Kaiser, 2007, Hauret and Williams, 2017]).

The main explanation behind this paradox indicates gender differences in expectations and reference points. Clark (1997) highlights the importance of lower expectations about employment outcomes among women which resulted from historically more restricted labour market opportunities and thus lower attachment to paid work. Having no valid reference point, women may have objectively evaluated similar job characteristics more favourably than men, which revealed as higher reported job satisfaction even in the presence of objective disadvantage. As a confirmation of this hypothesis, Clark shows that the gap disappears for younger, better educated, or individuals having working mother. Subsequent studies have explored this hypothesis using cross-country variation and cohort comparisons ([Kaiser, 2007, Green et al., 2018, Pita and Torregrosa, 2021, Fernández Puente and Sánchez-Sánchez, 2021]). Of these, Kaiser (2007) highlighted the role of social norms and institutional settings in shaping reported satisfaction, showing that the gap does not exist in countries with equal institutional framework and the same labour market opportunities for genders. A recent study by Perugini and Vladisavljević (2019) very closely complemented Clark's work by investigating his hypothesis of lower expectations on 2013 EU-SILC international data from 32 European countries. The authors propose a novel indicator that captures exposure to more gender equal settings at early stages of life and present robust evidence that women raised in such environments have more similar expectations regarding work to their male counterparts.

However, even with all the above contributions, the empirical evidence still lacks clarity as of to what extent gender differences in job satisfaction reflect genuine differences in preferences and expectations, versus differences in selection into employment and continuity of labour market attachment. In fact, a crucial but often overlooked feature of the existing literature is its almost exclusive focus on current job satisfaction—that is, satisfaction with the job held at the time of the survey. This focus has important im-

plications. Individuals who are not employed at the time of observation are excluded by construction, even though labour market exit and non-employment are strongly gendered. Women are substantially more likely than men to interrupt their careers or to exit employment early on and permanently, often in connection with family formation and caregiving responsibilities. As a consequence, analyses based on current job satisfaction disproportionately reflect the experiences of men and of women with strong and continuous labour market attachment, while systematically omitting individuals whose employment careers were short or discontinuous. Most of the studies attempt to address this issue using selection-correction approaches (such as Heckman selection correction as in [Clark, 1997] or the Bourguignon et al. correction as in [Perugini and Vladisavljević, 2019]). Still, the outcome of interest remains satisfaction with a contemporaneous job, rather than satisfaction evaluated over the working life as a whole.

This paper contributes to the existing literature by adopting a life-course perspective on job satisfaction and labour market attachment. Using retrospective life-history data from the Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe (SHARE), we analyse satisfaction with the main job of the working career—the job that respondents identify as the most important in their working lives. Crucially, this measure is available for all individuals who ever worked, regardless of the duration of their careers, or whether these were continuous or interrupted. By focusing on the main job rather than the current job, we are able to include individuals who exited employment early or did not remain attached to the labour market until older ages. This group is disproportionately female and is largely absent from the existing job satisfaction literature.

Conceptually, satisfaction with the main job of one's career captures a different evaluation process than satisfaction with a current job. It reflects an assessment formed over a longer horizon and incorporates cumulative experiences related to job quality, stability, working conditions, and the compatibility of paid work with family life. From a gender perspective, this difference is of crucial importance. Lets assume that women who are dissatisfied with early jobs are more likely than men to withdraw from employment (regardless whether temporarily or permanently). In such a case the analyses restricted to current workers may yield a misleading picture of gender differences in satisfaction as the investigated group disproportionately excludes dissatisfied women. If it was so, higher reported job satisfaction among women would partly reflect selective attrition rather than lower expectations or stronger preferences for non-monetary job attributes.

In addition to examining satisfaction with the main job of the career, this paper studies gender differences in labour market attachment, measured by the total number of years worked up to the age of 60 years. This second outcome provides a complementary and objective indicator of career continuity and cumulative labour market participation. While job satisfaction reflects subjective evaluations, years worked capture realised employment behaviour over the life course. Analysing these two outcomes jointly allows us to assess whether gender differences in reported job satisfaction are aligned with or distinct from gender differences in actual labour market attachment. If women who report lower satisfaction with their main job also accumulate fewer years of employment, then this would be consistent with a pattern of early labour market exit driven by adverse job experiences rather than by lower expectations alone.

The empirical analysis exploits rich retrospective information on employment histories, job characteristics, and family trajectories captured in the SHARE data. We estimate a

sequence of regression models that progressively introduce controls for individual background characteristics, educational attainment, occupational and sectoral segregation, employment arrangements, and detailed measures of career interruptions prior to the main job. Our baseline specification follows the standard approach in the job satisfaction literature and allows for direct comparison with existing studies. We then extend this framework by incorporating interactions between gender and country group indicators, highlighting how gender differences in satisfaction and labour market attachment vary across institutional contexts. This structure allows us to distinguish between patterns that are broadly common across Europe and those that are specific to particular systemic settings.

The results reveal three main findings. First, women report significantly lower satisfaction with the main job of their working career than men, even after conditioning on a rich set of job- and career-related characteristics. This finding contrasts sharply with the evidence based on current job satisfaction and suggests that the gender–job satisfaction paradox does not extend to evaluations formed over the entire working life. Second, women accumulate significantly fewer years of employment than men, and this gap remains substantial after controlling for education and job characteristics. Third, both gender differences in satisfaction and differences in years worked vary systematically across country groups, pointing to an important role of institutional and societal factors in shaping women's labour market experiences.

In addition to cross-country institutional variation, we examine heterogeneity by maternal education as a proxy for the gender norms environment in which individuals were socialised. Maternal education captures long-run differences in attitudes toward female employment, work–family roles, and expectations regarding labour market attachment that are formed early in life and precede individuals' own educational and career choices. Unlike contemporaneous attitudinal measures, this indicator reflects intergenerational transmission of norms that shaped labour supply decisions over the life course. Importantly, maternal education varies both within and across countries, allowing us to distinguish normative influences operating at the family level from those embedded in broader institutional contexts.

The analysis reveals that maternal education is a key dimension along which gender differences in both job satisfaction and labour market attachment emerge. Women from lower maternal education backgrounds report substantially lower satisfaction with their main job and accumulate fewer years of employment than men, whereas these gaps are markedly smaller among individuals raised by more educated mothers. Notably, maternal education moderates not only employment outcomes but also the relationship between subjective evaluations and objective labour market attachment, suggesting that early-life gender norms shape both how careers unfold and how they are retrospectively evaluated. These patterns are consistent with a life-course interpretation in which socialisation into traditional gender roles amplifies gender disparities in both perceived job quality and long-term employment continuity.

Looking beyond average gender differences, the analysis reveals that the relationship between job dissatisfaction and long-term employment depends strongly on the gender-norm environment in which individuals were raised. Among those who grew up in less egalitarian settings, proxied by lower maternal education, dissatisfied women are much less likely to remain in the labour market and accumulate substantially fewer years of employment

than both men and women from more gender-equal backgrounds. In contrast, in more egalitarian environments, dissatisfaction is more closely linked to reduced labour market attachment among men, while women's employment trajectories appear less affected by negative job experiences. As a result, the gender gap in years worked among dissatisfied individuals is particularly large in less equal settings and narrows markedly as maternal education increases. These patterns suggest that dissatisfaction does not have the same consequences for everyone: rather, whether dissatisfaction leads to earlier labour market exit depends on prevailing gender norms. In less egalitarian contexts, dissatisfaction seems to make women's withdrawal from paid work more acceptable or feasible, while in more egalitarian settings it is men who are more likely to adjust their labour supply in response to poor job experiences.

By shifting the focus from current jobs to careers and by jointly analysing subjective and objective outcomes, this paper contributes to the literature in a number of ways. It shows that conclusions about gender differences in job satisfaction depend crucially on whose jobs are evaluated and when satisfaction is measured. More broadly, it highlights the importance of a life-course perspective for understanding gender inequality in the labour market and demonstrates the value of retrospective data for studying subjective outcomes that are otherwise prone to selection bias.

2 Data and Methods

2.1 Building retrospective work histories with SHARE data

This study is based on the data collected in within the Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe - SHARE. The SHARE survey is a panel survey focused on individuals aged 50 years and over. The primary interest of the survey is to collect information on different aspects of daily life of the participants: their retirement or labour market experiences, family and broader social relationships and networks, physical and mental health. To capture changes occurring in these spheres as the ageing process progresses, the study is conducted in regular, biennial intervals. To date 10 waves of data collection were administered since the first edition of the survey in year 2004. To put the observations on the current aspects of life into a context of one's experiences over the life course, an additional part of the study collected the most significant events from participants lives - the so-called SHARE life histories.

In a special interview participants described their childhood, subsequent places of living during life, partnerships they maintained, births of their children, health and healthcare use at different stages of life and related information. From the perspective of this analysis, the most important part of the supplemental interview concerned working history. Each participant provides detailed information on their employment or other activity status (unemployment, homemaking, etc.) since completing full-time education until either retirement or participation in the survey. For each job spell the survey captures all the usual basic descriptive information - the sector (public, private, self-employed), working arrangement (part-time, full-time), industry and detailed job title (which can be easily aggregated to 10 categories by the international ISCO standard). On top of these, for one of the job spells which the participant considers as the main job of their career (by subjective assessment), we are provided with additional information regarding the quality of work and working conditions. These include, among others, the level of satisfaction

with the main job (on a 4-point Likert scale) and participant's opinion whether on the whole their salary in that job was adequate. By combining the job spells and gaps between jobs, for the purpose of this study we compile detailed labour market histories for all individuals on yearly basis over their life course.

2.2 Male and female work trajectories over the life course

The retrospective life histories collected for the participants of the SHARE project provide us with an enormous advantage over the other studies focused on gender differences in job satisfaction or even wider - gender differences in other labour market outcomes. Unlike the other studies, we are not restricted by observing each individual at a certain time of data collection. We are able to almost completely reconstruct the whole working lives of all individuals responding to the study - from the very point of first entry onto the labour market, through all the gaps they may have experienced during their careers, until their exit out of the labour market (or until the time of the survey if they are still active at that point). Additionally, we capture individuals who never worked in their lives. While this study is focused on the ever participants of the labour market (even if for a short period), in Figure 1 we provide a country level overview of the incidence of the lifelong stay outside of the labour market. Across-country differences are striking. In the Nordic countries or among those from the Eastern Europe the percentages of individuals who never entered the labour market do not exceed 5% among women. In Belgium, France and Luxembourg these proportions increase to around 10%, while in the countries representing Southern Europe they exceed 20%, or even in some cases like Cyprus, Greece or Malta - 30%. Interestingly, as compared to countries from Eastern and Northern Europe, the prevalence of never working is also much higher among men in Southern countries. We will come back to these statistics in the later parts of this study as the high incidence of a female population staying outside of the labur market throughout life is highly correlated with other indicators of traditional gender norms.

(Figure 1 about here)

The ability to observe those outside of the labour market is just one of the advantages of the SHARE retrospective data. As mentioned above, detailed recollections of the working histories allow us to build complete labour market profiles for individuals who ever entered the labour market. Stacked bar charts in Figure 2 present the proportion of person-years spent in different statuses with respect to the labour market. We emphasize those in full-time employment, part-time employment, unemployment and divide those out of the labour force at the certain age into homemakers and others. We split the sample by gender, however the life-cycle portfolios of labour states for men are very consistent across Europe, with most of their time spent in full-time employment. Sight differences emerge in later life, as we can see that men in particular in Eastern Europe but also in Southern Europe, tend to leave labour market earlier.

The career histories of women are much more diverse between different regions. What is immediately visible in the lower panel of Figure 2 women in Southern Europe reveal a larger out of the labour force incidence. Part-time spells in Central Europe and Nordic countries are much more common than among women from Eastern or Southern countries. Women in the Nordic countries entered labour market at slightly later ages, but also exited at older ages, with a certain, stable share of those working part-time (20% on average). In the the Central European countries initially a very high percentage of young women

entered labour market, but afterwards experienced more in-between work gaps, with much higher incidence of part-time employment (around 20% on average), increasing with age. Female labour market profiles in Southern countries are characterized by only a small fraction of those who worked part-time. Women in these countries often experienced long-term gaps in employment, with many leaving labour market early on and never returning (on average at age 50 only 60% of this sample was working). In most countries of Eastern Europe female labour market histories resemble their male counterparts', with a majority of women consistently working full-time throughout their lives until an often premature leave already at the age of 55 years. These *'special'* working histories are a clear legacy of the communist regimes that prevailed in these countries until the early 1990s and reflects the systemic constraints of compulsory employment assignment.

(Figure 2 about here)

Another distinctive feature of the labour market patterns in the Southern and Eastern regions as compared to the Northern and Central ones is the substantially higher propensity of having only one job over the course of the career (Figure 3). While this feature is easily observed for all workers, it is much more prevalent among women. Changing jobs in Nordic or Central countries was much more common than in Southern or Eastern countries. What needs to be noted, in the case of the latter two regions, the roots of the high incidence of a fixed job over the life course were very different. Again for both men and women in Eastern countries this was strongly related to the fundamental rules of the communist regime. In Southern countries women oftentimes left the job market permanently after the first job due to other types of constraints, related to familial and societal obligations. This reflects the attitudes towards gender roles prevailing in Southern countries, with men expected to provide for the family by fulfilling the role of the main breadwinner and women acting as family caregivers.

(Figure 3 about here)

2.3 Satisfaction with the job central to working career

The descriptive analysis of detailed working trajectories provides us with a strong basis for introducing two main outcomes that this study concentrates on. The first outcome is the satisfaction with the job that is regarded as the central to the working career by each individual. It may be understood as the longest job spell or the most meaningful one. Each individual is then asked to describe attributes of that job. On a four-point Likert scale, the participants state if they strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree with a number of statements, crucially: *All things considered, I was satisfied with my* [main] *job*. In our sample on average 1.2& of individuals strongly disagreed with the statement and further 4.1% disagreed (Table A1). Though people who may be classified as dissatisfied with main job constituted a small share overall, the proportion of these individuals varied strongly across countries. In Figure 4 we present the country distribution of the answers among men and women, which clearly shows a rather intuitive fact that the majority of individuals strongly agreed or agreed with the satisfaction statement. In most of the countries these people constituted over 90% of the sample, except for men and women in Lithuania and women only in Bulgaria, Greece, Poland, and Romania..

(Figure 4 about here)

In Figure 5 we make the first attempt to present the unadjusted gender gaps in job satisfaction by country. Interestingly, though compliant to the earlier international studies on

the topic, we show striking differences, with satisfaction among women exceeding men's in Finland, Luxembourg, Lithuania, Malta, Slovenia and Slovakia. On the other end of the distribution are two countries with strikingly lower female satisfaction - Greece and Spain.

(Figure 5 about here)

In the Appendix in Table A1 we provide the basic socio-demographic information on the sample utilized in the regressions, where satisfaction with main job is the outcome of interest. This is the sample of individuals aged 50+ with completed working careers (those still working at the time of the survey are excluded due to different construction of the job satisfaction question). The sample covers 26 European countries, as provided in Table A1. Mean age at the time of the SHARE interview (in 2017) of individuals included in the sample is 71 years for both men and women. The cohort born at the time of the Second World War and directly afterwards (1941-1950) constitutes the largest chunk of our sample (43% of men and 40% of women)

2.4 Duration of working career

In the following parts of the paper, gender differences identified in job satisfaction constitute an introduction to the further analysis, where we make an attempt to disentangle the relationship between expressing dissatisfaction with the main job and duration of the working career until age 60. In Table A2 we present the descriptive information of the sample utilized in the labour market attachment regressions. Here we further restrict the initial sample to persons aged 60 years and over in order to capture largely individuals who plausibly concluded their labour market activity. As in the case of job satisfaction sample for obvious reasons we focus only on individuals who ever performed work. On average women worked by almost 5 years shorter until age 60 than men, and had a much lower probability of being employed at the age of 40 (86% of women were employed vs. 97% of men) By the age of 55, this proportions fall for both gender to respectively 67% and 83%. However, as shown in Table A3 these statistics differ dramatically by the region of Europe. The largest gap in career length between men and women can be found in Southern countries, where on average women worked 31 years until the age of 60, while men - 39 years. Women from Southern countries had also the lowest incidence of being employed at later stages of the career - only 80% was employed at the age of 40, which drops to 51% by the age of 55. Due to the design of the socialist system in which most of our sample from Eastern Europe lived, and the general requirement to work, the gaps reported in Table A3 are the lowest for this group of countries. Until the age of 60 women worked on average only 1.5 years less than men. The prevalence of employment at the age of 55 in Eastern Europe was also very similar for both gender - 72% of women and 79% of men worked.

In Table A2 we further describe the careers before the main job and the average values of the attributes of the main job of people's career. Women entered the labour market slightly later than men, and less often changed jobs before they started the main one. They also spent more time in gaps between job spells - 1.7 years, while for men it was slightly over 7 months. Women were more likely to work in the public sector (55% vs. 47%), though less likely to be self-employed (6% vs. 9%). On the other hand they were on average more likely to engage in part-time work (almost 6% of the female sample, and less than 1% of the male sample). Men more often performed jobs belonging to the

manual classification (52% of men and 32% of women).[1] Main jobs performed by men can be also characterized as more stable within the structure of their careers - they stayed in these jobs longer - on average 31 years and almost 96% of men continued on the job for at least 10 years. Women on average were more likely to enter their main job early on during the career - 77% started before age 35.

Based on the Figures with labour market statuses over the life course (Figures 2 & 3) and the descriptives presented in Table A3 we may expect that in certain settings women accumulate less years of working experience. In Figure 6 we show the boxplots of years worked until age 60 by gender and by our preferred measure of gender norms - education of the mother. Though these associations are purely descriptive we can already observe that among individuals with mothers of no education the gender differences in years worked are much larger than for the group on the opposite side of the Figure - among participants with mothers with upper secondary or higher education.

(Figure 6 about here)

3 Results

Throughout the analyses reported in this paper we follow the same sequential modelling strategy, gradually introducing additional information in simple OLS regressions on top of the basic demographic information - job characteristics, early career instability, pre-main-job constraints and further confounders. In case of both outcomes Model (4) constitutes our main specification.

3.1 Gender gap in satisfaction with main job

As a point of departure, we estimate a baseline specification that closely follows the most influential contributions in the literature on gender differences in job satisfaction (Table 1). The outcome here is declared satisfaction with main job, measured as described in detail in Section 2.3, on a scale from 1 to 4, with 1 indicating the lowest level of satisfaction and 4 - the highest. This model conditions on a rich set of socio-demographic characteristics and detailed features of the main job of the career—including education, sector, occupational group, and employment arrangement—while controlling for birth cohort and country fixed effects. In this sense, the specification (Model (3)) allows for a comparison with earlier studies that focus on satisfaction conditional on observed job characteristics at a given point in the working life (most importantly - with the studies to which we would like to directly relate to by Clark (1997) and Perugini and Vladisavljević (2019)).

(Table 1 about here)

However, the central contribution of this study lies in adopting an explicit life-course perspective, which requires going beyond job characteristics alone. Therefore, our preferred specification additionally accounts for gendered labour market trajectories prior to the main job of the career, including employment interruptions, unemployment spells, number of jobs held, and health-related impediments experienced earlier in life. These factors are not treated as mere confounders, but rather as key elements of the cumulative

[1] Categories 6-9 in the ISCO classification of occupations at the level of first digit.

constraints that shape women's and men's working careers and, ultimately, their evaluation of the main job. By conditioning on pre-main-job career histories, the extended specification (4) in Table 1 allows us to distinguish gender differences in job satisfaction that may be attributed to job characteristics from those that reflect systematically gendered pathways into stable employment. All subsequent analyses therefore rely on this life-course-consistent model (4), while the baseline specification (3) is retained as a benchmark for comparability with the existing literature.

In all specifications we consciously refrain from controlling for having children. The rationale behind this decision is prompted by the fact that fertility decisions endogenously affect labour-market trajectories. In some countries, women with strong labour-market attachment are more likely to be mothers, while in others, motherhood strongly predicts labour-market exit. Thus, including children in the regressions would obscure the coefficients received on the female dummy.

(Table 2 about here)
(Table 3 about here)

3.2 Heterogeneity in job satisfaction by fertility timing

A concern that heavily affects the interpretation of our results is that a certain share of women may sort into lower-quality jobs in the first place - anticipating early labour market exit in the future due to family responsibilities related to fertility. To investigate the gravity of such a mechanism, we take further advantage of the detailed fertility histories captured in the SHARE data and distinguish women who became mothers prior to their main job, those who had their firstborn child during the main job, and those who did not have children until they exited their main job. In an additional analysis we interact these dummies with the female indicator and report the results in Appendix Table A4. These interactions should shed some light on the following concern: if a woman already has children when choosing her main job and she expects weaker attachment, does she accept a worse job, which shows up as lower satisfaction? As shown in Table A4, all estimated interaction terms are small and statistically insignificant, which suggests that the gender gap in satisfaction is more broadly distributed across women, independent of fertility timing relative to the main job. It appears that lower job satisfaction among women is neither concentrated among women who become mothers during their main job, nor among those who entered their main job after having children. It is important to note here that the SHARE data does not allow us to directly capture fertility intentions. Nevertheless, the absence of differences in female job satisfaction by birth timing provides some support for the hypothesis that the observed gender gap in satisfaction with the main job is not driven by the anticipatory sorting into lower-quality jobs of future mothers.

3.3 Accumulated years of work until age 60

Now we are modeling accumulated labour supply over the life course first trying to find an answer to a question of how many fewer years do women work among people who entered labour market at similar ages and who then had similar early work trajectories. In this set of regressions entry age is included to account for cross-gender differences in the timing of labour market entry, which reflect both educational trajectories and early-life institutional constraints. As presented in Model (5) in Table 4, conditional on education, early career history and job characteristics, women work on average fewer

years than men. Even conditional on entering the labour market at the same age, women accumulate fewer years of employment. Women work fewer years not only because they exit earlier, but also because they enter later and experience more early instability.

(Table 4 about here)

Next we want to explore if the observed gender gap in the length of working career until age 60 is related to satisfaction with the job that was declared as central to one's career. In Table 5 we extend the complete Model (5) from the previous Table with a dichotomous information on whether an individual was dissatisfied with the main job (which covers those who strongly disagreed or disagreed with the main job satisfaction statement). As shown in Model (1), on average dissatisfied workers had by 1.4 years shorter careers until the age of 60. However, it seems from the Specification (2) that among the dissatisfied, women did not experience any further penalty with respect to shorter working careers as compared to men. Albeit the coefficient on the interaction between the female dummy and the dissatisfaction dummy is negative (as would be expected), it is of small magnitude, and not significant. To further explore the background of this particular result, we first conduct a heterogeneity analysis where we add a regional information into the Model and interact it with both the female and the dissatisfaction dummy (Model (3)). This way we find out that a statistically significant gender gap in the length of career among the dissatisfied workers can only be observed in the Southern European countries. In this region of Europe as compared to Nordic countries the gender gap in career lengths is by 3.6 years larger if we consider the dissatisfied workers. So the group of dissatisfied workers is far from homogenous - it seems that dissatisfied women from certain environments are significantly less likely to continue working as compared to their male counterparts. This result points us towards looking for an explanation rooted in different gender norms and gender roles prevailing in European societies. As widely established in the literature, even nowadays women from Southern European countries are less likely to ever work in their lives (ref). Data from the European Values Survey conducted regularly on representative samples in European countries show that still the majority of citizens in Southern societies strongly support female homemaking and caring roles (ref), which is much less of a case in other countries.

(Table 5 about here)

3.4 How maternal education affects the association between cumulated working experience and dissatisfaction in main job

In order to investigate potential mechanisms operating behind the differential likelihood of men and women exiting labour market before age 60 conditional on satisfaction with the main job of the working career, we take further advantage of the richness of the SHARE data available from other interviews with the life-history participants collected over the years. Though during the retrospective interview the participants describe their childhood in detail, they do not provide much information regarding their parents. Fortunately, for those who participated in a contemporary interview (in a regular SHARE wave, before or after life history in wave 7), information on parental education was captured. Thus, for a large subset of our sample we are able to retrieve the level of their mother's education (coded in SHARE with the ISCED education classification, which we recode to four distinct categories based on sample sizes - no education, primary, lower secondary and upper secondary or higher education). It is a fantastic individual level

proxy information on the gender norms, which allows us to exploit potential differences in gender norms on the level of households rather than country (like in the study by [Perugini and Vladisavljević, 2019]).

Initially we closely followed their strategy to disaggregate the mechanisms behind the gender gap in job satisfaction by differentiaing the individuals depending on the gender norms they were exposed to in the early years of their lives. For that purpose, Perugini and Vladisavljević utilized the country indicator of female-to-male labour force participation ratio averaged over the first 20 years of individual's life, which, given differences in birth years of the survey participants, provided them with the additional variability of the measure within each country (the so-called ELGE indicator). Using this indicator the authors were able to provide some insights into the theoretical consideration from the Clark study, that the positive gender gap in job satisfaction mainly occurs among less informed, less educated groups, in which women have lower expectations regarding their jobs than men, so all things considered they admit to be more satisfied with a job of the exact same characteristics. Perugini and Vladisavljević confirm this hypothesis by differentiating between women exposed to more egalitarian gender norms in childhood and early adulthood and those subject to more traditional gender norms. The latter group of women was less likely to collect accurate information regarding working experiences from their peers, given that the surrounding women (mothers, relatives, potential role models) were on average less likely to actively participate in the labour market. As a result, once they join the labour market themselves their job satisfaction evaluation positively is affected by their initially incorrect expectations.

Following Perugini and Vladisavljević's footsteps seemed a natural step in our analysis. However, after exploring the historical gender ratio in labour force participation from the World Development Indicators database, we realized that it cannot be utilized in the same way for our sample, given that the database starts with year 1960, when majority of our sample is born well before year 1957 (those aged 60 years in 2017, whom we regarded as having complete working careers - having later birth cohorts in EU-SILC Perugini and Vladisavljević were less bothered by this limitation; in our case almost the fourth of our sample is born before year 1940, which means we have literally not a single year of ELGE indicator available for their first 20 years of life and for the rest of the sample the indicator could be computed only for a narrow subset of their teen years). This data limitation pushed us to search for a substitutive indicator of early-life gender norms, and conveniently we found a fantastic one in our individual-level dataset.

Maternal education captures cross-country differences in historically embedded gender norms. In Figure A2 we compare country level proportions of individuals with mothers without any education to a widely used in the literature external indicator of gender norms prevailing in the societies. It is the proportion of participants of the European Values Survey from year 2008 (full coverage of our country sample), who agreed or strongly agreed with a statement *A job is alright, but what most women want is a home and children*.

Given the rather high shares of individuals documenting that their mother had no education in some countries (e.g. Spain - almost 80%, Cyprus and Malta - close to 70%, Greece - almost 60%), we check the external validity of these retrospective reports. Appendix Figure A1 compares country-level average shares of mothers with no formal education

to historical census-based education statistics for comparable female birth cohorts.[2] The strong positive association provides reassurance that cross-country variation in maternal education in the SHARE data in fact reflects historical differences rather than reporting biases.

(Figure 7 about here)

The margins analysis reveals that the reduction in the dissatisfaction-related gender gap among individuals with highly educated mothers is driven primarily by a statistically significant shortening of men's careers. Dissatisfied men from more educated family backgrounds work substantially fewer years than their counterparts with low-educated mothers. For women, the corresponding increase in years worked is of similar magnitude but estimated less precisely, with confidence intervals overlapping across maternal education groups. Taken together, these results suggest that intergenerational transmission of more egalitarian gender norms operates most clearly by relaxing male breadwinner obligations, while potentially also mitigating early labour market exit among dissatisfied women.

Appendix Figure A3 shows that the narrowing of the gender gap at higher levels of maternal education reflects adjustments on both margins: dissatisfied men from highly educated backgrounds work fewer years, while dissatisfied women from such backgrounds work more years relative to their counterparts from low-education families.

3.5 Robustness checks: alternative mechanisms responsible for shorter working careers among dissatisfied women

Systematic sorting into lower quality jobs

Women with poorer parental background (proxied with mother with less education) may systematically sort into lower-quality jobs, that more likely involve physical or routine tasks and offer lower pay or less promotion perspectives. This would affect their dissatisfaction, but also such jobs likely translate into shorter careers due to availability of early retirement schemes on the one hand and lower returns to staying on the other. Already in the basic model we have included a rich set of job characteristics that should proxy the quality of a given job. Even in this detailed setup the triple interaction of interest is highly significant which we consider reassuring. However, to further test this alternative explanation of our fundamental results, we include wages, which may be regarded as one of the strongest proxies for job quality. Though in such a specification we further lose half of the sample without wage information, the triple interaction remains statistically significant in case of women with mothers with primary and lower secondary education (the coefficient for the third category of mothers with upper secondary or more education stays similar in magnitude but becomes insignificant which likely results from lack of power). Achieving comparable results when conditioning on wages suggests that the observed heterogeneity by maternal education is unlikely to be driven by initial sorting into lower-quality jobs. An additional claim that we can make here is that job sorting should

[2]According to the sample description in TableA1 43% of our sample was born between 1941 and 1950. The earliest available statistics in Barro and Lee (2013) from year 1950. We use data on women aged 30-34 years in 1950 to approximate for the average age of mothers of our sample's respondents. Given that we cannot anticipate the survival rates of the mothers, we refrain from using more recent data for older cohorts. However, using slightly different combinations of the year of data and cohorts yields similar correlation as in Figure A1.

affect both satisfied and dissatisfied workers. However, as can be seen in the Marginsplot A3, maternal education has much smaller moderating effect for the gender gap in years worked among the satisfied, as compared to the dissatisfied. This also points towards the mechanism of behavioral response to dissatisfaction. Maternal education does not generally compress gender gaps, but specifically in response to dissatisfaction.

Worse health channel

Women from families of less educated background may be more likely to have jobs negatively affecting their health (e.g. physically demanding) over the course of their career which results in worse health in the long-term and cumulated poor health strain. Dissatisfaction can be correlated with poor health, and early labour market exit would then be driven by health constraints, not norms. Given the availability of health information over the lifecourse, the best we can do here is controlling for disabilities and serious illnesses that occured up until taking up the main job, which we already do. However, this does not allow us to fully rule out that differential health trajectories during working life contribute to earlier exit among dissatisfied women from lower-educated backgrounds. The moderation pattern appears specific to dissatisfaction rather than general career length differences (it is not as pronounced among satisfied), suggesting that health alone is unlikely to account for the observed heterogeneity.

4 Discussion and conclusions

Our results suggest that early labour market exits induced by dissatisfaction with a job are gendered in traditional contexts. To the contrary, in egalitarian settings the exits are symmetric between men and women. This shapes observed gender satisfaction gaps, thus linking our findings to Clark's (1997) and Perugini's and Vladisavljevic's (2019).

In more traditional family environments, dissatisfied women have substantially shorter working careers, while dissatisfied men do not significantly differ in this respect from satisfied ones. This gendered asymmetric labour market exit pattern may imply that cross-sectional surveys examining current job satisfaction are more likely to observe positively selected women in traditional contexts, potentially explaining why women appear more satisfied in such settings. In contrast, in more egalitarian settings (educated family background), career adjustments to dissatisfaction are more symmetric across gender. Dissatisfied men work fewer years (the traditional breadwinner norm is weaker and they feel less compelled to stay in an unpleasant job), and at the same time we do not observe a large relative penalty among dissatisfied women. This reduction in gender-differentiated selection pressure is consistent with lack of the gender satisfaction gap in more egalitarian settings documented by both Clark and Perugini and Vladisavljević.

In traditional family set up, women dissatisfied with a job are much more likely to leave the labour market completely, because that way they actually comply with the prevailing gender norms. In more egalitarian family environments, dissatisfied women are less constrained to exit. Thus, selection among females with respect to activity at the labour market is strongest in traditional environments. Intergenerational transmission of more egalitarian gender norms operates most clearly by reducing male breadwinner obligations, while potentially also mitigating early labour market exit among dissatisfied women. Men with better educated backgrounds may feel more able to exit, switch, or downshift their

labour market activity when dissatisfied, thus the gender gap narrows partly because men adjust downward. Importantly, with the results that we receive in the triple interaction on maternal education we show that the mechanism operates not only across countries, but also within countries through family background.

4.1 Limitations

A non-negligible portion of women, especially in certain countries, may anticipate exiting labour market early due to family-related issues. This group may be inclined to sort into jobs with lower quality, lower commitment, or poorer long-term prospects, as they would not expect long labour market attachment in the first place. So the associations that we investigate in this study may arise from two separate mechanisms: ex post labour market exits due to dissatisfaction, or ex ante sorting into low-quality jobs in anticipation of an early exit. Crucially, dissatisfaction in both cases reflects gendered life-course constraints and expectations, not preferences in a vacuum. This is important from the perspective of the relevance of our findings for policy-making purposes. It allows us to emphasize the role of systemic and institutional constraints in shaping women's working careers well before labour market exit occurs.

5 Data acknowledgement

This paper uses data from SHARE Waves 1 - 9 (DOIs: 10.6103/SHARE.w1.900, 10.6103/SHARE.w2.900, 10.6103/SHARE.w3.900, 10.6103/SHARE.w4.900, 10.6103/SHARE.w5.900, 10.6103/SHARE.w6.900, 10.6103/SHARE.w7.900, 10.6103/SHARE.w8.900, 10.6103/SHARE.w9.900) see Börsch-Supan et al. (2013) for methodological details. The SHARE data collection has been funded by the European Commission, DG RTD through FP5 (QLK6-CT-2001-00360), FP6 (SHARE-I3: RII-CT-2006-062193, COMPARE: CIT5-CT-2005-028857, SHARELIFE: CIT4-CT-2006-028812), FP7 (SHARE-PREP: GA N211909, SHARE-LEAP: GA N227822, SHARE M4: GA N261982, DASISH: GA N283646) and Horizon 2020 (SHARE-DEV3: GA N676536, SHARE-COHESION: GA N870628, SERISS: GA N654221, SSHOC: GA N823782, SHARE-COVID19: GA N101015924) and by DG Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion through VS 2015/0195, VS 2016/0135, VS 2018/0285, VS 2019/0332, VS 2020/0313, SHARE-EUCOV: GA N101052589 and EUCOVII: GA N101102412. Additional funding from the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (01UW1301, 01UW1801, 01UW2202), the Max Planck Society for the Advancement of Science, the U.S. National Institute on Aging (U01_AG09740-13S2, P01_AG005842, P01_AG08291, P30_AG12815, R21_AG025169, Y1-AG-4553-01, IAG_BSR 06-11, OGHA_04-064, BSR12-04, R01_AG052527-02, R01_AG056329-02, R01_AG063944, HHSN271201300071C, RAG052527A) and from various national funding sources is gratefully acknowledged (see www.share-eric.eu).

Tables

Table 1: Gender differences in satisfaction with the main job

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Women	-0.037***	-0.032***	-0.042***	-0.038***
	(0.010)	(0.011)	(0.010)	(0.010)
Education years		0.011***	0.005***	0.005***
		(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)
Sector (ref. Private)				
Public			0.055***	0.057***
			(0.018)	(0.018)
Self-employed			0.055**	0.052**
			(0.025)	(0.025)
Status (ref. Full-time)				
Part-time			-0.053**	-0.053**
			(0.020)	(0.020)
Changed			-0.075**	-0.071*
			(0.035)	(0.035)
Number of jobs before main (ref. 0)				
1				0.018
				(0.013)
2				0.048**
				(0.017)
3+				0.062***
				(0.020)
Unemployment gap before main job				-0.064***
				(0.019)
Other type of gap before main job				-0.012
				(0.015)
Any disability before main job				-0.041*
				(0.022)
Observations	28781	28781	28781	28781
R-squared	0.047	0.053	0.068	0.069

Standard errors in parentheses

* $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Notes: OLS estimates. The dependent variable is satisfaction with the main job of the working career coded as 1=strongly disagree; 2=disagree; 3=agree; 4=strongly agree with the statement *'All things considered, I was satisfied with my* [main] *job'*. All models include country and birth-cohort fixed effects. Models (3) and (4) additionally control for 10-ISCO occupational groups. All job characteristics refer to the main job. Standard errors clustered at the country level. Sample of individuals aged 50 and over with completed working careers (those who already left labour market before participating in the survey).

Table 2: Robustness checks: Gender differences in satisfaction with the main job

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Women	-0.067***	-0.034***	-0.040***	-0.036***	-0.030**	-0.053**
	(0.018)	(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.014)	(0.026)
Satisfied with life (7+)		0.165***				
		(0.017)				
Religion at age 10 (ref. V.important)						
Somewhat important			-0.065***			
			(0.016)			
Not very important			-0.053***			
			(0.011)			
Not at all important			-0.041***			
			(0.013)			
Main job=Last job				0.231***		
				(0.013)		
ln Wage					0.005	0.009*
					(0.003)	(0.005)
cut1	-2.644***					-2.708***
	(0.089)					(0.120)
cut2	-1.978***					-2.047***
	(0.080)					(0.118)
cut3	-0.430***					-0.475***
	(0.061)					(0.110)
Observations	28781	28524	28724	28781	16214	16214
R-squared		0.080	0.070	0.086	0.076	
Pseudo R-squared	0.042					0.047

Standard errors in parentheses
* $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Notes: Estimates in models: (1) & (6): Ordered probit; (2)-(5): OLS. See notes in Table 1. Model (1) equals to Model (4) from Table 1 with ordered probit estimation. Models (2)-(6) are extensions of Model (4) from Table 1 with additional controls.

Table 3: Heterogeneity in satisfaction with main job by region of Europe

	(1)	(2)
Women	-0.037***	-0.004
	(0.008)	(0.024)
Region of Europe (ref. Nordic)		
Central	0.010	0.020
	(0.014)	(0.019)
Southern	-0.165***	-0.140***
	(0.014)	(0.019)
Eastern	-0.170***	-0.154***
	(0.014)	(0.020)
Women × Central		-0.019
		(0.027)
Women × Southern		-0.050*
		(0.027)
Women × Eastern		-0.033
		(0.027)
Observations	28781	28781
R-squared	0.059	0.060

Standard errors in parentheses

* $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Notes: OLS estimates. See notes in Table 1. Models (1) and (2) are extensions of Model (4) from Table 1 with country groups instead of country dummies. Robust standard errors. Country grouping between regions: Nordic: Denmark, Finland, Sweden; Central: Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Luxembourg, Switzerland; Southern: Croatia, Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Malta, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain; Eastern: Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungry, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia.

Table 4: Gender differences in accumulated years worked until age 60

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Women	-5.129***	-5.244***	-4.885***	-4.974***	-4.745***
	(0.846)	(0.845)	(0.788)	(0.771)	(0.713)
Education years		-0.206***	0.036	-0.028	-0.001
		(0.039)	(0.023)	(0.024)	(0.024)
LM entry age			-0.679***	-0.696***	-0.689***
			(0.033)	(0.032)	(0.043)
Sector (ref. Private)					
Public				0.567*	0.661*
				(0.324)	(0.321)
Self-employed				2.637***	2.457***
				(0.233)	(0.217)
Status (ref. Full-time)					
Part-time				-1.947***	-1.489***
				(0.413)	(0.401)
Changed				1.089*	1.400**
				(0.556)	(0.560)
Number of jobs before main (ref. 0)					
1					1.626***
					(0.374)
2					2.267***
					(0.350)
3+					2.940***
					(0.438)
Unemployment gap before main job					-1.139***
					(0.330)
Other type of gap before main job					-2.452***
					(0.204)
Any disability before main job					-1.309***
					(0.240)
Observations	26112	26112	26112	26112	26112
R-squared	0.124	0.138	0.253	0.272	0.287

Standard errors in parentheses

* $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Notes: OLS estimates. The dependent variable is number of years worked until age 60. All models include country and birth-cohort fixed effects. Models (4) and (5) additionally control for 10-ISCO occupational group fixed effects. All job characteristics refer to the main job. Standard errors clustered at the country level. Sample restricted to individuals aged 60 or more at the time of the survey with completed working careers (those who already left labour market before participating in the survey).

Table 5: Heterogeneity in accumulated years worked to 60 by region of Europe and maternal education

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Women	-4.727***	-4.695***	-2.632***	-6.469***
	(0.710)	(0.700)	(0.238)	(1.343)
Dissatisfied	-1.416***	-1.087***	-2.879***	0.276
	(0.276)	(0.305)	(1.005)	(0.626)
Women × Dissatisfied		-0.555	1.273	-2.890***
		(0.519)	(1.463)	(0.849)
Region of Europe (ref. Nordic)				
Central			0.155	
			(0.154)	
Southern			0.386**	
			(0.162)	
Eastern			-0.670***	
			(0.168)	
Women × Dissatisfied × Central			-2.713	
			(1.852)	
Women × Dissatisfied × Southern			-3.603**	
			(1.705)	
Women × Dissatisfied × Eastern			-1.350	
			(1.553)	
Mother's education (ref. None)				
Primary				-0.514
				(0.733)
Lower sec.				-0.570
				(0.837)
Upper sec.+More				-1.326
				(0.898)
Women × Dissatisfied × Primary				3.779***
				(1.036)
Women × Dissatisfied × Lower sec.				2.909***
				(0.968)
Women × Dissatisfied × Upper sec.+More				4.027***
				(1.200)
Observations	26112	26112	26112	21537
R-squared	0.289	0.289	0.292	0.295

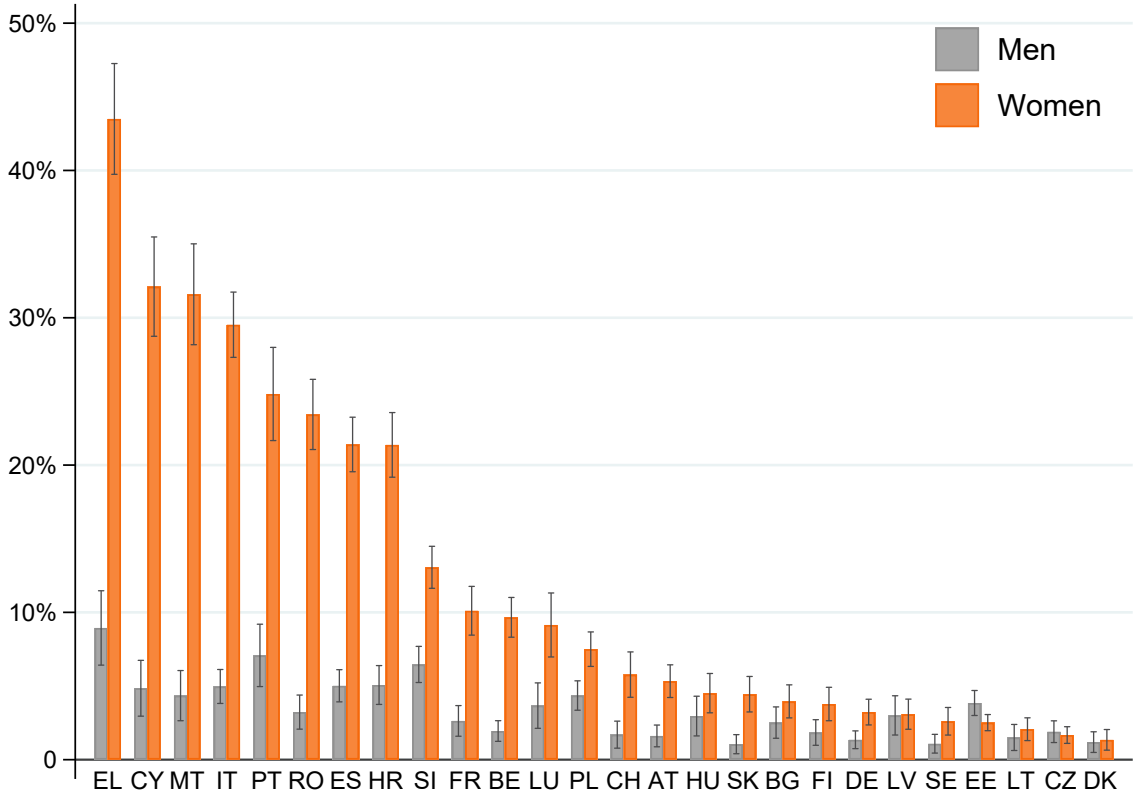
Standard errors in parentheses

* $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Notes: OLS estimates. Dissatisfied is a dummy based on answers 'strongly disagree' and 'disagree' to main job satisfaction statement. See notes in Table 4. Models (1), (2) and (4) are extensions of Model (5) from Table 4 with standard errors clustered at country level. Model (3) is also an extension of Model (5), but with country groups instead of country dummies and robust standard errors. Country grouping between regions: Nordic: Denmark, Finland, Sweden; Central: Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Luxembourg, Switzerland; Southern: Croatia, Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Malta, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain; Eastern: Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungry, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia.

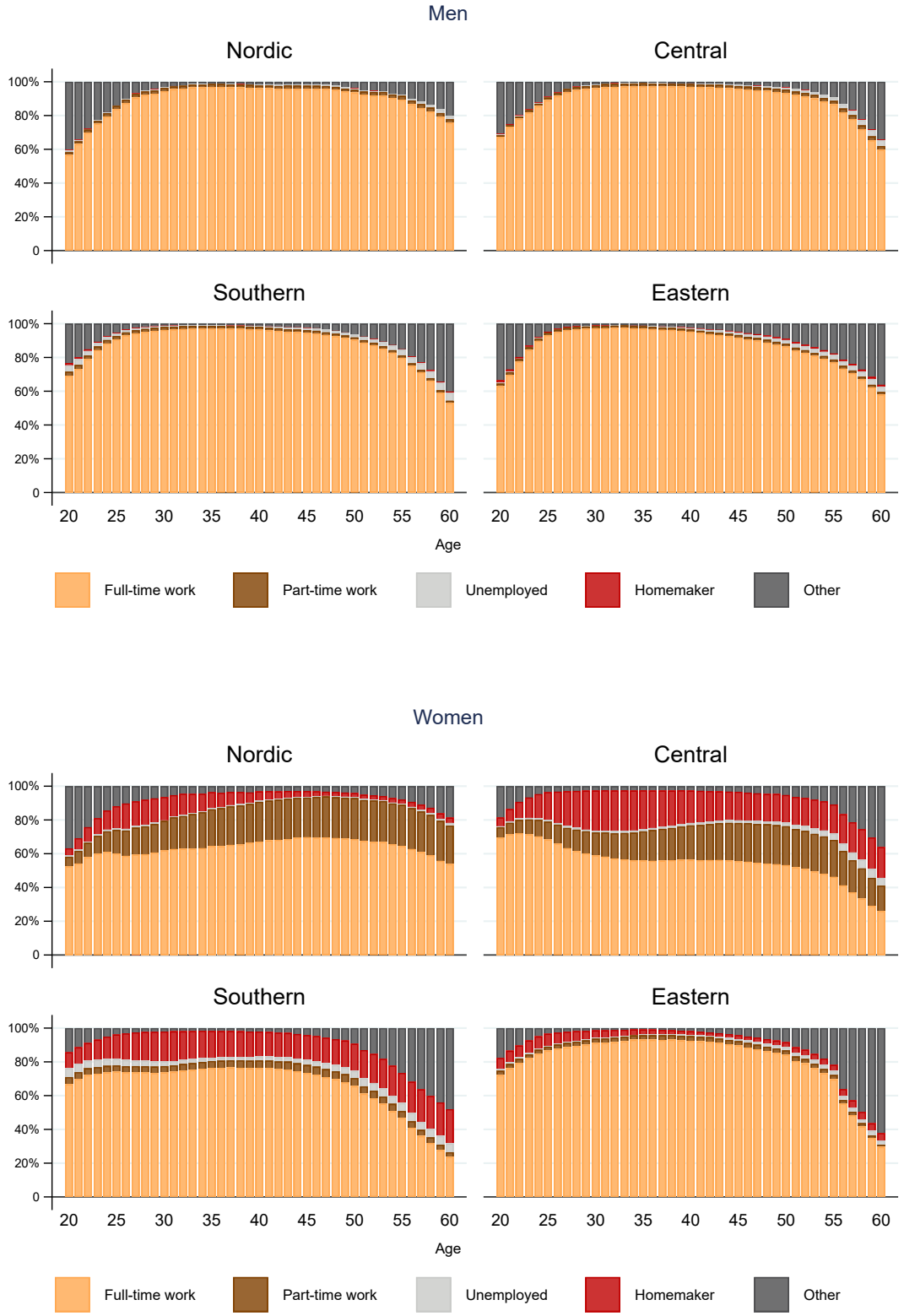
Figures

Figure 1: Percent of men and women who declared never working in their lives.



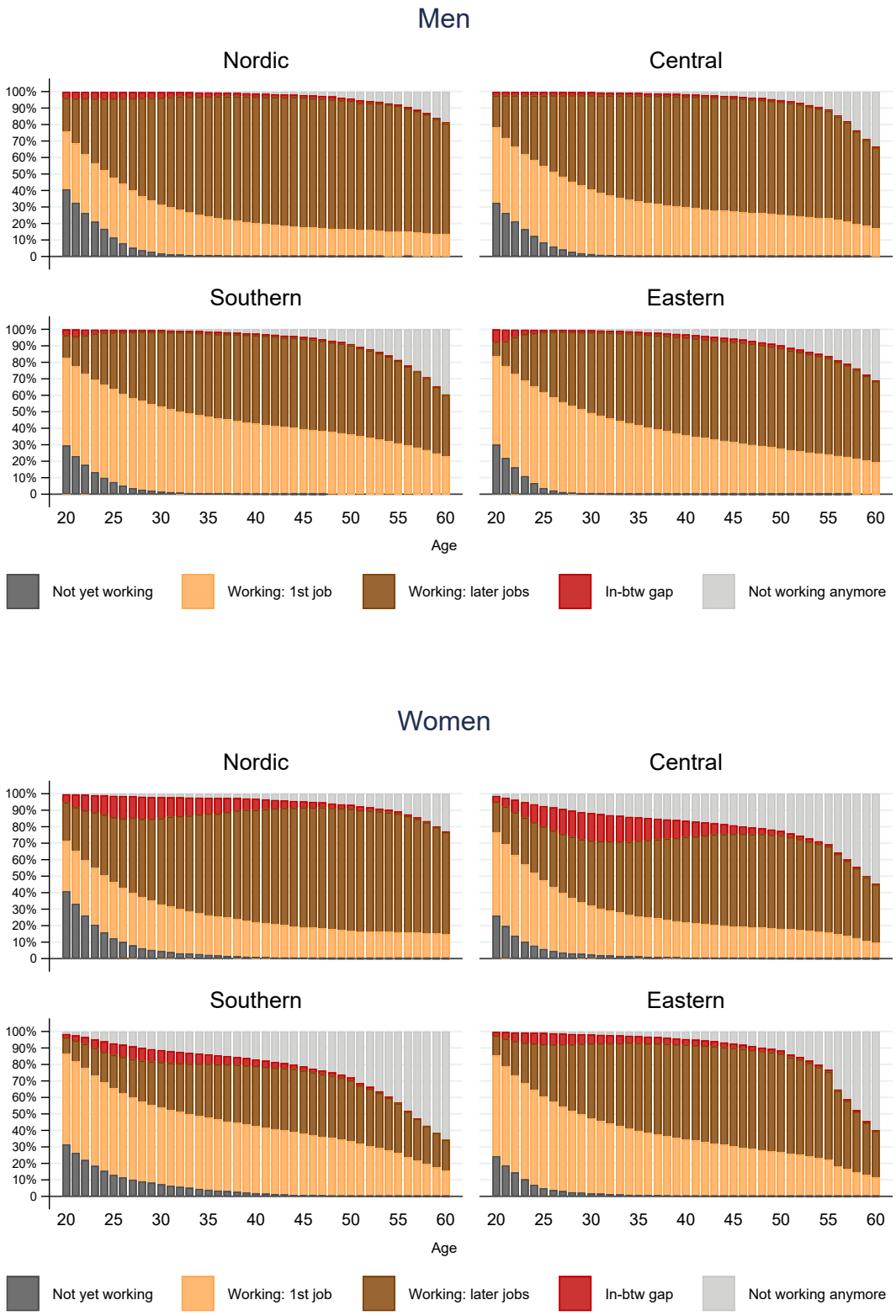
Notes: Countries ordered according to the highest proportion of women never working.
Source: Own compilation based on SHARE wave 7, rel. 9.0.0 data.

Figure 2: Status with respect to the labour market over the life course, by gender and region of Europe.



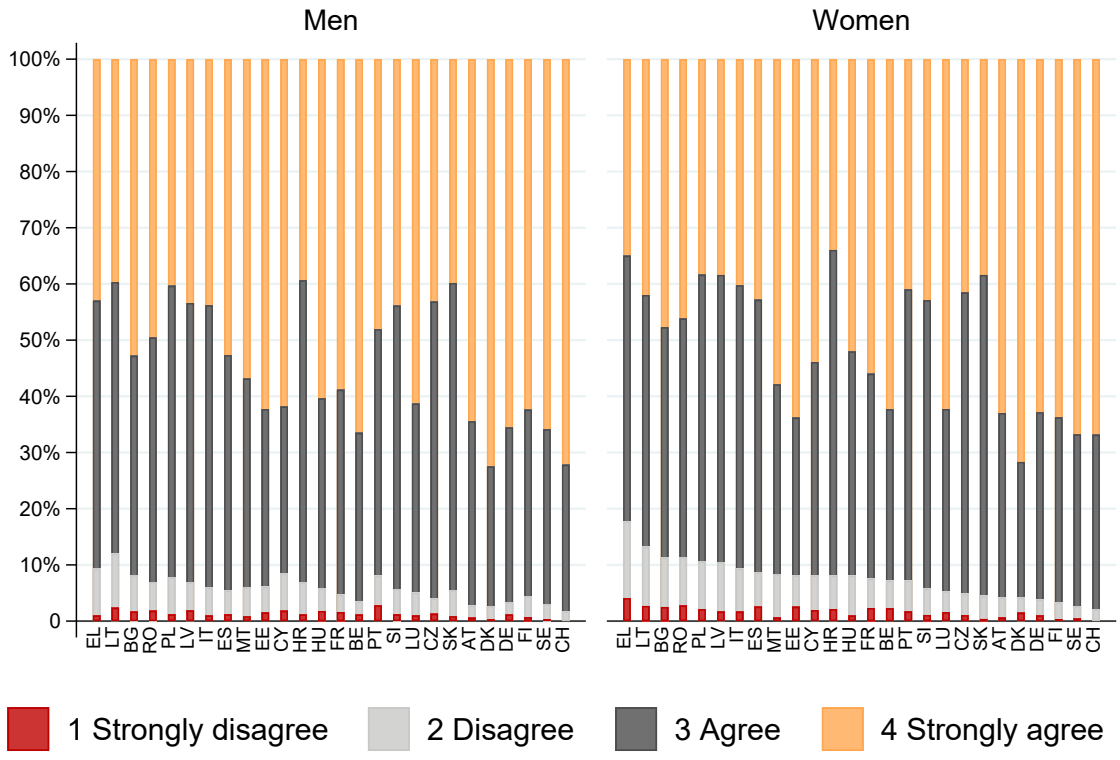
Notes: Only individuals who ever worked. Stacked bars show the proportion of person-years spent in each status. Other includes: in education, disabled, in retirement. The sample is limited to those included in the regressions in Table 1, further restricted to those with complete life-course portfolios (aged 60+ at the time of the interview; 26 406 individuals). Country grouping between regions: Nordic: Denmark, Finland, Sweden; Central: Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Luxembourg, Switzerland; Southern: Croatia, Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Malta, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain; Eastern: Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungry, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia.

Figure 3: Detailed working status over the life course, by gender and region of Europe.



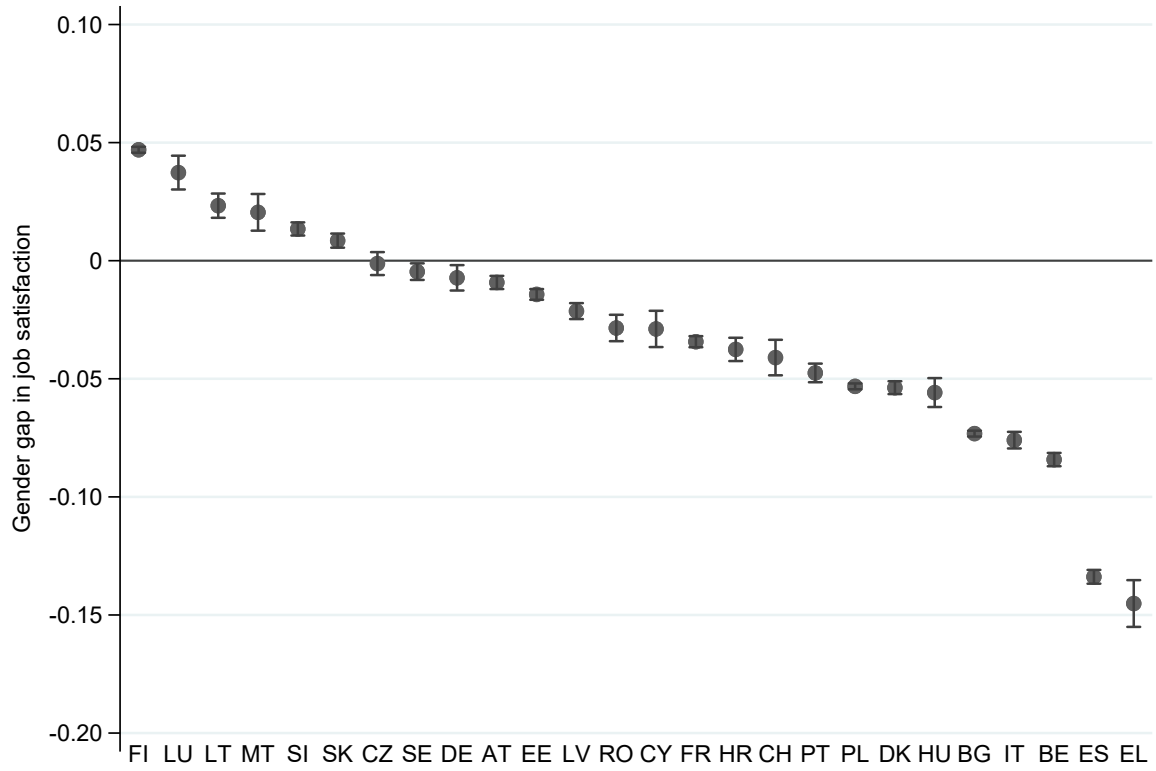
Notes: Only individuals who ever worked. Stacked bars show the proportion of person-years spent in each status. Other includes: in education, disabled, in retirement. For the note regarding the sample and country regional grouping see Figure 2.

Figure 4: Proportion of men and women responding to the statement *'All things considered, I was satisfied with my* [main] *job'*, by country.



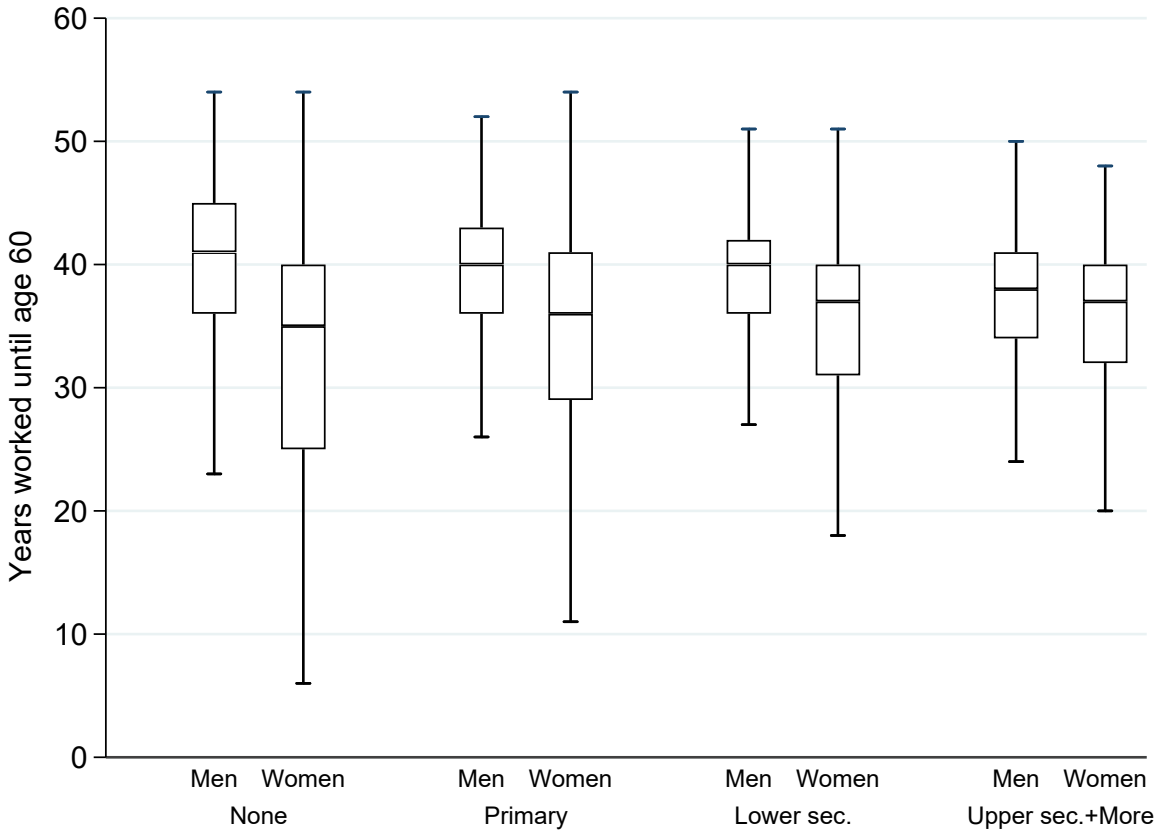
Notes: Countries ordered according to the highest proportion of women answering 'Strongly agree'.
Source: Own compilation based on SHARE wave 7, rel. 9.0.0 data.

Figure 5: Gender gap in satisfaction with the main job by country.



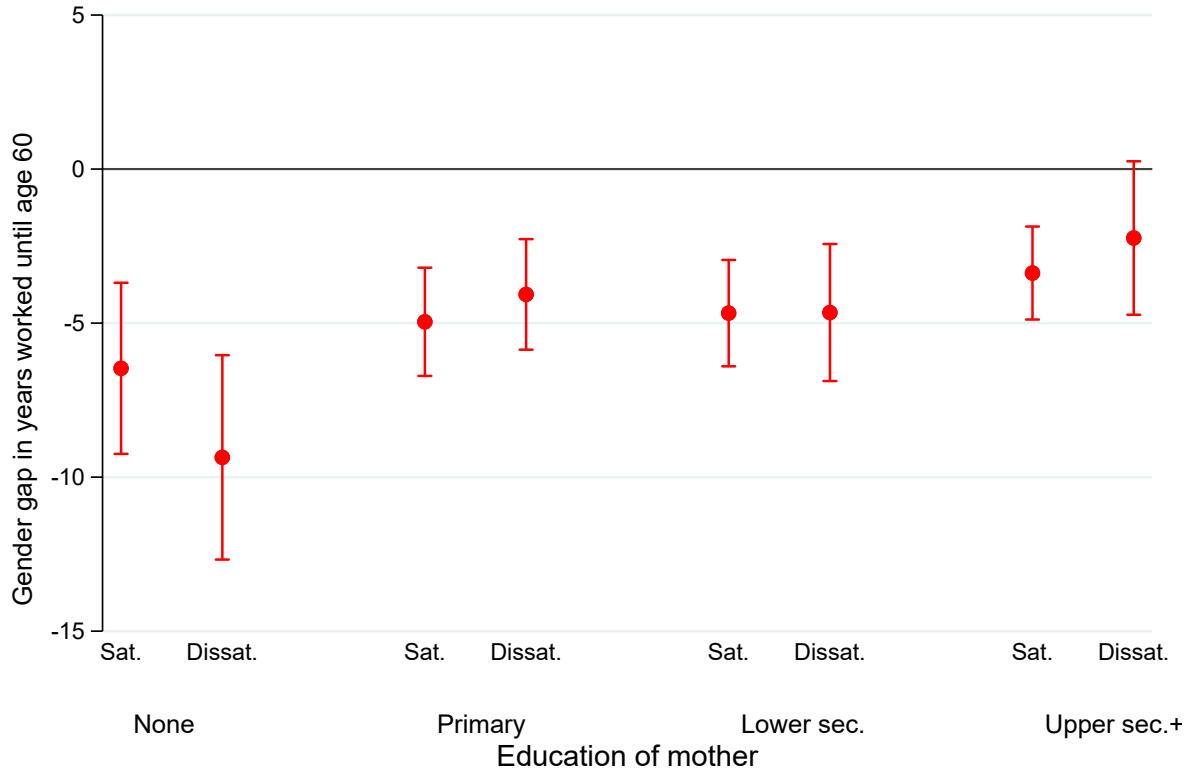
Notes: Marginal effects of the interaction between the female and the country indicators from an OLS estimation controlling additionally for birth cohorts and years of education. The dependent variable described in Notes to Table 1. Countries ordered by the size of the marginal effect. Whiskers indicate 95% confidence intervals.

Figure 6: Box plots with years worked until age 60 for men and women by level of maternal education.



Notes: .
Source: Own compilation based on SHARE wave 7, rel. 9.0.0 data.

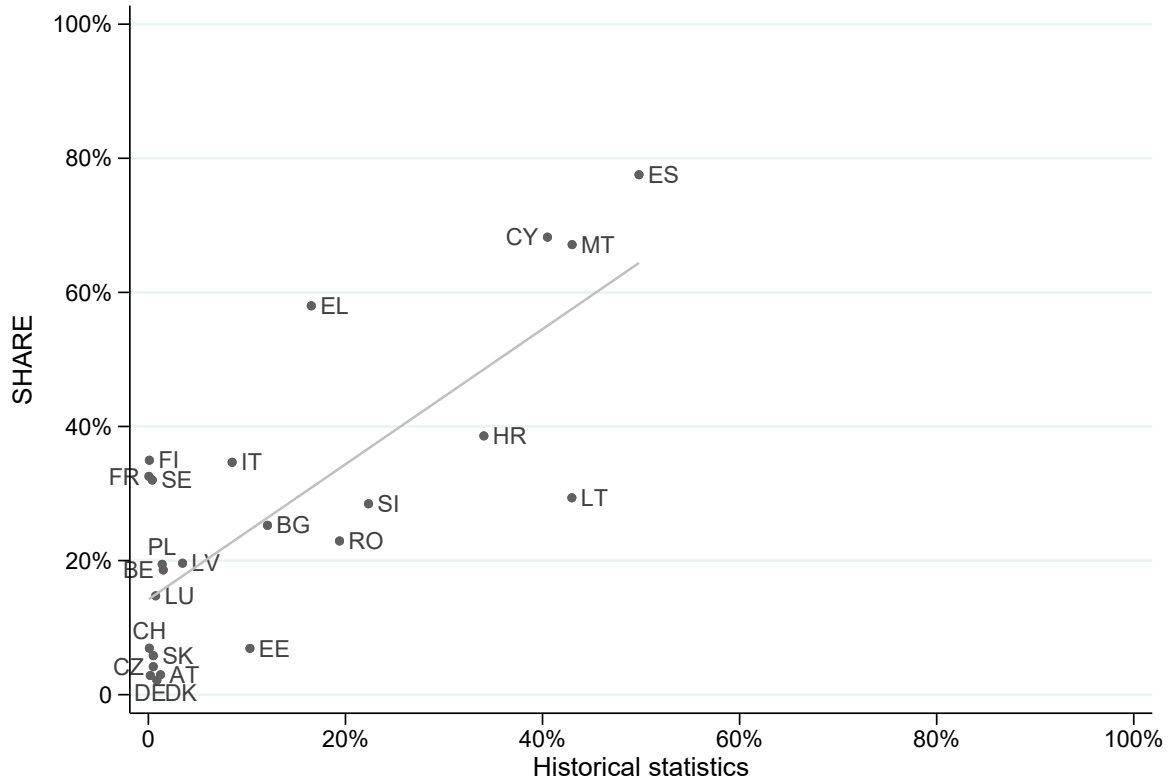
Figure 7: Contrasts of linear prediction: Gender gap in years worked until 60 for satisfied and dissatisfied with main job, by level of maternal education.



Notes: .
Source: Own compilation based on SHARE wave 7, rel. 9.0.0 data.

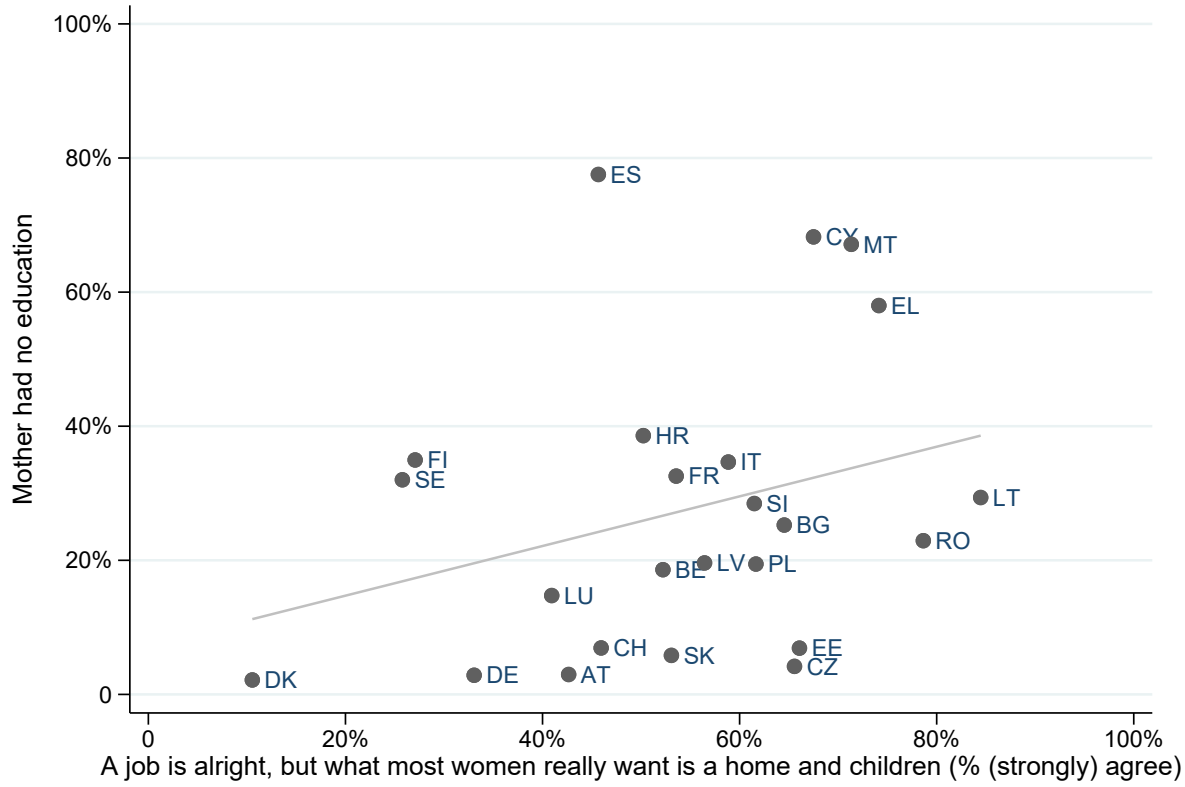
A Appendix

Figure A1: External validity of maternal education information in the SHARE data: a country-level comparison of proportion of SHARE participants' mothers without education with historical education data from censuses - proportion of women aged 30-34 years without any schooling in year 1950.



Notes: .
Source: Own compilation based on SHARE waves 5-9, rel. 9.0.0 data. Historical education data collected from censuses from [Barro and Lee, 2013].

Figure A2: Correlation of maternal education with gender norms: a country-level comparison of proportion of SHARE participants' mothers without education with proportion of respondents who strongly agreed or agreed with the statement *A job is alright, but what most women really want is a home and children.* in 2008 European Values Survey.



Notes: .
Source: Own compilation based on SHARE waves 5-9, rel. 9.0.0 data, and European Values Survey 2008 ([EVS, 2022]).

Table A1: Descriptive statistics

	Men		Women		Diff.
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	p
Age in 2017	71.299	8.358	70.583	8.829	0.716***
Birth cohort					
Before 1941	0.268	0.443	0.256	0.437	0.012*
1941-1950	0.429	0.495	0.397	0.489	0.032***
After 1950	0.303	0.460	0.347	0.476	-0.043***
Country					
AT	0.055	0.229	0.062	0.241	-0.006*
BE	0.055	0.228	0.049	0.216	0.006*
BG	0.034	0.181	0.041	0.199	-0.007**
CH	0.031	0.172	0.021	0.143	0.010***
CY	0.015	0.123	0.011	0.103	0.004***
CZ	0.066	0.248	0.092	0.290	-0.026***
DE	0.056	0.230	0.045	0.207	0.011***
DK	0.019	0.138	0.020	0.140	-0.001
EE	0.066	0.248	0.103	0.303	-0.037***
EL	0.017	0.129	0.010	0.101	0.007***
ES	0.071	0.258	0.055	0.228	0.016***
FI	0.024	0.152	0.021	0.143	0.003
FR	0.035	0.185	0.036	0.186	-0.000
HR	0.053	0.223	0.045	0.207	0.008**
HU	0.016	0.127	0.021	0.145	-0.005**
IT	0.057	0.233	0.039	0.195	0.018***
LT	0.018	0.132	0.028	0.164	-0.010***
LU	0.025	0.155	0.020	0.141	0.004*
LV	0.011	0.102	0.017	0.130	-0.007***
MT	0.015	0.121	0.012	0.107	0.003*
PL	0.060	0.238	0.062	0.241	-0.002
PT	0.023	0.149	0.018	0.134	0.004**
RO	0.028	0.164	0.021	0.143	0.007***
SE	0.048	0.213	0.043	0.203	0.005
SI	0.073	0.260	0.081	0.272	-0.008*
SK	0.029	0.169	0.027	0.162	0.002
I was satisfied with my main job					
1 Strongly disagree	0.012	0.110	0.016	0.127	-0.004**
2 Disagree	0.041	0.198	0.054	0.227	-0.013***
3 Agree	0.410	0.492	0.417	0.493	-0.007
4 Strongly agree	0.537	0.499	0.512	0.500	0.024***
Mother's education					
None	0.263	0.440	0.222	0.415	0.041***
Primary	0.332	0.471	0.327	0.469	0.005
Lower sec.	0.239	0.427	0.260	0.438	-0.020***
Upper sec. or more	0.166	0.372	0.192	0.394	-0.026***
Number of observations	13316		15465		28781

Notes: * p <0.10, ** p <0.05, *** p <0.01. The sample used in job satisfaction regressions: aged 50+ with completed working careers. Due to additional missings in maternal education, the number of observations for that variable is: Men: 10969; Women: 12842.

Table A2: Characteristics of the labour market participation and main job

	Men		Women		Diff.
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	p
(A) Labour market attachment					
Years worked until age 60	38.450	6.345	33.579	9.645	4.871***
Employed at age 40	0.973	0.161	0.863	0.344	0.111***
Employed at age 50	0.916	0.277	0.804	0.397	0.112***
Employed at age 55	0.832	0.373	0.671	0.470	0.161***
(B) Career structure before main job					
Number of jobs	1.250	1.467	1.097	1.385	0.153***
Length of employment gaps	0.630	1.696	1.657	4.212	-1.027***
Age at labour market entry	18.931	4.269	19.246	5.148	-0.316***
(C) Main job characteristics					
Age at main job entry	26.773	9.450	27.045	9.939	-0.272*
Public sector	0.471	0.499	0.550	0.498	-0.079***
Self-employed	0.087	0.282	0.056	0.230	0.031***
Part-time	0.005	0.073	0.057	0.231	-0.051***
Manual occupation	0.523	0.499	0.317	0.465	0.206***
(D) Stability of main job					
Tenure in main job	30.734	11.634	25.887	11.929	4.847***
Tenure 10+ years in main job	0.956	0.205	0.899	0.301	0.057***
Main job started before age 35	0.806	0.396	0.766	0.423	0.039***
Number of observations	12393		14013		26406

Notes: * p <0.10, ** p <0.05, *** p <0.01. The sample used in labour market attachment regressions: aged 60+ with completed working careers.

Table A3: Characteristics of the labour market participation by region

	Men		Women		Diff.
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	p
Years worked until age 60					
Nordic	38.426	6.063	35.347	7.649	3.079***
Central	38.969	5.533	31.714	11.277	7.255***
Southern	39.156	6.744	31.142	10.944	8.014***
Eastern	37.322	6.459	35.787	7.295	1.534***
Employed at age 40					
Nordic	0.970	0.171	0.899	0.301	0.071***
Central	0.981	0.135	0.764	0.424	0.217***
Southern	0.979	0.142	0.804	0.397	0.175***
Eastern	0.962	0.191	0.947	0.224	0.015***
Employed at age 50					
Nordic	0.945	0.228	0.924	0.266	0.022*
Central	0.951	0.216	0.762	0.426	0.189***
Southern	0.917	0.276	0.703	0.457	0.215***
Eastern	0.878	0.327	0.867	0.340	0.012
Employed at age 55					
Nordic	0.912	0.284	0.885	0.319	0.027*
Central	0.884	0.320	0.681	0.466	0.203***
Southern	0.812	0.390	0.511	0.500	0.301***
Eastern	0.788	0.409	0.722	0.448	0.066***
Number of observations	12393		14013		26406

Notes: * p <0.10, ** p <0.05, *** p <0.01. The sample used in labour market attachment regressions: aged 60+ with completed working careers.

Table A4: Heterogeneity in satisfaction with main job by fertility timing

	(1)	(2)
Women	-0.037***	-0.014
	(0.010)	(0.019)
First child before main job	0.075***	0.083***
	(0.017)	(0.017)
First child during main job	0.061***	0.076***
	(0.012)	(0.014)
First child after main job	-0.085**	-0.085
	(0.035)	(0.074)
Women × First child before main job		-0.017
		(0.019)
Women × First child during main job		-0.033
		(0.026)
Women × First child after main job		-0.009
		(0.078)
Observations	28781	28781
R-squared	0.070	0.070

Standard errors in parentheses

* $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Notes: OLS estimates. See notes in Table 1. Models (1) and (2) are extensions of Model (3) from Table 1, with number of jobs before main added in controls. Standard errors clustered at the country level.

Table A5: Gender differences in accumulated years worked until age 60: Testing alternative mechanisms

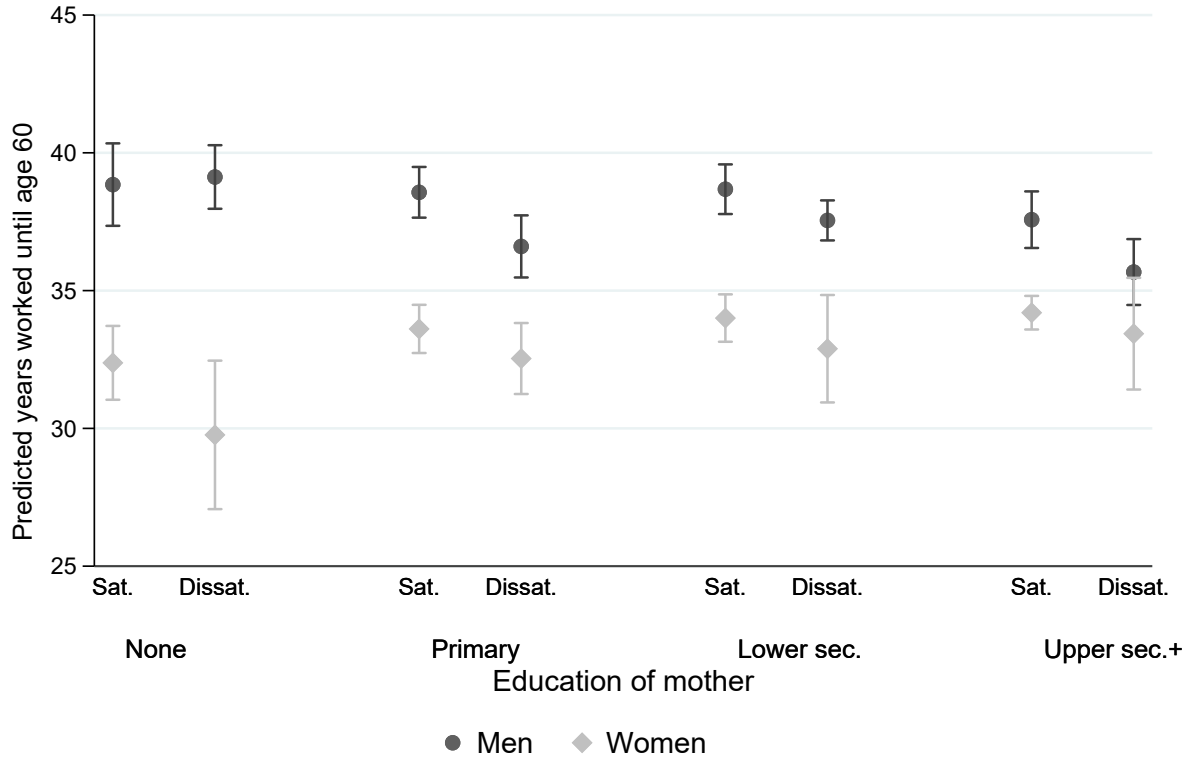
	(1)	(2)
Women	-4.371***	-6.463***
	(0.957)	(1.348)
Dissatisfied	0.853*	0.277
	(0.475)	(0.651)
Women × Dissatisfied	-2.275**	-2.865***
	(0.976)	(0.854)
ln Wage	-0.212	
	(0.130)	
Childhood health (ref. Excellent)		
Very good		0.013
		(0.158)
Good		-0.247
		(0.168)
Fair/Poor		-0.654***
		(0.227)
Mother's education (ref. None)		
Primary	0.044	-0.508
	(0.427)	(0.735)
Lower sec.	-0.019	-0.588
	(0.574)	(0.839)
Upper sec.+More	-0.393	-1.342
	(0.560)	(0.898)
Women × Dissatisfied × Primary	4.840***	3.741***
	(1.200)	(1.032)
Women × Dissatisfied × Lower sec.	4.116***	3.002***
	(1.287)	(0.991)
Women × Dissatisfied × Upper sec.+More	1.512	3.884***
	(1.314)	(1.187)
Observations	11894	21461
R-squared	0.380	0.296

Standard errors in parentheses

* $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Notes: OLS estimates. See notes in Table 1. Models (1) and (2) are extensions of Model (4) from Table 5, with added respectively - the logarithm of wage at the end of the main job (1) and childhood health status (2). Standard errors clustered at the country level.

Figure A3: Marginal effects: Predicted years worked until 60 for men and women, by satisfaction with main job and level of maternal education.



Notes: .
Source: Own compilation based on SHARE wave 7, rel. 9.0.0 data.

References

R. J. Barro and J. W. Lee. A new data set of educational attainment in the world, 1950–2010. *Journal of Development Economics*, 104:184–198, Sept. 2013. ISSN 0304-3878. doi: 10.1016/j.jdeveco.2012.10.001. URL https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0304387812000855.

M. Bertrand and K. F. Hallock. The Gender Gap in Top Corporate Jobs. *ILR Review*, 55(1):3–21, 2001. ISSN 0019-7939. doi: 10.2307/2696183. URL https://www.jstor.org/stable/2696183.

F. D. Blau and L. M. Kahn. The Gender Pay Gap: Have Women Gone as Far as They Can? *Academy of Management Perspectives*, 21(1):7–23, 2007. ISSN 1558-9080. URL https://www.jstor.org/stable/4166284.

F. D. Blau and L. M. Kahn. The Gender Wage Gap: Extent, Trends, and Explanations. *Journal of Economic Literature*, 55(3):789–865, Sept. 2017. ISSN 0022-0515. doi: 10.1257/jel.20160995. URL https://www.aeaweb.org/articles?id=10.1257/jel.20160995.

F. Bourguignon, M. Fournier, and M. Gurgand. Selection Bias Corrections Based on the Multinomial Logit Model: Monte Carlo Comparisons. *Journal of Economic Surveys*, 21(1):174–205, 2007. ISSN 1467-6419. doi: 10.1111/j.1467-6419.2007.00503.x. URL https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/j.1467-6419.2007.00503.x. _eprint: https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/j.1467-6419.2007.00503.x.

D. Card, A. R. Cardoso, and P. Kline. Bargaining, Sorting, and the Gender Wage Gap: Quantifying the Impact of Firms on the Relative Pay of Women *. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 131(2):633–686, May 2016. ISSN 0033-5533. doi: 10.1093/qje/qjv038. URL https://doi.org/10.1093/qje/qjv038.

A. E. Clark. Job satisfaction and gender: Why are women so happy at work? *Labour Economics*, 4(4):341–372, Dec. 1997. ISSN 0927-5371. doi: 10.1016/S0927-5371(97)00010-9. URL https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0927537197000109.

EVS. EVS Trend File 1981-2017, 2022. URL https://search.gesis.org/research_data/ZA7503?doi=10.4232/1.14021.

A. C. Fernández Puente and N. Sánchez-Sánchez. How Gender-Based Disparities affect Women's Job Satisfaction? Evidence from Euro-Area. *Social Indicators Research*, 156 (1):137–165, July 2021. ISSN 0303-8300, 1573-0921. doi: 10.1007/s11205-021-02647-1. URL https://link.springer.com/10.1007/s11205-021-02647-1.

C. Goldin. The Quiet Revolution That Transformed Women's Employment, Education, and Family. *American Economic Review*, 96(2):1–21, May 2006. ISSN 0002-8282. doi: 10.1257/000282806777212350. URL https://www.aeaweb.org/articles?id=10.1257/000282806777212350.

C. Goldin. A Grand Gender Convergence: Its Last Chapter. *American Economic Review*, 104(4):1091–1119, Apr. 2014. ISSN 0002-8282. doi: 10.1257/aer.104.4.1091. URL https://www.aeaweb.org/articles?id=10.1257/aer.104.4.1091.

C. Goldin, S. P. Kerr, C. Olivetti, and E. Barth. The Expanding Gender Earnings Gap: Evidence from the LEHD-2000 Census. *American Economic Review*, 107(5):110–114, May 2017. ISSN 0002-8282. doi: 10.1257/aer.p20171065. URL https://pubs.aeaweb.org/doi/10.1257/aer.p20171065.

C. P. Green, J. S. Heywood, P. Kler, and G. Leeves. Paradox Lost: The Disappearing Female Job Satisfaction Premium. *British Journal of Industrial Relations*, 56(3):484–502, Sept. 2018. ISSN 0007-1080, 1467-8543. doi: 10.1111/bjir.12291. URL https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/bjir.12291.

L. Hauret and D. R. Williams. Cross-National Analysis of Gender Differences in Job Satisfaction. *Industrial Relations: A Journal of Economy and Society*, 56(2):203–235, 2017. ISSN 1468-232X. doi: 10.1111/irel.12171. URL https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/irel.12171. _eprint: https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/irel.12171.

J. J. Heckman. Sample Selection Bias as a Specification Error. *Econometrica*, 47(1):153–161, 1979. ISSN 0012-9682. doi: 10.2307/1912352. URL https://www.jstor.org/stable/1912352.

R. Hodson. Gender Differences in Job Satisfaction: Why Aren't Women More Dissatisfied? *The Sociological Quarterly*, 30(3):385–399, Sept. 1989. ISSN 0038-0253, 1533-8525. doi: 10.1111/j.1533-8525.1989.tb01527.x. URL https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1111/j.1533-8525.1989.tb01527.x.

L. C. Kaiser. Gender-job satisfaction differences across Europe: An indicator for labour market modernization. *International Journal of Manpower*, 28(1):75–94, Jan. 2007. ISSN 0143-7720. doi: 10.1108/01437720710733483. URL https://doi.org/10.1108/01437720710733483.

C. Perugini and M. Vladisavljević. Gender inequality and the gender-job satisfaction paradox in Europe. *Labour Economics*, 60:129–147, Oct. 2019. ISSN 09275371. doi: 10.1016/j.labeco.2019.06.006. URL https://linkinghub.elsevier.com/retrieve/pii/S0927537119300624.

C. Pita and R. J. Torregrosa. The gender-job satisfaction paradox through time and countries. *Applied Economics Letters*, 28(12):1000–1005, July 2021. ISSN 1350-4851, 1466-4291. doi: 10.1080/13504851.2020.1792402. URL https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/13504851.2020.1792402.

A. Sousa-Poza and A. Sousa-Poza. The Paradox of the Content Female Worker.

A. Sousa-Poza and A. A. Sousa-Poza. Gender differences in job satisfaction in Great Britain, 1991–2000: permanent or transitory? *Applied Economics Letters*, 10(11):691–694, Sept. 2003. ISSN 1350-4851. doi: 10.1080/1350485032000133264. URL https://doi.org/10.1080/1350485032000133264. _eprint: https://doi.org/10.1080/1350485032000133264.