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**INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS DYNAMICS AND GENDER DYNAMICS: A
COMPARATIVE STUDY ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF WORKPLACE UNIONS IN
ADVOCATING FOR WORK-LIFE BALANCE AND GENDER EQUALITY IN
GERMANY AND CHILE**

**THESIS TO OBTAIN THE ACADEMIC DEGREE IN
MAGÍSTER EN GESTIÓN DE PERSONAS Y DINÁMICA ORGANIZACIONAL**

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my parents, Claudia and Frank, as well as to my grandparents, Bernhard and Johanna, who have provided unwavering support throughout my academic journey, which has taken me far from where I grew up in Lenthe. I also dedicate this thesis to my closest friends, Ilay and Debo, who have provided the final motivational boost I needed to complete this project. Finally, I would like to dedicate this thesis to the entire academic community of the Faculty of Economics and Business of the University of Chile, who have welcomed me with open arms and made my time in Chile an unforgettable experience.

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Abbreviations

BetrVG	Betriebsverfassungsgesetz (see WCA)
EntgTranspG	German Transparency in Wage Structures Act
EU	European Union
GEB	Gender Equality Bargaining
HRM	Human Resource Management
IR	Industrial Relations
MNAR	Missing not at random (missing values of variables)
WCA	German Works Constitution Act
WLB	Work Life Balance
VUCA	Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, Ambiguity

Abstract

Despite challenges, workplace unions play a crucial role in advocating for progress in Work-Life Balance (WLB) and gender equality, leveraging opportunity structures to renew their bargaining agendas. This thesis examines union effectiveness by exploring how two sets of factors, IR dynamics (representation support, topic involvement, management relations, union experience) and gender dynamics (feminization of organization, feminization of union, gender of the union's president), influence unions' contributions to organizational progress in WLB and gender equality. Considering the lack of comparisons between Chile and Germany given their distinct IR regimes, this study aims to bridge this gap through a cross-case synthesis technique and binary logistic regressions.

The empirical findings present mixed results, revealing no universal conclusion regarding the applicability of IR and gender dynamics. While core IR aspects in Germany and Chile empower unions to advocate for WLB, promoting gender equality demands a more nuanced approach. In Germany, effective union advocacy for gender equality relies on reliable management support, experience, and organizational feminization. Conversely, Chilean unions benefit from a facilitative relationship with management and a broader focus on contemporary topics like WLB. Thus, union effectiveness varies by country, underscoring the complexity to tailor union strategies to the unique national and issue-based contexts.

1 Introduction

In the research area of contemporary industrial and labor dynamics, the quest for achieving an optimal Work-Life Balance (WLB) stands as a paramount pursuit. This drive has garnered substantial attention in both social discourse and academic inquiry over the past decades (Guest, 2002; Kalliath & Brough, 2008), propelled further by the challenges posed by the volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA) landscape of the modern world (Demetriades et al., 2006; Gregory & Milner, 2009a). Defined as the “the individual perception that work and non-work activities are compatible and promote growth in accordance with an individual’s current life priorities” from Kalliath & Brough (2008, p. 326), WLB encapsulates the delicate equilibrium between engagement in work-related tasks and responsibilities and the minimization of conflicts between work and family obligations (Sirgy & Lee, 2018). But how can this alignment of work and nonwork roles take concrete action?

Not only the International Labor Organization (2023) but also other scholars conclude that flexible working time regimes play a pivotal role of WLB (Fagan et al., 2012; Gregory & Milner, 2009a). Additionally, specialized leave policies such as parental leaves or sabbatical leaves, dependent care arrangements in regards to child or elderly care (McDonald et al., 2005) and other forms of personal motivated leave scenarios such as health, wellness or social work (Sirgy & Lee, 2018) are relevant factors describing the idea of WLB. However, amidst the pursuit of balance, it is imperative to recognize the differential impacts experienced by various social groups within organizations, especially concerning gender disparities (Acker, 2006). The gendered perspective on WLB reveals structural imbalances, with women often bearing a disproportionate burden of over- and

underemployment, leading to adverse implications for both WLB and overall well-being (International Labor Organization, 2023).

While a whole array of gender gaps on pay, leadership or training exists and are well documented (Jirjahn & Mohrenweiser, 2021), Goldin (2014) analyses that a nonlinear relationship exists between flexible working times and earnings. In other words, an organization values continuous working hours in a given setting more than other flexible work-time schedules. Considering that more women work part-time or under different flexible work-time regimes across all organizational positions than men in the European Union (EU) (Eurostat, 2023) or in OECD countries (OECD, 2022), flexibility as key part of WLB comes at a high cost (Goldin, 2014) equipping the concept with an inherent structural gender perspective.

Integrated in WLB but also a relevant topic in itself, gender equality remains a critical discourse in workplace dynamics (Gregory & Milner, 2009b; Warren, 2021), plagued by persistent disparities across pay, leadership roles, and training opportunities (Jirjahn & Mohrenweiser, 2021). The quest for gender parity faces considerable hurdles, with estimations suggesting it could take up to 131 years to achieve under current conditions (World Economic Forum, 2023). Structural barriers such as glass ceilings and pay gaps underscore the systemic nature of gender inequality in organizational settings (Beirne & Wilson, 2016). Hereby, the global gender pay gap, which is currently at 11.9% and constitutes the key figure to assess gender disparities, exemplifies the ongoing discrimination faced by women. Although there has been some progress since the pay gap was at 14% in 2010, change is happening slowly (OECD, 2023).

Amidst these challenges, workplace unions¹ emerge as key actors in shaping labor dynamics and advancing the agendas of WLB and gender equality (Gregory & Milner, 2009b). The tripartite model proposed by Williamson & Colley (2023) of a so-called legislative tripod, comprising collective bargaining, state legislation, and human resource policies, underscores the pivotal role of workplace unions in effecting change. Hereby, the role of workplace unions can be especially highlighted as they allow for filling up “empty shells” with life (Milner & Gregory, 2014). This occurs as workplace issues can be raised and addressed through monitoring and information gathering capacities (Bryson & Forth, 2010; Jirjahn & Mohrenweiser, 2021). The so-called execution of indirect collective voice has the chance to overcome individual bargaining dilemmas as the responsibility of information, monitoring, and enforcement of employee-friendly advancements in the organization is delegated to an organ that canalizes singular voices into collective negotiation power (Jirjahn et al., 2022). As such, through their collective voice capacity, workplace unions bridge the gap between individual concerns and organizational policies, advocating for employee-friendly initiatives and influencing the organizational agenda towards enhanced WLB and gender equality (Acker, 2006).

Hereby, an opportunity structure inside the workplace employment relations process², which consists of representation process and representation support, the degree of involvement as well as the quality of the relationship between workplace union and

¹ As the industrial relations systems in Chile and Germany differ in their institutional setup, the overarching term “workplace union” is used to refer to the inner-company roles of Chilean trade unions and mainly the company-based roles of German work councils instead of industry-wide German trade unions.

² While Greene et al.(2021) use the term “workplace employment relations process” to encapsulate the mentioned dimensions, this thesis uses the term “industrial relations (IR) dynamics” as it better encompasses the interplay between the factors and is more coherent with the conceptual framework elaborated in [chapter 2](#).

management (Greene et al., 2021), can be exploited by unions to boost their effectiveness (Bryson & Forth, 2010; Gregory & Milner, 2009b). This effectiveness can be seen through organizational advancements in WLB and gender equality as their progress is in line with the interest of the workforce (Budd & Mumford, 2004; Heywood & Jirjahn, 2009).

However, the effectiveness of workplace unions in advancing these agendas is not only contingent on the mentioned dimensions that encapsulate the workplace IR dynamics, but also on gender-related factors. Based on Rigby & O'Brien-Smith's (2010) study on trade union interventions on WLB, which outlines the relevance of considering structural variables and the gender of the main workforce and workplace union, it is pertinent to investigate how the feminization of the organization and composition of the workplace union influences the effectiveness in the advancement of gender equality and WLB. While Gregory & Milner (2009b) underline the relevance of female leadership in the advancement of WLB and gender equality, Greene et al. (2021) are more cautious in their conclusion and refer to contextual factors. Based on a literature review, [chapter 2.6](#) outlines the adopted hypothesis.

Furthermore, the concept of Gender Equality Bargaining (GEB) underscores the importance of integrating gender-specific demands into collective bargaining agendas (Williamson & Baird, 2014). GEB operates within a framework of regulatory levels, which shape the arena for possible collective bargaining actions. Based on Dickens (1998) and further elaborated by Williamson (2010) and Williamson & Baird (2014) those levels include supranational, national, industry and organizational factors. Aligning the comparative approach of Gregory & Milner (2009b) of the United Kingdom and France with the aforementioned national level of GEB, a comparison of the changing cultural,

social and legal frameworks in different countries allows for a more comprehensive analysis of the impact of workplace unions on gender equality and WLB (Berg et al., 2013).

Accordingly, comparative analyses of two countries with differing industrial relations regimes, such as Chile and Germany, offer valuable insights into the contextual factors that influence the effectiveness of workplace unions in advancing WLB and gender equality (Berg et al., 2013). Despite their divergent historical, social, and legal contexts, both countries grapple with neoliberal trends that shape their industrial relations landscape, albeit to varying degrees (Baccaro & Howell, 2011). Although Chile and Germany are often used separately in regional comparative case studies (Atzeni et al., 2011; Ugarte Gómez & Grimshaw, 2015; Visser, 2009), no comparison between the two countries in this matter has been conducted.

Therefore, this thesis intends to add value by elaborating on the first comparative case study of Chile and Germany. As such, the difference in the historical, social, and legal context of both countries' industrial relations systems may yield relevant insights into the advancement of WLB and gender equality. By examining these contrasting contexts, this thesis seeks to elucidate the interplay between institutional frameworks, IR dynamics, and gender dynamics, offering valuable contributions to the role of workplace unions in impacting the advancement on WLB and gender equality in organizational settings. Moreover, as most studies conducted up to the first decade of the 21st century often consider the existence of trade unions in companies as a dummy variable to measure their impact, this thesis follows up on the call from Jirjahn et al. (2011), Ravenswood & Markey (2011) and Greene et al. (2021) to gather deeper insights into the conditions of effective workplace unions in advancing on relevant topics in recent industrial relations

research. In coherence with the previous discussion, the present thesis follows the research question and objectives below.

Research question

- To what extent do IR and gender dynamics impact the workplace union's effectiveness in advancing the agenda for WLB and gender equality in Germany and Chile?

General objective

- Investigate the relevance of IR dynamics and gender dynamics as impact factors for the effectiveness of workplace unions in advancing the WLB and gender equality agenda in Germany and Chile.

Specific objectives

- Determine in which way representation support, degree of involvement, quality of relationship and experience of the workplace union lead to further advancements on WLB and gender equality policies (H1, H2).
- Explore which effects feminization in organization and workplace union as well as the gender of the workplace union's president have on the advancements of WLB and gender equality for Germany and Chile (H3, H4).

2 Conceptual framework(s)

The theoretical framework of this research develops the guidelines presented in the introduction in a more detailed way, allowing for a more in-depth theoretical discussion. To set the context, first, the relevance of workplace unions as indirect voice representation is outlined in [chapter 2.1](#). Hereby, key concepts such as social dialog and codetermination are defined as central characteristics of industrial relations regimes, which enables a further deepening of the country-specific characteristics for Germany in Chile in [chapter 3](#).

After having established the importance of workplace unions a connection is made to the two core topics of this thesis: gender equality ([chapter 2.2](#)) and WLB ([chapter 2.3](#)). After this initial outline, external and internal challenges of unions in their advocacy for both topics are discussed in [chapter 2.4.1](#). Next, the opportunity structure from Gregory & Milner (2009b) serves as a guideline in [chapter 2.4.2](#) to assess micro, meso and macro mechanisms to understand the potential of workplace unions to advance on WLB and gender equality. Afterwards, based on the discussion on gender politics as part of the opportunity structure, the role of feminization in workplace union and organization is deepened in [chapter 2.5](#) as it serves as additional set of influence factors on organizational progress in both topics. Finally, the discussion and justification of the hypothesis based on the previous discussion of the conceptual frameworks is presented in [chapter 2.6](#).

2.1 Workplace unions as indirect voice mechanism

In its pioneer work on the role of unions, Freeman & Medoff (1979), based on the concept of “exit and voice” from Hirschman (1972), discuss two views on workplace unions as “labor monopoly” or “collective voice/institutional response” and apply the “exit or voice” scenario to the industrial relations research. As the “monopolistic view” sees workplace unions as harmful force inside a labor market, artificially driving up wages and lowering productivity, “collective voice” understands unions as crucial part of giving individuals a stand against the capital allowing for changes in institutions, higher productivity as well as equality (Freeman & Medoff, 1979). Consequently, while the execution of voice in an organizational setting can cause considerable internal turmoil, it also offers the opportunity to enter in a so-called **social dialogue** between employees and employers which opens spaces to engage in effective employment relations for all stakeholders involved. As such, workplace unions give the employees an alternative option than to vote only with their feet by quitting their jobs when confronted with adversaries. Instead, the workplace union’s voice can serve as a door opener towards a dialogue with management which further facilitates spaces to engage in effective employment relations for all stakeholders involved (Freeman & Medoff, 1979; Mowbray et al., 2015).

In their attempt to characterize the debate on voice, Mowbray et al. (2015) point towards two perspectives on voice execution. On the one hand, the prominent viewpoint of the **Human Resource Management (HRM)** line of investigation is interested in the direct voice elements of individual representation by speaking up. Even though individual voice becomes relevant in raising pro-social improvements (Mowbray et al., 2015), due to asymmetric information and power relations between employee and employer, it can

occur that single voices are too low to be heard when dealing with structural policy adoptions on topics such as WLB or gender equality (Jirjahn & Mohrenweiser, 2021). According to HRM theory, unions are rather dysfunctional as they create more conflicts in a employment relations setting where more harmony and joint problem-solving would be appropriate (Lewin, 2005). This focus of HRM on a consistent cooperation and constructive environment rather mirrors the interests of the employer, considering employee demands and wellbeing out of a perspective of organizational performance (De Prins et al., 2020). Consequently, the combination of Budd's (2004) theory on the necessity for a balance of efficiency, equity, and voice with HRM theories places management in a position of authority, framing their policies as win-win solutions for all stakeholders (De Spiegelaere, 2023).

On the other hand, research of **Employee/Industrial Relations (IR)** looks at the concept of voice as a mechanism of collective mobilization, which is often facilitated through workplace unions. This so-called collective voice institution has the chance to overcome individual bargaining dilemmas as the responsibility of information, monitoring, and enforcement of pro-employee advancements in the organization is delegated to an organ that canalizes singular voices into collective negotiation power (Jirjahn et al., 2022). In contrast to HRM, IR is traditionally looking at employee wellbeing and the broader societal context, often addressing power disbalances through a conflictual approach towards an organization's management (De Prins et al., 2020). As individual voice might fail to legitimately represent employee's interest due to organizational power asymmetries with differing interests, workplace unions are created and studied in IR research as subject in the institutionalization of conflict allowing to rebalance unequal power relations through collective mobilization (De Spiegelaere, 2023).

While both research streams have their reasons for existence and relevance, De Prins et al. (2020), based on the work of other scholars, suggest a neo-pluralistic new school of thought that combines IR & HRM on a cooperative basis which is illustrated in [figure 1](#) below. As such, the IR & HRM practices are seen as mutually reinforcing, laying the focus on a coalition between employers and employees instead of hardened positions on harmony or conflict. The latter can be seen through the terms “pluralistic” and “unitary”. While classical HRM research is framed around the approach that employees and employers have mostly the same (unitarist) interests in an organizational context, classical IR research starts from the premise that divergent (pluralist) interests exist between both actors leading to varying degrees of cooperation and conflict in the attempt to reach suitable trade-offs for management and employees (De Spiegelaere, 2023).

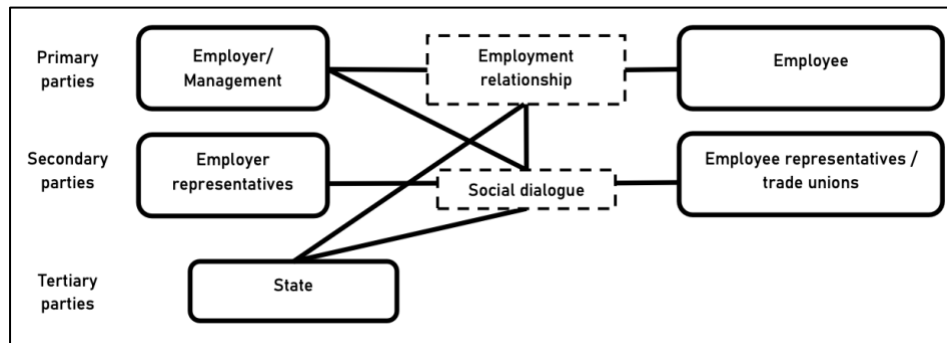
Figure 1: Comparing HRM and IR perspectives (De Prins et al., 2020, p. 1691) based on Delaney and Godard (2002) and Boselie (2010).

	Classical IR	Classical HRM	New schools of thought within IR & HRM
Conception of employee relation	Pluralistic	Unitary	(Neo)-pluralistic
Interests	Conflicting	Shared	Both
Participation	Institutionalized	Direct	Both
Climate	Hostile	Cooperation	Mostly cooperative
Importance of social partners	Substantial	Minor	Substantial
Focus	Societal performance	Organizational performance	Societal, organizational and individual performance

Promoted by the International Labor Organization and the EU, it can be argued that this movement is also encompassed by the term **social dialogue**, highlighting a two-way exchange of information between employee and employer representatives (Bryson et al., 2012) depicted in [figure 2](#) further below. Hereby, the singular contractual employment

relationship that binds an employee to an employer is lifted on a bargaining context connecting and representing the individual case through a consolidated approach.

Figure 2: The actors in social dialogue (De Spiegelaeere, 2023, p. 63) in an adapted version from (Edwards, 2003, p. 9).

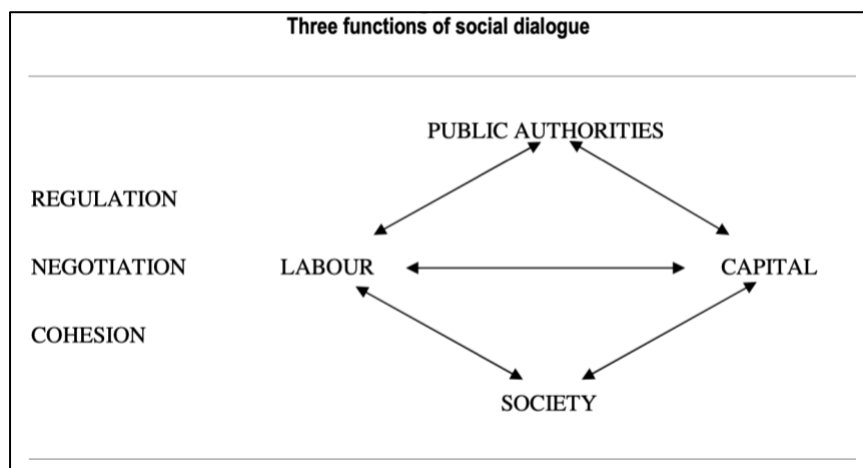


In this context, [figure 3](#) on the next page depicts a characterization of social dialogue. While social dialogue can span from bargaining to consultation and negotiation over to joint agreements (Hyman, 2010), its specific usage is determined by the national industrial relations system. In the exemplary case of [figure 3](#), the term encompasses the negotiation between workplace unions and organizations, which is embedded in regulations from public authorities and legitimated processes of the socio-economic model by the society as a whole.

In his discussion around the model, Hyman (2010) refers to two biases that distort the concept of social dialogue, a bias towards compromise and a bias towards procedures. Therefore, an understanding of social dialogue that is only focused on cooperation (see HRM view outlined by De Prins et al. (2020)), not giving space to conflict, yields to an overly optimistic approach (compromise bias). Hereby, it might happen that the focus of social dialogue structures lies on the process, while the outcome between the involved

parties is neglected, hollowing out the effectiveness of social dialogue (procedural bias). Thus, he argues in favor of statutory norm-setting to support agreements so that otherwise empty talks in bipartite dialogue settings become binding, especially in times of crisis and globalization which may undermine possible positive-sum logics Hyman (2010).

Figure 3: Three functions of social dialogue (Hyman, 2010, p. 12).



Following up on the latter mentioned role of the legislator, an additional form of **social dialogue** exists in which the government or a supra-national organization, such as the EU, enters the dialogue table as actor and not just as a framework provider and enforcer. Consequently, this setting can be called **tripartite social dialogue** as tertiary parties are involved as depicted in [figure 3](#). Those dialogue forums facilitate the involvement of unions in the development of broader policy with company and state representatives. This involvement may result in the adoption of framework agreements or social pacts, which serve as broader implementation guidelines at the individual organizational level. In the case of European framework agreements, it is interesting to mention that they

also touch on the relevant topics of this thesis, such as the agreements on parental leave (1995, 2009) and part-time work (1997) for the concept of WLB and gender equality (2005) for the eponymous concept (International Labor Organization, 2022).

As such, the role of workplace union through social dialogue forums serves as important mechanisms to balance power asymmetries by providing employee demands with a legitimate institution to channel their voices. Another illustration of the relevance of workplace unions as collective voice of an organization's employees in a context of the European-born social dialogue is the emergence of **codetermination** mechanisms that follow the logic of a stakeholder primacy (Hyman, 2010). Developed in war-torn Germany after the end of WW2, the policy spread to other Central and Northern European countries (Jäger et al., 2022a). In this context, different mechanisms and levels of codetermination can be distinguished. For the case of Germany, following the introduction of Fulton (2020), codetermination takes place at a workplace level through work councils, at a company level through participation of workers in the supervisory board as well as at a collective level through industry-wide negotiating trade unions. Hereby, workplace or shop-level codetermination through work councils offer a particular counterbalance to power and information asymmetries strengthening the role of human capital in a capitalistic enterprise (Bryson & Forth, 2010; Jäger et al., 2022). Thus, work councils help to canalize the voice needs of workers into more negotiating power to counterbalance the inherent asymmetries in individual employment relations.

As a cooperative approach in the relations between employee representation and management seems to be fruitful for the advancement of employee wellbeing, conflict resolution as well as organizational productivity (Bryson & Forth, 2010; De Prins et al.,

2020; Visser, 2009), ultimately the execution of voice only can live up to these claims when it is effective. Therefore, social dialogue and negotiation processes need to yield concrete results to not be “no more than window-dressing for employer unilateralism” (Hyman, 2010, p. 13). This call for effectiveness is also taken up from Bryson & Forth (2010) and for the purpose of the thesis is seen inside the advancements of two key topics: WLB and gender equality. Therefore, after a brief introduction in both topics, the involvement of workplace unions in each issue is outlined in the following chapters.

2.2 Gender Equality

Following the analysis of the World Economic Forum's 17th Global Gender Gap Index, it would take up to 131 years to achieve gender parity under current conditions. Accordingly, a variety of gender gaps, such as income disparities, poorer working conditions, less participation in senior management, and lower skill levels necessary for future employment, still exist today and remain rigidly resistant to change (World Economic Forum, 2023). Various structural barriers, such as the metaphorical "Glass Walls, Ceilings, and Cliffs," emerge to prevent women from participating on an equal footing (Beirne & Wilson, 2016). Hereby, a key indicator of women's inequality in the employment context is the global gender pay gap, currently at 11.9%, which illustrates the persistent discrimination women face. Although there has been some progress since the pay gap stood at 14% in 2010, change is slow (OECD, 2023). Prior to a more detailed examination of the difficulties of workplace unions as actors of interest for this research

in advancing WLB in [chapter 2.3](#), the concepts of gender equality and specifically the gender pay gap will be introduced.

According to the ILO, “gender equality refers to the enjoyment of equal rights, opportunities and treatment by men and women and by boys and girls in all spheres of life. It asserts that people’s rights, responsibilities, social status and access to resources do not depend on whether they are born male or female” (International Labor Organization, 2007, p. 91). Considered in this broad definition, gender equality encompasses all aspects of life in which discrimination is exclusively based on the identified gender of a person takes place³. As the argument in favor of gender equality is supported from a socio-ethical normative angle, from an economic perspective and also from a broader developmental view (as gender equality in itself is a Sustainable Development Goal inside the Agenda 2030 of the United Nations), the thesis assumes the relevance and desirability to achieve equality in the industrial relations context.

While the term **social action** encompasses all preferential actions taken towards the promotion of certain groups facing inequality, such as special networking events for women’s recruiting in technical positions, the concept of **positive discrimination** addresses the existence of structural inequality by setting up legally binding considerations, e.g. mandatory gender quotas in workplace unions or management boards (Noon, 2010; Norris, 2001). As such, positive discrimination might not address

³ At this point it is important to mention that not only inequalities based on gender exist. The term intersectionality, coined by Crenshaw in the late 1980s, describes the interconnectedness of mutually reinforcing identities (social categories) such as race, class, sexuality, or gender (Nash, 2008; Shields, 2008), which, independent of their high relevance to understand multi-layered forms of discrimination and equality struggles, will not be further discussed as it is not part of the focus area of the present thesis.

the root cause of inequality but can help to counteract on existing structural disadvantages (Beirne & Wilson, 2016). This might be a promising approach for the organizational setting as Acker (2006) adds to the earlier discussion structural inequalities and countermeasures the notion of **inequality regimes**. This concept takes social categories as the basis of inequality and connects them with equality barriers inside organizations. However, Beirne & Wilson (2016) point to the rejection of positive discrimination measures in popular opinion, arguing against the case of **reverse discrimination** through a top-down approach. This is in line with the idea that negotiations for gender equality should not take place from a “female deficit model”, but rather from a case of relevance to all genders, with equal opportunities being mainstreamed (Dickens, 2000; Williamson & Baird, 2014).

In order to limit the scope of the discussion on gender equality to the context of employment relations, the ILO definition again sets the stage by outlining the context of gender equality within the discussion on decent work, operationalizing the concept as “equality of opportunity and treatment, equality of remuneration and access to safe and healthy working environments, equality in association and collective bargaining, equality in obtaining meaningful career development, maternity protection, and a balance between work and home life that is fair to both men and women” (International Labor Organization, 2007, p. 92). While all aspects of gender equality are relevant, for this thesis three concepts out of the previous definition are of utmost importance: “equality of remuneration”, “equality in association and collective bargaining” as well “balance between work and home life”. As the latter two aspects are discussed in [chapter 2.3](#) on WLB and the thesis follows up on questions of feminization in organization and workplace

union in [chapter 2.5](#), the aspect of “equality of remuneration” out of the former definition, whose inequality is well known under the term **gender pay gap**, is discussed in the following paragraphs.

Gender Pay Gap

On a first sight, the gender pay gap may depict the simple difference in remuneration for the same position based exclusively on the gender of the incumbent. However, this simplistic perspective ignores the multidimensional nature of the concept (Rubery & Grimshaw, 2014) and is thus just the numerical tip of the iceberg. Under the surface the gender pay gap results out of occupational segregation, a stronger use of part-time work scenarios, various forms of discrimination along the employee lifecycle, as well as overall gender roles and expectations (Milner & Gregory, 2014). Accordingly, the discriminatory nature of wage structures that lead to unequal remunerations based on gender can be seen as institutionalized process that develops historically and reflects statutory legislation, employment contracts, collective bargaining, and managerial actions (Rubery et al., 2005). Consequently, a gender pay gap cannot only be addressed by focusing singularly on one point of action, but needs to be addressed in a holistic manner, for which workplace unions can be seen as one cogwheel of the overall system (Heery, 2006).

When considered that the gender pay gap is not a recent topic leading to public outrage, but rather an ongoing pain point since decades (Whitehouse & Smith, 2020) that even got addressed in anti-discriminatory laws both in Germany (Art. 157 Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union and § 3 para. 1, § 7 German Transparency in Wage Structures Act) and Chile (Law 20.348), the question arises how it can be so persistent if

it's unfair nature is well documented. Drawing on reward expectations theory, which posits that gender serves as a status indicator, both men and women evaluate the same positions with women's wages at only 92% of those for men (Auspurg et al., 2017). The authors thus conclude that strong gender status beliefs might create self-fulfilling prophecies and gender stereotypes that are resistant to social change. This line of thought aligns with Acker's (2006) previously mentioned theoretical framework of inequality regimes, which states that informal interactions and cultural beliefs centered around masculine-stereotyped on-the-job behavioral patterns perpetuate gender inequalities. In his influential book, Schein expands on this idea, explaining that cultural barriers are reinforced by hidden organizational beliefs and values, which in turn shape expectations of what is acceptable and supported (Schein, 2010). This might help to explain why women often find themselves stuck in hierarchical, dead-end or low-quality jobs (Beirne & Wilson, 2016).

These culturally embedded social processes are also reflected in the conclusion of Goldin's study (2014) on gender pay gap convergence. Giving less credit to legislation, Goldin argues that organizations value continuous working hours in a constant setting more than other flexible work-time schedules, which they translate in different pay structures. Considering that more women work part-time or under different flexible work-time regimes across all organizational positions than men in the EU (Eurostat, 2023) or in OECD countries (OECD, 2022), an indirect structural inequality exists. Therefore, the connection of higher remunerations to stable working hours must be culturally questioned, calling for a review of its strong connection to particular full-time segments (Goldin, 2014). Moreover, the study connects the other central topic of this thesis, WLB, with gender equality, which will be revisited in the following [chapter 2.3](#). Thus,

organizations are responsible not only for the creation of gender differences but also for their legitimization and relativization (Achatz, 2008; Acker, 2006).

In addressing the institutionalized nature of the gender pay gap, workplace unions emerge as critical actor. Institutional views emphasize the roles of organizations, legislators, and workplace unions in mitigating gender inequalities (Rubery & Grimshaw, 2014). Following the rationale of the “institutionalists”, workplace unions can be seen as a crucial actor for closing the gender pay gap as a high union density, extensive and centralized collective bargaining agreements as well as low-wage protection policies are associated with a reduced gender pay gap (Baumann et al., 2019; Busch-Heizmann & Rinke, 2018; Rubery & Grimshaw, 2014). As such, for the case of Germany, in 2017 a new law, called German Transparency in Wage Structures Act (EntgTranspG), was passed that gives employees the mandate to commission their workplace union to inform them about the criteria of remuneration components as well as to provide details how their own remuneration compares to others. This law empowers unions to address gender pay differences and strengthens their GEB agenda. The law will be further introduced in [chapter 3.2](#).

While these results underline the potential of effective workplace unions, it is necessary to frame them in the earlier discussed concept of social dialogue. On this narrower focus, workplace unions can address the gender pay gap by entering in dialogue with the social partner, following up on their so-called **Gender Equality Bargaining** (GEB) agenda (Gregory & Milner, 2009b; Williamson & Baird, 2014). Used cautiously evading singular-solutions for of higher gender equality leading to a compartmentalization of equality (Dickens, 2000), Williamson & Baird (2014) argue that the mainstreaming of gender issues can provide an opportunity to withdraw attention from the women’s business case

of equality towards the general relevance of a fair wage structure (Rubery et al., 2005) or more flexible working conditions for the whole workforce (Williamson & Baird, 2014). Accordingly, a strategic shift towards the inclusion of the equality agenda in all bargaining processes of the workplace union is called for (Dickens, 2000). Additionally, the development of a GEB agenda can provide workplace unions with a promising field of attracting members and underlining their systemic relevance.

Inside this GEB agenda, the aspect of the **gender proofing** is an especially relevant touchpoint for workplace unions. As individual employees lack a holistic picture on pay structures, information can be gathered and monitored through collective voice, so that gender inequalities are identified and act upon. Inside equality bargaining gender proofing can be seen as means to critically examine the causes leading to inequality, thus possibly uncovering also **indirect discriminations** instead of only **direct discriminations** (Williamson & Baird, 2014). An example for these structures can be the requirement for higher pay based on network meetings outside work hours or availability requirements in the late afternoon that might collide with family provisions which, as previously mentioned, affect women disproportionately more than men. Thus, even though the requirements are per se gender-neutral, in reality they affect one group of employees disproportionately more than another group.

In summary, achieving gender equality within the employment context requires addressing systemic barriers through social action and positive discrimination measures (Noon, 2010). Workplace unions play a crucial role in advocating for gender equality, particularly in addressing the gender pay gap. By integrating gender equality into collective bargaining agendas and adopting gender-proofing measures, unions can contribute to dismantling institutionalized gender inequalities (Williamson & Baird, 2014).

Therefore, the identification of facilitative factors for this endeavor and their differences for Germany and Chile are introduced in [chapter 2.5](#) and empirically studied in [chapter 5](#). However, beforehand the other central issue of this thesis, WLB, is discussed in the next chapter.

2.3 (Gendered) Work-Life Balance

As a concept that spans across the nature of human life, from maternity protection over childcare and upbringing to elderly care and personal interests apart from work (Mofoluwawo, 2021), Work-Life Balance (WLB) is a crucial topic evolving core aspects of employment conditions. In their attempt to create an integrative framework out of the existing literature, Sirgy & Lee (2018) identify two key dimensions in balancing work and nonwork life: role engagement and minimal conflict. While employee's engagement in work-related tasks and responsibilities seems to be a requisite of successful WLB, the minimization of conflicts between work and family responsibilities accounts for the second aspect of WLB (Sirgy & Lee, 2018). This is consistent with the integrated definition of WLB as "the individual perception that work and non-work activities are compatible and promote growth in accordance with an individual's current life priorities" from Kalliath & Brough (2008, p. 326). It can be argued that the notion of compatibility and growth encompasses the concept of engagement and low conflicts in work and nonwork scenarios.

To put the definition from the mentioned authors into practice, flexible working arrangements, specialized leave policies, and personalized time-off schemes have risen

to prominence as pivotal mechanisms in developing WLB policies, offering employees the opportunity to balance their professional commitments with personal responsibilities (Fagan et al., 2012; McDonald et al., 2005). In organizations where those aspects are met, extensive research indicates positive work- and nonwork-related outcomes such as higher job performance, commitment and satisfaction as well as an improved general employee wellbeing (Gregory & Milner, 2009a; International Labor Organization, 2023). While various factors influence WLB at the micro (individual), meso (organizational), and macro (societal) levels, the organizational level appears to be particularly important (Gregory & Milner, 2009a). As a result, there is growing interest in identifying mechanisms within organizations that can promote or hinder progress in this area (Jirjahn & Mohrenweiser, 2021). To account for the role of the legislation, which plays an important role providing statutory guidance on WLB policies (Hyman, 2010), the following [chapter 3](#) builds on the previous discussion on workplace unions as collective voice institutions in [chapter 2.1](#) and addresses the macro level by looking at the industrial relations regimes, which are constituting the research context of this thesis. Before the influence of workplace unions as collective voice mechanism in the advancement of WLB is considered in [chapter 2.4](#), the following paragraphs provide an introduction of WLB out of a gender perspective.

WLB out of a gender perspective:

WLB is a key part of the gender equality debate in industrial relations (Warren, 2021). While the conciliation between work and family benefits both men and women, the gendered division of work and family responsibilities is important to be considered. As

women tend to be more involved in caregiving family roles, which are traditionally and historically rooted and shape how gender roles are perceived in the workplace, it can be argued that WLB policies are more relevant for women and as such directly linked to a higher quality of life at work (Papí Gálvez, 2005). Another consequence of the fact that women disproportionately bear family responsibilities is that they are more likely to be affected by jobs that do not allow for flexible WLB (International Labor Organization, 2023; Jirjahn & Mohrenweiser, 2021). Consequently, a higher utilization of WLB policies of women compared to their male counterparts leads to discussions around organizational justice, gender neutral communications or a “glass handcuffs” phenomenon for men, if they want to use female attributed WLB policies (Blithe, 2018; Gregory & Milner, 2009a; McDonald et al., 2005; Williamson & Baird, 2014).

Even though these gender disparities are nowadays reflected in academic research on WLB and are noticed as central topic for HRM in organizations, the reality in terms of business policies and family organizing perpetuates the existing inequalities (Rashmi & Kataria, 2021). As such, a limited usage of flexibility based on gender and status can be observed and accounted for by a so-called **flexibility stigma** (Williams et al., 2013). This stigma is rooted in a so-called “work devotion schema” (Blair-Loy, 2003) that is describing work responsibilities as central part of one’s life and outlines the struggle of women to break traditional and widely unquestioned gender roles. Thus, under current traditional gender roles, women often require more workplace flexibility, but they may also face stigma if they utilize existing policies (Busch-Heizmann & Rinke, 2018). Additionally, the gendered nature of WLB policy utilization from McDonald et al. (2005) and the previously mentioned “**female deficit model**” (Dickens, 2000) is confirmed by Brochard & Letablier (2017) who conclude that WLB is seen as a “female issue” by employers as well as

workplace unions. While it is relevant to account for women's gendered experiences, it also poses the threat of side-lining the topic as it does not reach enough universal relevance for unions to pick up the topic on their bargaining agenda (Kirton, 2021). This is a problematic case for both Germany (Busch-Heizmann & Rinke, 2018) and Chile (Gómez-Urrutia et al., 2019).

The same line of argumentation can be used when looking at the analysis of Freeman & Medoff (1979) based on Hirschman (1972) mentioned at the beginning of the [chapter 2.1](#). Their argumentation around "exit and voice" relies on the assumption of full employment, not considering different sociodemographic and intersectional factors. While male middle-class men might have the option to quit and find another job, women are confronted with structural inequalities that lead to higher barriers of simply exiting an organization (Ghilarducci, 1985). Through this critical gender lens, the involvement of workplace unions in the WLB discussion is not only a traditional topic for unions (Freeman & Medoff, 1984; Rigby & O'Brien-Smith, 2010), but also an utmost relevant approach to tackle structural gender inequalities in the workplace as women are structurally more vulnerable (Williamson & Baird, 2014).

As the organizational culture shapes organizational behavior and traditional gender roles perpetuate the uptake of WLB policies (Gregory & Milner, 2009a), it stays critical to examine the space and influence workplace unions might be able to use for a broader cultural change project in organizations which is taken up again in the discussion of possible proposals out of the results of this thesis in [chapter 7](#). As such, recent investigations are also targeting men in this context, questioning rigid traditional gender roles in- and outside organizational boundaries (Warren, 2021).

In conclusion, WLB stands as a critical aspect of employment conditions, encompassing both role engagement and minimal conflict between work and nonwork activities (Sirgy & Lee, 2018). Flexible working arrangements and specialized leave policies have emerged as essential mechanisms for promoting WLB, leading to positive outcomes such as higher job performance and employee well-being. However, gendered divisions in caregiving responsibilities contribute to disparities in WLB utilization, with women disproportionately affected by inflexible work arrangements. Despite increased attention to gender disparities in WLB, existing inequalities persist due to male breadwinner organizational cultures rooted in a traditional understanding of gender roles. While workplace unions might play a crucial role in addressing these disparities by advocating for gender-aware policies and challenging traditional norms, it is crucial to understand the facilitative factors that influence the effectiveness of this endeavor. This is studied in detail in the empirical part of this thesis.

2.4 Conditions to promote WLB and gender equality – challenges and opportunities for workplace unions

This chapter delves into the complexities surrounding workplace unions' roles in advancing WLB and gender equality. In a first step, [chapter 2.4.1](#) discusses challenges for workplace unions that emerge in the interaction with the management of the organization (external) and within the decision making and positioning of the workplace union (internal). In a second step, [chapter 2.4.2](#) explores the factors influencing

workplace union's effectiveness in promoting WLB and gender equality, focusing on the opportunity structure from Gregory & Milner (2009b).

2.4.1 External and internal challenges for workplace unions

As the individual, organizational and societal benefits of a better WLB and gender equality are evident, it could be concluded that workplace unions can have a positive leverage effect in promoting policies to advance both concepts. Larsen & Navrbjerg (2018) argue in this case that WLB policies might not just be able to narrow the gender pay gap, but also that collective bargaining on one topic has a symbiotic effect on the other issue. Accordingly, both concepts are discussed in the following paragraphs simultaneously as they are affected by similar conditions and obstacles.

Following the work of Acker (2006), workplace unions might be more effective under the condition of high visibility and low legitimacy of inequalities. Considering that nowadays a great amount of data and as such public awareness as well as social pressure on policy development exists on the topics of equality and the issues of work-life dynamics (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2023; International Labor Organization, 2023; OECD, 2023), it could be argued that visibility is currently high and legitimacy low. Moreover, Dickens, (2000) underlines in this case the potential of workplace union's involvement in gender equality and WLB, taking it as an opportunity for a radical transformation of the current union's agenda around male needs towards an inclusive agenda of equal opportunities and flexibility for all genders. However, this development is not a sure-fire success, but depends on contextual factors that are discussed below.

Hereby, [table 1](#) shows an overview of relevant scholarly contributions towards the influence of workplace unions whose contributions will be incorporated in the following paragraphs.

Table 1: Author's contributions towards the influence of workplace unions on WLB & Gender Equality (own elaboration).

	Low	Medium	High
WLB	- No relevance of employee voice or collective voice on WLB agenda; financial sector, Scotland (Hyman & Summers, 2007)	- Room for unions to get involved, more proactive; media and retail; UK (Rigby & O'Brien-Smith, 2010)	- Key role of unions in WLB and change of organizational culture (Ravenswood & Markey, 2011)
Gender Equality		- Unions influence gender equality and pay, but variable according to favorable environment given by legislators (Heery, 2006)	- Unions help to close the gender pay gap, especially in less feminized organizations; manufacturing sector; USA (Elvira & Saporta, 2001)
WLB & Gender Equality		- Difference in discourse vs. resource allocation; integration of the topics instead of transformative change (Kirton, 2021)	- Influence of workplace unions on equal opportunity practices & WLB (but not on policies) (Bacon & Hoque, 2012) - Unions help close gender pay gap, esp. when high visibility; WLB policies facilitate gender equality (Busch-Heizmann & Rinke, 2018)

Considering the decline of union membership rates, gender equality and WLB can be seen as relevant topic of interest for workplace unions, especially using their collective voice to cater the needs of potential new members around younger generations and women (Brochard & Letablier, 2017; Gregory & Milner, 2009b). However, some studies show none or either limited influence of workplace unions (Hyman & Summers, 2007). To structure the following discussion around the challenges for workplace unions, two

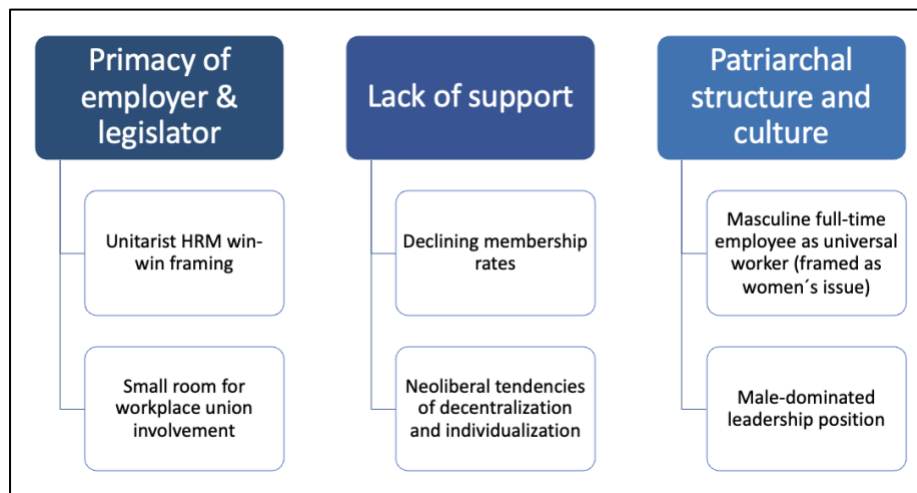
dimensions are used: An external view consisting of the relationship with management and an internal perspective of dynamics inside the workplace union. Hereby, [figure 4](#) on the next page summarizes the challenges faced by unions.

Even though Rigby & O'Brien-Smith (2010) bring forward that WLB is a topic of mutual gains between management and workplace union, it can be argued that WLB initiatives led by employers or legislators leave little room for workplace union involvement following an unitarist frame of reference. As such, Gregory & Milner (2009b) state in their study how unions are put in a defensive position not having the leverage to enter in discussion around WLB policies. At a time when union density is declining and neoliberal tendencies prevail, management sees union involvement in gender equality or health and safety initiatives as an additional burden rather than a potential business case (Brochard & Letablier, 2017). As HRM policies are framed around unitarist individual win-win scenarios, management might be tempted to push for their own flexible requirements and lobby against union involvement (De Spiegelaere, 2023).

Due to its limited bargaining and agenda setting power, employer-friendly policies can even be disguised as employee-friendly that rather cater business needs of flexible work time according to demand (Gregory & Milner, 2009a). As such, Demetriades et al. (2006) come to mixed results in their study on WLB and gender equality policies in Europe. While on the one hand the topics appear on the bargaining agenda throughout Europe, on the other hand, the initiative is mostly driven by the national legislator through EU directives and employer organizations, leaving limited room for unions to strongly drive the agenda through their standpoint. Moreover, workplace unions might prefer to stay out of an employer-led debate on highly flexible working arrangements, which could challenge the union's collective legitimation if the pure interest of employers, e.g. adjusting working time

to seasonal demand or promoting on-call or zero-hours contracts, dominates the agenda (Demetriades et al., 2006; Gregory & Milner, 2009b).

Figure 4: Challenges faced by workplace unions in advocating for WLB and gender equality (own elaboration).



In consequence, the lack of power and influence of workplace unions towards the organizational agenda setting obstructs the positioning and involvement in topics of WLB and gender equality (Hantrais & Ackers, 2005; Larsen & Navrbjerg, 2018). As such, Hyman & Summers (2007) argue that union's voice gets replaced by individualized HRM strategies, undermining the union's strength through collective representation. Furthermore, neoliberal tendencies of decentralization and individualization undermine union's position to speak for the majority of an organization's employees. As such, workplace union's strength of collective representation might suffer from an individualized approach to fight inequality, for example through "no-win-no-fee" lawyers (Beirne & Wilson, 2016). The consequent dominance of the employer over the weak voice of unions can be due to a lack in member support (Hyman & Summers, 2007), but as argued by

this thesis, can also attributed to the IR dynamics such as an adverse relationship with management, missing experience of the workplace union or low representation support and degrees of involvement.

However, it is not only the power imbalance between the legs of the tripod (Williamson & Colley, 2023) but also the internal organizational culture that can inhibit progress on both issues. For example, the patriarchal structure within organizations and workplace unions permeates structures and processes, making progress on WLB and gender equality cumbersome. While bringing gender equality issues into the mainstream discourse of collective bargaining is a promising approach to renewing workplace unions, cultural and institutional barriers within unions that are encapsulated in a masculine culture create resistance (Dickens, 2000). Therefore, Kirton (2021) argues that integrating equality into the agenda, focusing on issues common to both men and women, is the only realistic way forward, requiring however organizational effort and political will.

Also for the case of workplace unions, a patriarchal path based on the norming of the universal worker as a cisgender, full-time, masculine employee was previously followed, which resulted in the establishment of a biased and discriminatory agenda. (Dickens, 2000; R. Hyman, 1994). Even though this historic gender blindness in practice and industrial relations research (Forrest, 1993; Williamson & Baird, 2014) has been tackled by various research covering the gender perspective in the discipline (Danieli, 2006; Ugarte Gómez & Grimshaw, 2015), it is still a pressing matter at hand worth investigation as changes occur only slowly (Pocock, 1997) and require a holistic and interconnected perspective on the regulatory framework and organizational dynamics (Martin Caballero et al., 2023). However, the focus on the universal male worker together with male-

dominated positions inside the union, perpetuates the stated patriarchy inhibiting gender equality and WLB policies out of a framing on “women’s issues” (Kirton, 2021). As such, a weak commitment of workplace unions to WLB and gender equality could arise due to the persistence of an internal masculine culture in the workplace unions (Gregory & Milner, 2009b) not allowing for the necessary gender perspective to be taken. A mainstreaming of the relevance for all employee groups seems unlikely in this case. Thus, “women’s issues” might be still seen as add-on and not as central concern for the majority, which shows how women, independent of the existing gender quota in the organization, are socially constructed as minority (Kirton, 2021; Munro, 2001).

In conclusion, workplace unions face significant external and internal challenges in advocating for WLB and gender equality. In first place, patriarchal structures within both organizations and unions hinder progress, perpetuating biases, and relegating gender equality to a secondary concern. While unions are externally confronted with limited leverage in policymaking, often sidelined by employer-led initiatives and legislative dominance, internally, workplace unions struggle with the mainstreaming a gender perspective which undermines their ability to address these issues collectively. Overcoming these challenges requires a concerted effort to integrate gender equality into union agendas, foster inclusive workplace cultures, and strengthen collective representation. However, addressing these obstacles is crucial for advancing WLB and gender equality initiatives effectively within the workplace.

2.4.2 The opportunity structure for workplace unions

While there are various challenges for workplace unions to advance on both topics as outlined in the previous chapter, also a variety of opportunities exist that could help in the union's renewal around GEB. In the current literature, Brochard & Letablier (2017) differentiate factors that influence the effectiveness of workplace unions based on three theoretical issues: opportunity structure, voice, and choice. As one part of their classification, Gregory & Milner's (2009b) **opportunity structure** gives three possible conditions to advocate for WLB – which can also be extended to the promotion of gender equality – inside the organization for workplace unions: Gender politics (A), organizational dynamics (B), and regulatory framework (C). As the opportunity structure is a frequently applied concept to discuss promotive and inhibitory factors of unions involvement in gender equality and WLB, the discussion below quickly discusses each condition. [Figure 5](#) on the next page summarizes the main aspects.

A. Gender politics and feminization:

The first part of the opportunity structures addresses the feminization of workplace union, an increasing share of female union leaders and more equality frames on the bargaining agenda (Martin Caballero et al., 2023). As the feminization is detailed in the next [chapter 2.5](#), this short part underlines the potential of workplace unions to renew their agenda around the inclusion of gender politics (Martin Caballero et al., 2023). As such, Stuart et al. (2013) argue that external driving factors, such as gender quotas, are not enough in taking advantage of gender politics, but that rather an internal cultural change process around the dominant male union culture must take place (see internal challenge

regarding patriarchal union culture in the previous chapter). Hereby, invisible structures of unequal representative processes and structures need to be made visible. Again, gender mainstreaming initiatives that unveil structural differences through gender proofing can open up promising spaces for union renewal (Dickens, 2000). Additionally, unions can counteract on employer-led changes in setting payment systems or working time schedules by pointing to collectively bargained and transparent systems for all employee groups (Rubery & Johnson, 2019).

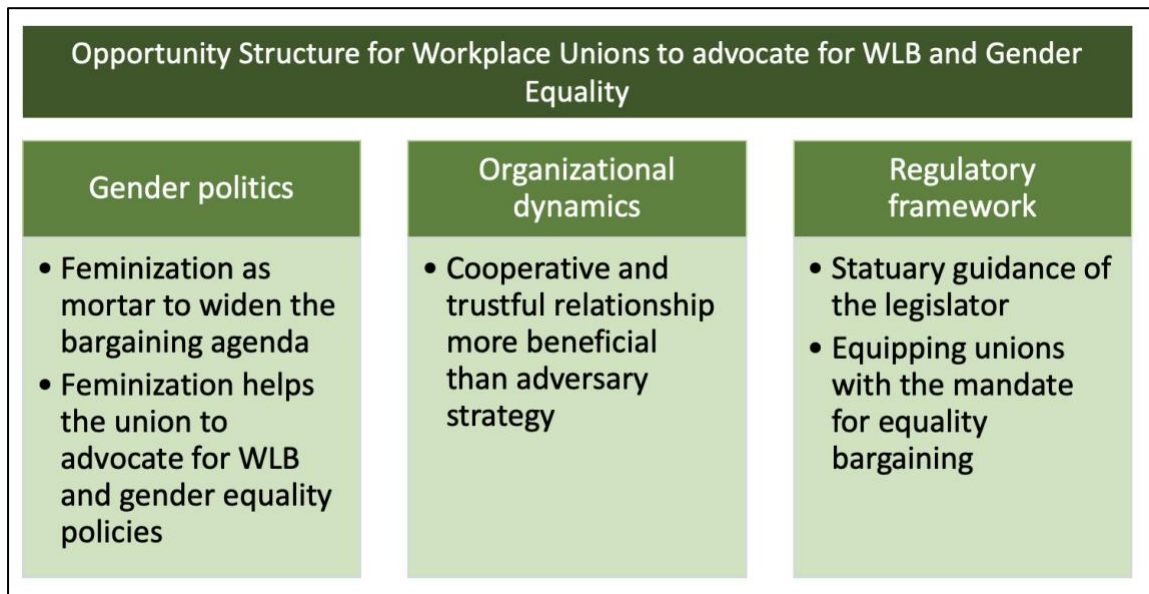
However, a hindering factor can be seen in the stereotypical discussion of WLB and gender equality through a feminine connotation as “women’s issue” which in turn lowers its appearance on the bargaining agenda (Brochard & Letablier, 2017). Bearing this risk in mind, Cooper (2012) reports that the advancement on key topics for women, such as WLB and gender equality, depends on their own advocacy as women participation is necessary to make power structures in agenda setting in decision-making visible. As such, feminization can serve as a necessary condition for organizations to advance on WLB and gender equality (Blaschke, 2015). Lastly, other scholars conclude that not only the female representatives of workplace unions are taking advantage of the opportunity structure, but that equally male representatives are promoting WLB and gender equality (Larsen & Navrbjerg, 2018).

Nevertheless, Blaschke (2015) notes as conclusion in her study that – while sector, employee status and qualification seem to be factors allowing for higher chances of women’s participation in unions – a differentiated approach is needed as the factors interact with each other and come to different results depending on industry and member characteristics. As such, gender politics and higher participation of women can be an interesting approach for unions to renew their agenda and advocate for WLB and gender

equality but, due to structural barriers, traditional frames (Kirton, 2021) and complex interactions (Blaschke, 2015) may inhibit unions from completely translating its opportunity into progress towards the GEB agenda.

Concluding the present discussion and applying the metaphor from Williamson (2012) on bricks and mortar, gender politics and feminization can be seen as mortar, assuring prevalence of the bricks, gender equality and WLB, and as such maintaining relevance of these topics on agenda setting debates. Especially when workplace unions and organizations are attracting more female participation (Gregory & Milner, 2009b; Ravenswood & Markey, 2011; Williamson & Baird, 2014), an opportunity structure can unfold that mainstreams WLB and gender equality as universal issues for all employees. The first column of figure 5 below summarizes the opportunity structure are gender politics.

Figure 5: The opportunity structure for workplace unions involvement (own elaboration based on Gregory & Milner (2009b)).



B. Organizational dynamics:

The second aspect of the opportunity structure deals with the environment in which GEB takes place, encompassing especially the relationship between workplace union and management. As already outlined by various scholars, a cooperative relationship with the organization's management allows for greater opportunities for workplace unions to advance on WLB and gender equality as a win-win scenario for both parties can be discussed (Brochard & Letablier, 2017; Gregory & Milner, 2009b; Heery, 2006; Ravenswood & Markey, 2011). In this context, Gregory & Milner (2009b) underline in their research the relevance of a partnership approach between workplace union and management for a successful implementation of WLB and gender equality policies, which stresses the relevance to consider the mentioned independent variable. Additionally, Pfeifer (2011) differentiate between three relationship styles between workplace union and management on the continuum cooperation vs. bargaining. He concludes that a middle way that allows for the expression of different views but nevertheless attempts to reach a consensus is the most promising option out of a general welfare perspective. While this is also in line with the pluralist approach on IR research, its cultivation in practice, following the neo-pluralistic approach from De Prins et al. (2020) in [chapter 2.1](#), depends on the underlying frame of reference inside the organization.

Additionally, time can be a decisive factor in the relationship between management and the union. As such, Jirjahn et al. (2011) highlighting the role of learning and experience of the workplace union for a higher quality of the relations with management. He indicates that the maturity of a workplace union, acquired through a longer existence of the institution, allowing for learning mechanisms through experience as well as training, leads to less adversarial relationships with management, more influence on decision-making,

higher productivity, and lower quit rates. Additionally, a cooperative relationship with the management allows for better opportunities to influence management (Greene et al., 2021; Pfeifer, 2011).

C. Regulatory framework:

The last part of the opportunity structure is the statutory guidance of the legislator whose relevance was already outlined in the discussion around tripartite social dialogue in [chapter 2.1](#). In this context, Heery (2006) points out that the advancement of workplace unions is bound to changes initiated by legislators towards a more inclusive employment law that opens opportunities for the GEB agenda. This dependence on the legislator, which provides a background on current scopes of action for unions, is a key reason why the present case study further deepens the discussion around the industrial relations regimes for both countries, Germany and Chile, in the [chapter 3](#). As such, the role of the collective voice through workplace unions depends on the respective industrial relations regime of a country (Jirjahn & Mohrenweiser, 2021). This is also followed up and underlined by recent research from Martin Caballero et al. (2023) and Williamson & Colley (2023) who stress incongruencies in spheres of gender equality regulation stemming from patchy legislative frameworks. While the relationship between the concepts inside the opportunity structures are complex, differing according to sector and organization, legislation can set a basic or, in more regulated cases, advanced basis for change (Milner, 2022).

In this context, Williamson & Colley (2023), relying on the original model of Dickens (1999), offer another point of view as they investigate the interconnectedness and

relevance of three legs of a so-called legislative tripod consisting of collective bargaining, state legislation and human resource policy aimed towards better WLB and gender equality. While all legs are relevant and should be mutually reinforcing, the authors stress the relevance of guiding regulatory policies from the legislator. Through a holistic regulatory ecology, in which all stakeholders could be involved, the role of workplace unions could be strengthened by the existence of state-level sanctions or giving unions the mandate for equality bargaining (Williamson & Colley, 2023). However, the reality rather sees incongruencies in regulations and the emergence of neoliberal tendencies fragmenting and undermining workplace unions power and influence (Baccaro & Howell, 2011; Martin Caballero et al., 2023).

In conclusion, the opportunity structure for workplace unions in advancing WLB and gender equality encompasses three main dimensions: gender politics, organizational dynamics, and the regulatory framework. The feminization of workplace unions and organizations presents both opportunities and challenges, with increased inclusivity potentially widening the bargaining agenda but also risking the relegation of WLB and gender equality to "women's issues." Organizational dynamics, particularly the relationship between unions and management, play a crucial role, with cooperative approaches fostering greater influence and problem-solving potential. Additionally, the regulatory framework, shaped by legislative guidance, sets the stage for union engagement, highlighting the importance of inclusive employment laws and collective bargaining structures. However, incongruencies in regulations and the rise of neoliberal tendencies present obstacles to union effectiveness. As further research is needed to explore the conditions under which unions can effectively advocate for WLB and gender

equality, the present thesis aims to consider IR dynamics and gender dynamics as contributive factors.

2.5 Feminization

In addition to the gender perspective on the central concepts of the study, WLB and gender equality, another focus factor is gender dynamics within the gender ratio of the organization and workplace union. Based on Rigby & O'Brien-Smith's (2010) study on trade unions interventions on WLB, which outlines the relevance of considering structural variables and the gender of the main workforce and workplace union, it is pertinent to investigate how the feminization of the organization and composition of the workplace union influence the advancement of gender equality and WLB. As such, Gregory & Milner (2009b) underline the importance of female leadership in the advancement of WLB and gender equality. Additionally, gender politics is one key part of the opportunity structure of Gregory & Milner (2009b) which is addressed in the previous [chapter 2.4.2](#).

As the workplace union's agenda is connected to the demands of their workforce it represents, the gender ratio within an organization is a relevant factor to consider how agendas are set. This ratio represents the interests of the average worker, rather than marginal workers found in non-unionized industries (Budd & Mumford, 2004). Although WLB should be a relevant topic for both men and women to overcome gender stereotypes (Gregory & Milner, 2009b; Papí Gálvez, 2005), it is particularly important to address the fact that women currently tend to benefit more from WLB policies than men (International Labor Organization, 2023). The traditional gender roles in work and family settings are often depicted by a persistent male breadwinner model. This model can be seen as a

limiting ideology of a patriarchal nature that permeates various social, economic, and legal areas (Williamson & Baird, 2014). Therefore, progress towards WLB may depend on the representation of women in organizations and workplace unions, particularly in male-dominated industries (Budd & Mumford, 2004). If the focus lies on the universal male worker, together with male-dominated positions inside the union, it is likely that the topics are only framed as “women’s issues” and not advanced with priority (Kirton, 2021). As such, Ravenswood & Markey (2011) highlight in their case study that feminized unions in feminized organizations have the most family-friendly policies in place. However, they argue that other contextual factors, such as experience or a positive relationship with management must be controlled for. Also, Brochard & Letablier (2017) state that while the feminization of a union can facilitate the awareness around WLB it is not a sufficient condition. On the contrary, women inside the workplace union who are pushing for the advancement of WLB are confronted with obstacles in their potential influence, lowering their credibility due to the earlier mentioned social stigma of WLB and gender equality being a “women’s issue”, as such framing their influence as untrustworthy as they are seen to only represent the voice of women.

Similarly, following Gregory & Milner’s (2009b) recommendation to avoid jumping to conclusions about the relationship between gender composition and union effectiveness, Greene et al. (2021) find that men and women have different levels of access and involvement in union processes. Accordingly, the presence of women in workplace union entities may not necessarily lead to higher effectiveness in WLB and gender equality, as contextual factors can undermine their potential for change. On the other side, Larsen & Navrbjerg (2018) show in their investigation that both male and female shop stewards

exploit the opportunity structure in an equal manner to promote WLB and pay related gender equality inside organizations.

Concluding it can be stated that most of the scholars argue that the feminization of workplace union and organization are helpful towards promoting gender equality and WLB (Gregory & Milner, 2009b; Ravenswood & Markey, 2011; Williamson & Baird, 2014).

As the workplace union tends to replicate the demographics of the workplace and recalling that women are more affected by WLB and gender inequality and as such supposedly place a higher value on corresponding policies, the role of workplace unions to advance on these topics – apart from the contextual factors of the opportunity structure – increases in the case of a higher feminization of the workforce (Artz, 2011; Budd & Mumford, 2004; Heywood & Jirjahn, 2009). As such, propelled forward by the higher usage of family-friendly policies by women, workplace unions inside feminized organizations tend to bargain particularly in favor of WLB policies (Artz, 2011).

2.6 Hypothesis and research strategy

As the previous chapters have outlined key conceptual frameworks, this chapter derives and justifies the hypothesis of this thesis based on the earlier discussion. While most studies conducted up to the first decade of the 21st century often consider only the existence of trade unions in companies as a measure of their impact, implicitly assuming full effectiveness immediately after their formation (Jirjahn et al., 2011), the present thesis opts for an approach to provide deeper insights into the conditions of effective workplace unions in advancing on relevant topics in recent industrial relations research. Thus, the

applied dependent variables, WLB and gender equality, are based on the argument from Bryson & Forth (2010) on union's effectiveness. As such, the advancement towards WLB policies and gender equality can hereby be seen as a measurement of a successful or effective workplace union which, according to Bryson & Forth (2010), consists in "achieving its goal in serving its membership through collective bargaining, workplace representation [...] and political influence [...]" (p. 6). Accordingly, the attempts of workplace unions to advance on WLB and gender equality are seen as a measurement of their effectiveness as a representative workplace union needs to assign relevant topics for their workforce a higher importance on their agenda (Budd & Mumford, 2004; Heywood & Jirjahn, 2009). As outlined in the conceptual framework of this thesis, WLB and gender equality are highly relevant issues in current IR research. This leads to the research question of the present thesis which asks to what extent two sets of independent variables, subsumed under IR dynamics and gender dynamics, facilitate exactly this advancement. Both perspectives will be recapitulated and summarized from the previous chapter on the following pages.

For the IR dynamics, it is relevant to point to Bryson & Forth (2010) who outline three factors as pre-requisites for union effectiveness, such as responsiveness to members, opportunity to influence management as well as the capacity to make changes at the workplace, which Greene et al. (2021) interlace with three core elements of workplace employment relations processes such as the representation process and representation support, the degree of involvement as well as the quality of the relationship between workplace union and management. As the connection between union effectiveness and Greene's et al. (2021) factors is not methodically accounted for in their investigation, the

present thesis argues in favor of a different theoretical model that better grasps the connection between union effectiveness and workplace employment relations processes – referred to as IR dynamics in the wording of this thesis (see footnote on page 9).

In the initial phase, a comparable set of dimensions based on Greene et al. (2021) is established, which serve as the independent variables in the thesis. This is done with the intention of offering a coherent understanding based on similar items present in the Chilean ENCLA and German WSI surveys. [Table 10](#) in the appendix shows the mapping of Greene's dimension to similar items from the German and Chilean questionnaire. In accordance with the methodological framework established by Greene et al. (2021), the dimensions in question do not entail a comparison of organizations with or without workplace unions. Instead, the selected secondary data sources focus on organizations with existing workplace unions. Accordingly, these factors of IR dynamics can rather be seen as determinants or door openers for the effectiveness of existing workplace unions in organizations or using the terminology from Bryson & Forth (2010), they can be called as opportunity factors for effective workplace unions. However, instead of using the workplace employment relations processes (IR dynamics) as dependent variables influenced by the gender of the union representative as studied by Greene et al. (2021), these dimensions are seen as the explanatory variables or independent variables.

Therefore, in a second step, the thesis looks at the influence of these variables on the effectiveness of workplace unions, with its focus on achieving the goals of the represented employees (Bryson & Forth, 2010), which, in this case, is operationalized through the advancements towards WLB and gender equality as both topics are seen as relevant in contemporary industrial relations studies but yet not profoundly linked to the quality of indirect voice of workplace unions (Gregory & Milner, 2009b).

Additional academic support for the use of the “relationship with management” dimension from Greene et al. (2021) as particularly important factor comes from Jirjahn et al. (2011). The scholars discuss in their article relationship types between work council and management and highlight the relevance of cooperative styles as agenda driving factor. In this context, Gregory & Milner (2009b) underline in their research the relevance of a partnership approach between workplace union and management for a successful implementation of WLB and gender equality policies, which stresses the relevance to consider the mentioned independent variable. Additionally, Pfeifer (2011) concludes that a middle way that allows for the expression of different views but nevertheless attempts to reach a consensus is the most promising option out of a general welfare perspective due to positive effects on productivity, worker’s income and low effects on the organization’s profit. This is also in line with the neo-pluralistic approach from De Prins et al. (2020) out of [chapter 2.1](#), highlighting the importance for actors to engage in social dialogue.

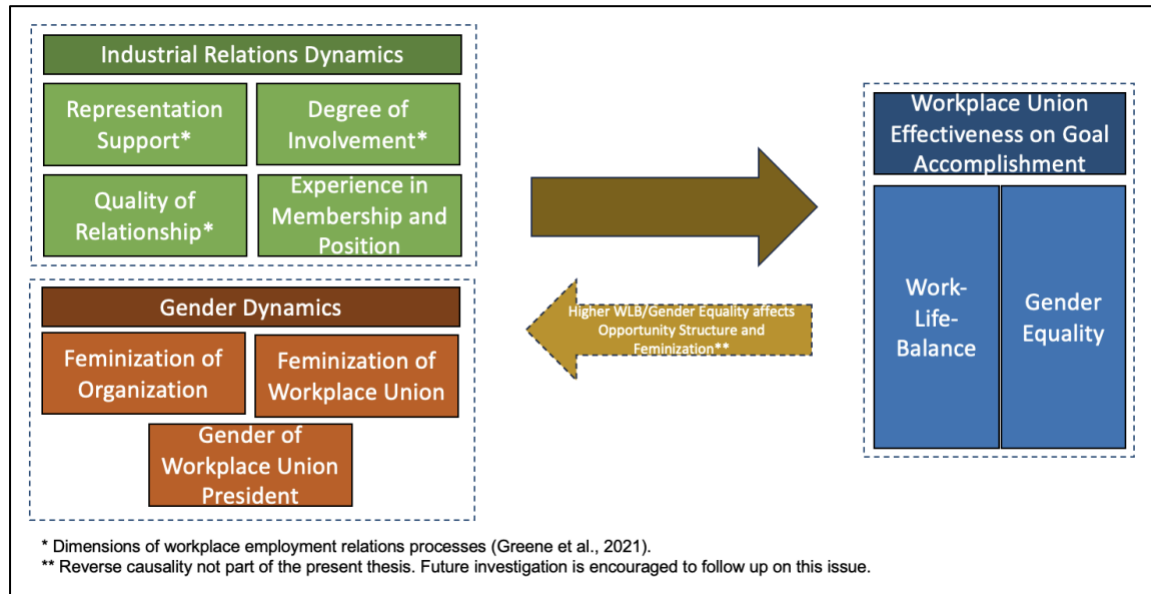
Moreover, Jirjahn et al. (2011) argue in favor of the inclusion of a learning dimension that includes the experience of a workplace union in negotiation and positioning due to learning effects. They indicate that the maturity of a workplace union, acquired through a longer existence of the body allowing for learning mechanisms through experience as well as training, leads to less adversarial relationships with management, more influence on decision-making, higher productivity, and lower quit rates. As such, the aspect of experience of workplace unions is also added to the explanatory set of variables influencing the advancement of WLB and gender equality of this study.

Through the outlined research setup, which consists of the inclusion of a variety of independent variables, the thesis follows up on the claim to gain more profound insights

into workplace union effectiveness by using various explanatory variables instead of a simple dummy variable that accounts for the existence of a workplace union (Jirjahn et al., 2011).

Lastly, the theoretical model of this thesis suggests that apart from the influence of these IR dynamics, also a gender perspective, subsumed under the term gender dynamics, on the advancement of WLB and gender equality is to be taken. Thus, the feminization of the organization and workplace union as well as the gender of the workplace union president is included as second block of independent variables. Their inclusion is based on the discussion on gender politics as part of the opportunity structure out of [chapter 2.4.2](#) and feminization as driving force for change in WLB and gender equality of [chapter 2.5](#). Accordingly, it proposes that the advocacy from female participation in workplace union and the organization towards the agenda setting is a considerable factor for their advancement (Gregory & Milner, 2009b). In line with the historic institutionalization of the organization and especially workplace unions as a patriarchic system, it might be less likely that workplace unions are effective on the WLB and gender equality if the inclusion of women is not given. Using the metaphor from Williamson (2012) on bricks and mortar, this thesis argues that the independent variables around the IR dynamics constitute the bricks, while the gender dynamics can be seen as mortar that allows for the necessary relevance and stress on the agenda setting to push for WLB and gender equality. [Figure 6](#) below provides an overview of the relationship between the mentioned variables.

Figure 6: Modelling of relationship between independent and dependent variables (own elaboration).



Based on the mentioned outline of the empirical study, and in coherence with the research question and objectives, the following hypothesis are developed and justified. Hereby, they reflect the academic call to understand contextual factors that promote workplace union’s effectiveness in advancing WLB and gender equality on an organizational level.

Hypothesis

H1: *The more favorable the IR dynamics (H1.1 higher representation support; H1.2.1 higher degree of involvement in WLB; H1.2.2 higher degree of involvement in gender equality; H1.3 higher quality of relationship; H1.4 longer experience in membership), the more likely are WLB and gender equality policies advanced for both, Chile and Germany.*

The first hypothesis is based on the outlined opportunity structure from Bryson & Forth (2010), which Greene et al. (2021) connects with three core elements of workplace employment relations processes. As such, the three dimensions replicated in this study are expected to promote the probability of workplace unions to have an impact on WLB and gender equality, both relevant topics for unions in Germany (Demetriades et al., 2006; Jirjahn et al., 2022; Jirjahn & Mohrenweiser, 2021; Pfeifer, 2011) and Chile (Martin Caballero et al., 2023). Additionally, the thesis builds on the approach of Heery (2006) who finds that the commitment towards equal pay and the experience of the workplace union is more relevant than having female union negotiators. This idea also follows Jirjahn et al. (2011) highlighting the role of learning and experience of the workplace union for a higher quality of the relations with management. Therefore, the concept of experience can be seen as an expansion of the proposed opportunity structure from Bryson & Forth (2010). As various studies have already proven the influence of workplace unions on WLB and gender equality, hypothesis 1 assumes that the examined contextual factors allow for a greater effectiveness of workplace unions towards WLB and gender equality (Baumann et al., 2019; Busch-Heizmann & Rinke, 2018; Ravenswood & Markey, 2011; Rubery & Grimshaw, 2014) as they constitute door-openers allowing for visibility and commitment (Busch-Heizmann & Rinke, 2018; Stainback et al., 2010) that is crucial for organizations to be advanced on both issues.

H2: *The involvement of the workplace union in topics of gender equality is beneficial for the organization's advancement in WLB as well as the involvement of the workplace union in topics of WLB for the organization's advancement in gender equality, for both Germany and Chile.*

While hypothesis 1 states that the involvement of the workplace union gender equality topics is increasing the likelihood of organization's to be advanced on gender equality, with the same effect for WLB involvement and organizational advancement in WLB, hypothesis 2 goes further and assumes a positive effect of a cross-dimensional involvement of workplace unions. As within the literature WLB policies are frequently seen as a tool to decrease the gender pay gap and vice versa, it is argued that the involvement in one topic also facilitates the advancement of an organization on the other issue (Rubery & Grimshaw, 2014). In this context, Larsen & Navrbjerg (2018) report that both issues are so closely interrelated that they are dealt with simultaneously in collective bargaining scenarios. Accordingly, Bryson & Forth (2010) conclude that gender equality initiatives within unions can create a conducive environment addressing WLB issues.

On the other side, especially for the case of a positive influence of WLB involvement in gender equality, Busch-Heizmann & Rinke (2018) conclude that the German gender pay gap is being reduced through WLB policies as women earn 5,1 percentage points more with every additional measure to make working hours more flexible. Also highlighting the key role of workplace unions through good visibility and high commitment (Busch-Heizmann & Rinke, 2018; Stainback et al., 2010), in this context the involvement of workplace unions in WLB topics can positively influence the organization's gender

equality. Accordingly, a positive cross-issue involvement of unions is to be expected for both Chile and Germany.

H3: *Organizations and workplace unions that are feminized are more likely to be advanced in WLB and gender equality for both, Chile and Germany.*

The third hypothesis can be traced back to the outcome of the study from Bryson & Forth (2010), in which they argue that an increased presence of women in bargaining positions, along with a new opportunity structure for bargaining (see hypothesis 1), can lead to heightened awareness and discussion of WLB within unions. This suggests that a more balanced gender composition in bargaining roles can facilitate the inclusion of WLB concerns in union agendas. While most of the scholars argue that the feminization of workplace union and organization are helpful towards promoting gender equality and WLB (Gregory & Milner, 2009b; Ravenswood & Markey, 2011; Williamson & Baird, 2014), other scholars point to contextual variables that influence this direct conclusion (Greene et al., 2021), such as the role of the legislative framework on a macro level (Martin Caballero et al., 2023; Williamson & Colley, 2023), the establishment of gender quotas for unions in particular (Kirsch & Blaschke, 2014), or the experience of the negotiator (Heery, 2006) on a more micro level. As the workplace union tends to replicate the demographics of the workplace and recalling that women are more affected by WLB and gender inequality and as such supposedly place a higher value on corresponding policies, the role of workplace unions to advance on these topics – apart from the contextual factors of the opportunity structure – increases in the case of a higher

feminization of the workforce (Artz, 2011; Budd & Mumford, 2004; Heywood & Jirjahn, 2009). As such, propelled forward by the higher usage of family-friendly policies by women, workplace unions inside feminized organizations tend to bargain particularly in favor of WLB policies (Artz, 2011).

Additionally, the result of Kirsch & Blaschke's (2014) study, which consists in a positive impact of gender quotas on women's representation and organizational outcomes, supports the direction of the hypothesis that a higher participation of women is beneficial for the effectiveness of unions on both issues. Consequently, the feminization of workplace union and organization might help to widen the bargaining agenda (Williamson & Baird, 2014) as key issues related to women at work are made visible and advocated for by women themselves (Cooper, 2012). As such, feminization can serve as a necessary condition for organizations to advance on WLB and gender equality. Therefore, the present thesis expects the feminization of workplace union and organization to positively impact the advancement in topics of WLB and gender equality.

H4: *Organizations with a female workplace union president are not more likely to be advanced in WLB and gender equality than organizations with a male workplace union president for both, Chile and Germany.*

Whereas the positive contribution of a feminization of organization and workplace union is accounted for by previous studies and as such leading to the beforementioned hypothesis, the relevance of the gender of the union's chairperson towards the effectiveness of unions remains a topic of ongoing debate. In their study in Denmark,

Larsen & Navrbjerg (2018) conclude that not only the female representatives of workplace unions are taking advantage of the opportunity structure, but that male representatives are equally promoting WLB and gender equality. This is in line with the mentioned conclusion of Heery (2006) who stresses that the commitment towards equal pay and the experience of the workplace union is more relevant than having female union negotiators.

Additionally, in their investigation on the effectiveness of the German Transparency in Wage Structures Act (EntgTranspG), Emmler & Klenner (2023) come to the conclusion that female chairpersons of workplace unions are not related to a higher use of the instruments to check gender pay inequalities. Thus, it is argued that the gender is not a decisive factor per se for the advancement in gender equality.

Another angle on the topics comes from Brochard & Letablier (2017). They state that while the feminization of a union can facilitates the awareness around WLB it is not a sufficient condition. On the contrary, women inside the workplace union who are pushing for the advancement of WLB are confronted with obstacles in their potential influence, lowering their credibility due to the earlier mentioned social stigma of WLB and gender equality being a “women’s issue”. Thus, it may be reasoned that male workplace union presidents posit even the advantage of not being confronted with the same stereotype. Accordingly, hypothesis 4 proposes no gender effect of the workplace union’s president on the advancement of WLB and gender equality.

3 Research context: Industrial relations regimes in Germany and Chile

While the earlier mentioned mechanisms of voice and dialogue inside the IR discipline align with research on the importance of a cooperative and pluralistic IR settings (De Prins et al., 2020), “the quality of IR is directly related to the social and institutional support that the industrial relations actors enjoy in a particular political context, but what they must also earn” (Visser, 2009, p. 70). Additionally, a contextualization around industrial relations practices as well as economic situation, legislative framework, and social values, that together influence the collective bargaining agenda, can help to set the background for the interpretation of the results obtained in [chapter 5](#) (Demetriades et al., 2006). Due to the focus of this research, this thesis follows with an assessment of the industrial relations regimes of the two countries involved in the comparative case study. As such, after a short introduction into IR research in [chapter 3.1](#), the following chapters introduce the German ([chapter 3.2](#)) and Chilean ([chapter 3.3](#)) IR regime before a short summary ([chapter 3.4](#)) concludes this part of the thesis.

3.1 Typology of industrial relations regimes

To structure the approach in the following part on the research context, it is beneficial to quickly review the background debate on industrial relations regimes. According to Visser’s (2009) classification, the industrial relations regime of Germany can be seen as social partnership, while Chile’s system can be fitted into the “market response or pluralist” classification (Ugarte Gómez & Grimshaw, 2015). In line with Fox’s (1974) initial

contribution on **frames of reference**, which can be described as an assumption about the relationships between and interests of the actors in industrial relations (Heery, 2015), the following paragraphs attempt to answer the question, where these categories come from and what their characteristics are.

In the early debate inside the relationship of employer, workers, and the state, Crouch (1994) divides the industrial relations systems, among others, into **pluralist** or **(neo)-corporatist** types. The latter one hereby emerges out of the combination of an interest representation system (corporatist) and its influence on policy formation (concertation), typically with research on trade unions in its center (Baccaro, 2003). The same direction follows Siaroff (1999) who highlights the involvement of the state, centralized unions, and employers in a combined management approach that benefits all involved actors with a focus on cooperation and coordination between the stakeholders. Moreover, corporatism encompasses the idea of a more centralized and structured approach to industrial relations through formalized spaces of cooperation, e.g. tripartite structures, or codetermination laws, that allow for joint decision making (De Spiegelaere, 2023). Another relevant concept inside the discourse on corporatism is the **social partnership**, which is centered around the cooperation between government involvement and workplace union (Jäger et al., 2022b). In these forms of collaboration, conflicts are not seen as zero- but as positive-sum game, underlining strong labor and collective bargaining rights (Mosley et al., 1998).

Consequently, Siaroff (1999) proposes pluralism as the opposite category. While corporatism promotes the common interest between stakeholders, pluralism refers to

imperfect labor markets which lead to conflicting as well as shared interests (Heery, 2015). As such, this view stresses the independence and autonomy of the involved actors, however, underlining the role of unions to balance the power asymmetries between labor and capital, with less interference of rule setting from the legislator (Budd & Bhawe, 2008). Hereby, the key question centers around how conflict of interest is organized inside organizations (De Spiegelaere, 2023).

Additionally, through a connection to different welfare state typologies (social democracies, liberal and corporatist), a better understanding of its legal and social consequences can be achieved. As such, the neo-corporatist system belongs to the social democracy/corporatist type and the pluralist industrial relations system to the liberal model (Crouch, 2004). While liberalism thinks about state interventions as problematic as the labor market is good enough in its own regulation, corporatism sees the market as insufficient thus requiring statutory regulations.

In the discussion on the classification of countries as certain industrial relation types, e.g. Germany as the example for social partnership or the UK for voluntarism, Bechter et al. (2012) call for caution as their reality differ greatly by sector, leading to a misjudgment if the term of a homogenous model is applied. Therefore, instead of just keeping the characterization of the countries of interest, Chile and Germany, at a term-level, the following subchapters address both respective industrial relation regimes in greater detail.

3.2 The industrial relations system in Germany

Germany is classified as a corporatist economy, characterized by tripartite policy development between the state, privileged business, and labor representatives (Heeg, 2014; Visser, 2009). Relying on the division of tasks and cooperative approach, the German industrial relations regime is described as social partnership between unions, organizations and the legislator (Jäger et al., 2022b; Visser, 2009). The idea on collaboration and partnership is also reflected in its “juridification”, a complex setup of statutory rules and structure that clearly define duties and responsibilities for actors inside the industrial relations system, which contributes to managing conflicting situation between actors (Behrens, 2014; Behrens et al., 2020).

Institutionally speaking, the industrial relations system in Germany in terms of employee representation is built on a dual framework. This dual framework represents the local interpretation of the social dialog in Germany by distinguishing between distributive and integrative bargaining (Bryson et al., 2012). Distributive bargaining is hereby described through the first pillar of trade union´s sectoral bargaining in which collective agreements are negotiated on an industry level, mainly covering wage and general employment relations affairs.

Meanwhile, the integrative bargaining part of Germany´s social dialogue is executed by work councils, equipped with duties and rights by law, that operate on a more micro level, dealing with employee representation at an organizational level. This second pillar is characterized by codetermination laws determining shop- and board-level representation of employees. The latter board-level representation is hereby establishing mandatory seats for workers on the supervisory board in share-based companies with more than

500 employees (Jäger et al., 2022b). The former shop-level representation refers to the election of company-based work council that is equipped with various information, consultation and codetermination rights for organizations with at least five employees (Fulton, 2020). These roles and duties of the works council are clearly defined in the German Works Constitution Act (WCA). For key topics around bonus payments, up- and down-grading, recruiting, working hours or performance monitoring the work council needs to be involved for changes to take place.

For the purpose of the thesis, it is relevant to mention that §15 para. 2 BetrVG defines the rights of work council regarding gender- and family related matters. Thus, the work council is by law required to address gender equality and WLB. Additionally, a gender quota for work council's election processes is established guaranteeing the gender that is in the minority to be represented in the workplace union at least in relation to their ratio inside the workforce. Apart from the responsibilities defined by law, the work council can setup its own agenda, whose success, together with the duties established in the WCA, highly depends on the relationship with management (Jirjahn & Mohrenweiser, 2021).

However, the reality of gender representation in German work councils differs from the quotas established by law. While women are underrepresented in organizations with a high (over 70%) or higher (50-70%) amount of female workforce and equally represented in organizations with lower female workforce (<50%), in regard to the position of the work council's chairperson women are constantly underrepresented with around 30% of female representation (Pfahl & Wittmann, 2023).

As an answer to the high German gender pay gap in comparison to other countries in the European Union (see [chapter 2.2](#)) and to follow up on European legal principles of equal pay based on the Directive 2006/54/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council

on the implementation of the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women in matters of employment and occupation established in 2006, the Transparency in Wage Structures Act (EntgTranspG) was passed in 2017. The new law tackles pay inequalities on three levels, giving individual employees the right of information on pay structures (§10) when employed in companies with over 200 employees as well as obliging organizations to carry out audits and check compliance (§17) and to prepare a management report on equality and equal pay (§21) in the case of more than 500 employees. However, the scope of the law is fairly limited as only 0.7% of all German companies and 32% of the German workforce are falling inside the law (Baumann et al., 2019). To follow up with their right of information, employees can reach out to their workplace union which hereby plays a pivotal role with its execution as voice and representation mechanism in gender equality issues. Even though employees turn to their workplace union in 26% of the organizations that fall within the law in 2022, which shows an increase from 17% in 2018 just after the law was passed, these numbers also indicate that in roughly $\frac{3}{4}$ of organizations no requests on pay structure transparencies are initiated (Emmler & Klenner, 2023).

3.3 The industrial relations system in Chile

Whereas the dual system allows for further separation of negotiation tasks in Germany, the Chilean system can be characterized by a more fragmented but holistic approach as trade unions are the negotiation partner inside an organization about all relevant topics that arise in employee-employer relations. As such, Chile can be classified as a relatively

exclusive industrial relations regime seen through a deregulated labor market with limited statutory support for trade unions, which are fragmented and equipped with poor political influence, as such falling into the category of a pluralist industrial relations regime (Ugarte Gómez & Grimshaw, 2015).

However, this approach to negotiate on firm-level instead of industry-level was not always the case for Chile. With its labor movement characterized as one of the first of its kind in Latin America and a strong worker's movement in the 20th century that continuously faced repression from right wing governments, the Chilean trade union system was undermined and union leaders prosecuted by the military dictatorship starting in 1973 (Ulloa, 2003). Imposed by its military dictatorship, Chile's industrial relations system was reshaped in a neoliberal logic, limiting workplace unions influence and rights (Atzeni et al., 2011). With the return to the democracy and alongside the creation of new organizations, the Chilean system got more fragmented and decentralized (Rios-Avila & Hirsch, 2014). However, through recent changes in legislation and social movements, Chile attempts to position itself more towards a system of collective bargaining on an industrial level, which would increase coverage of collective bargaining agreements in the country. Additionally, social dialogues are promoted from the legislator to strengthen collective voice mechanisms. Recently, a labor reform (law N°20.940) under the government of Michele Bachelet (2014 – 2018) was implemented, which also sets up a gender quota of 1/3 of women to in the leadership board of workplace unions. While in 2012 only 23.6% of unions leadership positions were hold by women, in 2022 the number of increased to 34.9% (Díaz Rojas & von Geldern Martel, 2023). However, according to Díaz Rojas & von Geldern Martel (2023) the position women mostly occupy inside the union's leadership the role of the secretary with 38.2% in comparison to 31.1% of women in the role of the union's

president in 2022. As such the possibility of women to get involved in direct negotiations is lower due to the varying representation in union's positions.

Even though the law N°20.940 established some valuable achievement in terms of gender ratios regarding the composition of the workplace union's leadership board, the foundations of the neoliberal industrial relations regime maintain unchanged (Ahumada, 2021; Gamonal, 2019), leading to a continuity in the four pillars of Chile's neoliberal legislation, namely collective bargaining at company level, limited strike possibilities, union parallelism and union depoliticization (Durán S. & Gamonal C., 2019). Furthermore, the efforts to draft a new constitution in response to the Chilean social protests of 2019 were stopped for a second time with the rejection of the second proposal in 2023, thus maintaining the neoliberal model at the heart of the Chilean industrial relations regime. Nevertheless, through various progressive laws, such as the Sexual Harassment Act, Equal Pay Act, Postnatal Parental Act, Non-Discrimination Act or Parental Co-Responsibility Act, Chile intends to tackle important challenges women face in the employment context (Martin Caballero et al., 2023).

One recent example is the introduction of law 21.561 which gradually reduces the weekly working hours to 40h/week over a course of 5 years. Additionally, the law also offers mothers and fathers flexibility and allows overtime to be used flexibly for additional vacation days. As the law allows for a great deal of adaptability of different measures according to the organization's reality, collective bargaining and a functioning social dialogue is paramount so that the new guidelines from the legislator are translated into the GEB agenda to develop action plans to accomplish a higher gender equality (Fernández, 2023). For this purpose, workplace union need to present themselves as legitimate monitoring and enforcement mechanism so that the law finds a successful

adoption to the local reality in which the employee's voice is heard and included. An additional stimulus for organizations to already undergo the implementation and cultural change process is the early adopter certification of having implemented the 40h week before it becomes legally mandatory (Ministerio de Trabajo y Previsión Social, 2022).

3.4 A short summary: The industrial relations system in Germany and Chile

While the attempts of creating a new constitution as results of the Chilean social protests in 2019 stalled a second time through the rejection of the second proposal in 2023 maintaining its neoliberal model at the core of the Chilean industrial relations regime, also in Europe neoliberal trends can be noticed in the recent years (Baccaro & Howell, 2011). As such, Schroeder (2016) points towards a fragmentation of the German industrial relations system and differentiates the influence and voice execution of workplace unions along three worlds of industrial relations, in which only in large companies of the manufacturing sector as well as the public sector the traditional model of collective bargaining, codetermination and workplace unions as influential actor persist (Oberfichtner & Schnabel, 2019).

With the previous restrictions for the German case in mind, both countries have quite a different collective bargaining coverage with 54% of covered workers in Germany and 20.4% in Chile (OECD, 2020). Additionally, it can be argued that the more than 2.6 times higher collective bargaining rate in Germany is even bigger when different calculations are used, estimating the collective bargaining coverage between 11.1% and 6.9% for Chile (Durán S. & Gamonal C., 2019). The so-called work councils in Germany show a

density of 43% according to the survey of the IAB-Betriebspanel in 2022 (Hohendanner & Kohaut, 2023), while Chile presents a density of active unions of 6.3% according to the ENCLA survey in 2019 (Dirección del Trabajo, 2019). However, regarding gender quotas inside the workplace union, it can be argued that in both countries' quota-defining-laws exists. Even though no gender parity is reached in terms of union leadership, a higher percentage of women in these positions can be noted with 35% for the Chilean case compared to 30% in Germany (Díaz Rojas & von Geldern Martel, 2023; Pfahl & Wittmann, 2023).

While both countries are dealing with neoliberal tendencies of decollectivization, decentralization and workplace union's power (Baccaro & Howell, 2011; Durán S. & Gamonal C., 2019), they still mark two very different ends of the industrial relations continuum. While Chile is characterized through highly decentralized collective bargaining, limited conflict resolutions mechanisms and a rather adversarial relationship between organization and workplace union, thus representing a neo-liberal pluralist approach, Germany has a centralized collective bargaining system with additional conflict resolution mechanism and a general more cooperative approach in place. Accordingly, examining two countries that represent contrasting ends of a typology of their industrial relations regimes can provide a better understanding of the factors that influence the effectiveness of workplace unions in advocating for organizational advancements in WLB and gender equality. As for both countries WLB and gender equalities are relevant agenda determining topics for workplace unions (Jirjahn & Mohrenweiser, 2021; Martin Caballero et al., 2023), the present thesis aims to provide insights into the determinants of those agenda points by looking at IR and gender dynamics out of the viewpoint of two very different industrial relations regimes.

In this context, it might also be interesting to investigate how the existence of an active collective bargaining agreement can create leverage for the effectiveness of work councils as it allows for a clearer focus on the set agenda considering that distributional and pay related topics are settled previously through the agreement (Jirjahn & Mohrenweiser, 2020). This follows the line of thought that bargaining on conditions of work, such as WLB, is less adversarial than bargaining on wages, allowing for a rather partnership-oriented approach (Williamson & Baird, 2014).

Additionally, it is in coherence with Jäger et al. (2022) who characterize codetermination mechanisms of board- and shop-level representation as more collaborative systems of shared governance while collective bargaining systems are by nature more adversary. Consequently, the Chilean example of a non-existing differentiation between industry-wide trade unions and company-centered work unions raises an interesting case of comparison as the Chilean body of employee representation needs to fulfill the German dual framework through a singular approach. The context of bargaining, however, is only one aspect of the approach of social dialogue discussed at the beginning of [chapter 2.1](#). Considering that social dialogue encompasses all types of exchange of information through negotiation or consultation in a bipartite or tripartite setting (Lawrence & Ishikawa, 2005), it is interesting to account for difference in the involvement of workplace unions in the information gathering and decision-making process in both countries.

As the influence of the German dual system in comparison to the Chilean IR model cannot be empirically tested due to data availability, the influence of social dialogue spans across the whole investigative setting of this thesis.

4 Methodology

Even though cross-country studies on industrial relations exist, their focus mostly lies on comparisons between countries in the Global North, (see for example Berg et al. (2013) or Gregory & Milner (2009b)). Case studies in the Global South are rare but existent (Ugarte Gómez & Grimshaw, 2015). Although Chile and Germany are used separately in regional comparative case studies (Atzeni et al., 2011; Ugarte Gómez & Grimshaw, 2015; Visser, 2009), no comparison between the two countries in this matter has been conducted. To bridge that gap, the present thesis looks at data from both countries to provide a better understanding of the factors that influence the effectiveness of workplace unions on organizational advancement of WLB and gender equality.

This section guides through the methodology of the investigation. First, the methodological approach is explained, giving details about the used questionnaires, their origin, and some descriptive statistics. Afterwards, the research design, centered around bi- and multivariate statistics, is presented. This design is then connected to the usage of the cross-case synthesis technique as analytical strategy of this thesis. Finally, the chapter concludes with a brief operationalization of the dependent and independent variables. A detailed operationalization is provided in the appendix.

Methodological Approach

The thesis draws on secondary data sources from the Chilean survey called Encuesta Laboral (ENCLA) and the German Work Council Survey (WSI-Betriebsrätebefragung), a survey conducted by the Institute of Economic and Social Research (WSI) of the Hans Böckler Foundation. Both quantitative datasets examine industrial relations in their

respective countries, focusing on core issues of worker participation and are sent out primarily to workplace union chairpersons or if not available forwarded to union representatives. The data analyzed stem from the 2018 German survey and the 2019 Chilean survey.

German WSI

The German questionnaire was launched in 1997 and is repeated every two years. It is addressed to the presidents or members of workplace unions on issues relating to the difficulties and successes of their work in relation to their relationship with employees, employers, and trade unions. In addition to the regular survey cycle, the original questionnaire is supplemented by a special survey on specific elements. Therefore, the present thesis takes advantage of the additional items on gender equality in terms of equal pay included in the 2018 dataset.

The German data set consists of 4125 workplace union representatives who were surveyed by telephone in the first two quarters of 2018. Of these respondents, 22.8% work in companies with more than 200 employees. The remaining $\frac{3}{4}$ of the sample work in companies with 20 – 49, 50 – 99 or 100 – 199 employees (Schiel et al., 2018). Hereby, with 33.2% of the respondent's organizations the most represented sector is the manufacturing industry. The next highest industry coverage are public service providers, education, and health with 16.8% as well as company-related services with 11.1%.

Chilean ENCLA

The Chilean ENCLA data collection is based on a key survey on forms of employment, working conditions and industrial relations that has been repeated regularly since 1998. The ENCLA survey consists of four separate questionnaires addressed to different target groups within an organization: The organization's management, employees, and union representatives. For the purposes of this paper, the data set on union leaders is of primary interest, as it covers various issues related to relations with management and employees, union action, as well as their involvement in working time or gender equality.

The Chilean data set consists of 1172 workplace union representatives who responded the survey carried out in 2019 for the same year's ENCLA version. These respondents work in 75% of the cases in companies with more than 200 employees with an average of 869 and a median of 381 workers in each organization. As such, the survey population includes mostly medium and big companies, with a few ($n = 8$) very big companies with over 10.000 employees. While the organizations of the interviewed workplace unions representatives are in nearly 70% of the cases centralized in Santiago's metropole region, the industry coverage is widely spread with manufacturing, commerce, and education accounting for 14% each.

Research design: Bi- and multivariate analysis

This present thesis looks at IR dynamics, taken out of the opportunity structure from Gregory & Milner (2009b) and further applied by Greene et al. (2021), and gender dynamics that together drive union effectiveness in the workplace in relations to WLB and gender equality. The results for Chile and Germany are discussed both separately and in

comparison. Thus, the thesis can be classified as comparative research using a quantitative data analysis methodology. Through inferential statistical analysis the study samples used allow for conclusions for the entire population of organizations with workplace unions in Germany and Chile. Following the theoretical model shown in [figure 6](#), descriptive bivariate analysis with Chi-Square Test is undertaken to gain valuable insights in relations between dependent and independent variables in form of contingency tables. Hereby, in case of departure from the 2x2 contingency table and if deemed relevant, the adjusted residuals are considered to determine which cells are decisive for the highest deviation from the expected values (Beh, 2012).

In order to better utilize the explanatory power of the included variables, the relationship between independent and dependent variables is also assessed using binary logistic regression. As the sample size of both surveys is large with over 1000 respondents, the recommendation of Cakmakyapan & Goktas (2013) is followed and binary logistic regressions (instead of probit models) are performed for the Chilean and German cases. Through this statistical method it is possible to express the relationship between both sets of variables by predicting the odds for an organization to be more/less advanced on WLB and gender equality based on the categories of the independent variables.

Analytical strategy

Based on the outlined scenario, the paper draws on theoretical propositions (Yin & Campbell, 2018) as a general research strategy. With this in mind, the existing literature on the opportunity structure for union engagement in the workplace is reviewed and then used to construct an alternative model (see [figure 6](#)) that provides direction for the

developed hypothesis. Here, the countries under study are considered as separate cases with separate data collection following the **cross-case synthesis technique** (Yin & Campbell, 2018). Even though the items for both cases are harmonized wherever possible, the data analysis strategy follows a "case-based approach" instead of a mere "variable-based approach" as the entirety of the whole country-case is considered (Byrne, 2009). Thereby, the integrity of each case is maintained to account for patterns within each case. At the same time the approach allows for within-case patterns to be compared across the case (Yin & Campbell, 2018). While Germany and Chile mark different ends in their industrial relation regime, this analytical strategy intends to capture valuable patterns not only through within-country comparisons between WLB and gender equality but also through cross-country comparisons on both topics. To obtain insights into both aspects, the thesis presents results from bivariate ([table 4](#) & [table 5](#)) and multivariate ([table 6](#) & [table 7](#)) statistics for gender equality and WLB for both Germany ([table 5](#) & [table 7](#)) and Chile ([table 4](#) & [table 6](#)). To obtain the results detailed in [chapter 5](#) computer-assisted statistical tools are used.

Data operationalization

As outlined in the previous paragraphs, the investigation follows the approach of Bryson & Forth (2010) and Greene et al. (2021) and is accordingly using similar items in both the Chilean ENCLA and the German WSI questionnaire. To acquire a better consistency and comparability, the analysis orientates itself on the intercountry comparative design of the study from Ugarte Gómez & Grimshaw (2015) and harmonizes the two surveys as far as possible. Hereford, the mentioned variables are created out of similar items in each questionnaire. However, as will be discussed in the limitations part of this thesis in [chapter](#)

[9](#), for some items the ability to compare is limited as scale measurements and item assessments of the same concepts differ.

Based on the theoretical framework out of [chapter 2](#), the dependent variables of the thesis are WLB ([chapter 2.3](#)) and gender equality ([chapter 2.2](#)). Due to pragmatic reasons of data availability, items around the gender pay gap are used to operationalize the organizational advancement in overall gender equality. Accordingly, [table 2](#) on the next page summarizes the items used for the Chilean ENCLA and the German WSI surveys. In both versions, the items are translated to English from Spanish and German.

The interested independent variables are grouped into two sets: IR dynamics, including representation support, degree of involvement in WLB and gender equality, relationship with management and experience, and gender dynamics, referring to feminization of organization and workplace union as well as the gender of the union's chairperson. [Table 3](#) on pages 77 and 78 presents the selected items, based on their proximity in terms of content across both surveys, and their scale measurement. Additionally, a comprehensive description of the operationalization is provided in the [appendix](#), starting on page 182. This includes a detailed explanation of the (technical) recodification of the items.

Table 2: Operationalization of the dependent variables based on the Chilean ENCLA and German WSI survey.

	ENCLA (Chile)	WSI (Germany)
Advancement WLB	<p>D4 (union): During 2018, how often did this company implement the following psychosocial risk prevention actions?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 08: Facilitated the compatibility of family and work life; for example, by introducing flexible working hours and flexible working hours measures in accordance with the needs arising from domestic-family work. <p><u>Answers</u> recoded to not advanced (0) and advanced (1)</p>	<p>37: Which of the following measures does your employer take to find or retain suitable staff?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - C: Flexible working hours - D: a say in the choice of working hours or place of work - G: Family-friendly working conditions <p><u>Answers</u> summed up and recoded to not advanced (0) and advanced (1)</p>
Advancement Gender Equality	<p>F7 (union): Indicate how much you agree with each of the following statements about gender equality in this company (union, F7)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 02: In this company, men and women receive equal pay when doing the same work <p><u>Answers</u> recoded to not advanced (0) and advanced (1)</p>	<p>P8 Are women and men paid equally for equal work or work of equal value in your company?</p> <p><u>Answers</u> recoded to not advanced (0) and advanced (1)</p>

Table 3: Operationalization of the independent variables based on the Chilean ENCLA and German WSI survey.

	ENCLA (Chile)	WSI (Germany)
Representation Support	<p>G8 (union): During 2018, did your union have support from this company for any of its activities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 01 Provided space for union activities - 02 Provided financial resources for union activities - 03 Allowed part of the workday to be used for union meetings <p><u>Answers</u> summed up and recoded to “limited resources (1)”, “some resources (2)”, “high resources (3)”</p>	<p>H3: How reliable is the employer when it comes to agreements? Is he...</p> <p><u>Answers</u> recoded into “not reliable (1)”, “rather unreliable (2)”, “very reliable (3)”</p>
Degree of Involvement WLB	<p>5 (union): During 2018, has this company formally informed and/or consulted your union on the following matters related to working conditions in the company?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 01 On the organization of work (working hours, overtime, change of functions, etc.) <p><u>Answers</u> recoded to “neither consulted nor informed (1)”, “only informed (2)”, “informed and consulted or only consulted (3)”</p>	<p>A1: Please tell us in each case whether the works council has been particularly involved in these since the beginning of 2017.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - H: Increasingly flexible working hours - N: Family-friendly working conditions - AD: Employees' wishes for flexible working hours <p><u>Answers</u> summed up and recoded to “not involved in WLB (0)”, “involved in WLB (1)”</p>
Degree of Involvement Gender Equality	<p>F5 (union): During 2018, has this company formally informed and/or consulted your union on the following matters related to working conditions in the company?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 04 On the incorporation of measures for gender equality in the company. <p><u>Answers</u> recoded to “neither consulted nor informed (1)”, “only informed (2)”, “informed and consulted or only consulted (3)”</p>	<p>A1: Please tell us in each case whether the works council has been particularly involved in these since the beginning of 2017.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - AQ: Equal pay for women and men <p><u>Answers</u> recoded to “not involved in gender equality (0)”, “involved in gender equality (1)”</p>
Relationship with Management	<p>G16 (union): What is the most frequent attitude of this company towards your union?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 01 Facilitates its operation - 02 Makes it difficult for it to function - 03 Neither facilitates nor hinders its functioning <p><u>Answers</u> recoded to “makes it difficult for its operation (1)”, “neither facilitates nor hinders its operation (2)”, “facilitates its operation (3)”</p>	<p>H8: All in all, how do you rate the relationship between your works council ...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A: with the management? <p><u>Answers</u> recoded to “poor relations (1)”, “average relations (2)”, “(very) good relations (3)”</p>

	ENCLA (Chile)	WSI (Germany)
Experience	R8: In what year did you join this union? <u>Answers</u> recoded to “between 2010 and 2019 (1)”, “between 2000 and 2009 (2)”, “before 2000 (3)”	J3a: How long have you been a member of the works council? (uninterrupted) <u>Answers</u> recoded to “between 2010 and 2018 (1)”, “between 2000 and 2009 (2)”, “before 2000 (3)”
Feminization Organization	A1 (self-administered): Indicate the total number of persons directly employed by this company as of November 30, 2018, by region of the country and gender. <u>Answers</u> calculated and then split if ≤50% “not feminized (0)” and >50% “yes, feminized (1)”	D2: How many employees does your company currently have in total? D2a: How many of them are women? An estimate is sufficient. <u>Answers</u> calculated and then split if ≤50% “not feminized (0)” and >50% “yes, feminized (1)”
Feminization Workplace Union	G2 (union): How many men and women are members of your union today? <u>Answers</u> calculated and then split if ≤50% “not feminized (0)” and >50% “yes, feminized (1)”	G9: How many works council members are women? G8: How many people are on the works council in total? <u>Answers</u> calculated and then split if ≤50% “not feminized (0)” and >50% “yes, feminized (1)”
Gender Workplace Union President	G4 (union): Indicate the gender of the persons holding the following positions on the union board of directors: 01: President <u>Answers</u> recoded to “man (0)”, “woman (1)”	G14: Is the chair of the works council held by a man or a woman? <u>Answers</u> recoded to “man (0)”, “woman (1)”

5 Findings

The following chapter presents the findings of the empirical study of the thesis. In a first step both datasets are introduced descriptively. Afterwards, the results of bivariate descriptive statistics for the advancement in WLB and gender equality for Chile and Germany are shown. In a last step, the findings of binary logistic regressions for both countries are presented.

Descriptive introduction

Starting with a general assessment of the dependent variables and beginning with WLB, the results (see [table 4](#) on the next page) show that in Chilean organizations, 48.5% of all respondents' signal that their organization is advanced in WLB, which is operationalized through the question if the company facilitates the compatibility of work and family life, for example, by introducing flexible working hours that are in accordance with the needs derived from domestic and family work [$N = 1170$, $M = 0.485$, $SD = 0.500$]. As such, a small majority of the organization either answers the advancement of WLB as "some of the time (3)", "only a few times (2)" or "never (1)". The quite large standard deviation shows that the reality in Chilean organizations differs strongly.

Compared to the advancement in WLB, Chilean organizations are more advanced in topics of gender equality. Accordingly, 65% of the interviewed representatives signal that their organization's pay related gender equality policies are advanced [$N = 1076$, $M = 0.65$, $SD = 0.477$]. The high standard deviation accounts for quite a big difference in Chilean organizations. As such, only a minority of 35% answer on both questions either with "some of the time (3)", "only a few times (2)" or "never (1)". Compared to the

advancement of WLB, it seems like Chilean organizations with active workplace unions are already quite advanced on gender equality which will be picked up again in the discussion part of this thesis in [chapter 6](#).

*Table 4: Univariate and bivariate descriptive statistics for advancement in WLB and gender equality for **Chile**.*

Variables		% sample	Chile	
			Advanced in WLB	Advanced in gender equality
% sample			48.5	65.0
Representation Support	Limited resources (1)	27.6	48.2***	66.1*
	Some resources (2)	32.8	55.4***	66.0*
	High resources (3)	39.7	66.3***	74.4*
Degree of Involvement WLB	Neither consulted nor informed (1)	48.3	33.6***	58.8***
	Only informed (2)	35.5	61.8***	67.0***
	Informed and consulted or only consulted (3)	16.1	63.1***	77.4***
Degree of Involvement Gender Equality	Neither consulted nor informed (1)	67.0	41.1***	61.7**
	Only informed (2)	23.3	62.5***	68.9**
	Informed and consulted or only consulted (3)	9.6	64.0***	74.1**
Relationship with Management	Makes it difficult for its operation (0)	14.8	23.7***	56.7***
	Neither facilitates nor hinders its operation (1)	17.5	33.7***	56.0***
	Facilitates its operation (2)	67.7	57.6***	68.9***
Experience, Membership	between 2010 and 2019 (1)	63.9	48.7	64.3
	between 2000 and 2009 (2)	23.9	46.2	63.1
	before 2000 (3)	12.2	51.4	72.0
Feminization Organization	No (0)	58.6	56.6***	64.0
	Yes (1)	41.4	37.0***	66.2
Feminization Workplace Union	No (0)	57.6	55.3***	62.8*
	Yes (1)	42.4	39.1***	67.6*
Gender Workplace Union President	Man (0)	69.5	52.2***	66.4
	Woman (1)	30.5	39.4***	62.6

Note: Statistically significant at the ***0.01 level; **at the 0.05 level; *at the 0.1 level. Reported values are %. Method: Chi-Square Test.

Univariate and bivariate descriptive statistics for advancement in WLB and gender equality for Chile

Representation support:

While only a marginally significant effect of representation support for the advancement of gender equality can be reported, a highly significant effect of representation support can be found for the advancement of WLB. In over 66% of the cases when workplace unions receive a high number of resources from the organization their WLB is advanced, whereas only in 48% of the cases when the representation support is low, the organizations count with advanced WLB policies. Chi-square analysis reveals a significant association between both variables [$\chi^2 (2) = 16.297, p < 0.001$]. The observed frequencies differed significantly from the expected frequencies, suggesting that the representation support is a relevant contextual factor for workplace unions to promote WLB. However, while the effect is statistically significant, it is low in magnitude with Cramer's V at a level of 0.152.

For gender equality, a lower but however statistically significant effect can be shown. Thus, in 74% of the cases when workplace unions receive a high number of resources from the organization their gender equality is advanced, while only in 66% of the cases when the support is low, the organizations count with an advanced gender equality [$\chi^2 (2) = 5.156, p = 0.076$]. Cramer's V at 0.089 indicates a small effect. Therefore, for both WLB and gender equality an adequate level resource support through offices, financial resources, or allowance to use part of the workday for meetings are associated with a higher advancement of both topics.

Degree of involvement:

For the dimension of the workplace union's involvement in WLB and gender equality highly significant effects exist for the advancement in both topics. Looking at the univariate descriptive statistics, it is worth mentioning that in 48% of the cases, respondents report that they are "neither informed nor consulted" in topics of WLB and only in 16% of the cases "informed and consulted or only consulted". A similar but even lower pattern can be noted for the case of being "neither informed nor consulted" (67%) and for the case of being "informed and consulted or only consulted" (10%) regarding pay related gender equality topics. As such, even though workplace unions are, generally speaking, in their majority not much involved in neither of both topics, they are more involved in topics around WLB compared to gender equality.

Looking at bivariate descriptive statistics, on the one hand, starting with the advancement of WLB, it can be reported that when workplace unions are involved in WLB topics, 63% of organizations are advanced in WLB, while only 34% of organizations are advanced under the condition that workplace unions are not involved [$\chi^2 (2) = 94.555, p < 0.001$]. Additionally, only a small difference exists between being "only informed" or being "informed and consulted or only consulted" with adjusted residuals of 6.8 and 4.4 respectively, whereas quite a big deviation exists between the observed and expected cases when the workplace unions are being "neither informed nor consulted" with adjusted residuals of 9.7. Cramer's V at a level of 0.286 shows a moderate effect size, with the no involvement category having the largest impact.

In the case of involvement in gender equality, 64% of organizations are advanced in WLB under the condition of an involvement through consultation and information of the workplace union, while only 41% of organizations are advanced in WLB when workplace

unions are not involved in gender equality [$\chi^2 (2) = 48.423, p < 0.001$]. Again, the adjusted residuals of the categories indicate that the highest difference between observed and expected values is for the lowest category of not being involved at all. Additionally, Cramer's V at 0.205 reports a moderate effect size.

On the other hand, when considering the advancement towards gender equality, the involvement of workplace unions in WLB and gender equality also play an important role. Thus, 74% of organizations are advanced on gender equality when workplace unions are involved in topics of gender equality compared to 62% when unions are not involved [$\chi^2 (2) = 8.82, p = 0.012$]. Moreover, also the involvement of workplace unions in WLB seems to matter for an organization to be involved in gender equality. When unions are involved in WLB, 77% of organizations are advanced in gender equality, this number drops to 59% when unions are not involved in topics of WLB [$\chi^2 (2) = 21.352, p < 0.001$]. Cramer's V at 0.091 for involvement in gender equality and 0.142 for involvement in WLB, shows a small effect for both cases.

Concludingly, the involvement of workplace unions in both topics is positively correlated with the advancement of the organization in both topics. A pattern of relevant cross-topic influence on their organizational outcome emerges which will be further discussed in [chapter 7](#). As such, a higher involvement in WLB is associated positively with higher organizational advancements in gender equality as well as in WLB. However, this cross-relationship is bigger for high involvement ("informed and consulted or only consulted") in WLB and the advancement in gender equality (77%) compared to the high involvement in gender equality and the advancement in WLB (64%). As such, it seems that the involvement of the workplace union in matters of WLB is more relevant for the

advancement in gender equality than the involvement in gender equality for the advancement in WLB.

Relationship with management:

Considering the dimension relationship with management, in both cases of advancement towards WLB and gender equality significant relations can be found. Regarding WLB, in around 24% of the cases when the management “makes it difficult for the workplace union’s operation”, WLB is advanced, compared to 57% for the advancement in gender equality. Additionally, while in 58% of the cases when the management “facilitates its operations” WLB is advanced, in 69% of the cases gender equality is advanced.

As such, comparing the influence of management as facilitator or as adversary, an analysis of the adjusted residuals suggests that a management that facilitates the work of trade unions (adjusted residuals of 9.1) is having a bigger impact on the advancement of WLB than a management that hinders workplace unions (adjusted residuals of -7.0). Chi-square analysis for WLB advancement reveals a significant association between both variables with a moderate effect size as shown by Cramer’s V at a level of 0.273 [$\chi^2 (2) = 86.571, p < 0.001$].

In the case of advancement towards gender equality a similar tendency can be detected. In 57% of the cases when management places obstacles to the operations of workplace unions, gender equality is still advanced, which, however, is lower than the mentioned 69% in cases of a facilitative management. With adjusted residuals of 4.0 for the case of a facilitative management compared to -2.4 of a management placing obstacles, the observed values differ more from the expected values in the sense that more organizations are advanced under the condition of facilitative relationships with

management. Chi-square analysis shows here a significant association between both variables with Cramer's V at a level of 0.116 [$X^2 (2) = 14.628, p < 0.001$].

Experience seen as duration in membership:

The dimension evaluating the experience of the workplace union as seen through the duration of membership has no significant influence neither on the advancement of WLB nor on the advancement of gender equality.

Gender dynamics:

Looking at the three variables measuring the influence of gender, it can be reported that the feminization of the organization is statistically significant for an organization's advancement of WLB in Chile. Accordingly, in around 57% of organizations that have a higher proportion of men than women in their workforce, the topic of WLB is advanced [$X^2 (1) = 43.543, p < 0.001$], while in 55% of workplace unions with a higher ratio of men the topic of WLB is advanced [$X^2 (1) = 30.128, p < 0.001$]. Put differently, only in 37% of feminized organization and 39% of feminized workplace unions, the organizations WLB is advanced, signaling a positive relationship between a higher number of men and WLB advancement. With Cramer's V at a level of 0.193 for the feminization of the organization and of 0.160 for the feminization of the workplace union, the effect size signals a small relationship.

On the contrary, for the advancement towards gender equality, the feminization of organization does not mark a significant result. Only the chi-square analysis for the feminization of workplace unions shows a barely significant relationship with Cramer's V at 0.050 [$X^2 (1) = 2.720, p < 0.099$]. This reflects the opposite tendency as for WLB and

demonstrates that in 67% of the cases when workplace unions are feminized, the organization is advanced in gender equality, whereas in 63% of the cases when workplace unions are not feminized, the organization is advanced in gender equality.

When looking at the role of the gender of the workplace union's chairperson, the earlier mentioned direction for the advancement in WLB can be found. As such, in 52% of the cases when a man inherits the role of the workplace union president, the organization is advanced in WLB and only in 39% of the cases when a woman takes this role, the WLB is advanced [$\chi^2 (1) = 16.094, p < 0.001$]. Thus, the male gender of the president relates to an increased chance of the organization being advanced in WLB. However, this effect is small in size with Cramer's V at a level of 0.118. In the scenario of gender equality being advanced no significant relationship with the gender of the workplace union's president can be found.

As a short summary, it is possible to highlight 4 key points of the bivariate analysis: 1. For the organization's advancement in WLB and gender equality an adequate level of resource support for the workplace union, a higher degree of involvement in the topics through information sharing and consultation with management and a good relationship with management are beneficial. 2. The involvement effects in topics of gender equality and WLB have a positively overlapping effect on the organization's advancement of the other concept. 3. The experience of workplace unions, seen through the duration in years in membership, have no effect on the organization's advancement in neither of both topics. 4. For the case of advancement in WLB a reverse feminization plays a significant role, demonstrating that a higher ratio of men in organization, workplace union and a

male chairperson are associated with higher chances of the organization being advanced. Only a higher feminization of the workplace union shows a marginal statistically significant effect towards higher organizational advancements in gender equality.

Univariate and bivariate descriptive statistics for advancement in WLB and gender equality for **Germany**

Looking at the general advancement in WLB and gender equality in the German case, the previous operationalization must be reconsidered. [Table 5](#) on the next page shows the results of the analysis. As such, the recodification of the variable gender equality already incorporates an already fairly advanced baseline as only the highest answer (“yes, always”) on the question if women and men are equally paid is considered as a sign of advancement in gender equality. Despite the higher level of item difficulty of the German item construction compared to the Chilean case, 62% of the organizations in Germany have their pay-related gender equality advanced [$N = 2232$, $M = 0.623$, $SD = 0.485$], which – if one is to look only at the figures – is quite similar to the Chilean value. However, a direct comparison is limited due to the different items and scales used and consequently rather indicates a higher advancement in Germany than in Chile according to workplace union representatives in both countries.

With the same caution as with gender equality, the results of the WLB dimension must also take into account that an organization is only considered advanced with its WLB policy if at least 2 of the 3 questions are answered in the affirmative sense. Again, the baseline criterium for being advanced in the German survey is put at a higher threshold as for the Chilean case. In this context, 25% of companies in Germany answered on two or all three items of the questions on flexible working hours, involvement in the choice of working hours or place of work and family-friendly working conditions with “yes” and thus are advanced on their WLB policies [$N = 2267$, $M = 0.246$, $SD = 0.431$]. Compared to the Chilean case, the German organizations seem to be less advanced in WLB, which,

however, can also be attributed to the different recodification of the scales of measurement. Additionally, a rather high standard deviation in Chile shows a big difference in the degree of advancements in the organizations compared to the German reality.

*Table 5: Univariate and bivariate descriptive statistics for advancement in WLB and gender equality for **Germany**.*

Variables		% sample	Germany	
			Advanced in WLB	Advanced in gender equality
% sample			24.6	62.3
Representation Support	Not reliable (1)	13	25.9***	56.0***
	Rather unreliable (2)	56.6	44.6***	60.6***
	Very reliable (3)	30.4	52.0***	68.2***
Degree of Involvement WLB	Not involved in WLB (0)	70.9	14.3***	63.5
	Involved in WLB (1)	29.1	49.3***	61.2
Degree of Involvement Gender Equality	Not involved in gender equality (0)	88.6	21.2***	68.9***
	Involved in gender equality (1)	11.4	50.7***	37.2***
Relationship with Management	Poor relations (1)	13.6	22.7***	61.3***
	Average relations (2)	30.3	38.4***	56.2***
	(very) good relations (3)	56.1	53.0***	65.8***
Experience, Membership	between 2010 and 2018 (1)	37.2	22.1***	60.1**
	between 2000 and 2009 (2)	35.8	24.1***	60.7**
	before 2000 (3)	27.0	28.5***	66.8**
Feminization Organization	No (0)	62.2	42.4**	56.7***
	Yes (1)	37.8	48.1**	71.5***
Feminization Workplace Union	No (0)	70.1	42.9**	59.5***
	Yes (1)	29.9	48.7**	68.8***
Gender Workplace Union President	Man (0)	72.0	23.7**	62.6
	Woman (1)	28.0	26.7**	61.7

Note: Statistically significant at the ***0.01 level; **at the 0.05 level; *at the 0.1 level. Reported values are %. Method: Chi-Square Test.

Representation support:

While the majority (57%) of workplace unions representative, univariately speaking, state that they receive representation support, as seen through the reliability of the management in terms of keeping up with arrangements, in a “rather unreliable” manner, 30% report “very reliable” support and only 13% signal “not reliable” support. In the bivariate analysis, the relationship with advancement in WLB and pay related gender equality is both highly significant. As such, if the workplace unions receive “not reliable” support, 26% of organizations are advanced in their WLB policies [$\chi^2 (2) = 56.706, p < 0.001$]. On the contrary, if workplace unions report “very reliable” support 52% of organizations are advanced in WLB, showing an increased amount of organization being advanced in WLB when the support is given. With Cramer’s V at a level of 0.158 the effect size is small. The adjusted residuals show that in the category “not reliable” the observed cases differ the most from the count of expected cases, signaling this category to have the biggest effect for this variable in interaction with advancement in WLB.

When looking at the relationship of representation support with the organization’s advancement in gender equality, a similar tendency regarding higher support and more organizations being advanced can be reported. As such, 68% of organizations are advanced on gender equality if the workplace union’s support is “very reliable” compared 56% of organizations being advanced when unions receive “unreliable” support [$\chi^2 (2) = 16.687, p < 0.001$]. This allows for the observation that progress on gender equality in German organizations is per se at a higher starting level, but that this increases as a result of more reliable management support for workplace unions. This effect has a small magnitude of 0.086 (Cramer's V). Contrary to WLB, the adjusted residuals show that the greatest difference occurs for the category “very reliable”.

Degree of involvement:

Looking at the univariate results, for both dimensions that define the degree of the workplace union's involvement in specific topics around WLB and pay related gender equality, it is striking that only a limited number of workplace unions involve themselves with WLB (29%) and even less with pay related gender equality topics (11%). Considering this tendency of lower involvement, highly significant effects can be noted in interaction with the organization's advancements. As such, only in 14% of the cases when workplace unions are not involved in WLB topics, the organization is advanced with their WLB policies, in comparison to 49% of the organizations, in which workplace unions are involved in WLB topics, are advanced on WLB policies [$\chi^2 (1) = 557.954, p < 0.001$]. Thus, the low advancement of WLB in case of a no-involvement in WLB topics is striking, while a bit less than the majority of organizations is advanced on WLB when the workplace union deals with topics of WLB. This comparison underlines that if workplace unions are involved the likelihood of organizations to be advanced rises some 35 percentage points. Hereby, the effect size with Cramer's V at 0.369 can be seen as quite moderate showing.

When looking at the degree of involvement in gender equality and the advancement in WLB, a similar logic can be reported. While in 21% of the cases when workplace unions are not involved in gender equality topics, the organization is advanced on WLB, the percentage raises to 51% when workplace are dealing with these topics [$\chi^2 (1) = 195.048, p < 0.001$]. With a moderate Cramer's V at 0.218 the effect is smaller than the previously mentioned relationship between involvement and advancement in WLB. Nevertheless, it illustrates again that also workplace union's involvement in gender equality and the advancement in WLB are correlated in Germany – as already reported

for the Chilean case. Also, the effect sizes of Cramer's V are similar between Germany and Chile, with a higher effect between the involvement in WLB and advancement in WLB compared to the involvement in gender equality and advancement in WLB.

Considering the other dependent variable, gender equality, it is noticeable that workplace union's degree of involvement in topics of WLB does not influence the organization's advancement in gender equality as no statistical significance can be reported. However, for the case of involvement in pay related gender equality topics, in 69% of organizations, in which workplace unions are not involved in gender equality topics, their pay related gender equality is actually advanced, whereas in 37% of the organizations are advanced in gender equality when workplace unions are involved in the same topics [$\chi^2 (1) = 156.198, p < 0.001$]. Thus, the effect is contrary to the observed results for WLB as a union's higher involvement in gender equality is associated with less advancement in gender equality. With Cramer's V at a level of 0.265, the magnitude of the effect is of moderate size.

Relationship with Management:

Considering the dimension relationship with management, it is noticeable that most of workplace unions report "average relations" (30%) or "(very) good relations" (56%). In the interaction with the organization's advancement, both cases of advancement towards WLB and gender equality yield highly significant relations. Regarding WLB, if the relationship with management is "poor", 23% of organization's are advanced on WLB. At the same time, if the workplace unions report a "(very) good relationship", 53% of organization's are advanced [$\chi^2 (2) = 107.022, p < 0.001$]. As such, a moderate connection can be found between better relationship with management and higher

advancements of WLB with Cramer's at a level of 0.217. Thus, similar to the Chilean case, comparing the relationship with management as facilitator or as adversary, the statistical analysis suggests that "(very) good relations" have a bigger impact on the advancement of WLB (adjusted residuals of 9.3) than "poor relations" on the advancement of WLB (adjusted residuals of -8.3).

In case of the advancement towards gender equality, "(very) good relations" with management seem to interact with organization's being advanced on gender equality. This can be noted through the result that 65.8% of organizations, in which the workplace unions have a "(very) good relation" with management, are advanced on gender equality. Contrary, 61.3% of organizations are still advanced in gender equality when the relationship is "poor" [$\chi^2 (2) = 17.281, p < 0.001$]. Thus, the positive effect between advancement and good relationships seems to be higher than for no advancement and poor relationships. Additionally, it can be noted that more than half of organizations are advanced on gender equality, also when the workplace union's relations with management are quite deteriorated. Nevertheless, for the advancement of gender equality, the interaction with "average relations" and "(very) good relations" is of greatest interest according to adjusted residuals analysis. However, with Cramer's V at 0.088 the effect size is small.

Experience:

The dimension evaluating the experience of the workplace union as seen through the duration inside the workplace union has a significant influence on the advancement of both, gender equality and WLB. Regarding the univariate statistics, it can be stated that of the duration of membership is quite balanced across the categories with 37% of the

respondents joined the workplace union since 2010, 36% between 2000 and 2009 and 27% before 2000.

However, looking at the relationship with the advancement of WLB, the results indicate that if the respondent recently joined the workplace union (“between 2010 and 2018”), the organization’s WLB is advanced in 22% of the cases. If the respondent has more experience in workplace union’s through a membership “between 2000 and 2009”, the organization is in 24% of the cases advanced on WLB. The number rises when the membership started before 2000 to 29% [$\chi^2 (2) = 14.603, p < 0.001$]. This indicates that with rising experience seen through duration of membership, organizations seem to be more advanced on WLB. Adjust residual analysis signals that the interaction with “between 2010 and 2018” (-2,8) and “before 2000” (3.6) are of biggest interest. As such, the lower experience of recently joined union members is related to lower advancements in WLB, while more experienced union members relate to higher advancements in WLB. The effect is small in size with Cramer’s V at 0.60.

Regarding the other dependent variable, gender equality, it can be said that if the membership inside the workplace union is “between 2010 and 2018”, 60% of organizations have their gender equality advanced compared to 67% of organizations advanced in the subject when the membership extends “before 2000” [$\chi^2 (2) = 8.106, p = 0.017$]. Nevertheless, the size of the effect is small with Cramer’s V at a level of 0.060, it demonstrates that higher amounts of experience inside the workplace union as member is related to higher advancements in gender equality and as such reflects the same direction and magnitude as for WLB. Adjust residual analysis shows only for the interaction with “before 2000” that the threshold of 1.96 is passed” (2.8), signaling that only for this category the observed count is significantly larger than the expected one.

Gender dynamics:

For the dimensions around gender dynamics, first it can be stated that the feminization of the workplace union and the gender of the workplace union's president reflects roughly the feminization of the organizations on an overall level. However, it can be noted that slightly more organizations are feminized (38%) compared to workplace unions (30%). Hereby, less than a third of workplace unions have more female than male members (30%) as well as a female than a male chairperson (28%).

Looking at the bivariate statistics, Chi-square analysis demonstrates a significant association between the feminization of the organization and WLB advancement, however, with a small effect size as revealed by Cramer's V at a level of 0.057 [$X^2 (1) = 7.346, p = 0.007$]. Thus, organizations tend to be slightly more advanced when there are more women (42%) compared to more men (48%) in the workforce. A similar effect can be observed in relation with the advancement on gender equality. The results show that organizations that are feminized are advanced in gender equality in 72% of the cases [$X^2 (1) = 48.775, p < 0.001$]. Even though the effect size with Cramer's V at 0.148 is small it shall be noted that it is still nearly three times higher than for the advancement in WLB. When looking at the feminization of the workplace union, a similar tendency can be observed. If workplace unions are feminized, 49% of organization are advanced in WLB compared to 43% in case of workplace unions with higher ratio of men than women [$X^2 (1) = 6.284, p = 0.012$]. For gender equality, 69% of organizations are advanced in the topic when feminized compared to 60% in case of workplace unions being not feminized [$X^2 (1) = 16.964, p < 0.001$]. Consequently, a higher ratio of women is positively correlated with higher degrees of advancement in WLB (Cramer's V = 0.053) and gender equality (Cramer's V = 0.087).

While for the advancement of gender equality, no significant influence of the gender of the chairperson can be reported, in 27% of organizations, in which the workplace union is led by a female president, their WLB policies are advanced, compared to 24% of advanced organization in case of a male president [$\chi^2 (1) = 3.928, p = 0.047$]. While the not advanced organizations towards WLB are nearly the same under a male (76%) or female (73%) workplace union's chairperson, it can be said that the no advancement is rather associated with male than female presidents. However, with a Cramer's V at 0.031 the effect is small.

In conclusion, the feminization of organization, workplace union and the chairperson of a workplace union is positively correlated with higher advancements in WLB and, excluding the gender of the chairperson, also with higher advancements in gender equality.

As a short summary, it is possible to highlight 4 key points of the bivariate analysis:

1. For the advancement of both WLB and gender equality an adequate level of reliable resource support and a good relationship with management are beneficial.
2. The feminization seen through the ratio of women in organization and workplace as well as the gender of the workplace union's chairperson plays a relevant but small role and is positively correlated with the organization's advancement in WLB. The same direction can be seen for the organization's advancement in gender equality, except that the gender of the chairperson does not seem to make a difference.
3. Contrary effects are reported for the involvement of the workplace union in WLB and gender equality in relation to the dependent variables. While both types of involvement are positively associated with higher advancements in WLB, for the organization to be advanced in gender equality it is beneficial for the workplace union not to be involved in gender

equality topics. 4. With significant effects for both dependent variables, the experience of workplace unions, seen through the duration in years in membership, have positive effects on the organization's advancement in WLB and gender equality. As such, higher degrees of experience, seen through people joining the union before 2000, can be associated with higher advancements on both topics. Again, the magnitude of the values shows the general tendency of German organizations being higher advanced in gender equality than in WLB, even though the coding of the dimension gender equality occurred at a higher baseline.

Binary Logistic Regression Chile

A binary logistic regression is used to make statements about the probability of the independent variables falling into the case of advanced or non-advanced WLB and equality in organizations. [Table 6](#) shows the given results. Before the analysis is performed the assumptions of the binary logistic regression is controlled for by assuring of nonexistence of multicollinearity and a sufficiently high sample size. Following the study of Bujang et al. (2018), the analysis includes 1128 valid cases for WLB and 1039 for gender equality, which is well above the minimum required sample size of 500.

Additionally, ex-antes analysis of the dimension representation support inside the first run of the model reveals missing data of 41% for the dependent variable WLB, to which the mentioned variable contributes some 37%. Similarly, a first run for the other dependent variable, gender equality, shows 46% of missing data, to which the variable representation support contributes 35%. Further analysis highlight patterns in the missing data regarding the dependent variables. Accordingly, in 34% of the cases when data was missing, organizations are advanced in WLB, compared to 58% when the data was not missing [$\chi^2 (1) = 62.333, p < 0.001$]. A similar pattern exists for gender equality, in which case in 58% when data was missing, organizations are advanced and in 69% when data was not missing, organizations are advanced [$\chi^2 (1) = 14.461, p < 0.001$]. As such, it seems that missing data on the questions regarding the resources obtained by the workplace union from the organization exist rather in the case of organizations not being advanced on WLB or gender equality, which in turn distorts the analysis. Consequently, the dimension is excluded from the binary logistic regression in the Chilean case for both models.

Table 6: Logistic Regression Predicting Advancement in WLB and Gender Equality in Chile from Degree of Involvement in WLB and Gender Equality, Relationship with Management, Experience through Duration in Membership, Feminization of the Organization, Feminization of the Workplace Union, and the Gender of the Workplace President.

	Chile	
	Advancement WLB	Advancement gender equality
Degree of Involvement WLB: Only informed (1) (Base: Neither consulted nor informed (0))	2.279***	1.290
Degree of Involvement WLB: Informed and consulted or only consulted (2)	2.348***	2.200***
Degree of Involvement Gender Equality: Only informed (1) (Base: Neither consulted nor informed (0))	1.481**	1.126
Degree of Involvement Gender Equality: Informed and consulted or only consulted (2)	1.491*	1.162
Relationship with Management: Neither facilitates nor hinders its operation (1) (Base: Makes it difficult for its operation (0))	1.489	0.929
Relationship with Management: Facilitates its operation (2)	3.486***	1.481**
Experience, Membership: between 2000 and 2009 (1) (Base: between 2010 and 2019 (0))	0.697*	0.847
Experience, Membership: before 2000 (2)	0.765	1.194
Feminized Organization (1) (Base: Not feminized (0))	0.629**	1.081
Feminized Workplace Union (1) (Base: Not feminized (0))	0.886	1.395
Female Workplace Union President (1) (Base: Male Workplace Union President (0))	0.911	0.774
Constant	0.305	1.609
R ² de Nagelkerke	0.203	0.056

Statistically significant at the ***0.01 level; **at the 0.05 level; *at the 0.10 level. Reported values are Odds Ratio (OR). Method: Binary logistic regression.

Binary Logistic Regression Chile WLB

After the outlined pre-analysis, the binary logistic regression is run and with a statistically insignificant Hosmer-Lemeshow-Test of 0.763 indicates an apt goodness-of-fit between the observed and expected event rates is assigned to the model [$\chi^2 (8) = 4.946, p = 0.763$]. Additionally, the model reveals that all categories of degree of involvement in

WLB and gender equality as well as some categories of relationship with management together with the feminization of the organization are significant predictors of organizations to be advanced in topics of WLB [$\chi^2 (11, N = 1128) = 186.05, p < .001$]. The model explains 20.3% (Nagelkerke R^2) of the variability of the advancement towards WLB and at a default cutoff value of 0.5 correctly classifies 65.9% of cases with a specificity (percentage of cases observed to be correctly predicted by the model to fall into the reference category of no advancement) of 66.1% and a sensitivity (percentage of cases observed to be correctly predicted by the model to fall into the target group of being advanced with WLB) of 65.6%.

The model reveals for the dimension involvement in topics of WLB that the likelihood of being advanced in WLB is 135% higher for workplace unions that are “informed and consulted or only consulted” compared to workplace unions that were “neither informed nor consulted” [$OR_{\text{degree of involvement WLB (2)}} = 2.348, p < 0.001, CI\ 95\%: 1.6 - 3.446$]. Additionally, workplace unions that are “only informed” are also 128% more likely to be advanced in WLB compared to workplace unions that are “neither informed nor consulted” [$OR_{\text{degree of involvement WLB (1)}} = 2.279, p < 0.001, CI\ 95\%: 1.696 - 3.062$]. Hereby, it is noticeable that the difference between the categories “only informed” and “informed and consulted or only consulted” is quite small if the major differences in content between being informed or actively involved in consulting is considered. As such, the results indicate that any degree of involvement of the workplace unions in the topics around WLB is facilitative for the organization to be advanced in WLB.

A similar relationship can be found in the degree of involvement in topics of gender equality, even if in a less significant way. The model shows that organizations with workplace unions that are “informed and consulted or only consulted” in topics of gender

equality are 49% more likely to be advanced in WLB [$OR_{\text{degree of involvement gender equality (2)}} = 1.491, p = 0.092, CI\ 95\%: 0.937 - 2.371$]. Similarly, the model also indicates that organizations in which workplace unions are “only informed” in topics of gender equality are 48% more likely to be advanced in WLB [$OR_{\text{degree of involvement gender equality (1)}} = 1.481, p = 0.017, CI\ 95\%: 1.071 - 2.049$]. Therefore, the results reveal a linkage between the sharing of information and consultation with the workplace unions about the incorporation of gender equality measures in the company with the organization’s advancement on WLB. Again, it can be noted that the difference between the degree of involvement seen through information sharing or consultation compared to no involved is minimal.

For the relationship with management also statistically significant results can be reported. As such, organizations that facilitate the operations of the workplace unions are 249% more likely to be advanced in WLB compared to organizations that obstruct the operations of the workplace union [$OR_{\text{relationship with management: facilitates its operations (2)}} = 3.486, p = 0.001, CI\ 95\%: 2.309 - 5.262$]. As the other category, reflecting no facilitative nor inhibitory behavior, is not significant, but shows the same direction of organizations being rather advanced in WLB when compared to the reference category, it can be seen as crucial that the relationship with management is not just neutral but positive accounting for efforts to facilitate the operations of the workplace union.

Additionally, being a member of workplace unions between 2000 and 2009 is associated with the organization being less likely to be advanced on WLB [$OR_{\text{experience, membership (1)}} = 0.697, p = 0.022, CI\ 95\%: 0.512 - 0.949$]. This indicates that the duration of the membership within workplace unions “between 2000 and 2009” results in a 30% lower chance of the organization to be advanced on WLB compared to a more recent duration of membership “between 2010 and 2019”. Thus, the model reveals that organizations

tend to be less advanced in WLB when the representatives of workplace unions joined the union not recently but also not more than 19 years ago. The other categories for this dimension are not significant.

Finally, the model reveals that organization with a ratio of more women than men in the workforce are 37% less likely to be advanced in WLB compared to organizations in which the half or more employees are men [$OR_{feminized\ organization\ (1)} = 0.629, p = 0.033, CI\ 95\%: 0.410 - 0.964$]. Put in different words, more women in the organization are leading to lower odds of organizational advancement in topics around WLB. Hereby, the feminization of the workplace union nor the gender of the workplace union's chairperson is insignificant and thus cannot predict the advancements of an organization related to WLB.

Binary Logistic Regression Chile Gender Equality

As outlined for the binary logistic regression for WLB, the regression run for gender equality also excludes the variable representation support. With a statistically insignificant Hosmer-Lemeshow-Test of 0.114, an apt goodness-of-fit between the observed and expected event rates is assigned to the model [$\chi^2 (8) = 12.165, p = 0.114$]. Continuing with the 7 remaining independent variables, the binary logistic regression indicates that some categories of the degree of involvement of WLB and relationship with management are significant predictors of advancement towards gender equality [$\chi^2 (11, N = 1039) = 43.162, p < 0.001$]. The model explains 5.6% (Nagelkerke R^2) of the variability of the advancement towards pay related gender equality and at a default cutoff value of 0.5 correctly classifies 65% of cases with a specificity (percentage of cases observed to be

correctly predicted by the model to fall into the reference category of no advancement) of 9.8% and a sensitivity (percentage of cases observed to be correctly predicted by the model to fall into the target group of being advanced with gender equality) of 94.9%.

The model shows that organizations, in which workplace unions are “informed and consulted or only consulted” in topics of WLB, are 120% more likely to be advanced in gender equality when compared to organizations in which workplace unions are “neither informed nor consulted” [$OR_{\text{degree of involvement WLB (2)}} = 2.200, p < 0.001, CI\ 95\%: 1.431 - 3.384$]. Even though the other category, referring to workplace unions being “only informed”, is merely not significant, the logic of the relationship is similar, accounting for higher organizational advancements compared to workplace unions that are not involved. Thus, the more involved a workplace union is in topics of WLB, the higher is their advancement of gender equality. Although a positive relationship exists between the degree of involvement of WLB and the organization’s advancement on gender equality, there is no statistically significant relationship between the degree of involvement of gender equality and the advancement on gender equality. However insignificant, the positive sign of the regression coefficient demonstrates the same direction of the relationship.

The second significant predictor variable of organizations advanced in gender equality is the relationship between workplace union and management. As such, organizations in which management facilitates the operations of the workplace unions are 48% more likely to be advanced on gender equality compared to organizations in which management is hindering the workplace union’s operations [$OR_{\text{relationship with management (2)}} = 1.481, p < 0.039, CI\ 95\%: 1.020 - 2.151$]. Thus, it can be concluded that only facilitative relationships with

management are beneficial for the workplace unions influence on gender equality as the other categories are insignificant.

Binary Logistic Regression Germany

Similar to the Chilean survey, a binary logistic regression is performed for the German sample. [Table 7](#) on the next page shows the given results. Before the analysis is performed the assumptions of the binary logistic regression is controlled for by assuring of nonexistence of multicollinearity and a sufficiently high sample size. Following the study of Bujang et al. (2018), the analysis includes 2237 valid cases for WLB and 2207 for gender equality, which is well above the minimum required sample size of 500. Additionally, ex-antes analysis of all the dimensions reveals very low quantity of missing values of 2% for WLB and 4% for gender equality. As such, no further adjustments are made.

Binary Logistic Regression Germany WLB

With a statistically insignificant Hosmer-Lemeshow-Test of 0.349, an apt goodness-of-fit between the observed and expected event rates is assigned to the model [$\chi^2 (8) = 8.926$, $p = 0.349$]. The binary logistic regression indicates that representation support, degree of involvement in WLB and gender equality, relationship with management as well as the gender of the workplace union's chairperson are significant predictors of the organization's advancements towards WLB [$\chi^2 (11, N = 2237) = 167.223$, $p < .001$]. The model explains 9.6% (Nagelkerke R^2) of the variability of the advancement towards WLB

and at a default cutoff value of 0.5 correctly classifies 62.3% of cases with a specificity (percentage of cases observed to be correctly predicted by the model to fall into the reference category of no advancement) of 70.6% and a sensitivity (percentage of cases observed to be correctly predicted by the model to fall into the target group of being advanced with WLB) of 52%.

*Table 7: Logistic Regression Predicting Advancement in Gender Equality in **Germany** from Representation Support, Degree of Involvement in WLB and Gender Equality, Relationship with Management, Experience through Duration in Membership, Feminization of the Organization, Feminization of the Workplace Union, and the Gender of the Workplace President.*

	Germany	
	Advancement WLB	Advancement Gender Equality
Representation Support: Rather unreliable (1) (Base: Not reliable (0))	1.567***	1.139
Representation Support: Very reliable (2)	1.758***	1.568**
Degree of Involvement WLB: Involved in WLB (1) (Base: Not involved in WLB (0))	1.556***	1.029
Degree of Involvement Gender Equality: Involved in gender equality (1) (Base: Not involved in gender equality (0))	1.256**	0.258***
Relationship with Management: Average relations (1) (Base: Poor relations (0))	1.821***	0.777
Relationship with Management: (very) good relations (2)	3.152***	1.086
Experience, Membership: between 2000 and 2009 (1) (Base: between 2010 and 2018 (0))	1.005	1.070
Experience, Membership: before 2000 (2)	1.040	1.416**
Feminized Organization (1) (Base: Not feminized (0))	1.110	2.191***
Feminization Workplace Union (1) (Base: Not feminized (0))	1.106	1.012
Female Workplace Union President (1) (Base: Male Workplace Union President (0))	1.281**	0.773**
Constant	0.146***	1.308
R ² de Nagelkerke	0.096	0.143

***Statistically significant at the 0.01 level; **at the 0.05 level; *at the 0.10 level. Reported values are OR. Method: Binary logistic regression.

Binary Logistic Regression Germany WLB

With a statistically insignificant Hosmer-Lemeshow-Test of 0.349, an apt goodness-of-fit between the observed and expected event rates is assigned to the model [$\chi^2 (8) = 8.926$, $p = 0.349$]. The binary logistic regression indicates that representation support, degree of involvement in WLB and gender equality, relationship with management as well as the gender of the workplace union's chairperson are significant predictors of the organization's advancements towards WLB [$\chi^2 (11, N = 2237) = 167.223$, $p < .001$]. The model explains 9.6% (Nagelkerke R^2) of the variability of the advancement towards WLB and at a default cutoff value of 0.5 correctly classifies 62.3% of cases with a specificity (percentage of cases observed to be correctly predicted by the model to fall into the reference category of no advancement) of 70.6% and a sensitivity (percentage of cases observed to be correctly predicted by the model to fall into the target group of being advanced with WLB) of 52%.

The model reveals for the dimension representation support, that it is 57% more likely for organizations to be advanced on WLB when the workplace union receives "rather unreliable" compared to "not reliable" support [$OR_{representation\ support\ (1)} = 1.567$, $p = 0.005$, $CI\ 95\%: 1.146 - 2.143$]. The odds of organizations being advanced increases to 76% when workplace unions are receiving "very reliable" support from management support compared to "not reliable" support [$OR_{representation\ support\ (2)} = 1.758$, $p = 0.002$, $CI\ 95\%: 1.238 - 2.495$]. Thus, workplace unions that receive "very reliable" support as seen through the reliability of the management to follow-up on agreements compared to workplace unions that are confronted with not reliable follow-ups on agreements are more likely to be advanced on WLB. As the odds rise in case of higher degrees of reliability, the results indicate that provision of reliable support in the agreed manner of management to

workplace unions is an increasingly relevant predictor for organizations to be advanced on WLB, showing that the higher the reliability the more likely are organizations advanced.

Additionally, the logistic regression shows that the degree of involvement in topics of WLB is a highly significant predictor of the likelihood of organizations being advanced on WLB. Specifically, the likelihood of being advanced in WLB is 56% higher for workplace unions that are involved in WLB compared to workplace unions that are not involved [$OR_{\text{degree of involvement WLB (1)}} = 1.556, p < 0.001, CI\ 95\%: 1.303 - 1.858$]. Considering that the degree of involvement in WLB is measured through the sum on three items around family-friendly measures and flexible working conditions, whereas a sum is higher or equal 2 justifies a case to fall in the category of being involved in WLB, the results show that this involvement of workplace unions pays off as the odds of organizations being advanced on WLB increases.

Additionally, the odds for organizations to be advanced on WLB also increases for workplace unions that are involved in gender equality. As such, the results indicate that if workplace unions involve themselves with equal pay, the odds for organizations to be advanced on WLB increase some 26% compared to workplace unions that are not involved in this topic [$OR_{\text{degree of involvement gender equality (1)}} = 1.256, p < 0.039, CI\ 95\%: 1.012 - 1.558$]. As such, like the Chilean case, it seems to pay off for the organization's advancement in WLB that the workplace union is also involved in gender equality topics. Following up with the relationship with management it can be said that this variable constitutes the biggest predictor of advancements in WLB. Thus, the logistic regression indicates that the odds of organizations to be advanced in WLB is 82% higher when relationship with management is "average" compared to a "poor" relationship [$OR_{\text{relationship}}$]

with management $(1) = 1.821, p < 0.001, CI\ 95\%: 1.317 - 2.518$]. At the same time, if the relationship with management is “(very) good”, the odds of organizations to be advanced on WLB increase some 215% compared to workplace unions with “poor” management relations [$OR_{relationship\ with\ management\ (2)} = 3.152, p < 0.001, CI\ 95\%: 2.281 - 4.355$]. This suggests that the better the relationship with management, the higher the chances of WLB to be advanced.

Lastly, also the gender of the chairperson of the workplace union is a significant predictor of the organization’s advancement in WLB. As such, the likelihood of organizations to be advanced on WLB is 28% higher when a woman holds the position as chairperson of the union compared to a man in the same position [$OR_{female\ workplace\ union\ president\ (1)} = 1.281, p = 0.023, CI\ 95\%: 1.035 - 1.586$]. This result shows the impact of woman union leadership for positive organizational advancements in WLB.

As no other variables are significant, it can be said that neither the experience of workplace unions nor the feminization of the organization or workplace union play a significant role in increasing or decreasing the odds of organizations being advanced on WLB.

Binary Logistic Regression Germany Gender Equality

Looking at the advancement in gender equality, with a statistically insignificant Hosmer-Lemeshow-Test of 0.380, an apt goodness-of-fit between the observed and expected event rates is assigned to the model [$\chi^2\ (8) = 8.568, p = 0.380$]. The binary logistic regression indicates that some categories of representation support as well as degree of involvement in gender equality, the experience through membership and the feminization

of the organization are significant predictors of the organization's advancements towards gender equality [$\chi^2 (11, N = 2207) = 244.798, p < .001$]. The model explains 14.3% (Nagelkerke R^2) of the variability of the advancement towards WLB and at a default cutoff value of 0.5 correctly classifies 67.4% of cases with a specificity (percentage of cases observed to be correctly predicted by the model to fall into the reference category of no advancement) of 32.2% and a sensitivity (percentage of cases observed to be correctly predicted by the model to fall into the target group of being advanced with gender equality) of 88.8%.

The model reveals for the dimension representation support, that it is 57% more likely for organizations to be advanced on gender equality when the workplace union receives "reliable" compared to "not reliable" support [$OR_{representation\ support\ (2)} = 1.568, p = 0.012, CI\ 95\%: 1.103 - 2.230$]. However, no significant prediction on the organizations advancement on gender equality can be derived from the cases when the workplace union receives "rather unreliable" support. Thus, only if workplace unions are equipped with "very reliable" support as seen through the reliability of the management to follow-up on agreements compared to workplace unions that are confronted with not reliable follow-ups on agreements, organizations are more likely to be advanced on gender equality.

Continuing with the degree of involvement, the logistic regression shows that only the involvement of the workplace union in the topic of gender equality is a significant predictor of the likelihood of advancing towards gender equality. As such, the odds of being advanced in gender equality is 74% lower for workplace unions that are involved in gender equality compared to workplace unions that are not involved [$OR_{degree\ of\ involvement\ gender\ equality\ (1)} = 0.258, p < 0.001, CI\ 95\%: 0.206 - 0.323$]. Considering that the degree of

involvement in gender equality is measured through the question if workplace unions involve themselves with equal pay, it is striking that this involvement leads to a decrease in the odds of organization's being advanced on pay related gender equality.

Another significant predictor is the experience of workplace unions as seen through the duration of membership. As such, the odds of organizations being advanced in gender equality rise some 42% when the interviewed person joined of the union "before 2000" compared people having joined the union "between 2010 and 2018" [$OR_{\text{experience, membership (2)}} = 1.416, p = 0.003, CI\ 95\%: 1.123 - 1.787$]. As only the difference between these two categories is a significant, the model suggest that a higher experience of members acquired through more than 18 years in the workplace union compared to more recent members increases the chances that the organization is advanced on gender equality.

When looking at the role of gender as predictors for the organization's advancement in gender equality, two variables can make a significant contribution to the model. On the one hand, the feminization of the organization increases the likelihood of an organization to be advanced. Specifically, the odds of organizations being advanced on gender equality raise some 119% when the workforce of the organization consists of more women than men [$OR_{\text{feminized organization (1)}} = 2.191, p < 0.001, CI\ 95\%: 1.716 - 2.798$]. On the other hand, if a woman holds the position as workplace union chairperson, the odds of the organization to be advanced in gender equality decreases some 23% [$OR_{\text{female workplace union president (1)}} = 0.773, p < 0.026, CI\ 95\%: 0.616 - 0.970$]. Consequently, diverging results can be reported when it comes to the influence of gender as a higher feminization of the organization is beneficial for the organization's advancement in gender equality, but a female workplace union president is associated with lower advancements in gender equality.

As no other variables are significant, it can be said that the experience of workplace unions as seen through the duration in membership, the relationship with management, the involvement in WLB as well as the feminization of workplace union do not play a significant role in increasing or decreasing the odds of organizations being advanced on gender equality.

[Table 8](#) on the next page summarizes the bi- and multivariate results of the study which will be further picked up and referred to in the following discussion. Using the example of organizational feminization, [table 8](#) shows that the bivariate statistics reveal a highly significant relationship with progress in gender equality for Chile and for WLB and gender equality for Germany – as indicated by the positive/negative sign – while only for Germany is organizational feminization significant in the multivariate analysis for gender equality, as the other fields remain without any sign.

Table 8: Comparison of bi- and multivariate results of the study for Chile and Germany.

		Chile				Germany			
		Bivariate		Multivariate		Bivariate		Multivariate	
		WLB	Gender Equality	WLB	Gender Equality	WLB	Gender Equality	WLB	Gender Equality
IR dynamics	Representation Support	+++	+	/	/	+++	+++	+++	+++
	Degree of Involvement WLB	+++	+++	+++		+++		+++	
	Degree of Involvement Gender Equality	+++	+++	++		+++	---	++	---
	Relationship with Management	+++	+++	+++	++	+++	+++	+++	
	Experience, Membership			-		+++	+++		+++
Gender dynamics	Feminization Organization	---		-		++	+++		+++
	Feminization Workplace Union	---	+			++	++		
	Gender Workplace Union President	---				++		++	--

Positive association significant at the 0.01 level (+++); at the 0.05 level (++); at the 0.10 level (+). Negative association significant at the 0.01 level (- - -); at the 0.05 level (- -); at the 0.10 level (-). "/" refers to the exclusion of the variable representation support in multivariate analysis due to patterns in missing data for Chile.

6 Discussion

After a brief research summary, this section proceeds to verify the hypotheses proposed in the theoretical framework of the study and to discuss in greater depth the results obtained during the analysis. Hereby, [table 9](#) on the next page provides an overview of the hypothesis assessment. Based on the call from Jirjahn et al. (2011) to include of a variety of explanatory concepts to account for the workplace union's effectiveness instead of taking the mere existence of a workplace union as indicator, the present thesis draws out of the research on union effectiveness (Bryson & Forth, 2010), the opportunity structure for workplace unions (Gregory & Milner, 2009b) as well as the workplace employment relations process and the gender composition of the workplace union (Greene et al., 2021), but proposes an alternative more holistic model that aims to describe the influence of IR dynamics and gender dynamics on union effectiveness as shown in [figure 6](#) in [chapter 2.6](#). Methodologically built on the contributions from the mentioned authors to ensure coherence, the outlined model of the thesis contributes to a better understanding of workplace union's effectiveness by highlighting the need to assess qualitative factors of workplace union's influence capacities as decisive factors on its effectiveness. These factors are representation support, degrees of involvement in WLB and gender equality, relationship with management as well as workplace union's experience. At the same time, the feminization of workplace union and organization as well as the gender of the workplace union's president is considered in the proposed framework (Gregory & Milner, 2009b).

Table 9: Overview of validated or rejected hypothesis based on the bi- and multivariate results of chapter 5.

Hypothesis	Chile	Germany
H1.1 Representation support	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Confirmed <input type="checkbox"/> With restrictions: <input type="checkbox"/> Rejected:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Confirmed <input type="checkbox"/> With restrictions: <input type="checkbox"/> Rejected:
H1.2.1 Degree of involvement in WLB	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Confirmed <input type="checkbox"/> With restrictions: <input type="checkbox"/> Rejected:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Confirmed <input type="checkbox"/> With restrictions: <input type="checkbox"/> Rejected:
H1.2.2 Degree of involvement in gender equality	<input type="checkbox"/> Confirmed <input type="checkbox"/> With restrictions: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Rejected: - No effect	<input type="checkbox"/> Confirmed <input type="checkbox"/> With restrictions: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Rejected: - Reverse relationship
H1.3 Relationship with management	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Confirmed <input type="checkbox"/> With restrictions: <input type="checkbox"/> Rejected:	<input type="checkbox"/> Confirmed <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> With restrictions: - For gender equality only significant in bivariate statistics <input type="checkbox"/> Rejected:
H1.4 Experience	<input type="checkbox"/> Confirmed <input type="checkbox"/> With restrictions: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Rejected: - Reverse relationship for WLB - No effect for gender equality	<input type="checkbox"/> Confirmed <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> With restrictions: - Confirmed for gender equality - No effect for WLB <input type="checkbox"/> Rejected:
H2 Degree of involvement cross-topic	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Confirmed <input type="checkbox"/> With restrictions: <input type="checkbox"/> Rejected	<input type="checkbox"/> Confirmed <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> With restrictions: - Confirmed for involvement in gender equality on WLB - No effect for WLB involvement on gender equality <input type="checkbox"/> Rejected
H3 Feminized organization and workplace union	<input type="checkbox"/> Confirmed <input type="checkbox"/> With restrictions: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Rejected: - Reverse relationship for WLB - No effect for gender equality	<input type="checkbox"/> Confirmed <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> With restrictions: - Confirmed for gender equality - No effect for WLB <input type="checkbox"/> Rejected:
H4 Female workplace union president	<input type="checkbox"/> Confirmed <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> With restrictions: - Significant effect existent but only for bivariate statistics for WLB <input type="checkbox"/> Rejected:	<input type="checkbox"/> Confirmed <input type="checkbox"/> With restrictions: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Rejected: - Woman as chairperson beneficial for WLB advancement - Man as chairperson beneficial for gender equality advancement

As most of the studies on the role of workplace unions towards gender equality or WLB are based on the Anglo-Saxon region of the UK (Greene et al., 2021) or USA (Acker, 2006), this thesis also contributes to the existing research by examining two countries that are rarely compared: Germany and Chile. For an easier overview of the findings regarding the hypothesis in [chapter 2.6](#), [table 9](#) on the previous page provides a summary on the validated or rejected hypothesis.

H1: *The more favorable the IR dynamics (H1.1 higher representation support; H1.2.1 higher degree of involvement in WLB; H1.2.2 higher degree of involvement in gender equality; H1.3 higher quality of relationship; H1.4 longer experience in membership), the more likely are WLB and gender equality policies advanced for both, Chile and Germany.*

To allow for a better comprehension of the results, the sub-hypothesis (H1.1, H1.2.1, H1.2.2, H1.3 and H1.4) across WLB and gender equality for each part of the opportunity structure are discussed step-by-step on the next pages.

H1.1: *The higher representation support, the more likely are WLB and pay related gender equality policies advanced for both, Chile and Germany.*

Due to significant issues with patterns of missing data, the variable representation support was not included in the regression model for the Chilean case. Therefore, the following analysis only refers to bivariate statistics for Chile, while for Germany also the

regression analysis is considered, adopting a case-based approach outlined in the methodological section of this thesis that allows to view each case separately while also comparing within-case patterns across cases (Yin & Campbell, 2018). The results show that the null hypothesis, consisting of the claim that lower representation support increases the likelihood of more advanced WLB and pay related gender equality policies, must be rejected, and that the alternative hypothesis can be confirmed for both topics and across countries. It is evident that supporting workplace unions by providing them with offices, financial resources, and allowing them to use part of the workday for meetings can contribute to an organization's advancement in WLB in Chile. This is also applicable to the German context. Workplace unions that have agreements with management and access to necessary resources can effectively contribute to organizational advancement in WLB. Although moving in the same direction as for WLB, the effect on advancing gender equality is smaller.

Looking at the results in a more detailed fashion, only a very reliable support from management towards the workplace union for the German and only high resource support in the Chilean case allow workplace unions to contribute towards the organization's advancement in gender equality. The results suggests that workplace unions need more support to be able to contribute towards gender equality, whereas unions can already make an impact towards WLB when they receive only some support from management. These findings can be interpreted in line with Bryson & Forth (2010) as well as Peetz & Pocock (2009) who highlight the necessity of a supportive environment for the workplace union to be able to operate effectively. Additionally, the results stress the outcomes from Greene et al. (2021), showing that reliable representation support is the baseline of union effectiveness.

Furthermore, the finding that very reliable support is needed to promote gender equality in Germany raises the question of why limited or rather unreliable support is not enough. One explanation for this could be that the analysis, implementation of measures and monitoring of equal pay schemes are characterized by a high degree of complexity and thus require reliable cooperation with management on agreements on access to and disclosure of unfiltered data in order to navigate with this challenging endeavor. Moreover, advancements towards pay equity depend on the enforcement of agreed policies. As management bears the responsibility of bringing forward the organizational commitment and implementing measures to address the gender pay gap, it is imperative that they demonstrate reliable follow-through. Without such commitment, the agreements reached between both parties may not be enacted, leaving the gender pay gap unresolved.

Concluding, the results suggest that the amount of needed representation support is contingent onto the discussed topic. It can be argued that in the case of WLB and gender equality, WLB topics might be less sensitive and thus unions require less reliable resource provision for them to still make an impact, whereas gender equality issues are delicate and require safer physical spaces, such as office rooms, and more time and financial resources for unions to analyze the given individual cases and contribute to an organization's advancement. Thus, very reliable representation support is required instead of rather unreliable support. Therefore, caution is needed in promoting a generalized level of support for representation required for unions to have an impact in the workplace. As such, further investigation is required before general conclusions on the type and degree of representation support needed can be drawn. Nevertheless, hypothesis 1.1 can be confirmed and no country-specific influence is found.

H1.2.1: *The higher the degree of involvement in WLB, the more likely are WLB policies for both, Chile and Germany.*

Looking at the degree of involvement in WLB, which reflects in the Chilean case the information sharing and consultation from management in WLB and in the German case the engagement of the workplace union itself with both topics, coherent results can be discussed. Accordingly, the null hypothesis must be rejected, and the alternative hypothesis can be confirmed.

On the one hand, for Chile and Germany a higher involvement of the workplace union in WLB is associated with higher chances of the organization to be advanced on WLB. This result could be explained by the fact that trade unions have acquired a higher level of knowledge about current issues in the policy development of flexible working arrangements, which in turn may be beneficial for their strategic influence and positioning in collective bargaining to drive the adoption of WLB measures. Furthermore, in Germany an additional involvement in WLB topics – reconsidering that the WCA includes both topics as part of the agenda workplace unions need to contribute towards (§80 (1) para. 2a & 2b) – seems to pay off suggesting that it is important for unions to engage with the issues beyond just meeting their statutory requirements.

Moreover, the Chilean results show that it is irrelevant if workplace unions are consulted and informed or only informed as they make an impact on the organization's advancement in WLB in both cases in a similar degree. A possible interpretation of that finding can be that an informed workplace unions is already empowered enough to engage with management and to use existing canals to execute its voice function when

it comes to WLB issues as the topic is less sensitive and requires less analysis compared to gender equality as already argued for hypothesis 1.1.

While the research findings of Greene et al. (2021) suggest that female workplace union representatives are less involved in WLB issues than their male reference, the findings of this thesis can only confirm the positive role of workplace unions as a whole in contributing to organizational progress in WLB. Future research should determine gender differences in the types and forms of involvement. Overall, the alternative hypothesis can be confirmed.

H1.2.2: *The higher the degree of involvement in gender equality, the more likely are pay related gender equality policies advanced for both, Chile and Germany.*

On the other hand, when organizational advancement in gender equality is examined, workplace union's involvement cannot be seen as significant factor in the Chilean case and has even a negative impact in the German case. Thus, the null hypothesis must be accepted, and the alternative hypothesis rejected for both countries.

Looking at the involvement of workplace unions, the first relevant fact to consider is that only 10% of workplace unions are fully involved in gender equality in the Chilean case compared to a similarly low number of 11% in the German case. This raises questions how such a small involvement can be possible if it is a pressing topic at hand since decades (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2023). Additionally, it is relevant to theorize about the necessary degree and type of involvement. As more influence of workplace unions in topics of pay related gender equality leads directly to lower outcome

of gender equality in Germany and no difference in Chile, this opportunity factor for workplace unions is currently below its potential. Furthermore, the mandate for a higher involvement of workplace unions per se, can be questioned as 66% of organizations are already advanced in pay related gender equality in Chile and 62% in Germany. Therefore, in line with Berg et al. (2013), it appears that Chile and Germany have already established relevant public policies around equal pay and equal opportunities in the work context, thus lowering the chances of workplace unions to position themselves and to make a difference in pay related gender equality. As such, it might be that employer-led approaches in policy development are already fostered (Gregory & Milner, 2009b) or hard laws of the legislator are followed (Heery, 2006; Rigby & O'Brien-Smith, 2010; Williamson & Baird, 2014), leaving small room for workplace unions to actually get involved as seen in their low participation rates.

Another explanation might be that organizations do not depend on the union in their gender equality policies as the HRM department uses its reporting tools for the assessment independently. This low need of a workplace union's involvement in Germany for an organization to be advanced on gender equality can also be exemplified through their small role in the German Transparency in Wage Structures Act that was passed in 2017. Even though the workplace union is involved in the implementation of the law by facilitating information to employees regarding their remuneration compared to others and as such is empowered to position itself around this topic as discussed in [chapter 3.2](#), the usage of this mechanism is still quite low (Emmler & Klenner, 2023). As the union is not part of the other aspects of the law (audits and compliance checks as well as management reports on equality and equal pay are responsibility of the

management), their contribution towards pay related gender equality might be low and not relevant for an organization to be advanced on the topic.

Thus, the results leave the need of further investigation on more apt advocacy mechanisms for workplace unions in topics of gender equality to comply with their role in the legislative tripod, perhaps through a strengthened back-up of their involvement through legislation (Hyman, 2010; Williamson & Colley, 2023). While this seems unlikely to happen in the current neoliberal industrial relations regime in Chile (Durán S. & Gamonal C., 2019), the cooperation oriented social dialogue approach in Germany may also inhibit stronger legislative enforcement. As such, the question how this leg of the tripod (Williamson & Colley, 2023) could be strengthened is an interesting approach to follow up in future research.

Drawing a conclusive picture on hypothesis 1.2.1 and 1.2.2, the findings suggest differences on the effective influence of unions on organizational advancement contingent onto the topic to be assessed. While the involvement of the union in WLB contributes quite positively to organizational advancement in WLB, the data suggests that the existing low degrees of union involvement in gender equality is even making negative (for Germany) or irrelevant (for Chile) contributions to the organizational advancement in gender equality. Consequently, in order to achieve gender equality, it is necessary to further investigate the bargaining leg of the legislative tripod (bargaining, legislation, and HR policy) across a range of topics. As such, while for hypothesis 1.2.1 the alternative hypothesis can be accepted, for hypothesis 1.2.2 the null hypothesis needs to be accepted for organizational advancements in gender equality.

H1.3: *The better the quality of relationship with management, the more likely are WLB and pay related gender equality policies advanced for both, Chile and Germany.*

Coherent results can be discussed regarding the relationship with management. Good relationships between workplace unions and management seem to play a pivotal role in both countries, especially for the advancement of WLB. However, for the advancement of gender equality, facilitative relations are only relevant in Chile in bivariate analysis. In Germany, very good relationships also pay off, although they are only significant in the bivariate analysis (see [table 4](#) and [table 5](#)). The data suggests that a positive relationship with management is a crucial factor (Bryson & Forth, 2010) for workplace unions to utilize their opportunity structure. By fostering good relationships and promoting social dialogue, unions can become involved in promoting gender equality and WLB. Thus, the alternative hypothesis can be accepted in its entirety and the null hypothesis must be rejected.

Accordingly, the findings from this thesis suggest that a partnership approach with management can be seen as key prerequisite for WLB and gender equality advancement and hereby replicate the results from Gregory & Milner (2009b). Building onto this foundation, it is further interesting to continue investigating about the optimal relationship style between workplace union and management (Pfeifer, 2011) as mentioned in [chapter 2.4.2](#) in the part of organizational dynamics inside the opportunity structure. As the findings suggest that very good facilitative relations are helpful in both countries for WLB advancements, the concrete design and reality of these relationships might be interesting to analyze in order to account for best practices or challenges. Adding to this research agenda, it might be valuable to look at different conflict resolution mechanisms inside

cross-country industrial relation regimes with particular relevance to their institutional ecology (Behrens et al., 2020).

Since the relevance of good relations for organizational advancement on gender equality is lower than progress on WLB in both countries, the findings of the thesis also call for further research in the partnership dimension contingent on the topics at hand. Thus, it appears that for organizational progress on gender equality, the relationship with management is not as central as for WLB advancement. This might be explained through more open discussions needed to find the right WLB policies around care and flexibility arrangements for the organization, which might benefit to a higher degree from cooperative relations compared to a more complex intent to close the gender pay gap.

Following Williamson & Baird's (2014) argument that negotiations over working conditions involving WLB issues are more effective through an inclusive or consensual negotiation approach, this study's findings also suggest that a positive relationship between both parties could create a win-win mentality for promoting WLB. In this study, it is suggested that mutual gains (Gregory & Milner, 2009b) can lead to improved WLB for employees, which in turn can benefit employers through positive work-related and non-work-related outcomes (Sirgy & Lee, 2018). Additionally, implementing progressive strategies can help workplace unions attract members and emphasize their systemic relevance (Williamson & Baird, 2014).

However, one should be cautious when generalizing these results across countries to other topics of a more controversial nature, such as wage negotiations. Therefore, it might be relevant to include the discursive and controversial nature of a topic in an analysis on the situational stability and favorability of a positive relationship with management. Additionally, the industrial relations regime of each country must be considered. In

relation to hypothesis 1.3, the data suggest that the alternative hypothesis can be accepted for Chile and Germany in relation to WLB and gender equality, albeit with large differences in importance for progress in both areas.

H1.4: *The higher the experience of the workplace unions, the more likely are WLB and pay related gender equality policies advanced for both, Chile and Germany.*

The findings regarding the experience of unions show mixed results for the issue at hand, WLB or gender equality, as well as for the country examined, Germany or Chile. As no clear patterns emerge out of the analysis, the alternative hypothesis must be rejected in its whole and the null hypothesis accepted. However, starting with Germany, it can be noted that while longer membership rates of before 2000 increase the likelihood of organizations to be advanced on gender equality significantly, no effect can be found in the regression model neither for more recent membership rates nor for the advancement in WLB altogether. Nevertheless, bivariate statistics (see [table 4](#) and [table 5](#)) indicate a positive correlation between longer memberships and the organization's advancement in both topics. Thus, the proposal of Jirjahn et al. (2011) highlighting the role of learning and experience of the workplace union for a higher quality of the relations with management can be corroborated within the German data.

Additionally, the data suggests that the influence of the experience of a workplace union on the organizational development of WLB policies achieves its peak with at least 18 years of membership inside the union. These results can be interpreted in the line of thought that longer membership rates allow for learning mechanisms through experience

as well as training to occur as the representatives of the workplace unions had the chance to prove themselves as reliable partners in the social dialogue. As this effect only occurs for advancements in gender equality and not WLB, it can be argued that members can draw from historical knowledge and past debates on gender pay gaps and the effectiveness of measurements undertaken which in turn might help to involve themselves in the social dialogue. As WLB is a more dynamic topic with new acceleration stemming from home office debates around the Covid-19 pandemic, past experience does not seem to be as relevant for workplace unions to contribute to the organization's advancement in WLB.

In Chile, however, the duration of membership between 2000 and 2009 is related to a decreased likelihood of organizations to be advanced on WLB. Hereby, no effects can be found neither for gender equality nor for the other categories of membership. This finding could be explained by the fact that longer memberships tend to represent a traditional view of a male breadwinner concept and patriarchal model, which may not see WLB as a fundamental issue to be addressed (Williamson & Baird, 2014). In comparison to younger membership figures, which tend to relate to younger people who are more driven by the demand for WLB, the dynamic of not changing an ongoing system could apply to workplace unions with long-standing members. Thus, younger Chilean generations entering the workplace with a new gender conscious mindset questioning traditional family responsibilities (Gómez-Urrutia et al., 2023) and eventually joining workplace unions might be challenging organizational passivity in WLB topics. Although the effect is insignificant for gender equality, it follows the same logic and might be in line with the strengthening of Chile's feminist movement in recent years, gaining visibility and uniting

voices to advocate for gender equality and WLB (Perry & Borzutzky, 2022) – which in a consequence might also be reflected in a higher number of young(er) people joining unions as an entry point to tackle both topics. However, it remains critical to investigate if and how the declared intentions of more flexible gender roles expressed in young segment of Chilean society (Gómez-Urrutia et al., 2023) is backed up by their participation in collective voice institutions inside organizations and their interest articulation with management towards more gender equality and flexible family arrangements. Consequently, higher experience of workplace unions seen through longer membership durations might even be seen as cumbersome for the establishment of progressive policies in traditional Chilean organizations as it might represent a more traditional patriarchal view on labor relations.

In summary, it could be said that in Germany the aspect of long-term relationships and trust is valued across issues – albeit to a lesser extent for WLB – while in Chile newer ideas and demands associated with people from young(er) generations who have recently joined the union may be key to driving WLB and gender equality forward.

Thus, the alternative hypothesis can only be accepted for Germany for the case of gender equality and must be rejected for Germany in the case of WLB and for Chile in its whole. This suggests that the experience through membership, as encompassed by hypothesis 1.4, must be cautiously further explored in a more nuanced approach as the results indicate differing country-specific and topic-specific results.

H1 (overall):

Closing on hypothesis 1 and hereby looking at the opportunity structure in its whole, the empirical study yields mixed results. Even though IR dynamics adapted from Greene et al. (2021) based on Gregory & Milner, 2009b and Bryson & Forth (2010) allow workplace unions in the Chilean and German case to impact the advancement of WLB and gender equality at an organizational level, its universality can be questioned. Consequently, the regression model suggests that a more fine-tuned approach is required as various cross-country and cross-issue differences are identified. In particular, the universality of a favorable higher degree of involvement in gender equality and positive relationship with management in raising the odds of organizations advanced in gender equality must be questioned. The addition to the opportunity structure, as seen through the experience of unions, also suggest different results contingent on the topic discussed. Although hypothesis 1 provides promising confirmation of the relevance of some IR dynamics, it must nevertheless be rejected in its entirety, which underlines the need for a more differentiated approach that considers the individual parts of the dynamics and their specific features.

H2: *The involvement of the workplace union in topics of gender equality is beneficial for the organization's advancement in WLB as well as the involvement of the workplace union in topics of WLB for the organization's advancement in gender equality, for both Germany and Chile.*

As Larsen & Navrbjerg (2018) report that both issues are so closely interrelated that they are dealt with simultaneously in collective bargaining scenarios, the findings of this thesis support their claim in most cases. As such, the alternative hypothesis can be confirmed for the Chilean case across topics and only for the involvement in gender equality towards the advancement in WLB for the German case.

While for Germany a higher involvement in gender equality is positively associated with higher likelihoods of organizations to be advancement in WLB, no influence can be seen between union involvement in WLB leading to higher chances of organizations to be advanced on gender equality. As such, the results from Busch-Heizmann & Rinke (2018) cannot be replicated.

On the other side, for Chile a higher involvement in gender equality is increasing the likelihood of organizations to be advanced on WLB as well as a higher involvement in WLB is raising the chances of advanced organizations in gender equality. Hereby, it is striking that the latter is the strongest predictor of advancement in gender equality in Chile. Thus, the results underline the high proximity between both topics, highlighting the gendered nature of WLB. As the fact that the degree of involvement in topics around WLB is the most relevant factor and not the involvement in topics around gender equality for the advancement in gender equality, the results give foundation to the importance of the involvement of workplace unions in interdisciplinary topics. A possible explanation for this effect of cross-dimensional involvement can come from Busch-Heizmann & Rinke (2018) who conclude in their study that the German gender pay gap is being reduced through WLB policies as women earn 5,1 percentage points more with every additional measure to make working hours more flexible. Also highlighting the key role of workplace unions through good visibility and high commitment (Busch-Heizmann & Rinke, 2018; Stainback

et al., 2010), in this context the involvement of workplace unions in WLB topics can positively influence the organization's gender equality.

Additionally, a post-hoc bivariate analysis for Chile shows that 72% of organizations that are advanced in WLB, are also advanced in pay related gender equality [$\chi^2 (1) = 15.554, p < 0.001$]. Therefore, the study expands the findings of Busch-Heizmann & Rinke (2018) to the Chilean case of a relevant relationship between workplace union's WLB involvement and an organization's advancement as door-openers for an organization's advancement on gender equality. However, further investigation is needed to comprehend the conditions of this dynamic regarding the overlapping topics of WLB and gender equality for higher advancements of gender equality in Chilean organizations. Adding up to this research proposal, further investigation is also needed to enter in depth in the dynamic between different areas of involvement of workplace unions and their outcome on different topics. Concludingly, the alternative hypothesis can be confirmed for the Chilean case and can only be confirmed for Germany with restrictions.

H3: *Organizations and workplace unions that are feminized are more likely to be advanced in WLB and gender equality for both, Chile and Germany.*

For both countries, no coherent results can be discussed regarding feminization of organization and workplace union as part of the gender dynamics. While the bivariate descriptive statistics show significant relationships between the feminization of the organization and workplace union and the advancement in WLB for both countries, only for Germany significant effects can be reported for the advancement in gender equality

in the regression analysis (see [table 8](#)). However, the direction of the influence is opening room for discussion as it does not follow the expected direction for the Chilean case. Thus, the alternative hypothesis must be mostly rejected for Chile and can only be partially confirmed for the advancement in gender equality in Germany.

Contrary to the predicted outcome, for the case of an organization advanced on WLB, in Chile a higher number of men in the workforce and also more men inside the workplace union are associated with higher chances, while in Germany, although only significant in the bivariate statistics, a higher number of women in the organization and workplace union tends to be connected with higher chances of WLB to be advanced. However, the only significant effect in the logistic regression can be found for the feminized organization in the Chilean case, stating that a higher ratio of women is lowering the likelihood of advanced organizations in WLB.

In the search for possible interpretation of this result for the Chilean case the “female deficit model” and “flexibility stigma” discussed in [chapter 2.3](#) could be helpful. Thus, an increase in the number of women could result in issues being categorized as “women's issues”, potentially causing organizations to defer progress towards WLB as it may be perceived as only beneficial for female employees. Also, the “flexibility stigma”, which relates to women using flexibility policies less frequently through fears of being stigmatized, could explain why in organizations with more women, the topic is less advanced. Following the study from Chung (2020), women report that they suffer negative career development opportunities due to their own usage of flexible working. As such, women might end up cannibalizing their eventual own benefits as the use of more flexible working time arrangement is making the group that would benefit the most also to suffer the most. Thus, this hesitance to use these WLB policies might demotivate

feminized organizations to advance on the topics in contexts where they are used less through indirect discrimination and societies' "flexibility stigma" in Chile. Moreover, as Gómez-Urrutia et al. (2019) outline in their study that WLB, especially seen through child and elderly care tasks, is framed mostly as a feminine problem in Chile, the question arises why WLB policies are advanced in the Chilean case when the organization and workplace union count with more men than women. Thus, the assumption of a the male workforce as passive in topics of WLB (Rigby & O'Brien-Smith, 2010) must be questioned.

Additionally, with WLB appearing in this light and being mostly demanded from women, the counterintuitive findings could be explained by looking at the nature of organization's WLB policies. As the majority of the workforce is male, WLB policies may not be developed as policies for women that focus on flexibility in caring for children and the elderly, as mostly women still tend to work as unpaid family care takers, but rather from the perspective of the universal male worker discussed in [chapter 2.5](#). Perhaps those policies are embedded in a neoliberal logic of flexible work arrangements allowing men to work extra hours on weekends or late at night to increase their remuneration in the logic of the male breadwinner model (Gómez-Urrutia et al., 2019), framing these policies as positive WLB achievements. As such, the underlying question if companies offer flexible working hours in accordance with the needs derived from domestic and family work could be mis-exploited through the possibility of extra income through additional work for men inside the male breadwinner model instead of an applied family-focus in terms of child or elderly care.

Contrary to the earlier explanation it might be also possible that organizations are advanced in WLB to balance the higher share of men in the workforce through the

attraction of women on the labor market. Accordingly, WLB policies can be seen as means to attract more female workers in male dominated organizations. In any case, these explanations require further investigation with useful additional controlling for industry and the size of organizations so that the characteristics of WLB policies in Chilean organizations can be better understood.

Looking at organizational advancements in WLB for the German case, the significant findings in the bivariate analysis of this thesis support the results from Artz (2011) and Heywood & Jirjahn (2009), following the argumentation that WLB policies are more desired by women than men and thus that the voice function of workplace unions in feminized organizations is expected to reflect this preference (Blaschke, 2015). However, as the results are only statistically significant in their bivariate analysis and cannot be seen as reliable predictors for organization's advancements in the regression model, the number of women seem to play a lower influence than assumed (Budd & Mumford, 2004). Therefore, the findings can be seen in the light of the fact that the workplace union agenda in relation to WLB is not only shaped by the interests and pressures of women as one group of employees, but that workplace unions take a more balanced approach to avoid being carried away by the demands of one particular group. At the same time, the findings suggest that WLB policies are becoming more relevant for the whole workforce. As such, recent reforms in 2007 and 2015 in parental leave options in Germany might have been able to contribute to the de-stigmatization of fathers to use WLB policies and increasing the WLB uptake for men (Adema et al., 2017), so that no gender influence in the workforce and workplace unions in relation to the organization's advancement in WLB can be found.

Contrary to merely significant results for WLB in Germany, the feminization of the organization seems to be a relevant factor towards advancing on gender equality. Accordingly, the clearest predictor of advanced organization's in topics of gender equality is a higher number of women in the organization. This could perhaps be explained through the higher chances of policies to be developed when women are present and put pressure on the organization's agenda (Ravenswood & Markey, 2011). The Chilean case represents a similar yet insignificant direction of the relationship.

As this effect can only be found for the advancement in gender equality and not for the advancement in WLB, it can be argued that the findings in Germany replicate the case of organizational feminization to be solely helpful towards promoting gender equality and not towards WLB (Gregory & Milner, 2009b; Ravenswood & Markey, 2011; Williamson & Baird, 2014). This could be explained through the high visibility of the inequality regime around the gender pay gap (Acker, 2006), compared to flexible working time arrangements every employee benefit from in the same way. This high visibility is created even more in organization where more people are negatively affected by gender-motivated unequal remuneration and as such can create more pressure towards organizations to be advanced. At the same time, a higher feminization goes in line with potentially more awareness of the privileged not-affected male employee group towards these topics and thus may challenge past justifications.

However, it can be argued that the feminization in itself is incapable of describing the actual company's culture (Busch-Heizmann & Rinke, 2018) which might be a necessary condition for priority setting in terms of advancement in gender equality. A corporatist approach of social dialogue with a focus on the necessary space for discussions and

agreements to take place can be seen as conducive for a gender perspective to be heard (Larsen & Navrbjerg, 2018).

Looking at the mixed results for hypothesis 3, it seems that neither the approach arguing in favor of higher degrees of feminization as beneficial tool for the organizational advancement in WLB or equal pay (Gregory & Milner, 2009b; Ravenswood & Markey, 2011; Williamson & Baird, 2014) nor the notion that feminization is an irrelevant factor from Larsen & Navrbjerg (2018) is a suitable explanation. Instead, the results of the study suggest that the beneficial role of feminization is contingent upon the area of feminization, such as organization or workplace union, the country, and the topic at stake.

Concluding, the thesis calls for the investigation and interpretation of feminization in relation to other relevant dimensions of the opportunity structure instead of its treatment as isolated factor. Hereby, the present findings relate to Greene's et al. (2021) conclusion to look at the factors behind the mere inclusion of women inside the workplace union as the access and involvement of women might differ from men in the same role. Consequently, a study on the interactional effects of feminization as moderator of the opportunity structure might help to get a better understanding on gender differences. As no coherent picture can be drawn for Chile and Germany, the alternative hypothesis must be mostly rejected. It can only be confirmed partially for the advancement in gender equality in Germany.

H4: *Organizations with a female workplace union president are not more likely to be advanced in WLB and gender equality than organizations with a male workplace union president for both, Chile and Germany.*

When the gender of the workplace union's chairperson is considered, the empirical data from this thesis does not allow for a coherent interpretation of the results for Chile and Germany on WLB and gender equality. Thus, whereas the alternative hypothesis can be confirmed for Chile as no significant effect exists on gender equality or WLB in the logistical regression, the null hypothesis needs to be accepted for Germany as significant results emerge. Consequently, on the one hand, a male union president is associated with higher chances of organizations to be advanced on gender equality in Germany, while, on the other hand, a woman as chairperson accounts for higher chances of organizations to be advanced on WLB for Germany. For Chile a male chairperson is positively related to WLB, however only significant in bivariate analysis, whereas no effect can be found for gender equality. As such, the empirical data suggests different results contingent onto the country and topic.

Hereby, the German results contrast the findings from Brochard & Letablier (2017). As such, it can be questioned if women in leadership positions inside the union are confronted with obstacles in their potential influence due to a social stigma of WLB being seen as women's issue. Instead, the data suggests that they manage to mobilize resources towards the successful agenda setting of WLB policies inside the collective bargaining with organizations.

However, in case of advancements in gender equality, a workplace union under male leadership has a positive effect for the German case. Accordingly, this finding could be

in line with Greene et al. (2021) who report that although female union presidents are more likely to be taken seriously by management and are generating more positive attitudes towards member's interest, they are given less resources, less meetings with management and are less involved in relevant issues. In a reversed sense, male union leaders might be able to take advantage of favorable power dynamics and resources networks to advocate for gender equality inside the organization. This might be especially appealing if gender equality is identified as core value of the organization and/or if competitive advantages may result out of higher gender equality, creating leverage for male chairperson to take advantage to advocate for the WLB through already open doors. Nevertheless, neither the question of the motive of male presidents to advance on the issue compared to female chairpersons, nor why a female union leadership is beneficial for WLB advancement but not for advancements in gender equality can be answered with certainty. Accordingly, the alternative hypothesis must be rejected for the German case as significant differences on the advancement of WLB and gender equality exists based on the gender of the workplace union's president. As no significant effects in the regression of the gender of the union's chairperson can be reported for the Chilean case and only the bivariate statistics is significant for WLB, the alternative hypothesis can be cautiously confirmed for Chile.

7 Proposed solution and intervention

As the empirical part of this thesis shows mixed results specific to the countries and topics studied, the temptation to provide easy answers to complex dynamics inside the industrial relations regime – and especially accounting for the role of the workplace union – is crushed. The results of this study are far from providing quick success factors to be taken by management, workplace union or legislator to strengthen the legislative tripod from Williamson & Colley (2023). Quite contrary, the results question the universality of the opportunity structure from Gregory & Milner (2009b) and follow the approach from Greene et al. (2021) to critically review contextual factors of different degrees of feminization (inside the organization, workplace union or the gender of certain positions inside the union) to understand the underlying structures of its influence. Nevertheless, with regards to the impact of voice execution from workplace unions towards organizational advancements in WLB and gender equality, some guiding recommendations can be proposed.

Differences in advancement strategies between countries:

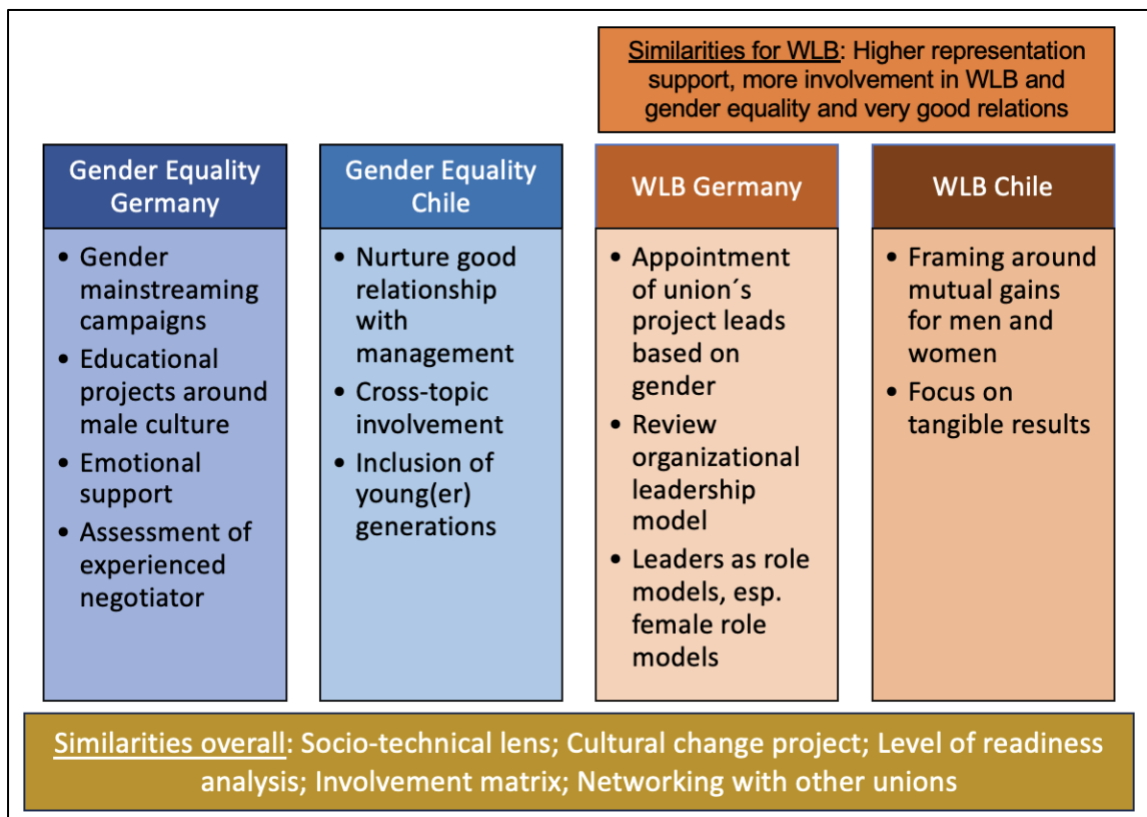
The evidence presented in the discussion section of this thesis portrays some differences in the influence of the IR dynamics and gender dynamics towards progress on gender equality within and between countries and suggests that different items on the bargaining agenda require different mechanisms for unions to raise their voices effectively. Although WLB and gender equality are often discussed interconnectedly and share similar underlying concepts and structures (Larsen & Navrbjerg, 2018), differences in the uptake of IR and gender dynamics demonstrate the necessity of a more nuanced approach.

Hereford, it seems that even though the gender pay gap is approached and problematized in the same way through international organizations such as the ILO or OECD, the structures for workplace unions to make an impact differ nationally. While WLB seems to be a more uniting topic allowing for similar approaches inside IR dynamics, the second set of influence factors around gender dynamics seems to be a differentiating factor. For this reason, the country-specific recommendations for Germany and Chile are presented separately in the following sections in order to highlight the differences in the two subject areas.

Hereby, it is relevant to consider that WLB and gender equality are issues that span across various analytical organizational levels, such as individual spheres (micro), the collaboration in group (meso) as well as the political dimensions of organizations (macro). Each level and their interplay require a profound analysis of the feasibility of the proposed implementations. For this matter, a systemic view of the organization as socio-technical system can aid to understand the complex dynamics between social elements on the one hand, such as the organizational culture or communication, and technical parts on the other hand, such as technology, tools, and processes. Hereby, the social and technical parts need to be considered together in the creation of a systemic view of an organization in which physical and psychological results are producing positive results (Appelbaum, 1997). In other words, extending the work from Appelbaum (1997) to this thesis, it is necessary to consider the impact of changes towards WLB and gender equality advocated from workplace unions through a social and technical lens so that organizational policies are created that fulfill the social needs of the employees (sense of belonging and meaningfulness) and the technical organizational needs regarding its structure and function (equipment and methods).

As this thesis investigates the interaction between workplace union and the organization, the following proposals are mostly taking place on a macro level. While [figure 7](#) below provides an overview of possible measures that can be taken by trade unions in the workplace, [figure 8](#) on page 144 summarizes possible limiting factors that reduce the feasibility of the proposals.

Figure 7: Proposed interventions to be taken by workplace unions based on the results of the empirical findings (own elaboration).



Gender equality Germany:

The discussion part in this thesis suggests that it might be beneficial for workplace unions in Germany to position themselves and mobilize gender equality around the feminization of the organization, for example through gender mainstreaming campaigns. It seems that feminized organizations are often more advanced in addressing issues of privilege, which can be attributed to women as a dominant group questioning the logic of “one privilege of the privileged is not to see their privilege” (Acker, 2006, p. 452). This allows for greater visibility and a questioning of the patriarchal stake on the topic. Hereford, educational projects aimed at understanding men’s unquestioned privileges exactly in female-dominated workforces are promising interventions as this organizational gender setup allows for relevant organizational dynamics and underlying structural stereotypes to be thematized. Not only can this challenge existing ideas about gender status from the theory of reward expectations mentioned in [chapter 2.2](#), but it can also aid in bringing cultural beliefs that revolve around male stereotypes to the surface and as such enabling transparent action to close the gender gap (Acker, 2006; Auspurg et al., 2017).

Additionally, analysis on the gender distribution in certain divisions and in leadership in female dominated workforces could provide insights to address male dominance and gender inequality. Furthermore, the data allows for the proposal that it could be recommendable for the workplace union to put less emphasis on appointing a woman as chairperson and more attention to exploiting the organizational gender distribution. While the gender quota in the organization can provide leverage in addressing the organizational advancement in gender equality, it is also recommendable for unions to invest in very reliable representation support from the management.

However, the gender distribution might be a sensitive organizational topic and must be equipped with the political support and cultural change processes to leverage its potential. As especially men might show some resistance for fear of losing their privileges, it is necessary to develop strategies of contention. In accordance with Vince (1998), who discuss Kolb's Learning Cycle and adds the facilitative/inhibitory role of anxiety, it becomes relevant to provide emotional support to enter in a virtuous learning cycle and to avoid various group regressions (Bion, 1968). Accordingly, the feasibility of workplace unions advocating for advancements in gender equality also depends highly on the readiness of organizations to involve themselves with the social part in their social-technical system. [Figure 8](#) on page 139 provides an overview of these and the following limiting factors.

As such, the radicalness of the earlier mentioned educational programs around male-dominated work culture needs to be adjusted to the local reality and context each organization is embedded in. Hereby, the model from Dannemiller & Jacobs (1992) can aid to assess the organization readiness and identify resistance. They propose that if dissatisfaction with the current state, a vision a new state, and if first concrete steps towards the vision are feasible, it is possible to overcome the individual and organizational resistance of change. In their model, these factors of mobilization are multiplied so that the absence of one factor is causing the change project to fail. Applied to the earlier mentioned strategy, promising factors of mobilization could be creating generational target-group adjusted communication, a uniting vision for everybody and a participatory approach to make the voices of the employees heard.

As in the present study a high involvement of unions is negatively associated with an organization's advancement in gender equality, additional analysis is needed to make

sure that workplace unions are not inhibiting any organizational advancements for their own benefit, for example through politically motivated bargaining process slowdowns or blockades. Therefore, it is necessary that the bargaining agenda of unions is often cross-checked with the needs of the workforce so that it still functions as voice for the employees maintain its legitimacy and relevance.

Moreover, for the German case the workplace union is most effective on gender equality advancements when experience of over 18 years is acquired. As such, it is recommendable for German workplace unions to equip themselves strategically with higher experience. In larger organizations with an increased number of trade union members, it could be advantageous if the union is represented on equal opportunities issues by the members who have been part of the union the longest. Hereby, it could be beneficial to look at Campbell's, (1990) differentiation of declarative and procedural knowledge as well as motivation to assess the potential experience and performance of the selected individual to approach this proposal in a more systematic manner.

Gender equality Chile:

In contrast to the situation in Germany, it is recommended for workplace unions in Chile to establish a facilitative relationship with management. Therefore, it may be advantageous for unions to demonstrate progress in gender equality, promoting a mutual gains scenario (Gregory & Milner, 2009b) that overcomes differences and contributes to achieving the facilitative support necessary for effective operations. Suggesting initiatives to develop and work on a cooperative environment through trust-building or teambuilding events might be a useful approach for Chilean workplace unions. However, building an

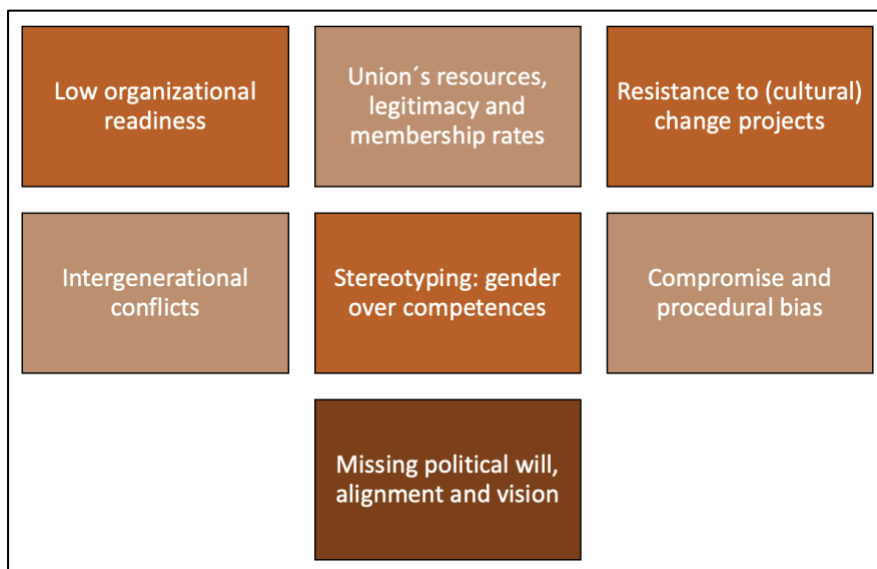
organizational case for investing in strengthened industrial relations can be difficult if management views unions in the workplace as an unnecessary adversary that follows a unitarist mindset (see [chapter 2.1](#)), according to which workers' interests are already aligned with the company's supposedly good management (De Spiegelaere, 2023). As collective bargaining in Chile is decentralized to the company level, unions must strategically shape their work within the company as allies of management and adapt to the company's reality in order to overcome management's mistrust and hostile tendencies towards unions (Bellido de Luna, 2022). This paper therefore confirms a partnership approach, as discussed in the case study from Bellido de Luna (2022), as a relevant trade union strategy for their renewal.

Another point of strategic intervention from unions is their involvement in other relevant workplace issues. As such, the results of the study call on unions to leverage their bargaining power in matters of gender equality through their involvement in topics around WLB. Hereby, it is useful to allocate additional attention to the question how their positive involvement with topics around flexible work and care arrangements can serve as entry point to position their equality bargaining agenda. However, the success of this cross-issue engagement by unions may also depend on effective internal knowledge management, available resources, and high visibility of the union as a viable partner for management (see previous proposal) on various issues. Consequently, Chilean trade unions can be advised to position themselves broadly across different issues, which requires prudent resource management to identify representatives for each issue. This may prove difficult for newly formed unions or unions in small organizations, as in both cases they need to prioritize their resources to address either WLB or gender equality issues in depth. In addition, the ability of unions to engage across issues may also depend

on their internal reputation and legitimacy, so that they can attract enough members to participate.

Finally, Chilean unions could consider renewing their agenda around gender equality by engaging the younger generation with their gender-conscious mindset that challenges traditional family responsibilities rather than focusing solely on experience through length of membership (Gómez-Urrutia et al., 2023). However, as the organization seeks to renew itself based on the needs of younger generations, there may be intergenerational conflict and resistance from long-standing groups of employees who want to participate in this change process. As such, an inclusive participatory approach, following a for example a multiple nucleus change strategy, with a clear vision to be communicated is key to mobilize the workforce across their sociodemographic characteristics. Again, the model of Dannemiller & Jacobs (1992) could be helpful to develop strategies to overcome resistance.

Figure 8: Limiting factors affecting the feasibility of the proposal implementation (own elaboration).



WLB Germany:

Although WLB seems to be a rather unifying topic for company unions in both countries, there are country-specific differences that require specific proposals. For example, it is advantageous for German unions to have a woman as chairperson in order to advance WLB in an organization. As it is unrealistic to change the chairperson depending on the issue to be promoted, it might be important to think strategically about how the initiative and sponsorship of issues in public communication is framed. One intervention worth exploring could be the formation of project teams in the unions with female leadership for WLB and male leadership for gender equality. Hereby, it might be controversial to appoint the project lead solely based on their gender and not on an established set of competences fueling through such a singular approach gender stereotyping, trait attributions and possible discrimination (see [figure 8](#)). Consequently, this strategy must be carefully balanced with the requisite competencies for the position in question, where gender can be one of the characteristics, but should not be the sole determining factor. Furthermore, it may be beneficial to investigate the causes of the gender differences and potentially translate them into underlying soft and hard skills.

Additionally, the results indicate that a mere focus on gender quotas in organizations or workplace unions is not a relevant strategy for Germany. Rather, it can be argued that cultural aspects should be addressed that allow for higher WLB uptake for all genders. Hereby, some promising intervention could be the review of the endorsed competences and expected behaviors inside the organizational leadership model, so that WLB claims can be filled with life. In this endeavor, the line manager plays the role model in the organization, which is reflected in the concept of transformational leadership (Hofert, 2018). Hereby, the leader is acting as role model, motivating, and empowering the

employees through an appealing communication of mission and vision as well as individual consideration (Bass et al., 1996). According to Bandura's social learning theory around role model learning, however, certain conditions must be met in order to increase the likelihood of implementing what has been learned from the model in one's own behavior. These conditions include the presence of a reward and a positive perception of the model, the visibility of the model's behavior, the ability to demonstrate the observed behavior oneself, and observed similarities between the learner and the model (Bandura, 1971). Thus, it might be a helpful strategy to engage with relevant stakeholders as well as to find male and female multipliers and earlier adopters for this change process to be successful. Hereby, it is relevant to start with a status quo analysis and to assess the organizational reality instead of promoting contemporary models of agile leadership or self-organized teams that may not fit within the organization. Accordingly, Appelbaum (1997) suggest that, apart from dissatisfaction with the current state and courage to allow for transformation to happen, "a conscious and insightful motive that is based in reality, to achieve concrete, planned changes" (p. 461) is necessary to enter in a successful socio-technical change process. The inclusion of the workplace union as ally in this organizational transformation is promising. As female union leaders contribute to organizational progress in Germany, an initiative where they serve as role models for other women within the organization is logical, given that studies have found that female role models within unions lead to higher rates of female participation (Blaschke, 2015).

WLB Chile:

Looking at the set of influence factors inside the gender dynamics, only the gender of the workplace union requires attention to determine union's effectiveness in the German case, whereas in the Chilean case attention should be paid to the feminization of the organization. Hereby, the results show that a higher number of men in the workforce is beneficial for organizational advancements in WLB. Thus, it is recommended for workplace unions to frame the debate around WLB as a mutual gain's scenario for all employee groups and not serving the prejudice that of WLB as a "women's issue". On the contrary, additional emphasis on WLB as particularly relevant issue for men (Fernández, 2023) is recommended in the strategic internal communication of Chilean unions. However, as discussed in the previous paragraphs, it might be counterproductive to only focus on the gender as decision criterium for communication strategies as this can lead to further stereotyping and in-group out-group scenarios based on the social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 2004) stressing differences instead of the earlier mentioned similarities around mutual gains.

Particularly in view of the Chilean labor reform through Law 21.561, which gradually reduces the working week to 40 hours/week over the course of five years (see [chapter 3.2](#)), a debate can be triggered about contemporary suitability of men as breadwinners. However, a profound cultural change is inevitable if flexibility stigmas and their exclusive framing as a women's issue are to be challenged. Through strategic change management initiatives that reach the invisible basic assumptions (Schein, 2010), as seen for example in Lewin's transformation "Unfreezing-Change-Refreezing" model, the Chilean organization can harness the current dynamic around the law to renew itself around a flexible family-friendly and equal work culture. The establishment of communication

channels between management and trade unions in the workplace can facilitate the strategic adaptation of legislation to the reality of the workplace (Fernández, 2023). This is because the implementation of this legislation allows for a high degree of adaptation to the corporate culture. The certification of an organization as an "early adopter", as a company that has implemented the 40-hour week before it becomes a legal requirement (Ministerio de Trabajo y Previsión Social, 2022), can also indicate the organizational commitment to the enforcement of flexible working time regimes as a crucial issue and a cultural change process. In this context, a strengthened productive relationship between management and trade union is a promising lever for this process, as the data from this work suggests.

Nevertheless, trade unions must exercise caution to avoid falling prey to the social dialogue biases identified by Hyman (2010) and discussed in [chapter 2.1](#), such as compromise and procedural distortions. Thus, a consequent focus on the actual tangible and permanent results is required. In line with the previously mentioned and as outlined by Martin Caballero et al. (2023) for the Chilean case, it is especially relevant to follow up on the organizational implementation of newly implemented labor laws. To this end, trade unions must present themselves in the workplace as legitimate monitoring and enforcement mechanisms so that the laws can be successfully adapted to local realities and the voice of workers is heard and included. However, this process requires the political will of the organization to engage in a socio-technical change process and a similar vision among all stakeholders.

Similarities in the advancement strategies between countries:

Although there are differences in the emphasis of factors between the two countries, such as those discussed above, it is noteworthy that there are no differences in the core part of IR dynamics when it comes to WLB. Accordingly, in both countries, a higher amount of representation support, more involvement in WLB and gender equality, and very good relations with management are facilitative factors for workplace unions to engage with. Consequently, it is recommended that workplace unions pursue stable IR dynamics in both countries as a baseline strategy to facilitate the execution of their voice function and to effectively serve their membership (Bryson & Forth, 2010). This can be achieved by making WLB a central issue of discussion.

This is especially interesting as Chile and Germany mark two far ends of differing industrial relations regimes which do not seem to lead to a different uptake of the opportunity structure. As such, the universality of these three dimensions of the IR dynamics can be corroborated across countries for certain topics. Accordingly, it may be advisable for unions in one country to reach out to other unions to establish contacts and share knowledge on similar issues. It may not be geographical proximity that is important for building strategic partnerships, but rather content proximity. As such, this study encourages unions to connect with local unions in other countries or to join transnational union networks and hereby working on cross-country topics relevant to all members. WLB more than gender equality is precisely such a transnationally linking agenda item.

However, it can be argued that not all organizations show the same readiness to advance on WLB or gender equality as this is embedded in the necessity of a cultural change process. Accordingly, also the union leadership board might want to check their own level of readiness to involve themselves with certain topics according to the dimensions of the

opportunity structure asking critical questions on ex- and internal conditions facilitating their contributions.

As in current times, collective voice through workplace unions is under constant threat through neoliberal tendencies of decollectivization, decentralization and the reduction of workplace union's power (Baccaro & Howell, 2011; Durán S. & Gamonal C., 2019) in both countries, it might be helpful for workplace unions to create an involvement matrix across different topics to assess requirements for more effective operations. This matrix might be a starting point to look at pre-requisites for workplace unions to count with representation support, possibilities to involve themselves with the issues at hand or to have positive relationships with management, as suggested by the findings of this thesis discussed in [chapter 6](#).

Hereby it remains pertinent to once again take a socio-technical lens to interpret the reality in a holistic way looking at the group and work system and not on singular positions. In order to diagnose the organizational readiness of a socio-technical change process, the three factors from Appelbaum (1997) should be considered: dissatisfaction with the present state, energy and courage as positive force and a conscious and insightful motive based in reality. Therefore, unions must work closely with management to assess the willingness or resistance of the workforce to participate in this change process, to assess whether the changes are in line with or run counter to the existing organizational (sub-)culture(s), and to identify key internal actors who will support the process with the necessary political will. Consequently, the similarities for the Chilean and German trade unions are to advocate for their participation in the necessary change processes by adopting a socio-technical perspective on the analysis of readiness,

creating an issue-based participation matrix, and building substantive network links with other trade unions. The bottom bar in [figure 7](#) shows these similarities.

As such, recent research on strategic decisions regarding the renewal of workplace unions for Chile (Bellido de Luna, 2022) and Germany (Nicklich & Helfen, 2019) can be augmented by looking at the promising IR dynamics that may increase the likelihood of contributing effectively to organizational advancements. In this context, workplace unions seek to ensure that they possess the requisite elements of the opportunity structure and are able to leverage the distribution of women and men within the organization to enhance their contribution to the advancement of the organization in relation to various agenda topics.

8 Conclusion and future research

In the contemporary landscape of industrial relations, achieving gender equality and promoting work-life balance (WLB) has become imperative for organizations seeking to create inclusive and supportive work environments. Workplace unions play a central role in advocating for the rights and well-being of employees, serving as a collective voice to address issues of gender discrimination, unequal pay, and inadequate WLB policies. The present thesis studies contextual factors, consisting of IR dynamics adapted from Greene et al. (2021) and gender dynamics, describing the effectiveness of workplace unions by looking at its impact on organizational advancements towards WLB and gender equality. Hereby, the empirical data provides some mixed results and no overall coherent conclusion regarding the universal applicability of the opportunity structure and feminization can be demonstrated. As such, the results make the opportunity structure for workplace union's effectiveness contingent on the country and agenda topic. This result can relate to Bechter et al. (2012) who question the coherence and homogeneity of the industrial relations regime within countries across industries. As this thesis does not control for industry and is thus unable to replicate their findings, it nevertheless illuminates the changing environment of relevant factors when topics are discussed that scholars argue are quite interwoven (Larsen & Navrbjerg, 2018). Accordingly, instead of following single-minded solutions, this study suggest that scholars and practitioners need to look closely on promoting factors workplace unions can incorporate into their strategy to contribute most effectively on relevant agenda points. Universal requirements for effective trade unionism for different agenda items should be taken with a grain of salt.

Nevertheless, through a detailed analysis of empirical data from Germany and Chile, along with proposed solutions and interventions, several key insights emerge regarding the role of workplace unions in advancing gender equality and WLB. Hereby, this chapter is centered around the central aspects identified by the thesis: country-specific dynamics, common strategies across countries, transnational collaboration, challenges and opportunities as well as recommendations for future research.

Country-Specific Dynamics:

In Germany, workplace unions are more effective in advancing gender equality when they mobilize efforts around the feminization of the organization. Initiatives such as educational projects aimed at understanding male privileges in female-dominated workforces and ensuring reliable representation support from management can enhance union effectiveness in promoting gender equality. Moreover, the presence of female leadership within workplace unions has been found to be beneficial for advancing WLB policies. This underscores the importance of diverse leadership perspectives in driving organizational change and addressing the multifaceted challenges of gender inequality and WLB.

In contrast, workplace unions in Chile face distinct challenges and opportunities in advancing gender equality and WLB. Here, the focus should be on establishing facilitative relationships with management and leveraging involvement in WLB topics to promote gender equality. Renewing the agenda to include younger generations with a gender-conscious mindset might be crucial for addressing evolving workplace dynamics. Additionally, framing WLB debates as a mutual gain scenario for all employee groups can help overcome stereotypes and biases. By strategically positioning themselves as

advocates for inclusive policies and fostering collaboration with management, workplace unions in Chile can drive meaningful change and promote gender equality and WLB in the organizational context.

Common Strategies Across Countries:

Despite differences in country-specific dynamics, certain strategies remain relevant across both Germany and Chile. Stable IR dynamics ensuring high representation support, high involvement in WLB and gender equality, and good relations with management are crucial for effective workplace union action when it comes to advancing WLB policies. Emphasizing female leadership for WLB initiatives in Germany and framing WLB debates as relevant for men in Chile can enhance union effectiveness and promote inclusivity. By aligning their efforts with organizational priorities and fostering collaborative relationships with stakeholders, workplace unions can maximize their impact and drive positive change in the area of WLB.

Transnational Collaboration:

Based on the similarities between countries on opposite ends of the industrial relations continuity, the results of the thesis allow for the conclusion to foster collaboration across borders. As such, the union's advocacy effort can be further strengthened by sharing knowledge and experiences between workplace unions in different countries. The establishment of partnerships based on the relevance and similarity of content, rather than on geographical proximity, can facilitate the exchange of best practices and strategies for advancing relevant topics within the organizational and gender equality bargaining agenda. Hereby, it might be promising for union networks to prioritize cross-

country topics relevant to all members, such as WLB, to maximize impact and effectiveness. By leveraging the collective expertise and resources of diverse unions, workplace unions can amplify their advocacy efforts and drive systemic change on a global scale. Nevertheless, as evidenced by the existence of significant cross-country and within-country discrepancies with regard to gender equality, it is imperative to preserve the distinctive characteristics and perspectives of local organizations in addressing universal issues. The adage "think globally, act locally" is particularly pertinent in this context.

Challenges and Opportunities:

While workplace unions have the significant potential to contribute to gender equality and WLB policies, they also face challenges, including neoliberal tendencies and employer-led workforce dynamics. Addressing these challenges requires a nuanced approach that is tailored to specific organizational contexts and country-specific dynamics. Moreover, recognizing the intersectionality of gender, race, class, and other dimensions of diversity is essential for developing inclusive policies and fostering a culture of equality and belonging in the workplace. Although this aspect was not the primary focus of this study, the results underscore the importance of examining organizational dynamics, history, and culture to assess the perception of collective voice institutions. This, in turn, can inform the development of more effective union intervention strategies tailored to the specific contextual factors at play.

Importance of Research and Continuous Evaluation:

The mentioned contingency of the opportunity structure and feminization on the agenda topic calls for further research to expand these findings onto other topics workplace unions are dealing with such as health and safety, benefit management, reorganizations, personnel development, or job security. Hereby, it might be beneficial for workplace unions to expand their network by joining transnational union associations or by reaching out to other local unions that are confronted with similar topics. This requires a pragmatic selection of topics to be discussed in this cooperation network. While WLB is a transnationally linked agenda item, the factors influencing unions in advancing gender equality in organizations may differ across countries. Consequently, the study suggests that universal requirements for effective trade unionism for different agenda items should be challenged. In light of these findings, further research is needed on the following points:

1. Conducting comparative studies on internal factors for effective union work depending on WLB and gender equality as well as other relevant agenda points
2. Following up on ideal partnership and conflict resolution styles (Behrens et al., 2020) with management contingent on the topics at hand.
3. Theorizing about the dynamic between different cross-thematic involvement of workplace unions and their beneficial outcome on agenda points.
4. Investigating the interactional effects of gender dynamics as moderator of IR dynamics to allow for a more nuanced appreciation of gender differences in the uptake of facilitative or inhibitory factors.

Furthermore, it might be beneficial to add different internal and external angles to this field of investigation. One additional level of analysis could be the industry of the organization. Accordingly, while the opportunity structure in its whole can facilitate workplace union's effectiveness in promoting WLB in organizations, the general disposition of the management to advance on the given topics— apart from legislative factors inside their industrial relations regime – is also driven by the dynamics of the respective industry, as Rigby & O'Brien-Smith (2010) show for the retail market. Whereas the study gives general guidance around relevant or irrelevant factors for the topics at hand, differences must be expected when applied to the organization specific context. This is additionally in line with the mentioned socio-technical perspective, which requires, apart from taking into account social and technical elements, the organizational embeddedness in the external environment (Appelbaum, 1997), such as the IR regime and industry.

Another interesting element to consider is the organizational culture. In line with Busch-Heizmann & Rinke (2018), the advancement of WLB and gender equality depends not only on the opportunity structure and the elements of feminization that promote their integration, but also on the fit between organizational structures and policies and an egalitarian culture. As such, it can be argued that missing cultural enforcement of WLB and gender equality does limit organizations progress and may even lead to contrary effects due to the flexibility stigma or framing flexibility advancements as “women's issue” and a such inhibiting its full benefits for all employees. An interesting question to explore in this scenario is the role of the workplace union in the manifestation and evolvement of the organizational culture which might yield relevant insights into additional interactions with the opportunity structure or feminization. Thus, the thesis calls for the expansion of

the results in a more fine-tuned manner to allow for specific patterns to emerge inside Germany and Chile according to the external environment to which the organizations are exposed to.

In conclusion, advancing gender equality and WLB through workplace unions requires a multifaceted approach that takes into account country-specific IR dynamics, organizational contexts, and evolving internal workplace behavior. As there exist significant differences in the emphasis placed on factors between Chile and Germany in terms of union effectiveness on gender equality, it can be surmised that gender equality is a complex topic with local differences in its uptake. Although no universal conclusion can be drawn regarding the opportunities for IR dynamics, a similar cross-national assumption can be confirmed for the core aspects of IR dynamics, such as support for representation, level of involvement, and relationship with management, in relation to the factors influencing union effectiveness in advocating for organizational progress in WLB. Consequently, rather than focusing solely on specific aspects of IR dynamics across countries and industries, a more nuanced approach is required for workplace unions to execute their voice function effectively. By employing common strategies, fostering transnational collaboration on similar issues, and addressing uncertainties through further research and evaluation, workplace unions can assume a transformative role in the creation of more inclusive, equal, and just work environments for all employees. In positioning itself as strategic ally advocating for organizational progress, union's may also broaden their agenda, facilitating (cultural) change processes through a socio-technical perspective, reviewing various HR issues, such as compensation, personnel development, coaching or leadership models, through a WLB and gender equality lens.

9 Limitations

This final section of the thesis outlines the limitations of the study. Two sets of limitations are identified: those related to the data used for the study and those related to the broadness of the analysis across contextual characteristics. As this study is based on secondary data sources from Chile and Germany, it has limited control over the data collection to avoid unconscious bias. However, as both surveys are administered through professional and reliable institutes, the mentioned threat can be reduced but should nevertheless be accounted for. Thus, for the German survey weighting factors are employed to compensate for selective exceptions and participation probabilities by company and sector, so that the sample data can be seen as representative for German the population of companies with work council and over 20 employees (Baumann et al., 2019).

Moreover, a more complex issues arises due to the fact the interested concepts are not operationalized and measured on the same scales in both surveys. Even though the variables are constructed using similar techniques in both cases, differences could not be controlled for. Thus, the direct comparability of the values in the bivariate statistics and regression model between both countries might be limited. Additionally, the translation of both surveys into English may introduce interpretation issues, potentially distorting local connotations, and language specialties. Nevertheless, the directions and magnitudes of the effects still provide clear indications that allow for meaningful and robust conclusions.

Moreover, as it is not possible to incorporate additional items into the surveys that have already been conducted, the application of the explicatory variables for the concepts

outlined in [chapter 2](#) regarding the conceptual frameworks of this thesis is constrained. Consequently, a pragmatic approach is employed to reconcile theoretical coherence with practical challenges in establishing comparable dimensions across two distinct surveys, where items are assigned disparate labels and scales to the same dimension. Consequently, it can be posited that it is not entirely guaranteed that the latent dimensions of WLB and gender equality are captured in an identical manner through the employed items (see, for instance, the operationalization of the dimension representation support detailed in the [appendix](#)).

In light of the aforementioned limitations, it is imperative to address another crucial issue. As explained at the beginning of the binary logistic regression for Chile in [chapter 5](#), the variable representation support contributed significantly to the accumulation of missing data in preliminary statistical analysis, reaching a prevalence of 35-37%. Upon the analysis of missing data, patterns emerged in the occurrence of missing cases for organizations that were not advanced in WLB or gender equality. Consequently, the variable was excluded from the binary logistic regression. As the data for the variable is not missing at random (MNAR), further investigation is required to ascertain the relationship between missing values and organizational advancements. It can be postulated that union representatives are more likely to withhold responses on the question if they have the opportunity to engage in union activities, receive financial resources, or are permitted to dedicate a portion of their workday to union work if they are working inside organizations that are less advanced in terms of WLB or gender equality, as evidenced by the Chilean ENCLA questionnaire. As the pattern of missing data could not be resolved using secondary data, the results on this dimension should be interpreted with caution. Nevertheless, the adjusted residual analysis within the bivariate

statistics indicated that representation support is a significant factor influencing the formation of workplace unions in Chile. Consequently, this dimension has been included in this thesis. However, its robustness should be treated with caution due to the potential for confounding effects, which require further investigation.

Furthermore, the nature of both surveys, which rely on the assessments of the interviewed personnel in roles of management (ENCLA) and workplace union representatives (ENCLA & WSI) across various organizations in different industries, precludes a more detailed empirical analysis of actual gender pay gaps or quotas of WLB usage. While this goes beyond the purpose of data gathering for large populations of analyzed organizations, the development of representative case studies, which allow for more profound numerical analysis, may help to sustain and further expand the presented findings in this thesis. As such, qualitative research to follow up on differences inside country-specific dynamics and their comparison within the identified common strategies across countries is needed to come to more rigorous conclusions.

Another limitation of the thesis arises from its generalist approach, which fails to control for industry or company size. The research strategy of conducting cross-country comparisons, as proposed by Bechter et al. (2012), is questionable, given that findings within the same country already vary significantly across industries. However, valuable insights could have been extracted from this generalist approach. Nevertheless, this high-level approach must be interpreted with caution and validated more thoroughly across industries in both countries.

10 References

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11 Appendix

Table 10: Mapping of the dimensions of the workplace employment relations process from Greene et al. (2021) to the questionnaires in Chile and Germany, with the addition of the dimension of experience extracted from Jirjahn et al. (2011).

	Greene et al. (2021) (WERS): Dependent Variables	Own elaboration (ENCLA & WSI): Independent Variables
Representation Process	<p>Regularity of meetings (yes/no)</p> <p>Amount of time spent on representative duties (continuous)</p> <p>Frequency (five-point scale)</p>	No items
Representation Support	<p>Providing facilities (e.g. phone, rooms; own creation of 9-point scale)</p> <p>Paid by employer (yes/no)</p> <p>Training received (yes/no)</p>	<p>Germany:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Availability of resources (e.g. phone, office, etc.; yes/no) - Paid time for union work (more/less as defined by law) <p>Chile:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support management resources (e.g. space, remuneration, etc.; yes/no)
Degree of Involvement	<p>Involved in pay setting, conditions of work, etc. (four-point scale)</p>	<p>Germany:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Involvement in training/qualification (yes/no) <p>Chile:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Involvement in training/qualification (yes/no)
Quality of Relationship	<p>Employees: Satisfaction of union rep (five-point scale)</p> <p>Managers: Attitude towards workplace union in general</p>	<p>Germany:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Collaboration: General relationship, work council (5-point scale) - Obstruction: General obstruction, work council (3-point scale) <p>Chile:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Collaboration: General relationship, employer (3-point scale) - Obstruction: General obstruction of management, work council (3-point scale)
Workplace Union Experience	-	Duration of membership of the interviewed person (mostly chairperson or high-ranking union representative)

A comprehensive explanation of the operationalization of the dependent and independent variables

For an easier understanding and to not inhibit the reader's flow in [chapter 4](#), the following section of the thesis summarizes the operationalization of the variables, outlining the used items, their scales of measurement as well as their recodifications according to the research design of this thesis. For the purpose of facilitating consistency for the reader, the recodified answers are used in the presentation of the variables included in the data analysis below. Additionally, all variables are recoded into ascending order so that the higher category – numerically speaking – refers to the preferred outcome according to the hypothesis of the study. This is also a required assumption of the later used binary logistic regression.

A. Dependent variables – Advancement of WLB and (pay related) gender equality:

As the interest of this thesis is to investigate the influence of IR dynamics and the role of gender on the effectiveness of workplace unions in their advancement towards WLB and gender equality, both dependent variables are recoded as nominal variables. An ordinal setup of both variables was considered but rejected as the case distribution was too unequal and no previous studies were found that allowed for a validated procedure to define the thresholds and categories. Accordingly, the dependent variables are coded nominally, which allows a binary logistic regression to be run.

Here, the definition of WLB by Sirgy & Lee (2018) out of [chapter 2.3](#) is recalled, in which **WLB** is seen through role engagement and minimal conflict. This compatibility between work and non-work activities is addressed first and foremost through flexible working time

regimes (Fagan et al., 2012; Gregory & Milner, 2009b; International Labor Organization, 2023) that are the key operationalizable entry point for both surveys.

Thus, in the Chilean survey the question “if the company facilitates the compatibility of work and family life, for example, by introducing flexible working hours and flexible working hours in accordance with the needs derived from domestic and family work” is a very accurate description of the used definition of WLB (Kalliath & Brough, 2008) in this thesis. Hereby, the original answers are presented on a scale ranging from “never (1)” to “always (5)”. To recode the variable into a nominal one, the threshold accounting for an advancement in WLB is put at “most of the times (4)”. As such, when the respondent answers with “always (5)” or “most of the times (4)” to the question if the company incorporates measures of WLB, the case falls into category 1 (advanced WLB) of the dependent variable. Consequently, an answer to the same question with “some of the time (3)”, “only a few times (2)” or “never (1)” is constituting the category 0 (not advanced WLB).

For the German survey, the answers related to the flexibility aspect of WLB on the question “which of the following measures does your employer take to find or retain suitable staff?” are used. Thus, the binary answers on “providing flexible work time arrangements”, “including employee’s opinions in the choice of working hours or place” and “creating family-friendly working conditions” constitute WLB for the German case. As the items already come in a dichotomous yes/no format across the three relevant questions, the sum is calculated and then divided into a dichotomic grouping. Accordingly, if the sum (min = 0 and max = 3) is lower than 2 the cases fall in the category 0 (not advanced in WLB). If the sum is higher or equal 2, the cases fall in the category 1

(advanced in WLB). Through this approach, the concept of WLB is operationalized in a more robust way, following the idea that only when the organization is already advanced in two of three aspects of WLB, namely flexible work time arrangements, inclusion of employee's opinions in the choice of working hours or place and family-friendly working conditions, it can be referred to as advanced on WLB for the German survey. As such, even though the overall advancement in Germany takes place on a higher baseline, the dependent variables base line is somehow similar to the Chilean item.

For the other dependent variable, **pay related gender equality**, it is beneficial to also recall the definition of [chapter 2.2](#) on gender equality and its aspect of gender pay gap. While gender equality encompasses a variety of equality measures in the workplace, the available data in the surveys allows best to assess gender equality through the difference in remuneration for the same work and based on the same qualification between women and men. Even though narrow in its operationalization, the pay related gender equality includes the multidimensionality of gender equality as wage structures that lead to unequal remuneration are the outcome of an institutionalized process that develops historically and reflects statutory legislation, employment contracts, collective bargaining, and managerial actions (Rubery et al., 2005). Thus, organizations are responsible not only for the creation of gender differences but also for their legitimization and relativization (Achatz, 2008; Acker, 2006). As such, the pay related gender equality dimension can be seen as light pole for the overall issue of gender equality.

For the operationalization of the concept in the Chilean case, the two possible questions, "in this company, men and women receive equal pay for equal qualifications" and "in this company, men and women receive equal pay when doing the same work", are an

accurate approximation to the concept. As both questions are highly intercorrelated at a level of 0.905 and as the latter question is rather depicting the demand-side of the concept as it focusses on the inequality emerging from inside the organization (Busch-Heizmann & Rinke, 2018), only the latter question is used. Additionally, to allow for consistency across the dependent variables, the answers are scored on the same scale as for WLB. As such, the same logic as for WLB is used to create a nominal variable using the cut-off value at “most of the times (4)” for cases to still belong to the advanced category.

For the German survey, the same procedure to create the WLB dimension is used for the dependent variable gender equality. So, if the question “Are women and men paid equally for equal work or work of equal value in your company?” is answered with “no, never (1)”, “rarely (2)” and “mostly (3)” it refers to the category 0 (not advanced in gender equality) and the answer “yes, always (4)” to the category 1 (advanced in gender equality). This subsummation of three answers into the one dichotomic category follows the logic of obtaining a better case distribution due to the lack of data availability for the categories “rarely (3)” and “no, never (4)”. At the same time, it shows that companies in the survey are overall already fairly advanced on gender equality, as such the differentiation takes place on a higher basis of progress for the German survey.

B. Independent variables:

For the categorization of the independent variables, a similar procedure is used as for the dependent variables. As outlined in [figure 6](#) the four dimensions representation support, degree of involvement, quality of relationship and experience constituting the

opportunity structure and the three dimensions around feminization are created. The following paragraphs outline their operationalization.

b.1 Representation support:

For the dimension **representation support**, in the Chilean survey the focus lies on facilities provided by the management to the workplace union in line with the setup of Greene et al. (2021). Therefore, an ordinal variable is created out of the sum of three dichotomic questions relating to the existence of resources, such as usage of offices, obtaining financial resources, or allowance to use part of the workday for meetings. In the case that the sum (min = 0 and max = 3) is 1 or lower, the workplace union has “limited resources”, for a value of 2 the workplace union has “some resources” and for the maximum value of 3 the workplace union has “high resources”.

In the German survey, no exact item exists that allows to operationalize the number of resources given to the workplace union in the same sense as operationalized by Greene et al. (2021) in UK’s WERS survey and applied to the Chilean ENCLA survey. However, the German law, §40 para. 1 +2 BetrVG, stipulates the resources to be given to the workplace union by the management according to necessities. As such, all costs arising from the workplace union’s activities must be paid for by the employer, including necessary rooms, material resources, information, and communication technology as well as office staff, which account for the resource dimensions assessed for the Chilean case. Consequently, it is argued that it can be taken as very likely that the workplace union in Germany is equipped with a sufficient degree of material representation support by law.

However, a further follow-up assessment of this dimension can be seen in the degree of reliability of the employer to follow-up on established agreements and by this to follow-up on the provision of the required resources. Thus, for the German survey the dimension representation support consists of an ordinal variable measuring the reliability of the management by answering the question “how reliable is the employer when it comes to agreements? Is he...” on a scale ranging from “not reliable (1)” to “very reliable (3)”. To follow the logic of the thesis’ hypothesis and to allow for an easier interpretation, the original scale is turned upside down through statistical polarity reversal. Additionally, the category “not reliable at all” was merged with “rather unreliable” to create the new lowest category of “not reliable (1)” which allows to obtain a better case distribution for the executed logistic regression analysis as only very few cases (less than 1%) fall into the original “not at all reliable” category. Moreover, this procedure allows obtaining the same number of categories as the Chilean survey, facilitating better comparisons. However, due to the use of different items, it is still necessary to compare both countries with caution.

b.2 Degree of involvement:

The dimension **degree of involvement** is split according to the involvement of the workplace union in topics of WLB and gender equality. However, both independent variables are related with the dependent variable in further regression analysis. For the Chilean survey, the question if the management is involving the workplace union for topics around work organization (working hours, overtime, change of functions, etc.) is used for the WLB version of the dimension, whereas the involvement for topics around the incorporation of gender equality actions in the company constitutes the gender

equality version. Thus, the degree of involvement for both topics is assessed on a 3-category ordinal scale from “neither consulted nor informed (1)” over “informed” (2) to “informed and/or consulted (3)” which is in line with the measurement of Greene et al. (2021). Due to both case availability and logical assumptions the original categories “consulted” and “informed and consulted” are integrated into the new category “informed and/or consulted”.

In the German survey, the same split according to both dependent variables are followed. However, instead of having a measurement that distinguishes between being informed and/or consulted, in the German survey, the question is asked if the workplace union has been particularly involved in certain topics. As the German WCA defines both the implementation of gender equality and the compatibility of family and employment (§80 (1) para. 2a & 2b) as general tasks of the workplace union, it is assumed that awareness and cooperation exist between workplace union and management for both areas of interest. Therefore, the question in the German survey points to the particular involvement of the workplace union in the given dimensions and can be seen as a focus agenda point for the given workplace union. Consequently, for the **involvement around gender equality** the question if the workplace union involves itself with equal pay is used, as it allows for a direct link to the gender equality dimension with focus on equal pay as operationalization for the dependent variable. As such, a nominal scale is created with “not involved (0)” and “involved (1)”. For the **involvement around WLB** the answers on the questions regarding family-friendly work conditions, higher flexibility as well as employee’s desires for flexible working hours are used to account for internal consistency with the original items used to create the dependent variable. Additionally, following the same approach as with the dependent variables, if the sum (min = 0 and max = 3) is

lower than 2, then the cases fall in the category 0 (not involved in WLB). If the sum is higher or equal 2, the cases fall in the category 1 (involved in WLB).

b.3 Relationship with management:

For the dimension **relationship with management** (Greene et al., 2021) or what Bryson & Forth (2010) call “opportunity to influence”, for the Chilean survey the question around facilitation or putting obstacles regarding the workplace union’s work is used. Thus, a 3-category ordinal scale consisting of “makes it difficult for its operations (1)”, “neither facilitates nor hinders its operations (2)” to “facilitates its operation (3)” is applied. For the Germany survey, the most corresponding item to assess the degree of cooperation with management is a general rating of their relationship. After reversing the polarity of the answers, the ordinal scale from “poor relations (1)” to “(very) good relations (3)” is calculated into a three-point-scale to allow for better comparability with the Chilean survey. Thus, the categories “unsatisfactory” and “sufficient” are recoded into “poor relations (1)” and “good” and “very good” into “(very) good relations (3)”, while the dimension “satisfactory” was only relabeled to “average relations (2)”. As for both, the Chilean and German survey, the interviewees are representatives of the workplace union, it is assumed that a higher rating of cooperation or satisfaction of their relationship with management, allows for better opportunities to influence and take part in decisions around WLB and gender equality.

b.4 Experience through duration in membership:

The next dimension to be operationalized is following the approach of Jirjahn et al. (2011), who argue in favor of the role of learning dynamics that allow workplace union representatives to assert more influence on management decisions and overall productivity. For learning to take place in a sufficient way, a necessary amount of **experience** needs to be accumulated, which Jirjahn et al. (2011) operationalize through the age of the workplace union based on their founding year. As this information is not available in the data sources used for this thesis, the duration in membership of the interviewed workplace union's chairperson is used as an alternative operationalization of their experience. Additionally, it might even be more relevant to assess the maturity of the union through the individual experience as member inside the union as the learning and reflection processes inside organizations occur through people, so that routines, unwritten rules in interaction and trustful relations with management can emerge over the years (Argyris & Schön, 1997; Jirjahn et al., 2011; Schein, 2010).

Another relevant way to measure experience can stem from the time in the position as chairperson of the workplace union. As such, a longer duration as incumbent of this position might allow for an increase in experience through information management, trust building based on past interactions with management and workforce as well as an increased knowledge of the organization's policies and politics (Jirjahn et al., 2011). However, ex-ante analysis reveals missing values that cannot be assumed to be Missing Completely at Random (MCAR) for the German case with undetected patterns in the interaction of the missing values with the dependent variables. Nevertheless, chi-square analysis with a very high Gamma at a level of 0.824 for the Chilean case [$\chi^2 (4) = 545.559, p < 0.001$] and at a level of 0.724 for the German survey [$\chi^2 (4) = 955.038, p < 0.001$], as both variables are of ordinal characteristics, allows for the conclusion that both

variables are highly correlated assuming that they measure the same latent construct of experience. Thus, for both the German and Chilean survey one categorical variable is created that assesses the experience of the interviewed person based on the duration of the membership within the workplace union. As such, the experience gained through membership is divided into three categories starting with “2010 – 2019 (1)” for the Chilean and “2010 – 2018 (1)” for the German survey due to the year of the survey implementation. The rest of the categories, “2000 – 2009 (2)” and “before 2000 (3)”, are the same for both countries allowing for better comparability.

b.5 Gender dynamics:

Finally, the empirical setup of the thesis follows the model outlined in [figure 6](#) which accounts for the **gender** role as second block of independent variables. This follows the logical assumption that a higher percentage of women in an organization is seen as critical mass in an organizational context for promoting WLB and gender equality as both topics are rather used by women than men. As such, the model used here proposes that only through high visibility and pressure from women a counterbalance to the structural patriarchy is created, which in turn allows for a positive effect on the advancement of WLB and gender equality. To assess the degree of feminization, the percentage of women inside an organization and inside the workplace union is calculated. Afterwards, binary variables are created through a split of cases, in which a feminization between 0 – 50% fall into category 0 (not feminized) and organizations with a woman’s ratio ranging from 51%-100% fall into category 1 (feminized). Additionally, a nominal variable is created that considers the gender of the workplace union’s president ranging from “man (0)” to “woman (1)”. This procedure is the same for the Chilean and German survey.