Original Paper

Realization of Gender Equality in the Workplace

Feminist Perspectives of a WLB

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Abstract

It has been a long time since people focused on the term "work-life balance" (WLB). It is an exaggeration to say that a WLB is in vogue like gender equality. Also, in academic fields in Japan, Europe, and the United States, WLB studies have been vigorously discussed, and a number of papers have been published since the 21st century. A WLB policy has been misconstrued as applying only to women because the ideology of the sexual division of work has not been totally dispelled; many women work away from home compared to the old days. This gives a false impression that if working women can easily take maternity leave or childcare leave, many women will have an opportunity to work, which appears to result in gender equality in society. In this interpretation, it has been considered important that company quality should be improved to make maternity leave or childcare leave available to female employees. This paper traces the historical context and previous studies about appearance of the term "WLB," analyzing what a WLB policy should be to realize real gender equality.

Keywords

Work-Life Balance, sexual division of work, gender equality, feminist thought, paid and unpaid works

1. Introduction

It has been a long time since people focused on the term "Work-Life Balance" (WLB). It is an exaggeration to say that a WLB is in vogue like gender equality. Also, in academic fields in Japan, Europe, and the United States, WLB studies have been vigorously discussed, and a number of papers have been published since the 21st century. However, the term can be confusing because what was originally meant by a WLB, the real goal of WLB, and what a WLB should be has not been correctly understood; it has been misconceived. This paper starts by clarifying what "balance," as used in a WLB, really means and examines an interpretation of a WLB from the perspective of feminist thought.

A WLB policy in Japan overwhelmingly correlated with "measures to counteract the falling birthrate, and 'gender equality.'" Therefore, a WLB policy has been often mistaken as a means for receiving maternal leave and childcare leave, for women only. However, a WLB policy should be originally interpreted as being essential for men as well as women. The Council for Gender Equality, held on May 24, 2007, by the Japanese government, states that a WLB policy carries a propensity for trivialization of combining working and raising children just for women (Note 1). Nevertheless, a WLB policy has been misconstrued as applying only to women because the ideology of the sexual division of work has not been totally dispelled; many women work away from home compared to the old days. In other words, because the ideology that women should perform domestic duties has been strongly rooted, it is naturally easy for working women to be caught in a dilemma between work and households. This gives a false impression that if working women can easily take maternity leave or childcare leave, many women will have an opportunity to work, which appears to result in gender equality in society. In this interpretation, it has been considered important that company quality should be improved to make maternity leave or childcare leave available to female employees. This paper clarifies that there is a mistake in this interpretation of a WLB. A WLB policy change should make it possible for individuals to work and live with respect. Therefore, the sexual division of work must be dispelled in order for both sexes to participate in both work and life as they wish. That is to say, a WLB policy should encourage real gender equality; that is, the policy should dispel the notion of sexual division of work. In a society where gender equality has not been promoted in workplaces and households, it makes no sense to accelerate a WLB policy. A WLB policy has an urgent need to promote gender equality, not the matter of time allotment. This paper traces the historical context and previous studies about appearance of the term "WLB," analyzing what a WLB policy should be to realize real gender equality.

2. Historical Context and Previous Studies about a WLB

2.1 In Europe and the United States

In 1963 the Equal Pay Act was enacted in the United States and equal opportunity for employment was legalized through Article 7 of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibited discrimination by race, gender, nationality, or workplace harassment. In the 1950s, academic researchers launched a study of role conflict between work and family (Note 2). The term WLB appeared frequently in 21st-century government documents and mass media in the US and the issue of role conflict between work and family gained increasing recognition because of the lack of balance between work and home life had had an unwanted effect on family and private lives as well as a significant negative effect on individuals' mental health and enhancement of labor productivities, behind which is the fact that *Family Socialization, and Interaction Process*, published by Arlie R. Hochschild in 2001, played an essential role in influencing (Hochschild, 2001) (Note 3). Hochschild's research showed that although most people in the US supposedly tended to express that "family is more important than work," they

could not help devoting much time to their work in real life, which significantly restricted their private and family lives, resulting in enormous stress in their lives (Yamaguchi, 2009).

The most important point in a WLB in the US is that many family-friendly companies appeared. Because there was no full-time homemaker, from the standpoint that prolonged work caused significant inconvenience to working women, there was a growing awareness that companies should have good policies on the work-family balance front. While expanded employment for women and wage growths on average, which led to a heightening of productivity, could make the whole American society richer, a lot of companies need considerations for female employees because of facilitating the use of human resources, because many working women hoped to be short-time employees, or to have flexible work to accommodate balancing a career and a family. This happened in 1980s, when we can glimpse a possibility that the sexual division of work remained strongly fixed in public also in the United States. Family-friendly policies in companies were to be gradually developed into an ideology of a WLB, including male employees and single persons, which emphasized on a preferred society where working people's diversity was valued, and they were able to have more choices in both work and family life than ever before.

WLB studies in the US are characterized by concentrated discussions on issues of family life, employment, and cultivation of human resources in companies, not on countermeasures to the falling birthrate, which means that the US did not face a fertility crisis in an economically advanced country. However, a WLB in Europe, with fewer children continuing to develop like Japan, was strikingly different from that in the US. In Europe, when the issue of a declining birthrate and a WLB entered scholars' consciousness, a WLB in the public was considered in relation to the issue of measures to counteract the falling birthrate. Moreover, what made a WLB in the US different from that in Europe was that while the American government has always entrusted an initiative of a WLB to the private sector attaching great weight on a market environment, European countries, especially member states of the European Union, had an active involvement in taking an initiative for a WLB that focused on employment situations and balancing a career and a family. For example, formulation of working hours based on a WLB policy was legally defined in Europe. EU countries have enacted the Part-Time Work Directive in 1997 to push programs of equal treatment between full-time employees and other types of employees. Furthermore, EU countries have also enacted the Temporary Agency Work Directive in June of 2008, aiming to secure fair treatment in temporary labors. As for measures to counteract the falling birthrate in a WLB policy, EU countries were to follow a different path from Japan. It is worthy of attention in the history of a WLB that although the EU consists of various countries, whose histories and traditions vary, they constitute a common framework that transcends all differences, as far as a WLB policy is concerned, for which that in EU countries was to be differentiated from that in the US.

As mentioned above, though EU countries succeeded in developing a policy that supported balancing a career and a family by reconfiguring working hours, they are aware that it is not enough for resolving an issue of the falling birthrate. It is noteworthy that EU countries took a step toward realization of

gender equality, considering the correlation between work and family at that moment, which means that EU countries were critically different from Japan, which has been obsessive about linking an ideology of a WLB and measures to counteract the falling birthrate.

Therefore, in Europe and the United States, the ideology of a WLB has not been polarized between work and family but has been vigorously discussed from a multilateral perspective, being aware that work and family should have a deep relationship with each other. This is a logical result for Europe and the United States, especially EU countries, developing a consciousness of real gender equality, unlike Japan, which has recognized a WLB policy as a simple tool for seemingly pulsion of gender equality and measures to counteract the falling birthrate.

2.2 In Japan

Hagiwara states that a term, "a WLB" has become prevalent in an academic field in Japan since 2001, and it has become popular at the governmental level since 2003, when the Second Koizumi Cabinet started (Hagiwara, 2009). The Japanese government enacted next-generation upbringing support measures in 2003 to promote a policy on the work-family balance front in companies. Although this policy aimed at counteracting the falling birthrate, the government enacted the WLB Charter in December of 2007 to establish a society where people could achieve healthy and productive lives, and work in very diverse ways, freeing itself from the traditional mindset of supporting balancing for measures to counteract the falling birthrate (Note 4). Moreover, the State of Formation of a Gender-Equal Society was featured in the White Paper of Gender Equality 2007 by the Gender Equality Bureau Cabinet Office in Japan, continuing to focus on realization of a WLB for resolving the issues of gender equality and the falling birthrate in the White Paper of Gender Equality 2008 and 2009 (Note 5), and the Declining Birthrate White Paper 2008 and 2009.

It is written that "Everyone can work while fulfilling their sense of fulfillment and fulfillment of their duties, and at the same time, have a healthy and prosperous life where they can spend time for childcare/nursing care, and personal time for home, community, self-development, etc. Now, we must pursue the realization of harmony between work and life in society as a whole (Note 6), which would build a vibrant society and economy (Kuwashima, 2018). There is little room for criticism of agenda in the charter, but it should be pointed out that a WLB policy in Japan has some problems. Especially, from a viewpoint of feminist thought, an attitude toward a WLB in Japan could even head in the opposite direction, gender equality. As previously stated, a WLB policy in Japan is mindful of the notion of "measures to counteract the falling birthrate," giving an initiative to companies with respect for companies' independence in enabling female employees to balance their work and family. This seems to emphasize "gender equality" on the surface in the sense that it realizes ideal working conditions for female employees, but it works differently, because it gives the impression that women are regarded as machines to give birth. The reason why a WLB policy has an essential lack of real recognition of gender equality is that it has been developed with linking with "measures to counteract the falling birthrate."

As mentioned in the previous section, the European government also equated measures to counteract the falling birthrate with the issue of WLB, but they became aware they cannot always negotiate an issue on the basis of a common understanding. In that sense, the Japanese government lags way behind European countries because of linking measures to counteract the falling birthrate with the issue of WLB. For increasing the number of children, women have to give birth and raise them. To do this, working women, as well as full-time homemakers, need to participate in bringing a baby into the world. That is, such a banal idea that creates an environment that enables working women to take easily maternity and childcare leave would halt the declining birthrate make a WLB policy head in the opposite direction, not in its proper one. While it is natural that only women give birth, what is the most important is an ideology of childcare. Behind a WLB policy in Japan is the fact that a conventional ideology of childcare still remains deeply rooted in the Japanese society, which is to say, women should dedicate themselves to the task of child rearing. In other words, the very child rearing must be the greatest joy in women's lives, working outside the home being only secondarily concerned. A WLB policy in Japan shows that an ideology that child rearing must take priority over entering the world of work, so women should stay home to try particularly hard to do "the greatest joy," in which there is no attitude to realize a real gender equality.

Although it is seemingly understood that a WLB in Japan has to be a policy for promoting gender equality in the workplace, Europe and the United States regard gender equality from a higher perspective through a WLB, because there is no original "full-time homemaker." Behind a WLB policy in Europe and the United States, where it is taken for granted that people enjoy gender equality in civil life regardless of a WLB policy, there is an attitude that it must be prepared for both men and women, rather than women's taking childcare leave with little difficulty. It could be pointed out that while a WLB in Japan has been facilitated in order for women to maintain their jobs, Europe and the United States have been promoted because of ideologies that it is natural for men and women to carry on working and lead a more fulfilling lifestyle in both employment and family.

3. Misleading Impression of a WLB

What does a WLB mean, and how do we interpret the term "balance"? To tell the truth, interpreting balance seems to be complex and creates a misunderstanding. The latest studies of a WLB do not suggest a common definition or concept（Lewis & Campbell, 2007）. Also, although a WLB has gained widespread use in Europe and the United States, they have not yet drawn boundaries between work and private lives (Aybras, 2007). However, WLB studies in Europe and the United States have analyzed the term from various directions as compared with Japan. This section discusses how we should interpret the term balance by analyzing what the term has been intended to mean in WLB studies in Europe and the United States, and what researchers have interpreted as a boundary between work and private.

Gender Equality Bureau Cabinet Office in Japan defines a WLB in this way: "All individuals, irrespective of age or gender, will be able to participate in a variety of activities, such as work,

child-rearing, nursing, self-development, and community activities, to the degree of their own choice." (Note 7). Translating a WLB into Japanese, the Cabinet Office mentioned it as "Shigoto (work) to Seikatsu (private life) no Chowa (evenness)." Simply understanding, balance means "chowa (evenness)" in Japanese, and "unbalance" means "fukinko" in Japanese. However, an antonym of a WLB should not be "a work-life unbalance." That is, interpreting the term balance in a WLB could not be quite so simple.

What kind of situation is it where "work and life are not in harmony"? An answer would be: Roughly speaking, when a person has "work to do," he or she cannot do a "private thing," or when he or she does a "private thing," he or she cannot do "work to do." In other words, "work" and "private" are "conflicting" states, which means that an antonym of a WLB should be "a work-life conflict," not "a work-life unbalance." In that sense, it can be said that the term a WLB is a very misleading term.

When considered in antonyms, "unbalance" gives an impression of a problem of time allocation, resulting in creating a misleading impression that a good time allocation can solve a problem. To give an extreme example, some people think that a WLB can be achieved by "8 hours work, 8 hours private, 8 hours sleep." But a work life balance isn't a simple matter of allocating time in actuality. A WLB does not choose between work and private and does not seek a time ratio. That is why the antonym of a work-life balance is now understood as "work-life conflict." "Conflict" is a quality issue, not a quantity issue such as time allocation.

It is not necessarily incorrect that work and private life are separate areas that are experienced by the same person. When focusing on an area and time, "work" and "privacy life" cannot exist on the same line, but attaching importance to a human beings living there, the two areas cannot always be separate. Because originally both are the areas experienced by the same person, it is possible that the concept is irrational—sacrificing or choosing one for the other. In other words, when the balance of a WLB is described as "evenness," it means that work and private life are in the opposite areas, and cause a problem about how people balance between them. But keeping in mind that work and private life are experienced by the same person, they are not in a conflicting relationship, but rather in a synergistic relationship that influences each other. It can be interpreted that work would be a success by a fullness of private life, and it would be enhanced by working well. Indeed, the WLB aims to create a virtuous cycle that is achieved by properly meshing the gears of both, not focusing on either work or private life, and making the ratio even.

Even in Europe and America, initially, the negative aspects between the roles at work and at home were studied using the concept of conflict, which clarified conflicts between roles occur, mainly among time, stress, and behavior and values (Parson & Bales, 1955). As stated above, WLB studies in Europe and the United States since 2000 rid themselves completely of the awareness of the negative side of a WLB. Research interest gradually began to focus on the positive side, resulting in increasing of research on harmony and synergies between multiple roles in work and private life. The shift from a negative perspective to a positive perspective came from the realization that, unlike finite time, the source of

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mental energy and ability is not always finite, and work and life have the potential to complement each other. Up to that point, it was thought that life takes time to be engaged in a work away. However, many research results show that having multiple roles reduces the psychological negative effect of a specific role, and enthusiasm for the role in a private life gives energy to an individual, which brings a significant benefit to work.

Looking at the theoretical background of WLB studies in Europe and the United States in the 1970s, research has emerged that views home and work as two open systems. Showing a typical example, the spillover theory can be raised, in which a situation, consciousness, and emotions of an individual overflow to the other in the internal or interpersonal relationship of the individual. This is because, for example, if there is something unpleasant at work, he or she feels unpleasant feelings when returning to the home, or conversely, if the degree of satisfaction of work is high, the degree of satisfaction of family life is also high, which refers to the correlation between the two domains of home and work (Stains, 1980). On the other hand, the compensation theory, which discusses the complementary positions of home and work, presents examples in which something that cannot be obtained in home life can be realized in the workplace and vice versa (Staines, 1980). Both discuss home and work as two static areas and discuss how they depend on each other. However, there is also a criticism that these two theories have a narrow perspective and emphasize only emotional connections. On the other hand, the work/family border theory, which discusses how two areas are related in the experience of an individual from the viewpoint of the relationship among space and environment and human beings, captures a more dynamic aspect, where it focuses on what kind of negotiations, conflicts, and balances occur between people in various positions around the boundaries of two domains (Clark, 2000).

Based on these theories, expressions such as a work-life integration and a work-life effectiveness tend to be preferred rather than the term, a WLB in Europe and the United States (Note 8). A work-life integration is a concept that integrates work and life and aims to become a synergistic existence of both work and family life and to enhance each other both publicly and privately. This is a further advancement of a WLB consciousness so far, in which balance is adjusted so that there is no bias between work and family life, and there is a difference from alternative understanding. By enhancing both work and private life, it aims to improve productivity and quality of life. Therefore, it is possible to create a synergistic effect for work and private life (Note 9). A work-life integration and a WLB differ greatly in grasping work and home. Originally, behind a background of appearance of the term a WLB, there should be an aim for correction that if an individual attaches importance to work, he or she has to put off family life by all means, and on the contrary, if wanting to give priority to home, he or she gives up career advancement. In other words, the idea of life-work balance was aimed at achieving a balance between the two, but as mentioned earlier, there was a risk that work and private life would be regarded as conflicting. On the other hand, a work-life integration does not make a home opposed to work. At first glance, it may seem that work is eroding a private life, but eliminating the line between both areas creates a synergistic effect that "if work is good, the private life will be good." Instead of

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simply balancing work and private life, if an individual shifts the two to the idea of integration, he or she no longer needs to limit one, and the worth of work and the worth of private life are linked. As a result, it becomes possible for both areas to obtain a sense of fulfillment at the same time. In this way, compared to a WLB that was expected to be only one-side fulfillment, in work-life integration, it can be seen that both have value (Lewis, Rapoport, & Gambles, 2003).

In addition, a study by Poelmans, Stepanova, and Masuda (2008) analyzes the positive relationship between work and private life, pointing out a new direction of a work-life research by arranging prior studies about the balance of two life areas. While Lewis et al. emphasize the term "integration," the term "enrichment" is the keyword in Poelmans' paper. The terms introduce two types of enrichment. One is called "instrumental enrichment," in which the abilities and skills acquired in one role area are brought into another role area and used effectively. This is the case, for example, when the problem-solving skills acquired in the workplace are used in home life to solve problems at home more effectively. The other is called "affective enrichment," in which positive emotions, such as joy and happiness, are transmitted from one role domain to another, being similar to the positive spillover mentioned above (Poelmans, Stepanova, & Masuda, 2008). The paper by Poelmans et al. provides clues for new ideas about work and private life, because it is important to consider how to mitigate conflicts and promote enrichment in both work to private life and private life to work" directions in the overall harmony of work and private life.

In addition, Allis and O'Driscoll examine the relationship with the work role, comparing the family role with other private activities. According to them, whether it is a family role or private role, the longer the input time, the less conflicted the roles, while it was found that those who are more passionate about their private roles tend to be more enriched with their work roles. It has been suggested that dedication to the private role does not deprive the work of resources and enthusiasm, but rather enriches the work (Allis & O'Driscoll, 2008). It is well known that the importance of WLB is being rapidly recognized in Japan, but as mentioned at the beginning of this section, a WLB theory in Japan is confused by the term balance, for which many of the research dealing with the interface between work and private life, and the interpretation of a WLB in companies focus on the negative relationship between work and private life; that is, the conflict between work and family roles. The trend has continued even now. The fundamental cause for a neglect of problems to be achieved by the realization of a WLB lies in the misunderstanding of the term, balance. A WLB is certainly a matter of working style, but working style should be a matter of individual ideology of working rather than a simple matter of working hours. When understanding that an original meaning of a WLB is synergy between work and private life, it can be understood that it is necessary to enhance both of them, and it is important to both men and women, not only for women. That is why a WLB is a policy that can significantly influence achieving gender equality. The idea of shortening working hours to facilitate women's work and domestic work to encourage them to work comes from the erroneous interpretation that a WLB is an allocation of time. This section has described an original interpretation of a WLB as a

theory, and the next section considers concrete a WLB practice. It analyzes how a WLB should be implemented so that it can contribute to the promotion of gender equality.

4. A WLB to Realize Gender Equality

4.1 A Paradox Caused by a Current WLB

Today, the number of female employees is increasing, and women are advancing in the workplace and improving their social status. However, while men mainly put their careers first, women often leave employment due to marriage, childbirth, or childcare even if in their career progression. On the other hand, some women even give up marriage and childbirth because they want to continue their career. This means that it is difficult for many women to balance work and private life, forcing women to choose between them. Moreover, as is well known, the declining birthrate is progressing in Japan, and the government is considering one of the causes as "difficulty in balancing work and childcare," having supported childcare for female workers since the 1990s as one measure to counteract the falling birthrate, and developing a WLB policy for female employees (Shimizu, 2008). The first step is the law concerning childcare leave (Law for Childcare Leave), which was enacted in 1991. Additionally, the Act for Measures to Support the Development of the Next Generation was enacted in 2003 to support families raising children throughout the society (Note 10). In this way, the policy that began with the support for women to balance work and family as part of measures to reduce the birthrate has expanded its content to support a WLB for men and women workers. However, looking at the background of implementation of a WLB policy in Japan, as mentioned earlier, there is a strong impression that its target is women, and there is a purpose to eliminate measures to counteract the falling birthrate. After all, even if the system to support a WLB of employees in companies is expanded, it will be used exclusively by women, resulting in a greater emphasis on women's burden of family responsibility. Therefore, the working style that fixes the sexual division of work cannot be resolved forever. As always, women's working and performing domestic duties conflict with each other, because men's participation in domestic work has not been realized yet, not only creating a double tradeoff for women, but also being a barrier for men to achieve a WLB.

Certainly, it cannot be denied that promoting a WLB also creates a situation in which women are more likely to develop their careers. However, when it causes too much stress on women, creating an impression that women can easily balance work and family, a paradox is established that promotes the sexual division of labor, which is an original barrier to gender equality. If the division of labor persists, as in the previous era, the phenomenon of women working outside the home will not occur in the first place.

Compared with former days, thanks to the fact that the number of full-time homemakers has decreased and the number of women working outside the home has increased, it can be stated that a concept of sexual division of labor has been destroyed incompletely. As a result, when women tried to work outside, it became easy to fall into the dilemma state between work and the domesticities. Consequently,

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the most problematic issue in the workplace is that only the words WLB and gender equality have wings in a situation where the concept of sexual division of labor is not completely dismantled. To achieve a WLB and gender equality, sexual division of labor is nothing but a barrier, not only for women but also for men. It is important to realize that a WLB is not just for women and that gender equality is still stagnant, not because of a WLB insufficiency, but an ideology of sexual division of labor's firm establishment. A WLB, which dismantles the sexual division of labor, should be promoted (Note 11).

4.2 Importance of Dismantling the Sexual Division of Labor

The first study about the idea of a women's sphere is "The Bonds of Womanhood: 'Woman's Sphere' in New England, 1780-1835" by Nancy Cott. Since her study, women's history in the United States has been developed in line with the women's sphere (Aruga, pp. 32-33) (Note 12). "Sphere" has been used from the nineteenth century, meaning that men and women play their gender roles in their social lives. It is the "women's sphere" that organizes a private life in a household and a "men's sphere" that performs an official life in a working place (Aruga, pp. 32). The ideology of spheres has doomed gender roles for men and women (Ishida, 2019). In Colonial America, a household functioned as a productive unit for living, and members of a family would work together both in the fields and inside houses to produce provisions and the common necessities of life. Although these productive labors would be wholly dominated by husbands, the heads of families, wives could be considered to be important members of the workforce. However, such qualities of family lives began to undergo change around the beginning of the nineteenth century because of the Industrial Revolution; the concept that a family should be a productive unit for living began to vanish. In other words, productive collaboration between men and women in Colonial America collapsed in the nineteenth century, with the division of productive activities into two domains. Men, who performed productive activities both in the fields and inside houses along with their wives before the Industrial Revolution, had followed a labor system of going to workplaces outside the home to earn their pay. Meanwhile, the understanding that women should be confined in households began gradually to deteriorate (Ishida, 2019).

It wasn't until the Industrial Revolution that work and employment came to be understood as synonyms; the workplace and home were different places, being held at different times, having different relationships and different norms. That is why there are two completely different cultures at work and at home today (Morf, 1989; Googins, 1991; Coontz, 1992). The mechanism by which sexual division of labor was fixed in Japan is very similar to the situation in the 19th century in Europe and the United States, although there is a gap of about 100 years. In Japan, the "female territory" appeared in the mid-1970s. Until the 1970s, many women were engaged in the family business, which might involve self-employment or agriculture. Many men began to engage in employment labor in urban areas during the period of high growth, and many of the women who married the men became full-time housewives (Tsutsui, 2014). In Japan, during the period of high economic growth, companies came to be based on a fixed division of roles by gender (sexual division of labor), and the employment system in the

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workplace was developed accordingly. In such a situation, a male regular employee who "has a dependent family and works long hours to contribute to the company in order to earn the wages that deserves to support the family" was considered as the standard worker image. While such work styles contribute to the development of the Japanese economy and have secured long-term employment security for workers and stable working conditions at a certain level (Shimizu, 2008).

When the ideology of sexual division of labor is considered a problem, the issues of paid work and unpaid work' are discussed in pairs. In other words, sexual division of labor, which means that men work outside and women work at home, does not simply indicate the division of labor to work in, but also indicates that there is a problem of female disdain behind the fact that the former is paid work and the latter is unpaid work. Jeanne Boydston analyzes gender roles and industrialization in *Home and Work*, pointing out that domestic work has been undervalued by industrialization. She describes this phenomenon as the "pastoralization of domestic duties," noting that women's unpaid work has no economic value in an industrial society (Boydston, pp. 142-163). Because of this concept of labor, a family was no longer a ground of production and had become a private space, being the very opposite of official space, which now was industrial workplaces for men. The division of labor according to gender has been justified and endorsed by this concept. A family became a healing space for men who worked hard outside, which demanded femininity in the Victorian era and the placement of virtue in obedience, chastity, piety, and self-sacrifice to women, who must serve their family and home (Aruga, pp. 34-37).

Not only in Boydston's suggestions, but also in the field of feminism studies, the concept of work that is specialized in paid labor has been reexamined, which has delineated a direction that gender equality should be achieved in both work, by placing importance on domestic duties including nursing care and child rearing, which have been understood as private areas, as work (Note 13). When considering a gender bias behind paid work and unpaid work as well as fixing of sexual division of labor, it can be apparent that a WLB is not just a problem of allocating working hours. The work assumed by a WLB policy refers to paid work; however, in reality, life includes domestic duties, childcare, and nursing, which are "free," and mostly carried out by women. Many working women are still engaged in unpaid work after returning from their work. In the WLB Charter, work is actually earned labor, and nonearned labor such as child-raising and nursing care is "private life." Given this nontheoretical situation, Norio Hisamoto asserts that a WLB is actually an issue of a work-WLB, which should be seriously regarded as "a balance of work-work is serious" (Hisamoto, 2015). A WLB policy includes the concept of gender asymmetric work, which is the work of men and the work of women on the premise of sexual division of labor. Simply understanding a WLB as a policy that enables women to balance home and work is not only to promote sexual division of labor, but also place responsibility for domestic work, a perpetual work, just on women, which means that women no longer have the opportunity to enjoy the private life. That is, this situation should be considered as the opposite direction from gender equality. An imbalance in the sharing of domestic duties and child-rearing care for couples has also been pointed

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out in WLB studies in Europe and the United States (Pleck, 1985; Nock & Kingston, 1988; Brines, 1994). For instance, Hochschild describes the actual situation as a term, "second shift," in which many women must perform domestic duties and childcare almost all alone when returning home after working (Hochschild, 1989).

4.3 A Blind Spot of Sexual Division of Labor

A correlation exists between sexual division of labor and paid and unpaid work in the previous section. In this section, going further, I examine the "responsibility for livelihood maintenance" caused by an ideology of sexual division of labor. In "Forget about 'the ideal worker': A theoretical contribution to the debate on flexible workplace designs, work/life conflict, and opportunities for gender equality," Peter and Blomme argue how gender influences the boundary between work and private life from the perspective of self-determination theory and boundary theory, in which they analyze that in the relationship between work and life, the gender identity of both sexes has a greater effect than corporate attitudes. In other words, the role of women centers on their family, and the role of men centers on their work (Note 14). Also, in Japan today, despite of the fact that more women are engaged in paid work, there is no phenomenon in which more men are engaged in unpaid work in the home. Considering Peter and Blomme's suggestions, it can be pointed out that paid work of women is an "auxiliary role" to make up for the lack of income for men, rather than so-called career development. In short, even if the number of working women has increased compared with the previous era, it does not mean that women can play active roles in a labor market regardless of gender and that working women become regarded as breadwinners. That is to say, as long as the family's earning head remains male, and the unpaid work of women is a subsidiary, responsibilities of unpaid work at home are still the role of women. For example, when problems such as childcare and nursing care emerge, it is common for a working woman to give up her job or change the way of working so that her husband's employment is not affected. This means that labors of husbands always take precedence over labors of wives, and that labors of the wives must be the subject of husbands' acceptance and obedience. It is unlikely that a husband's labors would be affected to maintain his wife's because an ideology has been established that husbands are responsible for maintaining livelihoods. It has been reported not only in Japan but also in Europe that the major responsibilities for livelihoods are imposed only on men. According to Catherin Hakim, who has researched in the United Kingdom and Spain, it has become apparent that many coworkers think that a family's breadwinner should be the husband. Even wives who advocate equal division of domestic duties against sexual division of labor do not insist on sharing livelihood responsibility (Hakim, 2003). What can be read from Hakim's research is that it is proved to be incorrect that because women are engaged in domestic duties and deprived of opportunities to be active outside the home unlike men, an issue of "responsibility for livelihood maintenance" that always accompanies an ideology of sexual division of labor has a great effect just on women. Sexual division of labor and responsibility for livelihood maintenance negatively affect not only women but also men, since if a wife quits her job for any reason, her husband will have more responsibility to maintain her

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livelihood, and he has no option to quit his job (Karkoulian, Srour, & Sinan, 2016). A fulfillment of responsibility for livelihood maintenance means a determination to continue working for a long period of time for a husband, and he will be overwhelmed by responsibility and the stress of supporting his family financially.

Ogasawara points out that a significance of paid work for women has a considerable effect on a division of household chores (Ogasawara, 2005), which means that increasing in an employment rate of women hardly contributes to dismantling the system of sexual division of labor, "while a husband should have responsibility for livelihood maintenance, a wife must be mainly in charge of household chores." From the point of view of feminist perspectives, it has already been noted that a persistent ideology of sexual division of labor has been an obstacle for the realization of gender equality in workplace. Further, although it has been pointed out that the sharing of domestic duties by married couples is important, family budget sharing has not been mentioned in this argument. A dismantling of sexual division of labor is not just a matter of eliminating a fixation of gender roles for domestic duties and works, but also an issue of who will maintain a living. Disassembling an ideology that a husband should work, and a wife must accept responsibility for domestic duties is not enough, and it is important for couples to eliminate the idea that husbands should be a breadwinners. Namely, significance of work for women, why women work, has an important meaning in the dismantling of sexual division of labor. Whether or not gender equality is realized should be measured by a meaning of employment, not by increasing in the employment rate of women. If women's labor and men's labor have the same meaning, there must be a tendency that men's income does not influence women's employment choices. That is, Douglas-Arisawa's rule, in which the higher the male's income, the lower the employment rate of his wife, ironically proves that the meaning of female labor is completely different from that of male labor.

5. Conclusion

It is fundamentally important to keep in mind that a WLB must be available equally to both sexes. It is not until this realization is achieved that a WLB contributes to gender equality. As mentioned in section three, a WLB is not a matter of work and private time allocation, but a matter of individual conception of both, as suggested by spillover theory. There is no room for a sexual difference. In a system in which only women are responsible for domestic duties, women, unlike men, find it difficult to find a significance in their work, and eventually women's work becomes subsidiary. A realization of WLB must be a policy to eliminate the distorted division of labor created by gender, for which a false idea that a WLB should enable women to balance domestic duties and work must be dispelled. Creating an environment in which women can easily take childcare leave through a WLB policy promotes the concept of sexual division of labor, resulting in moving gender equality backward. To achieve gender equality in the workplace, it is essential that the concept of sexual division of labor should be dismantled and that women take responsibility for maintaining their livelihoods. It is also necessary for

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women themselves to have the significance of working instead of simply providing support for their husbands. And to achieve these, a WLB policy must encourage men to take childcare leave. Gender equality should not be realized only in the workplace. It is not enough for women to participate in the workplace on an equal basis with men. As in the case of the front and back of a coin, if it is not realized that men also participate in domestic duties on a parity with women, actual gender equality cannot be realized.

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Notes

Note 1. http://www.gender.go.jp/kaigi/senmon/wlb/siryo/pdf/wlb07-1.pdf

Note 2. Parsons, T. and Bales, R. F. *Family Socialization, and interaction process*. Glence IL: The Free Press, 1955.

Note 3. It is interpreted that *The Time Bind: When Work becomes Home and Home becomes Work* by Arlie R. Hochschild, in 2001, has an enourmoue effect on a background about "a WLB" in the US (Yamaguchi, 2004).

Note 4. http://wwwa.cao.go.jp/wlb/government/pdf/charter.pdf#search=%27 ワークライフバランス憲章%27

https://www.mhlw.go.jp/bunya/kodomo/jisedai-suisinhou-gaiyou.html

Note 5. The Gender Equality Bureau was established in 2001 as a division of the Japanese Cabinet Office tasked with planning and coordinating the policies of the Japanese government pertaining to gender equality. The Gender Equality Bureau conducts research on topics concerning issues of gender—compiling findings into an annual report called the "White Paper." In 1994, the Headquarters for the Promotion of Gender Equality was created within the Cabinet of Japan. With the 1999 implementation of the Basic Law for a Gender-Equal Society, both the Office for Gender Equality and the Council for Gender Equality were established by the Japanese Cabinet. During the governmental reforms effected January 6, 2001, the Gender Equality Bureau was established under the newly formulated Cabinet Office. Coupled with the Gender Equality Council, the Bureau is tasked with devising and coordinating plans regarding issues of gender equality in addition to executing plans that fall outside of the jurisdiction of any other ministry. When first founded, the Gender Equality Bureau was composed of 50 people with an equal balance of male and female members. The White Paper is an annual report published by the Gender Equality Bureau that contains both research and policy suggestions for issues of gender inequality. The main object of study for each White Paper remains largely consistent with the measures for gender equality established by the 1999 Basic Laws for a Gender-equal Society, although each new report attempts to address obstacles to the accomplishment of these measures. The 2010 White Paper—the latest year available online—focused on the education of Japanese women, calling for their increased education of the variety of career opportunities available to them in an attempt to avoid the closing of the next generation of Japanese women's minds due to stereotyped perception of gender roles in society. The 2010 White Paper also pushes for combating the popular perception of gender equality being concerned with women only, stating that a gender-equal society would benefit both "the male worker and the housewife."

Note 6. http://wwwa.cao.go.jp/wlb/government/20barrier_html/20html/charter.html

Note 7. http://www.gender.go.jp/english_contents/mge/wlb/society.html

Note 8. A work-life integration is adopted by Intel (US) or AstraZeneca (UK), and a work-life effectiveness is by IBM (US).

Note 9. Also in Japan, Machiko Osawa focuses on a term, "a work-life synergy" and argues about a misunderstanding of a word, "balance" in WLB. She points out that "both enrichment" and "both enrichment" bring about "interaction/synergistic effect," and argue that synergy is the merit of improving the "quality" of work and life (Osawa, 2008).

Note 10. https://www.mhlw.go.jp/content/11909000/000355354.pdf

Note 11. In Japan, the Equal Employment Opportunity Act was enacted in 1986 to establish equal employment opportunities for both sexes, and the Basic Act for Gender-Equal Society was enacted in 1999. It is noted in Article 4 that "fixed sexual division of labor" impedes gender equality, but it does not mean that legally compliant content is required for its dismantling. It is not legally binding because it is stipulated as "to be considered" in practice and is not a matter that actually punishes the violation.

Note 12. Much has been written about sphere ideology as follows: Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, "The Female World of Love and Ritual: Relations between Women in Nineteenth-Century America" in *Signs* 1-1 (Autumn 1975), 1-29; Linda Kerber, *Women of the Republic: Intellect and Ideology in Revolutionary America* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1986); Linda K. Kerber, "Separate Spheres, Female Worlds, Women's Place: The Rhetoric of Women's History" in *the Journal of American History*, 75-1 (Jan. 1988), 9-39; Linda K. Kerber, Nancy F. Cott, Robert Gross, Lynn Hunt, Carroll Smith-Rosenberg and Christine M. Stansell, "Beyond Roles, Beyond Spheres: Thinking about Gender in the Early Republic" in *The William and Mary Quarterly* 46-3 (1989), 565-585; Mary Beth Norton, *Founding Mothers & Fathers: Gendered Power and the Forming of American Society* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1996); Zagarri, "Women and Party Conflict in the Early Republic" in *Beyond the Founders: New Approaches to the Political History of the Early American Republic* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 2004), 107-128; Mary Kelley, Learning to Stand & Speak: Women, *Education, and Public Life in America's Republic* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006).

Note 13. The following are typical examples of studies on a correlation between women and labor. Like Boydston's studies, all of them state that sexual division of labor locks women in their homes and forces them to play secondary roles, for which, a concept of "femininity" was an essential element: Berbara Welter, "The Cult of Womanhood, 1820-1860" in *American Quarterly* 18-2 (Summer 1966), 151-174: Gerda Lerner, "Placing Women in History: Definitions and Challenges" in *Feminist Studies* 3-1 (Autumn 1975), 5-14; Christine Stansell, *City of Women: Sex and Class in New York, 1789-1860* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1986); Ava Baron, *Work Engendered: Toward a New History of American Labor* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991); Wendy Gamber, "A Gendered Enterprise: Placing Nineteenth-Century Businesswomen in History" in *Business History Review* 72-2 (July 1998), 188-217; Rosemarie Zagarri, *Revolutionary Backlash: Women and Politics in the Early American Republic* (Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, 2007); Wilma A. Dunaway, *Women, Work and Family in the Antebellum Mountain South* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

Note 14. Unlike in Japan, a full-time homemaker is rare in Europe and the United States, but it cannot be denied that an ideology of sexual division of labor has taken root, and that sexual identity has a great influence on labor.