

POL S 404: The Politics of Sleep
Kathi Weeks, *The Problem with Work*

In chapter four, “Hours for What We Will’: Work, Family, and the Demand for Shorter Hours,” Weeks considers contemporary arguments for a shorter working week (without concomitant decrease in wages). She looks at two arguments, to which she is not unsympathetic, but that she argues have limitations:

Argument #1: Less work means more family

- pp. 155-161.
- Weeks uses Hochschild’s feminist critique of work as her exemplary text.
- What argument does Weeks represent Hochschild as making (in her book *The Time Bind*), and what is valuable about it?
- What five criticisms of Hochschild’s argument does Weeks offer?

Argument #2: Less work for ‘what we will’

- pp. 161-166.
- Weeks uses Aronowitz et al.’s “Post-Work Manifesto” as her exemplary text.
- What argument does Weeks represent “The Post-Work Manifesto” as making, and what is valuable about it?
- What feminist criticisms of “The Post-Work Manifesto” does Weeks offer (wages, hours, the work ethic)?

What benefits of a shorter working week does Weeks get behind?

Discussion: There is a lot of buzz in the business and union worlds about the benefits (and drawbacks) of a four-day work week, with forward-looking companies adopting it. There are also feminist arguments for a four-day week.

For example:

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2017/nov/16/working-four-day-week-hours-labour>
<https://qz.com/work/1530023/wellcome-trusts-four-day-week-is-great-for-gender-equality/>

Would you defend a four-day work week for the University of Alberta? What pros and cons do you see from the perspective of the students, the faculty, or the administration? Does the four-day week model only suit a certain kind of workplace?

Vern Baxter and Steve Kroll-Smith, “Normalizing the Workplace Nap.”

What does the normalization of the workplace nap do for employees? For employers? Is the workplace nap a solution to the same problem as shorter working hours, or do the two policies cut against each other?