

# The Work-Life Balance in Germany vs. the United States

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## THESIS STATEMENT

- Should Americans continue working long hours?
- Should Germans continue to utilize their vacation and leisure time?
- How does leisure time relate to proficiency and productivity?

These questions are often thrown back and forth when considering a proper work-life balance. In our studies we have found that both countries' economic status and industries succeed in different ways when it comes to productivity, innovation, and proficiency due to this balance.

## WORK-LIFE BALANCE

- The work-life balance:
  - balance between working hours and hours spent not at work.
  - good balance, spending the right amount of time working and the right amount of time at leisure, increasing productivity and proficiency.



## INNOVATION AND PROFICIENCY

-Innovation policies that target a complete innovation cycle will succeed in creating economic growth that enhances the welfare of all citizens.

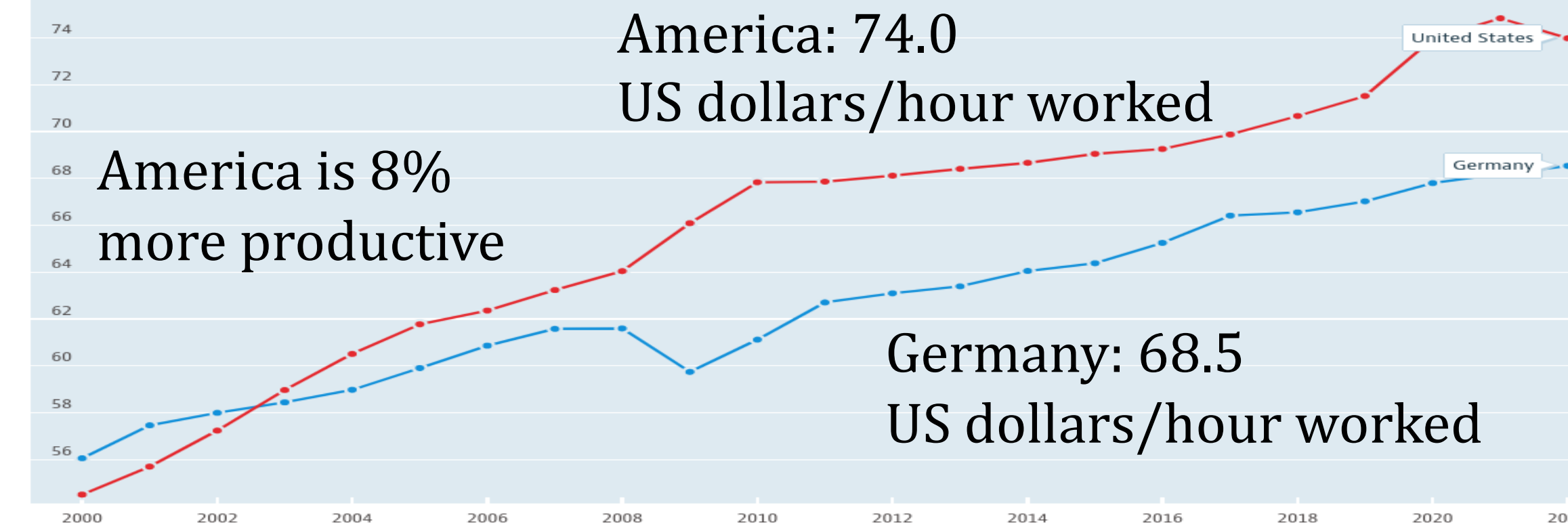
-Three factors to creating economic growth and success:

- Along with creating new industries, it is important to infuse existing industries with new ideas and technologies
  - Utilize public institutions so that innovation doesn't end with invention.
  - Enforce a constantly trained and productive workforce.
- Germany does a great job at utilizing this cycle to sustain productivity and employment growth.

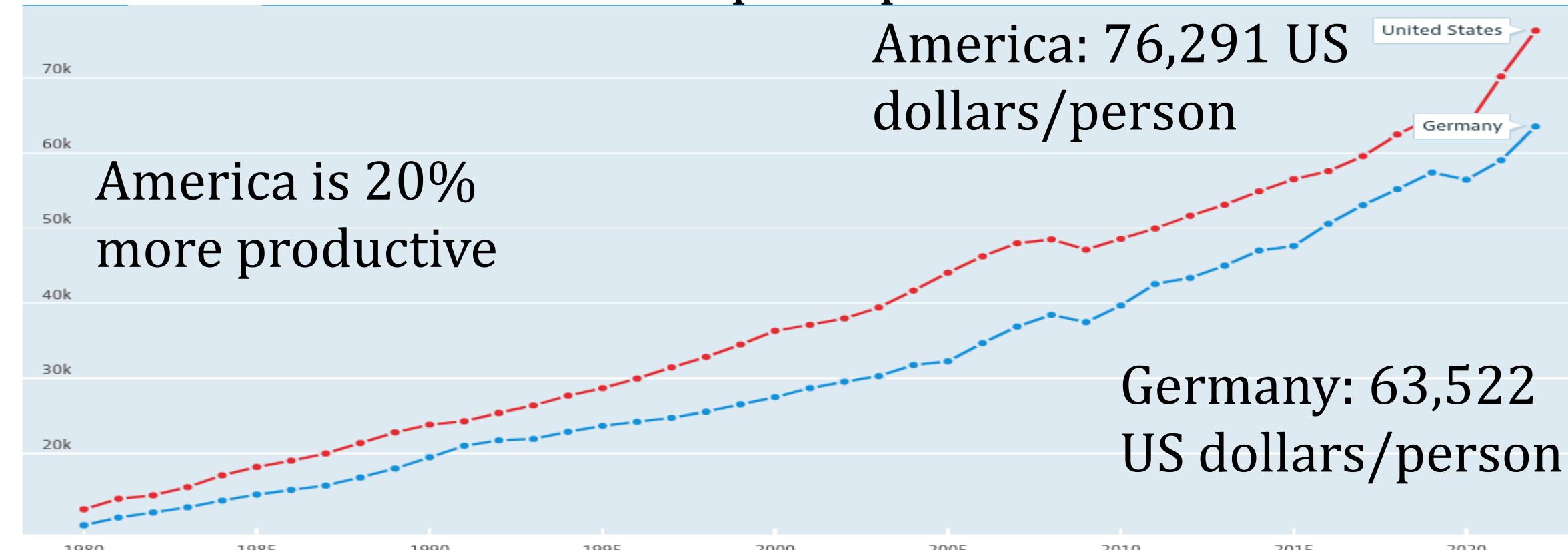
-The US falls behind when it comes to creating a stable cycle.  
-Even though Americans may spend more time at their job each day leading to a higher productivity, German companies are essentially more innovative and proficient when it comes to their work.

## PRODUCTIVITY OF GERMANY AND AMERICA

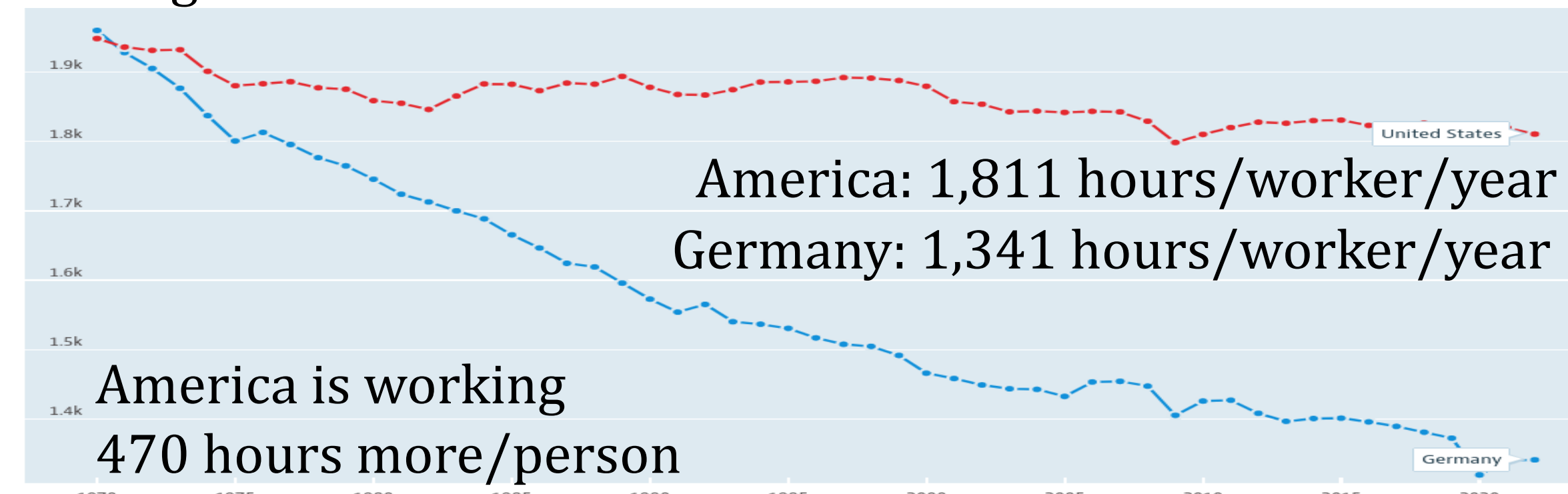
- The Gross Domestic Product per hours worked



- The Gross Domestic Product per capita



- Average Annual Hours Worked



## COMPARING WORK-LIFE BALANCED COUNTRIES



- Time devoted to leisure and personal care:

-Germany: 15.6 hours/week -America: 14.6 hours/week

- Employees working fifty hours or more a week:

-Germany: 3.9% of employees -America: 10.4% of employees

## EFFECTS OF WORKING LONG HOURS

- Can cause serious health issues, mental and physical
- Interrupt healthy sleeping and eating schedules
- Eventually leading to death

- USA; rise in hours worked, decline in GDP/hour worked

- Germany; decline in hours worked, rise in GDP/hour worked

## PAID TIME OFF

-German employees legally must be granted 24 days of paid vacation per year, based on a 6-day work week.

-Since most only work 5 days, the legal amount would be 20 days per year.

-In comparison to the United States, where there is no legal minimum amount of PTO.

## MATERNITY LEAVE

-In Germany, maternity leave is paid for six weeks before birth and eight weeks after.

-In contrast, the US is the only high-income country to not offer paid maternity leave on the Federal level.



## CONCLUSION

-From our research, we concluded that Germany does have a better work-life balance for the average person

-The difference essentially comes down to how well each country utilizes the time that they spend at work

-Americans tend to spend more time at work allowing them to get things done at a quicker pace which leaves less time to focus on important things like their mental health.

-Germans utilize their time wisely to provide quality innovative strategies by ensuring they are well rested and ready to do their best work.

## FRANCISCAN CONNECTION

-Our research reflects the Franciscan Value of Responsible Stewardship.

-“Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as though you were working for the Lord.” Colossians 3:23-24

-Being a responsible steward is to continue to work for the good of others and not get carried up in our work and the stress of our daily lives.

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