www.lisdatacenter.org

August 12, 2013 | ASA | New York City

Policy and Research Workshop. Data for Social Science Research

Introduction to LIS: Cross-National Data Center in Luxembourg

Luxembourg Income Study (LIS) Database
Luxembourg Wealth Study (LWS) Database

Janet Gornick, LIS Director

Overview of LIS

LIS was founded in 1983 by two US academics (Timothy Smeeding and Lee Rainwater) and a team of multi-disciplinary researchers in Europe.

The origin was a 7-country “study” that grew and was institutionalized as the “Luxembourg Income Study”.

In 2010, we shortened the name of our institution to “LIS”.

LIS: an overview

LIS: Cross-National Data Center (Luxembourg)

- parent organization
- located in Luxembourg
- independent, chartered non-profit organization
- cross-national, participatory governance
- acquires, harmonizes, and disseminates data for research
- venue for research, conferences, and user training

LIS Center (New York)

- satellite office
- located at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York
- administrative, managerial, development support to parent office
- venue for research, teaching, and graduate student supervision

Who's who at LIS?

In Luxembourg

Thierry Kruten
Caroline de Tombeur

The data team:
Teresa Munzi
Jörg Neugschwender
Paul Alkemade
Piotr Paradowski
Carmen Petrovici
Marco Lilla
Lindsay Flynn (FNR postdoc)

In New York

Janet Gornick
Caroline Batzdorf
Laurie Maldonado (FNR pre-doc)
Peter Frase (FNR pre-doc)
Natascia Boeri
Amalia Leguizamon
Sarah Kostecki
Berglind Ragnarsdottir
Emily Nell
Nathaniel Johnson

In Sweden

Markus Jäntti

Our mission

To enable, facilitate, promote, and conduct cross-national comparative research on socio-economic outcomes and on the institutional factors that shape those outcomes.

CROSS-NATIONAL
DATA CENTER
in Luxembourg

What we do

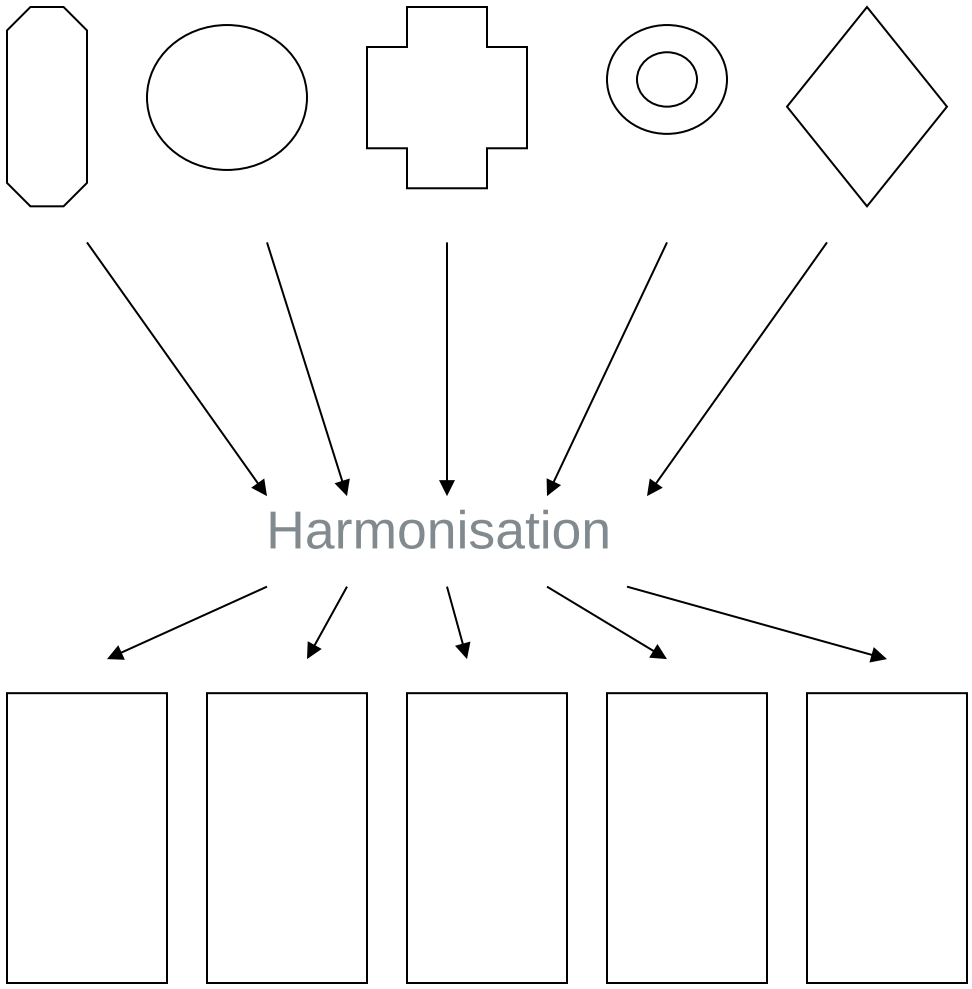
Step 1. We identify appropriate datasets.

Step 2. We negotiate with each data provider.

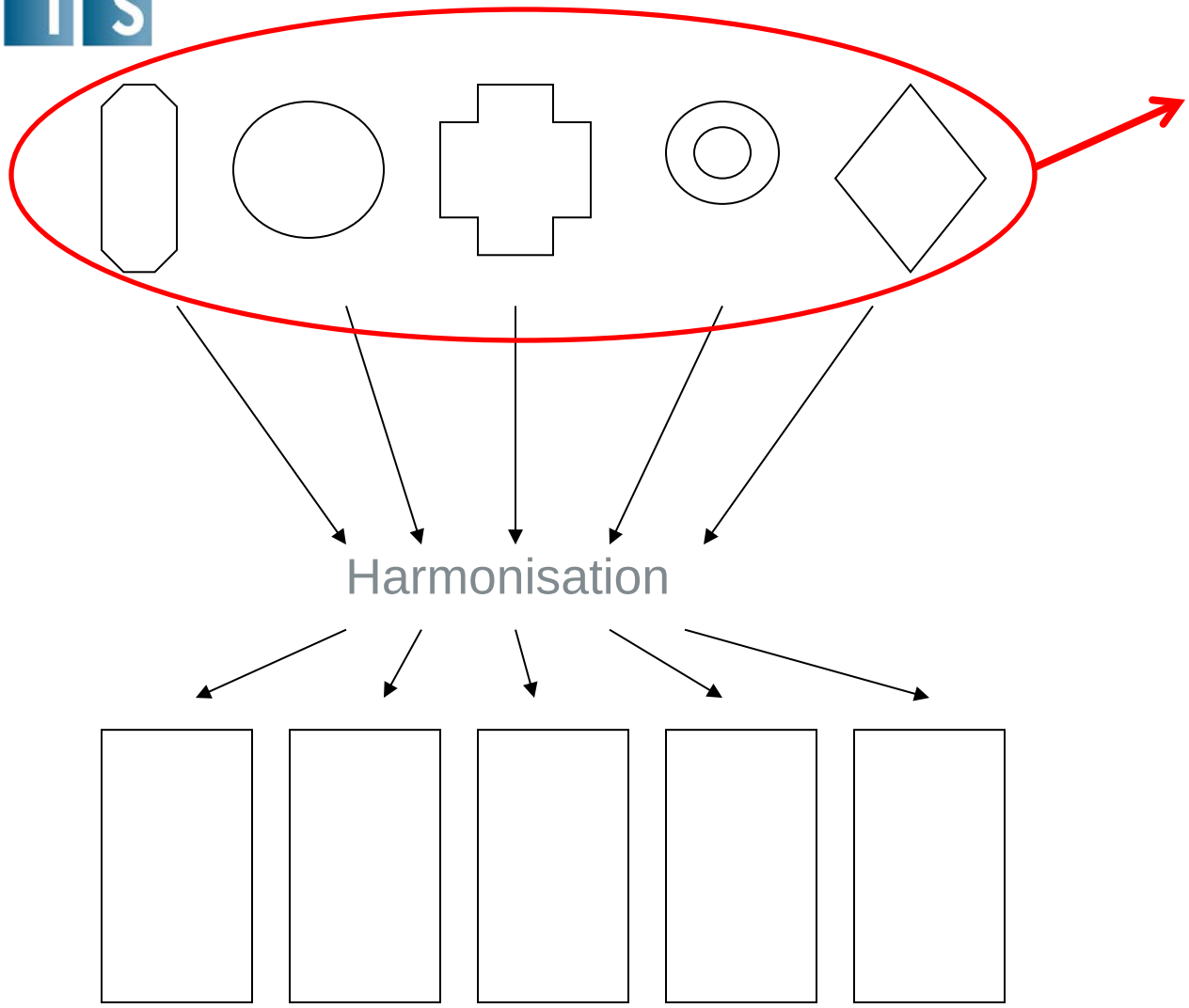
Step 3. We acquire and harmonize the data.

LIS' data experts harmonize the data into a common, cross-national template. This is very labor-intensive.

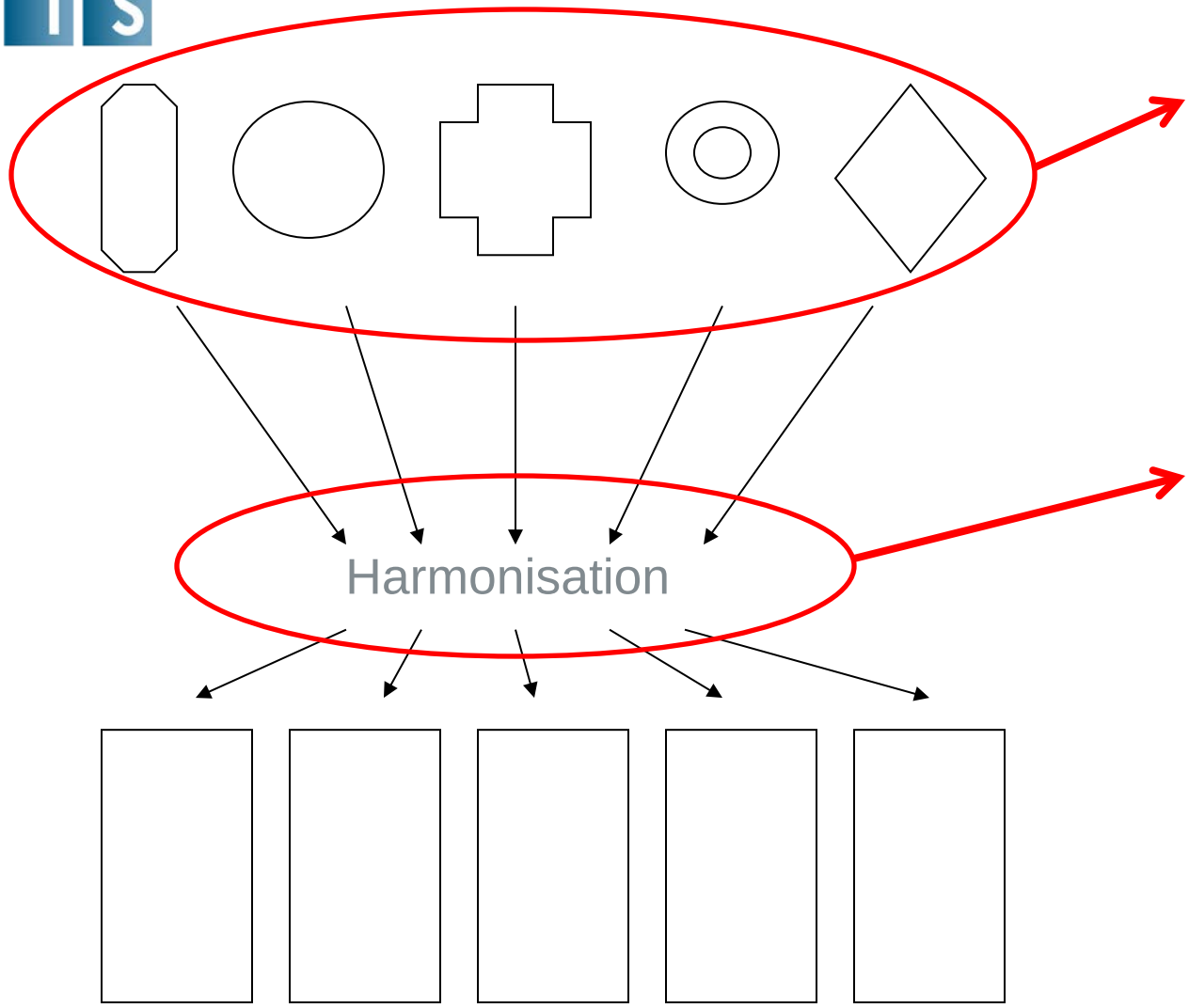
Data harmonization at LIS: an overview



Data harmonization at LIS: an overview



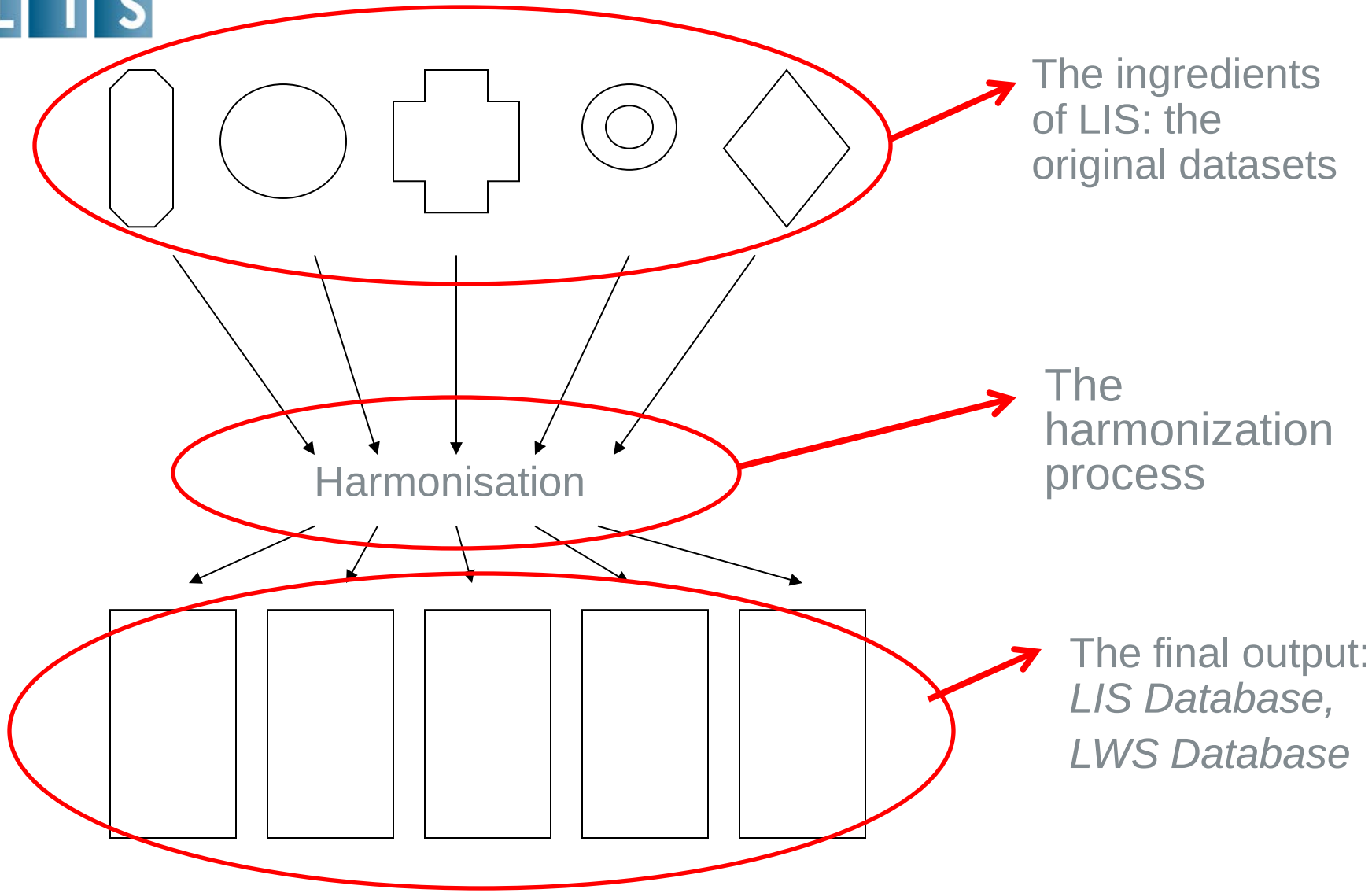
Data harmonization at LIS: an overview



The ingredients of LIS: the original datasets

The harmonization process

Data harmonization at LIS: an overview



The ingredients of LIS: the original datasets

The harmonization process

The final output: *LIS Database, LWS Database*

What we do – cont.

Step 4. We check and document the harmonized data.

Step 5. We make the data available to researchers via remote access, and two other user-friendly pathways.

LIS and *LWS* Databases

Luxembourg Income Study Database (LIS)

- First and largest available database of harmonized income data, available at the household and person levels
- In existence since 1983
- Data mostly start in 1980, some go back to the 1960s (recollected every 3-5 years)
- 45 countries
- 183 datasets
- Used to study: *poverty; income inequality; labor market outcomes*

Luxembourg Wealth Study Database (LWS)

- First available database of harmonized wealth data, available at the household level
- In existence since 2007
- Data going back to 1994
- 12 countries
- 20 datasets
- Used to study: *household assets, debt, and expenditures; wealth portfolios*

Current coverage:

62% of world population
84% of world GDP

Current axis of growth: middle-income countries
(now 17 out of 47 countries)

Australia	Denmark	India	Paraguay *	Spain
Austria	Dominican Republic *	Ireland	Poland	Sweden
Belgium	Egypt *	Israel	Peru	Switzerland
Brazil	Estonia	Italy	Romania	Taiwan
Canada	Finland	Japan	Russia	United Kingdom
Chile *	France	Luxembourg	Serbia *	United States
China	Germany	Mexico	Slovak Republic	Uruguay
Colombia	Greece	Netherlands	Slovenia	
Cyprus	Guatemala	Norway	South Africa	
Czech Republic	Hungary	Panama *	South Korea	

LIS' sponsors

Our financial sponsors are based in several countries:

- Luxembourg
(Ministry of Higher Education and Research)

- 17 other countries

- including the U.S.
(National Science Foundation!)

19th Annual Coalition for National Science Funding (CNSF) Capitol Hill Exhibition held May 7, 2013

Rep. Rush Holt (D-NJ-12) with Dr. Janet Gornick from the City University of New York.

http://www.cnsfweb.org

LIS' sponsors

We also receive support from supranational organizations, including:

- The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)
- The World Bank (WB)
- The United Nations Development Program (UNDP)
- The International Monetary Fund (IMF)

Users, products, services

Thousands of data users - and growing

- remote execution enables use around the world
- free access for students in all countries
- free access for data providers and their staffs

Pedagogical activities

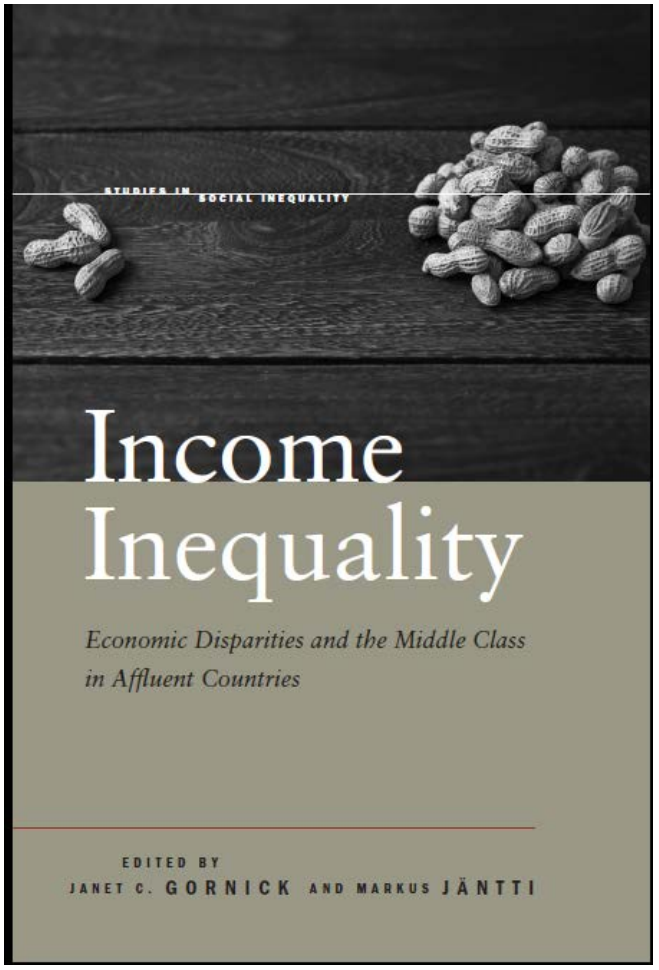
- annual training workshops in Luxembourg
- local workshops
- self-teaching lessons online

Research activities and support

- visiting scholar program
- working paper series (600+)
- research conferences
- edited books (new one published in July 2013!)

New LIS Book

published July 2013



Income Inequality: Economic Disparities and The Middle Class in Affluent Countries

Edited by
Janet C. Gornick
and Markus Jäntti

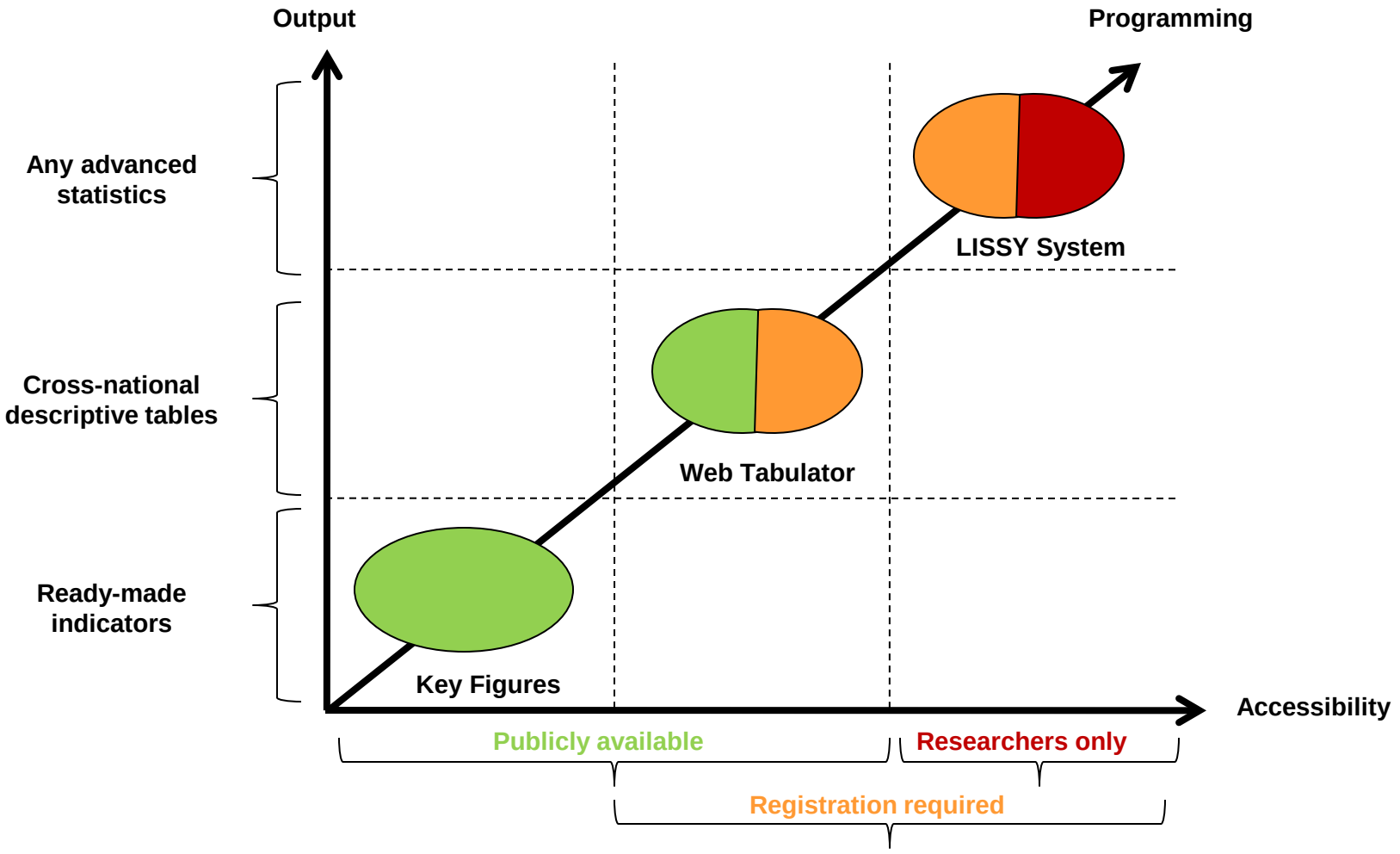
Stanford University Press,
Social Inequality Series.

2013

Stop by SUP booth here!
booth 1212
reception today 3:00 pm

Pathways to the data

Primary Pathway



Remote-execution system ("LISSY")

This is the primary means of access; it uses a software system that was designed specifically for LIS.

Researchers write programs (in SPSS, SAS, or Stata) and send them to the LIS server; results are returned to the researcher, with an average processing time of under two minutes.

Two other pathways to the LIS data

Web-based tabulator (“the WebTab”).

Our online table maker allows registered users to make tables, using keywords. Users can generate cross-national comparisons without the need for programming. Now, contains most recent LIS data (household-level) only.

Two other pathways to the LIS data (continued)

LIS Key Figures

Inequality and Poverty Key Figures

These include multiple inequality measures (e.g., Gini and Atkinson coefficients, percentile ratios), relative poverty rates for various demographic groups, and median and mean disposable household income. These are constructed for all LIS datasets, in all waves.

Employment Key Figures by Gender

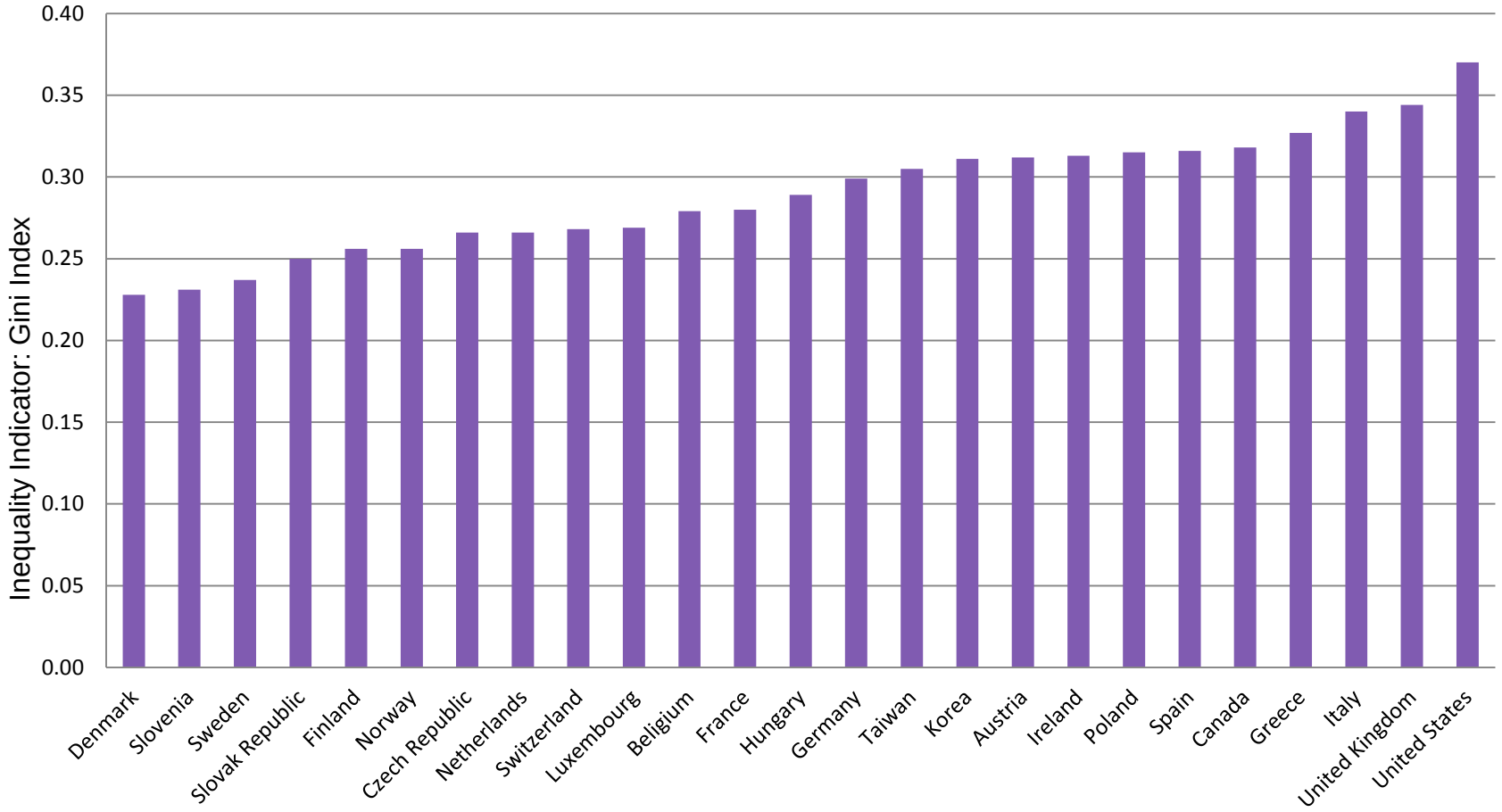
These are a set of national-level indicators presented in ten tables. These figures highlight women's economic outcomes and gender inequality in poverty and employment. These are available for all datasets in LIS' Wave V (2000) and VI (2004).

Research!

The research carried out using *LIS/LWS* data

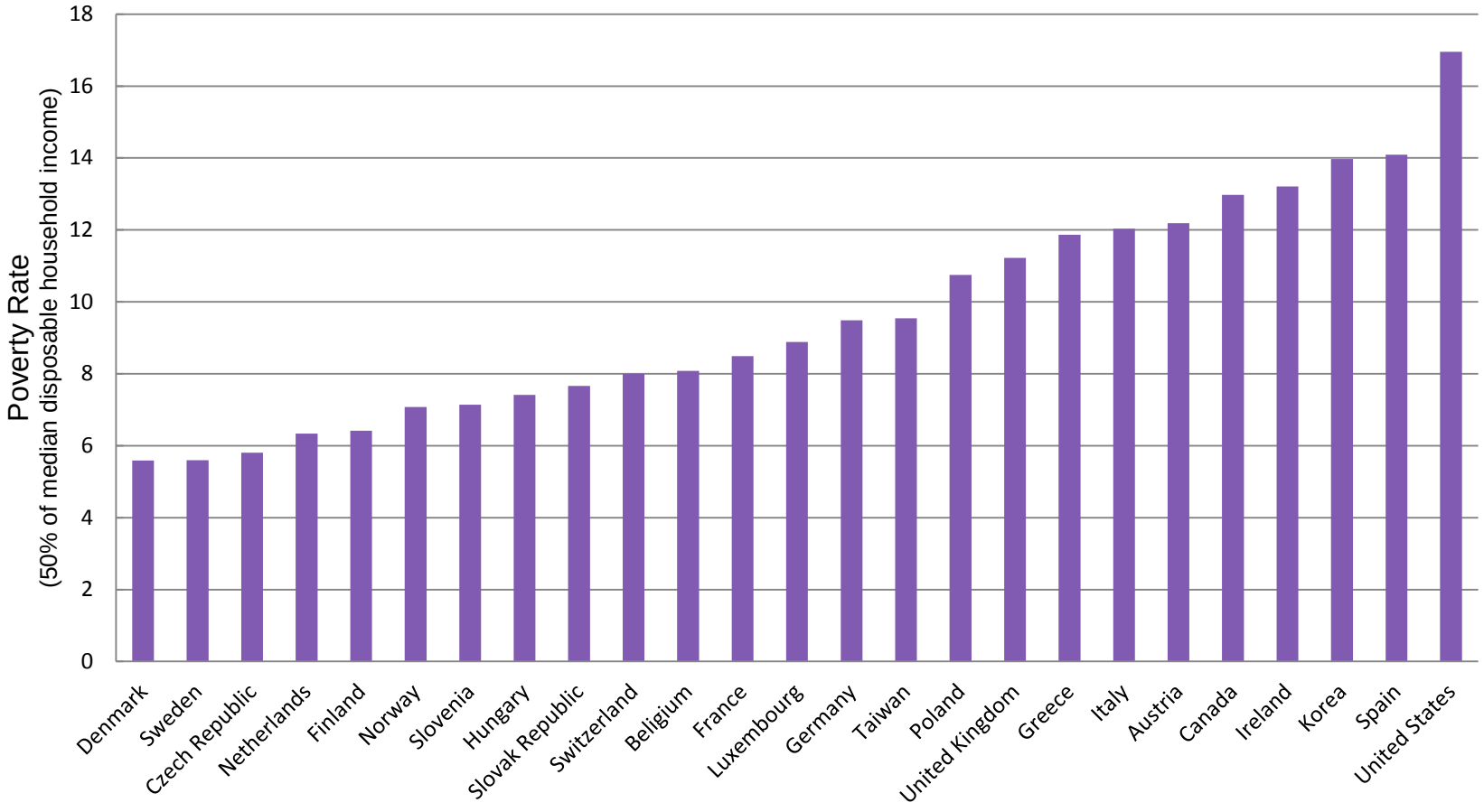
- *assessing income inequality*
- *measuring poverty*
- *comparing employment outcomes*
- *analyzing assets and debt*
- *researching policy impacts*

Assessing Income Inequality
Inequality Across Households



Source: Luxembourg Income Study Key Figures (publicly available online – www.lisdatacenter.org).

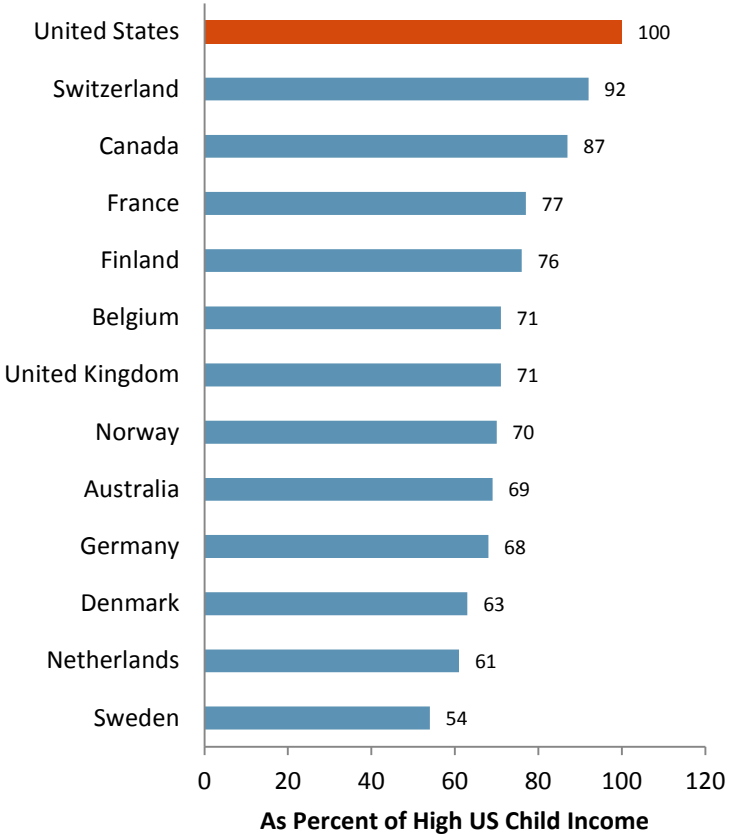
Measuring Poverty - I
Household Poverty Rates

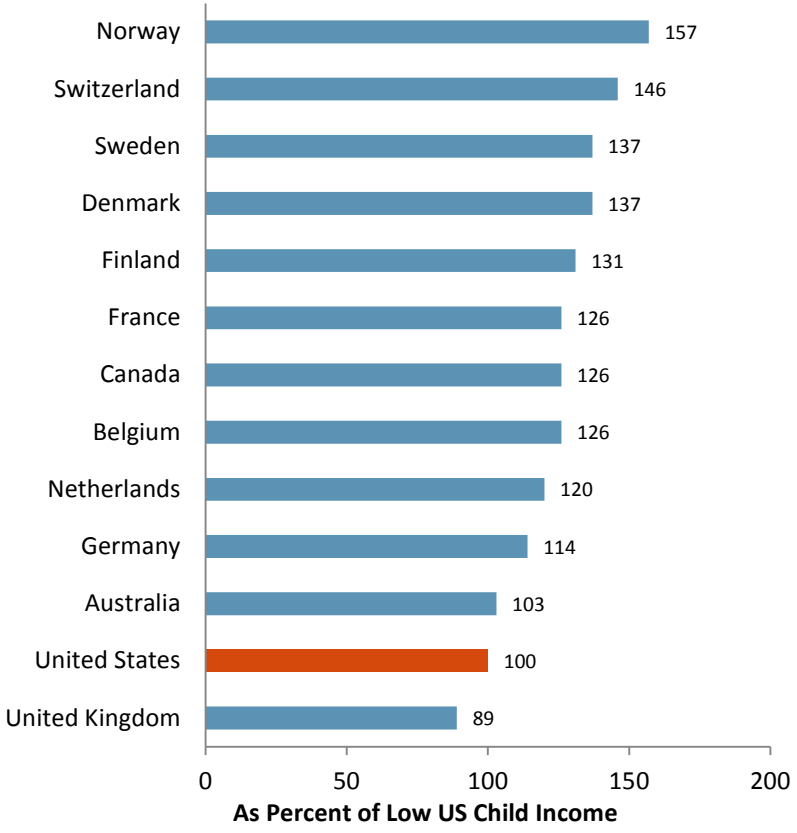


Source: Luxembourg Income Study Key Figures (publicly available online – www.lisdatacenter.org).

Measuring Poverty - II
"Real Income Levels" of Children

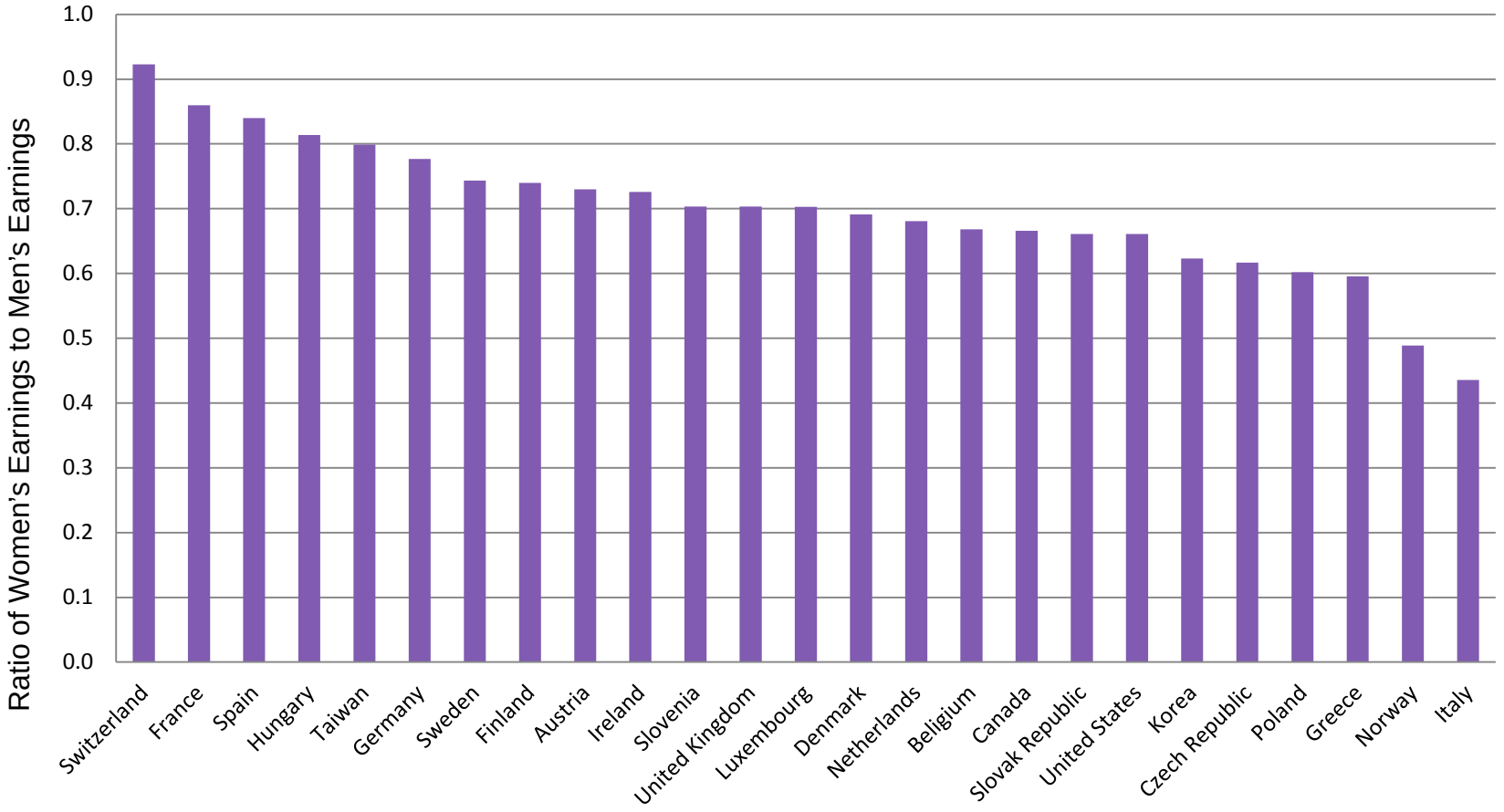
Note: US children: the rich are richer, and the poor are poorer.





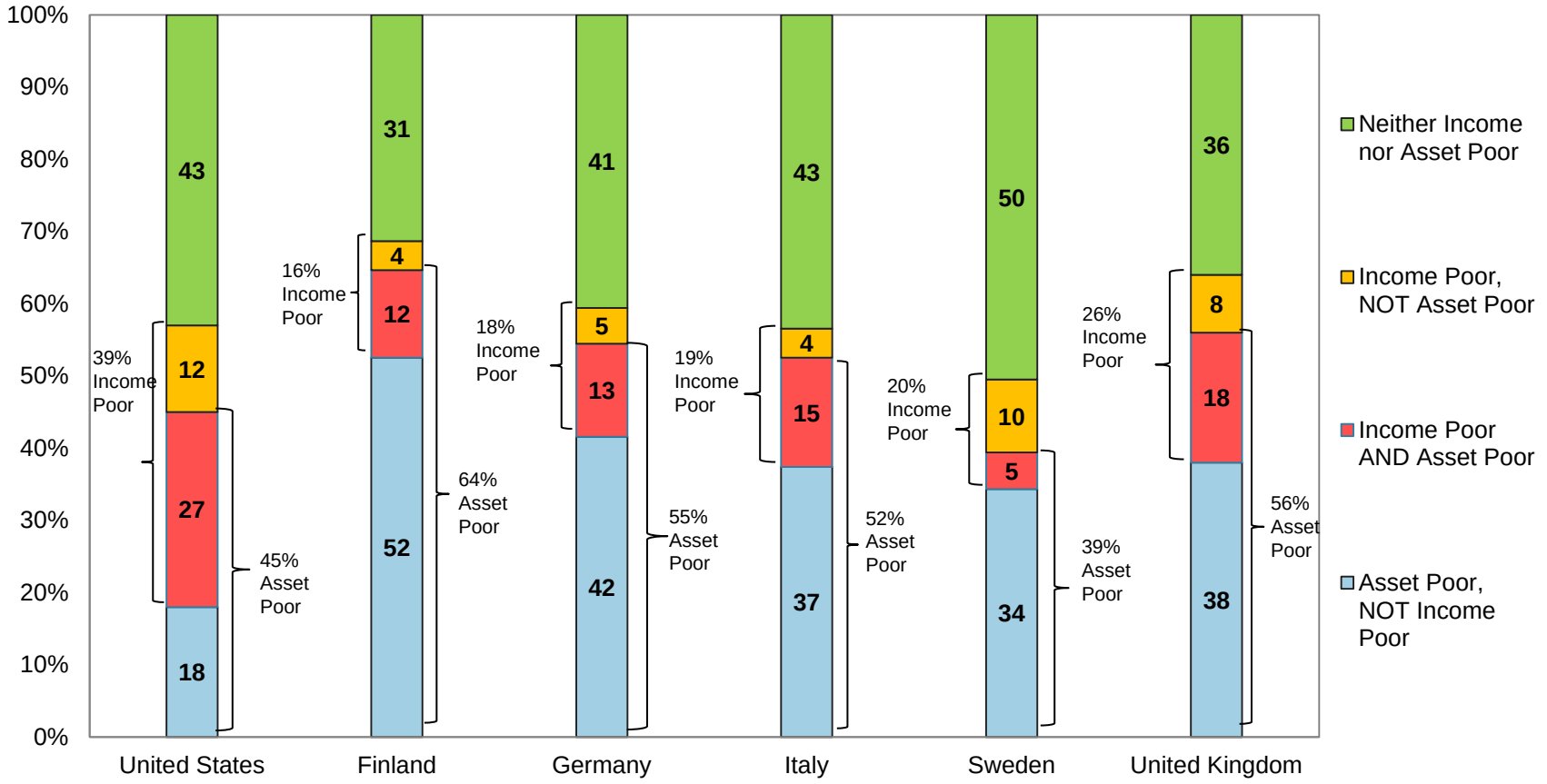
Source: Timothy Smeeding and Lee Rainwater. 2002. *Comparing Living Standards Across Nations: Real Incomes at the Top, the Bottom and the Middle*, LIS Working Paper 266.

Comparing Employment Outcomes
Earnings Equality between Women and Men



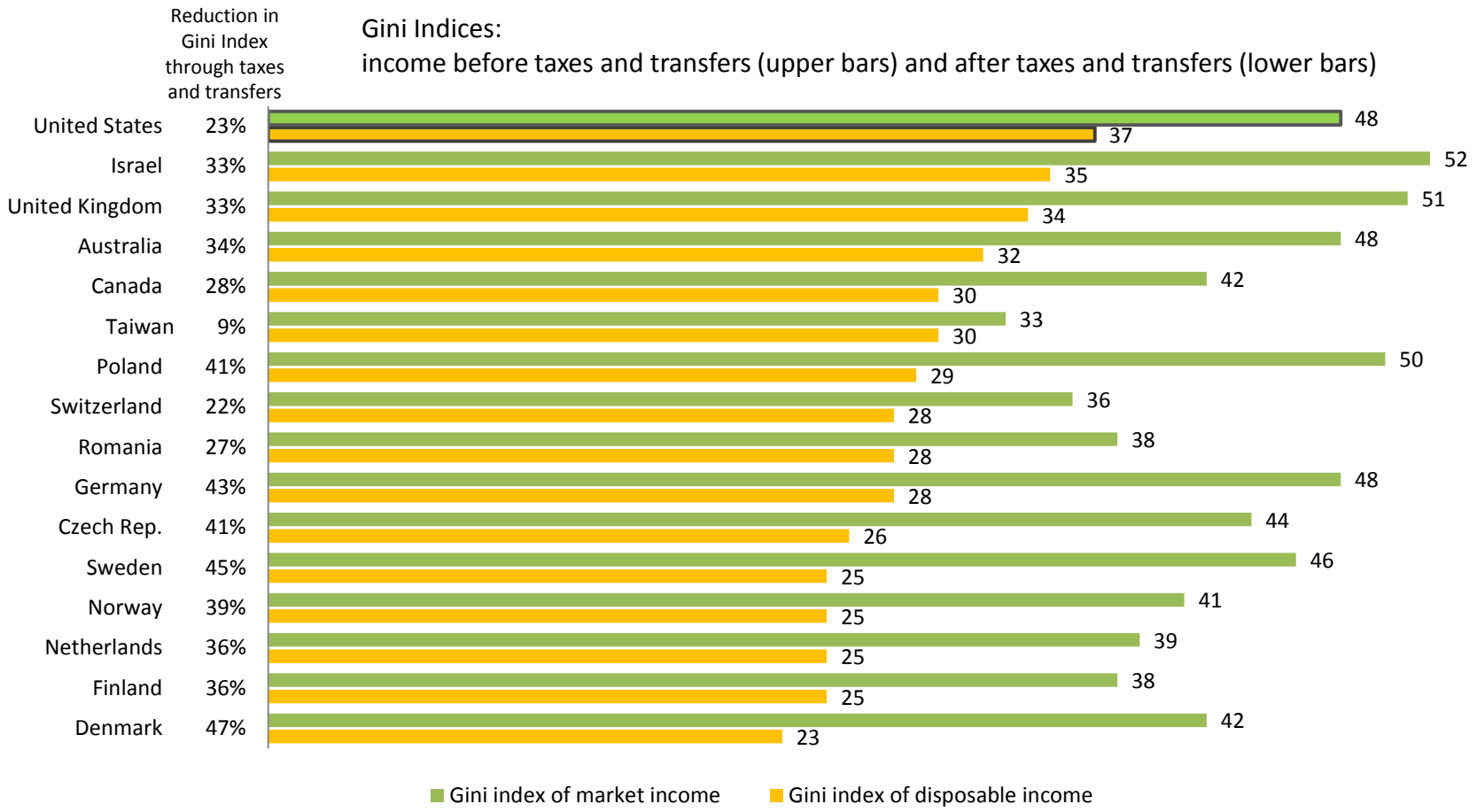
Source: Luxembourg Income Study Key Figures (publicly available online – www.lisdatacenter.org).

Analyzing Assets and Debt
Older Women's Income and Asset Poverty



Source: Gornick, Janet C., et al. 2009. "The Income and Wealth Packages of Older Women in Cross-National Perspective." Journal of Gerontology: Social Sciences 64B(3): 402-414.

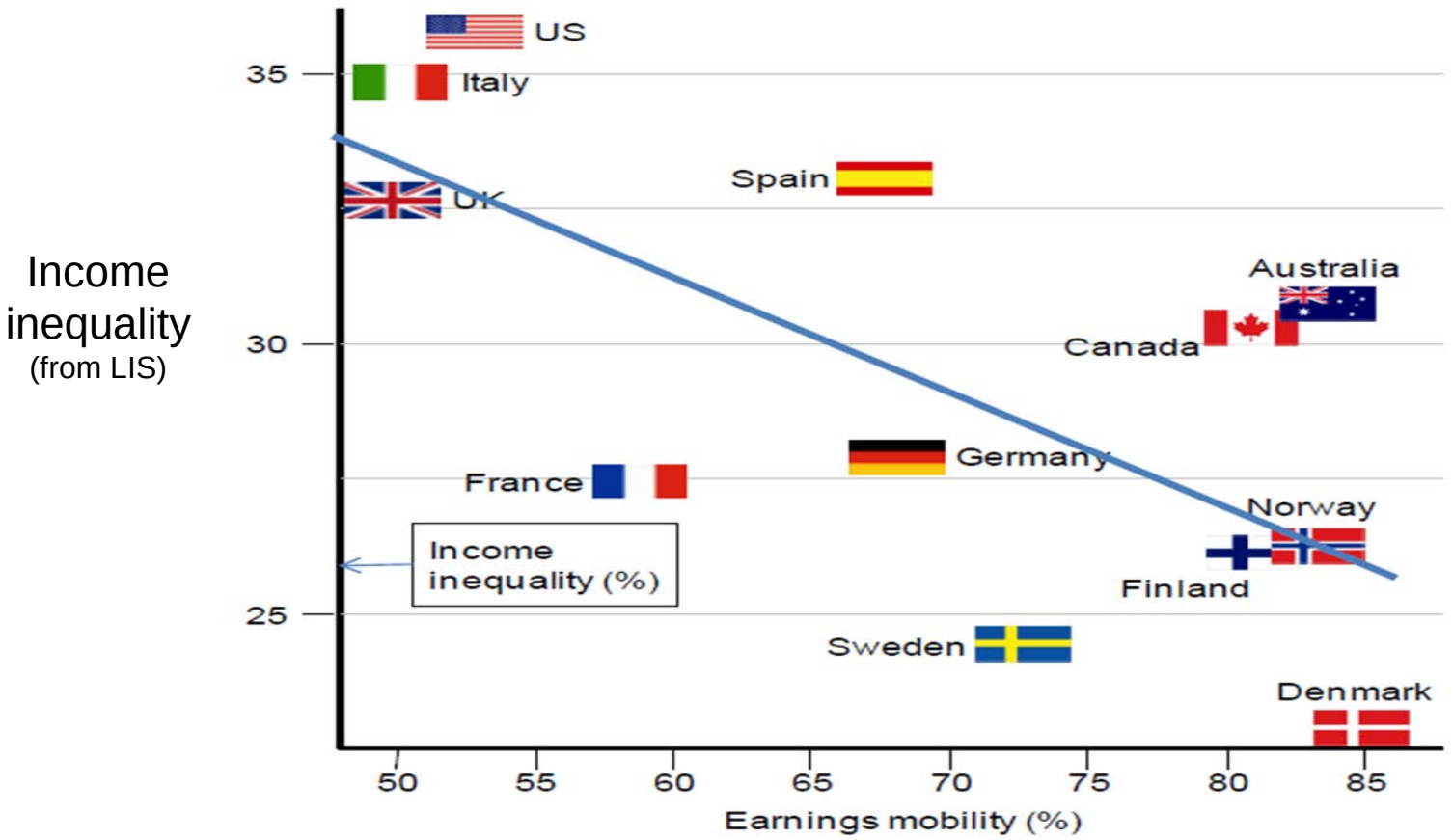
Researching Policy Impacts
Income Inequality and Redistribution



Source: Andrea Brandolini et al, 2007, *Inequality in Western Democracies: Cross-Country Differences and Time Changes*, LIS Working Paper 458.

Linking LIS Data with Other Data
Income Inequality and Earnings Mobility

Countries with higher levels of income inequality have lower levels of intergenerational economic mobility.



Source: OECD 2008. *Growing Unequal: Income Distribution and Poverty in OECD Countries*. Paris: OECD.

Thank you!