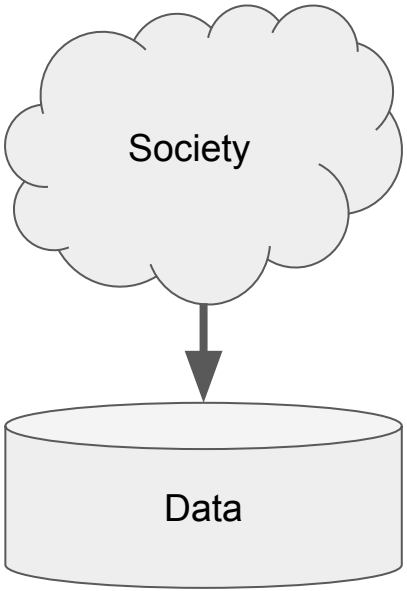
From Data to Policy

National and Transnational Research In Europe

Charles Gottlieb, University of St. Gallen

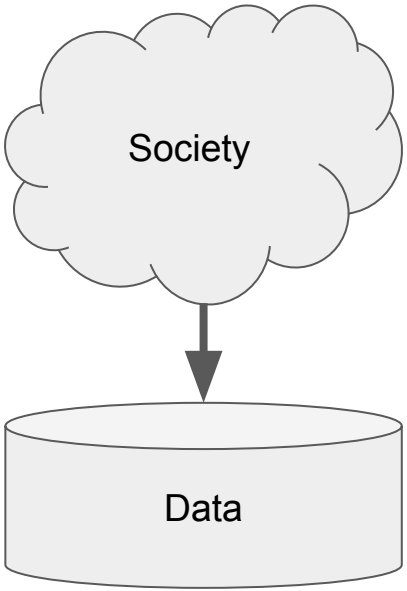
Lucerne, LUMACCS, 11th of November 2019

The Production Line of a Social Scientist



Policy

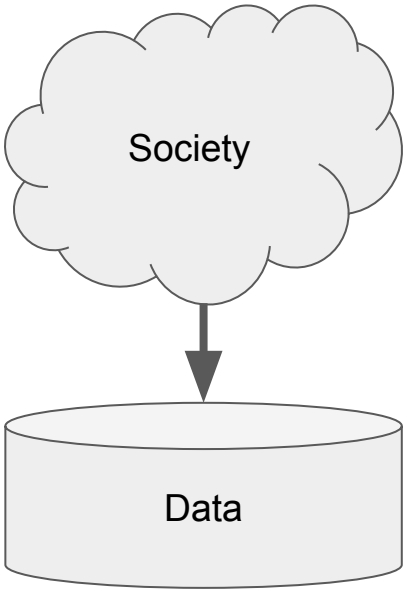
The Production Line of a Social Scientist



Research question

Policy

The Production Line of a Social Scientist

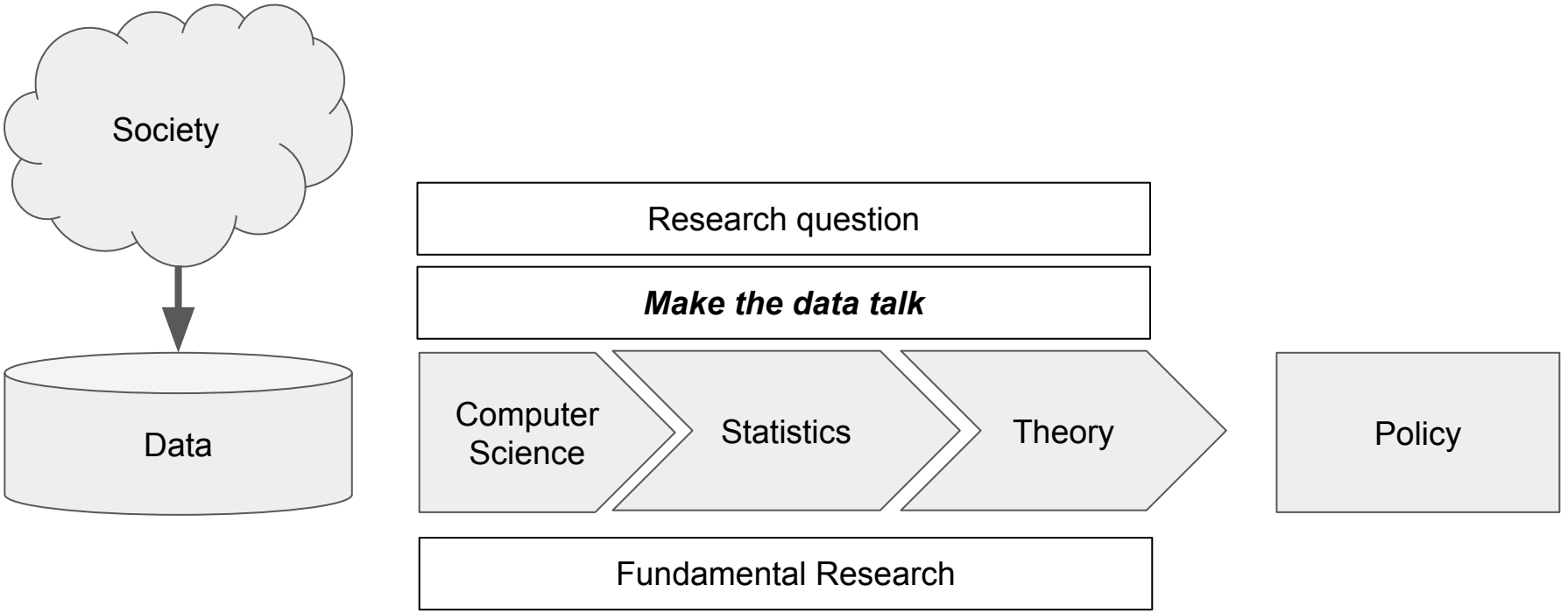


Research question

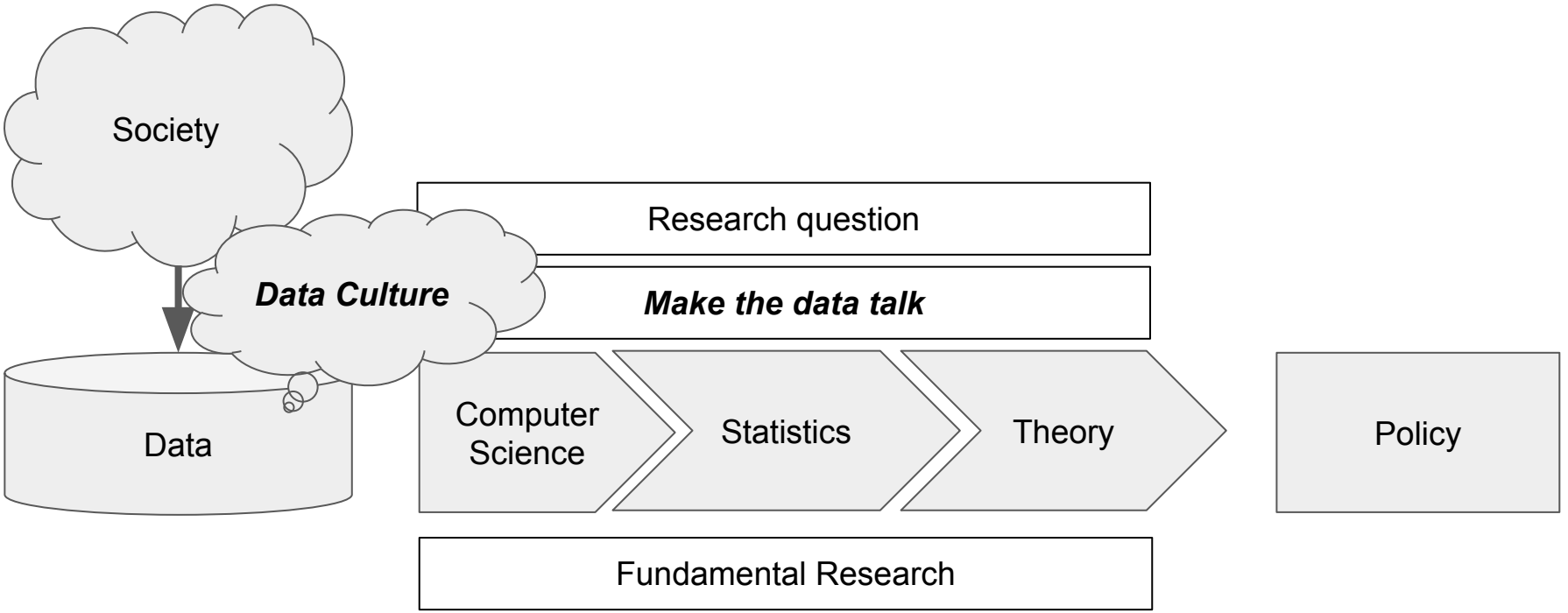
Make the data talk

Policy

The Production Line of a Social Scientist



The Production Line of a Social Scientist



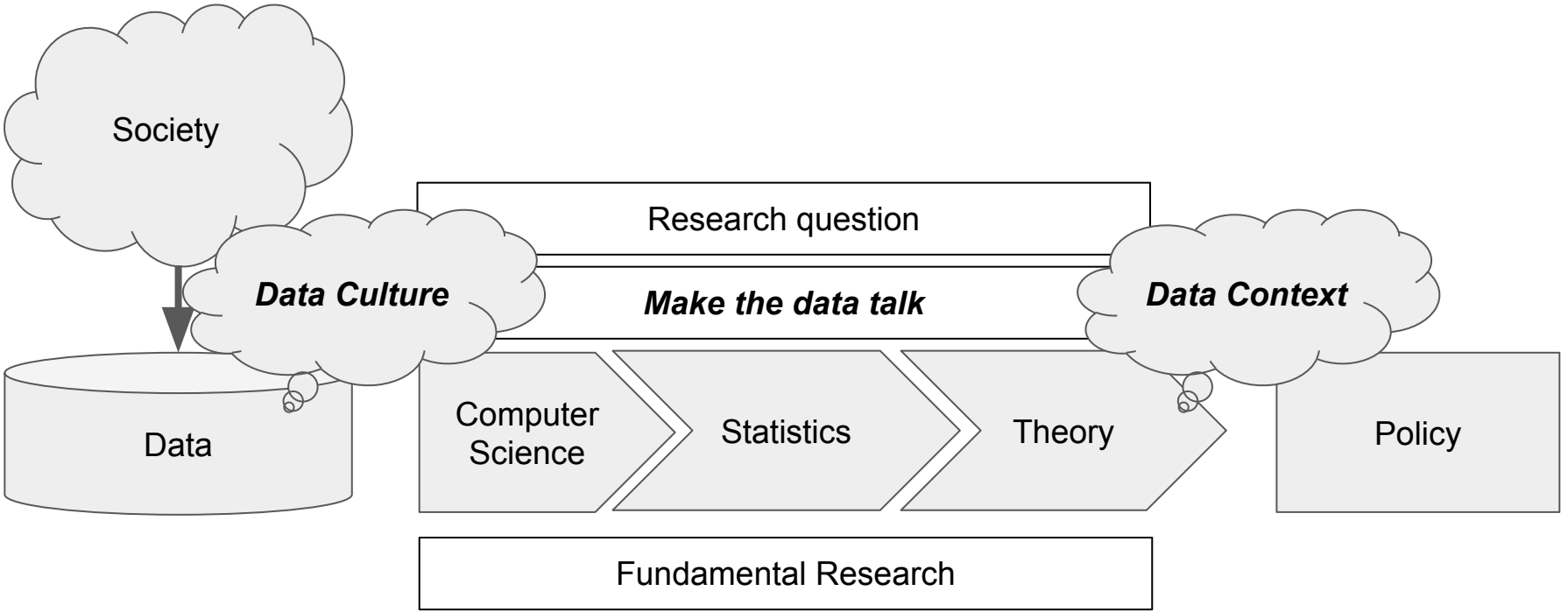
Data Culture

- Data Supply
  - Data structure
  - Harmonization for cross-country comparisons
  - Huge scope for improvement

- Data Demand
  - Asymmetry & Monopoly power
  - *Trade-off:* Democratization vs. Privacy
  - Replicability is at stake

(*Proprietary data sources*)

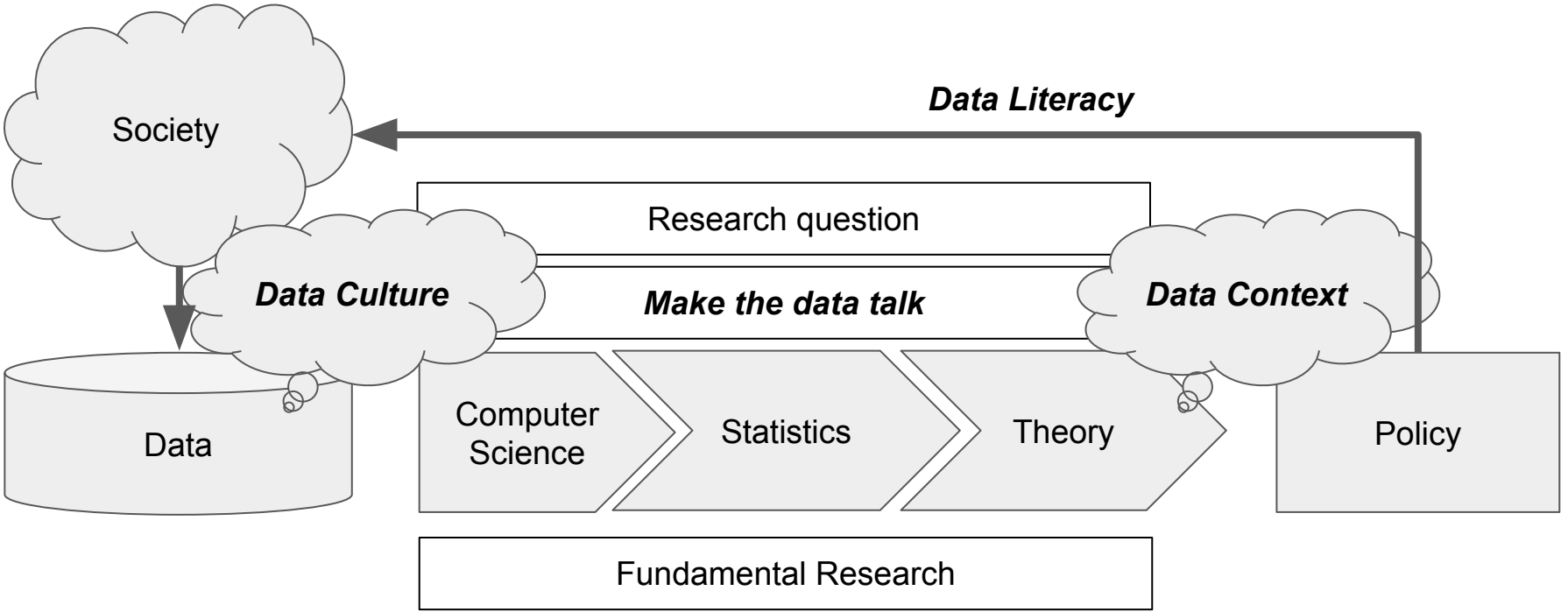
The Production Line of a Social Scientist



Data Context

- Modus operandi
  - Look at the world through data and algorithms.
  - "*You have the data, why should you go?*"
- Context matters
  - To uncover mechanisms,
  - To 'humanize' data and
  - Provide good policy recommendations.
- Example
  - *Land Tenure Reform in Ethiopia*

The Production Line of a Social Scientist

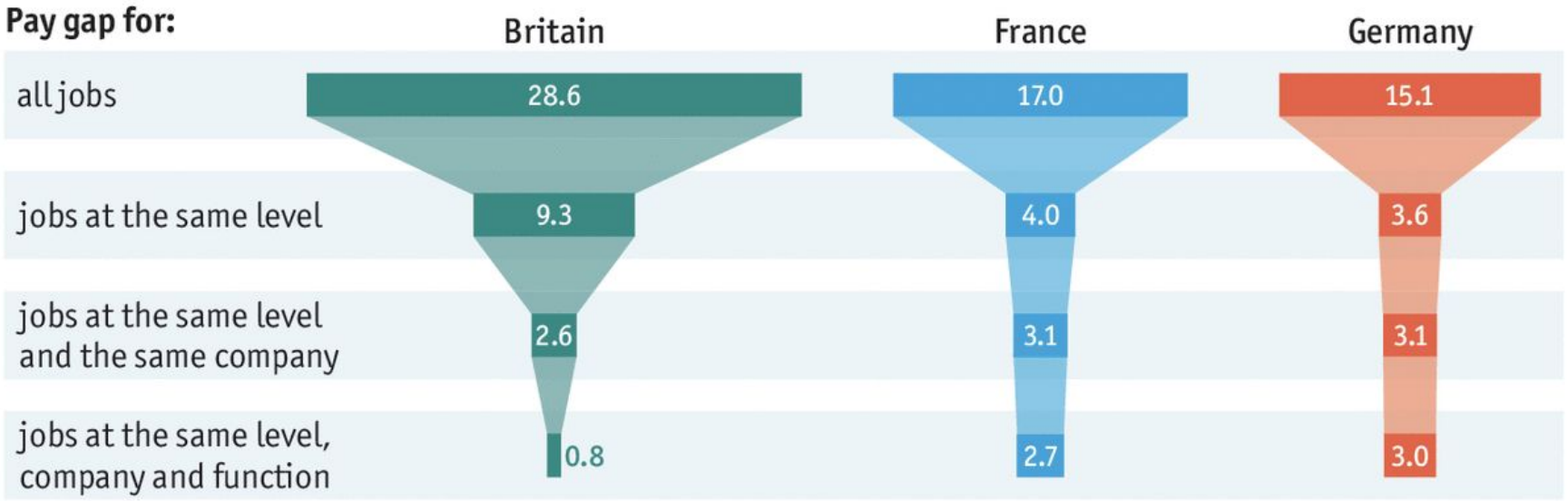


Data Literacy

- *No silver bullet* for policy recommendation.
- Most policy recommendation are subtle and hard to communicate.
- Scope for misinterpretation and adverse effects.
- Examples:
  - Gender pay gap.
  - Work-in-data.

Like-for-like

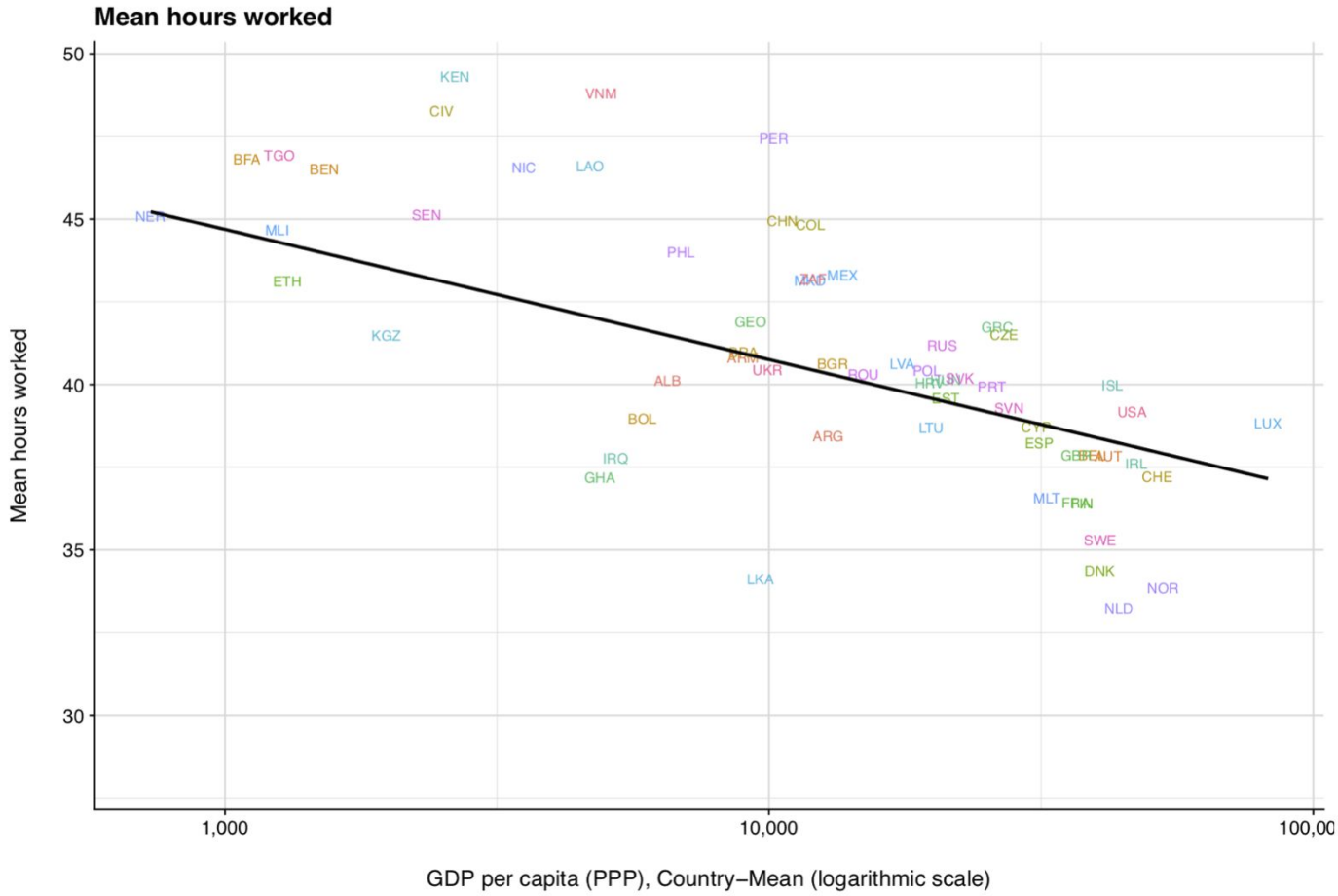
Pay gap between women and men, 2016, % of men's wages*



Source: Korn Ferry

*Full-time pay

Economist.com


Mean hours worked
50
45
40
35
30
Mean hours worked
KEN
VNM
CIV
PER
BFA
TGO
BEN
NIC
LAO
NER
SEN
MLI
CHN
COL
PHL
ETH
MEX
GEO
KGZ
RUS
CZE
ARM
UKR
BGR
ROU
LVA
POL
ALB
PRT
ISL
EST
SVN
USA
BOL
LTU
LUX
ARG
ESP
IRQ
IRL
GHA
CHE
MLT
SWE
DNK
LKA
NOR
NLD
1,000
10,000
GDP per capita (PPP), Country−Mean (logarithmic scale)
Sample restriction(s): Age: 15–55

Conclusions

- Data *Culture* shapes research possibilities.
- Data *Context* is key for the quality of policy recommendations.
- Data *Literacy* is instrumental for a nuanced policy discourse.