

Final Conference of BELSPO-BRAIN project BR/121/A5/CRESUS
Measuring and mobilizing wealth for a cohesive, inclusive and fair society

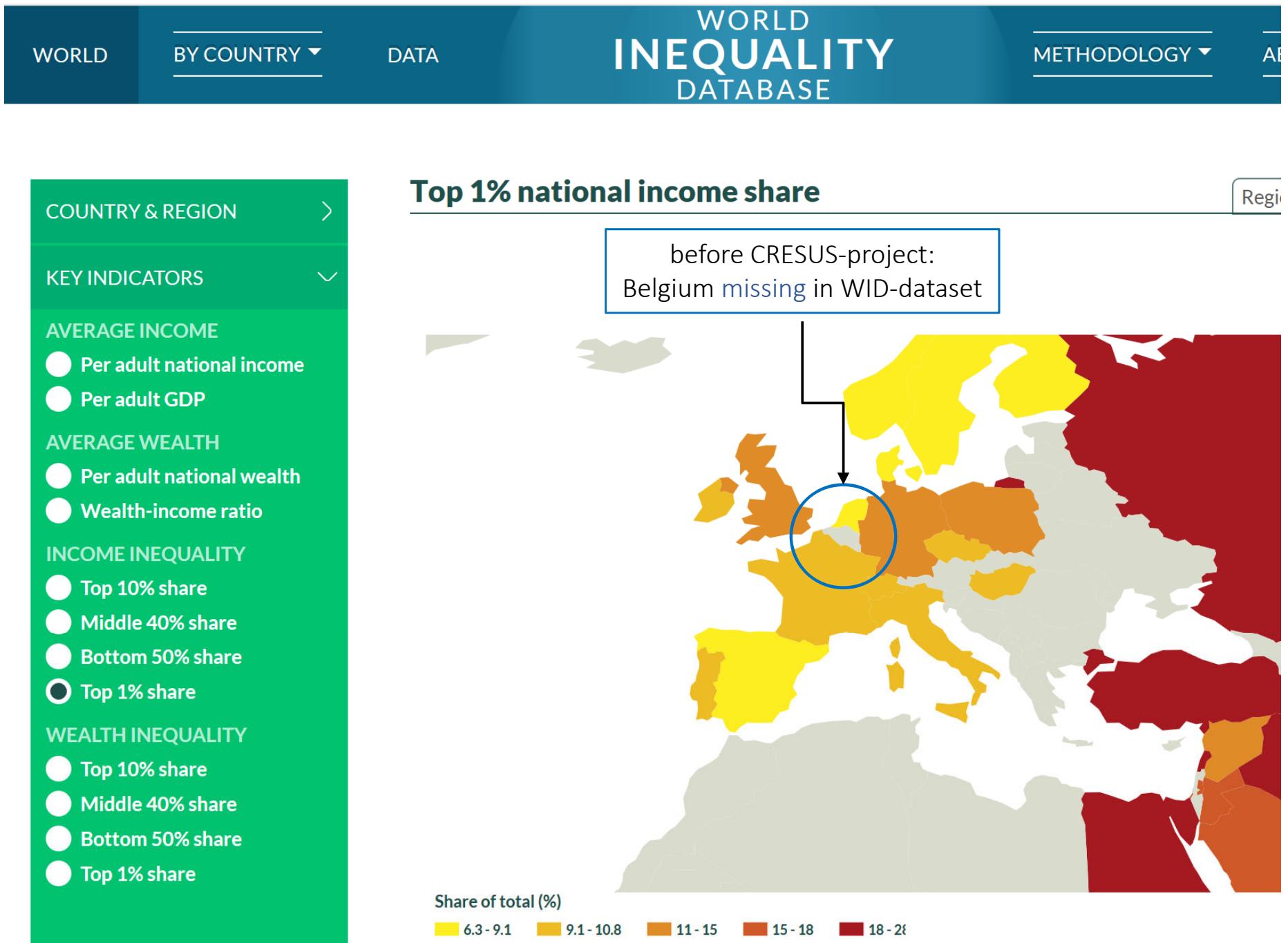
13th November 2019

Using fiscal data to estimate the evolution of top income shares in Belgium

A. Decoster
Department of Economics - KU Leuven

Thanks to Liebrecht De Sadeleer, Koen Dedobbeleer, Sebastiaan Maes, Lien Tam Co, Stijn Van Houtven and Toon Vanheukelom for help with the fiscal data and the development of the microsimulation model FANTASI, running on these data. The usual disclaimer applies.

1. contribution of CRESUS-project to (first) estimate of top 1% income share
2. what was the problem/challenge?
3. results
4. conclusions



1. CRESUS-project: added Belgium in the WID-database

WORLD

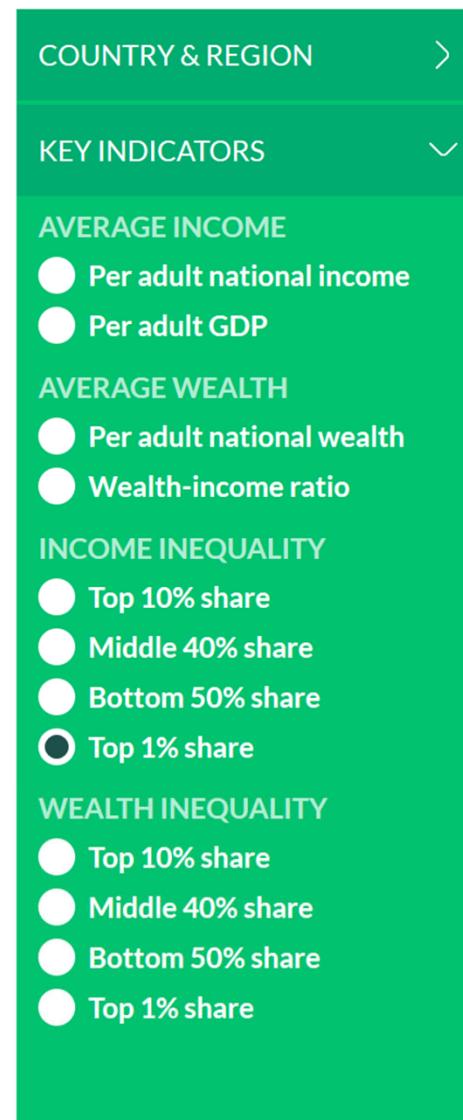
BY COUNTRY ▾

DATA

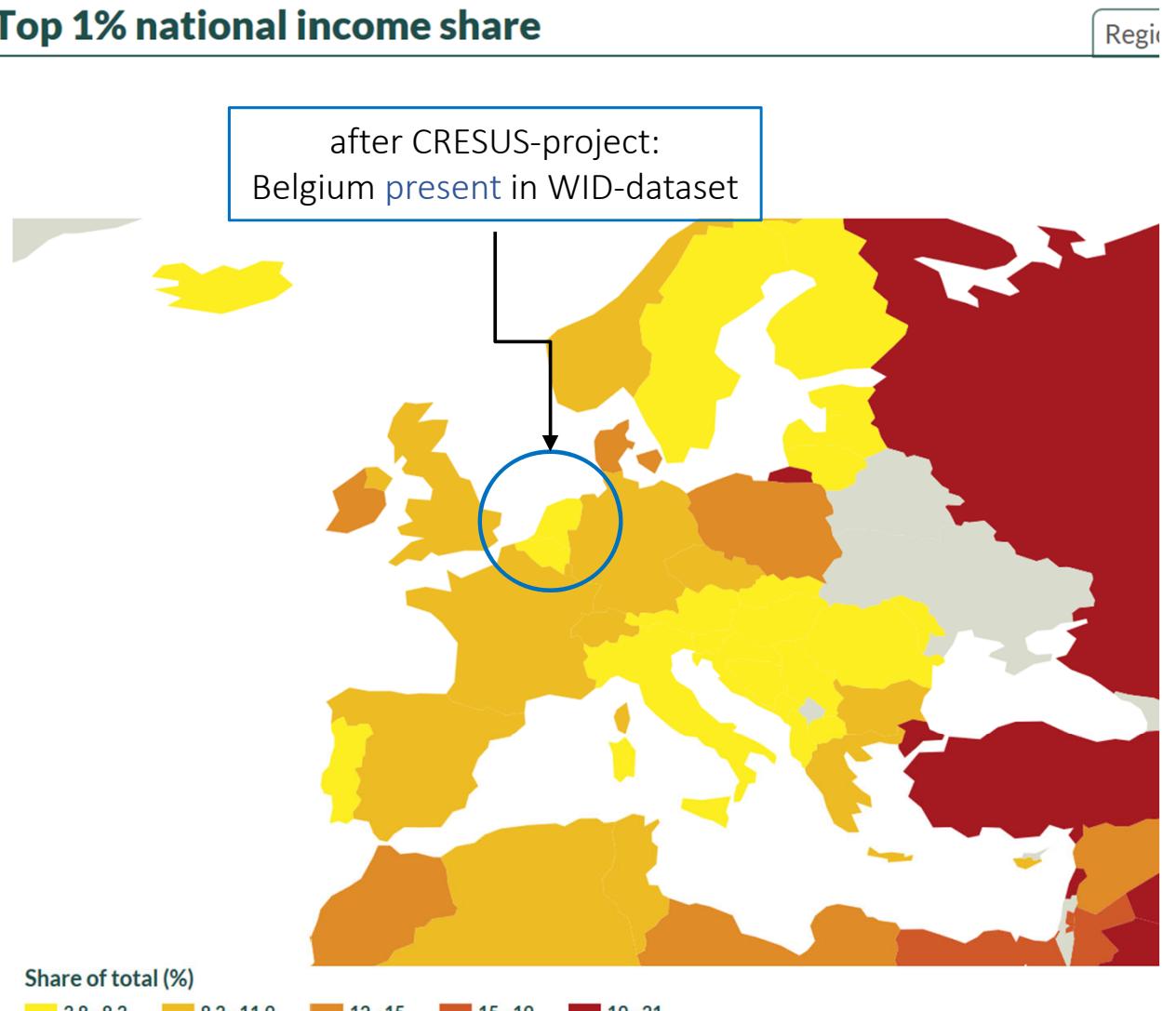
WORLD INEQUALITY DATABASE

METHODOLOGY ▾

AB



Top 1% national income share



2. what was the problem/challenge?

- no lack of studies on inequality in Belgium
- no lack of pronounced statements in public debate:

Helft inkomen voor 20 procent rijksten

België ontsnapt, net als de meeste westerse landen, niet aan een groeiende inkomensongelijkheid.

VAN ONZE REDITOREN
JAN-FREDERIK ABELLOOS
DRIES DE SMET
BRUSSEL | De voorbije 25 jaar

is het inkomen in ons land sterk gestegen. Maar niet iedereen profiteerde evenveel van de inkomensstijging. De twintig procent

rijke huishoudens trokken ruim de helft van de inkomengroei naar zich toe. Dat blijkt uit een analyse van de fiscale aangiften vanaf 1973 tot 2011 door *De Standaard*. Ze geven een beeld van de evolutie van de bruto-inkomens die voor het gros

uit arbeid worden gehaald. De cijfers tonen daarom vooral aan dat de toplopen in België wegrollen van de rest.

Door de sterke toename van hun inkomens heeft de rijkelijke twintig procent vandaag iets minder dan de helft van het totale jaarinkomen. Wie in 2011 een netto belastbaar inkomen – na belastingafrekenen – meer dan 40.399 euro had, behoorde tot de rijkste twintig procent.

Ook binnen het kranje-topverdieners-

deed. De 'rijkste' helft van de kopgroep zag haar aandeel in het totaal drie keer sneller stijgen dan de 'armste' helft. Die rijkste tien procent is nu goed voor ruim een derde van het totale inkomen, terwijl de twintig grondigen elk een inkomen van meer dan 56.895 euro. De 'one percent', de één procent rijksten, ging nog sneller vooruit. Die één procent verdient 126.565 euro en rijgt zo 7,5 procent van de totale inkomens binnen, ruim een derde meer dan een kwarteeuw geleden.

BLZ 6 Topverdiener rukken zich los van de rest.

Met de groeiende inkomensongelijkheid volgt België een internationale trend. Zoals onder anderen de Franse econoom Thomas Piketty aantoonde, stijgt ook in andere westerse landen de binnenvandense ongelijkheid.

BLZ 6 Topverdiener rukken zich los van de rest.



5 413657 203185 37

6 | POLITIEK

DE STANDAARD
MAANDAG 8 SEPTEMBER 2014

DE KLOOF ONGELEJKHEID IN BELGIË (1)

Ongelijkheid is na het grensverleggende boek 'Kapitaal in de 21ste eeuw' van de Fransman Thomas Piketty het meest spraakmakende economische thema van dit moment. Ook in ons land. Hoe ongelijk is België eigenlijk? Hoe ver liggen de inkomens uit elkaar? Hoe veel geld hebben de rijksten? En hoeveel geld hebben de armsten? Welke groepen en degenen die met het minimumloon moeten rondkomen? Biedt ons onderwijs iedereen gelijke kansen? Groot de kloof, of krimpt zit?

De Standaard heeft uit de hand van nosot eerder gepubliceerd statistisch materiaal. Een week lang gaan we in op de vraag: Hoe ongelijk is België?

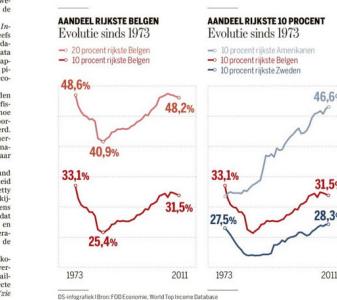
PIKETTY'S VASTSTELLING GELDT OOK VOOR ONS LAND: ONGELEJKHEID STIJGT

TOPVERDIENERS rukken zich los van de rest

De Franse econoom Thomas Piketty toonde overtuigend aan dat het gros van de westerse landen de voorbijde decennia ongelijker geworden is. België ontrukte in die analyse bij gebrek aan cijfers. De Standaard dook daarom in de fiscale statistieken. Conclusie: ook bij ons scheiden de hoogste inkomens zich af van de rest.

Het beeld dat uit de fiscale aangiften opeindigt, is helder. De voorbije twintig jaar is de kloof tussen de rijksten en de rest zich weg van de rest. Enkel de twintig procent rijkste gezinnen hebben in die periode een groter aandeel van het inkomen dan een derde meer dan de rest. Dat te trots. Alle andere groepen in de topverdiener kranje hebben een kleiner aandeel in het totale inkomen daalt. Samengevat zien we dat 31 procent van de inkomens sinds 1985 meer dan de top 20 procent rijkste gezinnen zijn. Ook binnen het kranje-topverdieners is de kook ergelijk verdeeld. De top 10 procent rijkste gezinnen hebben een kleiner aandeel in het totale inkomen dan de tien procent gezinnen met het hoogste belastingbare inkomen. Een kwarteeuw geleden was dat precies andersom. De 'armste' helft is goed voor 17 procent van de inkomens.

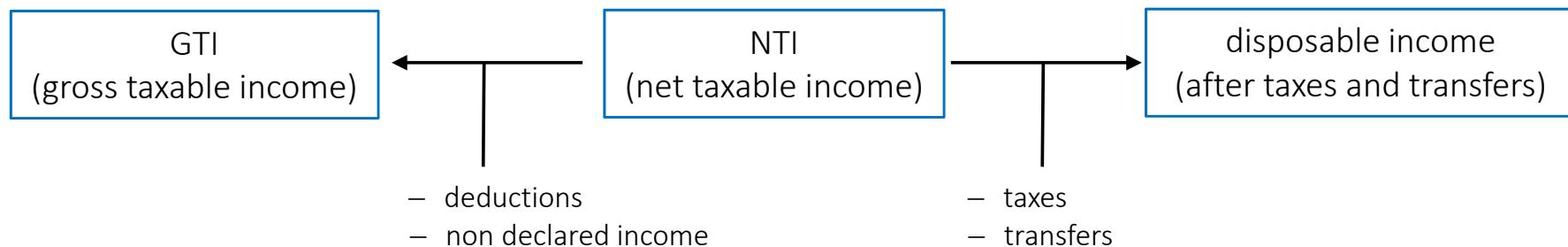
>>> Lees verder op blz. 8



- but (academic) work mostly based on
 - distribution of **disposable income** (after taxes/transfers)
 - retrieved from **surveys** (EU-SILC)
- WID: revival of Kuznets-methodology
 - **long run comparisons**
 - based on **administrative data** (fiscal data)
 - income **before taxes**
 - corrected for changes in enrolled population and missing income
 - linked to National Accounts (DINA-project)

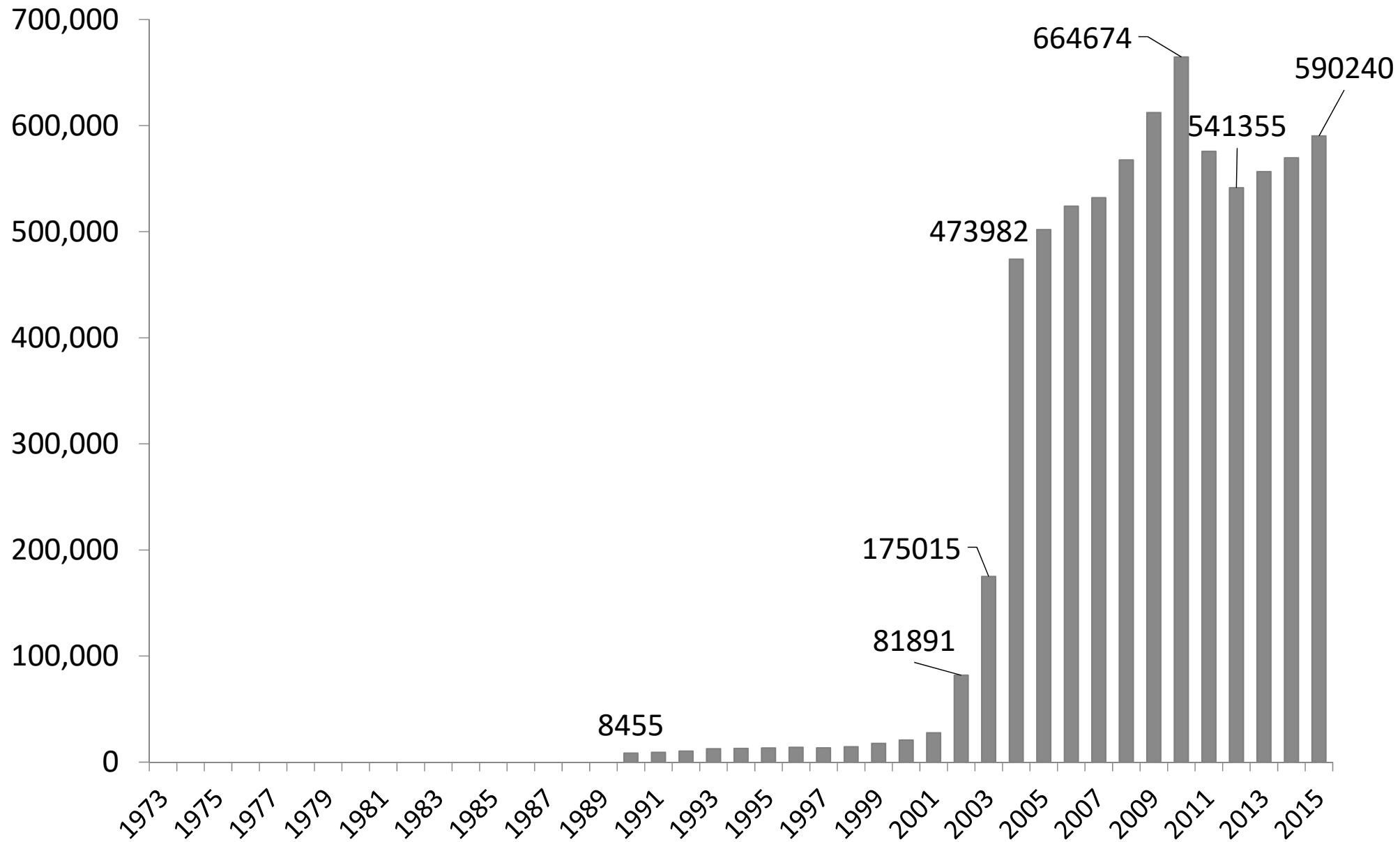
2. what was the problem/challenge?

- in this project: we tried to comply with international practice (read: WID)
 - for evolution of income shares top 1%, top 10%
 - which has now been enlarged to DINA-approach
- Belgium: *does* have published fiscal data, but:
 - NTI: Net Taxable Income (i.e. after deductions)

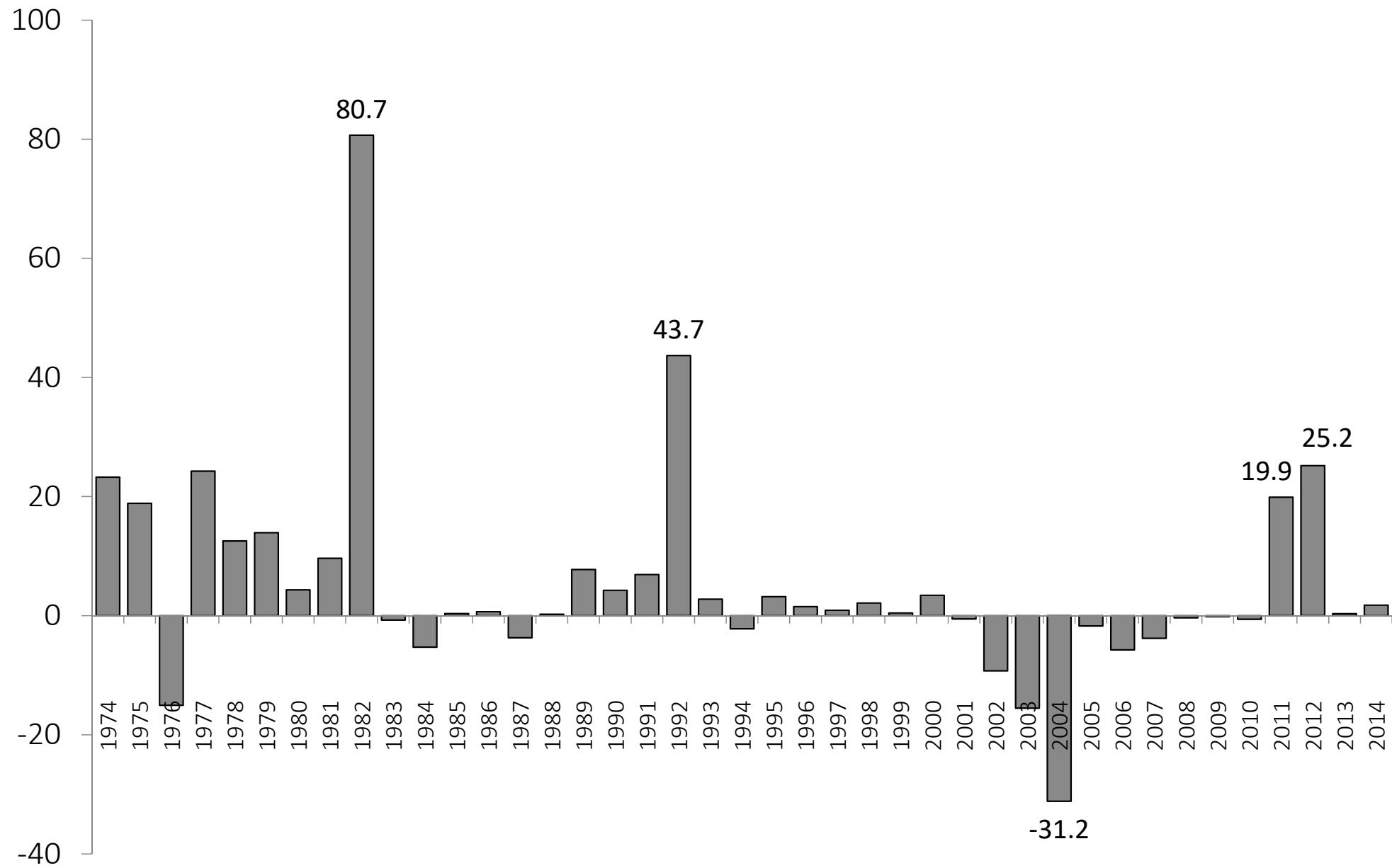


- zero NTI's are removed from tables (# is mentioned)
- anyhow dependent on legislation, and administrative practice (e.g. enrolment)
- illustration:

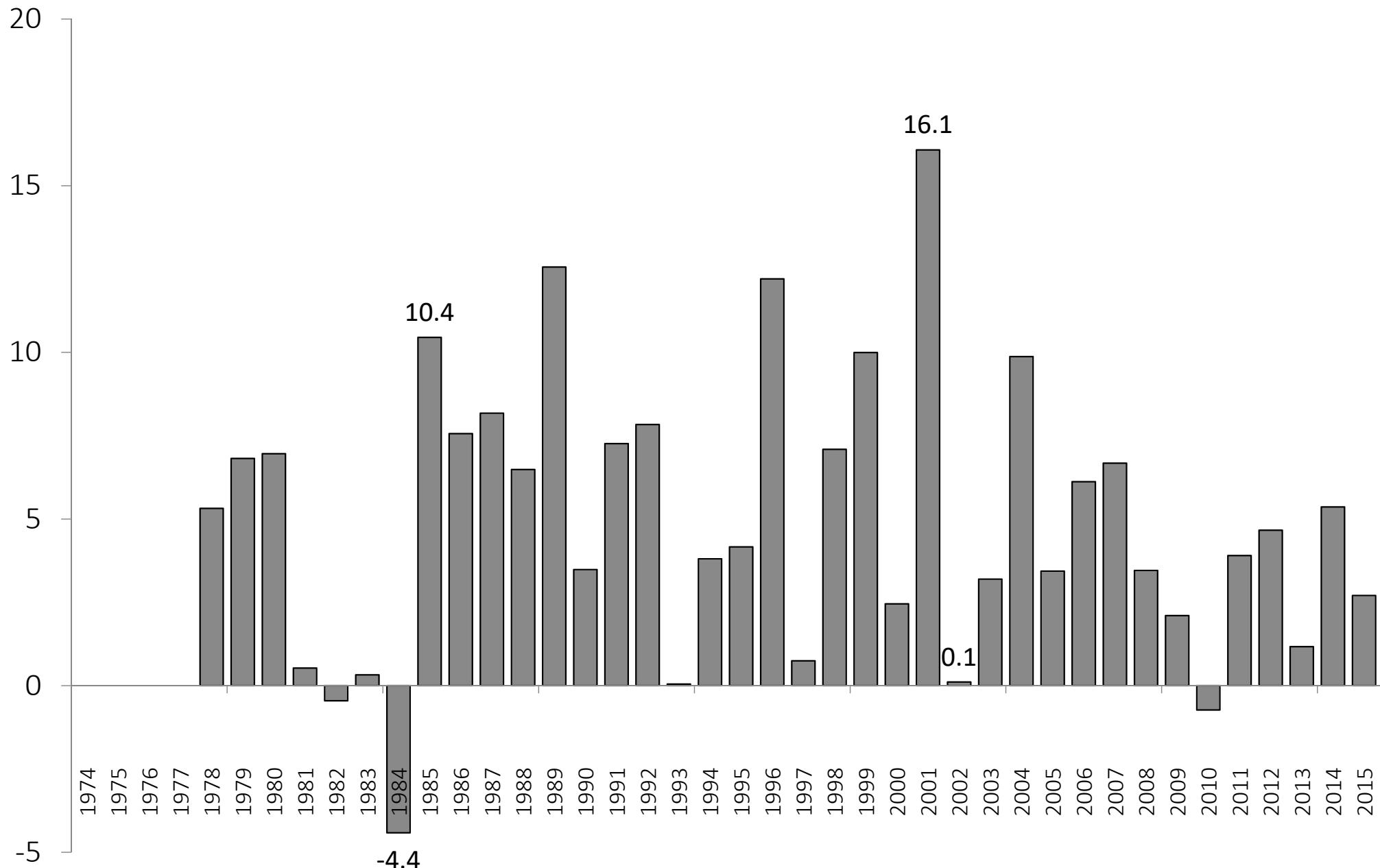
2. what was the problem/challenge? # of NTI=0 records



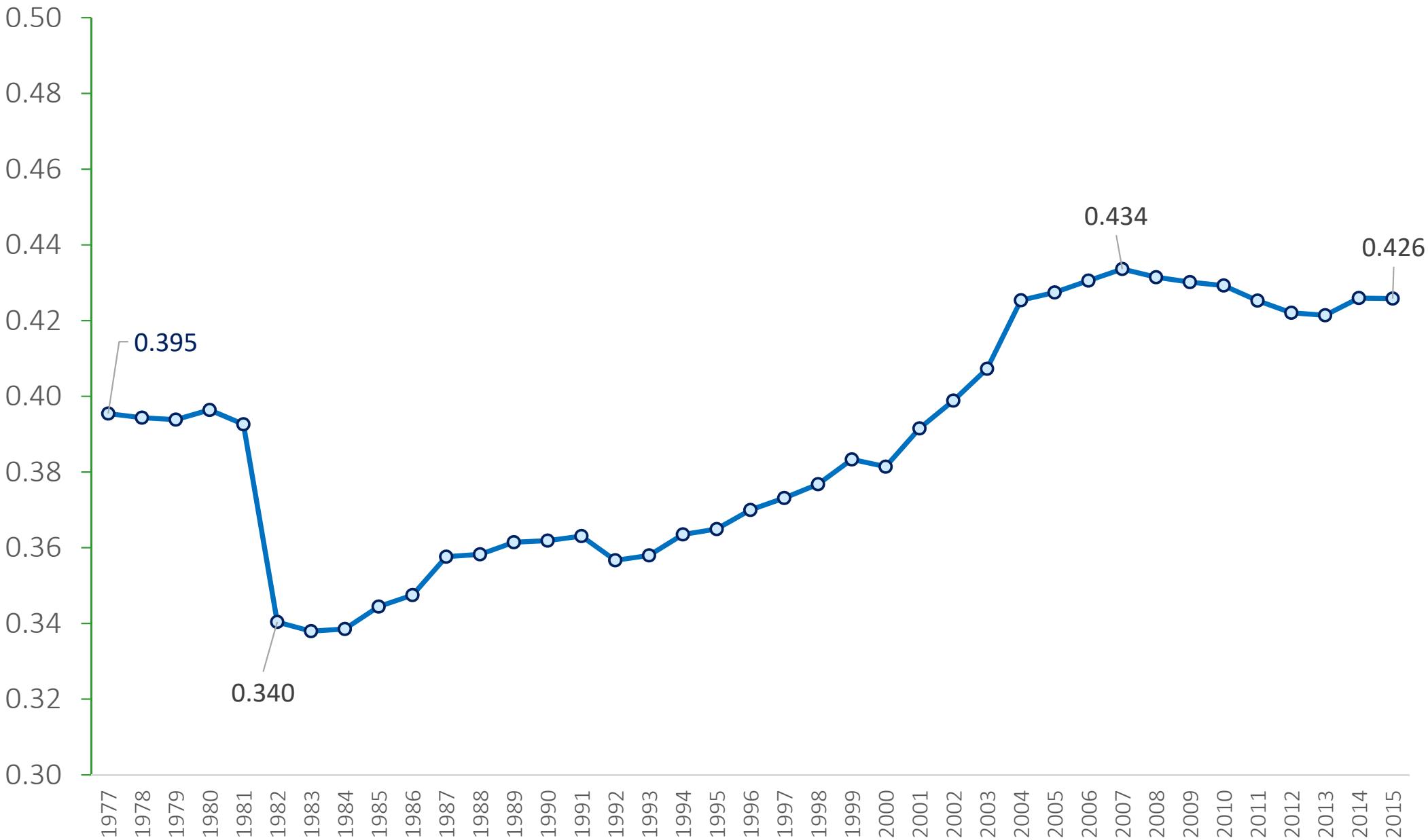
2. what was the problem? income growth D1 of published NTI



2. what was the problem? income growth P100 of published NTI



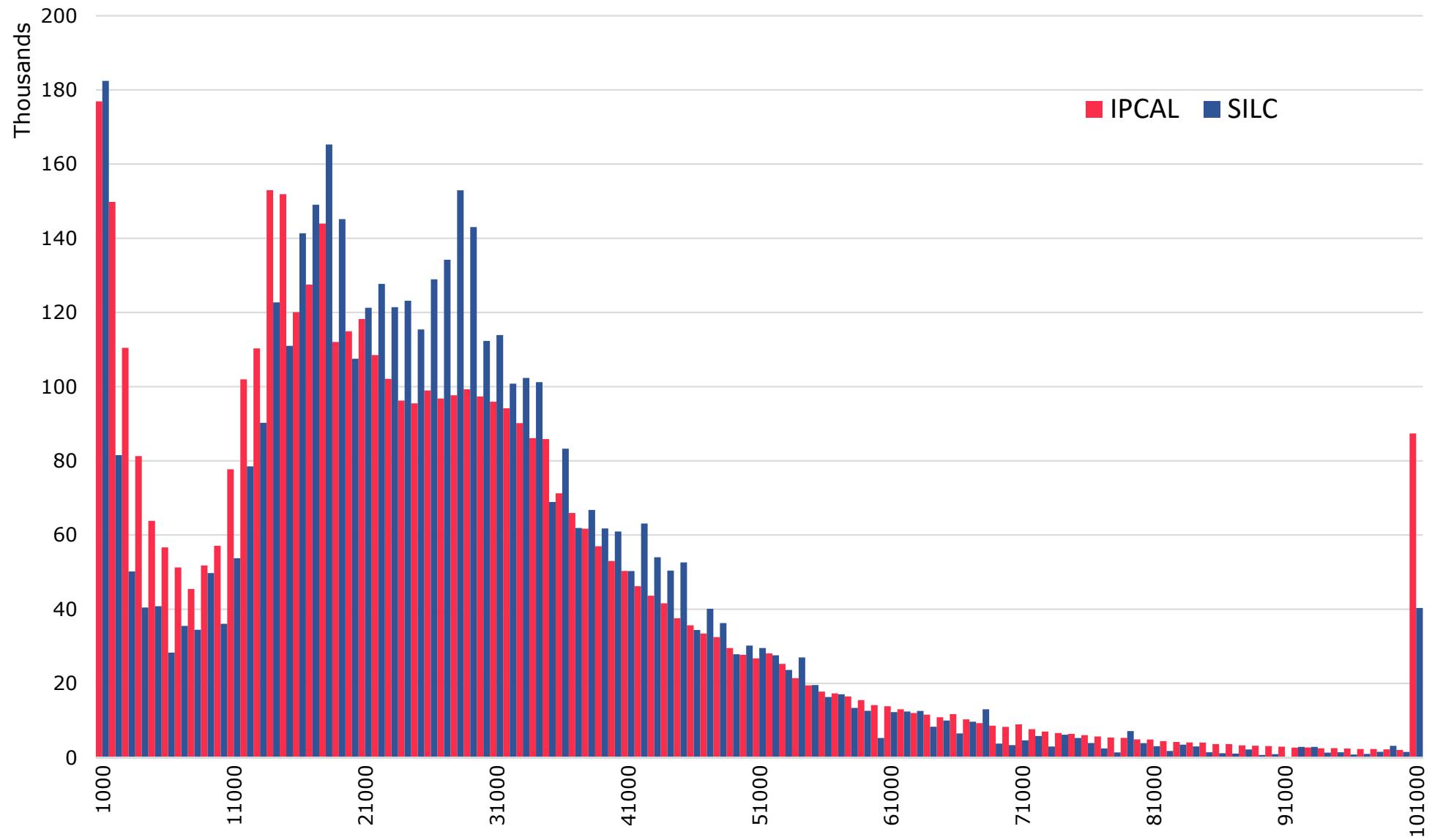
2. What was the problem? Gini published nti (0 NTI's removed)



2. what was the problem/challenge?

- administrative data compared to EU-SILC-survey data: no magic bullet
 - data access: application often more cumbersome, access conditions stringent
 - internal logic of data: administrative not economic, sociological etc.
 - dependent on legislation and hence changing over time
 - important variables for distributional or behavioral analyses missing (sociological household, education level, etc.)
 - ... other pro's and cons
- but:
 - more complete coverage of population:
 - longer tails
 - data on hard-to-survey groups
 - no 'errors' due to self-reporting ('errors' = deviation of administrative reality)
- illustration with micro-data IPCAL versus EU-SILC (Income Year 2014)
 - only for Flemish population (comparable to admin data: older than 16 or TI≠0)

2. what was the problem/challenge?



3.1 data: EM-SILC & IPCAL – distribution GTI in income brackets

frequency in thousands

data	total	less than zero	zero	between 0 and 25k	between 25k and 50k	between 50k and 75k	between 75k and 100k	between 100k and 125k	between 125k and 150k	more than 150k
IPCAL	5,277.1	2.4	535.8	2,590.1	1,616.9	357.6	86.3	36.8	16.2	35.0
SILC	5,172.7	4.4	478.3	2,353.4	1,932.8	309.0	54.5	21.3	10.1	9.0

average income in thousands

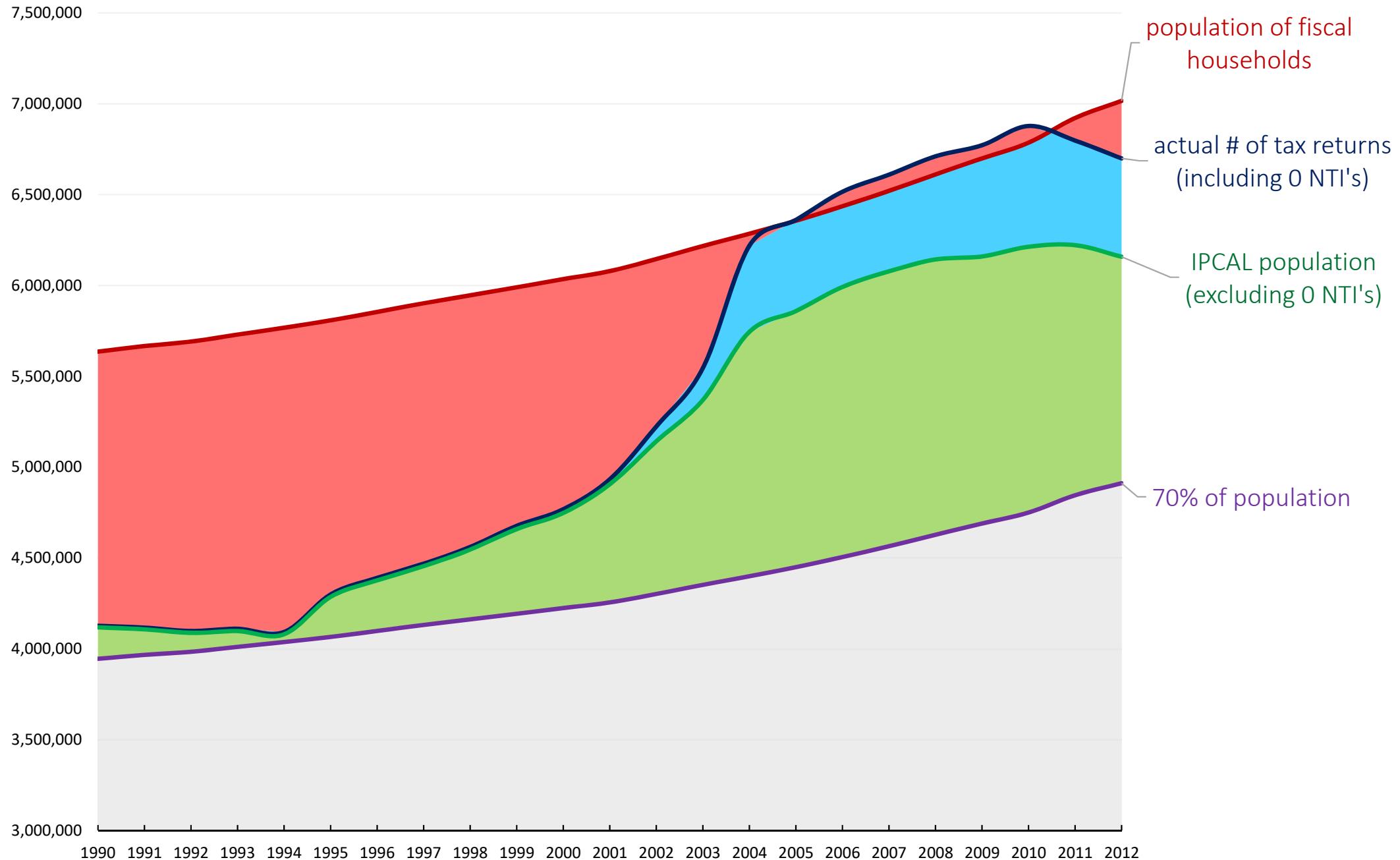
data	total	less than zero	zero	between 0 and 25k	between 25k and 50k	between 50k and 75k	between 75k and 100k	between 100k and 125k	between 125k and 150k	more than 150k
IPCAL	25.4	-3.1	0.0	12.9	34.7	59.3	85.0	110.5	135.4	274.9
SILC	25.3	-1.1	0.0	14.4	34.3	58.7	85.4	111.1	136.2	263.0

total income in thousands

data	total	less than zero	zero	between 0 and 25k	between 25k and 50k	between 50k and 75k	between 75k and 100k	between 100k and 125k	between 125k and 150k	more than 150k
IPCAL	133,851,112	-7,426	1,252	33,298,711	56,139,767	21,200,858	7,339,055	4,067,402	2,195,975	9,615,518
SILC	128,846,097	-4,508	1,539	33,971,046	66,155,417	18,078,168	4,641,322	2,366,883	1,358,757	2,277,474

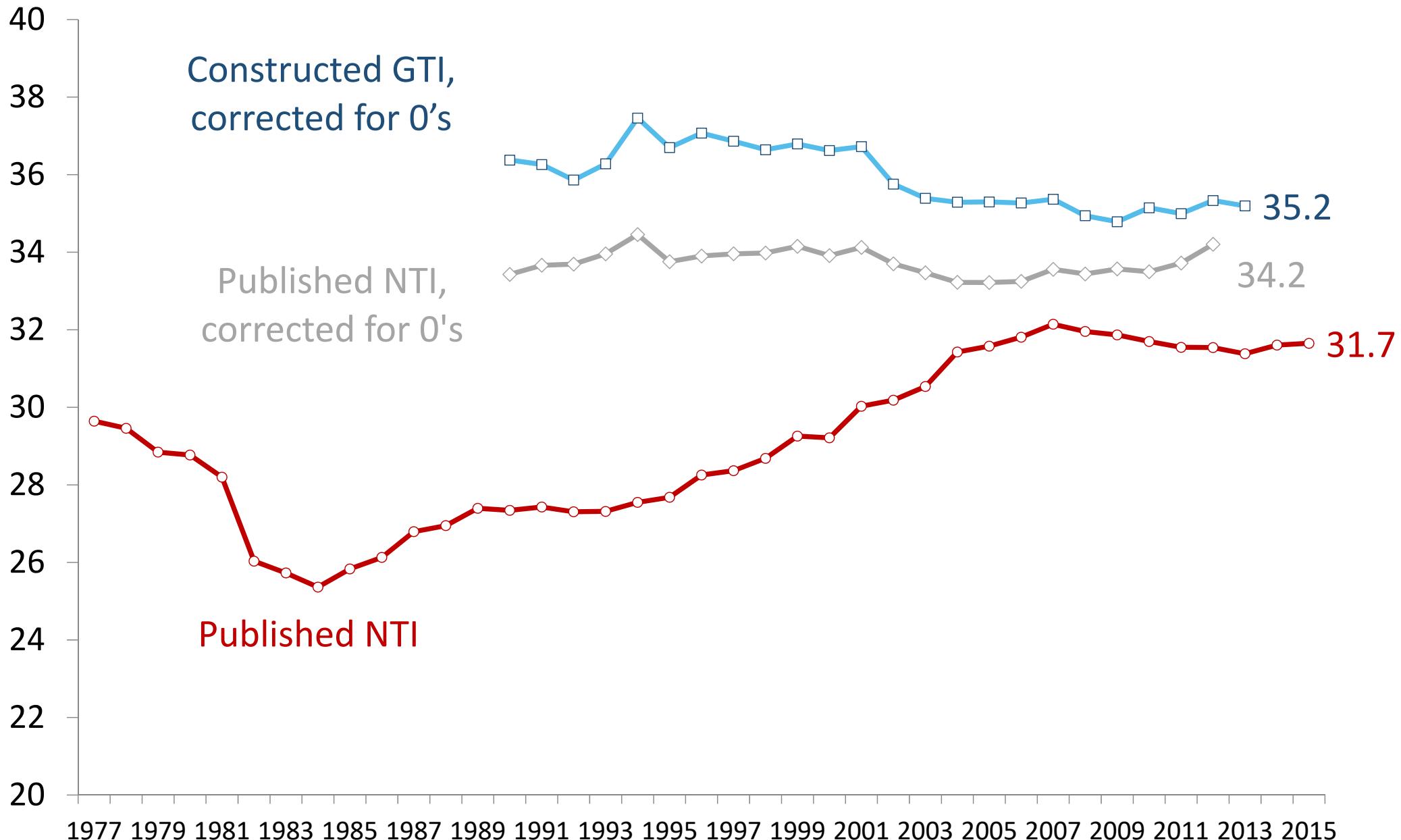
1. reconstruct **gross taxable incomes** (GTI) instead of NTI
(with FOD Economie – Lien Tam Co)
2. **adjustments** in accordance with **exogeneous reference totals** for...
 - population – correction for non-filers to reach **population reference**
 - adding zeroes at bottom up to population reference
 - this shifts the quantile values where top income groups start
 - => hazardous to calculate overall inequality measures, but top 1% ± ok
 - gross household income – correction for missing income
 - construction of **income reference** from national accounts (NA)
 - to account for missing capital income
(e.g. liberating withholding tax, but also retained earnings, etc...)
3. to calculate income shares of **top 1%** and **top 10%** of GTI-distribution

2. what we did in this project

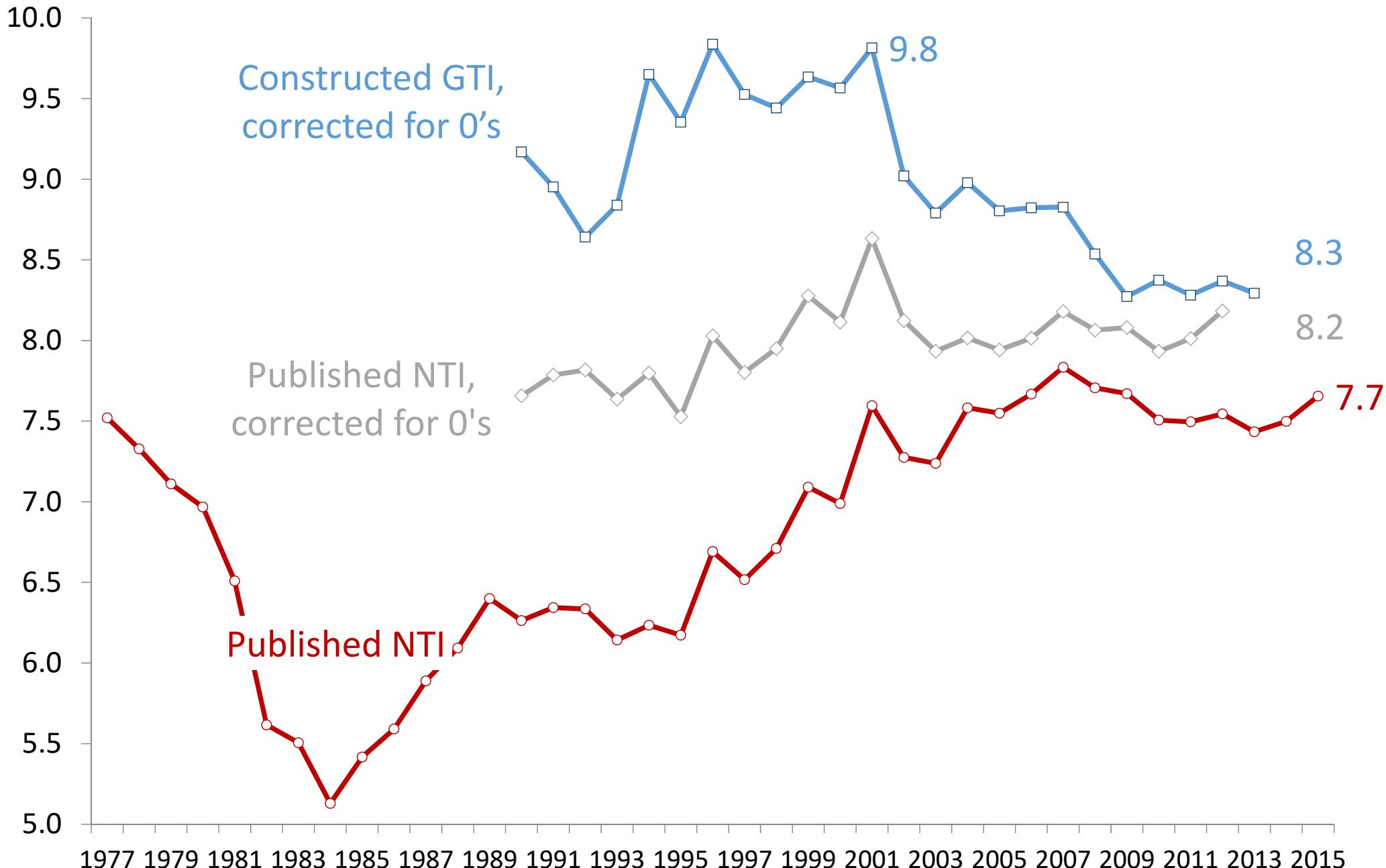


1. reconstruct gross taxable incomes (GTI) instead of NTI
2. adjustments in accordance with exogeneous reference totals for...
 - population – correction for non-filers to reach population reference
 - adding zeroes at bottom up to population reference
 - this shifts the quantile values where top income groups start
 -
 - gross household income – correction for missing income
 - construction of income reference from national accounts (NA)
 - to account for missing capital income
(e.g. liberating withholding tax, but also retained earnings, etc...)

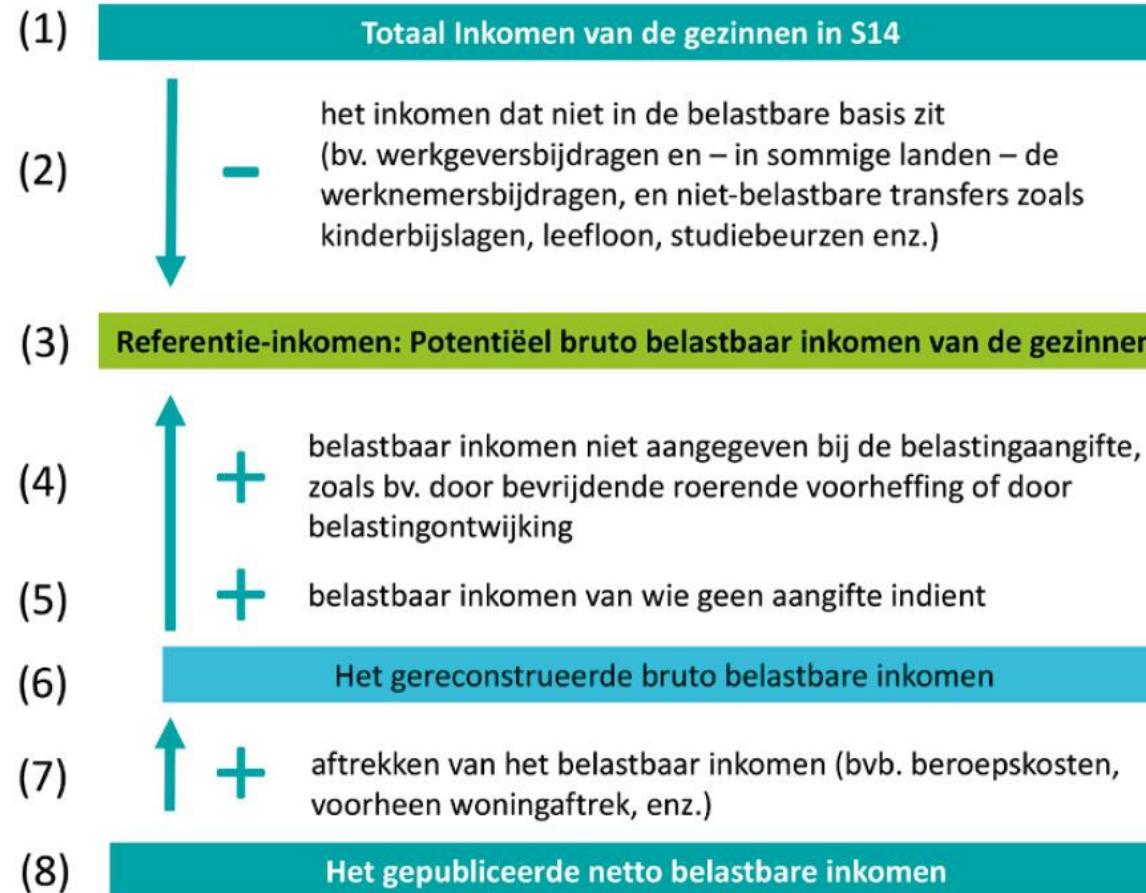
3. results - share D10 before and after correction for 0's and GTI



3. results - share P100 before and after correction for 0's and gti

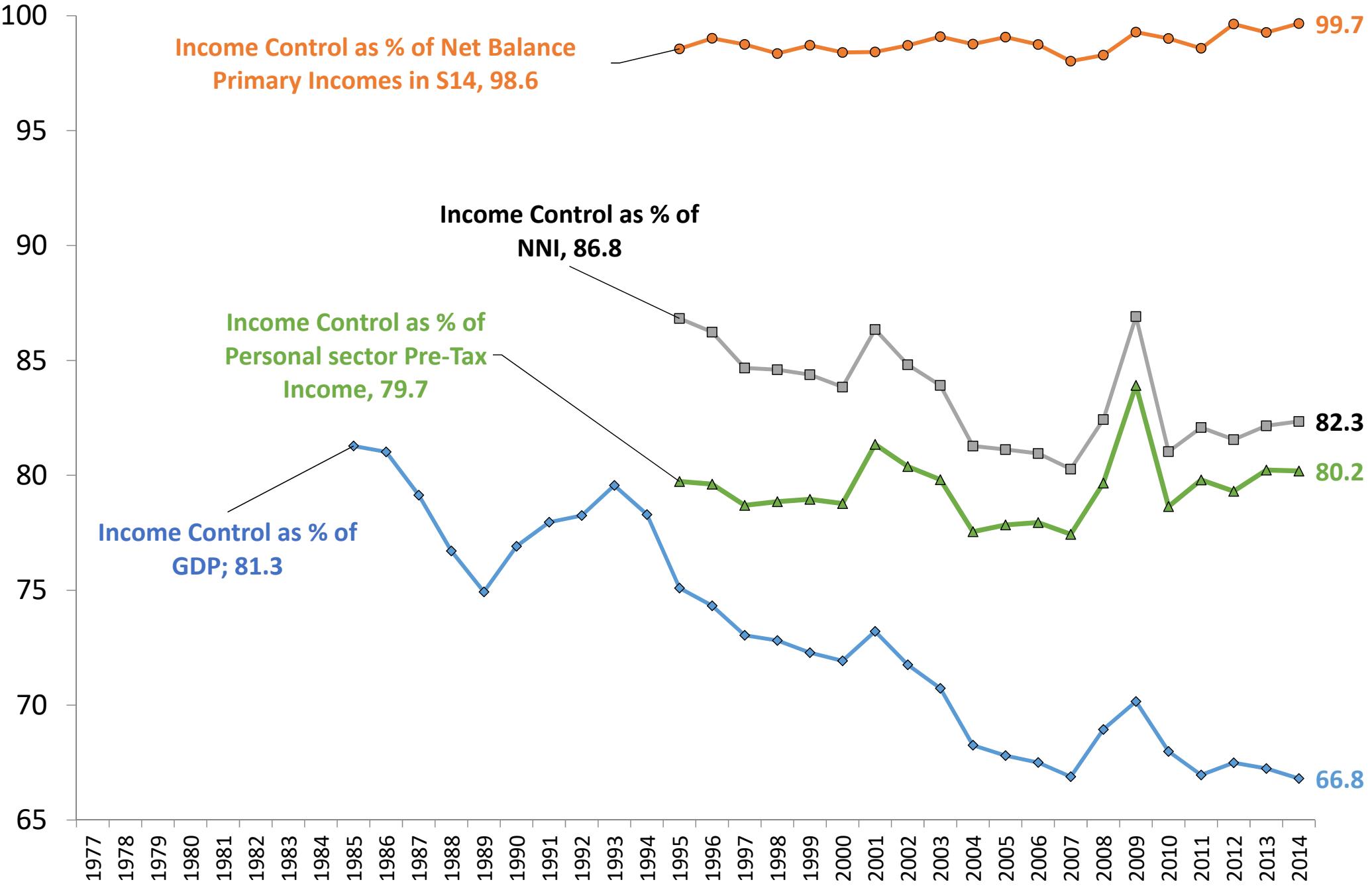


3. missing income

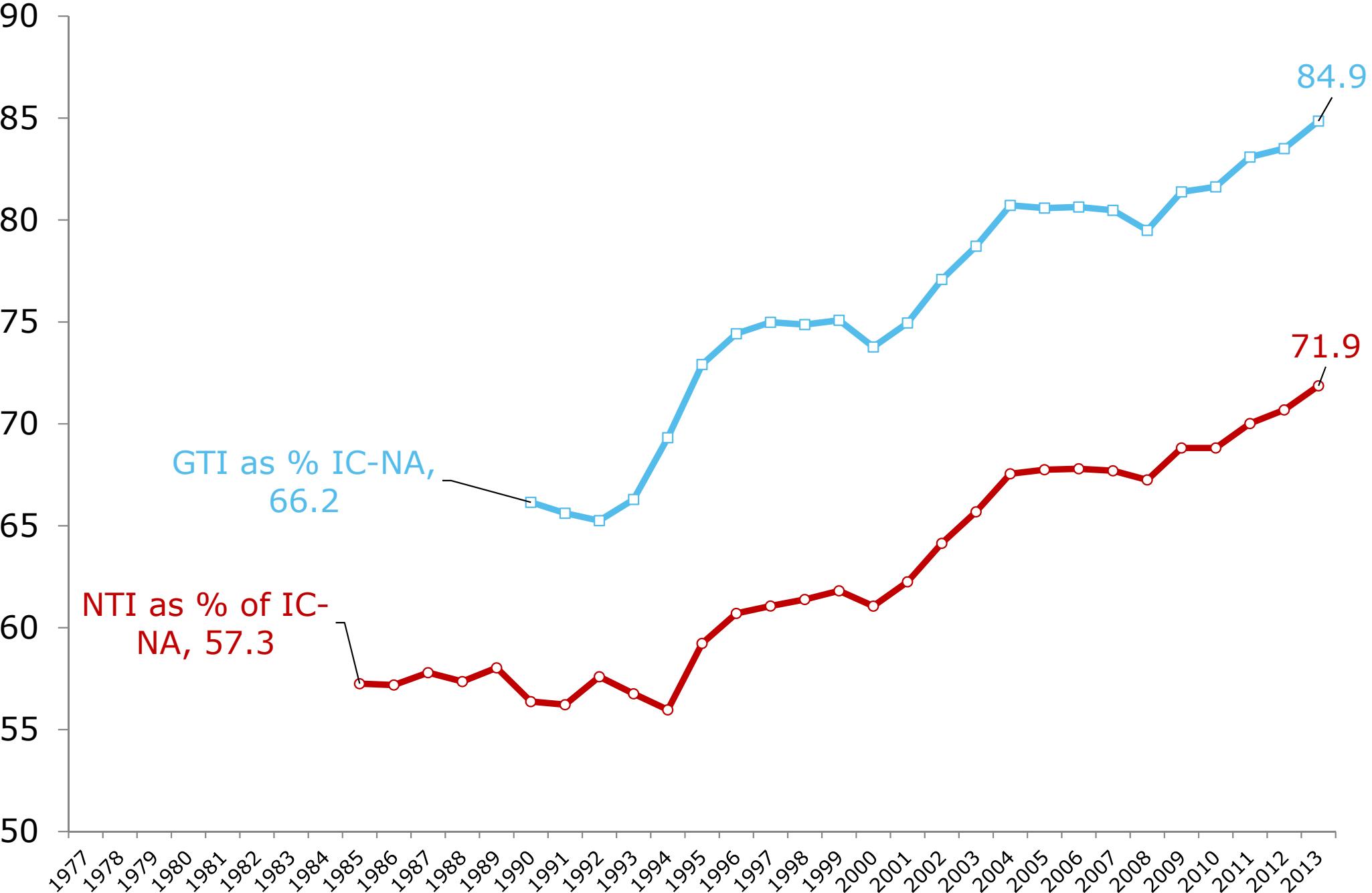


- construction **Income Control** in (3): starting from (1) and itemizing (2)
- has been compared with GTI in (6)
- to estimate '**missing income**' in fiscal data
 - Note: NA-standards: after 1995 ESA2010, before 1995: ESA95

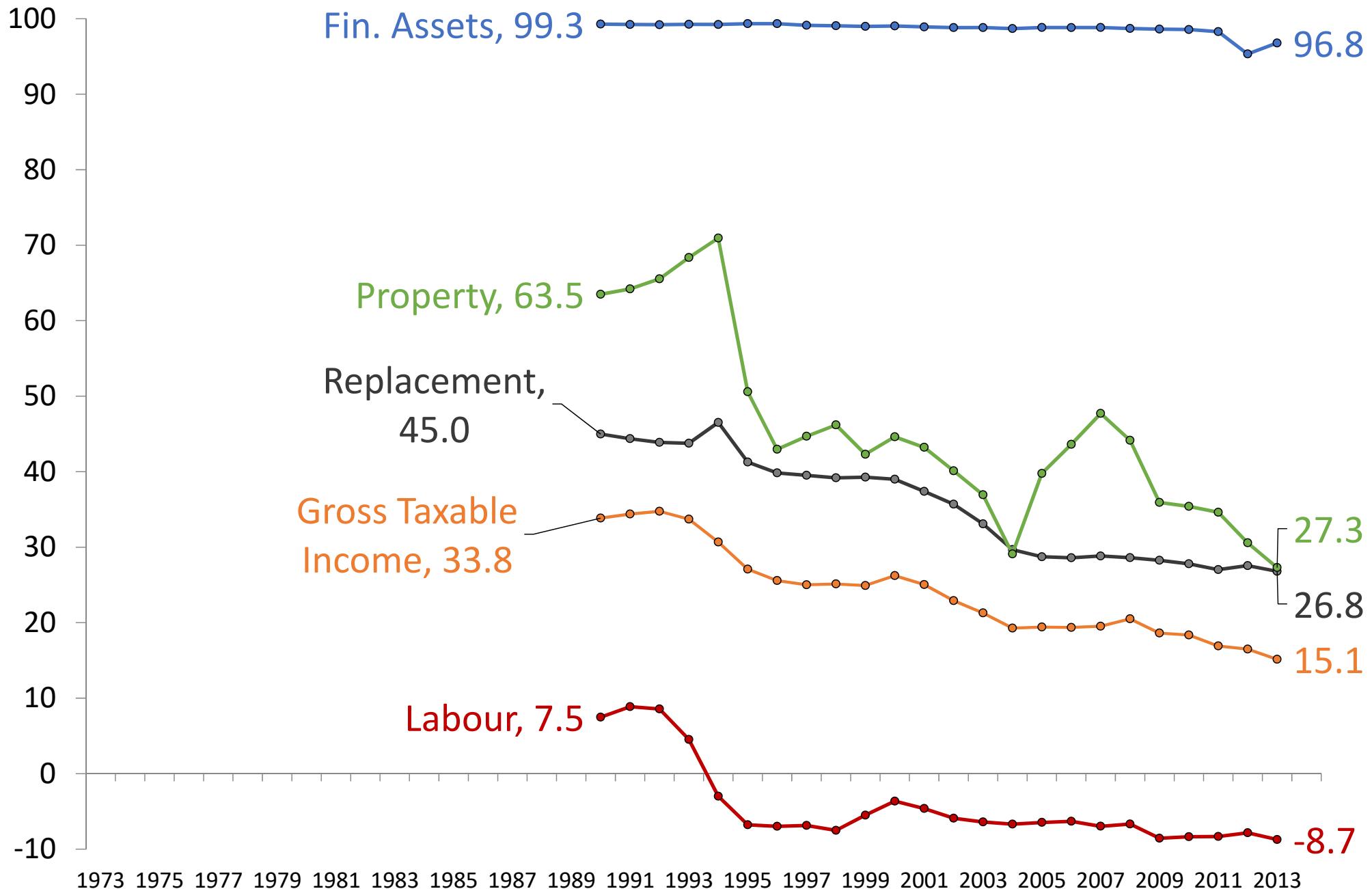
3. income reference in % of GDP and PSPTI



3. missing income: NTI & GTI as % of Income Control in NA

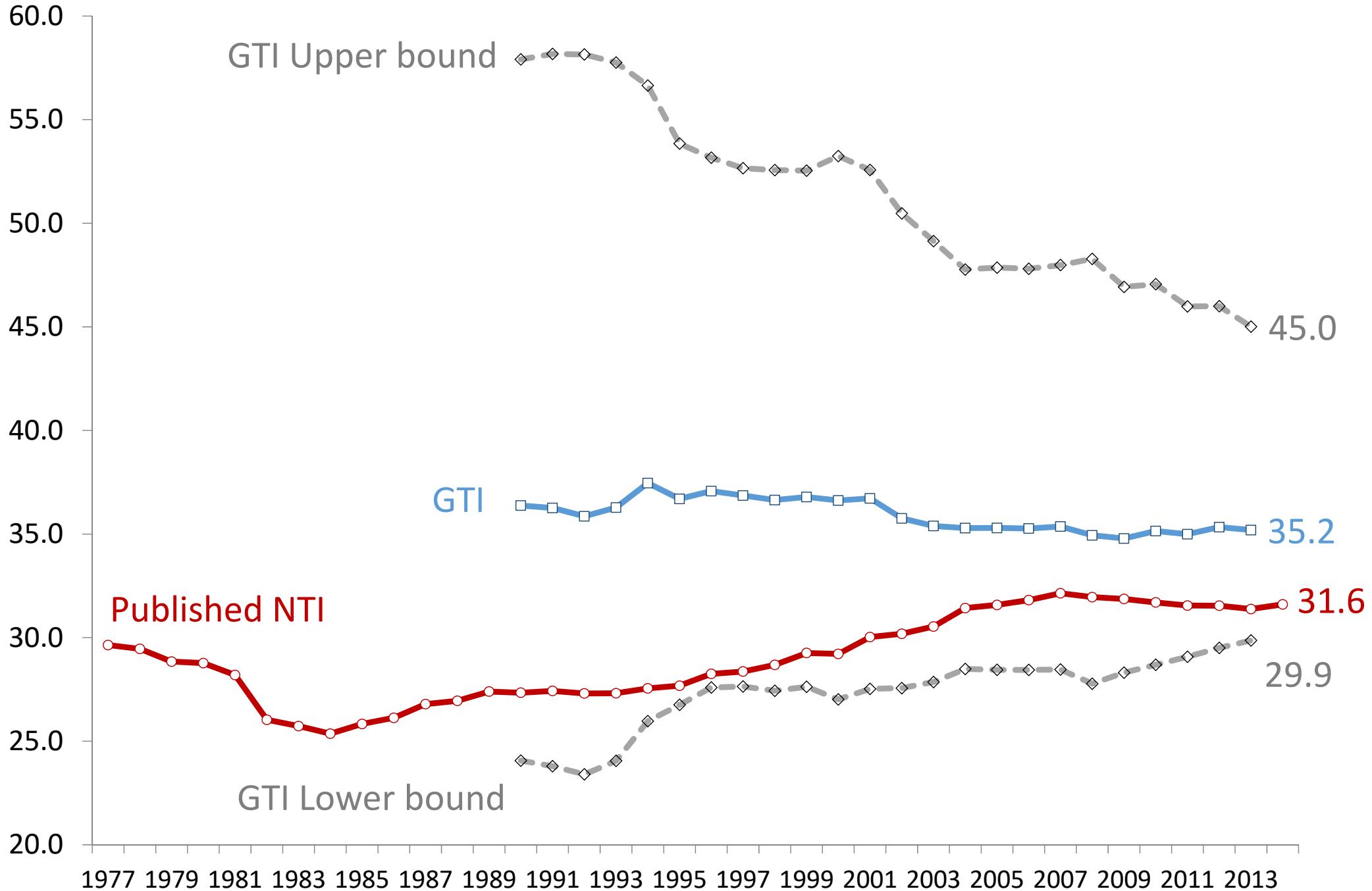


3. missing income by income component (in % of IC-NA)

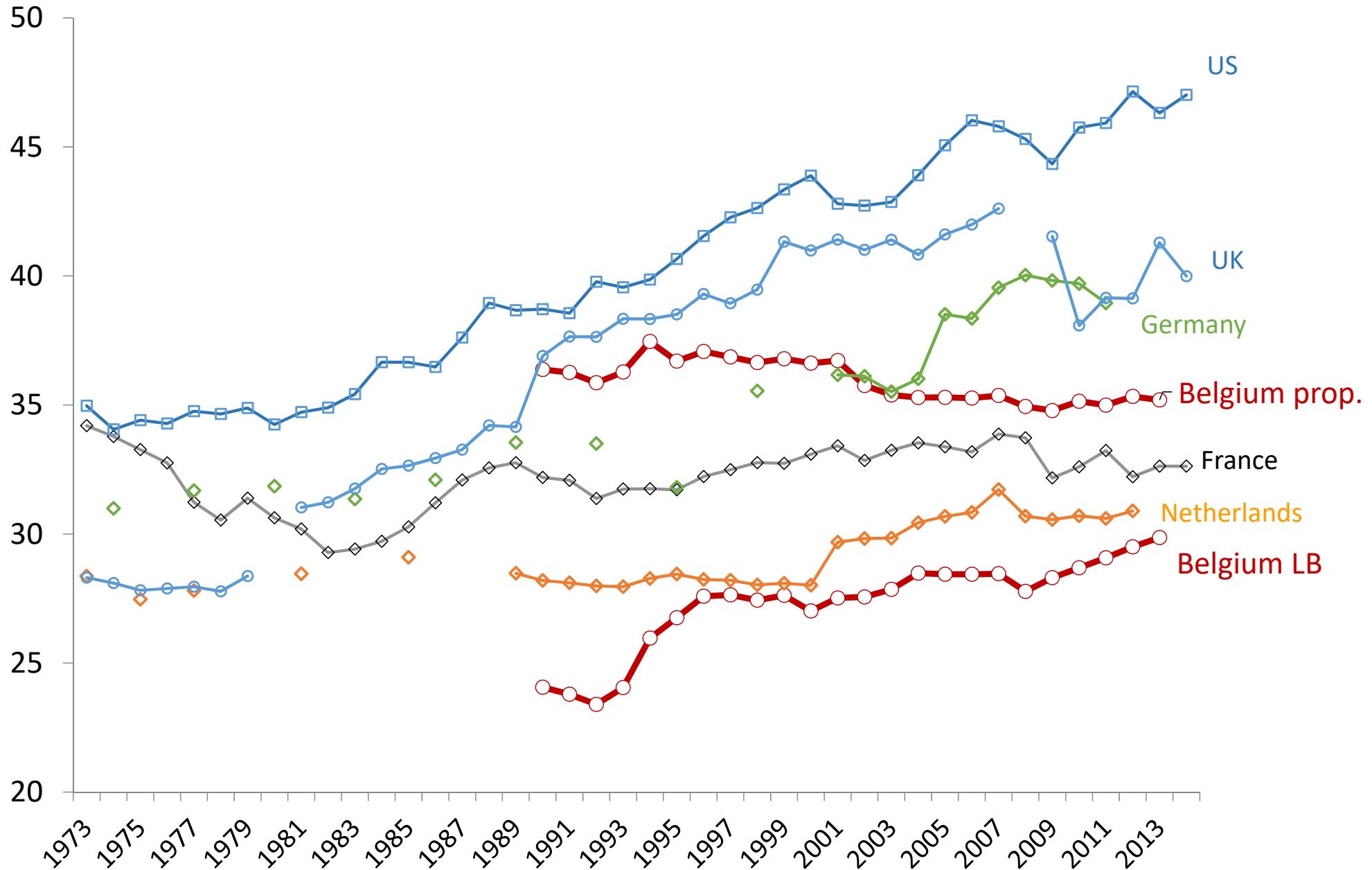


- 2013: 15% of IC-NA missing in tax files; down from 34% in 1990
 - how reliable is ↓ of IC-NA itself? to be investigated further
- how to allocate this ‘missing income’ (MI) across distribution?
 - without additional information, three options to allocate MI:
 1. allocate all MI **outside** top income groups => **lower bound**
 2. allocate proportionally: previous results unchanged
 3. allocate all MI **to top income** groups => **upper bound**
- future: use HFCS to impute income from FA and property income
 - but only one year (2010)
 - no returns by asset; only aggregate return and portfolio composition

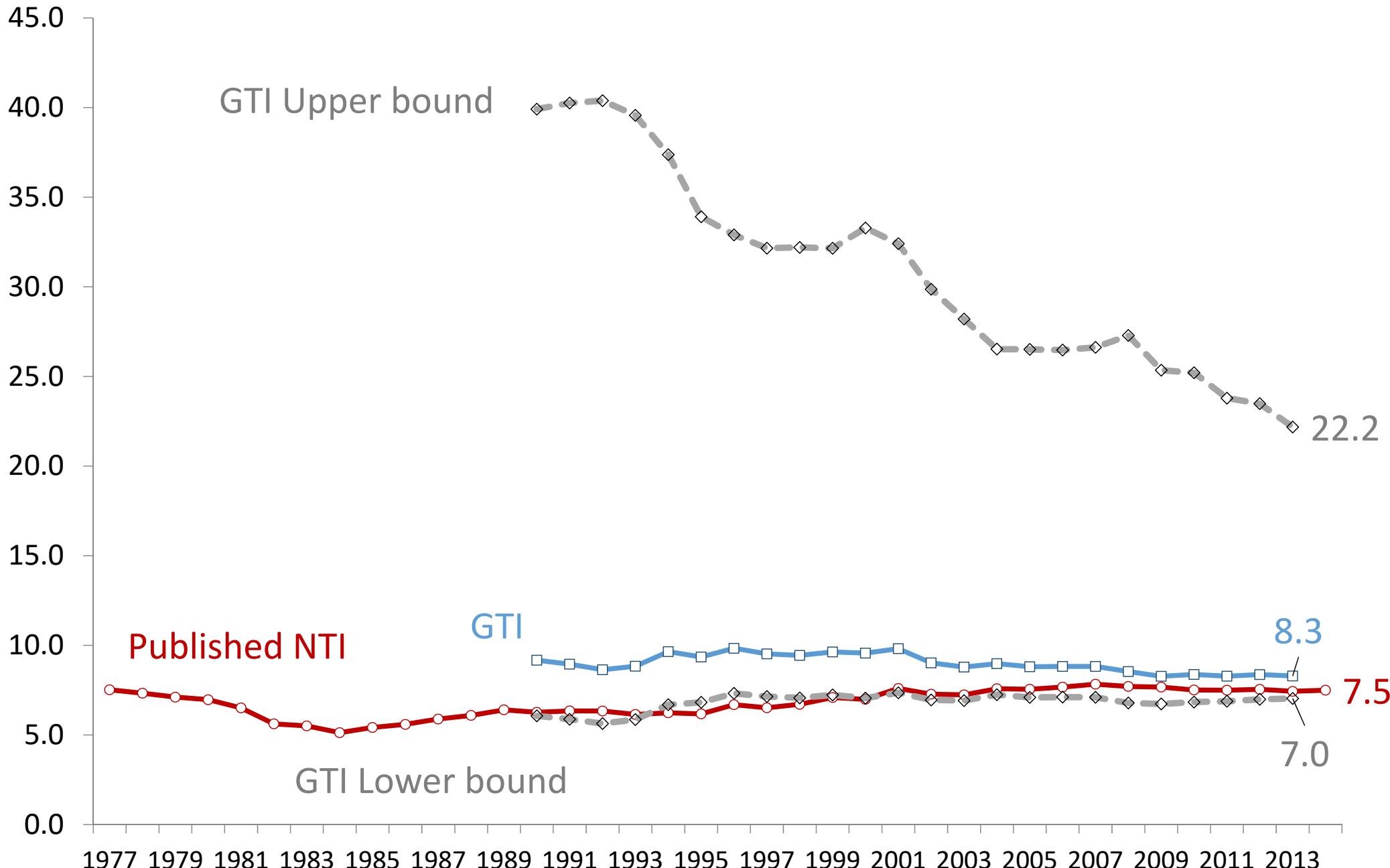
3. share D10 after allocation of missing income



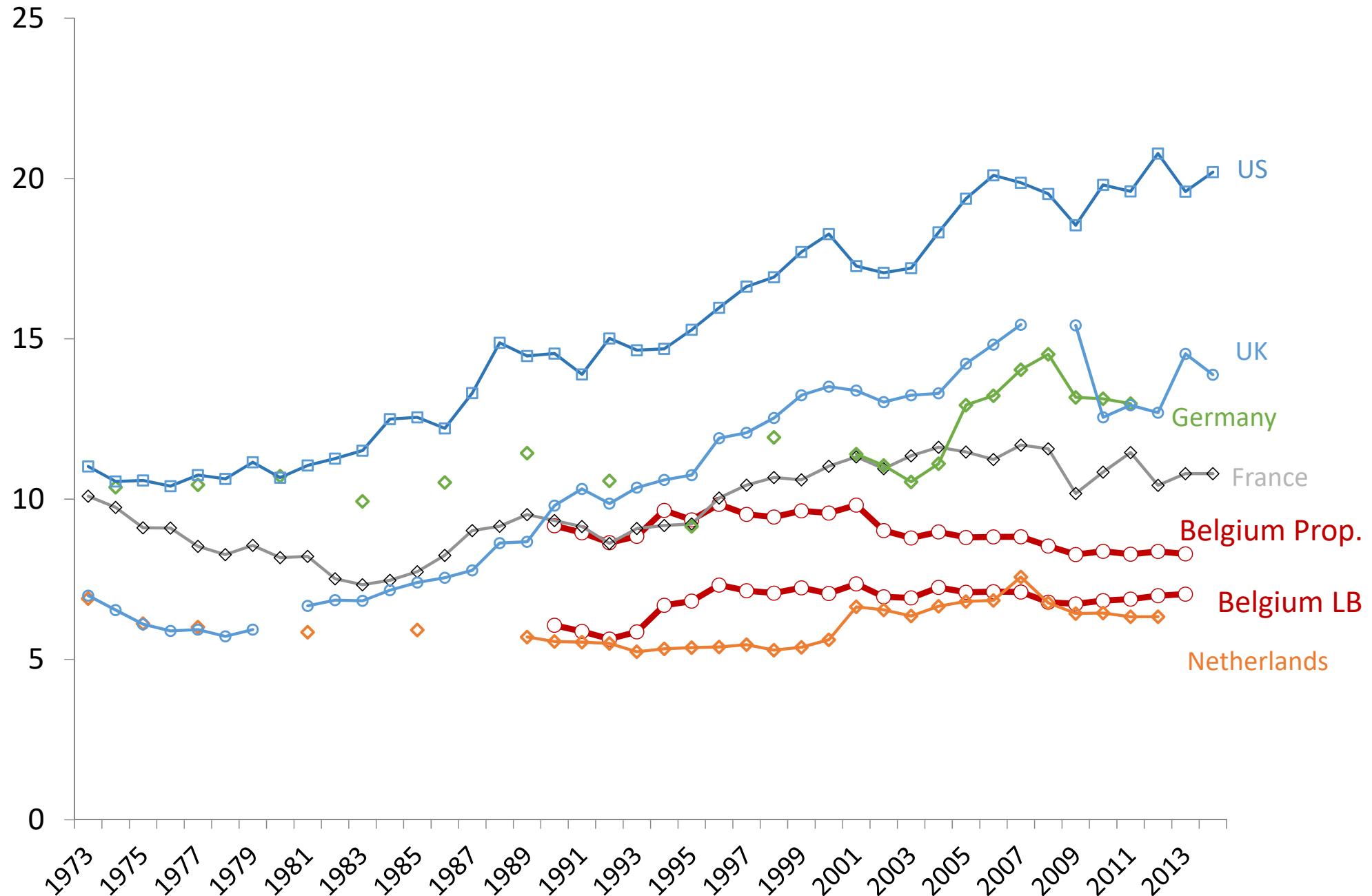
3 comparison of D10 internationally



3 share P100 after allocation of missing income



3 comparison of P100 internationally



- evidence for increasing Belgian top income shares in last 25 years: poor
- but... very preliminary first step and caution is needed
 - 97% of NA-total of financial assets is missing
 - NA: must be understood better and not limit income to sector S14
 - incorporated income
 - retained earnings
 - growth rates of income from property and FA in NA: puzzling
- administrative data:
 - certainly valuable complementary info to surveys
 - accessibility should be enhanced (micro-data)

- impute capital income in fiscal data
 - based on HFCS 2010, 2014 en 2017
 - with statistical matching techniques
 - distribution of missing income from Property and FA over percentiles
- fill in other (bottom) parts of distribution (eg. replacement income, ...)
 - which boils down to: DINA-approach
 - allowing growth incidence curves over longer time period
- stretch analysis further back in time
 - based on fiscal data
 - reconstructed national accounts