

# An ever wider gap in an ever closer Union

Rising inequalities and euroscepticism in 12 West European democracies, 1975-2009

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# Research question

- To what extent does rising income inequality lead to an increase in euroscepticism among EU-citizens?

# Theory

- Income inequality negatively affects attitudes towards public institutions (Anderson & Singer 2008, Beramendi & Anderson 2010)
- EU seen as cause of inequality (Eichenberg & Dalton 2007; Beaudonnet 2010)

**H1:** Rising levels of income inequality lead to an increase in euroscepticism

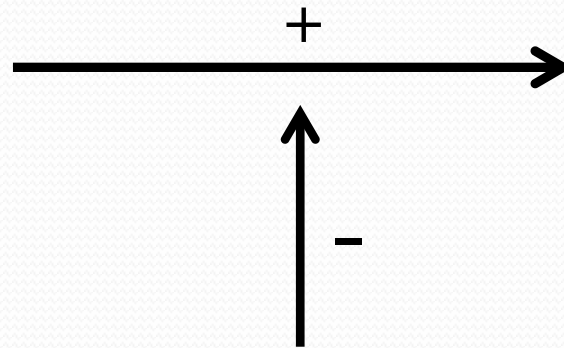
# Theory

- Rising inequality:
  - widens gap between higher educated ‘winners’ and lower educated ‘losers’ (Kriesi et al. 2008)
  - decreases interaction between different social strata (Wilkinson and Pickett, 2009)
  - biases policy and political participation towards higher educated (Schattschneider 1975; Solt 2010)

**H2:** The effect of income inequality on euroscepticism is stronger among the low educated than among the better educated.

# Hypotheses

H1: increase  
income inequality



increase  
euroscepticism

H2:

education

# Data

- Merged Eurobarometer waves 1975-2009
- 12 member states

Nation	N	Years
France	68630	1976-2009
Belgium	67984	1975-2009
Netherlands	70463	1975-2009
Germany	106187	1975-2009
Italy	69341	1975-2009
Luxembourg	26959	1981-2009
Denmark	70320	1975-2009
Ireland	63472	1977-2009
Great Britain	70131	1975-2009
Greece	56264	1982-2009
Spain	47537	1985-2009
Portugal	46695	1985-2009
Total	763983	

# Methods

- Multilevel logistic regression model
  - Individuals (N=763983) nested in years (N=35)
  - Country fixed effects
  - Focus on explaining variation across time

# Variables

DV: Euroscepticism: opinion on country's membership EU  
(0=good, 1= bad/neither)

IV: Income inequality: Gini-coefficient (*differenced*)

IV: Education: age finished full-time education (1-9)

Control variables:

- Age
- Gender
- Unemployment (*differenced*)
- Inflation (*differenced*)
- Globalization index (*differenced*)
- Time (*in years*)
- Satisfaction with democracy (1-4)



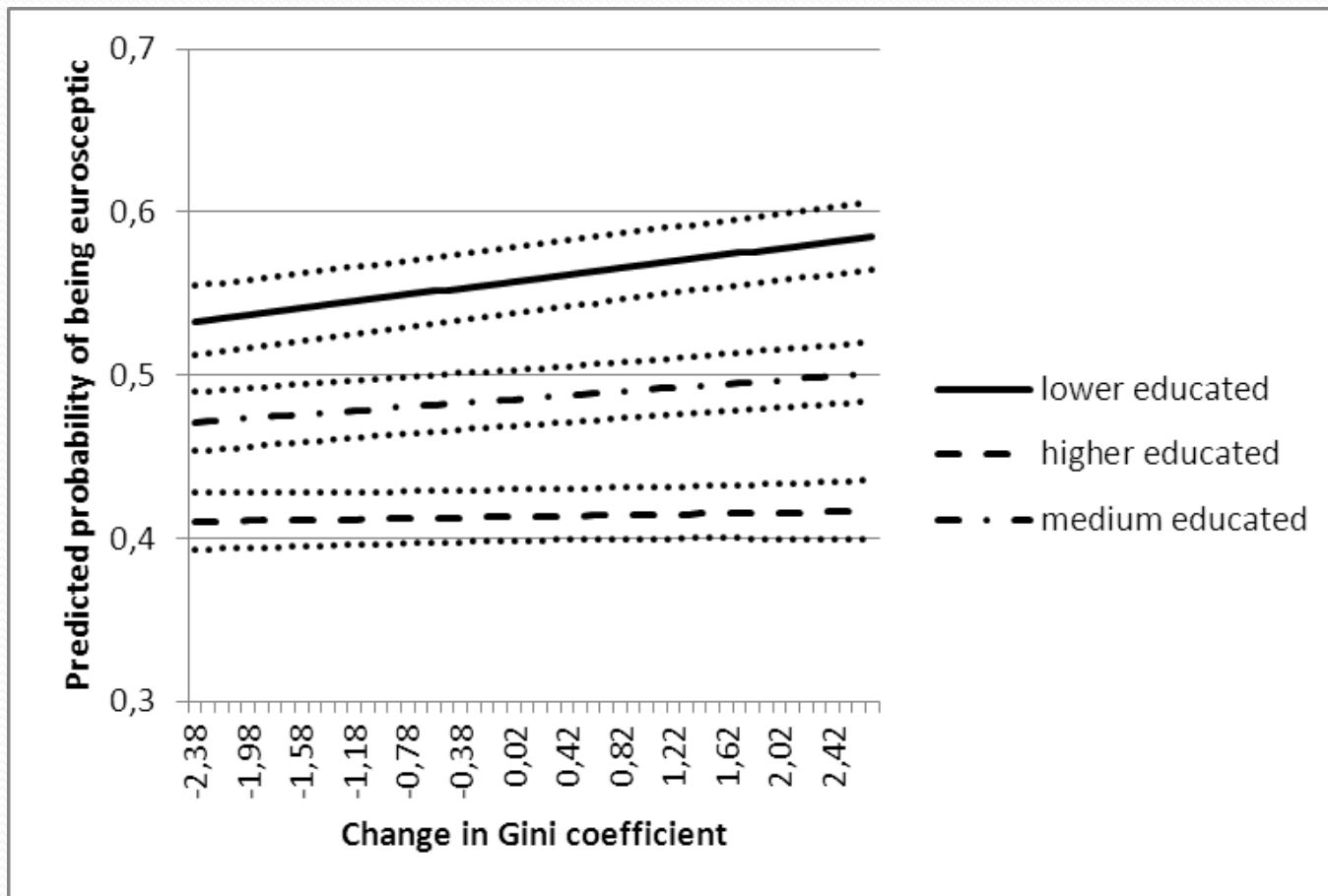
# Results

## Income inequality and euroscepticism in 12 EU member states (1975-2009)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Constant	<b>-.406 (.068)</b>	<b>-.353 (.072)</b>	<b>.329 (.060)</b>	<b>-.937 (.072)</b>
Time (1975=0, 1976=1...)	.004 (.003)	<b>.008 (.003)</b>	<b>.011 (.002)</b>	.003 (.003)
Δ Gini	<b>.015 (.004)</b>	<b>.058 (.007)</b>	<b>.047 (.011)</b>	<b>.063 (.008)</b>
Δ Unemployment	<b>.055 (.003)</b>	<b>.055 (.003)</b>	<b>.052 (.003)</b>	<b>.043 (.004)</b>
Δ Inflation	-.001 (.002)	-.001 (.002)	-.001 (.002)	<b>-.005 (.002)</b>
Δ KOF globalization	<b>-.014 (.002)</b>	<b>-.013 (.002)</b>	<b>-.013 (.002)</b>	<b>-.016 (.002)</b>
Education		<b>-.119 (.004)</b>	<b>-.100 (.004)</b>	<b>-.095 (.004)</b>
Education * Δ Gini		<b>-.007 (.001)</b>	<b>-.006 (.002)</b>	<b>-.004 (.002)</b>
Satisfaction with democracy				<b>.487 (.004)</b>
Level 2 N	763983	763983	763983	508168
Level 1 N	35	35	35	31

Note: all analyses control for age and gender and include country fixed effects. Standard errors within parentheses. Bold entries are significant at the 0.05 level.

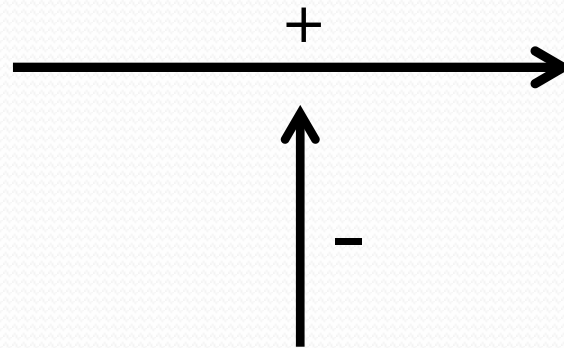
# Results



Note: predicted probabilities for Danish, retired, 70-year-old male

# Conclusion

H1: increase  
income inequality



increase  
euroscepticism



H2:

education



# Implications

## *Theoretical*

- Income inequality also affects support for *transnational* institutions

## *Societal*

- Legitimacy EU suffers from increasing inequality
- When income inequality increases, winner/loser cleavage (between lower and higher educated) will deepen