

# UNDERSTANDING RACIAL/ETHNIC DIFFERENCES IN PUBLIC OPINION TOWARDS THE AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

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# Background

- **Health care reform** has been an important issue of debate in national polls since 1930s.
- We focus on **Kaiser Health Tracking Polls** concerning the ACA.



# Research Question

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- Are there any **racial/ethnic** differences in public opinion toward the ACA?
- What **individual-level** and **survey-level** characteristics are associated with variability in public opinion regarding **the ACA**?

# Data Source

1

- **Dataset Search: Kaiser Family Foundation Poll**

2

- **Select Year: March 2010 – September 2015 (latest)**

3

- **Narrow Results: 2 -- 4 polls in each year**

# Literature

- Views on whether the health system treats people equally were strikingly different by race (Lillie-Blanton et al., 2000).
- When health care is framed as part of Obama's reform plan racial attitudes have a much stronger effect on health care opinions than race-neutral principles (Tesler, 2011; 2012).
- Racial and ethnic differentials in coverage could be greatly reduced through the implementation of the ACA (Clemans-Cope et al., 2011).

# Dependent Variable

- As you may know, a health reform bill was signed into law early last year. Given what you know about the health reform law, do you have a generally (favorable) or generally (unfavorable) opinion of it?
  - 1 Very favorable
  - 2 Somewhat favorable
  - 3 Somewhat unfavorable
  - 4 Very unfavorable
  - 5 (DO NOT READ) Don't know/Refused

# Independent Variables

## □ Individual-level measures

1. Age
2. Gender
3. Race/Ethnicity
4. Education
5. Employment
6. Partyid
7. Political View
8. Type of Interview
9. Interview Language
10. Insurance Coverage

## □ Survey-level measures

1. Month
2. Historical Event
3. Month×Race

# Individual-level Measures

1. Age: 18+
2. Gender: Male, Female
3. Race/Ethnicity: Non-Hispanic White, Hispanic, Non-Hispanic Black, Asian, Other/Mixed
4. Education: Less than high school, High school, College, College+
5. Employment: Employed, Retired, Unemployed, Homemaker, Student, Disabled
6. Partyid: Republican, Independent, Democrat
7. Political View: Conservative, Moderate, Liberal
8. Type of interview: Cell phone vs. Landline
9. Interview Language: English/Spanish
10. Insurance: No insurance



# Survey-level Measures

**1. Month of Data Collection: 1, 2, 3, ..., 69**

**2. Historical Events**

**March 23, 2010:** President Obama signed the ACA into law

**January, 2011:** A Florida judge ruled the ACA unconstitutional

**October 1, 2013:** Obamacare website problems emerged

**3. Month×Race/Ethnicity**

# Logistic Regression Model 1: 1= Favor

Individual- and Survey-level Independent Variables	B	( SE)
Hispanic (Non-Hispanic White)	0.45***	(0.09)
Non-Hispanic Black (Non-Hispanic White)	1.17***	(0.08)
Asian (Non-Hispanic White)	0.85***	(0.14)
Unemployed (Employed)	0.34***	(0.10)
Homemaker (Employed)	0.33***	(0.07)
Insurance (No Insurance)	0.30***	(0.07)
College (Less than High School)	0.30***	(0.07)
College+ (Less than High School)	0.45***	(0.09)
Age (18+)	-0.00*	(0.00)

Note: \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ . Non-significant variables not shown. (N=16,246.  $R^2=0.32$ )

# Logistic Regression Model 1 (Con't)

Individual- and Survey-level Independent Variables	B	( SE)
Independent (Republican)	1.11***	(0.05)
Democrat (Republican)	2.50***	(0.06)
Moderate (Conservative)	1.19***	(0.05)
Liberal (Conservative)	1.87***	(0.06)
Cell (Landline)	0.15***	(0.05)
Spanish (English)	1.84***	(0.15)
Month of data collection (1, 2, ..., 69)	-0.01***	(0.00)
Event1: President Obama signs the ACA into law	0.22*	(0.10)
Event2: A Florida judge rules the ACA unconstitutional	-0.60***	(0.10)
Event3: Obamacare website problems emerge	-0.26**	(0.10)

Note: \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ . Non-significant variables not shown. (N=16,246.  $R^2=0.32$ )

# Logistic Regression Model 2 (With Interactions)

Individual- and Survey-level Independent Variables	B	( SE)
Unemployed (Employed)	0.46***	(0.10)
Homemaker (Employed)	0.25***	(0.06)
Insurance (No Insurance)	0.24***	(0.07)
College (Less than High School)	0.33***	(0.07)
College+ (Less than High School)	0.55***	(0.08)
Independent (Republican)	1.11***	(0.05)
Democrat (Republican)	2.57***	(0.06)
Moderate (Conservative)	1.18***	(0.05)
Liberal (Conservative)	1.83***	(0.06)
Age (18+)	-0.00**	(0.00)

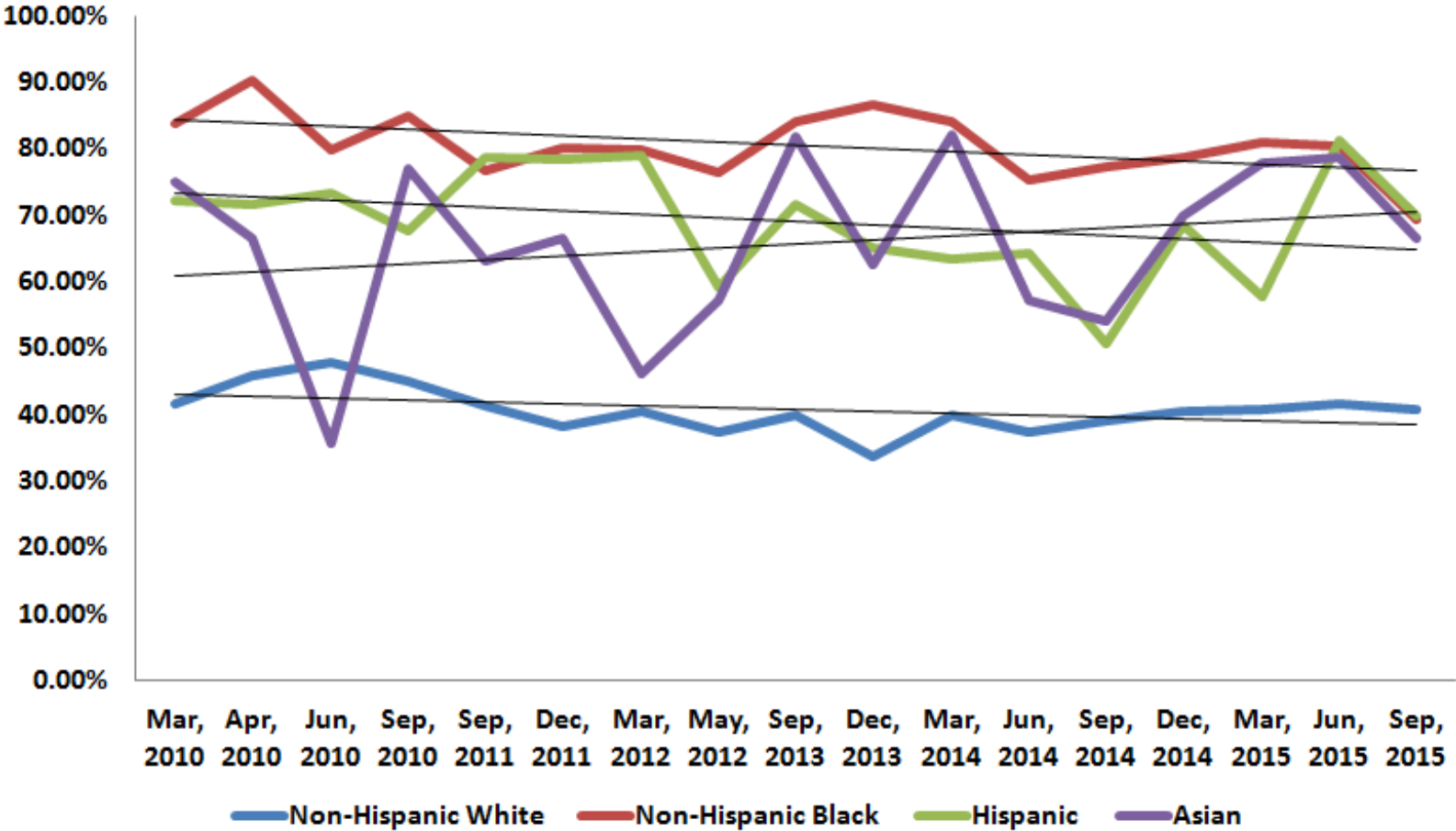
Note: \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ . Non-significant variables not shown. (N=16,246.  $R^2=0.32$ )

# Logistic Regression Model 2 (Con't)

Individual- and Survey-level Independent Variables	B	( SE)
Cell (Landline)	0.14**	(0.04)
Spanish (English)	1.94***	(0.14)
Month × Black (Month × White)	0.02***	(0.00)
Month × Hispanic (Month × White)	0.01***	(0.00)
Month × Asian (Month × White)	0.02***	(0.00)

Note: \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ . Non-significant variables not shown. (N=16,246.  $R^2=0.32$ )

# Racial/Ethnic Differences in Public Opinion Across time



# Conclusion

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- We find **racial/ethnic** differences in public opinion toward the ACA.
- Both **individual-level** and **survey-level** characteristics are associated with variability in public opinion regarding **the ACA**.

# Limitations

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- **The quality of data on “race/ethnicity”**  
**(Kaplan, 2014)**



# Future Research

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- **Multi-level models**
  - Individual-level
  - Question-level
  - Survey-level

# Thanks for your questions

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