
Electronic Theses and Dissertations, 2004-2019

2008

Marijuana Legalization: Americans' Attitudes Over Four Decades

Anthony Saieva
University of Central Florida

 Part of the [Sociology Commons](#)

Find similar works at: <https://stars.library.ucf.edu/etd>

University of Central Florida Libraries <http://library.ucf.edu>

This Masters Thesis (Open Access) is brought to you for free and open access by STARS. It has been accepted for inclusion in Electronic Theses and Dissertations, 2004-2019 by an authorized administrator of STARS. For more information, please contact STARS@ucf.edu.

STARS Citation

Saieva, Anthony, "Marijuana Legalization: Americans' Attitudes Over Four Decades" (2008). *Electronic Theses and Dissertations, 2004-2019*. 3446.

<https://stars.library.ucf.edu/etd/3446>

**MARIJUANA LEGALIZATION:
AMERICANS' ATTITUDES OVER FOUR DECADES**

by

ANTHONY PHILIP SAIIEVA
B.S. University of Central Florida, 2008

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Science
in the Department of Sociology
in the College of Sciences
at the University of Central Florida
Orlando, Florida

Summer Term
2008

© 2008 Anthony Philip Saieva

ABSTRACT

Americans have long held a variety of opinions when it comes to the legalization of marijuana. While previous research has mostly focused on use rates and behavior, the purpose of this examination is to specifically analyze people's attitudes towards marijuana legalization. Of particular importance was (1) the extent to which attitudes towards marijuana legalization have changed over the past four decades and (2) how the social factors often associated with marijuana legalization attitudes have changed over the same period. Results indicate that over one-third of Americans now believe marijuana should be made legal. These pro-legalization attitudes are at their highest levels in four decades. Being younger, more educated, and liberal have been associated with these positive attitudes towards marijuana legalization. Yet age and education has become slightly less significant. Greater church attendance has remained associated with negative attitudes. While being white once correlated with anti-legalization attitudes, it is now positively associated with marijuana legalization attitudes. Finally, this study describes the remaining findings and thoughts.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to acknowledge the tremendous support I have received from my mom, dad, sister, grandparents, aunts, uncle, cousins, friends, and fellow classmates. Thanks you all so much! Special thanks should also be given to Dr. David A. Gay and Dr. Elzbieta Sikorska-Simmons who were there for me both inside and outside the classroom. Last but not least, I have to thank these wonderful professors: J. Lynxwiler, J. Corzine, J. Jasinski, B. Marshall, W. Goldstein, E. Grauerholz, L. Mustaine and P. Canan. Go Knights!

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES	vii
LIST OF TABLES	viii
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION.....	1
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW	3
History of Marijuana Legalization.....	3
Supporters and Opponents of Marijuana Legalization	6
Age and Marijuana.....	6
Education and Marijuana	8
Income and Marijuana	8
Gender and Marijuana.....	9
Marriage, Parenthood, and Marijuana	10
Urbanity, Region of Residence, and Marijuana.....	10
Race and Marijuana	11
Religiosity and Marijuana.....	12
Political Trends and Marijuana.....	13
Summary.....	13
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY	14
Data and Methods	14
Dependent Variable	16
Independent Variables	16
Analytic Strategy	22

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS	24
CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION.....	32
APPENDIX A.....	37
LIST OF REFERENCES	39

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Americans' Political Attitudes	15
Figure 2: Americans' Attitudes Towards Marijuana Legalization	24

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Means and Standard Deviations for Independent and Dependent Variables	25
Table 2: Logistic Regression Results: Effects of Sociodemographic, Attitudinal and Behavioral Variables on Attitudes towards the Legalization of Marijuana	26
Table 3: Means and Standard Deviations for Dependent and Independent Variables Used in Logistic Regression.....	38

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Public opinion concerning the legality of marijuana use has long been of interest to policy makers, government entities, and academic researchers. Marijuana's criminalization has done little to curb the appetite of its American users. Of all illicit drugs, marijuana continues to be the most commonly used. A recent government survey estimated that over 97 million Americans have tried marijuana at least once in their life (SAMHSA 2005). This number represents 40.1% of the U.S. population ages 12 and up.

According to a Gallup Poll, roughly one third of Americans currently support general legalization of marijuana, while about half believe that marijuana possession should remain classified as a criminal offense (Gallup, 2005). Three quarters, (73 percent), favor legalization for medical purposes, but that's a different issue. The poll also found that while most Americans oppose the legalization of marijuana, they are more likely to see a problem with legalization from a national or societal point of view. However, when it comes to their local municipalities, Americans are less likely to hold such a pro-criminalization stance (Gallup, 2000). Hence, at the individual or local level, Americans are not as rigid in their views concerning the legalization of marijuana.

To date, most of the marijuana research has focused on the age of user (Greenbaum, Prange, Friedman, Silver 1991; von Sydow, Lieb, Pfister, Höfler, Wittchen 2002) frequency of use (Bachman, Johnston, O'Malley, Humphrey 1988; Chen, Kandel, Davies 1997) and related health effects (Abood, Martin 1992; Grant, Pickering 1998; Pope, Gruber, Yurgelun 1995). These studies have focused primarily on marijuana use rather than attitudes toward the legal availability of marijuana to adults in the general public.

The purpose of this examination, however, is to analyze people's attitudes towards the legalization of marijuana over the past four decades. The research that addresses attitudes reports that a number of social factors such as age, educational attainment, income, gender, marital status, living with children, urbanity of residence, region of residence, race, church attendance, and political ideology are associated with attitudes towards marijuana legalization. In addition, it is quite possible that these correlates between socio-demographic factors and social attitudes are dynamic and shift over different time periods. As a result, the focus of this study is to examine (1) the extent to which attitudes towards marijuana legalization have changed over the past four decades and (2) how the social factors often associated with marijuana legalization attitudes have changed over the same period.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

History of Marijuana Legalization

United States federal law currently schedules marijuana, or cannabis, as a non-medical banned substance (DEA 2008). This however was not always the case. Below is a brief history of marijuana criminalization in the United States, highlighting key decisions that have determined the drug's fate.

Prior to the 1930's, marijuana was legal and used as a recreational drug, medicine, industrial product, and religious instrument. In fact, George Washington himself grew several varieties of marijuana, including a few strains that were cultivated for smoking (Jackson and Twohig 1976). The "Marihuana Tax Act of 1937" changed all that by becoming the first major federal act of the United States to criminalize cannabis products (Marijuana Tax Act 1937). A little over three decades later, the Comprehensive Drug Abuse Prevention and Control Act of 1970 repealed the 1937 Act and set scheduled categories for the medical legitimacy of various families of drugs. As for marijuana, it was and still remains scheduled for non-medical use, therefore banned as an illegal substance.

Two years later, President Richard Nixon commissioned a panel of public policy experts, members of the justice department and, medical professionals to examine the social implications of drug prohibition. The results of the National Commission on Marihuana and Drug Abuse suggested that the societal harm of criminalization and imprisonment outweighed the physical risks from smoking marijuana (Shafer 1972). These findings however, did not result in a change of the national policy; marijuana continued to be treated as an illicit substance. Yet on the local and state level, community attitudes seemed to take heed of the report. The increase in support

during the 1970s may have been a reaction to the severity of legal sanctions for use or possession of marijuana at the time. In other words, due to the harsh nature of penalties for possession, a move toward decriminalization and/or legalization emerged. For example, the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws (NORML) was established in 1970.

Over the next few years, many states and local municipalities began to reduce the harsh penalties for marijuana possession, even going as far as decriminalizing it in some cases (Resnick 1990). Throughout the 70's these legalization initiatives were in direct conflict with federal policies (McVeigh 2004).

In the early 1980's, President Ronald Regan's administration took a hard line position on drug use. Not only did it establish an aggressive anti-drug media campaign "the war on drugs", the administration also passed new stricter mandatory sentencing guidelines for drug offenses (Comprehensive Crime Control Act 1984). These harsher penalties may have tampered Americans' support for legalized marijuana.

While these federal policies continued to supersede state laws supporting legal marijuana into the 90's, the legalization debate re-surfaced in a different light. This time, instead of classifying marijuana for recreational use, California proposed the legal use of marijuana for medical purposes with Proposition 215 passage in 1996; for the first time, California residents were able to legally use marijuana as medication under a doctor's prescription (Compassionate Use Act of 1996). Arizona was another state that adopted a similar bill (Medicalization, Prevention, and Control Act of 1996). Although there are important distinctions to be made between labeling marijuana for medical and recreational uses, there may also be some overlap in the attitudes towards legalization.

During the 1990s, the American public also heard a presidential candidate say that he did not inhale. Whether he did or did not does not appear to be important, the discussion was started. President Clinton was the first baby boom president. The baby boom generation “came of age” during the 1960s and 1970s, which is about the same time that the use of marijuana came to the attention of the American public in the contemporary period. To suggest that marijuana use was new would be naïve, however, the popular attention it received was new. Smoking marijuana began to reach a new demographic. Today, a substantial percentage of those in other influential positions in American society have admitted to smoking marijuana.

Since 2000, several states have proposed some sort of legislation to legalize or decriminalize marijuana for personal use, but none have successfully passed. Some of the states included Alaska, Nevada, Colorado and Nevada (CNN.com 200, 2004, 2006). Although these state-wide propositions did not pass, local municipalities had more success and were actually able to, in effect, legalize small amounts of marijuana for personal use. The most publicized city to amend their regional laws, which again were in direct conflict with state and federal guidelines, was Denver, Colorado in 2005 (O'Driscoll 2005).

Clearly, a growing proportion of the general public would like to see changes in the legal status of marijuana across the country. Public support for the legalization of marijuana appears to be higher than at any point since pollsters began asking the question on a consistent basis in 1969 (Internet site). Recent polls now indicate that roughly one-third of the adult population favors legalization. These changes in support are likely a result of several socio-cultural factors which will be discussed.

Supporters and Opponents of Marijuana Legalization

A number of sociodemographic, attitudinal, and behavioral variables are likely to affect attitudes toward the legalization of marijuana. Research in the 1970s depicted supporters of prohibition as typically older, female, low income, protestant, and more likely to drop out of high school. Those who supported marijuana legalization tended to be younger, male, higher income, Jewish or non-religious, college or higher graduates and independent in political affiliation. Yet in the last decade or so, these demographic characteristics appear to have changed (Thornton 2007).

Age and Marijuana

Since the 1970s, research has demonstrated that age is correlated with marijuana use, attitudes toward use, and attitudes toward legalization. Younger people have been shown as more likely users and hence more likely to view smoking marijuana in a more favorable light (Alfonso and Dunn 2007). This finding is not particularly unique since the relationships between age and other deviant attitudes and behaviors are well documented. The duration of marijuana use appears to be typically short. Those who tend to start smoking marijuana usually cease using by their late twenties (Lynskey, Grant, Nelson, Bucholz, Madden, Statham, Martin, Heath 2006). The period between the early 20's and the 40's show a steep decline in use patterns (Kerr, Greenfield, Bond, Ye, and Rehm 2007) and may correlate with a similar pattern of attitudes toward use and legalization. According to a recent Gallup Poll, 47% of respondents aged 18 to 29 support legalization, 35% of those 30 to 64 favor legalization, and 22% of those over the age of 65 support legalization. While the youngest age group has the highest percentage of support,

the middle age group and the retired public have significantly changed their opinion over the last thirty years.

In part, this can be explained due to the exploratory nature of younger ages and less responsibility to family and work. That is, as people move through their life course and experience individual life structure and socio-cultural changes, they are likely to alter their attitudes and behavior with reference to a number of personal activities.

Smoking marijuana may have very different consequences for older age groups. That is, the legal status of marijuana use may play more of a role in the decision to smoke marijuana than any other factor. Thus, on one hand some argue that people diminish their support for marijuana legalization later in life, in part, because they become more conservative (Brown, Glaser, Waxer, Geis 1974). On the other hand, while these individuals may not smoke marijuana or ingest it in other ways, they may prefer to make that decision without any legal ramifications. Research reports that adults tend to view marijuana as a personal, private, and recreational activity. They also appear to be more controlled in their involvement with marijuana (Shukla 2005). People in their twenties in the 1970s are now in their fifties. Much of the popular media attention concerning recreational use and attitudes toward legalization emerged in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Currently, a significant percentage of people occupying elite positions in business and government have admitted to use at some point in their lives. This represents a rather unique socio-cultural situation. As a result, the effect of age on attitudes toward the legalization of marijuana may have changed over the last thirty years. Hence, this study incorporates age as a factor in attitudes toward legalization over time.

Education and Marijuana

There is something of a paradox between marijuana use and legalization attitudes when it comes to educational attainment. On the one hand, those who use marijuana are likely to have lower educational attainment (von Ours and Williams 2007), while on the other hand, those with higher educational attainment are more likely to favor marijuana legalization.

The discussion of the relationship between education and attitudes and use of marijuana usually focuses on (1) the impact of smoking marijuana in adolescence on educational attainment and related school performances measures or (2) the use and attitudes in higher education and later adulthood. The latter is of more concern in this study. In Erich Goode's 1970 study, *The Marijuana Smokers*, college students were less likely to favor prohibition than their non-college counterparts. Goode also reported that roughly 25% of the college students had smoked marijuana. The students at the time Goode published his work were essentially baby boomers and are now in their 50s and early 60s. Current research suggests that the pattern for the relationship between education and support for legalization has remained over time. This study examines the extent to which the effect of educational attainment on attitudes toward legalization of marijuana has changed over the thirty years.

Income and Marijuana

Some research has suggested that marijuana use is correlated with earning a lower income (Degenhardt, Chiu, Sampson, Kessler, and Anthony 2007). They claim that marijuana users increase their likelihood of earning lower incomes to the point where they may become welfare dependent (Schmidt, Weisner, and Wiley 1998). Others theorize that while chronic and

on-the-job use of marijuana negatively affected wages, the general effect for all marijuana smokers was positive (Gill, Michaels, Register, and Williams 1992). In addition, a significant percentage of these workers represent what would generally be considered middle-class citizens. This study seeks to examine the extent to which income plays a role in predicting attitudes toward the legalization of marijuana over time instead of use.

Gender and Marijuana

Since the mid 1980's, there appears to be a growing degree of gender convergence in marijuana use rates. In other words, while men's usage rates appear to have slowed somewhat, women's have not. The result is a shortening of the gender gap (Kerr, Greenfield, Bond, Ye, and Rehm 2007). Men and women may interpret the perceived risks of cannabis in different ways, especially when it comes to use, abuse, and dependence (Agrawal, Lynskey 2007). Nevertheless, men are still more likely than women to smoke marijuana for a prolonged duration during their lifetime (Lynskey, Grant, Nelson, Bucholz, Madden, Statham, Martin, and Heath 2006). Males and females may be socialized in different ways, so that the influences of marijuana acceptance appear more readily in the social lives of males than in females (Rienzi, McMillin, Dickson, Crauthers, McNeill, and Pesina 1996). As a result of gender differences in use patterns, we also may assume a difference in attitudes towards marijuana legalization by gender.

Marriage, Parenthood, and Marijuana

There are many life events that play a role in determining attitudes to marijuana prohibition. One such event is marriage. In fact, the use of marijuana seems to decrease over the course of the marriage (Yamaguchi and Kandel 1985). Having children is also an important factor. The significance of having children in the home, and the experiences that come with it, are factors that may also be relevant when examining drug attitudes (Cubbins & Klepinger 2007). Parents serve as caregivers, protectors, disciplinarians, and teachers. Children often react to the attitudes and behaviors their parents have towards marijuana (Vicary and Jacqueline V. Lerner 1986).

Urbanity, Region of Residence, and Marijuana

Research suggests that those in urban communities hold different attitudes and patterns of use towards marijuana (Galea, Ahern, and Vlahov 2003). While there may not be one singular reason for this difference of opinion, factors such as age, income, religiosity, educational attainment, and political ideology converge on the side of prohibition. Residents of rural communities are more likely to be older, have lower incomes, attend church more frequently, have less formal education, and are more politically conservative. These rural communities may also conform to more rigid cultural barriers by vocalizing perceived risk factors at a greater intensity (Elliot and Larson 2004). Peer pressure, whether it be positive or negative, may also contribute to the pronounced differences between urban and rural communities. A study by Wilson and Donnermeyer (2006) found that those in urban communities approved of marijuana use more than those living in a rural residence.

While federal criminalization supersedes any state legislation, it has not stopped states including California, Arizona, and Colorado from adopting their own policy when it comes to legality of marijuana. The western region of the U.S. is much more likely to support marijuana legalization than the Midwest and South. States that fall under the western heading include California, Oregon, Washington, Arizona, New Mexico, Nevada, and Alaska. Some attribute these attitudes back to the pioneer spirit of early settlers. It is no wonder then that the drug counter-culture of the 60's grew out of the San Francisco area and spread eastward by means of popular culture and political dissidence.

Race and Marijuana

Among demographic variable, race may not be as powerful as age and gender. More times than not, studies suggest that whites are more likely to be approving of marijuana than are blacks. A study by Chen, Killeya-Jones, and Ley (2006) found that suburban white youths were far more likely to support marijuana use than were their black peers. Several researchers suggest that within the African American community, certain traditional health beliefs and practices served as risk factors for the smoking of marijuana. However, familial interdependency, support, consultation, sharing, and traditional religious beliefs serve as a shielding dynamic against marijuana (Nasim, Corona, Belgrave, Utsey, Fallah 2007). Ethnic identity may also have greater influence on marijuana beliefs, norms, and behaviors than race alone. It is suggested that the stronger the ethnic identity, the greater the influence of negative attitudes associated with marijuana beliefs and use (Holley, Kulis, Marsiglia, and Keith 2006).

However, a study by Lambert, Ventura, Baker, and Jenkins (2006) found that non-whites were more likely than whites to support the legalization of marijuana. They also suggested that non-whites were more likely to be tolerant of use, view abuse as an illness, and support treatment as an effective response. Because of this discrepancy, it is even more important that I examine race as a contributing factor.

Religiosity and Marijuana

Religion has typically frowned on drug use that falls outside the realm of denominational sacrament. For example, in the Caribbean, many Rastafarians embrace the religious use of marijuana. They often describe it as a gift from god that should be used on the path to enlightenment. Another example is the Church of 420 in California. This liberal branch of the Universal Life Church suggests that the Biblical burning bush was actually a marijuana bush and that God created it for our use. This, however, is in direct conflict with the mainstream Christian doctrine, not to mention federal drug laws.

Spirituality is significantly related to use and attitudes towards marijuana by serving as a protective factor. Hodge, Cardenas, and Montoya (2001) found that the more religious participation by youths, the less likely they were to support or use marijuana. Adolescents who do not claim a religious preference are more likely to smoke marijuana than those whose families identify a religious preference (Merrill, Folsom, and Christopherson 2005).

Political Trends and Marijuana

Those with more rebellious attitudes in general are more likely to support and use marijuana. Their peers holding greater authoritarian beliefs tend to be less permissive about drugs (Kohn and Mercer 1971). People often see marijuana as a sort of symbol. It can represent an umbrella of positions correlated to attitudes, beliefs, behaviors, and use. The identity of being liberal or conservative in political life is often reflected in social life as well.

In other words, the approval of marijuana says something about an individual. Those who disapprove of marijuana often see the smoker as a political radical, often engaging in risky behavior, lax of morals, and sometimes unpatriotic. This set of perceived behaviors lead to the pigeonholing of users to the left of the political spectrum (Goode 1969).

Summary

The purpose of this examination is to analyze people's attitudes towards the legalization of marijuana over the past four decades. The research provided addresses a number of social factors such as age, education, income, gender, marital status, living with children, urbanity, region, race, religiosity, and political ideology that are often correlated with attitudes and behaviors towards marijuana. As a result, these factors are also likely to have an effect on attitudes toward the legalization of marijuana. In addition, it is quite possible that these correlates between socio-demographic factors and social attitudes are dynamic and shift over different periods of time. As a result, the focus of this study is to examine (1) the extent to which attitudes towards the legalization of marijuana have changed over time and (2) the factors or determinants that shape these attitudes.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Data and Methods

The data for this study are taken the General Social Survey over a 33 year period. Conducted by the National Opinion Research Center, the General Social Survey, is a regular, nationwide survey utilizing an independently drawn sample of approximately 3000 English-speaking, non-institutionalized, U.S. citizens, ages 18 and higher. The sample appears to be representative of many other random telephone surveys, in that respondents are typically white, married, and more frequently female. The GSS is a popular data set for measuring attitudinal and political differences as well as a variety of socio-demographic and background characteristics. Survey years span from 1973 to the most recent data from 2006.

Because attitudes towards marijuana legalization may reflect shifts in political ideology of Americans over time, I use the GSS to juxtapose the political changes with the attitudes towards marijuana legalization. Figure 1 exhibits the general political attitudes from 1976 to 2006. It indicates that the overall political climate of the general population has been consistently moderate over this time period.

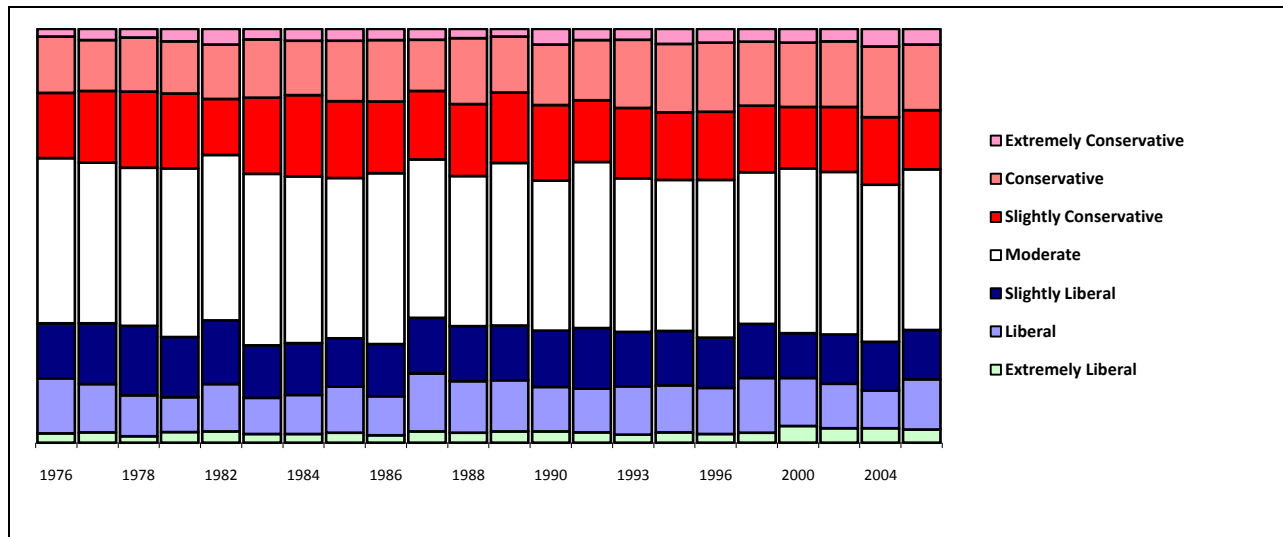


Figure 1: Americans' Political Attitudes

While the two major political parties have gained and lost power over the time, the majority of Americans have remained consistently moderate. One of the purposes of this study is to examine the extent to which attitudes toward the legalization have changed over time. Rather than arbitrarily selecting years to measure changes over time, this study focuses on ten year segments which also correspond to different presidential terms. While these presidential terms may reflect variations between political party preferences or the political climate in general, they may or may not mirror the attitudes towards marijuana legalization of the general population across the liberal/conservative spectrum.

Therefore model 1 will include the years 1976 and 1978, which coincides with the Carter administration. Model 2 includes the years 1986, 1987, and 1988, which coincides with the Reagan administration. Model 3 includes the years 1996 and 1998, which coincides with the Clinton administration. Finally, model 4 includes the years 2004 and 2006, which coincide with the Bush administration.

Dependent Variable

Attitude towards marijuana legalization are the dependent variable in this analysis. Other than reviewing previous vote totals from specific state legislative amendment efforts, this method may be best to represent a national sample. The focus of the current analysis is the extent to which attitudes towards marijuana legalization change over time. The GSS asks the question, “Should marijuana be made legal?” Responses are coded as, Legal (1), Not Legal (2), and Don’t Know (8). For the purposes of logistic regression a dummy variable will be created with (1) for Legal and (0) for Not Legal. Responses of Don’t Know or those with no answer will be treated as missing and omitted from the analysis.

Independent Variables

As stated in the previous literature, many studies illustrate a number of factors that affect where or not they support the legalization of marijuana. The influence of age, education, income, gender, marital status, number of children in the home, urbanity, region, race, political preference, and religiosity will be treated as control variables.

Age is a consistent determinant of whether someone supports the legalization of marijuana or not. Typically, younger individuals support marijuana legalization significantly more than older adults. The GSS measures age by asking “What is your date of birth?” Responses are coded as years old ranging from eighteen to eighty-nine and up.

Education is a significant predictor for attitudes towards marijuana legalization. As previously indicated, those with some college education are more likely to support marijuana legalization than those who have no college. The GSS measures and codes the years of formal

schooling on a twenty-point scale where each point represents a specific grade level completed. Specifically, grades are coded as: no formal schooling (00), 1st grade (01), 2nd grade (02) and so on through seven years of college (19). For those with more than eight or more years of college their response is coded as (20). Responses of Don't Know will be coded (98) and those with no response with (99). Both entries will be treated as missing.

Depending on the survey year, the GSS measures family income with several different coding scales. The survey asks "In which group did your family income, from all sources, fall last year before taxes?" In order to standardize family income throughout the years, the response categories must be rescaled into percentage format, ranging from 0 to 100 (Lynxwiler and Gay 1994).

For years 1973 to 1976, the GSS coded income with a 12 point scale. Family incomes under 2,000 are coded (01), incomes between 2,000 and 3,999 (02), incomes between 4,000 and 5,999 (03), incomes between 6,000 and 7,999 (04), incomes between 8,000 and 9,999 (05), incomes between 10,000 and 12,499 (06), incomes between 12,500 and 14,999 (07), incomes between 15,000 and 17,499 (08), incomes between 17,500 and 19,999 (09), incomes between 20,000 and 24,999 (10), incomes between 25,000 and 29,999 (11), incomes 30,000 and over (12), Refused (13), Don't Know (98), No Answer (99), and Not applicable with (BK).

For years 1977-1984, the GSS coded family income on a 17 point scale. Family incomes under 1,000 are coded (01), incomes between 1,000 and 2,999 (02), incomes between 3,000 and 3,999 (03), incomes between 4,000 and 4,999 (04), incomes between 5,000 and 5,999 (05), incomes between 6,000 and 6,999 (06), incomes between 7,000 and 7,999 (07), incomes between 8,000 and 8,999 (08), incomes between 9,000 and 9,999 (09), incomes between 10,000 and 12,499 (10), incomes between 12,500 and 17,499 (11), incomes between 17,500 and 19,999 (12),

incomes between 20,000 and 22,499 (13), incomes between 22,500 and 24,999 (14), incomes between 25,000 and 34,999 (15), incomes between 35,000 and 49,000 (16), incomes 50,000 and over (17), Refused (18), Don't Know (98), No Answer (99), and Not applicable with (BK).

For years 1986-1990, the GSS coded family income on a 20 point scale. Family incomes less than 1,000 are coded (01), incomes between 1,000 and 2,999 (02), incomes between 3,000 and 3,999 (03), incomes between 4,000 and 4,999 (04), incomes between 5,000 and 5,999 (05), incomes between 6,000 and 6,999 (06), incomes between 7,000 and 7,999 (07), incomes between 8,000 and 9,999 (08), incomes between 10,000 and 12,499 (09), incomes between 12,500 and 14,999 (10), incomes between 15,000 and 17,499 (11), incomes between 17,500 and 19,999 (12), incomes between 20,000 and 22,499 (13), incomes between 22,500 and 24,999 (14), 25,000 and 29,999 (15), 30,000 and 34,999 (16), 35,000 and 39,999 (17), 40,000 and 49,999 (18), 50,000 and 59,999 (19), 60,000 and over (20), Refused (21), Don't Know (98), No Answer (99) and Not Applicable (BK).

For years 1991-1996, the GSS coded family income on a 21 point scale. Family incomes less than 1,000 are coded (01), incomes between 1,000 and 2,999 (02), incomes between 3,000 and 3,999 (03), incomes between 4,000 and 4,999 (04), incomes between 5,000 and 5,999 (05), incomes between 6,000 and 6,999 (06), incomes between 7,000 and 7,999 (07), incomes between 8,000 and 8,999 (08), incomes between 9,000 and 9,999 (09), incomes between 10,000 and 12,499 (10), incomes between 12,500 and 17,499 (11), incomes between 17,500 and 19,999 (12), incomes between 20,000 and 22,499 (13), incomes between 22,500 and 24,999 (14), 25,000 and 29,999 (15), 30,000 and 34,999 (16), 35,000 and 39,999 (17), 40,000 and 49,999 (18), 50,000 and 59,999 (19), 60,000 and 74,999 (20), 75,000 and over (21), Refused (22), Don't Know (98), No Answer (99) and Not Applicable (BK).

In years 1998-2004 the GSS measures family income on a 23 point scale. Family incomes less than 1,000 are coded (01), incomes between 1,000 and 2,999 (02), incomes between 3,000 and 3,999 (03), incomes between 4,000 and 4,999 (04), incomes between 5,000 and 5,999 (05), incomes between 6,000 and 6,999 (06), incomes between 7,000 and 7,999 (07), incomes between 8,000 and 8,999 (08), incomes between 9,000 and 9,999 (09), incomes between 10,000 and 12,499 (10), incomes between 12,500 and 17,499 (11), incomes between 17,500 and 19,999 (12), incomes between 20,000 and 22,499 (13), incomes between 22,500 and 24,999 (14), 25,000 and 29,999 (15), 30,000 and 34,999 (16), 35,000 and 39,999 (17), 40,000 and 49,999 (18), 50,000 and 59,999 (19), 60,000 and 74,999 (20), 75,000 and 89,999 (21), 90,000 and 109,999 (22), incomes 110,000 and over (23), Refused (24), Don't Know (98), No Answer (99) and Not Applicable (BK).

In 2006 the GSS measures family income on a 25 point scale. Family incomes less than 1,000 are coded (01), incomes between 1,000 and 2,999 (02), incomes between 3,000 and 3,999 (03), incomes between 4,000 and 4,999 (04), incomes between 5,000 and 5,999 (05), incomes between 6,000 and 6,999 (06), incomes between 7,000 and 7,999 (07), incomes between 8,000 and 9,999 (08), incomes between 10,000 and 12,499 (09), incomes between 12,500 and 14,999 (10), incomes between 15,000 and 17,499 (11), incomes between 17,500 and 19,999 (12), incomes between 20,000 and 22,499 (13), incomes between 22,500 and 24,999 (14), 25,000 and 29,999 (15), 30,000 and 34,999 (16), 35,000 and 39,999 (17), 40,000 and 49,999 (18), 50,000 and 59,999 (19), 60,000 and 74,999 (20), 75,000 and 89,999 (21), 90,000 and 109,999 (22), incomes 110,000 and 129,999 (23), incomes between 130,000 and 149,999 (24) incomes 150,000 or over (25), Refused (26), Don't Know (98), No Answer (99) and Not Applicable (BK). Again, in order to standardize family income throughout the years, the response

categories must be rescaled into percentage format, ranging from 0 to 100 (Lynxwiler and Gay 1994).

Studies also suggest that women are less likely than men to support the legalization of marijuana. Therefore a dummy variable is created so that women are coded as (1) and men are coded as (0). The reason for this is to highlight any gender differences that may arise from the analyses.

Marital status plays a role in whether or not someone supports marijuana legalization. Research asserts that those who have been married once are less likely to support the legalization of marijuana. The GSS asks the following question: ‘Are you currently married, widowed, divorced, separated, or have you never been married?’ The responses are coded as following: married (01), widowed (02), divorced (03), separated (04), never married (05), and no answer (09). Marital status will be recoded by creating two dummy control variables: Never Married (1) and Divorced/Separated (1). The omitted category is Married (0).

Whether respondents have children living at home is another variable which must be controlled. Having a child or children in the home is likely to influence one’s attitudes towards marijuana legalization. The GSS asks “How many children, over the age of 18, are living in the household?” Possible responses are coded as, none (0), one (1), two (2)... eight or more (8). No answer and don’t know are coded as (9). Because those with children are more likely to reject marijuana legalization, a dummy variable will be created. Those whom have children in the home will be recoded with (1) and those with no children in the home will be recoded as (0).

Living in an urban or rural area can affect attitudes towards marijuana legalization. City size was observed by the interviewer. The choices are as follows: central city of 12 largest Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas (SMSAs) (1), Central City of remainder of the 100

largest SMSAs (2), Suburbs of 12 largest SMSAs (3), Suburbs of the remaining 100 largest SMSAs (4), Other urban (counties having towns of 10,000 or more) (5), Other rural (counties having no towns of 10,000 or more) (6). To maintain continuity, a new variable is created so that the higher the code, the more urban the residence. The response of choice (6) is recoded (1), (5) is recoded (2), (4) is recoded (3), (3) is recoded (4), (2) is recoded (5), and (1) is recoded (6).

Respondent's region of residence has impact on marijuana legalization attitudes. For this reason, geographical region will be treated as a control variable. Regions are originally coded as following: New England (01), Mid Atlantic (2), East North Central (3), West North Central (4), South Atlantic (5), East South Central (06), West South Central (07), Mountain (08), and Pacific (09). The Mountain region and Pacific region will be combined to create a dummy variable to represent the West (1).

There is also an association between race and the support or rejection of marijuana legalization. The numbers show that non-whites are more likely to support marijuana legalization compared to whites. The GSS data set codes race into three variables, white (1), black (2), and other (3). For the purpose of this study, race will be recoded into a dummy variable. Hence, whites will be coded as (1) and non-whites as (0).

Most respondents of the GSS have typically reported belonging to particular religious denomination. Religiosity also has an impact on respondents' attitudes towards marijuana legalization. Instead of measuring religiosity with denominational affiliation, studies often examine religious attendance instead. This analysis is also not concerned with specific affiliation, yet instead is interested in determining the amount of involvement or participation within a religious organization. Previous findings suggest that those with active regular religious involvement are less likely to support marijuana than those who take part in little or no

involvement. The GSS asks, “How often do you attend religious services?” Responses are coded with, never (0), less than once a year (01), about once or twice a year (02), several times a year (03), about once a year (04), 2-3 times a month (05), nearly every week (06), every week (07), several times a week (08), no answer and don’t know (09). Both “no answer” and “don’t know” are treated as missing.

Historically, distinctions between political party affiliations illustrate a clear contrast between the liberal left and the conservative right. When it comes to marijuana legalization the distinction is significant. Previous research shows that respondents who classify themselves as liberal are more likely to support marijuana legalization compared to those who identify themselves as conservative. The GSS categorizes responses as following: (1) Extremely Liberal, (2) Liberal, (3) Slightly Liberal, (4) Moderate, (5) Slightly Conservative, (6) Conservative, and (7) Extremely Conservative.

Analytic Strategy

Logistic regression is employed to examine the effects of sociodemographic, attitudinal and behavioral variables on attitudes towards the legalization of marijuana. The analysis controls for age, education, income, gender, marital status, children in the home, urbanity of residence, region of residence, race, religious attendance, and political view.

The analysis generates 1 figure and 3 tables. Figure 2 is a visual representation of American’s attitudes towards marijuana legalization over the past four decades. Table 1 includes means and standard deviations for the dependent and control variables for all years used in this analysis. Table 2 reports the logistic regression results for effects of sociodemographic,

attitudinal and behavioral variables on attitudes towards the legalization of marijuana. The regression contains four models, each corresponding to a different decade.

Tables 3 can be found in Appendix A. It includes the means and standard deviations of the sample blocks used in the logistic regression. Just as in the regression, Table 3 is divided into four models which correspond to a specific decade. Model 1 includes years 1976 and 1978, model 2 includes 1986, 1987, and 1988, model 3 includes 1996 and 1998, and finally model 4 includes years 2004 and 2006.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Figure 2 is a visual representation of Americas' attitudes towards marijuana legalization over the past four decades. There appears to be significant variation from decade to decade. For the years 1976 and 1978, about 29% of those surveyed believed marijuana should be made legal. Over the ten years, the support for marijuana legalization waned to only 18% for survey years 1986, 1987, and 1988. In survey years 1996 and 1998 the percentage of those supporting legalization rebounded and rose to 27%. Since then this percentage has continued to grow and for those surveyed in 2004 and 2006, about one-third (34%) supported the legalization of marijuana.

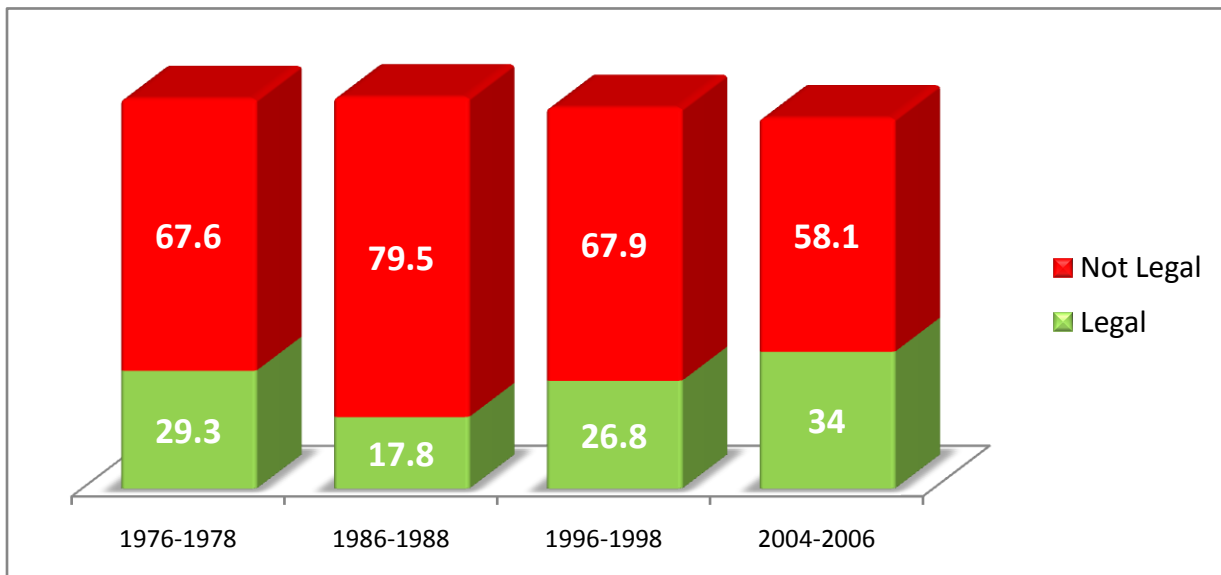


Figure 2: Americans' Attitudes Towards Marijuana Legalization

The total number of respondents within this analysis is 23,501. Taken together, over a 40 year period, about one-quarter of those sampled believe marijuana should be legalized. The average age of respondents is 45 years old with females comprising 55% of the sample and males 45%. Eighty-seven percent of respondents are also identified as white. On average, the

highest grade level achieved is 12.82. They identify themselves as politically moderate to slightly conservative and most attend church about once a month. While over half of respondents are married (65%), another 16% are divorced or separated, and another 20% have never been married. In all, about 39% of these households have children living in them and earn a family income in the middle percentile wage range (56.22).

Table 1 displays the means and standard deviations for both the attitudes towards marijuana legalization and control variables over the past four decades.

Table 1: Means and Standard Deviations for Independent and Dependent Variables

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation
Marijuana Legalization	.2599	.43857
Age	45.07	17.350
Educational Attainment	12.82	3.038
Family Income	56.2244	29.91511
Female	.5540	.49708
Divorced/Separated	.1580	.36479
Single	.1991	.39936
Children Living at Home	.3857	.48676
Urban Residence	2.9942	1.52430
West Residence	.1937	.39518
White	.8696	.33670
Liberal	3.8656	1.34885
Religious Attendance	3.88	2.690
Valid N = 23,501		

Table 2 reports the logistic regression results for effects of age, education, income, gender, marital status, number of children living in the home, urbanity of residence, region of residence, race, church attendance, and political affiliation on attitudes towards marijuana legalization. The table displays four separate regression models. Each model represents a specific period of time from each of the last four decades. The cell entries in table are presented as logistic regression coefficients/odds ratios with the standard error given in parentheses.

Table 2: Logistic Regression Results: Effects of Sociodemographic, Attitudinal and Behavioral Variables on Attitudes towards the Legalization of Marijuana

Independent Variables	Model 1 1976-1978	Model 2 1986-1988	Model 3 1996-1998	Model 4 2004-2006
Age	-.028/.972** (.004)	-.020/.981** (.004)	-.015/.985** (.003)	-.009/.991* (.004)
Education	.131/1.141** (.019)	.063/1.065** (.018)	.067/1.069** (.017)	.051/1.052* (.022)
Income	.002/1.002 (.002)	-.003/.997 (.018)	-.002/.998 (.002)	.001/1.001 (.002)
Female	-.128/.879 (.098)	-.381/.683** (.092)	-.407/.666** (.087)	-.351/.704 (.114)
Divorced/Separated	.236/1.267 (.154)	.427/1.533** (.123)	.316/1.372** (.113)	.444/1.559** (.148)
Never Married	.346/1.414* (.146)	.016/1.016 (.137)	.199/1.220 (.128)	.421/1.523* (.165)
Children in Home	-.300/.741** (.110)	-.199/.820 (.105)	-.387/.679** (.102)	.125/1.133 (.134)
Urban Residence	.101/1.106** (.031)	.075/1.078* (.031)	.072/1.075* (.030)	.044/1.045 (.040)
West Residence	.092/1.097 (.127)	.383/1.466** (.112)	.265/1.303* (.104)	-.165/.848 (.141)
White	-.399/.671* (.171)	-.119/.888 (.123)	.143/1.153 (.134)	.466/1.594* (.186)
Church Attendance	-.209/.811** (.020)	-.215/.807** (.019)	-.183/.833** (.018)	-.168/.846** (.022)
Liberal	.365/1.440** (.039)	.216/1.241** (.034)	.265/1.303** (.033)	.290/1.336** (.041)
Constant	-1.932/.145** (.402)	-1.432/.239** (.369)	-1.654/.191** (.352)	-1.877/.153** (.455)
R2	.212	.107	.134	.139
Chi-Square	644.197	428.503	456.471	242.253
N	2700	3785	3177	1622

Note: Cell entries are given as logit coefficient/odds ratio with the standard error given in parentheses.

* P < .05 ** p < .01

Model 1 includes findings for years 1976 and 1978. Model 1 is significant (.000), explaining 21.2 percent of the variance in attitudes towards marijuana legalization and has a Chi-square of (644.197). During this model's time period, those more likely to support marijuana legalization tend to be younger, more educated, never been married, don't have children living in the home, live in a more urban residence, non-white, politically liberal, and attend church less frequently. Also during this time period, income, gender, being divorced or separated, and region of residence were not significant determinates for the support of marijuana legalization. The means and standard deviations for the variables included in Model 1 can be found in the Appendix.

Model 2 includes findings for years 1986, 1987, and 1988. Model 2 is significant (.000), explaining 10.7 percent of the variance in attitudes towards marijuana legalization and has a Chi-square of (428.503). During this model's time period, those more likely to support marijuana legalization tend to be younger, more educated, male, divorced or separated, live in a more urban residence, live in the western region of the country, politically liberal, and attend church less frequently. Also during this period, income, having never been married, having children living in the home, and being white were not significant determinants for the support of marijuana legalization. The means and standard deviations for the variables included in Model 2 can be found in the Appendix.

Model 3 includes findings for years 1996 and 1998. Model 3 is significant (.000), explaining 13.4 percent of the variance in attitudes towards marijuana legalization and has a Chi-square of (456.471). During this model's time period, those more likely to support marijuana legalization tend to be younger, more educated, male, divorced or separated, don't have children in the home, live in a more urban residence, live in the western region of the country, politically

liberal, and attend church less frequently. Also during this period, income, never being married, and being white were not significant determinants for the support of marijuana legalization. The means and standard deviations for the variables included in Model 3 can be found in the Appendix.

Model 4 includes findings for years 2004 and 2006. Model 4 is significant (.000), explaining 13.9 percent of the variance in attitudes towards marijuana legalization and has a Chi-square of (242.253). During this model's time period, those more likely to support marijuana legalization tend to be younger, more educated, divorced or separated, never been married, white, politically liberal, and attend church less frequently. Also during this time period, income, gender, having children in the home, living in an urban residence, and living in the west were not significant determinants for the support of marijuana legalization. The means and standard deviations for the variables included in Model 4 can be found in the Appendix.

Age was a significant predictor for approval of marijuana legalization all in 4 models and decades. The logistic regression coefficients for models 1-4 are (-.028**), (-.020**), (-.015**), & (-.009*). This suggests that younger people are more likely to support marijuana legalization compared to older individuals. However there appears to be the trend of age becoming less of a significant predictor over time.

Education was a significant predictor for approval of marijuana legalization in all 4 models and decades. The logistic regression coefficients for models 1-4 are (.131**), (.063**), (.067**), & (.051*). This suggests that those with a higher grade level completed are more likely to support marijuana legalization than those who with a lower educational attainment. However there appears to be the trend of education becoming less of a significant predictor over the past four decades.

Income was not a significant predictor for approval of marijuana legalization in any model or decade. The logistic regression coefficients for models 1-4 are (.002), (-.003), (-.002), & (.001). This suggests that income has had no effect on people's attitudes towards marijuana legalization over the past four decades.

Being a female was a significant predictor for disapproval of marijuana legalization in both the 1980's and the 1990's, but not the 1970's or 2000's. The logistic regression coefficients for models 1-4 are (-.128), (-.381**), (-.407**), & (-.351). This suggests that when the attitudes towards marijuana legalization are more favorable, gender becomes a less significant predictor for support of legalization.

Being divorced or separated was a significant predictor for approval of marijuana legalization in the 1980's, 1990's, and 2000's, but not the 1970's. The logistic regression coefficients for models 1-4 are (.236), (.427**), (.316**), & (.444**). This suggests that divorced or separated people have become more likely to support marijuana legalization over the past four decades.

Having never been married was a significant predictor for approval of marijuana legalization in both the 1970's and 2000's, but not in the 1980's and 1990's. The logistic regression coefficients for models 1-4 are (.346*), (.016), (.199), & (.421*). This suggests that when attitudes towards marijuana are more favorable, having never been married becomes more of a significant predictor for support of legalization.

Having children living in the home was a significant predictor for approval of marijuana legalization in the 1970's and 1990's, but not the 1980's or 2000's. The logistic regression coefficients for models 1-4 are (-.300**), (-.199), (-.387**), & (.125).

Living in a more urban residence was a significant predictor for approval of legalization in the 1970's, 1980's, and 1990's, but not the 2000's. The logistic regression coefficients for models 1-4 are (.101**), (.075*), (.072*), & (.044). This suggests that urbanity of residence has become less of a significant predictor for support of marijuana legalization over the past four decades.

Living in the western region of the country was a significant predictor for approval of legalization in the 1980's and 1990's, but not the 1970's or 2000's. The logistic regression coefficients for models 1-4 are (.092), (.383**), (.265*), & (-.165). This suggests that when general attitudes towards marijuana legalization were less favorable, those living in the west were more likely to support legalization.

Being white was a significant predictor of attitudes towards marijuana legalization in the 1970's and 2000's, but not the 1980's and 1990's. The logistic regression coefficients for models 1-4 are (-.399*), (-.119), (.143), & (.466*). In the 1970's, white respondents were less likely to favor marijuana legalization, yet in the 2000's whites were more likely to support marijuana legalization. This suggests that whites have changed their beliefs to become more favorable towards marijuana legalization over the past four decades.

Greater frequency of church attendance was a significant predictor for disapproval of legalization in all 4 models and decades. The logistic regression coefficients for models 1-4 are (-.209**), (-.215**), (-.183**), & (-.168**). This suggests that while greater church attendance has been a significant predictor for disapproval of marijuana legalization over time, there appears to be a trend of decreasing significance of disapproval.

Being politically liberal was a significant predictor for approval towards marijuana legalization in all 4 models and decades. The logistic regression coefficients for models 1-4 are

(.365**), (.216**), (.265**), & (.290**). This suggests that liberals have consistently been more likely to favor marijuana legalization over the past four decades, compared to those who identify themselves as conservative.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

The purpose of this examination was to analyze people's attitudes towards the legalization of marijuana over the past four decades. The research provided addressed a number of social factors such as age, education, income, gender, marital status, living with children, urbanity, region, race, religiosity, and political ideology that are often correlated with attitudes and behaviors towards marijuana legalization. By employing several statistical methods, this research addresses (1) the extent to which attitudes towards marijuana legalization have changed over the past four decades and (2) how the social factors often associated with marijuana legalization attitudes have changed over the same period.

Over the past four decades, Americans have expressed varying attitudes towards the legalization of marijuana. While those who have supported legalization have always been in the minority of opinion, this group has grown and shrunk at different times in recent history. For example, in 1976 and 1978, about 29% of Americans favored legalization. Attitudes towards marijuana legalization then became less favorable, dropping 11% over the next ten years. In 1986, 1987, and 1988 only about 18% of people favored legalization. Ten years later the support for legalization rebounded, growing to about 27% in 1996 and 1998. This trend, of more favorable attitudes towards legalization, had continued to increase so that in 2004 and 2006, more than one-third (34%), of Americans said that marijuana should be made legal.

Age has been a significant predictor for whether people are likely support marijuana legalization. Over the past four decades, younger individuals were more likely to support the legalization of marijuana than older individuals. This would support previous research that found that younger individuals were more likely to support marijuana legalization. The strength of this

association however is weakening. In other words, age is slowly becoming less of a predictor for support of marijuana.

Educational attainment has been a significant predictor for whether people are likely to support marijuana legalization. Over the past four decades, those who have attained higher grade levels of formal schooling were more likely to support marijuana legalization compared to those with less formal education. This would support some previous research that found that those with more education were more likely to support marijuana legalization than those with less education.

Income was not a predictor for attitudes towards marijuana legalization in any decade. This finding, that measured attitudes towards legalization, were contradictory to previous research that found that marijuana users were more likely to earn lower wages and income (Schmidt, Weisner, Wiley 1998), (Degenhardt, Chiu, Sampson, Kessler, Anthony 2007).

Gender was found to be a significant predictor of attitudes towards marijuana legalization in the 1980's and 1990's. These findings suggest that females were less likely to support marijuana legalization than males during a time when overall attitudes were less favorable towards marijuana legalization. These findings also support the previous research that shows a gender convergence towards support for marijuana legalization (Kerr, Greenfield, Bond, Ye, and Rehm 2007).

This study also found that being divorced or separated has been a significant predictor of attitudes supporting marijuana legalization since the 1980's. That is to say, divorced and or separated individuals are statistically more likely to support marijuana legalization than their married peers. Previous research efforts have also found a link between the use of marijuana and an increased likelihood of divorce (Anthony, Helzer 1991), (Duncan, Wilkerson, England 2006).

When overall support for marijuana legalization is more favorable, those who are single and have never been married are more likely to be pro-legalization compared to those who have been married at least once. During the 1980's and 1990's, when overall support for marijuana legalization was low, marital history had no bearing on attitudes.

Having children living in the home had a negative effect on attitudes towards marijuana legalization in the 1970's and 1990's, but no effect in the 1980's or 2000's. Most of the previous literature in this area has focused on parent's use and the subsequent behavior of their children. There is less research on parents' attitudes reflecting the demands of having children living in the home. The research that has addressed this familial aspect has indicated that those with children in the home are less likely to support marijuana legalization.

Previous research has suggested that those living in urban communities were more likely to support marijuana legalization than those living in more rural areas. These findings are consistent with measured attitudes in the 1970's, 1980's, and 1990's, but has become less significant over time to the point that urbanity had no effect on attitudes towards marijuana legalization from 2004 thru 2006.

Living in the western region of the U.S. has traditionally been associated with more favorable attitudes towards marijuana legalization. This study found that living in the west was significantly associated with support for marijuana legalization in the 1980's and 1990's, when overall attitudes were less favorable. When overall attitudes towards marijuana legalization were more favorable, in the 1970's and 2000's, region of residence had no effect.

The impact and significance of race on attitudes towards marijuana legalization has shifted over the past four decades. During the 1970's, whites were significantly less likely to favor marijuana legalization. Over the next two decades, race seemed to have no effect. From

2004 thru 2006 however, these attitudes reversed and whites became statistically more likely to favor marijuana legalization. Therefore, since a majority of the U.S. population identifies themselves as white, it is understanding that attitudes towards marijuana have become more favorable.

Church going has long been supportive of marijuana prohibition. This study confirms previous research that suggests that the greater the church attendance, the less favorable one would be in their attitudes towards marijuana legalization. This suggests that over the past four decades, those Americans who go to church more frequently are less likely to support marijuana legalization than those who attend church less frequently.

Over the past four decades, a majority of Americans have identified themselves as moderate within the liberal/conservative spectrum. This majority has remained relatively consistent in proportion, while during the same time period, their attitudes towards marijuana legalization have fluctuated. This study also found that liberals have been statistically associated with more favorable attitudes towards the marijuana legalization from the 1970's thru to the 2000's. These findings fall in line with the previous research that suggests liberals are traditionally more likely to hold favorable attitudes towards marijuana legalization.

In the past, previous research narrowly focused on adolescents, rates of use, and effects of use/abuse. Less studied are the attitudes and beliefs adults have about marijuana and its prohibition. The advantage of this research was that it addressed adults' attitudes towards marijuana over the past four decades. By analyzing such a large, nationwide sample, spanning over an extended period of time, these findings can paint a more complete picture of just how Americans feel about marijuana legalization.

One limitation of this research is that it does not include enough contributing factors to explain the fall and rise of favorable attitudes towards marijuana legalization over the past 40 years. One aspect that was not discussed, but that may also be related to marijuana legalization attitudes, was the greater availability of mass and electronic media. There may also be a link between life period cohorts and attitudes that was not discussed in this paper.

The controversy surrounding marijuana legalization becomes more complicated when the contextual framing of the drug changes. When marijuana is designated for medical purposes, or labeled as medical marijuana, attitudes towards legalization tend to differentiate themselves from simply asking if marijuana should be made legal. Decriminalization is another connotation that may change people's attitudes towards the legality of marijuana.

Future studies should attempt to include these distinctions in their framing and measurement of Americans' attitudes towards marijuana. This may further clarify the association between beliefs and attitudes about marijuana legalization and actual behaviors of drug use. According to this paper's findings, age, educational attainment, and urbanity of residence are becoming less associated with support towards marijuana legalization. Future research should address where these trends are going and what may be driving force behind them. This paper also found that while being white was once negatively associated with pro-legalization attitudes towards marijuana, today being white is positively associated with pro-legalization attitudes. This reversal of attitudes is an interesting trend and should be further examined.

APPENDIX A
TABLE 3

Table 3: Means and Standard Deviations for Dependent and Independent Variables Used in Logistic Regression.

Variable	Model 1 (1976, 1978)		Model 2 (1987, 1988, 1989)		Model 3 (1996, 1998)		Model 4 (2004, 2006)	
	Mean	Std Dev	Mean	Std Dev	Mean	Std Dev	Mean	Std Dev
Marijuana Legalization	.3021	.45924	.1834	.38701	.2826	.45034	.3696	.48281
Age	44.25	17.887	44.91	17.555	45.19	17.026	46.65	17.117
Educational Attainment	11.97	3.096	12.56	3.028	13.33	2.823	13.5	3.072
Family Income	54.5696	30.2896	53.5311	29.4419	57.7343	29.5427	55.0557	30.2411
Female	.5622	.49621	.5639	.49596	.5463	.49793	.557	.49683
Divorced/Separated	.1038	.305	.1549	.36188	.1951	.39636	.1976	.39824
Single	.1461	.35323	.1954	.39655	.2254	.4179	.2399	.42711
Children Living at Home	.4584	.49836	.3939	.48867	.3553	.47867	.3093	.46229
Urban Residence	2.8657	1.58247	3.0745	1.51185	3.091	1.51106	2.7933	1.45938
West Residence	.167	.37308	.1803	.38477	.2088	.4065	.2191	.41374
White	.9121	.28325	.8115	.39114	.8605	.34656	.8588	.34826
Religious Attendance	3.91	2.687	4.07	2.640	3.71	2.707	3.62	2.792
Liberalism	3.9338	1.28925	3.8901	1.33731	3.8158	1.36236	3.8189	1.4308
Valid N	2700		3785		3177		1622	

LIST OF REFERENCES

- Abood, M. E. and B. R. Martin. 1992. "Neurobiology of Marijuana Abuse." *Trends Pharmacol Sci* 13(5):201-206.
- Agrawal, Arpana and Michael T. Lynskey. 2007. "Does Gender Contribute to Heterogeneity in Criteria for Cannabis Abuse and Dependence? Results from the National Epidemiological Survey on Alcohol and Related Conditions." *Drug and Alcohol Dependence* 88(2):300-307.
- Alfonso, Jacqueline and Michael E. Dunn. 2007. "Differences in the Marijuana Expectancies of Adolescents in Relation to Marijuana Use." *Substance Use & Misuse* 42:1009-1025.
- Bachman, Jerald G., Lloyd D. Johnston, Patrick M. O'Malley and Ronald H. Humphrey. 1988. "Explaining the Recent Decline in Marijuana Use: Differentiating the Effects of Perceived Risks, Disapproval, and General Lifestyle Factors." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 29:92-112.
- Bell, R., S. Pavis, S. Cunningham-Burley, and A. Amos. 1998. "Young Men's Use of Cannabis: Exploring Changes in Meaning and Context Over Time." *Drugs: Education, Prevention and Policy* 5:141-155.
- Breed, Warren and James R. De Foe. 1980. "Mass Media, Alcohol and Drugs: A New Trend." *Journal of Drug Education* 10(2):135-143.
- Brown, James W., Daniel Glaser, Elaine Waxer, and Gilbert Geis. 1974. "Turning off: Cessation of Marijuana Use after College." *Social Problems* 21(4):527-538.
- Caputo, Michael R. and Brian J. Ostrom. 1994. "Marijuana Market: A Meaningful Revenue Source." *American Journal of Economics and Sociology* 53(4):475-490.
- Chen, Kevin W. and Ley A. Killeya-Jones. 2006. "Understanding Differences in Marijuana Use among Urban Black and Suburban White High School Students from Two U.S. Community Samples." *Journal of Ethnicity in Substance Abuse* 5(2):51-73.
- CNN.com. 2004. "Ballot Measures." Election 2000, CNN.com. Retrieved on June 19, 2008 from <http://www.cnn.com/ELECTION/2000/ballots/WA/I2.frameset.exclude.html>.
- CNN.com. 2004. "Ballot Measures." America Votes 2004, Election Results, CNN.com. Retrieved on June 19, 2008 from <http://www.cnn.com/ELECTION/2004/pages/results/ballot.measures>.
- CNN.com. 2006. "Key Ballot Measures." America Votes 2006, CNN.com. Retrieved on June 19, 2008 from <http://www.cnn.com/ELECTION/2006/pages/results/ballot.measures>.

Comprehensive Crime Control Act of 1984. 1984. Public Law No. 98-473.

Comprehensive Drug Abuse Prevention and Control Act of 1970. 1970. HR 18583, Public Law No. 91-513, 84 Stat. 1236.

Cubbins, Lisa A. and Daniel H. Klepinger. 2007. "Childhood Family, Ethnicity, and Drug Use Over the Life Course." *Journal of Marriage & Family* 69(3):810-830.

DEA. 2008. *Drug Scheduling*. Retrieved June 19, 2008, from <http://www.usdoj.gov/dea/pubs/scheduling.html>.

Degenhardt L., W. T. Chiu, N. Sampson, R. C. Kessler, and J. C. Anthony. 2007. "Epidemiological Patterns of Extra-medical Drug Use in the United States: Evidence from the National Comorbidity Survey Replication, 2001–2003." *Drug Alcohol Depend* 90:210–223.

Duncan, Greg J., Bessie Wilkerson, and Paula England. 2006. "Cleaning Up Their Act: The Effects of Marriage and Cohabitation on Licit and Illicit Drug Use." *Demography* 43(4): 691-710.

Eagly A.H. and S. Chaiken. 1993. *Psychology of Attitudes*. Orlando, FL: Harcourt, Brace Jovanovich, Inc.

Elliott, Barbara A. and Jean T. Larson. 2004. "Adolescents in Mid-sized and Rural Communities: Foregone Care, Perceived Barriers, and Risk Factors." *Journal of Adolescent Health* 35(4):303-309.

Forsyth, A.J.M., M. Barnard, and N.P. McKeganey. 1997. "Musical Preference as an Indicator of Adolescent Drug Use." *Addiction* 92(10):1317–1325.

Galea, S., J. Ahern, and D. Vlahov. 2003. "Contextual Determinants of Drug Use Risk Behavior: A Theoretic Framework." *Journal of Urban Health* 80(4):iii50-iii58.

Galea, Sandro, Jennifer Ahern, Melissa Tracy, and David Vlahov. 2007. "Neighborhood Income and Income Distribution and the Use of Cigarettes, Alcohol, and Marijuana." *American Journal of Preventive Medicine* 32:195-202.

Gallup. 2005. Who Supports Marijuana Legalization? Retrieved June 19, 2008 from <http://www.gallup.com/poll/19561/Who-Supports-Marijuana-Legalization.aspx>.

Goode, Erich. 1969. "Marijuana and the Politics of Reality." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 10(2):83-94.

- Grant B.F. and R. Pickering. 1998. "The Relationship between Cannabis Use and DSM-IV Cannabis Abuse and Dependence: Results from the National Longitudinal Alcohol Epidemiologic Survey." *Journal of Substance Abuse* 10(3):255-264.
- Greenbaum, P.E., M.E. Prange, R.M. Friedman, and S.E. Silver. 1991. "Substance Abuse Prevalence and Co morbidity with Other Psychiatric Disorders among Adolescents with Severe Emotional Disturbances." *Journal of the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry* 30(4):575-83.
- Hodge, David R., Paul Cardenas, and Harry Montoya. 2001. "Substance Use: Spirituality and Religious Participation as Protective Factors among Rural Youths." *Social Work Research* 25(3):153-161, Sept.
- Holley, Lynn C., Stephen Kulis, Flavio Francisco Marsiglia, and Verna M. Keith. 2006. "Ethnicity versus Ethnic Identity: What Predicts Substance Use Norms and Behaviors?" *Journal of Social Work Practice in the Addictions* 6(3):53-79.
- Jackson, Donald and Dorothy Twohig. 1976-1979. *The Diaries of George Washington*. 6 vols. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia.
- Kerr, William C., Thomas K. Greenfield, Jason Bond, Yu Ye, and Jürgen Rehm. 2007. "Age-Period-Cohort Influences on Trends in Past Year Marijuana Use in the US from the 1984, 1990, 1995 and 2000 National Alcohol Surveys." *Drug and Alcohol Dependence* 86(2):132-138.
- Khatapoush, Shereen and Denise Hallfors. 2004. "Sending the Wrong Message: Did Medical Marijuana Legalization in California Change Attitudes About and Use of Marijuana?" *Journal of Drug Issues* 22(4):751-770.
- Kohn, Paul M. and G.W. Mercer. 1971. "Drug Use, Drug-Use Attitudes, and the Authoritarianism-Rebellion Dimension." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 12(2):125-131.
- Lambert, Eric G., Lois A. Ventura, David N. Baker, and Morris Jenkins. 2006. "Drug Views: Does Race Matter?" *Journal of Ethnicity in Criminal Justice* 4(1):93-111.
- Lynskey, Michael T., Julia D. Grant, Elliot C. Nelson, Kathleen K. Bucholz, Pamela A.F. Madden, Dixie J. Statham, Nicholas G. Martin, and Andrew C. Heath. 2006. "Novel Approaches to Phenotyping Drug Abuse." *Addictive Behaviors* 31(6):984-994.
- Lynxwiler, John and David Gay. 1994. "Race Differences in Abortion Attitudes." *Social Science Quarterly* 75:67-84.
- Marijuana Tax Act of 1937. 1937. U.S. Department of Treasury. HR 6385, Public 238, 75th Congress.

- McVeigh, Frank J. 2004. *Brief History of Social Problems: A Critical Thinking Approach*. Dallas: University Press of America.
- Measham, F., R. Newcombe and H. Parker. 1994. "The Normalization of Recreational Drug Use Amongst Young People in the North-West of England." *British Journal of Sociology* 45:287-312.
- Merrill, Ray M., Jeffrey A. Folsom, and Susan S. Christopherson. 2005. "The Influence of Family Religiosity on Adolescent Substance Use According to Religious Preference." *Social Behavior & Personality: An International Journal* 33(8):821-835.
- Morrall, Andrew R., Daniel F. McCaffrey and Susan M. Paddock. 2002. "Reassessing the Marijuana Gateway Effect." *Addiction* 97(12):1493-1504.
- Nasim, Aashir, Rosalie Corona, Faye Belgrave, Shawn O. Utsey, and Niloofar Fallah. 2007. "Cultural Orientation as a Protective Factor Against Tobacco and Marijuana Smoking for African American Young Women." *Journal of Youth & Adolescence* 36(4):503-516.
- National Survey on Drug Use and Health: National Findings. 2006. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. Retrieved June 19, 2008 from <http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov/drugfact/marijuana/index.html>.
- NIDA. 2001. National Institute on Drug Abuse Research Report Series: Marijuana Abuse. Retrieved June 19, 2000 from <http://www.drugabuse.gov/ResearchReports/Marijuana/default.html>.
- O'Driscoll, Patrick. 2005. "Denver Votes to Legalize Marijuana Possession." *USA TODAY*. Retrieved June 19, 2008 from http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2005-11-03-pot_x.htm.
- Ours, Jan C. and Jenny Williams. 2007. "Cannabis Prices and Dynamics of Cannabis Use." *Journal of Health Economics* 26(3):578-596.
- Ousey, Graham C. and Michael O. Maume. 1997. "The Grass Is Always Greener: Explaining Rural and Urban Differences in Marijuana Use." *Sociological Focus* 30(3):295-305.
- Parker, H., J. Aldridge, and F. Measham. 1998. *Illegal Leisure - The Normalization of Adolescent Recreational Drug Use*. London: Routledge.
- Pope, H.G. Jr., A.J. Gruber and D. Yurgelun-Todd. 1995. "The Residual Neuropsychological Effects of Cannabis: The Current Status of Research." *Drug Alcohol Depend* 38(1):25-34.

- Proposition 200. 1996. The Drug Medicalization, Prevention, and Control Act of 1996. State of Arizona. Retrieved June 19, 2008 from <http://www.nationalfamilies.org/guide/arizona200-full.html>.
- Proposition 215. 1996. The Compassionate Use Act of 1996. State of California. Retrieved June 19, 2008 from <http://vote96.sos.ca.gov/bp/215text.htm>.
- Readhead, S. 1993. *Rave Off: Politicised Deviance in Contemporary Youth Culture*. Aldershot: Avebury.
- Redhead, Steve ed. 1993. *Rave Off! : Politics and Deviance in Contemporary Youth Culture*. Ashgate Publishing, Brookfield.
- Resnick, H. 1990. *Youth and Drugs: Society's Mixed Messages*, vol 6. Rockville, MD: OSAP, SAMHSA.
- Rienzi, Beth Menees, J. Daniel McMillin, Candace L. Dickson, Darren Crauthers, Kevin F. McNeill, and Maria D. Pesina. 1996. "Gender Differences Regarding Peer Influence and Attitude toward Substance Abuse." *Journal of Drug Education* 26(4):339-347.
- Robins L. N. and D. A. Regier. 1991. *Psychiatric disorders in America: the Epidemiologic Catchment Area Study*. New York: The Free Press.
- Schmidt L., C. Weisner, and J. Wiley. 1998. "Substance Abuse and the Course of Welfare Dependency". *American Journal of Public Health* 88:1616–1622.
- Shafer, Raymond P., et al. 1972. National Commission on Marihuana and Drug Abuse: Marihuana: A Signal of Misunderstanding. Washington DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.
- Shukla, Rashi K. 2005. "Using Marijuana in Adulthood: The Experience of a Sample of Users in Oklahoma City." *Journal of Ethnicity in Substance Abuse* 4(3):153-181.
- Tec, Nechama. 1972. "Marijuana and Other Illegal Drugs." *Second International Symposium on Drug Abuse*, Jerusalem:173-179
- Thornton, Mark. 2007. "Prohibition versus Legalization: Do Economists Reach a Conclusion on Drug Policy." *Independent Review* 11(3):417-433.
- Trevino, Roberto A. and Alan J. Richard. 2002. "Attitudes Towards Drug Legalization Among Drug Users." *American Journal of Drug Alcohol Abuse* 28(1):91–108.
- Wilson, Jeremy M. and Joseph F. Donnermeyer. 2006. "Urbanity, Rurality, and Adolescent Substance Use." *Criminal Justice Review* 31(4):337-356.

- Vicary, Judith R. and Jacqueline V. Lerner. 1986. "Parental Attributes and Adolescent Drug Use." *Journal of Adolescence* 9(2):115-122.
- von Ours, Jan and Jenny Williams. 2007. "Cannabis Use and Educational Attainment." *CEPR* 6449:1-4.
- von Sydow K., R. Lieb, H. Pfister, M. Höfler, and H.U. Wittchen. 2002. "What Predicts Incident Use of Cannabis and Progression to Abuse and Dependence? A 4-year Prospective Examination of Risk Factors in a Community Sample of Adolescents and Young Adults." *Drug Alcohol Depend* 68(1):49-64.
- Yamaguchi, Kazuo and Denise B. Kandel. 1985. "On the Resolution of Role Incompatibility: A Life Event History Analysis of Family Roles and Marijuana Use." *American Journal of Sociology* 90(6):1284-1325.