Who Favors Legalization of Marijuana?

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Research Questions
• How do attitudes towards legalizing marijuana vary by race?
• How does age affect attitudes towards legalizing marijuana?
• Does age moderate the association between race and attitudes towards marijuana legalization?

Significance
• Public opinion about marijuana has also diverged greatly from earlier decades, and today much of society favors the legalization of marijuana (Caulkins et al. 2012).
• Illegal drugs are linked to crime, imprisonment, and wasted lives.
• Harms associated with drugs and drug law enforcement disproportionately affect African Americans (Mears, 1997).

Background
• Percentage of adolescents who perceive great risk in using marijuana once or twice a week has decreased from 55% to 44%.
• 58% of adults support legalization of recreational marijuana (Jones, 2016).
• Colorado and Washington both passed laws to decriminalize the drug.
• A third of students felt marijuana should be entirely legal (Joseph, 2014).

Independent Variable
Respondent’s Race

Dependent Variable
Should Marijuana be legalized?

Hypotheses
• Blacks will favor legalization of marijuana more so than other races.
• The older a person, the less likely they will favor legalization of marijuana.

Data & Sample
• 2018 General Social Survey (GSS)
• Nationally representative of adults from age 18 and older

Results

Percentage Favoring Marijuana Legalization by Race

65.4% 67.6% 57.1%
Black White Other

Percentage Favoring Marijuana Legalization by Race and Age

65.1% 67.6% 57.1%
Black White Other

Future Research
• Future research should consider role of socioeconomic status.
• Future research should also examine gender differences in attitudes regarding legalization of marijuana.

References