



# Religion And State Marijuana Laws

States That Are More Secular Are More Likely To Legalize Recreational Marijuana

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## Introduction

- In order to determine the role of religion in U.S politics I will compare how religious a state is with their level of legalization for marijuana use.
- The role of religion in U.S politics has long been studied and researchers have found that a voter's religion can affect their views on morality, policy decisions, and voter turnout.
- The goal of this paper is to extend on these previous studies and look at whether these previous findings are applicable when looking at marijuana legislation.

## Theory

- The present study proposes the question of whether the religious affiliation of voters in a state affect that state's level of legalization for marijuana with secularism rapidly growing in America.
- My theory is that the moral objections to drug use often due to religious beliefs will cause religious voters to be outspoken in opposition to loosening marijuana restrictions.

## Hypothesis

- H1: States with a higher number of religious voters will be more likely to have more restrictive marijuana laws.
- H2: States with a higher number of secular voters will be more likely to have less restrictive marijuana laws.

## References

Karmen Hanson, A. (n.d.). State medical marijuana laws. Retrieved April 30, 2021, from <https://www.ncsl.org/research/health/state-medical-marijuana-laws.aspx>

Schaffner, B., Ansolabehere, S., & Luks, S. (2021, March 26). Cooperative election study Common CONTENT, 2020. Retrieved April 30, 2021, from <https://dataverse.harvard.edu/dataset.xhtml?persistentId=doi%3A10.7910%2FDVN%2FE9N6PH>

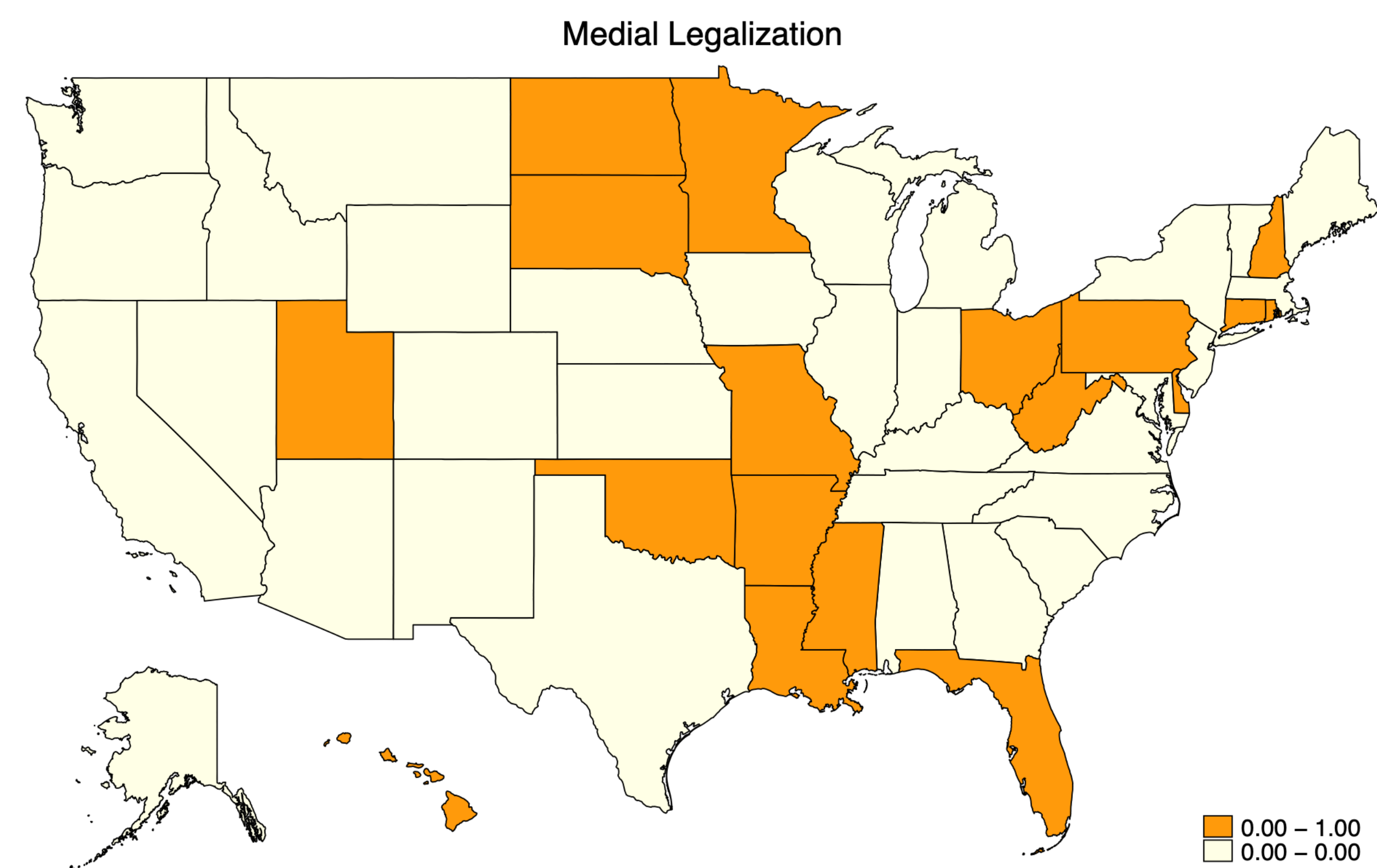


Figure 1

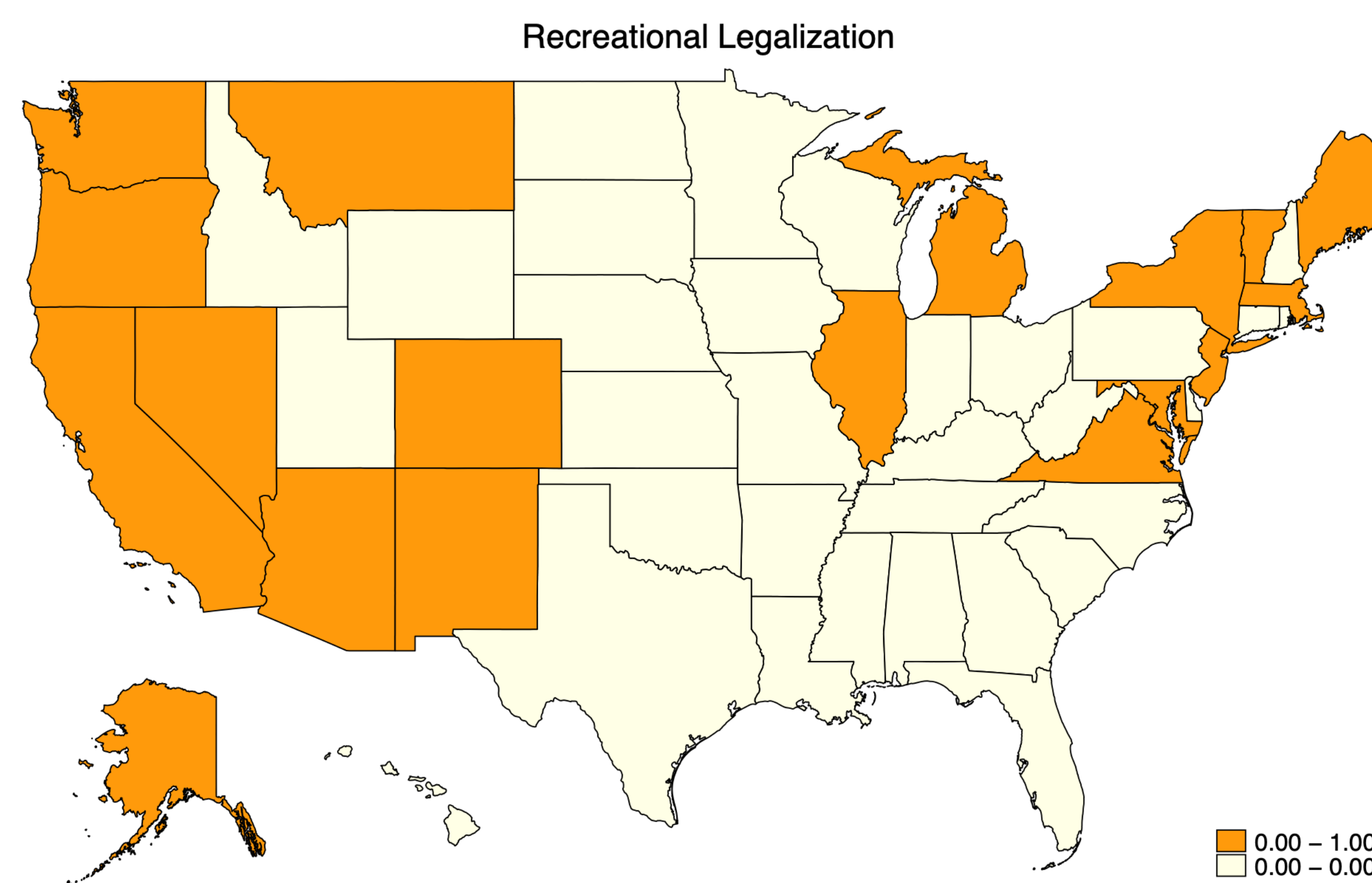


Figure 2

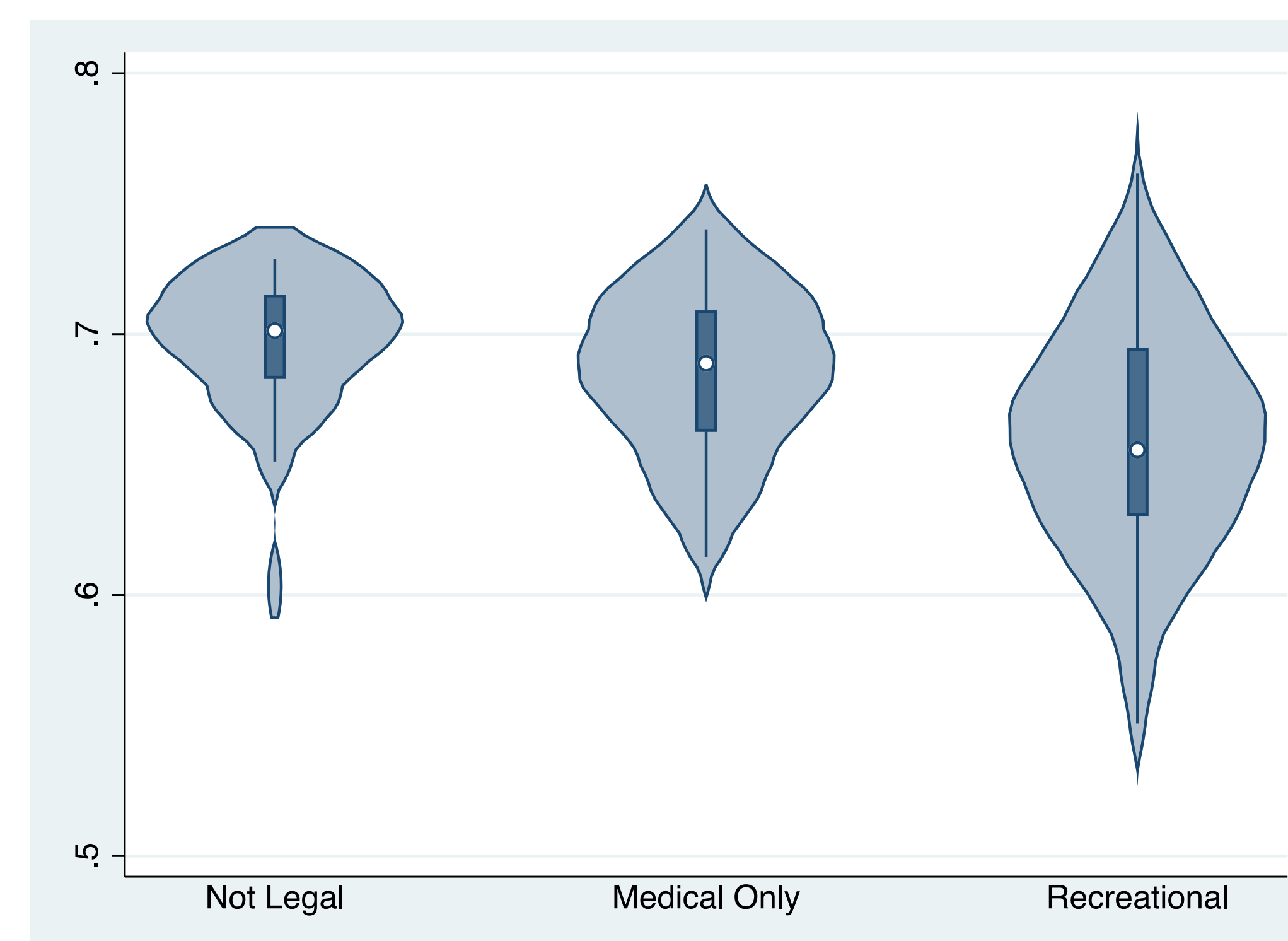


Figure 3.

## Data and Methods

- I use data from the 2020 Cooperative Congressional Election study to calculate the percentage of voters who are religious in each state and used data from the National Conference of State Legislators for marijuana legalization information.
- Dependent variable (DV) = level of marijuana restriction
- Independent variable (IV) = Percent of religious voters

## Results

- Figure 1.** – Displays the states that have legalized medical marijuana in orange. 2020
- Figure 2.** – Displays the states that have legalized recreational marijuana in orange. 2020
- Figure 3.** - Is a violin graph that displays how states with legalized recreational marijuana have fewer religious voters.
- Table 1.** - Shows that on average states with legalized recreational marijuana have fewer religious voters both before and after controlling for party affiliation. Medical marijuana does not follow this trend.

Table 1. Regressions

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	Recreational	Recreational	Medical	Medical
(mean) Religion	-3.784*	-4.084*	1.376	1.328
	(1.574)	(1.574)	(1.633)	(1.665)
(mean) Democrat		0.438		0.0701
		(0.318)		(0.336)
Constant	2.932**	3.039**	-0.578	-0.561
	(1.066)	(1.060)	(1.106)	(1.120)
Observations	51	51	51	51
R <sup>2</sup>	0.106	0.140	0.014	0.015

Standard errors in parentheses

\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$