

# Perceptions of NIMBY Syndrome among Colorado and Washington Dispensary Owners and Managers



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## Abstract

The legalization of medical and recreational marijuana in the United States has presented unique challenges that are unfolding at the federal, state, and municipal levels. As more states decide to allow for the opening of marijuana dispensaries, much is still unknown regarding the community's perception of these businesses. Dear (1992) and Halperin (2016) articulated that community opposition goes through a cycle, beginning with intense disputes and ending with extended calms. These disputes often begin because of the not-in-my-backyard (NIMBY) syndrome. Historically, these disputes have been witnessed over welfare programs, affordable housing programs, and homeless shelters (Dear, 1992). Often they arise because of fear of client groups associated with such programs. While NIMBY has been studied extensively with a number of programs, very few have examined this phenomenon concerning marijuana dispensaries. The purpose of this study was to measure dispensary owners' and managers' perceptions of community backlash against their business in both Colorado and Washington. Survey methodology was used to explore the relationship that dispensaries have with their communities. Results suggest that, while some NIMBY sentiment existed, it was not as severe as many other NIMBY disputes.

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## Introduction

In 2012, Colorado and Washington became the first states to legalize recreational marijuana. While both were legalized by vote, many individuals within these states were vehemently against its legalization. In fact, Colorado implemented a provision that allows localities to ban marijuana dispensaries from selling marijuana within city limits because residents did not want these types of business in town (though not private possession). Specifically, cities within Colorado are allowed to “opt-out” of allowing dispensaries within their city limits. While they cannot ban private possession, they can ban public establishments. It should come as no surprise, then, that NIMBY (Not in My Backyard) sentiment arose in both states. While NIMBY sentiment has been analyzed in a variety of settings, there is a dearth in the literature of its effect on marijuana dispensary locations. Further, studies that have examined NIMBY have focused primarily on medical marijuana facilities (Boggess et al., 2014; Németh & Ross, 2014; Romely et al., 2007; Thomas & Freisthler, 2017), with only one study we are aware of focusing on recreational marijuana dispensaries (Victory, 2016). In addition, this study will add to the literature of NIMBY by asking dispensary employees themselves to assess NIMBY sentiment they have experienced. Through both quantitative and qualitative analysis, we aim to measure the impact NIMBY sentiment has had on the proliferation of dispensaries and assess if any steps can be taken to curb these sentiments in the future.

## Marijuana Legalization in Colorado and Washington

Medical marijuana first became legal in Colorado in 2000, when Amendment 20 was passed. This allowed a qualifying patient, or their caregiver, to possess two ounces of marijuana and up to six plants, strictly for medical purposes (RMHIDTA, 2018). Amendment 20 allowed for government-issued “red cards” and created a defense for anyone carrying one who was arrested and prosecuted. Blake and Finlaw (2014) argued that this was the beginning of the legalization of recreational marijuana. In 2009, the “Ogden Memo” was released, deprioritizing prosecutions of those who provided medical marijuana. Blake and Finlaw (2014) argued that those who may once have been considered “drug dealers” were now “small business owners,” and an “unregulated network” had taken root (p.364). This led to pushback from the public, which resulted in two pieces of legislation passing in Colorado: House Bill 1284 and Senate Bill 109. The former regulated the growth, distribution, and sale of marijuana while the latter outlined how medical professionals could make marijuana-based recommendations, clarified patient privacy, and explained

how the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) issued red cards. These bills highlighted that marijuana could be state regulated, which the authors argued helped lead to the passage of Amendment 64.

Amendment 64, also titled, “An Act to Regulate Marijuana Like Alcohol,” removed criminal penalties for possession of less than one ounce of marijuana. It also permitted individuals to cultivate up to six plants and to give away, without pay, amounts up to one ounce (Kamlin, 2013). In addition, and Kamlin (2013) argued most significantly, it called on the legislature to pass the proper legislation for retail sale regulation. Finally, it called for established restrictions and taxes, making it a requirement that the Colorado Department of Revenue license and regulate this new industry (Pardo, 2014).

Blake and Finlaw (2014) highlighted that there was significant opposition to this, notably from then Governor John Hickenlooper, but there was not much momentum from their side until just weeks before the election. Many just assumed Amendment 64 would fail to pass because it was federally illegal. However, the proponents were quite organized, and Amendment 64 passed with 55% of the vote (Blake & Finlaw, 2014; Kamlin, 2013). Colorado Governor Hickenlooper was disappointed with this outcome, but nonetheless assembled a task force to help implement the legalization of recreational marijuana (Blake & Finlaw, 2014; Kamlin, 2013). This task force created and implemented many rules, but the one most salient to this topic is the allowance of local “opt-out” for Colorado’s cities. Localities, then, are not allowed to ban private possession, but they can ban retail establishments. However, these localities do not receive any tax share-back. As will be explored further, localities that are more conservative have opted out, while more progressive ones have opted in (Blake & Finlaw, 2014). As such, political ideology may play a role in the NIMBY sentiment felt at differing locales.

Washington took a slightly different approach. Voters in this state passed Initiative Measure No. 502, which amended sections of Titles 69 and 46 of the *Revised Code of Washington*, and not the state constitution (Goltz & Bogdanov, 2016). The stated goal of this was to allow law enforcement to focus on property and violent crimes, to put marijuana sale into the hands of legitimate business owners, and to generate tax revenue. To do the latter, the Washington State Liquor Board (known now as the Washington State Liquor and Cannabis Board) was authorized to both regulate and tax the sale of marijuana to those over 21 years of age. It also was required to create a threshold for driving under the influence of marijuana.

As such, Washington has more restrictive rules than Colorado. Washington does not allow individuals to cultivate their own marijuana, and a marijuana producer cannot also be a retailer. Further, dispensaries cannot be located or advertise

within 1000 feet of schools, and within 100 feet of parks, libraries, or any other place that a minor could potentially frequent (Goltz & Bogdanov, 2016).

## **Background of “Not in My Backyard” (NIMBY)**

The proliferation of the concept of “NIMBY” began in the late 1970s and early 1980s. One of the earliest, and most famous, utterances of the term came from New York City mayor Ed Koch, noting that NIMBY was making it nearly impossible to build facilities that were needed in the city. Dear (1992) noted that NIMBY is “the motivation of residents who want to protect their turf. More formally, NIMBY refers to the protectionist attitudes of and oppositional tactics adopted by community groups facing an unwelcome development in their neighborhood” (p.288). NIMBY facilities can vary greatly, from landfills and hazardous waste storage, to low-income housing and correctional facilities (to name a few). While the type of facility and hostility of the NIMBY sentiment can vary, Dear (1992) argued that the cycle remains the same. It begins in what he terms the “youth” stage, where news of the proposal is first presented, and opposition comes from a small group. It then segues into the “mature” stage, where supporters from each side draw their “battle lines.” The debate becomes public, and real concerns are voiced, such as property value declining and increased traffic. Finally, the cycle moves into “old age,” wherein conflict resolution occurs. It is often long, and sometimes no concrete solution occurs.

Pueblo, Colorado offers a good example of the NIMBY cycle. Local officials in the city allowed recreational marijuana dispensaries to open. Pueblo was a prosperous city until the closing of the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company mill in the 1980s. City officials believed that allowing these businesses to be located within the city would help grow the economy once again (Halperin, 2016). In Pueblo, the “youth” stage began about three years later. While the dispensaries had provided 1,300 jobs, there was a small but growing opposition to them. These individuals pointed out the rising homeless population, the damaged reputation of Pueblo, and concerns of organized crime for reasons as to why dispensaries should be banned (Halperin, 2016). Those who support dispensaries, however, have now also become more vocal, leading to the “mature” stage. These individuals note that the ban of dispensaries will not stop individuals from growing marijuana and that increased homelessness is expected in any boom town (Halperin, 2016). This all has led to the “old age” stage, when the organization, Pueblo for a Healthy Future, introduced a ballot measure that would end the recreational cannabis industry (Maclver, 2016). While residents rejected this proposal (Wallace, 2016), they did vote to put a

moratorium on new recreational marijuana businesses opening until 2019 (Padilla, 2016).

Dear (1992) articulated several factors that can impact the ferocity of the NIMBY sentiment. The first, and perhaps most important, is geographical proximity; the closer one lives to the proposed facility, the more likely they are to oppose it. Client characteristics also play an important role. According to the Daniel Yankelovich Group (1990), little to no pushback occurs against facilities to help those with physical disabilities, old age, or terminal illness. A bit more pushback occurs when the facilities help those who have some sort of mental illness, and facilities that are least desirable house those with what they termed “social diseases” such as criminals, alcoholics, and drug addicts. Piat (2000) expanded this, noting that individuals may fear criminal acts committed against themselves or their family. The facility’s size plays a role as well, along with its operating hours, types of activities, and potential outreach programs. Finally, the characteristics of the community hosting the facility are important; Dear (1992) reports that more affluent communities are less welcoming. Piat (2000) noted that these communities fear that neighborhood amenities and overall quality of life will suffer with the addition of these facilities.

## **NIMBY in Other Settings**

NIMBY syndrome has been applied to various facilities for the better part of five decades. Piat (2000) assessed community perceptions of three proposed group homes (one to help the mentally ill, one to help the developmentally disabled, and one to help those being released from prison) and found that the reason the community opposed the home was because of their opposition to deinstitutionalization and social integration. Specifically, residents did not understand why the community had to support these homes, and questioned if it was safe to integrate these individuals into their community. Piat (2000) urged policymakers to consider the concerns of community residents when debating opposition to these types of facilities.

New housing developments, both government assisted and market rate, also have felt NIMBY backlash. Pendall (1999) concluded that approximately 25% of 141 examined projects were protested through NIMBY rhetoric. NIMBY opposition was highest when the project included affordable housing, and when they were going to be built adjacent to single-family housing. Those projects that were built next to other affordable housing sites or open space did not experience this opposition.

Rasmussen (1990) examined NIMBY opposition of proposals to build prisons, landfills, and incinerators. Overall, he concluded that NIMBY opposition is weaker when there is perceived low risk and high economic benefit, and when the population is low. Martin and Myers (2005) came to similar conclusions, finding that the proximity of a prison to neighboring communities was a significant factor in NIMBY sentiment. The largest, however, was fear of prison visitors entering the community. Community-based residential housing that helps with the reentry process has also faced NIMBY opposition, and not just in middle- and upper-class neighborhoods. Disadvantaged communities do not want perceived security threats living in their neighborhoods as well, and often, even with monetary backing, these facilities are not sited because of this opposition (Roman & Travis, 2006).

Similar fears may occur that leads to NIMBY outcry for dispensaries. Specifically, individuals may fear an increase of crime in the community, an increase of perceived dangerous individuals, reduction of property values, and resistance to offer support. This may vary, however, based on the population size of the community, along with population demographics, specifically political affiliation, with more progressive communities more likely to support dispensaries.

## **NIMBY and Marijuana Dispensaries**

While there is little NIMBY research that assesses recreational marijuana dispensaries, several studies have assessed medical marijuana dispensaries. Boggess et al. (2014) examined 75 Denver neighborhoods that contained a total of 275 medical marijuana dispensaries to determine if: 1. racial and ethnic composition predicted future locations of marijuana dispensaries and 2. if the location of these dispensaries created social isolation over time. The authors hypothesized both of these would occur because of beliefs held by both the American public and law enforcement. Concerning beliefs held by the American Public, according to the Pew Research Center (2010, 2013) approximately one-third of the American public believes that smoking marijuana is morally wrong and can act as a gateway drug to harder drug use. Concerning law enforcement, Ingold and Lofholm (2011) found that law enforcement officers do believe dispensaries can lead to crime. Specifically, they found that Denver police share these views, noting that they have responded to crimes at dispensaries regularly. This suggests, then, that medical marijuana dispensaries could elicit NIMBY sentiment.

Using data retrieved from the Piton Foundation, Boggess et al. (2014) concluded that these dispensaries were not placed in disproportionately black or Hispanic



neighborhoods, but they were placed in areas with higher crime rates. This could suggest that developers took NIMBY sentiments into account when determining where to build their dispensary. The authors also note that they were built where there is a heavy retail presence, which does also attract more crime. Overall, the authors concluded that these dispensaries do not behave as locally undesirable land uses (LULUs), and do not have overall negative effects on minorities and the poor. While this does not specifically answer how the community perceives dispensaries, it does help frame the NIMBY argument against them.

Thomas and Freisthler (2017) conducted a similar study in Los Angeles. Using data from the UCLA Medical Marijuana Study, the authors examined the change in the number of dispensaries across Census tracts after the passage of Proposition D. This proposition capped the number of dispensaries allowed in Los Angeles, set zoning restrictions that disallowed dispensaries to be located within a certain distance from schools, parks, libraries, and churches, and prohibited dispensaries from operating in residentially zoned areas. In addition, some Los Angeles neighborhoods advocated for the closing of dispensaries, often asking local authorities to call in the DEA to raid and close them. Because of this, many dispensaries relocated. Thomas and Freisthler (2017) assessed where these dispensaries relocated and what effect relocation may have had. Contrary to the Boggess et al. (2014) study, they found that dispensaries relocated to predominately black communities, although they did not relocate to areas with higher social disorganization. Prior research has found that NIMBY sentiment is more likely to occur in predominately white neighborhoods (Boggess et al., 2014; Németh & Ross, 2014; Romely et al., 2007), which may explain why these owners chose to locate or relocate where they did.

Németh and Ross (2014) provided more evidence of NIMBY sentiment toward medical marijuana dispensaries in their case study of Denver. The authors argued that these dispensaries are “prototypical LULUs,” highlighting that they do have some benefit, but no one wants them around (p. 7). They elaborate on why communities do not want them, citing a bevy of reasons including: fear of increased loitering, drug dealers, noxious odors, and gang activity, to name just a few. Utilizing a wealth of Census data, the authors analyzed where these dispensaries would be allowed to locate. They found that most zoning land was in areas considered to be severely socioeconomically disadvantaged (SED) and had high proportions of African American, Hispanic, Asian, and Native American (AHANA) residents. The authors argue that better evaluations need to occur on the impacts of medical marijuana dispensary land use policies. Further, work needs to be done

in the neighborhood to allow for a more nuanced understanding of any potential effects.

Currently, only one study has analyzed NIMBY sentiment toward recreational dispensaries. Victory (2016) conducted interviews with both city and county planners throughout Colorado to understand how they planned to manage recreational marijuana legalization and why they chose their course of action. A total of fourteen interviews were conducted among city and county planners (and one city attorney) and all reported that at least some segment of their community held NIMBY sentiment. Similar to findings in prior studies, residents reported fearing the decline of property value (Bailey & Reiterman, 2008), health impacts (Thurstone et al., 2011), property and violent crime (Ingold, 2010; Ingold & Lofholm, 2011; Tilton, 2009) and, unwanted odor (Bailey & Reiterman, 2008). Differences occurred, however, between conservative and progressive communities. The former used zoning and regulatory powers to push these shops outside city limits, as they viewed them as nuisance or vice businesses. The latter, on the other hand, took an inclusive approach and have seen profit increases.

Overall, there is a dearth of research on NIMBY sentiment toward both recreational and medical marijuana dispensaries. This is an important topic to consider, however, as more states are starting to legalize these facilities. This study attempts to expand this line of research to assess NIMBY sentiments that these shop owner's experience.

## **Methodology**

The research question being answered is: Do marijuana dispensary owners or managers in Colorado and Washington experience NIMBY sentiment? To answer this, state government websites were accessed to create lists of active marijuana dispensaries. These various agencies compiled lists of all active marijuana dispensaries and their physical addresses and have made them available to the public. According to the Marijuana Enforcement Department (MED) of Colorado, there were 803 licensed marijuana dispensaries in Colorado at the time data were collected. According to the Washington State Liquor and Cannabis Board (WSLCB), there were 476 dispensaries in Washington. These surveys were sent during the summer of 2018, more than four years after recreational dispensaries were able to open in these states. A pre-notice was sent to the dispensaries on 4/23/18, followed by a survey two weeks after.

Out of the potential 1196 dispensaries that were originally sent a survey, 182 were returned to sender, mostly for not having a mail receptacle for the mail to be



delivered. After investigating each of the returned mailers, it was discovered that 51 of the dispensaries were closed, 67 were not interested in taking the survey, and 32 surveys were resent after calling the dispensaries and obtaining their correct mailing address. In a further attempt to increase the response rate, follow up email surveys were used. In October of 2018, email follow up surveys were sent to dispensaries in Colorado and Washington. From the initial list of dispensaries, the researchers were able to obtain email addresses for 448 dispensaries from Colorado and 543 from Washington. As most of these email addresses were not available from Colorado's MED or the WSLCB, the researchers used internet searches to build a database of dispensary email addresses. Some dispensaries had the same email address for multiple locations, and others did not make their email addresses public. After the initial email surveys, two follow up invitations were sent. The survey was closed in November of 2018.

There were a total of 95 respondents. Of those 95 dispensaries, a number owned or managed multiple locations and only answered one survey for all of their dispensaries. Therefore, the surveys reached a total of 170 dispensaries. When this was accounted for, the response rate for this study was 14.8% (170 dispensaries reached out of the 1145 eligible).

### ***NIMBY Measurements***

This paper is part of a larger study of dispensaries in the states of Colorado and Washington. The survey measured the attitudes of dispensary owners about legalization, victimization, political issues, and challenges of owning a dispensary. In addition to these topics, nine questions/statements were directed at their experiences with NIMBY sentiment. Five of these statements were in Likert-scale form, ranging from 1-5, with one being strongly disagree and five strongly agree. These statements were: 1. There is a lot of crime in the immediate area around my dispensary's location. 2. Communities should be able to decide if they want dispensaries within their city/county limits. 3. People have moved out of my community because of the presence of my dispensary. 4. The number of serious crimes has increased in my community. 5. The number of homeless people in my community has increased.

In addition to these questions, four other questions were asked, measuring their personal experiences with NIMBY sentiment. The first was, "How much backlash have you experienced from the community" (1 = none at all – 10 = extreme backlash)? The next three were: 1. How welcome do you feel by neighboring businesses in the area where your business operates? 2. How welcome do you feel by local residents in the area where your business operates? 3. How welcome do you feel by other shoppers in the area where your business operates? All three

used the same measure, with 1 = none at all and 10 = extremely welcome. These four questions also included a follow-up qualitative question asking them to explain any backlash or hostility felt in these situations.

## **Demographics**

There were a total of 95 respondents representing 170 dispensaries. Of the 95 responses, 63 were returned via mail and 32 were completed online. Respondents were closely split between states, with 49 from Colorado and 46 from Washington. The most common type of dispensary provided both recreational and medical cannabis (45.7%), with 40.4% selling only recreational, and 13.8% only medicinal.

Demographically (see Table 1), the respondents were split evenly between males (50.6%) and females (49.4%). The majority of the respondents were white (85.9%), with 4.7% identifying as Hispanic, 1.2% as Black, and 8.2% as "Other." When asked what about their highest education level, the largest group had a Bachelor's degree (45.5%), followed by some college (25%), Associate's degree (12.5%), Master's degree (10.2%), high school diploma or GED (3.4%), and technical school (2.3%). In addition, two individuals had either some high school or a law degree. When asked to identify their political affiliation, 17 individuals opted to leave the item blank. Of those who responded, the majority of the respondents (50%) identified as politically independent, while 25.6% identified as republican, 14.1% as democrat, and 10.3% as "other," ranging from libertarian ( $n = 3$ ), green party ( $n = 1$ ), or none ( $n = 1$ ).

## **Findings**

### **Scales**

The first scaled question asked, "On a scale of 1-10, how much backlash have you experienced from the community (1 = none at all - 10 = extreme backlash)?" Overall, dispensary owners in both states reported very little backlash. The mean was 3.44, with the majority of respondents reporting 1 ( $N = 24$ ). The qualitative comments shed light on the reason for this mostly positive response. Of the 45 respondents who commented, nine noted that backlash was strong in the beginning, but has since dissipated. While most just reported that it has decreased, this comment may suggest why: "Backlash at the beginning. Fear that there would be increased crime, etc. Currently four years of operating with zero public safety issues" (Participant 80: Washington Dispensary Owner). While future research should examine this further, it could be that the fears that community members had were unfounded, and, over time, their NIMBY sentiment has softened. Another respondent argued that it was because of lack of education about cannabis. With

that said, some still did report issues with the community. Echoing the findings of Németh and Ross (2014) and Bailey and Reiterman (2008), three dispensary owners noted that community members have issues with the smell from the dispensaries. Others noted complaints about trash, rent, zoning, and the “seedy” advertising used, and one noted that they could not get a car loan or cash a check because of the business they were in, but overall the respondents did not feel much backlash from the community.

The second scaled question asked, “How welcome do you feel by neighboring businesses in the area where your business operates” (1 = not welcome at all – 10 = extremely welcoming)?” As with the first question, overall dispensary owners/workers felt quite welcome by neighboring businesses (mean = 7.49) with the majority (N = 24) reporting a score of 8. There were a total of 33 responses to the qualitative question, with the majority either answering “none” or “N/A” (N = 7). The next most common responses were actually positive ones (N = 5), noting that other businesses are willing to help. Two noted that the other businesses like having them because they bring traffic to the area.

**Table 1. Demographics**

Variable	N	Percentage
<b>State</b>		
Colorado	49	51.6%
Washington	46	48.4%
<b>Type of Dispensary</b>		
Recreational Only	38	40.4%
Medicinal Only	13	13.8%
Both Recreational and Medicinal	43	45.7%
<b>Role</b>		
Owner	45	50.0%
Manager	33	36.7%
Employee	4	4.4%
Other	8	8.9%
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	44	49.4%
Female	45	50.6%

Variable	N	Percentage
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>		
White, non-Hispanic	73	85.9%
Black, non-Hispanic	1	1.2%
Hispanic	4	4.7%
Other	7	8.2%
<b>Education</b>		
Some High School	1	1.1%
High School Diploma/GED	3	3.4%
Technical School Diploma	2	2.3%
Some College	22	25.0%
Associate's Degree	11	12.5%
Bachelor's Degree	40	45.5%
Master's Degree	9	10.2%
<b>Political Affiliation</b>		
Democrat	20	25.6%
Republican	11	14.1%
Independent	39	50%
Other	8	10.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>100%</b>

Note: Some responses do not equal 95 due to respondents leaving items blank

Of the negatives, two noted that businesses complain of the smell, several noted that they were harassed, including one owner who had permission from a landlord to open a new business on the landlord's property. However, a neighboring business complained so much that the landlord changed his mind, refusing to let the marijuana dispensary owner move in. Finally, and interestingly, two noted that they were harassed by other dispensaries. One did not elaborate, but the other noted that the owner of a certain dispensary "called all of our vendors and threatened to stop doing business with them if they worked with us. We called the vendors and got them to keep working with us, but f\*\*\* that guy" (Participant 91: Colorado Dispensary Manager). Further research may want to explore potential disputes between dispensary owners within the same town.

The third scaled question asked, "How welcome do you feel by local residents in the area where your business operates (1 = not welcome at all – 10 = extremely welcoming)?" Again, as with the prior questions, overall dispensary owners felt welcomed by local residents who reside in their area of business (mean = 7.90) with the majority selecting either 8 (N = 20) or 9 (N = 20). Only 17 respondents

completed the qualitative question, and eight of them reported either “none” or “n/a.” One actually noted that they experienced NIMBY sentiment, but it had since “went away.” One noted that the religious conservatives are against their store, but, for the most part, the owners do not seem to have any issues with residents.

The final scaled question asked, “How welcome do you feel by shoppers in the area where your business operates (1 = not welcome at all – 10 = extremely welcoming)?” They also reported feeling extremely welcome by shoppers (mean = 8.31), with 30 dispensary owners scoring this item a 10. Only 13 respondents completed the qualitative question, and, as with the prior question, most reported either “none” or “n/a” (N = 7). Upon qualitative analysis, no emergent themes arose from this question. One noted that, on occasion, customers at a bowling alley next door complain of the smell, but, in general, it does not seem that shoppers in areas next to marijuana dispensaries mind the presence of it.

## **Discussion and Conclusion**

This study attempted to assess NIMBY sentiment experienced by marijuana dispensary owners and managers in both Colorado and Washington. A total of 95 respondents who owned or operated 170 dispensaries responded. Four qualitative questions were asked to assess their experiences, measuring backlash experienced, and welcoming from other businesses, community members, and business patrons in the community. For all questions, we found that NIMBY sentiment initially existed, but has relinquished over time. Below, we assess why this may have occurred.

While there still are some residual NIMBY sentiments experienced by dispensary owners and employees (the most common being smell, which echoes findings from Németh and Ross (2014) and Bailey and Reiterman (2008)), this study finds, for the most part, that these sentiments have dissipated over time. Because recreational dispensaries are new in this country, as of yet no studies have analyzed NIMBY sentiment over time in regard to them. However, NIMBY sentiment has been analyzed over time with other developments and has been found to be lessening. For example, both Devine-Wright (2005) and Petrova (2013) concluded that longitudinal studies of NIMBY sentiment toward wind farms have consistently found a decrease in negative feelings toward them. Petrova (2013) concluded this occurred because the community eventually found that wind power was better. He also noted that, once construction of the plants ended acceptance of them improved. It should be noted that this is not found in all studies. Further, Petrova (2013) noted that those who live closer to these plants come to accept them,

especially after they have visited one. Intriguingly, some rural individuals changed their NIMBY stance to a PIMBY (please in my backyard) stance when they learned of the money that could be made by having turbines on their property.

While NIMBY sentiment, according to respondents, did decrease over time, it could also be that they were never too severe to begin with. Devine-Wright (2011) noted, in his case study of tidal energy, the public accepted it because it made the community known worldwide. It could be that residents of both Washington and Colorado are proud to reside in states where marijuana legalization first happened. So while the dispensary owners experienced some NIMBY sentiment at first, it has quickly dissipated and, as highlighted by the results, for most no longer a concern. However, at least in Colorado, the lack of strong NIMBY sentiment could exist because of the success of policy implementation. As Hudak (2014) noted, the creation of the task force was one of the most successful administrative actions taken by Governor Hickenlooper. Hudak (2014) gives much credit to Governor Hickenlooper; while he was not a proponent of legalization, once it passed he worked diligently on implementation, creating the task force and giving them a short timeline (3 months). This led to task forces being created in specific jurisdictions, each including membership from diverse backgrounds. This led to compromise, and plans that worked best in each jurisdiction, including opting-out for some (Hudak, 2014). Allowing this could have had a significant effect on NIMBY sentiment before the dispensary was even built, because only communities that voted for the dispensary would have one constructed.

In addition, one of the primary concerns, it seemed, was that dispensaries may increase crime in the community. However, in an examination of property and violent crime rates using UCR data across states with and without legal marijuana dispensaries (medical, recreational, and both), Maier et al (2017) found no increase in either of these crime types. Further, in a recent study by Brinkman and Mok-Lamme (2019) it was found that dispensaries actually *decreased* crime in Denver by approximately 19% over the sample time period. It could be that residents are noticing these changes and curbing any NIMBY sentiment they may originally have had. Future research should explore this more carefully to understand any potential shifts in NIMBY sentiment residents may have had. This would also be beneficial to states that may legalize marijuana dispensaries in the future.

This study was not without limitations. Primarily, the response rate was low, at only 14.8%. To help increase the response rate, the researchers first mailed hard copies to all dispensaries in Colorado and Washington. This was followed by an e-mail survey to those dispensaries that did not respond. Even with these strategies implemented, we only received responses from 170 of 1,145 eligible dispensaries.



While the findings were consistent throughout those surveyed, there is a chance dispensaries that did not participate could have experienced NIMBY sentiment. Future research must increase response rates to better understand the impact of NIMBY sentiment.

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