

“Dead on Arrival”: Why Marijuana Decriminalization in the Air Capital Never Took Off

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This study is a thematic analysis of the events leading up to the marijuana decriminalization vote of April 2015 in Wichita, Kansas. Newspaper articles appearing in *The Wichita Eagle* were purposively sampled for their relevance to the subject matter. The lack of existing literature on marijuana decriminalization necessitated a ground-up coding and analysis scheme, which allowed for themes to emanate from the data itself rather than be imposed upon it. For instance, the code “city/state conflict” was developed after repeatedly finding instances of conflict between the state’s legislature and Wichita’s city council. Findings show that while Wichita’s city council is generally in favor of allowing citizens to vote on the ordinance they received strong opposition from state officials. The council ultimately placed the decriminalization measure on the ballot, which was accepted by a majority vote but has not been legally realized because of its contradiction with state law.