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The Social Representation of Marijuana in Brazilian Journalism: Coverage Analysis from Portal G1

The Social Representation of Marijuana in Brazilian Journalism: Analysis of The Coverage of Portal G1

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SUMMARY
This research presents a study on the employability of the words “marijuana” and “cannabis” in selected articles from the G1 news portal in 2022. The corpus of this research consists of 31 articles extracted from the G1 news portal, using the following keywords to search: “marijuana G1” and “cannabis G1”. The investigation sought to understand the context behind the use of the term “marijuana” and the term “cannabis” in selected articles. The study makes contributions to journalism through observation of journalistic news, pointing out its influences on the construction of social representation related to weed in Brazilian society.
Key words: Social representation. Marihuana. Cannabis. Journalism. G1 Portal.

ABSTRACT
This research presents a study on the employability of the world's “marijuana” and “cannabis” in selected articles from the G1 news portal in 2022. The corpus of this research consists of 31 articles extracted from the G1 news portal, using the following keywords for search: “marijuana G1” and “cannabis G1”. The investigation sought to understand the context behind the use of the term “marijuana” and the term “cannabis” in selected subjects. The study brings contributions to journalism through the observation of journalistic news, pointing out its influences in the construction of social representation related to the herb in Brazilian society. **Keywords:** Social representation. Marijuana. Cannabis. Journalism. G1 Portal.

1. INTRODUCTION

Many countries have reevaluated their drug policy over the years as an alternative to the failure of the prohibitionist perspective. Like the Uruguay model, which in 2013 became the first country in the world to legalize marijuana trade, regulating the production, distribution and sale of the plant and its derivatives.

There are other examples, such as Portugal, which since 2001 has decriminalized the medicinal and recreational use of cannabis, and has included all problematic drug use under its healthcare system. In the country, the legal quantity for personal consumption is 25 grams, making the example the closest to the Brazilian reality, considering that the number of consumers did not increase, thus understanding that the measure had a positive impact (hagenbuch, 2014) .

In the United States, since 1996, there have been several experiments with alternative policies to deal with drugs, with Colorado and Washington being the states where weed has been regulated for recreational purposes. tives and 22 other States have laws that allow the use of marijuana by medical prescription (THE STATE DE SÃO PAULO, 2014).

In Turin, Italy, a project regulating the production and sale of marijuana for recreational purposes was approved by the General Assembly in 2014, becoming the first major Italian city to approve the legalization of marijuana.

In 2015, Canada ended a 10-year period of a conservative government and one of the main changes was the legalization of marijuana with the policy defended by the Liberal Party, through which the new prime minister was elected.

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In Croatia, in 2015, marijuana was legalized for medicinal purposes, with cultivation and domestic cultivation of the plant, and only patients registered to receive it from the government were allowed.

The legalization of marijuana in the countries mentioned occurred slowly within a specific context, and in the same way, prohibitionist policies, still in force in some countries, rely on particular historical circumstances.

Therefore, it is important to analyze the construction of the social representation of the terms “marijuana” and “cannabis” in news on the G1 portal, selecting articles published in 2022.

Given the analyzed corpus, we seek to answer: how is the construction of social representation based on news involving the words “marijuana” and “cannabis” in mass media?

The relevance of this analysis lies in its contribution to various fields of knowledge, especially to the journalistic sphere, enabling the understanding of the construction of the representation of marijuana in the discourse reproduced by Brazilian journalism.

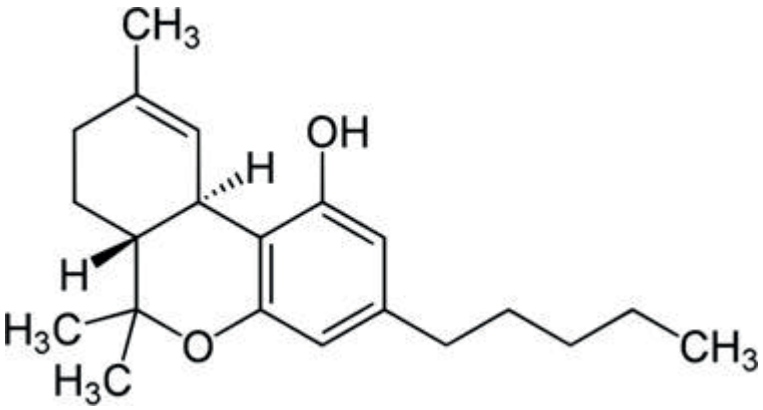
2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Chemical composition of marijuana

A*Cannabis sativa*is a herbaceous plant from the Moraceae family, native to India, and can reach five meters in height. Its fruit is greenish yellow, with acidic pulp that feeds some species of birds (MORAES, 2016).

It has more than four hundred chemical substances, with THC as its main active component. (tetrahydrocannabinol)(Figure 1), composed of the phenol family, responsible for hallucinogenic consequences by altering the person's brain activity, causing the perception of time and space to be reduced (FOGAÇA, 2016).

Figure 1–Chemical structure ofTetrahydrocannabinol(THC)



Source: Fogaça (2016)

THC is concentrated in the flowers andresins,being isolated for the first time by Raphael Mechoulam, Yechiel GazoniIt isHabib Edery,in 1964, by extracting THC from hashish with petroleum ether. The beginningactive remainsin the blood for eight days and if in that intervalused againthe concentration of THC increases and the effects are more intense (FOGAÇA, 2016).

In medicine, THC is used in cancer patients to treat vomiting and in glaucoma patients to reduce eye pressure (FOGAÇA, 2016).

Another substance found in marijuana is CBD.(cannabidiol)which is not hallucinogenic, being used in studies to treat cancer cells, chronic pain, diabetes and others (BOACONHA BRASIL, 2014).

two

2.1 Social representations of marijuana users

Social representations are characteristic elements of human expression based on the experience of the subjects who issue them. Regarding the cannabis user, in addition to the aspects that expose him as a criminal, there are other representations that arise from the scientific ideology of a technocratic collective organized around capital.

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Marijuana, in this context, is considered a threat to technocratic society, with medical discourse reinforcing this social representation when it brings scientific aspects about the plant's effects on the development of the user's reasoning.

It can be said that social representations are full of historical constructions that place cannabis as an element associated with crime, considering that the main Western values are rationalism in time and work and cannabis subverts these values and does not propose its own search (PAULINO, 2021).

Felix (2021) considers marijuana as a social object with several meanings and although its use is associated with chemical dependence, longitudinal studies do not corroborate this relationship.

Cannabis affects the hippocampus, responsible for short-term memory, however, the user does not become more or less intelligent under the influence of the herb, but becomes more prone to certain activities to the detriment of performing others and how cannabis interacts with brain activity, its use becomes a transgression to the norms of rationalism (BURGIERMAN, 2002, p.17).

Thus, in medicine, representations state that cannabis affects the notion of time elapsed, having short-term memory affected and consequently, the reference for measuring thelost time (BURGIERMAN, 2002, p.16).

2.3 The relationship between humans and marijuana

Burgierman (2002) mentions that marijuana originates in Central Asia, becoming the first plant It is cultivated to obtain vegetable fiber. Only hundreds of years later was cotton introduced to India and linen to the Mediterranean.

It was even used in China, as a currency of exchange and used in the Henan Valley, to pay taxes to rulers. As archaeological evidence, the first record is cited, a porcelain, marked with hemp rope, found in an archaeological site from the Chinese Neolithic period, dated 10,000 BC (ROBIN-SON, 1999).

From Central Asia, marijuana spread to Western Europe and Africa until reaching the Americas, where it faced problems with the law at the turn of the 19th century.the centuryXX.

Until the 19th century, Europe used a small amount of cannabis for recreational use, because its cultivation focused on fibers in the stem, favoring plants with higher levels of THC (BURGIER-MAN, 2002, p.18).

During the 1970s, there was a considerable increase in drug consumption, especially in the USA with heroin and marijuana in its territory, leading to the creation of a policy of total repression against drugs, declaring them as “internal enemies” of the State. Therefore, for the USA there were also external enemies, which would be the countries and continents that produce drugs consumed around the world, such as in North America, the East and Latin America (SALO, 2016).

In the country, more than 27 of the 50 states criminalize the possession or possession of marijuana for personal consumption, arguing that it should be a convergence for American political representation on the world stage.

With the popularization of the hippie movement and psychedelism, marijuana among young people from middle and high social classes became increasingly widespread, breaking down traditional barriers to cannabis consumption. Its use came to be considered a way to challenge Western coercion (PEREIRA, 1986, p.34).

As a result, anti-drug campaigns began to portray cannabis users as losers, socially maladjusted and unmotivated. Debates surrounding penalties for drug use began to gain prominence throughout society, including authorities, and became the subject of the media. While weed users suffered severe punishments, their consumption did not decrease, so in 1970, the Controlled Substances Law was approved by Congress, providing for the reduction of the penalty for drug possession and the elimination of mandatory minimum sentences (PEREIRA, 1986).

Two years later, then President Nixon brought together a research committee to carry out a study on cannabis produced in the USA and its conclusions were released in a report that considered that the possession of a small amount of marijuana for private use did not constitute an act criminal; that the police used existing laws to persecute and detain individuals based on their political position, skin color, haircut and clothing; the efforts and high costs undertaken in applying the cannabis repression law concealed “*whatever value it might have.”*.

Even with the committee's recommendations, in 1973, Nixton declared war on drugs together with the DEA (Drug Enforcement Administration), which brought together existing anti-drug divisions, having

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more than four thousand employees with the power to tap phones, invade homes without a warrant and place citizens under investigation.

In cinema, the topic of marijuana was put on the agenda between the 1960s and 1970s by the counterculture, which was a historical phenomenon that marked these two decades in the United States, known for the hippie movement, Rock'n Roll, the "On The Road", for a spiritual search focused on orientalism, the practice of free love and the use of drugs, such as LSD and marijuana.

This period influenced young people from several countries, mainly from Europe and Latin America, in their search for building new experiences and as a way of demonstrating dissatisfaction with the current culture.

At the religious core, cannabis also deserves attention. In India, for example, the Hindu God Shiva has marijuana as his favorite food and in the current*mahayana*, Buddha would have discovered the way to balance by eating, for six years, one cannabis seed a day (ROBINSON, 1999, p.53).

Among Jamaican Rastafarians, cannabis was used for religious purposes to seek healing for the nation, with the herb being considered the "seed of wisdom". For them, the act of smoking cannabis is a ritual that purifies body and mind and a means of elevating faith in Jah, the Rastafarian God (ROBINSON, 1999, p.53).

In Brazil, marijuana was associated with Afro-Brazilian religions that consider it a mystical plant. tica and its consumption was done by spiritual entities incorporated into religious people who smoked it mixed with tobacco (DÓRIA, 1986, p.26).

In this way, social representation is considered as a historical construction, produced by people who translated new concepts through reality and the marijuana user becomes a criminal, sick and addicted (FRANCO, 2004, p.171).

2.4 Drug policy in Brazil

The prohibitionist policy model was adopted by many countries after the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, in 1961. In Brazil, since the arrival of the Portuguese, cannabis was considered a symbol of wealth, for example, in 1783, Portugal hosted in Brazil the "*Royal Improvement of Hemp Linen"*to meet the international demand for products made based on this fiber. The first farms were located in the south of the country and then there was funding from the Crown for planting cannabis in Pará, Amazonas, Maranhão, Bahia and Rio de Janeiro (CARNEIRO, 2005, p.17).

Cannabis in Brazil originated with the arrival of colonizers who considered it an exotic plant, being consumed in the form of tobacco by enslaved black people and then cultivated by native indigenous people.

For Marques (2021), the repression of Cannabis is rooted in the prohibition of the habits of black and poor people, being considered a racist criminalization. The author cites as an example, Grimault cigarettes made with Cannabis Indica, which between the 1860s and 1920s were sold in Brazil as a treatment for respiratory problems, insomnia and tuberculosis, constantly being featured in newspapers at the time.

From 1950 onwards, with the advent of the media, marijuana became even more associated with delinquency, encouraging stigma. In the 1960s, its use gained new meanings, being associated with an alternative lifestyle, reaching the urban middle class and marked by movements such as the Marijuana March, which aims to carry out a peaceful demonstration in favor of the legalization of cannabis. (FELIX, 2021).

In 2011, the Fantástico program, on Rede Globo, even televised a poll on the regulation of marijuana in Brazil, with the majority of votes in favor (MARQUES, 2021).

In Brazil, Cannabis is prohibited by Drug Law No. 11,343/2006 and its medicinal use entered the debate in 2014, when an international package was seized by customs for containing cannabis oil. *Cannabis*(CBD). It was the case of a child, who was the first Brazilian patient to make legal use of of Cannabis, with judicial authorization to import the oil, creating a movement for the legalization of medicinal Cannabis in the country (MARQUES, 2021).

Thus, the medicinal use of Cannabis sativa has been discussed since 2014, and research such as Carvalho, et al., (2020), corroborated the benefits of cannabidiol (CBD) and tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) in the treatment of various diseases (RODRIGUES ; LOPES; MOURÃO, 2021).

Even so, the drug policy in force in the country (Law No. 11,343/2006) and the Anti-Drug System established by Decree No. 5,912/2006, prohibits the use of cannabis and its derivatives, covering planting, cultivation, harvesting and exploitation.

In 2015, the National Health Surveillance Agency (Anvisa) only regulated the import of

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cannabidiol and in 2019 the production and commercialization of plant-based medicines, excluding the release of recreational use (RODRIGUES; LOPES; MOURÃO, 2021).

2.5 The influence of journalistic news on everyday society

News focused on crime arouses curiosity among the population and the media tends to exploit this human fragility, stimulating a feeling of insecurity. Curiosity for the narration of crimes ends up being one of the causes of the new culture of violence, which ends up seeming to be part of everyday life (BAYER, 2013).

Can the media be considered a cause of the proliferation of fear in society based on a cluster of images that television transmits every day to family homes, without people even questioning the real veracity of the facts.

It is worth mentioning that sensationalism encourages violence due to the trivialization to which the phenomena of crime are subjected and because criminals become prominent public figures, even if in a negative way (BARROS, 2015).

For the author, the intentional manipulation of the public's emotions aims to form opinions, based on their interests, triggered by the sensationalist press. There are arguments on the part of the press that only convey the news within reality. Depending on the way in which the news was transmitted, correct and neutral, it does not cause social harm.

Given the facts, it is understood that the journalist's work must be quantitative and qualifying so that it can reach an audience. This means that more sales are made, that is, the audience increases, newspapers and magazines sell more copies and there are countless accesses to the internet. Therefore, the world revolves around news and money, and both must work responsibly.

3 METHOD

3.1 Sources

31 articles from a portal of great national relevance were analyzed – G1. Portal G1's editor-in-chief is Cláudia Croitor, it has been on air since 2006 with the commitmentto takereal-time news with credibility and precision, 24 hours a day. Sites affiliated with G1 have the samesectionsand editorials and inserts its content through the CMA system. The videos are allocated in a system patented by Rede Globo, the Ecoding Factory (EF) (FERREIRA, 2022).

3.2 Collection Procedures

Articles were collected that had the words “marijuana” and “cannabis” as their central point, published during the year 2022. The material was collected digitally, through searches in the newspaper’s databases and was restricted to publications which mentioned in the title one of the following descriptors: marijuana and *cannabis*.

3.3 Analysis Procedures

The methodological process of this research consisted of a bibliographical survey of scientific productions published on the topics raised.in thisstudy.

As for the object of this research, the news portal G1 (online), from Grupo Globo – the largest media conglomerate in Brazil and Latin America – was selected.

The time frame of the articles (corpus) selected for news analysis was from January to December 2022, with the g1 news search engine as a research source, using the following keywords: “marijuana G1” and “cannabis G1”.

After checking news related to the topic, 31 news items were collected, within the temporal space. Articles that contained narcotic and/or psychotropic substances other than marijuana in their headlines were excluded.

The research does not aim to make value judgments about the subjects belonging to the news. Searched-- distinguish how the use of the words “marijuana” and “cannabis” present in such articles contributes to the construction of social representation with a positive or negative connotation of marijuana in Brazil.

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4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 The Social Representation of marijuana in the Brazilian media through news from Portal G1

It was observed in the corpus, among the 31 news analyzed, the predominance of the use of the word “marijuana” compared to the word “Cannabis”.

Table 1 – Lexical Selection in Subjects

Lexicon	Amount
Marihuana	16
Cannabis	15
Total	31

Source:research data, adapted from Gomes (2021)

Among the thirty-one news items organized and subdivided into two categories – medicinal use and the criminalization of marijuana – a difference can be noted in lexical employability.

Only in one article was the term “medical marijuana” used to present its impact on medicinal treatments.

The lexical change alters the meaning of words, which can be seen in the articles analyzed regarding the use of the words “marijuana” and “cannabis”. It is understood that the use of the word 'Cannabis' causes greater agreement among readers, unlike the word 'marijuana', which is stigmatized and has greater use in news related to crime.

Table 2 – Discursive connotation in Subjects

Word	Matter	Connotation
Marihuana	Crime	Negative
Cannabis	Medicinal	Positive

Source:research data, adapted from Gomes (2021)

The subjects selected to form the corpus of this research were divided into two categories, namely “criminalization” and “medical use”.

Category 1: Criminalization

The content found in this category presents the direct relationship between marijuana and crime. Marijuana is used here with words that denote an illegal commodity, cultivated by criminals, as exemplified below:

- **August 24, 2022**

On August 24, 2022, it was reported that a Skank plantation was found by the police in the North Zone of Rio, emphasizing that the plants had LED light, irrigation and constant measurement, resulting in an arrest in the act and a search for an engineer chemical that was not on site.

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Source:https://g1.globo.com/rj/rio-de-janeiro/noticia/2022/08/24/policia-encontra-plantacao-de-skank-em- - casa-na-zona-norte-do-rio.ghtml

• December 15, 2022

With the headline titled "Police find criminal faction's marijuana greenhouse in Alto da Boa Vista", G1 reported on December 15, 2022, that police officers located and dismantled a marijuana greenhouse in a house in Alto da Boa Vista. The article emphasizes the terms "criminals" and "criminal faction" throughout the text.

"Inside the house, the police found dozens of marijuana plants and a structure prepared for the production of the drug. The criminals used a refrigeration and ventilation system at the location."



Source:https://g1.globo.com/rj/rio-de-janeiro/noticia/2022/12/15/policia-encontra-estufa-de-maconha-de-faccao-criminosa-no-alto-da-boa- view.ghtml

• December 24, 2022

On December 24, 2022, g1 reported that the military police seized 730 marijuana plants, in Guaratuba, on the coast of Paraná, following an anonymous tip. The article highlighted that a greenhouse also functioned as a laboratory, resulting in the arrest of three people. One of the defendants stated that he cultivated the plant to supply a cannabis treatment association.

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Source:https://g1.globo.com/pr/parana/noticia/2022/12/24/pm-apreende-730-pes-de-maconha-em-guaratuba-tres-suspeitos-foram-presos.ghtml

Category 2: Medicinal use

This category brings together forms of discourse on health and the therapeutic use of marijuana. Included are articles that provide research results in the field of science and health. The content relates to the therapeutic effects of the use of marijuana, anchored in scientific knowledge, which favors the insertion of the plant in the health sector.

It should be noted that the word "cannabis" makes direct references to the medicinal use of the drug, emphasizing its legal status. While the word "marijuana" is used in speeches aimed at criminalization. In this sense, marijuana is classified here as*cannabis*, in reference to the taxonomic nomenclature of the plant in biology, as explained below:

• August 3, 2022

The Profissão Repórter Program presented stories of people who use medicinal Cannabis, with the following repartee:

"Demystify to treat: known for its therapeutic properties, the herb has been used in treatment of difficult-to-control diseases, such as autism and epilepsy".



Source:https://g1.globo.com/profissao-reporter/noticia/2022/08/03/profissao-reporter-mostra-as-historias-de- - who-has-been-choosing-to-use-of-medicinal-cannabis.ghtml

• December 19, 2022

Jornal Nacional, from Rede Globo de Televisão, reported that Anvisa authorized the Federal University of Rio Grande do Norte to import, store and cultivate cannabis seeds, as long as safety criteria for carrying out scientific research are met.

The article highlighted the required security criteria:

Planting must be in a closed environment, with controlled access for registered people; The entire site will be monitored by video, with armed surveillance around the clock.

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Source: Jornal Nacional, G1 (2022).

• December 19, 2022

On December 19, 2022, a news broadcast by Programa Fantástico and published on Portal g1, highlighted the impact of the use of medical marijuana on the lives of those who depend on expensive treatments with the following remark:

"STJ allowed three Brazilians to grow marijuana for medicinal purposes, and Fantástico spoke with researchers and one of the patients who received authorization."



Source: https://g1.globo.com/fantastico/noticia/2022/06/19/entenda-o-impacto-do-uso-da-maconha-medicinal-na-vida- - who-depends-on-expensive-treatments.ghtml

CONCLUSION

Given the results found, we can reach the following considerations:

• The results worked seem to point to the construction of marijuana, in two universes of discourse: crime and medicinal use.

• The use of the words 'marijuana' and 'cannabis' in different subjects was noted, concluding that matters withconnotationsnegative articles use the term "marijuana" and in turn, medicinal and scientific articles used the word "cannabis".

• Panic is created through reports using the word "marijuana" with representations that lead the public to increasingly demand stronger anti-drug policies.

• The construction of the social representation of the word "marijuana" in the media has a negative connotation, As for the use of "cannabis", it brings a positive connotation, inducing the reader to accept medicinally and refuse the recreational use of the plant.

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