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## Historical Framing in *The New York Times*: A Plant's Tale

**Ronald W. Sitton**  
Arkansas State University

This longitudinal content analysis examines 128 articles containing the words hemp, hashish or marijuana appearing in the *New York Times* from 1851-1939, which starts at the publication's inception and concludes with the decade of the Marijuana Tax Act's passage. The research locates master framing of contentious issues by adapting previous computerized content analysis research to address historical documents unavailable for digital analysis. This study paints a more complete picture of one plant.

*Keywords: New York Times, prestige press, historical framing, longitudinal content analysis, hemp, marijuana, Marijuana Tax Act*

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**H**umanity historically processed hemp for clothing, food storage, paper, rope, and textiles. But the plant's marijuana flower provides medicinal properties that produce a euphoriant experience. The flower's properties delegitimized the plant in America and abroad during the 1930s. When Congress considered intervention, newspaper articles and editorial opinions provided evidence of a national marijuana crisis (Galliher & Walker, 1977; Herer, 1995; Siff, 2014). Articles highlighted some aspects of the hemp plant while minimizing others. Passage of the Marijuana Tax Act in 1937 curtailed U.S. hemp production as the plant was subject to the Controlled Substance Act until passage of the 2018 Farm Bill (Strunk, 2022).

Unlike the "famously sensational" Hearst newspapers (Siff, 2014, p. 3), *The New York Times* (a.k.a. *The Times*) has been traditionally lauded as the national newspaper of record and considered part of the Prestige Press. *The New York Times Index* starts in 1851, providing the longest-running indexing of an American newspaper.

Framing emphasizes some issue attributes while de-emphasizing others. This study examines historical framing in *New York Times*' coverage of hemp and marijuana. To find frames, it adapts previous computerized content analysis research to address historical documents unavailable for digital analysis.

## Focus of Study

Following both plant and flower through *The Times* provides the best opportunity to observe extended coverage of a chronic, contentious societal issue by one publication. This paper seeks to answer the following questions about *The Times*' coverage:

R1: How was the hemp plant and its marijuana flower framed?

R2: What source types provided information?

R3: What tone was initially set toward the plant and its flower?

R4: Did the *New York Times* alert audiences to the dual nature of this plant?

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Framing

A frame identifies a particular position, allowing the discussion and interpretation of events (Miller & Riechert, 2001). Word choice and language structure produce an issue's frame, a.k.a. an "organization of experience" (Goffman, 1974, p. 13). Frames may be ascertained by focusing on word choice (Miller & Richert, 2001). Implicit within texts, frames appear "as primary attributes of events that reporters are merely reflecting" (Gamson, 1985, p. 617) when gathering and disseminating information. Facts take meaning from the frame or storyline that "organizes them and gives them coherence, selecting certain ones to emphasize while ignoring others" (Gamson, 1989, p. 157).

Journalists use frames to focus on facts while still consciously or unconsciously shaping discourse (Miller & Riechert, 1997; Entman, 1993). Master frames can be understood as dominant positions with salience to multiple groups that must be addressed when a communicator discusses an issue. Media highlight master frames when interpreting events and experiences for the general public (Snow, Rochford, Worden & Benford, 1986). News-emphasized issue attributes affect public perception and issue salience (Ghanem, 1997). Miller (1997) notes a "contentious issue" should provide more than adequate coverage for analysis.

### Framing with Hemp Focus

Kent, Shellhouse, Lindsey and Lundy (2021) studied Florida newspapers' framing of industrial hemp production from March-October 2019 through 34 articles in the Access World NewsBank and located political, potential and problematic frames. They found distinctions between hemp and marijuana in half of their sample, yet only one article cited an informational source. Opinion leaders discussing hemp's potential included a senator, the state's cannabis director and agricultural commissioner. Quoted individuals usually held a political office, while other notable groups included trade association representatives, lobbyists, cannabis business owners and farmers. Scientific sources seldom appeared.

### Framing with Marijuana Focus

Although not labeled as a framing study, Shepherd (1981) found the press provides little attention to scientific marijuana research, instead relying on information channeled through spokespersons or celebrity authorities. Source selection affects issue framing as the perceived credibility of frame articulators will affect collective action frames (Benford & Snow, 2000, p. 620).

Golan (2010) examined medical marijuana framing in local and national daily newspapers' opinion sections. Frame coverage included legality, politics, medical and social issues. Editorial frames primarily examined legality, politics, medical and social issues. Op-ed frames focused on medical issues, politics, and legal issues. Golan suggests editors designated staff-covered issues and let op-ed contributors discuss

medical issues. Experts identified as scientists, and religious and political figures did not appear in the coverage.

McGinty, et al. (2016) researched national, regional and local newspapers' 2010-2014 coverage of recreational marijuana policy, finding slightly more pro-legalization arguments than anti-legalization arguments. Pro-legalization arguments focused on criminal justice and economic issues; anti-legalization arguments focused on adverse public health consequences. McGinty, Niederdeppe, Heley and Barry (2017) conducted survey research that found pro-legalization arguments of beneficial economic and criminal justice consequences more persuasive than anti-legalization arguments focusing on adverse public health effects.

Kim (2017) analyzed newspapers from 1995-2014 for organizing themes, issue attributes and story tone of both medical marijuana and recreational marijuana. The study found conservative newspapers more likely to report reasons to oppose marijuana legalization than liberal outlets, but found no significant differences reporting pro-legalizing arguments. Kim and Kim (2018) found marijuana legalization primarily framed as a law enforcement or legislative issue in 10 U.S. newspapers, with economics, medical effects and youth drug use providing other frequently used frames. More than half of the sample's coverage used a neutral tone, while more than a quarter used a positive tone.

Mikos and Kam (2019) investigated concerns over long-standing prohibitions using the word marijuana that caused reformers to shun the term in favor of the term "cannabis," yet found no support that changing the terminology from "marijuana" to "cannabis" affects public opinion. They note the possibility that the term "marijuana" once conjured up negative associations the drug has since shed.

### **Summary**

Hemp and marijuana provide contentious issues with historic roots that allow for frame analysis. Most hemp and marijuana framing studies focus on current events, with no observable topic overlap although they discuss the same plant. Current hemp frames include political, potential and problematic; sub-issues include legislation, political parties, responsibilities, regulation, economic, agriculture, consumer, negative impacts, and law enforcement. Current marijuana frames include economic, law enforcement, legislative, medical, social issue, and labeling terminology; sub-issues include increasing tax revenue, creating jobs, conflict between state and federal laws, criminal justice, prison overcrowding reduction, decreasing arrest disparities, impaired driving, adverse public health effects, medical benefits, medical risks, risk to youth, gateway effect, social ills, and misplaced priorities.

Hemp sources included political leaders, trade association representatives, lobbyists and business owners but seldom used scientists or other experts. Although marijuana framing accounts for more research, researchers provided few source types due to a frame-location focus.

### **NEED FOR STUDY**

Examining framing of a chronic societal issue by one publication over eight decades in the 19th and 20th centuries answers the following calls for research:

- Benford & Snow (2000) noted the need for a methodology to investigate framing processes and conduct frame analysis.
- Benford (2007) noted the need for a systematic, empirical study across cases and time (p. 412).

Indexing of the *New York Times* allows an examination of master frames in historic documents across time. If the initial master frame remains relevant, evidence should be apparent years later. The following hypotheses naturally occur:

**H1:** *The New York Times* articles from the mid-1800s through the 1930s should show a gradual buildup of negative connotations associated with marijuana that led to the 1937 Marijuana Tax Act.

**H2:** Framing will be evident through different terminology used to describe the hemp compared to its marijuana flower even though discussing the same plant.

## METHODS

A search of *The New York Times Index* located 128 articles containing the words hemp, hashish or marijuana from 1851-1939 and divided them into either hemp or marijuana categories. Beginning in 1926, the index listed hemp leaves, Cannabis indica and hashish under marijuana, leading to categorization of hashish as marijuana for this study. Framing can be found through word attributes, sourcing, and article tone.

### Word attributes

This study examines word choice and issue attributes appearing most often in news coverage as they provide observable frame elements. Computerized content analysis provides an easy way to let frames emerge from the text through frame-mapping procedures (Miller, 1997; Miller, Andsager & Riechert, 1998; Koella, 2001; Miller & Riechert, 2001). Digital versions of full-text documents provide a precise coding of multiple instances of a word within one story. Yet historical documents seldom lend themselves to computerized content analysis due to the nature of document preservation, i.e., microfilm and microfiche don't allow for full-text digital analysis. Using headlines from *The New York Times Index* and keywords gathered through a close reading of the text can allow for visual analysis through word clouds.

Observable differences in hemp and marijuana framing should be evident for both headlines and keywords. As different online cloud generators provide different visuals, one coded observed keywords found within texts to contrast with another coding verbatim headlines. Contrasting word clouds generated by headlines and keywords provides an indication of consistency between headlines and body text.

### Sourcing

Noting the source types provided within the articles helps with understanding attribution, which gives audiences an indication of the weight to assign interpretations of issues and events.

### Article Tone

Article tone measures positive, neutral, or negative cover of hemp and marijuana. Determining tone provides an indication of how audiences perceive frames. Positive-coded tone indicates substances depicted in a positive manner. Neutral-coded tone indicates articles with both positive and negative terminology. Negative-coded tone indicates substances depicted in a negative manner. An article with a negative overall tone could have a positive tone toward the plant, e.g., monopolistic practices may be considered negative overall, but would paint a positive tone toward hemp as the plant is worth monopolizing.

### Addressing literature gaps

Word clouds let frames emerge from the text. Also coding for sourcing and tone answers calls for a methodology to determine frames (Benford & Snow, 2000). Locating historic texts and subjecting them to this methodological approach provides a systematic, empirical study across cases and time (Benford, 2007). Examining historical frames emerging from textual analysis provides a manner to judge frame persistence.

**RESULTS**

Table 1

*Article Topics by Publication Year*

Year	Hemp	Marijuana
1857	1	0
1890	2	0
1899	1	0
1913	1	0
1914	0	4
1915	13	0
1916	3	0
1917	11	0
1918	10	0
1919	1	0
1922	2	1
1923	1	1
1924	2	0
1925	0	1
1926	6	1
1927	0	1
1928	1	0
1929	1	1
1930	1	0
1931	1	0
1932	1	1
1933	0	1
1934	1	8
1935	2	4
1936	0	6
1937	0	8
1938	1	20
1939	1	6
Totals		
	64	64

**Topics**

Table 1 indicates years of publication and the subject matter. For replication purposes, the dearth of initial coverage is not shown in the following table, i.e., neither hemp nor marijuana made the pages of the





**Keywords.** Figure 3 depicts keywords recorded when reading each hemp article. The terms are generally content neutral. As shown by Figures C2 and C3, headlines and keywords from the body text show a consistency in terminology used to describe articles about the plant.

**Framing Within Articles.** From the *New York Times*' beginnings until the 1920s, hemp garnered more coverage than marijuana as the country learned of the industry and its products. Master frames in the coverage included potential, commerce, and protection. Sub-frames included agriculture, production, finance, monopolistic practices, transport, distribution, government, mechanization, labor, alternatives, experiments, and products.

**Potential.** Renown, searches for alternative suppliers, experiments, and production improvements provided a "potential" frame. The first hemp article (actually a letter from a Missouri newspaper editor)<sup>1</sup> describes the "'Region of the hemp culture'" (Gilpin, 1857, para. 1). Potential alternative hemp suppliers during World War I included the Philippines, Germany, and Italy. North American experiments occurred in Wisconsin, Ohio, and Canada.

The advent of mechanized production and reduced labor costs led to the "revival of the hemp-growing industry" ("Kentucky hemp returns," 1926) and farmers' efforts to plant in central New York in March 1931. An Illinois processing plant introduced chemical production to separate the hurds and fiber. "(Experts) predict that hemp will rival the soy bean in importance to the farmer and manufacturer" ("Hemp crop," 1935, paras. 8-9).

**Commerce.** A "commerce" frame detailed hemp business. Hemp shipments during World War I concerned both agriculture and business. Coverage noted exports of hemp from Italy, The Philippines and Mexico, at times in spite of military engagements. Yucatan farmers bartered hemp to a revolutionary leader in hopes of opening a free market. Hemp sales garnered coverage for record amounts of investments.

A January 1918 editorial discussed the U.S. Food Administration under Herbert Hoover overseeing U.S. gold exports and forming a sisal hemp agreement. The U.S. Price-Fixing Committee of the War Industries Board in July 1918 established a maximum price on Manila hemp. The Philippine government removed hemp price controls a month before "owing to stagnation in the hemp market" ("Price limit off," 1918, para. 1).

**Protection.** A "protection" frame noted problems with hemp and governmental efforts to protect American farmers from rising hemp costs during World War I. Readers learned of negative hemp associations, including a "pulque" juice produced from its juices in a letter from Bermuda.<sup>2</sup> "A few drinks of it, at an incalculable price, will make the Mexican happy; a few more will make him crazy.... Every acre of agave plants is good for six hundred fights every day; but while it furnishes the liquor to set its victims crazy, it also kindly furnishes the hemp to hang them with" (Drysdale, 1890, paras. 10, 14).

Yet the majority of hemp articles addressed anti-trust concerns and proposed solutions. Hemp price rose during the war, causing problems for U.S. agriculture. Allegations of monopolistic practices dominated coverage in 1915 with contention between the International Harvester Company and the Comision Reguladora del Mercado de Henequen, a Yucatan board which controlled hemp distribution out of Yucatan,

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<sup>1</sup> William Gilpin, then an Independence, Missouri newspaper editor, would later become the first governor of the Colorado territory (Lewis, 1966, p. 40).

<sup>2</sup> William Drysdale, a reporter and writer who described his travels in the Times (Mendez, 2011), wrote the letter



Mexico. Drama unfolded with accusations and denials, counterclaims, a full-page advertisement, surreptitiously purchased steamers for transports, and charges of socialism in the Yucatan government.

The American government sent battleships to secure hemp shipments, directed the Federal Trade Commission to control Yucatan’s sisal hemp crop distribution, cleared International Harvester of responsibility for twine price increases and started an anti-trust suit against the Comision Reguladora. U.S. Circuit Court judge dismissed the anti-trust lawsuit after finding “positive disproof” of a monopoly or conspiracy to raise prices (“Yucatan sisal suit,” 1918, para. 12). A *Times* editorial recounted the lawsuit and noted “unfortunate international complications may have followed” had it proceeded (“No sisal conspiracy,” 1918, para. 3).

After the war, the hemp market dropped out. The Philippines’ government passed a law to protect trade and assure a hemp monopoly by prohibiting hemp seed exports. Overproduction first led to Yucatan burning sisal hemp, then limiting sisal crops before ultimately declaring sisal hemp as a public utility, kicking out large hemp growers, and distributing land among peasants.

**Keywords, paragraphs, mentions.** Production provided the most frequent keyword in hemp stories (23); commerce provided the second-most (17). Twenty-three hemp news articles (36%) consisted of one paragraph, while 10 articles (18%) featured 10 or more paragraphs. The most in-depth article (24 paragraphs) provided the day’s lead story. Multiple articles mentioned different elements of the hemp issue, e.g., products (18 mentions), prices (15), monopoly (7), court actions (6), labor (6), experiments or tests on hemp (6), mechanization (4) and potential substitutes for hemp (4).

**Sourcing**

Sources for hemp stories included government officials, legal representatives, and business personnel. International government sources included Yucatan government representatives as well as Sir Ambrose Shea, governor of the Bahamas, praised the plant and potential trade with the United States, saying, “I expect to see a large quantity of the hemp, which is of excellent quality, exported to this country” (“Growing sisal hemp,” 1890, para. 6). American government sources included the cabinet members, attorneys, a U.S. Senator, and multiple consuls. Legal sources included counsel for the Mexican government and the general attorney for the Comision Reguladora del Mercado de Henequen (a Yucatan board which controlled hemp distribution out of Yucatan, Mexico). Business sources included the International Harvester Company’s representative, general manager, and purchasing agent. Automotive giant Henry Ford noted plans to start an Ohio hemp farm.

Table 2  
*Hemp article type by tone*

	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Totals
Editorials	2	0	1	3
Letters	1	1	1	3
News	39	8	10	57
Advertisements	0	1	0	1

**Tone**

Table 2 indicates hemp articles by tone. Most news articles written (68%) discussed positive aspects of hemp including commerce, finance, production, distribution, farming regions, and products. Negative

aspects of hemp articles included a lack of standardized tests to grade the fibers, increased hemp prices, alleged monopolistic practices by those controlling the hemp trade, and attempts to find substitutes for hemp.

### **Marijuana Stories**

**Headlines.** “Marijuana” was the most regularly occurring word found in article headlines about hemp’s flower, with an alternative spelling (i.e., “marihuana”) second and “narcotic” third. Visible and stark differences exist in headline terminology for marijuana and hemp stories. Where hemp headlines primarily used content-neutral terminology, marijuana headlines suggest negative connotations.

### **Framing Within Articles**

Previously sporadic marijuana coverage suddenly increased in the mid-1930s as the country learned more about the flower and its associated ills. The “protection” master frame permeated marijuana articles. Other frames included danger, law enforcement, judicial actions, social movement, and legislation. Sub-issues included marijuana’s origins, marijuana smoking effects, marijuana studies, destruction of marijuana plants, anti-marijuana campaign, marijuana laws, marijuana users, violence, and marijuana films. The master frame of protection comprises danger, law enforcement, judicial actions, social movement, and legislation frames. Where hemp used the protection frame to shield farmers from monopolistic practices, the marijuana protection frame served to alert and save society from the perils of marijuana use.

**Danger.** The initial framing of the flower as different from the plant came in 1914 and foretold future themes concerning the marijuana issue. In an interesting turn, the *Times* published four articles on marijuana that year and no articles about hemp. An article describing an “insane orderly” who was likely killed by Mexican troops noted a Mexican officer telling an American officer, “Maybe your man smoked a poisoned cigarette. Mexican women in Vera Cruz give them to men and they always go crazy” (“Captive American soldier,” 1914, para. 8). A follow-up article quoted a physician saying, “I have seen several Americans in the same demented condition. It is the result of smoking marajuana (sic), one of the most mysterious and deadly drugs I have ever seen. ... I smoked just a taste of a marajuana (sic) cigarette for the sake of experiment. It acted on me like the strongest narcotic and I could feel it in my head for a week” (“Poison put in,” 1914, paras. 2-4).

A letter to the editor attempted to clarify “mariguana” and describe its relation to the hemp plant: “This plant is a species of wild hemp and the dried leaves, mixed with tobacco, seldom alone save by the aficionados of long use, are smoked by the Mexicans to produce the species of intoxication peculiar to hemp. ... this drug seems to arouse their worst passions, lust and blood shedding, and the county authorities on the Rio Grande border are very active in checking the use of mariguana” (Hale, 1914, paras. 1-3).

One article suggested marijuana threatened the Western United States. “Although as appalling in its effects on the human mind and body as narcotics, the consumption of marijuana appears to be proceeding, virtually unchecked ... The drug is particularly popular with Latin Americans and its use is rapidly spreading to include all classes. The poisonous weed, which maddens the senses and emaciates the body of the user, is being sold more or less openly in pool halls and beer gardens throughout the West and Southwest and, according to some authorities, it is being peddled to school children. The Federal Government is powerless to stop the traffic” (“Use of marijuana,” 1934, paras. 1-2). That danger demanded intervention.

**Law Enforcement Issue.** The initial law enforcement story continues the depiction of the hemp flower as dangerous, with multiple mentions of it being a narcotic. Articles discussed police finding and destroying plots of marijuana hidden among sugar cane fields or other crops such as alfalfa. One police raid

resulted in rioters attacking a Panamanian police chief's home because they thought he killed a 17-year-old during a raid "where West Indians were said to be smoking marijuana on the Colon beach" ("West Indians riot," 1934, paras. 1-2).

**Judicial Issue.** In 1929, the Panamanian Supreme Court ruled smoking marijuana was not forbidden in Panama a year after its National Assembly repealed the law classifying the drug with cocaine, morphine and heroin. "Not a single medical witness could prove clearly that the habit gave rise to mental aberration" ("Smoking marihuana upheld," 1929, para. 5).

A board of regents banned a marijuana film, "Assassin of Youth," as an entertainment/feature film. "However, the regents said that an educational or scientific permit is available to the owner of the picture, provided that it is not shown at any place of amusement" ("Marijuana film barred," 1938).

**Social Movement.** An anti-marijuana campaign conducted by the New York State Federation of Women's Clubs, the National Women's Christian Temperance Union, the World Narcotic Defense Association and others provides examples of social movement organizations.

"The latest habit-forming drug imported into the White Light district – marihuana, which is smoked in a cigarette – was exhibited along with two drug addicts and a collection of opium pipes, raw opium, morphine, cocaine and heroin at a meeting of women" causing a group resolution "asking that President Harding proclaim a 'National Anti-Dope Week' and call an international conference to deal with the drug evil" ("Marihuana is newest," 1923, paras. 1-3).

By 1937, anti-marijuana advocates saw progress. "Relentless warfare on marihuana, which was termed the latest narcotic menace to youth, was urgently recommended to the National Congress of Parents and Teachers," according an article describing activists lobbying for parental assistance. The article characterized marijuana as the "most pernicious" of drugs, which "produced in smokers of the weed a temporary sense of complete irresponsibility which led to sex crimes and other 'horrible' acts of violence" ("War on marihuana," 1937).

**Government action.** Multiple articles described state and federal laws designed to combat the marijuana problem and prevent the drug from spreading. The Mexican government outlawed marijuana cultivation in the mid-1920s. "Marihuana leaves, smoke in cigarettes, produce murderous delirium. Its addicts often become insane. Scientists say its effects are perhaps more terrible than those of any intoxicant or drug" ("Mexico bans marihuana," 1925, para. 3), but no scientists were mentioned.

A committee commissioned by Panama Canal's governor provided an alternative view. "The influence of the drug when used for smoking is uncertain and appears to have been greatly exaggerated ... there is no medical evidence that it causes insanity ... (or) that it has any appreciable deleterious effect on the individuals using it" ("Marijuana smoking," 1926, para. 30).

The *Times* barely mentioned the American response to the marijuana menace in a one-paragraph article: "President Roosevelt signed today a bill to curb traffic in the narcotic, marihuana, through heavy taxes on transactions" ("Signs bill," 1937).

## Summary

Two letters and one editorial joined the 58 news articles about marijuana and three additional articles that mentioned both hemp and marijuana. Nine of those news articles (14%) consisted of one paragraph, while 14 articles (22%) included 10 or more paragraphs. Generally, 54 marijuana articles (64%) focused on police and court actions. Of these, 20 covered arrests for marijuana possession, 12 recounted marijuana crop

destruction by the police or other groups, 16 covered trials of people indicted for marijuana use, and six noted police meetings that either discussed the marijuana problem or focused on recognition of the marijuana plant for eradication efforts.

**Sourcing**

Sources in marijuana stories included the government officials, physicians, scientists, law enforcement, and women’s groups. Government sources included President Franklin D. Roosevelt, a Lieutenant Colonel in the U.S. Army, the governor of the Panama Canal, and a chief health officer. Physicians describes the deleterious effects of marijuana. An article about Mexico’s marijuana ban mentioned scientists generally, but did not provide any names. An article about an insane family mentioned doctors having no hope of saving the family, but didn’t name the doctors. Multiple members of the New York Police Department’s narcotic squad made news for making arrests. Close readers might have noticed one detective’s promotion due to success arresting marijuana users. Women’s groups provided evidence of a social movement coalescing around the drug.

Table 3  
*Marijuana article type by tone*

	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Totals
Editorials	0	0	1	1
Letters	0	0	2	2
News	1	1	56	58

**Tone**

Table 3 shows marijuana article types by tone. Most news articles (68%) appearing above the fold were coded as negative in tone. Negative aspects of marijuana articles included an anti-marijuana campaign, censorship, class distinctions, court actions, dangers, education about dangers, intoxication effects, law enforcement, crop locations, origins, prices, productions, trials, and violence.

**RESEARCH QUESTIONS ANSWERED**

R1 pondered how coverage framed the hemp plant and its marijuana flower. *Times’* coverage provided divergent framing of the plant and its flower. During the 86 years under consideration, hemp earned a status of being vital to the national economy. This matches the “potential” frame noted by Kent, Shellhouse, Lindsey and Lundy (2021), suggesting the master frame surrounding the hemp plant alone is primarily positive. It also shows staying power for this master frame over time.

The suggestion that the term “marijuana” once conjured up negative associations (Mikos & Kam, 2019) can be seen in the framing used. Marijuana coverage depicted the flower as a “menace to society,” either through stories about its deleterious effects or stories concerning police efforts to eradicate the drug. Frames depicted in *The Times* include those currently in use: law enforcement, legislation, economics and harm to youth contribute to a “protection” master frame that communicators must still address in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

R2 questioned what source types provided information in coverage. Source selection provides an indication of the weight to assign interpretations of issues and events. Hemp sources included government officials, legal representatives, and business personnel. Sources used in hemp stories support both the

“protection” master frame and “potential” frame previously suggested. The reliance on government and business sources provided credibility needed to assure audiences of hemp’s need for protection. Marijuana sources included government officials, physicians, scientists, law enforcement, and women’s groups. As evidenced in current studies, few scientific researchers provided sourcing for marijuana studies. The chosen sources solidified marijuana’s protection frame.

R3 questions the tone set by the *Times* toward the plant and its flower. Overall, the tone towards the plant was primarily positive, but a negative tone is evident regarding the flower.

R4 questioned if the *Times* alerted its audience to the dual nature of the plant, thereby allowing citizens and their representatives to make informed decisions about it. Throughout the coverage, little to no mention exists of the connection between the hemp plant and its drug-related flower, marijuana. In the **four** stories (3% of the sample) noting *any* relationship between hemp and marijuana (printed in 1914, 1926, and twice in 1938 – after the law’s passage), three had a negative tone while the fourth detailed a study that found smoking marijuana to be safe. One can speculate most *New York Times* readers would not have made a connection between the two without prior botanical knowledge. In essence, the *New York Times* framed information the general public received by highlighting aspects of the hemp plant fitting the topic at hand.

### HYPOTHESES ANSWERED

H1 suggested *Times* newspaper articles from the mid-1800s through the 1930s should show a gradual buildup of negative connotations associated with marijuana that led to the 1937 Marijuana Tax Act. This hypothesis is not supported. Although an ongoing national marijuana crisis was not discernible from the *New York Times*, the negative connotations associated with marijuana use increased until 1937 and then exploded after the national law passed.

H2 suggested framing would be evident through different terminology used to describe hemp compared to its marijuana flower even though discussing the same plant. This hypothesis is supported by visual representations of article headlines and keywords.

### DISCUSSION

#### Conclusions

Although discussing parts of the same plant, master framing for hemp and marijuana decidedly diverged. While obviously within an agriculture frame, hemp coverage benefitted from a “potential” master frame noting its long-standing benefits to society as well as new methods to extract its fibers. A “protection” master frame enveloped hemp coverage during World War I. Thus, the twist in a “protection” master frame being used to combat the “menace” of marijuana. Ultimately, the protection master frame used against the flower trumped the potential master frame of the plant for more than 80 years.

Evidence of contention between master frames can be seen when considering the hemp plant and its marijuana flower. The master frame of “protection” subsumes frames like legislation and enforcement to maintain security. The “protection” master frame might be abused when assigning causality, blame, or culpability. The contention lies in the conflict of the “protection” master frame with the “potential” master frame, which assumes risk and reward. This can be seen in something as basic as conservative versus progressive points of view.

The *New York Times*, though noted for "all the news that's fit to print," did not completely inform its readers about the marijuana/hemp issue. Otherwise, one group of its readers, namely governmental employees, may not have passed a tax act on a substance that has both beneficial and detrimental properties.

### Future Research

Further hemp and marijuana research should use other newspapers, including the Hearst publications, to discover the major sources that helped procure the passage of the 1937 Marijuana Tax Act. It would be interesting to see what (if any) *New York Times*' articles were included as a source. Additional research could also follow the *Times* up through 21st-century coverage as many states now have legalized medical marijuana while others have legalized marijuana for recreational use.

Future framing research should consider "potential" and "protection" master frames as they cover many contentious issues. The methodology adapted from computerized content analysis studies provided replicable results, suggesting future historical research using the method would prove beneficial. Using indexed publications provides opportunities for future longitudinal studies across a number of contentious issues.

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## About the Author

**Ronald Sitton, Ph.D.**, is an assistant professor of multimedia journalism in the School of Media and Journalism at Arkansas State University. His research focuses of the framing of contentious issues and journalism education. He can be contacted at [rsitton@astate.edu](mailto:rsitton@astate.edu).