



Public Support for Cannabis Regulation Increasing but Majority Still Opposed in Uruguay

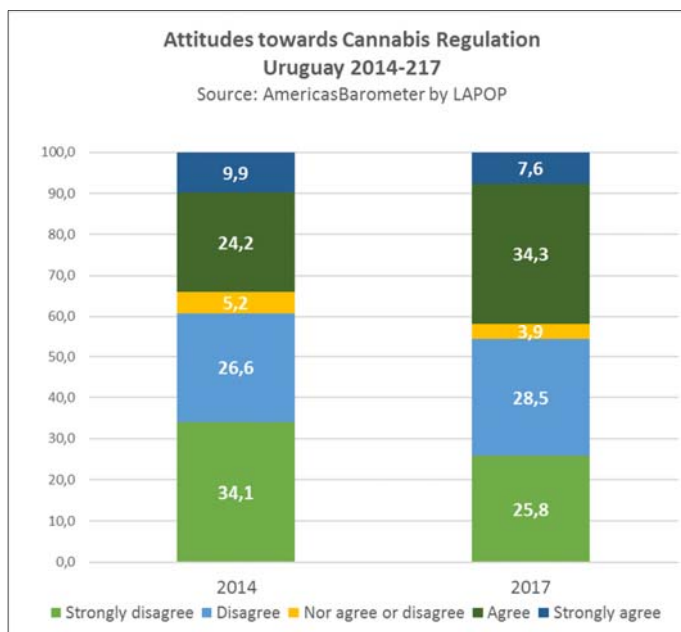
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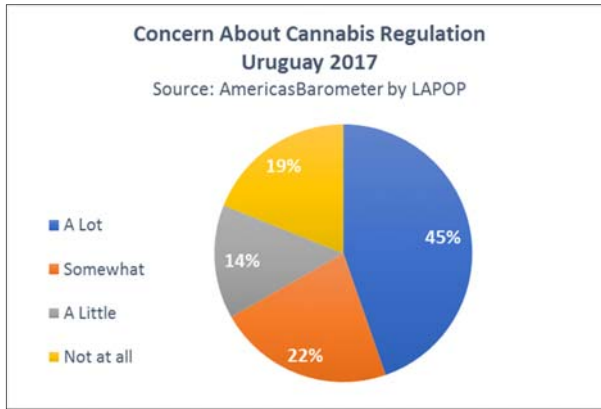
In 2013, Uruguay became the first country in the world to regulate the entire cannabis productive chain. Since then, our project has measured public attitudes towards marijuana. In the past, these attitudes depicted widespread opposition to the legalization of recreational marijuana and had remained stable until now. The law legalizing the use of recreational marijuana establishes three legal ways to access cannabis for registered consumers: self-cultivation, cannabis clubs and sales of cannabis in pharmacies. The marijuana law also specifies rigorous conditions for access and limits the quantity a user can obtain (40 grams per month). The 2017 results suggest that public views towards cannabis regulation have changed, as support for marijuana legalization has increased in comparison with our latest public opinion measure.

In 2014, 60.7% of Uruguayans disagreed with the law (34.1% said they strongly disagreed while 26.6% simply disagreed). The regulation received strong support from 9.9% of the population, while temperate support from 24.2%, for an overall level of support of 34.1%.



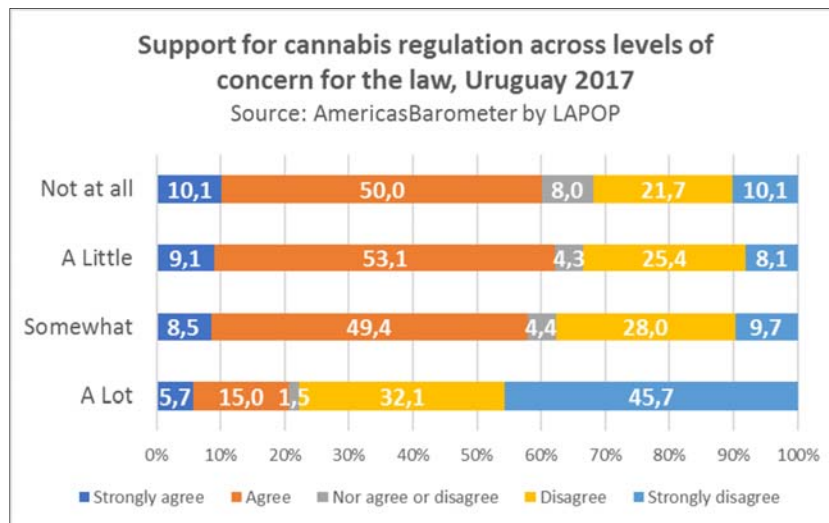
By 2017, strong opposition has dropped to 25.8%, while moderate support (those who declare to “agree” with the law) has increased almost ten percent points to 34.3%. However, those who oppose still comprise a majority: 54.3% (25.8% who strongly disagree plus 28.5% that disagree). Agreement with the law is now situated in 41.9% (34.3% who agree and 7.6% who strongly agree).ⁱⁱ

For most Uruguayans, cannabis regulation is an important matter. When asked how concerned they were about the issue, most declared to either be highly concerned (44.7%) or somewhat concerned (22.1%). Only one-fifth of respondents indicated not being concerned at all about the issue.ⁱⁱⁱ



Among those who consider the issue of cannabis regulation an important matter, opposition to the law is widespread: 45.7% strongly disagree, while an additional 32.1% disagree.

However, citizens conferring less importance to cannabis regulation tend to approve it more. In all the other groups (those whose opinions were somewhat, a little and not at all concerned about regulation) agreement outweighs disagreement. Importance of the issue seems to be a strong cleavage for understanding support for the law, something we are currently exploring in more detail as part of LAMRI research efforts.



ⁱ LAMRI is an academic initiative formed by Florida International University, Insights Research and Consulting and Universidad Católica del Uruguay scholars whose main objective is to collect, analyze, and provide rigorous scientific data and information to social actors (governments, academicians, and general public) interested in marijuana policy in the region and world. For more information, visit <http://lamri.fiu.edu/about/> or <http://ucu.edu.uy/es/lamri>.

ⁱⁱ The AmericasBarometer carries out nationally representative survey studies of voting age population. Data collection in Uruguay for this round took place in March -May 2017. For technical details of this study, please visit: http://datasets.americasbarometer.org/database/files/1307679099Uruguay_AmericasBarometer_Tech_Info_2016_17_W_092217.pdf. The question on views on cannabis regulation was the following: "Since December 2013, the marijuana market in Uruguay is decriminalized and regulated by the government. Do you strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree with this measure?" While not offered to respondents, we also recorded the "nor agree or disagree" answers. The number of cases offering valid responses to this question were 1,490 in 2014 and 1,476 in 2017.

ⁱⁱⁱ Respondents were asked: "And thinking about marijuana regulation in Uruguay. How concerned are you about the issue. A lot, somewhat, a little or not at all?"