

The harm reduction approach towards gambling in light of the internet and new technologies

Gambling addiction, science, independence,
transparency

4th International Multidisciplinary Symposium

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The Government of Québec announces that
the “Société des loteries du Québec”
will be authorized to offer online gambling.

Strong negative reactions from :

- The public health sector
- Directors of Public Health from Québec's 18 Health Authority Regions

The Québec
Ombusman

Establishment of an Online Gambling Working Group
July 9th, 2010

1. Analysis of the social impact of the development of online games;
1. Analysis of the regulatory, technical, economic and legal measures to counter illegal gambling.



**Competing
and
conflicting views**

SOCIOECONOMIC
HYPOTHESIS

SOCIO-HEALTH HYPOTHESIS

LEGAL HYPOTHESIS

METHODOLOGY

CONVOQUER LES FAITS / **SUMMON THE FACTS**

MONITORING SYSTEM

continuous, systematic collection,
analysis and interpretation of online
gambling-related data

The public health hypothesis

- An increase of the availability of online gambling in Quebec
- Thus an increase of the likelihood of at-risk gambling and Internet gaming disorder.

ONLINE GAMBLING PARTICIPATION

2009: 1.4%

2012: 1.5%



ONLINE GAMBLING PATTERNS

Not often, Not long, Not much

ONLINE GAMBLING PROBLEMS

Too low to estimate

PRIMARY AND SECONDARY PREVENTION

Loto Québec: Conflict of interest

Confusion between
responsible offering of online gambling &
prevention of gambling problems

SOCIO-HEALTH HYPOTHESIS

NOT CONFIRMED

NO increase in the number of gamblers

NO increase in the prevalence of gambling problems

Prevention of gambling problems should be entrusted
with an independent body.

The socioeconomic hypothesis

- 1) Channelling online gambling
- 2) Trustworthy offering of online gambling
- 3) Responsible offering of online gambling

CHANNELING ONLINE GAMBLING

- 22% of online gamblers exclusively on Espacejeux
- Beside Espacejeux, more than 2,000 sites available in Québec

SOCIO-ECONOMIC HYPOTHESIS

REASONS

1. LACK OF KNOWLEDGE

2. POKER

- SATURATION
- RAKE SYSTEM

3. CLOSED NETWORK

TRUSTWORTHY GAMES

VERY FEW COMPLAINTS... but

- Loto-Québec is self-regulated.
- No mechanisms of surveillance nor external control.

Impossible to know whether Loto-Québec is better or worst than the other online operators.

RESPONSIBLE GAMBLING

- 50% decrease in use of responsible gambling tools
- Non-validated detection test for problem gambling
- Flashing games on the “Help” page
- Other gambling sites have adequate responsible tools!

SOCIO-ECONOMIC HYPOTHESIS

NOT CONFIRMED

NO channelling

? Trustworthy games ?

Serious problems with responsible gambling

**Supervision and control should be entrusted with
an independent body.**

The legal hypothesis

Curtail the current
and
emerging online gambling offer
from illegal operators.

TRUSTWORTHY GAMES

- Only a province in Canada can « *Conduct and Manage* » online gambling.
- A province cannot licence online gambling as it is authorized to do with charitable organisations.
- In spite of this, there were routinely over 2,000 considered illegal sites offered to Quebecers - not much change since the governmental offer.
- Unregulated sites are numerous.

LEGAL HYPOTHESIS

PROXIMITY

- The illegal sites were closer to the players when consulting the Web.

OVER 2,000 SITES...WHY?

- Lack of Law Enforcement
 - Difficulties to investigate
 - Not a priority
 - Limited sign of organised crime involvement
- Ambiguity of the Canadian *Criminal Code*
 - Different interpretation of the text of law « *Conduct and Manage* »
 - Lack of clear jurisprudence
 - Legality of operators elsewhere
 - Presence of operators in Canada

AMENDMENTS TO THE CANADIAN
CRIMINAL CODE

LEGAL HYPOTHESIS

NOT CONFIRMED

NO decrease of what is considered the illegal online gambling offer.

Modification to the *Criminal Code* should be done to provide for proper and effective regulation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1

- Limitation of operator's social responsibility to their own activities
- An independent Foundation dedicated to prevention

Recommendation 2

Available clinical services

Recommendation 3

- An independent regulatory agency
 - *promotion, advertising, responsible offering, and security and integrity of online and other gambling activities.*

Recommendation 4

- An independent regulatory body to establish and administer a self-financing system to issue licences to private online gambling operators;
- Implementation of the necessary subsidiary measures to ensure the efficacy and long-term survival of a licensing system.

Recommendation 5

- A monitoring system through an expert panel capable of ensuring follow-up to sociosanitary, socioeconomic and legal challenges.

CONCLUSIONS

- The opinions and choices of the stakeholders are indissociable from their conflicting interests, beliefs and perspectives.
- If stakeholders succeed in reaching a consensus on the broad objectives to be attained,

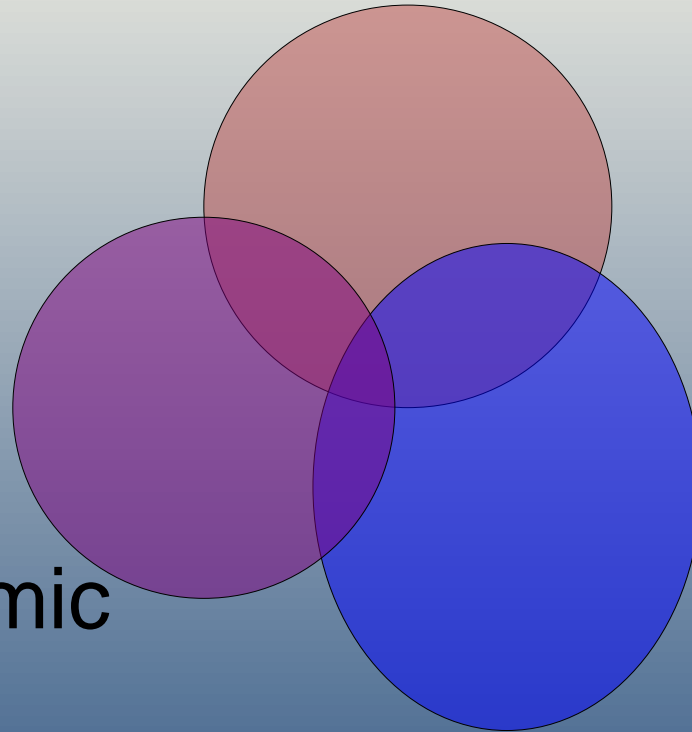
THE SOCIAL CLIMATE IN REGARD
TO GAMBLING HAS A HIGHER PROBABILITY OF BEING
ORIENTED TOWARDS THE PUBLIC GOOD.

Successful harm reduction

The **THREE** components
need
to work together.

CONCLUSION

Health



Economic

Legal

the key finding...

**Legal measures that are NOT accompanied
by competent staff
and a sufficient number of staff
are a feel good regulation
with no real impact of the stated objectives.**

**There is a politically
correct discourse**

**And then there is a genuine
implementation
of theoretical policy.**

Quebec Online Gambling Working Group

Quand la réalité du virtuel nous rattrape /
When online reality catches up with us

Merci !

