



The Legalization of Cannabis: The Saskatchewan Experience

Contemporary Policy Issues

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Canada's Bill C-45, *The Cannabis Act*, is an unprecedented piece of legislation that stimulates international debates as this country leads the world in a bold move towards legalization of adult usage recreational cannabis. The federal government repeatedly indicates that the three primary objectives for this legal change are to eradicate the illicit market, minimize harm and protect youth. Given Canada's high rates of youth cannabis use, developing public policy that targets this sub-population is critical. However, these three goals are counterproductive for the less overt agenda of raising revenue, creating a policy trade off between citizen well-being and profit. Given the complexities of competing goals and unprecedented policy, how can outcomes possibly be predicted? A case analysis of Canada's context that includes examining national papers of interest and other regulatory regimes as well as gleaning lessons through jurisdictional comparison provides some indication of what can be anticipated. This paper describes how a long term improvement in the prevalence of youth cannabis use is possible but renders it highly contingent on a strong public awareness campaign and eradicating the illicit market.