



# A comparative perspective on the emerging cannabis regulatory frameworks

First outcomes and unintended consequences

(Uruguay, USA/Colorado & Washington State, Canada)

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- A qualitative research 2015-2017 (Cannalex, INHESJ-OFDT) carried out in Colorado, Washington State and Uruguay
- Additional qualitative investigations in Canada (BC) and California
- Direct on-site observations
- Policy documents
- Quantitative official data (including Alaska, Oregon & Nevada)
- Latest research findings



# Uruguay starting in 2014



# Canada starting in 2018



# The intentions : different expectations and reform goals

- **Different reform narratives in the US 'green States', Uruguay & Canada:**
  - The objective of public health and youth protection strongly put forward in Uruguay and Canada
  - Increasing tax revenues high on the US agenda (+ racial issues)
- **Different constraints**
  - Level of public support
  - Risk of international disapproval
- **Different regulatory challenges... but a common concern for credibility**
  - 'Legitimizing the reform with euphemization strategies : narrow tax revenue estimates in the US 'green states', an « experiment » to be evaluated in Uruguay...
  - A « responsible » regulation framework (tautology!) (ad hoc regulatory body)
  - Restrictive legal requirements. (even if not backed up by science)

# Cannabis legal restrictions by State/province/territory

	Legalized	Retail sales	Min. age	Plants (home cultiv.)	Max. public possession quantity
<b>United States</b>	At local level				
<b>Colorado</b>	November 2012	January 2014	21	6	1 oz (28 g)
<b>Washington State</b>	November 2012	July 2014	21	0	1 oz (28 g)
<b>Oregon</b>	November 2014	October 2015	21	4	1 oz (28 g)
<b>Alaska</b>	November 2014	October 2016	21	6	1 oz (28 g)
<b>Nevada</b>	November 2016	July 2017	21	6	1 oz (28 g)
<b>California</b>	November 2016	January 2018	21	6	1 oz (28 g)
<b>Uruguay</b>	At national level December 2013	July 2017	18	6	40 g/month
<b>Canada</b>	At federal level				
<b>Ontario</b>		April 2019	19	4	30 g
<b>British Columbia</b>		October 2018	19	4	30 g
<b>Alberta</b>		October 2018	18	4	30 g
<b>Saskatchewan</b>		October 2018	19	4	30 g
<b>Manitoba</b>		October 2018	19	0	30 g
<b>Quebec</b>		October 2018	18	0	30 g
<b>4 provinces + 3 Northwest territories</b>		October 2018	19	4	30 g

# Implementation issues : common obstacles & specific difficulties

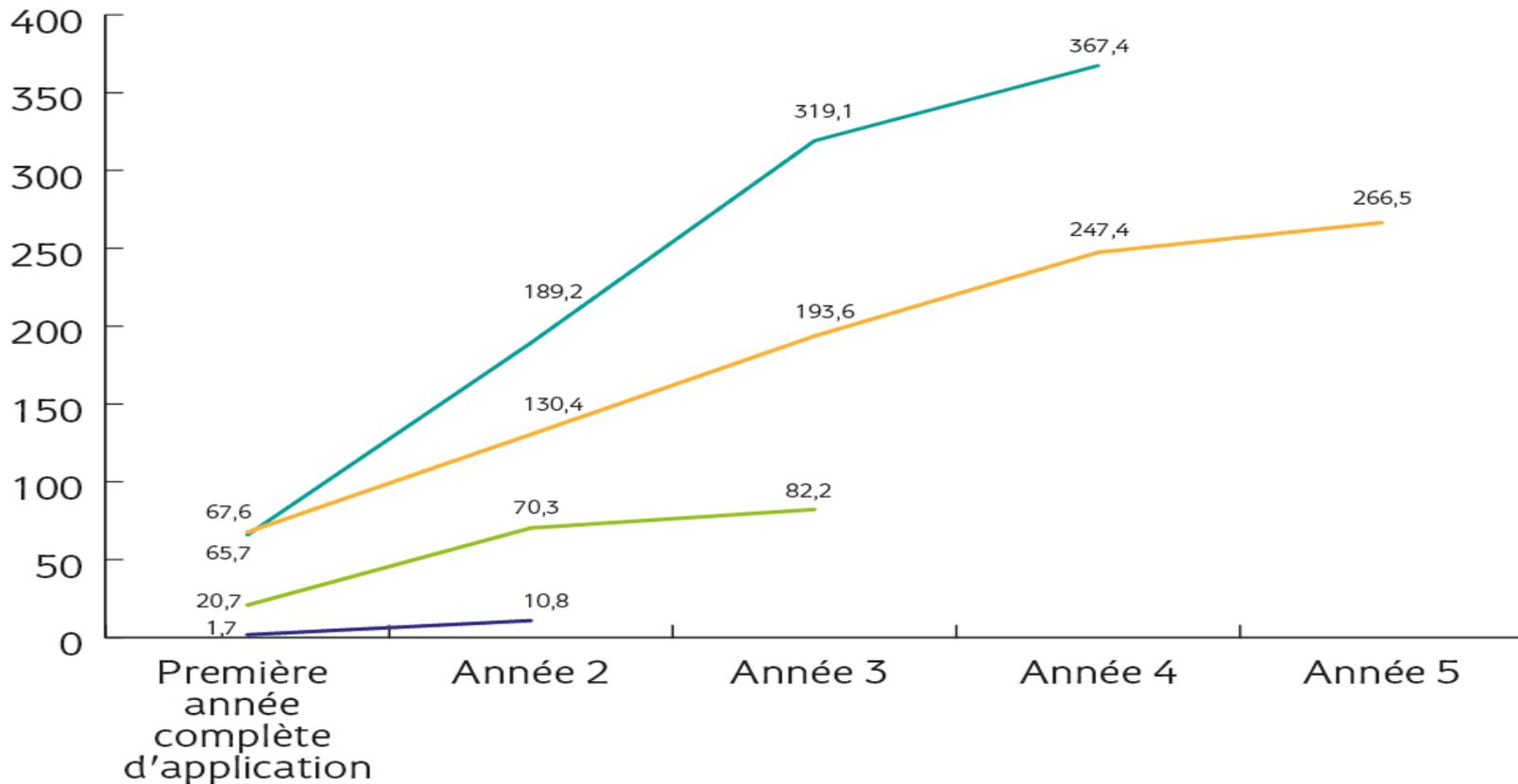
- **Rushed into regulation ? Tight schedules for implementation**
- **Different sources of internal resistance**
  - Uruguayan pharmacists and users reluctant to registrate,
  - Public authorities in Colorado
  - Health professionals and pediatricists in the US & some Canadian provinces
- **Bureaucratic issues and logistical obstacles**
  - Production delays and supply shortages
  - No federal assistance (US), e.g. on pesticide regulation
  - Banking restrictions

# Unanticipated outcomes

## Unexpected benefits

- **A fast-growing industry in the US : business opportunities, direct and indirect jobs, economic growth**
- **Raising revenue for the state : beyond all expectations... (see next slide)**
- **Enlarged public opinion support to the reform (social acceptability)**
- **International surface for Canada (as an early mover on the cannabis worldwide market)**

# Tax revenue From cannabis recreational sales



Colorado      État de Washington      Oregon      Alaska

# Unanticipated outcomes

## Unexpected drawbacks

- **Market centralization induced by commercialization in the US** (the 'Big Marijuana' menace as expressed by most US public health professionals) **and globalization** (Aurora now in Uruguay)
- **Diversification of cannabis products**, generating consumption incentives for a wider range of population, with still undocumented risks (concentrates, dabbing) – see next slide
- **Environmental damages** (salient concern in Canada)
- **Out-of-state exports (Colorado, Oregon)**

# Cannabis Products and Modes of Use in the U.S.

- **Combusted products**  
(e.g., joints, pipes, bong, bowls, blunts, spliffs)
- **Vaporizers**  
(e.g., electronic vaping devices, or older models that are more like heat-not-burn)
- **Edibles**  
(e.g., brownies, cookies, candies)
- **Drinks**  
(e.g., elixirs, syrups, hot chocolates)
- **Dabbing**  
(e.g., using concentrates and waxes)
- **Other ways**



# Unanticipated outcomes

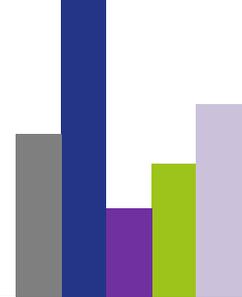
## Perverse effects

- **An effective « legalization of THC » ? The poor level of control of the types and potency of products legally available**
- **Marketing and advertising regulations**
- **New health concerns : acute intoxications (seniors), pathways to dependence**
- **Resilience of the black market (partly due to supply shortages in Uruguay & Canada + territorial disparities in the access to legal cannabis)**
- **The pricing issue (dramatic fall in most US states vs inadequate pricing in some Canadian provinces)**
- **Socioeconomic and racial stratification of cannabis-related arrests (as well as opportunities within legal cannabis markets)**

# Conclusion

## Persistent concerns

- **The paradox of legalization : minors and the black market**
- **Normalization (availability, affordability, perceived harmfulness)**
- **Levels of use among youths**
- **Healthcare encounters with mention of cannabis**
- **Concerns about increased driving fatalities**



**Thank you !**

