



Attitudes towards gambling among Icelanders in 2011 and 2023

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Introduction

- Gambling has been a point of some controversy in many countries, and it seems that in general, the public has a more negative than a positive attitude towards gambling (Delfabbro and King, 2021; Kristensen et al., 2023).
- Most likely this is because many associate gambling with the negative consequences such an activity has for some gamblers and their immediate families. Thus, it seems that people tend to assume that gambling does more harm than good.
- It is therefore an interesting fact that despite general negative attitudes towards gambling, majority of the public still gambles in most countries
- Attitudes towards gambling were first measured in 2011 as means to collect information that could be important for the Icelandic government to shape its future policy for the Icelandic gambling market...



Surveys

- Sampling frame: Participants were randomly (Plain random) selected from the population registry
- Data collection: Phone/CATI
- Data weights: By sex, age and region

	Sample N/n	Response rates	Mean age	Percentage of males
2011	3.227/1,887	62,0%	42,4 y.	47,1%
2023	5.000/2,073	42,0%	45,4 y.	48,5%

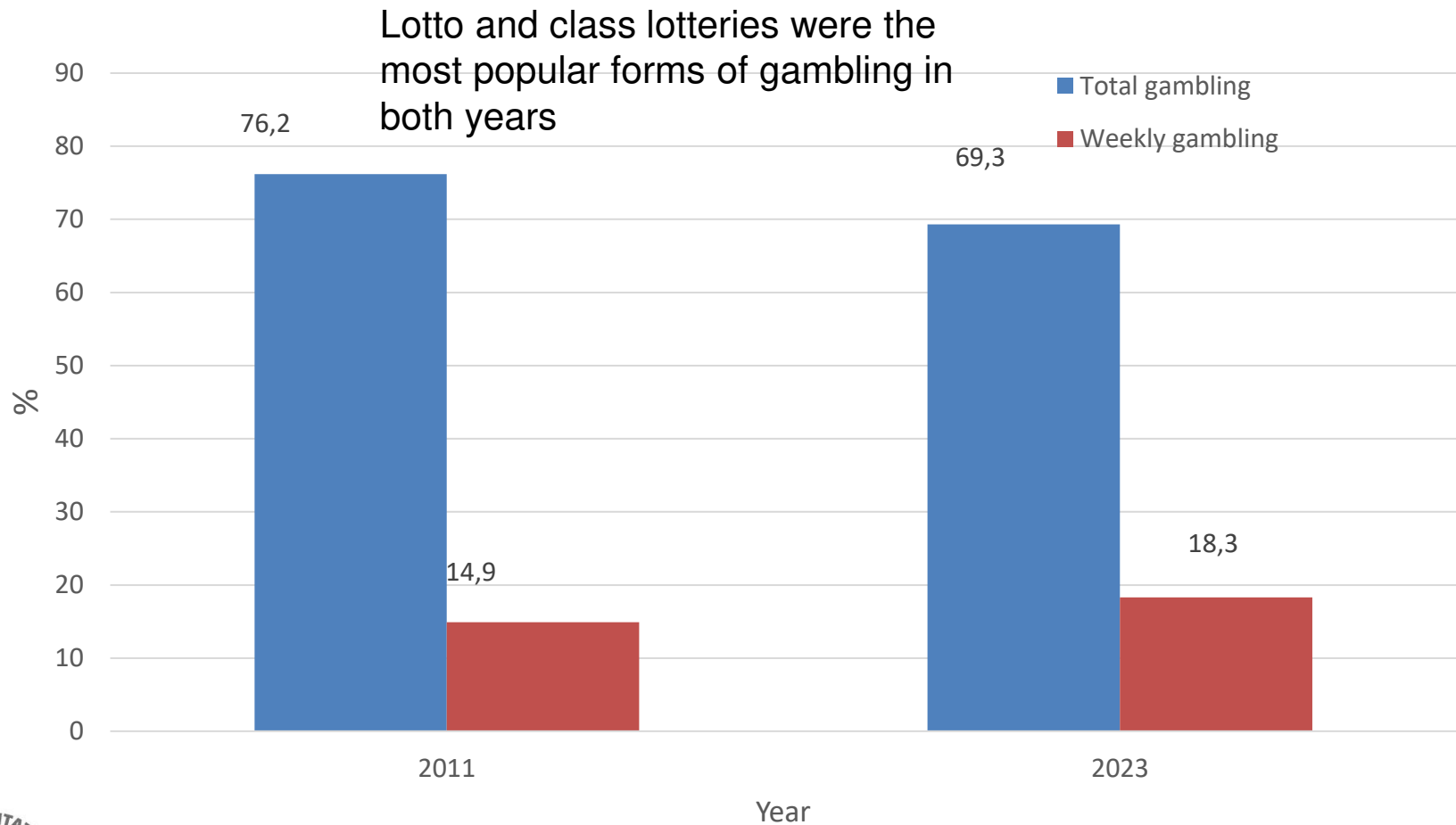


The ATGS

- The Attitudes Towards Gambling Scale (ATGS) is originally a 14-item measure on general attitudes towards gambling (Wardle et al., 2007; Orford o.fl., 2009).
- Participants respond to tiems on a 5- point Likert scale: 1 = strongly agree to 5 = strongly disagree.
- The ATGS-Isl was translated by two independent translator and merged into one version after some discussion. The ATGS-isl internal consistency was satisfactory ($\alpha = 0,88$), with item-total between 0,41 til 0,66.
- In this study we report on the 8-item version of the ATGS which has been shown to be equalent to the full version (Canale, et al., 2016).
- *The total score is interpretated in the following manner: Score above 24 = positive attitude towards gambling, a score below as negative and a 24 as a neutral.*

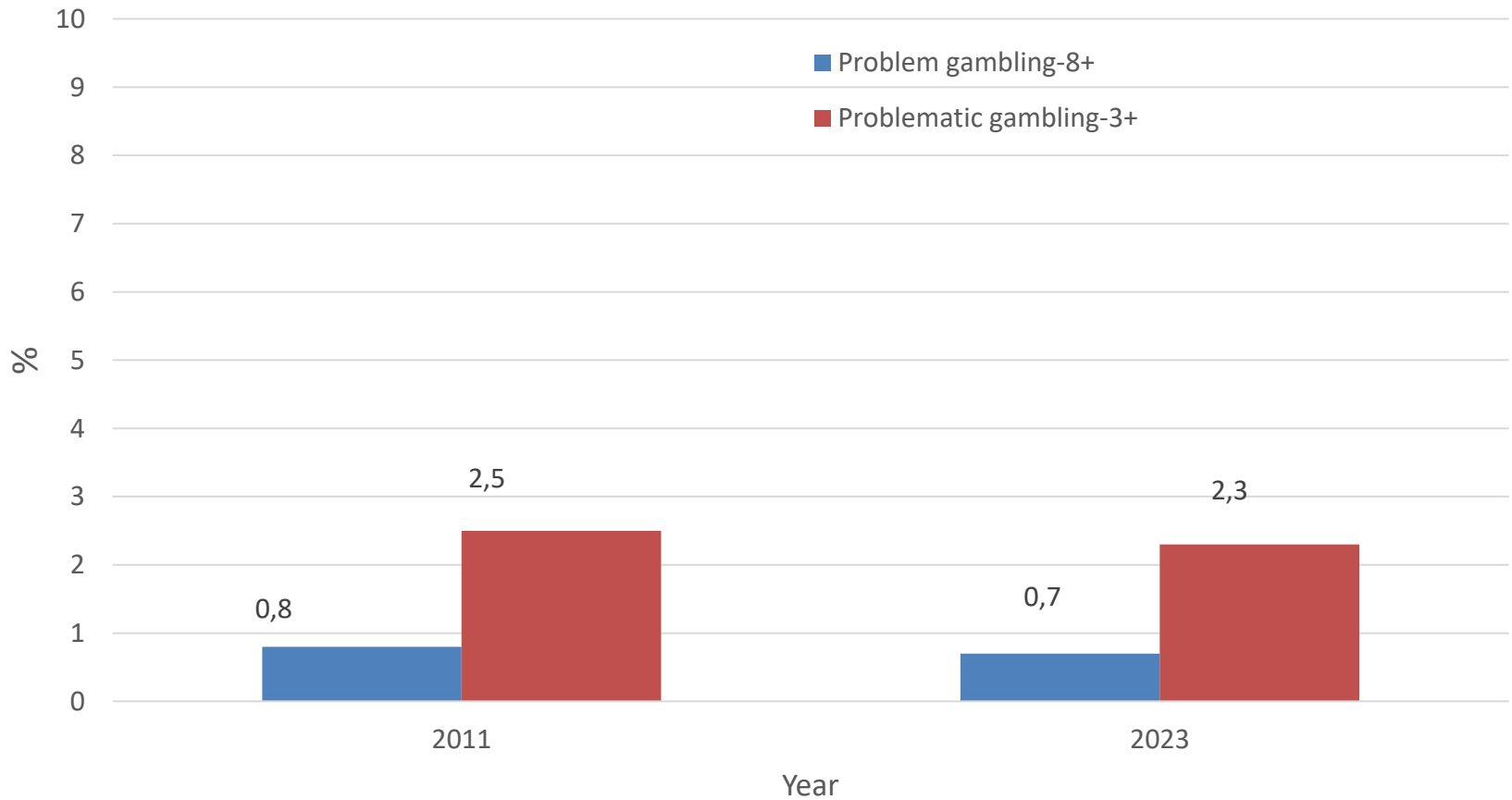


Gambling participation 2011 and 2023





Problem gambling 2005 and 2023





Attitude endorsement and total score

	% agree 2011	% agree 2023
items		
1. There are too many opportunities for gambling nowadays.		
2. People should have the right to gamble whenever they want*.		
3. Gambling should be discouraged.		
4. Most people who gamble do so sensibly*.		
5. Gambling is dangerous for family life.		
6. On balance gambling is good for society*.		
7. Gambling livens up life*.		
8. It would be better if gambling was banned altogether.		
Total score:	19,87 (6,32)	19,26*
mean (sd)		(5,85)
Chronbach's alpha	0,81	0,82

Significant values were set at 0,006 after correction for number of comparisons



Attitudes and background

	2011		2023	
Background	Mean	T-test or simple Anova	Mean	T-test or simple Anova
Gender				
Males	21,23	9,53***	20,67	5,32***
Females	18,4		19,14	
Education				
Elementary	19,21	2,57	19,64	0,917
High school	20,10		20,15	
University	20,01		19,90	
Age groups				
18-25	22,05 ^a	65.56***	21,13 ^a	21,74
26-40	21,65 ^a		20,83 ^{ab}	
41-55	18,58 ^b		19,85 ^b	
56-75	16,95 ^c		18,26 ^c	



Attitudes and Problem gambling

	2011		2023	
PG-groups	Mean	One-way Anova	Mean	One-way Anova
Do not gamble	18,16 ^a	23,57*	19,12 ^a	10,60*
Non-problem gamblers	20,14 ^b		20,12 ^a	
Low-risk gambling	23,54 ^c		23,02 ^b	
Problematic gambling	21,75 ^{bc}		19,96 ^a	



Attitudes and Gambling behaviour

Gambling behaviors	2011	2023
Number of gambling forms	0.24*	
Total gambling	0.10*	
Card poker	0.29*	
EGMs	0.17*	
Foreign websites	0.16*	
Sports gambling	0.19*	
Sport pools	0.15*	
Scratch tickets	0.10*	
bingo	0.07*	
Lotto	0.05	
Class lotto	-0.04	

* $P \leq 0.01$



Conclusion

- In general, Icelanders tend to have negative attitudes towards gambling which is in line with most of the attitudinal research conducted so far (Kristensen et al., 2023).
- Men were less negative towards gambling than women and younger people also reported fewer negative attitudes than older people. However, in contrary to common findings, there was no association between education and attitudes towards gambling.
- There were significant “very moderate” positive correlations with frequency of total gambling and with number of gambling formats.
- Exploring associations with different gambling formats however revealed no association with the two most common gambling activities, lotto and class lotteries, which suggests that people tend not to include these two activities as “really gambling” (see also discussion from Delfabbro and King, 2021 on the behaviour-attitude divide).



Limit setting systems and restriction to foreign websites

- During and after covid there was some discussion in news media and on social websites about EGMs and the possibilities of using *limit setting systems as harm prevention*.
- Further, the unlimited access of foreign gambling companies to the Icelandic internet market has been under discussion, both within the ministry of justice and in public media.
- Thus, I generated three statements to examine the public attitudes towards these issues in 2023.
- 1. We should introduce the use of player cards or electric registration for those who gamble on EGMs.
- 2. We should introduce the use of player cards or electric registration for all gambling forms in Iceland.
- 3. The access of Icelanders to foreign gambling websites should be restricted.



Limit setting and restrictions

Items	Mean (sd)	% agree	% disagree
1. We should introduce the use of player cards or electric registration for those who gamble on EGMs	3,05 (1,27)	38,0%	32,0%**
2. We should introduce the use of player cards or electric registration for all gambling forms in Iceland	2,83 (1,25)	31,1%	40,6%**
3. The access of Icelanders to foreign gambling websites should be restricted	2,95 (1,31)	35,5%	42,4%**

Men (x%) were more likely to disagree with restrictions to foreign gambling websites than women (x%) and those with more education were more likely to disagree than those with only elementary education.

Finally, it was notable that 81% of those who gamble on foreign websites were totally opposed to restrictions to their access to these websites, SURPRICINGLY

