

## **The Impact of Organizing Major Sporting Events Case of African Games in Morocco 2019**

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### **Abstract**

Hosting a mega sporting event represents a dream, as well as an opportunity, for the sports, political and socio-economic actors of a country, given its multiple direct and indirect impacts on its overall development process.

However, the act of hosting a sporting event of international reach is becoming increasingly complex, requiring the mobilization of all the available resources in a country: human, financial, logistical, as well as a whole network of sports, hotel, road, hospital and other infrastructure which must meet the required standards by the elaborated standards for this purpose.

Indeed, the ultimate goal through the organization of such sporting events goes beyond one-off financial revenues, it is expanded to produce a dynamic strong citizen and to encourage all the good wills of society, the impacts of which can have subsequent long term consequences.

Morocco, like developing countries, has opted, as an axis of its public sports policy, to host, since the 1980s, sporting events at the African level (African Cup of nations 1986...), Arab and International (Mediterranean games 1983 / Franco-phone games 1989, FIFA Club World Cup 2014...).

The tangible effects have encouraged the political responsible to bid for the 5th time the candidacy of Morocco to organize the football world cup.

The objective of this article is to identify the different impacts of the organization of a sporting event on the territory, the degree of involvement of the territorial actors in the organization process and to verify the legacy issue left by this event.

For this reason, we start from the following assumption: in Morocco the organization of a sporting event is not and integrated component of a global policy, it is often the result of constraints having a character of urgency thus making the impact of these events modest.

We have chosen as a case study, the 12th African Games organized from 19 to 31 August 2019 in Morocco.

Concerning the mobilized methodological tools, we used official documentary analysis, effective participation in the organization of these games and finally semi-structured interviews carried out with territorial involved actors in the event.

**Keywords:** Event; Sport; Territory

### **Theoretical Approaches to Sporting Events**

The theoretical approaches will be devoted, first, to presenting the definition of the used concepts, while giving a prominent place to spreading the theoretical approaches, which aim at explaining the fierce competition between countries, regardless of ideological tendencies, to host sporting events.

#### **Definition of the used concepts**

From a methodological point of view, it is not useless to observe a delineation of the outlines of certain concepts that will

punctuate this article. Regarding the concept of sport, we will retain the following definition, presented by the Council of Europe, in its Sport Charter (2007), which seems broad and flexible enough to reflect this diversity. "Sport" means all forms of physical activity, which, through organized or unorganized participation, have the objective of expressing or improving physical and mental condition, the development of social relations or the achievement of results in competition of all levels. The particularity of this definition is that it encompasses three

objectives: to broaden the base of sports practitioners who are not, for personal or administrative reasons, members of the Federations. In a second place to demonstrate that the purpose of practicing sport should not be limited to competitive sport, on the contrary, it should be extended to specific objectives to each age category.

Finally, this definition incorporates other dimensions of sport, in particular the indirect impact of sport on social integration, an axis which is of great interest to the Territorial Communities.

A sporting event is often defined as "a powerfully publicized social fact, the impact of which on different audiences is linked to the uncertainty of the action result of the placed various actors in a situation of exploit, performance or competition." (Ferrand. 1993. 280).

Other researchers, after having explored and presented a wide range of the different socioeconomic and political aspects of the concept, propose a more extensive definition: "A prior organization (as opposed to an accidental or improvised situation), a certain limit of time and place, media coverage or at least some communication, sports performance and spinoffs (material, memorial and symbolic)." [1,2].

As for the concept of territory, heavily used in this article, it represents "a social construct which translates at the same time economic, ideological, political and social appropriation of space by groups which make a particular representation of their history and singularity." (Di Méo G 1998. 13) [3]. In addition to the geographical aspect, the particularity of this definition lies in the fact that it emphasizes on the notion of appropriation and cultural, economic or social cohesion in a defined space that allows the development of common projects.

#### **Theoretical approaches to sporting events**

Various research and studies have tried to elucidate the impact of the organization of a sporting event on the development of a territory. The light, however, has been much more focused on the economic effects and on the foreseeable profitability without devoting, in parallel, an interest in evaluating and measuring the degree of the effects of a social, environmental, town planning.... "The studies carried out upstream / or downstream of the event favor the calculation of the economic impact and social utility and avoid what comes under the analysis of social impacts which appear more diffuse, non-measurable and in the longer term." (Charrier. 2019.9) [4].

However, the organization of a sporting event is at the center of a debate between those who are in favor of hosting these events, putting forward arguments of an economic nature, social impact and outreach to the international, while drawing on some examples of countries, which have made significant progress in development. "Indeed, Sporting events act as a catalyst for major urban development projects. From Grenoble to Turin via Barcelona, many cities have used games to accelerate their urban transformation." (Junod 2007. 93).

Despite the fact that some cities have recorded huge deficits following their organization of sporting events, this has not discouraged them from reiterating their candidacy. "Already famous for its record deficit following the organization of the summer Olympics in 1976, the city of Montreal hosted the 11th World Aquatic Sports Championships in 2005 with a deficit of US \$ 3.5 million. This did not seem to worry the mayor of Montreal, Gérard Tremblay, who declared "it was worth it. A deficit of the order of 4 million represents only 0.1% of Mon-

treil's annual budget of 4 billion. Worlds will also bring incredible visibility to the city, an important showcase to the world" [5].

On the other hand, other voices are raised to contest the reception of such an event by advancing negative effects on the territory, for example, the risks of traffic congestion constitute a threat both from an ecological and economic point of view [6]. As for the developing countries an outcry of criticism always follows the intention of their government to submit their candidacy, on the pretext that the development stakes are too important and so enormous that they require to direct public investments, rather, towards real development projects (health, education, work, basic infrastructure, etc.)

Historically, the organization of sporting events has passed three paths. Initially, it was such practiced physical activities in ancient times, which would give rise to the Olympic Games around 776 BC. AD the Romans, will install arenas, stadiums and racetracks. This period was marked by the chariot race and the fights of gladiators and beasts. These competitive games were, often very aggressive, aimed, among other things, at calming social tensions and winning the support of a very impoverished population by the heavy taxes.

The second highlight of sporting events is related to the birth of the Olympic movement formed on June 23, 1894. The first modern Olympic Games (Games of the Olympiad) [7] were celebrated in Athens, Greece, in 1896. This type of mega-event reflects a global philosophy of life, with an international focus, whose goals:

- "Promote the development of physical and moral qualities which are the basis of sport;
- Educate youth through sport, in a spirit of better mutual understanding and friendship, thus helping to build a better and more peaceful world;
- Make the Olympic principles universally known, thus arousing international will;
- Invite the athletes of the world to the great quadrennial sports festival that is the Olympic Games. "

As for the 3rd path, it represents sport integrating new socioeconomic issues and often conceived as a product that can be marketed and why not generate income.

Without forgetting that the new generation of mega-events must imperatively respect ecological and urban planning criteria... [8]

To answer the question: how can a temporary event be anchored in time and space to make territory?

Researchers Bessy & Suchet (2015) [1], after reviewing research in this field critically, identified three levels of effect. The first level concerns the close relationship between attendance at a sports site and its legitimacy with the population. However, its effects remain limited to the sports register aimed primarily at expanding the practice of sports among the population.

The second level presents the sporting event with significant spinoffs going beyond the effect on practitioners alone, but helping to create real economic and social tourism dynamics on the city and the region as a whole. Thus, hosting a sporting event can be a collective issue for the effects it generates: significant economic, social and environmental benefits in the short, medium and long term.

The third level is closely related to the constitution of a positive image about the city where the sporting event is organized, thus ensuring its influence at the international level.

Table 1: Effect levels and scale level in the resonance of a sporting event

Tableau 2. Niveaux d'effet et niveau d'échelle dans la résonance d'un événement sportif

Niveau d'échelle (dimension de cette emprise et de ce rayonnement)				
Niveau d'effet (emprise et rayonnement)	Local		Mondial	
	Limité à l'activité ou à la discipline sportive	La Course des Volcans 2008, Clermont-Ferrand. Sancy Verte 2016 (épreuve de VTT), La Bourboule. <i>Et autres compétitions sportives très locales...</i>	Championnats d'Europe de VTT 2006, Limosano (Italie).	Le Petzl RocTrip 2011, Vallée du Gêtu (Chine). Le Red Bull Rampage 2015, Virgin (Utah, USA).
	Sectoriel et touristique	Compétitions/animations en stations de sport d'hiver.	La Grande Odyssée Savoie-Mont-Blanc 2010, Savoie et Haute-Savoie.	Le Mondial du Vent 2010, Leucate. Le Lacanau Pro 2014 [surf], Lacanau.
	Étendu à l'ensemble de la société	Céret de toros 2008 [Feria et corridas], Céret. <i>Certaines petites compétitions de pratiques sportives portant localement identitaires</i>	Le Grand Prix de la Saint-Louis 2010 [tournoi de joutes languedociennes], Sète.	Coupe du Monde de football 1998, Paris. Les Jeux Olympiques d'été 2008, Pékin (Chine). <i>Les compétitions sportives mondiales majeures...</i>

According to Bessy & Suchet, different orientation strategies for an organization are profiled behind the organization of a sporting event, more clearly, the sporting event is ultimately only a used tool / support as a means of the territory development.

The theoretical approach aimed at better understanding the fierce competition between nations to host international sporting events, and it was initially oriented towards applying the tools of economic analysis, particularly quantitative and monetary, to assess the tangible contributions of such organization. However, “after decades of exploration, the consensus reached by most researchers is that these impacts are small, neutral and sometimes even negative. (Charrier & Jourdan, 2019) [4].

Academics will gradually abandon the path of researching economic impact as the sole criterion for organizing a mega-event.

In 2007, researchers from the CDES (Barget & Gouguet 2007) proposed, in addition to economic analysis, to focus, as well, on the social value of Major Sports Events (GES). This new concept alludes to a new method which, beyond the calculation of the economic impacts, raises the question of the inheritance by tracing a field of social utility built around the gain in licensees, the awareness of the regular sporting practice of the public, the avoided social disutility (savings of health related to the growth in the number of licensees) and volunteering in clubs (Charrier & Jourdan 2019) [4].

It should be remembered that social utility is a "concept frequently used, particularly in the context of the social and solidarity economy (SSE), to qualify the production of wealth of non-profit organizations or those not belonging to public services. The method designed by the CDES aims to calculate (in Euro) "the economic impact and social utility of GHGs ... This approach relates the costs generated for the host community to the benefits for the population in terms of welfare. To be social....They add up to the cost of sports investments; communication, organization and personnel expenses to which is added a monetary calculation of the nuisances caused by the event. The social benefits concern entertainment, animation and the image of the territories, social cohesion, the development of sports activity, the creation of jobs.” (Charrier & Jourdan 2019) [4].

This method will be challenged due to the fact that it is very difficult to translate in a monetary way the impacts of social effects, for example how can we measure social cohesion?

Table 2: Proposal for the scope of the social impact of GHGs (Charrier & Jourdan 2019. 79).

Categories	Sub-categories
Social cohesion and citizenship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Diversity (social, generational, gender).</li> <li>Promotion of “target” audiences: women, disadvantaged people, disabled people, senior minorities, etc</li> <li>Anticipated, shared and extended festive moments linked to the event as well as to the entertainment program.</li> <li>Sense of local or national belonging (pride linked either to sporting results or to hosting the event), identity and fraternity.</li> <li>Opening up of working-class neighborhoods and induced urban mobility.</li> </ul>
Education and empowerment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development of social content related to the event.</li> <li>Citizenship education.</li> <li>Consultations prior to the decision to organize the event.</li> <li>Invention of co-production methods.</li> <li>Mobilization of mechanisms for involving residents and "sports democracy" bodies.</li> <li>Training, experience and mobilization of staff, volunteers and volunteer networks.</li> <li>Social movements against or on the occasion of the event</li> </ul>
Development of physical activity for all and sports culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase in licensed effects</li> <li>General increase in physical practices (occasional or lasting)</li> <li>Public health: prevention and induced benefits</li> <li>Reduction of inequalities in access to practices</li> <li>Diversification of activities</li> </ul>
Structuring Of organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Capacity of events to generate projects or devices</li> <li>Development of sports organizations: activities, funding, etc.</li> <li>Politico-administrative transformations of public authorities (intercommunity and creation of transversal units for the organization of GESI °)</li> <li>Mobilization and transformation of actor networks (top-down, bilateral, multilateral, reticular partnerships, ripple effect of actors unrelated to the event)</li> </ul>
Valuation of territories	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Institutional communication and territorial identity</li> <li>Construction of sports and non-sports facilities</li> <li>Reduction of environmental footprints and awareness of ecology</li> <li>Positive lasting memory for organizational actors, participants, spectators and residents</li> <li>Ephemeral or lasting urban imprints (ambulatory, visual, sound, olfactory).</li> </ul>
Bridges between sport and other fields	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sports tourism and induced tourism</li> <li>Cross-cutting or transgressive meetings around hybrid arts and sport practices</li> <li>International solidarity and development aid</li> <li>Sensitization and intercultural exchange</li> </ul>

In 2016, on the organization of Euro 2016 Football in France, a group of researchers carried out a study aimed at defining the social impact of GHGs. They have believed that there is no precise definition of this concept to qualify as protean.

This is mainly because researchers have realized that the presence or absence of monetary benefits is often not a sufficient

criterion to determine the validity of hosting an event in a territory. These analyzes will broaden previously purely economic concerns, identifying a set of "non-market" effects of sporting events. (Charrier & Jourdan.2019) [4].

This review of the literature concerning theoretical approaches aimed at analyzing and understanding the keen competition between countries to organize GHGs, shows a tendency to abandon purely economic evaluations. "The legitimacy of obtaining public support for the organization of such events cannot be based on a single calculation of economic impact. It is preferable to measure the social utility thus created and, in the context of a cost / benefit analysis. To compare the incurred costs for the host community with the benefits for the population in terms of social well-being" (Barget & Gouguet 2010. 94).

### **Morocco and interest in Major Sporting Events (M.S.E)**

Morocco, since its independence in 1956 has effectively taken part in the M.S.E, in particular the Olympics (Silver Medal in Abdessalam Radi marathon in 1960), the World Cup and continental events. The beginning of the 1980s was a decisive turning point in the history of modern sport in Morocco with a given priority to sport by the public authorities.

Thus, we can, in a methodological point of view, evoke two stages, the first begins with the recovery of Morocco from its independence until the end of the 1970s, and sport was managed with rudimentary structures inherited from the protectorate.

This state of affairs can be explained by the macroeconomic situation of a country which had a real need to establish its sovereignty and to face the real issues and challenges of development, sport was not considered to be a priority on the government's agenda.

Also the behavior of the technical services of the Ministry of Finance opposed to any attempt at functional enlargement of the administrative structures, often putting forward the pretext of the financial repercussions of this action on the general budget of the State.

The second stage began in the middle of the 1980s with a more acute awareness of those responsible for the role that sport could play as a factor of influence and international openness, especially in that period of political crisis aggravated by the conflict. From the Sahara, Morocco thus began to host international sporting events; to acquire an infrastructure meeting the standards required by the International Sports Federations; and to shine on the world sporting scene.

During that decade, Morocco was able to host GHGs, for example, the Mediterranean games (1983) the Pan-Arab games (1986), the African football cup (1988) the games of the Francophonie (1989) and the world games of Peace (1990). The accumulation of experience, the effects of media coverage, and all the achieved good performances by Moroccan athletes encouraged the officials of the country to present the candidacy of Morocco for the organization of the World Cup for the 5th time (1994/1998/2002/2010/2026) but without success, which allows us to talk about the existence of public policies for

hosting sporting events (PASES) (Chappelet & Pinson 2015) [9,10].

### **Methodology and results**

This part will be dedicated to firstly present the African games and the reasons which have encouraged sports players in Morocco to commit to organizing these games. Secondly, analyze and discuss the emanating results from information and assessments resulting from semi-structured interviews conducted with territorial actors to assess the impact of these games on the chosen cities to host these games.

We seek, through this article to provide answers to the following questions:

- Why do countries engage in a fierce competition to host sporting events?
- What are the different contributions of such an organization in the country?
- In Morocco, does the organization of a sporting event integrate a global sports promotion policy or simply a reaction to fleeting opportunities?
- Do the managers have a clear vision of the objectives to be achieved through the organization of a mega-event?
- Are the territorial players involved in the process of organizing a sporting event?
- What link (s) and the role of sporting events in the development of a territory?

Finally, I reproduce the same developed question by other researchers (Bessy & Suchet 2015) [1]: how can a temporary event be anchored in time and space to make a territory?

### **Presentation of African games**

From August 19 to 31, 2019 Morocco hosted the 12th edition of the African Games, Rabat at the end of the memorandum of understanding signed in Rabat on November 10, 2018 conferring on the Kingdom of Morocco the organization of these Games, and this, after the withdrawal from Equatorial Guinea.

These games took place in the following cities: Rabat, Salé, Temara, Casablanca, Benslimane and El Jadida.

According to the official games website, "The African Games are a multidisciplinary sports competition aimed at promoting high-level African sport and encouraging cultural exchanges between member states of the African Union (AU). They are held in accordance with the provisions of the Architecture of Sport in Africa approved by the 5th ordinary session of the Conference of Sports Ministers held in Abidjan in Côte d'Ivoire from July 25 to 26, 2013 and endorsed by the Decision of the Executive Council. The organization of the African Games is inspired by the Constitutive Act of the African Union and the Statutes of the High Council of the AU.

The African Games are organized every four years. The capital of Congo Brazzaville hosted the first edition in 1965 and the last in 2015, and the edition of 2023 will be hosted by Ghana. "Morocco has agreed to host the 12th edition. In this regard, Morocco signed the Memorandum of Understanding for the organization of the Games in December 2018 at a request from the African Union, the Association of National Olympic Committees of Africa, the Union of Confederations of African sports and the African Games Organizing Committee, following the withdrawal of Equatorial Guinea, which had previously committed to organizing the continental competition".

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.leseco.ma/omnisport/>

<sup>2</sup> «*Equatorial Guinea to hold 2019 African Games*» [archive], in guineaequatorialpress.com, 21 juin 2016 (consulted : 13 september 2017)

It should be noted that Morocco had only ten months of preparation after the withdrawal of Equatorial Guinea for lack of sufficient means. Indeed, the cities of Accra, Nairobi, Lusaka and Malabo have respectively expressed their wish to organize the event. The African Union awarded, during a series of meetings held from June 13 to 17, 2016 in Addis Ababa, the organization's headquarters, the XII African Games to the city of Malabo in Equatorial Guinea after a year of hesitation around the organization of the event.

On November 5, 2017, in a statement by Equatorial Guinean President Teodore Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, the country announced that it was renouncing the organization of these games. The General Director at the Sports Ministry, Josue Esono, said, according to the African News Agency, "Our country could not afford to organize this competition without the guarantee that it would qualify for the Tokyo Olympics". Lusaka was then approached to replace Malabo, but sports director Bessy Chelemu ruled out this possibility, saying that Zambia is not ready to host such an event .

In July 2018, the Association of African National Olympic Committees (ANOCA) announced that Morocco was selected to host the 2019 Games. The host city, which hosts this continental sporting event, is Rabat, capital of Morocco and Casablanca. This was the first time that the African Games have been held in two different cities. Without forgetting that it had been 40 years since Morocco had participated in the African Games.

Morocco demanded that these games be a qualifying stage for the first time in the history of the JA at the Olympic Games Tokyo 2020.

Among the assigned objectives to these games according to the official documents of the games:

- Promote high-level African sport and encourage cultural exchanges between Member States of the African Union;
  - Encourage young athletes to develop and reach the levels where they can represent their nations and their entire regions;
  - Provide opportunities for African countries to unite by working on a defined sport program by mutual agreement;
  - Develop a spirit of fair play, mutual respect and Olympism among the young athletes of the continent;
  - Allow young people from the 54 Member States of the African Union to meet and get to know each other in order to develop the necessary community spirit and regional integration.
- This edition has launched with a new generation of games, as it would include 17 qualifying disciplines for the Olympic Games to be held in 2020 in Tokyo.

28 sports disciplines are represented during the games. 22 sports venues host the events.

**A last minute decision**

The analyzed writings confirm that the decision to organize the games was taken at the last minute, after the withdrawal of Guinea; Morocco is a palliative that came to the rescue to respect the regularity of organizing the games. The second observation relates to the argument presented by the Guinean State arguing that this event will not bring an added sporting or a socio-economic value, thus making it possible to justify the huge sums that will be released by public finances. To better understand the decision taken by Morocco to organize the African Games, it is imperative to link it with the geopolitical

context, particularly in Africa, to be described as very tense. Remember that Morocco, and since 1981 has decided to leave and freeze its participation in the Organization of the African Union (OAU) because of the recognition of the Polisario by the latter, an entity which did not have of the constituent elements of a State. But it has been strongly supported by other countries aiming to weaken the Moroccan state especially in a context of cold war and ideological conflict between countries having an affinity with Western countries and others with communist obedience. Nevertheless, the new reign of King Mohammed IV, has opted for a strategic decision, which has consisted in getting rid of the policy of the "empty chair and orienting Moroccan diplomacy to position itself in the African continent. To this end, Morocco to regain the AU and aims to integrate all African bodies, including sports ". [11-15].

**Dysfunctions in the organization of African Games**

The resulting observations from the presence of the author in the organizing committee of these games, the series of interviews that we had carried out with the sports managers and territorial actors, have allowed us to detect the remarks and relating findings to the dysfunctions in the organization of African games.

But before addressing these dysfunctions, it is essential to raise a remark that attracts attention, the total absence of any carried out prior study by the organizers to assess the feasibility and the foreseeable impact in the short and long term.

The only explanation for this major error would be the precipitation factor, which may have forced the organizers to resort to tinkering so as to get the strategic objective that was organizing the African games, which should normally be a tool to achieve economic and socio-political objectives which can consequently have a tangible impact on the territory.

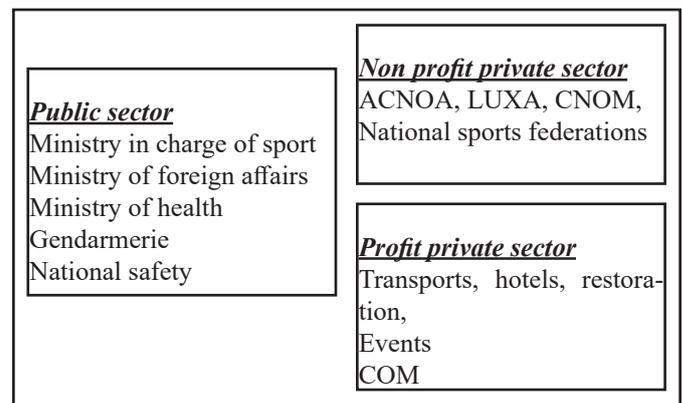


Figure 1: The involved actors in the organization of African games.

**Low attendance at sports venues**

The main objective of organizing a sporting event is to create a show for the benefit of the population, either real (spectator) or virtual (thanks to television broadcasting). Moroccan press articles have mentioned the low rate of attendance of the sites sportsmen, although the re-entry was free. This can be explained, according to the press, by the fact that, on the one hand, these games took place during the month of August, which is a holiday period. And on the other hand, a large part of the public had little or no information about these games, for lack of or weak local communication campaign, which uses

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.lepoint.fr/afrique/jeux-africains-2019>

all means of seduction to attract spectators. With the exception of the "FAN ZONE", which offered mostly recreational parasporting activities, music conferences and concerts, and exhibition stands. The initiative has been visited by a great influx of the population of Rabat. According to the head of FAN ZONE, he estimated, as daily averages over 1500 visitors per day.

However, this initiative should normally take place in all the other concerned cities by the games (Casablanca / Salé / El-Jadida).

### **Ambiguity of objectives**

The analysis of the official speeches of the responsible of the games shows a kind of ambiguity about the real objectives assigned to these games, are they sports objectives aimed at popularizing the practice of sports at the level of the population? Or objectives that aim at seizing the opportunity to organize the African games to hoist the national flag and to shine by winning medals?

This organization refers to multiple connotations with a strong symbolic and emotional charge.

Or perhaps, these games have other non-sporting purposes, namely to use the hosting of this event as a means of affirmation and international recognition, especially with the fierce desire displayed by the public authorities to ensure a return. Notorious on the African political scene after more than 38 years of absence.

### **100% public funding**

Analysis of official documents, particularly financial ones, shows that the budget allocated to games amounts to 500 million dirhams (46 million Euro), which covers the costs arising from the following services:

- Redevelopment of sports facilities in the cities hosting the event
- Purchase of sports equipment approved by international federations
- Accommodation for participants and VIPs
- Internal and external transport for invited personalities and members of the AU and ANOCA
- Catering
- Opening and closing ceremony entrusted to foreign companies with a reputation in the field
- Telecommunications (internet line rental for broadcasting competitions)
- Para-sporting activities in particular the FANZONE.
- Allowances for staff responsible for supervising games.

Note the total support of the part of the State budget of the costs arising from these games, with the exception of the 2 million Euros, granted by the AU to the organizing committee of the games to ensure the television broadcasting rights.

However, the pertinent question is to know why the organizing committee of these games did not want to diversify these revenue resources in order to alleviate the heavy weight of these charges. Allusion made precisely to the various tools frequently used in the field of marketing (sponsorship, merchandising ...)

Because this event of international scope meets all the conditions sought by private operators at the national and interna-

tional level.

Thus, and by contrary to what has become a rule in the field of organization of sporting events, the organizing committee has opted for funding 100% from the state budget, which raises doubts as to the capacity of this event to produce values in line with the expectations of private operators.

### **Weak involvement of territorial actors**

In this study, what interests us is to detect the impact of the organization of an international event on the territory, in other words, to know what are the advantages from which the territory would benefit during this event. However, another question calls out to us: were the territorial actors involved, or to a lesser extent, consulted and polled their opinions on the ways likely to succeed in organizing this event?

According to interviews with elected responsible from the cities of Rabat, Casablanca and Salé, the decision to organize the African Games was taken by responsible from the Ministry in charge of sport without any prior consultation. The first official meetings between the organizing committee and regional actors were held just two months before the official opening ceremony of the games.

At the request of the city governor, an elected representative of the city of Salé remembers, a meeting was held bringing together all the decentralized services of the city: (Police, Gendarmerie, Health, Firefighter and elected ones ...). During this meeting, representatives of the organizing committee presented the salient features of these games, their importance in sport and in terms of the country's influence in Africa, and the watchword to be respected is to combine efforts, each in his field of competence respective to successfully organize this event.

The concepts of identity of belonging pride, namely the sentimental register, have been heavily used to ensure the mobilization of territorial actors.

The fact of seeking the support of territorial actors until the last moment, impacts negatively on the one hand, the application of the participatory approach, as an instrument of governance, imposed by the constitution (2011 ) and the organic laws of local Communities (2015).

On the other hand, the responsible in charge of sport in Morocco, missed an important moment to benefit from the important contributions of the territory which could have mobilized all its resources to bring together the suitable necessary conditions for the success of this event.

We believed at one time that this sporting event will have significant impact beyond the effect on practitioners alone to expand to create a real economic and social tourism dynamic in the city and the region as a whole. However, it is clear that none of these goals have been achieved. Normally, the African games should have been a collective issue in which all the actors of the city and all the stages of its organization should be involved, if we really want to evoke the participatory and not figurative approach.

### **Conclusion**

Throughout this article, we have presented the different facets

relating to the organization of a mega event in addition to emphasize on the theoretical approaches aimed at really identifying its multiple direct and indirect consequences on the overall development process in this country.

As a case study, we have chosen the 12th African Games organized from August 19 to 31, 2019 in Morocco.

The use of various methodological tools, namely the official documentary analysis, the effective participation, in the organization of these games and finally semi-structured interviews, carried out with territorial actors concerned by the event, has allowed us to confirm the formulated hypothesis.

It stipulated that the organization of a sporting event in Morocco does not integrate a global policy, it is often the result of constraints having an emergency character, and that's what makes the impact of these events modest.

We also noted that the organizers of this international event did not know how to seize the opportunity for these games to integrate a global sports promotion policy, with a low degree of involvement of territorial actors in the organization process, which leaves some doubts concerning the question of the legacy of this event on the territory.

An important question must be asked: can we mention in Morocco the existence of a public policy for the organization of sporting events? The African games case study confirms the idea already advanced by other researchers that a single event cannot constitute a public policy. On the other hand, a succession of planned-one-off or recurring events - can allow a community to capitalize on facilities and experience (Chappelet & Pinson 2011) [4].

Also, and taking into account the fact that the territorial actors were only involved in an advisory capacity and at the last minute, confirms the lack of link between PASES and other sports public policies or public policies in other areas.

During the conference of African ministers of youth and sports held in Madagascar from September 11 to 13, 2019, the president of the commission of social affairs at the African Union congratulated Morocco for hosting the Africans games that have got a great success at all levels, making sport a unifying factor for young Africans.

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