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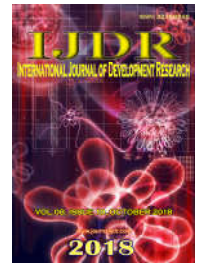


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ORIGINAL RESEARCH ARTICLE

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SPORTS AND DECENTRALIZATION: AN OUTLINE OF A TYPOLOGY OF MUNICIPAL SPORTS POLICIES IN BENIN

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ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Received 17th July, 2018
Received in revised form 22nd August, 2018
Accepted 16th September, 2018
Published online 30th October, 2018

Key Words:

*Sporting Practices,
Local Governorship and
Decentralization.*

ABSTRACT

The process of decentralization implemented in most of African countries and precisely in Benin by the years 2003 with the election of the town councilors transferred to the new municipalities competences in sport's field. These competences lead the municipalities in the implementation of the municipal sporting policies with the intention of ensuring the sporting development of their territory: physical-activities and sporting considered as activities that came under general interest and public service mission. This mission, inherited from French colonization, remains overall little implemented in Benin confronted with economic, sociocultural and policies realities quite different from those of France. These various realities led the municipalities to adopt various strategies and actions to ensure or not the development and or the animation of sport life of their territory. Thus while inspiring by the model of Loret (2004), various types of municipal sport policies are identified in Benin during the period 2003 to 2008. They are the proactive municipalities, the reactive municipalities, the tag-along municipalities and the passive municipalities. This diagnostic and comparative study of the municipal sport policies actually proceeds of a contribution to the current reflections giving to better including/understanding the effects of decentralization imposed on the development of the sport in the majority of the countries of French-speaking Africa.

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Citation: David Coffi AKOUETE, Emile-Jules ABALLOT, Bienvenue TAOUEMA and Nadine HASCHAR-NOE. 2018. "The violence between intimate partners in the city of praia: Report of the victims of the neighborhoods of santo antônio and terra branca", *International Journal of Development Research*, 8, (10), 23736-23742.

INTRODUCTION

The research presented focuses on the typology of municipal sports policies in the context of decentralization in Benin between 2003 and 2008¹. In this article, we propose to focus on the types of sports policies in Benin by drawing on the concrete actions carried out by the municipalities, field observations and interviews with local elected representatives. More precisely, it is a question of categorizing the types of districts encountered and their characteristics and then showing, on the basis of a quantitative survey and the

production of sports monographs, that the municipalities belonging to the same category make different choices of policies sports events (Akouété, 2012). As has been shown by numerous studies, French-speaking African countries have inherited from their independence a sport organization based on French colonization and a sport policy based on the French co-management model of sport (Gouda, 1986, 1997, Deville-Danthu, 1997, LoumFatou, 2004, Baba-Moussa, 2001, 2004). This model seems to be poorly adapted to political and socio-cultural realities (Gérard, 1997; Gouda & Chifflet, 1991) but also financial and organizational (Haschar-Noé, 2004a; Bouchet & Kaach, 2005). However, the decentralization process implemented in Benin since 2003 with the election of local elected representatives transferred competencies to the new municipalities in several areas, including Physical Activities and Sports Activities (PASA). These competences relate to the construction and maintenance of sports facilities and the

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¹We thank Patrick Bayeux who initiated and accompanied this thesis work during his early years

possibility for municipalities to provide material and financial assistance to the structures involved in the organization and running of sports activities on their territory. They thus set up a municipal sports policy. PAS are therefore considered to be of general interest and a public service mission and "the organization and development of sport as a fundamental element of education, culture and social life"². The local authorities are thus associated with the organization and animation of communal sporting life in order to develop mass sports, an objective which is given priority in the Sport Charter. In Benin, decentralization, which aims to increase autonomy decision-making of the municipalities and the existence of a Sport Charter³ framing the objectives to be pursued, appear a priori as two conditions favorable to the emergence and development of local sports policies (Haschar-Noé, 2004b). Benin, a West African country with an area of 114,763 km², has a population of about 9,984,000 inhabitants in 2013, more than 40% of whom are under 14 years of age. This country is classified by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank as one of the heavily indebted poor countries⁴. Informal private sector enterprises are those which contribute almost exclusively to the country's economic activity, with 94.3% of employed persons, far from those in the public sector, which comprise only 3.6% of employed persons⁵. Finally, in the area of administrative organization, decentralization has resulted in the creation of 77 municipalities⁶ with legal personality and financial autonomy, 546 districts, and 12 departments. However, the process of decentralization is a relative failure in Africa, due to several reasons: a complete copy of a colonizing model that is ill adapted to socio-economic and cultural realities and poorly accepted by the population, maintaining the centralizing role of the State and lack of administrative decentralization, lack of respect for democratic values, transfer of skills with insufficient financial, technical or human resources (Awortwi, 2011, NachMback, 2003, Sawadogo, 2001).

In this context of political, administrative, but also financial and fiscal "unfinished" decentralization (Laléyé, 2003), how can municipal sports policies respond to the national objectives for the development of mass sports and the demand for local sport. We will show that the municipal sports policies are rather in a first stage of their structuring and are more oriented by a concern for the affirmation of the local identity, carried by the local elected representatives and their political ambitions through different types of sports policies. Moreover, an incomplete decentralization is partly a brake on the development of communal policies truly adapted to socio-cultural and economic realities. However, the integration of sports facilities as instruments (Lascoumes and Le Galès, 2004) for local planning and the setting up of sports service contribute in some municipalities to the emergence of "active" municipal sports policies.

²Law No. 91-007 of 25 February 1991 on the Sports Charter in the Republic of Benin

³Ibid

⁴Gross domestic product is \$ 4775 million (2006) and per capita 0.7566 euro or about 496 FCFA (World Bank database 2009, www.worldbank.org)

⁵The weight of the informal sector fell slightly between 2006 and 2010, from 95.3% in 2006 to 94.3% in 2010. Moreover, between 2006 and 2010, there has been an increase in employment in the formal private sector (1.6% in 2010 against 1.0% in 2006).

⁶Of which three said special status: Porto-Novo (administrative and political capital), Cotonou (economic capital) and Parakou in the north. The special status municipalities are large cities with more than 100,000 inhabitants extending over at least 10 km in length. The other districts are called common law.

METHODOLOGY AND DATA COLLECTION

In order to answer this question, we have carried out various collections of data combining quantitative and qualitative methods. A quantitative survey was carried out using questionnaires from resource persons or sports service officials in 63 communes out of 77 in Benin. By retaining the three municipalities with special status, we have selected 60 municipalities of common right by dividing them by population group as indicated below.

Table 1. Number of municipalities in Benin by population and municipalities surveyed

Population group	Number of municipalities in Benin	Number of municipalities surveyed
100,000 or more inhabitants	11	11
80,000 inhabitants and less than 100,000	21	17
60,000 inhabitants and less than 80,000	30	20
20,000 inhabitants and less than 60,000	12	12
Special status	3	3
Total	77	63

These questionnaires made it possible to carry out a typology of the municipal sports policies and to gather the views of the people interviewed on the sports policy of the municipality (number and quality of sports facilities, animation, organization of sports service, local demands, relations with associations, partners, sports budgets, etc.). A second series of questionnaires was carried out among the practitioners and sports leaders of the 63 municipalities surveyed: 195 teachers of physical education in public secondary schools; 45 sports club leaders (35 exploitable questionnaires); 395 self-organized practitioners (330 exploitable questionnaires) were asked about the adequacy of sports equipment to their practices and the effectiveness of sporting activities of municipalities in order to perfect the typology. Finally, we produced sports monographs of three target municipalities belonging to municipalities most involved in sports policies.

These quantitative data were complemented by semi-structured interviews with 15 local elected representatives and 4 Departmental Directors of Youth, Sports and Leisure (DDYSL) as well as field observations carried out in the public spaces of municipalities surveyed. The questionnaires addressed to municipalities gave rise to several statistical treatments. The study of the contents of the documents of sports federations, national commission of local finances, ministries like the one of Ministry of Youth, Sports and Leisure, Interior and Secondary Education allowed secondary processing of data available as an analysis of share of PAS budget in the total municipal budget (Akouéti et al, 2014). Finally, the interviews were the subject of a content analysis (Bardin, 1996).

Our results are presented in two main parts. The first report, based on the inventory of these policies in the 63 municipalities surveyed a typology of municipal sports policies. The second part analyzes, from a comparison of case studies (Hamel, 1988), the similarities and dissimilarities between three target communes belonging to those most involved in sports policies. In the absence of any national study on municipal sports policies in Benin, the treatment of questionnaires sent to the 63 municipalities enables us to construct a typology of municipal sports policies in four categories and to deepen our analysis by writing sports monographs, three communes belonging to the same category,

in order to grasp the conditions for their implementation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Typology of sports policies in the communes of Benin

Loret (2004), identifies three types of attitudes of French municipalities in the management of Physical Activities and Sports (PAS), in light of the innovations observed in the PAS in redefinition of policies for the organization, development and promotion of sport in France. It defines them as follows:

- "Passive" municipalities: faced with innovations, they develop a type of negative reactions, lose interest in the evolution of sports practices and risk not investing. They are devoted to the simple management of the existing;
- "reactive" communes: they prefer to "wait and let" the problems to find solutions. They are more adaptive, but not voluntaristic;
- "pre-emptive" municipalities: they take into account the major trends in the evolution of sport and are committed to the future by giving themselves the means to "prepare it".

Generally speaking, municipalities have more or less direct control over sports policy and thus define a more or less active and organizational model of local sport (Bonnes, 1983). Based on Loret model (2004), different types of sports policies are identifiable among the municipalities surveyed. However, we propose a fourth category to adapt Loret's categorization to our field data. This fourth category is that of the communes which we shall call "followers". On the ground, we found that some municipalities are unable to adapt their sports policy to the demand of young people. They partly animate the sporting life of the municipality most often on the equipment of schools or state already existing. At the end of our discussions with the local elected representatives of these municipalities, they reveal that: "We organize the inter-district tournaments as the other municipalities do, but the young people do not participate actively and we do not reach the end. They are not motivated. It is not known exactly what the sport relates to the municipality; we do it because we have to do like the other communes"⁷. The elected representatives of those who do not directly organize the sport but who finance, for example, a local football club declare that "When he wants to go and deliver the games he asks for support as some large municipalities do, but I don't know what he reports to the municipality. If you do not, it will be said that the municipality does not want to bring aid to the sport"⁸. Thus, we can describe the attitudes of these "follow-up" communes, which merely conform to what the other communes do. We are interested in them because they are numerous and, having no organizational difficulty in the field of the PAS, they constitute a "recess" for the other actors of the local sport and more particularly the State and the sports federations. All these municipalities are nevertheless within the same development framework as the other communes, induced by decentralization during the period 2003 to 2008, but nevertheless realize different choices. These behaviors observed in the communes in Benin are similar to

those observed by Loum (2004) in sports policies in Senegal. Table 2 below shows the distribution of the types of municipal sports policies encountered in Benin in the 63 municipalities surveyed.

The sports policies of "pre-emptive" municipalities

The "pre-emptive" communes are opposed to the other three categories of communes and are distinguished by many points. They are committed to a proactive policy by giving themselves the means to make investments. They take into account the demands of the younger generation and build with their own means, even limited, equipment for the local sport. They thus show certain dynamism in terms of sports policy and a level of structuring more advanced than that of the other municipalities. In some of these municipalities, not only local amenities are found, but also sports facilities built and run by the State. All sports associations are of the "federal" type (Haschar-Noé, 1991), that is to say structured around a competitive objective. The financial and material support given to the clubs by the local elected representatives allow them to engage in competition logic and participate in the construction of a positive communal image (Haschar-Noé, 2004b). Some municipalities, through the organization of sports events, put in place a public health or environmental education policy (prevention of AIDS, preservation of the environment and the living environment, etc.)⁹ and sometimes, initiate a policy oriented towards the practices of leisure. In some of these municipalities there are private physical fitness centers where hygiene and health sports are practiced. There is also a greater presence of self-organized sports practitioners. In addition, these municipalities have a sport, leisure and culture service that manages and coordinates PAS. They are characterized by an offensive and ambitious sports policy despite the lack of financial resources for some and for others important social problems to be solved. These districts are of different sizes (high population, medium and low) and are spread over the whole country, while being more numerous in the southern part than in the central and northern parts. These districts are also differentiated from the others by their investments in the construction of sports facilities and their support for local sports (grants to associations, sporting events, maintenance of equipment). In addition, local elected representatives usually have at least two of the following characteristics: they are very dynamic; they often have a good sports history or like the practice of PAS. Historically, the populations of these districts are sporting, mainly practice football and, before decentralization, most of sports associations residing in these districts are recognized for their sporting performances.

Sports policies of "reactive" districts

These districts adopt a more adaptive and less proactive policy than the previous ones. They prefer to wait until social demand is manifested and do not lead a policy of anticipation. They try to meet the demand and build some small local equipment.

⁷Interview with the elected sports representative of one of the communes "followers".

⁸Interview with another elected from another municipality of the same type of category as the previous one.

⁹In collaboration with non-governmental organizations (NGOs), some districts organize sports events and raise awareness about AIDS, malaria, environmental preservation (do not throw bags in the city).The port of helmet, the work of minors....

Table 2. Types of municipal sports policies encountered in Benin

Types of sporting policies	Number of districts	Districts												
		Cotonou	Porto-Novo	Parakou	Bohicon	Djougou	Kandi	Nikki	Pobé	Akpro-Misséréké	Lokossa	Dogbo	Comé	
<i>Pre-emptive municipalities</i>	12													
<i>Reactive municipalities</i>	14	Banikoara	Savalou	Allada	Ouessé	Sakété	Savè	Athiémé	Pehunco	Adja-ouéré	Glazoué	Ajarra	Ifangni	
<i>Followers municipalities</i>	17	Bémbéréké Kouandé	Zogbodomey Abomey	Zè	Tangiéta	Aplahoué	Ségbana	Avrankou	Dangbo	Sèmè-Kpodji	Dassa-Zoumè	Toffo	Ouidah	
<i>Passive municipalities</i>	20	Bantè Malanville Zangnanado	Touncoutouna Djakotomey Klouékanmé	Covè Bopa Kalalé	Natitingou Houéyogbé Tchaorou	Abomey-calavi N'dali Gogounou	Za-kpota Djidja	Karimama Grand-popo	Adjohoun Kétou	Kpomassè	Ouinhi	Kérou	Basila	

Table 3. Comparative study of the sports monographs of three pre-emptive communes

	Municipality of Cotonou	Municipality of Dogbo	Municipality of Lokossa
Administrative status	Big city, municipality with special status, economic capital of Benin	Common law municipality, rural municipality	Municipality of common law, capital of the department Mono / Couffo
Economic resources	Rich, industrial, commercial and tourist district	Agricultural and commercial district	Agricultural district, partially industrialized, commercial and tourist
Sport policy	Innovative and diversified sports policy	Federate local actors	Singular
Actions	Sports tournaments, municipal sponsorship, education	Animation of the sports life of the municipality, support for the federal club	Sports track, high-level women's handball

They use the grounds of secondary schools and those built by the State to animate the sporting life of the district and do not subsidize sports associations residing on their territory. Structured sporting associations affiliated to sports federation are established in these districts and some of them participate in the championships of professional soccer and handball league. The other clubs (small football clubs) participate in amateur national championship of football. There is few sports volleyball, basketball or combat sports associations, and all the aids provided to these clubs are from the district sponsorship type¹⁰. All these investments in the field of sports show sports policy in phase of progressive construction. Thus, this "local sports association" culture becomes a resource for sports policy not only of leisure but also of high level (only in football and rarely in handball, volleyball and basketball), which allows to distinguish the district from others and to value its image in part. The difference with respect to the practice of the high level observed in the previous "pre-emptive" districts is that here sports associations are all in the second or third division (amateur division) and therefore of an "average level" if this can be so says. There is no legal framework (contract of purpose, partnership and other) between the clubs and the districts, which reinforces the competition between the clubs for the granting of subsidies. These sports operations are co-ordinated by the presence of a sport, leisure and culture service on the territory of the district even if these services are not run by sports executives. The practice of self-organized sports is less important than in "pre-emptive" districts.

¹⁰In our case in Benin, the district supports the sporting event that takes place on its territory and asks in return that its name and logo are put on advertising posters so that we know that it also participates in sports activities of the locality. The district uses sport primarily as a medium of political communication.

These districts are also spread over the whole territory of the country and are of different sizes. Compared to the previous districts engaged in both the construction of equipment and in all areas of local sports life, these "reactive" districts never pursue more than two objectives at once: the district has one sport service and sports equipment, either it has a sport service and uses the equipment of schools or of the State to animate the sports life of the district, or it does not have a sport service, but builds equipment and animates the sporting life of the district without subsidizing club. They are less wealthy than the previous ones but invest, like the previous ones, in other social areas considered as priorities, such as health, water supply, electricity, urbanization and rural roads ... etc. Local elected representatives have at least one of the following three characteristics: either they are very dynamic, have a sporting past or like the practice of PAS. In this category of districts, there are rich, medium and poor districts.

Sports policies of the "follow-up" districts

These districts imitate actions of others without taking into account the demands of local sports practitioners. Some of them, for example, organize sporting events, but they do not appear to be well suited to the local context, for example, the organization of an inter-borough tournament during the school year during the rainy season or Marathon of the district but without having a sufficient number of participants, etc. Most of the time, they do not build sports facilities, but they encourage sports life of the district on the equipment of schools and those built by the State. They practice a "follow-up" sport policy and are inspired by the achievements of other districts.

We notice the presence of some sports facilities of type neighborhood or small playground in some districts; others do not. There are also two districts belonging to this category, land of means games built by the State and the equipment transferred by the latter take the name of stadium of the municipality. Sports associations existing in these municipalities are more or less structured and of a federal type. The level of practice is average and is limited to leagues and districts (amateur championship). In these municipalities, sports policy generally supports recreational associations (Noé, 1991) and the municipalities are less ambitious in terms of sporting results. There is a total absence of private fitness centers and very few self-organized sports practices. The modest financial aid granted to sports associations which do not belong to the municipality, are sponsoring actions. Only the district associations¹¹ (if any) are funded for inter-district tournaments. The sports practices financed by the district are festive and leisure practices, in particular football tournaments between boroughs of the municipality or between the villages or neighborhoods of the cities. With the exception of four municipalities which have sports, leisure and cultural service, most "follow-up" municipalities do not have this type of structure. These municipalities are spread over the whole territory of the country and are of different sizes. Some of them provide only the management of existing sporting resources (sports facilities, sports equipment) while others only organize and animate the sporting life of the municipality. They specialize in one action and reason with one logic: either they vote for a budget for investment or for operation (subsidy and animation of the sporting life of the municipality) but rarely both.

The sports policies of "passive" municipalities

"Passive" municipalities show little interest in sports equipment, progressive development of local sports policy and development of local PAS. These municipalities consider that they can only "manage the existing" because, given their economic situation (very weak communal resources), demographic (very rural population), social (many problems to be solved: water, health center construction, rural roads, absence or lack of electricity, lack of school, etc.), sport is not a priority area of intervention. They prefer to invest in the construction of health centers, markets, internal channels and classrooms for primary schools. The primary concern of local elected representatives is to improve the living conditions of the inhabitants, such as the provision of drinking water in the most remote villages. Sports facilities used are those of the colleges and primary schools. There is no structure for organizing, facilitating and promoting PAS in the municipality's organization chart. These functions are entrusted formally to a local elected official. PSA are organized in the commune most often on the basis of private initiatives; that is to say by youth associations, managers and sometimes by political representatives. Each year, a tournament is organized for the Independence Day in Benin,

¹¹It is necessary to distinguish the municipal club (or communal) and the club of the municipality. The municipal club is the club that the municipality has created itself. The budget of the club is included in the budget of the municipality and it lives only thanks to the aid granted by the municipality. He represents the commune for intermunicipal competitions and does not take part in the championships organized by the sports federations. The club of the commune is the club residing in the commune, but whose budget does not depend on that of the commune. He may or may not receive a subsidy from the commune and may be mandated by the municipality to represent it at certain intercommunal competitions.

where local authorities come to offer a prize to the winning team. Surprisingly, these municipalities often have more sports equipment (soccer balls, jerseys, crampons, socks, etc.) than the other municipalities. It is in these municipalities that politicians come to distribute the sporting materials of the Ministry of Youth, Sports and Leisure (MYSL) during the election campaigns according to a clientelist political system.

The analysis shows that the differentiation of Benin's sports policies depends not only on their history and type of urbanization, their "urban" or "rural" location, but also and especially on the financial resources of the municipality. This "local differentiation" (Haschar-Noé, 2004b) of sports policies is organized here around the types of sports equipment, the financial assistance granted to sports associations and the presence of an organizational structure, sporting activities in the town. In all types of municipalities, as noted above, there is a shortage of sports facilities. Of all the above, what are then the essential elements contained in a sport monograph of a "preactive" commune?

Comparative sports images of "pre-emptive" municipalities: the contextual effects on the choice of sports policies

According to Akouété (2012), the development of a sport monograph of municipalities is articulated around the linking of five points of analysis:

- the municipal context: this is a presentation of the municipality, highlighting its historical, geographical, demographic, economic and social aspects on the one hand, and the various sports facilities present in the municipality;
- a diagram of the local configuration: the aim is to identify all the actors involved and coordinate the activities of the sports service;
- the sports policy of the municipality: the aim is to present the sports policy of the municipality by identifying the sports strategies of local elected representatives and the type of policy adopted;
- the actions implemented: it is a matter of presenting all the actions carried out in the field of PAS;
- key players: in this case, it is important to present the key actors involved in the implementation of local sports policy while defining their roles.

From municipalities belonging to different population groups but defined as "pre-emptive", we propose to refine a category of the previous typology in order to grasp the contextual effects on the choices made in terms of sports policies. The analysis of the monographs comprising these various points led to synthetic table No. 3, which highlights the resemblances and dissimilarities of the three "pre-emptive" communes.

From this table, it appears that

- from a statutory point of view, Cotonou is a large urban municipality while Dogbo is a rural municipality and Lokossa, despite its position as department head, is an intermediate municipality between urban and rural district: only the borough of Lokossa which is the city center has an urban aspect compared to other boroughs;
- in the area of economic resources, Cotonou is a very rich and more industrial municipality than Dogbo which is a poor and agricultural municipality. As for the municipality of Lokossa, it is situated in an

intermediate position between the two previous municipalities;

- in terms of sports policy, Cotonou has an innovative and diversified sports policy implemented by an autonomous sport service at the center of all activities. Moreover, this sports policy is also geared towards health education and starts actions concerning leisure activities. The municipality of Dogbo is mainly oriented towards federal sport and mainly football with a massive involvement and a federation of all the local actors around its development: the elected officials, the staff of the service of sports, the former glories of the football of village heads. The particularity of Lokossa's sporting policy is that it is singular because it is first of a federal type but specifically geared towards high-level women's handball, an activity that is not widespread in Benin;
- from the point of view of the actions implemented, Cotonou organizes competitions in the form of leisure, public awareness campaigns in the field of public health through sport and finances sporting events of certain sports federations in the form of municipal sponsorship. As for the municipality of Dogbo, it organizes competitions inter-arrondissement and finances in part the federal clubs of the locality. In Lokossa, the elected official wants to make this commune the "attic of women's handball in Benin", a kind of high-level sporting sector unique in Benin.

Depending on the contexts, these three communes all belong to the "preactive" category, therefore make differentiated choices of sports policies in connection with diverse local contexts.

Conclusion

Our analyzes have revealed four types of municipalities in relation to the more or less central role played by the sports service in relation to the political ambition and voluntarism of local elected representatives. Thus, in Benin, with regard to their sports policy, there are "pre-emptive", "reactive", "follow-up" and "passive" districts. The realization of three monographs of "pre-emptive" districts, shows that within these types of districts, the sectors of intervention of elected representatives are different; moreover, for promotional purposes, some elected officials mainly favor the support of event organizers and sports events, such as Cotonou's district, which nonetheless implements a relatively innovative sports policy pursuing differentiated objectives (high level, Health, education, leisure ...). Conversely, other municipalities such as Dogbo and Lokossa support different sporting disciplines, but in an almost exclusive federal model, such as football and handball. On the basis of these results, we can argue that the decentralization process, a complete copy of French decentralization laws, has allowed the emergence of the first local sports policies in some municipalities in Benin. However, the transfer of competences in the field of PAS is not accompanied by the transfer of the corresponding financial or human resources and has therefore not allowed the generalization and development of local sports policies in all municipalities of Benin. Thus, this transfer of competences in the absence of a legal framework that can give direction to the local sports policy and especially without accompaniment and financial support from the State, cannot allow the development of local or even national sport or sport of mass advocated by the different sports charters since independence.

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