Advances in Social Sciences Research Journal – Vol. 10, No. 12
Publication Date: December 25, 2023
DOI:10.14738/assrj.1012.14935.

Litoto Pambou, L., Bayette, J. B., Elenga, H. B., Leyinda, P. A., Loufoua-Lemay, E. D., & Massamba, A. (2023). Sociological Views on Sport Practices in Sports Facilities of Brazzaville, Congo. Advances in Social Sciences Research Journal, 10(12). 95-108.

Sociological Views on Sport Practices in Sports Facilities of Brazzaville, Congo

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to characterize the population frequenting Brazzaville's sports facilities and spaces, and to explore the universe of physical activities practiced and their modalities. A total of 5,492 users took part in the study, which was carried out in four districts of Brazzaville covering about half the city's surface area. Data were collected using a questionnaire based on Chifflet's work on the use of sports facilities in France. The results showed that the spatial distribution of the facilities did not provide adequate sports offer for users, despite the population's enthusiasm for sports and the demand from a young, active clientele.

Keywords: Sports practices, sports facilities, Black Africa, omnivore, sociology

INTRODUCTION

Sport has become a real social fact, a natural phenomenon that has taken on an increasingly important role in social life. The stakes are high: weaving together social ties that are weakening, getting to know oneself and others better, instilling respect for others and oneself, getting involved, enjoying oneself and building oneself up, disseminating and appropriating the culture of sport, but also encouraging people to maintain good health throughout their lives, through pleasant and convivial practices. A guarantor of physical health and social cohesion, sport also enables people to perform well at work, improve their interpersonal skills and gain a better understanding of society. As well as keeping children, young and old, in good health, sport also develops the IQ of teenagers and strengthens the muscles of individuals. But the basis for this is the existence of sporting facilities. The practice of sporting activities does indeed require the involvement of sports facilities, which are referred to as infrastructure. Indeed, [1] points out that to solve the problem of obesity in China in the early 1990s, it was necessary to increase the number of sports facilities in order to boost the practice of sport nationwide.

In Brazzaville, Republic of Congo, the first sports facilities date back to the colonial period. In the "indigenous" neighborhoods, mwana-football [1] stadiums were erected on vacant or makeshift sites. After independence in 1960, the city of Brazzaville was equipped with an Omnisports Stadium with annexes (Olympic swimming pool and annex stadium). During the "Democratization of Sport" years of the Socialist era, new sports facilities were built. In the meantime, sports platforms were set up in various districts of Brazzaville.

In 2015, in preparation for the 11th All-Africa Games in Brazzaville, several modern sports facilities were built across the city. Following the explosion of a weapons depot in a military barracks located in a residential area in 2012, which resulted in the destruction of several buildings and homes, a modern gymnasium was built in the vicinity of the disaster zone. In addition, a municipal decree closes the Avenue de la Corniche, which runs along and overhangs the Congo River for a distance of 7 km, every Sunday for mass sports activities. This initiative is in line with the recommendations of the World Health Organization (WHO) on the role of physical activity (PA) in preventing and combating obesity, diabetes and high blood pressure (HTA), given the steady rise in the number of patients suffering from these pathologies.

As a result of Brazzaville's increasing urbanization and demographics, the number of sports facilities in the city's various districts has evolved over time and space. However, to the best of our knowledge, no study has been carried out on the motivations of these users for practising physical activities and sport at sports facilities. In addition, Brazzaville's sports facilities and spaces contribute a priori to raising the level of sporting performance. By facilitating this practice, Congolese sport should return to its former level, or even surpass it. The same cannot be said, however, for the management of the sites, which is proving more or less chaotic insofar as it fails to satisfy users. In fact, this is a recurring problem at many of our sports facilities, as can be seen all over the country.

[1] This is the type of soccer played by children and adolescents aged 9 to 16 years on the waste ground in their neighborhoods. The rules are more flexible, and the number of players is the same as for amateur and professional teams.

That's why we proposed this study, the aim of which is to question, study and understand the conditions of physical activities and sport practice in sports facilities and spaces in the southern zone of Brazzaville, focusing on the nature of the physical activities and sport practiced, the socio-demographic and cultural characteristics of users, and their motivations. To this end, we opted for a mixed methodological approach (quantitative and qualitative) in line with the recommendations of Creswell and Plano Clark [2], in connection with the formulation of the following research questions:

1. What are the sports practices found in the sports facilities and spaces of the southern zone of Brazzaville?
2. What is the profile of the users of the said facilities?
3. What are the specific determinants of motivation to practice physical activities and sport among users of Brazzaville's sports facilities?
4. What difficulties do these users encounter? The choice of this method implies the formulation of research questions in line with the choice of a mixed method [2].

The objectives of the present study are:

1. to characterize the population using sports facilities;
2. to list sports practices in sports facilities in the southern zone of Brazzaville;
3. to identify the form of sports practices in these sports facilities in the southern zone of Brazzaville;
4. to identify the motivations for said practices.

The aim of this study is to highlight the essential role played by sports facilities in helping users achieve their long- and short-term development objectives.

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

Study Area

The study took place from February 2022 to February 2023 in Brazzaville, capital of the Republic of Congo. It is a metropolis with 9 arrondissements and a population of 1,347,258 inhabitants. This represents 48.7% of the Congolese population. Young people aged 10-25 years make up 2/3 of the national total. However, our study was restricted to the southern zone of Brazzaville, comprising four arrondissements: Makelekele (arrondissement 1), Bacongo (arrondissement 2), Mfilou (arrondissement 7) and Madibou (arrondissement 8) (Figure 1).

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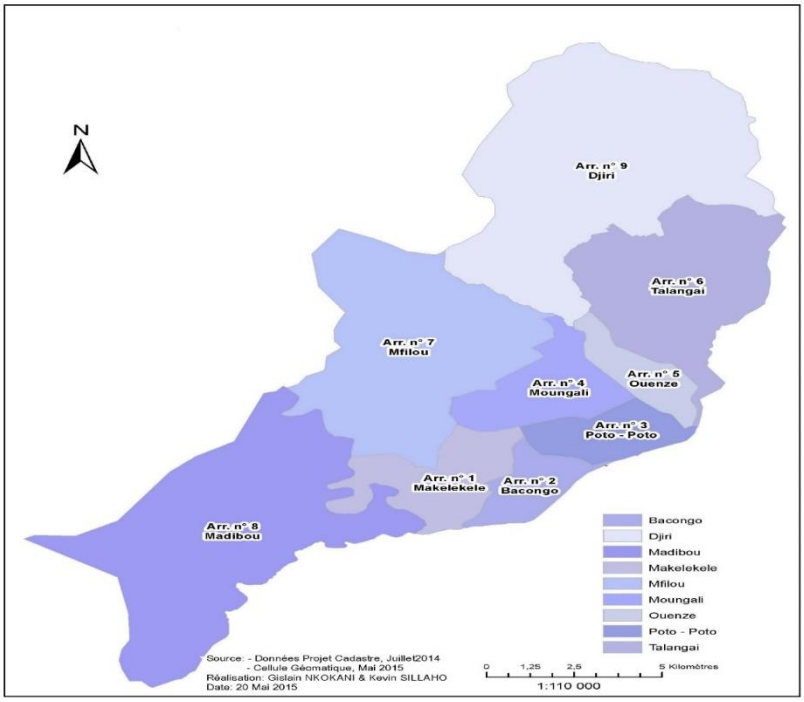

Figure 1: Location of study sites in the city of Brazzaville
From: Cadaster Project data, Brazzaville, 2015

The choice of this study area is explained by the fact that, following the recurrent socio-political and armed conflicts of 1997-2000, there has been a marked increase in population in the outlying areas adjoining the Pool prefecture, notably the rural district of Goma-Tsé-Tsé. New neighborhoods have sprung up or expanded spatially. However, this galloping demography and urban sprawl have not been accompanied by the development of sports facilities, even though the demand for sporting activities is there, given the predominance of the young population. Nevertheless, the practice of these activities can be found on several sites, either individually or collectively (groups of 2 to 5 people; groups constituted in the form of non-profit associations, recognized or not by the State).

Population and Sample Design

The population for this study was made up of people practising sport or physical activity in the sports facilities and spaces in the study area. The process of determining the sample size was based on the non-probabilistic method of reasoned choice. Given the lack of knowledge of the exact number of people practising physical and sports activities (physical activities and sport) at these sites on the part of the site managers (absence of statistical data on facility use, poor archiving of data and documents), an estimate was made in collaboration with them. Thus, the estimated number of users was set at 3,000, varying from 500 to 5,000 per week, with the optimum number of users on weekends (Saturday and Sunday). For this reason, the minimum sample size per facility surveyed was set at 300. Any person practising a physical activities and sport in one of the sports facilities and spaces in the study area who agreed to take part in the survey was included in the study. Athletes who were members of the various Congolese sports federations and took part in national and/or league championships were excluded. Study participants were classified into three age categories: 16 to 29 years (young people); 30 to 49 years (young adults); 50 to 59 years (older adults).

Variables of Study

A number of variables were selected: socio-demographic aspects; determinants of sports participation; multiple physical activities; indicators of the quality of sports facilities; support for the activities practiced; motivations for practicing and not practicing physical activities and sport.

Data Collection Tools

In order to assess the quality of sports facilities and spaces and understand the motivational dynamics of users of these facilities in the southern zone of Brazzaville, a mixed-methods approach was chosen. The mixed method approach (analytical and quantitative). The quantitative approach was based on Pierre Chifflet's study [3] on "Infrastructures et pratiques sportives en France". P. Chiffet's studies question the mediating role played by the personal, affective and psychological needs of French people in the use of sports facilities. The questionnaire used to gather qualitative data on the quality of sports facilities included 21 questions (18 closed and 3 open). It was divided into two parts: part A, with 8 questions devoted to the identity of users; part B, with 13 questions focusing on aspects related to the sports offer. The comprehensibility of the questionnaire was validated with 50 users. This validation made it possible to adjust a few questions to ensure that the user-respondents fully understood the meaning of the questions, and also to ascertain the time required to complete the questionnaire. As a result, 4 questions were modified. To gain a better understanding of users' socio-professional status, which enables us to take into account several dimensions of choice (indication of type of activity, location, quantity, etc.), we drew on the study by Lefèvre et al [4], which provides good indications of judgments and actual practices if we use a very open definition of physical activity or sport, and if we take the respondent's raw declarations. It is in this sense that our analysis of the coherence of choices was interested in the different socio-professional categories of the respondents. As for the interviews, which were semi-directive, an outline was used to gain in-depth knowledge of the motivations of several users in the practice of physical and sports activities. In order to bring depth and meaning to the multiple contextual and personal factors that influence the motivation of Brazzavillois practicing physical activities and sport in sports facilities, the analysis of these motivational factors was based on Deci and Ryan's self-determination model [5, 6]. The interview outline was developed following analysis of the questionnaire results, while drawing on Ryan and Deci's theory of self-determination. Based on the responses obtained from the analysis of the questionnaire, the questions in the interview outline were used to explore in greater depth the perceptions of users of sports facilities and spaces regarding their motivation. The direct observation analysis also enabled us to examine the attitudes of a number of users during these activities.

Application Procedures

A request for participation was made to the sites identified. A meeting was organized with each of the site authorities to present the aim and objectives of the study. The 15-minute questionnaire was then administered during a practice session. A two-week period was allowed between the questionnaire and the interview, in order to analyze the data and select subjects for the individual interviews. Interviews lasted 45 minutes and took place at the sites at times agreed with the individuals. Each interview was recorded using a Dictaphone (brand LG 312, Japan), to enable accurate analysis of perceptions. Finally, the interviews were

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transcribed to enable a qualitative analysis of users' perceptions, in addition to providing clarification following analysis of the questionnaires.

Statistical Analysis

Results were processed using SPSS 25.0 (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) (SPSS Inc., Chicago, IL, USA). At the end of data collection, a content analysis was carried out to understand the relevance of the study results. Statistical indices of central tendency (percentage frequencies, mean, standard deviation) from descriptive statistics were calculated. Two statistical tests, the Sokal test [7] and the chi-square test, were used to examine the existence of a relationship between two categorical variables. The statistical significance level was set at 5%.

RESULTS

Sports Facilities

During the study period, the Brazzaville study area included 18 sports facilities and areas (Table 1).

Identity of Respondents

A total of 5492 subjects were included in the study, divided into 3474 men (63.2%) and 2018 women (36.8%). The mean age was 37±17 years for men (extremes: 17-59 years) and 34±16 years for women (extremes: 16-54 years), the age difference between the two sexes being insignificant. There were 627 (11.4%) people under the age of 30 (358 men and 269 women). Young adults" numbered 3,764 (68.5%) (2,351 men and 1,413 women), while "older adults" numbered 1,101 (20.1%) (728 men and 373 women). We also wanted to check whether sporting practices allowed us to differentiate between the socio-professional strata of the population studied. The distribution of respondents according to the sector of professional activity exercised by users reveals: 2148 civil servants (39.1%) in all sectors (except teachers); 1007 students (18.3%) in all fields; 552 employees (10%) in the private sector, including 6 senior executives; 643 pupils (11.7%) in all subjects; 828 teachers (15.1%) at all levels (primary, secondary and university); 314 unemployed (5.8%), including 42 "housewives". In terms of country of origin, 3,516 people (64%) were Congolese from the Republic of Congo, 933 (17%) from the Democratic Republic of Congo, 645 (11.7%) from the Republic of Cameroon, 218 (4%) from West African communities, 127 (2.3%) from Lebanon and 53 (1%) from the Central African Republic.

Table 1: Distribution of sports facilities by district

	Makelekele	Bacongo	Mfilou	Madibou	Total
Public sports stadium	1	--	--	--	1
Public single-sport stadium	--	2	--	--	2
Landscaped public space	2	2	--	--	4
Undeveloped public space	3	2	1	1	7
Private landscaped area	--	--	2	1	3
Undeveloped private space	--	1	--	--	1
Total	6	7	3	2	18

Use of Facilities

The breakdown of users by type of sports facility is shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Number of respondents by sports facility

	n	%
Corniche avenue	3704	67.4
Landscaped public spaces	2358	42.9
School premises	2281	41.5
Undeveloped public spaces	1962	28.4
Private structures 2	254	4.6

More than half the users of sports facilities used avenue de la Corniche for physical activity (67.4%). Occupation of public spaces and school playgrounds came second and third respectively (42.9% and 41.5%). The last position was occupied by physical activity in private sports facilities (4.6%).

Sports Activities Practiced

The distribution of respondents by type of sport practiced is shown in table 3.

Table 3: Proportion of men and women taking part in sporting activities

	Co	Ind	Cb	Co + Ind	Ind + Cb	Co + Cb
Males						
n	2183	625	307	152	131	76
%	62.8	18	8.8	4.4	3.8	2.2
Females						
n	1015	548	51	273	92	39
%	50.3	27.1	2.5	13.5	4.6	2

Co=collective, Ind=individual, Cb=Combat

Team sports were more popular at the sites (62.8% of men and 50.3% of women). They were followed by individual sports (18% of men vs. 27.1% of women), combined team and individual sports for women (13.5%) and combat sports for men (8.8%).

Among team sports, three disciplines were the most practiced: soccer (70.2%), handball (55.7%) and volleyball (38.6%). Individual sports were dominated by walking (35.3%), followed by aerobics (20.1%) and fitness (13%).

Figure 2 shows the distribution of users according to the number of declared practices.

[2] These include sports facilities erected by French citizens working in private commercial and industrial companies, the World Health Organization at its regional site for Africa in Brazzaville, and the Swedish Evangelical Church.

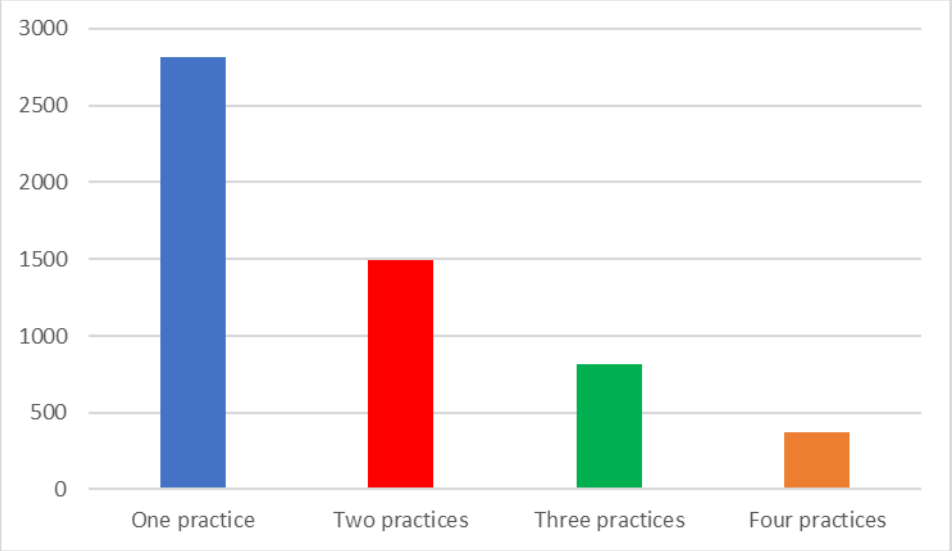

Figure 2: Distribution of users by number of practices

A total of 1.77 sporting activities were declared by the respondents. Of the 5,492 respondents, 51.3% declared that they practiced one sporting activity, compared with 27.2% for two activities. In the case of three activities (14.8%), the third activity was more common in private muscle or gymnastics gyms, with users aged 27-50 with bachelor's degrees and above. In the case of a single practice, the activities practiced were more individual.

Practice Modes

With regard to the times at which they took part in sporting activities, 87.4% of respondents (n=4802/5492) took part in the declared sporting activities in the morning between 5am and 9am, and 21.8% (n=648/5492) between 4pm and 6pm. Very few (4.7%; n=258/5492) chose the evening (6-8pm).

In addition, two out of three respondents (84.3%; n=4630/5492) stated that they were not supervised during their sporting activities. This was mentioned by 83.4% of men (n=2896/3474) versus 85.2% of women (n=1719/2018).

DISCUSSION

The aim of the study was to investigate the use of sports facilities by the population of Brazzaville, by questioning socio-demographic characteristics, choices and methods of practice.

Infrastructure Environment and User Expectations

Our findings show that accessibility to sports facilities, both built and unbuilt (open-air spaces or makeshift pitches), is linked to their location in the residential area and the fact that the site is free of charge. This enables many users to make use of sports facilities of varying quality without having to pay an entrance fee. It also offers the four boroughs in the southern part of the city the possibility of counting on a sports area that can be used for physical and/or sporting activities and leisure; the courtyards of some of the local schools can also be used for episodic activities. Geographically speaking, the sites chosen by the respondents are unanimously supported by the various players in the field (sports and community associations, educational institutions, economic players, etc.). For the most part, they are located close to major traffic

arteries and are served by an efficient public transport network. As far as public spaces are concerned, they are already recognized as sporting and recreational areas, with soccer pitches, mwana foot, pétanque game and lawn tennis courts, even if the facilities are of lesser quality. Avenue de la Corniche, on the banks of the Congo River, is a popular spot for sports activities such as walking, jogging, karate and taekwondo. The economic precariousness of most neighborhoods also explains the choice of these sports venues, given that the population of disadvantaged neighborhoods is often the most affected by youth inactivity [8]. Nevertheless, the results of our study show that the main users of the facilities we surveyed are mostly sedentary, with the exception of young people (under 30). We therefore find many active and moderately active people in the "young adult" and "older adult" age groups. None of the respondents mentioned swimming. One of the reasons for this, in our opinion, is the absence of public swimming pools in the area; the only swimming pool we found is reserved for members of an association of Europeans working in Brazzaville, and the cost of membership is very high for the average Congolese (around 300€ per month for a monthly salary of 120,000FCFA or 183€ for an average executive). This fact explains why the practice of this sporting activity is not a priority for a population living in economic precariousness. While our facilities seem to meet a pressing need for local sports activities, their symbolic and social accessibility also confirms their role as new places for exchanges and encounters (exchanges and discussions between participants, on the edges of the spaces and in the refreshment bars and other places where beer is consumed).

Multi-Sport Physical Activity

Our results show that 51.3% of respondents practiced just one physical activity, compared with 27.2% two activities and 14.8% three activities. The idea of taking multi-activity into account in our work stems from several works in the sociology of culture, which suggest that social boundaries play less of a role in individual sports practices. This observation supports our results. Indeed, the dominance of omnivorous practice is associated with a transformation of cultural capital, notably due to the increase in the average length of schooling. For Fridman and Olivier [9: 43], "eclectic or omnivorous taste would represent a new form of cultivated disposition and legitimate culture". However, the argument using the zoological metaphors of the univore and the omnivore to account for social cleavages has been challenged by B. Lahire [10]. We take up two of these criticisms. The first, of a methodological nature, calls for the diversity of choices to be addressed on the basis of a statistical analysis of individuals rather than social groups. The second qualifies omnivority as a significant change. For B. Lahire [10], that it is more sensitivity to the heterogeneity of individual choices than its existence that is new. Nevertheless, as far as physical activity is concerned, the influence of the increased availability of sports can be overlooked.

There is little data on sports omnivority [4]. Nevertheless, work based on the French survey [11] shows that the practice of several sports was already socially selective twenty-five years ago. If we take up Peterson's work [12] on the transformation of cultural practices, based on the "sense of distinction" [13], we might suppose that sports omnivorism reflects an opposition between upper management (omnivores) and lower management (more univores), as observed in this study (74.3% declared omnivores versus 25.7% univores). In France, Lefèvre and Ohl's study [4] of 6,526 people aged 15 to 75 found that 83% of them declared at least one physical activities and sport activity, and 279 different types of activity were cited. Analysis of the univority (one declared practice) and omnivority (more than one declared practice) of

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French people indicates an average of 2.96 practices (around 3 practices). Low omnivority (2 and 3 practices) affects two out of five practitioners, and high omnivority (4 or more practices) almost one in three. In this French study, we note that high omnivority is more prevalent in the bourgeois social classes (64% of senior executives), while omnivority is more prevalent in the middle and working classes (76.2%).

In short, the massification of physical activities and omnivority are widespread phenomena in the Brazzaville area studied, even if the upper classes are more concerned by omnivority. Finally, our data show that there are still some distinctive practices (e.g., aerobics) and others that are more popular (e.g., walking).

Mixed Appeal for Female Customers

The omnipresence of the practice of manly sports, highlighted by our results, diminishes the appeal of the site to female customers or those who do not have these sporting identity references. Indeed, the homogenization of sports enthusiasts is real: based on our observations, the majority of sports sites surveyed are used by a male clientele of varied ethnic origin. This seems surprising at first glance, given that the sites in the area studied are in most cases located within or on the edge of a neighborhood characterized by the predominance of a population of Kongo origin in all four arrondissements. And there is no discrepancy between the activities found at the sites and the motivations of the people living in these neighborhoods. We found 2018 women (36.8%) in this study; however, our observations highlight the uneven use of sports facilities by women. Indeed, within a neighborhood, women are more attracted to nzango[3] in the case of cultural events or walking, physical activities closer to their identity references [14], cultural and family, agro-pastoral activities of their terroir but also less expensive in terms of necessary practice equipment. The animation of the site should therefore be a primordial element in the multiplication of user types, as mentioned in particular by a man of the cloth interviewed:

"There have to be people who stimulate fewer active people. We need to show the fun aspect and accessibility. We also need to do a better job of communicating information about this equipment. We need to demystify with customers the judgments that some people might have, for example that it's dangerous".

The various participants found on the sites seem to agree on the fact that supervision is necessary to encourage less active, even inactive, people and women to visit sports facilities and take part in activities that might interest them. As pointed out by Ries et al [8], certain urban leisure activities are predominantly male because they are imbued with a "model of virility", so that there is no significant gender homogenization within the venues where these activities take place. Outdoor sports facilities, by virtue of their configuration (layout focused on soccer, handball and basketball) but also the sports models conveyed (free practice very often competitive and virile), become de facto masculine symbolic places. Furthermore, according to a study by Bergeron and Reyburn [15], entertainment has several elements that can encourage physical activity in men, particularly women. Social relevance seems to play a

[3] This is a traditional women's game based on the skill of hands and legs, in which two individuals are pitted against each other. Victory is awarded during the competition to the woman who is quickest to get ahead of the other in terms of speed of movement.

major role in the choice of activities among young people under 30. What's more, the discovery of new sporting activities that can be practised with peers would also encourage them to frequent facilities more regularly.

Cultural Considerations to Boost Sports Attendance

The development of our sports facilities undoubtedly strengthens the practice of different forms of physical and/or sporting activity, but above all it can enable many participants to discover new sporting disciplines. While some current social debates deal with the problem of integrating immigrants through various forms of gradual acculturation, our respondents included people from communities in West Africa (Mali, Senegal, Guinea, etc.), Central Africa (Democratic Republic of Congo and Cameroon) and Lebanon. Thus, the practice of Physical activities and sport in the different sites appears to be an integrating element. In particular, our results show that various forms of mutual aid are born and developed directly on these facilities, and that these practice sites have become gathering places where relatives, friends and colleagues from the same corporation can practice an activity together, whatever their racial or ethnic background. These observations have also been made by a number of local players, who point out that sport is often one of the best ways for different populations to come together in the same space. More generally, soccer and walking are currently physical and sporting activities that are firmly rooted in the cultural landscape of Brazzaville, and are widely covered in the media. However, for some ethnic minorities with economic activities in the study area (notably the Chinese, Indians, North African and Middle Eastern communities), sporting activities remain far removed from their centers of interest due to their cultures and preconceptions. However, the establishment of various sports facilities should help to attenuate the cultural divide, encouraging these populations to better integrate into the Congolese social strata and thus mitigating their misbehavior in the exercise of commercial functions. Moreover, according to several researchers, emotional attachment to a sport is most often a prerequisite for attachment to the place where it is practiced. Williams and Patterson [16] go further, pointing out that enthusiasm and, above all, perseverance in the practice of a sporting discipline are closely linked to a certain form of tradition. The term tradition can be interpreted as a process of cultural transmission built up and conveyed by family, friends, and even the environment in which people live or work. Applied to our research, it therefore appears necessary to offer physical and material support and guidance to immigrant populations, coupled with various forms of communication, so that sporting practices become socializing. This process is less prevalent in Brazzaville's southern zone, and needs to be strengthened, in particular by forging closer links between community circles and sports associations. Finally, we note that one of the reasons for the low number of night-time users (7pm-9pm) is linked to the security of the premises. Indeed, there is a lack of constant surveillance of practice areas (in and around them), which worries and discourages people.

Lack of Local Sports Facilities and Training

It's a constant among our respondents: their expectations concern the development of public space through appropriate sports facilities and the creation of landscaped sports trails. So, in parallel with the dilapidated state of the sports facilities, the southern Brazzaville boroughs are faced with a lack of sports facilities, linked to a low rate of sports spaces and equipment, as well as a poorly diversified offer in the four boroughs. This phenomenon is exacerbated by a number of factors: population growth, strong land pressure limiting the scope for new construction, and

an increase in the number of sports enthusiasts throughout the city, with sports being strongly encouraged by current policies.

Difficulties in accessing sports facilities emerged from the survey data among people living in outlying neighborhoods, where there is an absence of local sports facilities.

The accessibility of a sports facility is in fact the primary factor influencing the level of physical activity. This factor comprises three main dimensions [17]: economic, symbolic/social and geographical, which refer to the ability of an individual or group to consume (financial and economic capabilities), reach a place (proximity to home or work) or benefit (personal attractions and individual perceptions) from a particular resource. In a study by Popkin et al [18], the authors demonstrated that the proximity of facilities to places of residence and exchange seems to have a positive effect on people's physical activity. The second factor in the influence of the built environment on physical activity is the appeal of a resource (park, landscaped garden, sports facility, etc.) to its potential users [15]. However, this notion takes on several dimensions, such as the aesthetic appeal of practice areas, the presence of vegetation, the ambience created by lighting, the quality of street furniture and the effective maintenance of spaces dedicated to physical activity [19]. In addition to the fact that these urban design elements can have an influence on people's motivation and perception of physical activity locations [20], they seem to have a more significant impact on adult populations [21]. The third and final influencing factor is safety. On this subject, a number of studies have demonstrated the importance of adequately designing the spaces associated with sports facilities with a view to reinforcing users' sense of safety [21, 22]. Among women, as well as adults aged 50 to 60, the safety aspect of sports and leisure facilities is often considered a central factor in the choice of activity and place of practice, due to greater fears of injury and aggression [8]. This research also states that the organization of supervised physical activities and sport in practice areas can positively increase the feeling of safety and thus encourage the practice of physical activity in these areas. However, our data show that 70.5% of our respondents (n=129/183) do not have any supervision of the physical activities and sport practised and declared. It therefore appears necessary to offer physical supervision to this clientele if this sporting practice is to be sustainable. With regard to users who practised physical activity on their own (69 out of 183, or 37.7%), the literature shows that independent physical activity offers greater flexibility and has the advantage of being better adapted to individual rhythms [23]. It is also less expensive than club or commercial activity, even if price is not a barrier for some free exercisers.

Study Limitations and Strengths

The interpretation of our results must take into account a number of limitations. Firstly, the type of study itself and its cross-sectional nature allow only a snapshot in time. A prospective, longitudinal study would have been better suited to characterizing the motivational dynamics and attitudes of users of sports facilities in the study area. Secondly, one of our limitations is the lack of data on the motivations associated with sports practice. Thirdly, there is the question of the omnivority and univority of sporting practices. The question of sporting tastes using qualitative methods is a recurring one. The different levels and methods of observation are difficult to articulate. However, this approach is not beyond reproach. Indeed, qualitative surveys do not capture the full diversity of behaviors, and there are differences that strongly

modify the meaning of practices. Nonetheless, it remains an interesting method for examining the social uses of sporting practices and observing the transformation of sporting tastes.

These limitations do not, however, totally detract from the power of our observations. In any case, this study is the first of its kind in our field, including users who have consented to participate in the study. The present study provides a bank of data that can be used in the management of our sports facilities, with a view to optimizing the range of physical activities practised, even if the inclusion of motivational factors proves indispensable.

CONCLUSION

Our results show that the spatial distribution of sports facilities and spaces in the southern zone of Brazzaville is random, the insufficient supply of sports and the unsuitability of the supervision of physical activities constitute barriers that hinder the egalitarian aspect of physical and sports practices to all social strata. Thus, eight years after the eleventh All-Africa Games, held in Brazzaville in July-August 2015, "the internalized symbolic dimension of obstacles" seems to constitute a brake and a lock on the promotion of mass sport. It is therefore imperative that the place of practice is close to the neighborhood and that the user can have different forms of physical activity there throughout the year. To achieve this, it is essential to anticipate changes in the social world when planning sports facilities, or risk perpetuating the situation in which the people of Brazzaville currently find themselves. To meet these contemporary challenges, we need to innovate in the programming of facilities, strengthen the local network and integrate the urban space.

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