

# SPORTS AND RELIGIOUS BELIEFS: ROLES AND MEANINGS OF USES

ABALOT Emile Jules<sup>1</sup>, GAGLOZOUN Alphonse<sup>2</sup>, ZINSOU Minassou Paul Félix<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Doctor in Sociology, Master of CAMES, University of Abomey-Calavi (Benin), National Institute of Youth, Physical Education and Sport, Laboratory of the Social and Human Sciences, 01 P.O. Box 169 Porto-Novo Bénin.

<sup>2</sup> Doctor in Science of the Education, Auxiliary Master of CAMES, University of Abomey-Calavi (Benin), National Institute of Youth, Physical Education and Sport, Laboratory of the Social and Human Sciences, 01 P.O. Box 169 Porto-Novo Bénin.

<sup>3</sup> Laboratory of Analysis and Research, Religion, Space and Development, University of Abomey-Calavi (Benin), Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences

E-mail: <sup>1</sup> aemilejules@yahoo.fr <sup>2</sup> gaphonse@yahoo.fr <sup>3</sup> aiejbeninois@yahoo.fr

**Abstract:** *This comparative study of sports practices from physical exercises and traditional games, proceeds in reality a contribution to current thinking that lead to return the "psychic platform" and / or the perceptual level competitor who seems to be reduced in communities only to African rites tipsters, magicians and charlatans among others. Bringing this perspective several case studies, the study attempts to deepen the three key dimensions that question in turn: the causes award athletic failure, appropriation strategies of the invisible world of the elements and finally artifacts (items tangible) the psychological conditioning of the competitor.*

*Then taking support on a "phenomenological" (Husserl, 1931)<sup>1</sup> in his mediations and Cartesian behind the appearance of a dislocation transmitted hierarchies must emerge a collective representation less stigmatizing on the relationship between sports and spirituality.*

**Key Words:** Games, Sports, Deities, Spirituality, Competitions.

## 1. INTRODUCTION AND JUSTIFICATION:

The religious marking of sports spaces and the "transcultural" approach of rites in the psychological preparation of athletes (Tanimomo, 1987)<sup>2</sup> are increasingly considered in the scientific literature by sociological analyzes (Willaime, 2010)<sup>3</sup>; socio-historical, (Despland, 1999)<sup>4</sup>; anthropological, (Mauss, 1967)<sup>5</sup> and among others theological, (Bauer, 2009)<sup>6</sup>. Taking then support on the body through its different social uses and as "interface between the individual and the social", (Le Breton, 2011)<sup>7</sup>, the visible and / or the invisible, the objective of this study is to make more intelligible the interaction of religious beliefs, sport and the resulting social dynamics in African countries. Also of interest, particularly in the transcultural approach of rituals that interfere with other "psycho-regulatory rites", namely the use of charlatanism to the detriment of rational psychological preparation of athletes, is to relativize the way in which the human sciences have established (or built) their objects of study. In fact, these sciences have quickly asserted that knowledge based on the sciences of religion has been constructed without the mediation of knowledge that is not archived. Works that engage in the exclusive way of the religious field obscure a certain reality often arduous. Because sport, often perceived as a total social fact, is a powerful indicator of the ambivalence of the individual and/or collective representations that all societies have with spirituality. But in reality, sport can be seen as a relevant indicator of the ambivalence that modern and traditional societies have with religious beliefs. In fact, sport is first and foremost an activity where efficiency and rationality are paramount, and at the same time we invest in a spiritual dimension, which makes it possible to avoid fully assuming each of these two dimensions.

And yet, the phenomenological approach<sup>1</sup> that searches to return to the essence of the sciences of religion reflects a questioning and disagreement on themes such as: the solemn rites and the exposure of clusters of religious symbols during the Olympic Games. How can the sciences of religion, perceived as a political system capable of recognizing and organizing the coexistence of the rational and the irrational, federate in the same space the community of all those who adhere or not to religious beliefs?

This study attempts to find a disciplinary entry through concepts such as sacred things and belief system, institution(s), organization and all those who integrate sports practices into their culture. This means that sport through the various uses of the body appears as an universal space where the artifacts of the institution are confronted with those of practices that try to privilege visible forces doubled with invisible energies. Do the interference factors aimed at controlling the hazards of sport and their interactions with technological innovations not make cultural diversity a trend that opens up to non-specific knowledge instead of despising it? By inscribing this theme in the transcultural

<sup>1</sup> Phenomenology: In Husserl, it is a philosophical method that seeks to return to things themselves and to describe them as they appear to consciousness, independently of all knowledge.

logic of competitor rites and psychological conditioning, the fundamental question to be solved is to determine the place of "traditional resources" that interfere with other psycho-regulatory rites of preparation of athletes for competitions. From this postulate, the following hypothesis: the interaction of religious beliefs and the problems posed by the use of charlatans represent strategies for circumventing the scientific and technological innovations that influence the achievement of a sporting performance. In other words, the process of the introduction of religion in sports spaces and the methods of appropriation and / or rejection of values disseminated by sport appear as unavoidable hazards to give meaning to the social dynamics that take place in the world. The interaction of beliefs with sports. This perspective encourages us to finally set ourselves the objective of re-examining the tools that offer an adequate reading of the sociology of African sport. To achieve this goal and in the context of countries without a complex technique of use of the body (Benin, Cameroon, Gabon, Senegal, Togo among others), it is a question of grasping the dynamic anthropology of the races as a transversal analysis prism to interpret the internal coherence that exists between sports and religions on the one hand and what is specific on the other hand to each culture. Is the context chosen representative of the 54 countries (English, French and Portuguese) in Africa? In any case, the frame of reference for characterizing religious beliefs through the social uses of the body goes far beyond the historical perimeter of local particularities.

### 1.1. Theoretical approach

From the point of view of the different theoretical approaches to the concepts (religion, belief, organization and / or ritual culture), which have had to face various criticisms and which are besides far from answering some questions of general sociology, the study systematically uses works from two specialized sociologies. It concerns the sociology of organizations and / or the sociology of religions and the study of the cosmogony of African microcultures through games and sports. However, no definition of the games practiced in a repetitive way necessarily refers to motor techniques specific to the sports from which they come. In this regard, and to characterize the possibility of designating a multitude of things as one, whereas it is impossible to give a common definition that is appropriate for each of these things taken separately, Willaime (2010) relies on the image of the game to explain the complexity of the concept of "religion". It is in this perspective that within the body of knowledge established around the "sociology of religions", Weber (1996)<sup>8</sup> and Durkheim (1897-1898)<sup>9</sup> propose that religion can be "a system of solidarity of beliefs and practices relating to things sacred, forbidden, that is to say separate from the beliefs and practices that unite in the same moral community called church, all those who adhere to it ". Religion can also be understood as a way of life and a search for answers to the deepest questions of humanity in the sense that it relates to philosophy. But it can also be seen as what is most contrary to reason and judged as synonymous with superstition, taboo or presuppositions and is related to the irrational. This perception of religion reflects to a certain extent the cults and ancestral deities (Voodoo, Fâ, etc.) that are practiced in African communities. For religion, the same observations are needed and the threshold or even the double threshold between sports, religions and institutions is quickly crossed. This means that religious beliefs as well as sports institutions, appear as a "universal space" in which are presented issues and identity choices significantly different. However, any institution that is religious or sports, has a system of values and rules that characterize it and are not fixed even as each player in the system has a relative autonomy. This approach makes it possible to analyze the organizations by combining the contributions of the sociology of religions and those of the study of the African cosmogony (either to remove this theoretical reference or to explain which approach it raises).

## 2. METHODOLOGY:

This exploratory qualitative study was carried out in the specific context of African micro societies which, although rooted in ancestral practices, have retained some relics of rational psychological preparation as a multiplying factor (favorable to) motor performance. To remain consistent with the multidisciplinary spirit of STAPS, a consultation of the available bibliography favoring disciplines close to and / or related to the sociology of organizations such as structural anthropology, ethnology, as well as environmental sciences, was conducted. The breakdown of tangible elements within sports circles, and the analysis of the hazards of high-level sport (before, during and after the competition) made it possible to question social dynamics, individual and / or collective representations in terms of globalization of sports institutions. In a second step, the phenomenological approach, favoring the study of the relevant and specific environment was favored. The determination of identity markers and the definition of their interactions with institutional and technological innovations have helped to make the cosmogony of micro-societies more legible, namely: the link between magical thinking and fetishism without rational psychological support.

Specifically, we have analyzed the pathological behavior of high-level athletes and their state of chronic anxiety, which, when not channeled through regular psychological support, can affect the effectiveness of performance. In addition, the study cross-checks and re-examines the documentary data with the speech content of 15 subjects: (Coaches, sportsmen, and some guarantors of African ancestral traditions). It is the interplay of religious beliefs, the pre-eminence of rituals and the ambiguous relationships that bind athletes to fetishism to eliminate their emotional states that interest us.

### 3. RESULTS:

#### 3.1 Sports and religious beliefs: outstanding parallelism

The enormous constraints of sports training and / or competition lead to high-level competitors in general, pathological behaviors that can affect the effectiveness of performance. Indeed, the state of chronic stress and anxiety is reflected in emotional, neurophysiological reactions including fear of failure, abnormal sweating, tremors, etc ... "The sport has reached such a level of requirement that, in order to reach the high level, it is necessary to use extra physiological processes, that is to say, doping" Galien (Express of 24th November 1989), to answer the two types of motivations that structure the sporting logic. These are primary motivations (or physiological) and secondary motivations (social pressures, unsustainable outbidding and the medical assistance of life). But the control of emotions is a key factor in achieving performance. Thill (1983)<sup>10</sup>, corroborating this point of view already mentioned by Kempler (1982), argues that "if the athlete is not prepared to analyze and control a state of alertness, his entire disposition in combat is diverted and even sometimes annihilated". The main purpose of psychological preparation and the progressive control of the factors of adaptation and mental organization of the athlete to face the conditions are to create attitudes favorable to the acceptance of specific regimes which condition the effectiveness of the motor action. But before going further to reflect on the importance of psychological preparation and the various methods including the use of religious beliefs, this study outlines some forms of negative attitudes to competition and / or sports training.

##### 3.1.1 Negative attitudes to competition

These are "closed sportsmen" who, by their value, prefer isolation or loneliness. Most often they consider humility and modesty as great values and do not pose problems if we know how to integrate them. The second type is concerned with athletes "trapped by mistrust" who refuse to get closer to the team, and can become aggressive and even exclude themselves from the group. As for athletes who are afraid of winning for reasons related to the emotional (pressure) weight of the victory thus causing the appearance of this conduct, a victory may be perceived unconsciously as proof of the release of charges repressed and prohibited by the education. This attitude of anti-aggression can create feelings of guilt, perplexity, and introduce a state of anxiety considering that the champion can be felt (perceived) as an idol, a half-god or an inaccessible model. Victory may seem like sacrilege and profanation. If the fear of failure is the attitude of any sportsman engaged in a competition where he has to prove himself, it can however characterize certain sportsmen of pathological way to the point where their behavior becomes harmful (maladapted). Unusual situations of competition namely: important issue, risk of elimination, selection, record, etc. or specific situations that place the athlete in particular conditions such as frequent role changes or poorly defined responsibilities, may also induce behaviors adverse. The interest of this summary presentation of the various cases of negative attitude is within the framework of the control by the sportsman of the causes of attribution of his failure and / or its sporting success. It is in this perspective that, contrary to the positions often observed, athletes have often sought the causes of their failures in the re-evaluation of psycho-regulatory rites such as religious belief, magic, luck, fetishism and especially in an insufficient psychological conditioning. Concerning this conditioning, the reminder of some processes of the control of the emotions relates to the transcendental mediation, the psychoanalytic cure, the methods constituting in a manipulation by a third of which (the hypnosis, the placebo effect) to the psychological conditioning (the emotional dimension) and among others to mental imagery. Due to the fact that these methods help to reduce the effect of stress and fall within the domain of specialists, they will not be developed here. However, taking into account these few psychological data of the sportsman who needs to acquire the highest intellectual level is necessary to understand the rational factors that intervene in the achievement of a performance. But the reality is quite different because the psychic organization of most competitors does not always take into account the deep organization of the universe and / or the emotional environment.

##### 3.1.2 The sports environment and its motivations

At this level and referring to the work done by Ogilvie and Tutko (1982), Leveque has developed at INSEP in Paris, a projective test specific to the sportsman. It consists of ten boards that identify each of the affective components including motivation for sporting activity, confrontation with the family universe, pre-competitive anxiety, and the relationship with the coach, dual adversity, endurance, the effort, the resistance to failure, the relationship of the coach to the group, the spirit of competition and, among other things, bodily valorization. The gradual mastery of all these parameters that can generate a state of psycho-physiological tension induces reactions such that the subject is no longer able to ensure a sufficient grip on the outside world by his actions. It is therefore an optimal state of tension that the subject must seek by learning to regulate his behavior, to acquire control possibilities and regulatory mechanisms to be implemented autonomously. In these conditions, psycho diagnosis should be seen as an objective and preliminary study of the sport environment (comparable to what is done in the bioenergetic, biomechanical or bio-information field) in order to better understand the different levels of the organization of the

athlete's personality. The psychological preparation to face the enormous constraints of competition must no longer be considered as an additional task, but it must be integrated in the short, long and medium term to the multiplying effects of the motor performance. The reality is quite different because after a competition, the major trends observed reveal that athletes always resort to magic rites and continue to attribute the causes of their failures to external factors to the detriment of internal factors.

To this end, the failure attributed to external factors, fluctuating and unpredictable, poses the problem of the interaction of beliefs and rites in the performance realization. But if all the authors who have been interested in the study of sports rites have shown their importance in terms of psychological preparation and the need for their maintenance, how do African athletes challenge or reclaim these techniques of psychological conditioning?

### **3.2 African sports and cultures: interaction and / or cohabitation of cults**

The construction of a sociology of the African people through the games, allows to note that if several precautions are taken so that a scrupulous equality prevails at the beginning, it is not to confront exactly (or only) the physical merits of the competitors. Indeed, they serve as a pretext for the competitors to communicate with the earthly divinities in the best possible conditions. The terrestrial condition and the existence of the body then generate a status proper to each community of individuals in an environment where the spaces of interference between the rational and the irrational coexist. For this purpose, forests, rivers, swamps remain sacred initiatory places. The issue raised is that of the cohabitation of sport which bears on the one hand the footprints of the post-industrial and technological economy and on the other hand traditional games (engaged in a process of sportification). This testifies that the study of beliefs and that of the cosmogony of the African people are revealed here as a social organization first, endowed with rules and norms solidly anchored in customs because, transmitted from generation to generation. But whatever values and / or values are common to sports and other forms of bodily expressions (of practices), there are two cycles of socialization that function by incorporating habitus (Bourdieu 1979)<sup>11</sup> and having as common spatial imaginary Earth.

#### **3.2.1 Sports: permanence, break or continuity of beliefs**

Psychological conditioning and sports rites have always marked the institutions by the triptych of permanence, rupture and continuity of religious beliefs. Moreover, the institution of the Olympic Games is generally attributed to the half-god Heracles, who would have organized them in Olympia to honor Zeus, considered the supreme god of the Greek pantheon. But if it is useless to rewrite the history of the games since antiquity until their renovation in 1896 by Pierre de Coubertin to find their articulation around figures of divinities, it is enough to evoke some bodily expressions (practices) for to understand that this notion of amateurism that ended when professionalism prevailed in a mercantile context has only reintroduced into our societies of reason and rationality new rites. It is clear that in addition to the worship of the body (symbol of modernity, performance and performance), which has been able to supplant the soul or morals, sport has the function of building communities (by offering traditions), to contribute to identity belonging (by reintroducing rituals) and to ward off social inequalities (by staging an egalitarian ideal). The improper introduction of technology has thus allowed significant sociological ("historical") transmutations in the body's forms of bodily expression (body work tools, body code and machine body), while that it is permanent that the three functions of sport and religion mentioned above repulse an attempt to answer the narrow relationship of the sport-religion couple with other dimensions of social facts (culture, politics, economy). Given that this study focused on sports organization on the one hand and its interaction with religious beliefs on the other hand, it becomes legitimate to examine how French-speaking Black Africa appropriates or rejects this syncretism religious, whether instituted, popular implicit or explicit. Thus, if the first two models of the articulation between sport and religion "exclusivism and syncretism" Bauer (2009) do not distinguish sport from religion, in contrast the last two models (dimorphism and exclusivism) enshrine the autonomy of sport and religion. But whatever model is chosen, the question of this articulation of the sport and religious beliefs couple opens the way to new conflicting relationships. We will try to apply the model of religious syncretism to the pantheon of the Voodoo cult which is built around the forces of nature and supernatural entities: deified ancestors, thunders, seas, monsters, and animals. In Christianity, the notion of religious syncretism is defined as "the amalgam of Christianity and traditional religions" and is pejoratively connoted. It corresponds to a "theological polemic" maintained by those who oppose an authentic and original Christianity to a "syncretistic" Christianity which would have been constituted under the influence of pagan contributions and which, as such, would have been transmitted to the present time. But following this definition, syncretism is simply and in a much more neutral way to the confusion of two entities: here sport and religion lead to the creation of a new entity that is neither sport nor religion but something else with, however, specific features borrowed from both. In a syncretistic perspective, sport and religion are totally confused, creating a new entity. The most successful example of this religious syncretism is the cohabitation of the Voodoo cult with the Catholic Church. Indeed, Voodoo worship can be described as a culture, an inheritance, a philosophy, an art, dances, a language, an art of medicine, a style of music, a justice, a power, an oral tradition, and rites. The Voodoo pantheon is above all the forces of nature, as in shamanism and these relations refer to the natural powers that are the sea, disease etc.

Moreover, to continue to exist, the Voodoo whose geographical map has expanded to the Caribbean Islands, the Americas and Brazil, integrated Catholic rites and designs with its percussion and melodies from the 1950s. Voodoo is obviously interested in other supernatural entities such as deified ancestors, monsters, and especially animals.

### **3.2.2 Games, sports and the divine animals line**

The study of beliefs and that of institutions is often considered in the modern world as a social organization of anthropology (study of the man considered in the animal line), the exploration of games and religions reveals in this case a social organization that has its own rules and norms that are firmly rooted in morals and are values transmitted to the rising generations by the wise. These draughts characterize the structural anthropology of the people show how most African sports teams in reclaiming the names of animals, seek to benefit from the invisible forces and the favor of deified animals that will protect them throughout their journey. Thus, we distinguish in Benin, the Squirrels; in Botswana, the Zebras; in Burundi, the Swallows; the lions of the Terranga of Senegal; the indomitable Lions of Cameroon; the Lions of the Atlas of Morocco; Elephants of Ivory Coast; the Panthers of Gabon; the Scorpions of Madagascar; the Lesotho Crocodiles; the Eagles of Mali; the Great Eagles of Nigeria ... and this list of big cats, raptors or reptiles is far from exhaustive. The resurgence of certain traditional practices with the importance given to the occult world, now interfere with the vagaries of competitive sport. This observation is especially true in Benin, Senegal, Togo, among others, with the emergence of playful practices such as forms of corporal practices where the aggregates of symbols and myths are exposed in the spaces of confrontation. In other words, there is a certain "identity theatricality" that comes into play. The African struggle is part of this process of the transition from games to sport according to the phenomenon of "Sportivization of traditional games" (Illias and Dunning, 1998)<sup>12</sup>. Despite its anchoring in the cosmogony of the African, linked to the world of beliefs and superstitions, these mass productions can be considered as the reproduction of a rich history whose purpose is the perpetuation of an ancestral tradition still alive. In his ethnological discourse transcribed by Denise Paulme, the founder of the French scientific ethnology, Mauss (1872-1950), summarized in a remarkable formula, the close link between cultural heritage, magic and technique. According to him, "it seems certain that if the man had not believed that his magic would succeed, he would not have persevered in these techniques". We can then argue that the African struggle in its quest for sportivization, adopts a strategy of circumvention by reinforcing the mental doping ("mental preparation") of competitors, thus obscuring or denying a duty of memory face to face its ancestral roots. However, the traditional and playful forms of physical exercise are in line with all the values commonly shared by the community and work with the chronology of the seasons. The visible force of the community, integrating the animal kingdom, doubles as invisible energy. It is therefore impossible for the African sportsman to perceive the universe of the game, the sport and the physical challenges independently of a shared cosmogony. The gap between the IOC's current strategy, which threatens to suppress an activity such as the fight against the Olympics at the confluence of various traditions, and the benefit of "new" sports driven by the pressure of technology, is then measured.

### **3.2.3 Sports and games: a religious syncretism and / or cultural cohabitation**

The resulting sports organization is therefore a systematic reference to the Voodoo pantheon born of the meeting of the traditional cults of the Yoruba gods (Nigeria) and the deities Fons and Evé (Benin, Togo, Ghana). With the deportation of black populations as slaves in America and the Caribbean islands, the geographical map of Voodoo culture has expanded to Europe through the transition from amateurism to professionalism sports. Today, there are more than fifty million followers of Voodoo. This important adherence to the Voodoo cult resulted in a peaceful coexistence of religious cults and syncretism that Pierre de Coubertin never hid. Olympism is presented first and foremost as a religion, that is to say, "a commitment to an ideal of higher life, of aspiration, to perfection". Pierre de Coubertin (2008) and his successors certainly have a new religion based on (beliefs, symbols, rites, etc.), borrowed from the Greco-Roman, Judeo-Christian, German-Scandinavian religions and can also be, over time to other less Western religions, by reorganizing them according to the context and objectives of the games. But by reorganizing the Olympic Games according to the economic and technological stakes, has society not created a new sports spirit, totally different from all that had been done before?

In other words, is failure and / or success in achieving athletic performance linked to internal and / or external factors? The theme raised is that of the cohabitation of a sport that bears the imprint of a society with a powerful industrial and capitalist economy and the traditional games which, while preserving the relics of an economy with ancestral traditions, engage in this same process of sportification.

### **3.3 Traditional games, sports or new deritualized religions: the paradoxes of a contradicted society**

The examination of works dealing with body techniques, traditional games and / or modern sports in Africa have often evoked the permanence of the interaction of religious beliefs, where the body is involved. It is in this perspective that the influence of religious beliefs and their links with sport would not have favored a specialized sociology of religion if certain factors related to scientific and technological innovations had not played a facilitating role in the psychological preparation of athletes. The export and / or relocation of these competitive preparation

methods among certain cultural minorities is no doubt the result of the fact that sport was predisposed to large-scale fulfillment of the functions at its foundation from its invention towards the end of the year XIXth century and its appropriation in the public English schools. But paradoxically, Bourdieu (1979) mentions that "this extremely economical means of mobilizing adolescents brings together in its midst all the issues of struggle between institutions, be they political, ideological" and / or religious. The functions assigned to the sport practice then undergo changes, since the collective and / or individual representations diverge according to the imaginary and the meanings that the social actors give to their practices. To characterize this transformation and renewal of sporting practice, it can be said that the bodily exercises of the elite are cut off from the ordinary social occasions in which popular games remain associated and stripped of the moral ideal. However, "we know that the various ways of practicing games, often ephemeral and repetitive, do not necessarily refer to specific motor techniques" Callède (2007)<sup>13</sup>. However, it is precisely this culture of the ephemeral rooted in the terrestrial divinities that remains specific to African community societies. The identification and classification of traditional games is an exercise that allows to better explore what can be the subject of "sportivisation" or "sportification". We discover then that the body assumes a dual role in societies with local African particularities because, traditional games reach their peak when one seeks to know if one has the favor of the invisible forces. The sociology of traditional games and their process of sportivisation, which has relied on the importance of visible and / or invisible energies in the psychological preparation of athletes, is a full-function sociology. Westernization of Africa is a fact.

The new dynamics that are observed in particular through the crossed views of inculturation or globalization and the strategies of circumvention of the technique adopted by the actors of the system are concrete data of reading "sociology of African sport". On these aspects, we must recall some principles enunciated by Raymond Aron (1958-1959), in his inaugural lecture on sociology at the Sorbonne: "if sociology exhausts itself in search of detail, it becomes simply a research technique». Certainly, but the sociological analysis risks pouring into pure abstraction. Also, the concerted writing of sociology of African sport must be capable of apprehending other realities of the visible world, divinized and specific to a continent undergoing major changes.

### **3.3.1 Francophone black Africa: a computer-free complex using the body**

The synthesis of the identified parameters encourages us to take cognizance of the metamorphoses of African sport, mainly from the angle of sociology. In Africa, sport (and we understand that it is mainly football) is based on an ancestral, social, political and emancipated from the colonial (colonialism). It stands out without denying its local origins (local roots), to the point of contributing to shaping new collective and national identities. The federal sports organization tends to introduce a certain simplicity, a modernity by desecrating the sport. But this hope to access technological innovations by stigmatizing cultural practices is not without damage. Worse, structural imbalances persist because; the fictitious existence of federations has often resulted in a decline of local structures. "Here we find all the relevance and expressive force of the dual concept of hybridization and the secularization of the cultural and sporting model (Abalot<sup>14</sup> quoted by Callède, 2015)<sup>15</sup>. By retaining only the challenges of confrontation and those of high performance to the detriment of all that precedes the competition (songs, dances, rituals and deities), the introduction in societies without complex technique of use of the body rather engendered with reference to the philosophical anthropology explored by Jeu (1977): "a contradicted counter-society". Sport thus appears as "a counter-society", that is to say, a place of circumvention of norms and cultural values that, in fact, are valued by African communities. However, the sports system has its standards that must be learned to decipher and respect the risk of exclusion. But the paradox reveals that African countries have entered part of the industrial, rational and technological system while adopting strategies for exploiting occult forces.

So here is an approach to the sociology of African sport that links sport, religious beliefs and that should be put to the advantage of the authors: (Crozier and Friedberg, 1977)<sup>16</sup>. Today, the dual prospection of hybridization and cultural hegemony opens other avenues for reflection to reflect the evolution of sport in Africa. Indeed, the reevaluation of the psycho-regulating rites and the concomitant consideration of the mental conditioning of the African sportsman, are all processes used for the elimination of the emotional states not very favorable to the sporting performance. On the other hand, what must be condemned is the pre-eminence of the ambiguous relations that bind the charlatan to the players or the coach. The unorthodox practices that can lead to underperformance then make it possible to deduce that it is necessary to dissociate the roles while knowing that the realization of a sporting performance supposes the multiplication of the factors which participate in the regulation of psychological and psychological data. But since the study has shown close links between sport and religion, the magician just like the psychologist or other obscure doctors, has no other role than to reassure the partners in presence. If the works referred to in this study revealed that all sportsmen recognize the importance of rituals and that of spirituality about their psychological preparation, rename or rename the African national teams by stripping them of all these names of animals, would not lead them to lose their markers identity ?

### **3.3.2 The heritage of sport and the paradoxes of a society of rites**

The sociology of sport, apprehended in these conditions as a total religious fact allows to retain two approaches: the first concerns life together (living together) for a few hours and the spectacular dimension of sports that can bring together a whole people and this, without distinction of sex, race, ethnicity or religion, represents an ideal framework for learning the rules of life and democracy. Thus each people, each state, each continent projects its desires, drives, beliefs in its ideal self, and the model it seeks to achieve in sport. As a testimony, the aristocrats identified with their representatives as they were gathered to dine in restaurants of good quality, to attend boxing matches on which they engaged bets. Sport therefore appears as a summary of the human condition. Its vicarious practice is always subject to intense emotion in that in the face of our inability to predict or change the course of events, it is as if fate crucified the viewer on the way to the cross. When its emotions and sensations are well channeled by a belief in the educational virtues promoted by Olympism or simply by the religious syncretism required by the harmonious cohabitation of cults, these practices represent moments of great social mobilization. The preparation for sports aggression (violence) commonly tolerated and shared, the festive atmosphere and the evocation of warlike lyrics etc., are all methods used to destabilize the opponent by acting on his mind. Faced with the "dislocation" of the so-called modern sport, the testimonies gathered illustrate the will of African societies to safeguard their creative and recreating capacity to produce "moments and / or places of circumvention of norms and sports values called universal".

### **3.3.3 Scientific and technological innovations, religious beliefs and sports: a fragile and unfinished heritage**

The second reality that is not often mentioned is that this psychological conditioning dimension of affectivity can be transformed into aggressiveness (violence) in the proper sense to others. This is to present the opponent as a real enemy to be defeated, displaying warlike words such as: "the lions still roared, devouring on the field of hostilities the small team of zebras". The dichotomy between the "national", the last refuge of beliefs and the "transnational" catalytic effect of religious ultra-liberalism, provokes in the profane, a schizophrenia which perfectly illustrates the ambivalent world in which we plunge relations that sport has with beliefs. Inspired by Brohm's (1993)<sup>17</sup> analysis that shows that sport is a form of religion to create illusion among participants in order to distance them from social struggles and that of Bromberger (1994)<sup>18</sup>, which sharing the same forms of analysis has led to more rigorous (and especially different) conclusions. According to him, sport and religion are incomparable. However, they can be brought closer because the sport establishes some relations between the rites, the symbols and the places. But unlike religion, which explains where "we come and go", sport builds an identity by consecrating and dramatizing the fundamental values that shape society: identities shared through dreams, performance and the role of divinities. But beyond the ideologies that are only systems of ideas, opinions and beliefs oriented politically and giving a partial view of the sporting reality, it is especially the misuse of sportsmanship by outsiders, who represents the worst threat to the survival of the sporting legacy. It is in this context that we must locate the invasion of stadiums by groups identifying with wild animals, or by drug addicted (or strongly alcoholic!) supporters, showing religious ostentatious signs or symbols such as swastikas or by individuals developing profanity behavior of the stadiums. What also strikes the world imagination, it is not the ostentatious exhibition of religious symbols which seizes the sports circles, but it is rather the simultaneous globalization of the psychological conditioning by the written press, radio and television. Instead of lamenting the resurgence of atavistic violence, it is necessary to understand that it is the misuse of modern information technologies that amplify the different forms of beliefs and / or collective representations. Traditional violence, which is discovered through traditional games mainly in the cosmogony of the African people, is limited to the rites, sacrifices and processes that make it possible to benefit from the favor of the deities.

Psychological conditioning by modern technologies is stimulated in the sense that, rather than desacralizing sports, it is another form of verbal (or physical) violence that arises from the screens. It is rebroadcast after the fact; it is preceded as on the acts of religious terrorism, one creates it. This also makes it impossible for sociologists, psychologists and theologians to define scientifically the real interactions between sport and spirituality.

## **4. CONCLUSION:**

At the end of our analyzes, it appears that the existence of an essence common to all religions and the outline of typologies established on this postulate, such as that of polytheism or monotheism, henotheism or animism, have not shaken the sports institution. The interplay of religious beliefs and the traditional "resources" that interfere with other "psycho-regulatory rites" of preparation to face competitions represent, permanently and through the ages, relevant identity markers. This paradox is analyzed by Garassino (1992)<sup>19</sup> who questions the "founding myth" of sport and the problems posed by the use of charlatans but also other Catholic and Muslim religions among others. These strategies of circumvention that the social actors adopt (of (de) ritualisation and / or increasing ritualization) explain how the layman finds a new bulwark against the hazards of the sport. The sporting spectacle as well as the spirituality proposes a competition supposed pure between two opponents who leave on equal terms. This position leads to consolidate our results, which bring together the old myth (heroism) and the new myth (democracy). This is to say that sport seeks to keep access to a supernatural reality while legitimizing practices in a path of hyper-nationality, measurement and score. Thus, it is no longer the myth that is paradoxical but it is the whole sporting field that

maintains ambiguous relations with the divine while getting lost with the technique, the money, the passion and the exacerbation of the religious intolerance.

However, religion and sport may have no point of convergence and this position makes it necessary to make a choice because: this distinction and / or this empowerment of sport, far from freeing athletes, contributes on the contrary to alienating them in a sort of Decadent religion, unfinished and not asserting itself as such. By appropriating to us the empirical studies of Bauer and Barreau (2009), particularly edifying about the paradoxes born of the sporting field which is bogged down in both the technical and the divine, the results obtained confirm that the competitors no longer have cartography of the sporting order, the sacred or the desecration. The logic of the sport activity being determined by a consciousness (the mind, the thought) and affectivity (the soul) it is no longer surprising that men only give to the great religions of humanity, the sports area where only the gods of the stadium can predict the outcome of a competition. The whole problematic to be reexamined is how to design according to the contexts and the continents (African, European, Asian, American, etc.) the threshold or the double threshold of distribution of the powers of the humanity between the body, the physical, the technique and that of spirituality. And yet, should the pre-eminence of occult and / or invisible energies not be stigmatized or remain permanently, a delicate but essential question to be solved in the mental preparation of African athletes?

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