



Partnership As an Instrument of Sport Governance in Morocco: Case of The Partnership Between Ministries in Charge of Sport and National Education

Elakari Abderrazak

The Royal Institute, Morocco

ABSTRACT

To ensure the sustainable development of physical and sport activities, it is imperative to pool the efforts of all the actors involved in promoting sport, whether state, private or the sports and Olympic movement. Thus follows the importance of the public sports policies coherence, particularly at the territorial level. Thus, the interaction of actors and their interdependence, has become a reality to be taken into consideration in any process of construction of public sports action.

It is in this perspective that, within the framework of this reflection, we will focus our attention on the instruments of governance likely to provide us with certain answers as to the relationships between the various actors, and the coordination mechanisms through which public action in sport takes place, based on the concept of partnership as a tool of governance, and as a case study the partnership between the Ministries of Youth and Sport (MYS) and National Education (MEN).

Keywords: Governance, Instrument, Partnership, Sport. Physical Education

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I. Conceptual and Legal Framework of Governance Tools

First of all, it seems judicious, in a methodological point of view, to present the definition of the concepts that will be frequently used throughout this study:

1. Instruments of governance

Governance is defined as “*the organization of power at the head of an entity, which is based on a set of internal structures and rules governing the relationships between management, the board of directors, shareholders or partners and other stakeholders, as well as the rights and responsibilities of each, in conducting and controlling the entity's affairs, and defining the objectives to be pursued, in accordance with the interests of the entity and its stakeholders, and the means to achieve them and monitor activities and results*” (1).

E. Abderrazak 
0000-0002-2881-6859

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**Yazışma Adresi /
Corresponding Author:**
Elakari Abderrazak
The Royal Institute, Morocco
E-mail: aelakari@yahoo.fr

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As for the term instrument, it is defined in the field of political sociology as *“a technical device with a generic vocation carrying a concrete conception of a political/societal relationship and supported by a conception of regulation.”*(2).

Regarding partnership it can be defined as *“a collaborative relationship between two or more people based on trust, equality and mutual understanding, to achieve a specific objective. Partnerships carry risks as well as benefits, making shared responsibility crucial.”*(3).

The concept of a governance instrument has often been forgotten, in research relating to the sociology of organizations or in the field of administrative sciences, with the exception of a few rare reference writings. In their book entitled *“Gouverner avec les instruments”* **Lascoumes. P** and the **Galès. P** (2005) defend the idea that governance instruments cannot be understood in their functionalist purpose, but they also reveal a profound change in the social relations maintained between the various actors involved in the construction of public action. *“The question of the public action instruments and of their modes of operation is generally presented in a functionalist manner, as a matter of simple technical choices”* (4).

Thus, the instrument of governance refers to two modes of functioning, *“it is both a technical and a social mechanism that organizes specific social relations between the public authority and its recipients according to the representations and meanings it carries”* (5).

The instruments of governance also show us profound transformations in the mode of action and intervention of the state apparatus. The authors distinguish two figures of the state in restructuring, on the one hand a *“mobilising state of negotiated governance”*, and on the other hand, a *“regulatory, supervisory and controlling state”*.

According to **Lascoumes** and the **Galès**, legislative and regulatory, economic, fiscal instruments, that are too restrictive, are abandoned in favor of new incentive, informative and communicational public action

instruments. This evolution would testify to a recomposition of the State towards a *“negotiated governance”*: *“The dirigiste State is therefore supposed to give way to a leading or coordinating State, non-interventionist and mainly carrying out actions of mobilization, integration and coherence”* (6).

2. Partnership as an instrument of governance

Governance implies the need to recognize non-institutional actors as partners in the process of building public action, starting from the problem identification, through the design and finally to its implementation.

In the mid-1990s, evaluation reports on development project sigh lighted the alarming failure of policies. Despite the significant sums invested and the efforts made, the results remained mixed and far from achieving the expected objectives. Worse still, the facets of poverty are getting worse.

Through this perspective, it is necessary to appreciate the particular interest granted by the public authorities to encourage partnership either between ministerial departments, or with the associative movement and the private sector, in order to create a certain convergence between the various public policies.

Partnership, as an instrument of governance, constitutes a new mode of coordination between actors, whose main objective is to pool know-how, capital and skills in order to respond to new economic and social challenges.

The partnership mode has developed for decades in the business world, it is considered as an active association of different stakeholders who, while maintaining their autonomy, agree to pool their efforts so as to achieve a common goal. But it is only later that partnership takes its place of choice in inter-state relations.

II) MJS/MEN Partnership Agreement

The cooperation between the two ministerial departments does not date from today, it drains, behind it a long experience of attempts and actions aiming at pooling the resources of each

partner for a coherent sports policy which aims, in a specific way, two objectives :

- Broadening the base of sports practitioners in Morocco
- Prospecting and identifying young talents to ensure their follow-up at specialized centers.

When each new government takes office, it must be noted that the first project that the political leaders of the two ministerial departments are trying to implement concerns the relaunching of the MJS/MEN cooperation. Not with standing the many attempts and the large number of agreements and circulars signed, the results fall short of expectations and aspirations of all protagonists.

1. Limits of the sport promotion system in Morocco

Therefore, the question to ask is why this interest in developing cooperation between the two departments and its relationship with the promotion of sport in general?

The MEN is considered a strategic player in the Moroccan sports landscape for the following reasons:

- The educational system in Morocco provides a framework for a large number of children and young people who constitute a breeding ground for the permanent nourishment of the sporting movement of young talents;
- The existence of a strong correlation between the broadening of the sports practitioners' base and the emergence of an able sporting elite to represent Morocco with dignity on the international sports scene;
- The modernization of the Physical Education and Sport (PES) system was presented as one of the plausible solutions to ensure the sport development in Morocco generally(7).

In this way, school sport fulfils *“an educational function, which enables social integration and the fight against marginalization by contributing to the development of children and adolescents, also by participating in school success, and by countering early school leaving. It contributes to*

self-esteem and personality development, provides students with the opportunity to live unforgettable group experiences, allows them to go beyond their personal limits and often improves their academic performance” (8).

A reading of the literature on sport in Morocco and also political debates dealing with the crisis situation of sport, *“highlights the existence of an awareness of the PES role in any process aimed at reviving sport in general”* (9).

We should not forget the fact that the discourse developed by the supporters of a strong MEN involvement stems from an important argument, impregnated in the collective memory of the generations of the 1970s and 1980s, with an orientation of the MEN to launch the program of the School Sports Association commonly known under the name (ASS).

At this time, it must be recognized that the MEN has gone beyond the stage of its main mission, namely the pedagogical role of inculcating the basic elements of Physical Education, to further develop school sport with the increase in the hourly volume dedicated to inter-school competitions (Wednesdays and Fridays each week).

2. Reference framework of the MJS / MEN partnership

We thought it useful to revisit the frame of reference that legitimizes the use of the partnership instrument between the two departments. To this end, we will take a privileged look at the following elements, in a chronological order:

- The National Education Charter(2002);
- The Royal letter to participants at the National Sport Conference2008;
- Law 30-09 on Physical Education and Sport(2010) ;
- The Constitution (2011).

Concerning the National Charter of Education and Formation (2002), it has reserved a special place for the means to promote school and university physical education and

extracurricular activities at the territorial level. For this purpose:

- *“Regional bodies for research, evaluation and promotion of physical education, school and university sport and national sport in general shall be established. These bodies will involve, alongside the education and training sector, the other government departments concerned (youth and sport, health, social and cultural affairs) as well as representatives of sports associations and federations, institutions concerned with sport and health, and personalities who have played an outstanding role at national or regional level in this field”*(10).

The second source of inspiration is the Royal Letter to participants at the National Sport Conference. The letter reserved a whole paragraph to explain the situation of the PES and the means to make it a lever for reviving national sport.

This new sports strategy - the fruit of these meetings work - invoked a fundamental axis of development, namely *“To institute synergies between the Ministry of Youth and Sports and the Ministry of National Education”*(11).

These synergies will be structured around four main elements:

- Optimizing resources, through the reciprocal use of sports facilities and strengthening the participation of PES teachers in the sports movement.
- Coordinating sports and school curricula for young talents. This could be done by setting up timetables set up by schools, by creating sport-study programs, and by adapting the physical education system to all pupils, especially the disabled ones.
- Strengthening the place of sport in MEN programs.
- Reinstating sport as an optional subject at university.

The third source is Law 30-09 on Physical Education and Sports. Among the important innovations it initiated, the fact that it insisted

through the second article on the following point: *“Physical and sports education must be taught in schools”*.

Similarly, Decree No. 2-10- 628 (of 4 November 2011 implementing Act No. 30-09 on Physical Education and Sports) has repeatedly mentioned the role of MEN in activities relating to the promotion of sport. To this end, Article 15 stipulates that *“a joint committee responsible for determining the areas of cooperation and coordination between the Ministries of Youth and Sports and National Education. The composition and powers of this commission are determined by joint order of the governmental authorities in charge of national education and youth and sports.”*

It should be mentioned that the Constitution (2011) mentioned in article 26 the right of citizens to practice sport.

3. Chronology of MJS/MEN cooperation initiatives

In a chronological point of view, initiatives to develop partnership agreements date back to the early 1980s. We will briefly present the stages in the implementation of these conventions.

3.1 Joint decisions.

- 1980 : Joint decision to create pilot sports schools in Rabat, Casablanca, Khemisset and El Jadida.
- 1981 : Common note n°182 of 29 July 1981 concerning :
 - Establishment of provincial commissions,
 - Census of Sports Managers of the two Ministries
 - Designation of sport types and location of centers :
 - Athletics: Rabat-Khemisset-Taza-Oujda
 - Swimming: Rabat-El Jadida-Tetouan-Settat

- Gymnastics: Rabat-Casablanca-Fez-Tetouan
- 1985 : Joint decision to establish the national school for the preparation of high performance Athletes in the following sports: Athletics, Gymnastics, Weightlifting, Swimming.
- 1986 : Joint decision concerning the use of the human and material resources available to the two departments and an establishment of the Joint Cooperation and Coordination Committee.

3.2 Partnership agreements:

They concern two aspects, the agreements signed between the two ministerial departments, and those signed specifically between the MEN and other national sport actors, in particular the sports federations.

3.2.i Agreements signed between the two departments :

- June 28, 1999: Agreement on Sports and School Insurance signed within the framework of solidarity between the MJS, the MEN, the CNOM and the CNIA Insurance Company.
- 22 May 2002 : Cooperation agreement between the MJS and the Ministry of higher education and executive formation and scientific research for the exemplary use of sports facilities and the development of scientific research and sports medicine.
- 11 September 2008 : Framework partnership agreement with the MJS and the MEN.
- 16 May 2010: Signature of a joint circular between the MJS and the MEN concerning access to sports facilities for the benefit of local regulatory sports associations.

3.2.ii Agreements signed with sports federations :

- 1995 : The FRM Football signed the agreement with the MJS and the MEN aiming at the promotion of Football by

widening the base of the practitioners (Operation 60 thousands youth).

- 1997 Signature of an agreement between the FRM of Athletics on the one hand and the Ministries of the Interior, National Education, Higher Education and Scientific Research on the other hand for the promotion and popularization of Athletics
- 1997 : The FRM of Tennis signed an agreement with the MJS and the MEN to broaden the base of Tennis players within the Schools.
- 1998 : Signature of a partnership agreement between the MEN and the FRM Basketball.
- 2007 : Signature of partnership agreement between MEN and FRM Athletics

4. Characteristics of the MEN/MJS partnership agreements

Without claiming to an exhaustive analysis of the contents of all these conventions, however, we will present the terms relating to the preferred areas of partnership and the mechanisms for their implementation.

If we take the last MEN/MJS framework partnership agreement signed on 11 September, 2008, its objectives are:

- Upgrading University and civil school sports ;
- Early detection of young talents and broadening the base of practitioners ;
- Promotion of PE as an essential component of the institution's educational project;
- Opening the school to its environment and answering the civil society expectations in sport.

As regards areas of partnership, the agreement was limited to:

- The joint operation of sports facilities ;
- Executive formation in the sport field;
- The development and promotion of sports practice;

- Setting up programs to raise awareness, exchange expertise and experience and develop scientific research in the sport field;

This convention was signed during Mrs. **Nawal El moutawakil's** mandate (2007-2009), who worked for its implementation so that it would not remain a dead letter and would know the same fate as the antecedents signed since 1981. That's why, a joint commission composed of the senior staff of the two ministries has held a series of meetings to identify priority areas for better implementation of the content of the said convention.

During the second version of the Government chaired by **Abbas El fassi, Nawal El Moutawakil** will be succeeded by **Moncef Belkayat** (2009-2012). During his mandate, the latter identified 20 priority projects, among which was the revival of the MJS/MEN cooperation with as urgent action: the opening of sports areas in schools for the benefit of local sports associations.

As of Wednesday, June 16, 2010 in Rabat; the Ministers of the two departments officially launched the operation "Opening Sporting Spaces of Schools for Sport Associations". During this official ceremony, a Joint Circular concerning the joint operation of the sports facilities of the two Ministries was signed, as well as a specification which specifies the operating conditions and the mechanisms of execution and follow-up, while determining the commitments of each signatory party.

5. Remarks on the MJS/MEN partnership

A careful reading of a long history of cooperation between the two departments reveals the following remarks:

- Despite the large number of agreements signed, the rate of their implementation remains modest or even weak.
- Existence of a dichotomy between the will of the politician seeking by all means to revive cooperation and a disguised resistance of the administrative apparatus through dilatory procedures.

- The territory does not follow the commitment of the central structures some delegations on both sides continue to ignore the existence of the executive circular facilitating access for the benefit of associations to sports areas under the MEN. It should be noted that few delegations set up the Joint Committee.
- The content of these conventions follows the evolution of the socio-sports environment. Initially, interest was focused on actions to detect and prospect talented young people. There is currently a trend to focus on PSE as a social integration factor.
- The "sport-study" program has often been mentioned in the agreements signed, without however concretizing it into feasible actions .

CONCLUSION and RECOMMENDATIONS

The case study of the partnership between the ministries of youth and sport and the national education reveals the following dysfunctions:

- Lack of studies to clearly define the areas of convergence between the two departments;
- Multiple acts of overlapping competences in the absence of a structure ensuring the coordination and convergence of public policies dedicated to the promotion of sport;
- Persistence of the predominance of sectorial policies. Improving citizens living conditions requires a global and integrated approach.
- It is recommended to:

. Faced with the constraints imposed by high-level sporting performance, sports students find themselves forced to sacrifice their studies in favor of intensive sporting practice, for want of a poor match between school hours and the hourly volume of training per day. Acknowledge that neither the sports system nor the education system have taken this problem into consideration, without, however, providing funding incentives for these athletes. Consequently, the sport-study system was created to enable young people with good sporting qualities to develop them as part of a program integrated into their school education, which enables athletes with exceptional sporting potential to accelerate their sporting development in symbiosis with intellectual development within a structure allowing a balance between sporting and academic success.

- Direct the efforts of each department towards its core missions, taking into account its particular resources and capacities, in order to avoid duplication of structures and responsibilities.
- Lighten the weight of an excessively centralized public administration in favor of a strong delegation of powers to the deconcentrated services supposed to be closer to the expectations of the citizen.
- Encourage territorial initiatives with an opening on the other public actors.
- Re-launch the important "sport-study" program to ensure the socio-professional retraining of young sportsmen and sportswomen.

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