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RESEARCH ARTICLE

FANS ZONES: BETWEEN ORGANIZATIONAL ISSUES AND THE SPECTATOR EXPERIENCE IN CELEBRATION AREAS FOR MAJOR SPORTING EVENTS IN SENEGAL

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Abstract

The organization of fan zones during major sporting events involving the national football team and the consumer experience of the spectators who frequent them are central issues that shape the planning and implementation of these spaces. To gain a comprehensive understanding of these dynamics, a qualitative research methodology was employed, primarily consisting of semi-structured interviews and participant observation. Through this approach, three categories of organizers were identified: commercial companies, public administrations, and local authorities. In practice, fan zones, with their variety and widespread distribution across the national territory, are designed to offer the population a shared space to experience sports events, all free of charge. These fan zones serve not only as entertainment hubs but also as tools for strengthening national cohesion, energizing local regions, and providing elected officials with an opportunity to demonstrate their dynamism. In this way, local governments use fan zones to associate their political actions with the positive aspects of sport, fostering unity and pride within the community. For commercial companies, the organization of fan zones serves as a strategic marketing initiative with significant commercial benefits. These zones offer companies a chance to connect with spectators in an emotionally charged environment, creating lasting memories for fans that are often shared on social media, further amplifying the brand's presence. However, despite the potential for positive brand engagement, the organization of these celebratory spaces comes with considerable challenges. It requires substantial financial investment, as well as specialized technical expertise—resources that some organizers may lack. Thus, while fan zones can contribute to social cohesion and provide a unique community experience, they also present logistical, financial, and operational challenges that must be carefully navigated by organizers from both the public and private sectors.

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Introduction:-

The terms “fan zone,” “Live Site,” “Celebration zones,” and “supporters’ village” are commonly used today to describe spaces where spectators gather to watch live broadcasts of sporting events on giant screens. These fan zones are typically organized around major sporting competitions and serve as venues for large gatherings of fans. The concept originally emerged in the context of Formula 1 racing, where these designated areas allowed fans to enjoy pre-event activities and view broadcasts of practice sessions and races on giant screens. Over time, the concept of fan zones has expanded to include major international sporting events like the Football World Cup (FWC) and the African Cup of Nations (CAN). In these settings, fan zones refer to spaces, often set up in city centers, where supporters who are unable to attend the live event in person can watch the broadcast together, under ideal conditions, such as a giant screen display. In the context of the Olympic Games, these spaces are often referred to as “Live Sites.” These areas allow those without tickets to experience the games by watching the competitions on large screens set up at various locations throughout the host city, providing an opportunity to follow the games as a group, even if they are not at the actual competition venues. The evolution of these fan zones reflects the growing demand for communal viewing experiences and the desire to bring fans together, regardless of whether they can physically attend the event.

While at first these “celebration zones” were set up within the host cities, where the local population and non-ticketed supporters could take part in the event, today they are also organized in many cities thousands of kilometers away from the venues of international competitions. So although the 2022 Football World Cup is taking place in Qatar, the atmosphere was felt all over the world, especially in the 32 countries taking part in the competition. In Senegal, while some fans were seated in front of their television screens in their living rooms, others preferred to visit the fan zones set up throughout Dakar and the rest of the country. While there will be fewer than a dozen fan zones in the center of Dakar for the African Cup of Nations in January 2022, there were more than sixty spread across the major cities as well as in some rural communities. The rudimentary facilities of the early days seem to have given way to themed settings that welcome more and more spectators. This situation raises two questions: what are the reasons behind the organization of these fan zones? What kinds of experiences do spectators have there? The aim of this study is to gain a better understanding of the issues involved in setting up these zones, and the viewing experiences of the spectators who visit them. After presenting the methodology, the various results will be analyzed and discussed.

Methodology:-

Two research techniques were used: observation and interview survey. In participant observation, we adopted the posture of Patricia and Peter Adler (1987) by playing a “peripheral” role, i.e., in contact with the players (supporters and organizers) but without participating in the organization of the event. Seven fan zones were visited and observed. These were: 1) on the Corniche Ouest, organized by Radiodiffusion Télévision du Sénégal (RTS); 2) on the forecourt of the Monument de la renaissance Africaine organized by RTS and its partner SD Consulting; 3) at the village square in Yoff; 4) at Dakar railway station, organized by the Société d’Exploitation du Train Express Régional de Dakar (SETER); 5) at the social campus of Cheikh Anta Diop University in Dakar, organized by the Centre des œuvres universitaires de Dakar (COUD); 6) at the public square in the commune of Pout (located in the Thiès region and 73 kilometers from Dakar); 7) at the public square in the rural commune of Thiaré Ndiargui (located in the Fatick department and comprising 30 villages and 66 hamlets). The choice of sites for observation was based on two main criteria: their location (fan zones in major cities and small rural towns) and the profile of the organizers (commercial companies, media, public administrations, local authorities). Each fan zone underwent an ethnomarketing study. (Badot & al., 2009), which yielded around ten hours of recordings of informal conversations, several dozen pages of field notes and around a hundred photographs.

We also interviewed seven people involved in organizing fan zones: the Head of the Department of Cultural and Sports Activities (DIACS) at the Centre des Oeuvres Universitaires de Dakar (COUD), the Head of Sponsorship Operations for the Orange Senegal brand, a manager in the commercial department of Radiodiffusion Sénégalaise (RTS), the commercial manager of the Kirène group, the mayor of the commune of Ndiargui, a municipal manager in the commune of Pout and the director of a communications company responsible for the technical installation of giant screens and fan zone animation. This convenience sample reflects the heterogeneity of the population interviewed. The aim was to identify resource people and cross-reference the information obtained with that of other players in the field.

It seemed essential to us, through the interviews, to have as exhaustive a view as possible of all the types of players represented. We therefore interviewed 18 spectators we met in the fan zones. The interviews, which lasted an average of 37 minutes, were conducted face-to-face. For some spectators, it was necessary to translate the questions into Wolof. The interviews were transcribed in full and literally in order to be completely faithful to the recordings. The data processing consisted of a content analysis based on a thematic coding of the observation notes and the speeches collected from the interviewees. An inventory of the themes covered was drawn up for each interview and then for the whole, in order to structure the corpus of data (Bardin, 2007).

Results:-

Characteristics of fan zones and profile of organizers in Senegal

In Senegal, fan zones are typically set up in large public spaces such as parks or squares, often thousands of kilometers away from the venues of international sports competitions. Their architecture follows a common framework with room for variations, featuring reception areas for invited personalities, fan engagement zones, and food and merchandise stalls. Giant screens broadcast live matches, allowing supporters—seated on chairs, standing, or even sitting on the ground—to experience the event in real time.

In the absence of official Senegal Football Federation merchandise stands, street vendors take the opportunity to sell items related to the national team, including counterfeit jerseys, scarves, T-shirts, and souvenirs in team colors. The management of these fan zones involves securing a closed-off area that can accommodate thousands of supporters for free, offering a mix of cultural events, fast-food options, and social spaces for interaction and relaxation.

In rural areas, fan zone facilities are much simpler, often featuring traditional cultural activities such as tom-tom drumming. In contrast, fan zones in city centers offer more diverse entertainment, including music performances combined with fireworks after the match. For instance, the fan zone at the Renaissance Monument boasts a large stage beneath the giant screen, hosting pre-match concerts to enhance the experience. The goal is to create engaging entertainment that elevates the overall fan zone experience (Apostolopoulou, Clark & Gladden, 2006; Van Uden, 2004).

This immersive atmosphere is sometimes reinforced by dramatizing the setting, allowing spectators to feel a true sense of re-enchantment during their CAN experience (Ritzer, 1999). Some fan zones go further by offering interactive experiences, combining entertainment and activities. For example, in the Yoff village fan zone, a tea brand sponsor provided free tastings, while the Orange and Pepsi fan zones organized prize giveaways.

Despite common characteristics across Senegal, fan zones also display unique features depending on their organizers—whether commercial companies, local authorities, or public institutions—or their location, whether in the city center, suburbs, or rural areas. These variations influence the size, product offerings, services, and attractions available in each fan zone.

Experiential dressing of fan zones

Visits to several fan zones, particularly those organized by major commercial companies and those where they act as sponsors, reveal that these spaces are carefully decorated with themed settings reflecting the brands involved. One key objective is to create an immersive experience through a décor that enhances football consumption.

The selection of fan zone locations plays a crucial role in shaping this experiential atmosphere. For instance, spectators at the western Corniche fan zone enjoyed the refreshing sea breeze as they gathered, while others experienced the match broadcasts at the foot of the Monument de la Renaissance, one of Dakar's most iconic tourist landmarks.

The physical characteristics of the setting and the surrounding atmosphere serve as key attributes that shape the spectators' experience (Petr, 2002). This is evident in the spatial design of the venues, which often follow a specific theme (Hetzl, 2002). A notable example is the fan zone on the Corniche Ouest, where even nearby bus stops were transformed into a football-themed camp (Fig. 1), reinforcing the immersive and festive nature of the event.

Figure 1:- Bus stop in Dakar’s Corniche Ouest fan zone.



Source: Fall and Gassama, 2022

According to the head of sponsorship for the Orange brand, the fan zones are decorated in such a way as to give these areas an identity and visual coherence (fig. 2). This system (covering, entrance arch, partition covering, giant screen covering, etc.) is common to all the “Orange Villages.” Theatricalization and staging through extensive work on the décor, i.e., the design of the environment and the atmosphere of the fan zone, are one of the methods used by commercial companies to co-produce experiences with consumers (Carù and Cova, 2006).

Figure 2:- Orange brand fan zone décor.



Source: Instagram Page of Orange, Senegal

Three main categories of organizers have been identified: commercial enterprises (including the media), public institutions and local authorities. It is a matter of knowing the issues that underlie their willingness to set up fan zones.

Business issues in the area

Some sponsors of Senegal's national football team go beyond financial support—particularly in terms of sponsorship rights—by adopting strategies that promote large-scale public gatherings during events like HOM or the Africa Cup of Nations (CAN). This is the case for brands such as Orange, which has set up a fan zone in the suburbs of Dakar, as well as RTS and Groupe Kirène.

One of the key advantages of fan zones is their effectiveness in fostering direct engagement between companies and their audiences in a memorable and meaningful way. By creating dedicated spaces, organizers provide opportunities for fans to interact with brand representatives who distribute promotional items and products. This direct interaction strengthens the connection between the brand and supporters.

As Orange's Sales Director explains: The Orange fan zone is a gathering place for football enthusiasts, where they can fully immerse themselves in the excitement of the competition. Spectators will not only be able to watch the matches but also enjoy exclusive CAN offers, including Lions jerseys, Megawin promotions, and Orange Money services, to name a few. The fan zone contributes to the festive atmosphere and enhances the overall experience for football fans during the tournament. Customers in Orange fan zones will also benefit from special deals available exclusively during this period. With several thousand supporters and spectators, these fan zones also give great visibility to brands that position themselves as sponsors and partners of the organizers. They represent very important marketing opportunities for companies given the many interactions that take place there, maximizing experiences and how fans can interact with brands and other renowned players, especially with stars of the show biz. In this context, the celebration areas represent an opportunity to take advantage of to animate its community and communicate with its prospects and customers.

The media have now all understood the economic interest of these areas, which is why RTS wanted to organize at least one fan zone in each of the 46 departments of Senegal, on the occasion of CAN 2022. Because, according to an RTS official: "It is essential that everyone across the country can feel connected and be part of the event. And it's important to have places where people can come together to watch the games." However, behind this desire to satisfy a public service mission that aims to reach the maximum number of Senegalese, hides a real commercial operation with economic objectives. First, because the RTS went to get many sponsors, then it wanted to put its veto on the organization of the fan zone by other structures under the pretext that it has the exclusive signal for the retransmission of CAN games and, Finally, any organizer who would like to set up a fan zone in Senegal will have to pay him the sum of ten million CFA francs (about 15 250 euros). This initiative is also criticized by some Senegalese supporters who believe that RTS as a public channel in Senegal must allow any structure wishing to organize a fan zone to do so, because it is thanks to the money of the Senegalese taxpayer that RTS was able to buy the signal to the African Football Confederation to have the exclusivity of the retransmission of the matches."

Fan zones: the marketing Ambushers' landmark

It must be acknowledged that some organizing companies, as well as sponsors associated with them, use fan zones as a strategic means to bypass the exclusivity clauses in sports partnership contracts. For instance, the FSF's (Senegalese Football Federation) official marketing partners are the only entities allowed to associate their brands with the national football team, including its logos and other distinctive symbols. This exclusivity effectively blocks competing brands from partnering with the Senegalese "Lions" during the CAN—unless they leverage fan zones to gain visibility.

Exclusivity contracts in the sports sector leave no room for competitors unless they engage in what is known as ambush marketing, a tactic used to circumvent sponsorship restrictions. Mazodier, Chandon, and Quester (2009:3) define ambush marketing as "any form of communication undertaken before or during an event, using elements characteristic of that event and leading to the belief that the brand is a sponsor, in order to improve attitudes towards that brand and its awareness." Similarly, Fuchs (2009) describes it as a marketing communication technique in which a brand, product, or institution deliberately and unilaterally associates itself with an event—or related elements—without official sponsorship rights.

In practice, ambush marketing aims to occupy all unclaimed spaces left by official partners. It can take different forms, such as purchasing advertising space near event sites, launching campaigns that indirectly reference the event through visuals, slogans, or colors, or sponsoring smaller-scale activities that evoke the main competition. In this context, fan zones become a valuable tool for competing brands. For example, Free (a competitor of Orange) partners with RTS in the fan zones of the West Corniche and the Monument de la Renaissance, while Wave sponsors' activities in the fan zone at COUD.

The objective is to take advantage of the event's notoriety to promote its own brand or products and services, while avoiding the costs associated with official sponsorship. Because, "the cost of organizing and animating a fan zone is much lower than the sponsorship fees" (according to a marketing manager). This technique is controversial, as it may seem opportunistic or disloyal to official sponsors. At the same time, its wild character imposes a certain form of creativity that is interesting to analyze. Especially since, if properly conducted, the ambush marketing campaign can be very effective.

General government

Public administrations also play a role in organizing fan zones for citizens. A notable example is the Centre for Social Work at Cheikh Anta Diop University (UCAD), one of the largest public higher education institutions in West Africa, with nearly 80,000 students. Around 50,000 of these students reside in various social campuses, all located in the Fann District.

To engage this large student population, the "Centre des Œuvres Universitaires de Dakar" (COUD), through its Department of Cultural and Sporting Activities (DACs), regularly organizes cultural and sports events. In this framework, concerts and live screenings of football matches are frequently held within the social campus (fig. 3).

Figure 3:- The fan zone of the Centre for Social Work at Cheikh Anta Diop University.



Source: Fall and Gassama, 2022

During major football events like the World Cup and the CAN, COUD establishes multiple fan zones, often referred to as "villages de la CAN" or "village de la CDM." According to the head of DACs: "During the Last CAN in 2022,

we set up several fan zones. On the main campus alone, we had three giant screens—one at the Girls' City, one at the FASTEFCampus, and another at the École Supérieure Polytechnique. In total, we had six fan zones”.

Behind the establishment of these fan zones, the COUD intends to satisfy the need of thousands of young football-loving students for supporters of their national team. According to the head of DACS, “Students need to experience these events very closely. However, the television rooms of the social campus are too small to accommodate nearly fifty thousand students. That is why, over the last three to four years, we have created what we call ‘CAN villages’ and ‘HOM villages’ for these sporting events.” He also admits that the “fan villages” created during the CAN or the CDM, just like the classics of the European football championships, contribute to “soothing the social climate” within a social campus that is regularly singled out for recurring violence between groups of students affiliated with political parties.

With tens of thousands of students creating outbursts of emotion during the games, these “fan villages” offer a “stadium atmosphere” that attracts many residents from surrounding neighborhoods. This atmosphere has also attracted sponsors who wish to join the COUD. These are commercial brands such as Wave, Soboa, Nescafé, Seo mineral water, Good Rade and the TV channel 2STV that regularly accompany the DACS. For CAN 2022, it was Wave, a competitor of the Orange brand in the money transfer market, who paid the ten million fees to RTS and took over the rental of tarpaulins. Wave also distributed lots of products to viewers. In the village, “All financial transactions were done with Wave, the many merchants who had settled on campus only had to accept payments with the Wave application” (head of DACS).

Local authorities at the heart of celebration areas

It is important to remember that local authorities are legally distinct entities from the state, possessing their own legal personality and responsibility for addressing the interests of their local populations. Their motivations for organizing fan zones vary, including fostering social cohesion, providing residents with a unique communal experience, and stimulating economic activity.

• Create Social Connection and a Sense of Community

In local authorities, fan zones are times when men, women, children and adults, even the elderly, come to watch the games. “In our community, fan zones create a great sense of pride for the inhabitants” (a municipal representative from the municipality of Pout). And that pride only increases when you experience this exceptional competition with your family and friends. The fan zones would therefore be an opportunity to bring together the entire population, which would promote communion and strengthen the sense of community. For the mayor of Thialgui, “It is essential that everyone throughout the Commune can feel connected and be part of the celebration. Having places where people can come together to watch the games really strengthens social ties and provides a wonderful experience for all.” Thus, the mobilization, the popular enthusiasm around the sporting event, the desire to federate the population, to “include” it at the party participate issues that support the organization of fan zones in these rural municipalities. Moreover, these events often have an audience far beyond the locality: “Not only the Inhabitants of Thialgui are there, but other people come from villages and hamlets also make the trip” (the mayor of Thialgui).

• Have a Social Experience in the Celebration

The fan zones provide a unique and memorable experience of experiencing CAN or CDM football in local communities. And, as in these rural areas, the occasions to share festive moments of major sporting events are not so frequent, it is worth taking advantage of them to go together to support the national team,” according to the municipal representative of the municipality of Pout. Sporting events are better when they are shared, and fan zones will allow entire families and groups of friends to celebrate their team’s success and share their pride in seeing the Senegalese team progress in the competition. The festive dimension of the fan zones that comes from the possibility to organize animations that allow the territorial community to live, on the occasion of the CAN or the football CDM, “a unique opportunity to participate and experience the event”. This festive animation invites the population to “come well before the match.”

• Economic Dimension

The festive dimension of fan zones is often backed by business meetings. Indeed, even if it is less present in rural areas, the economic dimension of fan zones is often mentioned by our respondents. It is an opportunity for street vendors to sell their goods consisting mainly of counterfeit products from the national football team: jerseys, cloaks,

armbands, caps. According to a salesman, “everyone who comes here would like to have a jersey, a bracelet or a flag. This allows us to sell our goods.”

It is also worth noting that many local artisans are capitalizing on the “World Cup” or “CAN” events by customizing their products in the colors of the national flag. As one designer puts it, “Any item that is green-yellow-red is sellable.” This economic aspect is further enhanced by the cultural dimension, as rural celebration areas provide a platform for local cultural expressions, typically through traditional dance performances to the rhythm of tam-tams, allowing artisans to showcase their talents and celebrate the community’s best.

Fanzones, places of emotional consumption

Some authors argue that the sports fan is a customer for whom the sporting spectacle must be designed as an experience, one that fulfills their desires in order to encourage consumption (Desbordes, 2012). Gentile, Spiller & Noci (2007:397) define “customer experience” as “a set of interactions between the customer and a product, business, or part of their organization. This experience is strictly personal and involves the client’s participation in different new (rational, emotional, sensory, physical, and spiritual) aspects.” Consequently, the concept of customer experience includes the notion of spectator experience, which refers to all the emotions and feelings felt by a viewer before, during, and after the football match (Helleu, 2023). Various factors contribute to shaping the fan experience: animation and entertainment, social interactions, co-creation of experiences by fans, and the influence of social networks.

• Entertainment

By offering entertainment such as live music, activities, and food and drink stalls, fan zones provide viewers with an opportunity to enhance their experience, creating a level of excitement that wouldn’t be present if they stayed at home. Pre-match animations boost the stimulation for spectators, allowing them to “wait with enthusiasm and share moments with other spectators, with artists performing live” (Arame). Like other sports services, fan zones seem to incorporate an experiential dimension that evokes emotion (Desbordes, Ohl, and Tribou, 2004).

In the same vein, marketing activation techniques through brand communication serves not only as a means for sponsors to promote their products and services during the event but also to evoke unforgettable and exceptional emotions for the most dedicated fans.

• Shared social experience

The celebration area is a space of diversity, bringing together various segments of the public: locals and tourists, supporters, families, and friends, all of whom contribute significantly to the social acceptance of the event. As Lamine shares, “Watching the games in a fan zone with my friends makes me feel like I’m at the stadium with other fans. I can feel the energy and dynamism of the players more.” He admits that he prefers to go to the fan zones because “when Senegal wins, the atmosphere is better.” The desire for social interaction is often cited as a reason for visiting fan zones, highlighting the tribal aspect it can represent for certain fans. “We’re a group of friends who come here to watch the games. We always come together. We even met others and ended up bonding—there’s a lot of energy” (a supporter).

Literature shows that entertainment experiences have a strong social dimension. While the consumer enjoys individual pleasure from the experience, sharing that experience is equally important (Pulh, Bourgeon-Renault, and Bouchet, 2005). Social interactions occur not only between fans but also between fans and the contact staff of companies involved in brand activation. “The games organized by sponsors, like the pre-match quizzes, allow many people to participate, win prizes, and have fun” (a spectator).

• Social Media

It is also important to highlight the role of social networks and digital platforms in the way sports shows are consumed in fan zones. In these spaces, viewers often generate photo and video content, which is typically shared immediately on social media (Helleu, 2023). The exceptional emotional atmosphere of these zones encourages supporters to archive their experiences across various digital platforms, often proudly displaying the message, “For those who are not here, I am here.” Sharing these images on social networks not only attracts more viewers but also draws in influencers who eagerly adopt the “fan-zone” mode. This phenomenon underscores the importance of considering the experience of others. By creating a memorable fan experience, fan zones help ensure that the event stays in the minds of attendees for weeks, months, or even years.

• Supporters, Co-Builders of the Spectator Experience

The creation of an experiential environment through the decoration of football match venues enhances the emotional experience for spectators in fan zones. Furthermore, national television channels such as RTS and Télévision Futur Media (TFM) broadcast these emotionally charged moments to their audiences. Beyond the efforts of organizers who carefully design and stage the fan zones, and the involvement of partners and social media that spread and amplify these experiences, it is essential to recognize the role of the spectators themselves in generating these experiences. As Theodorakis (2014) suggests, spectators are key to co-constructing the atmosphere and experiences within the fan zones. Indeed, in any form of consumption, the consumer actively participates in the creation of their own experiences (Benavent and Evrard, 2002; Petr, 2002). The spectator often plays a dual role as both an actor and a producer of their experience (Cova and Dalli, 2010).

Recommendations to Address Constraints and Challenges:-

Although fan zones are a powerful tool for providing entertainment, welcoming more fans, and injecting dynamism into local areas, they present significant challenges for some organizers who have chosen to implement the concept.

Firstly, there is the financial challenge, as the cost of renting giant screens (around 300,000 CFA francs, or approximately 450 euros per day) and the fees (about ten million CFA francs) charged by RTS, which holds the exclusive broadcasting rights for matches in Senegal, can be a major burden. As a result, organizers often seek partnerships with commercial companies to sponsor these fan zones. However, care must be taken to avoid the phenomenon of ambush marketing, which has increased alongside the rise of fan zones. This trend requires organizers to be more vigilant and increase both marketing and organizational efforts to manage these spaces effectively.

Another challenge is technical, especially for local authorities that maybe underprepared or lack of experience in managing large crowds over extended periods. When a local authority cannot handle the full responsibility of organizing a fan zone with its own staff, it must rely on external service providers for specific tasks, such as communication agencies, rental of barriers, giant screens, tents, and electrical setups. By outsourcing, the municipality of Thiangu, for instance, delegates all or part of the fan zone organization to a communication agency.

Lastly, organizers must also address the ecological challenge presented by these large gathering spaces. With the considerable amount of waste generated in fan zones, it is essential for organizers to ensure that the cleanliness of the venues plays a significant role in shaping the overall experience for visitors, contributing to a positive and lasting impression. Existing waste management systems will need to be enhanced to guarantee a consistent presence of cleaning teams dedicated to maintaining the space. During the event, the cleaning teams should be strategically deployed, focusing on the most frequented areas, and collaborating closely with various stakeholders, particularly food vendors, to help reduce waste production at the source. By working together, it will be possible to minimize the environmental impact while enhancing the overall fan experience.

Conclusion:-

The fan zones, in their diversity and widespread presence across the country, align with the broader goal of offering the public immersive experiences in consuming sports content while fostering a sense of national identity. For local authorities and public administrations, the primary goal is to create accessible, festive spaces for communities to gather and enjoy live football matches for free, all while promoting national cohesion. These spaces also serve as a platform for local officials to demonstrate their dynamism, using the event to enhance their political visibility by associating with the positive values of sport.

For commercial companies, fan zones are more than just places of gathering; they are marketing tools driven by mercantile interests. These zones are often seen through the lens of the spectacle, as they are carefully staged to enhance the audience's experience and reinforce the brands involved. The co-construction of these spaces, involving both sponsors and fans, creates a complex, dynamic atmosphere marked by entertainment, branding, and a sense of participation. In this sense, fan zones are carefully orchestrated environments designed to serve both social and economic objectives, with clear goals of profit generation alongside community engagement.

However, despite their social and cultural value, fan zones require substantial financial investment and technical expertise. These challenges, coupled with the logistical demands of organizing such large-scale public events, are

significant considerations for the organizers. While they contribute to local animation and foster social cohesion, the economic costs and the expertise needed to manage these spaces should not be underestimated. The successful operation of fan zones hinges on effective collaboration between public authorities, commercial sponsors, and the community to ensure a balanced, sustainable model.

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