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The sport, vector of regionalization / globalization Case study: International Volleyball Federation (FIVB)

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Abstract: The present study aims at highlighting some of the defining aspects of how sport, in this case the volleyball represented by the Federation International Volleyball (FIVB) plays a decisive role in shaping and substantiating the concepts of globalization and regionalization. In this respect, two essential aspects were analyzed, one on the institutional organization of volleyball as a sport and the other on global competitions.

Keywords: globalization, regionalization, volleyball, sports, sports organizations

Introduction

Since ancient times, sport played an essential role in the crystallization of inter-human relations and in the definition of regional and global issues. The overall character of the sports competitions organized in honor of the Gods Zeus, Appolo, Poseidon, etc., derives from the selection of competitors, as the leading representatives of the Greek cities, while the regional character was conceived with the victory of a single participant as a representative of a city. At present, sport through its structure

and organization is becoming increasingly prominent as a vector in consolidating regional and global issues.

Globalization and regionalization are two complex and controversial concepts that transcend from the very nature of the human being and have evolved constantly over time. It is enough to recall the confrontations between the global aspirations of great leaders to unite all nations under the same banner under the same leadership, the same state and the regional ones represented by local leaders who opposed this desideratum. Virtually the entire history of humanity has been marked by this struggle between the global and the regional, but it seems that this phenomenon has never been as visible as it is today. A contribution to this is achieved by the technological advances achieved in the last period of time and the social mutations occurring on them (Appadurai, 1996; Giddens, 2018; Herman et al., 2017; Levitt, 1993; Robertson, 1992).

"Globalization and regionalization are two complementary concepts that cannot exist independently. Both concepts reflect an economic, political, social and cultural phenomenon. The difference between the two concepts lies in the coverage space" (Herman et al., 2016, p. 50). The idea of regionalization was circulated for the first time in the European Parliament Resolution of 18 November 1988. The principles of the regionalization process were laid down in the "Community Mapping of Regionalization". Against this backdrop, in Europe "regions" have been created "as a spatial or territorial level for the implementation of regional policies and their respective programs and as a condition for access to resources" (Cândeia et al., 2006, p. 58).

As a result of this, we can say that globalization is an economic, political, social and cultural phenomenon characterized by a spatial expansion in the whole of the earth globe (Baylis and Smith, 2001; Held et al., 1999; Holm and Sorensen, 1995; Indra, 2016; Rodhan, 2006). Regions are structural units of the global system that define a certain area from an economic, political, social and cultural point of view. Regionalization is the process of fragmentation into structural units of different types and dimensions according to certain economic, political, social and cultural particularities (Clark, 1997; Herman and Grama, 2018; Indra, 2016; Kacowicz, 1999). Therefore, we can not talk about globalization in the absence of regionalization, of dividing the whole into its structural parts, with a role in the proper functioning of the global system. Just as the world is made up of people and their occupations, so globalization is made up of regions and their peculiarities. Moreover, it can be noticed that there is a growing trend in the world in adopting a new system of organization at global level, it is the complex system of international relations that currently stands and which is in a continues spatial-functional evolution. This trend somehow prefigures the transition from the national states to the single global state (a single state, a single management, a command center with multiple regional execution centers).

In this context we can emphasize that sport, through its structure, organization and way of development, contributes to the assertion of regionalization (Bale, 1986; Ghena, 2015; Henry et al., 2003; Ming, 2006; Higham and Hinch, 2009; Miller et al., 2001; Giulianotti and Robertson, 2007; Lechner, 2009; Andreff, 2008).

Against this backdrop, the present study aims to emphasize the role of the vector of sport in strengthening the globalization / regionalization concepts as distinct and complementary elements at the same time.

Working methodology

In order to highlight the role played by sport, namely the volcano in the crystallization and the definition of the concepts of regionalization-globalization, a research focused on two supporting pillars was carried out: the organizational structures, regarded as associative-restrictive entities on the one hand, and profile competitions, analyzed from the perspective of their role as an organizational framework in which the activity of organizational structures takes place, on the other. Organizational structures and related competitions have been analyzed from a structural, temporal and spatial point of view.

The database was composed of textual information (names of continents, competitions, confederations, federations, hidronyms, etc.), graphs (shape files, graphs) and numerals (Baiaș et al., 2010; Grama et al., 2016; Ilieș et al., 2014, 2016, 2017; Romocea et al., 2018; Szabo-Alexi et al., 2016; Tătar et al., 2018a,b). In the development of the analytical charts on the International Volleyball Federation structure and the International World League competitions, the World Grand Prix used as the background map the "World Topographic map" over which were overlaid textual, numerical and shapefile information (line and polygon) (figures 1, 3, 4). Their processing was done in ArcMap Version 10.6.

Organizational structures

The organizational structures, together with the competitions organized within and under them, are an important pillar in shaping and consolidating global and regional identity elements. "The international organizations are superior forms of association between states on the basis of a common agreement of cooperation (status, pact, charter, convention) in order to achieve specific objectives through a judicious, continuous and steady coordination of the resources and actions of the Member States" (Herman et al., 2016, p. 49). From an organizational point of view, volleyball is represented globally by the International Volleyball Federation (FIVB), while at the regional level it is represented by five Asian Volleyball Confederation, the South American Volleyball Confederation and the Norceca Volleyball Confederation) and 222 federations (figures 1, 2).

The International Volleyball Federation (FIVB) was founded in 1947 by representatives of 14 founding countries, namely Belgium, Brazil, Czechoslovakia, Egypt, France, the Netherlands, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Uruguay, The US and Yugoslavia. The first world volleyball championships were held in 1949 for men and 1952 for women. Since then, FIVB has constantly evolved both qualitatively and quantitatively. Qualitative aspects are related to the planning and organization of sporting events, the involvement of the society in the sport life, the development of the game and the achieved performances, etc., while the quantitative ones are related to the number of participants and organized sporting events, etc.

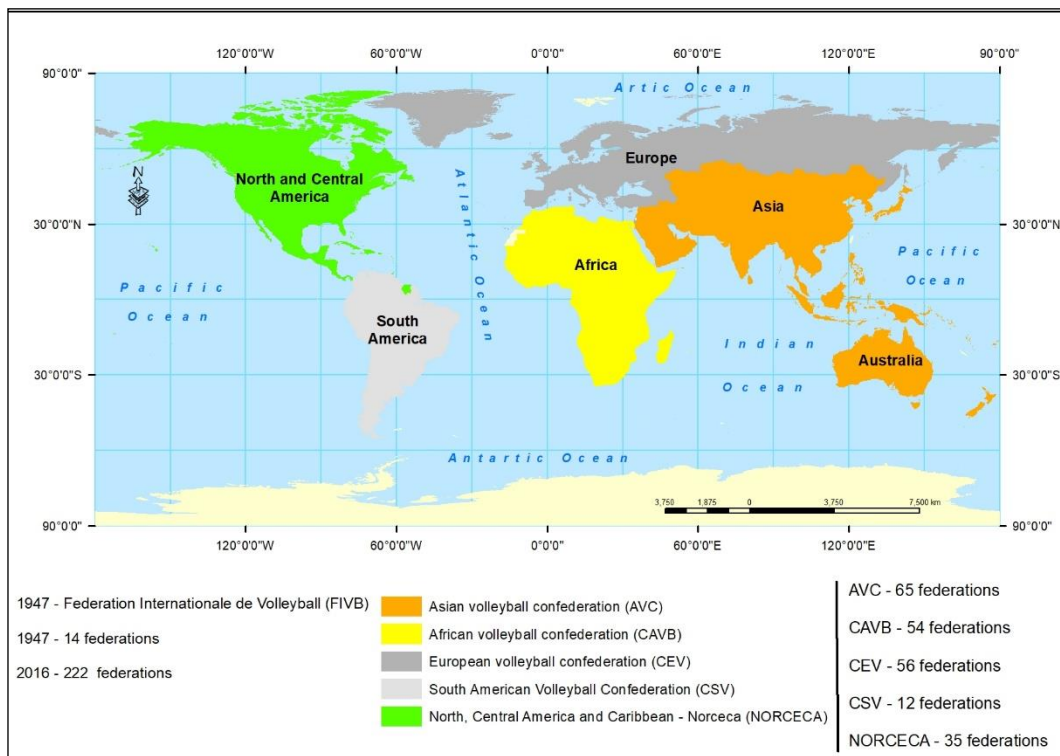


Figura 1. Federation Internationale de Volleyball
Source: Federation Internationale de Volleyball (FIVB) ¹

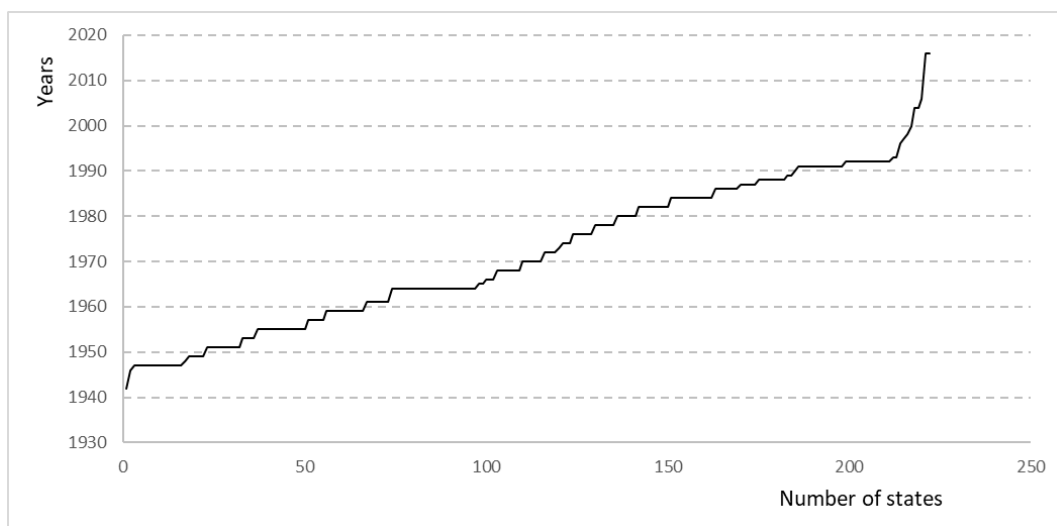


Figura 2. The evolution of the number of states adhering to the FIVB
Source: Federation Internationale de Volleyball (FIVB) ²

¹ <http://www.fivb.org/EN/FIVB/ListFederations.asp>

² <http://www.fivb.org/EN/FIVB/ListFederations.asp>

The temporal analysis of the states that joined the FIVB indicates the existence of a relatively steady ascendant trend, defined by the existence of the highest accession peaks, as was the case with the 1964 accession of 24 states and a minimum adherence period for the years 2000 - 2018 when only six states joined. The last states that joined the FIVB were Kosovo and South Sudan in 2016 (figure 2). Therefore, at present the FIVB, through its spatial and relational dimension, FIVB is a sporting organization with global leadership.

Global competitions

Global competitions, through form of organization and representation, represent the second pillar with a defining role in the crystallization of the concepts of regionalization / globalization. Among the most representative sporting events organized under the auspices of FIVB we mention: Annual events (World League, World Grand Prix, Club World Championships), quadrennial events, senior (Women's World Championship, Men's World Cup, Women's World Cup, Men's World Grand Champions Cup, Women's World Grand Champions Cup and Olympic Games), biennial events, age-group categories (Men's U23 World Championship Open, Men's U21 World Championship, Women's U20 World Championship, Girls' U18 World) and the Quadrennial event, youth (Youth Olympic Games).³

Each of the aforementioned competitions is defined by a series of peculiarities, of which the importance of the concept of regionalization / globalization is presented in terms of organization and representation.

For example, the FIVB Volleyball World League is a global sporting event, reached the 28th edition. In the year 2017, the World League took place in Brazil between June 2 and July 8, with 36 federal federations representing the confederations of which they are: Asian Volleyball Confederation (8 federations, 22%), African Volleyball Confederation 2 federations, 6%), European Volleyball Confederation (22 federations, 56%), South American Volleyball Confederation (3 federations, 8%) and Norceca Volleyball Confederation (3 federations, 8%) (figure 3).

Another example is the FIVB Volleyball World Grand Prix, the global sports event, reached the 25th edition. In the year 2017, the World Grand Prix took place in China from 7 July to 6 August, with 32 federal federations representing the confederations of which they are part: the Asian Volleyball Confederation (6 federations, 19%), the African Volleyball Confederation (2 federations, 6%), the European Volleyball Confederation (13 federations, 40%), the South American Volleyball Confederation (5 federations, 16%) and the Norceca Volleyball Confederation (6 federations, 16%) (figure 4).

³ <http://www.fivb.org/EN/Volleyball/Archives.asp>

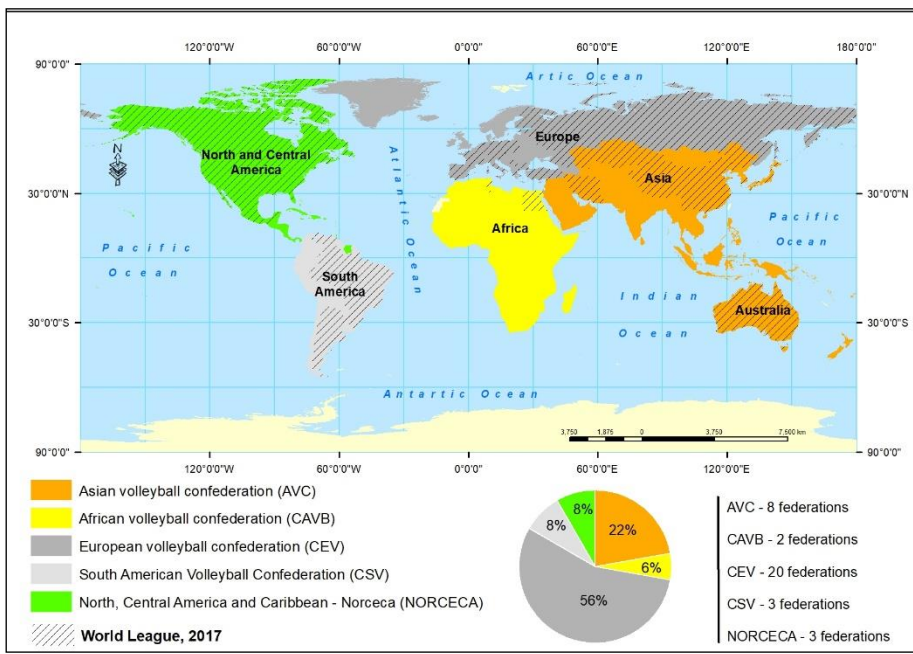


Figura 3. World League
 Source: Federation Internationale de Volleyball (FIVB) ⁴

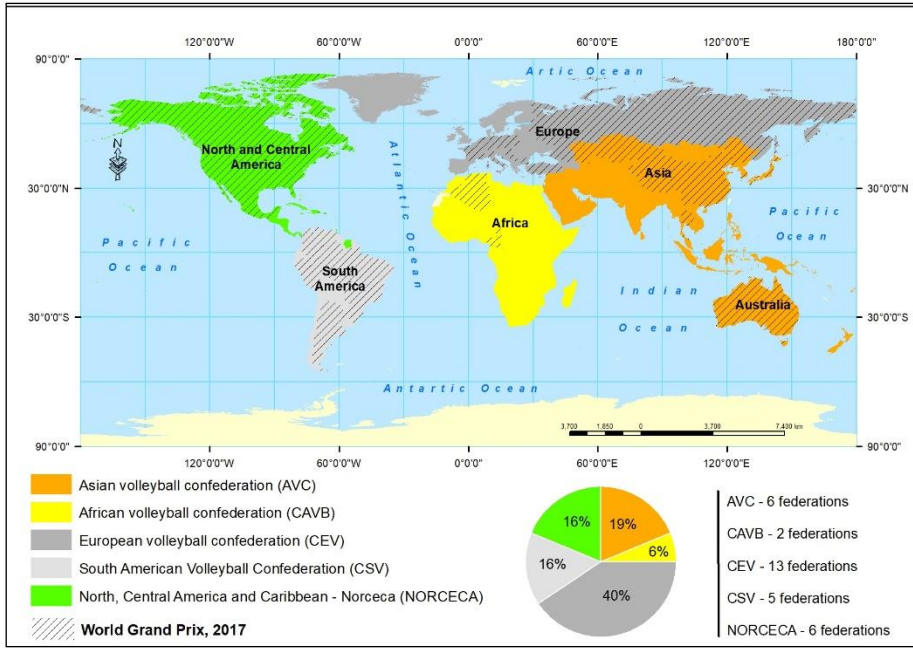


Figura 4. World Grand Prix
 Source: Federation Internationale de Volleyball (FIVB) ⁵

⁴ <http://worldleague.2017.fivb.com/en>
⁵ <http://worldgrandprix.2017.fivb.com/>

Conclusions

In conclusion, we can say that the International Volleyball Federation (FIVB), through the form of organization (in confederations and federations) and the area of representation, is a decisive vector in promoting the concepts of regionalization / globalization. The competition for the first places (places I, II and III) is a global one, with all participating federations aspiring to these positions in the ranking. The positioning of federations (states) on a certain level in the ranking is related to the individualization of that federation, thus emphasizing the concept of regionalization as an integral part of the larger concept of globalization. Each federation represents, indirectly, a state a region. Confederations are an intermediary link between federations and the International Volleyball Federation (FIVB). All together aim to "develop Volleyball as a major world media and entertainment sport through world-class planning and organization of competitions, marketing and development activities".⁶

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⁶ <http://www.fivb.org/EN/FIVB/>

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