

SPORTS AND GLOBALIZATION

During the 20th century, sports have become increasingly international and increasingly politicized, as shown in the boycott of the 1980 Moscow games by Western nations and the retaliatory boycott of the 1984 Los Angeles games by Soviet-bloc nations, an exchange brought on by Soviet actions in Afghanistan.

Individual countries during the recent past have boycotted sport events or used them for propaganda reasons and thus, imposed their political views affecting the global scene. Due to the world's interest in sport, the power to influence the public becomes a huge issue. By the late 20th century, the televising of athletic events had made sports big business. On the other hand, expanding public concern with personal physical health led to mass participation, not necessarily competitive, in sports like running, hiking, cycling, martial arts, and gymnastics.

Economic integration and free trade have and surely will, continue to affect the sports and fitness industry in the future. Countries use sports either to impose their economic power over others, or to elevate their current role. Due to sport's great costs, countries' governments engage themselves in promoting and supporting these economic needs by authorising special public monetary programs or by seeking private financing. Corporate sponsorships are today a reality, as companies spend about \$6 billion annually sponsoring activities ranging from the Olympic Games to the World Cup.

Living today in the information age, with amazing revolutions in technology and communication, sport experts believe that sport is greatly influenced by the actions of individual nations, as well as by the international trends that influence the world economy. The sport and fitness industries, as part of our Global Society, have become lately an issue of great concern. Studies worldwide provide valuable information about the political, geographical, economic, cultural, social, aesthetic and historical aspects of sports and it is firmly believed that they will continue 'shaping' one another in the years to come.