

The Professionalization of the International Olympic Committee Administration

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ABSTRACT: After being founded in Paris in 1894, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) moved its headquarters to Lausanne, Switzerland, in 1915. It hired its first staff member in the 1920s and continued to operate with just two or three employees until the mid-1960s, even though the Olympic Games had grown substantially. Indeed, the IOC still had only about twenty staff members when John MacAloon first visited its headquarters in the mid-1970s. It now employs more than 700 people from seventy-one nationalities, making it one of the world's largest and well-known NGOs. This chapter traces the IOC Administration's rise from its humble beginnings to the present day. It shows how, under successive presidents and heads of administration, the IOC has followed four stages of the process of professionalization described in the sport management literature.

KEYWORDS: IOC President, Lausanne, IOC Executive Board, managerialism, IOC governance

The origins of the modern Olympic Games and the role played by the French aristocrat Pierre de Coubertin was an audacious choice of PhD subject for a young anthropologist in the early 1970s. After taking this decision, John J. MacAloon naturally made his way to the Swiss city of Lausanne so he could meet the International Olympic Committee's (IOC) staff and consult its archives. He went on to spend most of the summers of 1975 and 1977 in Lausanne, while also finding time in the

summer of 1976 to attend the Games of the XXI Olympiad in Montreal (as did the author, although he had not yet met John).¹ MacAloon's doctoral dissertation, published in 1981 as *This Great Symbol: Pierre de Coubertin and the Origins of the Modern Olympic Games*, remains a foundational work in the field of Olympic studies.²

When the young MacAloon, who was an athlete as well as a scholar, first visited Lausanne in the mid-1970s, he found the IOC to be a sort of “gentlemen’s club” that had changed little from the organization Coubertin had founded eighty-four years earlier.³ It was administered by a twenty-person “Secretariat” under the baton of a Frenchwoman, Monique Berlioux. Nevertheless, this club and its Secretariat supervised what had become the world’s largest media event—the Olympic Games. The IOC’s administrative office expanded enormously during the 1980s, under Juan Antonio Samaranch’s presidency, and played a major role in implementing in 1999 a package of major reforms to the organization’s governance, which MacAloon helped shape.⁴ The IOC Administration currently (end 2021) employs more than 700 staff from seventy-one nationalities (see note 62), not including the many people who work for Olympic Broadcasting Services (OBS SL), a Madrid-based limited company (SL) set up under Spanish law by the IOC in 2003. The Administration became increasingly professionalized during the twentieth century and this process continues to this day.

In contrast to the widely researched history of the IOC and its presidents, much less is known about its Administration, even though it began playing such a large role in Olympic affairs in the 1950s that some IOC members, including the IOC president, then based in Chicago, Avery Brundage, became resentful of its influence. This article pays homage to John J. MacAloon by retracing the growth and professionalization of the IOC Administration, which MacAloon visited frequently from the mid-1970s onward and from which he learned a lot, according to him, especially at the turn of the century when he was a member of the IOC 2000 commission and thereafter as a member of the Olympic Museum Research Council and a frequent guest lecturer at the International Olympic Academy and Olympic meetings.⁵

The first section below covers the period from the IOC’s creation in 1894 to the mid-1960s, when the IOC’s administrative office was still very rudimentary and run by just two or three people at the service of an Executive Board created in 1921 and elected by the membership. The second section describes the IOC’s Secretariat from the mid-1960s to the early 1980s, while the following section looks at how the Administration, as the Secretariat was now known, evolved under the presidencies of Juan Antonio Samaranch (1980–2001) and Jacques Rogge (2001–2013). During this time, its staff increased to the point where it greatly exceeded the number of IOC members (limited to 115 as of 1999). The fourth section presents the Administration under the IOC’s current president, Thomas Bach (2013–2025). I conclude by

showing that the evolution of the IOC Administration followed four stages of sport federation professionalization described by Bayle as well as Nagel and colleagues: (1) structuring the headquarters/administration; (2) introducing specialized functions; (3) hiring coordinators and senior managers; (4) generalizing the managerial approach.⁶ My analysis combines information gleaned from the academic literature and IOC documents with my long experience of the Olympic system, gained as a member of the Administration from 1982 to 1987 (as Head of IT), during its early expansion, and as an observer of more than twenty Summer, Winter, and Youth Olympic Games since Munich 1972, many of which MacAloon also attended. In addition, interviews were conducted with two long-time staff members (one junior, one senior).

A Nascent Administration (1894–1965)

As MacAloon described so well, Pierre de Coubertin was the prime mover behind the revival of the Olympic Games.⁷ After first proposing the idea in 1892, Coubertin put it into effect two years later, after a congress in Paris that he had presented as a discussion of amateurism and athlete eligibility rules for sport events, which were becoming ever more popular. As congress chair (“commissaire”), he sent out the invitations, drew up the program, and had it printed. The congress unanimously agreed to “revive” the Games “on a basis suited to the conditions of modern life” and to set up an International Olympic Games Committee (quickly renamed the International Olympic Committee) to select a host city every four years.⁸ Dimítrios Vikelas, a Greek writer, was elected its first president; Coubertin was appointed secretary general. The congress awarded the first two Olympic Games to Athens (1896) and Paris (1900). Coubertin appointed thirteen of his acquaintances (mostly from Europe) as the first IOC members.

In accordance with the IOC’s statutes, Coubertin became IOC president following the Athens Olympics and remained president for a quarter century, until 1925, in complete disregard for these same statutes. During this time, he administered the IOC more-or-less on his own, at his own expense, either from his Paris home, at 20 rue Oudinot and then 10 rue Flandrin, or from hotel rooms, when he was away from the French capital. In fact, he traveled frequently across Europe and often stayed in Lausanne, where he set up the IOC’s headquarters in 1915 without consulting any of his colleagues except Godefroy de Blonay, the only Swiss IOC member.⁹ In 1901, he launched the IOC’s official magazine, the *Olympic Review*, writing most of the articles himself. Nevertheless, he rarely used a typewriter: In his description of the minimalist conditions in which he administered the IOC, he went as far as to deride the “unsupportable yoke of typing pedantry” (which would have required hiring a typist).¹⁰ Unsurprisingly, therefore, nearly all of Coubertin’s

papers (correspondence and speeches), now split between numerous archives, are handwritten.

Coubertin ran the IOC's day-to-day affairs on his own, even though he could have asked for help from the committee's official secretary, Eugenio Brunetta d'Usseaux, and treasurer, Ernest Callot. As well as carrying out tasks such as taking minutes and dealing with correspondence, Coubertin funded the IOC's expenditure, except for members' expenses during annual meetings. Members paid an annual fee of twenty-five French francs, twenty francs of which was used to print the *Olympic Review*.¹¹ De Blonay inherited the formal role of treasurer in 1908.

By the beginning of the 1920s, the IOC's members were becoming increasingly dissatisfied with Coubertin's autocratic management, so in June 1921, they forced him to accept the creation of an Executive Board, ostensibly to deputize for him during his planned long trips abroad, trips he never undertook. Blonay, who Coubertin saw as a potential successor, was appointed chair of the Board. The other Board members were Henri de Baillet-Latour (Belgium), who succeeded Coubertin; Siegfried Edström (Sweden), who succeeded Baillet-Latour; Jirí Guth-Jarkowsky (Czechoslovakia.); and Melchior de Polignac (France). However, when the Board held its first meeting, in Paris, Coubertin was present but Blonay was not. In fact, the two men had fallen out in part because Coubertin felt that Blonay was trying to use the Board to reform the IOC rather than to administer it. It was also Coubertin who recruited a secretary for the Board—Fred Auckenthaler, the son of a private school principal from Lausanne who had helped Coubertin organize the IOC's congress in Lausanne in 1913—although he did not give him much to do.

In 1922, Lausanne provided the IOC with permanent offices in a villa called Mon Repos, which it had just bought. Mon Repos would house the IOC's administrative office until 1968. Prior to that, from 1915 to 1922, the IOC's official address in Lausanne had been the Casino de Montbenon (also owned by the city), but the rooms there were not reserved solely for the IOC and it had been its headquarters in name only.¹² Nevertheless, the IOC has continued to use rooms in the Casino de Montbenon from time-to-time and even held most of its important meetings during the spring of 1921 at the casino. Coubertin immediately adopted Mon Repos in 1922 as his home and moved his family from Paris to an apartment on the villa's third floor. Also in 1922, the IOC's members, meeting in Paris, confirmed Lausanne as the organization's administrative headquarters, a full seven years after Coubertin's *fait accompli*. Two rooms on Mon Repos' ground floor were given over to the first Olympic Museum, which remained under Coubertin's supervision even after he had stepped down as president. The following year saw a major change in the IOC's funding when the organizing committee for the 1924 Paris Olympics agreed to pay the IOC 25,000 French francs to cover the sums it had paid out for these Games.¹³

Baillet-Latour took over from Coubertin as IOC president in 1925 and immediately appointed André Berdez as the Executive Board's (and IOC's) new secretary. The IOC moved from a "kitchen table" (under Coubertin) to a "boardroom" (under Baillet-Latour and his successors) governance design, to use the archetype taxonomy popularized by Kikulis and colleagues' foundational work for Canadian national sport organizations.¹⁴ Berdez was a very sociable local politician, reserve lieutenant colonel, and former ice hockey player from Lausanne who had trained as a lawyer, although he never practiced. Baillet-Latour lived in Brussels, but Berdez worked from Mon Repos and traveled to IOC meetings as required. During the president's absences, Berdez ensured that the IOC's work continued, occasionally drawing on (unpaid) help from the mayor of Lausanne's personal secretary and from Lydia Zanchi (née Lydie Portmann).¹⁵ Zanchi took over from Berdez when he died in 1940 following a long illness, and she remained with the IOC until 1966, becoming the Administration's "living memory." This period under Baillet-Latour's presidency is thoroughly described by Carpentier.¹⁶

After the 1936 Berlin Olympics, the IOC agreed to appoint Werner Klingeberg (Germany) to assist Berdez. Klingeberg, who was also the head of sport for the Berlin Games, traveled to Japan and Finland to support the organizing committees for the 1940 Summer Olympics, originally planned for Tokyo and then moved to Helsinki before being canceled because of World War II.¹⁷ Initially recruited as a technical advisor, Klingeberg was also given the title deputy secretary of the IOC and told that he would succeed Berdez as secretary when the time came. In 1938, publication of the *Olympic Review* was transferred to the International Olympic Institute, a Berlin-based organization headed by Carl Diem (Germany), the former general secretary of the 1936 Berlin Olympics. This move greatly increased the Nazis' influence over Olympic sport, as they turned the magazine, which included articles in French, English, and German, into a propaganda instrument with just a few pages given over to official IOC news (written by Berdez).

Although the Nazis continued to have designs on Olympic sport until their defeat at the end of World War II, their maneuvers were thwarted by Edström's appointment as acting IOC president when Baillet-Latour died suddenly in 1942. Edström ensured that Klingeberg, whom he distrusted, would not become IOC secretary by naming Lydia Zanchi as acting secretary two years after Berdez died.¹⁸ After the IOC's members confirmed his appointment in 1946, Edström continued as IOC president until 1952.

In 1946, Edström chose Otto Mayer as the new head for the IOC's administrative office. Mayer was a Lausanne jeweler with close ties to the sporting world and the brother of a local politician who had been the IOC's "chargé d'affaires" in Switzerland during World War II. He took the title "chancellor of the IOC," probably because this was the title of the civil servant at the head of the Vaud canton's

administration. Zanchi continued as his assistant. In a photograph published by Morath, the IOC's two, more-or-less unpaid employees can be seen working in the back of Mayer's jewelry store, on Place St-François in Lausanne, surrounded by Olympic files and memorabilia.¹⁹ Otto Mayer and his brother Albert (coopted as an IOC member in 1946) came to exert considerable influence over Olympic affairs.²⁰ Toward the end of the 1950s, Otto Mayer took on a second assistant to work alongside Zanchi. The young woman he chose, Myriam Meuwly, became very close to Avery Brundage (USA), who had succeeded Edström as IOC president in 1952, a relationship that resulted in her being asked to leave the IOC in 1967.²¹

The Mayer brothers' influence ended suddenly in the mid-1960s, due to Otto's resignation in 1964 following disagreements with Brundage, notably over the role of the Lausanne office,²² and Albert's sudden death in 1968. Brundage lived in Chicago, where he had his own office, run by the Swiss émigré Frederick (Fritz) Rügeseegger. During the 1964 Tokyo Olympics, Eric Jonas, another Swiss national, was appointed to replace Otto Mayer and given the title secretary general, but Brundage forced him to resign a few months later because he was worried about a possible resurgence of Lausanne's influence over the administration of the IOC.²³

Table 1 lists the main (most of them Swiss) figures involved in administering the IOC up until the mid-1960s. After the Coubertin years until 1925, the IOC Administration based in Lausanne is slightly structured, with a few employees working under an Executive Board created in 1921 with the most active IOC members and slowly growing in importance. This period corresponds to Bayle's first phase of sport organization professionalization: structuring the headquarters.

A More Structured Secretariat (1966–1985)

In 1966, Brundage replaced Jonas as secretary general with Johann Westerhoff, a retired Dutch colonel and businessman, who began strengthening and structuring what was now called the Secretariat. In 1967, he created a new post of press and public relations director and recruited Monique Berlioux (France), a former Olympic swimmer (London 1948), journalist, and press manager for France's secretary of state for sport, to fulfill the role and restore the aura of the *Olympic Review*. Despite never becoming a member of the IOC, Berlioux would be one of the organization's key figures for over twenty years. After the 1968 Mexico City Olympics, Brundage hired Arthur Takac (Yugoslavia) as technical director for relations with organizing committees and international sport federations. The following year, Brundage pressured Westerhoff into resigning as he felt he was not working hard enough.²⁴ Brundage promoted Berlioux to take over from Westerhoff at the head of the Secretariat, but she was not given the title secretary general, because Brundage felt that it had given Westerhoff delusions of grandeur. In 1971, a year before retiring from the presidency,

TABLE I. Leading Figures Involved in Administering the IOC from 1894 to 1965

IOC President	Chief Administrator	Other Key Personnel
Dimítrios Vikelas (Gre.) 1894–1896	Pierre de Coubertin (Fr.), Secretary General 1894– 1896	
Pierre de Coubertin (Fr.) 1896–1925*	Eugenio Brunetta d’Usseaux (It.), Secretary 1908–1919† Fred Auckenthaler (Swi.), Secretary 1921–1925	Ernest Callot (Fr.), Treasurer 1894–1908, then Godefroy de Blonay (Swi.)
Henri de Baillet-Latour (Bel.) 1925–1942†	André Berdez (Swi.), Secretary 1925–1940†	Lydia Zanchi (Swi.) 1925– 1946, Acting Secretary 1942–1946
Sigfrid Edström (Swed.) 1942–1952**	Otto Mayer (Swi.), Chancellor 1946–1964	Lydia Zanchi (Swi.), Secretary 1946–1966
Avery Brundage (USA) 1952–1972	Otto Mayer (Swi.), Chancellor 1946–1964	Lydia Zanchi (Swi.) 1925– 1966 Myriam Meuwly (Swi.) 1956–1960 and 1962–1967
	Eric Jonas (Swi.), Secretary General 1964–1965	

* Godefroy de Blonay (Switzerland) took over as acting president from 1915 to 1918.

**Acting president from 1942 to 1946.

Brundage finally agreed to Berlioux being given the title director of the IOC (for her title in French, Berlioux insisted on the masculine form “directeur” rather than the feminine form “directrice”). Takac left the IOC in 1973 to become technical director for the 1976 Montreal Olympics.²⁵

By 1968, the IOC had grown out of its offices in Mon Repos, so it persuaded Lausanne to provide it with new premises in the Château de Vidy, an eighteenth-century manor house on the west side of the city, beside Lake Geneva. The château, which had housed the organizing committee for the 1964 Swiss National Exhibition, would remain the IOC’s official address until the end of the twentieth century, by which time most of its offices had been moved to a neighboring building (called Olympic House). The château itself housed the president’s office until the IOC moved into its brand-new headquarters building (also called Olympic House) beside the château in 2019.

Berlioux remained director throughout Lord Killanin’s (1972–1980) presidency. Between 1976 and 1980, she increased the Secretariat’s staff from twenty-one

to twenty-seven (see table 5 at the end), recruiting mostly young women and/or people of British or French nationality. When Takac resigned, Killanin chose Sir Henry Banks (UK) to become both technical director and the head of the newly founded Olympic Solidarity, which Banks ran until he died shortly before the 1976 Montreal Olympics.²⁶ He was not replaced immediately. Killanin had an office and secretary in Dublin, where he continued to live, visiting Lausanne no more than a few times every year, generally when a Board meeting was held in the city. After suffering a heart attack in 1977, Killanin gave Berlioux a more-or-less free hand to run the IOC as she felt fit. Her authority was such that journalists sometimes referred to her as the only man among the IOC's membership, which, at the time, was exclusively male.²⁷ Marie Chevalier, another Frenchwoman, served as Berlioux's loyal and ever-present executive assistant. Although it was a politically and financially difficult period for the IOC (terrorism, boycotts, Montreal deficit, small revenues), several cities, including Monaco and Munich, tried to tempt the Secretariat away from Lausanne.

When Juan Antonio Samaranch, a Spanish politician who had become IOC member in 1966 and president of the IOC's press commission, announced his intention to stand for election as IOC president at the end of the 1970s, Berlioux gave him her support.²⁸ Samaranch's main rival was Marc Hodler (Switzerland), the president of the International Ski Federation, who lived in Bern, which was too close to Lausanne for Berlioux's liking. Samaranch also took great pains to win over the Secretariat's staff, going as far as to invite them all to dine at Lausanne's top restaurant, Girardet. After his election in 1980, Samaranch broke with the tradition set by his predecessors (except for Coubertin) and moved to Lausanne so he could work from the Château de Vidy. He appointed Berlioux's nephew, Alain Coupat, who had long worked at the Secretariat, as his chief of staff; Carlos Montserrat (Spain) as head of human resources; and in 1982 Anselmo Lopez (Spain) as director of Olympic Solidarity. Lopez, a Spanish banker who had been secretary general of his country's national Olympic committee (NOC), became responsible for the large sums (several million US dollars, increasing every four years) which the IOC was now able to redistribute to NOCs thanks to the large sums paid by right holding television broadcasters. Samaranch also relocated Olympic Solidarity from Rome to Lausanne and incorporated it into the Secretariat, although its offices were in a separate building. Maurice Louvet, a French consultant, was a constant presence at the Secretariat. He had been given an office in Paris by the head of Adidas, Horst Dassler, supposedly so he could transfer knowledge gained by the Montreal 1976 Organizing Committee of the Olympic Games (OCOG), where he had worked, to future OCOGs.

In 1981, the Swiss government granted the IOC a new status under which its staff, whatever their nationality, would be automatically granted work permits.²⁹

This was a rare privilege in Switzerland and overcame an issue that had caused problems in the past. Nevertheless, Samaranch promised to employ Swiss people whenever possible, which had not been the case before. This commitment ended under the Rogge presidency. The revived part-time post of sports director was occupied by Hungarian IOC member Arpad Csanadi and then by Walter Tröger, who was secretary general of Germany's NOC and became an IOC member in 1989.

Relations between Berlioux and the new president quickly became strained as she felt the president should not have a daily managerial role and continued to deteriorate until Berlioux was forced to resign, a decision made at the IOC's 1985 annual meeting in East Berlin. The two parties signed a confidentiality agreement—which she closely respected—under which Berlioux was forbidden to say anything about her sixteen years at the head of the Secretariat. Six of Berlioux's closest staff were fired at the same time.

Table 2 lists the main figures involved in administering the IOC between 1966 and 1985. We notice a further structuring of the IOC Administration and the recruitment of a few “functional specialist” (press and public relations, sport aka “technical,” accounting, human resources, information technology, etc.) This period corresponds to Bayle's second phase of sport organization professionalization: introducing specialized functions.

An Increasingly Managerial Administration (1985–2013)

When Berlioux left, in June 1985, the IOC's Board followed Samaranch's recommendation and appointed Raymond Gafner, a Swiss IOC member who lived near Lausanne, as the head of the Secretariat, now renamed the IOC Administration. Gafner adopted the title “administrateur délégué,” a common title among CEOs of Swiss companies, including multinationals such as Nestlé. Samaranch was increasingly adopting the role of an executive president (or CEO) and becoming involved in the day-to-day running of the IOC. Under the IOC's statutes, he also chaired the Executive Board and the IOC's annual general meeting (known as the “Session”) and thus performed a similar role to a company chairman.

Following an audit of the secretariat by the well-known management consultants McKinsey & Company, the Board appointed a new secretary general in the shape of Françoise Zweifel (Switzerland), who had previously worked for the provisional Olympic Museum, opened in 1982 near the Lausanne train station. The Swiss, and in particular the Lausanne, influence on the Administration was reinstated. The Board also appointed Jacques Belgrand (France) as financial director and Howard Stupp (Canada) as director of legal affairs.³⁰ All three new appointees occupied their posts until they retired. Gafner spent most of his tenure overseeing the construction of a new administrative building beside the Château de Vidy, which

TABLE 2. Leading Figures Involved in Administering the IOC from 1966 to 1985

IOC President	Chief Administrator	Other Key Personnel
Avery Brundage (USA) 1952–1972	Johann Westerhoff (Neth.), Secretary General 1966–1969	Monique Berlioux (Fr.), Press and Public Relations Director 1967–1969 Arthur Takac (Yug.), Technical Director 1968–1973 Monique Berlioux (Fr.), Press Director and Head of Administration 1969–1971
Michael Killanin (Irl.) 1972–1980	Monique Berlioux (Fr.), Director 1971–1985	Henry Banks (UK), Technical Director 1973–1976 Jacques Belgrand (Fr.), Chief Accountant 1973–1985
Juan Antonio Samaranch (Sp.) 1980–2001	Monique Berlioux (Fr.), Director 1971–1985	Alain Coupat (Fr.), President’s Chief of Staff 1980–1989 Jean-Louis Meuret (Fr.), Head of Press Relations 1970–1985 Jean-Loup Chappelet (Fr.), Head of IT 1982–1987 Carlos Montserrat (Sp.), Head of Human Resources 1982–1997 Anselmo Lopez (Sp.), Director of Olympic Solidarity 1983–1997

was inaugurated during the IOC Session in Lausanne in October 1986. This same Session awarded the 1992 Olympic Games to Barcelona, Samaranch’s hometown, ahead of Paris, whose bid had been championed by Berlioux. During the second part of Samaranch’s presidency, a system of elected staff representatives was set up within the Administration, together with an IOC-funded sports club for staff, who were encouraged to take part in the “20 km of Lausanne” running event, which had been created at Samaranch’s instigation in 1982.

Samaranch’s presidency post-Berlioux was marked by a large expansion of the IOC’s activities and a concomitant increase in the Administration’s staff (see table 5) made possible by increasing financial revenues (mostly from broadcasters) but also needed because of the growing stakeholders’ pressure and interest (from NOCs, international sport federations, media, local and host governments, sponsors, etc.). Samaranch did not want staff numbers to go beyond a hundred, but it became impossible to stay below this symbolic threshold when the new Olympic Museum

opened in Lausanne in 1993, obliging the Administration to take on an additional fifty employees just to run the new facility, including a few employees were assigned to an Olympic Study Centre and educational activities within the Museum.³¹ As a result, the IOC had more than 150 employees—which was more than the number of IOC members—at the end of the twentieth century (see table 5). In addition, several director positions were added over the years, notably for NOC relations (Anne Beddow, UK), media relations (Michèle Verdier, France), press reviews (José Sotelo, Spain), internal management (Thierry Sprunger, Switzerland), and information technology (Alexandre Fellrath, Switzerland).³² Many IOC members at the time were worried that the staff would become too large and would run the IOC rather than them.

After the 1988 Seoul Olympics, Gafner gradually reduced his responsibilities because of illness. The Board named François Carrard, a lawyer from Lausanne—and a militia colonel in the Swiss Army—as the IOC’s director general, an appointment in the form of an independent mandate given to Carrard’s legal firm, which had been the IOC’s counsel since 1979, notably in the legal suit brought by IOC member Henry Hsu against the IOC.³³ Carrard gave up the position of director general in 2003 when Samaranch’s successor decided that the director general should be an employee, not an external agent. Carrard died in January 2022. It is hoped that his memoirs will be published soon, as he played a strategic role at the IOC for almost twenty years (1985–2003), especially during the Salt Lake City scandal,³⁴ which forced the IOC to introduce wide-ranging governance reforms in 1999 with the help of John J. MacAloon.³⁵

The IOC’s Board also appointed a new marketing director, Michael Payne (UK), a manager with International Sport and Leisure (ISL), the company that had overseen the IOC’s TOP international sponsorship program (later named The Olympic Partners) since its launch in 1985.³⁶ Zweifel remained as secretary general, taking on a more operational role, especially with respect to IOC members’ logistics. In 1996, she also took over the new Olympic Museum, opened in 1993, a task she carried out with help from Fernando Riba, a Spanish banker and former general secretary of FC Barcelona who had become the IOC’s and Samaranch’s financial advisor.³⁷ Patrick Schamasch (France) was appointed medical director in 1993 in order to oversee the fight against doping (supervised by IOC member Alexandre de Mérode), a role he had filled at the 1992 Albertville Winter Olympics. A succession of people occupied the difficult post of press relations director. In 1999, during the Salt Lake City scandal, Franklin Servan-Schreiber (France) was swiftly named communication director in order to rebuild trust with the media, but he resigned two years later due to irreconcilable differences with Kevin Gosper, Australia’s IOC member, who chaired the press commission.

An article in the *Olympic Review* provides a rare description of all the entities within the IOC Administration in 1995, listing their main tasks and staff members

(with photos): Executive Office of the President, International Cooperation Department, Office of Public Information, Director General's Office, General Secretariat, and eight Departments: Sports and Relations with IFs and NOCs; Finance; Marketing; Legal Affairs; Control and Coordination of Operations; Medical Commission; Olympic Solidarity; and Computer Services.³⁸ The heads of these departments are, in theory, supervised by voluntary commissions composed of IOC members and outside experts appointed by the president, in accordance with Rule 21 of the Olympic Charter. The Directory of the Olympic Movement, which was published every year until 2017, provided similar information with staff members' names, alongside contact details for recognized international sport federations, NOCs, and IOC members. (Today, only contact details of the IOC members and honorary members are published in this directory.)

The first three bodies listed in the *Olympic Review* article (Executive Office of the President, International Cooperation Department, Office of Public Information) were run by the Ethiopian journalist Fékrou Kidane, who was instrumental in restoring the Olympic Truce and who worked increasingly closely with Samaranch from 1993 onward. Toward the end of Samaranch's presidency, Kidane even served as his chief of staff and later remained director of international cooperation under Jacques Rogge, a post he held until he retired in 2003.

During the second part of Samaranch's presidency, the IOC Administration began embracing ideas from the field of sport management as the sport sector was becoming more and more professional. As part of this process, Samaranch asked the author to attend one of the first French-language conferences on this emerging discipline in Europe, held at the University of Caen (France) in 1991.³⁹ Samaranch subsequently agreed to write a preface for a book that brought together contributions from all the main specialists in sport management at the time and, in February 1996, he presented degrees to the first students to graduate from the University of Lausanne's newly created sport management program.⁴⁰ This is also the time when the MEMOS (Executive Masters in Sports Organization Management) program was launched for NOC personnel with the support of Olympic Solidarity (the author was the program's director for twelve years). In the mid-1990s, the Administration began talking about the "Olympic Brand," which saddened MacAloon, who saw it as the end of the Olympics as a social movement.⁴¹ The IOC also began considering itself a "franchisor" and OCOGs as "franchisees" that were awarded the right to use the Olympic brand for a few years. These ideas were championed by Canada's IOC member Richard Pound—Samaranch's unofficial right-hand man until he opposed a change of rule in the Olympic Charter in 1995 which would allow Samaranch to run again for the presidency in 1997—and the marketing director, Michael Payne.⁴²

In 2000, a year before the end of Samaranch's presidency, the Swiss government signed a new agreement confirming the IOC's existing privileges (tax exemptions

and automatic work permits) and bestowing a few small additional advantages.⁴³ Switzerland's Permanent Mission to the United Nations in Geneva now classifies the IOC, alongside the World Economic Forum and nine other much smaller bodies, as a category 3 international organization: "Other international organizations with agreement on privileges and immunity relative to statute."⁴⁴

In 1999, during the Salt Lake City scandal, Pound, Payne, and Carrard (known collectively as PPC) formed an informal alliance to support Pound's bid to succeed Samaranch as IOC president.⁴⁵ However, Pound was beaten in the 2001 election by Samaranch's favored candidate, Belgian Jacques Rogge. Although Rogge wanted to differentiate himself from Samaranch, he "consolidated" all of his predecessor's projects, further "managerialized" the IOC's operations, and became even more of an executive president wary of corporate governance, a topic he had insisted upon in his manifesto for the presidency.⁴⁶ In 2008, he accepted that the Lausanne-based IMD business school prepare a case study on the IOC's managerial transformation.⁴⁷ At the same time, the embargo on IOC historical archives was raised to thirty years (instead of twenty years) and Executive Board minutes only listed the decisions taken without the details of the discussions as it was the case before.

As soon as Rogge took office, he recruited a new chief of staff, Christophe de Kepper, a Belgian legal expert who had until then run the Office of European NOCs in Brussels. Rogge had spent a lot of time with this office in his role as president of Europe's NOCs and as the IOC's delegate to the European Union, whose relations with the IOC were quite strained during the 1990s (symbolic presence of the European Union at the Albertville and Barcelona Olympics, the Bosman ruling, specificity of sport, etc.). Another of Rogge's first actions as IOC president was to order operational and financial audits of the Administration, which were conducted in 2002 both by the Administration's departments and by seven outside consultancies.⁴⁸

In response to the audit's findings, the Administration adopted International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) for presenting accounts⁴⁹ and created a position of internal auditor; substantially increased staffing levels in order to spread workloads; introduced a formal hierarchy of job titles (director, head of, senior manager, manager, etc.) with a bonus scheme in order to meet employees' demands for job recognition; developed an internal and external communication strategy, including the Olympic Museum; reviewed the 2001–2004 master plan drawn up by Schlumberger-Sema (an IOC TOP sponsor, later taken over by the information technology consultants Atos); introduced a data security policy; created a knowledge management and Olympic heritage department (that brought together several departments of the Olympic Museum but which was disbanded in 2011); fully integrated the Olympic Museum into the Administration, under a new director, Francis Gabet (France), the former marketing manager for France's sports daily *L'Equipe*; and created an Olympic Foundation, presided by the IOC president. This foundation's

purpose was to constitute a financial reserve as a safety net in case an edition of the Olympic Games (almost the IOC's sole source of revenue) had to be canceled.

The most important consequence of these audits was the creation, in 2002, of an Olympic Games Department, although the staging of the Olympics remained the responsibility of OCOGs. Rather surprisingly given the overarching importance of the Games to the IOC, it had never before had a specific Olympic Games Department as every staff member felt responsible for the Games at his/her level. The new department's main tasks had previously been carried out by the Sports Department, created under Samaranch in 1990 and run by Gilbert Felli (Switzerland), the former head of Lausanne City's sports office, with assistance from Pere Miró i Sellares (Spain), a former manager with the Barcelona 1992 OCOG, who was appointed Director of Olympic Solidarity in 1997. In 2001, Miró oversaw Olympic Solidarity's move into offices on the top two floors of the renovated villa Mon Repos, outside the main headquarters. Olympic Solidarity's staff reluctantly moved into the IOC's new headquarters in Vidy in 2019.

Before becoming head of the new Games department, with the title Olympic Games executive director, Felli had to go through the new open application procedure that had been introduced for the many newly created posts, which attracted numerous applicants. Felli was succeeded in 2014 by his deputy, Christophe Dubi, an economic science graduate from Switzerland. In order to avoid the sort of problems encountered with the organization of the centennial Olympics in Atlanta in 1996, the new department began playing an increasingly operational role in staging the Olympics and working more closely with the OCOGs (rather than just supervising their work).⁵⁰ This trend was reinforced in 2020 by the creation of the post of games operations director, which was given to Pierre Ducrey, a long-time member of the department.

After the 2002 Salt Lake City Olympics, Kidane was succeeded as director of international cooperation by Thomas (Tommy) Sithole, Zimbabwe's IOC member, who had to resign his membership. Soon after, in 2003, the IOC recruited Urs Lacotte (Switzerland), a senior staff officer in the Swiss army, to replace Carrard as director general. Lacotte spent much of his time smoothing relations with the city, cantonal, and federal authorities, which Rogge had neglected, in contrast to Samaranch, who had worked hard to ensure good relations. Lacotte resigned in 2011 for health reasons and was replaced by Christophe de Kepper, who combined his new role with his position as Rogge's chief of staff. That same year, Sprunger, who had been given a larger remit and the title of finance and administration director, also resigned, probably because he failed to detect a long-running case of embezzlement by an employee in the Olympic Museum's shop.⁵¹

In terms of marketing, the IOC decided at the beginning of Rogge's presidency to bring its TOP sponsorship program in-house, after having long outsourced

it to ISL, a limited company owned by the Dassler family. It was subsequently overseen by an Atlanta-based company owned by the IOC and some former ISL executives called Meridian Management, which had managed the program during the centenary Games in 1996.⁵² The TOP program is now run by IOC Television and Marketing Services SA (IOC TMS), an IOC-owned limited company, founded in 2003, whose management is integrated into the Administration. In addition, prior to the 2008 and 2012 Olympics, the IOC opened marketing offices in their host cities, Beijing and London. Timo Lumme (Finland) was appointed executive director in 2004, whereas Payne, who had been marketing director under Samaranch (also in charge of broadcasting), became broadcast rights and new media director. Payne left the IOC after the 2004 Athens Olympics.

In 2003, the IOC created Olympic Broadcast Services SA (OBS) to gradually take over the production of television images for the Games (the “Olympic signal”), which had previously been produced by a consortium of national networks in the host country, formed by the OCOG. The following year, the IOC took full control of Olympic Games Knowledge Services (OGKS), a company it had created in partnership with an Australian University after the 2000 Sydney Olympics in order to transfer knowledge from one OCOG to the next. OGKS is now part of the Olympic Games Department. The IOC’s accounts, which have been drawn up according to IFRS standards since 2005, group together all the companies and foundations controlled by the IOC under the name “IOC Group” in addition to the IOC itself (an association under Swiss law): the Olympic Museum (a Swiss foundation now called Olympic Foundation for Culture and Heritage), the Olympic Foundation, the Olympic Solidarity (an IOC Department with separate accounts), the Meridian Management SA (now replaced by IOCTMS SA), the Olympic Program (TOP), the OBS SA, the OGKS SA (now under the Games Department).⁵³

Table 3 lists the leading figures involved in administering the IOC from 1986 to 2013. During this period, a secretary general and a director general—both from Switzerland—were hired as well as several directors to lead and coordinate the many sectors of the IOC Administration. Managing the relationships with sponsors and broadcasters (by a marketing department), international federations (by a sport department) and national Olympic committee (by a solidarity department) became essential. This period corresponds to the third phase of Bayle’s sport organizations professionalization: hiring coordinators and senior managers.

A Highly Professionalized Administration

After being elected IOC president in October 2013, Thomas Bach (Germany) continued to play the role of executive president adopted by his two predecessors. As before, his professional expenses (accommodation, travel, insurance, taxes) were

TABLE 3. Leading Figures Involved in Administering the IOC from 1985 to 2013

IOC President	Chief Administrator	Other Key Personnel
Juan Antonio Samaranch (Sp.) 1980–2001	Raymond Gafner (Swi.), Administrateur Délégué 1985–1989	Françoise Zweifel (Swi.), Secretary General 1985–2003 Howard Stupp (Can.), Director of Legal Affairs 1985–2017 Jacques Belgrand, Financial Director, 1985–2005
	François Carrard (Swi.), Director General 1989–2003, Françoise Zweifel (Swi.), Secretary General 1985–2003 and Director of the Olympic Museum 1998–2003	Michael Payne (GB), Director of Marketing 1989–2001 Gilbert Felli (Swi.), Director of Sports, Games Coordination and Relations with IFs 1990–2003 Pere Miró (Sp.), Director of Olympic Solidarity and NOC Relations 1997–2018 Fékrou Kidane (Eth.), Chief of Staff 1992–2001 Thierry Sprunger (Swi.), Director of Control and Coordination of Operations, then Director of Finance and Administration 1994–2011
Jacques Rogge (Bel.) 2001–2013	Urs Lacotte (Swi.), Director General 2003–2011 Christophe de Kepper (Bel.), Director General 2011–	Christophe de Kepper (Bel.), Chief of Staff 2002–2011 Gilbert Felli (Swi.), Olympic Games Executive Director 2003–2013 Christophe Dubi (Swi.), Director of Sports 2003–2013 Pâquerette Girard-Zappelli (Fr.), Secretary of the Ethics Commission 2002–2014 Timo Lumme (Fin.), CEO Director, IOCTMS SA 2004– Marie Sallois-Dembreville (Fr.), Head of Corporate Development 2004–2015 Gerry Pennell (UK), Director of Technology 2012–2022 Kit McConnell (NZ), Director of Sports 2013–

covered by the IOC, but unlike Samaranch and Rogge, Bach also received an annual allowance (€275,000 in 2021) that is set by the IOC's Ethics Commission, indexed to inflation, and reported in the IOC's now-annual financial reports.⁵⁴

As soon as Bach was elected, the Administration began preparing the roadmap for his presidency, baptized "Olympic Agenda 2020." Work on the document began in December 2013 with a workshop involving the Administration's directors and the IOC's Executive Board, who also considered proposals solicited from the Olympic Movement. The resulting forty (20 + 20) strategic recommendations were adopted by the IOC Session at the end of 2014.⁵⁵

The following year, the Administration implemented a number of important changes. First, it set up an Ethics and Compliance Office, in line with Olympic Agenda 2020 Recommendation 31, appointing Pàquerette Girard-Zappelli, a former French magistrate who had been secretary of the IOC's Ethics Commission since 2002, as chief ethics and compliance officer.⁵⁶ At the same time, the IOC introduced a compliance and risk management system.⁵⁷ In addition, Pere Miró, the director of Olympic Solidarity and of NOC relations since 1997, took on the additional role of deputy director general for relations with the Olympic Movement, a position he held until his retirement in 2022. In 2019, James McLeod, a former Olympic Solidarity staff member who had been head of NOC and NPC services for the London 2012 OCOG, took over from Miró as director of Olympic Solidarity and of NOC relations.

Most of the directors under Rogge continued in their posts under the new president. A Corporate Development, Brand, and Sustainability Department was created in 2015 for Marie Sallois-Dembreville (France), who had joined the IOC in 2004 from Schlumberger-Sema to work with the then director general. Angelita Teo, who had been Singapore's museums director, was recruited as the new director of the Olympic Museum in 2019. Another major change in 2019 involved placing the Finance, Legal Affairs, Technology, Security, Events, and Human Resources Departments under the responsibility of a chief operating officer (COO). The new role was given to Lana Haddad, a British woman of Iraqi descent who had been finance director since 2013. In 2020, Christian Klaue (Germany) was promoted to take over as director of communications from Rebecca Edwards (USA), who had held the post only briefly. One of Edwards's predecessors, Mark Adams had held the post for six years, from 2009 to 2015, before becoming Bach's spokesperson and head of media relations. Christopher Carroll (USA), a former Coca-Cola executive, also arrived in 2020, soon to be replaced by Argentinian Leandro Larrosa in 2022, as director of digital engagement, a new department within the administration and a priority for Bach's second mandate.

Another Olympic Agenda 2020 recommendation (19) was to launch an Olympic Internet Channel. Like Olympic Broadcast Services (OBS), the new channel

(Olympic Channel Services) is a combination of two limited companies: OCS SA, a Swiss company based in Lausanne, and OCS SL, a Spanish company based in Madrid. OCS SA is integrated into the IOC Administration like OBS SA; OCS and OBS are now run jointly. Yiannis Exarchos, a former producer for Greek radio and television, was appointed CEO of OBS in 2012 and executive director of OCS in 2015. The two Spanish companies (OBS SL and OCS SL) housed in the same Madrid building had a total headcount of 259 in 2020 (of thirty-one nationalities).⁵⁸

In 2017, the IOC published an “integrity, efficiency, and social responsibility audit” of its governance, carried out by the Lausanne business school IMD in 2016 at the IOC’s request. The report’s three chapters—“Ethical Conduct and Reputation”; “Organizational Supervision and Decision-Making”; and “IOC as a Leader of the Olympic Movement”—set out twenty-two short-term recommendations, eleven longer-term recommendations, and seven dilemmas the IOC was likely to face in the next five-to-ten years.⁵⁹ The IOC’s Audit Commission has since announced that most of IMD’s publicly available recommendations have been implemented.⁶⁰ The creation of a Human Resources (HR) Committee, one of the audit’s important recommendations, resulted in the HR manager (Xavier Tissières, Switzerland) being promoted to director.

The IOC celebrated its 125th anniversary by inaugurating a new headquarters, just east of the Château de Vidy. Thanks to its homeworking policy (introduced before the 2020 pandemic), the building’s 500 workstations are sufficient to house all of the IOC’s employees (excluding museum and Olympic Study Centre staff housed in the Museum and a nearby villa in Ouchy), who had previously been divided between four buildings across Lausanne. Marie Sallois-Dembreville, who had overseen the building’s construction, was given a new title—director of corporate and sustainable development—and additional responsibilities.

Between 2014 and 2020, the Administration’s headcount expanded from 448 to 619 for fixed-term contracts (see table 5). Many directorships and assistant directorships were created in order to give the Administration’s employees opportunities for promotion, but there was still no published organization chart. This period also saw the recruitment of many specialists, including a director of digital content and an expert in pandemics, hired by the Olympic Games Department in 2020, and the introduction of measures to increase gender and nationality diversity.⁶¹ At the end of 2021, the Administration had a headcount of 759 employees on indefinite and fixed-term contracts from seventy-one nationalities from all five continents with a majority from Europe (in particular, at senior management level) equating to a full-time equivalent employee count of 712.⁶² Some 54 percent were women and four women were at a director level: COO, Museum, Corporate and Sustainable Development, Ethics and Compliance (only one under Bach’s predecessors). Further breakdowns by country or other categories are not publicly available. The

administration of the World Olympian Association was integrated into the Sports Department in 2015.⁶³ The Olympic Refuge Foundation, created in 2017, and a unit for social development through sport were integrated into the NOC Relations Department. A human rights unit was created in 2021 (within the Corporate and Sustainability Department) as well as an athletes' department headed by a director, Iranian Olympian Kaveh Mehrabi.

In March 2021, Bach was reelected for four years, which, under the rules introduced in 1999, will be his last term. He used the occasion to introduce a new strategic roadmap, entitled "Olympic Agenda 2020 + 5," based on a review of Olympic Agenda 2020.⁶⁴ That same month, MacAloon published his analysis of the dangers facing the Olympic Movement, focusing on the postponement of the Tokyo 2020 Games and, most importantly, the risks surrounding the Beijing 2022 Winter Olympics.⁶⁵

Table 4 lists the leading figures involved in administering the IOC from 2014 to 2021 under Bach's presidency. During this period, the position of director general is complemented with a few important directorships (for the Games—initiated by

TABLE 4. Leading Figures Involved in Administering the IOC from 2014 to 2021

IOC President	Chief Administrator	Other Key Personnel*
Thomas Bach (Ger.) 2013–2025	Christophe de Kepper (Bel.), Director General 2011– Pere Miró (Sp.), Deputy Director General 2015–2022	Christophe Dubi (Swi.), Olympic Games Executive Director 2014– Lana Haddad (UK), Chief Operations Officer 2019– Pâquerette Girard-Zappelli (Fr.), Chief Ethics and Compliance Officer 2015– Marie Sallois-Dembreville (Fr.), Director of Corporate Development, Brand, and Sustainability 2015– Mark Adams (UK), Director of Media Relations and Spokesperson 2009– James McLeod (UK), Director of Olympic Solidarity and NOC Relations 2019– Xavier Tissières (Swi.), Director of Human Resources 1997– Ilario Corna (It., Director of Technology and information 2020–

* See also IOC Form 990, Return of Organization Exempt From Income Tax, [US] Department of the Treasury, Internal Revenue Service, 2018.

Jacques Rogge under the title of Olympic Games executive director; for the Olympic Movement—with the title of deputy director general; for operations—with the title of COO [Chief Operating Officer]; for integrity—with the title of chief ethics and compliance officer; for sustainability—with the title of director of corporate and sustainable development). Three of these important directorships are held by women in 2021. This period corresponds to Bayle’s fourth phase of sport organizations professionalization: generalizing the managerial approach. During periods 3 and 4, the IOC Administration became more and more an “executive office” to use the already mentioned Kikuli’s and colleagues’ design archetype taxonomy bordering more and more toward the “professional” and “corporate” archetypes highlighted by Parent and colleagues.⁶⁶ Table 5 charts the increase in IOC administrative staff from the mid-1970s to the present day.

TABLE 5. Number of IOC Administrative Staff (Fixed-Term Contracts) at the End of Each Olympic Year

Year	Lausanne headcount*	Nationalities	Source
1968	12	?	IOC-HR (2021)
1976	21	?	Landry and Yerlès 1996, 61
1980	27	?	Landry and Yerlès 1996, 61
1984	76	?	Landry and Yerlès 1996, 61 and 69
1988	80	?	Landry and Yerlès 1996, 61 and 69
1992	101	?	Landry and Yerlès 1996, 69
1994	139	?	Landry and Yerlès 1996, 69
1996	157	?	IOC-HR (2021)**
2000	235	27	IOC-HR (2021)
2004	354	40	IOC-HR (2021)
2008	365	41	IOC-HR (2021)
2012	401	45	IOC-HR (2021)
2014	448	45	IOC-HR (2021)
2016	518	48	IOC-HR (2021)
2020	619	63	IOC-HR (2021)

*Including Meridian’s (now IOCTMS SA) employees from 2000 and excluding OBS and OCS staff based in Madrid from 2005.

** IOC-HR, personal communication with HR staff, June 7, 2021.

The Four Stages in the Professionalization of the IOC Administration

This historical review shows that the evolution of the IOC Administration can be divided into four stages (tables 1, 2, 3, and 4): (1) a nascent administration (1894–1965); (2) a more structured secretariat (1966–1985); (3) an increasingly managerial administration (1986–2013); and (4) a large and highly professionalized administration (2014–present). These four periods correspond to the four stages in the professionalization of French sport federations identified by Bayle: (1) structuring the headquarters/administration; (2) introducing specialized functions; (3) hiring coordinators and senior managers; (4) generalizing the managerial approach.⁶⁷

The first stage covered the first seventy years of the IOC's existence, during which all administrative tasks were carried out by Coubertin and, after he retired, a very small team of two or three people supporting an Executive Board created in 1921 but fully active after Coubertin's retirement from the presidency in 1925. Stage 2 saw the first steps toward dividing administrative work into separate fields, most notably through the recruitment of specialist managers for media relations and relations with OCOGs and international sport federations, two very important sectors of the IOC's activities, as well as an accountant. Stage 3 involved introducing systems and director positions to manage and coordinate the Administration's activities, which were overseen more-or-less directly by an IOC president (Juan Antonio Samaranch) who had adopted a much more executive role than his predecessors. For the last fifteen years of Samaranch's presidency, the Administration was supervised by a director general, in charge of strategy, and a secretary general, responsible for operations. During stage 4, the Administration became fully professionalized and now has specialist directors for every area of its work. Consequently, the Executive Board and the IOC's president, who now plays a fully executive role, can rely upon a highly professional Administration. This remarkable growth is certainly due to the growing financial resources at the IOC disposal from the 1980s (US\$5.75 billion of assets in 2020⁶⁸) and the growing complexity of staging the Olympics and supervising the local Organizing Committees with a large Olympic Games Department created in 2003, a task the IOC undertook more and more after the difficult centennial games in Atlanta in 1996.⁶⁹

Although the Board remains the IOC's executive body, as stipulated in the Olympic Charter, one of the dilemmas the IOC will face in the next five-to-ten years is how to respond to the expected increase in the Board's workload predicted by IMD's governance audit.⁷⁰ One option would be for the Board to delegate some of its responsibilities to the president and/or Administration. However, this does not appear to be the route the IOC is taking, as the number of board meetings increased greatly during the 2020–2021 pandemic, becoming almost monthly, allowing the

board members to keep their responsibility for the overall direction of the Movement as they do wish rather than entrusting it to the IOC Administration and senior management.”

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