

# Historical Development of the Olympic Movement

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## ABSTRACT

*The Olympic Movement is a term that covers all areas related to the phenomenon of Olympism. From its creation, the Olympic Movement has had to follow and to respond to numerous challenges and changes of the 20th and 21st century. The successful work of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) on the implementation of their projects related to world peace, the education of youth, equal inclusion of women in every aspect of the Movement, the establishment of the Women's Commission, the Sport for All Commission, and the Sports and the Environment Commission are facts indicating that the IOC has a significant impact on the values of the Olympic Movement. In addition to equal participation of all athletes, today, the Olympic Movement provides Olympic solidarity, education and other programs. The basic method that was used in this study was the historical method, which includes heuristic, empirical and theoretical study of the origin and development of the IOC and its operation as part of the Olympic Movement. Research results indicate that the management of the IOCs as a sporting organization that manages this Movement is directed at achieving the goal to contribute to building a more peaceful and better world by educating young people through sports, and in accordance with the Olympic values. With proper management, the IOCs have improved sports and has grown into an organization that is at the head of the Olympic Movement.*

**Key words:** history, the Olympic movement, management

## Introduction

Modern Olympic Games and Olympism as a movement of global proportions have kept the basic principles of the ancient Olympic Games. However, modern times with all the technology (training, pharmacological, communication technology, etc.) in addition to solving the existing problems brings some new ones as well. The basic Olympic principles are forgotten in a rush to the new records, where the means to achieve them are not important, which certainly leads to the dehumanization of sports.

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) encourages the development of sports. It cooperates with other sports organizations in order to bring sports at the service of humanity. They realize the Olympic principles through a large number of committees and projects, which are in accordance with the Olympic Charter (IOC, 2016). Under the supreme authority and leadership of the IOC, the Olympic Movement encompasses organizations, athletes and other persons that agree to act in accordance with the Olympic Charter. The goal of the Olympic Movement is to contribute to building a more peaceful and better world by educating young people through sports, and in accordance with the Olympic values (IOC, 2016).

The International Sports Federations (ISFs) and the National Olympic Committees (NOCs) are included in the movement through membership in the IOC. In addition to the above, the Olympic Movement also includes the following: the Organizational Committees of the Olympic Games, national associations, clubs and persons belonging to the ISFs and the NOCs, especially athletes whose interests are a fundamental element of the operation of the Olympic Movement; as well as referees, coaches and other sports officials and technicians. The Olympic Movement includes other organizations and institutions that are recognized by the IOC. Any individual or organi-

zation that belongs to the Olympic Movement in any capacity is obliged to behave in accordance with the Olympic Charter, and to abide by the decisions of the IOC (2016).

## Methods

The basic method that was used in this study was the historical method, which includes heuristic, empirical and theoretical study of the origin and development of the International Olympic Committee and its operation as part of the Olympic Movement.

## The Olympic Movement

At the celebration of the 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of the Union of French Societies of Athletic Sports, which was held in Paris at the Sorbonne in 1892, Baron Pierre de Coubertin, as Secretary General of this organization, managed to present a proposal on the need for internationalization of sports by organizing joint competitions with multiple sports branches under the name Olympic Games. The proposal was accepted and a three-member Commission composed of professor William Milligan Sloane from Princeton University, the United States, M. K. Herbert, president of the Amateur Athletic Association of England, and Pierre de Coubertin himself had the obligation and task to explain the justification for this proposal (Siljak, 2007). At the next session of the Union of French Societies of Athletic Sports, which was held in 1893, the Commission's proposal was accepted, and it was decided to convene the next International Sports Congress the following year, where a decision on the renewal of the Olympic Games would be made (Siljak, 2007). It can be said that in 1894, Baron Pierre

de Coubertin successfully justified the importance of renewing the Olympic Games for the whole world.

Renewal of the Olympic Games in 1894 at the founding congress of the IOC may be considered the starting point for the formation of the Olympic Movement as it is today. From its creation, the Olympic Movement has had to follow and respond to numerous global challenges and changes of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century, to adapt and change with them, so that the Olympic Games could be more successful in all their aspects (Skempler, 2007; Škaro, 2012).

The development of the Olympic Movement must be observed through several aspects. The question is what factors have influenced the development of the Olympic Movement to reach the dimensions that it has today?

From its creation in 1894 until 1915, the headquarters of the IOC were in Paris. As Switzerland has always aspired to neutrality in political terms, in the midst of the First World War, relocating the headquarters of the IOC from war-affected Paris to a country that has never been at war was a logical decision. Had the headquarters of the IOC remained in Paris it is likely the Olympic Movement would have had a different development path. Pierre de Coubertin himself initiated the relocation of the IOC to Lausanne because he thought that in Lausanne there were better conditions for faster development of the Olympic Movement (De Coubertin, 2000).

The First Olympic Charter, an official document that governs the operation of the International Olympic Committee and its members was created in 1908. Since then it has been amended and adapted for a total of 68 times. Aims and objectives of the Olympic Movement are explained in detail in the Olympic Charter, which was established and adopted in Lausanne in 1921. The Charter speaks of the fundamental principles and values of Olympism, determines the rights and obligations of both the IOC and the NOCs, national federations and organizations that have a role of organizing the Olympic Games, and represents the statute of the IOC. The last Olympic Charter was published in 2016. The first seven Olympic Charters were issued only in French, while all others have been published in English and French. This document has been issued twice in the same calendar year as many as nine times. These facts indicate that the IOC, following the need for a clear definition and determination of certain rules, was forced to respond in a timely manner to preserve the fundamental principles of Olympism. By analyzing these documents, we can see that the IOC recognizes the term Olympic Movement and incorporates it in the Olympic Charter for the first time as late as 1991.

At the beginning, the Olympic Movement had a very rigid stance on the participation of athletes, and the inclusion of new members in the IOC. The number of 14 Member States from the founding 1894 Congress doubled by the Stockholm Games in 1912. It was in 1968 in Mexico that there were more than 100 participating countries (112) and in Athens in 2004 over 200 countries (201) took part in the Games for the first time (<https://www.olympic.org/national-olympic-committees>). This number indicates the pace of inclusion of the countries as the IOC members.

The period from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, when the IOC/Olympic Movement first emerged until the World War I can certainly be called the pioneering period of Olympism. A period when not all of the countries of the world were interested in supporting and developing the Olympic idea, when the Games were held after 5-6 months as part of the World exhibitions, when the financial aspect brought the survival of the Olympic Games into question is very important because the Games

survived thanks to the persistence of enthusiasts. For this reason, the activity of spreading the Olympic idea in every country which was admitted as a member of the IOC in this period is important.

Today, the Olympic Charter guarantees equality for women (IOC, 2016). However, historical facts point to their almost century-long persistence in the equal involvement in all aspects of the Olympic Movement. Not one woman took part in the First Olympic Games in Athens. It is well known that Pierre de Coubertin was an opponent of their involvement in the competitions at the Olympic Games, both because they did not take part in the ancient Olympic Games and because he believed that they were not physically fit for the stress of training and competing (Parčina, Šiljak, Perović & Plakona, 2014). Although sports historians have the knowledge on organizing the women's Olympic Games, the name Alice Milliat is still not well known to the general public and neither is the importance of her work for the inclusion of women in the Olympic Movement.

The role of Alice Milliat in the more equal acceptance of women in the track and field competitions at the Olympics in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century is undeniable. By organizing the Women's World (Olympic) Games and establishing the Federation, Milliat managed to overcome the resistance of Pierre de Coubertin and allow women to participate equally in the Olympic Games, as well as for the IAAF to take women's track and field seriously. Thanks to the effort of Alice Milliat and her collaborators, the IOC was forced to include women in the track and field competitions at the Olympic Games.

## Discussion

The challenges of global socio-political developments in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and the tumultuous political changes that occurred primarily because of the First World War followed by the Second World War, caused a major upheaval and changes in the organization of the Olympic Games. They were not even held in 1916, 1940 and 1944, which stopped the development of the Olympic Movement in the entire world. This was clearly followed up by economic and political changes in the entire world, as a side effect of those wars, that halted economic development of many countries with their destruction. But in spite of everything, new challenges permanently appeared before the organizers of the Olympic Games.

Due to high demand and following by a large number of spectators, sports competitions have always been a possibility for various affirmation of individuals, teams, nations as well as for the expression of political or national protests by political groups and individuals. That entry and interference of politics with sports or the struggle for political ends at the very Olympics has caused a lot of damage to the development of the Olympic Movement, and has repeatedly threatened to significantly disrupt relations in the international Olympic Movement or even terminate the organization of the Olympic Games. That is what happened in Berlin in 1936, in Melbourne in 1956, in Mexico City in 1968, in Munich in 1972, in Montreal in 1976, in Moscow in 1980, in Los Angeles in 1984, in Seoul in 1988, and in Barcelona in 1992.

For these reasons, the IOC was forced to seek appropriate forms of operation and management during the Olympic Games in order to eliminate problems caused by these challenges and changes of modern times. In this sense, it formed the appropriate working groups that looked at and fought with the above problems.

Decolonization and poverty of former colonial countries led to the formation of the Solidarity Fund in 1961, which had the task of financing the sports development and other financial assistance programs, and reducing differences between developed and developing countries as soon as possible, in particular the former colonial countries of Africa and Asia. As part of its program and tasks in the development of culture as a supporting factor of the Olympic Movement, the IOC established a Culture Commission in 1968. Unregulated legal issues in sports in general, and especially abuse of athletes and their rights caused the formation of the Legal Committee in 1972. The increased problems in the use of doping that threatened the health of athletes and often ended fatally in sports arenas led to the establishment of the Medical Commission in 1974. The right of every person to play sports is one of the basic ideas of Baron Pierre de Coubertin, and the modern Olympism in general, and it called for the establishment of a special body called the Sport for All Commission in 1983.

A special organizational problem throughout the entire period of modern Olympism has been the emergence of new sports and continuous development of the existing ones, which are quickly divided into specific sports events. In recent years, this has led to large organizational problems and in general problems with planning and management of increasing needs and changes, which today represents a special challenge for the IOC and the host organizers of the Olympic Games. It has a special dimension when it comes to the preparation of facilities, equipment and props for an increasing number of competitive events, and on the other hand a growing number of athletes, referees, officials and organizers.

Sports are inherently characterized by competition to achieve better results, especially beating the existing records to achieve one's own sports targets while earning the appropriate recognition and fame. However, national interests for the affirmation of their countries and political systems at the time of the sharp opposition between East and West (socialist and capitalist countries) have given a new dimension in the "race for the records". Further development of professionalism, which opposed amateurism as a basic Olympic principle, despite the long struggle of the Olympic Movement with it, followed by large cash compensations and rewards, suppress basic sports and Olympic principles, condition unscrupulous sports fights and bring a new principle of winning at all cost. Winning becomes imperative for every individual and team, whereby deviating from the basic principles of the Olympic Movement and ignoring the respect for the rules, fair play, referees, opponents, and fans.

The commercialization of sports and thus the Olympic Games, advertising of large companies, and their sponsorship in terms of huge monetary compensation introduce a new aspect of winning for the company that pays, advertises or sponsors an individual or a team. This moves the participants even further away from the basic Olympic principles, which creates increasing problems to the IOC in the organization and management of not only the Olympic Games, but the Olympic Movement as a whole.

Sports haven't been a game for a long time, but are rather an economic activity dominated by profit corporations. The Olympic Games as the biggest global spectacle have become one of the best sports market products. They have their own marketing strategy, the popularity of athletes and teams, and help from the mass media, primarily television. The largest companies in the world are competing to sponsor the IOC and the organizers of the Olympic Games so that they could use this event to identify with the best athletes of the world and offer

their advertising to the market. For the money that sponsors give they receive a lot of publicity because the athletes and the venues are their billboards. In this way, the image of the company and athlete grows together.

Today, the Olympic Movement definitely involves the economic aspect that borders on business. A *maecenas* of the first few Olympic Games, Pierre de Coubertin, who spent all his wealth on the Olympic Movement in order to help it survive, was after all the only one in the world.

As a side effect of the effort to defeat someone better than oneself, violence is created at sporting events and venues as compensation for helplessness, and also a means to achieve victory no matter how. Violence spreads to the stands and to the city streets before, during, and after the competition, and this has become a serious social phenomenon, which forces the organizers of the Olympic Games to spend huge sums of money for the safety and security of this sporting event.

An increasing departure from the basic Olympic principles and insufficient knowledge of the essence and meaning of Olympism in general led the IOC to establish a special Olympic Education Commission in 1994, which in collaboration with the NOCs established a National Olympic Academy responsible for the implementation of the Olympic education program. Further, the main bearer of the entire program is the International Olympic Academy from Olympia, founded in Olympia in 1960.

The second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century saw significant problems in terms of environmental pollution. As healthy environment and preservation of natural conditions are of particular interest for sports, the IOC established a special commission called the Sports and Environment Commission in 1994.

Despite the fact that women have won equal rights in terms of participation in sports, it has, however, been noted that they are not being enforced equally in all parts of the world, that is, in certain countries. Therefore, a Commission under the name of Women in Sport was established in 1995.

The moral principles in sports are fundamental principles of both the ancient and the modern Olympism. But as new times brought on new challenges, especially in the field of winning, which often turn into a motto "win at all cost", with the fundamental ethical principles being violated, the IOC formed an Ethics Commission in 1999.

The successful work of the IOC on the implementation of their projects related to world peace, the education of youth, equal inclusion of women in every aspect of the Movement, the establishment of the Women's Commission, the Sports for All Commission, and the Sports and the Environment Commission are facts indicating that the IOC has a significant impact on the values of the Olympic Movement (Arnold, 1996; Defrantz, 1997; Šiljak, 2013).

## Conclusion

Since its creation, the Olympic Movement has contributed much to the development and preservation of the Olympic spirit. The obtained research results have confirmed that a number of developments over the past century have caused significant changes in its structure and management system. Some of them have shaken the foundations of Olympism and required the operation of the IOC in order to preserve the basic Olympic principles and ideals. However, the human factor as the cause of all events is the same as three millennia ago. The disputed referee decisions, the use of doping substances in order to win at all cost, amateurism that has grown into professionalism, political boycotts, terrorism, and commercialization are present at

today's Olympic Games. The study of the historical development of the Olympic Movement has determined that negative situations which the IOC has encountered produced its positive reaction in order to preserve the Olympic spirit of the Games. Thus, very strict security measures are being implemented

during the organization of the Games, including a large number of volunteers that help out, and the founding of the Olympic Movement for peace in the tradition of ancient Greece, the Solidarity Fund to help athletes, cooperation with the Anti-Doping Agency, and so on.

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