

Sports journalism ethics and quality of information

The coverage of the London 2012 Olympics in the British, American and Spanish press

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*“Sports wield power. They have the ability to transport,
transcend and, more specifically, to teach”*

Andrew C. Billings

*“Media should never switch off their ethical responsibility,
however good the time they are having”*

David Rowe

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Abstract

This dissertation has examined to what extent six prestigious newspapers (*The Guardian/The Observer*, *The Daily Telegraph/The Sunday Telegraph*, *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *El País* and *La Vanguardia*) complied with the fundamental principles of journalism ethics (truth, justice and responsibility) in their coverage of the London 2012 Olympics. The content analysis of 6,552 pieces, their correlation with the major codes of ethics, and the conduct of 41 interviews revealed that in many areas the coverage dispelled the long-held notion of sports journalism being the “toy department”. Significant strengths include the wide range of sources employed, the comprehensive examination of the larger framework of the Olympics, the recognition of errors and the fight against discrimination. Despite all of this, the research highlights that in other core aspects, the diversity of the sporting agenda, sensationalism, stereotyping and the use of warlike language, for example, there is much room for improvement.

Resum

Aquesta tesi ha examinat fins a quin punt sis prestigiosos diaris (*The Guardian/The Observer*, *The Daily Telegraph/The Sunday Telegraph*, *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *El País* i *La Vanguardia*) van complir en la seva cobertura dels Jocs Olímpics de Londres 2012 amb els principis fonamentals de la deontologia periodística: veritat, justícia i responsabilitat. L'anàlisi del contingut de 6.552 peces, el contrast amb els principals codis d'ètica i la realització de 41 entrevistes revelen que en moltes àrees la cobertura va dissipar l'arrelada noció del periodisme esportiu com a “departament de joguines”. Fortaleses significatives inclouen l'ús d'un ampli ventall de fonts, una anàlisi exhaustiva dels aspectes contextuais, el reconeixement d'errors i la lluita contra la discriminació. Malgrat això, la recerca ressalta que en altres aspectes essencials, com la diversitat de l'agenda esportiva, el sensacionalisme, els estereotips o l'ús del llenguatge bel·licista, hi ha un ampli marge de millora.

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Abbreviations

ABC	Audit Bureau of Circulations
ADO	Asociación Deportes Olímpicos (Olympic Sports Association)
AFP	Agence France-Presse
AIBA	Amateur International Boxing Association
AP	Associated Press
APSE	Associated Press Sports Editors
ASNE	American Society of News Editors
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BOA	British Olympic Association
CAS	Court of Arbitration for Sport
CBS	Columbia Broadcasting System
CCTV	Closed-circuit television/China Central Television
CEO-UAB	Olympic Studies Centre at the Autonomous University of Barcelona
CPC	Col·legi de Periodistes de Catalunya (Catalan Journalists College)
CSD	Consejo Superior de Deportes
DPA	Deutsche Presse-Agentur (German Press Agency)
EASS	European Association for Sociology of Sport
ECREA	European Communication Research and Education Association
EP	<i>El País</i>
EPA	European Pressphoto Agency
ESPN	Entertainment and Sports Programming Network
FAPE	Federación de Asociaciones de Periodistas de España (Spanish Journalists' Associations Federation)
FIFA	Fédération Internationale de Football Association
FINA	Fédération Internationale de Natation
FISA	World Rowing Federation
GDP	Gross domestic product
GRP	Grup de Recerca en Periodisme (Journalism Research Group)
HD	High-definition
HEI	Higher education institution
IAAF	International Association of Athletics Federations
IACS	International Association for Communication and Sport
IAMCR	International Association for Media and Communication Research
IFJ	International Federation of Journalists
IOA	International Olympic Academy
IOC	International Olympic Committee

IPC	International Paralympic Committee
IPSO	Independent Press Standards Organisation
LOCOG	London Organizing Committee for the Olympic Games
LV	<i>La Vanguardia</i>
MAS	Media accountability systems
MLB	Major League Baseball
NBA	National Basketball Association
NBC	National Broadcasting Company
NCAA	National Collegiate Athletic Association
NFL	National Football League
NHL	National Hockey League
NHS	National Health Service
NOC	National Olympic Committee
NUJ	National Union of Journalists
NYT	<i>The New York Times</i>
OBO	Olympic Broadcasting Organization
OBS	Olympic Broadcasting Services
OCOG	Organizing Committee for the Olympic Games
OJD	Oficina de Justificación de la Difusión
ONS	Olympic News Service
OSC	Olympic Studies Centre
OVEP	Olympic Values Education Programme
PA	Press Association
PCC	Press Complaints Commission
PRENDE	Programa Prensa y Democracia (Press and Democracy Programme)
PSB	Public Service Broadcaster
RHB	Rights-holding Broadcaster
RNE	Radio Nacional de España (Spanish National Radio)
RTVE	Radiotelevisión Española (Spanish radio and television broadcaster)
SPJ	Society of Professional Journalists
SPM	Sindicato de Periodistas de Madrid (Madrid Journalists Union)
TOP	Olympic Partner programme
TWP	<i>The Washington Post</i>
UEFA	Union of European Football Associations
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
WADA	World Anti-Doping Agency

1. Introduction

1.1. Topic of the research and identification of the research problem

According to their normative public service role (Singer, 2013) and their centrality as configurators of the public agenda and transmitters of information and values in democratic societies, the quality media¹ should carry out a comprehensive and ethical treatment of all areas of the news arena, including sports. In a current landscape characterized by an increasing preoccupation among the citizenship with the moral ground of media professionals (Aznar, 2005; Knowlton and Reader, 2009; Plaisance, 2009), sports journalists should also commit to the generation of high-quality content and the pursuit of excellence in their field. In order to do so, professionals should comply with the prescriptions established in the fundamental principles of media ethics: truth, justice and responsibility (Alsius, 2010; Christians et al., 2009; Frost, 2011).

That being said, in the field of sports journalism, extensive literature has shed light on a series of problem areas that have systematically occurred here and that have challenged the normative standards and conventional criteria of the profession (see Chapter 2.2). These widespread questionable practices include the blurring of the frontiers between journalistic genres, the pervasiveness of rumour, the “tyranny” of a narrow range of sports, sensationalism, the use of warlike language, the lack of rigour and public service mission, the inequalities and stereotyping in relation to gender and race and the low quality and lack of variety of news sources employed (Boyle, 2006b; Hardin et al., 2009; Horky and Stelzner, 2013; Oates and Pauly, 2007; Rojas Torrijos, 2011; Rowe, 2007; Wanta, 2013; Whiteside et al., 2012). All these ethical shortcomings have disparaged the credibility and respectability of the professionals

¹ Merrill (1968) established the concept of “quality press” in his fundamental book *The elite press. Great newspapers of the world*. Among other things, Merrill said that quality newspapers were characterized by the following criteria: “(1) Independence; financial stability; integrity; social concern; good writing and editing; (2) Strong opinion and interpretive emphasis; world consciousness; non-sensationalism in articles and makeup; (3) Emphasis on politics, international relations, economics, social welfare, cultural endeavours, education and science; (4) Concern with getting, developing and keeping a large number of intelligent, well-educated, articulate and technically proficient staff; and (5) Determination to serve and help expand a well-educated, intellectual readership at home and abroad and the desire to appeal to, and influence, opinion leaders everywhere” (Merrill, 1968, quoted in Meyer and Kim, 2003: 2). The quality media also “portray themselves as the main arena for public opinion formation” (Ruiz et al., 2011: 468).

working in the sports journalism field, an area still characterized by the long-held notions of it being a “toy department” or consisting of “fans with typewriters” (Boyle, 2006a; Rowe, 2007).

At this point, several relevant questions arise. Can this notion of “toy department” be applied to all newspapers and newsroom cultures, including to the quality media? Can the aforementioned claims be sustained or contested in the coverage of the biggest sporting mega-event, the Olympic Games? To what extent do sports media comply with the essential prescriptions established in the major codes of journalism ethics, stylebooks and newsroom statutes? What are the ongoing dynamics, tensions and factors that may prevent media organizations from performing to the highest standards in terms of ethics and quality of information?

Until now, the scholar body of research lacked an investigation that approached the coverage of a sporting mega-event from the comprehensive framework of ethics and quality of information² and that compared the object of study with those essential documents within the media accountability systems (MAS) – the ethical codes, stylebooks and newsroom statutes (Bertrand, 2001). Additionally, it was clear that there were other key ethical issues (such as the use of corrections and clarifications, the invasion of privacy and the respect for religious beliefs) that had received little attention or remained underinvestigated.

Given their significance³, their massive consumption through a whole plethora of media platforms on a global scale⁴ (Billings et al., 2014b; Darnell and Sparks, 2005) and the values they hold⁵, the Olympic Games are one of the most adequate analysis

² The concept of “quality of information”, regarded as one of the most sensitive and determinant aspects in the regulation of the media (Cuilenburg and McQuail, 2003), is equivalent to “journalism ethics”. To be precise, the Colombian scholar Javier Darío Restrepo (2012), in his description of identity signals of media ethics, unequivocally indicates that ethics is an invitation to excellence.

³ The academic rationale for choosing the news about the Olympics as an object of study for this dissertation is clear. Some key sporting mega-events are widely followed worldwide or in specific countries, events such as the FIFA Football World Cup, the UEFA Champions League, games in the big European football leagues (Premier League, Bundesliga, Serie A, BBVA League), the Wimbledon tennis championships, the National Football League (NFL), the National Basketball Association (NBA), the Major League Baseball (MLB), the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) and the Commonwealth Games. However, the Olympic Games are regarded as *the* most important and prestigious international sporting mega-event (Billings, 2008; Sugden, 2012).

⁴ As Moragas (2006: 8) explains, “no other event, with the unfortunate exception of war, inspires such interest on the part of the global media”.

⁵ One cannot forget that “the Olympic movement has a moral stance based on its ideals/standards” (Horne and Whannel, 2011: 32) and that “the Olympics promote idealised values, they remind us

environments in which to conduct an examination from the journalism ethics/quality perspective in relation to sports journalism. In particular, the celebration of London 2012 offered a unique opportunity to shed light on the aforementioned questions through an international comparative analysis that examined the media content from the multifaceted framework of ethics and quality of information. In order to address the current academic need, this dissertation has examined whether six prestigious newspapers of three countries (*The Guardian/The Observer*, *The Daily Telegraph/The Sunday Telegraph*, *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *El País* and *La Vanguardia*) complied in their coverage of London 2012 with the fundamental principles of journalism ethics: truth, justice and responsibility. In doing so, the dissertation has revealed many areas in which the high-quality coverage delivered by these publications clearly contributed to dispel the long-held notion of sports journalism being the “toy department”. Yet, in other essential aspects, the investigation will show that there is much room for improvement.

1.2. Fundamental objectives of the research

The main objectives of the dissertation have been as follows:

1. **To elaborate a theoretical framework and a review of the literature concerning journalism ethics and sports media.** The project has explored the relationship between sports journalism and ethics, thoroughly examining the normative standards of the profession juxtaposed with the major ethical problem areas that have systematically occurred in the field of sports communication. An essential part of this objective has been to adapt the thesaurus of journalism ethics devised by Alsius (1996) with the purpose of building a coherent set of analysis items to investigate the coverage of sporting events through the lens of media ethics and quality of information. This framework has then been systematically applied to carry out the textual analysis of the coverage of London 2012 and extract the relevant results of the research.

how the world should be” (Girginov and Parry, 2005: 90). In fact, the first article of the *Olympic Charter* highlights the mission statement as follows: “Olympism seeks to create a way of life based on the joy of effort, the educational value of good example, social responsibility and respect for universal fundamental ethical principles” (IOC, 2013a, Art. 1). Furthermore, as the bye-law to Rule 48 of the *Olympic Charter* points out, “it is an objective of the Olympic Movement that, through its contents, the media coverage of the Olympic Games should spread and promote the principles and values of Olympism” (IOC, 2013a: 92). These core values of the Olympic movement include: respect for human dignity, antidiscrimination, equality, fairness, moral excellence, mutual understanding, tolerance, friendship, solidarity, multiculturalism, justice, peace and fair play (Abreu, 2002; Brownell and Parry, 2012; Maass, 2007; Moragas, 1996; Müller and Poyán Díaz, 2011; Naul, 2008; Parry, 2006; Samaranch, 1995; Tavares, 2010).

- 2. To provide well-evidenced insight into the press coverage carried out at London 2012 by six newspapers of three countries (United Kingdom, United States and Spain) through the lens of ethics and quality of information.** In empirical terms, the fundamental objective of the dissertation has been to examine the adequacy of the newspapers' pieces in line with the fundamental principles of journalism ethics: truth, justice and responsibility. In order to carry out its task, the investigation has triangulated the qualitative content analysis using semi-structured interviews with experts, professionals and International Olympic Committee (IOC) representatives. The international sample of quality newspapers (*The Guardian/The Observer, The Daily Telegraph/The Sunday Telegraph, The New York Times, The Washington Post, El País* and *La Vanguardia*) has allowed the researcher not only to obtain a critical understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the coverage, but also to delve into the interwoven dynamics, tensions and conditioning factors that come into play in contemporary sports journalism. In order to achieve this objective, the researcher has also compared and contrasted the results obtained with the prescriptions established in the ethical codes, stylebooks, newsroom statutes and national and international recommendations about journalism ethics, such as *Resolution 1.003 on the Ethics of Journalism* from the Council of Europe, the *Declaration of Principles on the Conduct of Journalists* from the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), the *International Principles of Professional Ethics in Journalism* (UNESCO), the *Editors' Code of Practice* from the Press Complaints Commission, now the Independent Press Standards Organisation (IPSO), the *Professional Code of Conduct* from the National Union of Journalists (NUJ), the *Code of Ethics* from the Society of Professional Journalists (SPJ), the *Statement of Principles* from the American Society of News Editors (ASNE) and the *Deontological Code of the Journalistic Profession* from the Spanish Federation of Journalists Association (FAPE), among other relevant accountability documents. This combined approach has provided an answer to the main question (*To what extent did the British, American and Spanish press comply with the fundamental principles of journalism ethics and quality of information in their coverage of London 2012?*) and the three subsequent questions posed by the research.
- 3. To pursue the transference of knowledge into the research, teaching and professional fields.** The outputs of the project can be a starting point to foster excellence among journalism students at higher education institutions (HEIs) and professional journalists. With that purpose in mind, the theoretical background and results of the project have been translated into an operative set of guidelines ("Ten tips for covering sports responsibly"). This output has already been circulated among undergraduate students and will be also disseminated in the professional

arena. The implementation of this pedagogic instrument (as well as other further outputs, such as a set of activities and case studies) could be a rewarding initiative within the purposes of the Olympic Values Education Programme (OVEP). In research terms, a key goal of the investigation was to disseminate the results through different outlets, including peer-reviewed journals, conference papers at relevant conferences (IAMCR, EASS, ECREA, IACS) and contributions at the International Olympic Academy (IOA). In the process of dissemination, the researcher has engaged in a scholarly debate with other academics, universities and centres devoted to studying media ethics, sports journalism and the Olympics. As will be discussed in Section 5.3 (*Directions for future research*), the generation of theoretical and empirical knowledge has also proved to be a valuable starting point from which to continue monitoring ethics and quality of information in relation to the coverage of forthcoming Olympic events (Rio 2016, Pyeongchang 2018 and Tokyo 2020), as well as other objects of study.

1.3. Structure of the dissertation

This dissertation is divided into four main chapters. Chapter 2 (*Theoretical framework*) will look closely at the relationship between the Olympic Games and the mass media, pinpointing the trajectory and milestones of the media coverage of the Games since the first modern Olympics held in Athens in 1896 to London 2012. Special attention will be given to London 2012 as a media event, providing insightful data about the accredited professionals, the television broadcasting and digital audiovisual coverage, the expansive print media operation and the significant impact of social networking sites in the Olympic scenario. Beyond that, this chapter will provide a thorough examination of the theoretical framework, the items for analysis and the literature review relating to sports journalism, ethics and quality of information. The dissertation will highlight the normative role of media in democratic societies, the major problem areas of sports journalism noted by the literature and the current academic challenges in this field. Bearing this in mind, Chapter 2 will present the construction of the framework that has been employed to evaluate empirically the quality of sports journalism. A detailed examination of each one of the relevant items included within the deontological principles of truth, justice and responsibility will be provided. Finally, the chapter will outline the foundations of two complementary perspectives employed in the investigation (agenda-setting and framing).

Chapter 3 will proceed to describe the methodological approach used in the research. Attention will be devoted to explaining the relevant concepts used for investigative purposes and presenting the main research question and the three associated sub-

questions. Following on from this, the characteristics of the qualitative method will be outlined, and the two essential techniques employed to gather empirical data (qualitative content analysis and semi-structured interviews) examined. The timeframe of the observation, the relevant criteria employed for the selection of the British, American and Spanish print newspapers examined (which rendered a total of 6,552 analysis units) and the sampling of interviewees (which resulted in 41 conversations with scholars, professionals and IOC representatives) will be explained in detail.

Once the theoretical and methodological foundations of the dissertation are established, Chapter 4 will unravel the results of the empirical analysis. The outcomes for each one of the areas of inquiry (truth, justice and responsibility) will be documented in greater detail and juxtaposed with the prescriptions established in the national and international codes of journalism ethics as well as specific guidelines and newspapers' stylebooks. Excerpts of the interviews will be crucial in the presentation of the results, as they will provide insight into additional angles, will supplement the evaluation of the findings and will contribute to explaining the relevant reasons and criteria for understanding the results. They will also help to broaden the explanations in order to identify ongoing dynamics in sports journalism and the profession at large.

Using the structure of a SWOT analysis, Chapter 5 will provide a final discussion of the strengths and weaknesses observed in the coverage of London 2012, as well as the many tensions, ongoing processes and conditioning factors that shape the professional practice of sports journalism nowadays and that impact on the quantity and quality of the content that media organizations deliver. In the light of the results, the importance of education among journalism students at HEIs, within newsroom/industry groups and among the citizenship will be emphasized. Following on from this, the chapter will also outline the delimitations of the study and will provide directions for further research.

Last but not least, the reader will find several appendices to this dissertation. Section 7.1 will present a set of guidelines, "Ten tips for covering sports responsibly", created to raise journalists' and students' awareness of the importance of being accountable to the principles of ethics and quality of information while disseminating journalistic sports content. Section 7.2 will detail the list of the publications related to this dissertation. Section 7.3 will list the deontological codes employed throughout the project. Finally, Sections 7.4 to 7.10 will present additional data: the teams of core reporters from each of the newspapers sampled that covered London 2012; the National Olympic Committees (NOCs), federations, experts, international media and organizations quoted in the coverage; and a list of journalists from other news desks who contributed to the reporting of the areas linked to the larger framework of the Olympic Games.

2. Theoretical framework

2.1. The Olympic Games and the mass media

2.1.1. The role and history of the media coverage of the Games

As Moragas (1992b: 9) points out, “nowadays the Olympic Games cannot be understood without the influence of mass media”. Media reporting on the modern Olympics has been decisive for their development and for their configuration as global prestigious and transcendent events (Marshall et al., 2010). Nowadays, the media continue to be fundamental actors in the Olympics (Moragas, 1992a) because they are extensively consumed through a wide range of media platforms (Billings et al., 2014b). As Horne and Whannel (2011: 153) remind us: “around the world, for two brief weeks, television screens, newspaper pages, internet sites, blogs and twittering focus upon the Olympic Games. The Olympic site is briefly the centre of the world”.

As Girginov and Parry (2005: 80) highlight, the mass media perform crucial functions at the Olympic Games: surveillance (they provide the required textual and audiovisual information about the Games); interpretation (they select the information and expand on “the meaning and significance of the Olympic events”); linkage (they help to “bring together culturally and geographically diverse groups of people who share a common interest in sport”); transmission of values (they take into account the fact that “sport and the Olympics in particular present many examples of desirable values, such as excellence, friendship and positive role-models”); and, last but not least, they provide entertainment. These crucial functions have been essential during the history⁶ of the media coverage of the Olympic Games.

⁶ Leaving the Olympics aside, for a general overview of the history of sports journalism, key works should be considered. Boyle (2006a) carried out a comprehensive analysis of sports journalism, focusing mainly on the British case. Boyle and Haynes (2009) explained the trajectory of sports journalism, starting from the origins of the sports press in the eighteenth century with the publication *The sports and pastimes of the people of England* and following its evolution in the print media, newsreel, film, radio, television, and so on. The history of sports journalism in Spain and Catalonia can be consulted at Jones (1996). Finally, references such as Bryant and Holt (2006) and Schultz (2005) are very useful for exploring the history of the relationship between media and sports in the US, from the early sports stories featured in newspapers to the current era of convergence. Fuller's (2008) overview of the historical development of US radio and television sportscasting is also worth taking into consideration.

The first modern Olympic Games⁷, celebrated in Athens in 1896, were born in a historical context characterized by the beginning of the development of a modern system of mass communication (Horne and Whannel, 2011) and distinguished by an emphasis on the written word (Stead, 2008). At the end of the nineteenth century, print media contributed to the increasing popularity of sports and in turn this promoted an increase in newspaper circulation (Boyle, 2006a). In the specific case of the Olympics, the support of newspapers was crucial in the organization and success of the first Olympic congress, held at La Sorbonne University (Paris) in 1894. At that time, Pierre de Coubertin established an alliance with the journalists, who supported his plans to revive the Olympic Games (Coubertin, 1894).

Despite this emerging interest in sport and the establishment of the concept of sports journalism⁸ (Miah and García, 2012), the first Olympic Games received little attention from the European press (Horne and Whannel, 2011). In fact, “only eleven journalists ventured to attend the Games and reported the revival of Olympic tradition” (Girginov and Parry, 2005: 83). Nevertheless, attention from the media began to progressively increase. At London 1908, “several national British newspapers – notably the *Mirror*, *Daily Mail*, *The Times* and *The Daily Telegraph*, plus many other popular periodicals of the day – gave extensive coverage to the Games” (Gallagher, 2012: 48). At Stockholm 1912, the total number of accredited journalists was over 500 (Moragas, 1992a: 133).

The radio was introduced at Paris 1924. During Amsterdam 1928 and Los Angeles 1932, radio broadcasting of the Olympics was characterized by technical and economic restrictions. First of all, the nonexistence of transoceanic cable for the radio broadcasting, as well as the lack of a technology to enable the long-distance air

⁷ The original Olympic Games originated in Ancient Greece in 776 BC and were held until AD 394, when Roman Emperor Theodosius I banned them along with other pagan festivals (Girginov and Parry, 2005; Horne and Whannel, 2011). Up to and including the nineteenth century, sports festivals took place in countries such as the UK (Robert Dover’s Olimpick Games, Highland Games, Much Wenlock Games, First Olympic Festival in Liverpool, First National Olympian Games in London), the US (The Boston Caledonian Games, The New York Caledonian Games), Greece and Scandinavia, with the aim of “reviving the idea of ancient Olympic competition” (Girginov and Parry, 2005: 38). All these events influenced Pierre de Coubertin, who led the establishment of the IOC in 1894. Coubertin’s indisputable contribution was the “establishment of a new regular event, symbols, myths, narratives and an imagined history” (Horne and Whannel, 2011: 83) and the “promotion of sport to the category of universal value” (Samaranch, 1992: 13). The first modern Olympics were held in Athens in 1896, with 245 male athletes and 13 nations taking part (Girginov and Parry, 2005: 45).

⁸ Two milestones marked the start of the development of sports journalism. First, in the 1880s, “Joseph Pulitzer set up the first dedicated sports department within a newspaper when he bought the *New York Herald*” (Boyle, 2006a: 32). Second, in the same decade, the sports journalist was starting to be considered “as a distinct figure in the growing professional journalism field” (Boyle, 2006a: 32).

delivery of the signals, complicated the development of radio during these Games. Second, the economic issues that contributed to blocking the radio expansion were the press lobby in Amsterdam and Los Angeles and, in the case of the Los Angeles Games, the crusade of the Hollywood film studios against radio. At Amsterdam 1928, the British lobby press hampered the live radio broadcasting during the Games and the BBC was only able to offer radio news programmes after six in the evening. At Los Angeles 1932, according to Llinés and Moreno (1999: 22), Hollywood's film industry saw the radio as a serious threat to its domination of the entertainment market. Moreover, the organizing committee of the Games restricted radio broadcasting because they feared that it could harm ticket sales. In those years, ticket sales for the sporting competitions were the most important, and almost exclusive, source of income for the organizing committee of the Games. By Berlin 1936, "extensive coverage became normalized and became a regular feature of radio broadcasting" (Marshall et al., 2010: 266).

The first television broadcasting through CCTV (72 hours of footage) took place at Berlin 1936 (Marshall et al., 2010) and the images from the stadium were broadcast via CCTV to 21 auditoriums located in Berlin, Potsdam and Leipzig (Fernández Peña and Ramajo, 2014). This pioneer delivery of Olympic sporting coverage was made with only three cameras. Despite the fact that the picture quality obtained wasn't very sharp (Billings, 2008) and that the technology still had to be vastly improved, the history of the fruitful alliance between the Olympics and television started in Berlin.

However, it is widely regarded that the first real broadcasting of the Olympics took place at London 1948, in a context of recovery from World War II. It consisted of nearly 64 hours of live broadcasting by the BBC, as well as regular information in the news bulletins (Gallagher, 2012; Haynes, 2010). Nevertheless, it should be noted that "no more than 80,000 households in the London area had television sets at the time of the Games" (Gallagher, 2012: 139) and, therefore, the audience was only about half a million people (Haynes, 2010). Despite the technical difficulties, London 1948 showed "the power of sports broadcasting to bring communities together, even under severe economic and social conditions" (Haynes, 2010: 1043).

Even though it had already operated at Berlin 1936, London 1948 and Melbourne 1956, television became more important from Rome 1960, when the first live international television transmission of the Games was made. Eighteen European countries received live images of the Games and citizens from the US, Canada and Japan could watch the Games only hours later. The distribution of the signal in Europe was assured by the Eurovision network, while recorded tapes were flown to the US and

Japan. It is estimated that 300 million viewers watched the Rome Games. At this point, the first substantial incomes for television rights were obtained (Moragas, 1992a). Since then, television “has been the dominant medium at the Olympic Games for many years, in both financial⁹ and cultural terms” (Miah and García, 2012: 124). Some of the television milestones that substantially helped the globalization of the Olympic Games include the introduction of significant technological advances: satellite broadcasting and slow motion replay (Tokyo 1964); colour coverage (Mexico 1968); video (Munich 1972), super slow motion and enhanced graphics (Los Angeles 1984); the new technologies of information and HDTV (Barcelona 1992); and full digital television coverage and the introduction of 3D broadcasting (London 2012).

In recent years, the Internet, which “has had a dramatic impact on the environment in which the sports-media industry now operates” (Boyle and Haynes, 2003: 100), has also become a powerful medium for transmitting coverage of the Olympic Games. Despite the fact that the first Internet video experience showing the Olympics was released at Athens 2004 (Fernández Peña, 2010), it wasn’t until Beijing 2008 that the use of the Internet as a platform to transmit footage and as a video library (Chen and Colapinto, 2010; Fernández Peña, 2011) was consolidated. Here, the IOC broadcast footage of the 2008 Olympic competitions in 78 countries through its official YouTube channel (Marshall et al., 2010; Miah and García, 2012) and NBCOlympics.com maximized its video streaming, obtaining “53 million unique users, 75.5 million video streams and 10 million hours of video consumption during the Games” (Horne and Whannel, 2011: 58), averaging six million daily visits (Billings, 2010). Finally, the BBC, apart from the mainstream television broadcasts – limited to the events with British participation – provided users with “full coverage of other sports and events” via the Internet (Fernández Peña, 2010: 2), supplemented with “blogs from producers and BBC journalists” (Boyle, 2009: 7).

Since Vancouver 2010, the Olympic Games have also been transmitted through blogs and social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter (Fernández Peña, 2011; Hutchins and Rowe, 2012). Content is not only disseminated through media outlets

⁹ To be precise, the selling of television rights is one of the two main sources of finance for the Olympic Games, along with the “selling of licenses that authorize the use of Olympic symbols” (García Ferrando and Durán González, 2002: 243). Initially, the income from television rights came mainly from the US, but “since 1988 sponsorship and television income from the rest of the world have become significant too” (Horne and Whannel, 2011: 59). Nevertheless, as experts note, the “substantial and rapid rise in digital video streaming is a strong indicator that the dominance of the Olympic Games by broadcast television could come under increasing challenge” (Horne and Whannel, 2011: 58). This could lead to a possible threat to the “Olympic movement’s economic foundation” (Miah and García, 2012: 85).

and official platforms but by citizen journalists too, who also take advantage of the new possibilities in order to produce and distribute Olympic content through the Internet and mobile devices (Marshall et al., 2010).

2.1.2. London 2012 as a media event

London 2012 was “widely known as ‘the social Olympics’ because of the range of media coverage available – from television to newspapers to websites to social media to smartphones” (Eagleman, 2014: 215). According to Eagleman (2014: 215), “a total of 10.8 million ticketholders attended the Games, leaving the vast majority of Olympic fans and followers to get their news and information about the Games from media outlets”. The estimated global audience of London 2012, taking into consideration the broadcasting media, the traditional media and the online and mobile platforms was 4.8 billion people around the world (IOC, 2012). Anthony Edgar, the IOC head of media operations, pointed out that London 2012 was “the biggest media assemblage for one particular news event in the world and in terms of the number of countries represented” (Majumdar, 2013: 1206). Considering the four Olympic media groups together – rights-holding broadcasters (RHB), the host broadcaster (OBO), the social networking sites and the press (written and photographic press and non-rights-holding broadcast organizations) – there were 24,274 accredited media professionals at London 2012.¹⁰

First, taking into account both traditional television broadcasting and digital audiovisual coverage, in the UK “ninety per cent of the UK population¹¹ watched BBC coverage of the Olympics, with 52 million people tuning in for at least 15 minutes” (IOC, 2012: 1). The BBC’s coverage of the event “offered unprecedented levels of access to events as they took place and in review formats and replay mode throughout the event” (Tomlinson, 2014: 242). As Boyle and Haynes (2014a: 86) explain, the BBC “made all the events available for the first time by mobilising all their digital platforms and

¹⁰ In terms of the accredited press, 6,313 press people from 2,685 organizations were accredited (LOCOG, 2012: 10). Among these, the number of accredited written press journalists was 3,438 (LOCOG, 2012: 22). According to the Press Commission Report from the London Organizing Committee of the Olympic Games and Paralympic Games (LOCOG), “182 NOCs had at least one written press representative at the Olympic Games” (LOCOG, 2012: 10).

¹¹ According to Tomlinson (2014: 242), these figures “constituted the country’s biggest national television event ‘since current measuring systems began’, outstripping the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee earlier in the year (69%), her grandson’s wedding to Kate Middleton the previous year (61%) and the football World Cup of 2002 (81%)”. According to the author, “the single-most watched Olympic event, as has been the pattern for Olympics after Olympics, was the opening ceremony, garnering 27.3 million at its peak, with the closing ceremony a million less; Usain Bolt’s sprint triumph in the men’s 100-metre final captivated 20 million Sunday-evening viewers” (Tomlinson, 2014: 242).

creating 24 HD streams of content available through their interactive red button service¹². David Rowe made a very positive remark about the technical dimension of the coverage provided by the BBC:

I was impressed by the technical quality of the BBC's coverage. It was called the "Red Button Olympics". The capacity to see every event live was remarkable. Mobile technology, broadcast, computing, consoles, iPads, phones, etc. All was very good (David Rowe, interview, June 2013).

Focusing on the American context, London 2012 became "the most watched television event in American history, according to NBC, with more than 219 million viewers" (IOC, 2012: 2). NBC also transmitted "2,200 hours of live footage from the Games on NBCOlympics.com. Their coverage was extended to a further 77 nations via YouTube" (Boyle and Haynes, 2014a: 88).

Second, the print media coverage was also expansive. It should be highlighted that according to Anthony Edgar, the IOC head of media operations, "British national newspapers devoted an average 46 pages daily to Olympic coverage during London 2012. Olympic coverage was published on the front, news, sport, feature and other pages, and a total of 7,200 pages of Olympic news were published by the national press in the UK" (Majumdar, 2013: 1207). Some newspapers in this country even "dedicated 65% of space to Olympics coverage during the Games" (Majumdar, 2013: 1209). Given that the event was hosted in London, the British press were expected to deliver a wide coverage, but the actual extent of it was actually a surprise for IOC representatives, media professionals and scholars alike, as the words from Anthony Edgar (IOC), Richard Haynes (University of Stirling) and Paul Hayward (*The Telegraph*) reveal:

In an Olympic year, the Olympics change the world landscape of media coverage, but in London 2012, in the British newspapers there was more coverage than any event I have seen. They could not believe it themselves. The Olympics was on the front page, was on page three, it was on the

¹² As Boyle and Haynes (2014a: 86) explain in detail, "the BBC1 television channel was the carrier of prime-time Olympic content, while BBC2 and BBC3 were also mobilised as 2,500 hours of live sport was carried during the Games. The 24 streaming HD channels – the BBC had created 6 for the Beijing Games – were then available through a combination of the BBC red button service on television and via their web-based BBC Sport platform. The ability to watch whatever event you wanted was a major technological advance in the BBC's coverage of the Games, and although these proved to be for niche audiences, when aggregated across the 24 channels as we note in the following, they delivered significant numbers". It should also be taken into consideration that the Games were available across four types of screens: "PC, mobile phones, tablets and connected or augmented television, either through integrated wifi or gaming consoles" (Boyle and Haynes, 2014a: 89). Finally, the BBC radio coverage should not be overlooked, as the Games were broadcast through the following channels: BBC Radio 5 Live, BBC Radio 5 Live Extra and BBC Radio 5 Live Olympic Extra.

news pages, it was in the sports pages, it was on the politics pages, it was on the feature pages and it was on the back page. The same happened on the BBC. It was completely blanket coverage. British media had never seen anything like it (Anthony Edgar, interview, May 2014).

My general impression at the time was clearly that the coverage was expansive. We should account for the fact that it was in Britain and that actually British athletes did it pretty well (in certain sports, certainly). There was a kind of bubble for a month of congratulatory writing, celebration by sport, by broadcasters, by the press generally (Richard Haynes, interview, October 2013).

London 2012 was very different because it was the biggest sporting event ever to be staged in this country. The country's reputation was at stake in terms of the organization and in terms of the success of it. The expectation, the anticipation and pressure on newspapers were immense, because we had to cover every single moment and event of those Olympics in a way that we had never covered anything before. So, it was a unique operation, different from anything that we had done before as individual journalists (Paul Hayward, interview, October 2013).

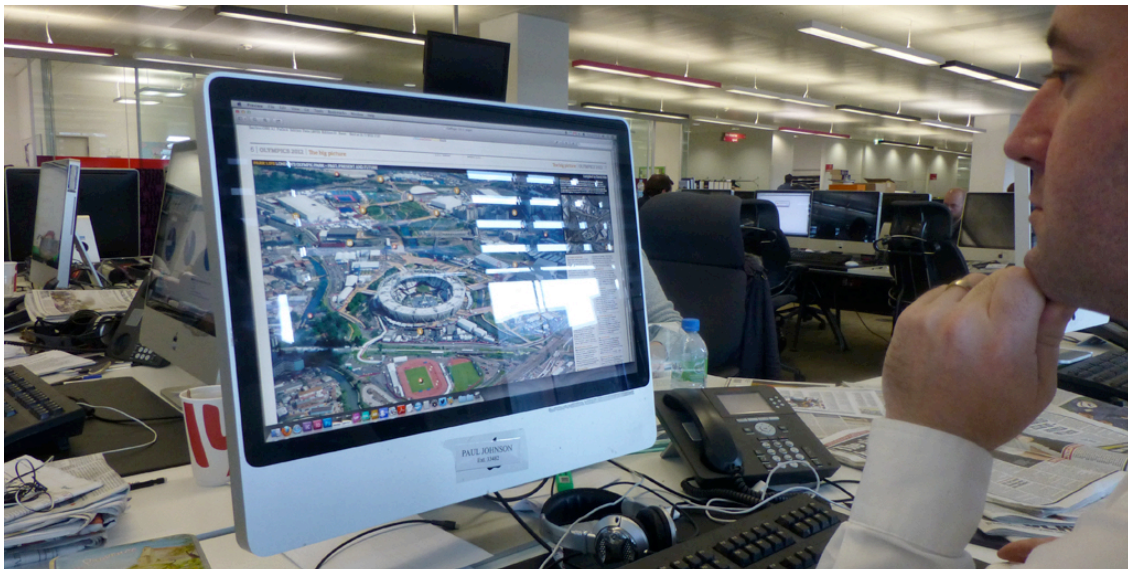


Figure 1. Sports editor Ian Prior showing pages produced by *The Guardian* for London 2012

Looking at the social networking scenario, “in London, 900 million people followed the Games on Facebook and 140 million people followed it on Twitter” (Majumdar, 2013: 1207). Other social platforms based on the sharing of photographic content, such as Instagram (Fernández Peña et al., 2014), also emerged in the Olympic media landscape. With regard to the production of news and information, the IOC and LOCOG also had an “active presence on social media sites¹³” (Eagleman, 2014: 215),

¹³ With regard to social media, it is also worth highlighting the fact that “London 2012’s social media sites, including Facebook, Twitter and Google+, attracted 4.7 million followers” (IOC, 2012: 2). It should be added too that an innovative initiative in this vein was the introduction of the Olympic Athletes’ Hub, which “brought together more than 3,000 athletes and nearly 300,000 Olympic fans to

which included the creation of the Olympic Athletes' Hub (Fernández Peña et al., 2014) and the dissemination of sporting news through Twitter's @London2012 account and the #London2012 hashtag (Frederick et al., 2015). Media outlets also made intensive use of their different channels on social networking sites while the event was ongoing.

2.2. Journalism ethics and sports media: theoretical framework, analysis items and review of the literature

As essential players in the configuration of the public agenda and the transmission of information and values in democratic societies (Bernstein, 2002; Hardy, 2008), the quality media should carry out a complete and responsible treatment of all the areas of the news arena, including sports, which indisputably are “a central aspect of contemporary popular culture¹⁴” (Boyle, 2006a: 182). According to the “newspaper’s normative public service role” (Singer, 2013), conscientious media must fulfil crucial duties in democratic societies. They should provide useful information and the guidance that the citizenship requires to understand public affairs and to participate in democratic lives on an informed basis (Christians et al., 2009; Delli Carpini and Keeter, 1996; Lambeth, 1992; Meyers, 2010; Pihl-Thingvad, 2015).

It is true that as Nordenstreng explains, in democratic systems “the freedom of expression and of media are vital elements of people’s lives” (Nordenstreng, 2011: 91). However, “freedom does entail responsibility” (Craft, 2010: 49). Although freedom of communication remains the key goal in the current information society (Fernández Alonso and Moragas, 2008), it must be accompanied by a series of communication responsibilities and moral obligations, such as the respect for human rights (Jørgensen, 2011) and the preservation of the “major values associated with good media – truthfulness, freedom, objectivity, diversity, and contributing to social solidarity” (Christians et al., 2009: 83). The ultimate goal of this ethical foundation is to guarantee that the media’s task is performed in a responsible way, protecting the rights and sensibilities of the citizenship from certain damaging circumstances, harm and offence, for example (Frost, 2011).

meet and interact online. Olympians participated in online chats and provided an inside view of life in the Olympic Village by sharing photographs, Twitter feeds and Facebook messages” (IOC, 2012: 2).

¹⁴ The fact that “sport is a central feature of life in countries around the world” cannot be denied (Billings et al., 2014b: 11). This is true not only with regard to its practice, both recreationally and professionally, but also in the media production and consumption field. Sport is a crucial asset for the different media (Bellamy, 2006). As a massively consumed content it is also regarded as a catalyst for professional opportunities and revenues (Billings et al., 2014b).

Ethics is “the branch of philosophy concerned with the attempt to establish principles and codes of moral behaviour” (Malcolm, 2008: 85). More precisely, journalism ethics can be understood as “the moral principles, reflected in rules, written or unwritten, which prescribe how journalists should work to avoid harming or distressing others, e.g. when gathering information, when deciding what to publish and when responding to complaints about their work” (Franklin et al., 2005: 74). In this research, the focus is on deontological ethics, which “emphasise rights and duties” (Sanders, 2003: 32) and refer to the “voluntary expressions of submission to specific norms” (Pasquali, 1997: 28).

Given the fact that information “plays a crucial role in the construction of the community and the citizenship¹⁵” (PRENDE, 2007: 19), journalists must have a “moral compass” (Kovach and Rosenstiel, 2001: 181), that is, a sense of ethics¹⁶, ideals and responsible behaviour in order to carry out their professional practice (Alsius, 1999; Christians et al., 1991; Deuze, 2005; Neurauter-Kessels, 2011; Pasquali, 1997; Pihl-Thingvad, 2015; Sanders, 2003). To generate high-quality content and to “build their own reputation as credible sources of information” (Girginov and Parry, 2005: 79), good journalists should follow the considerations and standards established in the main deontological principles: truth, justice and responsibility (Alsius, 2010; Christians et al., 2009; Frost, 2011).

That being said, it cannot be denied that “all too often journalism falls far short of this ideal” (Frost, 2011: 12). This is particularly true in the field of sports journalism. Scholars have pointed out a series of major problem areas that have systematically occurred in this field and that have challenged the normative standards of the profession: boosterism; blurring of the frontiers between information, opinion and

¹⁵ As an essential consideration of journalism ethics, one cannot get away from the fact that the media are “primarily a service to their publics, to which they are ultimately accountable” (Traber, 1997: 333). In other words, although journalists are accountable to different stakeholders, “normative approaches to journalism studies expect journalists to rank accountability to democratic society and the public at the top of the hierarchy” (Harro-Loit, 2015: 34). As Restrepo explains, quality journalism is executed with society in mind, considering “the selection of its themes, its approach and treatment of its materials and the persistence to serve the public good with effectiveness” (Restrepo, 2007: 16). Quality journalism is crucial so that “people can make sensible, well-informed decisions about those responsibilities and so play their part in the community” (Frost, 2011: 46).

¹⁶ This sense of ethics should be irrespective of the country in which journalists develop their work, because “information rationally commits *disseminators* of information to both epistemological and ethical standards that are universal and thus globally *prescriptive*” (Spence and Quinn, 2008: 267). As Richards (2010: 180) highlights, “ethics can be both universal and rooted in particular contexts, and it is possible to accommodate considerable differences”.

advertising; lack of rigour; sensationalism; a tendency to incite violence; inequalities in the treatment of gender, race and disability; using bad criteria in the selection of news; the lack of investigative reporting and public service mission; and the poor quality and lack of variety of the sources employed (Boyle, 2006b; Hardin et al., 2009; Oates and Pauly, 2007; Rojas Torrijos, 2011; Rowe, 2007; Wanta, 2013; Whiteside et al., 2012). As Oates and Pauly (2007: 333) emphasize, “sports coverage routinely violates the ethical norms by which the profession asks to be judged”. As a consequence, sports journalism “has been traditionally viewed disparagingly as the ‘toy department’, a bastion of easy living, sloppy journalism and ‘soft’ news” (Boyle, 2006a: 1). It is, therefore, a section “divorced from the rigorous constraints applied to other areas of the trade” (Boyle, 2006b: 12). Certainly, sports journalism has not been treated “with the same respect as other newspaper staples, such as crime news, politics and business” (Wanta, 2006: 105). In addition, the status of sports journalists has been seen as low¹⁷ (Boyle, 2006a; English, 2015; Hutchins and Rowe, 2012).

In order to address these shortcomings, sports journalists need to gain awareness of their accountability¹⁸ (Wulfemeyer, 1985) and assume that “sports journalism should not be exempted from scrutiny regarding conventional criteria within the news area” (Rowe, 2007: 385). They need to do this more than ever in a changing media landscape characterized by the following rapid technological innovations and sophistication: the challenges posed by new digital distribution platforms; the 24/7 news cycle; the fierce competition between and commercial orientation of media; the trend towards neoliberalism; the economic crisis, the decline of circulation and the fall of advertising revenues in the newspaper industry; and the fight for the maximization of audiences and the increased dependency on advertising as a support for media activities (Billings et al., 2014b; Brock, 2013; Dekavalla, 2015; Figueras-Maz et al., 2012; Haynes and Boyle, 2008; Kian and Zimmerman, 2012; McChesney, 2008; Prado, 2015; Richards, 2010; Schlesinger and Doyle, 2015; Wilkins, 2014). The key to

¹⁷ As Boyle (2006a: 165) points out, given the rise “in the commercial value attributed to sports journalism in terms of its contribution to both sales and the brand image of the broadsheet/compact newspaper, the profile and status of top sportswriters has never been higher within the print media sector”. Nevertheless, it should be acknowledged that, in comparison to other media professionals, sports journalists still continue to have a lower status (Boyle and Haynes, 2009).

¹⁸ Media accountability is “the process by which media organizations may be expected or obliged to render an account of their activities to their constituents” (Pritchard, 2000: 2). As Plaisance (2000: 259) argues, “accountability plays a critical role in the overall functioning of the media themselves and is a component of theories of media use, information processing, and the roles of media as credible agenda setters”. As the author highlights, accountability and responsibility are closely linked: “to be accountable is in fact to be responsible” (Plaisance, 2000: 260).

improving the situation in sports journalism is to pursue excellence and communicate responsibly (Billings, 2010).

The academic challenges in the field of ethics and sports journalism

In the sports media field, three crucial ethical questions have been extensively analysed: the media treatment of gender, race and nationality (Bernstein and Blain, 2003; Boyle and Haynes, 2009; Farrington et al., 2012; Hundley and Billings, 2010). An extensive body of theoretical and empirical research has studied those thematic axes which fall under the deontological principle of justice. The prominence of these themes is not unusual, given that “the Olympics is the biggest of all mega-events and thus can be seen as the biggest of all media portrayals of these forms of identity” (Billings and Eastman, 2003: 584). Furthermore, with regard to the construction of identity, other examinations have focused on two issues, the minimization and the stereotyped depiction of disabled athletes in the Paralympics (Schantz and Gilbert, 2001; Schell and Duncan, 1999; Thomas and Smith, 2003). Gantz (2011) pointed out that it was necessary to continue monitoring the study of identities in the future.

Leaving these key axes aside, further literature has explored other problem areas related to content: use of sources; trivialization of information; blurring of the division between information and entertainment; use of clichés; and the low percentage of news pieces focused on economic and political aspects of sports (Oates and Pauly, 2007; Rowe, 2007; Steen, 2012). Holt (2000) also highlighted the promotion of violence through the use of military metaphors. Horky and Stelzner (2013) underlined some of the discrepancies between the sports journalism field and the ethical norms that should guide the profession. The authors pinpointed problems such as: the low attention given by journalists to issues such as doping; the difficulty of maintaining a critical distance; the economic and emotional constraints of sports journalists; and the dependency on advertising. Other literature has examined the ethical attitudes and beliefs of sports journalists, focusing on sports journalism’s economic problems (Salwen and Garrison, 1998) and how the perceptions of public service determine journalists’ attitudes towards accepting gifts or establishing close relationships with sources (Hardin et al., 2009).

Finally, other scholars have focused on putting forward recommendations. Wulfemeyer (1985) analysed the *Ethics Guidelines* produced by the Associated Press Sports Editors (APSE) and proposed further guidelines in ten areas (freebies, moonlighting, newsgathering methods, news sources, direct quotes, privacy, gambling, special interests, self-interests and involvements) to foster the accountability of media professionals in the field. Taylor (1988) advocated: the avoidance of nationalistic and

chauvinistic approaches; nurturing neutrality and honesty; training in the ability to report on other issues beyond sport; and the requirement to be fair, honest and accurate. Rojas Torrijos (2011) designed a stylebook intended for Pan-American sports reporters. Focusing on the Olympics, MacNeill (1998: 115) stated that a code of media ethics “may enhance the quality of Olympic coverage, improve the working conditions for the Olympic sports media, and improve the competitive conditions for athletes”.

That being said, it should be highlighted that the aforementioned authors have not taken a systematic classification of the core principles of journalism ethics and news excellence as a starting point for their theoretical and empirical analyses. Moreover, neither have they made use of the comparisons between their objects of study and the ethical codes, stylebooks and newsroom statutes which are essential documents within the MAS (Bertrand, 2001). Additionally, it is clear that there are other key ethical issues that have received little attention or remain underinvestigated in the coverage of sporting mega-events such as the Olympic Games. As will be shown throughout this dissertation, ethics in sports journalism is a multifaceted question which also requires the detailed analysis of other key areas, such as the use of speculation and rumour, sensationalism, the invasion of privacy and respect for religious beliefs. These core challenges indicated the need to start conducting investigations that approached the coverage of sport in a more comprehensive way: contributions that, for instance, examined one particular Olympic Games from a global perspective and from the lens of media ethics, and that also juxtaposed the media outputs with the prescriptions established in the major recommendations of journalism ethics. This dissertation aims to contribute to the scholar community by filling the current gaps in the field.

Framework to evaluate the quality of sports journalism

In order to lay the groundwork for the empirical analysis, a thorough review of the literature and an examination of the key ethical issues in the field of sports journalism were required. In addition, it was compulsory to articulate a broad, robust and operative framework, that is, a set of coherent analysis items that enabled the researcher to examine in a systematic way the quality of sports media contents, that is, their compliance with the fundamental principles of journalism ethics. According to Fengler et al. (2014: 85), “from a normative point of view, the quality of the media has to be monitored because of the media’s unique function in democratic societies”.

The framework to analyse the quality of sports media content used in this dissertation took as its foundation the thesaurus of journalism ethics¹⁹ built by Alsius (1996), who systematized the main deontological principles based on the ideas posed by Black et al. (1995), Cooper (1989), Day (1991) and Lambeth (1992). The thesaurus has been a crucial tool in the work of the Journalism Research Group (GRP) at Pompeu Fabra University, in competitive projects both at a national level (*Ethics and excellence in news production*²⁰ and *Transparency and media accountability*²¹) and European level (*Media accountability and transparency in Europe*²²) (Alsius, 2010; Alsius and Salgado, 2010; Alsius et al., 2011). The significant items included in the thesaurus²³ were the reference point from which the framework of this research was built and organized and which revolved around the deontological principles of truth, justice and responsibility (see Figure 2).



Figure 2. Fundamental deontological principles: the core issues of sports journalism ethics at the intersection of the principles of truth, justice and responsibility

¹⁹ An extensive description of all the items included in the thesaurus of journalism ethics and the criteria used to elaborate it, including the ideas and principles raised by Cooper and Lambeth, as well as the codes database used by UPF's Journalism Research Group, can be found at Alsius (2011). In addition, a general overview of the content of the thesaurus can be accessed at http://www.eticaperiodistica.org/tesauro_eng.html [Last access: 22-09-2015].

²⁰ *Ethics and excellence in news production. Journalistic ethics and the expectations of the public*, 2006–2010, Spanish Ministry of Science and Innovation, SEJ2006-05631-C05-01/SOCI.

²¹ *Transparency and media accountability*, 2013–2015, Spanish Ministry of Economy and Competitiveness, CSO2012-39138.

²² *Media accountability and transparency in Europe*, 2010–2013, European Union, SSH-2009-5.1.1.

²³ It should be noted, however, that not all the items included in each epigraph of Alsius' thesaurus were used, because some of them (such as "suicide", "protection of underage" and "gender violence") were beyond the scope of the current research.

Additionally, the framework was complemented and reinforced with specific considerations relating to journalism's values written by Christians and Traber (1997), Christians et al. (1991), Deuze (2005), Frost (2011), Keeble (2009), Knowlton and Reader (2009), Kovach and Rosenstiel (2001), Meyers (2010), Plaisance (2009), Sanders (2003), Wilkins and Christians (2009) and PRENDE (2007).

The prescriptions established in the media style guides, newsroom statutes and national and transnational codes of journalism ethics were also thoroughly analysed at this stage and were taken into consideration in order to build the framework. These documents, which are direct sources of substantive deontology (Casasús, 2011), accomplish key functions, they: (i) reflect the general and specific moral standards, ideals, values and norms of the profession; and (ii) highlight the problems faced by journalists and protect the public they serve (Roberts, 2012; Slattery, 2014; White, 1989). Bertrand (2001) and Pöttker and Starck (2003) have highlighted the crucial significance of these traditional MAS as they can help to recover the prestige of journalism with regard to public opinion. As a social responsibility instrument, they establish an implicit contract between media professionals and citizens and, therefore, they are a crucial component in promoting the quality of information. Even though codes have their weaknesses, limitations and shortcomings (Slattery, 2014), including the fact that "they cannot contemplate every eventuality" (Sanders, 2003: 31), the MediaAcT project survey highlighted the fact that European journalists consider the ethical codes as instruments that have the most impact on their professional behaviour (3.44 out of 5 points), only after the newspapers' stylebooks (3.74). In other words, "among the traditional instruments, in-house and professional codes of ethics, as well as journalism education, are the mechanisms with the highest relevance for journalistic performance" (Fengler et al., 2014: 100).

The core documents that were taken into consideration are *Resolution 1.003 on the Ethics of Journalism* from the Council of Europe (1993), the *Declaration of Principles on the Conduct of Journalists* from the IFJ (1954, revised 1986), the *International Principles of Professional Ethics in Journalism* (UNESCO, 1983), the *Editors' Code of Practice* from IPSO, the *Professional Code of Conduct* from the NUJ, the *Code of Ethics* from the SPJ (1973), the *Statement of Principles* from ASNE (1975), the *Deontological Code of the Journalistic Profession* from FAPE (1993), the *Declaration of Principles of the Journalistic Profession* from the Catalan Journalists College (CPC, 1992) and the specific code about sports journalism, the *Ethics Guidelines* from APSE, revised in 1991).

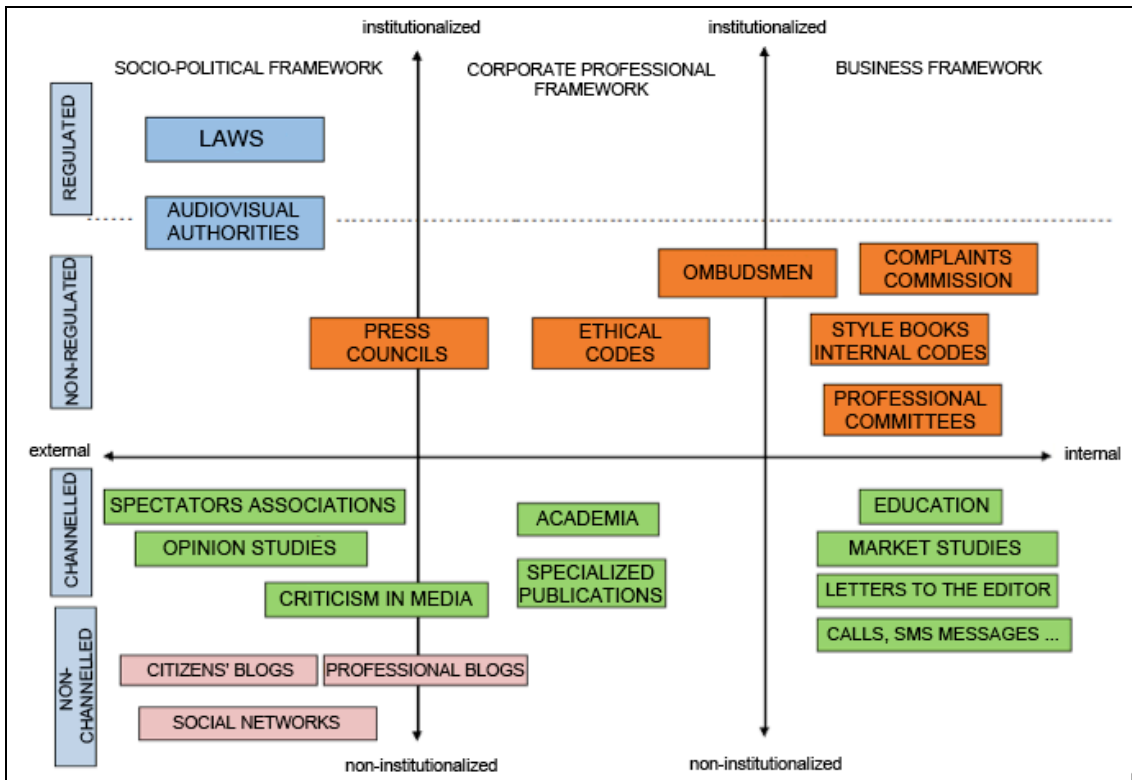


Figure 3. Map of media accountability systems (MAS) (Ethical codes, as non-regulated and institutionalized mechanisms operating in the corporate professional framework, are core instruments in this map, which also includes other mechanisms such as press councils, ombudsmen, media criticism and letters to the editor) (Source: Salvador Alsius. Translation: Xavier Ramon)

The following table, adapted from the published article “Ethics and sports journalism: a proposal of analysis items to evaluate the quality of the sports coverage in the media” (Ramon, 2013), presents the framework that has been used in the present study to analyse the coverage of London 2012 from the perspective of ethics and quality of information. In this chapter, each specific item will be thoroughly examined.

Principle	Specific items used to analyse ethics and quality in sports journalism
Truth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Avoiding conjecture, speculation and rumour ▪ Selection, citing and credibility of sources. Quantity and quality of representative, balanced, authoritative and trustworthy sources ▪ Depth and comprehensiveness in the provision of information <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Presence of a wide range of journalistic genres ○ Recognition in the agenda of the different Olympic sports ○ Completeness of the sports information ○ Importance given to the larger framework (relevant contextual issues) ▪ Rectification of content and clarification of misunderstandings ▪ Impartiality and correct separation between journalistic genres ▪ Avoiding sensationalism and trivialization in news reporting
Justice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Commitment to justice in the representation of gender ▪ Commitment to justice in the representation of race

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Commitment to justice in the representation of disability ▪ Commitment to justice in the representation of nationality
Responsibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Respect for the privacy of sportsmen and sportswomen ▪ Avoiding the warlike language that fosters violence and confrontation ▪ Respect for religious beliefs

Table 1. Organizing framework employed to study the media coverage of sports from the perspective of ethics and quality of information

2.2.1. Principle of truth

As Alsius (1999: 55) highlights, “the main moral systems of the human civilization have considered truth as one of the inexcusable duties”. Truth has been regarded as one of the “most solid and universal ethical principles in human interrelations” (Alsius, 2010: 64). From the professional point of view, “journalism’s first obligation is to the truth” (Kovach and Rosenstiel, 2001: 12). As Richards (2010: 179) points out, “finding and reporting the truth has, of course, long been one of the main goals of journalism, and truth telling continues to be the primary justification for journalism”. Ward (2009: 71) adds that “truthfulness in communication is imperative for any responsible communicator, let alone powerful news organizations”.

The essential character of truth-telling in journalistic practice (Alsius, 2010; Black et al., 1995; Christians and Traber, 1997; Christians et al., 1991; Cooper, 1989; Day, 1991; Deuze, 2005; Frost, 2011; Keeble, 2009; Knowlton and Reader, 2009; Kovach and Rosenstiel, 2001; Miedth, 1997; Plaisance, 2009; Sanders, 2003; Spence and Quinn, 2008) has been widely documented in the ethical codes and recommendations (Christians et al., 1991; Hafez, 2002). Illustrative cases in point can be found in UNESCO’s *International Principles of Professional Ethics in Journalism* (Arts 1–2), the IFJ’s *Declaration of Principles on the Conduct of Journalists* (Art. 1), *Resolution 1.003 on the Ethics of Journalism* from the Council of Europe (Art. 4), the NUJ’s *Professional Code of Conduct* (Art. 2), the SPJ’s *Code of Ethics* (Art. 1), ASNE’s *Statement of Principles* (Art. 4) and FAPE’s *Deontological Code of the Journalistic Profession* (Arts 2–3), among other documents.

As pointed out by Slattery (2014: 155): “according to the codes, truthful information is accurate, complete, and free of distortion. More specifically, in its accuracy and completeness, truth reflects the diversity of people and their ideas. It is free of manipulation, deception, and is transparent”. As Karlsson (2011: 290) underlines, “the traditional truth-telling ideal stresses that journalistic content is produced by experts and should not contain inaccuracies, lies or misinformation when the information is presented to the audience, as this would indicate flaws in journalistic scrutiny, which

would have a bearing on trust and authority”. It cannot be denied that in the field of journalism, “truth-telling is fundamental to trust” (Singer, 2010: 119).

In this research, the principle of truth has been broken down into two main areas: (1) the analysis of carefulness and rigour; and (2) the analysis of neutrality. Regarding the first area, the traditional concept of objectivity, that is, the observation and dissemination of the information without including any personal points of view, interpretations or opinions, presents epistemological problems (Alsius, 1999; Black and Roberts, 2011; Ward, 2009). Objectivity in its traditional sense, “rooted in a misleading metaphor of the journalist as a recording instrument who passively observes and transmits facts” (Ward, 2009: 77) has a problematic status, and scholars and media professionals have doubted its current validity (Ward, 2010).

Therefore, the compromise with regard to approaching objectivity is expressed in ethical codes and academic literature through other principles, such as carefulness, detachment, comprehensiveness in news reporting and balance or non-partisanship (Jontes, 2014). This concept makes reference to the attitude required: to report the significant events with rigour, precision and accuracy, and to ensure the depth and contextualization of information, a correct selection of the sources and the correction and clarification of any errors that have been made (Alsius, 2010).

Regarding the second issue, absolute neutrality or impartiality in journalistic practice is unattainable. However, as Figdor (2010: 160) stresses, “although bias in news reports is inevitable in general, it does not follow that every news report is inevitably biased”. Journalistic genres have to be precisely distinguished, taking into consideration the fact that “the opinions of the journalist should not affect, at least in an explicit way, the content of the news” (Alsius, 1999: 92). Furthermore, as will be argued, the selection and presentation of news cannot be subjugated to sensationalist criteria.

2.2.1.1. Avoiding conjecture, speculation and rumour

According to Cenite (2005: 57), “journalists should avoid reporting their own or others’ speculation; they should describe the facts”. Specific articles in ethical documents make explicit references to avoiding conjecture, speculation and rumour, such as in the codes promoted by the IFJ (Art. 3), the Council of Europe (Art. 4), IPSO (Art. 1.iii), FAPE (Art. 17), the CPC (Art. 1) and the Union of Journalists in Madrid (Art. 9), as well as the stylebooks/style guides established by *El País* (Art 1.12; Art. 1.13) and *La Vanguardia* (Art. 4.7). Nevertheless, one has to be aware that “comment and often speculation are increasingly a central aspect of contemporary sports journalism”

(Boyle, 2006a: 93). Rumour reporting, which undermines the accuracy of news, is pervasive across the sports media landscape. Rumour and speculative reporting is routinely one of the most used sources in sports journalism and sometimes it is difficult to distinguish whether rumours are true or whether they are simply interested information (Alcoba, 1993).

Speculation and rumour cannot only be detected in the presence of indicator words which hint or confess that information is based on a rumour (for example, “it is said that” or “it is rumoured that”) or in the use of conditional verb tenses. In some cases, such as in the media portrayal of Ye Shiwen, which will be thoroughly examined later, the use of rumour can involve casting doubts over the nature of athletes’ performances, a situation that can certainly influence citizens’ perceptions.

2.2.1.2. Selection, citing and credibility of sources

It is widely known that “sources are essential for journalists” (Sanders, 2003: 107). Thus, it is not strange that news sources have also been used extensively as objects of deontological codes and stylebooks (FAPE (Art. 13); SPJ (Art. 1); ASNE (Art. 6); APSE (Art. 6); *The Guardian Editorial Code* (Art. 1); *El País Style Guide* (Art. 1.14–1.15); *The Telegraph Stylebook* (Basic Principles); *The Washington Post Standards and Ethics* (Art. D); *The New York Times, Ethical Journalism* (Arts 22–24); *La Vanguardia Stylebook* (Art. 4–4.2); to list a few). Most of these documents emphasize that fact that “journalists should avoid anonymous sources²⁴ when possible” (Hlavach and Freivogel, 2011: 35). Identifying all the sources is vital, because it enhances transparency, which “signals the journalist’s respect for the audience” and also “helps establish that the journalist has a public interest motive, the key to credibility” (Kovach and Rosenstiel, 2001: 80-81). However, the revealing of sources and their accurate reproduction, in direct form or in precis (Franklin et al., 2005), is simply not enough.

The quality media should also feature an extensive range of representative, reliable, authoritative and trustworthy sources that provide genuine information (Frost, 2011). As Rojas Torrijos (2011: 142) underlines, “the better the number of treated sources the more truthful and credible will be the resulting information”. Therefore, one of the key aspects in ensuring the quality of a news piece is to be certain that it includes a

²⁴ As Frost reminds us, “anonymous sources need to be used sometimes, but it is much better to name a source and provide details about their situation so that consumers can be more sure about their motivation” (Frost, 2011: 135). Stofer et al. (2010: 38) state that “audiences are normally very hesitant to believe stories with unnamed sources, or do not want to believe the information presented”.

sufficient number of balanced sources. As Garrison and Sabljak (1993: 40) explain, “a reporter must use a wide range of sources on most stories to get the complete picture of what has occurred, or is occurring. Pieces cannot be under-resourced, because a single perspective can present a warped or biased point of view”.

The problem in the sports journalism field is that the number and range of sources that have been employed have been scant. Taking into account the data from the International Sports Press Survey 2005, carried out in 10 countries and using 37 newspapers around the world, Rowe (2007: 387) highlighted the fact that “the use of multiple story sources was rare, with 60 per cent of all sampled stories having either one source or none at all, and those sources used overwhelmingly confined to the sports industry (athletes, coaches, and representatives of sports clubs dominating completely as sources for sports clubs)”.

Focusing on the case of the Australian broadsheet, the *Sydney Morning Herald*, the same author studied 14 weeks of coverage in 2005 and highlighted the predominance of single sources and the use of “highly predictable ‘actors’ in sports events” (Rowe, 2007: 396). Moreover, the author pointed out that the “media do not use each other as sources very frequently” (Rowe, 2007: 396). The author emphasized that “sports journalism remains rather insular and heavily dependent on the usual source suspects”, that is, “the sports desk is a rather self-enclosed world with its own restricted preoccupations, in direct dialogue mainly with a narrow range of interlocutors” (Rowe: 2007: 398). Closely related to these ideas, Sugden and Tomlinson (2007: 48) highlight the fact that “a huge amount of material that appears in the sports pages is derived from the official sources”. Cassidy (2012: 34) also stresses that “sports journalists, much like their counterparts in other departments, rely overwhelmingly on official sources”.

Taking the coverage of a sporting event as a whole, it is argued that this coverage cannot rely solely on the hegemonic or prominent sources in the field, that is, the **sporting actors** (athletes, coaches, performance directors and representatives of national teams). Conversely, a high-quality journalistic approach to the coverage of an event such as the Olympics should encompass the use of a broader range of identifiable and reliable sources, which can help to provide the most complete picture possible of the events. In this investigation, the researcher specifically aimed to examine the use that newspapers made of other relevant information sources, which fall under the following categories:

- **First-hand observation.** Presence of specialist and polyvalent journalists at sporting events. In the reporting of off-the-field and contextual issues, the primary

observation provided by foreign correspondents is crucial, given their distinguishing role and the added value they can provide when undertaking their task (Archetti, 2013).

- **Former athletes.** In their study of sports television commentary, Keene and Cummins (2009: 75) demonstrated that “a commentator’s prior athletic experience does impact on viewers’ perceptions of sportscaster credibility”. There could well be a similar impact in the print media context. The analysis and background information that former athletes provide can be a key source to building the coverage of a sporting mega-event.
- **Institutional representatives.** Representatives from the IOC, NOCs, national and international sporting federations, LOGOC and from other relevant organisms, such as the British government and the London local authorities.
- **Major national and international news agencies**²⁵. Information provided by the IOC-recognized international agencies (Associated Press (AP), Reuters and Agence France-Presse (AFP) (IOC, 2013c: 61) as well as other major newswire services, the Press Association (PA and PA Sport), EFE and Deutsche Presse-Agentur (DPA), for example.
- **National and international media.** Media sources are also one of the main sources that journalists, including foreign correspondents, should consult (Archetti, 2013). Information originating in other relevant newspapers, magazines, television, radio and new media (including newspaper websites, blogs and portals), and major media outlets such as NBC or the BBC should be considered.
- **Websites.** Information originating from official and key websites and emanating from established media outlets, BBCSports.co.uk and NBCOlympics.com for example, as well as other relevant sites on the topic can be considered as sources, although journalists have to be aware that the Internet “is not an entirely reliable source” (Sanders, 2003: 117) and its content “must always be regarded with some scepticism” (Keeble, 2009: 127). Moreover, given the establishment of “the blog as a potentially credible source of information” (Billings et al., 2014b: 86), the media can post on valuable and subject-relevant professional and amateur weblogs.
- **Social networking sites.** Given the fact that “journalists are increasingly using social networking sites to access information and photographs” (Keeble, 2009: 126), sports journalism professionals can make use of valuable information appearing on the more trustworthy channels of Facebook and Twitter, among other social networking sites. Facebook and Twitter are key tools that have had a strong

²⁵ As Qing (2010: 1852) remarks, “transnational news agencies such as Reuters and the Associated Press continue to dictate and dominate the global news agenda in terms of both textual and audiovisual representations. The texts and images they disseminate to mass media and new media around the world are rarely challenged by alternative representations”.

impact on journalistic practice (English, 2014a; Frederick et al., 2015; Hacker and Seshagiri, 2011; Hermida, 2013, Ju et al., 2013). It is widely known that “social media has quickly become an increasingly important element of the day-to-day life of journalists, both those working in sports and also other journalistic arenas” (Boyle, 2012). Nowadays, “sports journalists use social media as a news feed, to follow players, journalists and supporters” (Boyle and Haynes, 2014b: 14) as well as “to promote content or interact with readers” (English, 2014a: 14).

- **Experts, scholars and analysts in the field.** This category includes researchers from social sciences and natural sciences and representatives connected in some way to sporting mega-events such as the Olympic Games. The use of these sources is crucial, particularly in the reporting of the larger framework, that is, the contextual issues surrounding the sporting mega-events.
- **Books and specialized publications.** Included here are academic journals, official publications, record books, rulebooks, media guides, archival documentation and public records.
- **Other sources.** These encompass representatives from private companies and organizations, letters, personal websites and blogs from readers and supporters, opinion polls and surveys, and so on.

2.2.1.3. Completeness in the provision of information

Above all, each of the individual news pieces must explain with precision the basic facts of the events (who, what, where, when, how and why). However, taking all the Olympic coverage as a whole, it is expected that a full, in-depth and contextualized coverage of the events in the Olympic Games should include a wide range of key elements, both related to the sporting competitions and to the larger framework of the event. It should be considered that sports journalism’s purpose “is to critically examine sports, from the play to the politics behind the play” (King, 2008: 341), as clearly maintained by the journalist Dave Zirin.

It should be borne in mind that, as Jim Lampley explains, “at the Games, a complete picture is never possible” because “the nature of media is to be selective” (Billings, 2008: 155). Likewise, as Tuggle et al. (2007: 58) comment, “no medium can cover all sports contests at all levels because of restrictions on space and time”. That being said, professionals “have the responsibility to inform the public about all the events that could be significant and to provide all the points of view that would enable citizens to have a grasp of the social phenomena” (Alsus, 1999: 50). This is not strange, given the fact that “the primary purpose of journalism is to provide citizens with the information they need to be free and self-governing” (Kovach and Rosenstiel, 2001:

17). This right to receive comprehensive, contextualized and complete information about the social reality is expressed in many deontological codes, including those promoted by UNESCO (Art. 1–2), the IFJ (Art. 1), the Council of Europe (Art. 17), the SPJ (Preamble) and ASNE (Art. 4). This right is also established in other documents such as the *El País Newsroom Statute* (Art. 3.2) and the *El País Style Guide* (Art. 1.2). As *The Washington Post Standards and Ethics* (Art. F) emphasizes: “no story is fair if it omits facts of major importance or significance. Fairness includes completeness”.

Given the aforementioned foundations, four elements of quality should be considered: a) presence in the media coverage of a broad range of journalistic genres; b) presence of the whole range of Olympic sports; c) completeness of the sports information; and d) importance given to relevant contextual issues (larger framework).

2.2.1.3.1. Presence of a wide range of journalistic genres

Quality newspapers should try to use a wide range of journalistic genres to carry out the coverage of a sporting event. These genres include the build-up pieces and previews of the forthcoming events, reviews, news reports, features, articles, interviews, personality profiles, brief pieces, features of opinion journalism (including opinion columns, opinion articles, editorials and letters to the editor), comic strips, lists of results and scores, agenda of the sporting and cultural programmes of the Olympic Games, and so on. The research sought to provide insight into the range of journalistic genres used by the newspapers sampled in their coverage of London 2012.

2.2.1.3.2. Recognition in the agenda of the different Olympic sports

Traditionally, “national newspapers are inclined to focus on their own sportsmen and sportswomen, as well as sports that are popular in their home countries” (Hedenborg, 2013: 794). That being said, if a quality newspaper has to be a reflection of the sporting activity in the Olympic Games, their pages cannot be subjected to the “tyranny” of a reduced number of sports, especially if these are the most popular disciplines, the sports that hold economic power and bring in the highest revenues, such as football²⁶,

²⁶ One cannot get away from the fact that “football is the *sine qua non* of the media sports world” (Boyle and Haynes, 2009: 205). Most of the times, as scholars remind us, “the excessive space dedicated to football displaces other sports, but also, avoids the dedication to general interest issues” (Labio, 2009: 166). This situation has been called the “tyranny of football” (Steen, 2012). To illustrate this, looking at the Spanish media landscape, football “tends to occupy around 70% of the daily volume of news spaces” devoted to sport (Manfredi et al., 2015: 78). Nevertheless, we must consider that the pre-eminence of football information in the media is contested during the Olympics. As Rojas Torrijos (2011: 78) points out, “the other disciplines have a major coverage in the general information

athletics and swimming. A quality newspaper should at least try to give recognition and opportunities to the different Olympic sports; none of them should be largely absent from media exposure. In the case of London 2012, the Olympic programme consisted of 30 different sports (Archery, Athletics, Badminton, Basketball, Beach Volleyball, Boxing, Canoeing, Cycling, Diving, Equestrian, Fencing, Football, Gymnastics, Handball, Hockey, Judo, Modern Pentathlon, Rowing, Sailing, Shooting, Swimming, Synchronized Swimming, Table Tennis, Taekwondo, Tennis, Triathlon, Volleyball, Water Polo, Weightlifting and Wrestling), featuring 39 disciplines (PA, 2012). Looking at these, the researcher codified which sport or sports were included in each news piece, in order to see the amount of coverage devoted to each sport.

2.2.1.3.3. Completeness of the sports information

The coverage of the aforementioned sports should be accompanied by some of the following key elements in relation to an event and the participating athletes: results and scores, and information about its development (including any stories about record-breaking performances); pertinent infographics, data and statistics²⁷; line-ups of teams and players; information about referees; information about the venues and number of spectators; a sense of the atmosphere; narration of the development and outcome; provision of the related background, human interest stories and contextual information; pre- and post-match stories and previews of forthcoming events; and comment and analysis. It should be pointed out that, nowadays, “print and rightless broadcasters can only compete with the Internet and right holders if they offer additional analysis, valuable background information and rich content” (Horky and Stelzner, 2013: 122).

2.2.1.3.4. Importance given to relevant contextual issues

According to Boyle (2006a: 143), “at its best, sports journalism is about making sense of the wider context within which events have occurred”. Nevertheless, a central problem is that, by and large, this area isn’t known for looking at the different contextual issues related to the world of sport from a wider perspective. To illustrate this, in his examination of the Australian broadsheet the *Sydney Morning Herald* during

print media, especially in the case of big events such as the Olympic Games”. As Hedenborg (2013: 797) explains: “the fact that men’s football gets less media attention during the Olympic Games than in routine coverage is usually explained by the fact that the men’s teams do not consist of the best players. According to the FIFA regulations for men’s football in the Olympics, the associations affiliated with FIFA are invited to send their men’s U-23 teams”.

²⁷ The emphasis on statistics also varies depending on the journalistic tradition. To illustrate this, Boyle (2006a: 34) tells us that more than in the UK, “US sport and sports journalism has always been fixated with statistics”.

a period of 14 consecutive weeks in 2005, Rowe (2007: 395) pinpointed the fact that the publication “did not focus intensively on problems in sport, give them prominence, or engage deeply with matters of society and politics”. In other words, “there seems to be little concern with problems beyond the daily sports round” (Rowe, 2007: 399).

These ideas are linked to the general lack of public service or investigative tasks carried out by sports journalists (Hardin et al., 2009). As Boyle (2006b: 17) explains, “sports journalism, particularly in the press, has correctly been criticised for its lack of investigative edge over the years and this remains true, even if the decline in investigative journalism is not unique to sports coverage”. There are some noteworthy exceptions to this trend, such as the detailed series of investigative reports published by *The New York Times* in 2012 on performance-enhancing substances in the US horse racing industry (Denham, 2013), the investigation into the 2022 Qatar Football World Cup conducted by *The Sunday Times* (Majumdar, 2015) and the research on Lance Armstrong, pursued by David Walsh of *The Sunday Times* and the American blog *NYVelocity* (Brock, 2013). The recent unveiling of the corruption cases at FIFA, a story investigated for many years by the journalist Andrew Jennings, is another key exception in point. Yet, the amount of investigative writing about sports is considered scant compared to other genres.

In the case of the Olympic Games, it is very important to make sense of the broader context in order to show the readership that apart from the drama and excitement of the sporting competition, the Olympics are a much broader event than just a “two-week festival of sport held once every four years among elite athletes representing their countries in inter-communal competition” (Girginov and Parry, 2005: 1). As Hayes and Karamichas (2012: 251) point out, “sports mega-events are not simply sporting events, but have profound political, economic, social and cultural consequences”. To report on all these issues is a crucial part of the public service mission of sports journalism.

Given that “printed newspapers are known to widen the range of public topics, events and issues their audience is aware of” (Schoenbach et al., 2005: 245), beyond documenting the Olympic schedule, the sporting events featured and the athletes’ achievements, a rigorous approach from the quality media should also focus their attention on expanding the coverage to all the complexity and also the significant issues of a social, economic, geopolitical, historical, environmental, cultural and communicative nature surrounding the Games. They should also look at other important matters, such as safety and security, the tangible and intangible legacies, transportation, ticketing, volunteering and health issues. A journalist’s role should be “to place athletic performances within broader contexts in order to enhance the overall

understanding of a sport” (Billings, 2008: 56). That approach also includes paying attention to the problem areas, protests or demonstrations, and negative issues linked to the Olympic Games (Sadd, 2014). As Rowe (2007: 386) points out, sports journalism “cannot be quarantined from the requirements of critical investigation because of its popular cultural object”.

Taking this background into account, the researcher codified the range of contextual issues that newspapers covered in order to provide their readership with a broader understanding of London 2012.

2.2.1.4. Rectification of content

Given their accountable nature, “news organizations should admit and promptly correct mistakes” (Hlavach and Freivogel, 2011: 28) and “clarify misunderstandings” (Knowlton and Reader, 2009: 64). The vast majority of deontological codes make explicit references to the rectification of content, including the documents promoted by UNESCO (Art. 5), the IFJ (Art. 5), the Council of Europe (Art. 26), FAPE (Art. 13), the CPC (Art. 3), the SPM (Madrid Journalists Union) (Art. 17), the SPJ (Art. 4), IPSO (Art. 1.ii) and the NUJ (Art. 3). The subject of rectification is also included in the stylebooks and newsroom statutes from the major newspapers examined in the study: *The Guardian Editorial Code* (1: Errors); *The New York Times Guidelines on Integrity* (Corrections); *El País Style Guide* (Art. 1.10); *La Vanguardia Newsroom Statute* (Art. 3.15); *La Vanguardia Stylebook* (Art. 6.3.1) and *The Washington Post Standards and Ethics* (C: Errors). Rectifying content entails self-reflection and, to some extent, self-criticism about journalistic practices and published content.

It was expected that sports journalists covering the Olympics would rectify their content if some published information incurred the infringement of the deontological principles. In sports journalism rectification is central to ensuring quality and trust, just as it is in other areas of the profession (Alsuis, 1999; Bugeja, 2007). Keeping this principle in mind, the researcher codified the presence of rectifications during the timeframe of the observation.

2.2.1.5. Impartiality and separation between journalistic genres

As Alsuis (2010: 80) highlights, “one of the classic journalism phrases is that which reminds us that ‘facts are sacred, comments are free’” (Alsuis, 2010: 80). The separation between news and opinions is clearly stated in the codes promoted by the Council of Europe (Art. 3), FAPE (Art. 17), the CPC (Art. 1), the SPM (Art. 3; Art. 5.1),

IPSO (Art. 1.iii), the NUJ (Art. 4) and ASNE (Art. 5), as well as in other major codes and ethical recommendations, such as *El País Newsroom Statute* (Art. 3.3), *El País Style Guide* (Art. 1.3), *La Vanguardia Newsroom Statute* (Art. 3.3), *La Vanguardia Stylebook* (Art. 6.1.4) and *The Washington Post's Standards and Ethics* (Art. G).

However, one cannot get away from the fact that “the golden rule of objectivity is a difficult one to invoke in contemporary sports journalism” (Jones, 2000, quoted in Boyle, 2006a: 174). The blurring of frontiers between information and opinion²⁸ is very common in this journalistic area and highly controversial (Billings, 2010; Keeble, 2009). As Wanta (2013: 84) points out, “studies clearly show that the definition of objectivity differs between sports and news journalists”. Knoppers and Elling (2004: 67) underline the fact that “sport journalists are often required to be subjective, such as when they cover international matches involving their country. Thus, a certain amount of subjectivity is built into sport journalism”. In empirical research about the ethical values of Spanish journalists, Alsius (2010: 85) found that “among sports journalists there is a tendency to be less stringent when separating information and opinion”.

The language of sports journalism has been routinely impregnated with expressions, phrases and words that indicate a mixture of facts and commentary (Hernández Alonso, 2003; Knowlton and Reader, 2009; Min and Zhen, 2010). First, it is worthy to note the pervasive presence in the news pieces of elements that indicate subjectivity, partiality, opinion and judgement. These elements, which tend to be very common in the field, include evaluative adjectives (which in turn include superlative adjectives, used by journalists to judge positively or negatively), evaluative adverbs (which always demonstrate a personal vision), expressions which show that a journalist is taking sides or is against a certain team or player (excessive praise or criticism, the use of accusations, jokes, excessive dramatic expressions, irony or black humour) and other mechanisms used to express a subjective judgement with the intention of creating a viewpoint that readers can identify with, such as rhetoric questions, irony, antithesis, gradation, comparisons and metaphors, among other rhetorical methods.

Second, a reference should also be made to the inclusion of the journalist as an actor in the news pieces. The inclusion of the subjectivity or view of the journalist as a participant in the action is determined by the use of the first-person approach, indicated by the personal pronouns “I”, “me”, “my” or “we”, “us”, “our”, for instance. As Knowlton and Reader (2009: 92) explain, “the use of first-person by professional reporters is still

²⁸ This blurring of frontiers also largely depends on the country where the media operate. For instance, as Hallin and Mancini point out, “the British broadsheets do employ a more interpretive style of writing than is typical in North American papers” (Hallin and Mancini, 2004: 211).

seen as something that should be used sparingly, and then only when the journalist's personal stake in something is an important part of the story". Nevertheless, in sports journalism this is one of the most recurrent mechanisms for demonstrating subjectivity/partiality.

It is true as Billings says, "the days when people believed that the major part of the transmitted news was objective are gone" (Billings, 2010: 26). As Hallin and Mancini (2004: 26) add, "no serious media analyst would argue that journalism anywhere in the world is literally neutral". That being said, these arguments are not incompatible with the fact that a certain impartial analysis and rigour should be expected in the media coverage of sporting events. Ideally, in the informative pieces²⁹, a standard objective³⁰ approach should be pursued. Like other journalists, sports specialists should align their tasks with the ethical codes in order to preserve their detachment, impartiality and even-handedness (Sanders, 2003; Stofer et al., 2010; Wahl-Jorgensen and Galperin, 2000). Given the wide circulation of their pieces, they should be responsible and try not to show any passion when they present their views in relation to an athlete, coach, manager or team. The sports journalist should try to be an impartial observer, duty-bound to offer sincere and realistic information about the reality. This distance is essential to retain credibility, which is a cornerstone of journalists' professionalism (Alcoba, 1993). Having this principle in mind, the researcher has examined the sample in order to detect the words, sentences and expressions that indicate a blurring between journalistic genres.

2.2.1.6. Avoiding sensationalism in the reporting of information

Media sensationalism refers to mechanisms such as hyperboles and exaggerations, and an excessive fascination with "the spectacle" (Horne and Whannel, 2011; Kennedy and Hills, 2009; Lambeth, 1992). Billings (2010: 103–4) highlights the fact that since the appearance of the mass media, journalists have been accused of varying the essential criteria of stories to sell more newspapers.

²⁹ For obvious reasons, the separation between information and opinion has not been analysed in the pieces corresponding to the following genres: opinion columns, opinion articles and editorials. These types of pieces are expected to be based on argumentation supported by persuasive reasons and personal points of view (Paniagua, 2009), "in contrast to daily reporting, which strives for objectivity, or fairness, in content" (Garrison and Sabljak, 1993: 162).

³⁰ As Knowlton and Reader clarify, "an objective journalist is one who is detached, neutral, impartial, and unbiased" (Knowlton and Reader, 2009: 45).

In particular, sports journalism has traditionally been an area where information has been “subordinated to entertainment as a way of expression and incorporates sensationalist elements that come from the spectacle industries” (Rojas Torrijos, 2011: 18), such as the “graphic and conceptual magnification of contents” (Garrido Lora, 2009: 55) or includes “narrative forms of fiction and entertainment” and “the system of values of ‘heart press’ and soap operas” (Moragas, 2010: 11). The contamination from sensationalism (Labio, 2009) has led to the “trivialization and softening of contents and, thus, to a deficient journalistic information” (Rojas Torrijos, 2011: 18).

The situation described might be even more pervasive in the current scenario, characterized as this is by “the dominance of the market-driven discourse across the sporting and media industries” (Haynes and Boyle, 2008: 267). In a communicative ecosystem where media have become “more commercially orientated” (Haynes and Boyle, 2008: 267), there has been an increasing preponderance of sensationalist entertainment, celebrity and gossip news (Boyle, 2013; Burton, 2010; Conboy, 2014; Harris, 2013; Steen, 2016; Tomlinson, 2014; Turner, 2014). As Conboy (2014: 176) explains, “an essential part of the tabloid news values has always been the exaggerated foregrounding of sensation and ‘human interest’”. In addition, as the author adds, “celebrity coverage has long been a mainstay of popular tabloid newspapers” (Conboy, 2014: 175–6).

Nevertheless, the progressive tabloidization³¹ process has spread across the wider journalistic culture, including the quality or elite press and its materials, modes of production, news agenda and values (Conboy, 2014). Turner (2014: 145) highlights the fact that nowadays, the cult of celebrity and entertainment-driven stories are “fundamental components of the news across all media platforms”. We understand tabloidization as the “spillover of reporting practices from the tabloid newspapers to other, harder news genres” (Skovsgaard, 2014: 205). More precisely, tabloidization implies “an increase in news about celebrities, entertainment, lifestyle features, personal issues, an increase in sensationalism and the use of pictures and sloganized headlines as well as vulgar language, and a decrease in international news, public affairs news that includes politics, a reduction in the length of words in a story and the complexity of language, and also a convergence with agendas for popular and in particular television culture” (Conboy, 2011: 117–18). The media coverage of sports is no exception and it is fully embedded within this rising trend.

³¹ “Tabloidization is too complex a phenomenon to judge as a single entity and too fraught with questions of taste and commercialism for simple judgements on its quality. It can either be considered as a lowering of the standards of an idealized journalism or a reorientation of popular national markets within globalized competition for news” (Conboy, 2014: 175).

In contrast to these practices, quality newspapers should continue observing the recommendations articulated in the major deontological codes (such as Article 30 of *Resolution 1.003 on the Ethics of Journalism* from the Council of Europe, Article 2 of the SPJ's *Code of Ethics* and the Basic Principles in *The Telegraph's Stylebook*), which emphasize that journalists should avoid confusing the spectacular with what is relevant news. Retaining the market appeal of newspapers is crucial in this day and age (Conboy, 2014), but from the perspective of media ethics and quality of information, conscientious media should always be careful about the inclusion of sensationalist stories and be aware of certain styles of reporting that would compromise their news values.

Taking into consideration the aforementioned aspects, the researcher has observed and codified the outstanding cases of sensationalism and trivialization of sports information in the text, headlines and pictures of the news pieces that make up the sample.

2.2.2. Principle of justice

It cannot be denied that, "as it happens with truth, justice is one of the more universally assumed moral features" (Alsius, 1999: 171) and a "fundamental requirement of a functioning society" (Plaisance, 2009: 74). Moreover, it is one "crucial component of journalistic conscientiousness" (Spence and Quinn, 2008: 275).

It has to be stated that the major ethical recommendations (UNESCO (Art. 9); IFJ (Art. 7); Council of Europe (Art. 33); SPJ (Art. 1); IPSO (Art. 12); NUJ (Art. 9); FAPE (Art. 7); CPC (Art. 12); SPM (Art. 15.2) and *La Vanguardia Newsroom Statute* (Art. 3.9)) are unequivocal about the avoidance of discrimination and stereotyping for reasons such as race, sex, nationality or disability. In addition, it has to be noted that "many journalists are concerned to remove discrimination on grounds of gender, sexual orientation, race, disability, age, mental health and so on" (Keeble, 2009: 174).

That being said, in sports communication, some disadvantaged social groups, such as sportswomen, non-white athletes and disabled participants, still "experience more difficulty than others when accessing media" (Alsius, 2010: 113). Furthermore, they are subject to a "distorted representation in the social showcase of media" (Alsius, 1999: 201). The media have tended to generate or reproduce stereotypes³² (Alsius, 1999;

³² Stereotypes are "simplified mental representation of certain groups" (Mosquera González and Puig, 2002: 100), "which grow stronger through repetition but are no more than a mere reductionism because they make simple a complex reality" (Alsius, 2010: 114). They can involve exaggeration, "an

Whitehouse, 2009) that contribute to the “social construction of differences” (Alsius, 2010: 115) and to the generation of prejudices and stigmas of nationality, gender, race and disability, among others. This situation is worrying, taking into account the fact that mediated sports are a crucial space in which individual and group identities and attitudes are shaped, reconstructed, naturalized, legitimized, amplified and conveyed to the public (Boyle and Haynes, 2009).

As Billings and Kim (2014: 184–5) point out, “Olympic media becomes a potentially flawed yet undeniably impactful means for influencing perceptions of human identity in many facets of modern life”. Given the fact that the Olympics hold great power to shape identities (Billings and Angelini, 2007), the quality media should devote a quota of presence to disadvantaged social groups and commit to developing an adequate, equal and fair representation of them in the newspapers, especially if we take into consideration that the principles of justice and non-discrimination are also closely related to the sixth principle of the *Olympic Charter*, which states that “any form of discrimination with regard to a country or a person on grounds of race, religion, politics, gender or otherwise is incompatible with belonging to the Olympic Movement” (IOC, 2013a, Art. 6). These ideas are also reflected under the principle of dignity, stated in the *IOC Code of Ethics* (IOC, 2013b: 12): “safeguarding the dignity of the individual is a fundamental requirement of Olympism” (Art. A.1); and “there shall be no discrimination between the participants on the basis of race, gender, ethnic origin, religion, philosophical or political opinion, marital status or other grounds” (Art. A.2).

2.2.2.1. Commitment to justice in the representation of gender

Gender³³ is widely regarded as one of the key themes in the analysis of sports media (Wenner, 2006). As the author highlights, “more than any other institution, even the military, gender remains the great divide in sport” (Wenner, 2013: 189). Sport has been seen by academics as a sexist and patriarchal institution, marked by a masculine hegemony that privileges, naturalizes and preserves the power of men while minimizing and perpetuating the feminine inferiority (Bernstein, 2002; Boyle and

inflation of a characteristic and/or an overgeneralization from part to whole” (Franklin et al., 2005: 254) and they can “negatively attribute a trait or attribute to all members of a group regardless of whether the attribution is accurate or not” (Teetzal, 2011: 390). Although the dissemination of stereotypes is not the media’s exclusive responsibility, it cannot be denied that they contribute to the task of reproducing the inherited stereotypes (Jorge Alonso, 2004). From the perspective of journalism ethics, as Sanders (2003: 154) stresses, “reducing people or groups to abstractions or clichés, is lazy, bad journalism”.

³³ While sex refers to the biological differences between men and women, gender is usually used to refer to the socially constructed concepts about masculinity and femininity (Billings, 2010).

Haynes, 2009; Crolley and Teso, 2007; Kian et al., 2009; King, 2007; Malcolm, 2008; Mosquera González and Puig, 2002). Gender, as a way of structuring social practice (Connell, 2003), has decisively influenced the world of sport, which has been socially and symbolically constructed under the privileges of male domination (Lomas, 2003). This situation has had serious implications for women, who have experienced difficulties in participating³⁴ in sporting competitions because such competitions have been regarded as spaces of the public sphere which, traditionally, have been the preserve of men.

In the media field, sport has also traditionally been constructed as a predominantly male territory³⁵ (Boyle, 2006a; Bruce, 2013; Buysse and Embser-Herbert, 2004; Crolley and Teso, 2007; Duncan, 2006; Franks and O'Neill, 2014; Keeble, 2009; Wensing and Bruce, 2003), where gender differentiations have not only been reflected and legitimized but also accentuated (Bruce, 2009; Horne et al., 2013; Lippe, 2002). Despite this, and in a clear correlation with the increase in female participation previously explained, women's visibility in sports information about the Olympic Games has progressively grown (Bernstein, 2002). It is widely recognized that the news about women is not trivial but is indeed of interest to the rest of the citizenship (Gist, 1993). Nevertheless, academics continue to point out that male sport still dominates the media and that the coverage of information about sports is mostly designed and destined for men (Billings et al., 2014b; Keeble, 2009; King, 2007). Journalistic discourse about the coverage of sport continues to be, in great part, characterized by

³⁴ In Ancient Greece, women were not allowed to take part in or attend the Olympic competitions. With the reintroduction of the modern Olympics in 1896, "women have struggled to participate as equals" (Teetzel, 2011: 386). It wasn't until Stockholm 1912 that female participation was allowed and not until Amsterdam 1928 did women receive definitive approbation from the IOC to take part in the Olympic Games (Zamora, 1998). Nevertheless, in the second half of the twentieth century, women made significant steps in the practice of organized sport and their status substantially increased (Bernstein, 2002; Girginov and Parry, 2005; Hargreaves, 1994; Markula, 2009). At London 2012, the percentage of female athletes taking part reached 44.2% (IOC, 2013c).

³⁵ Sports journalism has traditionally been an area dominated by men (male journalists, reporters and producers) (Bernstein, 2002). The segregation in the newsrooms is still in force, as shown by recent studies. Franks and O'Neill (2014: 12) highlight the fact that in 2013 *The Daily Telegraph/Sunday Telegraph* had only 1% of female by-lines while in *The Guardian/The Observer*, the figure wasn't much higher at 4.5%. These researchers conclude that in the UK press the number of sports stories written by women is on average below 2%. In addition, the authors point out that London 2012 had "little effect on the number of female by-lines" (Franks and O'Neill, 2014: 14). In the US, according to APSE (2013: 6), "90.4 percent of the sports editors were men" and "88.3 percent of the reporters were men". In addition to the segregation in the newsrooms, one must consider that the product is mainly addressed to a male audience (Bruce, 2009).

the inequality between genders in quantitative and qualitative terms³⁶ (Capranica et al., 2005; Kay and Jeanes, 2008; Mean, 2010; O'Neill and Mulready, 2015; Stead, 2008).

An extensive body of research has demonstrated empirically the quantitative and qualitative imbalances in the coverage of the Olympic Games. Some of the more recognized references within this research area include the investigations carried out to analyse the media coverage of: the summer Olympic Games from the 1950s to the 1970s (Pfister, 1987); Los Angeles 1984 and Seoul 1988 (Lee, 1992); Barcelona 1992 (Daddario, 1997; Higgs and Weiler, 1994); Atlanta 1996 (Eastman and Billings, 1999; Higgs et al., 2003; Tuggle and Owen, 1999; Vincent et al., 2002); Sidney 2000 (Billings and Eastman, 2002; Capranica and Aversa, 2002; Capranica et al., 2005); Athens 2004 (Billings, 2007; Billings and Angelini, 2007; Capranica et al., 2008; Crolley and Teso, 2007; Daddario and Wigley, 2007; Greer et al., 2009; Tuggle et al., 2007); Beijing 2008 (Angelini and Billings, 2010a; Billings et al., 2010; Bissell and Smith, 2013; Davis and Tuggle, 2012; Ličen and Billings, 2013; Yu, 2009); and London 2012 (Billings et al., 2014a; Eagleman, 2015; Godoy-Pressland and Griggs, 2014; Hellborg and Hedenborg, 2015). Other research is also of considerable significance: King (2007) carried out a longitudinal analysis of the Olympics in the British press (*The Times* and *The Daily Mail*) between 1948 and 2004; Yu (2009) monitored Olympic athletes of Asian origin in the international press between 2000 and 2008; and Galily et al. (2011) analysed the coverage of sportswomen in the Israeli press during three Olympic Games (Atlanta 1996, Sydney 2000 and Athens 2004).

In parallel, the gender differences in the coverage have also been addressed with regard to the Winter Olympics. Some of the most significant projects have analysed the Winter Olympics as follows: from Chamonix 1924 to Albertville 1992 (Urquhart and Crossman, 1999); Albertville 1992 (Daddario, 1994); Lillehammer 1994 and Nagano 1998 (Eastman and Billings, 1999); Salt Lake City 2002 (Billings and Eastman, 2003); Torino 2006 (Billings et al., 2008); and Vancouver 2010 (Angelini et al., 2012a; Angelini et al., 2013; Vincent and Crossman, 2012). All these investigations and further scholar work have helped in reaching a better understanding of how sportswomen are covered in the media both in quantitative and qualitative ways.

³⁶ These imbalances also depend on the entrenchment of patriarchal structures in culture and tradition (Crolley and Teso, 2007; Lippe, 2002). Although these factors are important, the attitude of the media is crucial, given that they send "important messages to spectators, listeners and readers about the place of women, the role of women and the life of women" (Byerly and Ross, 2006: 40).

2.2.2.1.1. Quantitative nature of coverage

In quantitative terms, various studies conducted during the 1980s and 1990s signalled a trend towards minimizing the coverage of women in sport (King, 2007). Since then, the space devoted to the coverage of men in sport has indeed continued to be a lot more extensive than that of women (Cooky et al., 2015; Godoy-Pressland, 2014; Messner and Cooky, 2010; Weber and Carini, 2013) in terms of the number of pieces awarded and their prominence (bigger space and an eye-catching position in the case of print media and being awarded a long time slot as far as television programmes and news bulletins are concerned). This situation has marginalized women, who have been underrepresented in comparison to men (Crolley and Teso, 2007).

Recent pieces of research have continued to highlight this ongoing trend across all media platforms. To illustrate this, Godoy-Pressland (2014: 595) underlined the fact that “sportswomen are still overwhelmingly under-represented in British print media” in her semi-longitudinal examination of the print media coverage of sportswomen in British Sunday broadsheet and tabloid newspapers during 24 months (January 2008–December 2009). The author highlighted the fact that women received only 3.6% of the coverage during the period studied, demonstrating that “gender inequality is still rife in sports reporting post-2000” (Godoy-Pressland, 2014: 604). In their 2009 study of six weeks of televised news coverage of women’s sport on local affiliate channels in Los Angeles (KABC, KNBC and KCBS) and on the programme *SportsCenter* (ESPN), Cooky et al. (2013: 203) discovered that “women’s sport is the lowest ever”, with only 1.6% of the news devoted to sports. We should take into consideration the fact that in 1999 and 2004, the figures were higher (8.7% and 6.3% respectively) (Cooky et al., 2013: 210).

Another piece of research worth highlighting is the examination of the front covers of *Sports Illustrated* over a period of 11 years (2000–2011) carried out by Weber and Carini (2013). The authors pointed out that the “percentage of covers [that featured women] did not change significantly over the time span and were comparable to levels reported for the 1980s by other researchers. Indeed, women were depicted on a higher percentage of covers from 1954–1965 [12.6%] than from 2000–2011 [4.9%]” (Weber and Carini, 2013: 196).

All these examples reveal the persistence of exclusionary practices (Hardin et al., 2014) that have contributed to generate the false impression that sportswomen do not exist or have little value (Bernstein, 2002; Tuggle et al., 2007; Wanta, 2013). Thus, “it conveys the message to audiences that sport continues to be by, for, and about men”

(Cooky et al., 2013: 205). Although the figures vary depending on the social, economic, cultural, historical and sporting contexts of each country, women still receive less than 10% of the sporting coverage both in newspapers and television (Markula, 2009).

However, it is vital to acknowledge that these figures have increased in the last few years, especially in the case of sporting mega-events such as the Olympic Games³⁷. Some investigations are clearly illustrative of this phenomenon. Vincent et al. (2002) proved in their analysis of the Canadian, US and British coverage of Atlanta 1996 that sportswomen received a more equitable coverage in quantitative terms. Eastman and Billings (1999) showed that media outlets such as NBC started to dedicate a more egalitarian screen time to both genders. The longitudinal analysis of the British press (*The Times* and *The Daily Mail*) between 1948 and 2004 carried out by King (2007) is also an illustrative case in point of this trend: At Athens 2004, after years of marginalization and underrepresentation of female athletes, sportswomen received more textual and photographic coverage than the men (King, 2007).

Most surprisingly, in contrast to previous research on the NBC coverage of the Olympics, in their study of London 2012 prime time, Billings et al. (2014a: 38) highlighted the fact that “women athletes received the majority of the clock-time and on-air mentions”. We should take into consideration that it was: “(1) the first time women received more overall clock-time than men, (2) the first time women tallied more appearances than men in the most-mentioned athletes category, and (3) the first time women athletes received more overall mentions than male athletes” (Billings et al., 2014a: 48). As Bruce (2009) explains, female athletes may be finding new spaces for themselves, a situation that could lead to a new scenario different from the traditional male domination of sport and sports media.

To continue exploring this issue, the researcher has codified the gender of the protagonists of each competition-related news piece throughout the coverage of London 2012. This information is essential to determine the gender equity in the coverage, a central aspect within the deontological principle of justice.

2.2.2.1.2. Qualitative nature of coverage

Qualitatively, as Billings et al. (2014b: 133) point out, “men and women athletes are described in a variety of media outlets in substantially different manners”. However, as

³⁷ Largely, this increase in media attention for female athletes in the Olympics has taken place in individual sports, such as swimming or diving (Yu, 2009). See also the contributions of Duncan and Hasbrook (2001) and Pinnen (2001).

they add, media do not use direct terms in order to convey sexist meanings: “overt expressions of sexism are increasingly rare; however, many subtle iterations of sexism remain” (Billings et al., 2014b: 14). In the same way, the mass media regularly employ certain subtle or covert strategies, such as the use of a series of adjectives, words, phrases, stereotyped constructions and clichés (Bernstein, 2002; Billings et al., 2014b; Cooky et al., 2013; Wensing and Bruce, 2003), to establish the distinction between genders. These linguistic strategies also persist in the coverage of the Olympics: “while the Olympic Games may appear to provide more equitable coverage of female athletes and some women’s sports, studies reveal they tend to perpetuate certain stereotypes” (Daddario and Wigley, 2007: 34).

According to Gallego (2007: 49), language “is not a neutral instrument that names the reality but maybe the more elaborated product of the human capacity to create it”. Stereotypes, as cognitive instruments characterized by a simplified representation of the reality and the resistance to change (Berganza and Del Hoyo, 2006), pervade the discourse, legitimizing and perpetuating the hegemonic divisions of gender (Lippe, 2002). There are several strategies or framing techniques worth highlighting. In this investigation, the researcher has examined the following strategies and has contrasted them with the textual and visual coverage that sportswomen received during London 2012.

Sexualization and inclusion of references to sportswomen’s physical attributes

As Duncan (2006: 243) explains, “to focus on a female athlete’s beauty is to introduce a *non sequitur*: it is a discursive strategy that trivializes a sportswoman’s accomplishments because her appearance has nothing to do with her athletic performance”. Media coverage of sportswomen has been traditionally characterized by the emphasis on the physical attributes of their femininity, such as their physical looks, attractiveness and attire (Bernstein, 2002). Typical references to them have focused on the health and beauty of their bodies, their hair, legs or smiles, among other things (“beautiful”, “elegant”, “pretty”, etc.). The overuse of references to these attributes has contributed decisively to turning sportswomen into sexual objects (Keeble, 2009). This sexualization has also been clearly reflected in pictorial representations. To illustrate this, in her analysis of the magazine photographs of Los Angeles 1984 and Seoul 1988, Duncan (1990: 29) underlined the fact that the published images showed specific parts of females’ bodies and their poses had a “striking resemblance to those of women in soft-core pornography”. In the examination of the coverage of the 2011 FIFA Women’s World Cup by *Bild*, Pfister (2015) detected the publication of a great deal of

text and images focused on eroticism. This trend in sexualizing³⁸ an athlete's image is not surprising, given the fact that the vast majority of sportscasters and sports journalists are men and presumably heterosexual (Billings et al., 2014b).

Nevertheless, there are some positive signs that may indicate the decline in this sexist type of coverage. In their analysis of the NBC beach volleyball coverage of Beijing 2008, Bissell and Smith (2013) discovered that there were few sexualized camera angles³⁹ and that the coverage "was not reflective of special attention to the players' bodies, their attire, or other appearance traits" (Bissell and Smith, 2013: 20). Furthermore, in their study of NBC's coverage of London 2012, Billings et al. (2014a: 52) highlighted the "small overall number of comments about athlete attractiveness – fourteen overall", which accounted for less than 0.09% of their descriptor database.

Emphasis on the psychology and emotionality of sportswomen

Sports media have persistently used certain types of expressions (for example, athletes who "cry or show her tears" or who are "adorable", "sweet", "weak", "delicate", "subjugated", "fragile", "passive", "passionate" or "nervous"), which are indicative of a gender-biased portrayal that contributes to characterize women only as emotional, weak and dependent beings⁴⁰, who also fall in sporting competitions due to "stress, nerves, or anxiety" (Daddario and Wigley, 2007: 44). These descriptors of women athletes are clearly opposite to some of the characteristics traditionally attributed to male athletes, who "are depicted as succeeding because they do not let emotions override their athletic desires" (Billings et al., 2014b: 133). The language with regard to sportsmen contributes to reinforce "the notion that men are inherently superior in terms of athletic skill" (Billings et al., 2014b: 131). Some of the adjectives used to strengthen the aggressive construction of masculinity as a form of power include the following: "aggressive", "ambitious", "big", "brave", "competitive", "concentrated", "confident", "conquering", "decided", "dominating", "experienced", "fearless", "fighter", "heterosexual", "incredible", "independent", "intelligent", "intimidating", "non-fragile", "powerful", "quick", "rational", "self-reliable", "self-sacrificing", "superior", "tough" and

³⁸ In addition, in current publications such as ESPN's *The Body Issue* (Cranmer et al., 2014) or *Sports Illustrated's* Swimsuit issue, there is no attempt to hide the sexualization of sportswomen.

³⁹ However, other research pointed out that when these types of shots did appear, the effect was to "distract spectators from fully appreciating the athleticism of the players and to remind them that a masculine hegemony still pervades sport" (Daddario and Wigley, 2007: 41).

⁴⁰ Of course, there are exceptions regarding this prototypical description pattern. For instance, the media construction of the aboriginal Australian athlete Cathy Freeman at Sidney 2000 showed her not only as "strong, powerful and physically capable" but also as a sportswoman who could "successfully cope with the most pressure ever placed on an Australian athlete" (Wensing and Bruce, 2003: 391).

“warrior”, among other expressions. These attributes exemplify the hegemonic idea of masculinity, that is, what men following the traditional model should be (Connell, 2003). The depiction of men as emotional is uncommon and only tends to appear in two circumstances: in victory and following defeat when men can also be depicted as “nervous” or “frustrated”.

Out-of-context reporting of sportswomen

Commonly, sports media have focused their attention on non-sport-related or peripheral aspects with regard to women. For instance, there have been frequent references to elements such as the age of sportswomen, their personal circumstances (for example origins, family life, habits, dating patterns and relationships, leisure activities, marital status, parental status, imminent motherhood, husband’s occupation, diet, sexual orientation and religious beliefs, among other non-athletic themes) rather than information about their athletic skills, career path, commitment, intelligence and their achievements.

Infantilizing

The infantilizing of sportswomen is depicted in the mass media by the use of certain diminutives, expressions and words that evoke a childish conception of female athletes, for example “girls”, “brides”, “kids”, “teenagers”, “young ladies”, “golden girls”, “youngsters” and “sweethearts”. With regard to men, the words “guys”, “lads” or “pupils” are not normally used to infantilize them. Also, the infantilizing of women can be represented by the use of expressions that imply that female athletes run their lives according to the wishes of their partners, husbands or coaches.

Trivialization of sportswomen’s accomplishments

At certain times, the media have trivialized the participation and achievements of sportswomen, demeaning their contributions (Bernstein, 2002; Billings et al., 2014b). One of the most used means of doing this is to attribute the success of sportswomen mainly to luck or consonance (the notion that everything simply comes together at the right moment in time). Women are more likely to receive comments about consonance than men (Billings et al., 2014b), whose triumphs are mainly due to strength, physical power, domination and sacrifice.

Gender marking

Another method extensively applied by the media is the use of gender marks only when women are participating in a given sport. The media tend to use a qualifier when the sport involves the presence of women (“women’s handball”, for example), as if it

was a special branch of this sport. On the contrary, when the qualifier is not used, the media are generally referring to men's sports ("handball").

2.2.2.2. Commitment to justice in the representation of race

Another of the major areas of study within the journalistic principle of justice is the media representation of race and ethnicity, regarded also as another of the "super themes" of sports media (Wenner, 2006). "Race and racism have always been broad and complex concepts" (Farrington et al., 2012: 16), but what is clear is that, far from being innocent, these terms carry "much ideological weight" (Bernstein and Blain, 2003: 17). One must not forget that "historically, sport and the sport media have served as important sites for the production and contestation of competing narratives of race and ethnicity" (McDonald, 2010: 154). Nowadays, race continues to have an impact on the "language, mind-set, cultures and structures of the sports media" (Farrington et al., 2012: 153).

In quantitative terms, "several studies have suggested that black athletes have historically been underrepresented in the sports media" (Grainger et al., 2006: 448). It is true that "increasingly, organized sports became integrated with not just whites and blacks participating together but with a myriad of other ethnicities represented on the athletic field" (Billings et al., 2014b: 142) and that the achievements of non-white athletes during the past few decades "have acquired global significance through involvements in sports events that have been mass mediated"⁴¹ (Horne and Whannel, 2011: 168). That being said, the racial disparities and underrepresentation of non-white athletes remain, to some extent, very noteworthy.

In his longitudinal study of NBC's Olympic coverage from 1996 to 2006, Billings (2008) found that white athletes were mentioned 72.1% of the time (two-thirds in the case of the summer Olympic Games), followed by black (13.1%) and Asian (9.5%). Meanwhile, Hispanics and athletes from the Middle East received less than 1% of the overall coverage. Partial investigations conducted by the same researchers (Billings and Angelini, 2007; Billings and Eastman, 2003; Billings et al., 2008) led to similar results,

⁴¹ Track and field is the most remarkable case in point within these mass-mediated sports (Horne and Whannel, 2011) although black athletes have acquired significant media presence in other sports such as basketball and football too. In some cases, the relationship between athletes and political statements, such as the Black Power salute from Tommie Smith and John Carlos at Mexico 1968 (Billings et al., 2014b), has resulted in more media attention for black athletes. Finally, media attention can also be gained by underperformance. As Horne and Whannel (2011: 168) explain, "Eric Moussambani's swim in Sydney made him a universal representative of Black Africans in water in the British media."

revealing a clear “white ethnocentric perspective” in news reporting (Farrington et al., 2012: 54). In the most recent investigation conducted by the same researchers with regard to NBC’s coverage of London 2012, Angelini et al. (2014: 115) highlighted the fact that “white athletes were more likely to be mentioned (64.3%) than all other athletes combined”.

Qualitatively, as remarked on by scholars, “athletes of different ethnicities have been treated in markedly different manners over the past several decades” (Billings, 2008: 80). Even though there “has been a decline in overt forms of racism within sport media (traditionally exhibited in areas such as underrepresentation, underreporting and biased commentaries), media nonetheless supports racist discourses and beliefs through stereotypical portrayals” (Grainger et al., 2006: 461). As Whitehouse (2009: 105) highlights, “incognizant racism occurs subtly but still perpetuates false narratives”.

First, “the portrayals of black athletes still serve to reproduce stereotypes that underpin racism” (Horne et al., 2013: 95). Sports media still tend to use stereotypes that reproduce and expand the idea that there are “biological differences between black and white athletes” (Sterkenburg et al., 2010: 827). As explained by Billings et al. (2014b: 152), “one finding in content analyses of sports media is that there is an increased emphasis on the notion of the innately talented black athlete, the born achiever”. In contrast to non-whites’ innate “quickness, physical strength, speed, jumping ability and force” (McDonald, 2010: 160) and “lesser mental capabilities” (Schmidt and Coe, 2014: 666), white athletes are often associated and framed with “intellectual capabilities” (Sterkenburg and Knoppers, 2004: 303), success through “a great deal of hard work and effort” (Billings et al, 2014b: 152), commitment (Billings, 2010) and leadership (Grainger et al., 2006). As illustrative of this trend⁴², Billings and Eastman’s (2002) research into the coverage of Sydney 2000 discovered that “African-American athletes were more likely to be depicted as succeeding because of superior athletic skills, whereas white athletes were more likely to succeed because of extreme commitment” (Billings and Angelini, 2007: 98). These kinds of stereotypes contribute to

⁴² However, exceptions to this overall trend can be found in other research. For instance, Angelini and Billings (2010b) studied Beijing 2008’s NBC telecast and found that “the traditional dialogue divergences (such as White athletes being more hard working and Black athletes being innately skilled) were not prevalent” (Angelini and Billings, 2010b: 1). Apart from the Olympics, it is important to consider the findings pointed out by Goss et al. (2010) in their content analysis of the representation of black and white NBA players on the front pages of the magazine *Sports Illustrated*. They showed that “Black players were almost equally likely as White players to be portrayed for their intellectual skills” (Goss et al., 2010: 186), such as “leadership, intelligence, work ethic, and mental skill” (Goss et al., 2010: 191).

negating “much of the hard work, commitment and sacrifice behind the sporting success of black athletes” (Farrington et al., 2012: 49).

In addition, although “there is a lack of hard evidence to suggest that there are any significant biological differences between ‘races’, this could explain why one ‘race’ has outperformed another in a sport” (Farrington et al., 2012: 28); some stereotypes foster innate differences between the athletes depending on the sport they practise. As Billings argues, the media produce simplistic messages conveying the idea that “the Black are superior and born players of basketball and the White are born leaders in field sports” (Billings, 2010: 36). When a black person takes part in a sport in which white athletes have participated predominantly, stereotypical portrayals also arise. To illustrate this, in his study of the coverage received by the golfer Tiger Woods, Billings (2003: 29) pinpointed the fact that “when Woods won, he was not portrayed as Black, but when he was not as successful he was more likely to be characterized using traditional stereotypes of Black athletes”.

Second, even if documents such as the *Editors’ Code of Practice* promoted by IPSO (Art. 12) state that the details of an individual’s race “must be avoided unless genuinely relevant to the story”, on many occasions the media commonly highlight the race of the competitors even if it is not a noteworthy element of the reports. Farrington et al. (2012) examined several cases and saw that in the British media, “Christophe Lemaitre became a ‘white’ sprinter; Zesh Rehman was framed as an ‘Asian’ footballer and Lewis Hamilton was presented as a ‘black’ driver” (Farrington et al., 2012: 152). It can be argued that journalists cannot always be colour-blind, given that “colour and ethnicity are part of identity” (Whitehouse, 2009: 104). However, “differences will always continue to attract attention and generally what is ‘new’ makes news” (Farrington et al., 2012: 152).

In contrast to this minimization and stereotyped portrayal, journalists should approach the question in a fair way. Given that “media hold some power in regard to whether racism, biases, and conceptions of difference are inflamed or diminished” (Angelini et al., 2014: 118), the “treatment of athletic accomplishments with an equal amount of respect should be the aim of anyone attempting to discuss race and sport in a literate and responsible manner” (Billings et al., 2014b: 155). Media should also be careful about the reproduction of distorted overt and covert representations, given their impact on the public perception of race. According to Schmidt and Coe (2014: 658), “negative media representations of minority groups can reinforce majority groups’ stereotypical perceptions and shape beliefs about those underrepresented groups”. As Frush Holt (2013: 111) stresses, “racial stereotypes have real-world consequences”.

Furthermore, given the global media impact of sporting mega-events such as the Olympic Games, the media can go a step beyond the playing field and use the sporting coverage to engage in some form of antiracist journalism (Drew, 2011), foster a broader conversation about the role of multiculturalism or raise the social awareness about the pending challenges concerned with racism in society. Historical cases such as *Sports Illustrated's* investigative series on discriminatory practices towards African-American athletes in 1968 (Smith, 2006), clearly exemplify that socially responsible sports journalism can contribute to focusing public attention on issues and problems to do with racism in society. This series “contributed to the process of ending blatant racism in athletics and began a course of action that continues to secure change” (Smith, 2006: 63).

Taking the aforementioned background into account, this investigation has focused on exploring the qualitative treatment of race in the coverage of London 2012, analysing the overt and also the more subtle forms of racial stereotyping and linguistic bias. Additionally, linked with the idea of raising social awareness of racism within society, it was crucial to examine how the media reacted to racist issues that arose during the period studied. Illustrative examples include the racist Twitter comments posted by Paraskevi Papachristou and Michel Moraganella and the discourses on “Plastic Brits”, fuelled by certain newspapers at the tabloid end of the British market. As Angelini et al. (2014: 130) point out, “these incidents at the 2012 Olympiad serve as a reminder that race remains an important issue within the Games”.

2.2.2.3. Commitment to justice in the portrayal of nationality

Sports media, its narratives, symbols and icons play a crucial role in the process of building and projecting social identity, including nationality (Allen, 2013; Denham and Duke, 2010; Rowe, 2011; Rowe, 2013b; Thomas and Anthony, 2015; Van Hilvoorde et al., 2010). More precisely, as Horne et al. (2013: 97) underline, “media coverage of sport arguably plays a significant part in the construction of national identities. Our sense of our own national identities and our characteristic stereotypical images of other nations can be traced in the ways in which the media represent sport”.

At London 2012, 204 NOCs took part in the event and, therefore, the Olympics provided an extraordinary opportunity for countries to show the world they existed and to gain international recognition and exposure. At the same time, media can expand horizons, promote or put down nationalities as well as creating nationalistic favour or national stereotyping (Stead, 2008). As Zhong et al. (2009: 45) explain, “when covering world events such as the Olympic Games, the media can act as a double-edge sword:

they can promote common goals and international understanding, but they might also advance simplistic stereotypes or the narrower interests of individual nations and groups” (Larson and Rivenburgh, 1991).

An extensive body of literature has shown that at the Olympics there has been a significant quantitative bias towards the coverage of the teams and athletes of the countries where media organizations are based. The media have commonly been prone to maximize their own countries’ stories over the rest (Nee, 2015). Due to the economic logic of the media and the news criteria of cultural proximity (Angelini et al., 2012b), they have primarily tailored their agenda “towards nationally constituted and regional/local readerships” (Rowe, 2013a: 166). Billings and Eastman (2002: 351) highlight the fact that “in each country, people feel a vested interest in their own Olympic team” and, therefore, it can be understood that journalists⁴³ have tended to interpret the Olympics from their “domestic and national frames of reference” (Qing, 2010: 1894) and “the unique lens of their home culture” (Rivenburgh, 2010: 4). This shows that “despite the strong globalization forces, the world remains a collage of different societies, rather than a single ‘global’ culture” (Ličen and Billings, 2013: 380).

Media professionals have concentrated on their national teams, local themes and domestic sporting heroes (Angelini et al., 2015), emphasizing “the special meaning of the medals for the countries if the sports writers and medallists are from the same country” (Yu, 2009: 301). It needs to be said that media organizations seek to “attract the largest and most affluent readership possible” (Vincent and Crossman, 2012: 87) and that, at the Olympic Games, to maximize the coverage of home athletes “makes sound economic sense” (Horne, 2006: 48).

Bearing this mediated national lens in mind (Billings and Kim, 2014), Thompson (2013: 1775) argues that “people all over the world watch the Olympics, but they are not watching the same Olympics”. In short, the national frame matters in terms of what gets covered in the media and how it gets covered. To illustrate this, Billings’ longitudinal analysis of the NBC telecasts from the summer and Winter Olympics between 1996–2006 (Atlanta 1996 to Torino 2006) showed that US athletes were the most mentioned in five of the six events taken into consideration for the study, achieving a proportion of near three-quarters of all the athletes included (Billings,

⁴³ According to Horky and Stelzner (2013: 124), we should also take into consideration the fact that “sports journalists are also sports recipients and have natural preferences for local, regional and national athletes”. However, as the same authors remind us, “this type of bias contradicts neutral and balanced reporting as it interprets the reality from a distinctively subjective point of view” (Horky and Stelzner, 2013: 124).

2008). These results are consistent with previous investigations in the field (Billings and Angelini, 2007; Billings and Eastman, 2002; Billings et al, 2008; Cho, 2009; Eastman and Billings, 1999; Larson and Rivenburgh, 1991).

In other research, Vincent and Crossman (2012) examined how *The Globe and Mail* (Canada) and *The New York Times* (US) covered the Canadian and US women's and men's ice hockey teams that competed at Vancouver 2010. The authors highlighted the fact that "each newspaper provided more coverage of the men's teams and to [sic] its own national teams, particularly in prominent locations" (Vincent and Crossman, 2012: 87). With regard to the same Winter Olympics, Angelini et al. (2012b: 193) explained that "U.S. athletes were highlighted at three to four times the rate their successes would suggest". More recently, Billings et al (2014c: 101) pinpointed the fact that in NBC's London 2012 prime time, "Americans were more likely to be mentioned (55.8%) than all other athletes combined". In Sochi 2014, American athletes represented the 43.9% of the mentions at NBC's primetime broadcasts (Angelini et al., 2015). The index of nationalism can be much higher and has even reached 79%, as noted by Real (1989), who focused on studying print media.

That being said, some notable exceptions should be taken into account. In the television coverage at Salt Lake City 2002, Billings and Eastman (2003: 569) highlighted the fact that "surprisingly, non-American athletes were mentioned more frequently than American athletes were". Another significant example can be found in the coverage of London 2012 in the Swedish press (*Aftonbladet* and *Dagens Nyheter*), where Hedenborg (2013: 800) identified the fact that home and international athletes "received almost equal shares of coverage".

Moving on to qualitative grounds, the "media coverage of the Olympics has often reflected and engaged in nationalistic and patriotic discourses" (Angelini et al., 2012b: 196). First, patriotism can be understood as "focusing more on pride in one's own country without comparison to other countries" (Billings et al, 2013: 915). According to Vincent and Crossman (2012: 91–2), "journalists draw on invented traditions to stimulate interest and create a sense of unity and patriotism". One of the frequently employed mechanisms used to do this is the "liberal use of personal pronouns in newspaper articles. Personal pronouns describe 'our' athletes or 'our' team" (Vincent and Crossman, 2012: 91–2). With regard to their usage, Ličen and Billings (2013: 387) showed in their examination of Beijing 2008 on Slovenian television that "dialogue regarding Slovenian athletes' performances was saturated with references to 'ours'". Leaving aside the first person plural, other mechanisms, which will be examined in the results, include the use of quotes and photographs with a patriotic purpose in mind.

Second, nationalism can be “viewed as comparative patriotism in which distinctions are made between the presumed superiority of one’s own nation and the inferiority of all other nations” (Billings et al., 2013: 915). It is true that the Olympics themselves “have historically been a channel for the construction and display of nationalism” (Billings, 2008: 90). However, as noted by Eagleman (2014: 217), time and time again the coverage of the Olympics is too “nationalistic in nature, which can detract from the Olympic ideals”. These nationalistic discourses in the media may involve the display of stereotypes and dialogue differences (Stead, 2008). For instance, research carried out by Billings et al. (2011) into the televisual narrations in the US and China (NBC and CCTV) during Beijing 2008 showed the perpetuation of dichotomic confrontations between countries in the construction of media discourses (“Us versus Them”). According to Billings et al. (2009: 383), the “‘us versus them’ dichotomies appear to be endemic to the self-categorization theory’s functions of mediated nationalism”. If nationalistic discourses are clearly exaggerated in the media, we can talk about smugness, which incorporates “a blend of patriotism and nationalism, but in a manner more brazenly arrogant, about a home country’s presumed superiority over all other nations” (Billings et al., 2013: 915).

Taking this background into consideration, the researcher has codified the nationality of the protagonists and co-protagonists of the competition-related news pieces according to the following categories: home athletes or foreign athletes. Furthermore, he has registered the most significant words, phrases and expressions that are used to foster patriotic and nationalistic discourses, including the stereotypes that may be employed to establish comparisons or to put down certain nationalities.

2.2.2.4. Commitment to justice in the portrayal of disability

As Thomas (2008: 222) highlights, “in a similar way to women, blacks and homosexuals, disabled people have been excluded from both mainstream society and sport”. Disabled people have received scant attention from the mass media or have been “rendered invisible” (Hardin, 2006: 580). As Thomas and Smith (2003: 139) point out, “the press treatment and social significance of sporting performances of disabled athletes remains [*sic*] considerably lower than that of non-disabled athletes”.

In addition, “the images of disability have long been associated with negative connotations and stigma” (Cherney and Lindemann, 2010: 196). As Pate and Hardin (2013: 161) explain, “*othering* carries a negative connotation similar to ‘us vs. them’ with the outgroup being outcast as different from what is normal”. Barnes (1992), quoted in Horne and Whannel (2011: 175), identified “ten commonly disabling

stereotypes in the mass media”: pitiable and pathetic; an object of curiosity or violence; sinister or evil; super cripple; adding atmosphere; laughable; his/her own worst enemy; a burden; non-sexual; and unable to participate in daily life. In other words, the media have tended to “reinforce the image of a disabled person either as a tragic but brave victim of a crippling condition or as a pitiable and pathetic individual” (Horne and Whannel, 2011: 176). This can lead to further negative consequences, because the fact cannot be refuted that “without fair and accurate coverage, [disabled] athletes are denied financial opportunities (through media exposure and sponsorships) afforded to able-bodied athletes” (Hardin, 2006: 583). Socially, “the way the media portray people with disabilities and disability sport can have a major impact on how other groups and individuals within society view them also” (Brittain, 2010: 72).

Until now, “there has been very little research that focuses on the media representation of disabled athletes or people with disabilities participating in sport” (Horne and Whannel, 2011: 176). Schantz and Gilbert (2001) carried out an analysis of the media coverage of the Atlanta 1996 Paralympics in the French and German newspapers while Schell and Duncan (1999) content analysed the same event, studying the CBS coverage. Later, Thomas and Smith (2003) examined the textual and photographic coverage of the Sydney 2000 Paralympics in the British printed press, detecting that “nearly one-quarter of the articles in the national newspapers depicted athletes as ‘victims or courageous people who suffer from personal tragedies’” (Girginov and Parry, 2005: 75–6).

In their examination of the photographic coverage of the Paralympic Games from Sydney 2000 to Beijing 2008 in ten European broadsheets, Pappous et al. (2011) uncovered the increase in journalistic attention (the number of images published during this timeframe grew), but also illustrated the fact that “the competitiveness and the abilities of Paralympic athletes” were not highlighted (Pappous et al., 2011: 345). The authors pinpointed the fact that 62% of the photographs were passive shots (Pappous et al., 2011: 350).

Focusing specifically on the Beijing 2008 Paralympics, Buysse and Borcharding (2010) examined the photographic coverage in 12 newspapers from five countries (the US, China, South Africa, New Zealand and Italy), revealing that “during the 15 days of Paralympic competition, only 152 photographs appeared in 12 newspapers from five countries, an indication that Paralympic sport is not perceived by the media as legitimate sport”. Following on from this, an analysis of these images showed that “Paralympians were not represented as competent athletes” (Buysse and Borcharding, 2010: 316). In another study focusing on the same Paralympics, Chang et al. (2011)

examined the coverage delivered by the Canadian newspaper *The Globe and Mail*, highlighting the fact that the newspaper “portrayed athletes with disabilities as ‘real athletes’ rather than ‘supercrips’ or ‘victims’” (Chang et al., 2011: 44). Nevertheless, as the authors emphasized, the “textual coverage of athletes with disabilities competing in the Paralympic Games still does not have the depth and breadth of that of the Olympic Games” (Chang et al, 2011: 45).

Furthermore, in his investigation of the front page coverage of London 2012 (including the Paralympics) in five Japanese newspapers (*Yomiuri, Asahi, Sankei, Akahata* and *Nikkan Sports*), Thompson (2013: 1776) revealed that “the Paralympics received sparse coverage on the front page of all the newspapers surveyed”.

In contrast to these results, there are some positive signs that need to be considered. According to Boyle and Haynes (2014a: 92), Channel 4, the broadcaster in charge of the London 2012 Paralympics, “set a new benchmark”. As the authors underline, “they focused firstly on the sport, and only then discussed disability issues in a tone that managed to be both respectful, but not patronising. This was a difficult balance to achieve and achieving this is something that the presenters and production staff at Channel 4 should take considerable credit from. Television, often rightly criticized for its limited range of representations of disability, became a key platform that helped to challenge broader audience perceptions around disability and society, while never losing sight that the Paralympics is first and foremost a sporting event” (Boyle and Haynes, 2014a: 93).

It must be said that this doctoral research does not focus on Paralympic sports events, because the event being examined is the Olympic Games. Information relating to the Paralympic Games⁴⁴, which were held in London from 29 August to 9 September, 2012, is therefore excluded. Nevertheless, one extraordinary circumstance has to be taken into account: two Paralympic athletes, Oscar Pistorius and Natalia Partyka took part in both the Paralympic and the Olympic programmes.

The South African runner Oscar Pistorius is “perhaps the most high-profile case of a Paralympian seeking Olympic inclusion” (Corrigan et al., 2010: 289). Pistorius had had a double amputation and ran with the aid of carbon fibre blade prosthetic limbs (Brittain, 2010). He had “always competed in both T43 (both legs amputated below the

⁴⁴ The Paralympic Games are the sporting competition “for elite athletes with a physical disability, mental disability or visual impairment” (Girginov and Parry, 2005: 69). The first summer Paralympic Games took place in Rome (1960) and the first Winter Paralympic Games were held in Örnsköldsvik, Sweden (1976). Since Seoul 1988, they have been staged in the same city as the Olympic Games.

knee) and T44 events (one leg amputated below the knee)” (Howe, 2008: 131), but his achievements were such that he gained the right to compete in London 2012⁴⁵. In July 2011 he obtained the Olympic “A” qualifying time and in July 2012 he was finally included in the South African 4x400 metres relay team and 400 metres individual lists, so he earned his place in London 2012. The Polish table tennis player, Natalia Partyka, who was born without a right forearm, competed in Beijing 2008 and also in London 2012. The participation of these two people opened up the unique possibility of analysing their coverage and assessing how the media treated physically handicapped athletes who had gained the right to compete in the Olympics. The analysis was aimed at discerning if such athletes were discriminated by mainstream media or if newspapers endorsed their inclusion.

In addition to Pistorius and Partyka, as will be explained in the results, another athlete, the South Korean archer Im Dong-Hyun, was portrayed as “disabled” even though he actually was not. As will be argued later, given that “journalists rarely cover disability sport” (Corrigan et al., 2010: 299), media professionals showed a particular lack of knowledge around this area. As Pate and Hardin (2013: 366) point out, “a lack of knowledge on the topic results in inaccurate and inconsistent actions and may reinforce inaccurate stereotypes of people with disabilities”.

2.2.3. Principle of responsibility

Responsibility is “the general compliance of all ethical principles as well as the general attitude shown by media and journalists according to which a process of reflection as well as appropriate behaviour and applied conscience are brought into play when carrying out certain professional tasks” (Alsus, 2010: 172). It is beyond doubt that freedom of expression must be conjugated with responsibility and accountability (Sanders, 2003), as it is clearly stated in some central codes such as UNESCO’s *International Principles of Professional Ethics in Journalism* (Art. 3), the Council of

⁴⁵ Although the repercussions of Pistorius’ participation in London 2012 were unprecedented as far as the mass media were concerned, there are some previous cases that should be mentioned, such as the participation of paraplegic sportsmen and women in archery in London 1948 and the case of Neroli Fairhall, “one of the first ever fully accepted wheelchair athletes to take part in an Olympic Games, who competed in the 1984 Los Angeles Games for New Zealand in archery” (Girginov and Parry, 2005: 66). It is also worth remembering George Eyser, who in St Louis 1904 “won three gold medals in gymnastics while competing on a wooden leg” and the blind runner Henry Wanyoike, who in Sydney 2000 raced in the 1,500 metres (Van Hilvoorde and Landeweerd, 2008). Other noteworthy cases in Beijing 2008 were Natalie du Toit (swimming), Paola Fantato (archery), Marla Runyan (athletics) and Natalia Partyka (table tennis) (Corrigan et al., 2010).

Europe's *Resolution 1.003 on the Ethics of Journalism* (Art. 1) and the *ASNE Statement of Principles* (Art. 1), to mention a few.

All media, including sports media, need to be responsible to society, given the inherent positive values of sports practice and their beneficial influence on society as a whole. As Moragas (1996: 9) points out, "modern sport will only be able to fulfil its educational responsibilities if media make a valid contribution to the strengthening of its positive values and avoid highlighting the negative ones". Three ethical aspects have been specifically looked into in this research: (1) the invasion of privacy, (2) the presence of warlike expressions that incite violence or confrontation, and (3) respect for religious beliefs.

2.2.3.1. Respect for the privacy of sportsmen and sportswomen

Privacy refers to "a human condition or status in which humans, by virtue of their humanness, control the time, place, and circumstances of communications about themselves. A private domain gives people their own identity and unique self-consciousness within the human species; such a domain is a precondition for developing a healthy sense of personhood" (Christians, 2010: 204). It cannot be denied that "the right of individuals to protect their privacy has long been cherished in Western culture" (Christians et al., 1991: 137). As Hlavach and Freivogel (2011: 28) acknowledge, "no one's privacy should be intruded upon unless justified by an overriding public need"⁴⁶. Privacy is a principle clearly reflected in the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (Art. 12), the *European Convention on Human Rights* (Art. 8) and other legislation, such as the US Privacy Act (1974) or the Spanish Constitution of 1978 (Alsius, 2010).

Focusing specifically on the field of journalism, privacy refers to "the invasion of physical and personal space to gather information", "the publication of private facts, e.g. about relationships, sexual habits, finances, health" or "the publication of speculation about an individual's private thoughts or feelings" (Franklin et al., 2005: 199–200).

⁴⁶ As Frost remembers, "media should have some right to invade a citizen's privacy, provided there is a justification of public interest in the affair. This can be loosely defined as the public's right to receive information about something which is being done privately by someone and which is against the general or specific interests of society" (Frost, 2011: 53). Nevertheless, the public interest cannot be the only reason to invade someone's privacy. As Sanders adds, "the editor's view that reporters should give people what they want is not a serious argument" (Sanders, 2003: 90).

Christians (2010: 203) argues that the “laws safeguarding privacy are impressive, but legal prescriptions are an inadequate foundation for the news business. Privacy is not a legal right only but a moral good”. Thus, laws should be complemented and enhanced with the ethical foundations of the media profession. The respect for privacy is well established in the main ethical codes and prescriptions, such as the *International Principles of Professional Ethics in Journalism* from UNESCO (Art. 6), *Resolution 1.003 on the Ethics of Journalism* from the Council of Europe (Arts 23–4), the NUJ’s *Professional Code of Conduct* (Art. 6), IPSO’s *Editors’ Code of Practice* (Art. 3), the SPJ’s *Code of Ethics* (Art. 2), FAPE’s *Deontological Code of the Journalistic Profession* (Art. 4), the *Declaration of Principles of the Journalistic Profession* from the Catalan Journalists College (CPC) (Art. 9) and the code belonging to the Union of Journalists in Madrid (Art. 13.1). *The Guardian Editorial Code* (1: Privacy) and *La Vanguardia Newsroom Statute* (Art. 3.10) also refer to privacy.

That being said, the recurring problem is that, “the right to know is used as an excuse to publish circulation-boosting journalism” (Frost, 2011: 10). Especially in the last few years, “in terms of content there has been erosion of the public-private distinction – and the rise of sensation, scandal and gossip news has continued to grow” (Horne, 2006: 59).

The situation is particularly controversial in the case of “people that are considered objects of public attention” (Alsius, 1999: 379) and “those who volunteer for public life” (Frost, 2011: 103), categories into which sportsmen and sportswomen fall. We cannot deny that some athletes seek or need their privacy to be invaded by the media in order to foster their social projection and notoriety (Alsius, 1999; Cummins Gauthier, 2010). As Cummins Gauthier (2010: 220) explains, “those who seek public office or have attained these positions, in addition to entertainment and sports stars, may desire to have their names and images in the public eye, for example, to win financial support and votes or to attract audiences for their films, music, or sports events”. Nevertheless, “that they wish such publicity, however, does not give journalists total access” (Cummins Gauthier, 2010: 220). As the same author points out, “no one can be expected to give up all of their privacy, regardless of their chosen career. Everyone deserves the respect that is owed to all persons, so that violations of privacy will always need to be justified by some overwhelming benefit, primarily to the public, and not just to those in the news businesses” (Cummins Gauthier, 2010: 224). As Alsius (1999: 381) adds, “the problems arise when a different interpretation of the points where individual limits have been set” occurs, and “they tend to change often according to various circumstances and their own conveniences”.

The vast majority of the written literature around privacy in sports journalism is related to general considerations of this principle and the treatment of isolated cases such as that of the tennis player Arthur Ashe and the baseball players Barry Bonds, Jason Giambi and Gary Sheffield (Cummins Gauthier, 2010: 225–6; Schultz, 2005: 225). Hodges (2009: 276–7) explains the classic case of Arthur Ashe, which any researcher in media ethics should have in mind when approaching issues regarding sport and the invasion of privacy: “Having won at Wimbledon and in the U.S. Open, Ashe in the 1970s was ranked No. 1 in the tennis world. After brain surgery in 1988, he learned that he was infected with HIV, the virus that causes AIDS, as a result of a blood transfusion in 1983. Many of his friends, including a number of reporters, knew of his condition and kept his secret. But in 1993 *USA Today* sent a reporter to ask Ashe about him having the virus. Ashe did not answer the question, and he was told that the newspaper would pursue the story. Although he had wanted to make his own statement later in his own way and at a time of his own choosing, Ashe called a news conference the next day and announced to the world, against his will, that he had AIDS”.

Bearing the primary principle of common good in mind and the key importance of respecting privacy to retain credibility (Christians, 2010), quality newspapers should draw a line between the public and private lives of athletes, reflecting seriously as to whether certain “private facts are appropriate for dissemination” (Hodges, 2009: 281) and whether they provide a newsworthy value to the coverage. Quality newspapers should follow the assumption that “generally and if there are no exceptional circumstances, quality journalism should omit from news the personal data that are not relevant for its comprehension” (Alsius, 1999: 384). As Hodges (2009: 287) explains, “in reporting on individuals, journalists should temper invasions of privacy in particular cases by applying the test of the public’s real need to know”. According to Christians (2010: 208), media professionals should “distinguish gossip, pandering, innuendo, exaggeration, and falsehood from news. These are minimalist tasks involved in all newsgathering and dissemination; that is, determining newsworthiness by separating what the public wants to know from what it needs to know”.

Taking this background into account, the objective of the researcher was to locate and codify the relevant cases and expressions that were unnecessarily emphasized in the non-sport-related details of sportsmen and sportswomen, in order to assess media compliance with ethical principles relating to respect for privacy.

2.2.3.2. Avoiding the warlike language that fosters confrontation

It cannot be denied that “violence has been an integral part of much sporting activity. Most sports comprise a form of competition, much of which intrinsically involves conflict” (Gunter, 2006: 353). Regarding the Olympics, it should be pointed out that the Games “provide a stage for the expression of international rivalry and conflict, which potentially breeds nationalism and divisiveness” (Reid, 2006: 206).

Focusing on the sports media field, it should be borne in mind that “conflict is a prized news value” (Hardin et al., 2007: 231). Lee (2009: 260) underlines the fact that “the drama of discord inherent in antagonistic and opposing actions, fuelled by a related news value – violence, appeals to journalists and their audiences alike”. According to Rowe (1992: 104), “rhetorical sports journalism generates and capitalizes, either soberly or excitedly, upon conflict and controversy. It draws heavily not on the imagined psychic communion of Olympian sport, but on sport’s capacity to represent, both literally and symbolically, disharmony and conflictual identification”.

More concretely, sports journalism “has been accused of contributing to the incitation of violent behaviours inside and outside the football pitches by using certain linguistic resources and ways of presenting images” (Rojas Torrijos, 2011: 82). López-González et al. (2014: 689) highlight the fact that “war has been persistently a frame of reference utilized by sports journalism to make sense of the game”. As Garrido Lora (2009: 57) pinpoints, “warlike language goes along with sporting chronicles almost from the origins of sports journalism” and “aggressiveness and sensationalism shake hands many times in the informative and commercial discourse associated with sport” (Garrido Lora, 2009: 65).

As Young (2012: 158) states, “not every media outlet is unprofessional, and the world of sport is replete with responsible, critical and extremely differentiated journalism, but it is not difficult to find examples of irresponsible, unethical, inflammatory or violence-condoning styles and conventions in the sports media”. This situation makes for the fact that sporting mega-events, such as the Olympic Games, have been portrayed as much in the media as a forum for fervent nationalism as they have been as an event that is about peaceful competition (Butterworth, 2007: 187).

As indicated by experts, certain vocabulary or jargon and analogies from military language have been used repeatedly in sports journalism, words such as “war”, “battle”, “soldiers”, “army”, “troops”, “enemies”, “revenge”, “conquer”, “massacre”, “annihilate” and expressions such as “Us versus Them” (words and expressions that

are, as it has been seen previously, detrimental to journalism impartiality). To illustrate this, López-González et al. (2014: 700) explained that the media coverage of the rivalry between FC Barcelona and Real Madrid was characterized by the use of certain language such as “assault”, “tactic battle” and “loaded arms”. Holt (2000) examined the two main newspapers in the Auckland area in New Zealand (*New Zealand Herald* and *Sunday Star Times*) and found that the most significant component of the sports reporting style was the “images of violence – a style that would strike readers as distinctly odd if found in other sections of the same newspaper” (Holt, 2000: 90). Holt (2000: 91–2; 94–5) provided a detailed enumeration of the terms and metaphors used which suggested violence and military association. These appeared on average around three to four times per page.

Journalists employ this war jargon and metaphors in the media coverage to describe the action on the playing field (Gunter, 2006) in order to add an interpretative judgement, to provide “exciting and dramatic language for players and sportscasters” (Jenkins, 2013: 245) – which correlates to the “commercialization or commodification of sport, and its marketing as spectacle” (Holt, 2000: 102) – and to make the development of sporting events more comprehensible to the readers of their news pieces (Alcoba, 1993). However, we cannot forget that “the emphasis on military imagery can bring risks of positively associating sport with war” (Billings et al., 2014b: 177, extracted from Brown, 2004). In other words, the use of warlike language and metaphors in the media coverage can “conflate war and sports in the minds of the public” (Jenkins, 2013: 247). Moreover, the use of these linguistic choices “raises the question of the ‘de-sensitizing’ effect of such sports reporting to real violence in real life” (Holt, 2000: 101).

The Olympic Games, which are “largely interpreted as competitions between nations⁴⁷” (Billings et al., 2014b: 163) and which are a forum where “conflict becomes a key element of the media narration” (Girginov and Parry, 2005: 89), are an excellent context in which to monitor and analyse the use of violent language in the media. Although the media need to reflect on the symbolic national rivalries between countries and athletes, which is an intrinsic part of Olympic sport, this does not mean that they should foster disputes, antagonisms, fights or enhance the use of aggressive or hostile

⁴⁷ “International sporting events are often portrayed within the context of wider political ‘battles’ between nations and serve to foster a sense of nationalism and loyalty to the state” (Malcolm, 2008: 166). In the Olympics, the nationalist dimension of this event was established during the 1920s and 1930s and was “ritualised by the establishment of medal ceremonies, the raising of national flags, the playing of national anthems and the parading in national teams in the Opening Ceremony” (Horne and Whannel, 2011: 114). Since then, “participant countries have tended to interpret the Games as an opportunity to express nationalist feelings and national identification” (García Ferrando, 2001, quoted in García Ferrando and Durán González, 2002: 242).

language. It should be borne in mind that key ethical recommendations, such as Article 35 of *Resolution 1.003 on the Ethics of Journalism* from the Council of Europe or Article 3.8 from *La Vanguardia Newsroom Statute*, state that language which fosters violence, aggressiveness, hatred and confrontation should be avoided. The code promoted by the Union of Journalists in Madrid (Art. 6) highlights the fact that journalists should “acquire an ethical compromise for peace”.

Similarly, Moragas (1996: 12) highlights the fact that the “media must promote a new language that banishes the warlike, violent terms from its vocabulary and that removes aggressive approaches from its narration” given their “responsibility to reflect the values of international peace and understanding inherent to the Olympic Movement”. Moreover, “apart from looking after the responsible use of language and caring about a respectful treatment of the images that are shown to the public, sports journalism has the added responsibility of being educator and transmitter of the positive values inherent in sports practice, such as the desire to improve, the effort culture, solidarity, companionship, equality or fair play” (Rojas Torrijos, 2011: 87). This fact is clearly related to the cornerstone ideal of peacemaking fostered by the Olympic movement (Martínková, 2012) and reflected in the second article of the *Olympic Charter*: “The goal of Olympism is to place sport at the service of the harmonious development of humankind, with a view to promoting a peaceful society concerned with the preservation of human dignity” (IOC, 2013a, Art. 2).

Bearing in mind all the aforementioned premises, the researcher has scrutinized the newspapers’ use of warlike language and the presence of confrontation narratives that were developed throughout the media coverage. Moreover, the investigation has searched for specific examples of commitment to peace and non-violence.

2.2.3.3. Respect for religious beliefs

One final point regarding the principle of responsibility should be made about the respect for religious beliefs. Religion has become a noteworthy issue in the mass media (Stout, 2012). However, even though “an ever-growing network of people inside and outside the academic community are beginning to take the intersection between religion and the media more seriously” (Hoover, 1998: viii), there is still a lack of a sufficient body of literature on the treatment of religion within the sports journalism field.

In broad terms, it cannot be denied that “religious beliefs and practices present a particular kind of challenge to journalism” (Hoover, 1998: 10). As Alsius (2010: 191) highlights, “news coverage of religions is one of those sensitive issues which require

extreme care according to the ethical principle of responsibility". The respect for rights, dignity and the responsible representation of different religions is quoted in many codes such as UNESCO's *International Principles of Professional Ethics in Journalism* (Art.9), the IFJ's *Declaration of Principles on the Conduct of Journalists* (Art. 7) and FAPE's *Deontological Code of the Journalistic Profession* (Art. 7). Above all, the quality media should be very respectful with regard to all religious beliefs and should not use stereotyping, negative assertions, clichés and non-respectful expressions towards religion (Sánchez González and Padilla Castillo, 2013).

That being said, we cannot get away from the fact that, sometimes, the provision of details about people's religion (included, for instance, in human interest stories and athlete profiles) can lead to sensationalist practices, where the borders between newsworthiness and spectacle can become increasingly blurred (Sánchez González and Padilla Castillo, 2013). For instance, O'Gorman (2009) reflects on the fact that usually sportswriters rely on "redemption and other biblical, spiritual and theological allusions" in order to "to cover the commitment of sports men and women" (O'Gorman, 2009: 250). These religious references to faith, used in a non-religious environment, may seek to attract readers' attention and, therefore, they may serve a commercial purpose.

In this investigation, the researcher has examined what information the print media reported during London 2012 about the religious beliefs of sportsmen and sportswomen. Given that the "media treatment of religion can be seen as a kind of indicator of the broader role and status of religion on the contemporary scene" (Hoover, 1998: 12), the research has analysed whether the media made use of any stereotyped or negative expressions in approaching these issues. To be precise, the research sought to ascertain if religion was portrayed in a respectful way or if it was depicted as something "exotic", "rare" or "differential", that is, as a commodity to draw more readers to a particular story.

2.3. Complementary perspectives of analysis: agenda-setting and framing

As can be perceived from the previous section, journalism ethics and quality of information has been the main interpretative framework for studying the coverage of London 2012 in the British, American and Spanish press. However, two key theories, those of agenda-setting (McCombs and Shaw, 1972) and framing (Goffmann, 1974), have also been key to this investigation. These theories have already proved very

useful with regard to explaining issues such as the portrayal of gender, race, disability and nationality and now they have been applied to these and other critical issues that have been analysed with regard to London 2012.

2.3.1. Agenda-setting

McCombs and Shaw (1972), theorists with regard to agenda-setting, have explained that “in choosing and displaying news, editors, newsroom staff, and broadcasters play an important role in shaping political reality. Readers learn not only about a given issue, but also how much importance to attach to that issue from the amount of information in a news story and its position” (McCombs and Shaw, 1972: 176). In other words, “agenda-setting theory posits the idea that mass media outlets cannot tell us explicitly what to think, but can be marvellously effective at outlining what a viewer should think about” (Billings, 2008: 33–4).

According to Frederick et al. (2013: 318), “within the confines of agenda-setting research, it has been well established that news media sets the public agenda through the amount of coverage an issue receives”. In the case of our research, the media and journalists decided exactly what salient⁴⁸ information, content, stories and aspects were transmitted and which aspects of London 2012 were emphasized, minimized or excluded⁴⁹ (Billings, 2010; Digel, 2010). These gatekeeping decisions were also shaped taking into consideration newspapers’ own newsroom cultures, particular values and organizational interests (Hesmondhalgh, 2007; Kennedy and Hills, 2009), and “their specific conventions” (Priest, 2010: 40). Other external factors that affect the way in which the media operate and the output they produce, such as technology, commercial influences, advertising and the need to maximize audiences in the current media landscape (Burton, 2010; Horne, 2006; Nee, 2015), were not forgotten either. The media therefore organized the public’s agenda and the discussion of the Olympic events (McCombs, 2004).

⁴⁸ As explained by Dearing and Rogers (1996: 8), salience is “the degree to which an issue on the agenda is perceived as relatively important”.

⁴⁹ Although it is true that journalists and the media decisively help to configure the stories regarding the Olympic Games (Billings, 2010), it has to be recognized that “in the end, agenda-setting and/or agenda-building in the Olympics succumbs to the ultimate agenda-setters: the participating athletes” (Billings, 2008: 37). In addition, the fact that plans can change should be taken into account, “depending on the athletic performances and overarching storylines that develop within any Olympic Games” (Billings, 2008: 43).

The understanding of the agenda-setting theory has been very helpful, for instance, in analysing the results of the salient topics featured under the item “Depth and comprehensiveness in the provision of information” (see Table 1).

2.3.2. Framing

Closely linked to the agenda-setting theory, the theoretical concept of framing is “an approach to media studies that examines how print and broadcast journalists tell stories so that particular themes or values are featured over others⁵⁰” (Billings et al., 2014b: 176). In contrast to agenda-setting, which basically focuses on which issues are covered (Tankard, 2003), framing (Goffman, 1974) takes it a step further by, “explaining how human minds build frames⁵¹ that define perceptions and definitions of reality” (Billings and Angelini, 2007: 97). Gitlin (1980: 7) defines frames as “persistent patterns of cognition, interpretation, and presentation of selection, emphasis, and exclusion by which symbol handlers routinely organize discourse, whether verbal or visual”. Therefore, framing consists of the “subtle selection of certain aspects of an issue by the media to make them more important and thus to emphasize a particular cause of some phenomena” (Dearing and Rogers, 1996: 71).

Framing is “an area that has strong implications in sports communication” (Wanta, 2013: 82). In this particular research, framing has been a very helpful theory to understand and evaluate how and why the media select and emphasize certain frames of gender, race, disability and nationality (principle of justice), frame certain news pieces from a sensationalist perspective (principle of truth) or use certain language within the coverage to convey narratives of confrontation (principle of responsibility). Conducting semi-structured interviews with media representatives and scholars has helped to understand these frames and the strategies involved in the production process of the media messages and how they are then disseminated to the readership (Billings and Eastman, 2003; Rui, 2010). Given the fact that “framing undoubtedly contributes to the social construction of reality” (Priest, 2010: 59) and that the media’s selection of aspects and values “can have subtle but powerful effects on the audience” (Tankard, 2003: 97), it is a crucial theoretical concept to take into consideration for any project devoted to studying media coverage from the multifaceted perspective of ethics and quality of information.

⁵⁰ By framing, the media can “promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation” (Entman, 1993: 52), among other features.

⁵¹ Frames can be defined as “one means through which a particular meaning is given to an issue” (Dearing and Rogers, 1996: 64).

3. Methodology

3.1. Concepts

Having presented the theoretical framework and the review of the literature in the previous chapter, the methodological design of the research begins with the delimitation of the relevant concepts for investigative purposes. These have guided the investigation as they have been the main categories and sub-categories involved in the research. We understand the term concept as “a name given to a grouping of phenomena that organizes observations and ideas by virtue of possessing common features” (Bryman, 2012: 710). As we have previously seen, ethics is the branch of philosophy concerning moral principles and values, studying what is right and what is wrong (Franklin et al., 2005; Sanders, 2003; Scott and Marshall, 2009). Journalists need professional ethics in order to work for the public interest and to provide information in a truthful, precise and honest way (Alsius, 1998; Frost, 2011; Keeble, 2009).

Three fundamental deontological principles (truth, justice and responsibility) limit the areas that have been covered during the investigation. As previously mentioned, these concepts were extracted from the thesaurus developed by Alsius (1996) and were complemented and reinforced with specific considerations about the values of journalism ethics written by other key scholars (Christians and Traber, 1997; Christians et al., 1991; Deuze, 2005; Frost, 2011; Keeble, 2009; Knowlton and Reader, 2009; Kovach and Rosenstiel, 2001; Meyers, 2010; Plaisance, 2009; PRENDE, 2007; Sanders, 2003; Wilkins and Christians, 2009, and so on) as well as the prescriptions established in the media style guides, newsroom statutes and major codes of journalism ethics.

First, we understand truth as the respect for rigour (avoidance of conjecture, speculation and rumour; provision of a wide range of representative, authoritative and trustworthy sources; depth and completeness in the provision of information; rectification of content and clarification of misunderstandings) and carefulness with regard to neutrality (ensuring correct separation between journalistic genres and avoiding sensationalism and trivialization in the reporting of information). Second, justice makes reference to the commitment to a fair and balanced representation, both qualitatively and quantitatively, of gender, race, nationality and disability. Finally, the concept of responsibility urges journalists to respect privacy and religious beliefs. At

the same time, it encourages professionals to steer clear of the warlike language that fosters violence and confrontation.

3.2. Research questions

The research questions, closely linked to the research objectives and concepts, have guided all the investigative process, from the literature review and the methodological design to the presentation of the results (Brennen, 2013; Bryman, 2012). This investigation is constructed around a main research question and three associated sub-questions, following the indications of Creswell (2003), which have been answered through the empirical fieldwork. The following questions were postulated:

Main research question:

- To what extent did the British, American and Spanish press comply with the fundamental principles of journalism ethics and quality of information in their coverage of the London 2012 Olympics?

Research sub-questions:

- **RQ1.** Did the media comply with the essential considerations included in the principle of truth: avoidance of conjecture, rumour and speculation; provision of a wide range of representative, authoritative and trustworthy sources; depth and completeness in the provision of information; rectification of content and clarification of misunderstandings; correct separation between journalistic genres; and avoidance of sensationalism and trivialization?
- **RQ2.** Regarding the principle of justice, how did the media portray gender, race, nationality and disability? How did the media treat different nationalities and the traditionally disfavoured groups such as sportswomen, non-white and disabled athletes?
- **RQ3.** Concerning the principle of responsibility, did the media make errors with regard to respect for privacy and the use of warlike language that fosters violence and confrontation? Moreover, was the coverage respectful with regard to athletes' religious beliefs?

3.3. Method, techniques of analysis and sampling

3.3.1. Presentation of the qualitative method

The qualitative method was chosen to conduct this research because the study was pursuing a “richer, more complex and polymorphic comprehension of the phenomena to be studied” (Busquet et al., 2006: 150). Inserted in the logic of comprehension (García Galera and Berganza, 2005), this inductive⁵² and interpretative⁵³ methodological perspective has distinct advantages: it enables the description and in-depth understanding and interpretation of the reality, at the same time taking into consideration the social, political, economic, communicative and historical contexts⁵⁴ (Brennen, 2013; Marshall and Rossmann, 2011; Ruiz Olabuénaga et al., 1998; Silverman, 2000); it offers a great deal of flexibility in the research design and in the collection and analysis of data (Wimmer and Dominick, 2011); and last but not least, it allows the emergence of new theory and concepts from the results obtained (Creswell, 2003; Yin, 2011).

First, because it is a central feature of this method, it has to be acknowledged that qualitative research emphasizes words, in contrast to the positivist strategy, which is fundamentally based on characteristics such as “the gathering, analysis, interpretation, and presentation of numerical information” (Tashakkori and Tedlie, 2009: 5). This fact, however, does still mean that basic percentages and numerical data have been quantified and analysed during the present research. As Priest (2010: 40) acknowledges, “sometimes researchers use qualitative content analysis to identify content themes but also use numbers to count and communicate how often particular

⁵² The qualitative method “predominantly emphasizes an inductive approach to the relationship between theory and research, in which the emphasis is placed on the generation of theories” (Bryman, 2012: 36).

⁵³ While positivism is based on the “practices and norms of the natural scientific model” (Bryman, 2012: 36), interpretivism recognizes that “the study of the social world requires a different logic of research procedure, one that reflects the distinctiveness of humans as against the natural order” (Bryman, 2012: 28). Also, “interpretative social researchers emphasize the complexity of human life. Time and context are important and social life is seen as constantly changing” (Rubin and Rubin, 1995: 35). These “contextual conditions may strongly influence all human events”, as Yin (2011: 8) recognizes.

⁵⁴ It has to be acknowledged that qualitative researchers “typically emphasize the importance of the contextual understanding of social behaviour” (Bryman, 2012: 401). Burton (2010: 9) highlights the fact that “texts do not operate in isolation”. As Ruiz Olabuénaga et al. (1998) add, “in the qualitative method, the researcher has to be sensitive to the fact that meaning can never be taken for granted and that it is linked to a context” (Ruiz Olabuénaga et al., 1998: 45).

themes have been found". In this research, numerical expressions are used, for instance, to provide meaningful insight into the space devoted to the different Olympic sports by the media sampled or the percentage of space devoted to the gender or nationality of the protagonists covered in the competition-related pieces pertaining to an event.

Second, it should be noted that qualitative research is based on a subjective approach, which is "the emphasis on the ways in which individuals interpret their social world" (Bryman, 2012: 36). "Qualitative researchers also attempt to reflect critically on their role as researchers, a process known as reflexivity. Reflexivity helps researchers understand how their interpretations of evidence are influenced not only by historical context, personal experiences and language but also by their race and ethnicity, class and gender" (Brennen, 2013: 22).

In this multimethod⁵⁵ investigation, two qualitative techniques⁵⁶ that complement each other have been used: qualitative content analysis and qualitative semi-structured interviews with scholars/experts, media professionals and IOC representatives. Triangulation⁵⁷ has allowed the researcher to obtain a more complete, stronger and in-depth vision of the social reality studied (Busquet et al., 2006; De Miguel, 2005; Hesse-Biber, 2010; Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2009). Moreover, triangulation has been one of the mechanisms used to control and evaluate the investigation. The standard criteria described by Ruiz Olabuénaga et al. (1998), Rubin and Rubin (1995), Silverman (2000), Tashakkori and Teddlie (2009), Teddlie and Tashakkori (2003) and Yin (2011) to assess qualitative investigations include: transparency (keeping a record of all the procedures and the materials used so they can be scrutinized); credibility (systematic

⁵⁵ As Hesse-Biber (2010: 3) points out, multimethod "refers to the mixing of methods by combining two or more qualitative methods in a single research study (such as interviewing and participant observation) or by using two or more quantitative methods (such as a survey and experiment) in a single research study". We should differentiate multimethod designs from mixed method designs, which refer to the "use of qualitative and quantitative data collection procedures or research methods" (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2003: 11).

⁵⁶ Other qualitative methods such as ethnographic non-participant observation were discarded, taking into consideration fundamental drawbacks. First, key aspects to take into consideration are the difficulties of access, observation and the acquisition of relevant material by the researchers inside the media premises (Puijk, 2008). Second, scientific researchers are not usually given access as academic observers to see the Olympics and enter the facilities where the media and journalists operate (Moragas, 2006). These are "closed" or "private" research settings (Silverman, 2000: 198). Last, but not least, it cannot be denied that "the presence of the observer may actually lead to the alteration of behaviour among research subjects" (Malcolm, 2008: 184).

⁵⁷ Triangulation is a key concept that refers to the "use of more than one method or source of data in the study of a social phenomenon so that findings may be cross-checked" (Bryman, 2012: 717).

observation and triangulation of techniques); transferability (qualitative researchers do not seek to generalize⁵⁸ the results to all the universe but the purposive sample allows them to be applied to other relevant contexts and other time periods); consistency and coherence of data (avoiding inconsistencies and contradictions in the analysis and in the presentation of the results); obtaining effective feedback; and, as explained, triangulation.

3.3.2. Qualitative content analysis

3.3.2.1. Qualitative content analysis technique

Content analysis is a research method “aimed at recording the salient features of texts using a uniform system of categories” (Franklin et al., 2005: 46). Berelson, in *Content analysis in communications research*, crafted its classic definition: “Content analysis is a research technique for the objective, systematic and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication” (Berelson, 1952: 263). Nowadays, “content analysis is one of the more important techniques used in research concerning the mass media” (Berger, 1998: 33).

The research has made use of the qualitative content analysis technique⁵⁹, which has allowed the researcher to read, interpret and make valid inferences in a systematic and exhaustive way of the manifest content of the communicative messages included in the newspapers sampled, with the objective of juxtaposing the research questions with the characteristics of messages (Berger, 1998; Bryman, 2012; Busquet et al., 2006; Krippendorff, 2004; Ruiz Olabuénaga et al., 1998; Schutt, 2001; Wimmer and Dominick, 2011).

Content analysis in its qualitative version has enabled the researcher to overcome the rigidity of the quantitative content analysis. A set of explicit rules and predetermined categories (well adjusted to the purposes of the investigation, clear, reliable and mutually exclusive) guided the investigation from the start (Silverman, 2000), but the research was adaptable and open to the refinement, revision and incorporation of new relevant analysis categories that emerged from the examination of documents

⁵⁸ As Rubin and Rubin explain, “qualitative research is not looking for principles that are true all the time and in all conditions, like laws or physics; rather, the goal is understanding the specific circumstances, how and why things actually happen in a complex world” (Rubin and Rubin, 1995: 38).

⁵⁹ In his key book *Qualitative media analysis* (1996), Altheide also uses the term “ethnographic content analysis” as a synonym of qualitative content analysis.

(Altheide, 1996; Bardin, 1986; Bryman, 2012). It is also recognized that the values, perspective, orientation, sensitivity and methodological approach of the researcher play a crucial role in the interpretation of the meanings of the messages (Altheide, 1996; Creswell, 2003; Hesse-Biber, 2010; Marshall and Rossman, 2011). As Krippendorff (2004: 10) adds, “qualitative analyses can be systematic, reliable, and valid as well” and until now “have been proved successful” (Krippendorff, 2004: 19).

The investigation has described, interpreted and explained the cultural, social, economic and sports contexts as well as their journalistic tradition and types of media system models (Hallin and Mancini, 2004), all of which have an impact on the results. We cannot forget that three of the key characteristics of qualitative content analysis are that it “emphasises the context within which documents are generated”, “provides a great deal of descriptive detail” and is “concerned with explanation” (Bryman, 2012: 401). Also, when comparing the results with the codes of media ethics and other deontological documents, the contextual forces described by Cooper (1989: 233–6), such as the economic, social, religious, cultural/ethnic, psychological, anthropological, archetypal, linguistic, national, emotional/personal and global/transcendent forces, have been taken into consideration.

To conduct the content analysis, two methodological tools were designed: a codebook and a database. First, the codebook or coding guide gave detailed instructions and clearly specified the criteria used to identify and evaluate each category of the study, so that the researcher could register the information following a uniform approach. This coding scheme enabled comparisons to be made between data obtained for the different newspapers of the sample. The design of the codebook was based on the framework used to analyse the ethics of and the quality of information provided by sports journalism (see Section 2.2).

Second, a database that was created with specialized software, FileMaker Pro 12, allowed the researcher to register and manage the content of each unit of analysis, enabling the collection and analysis of results.

The procedure for carrying out the qualitative content analysis was very transparent (Bryman, 2012) and its key stages (Busquet et al., 2006; Wimmer and Dominick, 2011) were followed during the research: (1) rigorous and focused formulation of the research questions; (2) delimitation of the analysis universe; (3) selection of an appropriate sample for the purposes of the investigation; (4) definition of the analysis units; (5) design of exhaustive, reliable and mutually exclusive categories; (6) codification of the content and collection of data; (7) analysis of the collected information; and (8)

interpretation of the results, obtaining the conclusions and writing up of the results, that is, presenting the analysis of the evidence and the “commentary and interpretations of the evidence” (Brennen, 2013: 24).

Figure 4. Database employed for the qualitative content analysis, designed using FileMaker Pro 12

3.3.2.2. Qualitative content analysis sampling

In this qualitative research, the sample was chosen in a non-probabilistic way (Ruiz Olabuénaga et al., 1998) by the researcher, who purposively selected the media considering strategic criteria such as their quality, tone and readers, relevance with regard to their communicative systems, circulation and their capacity to carry out “systematic, insightful and rigorous sports journalism” (Boyle, 2006a: 10). They are the most adequate and relevant to the purposes of the investigation and the established research questions⁶⁰ (Bardin, 1986; Silverman, 2000).

The research has examined six top-tier newspapers of general information, published in three countries: *The Guardian/The Observer* and *The Daily Telegraph/The Sunday Telegraph* (UK); *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* (US); and *El País* and *La Vanguardia* (Spain). In relation to this sample, four crucial questions (A–D) need to be answered.

⁶⁰ As Bryman clarifies, “although a purposive sample is not a random sample, it is not a convenience sample either. A convenience sample is simply available by chance to the researcher, whereas in purposive sampling the researcher samples with his or her research goals in mind” (Bryman, 2012: 418).

A) Why was it convenient to develop an international comparative analysis?

As Hallin and Mancini (2004: 2) explain, “comparative analysis is valuable in social investigation, in the first place, because it sensitizes us to variation and to similarity, and this can contribute powerfully to concept formation and to the refinement of our conceptual apparatus”. The Olympic Games are a global sporting mega-event and thus, they deserve a transnational approach that takes into consideration the quality press of three countries. The UK was selected because it was the host country of London 2012. The US was chosen given its key role in worldwide communication and the impact that the Olympics have in their media. As Rowe (2011: 103) pinpoints, “the United States is not only a developer of domestic sport and recipient of externally produced sport but is also a major exporter of it, especially in mediated form” (Rowe, 2011: 103). Spain was chosen because it is the country where the doctoral candidate is based and also because it added depth to the comparative study to feature a country different from those included in the North Atlantic or Liberal model (Hallin and Mancini, 2004).

B) Why was the sample obtained from newspapers in their print editions?

The rationale for choosing newspapers in their print editions was clear. It is true that “television has, since the middle of the twentieth century, occupied the prime position among sport media” (Rowe, 2011: 34). Television occupies a central space “within the broader media sports environment”: “specifically at elite level sporting events, it is the needs and demands of television broadcasters that take precedence over their print colleagues” (Boyle, 2015: 355). We need to understand that “television remains a compelling platform in delivering shared sporting experiences” (Boyle and Haynes, 2014a: 94) and also that rights-holding television companies are central actors within the Olympic system (Fernández Peña, 2009). Furthermore, we must also recognize the importance of online journalism and new media as primary sources of news for citizens (Kian and Zimmermann, 2012) and in the consumption of the Olympic Games too (Fernández Peña et al., 2010).

That being said, newspapers have the chance to work more in depth and have more possibilities of carrying out a “pre- and post-event analysis” (Boyle, 2006a: 54) than television, a medium determined by the superficiality, immediacy and the live reality of on-air broadcasts. As Miah and García (2012: 123-124) point out, “while television is clearly the medium that dominates the average Olympic media consumer experience of the sports competitions, it may not be the most important medium in terms of contextual and non-sporting news reporting”. As Fernández Peña (2010: 6) clarifies, “television is not an appropriate medium for debating complex issues or expanding on facts”, because “it offers a sort of mosaic of a complex reality like the Olympic Games,

rendering it incomplete despite hundreds of hours of broadcasts” (Fernández Peña et al., 2010: 1671). In other words, newspapers “frame and contextualise, they highlight an event’s key aspects and they often directly or indirectly sell the event (or even disparage the event) to a wider public. They also discuss and make sense of the event, and highlight its significance and help establish its legacy when the live coverage is over” (Boyle, 2015: 358).

Second, print media not only “have traditionally been considered the primary sites for citizens to discuss matters of common concern” (Wahl-Jorgensen and Galperin, 2000: 20) and have in addition been regarded as the “home of sports journalism” (Boyle, 2006a: 56) but they are also “still important vehicles for news gathering and for producing and disseminating information to a broad public” (Darnell and Sparks, 2005: 360). We cannot deny that, “despite living in a highly visual media culture, the print media remain an important source of information, gossip and insight for the sports fan” (Boyle and Haynes, 2009: 164). It also has to be considered that “the breaking of sports news across the web and digital 24-hour news and sports television and radio channels has not eroded the appetite, particularly at the broadsheet/compact end of the market, for more in-depth and reflective sports journalism” (Boyle and Haynes, 2009: 182).

Moragas pointed out in 1992 that print media would “still play an important role in the informative coverage of the Games” (Moragas, 1992a: 132). More than 20 years later, despite the “increasingly complex digital media landscape” (Boyle and Haynes, 2014a: 85), characterized by: media convergence (Boyle and Haynes, 2003); 24/7 news pace (Boyle, 2013); the impact of social media on the journalistic task (English, 2014a; Frederick et al., 2013; Hermida, 2013; Hull and Lewis, 2014; Miah, 2014; Oettler, 2015; Revers, 2015; Schultz and Sheffer, 2010); the “acceleration of information flows” and the “intensification of digital media sport content production” (Hutchins, 2011: 252), and despite the current crisis affecting print media in terms of the losses of circulation, advertising and revenue (Zimmerman et al., 2013), the quality press still perform a key role in the Olympic media system. Print media remains decisive in the functions of widening the horizons of the public agenda and in “shaping both the ways of seeing sport and the sports that can be seen” (Rowe, 2013a: 176).

According to Anthony Edgar, the IOC head of media operations, “the role of print media is critical”, as at London 2012 where 192 countries sent representatives of print media to the Games. As Edgar highlights: “the text coverage is not going away, it is just getting stronger at the moment. It is hard financially, there is no doubt about that, the

advertising dollars are moving, but the need for it is not going anywhere” (Anthony Edgar, interview, May 2014).

C) Why did the sample focus on general information newspapers?

In the current communications landscape, to all the big general-interest newspapers, “sports journalism remains a key component in the range of content” they offer (Boyle, 2006a: 54). The coverage of sport is a “staple attraction in newspapers” (Burton, 2010: 269) and a major element for their finances and prosperity (Andrews, 2014). During the past few decades the increase in audience demand, the technological advances, the competition in the marketplace (Boyle, 2006a), as well as the growing importance of sports to the financial viability of media organizations, have generated a substantial increase in the number of pages that newspapers devote to this field. To illustrate this, in the UK, “20 years ago the coverage of sports in the broadsheet press in the UK was limited⁶¹, now the coverage is extensive and recognizes the very public popularity of sports among sections of the population” (Boyle, 2010: 1308). With regard to the US, Carvalho et al. (2012) studied the sports coverage of eight newspapers (*Chicago Tribune, Milwaukee Journal, New York Times, St Louis Post-Dispatch, Atlanta Constitution, Dallas Morning News, Los Angeles Times* and the *San Diego Union-Tribune*) and highlighted the “increased interest in sports between 1956 and 1996” (Carvalho et al., 2012: 68). According to the authors, “even the rapid expansion of sports on cable television did not reverse this trend. Far from replacing newspapers, first broadcast and then cable television developed an interest in sports among readers that newspaper publishers sought to capitalize on” (Carvalho et al., 2012: 68). In these quality newspapers, it is supposed that sports journalists feature “a strong journalistic background as opposed to simply a passion for sport” (Boyle, 2006a: 167).

Sports dailies have not been considered in the sample for reasons of coherency of the methodological design of the research and comparison. The UK⁶² and the US⁶³

⁶¹ As Tomlinson and Sugden (2008: 156) explain, “in the mid-week press in 1970, only three or four of the back pages were devoted to sport whereas today sport colonises 12 or more in broadsheets and up to 20 pages in the tabloids. On Saturdays and Sundays this expansion is even more pronounced, with almost all papers producing multi-page special sport supplements for both days of the weekend”.

⁶² Two specific sports newspapers existed in the UK, *The Daily Sport* (1991–2011) and *The Sunday Sport* (1986–2011), published by Daily Sport Ltd. However, as Keeble (2009: 57–8) exposes, they were a clear example of the spread of “junk journalism”. Rojas Torrijos (2011: 24) adds that these newspapers were “nothing but low quality tabloids where information was completely absent”. *The Observer* had also a monthly magazine entitled *The Observer Sport Monthly*.

⁶³ In the US, there was a sports daily entitled the *National Sports Daily* which was distributed nationally across the country. Edited by Frank Deford, this publication “had high hopes, but it never

markets do not have daily newspapers specifically devoted to sports, in contrast to Spain (*Mundo Deportivo*, *Sport*, *As*, *Marca*) and other European countries such as Italy (*Gazzetta dello Sport*, *Corriere dello Sport*, *Tuttosport*), France (*L'Équipe*) and Portugal (*A Bola*, *O Record*, *O Jogo*), that have had the ability “to support long-term sports journalism publications” (Boyle, 2006a: 25). Including the Spanish sports dailies in the sample would have distorted the purposes and coherency of the methodological design of the research.

D) Why did the sample not include the tabloid press?

Tabloids or the sensationalist press were not included in the research for two reasons. First, tabloids haven't been analysed for conceptual reasons. As Vanacker (2014: 69) highlights, “in terms of ethical decision-making, there are huge differences between the tabloids and the broadsheets”. Skovsgaard (2014: 200) underlines the fact that “in their journalistic style tabloid journalists emphasize personalization and sensationalist news values more and relevance news values less than other journalists”. As Boyle (2006a: 100) points out, “tabloids remain committed to sensationalist stories and the building of stories from often the most meagre of scraps”. Also, as indicated by Hallin and Mancini (2004: 224), “the British tabloids, especially, have a heavy emphasis on sex scandals, about both public and private figures”. In other words, “they tend to be brash and irreverent, with news values that place sex and celebrity ahead of more serious and important news” (Andrews, 2014: 13). Specifically with regard to sports journalism, Boyle and Haynes explain that “the ‘writer-driven’ style of the quality papers is routinely contrasted with the assumed opposite, the reader-driven tabloid paper seen as cynically exploitative of sport and its personnel according to the demands of market-based profit maximization” (Boyle and Haynes, 2009: 168).

In terms of professional values, tabloid journalists “adhere less to the public service obligation usually connected with the professional ideology of journalists than other journalists” (Skovsgaard, 2014: 209). Furthermore, the “perceived importance of objectivity is substantially lower for tabloid journalists than for other journalists” (Skovsgaard, 2014: 209).

In contrast, the quality media⁶⁴ “aim for in-depth and comprehensive coverage and are written using moderate and emotionally controlled language” and “are less inclined to

got above 250,000 circulation” (Schultz et al., 2014: 25). It ceased publication shortly after it was created, in the early 1990s. Nowadays, there are two main sports magazines in the US, *Sports Illustrated* and *ESPN The Magazine* (Zimmerman et al., 2013: 108).

⁶⁴ We refer to quality or up-market newspapers, avoiding using the term “broadsheet.” As Boyle (2006a: 28–9) points out, “by late 2005, a number of newspapers that had previously been

use more ethically dubious reporting practices” (Franklin et al., 2005: 29). As Franklin et al. (2005: 30) remark, “as a consequence of their coverage, tone and readers, broadsheet newspapers have historically been regarded, both by journalists and readers, as the epitome of journalistic excellence”. Nowadays, as pointed out by experts, at least in the UK, these are interesting times because in the quality press not only have there “been huge increases in the number of pages and proportion of editorial space devoted to sports coverage” (Farrington et al., 2012: 1) but also “the expanded range and coverage in the broadsheet/compact market means there has never been more systematic, insightful and rigorous sports journalism” (Boyle, 2006a: 10).

Taking into consideration all the aforementioned issues, in this research, the focus of interest is on newspapers at the “quality end” of the market, with a serious approach to journalism. Thus, attention has not been paid to tabloids, which operate at a different end of the market and address different kinds of audiences⁶⁵. It is thought that the quality media sought to provide their coverage of the Olympics based on respect for the main ethical principles and a desire to enhance their credibility and reputation.

Second, tabloids were not chosen for reasons of coherency of the methodological design of the research. In the United Kingdom, a country traditionally characterized by the “clear separation between a sensationalist mass press and quality papers addressed to an elite readership” (Hallin and Mancini, 2004: 25), there is a wide range of mid- and down-market tabloids around (Andrews, 2014: 13–14), with titles such as *The Sun/The Sun on Sunday* (News Corporation), *The Daily Mirror/Sunday Mirror* (Trinity Mirror), *Daily Star/Daily Star Sunday* (Northern & Shell), *The Daily Mail/The Mail on Sunday* (Daily Mail and General Trust), *The Daily Express/The Sunday Express* (Northern & Shell) and *The People* (Trinity Mirror). Although Britain “is the strongest example” of the polarization between the broadsheet/compact and the tabloid/popular newspapers (Hallin and Mancini, 2004: 25; 198), in the US some of the most significant tabloid newspapers are titles such as *The New York Post* (News Corporation), *The New York Observer* (The New York Observer, LLC), *Chicago Sun-Times* (Sun-Times Media Group), *Boston Herald* (Herald Media Inc.) and the

broadsheets, such as *The Times* or *The Independent* were now tabloid or compact in size, while *The Guardian* had relaunched in the berliner form, which was larger than a tabloid, but smaller than the traditional broadsheet”.

⁶⁵ According to Franks and O’Neill (2014: 8), in contrast to the tabloid media, “quality newspapers are those at the top end of the market targeting better educated people with reasonable levels of income as a result of their jobs”. Top-tier newspapers seek to capture in their print versions a relatively elite audience, who “want the print newspaper to deliver something different: analysis, interpretation, and investigative reporting” (Singer, 2013: 212).

Philadelphia Daily News (Philadelphia Media Network) as well as other titles published by American Media, Inc., such as *Star*, *OK!*, *National Enquirer* and *Globe*.

Nevertheless, in Spain, “tabloids do not exist, but their space is partly covered by the sports press and the so-called *prensa rosa* (pink press) or *prensa del corazón* (literally, heart press)” (Alsius et al., 2011: 157), which include “weekly publications with predominantly female audiences focusing on celebrities and human-interest stories” (Hallin and Mancini, 2004: 97). This feature is shared with the countries that are integrated within the Polarized Pluralist model. As Hallin and Mancini (2004: 97) point out, “tabloid or sensationalist popular newspapers are virtually absent in the Mediterranean region except for *France Soir*”.

3.3.2.2.1. British newspapers

The United Kingdom, a developed country with a capitalist economy and democratic political structures (Hardy, 2008) adheres to the North Atlantic or Liberal model described by Hallin and Mancini in *Comparing media systems* (2004), along with other countries such as the US, Canada and Ireland. These countries are characterized by liberalism, a thriving market, a strong private sector and the important role of the commercial media, to the detriment of state intervention⁶⁶ (Hallin and Mancini, 2004). The characteristics of their media systems are “medium newspaper circulation”, “information-oriented journalism”, “external pluralism” (in the case of Britain, because the British press is clearly partisan), “strong professionalization”, “non-institutionalized self-regulation⁶⁷” and “market dominated” (Hallin and Mancini, 2004: 67).

⁶⁶ In the UK, the print media have been subject to self-regulation and voluntarism (Hardy, 2008). Nevertheless, it is a known fact that the British press is also subject to state intervention to some extent. The government, in the field of competition, focuses its activity on articulating mechanisms to correct monopolistic or oligopolistic situations, as well as on remedying other circumstances marked by an abuse of position (where this is dominant) or where it is necessary to stimulate competence (Sánchez-Tabernero, 2006). Furthermore, it needs to be said that in the UK there are some general requirements in terms of civil and penal rights which limit the media’s freedom of expression with regard to certain issues, the presumption of innocence for example, defamation, the protection of personal honour, the treatment of underage problems, discrimination and official secrets in relation to safety and defence (Frost, 2011; Hardy, 2008; Sanders, 2003).

⁶⁷ Although the “journalistic self-regulation in Liberal countries is organized primarily in an informal way, within individual news organizations” (Hallin and Mancini, 2004: 224), in contrast especially with the countries of the Democratic Corporatist model, in the UK there are different self-regulatory organizations that look after the press: IPSO, the NUJ, the Teenage Magazine Arbitration Panel and the Internet Watch Foundation (Frost, 2011). Each institution has its own codes of conduct, which guide the ways in which journalists should act.

The national press market includes “nine daily UK publications (plus the *Financial Times*⁶⁸, which targets the international business community) and eleven Sunday titles serving three distinct audiences – tabloid/popular, midmarket and broadsheet” (Steen, 2012: 214). The two quality newspapers chosen for this research are the London-based *The Guardian/The Observer* and *The Daily Telegraph/The Sunday Telegraph*. Authors such as Andrews (2014) and English (2015) have already identified them as representative of the print media at the top end of the British market and have utilized them in their investigations. As can be seen, the Sunday editions of these newspapers have also been used in the analysis.

The Guardian was established in 1821 and originated from *The Manchester Guardian*. Its Sunday edition, *The Observer*, appeared in 1791 in a context marked by the emergence of Sunday popular newspapers in the United Kingdom. At the end of the nineteenth century, when bought by Lord Northcliffe, the two were converted into quality newspapers (Guillamet, 2003). Now belonging to the Scott Trust, they are two of the most influential newspapers in the UK and abroad in terms of their quality, excellence in journalism, trustworthiness and plurality of expression (Singer et al., 2011). Despite the fact that, nowadays, *The Guardian* and *The Observer* apply a web-first strategy (English, 2015) and they “have the second largest online readership of English-language newspapers in the world” (Yang, 2015: 5), their print versions retain a wide national circulation. To be precise, they have an average circulation of 178,758⁶⁹ (*The Guardian*) and 202,824 (*The Observer*). In editorial terms, “the paper takes a left-wing view. Its readership is generally on the mainstream left of British political opinion” (Yang, 2015: 5).

⁶⁸ Although it has a current combined paid print and digital circulation of 737,000, *The Financial Times* was excluded from the sample of the British press because it does not feature a sports section.

⁶⁹ Circulation figures for UK newspapers (updated to June 2015) have been found in the following resource published by *Guardian.co.uk*, which used as its source the Audit Bureau of Circulations (ABC):

“Mail on Sunday overtakes Sun on Sunday”, *Guardian.co.uk*, 05-06-2015. <http://www.theguardian.com/media/2015/jun/05/mail-on-sunday-sun-on-sunday> [Last access: 15-06-2015]. However, it should be noted that if we compare the current figures to those published on April 2012, before the Olympics, we are looking at a clear decline in circulation. For instance, *The Guardian*'s circulation has decreased from 217,190 to 178,758, while *The Observer*'s has decreased from 251,074 to 202,824. With regard to *The Daily Telegraph*, the figures also indicate a downturn in circulation, from 576,378 to 486,262. The circulation of its Sunday edition, *The Sunday Telegraph*, has decreased from 451,731 to 380,922.

The Daily Telegraph is a conservative title established in 1855 that has currently consolidated its position as the best-sold quality newspaper in the country. In both 2010 and 2013, it was awarded the distinction of “National Newspaper of the Year”. Its Sunday edition, founded in 1961, is entitled *The Sunday Telegraph*. Both publications are the property of the Telegraph Media Group, a subsidiary of Press Holdings, and boast an average circulation of 486,262 (*The Daily Telegraph*) and 380,922 (*The Sunday Telegraph*). The newspaper is characterized by its “strong economic status” (English, 2015: 9) and its convergent strategy to maintain the print edition of the newspaper “as an essential part of a multi-platform business” (Schlesinger and Doyle, 2015: 317). As the same authors highlight, “during the 2012 Olympics, the newsroom was expected to think both about how the story was playing out on the Web and, at the same time, consider what would be done in the next day’s newspaper (Schlesinger and Doyle, 2015: 318).

3.3.2.2.2. American newspapers

The United States of America is the most paradigmatic case of the North Atlantic model of media and politics and the “purer example of a liberal system” (Hallin and Mancini, 2004: 198), distinguished among other features by the press freedom and some of the characteristics already mentioned in the case of Britain. In the US, *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times* are city based (Andrews, 2014), given the domination of the local press in the market. As Hallin and Mancini (2004: 206) acknowledge, the US is “so large that national daily newspapers were not technologically feasible until advances in telecommunications made it possible to send large amounts of data cheaply around the country (*USA Today* was founded in 1982 and *The New York Times* also introduced its national edition in the 1980s)”.

The two newspapers that were chosen for the present research because of their quality, national circulation, communicative impact and their status as key sources of sports news dissemination were *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*. It has to be noted that relevant experts in the field have already chosen these newspapers for their analysis (Eastman and Billings, 2000; Min and Zhen, 2010).

Considering the *The New York Times* first, this is a newspaper that was established in 1851 by Henry J. Raymond and which has been always characterized by the desire to produce a well-written and accurate publication (Kovach and Rosenstiel, 2001). It is currently owned by The New York Times Company and occupies third place in terms of

total circulation in the US, due to its substantial daily (639,887⁷⁰ copies) and Sunday (1,181,160 copies) circulation figures. As experts point out, “*The New York Times* is generally regarded as the most respected U.S. news medium” (Dearing and Rogers, 1996: 32) and it is definitely one of the high-status news outlets that set the public and media agendas worldwide (McCombs, 2004; Ruiz et al., 2011; Usher, 2015). McCombs and Reynolds (2008, quoted in Billings et al., 2014a: 50), highlight the fact that “*The New York Times* frequently plays an intra-media agenda-setting role because appearance on the front page of the *Times* can legitimize a topic as newsworthy”. Likewise, according to Corrigan et al. (2010: 297), *The New York Times* “influences what smaller publications consider newsworthy”. Regarding its editorial line, it “represents a rather conservative but highly reliable press with a large business-oriented and politically oriented readership” (Eastman and Billings, 2000: 196).

Looking now at *The Washington Post*, this was founded in 1877 and is considered to be one of the most prestigious and leading US newspapers. During its lifetime, it has been awarded 47 Pulitzer Prizes and has been recognized for its excellence in journalism. Owned by The Washington Post Company, the newspaper has a daily circulation in the US of 377,466 and a Sunday circulation of 776,806.

3.3.2.2.3. Spanish newspapers

Spain is a country that adheres to the Mediterranean or Polarized Pluralist model. This model has been characterized by “low newspaper circulation”, “elite politically oriented press”, “high political parallelism”, “external pluralism”, “commentary-oriented journalism”, “weaker professionalization” and “instrumentalization” (Hallin and Mancini, 2004: 67). Although in the European welfare state democracies the state “takes responsibility for funding television and to a significant degree the press” (Hallin and Mancini, 2004: 49), countries such as Spain and Portugal “have weaker welfare states, manifested in less state support for both the press and public broadcasting” (Hallin and Mancini, 2004: 71). In this research, the empirical data has been drawn from *El País* and *La Vanguardia*.

⁷⁰ The average circulation of US newspapers has been obtained from the following resource: “USA Today, WSJ, NYT top U.S. newspapers by circulation”, *Poynter.org*, 28-10-2014. <http://www.poynter.org/news/mediawire/277337/usa-today-wsj-nyt-top-u-s-newspapers-by-circulation/> [Last access: 15-06-2015]. It should be clarified that the average circulation provided refers only to the print editions of the newspapers studied. As with the British case, from 2012 a notable decline in circulation of the American newspapers could also be observed.

El País was founded in 1976 and belongs to the PRISA Group. Since the Spanish democratic transition, *El País* has been consolidated as the leading quality newspaper in Spain, being the most prestigious, read and sold print newspaper of general information in the country, with a current average circulation of 238,560 during the period July 2014–June 2015⁷¹. *La Vanguardia*, established in 1881 by Bartolomé and Carlos Godó, is one of the oldest newspapers still being published in the country (Prado, 2015), being the benchmark for Spanish journalism and occupying a central position in Catalan society. This Barcelona-based publication has always carried a comprehensive coverage of both national and international current affairs. It has a double edition (Catalan and Spanish) and its daily circulation is 135,824.

3.3.2.2.4. Object of study, analysis units and timeframe of the observation

In all these newspapers, the object of study has been the information that referred to the London Olympics. The units of analysis have been each one of the pieces that covered the event, including all the elements of each piece (headings, sub-headings, photographs, etc.) as well as the presence of the Olympics on the front page. The unit of analysis can be defined as “a self-contained narrative or visual plus any supplemental textual, photographic, or graphic information that could be understood independently of other information surrounding it on the page” (Beam, 2003: 375).

The corpus of analysis includes all kinds of journalistic genres (chronicles, previews, brief pieces and snippets, opinion columns and articles, editorials, and so on). The letters to the editor have also been included because “they are usually written in response to previous editorial contents and selected for inclusion by the letters editor” and “they also say something about the newspaper’s news values” (Richardson, 2008: 67). In order to provide a complete analysis of the coverage, the articles that referred to the larger framework or contextual aspects of London 2012 were also included in the sample. Conversely, the pieces that didn’t refer to London 2012 or its relevant contexts at all were disregarded for the study. The advertisements were also omitted from the codification process, even though the presence of some campaigns and their links with the economic logic of media and sports will be commented on in the results section.

The units of register have been each portion of the analysable content (words, expressions, phrases, subjects and themes, adjectives, adverbs, adjectival and adverbial phrases and elements included in the pictures) that match the significant categories of the research. Other elements, such as the font size and the style,

⁷¹ The average circulation of Spanish newspapers has been drawn from OJD Interactiva (Oficina de la Justificación de la Difusión) <http://www.introl.es/buscador/> [Last access: 20-10-2015].

typography and layout of the newspapers have not been analysed, as they are not part of the purposes of the research.

The timeframe of the observation is 33 days (18 July–19 August 2012), including the 19 days of London 2012 plus one week before and after. During this period, the 198 issues that form the corpus of analysis, whether as hard copies (*The Daily Telegraph/The Sunday Telegraph*, *El País*, *La Vanguardia*) or exact PDF replicas of the print versions (*The New York Times*, *The Washington Post* and *The Guardian/The Observer*) were rigorously collected. This allowed a correct codification of all the information, taking into account the news, reports and opinion features prior to and following the event. A total of 6,552 pieces have been codified. The origin of the pieces was as follows: *The Guardian/The Observer* ($n = 1,590$); *The Daily Telegraph/The Sunday Telegraph* ($n = 2,506$); *The New York Times* ($n = 656$); *The Washington Post* ($n = 630$); *El País* ($n = 540$); and *La Vanguardia* ($n = 630$).

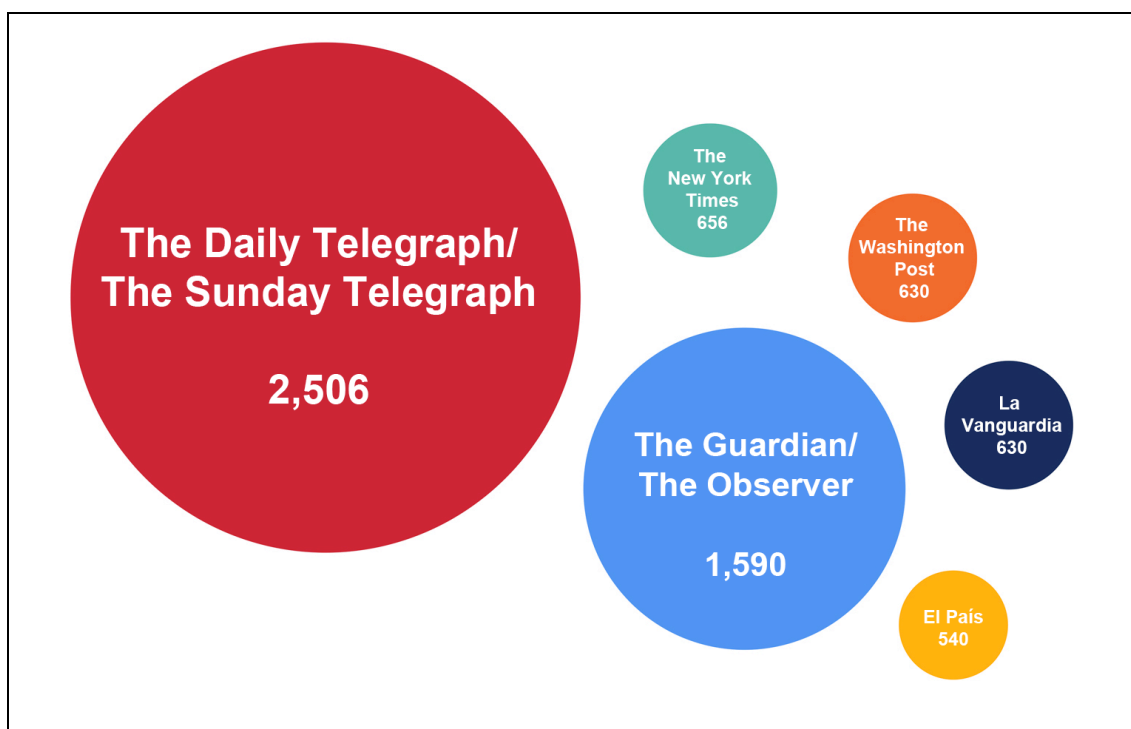


Figure 5. Number of analysis units included in the newspapers sampled

Across all six newspapers in the research, the number of pieces includes the competition-related pieces and the pieces exclusively referring to the larger framework/contextual issues around the London 2012 Olympics. The number of competition-related pieces and the larger framework pieces is as follows:

Newspaper	Number of pieces	Competition pieces	Larger framework
<i>Guardian/Observer</i>	1,590	1,023	567
<i>Daily/Sunday Telegraph</i>	2,506	1,540	966
<i>The New York Times</i>	656	519	137
<i>The Washington Post</i>	630	524	106
<i>El País</i>	540	404	136
<i>La Vanguardia</i>	630	497	133
Total	6,552	4,507	2,045

Table 2. Number of competition-related pieces and pieces exclusively devoted to larger framework/ contextual issues

3.3.3. Qualitative semi-structured interviews

3.3.3.1. Qualitative semi-structured interviews technique

The investigation has also made use of qualitative semi-structured interviews with top scholars/experts, media professionals and IOC representatives. Interviews, one of the most used techniques in social qualitative research (Bryman, 2012), including in sports studies (Malcolm, 2008), are a valuable empirical procedure for obtaining information that enables researchers to investigate social phenomena (Busquet et al., 2006; De Miguel, 2005; Marshall and Rossman, 2011; Ortí, 2000; Rubin and Rubin, 1995). This research technique has definite advantages, these being the breadth and depth of nuances and details that are provided by first-hand descriptions and the possibility of getting closer to a part of the object of study that cannot be approached through content analysis (King and Horrocks, 2010; Wimmer and Dominick, 2011). Previous works in the field of communication and sport (Bernstein, 2003; Billings, 2008) have illustrated the value of using interviews in the investigative process.

Taking into consideration the purposes of the research, 41 interviews with 38 interviewees have been carried out. The majority of the interviews (36) have been conducted on a face-to-face basis⁷². The information provided by the interviewees has been correlated with the results obtained from the qualitative content analysis as well as with data from further documentary sources.

⁷² A significant number of these interviews have been carried out in the context of research visits undertaken by the doctoral candidate (University of Glasgow, September–December 2013; University of Alabama, July 2014; IOC Olympic Studies Centre, May 2014) as well as at major international conferences attended during his doctoral studies. The only five cases where online interviews have been used are in relation to US-based journalists and correspondents from *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* who were not available for a face-to-face encounter, and also *La Vanguardia*'s London correspondent, Rafael Ramos.

All the seven stages described by Kvale and Brinkmann (2009: 97) have been followed: “thematizing, designing, interviewing, transcribing, analysing, verifying, and reporting”. Prior to conducting the interviews, the questions were prepared, structured and ordered through interview guides that included the relevant topics of the investigation and the contextual information required for each interviewee. However, the design of the interviews was not completely prepared in advance, because one cannot get away from the fact that “the design changes as you learn from the interviewing” (Rubin and Rubin, 1995: 43). This means that “conversational guides are not rigid frameworks that are prepared once and for all; rather they are customized for each interview and evolve throughout the work” (Rubin and Rubin, 1995: 161).

The ethical considerations of the interview process (Brennen, 2013; Wimmer and Dominick, 2011) were very much taken into consideration. Before each interview was conducted all respondents were informed about the purpose of the research and the use of their answers for this doctoral dissertation report and derived outputs.

During the interview process, all the predetermined areas were covered but unexpected themes arose from each conversation (Berger, 1998; Bryman, 2012). We must remember that the interview is an active process in which knowledge is constructed between the interviewer and the interviewee (Silverman, 2004). During this process, the wide range of interview questions described by Kvale and Brinkmann (2009: 135–6), such as introductory questions, follow-up questions, specifying questions, structuring questions, and so on, were taken into consideration. The conversations with scholars and experts delved into key issues relating to ethics and the quality of information in sports journalism as well as the media coverage carried out at London 2012. The interviews with sports editors and reporters dealt with a number of topics, including their participation at the event, the challenges they faced, the characteristics of and the resources used in the coverage carried out by their organizations and the ethical dimension in their professional practice. Finally, the conversations with two IOC representatives (Mark Adams and Anthony Edgar) centred on the characteristics of the media operation carried out by the IOC at London 2012 and their evaluation of the coverage of the event delivered by the international press.

All the interviews were audio recorded and, in addition, essential field notes were taken while they were in progress. The recorded conversations lasted between 25–120 minutes, depending on the number of areas covered and the depth of the conversation with the interviewees. The recordings were fully transcribed and codified in order to obtain the complete picture of what interviewees said, with the objective of accurately examining and interpreting the information gathered (Brennen, 2013).

3.3.3.2. Qualitative semi-structured interviews sampling

The type of sample that has been used for the semi-structured interviews is snowball sampling (Goodman, 1961). An initial sample was purposely selected: several top scholars, media professionals and IOC representatives were chosen, bearing in mind their relevance, experience and adequacy to the research purposes. Following on from this, the initial sample was improved using the snowball technique to establish contact with other people who became units of the sample (Malcolm, 2008). The three requirements for a person to be a suitable interviewee, as indicated by Rubin and Rubin, were taken into account during selection: “they should be knowledgeable about the cultural area or the situation or experience being studied”, they “should be willing to talk” and “should represent the range of points of view” (Rubin and Rubin, 1995: 68). As previously outlined, to conduct this part of the investigation, research visits have been undertaken in the UK, the US and Switzerland and interviews have also been carried out in the context of international conferences. The following table presents alphabetically the list of the interviewees as well as the contextual data pertaining to the conversations (affiliation, date and place of the interview).

ID	Interviewee	Affiliation	Date	Place
Scholars and experts (n = 28)				
1	Andrew C. Billings	University of Alabama (US)	09/07/2014	Tuscaloosa, AL
2	Kim Bissell	University of Alabama (US)	10/07/2014	Tuscaloosa, AL
3	Raymond Boyle ⁽¹⁾	University of Glasgow (UK)	27/11/2013	Glasgow
4	Raymond Boyle ⁽²⁾	University of Glasgow (UK)	26/03/2015	Glasgow
5	Kenon Brown	University of Alabama (US)	10/07/2014	Tuscaloosa, AL
6	Pam Creedon	University of Iowa (US)	28/06/2013	Dublin
7	Clifford Christians	University of Illinois (US)	03/04/2013	Seville
8	Neil Farrington	University of Sunderland (UK)	25/09/2013	Sunderland
9	Kari Fasting	Norwegian School of Sport and Physical Education (Norway)	09/05/2013	Cordoba
10	Chris Frost	Liverpool John Moores University (UK)	15/10/2013	Liverpool
11	Linda K. Fuller	Worcester State College (US)	28/06/2013	Dublin
12	Jennifer Greer	University of Alabama (US)	16/07/2014	Tuscaloosa, AL
13	Richard Haynes	University of Stirling (UK)	30/10/2013	Stirling
14	John Horne ⁽¹⁾	University of Central Lancashire (UK)	01/11/2013	Edinburgh
15	John Horne ⁽²⁾	University of Central Lancashire (UK)	27/03/2015	Glasgow
16	Amy Jones	University of West Alabama (US)	16/07/2014	Tuscaloosa, AL
17	John Mair	University of Northampton (UK)	03/04/2013	Seville
18	Kelly McBride	The Poynter Institute (US)	22/07/2014	St Petersburg, FL
19	Gertrud Pfister	University of Copenhagen (Denmark)	09/05/2013	Cordoba
20	John Price	University of Sunderland (UK)	25/09/2013	Sunderland
21	Michael Real	Royal Roads University (Canada)	28/06/2013	Dublin
22	J.L. Rojas Torrijos	University of Seville (Spain)	13/06/2014	Barcelona

23	Chris Roberts	University of Alabama (US)	17/07/2014	Tuscaloosa, AL
24	David Rowe ⁽¹⁾	University of Western Sydney (Australia)	28/06/2013	Dublin
25	David Rowe ⁽²⁾	University of Western Sydney (Australia)	26/03/2015	Glasgow
26	John Vincent	University of Alabama (US)	11/07/2014	Tuscaloosa, AL
27	Lawrence Wenner	Loyola Marymount University (US)	27/06/2013	Dublin
28	Shuhua Zhou	University of Alabama (US)	14/07/2014	Tuscaloosa, AL
Media professionals (n = 11)				
29	Sam Borden	<i>The New York Times</i> (US). European Correspondent	05/04/2014	Online
30	Liz Clarke	<i>The Washington Post</i> (US). Reporter	31/04/2014	Online
31	Paul Hayward	<i>The Telegraph</i> (UK). Chief Sports Reporter	09/10/2013	London
32	Colin Leslie	<i>The Scotsman</i> (UK). Sports Editor	17/10/2013	Edinburgh
33	Hugh MacDonald	<i>The Herald</i> (UK). Sports Editor	04/10/2013	Glasgow
34	Ian Prior	<i>The Guardian</i> (UK). Sports Editor	08/10/2013	London
35	Rafael Ramos	<i>La Vanguardia</i> (Spain). Correspondent	28/05/2014	Online
36	José Sámano	<i>El País</i> (Spain). Sports Editor	27/05/2014	Madrid
37	Adam Sills	<i>The Telegraph</i> (UK). Sports Editor	09/10/2013	London
38	Jason Stallman	<i>The New York Times</i> (US). Sports Editor	13/04/2014	Online
39	Matt Vita	<i>The Washington Post</i> (US). Sports Editor	10/04/2014	Online
IOC representatives (n = 2)				
40	Mark Adams	IOC. Communications Director	15/05/2014	Lausanne
41	Anthony Edgar	IOC. Head of Media Operations	16/05/2014	Lausanne

Table 3. Interviews conducted for the study and contextual data pertaining to the conversations

4. Results

4.1. Principle of truth

4.1.1. Avoiding conjecture, speculation and rumour

The presence of certain speculations about the sporting results during the Olympics was highly predictable, as it is one of the most common practices in sports journalism. Uncertainty is a key component for media and, therefore, from time to time journalists predicted the outcomes of the competitions and speculated about the medal prospects. This trend was particularly acute just before the start of the Games. To illustrate this, *El País* forecast that the football final would be between Brazil and Spain⁷³. *The Guardian* predicted that Team GB would win 84 medals, in comparison to the 48 medals predicted by UK Sport⁷⁴. *The Daily Telegraph* expected that Chris Hoy would be the likely nominee to carry the British flag at the opening ceremony⁷⁵. In a Ladbrokes-sponsored piece, *The New York Times* hypothesized who would win the most gold medals, who would emerge triumphant in the men's 100 metres and who would light the Olympic flame. The British media also conjectured for weeks about the fitness and whereabouts of the long jumper Phillips Idowu⁷⁶, who ended up participating with disappointing results⁷⁷.

During the actual competition, conjectures about the results continued in the build-up pieces to the events, as can be seen by the use of conditional tenses. For instance, in an article about athletics, *La Vanguardia* speculated as to whether Usain Bolt could win again in the Olympics⁷⁸. In track cycling, *The Guardian* wondered how a victory by Victoria Pendleton might appear: "Pendleton will hope to have already captured the gold medal by winning the first two races in a series of three. Should that occur, just

⁷³ Besa, R. (2012, July 25). "La apuesta es Brasil – España". *El País*, pp. 48–9.

⁷⁴ "Stronger, higher. Team GB can better the best of Beijing" (2012, July 27). *The Guardian*, Olympics 2012, pp. 6–7.

⁷⁵ Kelso, P. (2012, July 23). "Hoy to carry GB flag for second successive Games". *The Daily Telegraph*, pp. S18–S19.

⁷⁶ Hart, S. (2012, July 4). "Doubts grow over Idowu fitness". *The Daily Telegraph*, p. S10.; Simon, H. (2012, July 24). "Time running out on Idowu's golden dream". *The Daily Telegraph*, p. S8; "BOA pledges support for Idowu after receiving athlete's injury details" (2012, July 27). *The Guardian*, Olympics 2012, p. 9.

⁷⁷ "Sorry end to Idowu's Olympic soap opera" (2012, August 8). *The Daily Telegraph*, pp. S12–S13.

⁷⁸ Martínez, J.B. (2012, August 4). "El senado duda de Bolt". *La Vanguardia*, p. 42.

before six, her victory will immediately be engulfed by Hoy's giant shadow. This time it will matter less. This time, should the sweetest of Olympic triumphs actually happen, Pendleton will barely be able to see Hoy race through the blur of tears⁷⁹". Andrew C. Billings reflects on this current trend in sports journalism:

We have way much more coverage about what we think is going to happen than we ever had before. Sports news was largely about what had happened, about the results of last night's sporting competition. Lately, and I think this is a trend, we talk much about what is going to happen in the future. There are some advantages to that, you can never be wrong necessarily, until the story unfolds it is all opinion (Andrew Billings, interview, July 2014).

However, as previously mentioned in the review of the literature (see section 2.2.1.1), the story of the 16-year-old Chinese swimmer Ye Shiwen was the most notorious case at London 2012 with regard to the presence of speculation and rumour in news reporting. At *The Guardian*, John Leonard, a senior American coach, cast the rumour by relating Shiwen's performance to doping, despite that she had passed all the controls and she was innocent. This section will focus on this particular issue.

4.1.1.1. Initial reactions to Shiwen's triumph

On Saturday 28 July 2012, Ye Shiwen won the Olympic gold medal in the 400 metres individual medley, achieving a world record time of 4 minutes and 28.43 seconds. In her last 50m, she attained a faster time than Ryan Lochte, who had won the men's 400 metres medley event. In the two days after the event, the attention devoted to the issue by the newspapers sampled was not uniform but, in broad terms, it can be said that *The Telegraph*, *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *El País* and *La Vanguardia* highlighted the value of Shiwen's achievement without casting any doubt over the fair nature of her accomplishment. In *The Sunday Telegraph*, White wrote that "Ye delivered an astonishing performance", which represented "another imposing demonstration of China's increasing power in the pool⁸⁰". He also quoted Patrick Miley, the father and coach of the British swimmer Hannah Miley, who stated that Shiwen was "an excellent freestyle swimmer⁸¹".

⁷⁹ McRae, D. (2012, August 7). "Hoy and Pendleton. Cycling's crescendo". *The Guardian*, Olympics 2012, p. 1.

⁸⁰ White, D. (2012, July 29). "Miley left in shade as Ye sets new mark". *The Sunday Telegraph*, pp. S4–S5.

⁸¹ White, D. (2012, July 30). "Ye leaves even the men in her wake". *The Daily Telegraph*, pp. S6–S7.

The New York Times used expressions such as “Ye won in grand style” and “Ye found speed to which no other woman in the water could relate⁸²” in order to convey a positive image of her triumph. *The Washington Post* quoted Ryan Lochte, who highlighted the extraordinary nature of Ye’s performance, “That’s pretty impressive. She’s fast. If she had been right there with me, she might have beaten me⁸³”.

Regarding the Spanish newspapers, Juan Bautista Martínez reported in *La Vanguardia* that Shiwen “completed an impressive sprint” and “proved that a woman can swim quicker than a man in the Olympic elite⁸⁴”. In *El País*, Diego Torres highlighted the fact that Shiwen “was out of the ordinary” and that she “pulverized a world record that dated back to the epoch of polieuretano bathing suits: the 4m 29.45 seconds of Stephanie Rice in 2008⁸⁵”. Also, in the piece “Una entre 1.300 millones⁸⁶”, Torres elaborated on Shiwen’s achievements in order to contextualize the current situation with regard to sport in China and explain the improvements in Chinese elite swimming since Beijing was designated to host the 2008 Olympics. The author explained that the Chinese had learned new techniques of scientific training in Australia, working with the team coached by Denis Cotterell, that they had invested large sums of money and that they had developed a planned system of detecting sporting talents. Torres also delved into the rising success of the Chinese swimming team, which had achieved significant results in previous events such as Beijing 2008 and the 2011 World Championships held in Shanghai. As a complementary piece, *El País* included the opinion of Sergi López, bronze medallist at Seoul 1988, who positively valued Shiwen’s accomplishments and compared her time to an overwhelming victory of FC Barcelona over Real Madrid or vice versa⁸⁷.

In contrast to the attention devoted to Ye Shiwen’s success by the aforementioned newspapers, in *The Guardian* she was only mentioned briefly on 29 July and 30 July, 2012 respectively in the list of results⁸⁸ and in a piece focused on the British swimmer Rebecca Adlington⁸⁹.

⁸² Clarey, C. (2012, July 29). “Record adds emphasis to 2 gold medals by China”. *The New York Times*, pp. D1, D5.

⁸³ Quote of the Day (2012, July 30). *The Washington Post*, p. D9.

⁸⁴ Martínez, J.B. (2012, July 30). “Más rápida que los hombres”. *La Vanguardia*, p. 41.

⁸⁵ Torres, D. (2012, July 29). “Mireia no puede con todo”. *El País*, p. 54.

⁸⁶ Torres, D. (2012, July 30). “Una entre 1.300 millones”. *El País*, p. 50.

⁸⁷ López, S. (2012, July 30). “Barça, 15; Madrid, 0 (o al revés)”. *El País*, p. 50.

⁸⁸ Results (2012, July 29). *The Observer*, Olympics 2012, p. 16.

⁸⁹ Addley, E. (2012, July 30). “Adlington raises the roof but has to settle for third best”. *The Guardian*, p. 2.

4.1.1.2. *The Guardian* gives excessive weight to John Leonard's voice

However, with the article "China's record win in pool 'suspicious', says top coach"⁹⁰, which appeared on the front page of the newspaper on 31 July, *The Guardian* became the first publication to include the voice of John Leonard, whose opinion of Shiwen hit the global headlines. Leonard, a senior American coach and executive director of the World Swimming Coaches Association, suggested that her performance was "suspicious", "unbelievable" and "disturbing". Leonard was particularly sceptical about the dramatic improvement that Shiwen had made since the 2011 World Championships (she was more than seven seconds faster).

In particular, the time she recorded in her last 100 metres was not possible from Leonard's standpoint: "The final 100m was impossible. Flat out. If all her split times had been faster I don't think anybody would be calling it into question, because she is a good swimmer. But to swim three other splits at the rate that she did, which was quite ordinary for elite competition, and then unleash a historic anomaly, it is just not right".

Leonard explicitly said that he wanted "to be very careful about calling it doping". Nevertheless, the American coach cast the rumour by relating Shiwen's performance to past doping cases. He explained that "it brought back 'a lot of awful memories' of the Irish swimmer Michelle Smith's race in the same event at the Atlanta Olympics in 1996", who was "banned for four years in 1998 for tampering with a urine sample". It is very enlightening to look at the quotes from the interview with John Leonard that *The Guardian* included: "The one thing I will say is that history in our sport will tell you that every time we see something, and I will put quotation marks around this, 'unbelievable', history shows us that it turns out later on there was doping involved. That last 100m was reminiscent of some old East German swimmers, for people who have been around a while. It was reminiscent of the 400m individual medley by a young Irish woman in Atlanta [...] Any time someone has looked like superwoman in the history of our sport they have later been found guilty of doping".

Leonard went further, associating doping with the Chinese nationality and highlighting the fact that in "2009 five junior Chinese swimmers were banned after testing positive for the anabolic agent clenbuterol at the 2008 national junior championships": "You can't turn around and call it racism to say the Chinese have a doping history [...] That is just history. That's fact. Does that make us suspicious? Of course".

⁹⁰ Bull, A.; Gibson, O. (2012, July 31). "China's record win in pool 'suspicious', says top coach". *The Guardian*, pp. 1–3.

From the perspective of journalism ethics, as it will be argued later, the problem is that in this prominent article, *The Guardian* gave excessive weight to John Leonard's unfounded accusations and didn't properly balance his perspective because quotes from other sources were allocated minimal space. Shiwen stated that the Chinese athletes kept "very firmly to the anti-doping policies". Arne Ljungqvist, chairman of the IOC's medical commission, said that he had not had any particular suspicions. Other sources, such as the IOC president, Jacques Rogge, and Jeremy Hunt, Secretary of State for Culture, Olympics, Media and Sport at the time, stated that any athlete who used drugs would be caught and sanctioned.

It cannot be denied that on the same day Andy Bull pointed out in a complementary analysis piece⁹¹ that "Ye did not come from nowhere", highlighting that "she won the 200m IM title at the 2011 world championships". However, Bull gave Leonard a high degree of credibility, reinforcing his expertise and "enormous integrity" on anti-doping issues. Moreover, he used a sports scientist (Ross Tucker) as a single source. Tucker also adopted a sceptical tone about Shiwen's performance. He maintained that her last leg was "about 10% off the times set by the best 100m freestyle swimmers" although the general pattern is to "swim faster over the first three legs and trade that improvement off for a slight loss of time in the final 100m". In this case, Bull also didn't balance Tucker's viewpoint with other authoritative sources.

4.1.1.3. The inclusion of other voices to counterbalance Leonard's words

As part of their duty to contextualize Leonard's comments, the media sampled echoed his words, but also displayed "a large group of viewpoints that quickly showed that there was no evidence towards it" (Mark Adams, interview, May 2014).

Before Shiwen had even achieved her second medal in the 200m individual medley on 31 July 2012, Jeré Longman of *The New York Times* pointed out that the public scepticism directed at Shiwen was unfair. Longman claimed that there was no proof against her achievement: "There is nothing to indicate that she is anything more than a great swimmer from a country that holds about a fifth of the world's population, a teenager who relies on the latest scientific training and the kind of adolescent certainty that makes her unaware of any limitations. The Chinese have pledged to obey the rules. And Ye dismissed any concerns about doping⁹²". Similarly, although *The Daily*

⁹¹ Bull, A. (2012, July 31). "Getting unbelievable kicks". *The Guardian*, p. 5.

⁹² Longman, J. (2012, July 31). "China pool prodigy churns wave of speculation". *The New York Times*, pp. A1, B11.

Telegraph included large excerpts from Leonard's words, it reminded readers that Ye "had never failed a drugs test"⁹³.

The day after Ye Shiwen's second gold medal, more articles came out in her defence. In the editorial "Héroes y contaminación"⁹⁴, the sports editor of *El País*, José Sámano, explicitly criticized Leonard's attitude: "Shiwen's race astonished the world, a huge achievement. Immediately, far from accepting the feat, the American John Leonard, president of the coaches association, expressed his worry and raised the suspicions. He didn't have any other indication than a sidereal mark. The Chinese doesn't have the shelter of the big propagandistic machinery of the United States that, as well as China, is not alien to the blight of doping". Sámano concluded that the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) should be the body to determine whether or not Shiwen was clean: "Leonard doesn't have any authority about it, but the responsibility of not tarnishing [Shiwen's reputation] ahead of time".

Focusing specifically on the second gold medal, Juan Bautista Martínez of *La Vanguardia* also displayed a tone in favour of Shiwen's innocence: "Against those who are engaged in boosting suspicions, another gold. Against those who doubt of the honesty of her marks, another exhibition [...] Her final leg was demolishing again and allowed her to pulverize the Olympic record. Now people can keep on talking. Until the contrary is proved, her success is the result of talent and work"⁹⁵.

The views of the core staff from the newspapers were accompanied by the use of a wide range of authoritative sources. For instance, *The New York Times* featured the viewpoints of the swimmers David Sharpe, Natalie Coughlin, Stephanie Rice and Michael Phelps, who used adjectives such as "interesting", "pretty impressive" and "phenomenal", but none of them accused Shiwen of using illegal substances. After Ye's second gold medal, the swimmer Caitlin Leverenz highlighted the fact that "Shiwen had proven that it was possible to swim her final 50 meters faster than Ryan Lochte"⁹⁶. The same newspaper also gave voice to Frank Busch (national team director for USA Swimming) and the Chinese swimmer Lu Ying, who highlighted the fact that the talented nature of Shiwen and her hard work and training were decisive factors that should be considered.

⁹³ Wilson, J. (2012, July 31). "16-year-old's swim 'impossible', says coach". *The Daily Telegraph*, p. 7.

⁹⁴ Sámano, J. (2012, August 1). "Héroes y contaminación". *El País*, p. 41.

⁹⁵ Martínez, J.B. (2012, August 1). "Shiwen contesta a las sospechas con otro oro". *La Vanguardia*, p. 35.

⁹⁶ Das, A. (2012, August 1). "For Chinese swimmer, same result". *The New York Times*, p. B15.

Similarly, *The Daily Telegraph* displayed a series of quotes in favour of Shiwen in the pieces “Ye ignores her critics to strike gold yet again⁹⁷” and “Support for teenager in doping row as she wins again⁹⁸”. These articles included the views of: Colin Moynihan, chairman of the British Olympic Association (BOA), “Shiwen has been through the World Anti-Doping Agency programme and she’s clean. That’s the end of the story”; Sebastian Coe, chairman of LOCOG, “You have to be very careful jumping to the conclusion that a great breakthrough in sport is down to anything other than great coaching, hard work and formidable talent”; Bill Bowman, Michael Phelps’ coach, “It is unfair to immediately jump on someone who has had an extraordinary swim because it is something that happens [...] she is beautiful technically and she is swimming well”; the US coach Dave Marsh, “She obviously did some incredible sets and workout”; the Seoul 1988 gold medallist Adrian Moorhouse, “Ye Shiwen is no overnight sensation as she won gold at the World Championships last year”; the Moscow 1980 silver medallist Sharron Davies, “Youngsters can make huge improvements, these things do happen”; and Xu Qi, head of the Chinese team, “Shiwen has been seen as a genius since she was young, and her performance vindicates that”, among others. Likewise, *La Vanguardia* recalled the words of César Cielo, the Beijing 2008 gold medallist: “There is nothing suspicious, no way, it is obviously talent⁹⁹”.

Another illustrative reaction to the rumours can be found in an *El País* piece “Cuarenta años hacia atrás”, where the former swimmer Santiago Esteva compared the superiority of Shiwen with Mark Spitz and Roland Matthes¹⁰⁰ and expanded on her qualities: “It is not the typical case of swimmer that makes a difference only with her power. Her freestyle is great, but also her breaststroke technique is very good and that has specially helped her. Her length of breaststroke is key for the final rhythm of change. She arrives one and a half metres early at the wall to start the crawl in the most complicated change of the race. If you begin it before the rest, you can make tremendous advances because you achieve a distance that will give you a psychological stimulus and will depress your pursuers [...] That is what Ye Shiwen did, who seems a great leading figure. At this rate, she will be four years ahead of the rest of the world”.

⁹⁷ White, D. (2012, August 1). “Ye ignores her critics to strike gold yet again”. *The Daily Telegraph*, pp. S8–S9.

⁹⁸ Kelso, P. (2012, August 1). “Support for teenager in doping row as she wins again”. *The Daily Telegraph*, p. 2.

⁹⁹ Martínez, J.B. (2012, August 1). “Shiwen contesta a las sospechas con otro oro”. *La Vanguardia*, p. 35.

¹⁰⁰ Esteva, S. (2012, August 1). “Cuarenta años hacia atrás”. *El País*, pp. 42–3.

4.1.1.4. *The Guardian's* position after Shiwen's second gold medal

It should be underlined that after Shiwen's second gold medal, *The Guardian's* portrayal of the swimmer also became more balanced, due not only to the positive evaluation conveyed by its reporters but also to the inclusion of sources such as a British coach working with the Chinese team and representatives from WADA and FINA (Fédération Internationale de Natation).

In the article "Eyes of the world on her – but China's prodigy wins gold again"¹⁰¹, Esther Addley praised Shiwen's concentration, hard work and commitment. Complementing the chronicle of the event, the piece "These athletes train harder than anyone"¹⁰² centred on the contribution of a British swimming coach working with the Chinese team (whose identity was not published but was verified by the newspaper). His contribution was essential for *The Guardian's* readers to contextualize the success of Shiwen, to understand the environment in which Chinese elite athletes train and to explore the resources and funding available in the country for training. As the author pointed out, Chinese athletes are hard workers, "are proud to represent China and have a very team focused mentality" and participate in sport as it is their "only avenue for income". In addition, the coach highlighted other factors to explain the Chinese success, such as the unlimited access to training facilities, the economic bonuses for performance and the resources that coaches have to make use of a foreign training camp, hire an assistant coach or obtain gadgets and training equipment.

In the piece "Swimmer defended"¹⁰³, Robert Booth and Tania Branigan reflected on the statement released by FINA on Shiwen, which remarked that she had "fulfilled all of the FINA doping control obligations, having been tested on four occasions in the last 12 months". The authors also highlighted the fact that the athlete had passed the doping test carried out by WADA.

Nevertheless, explicit comments criticizing Leonard did not appear in the newspaper until the former athlete Dan Macey published the article "I am sick of the insinuations made about outstanding gold medal winners like Ye"¹⁰⁴. As Macey argued: "Is it fair to

¹⁰¹ Addley, E. (2012, August 1). "Eyes of the world on her – but China's prodigy wins gold again". *The Guardian*, pp. 2–3.

¹⁰² "These athletes train harder than anyone" (2012, August 1). *The Guardian*, Olympics 2012, pp. 2–3.

¹⁰³ Booth, R.; Branigan, T. (2012, August 2). "Swimmer defended". *The Guardian*, p. 6.

¹⁰⁴ Macey, D. (2012, August 10). "I am sick of the insinuations made about outstanding gold medal winners like Ye". *The Guardian*, Olympics 2012, p. 4.

cast aspersions over an athlete's performance simply because he or she achieves something brilliant? I don't think so. To my mind anyone who insinuates that an athlete is on drugs is wrongly damaging the sport [...] I thought what he said was disgusting. He ruined her moment of glory and forever after she will be tainted by his words".

4.1.1.5. The ethical implications of Ye Shiwen's case

The Guardian did a remarkable job by making John Leonard appear "on the record". As Raymond Boyle points out, the newspaper was clever in its perspective, writing the adjective "suspicious" in inverted commas and avoiding words like "cheating" or "exclusive" in the headline, as a tabloid newspaper would have done (Interview, October 2013). Furthermore, the newspaper's objective was to debate around a crucial issue – the fight against doping in high-level competition – and, arguably, it would have been worse not to have covered the story. Boyle maintains that "traditionally there has been a criticism that sports writers had been complacent about doping". In other words, journalists have spent years not talking about doping when they knew what was happening and they didn't raise the debate. As Boyle highlights, debating about doping "brings critical distance and adds value to the coverage as it helps to broaden the readers' knowledge and understanding" (Interview, October 2013).

Chris Frost underlines the fact that "there are a whole range of things that aren't going so well, which people ought to know about, such as drug taking". Frost argues that citizens should know much more about doping. However, he suspects that a number of journalists (especially those who are not in the senior posts) are "put off doing that kind of reporting, because they would see that they would not get anywhere with those types of stories and would lose their potential to work because their access might be denied" (Interview, October 2013). It is undeniable that sports journalism's purpose should be "to critically examine sports, from the play to the politics behind the play" (King, 2008: 341). Therefore, to raise the public debate about potential malpractices in sport, and doping in particular, is essential, especially if we consider that the fight against doping "has been one of the defining features of contemporary Olympic competition" (Miah and García, 2012: 96).

Ian Prior, *The Guardian's* sports editor, justified the newspaper's selection of the story and the adequacy of Leonard as a source:

We were the ones that broke the story, which made the global headlines. We included the voice of the most senior coach in America. Sometimes it is about getting to the right people first. He wasn't actually at the Olympics, but he is one of the world's greatest experts on swimming. It was a story that reverberated around the world, in *The New York Times*, it also was a huge story in Asia (Ian Prior, interview, October 2013).

According to media ethicist Chris Roberts, journalists needed to include Leonard's voice, because the story would have appeared anyway:

Just because we don't write something, that doesn't mean that it is not out there. So we often find ourselves having to report on rumours because they are already news [...] In the case of the Chinese swimmer you can't hide it, because if you don't do it, at the Olympics there are so many reporters. You can't ignore something like that (Chris Roberts, interview, July 2014).

Nevertheless, from the perspective of ethics and quality of information, there shouldn't be space for rumour in sports journalism, as José Sámano, sports editor of *El País* points out. Regarding Shiwen's case, Sámano explains why he decided to write the editorial article "Héroes y contaminación" criticizing the issue:

Against rumours, journalism ethics is very clear. It happens that sometimes rumours make so much noise that you cannot walk away. In that case, I decided to write this article and criticize it because in any case, civil or criminal, if there is evidence, go ahead. However, I did not find it ethical at all that the "suspicion" was based on the fact that she was "Chinese". That girl passed the controls as the rest (José Sámano, interview, May 2014).

From a similar perspective, José Luis Rojas and Shuhua Zhou underline the consequences of spreading rumours:

In the case of rumours, of non-contrasted news, there is a generalized problem of levity within media outlets. The urgency for publishing means that certain contents, which sometimes are rumours, appear. That clearly pauperizes this area of specialization. To what extent is this journalism? If you publish anything that you get and you don't verify it, that is on the border of anti-journalistic practice (José Luis Rojas, interview, June 2014).

I was a former journalist and if you don't have verified information, my perception is not to report it. It is true that there were cases where the Chinese swimming team has drug tested positive. But when a journalist reports something that is unverified, it also helps to spread the rumour, and a journalist's job is not to help to spread rumour. Accusations are best handled by the disciplinary bodies of sport. If the person does not prove guilty, then we are doing damage to that person (Shuhua Zhou, interview, July 2014).

Therefore, the fact that *The Guardian* published Leonard's words, the voice of someone whose opinions were based on unproved insinuations, generated a doping controversy. With this approach, which led to the dissemination of unsubstantiated speculations, the British newspaper didn't comply with the prescriptions promoted by the Council of Europe (Art. 4). Thus, the general recommendations regarding the truth in journalism practice, such as UNESCO's Arts 1-2, IFJ's Art. 1 and the NUJ's Art. 2, were also affected.

In this analysis, it wouldn't be fair to judge *The Guardian's* coverage based only on the piece "China's record win in pool 'suspicious', says top coach", because, as has

already been mentioned, the newspaper later articulated other voices. Nevertheless, *The Guardian* should have been more careful to consider Leonard's opinions against other relevant viewpoints much earlier, before propelling the issue on to the front page of the newspaper. To pose questions on doping might be necessary, but having a wide range of top experts and sporting actors who can reflect on these right from the start is essential for any media outlet. As Billings argues:

I think that you should have the same standards regardless of how important you perceive the issue to be. Because you consider that to be highly important or relatively unimportant doesn't mean everybody would feel that way. So if you have the same standards of what constitutes a source or how many sources you need to substantiate a claim, then you have some guide or set of ethics that you can apply in any given situation (Andrew Billings, interview, July 2014).

Furthermore, by labelling this controversy with a certain nationality, the issue also affected the principles of justice and responsibility. Treating Chinese athletes as suspicious based on past experiences contributed to reinforce and amplify negative stereotypes, contravening the major ethical standards embraced by international bodies (UNESCO, Art. 9; IFJ, Art. 7; Council of Europe, Art. 33) and national organizations (IPSO, Art. 12; NUJ, Art. 9). The dissemination of these stereotypes is also detrimental to the values of justice, equality and antidiscrimination, which are clearly stated in the *Olympic Charter* (Art. 6) and the *IOC Code of Ethics* (Art. A.1 and A.2). According to Billings and Rowe, Shiwen's coverage would have been completely different in the Western media if, for instance, she had been American or European:

They did not give the benefit of the doubt partly because of the nation she is from. I do think that if she was from a European nation or from the United States, media would have said "what a tremendous performance", "we have never seen anything like this". Whereas because she is from China, because China has not traditionally been a swimming superpower and because she actually performed at a level that was hard to explain, then all of a sudden you have a hook to look for something else there. People were certainly more likely to embrace that (Andrew Billings, interview, July 2014).

Journalists are much more interested in the alleged indiscretions of other people rather than their own. By including his voice, media made a decision before the evidence was actually presented. Journalists sometimes get swept up in the moment, so they are much less critical of their own suspicious cases, or less sceptical of their nation or similar nations than the other nations or more different nations (David Rowe, interview, March 2015).

In addition, the media's judgement over the legitimacy of Shiwen's triumphs, before any sport authority may have declared her guilty, was detrimental to the presumption of innocence, established in *Resolution 1.003 on the Ethics of Journalism* from the Council of Europe (Art. 22).

Related to the principle of responsibility, the association of negative values and the spread of rumours concerning Chinese athletes contributed to emphasizing prejudicial rivalries between countries. This contrasts with the values of peace and international understanding highlighted in the *Olympic Charter* (Art. 2) and can be illustrated in the articles “Shame and indignation in China as its Olympians come under fire¹⁰⁵” and “Conspiracy theories are afoot in China¹⁰⁶”, written respectively by *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* correspondents in Beijing, Andrew Jacobs and William Wan. *The New York Times* explained that the rumours cast over Ye Shiwen “snowballed into a gargantuan national insult” in China. The Chinese state media and newswire services, including the *People’s Daily*, *The Global Times* and *Xinhua*, pinpointed the fact that suspicions “represented the widespread hostility that Westerners feel toward a rising China” and that they “revealed Western envy at the nation’s growing economic might”. Similarly, *The Washington Post* mentioned that many Chinese (boosted by the words of the aforementioned media and other such as *Guangming Daily*) believed that there was a bias against China.

Obviously, there were “significant differences in the approaches of the Chinese and western media when discussing controversy” (Luo and Xue, 2013: 1709). We need to bear in mind that “the content of print news and television producers in China is inevitably influenced by the Communist Party of China” (Bie and Billings, 2015: 789). Nowadays, China is ranked 176th out of 180 countries, according to the latest data from Reporters Without Borders (2015). Moreover, we need to consider that the “Chinese coverage exhibited a strong desire to protect its national image and national identity through defending its athlete” (Bie and Billings, 2015: 799). Nevertheless, leaving these factors aside, with those reactions it can be seen that Leonard’s comments published in *The Guardian* contributed to generating tension between China and the West, especially the United States, reinforcing the archetypal stereotype of “us versus them” (Billings et al., 2011).

Even though in this case it seems that there weren’t any tangible consequence for *The Guardian*, Shuhua Zhou argues that media professionals should be careful, because the cases of speculation and rumour might have negative consequences for the credibility of media organizations:

When a journalist spreads rumours and plays up these narratives, the only thing that it will do for them is to get immediate attention. When you report sensationalist stories like that, you get your

¹⁰⁵ Jacobs, A. (2012, August 3). “Shame and indignation in China as its Olympians come under fire”. *The New York Times*, p. B12.

¹⁰⁶ Wan, W. (2012, August 9). “Conspiracy theories are afoot in China”. *The Washington Post*, p. D12.

stories sold, you sell your newspaper, but I think there are more consequences. You may erode the credibility of your newspaper. And you may play up some narratives, some conflict between nations for nobody's benefit but for the sensational value of the news story (Shuhua Zhou, interview, July 2014).

4.1.2. Selection, citing and credibility of sources

Moving on to the area of news sources, and considering all the coverage as a whole, it has been observed that the newspapers sampled made extensive use of a wide range of representative and authoritative sources to foreground their stories about London 2012. The following categories have been identified (see Figure 6): (1) staff and first-hand reporting; (2) sporting actors; (3) institutional sources; (4) scholars and experts; (5) online resources; (6) international media outlets; (7) major news agencies; (8) organizations; and (9) other sources. This section will deal with the use of each of these types of relevant sources. Additionally, we reflect on further types of sources that could be useful in enhancing the quality of the information reported.



Figure 6. Map of news sources identified in the coverage of London 2012

4.1.2.1. Staff and first-hand reporting of the Olympic events

To begin with, it is worth highlighting the fact that the newspapers sampled sent a significant number of polyvalent/versatile and specialized¹⁰⁷ journalists to London 2012 with the aim of providing the most complete coverage of both the sporting and the non-competition issues of the event. Despite the logistical difficulties of having different competitions to cover at the same time¹⁰⁸, to have the most human resources available to work on site at the Olympics, who “can work on very tight deadlines” (Hugh McDonald, interview, October 2013) and who are able to “navigate through dozens of different languages” in order to speak to sources (Jason Stallman, interview, April 2014) proved highly valuable. To illustrate this, the number of accredited journalists working on the Olympics for the following papers was: *The Guardian/The Observer* (26); *The Telegraph* (25)¹⁰⁹; *The New York Times* (20)¹¹⁰; *The Washington Post* (9)¹¹¹;

¹⁰⁷ A large part of the coverage was possible thanks to the efforts of reporters who mainly specialized in one or two Olympic sports. An illustrative example can be found in the coverage of athletics, led by key reporters such as Anna Kessel and Richard Williams (*The Guardian*), Simon Hart and Ian Chadband (*The Telegraph*), Ken Belson, Jeré Longman and Christopher Clarey (*The New York Times*), Carlos Arribas and Amaya Iribar (*El País*) and Juan Bautista Martínez and Carlos Martín (*La Vanguardia*). Other relevant examples are: gymnastics, written primarily by Emma John (*The Guardian*), Juliet Macur (*The New York Times*), Liz Clarke (*The Washington Post*), Amaya Iribar (*El País*) and Natalia Román (*La Vanguardia*); swimming, led by Donald McRae (*The Guardian*), Duncan White (*The Telegraph*), Karen Crouse (*The New York Times*) and Diego Torres (*El País*); and sailing, written by Steven Morris (*The Guardian*), Tom Cary (*The Telegraph*), Luis Martín (*El País*) and Felip Vivanco (*La Vanguardia*), among others.

¹⁰⁸ As Paul Hayward highlights, a key challenge was to “try to be on top of something where 20 or 30 things were happening every hour” and to “assess how much interest there would be in each of those events” (Interview, October 2013).

¹⁰⁹ According to Adam Sills: “getting the right number of accreditations was key and we got a good number. In terms of reporters, at *The Telegraph*, there are around 25. And for the Olympics, we added people from other parts of the business and also we included columnists as well. So, we were around 40 people for the Olympics time. Without our reporters and our budget, we would not have achieved the coverage we did. It allowed us to have the right number of people to cover the right amount of events. And also, it allowed us to buy some important names that were commentators for during the Games exclusively for us. I think that with these people we made the amount of coverage that we did and we achieved an authority that probably we wouldn’t have achieved otherwise” (Adam Sills, interview, October 2013).

¹¹⁰ Data: Anthony Edgar, interview, May 2014.

¹¹¹ Data: Matt Vita, online interview, April 2014.

and *El País* (7)¹¹². Other publications, however, weren't guaranteed as many accreditations to cover the event, a fact which complicated their job¹¹³.

The on-site access to the venues granted to the journalists was one of the core factors that had a significant impact on the quality of their reporting. In sporting venues accredited press¹¹⁴ were given access to crucial areas to carry out their job, such as the venue media centres, the press tribunes, the mixed zones, media conference rooms, photo positions and media lounges (LOCOG, 2011: 16). In addition, accredited professionals had access to a series of key facilities and services at the main press centre, which was a "29,000 square meter building, designed to provide all the necessary facilities and services required for accredited press to undertake their work efficiently and effectively throughout the Olympic Games" (LOCOG, 2011: 27). These facilities and services included a press workroom, results and printing distribution, media lounges, reference library, the IOC communications office, the LOCOG press operations office and an interview area, among other things.

José Sámano, sports editor of *El País*, highlights the fact that first-hand observation was the key source as far as reporting on London 2012 was concerned and it is also one of the most determining elements in providing quality in sports journalism. Boyle comments on the value of on-site reporters too:

There is nothing better than being on the field. Otherwise, you don't need to go to London. It is true that information can be found at Wikipedia, on Google. The difference is the passion that you can gain seeing Michael Phelps, Usain Bolt or Pau Gasol. To see the faces of the public, their excitement [...] From my perspective, because I have been 20 years in this field, the journalist

¹¹² Data: José Sámano, interview, May 2014.

¹¹³ It is very enlightening to reflect on the case of *The Scotsman*, explained by its sports editor, Colin Leslie: "In the build-up to the Olympics, it was very difficult to secure accreditation for Scottish newspapers. We weren't happy at all with the way the accreditation was dealt with. Originally we had only one journalist accredited, which would have been a tremendous challenge for one person to cover the Olympics for *The Scotsman*, *Scotland on Sunday* and occasionally *The Evening News*. We ended up with two, which compared to some of the English titles who were getting maybe 20 journalists [...] In many respects, we did feel let down that the organizing committee didn't extend the same privileges to the Scottish press. OK, the big newspapers in England are based in London, have a bigger readership and run bigger operations than us. But we do feel let down, yeah. We should never have had to fight for that" (Colin Leslie, interview, October 2013).

¹¹⁴ According to the *Press Facilities and Services Guide* (LOCOG, 2011), the quota of E-category accreditations for London 2012 (journalists, editors, photo editors, sport-specific journalists, photographers, support staff, non-rights-holding broadcast organizations, local press and local photographers covering sailing or football) was restricted to 5,800.

should be on the field. Young journalists who base their task entirely on Google¹¹⁵ don't convince me. You need to be on the field, because the sensations are yours and when you write a chronicle of a football match or of the 100 metres final, those sensations should be transmitted. You should feel emotion, because if you don't feel it, how would you translate this emotion to your readers? I am saying to feel emotion, not putting on a shirt of one team or another. The events should make you vibrate in order to write about them. And to vibrate, you can only have been on the field. That is an indispensable condition (José Sámano, interview, May 2014).

If you have resources and you are able to allocate journalists to venues it is important. The notion of eyewitness, of being actually there, is very important. The really good journalists will add additional value by being an eyewitness, by being able to bring in certain things that you can just not get if you hadn't been actually in the stadium. It is about authenticity (Raymond Boyle, interview, November 2013).

As well as first-hand observation of the sporting events, the significant contribution made by foreign correspondents such as Anthony Faiola (*The Washington Post*), Walter Oppenheimer (*El País*) and Rafael Ramos (*La Vanguardia*) shouldn't be forgotten, both in the reporting of sporting issues and the larger framework of the Olympics. Correspondents are vitally important, as Ramos explains:

The added value of a correspondent has two cornerstones. The first consists of the knowledge of the country and the city where he lives, the background that he has, the possibility of explaining situations and describing places at first hand. The second is the capacity to write it in an elegant and attractive way. In my case, 20 years as a London correspondent provided me with the required background. I interviewed Sebastian Coe before the Games, I spoke to members of the organization [LOCOG] and experts in sustainability, funding of the Games, urban transformation, etc. And I collected material about the athletes and people related with the Games (Rafael Ramos, interview, May 2014).

Section 7.4 details the core team of reporters that each of the newspapers used for covering London 2012, as well as listing former athletes who undertook roles as special commentators and analysts.

4.1.2.2. Sporting actors

Sporting actors, the individuals who are high up in the hierarchy of sport (athletes, former athletes, coaches and officials), were the most quoted sources by the newspapers sampled for London 2012. As Hugh MacDonald explains, "after every event, there were formal press conferences and mixed zones, which allowed

¹¹⁵ According to Brock (2013: 201–2): "technology has eliminated the need for the vast quantities of blanket, routine reporting that was needed in the past. But, irrespective of the hugely amplified power of digital recording, there remain situations best captured, with whatever technology is available, by an experienced eye-witness".

journalists to do interviews all the time every day” (Interview, October 2013). These interviews, which aimed to obtain the reactions and quotes of the protagonists, were essential to complement the description of the sporting action. It should be noted that access to the athletes was easier at the Olympics than in other competitions such as the football leagues and the FIFA World Cup¹¹⁶, as the sports editors of *The Guardian*, *The Telegraph* and *El País* explain:

Comparatively, a World Cup is much more complex in logistics terms. You try to come closer to the Brazilian football team and there is a road closed in 200m and until the organization opens the door for a press conference, you cannot access. Some teams hold an open day, but that is all. At the Games, that is much easier. Obviously, the access to Michael Phelps or Usain Bolt is more restricted. But the access to a Spanish athlete is relatively easy. To access Pau Gasol is a little more complicated though (José Sámano, interview, May 2014).

One of the best things about the Olympics is that everything is laid down for you. It is very different from football, when you have to find your way in at times. But in the Olympics, you have the events, press conferences, access. So, for a journalist it is a dream really, because you can speak to the performers (Paul Hayward, interview, October 2013).

As regards sources, in the Olympics, you cannot expect a lot of individual time with the athletes, who are either busy preparing for their events or you have to share them with everyone else. However, the media operation was pretty good at large, in terms of access. And when a moment in the spotlight comes around every four years, they are more than happy to take advantage. They want to talk to you. It is a different world from football, where the activity is constant and players are very suspicious about the interaction with the press. In the Olympics there is a general willingness to speak and to share (Ian Prior, interview, October 2013).

¹¹⁶ The impact of the dramatic rise of the PR industry (Hesmondhalgh, 2007) around the world of sport and the professionalization of media relations is certainly a crucial aspect to take into account in contemporary sports journalism. Because of the large sums of money invested, many personnel are employed by clubs, governing bodies and sports stars to: “prevent potentially critical journalists from obtaining insider information about their charges; to manage and set limits around access given to the rest of the sport media; and to generate and distribute freely positive news stories” (Tomlinson and Sugden, 2008: 158). The heavily managed relationships and the restriction of access seem to be particularly acute in the major football leagues. The informal access to and close relationships with athletes, which were the norm a few decades ago, are becoming less and less common (Boyle, 2015). In Neil Farrington’s words: “There was a time when journalists and footballers were quite equal, they lived in the same areas, drank together and so on. Players themselves are now brands, they have agents who want to protect that brand [...] sports journalists do not have the access they used to and they don’t have the relationship they used to have with athletes across the board, which is a shame” (Neil Farrington, interview, September 2013). This distancing leads to a core ethical issue, according to media ethicist Chris Roberts: “because journalists do not know athletes any more, they may write things that are not fair enough, as they simply don’t know the person to get a larger part of the story” (Chris Roberts, interview, July 2014).

Additionally, before the events took place, sporting sources were also indispensable for journalists in preparing for the Olympics, especially to obtain background information on sports in which they were not experts. In the following quotes, media professionals explain the value of interviewing athletes and coaches before the event:

I had never covered water polo before the London Games, so I made sure to talk with officials at USA Water Polo, as well as several players, which ended up being incredibly useful. Not only did I build relationships, but several story ideas germinated from my conversations (Sam Borden, interview, April 2014).

We prepared by having our reporters do as much reporting as possible before the Olympics. That meant interviewing athletes, coaches and officials (Jason Stallman, interview, April 2014).

In terms of preparing for the sports I covered in London, I attended the US Olympic Summit that was 6 months ahead of the Games, in Dallas, where the USOC brings together top prospective Olympians in all sports. It was a great opportunity over 3 or 4 days to conduct interviews well in advance. I also attended a few preliminary competitions (Liz Clarke, interview, April 2014).

4.1.2.3. Institutional sources

Representatives from different institutions were widely employed by the media: LOCOG; the IOC; NOCs; the federations of a wide range of Olympic sports; and the British government and local authorities, among other institutional sources. First, regarding LOCOG, the chairman and former athlete Sebastian Coe received the major number of quotes across the board, but other relevant representatives were also mentioned in the coverage: Debbie Jevans (director of sport), Paul Deighton (chief executive), Jean Tomlin (head of human resources), Jonathan Harris (head of anti-doping), Jackie Brock-Doyle (director of communications), Rob Abernethy and Simon Lillistone (general managers of the Aquatics Centre and the Velodrome respectively) and Niccy Halifax (victory ceremonies organizer).

Second, the IOC's institutional position was present throughout the quotes of Jacques Rogge (president), Mark Adams (communications director), Timo Lumme (director of TV and marketing), Arne Ljungqvist (chairman of the IOC medical commission), Gilbert Felli (executive director), Frank Fredericks (IOC athletes commission chairman), Pere Miró (head of Olympic Solidarity) and IOC members Dick Pound, Gerhard Heibert and Marisol Casado.

Third, the newspapers studied employed as sources representatives from 26 NOCs, ranging from the Afghanistan National Olympic Committee (AFG) to the United States Olympic Committee (USOC) (see Section 7.5). Fourth, delegates from 55 different

federations and sporting associations representing 24 different sports were quoted during the timeframe of the observation (see Section 7.6).

Fifth, print media made use of different key sources associated with the British government and local authorities. Regarding the former, Prime Minister David Cameron and the Olympics minister (Hugh Robertson) were usually quoted, but representatives of other governmental areas also found their viewpoints represented in the media sphere, particularly when issues corresponding to the larger framework of the Games came to the fore. These areas included: Culture, Media and Sport (Jeremy Hunt, Hugh Robertson); Business (Norman Lamb); Defence (Philip Hammond); Education (Michael Gove); Employment (Chris Grayling); Home Affairs (Theresa May, Lord Henley, Keith Vaz, Julian Huppert); Immigration (Damian Green); Science and Technology (Lord Krebs); Transport (John Woodcock, Justine Greening); and Trade and Investment (Nick Baird). Shadow ministers and secretaries as well as politicians from the opposition were also quoted throughout the newspapers' pages (Andy Burnham, Liam Byrne, Stephen Twigg, Kate Hoey, David Winnick, Nicola Blackwood, to list a few). In terms of the London authorities, Boris Johnson (Mayor of London) received most of the mentions. Other key representatives of the city, such as Peter Hendy (Transport for London commissioner), Robin Wales (the mayor of Newham council) and Daniel Moylan (chairman of the London Legacy Development Corporation) were also included.

Finally, other institutional sources at national and international level were taken into account. These included representatives from sporting institutions (Court of Arbitration for Sport –CAS–, WADA), the security forces (British Transport Police, Scotland Yard, MI5, London Metropolitan Police, British Army, Greater Manchester Police Federation, Strathclyde Police, South Yorkshire Police Federation), past and future Organizing Committees of the Games (Barcelona 1992, Beijing 2008, Vancouver 2010, Rio 2016) and foreign governments.

4.1.2.4. Scholars and experts

The use of knowledgeable scholars, experts and analysts was very notable throughout the coverage. The selection of these sources from prestigious universities and companies was done according to several disciplines and areas of specialization that it was obviously thought should be explored. These experts have been categorized into 46 areas (see Section 7.7): Anthropology; Art History; Biology; Criminology; Crowd Management and Security Studies; Cultural Management; Drug Monitoring; Economics; Environmental Issues; Fashion; Foreign Relations and International

Affairs; Gambling Studies; History; Health and Sports Performance; Human Rights; Internet Studies; Labour Studies; Landscape Studies; Languages; Law; Leisure Studies; Management; Marketing; Mathematics; Media and Communication; Medicine; Nutrition; Olympism and Olympics History; Philosophy; Physical Therapy; Politics and Political Philosophy; Psychology; Physiology; Sociology; Sport and Fitness; Sport and Social Theory; Sport Biomechanics; Sport Psychiatry; Sports Business Strategy; Sports Engineering; Sports Industry; Sports Science; Sports Technology; Typography; Urban Policy, Cities and Planning; and Weather. Shuhua Zhou highlights the value of using these expert sources¹¹⁷:

In the Olympics, if you are writing about contextual stories, then scholars and consultants are very useful, because they have in-depth knowledge of those issues. In the issues, you need in-depth knowledge, you need people, the experts who have been doing research on those issues (Shuhua Zhou, interview, July 2014).

Additionally, relevant academic journals were consulted (*Mass Communication and Society*, *British Journal of Sports Medicine*, *Journal of Applied Physiology*, *Journal of Olympic History*, *The Economic Journal*, *Sports Business Journal*, *Journal of Experimental Biology*), along with essential books (*The complete book of the Olympics* by David Wallechinsky and Jaime Loucky, *Showdown at Shepherd's Bush* by David Davis and *The perfect distance* by Pat Butcher, to list a few), plus other magazines and archives.

4.1.2.5. Online resources

During the timeframe of the observation, many specialized websites were quoted, including *AllCompetitions.com*, *Sports-Reference.com*, *London2012.com*, *Dressage-News.com*, *Goldenbearsports.com* and *Yahoo Sports*. Many relevant blogs, such as *InsideLondon2012*, *Saudiwoman.me*, *Muslim Women in Sport* and *Sport24* were also consulted.

Moving on to the use of social networking sites such as Twitter and Facebook, it is widely known that nowadays “sports journalists use social media as a news feed, to

¹¹⁷ The problem is that these types of sources that have been seen to be employed in the coverage of the Olympics are not always used in the daily coverage of sport, because they tend to be limited to certain types of pieces, as Jennifer Greer explains: “In certain areas, journalists will look for an expert. But it is only for the more sophisticated, for the more in-depth issues. I have seen business professors in the teams when the coverage is about tax breaks; in other issues they would go to social psychologists; they would go to gender experts to talk about the empowerment of girls. I mean, I see a little bit of it, but it is not in the day-to-day coverage at all, it is in the long-form pieces (Jennifer Greer, interview, July 2014).

follow players, journalists and supporters” (Boyle and Haynes, 2014b: 14). However, did the use of these social networking sites add any genuine value to the coverage of London 2012? Unfortunately, while the print media did publish comments posted online by athletes many of these ended up being mere anecdotes that did not add any quality to the information. This reinforced Hutchins’ notion (2011: 41) that the content of Tweets posted by athletes is “often banal, disposable and of questionable insight”. See, for example, two messages published by the *The Daily Telegraph*: Louise Jukes (Team GB handball) wrote: “Gave the Queen my pin badge!!!! And had a little conversation Wow!!! So pumped!!! Bring on the Game!!!”; and the British rower Zac Purchase commented: “Relaxing afternoon in bed, watching the Italian Job. What a better way to end an Italian training camp!” Now look at these two reactions posted by US athletes and republished by *The New York Times*: “Wow @Nathangadrian I just screamed out loud in my room watching you win gold!!! Heck yeah. Congrats”; and “Yeeeeeeeeessssss!!!!!!!!!! @AbbyWambach and crew. Such warriors! Don’t stop. Don’t ever stop!” According to media ethicist Chris Roberts, the trend in publishing these materials is illustrative of the current move towards a more opinion-based journalism:

In print media, what you see in many newspapers, is that they select the best online comments after the games. *The Birmingham News*, my paper, would go through and call Tweets from the day and will put those Tweets from athletes, other reporters and fans online. Part of the conversation is all of us, we are moving to a more opinion-based sports reporting, the readers’ and competitors’ opinions matter at least as much as the journalist matters (Chris Roberts, interview, July 2014).

Greer agrees that this is a growing trend in current journalism, but to her mind, it is arguable whether this practice really contributes to the quality of the information provided by newspapers:

Nowadays we have the enumeration of Tweets, “Here we have today’s Tweets”. And it is the whole story. But they have only basically curated Tweets from athletes to see what they are saying. I could go to their Twitter accounts and figure it out. That is masquerading journalism, but it is social media. The aggregation of social media materials has become journalism and sometimes it is really frustrating (Jennifer Greer, interview, July 2014).

4.1.2.6. National and international media outlets

The newspapers sampled consulted a vast number of quality media at a national and international level. To be precise, 145 news outlets from 27 countries were quoted in media reports, including many prestigious publications such as *L’Équipe*, *Le Monde*, *The Times*, *The Economist*, *Frankfurter Allgemeine*, *La Repubblica*, *NBC*, *Los Angeles Times* and *The Wall Street Journal*, to list a few (see Figure 7 and Section 7.8). The use of this information showed the honesty of the newspapers studied in that they took into account the work done by other major publications and correctly attributed it. This

respected key prescriptions such as Article 31 in *Ethical Journalism. A Handbook of Values and Practises for the News and Editorial Departments* from *The New York Times*: “Staff members compete zealously but deal with competitors openly and honestly. We do not invent obstacles to hamstringing their efforts. When we use facts reported by another publication, we attribute them”.

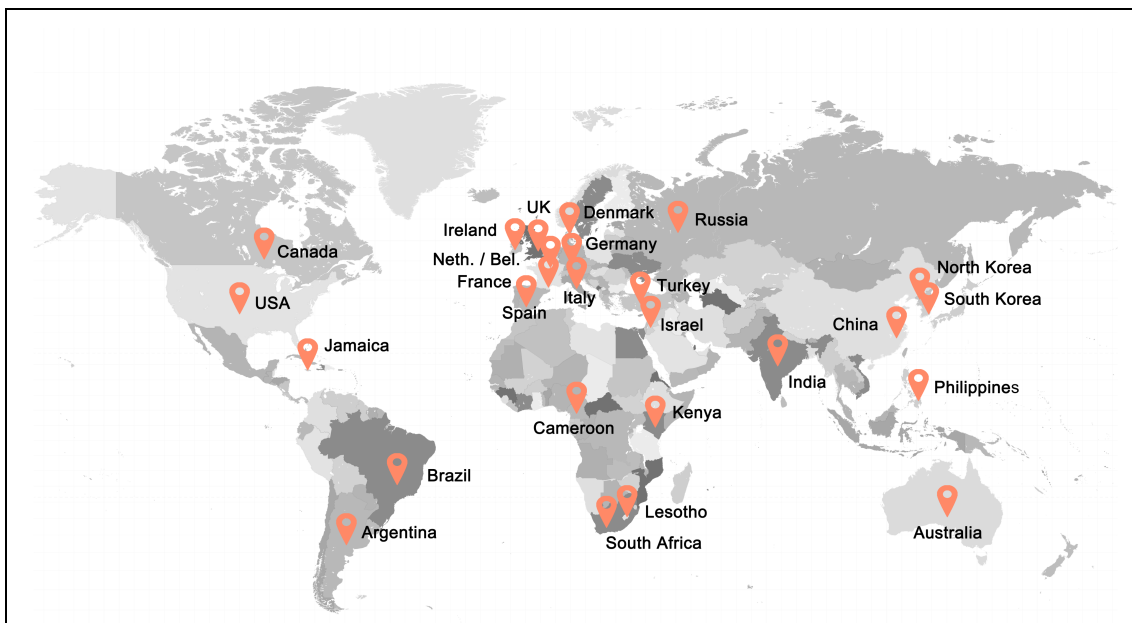


Figure 7. Countries of the media organizations quoted during London 2012

4.1.2.7. News agencies

Moving on to the newswire services, it should be noted that the newspapers in question extensively used the information provided by the major global news agencies (AP, AFP, Reuters), the national news agencies (the PA, EFE), the specialized stock photo agencies (Getty Images, Corbis) and the Olympic News Service (ONS). Other services were occasionally quoted¹¹⁸.

The use of materials from agencies not only made economic sense to the media (Manning, 2008), but it was also necessary in order to provide reliable coverage of the

¹¹⁸ These complementary newswire services are listed as follows: Action Images, ActionPlus, Allsport, Alpha Press, AMA, Andy Hopper Photography, Ansa, Associated Newspapers, Barcroft Media, Big Pictures, Bloomberg News, Camera Press, Cordon Press, Dogan News Agency, DPA, East Photographic, EPA, Eyevine, Fameflynet.uk.com, FilmMagic, GKImages.com, GNM Imaging, GYI, Keystone-Zuma, Korean Central News Agency, Landmark Media, Matrix Pictures, Newsteam, NOPP, Offside Sports, Optic Photos, Pacific Coast News, Page One Photography, Photoshot, Picture Alliance, Pixell 8000, Popperfoto, Raymonds Press Agency, Rex Features, S&G/Alpha, Splash News, Sportsphoto, SWIPX.com, UK Press, United Press International, Xinhua, Xposure Photos, Yonhap News Agency and Zed Jameson.

whole variety of sports included within the Olympic programme. As Andrews (2014: 154) highlights, agencies: “play a key role in the coverage of major cyclical sporting events such as the Olympic Games. Few media outlets have the staff to cover all the action at multidisciplinary events such as these, or the expertise to provide authoritative coverage of minority sports. The gaps are filled by agency journalists, who can provide a rapid and reliable service of reports and pictures”.

In the case of London 2012, the IOC-recognized international agencies (AP, Reuters and AFP) as well as the host national news agency (the PA) (IOC, 2013c: 61) had priority dedicated space in all the venues’ mixed zones (LOCOG, 2011: 22–34). Focusing on the PA, Andrews explains: “The Press Association had 90 staff at their base at the London 2012 Olympic Park, including reporters, sub-editors, photographers and data teams. They had a reporter at every sport. The journalists who covered them had been specialising in those sports for at least four years, since the previous Games in Beijing. They had spent much of that time getting to know the competitors, which made access to them at the Games much easier, and acquiring that sense of authority that goes with knowing a sport very well” (Andrews, 2014: 154).

Leaving the main agencies aside, we cannot deny the importance of the regular information provided by the ONS, which is a “professional-standard news agency dedicated to provide [*sic*] the media with a balanced file of Games information that is written in clear, concise English” (LOGOC, 2011: 51). At London 2012, the ONS used a system called myInfo+, which aimed to ensure “effective and timely communication to all Games constituent groups” (IOC, 2013d: 41). The system was accessed online by 6,049 media professionals (LOCOG, 2012: 94) and provided: “full schedules and results; live scoring across all sports; all the Games-related news, including previews, reviews, statistics; flash quotes¹¹⁹ and media conference coverage; biographies on every competitor¹²⁰ [...] historical data and statistics; medals and records; weather, transport”, among other relevant information (LOCOG, 2012: 51). Additional news content published by the ONS included: “London Eye – a handful of brief off-diary news stories each day”; “Flashback – a reminder/review of what happened in a particular

¹¹⁹ Flash quotes are “brief, pertinent comments by athletes and/or officials in response to questions by broadcast and print reporters in the Mixed Zone immediately following competition” (IOC, 2013d: 152). According to the LOCOG Press Commission Report, 8,474 Olympic flash quotes were published (LOCOG, 2012: 10).

¹²⁰ “Media operations teams begin their work months before the event, researching and writing official biographies on thousands of athletes”. These biographies proved “invaluable to busy journalists both before and during the event” (Andrews, 2014: 161). At London 2012, the ONS published 13,430 Olympic biographies (12,444 athletes, 177 coaches, 365 officials and 444 teams) (LOCOG, 2012: 91).

event at Beijing 2008”; “Five to watch – a news alert of the big five stories across the Games anticipated for the following day”; and “Beginners guide – a very basic rundown of how a particular sport works to allow media to cover a sport about which they have little, if any, knowledge” (LOCOG, 2012: 90). According to the LOCOG Press Commission Report (LOCOG, 2012: 88), at London 2012 the ONS published 14,262 news articles, which can be broken down as follows:

Type of stories	n	%
Flash quotes	8,474	59.42
Media conference highlights	1,348	9.45
News	956	6.70
Facts and figures	769	5.39
Match reviews	485	3.40
Media communications	483	3.39
Others	1,747	12.25
Total	14,262	100.00

Table 4. Types of news content published by the ONS (Source: LOCOG, 2012: 88)

Anthony Edgar, the IOC head of media operations, explains the crucial value that the ONS provided to media professionals at London 2012:

The ONS supplies information from the venues to a system so that media can write stories. We had 600 journalists working at the ONS at the London Games. ONS professionals are in mixed zones getting flash quotes from the athletes, writing previews, daily reviews, they cover all of the press conferences and use information from the conferences to expand their material. They cover every sport. Most newspapers cannot do that. Take for instance, *The New York Times*, which had 20 accreditations and there are 28 sports. Most newspapers might only have one accreditation. It is impossible for them to cover everything. That is why the ONS and international news agencies are so critically important to major events. Most newspapers, even *The New York Times*, with its number of journalists would only really cover four or five sports. The rest of its coverage, for instance, comes from AP and Reuters. If I am a journalist and I am covering athletics today, but I have got a team playing in basketball and I have got someone else playing in hockey, how can I get that coverage? The ONS would give you some of the highlights and previews so you can actually write your story (Anthony Edgar, interview, May 2014).

Professionals involved in the coverage of London 2012, such as Colin Leslie (*The Scotsman*) and Hugh MacDonald (*The Herald*) highlight how useful the system was in helping them to carry out their journalistic task:

It was very efficient in the way that it was run. Flash quotes were made available to our journalists, they didn't have any difficulties when they were at the events. Gaining access was fine, it was a quite smoothly run Olympics. The regular updates with quotes were very helpful in the case our guys weren't available for some reason to get access to quotes. I'd say it was a very organized and well-executed Olympics in terms of management of the information (Colin Leslie, interview, October 2013).

Although I mostly had my own background sources, the Olympics' own media stream, which you could access for information, updates, statistics and records, was very good (Hugh MacDonald, October 2013).

4.1.2.8. Organizations

Being able to consult the aforementioned range of sources was critical for journalists. However, we also need to acknowledge the significant contribution made by media professionals in opening up new angles by utilizing information from other organizations not directly connected to the Olympics (see Section 7.9). These organizations contributed further in-depth information that helped to broaden readers' understanding of many of the sporting and contextual dimensions of the Games. Throughout their pages, the print media quoted organizations linked with: sport and recreation; human rights and non-discrimination; tourism; trade and commerce; transport; unions; education; culture and leisure; health; labour; environmental issues; media and communications; weather; non-governmental activities; volunteering; and child support. Further organizations quoted belonged to the fields of architecture, development, engineering, statistics, economics, and memorabilia and collectibles.

4.1.2.9. Other sources

In addition to the aforementioned categories, other sources consulted included: cultural actors (opening and closing ceremony directors and creative representatives, poets, documentary makers, theatrical producers, musicians, writers, illustrators, museum spokesmen, curators, designers); private companies (from Adidas to William Hill); spectators/citizens (including traders, business owners, athletes' parents); Olympic volunteers; and newspapers' readers.

4.1.2.10. Sources that were minimized in the coverage

In spite of the fact that newspapers used a wide range of authoritative sources to build the coverage of the event, certain sources were minimized. These sources are rarely found in sports journalism and their use should be optimized in order to provide more comprehensive information to readers. As Rowe highlights, there should be an increase in the use of specific sources from the world of sport, such as the organization Play the Game:

The area I would like to see sports journalists use more is civil society organizations, which are dedicated for instance, to improving governance in sport, such as the Play the Game organization, which is based in Denmark. It has a mission to improve sports governance. I would like to see sports journalists use those organizations. They are not particularly partisan. They only want to stop corruption in sport, to fight against racism and sexism, and so on. I would like

journalists to be aware of that. Sometimes, sports is a little world, a little bubble, and sometimes, certain questions could be answered by somebody else (David Rowe, interview, June 2013).

Albeit some Olympic experts (such as Janice Forsyth, Susan Brownell, Bill Mallon and John Lucas) were quoted during the coverage, José Luis Rojas argues that researchers from the Olympic Studies Centres are not consulted enough and that their views and knowledge would definitely contribute to enriching the media coverage of sporting mega-events:

It is true that within sports journalism there is a certain self-sufficiency in covering information. Maybe this means that for instance journalists do not consult enough with research institutes or Olympic Studies Centres in Spain and around the world, which have staff that know very well not only how the Games and their competitions work, but that are knowledgeable about their philosophy, their institutions, the structure of the Olympic movement [...] To consult them more would certainly provide more context, richness and wideness in the coverage of the Olympic Games (José Luis Rojas, interview, June 2014).

4.1.3. Depth and comprehensiveness of information

4.1.3.1. Range of journalistic genres employed in the coverage

During the period studied, the newspapers in question cultivated a vast range of journalistic genres to build their coverage of the Olympics. All the genres previously presented in the theoretical framework (previews and build-up pieces, reviews, reports, features, articles, interviews, profiles, brief pieces, opinion columns and articles, editorials, comic strips, lists of results and box scores, agenda, and so on) were intensively employed throughout the newspapers' pages. Certain types of pieces (articles, extended reports, profiles and interviews), focused on providing comment, background and analysis (core aspects in print journalism nowadays), had considerable exposure throughout the sample (see Section 4.1.3.3). Other journalistic genres, such as letters to the editor, one of the traditional means of holding the media accountable for what they publish, became one of the most distinguishing features in certain publications, *The Washington Post*, for example (see 4.1.4). This section does not provide an exhaustive overview of all the journalistic genres employed, given that specific examples of all of these are widely discussed throughout other sections of the results.

4.1.3.2. Range of Olympic sports covered

Taking all the coverage as a whole, it can be observed that the newspapers sampled reported on the wide spectrum of Olympic disciplines, most of which remain invisible in

the day-to-day coverage of sport. Nevertheless, hierarchies also prevailed. The two most popular disciplines within the Olympics framework, Athletics ($n = 760.42$; 16.87%) and Swimming ($n = 377.58$; 8.38%) attracted the highest number of pieces. They were followed by Cycling ($n = 332.83$; 7.38%), Basketball ($n = 285.42$; 6.33%) and Football ($n = 249.25$; 5.53%). As will be discussed, each newspaper focused their coverage on sports more traditionally played in their own countries and also on those sports in which the performance of their home athletes was more successful. That clearly reinforced the notion that winners “seem to be more valuable in sports culture” (Chang et al., 2011: 33).

That being said, there were many other disciplines that should have received more mainstream attention in the framework of the Olympics, but they did not even reach the 1% of sports coverage throughout the newspapers’ pages. More concretely, seven Olympic sports did not reach that figure: Fencing (0.98%), Badminton (0.89%), Synchronized Swimming (0.89%), Archery (0.84%), Wrestling (0.80%), Table Tennis (0.77%) and Modern Pentathlon (0.42%). This generated a scenario in which the diversity of the sports covered was guaranteed but not equality between them. The huge disparities in the amount of coverage received by the different sports can be clearly seen in Figure 8, which represents the size of each sport considering the total number of pieces devoted to each one. Figure 9, which presents the volume of articles devoted to the Olympic sports by each of the newspapers sampled, also reflects the overall dominance of sports such as athletics and swimming across the board. The minimization of a wide range of minority sports can be perceived as well.

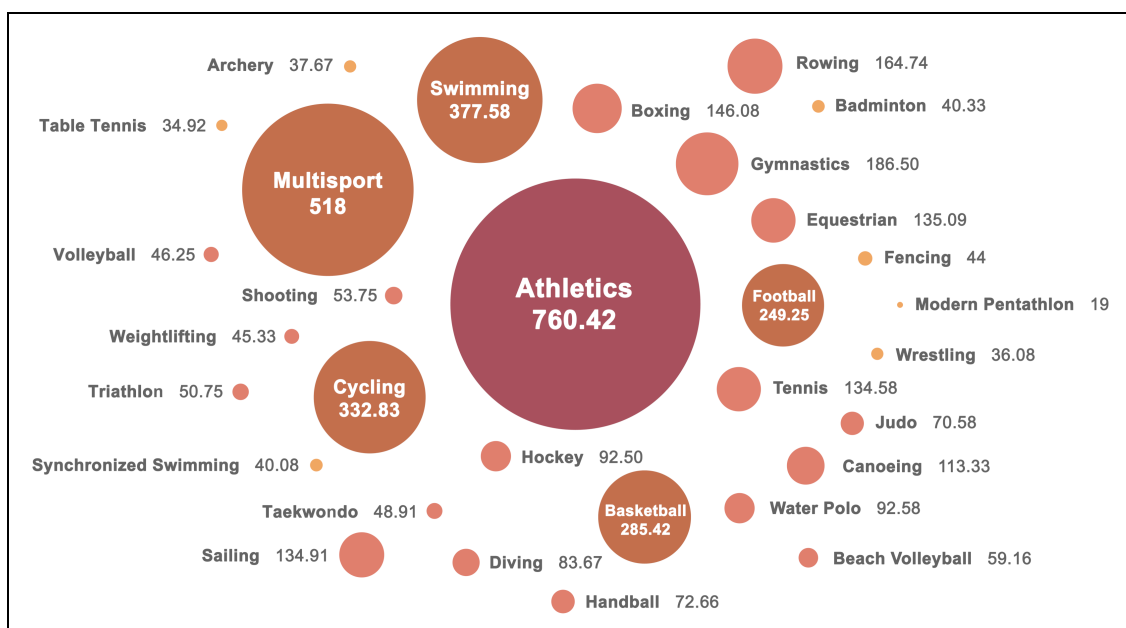


Figure 8. Size of Olympic sports as per the number of articles devoted to them throughout the sample

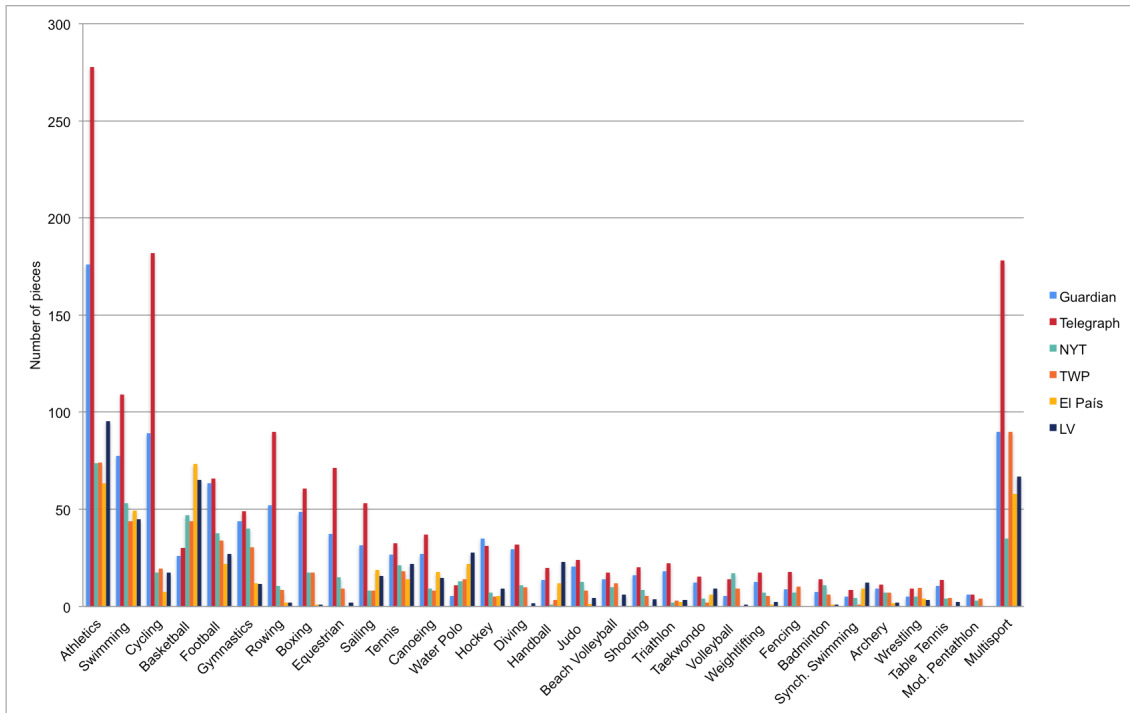


Figure 9. Volume of competition-related articles by sport in each of the newspapers

Sport	Guardian	Telegraph	NYT	TWP	El País	LV	Total	%
Athletics	176.09	277.75	73.75	74.00	63.50	95.33	760.42	16.87
Swimming	77.50	109.08	53.00	43.75	49.50	44.75	377.58	8.38
Cycling	89.08	182.00	17.50	19.50	7.50	17.25	332.83	7.38
Basketball	26.00	30.17	47.00	44.00	73.25	65.00	285.42	6.33
Football	63.33	65.67	37.50	34.00	21.75	27.00	249.25	5.53
Gymnastics	43.92	48.83	40.00	30.50	11.75	11.50	186.50	4.14
Rowing	52.08	89.83	10.50	8.33	2.00	2.00	164.74	3.66
Boxing	48.58	60.67	17.50	17.33	1.00	1.00	146.08	3.24
Equestrian	37.42	71.42	15.00	9.25	0.00	2.00	135.09	3.00
Sailing	31.58	53.00	8.00	8.00	18.75	15.58	134.91	2.99
Tennis	26.83	32.50	21.25	18.00	14.00	22.00	134.58	2.99
Canoeing	27.08	37.00	9.00	8.00	17.75	14.50	113.33	2.51
Water Polo	5.25	11.00	13.00	14.00	21.75	27.58	92.58	2.05
Hockey	34.75	31.17	7.00	5.00	5.25	9.33	92.50	2.05
Diving	29.42	31.75	11.00	10.00	0.00	1.50	83.67	1.86
Handball	13.75	19.83	1.00	3.33	11.75	23.00	72.66	1.61
Judo	20.50	24.00	12.50	8.00	1.25	4.33	70.58	1.57
Beach Volleyball	14.00	17.33	10.00	11.83	0.00	6.00	59.16	1.31
Shooting	16.00	20.00	8.50	5.50	0.00	3.75	53.75	1.19
Triathlon	18.00	22.25	2.00	3.00	2.25	3.25	50.75	1.13
Taekwondo	12.25	15.33	4.00	2.00	6.00	9.33	48.91	1.09
Volleyball	5.25	14.00	17.00	9.00	0.00	1.00	46.25	1.03
Weightlifting	12.58	17.25	7.00	5.25	1.00	2.25	45.33	1.01

Fencing	8.75	17.67	7.00	10.33	0.25	0.00	44.00	0.98
Badminton	7.50	14.00	10.75	6.08	1.00	1.00	40.33	0.89
Synchronized Swimming	5.00	8.33	4.25	1.00	9.25	12.25	40.08	0.89
Archery	9.00	11.17	7.00	7.00	1.50	2.00	37.67	0.84
Wrestling	5.00	9.33	5.00	9.50	4.00	3.25	36.08	0.80
Table Tennis	10.50	13.67	4.00	4.50	0.00	2.25	34.92	0.77
Modern Pentathlon	6.00	6.00	3.00	4.00	0.00	0.00	19.00	0.42
Multisport ¹²¹	90.00	178.00	35.00	90.00	58.00	67.00	518.00	11.49
TOTAL	1,023	1,540	519	524	404	497	4,507	100.00

Table 5. Number of competition-related articles by sports published in the newspapers sampled

A closer look at the individual results for each newspaper provided very interesting findings. To begin with, in *The Guardian/The Observer*, the most covered sports were Athletics ($n = 176.09$; 17.21%), Cycling ($n = 89.08$; 8.71%) and Swimming ($n = 77.50$; 7.58%). It should be taken into account that cycling was the sport in which Team GB athletes achieved more gold medals¹²² (8) and that in athletics British athletes obtained 6 medals (4 gold). Swimming was prioritized in the coverage, even though the sporting results for Britain weren't as good as expected. Next in the hierarchy were Football ($n = 63.33$; 6.19%), Rowing ($n = 52.08$; 5.09%), Boxing ($n = 48.58$; 4.75%) and Gymnastics ($n = 43.92$; 4.29%). In all but football, British athletes obtained a remarkable number of medals (Rowing: 9; Boxing: 5; Gymnastics: 4).

It should be noted that there were eight disciplines that did not reach 1% of the coverage: Archery ($n = 9.00$; 0.88%), Fencing ($n = 8.75$; 0.86%), Badminton¹²³ ($n = 7.50$; 0.73%), Modern Pentathlon ($n = 6.00$; 0.59%), Volleyball ($n = 5.25$; 0.51%), Water Polo ($n = 5.25$; 0.51%), Synchronized Swimming ($n = 5.00$; 0.49%) and Wrestling ($n = 5.00$; 0.49%). It is important to mention that in none of these disciplines did Team GB obtain any medal, except in the Modern Pentathlon (one silver medal won by Samantha Murray). Handball was not among the less covered sports. Despite

¹²¹ In the coding process, when an article was solely devoted to one sport, it received the value $n = 1$. When an article was devoted to two, three or four sports, the $n = 1$ value was divided between the number of sports that were covered in that article. To illustrate, in an article featuring two sports, each sport was allocated $n = 0.5$. In an article devoted to three sports, each of them was allocated $n = 0.33$. In a piece featuring four sports, each sport received the value $n = 0.25$. Finally, the pieces devoted to more than four sports were codified as "Multisport".

¹²² Source: Medals for Great Britain & N. Ireland (2012, August 13). BBC.co.uk. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/sport/olympics/2012/medals/countries/great-britain> [Last access: 22-09-2015].

¹²³ Despite the low figures obtained by badminton, it received more coverage across the board than it would have received otherwise, as a result of the controversy of misconduct (Sailors et al., 2015) that involved eight players from China, South Korea and Indonesia.

the fact that it has almost no tradition in Britain, it primarily “became newsworthy because it was odd¹²⁴” (John Horne, interview, November 2013).

Sport	<i>n</i>	%
Athletics	176.09	17.21
Cycling	89.08	8.71
Swimming	77.50	7.58
Football	63.33	6.19
Rowing	52.08	5.09
Boxing	48.58	4.75
Gymnastics	43.92	4.29
Equestrian	37.42	3.66
Hockey	34.75	3.40
Sailing	31.58	3.09
Diving	29.42	2.88
Canoeing	27.08	2.65
Tennis	26.83	2.62
Basketball	26.00	2.54
Judo	20.50	2.00
Triathlon	18.00	1.76
Shooting	16.00	1.56
Beach Volleyball	14.00	1.37
Handball	13.75	1.34
Weightlifting	12.58	1.23
Taekwondo	12.25	1.20
Table Tennis	10.50	1.03
Archery	9.00	0.88
Fencing	8.75	0.86
Badminton	7.50	0.73
Modern Pentathlon	6.00	0.59
Volleyball	5.25	0.51
Water Polo	5.25	0.51
Synchronized Swimming	5.00	0.49
Wrestling	5.00	0.49
Multisport	90.00	8.80
TOTAL	1,023	100.00

Table 6. Number and percentage of articles devoted to each sport by *The Guardian/The Observer*

¹²⁴ Some pieces reinforce this notion. For instance, Matthew Norman at *The Daily Telegraph* wrote: “What, then, is handball? It is a discipline you wouldn’t watch in a billion years in any other context, which comes alive and captivates for a few days when precious medals are at stake, before being instantly forgotten for the ensuing four years”. See: Norman, M. (2012, August 3). “Perfect Olympic sport – fast, furious, forgettable”. *The Daily Telegraph*, p. S25.

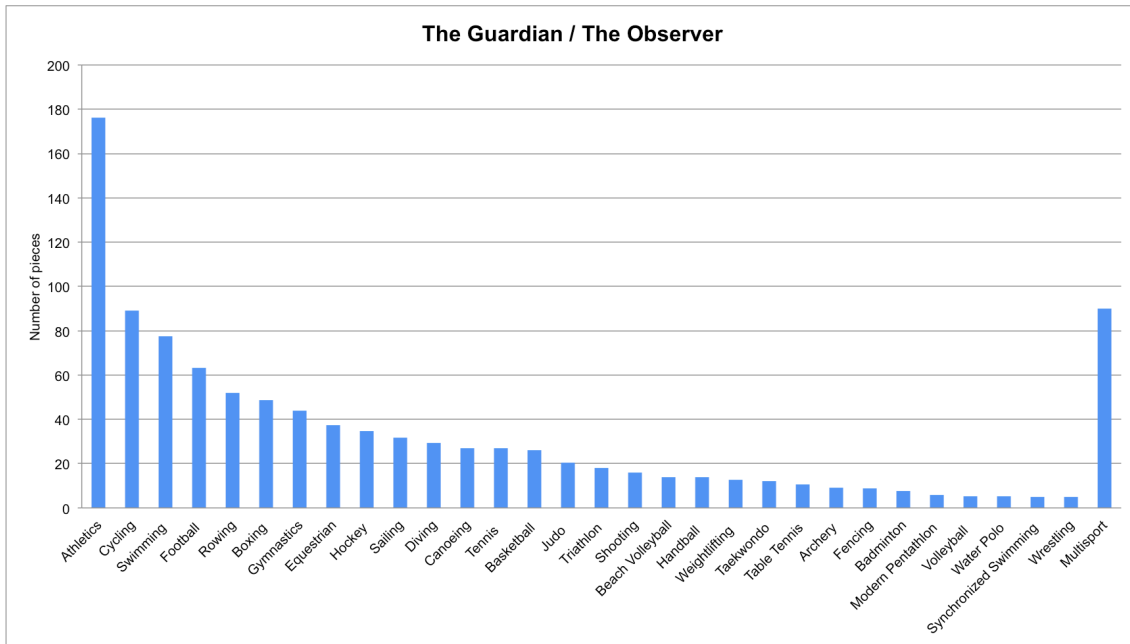


Figure 10. Volume of articles devoted to each sport by *The Guardian/The Observer*

The sports that received more coverage in *The Daily Telegraph/The Sunday Telegraph* were Athletics ($n = 277.75$; 18.04%), Cycling ($n = 182.00$; 11.82%) and Swimming ($n = 109.08$; 7.08%). They were followed by Rowing ($n = 89.83$; 5.83%), Equestrian ($n = 71.42$; 4.64%), Football ($n = 65.67$; 4.26%), Boxing ($n = 60.67$; 3.94%) and Sailing ($n = 53.00$; 3.44%). Again, eight sports didn't reach 1% of the sports coverage: Badminton ($n = 14$; 0.91%), Volleyball ($n = 14$; 0.91%), Table Tennis ($n = 13.67$; 0.89%), Archery ($n = 11.17$; 0.73%), Water Polo ($n = 11.00$; 0.71%), Wrestling ($n = 9.33$; 0.61%), Synchronized Swimming ($n = 8.33$; 0.54%) and Modern Pentathlon ($n = 6.00$; 0.39%).

Sport	<i>n</i>	%
Athletics	277.75	18.04
Cycling	182.00	11.82
Swimming	109.08	7.08
Rowing	89.83	5.83
Equestrian	71.42	4.64
Football	65.67	4.26
Boxing	60.67	3.94
Sailing	53.00	3.44
Gymnastics	48.83	3.17
Canoeing	37.00	2.40
Tennis	32.50	2.11
Diving	31.75	2.06
Hockey	31.17	2.02
Basketball	30.17	1.96
Judo	24.00	1.56

Triathlon	22.25	1.44
Shooting	20.00	1.30
Handball	19.83	1.29
Fencing	17.67	1.15
Beach Volleyball	17.33	1.13
Weightlifting	17.25	1.12
Taekwondo	15.33	1.00
Badminton	14.00	0.91
Volleyball	14.00	0.91
Table Tennis	13.67	0.89
Archery	11.17	0.73
Water Polo	11.00	0.71
Wrestling	9.33	0.61
Synchronized Swimming	8.33	0.54
Modern Pentathlon	6.00	0.39
Multisport	178.00	11.56
TOTAL	1,540	100.00

Table 7. Number and percentage of articles devoted to each sport by *The Daily Telegraph/The Sunday Telegraph*

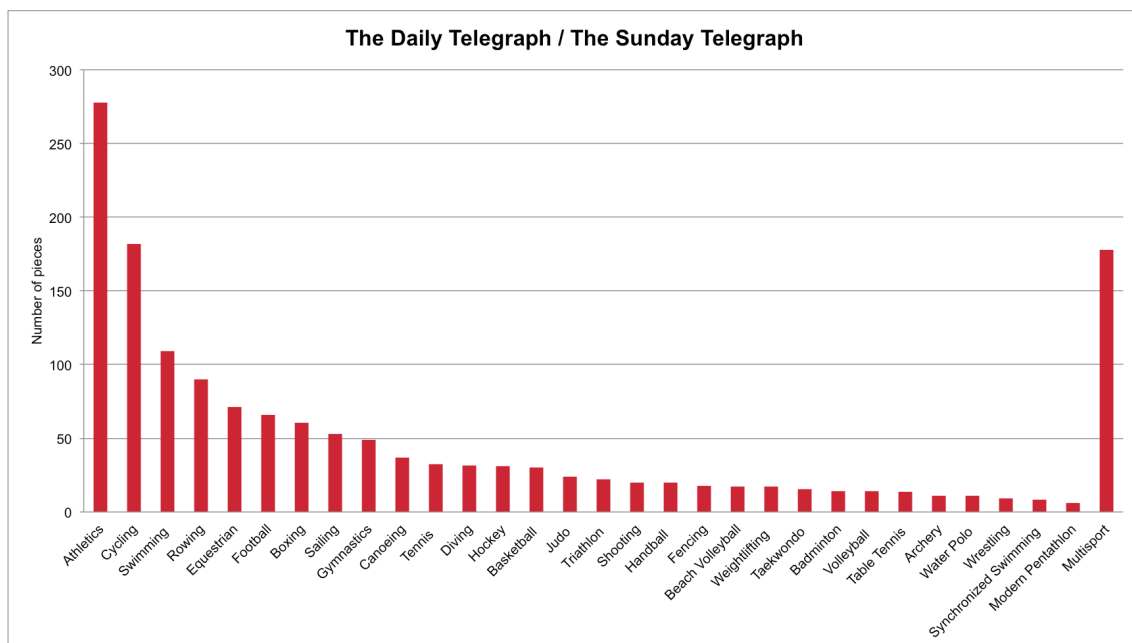


Figure 11. Volume of articles devoted to each sport by *The Daily Telegraph/The Sunday Telegraph*

Moving on to the American newspapers, and first to *The New York Times*, it can be seen that Athletics ($n = 73.75$; 14.21%) was the most covered sport, followed by Swimming ($n = 53.00$; 10.21%) and Basketball ($n = 47.00$; 9.06%). It should be taken into consideration that the US athletes captured 29 medals in Athletics (9 gold), 31 medals in Swimming (16 gold) and 2 gold medals for men's and women's

Basketball¹²⁵. Next in the hierarchy were Gymnastics ($n = 40.00$; 7.71%) and Football ($n = 37.50$; 7.23%). Again, it should be noted that the US gymnastics team won 6 medals (3 gold) and that the football team won the gold medal in the women's tournament.

In the case of *The New York Times*, seven sports didn't reach 1% of the sports coverage offered by the newspaper: Wrestling ($n = 5.00$; 0.96%), Synchronized Swimming ($n = 4.25$; 0.82%), Table Tennis ($n = 4.00$; 0.77%), Taekwondo ($n = 4.00$; 0.77%), Modern Pentathlon ($n = 2.00$; 0.39%), Triathlon ($n = 2.00$; 0.39%) and Handball ($n = 1.00$; 0.19%). It is quite surprising to observe that Wrestling and Taekwondo registered these figures, given that the US athletes obtained 4 and 2 medals in these sports respectively. In other cases, the scarce space devoted to sports such as Handball was not unexpected. Handball in particular had no tradition in the US and also the national team didn't take part in London 2012.

Sport	n	%
Athletics	73.75	14.21
Swimming	53.00	10.21
Basketball	47.00	9.06
Gymnastics	40.00	7.71
Football	37.50	7.23
Tennis	21.25	4.09
Boxing	17.50	3.37
Cycling	17.50	3.37
Volleyball	17.00	3.28
Equestrian	15.00	2.89
Water Polo	13.00	2.50
Judo	12.50	2.41
Diving	11.00	2.12
Badminton	10.75	2.07
Rowing	10.50	2.02
Beach Volleyball	10.00	1.93
Canoeing	9.00	1.73
Shooting	8.50	1.64
Sailing	8.00	1.54
Archery	7.00	1.35
Fencing	7.00	1.35
Hockey	7.00	1.35
Weightlifting	7.00	1.35

¹²⁵ Source: Medals for United States (2012, August 13). BBC.co.uk. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/sport/olympics/2012/medals/countries/united-states> [Last access: 22-09-2015].

Wrestling	5.00	0.96
Synchronized Swimming	4.25	0.82
Table Tennis	4.00	0.77
Taekwondo	4.00	0.77
Modern Pentathlon	3.00	0.58
Triathlon	2.00	0.39
Handball	1.00	0.19
Multisport	35.00	6.74
TOTAL	519	100.00

Table 8. Number and percentage of articles devoted to each sport by *The New York Times*

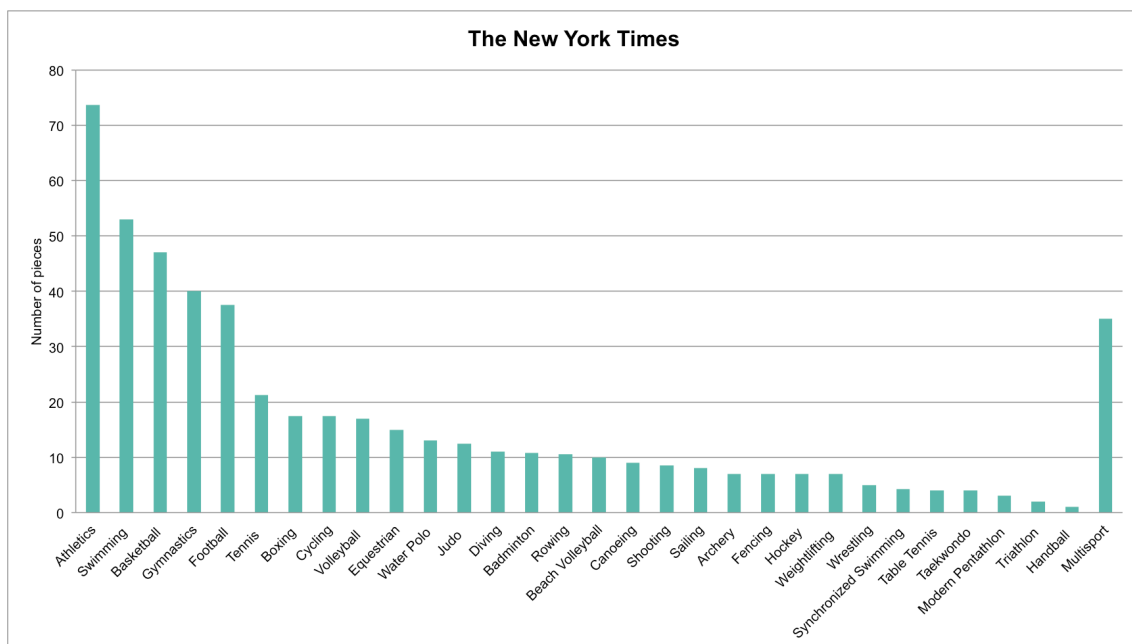


Figure 12. Volume of articles devoted to each sport by *The New York Times*

The examination of *The Washington Post* led to similar results. Athletics ($n = 74.00$; 14.12%), Basketball ($n = 44.00$; 8.40%) and Swimming ($n = 43.75$; 8.35%) were the disciplines that received more exposure. They were followed by Football ($n = 34.00$; 6.49%) and Gymnastics ($n = 30.50$; 5.82%). Likewise, seven sports did not reach 1% of the coverage: Hockey ($n = 5.00$; 0.95%), Table Tennis ($n = 4.50$; 0.86%), Modern Pentathlon ($n = 4.00$; 0.76%), Handball ($n = 3.33$; 0.64%), Triathlon ($n = 3.00$; 0.57%), Taekwondo ($n = 2.00$; 0.38%) and Synchronized Swimming ($n = 1.00$; 0.19%).

Sport	n	%
Athletics	74.00	14.12
Basketball	44.00	8.40
Swimming	43.75	8.35
Football	34.00	6.49
Gymnastics	30.50	5.82
Cycling	19.50	3.72
Tennis	18.00	3.44
Boxing	17.33	3.31
Water Polo	14.00	2.67
Beach Volleyball	11.83	2.26
Fencing	10.33	1.97
Diving	10.00	1.91
Wrestling	9.50	1.81
Equestrian	9.25	1.77
Volleyball	9.00	1.72
Rowing	8.33	1.59
Canoeing	8.00	1.53
Judo	8.00	1.53
Sailing	8.00	1.53
Archery	7.00	1.34
Badminton	6.08	1.16
Shooting	5.50	1.05
Weightlifting	5.25	1.00
Hockey	5.00	0.95
Table Tennis	4.50	0.86
Modern Pentathlon	4.00	0.76
Handball	3.33	0.64
Triathlon	3.00	0.57
Taekwondo	2.00	0.38
Synchronized Swimming	1.00	0.19
Multisport	90.00	17.18
TOTAL	524	100.00

Table 9. Number and percentage of articles devoted to each sport by *The Washington Post*

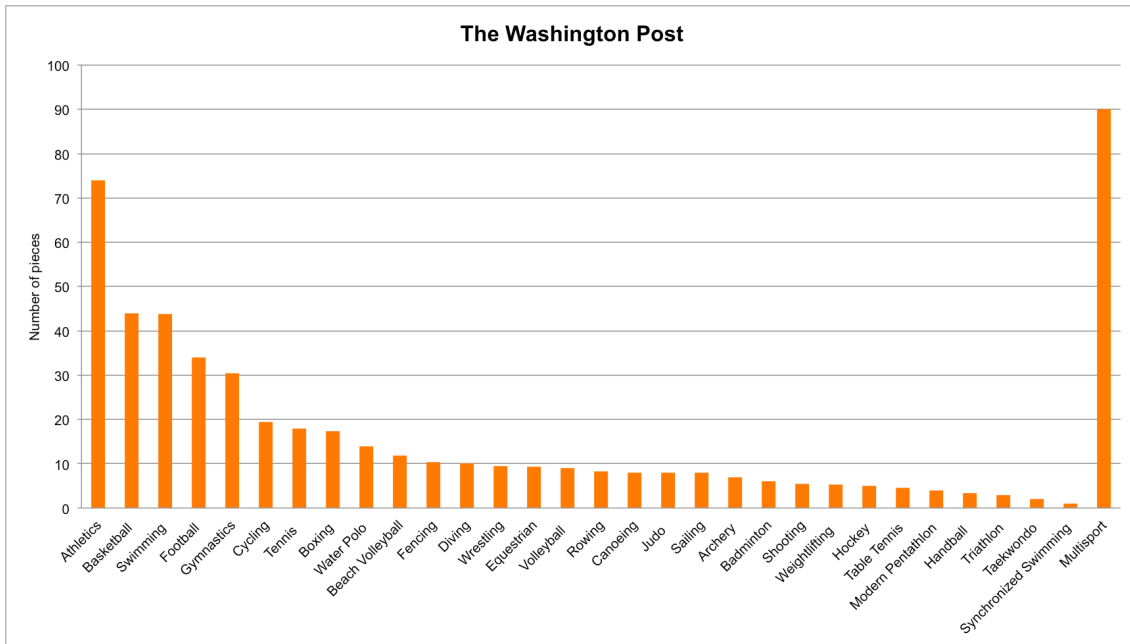


Figure 13. Volume of articles devoted to each sport by *The Washington Post*

Focusing on Spanish newspapers, it can be seen that the same top three sports prevailed. *El País* had intense coverage of Basketball ($n = 73.25$; 18.13%), Athletics ($n = 63.50$; 15.72%) and Swimming ($n = 49.50$; 12.25%). It should not be forgotten that the Spanish basketball team won the silver medal in the men's tournament. Mireia Belmonte's two silver medals in swimming also had a positive effect in terms of coverage. Next in the hierarchy were Football ($n = 21.75$; 5.38%), Water Polo ($n = 21.75$; 5.38%), Sailing ($n = 18.75$; 4.64%) and Canoeing ($n = 17.75$; 4.39%). Except for Football, in the other three sports Spanish athletes obtained noteworthy results: two gold medals in Sailing, three medals in Canoeing and the silver medal in the women's tournament in Water Polo¹²⁶. In terms of the less covered sports, it is very surprising to highlight that 16 sports didn't reach 1% of the coverage. What is far worse is that seven sports didn't even receive an individual piece in *El País*: Beach Volleyball, Diving, Equestrian, Modern Pentathlon, Shooting, Table Tennis and Volleyball.

Sport	<i>n</i>	%
Basketball	73.25	18.13
Athletics	63.50	15.72
Swimming	49.50	12.25
Football	21.75	5.38
Water Polo	21.75	5.38
Sailing	18.75	4.64
Canoeing	17.75	4.39

¹²⁶ Source: Medals for Spain (2012, August 13). BBC.co.uk. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/sport/olympics/2012/medals/countries/spain> [Last access: 22-09-2015].

Tennis	14.00	3.47
Gymnastics	11.75	2.91
Handball	11.75	2.91
Synchronized Swimming	9.25	2.29
Cycling	7.50	1.86
Taekwondo	6.00	1.49
Hockey	5.25	1.30
Wrestling	4.00	0.99
Triathlon	2.25	0.56
Rowing	2.00	0.50
Archery	1.50	0.37
Judo	1.25	0.31
Badminton	1.00	0.25
Boxing	1.00	0.25
Weightlifting	1.00	0.25
Fencing	0.25	0.06
Beach Volleyball	0	0.00
Diving	0	0.00
Equestrian	0	0.00
Modern Pentathlon	0	0.00
Shooting	0	0.00
Table Tennis	0	0.00
Volleyball	0	0.00
Multisport	58.00	14.36
TOTAL	404	100.00

Table 10. Number and percentage of articles devoted to each sport by *El País*

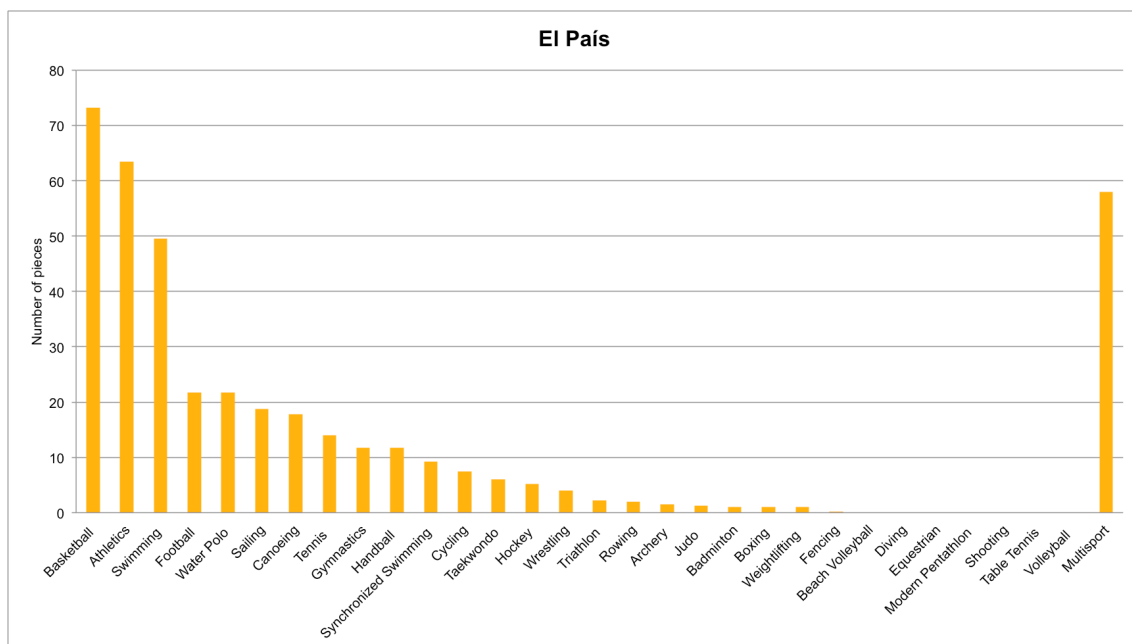


Figure 14. Volume of articles devoted to each sport by *El País*

In *La Vanguardia*, the dominance of Athletics ($n = 95.33$; 19.18%); Basketball ($n = 65.00$; 13.08%) and Swimming ($n = 44.75$; 9.00%) prevailed. They were followed by Water Polo ($n = 27.58$; 5.55%) and Football ($n = 27.00$; 5.43%). Handball also obtained notable exposure ($n = 23.00$; 4.63%) due to the bronze medal won by the Spanish women's team. Fifteen sports did not reach 1% of the coverage. Among them, Fencing and Modern Pentathlon didn't merit even a single piece of news. It should be noted that Spanish athletes didn't qualify for these sports at London 2012.

Sport	<i>n</i>	%
Athletics	95.33	19.18
Basketball	65.00	13.08
Swimming	44.75	9.00
Water Polo	27.58	5.55
Football	27.00	5.43
Handball	23.00	4.63
Tennis	22.00	4.43
Cycling	17.25	3.47
Sailing	15.58	3.13
Canoeing	14.50	2.92
Synchronized Swimming	12.25	2.46
Gymnastics	11.50	2.31
Hockey	9.33	1.88
Taekwondo	9.33	1.88
Beach Volleyball	6.00	1.21
Judo	4.33	0.87
Shooting	3.75	0.75
Triathlon	3.25	0.65
Wrestling	3.25	0.65
Table Tennis	2.25	0.45
Weightlifting	2.25	0.45
Archery	2.00	0.40
Equestrian	2.00	0.40
Rowing	2.00	0.40
Diving	1.50	0.30
Badminton	1.00	0.20
Boxing	1.00	0.20
Volleyball	1.00	0.20
Fencing	0.00	0.00
Modern Pentathlon	0.00	0.00
Multisport	67.00	13.48
TOTAL	497	100.00

Table 11. Number and percentage of articles devoted to each sport by *La Vanguardia*

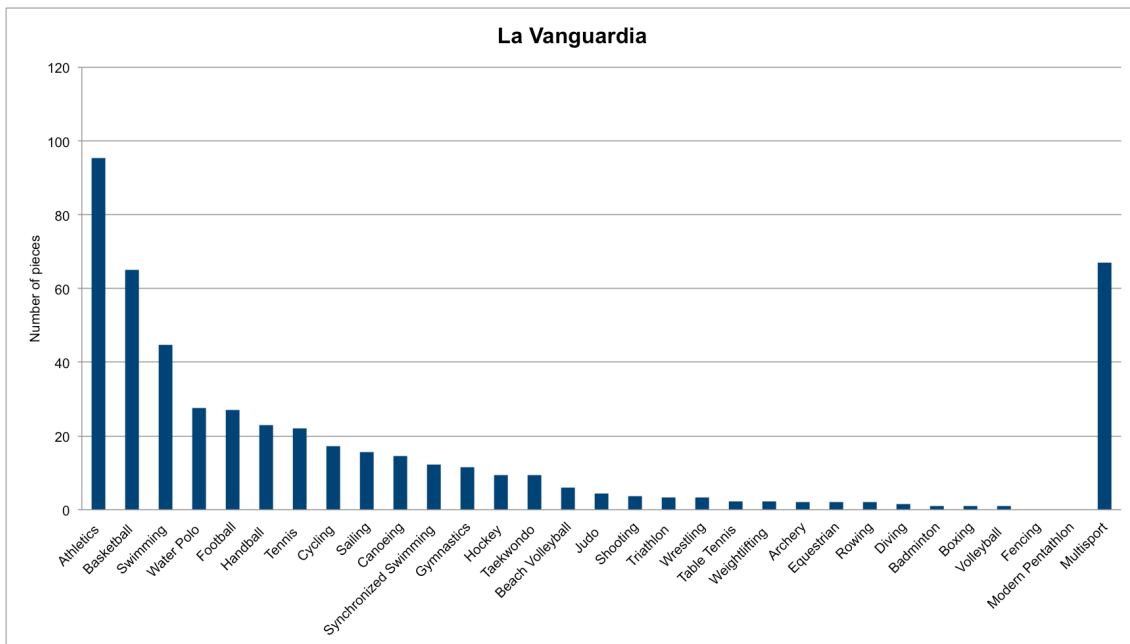


Figure 15. Volume of articles devoted to each sport by *La Vanguardia*

4.3.1.2.1. Political economy v the media’s responsibility to widen the scope

The selection and salience of the sports featured in the newspapers studied cannot be understood without taking into account the political economy of the media. Newspapers operate in a commercial context. As Boyle (2014b: 5) explains, “most print journalists work for private commercial organisations driven by the need to compete in a highly competitive market place”. In contrast to digital media, the finite nature of newspapers, combined with the institutional and market influences (Horne, 2006) heavily condition the range of sports that can be presented throughout newspapers’ pages. Asked whether quality papers should have the responsibility to try to give recognition and broad exposure to all Olympic sports, Price emphasizes that in contrast to public service broadcasters (PSBs), private newspapers have a different role:

In the end, newspapers are businesses and they have a different remit than the BBC, which has a public service broadcasting service remit. They have to sell newspapers, they have to prioritize, in their print editions they have a limited space, so they give space to the sports that sell. You can contrast that with the BBC, whose coverage of minor sports at the Olympics was unprecedented (John Price, interview, September 2013).

Boyle, Horne and Brown also highlight the importance of media giving their audience what they want, as it is a crucial factor for obtaining revenues:

In one sense, it is unsurprising that athletics, swimming and cycling were the most covered sports. But the unevenness reflects to some extent the cultures of each of the countries and also the markets that they are selling into. Newspapers at the end of the day should sell newspapers, they are not going to put content, in which their readers are not interested (Raymond Boyle, interview, March 2015).

Newspapers are fairly conservative when it comes to their markets and they know that their readers read (John Horne, interview, March 2015).

Do you sacrifice some of the coverage of basketball just to show that we are good at some other things or do you just ignore them and follow the agenda? Unfortunately, I don't have a clear-cut answer to that. Media need to give their audience what they want. If they want media to cover basketball, they need to cover basketball (Kenon Brown, interview, July 2014).

The idea that privately owned media need to tailor the range of sports they cover to the interests of their audiences, instead of necessarily giving visibility to minimized sports and specialities, is clearly sustained by the sports editor of *El País*, José Sámano:

We aren't a sports NGO or a public media. Out there, there are things that interest audiences and things that don't. In the case of the Games, a spectator can watch television to see a Spanish athlete achieve a medal. If we win, people get happy, but afterwards, they continue not to go to taekwondo combats. After the success of the water polo girls, maybe there are 25 spectators more that go to matches. The minority sports that have more visibility in an Olympic Games are those in which medals have been won. People feel euphoria for a day, but later this sport vanishes, because people are interested in other sports. Nowadays, people are not just focused on football, they follow car racing, tennis, motorcycling [...] but the attention to other sports dies quickly (José Sámano, interview, May 2014).

Nevertheless, this situation poses a key question in terms of ethics and quality of information and is related to the diversity of the coverage and citizens' rights to receive a comprehensive account of social reality, as expressed in many ethical codes (UNESCO, Arts 1–2; IFJ, Art. 1; Council of Europe, Art. 17; SPJ, Preamble). Since the Olympic Games are the only event in which a wide range of sports can receive exposure from the media and increase their visibility in society, economic factors shouldn't be the only criteria which have a bearing on which Olympic sports are covered. To some extent, the media have a social responsibility to inform the public about the diversity of sports. David Rowe and Kim Bissell hold that journalists should work to try and devote at least some time and space, little as it may be, to underrepresented sports:

Newspapers will always say that they look after the market and that they respond to the market, but they also create the market. Traditionally, newspapers and broadcasters have had different responsibilities in this area, but we still expect a quality newspaper to do more than simply concentrate its attention on even the most popular sports, because that reproduces their popularity. Your interest is in ethics in journalism and that seems to be a key ethical question. Every time you cover a sport, you are not merely representing it, you are also reinforcing the interest in it or confirming that your newspaper finds it interesting and therefore expects its readers to find it interesting. So, I don't think that these questions can simply be bypassed by "we are not a public media" or "we are not a non-governmental organization". That's true but, historically, media, including newspapers, are expected to have a social responsibility because of the communicative power that they have (David Rowe, interview, March 2015).

You have the economic side of news in journalism and then you have the responsibility to give a little bit of exposure to those underrepresented sports or underrepresented athletes. I do think that we have a responsibility to do that. So what I think we should do is to take those underrepresented sports and maybe not give them a whole lot of time, but show some highlight. Quite frankly, I don't even understand sports like handball, but I think what we could do on sports journalism is to give some highlights of the matches, that show the sport, the athleticism of the players. Even if we gave five minutes, six minutes or three minutes to give them a little bit of airtime, it is going to expose us and maybe open up our views on interest [...] I think that if we worked a little bit harder, we could probably do that (Kim Bissell, interview, July 2014).

According to Rojas, diversification is also crucial to quality of information. It should be at the core of the social responsibility of the media (public or private) to exploit the global dimension of an event such as the Olympics to provide visibility to those disciplines that for four years are minimized in the agendas:

I believe that is part of newspapers' social mission, of their responsibility, to report about sport in its diversity, especially at the Olympic Games. We should remind ourselves that it is a competition in which lots of spectators do not have any idea about certain sports, but they are willing to read and to watch hours and hours of various competitions. If media know how to take advantage of this situation, it is a perfect occasion to carry out a task of divulgation that media don't usually do during the rest of the days of the Olympic cycle. Why not use the previous weeks and during the competition for that effort? I believe that it is not harder, it may represent a bigger effort for those journalists not used to reporting on a certain sport¹²⁷, but research plays a key role, the work of the self-taught journalist to inform himself and nourish his sporting culture (José Luis Rojas, interview, June 2014).

4.3.1.2.2. *The diversity of sports in the regular coverage*

As Rojas has argued, the Olympics are the perfect occasion for the media to bring a wide range of minority disciplines into the public eye because these tend to be marginalized or rendered invisible in the day-to-day coverage of sport. That is certainly true if we look at the situation after London 2012. Certain minority sports had been in the spotlight at the Games, but afterwards the level of diversity in the sports covered

¹²⁷ To cover such a wide range of different Olympic sports posed key challenges in the run-up to the event for journalists and sports editors of the newspapers examined and other newspapers too, such as *The Herald* (Glasgow). According to its sports editor, Hugh MacDonald: "It was very difficult to prepare fully because there are so many different sports. So, for example, when I went to the judo, I had to be very honest. When I am writing I always try not to write something that I don't know about, that is above my knowledge. So I had to adapt my writing to my knowledge and maybe talk about the spectacle, rather than the technical aspects. From the Christmas before, I was constantly reading at night about the Olympics all the time, the different sports, the different personalities, the history of the Olympics, etc. Besides, I had some background of being a sports journalist" (Hugh MacDonald, interview, October 2013).

was dramatically reduced. Following London 2012 there hasn't been a broadening of the horizons in the British, American or Spanish media contexts, either with regard to print or broadcasting outlets; sports still remained positioned within a hierarchy. Boyle reflects on the nonexistence of big changes after the Olympics in the context of the British media:

Unless there is something that becomes very popular, it is very difficult. The only example in the past I can think of is snooker on television. Television takes, television invents and television reinvents and it became incredibly popular. And of course, everybody talked about it and in the press media they started to talk about it and TV stars were created around it. And that is the only example I can think of in the last 20 or 30 years of a sport that was invisible and became highly visible. And even then it had a trajectory of six, seven or eight years and kind of died down again. Football never went away, but even for some football went away for some time in the 80s, because it was seen as a pariah sport, with hooliganism. These things flow, but I think that in terms of sustainability, having success or stars associated with a sport is probably going to get you more media coverage. So I think that tennis with Andy Murray is going to have a profile that it wouldn't have without Andy Murray. So the short answer is that there has been a short splash, but I don't see any big changes. I think that if you were going to look at the newspapers in six or eight months time after the Olympics, I think that it would be very hard to spot anything discernibly different from before (Raymond Boyle, interview, November 2013).

Neil Farrington thinks that cycling is another exception in Britain, but we do need to take into account that although it received a remarkable boost during London 2012, its popularity was already growing before the event:

Cycling is a particularly interesting case. The rise of British cycling within the last five years, track cycling with Chris Hoy, Bradley Wiggins now in road cycling, is making people genuinely interested in cycling and it becomes a genuine story that attracts web traffic and sells newspapers. Newspapers are focusing more strongly on cycling. That is an example of how a previous minority sport can become top in the news agenda, but that is pretty rare. Newspapers will go with what sells, they have no reason to do anything else rather than that (Neil Farrington, interview, September 2013).

Billings provides a similar perspective in the case of the US, pointing out that in the digital age the greater possibilities available due to the multiplicity of media platforms haven't been translated into a broader coverage of sports, but rather into a deeper coverage of the most prominent sports:

It is very tough, because I do think it is important to give at least some short blurbs about minor sports, whether it is a couple of sentences or whatever it is, because I think people are more interested or at least want to know the final score. One of the biggest assumptions that we made in the growth of the Internet age was that more options (whether it is more websites or more sports broadcasting channels or more newspapers) equalled more sports being covered, and it doesn't. The coverage, instead of getting broader, it got deeper, at least in the US. Instead of covering wrestling or some secondary sport, we simply cover these major sports at an even deeper level, writing about what a football player's favourite meal for dinner is or analysing the

draft or making projections on things. The coverage got deeper but it didn't get wider. Newspapers and television are in a completely different boat than the Internet, because newspapers are built on the finite. They have a finite number of pages, so they have to try and please their audience. And the audience would rather see that secondary story on basketball than the primary story on golf (Andrew Billings, interview, July 2014).

We can find exceptions to this trend, but they refer to the biggest broadcasting companies, which have a wide range of channels and platforms both on television and online to disseminate their contents. In the case of Britain and the BBC, Boyle and Haynes (2014a: 93) explain that “the Olympics revealed an audience appetite for different sporting experiences via television, beyond the dominance of football, and the BBC’s management have been quick to turn to emerging popular television sports such as cycling and re-emergence of athletics to boost its appeal”. In the case of America, Kim Bissell highlights the important task carried out by ESPN:

ESPN does well, it will show collegiate sports, underrepresented collegiate sports, they will show Olympic sports, women’s field hockey for example on *ESPN U*. ESPN is also on Twitter and if you follow the different channels you can get that kind of news. I think that ESPN is kind of comprehensive, but of course there are still sports and athletes that are left out. But given the fact that they have an online presence, and a social media presence and the magazine itself, they can do a lot. The printed magazine is mostly devoted to football, baseball and basketball (Kim Bissell, interview, July 2014).

Leaving the big media companies such as the BBC and ESPN aside, one of the means by which citizens can find information on a broader range of minor sports is to look at specialized websites¹²⁸, as Brown explains:

I really don't see one mainstream media that really goes out of its way to cover minor sports. Usually when you are seeking information about an obscure sport, you will always have to go online and find a smaller outlet or a blog or something that covers that sport. The best thing about *Bleacher Report* is that if you want to find articles about cricket or the Premier League, you can get that information. So I think that for sports that are outside the mainstream, the way to go is to go to the smaller websites and blog networks to get that information. Because if you are a curling fan, you won't get that kind of coverage on ESPN on a regular basis, maybe in a sporting event, if the US has a team, but you have to go to Internet sources to get that information (Kenon Brown, interview, July 2014).

¹²⁸ Looking at the Spanish scenario, Manfredi et al. (2015) published a map of 57 new media in the field of sports journalism. Among them, there are 21 multisport digital platforms, including two publications about Olympism (*Juegosriojaneiro2016.com* and *Pasaporte Olímpico*). Projects like the aforementioned and many more such as *Quality Sport* and *Protagonistas*, are certainly needed to broaden citizens' possibilities of obtaining information about non-revenue sports.

Nevertheless, the problem, from Billings' standpoint, is that the Internet provides opportunities for minor sports to get covered, but their exposure would depend mainly on their position and accessibility within a website:

On the Internet, you can find tremendous stories about women's sports, but they are buried under the layers of everything else. They are there, but the problem is about whether they are prominent or salient. In the newspapers and broadcasting, the story gets covered or doesn't get covered. If it gets covered, it is an achievement in itself, because it made it on to a finite space. On the Internet, everything gets covered to some extent, we could watch live cricket right now from India if we wanted to, but the question is how accessible is that information and what happens if it does not make it to the main page of *Yahoo Sports!* or *Deadspin*. That is where the real action is (Andrew Billings, interview, July 2014).

Similarly, Amy Jones and Jennifer Greer highlight the fact that even in online media outlets, minor sports have more opportunities to be covered but prominence is still given to the major sports, in the case of the US, football, baseball and basketball:

With social media, I think you are exposed a little bit more and also in online media, because you don't have that concern with space. In online you can put as much content as you want. But still, the focus is on the big three (Amy Jones, interview, July 2014).

It is like there is no reason other than they don't want to focus on those sports, they think that their audience is not going to go for it, that there wouldn't be enough traffic. Locally there is a very strong following, but to even get *Bleacher Report* interested is difficult. They know their audience. Their audience is male, they like mostly football, baseball and basketball and they think that it might not be worthy to devote resources to cover other sports, even to get an intern to do that (Jennifer Greer, interview, July 2014).

4.3.1.2.3. Consequences of not broadening the range of sports covered

As mentioned before, newspapers operate in a commercial context and they also have to prioritize their contents, because in their print editions they have a finite space. However, the lack of coverage for many sporting disciplines inside and outside the spotlight of the Olympics has economic and social consequences: it contributes to reinforcing a greater divide between sports. This is a fundamental ethical dilemma that needs to be taken into consideration. To illustrate this, in Britain, athletics, cycling and swimming were, as well as rowing, the sports that received more funding from the national lottery¹²⁹, while the percentage of funding received by the less covered sports was minimal. In part, private media do not cover these minority sports because they are almost not practised at grassroots level. However, if they do not get exposure in

¹²⁹ The funding for Olympic sports in Britain can be found in the following report published by *The Guardian*: Gibson, O. (2012, August 15). "Sport by sport: the price of Olympic success and failure – and what the future holds". *The Guardian*, pp. 36–7. The figures can also be consulted on UK Sport's website <http://www.uk sport.gov.uk/sport/summer/> [Last access: 22-09-2015].

the media, it is very difficult for them to attract new generations of athletes to reverse the situation. Boyle reflects on this:

It is kind of a chicken and egg situation. We don't get coverage, which means that we don't get profile. And they say we don't give you profile, because you haven't got coverage. There is always going to be a hierarchy, there will always be sports in and sports out. I think that it is legitimate to say that there is a bit of reinforcement of that going on. So the sports that are successful get coverage and that helps to keep them successful, and breaking through that becomes very difficult. Cycling is an interesting example of why it was able to do that. I think that something of it has to do with stars, has also to do with marketing, it has to do with other coverage [...] if cycling got no coverage on television it wouldn't have the same coverage in the print and online newspapers. Also, success is a very strong story. It is an easier story to sell than failure (Raymond Boyle, interview, November 2013).

In addition, if the media do not cover minor sports and disciplines, it is difficult for the athletes who practice them to get the endorsements that could allow them to improve their conditions, as pointed out by Jones and Greer:

Media coverage pretty much equates to how people feel about that particular athlete or that particular sport, and if they are not perceived as important, they will not get the endorsements and they will not make the money (Amy Jones, interview, July 2014).

There is the perception among the public that certain sport is more exciting or better, that these athletes are more skilled, but it is also that economic engine. You can't get the endorsements if you don't have exposure (Jennifer Greer, interview, July 2014).

Furthermore, if journalists do not give opportunities for minor sports to be showcased, audiences will not be able to expand or evolve, as Jones maintains:

Sometimes there is a lot of focus on what media think their audience wants versus what is the fair and accurate way of reporting a story. For instance, I am going to focus more on men's sports, particularly the big three sports, which would be football, baseball and basketball. The reason why I will focus on those three sports and on men is because that is what my readers want or my viewers want. Even though there are other sports going on in just the same quantity and they would have as much of an interesting story going on, and we don't hear about them. What the journalists are interested in or what the readers are interested in gets covered, rather than an actual picture of what is going on [...] The interesting thing in relation to what the audiences want is that that audience is not going to change if that is all you are focusing on, because, for instance, research suggests that a female audience is interested in other sports. So females aren't going to continue being consumers of that media if they focus on the sports that females are not interested in. Females would be interested in the gymnastics, but if media organizations don't cover it, their audience is not going to expand or evolve (Amy Jones, interview, July 2014).

4.1.3.3. Completeness of the sports information

As explained in the previous section, the six newspapers in question covered a wide range of Olympic sports at London 2012, but with uneven results. By and large, each one of the published pieces explained the essential facts necessary for understanding the development of the sporting events, their results and their protagonists. However, it is widely known that in the current 24/7 scenario, characterized by an overabundance of information, print newspapers should do much more than just offering the outcomes of the events, the results and the match statistics. These facts were available all the time on online outlets, social networking sites and the BBC, which offered live feeds of all the venues. Taking this into account, newspapers' coverage of London 2012 excelled in consistently delivering the current core ingredients in print journalism: (1) provision of valuable context, background and analysis; (2) translation of the atmosphere and the ambience of the Olympic events; and (3) treatment of data and elaboration of infographics which enhanced the quality and depth of information. This section will provide an overview of these essential ingredients.

4.1.3.3.1. Providing context, background and analysis

All the newspapers sampled showed considerable ability in providing context, background and analysis throughout their coverage. To begin with, *The Telegraph* published different series that specialized, for example, in providing in-depth background information relating to athletes or certain sports. First, we should reflect on the series "The big read", consisting of daily two-page extended texts. The series included reports about: the adversities of the triple jumper Yamilé Aldama¹³⁰; the training involved and the crucial role of science and data in track cycling¹³¹; the production of sprinters in Jamaica¹³²; the challenges and difficulties that homosexual Olympians face¹³³; the struggles that women boxers have overcome to participate in

¹³⁰ Brown, O. (2012, August 4). "Not plastic. Just tough, loyal and talented". *The Daily Telegraph*, p. S31.

¹³¹ Gallagher, B. (2012, August 1). "Team GB tireless in the pursuit of perfection". *The Daily Telegraph*, pp. S28–S29. In track cycling, *The Daily Telegraph* excelled itself to provide readers with insight into other issues such as the engineering behind the design of stronger, lighter and aerodynamic bikes and the impact of battery-powered hot pants on performance. See: Dyson, J. (2012, August 9). "It's time to rip up the rules and give free rein to bike engineers". *The Daily Telegraph*, p. S39; Marsden, S. (2012, August 1). "Hot pants fire up Britain's cyclists". *The Daily Telegraph*, p. 6.

¹³² Chadband, I. (2012, August 10). "Inside the Jamaican sprint factory". *The Daily Telegraph*, p. S35.

¹³³ Briggs, S. (2012, August 9). "World-class athlete, gay and in closet". *The Daily Telegraph*, pp. S34–S35.

London 2012¹³⁴; athletes' transition towards future careers outside the playing field¹³⁵; and Van Commenee's (head of Team GB's athletics) attitude towards competition¹³⁶, among many other issues.

A second series of articles, entitled "Jonathan Liew learns to love", was a unique platform which provided readers with the history, rules, athleticism required, tactics, complexity and entertainment value of minority sports such as synchronized swimming¹³⁷, beach volleyball¹³⁸, badminton¹³⁹, wrestling¹⁴⁰, water polo¹⁴¹, table tennis¹⁴², shooting¹⁴³, handball¹⁴⁴, fencing¹⁴⁵ and BMX cycling¹⁴⁶. A third set of pieces, entitled "It's not rocket science" gave a daily space to John Barrow, Professor of Mathematical Sciences at the University of Cambridge. Among other issues, Barrow explored the impact of the seating pattern in rowing¹⁴⁷, explained the three sources of drag in swimming¹⁴⁸, commented on why reaction times are crucial to breaking world records in athletics¹⁴⁹, reflected on how heptathlon's scoring system could increase

¹³⁴ Davies, G.A. (2012, August 8). "Lonely match to winning hearts and minds". *The Daily Telegraph*, pp. S34–S35.

¹³⁵ Briggs, S. (2012, July 30). "Superman to Clark Kent: life after sport". *The Daily Telegraph*, pp. S32–S33.

¹³⁶ Chadband, I. (2012, August 2). "Bully or best friend – coach is born winner". *The Daily Telegraph*, pp. S16–S17.

¹³⁷ Liew, J. (2012, August 7). "Ballet that will take breath away". *The Daily Telegraph*, p. S31.

¹³⁸ Liew, J. (2012, August 1). "All hail lords and ladies of the sand". *The Daily Telegraph*, pp. S32–S33.

¹³⁹ Liew, J. (2012, August 6). "Lin versus Lee rivalry based on skill and respect". *The Daily Telegraph*, pp. S34–S35.

¹⁴⁰ Liew, J. (2012, August 10). "Baffled by the grapple". *The Daily Telegraph*, pp. S30–S31.

¹⁴¹ Liew, J. (2012, July 30). "Welcome to skill, speed and nipple tweaks". *The Daily Telegraph*, pp. S26–S27.

¹⁴² Liew, J. (2012, August 3). "China shows West meaning of futility". *The Daily Telegraph*, pp. S34–S35.

¹⁴³ Liew, J. (2012, July 31). "The skill is off the scale – the thrill is not on it". *The Daily Telegraph*, pp. S28–S29.

¹⁴⁴ Liew, J. (2012, August 8). "It's time for a helping hand". *The Daily Telegraph*, p. S29.

¹⁴⁵ Liew, J. (2012, August 2). "Dashing young blades show real steel". *The Daily Telegraph*, pp. S28–S29.

¹⁴⁶ Liew, J. (2012, August 9). "A crazy ride, of faceplants, guts and glory". *The Daily Telegraph*, p. S24.

¹⁴⁷ Barrow, J. (2012, August 2). "Why can the seating pattern in a rowing boat be so crucial in the pursuit of gold?" *The Daily Telegraph*, p. S38.

¹⁴⁸ Barrow, J. (2012, July 31). "Understanding how to beat the drag factor can help break records in the swimming pool". *The Daily Telegraph*, p. S38.

¹⁴⁹ Barrow, J. (2012, August 4). "It's not rocket science". *The Daily Telegraph*, p. S38.

Jessica Ennis' chances of gold¹⁵⁰, detailed why Olympic organizers turn the heat up in the Velodrome¹⁵¹ and considered whether there was any advantage gained from being right- or left-handed in racket sports such as table tennis¹⁵², to list only a few.

Apart from these special series, the background and careers of athletes and trainers in various sports, such as: the former East German rowing coach Jürgen Glöber¹⁵³; Team GB basketball players¹⁵⁴; the German-born British rider Laura Bechtolsheimer¹⁵⁵; the swimmer Rebecca Adlington¹⁵⁶; and the triathletes Alistair and Jonathan Brownlee¹⁵⁷ could also be found on a regular basis in the main newspaper and in supplements, *The Telegraph Magazine*, for example.

Moving on to the other newspapers, it can be seen that *The Guardian/The Observer* also did a very good job of providing context and background. To illustrate this, it regaled readers with interesting insights on many issues such as: the origins of the trampoline in gymnastics¹⁵⁸; the equipment, technology and strategies used in track cycling¹⁵⁹; the improbability of seeing Team GB competing in Olympic football again¹⁶⁰; and the evolution of table tennis in China¹⁶¹, among many others.

For their own part, the American newspapers were not behind the others in providing valuable background. For instance, *The New York Times* shed light on to the characteristics of compound bows¹⁶² (archery modality excluded from the Olympics);

¹⁵⁰ Barrow, J. (2012, August 3). "How heptathlon's scoring system has helped lift Jessica Ennis' medal chances". *The Daily Telegraph*, p. S38.

¹⁵¹ Barrow, J. (2012, August 1). "Why do Olympic organisers insist on turning the heat up in the velodrome?" *The Daily Telegraph*, p. S38.

¹⁵² Barrow, J. (2012, August 6). "It's not rocket science". *The Daily Telegraph*, p. S38.

¹⁵³ Briggs, S. (2012, July 27). "Failure unthinkable for admiral of the great British fleet". *The Daily Telegraph*, pp. S20–S21.

¹⁵⁴ Gallagher, B. (2012, July 29). "The London globetrotters". *The Sunday Telegraph*, p. S15.

¹⁵⁵ Dech, G. (2012, July 21). "Perfectly Poised". *Telegraph Magazine*, pp. 38–43.

¹⁵⁶ Harvey, C. (2012, July 28). "Chasing the dream". *The Daily Telegraph*, pp. 20–7.

¹⁵⁷ Bailey, M. (2012, July 21). "Sibling Rivalry". *The Daily Telegraph*, pp. 25–8.

¹⁵⁸ Addley, E. (2012, August 5). "From acrobatics to hypnotic bouncing". *The Guardian*, Olympics 2012, p. 17.

¹⁵⁹ Fotheringham, W. (2012, August 7). "'Magic' wheels and one-track minds". *The Guardian*, p. 5.

¹⁶⁰ Ronay, B. (2012, July 27). "Ancient enmities cast aside as Team GB is reunited in Manchester after 41 years". *The Guardian*, p. 5.

¹⁶¹ Branigan, T. (2012, July 27). "A recipe for the perfect ping pong bat". *The Guardian*, Olympics 2012, p. 10.

¹⁶² Borden, S. (2012, August 4). "Compound bow, a sport's 'ugly stepchild'", is still in exile. *The New York Times*, p. D8.

explored the history and the current situation of the US boxing programme, emphasizing its financial and organizational difficulties¹⁶³; examined the present state of elite sportsmen and sportswomen in China, including a reflection on the country's oppressive national sports system and the consequences for athletes' physical well-being¹⁶⁴; explained the key factors contributing to the improvement in medal-winning performances in track and field and swimming between Mexico 1968 and Beijing 2008¹⁶⁵; and delved into the difficulties that British Olympic shooters face since the private ownership of nearly all handguns was made illegal in 1997¹⁶⁶.

In addition, the newspaper: presented the origins of the modern pentathlon¹⁶⁷; reflected on the scientific evolution experienced by BMX cycling since it became an Olympic sport in 2008¹⁶⁸; and explained to the readership the difficulty of passing the baton in the 4x100 metres and 4x400 metres relay events¹⁶⁹. *The Washington Post* also interested their readership with many background stories, which explored such issues as: the financial difficulties that amateur Olympians face in the US¹⁷⁰; the evolution of contemporary gymnastics (which has led to the "emphasis on athleticism over artistry¹⁷¹"); the fight against stereotypes and the stigma of violence associated with shooting¹⁷²; the life of Guol Marial (an athlete from South Sudan who competed in London 2012, stateless¹⁷³); and the role of technology in the Olympic competition¹⁷⁴, among others.

¹⁶³ Barry, B. (2012, July 28). "Down, but not out". *The New York Times*, pp. D1, D5.

¹⁶⁴ Andrews, J. (2012, August 8). "Heavy burden on athletes takes joy away from China's Olympic success". *The New York Times*, p. A8.

¹⁶⁵ Silver, N. (2012, July 29). "Which records get shattered?". *The New York Times*, p. 4.

¹⁶⁶ Robertson, C. (2012, August 1). "Handgun ban tests a British Olympian". *The New York Times*, pp. B11, B18.

¹⁶⁷ Robertson, C.; Lyall, S. (2012, August 11). "All business on the first date". *The New York Times*, pp. D1, D3.

¹⁶⁸ Bishop, G. (2012, July 20). "A regiment for the unregimented". *The New York Times*, pp. B12, B14. See also: Bishop, G. (2012, July 23). "Long before London games, James Bond tactics". *The New York Times*, pp. A1, A3.

¹⁶⁹ Borden, S. (2012, July 23). "Pass or fail". *The New York Times*, pp. F12–F13.

¹⁷⁰ Svrluga, B.; Maese, R. (2012, August 12). "Athletes are returning to different worlds". *The Washington Post*, p. D13.

¹⁷¹ Clarke, L. (2012, August 2). "As gymnastics evolves, the joy is tougher to spot". *The Washington Post*, pp. A1, A9.

¹⁷² Boyle, K. (2012, August 1). "Athletes battle not only for titles but to dispel the stigma of violence". *The Washington Post*, pp. C1, C3.

¹⁷³ Maese, R. (2012, August 11). "A man, with a dream, without a country". *The Washington Post*, pp. A1, A5.

The provision of background and context was also a notable feature within the Spanish press. For instance, *El País* provided in-depth coverage on many issues such as: the historically low productivity in terms of medals of Latin American countries¹⁷⁵; the history and characteristics of the club CN Sabadell¹⁷⁶; the decentralized model of training in taekwondo¹⁷⁷; the limits of human athletic performance¹⁷⁸; the inequalities that Spanish sportswomen face¹⁷⁹; and the complicated situation of non-professional sports such as water polo¹⁸⁰ and wrestling¹⁸¹. The extraordinary efforts made by the newspaper in interviewing key sporting actors such as Kobe Bryant, Valero Rivera, Tamara Echegoyen, Sergio Scariolo, Miki Oca, Marina Alabau, Anna Tarrés and Bob Bowman also provided the background needed to contextualize the Games.

Last but not least, *La Vanguardia* also published insightful background pieces on: young athletes and the sacrifices they undergo¹⁸²; combining elite sport and university studies¹⁸³; and athletes' transition from elite competition to other careers after sport¹⁸⁴, to list only a few.

In the light of these results, scholars and media professionals reflect on the importance of background, analysis and interpretation as key ingredients in producing and retaining value for print media organizations nowadays:

In print media, nowadays, it is less about telling you the specific results that happened the night before. That is the Internet and television right now. No one waits to find out who won the game by picking up the newspaper the next morning. Nowadays print media is much more about telling a broader story, about adding more angles to the story than you have ever had before. They look wider and deeper (Andy Billings, interview, July 2014).

When there was not a great deal of sport on television, sports journalists used to describe football matches play by play. But now, journalists report it taking into account that people have seen it. So what is the point in telling people a day late what they have already seen? So that is why sports

¹⁷⁴ Mackintosh, E. (2012, July 31). "Technology plays its part in chasing Olympic medals". *The Washington Post*, p. D7.

¹⁷⁵ Rebossio, A. (2012, July 26). "Una región adormecida". *El País*, pp. 48.

¹⁷⁶ Besa, R. (2012, August 5). "Simplemente, El Club". *El País*, p. 51. An extended report on the same matter was published in *La Vanguardia*. See also: Benvenuty, L. (2012, August 12). "Mucho más que medallas". *La Vanguardia*, Vivir, pp. 1–3.

¹⁷⁷ Iríbar, A. (2012, August 12). "La patada de todos". *El País*, p. 58.

¹⁷⁸ Mateo, J.J. (2012, July 25). "Un Bolt que desmienta a la ciencia". *El País*, pp. 30–1.

¹⁷⁹ Villar, I. (2012, August 18). "Cenicientas con medalla". *El País*, p. 24–5.

¹⁸⁰ Besa, R. (2012, August 7). "El milagro de los panes y los peces". *El País*, pp. 46–7.

¹⁸¹ Torres, D. (2012, August 10). "Un bronce artesanal". *El País*, p. 50.

¹⁸² Gutiérrez, M. (2012, August 11). "Campeones y adolescentes". *La Vanguardia*, p. 16.

¹⁸³ Gutiérrez, M. (2012, July 23). "Estudiantes Olímpicos". *La Vanguardia*, pp. 22–3.

¹⁸⁴ Gutiérrez, M. (2012, August 11). "Y cuando el deporte se acaba, ¿qué?". *La Vanguardia*, p. 17.

journalists are required to do more of the other kind of sports journalism, which is a more expansive form of sports journalism (David Rowe, interview, June 2013).

As all good journalists, sports journalists should be truthful about what's happening. And that means more than just being accurate about covering a game. I mean, if you are covering a race in the Olympics or a game of football or any kind of sporting event, you would want to be accurate on what actually happened in the game, but truth requires you to look much deeper than that. It is also to look at the background, at what is behind what is happening (Chris Frost, interview, October 2013).

Readership values the journalism that goes the extra mile to report deep into the story, rather than having a broad overview. We live in a world where facts are everywhere. So the important thing is what you add to those facts, the depth, the background and the clarity of the picture you are building (Ian Prior, interview, October 2013).

The match reporting or the reporting of an event, by the time it is in the newspaper, it has changed seven times in television and online forums, blogs, on Twitter. The core information of the result is already known, so the job of sports journalists is to find some way in which to add value to that information, with their skill or artistry as sports journalists. In the quality press, the main task there is to find a story, a narrative that gives insight, analysis, background, critique, perhaps even a challenge to sport, which is kind of rare but it does happen [...] The biggest challenge for a sports journalist is to write quality stuff when, in a sense, the market of information dictates that people don't want that, they want quick, fast, speedy information that tells them who won, what happened and then move on" (Richard Haynes, interview, October 2013).

4.1.3.3.2. *Translating the atmosphere of sporting events*

Another fundamental component that was well delivered was the translation of the atmosphere and colour of the sporting events. Detailed information about the ambience at the venues, the music, the sounds and the spectators was provided in order to transmit to the readership the sense of "having been there". For instance, in a piece about the women's marathon, Simon Hattenstone wrote the following passage: "The Mall was a glorious place to start and finish – a stone's throw from the Queen's pad, with Big Ben poking his face through the plane trees of the royal parks. The conditions, though, were positively, inglorious. We could have been waiting for the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse rather than 118 women with matchstick arms and cellophane wrapped stomachs. Not surprisingly the crowds among the Mall were in their hundreds rather than tens of thousands but they still were lined six deep. The call over the speakers to make maximum noise to encourage the runners was drowned out by the rain thrumming on brollies¹⁸⁵".

¹⁸⁵ Hattenstone, S. (2012, August 6). "Gelana queen of London but gold belongs in Bekoji". *The Guardian*, Olympics 2012, pp. 10–11.

Other illuminating descriptions could be found in the reporting of Rebecca Adlington's first medal in swimming ("waves of noise rolled down from the top of the vertiginous heights of the two stands, 202 steps up, and broke over her as she swam and as she spoke. They only ebbed when people paused to draw breath¹⁸⁶"), and in the 100 metres running event dominated by Usain Bolt ("in an electrifying atmosphere, between the outbreak of a cloud of flashes and the start of the race or in the midst of a sepulchral silence at the time of the start, the Jamaican shattered the forecasts of the old kings of the hectometre¹⁸⁷").

Hugh MacDonald and Ian Prior highlight the core importance of this practice in print newspapers and, more specifically, in the context of the Olympic Games:

At the Olympics you cannot just write simply only about results. You have to write about the field, the colour and the ambience. One of the biggest changes in my life in newspapers is that you cannot just give facts. Readers would know it or would have seen it, read it on the Internet or been at the venue. So you have to place every sport story in a context, to give a background, give it a shape, give a spirit, while having the facts in it. And if you are at an event, you must try to give the sense of what precisely it is like to be at that event, the noise, the smell even, the heat (Hugh MacDonald, interview, October 2013).

We took the view that at the Olympics it's not so important that someone gets the final details of the modern pentathlon or diving, or knows the scoring system for taekwondo inside out. At the Olympics it's about how you translate the events, their colour, their vivacity and the human stories behind them, rather than the kind of strictly geeky sports knowledge, although it certainly also has its place (Ian Prior, interview, October 2013).

4.1.3.3.3. Enriching the quality of the coverage through infographics

A third core ingredient that should be examined is the huge impact of infographics on the quality of the coverage. A few years ago, informational graphics were mainly associated with "weak papers" (Beam, 2003: 379). The situation has changed dramatically, as their use is now widely spread among newspapers at the quality end of the market. At London 2012, infographics actually proved an invaluable technique for providing an in-depth and attractive insight into a wide variety of Olympic sports.

For instance, when reporting on track and field, detailed infographics helped readers to gain knowledge on: the different phases of the 200m event¹⁸⁸; the three best times

¹⁸⁶ Bull, A. (2012, July 30). "Adlington in tears after winning Britain's first medal in the pool". *The Guardian*, Olympics 2012, pp. 2–3.

¹⁸⁷ Martínez, J.B. (2012, August 6). "Bolt agranda su lugar en el firmamento". *El País*, pp. 30–1.

¹⁸⁸ Arribas, C. (2012, August 10). "Silencio, gana el más grande". *El País*, pp. 44–5.

achieved by Usain Bolt in the 100 metres¹⁸⁹; the evolution of Olympic records from 1896 to 2012¹⁹⁰; the increase in speed throughout the years¹⁹¹; and the comparison between the performances of the current Olympic champions and those of previous victors¹⁹².

The New York Times, which among the newspapers sampled proved to be at the forefront when it came to devising extraordinary infographics, delivered first-class examples of this technology. For instance, Sam Borden's article "Pass or fail"¹⁹³ was accompanied by two key graphics, produced by Shan Carter and Frank O'Connell. In the first one, entitled "Fastest baton to the finish", the newspaper visually presented the athletics track and the characteristics of the four legs, the fly zone and the exchange zone. The second one, entitled "Three ways to pass the baton", analysed the pros and cons of three different techniques of passing (overhand pass, upsweep and push-in). Another enlightening example could be found in the informational graphic "In tough conditions, enough for gold"¹⁹⁴, which explained step by step the jump that gave US athlete Jennifer Surh the pole vault gold medal. A similar case could be observed in "Clearing the obstacles to gold"¹⁹⁵, in which *The New York Times* graphically explained the technique of hurdling. The use of well-documented infographics by all the newspapers sampled was also very useful in showcasing the movements and rules involved in many minority sports that readers do not usually consume, such as taekwondo¹⁹⁶, weightlifting¹⁹⁷, diving¹⁹⁸ and gymnastics¹⁹⁹.

¹⁸⁹ Arribas, C. (2012, August 7). "Con el rabillo del ojo a 45 kilómetros por hora". *El País*, p. 45.

¹⁹⁰ Iríbar, A. (2012, August 6). "Yo siempre respondo". *El País*, p. 42.

¹⁹¹ Kessel, A. (2012, August 5). "London is primed for a 100m record". *The Guardian*, p. 6.

¹⁹² "How would the winners of previous Olympics fare against the 2012 victors" (2012, August 12). *The Guardian*, p. 28.

¹⁹³ Borden, S. (2012, July 23). "Pass or fail". *The New York Times*, pp. F12–F13.

¹⁹⁴ Cox, A.; Park, H.; Peçanha, S.; Saget, B.; Tse, A.; Ward, J. (2012, August 7). "In tough conditions, enough for gold". *The New York Times*, p. B9.

¹⁹⁵ Xaquín G.V.; Ward, J. (2012, July 23). "Clearing the obstacles to gold". *The New York Times*, pp. F8–F9.

¹⁹⁶ Cook, A. (2012, August 10). "Next time, Olympic gold will be mine". *The Daily Telegraph*, p. S25. See also: Vivanco, F. (2012, August 9). "Un tatami mágico, dos obras de arte". *La Vanguardia*, p. 34.

¹⁹⁷ Bearak, B. (2012, August 8). "Iranian easily lifts spirits of his country". *The New York Times*, pp. B11–B13.

¹⁹⁸ Hart, S. (2012, July 30). "Daley backed to prove that adversity is his greatest spur". *The Daily Telegraph*, p. S16. See also: Clarey, C. (2012, July 31). "Young British star is everywhere except on the medals podium". *The New York Times*, p. B14.

¹⁹⁹ Macur, J. (2012, August 3). "A very long journey was very swift". *The New York Times*, pp. B11–B15. See also: Macur, J. (2012, July 23). "Same team, worlds apart". *The New York Times*, p. F4;

In fact, graphics-based content proved very valuable in visually presenting large volumes of data. *The Guardian/The Observer* stood out as one of the most active publications in this field²⁰⁰. To illustrate this, at the start of the Games, the newspaper published the graphic “Who is taking part in London 2012?”²⁰¹, in which Christine Oliver and Michael Robinson provided clear data for all the participant countries (number of athletes per country, continent, number of male and female athletes). The newspaper also published an infographic that showed every medal won by each country since the modern Olympics began in 1896²⁰².

At the end of the Games, in the two-page “London 2012. How well have Team GB done?”²⁰³, *The Guardian* examined the funding for and the number of medals won by nine sports in Britain. Moreover, it provided a breakdown of the medallists by region, type of education, sex and age. In another two-page graphic, entitled “The top 25 medal winners”²⁰⁴, *The Guardian* presented a bubble chart on which the size of the countries depended on the medals they won in London. This effective graphic allowed readers to see at a glance which were the most successful NOCs²⁰⁵. Additional graphics presented alternative Olympic rankings, exploring success by population and by GDP²⁰⁶.

Berkowitz, B.; Stanton, L. (2012, July 29). “New definition of perfection”. *The Washington Post*, p. D7.

²⁰⁰ Other newspapers examined, such as *El País*, also provided interesting cases. For example, in the piece “Mejor que nuestras expectativas”, the newspaper presented the Olympic medals won by Spain throughout history. To complement this, an account of all the sportsmen and sportswomen that were awarded an Olympic diploma at London 2012 was given. See: Sámano, J.; Arribas, C. (2012, August 13). “Mejor que nuestras expectativas”. *El País*, p. 40.

²⁰¹ Rogers, S., Oliver, C.; Robinson, M. (2012, July 30). “Who is taking part in London 2012?” *The Guardian*, Olympics 2012, p. 13.

²⁰² Scruton, P., Robinson, M.; Burn-Murdoch, J. (2012, July 26). “Atlas of Olympic success”. *The Guardian*, pp. 20–1.

²⁰³ “London 2012. How well have Team GB done?” (2012, August 11). *The Guardian*, pp. 20–1.

²⁰⁴ “The top 25 medal winners” (2012, August 13). *The Guardian*, pp. 16–17.

²⁰⁵ In this case at *The Guardian*, the information was intelligible to readers. However, on certain occasions, the use of large amounts of data was overwhelming and made it difficult for readers to understand the information provided. For example, in an infographic published by *The New York Times* at the end of the Games, the newspaper tried to visualize a weighing scheme that took into account the number of gold, silver and bronze medals won by each country. It also aimed to adjust the number of medals according to population. However, the outcome was too much information that was quite difficult to understand. See: “Winning medal race depends on how you count” (2012, August 13). *The New York Times*, p. D4.

²⁰⁶ “The alternative Olympic rankings” (2012, August 12). *The Guardian*, p. 28.

Ian Prior, head of sport at *The Guardian*, explains the approach and the motivation that drove his organization to produce these infographics:

We did data journalism and infographics on a scale we have not seen before in sports events and people were absolutely hungry for the kind of breakdown of how many medals were “Private educated v Public educated”, the regional breakdown, the age variations [...] we did very rich stuff around that. This style was also reflected in the print newspaper. What we have noticed across the board in the last years is that there’s a kind of audience that appreciates the deepness into the core of the stories, the stories behind how the athletic success is achieved (Ian Prior, *The Guardian*, interview, October 2013).

Scholar José Luis Rojas also explains the impact and value of these graphics in the coverage of sporting mega-events in this day and age:

The importance of infographics could be seen in London and has been developed later in Sochi and the World Cup. Infographics are clear examples of the fact that the coverage of a sporting mega-event cannot remain in the simple explanation of the results: journalists should go beyond. The coverage of the big events has changed forever. Now professionals have to search for primary sources, to look for the best approaches in order to build their news pieces and reports, background pieces, profiles, interviews, which provide depth and richness to the coverage. In this environment, infographics play a crucial role. On the website, the ongoing trend is to explain data and concepts more visually. Media organizations such as *The New York Times*, *The Guardian* and *The Washington Post* are working in new narratives to present the coverage of the event while explaining all the data behind competitions. To some extent, this trend is also translated into the print matter (José Luis Rojas Torrijos, interview, June 2014).

4.1.3.4. Reporting on the larger framework of London 2012

With regard to the coverage of the relevant contexts of the Games, it should be noted that the British, American and Spanish quality newspapers that were sampled did an excellent job of shedding light on the larger framework of the London 2012 Olympics. Print media made sense of a wide range of contextual issues in order to provide their readers with the most complete and sophisticated coverage of the event. The research reveals the media’s detailed attention to the following core areas: culture; economy; legacy; geopolitical issues; security; ticketing; transport; other negative issues; history; environmental issues; health issues; media and communications; volunteer issues, and so on.

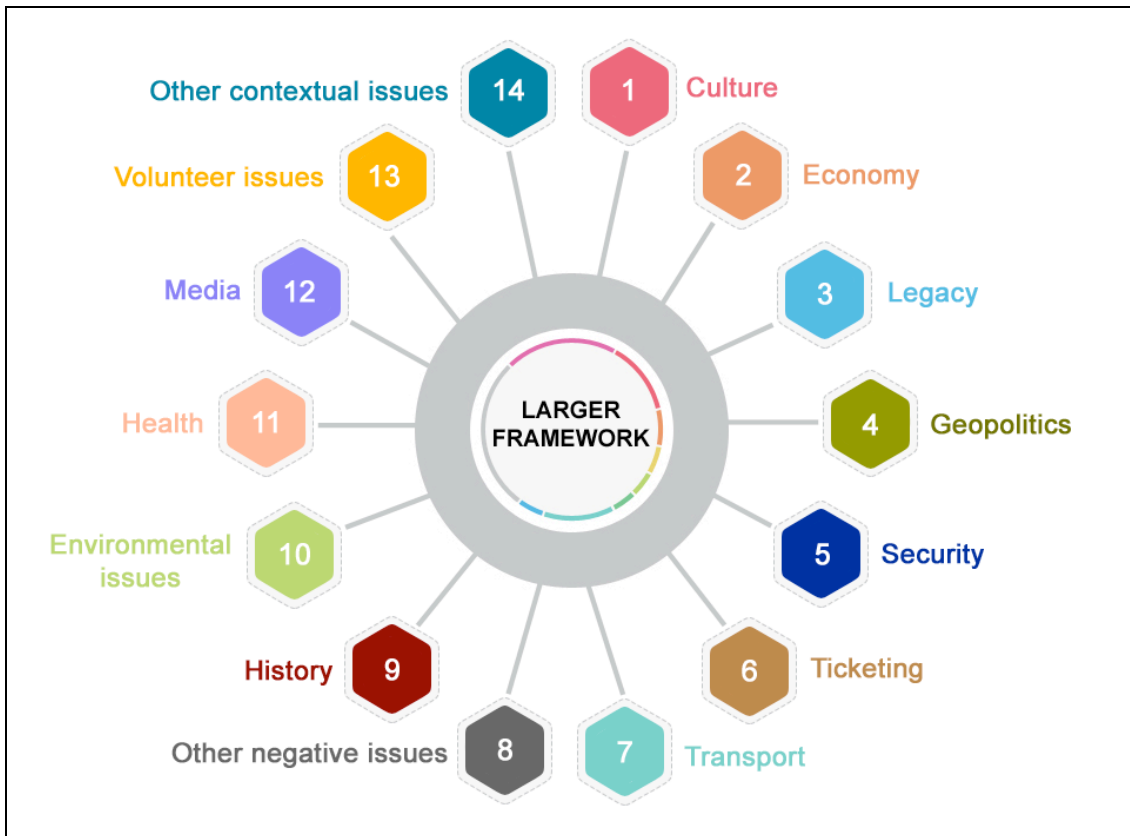


Figure 16. Areas of the larger framework of the Olympics reported by the media sampled

The breadth and depth of this contextual coverage was remarkable. The total number of pieces and the daily average of articles exclusively devoted to reporting on the larger framework of the Olympics was very significant (see Table 12 and Figures 17 and 18). As might be expected, the volume of this type of information was much greater in the case of the British broadsheets. Over the timeframe of the observation, *The Telegraph* published 966 pieces exclusively devoted to the larger framework of the Games (with a daily average of 29.27 pieces), while *The Guardian/The Observer* had 567 articles of this nature (averaging 17.18 pieces per day).

With regard to the foreign press, the volume of contextual pieces provided by the American and Spanish newspapers was quite similar. The daily average of contextual pieces published by *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* was 4.15 and 3.21 articles respectively while *El País* and *La Vanguardia* published an average of 4.12 and 4.03 pieces respectively.

Newspaper	Week before		Olympic per.		Week after		Total	
	<i>n</i>	Avg.	<i>n</i>	Avg.	<i>n</i>	Avg.	<i>n</i>	Avg.
<i>Guardian/Observer</i>	92	13.14	398	20.95	77	11	567	17.18
<i>Daily/Sunday Telegraph</i>	150	21.43	692	36.42	124	17.71	966	29.27
<i>The New York Times</i>	21	3	99	5.21	17	2.43	137	4.15
<i>The Washington Post</i>	26	3.71	73	3.84	7	1	106	3.21
<i>El País</i>	36	5.14	95	5	5	0.71	136	4.12
<i>La Vanguardia</i>	22	3.14	95	5	16	2.29	133	4.03
Total	347	46.42	1,452	76.42	246	35.14	2,045	61.96

Table 12. Number of larger framework pieces published by newspaper and average of pieces published per day (Week before = 7 days; Olympic period = 19 days; Week after = 7 days)

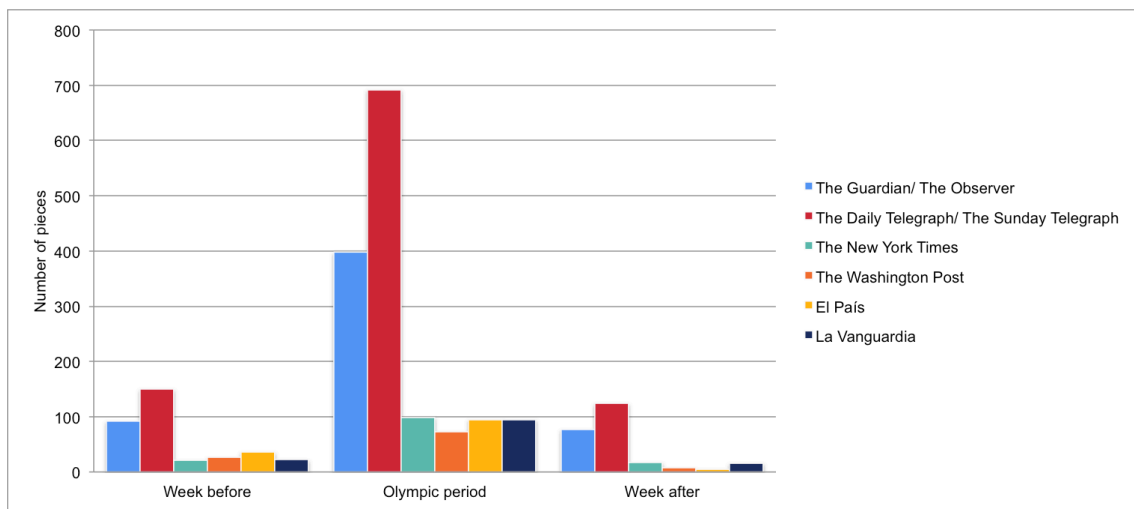


Figure 17. Number of larger framework pieces published by newspapers during the week before London 2012, the period of the Games and the week after London 2012

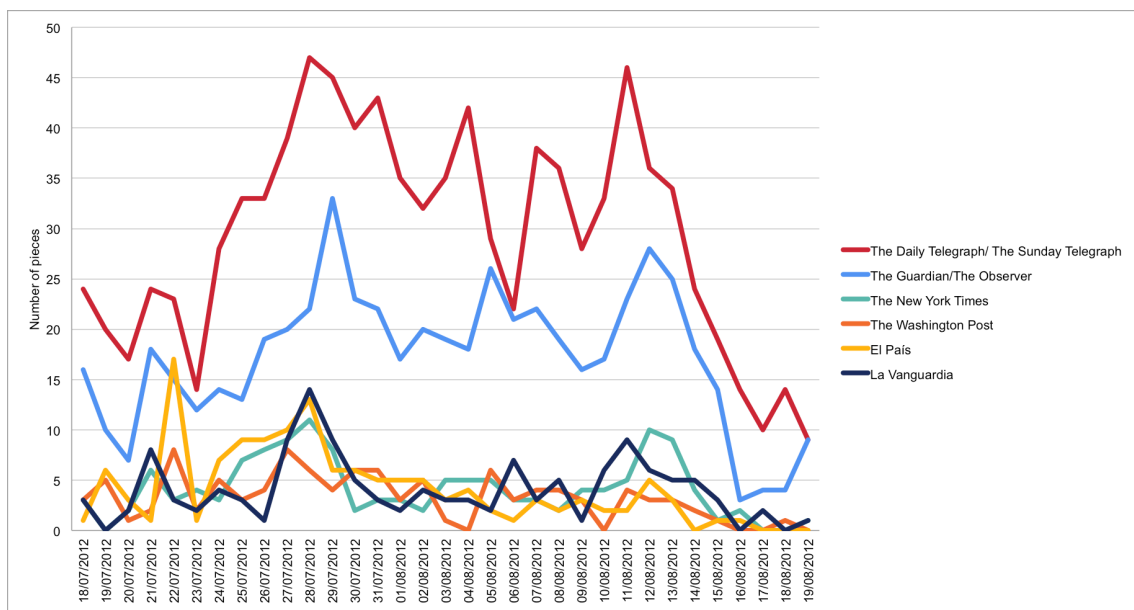


Figure 18. Daily evolution of the larger framework pieces published by the newspapers sampled

4.1.3.4.1. Culture

At the Olympic Games, the opening and closing ceremonies are regarded as one of “the world’s greatest spectacles” (IOC, 2000: 50) and, as a consequence of their global audience and high viewing figures, the fundamental cultural events of the Games (Bissell and Perry, 2012; Chappelet and Kübler-Mabbott, 2008; Collins and Palmer, 2012; García, 2012; Henry, 2012; Moragas, 1992b; Peaslee and Berggreen, 2012). The ceremonies are not only a showcase of a series of essential symbolic and ritualistic elements prescribed in the *Olympic Charter* (IOC, 2013a) but they are also a crucial opportunity to present and celebrate the host country’s culture, national identity, values and history to the rest of the world (Fernández Peña et al., 2010; Hogan, 2003; Horne and Manzenreiter, 2012; Luo, 2011; Miah and García, 2012; Moragas, 1992b). In line with their significance, the media devoted a huge amount of space to covering the artistic programme and the Olympic rituals and symbols involved in these ceremonies.

Reporting on the opening ceremony²⁰⁷, which was entitled “Isles of wonder”, newspapers provided systematic references to the historical elements included in the event, such as the English rural environment, the industrial revolution and the National Health Service (NHS). The media in general included extensive cultural references to literature, cinema and music. Along with their more extensive and detailed coverage (Oettler, 2014), the British press included more specific references to TV series, the inspiration from rural Britain and the names of the national anthems of England, Northern Ireland, Wales and Scotland.

In relation to the closing ceremony, which was entitled “A symphony of British music” articles²⁰⁸ included references to the three main acts (opening ceremony, the march of

²⁰⁷ See: Gibson, O. (2012, July 28). “Sparks fly on a madcap tour through Britain past and present”. *The Guardian*, pp. 2–3; White, J. (2012, July 28). “A thousand twangling instruments: welcome to this, our isle of wonder”. *The Daily Telegraph*, pp. 2–3; Lyall, S. (2012, July 28). “Five-ring opening circus, weirdly and unabashedly British”. *The New York Times*, pp. A1, D8.; Stanley, A. (2012, July 28). “In ceremony, Britain jests in journey through past”. *The New York Times*, p. D6; Faiola, A. (2012, July 28). “Olympics open with rock and roll”. *The Washington Post*, pp. A1, A7; Wise, M. (2012, July 28). “London answers call with rousing Olympic Opening Ceremonies”. *The Washington Post*, p. D5; Martínez, J.B. (2012, July 28). “Londres empieza de película”. *La Vanguardia*, pp. 42–3; Sámano, J. (2012, July 28). “El Londres más popular”. *El País*, p. 47.

²⁰⁸ See: Rayner, G. (2012, August 13). “Del Boy and Darcey give Rio a unique act to follow”. *The Daily Telegraph*, p. 4; Williams, R. (2012, August 13). “A raucous but poignant pageant of popular culture closes the Games”. *The Guardian*, p. 2; Segal, D. (2012, August 13). “Britain takes a final bow”. *The New York Times*, pp. D1, D3; Faiola, A. (2012, August 13). “London Games sing into the

the athletes and the Rio handover segment) and to the songs interpreted by recognized British artists such as The Rolling Stones, Adele, the Pet Shop Boys and Brian May, as well as to the tributes to John Lennon and Freddy Mercury. References to the scenography were also included in the coverage.

Moving on to the Olympic symbols and rituals, before and after the opening ceremony, all the newspapers provided the necessary background textual and photographic coverage on these elements, focusing mainly on the five key points: the five rings, the parade of the athletes and the flag bearers, the last relay of the torch, the lighting of the Olympic cauldron by Steve Redgrave and the institutional speeches. These fundamental components involved in the Olympic ceremonies have been highlighted as such by important scholars in the field (García, 2010; IOC, 2000; IOC, 2013e; IOC, 2013f; Miah and García, 2012; Moragas, 1992a; Moragas et al., 1995; Traganou, 2010).

Nevertheless, some of the media provided more in-depth information than others. *El País* pointed out that in the parade of participants there had been 204 national flags, because the athletes from Netherlands Antilles appeared after the Olympic flag, given that the IOC had suspended the country's NOC in 2011. The author, Amaya Iríbar, shed light on previous similar situations, such as the case of the Yugoslavian athletes at Barcelona 1992 and the West Timor athletes at Sidney 2000²⁰⁹. *The Daily Telegraph* also explained that as a tradition and a tribute to being the originator of the Games, Greece had led the parade of athletes. *The New York Times* also contributed to a better understanding of the Olympic flame symbol, devoting a special piece to it²¹⁰. Conversely, it is relevant to point out that *The Guardian's* and *La Vanguardia's* description of the rituals of the opening ceremony was surprisingly meagre and did not include any references to other key rituals such as the oaths taken by the athletes, officials and coaches. Given that outside the Olympics there is no type of sporting festival in the world so rich in significant symbols pertaining to different human and universal values, we cannot get away from the fact that not providing in-depth reporting on these elements denied readers from receiving the most comprehensive information about the events possible (UNESCO, Arts 1–2; IFJ, Art. 1; the Council of Europe, Art. 17).

sunset". *The Washington Post*, pp. A1, A10; Martín, L. (2012, August 13). "Homenaje al pop en el fin de fiesta". *El País*, p. 51; Ramos, R. (2012, August 13). "Adiós a los Juegos, vuelve la crisis". *La Vanguardia*, p. 45.

²⁰⁹ Iríbar, A. (2012, July 28). "Wiggins, Mister Bean y Ali". *El País*, p. 50.

²¹⁰ Robertson, C. (2012, July 28). "Flame answer revealed in teamwork". *The New York Times*, p. D8.

With regard to the closing ceremony, *The Telegraph* and *The Guardian* mentioned key rituals such as the handover to Rio segment, the speeches by Lord Coe and Jacques Rogge and the extinguishing of the Olympic flame. By contrast, *El País* and *La Vanguardia* did not run in-depth articles explaining the ritualistic elements and the protocol of the event. *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* also opted to devote little space to the ritualistic elements, highlighting instead the major positive and negative stories of London 2012 and the summary of key athletes' performances.

Reporting on the other cultural events

Aside from the ceremonies, the torch relay was another key cultural component for British newspapers²¹¹ before the start of the Games. After the lighting of the Olympic torch in Olympia²¹² and the arrival of the relay in the UK²¹³, *The Guardian/The Observer* and *The Daily Telegraph/The Sunday Telegraph* devoted a daily space to reporting on the 8,000-mile journey of the flame throughout the country. During the timeframe of the observation, these papers provided a comprehensive textual and photographic summary of the whole journey²¹⁴ reporting particularly on its last stages, especially on the flame's arrival in London²¹⁵ and the finale²¹⁶.

²¹¹ As might be expected, information on the torch relay in the foreign newspapers was mainly limited to brief agency pieces. See, for instance: EFE (2012, July 22). "La antorcha recorre Londres". *La Vanguardia*, Vivir, p. 11; AP (2012, July 21). "Canoeing case in court" (3rd part). *The New York Times*, p. D6; "London welcomes Olympic flame" (2012, July 21). *The Washington Post*, p. A10. However, there are some exceptions, such as a piece in *La Vanguardia's* Vivir supplement which provided six photographs of the relay, explained the journey of the flame and mentioned the athletes and celebrities that took part in it; it was a piece with a soft approach, but at least it allowed the readership to find out more about the torch relay as a cultural manifestation of the Olympic Games. See: "Olímpica Gran Bretaña. Isabel II y deportistas de los Juegos de 1948 reciben la antorcha en Londres" (2012, July 21). *La Vanguardia*, Vivir, p. 9.

²¹² Kelso, P. (2012, May 18). "Princess: Olympics do seem expensive". *The Daily Telegraph*, pp. 1, 4.

²¹³ Kelso, P. (2012, May 19). "Olympic flame sets the home fires burning". *The Daily Telegraph*, p. 7. See also: Moreton, D. (2012, May 20). "The Olympic flame rises in the West". *The Sunday Telegraph*, pp. 18–19.

²¹⁴ Morris, S. (2012, July 20). "How the flame lit up the country". *The Guardian*, pp. 25–8.

²¹⁵ Gibson, O. (2012, July 22). After its journey across Britain, the torch is held aloft in London. *The Guardian*, p. 23.

²¹⁶ Hattenstone, S. (2012, July 28). "After 70 days and 8.000 miles the torch's journey ends". *The Guardian*, pp. 6–7; Kirkup, J. (2012, July 28). "Royal barge completes torch's British odyssey". *The Daily Telegraph*, p. 8.

In contrast, the London 2012 Festival²¹⁷ received relatively limited exposure²¹⁸. *The Telegraph*, partner of the Cultural Olympiad, devoted more space to it than it would have done otherwise²¹⁹. The British media published general guides²²⁰, brief previews and short reviews of several cultural events such as: music concerts (Aldeburgh World Orchestra/Sir Mark Elder²²¹, BT River of Music²²², BT London Live Closing Ceremony Concert²²³); art exhibitions (Collecting the Olympic Games²²⁴, Road to 2012: Aiming High²²⁵, Tate Blackouts²²⁶); theatre plays (*Doctor's Dilemma*²²⁷, *Playing the Games*²²⁸); poetry initiatives (Winning Words²²⁹); and street events (Hatwalk²³⁰, All The Bells²³¹), to name a few. In this cultural area, foreign media (especially in Spain²³²) provided timely

²¹⁷ The London 2012 Festival “was the culmination of the Cultural Olympiad. Running for 12 weeks from 21 June to 9 September 2012, it provided the public with further opportunities to participate in over 12,000 artistic and cultural events designed to celebrate the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games” (Poulton, 2014: 273).

²¹⁸ Mark Adams, IOC communications director and former media professional, points out a reason why the Cultural Olympiad received such a limited media exposure: “It is not the Olympics, it is a cultural event. They are not really stories that grab the attention in the way the Olympics does [...] What will be more interesting to people, Usain Bolt winning the 100 metres or some cultural event in East London? Obviously, the first one” (Mark Adams, Interview, May 2014).

²¹⁹ According to *The Telegraph's* sports editor, Adam Sills: “In terms of culture, we were media partners of the Cultural Olympiad, so the paper did a lot more on that than they would have done otherwise” (interview, October 2013).

²²⁰ Brown, M. (2012, July 21). “A cultural marathon”. *The Guardian*, London 2012 Special Supplement, pp. 77–9.

²²¹ Clements, A. (2012, July 31). “Aldeburgh World Orchestra/Elder”. *The Guardian*, p. 25.

²²² Brown, H. (2012, July 21). “BT River of Music”. *The Daily Telegraph*, Review, pp. R16–17.

²²³ Hall, J. (2012, August 14). “Blur take a triumphant snapshot”. *The Daily Telegraph*, p. 25.

²²⁴ Gleadell, C. (2012, July 24). “The race is on for art of gold”. *The Daily Telegraph*, p. 22.

²²⁵ White, J. (2012, July 19). “The Olympic heroes on and off the track”. *The Daily Telegraph*, p. 23.

²²⁶ Sooke, A. (2012, July 31). “Bewitched by a night at the museum”. *The Daily Telegraph*, Telegraph Plus, p. F5.

²²⁷ Cavendish, D. (2012, July 26). “This bitter pill needs sweetening”. *The Daily Telegraph*, p. 24.

²²⁸ Cavendish, D. (2012, August 2). “Olympic odds and ends”. *The Daily Telegraph*, p. F6.

²²⁹ Payne, T. (2012, July 28). “Can poetry slip down as easily as Lucozade?” *The Daily Telegraph*, Review, p. R27.

²³⁰ Reed, P. (2012, August 3). “Hatwalk: a showcase of British millinery brilliance”. *The Daily Telegraph*, p. F4. See also: Brown, M. (2012, July 31). “Festival hat trick gives capital's statues a new look”. *The Guardian*, p. 10.

²³¹ Carrell, S.; Higgins, C. (2012, July 28). “Bells ring out across Britain to welcome the Games”. *The Guardian*, p. 6. See also: Howse, C. (2012, July 26). “Give us a ring in the morning”. *The Daily Telegraph*, p. 19.

²³² It is worth highlighting that another Spanish newspaper, *El Mundo*, devoted the main part of its supplement “El Cultural” of 27 July, 2012 to the theme of London 2012 and culture. General overviews of the culture proposals, the architecture and the connection of the 2012 Festival to

but insightful contributions. An enlightening example can be found in the lengthy report in *El País* on Shakespeare's role in the Cultural Olympiad²³³ which provided detailed information about the Shakespeare World Festival and the exhibition "Staging the World" at the British Museum. Another good example was Rafael Ramos' thorough overview of the Cultural Olympiad's events in *La Vanguardia*²³⁴.

Apart from reporting on the cultural events, the media sampled also occasionally offered some coverage on alternative manifestations and activities. These include: the literary contribution that the prisoners from Wandsworth made for the Games²³⁵; a photographic exhibition about the evictees in Clays Lane in London²³⁶ (whose houses were knocked down to build the Olympic Park); and the alternative "legacy" installations housed by the artist Nick Franglen in a derelict building²³⁷.

4.1.3.4.2. Economy

Moving on to the economic dimension of the Games, neither the British nor the international media remained uncritical. The public discussion about the total cost of the Olympics to the taxpayer and the substantial rise of the budget from £2 billion to £9.3 billion²³⁸ were well covered in the run-up to the event (John Horne, interview, November 2013). In addition, within the timeframe of the observation, newspapers reported that the effects of London 2012 on the economy, including the creation of jobs, could be short-lived. It was explained that "in London, the number of people out of

Shakespeare were provided. See: Perrottet, T. (2012, July 27). "Juegos Olímpicos: la cultura también gana". *El Mundo*, El Cultural, pp. 6–9; Maluenda, I.E.; Encabo, E. (2012, July 27). "Disciplina inglesa". *El Mundo*, El Cultural, pp. 10–11; Espejo, E. (2012, July 27). "Ding! Dong! London Calling!" *El Mundo*, El Cultural, pp. 12–13; Rosado, B.G. (2012, July 27). "Shakespeare bate record por tierra, río y aire". *El Mundo*, El Cultural, pp. 14–15.

²³³ Carlin, J. (2012, July 25). "Shakespeare, 'recordman' olímpico". *El País*, p. 34–5.

²³⁴ Ramos, R. (2012, August 11). "La otra olimpiada". *La Vanguardia*, pp. 22–3.

²³⁵ Erwin, J. (2012, July 18). "Prison plays part in Cultural Olympiad". *The Guardian*, p. 32.

²³⁶ "Clays Lane Live Archive" (2012, August 11). *The Guardian*, The guide, p. 36.

²³⁷ Lynskey, D. (2012, July 31). "Hidden legacy". *The Guardian*, G2, pp. 9–11.

²³⁸ A detailed breakdown of the costs of hosting the Games (London site preparation and infrastructure, overall cost of the event, costs for Olympic-related construction) as well as many other economic data (financing, expected revenue, cost of the broadcasting rights, athletes' earnings for medals, costs for attending the Games for citizens) could be found in the piece "The Olympic money machine" provided by *The Washington Post*. The article utilized a wide range of sources to supply this data, including the IOC, *Sports Business Journal*, *Businessweek*, Bloomberg, Oxford University, *The Telegraph*, *Financial Times* and the scholars Patrick Rishe (Walker School of Business), Frank Zarnowski (Mount St Mary's) and John Lucas (Penn State University). See: Cropp, I. (2012, August 5). "The Olympic money machine". *The Washington Post*, p. G3.

work fell by 42,000, suggesting some of the improvement in the jobs market was due to the Olympic Games²³⁹. At the same time, it was pointed out that, according to experts, the Games jobs boost could be a “one-off” to the UK labour market, that is, many of these jobs could be only temporary²⁴⁰. The media also recognized the fact that history showed the Games were expected to boost Britain’s GDP, but not for long²⁴¹.

With regard to the development of “Global Business Summits”²⁴² during the Games, the media sampled explained the importance of these for achieving new opportunities for British industry²⁴³. It was reported that Downing Street estimated the international attention the Games would “bring to the UK could lead to an extra £1.3 billion of sales for British companies over the next four years²⁴⁴”. Some successes already achieved were reported: Jaguar Land Rover, owned by India’s Tata industrial group announced 1,100 additional car manufacturing jobs in the Midlands²⁴⁵. However, newspapers also posed questions, remarking that it would not be so easy to attract further global investments. In a comment article, Matthew Lynn argued that “the dismal reality is that the incentives for coming to the UK are not nearly so compelling as they once were²⁴⁶”. The author discussed the high personal taxes in the country (not attractive for foreign executives), the high corporate taxes and the terrible shape of the domestic economy.

The impact of the Olympics on retailers and tourist attractions was another of the most prominent aspects covered. British and international newspapers raised concerns

²³⁹ Kollewe, J. (2012, August 16). “Olympics boost eases jobless figures”. *The Guardian*, p. 27.

²⁴⁰ Peacock, L. (2012, August 16). “Confusion as jobs rise but GDP falls”. *The Daily Telegraph*, p. B4.

²⁴¹ Moulds, J. (2012, July 26). “Games effect expected to boost Britain’s GDP – but not for long”. *The Guardian*, p. 6. See also: Wood, Z.; Moulds, J. (2012, July 29). “Will the Olympics get the economy growing again? Don’t bank on it”. *The Guardian*, pp. 40–1.

²⁴² It is worth noting that *The Guardian* and *The Telegraph* failed to provide a detailed list of the meetings and the potential economic deals it was hoped to achieve. In contrast, *The Independent* provided an exhaustive analysis of the projects for 22 countries (from UAE to South Africa), outlining the value of the potential contracts estimated by the British government. See: Cusick, J.; Milmo, C.; Wright, O. (2012, July 18). “Ministers line up to lobby for Olympic billions”. *The Independent*, pp. 1; 4–5.

²⁴³ “Welcome to London. Billionaires’ yachts arrive for the Olympics” (2012, July 22). *The Sunday Telegraph*, p. B1.

²⁴⁴ Kirkup, J. (2012, July 26). “PM to court visiting executives”. *The Daily Telegraph*, p. 4.

²⁴⁵ Lewis, T. (2012, August 12). “The fans, the parties, the venues, the BBC ... how did London rate?” *The Guardian*, p. 26.

²⁴⁶ Lynn, M. (2012, July 22). “We’re touting for business”. *The Daily Telegraph*, p. 21.

about the centre of London becoming a “Ghost town²⁴⁷” and how the Games were hitting trade. Newspapers explained that London hotels had to cut prices in many areas²⁴⁸ and that attendances at museums and theatres fell by up to a third²⁴⁹. More precisely, it was mentioned that “the royal palaces – the Tower of London and Hampton Court among them – have been particularly badly hit, attracting only half of last year’s visitor numbers. The British Museum has lost one in four visitors, the National Gallery two in five²⁵⁰”. Other museums such as the Tate Modern, Tate Britain, the Natural History Museum and the Museum of London had also suffered drops in tickets sales²⁵¹. Tour operators saw drops of around 30% in their business²⁵². Furthermore, according to the figures from the retail specialist Springboard, shops and restaurants in central London experienced a fall of 21% in footfall while, overall, UK high streets recorded a 9% fall in footfall²⁵³. So, this was a negative outcome for many well-known retailers such as Next²⁵⁴, HM, Lee and Garfunkel’s²⁵⁵. Outside of London, the number of shoppers also fell in the high streets of major cities such as Glasgow, Manchester and Stoke-on-Trent²⁵⁶. Other smaller towns, Weymouth, for example, also suffered²⁵⁷.

That being said, at the end of the Games, British newspapers changed their attitude, reporting on how the “Olympic feel-good factor” represented a positive impact for many department stores and companies. According to the data provided by Springboard, the

²⁴⁷ Burns, F. (2012, August 3). “After warnings of an Olympic crush, businesses suffer in a deserted London”. *The New York Times*, p. A4.

²⁴⁸ Hall, J. (2012, August 1). “Hotels cut prices as the tourists stay away”. *The Daily Telegraph*, p. 4.

²⁴⁹ Oppenheimer, W. (2012, July 27). “Estirar el brazo más que la manga”. *El País*, p. 59.

²⁵⁰ Kingsley, P. (2012, August 4). “Where is everyone?” *The Guardian*, p. 38.

²⁵¹ Maev, K. (2012, August 3). “All quiet on the West End front but National Theatre reports full house”. *The Guardian*, p. 8.

²⁵² Faiola, A.; Mackintosh, E. (2012, August 2). “London struggles to strike economic gold”. *The Washington Post*, p. A7.

²⁵³ Peacock, L. (2012, August 6). “Retail left in slow lane by rain and Games”. *The Daily Telegraph*, p. 21. See also: Wood, Z.; Roberts, L.; Gibson, O. (2012, August 3). “Retailers plan ‘emergency campaign’ to lure shoppers”. *The Guardian*, p. 8.

²⁵⁴ Moulds, J. (2012, August 2). “Olympics hit sales at Next’s London stores”. *The Guardian*, p. 26. See also: Russell, J. (2012, August 2). “Next revenues boosted by directory sales”. *The Daily Telegraph*, p. 23.

²⁵⁵ Oppenheimer, W. (2012, August 3). “East End gana, West End pierde”. *El País*, p. 54.

²⁵⁶ Neville, S.; Roberts, L. (2012, August 4). “High streets feel the Olympic squeeze”. *The Guardian*, p. 31.

²⁵⁷ Ford Rojas, J.P. (2012, July 31). “Games are hitting trade, say shop owners”. *The Daily Telegraph*, p. 7. See also: Bearak, B. (2012, August 6). “Far from London, and maddeningly far from the crowds”. *The New York Times*, p. D5.

West End enjoyed “a 10.6pc year-on-year rise during the second week of London 2012²⁵⁸” and department stores such as John Lewis and Waitrose achieved good performances during the same period, in part because of the sales of Team GB replica kits and merchandising, TVs and sporting products²⁵⁹. The Australian property developer Westfield was also reported to have had a very successful Olympics with 5.5m people visiting its Stratford shopping centre²⁶⁰. Many more companies, such as Greggs²⁶¹, HF Holidays²⁶², Ladbrokes, William Hill and Betfair²⁶³ saw their income increase during the period of the Olympics.

Nevertheless, this is only one side of the story. Some of the international media, such as *La Vanguardia* and *The Washington Post*, felt it necessary to point out after the end of the Games that the event had not been so positive for many shops, theatres, restaurants and major sightseeing spots of the West End²⁶⁴. *La Vanguardia*'s Rafael Ramos wrote that during the Olympics taxi firms experienced a 40% drop in clients, that reservations at restaurants fell around 30% and that the major sightseeing attractions of the city, such as the Tower of London, Piccadilly Circus, Leicester Square and Covent Garden were without their usual crowds²⁶⁵. Likewise, *The Washington Post* included the views from UKinbound, a leading trade association representing British tour operators and other businesses dependent on tourists. A survey by this

²⁵⁸ Ruddick, G. (2012, August 18). “London shops enjoy Olympic feel-good factor”. *The Daily Telegraph*, p. 32.

²⁵⁹ Kollewe, J. (2012, August 11). “Retailers feeling the Olympic dividend at last”. *The Guardian*, p. 22; Ruddick, G. (2012, August 11). “Team GB’s feelgood factor keeps the tills ringing”. *The Daily Telegraph*, p. 33; Neate, R. (2012, August 17). “Adidas gains from summer of love”. *The Guardian*, p. 31.

²⁶⁰ Ruddick, G. (2012, August 16). “Westfield strikes gold from the Games”. *The Daily Telegraph*, p. B3.

²⁶¹ Wood, Z.; Milmo, D. (2012, August 8). “Olympic boost for Greggs the bakery after a soggy start”. *The Guardian*, p. 19.

²⁶² Gurney-Read, J. (2012, August 11). “GB medals spur activity breaks”. *The Daily Telegraph*, Telegraph Travel, p. T3.

²⁶³ “Betting industry strikes Olympic gold” (2012, August 12). *The Sunday Telegraph*, p. B2; Goodley, S. (2012, August 7). “It’s a Games record for the bookmakers”. *The Guardian*, p. 22.

²⁶⁴ That type of critical reporting in terms of the impact could not be found in *The Telegraph* and *The Guardian* but was found in other British quality newspapers such as *The Independent*, who gave voice to small businesses and shop owners, travel associations and those in charge of sightseeing attractions in a front-page report after the end of the Olympics. See: Calder, S. (2012, August 15). “Hunt told: don’t pretend Olympics helped tourism”. *The Independent*, pp. 1, 6.

²⁶⁵ Ramos, R. (2012, August 15). “Por fin acabaron los Juegos!” *La Vanguardia*, p. 11.

association revealed that among its members, “88% reported some losses during the Games compared with the same period last year²⁶⁶”.

Moving on, other economic aspects reported on referred to the funding of sports, and the commercial endorsements of athletes and marketing. First, with regard to the funding of sports, a thorough explanation was provided about how the UK Sport programme works and how elite sports in Britain are financed through lottery money²⁶⁷. This system, created by Sir John Major in 1993²⁶⁸, was crucial for many disciplines such as rowing, cycling and sailing in order for them to deliver success at London 2012²⁶⁹. At the end of the Games, *The Guardian* provided a clear picture of the amount of funding received by each sport, the percentage (with respect to the total funding available) given to each sport and, taking into consideration the performance of individual sports during the Olympics, Owen Gibson examined whether their funding for the next Olympics would be increased or decreased. The transparency of the media in this exercise allowed readers to understand the disparities between big sports such as cycling (which received £26,032,000) and minor sports which only received a small percentage of the funding available²⁷⁰. Some pieces had already pinpointed the difficulties faced by those teams not supported by lottery funding, such as the women’s volleyball squad²⁷¹.

The reporting on the funding in the Spanish press was well delivered by *La Vanguardia*. Toni López Jordà provided a clear picture of the relationship between public and private investment in the Spanish athletes and the returns obtained at London 2012. In his approach, the author shed light on the uneven results of the ADO (Olympic Sports Association) plan for the Olympic cycle 2009–2012: hockey, athletics, football and cycling were the most funded sports, but they did not win any medals²⁷². With regard to the American press, *The Washington Post* explained the foundations of the funding system in the US, which relies solely on donations from corporations and

²⁶⁶ AP (2012, August 14). “Olympics fail to bring in big tourist dollars”. *The Washington Post*, p. A9.

²⁶⁷ Burns, J.; Macaskill, S. (2012, August 14). “Home team comes through”. *The New York Times*, pp. B9, B10.

²⁶⁸ “In praise of ... Sir John Major” (2012, August 10). *The Guardian*, p. 32.

²⁶⁹ Gibson, O. (2012, August 6). “Ennis leads the charge in a golden weekend for Team GB”. *The Guardian*, pp. 6–7.

²⁷⁰ Gibson, O. (2012, August 15). “Sport by sport: the price of Olympic success and failure – and what the future holds”. *The Guardian*, pp. 36–7.

²⁷¹ Ingle, S. (2012, July 29). “Lofty hopes of a quarter-final is no pipe dream”. *The Guardian*, Olympics 2012, p. 11.

²⁷² López Jordà, T. (2012, August 14). “Al ADO le falla el plan”. *La Vanguardia*, pp. 34–5.

individuals²⁷³. The situation of underfunded sports such as boxing²⁷⁴, modern pentathlon²⁷⁵ and sailing²⁷⁶ was also commented on.

Moving on to the area of commercial endorsements of athletes and marketing, the media reflected on the criticism of IOC's Rule 40, a "regulation that prevents athletes from advertising for non-Olympic sponsors just before and during the Games²⁷⁷". US athletes launched a barefoot protest against this rule²⁷⁸ while brands including Nike²⁷⁹ and Dr. Dre²⁸⁰ circumvented the strict rules by carrying out ambush marketing campaigns. Quality newspapers also criticized the restrictive branding policy "which seemed to be vicious on local traders and anyone who wanted to produce anything connected with the Olympic Games that used the word 'London 2012²⁸¹'" (Richard Haynes, interview, October 2013). The newspapers in question reported on the examples of small shops in Stratford²⁸² and a butcher in Weymouth, who had to remove a sign featuring the five Olympic rings that were depicted as being made of sausages²⁸³. *The New York Times* even quoted Alan Tomlinson, a professor at the University of Brighton, who explained that they couldn't use the phrase "London 2012" to name a series of lectures²⁸⁴.

²⁷³ Shipley, A. (2012, August 13). "American women take a stand ... again and again". *The Washington Post*, p. D7.

²⁷⁴ Wise, M. (2012, August 3). "U.S. fighters are boxed in by an underfunded system". *The Washington Post*, p. D5.

²⁷⁵ Breen, M. (2012, July 24). "Stettinius does not have a job yet, but she does have a chance at gold". *The Washington Post*, p. D3.

²⁷⁶ Breen, M. (2012, July 20). "Windsurfing to London on her own dime". *The Washington Post*, pp. D1, D4.

²⁷⁷ Belson, K. (2012, July 31). "Olympians take to Twitter to protest endorsement rule". *The New York Times*, p. B11.

²⁷⁸ Bull, A. (2012, July 20). "US athletes start barefoot protest on sponsor rule". *The Guardian*, p. 44.

²⁷⁹ Sweney, M. (2012, July 26). "Sponsors in the limelight". *The Guardian*, p. 11.

²⁸⁰ Sweney, M. (2012, August 1). "Heads-up to athletes". *The Guardian*, 01/08/2012, p. 2. See also: Das, A.; Martin, A. (2012, August 2). "Tuning out Olympic edict". *The New York Times*, pp. B11, B13.

²⁸¹ According to Erickson and Wei (2015: 411), "the London 2012 Games represented the widest enclosure of words and symbols so far in the history of the Olympics, including restrictions on combinations of words such as 'summer' '2012' and 'medals', terms which would not normally enjoy protection as trade marks".

²⁸² Robinson, A. (2012, August 10). "Oro en marketing". *La Vanguardia*, p. 19.

²⁸³ Longman, J. (2012, July 25). "When even sausage rings are put on the chopping block". *The New York Times*, p. B11.

²⁸⁴ Segal, D. (2012, July 25). "Brand police are on the prowl for ambush marketers". *The New York Times*, p. B11.

Further economic aspects covered include reports on: (1) the economic situation of the IOC²⁸⁵; (2) former Olympians who made money selling their experiences to businesses²⁸⁶; (3) companies' hopes of getting a future boost from the Olympics²⁸⁷; (4) forthcoming endorsement deals for the top Olympic stars²⁸⁸ and the economic difficulties experienced by the overwhelming majority of Olympians²⁸⁹; (5) the criticism of Olympic corporate sponsors such as McDonald's and Visa²⁹⁰; and (6) the recognition of the commercialization of the Games and the economic engines behind them²⁹¹.

4.1.3.4.3. Legacy

With regard to legacy, the British media explained in a systematic way how the Olympic venues would be utilized after the event. Print newspapers outlined the future use of sporting facilities²⁹² such as the Velodrome, the Water Polo Arena, the Riverbank Arena, the Copper Box Arena, the Lee Valley White Water Centre and the Olympic Stadium²⁹³. The media also highlighted the fact that the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park would have "new homes, schools, businesses, and open green spaces²⁹⁴". The Park would also become a cultural hub²⁹⁵. Despite the official discourses of the "feel-good factor", the British media remained conscious that it might take a generation to achieve the promises of "employment, rising school standards and

²⁸⁵ "El COI presume de reserva financiera" (2012, July 25). *La Vanguardia*, p. 39.

²⁸⁶ Goodley, S. (2012, July 29). "Energetic, inspiring, confusing: former UK medallists try to qualify in the corporate training business". *The Guardian*, pp. 40–1.

²⁸⁷ "Gibbons sees gold" (2012, August 11). *The Daily Telegraph*, p. 33.

²⁸⁸ Goodley, S. (2012, August 17). "Where there's medals there's brass". *The Guardian*, p. 31. See also: Rainey, S. (2012, August 18). "The athletes whose winning ways will see them going for more gold". *The Daily Telegraph*, p. 24.

²⁸⁹ Segal, D. (2012, August 4). "They win gold, but a pot of it rarely follows". *The New York Times*, pp. A1, D2.

²⁹⁰ Bearak, B. (2012, August 13). "A full plate of inspiring competition". *The New York Times*, p. D2. See also: Lyall, S. (2012, August 13). "A smooth event, safe and mellow". *The New York Times*, p. D2.

²⁹¹ Fahri, P. (2012, August 11). "Let's be honest, gold is the currency that runs the Olympics". *The Washington Post*, pp. C1, C3.

²⁹² Kinder, L. (2012, August 11). "What happens to venues after the Games?" *The Daily Telegraph*, p. S34.

²⁹³ Wallop, H. (2012, August 18). "Is the Olympic Park for everyone, too?" *The Daily Telegraph*, p. 24.

²⁹⁴ "What happens next to the velodrome, Copper Box and the village?" (2012, August 12). *The Guardian*, p.4.

²⁹⁵ Kirkup, J. (2012, August 13). "Park to become cultural". *The Daily Telegraph*, p. 11.

good, affordable housing²⁹⁶” for the area. For their own part, the international print media also provided a panoramic look at the different venues and examined their future purposes²⁹⁷.

The transformation²⁹⁸ of East London since 2005 had been extensively reported in the build-up to the Games, but that didn’t discourage the media from continuing to look for any less than salubrious areas that remained. For example, in the piece “The land that time forgot²⁹⁹”, *The Guardian* explained that the area stretching from the south of the Olympic site to the Thames had not been completely regenerated. As pointed out in the newspaper, “Sugarhouse Lane – a long and winding dead-end of abandoned industrial buildings – has hardly changed at all”. *El País*’ correspondent, Walter Oppenheimer, raised the awareness of the Carpenters Estate, whose inhabitants and shop owners suffered the consequences of the regeneration of the zone³⁰⁰. The same journalist highlighted the ongoing contradictions of Newham, still characterized by huge social problems, including an index of unemployment 50% higher than the rest of the country and worse schooling results than the London average³⁰¹. *The New York Times* posed further questions about the rising cost of living in East London and the possible future exclusion of people on low incomes³⁰². These types of pieces that provided the not-so-favourable views about the legacy of the Olympics in the London boroughs

²⁹⁶ “Good sports” (2012, July 21). *The Guardian*, p. 44.

²⁹⁷ See: Russell, J.R. (2012, July 22). “Design sense and sensibility: function outweighs form”. *The Washington Post*, p. E2; Vivanco, F. (2012, July 22). “Como anillo (olímpico) al dedo”. *La Vanguardia*, p. 50.

²⁹⁸ We must not forget that “mega-events like the Olympic Games are widely regarded as key opportunities for cities to accelerate large-scale urban development projects” (Scherer, 2011: 782). London’s East End underwent a serious regeneration (Docklands, Thames Gateway and the Lower Lea Valley). As happened with the revitalization of Barcelona with the 1992 Olympics (Gallagher, 2012), London 2012 represented “a once in a generation opportunity to regenerate the city’s East End” (Raco and Tunney, 2010: 2069). As Horne and Whannel (2011: 10) point out “the eastern inner-city boroughs of London were socially deprived areas, with poor transport links and extensive derelict sites which formerly housed industry, docks and railway sidings”. Poynter and MacRury (2009) explain in detail the process of the urban regeneration of East London, as well as the social and economic legacies and the environmental and sustainability issues with regard to London 2012.

²⁹⁹ Stanley, B. (2012, July 25). “The land that time forgot”. *The Guardian*, G2, pp. 9–11.

³⁰⁰ Oppenheimer, W. (2012, July 6). “Cara y cruz en Carpenters Estate”. *El País*, p. 50.

³⁰¹ Oppenheimer, W. (2012, August 8). “ExCeL, poco ‘glamour’, mucha miga”. *El País*, p. 50.

³⁰² Bennhold, K.; Castle, S. (2012, July 28). “A makeover for the Olympics leaves East London optimistic”. *The New York Times*, p. A10.

could also be found in many other foreign publications such as *El Mundo*³⁰³ and *USA Today*³⁰⁴.

The most prominent theme covered throughout the newspapers was, in fact, the debate about the legacy of sport at schools³⁰⁵. We should take into account the fact that planned intangible benefits of London 2012 included “motivating and inspiring children”, “promoting healthy living” (Atkinson et al., 2008: 426–7) and enhancing sports participation (Girginov and Hills, 2008). Despite the promise that London 2012 would “inspire a generation of young people through sport” and the coalition agreement that they would “seek to protect school playing fields³⁰⁶”, quality newspapers provided a critical account of the fact that under the direction of the Secretary of State for Education, Michael Gove, 31 school playing fields had been sold nationwide³⁰⁷. *The Daily Telegraph* reported that Gove “overruled recommendations [of the independent School Playing Fields Advisory Panel] not to sell school playing fields five times between February 2011 and July this year [2012], more than for the previous nine years³⁰⁸”. Moreover, it was disclosed that 2,000 academy schools could be sold off without any independent checks³⁰⁹. Furthermore, newspapers also critically reflected on the fact that Gove had “relaxed government regulations on the minimum outdoor space schools must provide pupils for team games³¹⁰”.

³⁰³ Pérez, B. (2012, July 25). “El azote de los Juegos Olímpicos”. *El Mundo*, p. 56.

³⁰⁴ Watson, T. (2012, August 9). “Some residents near Olympic Park grouse about Games”. *USA Today*, p. 6D.

³⁰⁵ Beyond the school buildings themselves, *The Guardian*’s David Conn also highlighted the fact that “playing fields, sports centres and swimming pools, and the staff to run them, are under threat and many budgets are being cut”. This represented a crucial problem, taking into account the fact that Britain is the “18th in the world league of physically active nations, with 63% of the population failing to do 2.5 hours of moderate exercise a week”. See: Conn, D. (2012, August 15). “Inspire a generation? That needs cash as well as Olympic glory”. *The Guardian*, pp. 8–9; Boffey, D. (2012, August 12). “This must be the Games that changes profile of women’s sport for ever, urges Labour”. *The Guardian*, p. 6.

³⁰⁶ Campbell, D. (2012, August 7). “Minister’s own goal on sport”. *The Guardian*, p. 8.

³⁰⁷ Vasagar, J.; Gibson, O.; Herbert, T. (2012, August 7). “School field sell-off puts legacy at risk”. *The Guardian*, p. 8. See also: Vasagar, J. (2012, August 18). “Olympic torch school playing fields to be sold”. *The Guardian*, p. 2.

³⁰⁸ Hope, C. (2012, August 17). “Gove defied playing field advice”. *The Daily Telegraph*, pp. 1–2.

³⁰⁹ Hope, C. (2012, August 18). “Academy playing fields can be sold off”. *The Daily Telegraph*, pp. 1–4.

³¹⁰ Vasagar, J.; Mansell, W. (2012, August 15). “Fears of school fields sale after change in rules”. *The Guardian*, p. 12. See also: “A sporting change” (2012, August 16). *The Daily Telegraph*, p. 19.

In addition to the selling of playing fields, the media critically shed light on the fact that £165 million of funding for school sports had been cut³¹¹, that the two weekly hours of physical education had been scrapped³¹² and that there were fewer and fewer opportunities for young people to participate in sport³¹³. These issues were connected with a crucial paradox: the gulf between independent and state schools, which became particularly clear in the light of a study published by the Sutton Trust. In the British private versus state school system, “almost four-in-10 British Olympic medallists were privately educated”, even though the sector “educates just seven per cent of the population³¹⁴”. Many voices, including Lord Moynihan³¹⁵ (head of the British Olympic Association), Lord Coe³¹⁶ (head of LOCOG) and Anthony Seldon³¹⁷ (master of Wellington College), were included in the coverage expressing the need to go beyond the current elitist sports policy.

According to Vincent, the debate on sport at schools was well delivered by British newspapers:

I enjoyed the debate that happened during the Olympics in both the tabloid and the serious newspapers where journalists pointed out the fact that the lottery funding had provided opportunities for many athletes to be successful. But that was set against the background where school fields had been sold off and the public school and education system, there were fewer and fewer opportunities for young people to participate in sport, and particularly in competitive sport. I think that journalists did a pretty good job in pointing out the hypocrisy of a government and a Prime Minister that was on the one hand saying that the nation should be joyful at the success of the British athletes but at the same time had cut funding for sport at schools and in the educational context and lessened the opportunities for future generations to follow in the footsteps of the British Olympic success in 2012 (John Vincent, interview, July 2014).

³¹¹ Kelso, P. (2012, August 7). “Coe demands ‘high quality’ legacy”. *The Daily Telegraph*, p. S5.

³¹² Paton, G. (2012, August 8). “Compulsory 2 hours of PE scrapped”. *The Daily Telegraph*, p. 8. See also: Wintour, P. (2012, August 9). “Holmes wades into school PE row as Cameron derides Labour’s two-hour target”. *The Guardian*, p. 23; Oppenheimer, W. (2012, August 10). “Patriotismo olímpico”. *El País*, p. 56.

³¹³ Gibson, O. (2012, July 18). “Funding cuts lead to drop in support for school sport”. *The Guardian*, p. 6.

³¹⁴ Paton, G. (2012, August 14). “Medal table shows up sporting gulf in schools”. *The Daily Telegraph*, p. 4. See also: Vasagar, J. (2012, August 14). “Private schooling for a third of GB medallists”. *The Guardian*, p. 9.

³¹⁵ Rayner, G. (2012, August 6). “‘Fund school sport’ for next generation champions”. *The Daily Telegraph*, p. 6. See also: Booth, R. (2012, August 6). “UK must spend more on sport”. *The Guardian*, p. 7.

³¹⁶ Kirkup, J. (2012, August 7). “State schools ‘letting down’ Olympians of the future”. *The Daily Telegraph*, p. 8.

³¹⁷ Seldon, A. (2012, August 8). “All our young deserve a fair shot at sport”. *The Daily Telegraph*, p. 17.

It should be highlighted that the debate on legacy continued in certain arenas after London 2012. *The Guardian's* Olympic legacy Sportblog explained in 2015 that “meanwhile childhood obesity rates continue to rise, PE in schools continues to decline, provision of facilities remains frustratingly patchy and participation figures suggest a widening gap between the sporting haves and have nots³¹⁸”.

4.1.3.4.4. Geopolitical issues

The coverage of geopolitical issues mainly revolved around two core themes: the meetings and summits during the Olympics and the diplomatic errors. In the first case, the media explained that David Cameron organized a total of 17 summits as the government sought to “exploit the presence of scores of heads of government and state for the Olympics to raise at least £1bn of inward investment³¹⁹”. Many of these heads of government and state were also reported as attending the opening ceremony³²⁰. The diplomatic meeting of Cameron with Vladimir Putin to discuss the Syrian crisis also received exposure in the British and international newspapers³²¹. Moving on to the diplomatic errors, Mitt Romney’s gaffe, when he questioned whether London was ready to stage a successful Olympics hit the British³²², American³²³ and Spanish³²⁴ newspapers on the front pages and in the international/world sections. Significant media attention was also given to the error regarding North Korea’s flag at the start of the women’s football tournament. In this unfortunate case, North Korea

³¹⁸ Gibson, O. (2015, March 25). “Golden promises of London 2012’s legacy turn out to be idle boasts”. *The Guardian*. <http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/blog/2015/mar/25/olympic-legacy-london-2012-idle-boasts> [Last access: 22-09-2015].

³¹⁹ Watt, N. (2012, July 24). “Cameron holds 17 summits to boost UK economy”. *The Guardian*, p. 5.

³²⁰ Borger, J. (2012, July 27). “VIPs ride ‘school-trip’ shuttle to ceremony”. *The Guardian*, p. 4.

³²¹ Wintour, P. (2012, August 2). “Cameron to raise Syria, but will Putin focus on judo?” *The Guardian*, p. 9; “Honored guests” (2012, August 3). *The New York Times*, p. B16; Ramos, R. (2012, August 3). “Putin recuerda a Cameron su defensa de El Asad”. *La Vanguardia*, pp. 4–5.

³²² Watt, N.; Mulholland, H.; Gibson, O. (2012, July 27). “Mitt falls at the first hurdle”. *The Guardian*, p. 4; Swaine, J.; Hope, C. (2012, July 27). “Hardly a ringing endorsement from the visiting presidential hopeful”. *The Daily Telegraph*, p. 4.

³²³ Parker, A. (2012, July 27). “A visitor’s questions on readiness for Games prompt a curt response”. *The New York Times*, p. A14; Parker, A. (2012, July 28). “For Romney, an Olympic stage less welcoming than the one in 2002”. *The New York Times*, p. A15; Rucker, P. (2012, July 27). “Romney tries to steer around Olympics gaffe”. *The Washington Post*, pp. A1, A4.

³²⁴ Alandete, D.; Oppenheimer, W. (2012, July 28). “Romney hunde su imagen en Londres”. *El País*, p. 9.

initially refused to play their match against Colombia because the South Korean flag was shown on the video board³²⁵.

Apart from the issues already mentioned, other geopolitical aspects covered included: (1) the protest with regard to some Ukrainian cities being included under Russia on the London 2012 website³²⁶; (2) the situation of Taiwan (obliged to compete under the flag and agreed name of Chinese Taipei³²⁷); (3) the non-recognition of Kosovo as part of the Olympic family of nations³²⁸; (4) the political display of a South Korean footballer (Park Jong-woo) in his team's victory over Japan³²⁹; (5) the opposition of Saudi Arabia, Iran and Mexico with regard to having their flags modified with the logo of the Games³³⁰; and (6) the fact that Belarus's autocratic president, Aleksandr Lukashenko, was denied entry to Britain³³¹.

The long-standing geopolitical confrontation between Iran and Israel also came to the fore in the coverage of London 2012. *The New York Times* reported that Iran, criticized in the past "because some of its athletes withdrew from events against Israelis", had no plans to boycott the Olympics in 2012³³². However, *The Washington Post*³³³ and *The Guardian*³³⁴ noted that the Iranian judoka Javad Mahjood was sick so he wouldn't be able to attend the Games; possibly he withdrew in order not to have to compete against an Israeli. Another piece of news in *The Daily Telegraph* highlighted the fact that the Lebanese judo team had refused to train alongside the Israeli team,

³²⁵ Murray, E. (2012, July 26). "The flag of inconvenience". *The Guardian*, p. 1. See also: Kelso, P. (2012, July 26). "Flag blunder angers North Koreans". *The Daily Telegraph*, p. S2; Oppenheimer, W. (2012, July 26). "Plante a Corea del Norte por su bandera". *El País*, p. 48; Borden, S. (2012, July 26). "U.S. seizes opening as Olympics begin". *The New York Times*, pp. B12, B17; AP (2012, July 26). "The wrong Korea". *The Washington Post*, p. D8.

³²⁶ Vivanco, F. (2012, July 27). "Fuera de juego diplomático". *La Vanguardia*, p. 42.

³²⁷ Walker, P. (2012, July 31). "We have to use this name and flag. It's political reality". *The Guardian*, Olympics 2012, p. 12.

³²⁸ Jackson, J. (2012, July 30). "I don't know why politics must come before everything". *The Guardian*, Olympics 2012, p. 12.

³²⁹ Das, A. (2012, August 12). "Politics atop podium". *The New York Times*, p. SP6.

³³⁰ Vivanco, F. (2012, August 1). "El club de las banderas rebeldes". *La Vanguardia*, p. 39.

³³¹ Roth, A. (2012, July 26). "Belarus: leader barred from Olympics". *The New York Times*, p. A8; News services (2012, July 26). "Belarus president denied entry to Britain". *The Washington Post*, p. A10.

³³² AP (2012, July 24). "Iranians will face Israelis". *The New York Times*, p. B13.

³³³ Rezaian, J. (2012, July 25). "Iran averts Olympic encounter with Israel". *The Washington Post*, p. A12.

³³⁴ Kamali Dehghan, S. (2012, August 10). "Team's unprecedented success a big positive amid the negatives". *The Guardian*, Olympics 2012, p. 14.

“demanding that a curtain screen be erected so that the athletes would not have to see each other³³⁵”.

Further noteworthy elements were detected in comment articles that provided a historical overview of the geopolitics of the Olympic Games. *El País'* columnist Miguel Ángel Bastenier explained that the choice of every host city for the Olympics since World War II had been influenced by geopolitical decisions³³⁶. Pascal Boniface, director of the Institute for International and Strategic Relations in Paris, wrote an article in *La Vanguardia* about the close relationship between the Olympic Games and geopolitics³³⁷. Walter Laqueur, from the Centre for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, also provided his perspective on the power of the Olympics in the international scenario³³⁸. Last but not least, in a piece in *The Washington Post* after the Games, Richard N. Hass (president of the Council on Foreign Relations) explored what the final medal tally revealed about contemporary theories of international relations³³⁹.

4.1.3.4.5. Security

With regard to security, both the British and the international media criticized G4S for not having enough personnel³⁴⁰, making the public aware of the concerns over security and trying to put pressure on the government to bring the military in³⁴¹. G4S, the world's largest security firm, “could not supply their original target of 10,400 guards³⁴²”

³³⁵ Magnay, J. (2012, July 28). “Organisers draw curtain in Lebanon row with Israel”. *The Daily Telegraph*, London 2012 Supplement, p. S28.

³³⁶ Bastenier, M.A. (2012, August 2). “El Gran Juego de los JJOO”. *El País*, p. 53.

³³⁷ Boniface, P. (2012, July 20). “Juegos Olímpicos y política”. *La Vanguardia*, p. 18.

³³⁸ Laqueur, W. (2012, July 30). “El poder del deporte”. *La Vanguardia*, p. 15.

³³⁹ Hass, R. (2012, August 19). “Who runs the world?”. *The Washington Post*, p. B3.

³⁴⁰ As explained by *La Vanguardia's* journalist Juan Bautista Martínez, in January 2012 G4S started to train thousands of young people to work at the Olympic venues, but it actually gave only a few of them a work contract and for the majority jobs weren't guaranteed. When the Games were approaching, G4S representatives “realized that many of the people they counted on to guard the facilities had already found another job”. See: Martínez, J.B. (2012, July 25). “Los Juegos del control”. *La Vanguardia*, p. 39.

³⁴¹ As a consequence of the G4S fiasco, the media reported that local police forces had been asked to run security in the Olympic venues in Manchester and Glasgow, among others. See: Syal, R. (2012, July 21). “G4S contracts at risk as private firms leave trail of chaos in public sector”. *The Guardian*, pp. 18–19. In other cases, local companies were used to look after security, as happened at St James' Park in Newcastle. See: “Newcastle replace G4S” (2012, July 24). *The Daily Telegraph*, p. S8.

³⁴² Travis, A.; Hopkins, N.; Gibson, O. (2012, July 18). “Up to 2,000 more troops may be called up to fill gap”. *The Guardian*, p. 4.

(in fact, it only provided 6,000 security staff³⁴³) and the home secretary had to call in 1,200 armed forces personnel to fill the gap³⁴⁴.

Security did turn out to be “less problematic than feared³⁴⁵” and there were no scares³⁴⁶. The display of military personnel “provided a highly visible reassurance to the public³⁴⁷”. However, newspapers such as *The Guardian* carried on doing their public duty. The newspaper published a series of articles written by an undercover security guard, who explained key malpractices at G4S, such as the lack of proper X-ray training and concerns about the “safety of the bag screening process³⁴⁸”, the “12-hour shifts without proper breaks³⁴⁹” and the fact that a team had “failed to spot half the fake guns, knives and homemade bombs³⁵⁰”.

According to Vincent, the British quality media did a very good job of explaining the controversy surrounding G4S and the issue was well reported throughout the newspapers in question. When they felt criticism was necessary it was given:

I think that media made the public aware of the security issues in the lead-up to the Olympic Games and the fact that the security services were outsourced largely but the private firm wouldn't do well, the security was an issue and I think that in the end, media at least played a role in putting pressure on the government to at the last minute bring the military in (John Vincent, interview, July 2014).

Apart from the G4S controversy, other issues linked to security in the run-up to the Olympics and during the actual event were reported by print media. These issues include: (1) the arrest of the artist Darren Cullen by the British Transport Police³⁵¹; (2) the RAF preparing to fight against any eventual terrorist emergency that could come from the sky³⁵²; (3) the scrambling of a Typhoon fighter after a commercial jet entered

³⁴³ Booth, R.; Hopkins, N. (2012, July 25). “1,200 extra military personnel drafted in to protect the Games”. *The Guardian*, p. 12.

³⁴⁴ Kirkup, J. (2012, July 25). “Extra 1,200 Armed Forces make our venues even safer, says Locog”. *The Daily Telegraph*, pp. 6–7.

³⁴⁵ “A first week full of wonder” (2012, August 4). *The Guardian*, p. 42.

³⁴⁶ Segal, D. (2012, August 13). “Britain takes a final bow”. *The New York Times*, pp. D1, D3.

³⁴⁷ “The security services also deserve a medal” (2012, August 14). *The Daily Telegraph*, p. 21.

³⁴⁸ The Secret Security Guard (2012, August 7). “At the end of a 13-hour shift you do start to miss things”. *The Guardian*, p. 9.

³⁴⁹ Hopkins, N. (2012, August 7). “G4S using untrained staff to screen visitors”. *The Guardian*, p. 9.

³⁵⁰ The Secret Security Guard (2012, August 1). “We are the Millwall of the Olympics...” *The Guardian*, pp. 8–9.

³⁵¹ Addley, E.; Laville, S.; Quinn, B. (2012, July 19). “Arrests show writing's on the wall for graffiti artists”. *The Guardian*, p. 13.

³⁵² Burns, J.F. (2012, August 2). “An Olympics vigil, from 30,000 feet”. *The New York Times*, p. A5.

the airspace over London 2012³⁵³; (4) the arrests of Ashley Gill-Webb (who threw a plastic bottle on to the track before the men's 100 metres final)³⁵⁴ and a Frenchman (who was eventually held for assault at the Royal Artillery Barracks)³⁵⁵ inside Olympic venues; and (5) the report that 276 people had been arrested in and around London's Olympic venues during the period of the Games (including 168 for ticket touting, 22 for drug offences, 17 for assault and 11 for theft)³⁵⁶. After the end of the Olympics, *The Guardian* also reported that it had learned that "the security services warned the Olympic authorities about a potential cyber-attack on their power supply days before the Games opening ceremony³⁵⁷". Curiously, before the start of the Games, other foreign publications such as the *Los Angeles Times* had already raised the possibility of cyber attacks during London 2012³⁵⁸.

4.1.3.4.6. Ticketing

British newspapers³⁵⁹, along with the international press, did a good job of questioning and raising the awareness about the hypocrisy involved in the ticket allocation³⁶⁰ and the controversy over empty seats³⁶¹, which were reserved for members of the so-called "Olympic family³⁶²". At the start of the Games, thousands of seats remained empty in

³⁵³ "Typhoon scrambled" (2012, July 26). *The Guardian*, p. 10.

³⁵⁴ Gibson, O. (2012, August 7). "Bottle-hurler 'dishonoured sport'". *The Guardian*, p. 2.

³⁵⁵ "Man held over assault" (2012, July 30). *The Daily Telegraph*, p. 4.

³⁵⁶ Rayner, G.; Marsden, S. (2012, August 14). "Crime falls 5pc as feel-good factor takes hold". *The Daily Telegraph*, p. 4.

³⁵⁷ Norton-Taylor, R. (2012, August 16). "Cyber-attack alert sparked checks on eve of the Games". *The Guardian*, pp. 1–2.

³⁵⁸ Faughnder, R. (2012, July 26). "Hackers to give Olympics staff a workout". *Los Angeles Times*, pp. B1, B5.

³⁵⁹ As well as the newspapers examined for the study, other British quality newspapers such as *The Independent* and *The Times* also made a conscious effort to report on this problem. See, for instance: Peck, T. (2012, July 30). "Empty seats fiasco: Locog calls in the Army (again)". *The Independent*, pp. 1, 3; Lawton, J. (2012, July 30). "Empty seats are betraying idea of the people's Games". *The Independent*, London 2012, p. 8; Brown, D.; O'Connor, A. (2012, July 30). "Troops are sent in to fill empty seats as athletes' dismay turns to anger". *The Times*, p. 6.

³⁶⁰ Before the timeframe of the observation, newspapers such as *The Telegraph* also reported on the sales of thousands of Olympic tickets to corporate sponsors behind closed doors, an issue that clearly limited citizens' opportunities to obtain tickets for the best events. See: Magnay, J. (2012, July 10). "Thousands of unsold Olympic tickets offered to sponsors". *The Daily Telegraph*, p. 7.

³⁶¹ Kirkup, J. (2012, August 2). "Last-minute chance to get seat in the stadium". *The Daily Telegraph*, p. 7.

³⁶² As pointed out by Giulianotti et al. (2015: 105), "after the Games, U.K. media widely reported an official review of Olympic ticketing, which revealed the disproportionately large numbers of prestige tickets given to the 'Olympic Family'; for example, the wider public received only 44% of tickets for

many events, instead of them being made available for the general public³⁶³. The army had to be brought in to fill the vacant seats³⁶⁴ and tickets were also handed “to students and teachers from the neighbourhoods around the Olympic Park³⁶⁵”. Despite the fact that the organizers were reported to be “investigating which bodies did not use the seats and issuing warnings that tickets would be redistributed if the problem persisted³⁶⁶”, *The Telegraph* critically noted that LOCOG refused “to provide a detailed breakdown” of who was taking up the seats and who was not³⁶⁷. More tickets did become available for sale, but the slowness of the web platform made it difficult for citizens to acquire them³⁶⁸. According to Vincent:

Newspapers in Britain, and also foreign papers, did a really good job of highlighting the problem of the empty seats and hypocrisy involved in the ticket allocation, particularly because many of the public wanted tickets but would be denied that opportunity and the seats went to various Olympic national governing bodies and corporate sponsors. I think that there could have been more criticism and it may have been muted because it was the home Games, but there were lots of photographs of empty seats and lots of questions asked (John Vincent, interview, July 2014).

In addition to this, *The Telegraph* reported that some unsold tickets for the most popular events (50,000) remained in the hands of agencies abroad, which hoped to cash in with last-minute, expensive hospitality packages³⁶⁹. These packages included travel and hotel accommodation, which enabled agencies to charge whatever they wanted for them. Therefore, as pointed out by Rafael Ramos, the profit margins for these companies were huge³⁷⁰. Regarding the cheapest tickets, *The Telegraph* also explained that the agencies did not return them given that the “process of returning them to LOCOG takes up to five minutes per ticket, because each ticket’s details must

the Opening Ceremony, 43% for some major cycling finals, 3% for some top tennis fixtures, and 0.12% for one sailing final”.

³⁶³ Gibson, O.; Booth, R. (2012, July 29). “Thousands of empty seats on day one raise questions over ticket allocation”. *The Guardian*, p. 4.

³⁶⁴ Booth, R.; Gibson, O. (2012, July 30). “Army brought in to fill seats left empty by ‘Olympic family’”. *The Guardian*, p. 4.

³⁶⁵ Das, A. (2012, July 31). “More vacancies”. *The New York Times*, p. B13.

³⁶⁶ Magnay, J. (2012, July 29). “The ‘family’ who couldn’t be bothered to take their seats”. *The Sunday Telegraph*, p. 5.

³⁶⁷ Magnay, J. (2012, August 5). “Tickets touchy subject”. *The Sunday Telegraph*, London 2012 Supplement, p. S17.

³⁶⁸ Peacock, L. (2012, August 1). “Rush of adrenalin but the unsold seats dash ends with a gold in disappointment”. *The Daily Telegraph*, p. 4. See also: Gibson, O. (2012, August 4). “Week one verdict”. *The Guardian*, p. 13; Crace, J. (2012, August 6). “Royal Mail’s golden blunder”. *The Guardian*, p. 4.

³⁶⁹ Rayner, G. (2012, July 30). “‘Fiasco’ of the 12,000 empty seats”. *The Daily Telegraph*, pp. 1, 4.

³⁷⁰ Ramos, R. (2012, July 31). “Sin entradas y con gradas vacías”. *La Vanguardia*, p. 37.

be manually put into a computer, which is too time-consuming to be worth the companies' while³⁷¹".

The British and American media also directed criticism towards the CoSport ticket agency, the biggest overseas distribution agency for London 2012 tickets. Two weeks in advance of the Games, the company stopped shipping American customers the tickets they had purchased³⁷² and they therefore had to collect them in London. According to *The New York Times*, "those customers had the shipping fees returned but they were also obligated to carve time out of their vacations to wait at the will-call center". In fact, the agency made fans wait for up to six hours to pick up their tickets from a centre near Paddington³⁷³.

Moreover, the media criticized the confusion about the "non-ticketed" events such as the archery ranking round³⁷⁴, which "meant hundreds of spectators were turned away at the gate after being told they could not enter the ground³⁷⁵". Despite the fact that "the event was officially listed as closed to the public", on some websites "it appeared to have similar status to cycling road races, which the public can attend for free³⁷⁶".

On top of this, it was pointed out that, surprisingly, the pricing of the tickets had been "so random that a £50 ticket at the very top of the stadium on the home straight gave a brilliant view while a £450 ticket seat was on the back straight with the hammer cage blocking most of the field of play³⁷⁷". Last but not least, the British and foreign media reported on the black market operation (including the closure of unauthorized ticket traders' websites such as Euroteam³⁷⁸) and the arrest of ticket touts, who had "been exploiting the confusion about empty seats by turning up outside the Olympic Park and other venues despite the threat of arrest by undercover police³⁷⁹".

³⁷¹ Rayner, G.; Magnay, J. (2012, July 30). "Promise of no empty seats returns to haunt Coe". *The Daily Telegraph*, p. 4.

³⁷² Pilon, M. (2012, July 18). "Olympic dream vacations, minus tickets". *The New York Times*, p. B15.

³⁷³ Belson, K. (2012, July 25). "Tickets online still mean time in line". *The New York Times*, p. B12.

³⁷⁴ Davies, L. (2012, July 28). "Slings and arrows from disappointed spectators". *The Guardian*, p. 5.

³⁷⁵ Liew, J. (2012, July 28). "Ticketless archery fans turned away at Lord's". *The Daily Telegraph*, London 2012 Supplement, p. S9.

³⁷⁶ "Archery is a miss" (2012, July 28). *The Daily Telegraph*, p. 8.

³⁷⁷ Magnay, J. (2012, August 12). "Cheap seats are still hottest tickets in town". *The Sunday Telegraph*, p. S6.

³⁷⁸ AP (2012, August 2). "Black market ticket ring disbanded". *The Washington Post*, p. D9.

³⁷⁹ Laville, S. (2012, July 30). "10 charged as touts try their luck outside park". *The Guardian*, p. 6.

4.1.3.4.7. Transport

In the lead-up to the Games, the media did a good job in raising awareness about the introduction of special reserved “Games lanes” (the so-called “Zil lanes”) exclusively intended for athletes and officials and critically depicted as “one of the most controversial elements of a series of rules imposed by the LOCOG³⁸⁰”. When the lanes came into force, large traffic queues and congestion were reported³⁸¹. Moreover, taxi drivers, who were not allowed to use the lanes, staged some protests, which were briefly covered by the press³⁸². After a few days, the lanes were opened to “regular motorists after Games officials bowed to pressure and used public transport instead of driving³⁸³”.

Other problems, such as the delays to the US and Australian teams’ buses from Heathrow Airport to the Olympic Park³⁸⁴ were also mentioned. However, by and large, the transport system worked very well³⁸⁵ and coped adequately with the influx of users, so the media didn’t pay much attention to it during the actual event. Minor transport issues, such as: Tube failures on the Central Line³⁸⁶; problems at King’s Cross railway station³⁸⁷; the heat affecting cables on the rail network³⁸⁸; the breakdown of a cable car³⁸⁹; disruptions to the Javelin high-speed train³⁹⁰; and misunderstandings with

³⁸⁰ Watt, N.; Topham, G. (2012, July 24). “Ministers will keep their ‘Zil lane’ use to a minimum, says N°10”. *The Guardian*, p. 7.

³⁸¹ Millward, D. (2012, July 26). “‘Normal’ 12-mile tailback as the Games lanes take effect”. *The Daily Telegraph*, p. 4.

³⁸² “Cabbies protest” (2012, July 18). *The Daily Telegraph*, p. 4; “New cab driver protest at Games lanes ban” (2012, July 27). *The Daily Telegraph*, p. 5.

³⁸³ Millward, D. (2012, July 31). “Games lanes opened as officials take the Tube”. *The Daily Telegraph*, p. 4.

³⁸⁴ Cowell, A. (2012, July 18). “British parliament investigates shortfall in Olympics security”. *The New York Times*, p. A9; Gibson, O. (2012, July 19). “Organisers play down Olympic village water problems”. *The Guardian*, p. 44.

³⁸⁵ Lewis, T. (2012, August 12). “The fans, the parties, the venues, the BBC ... how did London rate?” *The Guardian*, p. 26. See also: Gibson, O.; Hopkins, N.; Elliott, L. (2012, August 13). “Good at Games: where it all went right for Britain”. *The Guardian*, p. 6.

³⁸⁶ “Tube failure” (2012, August 4). *The Daily Telegraph*, p. 6.

³⁸⁷ “Halted in their tracks” (2012, August 6). *The Daily Telegraph*, p. 4.

³⁸⁸ Travis, A.; Topham, G.; Gibson, O. (2012, July 25). “Last-ditch high court bid to halt Heathrow strike”. *The Guardian*, pp. 10–11.

³⁸⁹ Hough, A. (2012, July 26). “Breakdown leaves scores dangling”. *The Daily Telegraph*, p. 4.

³⁹⁰ Macaskill, S.; Somaiya, R. (2012, July 26). “Olympics test limits of London commuters’ patience”. *The New York Times*, p. A10. See also: Taylor, M. (2012, August 1). “Javelin rail service disrupted”. *The Guardian*, p. 6.

regard to the signs indicating the route to the Javelin at St Pancras International railway station³⁹¹, were briefly reported.

4.1.3.4.8. Other negative issues

Moving on from the issues of security, ticketing and transport, other negative aspects were mentioned during the period studied, even though many of them were minimized. These include: (1) strike threats by the border guards on the eve of the Games³⁹² and afterwards by Tube cleaners over an Olympic bonus payment³⁹³; (2) the excessive heat in the swimming pool³⁹⁴; (3) the excessive volume of music in the stadium³⁹⁵; (4) the blind spots with regard to viewing the diving events at the Aquatics Centre³⁹⁶; (5) food shortages at the Olympic Park, Greenwich Park, Wembley and Old Trafford³⁹⁷; (6) water leaks in the Velodrome roof³⁹⁸; (7) water problems in the Olympic Village³⁹⁹; (8) the big queues⁴⁰⁰; (9) the collapse of a mixed zone floor at Horse Guards Parade⁴⁰¹; and (10) problems with the welding on the temporary seating in the hockey, rowing and archery venues⁴⁰². Other minor issues reported were: (11) the mix-up with the sign

³⁹¹ Lyall, S. (2012, August 4). "A buoyant bedlam". *The New York Times*, pp. D1, D6–D7.

³⁹² Millward, D.; Hope, C. (2012, July 20). "Border guards to strike on eve of Olympics". *The Daily Telegraph*, pp. 1–9.

³⁹³ "Tube cleaners strike" (2012, August 9). *The Daily Telegraph*, p. 5.

³⁹⁴ Crouse, K. (2012, July 27). "The hot pool". *The New York Times*, p. B12. See also: Jones, S. (2012, July 27). "Organisers play it cool over pool temperature worries". *The Guardian*, Olympics 2012, p. 10; White, D. (2012, July 27). "Concerns over poolside heat". *The Daily Telegraph*, p. S15.

³⁹⁵ Gibson, O. (2012, August 5). "Organisers back high-volume music". *The Guardian*, p. 9.

³⁹⁶ Magnay, J. (2012, July 26). "Ticket blind spot in diving". *The Daily Telegraph*, p. S11. See also: Topping, A. (2012, August 2). "Top prices don't always mean the best views". *The Guardian*, p. 8; Booth, R. (2012, July 26). "Poor visibility at take-off". *The Guardian*, p. 11; "Asientos con poca visibilidad" (2012, July 27). *La Vanguardia*, p. 42.

³⁹⁷ McVeigh, T. (2012, July 29). "Food shortage forces spectators to queue during veteran's equestrian display". *The Observer*, p. 16; "Complaints after venues run out of provisions" (2012, July 31). *The Daily Telegraph*, p. 2; Booth, R. (2012, August 2). "Hungry fans are turned away as supplies run out". *The Guardian*, p. 9.

³⁹⁸ "El velódromo tiene goteras" (2012, August 6). *La Vanguardia*, p. 37; AP (2012, August 6). "Velodrome springs three leaks". *The Washington Post*, p. D11; "A spoke in the wheel" (2012, August 6). *The Daily Telegraph*, p. 4.

³⁹⁹ Gibson, O. (2012, July 19). "Organisers play down Olympic village water problems". *The Guardian*, p. 44. See also: "Police flooded out of Games control hub" (2012, August 2). *The Daily Telegraph*, p. 3.

⁴⁰⁰ Bull, A. (2012, July 29). "Pool queues and hangovers contribute to a false start". *The Guardian*, Olympics 2012, p. 6.

⁴⁰¹ Maese, R. (2012, August 9). "Venue's floor collapses". *The Washington Post*, p. D11.

⁴⁰² Magnay, J. (2012, July 31). "Seat problem arises". *The Daily Telegraph*, p. S27.

greeting Arabic-speaking tourists at the airport – which said "NODNOLOTEMOCLEW", instead of "Welcome to London"⁴⁰³; and (12) the fire that broke out at Weymouth Pavilion in Dorset, which was being used as the Communication and Media Centre⁴⁰⁴. Another piece of news that was minimized in the newspapers sampled⁴⁰⁵ and other quality outlets too,⁴⁰⁶ related to the fact that a double-decker Olympic media bus had hit and killed a cyclist.

The protests and any objections to the Olympics were clearly marginalized in the media coverage⁴⁰⁷, in line with what experts have pointed out in previous research (Lenskyj, 2006). Only brief mentions were made in relation to the protests against the corporate sponsorship of London 2012 during the opening weekend of the Games and also with regard to the arrest in Stratford of cyclists from the group Critical Mass⁴⁰⁸. Regarding the former, *The Guardian* briefly reported on the arrest of six people⁴⁰⁹ after green custard was spilled during the "Greenwash Gold 2012" awards⁴¹⁰ and on the

⁴⁰³ Mooney, H. (2012, July 31). "The worst Olympics in the world". *The Guardian*, Olympics 2012, p. 11.

⁴⁰⁴ "Fire breaks out at sailing venue" (2012, July 28). *The Daily Telegraph*, p. 6.

⁴⁰⁵ AP (2012, August 2). "Olympic bus kills cyclist". *The Washington Post*, p. D9. See also; "Safety first" (2012, August 3). *The Daily Telegraph*, p. 4.

⁴⁰⁶ See, for instance: Masters, S. (2012, August 2). "Cyclist killed by official Games bus on road near Olympic Park". *The Independent*, p. 9; Johnson, K. (2012, August 2). "Crash kills biker outside Olympic Park". *USA Today*, p. 9D.

⁴⁰⁷ As Boykoff (2014: 5–6) argues: "the mass media play a vital role in fashioning and disseminating the political-economic spectacle. In a paroxysm of synergy, media and sport team up in the context of spectacle-drenched capital. These component parts combine to create a celebratory space where interlopers who are not there to revel in the merrymaking – political activists, social critics, and those allegedly engaging in 'anti-social behaviour' – must be ejected. As such, the process of celebration capitalism includes the displacement of those who might like to put a damper on the party, whether through repression, forced removal, gentrification or temporary bans".

⁴⁰⁸ "Critical Mass are a neo-tribal, informal social gathering of diverse cyclists, which meets monthly in London to cycle an unplanned route in relative safety" (Giulianotti et al., 2015: 111).

⁴⁰⁹ Laville, S. (2012, July 21). "Taken into custody". *The Guardian*, p. 14.

⁴¹⁰ As Boykoff (2014: 107–8) explains, "activists created a 'Greenwash Gold' campaign that put three corporate sponsors – BP, Dow Chemical, and Rio Tinto – into competition with each other to see who would win the gold medal for greenwashing. Activists created snappy, one-minute videos cataloguing the misdeeds of each corporation and urging concerned citizens to vote online. At an awards ceremony in Trafalgar Square, Rio Tinto collected the gold, with BP earning the silver, and Dow winning the bronze. Police arrested seven activists at the mock awards ceremony on suspicion of criminal damage when Greenwash Gold activists poured lime-green custard on the fake award recipients as they collected their medals".

protesters' attempts to disrupt the torch relay⁴¹¹. *The Daily Telegraph* only pointed out that more than 40 groups⁴¹² would be protesting right at the start of the Olympics⁴¹³. Regarding the latter, *The Daily Telegraph* and *The Guardian* reported that "officers arrested 182 people for defying orders not to cycle near the Games venues⁴¹⁴". Even though the event happened on the evening of the opening ceremony, it took a few days for the aforementioned media to mention the issue in brief pieces, as did other British newspapers such as *The Times*⁴¹⁵. Horne reflects on the reasons for its minimization:

It was reported in a magazine called *The New Statesman*⁴¹⁶, and it was briefly reported in *The Guardian* and other papers, but that was a story that was very contrary to the party atmosphere. And in that sense, it is not surprising it was given in a so-small scale. It was a group of cyclists, a regular kind of event, in which they cycle the streets of London and they were going through a part that the police had designated as a part of no-go to. I think that the number of people who went to court in the end was very small in number (John Horne, interview, November 2013).

The reduced coverage of the above in the mainstream press contrasts⁴¹⁷ with the coverage given to opposition to the Games found on online sites, social networks and in alternative newspapers such as *London Late*. Boykoff (2014), Sadd (2014) and Giulianotti et al. (2015) have expanded on many of these counter-Olympic protests that happened before and during London 2012 which include: (1) environmental protests at Leyton Marsh, Manor Garden Allotments, Wanstead Flats and Greenwich Park; (2) campaigns such as "Open Our Towpath" and "Stop the Olympic Missiles"; (3) glocal

⁴¹¹ Davies, L.; Jones, S. (2012, July 24). "Stars and community leaders take torch towards final frontier". *The Guardian*, p. 45.

⁴¹² These groups included, among others, "Games Monitor, Counter Olympics Network, Critical Mass 182, No Olympic 2012, Free Hackney, No to Greenwich Olympic Equestrian Events, the East London Communities Organisation, Manor Garden Allotments, No Olympic Levy for Londoners and Playfair 2012" (Sadd, 2014: 233).

⁴¹³ "Protesters to march" (2012, July 26). *The Daily Telegraph*, p. 4.

⁴¹⁴ "Cycle protests charges" (2012, July 30). *The Daily Telegraph*, p. 5; See also: Malik, S. (2012, August 4). "Tourist was trapped in Olympics mass arrest". *The Guardian*, p. 16.

⁴¹⁵ "Three protest cyclists charged" (2012, July 30). *The Times*, p.7.

⁴¹⁶ O'Hagan, E.M. (2012, July 29). "The Olympic spirit? Cyclists banned from Newham for the duration of the Games". *New Statesman*. <http://www.newstatesman.com/blogs/voices/2012/07/olympic-spirit> [Last access: 22-09-2015].

⁴¹⁷ The minimized coverage of the protests against the Olympics also needs to be understood in terms of their organization. According to Miah (2014: 104), "unlike the coordinated action of Olympic promoters, online Olympic dissent around London 2012 was much more sporadic". In addition, Olympic-related protests were "typically squeezed out into locations where contact with wider publics, particularly Olympic-related visitors, was relatively low. For example, the route for the major anti-Olympic march, and separate protests on Sri Lanka, Nepal, and the Towbridge footpath, did not come near to Olympic Park or to any large Olympic related crowds" (Giulianotti et al., 2015: 115).

protests such as those conducted by the FEMEN network⁴¹⁸; (4) the subverting activities of the organization War on Want; (5) the alternative torch runs on 21 and 27 July 2012; (6) the celebration of an alternative opening ceremony; and (7) a mass mobilization that gathered together more than 1,000 people, organized by the Counter Olympics Network on 28 July⁴¹⁹.

4.1.3.4.9. History

As far as the history of the Olympic Games was concerned, newspapers placed a special emphasis on illuminating key aspects of London 1948,⁴²⁰ the last time the Games were held in London. *The Telegraph* provided a daily account of what happened on every day of the Games in 1948 through the series “London 1948 remembered”. The newspaper used archival material to present readers with insights into the outstanding athletes of the event, such as Emil Zatopek, Mal Whitfield, Fanny Blankers-Koen, Arthur Wint and Laszlo Papp. Other pieces contributed contextualization of the austerity situation in 1948, characterized by “rationing and general post-war weariness⁴²¹”.

From its own part, *The New York Times* developed an extraordinary photographic project, entitled “Their golden series”, which showcased the US Olympians who took part in London 1948. During three days, images and quotes were picked from athletes such as: Thomas Montemagne, Frank Havens, Mal Whitfield, Bill Smith, Harry

⁴¹⁸ The FEMEN protest was indeed recalled by other newspapers such as *The Independent*, but was reduced to brief pieces with rather sensationalist expressions such as “Four topless Ukrainians from the feminist activist group Femen were arrested while staging an ‘Islamic marathon’”. See: O’Brian, L. (2012, August 3). “Naked ambition of Ukrainian feminists offers a volleyball slideshow”. *The Independent*, p. 5.

⁴¹⁹ Other quality newspapers such as *USA Today* briefly mentioned this protest. *USA Today* included the voice of Julian Cheyne (spokesman for the Counter Olympics Network) in a piece published the day after the end of the Games. See: Johnson, K. (2012, August 13). “Demonstrations drowned out. National pride, athletic success mute planned protests”. *USA Today*, p. 4D.

⁴²⁰ Conversely, the reporting on London 1908 was scarce and could only be found in isolated pieces such as the one in *The New York Times* (“Flag bearer to decide on a dip to the Queen”), where Ken Belson explained the tradition of why the US flag would not be dipped in the opening ceremony. The article explained that at London 1908 the flag bearer, Ralph Rose, did not lower the flag in front of King Edward VII. The piece was accompanied by a photograph from the Hulton Archive of the American athletes in the White City Stadium at London 1908. See: Belson, K. (2012, July 27). “U.S. flag bearer to decide on a dip to the Queen”. *The New York Times*, p. B12.

⁴²¹ Ellis, C. (2012, August 2). “It’s taken 64 years, but finally I’m an Olympic golden boy”. *The Daily Telegraph*, p. F2.

Marcoplos, Alice Coachman⁴²² (22/07/2012); Sammy Lee, Laddie Bakanic, Stu Griffin, Ray Lump⁴²³ (23/07/2012); and Maria Cerra, Jack Robinson, Patty Elsener and Walter Bahr⁴²⁴ (24/07/2012).

Spanish newspapers also ran a special series of articles to remember London 1948. *La Vanguardia* published a three-piece set written by Jaime Arias, who had covered London 1948. In the first of these pieces, Arias explained the organization of the Spanish journalists in London and looked at the quality of the athletes' accommodation⁴²⁵. In the second article, the author considered Britain's situation in the post-war era and his daily routines during the event⁴²⁶. In the third and last piece, Arias provided insight into the opening ceremony, the actual competitions and their stars⁴²⁷. Apart from this series, other pieces helped to contextualize London 1948 and the current situation of sport at the time⁴²⁸. As part of the series "El retrovisor" (The rear mirror), *El País* reconstructed the story of the swimmer Isidoro Pérez, focusing on the social situation after World War II and the accommodation provided for the athletes in military camps⁴²⁹.

Moving on to other Games, the American newspapers placed a particular emphasis on Munich 1972. Reports focused on the fact that it was now 40 years since the US defeat in the basketball final against the Soviet Union⁴³⁰ but also recalled the tragedy that happened at those Games. As in *USA Today*⁴³¹, criticism could be observed in *The New York Times*⁴³² and *The Washington Post*⁴³³ at the IOC's decision not to honour during London 2012 the 11 Israeli athletes and coaches assassinated in Munich by the Black September group.

⁴²² Winter, D. (2012, July 22). "Their golden years". *The New York Times*, pp. S1, S4–S5.

⁴²³ Winter, D. (2012, July 23). "Their golden years". *The New York Times*, pp. D1, D4.

⁴²⁴ Winter, D. (2012, July 24). "Their golden years". *The New York Times*, pp. B10, B16.

⁴²⁵ Arias, J. (2012, July 27). "Exentos de cartillas de racionamiento". *La Vanguardia*, p. 40.

⁴²⁶ Arias, J. (2012, July 28). "La jornada empezaba a las 11 de la noche". *La Vanguardia*, p. 44.

⁴²⁷ Arias, J. (2012, July 29). "A la sombra del espíritu de Churchill". *La Vanguardia*, p. 58.

⁴²⁸ Álvarez, R. (2012, July 23). "Regreso a Londres". *La Vanguardia*, p. 47.

⁴²⁹ Iríbar, A. (2012, July 27). "De niño de la guerra a nadador en Londres 48". *El País*, pp. 1, 54.

⁴³⁰ Ambdur, N. (2012, July 29). "The three seconds that never seem to run out". *The New York Times*, p. 14; Wise, M. (2012, August 11). "Forty years ago, the Cold War heated up on the court". *The Washington Post*, p. D6.

⁴³¹ Brennan, C. (2012, July 27). "72 Israelis owed moment of silence". *USA Today*, p. 5D.

⁴³² Macur, J. (2012, July 22). "No moment of silence". *The New York Times*, p. S6.

⁴³³ "The right moment" (2012, July 24). *The Washington Post*, p. A14; Hamilton, T. (2012, July 26). "With no moment of silence, IOC is stubbornly offensive". *The Washington Post*, pp. D1, D8.

As could be expected, the Spanish media took the opportunity of comparing London 2012 to Barcelona 1992. During the timeframe of the observation, starting with a conversation with the archer Antonio Rebollo⁴³⁴, *El País* published a series of 20 interviews in the daily section “De Barcelona 92 a ...” (“From Barcelona 92 to ...”) that focused on key protagonists of the event: Daniel Plaza, Patricia Guerra, Juan Carlos Holgado, Elisabeth Maragall, Carolina Pascual, Martín López-Zubero, José Manuel Moreno, Abelardo Fernández, Javier García Chico, Almudena Muñoz, Antonio Peñalver, Arantxa Sánchez Vicario, Fermín Cacho, Jordi Arrese, Jordi Calafat, Jordi Sans, José María van der Ploeg, Natàlia Via-Dufresne and Miriam Blasco. Away from the sporting field, *El País* remembered the urban transformation and the economic impact that Barcelona 1992 had on tourism and other sectors⁴³⁵ and also delved into the legacy of sporting facilities⁴³⁶. Likewise, *La Vanguardia* wrote insightful pieces on the political side of Barcelona 1992, the impact that the event had on the city⁴³⁷, its successful organization⁴³⁸, and on the role that culture played in those Olympics⁴³⁹.

Leaving the reports on specific Olympic years aside, the coverage of London 2012 by the newspapers examined was full of many more historical details. *The Telegraph* did a good job with the series “History lesson”, which provided a panoramic overview of a wide range of historical aspects, including Uruguay’s football team in Paris 1924, the pioneer of women’s weightlifting Ivy Russell and the old disciplines of Olympic shooting. Other athletes remembered were Chris Brasher (Melbourne 1956), Steve Redgrave (Atlanta 1996), Kelly Holmes (Athens 2004), Sebastian Coe (Moscow 1980), Harold Abrahams (Paris 1924)⁴⁴⁰ and Dorothy Tyler, the only woman to win in Olympic athletics before and after World War II⁴⁴¹.

The other newspapers also did an outstanding job of shedding light on major names and lesser known protagonists too. Through the aforementioned section “El retrovisor”, *El País* reflected on the stories of the swimmer Mari Paz Corominas⁴⁴² (Mexico 1968), the judoka Anton Geesink⁴⁴³ (Tokyo 1964), the gymnasts Carla Marangoni⁴⁴⁴

⁴³⁴ Galán, J. (2012, July 24). “Cazo jabalíes con aquel arco”. *El País*, p. 50.

⁴³⁵ Fancelli, A. (2012, July 22). “20 años bajo la antorcha”. *El País*, El País Semanal, pp. 54–5.

⁴³⁶ Corcuera, A. (2012, July 22). “Los héroes del 92”. *El País*, El País Semanal, pp. 46–53.

⁴³⁷ Juliana, E. (2012, July 22). “Barcelona, la pionera”. *La Vanguardia*, Magazine, pp. 25–9.

⁴³⁸ Moix, Ll. (2012, August 10). “La fórmula mágica”. *La Vanguardia*, p. 19.

⁴³⁹ Vila-Sanjuán, S. (2012, August 8). “No digas que fue un sueño”. *La Vanguardia*, Culturas, p. 7

⁴⁴⁰ Farndale, N. (2012, July 22). “Five golden greats”. *The Sunday Telegraph*, p. 21.

⁴⁴¹ Henderson, J. (2012, July 18). “My silver double and the day I met Jesse Owens”. *The Daily Telegraph*, Journey to London 2012, p. JL2.

⁴⁴² Acosta, Y. (2012, August 4). “La natación era muy ‘amateur’”. *El País*, p. 52.

⁴⁴³ Sáez, F. (2012, July 30). “Y el yudo dejó de ser japonés”. *El País*, p. 57.

(Amsterdam 1928), Larisa Latynina⁴⁴⁵ (Melbourne 1956, Rome 1960 and Tokyo 1964) and Elena Artamendi⁴⁴⁶ (Rome 1960), and the diver Greg Louganis⁴⁴⁷ (Seoul 1988). The newspaper also reflected on the story of William Penny Brookes, credited with inspiring the modern Olympic Games⁴⁴⁸. *The Guardian* paid tribute to the British gymnastics team that won a bronze medal in Stockholm 1912⁴⁴⁹ and recalled the history of Emil Voigt, who set a record in the five-mile run at London 1908⁴⁵⁰. Insights into many contextual aspects of past Games, such as Los Angeles 1984⁴⁵¹, Sydney 2000⁴⁵², Athens 2004⁴⁵³ and Beijing 2008⁴⁵⁴ were also provided by this British newspaper.

La Vanguardia provided a very interesting article about the winners of the 100 metres⁴⁵⁵, recognized as the most important event in the Olympic Games. Similarly, in the report “All the fastest men”, *The New York Times Magazine* displayed a gallery of photographs of all the 100 metres final winners since 1896⁴⁵⁶. The American publication did a remarkable job of providing more alternative historical angles. For instance, it went beyond the well-known dominance of Jesse Owens in Berlin 1936 to pursue the life stories of the silver and bronze medallists in the 200m event, Matthew Robinson and Martinus Osendarp⁴⁵⁷. With regard to Mexico 1968, not only did the newspaper focus on gold medallist Tommie Smith and bronze medallist John Carlos in the 200 metres event but it went on to reflect on the triumph of Kip Keino in the 1,500

⁴⁴⁴ Giovio, E. (2012, August 3). “¿Dónde estará la medalla?” *El País*, p. 48.

⁴⁴⁵ Iríbar, A. (2012, August 1). “La bailarina eterna”. *El País*, p. 44.

⁴⁴⁶ Iríbar, A. (2012, July 23). “No me siento una pionera”. *El País*, p. 51.

⁴⁴⁷ Mateo, J.J. (2012, July 29). “Muchos nunca me entendieron”. *El País*, p. 66.

⁴⁴⁸ Oppenheimer, W. (2012, July 28). “Todo empezó en Wenlock”. *El País*, p. 59.

⁴⁴⁹ Crace, J. (2012, August 1). “100 years ago”. *The Guardian*, G2, p. 8.

⁴⁵⁰ Gibson, O. (2012, July 23). “Vegetarian man who won track gold with fruit, tea and nuts”. *The Guardian*, p. 9. See also: “Walking the walk” (2012, July 25). *The Guardian*, p. 29.

⁴⁵¹ Carroll, R. (2012, August 9). “Who needs London in a blessed city full of beautiful, buffed bodies”. *The Guardian*, Olympics 2012, p. 12.

⁴⁵² Rourke, A. (2012, July 26). “My friends who got out of the city over the Olympics still regret it”. *The Guardian*, Olympics 2012, p. 12.

⁴⁵³ Smith, H. (2012, August 3). “The view from Athens”. *The Guardian*, Olympics 2012, p. 14.

⁴⁵⁴ Branigan, T. (2012, July 27). “Like the Bird’s Nest, legacy of the 2008 Games is a glass half empty”. *The Guardian*, Olympics 2012, p. 12.

⁴⁵⁵ Martín, C. (2012, August 6). “Historia de un suspiro”. *La Vanguardia*, p. 32.

⁴⁵⁶ Bosman, J. (2012, July 29). “All the fastest men”. *The New York Times*, NYT Magazine, pp. 39–41.

⁴⁵⁷ Weintraub, R. (2012, July 21). “Two lives after losing to Jesse Owens”. *The New York Times*, pp. D1–D2.

metres⁴⁵⁸. Research on almost unknown Olympians, such as Simon P. Gillis (who took part in London 1908 and Stockholm 1912⁴⁵⁹) was also appreciated.

4.1.3.4.10. Environmental issues

During the period studied, environmental issues did not receive prominent attention. Some pieces in the British and American newspapers⁴⁶⁰ focused on the following issues: (1) the sustainability of the design of the Velodrome and its aim of reducing the carbon footprint⁴⁶¹; (2) the ecological impact of manufacturing sports shoes⁴⁶²; (3) the quality of air in London and Britain as a whole at the time of the Olympics⁴⁶³; and (4) the green legacy of the gardens of the Olympic Park. Regarding the latter aspect, the British papers sampled (as did other publications such as *The Times*⁴⁶⁴) published specialized reports that provided information about the changes in the landscape, the vegetation⁴⁶⁵, the planting design and the ideas behind their future maintenance⁴⁶⁶. As explained by *The Guardian*, “the 250-hectare site in east London has been filled with 4,000 trees, 300,000 wetland plants and more than 150,000 perennial plants, in an ambitious scheme designed to delight visitors to the Games and leave a legacy of a permanent park once the Olympics are over⁴⁶⁷”.

In addition to the aforementioned issues, *The Telegraph* gave exposure to a collective letter signed by more than 50 people (Greener upon Thames grassroots campaign) that focused on the need to reduce the number of single-use plastic bags at London 2012⁴⁶⁸. Given that the Games provided a “perfect opportunity to raise awareness and

⁴⁵⁸ Rhoden, W.C. (2012, August 12). “The triumph that inspired Kenyan runners to be great”. *The New York Times*, p. SP11.

⁴⁵⁹ Storey, S. (2012, July 27). “An unusual burden for an Olympian”. *The New York Times*, pp. B11–B12.

⁴⁶⁰ In *El País* and *La Vanguardia* there wasn't any particularly relevant information to highlight in terms of environmental issues.

⁴⁶¹ Bishop, G. (2012, August 2). “New velodrome is a chip off the old cycling track”. *The New York Times*, p. B14.

⁴⁶² Palmer, B. (2012, August 7). “Would your shoes win a medal in the Green Games?” *The Washington Post*, p. E2.

⁴⁶³ Khaeleeli, H. (2012, August 6). “Bad air days”. *The Guardian*, G2, p. 12.

⁴⁶⁴ Swift, J. (2012, August 11). “Fields of dreams”. *The Times*, Weekend, pp. 16–17.

⁴⁶⁵ Lacey, S. (2012, August 4). “Four corners at the globe at Stratford”. *The Daily Telegraph*, p. G5.

⁴⁶⁶ Kingsbury, N. (2012, July 21). “Sowing seeds of Olympic glory”. *The Daily Telegraph*, Gardening, pp. G1, G3.

⁴⁶⁷ Dunnett, N.P.; Goodwin, M. (2012, July 21). “Going for gold”. *The Guardian*, Weekend, pp. 72–3.

⁴⁶⁸ “Bag-free Olympics” (2012, July 26). *The Daily Telegraph*, p. 21.

leave a lasting legacy in Britain and beyond”, the letter urged “Olympic organisers, visitors, suppliers and sponsors to avoid the use of plastic bags”.

4.1.3.4.11. Health issues

With regard to health issues, the media shed light on the operation of the anti-doping procedures at London 2012. *The Guardian* reported in extensive detail on the procedures introduced to ensure athletes’ drug testing samples were not tampered with during the Games⁴⁶⁹. *El País* and *La Vanguardia* explained that the GlaxoSmithKline laboratory would analyse 6,250 samples in 17 days, averaging almost 370 per day⁴⁷⁰, in the search for more than 240 banned substances⁴⁷¹. The information on the drug operations was well complemented with pieces on some of the doping cases made public before the Olympics (Nour-Eddine Gezzar⁴⁷², Mariem Alaoui Selsouli⁴⁷³, Dimitris Chondrokoukis⁴⁷⁴) and during the actual event (Hysen Pulaku⁴⁷⁵, Luiza Galiulina⁴⁷⁶, Nadzeya Ostapchuk⁴⁷⁷, Alex Schwazer⁴⁷⁸, Nick Delpopolo⁴⁷⁹, Ghfran Almouhamad⁴⁸⁰, Amine Laalou⁴⁸¹, Hassan Hirt⁴⁸², Mathew Kisorio⁴⁸³, Ivan Tsikhan and Diego Palomeque⁴⁸⁴). Additionally, Spanish newspapers, especially *El País*, devoted close attention to Ángel Mullera’s case. The Spanish steeplechaser competed in London

⁴⁶⁹ Neate, R.; Gibson, O. (2012, July 26). “Olympic effort behind anti-doping operation”. *The Guardian*, p. 12.

⁴⁷⁰ Arribas, C. (2012, July 26). “El control antidopaje como arma de disuasión masiva”. *El País*, p. 49.

⁴⁷¹ Martínez, J.B. (2012, July 25). “Los Juegos del control”. *La Vanguardia*, p. 39.

⁴⁷² “Steeplechaser misses Games after failing test” (2012, July 21). *The Guardian*, Sport, p. 11.

⁴⁷³ “La marroquí Selsouli, de nuevo positivo” (2012, July 24). *El País*, p. 49.

⁴⁷⁴ Hart, S. (2012, July 27). “Greek high jumper tests positive for steroids”. *The Daily Telegraph*, p. S10.

⁴⁷⁵ AP (2012, July 29). “Weight lifter barred”. *The New York Times*, p. D4; “Albanian is first athlete to be thrown out of Games” (2012, July 29). *The Guardian*, Olympics 2012, p. 16.

⁴⁷⁶ “Substance issues” (2012, July 30). *The New York Times*, p. D6.

⁴⁷⁷ Stallman, J. (2012, August 14). “Belarus shot-putter stripped of gold medal”. *The New York Times*, p. B11.

⁴⁷⁸ Reuters (2012, August 7). “Beijing medalist barred”. *The New York Times*, p. B10.

⁴⁷⁹ Otis, J. (2012, August 7). “Marijuana disqualification”. *The New York Times*, p. B10.

⁴⁸⁰ PA (2012, August 12). “The drugs don’t work for disqualified Syrian hurdler”. *The Guardian*, Olympics 2012, p. 14.

⁴⁸¹ AP (2012, August 4). “Report: runner fails test”. *The Washington Post*, p. D9.

⁴⁸² AP (2012, August 11). “France send Hirt home after positive dope test”. *The Guardian*, Olympics 2012, p. 14.

⁴⁸³ “Two runners fall foul of drug testers” (2012, August 11). *The Daily Telegraph*, London 2012 Supplement, p. S33.

⁴⁸⁴ “Moroccan and Belarusian charged with violations” (2012, August 5). *The Guardian*, Olympics 2012, p. 18.

2012 even though he was being investigated for doping⁴⁸⁵. The situation allowed journalists to provide an insightful critique⁴⁸⁶ on the way the Spanish Athletics Federation and the Consejo Superior de Deportes (CSD) dealt with the situation⁴⁸⁷.

As well as doping issues, the newspapers in question devoted space to other relevant issues of a health nature. First, regarding the observance of Ramadan, newspapers such as *The New York Times* and *The Guardian* made readers aware that fasting would be tough on some of the 3,000 Muslim athletes who were competing in London 2012⁴⁸⁸. The American newspaper explained key problems associated with fasting and included the viewpoint of Roy J. Shephard, author of an article for *The British Journal of Sports Medicine*, who highlighted the fact that “research conducted to date shows relatively minor effects of Ramadan observance upon athletic performance, health or safety⁴⁸⁹”.

Second, with regard to nutrition and junk food, *The New York Times* explained the calories lost per minute by athletes and what they needed to eat to refuel⁴⁹⁰. The benefits of certain foods in relation to enhancing athletes’ performances⁴⁹¹ were also commented on. In addition, the discussion about junk food came to the fore, bearing in mind the association of the IOC with brands such as Coca-Cola, McDonald’s and Cadbury. *The Guardian* reminded its readers that there are “interested parties who keep denying the adverse impact that junk food and poor quality of diet is having on public health⁴⁹²”.

⁴⁸⁵ Arribas, C.; Iribar, A. (2012, July 20). “Mullera, un pie fuera de los Juegos”. *El País*, p. 53.

⁴⁸⁶ Arribas, C. (2012, July 21). “La mala imagen del deporte español”. *El País*, p. 52. See also: Arribas, C. (2012, August 1). “Grotesco indulto a Mullera”. *El País*, p. 45.

⁴⁸⁷ In contrast to this insightful critique provided by the Spanish broadsheets, sports dailies such as *Marca* and *As* were more sensationalist in their reports. For instance, if we have a look at *Marca*’s front page of 1 August, Ángel Mullera appears with the words “SCANDAL” in bold. Inside the paper, the reader could find a two-page piece with lots of “exclusive” photographs taken of him outside the Grosvenor House hotel in London. See: Riquelme, G. (2012, August 1). “Mullera es olímpico”. *Marca*, Londres 2012, pp. 12–13.

⁴⁸⁸ Nordland, R. (2012, July 21). “Ramadan arrives amid high heat and political transition in Arab world”. *The New York Times*, p. A6. See also: Qureshi, H. (2012, July 23). “To fast or not to fast?” *The Guardian*, G2, p. 12.

⁴⁸⁹ Borden, S. (2012, August 1). “Observance of Ramadan poses challenges to Muslim athletes”. *The New York Times*, p. B18.

⁴⁹⁰ Reynolds, G. (2012, July 29). “Let them eat fat”. *The New York Times*, NYT Magazine, p. 12.

⁴⁹¹ Reynolds, G. (2012, August 14). “More athletes look for an edge in a glass of juice”. *The New York Times*, p. D5.

⁴⁹² Rigby, N.; Garde, A. (2012, July 18). “Junk food has no place in the Olympic lineup, say Neville Rigby and Amandine Garde”. *The Guardian*, p. 31.

Third, moving on to the area of psychology in sport, *The Guardian* explored the emotions of Olympic athletes and how factors like the performance of teammates or the added pressure of competing at home could affect them⁴⁹³. The newspaper also commented on how athletes should cope with losing⁴⁹⁴ and how governments should provide emotional support to those who weren't able to qualify for the Olympics⁴⁹⁵.

4.1.3.4.12. The media and communications

With regard to communications, the media reported on the coverage and operations of the main broadcasting companies for each of the countries studied: BBC, NBC and RTVE. In the case of Britain, the print newspapers considered the particulars of the live coverage of the Olympics offered by the BBC⁴⁹⁶ and the test of the "so-called Super Hi-Vision television⁴⁹⁷". Regarding the BBC's coverage per se, British newspapers reflected on its highs and lows. On the plus side, it was highlighted that "the explanations of how some of the lesser-known sports work have been detailed and mostly fairly lucid⁴⁹⁸". On the minus side, questions were raised about the BBC's impartiality⁴⁹⁹. Print media pinpointed the fact that the BBC was probably too patriotic, jingoistic and undetached in its coverage⁵⁰⁰. Hyperbolic formulas such as "absolutely", "incredible" and "phenomenal" were overused in the coverage, according to the television critic Clive James⁵⁰¹. Even so, the reporting carried out by Clare Balding was described as "informed, intelligent and professional⁵⁰²".

⁴⁹³ Jones, S. (2012, August 9). "For some, agony of defeat means second place has no silver lining". *The Guardian*, p. 45.

⁴⁹⁴ Khaleeli, H. (2012, August 8). "How should athletes cope with losing?" *The Guardian*, G2, p. 2.

⁴⁹⁵ Kwakye, J. (2012, July 27). "Think of the athletes who will miss the big moment". *The Guardian*, p. 36.

⁴⁹⁶ Kelner, M. (2012, July 21). "Wall to wall: the Beeb beanfeast consumes all". *The Guardian*, London 2012 Special Supplement, pp. 32–3.

⁴⁹⁷ Pfanner, E. (2012, August 6). "With live streaming and new technology, BBC tries to be everywhere at the Olympics". *The New York Times*, p. B6.

⁴⁹⁸ Kelner, M. (2012, July 30). "Beeb's momentous coverage makes sense of this madness". *The Guardian*, Olympics 2012, p. 20.

⁴⁹⁹ Corrigan, J. (2012, August 3). "BBC wins no medals for its toe-curling, jingoistic coverage". *The Daily Telegraph*, p. S39.

⁵⁰⁰ Deacon, M. (2012, August 6). "High drama plus irresistible emotion, and that's just the commentators". *The Daily Telegraph*, p. 2.

⁵⁰¹ James, C. (2012, August 11). "Team BBC wins gold for hyperbole". *The Daily Telegraph*, Review, p. R3.

⁵⁰² "There was one thing we could agree: Balding is the best of Beeb" (2012, August 12). *The Sunday Telegraph*, p. S11.

Moving now on to the American context and the NBC, *The New York Times* provided a clear account of the media operation designed by the broadcaster in London⁵⁰³. Once the Games started, the record viewing ratings achieved by the broadcaster in the opening ceremony⁵⁰⁴ and the first night of competition⁵⁰⁵ were reported. The good figures were maintained throughout the Games, where “NBC averaged 31.1 million viewers in prime time⁵⁰⁶”. Nevertheless, NBC was not exempt from critical examination. The company was criticized for its policy of making spectators wait until prime time to see some of the biggest events at London 2012⁵⁰⁷ which led to the campaign #NBCFail. Paul Fahri of *The Washington Post* also pointed out that much of NBC’s news coverage was “driven not by newsworthiness, but by corporate synergy, in which the news division generates stories to heighten interest in NBC’s prime-time Olympic telecasts⁵⁰⁸”.

Placing the focus on RTVE, the Spanish media described the company’s broadcasting operations and the content that would be offered on Canal 24 Horas, La 1, La 2, Teledporte, TVE HD, the website RTVE.es and the radio (RNE)⁵⁰⁹. Figures on audiences were also provided, stating that up until 2 August 2012, 32,372,000 people (73.6% of the Spanish population) had at some point seen the broadcasting of the events. Teledporte achieved the maximum audience of its history, with 5.52% of the viewing share⁵¹⁰. No criticism was raised in the case of the Spanish coverage.

Other issues linked with media and communications included: the international media perception of and verdicts on London 2012⁵¹¹; the impact of social networking sites and

⁵⁰³ Stelter, B. (2012, July 26). “Wired for wall-to-wall coverage”. *The New York Times*, p. B17.

⁵⁰⁴ Sandomir, R. (2012, July 29). “Overnight rating surges”. *The New York Times*, p. D4.

⁵⁰⁵ Sandomir, R. (2012, July 30). “Record viewers”. *The New York Times*, p. D2.

⁵⁰⁶ Sandomir, R. (2012, August 14). “Olympics viewership exceeds Beijing”. *The New York Times*, p. B12.

⁵⁰⁷ See: Pereda, C.F. (2012, August 1). “Lluvia de críticas a la NBC por emitir los Juegos en diferido”. *El País*, p. 53; González, E. (2012, August 11). “NBC se queda fuera del podio”. *La Vanguardia*, TV Mania, p. 22; Bell, E. (2012, August 6). “Lessons to be learned from the first social media Olympics”. *The Guardian*, p. 25; De Moraes, L. (2012, August 1). “NBC’s Olympics coverage gets big ratings – and big carping”. *The Washington Post*, p. C5.

⁵⁰⁸ Fahri, P. (2012, July 27). “Critics: NBC news just playing Games”. *The Washington Post*, pp. C1, C3.

⁵⁰⁹ Hernando, S. (2012, July 27). “Television, radio, Internet: todos con los Juegos”. *El País*, p. 61.

⁵¹⁰ Hernando, S. (2012, August 4). “Oro olímpico para Teledporte”. *El País*, p. 61.

⁵¹¹ Topping, A. (2012, August 14). “What the world thought”. *The Guardian*, p. 6. See also: “This is the fifth Games I’ve covered – and the best: world’s reporters deliver verdict” (2012 August 5). *The Guardian*, p. 13; Oppenheimer, W. (2012, August 12). “Hay muchos ‘Londres’”. *El País*, p. 60.

the creation of the Olympic Athletes' Hub by the IOC⁵¹²; the use of Twitter and the technical and timing problems in the men's cycling road race which also disrupted the Olympic Broadcasting Services (OBS) and BBC transmissions⁵¹³; and the explanation of the techniques of underwater photography at London 2012 in sports such as swimming and synchronized swimming⁵¹⁴.

4.1.3.4.13. Volunteer issues

Articles, editorials and letters to the editor shed light on the invaluable contribution of the volunteers in being “the human face of the 2012 Games and of Britain⁵¹⁵”. Pieces unequivocally praised their generosity, enthusiasm, politeness⁵¹⁶, tolerance⁵¹⁷ and their willingness to welcome and help people⁵¹⁸ with “unfailing good humour, proud just to be involved⁵¹⁹”. Many volunteers were given voice to explain their motivations for and their insights into participating in the event⁵²⁰ or specific parts of it, such as the opening ceremony⁵²¹. Occasionally, volunteers and unknown workers also became the authors of the articles, such as happened with Ann Mullard⁵²² and the multiple protagonists of the series “Making the Games” published by *The Telegraph*.

According to *The Sunday Telegraph*, the efficient work of the 70,000 volunteers had been “the most magnificent aspect of the event⁵²³”. The newspaper urged the government to build upon that foundation to preserve and develop a lasting legacy for

⁵¹² “Las redes sociales inundan Londres” (2012, July 27). *El País*, p. 60.

⁵¹³ Jones, C. (2012, July 30). “Twitter jams BBC’s cycling coverage”. *The Guardian*, p. 6; Gibson, O. (2012, July 31). “Timing glitches ‘could have been avoided’”. *The Guardian*, p. 9.

⁵¹⁴ Das, A. (2012, August 1). “How maestros make their moment”. *The New York Times*, p. B15; Tooth, R. (2012, August 3). “Eyewitness 02.08.2012. Aquatic Centre, London”. *The Guardian*, pp. 20–1.

⁵¹⁵ “The Games volunteers show us how a big society could really work” (2012, August 5). *The Guardian*, p. 32.

⁵¹⁶ “An Olympic legacy for those with learning disabilities” (2012, August 15). *The Guardian*, p. 29.

⁵¹⁷ Gibson, O. (2012, August 4). “Seven successful days”. *The Guardian*, p. 13.

⁵¹⁸ “A first week full of wonder” (2012, August 4). *The Guardian*, p. 42.

⁵¹⁹ Adams, T. (2012, August 12). “I cast aside my British reserve – the last fortnight has been one of dreams and wonder”. *The Guardian*, pp. 24–5.

⁵²⁰ Adams, T. (2012, August 5). “How the spirit of the volunteers could be London’s greatest legacy”. *The Guardian*, p. 10. See also: Mendick, R. (2012, August 12). “Meet the volunteers who helped make the Games”. *The Sunday Telegraph*, pp. 6–7.

⁵²¹ “It sounds trite, but it truly was the experience of a lifetime” (2012, July 28). *The Guardian*, p. 9.

⁵²² Mullard, A. (2012, August 18). “Such a pleasure and a privilege”. *The Daily Telegraph*, p. W15.

⁵²³ “Let the volunteer spirit shine” (2012, August 12). *The Sunday Telegraph*, p. 23.

volunteering once the Games were over. *The Guardian* shared the same idea through the editorial “The legacy of a flag to share⁵²⁴”.

4.1.3.4.14. Other larger framework issues

Moving on from the above, the newspapers examined also reported on other issues linked to the larger framework of London 2012. They include: (1) the use of the Olympics as a political dividend by Boris Johnson⁵²⁵; (2) concerns about the forthcoming Olympics, including the cost⁵²⁶, the slurs⁵²⁷, the illegal eviction of people in Rio⁵²⁸ as the city is smartened up for the Olympic Games in 2016 and the human rights and environmental abuses⁵²⁹ involved in the preparation for Sochi 2014; (3) the weather conditions and their impact on the development of competitions⁵³⁰; and (4) fashion and clothing issues (including general evaluations of teams’ clothing⁵³¹ and the outfits worn for the opening ceremony⁵³², the criticism of the Spanish team’s outfit⁵³³ and the controversy surrounding the fact that the American outfit had been made in China⁵³⁴). Further articles provided insightful information on: (5) the “hospitality

⁵²⁴ “The legacy of a flag to share” (2012, August 13). *The Guardian*, p. 24.

⁵²⁵ Freedland, J. (2012, August 4). “It’s a long shot”. *The Guardian*, p. 41. See also: D’Ancona, M. (2012, July 29). “Boris limbers up to join the ranks of Tory Olympians”. *The Sunday Telegraph*, p. 26; Faiola, A. (2012, August 8). “And now for something completely different”. *The Washington Post*, p. A8; Oppenheimer, W. (2012, August 1). “Boris busca el oro”. *El País*, p. 50.

⁵²⁶ Román, N. (2012, August 4). “Río de Janeiro esconde el coste de sus Juegos”. *La Vanguardia*, p. 46.

⁵²⁷ Watts, J. (2012, August 12). “Rio takes torch for the samba Games, but there are shadows in the sunshine”. *The Guardian*, p. 7.

⁵²⁸ Williamson, T.; Hora, M. (2012, August 13). “In the name of the future, Rio is destroying its past”. *The New York Times*, p. A17.

⁵²⁹ Buchanan, J.; Gorbunova, Y. (2012, August 12). “Russia’s Olympic abuses”. *The Washington Post*, p. A17.

⁵³⁰ Gray, L. (2012, July 28). “Faster, higher, stronger, wetter, warmer, windier”. *The Daily Telegraph*, p. 37.

⁵³¹ See: Finnigan, K. (2012, July 22). “The fashion Olympics”. *The Sunday Telegraph*, p. 23; Leitch, L. (2012, August 1). “The good, bad and plain ugly”. *The Daily Telegraph*, pp. S14–S15; Boyle, K. (2012, July 18). “How clothes came to make the Games”. *The Washington Post*, p. C9; Tschorn, A. (2012, July 22). “From Games to global must-wear”. *The Washington Post*, pp. 10–11.

⁵³² Wilson, E. (2012, July 28). “In runway Games, it’s Lauren vs rubber wellies and casual Friday”. *The New York Times*, p. D8.

⁵³³ Balfagón, M. (2012, July 20). “El chándal del terror”. *El País*, p. 28; Iríbar, A. (2012, July 25). “Aman estos colores”. *El País*, p. 50; Mañana, C. (2012, July 26). “Un chándal ‘contra’ España”. *El País*, pp. 30–1.

⁵³⁴ Sáiz, E. (2012, July 26). “Mano de obra china para los héroes de Estados Unidos”. *El País*, p. 31.

houses”⁵³⁵ that many NOCs such as China⁵³⁶ had in London; (6) architecture (for instance, through the review of the ArcelorMittal Orbit tower in the Stratford Olympic Park⁵³⁷); (7) Olympic memorabilia⁵³⁸ and alternative souvenirs⁵³⁹; (8) visitors and their evaluations of the Games⁵⁴⁰; (9) the parallel activities that citizens could do for free to take part in the Olympic Games⁵⁴¹; and (10) life in other London neighbourhoods during the time the Olympics were taking place. Regarding the latter aspect, it is worth highlighting Jordi Basté’s article⁵⁴² that critically reflected on the crude reality of East Ham, one of the poorest London suburbs, life in which was completely separated from the rest of London during the Olympic Games.

4.1.3.4.15. The value of the larger framework and challenges to overcome

Of course it was not possible for the media to include every single contextual story, but it can be strongly argued that the six newspapers carried out a magnificent job of critically examining the larger framework of London 2012, exploring the relevant contexts behind the play. The provision of this information added value for the readers, who could understand much more of the event. Professionals and experts reflect on the crucial value of this type of reporting in enhancing the quality of the coverage of the Olympic Games:

I believe that this has an added value. I believe that sport has a lot of angles, it is not only what happens on the field. Sport has a social transcendence, it can have a political and economic transcendence. Journalists should report on all those areas (José Sámano, interview, May 2014).

It is a fundamental aspect. In fact, contextualization is specialization. The treatment of specialized information requires a context, not only sports context, because sport is part of a culture in society. In the case of the Olympics, it is important that journalists do not only write about the event per se. It is ok to explain the curiosities around the sporting competitions, but if the coverage doesn’t involve the political, social and economic reality, the coverage would not be

⁵³⁵ Davies, L.; Addley, E. (2012, August 8). “Party time – and it’s the Dutch who claim top spot in this medal table”. *The Guardian*, pp. 6–7.

⁵³⁶ Magnay, J. (2012, July 27). “Small corner of London turns into China”. *The Daily Telegraph*, London 2012 Supplement, p. S22.

⁵³⁷ Glancey, J. (2012, July 21). “A new landmark in extreme engineering”. *The Daily Telegraph*, pp. R10–R11.

⁵³⁸ Ford Rojas, J.P. (2012, August 11). “Get your own Mary Poppins outfit in great 2012 auction”. *The Daily Telegraph*, p. 9.

⁵³⁹ Lasky, J. (2012, July 26). “Setting a high bar for trinkets”. *The New York Times*, pp. D1, D7.

⁵⁴⁰ See: Booth, R. (2012, August 13). “Visitors’ views”. *The Guardian*, p. 5; Jones, S. (2012, July 29). “Locals and visitors praise the Games’ friendly atmosphere”. *The Guardian*, p. 3.

⁵⁴¹ Collinson, P. (2012, July 28). “Get the big picture and enjoy the Games for free”. *The Guardian*, Money, p. 5.

⁵⁴² Basté, J. (2012, July 29). “La mirada triste del felino”. *La Vanguardia*, p. 62.

sufficient at all. For instance, in Sochi 2014, it wasn't possible to explain only the competition without talking about the problems in Russia from the political, social and economic points of view, about the conflict with Ukraine, and the problems related with the location of the venue and how it affected competitions. It is a chain of factors that shouldn't be forgotten. If you forget about them, you are providing biased and insufficient information (José Luis Rojas, interview, June 2014).

The Olympics are part sporting event, they are part political, they are part a global festival, they are part a soap opera, they have so many different angles to them. There has to be a place for contextual information, whether it is before, after, or during the event. Sometimes you can simply mention it once and that is going to cause people to at least find out more information if they are willing to get it. Some people would say they only want the flag waving and the sports, but overall, media should mention them (Andrew Billings, interview, July 2014).

Sports journalists should take ethics seriously and give attention to context and background, to put things into perspective so it is not just the sensational and dramatic act on the field (Clifford Christians, interview, April 2013).

There is a very complicated combination today of sports journalism on and off the field. Because on the field traditionally was what sports journalists traditionally did. And in a sense that is easy, you write about the games, the players and their performances. But nowadays, off the field dominates so much of the sports and sports journalists now have to deal with that. It requires a higher degree of sophistication, politically, socially, culturally, than with what traditionally was on-field sports journalism [...] The big events like the Olympics, the World Cup, the Indianapolis 500, the NBA championships, they spill over into all kinds of journalism. You have feature writers looking at the Olympics, you have economists [...] it is not just a sports story. It is much more a total event (Michael Real, interview, June 2013).

In the Olympic Games, you get a more sophisticated type of sports coverage for a mega-event than that which just involves the nation-to-nation competition. You need to get much more context and you need to get much more understanding of the national significance and of the meaning of the sport-related culture of these kind of events (Lawrence Wenner, interview, June 2013).

There is a school of thought that says that journalism writes history and I would like to think that some of those pieces, if they were put in anthologies in a few years, they would tell us some things about the event and the world in which the event occurred [...] It is very important that any kind of journalism that is worthy of the name has to be more than a bag of a media subject. So sports journalism cannot only be about sport. And that is because sport is not just about sport. Despite people's fantasies, you cannot say, "this is sport", "this is society", "this is politics". Anyone practising any form of journalism has to take into account the society in which the sport is taking place. It is inevitable to understand the role of sport in that society (David Rowe, interview, June 2013).

The findings in this area of larger framework issues showed that the coverage seemed reasonably balanced because the reports picked up some of the key aspects that went

wrong, such as the G4S security fiasco and the controversy over the empty seats. In terms of the future legacy, the media remained critical and detached from the political rhetoric. However, there were other negative stories, contrary to the “party atmosphere”, that were excluded or received scant attention. What factors should we take into account in understanding that fact? It is certainly a core issue to reflect on in this discussion. There are two other issues that should also be critically examined at this point: the types of journalists that covered these larger framework stories and the reporting on contextual issues beyond the timeframe of sporting mega-events such as the Olympics.

The absence of further critical stories about London 2012

First, we should acknowledge that the coverage changes according to the time in question. The broad pattern is that the majority of negative issues tend to be covered in the seven-year run-up period to the Olympics and in the months before the event. By and large, these issues tend to disappear or be minimized once the events start⁵⁴³. The media turn their focus on to the sporting action of the Games and the coverage of critical issues becomes less newsworthy for newspapers, which end up conforming to the “festive zeitgeist” (Boykoff, 2014: 94). According to Boyle, “London 2012 conformed to that kind of broad pattern” (Interview, November 2013). During the years prior to London 2012, critical stories relating to the Games and the investment in the event, such as: the spiralling costs; the controversy around the Olympic TOP (Olympic Partner Programme) sponsor Dow Chemical⁵⁴⁴; “the threat of an Olympic boycott by India”; the fall in public participation in sport (particularly with regard to women and young people); “the social disturbances that occurred in London during August 2011” (Horne et al., 2013: 223); the eviction of people; and the doubts about transportation were occasionally reported in the mainstream media, mainly in the broadsheet newspapers. As *The Telegraph’s* journalists Paul Hayward and Adam Sills explain, once the Games started, the scope of the coverage changed dramatically:

Previously there was a lot of focus on organization, whether the British could actually do this successfully, because for many months before the Games, people said that Britain would make a mess of it, that it would be wrong, that it would be a disaster, and embarrassment, In the event, it

⁵⁴³ As Boyle points out, the negative stories “kind of resurface in a more lukewarm way sometimes after an event, although I think it was less in London 2012. The post-event media consensus is that there had been a ‘good Games’. And it is funny how that consensus is kind of laid down, ‘it was a good Games’, ‘it was a bad Games’. And once it is laid down, it is very hard to shift, so it is quite important” (Raymond Boyle, interview, November 2013).

⁵⁴⁴ As Horne et al. (2013: 223) explain: “When it was revealed that Olympic TOP sponsor Dow Chemical would also provide LOCOG with polyester and polyethylene wrap for the Olympic Stadium, there was an outcry as Dow owns the company Union Carbide that was responsible for a toxic gas disaster in Bhopal in 1984”.

was the opposite. It was a success, it was a wonderful mood in the country and great enthusiasm. So there was this big change in the coverage, pretty much from the opening ceremony. The opening ceremony was a key moment, because it made everyone feel good and optimistic. And from then onwards, it was a completely different story of what we had been writing for six months (Paul Hayward, interview, October 2013).

There was a lot of critical reporting beforehand and a lot of it afterwards, but actually during the Games there was very little, because it all went very well. It was incredibly well managed by LOCOG, who built up expectations that things would go wrong when they were right, I think that it was a brilliantly done PR move. It is not a criticism at all, I think it was very well managed, in the sense of making people believe that there was going to be transport chaos when there wasn't. Making people believe that there were security risks when there weren't. Newspapers started doing a little more politics and economics but actually British success overtook the news pages as well as the sports pages (Adam Sills, interview, October 2013).

John Horne uses the example of *The Guardian/The Observer* to illustrate the pattern of change from reporting of critical issues to using celebratory language in the British quality newspapers⁵⁴⁵:

I look to *The Guardian*, and there is a very noticeable shift to celebratory language, the whole front covers given to the Olympics, and if not all the front covers then at least half of them, which is unprecedented, to my memory. If the newspapers had ever been somewhat sceptical of some of the expectations, they turned to being much more boosters of the occasion. And all of them did. I didn't systematically read *The Times* or *The Telegraph* but looking at them occasionally, at the moment of the Olympics, they were also celebratory. I think that there is this general feeling, which is what happens when your nation is in one of those things. One of the issues that preceded the London Games was the idea that it was going to be the greenest or the most environmentally sustainable, but also, that the Games would be in some way an ethical Games. There was also concern in terms of labour. Occasionally, during the seven-year period before the Games, you would get some negative issues in the newspapers, but when it came to July 2012, and the start of the Games, the focus turned to the festival and the people enjoying themselves. *The Guardian*, after three or four days, when Team GB hadn't won any gold medal, there was a sort of feeling that maybe that kind of euphoria was getting a little bit difficult. *The Guardian* had a centre fold, with the poster of "Keep Calm and Carry On, We still got Wiggo". And that was the day that someone won a gold medal, and after that there was the "Super Saturday". The following day Andy Murray won the tennis gold at Wimbledon. From then on, it was celebration (John Horne, interview, November 2013).

Second, it should be acknowledged that nationalism is another crucial factor in understanding why additional critical aspects weren't reported on during the actual event, as Rojas points out:

⁵⁴⁵ See also: Wilson, R. (2012, August 16). "Press suspend scepticism to praise the 'superb' Games". *Press Gazette*.

Normally, there is a nationalistic question that lots of times is behind media organizations in the coverage of those types of events. I am not saying that as sports journalists we don't see the reality, it is that we are impregnated with the hopes that our country does well in an international event like the Olympics and, therefore, we tend to highlight the positive over the rest. Many times, this leads to the fact that many other angles to reality are left behind and maybe they appear afterwards, once the competition has finished. In some cases, those issues appear beforehand, as happened in Sochi or in the World Cup held in Brazil. Brazilian media reported on those issues, but when competition started, journalists put on the jersey of their national team and tried to help to cheer up the country. Part of the nationalistic sentiment lies in the sentiment of wanting to help your country and to wish the best for your country. Obviously, that impregnates sports journalism to a larger extent (José Luis Rojas, interview, June 2014).

Third, we should reflect on the close relationship and the mutual commercial influences between sporting mega-events such as the Olympics and the media. As Oates and Pauly (2007: 338) explain, "media outlets cover sports with a clear conflict of interest: Their very enterprise is deeply invested in the continued success of commodified sport". It is widely recognized that "market forces have always been part of the normative ecology for news in the sense that news content is always influenced by journalism's 'funders'" (Pritchard, 2014: 5). In this specific case, the close relationship between the Olympics and the media might make it difficult for media organizations to write a full account of the critical issues relating to and controversies surrounding the Games. This is well known by key actors within the Olympic industry. As Lenskyj (2000: 192) explains, the PR campaigns carried out by the IOC and the organizing committees (OCOGs) have essential functions, including that of ensuring the "media complicity demanded by the Olympic industry" and the "suppression of the public debate and critique".

We should also take into consideration that not only in the Olympic Games but also in the day-to-day coverage of sport, media organizations and journalists do not want to jeopardize their access by carrying out a full critical interrogation of the world of sport. This is a key ethical challenge, as Wenner and other scholars argue:

With sports journalism, there is an internal conflict of interest. Sports journalists need to have access to sources to have a story. If they don't have access, they don't have a job, a story, they don't have content. Given that, sports journalists have a conflict in that they cannot be critical observers of sport. Because if they are critical about what they are covering, they will no longer be covering sport. There is little critical distancing and critical interrogation of sport and how it might function more broadly in society (Lawrence Wenner, interview, June 2013).

One of the key problems we tend to find journalists have is the pressure that they are under to write in a certain way. We get examples of people being excluded from press passes, excluded from being allowed into press facilities in particular grounds and stadiums, because they have written something in the wrong way according to the people who have control of that. So, there is

quite a lot of pressure [...] sports journalists are clearly aware that if they run certain stories they would lose access and they shy away and they would not be able to provide anything to their readers (Chris Frost, interview, October 2013).

The responsibility for professional media reporters is, as far as I can tell, to tell the truth. However, in doing that, they run the risk of creating some problems with their connection to the sources of their information (John Horne, interview, November 2013).

Organizations want to micro manage the information that goes into the public domain, because there is huge money involved, whether we are talking about the Olympics, football, tennis or the World Cup, Champions League, whoever we are talking about. The money that circulates in the sports world is astronomical so the key stakeholders have huge amounts of capital invested in all this. So they have to make the message right, and they don't like the negative things that would affect the values and their monetary values. That has changed the nature of the relationship of sports, nowadays information provided is like spoon-fed information. These things are commercially managed for a purpose. The issue is access. In terms of access to an individual athlete, it is micro managed by a publicist, a PR manager, a lawyer in some cases or some commercial enterprise that is interested in them. That applies to sports people and coaches and managers, and even to administrators of sport in some cases (Richard Haynes, interview, October 2013).

In relation to the point about commercial influences, another factor that may potentially prevent the dissemination of negative issues or critical reports about the Olympics is advertising. Obviously, it is far beyond the scope of this dissertation to establish a direct relationship between advertising and the minimization of any critical reports about the Games, but it is an additional factor that should certainly be taken into consideration⁵⁴⁶. To illustrate this, *The Guardian/The Observer* published advertisements from 12 of the TOP worldwide sponsors, Olympic partners, supporters of and providers and suppliers to London 2012 (General Electric, Omega, Procter & Gamble, Samsung, BMW, BP, British Airways, BT, Lloyds, Cisco, GlaxoSmithKline and John Lewis). Some of them, such as Procter & Gamble, used the images of key British athletes, Jessica Ennis, Chris Hoy and Victoria Pendleton for example, in their advertisements. Apart from the official sponsors, other companies with links to British sport, such as Sky, Halfords, The National Lottery, Virgin, Volvo, and Aviva also advertised in *The Guardian/The Observer*. Similarly, *The Daily Telegraph's* pages also

⁵⁴⁶ As Horky and Stelzner (2013) point out, "quality journalism is based on the principle of impartiality. However, dependencies on publishers, shareholders, or advertisers, as well as government influence can undermine the control function of the Fourth Estate. TV channels and other media outlets are often not only a direct sponsor or license holder and thus co-manager of the events they report on; in some cases they conceive events in order to initiate reporting on them [...] a lack of distance between the subject and object of reporting can produce an inappropriate glorification of individuals" (Horky and Stelzner, 2013: 125).

included many advertisements from Olympic sponsors, official providers and suppliers and other companies linked with sport (Coca-Cola, GE, Omega, Procter & Gamble, Samsung, BMW, BP, British Airways, BT, Lloyds TSB, Cisco, Deloitte, UPS, GlaxoSmithKline, Rio Tinto, Sky, Halfords, The National Lottery, Virgin Media, Volvo, Aviva, FedEx, Royal Mail, British Gas, Investec, Wattbike, Links and Aegon Tennis).

We need to understand that commercial media do not operate in a neutral context and advertisers such as the aforementioned are crucial bases on which the financial viability of media organizations rests⁵⁴⁷. To what extent can advertising exert unconscious pressure on journalists so that content is shaped in a certain way or so that the potential appearance of negative news about the Olympic Games is prevented? It is an event after all in which these companies invest large sums of money. Raymond Boyle reflects on this issue:

Again, that is one of the dilemmas for commercial organizations. I mean, it is very difficult to draw a direct correlation between A + B = C [...] This makes this much more speculative in that context, but I would have thought that there has to be a relationship, particularly with people who get long-term advertising or have a long-term relationship with particular sponsors. Say for example BMW. If there had been some issue about BMW cars at the Olympics (which were used to transport VIP officials around) having developed a particular fault that made all them break down, I am sure that would have probably been covered in a particular way. Would that mean that the editors and people may hesitate slightly before they go with something? You would need to ask them about it, but my hunch would be that they may hesitate. But it also depends on the size of the story, if it is a big story and rivals go for it, it is difficult not to go for that. Would you go out for stories around them, would you set a team of people to look at what BMW are up to? Probably not. It is a difficult area to be absolutely sure, but it would be strange if there were not some broader kind of background influence. But unless you can clearly identify that by tracing a story it is an assumption, but based on past precedents, it is a likely assumption to me that there is some relationship (Raymond Boyle, interview, November 2013).

Despite the fact that all the aforementioned issues (nationalism, relationship with the Olympics, commercial relationships and advertising) need to be taken into consideration, as Rowe points out, sports journalists, like all journalists, should be independent in order to be able to provide a detached, critical and challenging account of the social reality:

One of the first things I say is that sports journalists should be journalists and I often feel that they are not, many of them or much of the time they are not what I regard as a journalist. I have a fairly old-fashioned idea of what journalism should be and, obviously, it should report, it should be involved in recalling what has happened and summarize it, giving a vision of history. But it is essential that journalism is also critical, challenging, analytical and professionals shouldn't go with

⁵⁴⁷ Especially, taking into account that, as Brock (2013: 111) points out, legacy newspapers currently face a triple crisis of lost classified advertising revenue, falling income from larger "display" advertisements and falling circulation.

the flow with what everyone says, and so on [...] I would say that one of the big challenges is analytical and independent reporting. And that is important for all journalists, not just sports journalists. And they are facing, I guess, all kinds of pressures. The so-called legacy media, the old media, are under economic pressure, Internet, citizen journalism, blogging, cuts of staff, loss of advertising revenue, and so on. And sports journalists need to find their place, because they are professionals. If they want to call themselves professionals, then they have to differentiate themselves. And now that is the harder to do, I think. The analytical independence is also important (David Rowe, interview, June 2013).

Just because the event is happening, just because everybody is having a good time, if you are a professional journalist, you should report on the whole environment, not just on the positive bits. Media should never switch off their ethical responsibility, however good the time they are having. It is a very important point (David Rowe, interview, March 2015).

Were larger framework stories reported by sports journalists?

A second issue that should be critically discussed in this section is that many of the journalists that covered the contextual stories were not actually sports journalists but professionals from other news desks (business, politics, education, transport, home affairs, arts and culture, security and defence, consumer affairs, health and fitness, science and environment, style and fashion, and so on) (see Section 7.10). Therefore, the distinction between the journalists who wrote “sports stories” and journalists who wrote “news stories about sports” was still in force during London 2012, validating the long-held notion of the insularity of the sports desk (Rowe, 2007). Reflecting on the prevalence of this situation, Rowe talks about the broad knowledge and background that ideally journalists should have:

I have been critical of this in my own writing that sports journalists have often been ill equipped to cover wider topics, because they only know sports. They are on the sports desk, it is their own empire. And if there is a big story, a critical story, it tends to be taken up by other parts of the press and partly for commercial reasons, because as a sports journalist, you can say “it wasn’t my story, it was another journalist who wrote that”. My ideal sports journalist is someone who knows about the sport but who also knows about the context of the sport and isn’t just a sports fan, isn’t just supporting the sport or the national team. That is, actually being a journalist. That is a serious profession, it should be, but it is not treated as such. And I think that during mega-events like this, you actually need quality sports journalism. If the home athletes are doing very well, it is fine to report on that, but we want journalism as well (David Rowe, interview, March 2015).

Is this contextual type of reporting found outside the Olympics?

The third issue to be discussed here is that, with notable exceptions, this more sophisticated and contextual type of reporting on the larger framework of sport disappears quickly and is rarely found outside sporting mega-events such as the Olympics. The day-to-day coverage of sports in mainstream media is “less complicated, more straightforward and tends to focus mainly on the action of the sports

events” (Michael Real, interview, June 2013). After the Games, there is a problem with maintaining a sustained coverage about these relevant contextual issues, as experts highlight:

I think that these issues are important, but perhaps not necessarily seen as very important by newspapers. I think that newspapers are in the ephemeral business, what is here is gone tomorrow to some extent, and I think that some of those broader issues about legacy, about impact, etc. they will surface and then they may surface again from time to time but I am not convinced that they are something that occupies a big part of the discourse [...] I think it is not on the agenda in part because the timeline does not fit newspapers. If Usain Bolt runs the 100 metres, we have a beginning, a middle and end. Whether the Olympics makes kids take up sport or makes them thinner or fitter, it is not something you can determine overnight. So, in terms of the timeline, the timeline is more like an academic who may think over a long-term period when writing an article or a paper. I think that the timeline is difficult for journalists to get their head around, because once the event has finished, they have moved on, the caravan has moved on, the circus has moved somewhere else [...] Journalists at the end of the day are selecting, organizing and constructing stories (Raymond Boyle, interview, November 2013).

On a day-to-day basis, journalists do not have time. And perhaps the coverage of those issues is reserved for some specialists. There are reports that are explaining what is behind the World Cup, that is a task that journalists, whether they are sports journalists or not, should explain. Maybe the day-to-day urgency limits that possibility a lot (José Luis Rojas, interview, June 2014).

We can probably find an exception to this trend in the coverage of the Olympic legacy carried out after the event by *The Guardian* in its Olympic legacy Sportblog. Farrington reflects on the uniqueness of this space:

On *The Guardian* website, there is a specific section that covers the funding and the actual hosting of the Games in terms of “it is worthy” to host the Games. Since the Games, “quality end” newspapers in this country have done a good job in terms of analysing these aspects, and the legacy, whether the Olympic legacy actually exists and whether the Olympics have been worthy in terms of the legacy, in terms of participation of people in sport in this country. That’s been a feature of the quality newspapers in the post-Olympics coverage. I didn’t see other websites or the BBC website doing that kind of post-Olympic analysis. They have done a good job analysing how the Olympics were funded and if it was worth it (Neil Farrington, interview, September 2013).

There are different factors that we should take into account in order to understand why this complex type of reporting (and also investigative sports journalism) is rarely found outside sporting mega-events such as the Olympics. Among the most important, we should mention resources and economic reasons. Nowadays, the range of organizations is larger than ever before. Nevertheless, only some larger journalistic companies still have the resources and are willing to give journalists the required

degree of autonomy⁵⁴⁸ to pursue these stories and develop a more reflective, contextual and investigative approach under a strategic editorial line. For instance, investigative stories such as the case of the cyclist Lance Armstrong and his use of performance-enhancing drugs wouldn't have been possible if the stories had not been pursued by skilled and experienced reporters from established institutions, such as by David Walsh in the *Sunday Times* (Brock, 2013). Several experts reflect on this situation:

You will get a handful of journalists who will say "I will not go down that track, I am going to look at the sides of what is going on". And to do that, you need to be working in an organization that appreciates that as well as doing this they are willing to fund it. Does investigative journalism in sport happen enough? Probably not. The reasons for it not happening? Resources, a perception of how interesting this may or may not be for readers and also the culture. And there is a difficulty in doing that kind of work, looking at things more investigatively. It is not always easy and it means that you can spend a lot of time and end up not having a product. So you need to be a strong enough outlet and be willing to do that, to be able to let a journalist to go away for six months to get a story and there may not be a story. In lots of places he wouldn't have that luxury (Raymond Boyle, interview, November 2013).

I think it is becoming more difficult, because I think that the financial or economic incentive is to get the story out there and get it out there early to beat the competition. So I think that there has been a little bit of a trend, this is my personal opinion, to a less investigative kind of journalism. Because I think newspapers don't have the resources that they once had, because they haven't worked out completely how to monetize their web version of the newspaper with the decline of circulations in the print media. However, I do think that there are columnists that have the time both to write the story that has to appear tomorrow and be working on another story where they investigate an issue or contemporary trend (John Vincent, interview, July 2014).

Some journalists have to write four stories a day. How can they do that sophisticated and contextual or investigative type of reporting when they must write four stories a day? Some journalists have, in addition to the column they write for a newspaper, a radio show or they are on the television too (Kelly McBride, interview, July 2014).

Amateur sports journalists, bloggers, the fan communities, they don't have the resources or the demands that sports journalists really need to pay attention to the behind the scenes, how the team is managed, how the finances are responsibly managed [...] and really only the traditional newspapers have the resources to support, to look into that. And that is very important, because if the journalists do not hold them accountable, nobody will (Michael Real, interview, June 2013).

⁵⁴⁸ As Boyle (2015: 368) argues: "Institutions shape journalists, be they sports or otherwise. Working for a red top or tabloid newspaper means being driven by an agenda set by a sports desk editor. Being employed by a broadsheet/compact newspaper or magazine often allows a greater degree of autonomy for the journalist than that experienced by their colleagues at the sharp end of the tabloid market".

4.1.4. Rectification of content and clarification of misunderstandings

During the timeframe of the observation, the quality media promptly recognized and clarified some errors of content, mainly in the case of minor factual details. Among the newspapers sampled, *The Guardian/The Observer* was the one that published more rectifications, complying with the major ethical codes (UNESCO, Art. 5; IFJ, Art. 5; Council of Europe, Art. 26; IPSO, Art. 1.ii; NUJ, Art. 3) and with its editorial policy to “correct significant errors as soon as possible”. Illustrative examples will be commented on in this section.

First, in a graphic entitled “Atlas of Olympic success”, published on 26 July, *The Guardian* recognized that it “should have included a note on Germany’s entry to make clear that it includes the medal-winning achievements of East Germany before unification⁵⁴⁹”. Second, the newspaper admitted writing that “Romania’s Sandra Izbasa had won her country’s first medal of the Games, triumphing in the women’s gymnastics vault final”, when, in fact, Romania had previously been awarded seven medals, including one gold⁵⁵⁰. Third, another rectification said “some calculations were a decimal place out in an article that said the sprinter Usain Bolt won the Olympic 100m in a time that was 0.6 seconds faster than his performance four years ago in Beijing, but half a second slower than the world record he set in 2009”. The newspaper had originally stated that, “his time of 9.63 seconds was 0.06 faster than his Beijing time and 0.05 seconds slower than his world record⁵⁵¹”.

In addition, some errors in mentioning names were corrected. *The Guardian* recognized that it had incorrectly referred to Chris Gatlin (and not Justin Gatlin) as the winner of the bronze medal in the men’s 100 metres. It was also stated that Heather Mills had won the sailing silver medal alongside her partner Saskia Clark, when her actual name is Hannah Mills⁵⁵². Similarly, some errors in giving the names of countries were also highlighted. *The Observer* claimed that sprinter Kim Collins was Jamaican, when he was actually from Saint Kitts and Nevis⁵⁵³. The runner Lugelin Santos was identified as being from Dominica but he is from the Dominican Republic⁵⁵⁴. In the same vein, the confusion between “England” and “Britain” was recurrent. For instance, “the Great Britain v New Zealand women’s football match at Cardiff’s Millennium

⁵⁴⁹ “Corrections and clarifications” (2012, July 31). *The Guardian*, p. 29.

⁵⁵⁰ “Corrections and clarifications” (2012, August 7). *The Guardian*, p. 27.

⁵⁵¹ “Corrections and clarifications” (2012, August 11). *The Guardian*, p. 34.

⁵⁵² “Corrections and clarifications” (2012, August 14). *The Guardian*, p. 29.

⁵⁵³ “For the record” (2012, August 12). *The Observer*, p. 36.

⁵⁵⁴ “Corrections and clarifications” (2012, August 9). *The Guardian*, p. 33.

Stadium was accidentally referred to as ‘the England game⁵⁵⁵’. In another article, “Senegal were described as runners-up to England in Group A” whereas it should have been “runners-up to Great Britain⁵⁵⁶”. Additionally, a report about security “said hundreds of police officers from nine forces across England had been drafted in to fill gaps after G4S failed to provide enough guards”. *The Guardian* recognized that the police forces were not just from England: “as the article went on to say, they include the Strathclyde and South Wales forces⁵⁵⁷”.

Misrepresentations with regard to photographs were also commented on. *The Guardian* explained that the “Olympics 2012 supplement front page compilation of gold medal winners’ cameo shots wrongly included an image of canoe double slalom silver medal winners David Florence and Richard Hounslow in action rather than the gold medallists Tim Baillie and Etienne Stott⁵⁵⁸”. In addition, the newspaper recognized that “one of the photographs in an Eyewitness centrespread was wrongly part of a project commissioned by the Photographers’ Gallery to bring together 204 pictures of Londoners, each born in one of the countries competing in the Olympic Games. The portrait captioned as having been taken by Rasha Kahil and showing Elina Brotherus, from Lebanon, was actually of Rasha Kahil and was taken by Elina Brotherus⁵⁵⁹”.

Further corrections detected referred to: the gymnast Daniel Keetings (who was said to have won gold at the 2012 European championships but he actually did not take part in the squad that won the event⁵⁶⁰); basketball player Tyson Chandler (said to have won an NBA championship with the New York Knicks when it should have been the Dallas Mavericks⁵⁶¹); and runner Kelly Holmes (said to have won the 400 metres and 800 metres medals in Athens 2004 when it should have been the 800 metres and 1,500 metres⁵⁶²). Moreover, a clarification was issued with regard to the Olympic torch. In the piece “Rio takes torch for the samba games” (August 12), *The Observer* used the expression “Tonight Rio received the Olympic torch”. One week later, the newspaper explained the expression was intended as a metaphor, given that only a flag is handed over. As clarified by the paper, “the Olympic flame was extinguished at the close of the

⁵⁵⁵ “Corrections and clarifications” (2012, July 27). *The Guardian*, p. 37.

⁵⁵⁶ “Corrections and clarifications” (2012, August 3). *The Guardian*, p. 35.

⁵⁵⁷ “Corrections and clarifications” (2012, August 18). *The Guardian*, p. 29.

⁵⁵⁸ “Corrections and clarifications” (2012, August 15). *The Guardian*, p. 29.

⁵⁵⁹ “Corrections and clarifications” (2012, July 26). *The Guardian*, p. 33.

⁵⁶⁰ “Corrections and clarifications” (2012, July 24). *The Guardian*, p. 31.

⁵⁶¹ “Corrections and clarifications” (2012, July 21). *The Guardian*, p. 44.

⁵⁶² “Corrections and clarifications” (2012, August 10). *The Guardian*, p. 33.

London Games, as it has been at every Games since 1928. It won't be rekindled until 2016⁵⁶³”.

The Guardian/The Observer published a significant number of corrections, but this does not mean that the other publications didn't carry out this essential practice of media accountability. A noteworthy error and correction could be found in *The Daily Telegraph*. In a guide to the women's boxing semi-final match-ups, the newspaper incorrectly wrote “Can anyone defeat Britain's Katie Taylor, the most technically proficient attacking boxer in the world?⁵⁶⁴”, when in fact Taylor represented the Republic of Ireland. That error generated a Twitter storm⁵⁶⁵ and the newspaper had to apologize for the error the next day in the print issue⁵⁶⁶.

Moving on to the American press, the analysis of *The New York Times* also revealed many illustrative examples of errors and rectifications. For instance, the newspaper: misstated the number of Olympic medals won by the former US swimmer Joe Bottom⁵⁶⁷; erroneously attributed a distinction to the high jumper Alice Coachman⁵⁶⁸ (she was actually not the only female to win a track and field event in London 1948 as six women did in fact do so); misidentified the origins of the 100 metres swimmer Sun Yang⁵⁶⁹ and the gymnast Liubou Charkashyna; and equivocally wrote that the number of cycling gold medals won by Britain in Beijing 2008 and London 2012 was 7 when it should have been 16⁵⁷⁰. In further editing errors, a news analysis article on 29 July misspelled the surname of the long jump world record holder (Mike Powell) and also incorrectly referred to the world record holder in the men's swimming 1,500 metres freestyle (it was not Grant Hackett but Sun Yang)⁵⁷¹. Other errors made in relation to athletes' ages⁵⁷², the identification of sportsmen in pictures⁵⁷³, companies' names⁵⁷⁴ and to defence and security plans for the Olympics⁵⁷⁵ were also reported.

⁵⁶³ “For the record” (2012, August 19). *The Observer*, p. 32.

⁵⁶⁴ Davies, G.A. (2012, August 8). “Guide to the semi-final match-ups”. *The Daily Telegraph*, p. S35.

⁵⁶⁵ Farrelly, B. (2012, August 8). “Sorry for calling Katie Taylor British after Twitter storm”. *Independent*. <http://www.independent.ie/sport/other-sports/olympics/irish-news/sorry-for-calling-katie-taylor-british-after-twitter-storm-26884832.html> [Last access: 22-09-2015].

⁵⁶⁶ Davies, G.A. (2012, August 9). “Fields of Athenry ring out for finalist Taylor”. *The Daily Telegraph*, pp. S16–S17.

⁵⁶⁷ “Corrections” (2012, July 24). *The New York Times*, p. A2.

⁵⁶⁸ “Corrections” (2012, July 29). *The New York Times*, p. A3.

⁵⁶⁹ “Corrections” (2012, August 3). *The New York Times*, p. A2.

⁵⁷⁰ “Corrections. Sports”. (2012, August 16). *The New York Times*, p. A2.

⁵⁷¹ “Correction” (2012, August 5). *The New York Times*, p. A2.

⁵⁷² “Corrections” (2012, August 7). *The New York Times*, p. A2.

⁵⁷³ “Corrections” (2012, August 11). *The New York Times*, p. A2.

⁵⁷⁴ “Correction” (2012, August 12). *The New York Times*, p. A3.

For its own part, *The Washington Post* recognized that it had incorrectly written that rugby would be returning to the Games in 2012 (when it should have been 2016) and that the 1948 Olympics were the first held in London⁵⁷⁶, forgetting the 1908 Games. Erroneous data (the exact time achieved by 1,500 metres runner Matthew Centrowitz⁵⁷⁷ and the distance and winning times for two men's rowing eights heats⁵⁷⁸) were also promptly identified and corrected. In addition, the newspaper stated that a photograph had been incorrectly paired with an article about Usain Bolt's gold medal in the 200 metres: "the caption said that the photo showed Bolt crossing the finish line in that race, with countrymen Yohan Blake and Warren Weir taking silver and bronze. Instead, it showed Bolt crossing the finish line in his win in the 100-meter race on Aug. 5, with Blake taking silver and American Justin Gatlin taking bronze". Given the error, *The Washington Post* decided to reprint the photograph in the space allocated for corrections⁵⁷⁹.

The Spanish newspapers were the least active in terms of issuing corrections and rectifications. Only two brief examples were found in *El País*. The newspaper clarified that the *El País* Semanal supplement of 22 July had already been printed when Rafael Nadal announced that he would not be participating in the Games and, therefore, he wouldn't be the Spanish flag bearer⁵⁸⁰. The newspaper also clarified that the city hosting the next Olympic Games would be Rio de Janeiro and not São Paulo, as was erroneously mentioned in information published on 29 July about the torch designed by André Ricard⁵⁸¹. The research didn't turn up any examples of corrections published by *La Vanguardia*.

Letters to the editor as a key mechanism of accountability

Letters to the editor also became a crucial space for accountability. For London 2012, readers detected errors, clarified information, discussed the treatment carried out by the media and contributed with further data relating to the reports published by the newspapers sampled. Among them, *The Washington Post* was the newspaper that most constantly published letters to the editor for the purposes of accountability. In the piece "Success and sour grapes at the Summer Games⁵⁸²", it published three

⁵⁷⁵ "Corrections" (2012, August 3). *The New York Times*, p. A2.

⁵⁷⁶ "Corrections" (2012, July 19). *The Washington Post*, p. A2.

⁵⁷⁷ "Corrections" (2012, August 15). *The Washington Post*, p. A2.

⁵⁷⁸ "Corrections" (2012, August 12). *The Washington Post*, p. A2.

⁵⁷⁹ "Correction" (2012, August 14). *The Washington Post*, p. A2.

⁵⁸⁰ "Fe de errores" (2012, July 22). *El País*, p. 32.

⁵⁸¹ "Fe de errores" (2012, July 30). *El País*, p. 26.

⁵⁸² "Success and sour grapes at the Summer Games" (2012, August 4). *The Washington Post*, p. A13.

illuminating letters. In the first one, reader Tom Farquhar reflected on the violent vocabulary used in a piece about the US swimmer Missy Franklin published on 30 July 2012. Farquhar asked if it was necessary for the newspaper to “reimagine Franklin as a ‘nice kid [who] will knife you in the pool’ or as a swimmer who, with 25 meters to go, became possessed by a ‘mean girl’”. As the reader argued, “perhaps it’s time we let go of the pretense that essential to athletic success is the ‘killer instinct’. Perhaps the impulse to destroy the opposition was always the creation of coaches and sportswriters, playing to our basest nature. Perhaps Franklin’s optimism, generosity, grace, intensity and ambition could be celebrated for what they are – the creative, constructive values that empower success in the face of adversity and ennoble human experience”.

In the second letter, reader Christina FitzPatrick focused on the photographic coverage of African-American athletes. As put by FitzPatrick: “to look at the July 31 newspaper, you would think that John Orozco was the only reason the United States failed to medal in men’s team gymnastics. *The Post* ran two pictures about the bad night the team had, one on the front page and over the title ‘A Reversal of Fortune’ and one in the sports section [‘Unlikely events trip up U.S.’], and both are of Orozco, the only African-American on the team. While he had a terrible night, all but one of his teammates also fell”. The reader concluded that “*The Post* should be more sensitive to its choice of photographs and avoid the appearance of suggesting that the problem was the African American on the squad”. In the third letter, reader Jenifer Gittings-Harfst highlighted the fact that she was “pleased to find that *The Post*’s summaries of Olympic happenings include reports that go beyond just a U.S. focus”. As the reader pointed out: “I love reading in-depth pieces about the United States’ performance, but I also like knowing how the medals are going overall and learning tidbits about competitors from other countries”.

In another series of letters, entitled “Honoring the Olympic spirit⁵⁸³”, readers debated on five other aspects of *The Washington Post*’s Olympic coverage: (1) the criticism directed at Mariel Zagunis in a Mike Wise Column; (2) the criticism in relation to not including Michael Phelps on the front page after he had become the most decorated athlete in Olympic history; (3) the fact that a front page on 7 August didn’t specify the sport of the US win over Canada; (4) the little space devoted to the 10,000 metres gold medal victory won by Ethiopia’s Tirunesh Dibaba; and (5) a few congratulations on providing some non-comedic coverage of the sport of dressage. In another letter to the editor, Harry Piotrowki reflected on a column written from a historical angle by Mike Wise on 11 August 2012 about Munich 1972, providing the information that the author

⁵⁸³ “Honoring the Olympic spirit” (2012, August 11). *The Washington Post*, p. A11.

had failed to identify the reason why the clock was twice reset to three seconds in the basketball final between the US and the Soviet Union⁵⁸⁴.

In the other newspapers sampled, readers also contributed to the coverage by providing additional information. In *The Guardian*, Owen Gibson wrote that at London 1908, Emil Voigt “stunned his rivals by storming to victory in the five-mile race and becoming the first and only Briton to win a long-distance individual gold medal”. In response to that, a reader highlighted the fact that “at the same Games, George Larner won the 10-mile walk, while Tommy Green (1932), Harold Whitlock (1936) and Don Thompson (1960) won the 50km walk, and in 1964 Ken Matthews won the 20km walk⁵⁸⁵”. In another case, reader Fiona Carroll explained, in response to an article published on 10 August, that Bolt was “not the first to retain both sprint titles at the Olympics. Leonidas of Rhodes won the *stadion* or *stade* (just under 200 metres), the *diaulos* (2 *stades*) and the *dolichos* (20 *stades*) at the four Olympics between 164 and 152 BC”. Media criticism also came to the fore in *The Guardian* when reader Mary Jackson criticized the newspaper’s coverage of equestrian events, particularly dressage which, to her, was “snide, sarcastic and ignorant”. Reader Rosemary Chamberlin urged the newspaper to commit to a target of 20% of sports coverage to sportswomen. As the reader commented, “you will do our sportswomen justice and show girls you do not have to sleep with a footballer to get in the papers – you can be one⁵⁸⁶”.

In *La Vanguardia*, the Spanish hockey player Quico Cortès Juncosa sought to make a point about the article “Al ADO le falla el plan”, published on 14 August 2012. The piece claimed that the funding received by hockey didn’t match the results achieved. Through a letter to the editor, the player maintained that further key factors not mentioned by the author should be taken into account. As explained: “if we make the effort to divide the total quantity invested in a sport between its number of adherent athletes, we can observe that hockey has the third least investment per athlete, behind track and field and football. It should also be noted that at the Games even though only 18 players participated in the hockey matches there were more players actually involved in the sport, therefore more people who should receive remuneration that comes directly from the ADO plan. I am sure the same happens in other sports. Other factors should also be taken into account, particularly the fact that in some disciplines

⁵⁸⁴ “Why time was turned back in the 1972 Olympics” (2012, August 18). *The Washington Post*, p. A11.

⁵⁸⁵ “Walking the walk” (2012, July 25). *The Guardian*, p. 29.

⁵⁸⁶ “Gold for grandstanding Olympics” (2012, August 11). *The Guardian*, p. 35.

teams can only win a team medal whereas in other disciplines more than one medal per participant is possible⁵⁸⁷”.

4.1.5. Impartiality and correct separation between journalistic genres

As has already been pointed out, the major deontological codes (Council of Europe, Art. 3; IPSO, Art. 1.iii; NUJ, Art. 4; ASNE, Art. 5; FAPE, Art. 17; CPC, Art. 1; SPM, Art 3., Art. 5.1), as well as many newspapers’ stylebooks and newsroom statutes, establish as an ethical imperative the rule that media professionals should separate news from commentary. Nevertheless, a mixture of information and opinion has been widely observed within the timeframe of the observation, reinforcing the long-held observation that subjectivity is an inherent part of sports journalism (Wanta, 2013).

The use of the first-person approach, however, was not as commonplace as would have been expected. Isolated examples could be found in phrases like “we’re dead good at it⁵⁸⁸”, “we could taste the winning medal⁵⁸⁹”, “we had the fastest sprinter in the world⁵⁹⁰”, “our sprint relay team⁵⁹¹”, “our nation’s oarswomen⁵⁹²”, “our defending Star champions⁵⁹³”, “we’re winning the Olympics⁵⁹⁴” and “cracked before our eyes⁵⁹⁵”. Conversely, evaluative adjectives and adverbs as well as other expressions of subjectivity were widespread across the board⁵⁹⁶, especially when they referred to the

⁵⁸⁷ “L’ADO i l’hoquei” (August 16). *La Vanguardia*, p. 14.

⁵⁸⁸ Addley, E. (2012, July 30). “The big question”. *The Guardian*, p. 3.

⁵⁸⁹ Hattenstone, S. (2012, July 31). “It was all going so well – and then British hopes suddenly took a dive”. *The Guardian*, p. 7.

⁵⁹⁰ Williams, R. (2012, July 29). “Moment of truth came, but the tank was empty”. *The Guardian*, Olympics 2012, pp. 2–3.

⁵⁹¹ Bull, A. (2012, August 11). “Relay blunder pushes coach to brink”. *The Guardian*, Olympics 2012, pp. 2–3.

⁵⁹² Brown, O. (2012, July 29). “Pair shatter Olympic record”. *The Sunday Telegraph*, pp. S10–S11.

⁵⁹³ Cary, T. (2012, July 31). “Star men lift GB out of doldrums”. *The Daily Telegraph*, p. S25.

⁵⁹⁴ Morris, S. (2012, July 26). “Team GB triumphs in first match of the Games”. *The Guardian*, p. 1.

⁵⁹⁵ Gallagher, B. (2012, August 4). “Australia cracked by dedication of GB pursuit heroes”. *The Daily Telegraph*, p. S6.

⁵⁹⁶ The situation was particularly acute in the British press. One factor to consider is the British newspapers’ trend towards a more interpretative style of writing (Hallin and Mancini, 2004). However, a second aspect should be looked at: the success of Team GB and the fact that the Games were held in London. Regarding this aspect, it is interesting to reflect on the opinion given by Tim Adams, staff writer of *The Observer*, on the last day of the Games: “Journalists, even sports writers, are supposed to display professional detachment and reserve while working. They are supposed to hold tight to their cynicism, retain their objectivity, keep their seen-it-all before expressions in place while all about them are losing theirs. Still, there have been several occasions in the last week or two when

performances of the home athletes. In these cases, “instead of educating the viewer with neutral analysis, results and events were presented with a magnifying glass on sentiment” (Horky and Stelzner, 2013: 125). Some pertinent examples which illustrate that fact that journalists took sides with regard to domestic sportsmen and sportswomen include: “wonderfully dominant gold medal for the British men’s pursuit team⁵⁹⁷”, “splendid ending⁵⁹⁸”, “sensational second half⁵⁹⁹”, “a brilliant victory over the almighty Norway⁶⁰⁰”, “sublime mix of strength, skill and modesty⁶⁰¹”, “GB men’s four gloriously retain their title⁶⁰²”, “scintillating shooting performance⁶⁰³”, “Jessica Ennis’ glorious heptathlon victory⁶⁰⁴” and “Britain’s king of the kayak produced a performance as dominant in the water as Bolt is on the track⁶⁰⁵”. In the portrayal of the bigger international stars of the Games, such as Usain Bolt and David Rudisha, evaluative adjectives were also used to magnify their performances. For instance, Bolt was portrayed as “majestic”, “the master of the universe” and “the empire-made sprinter⁶⁰⁶” and Rudisha’s elegant way of running and his courage were qualified as “pure poetry in motion⁶⁰⁷”.

Again, in the case of loss or underperformance from home athletes⁶⁰⁸, subjectivity also commonly arose in news pieces. Ian Chadband of *The Daily Telegraph* criticized the British relay team for failing to get the baton round for the fourth time in the last five

even in the press seats it has been clear that the only honest human response to what is happening has been to stand up and yell and scream along with everyone else”. See: Adams, T. (2012, August 12). “I cast aside my British reserve – the last fortnight has been one of dreams and wonder”. *The Guardian*, pp. 24–5.

⁵⁹⁷ Ronay, B. (2012, August 4). “Gold, gold, gold!” *The Guardian*, pp. 1–2.

⁵⁹⁸ “Reacción final ante Argentina” (2012, August 6). *El País*, p. 43.

⁵⁹⁹ Martín, L. (2012, July 30). “Media hora para enmarcar”. *El País*, p. 46.

⁶⁰⁰ “España sorprende a Noruega” (2012, August 6). *El País*, p. 43.

⁶⁰¹ Hattenstone, S. (2012, August 7). “Sublime mix of strength, skill and modesty as Tweddle bows out with bronze”. *The Guardian*, pp. 2–3.

⁶⁰² Kitson, R. (2012, August 5). “Record rowers feel pleasure and pain”. *The Guardian*, Olympics 2012, pp. 2–3.

⁶⁰³ Withers, T. (2012, August 3). “Stars send U.S. numbers into orbit”. *The Washington Post*, p. D7.

⁶⁰⁴ Chadband, I. (2012, August 5). “Farah digs deep for glory”. *The Sunday Telegraph*, pp. S6–S7.

⁶⁰⁵ Hoult, N. (2012, August 12). “McKeever wins in a flash”. *The Sunday Telegraph*, p. S7.

⁶⁰⁶ Martínez, J.B. (2012, August 10). “El amo del universo”. *La Vanguardia*, pp. 40–1.

⁶⁰⁷ “Rudisha protagoniza la mejor carrera” (2012, August 13). *La Vanguardia*, p. 42.

⁶⁰⁸ According to Richard Haynes: “The construction of nationality, either in newspapers or on television, is highly celebratory, highly linked to the whole sense of national pride and identity. People want to see athletes do well. And when they don’t succeed, or underperform, they are criticized for not having trained hard enough to overcome personal problems or issues they have, for not being committed, for not having lived up to the nation’s expectations. That is also translated into journalism” (interview, October 2013).

Olympics: “the time has come to stop defending the indefensible. These are professional athletes who practice regularly to get this right, but on the big occasion they have been guilty of fouling up time and again⁶⁰⁹”. In the same newspaper, the defeat of the British boxer Fred Evans was qualified as a “missed opportunity”. Jim White pointed out that despite that fact that he is “one of the most technically gifted amateurs in the country”, he “is also frustratingly inconsistent⁶¹⁰”. Judoka Ashley McKenzie was named “miserable McKenzie” and “distraught McKenzie⁶¹¹” by *The Guardian*, which also considered the finishing position of the 15-year-old diver Alicia Blagg a “disappointing seventh⁶¹²”. A news piece by Liz Clarke in *The Washington Post* on the “disastrous performance⁶¹³” of the US men’s gymnastics team is another relevant case in point. Many subjective expressions were featured in this news article, including: “The Americans’ fifth-place represented a stunning fall for a team many felt would make history” and “The Americans’ collapse was total, with every gymnast underperforming to breath-taking degree”.

All this being explained, the clearest example of lack of detachment could be found in the excessive criticism in *El País* directed towards the defeat of the Spanish football team. Certainly, it could be argued that the triumph in football – which occupies a central role in Spanish society (Llopis-Goig, 2014) – was expected by public opinion and, therefore, the elimination of the team in the first round was a big disappointment. It was expected that criticism would appear in the opinion spaces and in the first pages of the sports sections, and it did, through the editorials written by José Sámano⁶¹⁴. However, the descriptions of the Spanish matches written by Ramon Besa also showed an exaggerated blurring of information and comment, a situation that posed ethical challenges to the prescriptions issued by the same newspaper (*El País Style Guide*, Art. 1.3; Art. 2.16).

To begin with, in the defeat of Spain against Japan in the first football match of the Olympics, a wide range of evaluative elements could be discerned⁶¹⁵. Some of the

⁶⁰⁹ Chadband, I. (2012, August 11). “Time to stop defending sorry relay record”. *The Daily Telegraph*, p. S6.

⁶¹⁰ White, J. (2012, August 13). “Evans emulates Khan but rues missed opportunity”. *The Daily Telegraph*, p. S4.

⁶¹¹ Jackson, J. (2012, July 29). “Miserable McKenzie struggles to help a hold on himself but looks to Rio”. *The Guardian*, Olympics 2012, p. 11.

⁶¹² Addley, E. (2012, July 30). “Blagg misses out on medal as Team GB pair disappoint”. *The Guardian*, Olympics 2012, p. 12.

⁶¹³ Clarke, L. (2012, July 31). “Unlikely events trip up U.S.”. *The Washington Post*, p. D7.

⁶¹⁴ Sámano, J. (2012, July 31). “El fútbol vuelve a la caverna”. *El País*, p. 41.

⁶¹⁵ Besa, R. (2012, July 27). “Una soberana derrota en Glasgow”. *El País*, p. 51.

dramatic⁶¹⁶ elements codified include: “a sovereign defeat”; “Spain plays badly wrong”; “the disappointment was monumental”; “disappointing debut of ‘La Roja’, a team right now unreadable: helpless, anxious and caricatured”; and “it is not known exactly where the beginning and the end of a confused Spanish team was against Japan”.

In the second loss, against Honduras, the language was no more detached. Some examples with regard to Spain include: “it has always been out of touch and the majority of its famous players have been anonymous footballers”, “Spain arrived at the Games late and in a poor state”, [players] “were overcome by complacency and problems”, “out of shape, out of mind, out of the Games⁶¹⁷”. The next day, Besa wrote that “Spain lacked competitiveness, leadership, drive and above all hunger for glory”, that the team was “depersonalized and immature” and lacked “style and identity⁶¹⁸”.

The tone and the kind of language that could be read in *El País* is clearly similar to what could be found in other newspapers, including general information publications, *ABC*⁶¹⁹ and sports dailies (*Marca*⁶²⁰ and *As*⁶²¹, for example) where expressions such as “tragedy”, “the pain is double, almost mortal” and “failure” were used. In *La Vanguardia*, the critical tone within news pieces could also be discerned, but to a lesser extent than in *El País*. Beyond opinion pieces, where phrases such as “the painful elimination of the football team⁶²²” were employed, some expressions used by Felip Vivanco and Juan Bautista Martínez in their chronicles included “very disappointing”, “they were an ugly caricature of what was expected of them⁶²³”, “pathetic, dramatic, incredible, unheard⁶²⁴” and “lamentable image⁶²⁵”.

Moving on from the case of the football team, another illuminating case in terms of the melding of information and opinion could be found in the news pieces devoted to the

⁶¹⁶ It cannot be denied that “sports journalism takes place in a world it has created itself through staging drama, highlights, crises, successes, and failures” and that “the self-dramatization of sports and its dramatization through media go hand in hand with each other and form an inseparable unit” (Horky and Stelzner, 2013: 121–2).

⁶¹⁷ Besa, R. (2012, July 30). “Fuera España”. *El País*, pp. 42–3.

⁶¹⁸ Besa, R. (2012, July 31). “La inercia no da títulos”. *El País*, p. 42.

⁶¹⁹ González-Martín, T. (2012, August 2). “España conquista el cero olímpico”. *ABC*, p. 53.

⁶²⁰ Seguro, S. (2012, July 27). “Tétrico arranque de España”. *Marca*, Londres 2012, pp. 2–3.

⁶²¹ Gabilondo, A. (2012, July 30). “Gran fracaso de La Rojita”. *As*, p. 2.

⁶²² “Una semana de JJ.OO” (2012, August 6). *La Vanguardia*, p. 10.

⁶²³ Vivanco, F. (2012, July 27). “Japón desnuda a España en su triste retorno olímpico”. *La Vanguardia*, p. 40.

⁶²⁴ Vivanco, F. (2012, July 30). “Patético, increíble: España eliminada”. *El País*, pp. 42–3.

⁶²⁵ Martínez, J.B. (2012, August 2). “Brasil golea y España se va sin marcar”. *La Vanguardia*, p. 38.

disappointing results obtained by the Spanish athletics team at London 2012. After Diego Ruiz, David Bustos and Alvaro Rodríguez failed to advance to the 1,500 metres semi-finals, *El País* headlined an article with “Dishonour in the 1,500⁶²⁶”, using the adjective “dishonour” without commas or italics. Kevin López’s strategy in the 800 metres was qualified as “badly wrong⁶²⁷”. In addition, Marta Dominguez’s last race in an Olympic Games was considered by *La Vanguardia* as a “fiasco” and “gloomy⁶²⁸”.

How can we understand the constant blurring of frontiers between genres in the field of sports journalism? First and foremost, it should be acknowledged that it is more generally accepted that sports journalists have more freedom in giving their comments and opinions in contrast to professionals from other sections or areas within the news arena. To a certain level, there is a subjective element in sports reporting that cannot be avoided, as experts highlight:

It is probably more generally accepted that there is more freedom to give opinion as a sports journalist, as compared to other types of journalists. Because even when you are reporting a match, it is a subjective exercise, it will include your opinion. In a way, that is what readers want and what you need to do as a journalist is to get people’s respect and to know what your opinion is (John Price, interview, September 2013).

Sports journalism isn’t just facts, it is driven by emotion. The people that are reading have a huge emotional investment in what you are writing. There is more subjective opinionated reporting that you would find in other news areas (Neil Farrington, interview, September 2013).

All journalists have their subjectivity, they are human beings. You would expect that a Catalan journalist supports one of the Catalan teams at some level, but you would expect them also to have some critical distance (David Rowe, interview, June 2013).

Second, we should understand that nowadays there is a greater problem with regard to the separation between journalistic genres due to the fact that in the multimedia landscape, newspapers cannot just stick to the facts and the data. As has been argued beforehand, the fundamental value that print newspapers can provide in this day and age (in contrast to online media, blogs and social networking sites, which prioritize immediacy) is sensemaking, which “involves the exercise of judgement” and this “may go under the labels of reporting, analysis, comment or opinion” (Brock, 2013: 201–2).

Nevertheless, the problem is that the blurring of frontiers is happening more and more because in the current environment, characterized by overload of information and the

⁶²⁶ Arribas, C. (2012, August 4). “Deshonra en el 1.500”. *El País*, p. 55.

⁶²⁷ Iríbar, A. (2012, August 8). “Demasiado 800”. *El País*, p. 45.

⁶²⁸ Martínez, J.B. (2012, August 7). “Marta culmina en fiasco su despedida olímpica”. *La Vanguardia*, p. 33.

multiplicity of voices in the media arena, journalists try to differentiate themselves, sometimes with “extreme” opinions, as Greer, Jones and Farrington explain:

It is happening more and more, and it is because of this idea that journalists have to brand themselves. In print media, because journalists need to become experts, they have to brand themselves as the experts, they are having their own voice [...] Before we had the columnist, who would have the voice, and the reporter, who would be objective. They are just blurred together now (Jennifer Greer, interview, July 2014).

Newspapers particularly are having a hard time in terms of sales, in terms of circulation, in terms of revenue. And opinion, let's say strong opinion, is a potential driver of sales (Neil Farrington, interview, September 2013).

By having their own voice means they should have an extreme point of view, it is not only opinion, they have to brand themselves with an extreme opinion so that they can find someone with a opposite yet similarly extreme opinion, so that they can argue with one another. I am sure that they do not fully believe in the extreme way in which they report, but they brand themselves with extreme opinions, completely on one side or completely on the other (Amy Jones, interview, July 2014).

However, despite the fact that: (1) people may have different expectations with regard to sports journalists and (2) media organizations and journalists need to maximize their comment and analysis spaces in order to retain their value in the current media scenario, this doesn't exclude that professionals still need to pay attention to the relevant ethical codes and the fact that they should look after the use of certain mechanisms in their writing such as evaluative adjectives and excessive expressions of subjectivity, which could be discerned in the criticism towards the Spanish football team's performance at London 2012.

Furthermore, in visual terms, a clearer separation between information and opinion needs to be enforced in the design of the newspapers analysed. In some publications, such as *The New York Times*, there wasn't a clear separation in visual terms between the pieces devoted to information and the commentary/more opinionated pieces⁶²⁹. Although the different genres may be characterized by very subtle formal differences, the problem is that the readership is not aware of them, as Jennifer Greer points out:

⁶²⁹ To be precise, establishing a clearer visual separation between the information and the opinion pieces is one of the recommendations established in the document “Preserving our readers' trust”, produced by *The New York Times*. As it points out: “the paper should devise clearer, more explicit rubrics and layouts to set off news analysis and viewpoint pieces of any sort” (p. 12). Additionally, the document mentions that “at a minimum, columns should be prominently labelled as commentary, a more personal expression than interpretive or analytical reporting. They should be set off distinctively, by more than ragged-right typography” (p. 12).

The mechanics of how things work, the general public doesn't know and doesn't want to know. So *The New York Times*, if you ever looked, if it is fully justified, it is actually like a softer analysis piece. If it is aligned flash left, it is a news piece. The public does not know that, just like the italics, nobody knows. It is almost like there is this fake way for journalists to feel right about what they are doing. The public doesn't know and, therefore, the public cannot separate between the two (Jennifer Greer, interview, July 2014).

In contrast to the examples that have been highlighted in this analysis, journalists should improve their commitment to their style of writing in order to make readers aware of what content is news and what is opinion or comment, as Rojas states:

There is confusion, and this is even more so in sports journalism, between comment and fact. There are many times that the separation isn't clear and this is a situation that should be clearly improved. Readers should always be aware when opinion starts and when information finishes (José Luis Rojas, interview, June 2014).

4.1.6. Avoiding sensationalism and trivialization in news reporting

As John Mair argues, the biggest difference between the tabloid and the quality press in terms of their ethics and quality of information is that “tabloids exist on football, fucking, fashion and celebrity, that is their staple”. Conversely, “broadsheets report intelligently” (Interview, April 2013). Despite the fact that there wasn't any story in the quality newspapers during the time of London 2012 that could compare to the type of sensationalist reporting that the tabloid newspapers favour, a close analysis does reveal some very interesting cases to evaluate. These situations, which pose doubts in relation to key ethical recommendations issued by the Council of Europe (Art. 30), the SPJ (Art. 2) and *The Telegraph* (Basic Principles), are illustrative examples of what David Rowe (1992) named “soft news” in his classification of modes of sports writing. To Rowe (1992: 102), in soft news, the “treatment of sport is less news and more entertainment oriented (sometimes described as ‘infotainment’)”.

4.1.6.1. The case of “Sex at the Olympics”

One of the most illuminating cases of sensationalist coverage within the framework examined was the reporting dedicated by *The Guardian*, *The Telegraph* and *La Vanguardia* to the issue of “Sex at the Olympics”. By contrast, *El País*, *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* did not publish any information about the topic in their print versions. In its G2 supplement, *The Guardian* republished the piece “Party hard and do some groping⁶³⁰”, written originally by Sam Alipour at *ESPN The Magazine*⁶³¹.

⁶³⁰ It should be taken into account that the report was included in *The Guardian*'s G2 supplement, which has a different format, character and approach to journalism than the main newspaper. We

The two-page article included plenty of details about the situation in previous Olympics and provided many explicit quotes by some athletes. For instance, Ryan Lochte mentioned that around 70–75% of the Olympians had sex at the Olympic Village. The US football player Hope Solo argued that athletes are extremists: “When they’re training, it’s laser focus. When they go out for a drink, it’s 20 drinks. With a once-in-a-lifetime experience, you want to build memories, whether it’s sexual, partying or on the field. I’ve seen people having sex right out in the open”. A quote from Breaux Green, a US javelin thrower, provided further details about the issue: “The Italians are particularly inviting: They leave their doors open, so you look in and see dudes in thongs running circles around each other. On the way to the training grounds, the girls are in skimpy knickers and bras, the dudes in underwear, so you see what everybody is working with”. Additionally, it is worth mentioning that the sensationalism was also conveyed through the visual layout of the article because the two pages displayed images of condoms as if they were Olympic rings.

The Telegraph also gave notable exposure to this issue. In the comment feature “Behind the scenes at the Hotlympics⁶³²”, the newspaper explained that 150,000 condoms would be handed out in the Olympic Village and included the quotes of footballer Hope Solo, swimmer Summer Sanders and triple jumper Jonathan Edwards. Tales of wild parties and alcohol being smuggled into the Olympic Village were also reported. The piece was illustrated with photographs of athletes who were therefore associated with the issue by readers, even though they might not have had a direct relationship with it. In addition, in a piece belonging to the series “Village Life”, *The Telegraph*’s undercover Olympian wrote that athletes were “compiling their ‘hit lists’ for when their competitions finish” and that condoms had “been flying off the shelves⁶³³”. Three days later, the same source highlighted the fact that the sexual tension was “rising fast⁶³⁴”. A further piece of news in *The Telegraph* about sex at the Olympics

cannot get away from the fact that G2 is an example of “magazine formats which prioritize a general appeal and an emphasis on personalised, soft-focus news with a celebrity emphasis where possible” (Conboy, 2011: 154). See: Alipour, S. (2012, July 24). “Party hard and do some groping”. *The Guardian*, G2, pp. 10–11.

⁶³¹ Alipour, S. (2012, July 5). “Will you still medal in the morning?”. *ESPN.com*. <http://espn.go.com/espn/print?id=8133052&type=story> [Last access: 22-09-2015]. The story was later published in *ESPN The Magazine* (The Body Issue, 23 July 2012).

⁶³² Turner, B. (2012, July 26). “Behind the scenes at the Hotlympics”. *The Daily Telegraph*, p. 22. See also: Tweedie, N.; Smith, J. (2012, July 28). “The backroom boys and girls have laboured long and hard to make a perfect stage for sport”. *The Daily Telegraph*, p. 22.

⁶³³ “Village Life” (2012, August 1). *The Daily Telegraph*, p. S39.

⁶³⁴ “Village Life” (2012, August 4). *The Daily Telegraph*, p. S39.

referred to the fact that the Australian officials had failed to receive free condoms so they had to go to the nearest supermarket, Waitrose, for “emergency supplies”⁶³⁵.

Moving on to *La Vanguardia*, in its supplement “Vivir”, the newspaper published the piece “Atleta de día, pero de noche ...”⁶³⁶, which referred to the *ESPN* magazine article. Further sensationalist quotes by other athletes, such as the swimmer Eric Shanteau, were included: “The village turns into the biggest center of sex in which I have ever been, something savage”.

A few days later, the newspaper published Felip Vivanco’s piece “Sexus, siestus, fiestus: bienvenidos a la villa”⁶³⁷ in the sports section. The author included further references to the issue, tried to get further information from athletes, the tennis players Feliciano López and David Ferrer, for example, and mentioned pertinent books, *The secret Olympia* (Bloomsbury), for instance, which focused on the experience of a British athlete at Beijing 2008. As with *The Telegraph*, the photographic coverage here too posed a further ethical dilemma. The chosen picture for the article featured four German female athletes on the balcony of their apartment in the Olympic Village. Thus, whether it was true or not, a direct association might have been established between these particular athletes and the soft issue that was being discussed.

On reaching this point, it is legitimate to ask ourselves: is there an issue in terms of journalism ethics when it comes to publishing these types of sex-related pieces? First, it is important to bear in mind that the media do not operate in a vacuum. As media ethicist Chris Roberts argues, in today’s Western societies⁶³⁸, sex is not a taboo anymore, but an issue that is widely present in the public sphere:

The best athletes have always been celebrities. The difference is that we write about them as more human now. We live in an era in which we are not as uptight about the coverage of sex and other things, so it is news, although it is not the most important news. If we wonder what those athletes do, sex is part of it (Chris Roberts, interview, July 2014).

Second, Mark Adams, the IOC director of communications, diminishes the importance and impact of these sensationalist stories. Adams believes there isn’t a major negative impact in the fact that such stories get associated with the athletes and the Olympic Games:

⁶³⁵ Magnay, J. (2012, August 10). “A precautionary tale”. *The Daily Telegraph*, p. S37.

⁶³⁶ Peiron, F. (2012, July 20). “Atleta de día, pero de noche ...”. *La Vanguardia*, Vivir, pp. 8–9.

⁶³⁷ Vivanco, F. (2012, July 31). “Sexus, siestus, fiestus: bienvenidos a la villa”. *La Vanguardia*, p. 39.

⁶³⁸ It should be taken into consideration that “standards of taste and decency in any society do not exist in isolation from the prevailing morality in that society” (Shaw, 1999: 1).

To be honest, I don't think that they do much harm, really. There is a kind of pure interest in the Olympic Village. Even in the IOC people joke about what goes on in the village, because if you had ten thousand athletes training hard for many years and then suddenly they finish their races and quite often they want to enjoy themselves either partying or whatever, so that happens. To be honest, I don't think there is much damage. In fact, what I think is quite good about it is that it shows that athletes and the Games are human, like everyone else (Mark Adams, interview, May 2014).

Third, it should also be taken into account that the approach taken by *The Guardian*, *The Telegraph* and *La Vanguardia* (as well as other serious staples such as *USA Today*⁶³⁹, *The Times*⁶⁴⁰, *CNN*⁶⁴¹ and *Forbes*⁶⁴²) wasn't as sensationalist as the stance taken on the issue by the British and American tabloids, *The Daily Mail*⁶⁴³, *The Mirror*⁶⁴⁴, *The Daily Star*⁶⁴⁵ and *The New York Post*⁶⁴⁶, for example.

However, leaving these considerations aside, from the perspective of journalism ethics and quality of information, sensationalism matters to a great extent. José Sámano, the sports editor from *El País*, explained why they decided not to include trivial and entertainment-related content, which unnecessarily focuses on the private lives of the athletes:

I imagine that those stories would get a lot of traffic online. But I am not interested in them at all. It could interest me if *Nature* publishes a scientific report at worldwide level stating that having sex

⁶³⁹ Whiteside, K. (2012, July 25). "Village has almost everything". *USA Today*, p. 7C.

⁶⁴⁰ Rayment, T. (2012, July 22). "Race to the one-night stand". *The Sunday Times*, p. 17.

⁶⁴¹ Wyatt, B.; Palmeri, T. (2012, August 12). "Sex, games and Olympic Village life". CNN. <http://edition.cnn.com/2012/08/08/sport/olympics-village-sex-party-athletes/> [Last access: 22-09-2015].

⁶⁴² Wismer, D. (2012, August 5). London 2012. "The most 'shagadelic' Olympics ever?" *Forbes*. <http://www.forbes.com/sites/davidwismer/2012/08/05/london-2012-the-most-shagadelic-olympics-ever/> [Last access: 22-09-2015].

⁶⁴³ Gayle, D.; Dewsbury, R. (2012, July 19). "The oh, oh, Ohhh-lympics!" *The Daily Mail*. <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2175783/The-raunchiest-Olympics-Record-150-000-condoms-handed-athletes-London-Games--thats-15-EACH.html> [Last access: 22-09-2015].

⁶⁴⁴ Head, S. (2012, July 23). "Olympic flings: Athletes 'go crazy' for sex during the Olympic Games, says 2008 medalist Ronda Rousey". *The Mirror*. <http://www.mirror.co.uk/sport/other-sports/london-2012-athletes-go-crazy-1155105> [Last access: 22-09-2015].

⁶⁴⁵ Lawton, J. (2012, July 18). "The London sex Olympics". *The Daily Star*. <http://www.dailystar.co.uk/news/latest-news/262746/THE-LONDON-SEX-OLYMPICS> [Last access: 22-09-2015]. See also: Moore, J. (2012, July 18). London 2012: "On your marks, get sex ... gropel!" *The Daily Star*. <http://www.dailystar.co.uk/news/latest-news/262733/London-2012-On-your-marks-get-sex-grope> [Last access: 22-09-2015].

⁶⁴⁶ Callahan, M. (2012, July 8). "Biggest partiers at the Olympics? Curlers!" *The New York Post*. <http://nypost.com/2012/07/08/olympic-athletes-leak-villages-sex-drinking-and-drug-secrets/> [Last access: 22-09-2015].

before a sporting competition stimulates a hormone that has an effect over the performance⁶⁴⁷. But I don't rate the rest of the stories. To be quite frank, I don't know how media do this type of report. I don't know if they look into the number of condoms that are available at the Olympic Village. Personally, I am not interested at all in a report that tells how many times Rafael Nadal or Usain Bolt make love. It is something that I am not interested in explaining to my readers. I don't know what the contribution of those articles to sport is (José Sámano, interview, May 2014).

As José Luis Rojas highlights, the fact that there was an original report published by a recognized staple in the sports field, in this case *ESPN's* magazine, should not preclude quality newspapers from being responsible in selecting what kind of information they should provide to their readership:

Sensationalism is what lots of times drives media to an outrageous search for the exclusive. That leads to the risk of wanting to be the first and not consulting a sufficient number of sources. I think that his case was a controversial case and, to a certain extent, was not sufficiently contrasted. I imagine that *The Guardian*, a quality newspaper, published the report because it gave credibility to a content that other quality media published. But I also believe that, leaving aside what ESPN publishes, you are also a quality media and you should have the editorial criteria to discern if a story is noteworthy of publishing or not (José Luis Rojas, interview, June 2014).

4.1.6.2. Reporting on “Partying at the Olympics”

Closely connected to the reports about sex, some articles exclusively focused on or provided details about the athletes partying during the Olympics. Although minor references could be observed in other newspapers, such as *The New York Times*⁶⁴⁸, *The Guardian* and *The Telegraph* were the publications that unequivocally devoted more attention to the coverage of these issues.

In the piece “Athletes turn village into a party zone⁶⁴⁹”, Robert Booth of *The Guardian* wrote about the fact that some South African and American swimmers explored the bars of East London and also included the photograph that Bradley Wiggins had posted on Twitter, where he appeared drinking vodka after taking part in his Olympic

⁶⁴⁷ Coinciding with the beginning of London 2012, *La Vanguardia* published an in-depth report which employed scientific studies and expert sources to examine whether sex before competition had an impact on the physical condition of the athletes. The tone of the report, available in the supplement “Estilos de Vida”, was not sensationalist but informative. See: Jarque, J. (2012, July 28). “Sexo o no antes de una competición”. *La Vanguardia*, Estilos de Vida, pp. 24–5.

⁶⁴⁸ In *The New York Times*, brief references were made to Bradley Wiggins and vodka and to the “Golden Cocktail” created by London’s Chinawhite club. See: Bishop, G. (2012, August 2). “From Paris to London, British cyclist finishes a record ride”. *The New York Times*, p. B14; “The round’s on me” (2012, August 11). *The New York Times*, p. D5.

⁶⁴⁹ Both, R. (2012, August 5). “Athletes turn village into a party zone”. *The Observer*, p. 15.

events. The same photograph was also republished by *The Daily Telegraph*⁶⁵⁰. The piece “How to party like an Olympian⁶⁵¹” included a picture of the swimmer Chad Le Cross partying at Chinawhite, a London club frequented by celebrities. Another article, published in the G2 supplement, focused entirely on the athletes who partied at this club⁶⁵². The piece mentioned that “Zara Phillips was dancing shoeless until 4am” and that the “gold-winning cyclist Dani King was there with her boyfriend, who promptly did a ‘moonie’ (‘he dropped his trousers and protruded his naked gluteus maximus into the cold night air’)”. Moreover, it was pointed out that Ryan Lochte had been drinking a cocktail that cost £2,012 and that Rebecca Adlington occasionally drank champagne from the bottle. Likewise, *The Daily Telegraph* published the article “Athletes strive to be faster, higher ... drunker⁶⁵³”. This also focused on Chinawhite and included plenty of details that illustrate the blurring of the boundaries between what is newsworthy and what is sensationalist and celebrity news.

There were many more mentions of other athletes who went partying, such as Usain Bolt⁶⁵⁴, the Brazilian sailor Robert Scheidt⁶⁵⁵ and the Australian rower Josh Booth (who broke shop windows “in an early hours drinking session on Egham high street⁶⁵⁶”) throughout *The Guardian*’s and *The Telegraph*’s coverage of London 2012. In the article “Lost in showbiz⁶⁵⁷”, Peter Robinson of *The Guardian* aimed to write a critical piece when he highlighted the fact that the Olympic stars and the media together had created a celebrity culture. At the same time, however, he also gave space to some of the more sensationalist issues, mentioning the cases of Richard Chambers and Mark Hunter, Ryan Lochte, Tyler Clary, and Rebecca Adlington, and even quoting information published by *The Daily Mail*.

What is even more surprising is that at the final evaluation of London 2012⁶⁵⁸ made by *The Observer* at the end of the Games, one of the elements that was considered (on

⁶⁵⁰ Kelso, P.; Winch, J. (2012, August 3). “Wiggins lets hair down with fish, chips and vodka”. *The Daily Telegraph*, p. S7.

⁶⁵¹ Khaleeli, H.; Buckley-Irvine, N. (2012, August 7). “How to party like an Olympian”. *The Guardian*, G2, p. 3.

⁶⁵² “Chinawhite” (2012, August 8). *The Guardian*, G2, p. 3.

⁶⁵³ Rowley, T. (2012, August 7). “Athletes strive to be faster, higher ... drunker”. *The Daily Telegraph*, pp. S28–S29.

⁶⁵⁴ Olutoye, F.; Oluwawo, M. (2012, August 9). *The Guardian*, Olympics 2012, p. 6.

⁶⁵⁵ Crace, J. (2012, August 8). “The armchair Olympics”. *The Guardian*, p. 7.

⁶⁵⁶ “Faster, higher, stranger” (2012, August 5). *The Guardian*, Olympics 2012, p. 14.

⁶⁵⁷ Robinson, P. (2012, August 10). “Lost in showbiz”. *The Guardian*, G2, p. 2.

⁶⁵⁸ In the pieces devoted to the final evaluation of the Games, other newspapers such as *The Daily Telegraph* and *The Independent* did not regard the “party” aspect as noteworthy and did not include

the same level of importance as issues such as the transport, the venues, the economy and the sporting performances) was “the party factor⁶⁵⁹”. The author of the piece, Tim Adams, devoted a section to describing yet again the case of Usain Bolt and three members of the Swedish women’s handball team, also mentioning the discos and bars frequented by the Olympic athletes and the fact that some of them had drunk the aforementioned £2,012 cocktail. Furthermore, the piece included a photograph of cyclists Dani King and Lizzie Armitstead and triathlete Alistair Brownlee going clubbing.

4.1.6.3. The coverage of Zara Phillips as a member of the British royal family

On some occasions, *The Guardian* and *The Telegraph* (as well as other newspapers such as *The New York Times* and *The Times*⁶⁶⁰) placed more emphasis on Zara Phillips being a member of the British royal family (she is the second-eldest grandchild of Queen Elizabeth II and the Duke of Edinburgh) than they did on her technique as a gold medallist show jumper. The articles in which she was the protagonist did provide information about her result (silver medal in the eventing competition), but at the same time, however, these articles were used as a platform to include information on and mentions of other members of the royal family⁶⁶¹, Princes William and Harry, Catherine (Duchess of Cambridge), Camilla (Duchess of Cornwall) and Prince Andrew’s daughters Princesses Beatrice and Eugenie, for example, which have absolutely nothing to do with sport or with Phillips’ participation in London 2012. The iconic moment where she received the silver medal from her mother made a good headline for the British press, of course: “With a hug and kiss from her mother, Zara joins riding royalty⁶⁶²”.

it. See, for instance: “So did London pass the Olympic test?” (2012, August 13). *The Independent*, pp. 18–20.

⁶⁵⁹ Lewis, T. (2012, August 12). “The fans, the parties, the venues, the BBC ... how did London rate?” *The Observer*, p. 26.

⁶⁶⁰ See, for instance: Bannerman, L. (2012, July 31). “Zara gets crowd roaring as she keeps her team in sight of gold”. *The Times*, pp. 4–5.

⁶⁶¹ Moss, S. (2012, July 30). “She’s the regal one: Phillips makes long-awaited Olympic debut”. *The Guardian*, pp. 4–5. See also: Bryony, G. (2012, July 30). “One rider stands out as Team Zara makes some noise”. *The Daily Telegraph*, p. 7; Rayner, G. (2012, July 31). “Zara is cheered on by the magnificent seven”. *The Daily Telegraph*, p. 3; Pilon, M. (2012, July 31). “Everyone wants to see Zara”. *The New York Times*, p. B13; Pilon, M. (2012, August 1). “Earning a royal silver, as Britain continues its wait for a gold”. *The New York Times*, p. B13; Williams, Z. (2012, August 8). “True blue Team GB revels in staying the course of a sporting marathon”. *The Guardian*, p. 6.

⁶⁶² Gordon, R. (2012, August 1). “With a hug and kiss from her mother, Zara joins riding royalty”. *The Daily Telegraph*, p. 3.

In addition, certain featured phrases relating to members of the royal family who attended Olympic events were undeniably sensationalist (see, for instance: “Princess Anne has been to Kim Jong-il’s hairdresser, which might be what frightened the horse the first time⁶⁶³”). Other pieces, such as “Windsor watcher⁶⁶⁴”, “Harry heads for the beach as royal cheerleader⁶⁶⁵” and “Young members of Royal family on the starting blocks to back Team GB⁶⁶⁶”, placed the focus on other events that would be attended by members of the royal family.

4.1.6.4. Further issues focused on celebrities

As well as the above, further mentions were made throughout the sample studied of other soft issues connected with certain athletes and their status as celebrities. These only contributed to emphasizing the entertainment dimension of the Olympic coverage. We should not forget that “celebrities are core constituents of the Olympic spectacle” (Andrews and Rick, 2014: 196). Many of these items, produced just for the moment, “were instantly forgettable”, in the words of David Rowe (Interview, June 2013).

Illustrative cases of this style of reporting can be found in pieces devoted to: (1) the relationship between the swimmer Michael Phelps and the model Megan Rossee⁶⁶⁷; (2) the story of Russell Mark and Lauryn Mark, an Australian couple who were not allowed to share a room in the Olympic Village⁶⁶⁸; (3) the celebrity status of Ryan Lochte, who appeared topless on the front covers of *Vogue*, *Men’s Health* and *Men’s Journal* in the months prior to the Games⁶⁶⁹; (4) the DJ performance of Usain Bolt in the Puma Yard club in London⁶⁷⁰; (5) the decisions of famous athletes such as Maria

⁶⁶³ Williams, Z. (2012, August 1). “An equestrian Little Britain is near perfect for Zara and chums”. *The Guardian*, pp. 4–5.

⁶⁶⁴ Thorpe, V. (2012, July 29). “Snapshots, squabbles and sillies at the biggest show on Earth”. *The Guardian*, pp. 14–15.

⁶⁶⁵ Rayner, G. (2012, July 24). “Harry heads for the beach as royal cheerleader”. *The Daily Telegraph*, p. 4.

⁶⁶⁶ Roya, N. (2012, July 22). “Young members of Royal family on the starting blocks to back Team GB”. *The Sunday Telegraph*, p. 2.

⁶⁶⁷ Lerman, G. (2012, August 8). “Michael Phelps y su novia: inseparables”. *La Vanguardia*, Vivir, p. 8. See also: Saiz, E. (2012, August 8). “La novia de Michael Phelps se ‘autopresenta’ en Twitter”. *El País*, p. 34.

⁶⁶⁸ Hyde, M. (2012, July 21). “Separating couples, and garments”. *The Guardian*, p. 15. See also: Monzó, Q. (2012, July 21). “Problemas en Londres 2012”. *La Vanguardia*, p. 16.

⁶⁶⁹ Bull, A. (2012, July 27). “‘El Dunderino’ Lochte throws down his branded gauntlet to the mighty Phelps”. *The Guardian*, Olympics, p. 11.

⁶⁷⁰ Agencies (2012, August 13). “El jamaicano Usain Bolt, un dj de oro”. *La Vanguardia*, Vivir, p. 11.

Sharapova and Roger Federer to live outside the Olympic Village during the event⁶⁷¹; (6) the rankings of the most popular athletes for their physical attractiveness on social networking sites⁶⁷²; and (7) Rebecca Adlington's admiration for the Duchess of Cambridge's shoes⁶⁷³, to list only a few. *The Daily Telegraph*⁶⁷⁴ and *La Vanguardia*⁶⁷⁵ also gave brief exposure to the pictures of the Belgian cyclist Gijs Van Hoecke which showed him drunk in London, even though these newspapers didn't cover the story in depth as did some of the tabloids, the *The Daily Mail*⁶⁷⁶ and *The Daily Mirror*⁶⁷⁷, for example.

Articles specifically about the attendance of Hollywood stars, sportsmen and other celebrities (such as Brad Pitt, Angelina Jolie, David and Victoria Beckham and Lewis Hamilton) at Olympic events⁶⁷⁸ were also published. The attire of Sofia, former Queen of Spain⁶⁷⁹, and the fact that she and Prince Felipe didn't have the right accreditation to get into the press area and therefore couldn't speak to the Spanish taekwondo silver medallist⁶⁸⁰, caught the attention of the quality press too.

One final issue to note refers to the exposure of the relationship between the British cyclists Laura Trott and Jason Kenny. The photographs of them taken inside the volleyball venue sharing a kiss were originally published by *The Sun* on its front page

⁶⁷¹ Ramos, R. (2012, August 2). "Señoritos y atletas del pueblo". *La Vanguardia*, p. 39.

⁶⁷² Sandoval, J. (2012, August 8). "Olímpicos y muy deseados". *La Vanguardia*, Vivir, pp. 8–9.

⁶⁷³ Ford Rojas, J.P. (2012, August 1). "Forget the medals ... Adlington only has eyes for Duchess' shoes". *The Daily Telegraph*, p. 2.

⁶⁷⁴ "Wheels come off for Belgian cyclist" (2012, August 10). *The Daily Telegraph*, p. S31.

⁶⁷⁵ "Fuera de Londres por una borrachera" (2012, August 10). *La Vanguardia*, p. 43.

⁶⁷⁶ Shergold, A. (2012, August 8). "A celebration of Olympic proportions! Belgian cyclist marks the end of his Games by overdoing it in London nightclub Mahiki". *The Daily Mail*. <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2185302/London-2012-A-celebration-Olympic-proportions-Belgian-cyclist-marks-end-Games-overdoing-London-nightclub-Mahiki.html> [Last access: 22-09-2015].

⁶⁷⁷ Evans, N. (2012, August 9). "'Pack your bags': Belgian cyclist sent home from Olympics after being pictured worse for wear on boozy night out". *The Mirror*. <http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/gijs-van-hoecke-drunk-belgian-1241372> [Last access: 22-09-2015].

⁶⁷⁸ Moore, V. (2012, July 25). "London pops its cork for the best show on earth". *The Daily Telegraph*, p. 20. See also: Rowley, T. (2012, August 4). "Royals flushed by hottest ticket in town". *The Daily Telegraph*, p. S5.

⁶⁷⁹ Román, N. (2012, July 28). "La reina Sofía se viste en Londres de Bosco sin ningún rubor". *La Vanguardia*, p. 10.

⁶⁸⁰ "Story of the day" (2012, August 12). *The Guardian*, Olympics 2012, p. 8.

(8 August 2012) and also by online media, *The Daily Mail*⁶⁸¹, for example. However, they were rapidly echoed by quality newspapers such as *The Daily Telegraph*⁶⁸² and *The Independent*⁶⁸³, which also rushed to capitalize on this “human interest” story. Further information about the couple’s romance was issued by serious newspapers and included details of a previous relationship between Laura Trott and the cyclist Sam Harrison⁶⁸⁴. Boyle and Horne reflect on this issue:

These are not things that you would necessarily expect to see from *The Telegraph*, so I think that it is very interesting. The dividing lines between the highbrow and the lowbrow content are not as clear as they used to be (Raymond Boyle, interview, March 2015).

It is the Olympics and in August it is also the beginning of the so-called “silly season”. People go on holiday in England and the politicians go on holiday, so there isn’t much to report. So, even more you are likely to see this kind of item on the front page, because it is human interest (John Horne, interview, March 2015).

4.1.6.5. Why were these types of sensationalist content published?

In order to understand why these types of content were published in the quality newspapers during London 2012 we first need to reflect on the impact of celebrity culture in this day and age. According to Conboy (2014: 174), “celebrity across the board has become one of the stand-bys in maintaining the specific market appeal of newspapers into the 21st century”. Celebrity culture is having particularly a significant impact on the world of sport. As Boyle and Haynes (2013: 207) explain, “sport now sits squarely at the center of the entertainment industries and is heavily influenced by both the economics of the media (television especially) and the cult of celebrity that drives the fascination and populist interest in sports stars”. Within sport, we cannot avoid the fact that “at the present time, the Olympic Games are inextricably connected to the broader celebrity culture” (Andrews and Rick, 2014: 196). This trend is clearly explained by Vincent:

Certainly, we live in a culture of celebrity. You take the tabloidization of the media and how they follow certain celebrities and how one can be a celebrity first and foremost. I think sport plays such an important cultural role in so many societies that sportsmen and sportswomen become celebrities often in their own right and they are aware that their image is being monetized and

⁶⁸¹ Eccles, L.; Parveen, N. (2012, August 8). “Laura, her new golden boy and the cyclist she left in her tyre tracks”. *The Daily Mail*. <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2185613/Laura-Trott-new-golden-boy-Jason-Kenny-cyclist-left-tyre-tracks.html> [Last access: 22-09-2015].

⁶⁸² Rayner, G. (2012, August 10). “Golden couple of Team GB share cycling success ... and a kiss”. *The Daily Telegraph*, p. 7.

⁶⁸³ Burrell, I. (2012, August 10). “Oh my god – she kissed Kenny! Britain has a new sports power couple”. *The Independent*, p. 7.

⁶⁸⁴ “Laura Trott” (2012, August 16). *The Daily Telegraph*, p. H8.

they often try to cross over from a pure sports ground and have their images associated with other brands for commercial profit. Take somebody like David Beckham, for example, who initially was a soccer player but he now has a celebrity status. Even when the celebrity status was used as an ambassadorial role to pitch the London 2012 Games, in the opening ceremony he rode the speedboat. So I think that is the era we are in. If you are a sports star now, you are a sport celebrity and often you are managed by people who are looking to use your image for other brands and products, so you are transferred from the sport to beyond it and I think that is the world that we live in (John Vincent, interview, July 2014).

The cult of celebrity and the entertainment-driven stories have had an unavoidable impact on the journalistic landscape, leading to a progressive tabloidization process (see Section 2.2.1.6). As Conboy (2011; 2014) explains, the tabloidization of messages and contents has not only had an impact on the popular newspapers, but has also affected professional practices in the wider journalistic culture, including the quality media staples and the elite press. According to Boyle, we need to understand that in the current environment quality media try to satisfy both highbrow and lowbrow tastes. News values are becoming more fluid and flexible. The duality between the right to know and the so-called public's right to know, between the public interest and the human interest (Knoppers and Elling, 2004; Rowe, 1999) is becoming increasingly blurred. Bearing this in mind, Boyle argues that there shouldn't be a problem per se if these kinds of stories are published from time to time:

It is partly due to a less rigid nature of boundaries. I am sure that if you speak to *The Guardian* or *The Telegraph*, they would say that they publish lighter pieces because they had people that were not particularly interested in the Olympics but maybe they were interested in those stories. There are highbrow and lowbrow tastes, and boundaries are much less distinct nowadays. If you are running those stories all the time, that is one thing. But if you are dropping them from time to time, they don't see it much as a problem (Raymond Boyle, interview, November 2013).

The Guardian's sports editor, Ian Prior, reminds us that entertainment is also essential to attract audiences. There may be some room for the "entertaining" and "frivolous" side of stories, according to what he says:

Sport is entertainment. It is spectacle. We always try with our journalists to try and poke a little fun and realize that we are not writing for athletes, we are not writing for coaches, we are writing for an audience that is there to be entertained and participate and have fun while they are doing it. I think we always try to reflect that in the writers that we use and the tone of the pieces (Ian Prior, interview, October 2013).

That being said, good professionals should make a stand and try to avoid the overuse of those types of stories driven by sensationalism and entertainment; they may interest certain sections of the public, but they are not in the public interest and they are definitely not "hard-won, hard news" (Tomlinson and Sugden, 2008: 159). As Paul Hayward and Ian Prior acknowledge, to go systematically down the road of

sensationalism is very dangerous, because not only can this have an impact on the reputation⁶⁸⁵ and credibility of trusted news organizations, it can also lessen respect for them:

In sports journalism now there is pressure to turn up the volume all the time, to extrapolate, sometimes sensationalize. I don't mean on *The Telegraph*, but in general. You have to be very careful not to join that process of sensationalizing things. It is counterproductive to go down the road of sensationalism, because the people you are sensationalizing will not see you as respectful and they will not trust you. And without any trust, you cannot do your work properly (Paul Hayward, interview, October 2013).

I believe that not everything is about chasing hits. If you want to take a kind of a model of journalism based on the trends of the day and produce quick journalism around these, that's fine, you get lots of hits, but what is the respect you get for them? That is far more of the question (Ian Prior, interview, October 2013).

Apart from this, we should not forget that to overemphasize the sensationalist aspects of sports journalism takes something away from its learning and educational side, as Shuhua Zhou states:

After all, media outlets, media organizations, they are for business, they are for profit, to begin with. And so the entertainment side is the selling point of those stories. What does that do to the Olympics? What does that do for people's acquisition of Olympic information? I think it would take something away from them. If you are good journalist, you can inform and you can also entertain. I don't want to sound like the two are mutually exclusive, to inform and to entertain, but there is a fine line that you have to tip, you can entertain but then you can also inform. When you put a lot of emphasis on entertainment, of course it would take something away from the learning side (Shuhua Zhou, interview, July 2014).

4.2. Principle of justice

4.2.1. Commitment to justice in the representation of gender

Moving on to the principle of justice, and taking all the coverage as a whole, it can be argued that the newspapers examined made an important step towards gender equality at London 2012 by devoting significant space to sportswomen. Despite the fact that in some media outlets female athletes lagged considerably behind male athletes in the coverage of the Olympics, the gap found in the newspapers was much narrower than can be found in any other journalistic context, where huge inequalities still persist. In a momentous occasion for sportswomen's participation, the print media took the opportunity of London 2012 to create a consciousness of the profile of women and their

⁶⁸⁵ We shouldn't forget that "reputation and trust in a news brand, already important, play an even more important role" (Brock, 2013: 122) in the current media scenario.

achievements. Moreover, they raised public awareness of the forthcoming challenges with regard to achieving equality.

That being said, the six newspapers did unfortunately persist in the use of long-held overt and covert gender stereotypes (sexism and mentions of physical attributes, emotionality, infantilizing, out-of-context reporting, trivialization, and so on), a situation that reveals a problem in professional practice regarding the deontological principle of justice. In the light of the results, this section explores the key factors for understanding the enduring gender imbalances in sports journalism, delving into issues relating to the presence of women in the newsrooms, audience preferences and the availability of resources in media organizations. The section also highlights meaningful changes that should be implemented in order to improve the situation.

4.2.1.1. Quantitative results

The six newspapers devoted considerable space to female athletes on their front pages and in their sports sections and supplements. As can be seen from Table 13, *The New York Times* dedicated the same number of pieces to male and female athletes ($n = 204$; 39.31% to each gender). The remaining 21.39% refers to the pieces in which both men and women were protagonists. It is also significant to note that in *The Washington Post* the gap remained in single figures (4%) and that in *The Guardian/The Observer*, the gap was close to 10% (42.82% for men v 32.16% for women).

These findings are consistent with the positive signs observed by other recent studies. Billings et al. (2014a) pointed out that for the first time, NBC's prime time Olympic broadcast at London 2012 contained more mentions of female athletics than of male athletes and that women Olympians received the majority of clock time. To be precise, women received 54.80% of the coverage while men received the 45.20% of the clock time (Billings and Kim, 2014: 186).

Newspaper	Male		Female		Mixed		Total	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
<i>The Guardian</i>	438	42.82	329	32.16	256	25.02	1,023	100.00
<i>The Telegraph</i>	717	46.56	485	31.49	338	21.95	1,540	100.00
<i>New York Times</i>	204	39.31	204	39.31	111	21.39	519	100.00
<i>Washington Post</i>	199	37.98	178	33.97	147	28.05	524	100.00
<i>El País</i>	219	54.21	103	25.50	82	20.30	404	100.00
<i>La Vanguardia</i>	245	49.30	135	27.16	117	23.54	497	100.00

Table 13. Number and percentage of competition-related articles by gender

Nevertheless, in *The Daily Telegraph/The Sunday Telegraph* (15%), and especially in *El País* (28.71%) and *La Vanguardia* (22.14%) the imbalance was greater. At this primary level of observation, therefore, it can be seen that the American newspapers were the closest to parity and that the Spanish publications were the least egalitarian in that sense. These figures indicate that sportswomen still lag behind sportsmen in the coverage of the Olympics. However, as will be discussed later, this gap is narrower than it would be in any other context.

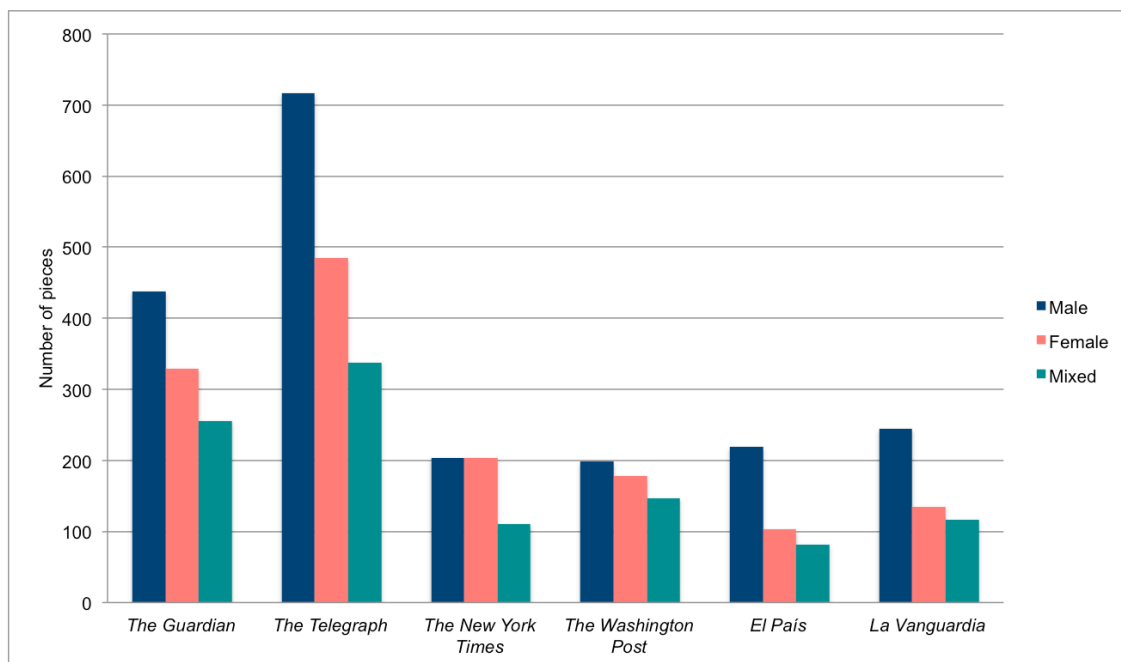


Figure 19. Number of pieces published by each newspaper by gender

Beyond this primary evidence, a closer look should be taken at the extent of the pieces, in order to determine how many of the most frequently published large pieces (more than $\frac{1}{2}$ page and one page) were devoted to women. The data reveals a very positive fact: *The Guardian* devoted a similar amount of “more than $\frac{1}{2}$ page” pieces (M: 49; W: 50) and “one page” pieces (M: 19; W: 19) to men and women alike.

Extent	Male		Female		Mixed	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Brief piece	202	46.12	150	45.59	78	30.47
Less than a $\frac{1}{4}$ page	62	14.16	35	10.64	26	10.16
From $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ page	77	17.58	56	17.02	64	25.00
More than $\frac{1}{2}$ page	49	11.19	50	15.20	24	9.38
One page	19	4.34	19	5.78	37	14.45
Between one and two pages	26	5.94	18	5.47	26	10.16
More than two pages	3	0.68	1	0.30	1	0.39
Total	438	100.00	329	100.00	256	100.00

Table 14. Distribution by gender and length of the pieces published in *The Guardian/The Observer*

However, by and large, it can be seen that in the other newspapers the differences between genders became more accentuated. To begin with, in *The Daily Telegraph/The Sunday Telegraph*, the pieces with a length of “more than ½ page” were more frequently devoted to men ($n = 78$) than to women ($n = 47$). This trend was repeated in the case of “one page” pieces (M: 25; W: 15) and also in articles of “between one and two pages” (M: 71; W: 45).

Extent	Male		Female		Mixed	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Brief piece	239	33.33	166	34.23	82	24.26
Less than a ¼ page	171	23.85	111	22.89	68	20.19
From ¼ to ½ page	131	18.27	99	20.41	58	17.16
More than ½ page	78	10.88	47	9.69	29	8.58
One page	25	3.49	15	3.09	34	10.06
Between one and two pages	71	9.90	45	9.28	63	18.64
More than two pages	3	0.42	2	0.41	4	1.18
Total	717	100.00	485	100.00	338	100.00

Table 15. Distribution by gender and length of the pieces published in *The Daily Telegraph/The Sunday Telegraph*

It can be seen that *The New York Times* devoted 30 pieces of “more than ½ page” to men (versus 19 to women) and 11 pieces of “one page” to men (versus 3 to women). That being said, men and women were given exactly the same number of pieces with a length of between one and two pages ($n = 3$). In *The Washington Post*, the articles of one page were devoted exclusively to men (M: 4; W: 0). Surprisingly, there were more pieces of “more than ½ page” devoted to women ($n = 22$) than to men ($n = 16$). At the same time, women had one article with a length of “between one and two pages”, a circumstance that was not found in the case of men.

Extent	Male		Female		Mixed	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Brief piece	111	54.41	117	57.35	47	42.34
Less than a ¼ page	12	5.88	15	7.35	0	0.00
From ¼ to ½ page	36	17.65	47	23.04	34	30.63
More than ½ page	30	14.71	19	9.31	21	18.92
One page	11	5.39	3	1.47	6	5.41
Between one and two pages	3	1.47	3	1.47	3	2.70
More than two pages	1	0.49	0	0.00	0	0.00
Total	204	100.00	204	100.00	111	100.00

Table 16. Distribution by gender and length of the pieces published in *The New York Times*

Extent	Male		Female		Mixed	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Brief piece	139	69.85	116	65.17	85	57.82
Less than a ¼ page	6	3.02	4	2.25	3	2.04
From ¼ to ½ page	34	17.09	35	19.66	33	22.45
More than ½ page	16	8.04	22	12.36	16	10.88
One page	4	2.01	0	0.00	4	2.72
Between one and two pages	0	0.00	1	0.56	4	2.72
More than two pages	0	0.00	0	0.00	2	1.36
Total	199	100.00	178	100.00	147	100,00

Table 17. Distribution by gender and length of the pieces published in *The Washington Post*

Focusing on the Spanish press, in *El País*, 61 pieces of “more than ½ page” belonged to men while only 30 focused on women. The pieces of “one page” in length also revealed inequalities: while 27 were devoted to men, only 9 of them were dedicated to women.

Extent	Male		Female		Mixed	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Brief piece	24	10.96	15	14.56	4	4.88
Less than a ¼ page	28	12.79	13	12.62	7	8.54
From ¼ to ½ page	63	28.77	23	22.33	27	32.93
More than ½ page	61	27.85	30	29.13	25	30.49
One page	27	12.33	9	8.74	8	9.76
Between one and two pages	10	4.57	12	11.65	11	13.41
More than two pages	6	2.74	1	0.97	0	0.00
Total	219	100.00	103	100.00	82	100.00

Table 18. Distribution by gender and length of the pieces published in *El País*

Last but not least, the Barcelona-based newspaper, *La Vanguardia*, dedicated a greater number of articles of “more than ½ page” (M: 41; W: 36), “one page” (M: 12; W: 1) and “between one and two pages” (M: 12; W: 6) to male athletes.

Extent	Male		Female		Mixed	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Brief piece	98	40.00	49	36.30	23	19.66
Less than a ¼ page	36	14.69	13	9.63	18	15.38
From ¼ to ½ page	46	18.78	30	22.22	43	36.75
More than ½ page	41	16.73	36	26.67	16	13.68
One page	12	4.90	1	0.74	5	4.27
Between one and two pages	12	4.90	6	4.44	11	9.40
More than two pages	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	0.85
Total	245	100.00	135	100.00	117	100.00

Table 19. Distribution by gender and length of the pieces published in *La Vanguardia*

As has been mentioned earlier, it is a very positive thing that the gender gap with regard to the amount of coverage was smaller than in any other context outside the Olympics. The results can be attributed to two complementary factors. First, as has happened in other Olympic powerhouses such as China and Russia⁶⁸⁶, in the countries examined women obtained a significant amount of medals. American women won 58 medals out of 104 (including 29 golds) and, thus, they performed better than male athletes. In terms of gold medals, newspapers mentioned that “if the U.S. women were their own nation, they would have finished third in the gold medal table with 29 medals⁶⁸⁷”. British female athletes were involved in 25 of the 65 medals achieved by Team GB. Spanish sportswomen were awarded more than two-thirds of the medals captured in London 2012⁶⁸⁸ (11 out of 17, including 2 of the 3 gold medals⁶⁸⁹). It is understandable, therefore, why the success of sportswomen was propelled to the fore and drove the agenda as salient content. As Richard Haynes highlights:

At a surface level, there didn't seem to be big disparities. The coverage of the Olympics seemed pretty balanced. In terms of the medal count, women did pretty well and in some countries, they got more medals than their male counterparts. That would account for one reason why there was not a big imbalance in the media (Richard Haynes, interview, October 2013).

Second, it should be considered that, at the Games, for the media and the audiences, “nationality” tends to overshadow or override “gender” (Bruce et al., 2010; Godoy-Pressland and Griggs, 2014; Wensing and Bruce, 2003), as Billings also argues:

I have to separate the Olympics from every other sports context because you wrap anything in your national flag, and it becomes less about any other issue of identity whether that is race or gender. If you wrap the flag, that is the group that you identify, that is the primary thing. People would tune in to see if their home nation does well, not to see if their men or women do well” (Andrew Billings, interview, July 2014).

As previously indicated, the biggest disparities in the space devoted to men and women are found outside the framework of the Olympics. Recent pieces of research quoted in the literature review (Cooky et al., 2015; Godoy-Pressland, 2014; O'Neill and Mulready, 2015) are illustrative of this trend. Moreover, the interviews with experts in the British, American and Spanish contexts after the event reveal a problem: the media exposure of female athletes in London has not represented a turning point. Boyle stresses that although awareness about the role of women in sport has been raised, inequalities still persist:

⁶⁸⁶ Jenkins, S. (2012, August 13). “Flood of women’s Olympic success began as a trickle”. *The Washington Post*, pp. D1, D8.

⁶⁸⁷ Shipley, A. (2012, August 13). “American women take a stand ... again and again”. *The Washington Post*, p. D7.

⁶⁸⁸ “Londres 2012: medida y dignidad” (2012, August 13). *La Vanguardia*, p. 12.

⁶⁸⁹ Vivanco, F. (2012, August 13). “Botín justo, futuro dudoso”. *La Vanguardia*, pp. 40–1.

I suspect that we have raised awareness, that people are much more aware within media organizations, they have realized that this is an issue and the Olympics helped to promote that. Whether we have moved to stage two, that is, real change, I would be more sceptical. There probably has not been much change but equally I would certainly suggest that there is a greater awareness. It was an issue that perhaps did not exist at the previous major events. The direction of travel is change, but I don't think that the changes are going to happen overnight (Raymond Boyle, interview, November 2013).

London 2012 was more balanced and positive than perhaps previous Olympics. But the issue is how sustainable that is, because the Olympics is a particular moment in women's events having profile. Probably, women athletes would argue that their events got more profile during the Olympics than they get at any other time (Raymond Boyle, interview, March 2015).

With regard to the British context, Vincent and Horne maintain that the coverage devoted to sportswomen at London 2012 was only an Olympic-specific phenomenon:

I don't think there has been much change. I think that a major sporting event like the Olympics is a one-off. If we go back to looking at the sports coverage in British newspapers, for the most part, it is like the American newspapers, which cover professional sports. Female athletes get scant coverage (John Vincent, interview, July 2014).

Any impact that took place during the Olympics, it is pretty much an Olympic-specific change and does not kind of really reflect after the Olympics. There was a lot of talk at the time about the success of women athletes, the success of certain athletes in certain sports, like the British boxer, Nicola Adams, who became the gold medallist. And it was thought that it might help to get more women involved and to get more women's sport in the media. And there has been a move in that direction (for example, the BBC decided to cover women's football), but the problem for them, as for every sports event that gets covered, is that the attendances for women's football games aren't very high. The stadium is virtually empty, there are very few people there. So the kind of spectacle for television viewers is just not the same as the regular Premier League games, with lots of fans, and so on. That is why they put those events not on television channels but on the digital channels. There hasn't been much change. I do not want to be dismissive, and I wouldn't like to think that there weren't some changes but I can't actually think of it. You see more female faces on television, but I don't see it much in sports. In the content, the usual statistic is that women get less than 10% of the coverage. Sports pages are thought to attract the male reader (John Horne, interview, November 2013).

Focusing on the US context, Jones and Brown assert that the attention on the "big three" professional sports (football, baseball and basketball) has not left space for female athletes to find their niche in the mainstream media⁶⁹⁰:

⁶⁹⁰ Apart from the mainstream media, there are other noteworthy initiatives that try and provide a greater coverage of sportswomen. Lisec and McDonald (2012: 160) highlight the unique potential of the network of blogs "Women talk sports" to "embrace women's sport as an empowering and significant venue of interest". According to the authors, "since these blogs have as their focus women's sport, they counter the trend of under-representation of women's sport as evident in

We are still focused on the same big three and particularly the male versions of the same big three, as far as the quantity of coverage is concerned (Amy Jones, interview, July 2014).

Do I think that we can be more diverse in our coverage? Yes, definitely. I think there is room to feature more women's sports now. NBC did a good job highlighting women's sports. But I also think that there is more room for them to grow (Kenon Brown, interview, July 2014).

Finally, Rojas' approach to the Spanish mediascape does not have any significant differences from the situation in the United Kingdom and the United States:

On a day-to-day basis, if we take any newspaper, we will see that with only a few exceptions (for instance, *Mundo Deportivo* which has a multisport section more developed than the other sports papers, and TVE, which has a public service vocation), women are not protagonists in sports journalism (José Luis Rojas, interview, June 2014).

4.2.1.2. Qualitative results

4.2.1.2.1. Praising the sporting qualities of female athletes

In qualitative terms, the newspapers examined took the historic opportunity of London 2012 to showcase sportswomen's triumphs. The landmark accomplishments of high-profile sportswomen such as Jessica Ennis, Nicola Adams, Clarissa Shields, Katie Taylor, Laura Trott, Missy Franklin, Katie Ledecky, Gabrielle Douglas, Carmelita Jeter, Allyson Felix, Kayla Harrison, Helen Glover and Heather Stanning, Katherine Copeland and Sophie Hosking, Marina Alabau, Mireia Belmonte, Maialen Chourraut, Maider Unda, Tirunesh Dibaba, Ye Shiwen and the Spanish female water polo, synchronized swimming and handball teams were celebrated throughout the coverage. The media conveyed a positive and respectful image of women through a wide range of adjectives: "competitive", "focused", "fearless", "ambitious", "hard-working", "intelligent", "skilled", "tenacious", "talented", "effective", "brilliant", "terrific", "committed", "dedicated", "motivated", "determined", "confident", "concentrated", "mentally strong",

traditional media and *Deadspin*" (Lisec and McDonald, 2012: 167). Antunovic and Hardin (2015) also identified BlogHer as a key alternative space. Further initiatives include the specific website *ESPN W* (which provides new angles for female coverage) and ESPN's special in-depth documentaries such as "Nine for IX: Let them wear towels" (Kim Bissell, Jennifer Greer, Kelly McBride, interviews, July 2014). Local and regional newspapers, affiliated TV stations (in the US) and social media are also sites where female athletes may be able to get more attention, according to experts (Pam Creedon, interview, June 2013; Amy Jones, interview, July 2014). That being said, Wolter (2014: 73) highlights the fact that behind the interest to "serve women as fans and athletes", there is an economic interest: "ESPN, Inc. is using *ESPN W* for profit, not for promoting women's sports". In addition, the author points out that "presenting *ESPN W* as a separate site for *female* fans yields women less respect as sports fans" (Wolter, 2014: 73).

“meticulous”, “extraordinary”, “impressive”, “courageous”, “wholehearted” and “inspiring”, to list but a few, which contributed to raising awareness of their qualities.

To illustrate this, the media attributed Ennis’ successes to her “natural ability, hunger and steeliness”. She was portrayed as a tough competitor, “whose talent is outstripped only by her determination to win”. *The Guardian* also pointed out that even in “her weakest events, such as the javelin, she pushes herself as hard as she can⁶⁹¹”. *The Telegraph* highlighted the fact that she was the “greatest all-round female athlete Britain has produced⁶⁹²” and that her performance was “the gimlet-eyed, steel-nerved, supple-sinewed culmination of years of training and effort⁶⁹³”.

Female boxers, who competed for the first time in London 2012, were depicted as “terrific athletes”, whose abilities challenged preconceptions and defied expectations: “the crowd stamped and cheered. They saw more than women’s boxing. They saw what they always want to see: good boxing⁶⁹⁴”. *The Daily Telegraph* pointed out that “the ring-craft was often exceptional” and that “the contests were no unedifying eye-scratching, hair-pulling catfights, but skilful duels rapturously received by an audience who identified these fighters more by their upper cuts than their ponytails⁶⁹⁵”. Katie Taylor’s portrayal was characterized by her “impressive hand speed and technical know-how⁶⁹⁶”. As highlighted in *La Vanguardia*, women boxers “have not only shown their strength, but also their art. Nicola Adams dances in the ring in a way that reminds us of the legendary steps of her idol, Muhammad Ali⁶⁹⁷”.

Similarly, the attitude towards the US women’s football team was positive and they were praised for their “togetherness”, “unselfishness” and “sacrifice⁶⁹⁸”, the triumph of the Spanish female water polo team was portrayed as a clear example of “effort,

⁶⁹¹ Jones, S.; Kessel, A. (2012, August 5). “Talent that propelled Jessica Ennis from girl next door to 2012 heroine”. *The Observer*, p. 3.

⁶⁹² Hart, S. (2012, August 5). “Golden girl rounds off campaign in real style”. *The Sunday Telegraph*, pp. S2–S3.

⁶⁹³ White, J. (2012, August 5). “Poster girl will discover true value of gold”. *The Sunday Telegraph*, p. S4.

⁶⁹⁴ Bearak, B. (2012, August 6). “Women finally get their chance to be a contender”. *The New York Times*, p. D3.

⁶⁹⁵ Brown, O. (2012, August 6). “Women pull no punches on a historic day”. *The Daily Telegraph*, p. S27.

⁶⁹⁶ Davies, G.A. (2012, August 9). “Fields of Athenry ring out for finalist Taylor”. *The Daily Telegraph*, pp. S16–S17.

⁶⁹⁷ Ramos, R. (2012, August 11). “Heroínas del ring”. *La Vanguardia*, p. 46.

⁶⁹⁸ Svrluga, B. (2012, August 10). “U.S. sticks together to win gold”. *The Washington Post*, pp. D1, D7.

comradeship, compromise, solidarity, generosity and tenacity”, an outstanding achievement accomplished thanks to their capacity to defend the Olympic values⁶⁹⁹. Likewise, the silver medal won by Andrea Fuentes and Ona Carbonell in the synchronized swimming was highlighted as an “exceptional case of effectiveness and competitive capacity⁷⁰⁰”, an example of “work, discipline and effort⁷⁰¹”. Furthermore, the gold-winning performance exhibited by the US gymnastics team formed by Gabrielle Douglas, Aly Raisman, Jordyn Wieber, McKayla Maroney and Kyla Ross was described as a “steady beat of excellence⁷⁰²”. These are only a handful of examples that provide a sense of the fair recognition awarded to female athletes’ achievements throughout the newspapers’ pages.

Linda K. Fuller argues that, in broad terms, the language used to describe Olympic sportswomen at London 2012 was different to that of previous Games and other sporting contexts:

It was absolutely outstanding. It was fair. The vocabulary was different, the coverage was different. I thought it was balanced, I thought it was fair, I thought it was wonderful. It was in magazines, in the newspapers, on the Internet, I thought it was excellent. I have no complaints about it. London 2012 was a game changer (Linda K. Fuller, interview, June 2013).

4.2.1.2.2. Raising awareness of the pending challenges to be faced on the way towards achieving equality

As is widely known, one of the greatest landmark achievements of London 2012 was the increase in participation by women. For the first time in history, no national team was male only. Thanks to the efforts of relevant IOC Commissions⁷⁰³ (Olympic Solidarity, for example, led by the Catalan Pere Miró⁷⁰⁴), human rights organizations

⁶⁹⁹ Martín, L. (2012, August 10). “Una plata de oro”. *El País*, pp. 48–9.

⁷⁰⁰ Torres, D. (2012, August 8). “Dos sirenas excepcionales”. *El País*, p. 42.

⁷⁰¹ Carol, M. (2012, August 9). “Las metáforas de la natación sincronizada”. *La Vanguardia*, p. 45.

⁷⁰² Jenkins, S. (2012, August 1). “Simply flawless”. *The Washington Post*, pp. A1, A12.

⁷⁰³ Mark Adams, the IOC director of communications, reflects on the efforts made by his organization to achieve the inclusion of Muslim sportswomen and his perception of the coverage that this issue received: “That was one of our priorities. Here is a good case of something where we wanted to demonstrate what the Olympic values actually meant in practice. We were very hard behind the scenes to make sure that the Saudis and Qatar sent women athletes. To an extent, it is largely symbolic, but unfortunately this is what communications are, symbols. We wouldn’t say that we have solved the problem, there is a lot more work to be done at grass-roots level in those countries on women’s inclusion (particularly in the administrative field), but the coverage was well taken actually, it was largely accepted as fact. I don’t think there was any particular adverse reporting. We were happy with the coverage” (Mark Adams, interview, May 2014).

⁷⁰⁴ Basté, J. (2012, August 4). “La niña que se puso un gorro”. *La Vanguardia*, p. 47.

and other key agents, three Muslim countries that had never sent female athletes to the Games (Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Brunei) included sportswomen in their teams. Thus, as well as showcasing the triumphs of female athletes at London 2012, the newspapers strove to shed light on the increase in women's participation, delivered positive coverage of the inclusion of female athletes from the aforementioned Muslim countries and explored the wide range of inequalities that still persist in the world of sport. Articles such as "A giant leap for women, but hurdles remain"⁷⁰⁵, "Women's time to shine"⁷⁰⁶, "The soul of the Olympics"⁷⁰⁷, "Women putting on a strong showing"⁷⁰⁸, "British women in need of Olympic movement"⁷⁰⁹, "Women ushering in a golden age of sporting equality"⁷¹⁰ and "Lightning a cauldron for change"⁷¹¹ provided critical accounts of the advances, broken-down barriers and pending challenges in this day and age.

From a general perspective, the media highlighted the fact that sexism still prevails because of the persistence of core factors such as: the lower salaries and sponsorships associated with women's sport⁷¹²; the scarce and sexualized media coverage⁷¹³; the lack of equal access to facilities; the scant number of female head coaches at college level in the US⁷¹⁴; and the absence of leading women in sport's governing bodies⁷¹⁵. In the case of Muslim sportswomen, the struggles⁷¹⁶ also include:

⁷⁰⁵ Longman, J. (2012, July 30). "A giant leap for women, but hurdles remain". *The New York Times*, p. D2.

⁷⁰⁶ Bruni, F. (2012, July 22). "Women's time to shine". *The New York Times*, p. SR3.

⁷⁰⁷ Bruni, F. (2012, August 12). "The soul of the Olympics". *The New York Times*, p. SR3.

⁷⁰⁸ Jenkins, S. (2012, August 9). "Women putting on a strong showing". *The Washington Post*, pp. D1, D13.

⁷⁰⁹ Clarke, L. (2012, July 21). "British women in need of Olympic movement". *The Washington Post*, pp. D1, D3.

⁷¹⁰ Kelso, P. (2012, August 10). "Women ushering in a golden age of sporting equality". *The Daily Telegraph*, p. S15.

⁷¹¹ Martinson, J. (2012, July 31). "Lightning a cauldron for change". *The Guardian*, G2, p. 13.

⁷¹² Gold, T. (2012, August 11). "Women on the podium". *The Guardian*, p. 32.

⁷¹³ Williams, Z. (2012, August 11). "All hail the new Olympic heroines, changing the face of sport for ever". *The Guardian*, pp. 4–5.

⁷¹⁴ Borzi, P. (2012, July 19). "Now at the pinnacle, an uneasy pioneer". *The New York Times*, pp. B11, B15.

⁷¹⁵ Saner, E. (2012, August 14). "The game changers". *The Guardian*, G2, p. 12.

⁷¹⁶ This in-depth contextualization was achieved taking into account the views of key experts and scholars, including Emma Tarlo (author of the book *Visibly Muslim: fashion, politics, faith*), Eman Al Nafjan (creator of the Saudiwoman blog saudiwoman.me), Janice Forsyth (director of the International Centre for Olympic Studies at the University of Western Ontario), Christoph Wilcke (a senior Middle East researcher for Human Rights Watch) and Lina al-Maeena (founder of a women's basketball league in Jeddah), among others.

the lack of infrastructure; the difficult living conditions; the daily abuse⁷¹⁷; the opposition to women's practice of sports by Islamist conservative rulers, leaders and groups⁷¹⁸; the impossibility of competing in a mixed gender environment⁷¹⁹; the ban on taking part in PE at school or attending a sporting event⁷²⁰; and the obstacles related to government policies⁷²¹. These are problems also identified by key scholars (Amara, 2012; Benn and Dagkas, 2012; Pfister, 2010; Sfeir, 1985). In the opinion article "La igualdad sigue siendo un desafío", published in *El País*, Michelle Bachelet expressed the view that during the Olympics women had broken down many barriers but "now they needed and deserved to be given equal conditions"⁷²².

With regard to the inequalities that specifically affect certain Olympic sports, a great deal of attention was devoted to boxing. Although key advances had been made after many years of struggle (for instance, USA Boxing didn't lift the ban on women's boxing until a lawsuit forced it to do so in 1993⁷²³), the media criticized the fact that at London 2012 there were only three categories of competition for women, in contrast with the ten for men. Given that "some of the world's best boxers could not expand or contract into those weights⁷²⁴", only 36 women could participate and, therefore, medal opportunities were not equal. *The Guardian* also reflected on the fact that the sport had a long way to go regarding the decision makers, given that early in 2012, "the Amateur International Boxing Association (AIBA) suggested wearing skirts would make female athletes look 'elegant' and help 'distinguish' them from their male counterparts"⁷²⁵. In addition, *The Daily Telegraph* pinpointed the fact that "it will take time to convince all the sceptics", including the governments of certain countries, such as Cuba, which "does not permit women to box"⁷²⁶.

⁷¹⁷ Rowley, T. (2012, July 28). "Kohistani sprinting for women of Afghanistan". *The Daily Telegraph*, p. S33.

⁷¹⁸ Graham-Harrison, E. (2012, July 25). "The view from Kabul". *The Guardian*, Olympics 2012, p. 12.

⁷¹⁹ "Gestas en femenino" (2012, July 25). *El País*, p. 26.

⁷²⁰ Addley, E. (2012, August 4). "Cheers and tears for first Saudi female competitor". *The Guardian*, p. 9.

⁷²¹ Al Nafjan, E. (2012, August 1). "They braved a storm of protest to fly our flag". *The Guardian*, p. 28.

⁷²² Bachelet, M. (2012, August 13). "La igualdad sigue siendo un desafío". *El País*, pp. 48–9.

⁷²³ Clarke, L. (2012, August 9). "Finally, their day in the ring". *The Washington Post*, p. D9.

⁷²⁴ Bearak, B. (2012, August 6). "Women finally get their chance to be a contender". *The New York Times*, p. D3.

⁷²⁵ Topping, A. (2012, August 4). "British women hoping to land first punch in sport's Olympic debut". *The Guardian*, pp. 12–13.

⁷²⁶ Davis, G.A. (2012, August 8). "Lonely march to winning hearts and minds". *The Daily Telegraph*, pp. S34–S35.

Second, with regard to women's football, *The New York Times* mentioned that the semipro league in Britain only features eight teams, has salary restrictions and an average attendance of less than 1,000⁷²⁷. The newspaper also examined the problems in Japan, "though teams have access to practice fields, they often share them with other clubs [...] much work remains. When the Japanese national teams left for the Olympics on the same flight last week, the men were seated in business class while the women, despite their World Cup title, sat in premium economy⁷²⁸". Additionally, it was commented on that in the US, "two professional soccer leagues have collapsed, and women's soccer is forever trying to elbow its way onto television⁷²⁹".

Third, in *The Guardian*, Richard Williams underlined the imbalance with regard to the participation of female road cyclists in London 2012: "The women's race was contested by 66 riders, less than half the size of the men's field". The author also reflected on the difficult situation outside the event: "Women's road racing has virtually no television coverage outside the Olympics and the world championships, which means sponsors are hard to find and tend not to stay long. The women's Tour de France is no longer held, and other important races have been lost⁷³⁰". Fourth, in the piece "Not equal yet⁷³¹", Lizzy Davies revealed other imbalances, such as the impossibility of women competing in canoeing and the decathlon or running the same distances as men in the hurdles (110 metres v 100 metres) and road racing (250km v 140km). With regard to the difficulties that occur in other sports, *La Vanguardia* explained that the Olympic female handball players are forced to pursue their careers abroad because to play professionally in Spain is impossible⁷³².

One final issue to note was the self-reflection on the remaining sexism in the media. The piece "Cenicientas con medalla⁷³³" acknowledged the fact that beyond the good ratings achieved by sportswomen at London 2012 on RTVE or the BBC, the coverage they receive on a daily basis remains almost inexistent. In the same vein, it is worth

⁷²⁷ Longman, J. (2012, July 26). "British women enjoy a long-awaited moment in the sun". *The New York Times*, p. B17.

⁷²⁸ Belson, K. (2012, July 23). "A bumpy past". *The New York Times*, p. F9. The same aspect in relation to the Australian basketball team was also criticized. See: Addley, E.; McCurry, J. (2012, July 20). "World-class women, economy-class flights". *The Guardian*, p. 3.

⁷²⁹ Belson, K. (2012, August 10). "For determined Japanese team, silver must be good enough". *The New York Times*, p. B15.

⁷³⁰ Williams, R. (2012, July 30). "She prayed for rain – and got Britain's first medal". *The Guardian*, pp. 1–2.

⁷³¹ Davies, L. (2012, August 11). "Not equal yet". *The Guardian*, p. 5.

⁷³² Martínez, J.B. (2012, August 9). "Guerreras y emigrantes". *La Vanguardia*, p. 40.

⁷³³ Villar, I. (2012, August 18). "Cenicientas con medalla". *El País*, pp. 24–5.

highlighting the self-criticism put forward by Dagoberto Escorcía, *La Vanguardia's* sports editor, "They [sportswomen] have claimed a place in mass media, we only take care of their sports once every four years. A whole truth in which we recognize our share of blame⁷³⁴".

4.2.1.2.3. The persistence of stereotypes

So far, this section has reflected on how the quality media gave dedicated sportswomen a positive language and critically examined the challenges to be faced in advancing towards equality. However, there is solid evidence to suggest that the six newspapers persisted in the widespread use of certain overt and covert forms of gender stereotypes and this cannot be overlooked. Certain sexist references, mentions of emotionality, attention to non-sporting elements, infantilizing and the trivialization of certain accomplishments continued, albeit the advances of women in the sporting world. The persistence of these long-held stereotypical constructions and the ambivalence in the coverage (Wensing and Bruce, 2003) revealed a problem in journalistic practice regarding the principle of justice, given that the prescriptions established in the major codes of media ethics (UNESCO, Art. 9; IFJ, Art. 7; Council of Europe, Art. 33; SPJ, Art. 1; IPSO, Art. 12; NUJ, Art. 9; FAPE, Art. 7; CPC, Art. 12, and so on) express the need to avoid discrimination and stereotyping for reasons of gender.

Sexism and mentions of physical attributes

On a broader level, it should be borne in mind that the media sampled did not continually portray overt sexist stereotypes. This was in contrast to the reporting style of popular newspapers, especially in the British context. An illustrative case in point can be found in the treatment of volleyball in some of the newspapers studied. While publications such as *The New York Times* focused on the athleticism of gold medal winners May-Treanor and Walsh Jennings and their contribution to raising the popularity of the sport⁷³⁵, British tabloids overemphasized the beach volleyball coverage purely for the attractiveness and attire of female competitors. This approach was criticized by Sarah Lyall and Campbell Robertson in their article "Where attire and oddities overshadow athleticism⁷³⁶", in which they censured the overwhelming presence of sexist mechanisms in tabloids: "Ever alert to fresh opportunities to

⁷³⁴ Escorcía, D. (2012, August 12). "Mujeres olímpicas". *La Vanguardia*, p. 58.

⁷³⁵ Pilon, M. (2012, August 9). "All-American match, all-American ending". *The New York Times*, p. B13.

⁷³⁶ Lyall, S.; Robertson, C. (2012, July 31). "Where attire and oddities overshadow athleticism". *The New York Times*, pp. B9, B15.

illustrate news articles with photographs of women's behinds, the British tabloids have found in beach volleyball perhaps their Platonic ideal of an Olympic sport. 'Cheeky Girls on Parade!' was the headline in *The Daily Mirror*, while *The People* used a number of angles for its own cheeky photographs".

The Guardian also criticized a reporter from *The Sun* who had asked Zara Dampney and Shauna Mullin if they could promise that whatever the weather, they "wouldn't disappoint their legions of fans and *Sun* readers by wearing leggings instead of bikinis⁷³⁷". The critique on beach volleyball and the participants' attire was even extended to the BBC at one point. In *La Vanguardia*, Noelia Román pointed out that to a certain extent, the "sudden interest" in the sport by the broadcaster may have had something to do with the athletes' attire⁷³⁸.

Having said that, it is very important to critically reflect on the few cases where the quality press did disseminate objectifying stereotypes. This reveals that overt sexist language and imaginary was in fact an element of serious papers. First, with regard to beach volleyball, in the article "It's all bikinis, beer, and Benny Hill" *The Telegraph* included expressions such as "the majority of the 15,000-strong crowd cared not for nationalities, skill or technique – they were here to see the girls in their bikinis, and the men in their shorts⁷³⁹". In an opinion article published in the same newspaper, the author (London's mayor, Boris Johnson) highlighted the fact that the "semi-naked women playing beach volleyball in the middle of Horse Guards Parade" were "glistening like wet otters⁷⁴⁰".

Quite surprisingly, *The Telegraph* also included objectifying photographs of female beach volleyball players. Some of the photographs that were published, Russia's Anna Vozakova "giving team-mate Anastasia Vasina a pat⁷⁴¹", for example, and a photograph of the behind of a Spanish volleyball player on Horse Guards Parade⁷⁴², clearly sexualized female athletes, an aspect that contradicts recommendations which urge the media not to exploit sex in their messages and images (Council of Europe,

⁷³⁷ Glendenning, B. (2012, July 20). "Not even the Sun can guarantee PM that bikinis will reign on Horse Guard's Parade". *The Guardian*, p. 44.

⁷³⁸ Román, N. (2012, July 28). "¿Un deporte sexy o sexista? La pareja británica de voleibol playa salta al estrellato gracias a sus bikinis". *La Vanguardia*, p. 45.

⁷³⁹ Gordon, B. (2012, July 29). "It's all bikinis, beer, and Benny Hill". *The Sunday Telegraph*, p. 5.

⁷⁴⁰ Johnson, B. (2012, July 30). "Here's 20 jolly good reasons to feel cheerful about the Games". *The Daily Telegraph*, p. 15.

⁷⁴¹ Alfred, T. (2012, July 29). "Sand, sun and sexy kit lures all types". *The Sunday Telegraph*, p. S7.

⁷⁴² Photograph of a Spanish volleyball player on Horse Guards Parade (2012, July 27). *The Daily Telegraph*, p. 19.

Art. 35) and the standards connected with the avoidance of sensationalism (*The Telegraph Stylebook*, Basic Principles). These types of shot clearly resembled those that could be found in popular sports dailies such as *Mundo Deportivo*, which accompanied its images with a reminder to its readers that beach volleyball “is the Olympic sport in which women compete with fewer square centimetres of clothing concealing their bodies than any other⁷⁴³”.

Scholar David Rowe reflects on the exploitation of beach volleyball through its photographic coverage in *The Telegraph*, linking it to the ongoing process of tabloidization (Conboy, 2014; Turner, 2014):

That is fascinating, because *The Telegraph* is historically the most conservative of all the newspapers. I have read a lot on tabloidization, and it would be expected that it would be the tabloid newspapers that look at women’s bodies in beach volleyball. It is worrying that the most conservative newspaper of all among the broadsheets in the sample has that kind of sexism, this kind of titillating coverage [...] *The Daily Telegraph* is using the visual approach in the print version which is much more available in the online version. This could be, to some extent, the influence of the online newspapers on the print newspapers, they need more photographs and more sexually oriented photographs, because people would be getting them anyway from the online newspaper (David Rowe, interview, March 2015).

Second, we should reflect on the four-page article “The Olympic Gaze”. Although it was published in G2 (*The Guardian*’s supplement with a lighter approach), it is arguable whether the newspaper should have published a piece with 15 photographs that not only objectified male and female athletes showing parts of their bodies but also included expressions such as “you take notice here that my buttock is actually rounder than a ball⁷⁴⁴”.

Third, certain language needs to be considered. Leryn Franco was described as “the sexiest athlete of Paraguay⁷⁴⁵”, Yelena Isinbayeva was said to “look like a supermodel⁷⁴⁶”, Antonija Misura was described as “the most beautiful woman at the Olympics⁷⁴⁷”, Sara Algotsson Ostholt was mentioned as “the pretty Swede⁷⁴⁸” and Kerri-Anne Payne was presented as “the glamorous 24-year-old⁷⁴⁹”. With regard to the women’s attire, the fact was highlighted that Gabrielle Douglas looked “angelic in a

⁷⁴³ “El deporte más refrescante fuera del agua” (2012, August 3). *Mundo Deportivo*, p. 27.

⁷⁴⁴ Williams, Z. (2012, August 7). “The Olympic gaze”. *The Guardian*, G2, pp. 6–9.

⁷⁴⁵ Mur, R. (2012, August 3). “La atleta más sexy de Paraguay”. *La Vanguardia*, Vivir, p. 10.

⁷⁴⁶ Williams, R. (2012, August 7). “Isinbayeva loses high-stakes poker game to Suhr on a countback”. *The Guardian*, Olympics 2012, p. 4.

⁷⁴⁷ “Meanwhile in Sibenik ...” (2012, July 30). *The Daily Telegraph*, p. S19.

⁷⁴⁸ Cuckson, P. (2012, August 1). “A cry of delight turns to despair”. *The Daily Telegraph*, p. S5.

⁷⁴⁹ Barkham, P. (2012, August 9). “What to watch on day 13”. *The Guardian*, p. 3.

sparkly all-white leotard⁷⁵⁰” and that Beth Tweddle “could have been dressed for Dancing on Ice⁷⁵¹”. These examples link to further cases that could be found in other quality newspapers outside the sample, such as *The Times*, where in an opinion piece on women’s hockey, Giles Coren used expressions such as “I came for the blondes”, “they looked like angels”, “I was there for the sex” or “smoking hot chicks in orange⁷⁵²”. According to Kari Fasting, focusing on physical appearance has serious consequences for the way in which female athletes are perceived and evaluated:

If you focus on women’s appearance, you are trivializing sport, it is like you don’t take them seriously, you don’t treat them as serious athletes (Kari Fasting, interview, May 2013).

Apart from what has already been discussed, the newspapers sampled did not engage in further blatantly sexist stereotypical portrayals. According to Billings, a great part of the audience during the Olympic Games is female and, therefore, the articulation of a greater volume of overt sexist stereotypes would have been detrimental to newspapers. Billings makes the following observation from the standpoint of US television, but it could equally be applied to other platforms and media environments:

The Olympics are the least sexist thing we have in terms of all the sporting events that are shown, partly because of that national flag and the audience. In this country [USA], the majority of the viewers of the Olympics are female. There is only another event that gets a majority female audience in this country, and it is a horse race, the Kentucky Derby. Every other sport, and that includes women’s basketball, soccer, golf and everything else, has a majority of male viewers. In the Olympics, you have a completely different audience, and therefore you have to show things in a different way (Andrew C. Billings, interview, July 2014).

Nevertheless, a core problem is that stereotypes such as the objectification of female athletes continue to be employed by the media on a day-to-day basis. The formulas used to display these stereotypes range from subtler but persistent comments to the most blatantly overt sexism, the daily photograph of girls in a soft porn style⁷⁵³ that can be found in the Spanish sports newspaper *As*, for example. Sexism remains pervasive in the sports coverage, as pointed out by leading scholars:

That is still going on. The ESPN magazine covered Lindsay Vonn, who was a tremendous athlete, and she was posing like she was Sharon Stone in *Basic Instinct*. There was some outrage over that, because she was portrayed not as a world-class athlete but as an object.

⁷⁵⁰ Macur, J. (2012, August 8). “A wait that paid off in gold and bronze”. *The New York Times*, p. B12.

⁷⁵¹ Hattenstone, S. (2012, August 7). “Sublime mix of strength, skill and modesty as Tweddle bows out with bronze”. *The Guardian*, pp. 2–3.

⁷⁵² Coren, G. (2012, August 9). “When the sexy game went bad”. *The Times*, The Games, p. 22.

⁷⁵³ During London 2012, this pattern in *As* remained unaltered, as could be seen in many soft porn pictures featuring models and actresses such as Tammy Torres (01/08/2012), Holly Peers (08/08/2012) and Geraldine Bazán (10/08/2012), to name just a few.

There is still that objectification of women even in sports in which they dominate (Kenon Brown, interview, July 2014).

There is little coverage of women's sport and when there is coverage of women's sport, the narrative discourse behind it is around what the athlete looks like, are they married, what kind of partners do they have, they are far more sexualized basically than men are, with the exception of David Beckham, perhaps (Richard Haynes, interview, October 2013).

The emotionality of sportswomen

The analysis revealed that emotionality was one of the major stereotypes that the media consistently employed to depict female athletes. A distinction should be made between two mechanisms: (1) the use of expressions related to tears, which appeared after wins and losses to portray the joy or misery of athletes; and (2) the use of expressions related to nerves, which affect the outcome of athletes' performances.

In the first case, it was reported that: "Emily Seebom broke down in tears⁷⁵⁴"; "Kanishkina burst into floods of tears⁷⁵⁵"; "Franklin's tears began flowing after her backstroke race⁷⁵⁶"; Charlotte Dujardin "wept uncontrollably⁷⁵⁷"; the US gymnasts "wiped away happy tears⁷⁵⁸"; the Spanish water polo players "hugged each other, crying⁷⁵⁹"; Ruta Meilutyte "melted in tears⁷⁶⁰"; Esther Lofgren "could scarcely stop crying⁷⁶¹"; Fraser-Pryce "crumpled to the ground in tears⁷⁶²"; and that Wieber "finished her routine fighting off tears⁷⁶³", among many other examples. Even when women do not cry, journalists could not refrain from mentioning tears, such as in the case of the Spanish windsurfer Marina Alabau: "When she came out of the water, Marina was euphoric and calm. While the [Spanish] anthem was playing, she felt serene and happy. There wasn't any motive to cry, therefore there weren't tears⁷⁶⁴".

⁷⁵⁴ Clarey, C. (2012, August 7). "A blow to the ego". *The New York Times*, p. B14.

⁷⁵⁵ Agencies (2012, August 12). "Jackson disqualified as Russian wins 20km walk". *The Observer*, Olympics 2012, p. 14.

⁷⁵⁶ Crouse, K. (2012, July 31). "Franklin, racing between races, squeezes in gold". *The New York Times*, pp. B9–B10.

⁷⁵⁷ Moss, S. (2012, August 10). "It's all rosy for Dujardin as British dressage duo show right moves to a very British soundtrack". *The Guardian*, Olympics 2012, p. 11.

⁷⁵⁸ Macur, J. (2012, August 1). "U.S. flies high and stands alone". *The New York Times*, p. B11.

⁷⁵⁹ Martín, L. (2012, August 10). "A sonreír! Que nadie llore!". *El País*, p. 48.

⁷⁶⁰ Martínez, J.B. (2012, July 31). "La noche de las colegialas". *La Vanguardia*, p. 36.

⁷⁶¹ Svrluga, B. (2012, August 3). "Four years later, a precious medal". *The Washington Post*, p. D5.

⁷⁶² Maese, R. (2012, August 5). "Into the spotlight". *The Washington Post*, pp. D1, D7.

⁷⁶³ Macur, J. (2012, August 8). "A wait that paid off in gold and bronze". *The New York Times*, p. B12.

⁷⁶⁴ Vivanco, F. (2012, August 8). "Oro en popa a toda vela para Marina". *La Vanguardia*, pp. 32–4.

Surprisingly, in contrast to previous research, it should be noted that there were also mentions of emotionality linked to male athletes. For instance, it was said that: Sugo Uriarte “flooded into tears⁷⁶⁵”; “Louis Smith wept openly in front of the home crowd⁷⁶⁶”; Paul Goodison was in “tears of agony⁷⁶⁷”; Luke Campbell “thrilled the roaring home crowd before bursting into tears in the ring⁷⁶⁸” and “collapsed in tears at the end of the fight⁷⁶⁹”; Michael Phelps “grew teary during the playing of the national anthem⁷⁷⁰”; and that Andy Murray “released his emotions and wept tears of exultation⁷⁷¹”. Nonetheless, it should be noted that London 2012 was widely described as “the crying Games⁷⁷²”, a trend both for male and female athletes.

That being said, it should be highlighted that stereotypes of emotionality in the case of photographs were almost exclusively ascribed to women. While the number of pictures where men appeared crying was very limited (the most remarkable one was of Chris Hoy crying on the front page of *The Daily Telegraph*⁷⁷³ after winning the keirin race), sportswomen showing their emotionality in pictures was a recurrent feature throughout the coverage.

With regard to the second focus of analysis, nerves, it is worth mentioning that when it comes to nerves negatively affecting their performances or the development of their careers, almost all the cases pointed to sportswomen, conveying the notion that they fail or struggle in crucial moments because of nerves or lack of focus. For instance, the career of Victoria Pendleton was framed by her emotionality: “Drama and tumult, as always, shadow Victoria Pendleton. Even when she is in blistering form, with all her ferocious competitiveness intact, life rarely runs easily for the multiple world

⁷⁶⁵ Sámano, J. (2012, July 30). “La Roja se destiñe”. *El País*, pp. 41–2.

⁷⁶⁶ John, E. (2012, July 29). “Smith’s perfect pommel leads the way”. *The Observer*, Olympics 2012, p. 10.

⁷⁶⁷ Cary, T. (2012, August 1). “Goodison in tears of agony as hopes of gold fade”. *The Daily Telegraph*, p. S31.

⁷⁶⁸ AP (2012, August 12). “Campbell beats familiar foe in bantamweight”. *The Washington Post*, p. D11.

⁷⁶⁹ Ensor, J.; Sawyer, P. (2012, August 12). “Daddy boom boom ends 104-year wait for gold”. *The Sunday Telegraph*, p. 4.

⁷⁷⁰ Crouse, K. (2012, August 4). “Another pool day belongs to Phelps and Franklin”. *The New York Times*, pp. D1, D5.

⁷⁷¹ Mitchell, K. (2012, August 6). “Murray the golden boy after crushing Federer”. *The Guardian*, Olympics 2012, pp. 12–13.

⁷⁷² Leapman, M. (2012, August 10). “The crying Games”. *The Daily Telegraph*, p. F3.

⁷⁷³ Hayward, P. (2012, August 8). “Tears of Hoy”. *The Daily Telegraph*, pp 1–2.

champion⁷⁷⁴ ". It was also claimed that "emotional vulnerability⁷⁷⁵ " and her "insecurities⁷⁷⁶" had been a hallmark throughout the three Games in which she participated.

Another noteworthy case can be found in the treatment that Mireia Belmonte received in *El País*. After failing to win the 400 metres medley, in the piece "Mireia no puede con todo⁷⁷⁷", she was criticized for her psychological weakness. Diego Torres argued that her tension and anxiety prevented her from coping with the psychological demands of the elite championships. A day later, when she finished 13th in the 400 metres freestyle she was described as "the big disappointment⁷⁷⁸ ". Conversely, *La Vanguardia*'s pieces⁷⁷⁹ did not display such a level of criticism and didn't exploit references to emotionality and psychological weakness either. It is worth noting that when she achieved two silver medals (200 metres butterfly and 800 metres freestyle), becoming the first Spanish female to win an Olympic medal in swimming⁷⁸⁰, she was then described in *El País* as "the strongest, the most versatile and the best trained⁷⁸¹" and "the best Spanish swimmer that had ever existed⁷⁸²".

Additional cases reinforce the association between nerves and women's underperformance. Although she had won a bronze medal, Rebecca Adlington was criticized by *The Guardian*: "Like so many other British swimmers, she seems to have got stage fright. She has bowed down under the burden of the occasion, rather than been boosted up by all the support she has had⁷⁸³". Similarly, *The Telegraph* highlighted the fact that "the pressure of the home crowd has not had the galvanising effect anticipated with many of the British swimmers⁷⁸⁴". This depiction contrasts with

⁷⁷⁴ McRae, D. (2012, August 3). "'Rubbish things happen' as Pendleton feels the anguish of a move too soon". *The Guardian*, Olympics 2012, p. 5.

⁷⁷⁵ Fotheringham, W. (2012, August 8). "British greats say farewell on epic night". *The Guardian*, Olympics 2012, pp. 2–3.

⁷⁷⁶ Liew, J. (2012, August 8). "Pendleton leaves open-hearted". *The Daily Telegraph*, p. S9.

⁷⁷⁷ Torres, D. (2012, July 29). "Mireia no puede con todo". *El País*, p. 54.

⁷⁷⁸ Sámano, J. (2012, July 30). "La Roja se destiñe". *El País*, pp. 41–2.

⁷⁷⁹ Martínez, J.B. (2012, July 29). "La esperanza duró un suspiro". *La Vanguardia*, p. 56.

⁷⁸⁰ Torres, D. (2012, August 3). "La liberación de Mireia". *El País*, pp. 46–7.

⁷⁸¹ Torres, D. (2012, August 2). "Me he quitado el miedo a nadar". *El País*, p. 49.

⁷⁸² Torres, D. (2012, August 4). "Un último zarpazo para la historia". *El País*, pp. 50–1.

⁷⁸³ Bull, A. (2012, August 4). "Another bronze for Adlington as Ledecky flows field away". *The Guardian*, Olympics 2012, pp. 8–9.

⁷⁸⁴ White, D. (2012, August 4). "Adlington's dream of home gold melts away". *The Daily Telegraph*, pp. S8–S9.

the references that the same newspaper made to Jessica Ennis. In her case, the pressure “seemed to be a source of inspiration rather than inhibition⁷⁸⁵”.

The New York Times highlighted the fact that Mariel Zagunis’ emotions led the US fencer to lose concentration: “Zagunis collapsed to the point that she did not even make the medal stand [...] She said she got ‘too excited’ because she was ‘thinking I had it’⁷⁸⁶.” *The Washington Post* reported that the gymnast Julie Zetlin committed “uncharacteristic errors” because nerves, caused by competing at the Olympics for the first time, “rattled her composure⁷⁸⁷”. The effect that nerves could have on performance was far exaggerated with the weightlifter Natasha Perdue: “When she entered the arena, she was so nervous she could barely walk. She never looked as if she would make her first lift. And she didn’t. Perdue was distraught, on the verge of collapsing⁷⁸⁸”.

Haynes criticizes the media insistence on stereotypes that wrongly associate emotionality with poor performances by sportswomen:

The idea that women fail because they are emotional where men aren’t is a fallacy, it is not true, because on most occasions it has to do with physical conditions, injuries and circumstances of other kinds (Richard Haynes, interview, October 2013).

Infantilizing women

Certain journalists did not refrain from evoking a childish conception of women. Jessica Ennis was described as “the golden girl of the GB team⁷⁸⁹” and “the poster girl of the London Olympics⁷⁹⁰”, Gabrielle Douglas as “America’s newest golden girl⁷⁹¹”, Rebecca Adlington as “the nation’s sweetheart⁷⁹²”, Gemma Gibbons as an “overwhelming crowd

⁷⁸⁵ Wilson, J. (2012, August 5). “Modest ‘face of Games’ pinpoints her long jump efforts as key to victory”. *The Sunday Telegraph*, pp. S2–S3.

⁷⁸⁶ Borden, S. (2012, August 2). “U.S. star loses chance to win her third gold”. *The New York Times*, p. B15.

⁷⁸⁷ Clarke, L. (2012, August 10). “Zetlin struggles to find her rhythm”. *The Washington Post*, p. D8.

⁷⁸⁸ Hattenstone, S. (2012, August 2). “Oliver and Perdue live up to the Olympic motto as they lift spirits as well as weights”. *The Guardian*, Olympics 2012, p. 13.

⁷⁸⁹ Williams, R. (2012, August 4). “Teenage newcomer joins Team GB’s star attraction for a moment in the sun”. *The Guardian*, pp. 4–5.

⁷⁹⁰ Hart, S. (2012, August 3). “Atonement beckons for Sheffield’s poster girl”. *The Daily Telegraph*, p. S30–S31.

⁷⁹¹ Clarke, L. (2012, August 3). “Douglas is America’s newest golden girl”. *The Washington Post*, pp. A1–A2.

⁷⁹² Adley, E. (2012, July 30). “Adlington raises the roof but has to settle for third best”. *The Guardian*, pp. 2–3.

darling⁷⁹³” and Katherine Grainger as “rowing’s eternal bridesmaid⁷⁹⁴”, who after winning the gold medal, was “finally the bride⁷⁹⁵”. The British hockey player Georgie Twigg was said to be “the baby of the team at 21⁷⁹⁶”. The members of the Spanish handball team were constantly referred to as “Jorge Dueñas’ girls⁷⁹⁷” and “the warrior girls⁷⁹⁸”. With regard to teenagers, the infantilizing clichés went further: they were not only described as “kids” or “schoolgirls⁷⁹⁹”, such as in the case of Ruta Meilutyte, who was referred to as “the Plymouth schoolgirl⁸⁰⁰”, but it was also reported that Gabrielle Douglas slept with a teddy bear⁸⁰¹ and that Missy Franklin adored “Justin Bieber and One Direction⁸⁰²”. It was said too that Ye Shiwen had a microblog “with cutesy pictures and a snap of her cuddling a puppy” and that her father had “promised to take her to Hong Kong Disneyland⁸⁰³”. During the coverage, certain infantilizing stereotypes were also used in the case of men, though to a lesser extent. Isolated examples can be found in Sam Oldham, who was referred to as “Baby gymnast⁸⁰⁴”, the Brownlee brothers, who were mentioned as looking “so young⁸⁰⁵”, the gymnast Max Whitlock, said to be a “pocket handkerchief of a man⁸⁰⁶”, the boxer Luke Campbell, who was

⁷⁹³ Robertson, R. (2012, August 3). “Judo gives her gold, but also gave her horror”. *The New York Times*, pp. A1, B14.

⁷⁹⁴ Brown, O. (2012, July 31). “Grainger on course to fulfil lifetime quest”. *The Daily Telegraph*, p. S32–S33.

⁷⁹⁵ Brown, O. (2012, August 4). “Grainger finally achieves ultimate high”. *The Daily Telegraph*, pp. S14–S15.

⁷⁹⁶ Briggs, S. (2012, August 9). “Aymar’s touch of Maradona magic crushes GB hopes”. *The Daily Telegraph*, pp. S28–S29.

⁷⁹⁷ Vivanco, F. (2012, August 11). “Las chicas del balonmano se someten a su ‘terapia de rodillo’ en pos del bronce”. *La Vanguardia*, p. 42.

⁷⁹⁸ López Jordà, T. (2012, August 8). “Las guerreras, ‘bien, coño, bien’”. *La Vanguardia*, p. 40.

⁷⁹⁹ Martínez, J.B. (2012, July 31). “La noche de las colegialas”. *La Vanguardia*, p. 36.

⁸⁰⁰ White, D. (2012, July 31). “Plymouth schoolgirl lands shock gold”. *The Daily Telegraph*, pp. S8–S9.

⁸⁰¹ Macur, J. (2012, July 23). “Same team, worlds apart”. *The New York Times*, p. F4.

⁸⁰² Braiker, B. (2012, July 19). “She’s the nicest person in the world, but in the water she will reach up and rip your heart out”. *The Guardian*, p. 39.

⁸⁰³ Branigan, T. (2012, August 1). “Shy youngster who became a world record holder – and international controversy”. *The Guardian*, p. 2.

⁸⁰⁴ Heritage, S. (2012, August 1). “The fab five. How Team GB’s gymnasts leaped to overnight stardom”. *The Guardian*, G2, pp. 16–17.

⁸⁰⁵ Hattenstone, S. (2012, August 11). “Anything he can do ...”. *The Guardian*, pp. 27–9.

⁸⁰⁶ Aldred, T. (2012, August 6). “Whitlock becomes a poster boy”. *The Daily Telegraph*, p. S14.

described as “the baby-faced 24 year-old⁸⁰⁷” and in Yuan Cao and Yanquan Zhang, referred to as “babes” and “Olympic virgins⁸⁰⁸”.

Out-of-context reporting

From time to time, the media overemphasized non-sport-related elements. *The Guardian*’s depiction of fencer Valentina Vezzali was characterized by mentions of her celebrity status – her appearance on the Italian version of *Strictly Come Dancing* and her marriage to footballer Domenico Guigliano⁸⁰⁹. In *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*, Alex Morgan was valued for her performance, but she could not escape mentions of her life away from the football field, particularly her fashion pose for *Sports Illustrated*’s swimsuit issue⁸¹⁰, where she only wore body paint⁸¹¹. It should be noted, however, that these minor referrals to Morgan in serious newspapers didn’t quite attain the sexist tone that could be found in other publications such as *As*. In fact, this Spanish sports daily featured Morgan in a bikini and the coverage included repetitive mentions to her physical attractiveness and her appearances in *FHM*⁸¹².

Another illuminating example can be found in Victoria Pendleton. *The Guardian* recalled that she was “the first British female bike racer to pose for the covers of men’s magazines and to exploit her looks in advertisements for beauty products⁸¹³”, and that she tried to capitalize “on her good looks by regularly undertaking fashion shoots⁸¹⁴”. Some of these photographs were reproduced in the newspapers’ pages, as they were in *The Telegraph*’s supplement “London 2012 Heroes after the Games”, where Pendleton appeared in a suggestive pose occupying more than half a page⁸¹⁵.

Despite these comments, it needs to be acknowledged that Pendleton was partly responsible for the way she was portrayed. In other words, Pendleton’s image was not only groomed by journalists. If we take a close look at her autobiography *Between the*

⁸⁰⁷ Davies, G.A. (2012, August 12). “Campbell hits gold standard”. *The Sunday Telegraph*, p. S9.

⁸⁰⁸ Hattenstone, S. (2012, July 31). “It was all going so well – and then British hopes suddenly took a dive”. *The Guardian*, p. 7.

⁸⁰⁹ Moss, S. (2012, August 3). “Deadly duels at the court of Italy’s fencing queen”. *The Guardian*, Olympics 2012, p. 8.

⁸¹⁰ Borden, S. (2012, July 23). “A bright future”. *The New York Times*, p. F8.

⁸¹¹ Svrluga, B. (2012, August 8). “‘Baby Horse’ Morgan blossoms into the face of the U.S. squad”. *The Washington Post*, p. D9.

⁸¹² Gabilondo, A. (2012, August 6). “Morgan: belleza más goles para las ‘Yanks’”. *As*, p. 17.

⁸¹³ Williams, R. (2012, August 8). “Britain’s golden Games”. *The Guardian*, pp. 1, 5.

⁸¹⁴ Williams, R. (2012, August 3). “Hoy scoops his fifth gold but Pendleton pays for illegal move”. *The Guardian*, p. 4.

⁸¹⁵ “Victoria Pendleton” (2012, August 16). *The Daily Telegraph*, p. H7.

lines (Pendleton and McRae, 2012), published straight after the Olympics, we can see that its pages are full of non-sporting elements, including her emotionality, insecurity and ups and downs and her motivation for posing nude on the front page of *Observer Sport Monthly* in 2008. As scholars Haynes and Vincent argue:

Pendleton did foster a sexualized media persona to a certain degree. She appeared in *The Observer* sports magazine naked on a bike, with the same pose that Lance Armstrong previously had in an advertisement. There is a difference, Lance Armstrong's advertisement is not read as a sexual image, the image of Victoria Pendleton is (Richard Haynes, interview, October 2013).

In the British newspaper coverage I saw, Pendleton was photographed quite a lot in her non-athletic environment, modelling clothes, she was in an advertisement for a shampoo company. She is obviously doing that for commercial gain, so she is using in some way her feminine attractiveness and having companies align their brand with her athletic success but with her femininity as well for commercial profit [...] Do you blame the media for that or does she have some responsibility? I personally would say that she has some responsibility if there was some stereotyped coverage (John Vincent, interview, July 2014).

A similar case can be observed in the US context. Jeré Longman's coverage of hurdler Lolo Jones was focused mainly on her self-promotion, including her nude appearance both in ESPN's magazine and *Outside Magazine*⁸¹⁶. The author criticized Jones for playing on the "persistent, demeaning notion that women are worthy as athletes only if they have sex appeal". *The Washington Post* also mentioned Jones' appearances on talk shows and magazine covers: "Jones is the one who garners the attention, the cover of *Time* magazine, the lucrative sponsorships. It's Jones who struggled to qualify for the Olympics and still flew to Los Angeles two days later to appear on 'The Tonight Show with Jay Leno'⁸¹⁷". The newspaper compared Dawn Harper with Lolo Jones, mentioning that while the former sought "validation", the latter pursued "justification" in the women's 100 metres hurdles. As happened in Pendleton's case, part of the responsibility for Lolo Jones' coverage lay in the way she promoted herself:

Looking at the pictures on her website, she obviously knows what she is doing. She embraces it. She appears in model poses, she is in a bikini in front of the American flag [...] she could show up in an interview in a dress, in an athletic way if she wanted to, but she wants to be portrayed as sexy. That will get her more money, or will get her more coverage, but it is a choice that the athletes make as well (Jennifer Greer, interview, July 2014).

Although we should bear this factor in mind, Jones' portrayal was biased. This lack of balance was criticized by readers through a series of letters to the editor at *The New*

⁸¹⁶ Longman, J. (2012, August 5). "For Lolo Jones, everything is image". *The New York Times*, pp. SP1–SP2.

⁸¹⁷ Maese, R. (2012, August 7). "For Harper and Jones, leap year has finally arrived". *The Washington Post*, p. D7.

York Times, entitled “Putting image aside: a hurdler’s qualities⁸¹⁸”. The letters expressed the opinion that “Jones worked hard to qualify for the Olympics despite health issues, including 2011 spinal surgery” and that “she didn’t get to London on her beauty or a marketing campaign”. From Bissell’s viewpoint, Jones received excessive criticism:

I thought she was probably under a little more scrutiny than deserved. There was a lot of talk about her appearance, her earrings, the jewellery she would wear, the hair, we did get a lot of out-of-context information. And I think that in some cases, it is meant for us to like the athlete and I think that in other cases, it is indirectly meant for us not to like the athlete. And I think that in her case, that was sort of it. I don’t think that everything was intentional, but I do think that in her case, the coverage wasn’t made to build a fan base (Kim Bissell, interview, July 2014).

In the case of male athletes, we can only account for one noteworthy case of somebody exploiting his celebrity status and practising self-promotion: Ryan Lochte. The media devoted a great deal of attention to non-sporting issues relating to the American swimmer, such as his topless appearances on the front covers of *Vogue*, *Men’s Health* and *Men’s Journal*⁸¹⁹ and his fashion preferences coupled with his desire to become a model⁸²⁰. Apart from Lochte, only the cases of Louis Smith’s nude pose for *Cosmopolitan*⁸²¹ and Robbie Grabarz’s pose for gay magazine *Attitude*⁸²² were briefly mentioned throughout the coverage.

Other than self-promotion, another frequently reported feature was women’s relationships and their marital status, both of which to some extent should be considered as private (UNESCO, Art. 6; Council of Europe, Arts 23–24; NUJ, Art. 6; IPSO, Art. 3; SPJ, Art. 2; FAPE, Art. 4; CPC, Art. 9). Illustrative examples include: Sanya Richards-Ross, “married to Jacksonville Jaguars defensive back Aaron Ross⁸²³”; Lizzie Armitstead, whose boyfriend is cyclist Adam Blythe⁸²⁴; Gemma Gibbons, in a relationship with judoka Euan Burton⁸²⁵; Marina Alabau, related to French

⁸¹⁸ “Putting image aside: a hurdler’s qualities” (2012, August 12). *The New York Times*, p. SP11.

⁸¹⁹ Bull, A. (2012, July 27). “‘El Dunderino’ Lochte throws down his branded gauntlet to the mighty Phelps”. *The Guardian*, Olympics, p. 11.

⁸²⁰ Arraut, A. (2012, August 1). “Lochte, oro en ‘marketing’”. *El País*, p. 36.

⁸²¹ Heritage, S. (2012, August 1). “The fab five. How Team GB’s gymnasts leaped to overnight stardom”. *The Guardian*, G2, pp. 6–7.

⁸²² Kirkup, J. (2012, August 8). “‘Lazy’ jumper leaps from obscurity to take Britain to new heights”. *The Daily Telegraph*, p. 2.

⁸²³ Pilon, M. (2012, August 6). “Richards-Ross breaks American drought in the women’s 400”. *The New York Times*, pp. D1, D7.

⁸²⁴ Saner, E. (2012, August 4). “Way to go!” *The Guardian*, pp. 35–7.

⁸²⁵ Davies, L. (2012, August 3). “Gemma Gibbons”. *The Guardian*, p. 7.

coach Alex Guyader⁸²⁶; Brigitte Yagüe, married to former Olympian Juan Antonio Ramos⁸²⁷; and Laura Bechtolsheimer, who competed against her former boyfriend in the dressage event⁸²⁸, to list only a few.

An especially noteworthy example was swimmer Federica Pellegrini. Not only did *The Guardian* describe her as “implausibly glamorous, improbably beautiful and a complete diva”, mentioning her nude appearances in *Vogue* and *Vanity Fair* but the author also mentioned her relationships: “Before she settled down with her current partner, former world 100 metres freestyle champion Filippo Magnini, Pellegrini was in a relationship with another Italian swimmer, Luca Marin. He had been engaged to her French freestyle rival Laure Manaudou but he left her for Pellegrini⁸²⁹”. As already pointed out in Section 4.1.6, there was another case in which the relationship of cyclist Laura Trott with fellow cyclist Jason Kenny became the core issue of an article. In the piece “Golden couple of Team GB share cycling success ... and a kiss⁸³⁰” it was mentioned that they confirmed they were “a couple after they were spotted kissing at the beach volleyball match on Wednesday”. The article also included a big photograph of them kissing.

Mentions of partners and relationships could also be found in the case of male athletes, but to a far lesser extent. Some of the few references available included: US volleyball player Donald Duxho, whose Ukrainian-born wife, Eleni, was initially denied entrance to the UK⁸³¹; the 100 metres runner from St Kitts and Nevis, Kim Collins, who was dropped for “spending the night in a hotel with his wife⁸³²”; British show jumper Nick Skelton, partner of the American show jumper Laura Kraut⁸³³; Ashley Eaton,

⁸²⁶ Martín, L. (2012, August 8). “Alabau plancha en oro”. *El País*, pp. 40–1.

⁸²⁷ Iríbar, A. (2012, August 10). “Reventamos el McDonald’s”. *El País*, p. 51.

⁸²⁸ Fanning, E. (2012, July 22). “10 to follow”. *The Observer*, Olympics 2012, p. 4.

⁸²⁹ Bull, A. (2012, July 21). “Ten golden moments. Women’s 400m freestyle”. *The Guardian*, London 2012 Special supplement, p. 14.

⁸³⁰ Rayner, G. (2012, August 10). “Golden couple of Team GB share cycling success ... and a kiss”. *The Daily Telegraph*, p. 7.

⁸³¹ Crouse, K. (2012, August 7). “For U.S. Team’s leader, victories on court and off”. *The New York Times*, p. B12.

⁸³² Gibson, O. (2012, August 5). “Collins axed from sprint for hotel stay with his wife”. *The Guardian*, Olympics 2012, p. 6.

⁸³³ Moss, S. (2012, August 7). “Showjumpers end 60 years of disappointment”. *The Guardian*, Olympics 2012, p. 7.

partner of the triathlete Brienne Theisen⁸³⁴; and windsurfer Nick Dempsey, married to Sarah Ayton, a sailing double gold medallist⁸³⁵.

Finally, the status of women as mothers was also a common feature. Considerable attention was given to shooter Nur Suryani Mohamed Taibi, who competed in an advanced state of pregnancy⁸³⁶. Occasionally, the language greatly overemphasized her condition, referring to her as “the most heavily pregnant woman ever to compete⁸³⁷”, an expression that clearly reinforced the notion of “otherness”. Another outstanding athlete, the US beach volleyball player Walsh Jennings was also pregnant, but it wasn’t known at the time of London 2012. According to Bissell, “if public and media had known that she was pregnant, we would not have gotten off of that story at all” (Kim Bissell, interview, July 2014).

Others referred to were Paula Radcliffe⁸³⁸ and Mary Kom⁸³⁹, and Kerri Walsh Jennings⁸⁴⁰ as being “the mother of two”. A woman’s maternal instinct was also conveyed in the case of Lizzie Armitstead (“She says she would like a family, and is thinking about the breaks between competitions when she could plan a child⁸⁴¹”), Misty Kay-Treanor (“It’s time for me to be a wife. I want to be a mom and share time with my family⁸⁴²”) and Brigitte Yagüe (“The next year my objective is to be a mother⁸⁴³”), among others. In the case of wrestler Maider Unda, however, her maternal instinct was questioned: “Has a partner, Aitor, and wants to be a mother. Hits and travels do not go well with her maternal instinct⁸⁴⁴.” In contrast, only brief references to their status as

⁸³⁴ Martín, C. (2012, August 10). “El último atleta más grande”. *La Vanguardia*, p. 42.

⁸³⁵ Cary, T. (2012, August 8). “Dempsey proves he’s the daddy with stylish silver”. *The Daily Telegraph*, p. S33.

⁸³⁶ Ronay, B. (2012, July 29). “Rogge, the first gold and a kicking baby”. *The Observer*, Olympics 2012, p. 9.

⁸³⁷ “Highlights Day 1. The big question”. (2012, July 28). *The Guardian*, p. 7.

⁸³⁸ Kessel, A. (2012, July 26). “Radcliffe ‘flips a coin’ away from marathon heartbreak”. *The Guardian*, Olympics 2012, p. 1.

⁸³⁹ Mitchell, K. (2012, August 7). “Jonas goes toe-to-toe with a fighter destined to strike gold for Ireland”. *The Guardian*, Olympics 2012, p. 12.

⁸⁴⁰ Pilon, M. (2012, August 8). “Defending champs advance to an all-U.S. final”. *The New York Times*, p. B13.

⁸⁴¹ Saner, E. (2012, August 4). “Way to go!”. *The Guardian*, pp. 35–7.

⁸⁴² Maese, R. (2012, August 9). “A perfect ending to their journey”. *The Washington Post*, p. D7.

⁸⁴³ Martínez, J.B. (2012, August 10). “La patada del ajedrecista”. *La Vanguardia*, p. 47.

⁸⁴⁴ Galán, J. (2012, August 9). “Maidier, la fuerza de los orígenes”. *El País*, p. 45.

fathers were foregrounded in pieces devoted to Bradley Wiggins⁸⁴⁵ and Roger Federer, who was reported to be the only father in the world top ten tennis players⁸⁴⁶.

Trivialization of sportswomen's achievements

Broadly speaking, women's accomplishments were not trivialized. However, it should be noted that while there were many salient stories, others were minimized. Although wrestler Clarissa Chun won the US first medal of the Games, *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* only mentioned her in a brief piece provided by AP⁸⁴⁷. Likewise, the newspaper only wrote five lines on Jennifer Shur (gold medal in pole vault), inside an article mainly devoted to Félix Sánchez⁸⁴⁸. The Australian Liz Cambage became the first women basketball player to dunk in an Olympic tournament, but this defining moment was reduced to only a brief piece⁸⁴⁹. *The Washington Post* also devoted only brief pieces to the first US gold medal in women's water polo⁸⁵⁰ and the two silver medals won by "the most decorated cyclist in US history", Sarah Hammer⁸⁵¹. In *The Guardian*, Andy Murray's triumph in tennis achieved prominent attention, but Laura Robson's role in the silver mixed team was minimized⁸⁵².

Kim Bissell criticizes media overemphasis on the winning sportswomen instead of broadening the opportunities:

I think that we spend a lot of time focusing on the winners. Missy Franklin deserved all the media attention that she got, because she is phenomenal. But I think that there are other athletes. Other women should have deserved more attention (Kim Bissell, interview, July 2014).

On other occasions, the trivialization can be illustrated not in the scarce space devoted to issues, but rather in the type of diminishing language used in the coverage. For instance, *The New York Times* wrote that Rebecca Adlington, "Britain's favorite swimmer and a common sight on London billboards, buses and shop windows" had "managed only third place". In his article "Falling short at home"⁸⁵³, Andrew Das pinpointed the fact that the "fans seemed to be beseeching her just to finish strong"

⁸⁴⁵ Lewis, T. (2012, July 22). "The undisputed king of the road". *The Guardian*, p. 30.

⁸⁴⁶ Mateo J.J. (2012, July 31). "No sé cuanto más sacrificaré por esto". *El País*, p. 45.

⁸⁴⁷ "American wins wrestling bronze" (2012, August 9). *The New York Times*, p. B12.

⁸⁴⁸ Clarey, C. (2012, August 7). "Sprinter gives Grenada its first medal". *The New York Times*, pp. B7, B9.

⁸⁴⁹ "A rare dunk" (2012, August 4). *The New York Times*, p. D4.

⁸⁵⁰ AP (2012, August 10). "'Fairy tale ending' for U.S. with first gold". *The Washington Post*, p. D8.

⁸⁵¹ AP (2012, August 8). "In omnium, Hammer made of silver". *The Washington Post*, p. D14.

⁸⁵² Moss, S. (2012, August 6). "Centre Court turns gold for Murray with straight-sets win over Federer". *The Guardian*, p. 5.

⁸⁵³ Das, A. (2012, July 30). "Falling short at home". *The New York Times*. p. D5.

and “she did it, but just not strong enough”. Additionally, we can see that on some occasions, women that participate in minimized sports (such as water polo in the US) only came into the spotlight when there was some sort of trivial or controversial situation associated with them, such as when the “unwanted swimsuit malfunctions” in the game between US and Spain were covered by NBC: “the network gave viewers a brief bit of risqué theater as the American Kami Craig pulled at her opponent’s swimsuit and briefly bared a Spanish player’s breast for all to see⁸⁵⁴”.

Finally, in the case of Muslim sportswomen, it is clear cut that the media praised the importance of their participation, but certain language trivialized their sporting skills. An overemphasis was put on the fact that these athletes were invited to the Olympics “despite failing by some distance to reach the qualifying standard in their disciplines⁸⁵⁵”. As *El País* remarked, “the majority of these Arab competitors come to the Games with an invitation or wild card, and not after succeeding in qualifying processes⁸⁵⁶”. Bearing this factor in mind, the media took it for granted that they were not supposed to succeed, because their goal was another one. As *The New York Times* wrote: “Winning was never the point. No one expected Wojdan Shaherkani, 16, the first female Saudi Olympian to compete, to pin her opponent. The idea was to flip sexist attitudes in Saudi Arabia⁸⁵⁷”.

Similarly, *El País* mentioned that she would surely not “advance in the preliminaries, because her best record is far away from the minimum B⁸⁵⁸”. *La Vanguardia* reported that she didn’t have “any possibility of advancing beyond the first round” and that she was “only in London due to the IOC program to encourage the participation of women from all the countries⁸⁵⁹”. In an article in *The Guardian*, Shaherkani was even portrayed as an object of compassion by rivals: “It was probably thanks solely to sportsmanlike politesse that she was allowed to stay on her feet for 82 seconds before being floored by her opponent⁸⁶⁰”.

⁸⁵⁴ Borden, S. (2012, August 9). “Underwater, overexposed”. *The New York Times*, pp. B11, B17.

⁸⁵⁵ Addley, E. (2012, August 4). “Cheers and tears for first Saudi female competitor”. *The Guardian*, p. 9.

⁸⁵⁶ Iríbar, A. (2012, July 23). “Los Juegos de las mujeres, un hito en Londres”. *El País*, pp. 50–1.

⁸⁵⁷ Stanley, A. (2012, August 4). “Saudis greet Olympic first with a shrug”. *The New York Times*, pp. D1, D8.

⁸⁵⁸ Iríbar, A. (2012, July 23). “Los Juegos de las mujeres, un hito en Londres”. *El País*, pp. 50–1.

⁸⁵⁹ Ramos, R. (2012, August 1). “La religión se cuele en el tatami”. *La Vanguardia*, p. 37.

⁸⁶⁰ Addley, E. (2012, August 14). “From the headhunter to Henry’s hug – 2012’s greatest moments”. *The Guardian*, pp. 36–7.

Only on one occasion, which concerned the runner Tahmina Kohistani, was the language used any different. Mike Wise of *The Washington Post* positively portrayed her as a woman who showed “more strength than the strongest Bulgarian weightlifter, more stamina than the gold medal marathoner⁸⁶¹”.

Gender marking

Gender marking can be identified as the stereotype with fewer ethical problems during the coverage of the Olympics. Overall, men’s and women’s sports were marked with equal frequency (women’s water polo, men’s water polo, for example). Given the wide range of sports and disciplines that were part of the Games, it made sense that journalists used qualifiers to refer to each gender. The cases of non-gender marking, in which the readers could only tell that a piece was about men/women by looking at the names of the players inside the text, were few and far between.

4.2.1.3. Factors to be taken into account in understanding the persistence of biases during and after London 2012

As has been shown, the six newspapers sampled contributed to contesting the long-standing imbalances in sports journalism: they considered sportswomen’s triumphs as salient content and delivered a message which conveyed the need to advance towards non-discrimination. Nevertheless, at the same time, it can be equally seen that there is still a long way to go with regard to the number of articles dedicated to female athletes and the nature of the coverage they receive. A core problem is that many journalists and citizens make the wrong assumption that “everything is equal now, we do not need to reinforce this anymore” (Pam Creedon, interview, June 2013).

Several factors should be considered in order to understand the persistence of biases during and after the coverage of the Olympics. First, it should be remembered that sports journalism has been considered a male territory. For reasons including the patriarchal values in society, the current division of labour (Claringbould et al., 2004) and men’s “ownership” of sports and sports journalism (Hardin and Shain, 2006), women have traditionally been excluded from this professional area. Hardin and Whiteside (2009: 628) underline the fact that “women in sports departments work in token status”, because “they fail to meet the 15 percent threshold” (Hardin and Whiteside, 2009: 631). As Whiteside and Hardin (2013: 148–9) explain, in 2006 in the US, “women constituted 40 percent of the reporters across all areas of the newsroom, compared with just 10 percent in sports”. Furthermore, “(white) men occupy the vast

⁸⁶¹ Wise, M. (2012, August 4). “From war-torn Afghanistan, a printer with the soul of a fighter”. *The Washington Post*, pp. D1, D7.

majority of leadership and authority positions in sports journalism” (Whiteside and Hardin, 2013: 151). With regard to the British case, it should be noted that less than 9% of the sports journalists in the UK national press are women (Boyle, 2006: 149).

If we take a close look at the accredited journalists covering London 2012 by gender, we will see that “amongst 25,154 total accredited media, 4,733 (18.88%) were women” (IOC, 2013c: 40). The prevalent masculine culture and the structural underrepresentation of women in media organizations have consequences for content. Bernstein (2002: 419) highlights the fact that “the predominantly male gender of host, reporters, and producers might be a primary cause of unknowing or knowing bias”. Pfister and Wenner argue in the same direction:

One big problem is that nearly all sports journalists are men. I don't think they want to discriminate on purpose, and they write as good as they can, but they orientate themselves, they have an anticipated taste towards certain sports and the taste of the consumers (Gertrud Pfister, interview, May 2013).

The sports department is a toy department that is very segregated. It is almost male, it tends to be less diverse, they are not preoccupied by social change, they are more preoccupied by “who won” or if “our team could perform better” or assessing athletics performances technically (Lawrence Wenner, interview, June 2013).

Second, to a large extent, gender imbalances remain as a consequence of the predominantly male audience, as scholars Horne and Rojas explain:

There is a division of men and women when it comes to interest in sports pages. It is pretty clear that in broadcasting, TV, radio and press, the sports pages tend to be oriented to men [...] Using more female reporters, presenters and commentators is only part of the change. It is better than nothing, but the real issue is to see who are the viewers of sport and what do these viewers want to see, and what is going to attract an audience on television or radio and what is going to make people buy a newspaper (John Horne, interview, November 2013).

It's sad, but it is true that sports journalism is based on the wrong premise that their public is more male than female and, from there, their contents tend to focus on these type of audiences. I believe that it is a contradiction, because the coverage of women and men can be equally attractive. It is simply a question of diversifying and going beyond the commercial criteria to apply the journalistic criteria (José Luis Rojas, interview, June 2014).

Third, closely related to audiences' interests, the possibility of covering more women's sports is also a matter of availability of human and economic resources in media organizations. José Sámano explains the situation at *El País*, which could be applied to other media companies in different journalistic contexts:

We have 10 journalists in Madrid and 4 in Barcelona. If we are 14 and we need to cover Barça, Madrid, Atlético, the NBA, Fernando Alonso, Nadal, motorbikes, Giro, Tour, European championships, athletics world tournaments [...] it is difficult to cope with everything. It is difficult

to devote those human resources to other sports, including female sports. I can say the same about men's handball at club level, which in Spain is dead [...] With the resources that we have, we should stick to what we think is important, but that does not mean a rejection. We are very happy that there are more sportswomen and, even better, if they are at the top in different sports. Take, for instance, Arantxa Sánchez Vicario. I would be delighted to include more women, but if we don't have Arantxa Sánchez Vicario ... what can we do about it? We also need to give readers what they believe is interesting (José Sámano, interview, May 2014).

Certainly, resources play a key role and media professionals are not solely responsible for the minimization of sportswomen and the reproduction of stereotypes, but their role is pivotal in overhauling the "sport-media complex" (Kian and Hardin, 2009: 186). Therefore, they should go beyond assumptions about audiences' interests (Cooky et al., 2013; Kane, 2013; Knoppers and Elling, 2004) and commit to developing a more egalitarian, dignified and non-biased treatment of gender. As Clifford Christians argues:

In the same way that advertising should learn how to represent women, with dignity instead of sexism, sports journalism is a field where that principle should also be implemented. When it comes to gender, journalism has to take it seriously. We should get rid of the sexist language and treat women with equality (Clifford Christians, interview, April 2013).

As an essential part of the equation, the decision makers in organizations must implement meaningful changes⁸⁶² (Hardin, 2013) that will positively affect the different ranks of sportswriters⁸⁶³ (Kian and Hardin, 2009) and lead to changes for the better in the routines and values of journalists. Readers should also play their role to "demand parity in sports coverage" (Crouse, 2013: 240).

At higher education level, educators should encourage "their students to develop a more balanced perspective" (Schmidt, 2013: 262), raise awareness of gender inequalities and increase the involvement of women in campus newsrooms, given that "the issues of fairness and quality go hand in hand" (Schmidt, 2013: 262). As Hardin (2013: 243) highlights, scholars "have an ethical duty to educate our students about the importance of diversity in the sports workplace and about the issues around women's sport".

Apart from the actors mentioned above, as Petca et al. (2013: 625) maintain, the IOC should also play a role in tackling these imbalances: "Although the IOC alone cannot change the way in which the media decides to portray Olympic athletes, it should at

⁸⁶² Studies have suggested an impact on journalistic content when women manage the newsroom (Beam and Di Cicco, 2010).

⁸⁶³ As Kian and Hardin (2009: 200) highlight, male journalists "less often than female journalists used framing that positively focused on the sporting accomplishments of female athletes. Thus, these frames are less likely to become the norm as long as men dominate the ranks of sports writers".

least criticize gender-based representation of sportsmen and sportswomen for this visual perpetuation of gender stereotypes legitimizes discriminatory regimes, which are essentially incompatible with the spirit of Olympism”.

4.2.2. Commitment to justice in the representation of race

With regard to the commitment to justice in the representation of race, during London 2012 the newspapers sampled gave wide exposure to the achievements of non-white athletes, challenging the traditional “white ethnocentric perspective” (Farrington et al., 2012: 54) in news reporting. As will be explained later, information about race was only provided in exceptional cases, that of the US gymnast Gabrielle Douglas, for example. Here, it was included in order to ensure readers understood the nature of her landmark success. Overall, the media sampled did not use overtly racist comments, even though certain covert stereotypes linked with race were fostered throughout the coverage. On a broader level, newspapers took the opportunity to raise public awareness of racism within sport and society. The criticism of two discriminatory Tweets and the notion of “Plastic Brits” are significant examples that illustrate how the quality media contributed to the fight against racism and praised the value of multiculturalism. This section will conclude with a reflection on the challenges that need to be overcome in the media’s portrayal of race, especially in certain segments of the journalistic market. Among them, the need to increase the presence of non-white media professionals in the newsrooms will be highlighted as a crucial element to take into consideration.

4.2.2.1. Positive evaluation of the sporting performances of non-white athletes

During London 2012, the performances of non-white athletes were positively portrayed in the media and they were granted a fair amount of coverage. The Jamaican runner Usain Bolt was unequivocally one of the most prominent stars of the event. His historical triumphs in the 100 metres, the 200 metres and the 4x100 metres relay⁸⁶⁴ did not only receive broad coverage within the newspapers’ pages but they were also featured on the front pages and in the openings of the sports sections in the British, American and Spanish publications. Apart from Bolt, the athleticism and accomplishments of other non-white sportsmen and sportswomen were considered as salient content and were highly praised throughout the coverage.

To illustrate the above: David Rudisha, who won the gold medal in the 800 metres with a world record (1m 40.91 seconds), was depicted as “the king⁸⁶⁵” and also “the

⁸⁶⁴ Crouse, K. (2012, August 12). “Triple-double is a slam dunk”. *The New York Times*, p. S1.

⁸⁶⁵ Arribas, C. (2012, August 10). “El rey David reina en el 800”. *El País*, p. 46.

greatest 800m runner in history⁸⁶⁶”; Ethiopia’s Tirunesh Dibaba won her third career gold medal, establishing herself as “history’s greatest female distance runner⁸⁶⁷”; the mixed race US athlete Ashley Eaton was described as the “indisputable king of the decathlon⁸⁶⁸” and in the one-page article “Overall excellence”, *The New York Times* published ten photographs of his participation in the event and heralded him as “the world’s greatest athlete⁸⁶⁹”; and British runner Mo Farah was depicted as a “true warrior⁸⁷⁰”, who due to his “strength of mind and belief⁸⁷¹” had “became only the sixth man in Olympic history to achieve the illustrious 5,000m and 10,000m double⁸⁷²”.

Other non-white athletes who were highlighted throughout the coverage include: Jessica Ennis (Britain, heptathlon); Gabrielle Douglas (US, gymnastics); Christine Ohuruogu (Britain, athletics); Yohan Blake (Jamaica, athletics); Louis Smith (Britain, gymnastics); Ye Shiwen (China, swimming); Nicola Adams, Anthony Ogogo and Anthony Joshua (Britain, boxing); Yamilé Aldama (Britain, triple jump); Tiki Gelana (Ethiopia, marathon); Meseret Defar (Ethiopia, 5000 metres); Lutalo Muhammad (Britain, taekwondo); Serena and Venus Williams (US, tennis); Christian Taylor (US, triple jump); and Félix Sánchez (Dominican Republic, 400 metres hurdles). Additionally, space was devoted to highlighting lesser known non-white athletes such as Julius Yego, Kenya’s first ever javelin competitor at the Olympic Games⁸⁷³.

The wide exposure given to the highly significant achievements of non-white sportsmen and sportswomen challenged the traditional dominance and representation of white athletes in the mass media (Farrington et al., 2012). We should take into account the fact that “increasingly, organized sports became integrated with not just whites and blacks participating together but with a myriad of other ethnicities represented on the athletic field” (Billings et al., 2014: 142). These sporting advances

⁸⁶⁶ Bull, A. (2012, August 10). “Rudisha smashes his own 800m record”. *The Guardian*, Olympics 2012, p. 3.

⁸⁶⁷ Longman, J. (2012, August 4). “A punishing kick from an enduring Great”. *The New York Times*, p. D3.

⁸⁶⁸ Martín, C. (2012, August 10). “El último atleta más grande”. *La Vanguardia*, p. 42.

⁸⁶⁹ Bishop, G. (2012, August 10). “Overall excellence”. *The New York Times*, p. B11.

⁸⁷⁰ Hayward, P. (2012, August 12). “People’s hero shows mindset of true warrior”. *The Sunday Telegraph*, p. S5.

⁸⁷¹ Cram, S. (2012, August 13). “We needed a big finish – it was about as big as you can imagine”. *The Daily Telegraph*, p. S7.

⁸⁷² Hart, S. (2012, August 12). “Farah’s incredible golden double”. *The Sunday Telegraph*, pp. S3–S5.

⁸⁷³ Longman, J. (2012, August 8). “For one Kenyan Olympian, throwing beats running”. *The New York Times*, p. B18.

were progressively translated into the quantitative media representation of athletes from different races and ethnicities. As John Price argues, nowadays there isn't really an underrepresentation of non-white athletes in the media coverage of sport:

I don't think that there is particularly an underrepresentation. In the end, the media coverage reflects the nature of sport and, if you look at football and other sports, and you focus on the winning teams and athletes, if you look at the way that teams have changed [...] I don't think that there is an underrepresentation (John Price, interview, September 2013).

4.2.2.2. The mentions of race: the case of Gabrielle Douglas

In overall terms, it can be stated that there were few references to the race of the athletes during the period examined. For the most part, journalists from the newspapers sampled took the right decision not to focus on the race and ethnicity of the participants. As John Price points out, "journalists need to ask themselves if they need to mention race and if race is necessarily relevant" (Interview, September 2013). This idea is also established in the codes issued by national and international bodies and the ethical guidelines promoted by some of the newspapers studied. For instance, *The Guardian Editorial Code* (1: Race) explains that, in general, the media doesn't "publish someone's race or ethnic background or religion unless that information is pertinent to the story". As will be explained, this information was only provided in exceptionally noteworthy cases, such as with Gabrielle Douglas. Therefore, unnecessary expressions that were employed by tabloid newspapers such as *The Sun* were rightly avoided and even criticized by the quality media. Take, for instance, the following example originally published in *The Sun*: "It was 46 golden minutes when three young Britons showed the watching world just who we are. A ginger bloke from Milton Keynes, a mixed race beauty from Sheffield, an ethnic Somali given shelter on these shores from his war-ravaged homeland. This is what Britain looks like today⁸⁷⁴".

In the case of the US gymnast Gabrielle Douglas, the first African-American to win the individual all-around competition in gymnastics, her specific situation demanded a different approach. Her race was mentioned in almost every story that referred to her, but not in a negative way. It was highlighted as necessary information in order that readers could appreciate the watershed historical importance of her success: "Douglas will go down in the history of Olympism for breaking another barrier in the ethnic war⁸⁷⁵." As Billings points out, sometimes the mention of race is very important for the

⁸⁷⁴ Muir, H. (2012, August 7). "Can a team that looks like GB change us for better?". *The Guardian*, pp. 6–7.

⁸⁷⁵ Román, N. (2012, August 3). "Douglas derrumba un muro". *La Vanguardia*, p. 37.

correct provision of information. Given that “colour and ethnicity are part of identity” (Whitehouse, 2009: 104), journalists cannot always be colour-blind:

Sometimes race is part of the story, sometimes it tells something about who they are. And when journalists say “I have decided to be colour-blind”, to me, they are missing part of the story. If you grow up in a given environment or with a different racial background, that is part of who you are and it is part of the story that needs to be shared. When I interviewed Tom Hammond of the NBC for the first Olympic book, he said “I just let the camera do the work, I do not focus on that”. That is just defining race only by skin tone. Tiger Woods is a great example. If you simply look at his skin, you would say that he is a black athlete. If you actually go a little deeper, you will find out that he has a pretty strong mixture of four different backgrounds and that does influence a part of who he is and his values. You don’t get that story if you just let the camera do the work (Andrew Billings, interview, July 2014).

In the case of Gabrielle Douglas, providing information about her race helped readers to understand much more of the background, life story, personality and character of the athlete and the struggles that she had had to overcome to achieve her triumph at London 2012. In the article “A very long journey was very swift⁸⁷⁶”, Juliet Macur explained that when Gabrielle Douglas left her family and went to West Des Moines (Iowa) to train and live, she found herself in a different environment in which race played an important role: “Douglas noticed right away that she was one of the few black people in town. She was used to standing out. Often, she was the only black gymnast at high-level competitions”. However, she didn’t let that initial situation detract from her objective and she kept on working to improve, a goal that led her to participate in and achieve an outstanding result at London 2012.

Having said that, Eagleman (2015: 245) argues that providing details about Gabrielle Douglas’ background “seemed to cast Douglas in the ‘other’ spotlight due to her race”. According to Rightler-McDaniels (2014: 1090), “despite popular belief to the contrary, there exists a strong Black/White binary in US society that reinforces an ‘Others’ view of Blacks”. As Kim Bissell asserts, the reporting of cases such as Gabrielle Douglas’ illustrates the fact that the media sometimes tend to focus prominently on subjects’ different attributes rather than considering them first and foremost as athletes.

There was a lot of news about Gabrielle Douglas being the first African-American to win in women’s all-around. On the one hand, it is worth noting, because it is something that went down in history. On the other hand, it points out difference. I think there is a very fine line between celebrating success based on difference and celebrating it but mentioning what the difference is, because that is when you introduce “oh, she is African-American” not “she is an athlete first and foremost”. Her race was mentioned and was turned into a prominent lead. In the case of Oscar Pistorius, if he had won in the 400 metres or in the relay, running against able-bodied athletes,

⁸⁷⁶ Macur, J. (2012, August 3). “A very long journey was very swift”. *The New York Times*, pp. B11, B15.

the lead would have been “disabled athlete” or “The Blade Runner wins”, because it makes it a little more newsworthy. He would say he is an athlete competing against other athletes, I think. But I do believe that the media, when women do well, we emphasize gender. If African-Americans do well, we emphasize that. If we have the Michael Sam issue, and this is off the Olympics, if you have an athlete coming out as gay or homosexual then we emphasize that. It is like their identity is more important than being an athlete (Kim Bissell, interview, July 2014).

Furthermore, the media’s focus on the fact that Gabrielle Douglas was the first African-American to win individually in gymnastics made some people forget about historical precedents of other kinds relating to the gymnastics team. Sally Jenkins of *The Washington Post* made an insightful contribution to the issue in her opinion article “Douglas needs to follow her own script⁸⁷⁷”: “Race in America is a storyline that Douglas is part of – but it’s not her whole story. The pat storyline of black gymnast breaks the color mould was not only old and too neat, it was especially untruthful. ‘The last seven [American] gymnastics teams had women of color on them’, pointed out Dominique Dawes, the 1996 gold medallist”.

Leaving Douglas’ noteworthy case aside, there were only a few mentions of the race of participants throughout the coverage. In the case of the South African rower Sizwe Ndlovu, who won the gold medal in the lightweight men’s four category, the mentions of race were justified by the fact that he had been “South Africa’s sole black winner in London so far⁸⁷⁸”. As the South African team’s chief, Shikwambana, told AP, “he hoped Ndlovu would inspire black children to take up rowing⁸⁷⁹”. In the case of the French runner Christophe Lemaitre, he was mentioned as “white”. This information was featured in the specific context of the piece, in order to explain to readers that if Lemaitre won the bronze medal, “it would be the second white athlete since Pietro Mennea in 1980” who could achieve it⁸⁸⁰. At the same time, however, it could be argued that providing such information was not entirely relevant to building the story. This finding is similar to observations made by Farrington et al. (2012) when focusing on Lemaitre’s coverage at the 2010 European Athletics Championships. They pointed out that mentioning his skin colour was “surely not ‘genuinely relevant’”, given that in explaining athletic success, “genetic factors are not correlated to skin colour, but tend to be concentrated in specific geographic areas” (Farrington et al., 2012: 62).

⁸⁷⁷ Jenkins, S. (2012, August 8). “Douglas needs to follow her own script”. *The Washington Post*, pp. D1, D8.

⁸⁷⁸ Smith, D. (2012, August 3). “Pride and joy at country’s growing haul of medals”. *The Guardian*, p. 2.

⁸⁷⁹ Macur, J. (2012, August 3). “U.S. women pull in another gold”. *The New York Times*, p. B16.

⁸⁸⁰ Martínez, J.B. (2012, August 9). “Bolt vuelve a la pasarela”. *La Vanguardia*, p. 38.

4.2.2.3. The presence of covert race stereotypes in the coverage

In overall terms, quality newspapers largely did not use overtly racist comments. Furthermore, the publications sampled did not overuse traditional stereotypes that establish biological differences⁸⁸¹ between black and white athletes (Billings et al., 2014; McDonald, 2010). Yet, it may have been very enlightening to see them publish pieces that explicitly counteracted these misleading notions⁸⁸². Nevertheless, three outstanding cases illustrate the fact that certain stereotypes linked to race continued to be present throughout the sports coverage.

First, we should refer to the **photographic coverage that the gymnast John Orozco received** in *The Washington Post*. In the piece “Unlikely events trip up U.S.”⁸⁸³, which focused on the underperformance of the men’s gymnastics team, the only photographed gymnast was Orozco, who had also appeared alone on the newspaper front page. As he was the only African-American in the team, this restrictive selection of images could lead the audience to inaccurately associate the failure solely with the black athlete. This lack of care in the selection of photographs was criticized in a letter to the editor written by Christina FitzPatrick, a reader⁸⁸⁴ (see also section 4.1.4).

The reader argued that “to look at the July 31 newspaper, you would think that John Orozco was the only reason the United States failed to medal in men’s team gymnastics. *The Post* ran two pictures about the bad night the team had, one on the front page and over the title “A Reversal of Fortune” and one in the sports section [“Unlikely events trip up U.S.”], and both are of Orozco, the only African-American on the team. While he had a terrible night, all but one of his teammates also fell”. As FitzPatrick highlighted, *The Washington Post* should have been “more sensitive to its

⁸⁸¹ However, certain expressions, which indicate a biological difference between races, were still present in the coverage, even in situations where they should not have been expected to appear. For instance, in a comparison between the Spanish taekwondo fighters Joel González and Brigitte Yagüe (both white), the author highlighted the fact that “he is cool, cerebral, a machine of kicking. She is more impetuous, more racial, passionate”. See: Martínez, J.B. (2012, August 10). “La patada del ajedrecista”. *La Vanguardia*, p. 47.

⁸⁸² A type of piece that counteracted the traditional notions in a more explicit way could be found outside the sample and, more specifically, in *The Times*, which used key sources and research results to point out that “the very notion of ‘black’ athletic superiority is deeply misguided”. See: Syed, M. (2012, August 9). “Genetic advantage? It’s not that black and white in sport. Evidence to support popular theory is sketchy”. *The Times*, The Games, pp. 10–11.

⁸⁸³ Clarke, L. (2012, July 31). “Unlikely events trip up U.S.” *The Washington Post*, p. D7.

⁸⁸⁴ “Success and sour grapes at the Summer Games” (2012, August 4). *The Washington Post*, p. A13.

choice of photographs and avoid the appearance of suggesting that the problem was the African American on the squad". A parallel can be established between this misrepresentation and the approach chosen by other American media, *USA Today*, for example⁸⁸⁵. When this publication covered the fifth place of the men's gymnastics team, the piece mainly focused on John Orozco and his photograph was also selected to illustrate the disappointment after the team had failed to obtain a medal in the gymnastics team final.

The second case refers to the **portrayal of Niger's rower Hamadou Djibo Issaka**, who received a wild card from the IOC to participate in the single sculls event even though he had only been able to train for three months before the actual competition. It is worth highlighting the fact that his coverage was characterized by ambivalent language. On the one hand, he received attention from the majority of the newspapers sampled⁸⁸⁶, which framed his participation as an important step for inclusion, non-discrimination and the development of sport. To counterbalance Sir Steve Redgrave's words (who argued that more countries should be encouraged to get involved but that there were better scullers who were not allowed to compete as a result of Issaka's inclusion), *The Daily Telegraph* quoted Matt Smith, the executive director of FISA, the international rowing federation: "We had all the top leaders of sport in Niger here, so proud, and all of them so interested in our sport. It gave us a new country, so as far as we're concerned it's fantastic⁸⁸⁷". Likewise, Robert Kitson of *The Guardian* wrote that Djibo Issaka had "done his country proud simply by taking part⁸⁸⁸". In an editorial piece, the same newspaper pointed out that thanks to his participation "now Niger knows about rowing, the spectators at Eton Dorney have had something to cheer before a medal's been won, and Mr Issaka has proved a great sport⁸⁸⁹".

On the other hand, to a certain degree, Djibo Issaka was portrayed as an object of curiosity. His depiction couldn't escape the constant comparison with other past athletes such as Eric Moussambani from Equatorial Guinea, who participated in the 100 metres freestyle swimming event in Sydney 2000. In addition, he was described on certain occasions using some patronizing or trivializing expressions: "has a technique that can generously be described as crude⁸⁹⁰"; "the Games's unlikeliest participant⁸⁹¹";

⁸⁸⁵ Whiteside, K. (2012, July 31). "For U.S. men gymnastics dreams tumble". *USA Today*, p. 10D.

⁸⁸⁶ With the exception of *El País* and *La Vanguardia*.

⁸⁸⁷ Brown, O. (2012, July 30). "Slowly but surely, rower lives the Olympic dream". *The Daily Telegraph*, p. 3.

⁸⁸⁸ Kitson, R. (2012, August 1). "Backwater unearths a hero to stir affections at the lake". *The Guardian*, Olympics, p. 10.

⁸⁸⁹ "In praise of ... Hamadou Djibo Issaka" (2012, August 1). *The Guardian*, p. 28.

⁸⁹⁰ News services (2012, July 30). "Green rower riles crowd". *The Washington Post*, p. D6.

“the Games’ most popular loser so far⁸⁹²”; “worst performance on water⁸⁹³”; “lost his heat by a spectacular margin”; “he crossed the finish line even slower – and again a distant last⁸⁹⁴”; and “he may have had a dubious sculling action but he was possessed of an insuperable spirit⁸⁹⁵”. All of these undermined the athletic value of his participation.

The third observation revolves around the emergence of **subtler stereotypes**, the **Caribbean laid-back and relaxed attitude** exemplified by Usain Bolt, for instance. This stereotype was continuously employed and exaggerated throughout the period studied, especially by *The Guardian*. Bolt’s portrayal was characterized by several expressions, including: “so unstressed by the whole thing⁸⁹⁶”; “so chilled out he almost falls asleep on the blocks⁸⁹⁷”; “so relaxed it felt more like training practice than an Olympic final⁸⁹⁸”; “so relaxed at the start was Bolt that he could even start chatting up the pretty blocks official⁸⁹⁹”; “he could have been going out for a stroll in the park⁹⁰⁰”; “effortless cool⁹⁰¹”; and “leisurely crossing the line⁹⁰²”. All of these are illustrative of the trend observed. *El País* also commented on “Bolt’s carefree attitude”: “Outside the track, each one of his movements is extremely slow. He oozes good mood as if it was steam and transmits it to those who are around him⁹⁰³”.

⁸⁹¹ Kitson, R. (2012, August 13). “No place like home thanks to ‘Dorney roar’”. *The Guardian*, Olympics 2012, pp. 10–11.

⁸⁹² Ferguson, E. (2012, August 5). “Good week bad week”. *The Observer*, p. 13.

⁸⁹³ Clarey, C. (2012, August 14). “Guts, greatness and gaffes on full display in London”. *The New York Times*, p. B11.

⁸⁹⁴ Brown, O. (2012, August 1). “Slow and steady again for the sub-Saharan sculler”. *The Daily Telegraph*, p. 4.

⁸⁹⁵ Brown, O. (2012, July 30). “Slowly but surely, rower lives the Olympic dream”. *The Daily Telegraph*, p. 3.

⁸⁹⁶ Williams, R. (2012, August 10). “Bolt seals place in pantheon with another stunning double”. *The Guardian*, pp. 2–3.

⁸⁹⁷ Macey, D. (2012, August 7). “Bolt makes the rest look ordinary and he may lower his 200m record”. *The Guardian*, Olympics 2012, p. 3.

⁸⁹⁸ Kessel, A. (2012, August 10). “Bolt end rivals’ dreams of a dethroning”. *The Guardian*, Olympics 2012, pp. 2–3.

⁸⁹⁹ Chadband, I. (2012, August 10). “Imperious Bolt silences all the arguments”. *The Daily Telegraph*, pp. S2–S3.

⁹⁰⁰ “Freeze frame: the day’s unforgettable moments that made our hearts race” (2012, August 5). *The Observer*, p. 6.

⁹⁰¹ Hyde, M. (2012, August 6). “With his effortless cool, we all want to be Usain Bolt”. *The Guardian*, p. 3.

⁹⁰² Kessel, A. (2012, August 6). “Bolt blasts aside pretenders to throne”. *The Guardian*, Olympics 2012, pp. 2–3.

⁹⁰³ Bailey, M. (2012, August 5). “Todos queremos a Usain”. *El País*, p. 55.

4.2.2.4. Fighting against racism and praising multiculturalism

On a much broader level, newspapers took the opportunity of London 2012 to raise public awareness of racism within sport and society and to shape audiences' perceptions about this crucial issue. This is a core function of the media operating in democratic societies, as reflected in Article 1 of *Resolution 1.003 on the Ethics of Journalism* from the Council of Europe: "Media have an ethical responsibility towards citizens and society which must be underlined at the present time, when information and communication play a very important role in the formation of citizens' personal attitudes and the development of society and democratic life". This function is related to the need to reject discrimination and the language of hatred and confrontation (UNESCO, Art. 9; IFJ, Art. 7; Council of Europe, Art. 33; NUJ, Art. 9, to list just a few).

Significant examples throughout the sample illustrate how the quality media contributed to the fight against racism. To begin with, all the newspapers sampled **condemned two discriminatory Twitter comments** contrary to the spirit, values and ideals of the Olympic movement. One of them was made by the Greek triple jumper Paraskevi Papachristou⁹⁰⁴, who disparaged the African immigrants in Greece ("With so many Africans in Greece, at least the mosquitoes of West Nile will eat homemade food"). Some of the newspapers, *The Daily Telegraph*, for example, contrasted her words with the views of relevant representatives such as Isidoros Kouvelos, head of the Hellenic Olympic Committee, who emphasized the fact that Papachristou had "showed no respect for the basic Olympian value". In addition, the newspaper paraphrased the content of the *Olympic Charter* so that readers could be aware of it: "The Olympic Charter says that everyone should be able to play sport without discrimination of any kind and in the Olympic spirit, which requires mutual understanding, with a spirit of friendship, solidarity and fair play⁹⁰⁵". *El País* devoted an especially critical editorial piece to the issue, stressing that "the London 2012 athletes must not only be unimpeachable regarding doping". As the piece emphasized, "now that, at last, all the delegations include women – that discrimination was maintained against the Olympic spirit until now – manners are also determining⁹⁰⁶".

⁹⁰⁴ See: "Una atleta griega, expulsada por sus comentarios" (2012, July 26). *El País*, p. 48; "Greek team expels jumper" (2012, July 26). *The Guardian*, p. 11; "Expulsan de los Juegos Olímpicos a una atleta griega por publicar tuits racistas" (2012, July 26). *La Vanguardia*, p. 8; Pilon, M. (2012, July 26). "A comment on Twitter costs a Greek athlete her spot in the Games". *The New York Times*, p. B18; AP (2012, July 26). "Athlete ruled out because of tweets". *The Washington Post*, p. D8.

⁹⁰⁵ Magnay, J. (2012, July 26). "Greek athlete thrown out over racist tweet". *The Daily Telegraph*, p. S7.

⁹⁰⁶ "Triple salto mortal" (2012, July 27). *El País*, p. 28.

The other Twitter comment was made by the Swiss footballer Michael Morganello⁹⁰⁷ (who insulted and violated the dignity of the South Koreans after Switzerland lost against them, stating that they could “go burn” and referring to them as a “bunch of mongoloids⁹⁰⁸”). In this case, *La Vanguardia*’s editorial position made it unequivocally clear that Morganello’s racist and threatening action did not have “any excuse⁹⁰⁹”, in a moment when he was blinded by the defeat.

Second, *The Guardian* and *The New York Times* raised public awareness of a **case of racist behaviour** that occurred during the Olympics when a Lithuanian spectator “made Nazi gestures and monkey chants during a game against Nigeria⁹¹⁰” and was convicted of a racially aggravated offence. Apart from providing information about the fine he received for such a racist display, it is worth noting that *The Guardian* also reflected on the words from the district judge, Sonia Sims, which illustrate the message of non-discrimination and the need to fight against those kinds of misbehaviours: “This type of conduct tarnishes the whole ethos of the Games”; “She said his Nazi salute had been an insult to all those who had lost their lives in the Holocaust and his behaviour was despicable⁹¹¹”.

Furthermore, quality newspapers **praised multiculturalism** and were **opposed to the discriminatory practices conducted by other publications at the popular end of the market**. As Andrews and Rick (2014: 200) highlight, tabloid newspapers used “the convenient vehicle of the London Olympics to further their own populist and/or regressively ideological agenda” and, therefore, to display examples of “pernicious spectacle”. These newspapers used certain narratives that tried to mark particular athletes as outsiders (Doidge, 2015). To be precise, *The Guardian* and *The Telegraph* criticized *The Daily Mail*’s attempts to use damaging expressions such as “Plastic Brits” to refer to athletes who were non-white or non-British born, such as Mo Farah and Yamilé Aldama⁹¹². The aforementioned tabloid portrayed them in the build-up to the event as “not being sufficiently British either in terms of lineage, national cultural capital or both” (Andrews and Rick, 2014: 200).

⁹⁰⁷ See: “Swiss player expelled for racist tweet” (2012, July 31). *The Guardian*, Olympics 2012, p. 12; “Expulsado un suizo por insultos racistas” (2012, July 31). *La Vanguardia*, p. 37; Belson, K. (2012, July 31). “Swiss athlete is sent home for insults posted online”. *The New York Times*, p. B13.

⁹⁰⁸ AP (2012, July 31). “Swiss player ousted for racist tweet”. *The Washington Post*, p. D8.

⁹⁰⁹ “Michael Morganello” (2012, July 31). *La Vanguardia*, p. 2.

⁹¹⁰ AP (2012, August 5). “Lithuania gets warning”. *The New York Times*, p. S6.

⁹¹¹ Duncan, C. (2012, August 2). “Lithuanian man fined £2,500 for Nazi salute”. *The Guardian*, p. 8.

⁹¹² Addley, E. (2012, August 6). “Aldama short of medal but holds head high”. *The Guardian*, Olympics 2012, p. 5.

Just before the start of the period of study, *The Guardian* devoted an article to the issue and included the voice of Yamilé Aldama, who urged people to abandon the notion of “Plastic Brits”, taking into account the social consequences of these expressions: “I want it to stop, it is not nice for me or for my family. And it is not good for other people. It is very sad that this is happening because it sends the wrong message. What if children start being called Plastic Brits in the playground? Please let us stop this before real damage is done⁹¹³”. During the timeframe of the observation, in the article “Not plastic. Just tough, loyal and talented⁹¹⁴” in *The Daily Telegraph*, Oliver Brown condemned the notion, considering the “Plastic Brit” definition to be a “dreaded” moniker, “an offending word” and a “hideous affront” to Aldama’s struggle.

Similarly, *The Guardian* highlighted the fact that athletes such as Aldama and Farah “embodied the very notion of multiculturalism⁹¹⁵” and remarked that the modern British identity is multiethnic and multifaceted⁹¹⁶. In an opinion article, Hadley Freeman wrote that “it’s hard to think of another time in which the *Mail* has so significantly failed to grasp the public mood, trying in vain to stir up antipathy for the opening ceremony, burbling away to itself about ‘Plastic Brits’ and talking absolute nonsense in one blog post, apparently now deleted, about mixed-race families⁹¹⁷”.

At the end of the Games, *The Observer* pointed out in an editorial that “the Games have told us something about who we are as a nation – with the triumph of athletes such as Mo Farah, who came to the UK as a child from Somalia, a rebuke to those who would have sought narrowly to define ideas of what Britishness should be⁹¹⁸”. In another editorial, *The Guardian* emphasized the fact that the Games allowed “a golden glimpse of a nation that celebrates men and women with equal awe, and embraces British athletes of all racial backgrounds⁹¹⁹”. According to Nadifa Mohamed, the triumphs of Mo Farah could help British Somalis to gain a positive place in the national consciousness, away from the “persistently negative representations in the media”

⁹¹³ Aldama, Y. (2012, July 15). “Plastic Brit jibe at me is nuts in a country that loves KP”. *The Observer*, Sport, pp. 1, 6.

⁹¹⁴ Brown, O. (2012, August 4). “Not plastic. Just tough, loyal and talented”. *The Daily Telegraph*, pp. S30–S31.

⁹¹⁵ Kessel, A. (2012, July 27). “Farah eager to report his glass is no longer half empty”. *The Guardian*, Olympics 2012, pp. 8–9.

⁹¹⁶ Kiberenge, K. (2012, August 12). “How Britain’s multicultural capital won the hearts of people from every nation”. *The Observer*, p. 29.

⁹¹⁷ Freeman, H. (2012, August 8). “I don’t know if you’ve noticed, but in the last week Britain has somehow learned how to win”. *The Guardian*, G2, p. 5.

⁹¹⁸ “A true Olympic legacy would be sport for all” (2012, August 12). *The Observer*, p. 32.

⁹¹⁹ “The legacy of a flag to share” (2012, August 13). *The Guardian*, p. 24.

based on “the worst connotations: violence, terrorism, gangs⁹²⁰”. In an interview in *The Daily Telegraph*, also after the end of the Olympics, the newscaster George Alagiah (award-winning foreign correspondent during the 1990s and presenter of the BBC2 series *Mixed Britannia*) pinpointed the fact that London 2012 provided a positive legacy as far as multiculturalism and diversity were concerned: “It has been such a pleasure to see us presenting to the world this wonderful tapestry of our nation, and how much we are at ease with our diversity⁹²¹”. Similar evaluations, positive and with multiculturalism as key to sporting success, were written by other quality newspapers in Britain, *The Times*⁹²² and *The Independent*⁹²³, for instance.

As Rowe and Haynes explain, the discriminatory comments and the notions of “Plastic Brits” were rapidly criticized by the British media and public opinion:

Yes, there was this criticism about the Plastic Brits. It is clearly connected to race, because there are still many British people in the media who find it hard to accept that a black person is really British in a same way that a white is. There is still that residual and, sometimes, quite open racism. All the research I have seen shows that nationalism is not undiminished but it is actively invoked (David Rowe, interview, March 2015).

Somebody put a comment that we shouldn't celebrate Mo Farah's victory, because “he is not British, he is African, he is not one of us”. Mainstream media and social media jumped on this comment very quickly saying that it was stupid. There are lots of recent examples in sport in which athletes that were born in other countries represent other countries in the Olympic Games. In the case of Mo Farah, the mainstream media and social media responded very quickly (Richard Haynes, interview, October 2013).

Taking all the aforementioned aspects into account, Mark Adams, the IOC director of communications, stresses the importance of fighting against discrimination:

That mass media sends the audiences the message of antidiscrimination is absolutely central. We can think also about Sochi and the gay rights issues. Non-discrimination is absolutely central to the Olympics, it is one of the fundamental principles of the *Olympic Charter* and we don't just say that, it really is. Take for instance the case of the Swiss athlete who was sent home after his comments. Largely in the UK and the US press, and in the Spanish press of course too, there is no room for racism (Mark Adams, interview, May 2014).

Moving on from the debate about the “Plastic Brits” comments and the praise of multiculturalism, it is at the core of the media's public service mission and their

⁹²⁰ Mohamed, N. (2012, August 8). “Nomads no more”. *The Guardian*, p. 26.

⁹²¹ Stanford, P. (2012, August 18). “Showing the world our tapestry of diversity is the real Olympic legacy”. *The Daily Telegraph*, p. 12.

⁹²² Syed, M. (2012, August 15). “Mo makes racist slurs seem distant memory”. *The Times*, p. 53.

⁹²³ Morris, N. (2012, August 14). “Plastic Brits? They were the secret of our success”. *The Independent*, pp. 4–5.

responsibility to go beyond the widespread discourses of the “feel-good factor” and use the opportunity of the Olympics to **raise awareness of the current inequalities and the systemic contradictions in society**. In the article “Ahora todos somos británicos”, *La Vanguardia*’s London correspondent, Rafael Ramos, reflected on the contradictions in British society regarding the attitudes to immigrants which are different depending on whether they are winning athletes or common people⁹²⁴. According to Ramos, “when it is about demanding social benefits from the state or competing in the labour market, the British whose origins are Caribbean, Bangladeshi or African are not welcome. But when it is about paying taxes or winning medals at the Games, they are welcomed with open arms and considered of *us*”. As Ramos added, “nobody cares that the athlete Yamilé Aldama (triple jump) is a Cuban-born and that she is married to a Scottish man, that Ohuruogu’s ancestors are Nigerian, that Ennis’ father comes from Jamaica or that Farah was born in Somalia. Nobody accuses the London 2012 champions of *stealing opportunities* from the full-blooded English, as it would happen if they worked in hospitals, in refuse collection or in the construction industry”.

These contradictions can also be discerned if we take a look at the two opinion polls featured by *The Guardian* during the period studied. On the one hand, a survey conducted by Ipsos MORI for the independent think tank British Future claimed that 75% of the Britons said they “supported all Team GB athletes with equal passion, regardless of where they were born⁹²⁵”. On the other hand, an ICM poll⁹²⁶ stated that only 32% of the people agreed that as a result of the Olympics, they felt “more positive or less worried about immigration in general”. In this survey, moreover, it was said that 53% of the people believed that “most immigrants bring nothing positive; Olympians are the exception”. Closely related to the previous observations, Lord Ouseley (the former chair of the Commission for Racial Equality and chair of Kick It Out, a group fighting racism in football) mentioned in an article written by Hugh Muir that “the harsh reality is that ordinary black and minority Britons will still fare badly in the labour market, the housing market and in other areas⁹²⁷”. It can be perceived, therefore, that the media also contributed to denouncing discrimination in society as a whole.

⁹²⁴ Ramos, R. (2012, August 7). “Ahora todos somos británicos”. *La Vanguardia*, p. 40.

⁹²⁵ Helm, T. (2012, August 19). “Games ‘showed a happy, confident image of UK’”. *The Observer*, p. 9.

⁹²⁶ Clark, T.; Gibson, O. (2012, August 11). “Britons back the feelgood Games”. *The Guardian*, p. 13.

⁹²⁷ Muir, H. (2012, August 7). “Can a team that looks like GB change us for better?” *The Guardian*, pp. 6–7.

4.2.2.5. The challenges yet to overcome in the media portrayal of race

Leaving the timeframe of the observation aside for the moment, there are still many crucial challenges to overcome regarding the portrayal of race and ethnicity in the media coverage of sports. This fundamental point is clearly emphasized by the ethics professor Clifford Christians:

There is still work to do, I believe, in implementing human dignity within sports journalism, especially when it comes to issues of gender and race. Teams are becoming more complex, ethnically inclusive, etc. but there is more work to do in their representation (Clifford Christians, interview, April 2013).

As acknowledged by John Price, co-author of the book *Race, racism and sports journalism*, the problem is that, sometimes, people tend to wrongly perceive that the issues related to the portrayal of race in the media have already been solved, but the situation is not so clear cut:

Part of the issue is that there is a sense in journalism and in society that these are not problems anymore. There is a kind of complacency there, and those problems still exist (John Price, interview, September 2013).

In particular, in certain segments of the media market, such as the tabloid press, the way in which race is portrayed in sports journalism and in another areas of the news arena is still problematic. According to Neil Farrington:

In British sports journalism, sexism was rough, was very common in the tabloid journalism market in terms of sports journalism. And a section of the UK press flirts with issues of race as well. Not just in a sports context, the way that race is portrayed in certain national newspapers in the UK is still problematic [...] Possibly, in the UK press, one of the biggest problems is that across the board, the reporting of race manifests sometimes in the sports reporting. For instance, there is a problem in the way that Pakistan cricket players are portrayed in the UK press. They are portrayed as naturally corrupt, naturally dodgy, because of the fixing of a case that emerged a couple of years ago (Neil Farrington, interview, September 2013).

You will look at the back page of *The Sun* or *The Mirror* at certain times of the year, there may be a huge football tournament going on, and you'll see headlines that are blatantly xenophobic, that are blatantly racist or sexist. It is a confused picture. Certain newspapers at certain times act as if they were still in the Dark Ages when it comes to sports reporting. And they are just appealing to a male wide working class audience who want a certain level of coverage (Neil Farrington, interview, September 2013).

According to John Vincent, unfortunately the portrayal of race in the media will continue to be an issue, both in the American and European contexts:

In a way, even in the American perspective and European as well, while in sexual orientation there will be positive progressive steps, unfortunately race will still be an issue. Lots of the media narratives, although they are not as overt as they used to be, covertly they include stereotypes.

You still read around the world about African-American athletes or black athletes being natural athletes and an inverse relationship between being a natural athlete and not having to work very hard, because you have got better muscle fibres or jumping genes. I think throughout media discourse in newspapers, you still find those narratives creeping in, although it is not quite as overt as it used to be (John Vincent, interview, July 2014).

In order to improve coverage of different races and ethnicities, a critical challenge will be to increase the presence of non-white sportswriters in the newsrooms. The situation is characterized nowadays by a lack of diversity (Jenkins, 2012). As Farrington et al. (2012: 45) underline, “while the participants of many professional sports have become increasingly diverse, the press boxes have remained stubbornly white”. This “lack of diversity must therefore be seen in this bigger and social professional context” (Farrington et al., 2012: 46). Race can have a decisive influence on the selection of content that is published and how it is published. In other words, the race of sports journalists may be a primary cause of bias in the content they produce. Mastro et al. (2012: 470) illustrated that “the race and gender of the reporter, together with the sport being covered, influence evaluations of both the reporters themselves, as well as the information they provide”.

The situation in the United Kingdom can be illustrative of the situation on a larger scale and can be applied to other media landscapes such as Spain. It is enlightening to look at the observations made by Price and Farrington regarding this problem:

Journalists tend to be white, male, middle-class. They come from a very narrow section of society [...] In athletics there are a lot of black athletes, but not a single black athletics writer in the British Athletics Writers’ Association. That is an incredible contradiction, isn’t it? But not just for athletics, it’s also in other sports in the written press. I think that in broadcasting, such as the BBC, there is more diversity (John Price, interview, September 2013).

The figures are pretty shocking, black journalists are a minuscule proportion [...] Black footballers may have done more than any specific single group to combat racism in this country. They have been a huge driver. And we only found three national black football journalists and one of them was working for *The News of the World*, which stopped publishing. I can only think of two black football writers in this country (Neil Farrington, interview, September 2013).

Part of the problem is that black and other minority groups do not want to get into sports journalism. Therefore, there are no black or minority journalists coming into the profession. That is a potentially problematic issue (Neil Farrington, interview, September 2013).

Another crucial challenge would be to raise awareness among future media professionals. As Farrington et al. (2012: 25) argue, “it is vital that the future generation of aspiring sports journalists and commentators acknowledge that racial stereotypes can influence media consumers”. Finally, audiences must also pursue a critical role.

According to Billings (2003: 37), their role is pivotal: “viewers of the sporting event can become more aware of such biases and become conscientious listeners. Indeed, it is important for consumers of all televised sports to be aware of potential biases that directly or indirectly influence the reality being portrayed on the small screen as the depictions that people witness within on-air commentary often become the ethnic stereotypes that are held when interacting on an interpersonal basis”.

4.2.3. Commitment to justice in the representation of disability

With regard to the portrayal of disability, the newspapers sampled gave a great deal of attention to the participation of the South African runner Oscar Pistorius⁹²⁸. The significance of his inclusion was well depicted throughout the media coverage, although he was portrayed on many occasions as an object of curiosity and he could not escape the controversy around the unfair advantage that his prosthetics could possibly provide him with. If we look at another case, the treatment of the South Korean archer Im Dong-Hyun revealed some of the inaccuracies relating to and misleading perceptions about disability in society which existed in the minds of media professionals. Additionally, the case of the Polish table tennis player Natalia Partyka illustrated the minimization that non-prominent disabled athletes face in the showcase of media.

In order to expand the critical debate about the marginalized coverage of disability sport in society, this section also reflects on the reduced attention given to the Paralympic Games during the timeframe of the observation. Moreover, the interviews with scholars reveal that although the coverage of the Paralympics on Channel 4 and in the British quality print media set a new benchmark in terms of fairness, the attention given to the Paralympics in the US and Spanish media landscapes remained scant. Finally, the section discusses key factors for the almost non-exposure of disability sport in the media after London 2012 and outlines directions for the future.

4.2.3.1. The coverage of Oscar Pistorius

As has been pointed out, the newspapers sampled devoted considerable attention to the South African runner Oscar Pistorius, who competed in the 400 metres and the 4x400 metres relay. Overall, the media recognized and endorsed his historic

⁹²⁸ Given the extent of the sample, the analysis of Oscar Pistorius has focused on the coverage that he received at London 2012. Therefore, all the coverage related to the trial for the murder of his partner, Reeva Steenkamp (which certainly has considerable implications in terms of the ethical behaviour of the media) was beyond the scope of this dissertation.

participation as a remarkable milestone for inclusion, celebrating that he “challenged precedent and also defied limits⁹²⁹”, as he not only became the first double amputee to compete in track and field at the Olympics⁹³⁰, but was also the first to run in an Olympic final. Pistorius was not only praised for his spirit and his values throughout his life: “Nobody questions the incredible spirit of self-improvement of the South African, who was born without shinbones; nobody fails to recognize that if a person embodies as nobody else the exemplary values of sport for humanity, the fight, the commitment, the nonconformity and of all these, then that person should be celebrated⁹³¹”. Furthermore, he was also valued for the nature of his performances in London 2012: “The South African Oscar Pistorius became yesterday the first athlete with prosthetics on his legs to compete in the Olympic Games. And he didn’t do it in a symbolic manner, but with fighting spirit and speed⁹³²”.

Challenging the traditional stereotypes, the media did not depict Pistorius as a “pitiable and pathetic individual”, but rather as a competitive athlete who empathized with the audience: “The crowd of 80,000 roared because they felt happy for Oscar Pistorius, not sorry for him. They rose from their seats in awe, not in uncomfortable ambiguity⁹³³”. In addition he “had been accepted by his rivals⁹³⁴”. This latter aspect can be appreciated in the quotes of the Grenadian runner Kirani James: “He is out here making history and we should all respect that and admire that. I just see him as another athlete, as another competitor, but most importantly as a human being, another person⁹³⁵”; “He’s an inspiration to all of us [...] He’s a down-to-earth guy and a great individual⁹³⁶”. In addition to the all the aforementioned elements, it is worth noting that Pistorius was given notable exposure both inside and on the front pages of some of the newspapers in question (*La Vanguardia* and *The New York Times*, 05/08/2012).

Conversely, he could not escape stereotypes to a certain extent. First, he was portrayed on several occasions as an object of curiosity: “Pistorius has said many times that he considers himself the same as any other athlete but the 80,000 pairs of

⁹²⁹ Bruni, F. (2012, August 12). “The soul of the Olympics”. *The New York Times*, p. SR3.

⁹³⁰ Kelso, P. (2012, August 5). “Pistorius strides into history”. *The Sunday Telegraph*, p. S4.

⁹³¹ Arribas, C. (2012, August 6). “El debate del caso Pistorius”. *El País*, p. 43.

⁹³² “Pistorius hace historia y se clasifica” (2012, August 5). *La Vanguardia*, p. 50.

⁹³³ Wise, M. (2012, August 5). “A run to celebrate instead of debate”. *The Washington Post*, pp. D1, D6.

⁹³⁴ Kelso, P. (2012, August 6). “Pistorius leaves his mark by breaking down barriers”. *The Daily Telegraph*, p. S9.

⁹³⁵ Quotes of the day (2012, August 5). *The Observer*, p. 8.

⁹³⁶ Borden, S. (2012, August 6). “Pistorius misses chance at final, but remains upbeat”. *The New York Times*, p. D7.

eyes in the Olympic Stadium were trained on only one man ahead of his race⁹³⁷”; “All eyes in the Olympic Stadium were still on Pistorius⁹³⁸”. Second, journalists used his nickname, “The Blade Runner”, on many occasions without formatting it between quotation marks or in italics, for example: “Will the blade runner make it though?⁹³⁹”; “Pistorius, known as the Blade Runner⁹⁴⁰”; “Blade Runner makes history⁹⁴¹”; and “Johnson calls for ban on the blade runner⁹⁴²”. It should be noted that Pistorius was the first to coin this term in 2009 in the title of his autobiography. However, the insistence on using this nickname by the media contributed to the continued fostering of the stigma of “cyborg”, which marked the subject as different from the able-bodied athletes (Brittain, 2010; Corrigan et al., 2010).

On top of all of this, neither could Pistorius escape the mentions about the setbacks he had experienced throughout his career (including the ban from the International Track and Field Federation that debarred him from participating at Beijing 2008) or the constant debate about whether his carbon fibre prosthetics gave him any advantage in able-bodied events. The latter became one of the main narratives that drove his coverage throughout the Olympics. This approach focused on debate was also followed by other newspapers in the three countries examined, *USA Today*⁹⁴³, the *Los Angeles Times*⁹⁴⁴, *The Times*⁹⁴⁵ and *Marca*⁹⁴⁶, for example.

It must be positively evaluated that the quality media consulted expert sources such as Robert Gailey, a professor of physical therapy at the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine, who argued that Pistorius had no technological advantage: “Without lower legs, Pistorius must generate his power with his hips, working harder than able-bodied athletes who use their ankles, calves and hips [...] Pistorius also struggles more against centrifugal force in the curves than runners with biological feet, and his arms

⁹³⁷ Gibson, O. (2012, August 5). “Pistorius makes history and flies into 400m semi-finals”. *The Observer*, Olympics 2012, p. 5.

⁹³⁸ Steinberg, J. (2012, August 6). “Pistorius misses out on final but makes world champion’s day”. *The Guardian*, Olympics 2012, p. 4.

⁹³⁹ Barkham, P. (2012, August 4). “What to watch on day 8 – The big question”. *The Guardian*, p. 3.

⁹⁴⁰ Shipley, A. (2012, July 27). “Pistorius’s historic run”. *The Washington Post*, p. D7.

⁹⁴¹ Moreton, C. (2012, August 5). “Blade Runner makes history”. *The Sunday Telegraph*, p. 11.

⁹⁴² Pickup, O. (2012, July 18). “Johnson calls for ban on the blade runner”. *The Daily Telegraph*, pp. S8–S9.

⁹⁴³ Saraceno, J. (2012, August 2). “Pistorius can’t escape debate on prosthetics”. *USA Today*, p. 8D.

⁹⁴⁴ Shapiro, H.; Waddell (2012, August 3). “An unfair advantage?” *Los Angeles Times*, p. A21.

⁹⁴⁵ Dickinson, M. (2012, August 6). “Blade-runner’s bid ends at semi-final stage”. *The Times*, The Games, p. 28.

⁹⁴⁶ Fleitas, B.; Riquelme, G. (2012, August 5). “¿Tiene Pistorius ventaja en 400?”. *Marca*, Londres 2012, p. 10.

and legs tend to begin flailing in the homestretch more than those of able-bodied runners, costing him valuable time, Gailey said". However, the inclusion of Pistorius' own perceptions on the issue were scant, and could only be found in exceptional cases, in quotes published in *La Vanguardia*, for example ("Yes, I do not have that part of my legs, but I also do not have muscles as my rivals do. A lot of people are devoted to research on the advantages, but nobody does it on the disadvantages⁹⁴⁷") and in *The Daily Telegraph* ("I would like to show people that if you put the work in and you believe in yourself, then you can do whatever you want to⁹⁴⁸").

It can be argued that, in order to provide complete and comprehensive coverage of the issue, it was important for the media to stimulate public discussion about fairness in competitive sport. However, the overemphasis on this controversy was openly criticized by Mike Wise in his opinion piece "A run to celebrate instead of debate" (*The Washington Post*). Wise argued that "Pistorius was not asked how many other children born without limbs he made feel whole again". Instead of focusing on the significance of his achievements, Pistorius' participation was unfortunately characterized by the constant debate. Wise urged people to focus on the essentials: "When he runs Sunday, stop and take it in as a human being, without having to dwell on the how and why. For at least one day, let's start commemorating and stop calibrating⁹⁴⁹".

Andrew C. Billings agrees that the coverage Pistorius received "certainly focused on whether he had an unfair advantage". He argues that the media shouldn't have devoted as much attention to this aspect:

Sometimes the media, I don't say they are doing perfectly, but how do you not make into a story the fact that Oscar Pistorius is competing on blades? You know, I don't blame media for focusing on that. People sometimes say: why can't they just focus on him like any other athlete? Once again, that is like saying, in the issue of the race, to be colour-blind. We are going to be blind at the fact that this man is competing on blades? No, that is completely part of the story and I am OK with media focusing on that. However, I don't think it should be reduced to making him a carnival act, I don't think so much attention should be focused on whether or not he had an unfair advantage because largely, that had already been litigated at that point. So you can focus a little bit more on his reality, having cleared those hurdles, instead of going over and over the controversy again. His case is similar to the case of Caster Semenya. Once you get past the "should she be allowed to compete with women?" and the issue has been litigated, media should move on (Andrew Billings, interview, July 2014).

⁹⁴⁷ Martínez, J.B. (2012, August 2). "Me siento como uno más". *La Vanguardia*, p. 40.

⁹⁴⁸ Brown, O. (2012, July 21). "Johnson is a very calculated guy. I respect him a lot". *The Daily Telegraph*, p. S12.

⁹⁴⁹ Wise, M. (2012, August 5). "A run to celebrate instead of debate". *The Washington Post*, pp. D1, D6.

John Horne suggests that the emphasis on debate was a mechanism used to raise readers' excitement more than anything else:

There is a bit of me that thinks that that sounds like lazy journalism. We do know who Oscar Pistorius is, so why do they constantly talk about this? It can be a type of time filler more than anything else and another way of raising readers' excitement (John Horne, interview, March 2015).

4.2.3.2. The cases of Im Dong-Hyun and Natalia Partyka

Apart from the case of Oscar Pistorius, it is also worthwhile focusing on the cases of Im Dong-Hyun and Natalia Partyka. The South Korean archer Im Dong-Hyun first came into the media spotlight after achieving the first world record of London 2012, with a mark of 699 points. Even though he had limited sight, he was inaccurately described in several media reports as “the blind archer⁹⁵⁰”, “registered as blind⁹⁵¹” and “legally blind⁹⁵²”. Other reports identified him as “blind” (written between quotation marks) and “almost blind⁹⁵³”. *The New York Times* was the first to point out these inaccuracies (also reproduced by other newspapers⁹⁵⁴) in the piece “Blurry target is no trouble for ace archer⁹⁵⁵”. They were briefly mentioned later in *The Washington Post*⁹⁵⁶. His portrayal, based on oversimplifications, is a clear example of how the misuse of terms contributes to the persistence of inaccurate stereotypes about disability. Given that “journalists rarely cover disability sport” (Corrigan et al., 2010: 299) and that “disability is generally confined to the Paralympics so there is very little discussion about ability and disability in the Olympics” (David Rowe, interview, March 2015), media professionals showed a lack of specific background knowledge in this area. As Pate and Hardin (2013: 366) point out, “a lack of knowledge on the topic results in inaccurate and inconsistent actions and may reinforce inaccurate stereotypes of people with disabilities”. According to Boyle:

I think that there was a lot of difficulty initially. I suspect some of the journalists had difficulty dealing with disability issues and the relative nuances involved in that, because simply journalists

⁹⁵⁰ “El arquero ciego, fuera en octavos” (2012, August 4). *La Vanguardia*, p. 45.

⁹⁵¹ “Upsets and oddities: 12 things you might have missed so far” (2012, August 5). *The Observer*, p. 11.

⁹⁵² Butler, E. (2012, July 28). “Blind archer hits his straps at home of cricket to break world record”. *The Guardian*, Olympics 2012, p. 4.

⁹⁵³ Liew, J. (2012, July 28). “First world record falls to Im, the ‘blind’ archer”. *The Daily Telegraph*, pp. S8–S9.

⁹⁵⁴ See, for instance: AP (2012, July 28). “Blind archer on target”. *Los Angeles Times*, p. V4; Leiva, J. (2012, July 28). “El primer record mundial lo bate un arquero ciego”. *As*, p. 16.

⁹⁵⁵ Longman, J. (2012, July 29). “Blurry target is no trouble for ace archer”. *The New York Times*, p. D4.

⁹⁵⁶ AP (2012, August 4). “Oh adds another gold to South Korea’s haul”. *The Washington Post*, p. D8.

weren't used to it. I think that a lot of the reporting was down to the fact that for many of the journalists that was a new area (Raymond Boyle, interview, March 2015).

Due to the fact that he consulted experts, coaches and federation representatives (Mario Scarzella, for example, president of World Archery Europe, and Teresa Iaconi, a national-level American coach), Jeré Longman was able to go beyond the generalized lack of knowledge and misconceptions in the piece “Blurry target is no trouble for ace archer” and thus contribute towards breaking long-standing stereotypes. Longman reflected on the fact that limited sight does not equate to the impossibility of performing in archery. The author highlighted the fact that “although poor eyesight might be a disqualifying hindrance in many sports, visual acuity in archery is considered less important than an ability to shoot with consistent and repeatable technique, to remain calm under pressure and to judge the wind”. Due to the fact that Im Dong-Hyun is “unable to see the target as clearly as some others, Im tends not to overaim, thus avoiding the yips that can frustrate archers on a target range, golfers on a putting green and basketball players at the free-throw line”. In the article, the South Korean was described as a “tremendous archer”. According to the Mexican archer Juan René Serrano, who was quoted in the piece, Im Dong-Hyun “is great because he has really good form and he is always focused [...] his timing, his form, his movement are always the same, even when there is pressure”.

The Polish table tennis player Natalia Partyka, who was born without a right forearm, should also be mentioned. Partyka was rendered almost invisible by the media sampled, even though she was the only participant (along with Oscar Pistorius), who competed in both the London 2012 Olympics and Paralympics. In contrast to *The Guardian*, *El País* and *La Vanguardia* (where she was not even mentioned in their print versions), *The New York Times* did in fact talk about her, but she was only included in a brief piece⁹⁵⁷ about her table tennis match against Jie Li of the Netherlands. Similarly, in *The Sunday Telegraph*, she was only briefly referred to in an article devoted to Oscar Pistorius⁹⁵⁸. *The Washington Post* was the only newspaper in the sample that at least included a little photograph of the athlete⁹⁵⁹.

⁹⁵⁷ Reuters (2012, July 30). “Partyka loses in table tennis”. *The New York Times*, p. D6.

⁹⁵⁸ Moreton, C. (2012, August 5). “Blade Runner makes history”. *The Sunday Telegraph*, p. 11.

⁹⁵⁹ “Maintaining focus” (2012, July 30). *The Washington Post*, p. D10.

4.2.3.3. Attention to the Paralympic Games during the timeframe of the observation

As previously mentioned, a thorough analysis of the coverage of the London 2012 Paralympics is beyond the scope of this dissertation. Nevertheless, in order to expand the debate and reflect in a critical way on the marginalized coverage of disability sport, it is worthwhile pointing out that the space devoted to the Paralympics by the media sampled during the timeframe of the observation was almost non-existent. During the period studied, there was scant information with regard to the London 2012 Paralympics in the print editions of *The Guardian/The Observer* and *The Daily Telegraph/The Sunday Telegraph*.

In *The Guardian*, for instance, information could mostly be found in a section included in the London 2012 special supplement (21/07/2012, pp. 83–98) and in brief mentions in the regular paper, referring to issues such as the fact that The Royal Mail decided “not to create individual stamps for Paralympic gold medallists⁹⁶⁰”. However, in *The Guardian* and *The Telegraph* most of the pieces on the Paralympics started to appear straight after the end of the Olympics, reflecting on different aspects of the build-up to the Paralympic event, such as: the torch relay⁹⁶¹; concerns with regard to travel⁹⁶²; ticket sales⁹⁶³; the public’s expectations⁹⁶⁴; Channel 4’s operation⁹⁶⁵; the funding received by UK Sport⁹⁶⁶; the preparation of outstanding athletes such as Esther Vergeer⁹⁶⁷ and Hannah Cockroft⁹⁶⁸; and the main competitors⁹⁶⁹. It is important to note that starting from 15 August, with the piece “Historic homecoming for Paralympics⁹⁷⁰”,

⁹⁶⁰ Taylor, M. (2012, August 9). “No individual stamps for Paralympic golds”. *The Guardian*, p. 5.

⁹⁶¹ Rayner, G. (2012, August 16). “Beacons to be lit in games countdown”. *The Daily Telegraph*, p. 4.

⁹⁶² Topham, G.; Topping, A. (2012, August 12). “And now for the first-ever sellout Paralympics”. *The Observer*, p. 5.

⁹⁶³ “The tickets, the stars and the stouts lighting fires: all you need to know about London’s Paralympic Games” (2012, August 19). *The Observer*, Sport, pp. 12–13.

⁹⁶⁴ Rayner, G. (2012, August 15). “Paralympics has public more excited than I dared to dream”. *The Daily Telegraph*, p. 4.

⁹⁶⁵ Brown, M. (2012, August 19). “C4 invests £600,000 in band of reporters with disabilities”. *The Observer*, pp. 8–9.

⁹⁶⁶ “Paralympics Watch. 10 days to go” (2012, August 19). *The Observer*, Sport, p. 16.

⁹⁶⁷ Burnton, S. (2012, August 18). “Meet Esther Vergeer: unbeaten in a decade and the athlete with the world’s longest winning streak”. *The Guardian*, Sport, p. 13.

⁹⁶⁸ Steinberg, J. (2012, August 19). “World record holder Cockroft ready to fight fear on big stage”. *The Observer*, Sport, pp. 12–13.

⁹⁶⁹ Kingsley, P. (2012, August 14). “The 10 stars to watch at the Paralympics”. *The Guardian*, p. 2.

⁹⁷⁰ Gallagher, B. (2012, August 15). “Historic homecoming for Paralympics”. *The Daily Telegraph*, p. S12.

The Telegraph also began “a series of articles explaining the rules and classifications attached to every Paralympic sport”.

Outside of the British context, the attention paid to the Paralympics during the timeframe of the observation was even less. In *The New York Times*, the only Paralympic-related piece was devoted to the blind long jumper Lex Gillette⁹⁷¹. In this article, Mary Pilon reflected on the problem of 70% of the visually impaired children in the US not being “afforded the opportunity to participate in meaningful physical activity”. Moreover, it was maintained that “many blind athletes have lost opportunities because of cuts to physical education programs, and a stigma still exists, coaches and athletes said, that leaves parents concerned that sports put blind children in harm’s way”. In *The Washington Post*, there was only a brief reference to the Paralympics in a “KidsPost” article devoted to Oscar Pistorius⁹⁷².

With regard to the Spanish context, it should be acknowledged that *El País* did not publish any specific piece concerning the Paralympics during the period studied. By contrast, two noteworthy pieces recognizing Paralympians could be found in *La Vanguardia*. First, in the opinion piece “Aún no se ha acabado⁹⁷³”, Jordi Basté explored the difficulties of being a disabled athlete, explaining his own experience when he tried to play football with the Team GB players wearing a mask. Basté encouraged readers to recognize that “Paralympic athletes search for their moment of glory” and that they should not be forgotten. Second, in the opinion article “Extraordinarios⁹⁷⁴”, the sociologist Cristina Sánchez Miret also reflected on the day-to-day hurdles that Paralympians face. The author regretted that it is a shame that people are not capable of acknowledging their achievements and that “we keep dividing the world between abled and disabled, based on the most absolute arbitrariness”.

4.2.3.4. What was the situation with regard to the coverage of the London 2012 Paralympics?

Although the coverage of disabled athletes at London 2012 deserved better treatment both in quantitative and qualitative terms, we should take into consideration the fact that disability sport was indeed showcased in the unique setting of the London 2012 Paralympics. According to Boyle and Haynes (2014a: 92), Channel 4, the broadcaster

⁹⁷¹ Pylon, M. (2012, July 23). “A sprint and leap into the unknown”. *The New York Times*, p. F15.

⁹⁷² Bowen, F. (2012, August 2). “Mom, ‘different shoes’ led Pistorius to Olympics”. *The Washington Post*, p. C8.

⁹⁷³ Basté, J. (2012, August 14). “Aún no se ha acabado”. *La Vanguardia*, p. 36.

⁹⁷⁴ Sánchez Miret, C. (2012, July 30). “Extraordinarios”. *La Vanguardia*, p. 15.

in charge of the event, “set a new benchmark in coverage of the Paralympics”. As they point out, “they focused firstly on the sport, and only then discussed disability issues in a tone that managed to be respectful, but not patronising. This was a difficult balance to achieve, and achieving this is something that the presenters and production staff at Channel 4 should take considerable credit from. Television, often rightly criticized for its limited range of representations of disability, became a key platform that helped to challenge broader audience perceptions around disability and society, while never losing sight that the Paralympics is first and foremost a sporting event” (Boyle and Haynes, 2014a: 93). According to Vincent, the coverage provided by Channel 4 also influenced the good coverage provided by the newspapers:

My sense was that the Paralympic Games in London were fairly well covered, in relation to what they had been previously in the British newspapers. Of course, the home nation always covers the events more than any other nations, but I really got a sense that the nation embraced the Paralympic Games more than it had ever done and Paralympic athletes were defined more by their athleticism. And part of that was also because of the excellent coverage that Channel 4 provided, where they were defined by athleticism, and it broke a lot of barriers, a lot of preconceived notions that they weren't really athletes [...] I think that changed a lot of perceptions about the Paralympics, in a very positive way. They were defined far more by their athleticism than their disability (John Vincent, interview, July 2014).

As Vincent explains, we should bear in mind the fact that the British media devoted more attention to the Paralympics because Britain was the host nation. If we looked at other contexts, such as the American or Spanish, we would see that the coverage the event received was scant. Focusing on the US, Andrew Billings points out that some progress was made, but not when it came to mainstream media:

We had something called the NBC Sports network, that is a relatively new network, it is not NBC, but a new cable satellite network for which they are not trying to get huge ratings, they are trying to build some sort of niche there. I didn't see what the ratings were, I am sure that they were high, and at least the Paralympics were covered on TV. That was progress. They were also covered online but as far as mainstream media, I am going to say nothing was there. Maybe a story but the percentage was going around 0% (Andrew Billings, interview, July 2014).

Similarly, through a Twitter message published on 29 August 2012 (the day of the start of the London 2012 Paralympics, Dr. José Luis Rojas (@rojastorrijos), a scholar from the University of Seville, pointed out that none of the general information Spanish newspapers had even published a brief piece on the event. According to another Tweet published by the same scholar a day later, there was a huge difference between the extent of the coverage given to the Paralympics by the British newspapers⁹⁷⁵ and

⁹⁷⁵ Despite the fact that it did not reach the levels of the Olympic Games, *The Telegraph* and *The Guardian* devoted considerable space to the London 2012 Paralympics. To illustrate this, *The Telegraph* published an average of 16 pages per day on the event in a supplement, plus space was

the scarce treatment that the Spanish press (such as *La Vanguardia*) had given to the event 20 years earlier when it was held in Barcelona.

4.2.3.5. The coverage of disability sport after the London 2012 Olympics and Paralympics

As has been explained, disabled athletes didn't receive much coverage at the London 2012 Paralympics outside of the British media landscape. A major problem, however, is that their exposure outside the spotlight of the Paralympics continues to be minimal or nonexistent, according to experts such as Richard Haynes and John Horne:

It was the biggest ever Paralympic Games. The whole concept of Paralympic sport has its roots in the UK and I thought that the coverage of it was overall very good, or better than what it had been previously, but there is a long way to go. The biggest test is to check out its legacy. In the time that the Paralympics lasted there was a good coverage in the national newspapers, whereas now, that doesn't exist in any great way. Paralympic sports seem to continue being virtually invisible in British media. It was a flash that happened but then quickly disappeared (Richard Haynes, interview, October 2013).

If you think about Paralympics and disability sport outside the Paralympics, there is nothing. Apart from that coverage and apart from the Games time, there is very little spillover of regular coverage or regular journalism (John Horne, interview, November 2013).

Andrew C. Billings reflects on the key factors that have an impact on the media decisions and also on audience demands as far as disability sport is concerned:

I think that there are a lot of reasons for that, but I don't think they are all as insidious as some people think. I think that people tune in to sports to try and see something, to see excellence they haven't before and that they couldn't do themselves. You want to see someone going faster, higher and stronger than either you could do or you have seen on TV. That is not to say that Paralympic athletes cannot do that. We just don't know where the bar is. We can't place ourselves in the role of that athlete to know what is a good field goal percentage for wheelchair basketball. We do not have the benchmarks, we do not have the history, we do not have enough context and understanding and because of that it gets very hard to watch it and know "that is excellence". That is not fair, but I think that is the reality (Andrew Billings, interview, July 2014).

devoted to it on the front pages and there was also information in the main section of the newspaper. Providing this depth of coverage required thorough preparation by the journalists. According to Adam Sills, sports editor from *The Telegraph*, the Paralympics were "one of the major challenges of the summer for people who hadn't been at a Paralympics Games before, in order to treat the event as elite sport and tell its brilliant stories without being patronizing". As Sills explained, "getting that right was difficult and I believe we did it quite well. It was a very different experience, but a very rewarding experience for the journalists who covered that" (Adam Sills, interview, October 2013).

Even though the current exposure of disabled athletes in the media continues to be minimized, John Vincent is optimistic that the situation will improve little by little in the future:

I think that history is on our side, because the more minority and less popular sports are gaining more coverage and I think that the Paralympic Games is gaining more coverage bit by bit [...] In the case of the United States, NBC had hardly any coverage of the Paralympics in 2012. In Sochi, they increased the coverage and I think that in the forthcoming summer Olympics they are going to increase their coverage. And I would expect that to be reflected in the print media and in the newspaper coverage as well (John Vincent, interview, July 2014).

In addition to aiming for growth in coverage in quantitative terms, another fundamental challenge in ethical terms for media professionals will be to work harder in order to overcome the traditional stereotypes of disability, which have definitely been reproduced within the sample analysed. According to Pate and Hardin (2013: 366), “a shift away from disabling language and the dominant supercrip stories may take time, but it is possible through exposure to athlete preferences, awareness of the language and portrayal presented, and knowledge of how to address it. In many cases, athletes with disabilities just want recognition for their athletic accomplishments and no more or no less”. Independently of the competition that they are reporting on, journalists could improve the qualitative coverage of disabled athletes through the consultation of specific documents, the set of guidelines for reporting on persons with disabilities promoted by the International Paralympic Committee, for example (IPC, 2012).

4.2.4. Commitment to justice in the representation of nationality

Focusing now on the commitment to justice in the portrayal of nationality, the research has revealed a clear maximization of the coverage of domestic athletes, which was particularly acute in the case of *The Guardian* and *The Telegraph*. The following section explores the fundamental reasons for this quantitative bias, placing the emphasis on the political economy of media and the sporting results achieved by the countries studied at London 2012. While the scholars interviewed argue that it is not inherently unethical that the media report more about the home team, this narrow approach at times limited the opportunity to expand the coverage and give exposure to foreign competitors. The main ethical problem, however, arose when ethnocentrism turned into a constant display of patriotic strategies (evaluative adjectives and adverbs, excluding foreign competitors in pieces, quotes, photographs of national flags, patriotic human stories, etc.) and use of nationalistic strategies (comparisons and diminishment of other countries’ abilities to compete along with isolated negative references to other countries).

4.2.4.1. Quantitative results

As mentioned in the theoretical framework, it cannot be denied that international sporting mega-events such as the Olympic Games and the FIFA World Cup are very powerful in the projection of national identity and the building of community and pride (Billings et al., 2014c; Haut et al., 2014; Horne et al., 2013, Rowe, 2011; Van Hilvoorde et al., 2010). In the media coverage of these events, therefore, the national frame greatly determines what gets covered and how it gets covered. According to Horne et al. (2013: 97): “media coverage of sport arguably plays a significant part in the construction of national identities. Our sense of our own national identities and our characteristic stereotypical images of other nations can be traced in the ways in which the media represent sport”.

In quantitative terms, a clear maximization of the coverage of home athletes was found within the sample analysed, showing that in international mega-events such as the Olympics, “the nation is not overridden by the global” (Rowe, 2013b: 22). With the exception of global stories, such as those about Usain Bolt and Michael Phelps (along with those featuring other major names, David Rudisha, Kohei Uchimura and Stephen Kiprotich, for example), and with varying degrees from country to country, newspapers tended to amplify the stories of their own sportsmen and sportswomen. That being said, significant differences between the publications can be found. As can be clearly perceived from Table 20, newspapers such as *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post* and *La Vanguardia* presented a greater international scope in their coverage of the event. In *The New York Times*, 56.07% of the articles ($n = 291$) were devoted to US protagonists or co-protagonists, while 43.93% of the pieces ($n = 228$) were allocated exclusively to foreign athletes. In *The Washington Post*, the gap between the articles devoted to domestic and foreign athletes was 31.68%, while in *La Vanguardia*, the figure was 25.96%. In contrast, the degree of ethnocentrism in *El País*, and especially in the two British newspapers was very significant. More specifically, in *The Guardian/The Observer* and *The Daily Telegraph/The Sunday Telegraph*, the space devoted to home athletes reached 74.10% and 74.96%, respectively. From the perspective of ethics and quality of information, the high index of nationalism (in which nearly three-quarters of the articles were devoted to home heroes) delivered a sort of uncomfortable message, as it meant that relatively small opportunities were left for foreign athletes to be showcased.

Newspaper	Home athletes		Foreign athletes		Total	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
<i>The Guardian</i> (GB)	758	74.10	265	25.90	1,023	100.00
<i>The Telegraph</i> (GB)	1154	74.96	386	25.06	1,540	100.00
<i>The New York Times</i> (US)	291	56.07	228	43.93	519	100.00
<i>The Washington Post</i> (US)	345	65.84	179	34.16	524	100.00
<i>El País</i> (SPA)	291	72.03	113	27.97	404	100.00
<i>La Vanguardia</i> (SPA)	313	62.98	184	37.02	497	100.00

Table 20. Competition-related pieces in which home athletes were protagonists or co-protagonists

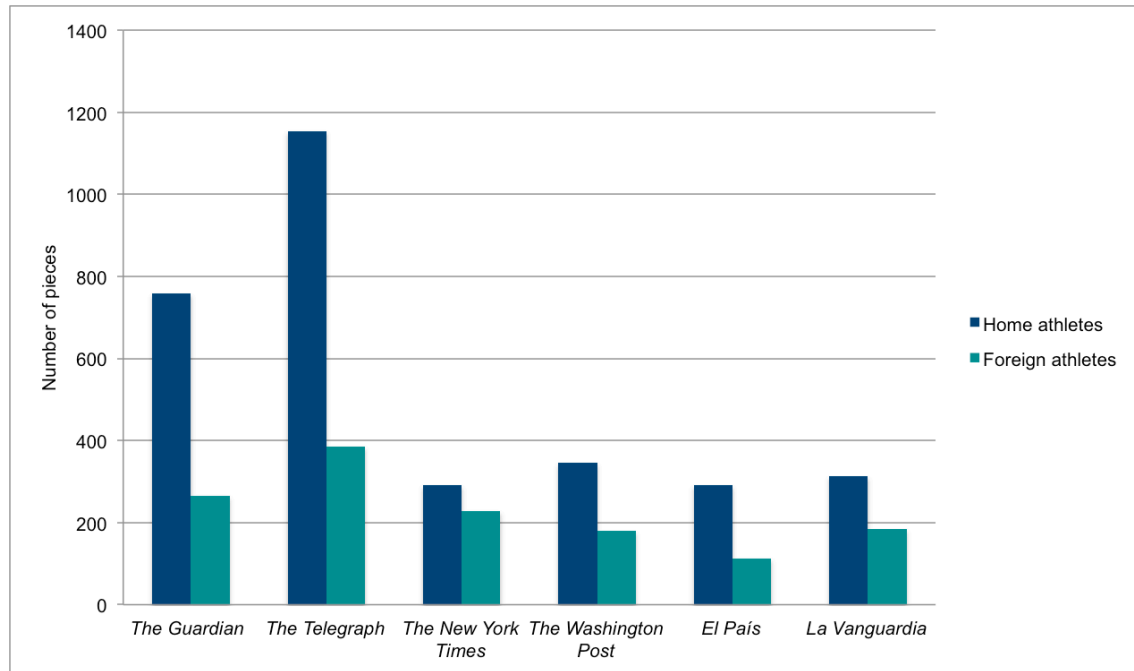


Figure 20. Number of competition-related pieces in which home athletes were protagonists or co-protagonists

The examination of the quantitative results taking into account the extent of the pieces, however, reveals some nuances worth highlighting. For instance, *The Washington Post*, which was one of the newspapers that a priori provided a more international scope in the coverage, did mostly place foreign athletes in brief pieces (86.03%) and did not publish any bigger piece (“one page”, “between one and two pages” and “more than two pages”) on international protagonists. These figures indicate that although foreign protagonists were regularly present in the coverage of the newspaper, in fact they were minimized in space as they were not generally placed in prominent locations.

Extent	<i>The Guardian</i>				<i>The Telegraph</i>			
	British		Other		British		Other	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Brief piece	290	38.26	140	52.83	306	26.52	181	46.89
Less than a ¼ page	91	12.01	32	12.08	268	23.22	82	21.24
From ¼ to ½ page	155	20.45	42	15.85	235	20.36	53	13.73
More than ½ page	99	13.06	24	9.06	129	11.18	25	6.48
One page	65	8.58	10	3.77	62	5.37	12	3.11
Between one and two pages	55	7.26	15	5.66	145	12.56	34	8.80
More than two pages	3	0.40	2	0.75	9	0.78	0	0
Total	758	100	265	100	1,154	100	386	100

Table 21. Distribution by nationality and length of the pieces published in *The Guardian/The Observer* and *The Daily Telegraph/The Sunday Telegraph*

Extent	<i>The New York Times</i>				<i>The Washington Post</i>			
	American		Other		American		Other	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Brief piece	145	49.83	130	57.02	186	53.91	154	86.03
Less than a ¼ page	15	5.15	12	5.26	11	3.19	2	1.12
From ¼ to ½ page	68	23.37	49	21.49	85	24.64	17	9.50
More than ½ page	44	15.12	26	11.40	48	13.91	6	3.35
One page	11	3.78	9	3.95	8	2.32	0	0.00
Between one and two pages	8	2.75	1	0.44	5	1.45	0	0.00
More than two pages	0	0.00	1	0.44	2	0.58	0	0.00
Total	291	100	228	100	345	100	179	100

Table 22. Distribution by nationality and length of the pieces published in *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*

Extent	<i>El País</i>				<i>La Vanguardia</i>			
	Spanish		Other		Spanish		Other	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Brief piece	35	12.03	8	7.08	92	29.39	78	42.39
Less than a ¼ page	30	10.31	18	15.93	54	17.25	13	7.07
From ¼ to ½ page	81	27.84	32	28.32	86	27.48	33	17.93
More than ½ page	82	28.18	34	30.09	51	16.29	42	22.83
One page	30	10.31	14	12.39	9	2.88	9	4.89
Between one and two pages	28	9.62	5	4.42	20	6.39	9	4.89
More than two pages	5	1.72	2	1.77	1	0.32	0	0.00
Total	291	100	113	100	313	100	184	100

Table 23. Distribution by nationality and length of the pieces published in *El País* and *La Vanguardia*

The quantitative bias towards domestic stories in the newspapers cannot be dissociated from the political economy⁹⁷⁶ of media. Horne (2006: 48) points out that to support the home athletes and to maximize their coverage “makes sound economic sense”. As Conboy (2014: 177) underlines, “the vast majority of newspapers are sold on a national basis, have a strong national bias to their news values”. Thus, “newspaper editors and journalists construct their narratives to attract the largest and most affluent readership possible” (Vincent and Crossman, 2012: 87).

The agenda of print media is “usually tailored towards nationally constituted and regional/local readerships” (Rowe, 2013a: 166). It is crucial, therefore, to the economic operations of media institutions to prioritize the content that readers are interested in, a fact that has a decisive impact on advertising revenue (Horne, 2006), and which indisputably “is integral to the finances of the media” (Burton, 2010: 209). According to John Vincent, it should be important for quality newspapers to try to be inclusive and give exposure to other nationalities in order to provide the most diverse coverage of the Olympics possible. Nevertheless, he acknowledges that critical factors such as the interest from audiences and newspaper sales should be borne in mind in order to understand the quantitative bias towards domestic stories. Kim Bissell follows the same line of thought:

I think that being inclusive would be very important. However, if you analyse the American newspapers and the British newspapers and the newspapers from each country, they tend to follow their own athletes, because they are looking to sell more copies and they think that their own population is going to buy more copies and they will get more clicks and more views if they cover their own people. So it becomes a little bit parochial, “Us versus Them”, rather than a celebration of international sport and international cultural diversity (John Vincent, interview, July 2014).

In the coverage of the Olympics, of course the US papers are going to cover the US athletes more than they would cover the Russian athletes [...] One of the things I have noted from the coverage of the London Games was that hometown bias. You might have athletes in certain sports from other countries that are excelling, but they get next to no coverage by the US media. There is a geographic proximity, we want to rally behind the home team [...] If we are focusing on other teams, first of all, who is going to read it? If you put a story about an athlete from a different country on the front page, you won't sell as many papers and you will not get as many hits on your website. So it comes down to economics (Kim Bissell, interview, July 2014).

⁹⁷⁶ As Conboy acknowledges, “sales, an audience share and advertising revenue have all been powerful influences on the content of every form of journalism throughout the twentieth century. This political economy of journalism has had an effect not just on the quality of journalism but also on the range of perspectives which can be offered within an environment which is so driven by commercial pressures that most varieties of journalism are not only sponsored by advertising but also literally shaped by it” (Conboy, 2011: 43).

With regard to the specific case of British newspapers, as highlighted by *The Guardian's* sports editor, Ian Prior, the fact that the British media maximized the coverage of their home athletes so much was inevitably to do with the fact that Britain was the host nation:

If you are the host nation, the media's ecosystem around you is obsessed with British medals and British performances, which are great for the UK audience. And we have a very big UK audience. I think you inevitably do fall into the trap in which you end up writing more about the British medals and the British performances. But I think that it is just unavoidable when you are covering a home Olympics (Ian Prior, interview, October 2013).

According to the scholar Raymond Boyle, and Adam Sills and Paul Hayward from *The Telegraph*, the remarkable success of British athletes is key for understanding the news criteria for such extended coverage of home athletes as opposed to other stories featuring foreign protagonists. We cannot forget that the British team won 65 medals, 18 more than they had obtained at Beijing 2008. Among these, there were 29 gold medals.

There is always an ethnocentric view to the coverage, which I am sure you would find if you go to other countries. If we talk about the level of that, I would agree that it was particularly acute for some reason this time around. Perhaps it was a lot of British success relatively speaking (Raymond Boyle, interview, November 2013).

What drove the agenda was the British success, primarily. It took a few days for that to come. What actually happened is that there was a snowball effect after the first gold medal came, and that was the narrative of all of the Games, the success of Team GB. So that very much drove what we were doing (Adam Sills, interview, October 2013).

It became easier when Britain started winning lots of medals, because then it became a story of British success, and every day we were writing about gold medals and British victories. That developed a momentum that carried all the media organization (Paul Hayward, interview, October 2013).

Discussing the maximization of the coverage of domestic athletes, Professor Chris Frost from Liverpool John Moores University, who has an interest in media ethics, argues that it is not inherently unethical that media report more about the home team:

I don't personally think that there is anything wrong with that. You are writing for your readers in your home newspapers, you are writing for your home public in exactly the same way the American papers would be full of how the American team was doing and the same with the Japanese, and so on. I think that it is fine [...] To a certain point, that is not a big problem if you are writing about how well your home team from the country of the newspaper you are writing for is doing. That's what people want to read anyway, so that is not an issue (Chris Frost, interview, October 2013).

Nevertheless, and although we should bear these elements of political economy in mind, from the perspective of the commitment to justice in the representation of nationalities, we should not forget the values of open-mindedness, of broadening the horizons and going beyond the narrowly focused coverage of domestic athletes. This ideal is ultimately founded in respect of citizens' fundamental right to receive comprehensive and complete information about social reality (UNESCO, Art. 1–2; IFJ, Art. 1; Council of Europe, Art. 13; SPJ, Preamble; ASNE, Art. 4). This is especially important at the Olympic Games, "given that it is the only time in a four-year time when audiences can get to learn about other nations" (Chris Roberts, interview, July 2014).

Outstanding examples of good practice in this sense include *The Telegraph's* daily series of brief pieces "Meanwhile in ...", highlighting the stories of athletes from Pacific islands such as Tuvalu, Guam and Samoa⁹⁷⁷ and *La Vanguardia's* reporting on the sporting success of Kazakhstan at London 2012⁹⁷⁸. With regard to this aspect too, it is very important to highlight the work done by *The New York Times*. In adhering to the global approach lying at the core of its newsroom culture the newspaper provided alternative insights into non-familiar athletes such as the judoka Jacob Gnahoui⁹⁷⁹ (Benin), the weightlifting gold medallist Behdad Salimikordasiabi⁹⁸⁰ (Iran) and the marathoner Arata Fujiwara (Japan)⁹⁸¹. *The Washington Post's* approach is also worth mentioning. Even though it has been noted that this newspaper did mostly place foreign athletes only in brief pieces, at least it provided a daily recap of non-American performances through a page composed of brief AP items. This approach was praised by a reader, Jenifer Gittings-Harfst, in a letter to the editor: "I was pleased to find that *The Post's* summaries of Olympic happenings include reports that go beyond just a U.S. focus. I love reading in-depth pieces about the United States' performance, but I also like knowing how the medals are going overall and learning tidbits about competitors from other countries⁹⁸²".

⁹⁷⁷ Tweedie, N. (2012, July 21). "Pacific islanders may not win but they have true Olympian vigour". *The Daily Telegraph*, pp. 24–5.

⁹⁷⁸ Ramos, R. (2012, August 8). "El dorado kazajo". *La Vanguardia*, p. 41.

⁹⁷⁹ Robertson, C. (2012, July 29). "In less than five minutes, a match and an Olympics end". *The New York Times*, p. D2.

⁹⁸⁰ Bearak, B. (2012, August 8). "Iranian easily lifts spirits of his country". *The New York Times*, pp. B11, B13.

⁹⁸¹ Belson, K. (2012, August 11). "As a long-distance runner, lonelier than most". *The New York Times*, p. D6.

⁹⁸² "Success and sour grapes at the Summer Games" (2012, August 4). *The Washington Post*, p. A13.

In order to understand the approach adopted by *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*, Chris Roberts and Andrew Billings explain that these two national publications are a little more detached than other media outlets in the US:

I think that *The Times* and *The Post*, because they are national papers, they are a little more detached. They cover the home teams but they are not homers. In the Olympics, you get a lot of jingoism and covering your own nation first and when they win it is good. I don't think the national organizations are quite that way. They will be America-first a little bit, because at the end of the day, their readers care more about American athletes than others, but they are not just only homers (Chris Roberts, interview, July 2014).

The New York Times and *The Washington Post* are US outlets, but they are at least considering the international audience. Conversely, ESPN and *USA Today* have some international audience, but they are primarily domestic newspapers. As a result, they are going to write things in different ways. It depends on who your audience is (Andrew Billings, interview, July 2014).

According to the sports editors of *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*, they gave preference to the US athletes but also took into account the need to provide a broader perspective and to reflect on other interesting stories:

We simply pursued the most interesting stories we could find, regardless of sports or athletes (Jason Stallman, interview, April 2014).

We focused our coverage on the sports and athletes most well known and popular in the United States as well as the storylines that illuminated most brightly some of the bigger themes surrounding any Olympics, regardless of country – sports and cultural/political issues, underdogs, surprise winners, extraordinary examples of athleticism (Matt Vita, interview, April 2014).

4.2.4.2. Qualitative results: the blurring of the frontiers between ethnocentrism and patriotism/nationalism

On qualitative grounds, Shuhua Zhou argues that we should differentiate between the concepts of “ethnocentrism” and “nationalism”. A healthy dose of ethnocentrism doesn't equate to a nationalistic approach, as the researcher elucidates:

Every nation, every people, every single individual will look at things based on their own perspectives. So, there is a healthy dose of ethnocentrism versus nationalism. The two are different things. A lot of the times, your coverage is catered to your nation, catered to your culture. That does not mean nationalism per se. To play it up such that one nation is above everybody else probably can be categorized as nationalism (Shuhua Zhou, interview, July 2014).

During the timeframe of the observation there were some occasions when the frontiers between “ethnocentrism”, “patriotism” and “nationalism” (Billings et al., 2013) were not so clear cut. Across the sample, the media consistently engaged in certain strategies to create patriotic favour and stimulate pride and unity which went far beyond the overt

use of personal pronouns such as “us” and “we” (Ličen and Billings, 2013; Vincent and Crossman, 2012).

The patriotic mechanisms displayed in the sample include: (1) the use of evaluative adjectives and adverbs that can “dress up fandom in fancy words”; (2) the overemphasis on the performance of home athletes that meant certain pieces did not pay any attention to foreign competitors, even though they had obtained gold or silver medals; (3) the use of patriotic quotes by athletes; (4) the repeated use of photographs with national flags; (5) the use of certain human stories that serve a nationalistic purpose; (6) criticism of sportsmen and sportswomen who were not “patriotic enough”; (7) bathing in reflected glory; and (8) reflecting on the ambience surrounding particular events with a patriotic purpose. In addition to patriotic mechanisms, on minor but noteworthy occasions, nationalistic mechanisms (which always invite a comparison) were employed to put down, diminish or stereotype other nationalities, even though they didn’t reach the level at which they could be qualified as “smugness” (Billings et al., 2013).

The use of all these mechanisms hardly displays a neutral stance, given the impact that the consumption of media contents can have in reinforcing patriotic and nationalistic attitudes (Billings et al., 2013) instead of promoting internationalism. Furthermore, the display of these mechanisms does not only have implications from the perspective of the deontological principle of justice, it also unequivocally links with the principle of truth and, more precisely, with issues related to impartiality and objectivity in journalism. It should be borne in mind that the requirement for professional detachment is clearly established within the major codes of journalism ethics (Council of Europe, Art. 3; IPSO, Art. 1; NUJ, Art. 4; ASNE, Arts 4–5; FAPE, Art. 17; CPC, Art. 1).

4.2.4.2.1. Patriotic strategies

The use of evaluative adjectives and adverbs with a patriotic purpose

The newspapers sampled included many evaluative adjectives, adverbs and other subjective expressions, feeding the impression that journalists certainly took sides with regard to their home athletes. Illustrative examples can be seen in expressions such as: “we’re dead good at it⁹⁸³”; “wondrous completion of his historic 10,000 metres/5,000 double⁹⁸⁴”; “an imperious Olympic gold-medal ride⁹⁸⁵”; “insurmountable American⁹⁸⁶”;

⁹⁸³ Addley, E. (2012, July 30). “The big question”. *The Guardian*, p. 3.

⁹⁸⁴ Chadband, I. (2012, August 13). “Flying Farah is just getting started”. *The Daily Telegraph*, pp. S6–S7.

“glorious gold medal-winning performance⁹⁸⁷”; and “a dreamlike first half⁹⁸⁸”, to list but a few. The situation was probably particularly acute in the British case. The excessive parochialism displayed by the London-based newspapers as well as the BBC during London 2012 had ethical implications. Such a chauvinistic approach sometimes made it difficult to provide a balanced and accurate account of the events. From David Rowe’s standpoint:

Television and to a lesser extent the press was part of Team GB. Obsessed with their own nation. I perfectly understand that if you are writing for a newspaper which is British, Spanish, Italian, whatever, you are going to assume that the implied reader is going to be British, Spanish, Italian, and so on. That does not license you to stand as if you were one of the people in the crowd, waving the flag⁹⁸⁹. You can do that, but don’t call yourself a journalist. In the quality press, there were some terrific pieces, very good writing, very reflective, and so on. And there was also a lot of garbage in my view. A lot of it was just dressing up fandom in fancy words. I can put up with a bit of that, but I just don’t regard it as journalism. It is a form of writing, celebration writing if you would like to say (David Rowe, interview, June 2013).

Exclusion of foreign competitors within the pieces

It should be remembered that the national frame determines what gets covered and how it gets covered (Billings and Kim, 2014; Qing, 2010). However, a narrow national frame and excessive parochialism sometimes made it difficult to understand what happened beyond the domestic athletes’ performances. On occasions, the storytelling mechanism based on an overemphasis on home athletes meant that almost no attention was paid within certain pieces to foreign competitors (even though they had obtained gold or silver medals). This favouritism was again particularly noteworthy in the British case. Sometimes, the media were so busy focusing on Team GB athletes that the appearance of non-British medal winners in the limelight was limited to brief mentions within the texts or complementary pieces. Thus, the integrity of information may have been compromised.

⁹⁸⁵ Marsden, S. (2012, August 8). “King of the road: Wiggo pedals to pinnacle of British sport”. *The Daily Telegraph*, p. 4.

⁹⁸⁶ Bishop, G. (2012, July 23). “With one tuneup left, U.S. has biggest test yet”. *The New York Times*, p. D6.

⁹⁸⁷ Svrluga, B. (2012, August 3). “Four years later, a precious medal”. *The Washington Post*, p. D5.

⁹⁸⁸ Álvarez, R. (2012, July 21). “España se pone a 100 ante Argentina”. *El País*, p. 52

⁹⁸⁹ This patriotism was also recognized by journalists. According to Andy Bull and Barney Ronay at *The Guardian*, “part of me is yearning to unleash my frustrated inner patriot, to slap on a plastic bowler hat, wrap myself in a union flag and run screaming down the aisles”. See: Bull, A.; Ronay, B. (2012, August 12). “The gold rush v the fug of failure: a tale of two Olympics”. *The Guardian*, Olympics 2012, p. 6.

To illustrate this, *The Guardian*⁹⁹⁰ and *The Telegraph*'s⁹⁹¹ articles about the 800 metres women's swimming event were entirely focused on Rebecca Adlington (bronze medal) while the silver medallist, Mireia Belmonte, was mentioned only once during these pieces. This case contrasts with the approach displayed by the Spanish newspapers; *El País*⁹⁹² and *La Vanguardia*⁹⁹³ did indeed focus on Belmonte, as would have been expected, but they also devoted a certain amount of space to mentioning the performances of other key swimmers such as Katie Ledecky, Rebecca Adlington, Lotte Fris and Lauren Boyle. Another example of a story that failed to provide information about non-British competitors can be found in *The Guardian*'s article "Kayak king McKeever revels in his Bolt moment"⁹⁹⁴, in which the silver and bronze medallists, Saúl Craviotto and Mark De Jonge were not mentioned in the main text. A further example can be seen in the report about the uneven bars element of the gymnastics event in *The Telegraph*, which focused almost entirely on the bronze medallist, Beth Tweddle, while devoting scant attention to the gold and silver winners (Aliya Mustafina and Kexin He)⁹⁹⁵. This was a kind of exclusionary practice that limited readers' opportunities for getting the full picture of the event.

This is not an exhaustive compilation of all the examples found, but the ones that have been highlighted are consistent with some of the findings obtained by Boyle and Haynes (2014a) in their research into the BBC's television coverage of London 2012. According to the authors:

My criticism of some of the coverage at the BBC was the inability to actually give a proper sports coverage. And again, they were focusing on the Brits coming third, which is very American, you have seen that on American television for 20 or 30 years in the Olympics⁹⁹⁶, that they are focusing on the American who came fourth but you don't know who has won the race. I saw a bit of that this time around (Raymond Boyle, interview, November 2013).

⁹⁹⁰ Bull, A. (2012, August 4). "Another bronze for Adlington as Ledecky flows field away". *The Guardian*, Olympics 2012, pp. 8–9.

⁹⁹¹ White, D. (2012, August 4). "Adlington's dream of home gold melts away". *The Daily Telegraph*, pp. S8–S9.

⁹⁹² Torres, D. (2012, August 4). "Un último zarpazo para la historia". *El País*, pp. 50–1.

⁹⁹³ Martínez, J.B. (2012, August 4). "Doblete imperial de Belmonte". *La Vanguardia*, pp. 38–9.

⁹⁹⁴ Kitson, R. (2012, August 8). "Kayak king McKeever revels in his Bolt moment". *The Guardian*, Olympics 2012, pp. 2–3.

⁹⁹⁵ Briggs, S. (2012, August 7). "Tweddle blazes trail to earn her medal of honour". *The Daily Telegraph*, pp. S24–S25.

⁹⁹⁶ Media ethicist Chris Roberts reflects on the perception about the parochialism of American television: "The American coverage of the Olympics, particularly from the NBC, has been particularly well criticized for being more jingoistic than it ought to have been. Every time the Olympics get covered, you always see comments that the Canadian coverage is so much better because they just let the stuff happen" (Chris Roberts, interview, July 2014).

It became impossible as a viewer to understand the athletic integrity of the events, as the focus was solely on the Team GB athlete involved. Who finished 2nd, 3rd and so forth was simply deemed unimportant by the commentary. One can understand the emotion of the occasion, and the need to address a general television audience, most of whom were not athletics fans but interested only in particular British athletes. Nonetheless, it was striking that a critique of coverage often levelled at US television coverage of international sport (they simply follow US athletes to the detriment of the event), was also evident in the BBC's commentary that was part of its otherwise technically outstanding coverage (Boyle and Haynes, 2014a: 89).

This does not imply that the rest of the newspapers sampled were not guilty of similar practices of minimization, but they did it to a lesser extent. Noteworthy examples should be mentioned. In *The New York Times*, a piece on the US women's gold medal in water polo did not mention a single action of the Spanish team or any Spanish player⁹⁹⁷. A report on the basketball gold medal, for which the US team beat their Spanish opponents, yielded similar results: the piece was written mainly from the American frame of reference and the only Spanish player mentioned was Pau Gasol, at that time power forward at Los Angeles Lakers⁹⁹⁸. In *The Washington Post*, the victory of Tirunesh Dibaba in the women's 10,000 metres only received a brief mention at the end of an article featuring American shot putter Reese Hoffa⁹⁹⁹. This minimization was later criticized by reader Samson Woldemariam in a letter to the editor: "Tirunesh Dibaba's victory deserved more than the footnote [...] *The Post* could have found a way to elaborate on Dibaba's victory. Especially for the thousands of Ethiopians living in the Washington area who are rabid track and field fans¹⁰⁰⁰". Taking into consideration the value of "community interest" established in *The Washington Post Standards and Ethics* (Art. H), it may have been politic to have expanded this story.

Other cases worth highlighting are the victories of Marina Alabau in windsurfing¹⁰⁰¹ and Maialen Chourraut in canoeing¹⁰⁰², which were reported in *La Vanguardia*. Both stories by Felip Vivanco did not include the names of the silver and bronze medallists which could only be found in a small table of results.

⁹⁹⁷ Crouse, K. (2012, August 10). "Fourth time brings title for United States". *The New York Times*, p. B14.

⁹⁹⁸ Bishop, G. (2012, August 13). "James and U.S. replenish gold in treasure chest". *The New York Times*, pp. D1–D6.

⁹⁹⁹ Wise, M. (2012, August 4). "Note". *The Washington Post*, p. D7.

¹⁰⁰⁰ "Honoring the Olympic spirit" (2012, August 11). *The Washington Post*, p. A11.

¹⁰⁰¹ Vivanco, F. (2012, August 8). "Oro en popa a toda vela para Marina". *La Vanguardia*, pp. 32–4.

¹⁰⁰² Vivanco, F. (2012, August 3). "Bronce dulce en aguas bravas". *La Vanguardia*, pp. 32–3.

Use of patriotic quotes by athletes

If they had used overtly patriotic expressions rephrased in their own words, journalists might have been accused of being “fans with typewriters”. However, a frequently used mechanism that may have hid their own emotions was inserting the patriotic quotes of the athletes into articles. Some illustrative examples include the words of Anthony Ogogo (“I’m so proud to wear this [GB] lion on my chest¹⁰⁰³”); Gabrielle Douglas (“I just can’t wait to wear those red, white and blue stripes down my back. It feels like a dream come true¹⁰⁰⁴”); and Kayla Harrison (“We’re part of Team USA, and there’s no better color than the American flag¹⁰⁰⁵”).

Repeated use of photographs showing national flags

As Rowe (2011: 147) points out, “it is difficult to imagine any international tournament or contest in team sports without players bearing national insignia and spectators draped in national colours and voicing support in nationally significant ways”. However, it is arguable whether the six newspapers needed to make such repetitive use of the images of national flags during their coverage of London 2012. In the British context, many large photographs on the newspapers’ front pages showed the winners (Chris Hoy, Jessica Ennis, Christine Ohuruogu, Charlotte Dujardine and Laura Bechtolsheimer, Andy Murray, Ben Ainslie, Mo Farah, Greg Rutherford, Nick Dempsey, Alistair Brownlee, and so on) holding the Union Jack. Similar images were inside the papers too. Using this mechanism, the newspapers continuously associated the victories with Britain, thus contributing to fuelling national pride. *The Guardian* even included a photograph of the US politician Mitt Romney in the Aquatics Centre with a girl behind him holding a British flag¹⁰⁰⁶, a fact which illustrates that photographs can be, and in fact are, constructed and intentionally framed in ideological ways (Buisse and Borcharding, 2010). Furthermore, before Team GB had won their first gold medal, the same newspaper also published a prominent poster with the slogan “Keep calm and carry on (we still got Wiggo)” with the symbol of the British Royal Air Force, entreating the British public to place it in their windows.

In the American press, photographs of athletes wrapped in the American flag (Ashley Eaton, the water polo team, Reese Hoffa, Lashinda Demus, Missy Franklin) and fans portrayed with the American colours were also commonplace, but they didn’t have the

¹⁰⁰³ Jackson, J. (2012, August 3). “Ogogo counts his lucky stars after getting benefit of judges’ doubt”. *The Guardian*, Olympics 2012, p. 10.

¹⁰⁰⁴ Debnam, B. (2012, July 22). “Supersport: Gabrielle Douglas”. *The Washington Post*, p. 4.

¹⁰⁰⁵ Faiola, A. (2012, August 13). “London Games sing into the sunset”. *The Washington Post*, pp. A1, A10.

¹⁰⁰⁶ “Who’s watching?” (2012, July 29). *The Guardian*, Olympics 2012, p. 15.

same overt patriotic character that could be observed in the British case given the smaller size and lesser prominence devoted to these pictures. The mechanism was also often used in the Spanish newspapers to illustrate the triumphs of outstanding athletes such as Brigitte Yagüe, Mireia Belmonte, Marina Alabau and Joel González but, again, its impact was rather less than could be observed in *The Guardian/The Observer* and in *The Daily Telegraph/The Sunday Telegraph*.

Use of human stories to serve a patriotic purpose

The construction and framing of certain stories also served an explicitly patriotic purpose. In the article “From Havana to London, determined Huerta goes the distance”, Barry Svrluga of *The Washington Post* explored the story of the triathlete Manny Huerta, who was born in Cuba, explaining how the US had supported him in gaining his triumph. Some of the quotes from his testimony include: “I am 100 percent American” and “I remember where I came from, and I think I’m very lucky to be able to [be] born over there but then to come over here and succeed, I think it can open the doors to many kids that come to this country with a dream¹⁰⁰⁷”. Similarly, *The New York Times* covered the story of the gymnast Danell Leyva, also born in Cuba, whose stepfather Yin Alvarez dreamed of opening a gym and coaching an Olympian. After the struggles of trying to fulfil his dream in Cuba, he finally achieved his goal in the US¹⁰⁰⁸. In *El País*, the story of the naturalized table tennis player He Zhi (Juanito) should be mentioned. Even though he had already lived and played in Spain for 23 years, it is doubtful whether the newspaper should have used this information to express his Spanish nationality: “Juanito doesn’t remember that a long time ago he was Chinese¹⁰⁰⁹”.

Criticism of “not patriotic enough” athletes

In the British case, another mechanism to indicate patriotism could be found in the critical observation of the British footballers who refused to sing “God Save the Queen” and, therefore, were considered to be “not patriotic enough”. *The Guardian*’s Barney Ronay pointed out: “God Save the Queen was received with fluttering excitement, and observed with the now-familiar absolute stony-faced indifference by Britain’s five Welshmen, who have quite sensibly taken to looking completely nonplussed while it

¹⁰⁰⁷ Svrluga, B. (2012, July 28). “From Havana to London, determined Huerta goes the distance”. *The Washington Post*, p. D5.

¹⁰⁰⁸ Macur, J. (2012, July 30). “For a gymnastics family, a longtime vision is in reach”. *The New York Times*, p. D7.

¹⁰⁰⁹ Oppenheimer, W. (2012, July 30). “Españoles de profesión”. *El País*, pp. 52–3.

drones away, as though unaware of any music being played at all¹⁰¹⁰.” In an opinion article, the same newspaper pronounced: “People who can’t sing. Specifically, Ryan Giggs and the two Scots girls who refused to sing the anthem. Really grudgingly refused. If you can take the team shirt, you can sing the bloody song¹⁰¹¹”.

Bathing in reflected glory

A curious case could be found in *The Guardian*. Even when the focus of the piece was not a British athlete, but the New Zealand shot putter Valerie Adams (gold medal winner at Beijing 2008), the newspaper showed patriotism by using the expression “If she wins, we can almost claim her as a Brit: Adams has an English father and a Tongan mother¹⁰¹²”.

Showing patriotism by recalling the ambience of sporting events

Despite the fact that this mechanism could occasionally be found in other newspapers, *The Telegraph*, for example (Murray and Laura Robson “delighted the home support yesterday, with cries of “GB, GB¹⁰¹³”), showing patriotism by recalling the ambience of sporting events was mainly exploited in *The Washington Post*. Expressions such as: “Logan Tom spiked for match point to the cheers of 'U-S-A! U-S-A!' from the crowd¹⁰¹⁴”; “chanting a deafening 'U-S-A!'¹⁰¹⁵”; and “right hand over her heart, belting out the words of The Star-Spangled Banner¹⁰¹⁶” were frequently employed throughout the sample.

4.2.4.2.2. Nationalistic strategies

Comparisons, and diminishment of other countries’ abilities to compete in sport

Despite the fact that the IOC does not endorse the medal table (Mark Adams, interview, May 2014), the comparison between countries in terms of the medals obtained was a constant feature throughout the newspaper coverage of London 2012¹⁰¹⁷ and after the event too¹⁰¹⁸. The superiority of home athletes in certain sports

¹⁰¹⁰ Ronay, B. (2012, July 30). “Team GB prove their mettle after UAE give Pearce’s tyros and veterans a scare”. *The Guardian*, Olympics 2012, pp. 8–9.

¹⁰¹¹ “On the plus side, Boris and the Queen. On the minus, Romney and wrong flags” (July 29, 2012). *The Observer*, p. 11.

¹⁰¹² Barkham, P. (2012, August 6). “World record watch”. *The Guardian*, p. 8.

¹⁰¹³ Mairs, G. (2012, August 5). “Murray ready for double”. *The Sunday Telegraph*, p. S18.

¹⁰¹⁴ AP (2012, August 10). “U.S. women to play in second straight gold medal match”. *The Washington Post*, p. D6.

¹⁰¹⁵ Adam, K. (2012, July 26). “The Games begin as U.S. team rallies past France”. *The Washington Post*, p. D8

¹⁰¹⁶ Svrluga, B. (2012, July 30). “Vollmer returns with a record”. *The Washington Post*, pp. D1, D8.

¹⁰¹⁷ Gibson, O. (2012, August 9). “How GB is ahead of USA”. *The Guardian*, Olympics 2012, p. 1.

was commonly conveyed throughout the newspapers' pages. To illustrate this, *The New York Times* claimed that although for some countries, "not even one gymnast can land [a vault]", "the entire United States team performed it with ease¹⁰¹⁹". It was also said that in women's basketball, "the gap between the United States and the rest of the world remained as sizable as ever in this tournament¹⁰²⁰". Nevertheless, from time to time these comparisons turned into an unnecessary diminishment of the performance and abilities of certain countries to participate in sport. The most significant case can be found in the references to Australia¹⁰²¹ in the British newspapers. For example, *The Telegraph* highlighted the fact that Yorkshire was "beating" Australia in the medal table: "The Brownlee brothers' double medal win in the triathlon has boosted the Olympic credentials of their home county of Yorkshire, putting it ahead of Australia¹⁰²²"; that Britain had "inflicted misery on their rivals at London 2012¹⁰²³" and that more than halfway through the Games Australia had won only "T.W.O." gold medals, while New Zealand and Kazakhstan had already achieved six triumphs¹⁰²⁴". These types of diminishing comparisons could also be found in other British quality newspapers, *The Independent*, for example, which used expressions such as "Heroes to zeroes. The Aussies' biggest flops¹⁰²⁵". According to media ethicist Chris Roberts, the value of these types of comparisons is doubtful:

Of course, you want to appeal to your readers, and your readers care about ethnocentrism, what matters is local. I think that the line gets crossed when somehow we believe that our nation is somehow better than another nation, because "our guys" are able to "beat you guys" in a sport. I think that is wrong (Chris Roberts, interview, July 2014).

Negative references to other countries and foreign athletes

Fortunately, blatantly negative references to other countries and nationalities were not often discovered in the sample examined. However, certain simplistic stereotypes *were* employed. In *The Guardian*, there was a clear negative stereotyping in the case of the Russian pole vaulter Isinbayeva, expressed through quotes from the British athlete

¹⁰¹⁸ "A successful trip" (2012, August 13). *The New York Times*, p. D2.

¹⁰¹⁹ Macur, J. (2012, August 1). "U.S. flies high and stands alone". *The New York Times*, p. B11.

¹⁰²⁰ Bishop, G. (2012, August 12). "U.S. women run away with 5th straight gold". *The New York Times*, p. SP4.

¹⁰²¹ Not surprisingly, as will be commented on in the presentation of the results relating to the deontological principle of responsibility, the narratives of competition with Australia were more developed throughout the British newspapers' pages, due to historical and sporting reasons.

¹⁰²² "Yorkshire is beating Australia" (2012, August 8). *The Daily Telegraph*, p. 3.

¹⁰²³ Mairs, G. (2012, August 5). "Murray ready for double". *The Sunday Telegraph*, p. S18.

¹⁰²⁴ Norman, M. (2012, August 7). "Oi Aussie, we can't hear you any more!". *The Daily Telegraph*, p. S33.

¹⁰²⁵ Marks, K. (2012, August 7). "Australia on the top of the word? Quite the opposite ...". *The Independent*, p. 8.

Holly Bleasdale: “Isinbayeva comes into a competition really late, tries to psych everyone out [...] I’ve seen her do that, looking like a tramp on a street corner”. The author Richard Williams also referred to her extreme mannerisms and criticized her Tweets thanking “Roman Abramovich for funding a new sports centre or to announce her appointment as an ambassador for a brand of luxury watches¹⁰²⁶”. *The New York Times* employed the adjective “sinister” in a headline: “Yes, it’s a sport, and Russia’s sinister dolls win¹⁰²⁷” referring to the Russian synchronized swimmers. It could be argued that the adjective only referred to their costumes for the competition, in accordance with their somewhat scary routine, but selecting this expression for a headline about the Russian competitors certainly generated doubts. The denigrating statements about their appearance, instead of a focus on the technical skill and artistry of the athletes, were criticized in a letter to the editor¹⁰²⁸. Another case of a simplistic stereotype can be found in *The Sunday Telegraph*’s portrayal of the cyclist Alexander Vinokurov. Just because he is from Kazakhstan, he was mentioned as “Borat” several times in the piece, including in the headline and in a quote from a spectator: “Beaten by bloody Borat¹⁰²⁹”.

To understand the low impact of explicitly negative references to and vitriolic expressions describing other countries, it should be recognized that in quality newspapers, because of their newsroom cultures, the type of nationalism that is conveyed through the sports pages isn’t as extreme as that which is expressed in the tabloid newspapers, as John Vincent explains:

In my line of research, I have looked at how journalists in broadsheet newspapers in the United Kingdom, the United States and Canada have framed or portrayed major international sporting events like the FIFA World Cup or the Olympic Games or the Wimbledon Tennis Championships. I have found for the most part that the serious newspapers often provide a very nuanced, clever, inventive approach to their coverage. That is not to say that there isn’t a little bit of patriotism and even at times jingoism, but normally the more serious newspapers provide a fair, balanced approach. That being said, I do think one of the contemporary trends is the tabloidization, generally. I think that there are times when even the serious broadsheets, particularly in a major international sporting event when national identity comes forward, can be overtly patriotic and often even the discourse is a juxtaposition between who we are and what our values are and a negative stereotype of the others, of the other nations. But that is particularly true within tabloid

¹⁰²⁶ Williams, R. (2012, August 7). “Isinbayeva loses high-stakes poker game to Suhr on a countback”. *The Guardian*, Olympics 2012, p. 4.

¹⁰²⁷ Lyall, S. (2012, August 8). “Yes, it’s a sport, and Russia’s sinister dolls win”. *The New York Times*, pp. A1, B12.

¹⁰²⁸ Grady, D.S.; Greenspan, R.J. (2012, August 12). “Putting image aside: a hurdler’s qualities”. *The New York Times*, p. SP11.

¹⁰²⁹ White, J. (2012, July 29). “‘Borat’ gatecrashes party as fans’ hopes fade”. *The Sunday Telegraph*, pp. S2–S3.

newspapers. During the FIFA World Cup, particularly when the British tabloid newspapers follow the English national team, for example, they are very guilty of almost employing or dusting off the old tropes and stereotyped images, particularly if it is against the major rival nations like Argentina or Germany, they are quite capable of some vitriolic, unpleasant stereotypes and national narratives (John Vincent, interview, July 2014).

4.3. Principle of responsibility

4.3.1. Respect for the privacy of sportsmen and sportswomen

Moving on to the deontological principle of responsibility and, more concretely, on to respect for the privacy of sportsmen and sportswomen, it can be argued that the media sampled published an extensive range of pieces that foregrounded and constructed the human dimension¹⁰³⁰ of athletes. However, by and large, the newspapers did this respectfully, without incurring a blatant invasion of privacy or an exaggeration of sensational details relating to the athletes' private lives¹⁰³¹. According to their social responsibility as quality media, exposés and unauthorized reporting of private elements were out of the equation in the coverage of London 2012. The media therefore complied with the essential recommendations established in the major codes of ethics (UNESCO, Art. 6; Council of Europe, Arts 23–24; NUJ, Art. 6; IPSO, Art. 3; SPJ, Art. 2; FAPE, Art. 4; CPC, Art. 9). Illustrative examples of building the backstory – the human dimension of athletes – in a responsible way could be found in the pieces that placed emphasis on personal endeavour and the overcoming of adversities.

A first case in point can be observed in the portrayal of the US judoka Kayla Harrison. In an interview with Ian Chadband at *The Daily Telegraph*¹⁰³², Harrison explained her story of how she was sexually abused by her former coach when she was a girl. Many passages revisited her torment and how she felt at that moment: “I was young, terrified but really didn’t understand. Even at an early age, I was putting a lot of pressure on myself to please people. My world revolved around Daniel. He was my sun. All I wanted to do was please him. Unfortunately, he took advantage of that”. Harrison also

¹⁰³⁰ We should take into account the fact that, at the Olympics: “much of the coverage is not written for the sports fan, so journalists are not writing for a swimming fan or a swimming aficionado. They are writing for a casual reader. That means that they are accentuating the human interest area and the ethnocentric dimension to it” (Raymond Boyle, interview, November 2013).

¹⁰³¹ We should exclude from this assertion the reporting on private aspects linked to the issues “Sex at the Olympics” and “Partying at the Olympics”, which have been examined in Section 4.1.6. (Avoiding sensationalism and trivialization in news reporting).

¹⁰³² Chadband, I. (2012, August 2). “Harrison ready for gold after years of torment”. *The Daily Telegraph*, pp. S36–S37.

explained that for many years, she felt an “emotional wreck, severely depressed, suicidal”. However, the media did not overemphasize further details about her past and traumatic situation. By contrast, emphasis was essentially placed on how she overcame the situation to participate in London 2012, showing that her story can be an inspiring example for many youngsters who have suffered similarly in these kinds of situations. A similar approach could be perceived in articles such as “Judo gives her gold, but also gave her horror”, in *The New York Times*¹⁰³³ and further pieces published in other American quality staples such as the *Los Angeles Times*¹⁰³⁴ and *USA Today*¹⁰³⁵.

A second example of constructing a human story without violating the privacy of the athletes could be found in the case of the British swimmer Gemma Spofforth. The media did mention that she lost her mother to cancer in 2007 and that her father’s partner and daughter both died of the same disease in 2011, a situation that drove her to contemplate suicide. Nevertheless, newspapers positively reflected on the fact that she had decided to come back to competition and that she was channelling her energy into becoming a counsellor¹⁰³⁶.

A third example revolves around the portrayal of the British triple jumper Yamilé Aldama. In a report from the series “The big read”, in *The Daily Telegraph*¹⁰³⁷ and in the piece “Aldama short of medal but holds head high¹⁰³⁸” in *The Guardian*, journalists provided details about her personal circumstances and highlighted the many adversities that she had faced throughout her life without emphasizing the more sensationalist points. Newspapers explained that she grew up in penury in Havana, that her husband, Andrew Dodds, spent seven and a half years in prison for being implicated in a £40 million drug-running operation, that her British passport application was rejected and that she found herself living as a penniless, lonely single mother in London. She later had to join the Sudanese team in order to compete in Athens 2004 and Beijing 2008 before she was granted a British passport in 2010. Reporting on all

¹⁰³³ Robertson, C. (2012, August 3). “Judo gives her gold, but also gave her horror”. *The New York Times*, pp. A1, B14.

¹⁰³⁴ Baxter, K. (2012, August 3). “Emotional journey to the stand”. *Los Angeles Times*, p. V6.

¹⁰³⁵ Mihoces, G. (2012, August 3). “For Harrison, healing comes with history”. *USA Today*, p. 5D.

¹⁰³⁶ McRae, D. (2012, July 31). “Franklin’s first gold gives weight to the hype”. *The Guardian*, Olympics 2012, pp. 4–5; Bull, A. (2012, July 31). “Trio miss out on medals to leave swimmers in need of a fillip”. *The Guardian*, Olympics 2012, pp. 4–5.

¹⁰³⁷ Brown, O. (2012, August 4). “Not plastic. Just tough, loyal and talented”. *The Daily Telegraph*, p. S31.

¹⁰³⁸ Addley, E. (2012, August 6). “Aldama short of medal but holds head high”. *The Guardian*, Olympics 2012, p. 5.

these adverse circumstances in Aldama's life was essential in order to inform readers about her courageous character.

Other cases in which personal details were provided in a respectful and non-sensationalist way, with the sole purpose of building the human stories of athletes, include reports on: the swimmer Danna Vollmer, who overcome a heart operation to win the Olympic gold medal in the 100 metres butterfly¹⁰³⁹; diver Tom Daley, who took part in London 2012 after being bullied at school and also losing his father to cancer in 2011¹⁰⁴⁰; judoka Ashley McKenzie, who ended up being a star despite the fact that he suffers from ADHD, that he spent time in a young offenders institution and was banned from sport for drinking and fighting¹⁰⁴¹; football player Kelly Smith, who drank heavily at university in the US but given the support of his family, the Football Association and coaches, managed to overcome his addiction¹⁰⁴²; basketball player Geno Augustus, who had three tumours removed¹⁰⁴³; and volleyball player Jack Gibb, who also overcame cancer¹⁰⁴⁴.

Similar observations were noted in the cases of several boxers: Jamel Herring, who lost her daughter to sudden infant death syndrome when she was two months old¹⁰⁴⁵; Claressa Shields, who was raped by a family acquaintance when she was younger¹⁰⁴⁶; Anthony Ogogo, who competed in the Olympics shortly after his mother suffered a brain haemorrhage¹⁰⁴⁷; and Gemma Gibbons, whose mother died of leukaemia in 2004¹⁰⁴⁸. There was also water polo coach Miki Oca, who overcame his addiction to cocaine and came back to sport¹⁰⁴⁹, among many others. An exception was a report

¹⁰³⁹ Martínez, J.B. (2012, July 30). "Con el corazón en un puño". *La Vanguardia*, pp. 40–1.

¹⁰⁴⁰ McRae, D. (2012, July 21). "My dream is to win a gold medal. If I dive my best it can happen. I really believe that". *The Guardian*, Sport, pp. 10–11.

¹⁰⁴¹ Williams, Z. (2012, July 18). "McKenzie is the wild child breaking judo's conventions". *The Guardian*, p. 44.

¹⁰⁴² Winter, H. (2012, August 3). "Smith reveals life of abuse and self-harm". *The Daily Telegraph*, p. S37. See also: McRae, D. (2012, July 25). "It was devastating when my dad told me that I couldn't play with the boys any more". *The Guardian*, Olympics 2012, pp. 8–9.

¹⁰⁴³ Bishop, G. (2012, July 31). "American's success puts her pain in perspective". *The New York Times*, p. B15.

¹⁰⁴⁴ Martínez, J.B. (2012, August 1). "La historia de Jake Gibb". *La Vanguardia*, p. 41.

¹⁰⁴⁵ Bearak, B. (2012, August 1). "U.S. marine loses in boxing". *The New York Times*, p. B17.

¹⁰⁴⁶ Maese, R. (2012, August 10). "Shields completes journey from Flint to gold". *The Washington Post*, p. D7.

¹⁰⁴⁷ Jackson, J. (2012, July 29). "Ogogo wins for battling mother". *The Guardian*, Olympics 2012, p. 10.

¹⁰⁴⁸ Mairs, G. (2012, August 3). "Gibbons' silver banishes gloom". *The Daily Telegraph*, p. S15.

¹⁰⁴⁹ Martín, L. (2012, August 9). "El milagro de Miki Oca". *El País*, p. 46.

about one particular person that was translated into a rather sensationalist headline: “From a life of clubs and drugs to gold in four years”¹⁰⁵⁰. This referred to the British boxer Anthony Joshua, who had been charged for possessing cannabis and was suspended by the British Amateur Boxing Association.

Leaving athletes aside, the death of Conrad Readman (a 49-year-old Colchester “fan who had hoped to attend every day of the Games”) from a heart attack during London 2012 was reported by *The Daily Telegraph*¹⁰⁵¹ and *The Guardian*¹⁰⁵² in brief news pieces without providing unnecessary details of his life. This contrasted with the treatment chosen by tabloids such as *The Daily Mail*¹⁰⁵³, which took plenty of photographs from his Facebook page to illustrate articles it wrote on the issue.

It is important to recognize that the absence of major cases relating to invasion of privacy during the timeframe of the observation is due to the particular newspapers that have been examined and the cultures that these publications have, as explained by media ethicist Chris Frost:

It is very important to understand the particular culture of the newsrooms. In *The News of the World*, for instance, it was fine to tap into people’s phones. They knew that it wasn’t ok and they should have known that it was illegal. But they thought they would get away with it. It became a cultural norm that it was acceptable to tap into people’s phones to find what was going on, it was convenient and it became the norm to get the sources in an illegal and unethical way. Sports journalists, especially in broadsheets, are clearly aware that if they run certain stories they would lose access and they shy away and they would not be able to provide anything to their readers. So the ethical battles tend to be more subtle, they are not doing anything like intrusive exposés of sports players, partly because they know that if they did it, they would probably completely lose their access. So it is also a cultural thing (Chris Frost, interview, October 2013).

Having said that, there was one particular case in which the line between providing information to foreground the athletes’ lives and the invasion of privacy was not so clear cut. We need to refer to a report about Gary Wiggins, the father of cyclist Bradley Wiggins, published in *The Daily Telegraph* and entitled “Town’s dark secret over killing

¹⁰⁵⁰ Marsden, S. (2012, August 13). “From a life of clubs and drugs to gold in four years”. *The Daily Telegraph*, p. 9.

¹⁰⁵¹ “Fan suffers heart attack at velodrome” (2012, August 8). *The Daily Telegraph*, p. S28.

¹⁰⁵² Taylor, M. (2012, August 8). “Superfan dies”. *The Guardian*, p. 6.

¹⁰⁵³ Shergold, A. (2012, August 7). “Olympics superfan who spent every day of the Games watching events live dies of suspected heart attack at the velodrome”. *MailOnline*. <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2184852/London-2012-Olympics-superfan-Conrad-Readman-dies-suspected-heart-attack-velodrome.html> [Last access: 22-09-2015].

of Wiggins' father¹⁰⁵⁴. It is true, however, that many details about Wiggins' father (his drinking problems, the fact that he would smuggle amphetamine tablets through customs, his obsessive personality, the fact that he abandoned his family, that he had been found beaten up in the street in New South Wales, and so on) had already been published by the cyclist in his autobiography *In pursuit of glory* (2008)¹⁰⁵⁵.

Nevertheless, the aforementioned report in *The Daily Telegraph* went far beyond these details in that it had elicited additional information about the life and violent death of Gary Wiggins, breaking down the barrier between public and private, between what should be noteworthy in sports reporting and what should not be. When employing the concept of relevance (Cummins Gauthier, 2010), it could be argued that this extra information did not fall within the category of "public interest". To begin with, on the front page of the sports supplement, the story received similar treatment to that which it could have been granted in a tabloid newspaper, characterized by the use of the word "Exclusive": "Exclusive. Dark secret of the town where Wiggins' father was killed".

Inside the newspaper, the two-page report included citizens' views in the search for more details on Gary Wiggins' death as a consequence of a fight after a house party, and featured emotional quotes from his "tearful" sister, Glenda Hughes, who spoke to *Telegraph Sport* and demanded that the police reopen the case. The report clearly overemphasized Gary Wiggins' alcoholism problems by including too many quotes from friends and acquaintances which it is doubtful should ever have been published. The following quotes are illustrative examples of what was said: that "he led a lonely sort of life around the pubs of Muswellbrook"; that "he never rode a bike to the pub – he was too drunk all the time"; that "if he had 50 dollars on him, he would drink 50 dollars and then bum drinks if he could"; that "if there was a pub, Gary would have been drinking in it"; and that "he was just a drunken idiot who loved to talk about his boy", among others. In photographic terms, the report was illustrated with photographs of Gary Wiggins with Bradley, Glenda Hughes, the cemetery where he was found, the entrance to the town and the pub where Gary was often a "drunken nuisance". Was there an overwhelming benefit for *The Daily Telegraph's* readers and for citizens in general in publishing this report?

¹⁰⁵⁴ Thorne, F. (2012, July 25). "Town's dark secret over killing of Wiggins' father". *The Daily Telegraph*, pp. S10–S11.

¹⁰⁵⁵ Lewis, T. (2012, July 22). "Bradley Wiggins. The undisputed king of the road". *The Guardian*, p. 30.

4.3.2. Avoiding the warlike language that fosters confrontation

With regard to the transmission of violence and the use of confrontational narratives in the media coverage of London 2012, a close analysis revealed that on many occasions, media reports from all six newspapers continued using military expressions and vocabulary and war analogies to foster rivalries between countries and athletes. Illustrative examples include: “kicked and smacked in the face”, “to make a killing”, “to rocket down”, “to destroy”, “bazooka shots”, “missile”, “lethal weapon”, “be out for revenge”, “revenge served cold”, “opponent”, “battlefield”, “annihilation”, “victim”, “fight”, “shootout”, “soldiers”, “commander in chief”, “ammunition”, “firepower”, “killer”, “pugnacious fighter”, “to bludgeon”, “assassin”, “aggressor”, “onslaught”, “red-hot rivalry”, “to trounce”, “army”, “contingent”, “troops”, “battle”, “combat”, “deadly duel”, “thrilling duel”, “squad”, “sniper”, “nemesis”, “barrage”, “rough match” and “clash”, among others.

It is worthwhile pointing out that warlike language was not only ascribed to combat sports such as taekwondo or boxing, in which the use of this kind of violent vocabulary might be necessary to explain the development of the action (for example: “Joshua drew blood from Dychko’s nose in round three¹⁰⁵⁶”; and “Shields remained the aggressor¹⁰⁵⁷”) and might even be translated into pictures featuring blood, as happened in *The Daily Telegraph* with the images of the Greco-Roman wrestler Alan Khugaev¹⁰⁵⁸, but it was also extended into the media reporting of a wide range of other sporting disciplines (basketball, swimming, handball, athletics, water polo, canoeing, rowing, cycling, hockey, tennis, sailing, football, table tennis, badminton, and so on). Illustrations of this trend are as follows: in the case of basketball, a triumph of the US men’s team was considered a “history-making 156-73 annihilation of Nigeria¹⁰⁵⁹” and Kevin Durant was described as “the reluctant assassin¹⁰⁶⁰”; in badminton, the match between Lin Dan (China) and Lee Chong Wei (Malaysia), was framed as “Lee’s opportunity for revenge¹⁰⁶¹”; and in rowing, *The Guardian* pointed out that Katherine

¹⁰⁵⁶ Mitchell, K. (2012, August 11). “Joshua just ‘a day away from glory’ after victory lifts him into the final”. *The Guardian*, Olympics 2012, p. 7.

¹⁰⁵⁷ Maese, R. (2012, August 10). “Shields completes journey from Flint to gold”. *The Washington Post*, p. D7.

¹⁰⁵⁸ Picture essay. “Greco-Roman wrestling” (2012, August 7). *The Daily Telegraph*, pp. S18, S23.

¹⁰⁵⁹ Svrluga, B. (2012, August 5). “James plays the closer’s role”. *The Washington Post*, p. D6.

¹⁰⁶⁰ Bishop, G. (2012, August 9). “Urged to shoot, Durant obliges as U.S. ousts Australia”. *The New York Times*, p. B16.

¹⁰⁶¹ Segal, D. (2012, August 6). “In battle between longtime rivals, more than one gold is in offing”. *The New York Times*, p. D2.

Grainger was plotting “to make a killing on the lake¹⁰⁶²”. Furthermore, with regard to the hockey tournament, the defeat of the British men’s team against Holland was considered by *The Telegraph* to be an “onslaught” and a “9-2 annihilation¹⁰⁶³”. In cycling, Grégory Baugé, the sprint world champion, was reported to be “ready to go to war against Jason Jenny and other British riders at the London Velodrome¹⁰⁶⁴”.

The observation of journalists’ language has revealed even more cases worthy of highlighting. First, in the analysis piece “Franklin isn’t kidding around¹⁰⁶⁵” in *The Washington Post*, Sally Jenkins pointed out that “for a nice kid, Missy Franklin will knife you in the pool¹⁰⁶⁶”. As the author expressed, “she comes on all bubbles and dimples, all Rapunzel ropes of hair, and Justin Bieber worshipping. Then she gets in an Olympic swimming race, and all of a sudden, everybody is floating around with lifeless eyes”. As mentioned in Section 4.1.4, this portrayal was criticized by the reader Tom Farquhar in a letter to the editor, in which he argued that “it’s time we let go of the pretense that essential to athletic success is the ‘killer instinct’”. The reader placed the focus on Franklin’s integrity and pointed out that her “optimism, generosity, grace, intensity and ambition could be celebrated for what they are – the creative, constructive values that empower success in the face of adversity and ennobled human experience¹⁰⁶⁷”.

Second, after the bronze medal won by the Spanish female handball team against South Korea, Walter Oppenheimer wrote the article “Guerreras esculpidas en bronce”, which contained many war metaphors and expressions, none of them formatted in italics or between quotation marks¹⁰⁶⁸. As Oppenheimer wrote: “it was an epic match

¹⁰⁶² Kitson, R. (2012, July 28). “Grainger puts her Clarice Starling role on hold as she plots to make a killing on the lake”. *The Guardian*, Olympics 2012, p. 5.

¹⁰⁶³ Benammar, E. (2012, August 10). “GB blown away by Holland onslaught”. *The Daily Telegraph*, pp. S16–S17.

¹⁰⁶⁴ Gallagher, B. (2012, July 31). “I feel like caged tiger, says Bauge as he prepares for battle with Team GB”. *The Daily Telegraph*, p. S37.

¹⁰⁶⁵ Jenkins, S. (2012, July 31). “Franklin isn’t kidding around”. *The Washington Post*, pp. A1, A12.

¹⁰⁶⁶ A similar expression was used in *The Guardian* to refer to Missy Franklin, but on this occasion, the expression was not used by a journalist but was a quote from John Koslovsky: “When that horn goes off and she jumps in the water, she will reach up and rip your heart out”. See: Braiker, B. (2012, July 19). “She’s the nicest person in the world, but in the water she will reach up and rip your heart out”. *The Guardian*, p. 39.

¹⁰⁶⁷ “Success and sour grapes at the Summer Games” (2012, August 4). *The Washington Post*, p. A13.

¹⁰⁶⁸ Leaving this case aside, it is worth pointing out that, in broad terms, *El País* was the newspaper that was more consistent in differentiating the warlike expressions by formatting them in quotation marks or italics, in order to make its readers understand unequivocally that these terms were used as metaphors. This good practice was consistent with article 4.21 of the *El País Style Guide*, which

In the case of resorting to that language of war, it is still troubling and you would hope that journalists would be more aware of the inflation of language. One of the justifications of sport is that it is not war, it is a way of nations coming together in respectful competition under rules, and so on, not to destroy or harm each other, which inevitably happens in war. The use of this language, aggressive, warlike and masculinist in particular, it's lazy, it's just lacking the imagination to find other ways of presenting the sporting action. I know it is difficult. If I was a journalist writing words every day, I would do something similar myself. I would use "kill", because it is a strong way of saying "beating". Journalists are increasingly being asked to write a lot in a range of platforms (broadcast, online, in print). Journalists are not only operating in the print world, they now have to operate across other communicative environments. But I think that journalists have to be reminded that sport is not war, it is not war by other means. It is not analogous to war. It is sport, not a substitute for war. It is sport, a different practice. I think it is dangerous to treat sport as if it is war, because it can lead to antagonism between nations and sometimes it can lead to physical violence between fans, we know that. I think that newspapers should take their responsibility of setting the tone of the coverage. If they use warlike expressions, it is more likely that people will adopt those expressions, because of their power to represent sport. Most of us don't go to the stadium, we rely on the media to tell us what happened. Images are also increasingly constructed in a warlike way, the photographs, the audiovisual. It is something of an irony, because the modern Olympics were supposed to deter people from engaging in war. Maybe there was also some militarism beneath it, in the idea that young people should become healthy, and so on. But the official justification of the Olympics is that they are not warlike. And they should not be represented as such in the media (David Rowe, interview, March 2015).

4.3.2.1. The persistence of confrontation narratives between countries and athletes

In addition to the use of specific words having a military analogy, certain battle narratives were clearly exploited and developed throughout the newspapers' pages. In these instances, the media adopted and emphasized the frame of conflict. These confrontational narratives are linked with the "orthodox rhetoric" mode of sports journalism described by David Rowe. It should be remembered that "rhetorical sports journalism generates and capitalizes, either soberly or excitedly, upon conflict and controversy. It draws heavily not on the imagined psychic communion of Olympian sport, but on sport's capacity to represent, both literally and symbolically, disharmony and conflictual identification" (Rowe, 1992: 104). This symbolic conflict is often "framed in relation to regional or national identities" (Burton, 2010: 270).

A first case in point can be found in the coverage of the rivalry between the British sailor Ben Ainslie and the Dane Jonas Høgh-Christensen. This reached a new dimension and height of media attention after Ainslie accused Høgh-Christensen and the Dutch sailor Pieter-Jan Postma "of teaming up to claim he had hit a mark in one

race¹⁰⁷¹”. Ben Ainslie, “one of the most ruthless and aggressive competitors these Isles have ever produced” was said to have “exploded in anger at Finn class leader Jonas Høgh-Christensen¹⁰⁷²”, as Tom Cary of *The Telegraph* highlighted. In the same article, the newspaper pointed out that if Høgh-Christensen wanted the title, he would “have to fight it inch by bloody inch”. The day before the gold medal was contested, Cary qualified the confrontation between the British and the Dane as a “grudge match” and a “battle”: “never mind the Battle of Trafalgar; in years to come students, at least of Olympic history, may talk of the Battle of Weymouth Bay. An epic maritime duel¹⁰⁷³”.

A second notable case refers to the rivalry between Britain and Argentina. With regard to men’s hockey, *The Guardian* devoted the major part of the article “With scrupulous politeness from both sides, GB beat Argentina with big sticks¹⁰⁷⁴” to talking about the conflict between the two countries in relation to the Falkland Islands instead of focusing on the sporting dimension of the match. The piece included rather unnecessary phrases such as “None of the Argentine players know the words to their own anthem. Ah, it appears that it has no words” and “It is against the spirit of the Olympics to bear old grudges, but I put it to your honour that they started it”. Fortunately, the historically cold relations between the two countries – intensified by the 30th anniversary of the Falklands War – didn’t translate into further conflict narratives in the British press. In the review of the same match, *The Daily Telegraph* played down the issue, simply stating that even though there were “isolated incidents to feed the ‘enmity’ narrative”, it was not an “ill-tempered match¹⁰⁷⁵”.

A third significant case revolves around the persistence of the confrontation narratives between Britain and Australia (“It doesn’t matter what the sport is, Britain v Australia is always a grudge match¹⁰⁷⁶”). Even though the piece “GB v Aus¹⁰⁷⁷” by Owen Gibson was respectful and was not written in a particularly sensationalist way, it included some vocabulary that reminded readers of the strong sense of rivalry between the two countries. The author referred to Australia as “the old enemy” and characterized the

¹⁰⁷¹ Morris, S. (2012, August 6). “Ainslie the maths master is No 1 again”. *The Guardian*, Olympics 2012, p. 6.

¹⁰⁷² Cary, T. (2012, August 3). “Ainslie fury over rivals’ tactics”. *The Daily Telegraph*, p. S29.

¹⁰⁷³ Cary, T. (2012, August 4). “Ainslie gains upper hand in grudge match”. *The Daily Telegraph*, p. S13.

¹⁰⁷⁴ Williams, Z. (2012, July 31). “With scrupulous politeness from both sides, GB beat Argentina with big sticks”. *The Guardian*, p. 8.

¹⁰⁷⁵ Liew, J. (2012, July 31). “GB statement of intent makes world sit up and take notice”. *The Daily Telegraph*, pp. S16–S17.

¹⁰⁷⁶ Booth, R. (2012, August 1). “What to watch on day 5. Grudge match”. *The Guardian*, p. 5.

¹⁰⁷⁷ Owen, G. (2012, July 26). “GB v Aus”. *The Guardian*, Olympics 2012, pp. 6–7.

confrontation with Britain as the “fiercest”. The quotes included in the article from the Australian rower David Crawshay (“It is always good to win and it’s great if you can beat the Brits along the way”) and the sailor Malcolm Page (“There’s no doubt it would be great to knock Britain off their perch [...] It’s going to be war on the water”) also contributed to reinforcing that sense of rivalry. Other articles identified Britain and Australia as “arch rivals”¹⁰⁷⁸.

In order to try and understand why the media placed such emphasis on the rivalry between Britain and Australia, Boyle underlines that fact that several historical and sporting factors should be taken into consideration:

Within sports discourse, Britain has often looked towards Australia. There is a historical connection. They speak the same language, there are ties that bind in terms of previous political relationships, but the Australians have often been held up as a role model of how of they organize themselves in coaching. The comparative element has become important. Moreover, we need to look into certain sports. Although cricket is not in the Olympics, I think that the legacy of cricket¹⁰⁷⁹ overshadows some of that. And I think that if there wasn’t a cricket rivalry between England and Australia, I think that some of that coverage would be a bit different. A perception that the Australians are arrogant, a perception that they have succeeded in sport for so long¹⁰⁸⁰ [...] There is kind of a colonial dimension, which I would not like to overstate or overplay, but there is a way in which that is part of the cultural dimension. I think that that explains to some extent why there is confrontation between the two countries and also the sense of pleasure at others’ failure, of

¹⁰⁷⁸ Cracknell, J. (2012, August 3). “Arch rivals give nothing away in semi dry run”. *The Daily Telegraph*, pp. S16–S17.

¹⁰⁷⁹ The traditional rivalry between England and Australia in cricket is commented on in more detail by Richard Haynes: “In many sports, Australians for a large part of the twentieth century beat English at sports. That also contributed to raising the level of antagonism. For instance, in cricket, there is the biggest rivalry. The idea of the rivalry for the Ashes in cricket has permeated other sports where England plays against Australia, such as rugby. It is not that strong perhaps in athletics or even swimming. If you ask the Australians who are their biggest rivals in swimming, they would say US. If you asked them about the athletics, it would depend on the discipline. In cycling there was a confrontation because the two strongest nations were Britain and Australia. There is a strong historical, cultural and political dynamic going on there” (Richard Haynes, interview, October 2013).

¹⁰⁸⁰ The factor of Australian success in sport is commented on in more detail by John Horne: “Australia, in the 1980s, really started to develop a centralized system, they borrowed from Eastern Europe the principles of training elite groups of athletes to succeed in some international sports, and in that Australia did well, they improved performances in the Olympics and in competitions such as Rugby Union. They also hosted some of the best Games ever, the 2000 Sydney Olympics. That was almost like the pinnacle of success for the Australian sports policy that they had developed 20 years before, plus their policy of attracting events to the country. Since the 1990s, the UK governments wanted a policy that invested a lot of money into elite athletes. In a sense, you could say that 2012 was evidence of this process of delivering. A lot more public money is being invested in the production of elite athletes, because it was perceived as a valuable way of flagging up the country as successful” (John Horne, interview, November 2013).

Australia doing poorly and, particularly, in one of those head-to-head events, such as cycling and other areas as well. With the United States and China it is different, because they are so much bigger. But with other countries, such as Germany, there is another type of rivalry. I think that you have always had those kinds of cultural aspects that exist outside the sport but that surface in the sports pages, sometimes very explicitly and crudely but, in other cases, slightly more surreptitiously and quietly, but they are kind of still there. So I think that would be the case with Australia, those close links, history and the notion of sporting excellence (Raymond Boyle, interview, November 2013).

The American media also provided some noteworthy examples that illustrate the persistence of confrontation narratives. For instance, *The New York Times* gave exposure to the confrontation between the US and Canada in the women's football tournament¹⁰⁸¹ after the Canadian coach, John Herdman, accused the Americans of using "illegal" tactics at London 2012. A certain emphasis was also placed on the confrontation that arose between the US and Colombia, again in the women's football tournament, after Abby Wambach was punched by the Colombian player Lady Andrade¹⁰⁸². From the journalistic principle of non-violence, it is arguable whether *The Washington Post* should have included the quotes of both footballers, which do include a certain amount of aggressiveness (Wambach: "You think about yourself and what would you do on the street if you got sucker-punched"; Andrade: "They're the United States, the whistle always goes in their favor. They were hitting us and hitting us, but there was never a whistle"). After Wambach got her "revenge" by scoring a goal, the author Barry Svrluga pointed out that "the street fight could wait".

The IOC is perfectly aware of the reproduction of these confrontational narratives in the media, contrary to the principles of peace, international understanding, respect and non-violence established in the fundamental documents of the Olympic movement: the *Olympic Charter* (Art. 2) and the *IOC Code of Ethics*. However, they do not want to interfere or give any kind of more explicit recommendation to the media:

Obviously we try to transmit our values and our views, but again I would say that it is not our job to teach newspapers how to reach their audience. Probably if a tabloid or a red top is using a particular term it is probably because it is a term that works with the audience. Some of the kind of over-nationalistic stuff is not helpful, but are we going to stop it? Probably not. In Sochi, we have seen the return of a kind of rhetoric of the Cold War in the newspapers, probably on both sides. Do we like it? Not. Are we going to do something to change it? Neither. That is something that we live with, I guess (Mark Adams, interview, May 2014).

¹⁰⁸¹ AP (2012, August 6). "Critical of U.S. before matchup". *The New York Times*, p. D8.

¹⁰⁸² Svrluga, B. (2012, July 29). "Strike her? Wambach says she was punched by Colombian defender". *The Washington Post*, p. D6.

4.3.2.2. Examples of commitment to non-violence in sports reporting

Up to this point, an emphasis has been placed on outlining the presence of warlike language and confrontational narratives in the newspapers' pages. Nevertheless, inspiring examples of commitment to non-violence have been also found throughout the coverage. The most illustrative case in point can be found in the two-page "Fierce, shuddering collision but hope survives conflict"¹⁰⁸³ article, focused on the handball match between Croatia and Serbia.

Although the situation between these two countries is still difficult due to the scars of the Balkan war, Barney Ronay of *The Guardian* highlighted the positive value of non-violence: "In London, happily, a sense of Balkan good-fellowship prevailed. Beneath the sin-binnings and the full-bore physicality of competition this was not so much a handball of hate as a handball of hope. Perhaps even another footnote in the grand history of Olympian forays into international relations". As Ronay underlined: "the cold war was a tragedy on every conceivable level. But it did, at least, give us two decades of unforgettably epic-scale Olympic Games. Croatia versus Serbia was an example of something else: of sport as simply sport, but also as theatre, and modern history, and perhaps even – just a little bit – as a force for a kind of handballing reconciliation".

A mention also should be made of *The Guardian's* Zoe Williams' personal position on fighting, which she articulated in the piece "Women pioneers who are happy to punch their weight"¹⁰⁸⁴. This example shows that although women (and men) take part in boxing, judo, taekwondo and wrestling and should be praised for their sporting qualities and athleticism, we should not forget the violence component of those sports: "the sight of a woman beaten up, even by another woman, makes me feel nauseous. It seems like a little bit of a shame to have to watch something so horrible in the name of the sisterhood. But it's horrible watching men beat each other up, also". As Williams added, "I would still prefer if people didn't hit one another, and I would prefer it, just for this one fight, if both people could have won".

4.3.2.3. The situation with regard to the day-to-day coverage of sport

As it has been demonstrated, even though some notable examples of commitment to non-violence have been found, the coverage of London 2012 in the newspapers

¹⁰⁸³ Ronay, B. (2012, August 1). "Fierce, shuddering collision but hope survives conflict". *The Guardian*, Olympics 2012, pp. 8–9.

¹⁰⁸⁴ Williams, Z. (2012, August 6). "Women pioneers who are happy to punch their weight". *The Guardian*, Olympics 2012, p. 14.

sampled continued to be pervaded with certain warlike language and confrontational narratives. Clifford Christians, a professor of media ethics, highlights the “incredible difficulty” of implementing the principle of non-violence in the field of sports journalism because this element is still part of the story that is transmitted:

Even when you have a sophisticated style of reporting, it still communicates violence. That is especially true in some sports such as hockey in North America, in which violent incidents are part of the story and they need to be covered, because it is part of the news. There is definitely a key challenge there. In the covering of it, how do we still communicate that human relations have to be peaceful and non-violent? (Clifford Christians, interview, April 2013).

According to José Luis Rojas, more and more in the quality media there is a greater awareness than in the past of the use of certain types of violent language. That being said, he highlights the fact that in the sports print and online newspapers as well as on the social networking sites, there is still a long way to go:

I believe that, fortunately, more and more, professionals care about taking care of language in sports journalism, especially in the sports sections of general information newspapers. We should differentiate, because sports dailies (especially on digital) reach out to a massive sports consumer and tend to monitor those issues to a lesser extent. Those outlets commonly use expressions like “Spanoulis, no 1 public enemy of Spain”. Why public enemy? You can say “rival”, “opponent”, but why enemy? This fixation on using certain warlike expressions in sports language remains in media that are targeted to a reader focused solely on sports. Perhaps in the general press and quality press, that issue is more taken care of, because there are stylebooks, in some cases there are ombudsmen and because there is a greater task of editing. In general, they are more conscious of the social responsibility that the use of those words has, that these words can lead to non-desired behaviours. Fortunately, I think that there is a bigger consciousness among sports journalists of these aspects in texts and images. We should take into account that images can be even more dangerous than words. On the Internet and on the social networking sites, there is a lot to be improved (José Luis Rojas, interview, June 2014).

4.3.3. Respect for religious beliefs

With regard to the last area of the principle of responsibility, the research shows that, with some exceptions, the religious beliefs of athletes were not usually propelled into the media spotlight. When religion became a key component of an athlete’s personality, such as happened with the Irish boxer Katie Taylor, the print media treated the issue with due respect and tolerance. Newspapers described her as “deeply religious¹⁰⁸⁵” a “devout Christian¹⁰⁸⁶” and a “born-again Christian¹⁰⁸⁷” and included brief

¹⁰⁸⁵ Davies, G.A. (2012, August 9). “Fields of Athenry ring out for finalist Taylor”. *The Daily Telegraph*, pp. S16–S17.

¹⁰⁸⁶ Barkham, P. (2012, August 5). “Brit (and Irish) to watch”. *The Guardian*, p. 7.

¹⁰⁸⁷ Bearak, B. (2012, August 10). “Striking a blow for Ireland”. *The New York Times*, pp. B9, B16.

quotes of Taylor reflecting on religion as an inspiration for her career. But the newspapers did not go beyond these or make a great fuss about the issue. Likewise, *The Guardian* briefly reported that the American Allyson Felix, daughter of a church minister, read “her favourite passage from Philipians before every race¹⁰⁸⁸” and *The Telegraph* mentioned that badminton player Li Dan had a cross on his left arm as a reminder of his “grandmother, a Christian, who prays for him before matches¹⁰⁸⁹”.

The Guardian also reflected on the story of Abdul Buhari, who decided not to risk his Olympic performance for Ramadan. The newspaper was careful to include his exact quotes on the matter: “It was a really difficult decision because I’ve fasted all my life for Ramadan – it’s incredibly important to me. But if I fast, it will be impossible to stay in peak condition and perform at my highest level in the Games [...] I believe God is forgiving, and I’ll make up for every single day I’ve missed¹⁰⁹⁰”.

Considering specifically the Muslim sportswomen who participated in London 2012, despite the fact that the media overemphasized their different attire¹⁰⁹¹, reports were respectful with regard to their religious beliefs and did not include negative assertions about Islam (UNESCO, Art. 9; IFJ, Art. 7; FAPE, Art. 7). It should be highlighted that newspapers did not use the stereotype that Islam is not positive about sport. In fact, Islam is an enabling religion and considers that sport is beneficial for health and recreational reasons (Amara, 2008; Benn and Dagkas, 2012; Walseth and Fasting, 2003). The newspapers sampled did not employ disrespectful expressions such as “unchanging”, “monolithic”, “different”, “intolerant”, “irrational”, “sexist”, “misogynist”, “culturally oppressive”, “patriarchal” or “fundamentalist”, which were observed in previous investigations (Benn and Dagkas, 2012; Chin et al., 2009; Malcolm et al., 2010; Vintges, 2012). In the case of the Afghan runner Tahmina Kohistani, Mike Wise of *The Washington Post* clearly showed that sport is not incompatible with devotion to the Muslim faith: “She ran. And ran. Because no one could make her believe churning

¹⁰⁸⁸ Bull, A. (2012, August 9). “Joy at last for Felix but Jeter grilling leaves USA with sour taste”. *The Guardian*, Olympics 2012, p. 3.

¹⁰⁸⁹ Liew, J. (2012, August 6). “Lin versus Lee rivalry based on skill and respect”. *The Daily Telegraph*, pp. S34–S35.

¹⁰⁹⁰ Qureshi, H. (2012, July 23). “To fast or not to fast?”. *The Guardian*, G2, p. 12.

¹⁰⁹¹ During the coverage, the hijab and headscarf were highlighted as central elements of debate and symbolic conflict (Lenskyj, 2012; Shirazi and Mirshra, 2010), as could be seen in the controversy surrounding Wojdan Shaherkani’s wearing of the hijab. According to Bissell: “I think that they were kind of used as a spectacle, because their image refers to cultural difference. And what happens is that it reinforces those existing stereotypes we have about Muslims. I don’t know how I felt, because I wanted them to get covered, but I don’t know how it could have been without basically being a spectacle (Kim Bissell, interview, July 2014).

her legs as fast as she could possibly make them go was against Allah and the Muslim faith, which she remains so devoted to she refused to compete without the hijab, especially during the holy season of Ramadan¹⁰⁹².”

Apart from the issues mentioned above, other specific articles became helpful platforms for bigger debates on matters connected with sport and religion¹⁰⁹³. The piece “Reveling in shared faith¹⁰⁹⁴”, written by Omar Sacirbey in *The Washington Post*, explored the reasons as to why members of minority faiths in the US (Jews, Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs) follow American Olympians and athletes from other countries who follow the same religion as themselves. The article explained that “people like to see those from their own groups do well” and that “sometimes rooting for one’s religion is motivated by wanting to push back against persecution”. In line with this feeling, members of minority faith groups in the US supported the Malaysian shooter Nur Suryani Mohamed Taibi at London 2012 as if she were a hometown hero, given that her accomplishment “sent a great message to the world about Muslim women”.

The diversity of sources used in relation to people of different religions across the US should be positively highlighted: Rabbi Keith Stern of Temple Beth Avodah in Newton Centre, Massachusetts; Harold U. Ribalow, author of three books about Jewish athletes; Tarlochan Singh Nahal, a Sikh from San José; Vijay Pallod, president of the advocacy group Hindus of Greater Houston; Jeff Kornstein, who works for the American Jewish Historical Society in New York; Janaan Hashim, a Chicago lawyer who was visiting Jordan; and Sertac Sehlkoglu, who runs the Muslim Women in Sports blog). Information from the Religious News Service was also utilized.

Exceptionally, there was an occasion in which religion was clearly treated not as a serious matter of debate but rather as an object of curiosity, that is, as a commodity to draw more readers to a particular story. To be precise, we should refer to the treatment

¹⁰⁹² Wise, M. (2012, August 4). “From war-torn Afghanistan, a printer with the soul of a fighter”. *The Washington Post*, pp. D1, D7.

¹⁰⁹³ Beyond the sample studied, *USA Today* was a newspaper that made a significant effort to foster serious conversations about religion in relation to London 2012 through the Monday series “On religion”. Some of the issues covered include insightful reflections on the Olympics’ religious roots (written by Henry Brinton, author of *The welcoming congregation*) and on the impact of faith on Olympians (written by Tom Krattenmaker, the *USA Today* contributor specializing in religion and author of the book *Onward Christian athletes*, about Christianity in sports). See: Brinton, H.G. (2012, July 30). “Olympics’ religious roots”. *USA Today*, p. 7A; Brinton, H.G.; Krattenmaker, T. (2012, August 6). “Can faith help an Olympian?” *USA Today*, p. 7A.

¹⁰⁹⁴ Sacirbey, O. (2012, August 4). “Reveling in shared faith”. *The Washington Post*, p. B2.

*El País*¹⁰⁹⁵ and *La Vanguardia*¹⁰⁹⁶ gave to the story of the Spanish hockey player Carlos Ballvé, who decided to retire to become a seminarian. The approach given to this human interest story was not disrespectful but indeed boosted many worn-out clichés and stereotypes. Expressions included are illustrative of this trend: “If gold depends on divine help, it could be said that the Spanish team takes the lead”, “God wins, field hockey loses”, “God calls him” and “The faith of hockey moves medals. Spain, with the seminarian Litus Ballvé in their ranks, begins its ascension to glory”. These clichés were similar to those that could be found in other general information and sports newspapers such as *ABC* (“The Olympian that wants to be a priest¹⁰⁹⁷”), *Marca* (“Hockey is blessed¹⁰⁹⁸”) and *As* (“Ballvé, the seminarian who seeks the Olympic miracle¹⁰⁹⁹”), to list but a few.

¹⁰⁹⁵ Martín, L. (2012, July 29). “Dios gana, el hockey pierde”. *El País*, p. 63.

¹⁰⁹⁶ Vivanco, F. (2012, July 30). “La fe del hockey mueve medallas”. *La Vanguardia*, p. 43.

¹⁰⁹⁷ Yunta, E. (2012, July 29). “El olímpico que quiere ser cura”. *ABC*, p. 74.

¹⁰⁹⁸ Piferrer, D. (2012, July 31). “El hockey está bendecido”. *Marca*, Londres 2012, p. 10.

¹⁰⁹⁹ Martínez, A. (2012, July 26). “Ballbé, el seminarista que busca el milagro olímpico”. *As*, p. 21.

5. Conclusion

5.1. Concluding discussion

This dissertation has contributed to the field of sports and communication by engaging with the scholarly debate surrounding ethics and quality of information in sports journalism. The study offered a main research question (*To what extent did the British, American and Spanish press comply with the fundamental principles of journalism ethics and quality of information in their coverage of the London 2012 Olympics?*) and three subsequent research questions, which tried to ascertain whether long-held claims of sports journalism being a “toy department” could be substantiated during the coverage of the London 2012 Olympics. In trying to critically answer these questions, each one of the thematic axes studied has provided well-evidenced insight of good, bad and improvable practices in the reporting of this unique event linked to the deontological principles of truth, justice and responsibility. Textual evidence from 6,552 analysis units published by six prestigious media outlets has been contrasted with the codes of journalism ethics, central instruments among the traditional media accountability systems (Bertrand, 2001). Results have also been triangulated using semi-structured interviews with scholars, professionals and IOC representatives.

The combination of these empirical methods has allowed the researcher to present a detailed evaluation of the coverage provided by the six quality newspapers at London 2012. At the same time, the critical assessment of this coverage has allowed us to highlight some of the ongoing dynamics, debates and tensions in contemporary sports journalism. In doing so, this analysis has added new knowledge to the body of scholarly research in the field of sports communication and media ethics. In order to structure the final discussion of the findings in a systematic way and draw fruitful conclusions from the study, this section has generated a SWOT matrix that will consider the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats in the field examined.

5.1.1. Strengths

Does the sports section continue to be the “toy department” of the media? Based on the findings of this dissertation, in many of the proposed areas of inquiry, the coverage of London 2012 delivered by *The Guardian/The Observer*, *The Daily Telegraph/The Sunday Telegraph*, *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *El País* and *La Vanguardia* has contributed strongly to dispel this notion. As will be thoroughly argued later, this moniker cannot be applied to all contexts, all organizations and all newsroom

cultures. The analysis has provided ample evidence of a wide range of illuminating examples of quality journalism delivered by these newspapers, consistent with the essential prescriptions established in the major codes of media ethics. Fundamental strengths, therefore, have been clearly identified. First, the dissertation has provided solid proof that the media examined employed an extensive range of representative, authoritative and trustworthy sources to foreground their London 2012 stories (staff, sporting actors, institutional sources, experts, online resources, national and international media outlets, major news agencies and organizations from civil society, among other sources identified in Section 4.1.2). To include such an extraordinary volume and variety of primary and secondary sources was very challenging but it was well delivered by the newspapers sampled, which complied with the importance of news sources clearly stated by the major deontological codes (FAPE, Art. 13; SPJ, Art. 1; ASNE, Art. 6; APSE, Art. 6).

As expected, there was a heavy reliance on sporting actors (especially given the fact that accessing athletes at the Olympics is easier than in other environments), whose reactions complemented well the authenticity brought by the first-hand observation. Beyond this, the broad range of interlocutors employed, most of which are not commonly found in the day-to-day coverage of sports, shows that it is possible to carry out a journalistic task that does not rely solely on official sources (Cassidy, 2012; Sugden and Tomlinson, 2007) and those agents confined to the sports industry (Rowe, 2007). The use of knowledgeable scholars, experts and analysts from prestigious universities and companies was particularly noticeable throughout the timeframe of the observation. These types of sources certainly added in-depth knowledge to all the areas connected with the sporting competitions and the larger framework of the Games too.

Second, and notwithstanding the fact that the Olympics are so broad and concentrated that it is impossible for media organizations to cover every single detail of the competitions¹¹⁰⁰, let alone publish everything in the print matter¹¹⁰¹, the findings of the

¹¹⁰⁰ It should be also borne in mind that nobody consumes sporting mega-events, including the Olympic Games, only through one medium but rather through a variety of platforms.

¹¹⁰¹ It should also be taken into consideration that not everything was in the print newspapers, because the organizations studied concentrated a lot of their resources on website and digital content. *The Guardian/The Observer*, known for its online-first strategy, employed several digital strategies aside from the usual online reports. These included: live blogs, a specific data blog, picture weblogs, 60-second guides explaining the rules and tactics of the Olympic sports, a mobile application with a dedicated Olympic channel and an iPad-friendly dashboard, and additional e-books about the alternative history of the Olympic Games. *The Daily Telegraph* also featured a live blog, plus special series of slideshows, fact files on every Team GB athlete and details on every

project demonstrate that the newspapers examined employed a broad range of journalistic genres to report on a wide spectrum of Olympic disciplines, most of which remain off the radar in normal day-to-day coverage. In undertaking this task, the newspapers went to extraordinary lengths to deliver core ingredients that produce value in contemporary print journalism: the careful provision of valuable context, background narratives, insightful analysis and sensemaking; the translation of the atmosphere, ambience and colour of the events; and the relevant employment of innovative, didactic and beautifully displayed infographics, which accompanied an amazing photography-driven coverage. In a challenging environment where the number of journalists that were chasing similar stories at the Olympics was huge (Sam Borden, interview, April 2014), these elements added depth and originality to the reporting, shifting away from the redundancy, uniformity and similarity that can be so often found in sports stories (English, 2014b). In a media landscape characterized by “fast and instantaneous journalism” (Le Masurier, 2015: 138) and the cacophony of competing voices, the very notion of print media journalism in this day and age must encompass excellence in delivering all of these components, according to the scholars and professionals interviewed.

Third, with regard to the larger framework of the Olympics, it should be noted that the wide coverage and critical examination of the relevant contexts of London 2012 added value to the coverage and helped to broaden readers’ knowledge and understanding of the event. Taking advantage of their capabilities in terms of contextualization (Boyle, 2006a; Fernández Peña et al., 2010; Miah and García, 2012), all print media (and not only British broadsheets) raised public awareness of a broad range of aspects behind the play, including critical issues such as the long-term effects of the Olympics on the British economy, the debate about the legacy of sport at schools, the security issues with G4S, the hypocrisy involved in the ticket allocation and the controversy over empty seats. Except for the coverage of dissent regarding and opposition to the Games (almost completely muted by the shift to “celebratory language”), the media’s good performance in reporting on the larger framework was very important, bearing in mind journalism’s public mission to inform and enlighten in democratic societies (Fengler et al., 2014; Kovach and Rosenstiel, 2001; Singer, 2013), stated in many fundamental

competing country, and daily webchats with experts and interactive schedules, to list a few. *The New York Times* enhanced its coverage with interactive features, hundreds of pictures, daily videos, real-time results and live blogging of marquee events. Similarly, *The Washington Post* offered live blogging spaces, multimedia galleries with content from reporters and readers and up-to-the-minute reports. *El País* should be commended for Walter Oppenheimer’s blog and for its web app that offered the latest updates. Finally, *La Vanguardia* designed specific spaces for readers’ contributions.

codes of the profession (UNESCO, Arts 1–2; IFJ, Art. 1; Council of Europe, Art. 17; SPJ, Preamble; ASNE, Art. 4). The value of these findings should not be underestimated, especially if we recognize that in the day-to-day coverage, sports journalists (due to a series of constraints that will be commented on later) are limited in their ability to approach these issues in such breadth and depth.

Fourth, when it comes to the area of corrections and rectifications, the prompt recognition and clarification of errors and misunderstandings (particularly in the British and American newspapers) should be assessed very positively in the light of the guidelines issued by national and international ethical codes (UNESCO, Art. 5; IFJ, Art. 5; Council of Europe, Art. 26; IPSO, Art. 1.ii; NUJ, Art. 3; SPJ, Art. 4; FAPE, Art. 13; CPC, Art. 3). Despite the fact that news organizations “have traditionally been laggards when it comes to accounting for their mistakes” (Currie, 2015: 131), in this case factual errors were diligently dealt with. Interestingly, as it has been noted, traditional letters to the editor became a crucial space for openness and accountability, as readers detected errors, checked facts, clarified information, discussed and criticized the treatment carried out by the media and contributed with further data. In particular, *The Washington Post*, complying with its policy on acknowledging error and criticism (*The Washington Post Standards and Ethics*, C: Errors) was the newspaper that more frequently published letters to the editor with this purpose. This was an important finding for RQ1. Given that nowadays credibility is constructed between media professionals and audiences (Vultee, 2010) not only in the digital scenario but also in the print media context, this cultivation of a two-way conversation about standards and quality of content should be assessed very positively.

With regard to the deontological principle of justice, one of the key findings of this research is that the newspapers sampled took an important step towards gender equality by devoting significant space to sportswomen in the coverage of London 2012, reinforcing the positive results from other recent studies (Billings et al., 2014a). Interestingly, it is worth remembering that in *The New York Times* men and women received an equal share of the coverage while in *The Washington Post*, the imbalance remained in single figures. The quantitative evidence showed that the gender gap was narrower than can be found in any other journalistic context either before or after London 2012 where overwhelming disparities still remain (Cooky et al., 2013; Godoy-Pressland, 2014; Weber and Carini, 2013). Findings also indicate that in a landmark occasion for sportswomen’s participation, the print media took the opportunity of London 2012 to focus attention on female athletes’ profiles and achievements. Meaningful evidence was provided in Section 4.2.1.2.1. (*Praising the sporting qualities of female athletes*) of the fair language used by the media to describe sportswomen’s

athleticism and accomplishments. In addition, we should remember that the newspapers raised public awareness of barriers broken down and the pending challenges to be overcome in achieving equality. In the light of many recommendations (UNESCO, Art. 9; IFJ, Art. 7; Council of Europe, Art. 33; SPJ, Art. 1; IPSO, Art. 12; NUJ, Art. 9; FAPE, Art. 7; CPC, Art. 12), which urge journalists to avoid discrimination for gender reasons, these results represented a significant finding in relation to RQ2.

Moving on to the area of race, it is worth highlighting that on a broader level, newspapers took the opportunity of London 2012 to raise public awareness of racism within sport and society (giving salience to the criticism of the Twitter comments made by Paraskevi Papachristou and Michael Morganella and the tabloid-created moniker of “Plastic Brits”, as well as raising awareness of the current inequalities and systemic contradictions in society). Quality newspapers engaged in forms of antiracist journalism (Drew, 2011) and praised the values of multiculturalism and non-discrimination lying at the core of the Olympic movement (IOC, 2013a). Given the massive consumption of the coverage of the Olympics (Billings et al., 2014b) and the importance of the media as transmitters of values in this coverage (Girginov and Parry, 2005), these results have a far-reaching significance because the inclusive attitudes displayed by newspapers can without doubt reverberate among readers and society at large. In addition, the media sampled gave salience to the achievements of non-white athletes, challenging the “white ethnocentric perspective” (Farrington et al., 2012: 54) in news reporting. Furthermore, it is worth remembering that for the most part, journalists took the right decision not to focus on the race and ethnicity of the participants (with the much reported exception of the US gymnast Gabrielle Douglas, whose specific situation clearly demanded a different approach). Such an approach was consistent with the specific prescriptions issued by relevant deontological codes (IPSO, Art. 12).

Returning to RQ3, two out of the three concerns posed in this area were by and large resolved in an ethical way by the newspapers sampled. The results of the investigation demonstrate that there was an extensive range of articles that foregrounded the human dimension of the athletes in a respectful way (the stories of overcoming adversity, for example, such as those that referred to Kayla Harrison and Yamilé Aldama), without representing an invasion of privacy. The inclusion of elements about personal endeavour and strength of the human spirit indeed provided a newsworthy value to the coverage. This output, a consequence of the type of newsroom culture that these newspapers foster, conformed to the essential documents of the profession (UNESCO, Art. 6; Council of Europe, Arts 23–24; NUJ, Art. 6; IPSO, Art. 3; SPJ, Art. 2; FAPE, Art. 4; CPC, Art. 9; SPM, Art. 13.1). As mentioned before, an isolated exception to this trend was the report in *The Daily Telegraph* on Bradley Wiggins’ father’s violent death

and drinking problems, which raised the question as to whether there was a benefit in providing this kind of story to the readership. On the positive side, it should also be remembered that the newspapers examined treated religious beliefs in a respectful way (UNESCO, Art. 9; IFJ, Art. 7), mentioning this aspect only when it was relevant to foreground the lives of the athletes in a restrained way without going further or making more of the issue than was necessary. Religion was only treated as a commodity and object of curiosity in the case of the hockey player Carlos Ballvé in *El País* and *La Vanguardia*, which exploited certain worn-out clichés, but did not do this disrespectfully, rather as an exotic element.

5.1.2. Weaknesses

Having considered the strengths, a closer scrutiny of the available empirical material also revealed that in some areas there are imbalances that should be carefully commented on and addressed. First, with regard to the principle of truth, a clear concern arose in the case of Ye Shiwen. While it should be agreed that critical issues in the world of sport need to be tackled and despite the fact that John Leonard was a relevant source, excessive weight was given to his voice in *The Guardian*. We should remind ourselves that his unfounded allegations, which were propelled on to the newspaper's front page, led to rumours about doping and speculations that not only tarnished Shiwen's image but, professionally, had consequences for the principles of truth, justice and responsibility (doping was associated with Chinese athletes and prejudicial rivalries between countries were emphasized). In the light of the results, scholars interviewed emphasized the importance of not reporting unverified information (IFJ, Art. 3; Council of Europe, Art. 4; IPSO, Art. 1.iii) or if it is the case that rumours are already news and journalists cannot ignore them, they should aim to display a wide range of viewpoints and thus help to contextualize and criticize unsubstantiated claims.

Second, moving on to the area of sources, the analysis alerts us to the fact that despite having a prominent role in today's media environment, the content gathered from social networking sites does not always add value to the coverage. The simple aggregation of athletes' postings does not constitute a journalistic practice per se. Another interesting finding with regard to this area is that some crucial sources were minimized in the coverage, specific organizations in the world of sport, for example, such as Play the Game and researchers, such as those from the Olympic Studies Centres (OSCs). According to the experts interviewed, these sources could play a significant role in the coverage of the Olympics given that they are well versed in a comprehensive range of issues connected to the Games and the Olympic movement.

Third, as has already been pointed out, the notion of the Olympics coverage being a platform for a wider sporting menu held true. As mentioned earlier, many sports that are not covered regularly found that they had been allocated space throughout the newspapers' pages. Nevertheless, this should not prevent us from recognizing that a hierarchy of sport prevailed and that there were huge disparities in the sporting agenda across the board. The dataset indicates that some sports were largely ignored. This point is particularly evident when we remember that many sporting disciplines did not even reach 1% of the sports coverage throughout the newspapers' pages, a trend consistently found throughout the sample. The situation in *El País* (where 16 sports did not reach 1% of the coverage and 7 sports didn't even receive an individual piece during London 2012) was significantly worrying. Since the Olympic Games are the only event in which a wide range of sports can receive exposure from the media (the "tyranny of football" in Europe and the dominance of the "big three" sports in the US should not be forgotten) and increase their visibility in society, it was worth interrogating interviewees to see if economic factors were in fact the only criteria for allocating coverage. According to the media professionals interviewed, newspapers are not PSBs or sporting NGOs and, therefore, must abide by their audiences' and advertisers' interests. Contrary to this conservative view, scholars such as Rowe and Rojas hold that quality newspapers, because of their social responsibility and the communicative power they hold, are expected to do more than simply concentrate their attention on the most popular sports. These findings strongly suggest that organizations should work harder to broaden their offer and publicize minority/less mediatized sports. Without exposure, it would be very difficult for minority sports to attract new generations of athletes as well as to increase their endorsement opportunities. Moreover, it would be very hard for audiences' tastes and appreciations to evolve, as rightly noted by Professor Amy Jones from the University of West Alabama.

Fourth, regarding the coverage of the larger framework of the Olympics, the analysis reveals that opposition to the Games was minimized in the mainstream press, which ended up conforming to the "festive zeitgeist" (Boykoff, 2014: 94). Another finding is that many journalists who engaged in the reporting of contextual issues were actually not sports journalists but professionals from other news desks. Thus, the notion of the insularity of the sports desk (Rowe, 2007) was unfortunately still in force.

Fifth, the dissertation has drawn attention to the constant blurring between news and commentary, especially through the pervasive use of evaluative adjectives and adverbs as well as other expressions of subjectivity to praise or criticize athletes (rather than the use of the first-person approach). The study therefore supported the widely

accepted assumption that the golden rule of separating information and opinion is very difficult to follow in the field of sports journalism (Jones, 2000; Wanta, 2013). As pointed out in the theoretical framework, it is impossible for journalists to be totally neutral (Billings, 2010; Hallin and Mancini, 2004). Scholars interviewed also stressed that emotion is an inherent component of sports journalism. Thus, to a certain level, there is a subjective element in this field that cannot be avoided, even though it does little to disparage the long-held notions of lack of detachment and “fans with typewriters”. Yet, the real problem – and what posed major doubts with regard to the deontological prescriptions (Council of Europe, Art. 3; IPSO, Art. 1.iii; NUJ, Art. 4; ASNE, Art. 5; FAPE, Art. 17; CPC, Art. 1; SPM, Art. 3) – was that in some cases, news journalists entered the realm of strong opinions. One of the clearest cases in point was found in the excessively critical coverage by the Spanish press of the poor results obtained by the Spanish football and athletics teams. Arguably, this fact might correlate with one of the key characteristics of the Mediterranean or Polarized Pluralist model posited by Hallin and Mancini (2004): the preponderance of commentary-oriented journalism. In addition, another concern raised is that on the majority of occasions, there wasn’t a clear visual separation between information and opinion pieces in the design of newspapers. Therefore, readers were not to know exactly where opinion started and when information finished, a lack of clarity that needs to be addressed.

In addition, with regard to RQ1, it should be remembered that in the quality newspapers during London 2012 there was no story that could compare to the type of sensationalist reporting that tabloid newspapers are exponents of. It should be emphasized, however, that the analysis revealed key cases of “soft news”, driven by entertainment, gossip and the seduction of spectacle (“Sex at the Olympics”, “Partying at the Olympics”, celebrity coverage, the coverage of Zara Phillips as member of the royal family, the photograph of the British cyclists Laura Trott and Jason Kenny, and so on). Despite the fact that some of the professionals interviewed argued in favour of giving some room to the entertainment side of sport, others disparaged the contribution of certain non-relevant stories which posed doubts with regard to the main deontological guidelines in this area (Council of Europe, Art. 30; SPJ, Art. 2; *The Telegraph Stylebook*, Basic Principles). As argued before, the entrenchment of these issues and narratives in the coverage is symptomatic of the huge impact of tabloidization and celebrity culture across the journalistic landscape (Conboy, 2014; Skovsgaard, 2014; Steen, 2016; Turner, 2014) as well as the commodification process and the commercial orientation of news in commercial journalism (Haynes and Boyle, 2008; Jackson, 2009). As emerges from the conversations conducted in this study, going down the road of sensationalism can have serious consequences for news

organizations' reputations for credibility and may well take something away from the learning and educational side of sports journalism too.

Moving on to the principle of justice and considering first the commitment to justice in the portrayal of gender, it is of particular interest that newspapers persisted in the widespread use of long-held overt and covert forms of stereotypes and dialogue differences. Different framing techniques permeated the coverage (sexism and mentions of physical attributes, emotionality, infantilizing, out-of-context reporting, trivialization, and so on), despite that fact that what was written might have been reproduced unintentionally. This represented a stark contrast with the favourable quantitative results and the positive evaluation of sportswomen discussed in the previous section, posing serious doubts with regard to RQ2. Given the power of the Olympic coverage to shape identities (Billings and Angelini, 2007), the research suggests abandoning the incorrect assumption that everything is equal now. In point of fact, journalists need to be as careful as possible in the language they use to depict sportswomen, avoiding biased stereotypes that have real-life consequences for the way in which female athletes are perceived and evaluated by the citizenship.

In terms of race, it should be positively assessed that the coverage did not include racist comments or the classic stereotypes that establish biological differences between black and white (Billings et al., 2014b; McDonald, 2010; Schmidt and Coe, 2014), which still are very much an issue in some areas of the news arena, the tabloid press, for example, as noted by Neil Farrington and John Vincent. Still, empirical evidence in this dissertation strongly suggests that certain covert stereotypes linked to race and, more specifically, to the cases of Djibo Issaka and John Orozco, were fostered throughout the coverage.

With regard to disability, and despite that fact that the coverage shifted away from traditional stigmas (Barnes, 1992; Chang et al., 2011), the study uncovered the presence of other covert forms of disability stereotypes. To illustrate this, the textual analysis revealed that Oscar Pistorius was portrayed as an object of curiosity and that the debate on whether his carbon fibre prosthetics gave him any advantage was overemphasized. At the same time, the research showed that Natalia Partyka was mostly ignored by the newspapers examined and that Im Dong-Hyun was inaccurately portrayed, revealing journalists' lack of specific knowledge about disability (Pate and Hardin, 2013). With regard to the situation after the London 2012 Paralympics (where, at least, an acceptable standard of reporting was achieved on Channel 4 and in the British press), a crucial recommendation of this research emerges: disability sport

should not be virtually invisible and competitors should be defined first and foremost by their athleticism, not by their disability.

In terms of nationality, two areas deserve particular scrutiny. First, as argued earlier, media ethicists such as Chris Frost have argued that it is not inherently unethical to report more about the home team. In fact, the national perspective has always been a common trait in media, given that as far as newspapers are concerned it makes economic sense to shape and maximize their agenda towards their national readership (Horne, 2006; Rowe, 2013a). Having said that, some newspapers delivered a higher index of nationalism than would have been expected. In contrast to the openness and global approach of newspapers such as *The New York Times*, parochialism was particularly evident in the London-based press, with nearly 75% of their stories devoted to domestic athletes. Although this content-analytic finding might be founded on many reasons already discussed, the narrow editorial approach delivered an uncomfortable message: by and large, relatively few opportunities were left for foreign athletes to be showcased, limiting to a great extent the possibilities of transcending the national sports fan market. In the light of the results, the research suggests that journalists should try to broaden their horizons and venture beyond a restricted perspective.

Second, it is important to note that time and time again, readers were presented with a constant display of strategies that blurred the frontiers between ethnocentrism and patriotism/nationalism. Among these mechanisms we should mention patriotic strategies (evaluative adjectives and adverbs, excluding foreign competitors in pieces, patriotic quotes, repeated photographs of national flags, human stories to serve a patriotic purpose, criticism of “non-patriotic” athletes, patriotism in recalling the ambience, etc.) and nationalistic strategies (comparisons and diminishment of other countries’ abilities to compete and isolated negative references to other countries). One should be aware of the use of these strategies, taking into consideration the potential impact that the consumption of content can have in reinforcing patriotic and nationalistic attitudes instead of promoting internationalism. At the same time, it should be recognized that these mechanisms were also problematic for the deontological principle of truth. To be precise, they represented a departure from expected standards of journalistic impartiality and were linked to the notion of “fans with typewriters”. Despite this, we should positively assess that in the newspapers examined, due to their particular newsroom cultures, the type of nationalism conveyed through the sports pages wasn’t as hard line as it was in other segments of the market, as Vincent explained. Fortunately, hatred narratives didn’t feature in the quality media coverage of London 2012.

Last, but not least, we should reflect on the deontological principle of responsibility and the use of warlike language, which meant that RQ3 could not be answered in a totally positive way. The coverage of London 2012 revealed plenty of examples of the use of military jargon and battle narratives, coinciding with results already identified in previous investigations (Holt, 2000; López-González et al., 2014) and the “orthodox rhetoric” mode of sports journalism described by Rowe (1992). The news value of conflict should be clearly acknowledged (Hardin et al., 2007; Lee, 2009), but if we return to the idea of newspapers as essential players in the transmission of values in democratic societies (Hardy, 2008) and the potential impact of such language on peoples’ attitudes (Brown, 2004; Jenkins, 2013), the importance of this issue needs to be recognized. Future cultivation research should attempt to provide a more precise answer in this respect, but one thing should remain clear at this point in time: the Olympics and sport in general are not warlike and, therefore, should not be represented as such in the media, as rightly argued by Rowe. As highlighted by Rojas, the increasing awareness among quality press journalists of the issue of violent language gives us some hope but, increasingly, close attention needs to be paid to the language used on digital media and social networking sites.

5.1.3. Threats

As has been discussed throughout this dissertation, journalists do not operate in a vacuum. Along with particular newsroom cultures, a myriad of interwoven factors and constraints shape professional journalists’ practice, impacting on the news value and the quantity and quality of sports journalism that media organizations deliver. Some of these factors make it difficult for journalists to produce work that entirely abides by the prescriptions established in the major deontological codes of the profession. Hence, the strengths and weaknesses discussed in the media coverage of London 2012 (as well as in the coverage of other sporting events) are inextricably linked to these factors.

First, some of the aforementioned results reflect the increasing tension between ethics/quality of information and the inevitable orientation of privately owned organizations towards market forces. Newspapers operate in a highly competitive commercial environment. They have to respond to audience demand and need to maximize their revenues through newspaper sales and advertising income, especially in a time of decline and deep-rooted economic problems such as the present (Schlesinger and Doyle, 2015). To a certain extent, this commercially driven approach forces newspapers to shape their agendas in a fairly conservative way, from the range of sporting disciplines that are covered to the gender, nationality and ability/disability of the stories’ protagonists. This market orientation can also motivate, to a certain degree,

the inclusion in the coverage of certain soft and entertaining news and of more hard-hitting stories featuring strong opinions and viewpoints.

Second, we should account for the increased news pace in the 24/7 scenario and the equally speedy way in which professional routines are now expected to be performed (Boyle, 2013; Usher, 2015). Despite the fact that this dissertation has focused on print newspapers, which operate with different tempos to electronic media, the challenging 24/7 production cycles and the need for instant breaking news also come with a cost as far as print matter is concerned. Here, we are not only referring to essential concerns connected with accuracy, fact checking and ensuring the credibility of sources but, beyond this, this situation inevitably creates an environment in which the day-to-day urgency limits journalists' possibilities of carrying out, for instance, sustained reporting on the contextual issues linked with sport and its larger framework.

Third, the analysis reveals the effect of the progressive tabloidization process on the wider journalistic culture, the erosion of public versus private dimensions and the significant impact of the celebrity culture on the world of sport. Across the board, the divisions between highbrow and lowbrow tastes are not as clear as they used to be. At the same time, the boundaries between the public and human interest are less rigid. These considerations should be taken into account to try and understand why the newspapers studied included in their coverage certain sensationalist stories linked with sex and partying at London 2012, reporting on celebrities and royalty, sexually oriented references and photographs with regard to sportswomen and stories such as *The Daily Telegraph's* two-page report on Bradley Wiggins' father, to list but a few.

Fourth, and linked to the previously aforementioned political economy of media, it should be recognized that shrinking budgets in media organizations, an increase in workloads and tougher working conditions are determining elements that can influence the number of competitions that can be covered, the athletes that can be followed and the depth in which those stories can be researched. Constrained newsroom budgets in the current scenario can mean there is less opportunity for a newspaper's watchdog function to operate effectively (Reynolds, 2014). Only some larger journalism companies still have the resources and are willing to give journalists the required degree of autonomy to pursue more reflective, contextual and investigative tasks.

Even if a small number of journalists from certain organizations are able to develop investigative and reflective work, a fifth core factor should not be neglected: the dramatic rise of the PR industry around the world of sport (Boyle, 2006b). The increased logistical complexity, the tightly managed relationships and the control of

access, particularly acute in certain areas such as the major football leagues, prevent journalists from making a full interrogation of the world of sport. In fear of jeopardizing their access, sports journalists can't be entirely critical observers of sport¹¹⁰², as Lawrence Wenner and other scholars have rightly claimed. Linked to this situation, we should also raise concerns about the close relationship, interdependence and mutual commercial influences between sporting mega-events such as the Olympic Games, Olympic advertising and the media. As has been argued earlier, one should be very careful in establishing a direct correlation between these elements and the content published (further research should shed light on the issue), but one should be aware of them. It should be recognized that it is plausible for these embedded links to make it difficult for media organizations to write a full account of the critical issues and controversies surrounding the Olympic Games.

5.1.4. Opportunities

A vision of shared responsibility and proper education and literacy at all levels (in HEIs, within newsrooms and among citizens) constitutes a vital opportunity to raise awareness of the existing ethical constraints in sports journalism, to advance towards professional excellence and to challenge some of the problems detected in the coverage of the London Olympics and that affect the field of sports journalism at large.

To begin with, the importance of academic training in journalism should be emphasized. It is not just a question of providing students with the essential reporting skills and the basic capabilities they need to work in the new multimedia/convergent scenario (Murray et al., 2011), but also of providing them with a comprehensive education in ethics and quality of information. Such an ethical education, combined with an adequate knowledge of the broader sporting and social culture (including the Olympic culture¹¹⁰³), could help to train new generations of sports journalists who would

¹¹⁰² However, according to Mark Adams, the IOC does not restrict the views of journalists but gives them freedom to report: "It would be a strange world if the IOC was telling journalists how they should do their job, but we have a commission, the Press Commission, where we work with a lot of the key journalistic organizations (AP, Reuters, BBC, etc.) about how they cover the Games, what facilities we give them and we have an ongoing discussion about the coverage. Recently we had a discussion about some sporting organizations restricting access to journalists because they didn't like what they wrote. We wouldn't do that. We are in favour of journalistic freedom to report, but we have an ongoing dialogue with the major news organizations" (Interview, May 2014).

¹¹⁰³ The need to educate journalists about the wider culture of the Olympics is very important in the light of the current lack of knowledge pinpointed by Mark Adams, the IOC director of communications: "The journalists that are informed about the Olympic movement are a group that is getting smaller and smaller. There are fewer and fewer Olympic correspondents, who follow our work

develop a more balanced perspective with regard to portraying different kinds of identity, who would be more careful about spreading rumour and who would be conscious of the wider effects of employing sensationalist, non-detached and militaristic language, among many other issues. It could also prepare sports journalism students for critically assessing and reporting on the many sophisticated issues concerned with the larger framework of sport (economics, culture, history, geopolitics, etc.), breaking the insularity of the sports desk which has been highlighted time and time again throughout this dissertation. As scholars and researchers, we should do our very best to train critical, challenging and analytically independent sports journalists, so that in their professional careers they can handle the reporting of as many sporting disciplines and wider contextual areas as possible.

Second, the pursuit of further training and education in newsrooms and industry groups is fundamental. It should be remembered that one of the key findings that emerged from the MediaAcT project was that journalism education is one of the media accountability systems that has a considerable effect on journalistic performance (Fengler et al., 2014). According to Chris Frost: “education is the only way that journalists can start to find out what is acceptable and what isn’t and to set the boundary lines. Conscience needs good training. If not, it is very easy to make poor decisions” (Interview, October 2013). With better education and continuing professional development (CPD), professionals can improve their self-awareness of the many ethical constraints and practices embedded in journalistic routines, for example, periodic training can help reporters and decision makers to: make better linguistic choices; avoid thinking in stereotypical terms; enhance their sporting culture; and search for a broader range of news sources to build their stories. Scholars and educators can contribute decisively to this process, not only through the preparation of textbooks or handbooks, but also through the production of more operative assets, such as a set of guidelines or the organization of short practical workshops to discuss specific issues with regard to professional practice.

Third, the importance of educating audiences should not be forgotten. Christians (1988) thought of the public as an essential agent for holding the media accountable. To develop media literacy skills is one of the essential ethical obligations of citizens in democratic societies (Wyatt, 2010). Scholars can contribute to helping readers to become active and conscientious consumers so that they can carry out a critical assessment of the quality of content published by media organizations; the values and stereotypes underlying the messages; and the sources of information that

on a day-to-day basis. Quite often now, we have to explain to journalists some simple things about the organization that others in the past would have just known already” (Interview, May 2014).

professionals employ to build that coverage (Frush Holt, 2013; Meyers et al., 2012). The release of relevant publications and guidelines as well as holding seminars and workshops aimed at the public can certainly contribute to making a difference in this area.

With the objective of contributing to education at university level, within the newsrooms and among the citizenship, the theoretical framework and the results of the investigation have been translated into a series of recommendations. A concise document, entitled “Ten tips for covering sports responsibly” (see Section 7.1) has been created to raise journalists’ and students’ awareness of the importance of being accountable to the principles of ethics and quality of information when disseminating sports content. Far from implying any form of censorship, constraint or limitation to the freedom of expression, the main point of these guidelines is to contribute positively to the educational goal of promoting and preserving the highest standards in the coverage of the Olympic Games and other sporting mega-events. In order to bridge the gap between the ideal and what actually happens in professional practice and to encourage journalists to use such guidelines and citizens to understand them, ethical guidelines should be kept as short and operational as possible. Bearing these characteristics in mind, the one page proposal features relevant points that are easy to remember and also refers to further documents in the field of journalism ethics. By disseminating these guidelines, which are an asset with regard to the transfer of knowledge, this dissertation can also contribute to fighting against some of the major constraints that still prevail in the sports communication field¹¹⁰⁴.

In addition, the implementation of this pedagogic instrument could be considered a rewarding initiative within the purposes of the Olympic Values Education Programme (OVEP). It cannot be denied that “the ideology of Olympism has always been strongly connected with education” (Chatziefstathiou, 2012: 387). So far, Olympic education programmes have largely focused on the areas of primary and physical education. Illustrative examples can be found in the projects “Come Together: The Olympics and You”, “Fair Play for Kids”, “Be a Champion in Life”, “Teaching Values: An Olympic Education Toolkit” (Binder, 2012) and “Get Set: The Official London 2012 Education Programme” (Teetzel, 2012). However, in relation to the lifeworld-oriented approach of Olympic education proposed by Naul (2008), the researcher argues that the implementation of education about the Olympics would also be worthwhile in certain

¹¹⁰⁴ The doctoral candidate has already taken a first step in this direction by circulating the “Ten tips for covering sports responsibly” document and incorporating short debates based on the cases studied in this dissertation into the Deontology of Journalism course, which is taught to the third-year journalism students at Pompeu Fabra University in Barcelona.

specialized areas, such as in the teaching of sports journalism. Encouraging young, professional journalists to commit to disseminating high-quality and ethical information, which also takes into consideration the values embodied in Olympism, is a vital task and one in which scholars must play an important role in carrying out.

Along with the implementation of educational initiatives, this dissertation strongly argues that, as far as media professionals are concerned, a much greater use of journalism ethics codes could be fostered. Despite that fact that many people both inside and outside the industry disparage the usefulness and effectiveness of these codes, their consideration as instruments that do actually have significant impact on professional behaviour, as claimed by the MediaAcT project (Fengler et al., 2014), must be taken into account. Ethical codes and guidelines are not merely tools of public relations; they are in fact meaningful documents that can point journalists in the right direction with regard to quality and the highest of standards in their reporting. The use of codes should be reinforced particularly in many countries outside the North Atlantic/Liberal model¹¹⁰⁵, as they would contribute to improving the credibility of sports journalism and its image of rigour in relation to society. At the same time, and especially in the digital scenario, other innovative MAS, such as blogs created by ombudsmen, newsroom blogs, online chats, buttons for correcting errors and other transparency tools should be enforced too, given the beneficial impact that these instruments can have on journalistic practice (Mauri and Ramon, 2015).

A final vital opportunity exists to increase diversity in the newsrooms (from the decision makers to the different ranks of reporters) in order to fight against the current token status of female and non-white sports journalists (Farrington et al., 2012; Hardin and Whiteside, 2009; Jenkins, 2012). As has been argued in the presentation of the results for the principle of justice, gender and race play a critical role in the types of stories that are covered and how contents are crafted. Although it is beyond the scope of this dissertation to provide an evaluation of how much the situation can change, based on previous assessments (Mastro et al., 2012) one could fairly presume that the impact would be noticeable.

¹¹⁰⁵ As Rojas explains, many media outlets and news agencies in the UK and the US have specific guidelines. For example, AP and Reuters even have specialized sections on sports journalism within their stylebooks. Conversely, in Spain there is a long way to go. Within the sports dailies, for example, despite the fact that *Marca* has an updated stylebook (González-Palencia and Mendaña, 2012), *Mundo Deportivo* has not revised its guidelines since 1995 (Mundo Deportivo, 1995) (José Luis Rojas, interview, June 2014).

5.1.5. Final remarks

In the final analysis, while we should not generalize the results for the whole profession and all contexts (see Section 5.2), it is safe to say that for many of the issues examined the coverage of the quality newspapers sampled during London 2012 challenged and counteracted the long-held notions of sports journalism as being the “toy department”. The picture that emerged (see Table 24) is somewhat brighter than might have been expected, given the rather pessimistic views of sports journalism that prevailed in much of the literature presented in the theoretical framework.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<p><i>Principle of truth</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contextualized and foregrounded reaction of the newspapers sampled to the rumours cast by John Leonard in Ye Shiwen’s case Cultivation of a wide range of genres Use of a wide range of authoritative and trustworthy sources Considerable human resources devoted by organizations to work on site at the Olympics Reporting on a wide spectrum of sports that remain invisible in the day-to-day coverage Ability to deliver core ingredients in current print journalism (background, analysis, translation of atmosphere, infographics) Thorough examination of the larger framework of London 2012 Recognition and correction of errors plus accountability through letters to the editor <p><i>Principle of justice</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Significant space devoted to sportswomen Creation of a consciousness of the profile of women and challenges with regard to achieving equality Raising public awareness of racism Exposure to non-white athletes and to the historic participation of Oscar Pistorius <p><i>Principle of responsibility</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respectful foregrounding of athletes without invading privacy In general, respect for religious beliefs without treating them as a commodity 	<p><i>Principle of truth</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Excessive weight given in <i>The Guardian</i> to John Leonard’s viewpoint, whose insinuations led to a case of doping The use of social networking sites did not add value to the coverage Some key sources were minimized in the coverage (Play the Game, OSCs) Disparities in the agenda: some Olympic sports did not reach 1% of the coverage Many journalists covering the larger framework were professionals from other desks; insularity of the sports department Constant blurring between news and commentary Presence of certain sensationalist and entertainment-oriented topics <p><i>Principle of justice</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presence of stereotypes linked with gender, race and disability The high index of nationalism limited the opportunity to showcase foreign competitors Blurring of the frontiers between ethnocentrism and patriotism/nationalism <p><i>Principle of responsibility</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of warlike language and exploitation of confrontation narratives throughout the newspapers’ pages
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Education and research in HEIs Education and training within the newsrooms in order to enhance the culture of quality at the core of the newspapers sampled Education for audiences, who can increase their awareness as consumers of sports media content Increase diversity in the newsrooms Reinforce the use of ethical codes, guidelines and other traditional and innovative media accountability systems (MAS) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 24/7 production cycles Orientation towards market forces and the political economy of media Close relationship and mutual influences between sporting mega-events and the media Dramatic rise of the PR industry in the world of sport Progressive tabloidization, erosion of the public versus private distinction and the impact of celebrity culture on the world of sport Shrinking budgets in media organizations

Table 24. SWOT matrix about the quality press coverage of London 2012

In line with the arguments raised by other scholars, the author submits that newsroom cultures decisively affect behavioural standards and decision making (Boyle and Haynes, 2009; Skovsgaard, 2014; Vanacker, 2014; Wilkins, 2014). The quality newspapers examined come from a very particular subsection of the print press. They are respected and socially responsible entities within their countries, highly committed to quality of content and a public service approach to society at large. Given that journalists are shaped by the environment and the institution they operate within, it can be understood that the quality coverage of London 2012 delivered by *The Guardian/The Observer*, *The Daily Telegraph/The Sunday Telegraph*, *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *El País* and *La Vanguardia* in many ways contradicted the notions of “toy department”.

Yet, the answer to the MRQ (*To what extent did the British, American and Spanish press comply with the fundamental principles of journalism ethics and quality of information in their coverage of the London 2012 Olympics?*) is nuanced. As the dissertation has yielded, there are certain areas in which there is room for improvement, for example: the diversity of the sporting agenda; the blurring of frontiers between news and comment; the insularity of the sports department; sensationalism; stereotyping in portraying athletes’ identities; and the use of warlike language. There is still, therefore, a long way to go to eliminate fully the “toy department” label and enhance the credibility and status of the professionals working in the field.

As noted, many interlinked factors, debates and tensions contribute to the quality of the media’s output in the current scenario. That being said, sports journalism is a very important commercial engine for newspapers and therefore its task should be guided by the same professional values, ethical standards and demands for quality that apply to all journalism. The escalating pressures, orientation towards the market and the tensions of immediacy should not deter journalists from pursuing the goal of an ethical and comprehensive treatment of sports that ultimately links to the original social function of media in democratic societies. As Andrew C. Billings points out, “sports wield power”. But, at the same time, we should recognize that sports journalism has great power over and an influence and impact on society at large. That being the case, socially responsible sports journalists who are able to distil noise from quality are very necessary and will still be vital in the future. One of our main responsibilities as academics is a commitment to training students, professionals and citizens. Education should be recognized as a vital opportunity for harvesting the traditional values of journalistic practice and continuing to advance towards the seemingly out-of-reach goal of excellence.

5.2. Delimitations

The results of this dissertation should be seen in light of their limitations. Despite the fact that the research has provided different insights into the situation prior to and after London 2012, the study has mostly focused on the coverage of this particular event carried out by six prestigious publications. Albeit the constant references to other media organizations, it has been beyond the scope of this dissertation to present a systematic examination of the coverage delivered both by other subsections of print media in the three countries and by broadcasting and digital outlets. It should, therefore, be acknowledged that the research has provided a snapshot of the coverage delivered by six elite newspapers in a certain moment in time, which should be complemented and enhanced with complementary studies in the field. Bearing this in mind is essential when interpreting the results, given that the outcomes of the research cannot be immediately extrapolated to the treatment of other sporting events. Despite the caveat discussed above, the reader should be reminded that the objective of the dissertation which was founded on the qualitative research paradigm (see Chapter 3), was not to achieve representativeness but to provide well-evidenced relevant cases for study in the intersection between sports journalism and ethics/quality of information. These cases can be very useful to researchers, teachers, students and media professionals alike.

With regard to the conduct of interviews, another factor should be taken into account. Despite the greater availability of leading scholars around the world to discuss the topics of the dissertation, the task of contacting and gaining access to media organizations in order to talk to reporters and decision makers proved much more complicated and time consuming. Fortunately, on-site access was guaranteed in order to conduct very insightful interviews with the sports editors of *The Guardian*, *The Telegraph* and *El País*. In the other cases, online interviews were also effective in gathering information, but they didn't reach the degree of depth that can be achieved in face-to-face conversations. More conversations with professionals and decision makers would have been very useful in order to delve further into their mindsets, cultural criteria and professional routines, among many other areas linked to the study of the production side of sports media. Further investigation in this area is one of the key directions for future research (see Section 5.3).

Consideration should also be given to the deontological codes employed throughout this dissertation. Despite the fact that the national and international documents that have been consulted are relevant for the investigative purposes of this project, the researcher bears in mind the limitation of the territorial scope of the ethical corpus

analysed. In the future, it would be worthwhile widening the focus of analysis to examine the prescriptions established in a major number of self-regulation codes around the world. A starting point for this analysis would be the website of the Donald W. Reynolds Journalism Institute at the University of Missouri in the US, which includes more than 400 general and specialized deontological codes for the media sector (<http://accountablejournalism.org/>).

5.3. Directions for future research

This doctoral dissertation shows the growing interest in approaching the study of sports communication from new perspectives, an area that was considered to be of little value during the 1980s and 1990s (Billings et al., 2014; Boyle, 2006a; Brown and O'Rourke, 2003; Wanta, 2006) but which nowadays is very much a relevant element in current academic research (Boyle and Haynes, 2009). Even so, sports communication is an area battling for respect and there is still a long way to go in terms of the number of journal articles, projects and monographs dedicated to sports journalism as well as their depth and completeness. We should strive to make this a more stable and influential research area. With such a purpose in mind, this section will outline a number of directions for future research. Three valuable areas would be of particular interest: (1) the examination of the coverage of forthcoming Olympic Games and other sporting mega-events; (2) research on ethics and quality of information in the digital environment; and (3) further investigation with regard to the audiences and the producers of sports media.

5.3.1. Examination of the coverage of forthcoming Olympic Games and other sporting mega-events

More empirical research should be conducted in the field of sports media ethics and quality of information. The celebration of forthcoming Olympic Games (Rio 2016, PyeongChang 2018 and Tokyo 2020) will provide first-class opportunities for continuing to develop the approach that has been employed in this doctoral dissertation. It will be crucial to continue monitoring the areas identified in the deontological principles of truth, justice and responsibility, as they can provide illuminating examples that showcase the improvements and the persistence of certain constraints in the field of sports journalism. In undertaking this task, it will be very enlightening to continue examining media outlets from different countries and journalistic cultures because they can reveal interesting variations and nuances in the results obtained.

Within this line of inquiry, the researcher proposes to conduct an international examination of ethics and quality of information in the coverage of Rio 2016 in the British, American and Spanish newspapers, while also incorporating Brazilian quality staples such as *O Globo* (Rio de Janeiro), *Folha* and *O Estado* (São Paulo). Such research would allow an adequate comparison of the results obtained with those obtained in the analysis of London 2012, broadening the scope of the project to the elite national press of the next host country of the Olympic Games. Among many other issues, this new investigation will enable the researcher to ascertain whether: there has been an evolution in the diversity of the sporting agenda and the coverage of underrepresented sports; if the more than satisfactory quantitative results observed in the coverage of sportswomen were a real tipping point for their advance; if there has been a trend towards fewer gendered commentaries; and if the inclusion of sports such as rugby sevens in the Olympic programme has had negative consequences for the use of militaristic language and confrontational narratives in newspapers, to list only a few.

As well as the project making use of a broad framework of analysis items, which included the key questions within the deontological principles of truth, justice and responsibility, the open and flexible nature of the codification scheme allows the revision and extension of analysis categories and the incorporation of new relevant ones that could emerge (for instance, the evaluation of the representation of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) athletes and media discourses around the pending challenges with regard to eradicating homophobia in sport and society). The proposal is, therefore, a starting point that would need to be continuously rethought, reconfigured and debated in the future. At the same time, even though the analytical procedure and the tools used in this doctoral dissertation were designed for examining print newspapers, they can be adapted to study the sports media messages conveyed by other platforms (digital press, radio, television and social media). Their transferable nature also enables them to be used with multiple objects of study, from the coverage of other international sporting mega-events, such as the forthcoming football World Cups (Russia 2018 and Qatar 2022), to the longitudinal treatment of local and regional sport, also taking into account the big professional and collegiate competitions in Europe and North America (UEFA Champions League, NFL, NBA, MLB, NHL and NCAA), among other contexts.

5.3.2. Research on ethics and quality of information in the digital environment

In the current scholarship environment, characterized as it is by an increasing focus on online media and social networking sites as objects of study, it is essential to continue researching using print newspapers because they remain key components in the operations of many media companies and their role within society, therefore, remains pivotal. Despite this fact, it cannot be denied that organizations no longer see themselves as purely print newspapers. The range of platforms via which sports media products are consumed are now multiple (Boyle and Haynes, 2014b). The changes in the industry and the shift towards new platforms have offered extraordinary opportunities both for journalists and audiences. In recent years, for instance, we have witnessed a vigorous expansion across the media landscape of immersive long-form reports that fully exploit online multimedia capabilities (embedded video footage, audio, infographics, interactive applications) and which have enhanced storytelling formulas for sports journalists (Barnhurst, 2010; Pauly, 2014).

Nevertheless, the emergence of the new 24/7 digital environment has also posed a set of key challenges in terms of ethics and quality of information which have fallen outside the remit of this project and should be thoroughly examined in future academic investigations. The specific challenges and concerns that subsequent research should pay attention to include core issues such as: linking and source attribution; the tension between immediacy/accelerated production and quality; the continuous adaptation and updating of material posted to maintain accuracy and integrity; the handling of mistakes and complaints; the verification and fact checking of content from social media sites and blogs; the evaluation of the reputation and weight of digital sources; the use of unnamed sources; the clash between real-interest stories and populist click-based ones; the difficulties of real-time online reporting, blogging and tweeting; the boundaries between personal and public accounts when gathering information; the frontiers between individual and media accounts when disseminating content; and the treatment of huge volumes of data, among many other significant dilemmas that current professionals must respond to (English, 2012; Karlsson, 2011; Kian and Zimmermann, 2012; Ramírez de la Piscina et al., 2015; Singer, 2013; Zion and Craig, 2015).

As well as potentially studying these challenges in the field of sports journalism, another area with enormous investigative potential is MAS, to include such things as online ombudsmen, online codes and stylebooks, newsrooms' blogs and media observatories (Mauri and Ramon, 2015). It would be illuminating to see how these can

help to monitor and criticize the quality of sports content and journalistic practice in this new multiplatform scenario. Scholars should remain especially attentive to this area.

5.3.3. Investigation of audiences and producers of sports media

A third essential area of future research revolves around the study of the audiences and the producers of sports media. Despite the fact that so far sports communication scholars have prioritized research on media messages and case studies, a shift is very much needed to go beyond the textual analysis and focus much more on the consumers and producers of information. First, it will be fruitful for researchers to engage in conversations with audiences¹¹⁰⁶ (readers, listeners and viewers) in order to learn more about their ethical expectations with regard to the consumption of sports journalism contents. Ethnographic data concerning reader reception will allow scholars to learn more about audiences' scales of values and priorities, examine how they perceive ongoing tensions in journalism and gain knowledge of how they evaluate the quality, standards and ethical compliance of the products they consume, as well as identify audiences' levels of literacy and awareness of the mechanisms used by media. Such conversations will also enable scholars to gain additional insight into the strengths, weaknesses and opportunities which audiences see in the organizations that elaborate those contents, and would include additional possibilities of engaging with such audiences.

A further crucial line of inquiry would be to study the long-term effects of media consumption on audiences' attitudes. This would be particularly enlightening in the context of the Olympic Games, given their great exposure and the huge attention audiences give the event in such a short period of time. In order to conduct these types of studies, the use of empirical research methods such as in-depth interviews, focus groups and surveys will have to be enhanced in the field of sports communication.

Second, regarding the production side of sports media, there is a considerable need to understand the situation behind the scenes: the work settings, newsroom cultures, resources, technological investment, newsgathering processes, professional routines, gatekeeping choices, criteria, cultural and ethical values, perspectives and the decision makers under which journalists develop their work. It is vitally important to achieve

¹¹⁰⁶ With regard to audiences, another interesting challenge would be to study the perceptions of the athletes as to how they are portrayed in the media. As Jones argues: "It is important to continue looking at how the athletes are portrayed, but I also think that it is important to get to hear from the athletes themselves, because you wonder what they think, what they know and what role they play in having the coverage come out the way it does" (Amy Jones, interview, July 2014).

closer links with the industry in order to provide a deeper insight into how the profession works. As Wenner explains: “we need to focus more on the management of sports media institutions to understand how decisions are made and why, because it affects what journalists do. Journalists are told to do certain things, assume certain perspectives, to focus on certain issues. They don’t decide which issues they cover, they are workers, they are labour” (Lawrence Wenner, interview, June 2013).

In an examination of the production side, it will be necessary to observe how quality journalism will continue to operate in a future of shrinking budgets. Quality journalism is not cheap, whether we are talking about an Olympics, a World Cup or the coverage of any other sporting mega-event. Adapting to this situation will be a major challenge for sports media professionals that must be overcome and it would be interesting to examine how they proceed. In addition, with regard to the production side, it will be crucial to analyse how journalists deal with the current cluttered and controlled environment characterized by the increasing intensification of the PR industry, an issue already introduced in this dissertation. The importance of studying issues related to the problems of journalists of getting and retaining access; the attempts by sporting organizations to control the messages; and the dependency of sports journalists on sources, should not be underestimated. All the aforementioned knowledge would contribute to a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the field of sports journalism from the perspective of journalism ethics and quality of information.

6. References

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TEN TIPS FOR COVERING SPORTS RESPONSIBLY

RECOMMENDATIONS BASED ON THE PRINCIPLES OF JOURNALISM ETHICS AND QUALITY OF INFORMATION

1. Be accurate, rigorous and avoid speculation and rumour

There shouldn't be space for rumour in sports journalism. Stick to the facts and verified data. If rumours make so much noise that you cannot avoid them, reflect critically on them.

2. Employ a wide range of authoritative and balanced sources to build the coverage

Display the necessary viewpoints to foreground and contextualize your stories. In the day-to-day coverage, do not only interview sporting actors but search for further voices (including experts and organizations) that can help to broaden readers' understanding of sport. Do not under-resource your pieces or minimize certain viewpoints in order to avoid bias.

3. Work harder to publicize and give more exposure to underrepresented sports

Quality newspapers are expected to do more than simply concentrate their attention on the most popular sports. Broaden the coverage and nourish your readers' sporting culture. Diversification is crucial to quality of information.

4. Go beyond the dramatic action on the field to report on the larger framework

Raise the public awareness of the relevant contexts behind the play. Be independent in order to provide a detached, critical and challenging account of the social reality. Never switch off your ethical responsibility.

5. Respect the correct separation between journalistic genres

Always make your readers aware of when opinion starts and when information finishes.

6. Don't go down the road of sensationalism and trivialization

Before publishing stories of a sensational nature, ask yourself about the contribution these will make to your readers' understanding. Don't erode the reputation and credibility of your organization.

7. Broaden your horizons: have diversity and equality in mind

Challenge the long-standing underrepresentation of female, non-white, non-domestic and disabled athletes. Do not endorse them only in the spotlight of the Olympics. Showcase their qualities and accomplishments in the day-to-day coverage too.

8. Deliver the message of non-discrimination to audiences

Provide a meaningful explanation of the milestones achieved but also a critical account of the pending challenges with regard to discrimination in sport and society. Promote the values of inclusion and multiculturalism.

9. Don't be complacent, and avoid the use of stereotypical language

Steer clear of sexist comments and other covert clichés. With regard to race, avoid stereotypical portrayals based on biological differences and do not focus on an athlete's race unless it is newsworthy. Do not associate disabled athletes with stigmas: define them for their athleticism and move away from inaccuracies. Be aware of the impact of patriotic/ nationalistic strategies.

10. Sport is not a substitute for war; minimize the language that fosters confrontation

Do not overemphasize confrontational narratives and warlike imaginary. Be conscious of the effects of using such linguistic choices. Promote the values of non-violence, peacemaking and international understanding.

FURTHER SOURCES. To develop a complete and ethical professional practice, please also bear in mind the major codes issued by UNESCO, the IFJ, the Council of Europe and ASPE, as well as other relevant national codes and specific media guidelines.

7.2. List of publications related to the dissertation

Journal articles

Ramon, X. (2016). "Sports journalism ethics and the portrayal of race and disability. The coverage of the London 2012 Olympics in the British, American and Spanish quality press". *Comunicació, Revista de Recerca i Anàlisi* (in press).

Ramon, X. (2014). "Rumours, responsibility and sports journalism ethics. The coverage of Ye Shiwen at the London 2012 Olympics in the British, American and Spanish quality press". *Periodística* (in press).

Ramon, X. (2013). "Ethics and sports journalism: a proposal of analysis items to evaluate the quality of the sports coverage in the media". *Comunicació, Revista de Recerca i Anàlisi*, 30(2): 55–74 (in Catalan). Available at: <http://www.raco.cat/index.php/Comunicacio/article/view/270582>.

Ramon, X. (2013). "Rigour in sports information. The coverage of eight Muslim sportswomen at the London 2012 Olympics from the perspective of journalism ethics". *Periodística*, 15: 29–45 (in Catalan). Available at: <http://www.raco.cat/index.php/Periodistica/article/view/286501>.

Reports

Ramon, X. (2015). *Olympic values and sports journalism ethics. The international press coverage of the 2012 Olympics*. Final report. Project supported by the IOC Olympic Studies Centre PhD Research Grant Programme 2014. Available at: http://doc.rero.ch/record/255152/files/OSC_Final_Report_Xavier_Ramon.pdf.

Conference and seminar papers

Ramon, X. (2015). "A watershed moment to challenge gender inequalities or a site to persist in the old stereotypes? *The New York Times*, *The Guardian* and *El País* coverage of sportswomen at the London 2012 Olympics from the lens of media ethics". 8th Summit on Communication and Sport, International Association for Communication and Sport (IACS). Charlotte, North Carolina. March 6–8, 2015.

- Ramon, X. (2015). "Reporting on the larger framework of sporting mega-events. The coverage of the London 2012 Olympics in the American, British and Spanish quality press". 8th Summit on Communication and Sport, International Association for Communication and Sport (IACS). Charlotte, North Carolina. March 6–8, 2015.
- Ramon, X. (2014). "Promoting equality or persisting in the old stereotypes? The coverage of sportswomen at the London 2012 Olympics in *The Guardian*, *The New York Times* and *El País* from the perspective of journalism ethics". ECREA 2014 Conference. Lisbon, Portugal. November 12–15, 2014.
- Ramon, X. (2014). "Olympic values and sports journalism ethics. Reflections on the international press coverage of the London 2012 Olympics". 21st Postgraduate Seminar in Olympic Studies. International Olympic Academy (IOA), Greece. September 1–29, 2014.
- Ramon, X. (2014). "Rumours, responsibility and sports journalism ethics. The coverage of Ye Shiwen at the London 2012 Olympics in *The Guardian*, *The New York Times* and *El País*". XX Congreso de la Sociedad Española de Periodística (SEP). Barcelona, Spain. June 13–14, 2014.
- Ramon, X. (2013). "The London 2012 Olympics and the deontological principle of truth. An analysis of the opening and closing ceremonies in the international quality press". IAMCR Conference 2013. Dublin, Ireland. June 25–29, 2013.
- Ramon, X. (2013). "A showcase for pioneers. The portrayal of eight Muslim sportswomen at the London 2012 Olympics from the perspective of journalism ethics". 10th European Association for the Sociology of Sport Conference (EASS). Cordoba, Spain. May 8–11, 2013.
- Ramon, X. (2012). "The journalistic coverage and the deontological principle of justice. Review of the literature about the media representations of gender, nationality, race and disability at the Olympic Games" (in Spanish). IV Congreso Internacional Latina de Comunicación Social. La Laguna, Spain. December 4–7, 2012.

Forthcoming publications will be available at: <http://xavierramon.com>

7.3. List of ethical documents employed in the project

International codes and recommendations concerning journalism ethics	
C1	<i>Declaration of Principles on the Conduct of Journalists</i> (International Federation of Journalists, IFJ) http://www.ifj.org/about-ifj/ifj-code-of-principles/
C2	<i>International Principles of Professional Ethics in Journalism</i> (UNESCO) http://ethicnet.uta.fi/international/international_principles_of_professional_ethics_in_journalism
C3	<i>Resolution 1.003 on the Ethics of Journalism</i> (Council of Europe) http://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/XRef/Xref-XML2HTML-en.asp?fileid=16414&lang=en
United Kingdom	
C4	<i>Editors' Code of Practice</i> (Independent Press Standards Organisation, IPSO) https://www.ipso.co.uk/IPSO/cop.html
C5	<i>Professional Code of Conduct</i> (National Union of Journalists, NUJ) https://www.nuj.org.uk/documents/nuj-code-of-conduct/
C6	<i>The Guardian Editorial Code</i> (<i>The Guardian</i> and <i>The Observer</i>) http://image.guardian.co.uk/sys-files/Guardian/documents/2007/06/14/EditorialCode2007.pdf
C7	<i>The Telegraph Stylebook</i> (<i>The Daily Telegraph</i> and <i>The Sunday Telegraph</i>) http://www.telegraph.co.uk/topics/about-us/style-book/1435304/Telegraph-style-book-basic-principles.html
United States of America	
C8	<i>Code of Ethics</i> (Society of Professional Journalists, SPJ) http://www.spj.org/ethicscode.asp
C9	<i>Statement of Principles</i> (American Society of News Editors, ASNE) http://asne.org/content.asp?pl=24&sl=171&contentid=171
C10	<i>Washington Post Standards and Ethics</i> (<i>The Washington Post</i>) http://asne.org/content.asp?pl=236&sl=19&contentid=335
C11	<i>Ethical Journalism. A Handbook of Values and Practises for the News and Editorial Departments</i> (<i>The New York Times</i>) http://www.nytc.com/wp-content/uploads/NYT_Ethical_Journalism_0904-1.pdf
C12	<i>Guidelines on Integrity</i> (<i>The New York Times</i>) http://www.nytc.com/wp-content/uploads/Guidelines-on-Integrity-updated-2008.pdf
C13	<i>Assuring Our Credibility</i> (<i>The New York Times</i>) http://www.nytc.com/wp-content/uploads/assuring-our-credibility.pdf
C14	<i>Ethics Guidelines</i> (Associated Press Sports Editors, APSE) http://apsportseditors.org/apse-ethics-guidelines/
Spain	
C15	<i>Deontological Code of the Journalistic Profession</i> (Spanish Journalists' Associations Federation, FAPE) http://fape.es/home/codigo-deontologico/
C16	<i>Declaration of Principles of the Journalistic Profession</i> (Catalan Journalists College, CPC) http://www.periodistes.org/ca/home/periodisme/codi-deontologic.html

C17	<i>Ethical Code</i> (Madrid Journalists Union, SPM) http://www.xornalistas.com/imxd/noticias/doc/1229539030codigosindimadrid.pdf
C18	<i>El País Style Guide</i> (<i>El País</i>) http://blogs.elpais.com/files/manual-de-estilo-de-el-pa%C3%ADs.pdf
C19	<i>El País Newsroom Statute</i> (<i>El País</i>) http://www.fesp.org/index.php/documentos/item/download/38_705c358137c92f9a02ee3085d39b6bad
C20	<i>La Vanguardia Newsroom Statute</i> (<i>La Vanguardia</i>) http://www.sindicatperiodistes.cat/sites/default/files/documents/ER%20La%20Vanguardia.pdf
C21	<i>La Vanguardia Stylebook</i> (<i>La Vanguardia</i>) [Not available online]
Specific documents related to the Olympic movement¹¹⁰⁸	
C22	<i>Olympic Charter</i> (IOC) http://www.olympic.org/Documents/olympic_charter_en.pdf
C23	<i>IOC Code of Ethics</i> http://www.olympic.org/Documents/Commissions_PDFfiles/Ethics/code-ethique-2015-en.pdf

Table 25. List of ethical documents employed in the project

¹¹⁰⁸ The Olympic movement does not have a set of guidelines or rules of journalistic conduct specifically addressed to media professionals. Nevertheless, it is possible to relate some of the content of the journalism ethics principles to key points established in the *Olympic Charter* (IOC, 2013a) and the *IOC Code of Ethics* (IOC, 2013b). This is the reason why these two documents have been employed throughout this dissertation.

7.4. List of core reporters who covered London 2012

The following list details the core team of reporters (editors, polyvalent journalists and specialists) from each of the newspapers who covered London 2012¹¹⁰⁹:

Newspaper	Core team of sports reporters		
<i>The Guardian/The Observer</i>	Tim Adams	Esther Addley	Robert Booth
	Andy Bull	Lizzie Davies	William Fotheringham
	Owen Gibson	Simon Hattenstone	Andy Hunter
	Sean Ingle	Jamie Jackson	Emma John
	Sam Jones	Anna Kessel	Robert Kitson
	Donald McRae	Kevin Mitchell	Steven Morris
	Stephen Moss	Barney Ronay	Daniel Taylor
	Louise Taylor	Peter Walker	Richard Williams
	Zoe Williams		
<i>The Daily Telegraph/The Sunday Telegraph</i>	Tanya Aldred	Chris Bascombe	Emily Benammar
	Simon Briggs	Oliver Brown	Tom Cary
	Ian Chadband	Pippa Cuckson	Gareth A. Davies
	Luke Edwards	Brendan Gallagher	Simon Hart
	Paul Hayward	Nick Hoult	Paul Kelso
	James Kirkup	Jonathan Liew	Jacquelin Magnay
	Gavin Mairs	Sam Marsden	Nick Pearce
	John Percy	Rachel Quarrell	Gordon Rayner
	Tom Rowley	Duncan White	Jim White
	Jeremy Wilson	Jessica Winch	Henry Winter
<i>The New York Times</i>	Barry Bearak	Ken Belson	Greg Bishop
	Sam Borden	Christopher Clarey	Karen Crouse
	Andrew Das	Jeré Longman	Sarah Lyall
	Juliet Macur	Mary Pilon	Campbell Robertson
	David Segal		

¹¹⁰⁹ Apart from these staff, newspapers also relied on athletes and former athletes as special commentators and analysts. The British newspapers and *El País* should be particularly commended for the large number of analysts who participated in the coverage. *The Guardian* relied on the views of special commentators, including Nicola Adams, Yamilé Aldama, Jonathan Brownlee, Dan Macey, Zac Purchase, Sarah Stevenson, Bobby White, Bradley Wiggins and Jermaine Gonzales. *The Telegraph* also made extensive use of analysts, including Ben Ainslie, Aaron Cook, James Cracknell, Steve Cram, Paul Drinkhall, Ellen Gandy, Haile Gebrselassie, Maurice Greene, Tanni Grey-Thompson, Denise Lewis, Edwin Moses, Steve Redgrave and Laura Trott. *El País* also had a notable team of special commentators, including Arturo Casado, Luís Doreste, Santiago Esteva, Manel Estiarte, Oscar Freire, Juan Carlos Granado, Juanma Iturriaga, Sergi López, Gisela Morón, Antonio Oca, Ivan Raña and Paul Shirley.

<i>The Washington Post</i>	Karla Adam	Nancy Armour	Matthew Breen
	Maria Cheng	Liz Clarke	Anthony Faiola
	Sally Jenkins	Eliza Mackintosh	Rick Maese
	Brian Mahoney	Tim Reynolds	Amy Shipley
	Barry Svrluga	Mike Wise	Tom Withers
<i>El País</i>	Robert Álvarez	Carlos Arribas	Ramon Besa
	Amaya Iribar	Luis Martín	Juan José Mateo
	José Sámano	Diego Torres	
<i>La Vanguardia</i>	Carlos Martín	Juan Bautista Martínez	Rafael Ramos
	Natalia Román	Felip Vivanco	

Table 26. List of core reporters who covered London 2012

7.5. National Olympic Committees (NOCs) quoted in the coverage

Country	National Olympic Committee (NOC)
Afghanistan	Afghanistan National Olympic Committee (AFG)
Australia	Australian Olympic Committee (AOC)
Britain	British Olympic Association (BOA)
Cameroon	Cameroon National Olympic Committee (CNOSC)
China	Chinese Olympic Committee (COC)
Denmark	NOC and Sports Confederation of Denmark (DIF)
Egypt	Egyptian Olympic Committee (EOC)
Germany	German Olympic Sports Confederation (DOSB)
Greece	Hellenic Olympic Committee (HOC)
Grenada	Grenada Olympic Committee (GOC)
Hungary	Hungarian Olympic Committee (MOB)
India	Indian Olympic Association (IOA)
Iran	National Olympic Committee of the Islamic Republic of Iran (IRI)
Ireland	Olympic Council of Ireland (OCI)
Israel	Israel Olympic Committee (NOCIL)
Japan	Japanese Olympic Committee (JOC)
Kenya	National Olympic Committee Kenya (NOCK)
Mexico	Mexican Olympic Committee (COM)
Niger	Nigerien Olympic and National Sports Committee (COSNI)
Russia	Russian Olympic Committee (ROC)
South Africa	South African Sports Confederation and Olympic Committee (SASCOC)
South Korea	Korean Olympic Committee (KOC)
Spain	Spanish Olympic Committee (COE)
Switzerland	Swiss Olympic Association (SOA)
Taiwan	Chinese Taipei Olympic Committee (TPENOC)
United States	United States Olympic Committee (USOC)

Table 27. National Olympic Committees (NOCs) quoted during the timeframe of the observation

7.6. Sporting federations quoted in the coverage

Sport	Sporting Federation
Archery	World Archery Federation (WA-FITA)
Athletics	Afghanistan Athletics Federation
	International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF)
	Spanish Federation of Athletics (RFEA)
	Fédération Française d'Athlétisme (FFA)
	UK Athletics (UKA)
Badminton	Badminton World Federation (BWF)
Basketball	International Basketball Federation (FIBA)
	National Basketball Association (NBA)
	Spanish Basketball Federation (FEB)
	USA Basketball (USAB)
Boxing	International Amateur Boxing Association (AIBA)
	Irish Amateur Boxing Association (IABA)
	USA Boxing (USAB)
Canoeing	Spanish Canoeing Federation (RFEP)
Cycling	Delhi Cycling Association
	International Cycling Union (UCI)
	USA Cycling (USAC)
Equestrian	British Equestrian Federation (BEF)
	Maryland Dressage Association (MDA)
Football	English Football Association (FA)
	Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA)
	US Soccer (USOC)
Gymnastics	International Gymnastics Federation (FIG)
	USA Gymnastics (USAG)
Handball	European Federation of Handball (EHF)
Judo	British Judo Association (BJA)
	Fédération Française de Judo (FFJDA)
	Georgian Judo Federation (GJF)
	International Judo Federation (IJF)
	USA Judo (USJF)
	Saudi Arabia Judo and Taekwondo Federation (GTP)
Modern Pentathlon	Union Internationale de Pentathlon Moderne (UIPM)
Rowing	International Rowing Federation (FISA)
Sailing	International Sailing Federation (ISF)
	Royal Yachting Association (RYA)
	Korea Sailing Federation (KSAF)
	Spanish Sailing Federation (RFEV)
	US Sailing
Shooting	USA Shooting

Swimming	Fédération Internationale de Natation (FINA)
	Swimming Australia (SAL)
	USA Swimming (USAS)
Swimming/Water Polo	Spanish Swimming Federation (RFEN)
Table Tennis	USA Table Tennis (USATT)
Taekwondo	Spanish Taekwondo Federation (FET)
Tennis	Spanish Tennis Federation (RFET)
Triathlon	International Triathlon Union (ITU)
	USA Triathlon (USAT)
Volleyball	International Volleyball Federation (FIVB)
	Volleyball England (EVA)
Wrestling	British Wrestling Association (BWA)
	Spanish Wrestling Federation (FELODA)
Other/Multisport	Consejo Superior de Deportes (CSD)
	Sport England (SE)

Table 28. Sporting federations quoted during the timeframe of the observation

7.7. Scholars and experts quoted in the coverage

Area	Experts	Institutions	Quoted by ...
Anthropology	Emma Tarlo	Goldsmiths	<i>The Guardian</i>
Art History	Claire Bishop	CUNY	<i>The Guardian</i>
Biology	Werner Franke	University of Heidelberg	<i>New York Times</i>
Criminology	Mark Williams-Thomas	-	<i>The Guardian</i>
Crowd Management and Security Studies	Chris Kemp	Bucks New University	<i>El País</i>
	Paul Russell	-	<i>The Guardian</i>
Cultural Management	Beatriz García	University of Liverpool	<i>La Vanguardia</i>
Drug Monitoring	David Cowan	King's College London	<i>The Guardian</i>
Economics	Caroline de La Soujeole	Seymour Pierce	<i>The Guardian</i>
	David Brockton	Execution Noble	<i>The Guardian</i>
	Guy Hewett	Execution Noble	<i>The Guardian</i>
	Flaubert Mbiekop	International Development Research Centre	<i>The Guardian</i>
	Jeremy Cook	World First	<i>The Guardian</i>
	John Hawksworth	PWC	<i>The Guardian</i>
	Anthony Heath	University of Oxford	<i>The Guardian</i>
	Tony Travers	LSE	<i>The Guardian</i>
	Richard Layard	LSE	<i>The Guardian</i>
	John Ross	Jiao Tong University	<i>The Guardian</i>
	Spencer Dale	Bank of England	<i>The Guardian</i>
	Chris Gratton	Sheffield Hallam University	<i>The Guardian</i>
	Philip Rush	Nomura	<i>The Guardian</i>
	James Knightley	ING	<i>The Guardian</i>
	Howard Archer	IHS Global Insight	<i>Guardian, TWP</i>
	Ajay Bhalla	Cass Business School	<i>The Guardian</i>
	Michael Saunders	Citigroup	<i>The Guardian</i>
	-	International Association of Sports Economists	<i>The Guardian</i>
	Colin Ellis	Moody's Investor Services	<i>New York Times</i>
	Frank Zarnowski	Dartmouth College	<i>New York Times</i>
	Roger Noll	Stanford University	<i>New York Times</i>
	Patrick Rishe	Walker School of Business	<i>TWP</i>
	Eva Kasimati	University of Bath	<i>La Vanguardia</i>
	Arvind Subramanian	Peterson Institute	<i>La Vanguardia</i>
	Chris Daniels	Lloyds Banking Group	<i>The Telegraph</i>
	-	High Frequency	<i>The Telegraph</i>
	David Forrest	University of Salford	<i>The Telegraph</i>
Daniel Solomon	Centre for Economics and Business Research	<i>The Telegraph</i>	

Environmental Issues	Gary Fuller	King's College London	<i>The Guardian</i>
	Environmental Working Group	University of California at Santa Barbara	<i>TWP</i>
	-	Stockholm Environment Institute	<i>TWP</i>
Fashion	Patricia Campbell	University of Massachusetts	<i>TWP</i>
Foreign Relations/International Affairs	Richard N. Hass	Council on Foreign Relations	<i>TWP</i>
	Pascal Boniface	The French Institute for International and Strategic Affairs (IRIS)	<i>La Vanguardia</i>
	Tao Wenzhao	Chinese Academy of Social Science	<i>TWP</i>
Gambling Studies	Mark Griffiths	Nottingham Trent University	<i>TWP</i>
History	Peter Catterall	University of Westminster	<i>The Guardian</i>
	Jed Esty	University of Pennsylvania	<i>The Guardian</i>
	Andy Archibald	-	<i>New York Times</i>
	Dong-Jhy Hwang	National Taiwan Sport University	<i>New York Times</i>
	Fouad Ajami	Stanford University	<i>TWP</i>
	Alfred Bosch	-	<i>El País</i>
	Walter Laqueur	Center for Strategic and International Studies	<i>La Vanguardia</i>
	Mary Beard	University of Cambridge	<i>The Telegraph</i>
Health and Sports Performance	Dena Bravata	Stanford University	<i>New York Times</i>
	Michael Joyner	Mayo Clinic (Rochester)	<i>New York Times</i>
	Geoffroy Berthelot	IRMES-INSEP	<i>El País</i>
	José González Alonso	Brunel University	<i>El País</i>
	Bryan Jones	UCLAN	<i>The Telegraph</i>
Human Rights	Christoph Wilcke	Human Rights Watch	<i>NYT, TWP</i>
Internet Studies	William Dutton	University of Oxford	<i>TWP</i>
	Mark Graham	University of Oxford	<i>The Telegraph</i>
Labour Studies	Gerwyn Davies	CIPD	<i>The Telegraph</i>
Landscape Studies	Nigel Dunnnett	University of Sheffield	<i>The Guardian</i>
	James Hitchmough	University of Sheffield	<i>The Guardian</i>
Languages	A. Lobanov-Rostovsky	Kenyon College	<i>New York Times</i>
Law	Adam Rendle	Taylor Wessing	<i>New York Times</i>
Leisure Studies	Alan Tomlinson	University of Brighton	<i>New York Times</i>
	Mark Perryman	University of Brighton	<i>La Vanguardia</i>
Management	Stefan Szymanski	University of Michigan	<i>The Guardian</i>
	Tina Opie	Babson College	<i>TWP</i>
Marketing	Peter Carlisle	Octagon	<i>New York Times</i>

	Bob Dorman	Baker Street Advertising	<i>TWP</i>
	Paul Swangard	University of Oregon	<i>TWP</i>
	Pablo Laso	Real Madrid Basketball	<i>El País</i>
	Jamie Wynne-Morgan	M&C Saatchi Sport and Entertainment	<i>The Telegraph</i>
	Nigel Currie	BrandRapport	<i>The Telegraph</i>
	Alan Seymour	University of Northampton	<i>The Telegraph</i>
	John Davis	University of Oregon	<i>The Guardian</i>
	Mark Borkowski	Borkowski.do	<i>The Guardian</i>
	Diane Wehrle	Springboard	<i>The Guardian</i>
	-	Experian	<i>The Guardian</i>
	-	British Retail Consortium	<i>The Guardian</i>
	-	KPMG research	<i>The Guardian</i>
Mathematics/Statistics	John Barrow	University of Cambridge	<i>Guardian/Teleg.</i>
	Nate Silver	FiveThirtyEight blog	<i>New York Times</i>
Media and Communication	Tim Nelson	Tris3ct	<i>New York Times</i>
	Antoni Gutiérrez Rubí	-	<i>El País</i>
	Steven V. Roberts	George Washington Univ.	<i>TWP</i>
	Kevin Alavy	Initiative	<i>New York Times</i>
	Andrew Tyndall	-	<i>TWP</i>
	Tom Rosenstiel	Project for Excellence in Journalism	<i>TWP</i>
	-	The Pew Research Centre	<i>TWP</i>
Medicine	Malachy McHugh	Lenox Hill Hospital	<i>New York Times</i>
	Lluís Til	CAR Sant Cugat	<i>La Vanguardia</i>
Nutrition	Alicia Kendig	USOC	<i>New York Times</i>
	Drew Price	-	<i>The Guardian</i>
	Gareth Wallis	University of Birmingham	<i>The Guardian</i>
	Naomi Cermak	University of Maastricht	<i>New York Times</i>
Olympism and Olympics History	David Wallechinsky	International Society of Olympic Historians	<i>TWP</i>
	Bill Mallon	UNC Chappel Hill	<i>NYT/TWP</i>
	John Lucas	Penn State University	<i>TWP</i>
	Ioanna Mastora	Foundation of Olympic and Sport Education	<i>The Guardian</i>
	Susan Brownell	University of Missouri-St. Louis	<i>The Guardian</i>
	Janice Forsyth	Univ. of Western Ontario	<i>New York Times</i>
Philosophy	Julian Baggini	Philosopher's Magazine	<i>The Guardian</i>
	Roger Scruton	Ethics and Public Policy Center	<i>The Guardian</i>
	Shawn Klein	Rockford College	<i>New York Times</i>
	Sigmund Loland	Norwegian School of Sport Sciences	<i>The Guardian</i>

Physical Therapy	Robert Gailey	University of Miami	<i>New York Times</i>
Politics	Tim Soutphommasane	Monash University	<i>The Guardian</i>
	Hajo Funke	Free University Berlin	<i>New York Times</i>
	Dierk Borstel	University of Bielefeld	<i>New York Times</i>
Psychology	Chris Harwood	Loughborough University	<i>The Guardian</i>
	James Beale	University of East London	<i>The Guardian</i>
	Pablo del Río	Residencia Blume	<i>El País</i>
	Josep Marí	CAR Sant Cugat	<i>La Vanguardia</i>
	Manuela Rodríguez	CAR Madrid	<i>La Vanguardia</i>
	Peter Cohen	-	<i>The Telegraph</i>
	Lanny Bassham	-	<i>The Telegraph</i>
	Steven Ungerleider	University of Texas at Austin	<i>New York Times</i>
	Linda Papadopoulos	London Metropolitan University	<i>The Guardian</i>
Physiology	Richard Ferguson	Loughborough University	<i>The Guardian</i>
	Andrew Jones	University of Exeter	<i>New York Times</i>
	Kerry Stewart	John Hopkins University	<i>New York Times</i>
	José Antonio Calbet	University de Las Palmas	<i>El País</i>
	Peter Weyand	Southern Methodist University	<i>El País</i>
	Alejandro Lucía	Universidad Europea de Madrid	<i>El País</i>
Sociology	Penny Bernstock	University of East London	<i>The Guardian</i>
	Gavin Poynter	University of East London	<i>The Guardian</i>
	Aidan Foster-Carter	University of Leeds	<i>The Telegraph</i>
	Keith Woodward	University of Wisconsin	<i>TWP</i>
	David Moscoso	Universidad Pablo de Olavide	<i>El País</i>
	-	LSE	<i>La Vanguardia</i>
	Cristina Sánchez Miret	Universitat de Girona	<i>La Vanguardia</i>
Sport and Fitness	Ben Oakley	Open University	<i>The Guardian</i>
Sport and Social Theory	Alan Bairner	Loughborough University	<i>New York Times</i>
Sport Biomechanics	Peter Pidcoe	Virginia Commonwealth University	<i>New York Times</i>
	Aki Salo	University of Bath	<i>New York Times</i>
	Xavier Aguado Jódar	Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha	<i>El País</i>
Sport Psychiatry	Dave Peters	-	<i>The Guardian</i>
Sports Business	Simon Chadwick	Coventry University	<i>NYT/Telegraph</i>
	Ben Speight	SportBusiness Group	<i>New York Times</i>
Sports Engineering	Steve Haake	Sheffield Hallam Univ.	<i>TWP</i>
Sports Industry	Tan Jianxiang	South China Normal University	<i>New York Times</i>

Sports Science	Jo Corbett	University of Portsmouth	<i>The Guardian</i>
	Ross Tucker	University of the Free State	<i>The Guardian</i>
	Charles Yesalis	Penn State University	<i>New York Times</i>
	Jon Kolb	University of Calgary	<i>New York Times</i>
	Benilde Vázquez	INEF	<i>El País</i>
	Élida Alfaro	INEF	<i>El País</i>
	John Brewer	University of Bedfordshire	<i>The Telegraph</i>
Sports Technology	Phil Cheetham	Titleist Performance Institute	<i>New York Times</i>
Typography	Simon Garfield	-	<i>The Guardian</i>
Urban Policy/Planning	Mitchell Moss	New York University	<i>The Guardian</i>
Weather	Philip Eden	Royal Meteorological Society	<i>The Telegraph</i>

Table 29. Scholars and experts quoted during the timeframe of the observation

7.8. National and international media quoted in the coverage

Country	Media outlet	Guardian	Telegraph	NYT	TWP	El País	LV
ARG	<i>Clarín</i>	X					
AUS	<i>Australian Sailing Magazine</i>	X					
	<i>Channel 9</i>		X				
	<i>Melbourne Age</i>	X	X				
	<i>Melbourne Herald Sun</i>	X					
	<i>mX newspaper</i>	X					
	<i>Sydney Daily Telegraph</i>		X				
	<i>The Australian</i>	X	X	X			
	<i>The Sunday Mail Australia</i>			X			
	<i>The Sydney Morning Herald</i>	X	X	X			
BEL	<i>Le Soir</i>	X					
BRA	<i>Estado de Minas</i>			X			
	<i>Folha de São Paulo</i>	X					
	<i>La Gazeta</i>	X					
	<i>O Estado de São Paulo</i>	X					
	<i>Veja</i>	X					
CAN	<i>Vancouver Province</i>	X					
CHN	<i>Beijing Morning News</i>			X			
	<i>CCTV</i>				X		
	<i>China Daily</i>	X					
	<i>Guanming Daily</i>				X		
	<i>People's Daily</i>	X		X	X		
	<i>Shanghai Morning Post</i>		X				
	<i>Shanghai Times</i>		X				
	<i>Sports Illustrated China</i>			X			
	<i>The Global Times</i>	X	X	X	X		
CMR	<i>Cameroon Tribune</i>			X			
DEN	<i>Jyllands-Posten</i>				X		
ESP	<i>Ara</i>	X					X
	<i>As</i>					X	X
	<i>Catalunya Ràdio</i>					X	X
	<i>El Mundo</i>			X			
	<i>El País</i>	X		X			
	<i>Mundo Deportivo</i>						X
	<i>Palco Deportivo</i>					X	
	<i>RTVE</i>					X	X

FRA	<i>France 24 television</i>	X			X		
	<i>France BFM Television</i>		X				
	<i>France Football</i>						
	<i>France Television</i>	X				X	
	<i>Journal du Dimanche</i>	X					
	<i>L'Équipe</i>		X	X	X	X	X
	<i>Le Canard Enchaîné</i>		X				
	<i>Le Figaro</i>	X	X			X	
	<i>Le Monde</i>	X	X				
	<i>Libération</i>	X	X				
	<i>Sud Ouest</i>		X				
GBR	<i>BBC</i>	X	X	X	X	X	X
	<i>Channel 4</i>	X					
	<i>Colchester Gazette</i>	X					
	<i>Defence Focus Magazine</i>	X					
	<i>Financial Times</i>		X	X	X		
	<i>FourFourTwo</i>					X	
	<i>ITV</i>	X	X				
	<i>Lancashire Evening Post</i>	X					
	<i>London Evening Standard</i>	X	X	X			
	<i>Morley Observer and Advertiser</i>	X					
	<i>New Statesman</i>		X				
	<i>Radio Times</i>	X					
	<i>Sky</i>	X	X		X		
	<i>Sports Pro</i>					X	
	<i>The Daily Telegraph/The Sunday Telegraph</i>	X		X	X	X	X
	<i>The Daily Mail/Mail on Sunday</i>	X		X	X	X	X
	<i>The Economist</i>	X					
	<i>The Guardian/The Observer</i>		X	X	X	X	X
	<i>The Independent</i>		X	X		X	
	<i>The Mirror</i>	X		X	X		
<i>The Spectator</i>		X					
<i>The Sun</i>	X			X			
<i>The Times</i>	X		X	X		X	
<i>The Western Mail</i>			X				
GER	<i>Augsburger Allgemeine</i>	X					
	<i>Bild</i>	X		X			
	<i>Der Spiegel</i>	X	X				

	<i>Deutsche Welle</i>					X	
	<i>Die Welt</i>					X	
	<i>Die Zeit</i>	X					
	<i>Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung</i>	X					
	<i>Süddeutsche Zeitung</i>	X					
	<i>Tagesspiegel</i>			X			
	<i>Taz</i>					X	
	<i>ERT</i>	X					
IND	<i>Hindustan Times</i>	X					
	<i>Indian Express</i>		X				
	<i>Mail Today</i>	X					
	<i>Shargh</i>				X		
	<i>The Times of India</i>	X					
	<i>The Week</i>	X					
IRL	<i>Irish Examiner</i>	X					
	<i>RTE</i>			X			
	<i>The Irish Independent</i>			X			
ISR	<i>Haaretz</i>	X					
ITA	<i>Gazzetta dello Sport</i>						X
	<i>Il Giornale</i>	X					
	<i>La Repubblica</i>	X					
	<i>La Stampa</i>	X					
JAM	<i>Irie Radio</i>	X					
KEN	<i>The Standard of Nairobi</i>					X	
KOR	<i>Sports Kyunghyang</i>	X					
LES	<i>Lesotho Times</i>	X					
NED	<i>Het Laatste Nieuws</i>		X				
PHI	<i>Philippine Daily</i>					X	
PRK	<i>North Korean state newspaper</i>	X					
RSA	<i>Mail and Guardian</i>	X					
RUS	<i>Moskovsky Komsomolets</i>	X					
	<i>Rossiyskaya Gazeta</i>		X				
	<i>Sovetsky Sport</i>	X	X				
	<i>Sport Express</i>		X				
	<i>Tvoy Den</i>		X				
TUR	<i>Aksam</i>					X	
	<i>Hurriyet</i>	X					
	<i>Milliyet</i>	X					
	<i>Radikal</i>	X					
USA	<i>ABC News</i>			X			
	<i>Bleacher Report</i>		X				

<i>Business Week</i>				X		
<i>Chicago Tribune</i>	X			X		
<i>CNN</i>	X			X		
<i>ESPN</i>	X			X		X
<i>Forbes</i>		X		X	X	
<i>Fortune Magazine</i>						X
<i>Fox News</i>				X		
<i>International Herald Tribune</i>	X					
<i>Los Angeles Times</i>	X			X		
<i>Marketing Magazine</i>		X				
<i>NBC</i>	X	X	X	X	X	
<i>New Orleans Times-Picayune</i>	X					
<i>New York Daily News</i>		X		X		
<i>Philly.com</i>				X		
<i>Press Enterprise</i>	X					
<i>San Francisco Chronicle</i>	X	X				
<i>San José Mercury News</i>	X					
<i>Slate</i>				X		
<i>Sports Illustrated</i>	X	X	X	X	X	X
<i>The Daily Beast</i>				X		
<i>The Hollywood Reporter</i>					X	
<i>The Huffington Post</i>		X				X
<i>The Miami Herald</i>			X			
<i>The New York Times</i>	X	X				
<i>The New Yorker</i>				X		
<i>The Wall Street Journal</i>	X					
<i>The Washington Post</i>	X	X				
<i>Time</i>	X	X		X		X
<i>Track and Field News</i>					X	
<i>USA Today</i>	X	X				
Total media quoted	82	43	30	32	25	17

Table 30. List of national and international media quoted by the newspapers sampled

7.9. Relevant organizations quoted in the coverage

Area	Organizations quoted in the coverage	
Sport and recreation	Sport England	WADA
	UK Sport	CAS
	CTC	English Institute of Sport
	Sport and Recreation Alliance	Youth Sport Trust
	Fields in Trust	Stiftung Deutsche Sporthilfe
Human rights and non-discrimination	SOS Racism	Kick It Out
	Muslim Women in Sport Foundation	Women's Sport and Fitness Foundation
	Liberty	Human Rights Watch
	Anti-Defamation League	
Tourism	Association of Leading Visitor Attractions	European Tour Operators Association
	Visit England	UKinbound
	The Travel Association	British Hospitality Association
	London & Partners	
Trade and commerce	Business and trade associations based in London	London Chamber of Commerce
	British Retail Consortium	Scottish Chamber of Commerce
	New West End Company	Confederation of British Industry
	Trading Standards	World Gold Council
	The Greater Washington Board of Trade	
Transport	Transport for London	British Airports Authority
	Licensed Taxi Drivers Association	National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers
	RAC Foundation	
Unions	Public and Commercial Services Union	Unite
	RTM	Unison
	Napo	Immigration Services Union
Education	Independent Schools Trust	The Sutton Trust
Culture and leisure	British Council	Chief Cultural and Leisure Officers Association
Health	ADDISS	World Health Organization
	British Lung Foundation	Centres for Disease Control
	British Medical Association	
Labour	International Labour Organization	Recruitment and Employment Confederation
	China Labour Watch	
Environmental issues	World Wildlife Fund	Clean Air

Media/Communications	Sound Women	Ofcom
Weather	Met Office	British Weather Services
	Vantage Weather Services	
NGOs	Oxfam GB	Unicef UK
	Save the Children UK	Action Aid UK
	CAFOD	Christian Aid
	Progressio	Tearfund
	Concern Worldwide	Global Poverty Project
Volunteering	National Council for Voluntary Organizations	Join In Trust
	Volunteering England	
Child support	Children's Food Campaign	Save The Children
	Child Poverty Action Group	
Architecture	Royal Institute of British Architects	
Business and economics	Institute of Directors	International Monetary Fund
Development	Centre for Research and Dialogue	Conservative Friends of International Development
Engineering	Institution of Mechanical Engineers	
Statistics	Office for National Statistics	
Memorabilia	Society of Olympic Collectors	

Table 31. List of relevant organizations quoted in the coverage

7.10. Journalists from other news desks involved in the coverage of the larger framework of London 2012

Area	Journalists and commentators from other news desks (including)
Economics, business, finance	Simon Goodley, Simon Neville, Larry Elliott, Zoe Wood, Nils Pratley (<i>The Guardian</i>)
	Kamal Ahmed, Sarah Edworthy, Graham Ruddick, Anna White (<i>The Telegraph</i>)
	David Jolly, Eric Pfanner (<i>The New York Times</i>)
	Ian Cropp, Jena McGregor (<i>The Washington Post</i>)
Politics	Toby Helm, Juliette Jowit, Nicholas Watt, Patrick Wintour, H�elene Mulholland, Andrew Rawnsley, Rajeev Syal (<i>The Guardian</i>)
	Christopher Hope, Tim Ross (<i>The Telegraph</i>)
	Maureen Dowd (<i>The New York Times</i>)
	Dan Balz, Chris Cillizza, Robert McCartney, Ed O'Keefe, Kathleen Parker, Vanessa Williams (<i>The Washington Post</i>)
Media, television and film	Stuart Jeffries, Sam Wollaston, John Plunkett, Mark Sweeney (<i>The Guardian</i>)
	Emma Barnett, Gillian Reynolds (<i>The Telegraph</i>)
	Richard Sandomir, Alessandra Stanley, Brian Stelter, Neil Genzlinger, Christine Haughney (<i>The New York Times</i>)
	Paul Fahri, Jen Chaney, Rachel Lubitz, Lisa De Moraes (<i>The Washington Post</i>)
	Emili Gonz�alez, Oriol Rodr�guez, Toni de la Torre (<i>La Vanguardia</i>)
Arts, culture, architecture	Vanessa Thorpe, Mark Brown, Rowan Moore (<i>The Guardian</i>)
	Sarah Crompton (<i>The Telegraph</i>)
	David W. Dunlap, Roslyn Sulcas (<i>The New York Times</i>)
	Katherine Boyle (<i>The Washington Post</i>)
	S�lvia Hernando, Carmen Ma�ana (<i>El Pa�s</i>)
	Xavier Antich, Sergio Vila-Sanju�n, Ll�tzer Moix (<i>La Vanguardia</i>)
Education	Jeevan Vasagar (<i>The Guardian</i>)
	Graeme Paton (<i>The Telegraph</i>)
	Maite Guti�rrez (<i>La Vanguardia</i>)
Transport	Gwyn Topham (<i>The Guardian</i>)
	David Millward (<i>The Telegraph</i>)
Security/Defence	Nick Hopkins (<i>The Guardian</i>)
Consumer affairs	James Hall (<i>The Telegraph</i>)
Home affairs, national, local news	Alan Travis (<i>The Guardian</i>)
	Richard Alleyne, Michael Deacon, Richard Eden, John-Paul Ford Rojas, Victoria Ward (<i>The Telegraph</i>)
	Michael S. Rosenwald, Emily Wax, Mari-Jane Williams (<i>The Washington Post</i>)
	Xos� Hermida (<i>El Pa�s</i>)

	Raquel Páramo (<i>La Vanguardia</i>)
Style and fashion	Rosie Swash (<i>The Guardian</i>)
	Edward Barsamian (<i>The New York Times</i>)
	Roxanne Roberts, Amy Argetsinger, Adam Tschorn, Dan Zak (<i>The Washington Post</i>)
Health/Fitness	Neville Rigby (<i>The Guardian</i>)
	Gretchen Reynolds (<i>The New York Times</i>)
	Vicky Hallett, Jennifer LaRue Huget (<i>The Washington Post</i>)
Science and environment	Brian Palmer (<i>The Washington Post</i>)
	Javier Sampedro (<i>El País</i>)
Other areas	Royal affairs: Roya Nikkhah (<i>The Telegraph</i>); Mabel Galaz (<i>El País</i>), Mariángel Alcázar (<i>La Vanguardia</i>)
	Jobs, Labour: Louisa Peacock (<i>The Telegraph</i>)
	Travel: Tanya Mohn (<i>The New York Times</i>)
	Children: Fred Bowen (<i>The Washington Post</i>)
	Food: Tim Carman (<i>The Washington Post</i>)
	Lifestyle: Marie Elizabeth Oliver (<i>The Washington Post</i>); Jordi Jarque, Josep Sandoval (<i>La Vanguardia</i>)
	Data: Simon Rogers (<i>The Guardian</i>)

Table 32. Journalists from other news desks involved in the coverage of the larger framework of London 2012