Sports and journalism ethics: the coverage of 2012 London Olympics in the British, North-American and Spanish press

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Abstract

Sports and journalism ethics: the coverage of 2012 London Olympics in the British, North-American and Spanish press is a research focused on analysing the treatment that the quality press of three countries (United Kingdom, United States of America and Spain) will carry out in the London Olympic Games. Through a solid methodological approach based on the combination of the qualitative content analysis and qualitative in-depth interviews, the investigation will study if the media provide a quality coverage, that is, if they adequate their pieces to the fundamental principles of journalistic deontology (truth, justice, freedom and social responsibility). Furthermore, the research will assess if the selected media comply with the prescriptions established in the ethical codes, stylebooks, newsroom statutes and national and international recommendations about journalism ethics, ranging from each media’s guidelines to key transnational codes established by the UNESCO, the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) or the Council of Europe.

Keywords: Olympic Games, London 2012, ethics, journalism, truth, justice, freedom, social responsibility, qualitative content analysis, qualitative in-depth interviews, United Kingdom, United States of America, Spain.

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Index

1. Presentation and delimitation of the research project
   1.1. Topic of the research. Identification of the investigation problem
   1.2. Justification of the research
      1.2.1. Academic interest, relevancy and opportunity of the research topic
      1.2.2. Adequacy of the project to the ethics and excellence research line at Journalism Research Group (GRP) and further academic benefits
      1.2.3. Feasibility of the study
   1.3. Fundamental objectives of the research

2. Theoretical framework
   2.1. London 2012: presentation of the event
   2.2. The role and history of the mass media in covering the Games
   2.3. Sports journalism and ethics. A theoretical framework and review of the literature
      2.3.1. Principle of truth
         2.3.1.1. Conjectures, speculations and rumours
         2.3.1.2. Informative sources included in the news pieces
         2.3.1.3. Inclusion of all the necessary elements to understand the Olympic Games
         2.3.1.4. Rectifications of content
         2.3.1.5. Differentiation between journalistic genres: information and opinion
         2.3.1.6. Sensationalism in the reporting of information
      2.3.2. Principle of justice
         2.3.2.1. Justice in the representation of nationalities
         2.3.2.2. Justice in the representation of genders
         2.3.2.3. Justice in the representation of races and ethnicities
         2.3.2.4. Justice in the representation of disability
      2.3.3. Principle of freedom
         2.3.3.1. Commercial servitude in the selection of Olympics news
      2.3.4. Principle of social responsibility
         2.3.4.1. The invasion of privacy
2.3.4.2. Presence of expressions that incite violence or confrontation

2.3.4.3. Respect for the religious beliefs

2.4. The media coverage of the Olympics. An overview of the existing literature and identification of the current research needs

2.5. Key theoretical perspectives of analysis: agenda-setting and framing

3. Methodology. Construction of the analysis model and the design of the observation

3.1. Concepts

3.2. Research questions

3.3. Method and techniques of analysis

3.3.1. Presentation of the qualitative method

3.3.2. Qualitative content analysis

3.3.3. Qualitative in-depth interviews

3.4. Sample and analysis units. Presentation and criteria

3.4.1. Qualitative content analysis sampling

3.4.1.1. Presentation of the British selected media

3.4.1.2. Presentation of the North-American selected media

3.4.1.3. Presentation of the Spanish selected media

3.4.1.4. Object of study, units of analysis and period of the observation

3.4.2. Qualitative in-depth interviews sampling

4. Working plan and structure of the doctoral thesis

4.1. Working plan

4.2. Structure of the doctoral thesis report

5. References

6. Appendixes

6.1. Coding schedule for the qualitative content analysis

6.2. List of the ethical codes and documents that will be used during the research

6.3. Website for the dissemination of the project
**Abbreviations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABC</td>
<td>Audit Bureau of Circulations</td>
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<tr>
<td>AFP</td>
<td>Agence France Press</td>
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<tr>
<td>AE-IC</td>
<td>Asociación Española de Investigadores de la Comunicación (Spanish Association of Communication Researchers)</td>
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<tr>
<td>AP</td>
<td>Associated Press</td>
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<td>APSE</td>
<td>Associated Press Sports Editors</td>
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<td>ASNE</td>
<td>American Society of Newspapers Editors</td>
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<td>BBC</td>
<td>British Broadcasting Corporation</td>
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<td>BOA</td>
<td>British Olympic Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>CBS</td>
<td>Columbia Broadcasting System</td>
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<tr>
<td>CCTV</td>
<td>Closed-circuit television // China Central Television</td>
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<tr>
<td>CEO-UAB</td>
<td>Centre d’Estudis Olímpics – Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (Olympic Studies Centre – Autonomous University of Barcelona)</td>
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<tr>
<td>CIEDI</td>
<td>Congreso Internacional de Ética y Derecho de la Información (International Conference of Information Law and Ethics)</td>
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<td>CNN</td>
<td>Cable News Network</td>
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<tr>
<td>CSIC-ISOC</td>
<td>Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas (Superior Council of Scientific Research)</td>
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<tr>
<td>DPA</td>
<td>Deutsche Presse-Agentur (German Press Agency)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECREA</td>
<td>European Communication Research and Education Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>FAPE</td>
<td>Federación de Asociaciones de la Prensa de España (Spanish Journalists’ Associations Federation)</td>
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<tr>
<td>FIFA</td>
<td>Fédération Internationale de Football Association</td>
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<td>GRP</td>
<td>Grup de Recerca en Periodisme (Journalism Research Group)</td>
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<tr>
<td>IAAF</td>
<td>International Association of Athletics Federations</td>
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<td>IASI</td>
<td>International Association for Sports Information</td>
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<td>ICA</td>
<td>International Communication Association</td>
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<td>IFJ</td>
<td>International Federation of Journalists</td>
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<td>IJHS</td>
<td>International Journal of the History of Sport</td>
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<td>IAMCR</td>
<td>International Association for Media and Communication Research</td>
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<tr>
<td>IOC</td>
<td>International Olympic Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>IRSS</td>
<td>International Review for the Sociology of Sport</td>
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<tr>
<td>JLS</td>
<td>Journal of Language and Social Issues</td>
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<td>JMME</td>
<td>Journal of Mass Media Ethics</td>
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<td>Abbreviation</td>
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<tr>
<td>JSSI</td>
<td>Journal of Sport and Social Issues</td>
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<td>LOCOG</td>
<td>London Organising Committee for the Olympic Games</td>
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<td>MLB</td>
<td>Major League Baseball</td>
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<tr>
<td>NBA</td>
<td>National Basketball Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>NBC</td>
<td>National Broadcasting Company</td>
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<tr>
<td>NCAA</td>
<td>National Collegiate Athletic Association</td>
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<td>NFL</td>
<td>National Football League</td>
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<tr>
<td>NOC</td>
<td>National Olympic Committee</td>
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<td>NPPA</td>
<td>National Press Photographers Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>NUJ</td>
<td>National Union of Journalists</td>
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<tr>
<td>OJD</td>
<td>Oficina de Justificación de la Difusión (Office for the Justification of Circulation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PA</td>
<td>The Press Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCC</td>
<td>Press Complaints Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRENDE</td>
<td>Programa Prensa y Democracia (Press and Democracy Programme)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRISA</td>
<td>Promotor de Informaciones, S.A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPJ</td>
<td>Society of Professional Journalists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPM</td>
<td>Sindicato de Periodistas de Madrid (Madrid Journalists Union)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TVE</td>
<td>Televisión Española (Spanish Television)</td>
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<tr>
<td>UEFA</td>
<td>Union of European Football Associations</td>
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<tr>
<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
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<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>US</td>
<td>United States</td>
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1. Presentation and delimitation of the research project

In the following chapter, a detailed presentation of the topic of the investigation *Sports and journalism ethics: the coverage of 2012 London Olympics in the British, North-American and Spanish press* will be provided. The chapter unravels the academic interest, relevancy and opportunity of the research, its adequacy to the ethics and excellence research line at Journalism Research Group (GRP) of Universitat Pompeu Fabra and also highlights the feasibility of the study. This section will conclude with the definition of the fundamental objectives of the research.

1.1. Topic of the research. Identification of the investigation problem

As essential players in the configuration of the public agenda, the socialization, the development and the transmission of cultural information and values in democratic societies (Bernstein, 2002; Buysse and Embser-Herbert, 2004; Fernández Alonso et al., 2006; Hardy, 2008; Higgs et al., 2003; Mateos de Cabo, 2006), quality media should carry out a complete and responsible treatment of the issues involved in all the areas of the news arena, including sports, which indisputably are “a central aspect of contemporary popular culture” (Boyle, 2006: 182). It is beyond doubt that conscientious media must fulfil crucial duties in democratic societies, including the provision of useful information and the guidance that the citizenship requires to understand current affairs and their contexts (Christians et al., 2009; Lambeth, 1992).

It is true that as Norderstreng explains, in democratic systems “the freedom of expression and of media are vital elements of people’s lives” (Norderstreng, 2011: 91). Although freedom of communication remains the key goal in our current information society (Fernández Alonso and Moragas, 2008), it must be pondered with the accomplishment of 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

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1 We cannot get away from the fact that “sport is a central feature of life in countries around the world” (Billings et al., 2012: 10). This is true not only in the recreational and professional practise grounds, 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 (Billings, 2008) it is also regarded as a catalyst for professional opportunities and revenues (Billings et al., 2012).
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 pernicious circumstances such as harm and offense (Frost, 2011).

Nevertheless, in the sports media arena, one cannot get away from the fact that sports journalism has been traditionally associated with major ethical drawbacks, such as the dissolution of the frontiers between information, opinion and advertising; the lack of rigour; sensationalism; the bad criteria in the selection of news; the incitation to violence; informative sexism or the low quality and variety of the used sources (Oates and Pauly, 2007; Rojas Torrijos, 2011; Rowe, 2007). In contrast to these shortcomings, sports journalists need to gain awareness of their accountability2 (Wulfemeyer, 1985) and assume that “sports journalism should not be exempted from scrutiny regarding conventional criteria within the news area” (Rowe, 2007: 385). More than ever, in a changing media landscape characterized by the rapid technological innovations, the increased competence, the trend to neoliberalism, the fight for the maximization of audiences and the increased dependence towards advertising as a support for media activities (Billings et al, 2012; McChesney, 2008), the key to improve the situation in sports journalism is to communicate responsibly (Billings, 2010a).

Through the academic lens, certain ethical aspects of the sports journalism coverage have been extensively analysed, especially the quantitative and qualitative treatment of gender, race and nationality (Bernstein and Blain, 2003; Boyle and Haynes, 2009; Farrington et al, 2012; Hundley and Billings, 2010), issues that are connected with the principle of justice. However, the less amount of research conducted around other key aspects indicates that a new project should analyse from a wider perspective the task carried out by the international quality press3, in order to discern if they cope

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2 Accountability is a concept that “refers to the willingness of the media to answer for what they do by their acts of publication, including what they do to society at large, and refers as well to the feasibility of securing accountability where there is unwillingness. Being accountable is normally linked to accepting, or being given, certain responsibilities, tasks or goals” (Christians et al, 2009: 132).

3 Merrill established the concept “quality press” in his fundamental book The elite press. Great newspapers of the world (Merrill, 1968). Among its features, 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, intelligent, well educated, articulate and technically proficient staff and (5) Determination to serve
with the essential principles of ethics and excellence of information (truth, justice, freedom and social responsibility) while disseminating sports information and to check if they comply with the prescriptions comprised in the ethical codes, style guides and national and transnational recommendations of journalism ethics. To be specific, the object of study that has been selected to conduct this project is the **news regarding the 2012 London Olympics featured in 12 newspapers from three countries: The Guardian, The Times, The Daily Telegraph and The Independent** (United Kingdom), *The New York Times, The Washington Post, Los Angeles Times and USA Today* (United States of America) and *El País, El Mundo, La Vanguardia and ABC* (Spain).

**1.2. Justification of the research**

**1.2.1. Academic interest, relevancy and opportunity of the research topic**

Before the 1980s-1990s, “many academics dismissed the study of sport as being trivial” (Billings *et al.*, 2012: 7), considering that there were “more important topics than the analysis of sport and the communicational processes involved in them” (Billings, 2010a: 11). However, the traditional understudy of sport and sports journalism (Boyle, 2006; Brown and O’Rourke, 2003; Wanta, 2006) has changed during the last two decades and nowadays it is widely recognized that the analysis of the sports in the media is crucial. In fact, as Boyle and Haynes point out (2009: 17), “the sporting terrain is now routinely mobilized by the academy as an area of study across subjects as diverse as management studies, cultural economics, public relations, public policy, media and cultural studies, journalism studies and sports studies”. As Trujillo adds, “communication scholars interested in studying sport now have more outlets to publish their work than ever before” (Trujillo, 2003: xiii).

The academic **rationale for choosing the news about the Olympics as an object of study** for the thesis *Sports and journalism ethics: the coverage of 2012 London Olympics in the British, North-American and Spanish Press* is clear. Some key sports mega-events are widely followed worldwide or in specific countries, such as the FIFA Football World Cup, the UEFA Champions League, the big European football leagues (Premier League, Bundesliga, Serie A, BBVA League), the Wimbledon tennis 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). Quality media also “portray themselves as the main arena for public opinion formation” (Ruiz *et al.*, 2011: 468).
championships, the National Football League (NFL), the National Basketball Association (NBA), the Major League Baseball (MLB), the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) or the Commonwealth Games. However, it is beyond doubt that the Olympic Games are the most important and prestigious international sporting mega-event (Billings, 2008; Eastman and Billings, 2000; Sugden, 2012).

As “sociocultural reference points” (Horne and Whannel, 2011: 40) with a massive universal impact and appeal (Higgs et al, 2003; Markula, 2009; Moragas, 1992a; Moragas, 1992b; Vincent et al, 2002), in a short period of time the Olympics receive a wide amount of attention and coverage by the media at a global scale⁴ (Moragas, 2006; Rivenburgh, 2002). That is the reason why they are regarded as media intensive sport events (Darnell and Sparks, 2005). Taking into consideration their paramount importance, it is crucial that the Olympic Games should be reflected in the media in a responsible and ethical way. It must also be considered that journalism ethics and values from Olympism⁵ are closely linked. 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 how the world should be” (Girginov and Parry, 2005: 90). These values⁶ include the respect for human dignity, antidiscrimination, equality, fairness, moral excellence, mutual understanding, tolerance, friendship, solidarity, multiculturalism, justice, peace and fair play (Fernández Peña, 2010; Miah and Garcia, 2012; Parry, 2006; Tavares, 2010).

In a current landscape characterized by the increasing preoccupation among the citizenship for the ethical exigency of the media and the moral ground of journalists

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

⁵ Olympism is the philosophy devised by Pierre de Coubertin, which “emphasizes the role of sport in world development, international understanding, peaceful co-existence, and social and moral education” (Girginov and Parry, 2005: 2). Its ultimate goal is “to put sport, united with art and culture, to the service of a harmonious development of human being, with the objective of contributing to the establishment of a pacific society, worried to preserve the human dignity” (Samaranch, 1992: 22). One of the ways to achieve it is to “promote a way of life based on ‘the fundamental ethical principles’” (Horne and Whannel, 2011: 32). As Parry explains, “Olympism has been the most coherent systematization of the ethical and political values underlying the practice of sport so far to have emerged” (Parry, 2006: 202).

⁶ The ‘fundamental principles and values of Olympism’ can also be found in the Olympic Charter, a document appeared in 1908 and whose latest version was published in 2011. This document can be consulted in: [http://www.olympic.org/Documents/olympic_charter_en.pdf](http://www.olympic.org/Documents/olympic_charter_en.pdf) [Last access: 10-06-2012].
(Aznar, 2005; Knowlton and Reader, 2009; Plaisance, 2009) and bearing in mind the significance, the international scope and the great public visibility of the event, as well as the values associated with it, the Olympic Games are one of the most adequate analysis frameworks to conduct an examination from the journalism ethics/quality\(^7\) perspective. The celebration of the 2012 Olympics is a very pertinent opportunity to carry out this international comparative study and to obtain a better understanding of the quality of the media coverage of sports, through the analysis and assessment of their content from the journalism ethics frame of reference. Moreover, it is a unique challenge to gain knowledge from the comparison of the obtained results with the principles included in the ethical codes, style guides and national and transnational recommendations of journalism.

1.2.2. Adequacy of the project to the ethics and excellence research line at Journalism Research Group (GRP) and further academic benefits

The research is circumscribed within the ethics and excellence in journalism research line at Journalism Research Group (GRP), an emergent investigation team lead by Dr. Jaume Guillamet at Department of Communication of Universitat Pompeu Fabra.

This research line, directed by Dr. Salvador Alsius, has conducted in the recent years the project Ethics and excellence in news production. Journalistic ethics and the expectations of the public (2007-2010), funded by the Spanish Ministry of Science and Innovation. Universitat Pompeu Fabra coordinated this project, in which Universidad Carlos III (Madrid), Universidad del País Vasco and Universidad de Sevilla also took part. The investigation was developed in three stages, involving the development and analysis of a codes database, the examination of the ethical values of journalists and the evaluation of the citizens’ perception of the ethical functions of the media. The project’s output consisted of a codes database, a website (http://www.eticaperiodistica.org), two reference books (Alsius et al 2010; Alsius and Salgado, 2010) and multiple scientific contributions to journals and conferences. Afterwards, the research group has taken part as an associate member in the pioneer European project MediaAct (Media Accountability and Transparency in Europe, www.mediaact.eu), directed by Susane

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\(^7\) The concept “quality of information”, regarded as one of the most sensitive and determinant aspects in the regulation of media (Cuilenburg and McQuail, 2003) is equivalent to “journalism ethics”. Precisely, 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.
Fengler (TU Dortmund University), which led to the analysis of the media accountability instruments in the Spanish landscape (Alsius et al., 2011). The PhD dissertation Sports and journalism ethics: the coverage of 2012 Olympics in the British, North-American and Spanish Press will represent a worth while contribution to the Journalism Research Group, widening the analysis field that has been already researched to approach the journalistic treatment of sports, a knowledge with clear educational, research and professional applications.

Apart from the aforementioned benefits for the university where the researcher is based, the investigation will also be useful for the academic community related to the Olympic Studies, a multidisciplinary field focused on analysing the Olympic Games in all its dimensions. Reached this point, it is indispensable to mention the task developed by the Olympic Studies Centre of Autonomous University of Barcelona (CEO-UAB). Established by Dr. Miquel de Moragas Spà in 1989 and currently directed by Dr. Emilio Fernández-Peña, this centre devotes its task to studying and disseminating the Olympic Games from the social sciences and humanities as well as maintaining a website of Olympic Studies and an information and documentation centre. During its trajectory, CEO-UAB has undertaken serious research at national and international level and its authors have published key titles such as Los Juegos de la comunicación (The Games of Communication) (Moragas, 1992a); Les claus de l’èxit. Impactes socials, economics i comunicatius de Barcelona’92 (The Keys to success: Social, economic and communicative impacts of Barcelona’92) (Moragas and Botella, 1995) or Television in the Olympics (Moragas et al., 1995). Their last publication, entitled Olympic mosaic. Multidisciplinar research and diffusion of Olympic studies (Fernández Peña et al., 2011) presents the main academic contributions that CEO-UAB has made to the field.

8 The Olympic Studies have their origins in the 1980s, when the increase in popularity and the growth of the Olympics brought academics to study their different dimensions “from a wide range of disciplines, such as sociology, international relations, anthropology, economy, law, urban planning, communications, sports management, etc.” (Puig, 2011: 49). Fundamental conferences such as The Olympic Movement and the Mass Media: Past, Present and Future Issues (organized by the University of Calgary in 1987) and The First International Conference on the Olympics and East/West and South/North Cultural Exchange in the World System (Moragas, 2006: 6) and the creation of university centres for Olympic research decisively helped to consolidate this area of study. The emergence of the Olympic Studies was parallel to the increasing interest for studying the relationship between media and sport (Bernstein and Blain, 2002). McCollum’s (1980) content analysis of Montreal’76 television coverage is recognized as one of the pioneer researches in the field of media and Olympics. In Spain, Moragas’ (1990) study of Seoul’88 Olympic ceremonies telecasts of Televisión Española (TVE) is one of the earliest references available.
Likewise, there are other prestigious centres devoted to the Olympic Studies worldwide, including the International Centre for Olympic Studies (University of Western Ontario, Canada), the Centre for Olympic Studies & Research (Loughborough University, United Kingdom) or the Australian Centre for Olympic Studies (University of Technology, Australia), to list a few. The output of the research project will be also beneficial for the researchers related to these Olympic Studies Centres and other research centres such as Stirling Media Research Institute (University of Stirling, United Kingdom) or the Centre for Study of Sport in Society (Northeastern University, United States). The project could be a starting point to cooperate with these institutions.

1.2.3. Feasibility of the study

The feasibility of the project is assured by the proved accessibility to the primary documents: the press sample chosen for the research (in a subscription basis), and the wide bibliographic corpus that is relevant for the research (ethical codes and documents, articles from indexed journals\(^9\), books, doctoral and master’s thesis, specialized dictionaries and other useful documents). The conduction of qualitative in-depth interviews and the attendance to conferences will decisively enrich the obtained information. The delimitation of the thematic and temporal fields of the sample is oriented to finish the PhD in the terms fixed in the working plan (see chapter 4.1).

1.3. Fundamental objectives of the research

- First of all, at a conceptual level, the project seeks to elaborate a theoretical framework and a review of the literature about journalism ethics applied to sports communication. In addition, the theoretical framework will explore the historical relationship between the Olympics and the media, an indispensable requisite to understand the mega-event whose media coverage is the object of study of this research and to prepare the foundations for the empirical analysis.

\(^9\) Some of the most useful articles that have been used for the documentation of this research project have been consulted in scientific journals such as *Journal of Mass Media Ethics* (JMME), *Journalism*, *International Review for the Sociology of Sport* (IRSS), *Journal of Language and Social Psychology* (JLS), *International Journal of the History of Sport* (IJHS), *Journal of Sport and Social Issues* (JSSI) or *Sport in Society*. These articles have been found in key academic databases such as ISI Web of Knowledge (Thompson & Reuters), Scopus (Elsevier), Scirus, Sage Journals Online, Google Scholar, CSIC-ISOC and other specific resources such as RERO DOC repository.
Secondly, one purpose of the research is to contribute to the scientific community with the provision of valuable insight about the international press coverage of 2012 London Olympic Games from a lens that has not been explored until this moment: the analysis and comprehensive evaluation of the adequacy of the journalistic pieces to the four main principles of journalism deontology (truth, justice, freedom and social responsibility). The international sample of quality newspapers will allow the researcher not only to obtain a critical understanding of the key issues and the overall trends detected but also to draw comparisons between the different media within a country and between the countries integrated in the study. It will also help to unravel the coverage of media in emergent and under-researched areas.

Thirdly, the doctoral research seeks to compare and contrast the affected aspects in each one of the deontological principles with the information contained in the ethical codes, style books, newsroom statutes and national and international recommendations about journalism ethics\(^{10}\), such as the Resolution 1.003 on the Ethics of Journalism from the Council of Europe (1993), the Declaration on the Conduct of Journalists (International Federation of Journalists, IFJ, 1954 and revised in 1986), the International Professional Ethics Principles of Journalism (UNESCO, 1983), the Editors’ Code of Practice (Press Complaints Commission, 1989), the Professional Code of Conduct (National Union of Journalists, NUJ), the Society of Professional Journalists Code of Ethics (SPJ, 1973), the American Society of Newspapers Editors (ASNE) Statement of Principles (1975) or the Deontological Code of the Journalistic Profession of the Spanish Journalists’ Associations Federation (FAPE, 1993), systematized by authors such as Aznar (1999b), Cooper et al (1989), Frost (2011) or Pérez Fuentes (2004), among others.

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\(^{10}\) Codes, newsroom statutes and style guides, as direct sources of substantive deontology (Casasús, 2011) and fundamental documents within the media accountability systems (Bertrand, 2001), do not only have a pedagogical but also a practical and professional sense. Ideally, they feature five essential values: they are concrete, representative, focused and specific, intentionally conceived and meaningful (Cooper, 1989: 30). They are built taking into consideration the “broad normative ideals and culture” (White, 1989: 44) of journalism and feature shared elements such as professional guidance to “gathering information, dealing with contacts and sources, publishing information, presentation of the information, guaranteeing its quality and dealing with complaints” (Frost, 2011: 268), although “they cannot contemplate every eventuality” (Sanders, 2003: 31). They are deontological, that is, “they are based on the duties contained with them” (Frost, 2011: 265). In this research, three types of media codes are considered: single media codes (or media codes emerged from companies and communication groups), national independent codes and multinational codes (Alsius, 1999; Hafez, 2002). The detailed list of the media codes that will be used can be found in the appendix 6.2 of this master’s thesis.
This comparison can bring to light new knowledge about the compliance of journalist’s pieces with these fundamental prescriptions and can help to outline the actions that could be undertaken in order to improve the current situation.

- In fourth place, the research seeks to develop an **adaptation and extension of the thesaurus of journalism ethics devised by Alsius (1996)** as a part of his doctoral thesis. So far, the thesaurus has proved very effective to study ethics in journalism both in teaching and researching grounds. This output will enable to analyse the quality of the sport coverage in the media and will become a valuable asset in three ways. First and foremost, this codification scheme will be a useful tool for **further investigations**. Secondly, it will become a relevant **pedagogic** instrument to establish a framework of analysis and to create a database of case studies in order to prepare undergraduate and graduate students. Finally, it will be a reference point for **journalists**, with the objective of increasing their ethical conscience in the professional practice. Fostering excellence in the professionals, so they can achieve a strong sense of media ethics and improve the quality of sports journalism, is a very important challenge that must be undertaken by universities. At the end of the research, a proposal of guidelines will be disseminated within media professionals.

- Fifthly, another key objective of the research is the **dissemination of the findings through different outlets**, such as scientific journals and papers at conferences as well as through mainstream media and publications such as *Olympic Review*, the official magazine of the International Olympic Committee\(^\text{11}\) (IOC). The project has also a website for its diffusion (www.sportsmediaresearch.org, see appendix 6.3).

- Finally, the project aims to **establish a research agenda of the sports journalism ethics at Universitat Pompeu Fabra**. The output of this research could be beneficial to enhance the cooperation between universities and academics devoted to studying journalism ethics, sports journalism and Olympic studies. Also, the research could be a valuable starting point to establish a consolidated research sub-line devoted to analyse the quality of the media coverage in the forthcoming Olympic events (Sochy 2014, Rio 2016 and Pyeongchang 2018).

\(^\text{11}\) The International Olympic Committee (IOC), established in 1894, is the body in charge of promoting Olympism and leading the Olympic movement (Malcolm, 2008). This institution is based in Lausanne (Switzerland) and nowadays it is composed by 110 members, leaded by their president Jacques Rogge. The IOC is organized in different commissions, including the Athletes’ Commission, the Culture and Olympic Education Commission, the Ethics Commission, the TV Rights and New Media Commission or the Women Commission, to list a few (Horne and Whannel, 2011). An in-depth study of the IOC, including its history and its organisational aspects is provided by Chappelet and Kübler-Mabbot (2008).
2. Theoretical framework

This chapter will provide the theoretical framework to set the foundations for the empirical analysis of the media coverage of 2012 London Olympics. First of all, a brief presentation of the event will be carried out. Secondly, a section will be devoted to explaining the role and the history of the mass media in covering the Games. In third place, a theoretical exposition will be conducted to explain the relationship between sports journalism and ethics, including all the relevant considerations included in each of the four main deontological principles (truth, justice, freedom and social responsibility). Thereafter, an overview of literature regarding the media coverage of the Olympics will be delivered. Finally, the identification of the current research needs and the analysis perspectives that will be taken into account will be presented.

2.1. London 2012: presentation of the event

The Games of the XXX Olympiad, which will be held in London from July 25 to August 12, 2012, are a key event to be analysed from different perspectives and areas of study, in this case, journalism ethics. Before presenting the relationship between Olympic Games and the media, it is important to start the theoretical framework of the project by carrying out a brief presentation of the main characteristics of the event whose media coverage will be examined: the 2012 London Olympic Games.

After London successfully organized and hosted the Olympic Games in 1908 and 1948 and even made profit from them (Girginov and Parry, 2005), some British cities failed to achieve the recognition from the IOC to organise the Games. Illustrative cases were Birmingham, who took part in the race for organising the 1992 Games (finally held in Barcelona) and Manchester, which applied to host the 1996 and 2000 editions of the event, celebrated in Atlanta and Sidney (Horne and Whannel, 2011). Their respective failures showed the British Olympic Association (BOA) that London was the only city capable of attracting the support and the attention of the IOC.

After a feasibility study published by the BOA in 2001 and gaining the support from the British government in 2003, the full bid proposal for hosting the 2012 London

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12 Academic references regarding the history and the organization of the 1908 and 1948 London Olympic Games can be found at Llewellyn (2011) and Bolz (2010), respectively.
Olympics was handed to the IOC on the 15th of January, 2004 (Horne and Whannel, 2011). Finally, London was announced as the host of the 2012 Olympics on the 6th of July, 2005 in Singapore. In the final race for organising the Games, London defeated Paris by 54 votes to 50 (Horne and Whannel, 2011; Miller, 2012). Other bidding cities that applied for the Games were New York, Madrid, Paris and Moscow, as well as Rio de Janeiro, Istanbul, Havana and Leipzig, eliminated from the bidding process in 18 May 2003 (Booth, 2011). The key reasons of London’s bid success include its planning, the enthusiasm from their members, the support of the former British president Tony Blair and the lobbying processes involved during the race to hosting the Games (Horne and Whannel, 2011; Sugden and Tomlinson, 2012). By achieving this milestone, London became the first city that has staged three Summer Olympic Games.

Some central features have indisputably marked the preparation of the 2012 Olympic Games. First of all, during the last years, London’s East End has undergone a serious regeneration (Docklands, Thames Gateway and the Lower Lea Valley). As it happened with the revitalisation of Barcelona with the 1992 Olympics (Gallagher, 2012), 2012 Games have represented “a once in a generation opportunity to regenerate the city’s East End” (Raco and Tunney, 2010: 2069). As Horne and Whannel point out, “the eastern inner-city boroughs of London were socially deprived areas, with poor transport links and extensive derelict sites with formerly housed industry, docks and railway sidings” (Horne and Whannel, 2011: 10). Major construction works during the organising period have included the building of the sporting facilities (Olympic Stadium, Aquatics Centre, Hockey Centre, Basketball Arena, Velodrome, Handball Arena), the Media Centre and the International Broadcasting Centre and the Olympic Village, all located in Stratford, in the London borough of Newham (Burdsey, 2012). Also, there have been significant changes in transport and infrastructures, such as the construction of the Channel Tunnel rail link or the works executed in the bridges, roads, centres and in cabling (Horne and Whannel, 2011), among other interventions.

Secondly, the celebration of the 2012 London Olympics will bring positive legacies for the city and the host country. In the lecture Olympic cities, Why a city wants to be Olympic, held in Barcelona in December 2011, professor Gavin Poynter (East London University) signalled the beneficial impacts of all these improvements, highlighting the new possibilities of connectivity between East and West London, the expansion of the urbanisation and the creation 10.000 new jobs for East London communities and more for the rest of the city, among other significant legacy issues (Poynter, 2011). In his
In the media field, an extensive coverage from the national and international media, which will set their eyes in all the aspects related to the event, is expected. British most important media, including The Daily Telegraph or the BBC have undertaken an active role in the process of staging the Olympic Games in London (Horne and Whannel, 2011). First, supporting London bid and after that, devoting their attention to covering the run-up to the Games, including a wide range of sporting and non-sporting information, encompassing economy (including the rise over the initial budget\textsuperscript{13} or the criticism of the ticketing procedure), politics, culture or history, to list a few. In the field of media technologies, 2012 Olympics are regarded to be the ‘first mobile Summer Olympics’ and it will be the first time that the Olympics will be fully transmitted through digital television in the United Kingdom, after the analogue switch-off.

\textsuperscript{13} In economic terms, the cost of staging the Olympic Games in London is projected in 13.500 millions of dollars, which is “four times as much as Sydney 2000, almost twice as Athens 2004, but one-third that of Beijing 2008” (Horne and Whannel, 2011: 4).
2.2. The role and history of the mass media in covering the Games

As Moragas (1992b: 9) points out, “nowadays the Olympic Games cannot be understood without the influence of the mass media”. Media reporting on the modern Olympics has been decisive to their development and their configuration as global prestigious and transcendent events (Marshall et al., 2010). Nowadays media continue to be fundamental actors in the Olympics (Moragas, 1992a) as they are massively consumed through a wide range of media platforms (Billings, 2008; Billings et al., 2012). 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) expose, the mass media perform crucial functions in the Olympic Games: surveillance (they provide the needed textual and audiovisual information about the Games), interpretation (they select the information and expand on “the meaning and significance of the Olympic events”), linkage (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 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, entertainment. These crucial functions have been essential during the history of the Olympic Games media coverage.

The relationship between the Olympic Games and the media: a historical perspective

The first modern Olympic Games, celebrated in Athens in 1896, were born in a historical context marked by the beginning of the development of a modern system of

14 Leaving the Olympics aside, for a general overview of the history of sports journalism, indispensable scholars have to be considered. Boyle (2006) carried out a comprehensive analysis of sports journalism, focusing mainly in the case of the United Kingdom. Boyle and Haynes (2009) explained the trajectory of sports journalism, starting from the origins of sports press in the eighteenth century with the publication The Sports and Pastimes of the People of England and followed its evolution in the print media, newsreel, film, radio, television, and so on, focusing principally in the case of the UK media. History of sports journalism in Spain and Catalonia can be consulted at Jones (1996). Finally, key references such as Bryant and Holt (2006) or Schultz (2005) are very useful to explore the history of the relationship between media and sports in the USA, from the early sports stories featured in newspapers to the current era of convergence. Fuller’s (2008) overview of the historical development of radio and television sportscasting in the USA is also worthwhile to consider.
mass communication (Horne and Whannel, 2011), distinguished by the emphasis on written word (Stead, 2008). At the end of the nineteenth century, print media contributed to the expansion of the popularity of sports and they promoted the increasing of newspaper circulation (Boyle, 2006). Despite this emerging interest for sport and the establishment of the concept of sports journalism\(^\text{16}\) (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, the attention from the media progressively began to increase. In the 1908 Games, held in London, “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). In Stockholm 1912, the total number of accredited journalists surpassed the 500 (Moragas, 1992a: 133).

The radio was introduced in the 1924 Olympics held in Paris and “by the 1936 Games, 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) occurred in the 1936 Olympic Games held in Berlin (Marshall et al, 2010), even though the achieved picture quality was very scarce (Billings, 2008). However, it is widely regarded that the first real broadcasting of the Olympics happened in London 1948, in a context of recovery from World War II. It consisted of nearly 70 hours of live broadcasting by the BBC, as well as regular

\(^{15}\) The original Olympic Games originated in the Ancient Greece in 776 B.C. and were held until A.D. 394, when Roman Emperor Theodosius I banned them along with other pagan festivals (Girginov and Parry, 2005; Horne and Whannel, 2011). During the nineteenth century and the previous centuries, 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), United States (Roman Circus, Caledonian games), Greece or Scandinavia, with the aim of “reviving the idea of ancient Olympic competition” (Girginov and Parry, 2005: 38). All these experiences represented an influence for Pierre de Coubertin, who led the establishment of the International Olympic Committee in 1894. Coubertin’s indisputable contribution is 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 the participation of 245 male athletes and 13 nations (Girginov and Parry, 2005: 45).

\(^{16}\) Two milestones marked the starting development of the sports journalism. First of all, in the 1880s, “Joseph Pulitzer set up the first dedicated sports department within a newspaper when he bought the New York Herald” (Boyle, 2006: 32). Secondly, in the same decade, the sports journalist was starting to be considered “as a distinct figure in the growing professional journalism field” (Boyle, 2006: 32).
information in the news bulletins (Gallagher, 2012). Nevertheless, it has to 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 of about half a million (Haynes, 2010). Although there were technical difficulties, the 1948 Games showed “the power of sports broadcasting to bring communities together, even under severe economic and social conditions” (Haynes, 2010: 1043).

Even though it operated in Berlin 1936, London 1948 and Melbourne 1956, television became more important from Rome 1960, when 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 financial and cultural terms” (Miah and García, 2012: 124). Some of the television milestones that substantially helped to the globalization of the Olympic Games include the introduction of technological advances such as the satellite (Tokyo 1964), the colour coverage (Mexico 1968), the video (Munich 1972), the new technologies of information (Barcelona 1992) and the full digital television coverage (London 2012).

In the 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 to transmit the Olympic Games. Although the first Internet video experience in the Olympics happened in Athens 2004 (Fernández Peña, 2010), in Beijing 2008 Olympic Games, 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. The IOC broadcasted footage of the 2008 Olympic competitions in seventy-eight countries through its official YouTube channel (Miah and García, 2012; Marshall et al, 2010). 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 per day (Billings, 2010a). Finally, the BBC, apart from the mainstream

17 Precisely, the selling of television rights is one of the two main financing sources for the Olympic Games, along with the “selling of licenses that authorize the use of Olympic symbols” (García Ferrando and Durán González, 2002: 243). Firstly, the incomes from television rights came mainly from the USA, 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 explicit, 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).
television broadcasts, limited to the events with British participation, provided users with Internet “full coverage of other sports and events” (Fernández Peña, 2010: 2), supplemented with “blogs from producers and BBC journalists” (Boyle, 2009: 7). In the 2012 London Olympics, the BBC will have “every Olympic event available live through its interactive web based service for the first time” (Boyle, 2009: 8).

Since 2010 Vancouver Winter Games, the Olympics are also being transmitted through blogs and social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter or Flickr (Fernández Peña, 2011; Hutchins and Rowe, 2012; Miah and García, 2012). Content is not only disseminated through official platforms, because citizen journalists also take profit of the new possibilities to produce and distribute Olympic content through the Internet and mobile devices (Marshall et al, 2010). Precisely, the mobile devices will play a crucial role in London 2012, given the fact that audiences will tune in “via a diversity of mobile telecommunication technologies to receive transmissions from accredited broadcasters, bloggers and spectators” (Poynter and MacRury, 2009: 304). Despite the emergence of the new media in the communication landscape, traditional media are still important producers of sport contents (Kian et al, 2009). Among them, newspapers clearly remain a powerful medium to disseminate the Olympics.

2.3. Sports journalism and ethics. A theoretical framework and review of the literature

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 are “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, 2008: 74). In this research, the prominence will be put in deontological ethics, which “emphasises rights and duties” (Sanders, 2003: 32) and 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 citizenship” (PRENDE, 2007: 19), journalists undoubtedly need to

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18 As an essential consideration of journalism ethics, one cannot get away from the fact that media are “primarily a service to their publics, to which they are ultimately accountable” (Traber, 1997: 333). As
have a “moral compass” (Kovach and Rosenstiel, 2001: 181), that is a sense of ethics and a responsible behaviour in order to carry out their professional practice (Alsius, 1999; Christians et al., 1991; Deuze, 2005; Neurauter-Kessels, 2011; Pasquali, 1997; Sanders, 2003). To generate quality contents and to “build their own reputation as credible sources of information” (Girginov and Parry, 2005: 79), good journalists should follow the considerations established in the main deontological principles.

Nevertheless, we cannot get away from the fact that “all too often journalism falls far short of this ideal” (Frost, 2011: 12). This is particularly true in the field of sports journalism. As previously indicated, academics have pointed out a series of central problems that have systematically occurred in this area, such as the dissolution of the frontiers between information, opinion and advertising; the lack of rigour; sensationalism; the bad criteria in the selection of news; the incitation to violence; informative sexism or the low quality and variety of the employed sources (Oates and Pauly, 2007; Rojas Torrijos, 2011; Rowe, 2007). As Oates and Pauly emphasize, “sports coverage routinely violates the ethical norms by which the profession asks to be judged” (Oates and Pauly, 2007: 333). 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, 2006: 1) and certainly has not been treated “with the same respect as other newspaper staples, such as crime news, politics and business” (Wanta, 2006: 105). In addition, sports journalists’ status has been seen as low (Boyle, 2006; Hutchins and Rowe, 2012).

Although some studies have already been conducted in this area, an in-depth examination should be made around the relationship between sports journalism and...
ethics, in order to prepare the foundations for the analysis of 2012 London Olympics in the British, North-American and Spanish press. To explore this theoretical framework in a systematic way, a closer look will be taken to each of the deontological principles (truth, justice, freedom and social responsibility) and its respective considerations. They will be treated as a set of quality indicators that should be accomplished by the media.

Some influential literature has been taken into consideration in order to establish the foundations of each of these indicators. First and foremost, Alsius (1996) systematized the four main deontological principles into a thesaurus of journalism ethics$^{21}$, based on the ideas posed by Cooper (1989), Lambeth (1992), Day (1991) and Steele, Black and Barney (1993). The items included in the thesaurus will be the reference point to build and organise the framework of this research and have been complemented with the elements provided by other key scholars, which are presented in the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Authors</th>
<th>Fundamental elements of journalism ethics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Christians and Traber (1997)</td>
<td>Core values in communication: Truth-telling, commitment to justice, non-violence or non-maleficence, freedom in solidarity and respect for human dignity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christians <em>et al</em> (1991)</td>
<td>Truth-telling, responsibility with sources, social justice, the right to privacy, among others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deuze (2005)</td>
<td>Core values of journalism: public service, objectivity, autonomy, immediacy and ethics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frost (2011)</td>
<td>Truth, accuracy, objectivity, impartiality, balance, avoidance of sensationalism, the right to privacy, protection of reputation or avoidance of harm and offense.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowlton and Reader (2009)</td>
<td>Basic principles of ethical journalism: objectivity, fairness and balance, independence, respect of privacy, responsibility, verification and attribution, the avoidance of deception, omission and obfuscation, correction and clarification.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 1. Fundamental elements of journalism ethics provided by authoritative scholars in the field.

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21 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 the Journalism Research Group can be found at Alsius (2011). Also, a general overview of the thesaurus’ content can be accessed at: [http://www.eticaperiodistica.org/tesauro_eng.html](http://www.eticaperiodistica.org/tesauro_eng.html)
All the foundations about the ethical principles provided by the aforementioned authors plus the general considerations about journalism written down by Sanders (2003), Keeble (2009), Kovach and Rosenstiel (2001) or Fundación Prensa y Democracia (PRENDE, 2007), as well as sports journalism specific elements studied by authors such as Oates and Pauly (2007), Rowe (2007) or Spence and Quinn (2008) have been very helpful to establish the theoretical framework.

From this starting point, every significant feature in each deontological principle included in Alsius’ thesaurus will be explained and connected to the sports journalism discipline and the coverage of the Olympics, in order to prepare the foundations for the empirical analysis. The contents that will be reviewed are systematized in the following table, which acts a coherent organising framework to approach the study of the sports journalism from the ethics and quality of information perspective.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principle</th>
<th>Specific considerations to study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Truth</td>
<td><strong>Analysis of the objectivity and rigour</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>± Conjectures, speculations and rumours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>± Informative sources included in the news pieces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>± Inclusion of all the necessary aspects to understand the Olympic Games</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>± Rectifications of content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Analysis of neutrality</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>± Differentiation between journalistic genres: information and opinion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>± Sensationalism in the reporting of information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justice</td>
<td>± Media representation of nationalities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>± Media representation of genders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>± Media representation of races and ethnicities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>± Media representation of disability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freedom</td>
<td>± Commercial servitude in the selection of Olympics news</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social responsibility</td>
<td>± Invasion of privacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>± Presence of expressions that incite violence or confrontation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>± Respect for the religious beliefs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 2. Organising framework to study the coverage of sports in the media from the perspective of ethics and quality of information.

22 It must be noted though, that not all the items included in each epigraph of Alsius’ thesaurus will be used, because some of them (such as “suicide”, “protection of underage” or “gender violence”) are beyond the scope of the current research. Nevertheless, if something happened in the sample around any of these topics, they would be taken into consideration for the analysis. As it will be explained in chapter 3, the qualitative content analysis technique allows for new categories to emerge if it is required.
2.3.1. Principle of truth

As Alsius points out, “the main moral systems of the human civilization have considered truth as one of the inexcusable duties” (Alsius, 1999: 55), which has been regarded as one of the “most solid and universal ethical principles in human interrelations” (Alsius et al, 2010: 64). From the professional point of view, “journalism’s first obligation is to the truth” (Kovach and Rosenstiel, 2001: 12). The essential character of truth into the journalistic practice (Frost, 2011; Keeble, 2009; Miedth, 1997; Spence and Quinn, 2008; Sanders, 2003) has been widely documented in the ethical codes and recommendations (Christians et al, 1991; Hafez, 2002). Illustrative cases in point can be found in the UNESCO’s International Principles of Professional Ethics in Journalism (Art. 2); The Declaration of Principles of the International Federation of Journalists (Art. 1); Resolution 1.003 of the Council of Europe (Art. 4); NUJ Code of Conduct (Art. 2); SPJ’s Code of Ethics (Art. 1), ASNE’s Statement of Principles (Art. 4-5) or FAPE’s Deontological Code of the Journalistic Profession (Art. 2-3), among many other essential documents. In this research, the principle of truth is broken down into two main areas: (1) the analysis of the objectivity and rigour and (2) the analysis of neutrality.

Analysis of the objectivity and rigour

2.3.1.1. Conjectures, speculations and rumours

Some specific articles in ethical documents make explicit references to avoiding conjectures, speculations and rumours, such as IFJ (Art. 3), Resolution 1.003 of the Council of Europe (Art. 4) or FAPE (Art. 13). Nevertheless, one has to be aware that “comment and often speculation are increasingly a central aspect of contemporary sports journalism” (Boyle, 2006: 93). Rumour and speculative reporting is one of the most used sources in sports journalism and sometimes it is difficult to distinguish whether the rumour is true or simply an interested information (Alcoba, 1993).

Taking into account the aforementioned background, the researcher should evaluate the presence of indicator words which explicit or confess that the information is based on a rumour (for example, “it is said that” or “it is rumoured that”). Moreover, the researcher should look into the conditional verbal tenses that may refer to rumours and speculations.
2.3.1.2. Informative sources included in the news pieces

It is beyond doubt that “sources are essential for journalists” (Sanders, 2003: 107). Thus, it is not strange that informative sources have also extensively been taken as an object of the deontological codes (FAPE, Art. 13; SPJ, Art.1; ASNE, Art. 6; among many others). Most of these documents have explained that “journalists should avoid anonymous sources23 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 revelation of sources and their accurate reproduction, in direct form or in precis (Franklin et al, 2008) is not simply enough. Quality media need to feature an **extensive range of representative, reliable, authoritative and trustworthy sources** that provide genuine information (Frost, 2011). As Rojas Torrijos reminds us, “the better the number of treated sources the more truthful and credible would be the obtaining information” (Rojas Torrijos, 2011: 142). Therefore, one of the key indicators to assure the quality of a news piece is that it includes a sufficient number of balanced sources. As Garrison and Sabljak 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” (Garrison and Sabljak, 1993: 40). Thus, journalists covering the London Olympics must not rely on a single source. In their selection, they will have to combine, at least, two identifiable and reliable sources to provide the most complete picture possible of the events. It can be assumed that a more extensive piece, such as a report, should feature more than two sources.

**A list of appropriate and relevant information sources** has been built taking into consideration the categories presented by authors such as Alcoba (1993: 100-101), Andrews (2005: 34-42) or Rowe (2007: 396). A wide range of new categories has also

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23 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). Andrews (2005: 35) also explains that “quoting an unnamed source within a sports club does not have the same authority as quoting the coach or chief executive”. Finally, 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”.
been added in order to obtain the most exhaustive list for the purposes of this research. The quoted sources of information that will be observed and codified in the analysis include the following:

- **First-hand observation.** Presence of the journalist in the sporting events.
- **Sporting actors.** Athletes, players, coaches and representatives of national teams and international clubs as well as doctors, health staff and agents.
- **Institutional representatives.** Representatives from the International Olympic Committee (IOC), National Olympic Committees (NOC), national and international federations, London Organizing Committee (LOGOC) and from other relevant organisms, such as the British government or the London local authorities.
- **Major national and international news agencies**. Information provided by major agencies such as EFE, Reuters, Agence France-Presse (AFP), Associated Press (AP), Deutsche Presse-Agentur (DPA) or The Press Association (PA and PA Sport).
- **National and international media.** Information originated in other newspapers, magazines, television, radio and new media, including newspapers’ sites, blogs, portals and major media outlets such as CNN, NBC, BBC, *Time, Newsweek*, etc.
- **Web as a source of information.** Information originated in official and key websites from established media outlets (such as BBCSports.co.uk or NBCOlympics.com) as well as other relevant sites on the topic can be considered as sources, although journalists have to be aware that 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*, 2012: 55), media can document on professional and amateur valuable weblogs on the topic.
- **Social networks.** Given the fact that “journalists are increasingly using networking sites to access information and photographs” (Keeble, 2009: 126), sports journalism professionals can make use of valuable information of trustworthy channels of Facebook and Twitter, among other networking sites.
- **Books and specialized publications.** Official publications, record books, rulebooks, media guides, archival documentation, public records, to list a few.

24 As Qing (2010) 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” (Qing, 2010: 1852). This is an element to take into consideration in the analysis of this parameter in the empirical study.
2.3.1.3. Inclusion of all the necessary elements to understand the Olympic Games

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, rich and contextualized coverage of the events in the Olympic Games should include a wide range of key elements, both sporting and non-sporting related, bearing in mind that sports journalism’s purpose “is to critically examine sports, from the play to the politics behind the play” (King, 2008: 341), as clearly sustained by the journalist Dave Zirin.

It is undoubtedly true that, as Jim Lampley explains in an interview carried out by the North-American researcher Andrew C. Billings, “at the Games, a complete picture is never possible” because “the nature of media is to be selective” (Billings, 2008: 155). Nevertheless, professionals “have the responsibility to inform of all the events that could be significant and to provide all the points of view that could enable the citizen to have reason of the social phenomena” (Alsius, 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 a comprehensive, contextualized and complete information about the social reality is expressed in many deontological codes, promoted by UNESCO (Art. 1-2), IFJ (Art. 1), the Council of Europe (Art. 17), SPJ (Foreword) or ASNE (Art. 4).

Given the aforementioned foundations, four indicators of quality will be considered in the research: a) Presence in the media coverage of a wide range of journalistic genres; b) Presence of the wide range of Olympic sports; c) Completeness of the sports information and d) Importance given to relevant non-competition issues.
A) Presence in the media coverage of a wide range of journalistic genres

A quality newspaper should try to use a **wide range of journalistic genres to carry out the coverage** of the studied sporting event. These genres include the build-up pieces and previews of the upcoming events, reviews, news reports, articles, interviews, personality profiles, brief pieces, opinion columns, opinion articles, editorials, letters to the editor, comic strips, lists of results and scores, agenda of the sporting and cultural programmes of the Olympic Games, to list a few. This area of the Olympic media coverage has been empirically under-researched until the present moment. The celebration of 2012 Olympics is a very pertinent occasion to overcome this lack of insight around this issue.

B) Presence in the media coverage of the wide range of Olympic sports

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, specially the most popular disciplines, the sports that hold an economic power and the highest revenues (such as football25, athletics or swimming). A quality newspaper has a social responsibility and should, at least, **try to give recognition to the different Olympic sports**. None of them should be largely ignored from the media exposure.

That is the reason why the researcher should codify which sport or sports are covered in each piece, taking into consideration the space devoted to each of them, in order to see the proportion of the coverage for each individual and team sport. Apart from obtaining numerical data from this quality indicator, **the researcher will have to analyse the results bearing in mind the background and contextual factors** such as the history and tradition of the sports, their status, universality, popularity, economic impact and commercialization, the number of practisers, clubs or followers of the sport in each country, among other determining factors signalled by authors such as Boyle and

25 We 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 named as the “tyranny of football” (Steen, 2012). Nevertheless, we must consider that the pre-eminence of football information in the media varies during the Olympics. As Rojas Torrijos points out, “the other disciplines have a major coverage in the general information print media, specially in the case of big events such as the Olympic Games” (Rojas Torrijos, 2011: 78).
Haynes (2009). Also, the characteristics of media sports described by Gnädinger (2010) (profiles of the athletes, type and value of the competition, degree of organisation of the sport, structure and development of the competitions or the venues where the events take place, among others) will need to be considered. The sports included in the 2012 Olympics programme are presented in the next table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2012 London Olympic Programme</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Archery</td>
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<tr>
<td>Athletics (800m, 1.500m)</td>
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<td>Athletics (Marathon)</td>
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<td>Athletics (4x100m and 4x400m Relays)</td>
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<td>Athletics (3.000 Steeplechase)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Athletics (Shot Put, Discus Throw, Hammer Throw, Javelin Throw)</td>
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<td>Athletics (Decathlon)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Basketball</td>
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<tr>
<td>Boxing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Canoeing (Sprint)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cycling (Road Race and Time Trial)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cycling (Mountain Bike)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Equestrian (Dressage, Eventing, Jumping)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Football</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gymnastics (Rhythmic)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Handball</td>
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<tr>
<td>Judo</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rowing (Single Sculls, Double Sculls, Pair)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sailing (One-Person Dinghy classes; Windsurfer)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shooting</td>
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<tr>
<td>Swimming (Freestyle and Medley)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Swimming (10km Marathon Swimming)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Table Tennis</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tennis</td>
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<td>Volleyball</td>
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<td>Weightlifting</td>
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</table>

C) Completeness of the sports information

The coverage of the aforementioned sports should be accompanied by some of the following key elements: results and scores from the event and information about its development (including the cases about record-breaking performances), well-used data and statistics\textsuperscript{26}, line-ups of teams and players, information about referees, information about the venues\textsuperscript{27}, number of spectators and atmosphere of the event, climate, narration of the development and outcome of the sporting event, the related background and context information of the sporting events, pre-match and post-match stories and previews of upcoming events, as well as comment and analysis.

D) Importance given to relevant non-competition issues

According to Boyle (2006: 143), “at its best, sports journalism is about making sense of the wider context within which events have occurred”. This is very important in the case of the Olympic Games, 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). Beyond documenting the Olympic schedule, the sporting events featured and the athletes’ achievements, a rigorous approach from quality media should also focus their attention in expanding the coverage to all the complexity and the significant issues of social, political, historical and cultural nature related to the Games. Journalists’ role should be “to place athletic performances within broader contexts in order to enhance the overall understanding of a sport” (Billings, 2008: 56). Taking this into account, the researcher will codify the range of topics that media may use to present the event from a broader framework, presented in the next enumeration.

- **Opening and closing ceremonies.** We cannot forget that “the opening ceremony has become, as a consequence of its great worldwide audience, in the basic cultural

\textsuperscript{26} The emphasis on statistics also varies depending on the journalistic tradition. To illustrate, more than in the UK, “US sport and sports journalism has always been fixated with statistics” (Boyle, 2006: 32).

\textsuperscript{27} A detailed description of the venues (including the Olympic Park Venues, London Venues and Outside of London Venues, including the Olympic Stadium, the Velodrome, the Aquatics Centre, among many others), in terms of their capacity and the events that will host can be found at *London 2012 Olympic Games: The Official Book* (2012), a reference publication written by The Press Association.
event of the Olympic Games” (Moragas, 1992b: 57). Newspapers should put emphasis on these events and the protocol involved in them, providing information about its cultural expressions (music, folklore and other cultural elements of the host country) and the Olympic rituals that it features (the parade of the participants, the institutional speeches, the raising of the Olympic flag, the symbolic release of pigeons, the playing of the Olympic anthem, the entrance of the Olympic flame into the stadium, and so on). Brief descriptions about the protocol of the Olympic ceremonies can be found in several key sources, such as Moragas (1992a: 116-130) or Miah and García (2012: 14). Also, insight on the representation of the national identities in the Opening and Closing ceremonies is explored, for instance, in Traganou’s study of 2004 Olympic Games ceremonies (Traganou, 2010).

- **Cultural dimension of the Games and Olympic Cultural Programme.** Media should include information about some of the concerts, scenic arts plays and cultural and artistic exhibitions that will take place during the celebration of 2012 Olympic Games. Academics such as Moragas (1992b) or García (2008) have devoted their research to explain the cultural dimension of the Olympic Games and the evolution of the Olympic cultural programmes. Among the issues regarding London 2012 Cultural Olympiad, there should be information about the cultural aspects of the host nation and the city and its cultural tastes. In addition, details about the cultural legacy of the London Olympics should be included.

- **Economical issues.** Although sometimes sports journalists have been depicted as lacking the needed knowledge about economics and the business world (Boyle *et al*, 2002), quality media should provide information to their readers about the financing sources of the London Olympic Games (private investors/businesses, public funding, television and new media rights, sponsoring, licenses, merchandising, ticket sales, advertising, among others) as well as the economic effects of the Olympics (economic impact, employment and creation of jobs, etc.). Detailed references of the economical aspects of staging Olympics can be found in the texts of the recognized expert in the field, Holger Preuss (Preuss, 2004).

- **Geographic and demographic information of the host country and city.**

- **Geopolitical issues.** Media should explain the political and geostrategic issues related to the Games, including the reporting of the presence of politicians and countries’ representatives. Moreover, emphasis should be given to the Olympics in terms of local and national policy. We cannot forget that “the international sporting events that attract the world’s media are intrinsically connected to the global political and economic organisation of society” (Kennedy and Hills, 2009: 2).
• **Tangible and intangible impacts of hosting the Olympic Games.** We cannot forget that “mega-events like the Olympic Games are widely regarded as key opportunities for cities to accelerate large-scale urban development projects through the construction of Olympic Villages” (Scherer, 2011: 782). The Olympics held in Barcelona’92, Sidney’2000 or Vancouver’2010 Winter Olympics have been clear examples of the fact that “Olympic urbanism can play an important role in the process of the transformation of urban spaces and sometimes regions” (Muñoz, 2006: 186). Newspapers should include information about the economic, urban and social impact of the Games for the host city of London and, more precisely, for the East London and the Lower Lea Valley area (extensively described by authors such as Poynter and MacRury, 2009). Media should explain their readers’ crucial issues such as the urban transformations and redevelopment, the construction of new sporting facilities and non-sporting facilities, house building, the environmental impacts and the creation of new green spaces, the improvement of transport connections or the international projection of London, the boosting of tourism and the modifications on the British tourism policy (Weed *et al*., 2011) or the impact of the Games upon local communities, among other issues.

Apart from these tangible legacies, space should be devoted to **less tangible legacies**, such as the summarized by Gratton and Preuss (2011: 1923): “urban revival, enhanced international reputation, increased tourism, improved public welfare, additional employment, more local business opportunities, better corporate relocation, chances for city marketing, renewed community spirit, better interregional cooperation, production of ideas, production of cultural values, popular memory, education, experience and additional know-how”. Atkinson *et al* added other intangible benefits, such as “national pride”, “motivating and inspiring children” or “promoting healthy living” (Atkinson *et al*., 2008: 426-427), also complemented with the idea of enhancing sports participation (Girginov and Hills, 2008). An explanation of the impact of the Olympics in the local communities and the educational, cultural and health legacies is explored by Shipway (2007).

• **Safety and security.** Media outlets should feature information related to the safety and security measures and their impact during the celebration of the 2012 London Olympic Games. Sugden (2012) has looked into the security at the Olympics from

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28 As Horne and Whannel (2011: 135) pinpoint, “Barcelona in 1992 was and continues to be seen as a huge success, especially for urban redevelopment, thus inaugurating the idea of (and emphasis on) the Games as a tool for boosterism – urban promotion, (re-) design and legacy”.

an historical perspective and has extensively explained the key features and the rationale for enhanced security at 2012 Olympics.

- **Multicultural diversity.** The role played by ethnic populations and local communities during the preparation and the celebration of the Olympic Games has to be reflected in the media. We cannot forget that in the United Kingdom nowadays “multiculture becomes an unremarkable feature of British metropolitan life” (Burdsey, 2007: 618), that is, “a central characteristic of a new British identity” (MacRury and Poynter, 2010: 2961).

- **Environmental and weather conditions.** Newspapers should mention the general environmental and weather conditions and their effect to the development of the sporting and non-sporting events of the Olympic Games.

- **Health issues.** The selected media should make references to health issues related to the Olympics and the sporting activity, such as the fight against doping and the promotion of health. It is known that “one of the defining features of contemporary Olympic competition has been its struggle against doping in elite sport” (Miah and Garcia, 2012: 96). An explanation about the IOC’s involvement in anti-doping and an historical overview on the topic can be found at Houlihan (2012).

- **History and relationship of the Olympic Games with other major sporting events.** Newspapers should include, at least, a brief history of the basic facts and trajectory of the Olympic Games, including its mythology, origins and references to past and forthcoming events (Sochi 2014 and Rio 2016). Also, they should ideally link and compare the Olympics with other major sporting events. An indisputable reference to the Olympics history, both for professionals and academics, is the latest edition of Miller’s work, entitled *The Official History of the Olympic Games and the IOC. Athens to London 1894-2012* (Miller, 2012). This book can be complemented by the indispensable source about the history, results and statistics of all the Olympics sports, written and updated by Wallechinsky and Loucky (2012). Also, it would be worth for journalists to take into consideration Guttmann’s history of the modern Olympic Games (Guttmann, 2002) and Gallagher’s exhaustive overview of the British Olympic and Paralympic history (Gallagher, 2012). Extensive information about the records and biographies of the greatest Olympic and Paralympic sportsmen and sportswomen (including athletes such as Sebastian Coe, Carl Lewis, ‘Jesse’ Owens, Michael Phelps or Emil Zatopek) can be found in the official publication *The 100 Greatest Olympians and Paralympians* (Callow, 2011).

- **Identity of the Games.** Quality media should contain references to the logos, images and mascots of the Olympics and other representative and iconic elements.
• **Coverage of the negative aspects of the Olympics.** Newspapers also should reflect, if necessary, any protests or demonstrations against the Olympics that may happen. We cannot forget that the “Olympic Games provide an excellent international platform for promoting causes or making protests” (Milton-Smith, 2002: 133). Although Lenskyj explains that the mainstream media tends to “trivialize or ignore anti-Olympic activists” (Lenskyj, 2006: 206), in the last Beijing’2008 Olympics, negative aspects, including the status of human rights and the lack of press freedom in China were covered by the media (Boccia *et al*, 2010). Also, other negative outcomes of the Games must be explained.

• **Media and communications information.** Information should be given to the readership about the media coverage of the Olympics, including service information such as schedules to follow the events through the mass media.

• **Inclusion of other issues.** Quality print media should also make references to other themes related to the Olympic Games, such as the ticket allocation, pin-trading, the role of volunteers or the London transport system, among others.

### 2.3.1.4. Rectifications 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 great majority of deontological codes make explicit reference to the rectification of content, including the documents promoted by UNESCO (Art. 5), IFJ (Art. 5), the Council of Europe (Art. 26), FAPE (Art. 13), SPJ (Art. 4), PCC (Art. 2) or NUJ (Art. 3). Keeping this in mind, sports journalists covering the Olympics should rectify their content if some published information incurs in the infringement of the deontological principles. Rectification is in sports journalism, as well as in other areas of the profession, central to assure quality (Alsius, 1999). The researcher should detect and codify the presence of rectifications in the sample.

### Analysis of neutrality

#### 2.3.1.5. Differentiation between journalistic genres: information and opinion

As Alsius *et al* state, “one of the classic journalism phrases is that which reminds us that ‘**facts are sacred, comments are free**’” (Alsius *et al*, 2010: 80). This separation between news and opinions is clearly stated in the codes promoted by the Council of
Europe (Art. 3), FAPE (Art. 17), PCC (Art. 1), NUJ (Art. 4) or ASNE (Art. 5), among other major codes and ethical recommendations. Bearing this in mind, in the informative pieces covering the Olympic Games, a standard objective approach should be ideally pursued. Like any other journalist, the sports specialists should adequate their tasks to the ethical and deontological codes, in order to preserve their detachment, impartiality and even-handedness (Sanders, 2003; Stofer et al, 2010; Wahl-Jorgensen and Galperin, 2000). Given the great circulation of their pieces, they should be responsible and should not show themselves passionate when they present their views in relation to an athlete, coach, manager or team. The sports journalist should be an impartial observant, with the duty to be ready to offer a sincere and realistic information about the reality. This distance is essential to retain credibility, which is a cornerstone of the professionalism of the journalists (Alcoba, 1993).

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, 2006: 174). The dissolution of frontiers between information and opinion is very common in this journalistic area and highly controversial (Billings, 2010a; Keeble, 2009). In their empirical research about the ethical values of the Spanish journalists, Alsius et al (2010: 85) pointed out that “among sports journalists there is a tendency to be less stringent when separating information and opinion”. It is true that as Billings says, “the days when people believed that the major part of the transmitted news were objective are gone” (Billings, 2010a: 26). As Hallin and Mancini (2004: 26) add, “no serious media analyst would argue that journalism anywhere in the world is literally neutral”. Nevertheless, these assumptions are not incompatible with the fact that a certain impartial analysis and rigour should be expected in the media coverage of the sporting events such as the Olympic Games.

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29 For obvious reasons, the separation between information and opinion will not be analysed in the pieces corresponding to the following genres: opinion columns, opinion articles and editorials. These types of pieces are expected to be subjective and contain personal opinion and analysis, “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).

31 This dissolution of frontiers also 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).
In this project, the researcher will **look into and analyse the errors that the journalists commit in the separation between information and opinion**. Information and analysis refer to the explanation of the events, the precedents and the background, the current circumstances, reactions and interpretations and an assessment supported by objective reasons. Conversely, opinion is based in argumentation supported by persuasive reasons and personal points of view (Paniagua, 2009).

A wide range of **expressions, phrases and words can help the researcher to locate a mixture between information and opinion**, that is, the combination between facts and commentary (Hernández Alonso, 2003; Knowlton and Reader, 2009; Min and Zhen, 2010). This set of expressions and words would be the following:

- **Presence**, in the informative news pieces, **of expressions that mark subjectivity, partiality, opinion and judgement**. These cases include the expressions that show that a journalist takes sides or stands against a certain team or player (excessive praises or criticism, the use of accusations, jokes, excessive dramatic expressions, irony or black humour, to list a few).
- **Presence of evaluative adjectives** used by journalists to judge positively or negatively, including the superlative adjectives.
- **Inclusion of evaluative adverbs**. These types of adverbs always hire a personal vision. These adverbs, as it happens with the adjectives, tend to be very common in sports journalism (Hernández Alonso, 2003).
- **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 of the actions is determined by the use of the first-person approach, marked by the personal pronouns “I”, “me”, “my” or “we”, “us”, “our”, for instance. As Knowlton and Reader explain, “the use of first-person by professional reporters is still 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” (Knowlton and Reader, 2009: 92). Nevertheless, in sports journalism this is one of the most recurrent mechanisms.
- **There are other mechanisms** that are also used by sports journalists to express a subjective judgment with the intention of creating a viewpoint that readers can identify with, such as rhetoric questions, irony, antithesis, anaphora, gradation, comparisons and metaphors, among other rhetorical methods.
2.3.1.6. Sensationalism in the reporting of information

Media sensationalism refers to aspects such as hyperboles and exaggerations, the stimulation of primary instincts or the excessive fascination for the spectacle (Horne and Whannel, 2011; Kennedy and Hills, 2009; Lambeth, 1992). As Billings reminds us, “since the appearance of mass media, journalists have been accused to be sensationalists and to vary the essential of stories in favour of the criteria to sell more newspapers or to attract the maximum interest” (Billings, 2010a: 103-104).

Sports journalism has traditionally been an area where the information “is habitually 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 the inclusion of the “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 lead to the “trivialization and softening of contents and, thus, to a deficient journalistic information” (Rojas Torrijos, 2011: 18).

Bearing in mind the recommendations to avoid mistaking between the spectacular and the relevant news (which are clearly expressed, for instance, in the Article 30 of the Resolution 1.003 of the Council of Europe or the Article 2 of the Society of Professional Journalists Code of Ethics), in their coverage of the Olympics, the quality newspapers included in the sample should not include sensationalist stories, containing issues related to scandal or celebrity, such as the tabloid newspapers usually do. The researcher will need to observe and codify if there is any sign of sensationalism or spectacular elements in the texts, headlines and in the pictures of the news pieces.

2.3.2. Principle of justice

One cannot get away from the fact 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). Nevertheless, justice is sometimes not achieved by the media, because they tend to
generate or reproduce stereotypes\(^{32}\) (Alsius, 1999) that contribute to the “social construction of differences” (Alsius et al., 2010: 115) and to the generation of prejudices and stigmas of nationality, genre, race or disability, among others.

It is unavoidable that the major ethical recommendations (UNESCO, Art. 9; IFJ, Art. 7; Council of Europe, Art. 28; SPJ, Art. 1; PCC, Art. 12; NUJ, Art. 10; FAPE, Art. 7) 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). Nevertheless, in sports communication, some disadvantaged social groups, such as sportswomen, non-white athletes or disabled participants still “experience more difficulty than others when accessing media” (Alsius et al., 2010: 113). What is more, they are subject to a “distorted representation in the social showcase of media” (Alsius, 1999: 201). This situation is worrying, taking into account that mediated sports are a crucial space in which individual and group identities and attitudes are shaped, reconstructed, naturalised, legitimized, amplified and conveyed to the public (Billings et al., 2012; Boyle and Haynes, 2009; Horne and Whannel, 2011; Howe, 2008a; Oates and Pauly, 2007). Precisely, given the fact that the Olympics hold a great power to shape identities (Billings and Angelini, 2007), in this research project it is indispensable to evaluate the justice in the quantitative and qualitative representation of nationalities, genders, races and the disabled athletes. All the collectives should have a quota of presence and an adequate, equal and fair representation in the newspapers.

2.3.2.1. Justice in the representation of nationalities

Sport plays a crucial role in the construction and the projection of social identity, especially nationality (Denham and Duke, 2010). Nowadays, there are 205 National

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\(^{32}\) The 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 et al., 2010: 114). They can involve exaggeration, “an inflation of a characteristic and/or an overgeneralization from part to whole” (Franklin et al., 2008: 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” (Teetzel, 2011: 390). Although the dissemination of stereotypes is not an exclusive responsibility from media, we cannot avoid that they contribute to the task of reproducing the inherited stereotypes (Jorge Alonso, 2004). From journalism ethics perspective, as Sanders stresses, “reducing people or groups to abstractions or clichés, is lazy, bad journalism” (Sanders, 2003: 154).
Olympic Committees (NOGs) and therefore, the Olympics provide an extraordinary opportunity for countries to show the world they exist and to gain international recognition and exposure. Meanwhile, media can promote or put down nationalities as well as creating nationalistic favour or national stereotyping (Stead, 2008).

Empirical research has extensively shown that in the Olympics there has been a significant quantitative bias towards the coverage of the teams and athletes of the countries where the media are based. For instance, in Billings’ longitudinal analysis of the NBC telecasts of the Summer and Winter Olympics between 1996-2006, North-American athletes were the most-mentioned athletes in five of the six editions taken into consideration for the study, from Atlanta’96 to Torino’2006, achieving a proportion of near three-quarters among all the included athletes (Billings, 2008). These results are consistent with previous investigations in the field (Billings and Angelini, 2007; Billings and Eastman, 2002; Billings et al, 2008; Eastman and Billings, 1999; Cho, 2009; Larson and Rivenburgh, 1991). Despite this, some remarkable exceptions have to be taken into account, such as in the television coverage of 2002 Winter Olympics, where “surprisingly, non-American athletes were mentioned more frequently than American athletes were” (Billings and Eastman, 2003: 569).

In qualitative terms, researchers have shown that the media representation of nationalities has usually been constructed from stereotypes and dialogue differences (Stead, 2008). The recent research of Billings et al (2011) about television narrations in the US and China (NBC and CCTV) during the 2008 Beijing Olympics shows the perpetuation of the dichotomic confrontations between countries in the construction of media discourses (“Us versus them”).

Given this empirical background, it cannot be argued that media have been prone to favour and maximize their countries’ stories over the rest. Also, sports journalists have tended to interpret this global event from their “domestic and national frames of reference” (Qing, 2010: 1894) and “the unique lens of their home culture” (Rivenburgh, 2010: 4), emphasizing “the special meaning of the medals for the countries if the sports writers and medallists are from the same country” (Yu, 2009: 301). To a certain extent, this attitude is logical for two reasons. First of all, we cannot avoid that the Olympics “have historically been a channel for the construction and display of nationalism” (Billings, 2008: 90). Secondly, it is indisputable that “in each country, people feel a vested interest in their own Olympic team” (Billings and Eastman, 2002: 351).
Within this research framework, the researcher’s aim is to check if in London 2012 media help to contribute to giving more opportunities to other countries/athletes or they incur in some shortcomings as the excessive emphasis on patriotism or the minimization/stereotyping of certain countries and geographic areas. To achieve this purpose, he will codify how many times is each country mentioned in each newspaper and in the overall sample. Furthermore, he will write notes about certain expressions that could be used to promote or put down nationalities. The obtained results for this quality indicator will be analysed considering crucial factors such as the tradition of countries, their social and geopolitical relevance, the situation of sport and the size of the delegation that takes part in the Olympics, among other determining elements.

2.3.2.2. Justice in the representation of genders

Without any doubt, gender\textsuperscript{33} is widely regarded as one of the key themes in the analysis of media sport (Wenner, 2006). Sport has been seen by academics as a sexist and patriarchal institution, marked by a masculine hegemony that privileges, naturalises and preserves the power of men while minimizes and perpetuates the feminine inferiority (Bernstein, 2002; Boyle and Haynes, 2009; Crolley and Teso, 2007; Kian \textit{et al}, 2009; King, 2007; Malcolm, 2008; Mosquera González and Puig, 2002). Gender, as a way of structuring the social practice (Connell, 2003), has decisively influenced the world of sport, which has been socially and symbolically constructed under the privileges of masculine domination (Lomas, 2003). This situation has had serious implications for women, which have had difficulties to participate\textsuperscript{34} in the sporting competitions, spaces of the public sphere traditionally destined to men.

\textsuperscript{33} While sex refers to the biological differences between men and women, gender is usually used to make reference to the socially constructed concepts about masculinity and femininity (Billings, 2010a).

\textsuperscript{34} In the ancient Greece, women were not allowed to take part in and to attend the Olympic competitions. With the reintroduction of the modern Olympics in 1896, “women have struggled to participate as equals” (Teetzel, 2011: 386). It was not until Stockholm 1912 when female participation was allowed and until Amsterdam 1928 when women received the definitive approbation from the IOC to take part in the Olympic Games (Zamora, 1998). Nevertheless, in the second half of the XX century, women have undertaken significant steps in the practise of organized sport and their status has substantially increased (Bernstein, 2002; Girginov and Parry, 2005; Hargreaves, 1994; Markula, 2009). In Beijing 2008 Games, the percentage of women athletes reached the 42% (Billings \textit{et al}, 2012: 82).
In the media field, sport has also traditionally been constructed as a predominantly masculine territory\(^{35}\) (Boyle, 2006; Buysse and Embser-Herbert, 2004; Crolley and Teso, 2007; Duncan, 2006; Keeble, 2009; Wensing and Bruce, 2003), where the gender differentiations have not only been reflected and legitimized but also accentuated (Bruce, 2009; Lippe, 2002). Despite this, and in clear consonance with the increasing in the female participation previously explained, women visibility in the sports information about the Olympic Games has progressively grown (Bernstein, 2002). It is widely recognized that the news about women are not trivial but they are of interest to the rest of the citizenship (Gist, 1993). Nevertheless, academics continue to point out that masculine sport is still dominating in the media and that the coverage of this type of information is destined mainly to men (Billings \textit{et al}, 2012; Keeble, 2009; King, 2007). Journalistic discourse about the coverage of sport continues to be, in great measure, characterized by the inequality between genres in quantitative and qualitative terms\(^{36}\) (Capranica \textit{et al}, 2005; Kay and Jeanes, 2008; Mean, 2010; Stead, 2008).

**Extensive research** has empirically demonstrated the aforementioned aspects. Some of the best references within this research line include the investigations carried out to analyse the media coverage of the Summer Olympic Games between the 1950s and 1970s (Pfister, 1987); Los Angeles’84 and Seoul’88 (Lee, 1992); Barcelona’92 (Higgs and Weiler, 1994; Daddario, 1997); Atlanta’96 (Eastman and Billings, 1999; Higgs \textit{et al}, 2003; Tuggle and Owen, 1999; Vincent \textit{et al}, 2002); Sidney’2000 (Billings and Eastman, 2002; Capranica and Aversa, 2002; Capranica \textit{et al}, 2005); Athens’2004 (Billings, 2007; Billings and Angelini, 2007; Capranica \textit{et al}, 2008; Crolley and Teso, 2007) and Beijing’2008 (Angelini and Billings, 2010a; Billings \textit{et al}, 2010; Davis and Tuggle, 2012; Yu, 2009). It is also of great significance the research conducted by King (2007), who carried out a longitudinal analysis of the Olympics in the British press (\textit{The Times} and \textit{The Daily Mail}) between 1948 and 2004; the monitoring of the Asiatic Olympic athletes between 2000 and 2008 in the international press carried out by Yu (2009) or the analysis of sportswomen in the Israeli press in three Olympics (1996, 2000

\(^{35}\) Sports journalism has traditionally been an area primarily dominated by men, where the male journalists, reporters and producers predominate (Bernstein, 2002) and where the product is mainly addressed to a masculine audience (Bruce, 2009). In addition, one must consider that “the relative lack of women readers of sports product is a mitigating factor” (Billings \textit{et al}, 2012: 89) in this journalistic area.

\(^{36}\) These imbalances also depend on the entrenchment of the patriarchal structures in the culture and tradition (Crolley and Teso, 2007; Lippe, 2002). Although these factors are important, the attitude of 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).
and 2004) developed by Galily et al (2011). Also, this thematic axe has also been the object of study of recent master’s thesis in North-American universities (Herman, 2009; Poniatowski, 2008).

In parallel, the differences of gender in the coverage have also been approached in the Winter Olympics, through various researches that need to be taken into account. Some of the most significant projects have analysed the Winter Olympics from Chamonix’24 to Albertville’92 (Urquhart and Crossman, 1999) and the editions of Albertville’92 (Daddario, 1994); Lillehammer’94 and Nagano’98 (Eastman and Billings, 1999); Salt Lake City’02 (Billings and Eastman, 2003) or Torino’06 (Billings et al, 2008). All these investigations and further scholar work has helped to reach a better comprehension of how sportswomen are covered in the media both in quantitative and qualitative ways. Within the next lines, an overview of these two types of coverage (as well as references to another quality indicator –the presence of women as sports journalists-) will be presented in order to prepare the foundations of the analysis proposed for this thesis.

A) Quantitative presence of genders in the news pieces

In quantitative terms, various researches conducted during the 1980s and 1990s signalled towards a minimization of the feminine coverage (King, 2007). The space devoted to men’s coverage has been a lot more extensive than women’s, in terms of the number of pieces awarded and their privileged localization (bigger space and a prominent situation in the case of print media and a major number of minutes in television programmes and news bulletins), leaving in a situation of marginalization or underrepresentation the sportswomen in comparison to male athletes (Crolley and Teso, 2007). This asymmetry has contributed in some occasions to generate the false impression that sportswomen do not exist or have little value (Bernstein, 2002; Wanta, 2006). Although the figures vary depending on the social, economic, cultural, historical and sporting contexts of each country, women are still receiving less than 10% of the sporting coverage both in newspapers and television (Markula, 2009).

However, it is indispensible to acknowledge that these figures have been incremented in the last years, especially in the case of mega-events such as the Olympic Games37. Some

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37 Largely, this increase in the media attention on feminine athletes in the Olympics has taken place mainly, as Yu (2009) remarks from the contributions of Duncan and Hasbrook (2001) and Pinnen (2001), in the case of individual sports, such as swimming or diving.
investigations are clearly illustrative of this phenomenon. Vincent et al (2002) proved in their analysis of the Canadian, North-American and British coverage of Atlanta’96 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 between 1948 and 2004 carried out by King (2007) is also an illustrative case in point of this trend: after years of marginalization and under-representation of the female athletes, in Athens 2004 the sportswomen received a bigger textual and photographic coverage (King, 2007). As Bruce (2009) explains, the feminine athletes may be finding new spaces for themselves, a situation that could lead to a new scenario different to the traditional masculine domination of sport and sport media. To continue exploring this issue, the researcher will codify the gender of the protagonists of each news piece in London 2012. This information is essential to determine the gender equity in the Olympics coverage, a key aspect within the principle of justice.

B) Qualitative nature of the coverage

Apart from the differences at the quantitative level, it is important to put special emphasis on the sphere of the qualitative coverage. As Billings et al (2012: 97) point out, “men and women athletes are described in a variety of media outlets in substantially different manners”. However, as they add, media do not use direct terms in order to convey sexist meanings: “overt expressions of sexism are increasingly rare; however, many subtle iteration of sexism remain” (Billings et al, 2012: 12). Conversely, mass media regularly carry out certain strategies, such as the use of a series of adjectives, words, phrases, stereotyped constructions and clichés (Angelini and Billings, 2010a; Bernstein, 2002; Billings et al, 2010; Billings et al, 2012; Christians et al, 1991; Crolley and Teso, 2007; Daddario, 1994; Duncan, 2006; Fuller, 2008; Hernández Alonso, 2003; King, 2007; Vincent et al, 2002; Yu, 2009) to establish a significant differentiation of gender.

An in-depth reading of the contributions of these authors has allowed the researcher to discover different major resources and strategies that media use through the language to articulate these differences. It cannot be forgotten that, as Juana Gallego explains, the language “is not a neutral instrument that names the reality but maybe the more elaborated product of the human capacity to create it” (Gallego, 2007: 49). Stereotypes, as cognitive instruments characterized by the simplified representation of the reality and
the resistance to change (Berganza and Del Hoyo, 2006), impregnate the discourse, legitimizing and perpetuating the hegemonic divisions of gender (Lippe, 2002). An explanation of these strategies will be provided straightforward:

- **Inclusion of references to sportswomen physical attributes.** As Duncan 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” (Duncan, 2006: 243). The sportswomen coverage has been traditionally characterized by the emphasis on the physical attributes of their femininity, such as their physical look, attractive and attire (Bernstein, 2002). Regular references have insisted on the health and beauty of their bodies, their hair, legs or smiles, among others (‘beautiful’, ‘elegant’, ‘pretty’, etc.). The overuse of references to these attributes has decisively contributed to turn the sportswomen into a sexual object (Keeble, 2009). This trend to the sexualization of the 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., 2012). If a sportswoman does not answer to the stereotyped model of femininity or decides to blend into the masculine genre appearance, she will be labelled in a different way and negatively sanctioned by the media (Gallego, 2007). By contrast, in the case of the male athletes, the physical mentions tend to be positively associated with their sporting performances and their physical power. Only the cases of injuries, overweight and low physical condition men’s physical attributes are negatively sanctioned by the media.

- **Presence of expressions and stereotypes that emphasize the psychological characteristics and the emotionality of sportswomen.** Certain types of expressions (for example, athletes that ‘cry or show her tears’ or that are ‘adorable’, ‘sweet’, ‘weak’, ‘delicate’, ‘subjugated’, ‘fragile’, ‘passive’, ‘passionate’ or ‘nervous’, among others, are indicative of a gender biased portray, that contributes to characterize women only as emotional, weak and dependent beings. This way of depicting women is clearly opposite to some of the characteristics traditionally attributed to male athletes, that “are depicted as succeeding because they do not let emotions override their athletic desires” (Billings et al, 2012: 97). The language in

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38 Of course, there can be exceptions regarding that 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).

- **Out-of-context reporting.** Commonly, the media have tended to focus their attention on non-sport-related or peripheral aspects in the case of women. For instance, there have been frequent references to elements such as the age of the sportswomen, the circumstances which are part of their personal lives (such as their origins, family life, habits, dating and relationships, leisure activities, marital status, family role, children, maternity, husband’s occupation, diet, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, among other non-athletic themes) rather than explaining their athletic skills, career path, commitment, intelligence or their achievements.

- **Infantilising.** The infantilising of sportswomen has been carried out by mass media by the use of certain diminutives, expressions and words that evoke a childish conception of female athletes, such as ‘girls’, ‘brides’, ‘kids’, ‘teenagers’, ‘young ladies’, ‘golden girls’, ‘youngsters’ or ‘sweethearts’. In men, the words ‘guys’, ‘lads’ or ‘pupils’ are not normally used to infantilize. Also, the infantilising of women can be represented by the use of expressions that imply that female athletes drive their lives following the indications of their partners, husbands or coaches.

- **Trivialization.** At certain times, media have trivialized the participation and the accomplishments achieved by sportswomen (Bernstein, 2002; Billings et al, 2012), demeaning their contributions. One of the most used resources is to attribute the success of the sportswomen mainly to luck or consonance (the notion that everything simply comes together at a right moment in time). Women are more likely to receive comments about consonance than men (Billings et al, 2012), whose triumphs are mainly due to strength, physical power, domination and sacrifice.

- **Gender marking.** Another resource extensively applied by media is the use of gender marks only when women are participating in a given sport. Media tends to
use a qualifier when the sport involves the presence of women (e.g.: ‘women’s handball’), as if it was a special branch of this sport. On the contrary, when the qualifier is not used, media generally refer to men’s sports (e.g.: ‘handball’).

- **Stereotyping in the pictures.** Photographs are sometimes selected and composed to reinforce gender stereotypes, presenting them as natural and biological (Crolly and Teso, 2007). Given the fact that photographs “carry meanings that are significant to the social construction of ideology” (Buysse and Embser-Herbart, 2004: 67), an analysis should be conducted to see if they excessively focus on the physical attributes of sportswomen, their emotionality or in non-sport-related issues.

C) **Presence of women as sports journalists**

For reasons such as the patriarchal values in society, the current division of labour (Clarinbould *et al*, 2004) and the men’s ‘ownership’ of sports and sports journalism (Hardin and Shain, 2006; Schultz, 2005), **women have traditionally been mainly excluded from this professional area.** It is true that in the last decade the number of female sports journalists has grown but they still “remain a minority among media workers who produce sport across media platforms” (Boyle and Haynes, 2009: 133-134). Boyle pointed out that less than 9% of the sports journalists in the United Kingdom national press were women (Boyle, 2006: 149), a figure that clearly shows this underrepresentation.

This fact may represent a direct consequence over the quality and ethics of the contents of the sports information, as “the predominantly male gender of host, reporters, and producers **might be a primary cause of unknowing or knowing bias**” (Bernstein, 2002: 419). Nevertheless, no empirical study until the moment has explored this relationship in the arena of the coverage of the Olympic Games. That is the reason why, within the justice principle, the researcher should register through the content analysis the author of each news piece. This information is **essential to know the number of news pieces in the sample written by men and women journalists**, as it is another crucial factor to assess the access or the under-representation of women in the sports journalism discipline. The results of this indicator will provide information about the gender balance/imbalance in the professionals covering the Olympics, which will be complemented by the views of professionals through qualitative in-depth interviews.
2.3.2.3. Justice in the representation of races and ethnicities

Another of the major areas of study within the journalistic principle of justice is the media representation of race and ethnicity, which is regarded as another of the super themes of media sport (Wenner, 2006). 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).

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 the achievements of black athletes during the last decades “have acquired global significance through involvements in sports events that have been mass mediated” (Horne and Whannel, 2011: 168). Nevertheless, the under-representation of non-white athletes remains, to some extent, very noteworthy. In his longitudinal study of the 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 Middle Eastern athletes 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, revealing a clear “white ethnocentric perspective” in the news reporting (Farrington et al, 2012: 54).

Qualitatively, as signalled by scholars, “athletes of different ethnicities have been treated in markedly different manners over the past several decades” (Billings, 2008: 80). Although there “has been a decline in overt forms of racism” within the sport

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39 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 or football. In some cases, the relationship between athletes and political vindications, such as the Black Power salute from Tommie Smith and John Carlos in 1968 Olympics (Billings et al, 2012) have repercussions in more media attention to black athletes. Finally, media attention can also be gained by underperformance. As scholars explain, “Eric Moussambani’s swim in Sydney made him a universal representative of Black Africans in water in the British media” (Horne and Whannel, 2011: 168).

40 In the research, it is not expected that racist language or inappropriate or disrespectful expressions will be used in the British, North-American and Spanish quality press. However, it is presumed that the less overt mechanisms used by media, such as the stereotypes that are being described, will continue to appear in the coverage of the quality newspapers included in the sample for this analysis.
media (traditionally exhibited in areas such as underrepresentation, underreporting and biased commentaries), the media nonetheless supports racist discourses and beliefs through stereotypical portrayals” (Grainger et al, 2006: 461). The sport media still tends 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 (2012), “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” (Billings et al, 2012: 117). In contrast to these innate “quickness, physical strength, speed, jumping ability and force” (McDonald, 2010: 160), white athletes are often associated and framed with “intellectual capabilities” (Sterkenburg and Knoppers, 2004: 303), the success through “a great deal of hard work and effort” (Billings et al, 2012: 117), commitment (Billings, 2010a) and leadership (Grainger et al, 2006). As illustrative of this trend41, Billings and Eastman’s (2002) research of the 2000 Summer Olympics coverage 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). Also, some stereotypes foster innate differences between the athletes depending on the sport they practise. As Billings argues, media produce simplistic messages that send the idea that “the Black are superior and born players of basketball and the White are born leaders in field sports” (Billings, 2010a: 36).

In contrast to this minimization and stereotyping, journalists should approach the question in a fair way. As Billings et al point out, 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, 2012: 121). Taking into consideration the aforementioned background, this research should explore which is the quantitative and qualitative treatment of races and

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41 However, exceptions of this overall trend can be found in other researches. For instance, Angelini and Billings (2010b) studied the 2008 Olympics NBC’s 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). Leaving Olympics aside, 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 in 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).
ethnicities in London 2012 Olympics. To correctly categorize the athletes and teams featured in the media, the six categories classification provided by Billings (2008) will be followed (Asian, Black, Hispanic, Middle Eastern, White, and other). The rationale for using this system of classification is 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, 2012: 108).

2.3.2.4. Justice in the representation of disability

As Thomas acknowledges, “in a similar way to women, blacks and homosexuals, disabled people have been excluded from both mainstream society and sport” (Thomas, 2008: 222). The disabled have received minor attention by the mass media or have been “rendered invisible” (Hardin, 2006: 580). As Thomas and Smith (2009: 139) point out, “the press treatment and social significance of sporting performances of disabled athletes remains 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). Colin 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; unable to participate in daily life. In other words, 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 it cannot be avoided that “without fair and accurate coverage, 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 the moment, “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 Atlanta 1996 Paralympics in the French and German newspapers while Schell and Duncan (1996) content analysed the event studying the CBS coverage.
Afterwards, Thomas and Smith (2003) examined the textual and iconic coverage of the Sydney 2000 Paralympics in the British printed press, detecting that “nearly one-quarter of the articles in the national newspaper depicted athletes as ‘victims or courageous people who suffer from personal tragedies’” (Girginov and Parry, 2005: 75-76).

As it can be seen, the research *Sports and journalism ethics: the coverage of 2012 London Olympics* does not focus on Paralympic sports events, because the event to be studied is the Olympic Games. That object of study excludes the information referring to the Paralympic Games, which will be held in London from 29th August to 9th September 2012. Nevertheless, an extraordinary circumstance has to be taken into account. Oscar Pistorius is a South African sprint runner who has a double amputation and runs with the aid of carbon fibre blade prosthetic limbs (Brittain, 2010). He “has always competed in both T43 (both legs amputated below the knee) and T44 events (one leg amputated below the knee) (Howe, 2008b: 131) but has achieved to gain access to compete in the 2012 Olympics. In July 2011, he obtained the Olympic “A” qualifying time. In July 2012, he was finally included in the South Africa 4x400 relay team and 400m individual lists, so he earned his place in the London Olympic Games.

As a consequence, the case of Oscar Pistorius will be analysed in order to assess how media treats a physical handicapped athlete that has achieved to compete in the Olympics. It will have to be seen whether he is discriminated by the mainstream media for participating with the use of prosthetics. Or if, on the contrary, his inclusion is endorsed by newspapers and he is given a positive public image and acts as a catalyst for disabled people inclusion in society. Also, it should be seen if newspapers incur on some stereotypical expressions to establish a compensatory treatment to approach him.

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42 “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 were set in Rome (1960) and the first Winter Paralympic Games were held in Örnsköldsvik, Sweden (1976). Since 1988 in Seoul, they are staged in the same city as the Olympic Games.

43 Although the mass media repercussion of Pistorius’ participation in 2012 London Olympics will be unprecedented, there are some previous cases that cannot be forgotten, such as the participation of paraplegic sportsmen and women in archery at London 1948 or 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).

44 As Brittain (2010: 104) recognizes, the case of Oscar Pistorius “appears to have resulted in removing the stigma of being disabled whilst adding the stigma of being ‘more than human’ in athletic ability, but ‘less human’ in physical appearance i.e. some kind of cyborg.”
2.3.3. Principle of freedom

From an historical perspective, “the concept of freedom of expression as an individual and social desire was born linked to the freedom of press” (Alsius, 1999: 234). As a “core value of the Western tradition” (Sanders, 2003: 63), “freedom of expression now has the status of an almost unchallengeable dogma in democratic societies” (Sanders, 2003: 67). The avoidance of any kind of interference from the private sectors or advertising is clearly stated in the major ethical codes and practice recommendations around the world (see for instance: IFJ, Art. 9; Council of Europe, Art. 8 and 15; SPJ, Art. 3; FAPE, Art. 3 and 8; NUJ, Art. 8 or ASNE, Art. 3).

Nevertheless, journalists’ task is also developed in a entrepreneurial context where the companies in which professionals work have their own financial and commercial interests as well as the economic pressure from advertisers and sponsors. It is beyond doubt that there are “extra journalistic factors (political and economical) that have an influence on the hierarchisation of editorial contents” (PRENDE, 2007: 54). As Frost adds, “it is important to remember that most media in a market economy are not in business because of high and lofty ideals; they are there to make a profit for their owners and shareholders” (Frost, 2011: 47). Therefore, they operate to maximize audiences and to obtain revenues (Christians et al, 2009; Digel, 2010; Franklin et al, 2008; Lambeth, 1992).

One of these key extra-journalistic factors is advertising, which plays a fundamental role in the survival of media (Keeble, 2009; Wahl-Jorgensen and Galperin, 2000). This influence may generate controversial problems. As Sanders acknowledges, “external advertising pressure to influence editorial content is cited as an area of ethical difficulty for journalists” (Sanders, 2003: 125), even though it has to be recognized that “quantifying how often this happens is difficult” (Franklin et al, 2008: 9). This influence of advertising over editorial content can be especially worrying, specifically in some areas of journalism. As the author adds, “financially high-octane areas like sport and business news are notorious for the kinds of pressures that can be brought to bear on reporters” (Sanders, 2003: 28). It is true that “advertising and sports have gone hand in hand almost from the very beginning” (Schultz, 2005: 220) and that “advertisements

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45 Precisely, in Alsius et al (2010) interviews conducted with Spanish journalists, professionals thought that “certain sections were under or very much under the influence of advertising companies, especially in the cases of Economics and Sports” (Alsius et al, 2010: 147).
have become an inseparable feature of the mediation of sport spectacles and megaevents” (Kennedy and Hills, 2009: 133). That is the reason why this area needs to be observed in the coverage of the Olympics.

2.3.3.1. Commercial servitude in the selection of Olympics news

As it is widely understood, traditional media depend on the needs of advertisers and pursue the profit maximization (Lewis, 2006). Despite media’s “economic interest in sport, it is in the nature of the media to keep a distance from it, to maintain their credibility, and to serve the truth and their audience” (Girginov and Parry, 2005: 87). Although the selection of news and the way they are presented to the reader should not ideally depend on entrepreneurial factors, it is plausible that sometimes there might be a distortion on the “news values and reporting priorities” (Boyle, 2006: 16). Beyond any doubt, it is very difficult to assure if there is a commercial servitude in the selection of the Olympics news. Nevertheless, to obtain a first approximation to this issue, two strategies will have to be applied.

First of all, the researcher will codify if there are any advertisements in each edition of the newspaper that directly refer to the main characters featured in the news pieces. This indicator may offer a primary approach to explain if the sports, the events and athletes presented in the information pages have a correspondence with the featured advertising.

Secondly, in-depth interviews with experts, professionals and representatives from the selected media will be conducted to examine this subject, among with others, as will be described in detail in chapter 3.

2.3.4. Principle of social responsibility

The 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” (Alsius et al, 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 General Principles of Professional Ethics (Art. 3), the Council of Europe’s Resolution 1.003 (Art. 1) or the ASNE Statement of Principles (Art. 1), to list a few.
All the media need to be responsible to society, including the sports media, given the inherent positive values of sport practice and their beneficial influence in the society as a whole. As Moragas (1996: 9) points out, “modern sport will only be able to fulfil its educational responsibilities if the media make a valid contribution to the strengthening of its positive values and avoid highlighting the negative ones”. Two ethical aspects will be specifically looked into in this research: (1) the invasion of privacy and (2) the presence of expressions that incite violence or confrontation.

2.3.4.1. The invasion of privacy

We cannot avoid at any rate that “the right of individuals to protect their privacy46 has long been cherished in Western culture” (Christians et al, 1991: 137). As Hlavach and Freivogel acknowledge, “no one’s privacy should be intruded upon unless justified by an overriding public need47” (Hlavach and Freivogel, 2011: 28). Privacy is a principle clearly reflected in the UN Declaration of Human Rights (article 12), the European Convention of Human Rights (Art. 8) and other legislation, such as the US Privacy Act (1973) or the Spanish Constitution of 1978 (Alsius et al, 2010), as well as in journalism codes and prescriptions such as the International Principles of Journalistic Ethics from UNESCO (Art. 6), the Resolution 1.003 from the Council of Europe (Art. 23-24), NUJ’s Code of Conduct (Art. 6), PCC’s Editors’ Code of Practice (Art. 3), SPJ’s Code of Ethics (Art. 2) or FAPE’s Deontological Code for the Journalistic Profession (Art. 4).

Nevertheless, recurrently, “the right to know is used as an excuse to publish circulation-boosting journalism” (Frost, 2011: 10). It is particularly controversial the case of the “people that are considered object of public attention” (Alsius, 1999: 379) and “those who volunteer for public life” (Frost, 2011: 103), category in which sportsmen and sportswomen fall. It is beyond doubt that some athletes seek or need their privacy from the media to be invaded in order to foster their social projection (Alsius, 1999).

46 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” and “the publication of speculation about an individual’s private thoughts or feelings” (Franklin et al, 2008: 199-200).

47 As Frost remembers, “the 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).
Nevertheless, 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 the general considerations of this principle and the treatment of isolated cases such as the tennis player Arthur Ashe or the baseball players Barry Bonds, Jason Giambi or Gary Sheffield (Schultz, 2005: 225). However, a closer approach should be conducted in order to empirically examine the inclusion of private and personal stories in the media coverage of 2012 Olympics. Quality newspapers should draw a line between the public and private lives of athletes, following 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). The researcher’s objective will be to locate and codify any phrases and expressions that unnecessarily emphasize in the non-sport-related details of sportsmen and sportswomen, in order to assess the media compliance with the ethical principles regarding the respect for privacy.

2.3.4.2. Presence of expressions that incite violence or confrontation

Ethical considerations such as the article 35 of the 1.003 Resolution from the Council of Europe state that the language that fosters violence, aggressiveness, hatred and confrontation should be avoided. However, the “journalism linked to the world of sport 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). As Garrido Lora (2009: 57) adds, “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 signalled by experts, certain vocabulary or jargon from the military language has been repeatedly used in sports journalism, such as ‘war’, ‘battle’, ‘soldiers’, ‘army’, ‘troops’, ‘enemies’, ‘revenge’, ‘conquer’, ‘massacre’, ‘annihilate’ and expressions such as ‘Us versus Them’ (that, as it has been previously seen, are also detrimental to journalism impartiality). Journalists employ this jargon to make more comprehensible the development of sporting events to their readers (Alcoba, 1993). However, we cannot
forget that “the emphasis on military imagery can bring risks of positively associating sport with war” (Billings et al, 2012: 139, extracted from Brown, 2004).

The Olympic Games, which are “largely interpreted as competitions between nations” (Billings et al, 2012: 126) and where “conflict becomes a key element of the media narration” (Girginov and Parry, 2005: 89), are an excellent context to monitor and analyse the use of this violent language in the media. Although the media need to reflect 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 language. Moragas (1996: 12) points out that “the media must use and promote a new language which banishes the warlike, violent terms from its vocabulary and 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 to care for a respectful treatment of the images that are shown to the public, sports journalism has the added responsibility to be educator and transmitter of the positive values inherent to the sports practice, such as the desire to improve, the effort culture, solidarity, companionship, equality or fair play” (Rojas Torrijos, 2011: 87).

It is true that “there is a fine line between fostering national unity and cultivating an attitude that either stereotypes or denigrates other identities” (Billings et al, 2012: 139). Nevertheless, and bearing in mind all the aforementioned premises, the researcher should discover, codify and assess if journalists covering the 2012 Olympics use dramatic expressions and an aggressive vocabulary that incites violence or a confrontation between athletes, countries and supporters or which stereotypes or denigrates other national identities.

48 It is beyond doubt that “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 within the 1920s and 1930s decade 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 the nationalist feelings and national identification” (García Ferrando, 2001, quoted in García Ferrando and Durán González, 2002: 242). The era of political boycotts within the Cold War context, including the boycotts in 1980 Moscow Games and 1984 Los Angeles Games are clear examples of the exacerbation of this national dimension (Horne and Whannel, 2011).
2.3.4.3. Respect for the religious beliefs

One final point in the social responsibility principle should be made about the respect for the religious beliefs. It cannot be avoided that “news coverage of religions is one of those sensitive issues which require extreme care according to the ethical principles of responsibility” (Alsius *et al.*, 2010: 191). The respect for the rights, the dignity and the responsible representation of the different religions is quoted in many codes such as the UNESCO’s International Professional Principles of Journalistic Ethics (Art. 9), IFJ Code of Conduct (Art. 7) or FAPE Code of Ethics for the Journalistic Profession (Art. 7). Above all, quality media should be very respectful with all the religious beliefs and should not incur on stereotyping and on the statement of negative assertions about this issue. In this investigation, the researcher will register if in the coverage of the 2012 Olympic Games the print media explicitly state certain information about the religious beliefs of the athletes or the teams or they make use of any stereotyped expression to approach these issues.

2.4. The media coverage of the Olympics. An overview of the existing literature and identification of the current research needs

As can be perceived from the theoretical framework of sports journalism, ethics and Olympic Games that has been presented, the three broad themes that have been more empirically explored by researchers have been the media representation of identities in the Olympic Games coverage, involving gender, race/ethnicity and nationality, which in the journalism ethics thesaurus would fall under the principle of justice (Angelini and Billings, 2010a; Angelini and Billings, 2010b; Billings, 2007; Billings, 2008; Billings and Angelini, 2007; Billings and Eastman, 2002; Billings and Eastman, 2003; Billings *et al.*, 2008; Billings *et al.*, 2010; Capranica and Aversa, 2002; Capranica *et al.*, 2005; Capranica *et al.*, 2008; Cho, 2009; Crolley and Teso, 2007; Daddario, 1994; Daddario, 1997; Davis and Tuggle, 2012; Eastman and Billings, 1999; Galily *et al.*, 2011; Higgs and Weiler, 1994; Higgs *et al.*, 2003; King, 2007; Larson and Rivenburgh, 1991; Lee, 1992; Pfister, 1987; Tuggle and Owen, 1999; Urquhart and Crossmann, 1999; Vincent *et al.*, 2002; Yu, 2009). The prominence of these themes is not strange, 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).
Leaving aside the exploration of gender, race/ethnicity and nationality issues, there have been other recent studies related to the media coverage of the Olympics. First of all, some scholars have tried to provide a **global perspective of the coverage** of an edition of the event, such as in Beijing 2008. Fernández Peña *et al* (2010), carried out an study of the Spanish coverage of the opening and closing ceremonies and of a series of key events and competition days in Televisión Española (TVE), Telecinco, *El País* and *La Vanguardia*. In addition, the authors studied the quantitative presence of the Olympics in the news bulletins aired at prime-time in the Spanish television. Also, it is remarkable the investigation conducted by Min and Zhen (2010), who studied the coverage of Beijing 2008 in the North-American quality press.

Secondly, other researches have focused on the **quantitative and qualitative analysis of Olympics ceremonies**. Illustrative cases have been the analysis of the opening ceremony at Beijing 2008 in the international television broadcasts (NBC, Globo and Bandeirantes, BBC and CCTV) (Qing *et al*, 2010) and in the news programmes of the Japanese television networks (Naka and Kobayashi, 2010). In third place, previous to the celebration of 2008 Olympics, some academics focused their activity on explaining the television and the print media **coverage of the torch lightning ceremony** (Fernández Peña and Moragas, 2010) and the significance and the criticism involved in the **Olympic torch relay** (Horne and Whannel, 2010; Rowe *et al*, 2010; Rui, 2010). On top of that, other projects have analysed the media representation of volunteers at the Beijing Olympic Games (Bladen, 2010), which positively portrayed them as valuable and beneficial to the organization of the event.

Apart from the aforementioned studies and the three main areas related to the principle of justice that have an established tradition of study – which need to continue to be monitored, as signalled by Gantz (2011) among its research suggestions – it is a clear fact that **other specific issues related to journalism ethics have received little attention from Olympic media scholars**. Under-investigated issues included in the journalism ethics thesaurus, such as the analysis of the conjectures and rumours, the informative sources, the completeness of the sports information and non-competition issues, the differentiation between information and opinion or the sensationalism (principle of truth), the representation of disability in the Olympics (principle of justice), the commercial servitudes (principle of freedom) or the invasion of privacy and the incitation to violence through language (principle of social responsibility) also need to be empirically explored in the media coverage of the Olympics. The celebration of
2012 Olympics opens a crucial opportunity to fill the current gaps in the sports and media scholarship and to continue exploring key themes as the media representation of nationality, race and ethnicity and gender identities.

2.5. Key theoretical perspectives of analysis: agenda-setting and framing

As can be perfectly understood from the two previous sections, journalism ethics will be the main interpretative framework for studying the coverage of the 2012 London Olympics in the British, North-American and Spanish quality press. Also, two key theories such as the agenda-setting (McCombs and Shaw, 1972) and framing (Goffmann, 1974) will converge in this investigation. They have already proved very useful to explain issues such as the analysis of gender, race/ethnicity and nationality and now they could be applied to these and the other ethical issues which will be analysed.

First of all, McCombs and Shaw (1972), theorists of the agenda-setting, 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: 33-34). In our case, media and journalists decide which salient information, content, stories and aspects will be transmitted to the readers and which aspects of the London Olympics will be emphasized, minimized or excluded (Billings, 2010a; Digel, 2010), also taking into consideration media’s own “particular values and organisational needs” (Kennedy and Hills, 2009: 74) and “their specific conventions” (Priest, 2010: 40). Thus, media organises the public’s agenda and the discussion of the Olympics events (McCombs, 2004).

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

50 Although it is true that journalists and media decisively help to configure the stories regarding the Olympic Games (Billings, 2010a), it has to be recognized that “in the end, agenda-setting and/or agenda-building in the Olympics succumbs to the ultimate agenda-sets: the participating athletes” (Billings, 2008: 37). Also, it has to be taken into account that plans can change, “depending on the athletic performances and overarching storylines that develop within any Olympic Games” (Billings, 2008: 43).
The understanding of the agenda-setting theory can be very helpful, for instance, to comprehend the results of the salient topics featured in the subcategory “Inclusion of all the necessary elements to understand the Olympic Games” (already seen in section 2.3.1.3.) and also to interpret them using the complementary information obtained from the qualitative in-depth interviews.

Closely linked to the agenda-setting theory, framing theoretical concept is “an approach to media studies that examines how print and broadcast journalists tell stories so that particular themes or values are featured over others” (Billings et al., 2012: 136). In contrast to agenda-setting, which basically focuses on which issues are covered (Tankard, 2003), framing (Goffman, 1974) takes a further step, “explaining how human minds build frames that define perceptions and definitions of reality” (Billings and Angelini, 2007: 97). It consists in 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).

In this research, framing can be a very helpful theory to comprehend and evaluate how media select and emphasise certain frames of gender, race, nationality and disability (principle of justice), frame the news pieces from a sensationalistic perspective (principle of truth) or focus their attention on privacy aspects or incite to violence through the language (principle of social responsibility). The conduction of in-depth interviews with media representatives and journalists will also help to understand these frames and strategies involved in the production process of the media messages and how they are 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 media’s selection of aspects and values “can have subtle but powerful effects on the audience” (Tankard, 2003: 97), framing is a crucial theoretical concept to take into consideration in this research project and all the projects devoted to study media coverage from the perspective of ethics and quality of information.

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

52 Frames can be defined as “one means through which a particular meaning is given to an issue” (Dearing and Rogers, 1996: 64).
3. Methodology. Construction of the analysis model and the design of the observation

3.1. Concepts

The methodological design of the research begins with the delimitation of the relevant concepts for the investigative purposes. They will guide the investigation as they will be the main categories and the sub-categories involved in the research. By concept, we understand “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 in charge of the moral principles and values, studying what is right and what is wrong (Franklin et al, 2008; Sanders, 2003; Scott and Marshall, 2009). Journalists need from a professional ethics to work for the public interest and to provide information in a truthful, precise and honest way (Alsius, 1998; Frost, 2011; Keeble, 2009). The four main deontological principles limit the areas to cover during the investigation: truth, justice, freedom and social responsibility. These concepts have been extracted from the thesaurus developed by Alsius (1996) and have been reinforced with the ideas provided by Christians et al (1991), Christians and Traber (1997), Cooper (1989), Deuze (2005), Frost (2011), Keeble (2009), Knowlton and Reader (2009), Kovach and Rosenstiel (2001), Lambeth (1992) and Sanders (2003).

First of all, we understand truth as the respect for the objectivity and informative rigour (the avoidance of rumours and speculations; the inclusion of all the needed elements to comprehend all the events; to use a sufficient and equilibrated number of identifiable, trustworthy and relevant sources) and the carefulness for neutrality (looking after the correct separation between journalistic genres and to avoid sensationalism or the overuse of spectacle in the texts and images). Secondly, justice makes reference to the respect and equity in the representation of nationalities, genders, races and certain collectives such as the disabled, including the avoidance of stereotyped and discriminatory constructions. Thirdly, the concept of freedom refers to the fact that journalists do not incur in a commercial servitude in the selection of the informative affairs. Finally, social responsibility tells journalists to avoid contents that violate people’s privacy rights. At the same time, it pursues to steer clear of expressions that encourage violence or that could harm certain sensibilities, due to reasons such as religious beliefs.
3.2. Research questions

The research questions, closely linked to the research objectives and concepts, are crucial because they guide all the process, from the literature review and the methodological design to the presentation of the results (Bryman, 2012). This investigation is constructed around a main research question and five associated sub-questions, following the indications of Creswell (2003), which will need to be answered through the empirical fieldwork:

• **Main research question**: In which measure will the British, North-American and Spanish press comply in their coverage of the 2012 London Olympic Games with the fundamental aspects of the four main deontological principles?

• **Research Question 1.** Will the media comply with the essential considerations included in the principle of truth, such as the objectivity and the informative rigour, the neutrality and the carefulness to avoid sensationalism?

• **Research Question 2.** As a basic aspect within the principle of truth, will the media cover all the needed aspects to comprehend the Olympics from a broad framework, including not only its sporting information but also its cultural programme, its impact and its social, urban and economic legacies and other questions such as the infrastructures, the transport system, the security or the environmental issues?

• **Research Question 3.** In reference to justice, how will media treat the different nationalities, races/ethnicities or the traditionally disfavoured social groups such as the sportswomen, non-white or disabled athletes? Will there be a persistence of the asymmetric representations observed in precedent investigations?

• **Research Question 4.** In reference to freedom, and bearing in mind the difficulty to analyse if a commercial servitude exists in the selection of news, the researcher will have to answer this question: will there be more informative space dedicated to the athletes that are also featured in advertisements included in the same newspapers?

• **Research Question 5.** Concerning social responsibility, will the media incur on errors referring to the privacy of the athletes and the utilisation of expressions that encourage violence and confrontation? Will there be any expression that delves into religious beliefs or that approaches them in a harmful manner?
3.3. Method and techniques of analysis

In this section, a closer look will be given to the qualitative method and the two main techniques that will be used in the investigation, the qualitative content analysis and the qualitative in-depth interviews.

3.3.1. Presentation of the qualitative method

The **qualitative method** has been chosen to conduct this research, because the present study pursues a “**richer, more complex and polymorphic comprehension** of the phenomena that wants to be studied” (Busquet *et al*, 2006: 150). Inserted in the logic of comprehension (García Galera and Berganza, 2005), this inductive and interpretative methodological perspective provides cornerstone advantages: it enables the description and in-depth understanding and interpretation of the reality taking into consideration the **social contexts** (Marshall and Rossmann, 2011; Ruiz Olabuénaga *et al*, 1998; Silverman, 2000) and provides a great flexibility in the research design, the collection and the analysis of data. Last but not least, it allows the **emergence of new theory and concepts** from the obtained results (Creswell, 2003; Yin, 2011).

As central features of this method, firstly it has to be acknowledged that **qualitative research emphasises words**, in contrast to the positivist strategy, fundamentally based on characteristics such as “the gathering, analysis, interpretation, and presentation of numerical information” (Tashakkori and Tedlie, 2009: 5). This fact does not exclude that basic percentages and numerical data will be quantified and analysed during this research. As Priest (2010: 40) acknowledges, “sometimes researchers use qualitative

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53 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).

54 While positivism is based on the “practises and norms of the natural scientific model” (Bryman, 2012: 36), interpretivism recognises 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) recognises.

55 It has to be acknowledged that qualitative researchers “typically emphasize the importance of the contextual understanding of social behaviour” (Bryman, 2012: 401). 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).
content analysis to identify content themes but also use numbers to count and communicate how often particular themes have been found”. In this research, numerical expressions will be used, for instance, to see the space devoted to the Olympic Games in the selected media or the percentages devoted to each of the genders, nationalities or races (issues included in the principle of justice). Secondly, 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).

In this **multimethod** investigation, two qualitative techniques will be complementarily used: **qualitative content analysis** and **in-depth interviews** with experts, scholars, professionals and media representatives. **Triangulation** will allow the researcher to obtain a more complete, fortified and rich vision of the studied social reality (Busquet *et al.*, 2006; De Miguel, 2005; Hesse-Biber, 2010; Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2009). Moreover, triangulation will be one of the **mechanisms used in order to control and evaluate the investigation**. The standard criteria described by Ruiz Olabuenaga *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 that they can be scrutinized) credibility (systematic observation and triangulation of techniques), transferability (the qualitative researchers do not seek to

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56 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).

57 Other qualitative methods such as ethnographic non-participant observation have been discarded, taking into consideration fundamental drawbacks. First of all, a key aspect to take into consideration is the difficulty of access, observation and the acquisition of relevant material by the researchers inside the media premises (Puijk, 2008). Secondly, the scientific researchers are not given access as academic observers to see the Olympics and enter the facilities where media and journalists operate (Moragas, 2006), which are “closed” or “private” research settings (Silverman, 2000: 198). Last, but not least, we cannot forget that “the presence of the observer may actually lead to the alteration of behaviour among research subjects” (Malcolm, 2008: 184).

58 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).
generalize the results to all the universe but the purposive sample allows to apply the results into other relevant contexts and other time periods), the consistency and coherence of data (avoiding inconsistencies and contradictions in the analysis and the presentation of the results), getting effective feedback, and, as explained, triangulation.

3.3.2. Qualitative content analysis

Content analysis is a research method “aimed at recording the salient features of texts using a uniform system of categories” (Franklin et al, 2008: 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 will make use of the qualitative content analysis technique, which will allow 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 sampled newspapers, with the objective of contrasting the research questions with the characteristics of messages (Berger, 1998; Bryman, 2012; Busquet et al, 2006; Krippendorff, 2004; Ruiz Olabuenaga et al, 1998; Schutt, 2011; Wimmer and Dominick, 1996). The content analysis in its qualitative version will enable the researcher to overcome the rigidness 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) will guide the investigation (Silverman, 2000), but the research is adaptable and open to the refinement, revision and incorporation of new relevant analysis categories that emerge from data (Altheide, 1996; Bardin, 1986). This flexibility implies that “the researcher is constantly revisiting the themes or categories that are distilled from the examination of documents” (Bryman, 2012: 559). It is also recognised that the values, perspective, orientation,

59 As Rubin and Rubin explain, “qualitative research is not looking for principles that are true all the time and in all condition, 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).
60 In his key book Qualitative Media Analysis (1996), Altheide also uses the term “ethnographic content analysis” as a synonym of qualitative content analysis.
The investigation will describe, interpret, comprehend and explain the political, economical, cultural, social and sports contexts as well as the journalistic tradition and the types of models of media systems (Hallin and Mancini, 2004) that have an incidence 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”, it “provides a great deal of descriptive detail” and it 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: 233-236), such as the legal, economic, political, social, religious, cultural/ethnic, psychological, anthropological, archetypal, linguistic, environmental, national, emotional/personal, global/transcendent, will be taken into consideration.

To conduct the content analysis, three methodological tools will be elaborated: a codebook, a database and a coding schedule. First of all, the codebook will specify with detail the instructions and the criteria used to identify and evaluate each category of the study, so that the researcher can register the information following a uniform approach. This guide will enable the comparisons between the obtained data for the different newspapers of the sample. The design of the coding manual will pivot on the thesaurus of journalism ethics developed by Alsius, based on the already explained essential deontological principles (truth, justice, freedom and responsibility), which has been taken into consideration and adapted for the purposes of this investigation.

Secondly, the database, created with specialized software such as FileMaker, will allow the researcher to register and manage the content of each unit of analysis, enabling the collection of results. Thirdly, the coding schedule or coding form will enable the
registration of all the relevant data related to a unit of analysis, taking into account a series of register units (words, sentences and themes). The proposed coding schedule for this investigation can be found attached in the appendix n°6.1 of this master’s thesis.

The procedure to carry out the qualitative content analysis will be very transparent (Bryman, 2012) and its key stages (Busquet et al, 2006; Wimmer and Dominick, 1996) will be followed during the research: (1) rigorous and narrowed formulation of the research questions; (2) delimitation of the analysis universe; (3) the selection of an appropriate sample to 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 the results.

3.3.3. Qualitative in-depth interviews

The investigation will also make use of qualitative in-depth interviews with experts, scholars, professionals and representatives from the selected media. Interviews, one of the most used techniques in social qualitative research (Bryman, 2012), including sports studies (Malcolm, 2008), are a valuable empiric procedure in order to obtain information that enables researchers to investigate the social phenomena (Busquet et al, 2006; De Miguel, 2005; Marshall and Rossman, 2011; Ortí, 2000; Rubin and Rubin, 1995). This research technique presents fundamental advantages, such as the richness of nuances and details provided by descriptions and the possibility to get closer to a part of the object of study that cannot be approached through the content analysis (Wimmer and Dominick, 1996).

Taking into consideration the purposes of the research, a number of 15-20 one-to-one interviews62 will be carried out, including the conduction of more than one interview with each interviewee. They will be preferably conducted face to face or telephonically if it is not possible by any other means. The provided information will be confronted to data gathered from further sources and the results from the qualitative content analysis.

62 As Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) acknowledge, “in common interview studies, the number of interviews tends to be around 15+/−10”. As the authors explain (2009: 113), apart from the economic and human resources needed in the research, the “law of diminishing returns (beyond a certain point, adding more respondents will yield less and less new knowledge)” has to be considered.
The interviews will be **highly focused on specific themes** (Berger, 1998; Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009) and the questions will significantly vary depending on the typology of interviewee. First of all, the **professional journalists** that will cover the 2012 Olympics will be asked about the newsgathering process, the previous time dedicated to the preparation of the Olympics, the techniques they use, their attitudes towards work, their accessibility to sources and their relationship with them or the constraints they have for selecting and elaborating news, such as the threshold criteria described by Frost: space, logistics and time\(^6\) (Frost, 2011: 24-25). Apart from that, they will be asked about their ethical values, their perceptions about the relationship between sports journalism and ethics, their knowledge and awareness about the deontological codes and the normative aspects of the media and, finally, to which extent do they comply with their fundamental principles.

Secondly, the interviews with **representatives from the selected quality media** will need to provide crucial information about the institutional framework and the structure of newspapers, the working environment, the resources, values and editorial line of the media, the role of advertising as well as their selection guidelines and the agenda-setting criteria they follow to cover the Olympic events. One cannot get away from the fact that knowing the media where the journalists’ work is essential to understand the information they provide to their readers. As Bernstein explains, “it is important for academics interested in media and sport to interact with the people who, in many respects, shape the reality we analyse, in order to gain a better understanding of the professional motivations behind mediated sport” (Bernstein, 2003: 115).

Thirdly, **interviews with academics** will seek to gain additional knowledge about the relationship between sports communication, journalism ethics and the Olympics. It will also be worth asking them about the contextual factors and the journalistic culture of the different countries, issues that can certainly have incidence in the results of the research.

All the **seven stages** described by Kvale and Brinkmann will be followed: “thematizing, designing, interviewing, transcribing, analysing, verifying, and reporting” (Kvale and

\(^6\) We cannot forget that “in sports news, the task of checking, filtering and making sense of stories for readers, listeners and viewers becomes more difficult as a lack of time becomes an increasing constraint for journalists” (Boyle and Haynes, 2009: 176). What is more, in media intensive events such as the Olympics, the “notions of speed, fast decision-making, hastiness and working in accelerated real-time” (Deuze, 2005: 449) involved in the journalists’ task are substantially incremented.
Previously to the conduction of interviews, the questions will be prepared, structured and ordered through interview guides that will include the relevant topics of the investigation and the contextual information needed about each interviewee. However, the design of the interviews will not be entirely 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). During the interviewing process, all the predetermined areas will be covered but it will be taken into account that the schedule may vary and that unexpected themes may arise from each conversation (Berger, 1998; Bryman, 2012). We cannot forget that the interview is an active process in which the knowledge is constructed between the interviewer and the interviewee (Silverman, 2004).

During the conduction of interviews, the wide range of interview questions described by Kvale and Brinkmann (2009: 135-136), such as introductory questions, follow-up questions, specifying questions, structuring questions and so on, will be taken into consideration. In each case, all the interviews will be audio digitally-recorded and also essential fieldnotes will be taken during the realisation of the interviews, although the recordings will be transcribed to get the complete picture of what the interviewees said, in order to accurately examine and interpret the meaning of the obtained content.

Relevant examples of interviews conducted by sport communication scholars include Bernstein’s interview with the former NBC television executive Alex Gilady (Bernstein, 2003) or the work carried out by Billings (2008), who conducted several interviews with NBC Olympic key producers, such as Dick Ebersol (the former chairman of NBC Universal Sport and Olympics), David Neal, Molly Solomon and Joe Gesue, about crucial themes such as the preparation of professionals, the coordination of resources, the storytelling and the media representation of identities, among other issues. Leaving aside sports issues, the in-depth interviews carried out by Singer et al (2011) in their investigation Participatory Journalism. Guarding Open Gates at Online Newspapers, (67 editors and journalists from 24 national newspapers in 10 western countries, including members of digital media that relate to the print newspapers of this study – Guardian.co.uk, Telegraph.co.uk, USAToday.com, WashingtonPost.com and ElPaís.com) are also excellent cases in point to prepare the required interviews for the present research project.
3.4. Sample and analysis units. Presentation and criteria

After having outlined the methods and techniques that will be used during the research, this section will present the sample that will be used in the qualitative content analysis and in the in-depth qualitative interviews, providing the rationale for their selection.

3.4.1. Qualitative content analysis sampling

Taking into account the unattainable extension of the universe and with the objective to achieve results with a greater depth, the selected sample complies with the three basic conditions (representativeness, trust and size). In this qualitative research, the sample has been chosen in a non-probabilistic way (Ruiz Olabuénaga et al, 1998) by the researcher, who has purposively selected the media taking into account certain strategic criteria such as their quality, prestige, national circulation and relevance in their communicative systems. They are the most adequate and relevant to the purposes of the investigation and the established research questions (Bardin, 1986; Silverman, 2000).

The research will carry out a systematic study of the content of 12 quality newspapers of general information, published in three countries. More precisely, the analysed media will be The Guardian/ The Observer, The Times/ The Sunday Times, The Daily Telegraph/ The Sunday Telegraph, The Independent/ The Independent on Sunday (United Kingdom); The New York Times, Los Angeles Times, The Washington Post and USA Today (United States of America) and El País, El Mundo, ABC and La Vanguardia (Spain). It will be crucial to distinguish between the three Spanish media, which are circumscribed within the Polarized Pluralist model and the British and North-American newspapers, which are included in the Liberal model described by Hallin and Mancini (2004). In relation to this sample, four crucial questions (A-D) will be answered.

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

As Hallin and Mancini explain, “comparative analysis is valuable in social investigation, in the first place, because it sensitizes us to variation and to similarity, and

64 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).
this can contribute powerfully to concept formation and to the refinement of our conceptual apparatus” (Hallin and Mancini, 2004: 2). Without any doubt, the Olympics are a sporting event followed worldwide and thus, they deserve a transnational approach that takes into consideration the quality press of three countries: UK (as the host country of the Olympics), USA (given its key role in worldwide communication and the repercussion that the Olympics have in their media) and Spain (it is also crucial for the comparison to feature a country of the Polarized Pluralist model). The comparison between the results obtained in each of the 12 newspapers included in the sample will lead to worthy conclusions about the Olympics coverage in the quality press and the media compliance with the principles established in the codes and ethical documents.

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

The rationale for choosing newspapers in their print editions is clear. First of all, it is undoubtedly true that newspapers have the chance to work more in-depth and have more possibilities to carry out a “pre-and post-event analysis” (Boyle, 2006: 54) than television, a medium determined by the superficiality, immediacy and the live reality of on-air broadcasts. As Miah and García 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” (Miah and García, 2012: 123-124). 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).

Secondly, 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 been regarded as the “home of sports journalism” (Boyle, 2006: 56) but they also are “still important vehicles for news gathering and for producing and disseminating information to a broad public” (Darnell and Sparks, 2005: 360). We cannot avoid 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). Twenty years later, quality press still performs a key role in the construction of mega-events such as the Olympics.

Despite this, it cannot be avoided that the in-depth coverage of the Olympic Games nowadays is assumed too by the digital press, “accessible through numerous devices (computers, mobile phones, games consoles etc.)” (Fernández Peña et al, 2010: 1672) as well as by citizen journalists. However, the project has chosen to focus on print edition newspapers because online newspapers provide the text, images and multimedia material from the news, “but they are removed from their original context and fonts, and formatting and placement are altered” (Kennedy and Hills, 2009: 87). These authors (2009: 87) acknowledged in their analysis about the newspaper coverage of the British athlete Kelly Holmes at Athens’2004 Games that it was “important to use the paper edition of the newspaper to be able to analyse the placing of the story on the page and the way the event was accompanied by photographs and other reports”. Despite this selection criteria, the researcher should not underestimate the role of the digital press in the media construction of the Olympics. Specially, taking into consideration that some newspapers, such as The Guardian, have a web-first strategy.

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

To all the big general information newspapers, “sports journalism remains a key component in the range of content” they offer (Boyle, 2006: 54). In some countries such as the UK, the sports sections in the national broadsheet market increased in a very significant way during the nineties, due to reasons such as technological advances, the competition in the marketplace and the rise in interest from readers (Boyle, 2006). In these quality newspapers, it is supposed that sports journalists feature “a strong journalistic background as opposed to simply a passion for sport” (Boyle, 2006: 167).

Sports dailies have not been considered in the sample for coherent and comparative reasons. The United Kingdom\textsuperscript{65} and the United States markets do not have daily

\textsuperscript{65} 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 exposes, they were a clear example of the spread of “junk journalism” (Keeble, 2009: 57-58). Rojas Torrijos adds that these newspapers were “nothing but low quality tabloids where information was completely absent” (Rojas Torrijos, 2011: 24).
newspapers specifically devoted to sports, in contrast with Spain (*Mundo Deportivo*, *Sport*, *As*, *Marca*) and other European countries such as Italy (*Gazzetta dello Sport*, *Corriere dello Sport*, *Tuttosport*), France (*L’Equipe*) and Portugal (*A Bola*, *O Record*, *O Jogo*), which have had the ability “to support long-term sports journalism publications” (Boyle, 2006: 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 does the sample not include the tabloid press?

The **tabloids or sensationalist press has not been included in the research** for two key reasons. First of all, tabloids will not be analysed for **conceptual reasons**. As Boyle points out, “the tabloids remain committed to sensationalist stories and the building of stories from often the most meagre of scraps” (Boyle, 2006: 100). Also, as signalled by Hallin and Mancini (2004: 224), “the British tabloids, especially, have a heavy emphasis on sex scandals, about both public and private figures”. Specifically about 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 contrast, quality media66 “aim at in-depth and comprehensive coverage and are written using moderate and emotionally controlled language” and “are less inclined to use more ethically dubious reporting practices” (Franklin *et al*, 2008: 29). As Franklin *et al* 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” (Franklin *et al*, 2008: 30). Nowadays, as pointed out by experts, at least in the United Kingdom, it is an interesting moment, because in the quality press not only “there have been huge increases in the number of pages and proportion of editorial space devoted to sports coverage” (Farrington *et al*, 2012: 1) but also because “the expanded range and coverage in the broadsheet/compact market means there has never been more systematic, insightful and rigorous sports journalism” (Boyle, 2006: 10).

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66 We will refer to quality newspapers, avoiding to use the term “broadsheet.” As Boyle (2006: 28-29) points out, “by late 2005, a number of newspapers that had previously been 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”.

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

Secondly, tabloids have not been chosen for coherent comparative reasons. 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 tabloid newspapers in the market, 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), Daily Mail/ Mail on Sunday (Daily Mail and General Trust), Daily Express/ Sunday Express (Northern & Shell) or The People (Trinity Mirror). Although the “British is the strongest example” of the polarisation between the broadsheet(compact and the tabloid/popular newspapers (Hallin and Mancini, 2004: 25; 198), in the United States some of the most significant tabloid newspapers include 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.) or Philadelphia Daily News (Philadelphia Media Network) as well as other titles published by American Media, Inc., such as Star, OK!, National Enquirer or 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 among 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”.

3.4.1.1. Presentation of the British selected media

The UK, a developed country with a capitalist economy and democratic political structures (Hardy, 2008) is circumscribed within the North Atlantic or Liberal model
described by Hallin and Mancini at *Comparing Media Systems* (2004) as well as other countries such as the USA, Canada or Ireland. These countries are characterized by liberalism, a strong role of the market, the private sector and the commercial media, to the detriment of the state intervention\(^{67}\) (Hallin and Mancini, 2004). The characteristics of these 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-regulation\(^{68}\)” and “market dominated” (Hallin and Mancini, 2004: 67).

The UK national press market includes “nine daily UK publications (plus the *Financial Times*\(^{69}\), which targets the international business community) and eleven Sunday titles serving three distinct audiences – tabloid/popular, midmarket and broadsheet” (Steen, 2012: 214). The four quality newspapers that have been chosen for this research are *The Guardian/The Observer; The Daily Telegraph/The Sunday Telegraph; The Times/The Sunday Times and The Independent/The Independent on Sunday*. Some authors such as Andrews (2005) have already identified them as representative of the print media at the top end of the British market. As can be understood, the Sunday editions of these newspapers are also considered for the analysis.

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\(^{67}\) In the UK, the way to look after the quality of content has been materialized in significantly different ways, in coherence with the different traditions that have characterized the regulation of audiovisual and print media. The print media has been subject to self-regulation and voluntarism (Hardy, 2008). Nevertheless, it also has to be known that the British press is also subject to the 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 remediing other circumstances marked by an abuse of dominant position or where it is necessary to stimulate the competence (Sánchez-Tabernero, 2006). Furthermore, it has to be added that in the United Kingdom there are some general requirements in terms of civil and penal rights which limit media freedom of expression, regarding issues such as the presumption of innocence, defamation, the protection of personal honour, the treatment of underage, discrimination or the official secrets in safety and defense (Frost, 2011; Hardy, 2008; Sanders, 2003).

\(^{68}\) Although the “journalistic self-regulation in Liberal countries is organized primarily in an informal way, within individual news organizations” (Hallin and Mancini, 2004: 224), specially in contrast with the countries of the Democratic Corporatist model, in the UK they exist different self-regulation organisations that look after the press: the Press Complaints Commission (PCC), the National Union of Journalists (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 must act.

\(^{69}\) Although it is the third UK national newspaper in circulation (averaging 319,381 copies) *The Financial Times* has been excluded from the sample of British press because it does not feature a sports section.
First of all, *The Guardian* is a newspaper established in 1821, originating 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 UK. At the end of the 19th century, when bought by Lord Northcliffe, it was converted into a quality newspaper (Guillamet, 2003). These two media outlets, property of the Scott Trust, are two of the most respected newspapers in the country and abroad for their quality, excellence in journalism, trustworthiness and plurality of expression (Singer *et al.*, 2011). They feature an average circulation of 217.19070 *The Guardian* and 251.074 copies *The Observer*, respectively. It is significant to add that *The Observer* has a monthly magazine entitled *The Observer Sport Monthly*.

Secondly, *The Daily Telegraph* is a publication created in 1855 that is currently consolidated as the best sold quality newspaper in the country. In 2010, it was awarded the distinction of “National Newspaper of the Year”. Its Sunday edition, founded in 1961, is entitled *The Sunday Telegraph*. Both media outlets, property of Telegraph Media Group, feature an average circulation of 576.378 copies *The Daily Telegraph* and 451.731 copies *The Sunday Telegraph*, respectively.

In third place, *The Times* is a newspaper that was started to publish in London in 1788, as a transformation by John Walter of *The Daily Universal Register*. As Guillamet (2003: 70) points out, “*The Times* is the name with the longest life and celebrity of the history of journalism”. *The Times* and its Sunday edition, *The Sunday Times*, are both owned by News Corporation. They feature an average circulation of 394.192 copies *The Times*) and 928.260 copies *The Sunday Times*).

Finally, *The Independent* appeared in 1986 and is currently owned by Alexander Lebedev and Evgeny Lebedev. Its average circulation is of 100.672 daily copies, while its Sunday edition, *The Independent on Sunday* (established in 1990) accounts for an average circulation of 124.921 copies. *The Independent* was awarded with the “National Newspaper of the Year” distinction in 2004.

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70 The circulation from British Newspapers (updated to March 2012) has been found in the following resources published by Guardian.co.uk, which used as source ABC (Audit Bureau of Circulations):


3.4.1.2. Presentation of the North-American selected media

The USA is the most paradigmatic case of the Atlantic Model of media and politics and the “purer example of a liberal system” (Hallin and Mancini, 2004: 198), marked among other features by the press freedom and some of the characteristics already mentioned in the British case. In the USA, some of the newspapers considered, such as The Washington Post, The New York Times or Los Angeles Times are city-based (Andrews, 2005), given the domination of local press in the market. As Hallin and Mancini (2004: 206) acknowledge, The United States are “so large that national daily newspapers were not technologically feasible until advances in telecommunication 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 four newspapers that have been chosen for this research because of their quality, repercussion, national circulation, communicative impact and as key sources of sports news dissemination have been The New York Times, The Washington Post, Los Angeles Times and USA Today71. It has to be noted that relevant experts in the field have already chosen these newspapers for their analysis, such as Eastman and Billings (2000) study of the USA Today and The New York Times coverage of 1996 Olympics or Min and Zhen’s (2010) approach to Beijing 2008 through the lens of the coverage given by The New York Times, The Washington Post and USA Today.

First of all, The New York Times is a newspaper established in 1851 by Henry J. Raymond, which has been always characterized by the desire to carry out a well-written and accurate publication (Kovach and Rosenstiel, 2001). It is currently owned by The New York Times Company and occupies the third place in terms of daily circulation in the US (with 779,83172 copies) and it is the newspaper with most circulation on Sundays (1,265,839 copies). As experts point out, “The New York Times is generally regarded as

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71 As Guillamet (2003) points out, The Washington Post, The New York Times, Los Angeles Times and USA Today can be categorized as quality media, as well as other US titles such as The Wall Street Journal, Chicago Tribune or The Christian Science Monitor. Although The Wall Street Journal is currently the first daily newspaper in circulation (1,566,027 copies), it has not been chosen for this research as sports information is only featured in its Weekend Edition, published only on Fridays.

72 The average circulation of US newspapers has been obtained from the next resource. “The Top U.S. Newspapers for March 2012”. Published: 01-05-2012. [Last access: 27-05-2012] http://accessabc.wordpress.com/2012/05/01/the-top-u-s-newspapers-for-march-2012/ It has to be clarified that the average circulation refers only to the print editions of the studied newspapers.
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). It “represents a rather conservative but highly reliable press with a large business-oriented and politically oriented readership” (Eastman and Billings, 2000: 196).

Secondly, The Washington Post, founded in 1877, is considered to be one of the most prestigious and leading North-American newspapers. During its trajectory, it has been awarded with 47 Pulitzer Prizes and has been recognized for its excellence in journalism. Owned by The Washington Post Company, this newspaper accounts for the eight daily circulation in the United States with 467,450 daily copies, after The Wall Street Journal, USA Today, The New York Times, Los Angeles Times, The Daily News of New York, San José Mercury News and The New York Post.

Thirdly, Los Angeles Times is a major media outlet from Tribune Company, which also owns other key titles in the US market such as Chicago Tribune. It was founded in 1881 as Los Angeles Daily Times and during its trajectory it has won 39 Pulitzer Prizes. It is currently the newspaper with the fourth daily circulation (489,514 copies) and the second Sunday circulation (850,267 copies) in the United States.

Finally, USA Today73, based in McLean (Virginia) and owned by Gannet Company, Inc., was the first newspaper in the US (founded in 1982) designed with a national scope and distribution in mind. It is currently the second daily newspaper in circulation, averaging 1,701,777 copies. It has to be noticed that it is not published on Saturday and Sunday. Its weekend edition (USA Today Weekend) is published on Fridays.

3.4.1.3. Presentation of the Spanish selected media

Spain is a country inscribed in 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

73 It has to be noted that in comparison to the other US newspapers, experts point out that “USA Today epitomizes more popular reporting” (Eastman and Billings, 2000: 196). Nevertheless, the adjective “popular” does not diminish its quality and repercussion as a national newspaper and cannot be compared whatsoever with the meaning of “popular” that it is attributed, for example, to British sensationalist press.
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\footnote{For instance, as the authors point out in the case of print media, “Spain had substantial press subsidies for a while in the 1980s, but does not currently” (Hallin and Mancini, 2004: 121).} and public broadcasting” (Hallin and Mancini, 2004: 71). In this research, the empirical data will be drawn from the following newspapers: \textit{El País}, \textit{El Mundo}, \textit{ABC} and \textit{La Vanguardia}.

To begin with, \textit{El País} is a newspaper from the PRISA Group, founded in 1976. Since the Spanish democratic transition, \textit{El País} has consolidated as the leading quality newspaper in Spain, being the most prestigious, read and sold print newspaper in the country, with a current average circulation of 365,117 copies within the period comprised between January 2011 and December 2011\footnote{The average circulation of Spanish newspapers has been consulted in OJD (\textit{Oficina de la Justificación de la Difusión}). \url{http://www.ojd.es/} [Last access: 27-05-2012].}.

Secondly, \textit{El Mundo del siglo XXI} is a newspaper owned by Unidad Editorial, which was established in Madrid in 1989. Since its creation, it “was rapidly collocated in the second position among the general information newspapers, competing with \textit{ABC} on the right side of the political spectrum and \textit{El País} on the left side” (Guillamet, 2003: 199-200). It currently features an average of 252,770 copies per day. In third place, Vocento’s conservative newspaper \textit{ABC}, founded in 1905 by Torcuato Luca de Tena and “historically associated with the monarchist movement” (Hallin and Mancini, 2004: 104), features an average circulation of 221,351 daily copies.

Last but not least, \textit{La Vanguardia}, established in 1881 by Bartolomé and Carlos Godó, is a reference of the Spanish journalism and has always occupied a central position in the Catalan society. This outlet has always carried out a comprehensive coverage of the national and international current affairs. Its daily circulation is of 190,033 copies.

3.4.1.4. Object of study, units of analysis and period of the observation

In all these newspapers, the \textbf{object of study will be the information that makes reference to the 2012 London Olympic Games}. The \textbf{units of analysis} will be each one of the pieces that cover the event, including all its elements (headings, sub-
headings, photographs, etc.) as well as the presence of the Olympics in the front pages. The **units of register** will be 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 with the significant categories of the research. Other elements, such as the font size or the style, typography or the layout of the newspapers will not be analysed, as they are not part of the purposes of the research.

The **temporal period** of the observation will comprehend the 17 days of the 2012 London Olympic Games plus two weeks before and after the Games. This fact will allow a correct codification of all the information, taking into account the news, reports and opinion features prior and posterior to the event. As a consequence, the **timeframe of the observation will comprehend 45 days (from July 13 to August 26, 2012)**. All the articles that integrate the corpus of analysis from all the copies of the selected newspapers will be rigorously collected and codified (Bardin, 1986). Prior to the presentation of this master’s thesis, the researcher has formalized every newspaper subscriptions to assure the access and the collection of all the units of analysis.

### 3.4.2. Qualitative in-depth interviews sampling

In the case of interviews, the type of sample that will be used is the **snowball sampling**. The initial sample will also be purposely selected, because the academics, experts, professionals and representatives from media will be chosen bearing in mind their relevance, experience and adequacy to the research purposes. Nevertheless, this initial sample could be improved by establishing contact with other people that would become units of the sample (Malcolm, 2008). The three requirements of the interviewees signalled by Rubin and Rubin will be taken into account in order to establish the initial 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).

In terms of **scholars and experts**, some of the key actors that will need to be interviewed include names such as Dr. Miquel de Moragas i Spà (Autonomous University of Barcelona); Dr. Andrew C. Billings (Clemson University), Dr. Emilio Fernández Peña (Director of Olympic Studies Centre at Autonomous University of Barcelona), among other academics. It has to be added that the researcher will attend the conference “The Olympic Games: Meeting New Global Challenges”, which will be
held in Oxford in August 13-14, 2012. One of his key objectives is to establish contact with some of the academics and experts present at the event in order to become future interviewees of this research project.

Leaving the academia aside, in terms of the **professionals and newspapers representatives** from the selected media, contact will need to be established with each organisation in order to set interviews with the relevant people that would become part of the sample. Challenges such as “the difficulty to gain access” and the “great demands on the ability of the interviewer to establish competence and credibility by displaying knowledge of the topic” (Marshall and Rossman, 2011: 156) will need to be overcome. In order to correctly conduct this part of the investigation, research stages and visits will need to be undertaken to the relevant countries involved in the project: United Kingdom and United States of America.

### 4. Working plan and structure of the doctoral thesis

#### 4.1. Working plan

The investigation *Sports and journalism ethics: the coverage of 2012 London Olympics in the British, North-American and Spanish Press* will be presented as a doctoral thesis, which implies that it will have to be finished in a maximum period of three years, following the rules established in the Royal Decree 99/2011 that will regulate the Communication PhD at Universitat Pompeu Fabra from 2012-2013 onwards. After remarking this consideration, within this section a chronogram will be presented, including the specification of the duration of each of the research phases.

It has to be noted that the PhD candidate will pursue the consecution of the **doctoral thesis with an international mention**, under the criteria established in the Royal Decree 99/2011 (Article 15), including the realisation of **research stages in prestigious universities of the relevant countries for the investigative purposes** (*United Kingdom and United States of America*). Ideally, two research stages will be carried out in distinguished institutions in the field during the phase nº2 (one approximately by mid-2013 and the other one approximately by mid-2014). In addition, an additional research visit to the Olympic Studies Centre Library in Lausanne (Switzerland) will be undertaken at least once during the project lifetime.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tasks</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Design of the research</strong></td>
<td>October 2011 – July 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Theoretical framework and review of the literature(^76)</td>
<td>October 2011 – April 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Definition of the objectives and research questions</td>
<td>May – July 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Definition of the methodology and sampling</td>
<td>June 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Drafting of the Master’s Final Project</td>
<td>May – July 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Acceptance to the PhD programme</td>
<td>June 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2. Updating of the design and fieldwork</strong></td>
<td>July, 2012 – August 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Collection of the primary sources of data for the content analysis (newspapers included in the sample)</td>
<td>July – August, 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Master’s Final Project presentation and revision of the document, taking into account the observations provided by the thesis committee.</td>
<td>September 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Design and test of the database for the qualitative content analysis</td>
<td>September – October 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Codification of the pieces included in the newspapers into the database</td>
<td>November 2012 – April 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Control of the codification</td>
<td>May 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Research stage nº1. United Kingdom</td>
<td>May – August 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Stage at one of the following universities: Stirling Media Research Institute (University of Stirling), Loughborough University, University of Westminster or London Schol of Economics (LSE).</td>
<td>May – August 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Conduction of the in-depth interviews with British journalists, media representatives and scholars</td>
<td>May – August 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Analysis, treatment and interpretation of data</td>
<td>September 2013 – April 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Research stage nº2. United States of America</td>
<td>May – August 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Stage at one of the following universities: Northeastern University, Missouri School of Journalism, Clemson University or Indiana University.</td>
<td>May – August 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Conduction of the in-depth interviews with North-American journalists, media representatives and scholars</td>
<td>May – August 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3. Drafting and finalization of the PhD thesis</strong></td>
<td>September 2014 – 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Drafting of the PhD thesis research report</td>
<td>September 2014 – April 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Deposit and presentation of the doctoral thesis</td>
<td>May – September 2015</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^76\) It is clear that the theoretical framework and the state of the art of the research will need to be broadened with the new academic contributions that will emerge during the period 2012-2015, in order to present the most updated information available.

**Fig. 4.** Working plan of the research, with the description of phases and their duration
Transversely to the conduction of the doctoral thesis, results will be partially exploited through the presentation of articles to scientific peer-reviewed journals with a high impact and relevance in the field, such as *Journal of Mass Media Ethics* (JMME), *Journalism, Communication Quarterly, International Review for the Sociology of Sport* (IRSS), *International Journal for the History of Sport* or *Sport in Society*. Within the Spanish framework, key media and communication journals, such as *Comunicación y Sociedad, Comunicar, Revista Latina de Comunicación Social, El Profesional de la Información, Estudios sobre el mensaje periodístico* or Zer will be considered. Apart from the aforementioned, the diffusion of the results into mainstream media, both printed and online, will also be pursued. In addition, updated information about the thesis and useful resources around the topic will be distributed through the specifically created website [www.sportsmediaresearch.org](http://www.sportsmediaresearch.org) (presented in the appendix 6.3).

Furthermore, the dissemination of papers in conferences and international seminars will be crucial. The International Conference of Information Law and Ethics (*Congreso Internacional de Ética y Derecho de la Información, CIEDI*), the conference of the Spanish Association of Communication Researchers (*Asociación Española de Investigadores de la Comunicación, AE-IC*), the ECREA (European Communication Research and Education Association) and the ICA (International Communication Association) annual conferences as well as the section “Media and Sport” and the working group “Ethics of Society and Ethics of Communication” from the IAMCR (International Association for Media and Communication Research) will be key focuses for the scientific diffusion of the project.

### 4.2. Structure of the doctoral thesis report

Following the indications of authors such as Krippendorff (2004) or Ruiz Olabuenaga *et al* (1998), the structure of the doctoral thesis *Sports and journalism ethics: the coverage of 2012 London Olympics in the British, North-American and Spanish press* will be presented within the following lines.

0. Acknowledgments, summary or abstract, table of contents, table of illustrations and graphics and list of abbreviations.

1. Presentation and delimitation of the research. The topic and the investigation problem of the research will be presented and clearly justified for its academic interest, relevancy and opportunity, as well as for its adequacy to the ethics and
excellence research line at Journalism Research Group (GRP) from Universitat Pompeu Fabra. The fundamental objectives of the research will be stated.

2. **Theoretical framework.** The theoretical framework will be divided into five main parts. First of all, an exhaustive presentation of the 2012 London Olympics will be carried out. Secondly, a historical analysis of the modern Olympic Games, the Olympic movement and the role of mass media in covering the Games will be provided. Thirdly, a comprehensive explanation of journalism ethics applied to sports communication (which will have been used to prepare the analysis) will be presented. In fourth place, a complete review of the existing literature of the media coverage of the Olympics will be elaborated, including the new academic research that will be developed between 2012 and 2015. Finally, the key theoretical perspectives used in the doctoral thesis will be explained in detail.

4. **Methodology. Construction of the analysis model and the design of the observation.** The explanation of the methodology will comprise the precise definition of the concepts and the research questions that will have guided the empirical analysis. After that, this chapter will explore the qualitative method and the two techniques of analysis used (qualitative content analysis and qualitative in-depth interviews) and it will also detail the sampling criteria and delimit the characteristics of the analysis units and the period of observation.

5. **Exposition, analysis and discussion of the results.** The results from the investigation will be described and analysed, explaining both globally and partially the adequacy of the selected media to the four main principles of journalism ethics (truth, justice, freedom and social responsibility) and the compliance of media to the ethical codes and recommendations, information gathered through the application of the qualitative content analysis and the qualitative in-depth interviews.

6. **Conclusions.** This chapter will provide a systematic exposition of the conclusions that the research has reached and its contribution to the scientific knowledge. Also, the limitations of the study and future research challenges will be explained.

7. **References.** Description of all the relevant bibliography and resources used.

8. **Appendices.** The appendices will include important materials such as the codebook and the coding schedule for the qualitative content analysis, the main data obtained from the database of analysis, the transcriptions from the interviews, the specification of the relevant content from each of the ethical codes and documents that will have been used during the research and the guidelines for journalists and the set of study cases for educational purposes, proposed as further outputs of the research (see chapter 1.3).
5. References


Alsius, S.; Salgado, F. (Eds.) (2010). La ética informativa vista por los ciudadanos. Contraste de opiniones entre los periodistas y el público. Barcelona: Editorial UOC.


http://olympicstudies.uab.es/2010/docs/billings_eng.pdf [Last access: 09/05/12]


http://olympicstudies.uab.es/2010/docs/boyle_eng.pdf [Last access: 14/05/2012]


6. Appendixes

6.1. Coding schedule for the qualitative content analysis

In a computerized database, the researcher will write down a series of information from each analysis unit. This grid involves six major categories, including two contextual categories (contextual data of the object of study and global research indicators to be recorded from each piece) and the four main categories that correspond with the four main deontological principles (truth, justice, freedom and social responsibility). Each one of these categories is divided into several parameters, which will need to be observed and codified in order to capture the empirical data.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>1. Contextual data of the object of study</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1.1.</strong> Newspaper to which corresponds the news piece analysed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1.2.</strong> Country in which the newspaper is based</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1.3.</strong> Media group or company that owns the newspaper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1.4.</strong> Date of the edition of the newspaper to which corresponds the news piece</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1.5.</strong> Day of the week of the newspaper to which corresponds the news piece</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1.6.</strong> Number of pages of the overall edition of the newspaper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1.7.</strong> Number of pages dedicated to the Olympic Games coverage in the edition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1.8.</strong> Regular edition or special magazine or supplement in which the piece is located</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# 2. Global research indicators to be recorded from each piece

## 2.1. Section in which the piece appears (sports, economy, politics, society, culture, opinion and editorials, supplements, front pages, among others).

## 2.2. Does the considered piece open the section in which it is included? (This parameter will help to comprehend the importance of the analysed news piece in relation to the overall coverage of the Games included in the section).

## 2.3. Extension devoted to each piece (in square centimetres)

## 2.4. Presence of photographs in the piece

## 2.5. Number of photographs included in the piece

# 3. Indicators that refer to the adequacy of the pieces to the principle of truth

## 3.1. Does the piece include any conjectures, speculations or rumours?

## 3.2. Number of informative sources quoted in the piece

## 3.3. Statement of all the informative sources included in the piece (first-hand observation, sporting actors, institutional representatives, major national and international news agencies, national and international media, web as a source of information, social networks, books and specialized publications, experts and specialists in the field, private companies and organisations, letters, personal websites and blogs from readers and supporters; International Association for Sports Information (IASI), opinion polls and surveys, among others).

## 3.4. Explanation of the basic facts of the events (who, what, where, when, how and why)

## 3.5. Completeness of the information (results and scores, data and statistics, line-ups, information about referees, venues, number of spectators, atmosphere, climate, background and context information, to list a few).

## 3.6. Journalistic genre of the piece (Previews of upcoming events, reviews, news reports, articles, interviews, personality profiles, brief pieces, opinion columns, opinion articles, editorials, letters to the editor, comic strips, lists of results and scores, agenda of the sporting and cultural programmes of the Olympic Games, to list a few.)

## 3.7. Sport or sports of the 2012 Olympic programme to which the piece refers

## 3.8. Inclusion of relevant non-competition issues (Opening and closing ceremonies, Cultural dimension of the Games and Olympic Cultural Programme, Economical issues, Geographic and demographic information the host country and city, Geopolitical issues, Tangible and intangible impacts of hosting the Olympic Games, Safety and security, Multicultural diversity, Environmental and weather conditions, Health issues, History and relationship of the Olympic Games with other major sporting events, Identity of the Games, Negative aspects, Media and communications, among other issues).

## 3.9. Does the piece refer to a rectification of a content that was previously published?

## 3.10. Does the piece incorrectly incur in a mixture between information and opinion? (Noted by the presence of expressions that mark subjectivity, partiality, opinion and judgement, evaluative adjectives and adverbs, the inclusion of the journalist as an actor in the news pieces as well as other mechanisms described in chapter 2.3.1.5).

## 3.11. Is there any sign of sensationalism or spectacular elements in the piece?
4. Indicators that refer to the adequacy of the pieces to the principle of justice

4.1. **Country of the main protagonist** included in the piece

4.2. Does the piece feature any **stereotypes or expressions that could be used to promote or put down nationalities**?

4.3. **Gender** of the protagonists of the piece

4.4. Gender of the protagonists of the pictures included in the piece

4.5. Does the piece **reproduce any gender stereotypes**? (references to sportswomen physical attributes, emphasis on the psychology and emotionality of sportswomen, out of context reporting, infantilising, trivialization, gender marking or stereotyping in the pictures).

4.6. **Gender** of the sports journalist who has written the piece

4.7. **Race/ethnicity** of the main protagonists of the piece (Asian, Black, Hispanic, Middle Eastern, White, and other)

4.8. Does the piece **incur in any stereotypes regarding race and ethnicity**?

4.9. **Ability or disability** of the main protagonists of the piece

4.10. Does the news piece feature any **stereotyping expressions in order to approach the disabled athlete Oscar Pistorius**?

5. Indicators that refer to the adequacy to the principle of freedom

5.1. In the considered newspaper edition, is there any **advertisement** that directly refers to the main characters featured in the news pieces?

6. Indicators that refer to the adequacy of the pieces to social responsibility

6.1. Does the piece include any **phrases and expressions that unnecessarily emphasize in the non-sport-related details of sportsmen and sportswomen**?

6.2. Does the piece include any aggressive **vocabulary that incites violence or a confrontation between athletes, countries or supporters or which stereotypes or denigrates other national identities**?

6.3. Does the piece include **direct references about the religious beliefs of the sportsmen and sportswomen**? **Does it include any stereotypes or negative assertions around this issue**?

**Fig. 5.** Coding schedule for the realization of the qualitative content analysis.

### 6.2. List of the ethical codes and documents that will be used during the research

In this section, a detailed list of the specific deontological codes and national and transnational recommendations of journalism ethics that will be used during the research will be provided. These documents include single media codes (emerged from companies and communication groups), national independent codes from the United Kingdom, United States and Spain and multinational codes with an European and worldwide scope.
1. **United Kingdom**

1.1. Editors’ Code of Practice (Press Complaints Commission)

1.2. National Union of Journalists (NUJ) Code of Conduct

1.3. The Guardian’s Editorial Code (The Guardian and The Observer)

1.4. The Guardian and The Observer Style guide (The Guardian and The Observer)

1.5. The Times Style and Usage Guide (The Times)

1.6. Telegraph Style Book (The Daily Telegraph and The Sunday Telegraph)

1.7. Evening Standard Limited and Independent Print Limited - Code of Conduct and associated Policies (The Independent and The Independent on Sunday)

2. **United States of America**

2.1. Society of Professional Journalists Code of Ethics (Society of Professional Journalists, SPJ)

2.2. ASNE Statement of Principles (American Society of Newspapers Editors, ASNE)

2.3. Washington Post Standards and Ethics (The Washington Post)


2.10. Los Angeles Times Ethics Guidelines (Los Angeles Times)

2.11. Gannett Company Inc, Ethics Policy (USA Today)

2.12. APSE Ethics Guidelines (Associated Press Sports Editors)

2.13. NPPA Code of Ethics (National Press Photographers Association)

2.14. Handbook of Journalism (Reuters)

2.15. AP Stylebook (Associated Press)


3. **Spain**

3.1. Deontological Code of the Journalistic Profession (Spanish Journalists’ Associations Federation, FAPE)

3.2. Declaration of Principles of the Journalistic profession (Catalonian Association of Journalists).

3.3. Ethical Code of the Madrid Journalists Union (SPM)

3.4. El País Style Guide (El País)

3.5. El País Newsroom Statute (El País)


3.7. El Mundo Newsroom Statute (El Mundo)

3.8. ABC Style Guide (ABC)

3.9. Vocento Style Guide (Vocento – ABC)

3.10. La Vanguardia Newsroom Statute (La Vanguardia)

3.11. La Vanguardia Newsroom Book (La Vanguardia)

3.12. EFE Newsroom Statute (EFE news agency)
## 4. International codes and recommendations about journalism ethics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Code/Recommendation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>Declaration of Principles on the Conduct of Journalists (International Federation of Journalists, IFJ)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>International Principles of Professional Ethics in Journalism (UNESCO)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>Resolution 1.003 of the Council of Europe on the Ethics of Journalism (Council of Europe)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>Recommendation 1.589 of the Freedom of expression in the media in Europe (Council of Europe)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UN)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Fig. 6.** List of the ethical codes and documents that will be used during the research.
6.3. Website for the dissemination of the project

As previously explained, the process of realization of the PhD dissertation *Sports and journalism ethics: the coverage of 2012 Olympics in the British, North-American and Spanish Press* will be disseminated through the website [www.sportsmediaresearch.org](http://www.sportsmediaresearch.org). The main objective of building this website is to contribute to the scientific knowledge in the fields of sports media studies and journalism ethics/quality of information. As well as disseminating the advances of the project, the page offers useful resources to study the Olympic Games and sports mega-events from the media and communication perspective, featuring a selection of specialized bibliography and references to relevant journals and electronic resources for research purposes. The following images are illustrative of the project’s website.
Fig. 7. Images extracted from the website built for disseminating the doctoral project: www.sportsmediaresearch.org