

On Horse Guards Parade:
"Best Venue Ever!"
Canada, National Post

"In terms of humour and entertainment, the French have a lot to learn from the English. We have Johnny and Dick Rivers; they have the Beatles and the Stones". France, Le Novel Observateur

"Amazingly funny and stylish – Britain at its best." Sweden, TV4

"The Olympics is but one of a series of otherwise regular spectacles that abound in the land that gave the world cricket, Shakespeare, James Bond and the Queen" Australia, Sydney Morning Herald

Modern Olympics is not merely a sporting event. It is also a platform to showcase the destination. London has presented its great culture and heritage, splendid countryside and the inspiring sporting events in front of the world by capitalising on the opportunity." China, CCTV

Can we have London hosting all future Games? Sweden, Svenska Dagbladet

"It must be said that the British are the friendliest people on earth" Germany, Suddeutsche Zeitung

"My perception has been changed because the food was much better and British people were much more friendly and supportive to the Japan team" Japan, Nikkan Sports

Major Themes

- The pattern for nearly all markets was initial scepticism about the preparedness and security, quickly giving way to delight at the Opening Ceremony, which was universally well-received in almost every market;
- There was a warm response to the friendliness, humour and welcome of the British people, highlighted by the volunteers, soldiers and British crowds cheering athletes from all countries;
- Praise for Britain and London's diversity and vibrancy – London 2012 portrayed as a cultural melting pot;
- The inclusiveness of the Games – for everybody not just for sport fans;
- Venues with tourist attractions as backdrops helped show Britain at its best;
- Acclaim for facilities, organisation and planning of Olympic events;
- Enhanced perceptions of Britain's food, weather, culture and music;
- The Paralympic Games received less international media coverage, but focused on the engaging ceremonies, lively atmosphere and excellent organisation.

Overseas Perceptions of Britain



The above gives an indication of how Britain was perceived during the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games based on the feedback of VisitBritain's staff who were monitoring the media and national sentiment in overseas markets. Perceptions of Britain's Creativity, Heritage & Culture, Arts & Music, and Diversity seem to have been huge positives for the destination across the board. Weather, Food, and Transport & Security seemed to have remained largely neutral, whereas perceptions of Britain as a Value for Money destination seem to have suffered somewhat.

1. AUSTRIA

Perception indicator:

Creativity: ↑, Heritage & Culture: ↑, Arts & Music: ↑ Weather: ↔

Value for Money: ↔ Food: ↔, Diversity: ↑

As Austria is a nation predominantly interested in winter sports there was limited interest from the Austrian media in the Olympic Games. The media focus was more on athletes' stories, and less on destination features. Austria did not end up winning any medals during the Olympic Games, which meant that the nation was a little frustrated with the results of the Games. This was reflected in a lack of interest in the Games relative to other markets. Nevertheless the perception of the Olympic Games was overwhelmingly positive and resulted in praise for Britain.

Coverage of the Paralympic Games was extremely limited and the competition was not broadcast widely. Even in the main newspapers there was very little to read, in spite of Austria winning four gold medals.

Key themes and coverage during the Olympic Games:

- Die Presse: "London: with umbrella, charm and bowler hat"
"London was a brilliant host. The capital on the river Thames organised the Games for the third time and despite all prophecies of doom they were impressive days. Neither the Underground nor the officers at passport controls failed. Sometimes it rained, but organisation and venues impressed and the enthusiasm of the initially sceptical Britons for the five rings was unlimited at the end. Even the Royal Family followed various contests."
- Salzburger Nachrichten: "London says 'Goodbye' with a huge party"
"The Olympic Games finished with a spectacular party. The Games were very well organized, especially the volunteers got very good comments in the Austrian press for being so helpful and friendly, assisting visitors and athletes not only in the Olympic area but also in the whole town."
- Krone: "Closing Party with a spectacular concert"
"British stars like George Michael and the Spice Girls made the closing event a real party. Britain has been an excellent host and the Olympic Games have been very well organised and successful."

2. AUSTRALIA

Perception Indicator:

Creativity: ↑, Heritage & Culture: ↑, Arts & Music: ↑, Weather: ↔,

Value for Money: ↔, Food: ↔, Diversity: ↑

Transport & Security: ↑ (given Australians understanding of the complications in running a modern Games, London seemed to handle it all very well)

Welcome: ↑ (the volunteers seemed to have made a great impact)

Australians were wowed by London 2012. From the magnificent historical backdrops, flawless organisation, breath-taking ceremonies and the warmth of welcome by volunteers and public alike, the Australian media reports were positive, enthusiastic and balanced, heaping praise on British history and the nation's ability to stage the best Olympic Games ever.

Australians are naturally proud of their sportiness and believe that they can match any country in the world in their ability, dedication and passion. But despite the fact that London 2012 was not seen as a success for the Australian Olympic team with regards to medals, the media waxed lyrical about how successful the Games were for sport in general, and the reinvigation of an "old" nation.

Key themes and coverage during the Olympic Games:

- Universal praise for the manner in which the Games were opened: Sydney Sun Herald – *"Not a trace of English pomposity, no Rule Britannia imperialism, or even nouveau British triumphalism. A celebration of twee humour, homely rituals and – the best of all – a back catalogue that makes Britain the world's jukebox."*
- A reminder of that Britain is still here, still worth visiting and excelling in many ways. *"In truth, the Olympics, however grandiose and victorious for London and Britain it has been, is but one of a series of otherwise regular spectacles that abound in the land that gave the world cricket, Shakespeare, James Bond and the Queen"*, wrote the Sydney Morning Herald.
- The Royal family who not only seemed to enjoy the limelight but also the renewed love by the British public – and the Australian viewers were hooked, part in awe and reverence, part in modern celebrity fascination. *"The royal family was already well into the final stages of a major comeback before the Olympics...but the 2012 Games have delivered something quite unexpected – athletic grit accompanied with a familial warmth not usually associated with the Windsors"*, wrote The Melbourne Age.
- From a desire by the Australians before the Games really wanting to beat the British team (in the context of sporting rivalry) and to have Sydney still considered the best Games, the media actually marvelled that Britain's success was deserved. The (friendly) "hatred" of the mother country turned to respect. *"The Brits...have put on one of the greatest, perhaps the greatest, Games of the modern era"*, wrote a particularly nationalistic Peter Fitzsimmons of the Sydney Morning Herald.
- Brisbane Times: *"a hugely successful, continuously enjoyable Olympics...Put into context the tough times in which these Games were staged...the enthusiasm, good humour and even very un-British passion with which they were embraced, makes it all the more impressive. But what I will remember about these*

Olympics...is the manner in which a nation with a bit more on its plate right now than judo and badminton rose to the occasion. Well done you magnificent Pommy bastards."

- Sydney Morning Herald, *"Flawless organisation, breath-taking ceremonies, iconic backdrops. Britain, you were great"*. Of the Closing Ceremony, *"Yet again London has raised the Olympic bar. It was brilliant in an exclusively British way."*
- Channel 9, the official national broadcaster: *"a homage to what makes Britain great...awesome, magnificent, unique and sensational"*
- *"The Games organisers have somehow turned the London Olympics into a musical pageant through British history to modern British life"*, Melbourne Age.
- The Australian Financial Review said, *"But one of the great stories of these Olympics was the effect they had on England itself. The Games have hit this country like an extra-strength dose of a mood-enhancing drug."*
- *"The Games of the 30th Olympiad have been exceptional.....All against a perfect backdrop: one of the world's great cities. A brilliant, creative nation has had occasion to once again believe it hasn't lost it"*, commented The West Australian, Western Australia's broadsheet.
- The Sydney Morning Herald summed it by saying, *"How are we supposed to hate a nation that invokes the jolly old Olympic spirit of Chariots of Fire, then sends the whole thing up by superimposing Mr Bean on the famous beach scene, and has him end a performance by the London Symphony Orchestra with a fart-noise joke? [We have] a renewed affection for a nation with whom we were, at least according to those blazers, about to engage in sporting conflict."*

Coverage of the Paralympic Games:

- The extent of coverage in the mainstream broadcasting was higher than expected. Most news broadcasts on all channels included mention of the Australians who won gold. However there was almost no destination coverage. Print coverage was reasonable, the Games starting off with coverage on the front pages, but very quickly moving to the back (sports) pages. There was strong and detailed coverage on all online media.
- Very positive coverage of Brits' attitude to the Paralympics, the tickets sold, and the coverage Channel 4 was giving. Perceptions of 'Welcome' were probably the area being most positively influenced.
- In summary, the Australian media has given Britain a huge positive tick for not only hosting the Paralympic Games with the same scale, creativity, professionalism, smoothness and drive as the Olympic Games, but also for providing the platform for the Paralympic athletes to take on the world media and showcase their talent. In the eyes of the Australians the Paralympic Games seems to have come of age in London in 2012.

3. BELGIUM

Perception indicator:

Creativity: ↑, Heritage & Culture: ↑, Arts & Music: ↑ Weather: ↔

Value for Money: ↔ Food: ↔, Diversity: ↑

Belgians were impressed with the quality of organisation and the warm welcome given by British fans. As a result of the Games, Britain is seen as a happier and more open place. Once the Games started, negative stories which had been prominent virtually disappeared, replaced by an overwhelming enthusiasm for the athletes and Britain. One lead daily wrote that the pessimism which preceded the Games disappeared on the day of the opening ceremony, reporting good shopping results, well-functioning transport, and high morale of the population – the “*Feel-Good Games*”.

The Games have reinforced a reputation already secured by the Diamond Jubilee, namely that Britain is a country that can do things on a big scale and that they are comfortable with their nationhood in a way in which Belgium – riven by linguistic divisions – can only envy.

During the Paralympic Games the Belgian media were focussed on the unexpected good results of the Belgian team winning seven medals. There was also praise in the media about how accessibility-friendly London/Britain is – suggesting that Belgium could follow this example better.

Key themes and coverage during the Olympic Games:

- Het Nieuwsblad: “*Fabulous*” Closing Ceremony, with similar reports across the rest of the Belgian media.
- PagTo (travel trade magazine): reports on the good results for the UK economy from the Olympic Games (using figures from a Deloitte survey) and a tourism legacy for the coming years.

Coverage of the Paralympic Games:

- La Libre Belgique: declared the London 2012 Paralympic Games as the best ever organised until now. “*The closing ceremony has been fantastic with renowned stars as Rihanna, rapper Jay-Z and Coldplay. These Paralympic Games were the most mediatised ever (broadcast in more than 100 countries), which is contributing to modify the perception of people on disability. Londoners were very supportive and thousands people followed the marathons.*”

4. BRAZIL

Perception indicator:

Creativity: ↑, Heritage & Culture: ↑, Arts & Music: ↑, Weather: ↓

Food: ↔, Diversity: ↔, Transport & Security: ↔ Welcome: ↑

Coverage of the Olympics was largely positive. Negative perceptions of transport & security before the games and during the first days turned more positive afterwards as the “chaos and risks” did not materialise. The Opening Ceremony put forward a good image of the country and demonstrated Britain’s history, culture, art and the importance of Britain to Brazilians. Any negative issues in London were reflected back on the Brazil situation, with much expectation amongst the public that the Rio Games will not be as good as London’s. The exception was the weather - although there were many great days of sunshine, the images were often highlighted as rare by the media in a city considered famous for its rain and grey weather.

Key themes and coverage during the Olympic Games:

- The major issue in Brazil was the boycott of Olympic coverage by TV Globo, the largest and most powerful media group in the country, who referenced London 2012 very little and steered clear of showcasing the host nation. The audience of TV Record, the official rights-holder, was much less than expected. Social networks, mainly Twitter and Facebook, took over the role of informing and engaging Brazilians around the Games.
- The political relationship between Brazil and Britain was featured positively across major newspapers.
- Significant discussion regarding the legacy of the Games in the media as Rio de Janeiro is considered to be behind schedule for the 2016 Games, and London’s infrastructure is considered to be better than Rio’s.
- A revitalized image for the Royal Family with the Queen as a ‘Bond Girl’ was also very positive for the destination.
- With references to British icons and marked by the Rio de Janeiro handover, London said a stylish goodbye in the Closing Ceremony, and demonstrated the excitement of the Games.
- Overall, the Games showcased a contemporary image of Britain, with positive perceptions around sustainability, technology, welcome & fun, youth, humour, and music.

Coverage of the Paralympic Games:

- TV Globo had the broadcast rights for the Paralympic Games, and covered the Games widely, although coverage was very focused on the sport, with little exposure for the destination.
- There was some good coverage of the Royal Family attending the Opening Ceremony and some events in print and social media.
- Overall a positive image for Britain - well-organised Games, full venues, Londoners engaged in the Games, and a city prepared to host many people with special and diverse needs.

5. CANADA

Perception indicator:

Creativity: ↑, Diversity: ↑, Heritage & Culture: ↑, Arts & Music: ↑

Weather: ↔, Value for Money: ↔ Food: ↔,

Overall the Canadian media's coverage of London 2012 was positive. Initial negative coverage around security, transportation and weather was trumped by positive entertainment, the sport and hospitality. Media coverage turned briefly negative towards ticketing and 'ghost town' coverage of London, but then closed on a positive note with the Closing Ceremony.

Key themes and coverage during the Olympic Games:

- The magnificent Opening Ceremony set off a flurry of overwhelmingly positive media activity. Nearly one in two (16.6 million) Canadians tuned in for some part of the ceremony, setting a record in Canada as the most-watched Summer Olympic Games Opening Ceremony ever. This smashes the old record set in 1996 when 4.3 million Canadians tuned in for the opening ceremony from Atlanta and quadruples the viewership seen for the opening ceremonies in Beijing in 2008 (1.6 million) and Athens in 2004 (1.4 million).
- Praise for the hospitality and humour of the volunteers and the British public: Bruce Arthur from Postmedia said: *"This was a brilliant Olympics, in almost every way: wonderful crowds, marvellous volunteers, logistical coherence, a galvanizing performance by the home side."*
- Acclaim for the facilities and venues: Cam Cole of the National Post stated that the Horse Guards Parade venue (for beach volleyball) in particular was the *"best venue ever!"*
- Praise for London's vibrancy: *"London is one of the world's most vibrant cities. It is culturally and ethnically rich. It buzzes with energy and diversity and ideas. The world comes to London."*
- British cuisine and the food of the Games: The Food Network ran a story about exceptional British foods that you can eat while watching the Games, as told by British Food Network hosts and the National Post's food writer, Margaret Swain, boasted about the best places to eat in Britain's capital. She said *"the size of your stomach will be the only thing stopping you [from visiting them all]."*
- Stories about the closing ceremony and recaps of the Games were positive and plentiful in Canadian media. In the National Post *"Britain's vibrant worlds of art, music and fashion"*, *"a perfect end to a near perfect Olympics"* in London, the *"loveliest of cities."*

Coverage of the Paralympic Games:

- There was sparse coverage of the Paralympic Games in Canada, with a heavy focus on the ceremonies which was positive.
- As a result of a VisitBritain Paralympic press trip, Cathy Stapells filed for dozens of Sun Media outlets on London's accommodation for travellers with disabilities. *"In recent years, many access improvements and service enhancements have been made to make public transport networks, attractions and tours, and travelling in London and throughout Britain much easier for people with disabilities."*

6. CHINA

Perception indicator:

Creativity: ↑, Heritage & Culture: ↑, Arts & Music: ↑ Weather: ↓ (seen as a very cold summer)

Value for Money: ↔, Food: ↔, Diversity: ↑, Welcome: ↔, Transport & Security: ↔

The Chinese were impressed and enchanted by the creativity and stunning views of countryside showcased in the Opening Ceremony, which was in general applauded in the Chinese media. The hospitality of volunteers and conversion of the sporting venues from the existing historic sites were also praised highly in the Chinese media. Chinese netizens were interested in the anecdotes and trivia about British society and the Olympics.

Considering the Chinese public's huge pride and conviction in their athletes' ability to do extremely well at the Olympics there was a lot of sensitivity around decisions that seemingly went against Team China – described as “mistakes” in the media. The 2012 Games being the first ‘social media’ mega-event and given China's environment and online culture, there was a resulting backlash for Britain, including many negative and inflammatory comments on the Weibo accounts of VisitBritain and the Embassy, peaking at 36% of interactions on one day. Even though the Chinese media criticised the negligence of the organizers around the perceived mistakes, they praised the London Games as a whole, with China in the end achieving their best ever overseas Olympic medal tally.

Key themes and coverage during the Olympic Games:

- China Central TV, the Chinese media's flagship TV station and accredited Olympics broadcaster, in collaboration with VisitBritain, generated huge TV coverage across the country in the lead up to and during Games-time, projecting around 40 hours of destination programming across China, reaching up to 700 million Chinese viewers. *“The Modern Olympics is not merely a sporting event. It is also a platform to showcase the destination. London has presented its great culture and heritage, splendid countryside and the inspiring sporting events in front of the world by capitalising on this opportunity.”*
- Total tweets about the London Games on Weibo (including all the Weibo sites run by the major Chinese online players – Sina, Tencent, Sohu, Netease) reached 393 million people over the duration of the Games, comparable to more than half of the total population of Europe. The Opening Ceremony drove unprecedented traffic to Weibo sites, with the Chinese public praising the images of countryside, British history and culture, humour and respect for people, including the idea of inspiring a generation embodied in the lighting of the torch.
- Overwhelmingly positive coverage on the Opening Ceremony – commented as very British and extremely creative and dramatic. The highlights were regarded as being the images of countryside, music scenes, the Queen & Bond and Mr Bean. *“By staging the British iconic elements, London's Opening Ceremony has showcased to the world a dynamic and modern image of Britain”,* wrote China Business News.
- There was some notable positive and touching coverage achieved at an event facilitated by the FCO and VisitBritain reuniting a Chinese and a British Olympian from the 1948 London Games. About 200 pieces of coverage from national and international media resulted from this event. *“A meeting with two former Olympians left me in no doubt about sports' ability to unite people from two contrasting cultures and*

countries but who shared common Olympian ideals”, wrote the Gulf News.

- There was widespread recognition of the successful regeneration of East London among China’s media: *“The regeneration of Stratford leaves the most important Olympic legacy for London. The green effect extended the benefits to a wider range and scale - Greater London”,* wrote People’s Daily, one of the most influential government-funded daily newspapers in China.
- The volunteers’ contributions were highly praised among Chinese media. 21st Century Economics Herald (China’s Financial Times) wrote, *“the friendship represented by Britons attracted the globe’s attention, especially those volunteers who were easy to approach and very helpful.”*
- The majority of Chinese media provided considerable destination coverage on the back of the Games. This included good regional spread with coverage of London, cities with Olympic venues, Much Wenlock, the Edinburgh Arts Festival, and the new Wales Coastal Path.
- The high spend of Chinese tourists in Britain during the Games was another major Olympic story in China.
- Given that several perceived ‘mistakes’ were made during the Games, China’s media were critical of the organisation of the Games. But these criticisms faded as the Closing Ceremony approached.
- By the time of the Closing Ceremony, media in China were appreciating Britain as *“a holy land for music”,* the London Games as *“a glorious and joyful one”,* which *“definitely inspired a generation”.* Public opinion shifted towards a more positive tone after watching the Closing Ceremony. The majority were amazed by the big party that celebrated British music. *“Some said British music rocks the world! Let’s stop complaining with biased views and enjoy life”.* Any negative comments on Weibo towards Britain seemed to disappear.
- China Central TV (China’s BBC equivalent) said that *“London is not only the capital of culture and finance but also the capital of fashion”.*
- China Business Post’s summary said that *“London 2012 presents to the world a more contemporary, younger British culture..., Britain has inspired a generation through the Games”.*
<http://opinion.cb.com.cn/12714523/20120813/405141.html>

Coverage of the Paralympic Games:

- The Paralympics Opening Ceremony was widely and positively reported in China by key broadcasters, online portals and mainstream print publications. The media commented on it as being *“inspiring, creative and touching; a feast of British heritage and culture”.* Coverage afterwards focussed on the sports and performance of Team China, but not much on the destination. Key media platforms were the accredited broadcaster (CCTV) and online portals (sina, sohu, qq.com, etc).
- Coverage was predominantly positive. Sold out tickets and the high viewing figures in Britain were both picked up by Chinese media highlighting the success of the Paralympic Games. Britain’s culture, heritage and welcome were strengthened in the market, thanks to the Opening Ceremony.
- Overall the Paralympic Games drew comparatively lower attention from Chinese media and general public compared to the Olympic Games. But coverage in China was in general all positive, with the media especially more positive.

7. DENMARK

Perception indicator:

Creativity: ↑, Heritage & Culture: ↑, Arts & Music: ↑ Weather: ↑

Value for Money: ↔ Food: ↔, Diversity: ↑

Danes' response to the London Olympic Games has been overwhelmingly positive. There were a couple of minor negatives at the beginning, with the G4S security issue receiving extensive coverage, but the Danish media were delighted by the performance of the British soldiers and the many officials helping and guiding visitors around the venues. There was an overwhelmingly positive reaction to the Opening Ceremony.

The Opening Ceremony for the Paralympic Games was well received with a lot of coverage in the media stating that this would be the biggest and best Paralympics ever, with tickets sold out. The focus quickly turned to sport and the athletes' achievements. There was some coverage of the Closing Ceremony, but a heavy sport focus meant there was little on the destination or tourism dimension.

Britain's already positive image in Denmark was strengthened in the areas of humour, welcome, music, sport, culture and 'classic' Britain. Perceptions of weather and food probably remained neutral.

Key themes and coverage during the Olympic Games:

- Daily newspaper, Politiken, ran a daily series of how life is for Danes living and working in London. When asked the question "what do you value most?" Britain's diversity was the near-unanimous answer. London's reputation as the world's most stimulating city was significantly enhanced.
- Daily newspaper, Berlingske, praised the British and the volunteers, stating that no matter where you stop to look at a map, someone would come up and offer assistance. The paper highlighted how life in people's local areas carried on regardless of the buzz and how the British people enjoyed taking part in the free viewing facilities in the city.
- The national TV stations, DR and TV2, were based in London throughout the Olympic Games, and invested heavily in full and up-to date coverage, making it the biggest TV coverage of the Games yet, with significantly more coverage than for Beijing.
- Henrik Liniger, DR Radio sports commentator stated, "*One of the best things about London 2012 is the way many of the sports have been integrated with the famous and historic places in London*"
- Denmark's TV2 was based at St. Katharine's Dock and used the Games as a platform to invite guests into the studio. There were frequent comments on the good humour of the volunteers and the Mayor of London.

8. FRANCE

Perception indicator:

Creativity: ↑, Heritage & Culture: ↑, Arts & Music: ↑ Weather: ↔

Value for Money: ↔ Food: ↔, Diversity: ↑

After initial concerns about uncertain weather conditions, security issues and fear of transport chaos, the French media turned very positive and focused on the impressive quality and smoothness of the organisation of the Games. They were also amazed by the warmth and friendliness of people and the remarkable success that the volunteers achieved.

Key themes and coverage during the Olympic Games:

- Warm welcome, from volunteers TFL staff and the army – Sud Ouest praised “*Volunteers who have been extraordinary with kindness and helpfulness*” and Le Nouvel Observateur stressed “*the incredible job achieved by the extremely friendly British Army and the 7,000 volunteers*” admitting that “*volunteering is part of British Culture*”.
- The British sense of humour, especially after the opening ceremony. A journalist from Le Nouvel Observateur declared: “*In terms of humour and entertainment, the French have a lot to learn from the English. We have Johnny and Dick Rivers, they have the Beatles and the Stones*”.
- Quality of sports infrastructure
- Praise for the remarkable performance of Team GB, with Le Nouvel Observateur talking about a “*fruitful raid*” for Team GB.
- Lord Coe received high praise in the French press, with La Voix du Nord saying that “*he has known success*” both as an athlete and as the organiser of the London Games.
- Despite very positive coverage about the quality of the Games and the success of the organisation, towards the end of the Games French newspapers focused on the economic issues that Britain is now facing due to the considerable budget spent organising the Games. “*After the Games, back to reality*” was the headline of La Tribune. Ouest France reported that Britain “*has not won any medal in economics*”.
- Sud Ouest: “*Despite uncertain weather conditions, the two weeks of the Olympic Games went unbelievably smoothly. High quality infrastructures, extraordinary kind and helpful volunteers, almost perfect organisation and no major incidents reported.*”
- Le Nouvel Observateur: “*(French?) Gossipers took great pleasure in announcing impending chaos in the London Underground. It did not happen. Is it because Londoners flew away from the city during the Games? Or because disciplined tourists avoided any lines other than the Olympic ones? Most probably both. But it is certain that, between the A line of the RER and the Jubilee line, we prefer the latter. It is a bit packed for sure, but you are kept informed and the charming TFL staff help you to wait.*”

- Le Nouvel Observateur: *“The British are so proud of their flag. It is featured everywhere, from Muse t-shirts at the Closing Ceremony to the stadium stage... But how can this country reconcile fervent patriotism (maybe too fervent), cultural and religious individuality and a great level of fairness. Is it the monarchy?”*
- Le Monde: *“Birds of ill omen, grumpy people and pessimistic professionals, who were as numerous in France as in the UK, have been disappointed. What hadn't they predicted until the last minute before the opening of the London Games? Poor security, an inability to cope with a potential terrorist threat, strikes paralysing the British capital and, needless to say, depressing weather conditions... Except for some inevitable hitches, none of these happened. From Rogge to Cameron, from thousands of spectators in the Olympic sites to billions of viewers all over the world, everyone could tell that the Olympic magic operated perfectly, in a friendly, warm and slightly chauvinistic atmosphere.”*
- Le Nouvel Observateur: *“The 30th Modern Olympic Games have closed with fireworks that illuminated the London sky. These games are remarkable because they were gigantic and proved to be an immense popular success, with lots of medals for [Team GB].”*

Coverage of the Paralympic Games:

- Le Figaro : Focused on the disappointment for Team France with results not as good as were hoped for. They also described the Paralympic Games as a huge, popular success with 2.3 million tickets sold. *“At the end of the magnificent Closing Ceremony, the Paralympic flame was turned out and the curtain closed on the London Games. 11 days of competition in an incredible, fervent atmosphere, a breath-taking English fever”.*
- Le Nouvel Observateur: Stresses the incredible popular success of the Paralympic Games with 2.7 million tickets sold.

9. GERMANY

Perception indicator:

Creativity: ↑, Heritage & Culture: ↑, Arts & Music: ↑ Weather: ↔

Value for Money: ↔ Food: ↔, Diversity: ↑

Germans were impressed and entertained by London 2012. Initial scepticism about the preparedness and security quickly gave way to delight at the Opening Ceremony, praise for the smooth organisation of events, respect for the performance of Team GB and a warm response to the friendliness and hospitality of the British people.

During the Paralympic Games media coverage focused almost entirely on the sport, but Britain received a lot of praise for the organisation of the event and great atmosphere, and it was generally felt that the Paralympics were taken to another much higher level.

Key themes and coverage during the Olympic Games:

- Praise for the hospitality of the volunteers and the British public: *“It must be said that the British are the friendliest people on Earth”*, noted Süddeutsche Zeitung. *“Britain has been a dazzling host,”* declared Financial Times Deutschland.
- Acclaim for the facilities and locations from German athletes and officials
- Praise for London as a city that brings the world together – linked with acknowledgement of the multi-cultural British Team, supported by all parts of British society.
- Centre broadsheet Tagesspiegel thought the Closing Ceremony complemented the magnificent Opening Ceremony, bringing to an end a *“two-week joyous party”*.
- Centre-right broadsheet Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung praised the UK for organising a relaxed, lively Games, whilst also managing the security threat.
- Britain’s organisational expertise and sporting strength were *“marvellous”*, according to business daily, Handelsblatt.
- Britain has shown itself to be *“capable, proud, joyous – and a little crazy”*, claimed centre-left, Süddeutsche Zeitung.
- Die Zeit: *“Olympic feel-good moments in a relaxed atmosphere”*
The newspaper wrote about the glorious closing party but especially how well the British had presented themselves during the Games. *“London really has to deserve the praise of ‘the best Games ever’, anything else amounts to an insult. It was impressive to experience how friendly, warm and helpful the British people are. Union Jacks everywhere. The Games were very well organized and the atmosphere in London was relaxed and friendly the whole time. After the financial crisis the self-esteem of British society was distressed, so they need a feel-good moment. But now British self-esteem has recovered. For the Olympic Games the British public overcame the culture of opposites (poor-rich, native-immigrant, Islamic- non Islamic) and they became a nation that worked well together. “*

- Spiegel: *“With a joyful closing party the Olympic Games came to an end. The Closing Ceremony represents Britain as the great power of pop music and culture. Thanks to the Olympic Games Britain gained back its national pride. Union Jacks everywhere. The Games advanced the atmosphere in Britain enormously. The British public is proud of their sporting successes and of the perfect organisation during the Games. Also the majority of the British people consider the £9.3bn that were spent for the Olympic Games as a profitable investment. They celebrate the idea of a multicultural society that is manifested by the Olympic winner and immigrant Mo Farah. The new atmosphere caused by the Games suits the British public and the rest of the world too.”*
- Süddeutsche: *“The last 17 days during the Olympic Games have delivered a new view on Britain. They got to themselves known as a nation that is efficient, proud, bright and sometimes a little bit crazy. One year ago London burned and teenagers provoked street battles, now London gleams and the youth win Olympic medals in a peaceful games. Already the message of the Opening Ceremony invited the complex British society to be a part of the Olympic Games and was a signal for other countries. During the Games a new atmosphere was created and now there is the hope of a changed, modern and open-minded Britain. Britain’s athletes created a patriotism that caught every region and stratum in the UK. The alienated nation celebrated itself and won a new self-concept.”*
- FAZ: *“The great party of the Olympic Games ended with the Closing Ceremony reminiscing about the British history of pop. With flashy colours and a lot of music London said good-bye in a classic but also very British way. The British leave a mark from the impressive Closing Ceremony.” “The Games were like a national short-term therapy treatment for the English patient plagued with identity problems. Everything seemed to slot into place at the right time: the UK no longer stands for organisational unreliability, torturous self-doubt or social unrest, but for efficiency, a “can-do” culture and multicultural harmony. But Britain’s new self-confidence will soon be hit by the realities of every-day travails.”*

Coverage of the Paralympic Games:

- Tagesthemen (main evening news on ARD): Feature highlights the success of the event and Britain as a fantastic host nation. But it also highlights deficiencies in the public transport system in London and financial barriers for disabled people to take up sports
- Focus online: *“The Paralympics in London exceeded all expectations and it really felt as though these were the second Olympic Games – and they were on an equal level. If Germany experienced a summer tale during the football World Cup in 2006 this can only be described as summer madness.”*
- Welt.de: *“The London Paralympics have set benchmarks which all future hosts will have to measure themselves against – both in terms of the organisation and the atmosphere. We can only hope that some of the interest and the success of these vibrant, happy Games will have a lasting effect. It may be that the 11 days of competing will have given one or two politicians something to think about when it comes to improving the everyday lives of disabled people. The main challenge for disability sport will be to overcome the opaqueness of the classification of disabilities.”*

10. HONG KONG

Perception indicator:

Creativity: ↑ , Heritage & Culture: ↑, Arts & Music: ↑ Diversity: ↑

Weather: ↔ , Value for Money: ↔ Food: ↔

Welcome: ↔

Transport and security were negative issues before the Games and during the first few days, but overall there was an overwhelmingly positive response from the Hong Kong media and public to the creativity and competence of the Games.

Regarding the destination there was a focus on the fresh transformation of East End of London, portrayed 'as off the beaten track' and giving the capital a fresh perspective – always important for the Hong Kong consumer. There was also some good positive pick up on food, shopping, and regional coverage including the Scottish Highlands, Edinburgh, Bristol, the Cotswolds, York and Northern Ireland.

Key themes and coverage during the Olympic Games:

- Positive coverage of the opening ceremony, including from South China Morning Post: *“A night of spectacular success...one of the most spectacular Opening Ceremonies in Olympic history. From James Bond to Mr Bean, from the Industrial Revolution to the rise of the internet, Slumdog Millionaire director Danny Boyle wove British cultural icons and historical landmarks into a feast of music and dance – with extravagant fireworks.”*, Apple Daily: *“Exciting, creative, spectacular and fabulous Opening Ceremony”*
- Positive destination stories were captured in Eat & Travel Weekly and Ming Pao Daily News, promoting Britain's culture, heritage, countryside, food and sport.
- Metro: *“Everyone is looking forward to all the surprises and excitement of Closing Ceremony. It gives a very positive impression of Britain's creativity and cultural talents – Britain is a must place to visit if you want to be exposed to world class music, art and culture.”*
- All the radio programme hosts in Hong Kong had extremely positive comments on the Closing Ceremony, considered as probably the best one yet.
- All music performances at the ceremonies served to remind the Hong Kong people of the greatest British singers and musicians, including the great memories and music they enjoyed in the past. Although the Beijing Games are remembered for being great, this was more to do with the production value rather than the sentiment or messaging transmitted. The Closing Ceremony and the Games in general inspired Hong Kongers to talk about Britain and its traditional iconic attractions.

Coverage of the Paralympic Games:

- There was limited but positive coverage of the Opening Ceremony of the Paralympic Games, with a lot of focus on Stephen Hawking and the 'Big Bang' performance. Coverage of the Closing Ceremony was also limited with little impact on perceptions of the destination.

11. INDIA

Perception indicator:

Creativity: ↑, Heritage & Culture: ↑, Arts & Music: ↑

Value for Money: ↔ Food: ↔, Diversity: ↔

Before the Olympic Games began most of the destination stories were fairly negative around the introduction of Games Lanes, athletes accommodation and security, but as we inched closer to the Games these turned into more positive stories. In a few weeks London turned into a city with good security, straightforward airports, convenient transportation, good weather and smiling volunteers.

Key themes and coverage during the Olympic Games:

- Extremely positive response and coverage for the Opening Ceremony by all media (including the “mystery woman in red” and Karan Johar’s appearance) and the same for the Closing Ceremony.
- A lot of coverage appeared showcasing Britain as one of the best countries for recreation and travel purposes with details about specific famous destinations as well as positive coverage of cuisine, ambience and layout of the restaurants and of London’s biggest restaurant festival. Many destination-related stories and lesser-known facts about London 2012 featured in various publications.
- Positive coverage of the weather which was described as perfect for the Games.
- London 2012 as the ‘Social Media Games’ and overwhelming positive coverage on local social blogs, mainly Twitter, before and during the Games. The BBC received positive coverage for providing full live streaming of the Games and leaving no event uncovered.
- Extremely positive coverage of Britain as a host nation and the excitement among the locals, portraying Britain as a multicultural city during the Games. The Hindu: “*City-us, Altius, Fortius – the city was buzzing with energy and excitement like a giant fairground when we visited it in the middle of the Games ... A mix of accents and languages everywhere.*” The Times of India: “*London 2012 has everything in place for a lasting legacy.*” Brilliant security, easy transportation in London and the Olympic Village was highly appreciated by the Indian athletes;
- London’s Athletes’ Village was compared unfavourably to the one for 2010 Commonwealth Games in Delhi, which was reported to have had better facilities, including bigger rooms and more bathrooms;

Coverage of the Paralympic Games:

- Coverage of the Opening Ceremony was very positive, showcasing British values including culture, music and heritage. There was a positive impact about London having the confidence to host such a large event for the Paralympic athletics, and how so soon after hosting a successful Olympics that London was yet again ready to welcome 4,000 athletes for the Paralympics. The British people also received positive coverage for being as enthusiastic about the Paralympic Games as they were about the Olympics.
- There were a few negative pieces highlighting how one Paralympic athlete in the Indian delegation had problems as there was no-one to escort him around the village, and reports of problems with the meals.

12. ITALY

Perception indicator:

Creativity: ↑, Heritage & Culture: ↑, Arts & Music: ↑ Weather: ↔

Value for Money: ↔ Food: ↔, Diversity: ↑

Overall the Italian media covered the Games, London and Britain positively. Apart from initial concerns around security and some controversial stories about the total costs of the Games, ticketing and the mid-Games story about London as a ‘ghost town’, the vast majority of coverage praised the event’s organisation, the attitude and enthusiasm of the British people, the Opening and Closing Ceremonies, the warm welcome of the volunteers and the remarkable job they did. The Royal Family, the fabulous architecture of the Olympic Park, the East End and Stratford area, as well as the Olympic venues outside London gained excellent coverage.

The main coverage of the Paralympic Games in Italy was focused on sport, and this was significantly lower in comparison to the Olympic Games. Articles published were all positive, and comments ranged from the good relations between the Paralympic Committee and the Organising Committee, to the enthusiasm displayed by the British public.

Key themes and coverage during the Olympic Games:

- Overwhelmingly positive coverage of the Opening and Closing Ceremonies, commented as summing up the quintessential nature of Britain’s spirit. The presentation of nature, history, countryside, music and a range of British icons created an enthusiastic and dynamic image of Britain. In La Repubblica, Fabrizio Bocca: *“Great show with the Queen and McCartney, the cauldron lit by seven young British athletes.” “The opening ceremony, directed by Danny Boyle inspired by the history of Great Britain. Enthusiasm for the arrival of Elizabeth II, who became ‘Bond Girl’. Emotion for the words of Sebastian Coe and for the presence of Muhammad Ali. Finally, the lighting of the flame, by seven talented young British athletes. To close the Ceremony, Sir Paul, who sang ‘Hey Jude’. A Great Show in a Great Country”.*
- Renewed and fresh image of the Royal Family, in particular after the participation of the Queen at the Opening Ceremony acting as a ‘Bond Girl’. The British sense of humour, above all after the Opening Ceremony.
- Warmth and efficiency of the volunteers and the Army and excellence of sport facilities and infrastructure
- Digital: Over the last 7 days of the Games 464,000 web pages were devoted to the event in Italy. And thanks to the internet (or rather, to Twitter), it is possible to trace back how the Italians have lived these Games.
- Il Corriere della Sera, Beppe Severgnini. *“Thanks London: A lesson to the pessimists”*
“The Capital wanted to have a party in the world. And when it comes to parties, celebrations, ceremonies, the British have no rivals. These Olympics has been a success for Britain, despite spasmodic sporting expectations, and because of organisational concerns: they have created the right tension. Public transport and 70,000 enthusiastic volunteers, polite soldiers, happy to be able to use the experience gained in Northern Ireland, Iraq and Afghanistan in front of crowds of tourists, made the difference. Happy crowds everywhere”.

13. JAPAN

Perception indicator:

Welcome: ↑↑; Food: ↑↑ (increased a lot)

Creativity: ↑, Diversity: ↑, Heritage & Culture: ↑, Arts & Music: ↑

Weather: ↔, Value for Money: ↔; Transport & Security: ↔

In spite of the 8-hour time difference the Japanese public seem to have been impressed by the London 2012 Games. The Opening and Closing Ceremonies were well received and public interest was helped by the Japan Olympic team receiving more medals than ever before. There was some negative coverage of some social media comments made by British people on Japan and the London 'ghost town' stories. However, the overall perception of the destination and the 2012 Games was very good.

Key themes and coverage during the Olympic Games:

- Huge positive interest in the Royal Family & Britain's heritage, sustainability and food. Sankei Newspaper: *"The Queen's sense of humour led to a successful Olympics. Compared to Beijing Olympics, London had more humour."*
- Praise for the 70,000 volunteers, which was helpful for shifting perceptions of welcome in the UK.
- London 2012 was seen as a good template for Tokyo's bid for the 2020 Games, as it focused on sustainability and legacy for future generations.
- Nikkan Sports: *"London 2012 has nicely exceeded our expectations. My perception has been changed because the food was much better and British people were much more friendly and supportive to the Japan team."*
- Yomiuri Newspaper: *"British audiences gave their generous applause even to other nations"*.
- Masaharu Fukuyama (actor & singer), Asahi Newspaper: *"British athletes were strong thanks to the support of the host country and the British were enjoying London 2012 in a cool way...I came to think Tokyo can host the Games like this in London."*
- Asahi Newspaper: *"Difference of races, religion, region, sex and disability can be overcome, that was what London 2012 tried to show to the world."*

Coverage of the Paralympic Games:

- Media coverage was not extensive, but there were some positive mentions of Britain being the birthplace of the Paralympic Games.

14. NETHERLANDS

Perception indicator:

Creativity: ↑, Heritage & Culture: ↑, Arts & Music: ↑ Weather: ↔

Value for Money: ↔ Food: ↔, Diversity: ↑

The Dutch media seemed to be a bit sceptical just before the start of the Games with stories on traffic and security dominating, but once the Olympic Games were underway Britain was praised for the flawless execution of the event, the great welcome from the British people (especially the volunteers) and the fantastic atmosphere during the event.

The Paralympic Games did not get nearly as much media attention as the Olympic Games but the official broadcast rights holder NOS showed many of the events on national TV. In print and digital media there was a strong focus on the athletes competing during the Paralympics and their results. However there was less focus on London with less destination stories than during the Olympics.

Key themes and coverage during the Olympic Games:

- Algemeen Dagblad: *“The Brits have been fantastic supporters for all the athletes, they cheered for all of them, it was a great welcome. The Games were alive in London, the setting of the sporting locations in the city were big and impressive. It has been a fascinating two weeks”*
- Telegraaf: *“Great Britain is on a high. The 30th Olympiad has finished and is has been a big success. Not only in sports did the Brits perform well, but also there are only good words for the organisation. The expected traffic chaos, security issues and empty stages were not a problem in the end. The Games have unrecognisably changed London. People’s moods have been lifted and the Games have definitely created a sense of unity”.*
- Volkskrant: *“The Games have shown us unity and British enthusiasm. The expected traffic chaos did not happen, there were no security issues and the weather was not half as bad as expected. Overall the Games were good and made possible by the enthusiasm of the Brits.”*
- Associated Press (quote covered widely in the Dutch media): *“The success of London is the reason why the Netherlands should host the Games in 2028. The great success of the 2012 Games have already being hailed by all sides. The atmosphere was excellent, sport performances were record-breaking, and the dreaded terrorist attack failed to materialize. Britain has shown its best side. The success of London 2012 has heated discussions in the Netherlands again about bringing the Games over in 2028”*
- Volkskrant: *“The Olympic Games in London have been described as the ‘perfect Games’. The execution of the event was flawless. London 2012 was an attractive sports festival, in a country where everyone stood behind ‘Team GB’ and the success of the British athletes were celebrated widely on a daily basis. From the moment that Britain (thanks to the rowers Heather Ning Stan and Helen Glover) grabbed the first gold medal, the initial scepticism disappeared within a day and united the nation.”*

Coverage of the Paralympic Games:

- Volkskrant reported that the London Paralympics were a huge success with a record number of tickets sold.

15. NORWAY

Perception indicator:

Creativity: ↑, Heritage & Culture: ↑, Arts & Music: ↑ Weather: ↑

Value for Money: ↔ Food: ↔, Diversity: ↑

Norwegian coverage of the Games was very positive. The scepticism of security and transport issues quickly changed after the Opening Ceremony. Norwegians admire Britain's ability to organise grand, successful events and the Opening Ceremony reinforced the already positive attributes of Britain and its people.

The Opening Ceremony of the Paralympics was well received, alongside a lot of coverage that the London Paralympic Games would be the biggest and best Paralympics ever, with tickets sold out already sold out. The focus quickly turned to sport and athletic achievements. There was some coverage of the Closing Ceremony, but a heavy sport focus probably meant little for the destination from a tourism perspective.

Key themes and coverage during the Olympic Games:

- Admiration for the volunteers, Boris Johnson and London's citizens – they were defined as welcoming, friendly and service-minded.
- Comments on the British weather in the media – only three rainy days during the Olympic Games. This was in strong contrast to the stereotypical perception Norwegians had of British weather. *"During the whole Olympics, it has only rained for three days!"*
- *"The greatest Olympic Games I've ever been to - it has been wonderful to experience the British politeness, in particular from the volunteers. Brits truly know how to arrange great events".*

16. POLAND

Perception indicator:

Creativity: ↑, Heritage & Culture: ↑, Arts & Music: ↑ Weather: ↔

Value for Money: ↔ Food: ↔, Diversity: ↑

The Polish media were very impressed with the Opening and Closing Ceremonies and the great sporting success of Team GB. The performance of Team GB and smooth organization overshadowed initial scepticism about security issues. Coverage of the Paralympic Games overall was extremely limited and the competition was not broadcasted widely in Poland.

Key themes and coverage during the Olympic Games:

- Coverage of the Opening and Closing Ceremonies was very positive, showcasing British values, culture, music and heritage; Rzeczpospolita (a national daily, one of the most influential titles): *“Great Great Britain”*, Gazeta Pomorska (regional daily): *“Great Britain surprised the world”*, Gazeta Wyborcza (influential national daily): *“Great Britain is great again”*, Polska Gazeta Krakowska: *“Rock and royalty met”*, Przegląd Sportowy: *“Such celebration once in 1,000 years”*, Super Express: *“Crazy party for dessert”*, Gazeta Polska Codziennie: *“Britons rocked out”*, Dziennik Elblaski: *“Great Britain bowled the world over”*, Super Express: *“Dazzling beginning of the Games”*
- There was very positive feedback on volunteers, soldiers and police (some of the journalists used the saying “Every cloud has a silver lining” commenting on the perceived security issues leading to the friendliness and helplines of the soldiers; some media even described the British soldiers as the winners)
- Admiration at the performance of Team GB and the British sports programme to be followed by other nations – a model sports programme created for the Games
- Britain’s creativity, and London as a cultural melting pot
- The Olympic Games as a catalyst for change and the transformation of the East End of London
- The great atmosphere of the Games, an Olympic Games for everyone and not just for sports fans, with London 2012 winning a “gold medal” for the event’s smooth organisation. Rzeczpospolita: *“Great Britain gave us a refreshing Games. The British showed that they can keep distance to themselves, here was a great sense of humour and pomp when necessary”*, *“The Opening and Closing Ceremonies opened the eyes of the world wide”*, *“No other organisers have involved so many people with special needs and it was not for show”*, *“Even the weather is not so bad as people think.”*, *“The British can be proud – they organized an amazing Games and achieved great sporting success”*, *“The Games were beautiful, very surprising, not leaving a bad aftertaste during this time of crisis.”*
- Angora: *“Everything went well. There were no problems with public transport, no giant traffic jams, no feeling of the permanent invigilation, no overpriced hotels. I have been, I have seen and enjoyed the great Games atmosphere. Let’s hope the British will organise the Games for a fourth time.”*

17. RUSSIA

Perception indicator:

Creativity: ↑, Heritage & Culture: ↑, Arts & Music: ↑ Weather: ↑

Value for Money: ↔ Food: ↔, Diversity: ↑

The Olympic Games were well received in the Russian media. The Ceremonies helped to strengthen Russians' appreciation for British humour, and the ability of the British to laugh at themselves. Britain's culture, history and music was noted, as well as the British people for being very warm, welcoming and empathic. Team GB's success in the medal table portrayed an image of Britain being a very sporting nation.

The Paralympic Games received some good coverage as well, especially around the organisation, and the popularity of the Games in Britain. There was a lot of focus on the Russian Paralympic team and its achievements. Although reporting was generally positive there was little to boost Britain as a tourism destination.

Key themes and coverage during the Olympic Games:

- Vedomosti (leading business publication) wrote: *"London demonstrated to the world the perfect Games - light, self-humoured, warm, not without chaos, but chaos within limits."*
- A lot of publications wrote about British people's empathy and ability to cheer not just the winners, but the ones who were losing. SportExpress reported: *"All sportsmen felt great support from the British fans"*. Russia's Minister of Sport, Valery Mutko, said: *"We should all learn from the British fans"*.
- The Opening and Closing Ceremonies played a vital role in forming or changing people's perceptions. Prime Minister Medvedev said: *"I was very impressed and didn't expect to laugh at the opening ceremony"*. Vesti (main Federal channel and Olympic rights-holder) stated that *"the Opening Ceremony combined everything that the British people are proud of and their ability to laugh at themselves"*. According to Vesti the Closing Ceremony was *"warm ... British music made it truly unforgettable"*.
- Britain was perceived to do a good job showing off the country's landmarks to the world. The Head of the Russian NOC, speaking to SportExpress, said: *"I loved the way the British organised their sports events in famous places"*.
- Many publications commented on the work of volunteers and how welcoming and helpful they were. Rosbalt said that *"the level of volunteers work was very high; they knew about various things and helped beyond their responsibilities"*. The publication also stated that *"London was able to combine two important things for the Games: excellent organisation and a wonderful atmosphere"*.
- The attitude of the British people surprised a lot of journalists, who were impressed by their dedication to the Games. A lot of publications including SportExpress were also very impressed by the country's love of sport: *"everywhere in London you see people running, cycling, and going to the gym; it's amazing!"*

18. SPAIN

Perception indicator:

Creativity: ↑, Heritage & Culture: ↑, Arts & Music: ↑ Weather: ↔

Value for Money: ↔ Food: ↔, Diversity: ↑

Spaniards seem to have been very impressed with the passion of the British people as seen on television during the Games. As a destination Britain seems to have strengthened its reputation across all key themes: on top of great music, culture, and fashion, the Games helped Spaniards to see how they could have a great experience with passionate and friendly people in Britain. Coverage of the Paralympic Games was limited to sports, although this received good coverage on the official broadcaster, RTVE.

Key themes and coverage during the Olympic Games:

- RTVE: *“British bands have created most of the world soundtracks since the second half of the 20th century. Some old rockers jumped on the stage of the Olympic Games. They have influenced most of the current musicians all over the world.”*
- El Mundo: *“We all wanted to be British. The Opening Ceremony was the confidence boost that the Games needed. We all felt British somehow during a ceremony that showed the overwhelming cultural richness that Britain has been exporting to the world.”*
- El Pais: *“The British have gone from doubts to passion. London 2012 has already been a success by popular sentiment and the medals have reinforced that joy. Britain is full of Union Jacks and the Team GB shirt designed by Stella McCartney.”*
- ABC: *“God save Olympic London: Jacques Rogge, IOC president, thanked the organisers for ‘showcasing the best of British hospitality’. After 17 days of competitions, civic spirit and stunning performance it is confirmed: Britain knows how to do it!”*
- Marca: *“As per IOC President’s words ‘We will never forget the smiles, kindness and support of the wonderful volunteers, the real heroes of these Games, and the spirits of the spectators, who brought a warm atmosphere to each venue.’”* h
- La Vanguardia: *“London 2012’s common sense & pride. London 2012 is now history. Both an organisational and a sporting success. The Games have been organised with common sense and pride by a country who knows we are in an economic crisis. The Games that have finally managed to excite the British people. Brilliant Opening & Closing Ceremonies, 70,000 friendly volunteers, hundreds of cultural events and 63 medals won have finally made Britain a party of British pride.”*

19. SWEDEN

Perception indicator:

Creativity: ↑, Heritage & Culture: ↑, Arts & Music: ↑ Weather: ↑

Value for Money: ↔ Food: ↔, Diversity: ↑

Swedes were very impressed by the London 2012 Games. The scepticism over security and transport issues quickly changed after the Opening Ceremony. Swedes admire Britain's capability for organising grand, successful events and the Opening Ceremony reinforced the already positive perceptions of Britain and its people. The conclusion on the last day of the Games was that it was the British people who made difference – they made the Games a success with their warm, happy and welcoming attitude.

The Paralympic Games received a much lower level of coverage. The Opening Ceremony was shown live and was well-received, but the Closing Ceremony was only broadcast on an online channel. All of the coverage of the Paralympics was positive, but sparse.

Key themes and coverage during the Olympic Games:

- Britain's already positive image was strengthened further, especially regarding the country's humour, welcome, music, sport, culture and its 'classic' aspects. Svenska Dagbladet: *"Humour found its place at the Olympics. What an opening, much more fun, much more beautiful, much more relaxed – so much better than Beijing. Danny Boyle should really get a gold medal for this. If there is anything the Brits are world champions at, its comedy and the ability not to take themselves too seriously."*
- There was general praise for the British people and the volunteers, including their great hospitality and passion for sport. Sports editor of national daily Dagens Nyheter: *"The best Games ever. People from all kinds of society, class and gender united and volunteering to welcome the world."* Columnist in national daily Svenska Dagbladet: *"Can we have London hosting all future Games? Looking at the democracy aspect, London delivered a successful Games and people from all parts of society have been welcome to take part, no matter what your gender, your class or if you have disabilities."*
- It was noted that the public not only supported Team GB, but also cheered and supported athletes from all over the world, which was a great boost for perceptions of welcome. Kajsa Bergqvist, for SVT (equivalent BBC) *"I have never experienced this kind of atmosphere in an Olympic Park before; it was like coming home from a club every night, with my ears whistling. The crowd was cheering Team GB of course, but they showed great support for all athletes, which shows the British people's passion for sport in general, no matter where you're from"*. In general a warm and welcoming, festive atmosphere in all venues and host cities was reported, with people from all over Britain gathering in the streets to watch the Games.
- There was admiration of the Opening and Closing Ceremony, and Britain's ability to organise these large scale performances and events, with the media reporting the Games as being very well organised and well planned. A very positive image was portrayed of the regeneration of Stratford and East London and the fact that LOCOG had a plan for after the Games, listening and learning the lessons from previous host cities. Jonas Karlsson, influential sports commentator, SVT: *"I would like to compare it to the Sydney 2000, this has been just as successful"*.
- Views of British food perhaps suffered a little as a result of the media's experience within the Olympic Park.

20. SWITZERLAND

Perception indicator:

Creativity: ↑, Heritage & Culture: ↑, Arts & Music: ↑ Weather: ↔

Value for Money: ↔ Food: ↔, Diversity: ↑

Coverage of the Olympic Games by the Swiss media was more factual and very much focused on the Olympic sporting events themselves. After an initially rather reserved coverage of the Games, with some focus on issues such as transport, costs and security, the perceptions shifted with positive coverage predominating and the media praising the enthusiasm and good organisation of the Games.

Swiss coverage stated that Britain was a perfect place for the Olympic Games, that everything went well and that people from different countries were all welcomed by the British people, with London as a great place to enjoy the Games. The fear of more traffic jams was without any reason and apart from some small incidents there were no real security problems, which meant that after the Opening Ceremony there was no real negative coverage.

By the end of the Games all of the initial problems had been forgotten, and the focus of coverage was on a peaceful and amazing Games hosted by a welcoming country. Coverage of the Paralympic Games was mostly restricted to the sports sections and was generally very low-key.

Key themes and coverage during the Olympic Games:

- Praise for the hospitality of the volunteers and the British public, and the way that London as a city welcomed the world with a perfect Olympic party; the success of Team GB; Britain as a destination.
- Neue Zürcher Zeitung: *“Olympics in Wonderland“* - very positive article about London as Olympic host city *“London is the perfect stage for an easy-going Summer Games. What a perfect sports summer! Britain’s Games will not be as dominated by political ostentation as at Beijing, and will not be identified as badly organised as Athens, but as a charming, positive and creative event as the Diamond Jubilee was already some weeks ago.”*
- 20Minuten: *“Rule, Britannia!”*
“The British people celebrate the Olympic Games with parties everywhere. The team of Great Britain is very successful during the Games and the British people were electrified. So everybody is welcomed in London and can celebrate the Olympic Games with people from different destinations.”

Coverage of the Paralympic Games:

- NZZ Online: *“The interest of the British population in the Paralympics is setting a new benchmark. The atmosphere was fantastic and the event was well organised. But what difference will the Games make to disabled people in day-to-day life?”*

21. UAE

Perception Indicator:

Creativity: ↑, Food: ↔, Diversity: ↑, Heritage & Culture: ↔, Arts & Music: ↑

Weather: ↓, Value for Money: ↓

Transport & Security: ↔

Welcome: ↑ (Britons were viewed as hospitable and the Olympics offered a welcoming atmosphere to many)

The UAE seems to have been entertained and surprised by the Olympic Games in London. In the lead up to the event main concerns were centred on security, weather and the potentially unchanging economic state of the UK. By the end of the Games however, coverage was extremely positive and voiced (pleasant) surprise and gratitude for best Games ever.

As expected during the Paralympic Games coverage was not as extensive as during the Olympic period. News articles (both Arabic and English) were more sports-related, while non-sports coverage focused on the Opening Ceremony (seen as another spectacular event). The other non-sporting coverage that did appear during this period was positive, with no negative reporting on security or the weather appearing as during the Olympics. But there was limited coverage of London as a destination overall.

Key themes and coverage during the Olympic Games:

- Praise for British people as hospitable and kind, which was made clear by interaction with volunteers and security personnel, especially the extra troops deployed, applauding the UK Government for keeping everyone safe. The Times – *“Capital puts on happy face to welcome the world ...an Army of friendly volunteers is helping even the cynics discover something to love about the Olympics.”*
- Assurance that Games were not held for bragging rights and are a long-term investment in Britain’s future, and acclaim that London should not have a problem maintaining the positive energy post-Games
- Commended London for being a generous host city, for being a ‘Green Games’, and for its electric atmosphere, impressed at large numbers of spectators at the Games
- The National praised London for turning its image around and *“a capacity for excellence that defies everyday expectations”* – *“Nation answers call – London and people show who they are and what they stand for”*
- Khaleej Times thanked London for energetic Closing Ceremony, *“with a high-octane romp through British pop music”*
- Gulf Today praised the Games as *“a two-week sporting festival that electrified the host nation and was watched by billions around the world”*
- Al Ittihad Newspaper acclaimed nationwide agreement on making the Olympics successful in showing the ‘True London’

- Gulf News – *“London Olympics made an impression”*
“The Games will be remembered for sporting excellence and a victory for gender equality despite the odds.”
The report mentions Usain Bolt and Michael Phelps, Saudi female athletes, the British government’s decision to increase security, the cost of the Olympics and finally, that London is the first city to host the Olympics three times.
- The National – *“Games Wipe Grime from London’s Image”*
While this piece remembers the riots last year, it positively says how the Games have helped London turn its image around. It quotes Mayor Boris Johnson saying on Radio 4 that the riots had revealed ‘deep social problems’, but that he felt that these problems could be addressed in part by the positive atmosphere surrounding the Games.
- The National – *“A celebration of sport”*
“Most cynics were converted by the end the opening ceremony. Britons have declared the Olympics Games a breath of fresh air that united the nation during difficult times. The Games were heralded by gripes and cynicism, but the past weeks have shown a capacity for excellence that defies everyday expectations.”
- Al Eqtissadiya KSA – *“London’s Public Surpassed Expectations”*
“London’s Olympics has gone over the expectations on the number of spectators, especially after Team GB received 25 Gold medals.”
- Al Ittihad Newspaper – *“Nationwide agreement on making the Olympics succeed in showing the True London”* *“Although many are still waiting for the economic side effects to appear during the Olympics 2012, there is a nationwide agreement on making the best out of the Olympics in showing the true sportive spirit of London. The British are trying their best in helping during the Olympics. Example, They are using public Transport instead of their own cars, refusing any call for strikes, and being at the service of visitors.”*
- *“Al Sharq Al Aawsat”* – *“More Arabs will Visit London this Summer”*
“This Summer more Arabs, especially from the Gulf region, are expected to visit London compared to Paris due to the ban of the burqa and head veil in France.”

Coverage of the Paralympic Games:

- Al Bayan newspaper ran story on London becoming one of the most accessible cities in the world
- KSA’s Arab News ran a good story on upcoming food festivals in Britain
- Emarat Al Youm newspaper ran a destination piece on Dover, calling it “an unwavering key to the UK”
- Asharq Al Awsat: *“The Opening Ceremony was a spectacular show that mixed technology, art, culture, and suspense.”*
- Gulf Business: *“After a difficult few years and low public morale, the greatest show on earth has returned London to its pinnacle status.”*

22. USA

Perception indicator:

Creativity: ↑ , Heritage & Culture: ↑, Arts & Music: ↑ Weather: ↑,

Value for Money: ↔ Food: ↔, Diversity: ↔

There was overwhelmingly positive coverage of the Opening Ceremony across the board in all US media channels. Coverage of the Closing Ceremony also very positive. London as the host city and Britain as the host nation, highlighting the fantastic atmosphere, created a lot of positive coverage, which contributes to a good potential of changing perceptions of welcome in Britain.

There was strong positive general destination coverage from the official rights holder (NBC) and key entertainment channels (E! News, ET), plus in all major media markets (print/digital) with pieces on cultural & historic experiences/attractions, food and drink and retail/fashion. There were some individual negative stories picked up, but positive coverage has dominated.

The main focus of destination coverage has been on London, with some non-London coverage from broadcasters VisitBritain worked closely with. There was also huge interest in social media: athletes, celebs and media properties were ‘tweeting up a storm’ which VisitBritain and the destination were able to capitalise on.

There was some negativity around transport & security before the Games and during the first days, but this turned positive soon after. There was also extensive negative coverage regarding NBC’s air times, however NBC had record breaking ratings for the Olympics overall.

Coverage of the Paralympic Games was very much buried and limited to the Ceremonies. This was partly due to no broadcast coverage (a bone of contention as NBC paid for the rights), but also due to overwhelming attention to the political conventions and the US Open amongst other lead news stories. A large portion of the sports coverage came from syndicated outlets such as AP and Reuters. Very few staff writers at major outlets covered Paralympic events.

Key themes and coverage during the Olympic Games:

- Washington Post: *“The XXX Olympiad ended Sunday with a blowout of British pop and circumstance, a closing-ceremony-cum-after-party offering a final dose of eccentricity to 17 days that saw the rise of girl power in sports, the coupling of Olympic solemnity with English humour and a wave of euphoria in a host nation that seemed to rediscover the ‘great’ in Great Britain.”*
- The Los Angeles Times summed the Games up as a *“Jolly good show, London.”*
- The Los Angeles Times also carried a piece sub-headed *“A Royal Wedding, the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee and now the Olympic Games give rise to a burst of American-style flag-waving among the usually understated Brits.”*

- The Associated Press via the Boston Globe summed the Games up: *“What a way to end a Games far more successful than many Londoners expected. Security woes were overcome, and traffic nightmares never materialized. The weather held up, more or less, and British athletes overachieved.”*
- USA Today: *“London has been transformed into an enclave of smiling Olympic volunteers, efficient transit systems and joyful crowds... And the favourite pre-Games activity of griping about the Olympics has been replaced by basking in the Olympics’*
- USA Today: *“A day didn’t go by here when I couldn’t help but think how much London 2012 reminded me of the LA Olympics, from the delight of the proud host city to its warm sunshine, from the non-existent traffic jams to the pastel color schemes of the venues, signs and even the ribbons on which the gold, silver and bronze medals were dangling.”*