An appraisal analysis of British, French and Belgian online and print press coverage of the rise of the 'Red Devils'
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1 ABSTRACT

An appraisal analysis of British, French and Belgian online and print press coverage of the rise of the 'Red Devils'

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Themacode: EH_4

Abstract

This quantitative and qualitative study examines online and print press coverage of the rise of the 'Red Devils', Belgium's national football team. Its main aim is twofold: (a) to analyze the evaluative language used in the newspaper coverage in the run-up towards the 2014 World Cup by means of an appraisal theory approach, and (b) to analyze the extent to which Belgium is mentioned outside of a footballing context. To this purpose, a corpus of 106 articles was established from French, British and Belgian quality and popular newspapers as well as blogs. Existing studies on appraisal have proven helpful assets for this research. The results of this study point towards several differences and similarities between press types and the French, British and Belgian national presses. References to Belgian culture and history seem to be only marginally present, with an emphasis on negative aspects such as the language debate and separatism.
2 INTRODUCTION

The main focus of this study is to examine British, French and Belgian online and print press coverage of the rise of the 'Red Devils', Belgium's national football team. More specifically, this study will examine 2 main aspects: (a) the evaluative language used in the newspaper coverage of popular press, quality press and blogs in the run-up towards the 2014 World Cup, and (b) the extent to which Belgium is mentioned in this coverage outside of a footballing context. In this regard, we will attempt to formulate answers to three main quantitative questions:

1. When did the national presses become aware of the issue?
2. What are the similarities / differences in how the Belgian team is covered by the Belgian, French and British press?
3. Where do the elements mentioned in the articles fit in when it comes to the background story: do they pertain to past performance, reorganization or success?

Subsequently, an answer to the following question will be formulated in the discussion section by means of a more qualitative approach:

4. To what extent is Belgium (culture, history, etc) mentioned outside of a footballing context? How do these references align with cultural stereotypes? What are the main contextual aspects: immigration, multiculturalism, language debate, national stereotyping, reorganization, ...?

The corpus consists of 106 articles originating from Belgium, France and the UK. more specifically, these articles were gathered from quality and popular newspapers as well as blogs. They were authored in the period of September 2009 to January 2014, which will allow us to see certain trends and developments in foreign and domestic press coverage.

This study will apply the appraisal analysis to investigate the kinds of positive and/or negative statements and attitudes mentioned in the coverage. This theory comprises a series of attitudes (affect, appreciation and judgement) that reflect the author's attitudinal positioning, which will in turn allow for a clear comparison between either press types or the various national presses.
The theory section of this dissertation will bring further clarification to these terms and the appraisal theory as a whole. In addition, a description of media models as set out by Hallin & Mancini will provide an insight into how the newspaper industries of Belgium, France and the UK relate to one another, which will then help us reveal certain differences or similarities between these three. After having set out the theory framework, we will attempt to answer our research questions in the results and discussion sections.
3 BACKGROUND

3.1 The future's bright, the future's Belgian... or is it?

In the 1980s, Belgium's national football team was one of the key contestants on the world stage. Led by Guy Thys, the Red Devils were second in the European Championship of 1980. Two years later, world champions Argentina were defeated by the Red Devils in the opening game of the World Cup: 1-0. And in 1986, Belgium managed to impress even the biggest sceptics by reaching the semi-finals of the World Cup to rank 4th. At the time, the team was unaware that this would be their last major accomplishment on the world stage for many years to come.

After failing to qualify for three successive European tournaments, they benefited from automatic qualification as joint hosts in 2000, but failed to progress beyond the group stage, making them the first ever host nation to be knocked out in the first round.

At this time, the fans would agree that the Belgian team had lost its position as key contestant. Despite its array of talent, the Belgian side has since 2002 repeatedly failed to qualify for any major tournament. The world cup did, however, seem to be the pivotal moment: having survived the group stage, Belgium faced Brazil in the second round. The South-Americans were favourites, but Belgium fought back with spirit. Marc Wilmots opened the scoring after 35 minutes, or so it seemed. The Jamaican referee Peter Prendergast disallowed the goal for unclear reasons. Belgium was furious, but even more so, eliminated.

"When I analyze the moment back in my head, I go crazy. I realize I wasn't allowed to score. At that moment, I knew: it's over. We're not allowed to go through."

(Interview with Marc Wilmots on Brazil-Belgium, 2011)

It would take them another ten years to develop the next Golden Generation, and over a decade to again qualify for the most prestigious football tournament. Since 2003, Belgium plummeted on the FIFA World Ranking: fans and coaches alike started to use the term 'crisis'. From then on, acrimony, conflict and back-and-forth accusations between players and staff plagued the process even further. The possible causes mentioned by press, fans and the team ranged from lack of dedication and star like airs to lack of team spirit. In the bleakest of times, even Belgium's most hardcore fans stopped showing up for home games, leaving the team to play in half-empty stadiums.
Twenty years have gone by since the first Golden Generation of the Red Devils emerged on the international stage, in which the team has not produced any major accomplishments. Many saw the downward spiral as inescapable. It has only been four years since Belgium last turned on their own team, diagnosed as a "generation of players that seems more blinged up than golden" (Doyle, P. 2009).

Public interest in the Red Devils rose again as some claimed the birth of a new Golden Generation, the likes of which Belgium had never witnessed before. Belgium's U17 reached the semi-finals at the 2008 Olympics. Concrete results, in the shape of trophies, remained absent. No Belgians assisted in the World Cup in 2010 in South-Africa, nor in the European Championship of 2012.

In contrast to the many years of underachievement, the fortunes of the Belgian team now appear to be more positive. The hopes of football-loving Belgians have never been higher, as the current success of the Belgian players means that they have become household names.

ople can say for certain when the tipping point was reached. When Belgian football looked deep into its soul and discovered an empty hollow. Some say the European Championship of 2000 was the watershed. Co-hosts of the tournament with Holland, Belgian aspirations were high. They would go on to reach a sixth successive World Cup in 2002, they were a nation to be reckoned with (Mcgowan S., 2013).

2012 was marked by the resignation of Georges Leekens and Dick Advocaat. Initially, assistant coach Marc Wilmots was assigned ad interim, but two friendly matches and major support from the players led to his permanent appointment as head coach of the Red Devils. The qualification campaign for the upcoming world cup in Brazil has been closer to flawless than any other Belgian generation has been capable of achieving: the team remained undefeated in the entire campaign, with a score of 26 out of 30, the highest in the nation's history. Belgium's fans would eagerly claim that if the Red Devils ever were a force to be reckoned with, it would be now.

An emerging crop of football talent looks capable of ending this notion that Belgium gets far more credit for its chocolates, waffles and red tape than for its human beings. All of a sudden, no self-regarding Barclays Premier League team is complete without a little Belgian gem (Barlow M., 2012).
4 APPRAISAL THEORY

This section examines appraisal theory, which will be applied in this study as a means to examine subjective language elements in written and online media coverage of the rise of the "Red Devils". In other words, we will use appraisal theory to analyze positive, negative and neutral statements found in a corpus of Belgian, British and French articles. This corpus consists of both quality and popular newspapers, blogs and in-depth articles published in online magazines. The results of this analysis will then be used to answer the first two research questions and draw up conclusions regarding the differences or similarities in the approach of British, Belgian and French newspapers.

Systematic methodology is essential in order to deliver scientifically robust answers to the research questions at hand. This specific study has opted to apply the appraisal analysis (Martin & White, 2005). This theory is key to analyzing positive and negative evaluations and subjectivity in newspaper articles.

Appraisal theory "studies journalistic discourse and the evaluative meaning of particular statements (e.g. authorial neutrality or objectivity) within a certain news story" (Van Beneden, 2013). It is described by Martin & White (2005, p.14) as the "subjective presence of writers/speakers in texts as they adopt stances towards both the material they present and those with whom they communicate". This can range from emotive evaluation to judgement and appreciation. Does the author's text show any signs of appreciative language, admiration or the contrary?

More specifically, one of the attitudes that this study will focus on, is what Martin & White refer to as "the heading of 'affect', the means by which writers/speakers positively or negatively evaluate the entities, happenings and states-of-affairs with which their texts are concerned". In other words, affect comprises the attitudes concerned with inscribing positive and negative feelings, such as joy, sadness, anxiety, frustration, and so on. This means that the appraisal analysis will allow us to gain an insight into how the event of the 'Belgian revolution' is portrayed through the eyes of the journalists. This study aims to find out how positive or negative foreign and domestic press coverage on this particular topic is, and when certain shifts in perception have taken place. In other words, when and in what way have the positive performances of the Belgian national team influenced Belgian, British and French press coverage?
As Martin & White (2005, p.35 ) indicate, "Appraisal is one of three major discourse semantic resources to construe interpersonal meaning, alongside involvement and negotiation." A key idea of appraisal theory is that it helps to determine "the subjective presence of writers/speakers in texts as they adopt stances towards both the material they present and those with whom they communicate" (Martin & White 2005, p. 14). Appraisal itself can be subdivided into three main headers: 'attitude', 'engagement' and 'graduation'. This study will focus on the first section, 'attitude'.

Attitude is "concerned with our feelings, including emotional reactions, judgements of behaviour and evaluation of things." (Martin & White, 2005 p. 38). It counts as the values by which speakers "pass judgements and associate emotional/affectual responses with participants" (P.R.R. White & Eldon, 2012).

- e.g. Well, I've been listening to the two guys who are heroes [value judgement] and I admire [affect] them both.

'Engagement' treats "the linguistic resources which explicitly position a text's proposals and propositions intersubjectively." In other words, engagement deals with the linguistic elements that the author uses to determine his/her personal position with regard to the various propositions and proposals conveyed by a text.

- e.g. Meanwhile (and we're not making this up), two Indian nationals on a flight from Singapore to Hong Kong were detained at Changi Airport after an American passenger said he heard one of the men calling himself a 'Bosnian terrorist.' (The man in fact said he was a 'bass guitarist.') [Mourning 2001] (Example taken from Martin & White 2005, p. 36)

In conclusion, 'Graduation' "attends to grading phenomena whereby feelings are amplified and categories blurred" (Martin & White 2005, p. 36). Writers use graduation "(1) as a means to raise or lower the interpersonal impact, force or volume of their utterances and (2) a means by which they graduate (blur or sharpen) the focus of their semantic categorisations" (P.R.R. White & Eldon, 2012).

- e.g. (FORCE) slightly, somewhat, very, completely
  (FOCUS) I was feeling kind'v woozy, they effectively signed his death warrant, a true friend
These examples demonstrate that graduation can be used to intensify, emphasize or to diminish the effect of propositions and proposals conveyed in the text. The following overview should clarify the structural subdivisions made in the appraisal theory framework.

Figure 1: An overview of appraisal resources (Martin & White, 2005)

4.1 Types of attitudes

Appraisal helps to determine positive and negative evaluations which are referred to as attitudes. Attitude is again divided into three 'regions of feelings': (1) affect (emotions), 2 judgement (ethics) and (3) appreciation (aesthetics).

Martin & White (2005, p. 55) stipulate that affect is an attitude "concerned with registering positive and negative feelings" (e.g. happiness, sadness, anxiety, interest or boredom). More specifically, (1) affect is defined by Martin & White (2005, p. 55) as "dealing with resources for construing emotional reactions, for example feelings of shock in relation to the events of 9/11:"

*The terrible events of the past week have left us with feelings - in order of occurrence - of horror, worry, anger, and now, just a general gloom.* [Mourning 2001]

Martin & White (2005, p. 59) subdivide this attitude into three different categories: (a) affect as 'quality' (e.g. the captain was sad/happy), (b) affect as 'process' (e.g. the captain wept/cheered) and (c) affect as 'comment' (e.g. sadly, luckily, he had to go).

(2) Judgement is defined by Martin and White (2005, p. 55) as an element that "deals with attitude towards behaviour, which we admire or criticise, praise or condemn." Subsequently, it is concerned with "resources for assessing behaviour according to various normative
principles, for example criticism of the Australian Prime Minister, John Howard's neo-conservative government:

   Worse, this is a mean administration, a miserly, mingy, minatory bunch if ever there was one. [ Carlton 2000:38]

Judgement is subdivided into two categories by Martin & White (2005, p. 65): (a) those dealing with 'social esteem' and (b) those regarding 'social sanction'. Judgements of esteem (criticism or admiration) have to do with 'normality' (how unusual someone is), 'capacity' (how capable they are) and 'tenacity' (how resolute they are); whereas judgements of social sanctions deal with 'veracity' (how truthful someone is) and 'propriety' (how ethical someone is).

The third region of feeling is (3) appreciation. This attitude "involves evaluations of semiotic and natural phenomena." In other words, this attitude investigates how certain events are evaluated by the author or speaker, for example a fan's rave review of a Stevie Ray Vaughn CD:

   ... and, as a bonus, a very psychedelic, destructive (literally!), cathartic, and liberatory version of Jimi Hendrix's 'Third Stone from the Sun'.
   [Amazon.com online reviews]

Martin & White (2005, p.69) distinguish three categories within this attitude: (a) "our 'reactions' to things (do they catch our attention; do they please us?, (b) their 'composition' (balance and complexity), and (c) their 'value' (how innovative, authentic, timely, etc.)."

One way to think about the latter two, judgement and appreciation, is to see them as "institutionalised feelings, which take us out of our everyday common sense world into the uncommon sense worlds of shared community values" (Martin & White 2005, p. 45). In further detail, this means that judgement stipulates the "ethics and morality of behaviour" (how we should behave), while appreciation focuses on how we value things. The following illustration will clarify this image of judgement and appreciation as institutionalised affect.
One should also bear in mind that all types of attitudes can be expressed in both positive and negative ways. These distinctions can be made as follows:

- Joy vs. sadness (*affect*)
- Admiration or praise vs. condemnation or criticism (*judgement*)
- Characteristics we appreciate/value vs. those we do not (*appreciation*)

In addition to what is mentioned above, Martin & White (2005, p. 44) stipulate that "attitude involves gradable meanings, which have the potential to be intensified and compared." In other words, the author's feelings can manifest themselves throughout the text in varying levels of depth.

- e.g. **very** sad, **very** unhappy, **full** of sorrows, the **more** skilful, **virtually** flawless, **startlingly** original, **so** pleasant, **very** pretty, finer, **as** pretty
  (Examples taken from Martin & White 2005, p. 44)

It is also worth adding that evaluative expressions can contain multiple attitudes at the same time, as is the case in the examples listed below. Martin & White (2005, p. 61) refer to these expressions as "hybrid realisations".

- e.g. I felt **disgusted** with them for provoking him. (Affect / Judgement)
  I felt **disgusted** with / by the smell. (Affect / Appreciation)
  (Martin & White 2005, p. 61)
4.2 Journalistic voices in media coverage

Distinguishing journalistic voices in written press coverage is relevant to this study in particular because these illustrate the degree to which authorial subjectivity or objectivity is present in the provided article. Martin & White (2005) stipulate that the nature of the text determines the respective presence or absence of evaluative and subjective elements. As such, the author will respectively resort to or refrain from lexical elements that reflect his or her personal opinion and beliefs.

Martin & White (2005, p. 173) indicate that two main types of voices can be differentiated: *reporter voice* and *writer voice*. *Reporter voice* is synonymous to a factual and objective writing style, whereas the latter is more subjective and thus holds more emotive elements from the author. *Writer voice* is subsequently re-divided into *correspondent voice* and *commentator voice*.

Thomson et al. (2008, p.221) indicate that *reporter voice* is used in "hard news" coverage (i.e. reports of accidents, protest crimes, etc.). Writing in *reporter voice* means "refraining from all judgements of human behaviour, confining such evaluations to the quoted words of external sources" (Thomson & Al 2008, p. 221). *Correspondent voice* is used in articles of specialist or rounds journalists (i.e. "correspondents"). It is described by Thomson et al. (2008, p. 221) as a "category which explicitly assesses human behaviour by reference to notions of human capacity, tenacity and normality, but will refrain from explicitly making ethical judgements about right or wrong." *Commentator voice* on the other hand, is "found in the context of the overtly argumentative and subjective types (i.e. opinion pieces, commentaries and editorials)."

In this study, our corpus mainly consists of opinion pieces, in-depth articles and editorials. As such, writer voice and commentator voice are the main voices used in the collected articles. We should take into account that commentator voice is, by definition, of a subjective nature, thus complicating an objective analysis of our data. One should also note that in this corpus, voice types have not been solely determined per paragraph, but have been interpreted per article. This means that articles can contain multiple voices, but for the sake of this study, the dominant voice will be regarded as the sole voice in the article.
4.3 **Inscribed (explicit) vs invoked (implicit) attitude**

Subjectivity in these articles can be either implicit or explicit. In this study, we will focus on the explicit evaluative language elements used in press coverage, as implicit evaluations are much more difficult and ambiguous to assess, and would provide no real additional value to the findings of this study. Appraisal will thus be used in this study to investigate emotions, feelings, values and norms as explicitly expressed in the Belgian, British and French corpus articles.

Within the appraisal theory framework, explicit and implicit subjectivity are respectively referred to as inscribed and invoked attitude. In other words, inscribed attitude deals with explicit information, whereas invoked attitude refers to implicit information. According to Thomson et al. (2008, p. 221), inscribed attitude can be linked to "locutions which carry an attitudinal value (positive or negative assessments) across a wide range of contexts (e.g. corrupt, virtuously, coward, beautiful, etc.)." In other words, one should perceive inscription as all utterances that reflect the author's explicit evaluation or esteem of the information at hand. In contrast, the term "invocation" can be used when the language expressed by the author does not convey any positive or negative assessments. In this case, Thomson et al. (2008, p. 221) claim that "the positive or negative viewpoint is activated through various mechanisms of association and implication." In other words, inscription deals with evaluations that are expressed explicitly through lexical elements, whereas with invocation no such expressions will be found, but the reader can deduce the author's evaluation from the text by reading between the lines. The following examples\(^1\) should bring further clarification to the notions of implication and inscription:

- (i) Last weekend, Manning, who was arrested in May 2010 at the US army base outside Baghdad where he was working as an intelligence analyst, entered his **1,000th day in detention without trial**. (The Guardian, 26 February 2013, www.guardian.co.uk) [Implicit judgement]

- (ii) David Coombs, the civilian lawyer representing Bradley Manning at his court martial for supplying WikiLeaks with a trove of US state secrets, has described the soldier's treatment in solitary confinement at Quantico marine base as criminal and a blot on the nation's history. (The Guardian, 04 December 2012, www.guardian.co.uk) [Explicit judgement]

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\(^1\) Examples taken from Martin & White 2005, p.44
4.4 Belgian, French and UK press

In the analysis of journalistic discourse, one should distinguish popular press and quality press articles, also known as tabloid press coverage and broadsheet press coverage. Blackwell Reference Online stipulates that "the former aims for a sensational and dramatic approach and style, whereas the latter's objective is to uphold its neutrality and objectivity at all times". In addition, the tabloid style is "consistently seen by critics as inferior, appealing to base instincts and public demand for sensationalism". Over the years, each newspaper type has acquired its very own type of readership.

Nevertheless, R. Boyle (2006) argues that this distinction of quality and popular press is fading and becoming decreasingly transparent, especially when it comes to sports and cultural topics. The term 'tabloidization' has been frequently used to designate a series of processes that is transforming what was formerly accepted as rationalist discourse (broadsheet newspapers) into a more sensationalist type of discourse (tabloid newspapers). As R. Boyle (2006) states in his analysis of sports journalism:

This ties in with what Sparks (2000: 32) suggests is the need to view such broadsheet newspapers as 'bundles of serious and less serious materials'; the challenge for newspapers is getting that mix or balance correct in terms of attracting and retaining their target readership. Hence the rise in the space and resource allocated to the coverage of sports in the 'serious' broadsheet press in the UK over the last decade or so is in part explained by placing it within this wider context of the 'reformulation' of a more market-driven journalism.

In addition, it is also worth noting that there might be considerable inherent differences when it comes to Belgian, French and British press coverage. French newspapers, for example, play a considerably smaller role in the life of its citizens compared to UK and Belgian newspapers. The French newspaper industry is not familiar with mass-market national dailies or the Sunday newspapers that one finds in English-speaking countries, and above all, tabloid press, which is omnipresent in the UK. Almost all French newspapers have been suffering from a declining readership since the new millennium, and continue to do so as the internet takes over to threaten their survival. Although Britain has no monopoly on popular press, France boasts no tabloid newspapers, though it has magazines and satirical weeklies.
The British newspaper The Economist makes interesting claims as to where, when and how these differences may have originated. According to this British quality newspaper, history and political culture may explain some of these discrepancies. "As many editors in post-war France had ties to former resistance networks, papers are still perceived as a means to further political aims, and not to make money", says Jean-Clément Texier, investment banker specialised in media. "The French press has always catered to elites", notes Olivier Fleurot, former chief executive of the Financial Times Group. "Le Figaro is for the wealthy, Libération for the cultured left, Le Monde for intellectuals. They have not properly understood what a mass audience wants to see in a newspaper."

Yet the most important reason for the variation in tabloid cultures may be of an economic nature. "If the Sun and its rivals are more aggressive than its German counterpart Bild, it is because competition in Britain is more intense than it is in Germany or anywhere else." Up until today, British tabloids continue to be sold on newsstands, and sensationalist headlines allow them to increase their readership whereas Bild practically has a monopoly and thus has no need for such policies.

A fair amount of observations have been made with regard to the Belgian press as well. According to Fox (1988, p. 271), the Belgian press "not only reports news and attempts to reflect and influence public opinion. It also seems to provide an important channel through which individuals who represent specific social groups in Belgium, but who are not journalists by trade, can speak out, directly or from behind the scenes, on behalf of the interests of those groups." In other words, the press in Belgium is one of the more "important, legitimate, potentially effective ways to exert enough social pressure either to foster or to deter social change in various sectors of Belgian life."
5 COMPARING MEDIA SYSTEMS: THREE MODELS OF MEDIA AND POLITICS

Comparing Media Systems: Three models of Media and Politics (2004) by Daniel C. Hallin and Paolo Mancini is a comparative study of media systems in 18 Western democracies including Belgium, France and Great-Britain. This project can be of interest as it provides us with a theoretical framework to evaluate any observations regarding potential differences in British, French and Belgian written press coverage of the rise of the Red Devils.

Within this study, Hallin & Mancini identified five core dimensions used to assess media systems and their political context. The two primary dimensions will suffice to illustrate the inherent differences between French, UK and Belgian media models.\(^2\)

The first of these dimensions is the role of the state. Hallin & Mancini distinguish liberal democracies and welfare state democracies, based on the interventional activity of the state. Welfare state democracies tend to have highly interventionist governments, whereas the role of the state is less prominent in liberal democracies. France and Belgium share a strong involvement of state and parties in economy, whereas the United Kingdom is more liberal and has a weaker welfare state. When it comes to the role of the state in media systems, a clear distinction can be made between Belgium, France and the UK as well: whereas Belgium and France share similar models of strong state intervention, the UK boasts a market-dominated media system.

Consensus vs. majoritarian democracy is the second aspect. Majoritarian democratic systems have two dominating parties, clearly distinguishing the government from the opposition. By contrast, the consensus politics model has a multi-party system based on coalition and compromise, thus complicating the distinction between government and opposition. Belgium boasts a government that is predominantly based on consensus, whereas the UK government can be perceived as predominantly majoritarian. France boasts a mixture of these two systems.

\(^2\) The other dimensions are: - liberalism vs. corporatism - rational-legal authority vs. clientelism - moderate vs. polarized pluralism
Using these dimensions, Hallin & Mancini conceptualized three models of media-politics relations. These three models are identified by the region in which they predominate:

- the Mediterranean or *Polarized Pluralist model* (France, Greece, Italy, Portugal, Spain);
- the North-Central Europe or *Democratic Corporatist model* (Belgium, Germany, ...);
- the North Atlantic or *Liberal model* (Britain, United States, Canada, Ireland).

The following diagram (Hallin & Mancini 2004, pp. 69) provides us with a clear overview of the media system characteristics of these models.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimensions</th>
<th>Mediterranean or Polarized Pluralist Model</th>
<th>North/Central Europe or Democratic Corporatist Model</th>
<th>North Atlantic or Liberal Model</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>France, Greece, Italy, Por-tugal, Spain</td>
<td>Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland</td>
<td>Britain, United States, Canada, Ireland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Newspaper Industry</strong></td>
<td>low newspaper circulation; elite politically oriented press</td>
<td>high newspaper circulation; early development of mass-circulation press</td>
<td>medium newspaper circulation; early development of mass-circulation commercial press</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Political Parallelism</strong></td>
<td>high political parallelism; external pluralism, commentary-oriented journalism; parliamentary or government model of broadcast governance; politics-over-broadcasting systems</td>
<td>external pluralism especially in national press; historically strong party press; shift toward neutral commercial press; politics-in-broadcasting system with substantial autonomy</td>
<td>neutral commercial press; information-oriented journalism; internal pluralism (but external pluralism in Britain); professional model of broadcast governance; formally autonomous system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Professionalization</strong></td>
<td>weaker professionalization; instrumentalization</td>
<td>strong professionalization; institutionalized self-regulation</td>
<td>strong professionalization; non-institutionalized self-regulation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Role of the State in Media System</strong></td>
<td>strong state intervention; press subsidies in France and Italy; periods of censorship; “savage deregulation” (except France)</td>
<td>strong state intervention but with protection for press freedom; press subsidies, particularly strong in Scandinavia; strong public-service broadcasting</td>
<td>market dominated (except strong public broadcasting in Britain and Ireland)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 1: Overview Hallin & Mancini diagram*
In contrast to this framework, Hallin & Mancini (2004) discuss the convergence or homogenization thesis, in which they claim that several transformation processes are taking place in Europe. The most important developments are the European integration, politically as well as with regards to the media, the decline of traditional political mass parties, the American influence on the professionalization of journalism, and finally the commercialization of the media markets in Europe. Based on these observations, Hallin & Mancini conclude that European countries might be pushed toward the Liberal model in the nearby future. However, they do point out that there may be limitations to this process as well, as the "elements of the process are anchored in the structural differences between the political systems around the world" (Hallin & Mancini 2004, pp. 75).
6 METHODOLOGY

This section describes the methodological choices that have been made in this study. In order to analyse the written press coverage of the rise of the Red Devils, a corpus of articles was assembled from French, British and Belgian newspaper articles in addition to blog articles and opinion pieces.

The main focus of this dissertation is to examine online and print press coverage of the Belgian team in Belgium, France and the UK. The terms used in domestic and foreign presses to describe the Belgian team, its performances and players will then be examined using the appraisal theory as described by Martin & White (2005). This theory will help to investigate the kinds of positive and/or negative statements and attitudes mentioned in the coverage.

6.1 Selection of articles

The corpus consists of articles gathered from British, Belgian and French newspapers, on the topic of the Belgian national football team. The majority of articles were gathered from different quality and popular newspapers, whereas a minor part was gathered from online blogs.

The French and British articles include columns, opinion pieces, in-depth articles and editorials. The subjective nature of these articles allows for a clear analysis of positive and negative elements of appreciation, emotion or evaluation. The Belgian corpus articles consist mainly of general newspaper articles and magazine articles. All corpus articles count at least 300 words and contain keywords linked directly to the Belgian national football team or any of its individual players. The articles on individual players were selected on the condition that there is a specific link to the Belgian national team as a whole.

6.2 Time frame

The corpus consists of articles dating from September 2009 to January 2014. When it comes to the team, this means that the articles were published from the period following the 2008 Olympics up until the qualification round for the World Cup in 2014. This should provide us with articles reflecting a range of responses. For the purpose of comparison, the information provided within the articles has been subdivided into three distinctive themes:

1. past performances of the national team;
2. the reorganization of the Belgian national Football Association;
3. the current success and the run-up towards the world championship in 2014.
Within our chosen timeframe, three main periods can be distinguished regarding the qualification campaign: (1) before/during the qualification campaign, when Belgium had not yet qualified for the upcoming World Cup, (2) during the qualification campaign, when Belgium had qualified for the World Cup and (3) after the qualification campaign, when Belgium lost a couple of friendly matches. It may prove interesting to see whether these facts have an influence on how the press depicts the national team or its individual players. An answer to this matter will be formulated in the discussion section.

Likewise, one should take into consideration the events that the Red Devils did or did not participate in throughout the course of this time period, as they may have an influence on the amount of press coverage linked to the team as well as how the team is portrayed.

- 2008 - Beijing Olympics - Belgium participated and finished 4th
- 2008 - European Football Championship - Belgium did not participate
- 2010 - FIFA World Cup (South Africa) - Belgium did not participate
- 2012 - London Olympics - Belgium did not participate
- 2012 - European Football Championship - Belgium did not participate
- 2014 - FIFA World Cup (Brazil) - Belgium will participate

6.3 Analysis of newspaper articles

This study uses the appraisal theory model by Martin & White (2005) to analyse the contents of the corpus articles. Appraisal theory as described by Martin & White (2005) mentions three different types of attitudes: affect, judgement and appreciation. These attitudes will help to determine how journalists portray any event or news regarding the national team and how positive or negative foreign and domestic press coverage is on these particular topics.

Next is the difference in journalistic voices. The corpus in this study is mainly built up from opinion pieces, in-depth articles and editorials. Because of this, writer voice and commentator voice are the main voices used in the collected articles. In this corpus, voice types have been interpreted per article rather than determined per paragraph, which means that even though articles may contain multiple voices, for the sake of this study, the dominant voice will be regarded as the sole voice in the article.
This study aims to reveal similarities, contrasts and patterns between foreign and domestic press coverage using the appraisal theory model. In order to give a clear overview of the expressions found within the corpus articles, an excel sheet was drawn up. In this overview sheet, each corpus article has been labelled with a code. The following items have been integrated in this overview sheet:

- type of attitude (affect, judgement or appreciation);
- nature of the article (e.g. opinion pieces, magazine articles, newspaper articles);
- dominant voice of the article (e.g. reporter voice, commentator voice);
- total number of items spotted in the article;
- theme of the item (past performance of the team, the reorganization, current success);
- the item itself.

One should note that the attitudes found within the corpus will not be analyzed on the level of separate words. Instead, this study will regard expressions, word groups, clauses, sentences or paragraphs describing a single topic or idea as one single unit in the analysis. When boundaries between types of attitude or other aspects are unclear, decisions were made based on my own judgement. The following example should clarify the process of applying the appraisal analysis.

"Sixteen now play for the biggest clubs in the English Premiership. Kompany is Manchester City captain, Fellaini has completed a £27 million move to Manchester United, while big-spending Spurs have Vertonghen, Chadli and Dembele in their ranks." (UK1)

The dominant voice of the article is correspondent voice, which means that there are some contextual constraints on authorial judgement. On one hand, this section deals with the 'capacity' of the Belgian players, yet on the other hand it also appeals to our 'reaction' to things (do they catch our attention or please us?). Consequently, one could argue that this paragraph is actually an indication of both judgement and appreciation. Martin & White (2005) refer to such cases where two types of attitude apply as 'hybrid realisations'. And finally, this section is linked to theme number 3, meaning that the author describes the current success of the team and its individual players.
7 RESULTS

For ease of reference, systematic codes have been allocated to the corpus articles. This means that the articles will not be referred to by title or author, but by the national code (e.g. 'BE') and the number that corresponds to that particular article. As a result, the codes do not reveal information on the press type of the article; e.g. a blog, popular or quality press. Similar information such as the dominant voice, the theme and the article nature has been integrated in the analysis itself in order to keep codes simple and concise. In addition, the articles have been coded in order of their publication, allowing a clear chronological overview. Consequently, this will enable us to hypothetically split the corpus into shorter periods, which will in turn allow us to gain a clearer insight into the development of British, French and Belgian press attention in the run-up to June 2014.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BE1</td>
<td>Pop</td>
<td>Het Nieuwsblad</td>
<td>AP</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Opinion piece</td>
<td>Comm. V</td>
<td>Witsel: volmaakt symbool van gouden generatie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FR1</td>
<td>Qual</td>
<td>Le Figaro</td>
<td>J</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>In-depth feature</td>
<td>Corr. V</td>
<td>On a vraiment un potentiel qui fait de nous un prétendant à la qualification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK1</td>
<td>Qual</td>
<td>The Guardian</td>
<td>AF</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>In-depth feature</td>
<td>Corr. V</td>
<td>He expressed sympathy for the manager after his departure</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Extract appraisal analysis

7.1 Chronological overview of foreign and domestic corpus articles

The graph below illustrates when foreign and domestic press started to cover the success story of the Belgian national team. By analyzing the number of articles published in a given period of time, we should be able to reveal or at least gain an idea of when the news item was picked up by the French, British and Belgian national press. One should bear in mind, however, that this is but an indication, as our corpus does not include every article that has been published regarding the rise of the 'Red Devils'. The time frame has been condensed into three-monthly periods, which gives us a better perspective on developments and trends in press coverage.
Figure 3: Chronological overview of foreign and domestic corpus articles

Our corpus indicates that the success of the Belgian national team was first covered by Belgium in January 2009, followed by Britain in October 2009 and France in September 2012. A possible reason for the early British newspaper coverage could be the so-called 'Belgian invasion of British shores': a great deal of the current players of Belgium's national side decided to try their luck elsewhere, more specifically in the British Premier League. However, a key player such as Eden Hazard had already won individual prizes in the French 'Ligue 1' as early as 2008, which could have resulted in a similar effect on the French media coverage for Belgium's national side.

In addition, the graph suggests that the bulk of British newspapers and news sites started to cover the rise of Belgium's national side in April 2012. Belgian newspapers followed closely after, over the course of April to August 2012, but a clear distinction can be made between the steep rise in newspaper coverage in Britain compared to the gradual increase in Belgium. A possible explanation for this result could lie in the fact that the Belgian press has been reporting the progress of their domestic team on a more frequent basis than the British team, suggesting that any possible causes for optimism would be picked up quicker by the Belgian press.

The increase in French press coverage seems to fluctuate more, although a first peak can be distinguished in the period between September and December 2012. When it comes to the team, this means that the British press coverage picked up shortly after a friendly draw against Greece, before the team had actually produced any major results. The French press, on the other hand,
started to cover the team's story after a 4-2 win against the Netherlands and a 4 out of 6 streak in the World Cup qualification campaign.

The next development shown by the graph occurs in April 2013 for France and August 2013 for Belgium and Britain. It is remarkable that this major peak in press coverage in France actually precedes the one in Britain and Belgium, although it might in fact be explained by the lack of earlier coverage. When French press coverage started to pick up eventually, the team that had frequently been claimed to be a Golden Generation actually started to perform accordingly, resulting in two consecutive victories against Macedonia and a win in a friendly against Slovakia. The increase in press coverage appears to be earlier, yet is also less steep than the one in Belgium and Britain in August 2013. From this date, there actually seem to be considerably more British and Belgian articles than those originating from France. Again, this leads to believe that the large amount of Belgian players developing in the British Premier League may have a direct result on the amount of press coverage linked to Belgium's national side.

7.2 Length of corpus articles

The length of corpus articles may reveal certain differences or similarities between Belgian, British and French press. The following graph gives a clear comparison of the average article length per country and per press type.

Figure 4: Average length of corpus articles
It appears that the Belgian corpus articles are shorter relative to their French and British counterparts. A possible explanation for this result could again be the fact that Belgian press reports on their team more frequently, suggesting that the chunks of information provided in each article are considerably smaller.

Another disparity can be observed in the article length of quality and popular press compared to blogs. The corpus articles seem to suggest that Belgian articles and blogs share approximately the same length. In contrast, British and French blog articles seem to be considerably longer than popular and quality press articles.

7.3 Three recurring themes

![Figure 5: Coverage of three recurring themes](image)

This graph illustrates to what extent Belgian, UK and French newspapers cover each of the three themes introduced in the methodology section. These three themes include:

1. past performances of the national team;
2. the reorganization of the Belgian national Football Association;
3. the current success and the run-up towards the world championship in 2014.

Some expressions relate to both the current situation and past performances as a means of comparison. In these cases, decisions were made based on my own judgement to determine which of these themes should be considered the dominant one.
Our corpus suggests that the majority of expressions with regard to Belgium's national side relate to the current situation. Expressions pertaining to the past performances and the reorganization appear to be only marginally present. However, one should note that all expressions regarding the team's situation since 2002 were added to theme 3, as the reorganization of Belgian football occurred as early as 2002. The minor presence of expressions regarding this reorganization could be explained by the fact that most newspapers appear to suggest the current success is based on a combination of luck and coincidence rather than a major reform on behalf of the Belgian Football Association. In most cases, this reorganization is not perceived to be a major instigator of the current success.

Most articles that refer to theme 1 seem to mention the generation and the World Cup of 1986. Moreover, there appears to be a certain analogy between coverage of the current team and the former team of the 1980's. This past generation has often been called a Golden Generation, similar to Belgium's current team. Since our corpus has not included articles written in the period preceding the World Cup of 1986, further research will have to be carried out in order to make firm assumptions regarding differences or similarities between the coverage of these two generations in the run-up of a major tournament.

7.4 Prominence of appraisal in corpus articles

The corpus itself is compiled of 106 articles dating from September 2009 to January 2014, and contains a variety of expressions reflecting the author's personal opinion and beliefs. The amount of evaluative expressions found within our corpus should allow us to gain an insight into possible discrepancies between Belgian, UK and French newspaper coverage of Belgium's national side in the run-up towards the 2014 World Cup.
The chart above serves as a comparison between the number of expressions found in our corpus of Belgian, French and UK articles. For the sake of clarity, no distinction was made in these general figures between quality press, popular press and blog articles. However, a clear contrast can be observed between UK press on the one hand and French press on the other. The majority of expressions in the UK press are labelled as appreciation, whereas in French press we see a clear dominance of expressions of judgement. The Belgian articles in our corpus appear to reveal a balance between expressions of appreciation and judgement.

In addition, all three national presses seem to be predominantly positive in their coverage of the developments concerning the Red Devils. The following graphs will give us an overview of positive and negative expressions of appraisal per country and press type. This should help us gain a better idea of how these three national presses relate to one another and if any particular differences can be observed between national presses or quality press, popular press and blogs.
7.4.1 Belgian press

In terms of the appraisal theory, Belgian press articles seem to reveal a discrepancy between quality press on the one hand and popular press and blogs on the other. Expressions of judgement seem to predominate in quality newspapers, whereas appreciation is definitely present but not to the same degree. In popular newspapers and blogs however, the expressions of appreciation seem to outweigh the expressions of judgement, albeit only slightly. This may suggest that quality newspaper authors focus more on generally accepted opinions rather than expressing their own appreciation or admiration for a particular player or the team as a whole. The emphasis in quality newspaper articles seems to lie more squarely on the notion of a team or player being good or bad according to more general criteria or opinions shared by the vast majority. By contrast, this would imply that popular newspapers tend to use figurative language more frequently which in this case suggests the writer's admiration. However, this will have to be confirmed by future research, as our corpus is not extensive enough to make firm conclusions on this matter. One important trend that the analysis itself seemed to confirm, is that blogs started to cover the story considerably quicker than popular press and quality press.

The amount of positive and negative evaluations is another interesting aspect. We can see a clear disparity in the number of positive and negative expressions of appreciation, judgement and affect. In all actuality, positive notions of appraisal in the Belgian corpus articles outweigh negative notions in a ratio of approximately 2 to 1. This applies to both quality and popular
press, but not to blogs. In fact, the number of negative expressions of appraisal exceeds the number of positive expressions in Belgian blog articles, implying that blog writers seem to be less impressed with Belgium’s national side and offer a counterbalance to the optimism and more positive expressions found in quality and popular corpus newspaper articles.

7.4.2 UK press

![Figure 8: Prominence of appraisal in UK corpus articles](image)

Our Belgian corpus articles showed a discrepancy between quality and popular press on one side, and blogs on the other. In contrast to the Belgian corpus articles, more expressions of positive appreciation can be found in the UK articles in all three press types. There seems to be no significant disparity between quality press, popular press and blogs in terms of the appraisal analysis. A trend that does seem to become clear, however, is the fact that expressions of affect seem far less frequent than evaluations of appreciation and judgement. This seems to be a general trend, as this is the case in the French, British and Belgian part of the corpus.

The parallel between British quality and popular press may in fact be explained by what R. Boyle (2006) refers to as the ‘tabloidization’ of the British newspaper industry. In practice, this means that the distinction of quality and newspaper articles is becoming less and less apparent, and that broadsheet newspapers are transforming their discourse into a more sensationalist approach, similar to the tabloid newspapers which are omnipresent in the UK.
The vast majority of expressions used in the British corpus articles are positive, and the ratio seems to outstrip that of Belgian corpus articles with approximately 3 to 1. This also suggests that the British newspapers seem to believe in the reality of a 'Belgian football revolution' and the chances of the Belgian team for the upcoming World Cup. Blog articles seem to be in line with the notion of Belgium's 'Golden Generation' and do not offer the same sort of counterbalance that Belgian blog articles seem to do.

This expression of a 'Golden Generation' appears to occur frequently in the corpus articles. In this study, it was labelled as appreciation, as it seemed more of a comment of admiration from the author, even though the notion of the Belgian team being a Golden Generation is widespread. On the other hand, if the focus of a phrase with this term is more on specific skills or characteristics, the expression was labelled as judgement, because the term is used in these phrases simply as a means to refer to the current Belgian team without having to repeat the same constructions of 'Red Devils' or 'Belgium's national side'.

In addition, the corpus contained a great number of expressions that lie somewhere between judgement and appreciation. The problem is that terms such as 'plan' and 'idea' can often be seen as a reference to both a human act and a thing or entity. Grammatically they seem to refer to objects, yet these objects are abstract, and do not relate to anything physical.

As a result, terms such as 'plan' are sometimes called 'nominalizations' or 'verbal nouns' (Halliday and Hasan, 1985). These verbal processes are often represented as if they are things or entities. For example, an 'idea' (judgement) can be represented as if it is a thing or object (thus, appreciation). This often makes it difficult to decide whether an expression refers to human behaviour or to some type of entity or thing.

These ambiguous evaluations might in fact be seen as 'hybrid realisations' (coined by Martin & White, 2005), meaning that they would be categorized in an entirely separate sub-grouping of evaluations which are ambiguous in terms of attitudinal positioning and thus deviate from evaluations that do not show any signs of ambiguity. For the sake of this study, these hybrid realizations were regarded as pure expressions of either judgement or appreciation. Decisions were made based on my own judgement as to what is the dominant attitude.
7.4.3 French press

French press articles seem to reveal the opposite of Belgian articles in terms of the distinction between popular and quality press. There appears to be no significant difference between these two press types with regard to the appraisal theory, and in addition, we can see that judgement is in fact the dominant expression in all three press types. This would suggest that French newspapers, regardless of their press type, tend to use more generally accepted opinions in their story, rather than expressing their own appreciation or admiration. The emphasis seems to lie on expressing widely shared beliefs and there seems to be no frequent use of figurative language as is usually the case in popular press articles.

Similar to the Belgian and British press, we can see a clear majority in terms of positive expressions of affect, judgement and appreciation. In the French part of our corpus, negative expressions seem to be only marginally present when compared to their positive counterparts. Much like the British articles, this might suggest that French newspapers seem to believe in the chances of Belgium's national side. Blog articles follow the same trend as quality and popular press, although we could argue that the number of French blog articles in our corpus is insufficient to express any conclusions on this matter.
8 DISCUSSION

The results section provided answers to the first three research questions. These questions were of a quantitative nature, and the appraisal analysis helped us in providing a clear and theoretical backbone to our findings. However, it is also interesting to examine the qualitative aspect. In this section, we will attempt to answer the question of the extent to which Belgium is mentioned outside of a footballing context. In addition, this section describes the differences between the Belgian, French and UK press coverage that are not linked to the appraisal theory.

While the analysis itself may seem to confirm, reveal or counter certain professed characteristics of the press in Belgium, France and the UK, there are some aspects that cannot be measured or explained by its results. Obviously, the fact that our sources range from quality and popular press to blog articles makes it harder to make firm conclusions on discrepancies between either press types or the national presses. In turn, we could start by arguing that many factors may in fact influence the attitudinal positioning of the author. The manner in which events are observed, interpreted and communicated is inextricably linked to the social background and ideological perspective of a journalist, be it a journalist by trade or an individual writing simply to share his or her personal ideas. This suggests that even the most factual reports are inevitably the product of numerous value judgements\(^3\), as the author has determined, for example, that this event, and not some other, deserved to be covered, how prominently it will be reported on, the way in which the event was described, which aspect received primary focus, and so on.

In our corpus, a clear shift of tone can be distinguished over the course of 3 time periods:

1. Before the qualification campaign;
2. During the qualification campaign, before having qualified;
3. During the qualification campaign, after having qualified.

\(^3\) (Iedema, R., S. Feez & P.R.R. White. 1994. *Media Literacy*, Sydney, Disadvantaged Schools Program, NSW Department of School Education.)
The tone of articles published in the first period was less optimistic. After the victory against Croatia, the team had convinced the majority of Belgian, UK and French press, which resulted in an immediate change in articles published after this particular victory. However, shortly after the qualification campaign, Belgium lost two consecutive friendly games against Colombia and Japan, which again caused a turnaround in foreign press coverage. Even though Belgium had succeeded in qualifying and lived up to the expectations, the first loss against Colombia apparently made most foreign sports journalists second guess their opinion. Suddenly, the team has shown major weaknesses in its defensive line. The British and French press coverage was marked by hard conclusions following these two friendly games, whereas Belgian press did not appear to change its opinion completely and simply tempered the high hopes and optimism built up throughout the run-up towards the 2014 World Cup. The following examples should clarify these developments in press coverage throughout the campaign.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Period 1</th>
<th>Period 2</th>
<th>Period 3</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Belgian press</td>
<td>Tijd om te concluderen dat onze Duivels toch niet zo goed zijn als ze zelf beweren.</td>
<td>Door de opmars van de succesvolle 'Rode Duivels' zijn de voetballers echter net popsterren geworden.</td>
<td>Het pleit voor de Duivels dat ze daarna zelf nog minstens twee keer hadden kunnen scoren, maar daar besliste de paal anders over</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK press</td>
<td>The players don't know what the top level is, [...] they seem contemptuous of everyone but themselves, and they don't seem to see anything wrong with that.</td>
<td>The streets of Brussels are alive with the excitement and promise of a rising force in the country, one that might finally put to rest the demons that have haunted the country and its legions of football fans.</td>
<td>While it is too early for the Belgian bubble to be burst, the fanfare has faded.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8.1 Differences in coverage of British, Belgian and French newspapers

This study focuses on differences between UK, Belgian and French press articles with regard to the appraisal theory. However, it might also prove interesting to have a look at how each nation reports news items on Belgium's national side. It would appear that in our corpus, articles originating from the UK tend to focus on individual key players, the political aspects of Belgium and its governmental crisis. Most articles continue by praising the uniqueness of Belgium's Golden Generation and how long it has taken the nation to build up a team that might be a global competitor in the years to come. In those articles, there appears to be no considerable focus on either match reports or in-depth information on Belgian players. In fact, UK articles seem to offer a coalescence between the two. If we have a look at the amount of attention of UK newspapers for the Belgian team, one could argue that it appears to be emphasized or enlarged due to the poor results of the British squad. If Britain had not succeeded in qualifying, its press seemed willing to support an underdog. The UK corpus articles focus on the Belgian team, and only refer to their own team occasionally by way of comparison.

In French articles, a larger focus on match reports can be distinguished, with less in-depth articles or articles longer than 600 words. In addition, more articles seem to compare the Belgian squad to the French domestic team, "Les Bleus", yet the focus often lies on their own squad. Considerable attention is given to the friendly match between Belgium and France and the history of matches between these two nations, but again, the emphasis appears to lie on their own team much more than in the British corpus articles. The individual players that French newspapers focus on, either play or grew up in France. This includes players such as Divock Origi, who has not yet obtained a reputation in Britain and is not mentioned in any of our corpus articles from the UK. Likewise, players such as Thomas Vermaelen, Jan Vertonghen and Moussa Dembele are discussed considerably less in French newspapers, given the fact that neither one of them has ever played in a French league.

There are, however, some players that seem to transcend this notion of household names. These players are mentioned in all three countries because they are considered to be of crucial importance in Belgium's national side, and include the likes of Vincent Kompany, Thibaut Courtois and Eden Hazard. On a side note, the latter does have a history in both the French Ligue 1 and the British Premier League, making it hard to build conclusions as to whether he is considered a key player or he is simply mentioned because of his mixed background.
The Belgian corpus articles seem to be more down-to-earth and measured about the strength of the national side. Most articles use quotations of foreign coaches or former players to express euphoria or pride. One could argue that twelve years of being absent on the global stage may have contributed to creating this cautious approach. On another note, some Belgian popular press and blog articles mention the Belgian team in their title, and then embark on a long subjective discourse revolving entirely around politics and the Flemish nationalist parties. The general idea that sports and politics should remain separated seems to be lost here, as somehow the success of Belgium's national team appears to be used as a means to counter separatist ideals.

Fox (1988, p. 271) stipulates that the Belgian press is "one of the more important and legitimate ways to exert social pressure either to foster or to deter social change in various sectors of Belgian life". This observation can most certainly be linked to the Belgian national squad and the change in momentum the team has witnessed over the past years. When it comes to foreign press, it makes sense that good or bad results alone are enough to change the team's portrayal completely. But the Belgian domestic attitude of criticism towards the Red Devils because of the bad results, would not have seen a complete turnaround in such a time if it was not for the press and the new-found sense of nationalism in response to the success of separatist political parties.

According to Fox (1988, p. 271), many articles on a particular topic tend to make general references to certain attributes of the Belgian economy, to the role of the royal family in the political life of Belgium, and even to positive qualities and problems of the country as a whole - which suggests that press coverage on events as trivial as the world cup qualification of the Red Devils can often be seen as an incentive to fend off or re-commence debates with vested interests in far more than the national football team.

8.2 References to Belgian culture and history

Our corpus seems to suggest that references to Belgian culture and history are only marginally present. Nonetheless, it could prove interesting to have a look at which aspects of Belgium are mentioned and which are not. We could also compare the different national presses with regard to this item and determine whether or not there are considerable discrepancies between British and French presses.

Whereas the UK corpus articles contained a number of references to cultural aspects of Belgium, French articles do not bear any such references at all. It is in fact quite remarkable that not a single reference is made to Belgian culture in a corpus of 31 French articles.
However, one could argue that this may be because France and Belgium are neighbouring countries, suggesting that the French population is in fact better acquainted with Belgium's cultural background and does not require further introductions.

The difference between Belgium, Flanders and Wallonia is the only aspect of Belgium that is mentioned in both French and UK corpus articles. There appears to be no explicit explanation as to what divides the country and how these troubles have originated. However, both presses do mention the division in itself, by referring to the fact that there is little love between French-speaking Wallonia and Dutch-leaning Flanders. In addition, the French articles F25 and F10 claim that the Red Devils serve as a unifying force to a divided nation that never before stood as close to an irreversible split into Flanders and Wallonia.

When we examine the articles referring to Belgian culture more closely, we can see that a certain number of items tend to recur. For instance, three UK corpus articles start by mentioning Tintin and his creator, Herge. Hercule Poirot is another famous, yet fictitious character mentioned by the UK press. These articles go on to claim that the inclusion of a fictitious character in the introduction of Belgium actually confirms the stereotype of the scarcity of Belgian celebrities. However, The Daily Mail also makes reference to famous Belgian painters such as Rubens and Magritte and Adolphe Sax, inventor of the saxophone.

A second reference to Belgian culture found in the UK corpus articles included traditional Belgian products such as waffles, beer and chocolate. Although these are often welcomed positively, the articles tend to use these references as a way of expressing the lack of Belgium's sporting glory. Belgium is sometimes depicted as a country with little history, few to no celebrities and chocolate, waffles and beer make up for the largest amount of references to its background.

Another remarkable example was found in article UK40 published by The Daily Mail in November 2013. The author specifically used the alliteration "Fashionable Flemish" in the title to refer to the Belgian team as a whole. One could argue that this reflects the author's limited knowledge of Belgium or a lack of appreciation of just how important this information is to the country. In conclusion, we could say that Belgian culture is only mentioned as a means of introduction, and that these references are usually coloured or subjective in the way they are presented. References to Belgium's history are completely absent with regard to anything besides football. More often than not, these cultural references depict the author's
negative view of Belgium as a country rather than offering the reader a neutral introduction of what Belgium stands for outside of a footballing context.

8.3 Name errors

Our corpus articles contained a number of individual players whose names were written incorrectly. The following table provides us with an overview of all these errors.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UK24</td>
<td>Popular</td>
<td>Alex Witsel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK19</td>
<td>Popular</td>
<td>Thorgan Hazard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK22</td>
<td>Popular</td>
<td>Lukaka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK36</td>
<td>Popular</td>
<td>Alex Witsel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK32</td>
<td>Blog</td>
<td>Thomas Hazard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FR22</td>
<td>Popular</td>
<td>Nicolas Gillet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FR10</td>
<td>Popular</td>
<td>Thomas Vermeulen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FR28</td>
<td>Popular</td>
<td>Axel Witsel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BE10</td>
<td>Popular</td>
<td>Drien Martens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Jelle Vossem</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: Overview of name errors in corpus articles

First of all, these results suggest that popular newspapers make more errors than quality newspapers. In fact, none of the quality newspapers in our corpus contain any name errors regarding players of Belgium's national side. Secondly, UK newspapers appear to make more errors than French and Belgian newspapers, mostly in names of players that do not play in the English Premier League. This last trend can also be observed in French newspapers, as Thomas Vermaelen plays in England and Axel Witsel in Russia. Although these results seem logical, it is surprising that Belgian newspaper articles contain errors in names of players such as Jelle Vossen and Dries Mertens, the first of which still plays in the Belgian Pro League and both of which are well-known to the general public. Some players that are also on the brink of international success are not mentioned in any corpus articles. These players include Charly Musonda, Andreas Pereira and Zakaria Bakkali. The fact that the names of other players such as Vincent Kompany, Thibaut Courtois and Eden Hazard are not misspelled in any article seems to confirm the statement that some players transcend the notion of a household name and, along with the notion of Belgium's Golden Generation, have acquired international fame.
9 CONCLUSION

The main objective of this study is to examine written and online press coverage of the rise of Belgium's national football team, nicknamed the 'Red Devils'. By means of the appraisal analysis, this study provides answers to the following research questions: (1) when did the national presses become aware of the issue? (2) what are the similarities / differences in how the Belgian team is covered by the Belgian, French and British press? (3) where do the elements mentioned in the article fit in when it comes to the background story: do they pertain to past performances, reorganization or success?

A more qualitative approach was used in order to provide an answer to the following question: (4) To what extent is Belgium (culture, history, etc) mentioned outside of a footballing context?

In response to the first research question, we can conclude that this phenomenon of Belgium's Golden Generation was first covered by Belgium in January 2009, followed by Britain in October 2009. However, French press only started covering the story of the current Red Devils in 2012. This is remarkable, as we expected that French and British press would have started covering Belgium's national side almost simultaneously. The bulk of UK newspapers followed in April 2012 and Belgian newspapers followed closely after, in the course of April to August.

A next step (research question 2) consists of comparing Belgian, UK and French newspaper coverage to discover any similarities or differences between these national presses. The appraisal analysis illustrates that in UK press articles, appreciation is the dominant expression and judgement is less frequent. French articles suggest the opposite, as expressions of judgement are much more frequent than expressions of appreciation. In Belgian press coverage, a balance between the use of appreciation and judgement can be observed. Another important conclusion is that in all three national presses, the evaluative expressions used in newspaper articles are predominantly positive. This is an expected result, but we do see a difference between foreign and domestic press. Percentage-wise, French and British press coverage is considerably more positive than its Belgian counterpart.

When we analyze the results of the appraisal analysis more closely, we can see a distinction between Belgian quality and popular press coverage. Whereas quality newspapers contain more expressions of judgement, appreciation is in fact the dominant expression in popular newspapers. French newspaper coverage suggests a symmetry between quality and popular
press, with evaluations of judgement being dominant in both press types. In UK press coverage, expressions of appreciation outweigh expressions of judgement in all three press types, confirming what is believed to be the tabloidization of the UK newspaper industry. Today, media experience a transition from being driven by a public welfare agenda to being driven by market forces. Capitalization and the 'corporatization' of media are often perceived to be the main causes of this development. Most newspapers have adapted their approach in order to cater to the tastes of audiences and advertisers. As revenue maximization is the supreme aim of any business, it seems only logical that this would inevitably lead to a more populist agenda of the newspaper industry as a whole.

Research question 3 dealt with the background story and whether the elements in corpus articles pertained to past performances, the reorganization of Belgium's national football association or the present success. Our initial analysis revealed that the corpus articles tend to cover the present situation with limited to no attention for past performances and the reorganization. These themes are in fact only mentioned occasionally.

Subsequently, a more qualitative approach was applied for research question 4 in order to determine to what extent Belgium is mentioned outside of a footballing context. This revealed that the general image of Belgian culture and history appears to be negative in most, if not all, corpus articles. Most references to Belgium as a nation refer to the troubles between Flanders and Wallonia and the corresponding language debate that incessantly threatens the country's survival. Few references to Belgian culture were found in both French and UK corpus articles. These included Tintin, Adolphe Sax and Belgian painters such as Rubens and Magritte, and some newspapers argued that the inclusion of fictitious characters in their presentation of Belgium seemed to prove their point that Belgium is not a nation of many international celebrities.

An aspect that was remarkably absent in the newspaper coverage of the Belgian national team is multiculturalism. One or two articles argue that the Belgian team might be where it is today thanks to its immigration policy, but in most cases, this policy is seen as a simple side note. Without engaging into any political debate, it seems fair to claim that the aspect of multiculturalism deserves more attention, given the fact that 10 out of 23 players are of foreign descent or ancestry.
In addition, the corpus articles revealed a certain shift in tone that took place during the time span of our research. While early coverage seemed less optimistic about Belgium's chances, their qualification seemed to alter most opinions in both foreign and domestic press. However, these sentiments were tempered after two consecutive losses in friendly games against Columbia and Japan. In the case of UK newspapers, the positivity built up throughout the qualification campaign even witnessed a complete turnaround.

In conclusion, media coverage is subject to constant change. Whereas the tone of most articles throughout the campaign was predominantly positive, two losses completely turned around how the press reports on the team, as more recent press coverage has been less optimistic about the chances of the team. In fact, this opens up a great deal of perspectives and opportunities for future research. It could prove interesting to carry out the same study on the British and French teams and see how these three relate to one another. Additionally, a similar study could be carried out in the aftermath of the World Cup in order to formulate possible answers as to how and why opinions might change overtime.
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## 12 APPENDIX

### 12.1 Non-exhaustive list of examples

#### 12.1.1 Occurrence of affect

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Non-exhaustive list of examples of affect from Belgian newspapers</th>
<th>Non-exhaustive list of examples of affect from UK newspapers</th>
<th>Non-exhaustive list of examples of affect from French newspapers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Heel België hoopt, zijn wanhoop, des scènes de lièsses, célébrer ce succès, fêter ensemble, les amoureux du ballon rond, l'amour du maillot, de voetbalkoorts, de verlossing, bange momenten, hou niet van de Rode Duivels, irriteren me, gek werd, eventjes hoop, we hopen, funfactor, de Belgen vieren, liefde voor het straatvoetbal, prettige gestoordheid, de Belgen vieren hun geloof, la ferveur autour des Diables rouges, de la pure folie, dans l'espoir de, l'engouement autour de notre équipe, le regard amusé et quelque peu amoureux de nos adversaires, on vous envie vos joueurs, les chants à la gloire, fébrile et décevante, exprimé ouvertement leurs doutes, le public du football adore, déçu de ne pas être titularisé, la lièse</td>
<td>Belgium were humiliated, a frightening squad, stirrings of unrest and dissent, there was humiliation, beat this; abandoned hope, proud of my team, the most frightening team, admired across the continent, hair-raising, stunned the Belgians, fears have surfaced, well liked among the players, disappointing, the passion is there, sprang a surprise, enjoy the football, it looked exciting, I just love having the ball, enjoying themselves, to the delight of the travelling support, watch in envy, the only thing he enjoys, Belgium hoping, take the breath away, growing frustration, a worrying situation, I very much hope, will be left mourning, high hopes, Belgium? Really?, depressing season</td>
<td>Falcao assomme les Belges, pas resté insensible, ce qui les envioye au paradis, la titraille euphorique, l'engouement, être toutes satisfaites, n'a cessé de décevoir, cette trop longue agonie, beaucoup d'espoir, très appréciés de José Mourinho, rien à envier à la France, ne tarit pas d'éloge, de quoi réjouir, explosion de joie, envioux de France, un vrai plaisir, peut être fièr, chantant &quot;on est les champions&quot;, le nouvel engouement, faire la fête et célébrer, une telle fièvre, les supporteurs confiants, totalement endiablée, toute la Belgique a chaviré, un véritable engouement, une soudaine passion, souleve la ferveur, la fierté du Roi, en liesse pour fêter la qualification, une étonnante fièvre patriotique,</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
12.1.2 Occurrence of judgement

12.1.2.1 Social esteem

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Normality (e.g. ordinary, extraordinary)</th>
<th>Belgian newspapers</th>
<th>UK newspapers</th>
<th>French newspapers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Opvallend in de basis, heel onvoorspelbaar, jamais, sans doute, une immense faculté d'adaptation, ook opvallend, slechts zelden komt het nog voor, een zeldzaam foutje, schitterend, formidabel, buitengewoon</td>
<td>Brilliant performance, exceptional talent, a unique player, a brilliant prospect, an exceptional young generation, an ordinary performance, an odd chance</td>
<td>L'exceptionnelle génération, étonnamment rapide, excellent de la tête, un superbe parcours, trois gardiens exceptionnels, exceptionnel pouvoir d'accélération</td>
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</table>

| Tenacity (e.g. resolute, courageous) | Gebrek aan concentratie en inzet, zal er alles aan willen doen, de bedrijvigste aller Belgen, ze zullen hun kop er niet voorleggen, n'accepte pas la défaite, maar Kompany gaat door | The spirit and determination, refuses to give up, we're taking it seriously, they will be up for it and so will we | Insensible à la pression, une génération qui ne s'imagine pas échouer au dernier moment, demeure très incertain, ils n'ont pas tardé |

| Capacity (e.g. great, star, elite) | Eén van de grootste talenten, een hele weg afgelegd, zijn veelzijdigheid, technisch begaafder, dans le top 20 des meilleures équipes du monde, une dimension nouvelle sur le plan physique et mentale | The level of football was not good enough, we knew what we were doing, we will be as strong as Holland, arguably the best squad of players in European football, one of the best defenders in the Premier League | Une inflation de talents, joueur de l'année, technique, vif, meilleur espoir puis meilleur joueur, le meilleur ratio de passes réussies, un milieu complet et très élégant |
### 12.1.2.2 Social sanction

<table>
<thead>
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<th></th>
<th>Belgian newspapers</th>
<th>UK newspapers</th>
<th>French newspapers</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Veracity</strong> (e.g. truthful)</td>
<td>Rankings liegen niet, zelfs niet die van de FIFA, maar eerlijk</td>
<td>The controversial injury-time equaliser, it would be unfair, to put complaints about ‘unfair’ football economics aside, in fairness</td>
<td>Un parcours exemplaire, son but injustement refusé</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Propriety</strong> (e.g. ethical, moral)</td>
<td>Voor relativering en nuancering was er amper nog plaats, met de voeten op de grond, überpositivo, sinds ze zich Tiësto en 50 cent wanen</td>
<td>All they cared about was winning the game, nothing else, totally wrong for the development of the players, change from a win-at-all-cost-mentality, he told other players deserve to be in the side ahead of him, the mentality is deplorable</td>
<td>Ils ont manqué de réalisme, plus Belge que moi, y’a pas, pour l’unité de la Belgique, Vincent Kompany s’insère tout en s’investissant dans les oeuvres humanitaires pour les jeunes défavorisés</td>
</tr>
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</table>
12.1.3 Occurrence of appreciation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Belgian newspapers</th>
<th>UK newspapers</th>
<th>French newspapers</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Volmaakt symbool van Gouden Generatie, rot van talent, de volmaakte synthese van Marouane Fellaini en Steven Defour, deze 'Dream Team', Génération Dorée et colorée, cette pépinière de talents, une armada invincible, possède des ressources à revendre, Hazard steelt de show, klasseflits Hazard, de geniale ingeving van Hazard, mannen met baarden die de bal desnoods opvraten en hem in de doelmond uitspuwden, un bilan impressionnant, ongelooflijk hoe het leeft in ons land, met bewondering wordt er gesproken over België, Brasil, beware of the Devils, Wilmots is God, vooral de keuze van Wilmots op het middenveld was 'spot on', de koelbloedigheid van een echte killer, de actie van Lukaku nog indrukwekkender, Gezien, José?, de enige die deze losgelaten beer nog kon volgen, Romelu Lukaku was dé held, heeft voetbalgoud in handen</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Is built like a Humvee and is blessed with searing speed, a sure touch and the finishing prowess of a natural predator, plethora of young Belgian talent, Belgian blaster, no self-regarding Premier League team is complete without a little Belgian gem, such gifted players, such a huge crop of talent, the solid spine to a team, the Belgian influence, such is their ability on the ball, an array of exciting, young talent, the never-ending conveyor belt of Belgian talent, a magnificent hat-trick, dazzled Anderlecht supporters with his superb ball distribution, terrific square passes, such an array of stars, with almost stealth-like endeavour, bursting with muscular aggression and brimming with talent, Hazard's illuminating display, a huge depth in the midfield talent available to the coach, a wonder kid, the wealth of talent</strong></td>
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<td><strong>L'ex-taureau de Dongelberg, Une équipe incroyable, le génial Hazard, sa phénoménale adaptation en Angleterre, une super génération, un jeu précis et spectaculaire, c'est fameux, non?, un début de saison tonitruant, l'équipe la plus talentueuse de l'histoire du football Belge, la star incontestée, le joyau de la couronne, l'imposante coupe afro de Marouane Fellaini, les deux mastodontes, incontournable Hazard, des joueurs pétris de talents, l'inamovible Vincent Kompany, l'explosion de ses talents, deux touffes parfaitement équilibrées, le symbole de cette génération aux pieds d'or, les talents conjugués de cette génération en or, l'indispensable et chevelu Marouane Fellaini, c'est absolument brillant, c'est juste magique, une étoile est en train de naître sous nos jeux</strong></td>
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