Squeezing Houses or Firm Bastions?
About the Tabloidization of the Dutch Quality Press between 2004 and 2013.

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Abstract
Since the beginning of this century, the circulation numbers of newspapers are under pressure. The decline in readership and the rise of online news are to blame for this trend. In the United States, the decline in readership triggered a process of tabloidization. With cheeky headlines, softer news and more visuals the newspapers tried to interest a bigger audience for their articles. Scholars disagree about the consequences of tabloidization. Some, like McLachlan & Golding (2000), argue it makes the news consumers less informed about the world. Others, like Gans (2009), state this accommodation to a bigger audience is important because that’s the only way to inform the mass. This research revolves around the question to which extent the Dutch quality press take over tabloid-characteristics between 2004 and 2013. There is special interest for nrc.next, a newspaper that was introduced in 2006 as quality newspaper in a popular format. This research combines tabloid-characteristics from the literature with nrc.next-elements in a comparative quantitative analysis of nrc.next, NRC Handelsblad, Trouw and de Volkskrant. It shows that these four papers popularized substantially between 2004 and 2013, which is clearly visible by the rise of soft news coverage and the increased visualization of the papers. The influence of nrc.next was limited in this process of popularization.

Keywords: tabloidization, popularization, Dutch quality press, nrc.next, piggybacking, newspapers
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Chapter 1 - Introduction

It’s October 2010 when Peter Vandermeersch and Derk Sauers join the Dutch television show De Wereld Draait Door. At that time, Vandermeersch was freshly installed as editor-in-chief of NRC Handelsblad. Sauers spoke as the new director of NRC Media, the publisher of NRC Handelsblad, nrc.next and nrc.nl. Both men talked about their plans for NRC Handelsblad, which was struggling with declining circulation numbers. Matthijs van Nieuwkerk, host of the show, asked them straightforward: ‘What needs to be changed at NRC Handelsblad?’

Sauer: ‘A lot.’

Vandermeersch: ‘NRC Handelsblad should be more fun sometimes.’

Sauer: ‘We need to make a new newspaper.’

And they did make a new newspaper. Critics saw an increase of sensationalist stories, uncharacteristic front page choices and lifestyle content. Vrij Nederland called NRC Handelsblad, traditionally the most prestigious quality newspaper in the Netherlands, ‘less a gentleman’. Former NRC-editor Geert Mak summed up the criticism as follows: ‘The newspaper reminds me of a restaurant that has been revamped in a strange way. The chairs wobble, the sounds are weird, there hang ugly paintings on the wall, the towels in the restroom aren’t entirely clean. Despite all of this, there are still pretty fine cooks working in the kitchen making excellent journalistic products. But, for how long’ (Botje & Cohen, 2012).

At the same time, other (quality) papers in the Netherlands were struggling with their circulation as well, while a new fresh paper, nrc.next, gained ground quickly (Oosterbaan & Wansink, 2008). And with the amount of online news growing as well, papers have been thinking a lot the last twenty years about reinventing themselves. In the United States, this thinking lead to a trend of tabloidization (McLachlan & Golding, 2000). Tabloidization is a term used by researchers for describing a trend in mass media that is about changing in formats in order to reach a bigger audience. According to Esser (1999), this trend began to appear a century ago when newspapers started to add ‘sections emphasizing sports and entertainment, illustrations and sensations that appealed to wider audiences’ (p. 292). Since then, newspapers popularized with sensationalist headlines, softer news and bigger images. All to increase the ‘salability’ of the papers. Critics raise questions about this trend that was reinforced by the drops in circulation numbers since the rise of the internet. They feared the simplification of journalism (Djupsund & Carlson, 1998). Some argue media are ‘dumbing down’ in order to be attractive for a bigger audience. The same concerns Mak had about NRC Handelsblad.

Research about tabloidization in the Netherlands is limited. Especially when it comes to the quality press. This study is intended to fill this gap in research, by fitting the characteristics of tabloids into a comparative quantitative research design that looks at how the Dutch quality press – represented by nrc.next, NRC Handelsblad, Trouw and de Volkskrant – changed over time. Establishing empirical evidence of a tabloidized quality press in the Netherlands provides valuable insights in the condition of
contemporary journalism. It shows us how newspapers have developed over time and how right critics as Mak are.

*nrc.next* forms an important part of this study. It was introduced in 2006 as a quality newspaper in a popular format aiming especially for young adults. After its introduction, the paper gained great popularity quite quickly (Reijmer, 2015). According to Oosterbaan and Wansink (2008), other papers followed the development of *nrc.next* closely. The paper proved a quality paper did not need to be stately and dusty, but could be young, fresh and jolly as well. Oosterbaan and Wansink state that other papers watched it with envy and started to change in the direction of this new ‘kid on the block’. It will be the first time that the *nrc.next*, which has been hyped extensively, is researched from an academic point of view (Reijmer, 2015). Such research is a fruitful complement for the existing studies about tabloidization. Because of its successful new format, it’s not unthinkable *nrc.next* provided other, struggling quality papers in the Netherlands some kind of blueprint to success. Therefore, it’s useful to involve *nrc.next* and its characteristics in this study.

This research revolves around the following research question: to which extent did the Dutch quality press take over tabloid-characteristics between 2004 and 2013? In order to answer the question, a comparative quantitative analysis will be carried out. The timespan is extensive in order to signalize popularizing trends over time. It also gives the researcher the opportunity to determine whether or not *nrc.next* introduced new features in the paper, so whether or not it can be called revolutionary paper in Dutch terms. The assumption is, based on the literature, that the paper did provide a blueprint for the Dutch quality press. The variables in the analysis will be distilled from academic literature and news coverage about tabloidization and *nrc.next*. Therefore, the literature study, that contains a background section as well, forms an important part of this thesis.

In the following chapters the definition of tabloidization will be discussed firstly, as this sets the scene for the corresponding changes in journalism and how to identify them. In the literature review, there will be special attention for the history and characteristics of *nrc.next*. This is important, so it’s uniqueness and influence on other papers can be examined. Besides, there will be attention for research on news consumption, as researches examined what the news consumers expect from newspapers these days. Their findings will be used for setting up the operationalization of this research in chapter 4. Chapter 5 and 6 will present and discuss the results of the comparative quantitative content analysis.
Chapter 2 – The Dutch Newspaper Landscape: A Brief History

The De Wereld Draait Door-show gives an insight of what struggles Dutch newspapers are dealing with. They struggle with popularization: what possibilities are available in order to stay attractive to a big audience? This research attempts to determine to what extent newspapers embraced such possibilities between 2004 and 2013. In other words: what ‘popular elements’ did the Dutch quality press adopt during that course of time. A brief history of the Dutch newspaper landscape is necessary to determine the state of the Dutch newspaper industry at the beginning of this century. Such an overview shows us long-term developments in the industry, which is important to interpret the sample properly. According to Oosterbaan and Wansink (2008), nrc.next can be seen as blueprint for the Dutch quality press in becoming quality, but popularized newspapers. Therefore, the case of nrc.next will be the starting point of this research. A look into the characteristics of nrc.next is necessary to determine its unique character and (possible) influence on other papers. In addition, the academic debate about tabloidization provides an overview of popular elements papers all over the world are using to make themselves more attractive. Literature about the decline in newspaper readership and the recommendations researchers make are fruitful for the same reasons: determining the unique character of nrc.next, its possible influence on other papers; and assessing the extent to which the Dutch quality press adopted popular elements.

The Dutch Newspaper since 1945

After the Second World War, the inner and outer of Dutch newspapers changed permanently and fundamentally. An important factor for the changes was the shortage of paper. Before the war, newspapers mostly appeared twice a day, but after the war – because of the shortage – that wasn’t possible anymore. Therefore, newspapers only appeared one time a day. de Volkskrant became the first ‘morning only newspaper’, followed by De Telegraaf and Algemeen Dagblad (Wijfjes, 2004).

The shortage of paper stimulated another change, namely concise writing. Before the war, for example, complete records of meetings were published. After the war, journalists exchanged these records for short, newsy pieces. When the shortage came to an end in the fifties, no one felt the need to return to the ‘detailed boringness and completeness’ from before the war. The Marshall Plan and press trips to America stimulated journalists to look across the borders. The Dutch newspaper switched to the Anglo-Saxon layout with headlines, introductive and excitatory written summaries, streamers and an article structure based on the inverted pyramid. Objectivity became a key concept, just like it was in America (Wijfjes, 2004).

Lightness became a more important characteristic of newspapers. For example, by printing human interest stories. But also by using a ‘friendly and roguish’ tone of voice and new sections like ‘relaxing’ puzzles and strips. Besides, photos gained importance. ‘Not too excessive used, but spread tastefully with a clear eye for detail’ (p. 320). At the same time, decency remained important for the newspapers. ‘The individual with all his worries and preoccupations was kept out of the newspaper, unless he was a public figure or it was necessary to understand the news’ (p. 321). Journalists tried to avoid public debate. The
press felt responsible for the stability in the country. Newspapers developed to ‘nice consumable products’: a ‘real gentleman, freshly washed, neatly trimmed and smooth in the suit, as it was becoming a real family friend’ (p. 340). As a consequence of these changes, the Dutch newspapers began increasingly resembling each other. The newspapers of the fifties changed in terms of position, but less and less regarding the news selection. It was all about the fiercest and most fascinating stories, notions that were the same for every paper’ (p. 367).

With the introduction of Dutch television in 1951, the media culture in the Netherlands began to change. The ‘new’ culture was based on ‘photos, films and television images which the media used to create their own reality aimed for seducing the consumer’. The aversion under Dutch newspaper journalists was big. They criticized the superficial of short television items. At the same time, they were confronted with a formidable competitor in the battle for the consumer’s attention. Not just because journalistic broadcasting shows were launched, but also because depillarization\(^1\) confronted newspapers with less loyal readers. Besides, the costs of labor, distribution and printing increased enormously. Therefore, the years between 1960 and 1975 are drawn by a process of rationalization whereby newspapers merged and the market concentrated (Wijfjes, 2004). At the same time, readers asked for a different newspaper. An informative one, but also one that would amuse. ‘The television sucked many fleeting attention away and newspapers were forced to concentrate more on quality and diverse information’ (p. 467).

Papers were forced to distinguish themselves. Therefore, they got bigger, were printed in color and introduced supplements. Also, human interest gained prominence. Hard news was brought ‘short, concise and factual’ while ‘stories with a human face, backgrounds and interviews and other genres which newspapers could use to distinguish’ were given free rein. Alongside the who, what, where and when, the why-question came into the picture. By answering these questions correctly, newspapers could distinguish themselves from the fast, but – according to them – superficial television shows. Newspapers hired young journalists because they felt ‘the pulse of time’ better than their older colleagues. They were hired to write ‘unprejudiced and varied’. Journalists all along the line experimented with own styles and sections. Examples are ‘scenic written leads’ and the in personal style written interviews (Wijfjes, 2004). ‘The modern journalist explained the public not from heavy sense of duty and paternalistic way, but tried in a challenging and creative manner to create a platform for public discussion and opinion formation’ (Wijfjes, 2004, p. 369).

The increasing wealth and advancing technology made it possible for Dutch media to grow enormously in the eighties and nineties. This growth wasn’t well-balanced and was characterized by increasing concentration of the market. A new wave of mergers followed. There was hardly resistance against these mergers, because history proved that concentration had clear benefits for journalists. \textit{de Volkskrant} for example, benefiting from the capacity of mother company Perscombinatie, saw her printed

\(^1\) A process of secularization in the Netherlands. The process started in the 1960s and weakened religious organizational forms – the pillars – strongly.
circulation growing from 190.000 in the seventies to 365.000 in the nineties. The concentration of the market stimulated newspapers to distinguish themselves from each other. Papers introduced specialized complements about subjects like science, cars and fashion and developed house styles. These house styles contained own fonts, a specific layout, a format for infographics and a philosophy for the use of color. Under influence of the visual media, newspapers used photography as a way to distinguish (Wijfjes, 2004). ‘The best photos were newsy and eye-catching aesthetic ones that were able to communicate a large load of emotions’ (Wijfjes, 2004, p. 423).

Although newspapers grew, a few fundamental problems appeared during the nineties. First of all, with the emergence of new media forms, newspapers were confronted with new competitors like websites. Besides, reader’s preferences changed in to the detriment of newspapers. Magazines, on the contrary, flourished because they adapted to specific needs of readers by specializing. Besides, the increasing influx of immigrants – mostly unlettered – would make it difficult for newspapers to maintain their large group of readers. The decline in readership, to conclude, would become a serious threat for newspapers (Wijfjes, 2004). ‘It was not only the question of whether and how the established journalistic profession could survive the internet, but how journalism would survive the integrated media system with one dominant visual medium and unprecedented mutually competition’ (Wijfjes, 2004, p. 480).

Oosterbaan and Wansink (2008) call the last quarter of the twentieth century the ‘golden era of Dutch journalism’. During that time, the total circulation of newspapers in the Netherlands was 4.6 million. The circulation numbers dropped at the end of the nineties. To illustrate this: in 1979, according the Wijfjes (2004) the ‘absolute prime year’ of Dutch newspapers, for every 100.000 people there were 32.554 dailies spread. In 2000, that number dropped to 27.250. In 2012 the total circulation of Dutch newspapers was 4 million pieces a day, substantially less than in the nineties and half a million less than in the eighties. Since 1998, the circulation of paid newspapers is dropping incessantly. Between 2000 and 2005, the total circulation of paid newspapers dropped with 15 percent. In the years that followed, the circulation dropped to more than 20 percent. In 2012, less than 2 percent of the paid circulation consisted of digital subscriptions. Meanwhile, the number of visits to their websites that newspapers generated increased sharply: in 2007 4.8 million people visited these websites, in 2012 that number increased to 6.9 million. ‘Concentration and consolidation are the dominant trends since the nineties, the number of titles dropped sharply. That is shown particularly by the regional press: a sharply increasing number of one-paper-cities and even a few no-paper-cities’ (Bakker, 2013).

This drop had four causes (Oosterbaan & Wansink, 2008). First of all, the omnipresence of audiovisual media. Newspapers found serious competitors in television shows, radio broadcasts and free newspapers. Those media were faster and free, but slightly more superficial in coverage. *Metro International*, the company behind *Metro*, is responsible for half of the total circulation of free dailies (Bakker, 2002). Free dailies aim at the general public in metropolitan areas, are published on weekdays, come in tabloid format and are ‘lighter’ products with more entertainment. In 2004 Bakker calculated that
the four national paid morning newspapers in the Netherlands lost 25 per cent of their single copy sales to free newspapers. Secondly, the internet posed a huge threat for papers. Websites robbed newspapers decisively from the privilege to publish only one time a day. Papers introduced websites and apps, but are struggling to this very day with the presence of the web. How complicated this struggle is, can be illustrated by looking at a rapport called ‘Innovation’ which was leaked from The New York Times in July 2014. In this document the newspaper, widely seen as one of the best newspapers in the world, tries to set out a strategy which would make it, after big offline and online losses, get growing again with a successful online strategy. According to Deuze, a huge moment that shows how much of a threat internet is to printed media: ‘I have heard the statement ‘if the Times falls, we all fall’ a lot. In other words, if the Times falls, we are all screwed’ (Deuze, 2014). Thirdly, publishers are less like the enthusiastic press lords of the past, but more like fierce investors on the hunt for profits. More about this later. Fourthly, there is the general trend that people are less interested in the collective, which can be deduced of the changed newspaper formulas. Instead of covering politics, newspapers published stories that touch the private sphere. Stories, for example, about health, careers and emotions. Illustrative are the words over Christiaan Ruesink, former editor-in-chief of Algemeen Dagblad: ‘That one scoop isn’t very important for me. What matters is making a newspaper that gives readers joy’ (Ruesink, 2013).

The importance of the reader is also apparent from the power advertisers have. Wijnberg (2013) see in the ‘explosion’ of competitors the power of newspapers declining, while advertisers actually have more to say than ever. ‘The alternatives are plentiful. Why advertise in ‘dead trees’ while a campaign on nu.nl, YouTube or even a game generates hundreds of thousands extra people?’ (Wijnberg, 2013, pp. 43-44). More and more sections and articles in newspapers are therefore tailored to the demands of advertisers. Examples are V from de Volkskrant or Carriere from nrc.next, both supplements aimed for ‘young career makers’ and therefore attractive for advertisers. A consequence of this commercialization is that attention is more important than ever. Therefore, it is necessary that media don’t miss big news. As a consequence, news is copied from other media, whereby the market homogenizes. That’s the case for both the popular and the quality newspapers. An examination of de Volkskrant-editor Keulemans (2012) shows that the number of longreads – pieces with 4000 words or more, according to Keulemans a gauge for quality journalism – is clearly on the decline since 2007. ‘Space is money. No reader is waiting for such long stories’ (Keulemans, 2012).

Changing newspaper formulas is an example of the renewed relationship between newspaper and consumer. ‘The newspaper is not the king anymore, the consumer is’. The era of ‘demand journalism’ – when newspapers decided what the reader should read – is over. ‘The newspaper is no longer a club where you are a member of’ (Meijer, 2010, p. 225). Instead, newspaper listen carefully to their readers in order to attract them. An example is the introduction of the tabloid format in the Dutch newspaper industry, a real adaptation to the busy lives of readers. ‘Opening a broadsheet newspaper over breakfast is like covering the entire table with newsprint. To create the required space the juice glass has to be moved to the right,
the egg cup to the left against the toaster and... er, where did the coffee cup go. [...] Today’s newspaper reader is harried. There’s not time to consume large chunks of newsprint, page after page. Instead, the paper is taken onto the bus, train or subway, to be breezed through as its reader rushes to a morning meeting or the day shift (Jändel, 2002, p. 4). According to (Bakker, 2014) the impact of the tabloid format should not be overrated. He found out that a switch to tabloid does not necessarily mean the circulation figures will rise. Most of the times, the decline actually continues.

Another example of the willingness of Dutch newspapers to accommodate to the wishes of the readers: the increasing use of photographs and illustrations. Broersma (2004) argues readers have ‘less time to read their thicker newspaper’ and, thanks to television, became used to images. Therefore, newspapers needed to add a visual structure that would increase both the clarity and attractiveness of the paper. These changes are more fundamental than just adding extra images. ‘It also generates a different representation of reality. Images appeal above all to the feeling. A ‘hard’, factual and analytical view of the news loses ground to a ‘soft’, empathetic and narrative style. [...] There is more attention to what people moves, health and feelings, in short: lifestyle in the broadest definition of the word’ (Broersma, 2004, p. 29). Images need to be there, no matter how shocking they might be. The killing of Gaddafì in 2011 is illustrative of how much the Dutch (quality) press has visualized over time. Sjoerd de Jong, ombudsman of NRC Handelsblad and nrc.next, wrote an opinion piece about the reactions that followed after the papers published the shocking image of Gaddafì’s dead body. De Jong stated: ‘This is a new step in the ‘normalization’ of the Dutch media, that were reluctant for so long in showing violent pictures this big. Big news needs to be served in images as well, seems to be the philosophy these days, even so during breakfast.’ De Jong quotes his colleague, Peter van der Ploeg from nrc.nl. Van der Ploeg stated: ‘News does not adapt to appetite’ (De Jong, 2011).

Het Parool was in 2004 the first Dutch paper to switch to the smaller format. In October 2014, De Telegraaf, as the last non-tabloid paper in the Netherlands, switched to tabloid as well. In between, Trouw changed in February 2005, de Volkskrant in March 2010 and NRC Handelsblad in March 2011. Papers had concerns about the switch they needed to make. NRC-Editor Carola Houtekamer wrote in March, a few days before NRC Handelsblad would switch to the format: ‘For weeks this page contains a smokescreen about the new appearance. Will the newspaper become a superficial tabloid? Is lifestyle gaining ground at the expense of the analysis? Will images displace text? That kind of questions we are dealing with’ (Houtekamer, 2011). For years, papers didn’t reinvent themselves. In the words of Sjoerd de Jong, ombudsman at NRC Handelsblad, they switched to tabloid format, but ‘remained broadsheet papers’. De Jong: ‘While tabloid has its own ground rules, specific mathematics. Tabloid is smaller, so it needs focus and great navigation. You should be able to read it in three minutes, half an hour and three hours.’

According to Oosterbaan and Wansink (2008), the introduction nrc.next, a whole new quality newspaper in tabloid format, on March 14th 2006 set the scene for other Dutch quality newspapers in the Netherlands. With its distinctive style – lots of popular elements – nrc.next showed other papers how to
use the tabloid format successfully. Therefore, Oosterbaan and Wansink (2008) argue *nrc.next* influenced the Dutch quality press. This argumentation makes the case of *nrc.next* a valuable starting point in determining to which extent the Dutch quality press took over popular elements over time. However, understanding of the *nrc.next*-philosophy is necessary in order to interpret its style correctly.

*nrc.next: Becoming an Example*

*nrc.next* is a Dutch daily newspaper that first appeared in March 2006. The paper is published by *NRC Media*, the organization that also publishes the evening newspaper *NRC Handelsblad* and owns *nrc.nl*. *nrc.next* is a morning edition tabloid and aims for young, higher educated readers. That means people between 20 and 39 years old with Higher Education- or University-degrees. Initially, the paper appeared only from Monday till Friday (Oosterbaan & Wansink, 2008). Since October the 12th 2013, *nrc.next* appears on Saturday as well. According to the latest NOM-figures (2015 Q4), *nrc.next* has a print circulation of 33.355 pieces.

The first idea of what would become the *nrc.next* arose in December 2003. Assistant editor-in-chief of *NRC Handelsblad* Gijsbert van Es and his marketing companion Willem Jan Makkinga set up a meeting with some media specialists. They talked about the question: how to reach and bind people that, because of the internet and free newspapers like *Metro*, aren’t used to read a paid paper anymore? In practice that meant: how to bind the young reader? An idea arose to make a daily newspaper especially for young people that would be sold on universities only. However, the costs of such a newspaper turned out to be too high and the project got cancelled within a few weeks (Oosterbaan & Wansink, 2008). It wasn’t until June 2004 before the issue of reaching younger readers got put back on the table again. At that moment, the circulation figures of *NRC Handelsblad* were dropping fast and Van Es set up another meeting. The solution for the dropping numbers: a new paid morning paper, made for young people and one that would contain as much pieces from *NRC Handelsblad* – and therefore quality – as possible. Folkert Jensma, at that time editor-in-chief of *NRC Handelsblad*, stated: ‘After we introduced a new, ‘young’ section in *NRC Handelsblad* called *Leven.etc.* we ran out of possibilities to serve the traditional and the younger readers at the same time’ (Oosterbaan & Wansink, 2008, p. 146). A second newspaper, made for young people only, would give the staff and journalists more space to experiment. Van Es: ‘From the beginning we knew this would not become a regular newspaper. We wanted a news magazine. One with a cover story, the most important story of the day’ (Oosterbaan & Wansink, 2008, p. 146). Editors from *NRC Handelsblad* feared dumbing down journalism – ‘it will become even worse than *Leven.etc.*’ – and a bigger workload. However, the staff carried through and *nrc.next* became a fact. The name – *nrc.next* – stood for the next chapter in newspaper history’ (Oosterbaan & Wansink, 2008).

On March 14th 2006, the first *nrc.next* appeared. It was substantially thinner (36 pages) and cheaper (50 cents) than other newspapers. Striking was the cover with one big image which referred to a story inside. In charge was chief editor Hans Nijenhuis. He supervised 24 newly appointed next-journalists. Those
journalists were young (most of them twenties and thirties) and ‘highly talented’. Therefore, it didn’t matter that some of them weren’t experienced in being a journalist. Nijenhuis wrote in the first edition: ‘They have been chosen because they have a special background, as journalist, designer or image editor – and because they explored the world. In short, they surprised us when we met them. It’s now up to them to surprise the readers of nrc.next’ (Nijenhuis, 2006, p. 4).

It wasn’t the intention to make a newspaper for young readers only, wrote Nijenhuis on his blog: ‘We make a newspaper for people who don’t read paid newspapers anymore: they never started or stopped at some point doing it (or are considering that). People who don’t have much time and/or patience and/or money for a big, complete newspaper. People who already know the ‘who’, ‘what’, ‘where’ and ‘when’ from the news because of the radio, television or internet, but who still are interested in the ‘how’ and ‘why’. And who want to read that in a clear and accessible manner’ (Nijenhuis, 2006). On the same day, editor-in-chief Folkert Jensma wrote in NRC Handelsblad and nrc.next: ‘nrc.next is meant for the new generation interested media users who deal differently with news and information. All day long, this group is connected to different channels. These people see news as a barrage of free flashes and updates from the online world. We want to adapt to their lives and work’ (Jensma, 2006, p. 2).

Initially, the success of nrc.next was great. Until 2012, the circulation figures grew every quarter. During the heyday of next, in 2011, the paid paper circulation of the paper was more than 75.000 copies. The growth stagnated the following year. Since the end of 2012, the circulation figures of next dropped. At the moment, the situation is worrisome. In January 2015, de Volkskrant asked itself the question: for how long can nrc.next survive? Nijenhuis: ‘When I look back to the early stages of next, we forgot one thing: innovate. Other newspapers moved forward to nrc.next. We gradually became less distinctive’ (Reijmer, 2015).
Chapter 3 – Popularization in all Forms

Tabloidization

*nrc.next* appeared in a time when newspapers were seriously struggling with dropping circulation numbers. The popular elements *nrc.next* used to be attractive for (younger) readers are central in this research. Although, the emergence of *nrc.next*, a popular newspaper printed on tabloid format, fits into a broader trend which academics describe as tabloidization. Definitions of tabloidization differ – the literature lacks a widespread accepted definition of the term, but the bottom line is that newspapers are getting less strict and serious in order to captivate a bigger audience. According to Esser (1999), this trend began to appear a century ago when newspapers started to add ‘sections emphasizing sports and entertainment, illustrations and sensations that appealed to wider audiences’ (p. 292). Since then, newspapers popularized with sensationalist headlines, softer news and bigger images. All to increase the ‘salability’ of the papers. The tabloid format spread slowly, but became popular after the introduction of *USA Today* in 1982. The publication of this new American newspaper marked a drastic departure from traditional conceptions of newspaper form and style with the colored pages, graphics and compact stories. ‘USA Today was designed to be different. Breezy. Bright. Colorful. Attention-getting. Sometimes irreverent. Always upbeat. Most of all, fun,’ wrote Neuharth (1990). While other newspapers desperately tried to distinguish themselves from the television format, *USA Today* copied it and ‘wanted to look like television’ (Vivian, 1993 & Broersma, 2004).

It’s important to note that tabloidization knows different forms. Therefore, Bird (2006) warns that tabloidization is not one homogenous phenomenon. In fact, tabloidization has different forms depending on the context. ‘Even in two societies as apparently similar as Britain and the USA, there are substantial differences in tabloid media, and thus the implications of tabloidization can also differ’. For example, British tabloids are ‘explicit visually and verbally, about sex, while US weeklies avoid direct references’. Esser (1999) states tabloidization could be seen as micro scale process which entails ‘a media phenomenon involving the revision of traditional and other media formats driven by reader preferences and commercial requirements’. That means ‘a change in the range of topics begin covered (more entertainment, less information), in the form of presentation (fewer longer stories, more shorter ones with pictures and illustrations) and a change in the mode of address (more street talk when addressing readers)’ (Esser, 1999). Thereby, the smaller format would fit with the demands of the reader.

According to Esser, tabloidization must also be understood as macro scale process, as ‘a social phenomenon both instigating and symbolizing major changes in the constitution of society – signs being, for example, attaching less importance to education and more political marketing, resulting in an increase in political alienation’ (Esser, 1999). Sparks (2000) sees three ‘master themes’ of ‘social change in the developed world’ that are linked to the rise of tabloidization. First, he refers to the high literacy and educational level of the overall population, that increases the potential market for serious newspapers. But,
his second point, that’s about the structure of the family and labor market, must be seen as a bad sign for the quality newspaper industry. More and more women buy newspapers, but they are confronted with newspaper content that is – in general – traditionally male focused. Thirdly, Sparks states that the number of college graduates is increasing, which leads to a disruption of the status quo. ‘The positions of economic and social responsibility and leadership that were characteristics of the elite readership of the serious press are not shared by many of the news, educated employees’ (Sparks, 2000, p. 33). These factors lead to what Sparks calls ‘a shift in the preferred average mix of content’. He states: ‘The serious is struggling to identify this new mix, and in the course of doing so is finding it seems to contain much more sensation and scandal than they were trained to believe was appropriate in a serious newspaper or news broadcast’ (Sparks, 2000, p. 33). Golding and Elliot (2000) agree on that point by saying that the desire of the journalist to engage the audience ‘may cut across some professional and moral standards’. In order to inform the audience, it’s necessary to gain its attraction first.

Some scholars agree that commercialization of the media must be seen as one of the main motives behind tabloidization. Esser (1999), for example, states: ‘Tabloidization is the direct result of commercialized media, most often promoted by the pressures of advertisers to reach large audiences’. According to Picard (1998), newspapers choose to become a tabloid when their classic form does not attract enough readers any more. Because of the growing competition, newspapers need to cut costs and are therefore forced to standardize their content. A newspaper is a real business, writes Hauttekeete (2005). Generating profit is the primary goal. In doing this, newspapers serve two parties: the readers and the advertisers. Scholars like Vanheerentals (2000) publish about the dangers of this construction. He argues that the fear that commercial divisions behind the newspapers pressure on the working journalists and the content is real.

Reactions to Tabloidization

Critics see tabloids as ‘inferior’ compared to the traditional press and ‘appealing to base instincts and public demand for sensationalism’ (Bird, 2006). They fear ‘dumbing down journalism’. Like MacDonald (2006, p. 23): ‘Relying on readily available human interest to cover up a poverty of sources or inadequacies in evidence may still deliver ratings, but it will atrophy the ability of the personal to provoke the range of questions that need to be opened for debate if we are to have a vibrant democracy.’ Esser (1999, p. 34): ‘At their most extreme, critics of ‘tabloidization’ see a shift towards sensation, emotion and scandal as a major element provoking a crisis of public life and as the negation of the kind of journalism that is essential to democracy’. Franklin (2007) warns for the fact that articles are slimmed down to ‘bite-sized chunks’, most of the time only containing some quotes. By doing this, the journalist fails to provide interpretation and nuance. Blumler and Gurevitch (1995) build on here by stating that tabloidization undermines democracy, because tabloids are more about entertaining than informing. The watchdog function of the press, a point proven by the Watergate-stories of the previous century, is therefore in jeopardy (Haen & Bardoel, 2011).
Gulyas (1998) argues the entertaining content of tabloids distract readers of what really matters in society. The importance of proper political coverage is highlighted by McManus (1994, 183): ‘Even if you dismiss the idea of the news media as a ‘Fourth Estate’ of government as a romantic ideal, citizens nevertheless depend upon the media to enable them to meet their routine civic obligations – electing scores of local, state, and national officials, and deciding referenda and bond issues’.

Franklin (2005) states that dumbing down isn’t the main problem of tabloidization, while McJournalism is. McJournalism, which refers to the standardization trend that Franklin calls McDonaldization, is about a new style of journalism, that is characterized by efficiency, calculability, predictability and control via technology. ‘McJournalism offers a dull, consistent, staple diet of programming which is obsessed with quantitative measure of ‘quality’ such as ratings: McJournalism delivers the journalistic equivalent of Big Macs but is less concerned about Quality Macs. McJournalism increasingly produces newspapers with similar contents and on occasion identical headlines, lead stories and pictures provided by the same picture or news agency. In the local press, reduced numbers of journalists, the power of local advertisers, the increasing reliance on information subsidies from local government and other PR agencies, similarly delivers a homogenous product: from Land’s End to John O’Groats, McJournalism delivers the same flavorless mush.’ This McJournalism has the consequence that news becomes uniform and predictable and readers get ‘spoon fed’.

The underlying assumption of these critiques is what Max Weber called an ideal type, a conceptual form of something – in this case journalism – that is perfect, the way it should be. According to Zelizer (2000), it touches the discussion about high and low culture, distinctions that have been made ‘since we have recognized that phenomenon we call “culture”’. She states: ‘In the United States “tabloidization” is seen as something coming from outside of the world of proper, respectable journalism. It is an alien form, invading that world and contaminating it. It threatens to destroy U.S. journalism’ (Sparks, 2000, p. 7).

Concerns over the declining standards of newspapers weren’t new when tabloids were introduced. Schudson (1978, p. 23) argues: ‘The six-penny papers responded to the penny newcomers with charges of sensationalism. This accusation was substantiated less by the way penny papers treated the news (there were no sensation photographs, of course, no cartoons or drawings, no large headlines) than by the fact that the penny papers would print ‘news’ – as we understand it – at all.’

Scholars like Gans (2009) believe in the importance of tabloidization. Citizens, he argues, need to know about hard news and sometimes it is necessary to present this news differently in order to make it attractive to read or watch. The end justifies the means: ‘The news and news media that would result from these efforts at popularization might not satisfy current professional criteria for excellence. However, in a highly polarized society embedded in a globalizing domestic economy and a combative international polity, every little bit of extra understanding of the national and international news is important’ (Gans, 2009, p. 26-27). Baum (2002, 2003) argues soft news can be used for spreading a serious message. His ‘incidental by-product’ model shows that when political information is presented in an ‘entertaining context’, it could
be ‘piggybacked’ or attached to information intended primarily to entertain and therefore ‘consumed incidentally, effectively at no extra cost’. Baum and Jamison (2006) found that politically inattentive individuals who consume daytime talk shows were more likely than their non-consuming, inattentive counterparts to vote for the candidate who best represented their self-described preferences. They call it the Oprah-effect: soft news can facilitate voting ‘competence’. Meijer (2009) states the quality of journalism doesn’t depend on the amount of political news only. She argues soft news could make citizens involve in the public debate. Therefore, tabloidization has a democratizing effect. Piontek (2013) argues the media ‘have to struggle for the attention of people who are not really interested in serious discussion. Tabloidization thus seems to be a quite natural consequence of that coincidence.’ According to Bird, it’s not necessary to worry about the reducing quality of journalism: ‘I don’t worry that journalism includes supposedly trivial or emotion-laden stories of celebrities, everyday heroes, and so on. These have always been part of news, and they perform an important cultural role. The problem is when that role swamps the other important dimensions of what journalism can and should be. […] But as long as we still fuss about the tabloids as representative of everything bad, we will be distracted from seriously addressing the more real challenges of maintaining journalistic authority in the age of truthiness’ (Bird, 2006, p. 47).

Brants (2008) states the ‘infotainment scare’ is based on several doubtful assumptions. He refers to commercial television shows. These shows, he argues, didn’t succeed in expelling news programs from prime-time. On the contrary: many commercial broadcasters have adapted their schedules to the ones of the public broadcasters. Then, Brants discusses assigned properties of tabloid papers, like the preference for sensational stories, the substantially shortened articles and the happier writing style. True, but these changes didn’t influence the political coverage. Only when infotainment leads to a misshapen rending of reality, there is a reason to panic. Brettschneider and Gabriel (2002) agree by stating that voters still base their choices on substantive positions and don’t allow themselves to be drive by doubtful media coverage.

**Tabloidization of the Quality Press**

While this research is about the tabloidization of the Dutch quality press, it’s relevant to look into earlier research on this specific topic. Methods other academics used and limitations they faced can be useful for setting up this paper. Literature about the pros and cons of tabloidization is abundant, examinations that put these claims to a test isn’t widespread though. Therefore, the research of Hauttekeete (2005) is valuable. She composed a quantitative content analysis in order to verify if the political coverage of Belgium newspapers *Le Soir*, *La Libre Belgique* and *La Dernière Heure* is ‘tabloidized’. She looked at ‘manifest’ (size of the pictures, size of the text and type of article) and ‘latent’ aspects (to which extent is the article emotional and negative). On the basis of these aspects, she compared two weeks of articles from two different years (1990 and 2000). Hauttekeete marked the articles as ‘factual news and interpretation’, ‘opinion’, ‘reportages’ or ‘interviews’. Besides, she measured the amount of space that the newspaper devoted to text and pictures. At this point, she states: ‘This research does not say anything
about the ‘how’ of the pictures. A more qualitative approach would be insightful. Photos can say a lot, although it’s not wishful that they supplant text’ (Hauttekeete, p. 67). Then, she checked the headlines for the presence of ‘irony, underlines, superlatives, and question or exclamation marks’. She used the definition of McQuail (1992) to determine to which extent (on a scale from 1 till 5) articles could be qualified as ‘personalized, dramatized and emotional’. To conclude, she measured to which extent politicians are portrayed ‘negative’, for example as ‘enemy of the crowd’ or as ‘an actor in a scandal’. Hauttekeete concludes that the worries about the dumbing down of the quality press are unjustified when looking at *Le Soir* and *La Libre Belgique*: the amount of serious news didn’t change, although ‘visual culture left its traces’. *La Dernière Heure*, on the contrary, ‘does justice to its name as popular newspaper’. Hauttekeete found a big rise in the number of photographs, reportages and sensational headlines. Besides, the content has become ‘clearly’ more emotional and superficial.

Again, it’s important to notice that tabloidization cannot be seen as an international phenomenon which expresses the same in every country. Schoenbach (1997), for example, concluded after a study of 350 newspapers that tabloidization does not ‘sell’ in Germany. The study shows that paper which decided ‘to go tabloid’, for example by using more infotainment and emotion, could not increase their circulation. Schoenbach sees this as an indication that Germans still tend to value news values. They are substantially more interested in business news and political commentary. Franklin (1996) conducted a content analysis of the political reporting of *The Guardian* and *The Times*. He looked at how both papers covered the activities of Prime Ministers inside and outside the parliament between 1990 and 1994. The number of articles about this subject dropped from 253 to 205. Meanwhile, the number of newspaper accounts of political scandals went from 7 to 33. Golding and McLachlan (1998) examined *the Times*, *the Guardian*, *the Mirror* and *The Sun* and looked at quantitative indications of tabloidization occurring over time. Their coding scheme contained: amount of international news stories, ratio of pictures and text, amount of human interest and entertainment stories and the amount of political and parliament news stories. It seemed that the amount of international news decreased, while the number of human-interest stories increased. Besides, the number of political news stories and their average length have become more similar between the quality and tabloid press.

Djupsund and Carlson (1998) looked at different newspapers in order to determine to which extent they are using elements of the tabloid press. They examined two aspects: trivialization and visualization. Trivialization was observed by looking at the area (in cm2) and the share (percent) of different types of articles. The articles were divided into the categories ‘hard news’, ‘soft news’ and ‘news of crimes and accidents’. The visualization was analyzed by determining the share of pictures on the front page, the extent in which articles were illustrated and by looking at the largest photograph on the front page ‘in more detail’. By looking at this photograph, the researchers could possibly see a ‘reflection of how the newspaper wishes to meet its readership’. Franklin (1997) summarizes that the emphasis on entertainment – which he calls ‘newszak’ – have resulted in the growth of broadloids, tabloidized broadsheets. These
broadloids resemble tabloids in terms of style, layout and content. Copied characteristics are banner headlines, alliteration and the use of puns. Besides, many traditional newspapers increased their font size and number of pictures, and feature shorter words, less text, bigger pictures and color photos. Franklin states that these aspects have become ‘standard components of the broadsheet front page’.

**Changes in News Consumption**

In order to have a better understanding of what makes newspapers think tabloids are the answer for that problem, it is illuminative to look at previous research on the decline in readership. What are the reasons for the diminished interest in printed media? Why is it so problematical to reach the youth? And: what do non-readers actually expect of traditional newspapers? By having insight into the problems (young) readers have with newspapers, it will be easier to determine and understand how newspapers have adapted over time. Besides, academics like Meijer (2006) come up with ‘solutions’ for the papers’ struggles in reaching a big audience. These solutions will be useful when identifying popular elements in the Dutch quality press.

**General Decline in Readership**

The interest in printed media has diminished throughout the whole Western world (Cushman et al. 1996). Since the mid-seventies the amount of time Dutch people are spending on reading printed media is becoming less and less. Between 2006 and 2011 the number of Dutch people who are reading a newspaper, magazine or book dropped from 82 percent to 67 percent. In 1975 this was 96 percent of the people. The time spent on reading newspapers dropped between 1975 and 1990 with 37 percent (12-19 years of age) and 49 percent (20-29). According to the CBS, the waning interest in printed media isn’t bound to certain groups and must be seen as a general phenomenon which is called ‘ontlezing’, a decline in readership. This decline wasn’t foreseen in the Netherlands. During the fifties the mood was even optimistic, because the number of young people who attended higher education was rising. The CBS predicted this would result in a ‘substantial’ increase in the reading frequency of the Dutch (CBS, 1959). This optimistic point of view also reached the Dutch newsrooms. Newspapers saw the number of subscribers increase proportionately with the number of academic graduates (Oosterbaan & Wansink, p. 10).

Although decline in readership is a general phenomenon, it are especially young people who are massively putting printed media aside (Knulst & Kraaykamp 1996, Van den Broek, Knulst & Breedveld 1999). Newspaper readers are getting older and the youth have found their way into the digital media, like television and internet (Knulst & Kraaykamp, Lauf 2001). This has serious implications for the newspaper industry. Sixty percent of the households in the Netherlands are subscribed to a newspaper, but only a quarter of the children in these households still read it. When looking at the youngest, between 12 and 19 years old, 18 percent reads a newspaper. The older youngsters, 20-34, read a bit more often: 37 percent of them read a newspaper. It matters if youngsters are raised by parents who read a newspaper on a regular basis. If so, it’s much more likely the children will develop this habit as well. In households were at least one
parent had an academic education, it is three times more likely that there will be a newspaper subscription compared to households were both parents didn’t have an academic education (Huysmans & de Haan, 2003). Raeymaeckers (2003) adds that households were a lot of talking place about the news takes place, youngsters develop the ability to process large amounts of information quicker. For many years, researchers related the non-readership of youngsters to the maturation effect. In other words, youngsters would acquire the newspaper habit when they grow older. But situation might have been changed and some argue that ‘readers lost in youth may be lost forever’ (Lain, 1986).

**Why the Youth Doesn’t Read Anymore**

Walgren (2008) found five reasons for the decline in readership when looking at American youngsters. First, she states there is a decline in reading aptitude scores. As a consequence, less youngsters are able to read newspapers. In the Netherlands, there was a decrease in reading achievement the past few years too. However, research proves that Dutch youngsters still belong to the best readers in the world. Second, there is the competition from the ‘more dynamic, visually stimulating television medium’. Then, Walgren points at changing lifestyles. For example, the youth is more emphasized with the self. This individualism makes the world outside less important. Oosterbaan and Wansink (2008) recall the utilitarian attitude of the youth: ‘The new generations act differently, they are argue more practically and are inclined to have an utilitarian perspective on life: ‘What’s in it for me?’.’ As the fourth reason, Walgren states that the tradition of newspaper reading in the home environment is weakened. Therefore, youngsters don’t develop the habit of newspaper reading. To conclude, youngsters struggle with the newspaper image. Newspapers are known for their traditional style and aren’t very attractive to youngsters who – because of the television – are used to lots of visuals. Newspapers are struggling with a damaged image. Only a third of young people like to read a newspaper and most of them think newspapers are boring and not very interesting. Meijer (2006) states that youngsters consider the news ‘important’, but also ‘boring’. Besides, she argues that a cultural change is taking place. Youngsters aren’t ashamed any more when they don’t follow the news. ‘They openly acknowledge that they think the news is boring and don’t want to be confronted with all the negative things.’ Oosterbaan and Wansink (2008) add a sixth factor of importance. They state that the decline in newspaper readership strokes with a changing economic system. According to both journalists, there is a shift taking place from a supply-side economy to a demand economy. ‘The loyal subscribers became critical consumers. Especially for youngsters, paying for newspapers isn’t naturally’ (Oosterbaan & Wansink, p. 7). Besides, the prestige of elite groups is diminishing. With the coming of the internet, the mass became much more self-assertive and emancipated. People don’t need an elite newspaper anymore to identify with. They can choose from a whole range of websites, forums and online groups to express themselves (Oosterbaan & Wansink, 2008).

Hans Nijenhuis, one of the spiritual fathers of *nrc.next*, wrote on his blog: ‘We make a newspaper for people who don’t read paid newspapers anymore: they never started or stopped at some point doing it (or are considering that). People who don’t have much time and/or patience and/or money for a big,
complete newspaper. People who already know the ‘who’, ‘what’, ‘where’ and ‘when’ from the news because of the radio, television or internet, but who still are interested in the ‘how’ and ‘why’. And who want to read that in a clear and accessible manner’ (Nijenhuis, 2006). That philosophy is based on a phenomenon that has been called ‘media multitasking’. According to Roberts and Foehr (2008), the Western youth are ‘awash’ in media. ‘They have television sets in their bedrooms, personal computers in their family rooms, and digital music players and cell phones in their backpacks.’ Both researchers state that the average American eight- to eighteen-year-old on a daily basis spends more than six hours on media use. These youngsters use several media concurrently, they ‘media multitask’. Oosterbaan and Wansink (2008) argue that youngsters therefore select very carefully which medium they want to use for which information. Because they have so much choice, they know what kind of medium suits their needs. ‘They surf, scan and read especially short pieces. Youngsters search specifically for information they need on specific moments and are used to interactive features so they can react on content instantly’ (p. 43). In the words of Murdoch, timing and independence is all: ‘What is happening is, in short, a revolution in the way young people are accessing news. They don’t want to rely on the morning paper for their up-to-date information. They don’t want to rely on a God-like figure from above to tell them what’s important. And to carry the religion analogy a bit further, they certainly don’t want news presented as gospel. Instead, they want their news on demand, when it works for them. They want control over their media, instead of being controlled by it’.

**How the Youth Can Be Reached Again**

It’s a fact that readers – youngsters in particular – are putting the newspaper aside. However, there is still discussion to which extent young people lost their interest for news in general. Some scholars draw solely negative conclusions. Hargreaves and Thomas (2002), for example, state that 14 percent of youngsters from 16 till 24 years old think there is too much news on the television, while Reaymakers (2003) argues that young people aren’t interested in more news besides the headlines. Groenhuijsen and Van Leimpt (1995) call them ‘headhunters’. However, the debate isn’t totally negative. Gauntlett and Hill (1999) asked 500 young British respondents to keep a diary for five years about television viewing habits. The respondents declared their interest for news programs actually increased. Researches like these, which are based on self-reports, are doubtful, states Reaymakers (2003). She argues that the youth is only fragmentally following the news and are only interested in the major lines. They stop following the news when it costs them too much effort to see, read or understand it.

These findings, according to Beekhoven and Van der Wel (1998) do not mean that young people aren’t interested in the news at all. They don’t ‘cut themselves off’. Although, when the news becomes ‘incoherent and morbid’, youngsters are likely to lose their interest. A solution, according to both researchers, would be to make news more coherent and nice. Other scholars draw the same conclusion: young people are interested in news, but are not interested in the traditional formats. Barnhurst (1998), for example, states: ‘Young people experience that the products of institutional journalism are largely
irrelevant to their lives' (205). Richard Sambrook, former director of *BBC News* once said: ‘Young people no longer sit down with news as appointment viewing, but it would be wrong to conclude that they don’t care about the news’ (Hargreaves & Thomas, 2002, 85). Scholars like Fiske (1992) state that news should be more entertaining, while Buckingham (1999) thinks a more ironic and personal presentation style would make news more attractive. A research of *Kijk- en Luisteronderzoek* resulted in the fact that young people, between 13 to 24 years, think *Man Bigt Hond* is the best Dutch television ‘news’ show, because the news is presented in a different matter compared to for example the television news: the show is variously, can be funny and is quick. Meanwhile, Barnhurst and Wartella (1998) conclude that ‘pimping’ the news actually repels the youth because it could become superficial. Buckingham (1999, p. 180) states: ‘And yet, as I have implied, the answer is not simply to add sugar to the pill. News clearly does have a great deal to learn from genres which are most successful in engaging the younger audience. Obviously, such approaches can be a recipe for superficiality, but they can also offer new ways to fulfill its traditional mission to educate and to inform.’

Commissioned by the NOS, Meijer (2006) conducted a qualitative research under 450 people from the age of 15 till 25 and 100 people in the category 15-85 about the role of news and information in their lives and how this part could become bigger. It is fruitful to take a closer look at this research, because *nrc.next* tried to figure out new ways to attract young people as well. Meijer, first of all, states that young people think quality news stands for ‘trustworthy, credible, objective, independent, true, genuine, professional, gray and dull’. Newspapers and news shows, they say, are important. At the same time, the youth watches – so they say – ‘stupid and trivial’ shows as *RTL Boulevard*. Meijer calls this the ‘double watch paradox’: on the one hand the youth thinks quality information should be objective and dull, on the other hand they watch stupid and trivial shows. The solution, Meijer (p. 50) states, for serious news programs does not lie in ‘pimping’ the news: ‘News that can be watched while you are relaxing, cannot be real news.’ After a qualitative analysis, Meijer concludes several things about the relationship between youngsters and news. First of all, the youth actually do feel a need for news and information. The point is: they want to consume it differently compared to their parents. Meijer, therefore, distinguishes the modern and postmodern news logic, two kinds of ‘languages’. She states that news makers, in order to reach the youth, should use postmodern news logic. Aspects of this postmodern language are experience (compared to the knowledge and insights of the traditional, modern logic), participation (versus being detached), images (text), feeling connected (individualism) and anarchy (hierarchy).

Meijer distinguishes two types of news: snacks and slow news. Snacks are bits of news. They are brief, quick and up-to-date, like the articles of *Metro*. Snacks don’t necessarily have to be of a high quality: youngsters just want to know about the news events, so they can discuss them with their peers. At other times, the youth actually do wants high quality news. Meijer calls it slow news: news with a narrative structure based on the experience of a journalist.
Signs of Tabloidization

The historical account and literature study above gives already a slight idea on how to identify tabloidized newspapers. Though, in order to complete the picture, it’s necessary to dive deeper into the characteristics of nrc.next and tabloidization. Oosterbaan and Wansink (2008) use three pillars – content, writing style and form – to describe the characteristics of nrc.next. The same division can and will be used to typify tabloidization.

Content

Tabloidization is understood to mean less space devoted to hard news and foreign news. Information is less important (Winston, 2002). Stories about politics and economy make room for articles about soft news like scandals, sensation and entertainment (Kurtz, 1993; Patterson, 2000). Also, domestic events are better covered than foreign ones (McLachlan & Golding, 2000; Conboy, 2006). With it’s preference for foreign news and it’s envy for showbiz, nrc.next clearly doesn’t fit in the trend at this point. Another specific of tabloidization, personalization, actually does apply to nrc.next. The paper is known for it’s personalized headlines (see Writing style). According to MacDonald (2005), tabloidization goes hand in hand with ‘increasing personalization in the coverage’. More items are made with the incorporation of personal experiences which raises the question of verifiability. However, personalized stories have ‘the positive capacity to be powerfully revelatory, especially of specific forms of interconnectedness between human agency and wider social and political processes and structures’.

Also characteristic, and according to MacDonald (1998) an example of personalization, are human interest stories. She claims those stories are supposedly trivial, de-contextualized and incapable of producing knowledge about social or political structures. Although, she did not find an automatic correlation between human interest and a loss of serious investigation or investigation in journalism. Buckingham (1997) calls the human interest stories and vox pop items examples of how tabloid papers are prioritizing subjects about the daily life. Sparks (1998) argues that this personalization of stories is important, because it makes a broad, abstract subject better understandable. The reason behind that: readers can relate themselves to the subject of the article. A pitfall, according to Bird (2000), is to personalize too much. He states that a ‘pure personalization’ without context is harmful to understand the problems of society. Rahat and Sheafer (2007) found that stories about politics are personalized too. Tabloid papers focus increasingly on the individual politician instead of the political parties, organizations and institutes. These stories focus on personal lives or individual strategies. By doing this, voters can verify what’s behind the ‘political mask’ (Neveu, 1999). According to Van Aelst (2002), the political process is thus depicted as ‘joust’ between politicians rather than parties. At the same time, politicians – backed by armies of spin doctors – feed this development by showing more emotions in public in order to be more accessible to their voters and score more votes (Beunders, 2009; Hooghe, 2001). Rosenstiel (1993) states that politicians could use infotainment as ‘hideout’. President Bill Clinton, he argues, bypassed the critical
Washington-watchers in 1992 by focusing on the non-traditional media format of talk shows and local media.

The journalistic starting point of *nrc.next* is the awareness that readers are already informed about the most important news just after they wake up – thanks to real time online news outlets. This, in combination with the fact that space is limited, makes selection important. *nrc.next* does not just cover the latest news, but tries to put an interesting twist in her stories. This vision leaded to, what Oosterbaan and Wansink (2008) call the ‘typical’ *nrc.next* -piece. In the words of Nijenhuis: ‘If there is a general strike on Tuesday in France, we would normally have an article about that in the *NRC Handelsblad* of Wednesday. For *nrc.next*, that would be Thursday morning, too late of course. In that case, we could ask the correspondent to write his piece on Tuesday night. But then we thought, is such a report not exactly the kind of piece that we don’t want to give our readers? Isn’t it much better to have a piece in *nrc.next* on Tuesday morning with the headline: Today is France striking. Why and what does it mean? This has become our tactics’ (Wansink, 2008, p. 153). *de Volkskrant* wrote in its profile of *nrc.next*: ‘Vintage *nrc.next* is asking the question: how about that’ (Reijmer, 2015). Two months prior to the launch of *nrc.next*, Nijenhuis blogged about the composition of the paper. ‘*nrc.next* follows your daily routine,’ he wrote. ‘The paper starts with *This morning*: two pages with news, a column and Fokke&Sukke-cartoon. After reading these pages, you know the ‘who’, ‘what’ and ‘where’ of the news. Let’s say: before breakfast. Then, a few pages – *e.g. the Netherlands* and *International* – where we treat the ‘how’ and when’. Let’s say: for reading in the train. Then, after you read two thirds of the paper, a page *Pause* with puzzles and strips. Finally, two pages *Tonight*, for cultural tips. In short, *nrc.next* is a newspaper that you can both read in half an hour and browse through during the day’ (Nijenhuis, 2006).

**Writing Style**

According to Oosterbaan and Wansink (2008), *nrc.next* has ‘a distinctive journalistic profile, cheeky, a bit ironic, clearly aiming for the young and highly educated readers.’ The ironic overtone is important. *nrc.next* wants to be optimistic and humorous to be ‘freed from the seriousness of traditional quality papers’. On November the 7th 2014 – one day after WhatsApp introduced the blue checkmarks that show a message has been read, which lead to big commotion under users – *nrc.next* printed the same blue checkmarks at the end of every article in the paper. Other example: the *nrc.next* of April the 1st 2010 was printed on broadsheet format because ‘tabloid became too mainstream and pioneers like to think big’ (Redactie, 2010). On December the 5th 2006, *nrc.next* only used rhyming headlines because of the St. Nicolas celebration.² The paper has a more ‘personal’ writing style: ‘The rule at *NRC Handelsblad* is: ‘u’. The paper is rational, almost aloof and is committed to good manners. The newspaper is a gentleman. [...] At *nrc.next*, it is sometimes ‘u’ and sometimes ‘jij’. The tone of voice is more personal, the paper wants to be close to the reader and finds the difference between ‘u’ and ‘jij’ not that important actually’ (Nijenhuis, 2007). The

² Important aspect of this celebration is rhyming.
language use of *nrcl.next* is in line with this and can be characterized as ‘popular’. An example: ‘Kunstwerk van 120 meter gejat’. A reader, in reaction to a *nrcl.next*-blogpost, denounces the short sentences and ‘jeugdjournaaltoontje’ (Nijenhuis, 2006).

The tabloid format in general is about the ‘aim to simplify formats, possibly at the expense of necessary complexity’. Simplification is the key. For print media that means: ‘greater use of easily understood illustration and simpler vocabulary, syntax and presentations and simpler forms in which the style and assumed relationship between reader and writer tends to the more demotic and convivially casual tone of the popular press, eschewing the more self-consciously serious, and even portentous, posturing of the political classes’ (McLachlan and Golding, 2000). Djupsund and Carlson (1998) concluded that Finnish and Swedish newspapers have been using more ‘simplistic formats with increased visuals and decreased text’. Connel (1998) sees in tabloidization the transition from the rational to the sensational. By ‘narrativising’ the news, articles become stories in which the different characters become actors. Besides, he points at ‘conversationalising’. That means: official, impersonal language makes room for the use of spoken language. Tabloidization is also connected to sensationalism. Mott (1962) describes sensational news as stories about ‘crimes, disasters, sex scandals and atrocities’. Zelizer (2000) distinguishes two types of sensational tabloids: the newsstand tabloid press and the supermarket tabloid press. The latter is ‘dominated by scandal, sports and entertainment and often has a strong element of the fantastic built into it’, while the former has ‘a strong agenda of scandal, sports and entertainment, they do, however, have some elements of the news values of the serious press.’

The style of the sensational tabloid papers is quite extreme and not necessarily illustrative for tabloidization in general. Scholars, though, agree that the extensive use of sensationalist – bigger printed, more ‘screaming’ and less factual – are one of the key characteristics of tabloidization (Esser, 1999). Also *nrcl.next* has its own less strict style of formulating headlines. *de Volkskrant* signaled ‘personal headlines like ‘Op naar Polen, waar je klassieke bak nog wél welkom is’ (Reijmer, 2015). Oosterbaan and Wansink (2008) typify them as ‘a bit more cryptic, direct or funny’. Compared to traditional newspapers, *nrcl.next* use longer headlines and often even complete sentences with exclamation and question marks (Wansink, 2008). The *nrcl.next*-style proved ‘contagious’. In the course of time, *nrcl.next*-headlines – headlines that are a bit more cryptic, direct or funny – got used in *NRC Handelsblad* and her attachments more often. Also, the small boxes with an explanation are regularly used in *NRC Handelsblad* as well (Wansink, 2008).

**Form**

Although *nrcl.next* uses articles of *NRC Handelsblad*, it’s important to note that *nrcl.next* never publishes one-to-one copies of these articles. There’s a process of ‘vernexting’ before *nrcl.next* publishes such a piece. That process is about making the article attractive to read for young readers. If possible, articles are made shorter and, if necessary, journalists add additional explanation. Every *nrcl.next*-article is written – or rewritten – from a clear and sharp starting point, focus is important. Examples are ‘Almost one million
freelancers, isn’t that too much?’ or ‘Studying at Harvard is like this’. To make complicated topics more accessible, *nrc.next* often uses a format called ‘questions about’. Such articles aren’t stories, but are pieces constructed of several questions and answers. For example: ‘Seven questions about freelancers.’ In the article, *nrc.next* raises and answers questions like ‘who are the freelancers’ and ‘why are there so many of them’. *nrc.next* uses extra boxes alongside the article to explain aspects of the article in more detail. This philosophy has consequences for the form of the papers. According to Steenhuis (2010) the form of a newspaper depends on the function of the paper. ‘*nrc.next* looks more like a magazine that looks ahead, instead of the classic newspaper with a summary of the latest news’ (p. 155). Oosterbaan and Wansink (2008) argue that *nrc.next* ‘breaths some kind of educated cheerfulness’. The paper is ‘freed from the seriousness of quality newspapers’. The way the title is made, is illustrative. ‘Cabinet, in contrast to the *NRC Handelsblad*-title that contains stately capitals’ (Wansink, 2008). This characteristic fits seamlessly into the tabloidization trend, which is – as already mentioned above – about lightness, accessibility and positivity. Simplification is important in order to attract a bigger audience (Djupsund & Carlson, 1998).

In 2006, the year of the *nrc.next*-launch, only *Het Parool* (since 2004), *Trouw* (2005) and the *Algemeen Dagblad* (2005) were tabloid newspapers (Bakker, 2014). Therefore, the fact that *nrc.next* wouldn’t be published as broadsheet was comparatively innovative. Were *NRC Handelsblad* wanted to be a ‘big paper that you can spread on the table [...] with a lot of articles, where the reader from the multitude chooses something he likes’, *nrc.next* needed to be compact and focused in order to ‘guide’ the busy reader. Besides, the tabloid format would be more convenient for readers in the public transport, something *Metro* and *Spits* already proved (Steenhuis, 2010). Typical *nrc.next* is the extensive use of images. The cover, for example, consists of one big picture or illustration. It refers to the ‘story of the day’, a spread inside the newspaper. ‘The cover is there to tease, stimulate the reader to think’ (Nijenhuis, 2006). In the heart of the paper, *nrc.next* contains *In Beeld*, a spread with one big photo. *nrc.next* was the first Dutch newspaper with such a photo spread. Images are important for the target audience of *nrc.next*. Young people are raised with television and ‘trained to understand complex information quickly that is transferred by images’. They are visually oriented and need photos and images to get interested in newspapers. Extensive use of visuals is one of the key characteristics of papers on tabloid format (Broersma, 2004).

The composition of *nrc.next* is clean and strict. As reader, you should be able to find your way quickly. ‘The layout of *nrc.next* forces you to either scan or read more quickly. That’s because of the clear focus in presentation’ (Steenhuis, 2010, p. 155). That means: a lot of white space, big and colorful headlines and clearly defined blocks of text. ‘Entry points’ are important. ‘Generally, readers only read short messages completely. So, readers wander through papers, looking for something they like. He jumps from entry point to entry point, points like images, headings, subheadings, itemized written frameworks. The basic layout of *nrc.next* takes this behavior into account: there are many ‘entry points’ created – more than a traditional newspaper as *NRC Handelsblad* did’ (Steenhuis, 2010, p. 156).
Chapter 4 – Research Design and Methodology

Research Design
This research is about the possible popularization of the Dutch quality press. In order to research this development, the following research question has been formulated:

RQ1: To which extent did the Dutch quality press take over tabloid-characteristics between 2004 and 2013?

In order to answer the question, a comparative quantitative analysis with a longitudinal design will be carried out. The assumption is, based on the literature, that *nrc.next* did provide a blueprint for the Dutch quality press. Therefore, the following sub-question has been formulated:

SQ1: To which extent did the Dutch quality press take over characteristics of *nrc.next* between 2007 and 2013?

According to Riffe, Lacy and Fico (2014), a quantitative content analysis can be described as ‘the systematic assignment of communication content to categories according to rules, and the analysis of those categories using statistical methods’ (p. 3). This can be done in an objective and systemic way (Bryman, 2012). The research will be deductive as well; codes and concepts shall be applied to the data. This method is well-suited for analyzing big amounts of data and comparing content produced by different journalistic outlets over a long period of time. These characteristics of a quantitative content analysis make it the ideal way in order to see if empirical evidence of the tabloidization of the Dutch quality press can be established, and whether *nrc.next* has been an example for other papers. Central in this research is the comparison between four Dutch quality papers. Articles from different months and years will be examined by using a coding scheme distilled from the academic debate.

Cases
The starting point of this study is the presumption that the Dutch quality press – threatened by decline in readership and the internet – has popularized in order to stay attractive to a big audience. Besides, Oosterbaan and Wansink (2008) argued that *nrc.next* acted as some kind of blueprint for other Dutch newspapers. The paper has been put in the market as quality newspaper, but has clear characteristics of tabloid newspapers. According to the growing circulation figures, in the first years after the introduction of *nrc.next*, this philosophy definitely worked. At that time, it looked like *NRC Media* ‘reinvented’ the quality newspaper.
With the above in mind, characteristics of \textit{nrc.next} – distilled from the literature – will be used as coding variables in the coding scheme besides the elements of tabloidization in general. In order to determine how \textit{nrc.next} developed over time, the paper will be added to the sample. The paper will be compared with the rest of the Dutch quality press: \textit{NRC Handelsblad}, \textit{de Volkskrant} and \textit{Trouw}. Journalists and scholars consider this trio the embodiment of the Dutch quality press (Wijfjes, 2004). Therefore, it’s logical to examine these three papers. By comparing these four newspapers and test them on tabloid-characteristics, it can be determined whether or not the traditional quality press in the Netherlands – \textit{NRC Handelsblad}, \textit{de Volkskrant} and \textit{Trouw} – popularized their form, style and content. Only quality newspapers will be taken into account: popular newspapers have different standards when it comes to form, style and content. It wouldn’t make sense to examine to which extent \textit{nrc.next} made \textit{Algemeen Dagblad} a more popular newspaper: it’s likely that the latter already was more of a tabloid in 2006 than \textit{nrc.next} will ever be. Comparing \textit{nrc.next} with the popular press would be comparing apples to oranges.

\textbf{Sample}

The coverage of \textit{nrc.next} will be compared with the articles of the other quality newspapers. Since \textit{nrc.next} was released in March 2006, the first full year after it, 2007, will be taken as a starting point for this research. In order to get a clear picture of the development of the newspapers over time, articles from different years will be compared. Independently from 2007, these years are 2004, 2010 and 2013. The year 2004 is added so it can be determined what developments were in order before \textit{nrc.next} was launched. There has been chosen for intervals of three years because newspapers change quite slowly. Therefore, this research will be more interesting and relevant when it covers a longer period of time.
The articles were selected following the structured week approach. Bryman (2008, p. 278): ‘The principles of probability sampling (...) can readily be adapted for sampling dates. For example, it is possible to generate a systematic sample of dates by randomly selecting one day of the week and then selecting every nth day thereafter. Alternatively, Monday newspapers could provide the first set of newspapers for inclusion, followed by Tuesday the following week, Wednesday the week thereafter, and so on.’ According to Riffe (1993, p. 139) ‘a structured week procedure is more efficient than pure random or consecutive day sampling’. This resulted in two weeks of articles a year for every newspaper. There have been started with January 2nd 2004, because January the first is a holiday, therefore there are no newspapers that day. In order to spread the days as much as possible, the researcher moved five days forward with the start of a new year. Due to restrictions in time, only the even months in 2007 (nrc.next excluded) and the uneven months in 2010 (nrc.next excluded) were selected. The same applies to the year 2004. Only the even months in that year were included. This has to do with the fact that the papers back then were broadsheet papers: lots of articles, very few illustrations. The sample for 2004 would therefore be much bigger compared to the other years. In order to maintain the balance, only the half of the articles from 2004 was taken into account.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Dates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>3-2, 5-4, 7-6, 9-8, 11-10, 13-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>8-1, 10-3, 12-5, 13-7, 15-9, 17-11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>13-2, 15-4, 17-6, 19-8, 21-10, 23-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>12-1, 13-2, 14-3, 15-4, 16-5, 17-6, 18-7, 19-8, 20-9, 21-10, 22-11, 23-12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 1 - Sampling dates**

**NRC Handelsblad**

*NRC Handelsblad* can be seen as the ‘big brother’ of *nrc.next*. The paper first appeared in its current form on 1 October 1970 and spreads around 175.000 copies a day, which makes it the fourth biggest Dutch newspaper. *NRC Handelsblad* operates under the motto *Lux et Libertas*, a liberal signature. The paper concentrates on coverage of foreign news, politics, economics, opinions and culture. According to Oosterbaan & Wansink (2008), the journalists of *NRC Handelsblad* initially looked down upon *nrc.next*, but eventually started to take over its distinctive style and copied more and more articles one-to-one. *NRC Handelsblad* became a tabloid newspaper in March 2011. Editor-in-chief Peter Vandermeersch, since September 2010 the head of the newspaper, wrote there was ‘only one reason’ for changing formats: ‘We are convinced that this format allows us to present our content in a better way.’ Besides, readers asked him to change. Before the switch, he promised the journalism of *NRC Handelsblad* would stay factual ‘exact’, ‘unique’ and ‘nuanced’. The average age of the NRC-reader is 52 (Bakker, 2013).

The first four pages of the paper, the pages that contain the most important news of the day, will be looked at. Until 2011, the year *NRC Handelsblad* changed to tabloid, these pages mostly contained
national news. In 2011, the first pages were recalled In het nieuws and contained articles that ‘were in the news’ at that moment, regardless of the subject.

**de Volkskrant**
de Volkskrant was founded in 1919 as a Roman Catholic newspaper, but presents itself as neutral since the sixties. Until the nineties, de Volkskrant operated on the left side of the political spectrum. Since then, the newspaper has moved to the right. With a daily circulation of 275.000 copies de Volkskrant is the biggest quality newspaper in the Netherlands. The paper changed to the tabloid format in March 2010. A few months later, in July 2010, the current editor-in-chief, Philippe Remarque, was installed. Under his leadership, the paper grew up to be a ‘newsy’ newspaper for a big audience (Mooij, 2011). The average age of readers is 50 (Bakker, 2013).

The first four pages of the paper, the pages that contain the most important news of the day, will be looked at. Until 2010, these pages mostly contained national news. In 2010, the first pages were recalled Ten eerste and contained, just like NRC’s In het nieuws, articles that were in the news at that moment, regardless of the subject.

**Trouw**
Trouw started as opposition newspaper and first appeared on 18th February 1943. After the war, Reformed journalists took control over the paper. Trouw has had a religious signature since then, with much coverage about religious affairs. The paper aims to be a ‘broad quality newspaper’, but focuses on several social aspects in particular: religion, philosophy, sustainability, nature, healthcare, education and science. The readers are described in the paper as ‘people with ideals, no floating idealists – committed and broadminded’. Trouw became a tabloid in February 2005. Former editor-in-chief Willem Schoonen spoke the following about the switch: ‘If you, as reader, want the best overview of all the news, you should go to http://nu.nl. So why should we do exactly the same? We want to be distinctive and publish our own news. The emphasis is shifting more and more to own news and background articles’ (Van den Berge & Dekker, 2013). Cees van der Laan is the editor-in-chief since December 2013. The average age of Trouw-readers is 55, the highest of all Dutch newspapers (Bakker, 2013).

The first four pages of the paper, the pages that contain the most important news of the day, will be looked at. Until 2013, the first three pages formed the section Vandaag. In that section, the news of that moment was covered, regardless of the subject. The fourth page belonged to Nederland, the section with about the Netherlands. From 2013, the fourth page belonged to Vandaag as well.

**nrc.next**
When examining the articles, only the first sections of the paper will be examined. These are Vandaag, Internationaal, and Nederland. Vandaag starts on page 4, Nederland ends on page 9. The paper got a redesign in February 2013. At that time, the composition changed as well. From then on the paper was
divided in *Weten, Denken, and Doen*. In *Know*, the first 13 pages of the paper, news subjects are covered. From page 14, the paper consists of articles about culture and sports. These subjects change daily, but are never relevant for this research. There will only be focused on *Weten*, the news section of *nrc.next*. On average, *Weten* consists of 7 articles every day. It’s necessary to look at more pages of *nrc.next* compared to other papers, because its composition and design are quite different. Articles are bigger and more visualized: therefore, it will not be sufficient to look at the first four pages only, like what will be done for the other papers.

By using the first sections only, stories about topics that are likely to haven’t changed over time will be filtered out. Examples are sports and showbiz, although the latter won’t be omnipresent in this selection of quality newspapers. Besides, the first four pages are considered the four most important pages of the paper. Therefore, it seems the most logic option to research those pages. Every article on the pages will be examined, except for articles that contain less than 300 words. For broadsheet papers, that contain bigger articles, only pieces with more than 350 words will be taken into account. This limits have been chosen because of time restraints. Besides, returning sections with strict formats will be filtered out. Examples are columns. Also, interviews with the question and answer format shall be ignored. All this leads to a sample size of 798 articles, as can be seen in the following table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>nrc.next</em></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>NRC Handelsblad</em></td>
<td>70</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>de Volkskrant</em></td>
<td>60</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Trouw</em></td>
<td>54</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>184</td>
<td>209</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>265</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Total sample** | 798 |

*Table 2 - Sample size*
**Operationalization**
A detailed coding scheme has been crafted to help answer the research question. The data was coded in Microsoft Excel, which allowed the researcher to process variables quite easily afterwards. The articles were coded for 42 variables, which includes basic article information like the date of publication and the name of the newspaper. As already mentioned above, the coding has been done in a deductive matter: codes and concepts distilled from articles were applied on the sample. The coding scheme has been divided into six sections, each created to identify trends – towards nrc.next or tabloidization in general – in the development of certain parts of the newspaper. The coding scheme was tested by analyzing twenty articles that were not part of the definitive sample, in that way seeing if the coding scheme, its rules and its categories functioned properly.

Firstly, some general variables will be coded to keep the dataset organized.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Relevance</th>
<th>How to code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| General | General variables will be coded to keep the dataset organized. | - Title of newspaper  
- Date of publication  
- Title of article  
- Subtitle of article  
- Number of words used  
- Page number of article |

**Table 3 - Operationalization of coding scheme**

Then, the researcher will look at the headlines of the articles and how they developed over time. Bigger fonts, changing tones and the use of popular words point at tabloidization. Reijmer (2015) calls irony and personalization of headlines characteristics of nrc.next. The format of the headline will be taken into account by signalizing how it was printed (e.g. in bold or italics, what size, how long). Most variables are manifest and can be filled in quite easily (e.g. whether a question mark is visible; yes or no). The latent ones – dramatization, personalization of politicians and factuality – will be coded by carefully reading the headline and comparing it with article beneath, using the scale of Voltmer (2000). This scale goes up from 0 (e.g. not dramatic) till 2 (e.g. very dramatic).

| Headlines | One of the key characteristics of tabloidization and nrc.next is the much bigger attention journalists have for headlines. For example, by formatting them more extensively or making them more dramatized. | - Number of words in headline  
- Number of lines used  
- Size of headline  
- Sentence  
- Personal  
- Question mark  
- Judgement  
- Focus  
- Explanation  
- Ironic  
- Popular word use  
- Format  
- Exclamation mark  
- Dramatization  
- Personalization politics  
- Factuality |

3 The complete coding manual can be found in Appendix B.
Then, the first paragraph of the articles will be taken into account. Determining the function of this paragraph is important to ascertain traces of tabloidization. Tabloids, and *nrc.next* as well, are keen on dramatic paragraphs with described ‘sphere’. Typical for *nrc.next*, according to Reijmer (2015) and Nijenhuis (2006, 2007) is setting the occasion in the first paragraph (e.g. why was this piece written, why should this article be read) and referring to the reader. By looking at the first paragraphs, specific formatting (e.g. bold or colored sentences) can be taken into account as well. Extensive formatting points at tabloidization (McLachlan & Golding, 2000).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First paragraph</th>
<th>Changing functions of first paragraphs (e.g. more often describing sphere) can point at tabloidization. Besides, <em>nrc.next</em> uses the first paragraph often to explain the relevance of the piece or to refer to the reader.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Function</td>
<td>- Reference reader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Bold</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The main part of this research focusses on the content of articles. The researcher will look at the subject of the article (e.g. politics or media) and the type of this subject (hard or soft), hereby leaning on the definitions of Broersma and Graham (2012). Important, because tabloids are known for its soft topics. The semantic differentials of Hauttekeete (2002) will give an insight in how the tone of articles changed over time. The researcher will use the scale that was designed by Hauttekeete (that goes from 1 till 5) for the coding. Detection of signal words (e.g. ‘inconsolable’ instead of ‘sad’ points at dramatization) and comparing headlines mutually will be important. *nrc.next* is known for its ‘future stories’ (e.g. articles about what’s to come today instead of what’s happened yesterday). Therefore, the researcher will determine what the starting point of the articles has been. The type of the article – news story, analysis or feature – can tell whether or not papers simplified, where the quality press is known for its analyses and tabloids for its features.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Tabloids are known for its soft stories and features, while <em>nrc.next</em> distinguishes itself with ‘future stories’.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Type</td>
<td>- Starting point</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Structure</td>
<td>- Reflective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Subheadings</td>
<td>- Subject</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Type news</td>
<td>- Popular words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Semantic differentials</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*nrc.next* is known for its reader-friendly layout. By using information boxes, the paper gives the reader demarcated chunks of information. These boxes will be counted and measured.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Boxes</th>
<th>A grow in the number of boxes used over time could mean the style of <em>nrc.next</em> proved to be an example for others.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Ratio</td>
<td>- Function</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Visualization, another key aspect of tabloidization and *nrc.next* as well, shall be researched by measuring the surface of the article and the image that belongs to it, where after the ratio between these two numbers will be determined. Comparing ratios over time shows how newspapers have visualized over time.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Visuals</th>
<th>Visualization is an important aspect of tabloidization and <em>nrc.next</em> and the degree of visualization can be determined by measuring images.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
**Reliability and Validity**

In order to guarantee consistent and non-biased results for this project, the researcher tested the coding scheme before conducting the research. The coding scheme was tested by analyzing twenty articles – five pieces from each newspaper – that were not part of the definitive sample, in that way seeing if the coding scheme, its rules and its categories functioned properly. By doing this, the researcher made sure the scheme was reliable for using in the research. The test was also used for building in intercoder reliability. These twenty articles were coded by a second coder – academically trained, however not in media studies – as well. Intracoder reliability can be guaranteed because the researcher, that conducted the research in several months, randomly picked already coded articles after a few weeks of the initially coding for a ‘second opinion’. By doing this, the researcher guarantees an unambiguously way of coding. Finally, the manifest variables will be mostly coded by using academically substantiated classifications, e.g. the scale of Hauttekeete (2002) that goes from 1 till 5. By picking a big range, the results will become more nuanced and therefore more veracious. Scales, in general, make these manifest variables easier to compare.

**Limitations**

As is the case with any research project, this thesis has its limitations. Due to time constraints, the researcher could only examine the first four pages of every newspaper. These pages were chosen because they can be seen as the four most important pages of the paper and give a clear profile of it. Though, the picture would be more complete when newspapers were examined in full. The same goes for the sample size. To keep it workable, the sample was restricted in size by using a time frame of one week a year. A bigger timeframe would provide a more veracious picture. The gaps in the digital archive of De Persgroep, were the researcher obtained PDF-files of the newspapers from 2007 and onwards, posed another problem in relation to the sample. The archive does not contain PDF-files of articles that were published before 2006. Therefore, articles from 2004 had to be obtained via LexisNexis. That means the researcher had no access to visuals of that year, while LexisNexis only saved plain text at that time. As a consequence, the researcher was not able to determine which styles, visuals and design was used in 2004 and certain variables could not be examined for that year. Due to time constraints, only the size of illustrations will be examined in this research. It shall be enough for drawing conclusions about visualization, though a qualitative approach would give more interesting insights about the popularization – e.g. sensationalism, emotionalism – of news photos.
Chapter 5 – Findings

As a large amount of data has been researched and a lot of variables were used, this chapter discusses the most striking findings for every individual newspaper. Because a big part of the variables relates to the headlines, separate paragraphs will be formed. The same goes for the content of the articles.

**nrcre.next**

**Headlines**

What sticks out immediately, are the big changes in headlines through the years. The newspaper clearly abandoned the traditional news headline and experimented frequently between 2007 and 2013. In 2013, 84 percent of the researched headlines were a full sentence. Six years earlier, this was only 67 percent. Furthermore, the headlines became more personal and more outspoken: through the years, they refer more often to people and contain frequently an opinion of the journalist who wrote the piece. Respectively, 39 percent (12 percent in 2007) and 43 percent (20 percent in 2007) of the researched pieces.

The headlines contained also more drama. In 2007, 35 percent of the headlines were ‘very tragic’, but in 2013, almost half of the researched headlines were ‘very tragic’ (46 percent). Obviously, the numbers show a trend. The amount of ‘non-tragic’ headlines decreases by half very quickly, while the ‘semi-tragic’ headlines appear significantly more in 2010 compared to 2007. In 2013, the ‘semi-tragic’ headline becomes less popular again, while the ‘tragic’ headline shows up more often. This trend dismantles the actual meaning of the written piece: in 2013, compared to 2007 (46 percent), it’s for the reader less obvious (32 percent) what the piece written under the headline is about. Finally, it makes the headlines more simplistic. That shows in the way in which the headlines about politics are made. The journalists refer in the headlines more and more often to one politician, who is becoming a symbol of a wider group, which is ‘simplistic’ according to Neveu (1999).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sentence</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-dramatic</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi-dramatic</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dramatic</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4 - Findings headlines (nrcre.next)

---

4 Numbers must be seen as percentages (%), unless indicated otherwise. Bold means: an increase compared to the previous examined year.
Also visually *nrc.next* has clearly changed. They became a little smaller, which makes sense because the length of the headlines increased. In 2007, only one fourth of the headlines counted more than 40 characters, six years later this was more than 50 percent. Nevertheless, the journalists started playing with the layout. Over the years, the headlines became more visually attractive. For example: the multi-colored headlines (12 percent in 2013, 0 percent in previous years) that were not totally black. Important words were printed in red (or another bright color). The journalists pulled the same trick when it comes to the size: important words in certain headlines were printed bigger than the less important words in the same headline.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average size (cm)</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colored</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Popular</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ironic</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 5 - Findings headlines II (nrc.next)*

The journalists adapt themselves very good to her most important target group: young adults, often struggling with a life that becomes more and more busy (Meijer, 2006). Researched have showed that there’s less and less time for reading the newspaper in that busy life, which is being confirmed by *nrc.next* (Nijenhuis, 2006). It’s a constant battle between journalists to win over the time of their readers, which makes the headline even more important than it already was. That’s probably the reason *nrc.next*, taken its aim to be a paper for rushed youngsters into account, made their headlines more and more outspoken, for example by adding opinions to the headline (Nijenhuis, 2006). The headline had to encourage readers, more than before. They became more playful: for example, the paper started using popular words – e.g. English words and slang – more often and the journalists valued humor and irony more. Headlines contain more alliteration, puns and cynicism (39 percent in 2013, 30 percent in 2006). There are a lot of similarities between the full sentences and the clickbait-headlines from the Internet age (Reijmer, 2015). In this respect, it’s good to notice it became possible to create a more attractive headline, because *nrc.next* introduced in 2013 the subtitle together with its new design. At that moment, the purpose of the headline changed: it was not there only to inform, but mostly to attract readers. The subtitle contained the summary of the piece.

It makes sense that *nrc.next* produced different headlines than the traditional quality newspapers in 2007, but not on this big of a scale as in 2013. After all, *nrc.next* was a new newspaper: a young and trendy brother of *NRC Handelsblad*. Over time, the journalists created a more obvious signature to the *nrc.next* newspaper and continued to distinguish itself more and more from *NRC Handelsblad*. 

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**Articles**

This characteristic *nrc.next* signature also influenced the content of the newspaper. In the course of time, journalists more often wrote about soft news or chose to approach hard subjects in soft ways. For example, by publishing a human interest story about a political subject. This is explicable, because the copy of *nrc.next* came in the early days mostly from *NRC Handelsblad*. Over the years, it became possible to look at the preferences of their own, young readers. They do not want to read only about politics, but they also want to read soft articles about lifestyle (Meijer, 2006). Showbiz news never made it to the newspaper: *nrc.next* connected with their target group by writing more often about popular scientific pieces and human interest stories. Hard subjects like politics and social welfare became less relevant for the newspaper. Instead, the journalists started to write more about sports and media. According to Meijer (2006), this is explainable seen the fact these subjects have the young readers’ interest.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hard news</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soft news</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Politics</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science (soft)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human interest</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 6 - Findings articles (*nrc.next*)**

Apart from the discussed shift in subject choices, *nrc.next* barely changed qualitatively. The articles stayed the same length as before or became even longer (from 500 words) than in 2006, although the emphasis (articles between 500 and 999 words) hasn’t really changed over the years. An important change is the fact that the pieces became less emotional – 94 percent in 2013 is non-emotional compared to 86 percent in 2007. At the same time, pieces became slightly more narrative. For example, the first paragraph contains more often a description of sphere. But also in the rest of the piece, journalists choose more often a colorful description. In most of the pieces, humor is absent. This hasn’t changed over the years. But, the pieces became a little bit less nuanced, although the differences are quite small. It’s possible that the growing importance of narratively is the cause of this: in this way, there’s less space available for an expert to speak. As far as the type of articles, there are hardly any changes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-emotional (1)</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi-emotional (3)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional (5)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 7 - Findings articles II (*nrc.next*)**

---

5 With ‘articles’ the articles that have been coded are meant. In other words: articles that contain at least 300 words (or 350 words for broadsheet papers).
However, the way in which articles were made have changed. Less than half of the pieces of nrc.next in 2013 brought news not older than a day, in 2007, this was still 69 percent. More often nrc.next chose to publish timeless articles, background articles and stories that have nothing to do with ‘current issues’ – ‘de waan van de dag’. At this point, the signature style of Rob Wijnberg is clearly visible. He pointed out that readers read the latest news on the internet. Therefore, the newspaper had to offer more than just the news from the day before. That is also the reason why the young character of nrc.next was expressed more clearly in the content of articles over the years. The articles are tailored to the young target group with popular vocabulary (18 percent in 2013, 1 percent in 2007). Also, the journalist takes the reader by the hand by specifying their opinion or by hinting their opinion in another way in the article (20 percent in 2013, 11 percent in 2007). This is being highlighted by the fact that the journalist turns to the reader more and more often by addressing himself more often to the reader directly (7 percent in 2013, 5 percent in 2007).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Visualized articles</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subheadings</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boxes</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8 - Findings articles III (nrc.next)

What applies to the headlines, applies also to the articles itself: the journalists started to value the visual aspect more and more. This is illustrated by the fact that the amount of articles with a matching image increases constantly. This amount increased gradually: in 2007, 62 percent of the researched articles had a matching image. In 2010, this was 72 percent and in 2013, it was 82 percent. It makes sense that the images became smaller over the years: the newspaper didn’t increase in size, but there had to be enough space for more and more images. The text boxes with contextual information remained important: in 2013, the journalists published 51 percent of the articles with a frame. Six years earlier this was 48 percent. The use of page breaking elements such as subheadings and streamers did increase: over the years with over 10 percent till 59 percent. This matches the philosophy of nrc.next: at the introduction of the newspaper in 2006, Nijenhuis (2006) already said that the articles of nrc.next needed to have a lot of moments to ‘hop on’. It also matches the trend towards popularization which values visual elements more.

**NRC Handelsblad**

**Headlines**

NRC Handelsblad has also changed their headlines, just like nrc.next, between 2004 and 2013. Results show that practically all values of the researched variables have increased over the years. A big part of these increases have arisen in 2004. In 2007, headlines are significantly more often full sentences and quotes containing opinions. Especially the increase of the amount of full sentences stands out: from 9 percent in 2004 to 27 percent in 2007. The change could have to do with the introduction of nrc.next in 2006. The use of full sentences as headlines is a characteristic nrc.next signature which is illustrated by literature and the
fact that 84 percent of the headlines was created in that way in 2013. Results illustrate the statement of Oosterbaan and Wansink (2008) which maintained that NRC Handelsblad only took over very little characteristics of his younger brother. For example, headlines started to have an ironic formulation and popular words (16 percent) on quite a regular basis (16 percent) not earlier than 2010, four years after the introduction of nrc.next. Irony and popular word use are also characteristics of nrc.next.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sentence</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irony</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Popular</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-dramatic</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi-dramatic</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dramatic</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-factual</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi-factual</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factual</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9 - Findings headlines (NRC Handelsblad)

The popularization is also visible in the headlines that became more tragic over the years. In 2004, about 20 percent of the headlines contain a tragic element which increases to more than 50 percent of the headlines in 2013. It’s remarkable that the headlines became more factual. This means: the reader understands more often directly what the headline is about (86 percent in 2013). This development goes together with the decrease of the subtitles. These subtitles are necessary to clarify the headlines when it’s, for example because it’s more attractive, less factual. A widely used construction is for example the publication of an attractive quote as a headline accompanied by a subtitle that clarifies the meaning of the quote. Fact is that NRC Handelsblad uses subtitles for a little less than half of the articles published in 2004. In 2013, this percentage decreased to 27 percent. This decrease has probably to do with the transition to tabloid size in 2011. From that moment, journalists had less room for their articles, so they had to make choices. The average headline became smaller, but longer. They removed the subtitle for most part to create more space. It’s remarkable that the headlines in 2013 are printed in bold type more often (58 percent of the headlines compared to 21 percent in 2007). The headlines became more uniform. Headlines were either printed in bold type, in italics or without any effects at all. Six years later, the headlines turned out to be either printed in bold type or printed without any effects at all. There’s one exception: the journalists played with the size of the headlines twice, inspired by nrc.next.
Articles

The first four pages of *NRC Handelsblad* contain almost only hard news in 2004. The biggest part of the articles (37 percent) treated international news. A quarter was about political news. Also financial news (11 percent) was an important subject for *NRC Handelsblad* during this year. They kept being the most important subjects for this newspaper, although there appeared less articles on each subject in 2013. More soft news was published instead. Remarkable were the numbers: 4 percent of the articles contained soft news in 2004, in 2013 this increased to almost a quarter. Unlike *nrc.next*, where they started to publish also more soft news, *NRC Handelsblad* focused mainly on cultural pieces. *nrc.next* started to publish a lot of popular scientific articles, but chose at the same time often a soft approach when it comes to hard subjects. This was not the case in *NRC Handelsblad*. It’s understandable why the journalists chose to publish more cultural news. Over the years, also the older reader could use some more lighthearted news (Meijer, 2006).

To maintain their quality status – Vandermeersch promised *NRC Handelsblad* would remain a real ‘quality newspaper’ after the switch to tabloid size – the journalists chose possibly a lighthearted subject that would fit the quality status of the newspaper and at the same time also the preferences of their readers (Meijer, 2006).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hard news</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soft news</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Politics</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture (soft)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human interest</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 10 - Findings articles (*NRC Handelsblad*)

Because of the switch to tabloid size, it makes sense that less and less longreads were being published. Keulemans (2012) noticed this once before and thought it was a sign of ‘degradation’. Numbers are clear: the first four pages of *NRC Handelsblad* counted still 6 articles between 2000 and 2500 words, which is 9 percent, in 2004. This percentage was zero in 2013. The longread didn’t disappear: it’s obvious that it was only shortened. 9 percent of the articles counted between 1500 and 2000 words in 2013. It’s remarkable that the biggest part of the articles published in 2013, 91 percent, counted up to 1000 words. This same percentage was 74 in 2004. 17 percent of the articles counted between 1000 and 1500 words in that same year, nine years later this was 5 percent. The average word count dropped from 857 in 2004 till 605 in 2013.

*NRC Handelsblad* – with 96 percent hard news, 60 percent of the articles containing a ‘newsy’ first paragraph (hard news, no sphere of setting the scene for the article) and the inverted pyramid as its most used form (53 percent) – was a real ‘newsy’ newspaper in 2004. That hasn’t changed, apart from the decrease in the amount of hard news. In some fields, *NRC Handelsblad* became even ‘newsier’. Unlike *nrc.next*, where 49 percent of the articles in 2013 related to the news of the day before, *NRC Handelsblad* hasn’t changed much between 2004 and 2013. Over the years, the percentage stayed around 80 percent.
The influence of *nrc.next* is visible through by the increase in articles treating news of the future. In 2004, this was only 1 percent and in 2013, this was 9 percent. The stronger character of the newspaper shows furthermore in the increase of the amount of news articles: 50 percent in 2004 and 61 percent in 2013. At the same time, the amount of features decreased with about a quarter (till 2 percent). This would have to do with the devouring nature of the features. There would have been no more space for them, because of the tabloid size. The newsy character – big percentage of news stories, extensive use of inverted pyramid – shows especially in 2013 when *NRC Handelsblad* appears in tabloid size. For example, the reporting became more emotional (100 percent of the articles were ‘non-emotional’ in 2004 and in 2010 this was only 76 percent) till 2013. In that year 92 percent of the articles were ‘non-emotional’.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>News articles</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analysis</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feature</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-emotional (1)</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very nuanced (1)</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-narrative (1)</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 11 - Findings articles II (*NRC Handelsblad*)

When it comes to narrativity, the newspaper shows a comparable development. At first, there was an increase in the amount of narrative stories. But in 2013, 81 percent of the articles were ‘non-narrative’. This corresponds to the strong decrease in reportages. Between 2004 and 2010, this percentage of almost 20 percent basically stayed the same, but in 2013 there’s a strong decrease towards 3 percent. Stories, often long articles which values emotion and narrative, had to make room for news articles (50 percent in 2004, 61 percent in 2013) and analysis (10 percent in 2004, 22 percent in 2013). These findings correspond with the words of editor-in-chief Peter Vandermeersch who said at the introduction of the tabloid size that the quality of the paper would remain the same (Vandermeersch, 2011).

The switch to tabloid size had consequences for the subtlety of the articles. In 2004, 17 percent of the articles was ‘very nuanced’, in 2013 this was only 9 percent. That means: 9 percent of the articles, according to the scale of Hauttekeete (2002), had the most convenient balance of opinions and a high number of sources mentioned. This goes hand in hand with the trend of *NRC*-articles getting shorter over the years. Editors simply have less space to consult extra sources. More workload could be a second explanation. Also the amount of copies of *NRC Handelsblad* decreased since 2004 which caused the dismissal of dozens of journalists, while others were given more tasks (Oosterbaan & Wansink, 2008). The numbers are clear: 88 percent of the articles were ‘very nuanced’ of ‘nuanced’ in 2004 while this percentage is only 56 percent in 2013.

Meanwhile, you could notice very few influences of *nrc.next* with regard to content. Although the increase in the amount of enumerated articles is very obvious (e.g. ‘five questions about’). This number went from practically zero in 2004 to almost one tenth. *NRC Handelsblad* clearly didn’t take over the ironic
undertone of *nr.c.next*, practically all the articles remained ‘non-ironic’. But they did modernize the language. There appeared more and more popular words in articles over the years. None up to 2007, but this number kept increasing afterwards (12 percent in 2010 and 16 percent in 2013). Visually, *NRC Handelsblad* obviously did look at his little brother. The newspaper created more ‘moments to hop on’ by adding text boxes and subheadings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Visualized articles</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subheadings</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boxes</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 12 - Findings articles III (*NRC Handelsblad*)

Finally, images have gained importance. One in three articles in 2004 had an image or an illustration. In 2010, this number increased to 67 percent after which the number decreased again in 2013 till 48 percent. The latter can be explained, again, by taking the tabloid size into consideration. The newspaper became smaller and had to have more blank spaces next to that. It’s remarkable that the balance between text and images at article level shifts, which corresponds to the image culture of these past years (Broersma, 2004). 13 percent of the images took between 40 percent and 70 percent of the total article space in 2007 (text, images and text boxes). This was 26 percent in 2010 and already 33 percent in 2013. Although the newspaper was forced to publish less articles with an image because of the tabloid size, the used images did become bigger.

**Trouw**

**Headlines**

A big part of the values increased over the years when it comes to the headlines of *Trouw*. It’s remarkable that *Trouw* in 2004, two years before the introduction of *nr.c.next*, already published headlines as full sentences on a regular basis (20 percent of the headlines). Not alarming though: the other values were in 2004 as low – and non-popular – as other researched newspapers. The high values of several variables in 2007 are also worth noting. For example: in that year, two years after the switch to tabloid size and one year after the introduction of *nr.c.next*, the amount of personal headlines (27 percent) and judging headlines (36 percent) is remarkable. But this seems not meaningful as well, because the other values are again substantially lower and only started to increase during the next years.
On the other hand, the fact that the headline of Trouw got a more and more prominent place in the newspaper is very remarkable. For example: the headline became bigger. The average size was 1,1 centimeters in 2007 and 1,4 centimeters in 2013. In 2007, almost a quarter of the headlines was between 1,5 and 2,4 centimeters. This percentage increased to almost half of the headlines in 2013. At the same time, the headlines contained more characters, which is remarkable. The amount of headlines between 10 and 29 characters decreased from 15 percent in 2004 till 8 percent in 2013. Meanwhile, 60 percent of the headlines in 2013 counted between 40 and 59 characters. In 2004, this was only 33 percent. Both variables show that the headlines became more and more important, which corresponds to the information taken from literature written about tabloidization. Trouw possibly chose to print their headlines less often in bold type. That might be the case so the headlines would not become too prominent. The amount of headlines printed in bold type decreased from 100 percent in 2004 to 64 percent in 2013. Changes in layout weren’t really there: there were used different colors only a handful of times, but there were never differences in size or words written in italics.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Irony</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Popular</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focused</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bold</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-dramatic</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very dramatic</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-factual</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very factual</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 14 - Findings headlines II (Trouw)

Though, it’s obvious that Trouw made some popular changes when it comes to the headlines. The headlines became, following the example of nrc.next, more ironic: none of the headlines were ironic in 2004, but one in ten headlines was ironic in 2013. Also, the headlines contained increasingly more popular words. The numbers are basically the same as the above: none in 2004 and one in ten headlines in 2013. The headlines of Trouw were focused on a regular basis – 13 percent of the headlines in 2013, a percentage that increased steadily over the years – and contain in a quarter of the headlines quotes or partial quotes, although the latter seems typical of Trouw, because this was already the case in 2004. The amount of
tragedy in the headline did change. 59 percent of the headlines was ‘non-tragic’ and 17 percent was ‘very tragic’ in 2004. Nine years later, the shift is obvious: 23 percent of the headlines is ‘non-tragic’ and 31 percent is marked ‘very tragic’. Furthermore, the amount of ‘semi-tragic’ headlines doubled over the years. The numbers correspond to the slightly decreased factuality: only 2 percent of the headlines is ‘non-factual’ in 2004 and one in ten of the headlines is ‘non-factual’ in 2013. Also the percentage of ‘very factual’ headlines dropped by six percent.

The values show that the headlines of Trouw, supported by the subheadings that were in 2013 present in almost every article, did became clearly more popular over the years. They’re more tragic, al little bit vaguer and funnier. Next to that, they’re placed more prominently: more characters, bigger size. The success of nrc.next did inspire Trouw, because the characteristic signature of nrc.next (full sentences, focus, and irony) became visibly in this newspaper over the years.

**Articles**

The balance between hard and soft news hardly changed between 2004 and 2013. Meaning: roughly 75 percent hard news and 25 percent soft news. However, the chosen topics seems to soften since 2013. 77 percent of the subjects is hard news in 2010, but in 2013 that’s 72 percent. The choice of subjects stayed, when it comes to hard news, practically the same. About half of the articles containing hard news treated politics, financial news and the news out of foreign countries. Subjects like social welfare and religion stayed important as well, which is not strange because of the religious signature of the newspaper. Also the choices when it comes to soft news stayed practically the same over the years. However, the increased amount of articles with hard news presented in a soft way in 2013 do show a little popularization. It’s about articles on social welfare, education and religion which journalists publish as human interest reportages.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hard news</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soft news</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Politics</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human interest</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 15 - Findings articles (Trouw)

Since Trouw switched to tabloid size in 2005, the articles became smaller. A small 40 percent of the articles counted up to 499 words in 2004, seven years later this was about 70 percent of the articles. There were only a handful of articles longer than 1000 words during the researched years, which is practically negligible. The absence of longreads can be explained because of the tabloid size of the newspaper. The increase in the size of articles goes together with the change in structure of the written pieces. Editors chose more often news formats: a newsy lead (54 percent in 2004, 61 percent in 2013) and a structure following the inverted pyramid (44 percent in 2004, 58 percent in 2013). The increase of both values had been at the expense of the amount of ‘sphere’ in the newspaper. About 40 percent of the articles had a ‘sphere first paragraph’ in 2004 and only 27 percent contained a spherical beginning in 2013. The amount
of reportages did also decrease drastically: 43 percent in 2004 to 20 percent in 2013. This goes together with the decrease in features: 33 percent in 2004 and 27 percent in 2013. The presence of news analysis did not change. This was 15 percent in total in both years. The amount of timeless articles did increase: 17 percent in 2004 to a quarter in 2013. The fact that the articles became smaller, the increased amount of news analysis and the almost completely disappeared features show that the journalists wanted to publish quick news on the first four pages of the newspaper in tabloid size, which corresponds to the structure of nrc.next: the first four pages of this newspaper contain also a lot of short news, the bigger articles are printed on the other pages. Articles written point by point were there since 2010, but they’re very rare.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inverted pyramid</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reportages</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-narrative (1)</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-nuanced (4-5)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 16 - Findings articles II (Trouw)

What goes for the headlines goes also for the articles: popularization is visible. The articles became slightly emotional over the years. 81 percent of the articles is ‘non-emotional’ in 2004 which becomes 72 percent in 2013. Neutral articles and slightly emotional articles became 17 percent of the total in 2004 and 28 percent in 2013. At the same time, the articles became less narrative. This corresponds to the increase of the amount of news articles and the fact that reportages became more and more rare. The fact that 35 percent of the articles were narrative in 2004 and only 11 percent of the articles were narrative in 2013 is remarkable. The increase in the amount of ‘very narrative’ articles is also remarkable: zero percent in 2004 to 8 percent in 2013. This means that a little less than half of the narrative articles – 11 percent and 8 percent – could be defined as ‘very narrative’. In other words: journalists chose to push boundaries more often in the very few articles in which it was permitted to choose a narrative structure. In addition, there’s an increase in the amount of ‘non-nuanced’ articles: 7 percent in 2004 and 17 percent in 2013. This is not surprising, because the articles decreased in length at the same time. Therefore, the editor has less opportunity to add extra details. Finally, the articles did not increase significantly when it comes to humor, which can be explained by the fact that Trouw has the oldest group of readers in the Netherlands (Bakker, 2013). However, the past years, the language did popularize a little bit. This shows in the increase of popular words in headlines (6 percent in 2010 to 11 percent in 2013) and articles (3 percent in 2010 and 11 percent in 2013).

Visually there are obvious trends to be spotted. For example: the amount of articles with subheadings increased from 15 percent in 2007 to 42 percent in 2013. Meanwhile, the amount of text boxes decreased, unlike other researched newspapers. About a quarter of the articles had a text box with contextual information in 2007. In subsequent years, this amount decreased gradually to 17 percent in 2013. This corresponds to the developments when it comes to images: 61 percent of the articles had a photo, infographic or illustration in 2007 which decreased to 48 percent in 2010 and slightly increased
again to 52 percent in 2013. Nevertheless, we’re talking about a doubling compared to 2004 (26 percent). The used image became mostly a little smaller in 2013. 54 percent of the images covers between 30 percent and 60 percent of the article in 2007 which becomes only 28 percent in 2013.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Visualized articles</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subheadings</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boxes</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 17 - Findings articles III (Trouw)

A lot of values in this research are low in 2004, significantly higher in 2007 and slightly lower again in 2010 and 2013, although they remain higher than the values of 2004. This has two causes. First of all, the switch to tabloid size turned out to be ‘harder than expected’. Willem Schoonen, editor-in-chief at that time, claimed he had ‘to get used to’ the new size, which might have meant that the chosen path of the newspaper was revised over the years after 2005. Secondly, Trouw got a new layout and structure in 2010 (Van den Berge, 2013).

**de Volkskrant**

**Headlines**

The headlines of *de Volkskrant* are significantly different in 2013 than in 2004. A lot of values have increased between 2010 and 2013. This means that the headlines in 2010, the year the newspaper switched to tabloid size, have made the biggest changes. Remarkable are the strong increase in full sentences (from 15 percent in 2004 to a quarter in 2013) and personal headlines. This increase in full sentences went gradually, while the personal headlines appeared in large numbers from 2013. No less than a quarter of the headlines was personal in 2013, earlier this was 3 percent at the most. It’s obvious that they ‘played’ more with the headlines between 2010 and 2013, because there was also an increase in the amount of quotes in headlines, the headlines contained more irony and there were more popular headlines. Although we’re only talking about a few percent per variable, it does show very clearly that the journalists started to do more with their headlines since the newspaper was printed in tabloid size.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sentence</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dramatic</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 18 - Findings headlines (*de Volkskrant*)
The trend of popularization did not influence the visual aspects of the newspaper. For example, the amount of headlines printed in bold type decreased since the switch to tabloid size (from 87 percent in 2007 and 2010 to 62 percent in 2013). They also never chose to print the headlines in italics, in color or in different sizes. However, the headlines are not ‘small’ anymore since 2010, this means that they’re bigger than 0,9 centimeters. A slow shift when it comes to size is visible. In 2010, 32 percent of the headlines were ‘big, in 2013 45 percent. Next to that, the average size of headlines did increase over the years: from 1,7 mm in 2010 to 1,8 mm in 2013. To give you some indication, when de Volkskrant was still printed in broadsheet in 2007, the average size was 1,9 cm. There didn’t change a lot about the length of the headlines since 2004. Most headlines, 34 percent, are between 30 and 39 characters against 45 percent in 2004. However, long headlines appear slightly more often in 2013: 49 percent counts between 40 and 59 characters against 43 percent in 2004. This shows that the headline started to take a more prominent place at the page, although the layout stayed pretty much the same over the years.

This does not apply to the content of the headlines. They became obviously more popular, especially since the switch to tabloid size. Headlines became substantially more tragic. A quarter of the headlines was ‘very tragic’ in 2013. This percentage increased gradually since 2004 (7 percent). It’s also remarkable that the amount of ‘non-tragic’ headlines decreased from 92 percent in 2004 to 36 percent in 2013. This corresponds to the fact that the journalists started to personalize the political headlines more often: from 2 percent in 2004 to 21 percent in 2013. Next to that, the headlines became less factual: 62 percent of the headlines was ‘very factual’ in 2004 against 53 percent in 2013. However, the amount of ‘non-factual’ headlines did also decrease: from 12 percent in 2004 to 6 percent in 2013.

**Articles**

The amount of hard news on the first four pages of de Volkskrant decreased significantly between 2004 and 2013. In 2004, the biggest part of the articles (83 percent) treated hard news. This percentage decreased gradually over the years up to 57 percent in 2013. It’s obvious that the journalists wanted to bring more lighthearted subjects on the most important pages of the newspaper. When it comes to hard news, the subjects haven’t changed. In 2004, half of the articles containing ‘hard’ news treated international news (30 percent), politics (22 percent) and financial news (10 percent). These subjects remained the most important during 2013, although the amount of articles per subject decreased: international news (17 percent), financial news (13 percent) and politics (11 percent). The decrease in political news is especially visible since the switch to tabloid size.
Table 19 - Findings articles (de Volkskrant)

The strong increase towards soft news after the switch to tabloid size is remarkable. In 2007, 26 percent of the articles contained ‘soft’ news against 39 percent in 2007 to even 43 percent in 2013. When it comes to soft news, culture remained an important subject. Over the years, about 8 percent of the articles were about these ‘serious’ soft subject. It’s worth noting that the increase in soft news is a broad development: the journalists didn’t avoid many subjects. This means that journalists thought the newspaper should become more approachable (Meijer, 2006). Frequently covered subjects were media (0 percent in 2004, 9 percent in 2013), sports (0 percent in 2004, 4 percent in 2013) and crime (0 percent in 2004, 6 percent in 2013). The journalists started to approach ‘hard’ subjects in a ‘soft’ way since 2010. That’s why 12 percent of the articles in 2013 were about religion, but three quarters could be labeled as ‘soft’ news. Finally, the amount of human interest stories did not increase significantly.

The trend of popularization did have little influence on the type of articles. Over the years, about half of all the articles were news articles. Furthermore, the features became constantly important with about 30 percent, although this percentage is slightly increasing since 2004. The shifted balance between 2007 and 2010 is remarkable, because about 30 percent of the articles were analyzed in these years against about 15 percent in 2004 and 2013. The rest remained pretty much the same: the day before was the starting point (about three quarter of the articles), timeless articles (about 25 percent) and the modest amount of articles writing about the future (about 7 percent). The opening and the structure haven’t changed much.

Table 20 - Findings articles II (de Volkskrant)

Nevertheless, the style of writing got clearly more popular over the years. For example: the amount of emotion in the articles increased. This is exceptional, because the amount of stories did not increase significantly. This means that news articles and analysis became less factual over the years. The amount of ‘non-emotional’ articles did decrease (82 percent in 2004 to 55 percent in 2013) while the ‘neutral’ articles increased (5 percent in 2004 to 25 percent in 2013). The articles became more often ‘very narrative’ and over the years, there was less room for subtlety. For instance, 77 percent of the articles was ‘nuanced’ in
2004 against 49 percent in 2013. This trend already started in 2007 though, three years before the introduction of the tabloid size. The tone of the articles became a little more lighthearted in 2013 compared to previous years considering the increase in humor. 8 percent of the articles have a humorous tone against a few percent in earlier years. This corresponds to the fact that the amount of popular words in articles increased more and more.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Visualized articles</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subheadings</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boxes</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 21 - Findings articles III (de Volkskrant)

The trend of popularization was expressed visually as well. Images gained significantly more value over the years. Articles were more and more provided with subheadings (30 percent in 2007 and 51 percent in 2013) and the amount of text boxes increased from 11 percent in 2007 to 17 percent in 2013. Furthermore, the size of the newspaper got bigger. This also goes for the images. 37 percent of the articles had an image in 2004. This percentage did gradually increase to 72 percent in 2013. When it comes to the size of the image, the image has grown since the switch to tabloid in 2010, but did slightly decrease again in 2013. This first shows the popularization of the newspaper and the latter demonstrates a lack of space. After all, the fact that the amount of articles provided with an image increased between 2010 and 2013 was proven earlier.
Chapter 6 – Discussion

Academics published a lot about tabloidization in the past few years. There’s a lack of unanimity, although there are a few trends to be noticed. First of all, there’s consensus about the fact that tabloidization provides more prominent and more sensational headlines (Esser, 1999). At the same time, the focus of the journalists shifted from hard news to soft news. Human interest stories are introduced while the amount of political articles decreases. Newspapers become, according to Djupsund and Carlson (1998), ‘more simple’: the tone is more popular, the texts are more narrative, personal and less nuanced. Last but not least, tabloidization makes newspapers obviously more visual by providing it with a lot of photos, illustrations and text boxes. To be able to answer the research question – to which extent did the Dutch quality press take over tabloid-characteristics between 2004 and 2013 – systematically, the above aspects – as the most important lines in the academic debate about tabloidization – will be discussed point by point.

Headlines

The headlines became significantly more popular between 2004 and 2013, this goes for all the researched newspapers. This trend is most visible in nrc.next where the journalists eliminated the traditional headline and started to choose more often a playful, personal and attractive one. Because of this, the headlines became more simplistic and less factual. Secondly, the headlines of nrc.next became visually more attractive. Everything ‘to allure’ the reader, like Nijenhuis (2006) described. This corresponds to quotes of academics like Djupsund and Carlson (1998) when it comes to the simplistic tone, although this popularization could also be seen as a form of ‘piggybacking’: the journalists wrap a serious article with an attractive headline (Gans, 2009). It’s NRC Handelsblad which partly copies the style of the headlines of nrc.next in 2007. For example, the newspaper publishes more full sentences in the headlines during that year. From 2010, irony, popular language and drama were also added. It’s remarkable that the headlines did not become vaguer, but actually more factual. This had two causes. First, the need to attract readers was less big than at nrc.next. NRC Handelsblad has more, more older and more loyal readers than nrc.next (Oosterbaan & Wansink, 2008). Secondly, nrc.next wants to serve rushed young adults, which is the most difficult target group to reach according to Meijer (2006). When it comes to headlines, NRC Handelsblad moved with the times. The fact that the successful characteristics of nrc.next appeared not before 2010 and the quotes of Oosterbaan and Wansink (2008) showed it was a slow process, but made sure the headlines remained understandable and did not get a very prominent place in the newspaper. Unlike Trouw, where headlines already became bigger and longer between 2004 and 2013, although the journalists – which also did not happen at NRC Handelsblad – hardly changed the layout. This ‘playing’ seems to only happen at nrc.next, newspaper for young adults, which reaches a target group getting more and more visual. However, the headlines of Trouw became more tragic and less factual. Furthermore, the journalists might be inspired by nrc.next using full sentences, irony and focused headlines. The same goes for de Volkskrant: no visual changes and the journalists made the content of the headlines more attractive. For example, they
became more emotional and more personal, which had negative effects on the factuality of the headlines. Just like *de Volkskrant*, *Trouw* used full sentences, irony and focused headlines more often. Both newspapers made the biggest changes after the switch to tabloid size, *Trouw* in 2005 and *de Volkskrant* in 2011. *NRC Handelsblad*, which also switched in 2011, did change gradually. It corresponds to the quotes of Oosterbaan & Wansink (2008): *NRC Handelsblad* started to introduce the positive points of *nrc.next* slowly before the newspaper switched to tabloid size. So clear signs of tabloidization are visible for all the examined newspapers when looking at the changes of headlines over time.

**Soft Stories Replace Hard News?**
Tabloidization is understood to mean less space devoted to hard news and foreign news. Information is less important (Winston, 2002). Stories about politics and economy make room for articles about soft news like scandals, sensation and entertainment (Kurtz, 1993; Patterson, 2000). Also at this point the trend is clearly visible: all researched newspapers started to publish more soft news between 2004 and 2013. Again, *nrc.next* shows the trend the most. The newspaper tripled the amount of soft stories during a period of six years.

![Figure 2 - Soft news](image)

The same goes for *de Volkskrant* where ‘soft’ articles were doubled in a period of eleven years. This shows that *de Volkskrant*, published on tabloid format since 2011, already started to popularize their choice of subjects in 2004. The course obviously changed: *de Volkskrant* offers slightly less ‘soft’ news than *Trouw* in 2004 and in 2013 almost twice as much. *Trouw*, however, remained stable although the amount of soft news articles increased a little after 2010. Since 2013, the newspaper can be compared to *NRC Handelsblad* when it comes to choice of subjects – at the same time, *de Volkskrant* can be compared to *nrc.next*. *NRC Handelsblad* brought mainly hard news in 2004, but quadrupled the amount of soft news over the years. However, ‘softening’ the articles have nothing to do with the switch to tabloid size. The trend was introduced at *Volkskrant* and *NRC Handelsblad* way before the switch. *Trouw* remained quite stable for
years after the switch – although an increase is visible from 2013 – and nrc.next has always been a tabloid size newspaper.

However, there were changes in choice of subjects. For example, nrc.next focused on popular scientific articles and NRC Handelsblad focused on cultural pieces. de Volkskrant wanted to approach a bigger target group by offering a broad variety in subjects while Trouw mostly –although very modestly – brought hard subjects in a soft way. The general increase of soft news shows that journalists realized their newspapers could be more lighthearted. They gave in to the trend of popularization, although the implementation differed for every newspaper.

![Figure 3 – Ratio between stories about politics and human interest articles](image)

When it comes to political news, the newspapers went through a similar development. All papers are around the same (high) level in 2007 which can be explained by the fact that the Netherlands got a new government that year. The newspapers wrote about a lot of first steps of the government. Fluctuations were harder to explain: every newspaper considers other political situations important. Although it’s remarkable that all newspapers publish less political news in 2013 compared to 2004. At the same time, human interest is up-and-coming in 2013. Kurtz (1993) and Patterson (2000) were right in this: political (and hard) news were replaced by human interest and (soft) stories.

**Simplification**

Djupsund & Carlson (1998) state that popularization of newspapers goes hand in hand with simplification. News articles are getting shorter and longreads disappear. Meanwhile, journalists change their tones. They become more popular: with fancy words and less sophisticated language. Articles are getting more narrative and personal, so readers are sooner triggered to read. All of this at the expense of factuality and nuance.
When looking at the Dutch quality newspapers, it’s true that articles became shorter between 2004 and 2013. Especially *NRC Handelsblad* saw a big decrease in the average length of articles. That decrease is especially visible after the paper switched to the tabloid format in 2011. Between 2010 and 2013, the average length of articles decreased with two hundred words, about two paragraphs. Also the longread, when looking at the first four pages at least, disappeared from the paper. *de Volkskrant* and *Trouw* started in 2004 with respectively seven hundred and six hundred words on average. Both numbers dropped to five hundred. That number remained stable over the course of years, which indicates that journalists did not want to shorten them even more. What comes to attention is the increase of length of *nrc.next*-articles.

Since the design and layout of the newspaper hardly changed over the years, this increase can be related to the increase of the use of information boxes. In this research the number of words that these boxes contain is summed up to the number of words the articles contain. That the amount of boxes increased, indicates that the average number of words in fact decreased more than the graph above shows.

This research shows that *nrc.next* qualitatively barely changed during 2007 and 2013. The stories became less emotional, but at the same time they did become more narrative. Besides, the tone of voice has been ‘rejuvenated’: in the course of years the journalists used more popular words, theorems and sentences that were directed directly to the reader. This rejuvenation is explicable seen the target audience of *nrc.next*. The clear popularization of *de Volkskrant*, on the contrary, is far less obvious. The stories in that paper become more emotional, while the number of reportages decreased. It means that news stories got more emotional over times, something that has negative consequences in terms of objectivity. Objectivity, according to Schudson (2001) one of the most important pillars of modern journalism, is outside the scope of this research, but it can be said that the stories in *de Volkskrant* became less nuanced between 2006 and 2013. Besides, *de Volkskrant* clearly saw its stories become more narrative, more popular in language and more humorous.
**NRC Handelsblad** popularized until 2010. Between 2004 and 2010 its stories became more emotional, more narrative and less nuanced. After the introduction of the tabloid, in 2011, there is a reversal visible: the first four pages became clear news pages with lots of news pieces and barely reportages. The trend of losing nuance actually did continue after 2010. The same goes for *Trouw*, although the paper only popularized mildly. Pieces became slightly more emotional, while the narrativity decreased. Moreover, the number of reportages dropped at *Trouw* between 2004 and 2013. It means, just like for *NRC Handelsblad*, that news pieces became more emotional. The increase in the number ‘very narrative’ pieces proves that journalists have been more willing over the years to push the boundaries. However, broadly speaking, *Trouw* has been popularized less than other newspapers. That boundaries were pushed sometimes is only consistent with the spirit of the age.

**Visualization**
In terms of visualization, the same applies to every newspaper: between 2004 and 2013 images became substantially more important.

![Articles with images (2004-2013)](image)

*Figure 5 - Articles with images*

Again, the differences between *nc.next* and other papers are clearly visible: in 2004 the paper contained twice as much images compared to the others. That amount only grew since then: in 2013 eight out of ten pieces contained an image. *de Volkskrant* went through a similar development. It’s striking that the number of images grew between 2010 and 2013 as well, despite the fact that the paper switched to tabloid in 2010, it still went on to publish more images. *Trouw* became, despite a peak in 2007, slightly more visual. The visualization process went quicker at *NRC Handelsblad*, where the amount of mages doubled between 2004 and 2010. The switch to tabloid made sure that journalists started to make clear decisions: the number of articles with an image dropped just under half of the total. Text should stay important, as can been seen in the graph.
The graph above shows that images got bigger over the years. This applies to all of the papers. The increase of the number of big images – the ones that cover between the 60 and 69 percent of the article space – is the clearest example of that trend. Besides, the share of the three categories that contain the biggest images did increase as well. Another important finding is that in 2013 by all the newspapers – except nrc.next, where the smallest image category isn’t there – every category is represented. That indicates a great diversity in sizes of images, which points at the increasing importance of images. It means that journalists in 2013 published all sizes of images. Good examples of this variety are the news stories that come with a small portrait of one of the key players in the piece. The average image got bigger, but at the same time journalists chose to accommodate more articles with pictures – though they are quite often small. 

Figure 6 - Size of images
In – possible – imitation of *nrč.next*, papers started to build more ‘entry points’ into their pieces. That means: more subheadings and streamers. Such page breaking elements are necessary to take the busy reader by the hand when reading the newspaper, something that is very important to *nrč.next*. The graph above shows that *Trouw* and *de Volkskrant* have the same opinion as *nrč.next* about this topic, *NRC Handelsblad*. That’s explainable because *NRC Handelsblad* is an evening newspaper. Readers read the paper quietly in a lounge chair during the evening, they aren’t rushed by, for example, the rush hour in the public transport (Oosterbaan & Wansink, 2008).

When it comes to information boxes, *NRC Handelsblad* clearly followed the example of little brother *nrč.next*: the number of boxes increased explosively between 2007 and 2010. Though, from 2010 and onwards a decrease is visible, which is explicable seen the increase of the number of images. Besides, *NRC Handelsblad* switched to the tabloid format in 2011, so that there already was less space available. *Trouw*
and de Volkskrant saw a similar development. The papers started to use boxes more often, though the total number remained small.

When looking at the numbers only, it’s hard to determine the impact of nrc.next on the other quality newspapers in the Netherlands. Though, the numbers allow the researcher to discover trends. Five typical nrc.next-elements – headline as sentence, personal headline, ironic headline, articles about future news, the extensive use of sphere, articles following a point by point structure and the big importance of narrative stories – were examined. It’s obvious to think the numbers related to these elements would rise in 2007 and 2010, shortly after the introduction of nrc.next in 2006. The graph shows this was not always the case, which means the influence of nrc.next on the other Dutch quality newspapers has been minimal.

However, there are typical nrc.next-elements that were used more often in 2007 compared to 2004. A good example is the ‘sentence headline’. NRC Handelsblad and Trouw both used type kind of headline significantly more often in 2007 and 2010, before a decrease in 2013. de Volkskrant saw a rise from 2010 onwards. The same pattern – rise from 2007 onwards, decrease in 2013 – is visible for ‘future stories’. Trouw and de Volkskrant published more of those stories from 2007 onwards, but stopped doing that in 2013. NRC Handelsblad saw a constant increase of ‘future stories’. Moreover, the number of ‘future stories’ in nrc.next dropped in 2013, which is perfectly understandable seen the departure of Rob Wijnberg in the meantime. When it comes to personal stories Trouw saw a big rise in 2007, where after a drop followed. de Volkskrant did follow the example of nrc.next, NRC Handelsblad did not. Only in from 2010 onwards irony and the ‘point by point format’ started to gain ground Both elements are more visible in all the papers from that year onwards. Furthermore, there are no more trends to discover. The influence of
Looking at the above, it’s fair to say the Dutch quality press did take over tabloid-characteristics between 2004 and 2013. Especially when it comes to content, clear signs of tabloidization are visible. All examined newspapers saw an, sometimes dramatic, increase in the number of soft news stories. Besides, articles about politics have been replaced more and more by human interest stories. Stories that became shorter as well: the longread practically disappeared. Meanwhile, the tone of voice popularized as well. That’s particularly noticeable when looking at the development of headlines. They have become more simplistic and less factual. A possible influence of *nrc.next* can be perceived: headlines as full sentences, irony and focused titles became popular as well – especially at *de Volkskrant* and *NRC Handelsblad*. The writing styles in general have changed. They became more popular with the use of fancy words – e.g. English terms and slang – and less sophisticated language – ‘je’ instead of ‘u’ when referring to the reader. Besides, articles got more narrative and personal, with sometimes a clear preference for the human interest side of a story. All of this at the expense of factuality and nuance. Both variables, according to the scale of Hauttekeete (2002), dropped for all examined newspapers.

However, the most important prove of tabloidization of the Dutch quality press is the increasing visualization. The amount of articles that were printed with images corresponding images increased dramatically, especially at *de Volkskrant*. Also, the used visuals got bigger over time. Finally, papers started to build in more ‘entry points’ – e.g. subheadings and streamers – into their pages. This could suggest a influence of *nrc.next*, a paper that clearly aims at the rushed young reader that wants to skim and scan papers more easily.
Chapter 7 – Conclusion

Tabloidization is a broad and difficult concept to describe. Scholars have published regularly about it, but frequently disagree with each other. For example, about the definition of the concept and its consequences. However, there can be found returning elements in the literature. Consensus exists about the fact that tabloidization goes hand in hand with an increase in soft news. Tabloid papers also contain substantially more images than broadsheet papers. Tabloidization allows more ‘air’ into the newspaper: shorter stories, a popular writing style and provocative headlines. Emotion displaces factuality, human interest comes gains ground at the expense of political news. These characteristics, divided into different categories, were central to this study. That was also the case for nrc.next, the paper which is an example of a popularized quality paper since 2006. The paper gained popularity with its own writing style and design. Besides, nrc.next responded to the rise of online news: its pieces were about events of that day, not the day before. nrc.next, initially a very loved paper with characteristics of a tabloid, seemed to be a blueprint for the Dutch quality press. This research shows that the Dutch quality press changed substantially between 2004 and 2013 and, by adopting some tabloid-characteristics, became a popularized paper. That’s demonstrated in particular by the increased visualization of the newspapers. Every newspaper has in 2013 about twenty percent more items imaged than in 2004. In addition, graphics have become larger over the years. Striking is also the bigger importance of headlines. Especially in regarding to visuals, pages got more ‘air’ through the years. First of all, this affected the length of the articles. On average, articles got two paragraphs shorter over the years. Besides, it’s clear headlines gained more importance over the years: journalists – who wanted to tease more and more – saw it more often as a tool to get the consumer reading. Also, newspaper became ‘lighter’. In some cases, the amount of soft news grew explosively. nrc.next, NRC Handelsblad and de Volkskrant showed increases of twenty percent at least. Trouw saw a rise, but not as big as the other papers. Political news has – just like the literature said – made room for human interest stories, albeit only from 2010. The researched pages are indeed simplified between 2004 and 2013. Not only did the articles become shorter, the tone changed as well – more emotional, more popular and narrative – thereby making the pieces less nuanced. This trend is not that alarming, though. The vast majority of the items is in 2013 still ‘nuanced’. However, there are frequent outliers regarding ‘not nuanced’ items. Besides, the average nuance of the articles dropped between 2004 and 2013. The biggest shift is visible at de Volkskrant. Trouw, on the contrary, remained the most stable. It’s hard to say whether nrc.next contributed to the tabloidization of the Dutch quality press by looking at the numbers only. Interviews with former chefs and journalists are necessary to complement the picture. However, it does seem that nrc.next inspire other papers in certain areas. This is especially true for the tone of voice. Headlines as sentences became popular since nrc.next introduced them in 2006. Besides, nrc.next showed that it possible to add some irony to headlines and articles. Papers followed, albeit in a
limited extent. Typical nrc.next-characteristics as future stories and the ‘point by point format’ found their way to other papers as well. But, the same applies for every nrc.next-characteristic: the differences in numbers between nrc.next and other papers are way too big to speak of a substantial influence until 2013. Besides, some elements that gained ground – e.g. ‘sentence headlines’ and ‘future stories’ – in 2007, were already rarer in 2013. Although, it does seem safe to conclude that nrc.next was an inspiration for others, especially in making headlines. The newspaper showed, as Oosterbaan & Wansink (2008) experienced in the newsroom of NRC Handelsblad, a quality paper does can have a popular format. The existence of nrc.next did not open the door for popularization, but it certainly not closed it as well. It could mean that nrc.next only inspired other papers temporarily. After a few years the ‘hype’ got to an end. To settle this out, interviews are necessary.

Every newspaper has reacted differently to the transition to the tabloid format. Trouw is the paper that changed the least between 2004 and 2013. That may be the case because the newspaper already switched to the tabloid format in 2005. Therefore, it would be useful to research a series of articles from 2001 in order to get a more complete picture. In addition, the circulation of Trouw has remained the most stable of all researched newspapers (HOI, 2014). The readers did not ask for a change, obviously. At the same time, it’s a fact that the first four pages of Trouw became newsier over the years. NRC Handelsblad had the same response since the paper changed to tabloid in 2011. The first part of the paper became more of a news section: lots of staccato news pieces, much less features. Both papers is the ‘newsier trend’, apart from the above, the most important change after the transition to tabloid. The ‘lighter’ tone of 2013 entered the papers gradually and can therefore be seen as the result of adapting to the spirit of the age. de Volkskrant is the most popularized paper of the sample. The paper gradually became more popular over the years, but used its transition to tabloid in 2011 as a moment to strengthen that trend. The journalists seem to have used the moment to start with a new philosophy of making a ‘lighter’ paper. Trouw and NRC Handelsblad seem to have regarded the tabloid transition as necessary only.

The results are far from complete. Therefore, the used timeframe was too limited, although it was enough – following the structured week approach – to give a clear profile of newspapers and developments over time. A larger time span and a bigger sample, though, could provide more insights into the ways in which the Dutch quality press popularized over the years. Therefore, this study must be seen as a step towards such a project and a framework were future researchers can build on. The research has shown that the Dutch quality press did take over characteristics of tabloids since 2004. This is a valuable conclusion, especially since research on this phenomenon is scarce in the Netherlands. A bigger study could provide insights in whether or not certain choices have worked out well. It is, for example, interesting that de Volkskrant popularized until 2013, while seeing its circulation rising (HOI, 2014). Causality is far from certain, but it’s worth researching. Surveys and interviews with readers can provide the necessary insights. These insights can be useful for journalists, as they can learn from each other’s strengths, which is valuable
in times like these. Times were even *The New York Times* is struggling with reaching a big audience (Deuze, 2014).

Besides, this research proved ‘softening’ of the Dutch newspapers and the increased importance of visuals. Further research may reveal what these trends mean for the information provision of newspapers. Simplification does not necessarily mean deterioration, but it does seem that way. Therefore, it’s important in future studies that the researcher investigates the entire newspaper and not just parts if it. A comparison with popular papers like *De Telegraaf* and *Algemeen Dagblad* could give insights in the place that quality newspapers have in the Dutch newspaper landscape. This study is a first step towards such research, because the importance of such projects is undeniable: the existence of the printed newspaper is at stake. And, with the shift to online reading and the expanding ‘clickbait culture’, our open society that is based on the freeflow of quality information, is shaking at least.
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De wereld draait door. VARA (2010, 21-20).


Appendix A: List of articles

**nrc.next**

- 8-1-2007 - Religie draait om vergiften
- 8-1-2007 - Internationale druk op Irak om executies te staken
- 8-1-2007 - De prins weet van geen kwaad
- 8-1-2007 - Ontsnapt uit jungle van de burgeroorlog
- 8-1-2007 - Een lokaal als aas voor fietsendieven
- 8-1-2007 - Undercover in probleemwijk
- 8-2-2007 - Just the product - en een hoop ambitie
- 8-2-2007 - Racisme of Franse traditie
- 8-2-2007 - Eerst een kernproef, dan overleg
- 8-2-2007 - EU eist schonere autos
- 8-2-2007 - Samen werken, samen leven
- 8-2-2007 - Brussels stempel op Haags akkoord
- 8-2-2007 - Zo’n drie euro per kilo
- 9-3-2007 - Geen tijd meer om te wachten
- 9-3-2007 - Peking plaveit pad voor bezit
- 9-3-2007 - Het klimaat beheerst Brussel
- 9-3-2007 - Liever herten dan huizen
- 9-3-2007 - Ongure types in het Woonhotel
- 9-3-2007 - De baby kan wachten, er is toch IVF
- 10-4-2007 - Een eigen radiostation voor iedereen
- 10-4-2007 - Ahmadinejad: Iran kan kernenergie produceren
- 10-4-2007 - Hoe gaat het met Frankrijk? Slecht!
- 10-4-2007 - Hongaars reist voortaan uur naar dokter
- 10-4-2007 - Hozeo, Afrikaanse boatmigranten
- 10-4-2007 - PvdA voelt wel voor graaitjes, kabinet niet
- 10-4-2007 - In vrijheid voor euthanasie kunnen kiezen
- 10-4-2007 - Strijd tegen huwelijk homo
- 11-5-2007 - Terug naar het vrijdenken
- 11-5-2007 - José Ramos-Horta wordt president Oost-Timor
- 11-5-2007 - Chinese tomaat bloeit in Oeral
- 11-5-2007 - 2008: wellicht nog Elfstedentocht?
- 11-5-2007 - Marktwerving hoeft niet in stadsvervoer
- 11-5-2007 - Nieuwe toon als het om integratie gaat
- 11-5-2007 - Sober en dramatisch rapport
- 12-6-2007 - Waarom lukt het in Frankrijk wel en bij ons niet?
- 12-6-2007 - Waarom lukt het in Frankrijk wel en bij ons niet?
- 12-6-2007 - In de sloppenwijk is het oorlog
- 12-6-2007 - België gaat terug naar de tekentafel
- 12-6-2007 - De nieuwe armen zijn mensen met een baan
- 12-6-2007 - Sportvelden zijn micromaatschappijtjes
- 12-6-2007 - Kernfusie lukt
- 12-6-2007 - Europese paling erkend als bedreigde diersoort
- 13-7-2007 - Om 10,00 uur: De Bank en De Uitspraak
- 13-7-2007 - De Zwitserse worst hangt aan dun vel
- 13-7-2007 - Ad Melkert maatje van dictator Kim
- 13-7-2007 - Zorg over akkoord met VS
- 13-7-2007 - Post onwelziger door internethandel stoffen
- 13-7-2007 - Codes tegen aso-gedrag
- 13-7-2007 - Word jij de nieuwe burgemeester van Utrecht?
- 14-8-2007 - Links en rechts staan pal tegenover elkaar
- 14-8-2007 - Het went, de waanzin die Kosovo heet
- 14-8-2007 - De Stasi gaf een Lizenz zum Töten
- 14-8-2007 - Kan ik in een kerk, zomaar?
- 14-8-2007 - Je kan er signalen uit het heelal mee vangen
- 17-9-2007 - Re睡ring Irak verzwaakt na opstappen partij Sadr
- 17-9-2007 - Geen trek in een Big Mac
- 17-9-2007 - Politieke midden verscheurd
- 17-9-2007 - VVD-gevoel gezegeviert
- 16-10-2007 - Zestig dagen zonder eten kán
- 16-10-2007 - Honger onderzoek je in de oorlog
- 16-10-2007 - Het vijfjarlijkse ritueel in De Hal van het Volk
- 16-10-2007 - Stoppen met de strijd is lastig
- 16-10-2007 - Hulp voor 'fragiele landen'
- 16-10-2007 - Een moordenaar met een taakstraft
- 16-10-2007 - Familie gedode man: Bilal B. was schizofreen
- 16-10-2007 - Eerherstel voor naoorlogse kolossen
- 16-10-2007 - Haagse waakhond blaff weinig naar Brussel
- 19-11-2007 - Wat blijft er nog van onze reputatie over?
- 19-11-2007 - Oud-strijder Kosovo wint de verkiezingen
- 19-11-2007 - Belgisch marsje voor nationale eenheid
- 19-11-2007 - Is de kern bom veilig in Pakistan?
- 19-11-2007 - Principes en de Haagse praktijk
- 19-11-2007 - Is ons spoor wel veilig genoeg?
- 15-12-2007 - Verantwoord je bezatten, in de Stumphokke
- 15-12-2007 - Rusland levert brandstof voor kerncentrale Iran
- 15-12-2007 - De tweede pop maakt ook kans
- 15-12-2007 - Wit en zwart op rijkeland
- 15-12-2007 - Bieten moeten afklenken
- 15-12-2007 - De spindoctor van het CDA is terug
- 15-12-2007 - Politie strijdt voor poen-cao
- 15-2-2010 - Een restaurant runnen, Nee
- 15-2-2010 - Het gaat om steun Afghanen
- 15-2-2010 - Cel voor ’n stukje vlees
- 15-2-2010 - Kado van 248 miljoen
- 15-4-2010 - Voetbal? In Nederland is dat alleen voor hooligans
- 15-4-2010 - Slaan is leuk, klappen krijgen ook
- 15-4-2010 - Volks, voor wapenbezet en tegen een sterke overheid
- 15-4-2010 - In Bangkok is het bedrijfelijk rustig
- 15-4-2010 - Ook zwerven is nu Europees
- 17-6-2010 - Eerst vang je de piraten
- 17-6-2010 - En dan dus berechten
- 17-6-2010 - Obama gebruikt de olie
- 17-6-2010 - De comeback van cocaïne
- 17-6-2010 - Religie vrijheid is heilig bij de VVD
- 17-6-2010 - Merkel vs. Sarkozy, deel drie
- 19-8-2010 - Met jouw pensioen kom je niet verder dan de achtertuin
- 19-8-2010 - Gevolgen ramp deels man made
- 19-8-2010 - David Cameron wil gewoon 'Dave' zijn
- 19-8-2010 - Een christelijk Lowlands
- 21-10-2010 - Het zit de Fransen in de genen
- 21-10-2010 - Nu is Sarkozy aan zet
- 21-10-2010 - Toenadering na terreur
- 21-10-2010 - Iedereen zal het gaan voelen
- 21-10-2010 - Straks worden de artsen zelf verliezers
- 23-12-2010 - Stressloos opwarmen
- 23-12-2010 - Of neem een kalkoen
- 23-12-2010 - Loekasjenko pakt zijn tegenstanders hard aan
- 23-12-2010 - Hier zijn we altijd kritisch
- 23-12-2010 - Snot, sneeuw en zweet voor iedere boom
- 14-1-2013 - In Parijs is nu een leider opgestaan
- 14-1-2013 - Afghanistan, maar dan vlakbij huis
- 14-1-2013 - Protesten in Parijs tegen homohuwelijk
- 14-1-2013 - Eenzame voorvechter van een vrij internet
- 14-1-2013 - Op jacht naar de beste prijs
- 14-1-2013 - Hotels in Amsterdam lokken locals
- 14-1-2013 - Iedereen wil nu in China zijn
- 13-2-2013 - Het kabinet kan kiezen uit drie wandelgangen
- 13-2-2013 - Ook Kim jr. doet wat hij wil
- 13-2-2013 - Het halve voetbalelftal zit nog in de cel
- 13-2-2013 - De enige optie: fuseren met het arme broertje
- 13-2-2013 - Dit doet niemand haar na
- 13-2-2013 - Bestemming gewijzigd. TomTom lijd verlies
14-3-2013 - Eindelijk een niet-Europese. Eindelijk verandering
14-3-2013 - Wat zegt de keuze voor de naam Franciscus?
14-3-2013 - Kijk Haren, zo deed Spijkenisse dat
14-3-2013 - Pas op voor de jhadezieger
14-3-2013 - En opeens is het weer rustig in Enschede
14-3-2013 - Bemoei je er niet mee
14-3-2013 - Vette Kim’ ligt onder vuur
14-3-2013 - Hou je voertaan even stil graag, meneer Karel
14-3-2013 - Typisch Nederlands: voor alles een commissie
15-4-2013 - Hier werd fout op fout gestapeld
15-4-2013 - Wat heeft mijn zoon zo onrecht dat hij voor de dood koos?
15-4-2013 - Welke zal het worden?
15-4-2013 - Elf jaar strijd, en nu is alles weer terug bij af
15-4-2013 - Deze crackzombie moet van de straaf af
15-4-2013 - Wordt er toch weer gesomberd
15-4-2013 - Twee miljoen jaar geleden deden ze al aan silly walks
15-4-2013 - Calvijns boek in oud, katholiek Jasje
16-5-2013 - Dit is Sarah. De enige in Goes met een niqab
16-5-2013 - Burger durft wel weer wat geld uit te geven
16-5-2013 - De bank lokte de roof uit, vind ik
17-6-2013 - Een echte leider is geen macho
17-6-2013 - Het lijkt alsof de slager nooit worstjes verkoopt
17-6-2013 - Het geheim van Blauwgroen
17-6-2013 - Traangaas, pepperspray en dan krijg je dit
17-6-2013 - Wij zien hier helaas vaak strijkijzerafdrukken
17-6-2013 - Jullie zijn stuk voor stuk kanjers'
17-6-2013 - Al duizend jaar even ellendig
17-6-2013 - Wie goed kan lezen, doet het beter bij de rekenles
18-7-2013 - Hier hoeft je nooit te wachten
18-7-2013 - Dit is nog lang niet voorbij
18-7-2013 - 67 minuten vrijwilligerswerk om jarme Nelson Mandela te eren
18-7-2013 - Ik now pronounce you wife and wife
18-7-2013 - Plunder je spaarrekening en beleg je geld
18-7-2013 - De Chinese politie vond Tung Hui maar lastig
18-7-2013 - Uit, gewoon plassen toch?

NRC Handelsblad

3-2-2004 - Joodse lobbygroepen strijken neer in Brussel
3-2-2004 - Staatssie teu omdoop op de korrel
3-2-2004 - Chirac betuigt steun aan Juppe
3-2-2004 - Als je de pilaar ziet wil je hem hard stenigen'
3-2-2004 - Gemeenten: wij willen geld terug
3-2-2004 - Verbazend over harde Franse conclusies
3-2-2004 - SP-top zet Ali Lazrak uit Kamerfractie
3-2-2004 - Ik ben nooit door de kiezen gegaan'
3-2-2004 - Demasque Khan komt Musharraf uit
3-2-2004 - Armeoed doodsdoenzaart natuurruimramp
3-2-2004 - Ontrooiing Gaza stap in scheiding van Palestijnen
3-2-2004 - Voor je familie moet je altijd op je hoede zijn
3-2-2004 - Sharon: joden weg uit Gaza
5-4-2004 - Stembligt zo groot als een tafellaken
5-4-2004 - Tientallen doden bij onlusten in Irak
5-4-2004 - Veilig thuis
5-4-2004 - Hoe een krant met een specifiek abuis de PvdA boos maakte
5-4-2004 - De buigzame bewaker van het gezag
5-4-2004 - Balkenende met broodje kaas in de Verboden Stad
5-4-2004 - Opa heeft altijd dezelfde kleren aan
5-4-2004 - Bomalarm leidt tot overlast in Urtech, Nijmegen
5-4-2004 - Kans op plaat processiers
5-4-2004 - Zinloos en onthullend
5-4-2004 - Huillend of brakend de zaal uit
5-4-2004 - Blair toenemend onder vuur over immigratiebeleid
5-4-2004 - Mechiar wint eerste ronde in Slowakije
7-6-2004 - Ronald Reagan (93) overleden
7-6-2004 - Prijzen wetenschap toegekend
18-7-2013 - Een illegaal is supernetjes
19-8-2013 - Maar wie kan het nog betalen?
19-8-2013 - Dit is de richtlijn, zo moet je over Egypte schrijven
19-8-2013 - Bier, het recept tegen de crisis. Voor Walmart dan
19-8-2013 - Nieuwe opdracht voor Wouter Bos
19-8-2013 - Leer een ambacht, want dan vind je wel een baan
19-8-2013 - Zeg Poolse hengelaar, jij gaat die vis toch niet opeten?
19-8-2013 - Een laatste flikkeringslamp voor het licht uitgaat
19-8-2013 - Meer autisme na een schildklierprobleem
20-9-2013 - Duitsland is dominant, tegen wil en dank
20-9-2013 - Dit is de uitleg van het kabinet
20-9-2013 - En dit lezen de tegenstanders
20-9-2013 - Lieveer een verfomfaaid blijkt dan zo’n onhandige munt
20-9-2013 - Hoeveel van dit geld gaat naar onderzoek?
20-9-2013 - Hij komt niet meer
20-9-2013 - Ook corrupte tijgers gaan nu de cel in
20-9-2013 - Ik zou best nog wel een keertje een marathon...
21-10-2013 - Vandaag slaat Europa terug
21-10-2013 - Met klapperende tanden in je Victoriaanse cottage
21-10-2013 - Het woningentrente rijdt leeg rond
21-10-2013 - Zelfkritiek is in China een machtsmiddel
21-10-2013 - De Correspondent, maar dan in Amerika
21-10-2013 - Anouks afgelaste concerten
22-11-2013 - Holland’s Got Comment
22-11-2013 - Waar ligt de grens voor oute opmerkingen op tv?
22-11-2013 - Xtc is gewoon leuk, net als wiet
22-11-2013 - Aerobics zonder instructeur
22-11-2013 - Ik ver Trauw de Amerikanen niet, echt niet
22-11-2013 - De AVD speelde NSA’tje op Bonaire
23-12-2013 - Pakketje ligt negentig minuten na de klik in de vrachtwagen
23-12-2013 - Zingen op schóóóóóóóól
23-12-2013 - Spanje wil 40 jaar terug in de tijd
23-12-2013 - Hoe zorg je dat ze dit straks laten staan?
23-12-2013 - De oermens in ons allemaal
17-10-2007 - Aartsbischop stort Poolse kerk in crisis
8-1-2007 - Schadelclaim voor Alaska
8-1-2007 - Begeleiding voor de alle kiezers
8-1-2007 - Ambities van een rechts PVDA'er
8-1-2007 - Fruit of katoen telen is beter voor de veeteelt dan papa-vegetatie
8-1-2007 - Haags protest tegen autoluwbeweging
8-1-2007 - Ook politici ontdekken nu voordelen van 'de heilige fietstocht'
8-1-2007 - Nieuwe EU-landen leveren 'mobiële bandieten'
8-1-2007 - Canadese kiezers opeens bezorgd over klimaatverandering
8-1-2007 - Cambodjaanse ex-minister ontvange regi van de jungle
9-3-2007 - Europees akkoord voor als het klimaatbeleid
9-3-2007 - Lange dag in de Kamer met veel hatelijkheden
9-3-2007 - Uruguayan met nieuwe leider veel onveiliger
9-3-2007 - Angsten over honger in een kale gevangeniscel
9-3-2007 - Na de poffertjeskraam gaat Hoog Catharijne op de schop
9-3-2007 - Ik hoop geen vriendjes te worden'
9-3-2007 - Hirohito was tegen oorlog met China
9-3-2007 - Great game om macht enolie Iran
11-5-2007 - Afghanistan is nog lang niet stabiel'
11-5-2007 - Tilburg geeft vaak het stempel 'verTrouwelijk'
11-5-2007 - Burger heeft bedenkingen bij zijn vrijheid
11-5-2007 - De strafbare woorden van de Hofstadgroep
11-5-2007 - Een eiland vol nieuwe geordende natuur
11-5-2007 - Cambodja is een land van zwervende kinderen
11-5-2007 - Vietnam zet weer activisten in de cel
13-2-2010 - Postie Reporter en Zembla onder druk
13-2-2010 - Speculeren over einde van euro is niet langer taboe
13-2-2010 - Achterdocht en ergernis domineren coalitie
13-2-2010 - Dekzeel als voorbode van tijdelijk huisje
13-2-2010 - Een maand wachten op rijst
13-2-2010 - 'Paars' strijdt om bejaard te mogen sterven
15-4-2010 - Verdachte broeder in functie door Simonisz
15-4-2010 - Aswool verstoort luchtverkeer
17-6-2010 - Overijssel eens door start van luchthaven
17-6-2010 - NAVO doet opnieuw een beroep op Nederland
17-6-2010 - Jarenlang blijven hangen in wegloopperscenario
17-6-2010 - Dominée wil hoop bieden en de politiek helen
17-6-2010 - Garage voor 60 min. Onzinnig
17-6-2010 - Bijmer spreekt in sluiertaal over Grensgang
17-6-2010 - Zirof tolerantie rond drugs 'faalt'
17-6-2010 - Een laatste zitting, zonder leedvermaak
19-8-2010 - Zeven doden bij aanslag in Chinese Xinjiang
19-8-2010 - Penisfondsbetaling voorstelt prijs voor aanpak crisis
19-8-2010 - Ramp tekende zich al vroeg af
19-8-2010 - Een camera, koffie, en een stoel tallships
19-8-2010 - Doedelzakdicht van D-day
19-8-2010 - Schijven in modderig tentenkamp
19-8-2010 - Franse gemeenten kijken andere kant op
21-10-2010 - Boze brief over bezuinigingen: oudere mbo'er redt economie
21-10-2010 - Langer verlof ouders verdeelt Kamer
21-10-2010 - Bij parachutemoord staat ook jury terecht
21-10-2010 - Oppositie verwijt premier gedraai in paspoortaffaire
21-10-2010 - Oesters stillen zondag, Oosterschelde
21-10-2010 - Niet eke mega-school is een te grote school
21-10-2010 - Een jury kan alleen 'ja' of 'nee' zeggen
21-10-2010 - Man voor alle problemen
21-10-2010 - Dapper en zeer begaan met oude mensen
21-10-2010 - Het echte probleem is het taxeermiddelentabaeste
21-10-2010 - Schuldig aan 'parachutemoord', geen bewijs
21-10-2010 - Geen plek voor Rutte bij G20-top
23-12-2010 - Internationale druk om voorkomen van verder omhooi
23-12-2010 - Ex-directeur Hofnarretje zegt zelf onschuldig te zijn
23-12-2010 - Experts zien gevaar in optimisme
23-12-2010 - Obama leeft even op, maar is niet uit problemen
23-12-2010 - Een kalkoen die 21 weken lol heeft gehad in het leven
23-12-2010 - Eerlijk zullen we alles delen, ook het strooizout
23-12-2010 - Windmolengeldruit kruipt in je kop
23-12-2010 - De kerk? Daar, achter het reuzenrad
12-1-2013 - Kritiek op verkoop Afrikacollectie
12-1-2013 - Savile smisse in ruim 200 kinderen
12-1-2013 - Biermarkt horeca is 'verziet'
12-1-2013 - Homohuwelijkswetten wereldwijd steroid in opkomst
14-3-2013 - Rijks wil doek van Goudstikker kopen
14-3-2013 - Vijf grote opgaven voor de nieuwe paus
14-3-2013 - Sobere levensstijl en heldere geest
15-4-2013 - FNV botst met coalitie over bezuiniging
15-4-2013 - Protégé van Chávez wint Venezuelaanse verkiezingen nipt
15-4-2013 - Wanhoop op Guantánamo leidt tot massaal gevecht
15-4-2013 - Duitse woede over exposietje in Louvre
15-4-2013 - Kwastje-Dobmatov staat niet op zichzelf: inspecties hadden eerder al kritiek
16-5-2013 - Extremisten bedreigen de stabiliteit intussen in heel West-Afrika
16-5-2013 - Affaires rond Obama zijn zegen voor Republikeinen
16-5-2013 - Kunst met dieren domineert de KunstRAI
16-5-2013 - Toenemende terreurdreiging is erfenis van Arabische Lente
16-5-2013 - Coalitie praat toch weer over asielbeleid
17-6-2013 - Geheim vredesoverleg in Nederland
17-6-2013 - Britse geheime dienst luisterde G20 in Londen af
17-6-2013 - Oude vriend even geen vriend meer
17-6-2013 - Iraniers juichen na zege 'beleefde sjeik'
18-7-2013 - Poetin- criticus Navalny krijgt vijf jaar strafkamp
18-7-2013 - Nieuwe korting op pensioen dreigt in 2014
18-7-2013 - Soldaat van Oranje terug naar Engeland
18-7-2013 - 67 minuten goed doen voor jarige Mandela
18-7-2013 - In België is de patiënt koning, ook als hij uit Nederland komt
19-8-2013 - KPMG overtrad de regels bij Vesta
19-8-2013 - Opnieuw moordpartijen in Egipte, leger 'beraadt zich'
19-8-2013 - Dagbok uit Guantánamo

Trouw
3-2-2004 - Allesbavehele een schandaal
3-2-2004 - Sjaron voor ontruiming Gaza
3-2-2004 - Alleen de sterkste bioboeren blijven'
3-2-2004 - Overheid bepaalt prijs van energie
3-2-2004 - Scheepvaart Nedlloyd compleet Nederlands
3-2-2004 - NMA minder openhartig
3-2-2004 - Karinverwielde rode tap in beton vraagt om andere manieren van bouwen
3-2-2004 - Markt speelt weer op Cito-toets in
3-2-2004 - Lachen om het beeld van de Marokkaan
5-4-2004 - Donorregistratie faalt
5-4-2004 - Daders 'Madrid' blazen zichzelf op
5-4-2004 - Vrouwen van Rwanda leven slechts voor de toekomst van hun kinderen
5-4-2004 - Rode kaart wegens tekort
5-4-2004 - Binnen twee minuten een 'gezonde' hap
5-4-2004 - Thuiszorg ziet kansen om toch te bezuinigen
5-4-2004 - Veel kritiek op nieuw kiesstelsel De Graaf
5-4-2004 - Afscheid met roomse, romantische rand
5-4-2004 - 'Laat die Oranjes nou eerst maar eens een hele tijd leven'
5-4-2004 - Vriendschap voor altijd' bij herdenking D
6-5-2004 - Binnen twee minuten een 'gezonde' hap
6-5-2004 - Overheid bepaalt prijs van energie
6-5-2004 - Sjaron voor ontruiming Gaza
5-4-2004 - Doven moeten straks op eigen houtje tolk zoeken'
5-4-2004 - Alles over voedsel onder de vlag van Food Valley
5-4-2004 - Verzet tegen selectie pers bij Murat D.
5-4-2004 - De zoete wraak van piraat VMU
5-4-2004 - Computer in klaslokaal werkt niet
5-4-2004 - Politie onderzoekt omvang eraan
5-4-2004 - Ruzie met NS dreef kosten Betuwelijn op
5-4-2004 - De bedrijfelijk rust van het verminkte Rwanda
5-4-2004 - Politieke klasse in Frankrijk is aan vernieuwing toe
7-6-2004 - D-Day groots herdacht in sfeer van verzoening
7-6-2004 - Ronald Reagan overleden
7-6-2004 - Zalm: WV niet misbruiken als verkapte VUT-regeling
7-6-2004 - Haast niemand weet wat wij voor Europa doen'
7-6-2004 - Saudische smeroeil voor meest 'pure' vorm islam
7-6-2004 - Vrijmetselaarj al honderd jaar geen mannenbolwerk meer
7-6-2004 - Schamen voor de Antillen? Nee'
7-6-2004 - Ronald Reagan gaf Amerika weer zelfverTrouw
9-8-2004 - 'Papierwork politie moet snel minder'
9-8-2004 - En ineen is Athene toch op orde
9-8-2004 - Bloedneus voor George W. Bush
9-8-2004 - Alles braaf, gelukkig is daar de piemelboot
9-8-2004 - Kamer zeer bezorgd over lek politie
9-8-2004 - Een Rus moet vissen, desnoods langs de Maas
9-8-2004 - Een keer gezeten; dat nooit meer
9-8-2004 - Prenzlauer Berg is trendy, met vleugje DDR
11-10-2004 - Kabinet wil toenadering tot bonden
11-10-2004 - Liever tumult om inkt danommen
11-10-2004 – ‘Wie te veel op zijn gevoel afgaat, wordt pas willekeurig'
11-10-2004 - 'Verdonk voert strijd tegen islam'
11-10-2004 - Coke blijft Schiphol instromen
11-10-2004 - 'Status Antillen moet snel duidelijk worden'
11-10-2004 - 'Onferlijke strijd straks voorbij'
11-10-2004 - 'Elke schedel in Katyn heb ik in mijn hand gehad'
13-1-2004 - Die brandende patrouilleauto in Bagdad was het keertje
13-12-2004 - Jongeren behandelen is voor 90 procent opvoedden'
13-12-2004 - Plan emancipatie hapert
13-12-2004 - Het publiek valt stil als de stoet de Markt op komt
13-12-2004 - 'Ontroerende pater familias'
13-12-2004 - 'Muzikaal uitbundig, maar treffend'
13-12-2004 - Drank en seks op Britse kerstborrels
13-12-2004 - Een huiveringwekkende boodschap aan alle vrouwen
8-1-2007 - Een complott tegen de kerk'
8-1-2007 - Gratis bus moet winkeliers spekken
8-1-2007 - Leger vatbaar voor uitwassen
8-1-2007 - Chaos door vaagheid van uitzetstop
8-1-2007 - 'Alles komt goed – echt, gevoel me'
8-1-2007 - Een kabinet formeren in achterkamertje op de hei
8-1-2007 - ProRail ontdekt Romeinse weg
8-1-2007 - Angst voor de Arabieren' zit er diep in
10-3-2007 - EU neemt voortouw in strijd CO2
10-3-2007 - Princes Mabel: 'Kwaliteit democratie onder druk'
10-3-2007 - Gastvrijheid Nederland schiet tekort
10-3-2007 - Afschaffen kapvergunning omstreden
10-3-2007 - Nederlandse Kuijt uit Thaise gevangenis
10-3-2007 - Stijl van Wilders krijgt navolging
10-3-2007 - Guantánamo hebben VS de wet laten vallen
10-3-2007 - Verkiezingen Rusland zijn straks geregeerd
10-3-2007 - Namen en waarden van oude wijgerse Confucius verdelen moderne China
12-5-2007 - Bob Geldof: Al Gore is verkeerd bezig
12-5-2007 - Orgaandonatie: na tien jaar even ver
12-5-2007 - D66 ondertapij APK, uitslag over vier jaag
12-5-2007 - Kabinet laat jaarlijks dreigingen in kaart brengen
12-5-2007 - Volgens Mohammed B. Iette AIVD niet op
12-5-2007 - Beleggers claimen miljoen van CDA'er
12-5-2007 - College over Allah en Rockefeller
12-5-2007 - Oproer in VS over 'Jihad Mickey'
12-5-2007 - Rusland beschermt positie als olimoacho
12-5-2007 - Pools ex-communisten blijft zelfkritiek bespaard
13-7-2007 - Melkplas en boterberg verdwenen
13-7-2007 - Niks fijne lackick, wel hallucinaties
13-7-2007 - Kandidaten voor de 'fopspeenverkiezing'
13-7-2007 - Senator Yildirim heeft zo zijn eisen
13-7-2007 - Klein vuil of goed fout
13-7-2007 - Rotterdam zit in maag met blunderput
13-7-2007 - Marokkanen willen zelf naam voor hun kind kunnen kiezen
13-7-2007 - Reageerbuis van mondiaal migrantie
15-9-2007 - VVD balanceert op rand afgrond
15-9-2007 - Ja, de keus is wel heel beperkt
15-9-2007 - Gelijk of twee aan imago strenge juf
15-9-2007 - Neonazi's overrompelen Israël's
15-9-2007 - Karamanlis reken in een krappe overwinning
17-11-2007 - De onmogelijke opdracht van Rouvoet
17-11-2007 - Zelfs Cohen vindt sluiting van Rab Yum jammerlijk
17-11-2007 - 'Versimpel aanvachten vonnis'
17-11-2007 - Voogd is nalatig, maar niet schuldig
17-11-2007 - Burger laat zich niet verwarren door groen-witte spellingsstrojd
17-11-2007 - 'Musharraf speelt met de wereld'
17-11-2007 - Turkse justitie wil verbod op Koerdische DTP
13-2-2010 - Bos wel op de hoogte van contact met NAVO
13-2-2010 - Tijgerei beter dan varkensspil, denken Chiinezen
13-2-2010 - Uit Vrije Wil heeft voldoende steun voor een Kamerdebat
13-2-2010 - 'Davids ' heeft diepe sporen getrokken
13-2-2010 - 'Dit zijn goeie kids uit goeie families'
13-2-2010 - Geroofde baby van ontvoerde ouders
13-2-2010 - Ministers zijn welkom, mits ze hun plaats weten
15-4-2010 - Een doek voor de vlekken, maar nooit meer een muis
15-4-2010 - Druppels bewijs werden langzaam waterval
15-4-2010 - Vertraging is vervelender dan een vervuild station
15-4-2010 - Evacuaties door duinbrand
17-6-2010 - Oproep politieke rol over locatie Nationaal Historisch Museum
17-6-2010 - Overijssel: groen licht voor burgerluchthaven
17-6-2010 - CDA onzeker factor in kabinet-Rutte
17-6-2010 - BP stort 16 miljard in noodfonds
17-6-2010 - Aangehouden Chris K. spin in web van louche vastgoedzaken
17-6-2010 - In Jericho juichen ze voor Z-Afrika, als de zon schijnt
19-8-2010 - Zorg zet formatie op scherp
19-8-2010 - DNB roept ergenis op met twijgen over pensioenfondsen
19-8-2010 - Frankrijk in banuitzetting Roma
19-8-2010 - Democraten en Republikeinen verdeeld over Ground Zero-masks
21-10-2010 - Lagere beloning bij NS, Gasunie en Connexion
21-10-2010 - Oppositie: Rutte is dubbelhartig
21-10-2010 - FIFA schorst verdachte officials
21-10-2010 - Nuon stopt toch met zonnecellen
21-10-2010 - Er is altijd die geur van partijtijdigheid
21-10-2010 - Sharon ligt er vredig bij
23-12-2010 - Monumentaal eerbetoon voor 's werelds beroemdste zebraspad
23-12-2010 - Beste verpleeghuis van het land staat in het Friese Metslawier
23-12-2010 - Kamer wil meer greep op de NS
23-12-2010 - Haags pr-reisje Turkse media pakt slecht uit
14-1-2013 - Door het pesten had ik geen zin meer in school'
14-1-2013 - Piepend kuiten verovert de wereld
14-1-2013 - Frankrijk onwillige arbiter in Afrika
14-1-2013 - Plaats delict is weer voetbalveld
14-1-2013 - Mat haar, dode ogen, maar Kate vindt het prachtig
13-2-2013 - Akkoord woningmarkt
13-2-2013 - Onderzoekers: achter fuses ziet vooral strategisch belang
13-2-2013 - Doder Bin Laden: ze laten me vallen
Appendix B: Coding manual

General

G1 - Newspaper

Identify which newspaper the article comes from. Choose one of the following:
1. *nrc.next*
2. *NRC Handelsblad*
3. *de Volkskrant*
4. *Trouw*

Write down the number (in digits) that corresponds with the title.

G2 - Date of publication

Write down the date of publication (DD-MM-YY).

G3 - Title

Write down the title of the article. Use no quotation marks, unless they are included in the headline. Ignore eventual subheadings.

G4 – Subtitle

Write down the subtitle of the article. Use no quotation marks, unless they are included in the headline. If there is no subtitle used, write ‘-’.

G5 - Number of words article (including boxes)

The number of words used for the article. Write down the number in digits after selecting only the article, and not the title and subtitle.

G6 – Page number

Write down the number in digits on which page the article has been published.

Headline

H1 - Length

Count the number of characters that are used for the headline by using =LENGTE() in Microsoft Excel. Include spaces and punctuation. Write down the number in digits.

H2 - Lines
Number of lines used for the headline. Write down the number in digits.

H3 - Size

Measure the height of the headline in centimeters. This should be done by placing a digital straightedge down at the top of the first letter of the first word. The height of the headline is where the bottom of the lowest placed letter of the headline ends. The tool can be used in Foxit Reader. Write down the number in digits.

H4 - Sentence

Identify if the headline is a complete sentence that is spelled out completely and includes all the necessary verbs to make it an ordinary sentence that could have been used one-to-one in the article as well. Choose between Y (yes) or N (no).

Example of Y: ‘Er is een stukje van MH370 gevonden, maar wat nu?’

Example of N: ‘Wrakstuk ‘MH370’ in Frankrijk voor onderzoek’

H5 - Personal

Identify if, and if so to which extent, the headline refers directly to a single person (e.g. the reader or the person who is the subject of the article). If so, write down who is referred to. Choose from: reader, subject or other. Use other when it’s not clear who is referred to. If there is no referral, write N.

Example of a personalized headline (subject): ‘Aukje is haar broers baas - officieel dan’

Example of N: ‘Er is een stukje van MH370 gevonden, maar wat nu?’

H6 - Question

Identify if the headline is a question. Choose between Y and N.

H7 - Judgement

Identify if the headline includes a judgement. A headline includes a judgement when the author explicitly picks a side in the discussion where his article is about. It must be clear that it’s the perspective of the author and not from someone else (e.g. a politician). If so, describe this judgement.

Example of a headline with a judgement: ‘Griekenland? China, daar zijn pas problemen’

Example of N: ‘Er is een stukje van MH370 gevonden, maar wat nu?’

H8 - Focusing
Identify if the headline focusses on one particular aspect of the subject of the article beneath. That means: the article is about a general trend or problem, while the headline just focusses on one tiny aspect of this general trend or problem. If so, write Y. If not, write N.

Example of Y: ‘De nieuwe Chinese toerist wil ook naar de coffeeshop’
Explanation: the article is about a trend, namely that Chinese tourists don’t visit other countries in the traditional groups anymore, but discover new places by themselves and do different things. An example that support the existence of this trend is the fact that some of these individual Chinese tourists visit coffee shops. However, the complete article is not about Chinese tourists who are visiting coffee shops, it’s just a tiny bit or not at all.

Example of N: ‘Golf van Chinese toeristen naar Nederland’

H9 - Quote
Identify if the headline is a quote in whole or if it includes quoted words. A headline that is a complete quote can be identified by two quotation marks: one at the beginning of the headline and one at the end of the headline. A headline that includes quoted words can be identified when one or both of the quotation marks are not placed at the beginning or end of the headline. A headline that is not a quote or does not contain quoted words can be identified by the fact that quotation marks are missing. If the complete headline is a quote, write Y. If the headline contains quoted words, write P (Partial). When there are no quoted words at all, write N.

H10 - Explaining
Identify if the headline is pointing at an explanation. That means: does the headline clearly reveal that the article beneath is going to explain something. These kind of headlines can be identified by looking at signal words like why, how and whereby. It’s common that such headlines are a question as well. If so, write Y. If not, write N.

Example of Y: ‘Hoe China de Westerse beurzen raakt’

Example of N: ‘Chinese beurzen boeken megaverliezen’

H11 - Ironic
Identify if the headline contains an ironic undertone. That means: does the headline state something, but at the same time, clearly meaning the opposite? Most of the times these kind of headlines are funny, make the reader smile. If so, give a short description of what is stated and what is meant. If not, write N.

Example of ironic headline: ‘Hoe miserable wordt dit?’

H12 - Popular word use
Identify popular words that are used in the headline. Popular words can be English terms, invectives, words in spoken language, street language and superlatives. If so, write down the popular words that are used. If not, write N.

H13 - Format

Identify what kind of formatting is used for the headline. Options are: bold (B), underlined (U), italic (I), fluctuations in size (S) and capital letters (C). N = none. Write down every kind of formatting that is used. This should be done by using the letters mentioned above.

H14 - Exclamation mark

Identify if the headline contains an exclamation mark. If so, write Y. If not, write N.

H15 - Dramatization (Voltmer, 2000)

“‘Dramatization’ is a strategy by which news topics are presented as an acceleration of events. The reporting focuses on the climax of a development rather than on long-term causes or consequences. Coding was guided by the consideration of whether the language is characterized by the use of the superlative or by intensifying and emotional adjectives aiming to provoke excitement, fear or compassion.”

Use a three-point scale of intensity: 2 (strong usage), 1 (weak usage) and 0 (absence of linguistic format). Write down the number in digits.

H16 - Personalization of politics (Voltmer, 2000)

“‘Personalization’ is a presentation format which depicts politics as a result of the actions of single individuals rather than of structural conditions and the functioning of institutions. Coding captures whether or not the text centers on an individual person, be it a leader or an ordinary citizen.”

Use a three-point scale of intensity: 2 (strong usage), 1 (weak usage) and 0 (absence of linguistic format). Write down the number in digits.

H17 - Factuality (Voltmer, 2000)

“‘Factuality’ refers to the amount of knowledge a recipient can draw from reading the paper. The indicator measures whether the headline provides information about facts, or whether it primarily draws on vague associations. Coding was guided by the consideration whether or not the reader can understand the central point of the news story by reading the headline only.”

Use a three-point scale of intensity: 2 (strong factuality), 1 (weak factuality) and 0 (absence of factuality). Write down the number in digits.

First paragraph

F1 - Function
Identify the function of the first paragraph. The first paragraph are the first grouped lines after the headline. Choose one of the following:

- Describing the news following the inverted pyramid. That means: the article is built by the principle of giving the most important information first. The higher the paragraph is placed, the more important the given information is. Articles bases on the inverted pyramid use the very first paragraph for summarizing the news. Write down: newsy.

*Example: ‘Voor de kust van het Griekse eiland Farmakonisi zijn vandaag zeker 28 vluchtelingen verdronken. Het gammele houten bootje dat hen naar Europa moest brengen zonk. Het is voor zover bekend het dodelijkste incident in Griekse wateren sinds het begin van de vluchtelingencrisis.’*

- Describing sphere. That means: the author uses the first paragraph to ‘throw’ the reader in some kind of setting by giving a detailed and rich description of a scene. Common used techniques are describing the weather of an occasion, writing down what the author sees on a certain moment or by giving a rich description of a happening. Reportages mostly have these kinds of introductions. Write down: sphere.

*Example: ‘Een maand na de rellen in de Schilderswijk wanTrouwen bewoners de politie. „Alsof ze altijd op zoek zijn naar iets.”’*

- Setting the occasion. That means: the author uses the first paragraph to tell the reader why he wrote the article. Mostly, authors give some kind of description of a problem or phenomenon and describe how their article is related to this problem. These kind of introductions are used for background articles. Write down: occasion.

*Example: ‘Varkensboeren hebben het moeilijk, want ze verdienen bijna niets meer aan hun vlees. Vandaag eisen ze in Brussel meer steun.’*

**F2 - Referring to the reader**

Identify if the paragraph directly refers to the reader. This is the case when the author directly ‘talks’ to the reader or when the reader is the subject of the paragraph. Signal words are ‘u’, ‘uw’, ‘jij’ and ‘jouw’. If so, describe how this happens and what kind of words the author uses. If not, write N.

*Example of Y: ‘Jouw steenkolen-Engels kan een deal verprutsen’*

**F3 - Bold letters**

Count how many letters of the first paragraph are bold. Write down the number in digits.

**Content**

**C1 - Type (Patterson, 2000)**

Identify which newspaper the article comes from. Choose one of the following:
1. Basically straight news/hard news (happened in past 24 hours; event or incident based
2. Balanced mix of straight news and news analysis
3. Mainly news analysis (taking material from different times; includes motive, expectations, etc.)
4. Feature/human interest
5. Verbatim text-interview, speech or document

Write down the number (in digits) that corresponds with the type of the article.

C2 - Starting point

Identify the starting point of the article. Choose from the following:

- Past: the article is about some kind of event in the past. Write down: P.

Example: ‘Man dreigde uit hijskraan Beverwijk te springen’

- Future: the article is about some kind of event that’s yet to happen. Write down: F.

Example: ‘Dit gaat Apple vanavond presenteren (denken we)’

C3 - Structure (Patterson, 2000)

Identify the structure of the article, the way the article is build-up. Choose from:

- The inverted pyramid: the article is written following the principle of giving the most important information as soon as possible. Write down: inverted pyramid.

- Reportage: the article is a reportage and has a structure that fits the subject. Write down: reportage.

- Interpretive / analytical / evaluation: the article is a background story and has a structure that fits for explaining a certain topic. Write down: explanation.

- Point by point: the article is not a coherent story, but consists of different parts divided by pinpoints. Write down: point.

C4 - Reflective

Identify if the article is reflective. That means: does the author show his opinion or does he encourage the reader for some kind of action? Is he pleading for a certain case? If so, describe how the author does this. If not, write N.

C5 - Subheadings

Identify the function of subheadings. Subheadings are the mostly bold formatted words or small sentences that are used in an article to ‘break’ the otherwise completely grey surface of the article. Choose from:
- Dividing the article: the subheadings are used just to ‘break’ the surface. Write down: dividing.

- Summarizing: the headlines are used to summarize the piece of text below. Write down: summarizing.

C6 - Subject

Identify the subject of the article. Choose from (Broersma & Graham, 2012):

1) Politics and government
2) International relations
3) Social welfare
4) Business and economy
5) Accidents and disasters
6) Crime
7) Sports
8) Nature and the environment (including weather)
9) Education
10) Science and technology
11) Health care
12) Religion and beliefs
13) Arts and culture
14) (Multi)media
15) Human interest
16) Lifestyle
17) Royalty

Write down the number in digits.

C7 - Type news (Curran, 2010)

Identify the type of news. Choose from the following:

- Hard news: ‘reports about politics, public administration, the economy, science, technology and related topics’. Write down: H.

- Soft news: ‘reports about celebrities, human interest, sport and other entertainment-centred stories’. Write down: S.

According to Curran, crime stories can either be hard or soft. ‘If a crime story was reported in a way that contextualized and linked the issue to the public good – for example, if the report referred to penal policies or to the general causes or consequences of crime – it was judged to be a hard news story assimilated to public affairs. If, however, the main focus of the report was the crime itself, with details concerning the perpetrators and victims, but with no reference to the larger context or implications for public policies, the news item was judged to be soft.’
C8 - Popular word use

Identify popular words that are used in the article. Popular words can be English terms, invectives, words in spoken language, street language and superlatives. If so, write down the popular words that are used. If not, write N.

C9 - Semantic differentials (Hauttekeete, 2002)

C9.1 - Emotional - - - - - rational (note: use of superlatives)
C9.2 - Narrative reporting - - - - - non-narrative reporting (note: sphere)
C9.3 - Black-white - - - - - nuanced (note: number of sources)
C9.4 - Humorous - - - - - non-humorous

Use a scale from 1 (e.g. very rational) till 5 (e.g. very emotional). Write down the number in digits.

Boxes

B1 - Size

Measure the size of the used boxes in cm2. A box is some freestanding space that belongs to the article and is mostly used to give the reader some extra information of a certain topic. If there are more boxes, sum up the total amount of used space. Write down the number in digits.

B2 - Function

Identify the function of the box. Choose from:

- Explaining a certain topic from the article in more depth. Write down: explain.
- Providing background information for a better understanding of the article. Write down: background.

B3 - Ratio

Measure the ration between size of the boxes and the total amount of spaced used for the article. The total surface of the article can be measured by looking at the most top, right, bottom and left corner of the above accumulation. The space between the most top and most bottom spot should be multiplied with the space between the most left and most right spot (S). The same should be done for every box. In case of several visuals, sum up the total amount of space. This number should be divided by S and multiplied by 100. Write down the number in digits.

Visuals

V1 - Ratio graphics

Measure the amount of space used for visuals in relation to the total amount of space used for the complete article. The complete amount of space used for the article must be seen as a accumulation of
headlines, text, boxes and visuals. Visuals are photographs, illustrations, infographics and drawings. The total surface of the article can be measured by looking at the most top, right, bottom and left corner of the above accumulation. The space between the most top and most bottom spot should be multiplied with the space between the most left and most right spot (S). The same should be done for every visual. In case of several visuals, sum up the total amount of space. This number should be divided by S and multiplied by 100. Write down the number in digits.

V2 – Description of images

Write down in a few words what can be seen.
## Appendix C: Example of results scheme

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**First paragraph**

| Newsy | 29 | 48 | 21 | 45 | 18 | 58 | 26 | 49 |
| Sphere | 20 | 33 | 10 | 21 | 9 | 29 | 21 | 40 |
| Occasion | 11 | 18 | 16 | 34 | 4 | 13 | 6 | 11 |
| Reference reader | 0 | 0 | 3 | 6 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 2 |

**Structure**

| Inverted pyramid | 28 | 47 | 21 | 45 | 16 | 52 | 29 | 55 |
| Explanation | 10 | 17 | 12 | 26 | 8 | 26 | 6 | 11 |
| Reportage | 22 | 37 | 14 | 30 | 7 | 23 | 17 | 32 |
| Point by point | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| Emotional | 1 | 49 | 82 | 36 | 77 | 17 | 55 | 29 | 55 |

**Narrative**

| 1 | 40 | 67 | 21 | 45 | 17 | 55 | 28 | 53 |
| 2 | 1 | 2 | 5 | 11 | 3 | 10 | 1 | 2 |
| 3 | 4 | 7 | 10 | 21 | 5 | 16 | 5 | 9 |
| 4 | 15 | 25 | 9 | 19 | 2 | 6 | 13 | 25 |

**Black and white**

| 1 | 6 | 10 | 7 | 15 | 8 | 26 | 7 | 13 |
| 2 | 40 | 67 | 18 | 38 | 14 | 45 | 19 | 36 |
| 3 | 12 | 20 | 16 | 34 | 7 | 23 | 22 | 42 |
| 4 | 2 | 3 | 5 | 11 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 8 |

**Humorous**

| 1 | 58 | 97 | 46 | 98 | 30 | 97 | 49 | 92 |
| 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 6 |
| 3 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
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| 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

**Subheadings**

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**Boxes**

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**Boxes (#)**

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| 15-19 | - | - | 2 | 4 | 1 | 3 | 4 | 8 |

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**Images**

| 22 | 37 | 24 (3) | 51 | 19 (4) | 61 | 38 (8) | 72 |

**Images (#)**

| - | - | 29 | - | 23 | - | 48 | - |

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