A new reading of primary sources via the digital analysis of social networks

‘The Werner Committee and the debates on European economic and monetary integration’

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*Motto:*

«*Le chef politique doit être avant tout le catalyseur des énergies de ceux qui l’entourent et qui le secondent dans un grand dessein.*»

(Pierre Werner, 1992)

1. Introduction - Scope of the pilot project, Issues & Key-players

2. Goals – Summarise and visualise the negotiations within the Werner Committee

3. Methodology – Manual extraction of network data

4. The first results

5. Conclusion/Epistemological considerations – Revisit and upgrade the traditional methodology of research
1. Introduction – The pilot project

- Combining humanities and social sciences research with digital tools
- Publishing the results via the digital research infrastructure on European integration, CVCE.eu

«There is a tendency when using graphs to become smitten with one’s own data. (...) Graphs have a tendency of making a data set look sophisticated and important, without having solved the problem of enlightening the viewer.»

(Ben Fry, 2007)

http://www.cvce.eu/recherche/projet-werner
http://www.cvce.eu/digital-innovation/projects/netviz
1. Introduction – The pilot project

Research Corpus
A rereading of the Werner Report in the light of the Pierre Werner family archives

Digital publication: http://www.cvce.eu/recherche/projet-werner

The Hague Summit and the establishment of the Werner Committee

December 1 and 2, 1969
Hague Summit

The Heads of State agree to make every effort to achieve economic and monetary integration.

The decision is taken to explore the possibilities for stage-by-stage progress towards an economic and monetary union.

The 1970 Werner Report: a blueprint for EMU

“I am happy to note that on all these aspects we forged a unanimous collective view. Of course these joint replies do not reflect all the individual preferences of the members of the group. But we do think that having looked at the question from all sides, at long sessions where we compared a range of ideas, we have succeeded in giving shape to the wish for proceeding in parallel on the measures to be taken in the economic and financial fields. What we aspired to do was, once and for all, to break the vicious circle consisting of setting prior economic and political conditions. We have tried to draw a line midway between the view that monetary union is the crowning glory of European integration and the view that would turn it into the virtually all-powerful engine driving integration. I think the proposals are in line with the existing treaties, and that they do, precisely, ensure that the objectives of the treaties will be achieved in full. Thus for stage one we can go a great deal of the way without amending the treaties. However, there must be a strong political will backing up this process all the time that it is being put into effect.”

The 1970 Werner Report: a blueprint for EMU

‘In the history of Europe as a monetary entity, there is a pre-Werner and a post-Werner period.’

‘Up until the time of the report, which is inextricably associated with the Hague Conference, the Member States still had a vision of an economic union, or at any rate a common market, which they thought could be achieved merely by resorting, where monetary affairs were concerned, to the coordination of their policies; from the time of the Hague Conference and the Werner Report onwards, they admitted that economic union could not be brought about unless monetary union were progressively established’

(Ansiaux, H and Dessaert, M. 1975:1)

Seven members and their alternate members

- Holders of high public offices in the Member States
- Leaders of the specialized committees of the European Commission
- Highly committed in the European integration process

Pierre Werner, Chair of the Committee & Johnny Schmitz

Gaetano Stammati & Simone Palumbo

Bernard Clappier & Jean-Michel Bloch-Lainé

Baron Hubert Ansiaux & Jacques Mertens de Wilmars

Ugo Mosca & Jean-Claude Morel & Georges Morelli

Johann B. Schöllhorn & Hans Tietmeyer

Gerard Brouwers & Anthony Looijen
2. Goals

- Analysing the relationship between individuals on the basis of various primary sources

- Drawing a complete overview of the relationship within the Werner Committee

- Summarize and visualise the negotiations that led to the Werner Report

- Exploring in depth the network analysis method

- Enhancing the research capabilities and developing new knowledge

- Targeting the community of digital tools users
3. Methodologie – The digital analysis of social networks

Exchange of letters

Time frame: 1969-1972

51 relevant documents (official and confidential correspondence between the members of the Werner Committee and associated figures)

A network of 25 individuals

Letter of Baron Hubert Ansiaux to Pierre Werner (Bruxelles, 22 April 1970)

Letter of Gaetano Stammati to Pierre Werner (Rome, 25 May 1970)
Example: Lettre of Gaetano Stammati to Pierre Werner (Rome, 25 May 1970)

Recipient
Pierre Werner

Sender:
Gaetano Stammati

Date: 25 May 1970

Discussed topic:
Monetary union, EMU, Budgetary union

Purpose:
Give a analysis

Relationship between sender and recipient:
* Strong personal link
* From high level to high level

Agreement/Desagreement:
Rather agree
3. Methodologie – A structured set of data

- A categorization of the discussed topics
- A typologie of the objectives aimed by the documents
- Agreements and disagreements between various points of view

Sample of the structured data of Werner Committee network:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Person</th>
<th>Person2</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Actions</th>
<th>(Dis-) Agreements?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pierre Werner</td>
<td>Baron Hubert Ansiaux</td>
<td>Fiscal Union</td>
<td>Request information</td>
<td>Mostly Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pierre Werner</td>
<td>Baron Hubert Ansiaux</td>
<td>Monetary Union</td>
<td>Give analysis</td>
<td>Mostly Agree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sample table showing interactions and agreements.
3. Methodologie – From letters encoding to a structured set of data

- Network analysis with *NodeXL*

Figure: The Werner Committee network as reflected by the exchange of letters
4. The first results – Macroanalyse of the exchange of letters within the Werner Committee

- Strong and continuous link between the German alternate member of the Werner Committee and the German Federal Ministry of Economy

Figure: The Werner Committee network as reflected by the exchange of letters
4. The first results – Macroanalyse of the exchange of letters within the Werner Committee

- A missing link

Figure: The Werner Committee network as reflected by the exchange of letters
4. The first results – Macroanalyse of the exchange of letters within the Werner Committee

A influential group
Werner-Monnet-Triffin-Ansiaux

Figure: The Werner Committee network as reflected by the exchange of letters
4. The first results – Visualising the exchange of letters within the Werner Committee

- Visualisation with RAW

Figure: Topics aimed by the exchanges of letters over time

http://raw.densitydesign.org/
4. The first results – Visualising the exchange of letters within the Werner Committee

Focus on the topic «Monetary union»

Key events

- Establishment of the Werner Committee 6.3.1970
- The Interim Report 8.-9.06.1970
- The Final Report 8.10.1970
- The European Commission Proposals 29.10.1970

Figure: Topics aimed by the exchanges of letters over time
4. The first results – Visualising the exchange of letters within the Werner Committee

Focus on the topics
• «Political union»
• «Social dimension»

Figure: Les sujets abordés dans les échanges au cours du temps
4. The first results – Visualising the exchange of letters within the Werner Committee

Focus on the topic « Budgetary union »

Figure: Les sujets abordés dans les échanges au cours du temps

Key events
- Establishment of the Werner Committee 6.3.1970
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- The Final Report 8.10.1970
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4. The first results – Visualising the exchange of letters within the Werner Committee

- Diagram: Areas of agreements and disagreements related to the topic
4. The first results – An iterative and multi-faced process of interpretation and adjustment

In order to refine the encoding, the results have being analysed through an iterative and multi-faced process:

Categorisation > visualisation > interpretation > adjustment of the categories > ...

Example:
«mostly agree» and «consensual»
4. The first results – Specific conclusions resulting from the analysis of social networks

**Most valuable outcomes**

- The controversy between «Economists» and «Monetarists» less categorical than expected

- Close and continuos link between the German member (and the alternate member) of the Werner Committee and German official institutions

- The German Central Bank (Bundesbank) most active in the interinstitutional cooperation between Member States than inside the Committee of Governors of the central banks of the Member States of the EEC

- Particular closeness of some relations (Werner-Ansiaux-Monnet-Triffin)

**Limits of the research**

- «Work in progress»/«embryo research», only with partial results
- The selection of documents
- Disparity of documentary and data sources by topic and/or by period
- Confidential and non-written exchanges were not retained
- Specific difficulties of the «data setting» process
5. Conclusion - Epistemological considerations

1. Confirm and consolidate the conclusions of traditional analysis

2. Give an appropriate visual representation of the process and explore and interpret data through graphs and diagrams

3. A new perspective on the traditional human reading, the information contained in primary sources and reveal new findings or research directions

4. Revisit and upgrade the traditional methodology of research

5. Communicate results with illustrations
References


Digital Humanities LAB at CVCE: https://cvcedhlab.hypotheses.org

Node XL: http://nodexl.codeplex.com

RAW density design: http://app.raw.densitydesign.org
Thank you for listening!

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