The discourses and practices about Corporate Social Responsibility (DP-CSR), new components of multinational companies’ strategies and element of micro-regularities in the post-Ford model: the illustration with French multinational companies.

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The discourses and practices about Corporate Social Responsibility (DP-CSRs), new components of multinational companies’ strategies and element of micro-regularities in the post-Ford model: the illustration with French multinational companies.

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Introduction

Sustainable development, an already old concept, is nowadays in the heart of several academic debates in Management Sciences (Dreveton and Krupika, 2005). It is also in the centre of the companies’ concerns, especially multinationals. These companies, with their power, their size and their planetary presence, are strongly concerned with their economic, social, cultural and ecologic environment. Their activities have significant effects on ecologic environment, society and economy.

In this context, lots of organizations (particularly non governmental organizations) ask for a right to look at the activities of these companies, which escape from the state regulations.

The ecologic accidents, the social scandals (like Nike or Puma) and financial scandals (Enron, Worldcom…) altered the image of the big company, bringing about suspicion and mistrust. The commitment of a company in terms of sustainable development and corporate social responsibility appears as a means to “restore a dismayed legitimacy by the financial, social and ecologic scandals” (Salmon, 2005), but also a way to prevent some different risks (financial ones, risk for the image and the reputation, ecologic ones…). Some think that company is becoming a “society issue” (Sainsaulieu, 1995).

In this point of view, the DP-CSRs are composing an answer from the companies, especially multinationals, to the pressure of the different social actors organized. Thus, the non-governmental organizations ask accounts about the economic, social and ecologic impacts of their activities. Likewise, the DP-CSRs are building up a means to avoid scandals...
like Nike or Enron, which lead to heavy commercial and financial consequences and repercussions. The DP-RSE can also allow the big companies to reduce costs and attract new investors, while keeping their present shareholders.³

But the extent of the CSR phenomenon attests that these explanations are not sufficient.⁴ Appearing in a post-Ford economic context of high mutations, the DP-CSR contribute to the regulation of the capitalist system, enabling notably to inflect the wage-labor relationship, in a context of a programmed enfeeblement of the state control.

In this text, we would like to test these hypotheses. In order to do it, we have studied the DP-CSR through the annual reports of big French companies quoted in the CAC40 at the Paris stock exchange. The content analysis of these reports, done with a sample of 10 companies, enables us in particular to check various theoretical hypotheses (the existence of a common basis concerning the DP-CSR of the various companies, their regulative capacity on the economic system). It has also brought into light the interest to explore several new leads, as for instance the specificities of each business sector, the cultural influence on the content of the DP-CSR.

I – PLENTY OF DEFINITIONS, ILLUSTRATION OF THE VARIETY OF INTERPRETATIONS

It’s not easy to present in an exhaustive way the various points of view and definitions of the sustainable development and CSR concepts. We suggest to focus on our own point of view.

1.1. The historic dimension of the sustainable development concept

Even if classical researchers in economy like Malthus, Ricardo, Jevons, never pronounced this expression, the worries that they expressed were close to it.

After the Second World War, François Perroux, in France, put into words a close concept: the harmonized growth.⁶

In the sixties and seventies, several authors underlined the sometimes bad consequences of the uncontrolled growth (Lattès, D’Iriberne, Bardelli), and various events, as for instance the Club of Rome report and conferences of the United Nations, gave rise to the debate. It is the

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³ Formally the DP-CSR take an increasing place in the corporate communication mediums.
⁵ One of the major structural forms of the capitalist system, Aglietta M, 1976.
⁶ François Perroux recommended to introduce the effects of the asymmetry to correct the negative effects of the growth; Perroux F., « Les techniques quantitatives de planification », PUF, 1965.

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October 19-20 2006, Atlanta

Pierre BARDELLI
Manuela PASTORE
“Brundtland” report, ordered by the United Nations in 1987, that really boosted the debate under the term of “sustainable development”.

The business world is interested in it since the beginning of the twentieth century. The first works are dated from 1916, with Clark, followed by Berle and Means (1932). But one of the founder works is the Howard Bowen’s work, Social Responsibilities of the Businessman, from 1953 (Carroll, 1999), is considered as a major work in the later theoretical developments concerning CSR.

Two complementary points of view co-exist about sustainable development: the macro-voluntarism approach which deals with global practices (particularly state practices) which are the concern of sustainable development, and the micro-behaviorist which deals with companies’ practices in CSR (Bardelli, 2004).

According to some authors, CSR would be the transfer of the sustainable development issues in the companies (Dreveton and Krupika, 2005). Thus the CSR is “intrinsically related to the sustainable development concept” (European Community, 2002) it is characterized by “the companies’ appropriation of the sustainable development issues” (Capron & Quairel-Lanoizelée, 2004).

1.2. American practices and European practices: different cultural base

Several authors underlined the difference of point of view between CSR perception and conception in the European and Anglo-Saxon worlds.

A first gap, cultural gap, gives us a key to read the conceptions variety (Perez, 2004; Bardelli, 2005). This gap takes place in the different management practices. In the Anglo-Saxon world, business and non-business are dissociated. From this, it results a CSR practice out of the business: sponsoring, patronage, foundations. The European management model (the Japanese model too, but for other reasons) integrates the social dimension. In Europe, the historical form illustrating this model is paternalism.

A second notorious difference exists between Anglo-Saxons practices and European Latin practices, as result of a different meaning of the “social” notion. This notion has a larger connotation in the expression “Corporate Social Responsibility” than in the European expression, and more precisely the French one. This last conception, more restrictive conception of the “social” notion, deals with employees, wages and working conditions (Capron and Quairel-Lanoizelée, 2004).
There is finally a third difference: in general, Latin countries promote rules and restricting measures (laws and rules) whereas the Anglo-Saxon world promotes initiatives and voluntarism (recommendations) (Queinnec, 2004). The cultural differences between those two worlds explain, at least partly, the variety of conceptions which exists in this topic.

1.3. The three major research directions on CSR

In fact, three major approaches exist on CSR (Brabet J., 2004):

- **The contractual interpretations**, according to which the company is a contracts knot. This approach postulates that the regulation is done by the market. In the pure tradition of the neoclassical economy (Walras, Pareto), it expounds that the social wellbeing comes from the economic performance.

- **The stakeholder approach:** it relies on a moral perception (or ethical) of the governance and it advocates the companies’ voluntarism in CSR. In its analysis, this approach leads to a normative attitude. The company has to worry at the same time about profitability and growth, but also about the environmental and social impacts of its activities, and about the stakeholders’ preoccupations (Novethic). A “light” version of this approach exists; it bases the CSR on the voluntarism. We can find it in the Green Book promoted by the European Union. Its content covers the taking into account of the indirectly economic and financial consequences of the companies’ activities and the taking into account of all the stakeholders.

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7 Moreover we can legitimately wonder if, by its voluntary doctrine, the EU does not wish that companies adopt the Anglo-Saxon model, much more liberal than the European one.

8 Ethics corresponds to a behavior from which the criterions are determined by the individual himself, criterions he promises to respect. The wordings of ethics do not point out the external object, they just point out themselves, Wittgenstein, *Tractatus logico-philosophicus*, 1921. Ethics have their “origin in life” and their values are subjective, concrete, individuals, purely optional. Nobody has to adopt them. They cannot be object of knowing, they can only be experimented. On the other hand the moral values are prescriptive, abstract (formal), universal and compulsory. Quiniou Y. « *Etudes matérialistes sur la morale. Nietzsche, Darwin, Marx, Habermas* », éd. Kimé, 2002.

9 For some authors, confusion between CSR and ethics would result from the American origin of this concept (Capron and Quairel-Lanoizelée, 2004).

10 Novethic is a resource expert center on CSR and on responsible investment, [www.novethic.fr](http://www.novethic.fr).

11 The Green Book of the European Commission on CSR (2001) is a whole of prescriptions based on the companies’ voluntary and the exemplarity of some of them regarding to sustainable development.

12 For the EU, the “CSR is all of the social and environmental practices, relied to their activities and going beyond their legal obligation”, Green Book, 2001.
The Global approach by the regulation theory: it considers CSR as bounded to deep mechanisms of capitalist economy (and its institutional or structural forms\textsuperscript{13}) and as the expression of the companies’ will to influence the wage-labor relationship. The wage-labor relationship, indeed, is becoming a major stake for companies: it covers at the same time direct and non-direct wages conditions (unemployment, illness, old age), safety at work, work length, etc. To summarize, a whole of dimensions that set up costs which were previously managed by the state (Ford-model regulation).

In the post-Ford phase, that also corresponds to a deep crisis (transformation of the state regulation model and transformation of the companies’ practices) which results from price drop, due to the new international competition, companies have to search for means to reduce production costs. That is in this particular and historic context that the big international companies will try to take again the levers that will enable them to directly regulate the employment relation. In this way they could take the states’ places, which have a tendency to retire from the social management, in accordance with the liberal discourse in the air and with the prescriptions of liberal economy.

As we noted, it seems difficult to find a consensus definition of sustainable development. That’s why a definition “by default” seems to be a clever idea: it represents “one of the answers to the incoherencies of a world which became chaotic” (Férone, D’Arcimoles, Bello and Sassenou, 2001). The new world context is the source of new companies’ practices and the awareness of the different actors of the various problems relied to the activities of the companies, especially international ones.

The “New World” (Bardelli, 2004, 2005) is characterized by a globalization of the economy, an increasing competitive intensity, as well as a weakening of the regulating part of the States (Nations-States). The companies’ regulation stands for the state regulation. In this context, the involvement of the companies in CSR is revealing that a new way of economic and social regulation emerges (Bardelli, 2005). It sets up a mean to answer to the new competitive constraints.

\textsuperscript{13} The concept of the structural forms, characterizing capitalism at a given moment of its evolution, is due to Michel Aglietta, « Régulation et crise du capitalisme », Calmann Levy, 1976, Paris.

Indeed it exists some structural forms (Aglietta, 1976) or institutional (Boyer, 2004) significant of Fordism. They have economic dimensions (running system of the productivity deposits) and non-economic (social contract system -collective agreement- between employees and employers). Among these institutional forms we find pin particular the wage-labor relationship and the competition forms. Boyer R, « Théorie de la régulation, 1 – les fondamentaux », éd. Repères la Découverte, Paris, 2004.
II — THE ANNUAL REPORTS, A TOOL FOR THE INSTITUTIONNAL COMMUNICATION OF THE COMPANY REVEALING THE DP-CSR

The study of the annual reports, based on a rigorous method, permits us to test some theoretical hypotheses which found our approach, in particular:

- The existence of a common basis to the discourses and practices of the companies, apparently disparate, which could attest that there are some “objective” and mechanist constraints from the market economy on the firms behavior.
- The existence of business sectors specificities illustrating significant differences between competitive conditions in the various sectors, and showing effects of the nature of the activity on social and especially environmental practices.
- The existence of a polarization of the big companies on the employment relation, with the aim to make on its own the direct management of it, as part of a long-term strategy aiming to establish their predominance on the regulation conditions of the capitalist system.

2.1. Reporting: legal foundations and informative content

2.1.1. Reporting: from the obligation to the practice

We note that there is no theoretical foundation to the reporting, but legal foundation (as for instance the NER law in France) or strategic foundation. Indeed, the publication of the annual reports by the quoted companies responds to an information obligation. Generally, companies do not only present the annual accounts approved by the board of directors. They use the annual report as a medium of corporate communication, in order to convey a positive and dynamic image, in particular to seduce investors, inform consumers and send strong signals to the various “stakeholders” involved in the issues where multinational companies are involved in (respect of the human rights, respect of the environment, etc.).
The law on the New Economic Regulation:

In France, the law relative to the New Economic Regulations, called “NRE law” comes from a will to supervise the approaches in CSR. Since May 2001, the 900 companies quoted have to account for how they manage the social and environmental consequences of their activities.

The information to provide is detailed in the application decree. This law aims at supervising, controlling the diffusion of information concerning the CSR, and to reduce the gap between American and French companies, to incite the latter to produce more reports concerning the sustainable development (Igalens, 2004). This law leads to an increase of the companies’ discourses on their involvement in CSR, inciting them to precise how they take into account, daily, these aspects (Igalens and Joras, 2002).

This law is criticized on different points: it rests on statements; no sanction is planned in case of non-respect. This certainly explains the fact that almost the half of the 900 companies did not publish anything (Igalens, 2004). Some consultants and auditors consider that “the companies did not satisfy the demands of the application decree of the article 116 from the law relative to the New Economic Regulations”, (Igalens, 2004).

Furthermore, the available information remains so different and heterogeneous from one report to one another. “Lots of managers chose to obey to the spirit of the law instead of to the letter” (Igalens, 2005).

Even if the annual report represent “the calling card, the identity card of the company for a year” (Westphalen, 94), even “a real tool for public relations” (O’Donovan 2002), some interpret it as a try to manipulate from the managers (Suchman, 1995), permitting them to present the company on an attractive way (Point, 2001; O’Donovan, 2002).

Some authors justify this practice constructing a “legitimacy theory”. According to them, organizations must react inside the limits of the “politically correct” or the “socially acceptable” (Wilmshurst and Frost, 2000; Deegan and al. 2002; O’Donovan, 2002; Campbell and al. 2003)\(^\text{14}\). The fact to publish environmental and social information enables the company to “interpret its own activities and to justify their impacts on social and political environment” (Garric, Léglise, Point, 2005) and also to “construct its own reality, to redefine its image” (Garric, Léglise, Point, 2005). As we can notice, it is more a supporting theory than an explanatory one.

We refute this position as the scientific content analysis method that we suggest mainly aims at extracting the “objective substance”\(^\text{15}\) of the reports, and have no supporting mission.

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\(^{14}\) Quoted in Garric N., Léglise I., Point S., « Le rapport sociétal et environnemental de Total à l’épreuve de l’analyse de discours », Colloquium « The CSR : reality, myth or hoax ? », Nancy 2, March 17th and 18th, 2005..

\(^{15}\) We mean that what is intentional from companies but not necessarily explicit.
2.1.2. The information contained by the annual reports – some precautions to take

If the state of affairs is lukewarm, the French law called “NRE law” permitted to launch the debate and to incite companies to publish more information relative to their CSR and sustainable development actions. From now on, we have at our disposal a rich material concerning the quoted companies, for which the annual report is becoming the favorite medium to communicate on the DP-CSF. The running of this information, relative to big French companies, allows us to test various theoretical hypotheses. The annual report of the company becomes “the favorite investigation medium to analyze the content and the springs of the managerial discourse” (Attarça and Jacquot, 2005). Moreover the researches use more and more these annual reports to make deeper the companies’ DP-CSF. But the evaluation of the involvement in CSR remains hard to do. Indeed the companies frequently mix corporate communication and responsible involvement, making the whole confused and not very homogeneous (Capron and Quairel-Lanoizelée, 2004). Thus, “the practices of publishing environmental and social reports are more relative to communication actions than to contributions on the real consequences of the companies’ activities” (Capron and Quairel-Lanoizelée, 2004).

Nevertheless, the content analysis seems to be an adapted methodology and capable to answer our questions.

2.2. The suggested method: the content analysis

The content analysis permits to fully explore the wealth of information content in the annual reports. The content of these reports being an exhibited, intentional, considered discourse, its study, by a quantitative and qualitative content analysis, reveals precious information about the CSR involvement of these companies.

We agree with the idea that “Words and sentences convey more than the immediate meaning that we give them. They include a deeper communication from which the actor is unconscious” (Wacheux, 1996). We also share the principle of the content analysis according to which “the repetition of discourse’s unities of analysis (...) reveals the preoccupation, the interests of its author” (Thiétart, 1999). As some researches testify for, the content analysis is a relevant method to deeply study the DP-RSE and their understanding.

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16 Recently, several authors chose to study the involvement in CSR by the annual reports (Attarça & Jacquot, 2005; Garric, Léglise et Point, 2005; Igalens, 2004; Alpha études).

17 Several recent studies in CSR were conducted with a content analysis methodology (Attarça and Jacquot, 2005; Garric, Léglise and Point, 2005).
We choose to test our hypotheses relative to the explanatory factors of the strategic choices in CSR on a sample of ten companies belonging to the CAC40. This sample, even if it’s limited, offers a panoramic and synthetic vision of the DP-CSR diffused in the reports. From this, and trying to use the rich possibilities of the content analysis at their best, we suggest to explore the annual reports of these companies and make emerge various positioning as far as CSR is concerned, so as more general trends. Finally, we will deduct some potentially explicative factors of the choices made by these companies about CSR. This study helps us to understand more easily the stakes of the DP-CSR for these big companies, and opens up interesting research leads for the future.

III – THE RUNNING OF THE STUDY: PROMISING RESULTS

3.1. The joint between global strategy and CSR strategy

We suggest studying the joint between global strategy and CSR strategy with the qualitative analysis, which is interested in the appearance contexts of the preoccupations relied to sustainable development in the annual reports. Moreover, a quantitative analysis was made through a theme dictionary progressively built, which groups together all the dimensions joinable to the CSR. This dictionary plays the role of filter for the material studied, the annual reports, and reveals the density and the orientation of the responsible involvement of companies.

In view of the extensive concept of CSR, we choose to be as exhaustive as possible, to take into account the different visions held by companies, visions which are shaped by the strategy developed in the annual reports. This stage enables us to clarify the positioning of each company by quantitative indicators (frequencies and relative frequencies) and by qualitative indicators revealing the orientation of these preoccupations (working conditions, social, environmental…).

Several strategies appear. We suggest establishing a typology. It concerns the CSR strategies displayed in the annual reports, in harmony with the existing typologies about CSR strategies. We find three main levels: the proactive companies, the adapting companies, and the companies in phase of partial integration.

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18 The methodology and the detailed results are presented in the annexes.

19 For instance, typologies in CSR reactions and strategies presented in various works or articles. (Chauveau and Rosé -2003- quoting Clarkson typology; Capron and Quairel-Lanoizelée -2004-; Alberola and Richez-Battesti -2004-).
• The proactive companies, Danone and Veolia in our sample, put sustainable development and CSR in the heart of their vision of the company. The preoccupations linked to this theme are very present quantitatively. They are transverse to the different topics approached in the report. Companies convey a large vision of CSR. Indeed they do not limit themselves to the aspects directly connected to their activities but cover all the dimensions of the concept. The integration of these preoccupations in the global strategy seems to be easier thanks to a “cultural predisposition” particularly due to the business sector (food for Danone, environment for Véolia). Danone and Véolia so strongly promote their responsible involvement that they make it their main competitive advantage. For these firms, the attachment to the responsible preoccupations is a part of the company identity and managing model.

Danone: “First of all there is a strong anchorage in this company’s history, that we call the “double economic and social project” which deeply influence reflexes and behaviors. I have the conviction that this culture is a part of the competitive asset of DANONE” Franck Riboud, CSR Report 2004.

Véolia Environnement: “SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: Véolia Environnement wants to carry on taking part actively to the implementation of an involved society in the logical of sustainable development” Report 2004

• The adapting companies: in this group we find LVMH, Renault, PSA and Saint-Gobain. The preoccupations of these companies include environmental and all social aspects linked to their main activities. In this way, by their initiatives, they transform the inherent threats in assets. We can say that these companies appropriate the sustainable and CSR stakes, even if all reports do not always have a “responsible involvement” tone.

LVMH: “The preservation of the environment is an implicit message in the luxury concept. The fact to take into account the environment in the elaboration of the products of our Group remains a strong expectation, even if majority of the consumers don’t express it in precise terms”. Report 2004, LVMH.

Renault: Renault is convinced that CSR is a long-term factor of success in all of its establishments all around the world. In this shape, Louis Schweitzer, Chairman and President of the Renault group, Marcello Mallentacchi (…), the Renault group Committee (RGC) and the signatory trade-union organizations of the agreement of April the fourth 2003 relative to the RGC (…), signed, on October the twelfth 2004, the Statement on the fundamentals social rights of the Renault group. (…) By this statement, Renault commit to “respect and make progress all around the world the women and men working in the company, promote a freedom spirit, to insure the information transparency, to practice equity and to conform to the rules fixed by Renault professional ethics Code”. Report 2004, Renault.
The companies in phase of partial integration. Here we find Arcelor, Bouygues, Thomson and Thalès. Their preoccupations “Sustainable Development” and “CSR” are focused on some particular aspects, as governance or stakeholders. The environmental aspects and social aspects are less present. The involvement is much more selective, permitting to center the approach on the main domains of their strategies.

**Thomson:** Thomson Panorama 2004 Governance and Sustainable Development

“In year 2004, the Group conducted, considering all its operations, 40 intern audits and several projects involving management and which covered the essential aspects relied to operational, financial and regulation conformity risks. Results are regularly checked by the Risks Committee and by the Audit Committee of the Board of Directors”, Report 2004, Thomson.

**Arcelor:** “In a target of positioning, differentiation and competitiveness, our Group is now completely involved in the Sustainable Development road. In accordance with its values, Arcelor target excellence in the safety domain. Thanks to everybody’s effort, we could reduce significantly the frequency and the gravity of industrial accidents. The “Zero accident” remains our ambition. (…) Finally, in coherence with our approach aiming at optimizing the transparency and the quality of the information published as far as governance is concerned, we created on our website a heading devoted to this topic which usefully completes the governance Report and the intern control included in this annual report.” Report 2004, Arcelor.

### 3.2. The common basis of the DP-CSR

More general trends also take shape in the DP-CSR published in the annual reports of the sample. We find them in the different companies, so that we can speak about a “common basis” as far as CSR conception is concerned.

We notice that three dimensions in the DP-CSR are recurrent:

- The favored taking into account of the traditional stakeholders, contractual ones, taking into account matched with a lighter trend to include also the non-contractual stakeholders,
- The Governance dimension, only focused on some precise aspects as audit,
- The tight interpretation of the social dimension. It is from a distance the more significant general trend. It corresponds to the European vision, even French vision of the social, tighter than the Anglo-Saxon vision.

These trends, shared by the ten companies of our sample, allow us to think that they share a common conception of CSR. But they still carry on giving shape to their discourses another way, with different strategic implications, adopting one of the three positioning “proactive”, “adapting”, and “partial integration”. These choices are certainly relied to the business sector...
belonging, to the company culture or the business sector culture, to the nature of the product made, but also to the personality of the chairman, hypotheses that we will try to test in a later study, based on a larger sample.

The following scheme represents the results of our study, theoretical and empiric ones.

**Influence of potential factors:**
- Business sector
- Nature of the product made
- Company or sector culture
- Chairman’s personality

**Common basis of CSR conception:**
(General trends particularly relied to European culture, even French culture):
- The traditional Stakeholders are predominant
- The importance of the governance dimension, focused on some aspects,
- Tight vision of the social dimension (employees, working conditions…)

**CSR strategies adopted**
- Proactive Strategy
- Adapting strategy
- Partial integration

**Over-determination: global process of regulation**
(macro-regulation historically determined)

**Local regulation process**
(micro-regulations)
3.3. A difficult interpretation

3.3.1. Some ambiguities to remove

Certain trends that emerge from our study seem to contradict (at least apparently) the hypothesis of an “Anglo-Saxon conception-European conception” gap, the Anglo-Saxon point of view implying a voluntarist and auto-regulated action, whereas the European point of view is framed by law, and subject to sanction (Queinnec, 2004).

It is true that European Union promotes a device fund on voluntarism and the fact to set an example as far as CSR is concerned, just as the EU plebiscite soft law instruments (Good behavior charter, ethics codes…). This trend is not conform to the French legal culture, based on written law\(^{20}\).

Nevertheless, this situation does not invalidate our initial hypothesis. For companies, the DP-RSE have a regulative role: they aim at influencing the nature and the content of the employment relation. The choice made by the companies that we studied, for a voluntarism toward CSR, illustrates the substitution effect that we have already described: the companies are taking the relay from the State, as far as the employment relation is concerned. The choice of a volunteer action makes them free to inflect the wage-labor relationship in a completely disrupt world context\(^{21}\). That is how the conjunction between macro-economic mechanism from post-Ford regulation and the own strategies of these companies (micro-regularities) is made.

3.3.2. The explanatory factors of the choices in CSR

The study shows finally that the factors introduced at the beginning have a real explanatory potential as far as CSR is concerned, but they have to be distinguished in two parts. First of all, factors which explain the companies’ support to a common basis in terms of CSR. These trends are relied to national culture (or European culture) which center the understanding and the perception of CSR (Capron and Quairel-Lanoizelée, 2004), but also the reference as far as managing model is concerned (Bardelli, 2005).

\(^{20}\) It seems that EU chose the American model, known for its aversion to laws relative to industrial relations, considered as a static intrusion in the free enterprise.

We can suppose that companies integrate (and communicate on) CSR and sustainable development dimensions that best correspond to their strategic stakes. These stakes are intern (human resources, process effectiveness) as well as extern (emergence of new markets, customers’ expectations…) (Alberola, Richez-Battesti, 2005). The choice that companies make, in terms of involvement and communication in CSR, is a strategic choice.

We supposed that factors that influence this choice are business sector, nature of the product made, company culture, linked to various aspects as its history, the fist activity or the chairman’s personality. Several of these hypotheses have still to be tested.

Contradictions between social preoccupations displayed and the real observed attitude as far as CSR is concerned also exist. According to “The Private Life of Public Affairs”\(^{22}\), a report made by S. Caulkin from the Observer and J. Collins from Green Alliance, shows that some companies display preoccupations in terms of CSR, while they develop, through their professional associations, a lobbying in order to delay major progresses in the legal level (for instance in the environmental domain).

**Conclusion: the micro-regulative potential of DP-CSR, a promising hypothesis**

The analysis of DP-CSR, in terms of regulation, sets up a promising point of view of CSR\(^{23}\). It allows to introduce the wage-labor relationship as a major concept. In this sense, this approach permits, on the one hand, to make the connection between the companies’ strategies (micro point of view) and the determinants of the productive system (macro point of view), and one the other hand, it allows to articulate the reasoning relative to the factors of development of the DP-CSR to a global reasoning relative to the determining conditions of the economic model regulation. This articulation takes support on the analysis of the wage-labor relationship transformation. It sets up the basis on which the economic model is based. The circumstances of its own evolution are conditioning the one of the whole model.


A previous work had already permitted us to note that the social dimension in DP-CSR are particularly focused on aspects relied to the employment relation the less controlled by the State (training, career, skills), with a strong ideological dimension (values, companies’ culture). But this work also allowed us to remark that the social dimension of DP-CSR included controlled aspects, which are the subject of a strategic moving by companies (Igalens and Joras, 2002). This reinforces one of our central hypotheses posed by P. Bardelli (2004, 2005). Companies progressively take the place of the States in the management of the employment relation, so that we can suppose the withdrawal of the States, simultaneously to the increasing involvement of the big international groups, to be programmed.

So we can consider that DP-CSR are elements of micro-regulation aiming at influencing he wage-labor relationship, permitting to the big firms to adapt themselves to the New World (characterized by the trade internationalization, the race to competitiveness, the weakening of the state constraints...).

But our empirical analysis confirms also that the practices of the companies concerned are not homogeneous (differences exist as far as involvement degree and involvement content are concerned). This lack of homogeneity reveals the proper dynamic of this new strategic involvement model of the firms, since it introduces new components in the competition between firms (Bardelli, 2004). Adding that nothing attests that the observed practices will converge. Indeed, if no new -post-Ford- compromise between the partners (employers and employees) is made and if no stabilizing tools are constructed, the model will remain boisterous.
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MESD, Strategic Tool for Competitiveness
October 19-20 2006, Atlanta
ANNEXES

ANNEX N°I: PRESENTATION OF THE METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

ANNEX N°II: THE REFERENTIAL

ANNEX N°III: SOME INCORPORATED QUANTITATIVE RESULTS
ANNEX N°1: PRESENTATION OF THE METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

Our research approach aims at giving explanations and producing constructs to come nearer to reality. Of course, it has no pretension to reproduce it exactly, but to understand it better (Wacheux, 1996). It is inscribed in a constructivist logical.

The content analysis used is now one of the representations and discourses approaches most used in management (Thiétart, 1999). We chose a both quantitative and qualitative method. The first appeals to a lexicometric content analysis enabling to highlight at the same time the main characteristics and the diversities of the discourses, thanks to the frequencies of appearance. The second allows us to study the elements on their context.

We retain two major hypotheses:
- The discourses are “a whole of mental pictures, revealing the action motives” (Wacheux, 1996)
- The “frequencies of sense unities represent the relative importance of the representations which are linked” (Jacquot, 2004).

We chose to study the annual reports of the CAC40 companies. The companies using very heterogeneous types of reports to discuss about their responsible involvement, we chose to analyze each “classical” annual report in the whole. We have also studied the report devoted to the CSR when it includes complementary or different information.

The content analysis was conducted in five stages:
- **First stage: the pre-analysis**
  - Delimitation of the corpus
  - Preparation of the texts for the analysis
  - First reading of the texts
- **Second stage: categorization**
  - The categorization consists in defining a universe of reference for the discourse, and selecting the unities of analysis for this discourse (lexical or thematic analysis)
  - The dictionary theme or referential is the articulation between empirical material and theoretical project (Wacheux, 1996)
- **Third stage: encryption and counting**
- **Fourth stage:**
  - Enhancement of the links, cause and effect relations, psychological and sociological referents.
  - “Inference constitutes the transit point between description and interpretation” (Pautois and Demet, 1998)
- **Fifth stage: interpretation**
  - It is “the result of continuing round-trip between body of theory and empirical material” (Wacheux, 1996)

---

24 The quantitative part is principally represented by the calculation of frequencies and relative frequencies (we did not do any factorial analysis). Frequencies and relative frequencies offer very interesting information to clarify our issues. Indeed, “Lots of qualitative data can really be right indicators of some situations” (Wacheux, 1996).

MESD, Strategic Tool for Competitiveness
October 19-20 2006, Atlanta

Pierre BARDELLI
Manuela PASTORE
The following scheme **sums up the empirical issues:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Choice of the method: quantitative and qualitative content analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Object of the analysis: annual reports and complementary reports relative to CSR and sustainable development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definition of the sample</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Collection of the texts

Presentation of the formal features of the texts

Texts analysis with a global point of view: style and setting, scene, main verbs and pronouns used, general structure of the texts (with the help of the software Tropes)

In-depth content analysis:

- Analysis of the appearance contexts and relations with sustainable development and CSR thematic (with the help of Tropes)
- Calculation of the relative frequencies averages for all companies: which resemblances? Which trends?
- Analysis of the relative frequencies obtained by each company, regarding dimensions and categories of the referential.
- Features of the communication as far as sustainable development and CSR are concerned, for each company, main differences and resemblances.
- Try to bring together companies with similar communication strategies in CSR and sustainable development.

The main element of our study is the referential, progressively built during readings and documentary researches. It is through this referential that the categorization and the calculation of the relative frequencies are made.

It is always developed in a scalable way and it needs to make decisions as far as grouping and classification are concerned. If these choices always remain open to criticism, we have tried to make this referential as complete as possible, studying various sources and developing a large vision of the concept (Cf. Annex n°II).

This referential was the filter through which we studied the selected texts, annual reports of the companies of our sample. Thanks to the software Word and its function « search », we have then found, for each thematic and dimension, the frequencies of appearance. Finally we have calculated the relative frequencies, that is to say the frequencies of appearance related to the number of words in the report, sizes being sometimes so disparate.

In the frame of this communication, we present in annexes only some of the incorporated results of the lexicometric analysis. As we wanted to be concise, we could not present all of the results obtained (formal and textual analysis, contexts of appearance analysis, qualitative analysis...).
### Annex N°II: The Referential

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Environmental concern</th>
<th>Management of the human resources in the company</th>
<th>Societal concern</th>
<th>Stakeholders</th>
<th>Sites and organization</th>
<th>Vision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Large meaning</td>
<td>Large meaning</td>
<td>Large meaning</td>
<td>Large meaning</td>
<td>Large meaning</td>
<td>Large meaning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>biodiversity</td>
<td>career</td>
<td>unemployment</td>
<td>collaborator</td>
<td>executive control</td>
<td>responsible involvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ecology</td>
<td>training</td>
<td>human rights</td>
<td>trade-union delegate</td>
<td>executive</td>
<td>societal performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>greenhouse effect</td>
<td>competences management</td>
<td>employment</td>
<td>employee</td>
<td>subsidiary</td>
<td>global responsibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>environment protection</td>
<td>layoffs</td>
<td>individual</td>
<td>personnel</td>
<td>governance</td>
<td>social responsibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>species protection</td>
<td>mobility</td>
<td>occupation</td>
<td>staff representative</td>
<td>group</td>
<td>societal responsibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>climatic warming</td>
<td>promotion</td>
<td>child labor</td>
<td>balanced</td>
<td>hierarchy</td>
<td>Obligation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>respect of the environment</td>
<td>recruitment</td>
<td>Diversity management</td>
<td>satisfaction of the personnel</td>
<td>sites</td>
<td>NER law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impacts</td>
<td>remuneration</td>
<td>Discrimination</td>
<td>trade-unions</td>
<td>Board of directors</td>
<td>environmental obligation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>on company's activities</td>
<td>Involvement and development</td>
<td>Cultural diversity</td>
<td>Shareholders</td>
<td>board of directors</td>
<td>societal obligation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>waste</td>
<td>of the employees</td>
<td>professional equality</td>
<td>shareholders</td>
<td>managers' independence</td>
<td>OECD principles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>packaging</td>
<td>social climate</td>
<td>women</td>
<td>share rate</td>
<td>manager</td>
<td>Reporting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>environmental impacts</td>
<td>social cohesion</td>
<td>insertion</td>
<td>dividend</td>
<td>Financial ethic</td>
<td>rating agencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pollution</td>
<td>intercommunication</td>
<td>disabled person</td>
<td>Suppliers</td>
<td>financial communication</td>
<td>Global Reporting Initiative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chemical products</td>
<td>culture</td>
<td>Involvement of the company in citizenship</td>
<td>auditors</td>
<td>environmental audit</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rejection</td>
<td>team</td>
<td>help</td>
<td>supplying</td>
<td>environmental indicators</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>transport</td>
<td>employees' involvement</td>
<td>act of god</td>
<td>partner</td>
<td>societal rating</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prevention of environmental risks</td>
<td>information</td>
<td>citizen</td>
<td>partnership</td>
<td>Responsible funds</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>environmental risks</td>
<td>integration</td>
<td>local development</td>
<td>subcontractor</td>
<td>Referential</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>biodegradable</td>
<td>employees' motivation</td>
<td>humanitarian</td>
<td>Consumers</td>
<td>financial information</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>environment preservation</td>
<td>collective bargaining</td>
<td>patronage</td>
<td>buyer</td>
<td>Socially Responsible Investments</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pollution prevention</td>
<td>sharing</td>
<td>health</td>
<td>client</td>
<td>Certification</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>recycling</td>
<td>values sharing</td>
<td>solidarity</td>
<td>fair trade</td>
<td>environmental audit</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>environmental risks</td>
<td>performance</td>
<td>social responsibility</td>
<td>certification</td>
<td>ISO 1000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preservation of the resources</td>
<td>social relations</td>
<td>quality</td>
<td>social approval</td>
<td>AA 1000 norm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>environment management</td>
<td>know-how</td>
<td>clients' satisfaction</td>
<td>ISO 14000 norm</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>water</td>
<td>social</td>
<td>after sales service</td>
<td>SD 21000 norm</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>resources savings</td>
<td>competence development</td>
<td>user</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>energy</td>
<td>Working conditions of the employees</td>
<td>Civil society</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gas</td>
<td>the employees</td>
<td>Responsible documentation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>environmental information</td>
<td>absence/ism</td>
<td>associations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>resources preservation</td>
<td>work accident</td>
<td>communities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>environment department</td>
<td>working conditions</td>
<td>foundations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hygiene</td>
<td>safety</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working time</td>
<td>Working conditions</td>
<td>Socially Responsible Investments</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Results of the whole sample

For instance: On the totality of the texts analyzed, more than seven words over one thousand were devoted to the Stakeholders dimension of our theme dictionary.

NB: The frequencies of appearance calculus over one thousand words was made to make the comparison between companies possible, despite the heterogeneity of the texts. The disparities in the annual reports we studied lead us to analyze the totality of each annual report and not only the part devoted to the CSR.

Some quantitative results for each company
Lexicometric content analysis for each company and each thematic
Incorporated quantitative results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Environmental concern</th>
<th>Arcelor</th>
<th>Bouygues</th>
<th>Danone</th>
<th>LVMH</th>
<th>PSA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frequencies</td>
<td>relative freq.</td>
<td>Frequencies</td>
<td>relative freq.</td>
<td>Frequencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental concern (large meaning)</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>0,241</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0,075</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impacts of the companies' activities</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>0,409</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>0,471</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prevention of environmental risks</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>0,132</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>0,128</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preservation of the resources</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>0,581</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>0,402</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>1,355</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>1,355</td>
<td>310</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Social concern (strict meaning)
Words referring to employees and their place in the company

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social concern (strict meaning)</th>
<th>Arcelor</th>
<th>Bouygues</th>
<th>Danone</th>
<th>LVMH</th>
<th>PSA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Management of the human resources in the company</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>1,010</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>1,553</td>
<td>164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement and development of the employees</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>0,268</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>0,692</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working conditions</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0,036</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>0,421</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>1,374</td>
<td>285</td>
<td>2,666</td>
<td>302</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Societal concern (large meaning)
Company's concern toward society

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Societal concern (large meaning)</th>
<th>Arcelor</th>
<th>Bouygues</th>
<th>Danone</th>
<th>LVMH</th>
<th>PSA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Involvement of the company in citizenship</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>1,029</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>0,926</td>
<td>186</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Governance
Words referring to the company's governance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Governance</th>
<th>Arcelor</th>
<th>Bouygues</th>
<th>Danone</th>
<th>LVMH</th>
<th>PSA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reporting</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0,179</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>1,918</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial ethic</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>0,726</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>0,458</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>436</td>
<td>3,897</td>
<td>513</td>
<td>4,800</td>
<td>229</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Vision
Confines and evaluation of the company's involvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vision</th>
<th>Arcelor</th>
<th>Bouygues</th>
<th>Danone</th>
<th>LVMH</th>
<th>PSA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Obligation</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0,000</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0,000</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reporting</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0,179</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>0,826</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certification</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>0,268</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0,187</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsible documentation</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>0,216</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0,103</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>189</td>
<td>1,689</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>1,263</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total for all dimensions</td>
<td>1659</td>
<td>14,820</td>
<td>1587</td>
<td>14,848</td>
<td>1739</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Number of words analyzed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of words analyzed</th>
<th>Arcelor</th>
<th>Bouygues</th>
<th>Danone</th>
<th>LVMH</th>
<th>PSA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>111879</td>
<td>106884</td>
<td>54886</td>
<td>57684</td>
<td>24575</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Environmental concern

Words referring to the impacts of the company's activities on environment and the management of those impacts by the company. Frequencies relative freq. frequencies relative freq. frequencies relative freq. frequencies relative freq. frequencies relative freq.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Impact</th>
<th>Renault</th>
<th>Saint-Gobain</th>
<th>Thalès</th>
<th>Thomson</th>
<th>Véolia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Impacts of the companies' activities</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prevention of environmental risks</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preservation of the resources</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Social concern (strict meaning)

Words referring to employees and their place in the company. Frequencies relative freq. frequencies relative freq. frequencies relative freq. frequencies relative freq. frequencies relative freq.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Management of the human resources in the company</th>
<th>Renault</th>
<th>Saint-Gobain</th>
<th>Thalès</th>
<th>Thomson</th>
<th>Véolia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>392</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>233</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Societal concern (large meaning)

Company's concern toward society. Frequencies relative freq. frequencies relative freq. frequencies relative freq. frequencies relative freq. frequencies relative freq.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Diversity management</th>
<th>Renault</th>
<th>Saint-Gobain</th>
<th>Thalès</th>
<th>Thomson</th>
<th>Véolia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### the Stakeholders

Words referring to the company's stakeholders. Frequencies relative freq. frequencies relative freq. frequencies relative freq. frequencies relative freq. frequencies relative freq.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employees</th>
<th>Renault</th>
<th>Saint-Gobain</th>
<th>Thalès</th>
<th>Thomson</th>
<th>Véolia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>267</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>446</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shareholders</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suppliers</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumers</td>
<td>263</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1058</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>750</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>665</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Governance

Words referring to the company's governance. Frequencies relative freq. frequencies relative freq. frequencies relative freq. frequencies relative freq. frequencies relative freq.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Governance</th>
<th>Renault</th>
<th>Saint-Gobain</th>
<th>Thalès</th>
<th>Thomson</th>
<th>Véolia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>734</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>516</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>440</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Vision

Confines and evaluation of the company's involvement. Frequencies relative freq. frequencies relative freq. frequencies relative freq. frequencies relative freq. frequencies relative freq.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vision</th>
<th>Renault</th>
<th>Saint-Gobain</th>
<th>Thalès</th>
<th>Thomson</th>
<th>Véolia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>285</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>149</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Total for all dimensions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Renault</th>
<th>Saint-Gobain</th>
<th>Thalès</th>
<th>Thomson</th>
<th>Véolia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3370</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>2088</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of words analyzed</td>
<td>178572</td>
<td>91616</td>
<td>18036</td>
<td>42184</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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