RESEARCH TEAM ON THE COMPENDIUM OF SUBMISSIONS ON ARTICLE 23 OF THE BASIC LAW

Training of Coders and Inter-Coder Reliability

Development of Coding Scheme and Coding Sheet

Members of the research team spent 4 meetings on the development and refinement of the coding scheme as well as the coding sheet (Appendix 7). During the period, 2 rounds of pilot coding were conducted.

Recruitment and Training of Coders

To allow for close supervision of coding work and to achieve greater coding consistencies, we have made the following explicit decisions:

✧ The number of coders should be limited to 10 or below, depending on the commitment of the recruited coders, or it will be hard to monitor the progress and strain the inter-coder reliability level. Eventually 8 phenomenal students were recruited on board. Five of them Law/BA background, 3 with Sociology background. All are either third year or fourth year college students.

✧ Vigorous briefing and training sessions were given by Prof. Kin Man Chan (member of the research team), Prof. Clement So (Honorary Adviser with expertise in content analysis) and Ms. Winnie Kwok (project manager). The first briefing session lasted a little over 2 hours, followed by a 3-hour on site test coding. In addition to answering questions about coding, there was a comprehensive debriefing session afterwards.

✧ Because of SARS, the students collected volumes of submissions for home coding. However, they were encouraged to continue exchange over email.

✧ Additional debriefing session when they were almost done with the first batch of submissions.

✧ The coding scheme was further refined and became the Variables and Coding Ledger (Appendix 8) which describes the variables and the guiding principles to use in the coding process.

Quality Control

The project manager put in place 2 measures of quality control and found that the quality of coding was impressive:

✧ Coded submissions were randomly picked for full coding by the project manager.

✧ Some diagnostic checks based on logical relationship among variables were performed.

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Inter-Coder Reliability

✧ A sample of 144 submissions was randomly picked from the Compendium. Each of the sampled submissions was coded by at least two of the eight student coders who were responsible for coding more than 95% of the entire Compendium of 8000+ submissions.

✧ We took measures to ensure that each coder's coding can be compared to every other coder's. The percentage of consistent codings among coders ranges from the lowest of 85% to 100%, the average across variables being 92%.

✧ The scholar members of the team did not participate in the inter-coder reliability test, as they were only responsible for coding a few dozens of organizational submissions and often times the codings were being discussed before finalization.