Moral Formation: Humility, Truth, and Faith
Instructions to Coders
1/5/12

Coding Manual

The coding manual for this project is organized into three major sections corresponding to the three virtue categories that form the primary focus of the study -- humility, truth (inner truthfulness), and faith. Within each of these three categories, there are many ways that the virtue can be displayed as well as a number of counter-indicators, which reveal limitations or complications in the individual's embodiment of the virtue. Similarly, there are a number of different roles that each virtue can play in the individual's moral commitment and action, development, leadership, and adaptation or response to challenges.

In order to spell out the range of variants we have identified within the three virtue categories, we have articulated a number of *themes* within each of the categories. The list of themes within each virtue category is empirically derived from case material and is an attempt to outline the many different ways that individuals may experience and exhibit the virtue and the many different roles that virtue may play in a person's character, adaptations, responses to challenge, behavioral patterns and habits, and development. Naturally, the three central virtues are interconnected in a number of ways, and sometimes the individual's adaptation or characteristic pattern of behavior will fall at the intersection of two of the virtues or even all three. Themes that represent these intersections will be noted as such in the coding manual.

Counter-indicators are similar to the positive themes in that they represent variants of the individual's character, habits, adaptations, and so on within the virtue category in question. However, exhibiting these counter-indicators reveals the ways that the individual does <u>not</u> fully embody that virtue or did not display the virtue fully at some particular point in his or her life. Presence of both positive virtue themes and counter-indicators at the same time in the individual's life indicates inconsistency or complexity in regard to the virtue in question.

In the coding manual, all of the themes and most of the counter-indicators are accompanied by examples, which illustrate the kind of case material that should be coded as matching that theme or counter-indicator. These examples are intended to provide a more textured sense of what it looks like to exhibit that theme or counter-indicator but they are not exhaustive of the ways the theme may be expressed, nor are they definitive of the theme.

Code Sheet

The code sheet matches the coding manual, listing each of the themes and counter-indicators, organized into the three major virtue categories. For most themes, a briefer version is included in bold as a reminder heading so that coders can more quickly find the theme they're looking for.

When the full statement of the theme is itself very brief, it serves as the bolded reminder, and no further elaboration is included.

For each of the three virtue categories, the code sheet also has a section for *Other*. This provides a place for the coder to write in themes or counter-indicators that seem important but were not identified by the PIs for inclusion in the coding manual.

Finally, the code sheet includes a space at the end for suggestions of individuals who provide interesting contrasts with the case study individual. The contrast case can differ from the case study individual along several kinds of dimensions – he or she need not be an "immoral leader," for example.

Material to be Coded
In this project, we coded pages from published works by and about the case study individuals. We believe that this manual could also be used to code transcripts of open-ended interviews that address relevant issues.

The Coding Process
In preparation for coding the case material, we suggest that coders become familiar with the themes and counter-indicators for the three virtue categories. It may be useful to look over the coding manual, which includes examples, but when doing the actual coding, the code sheet should be sufficient for spelling out the themes and counter-indicators. You may also want to read through all of the textual material on the case before beginning to code.

Once you're familiar with the themes and counter-indicators, put the name or case number of the case and your name at the top of the code sheet and establish abbreviations for each of the textual sources you have been given. It is usually easiest to use the author's initials as indicators of the source.

Next, for each source, beginning with the one that has the most material, read through the first passage marked as potentially codeable. Scanning through the code sheet, try to identify one or more themes or counter-indicators that seem to match the idea expressed in the passage. Coders should bear in mind that case material will seldom be a perfect match for any of the themes articulated in the coding manual. If the basic, underlying idea seems to be the same, even if the wording is fairly different, indicate the source and the page number in the space following the theme that most closely matches the idea expressed in the passage.

If you are not sure whether the idea in the passage matches the theme, put a question mark after the page number.

If you believe that the passage is an especially good example of the theme, circle the page number.

When coding counter-indicators, note in a general sense what phase in the individual's life the counter-indicator refers to -- childhood, for example, or adulthood prior to some defining event, and so on.

Note that most discrete passages correspond to a single theme or counter indicator but some passages may include two different ideas, each of which should be coded.

In scanning the code sheet looking for a match, be careful not to be misled by the bolded capsule statement of the theme or counter-indicator. Those headings are included to make it easier to find a particular idea, but the fuller statement of the theme following the bolded heading is definitive and sometimes includes a number of variants that are not captured well by the shorter bolded heading.

If, after reading and coding all of the material that has been provided, you believe that a theme or counter-indicator on the code sheet characterizes the person whose material you are coding but none of the passages we've given you provides a match, indicate following the theme that you believe it is present but implicit. In these cases, simply write – "implicit" in the space following the theme.

If you believe that the passage you are coding provides evidence that the case study individual affirmatively *does not* exhibit a particular theme – that is, the passage seems to be inconsistent with the theme – you can indicate that in the space following the theme. Simply write in the source and page number, along with a note that passage seems to *contradict* the theme. In our own coding, this occurred only rarely.

Many of the passages to be coded are reflections or claims about the case study individual written by a biographer or someone else other than the case study person. If the idea expressed by the writer fits a theme or counter-indicator but you have reason to believe that the biographer's interpretation is incorrect or questionable, you can indicate that judgment when you write the source and page number in the space following the theme. Simply write "questionable interpretation" following the page number. Don't worry about making judgments about the validity of biographers' interpretations throughout. Just indicate apparent misinterpretations if you encounter any when you're reading the material.

New themes – if the case study individual or someone writing about that individual expresses an idea that appears to be a variant of the major virtue category but is not captured by the existing themes or counter-indicators, the coder should write that new theme or counter-indicator into the section called *Other*. Make sure that the new theme is articulated clearly enough to be understandable to others. If you do write in a new theme or counter-indicator, note the document sources and page numbers of the material on which it is based.

Summary note to project's expert coders
Although these instructions may seem complicated at first, the basic idea of this coding is very simple. We have combed through a great deal of historical case material, looking for any ideas that reveal variants of humility, truth, and faith. We are now trying to see whether another coder, especially one who is expert in regard to the individual being coded, will see the same themes in the material or whether the coder will interpret the case material differently. We are eager to learn from your insights about these cases and look forward to discussing the cases with you at our meeting this spring.