

National Human Rights Institutions (NHRI) Organizational Data Project: Coding Rules

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1 Introduction

The National Human Rights Institution (NHRI) Data Project aims to provide scholars with quantitative data to test hypotheses about the development, activities, and consequences of NHRIs. This codebook describes the processes associated with coding NHRI Institutional Data. The NHRI Institutional Data contains cross-national information from various print and Internet sources on the institutional structure and origination of the population of national NHRIs.¹ The goal of the Institutional Data collected here is to obtain the *de jure* responsibilities and abilities of NHRIs.²

In conjunction with the NHRI Institutional Data, the NHRI Data Project also collects behavioral data on the activities on NHRIs. The NHRI Behavioral Data performs content analysis on English language annual reports issued by National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) that have been posted on a publicly accessible website. Coding rules for the NHRI Behavioral Data are described in a separate codebook.

The cross-national NHRI Institutional Data focus on characteristics of the NHRI itself. The unit of observation for these data is the NHRI. Questions include (but are not limited to) the following: How was it created? What responsibilities does it have? To whom does it report? Does it have any legal authority?

1.1 What is an NHRI?

NHRIs are domestic institutions with an explicit mandate to protect and promote human rights. They sit at the intersection of government and civil society (Smith, 2006). Although they are created by states and oftentimes with nongovernmental organizations' (NGOs') input, NHRIs are to remain independent from state agencies. Rather than represent and pursue government or NGO goals exclusively, NHRIs are mandated to promote and protect individuals' human rights.

NHRIs are an outgrowth of ombudsperson³ offices, which were formed in Sweden at the end of the 19th Century as an office to which citizens could petition for redress of grievances stemming from treatment by government officials. Ombudsmen offices remained rare throughout the first half of the 20th Century, but began to diffuse among a few dozen countries between the 1950s and 1980s (Anderson and Weeks, 1969; Weeks, 1973, 1978). From the late 1970s through the early 1990s an international legal movement began calling for the creation of national institutions that focused exclusively upon human rights (rather than any complaint with a government official) (?). In 1991 an international conference produced the Paris Principles, ratified by the UN General Assembly in 1993, which codified the standards that NHRIs must meet in order to promote states' respect for human rights (Pohjola, 2006; Smith, 2006; Carver, 2010). This project focuses upon the post-Paris Principles period: we are coding data only on NHRIs that have been given an accreditation grade by the United Nations' Subcommittee on Accreditation (SCA) of the Global Alliance of

¹Sources must be in English. Those websites that are in another language, but have an English translation available (through the website, not an outside program), even if it is abridged, are also included as English sources.

²The Behavior Data project will collect *de facto* responsibilities and abilities, i.e. what is NHRIs actually do year-to-year.

³We choose to use the more contemporary ombudsperson, though much of the early and current literature may refer to them as ombudsman.

2 General Guidelines for Coders

If you encounter a term with which you are unfamiliar that is not defined within the Coding Rules, please type that term into a search engine along with the word “definition.”

2.1 Assignments

Each of you will code a separate region of the world starting with the 'A' status NHRIs, then the 'B' status, then the 'C' status. Work alphabetically through each of these NHRIs⁶

2.2 Coding Processes

Use the following steps to code each NHRI.⁷ Many NHRIs you receive will have already been coded through a previous end date. In that case, follow all of the steps below. If your NHRI has no previous coding, you should skip the first step. In either case, code through 2019 since the 2020 accreditation has not occurred yet.

- If the sheet was previously coded use the following to search for and code any variables that have changed since the listed end date on the sheet. If the NHRI was not previously coded, use these references to code each variable.⁸
 - NHRI official website
 - * Google NHRI name or use <https://ganhri.org/membership/>
 - * Only use English language websites (i.e. no translating software such as Google Translate).
 - * Look for tabs/pages with titles such as *History*, *Mission*, *Who We Are*.
 - NHRI annual reports
 - * Often found on NHRI website under *Publications*
 - * Read the preface and sections deemed useful in the table of contents.

⁴The GANHRI was formerly known as the International Coordinating Committee (ICC).

⁵Accreditation information is available from the GANRHI website: <https://ganhri.org/>, more specifically here: <https://nhri.ohchr.org/EN/AboutUs/GANHRIAccreditation/Pages/default.aspx>.

⁶You should work through your list, 10 hours per week. Included within these 10 hours is the time spent at each weekly meeting.

⁷The documentation for each NHRI may present you with country-specific context and language. When this hampers your progress, please visit the Wikipedia page for that country to gain historical, political, and/or legal insight.

⁸Much of the information in the bullet points below come from a memo written by Katie Sturmer.

- * Skim the rest of the report to see if other sections useful.
- Country constitution
 - * Look for specific NHRI or human rights sections
 - * Use constitutions to define which rights are protected if an NHRI’s mandate includes protecting constitutionally-derived human rights.
- Founding legislation
- <https://ganhri.org/resources/>
 - * Enter the country name in the search bar
- <https://news.google.com/>⁹
- <https://scholar.google.com/>
- Visit each source referenced on the sheet by the previous coder. Use that source to see if the information for that variable has changed. If there is no indication of change, move to the next variable. Do this for every column in the spreadsheet.¹⁰

2.3 Excel Coding Sheet

You will be recording data on an Excel Coding sheet. Please name your Excel Coding Sheet according to the following format: “NHRICountryName_LastNameofCoder_DDMonYYYY” (i.e., NHRIPortugal.Welch_06Feb2012). The top two rows of the coding sheet lists the variable numbers and names in the order they are described below. The fourth (pink) row of the Excel Coding sheet (labeled “Researched Data”) is where you should record the information about your assigned NHRI. Each country’s NHRI has its own Excel spreadsheet. If there are no temporal (i.e., over time) changes in the values of any variables, all of the information for a particular country will be recorded on this one pink row.

You will be gathering information from a variety of sources over the course of this data collection effort. As a result, we need to keep track of the sources that you use in the Excel Coding Sheet. Rows 6, 7, and 8 include information about the sources used to code each variable:

- Source Title¹¹
- Source Date¹²

⁹Often the media report on what an NHRI has recently done or said. Remember that this project is about the *de jure* information rather than behavioral information. When behavior is listed in an official document (e.g. NHRI website, annual report) we can assume these are legally sanctioned activities. One must be careful not to make that assumption about behavior in media reports or scholarly pieces.

¹⁰You should not be looking to correct prior collected data. If, however, you come across a variable you believe to be incorrect, make note of it in the coder notes including the new value, your source, and why you believe it should be changed.

¹¹Record (e.g., copy and paste) the entire title of the publication, article, or press release from which the information comes.

¹²Use the following format to record the date of the document in which the allegation is reported: DD-Mon-YYYY. If either the day or month are not available, code what is available. Note that Source Date may not always be available; in such instances, leave this cell blank. If the date is from a website, use the most updated date. If the date is from a publication posted on a website, use the date of publication.

- Source URL¹³

TRICKY BIT: If there are temporal (i.e., over time) changes in the values of any variables, copy and paste Rows 4–8 into Rows 10–14. Record the changed variable in these new rows. For any variable that does not change, copy and paste it into the new rows. If there is another change, repeat the process in rows 16–20.

2.4 Coder Notes

Coders should turn in their Excel Coding Sheets to the principal investigator(s) weekly. To accompany these Coding Sheets, coders should also compile a Word (or Open Office) document of Coder Notes listing sources that correspond with the information in the Excel Coding Sheet. Coders should copy and paste the relevant paragraph from which they find the information into their Coder’s Notes, followed by the url of the source.¹⁴ Coders should also include information on problems they have with coding, highlighting those in yellow. An example of Coder Notes will be distributed to all coders at the beginning of the project. The format used on this example should be followed in your own Coder Notes. Coder Notes files should be named according to the following format: NHRICountryNotes.LastNameofCoder_DDMonYYYY (i.e., NHRIPortugalNotes.Welch_13Feb2012).

3 The Organizations Data

This section includes a description of each of the cross-sectional organizational variables that we code at the NHRI unit of observation. The variables are listed in the same order as the columns on the coding sheet. Details on the coding scheme of each variable follow a definition of the concept.

3.1 ISO3 Alpha Country Code

Definition: This is a three-letter country identification code published by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) to represent countries, dependent territories, and special areas of geographical interest.

Coding Scheme: These values can be found on the second sheet of the coders spreadsheet. Alternatively, ISO3 Alpha Country Codes can be found here: <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/methods/m49/m49alpha.htm>.

¹³Record the associated URL (i.e., website address) of the source.

¹⁴If the website will not allow copying, coders should type up the relevant sentence.

3.2 COW Country Code

Definition: This is a three-digit numeric identification code published by the Correlates of War (COW) project to represent countries, dependent territories, and special areas of geographical interest.

Coding Scheme: These values can be found on the second sheet of the coders spreadsheet. Alternatively, a comma separated values (.csv) file that can be opened in Excel that lists the COW Country Codes can be found at the COW project website.

3.3 ISO3 Numeric Country Code

Definition: This is a three-digit numeric identification code published by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) to represent countries, dependent territories, and special areas of geographical interest. ISO3 Number Codes are the same as codes defined by the United Nations Statistics Division.

Coding Scheme: These values can be found on the second sheet of the coders spreadsheet.

3.4 Begin Information Date

Definition: Although the Organizational data is primarily cross-sectional, the value of some variables change over time. This variable indicates the start date of the time period in which there are no changes in the values of any Organizational variables.

Coding Scheme: Record the year as YYYY.¹⁵

3.5 End Information Date

Definition: Although the Organizational data is primarily cross-sectional, the value of some variables change over time. This variable indicates the end date of the time period in which there are no changes in the values of any Organizational variables.

Coding Scheme: Record the year as YYYY.¹⁶

¹⁵Keep the format of the cells with this and all dates as General in Excel.

¹⁶Beginning and end dates become important if anything changes about the institution over time. For instance, Afghanistan's NHRI was established by treaty in 2001 and then was established by an executive decree in 2002. The first date range is from 2001 to 2002, the second is from 2002 to 2012. The second date range will be the information copied and pasted from the first date range with the only changes being the beginning date, end date, and 'established by' variable.

3.6 GANHRI Status

Definition: Letter Grade assigned by the GANHRI. You must use the following to find the current grades: <https://nhri.ohchr.org/EN/AboutUs/GANHRIAccreditation/Pages/default.aspx>.¹⁷ Note, this document conveys the entire history of an NHRI's accreditation.

Coding Scheme: Assign values according to the following ordinal scale. This variable is mutually exclusive.

- 0 = C: Non-compliant with Paris Principles
- 1 = B: Observer Status: Not fully compliant or insufficient information
- 2 = A(R): Accreditation–Reserve (insufficient documentation)¹⁸
- 3 = A: Fully compliant with Paris Principles

3.7 NHRI Office Type

Definition: This variable records the type of NHRI.

Coding Scheme: Assign values according to the following binary scale describing the institutional arrangement of the NHRI. This variable is mutually exclusive.

- 1 = Ombudsperson¹⁹
- 2 = Human Rights Commission

3.8 Established by

Definition: This variable records the current (or most recent) legal foundation for the NHRI's existence. The current legal foundation might be distinct from the original legal foundation.

Coding Scheme: Assign values according to the following nominal scale. This variable is mutually exclusive.

- 1 = Treaty

¹⁷Other grade lists exist on the internet that are not official and do not correspond with this one.

¹⁸When the International Coordinating Committee changed its name to GANHRI on 23 March 2016, it ceased issued this grade.

¹⁹An *ombudsperson* or *ombudsman* is an official who acts as an intermediary between an organization (e.g., the government) and a constituency (e.g., citizens). S/he is usually appointed by the government or by parliament and charged with representing citizens' interests by investigating and addressing reported complaints.

- 2 = Constitution
- 3 = Executive Decree (mandate, declaration or promulgation not involving legislature)
- 4 = Legislation (law passed by legislature)
- 5 = United Nations
- 6 = Judiciary

3.9 Year Formally Established

Definition: This variable records the year that the NHRI was initially established.

Coding Scheme: Record the year as a four-digit numeral (e.g., 2011).

3.10 Year First Occupied

Definition: This variable records the year that the NHRI initially met or was convened/occupied.

Coding Scheme: Record the year as a four-digit numeral (e.g., 2011).

3.11 Identified Objective(s)

Definition: These variables record the NHRI's objectives. The list is adopted from the CIRI data project, and we adapt the definitions of these terms delineated in the CIRI Codebook (?). The only difference in our definitions and those of CIRI is that we are only concerned with situations when the state violates rights. Often times this will be exactly as CIRI has defined a right i.e. torture, disappearance, etc. However, some cultural or economic rights listed in CIRI do not make this distinction. For our purposes we are only concerned with rights vis-a-vis the state. Coders, please download the CIRI Codebook (<http://www.humanrightsdata.com/p/data-documentation.html>).

Coding Scheme: Assign a value of "1" to each of the following applicable objectives. Assign a value of "0" to each objective that is identified as not part of the NHRI jurisdiction. These variables are not mutually exclusive. If this information is unavailable, please leave the cell(s) on the coding sheet blank.²⁰

- Worker's Rights
- Arbitrary detention (political imprisonment)
- Disappearance
- Extra-judicial killing

²⁰If the NHRI is said to protect human rights generally, assign a "1" to each objective.

- Torture
- Freedom of Speech
- Freedom of Assembly and Association
- Freedom of Foreign Movement
- Freedom of Domestic Movement
- Electoral Self-Determination
- Freedom of Religion
- Women’s Economic Rights
- Women’s Political Rights
- Women’s Social Rights
- Children’s Rights
- Non-Human Rights Objectives²¹

3.12 Scope of Institutional Jurisdiction

Definition: This variable records whether the NHRI has the authority to perform its duties with all agencies/institutions in the country, or whether there are exceptions upon which it cannot act.²²

Coding Scheme: Assign values according to the following binary scale. This variable is mutually exclusive. If there are no mention of limitations, leave this variable blank.

- 1 = Limited
- 2 = Unlimited

3.13 Report to State Institution

Definition: This variable records the institution to which the NHRI is required to report.²³

Coding Scheme: Assign a value of “1” to each of the following applicable institutions that the NHRI is required to report to. These variables are not mutually exclusive. If this information is unavailable, please leave the cell(s) on the coding sheet blank.

²¹Non-human rights objectives are any objective without basis in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). You can find the UDHR full text here: http://www.ohchr.org/EN/UDHR/Documents/UDHR_Translations/eng.pdf.

²²Agencies/institutions in this case are governmental only. This project does not include private and other non-governmental agencies/institutions.

²³This variable refers to *de jure* requirements to report rather than *de facto* actions. If an NHRI is to report to an institution that is to pass that report to another institution, code both of these as receiving institutions.

- No Reporting Required
- Executive (e.g., Prime Minister, President, Royalty, Ministry)
- Legislature
- Judiciary
- International Institution
- Public²⁴

3.14 Independent

Definition: This variable records whether the NHRI claims to have independence from other government actors/institutions in its decision-making.²⁵²⁶

Coding Scheme: Assign values according to the following binary scale. This variable is mutually exclusive.²⁷

- 0 = No
- 1 = Yes

3.15 Member Appointment

Definition: This variable records whether the NHRI appoints its own members.

Coding Scheme: Assign values according to the following binary scale. This variable is mutually exclusive.

- 0 = No
- 1 = Yes, but approval²⁸
- 2 = Yes

²⁴this value includes a mandate to report to the nationwide press, internet, etc.

²⁵This variable refers to de jure independence rather than de facto independence.

²⁶As long as the independence is explicitly stated, this should still be coded as independent even if there is mention of oversight by another institution.

²⁷Assign a “0” if there is no explicit mention of the NHRI’s independence in the English primary documents. Leave it blank if you cannot find the information i.e. there are no available English primary documents.

²⁸Approval from various sources i.e. legislature, executive, NGO, is necessary to confirm NHRI member choice.

3.16 Leadership Appointed by

Definition: This variable records who appoints the leadership.²⁹

Coding Scheme: Assign a value of “1” to each actor that appoints the leadership of the NHRI. If information is not found, leave this variable blank.

- Executive (e.g., Prime Minister, President, Royalty, Ministry)
- Legislature
- Judiciary
- United Nations
- NHRI/internal appointment³⁰
- Public/vote
- Other

3.17 Chairperson Term

Definition: This variable records the length of one term of the Chairperson

Coding Scheme: Record the length of the term in years. If the chairperson’s term is unlimited, code this variable as –11. If it is not determined by the NHRI, code this variable as –66.³¹

3.18 Donor Source(s)

Definition: These variables record the actor(s) that are to provide or can provide funding to the NHRI at any time.

Coding Scheme: Assign a value of “1” to each of the following applicable actors. These variables are not mutually exclusive. If this information is unavailable, please leave the cell(s) on the coding sheet blank. If the NHRI is forbidden to accept funding or mandated to be financially autonomous from a source, code it “-1.”

- Government

²⁹Some NHRIs have more than one leadership position i.e. chairperson, ombudsperson, director, executive

³⁰This refers to a situation in which the membership of the NHRI is responsible for the appointment of the leadership.

³¹If there is a required retirement age or age limit, this should still be coded as unlimited. If there is a term limit(in years), but the chairperson is electable *ad infinitum*, this should still be coded as unlimited.

- Private³²
- IGO
- NGO
- Other Country³³

3.19 Permitted Activities

Definition: This variable records the activities that are formally permitted by the NHRI.

Coding Scheme: Assign a value of “1” to each of the following applicable activities. These variables are not mutually exclusive. If this information is unavailable, please leave the cell(s) on the coding sheet blank. If the NHRI is forbidden to take part in an activity, code as “-1.”

- Hear Complaints
- Initiate Investigations
- Bring Charges³⁴
- Compel Testimony/Documents³⁵
- Visit Prisons/Detention Centers³⁶
- Publish Findings Publicly³⁷
- Levy Punishment
- Other³⁸

3.20 Relations with NGOs

Definition: This variable records information about NHRI relations with NGOs.³⁹

³²This can refer to either private individuals or organizations.

³³An example of this situation is Canada is the largest of many countries that funded the NHRI in Afghanistan in 2009.

³⁴Binary indicator of whether the NHRI can bring charges against an allegedly abusive agency (i.e., can it act as a prosecutor itself or order a prosecutor to pursue a given charge)?

³⁵Binary indicator recording whether the NHRI can compel testimony and/or documents in the course of an investigation.

³⁶Binary indicator recording whether the NHRI has the authority to visit prisons and detention centers at will.

³⁷Binary indicator recording whether the NHRI publicly publishes its findings.

³⁸Binary indicator recording whether the NHRI has general permission to undertake “other matters deemed necessary to promote and protect human rights.

³⁹This variable refers to *de jure* requirements with NGOs rather than *de facto* behavior.

Coding Scheme: If the NHRI has a mandate to work with NGOs, assign a value of “1”. If the primary English sources do not state a mandate to work with NGOs, assign a value of “0”. If the NHRI has a mandate *not* to work with NGOs, assign a value of “-1”.

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