Spotlight Session: Focus Group Analysis with MAXQDA

How does MAXQDA support focus group analysis?

- Autocode speakers in focus group transcripts

- Shortcuts for speaker names when transcribing focus group recordings

- Compile contributions of individual speakers on coded topics

- Include standardized background information about speakers using variables

- Use this standardized information for selecting speakers

- Show amount and number of contributions from a speaker using the "Overview of Focus Group Participants" function

- Explore and conduct in-depth analysis of data with several functions, such as the Word Cloud, Code Matrix Browser, or Crosstab functions

Importing a focus group transcript

To import a focus group transcript, it must be prepared as such:

1. Each contribution begins with a new paragraph.

2. The contribution starts with the name of the participant, followed by a colon.

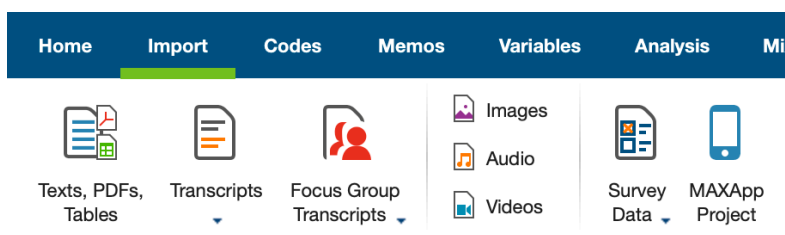**DINAN (MOD):** Senator Rubio, real quick follow-up on this.

You've — in the — in the context of illegal immigration, you've called for basically putting off any legalization process until we get the border secured.

RUBIO: Correct.

DINAN (MOD): Why not call for a pause on H1Bs until those abuses you've talked about are solved.
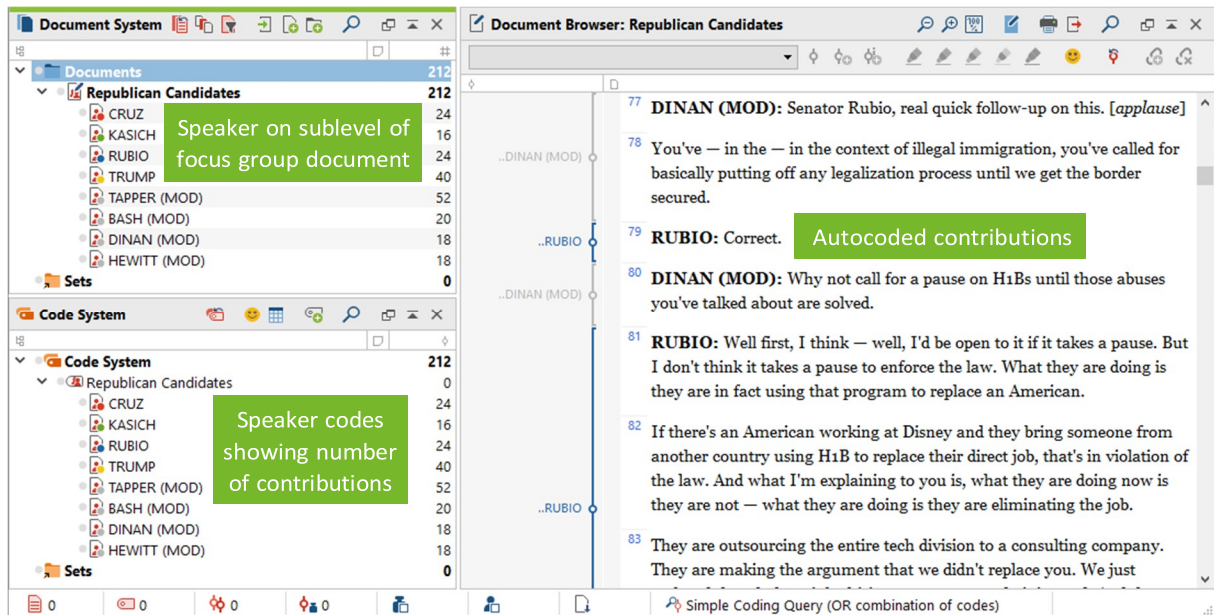
Prepared focus group transcript for import

The import is started in the main menu via Import > Focus Group Transcripts.

You might have to clean up transcripts if there are extraneous colons in the text, which could inadvertently create a speaker out of a phrase in a sentence.

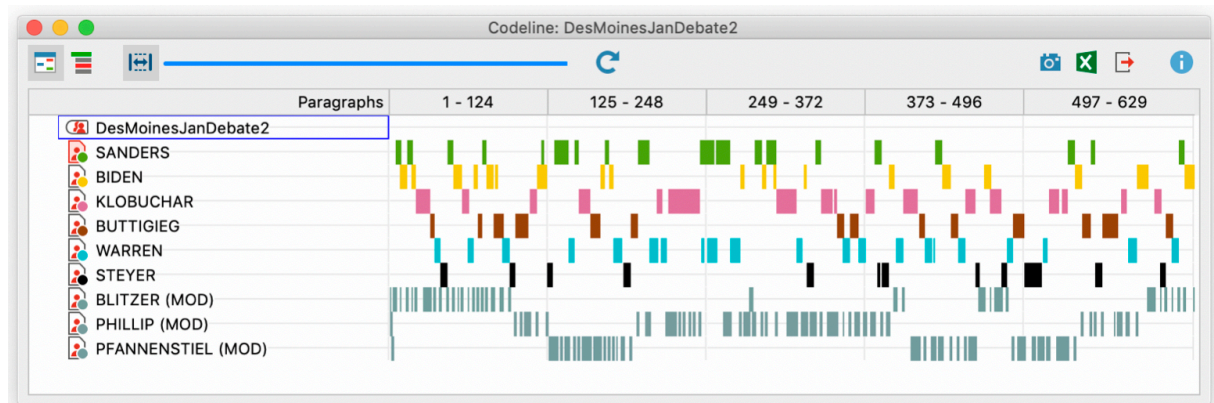After the import, MAXQDA autocodes the speaker contributions with speaker names.

Imported focus group transcript with autocoded contributions with speaker names

To autocode speakers in a transcript that has been already imported into MAXQDA, open the document and use the function Import > Convert Text > Insert displayed Text as a Focus Group Transcript. This also works for a focus group transcript that has been created in MAXQDA.

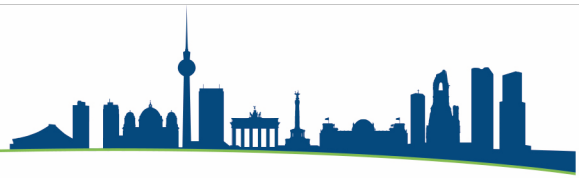# Exploring focus group data

Codeline: Progression of discussion

It is always a good idea to assign different colors to each speaker. Then, you can use the Codeline visual tool (available in the context menu of a focus group) to visualize the progression of the discussion in a focus group.
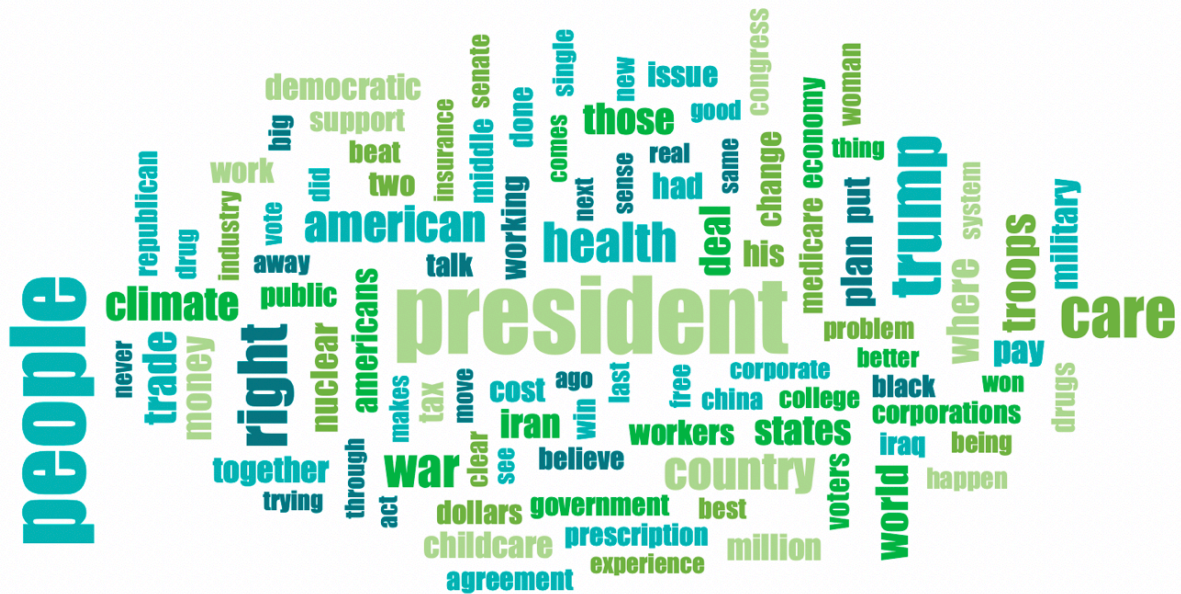

Codeline displaying the sequence of contributions in a focus group

If you have already begun coding (topics etc.), you will also see when the topics were addressed in the discussion.

Word Cloud: Identify frequently used words in a focus group

The function Visual Tools > Word Cloud allows you to get an overview of the most frequently used words in one or more transcripts. Define stop words that are to be ignored in the image.

People and president are the most used noun in the analyzed focus group discussion

Overview of Focus Group Participants: Gain a (first) impression of speaker
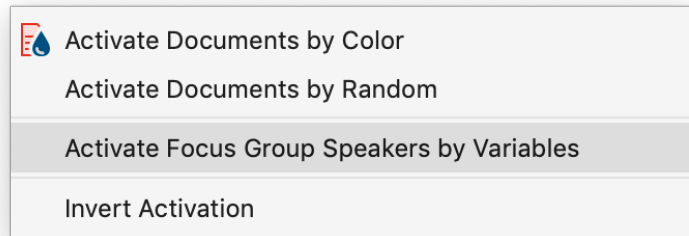
You can use the "Overview of Focus Group Participants" function to get information about individual participants, such as the number and extent of their contributions. The overview table is available on each level in the "Document System" window: for a single focus group transcript, for a document group containing several transcripts, or on the top level for all transcripts.

	Speaker	Foc...	Contributions	% Contributions	Characters	% Characters	Name	Receipts in Mil...	Age
●	SANDERS	Des...	31	9.69	15,349	13.32	Sanders	107	79
●	BIDEN	Des...	22	6.88	16,717	14.51	Biden	59	78
●	KLOBUCHAR	Des...	43	13.44	17,276	14.99	Klobuchar	28	59
●	BUTTIGIEG	Des...	25	7.81	16,824	14.60	Buttigieg	75	38
●	WARREN	Des...	26	8.13	18,427	15.99	Warren	81	70
●	STEYER	Des...	18	5.63	12,511	10.86	Steyer	205	62

Number and extent of contributions in the "Overview of Focus Group Participants"

In the overview, you can add your own variables and enter values for each participant. These values can be used to select participants for analysis: right-click on the root of the "Document System" window and select Activate Focus Group Participants by Variables.

🧪 Activate Documents by Color	
Activate Documents by Random	
Activate Focus Group Speakers by Variables	
Invert Activation	

Overview of Focus Group Speakers

List of variables   3 Variables

	Variable	Variable type	To be displayed	Source	Missing value
■	Receipts in Milli...	Integer	☑	User	
■	Age	Integer	☑	User	
■	Name	Text	☑	User	

Coding focus group transcripts

When coding focus group discussions, you can focus on different aspects reflected in different levels in the "Code System" window, e.g.:

- a topic and content level
- a group interaction level
- a moderator and participants level

Different code levels in the "Code System" (Kuckartz & Rädiker, 2019)

Analyzing coded focus group transcripts

What did a specific participant say in one or more focus group discussions?

1. Activate the focus group documents of interest in the "Document System".

2. Activate the participant's speaker code(s) in the "Code System". MAXQDA will compile the contributions in the "Retrieved Segments" window.

3.

4. *Participant's name displayed in the source information in the "Retrieved Segments" window*
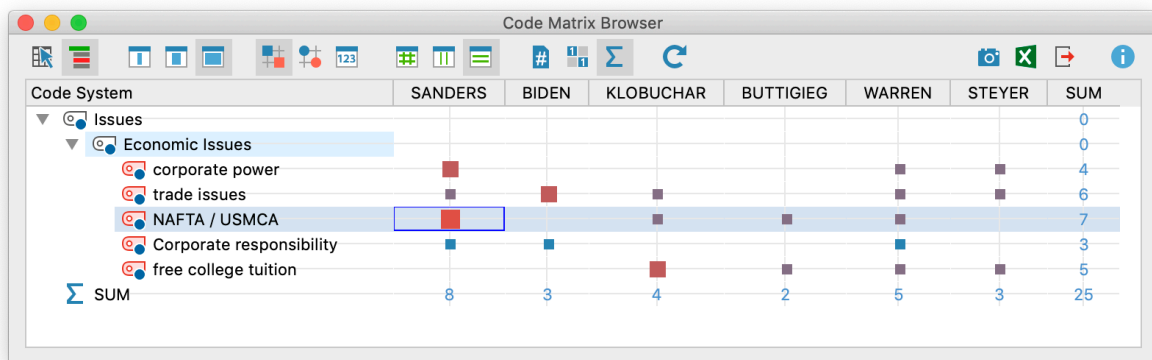
What did one or more participants say about a specific topic?

1. Activate the participant(s) in the "Document System".
2. Activate the topic code in the "Code System".

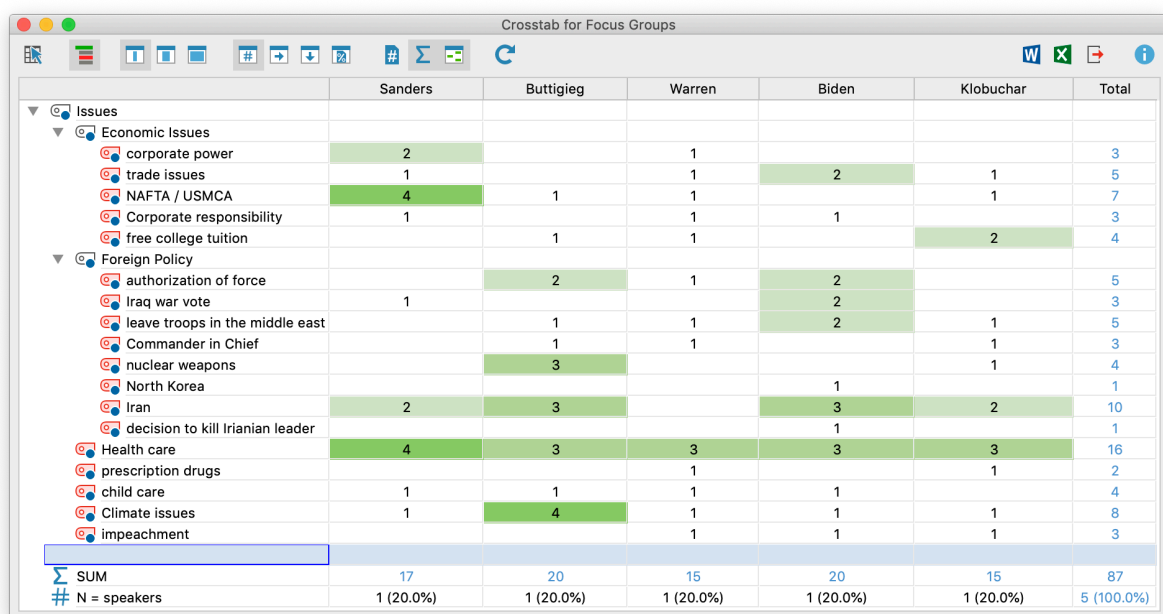### Code Matrix Browser: Visualize code assignments per participant

You can use Visual Tools > Code Matrix Browser to display the distribution of topics per participant.

Topics (rows) by participants (columns) in the Code Matrix Browser

Crosstab: Compare code frequencies for groups of participants

You can use Mixed Methods > Crosstab > Crosstab for Focus Groups to create a display that compares code frequencies for grouped participants. To use this function, you need to assign variable values in the "Overview of Focus Group Participants" first because the groups are built by using these variables.

Crosstab for comparing code frequencies by participants