

Creating A Code Hierarchy

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A frequent question is how to structure codes hierarchically. The easiest way to work with higher and lower order categories is to structure your codes alphabetically in the code manager, e.g., according to the basic pattern below (also see the code list in this project):

```
category A_sub 1
category A_sub 2
category A_sub 3
```

```
category B_sub 1
category B_sub 2
category B_sub 3
```

If you would like, you can insert a category as an "empty" code (i.e., one that is not assigned to any quotations):

```
CATEGORY A
category A_sub 1
category A_sub 2
category A_sub 3
```

```
CATEGORY B
category B_sub 1
category B_sub 2
category B_sub 3
```

A further possibility is to work with numbers:

```
1 CATEGORY A
1 1_A_sub 1
1 2_A_sub 2
1 3_A_sub 3
```

```
CATEGORY B
1 1_B_sub 1
1 2_B_sub 2
1 3_B_sub 3
```

You may at some point group all sub-codes into a family to facilitate searches or to use them as filters. However, these steps are usually only necessary after the initial coding phase.

Code Families

Code families do not appear in the Code Manager and cannot be assigned to data segments as codes. Code families have a more functional purpose; they can be successfully used, e.g., to filter and group codes to facilitate queries, and to visualize your code list in network views. For various reasons, I do not recommend the use of code families to group codes by higher order categories. This tends to produce unnecessary complications once network functions are employed.

Network Function

Another option to create a code hierarchy is by using the network function. This can be done by linking the higher level code and the lower level code via a transitive (i.e. a directed) relation in a network view (or via drag and drop in the code manager). Transitive relations include "is part of" and "is a" (please refer to the User's Manual for more detailed instructions).

After you have linked the codes, open the code forest (under Codes / Miscellaneous in the Main Menu). There you will see a hierarchical display of codes. The code forest can be used for drag and drop coding.

Utilizing the network function to introduce a hierarchy in your coding system offers a way to structure your codes. However, you need to be aware that this is not yet conceptual level work. When you use the network view function in such a way, you simply use it to organize your data and your codes. If you begin later to build models and to theorize about your data, the hierarchical relations might be in the way.

I generally recommend experimenting with an alphabetical code structure to create a code hierarchy rather than using code families or the network view function for this purpose.

Note: The code list in this sample project structured as follows: Main categories and subcategories were used within the list (this is not a requirement; you are obviously free to structure your own list to suit your needs!), and are separated by an underscore or a colon.

All terms preceding the underscore or colon indicate the code category name; the terms following the symbol constitute subcategories. As category and subcategory names may contain more than one word, an empty space cannot be used to separate the two levels of coding. The symbols used here (underscore/colon) have no syntactic function. Additional sublevels may also be created.