

MAXQDA – a QDA Software that Plans: Qualitative Data Analysis in Urban Planning

From Global Goals to Local Action

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Urban Settlements of 21st Century



The 21st Century era has raised unique challenges for urban settlements and the development of many cities around the world still hinges on outdated urban planning approaches. Urban planning is often hindered by poor planning trends, which serve as the utmost barriers to development and divorce global goals from true localization. Despite the fact that many international policy documents such as Sustainable Development Goals (Goal 11 – Sustainable Cities and Communities), New Urban Agenda (Habitat III), EU/Georgia Association Agreement, etc. outlined guidelines for inclusive and sustainable development, the real obstacle to the execution of the global or national objectives on the local level remains. Every settlement is a dynamic organism, shaped by centuries of events that create distinctive characteristics and form vibrant destination-specific identities. These historical details make the transformation of global principles into local solutions even more difficult.

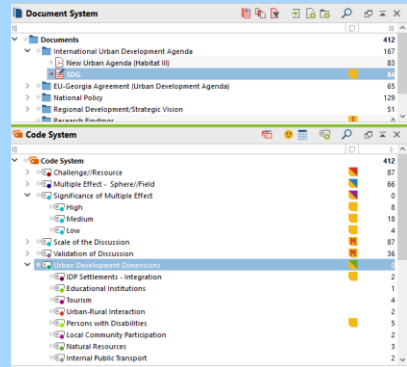
Gori is located in eastern Georgia and serves as a connecting highway between the county's western and eastern regions. It is a great example of how unique spatial, socioeconomic, demographic and geographic characteristics can be formed through historical pathways. In 2008 Gori was a battleground in the five-day Russian-Georgian war, which caused displacement of the local population. As a result, large-scale settlements for internally displaced persons (IDP) had to be constructed both within the city and in its surrounding area. These circumstances play a key part in the development of the basic plan for its resilient furtherance.

Fulfilment of Methodological Gap- Five Steps Prioritizing Method

The main mission has been to sort the priorities and challenges for the selected city in a way that would combine the globally-promoted urban principles with local peculiarities. After a thorough analysis of possible methodological approaches we realized that there was a lack of existing tools to achieve the stated aim. In order to fill this gap we have devised the **Five Steps Prioritizing Method** for urban planning issues in the case of Gori.

The **Five Steps Prioritizing Method** encompasses well-established methods, including **Systematic Review**, **Evaluative Qualitative Text Analysis**, and **Transformative Mixed Method Research Design**. **MAXQDA** has been a valuable tool for integrating all of the necessary features and different forms of analysis innovations in order to execute this new approach.

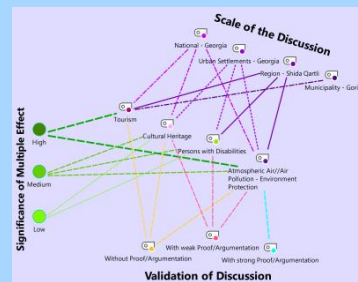
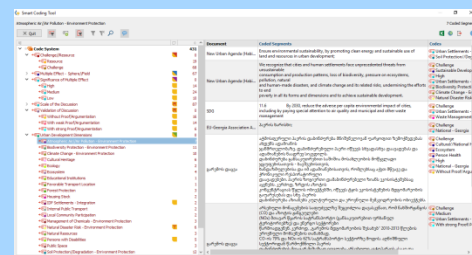
The first phase of the Five Steps Prioritizing Method was based on the principles of **Systematic Review**. Following discussions with members of the research team and various stakeholders, we clearly set the scope of the research through a prioritization of issues concerning the completion of the Basic Plan, which itself will serve as the foundation for the upcoming Master Plan in Gori. A comprehensive literature search was conducted based on the following inclusion criteria: latest international policy documents promoting sustainable urban development principles, local regional strategic vision documents, primary research findings related to the urban issues of Gori, etc.



Coding is the next step in the Five Steps Prioritizing Method. The initial code system was developed using MAXQDA 2018, integrating concepts of **Evaluative Qualitative Text Analysis**. To ensure the successful implementation of the following process we determined the necessary thematic subcodes, the dimensions of urban development including Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) settlements, tourism, urban-rural interactions, public transport, etc.

The structure of the code system, alongside thematic subcodes, consists of evaluative categories such as the significance of multiple effects, validation and scale of discussion. The values/levels for each evaluative category were defined in advance. For example, the validation of discussion was used to distinguish the quality of evidence (strong/weak/without proof/argumentation), on which the thematic coded passages relied. Document variables have also been created using MAXQDA in order to summarize the information regarding selected documents. Specifically, several variables such as types of documents, publication date, etc., have been added to extract the information needed.

The third step was to commence the coding process. A hybrid approach was applied to this process in which several text segments were assigned to the initially developed codes/subcodes. In addition to the pre-set codes, various additional "emergent" thematic codes were established according to the visions and strategies reflected in the sampled documents. Using the **Smart Coding Tool**, a recently-released feature of MAXQDA 2018, all of the thematic subcodes under the multiple effects code were assigned to evaluative categories. The transformation of thematic categories into evaluative categories greatly helped with the assessment of the multiple effects of urban development dimensions.



The accomplishment of the third step created a baseline for the analysis of the coded segments. To ensure the successful implementation of this process, new features of data processing and analysis provided by MAXQDA 2018 were applied. Along with other versatile data processing features, integral analysis tools such as **Complex Code Configurations**, **MAXMaps**, and the **Document Trait** proved particularly helpful. Code Configurations were used to reveal percentages and frequencies of coded segments (urban development dimensions) linked with scale of discussion. As a result, MAXQDA 2018's data analysis tools added life to the sampled and coded qualitative information, and successfully depicted the research findings.

The concept of **Transformative Mixed Method Research Design** has been employed to prioritize the urban development dimensions for the target city of Gori. Techniques for converting textual information, in particular the quantification of qualitative coded segments, allowed us to use quantitative parameters for localization of global goals!

Research Findings

The combination of evaluative and thematic categories revealed the dimensions of urban development that must urgently be addressed for the further advancement of Gori. Some of them are significant issues on the local level that simultaneously intersect with global principles, such as the integration of IDP, sustainable urban tourism development, preservation of cultural heritage, etc.

One of the great advantages of the Five Steps Prioritizing Method is the evaluation of the scale of the discussion and quality of evidence as well as the identification of urban areas that require thorough study. Since the targeted settlement suffers from a paucity of scientific evidence, the community participatory approach is highly recommended in the process of developing a master plan.



The poster showcases one of the ongoing urban planning projects of the City Institute Georgia (CIG) related to the completion of a "Basic Plan" for the city of Gori, which will serve as a strong foundation for the city's forthcoming "Master Plan".



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