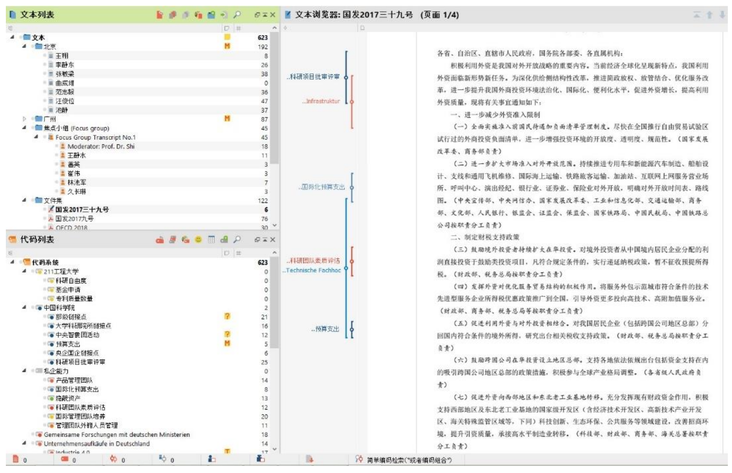
MAXQDA-based managerial research in intercultural context

A brief description of research objective

China is currently undergoing a transformational process that pursues a more sustainable structure in its national economic framework. Policymakers of the central government stress the importance of qualitative economic growth together with the decisive role of indigenous technological activities and achievements. These movements have significantly reshaped the landscape of the technology-making system, the National Innovation System (NIS), in the People's Republic over recent years.

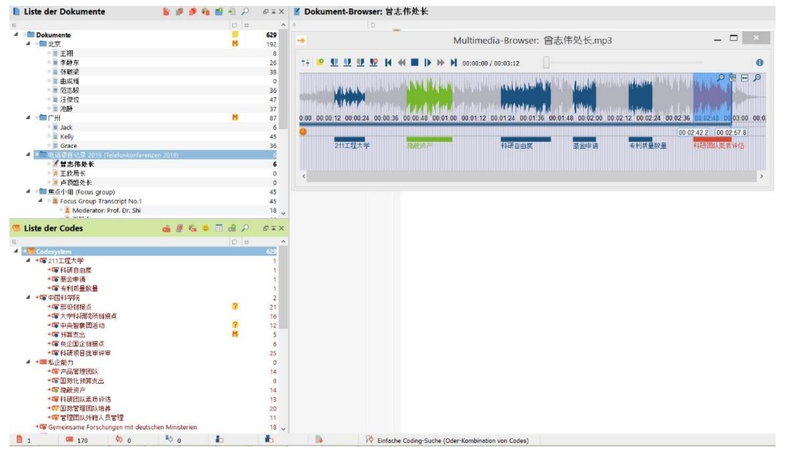
Utilizing the primary data originating from documents, conversations, discussions and observations, the research project focuses upon the questions: in which way the structure and nature of China's NIS has changed in general, as well as how the relevant institutions and their linkages have evolved in particular. MAXQDA was deployed to play the role of a data manager and analyst.

Data elicitation and coding in Chinese language



Graph 1*: Data collection and coding in intercultural context and multiple languages
(*All graphs are only examples, depicting the application of MAXQDA features used by the research project)

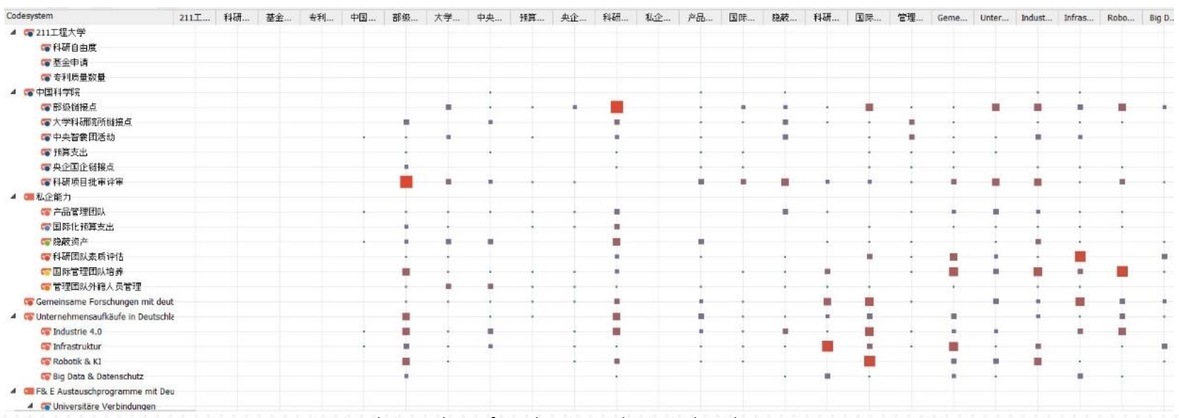
Text data in Chinese language can be established or imported to MAXQDA smoothly [see Graph 1]. The researchers can organise the coding activities flexibly, either in English or German languages, or in Chinese characters, according to the specificity of the text position and personal preference at a certain point in time [also see Graph 1]. Audio and video data not being transcribed into textual information are easily coded directly in Chinese or another language [see Graph 2].



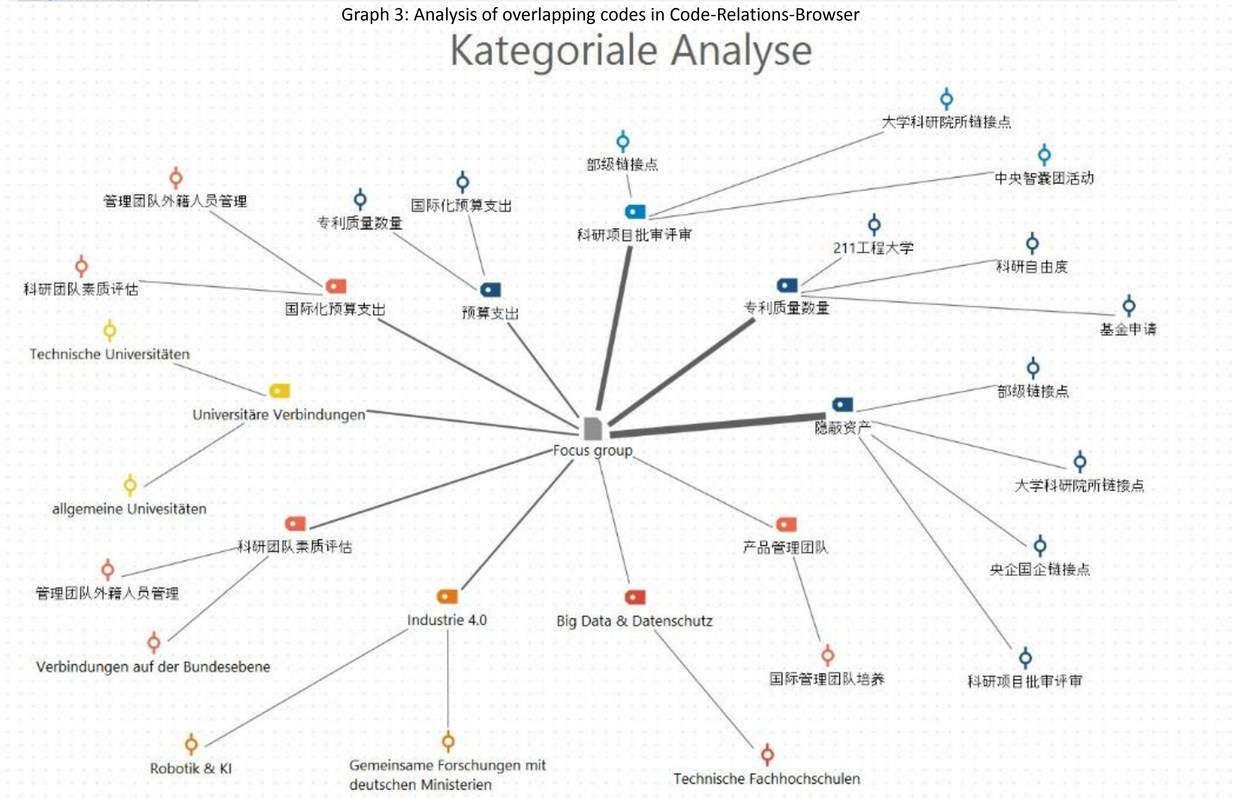
Graph 2: Audio and video data directly coded

Visualisation functionalities enabling dynamic analysis

The codes created on the basis of the primary data can be systematically analyzed and linked together, because the structural characteristics of the categories can be illustrated vividly by visualization mechanisms. The "Code-Relations-Browser" [see Graph 3], for example, depicts how frequently which codes are overlapping with each other in activated documents and files, which therefore greatly contributes to the efficient code integration and optimization in the research project. The feature "MAXmaps" visualizes the relationships among primary data, cases, codings and codes, supporting the causal modelling and hypothesis building during the research process in an intriguing way [see Graph 4].



Graph 3: Analysis of overlapping codes in Code-Relations-Browser



Graph 4: Case-based map for identification of core categories and related coding

Conclusion

The research project is conducted in an intercultural context, involving participants coming from different language systems. All major procedural elements of the research project were carried out effectively by applying a broad range of functionalities provided by MAXQDA. From import and organisation of primary data, from transcription to coding of primary data, from generation, integration to systemisation and optimisation of categories and from causal analysis to dynamic construction of a model or theory, the software application covers literally every essential corner of a qualitative research. The powerful analysis features, especially those of the visual tools, have convincingly delivered both logical analytics and graphical visibility during the research process. MAXQDA may also prove to be useful, when the structural model resulting from the qualitative design shall be transferred to a subsequent quantitative methodology within a framework of mixed methods.

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