Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) Research Course  
Prof. Dirk Berg-Schlosser - Professor Emeritus, University Marburg

QCA is a well-recognized “configurational” procedure that is based on set theory and Boolean algebra (Ragin 1987; Rihoux/Ragin 2009). It is particularly suitable for the systematic comparison of a small and medium number of cases where statistical methods based on large numbers and often random sampling as in survey research are not applicable. It allows to identify different configurations and patterns of conditions (comparable to independent variables) for the respective outcome (the dependent variable). In this way, forms of “conjunctural causation” or “equifinality” can be established in contrast to just average correlations or regressions across all cases. It has become widely applied in political science, sociology, economics, business administration and similar fields.

This course provides a short introduction to the main variants of this method: crisp-set QCA, multi-value QCA, and fuzzy-set QCA. As a basic software (TOSMANA, version 1.6.1.0, available at: https://www.tosmana.net/) will be used. For the online format of the course, PowerPoint slides will be made available to all registered participants before the course.

A comprehensive introduction to comparative methods and research designs by Dirk Berg-Schlosser is also available as an IPSA MOOC (Massive Open Online Course) at: https://www.ipsa.org/resources/ipsamooc. It is recommended that participants follow this course beforehand.

Reading list:


These readings should be done before the course!

Current information about QCA-related events and publications can be found at the COMPASSS website: http://compasss.org/.