

Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) Research Course

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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:

- Berg-Schlosser, D.; G. De Meur; B. Rihoux and Ch. Ragin (2009), “Qualitative Comparative Analysis as an Approach”, in: Rihoux, Benoit and Charles C. Ragin (eds.), *Configurational Comparative Methods*, Los Angeles: SAGE, pp. 1 – 18.
- Ragin, Ch. (2009), “Qualitative Comparative Analysis Using Fuzzy Sets (fsQCA)”, in: Rihoux/Ragin, op. cit., pp. 87 – 121.
- A brief introduction to set theory is Goertz, G. and J. Mahoney (2012), “Mathematical Prelude: A Selective Introduction to Logic and Set Theory for Social Scientists” in: Goertz, Gary and James Mahoney, *A Tale of Two Cultures – Qualitative and Quantitative Research in the Social Sciences*, Princeton: Princeton UP, pp. 16 – 38.

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/>.