

## Qualitative Comparative Analysis in Comparative Politics “Forschungsprojekt”

12.20.2020

instructor: Prof. Ingo Rohlfing, PhD  
office hours: Tuesday, 10.00-12.00; by appointment; open door policy  
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first session: 17.04.2020  
last session: 17.07.2020  
no session: 10.04; 01.05; 05.06.  
room: Hörsaal Forschungsinstitut, Gottfried-Keller-Str. 6  
time: Friday, 10.00-11.30 (see schedule for exceptions)

Please also regularly check the CCCP information on teaching on the internet:  
<http://www.cccp.uni-koeln.de/en/public/teaching/>

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The course introduces participants to the basis, mechanics and application of Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) in Comparative Politics. QCA is based on the idea of set relations and can be an alternative to statistics when it comes to the analysis of a medium or large number of cases. The course starts with the foundation of QCA, which are the notion of a 'set' and different sorts of necessary and sufficient relationships between one or multiple sets. You are then taken through all the steps required for performing a QCA:

- the choice of potential causes of an outcome;
- their transformation, called calibration, into sets;
- the transformation of calibrated data into a truth table;
- the simplification of a truth table with an algorithm;
- the interpretation of the results

We will probably use a study by Hinterleitner et al. (2016) for illustration and reproduction. “Reproduction” means we will use the original data and try to produce the same results by rerunning the analysis with *RStudio* (see below).

- Hinterleitner, Markus, Fritz Sager and Thomann Eva (2016): The Politics of External Approval: Explaining the IMF's Evaluation of Austerity Programmes. *European Journal of Political Research* 55 (3): 549-567.  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/1475-6765.12142>

At the end of the course, participants will have the required basic knowledge for evaluating the quality of published QCA studies and to perform a basic analysis using the software R.

### **Voluntary reading ahead of course**

You can have a look at these two texts if you want to get a better idea of what QCA is.

- General intro to QCA: Marx, Axel, Benoît Rihoux and Charles Ragin (2014): The origins, development, and application of Qualitative Comparative Analysis: The first 25 years. *European Political Science Review* 6 (1): 115-142. [http://journals.cambridge.org/abstract\\_S1755773912000318](http://journals.cambridge.org/abstract_S1755773912000318)
- Summary of main elements of QCA: Thiem, Alrik (2017): Conducting Configurational Comparative Research with Qualitative Comparative Analysis. *American Journal of Evaluation* 38 (3): 420-433. <http://doi.org/10.1177/1098214016673902>
- Intro to QCA, but mainly an intro to QCA using R and the QCA package (no need to buy it): Dusa, Adrian (2018): *QCA with R*. Springer.

### Topics and readings

#### 17.04.20

Intro to QCA & basics of set theory I

- Schneider, Carsten Q. and Claudius Wagemann (2012): *Set-theoretic methods for the social sciences. A guide to Qualitative Comparative Analysis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: section 1.1, chapter 2, 3.

#### 24.04.20

Basics of set theory II

- Schneider, Carsten Q. and Claudius Wagemann (2012): *Set-theoretic methods for the social sciences. A guide to Qualitative Comparative Analysis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: chapter 2, 3.
- Setting up RStudio and getting it running for next session

**01.05.20: No course** (Tag der Arbeit / Labor Day)

#### 08.05.20

Calibration I

- de Block, Debora and Barbara Vis (2018): Addressing the Challenges Related to Transforming Qualitative into Quantitative Data in Qualitative Comparative Analysis. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research* 13 (4): 503-535.
- Schneider, Carsten Q. and Claudius Wagemann (2012): *Set-theoretic methods for the social sciences. A guide to Qualitative Comparative Analysis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: chapter 2, 3.

#### 15.05.20 [Session moved from 03.05. to 08.05.]: Seminar room 410, WiSo-Gebäude

Calibration II

- Schneider, Carsten Q. and Claudius Wagemann (2012): *Set-theoretic methods for the social sciences. A guide to Qualitative Comparative Analysis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: section 1.2.

#### 22.05.20 [Session moved from 08.05. to 10.05.]: Seminar room 410, WiSo-Gebäude

Necessity I

- Schneider, Carsten Q. and Claudius Wagemann (2012): *Set-theoretic methods for the social sciences. A guide to Qualitative Comparative Analysis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: section 3.2, 5.4, 5.5.

### **29.05.20**

Necessity II & Construction of truth table I

- Schneider, Carsten Q. and Claudius Wagemann (2012): *Set-theoretic methods for the social sciences. A guide to Qualitative Comparative Analysis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: chap. 4, 6, 7.

**05.06.20: No course** (Pfingstwoche / Pentecost)

### **12.06.20**

Construction of truth table II

- Schneider, Carsten Q. and Claudius Wagemann (2012): *Set-theoretic methods for the social sciences. A guide to Qualitative Comparative Analysis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: chap. 8.

### **19.06.20**

Construction of truth table III

- Schneider, Carsten Q. and Claudius Wagemann (2012): *Set-theoretic methods for the social sciences. A guide to Qualitative Comparative Analysis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: chap. 8.

### **26.06.20**

Minimization I

- Schneider, Carsten Q. and Claudius Wagemann (2012): *Set-theoretic methods for the social sciences. A guide to Qualitative Comparative Analysis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: chap. 8

### **03.07.20**

Minimization II

- Schneider, Carsten Q. and Claudius Wagemann (2012): *Set-theoretic methods for the social sciences. A guide to Qualitative Comparative Analysis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: chap. 5.2, 5.3, 8.

### **10.07.20**

Minimization III

- Schneider, Carsten Q. and Claudius Wagemann (2012): *Set-theoretic methods for the social sciences. A guide to Qualitative Comparative Analysis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: chap. 5.2, 5.3, 8

### **17.07.20**

What makes a good QCA study & research transparency

- Wagemann, Claudius and Carsten Q. Schneider (2016): Transparency Standards in Qualitative Comparative Analysis. *Qualitative & Multi-Method Research* 13: 38-42 (<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.893090>).

### **Course requirements**

Prior exposure to QCA and qualitative methods is recommended, but not required.

Participants are kindly requested to use their own laptops because we do not have access to a computer lab. It is necessary to install the current free versions of:

- R: <https://cran.rstudio.com/>
- RStudio: <https://www.rstudio.com/products/rstudio/download/>

There are plenty of free instructions on using R and RStudio. You can access two short intros here: <https://uni-koeln.sciebo.de/s/OA17I0Yw65QSCeO>

- Setup of R and RStudio
- First steps with R and RStudio

See also the “Resources” on the RStudio website. More information will be shared at the beginning of the course. (see also course folder on ILIAS)

Don't panic if you are not familiar with R or have never before done an analysis by writing code. One goal of the course is to make you used to doing a QCA study based on R code.

### **Exams and grading**

The type of exam for this course is the portfolio exam covering multiple smaller assignments requiring the participant to reproduce a QCA study. More information about this will be added later.

All exams are graded based on the following scheme.

Points	Grade
18	1.0
17	1.3
16	1.7
15	2.0
14	2.3
13	2.7
12	3.0
11	3.3
10	3.7
9	4.0
8	5.0
7	5.0
6	5.0
5	5.0
4	5.0
3	5.0
2	5.0
1	5.0
0	5.0