



Qualitative Comparative Analysis

Instructor: Professor Dr Lasse Gerrits, Erasmus University Rotterdam

Course outline

This course introduces PhD students to the logic and application of Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) in empirical research in the social sciences. QCA is a systematic comparative method for small to medium n-samples (usually between ~10 and ~50 cases). It can process both qualitative and quantitative data. The underlying logic is rooted in set-theory and Boolean algebra. This means that QCA is not only a technique but also an approach that requires one to rethink certain core assumptions in social science research, such as causality and casing. In this course, we will discuss the main characteristics and operations of QCA, and will outline what QCA means for your research project. You will be made familiar with the method through exercises. Importantly, you will be asked to apply some of the operations to your own dataset (or a given dataset in case you don't have one yet) so that you will be able to start using the method on your own by the end of the course.

Prerequisites

- You should have taken the Qualitative Research Design course before the QCA course.
- We will use R for data processing. Please make sure you have R running on your laptop, and that you have the QCA package installed: <https://cran.r-project.org/web/packages/QCA/index.html>
- Preferably, you have a dataset ready. This doesn't have to be a fully prepared set. In case this comes to early: we can also work with pre-made datasets that the instructor will bring along.

Time Schedule and Topics covered

Wednesday 29.03.2023:

- Introduction and background QCA
- Rethinking research for QCA
- Set theory and Boolean operators
- Casing

Thursday 30.03.2023:

- Calibration
- Crisp, fuzzy, and multi-value QCA

Friday 31.03.2023:

- Analysis and interpretation
- Measures to enhance quality of your findings

About the Trainer

Professor Lasse Gerrits studied Public Administration and Urban Planning at the Erasmus University Rotterdam. After his graduation in 2003, he worked as a researcher at TNO Built Environment and Geosciences whilst working on his PhD thesis on the management of fragile ecosystems simultaneously. He received his PhD degree in 2008 and was appointed as assistant-professor (2008 – 2011) and associate-professor (2011 – 2014) at the Erasmus University Rotterdam before being appointed as full professor in Political Science at the Otto-Friedrich University in Bamberg, Germany. In Bamberg, he was the first holder of the Governance of Innovative and Complex Technological System chair. Currently he is the Academic Director at the Institute for Housing and Urban Development Studies of Erasmus University Rotterdam, focusing on the PhD program, student supervision, and developing the scientific portfolio of the institute.