

Qualitative Comparative Analysis Workshop 2017

Instructor:	Peer C. Fiss, University of Southern California
Course dates:	September 13-15, 2017
Course Venue:	Room No: US-A120 Universität Siegen, Campus Unteres Schloss (US) Unteres Schloß 3, 57072 Siegen
Requirements:	Please bring along your laptop/notebooks with fsQCA software installed. Download link (Windows & Mac): http://www.socsci.uci.edu/~cragin/fsQCA/software.shtml
Credit points:	3

Course overview

The workshop provides a ground-up introduction to Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) and fuzzy sets. It consists of a combination of interactive lectures and hands-on sessions that offer an introduction to working with the fsQCA software package.

Course objectives

After successful completion of you should be able to:

1. Understand the goals, assumptions, and key concepts of QCA
2. Conduct data analysis using the fsQCA software package
3. Design and execute research projects using a set-theoretic approach
4. Apply advanced forms of set-analytic investigation

Some Introductory Notes

I would like this workshop to be as useful to you as possible. To get the most out of this workshop, you would ideally already be working on an empirical project that might be aided by taking a configurational approach, but that is not essential. Over the course of this workshop, I hope you will be thinking about how you can apply these methods to your research, and I will do our best to be of assistance.

You can find an international bibliography of applications (incomplete and not fully up-to-date) at www.compass.org.

Course materials

There are three key books for the course, and most relevant chapters are posted included as softcopy in the workshop preparation package.

Ragin, Charles C. 1987. *The Comparative Method: Moving beyond Qualitative and Quantitative Strategies*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press

Ragin, Charles C. 2000. *Fuzzy Set Social Science*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Ragin, Charles C. 2008. *Redesigning Social Inquiry: Fuzzy-Sets and Beyond*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Detailed Schedule

Time	13.09.2017	14.09.2017	15.09.2017
10 am – 12:30 pm	Units 1+2	Unit 4	Unit 6
1:30pm - 4 pm	Unit 3	Unit 5	Units 7+8

Unit 1. Introduction to the Comparative Method

The goal of this first unit is to offer an introduction to the logic of comparative research, as this perspective will be fundamental in informing our thinking for the coming days. The focus is on understanding social research from a set-theoretic perspective as well as examining the distinctive place of configurational and comparative research.

Key Readings:

Ragin, 2008 (*“Redesigning Social Inquiry”*): Chapters 1-2

Unit 2. The Basics of QCA

We’ll move on to the basics of QCA. We will begin with an Introduction to Boolean algebra and set theoretic methods. Other issues we will cover include set-theoretic analysis vs. correlational analysis, the concepts of necessity and sufficiency as well as consistency, coverage, and set coincidence. Time permitting we will also examine case-oriented research strategies for theory building.

Key Readings:

Ragin, 2000: Chapters 3-5

Ragin, 2008: Chapters 1-3

Unit 3. Crisp Set Analysis

In this unit, we will dive into crisp-set QCA (csQCA), the simpler version of QCA using binary sets. This will include the coding of data, the construction of truth tables, and understanding the three solutions—complex, parsimonious, and intermediate. We will also begin to examine the importance of counterfactual analysis based on easy versus difficult counterfactuals. Topics also include understanding consistency and coverage in crisp-set truth table analysis.

Key Readings:

Ragin, 2000: Chapters 3-5

Unit 4. Fuzzy Set Analysis

Fuzzy set analysis presents a slightly more complex version of QCA. We will start with the notions of fuzzy sets and fuzzy set relations before moving on to calibrating fuzzy sets and fuzzy set consistency, coverage, and coincidence. We will then cover the fuzzy-set truth table algorithm. Building on crisp set analysis, we will further examine issues around limited diversity, fuzzy sets and counterfactual analysis.

Ragin, 2008: Chapters 4-5

Unit 5. Hand-on Software Session

Working with sample data sets, this session will introduce you to working with the fsQCA software package and conducting empirical analyses. Please be sure to bring a laptop with the fsqca software installed (available for free from fsqca.com).

Unit 6. Advanced Topics in QCA

This unit provides us with an opportunity to catch up and delve deeper into some of the topics introduced above. Should we feel comfortable enough, we will move on to some more advanced topics in QCA, including the testing of causal recipes and substitutable causal conditions.

Key Readings:

Ragin, 2008: Chapters 7-10

Unit 7. Longitudinal Analysis using QCA

Moving beyond cross-sectional analysis, this unit will focus primarily on the analysis of longitudinal and sequence data using a set-analytic approach. We will explore several ways that such an analysis can proceed and discuss the tradeoffs involved.

Unit 8. Large-N Applications of QCA

The last unit will provide examples of recent large-N applications of QCA. These examples will give us an opportunity to raise further questions about how to execute research using a set-analytic approach. We will also reserve some time for further questions that have come up during the workshop.

About your instructor:

Peer Fiss is a Professor and Chair of the Department of Management and Organization at the University of Southern California's Marshall School of Business. Before joining USC, he taught at Queen's University, Canada. He holds a Ph.D. from Northwestern University and a Master's Degree from the University of Hamburg. Peer is broadly interested in how meaning structures shape organizational actions and in configurational theory and set-theoretic methods such as fuzzy set Qualitative Comparative Analysis (fsQCA). Peer's work has been published in *Academy of Management Journal*, *Academy of Management Review*, *Administrative Science Quarterly*, *American Sociological Review*, *Journal of the Association for Information Systems*, *Journal of Management Studies*, *Organization Science*, and the *Strategic Management Journal*, among others. His recent book with Charles Ragin, entitled *Intersectional Inequality: Race, Class, Test Scores, and Poverty* (University of Chicago Press) uses a set-analytic approach to examine the different ways in which advantages versus disadvantages combine to affect social inequality.