Qualitative Comparative Analysis

Claude Rubinson
University of Houston—Downtown
Houston, TX

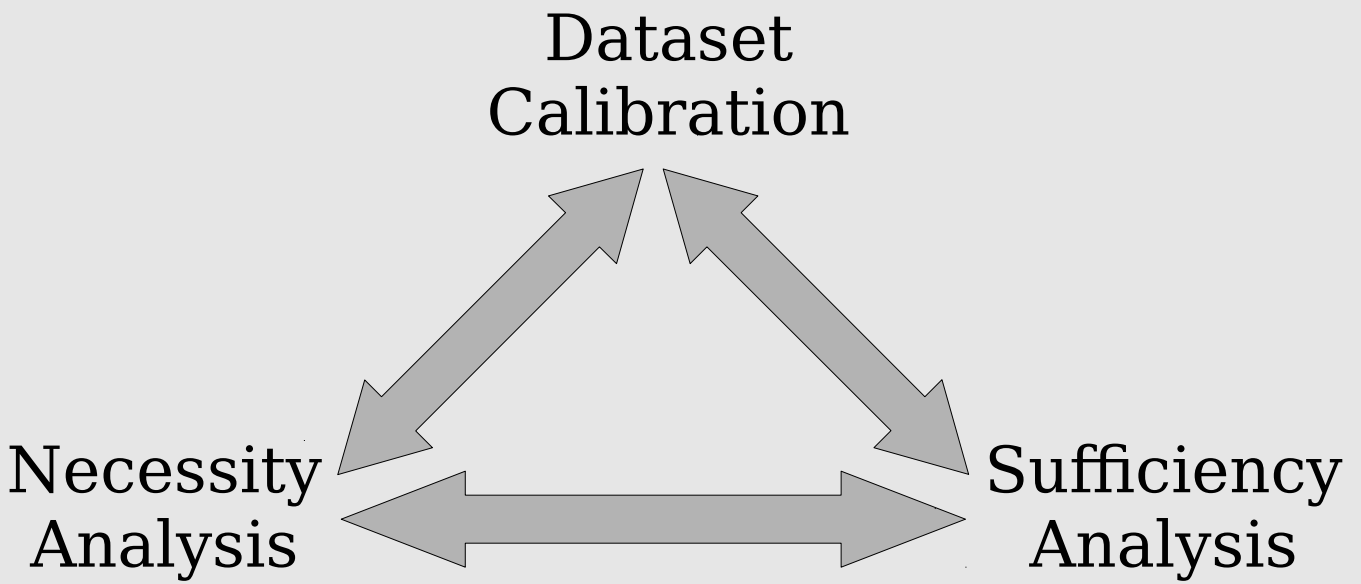
rubinsonc@uhd.edu
http://gator.uhd.edu/~rubinsonc/
http://grundrisse.org/qca/

University of Arizona
Arizona Methods Workshops
January 9–11, 2014

Overview

- Day 1: Introductions and overview
  - Review of QCA resources, publications, and software
  - QCA as an investigation of invariance
  - Three analytic components of QCA: dataset calibration, necessity analysis, and sufficiency analysis
  - Three types of QCA projects: identifying causal recipes, uncovering taxonomies, understanding context
  - Discussion of research projects
- Day 2: Nuts and bolts—QCA in depth
  - Dataset calibration
  - Necessity analysis
    - Consistency and coverage measures for necessity
    - Testing for necessary conditions
  - Sufficiency analysis
    - Consistency and coverage measures for sufficiency
    - Constructing and reducing truth tables
    - Interrogating the analysis and deriving solutions
- Day 3: Putting it all together
  - Conducting a step-wise QCA analysis
  - Writing up and presenting QCA research
  - Discussion of research projects

Three Analytic Components of QCA



Recommended Analytic Strategy

- Preliminaries and Diagnostics:
  - Import data into *Kirq* to test for missing and illegal values
  - Use conventional statistical software or *fs/QCA* to run crosstabs

- Step-wise Procedures:
  - Conduct necessity analysis
  - Conduct sufficiency analysis on observations exhibiting the necessary condition
  - Conduct sufficiency analysis on observations not exhibiting the necessary condition

  - Build sufficiency analysis up from simple to complex, keeping in mind the nature of invariance—begin with just two causal conditions and investigate how the truth table changes as you introduce additional conditions

General Recommendations

- Explain your calibration process; why/how did you choose your thresholds?
- If your dataset is small enough, reproduce it in your write-up
- Truth tables are usually small enough to be included; can omit remainders to save space
    - Use standardized layout for truth table rows (see Rubinson's papers or *Kirq* for examples)
- Discuss the full range of solutions, from complex to parsimonious, and/or explain why you chose the solution that you did. Don't simply choose the intermediate solution without explaining why.
- Include 2x2 tables, scatterplots, and Venn/Euler diagrams as appropriate