

Qualitative Comparative Analysis: A Cross-Disciplinary Methodology for Studying Similarities and Differences

Claude Robinson
University of Houston—Downtown
Houston, TX

qca@grundrisse.org
<http://grundrisse.org/qca/>

UNAM
October 17–21, 2025

Overview

Day 1: The Logic of QCA

- Introductions and discussion of research projects

Day 2: Three Analytic Components of QCA

- Calibration, Necessity Analysis, Sufficiency Analysis

Day 3: Putting QCA into Practice

- Software for conducting QCA

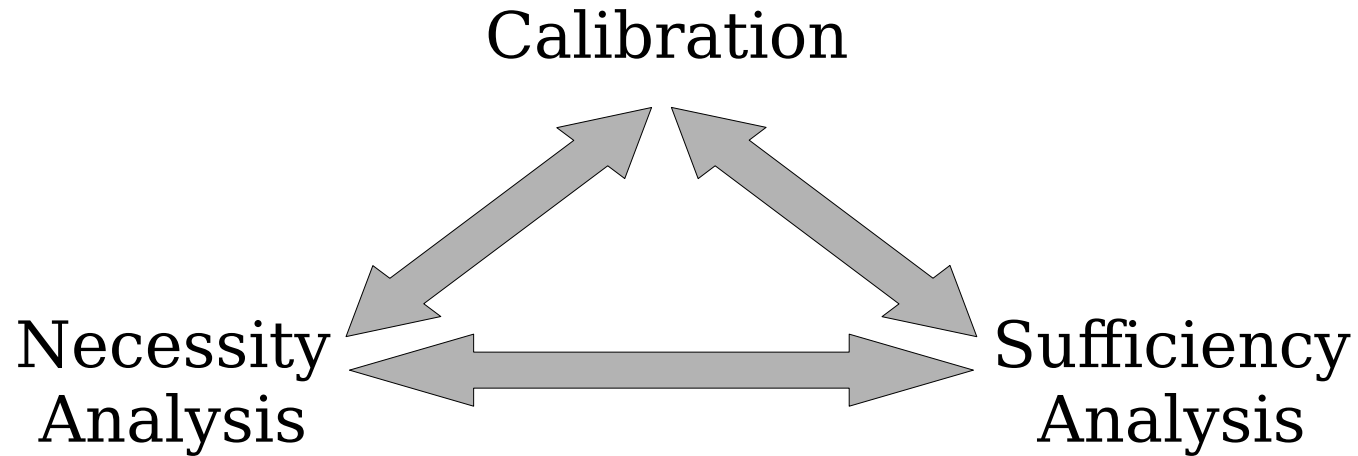
Day 4: Advances in QCA

- Time in QCA, Generalized Analytic Induction

Day 5: Pulling it all Together

- Building robust models, Visualizing and presenting QCA
- Discussion of research projects

Three Analytic Components of QCA



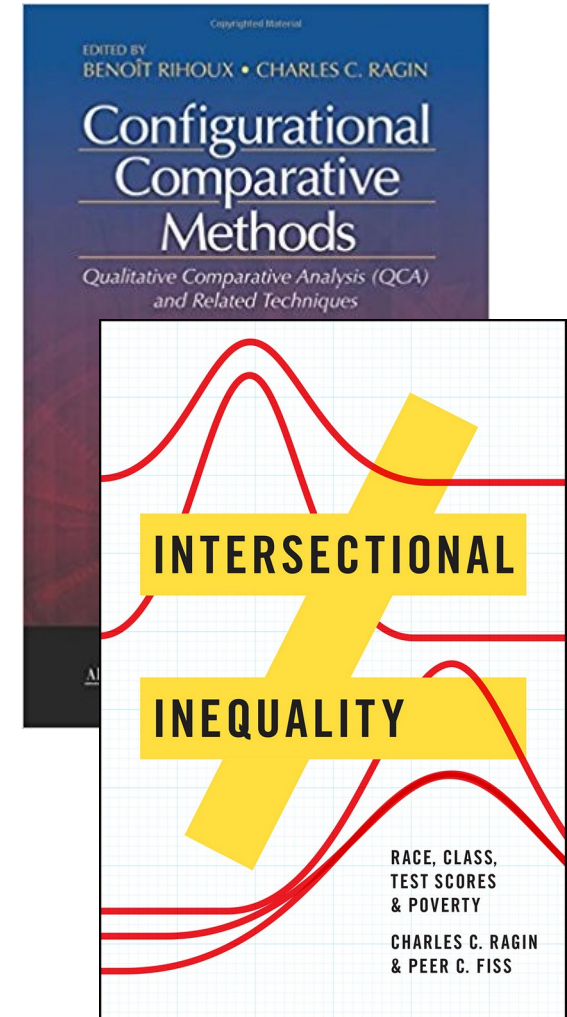
QCA is both a technique and an approach

As a technique

- Measures of degree of set membership
- Subset relations measured by consistency and coverage
- Taxonomies as truth tables
- Sufficiency solutions via Boolean minimization
- Requires software

As an approach

- Rihoux, et. al. (2009, Ch 1 of *CCM*)
- Ragin (1997/2004) "Turning the Tables"
- Ragin & Fiss (2017) *Intersectional Inequality*
- Doesn't require software



3M

ENHANCED PERFORMANCE DISKETTES

QCA

Qualitative Comparative
Analysis

QCA 3.0

Serial # 030B0002

© Kriss Drass 1993

FORMATTED

IBM

2HD

FUJIFILM



Recommendations

- Distinguish between QCA as a technique and QCA as an approach. A good QCA embraces the approach.
- Carefully consider how QCA is applied to small, medium, and large-N studies and their respective emphasis on in-depth case knowledge versus cross-case regularities.
- Different software packages approach QCA differently, shaping how you think about and conduct your analysis.
- Software is just a means to an end. It automates the mundane and repetitive parts of the analysis, so that you can focus on what's really important—getting to know your cases.
- Follow COMPASSS website for updates on QCA/CCM software.
- See also: Robinson, et. al. (2024) “Avoiding Common Errors in QCA: A Short Guide for New Practitioners” on COMPASSS.

A menagerie of software packages

