

IPSA Online Summer School on Research Methods, Antalya 2022

Outline of course on:

“Comparative research designs and comparative methods”

Instructor: Prof. Dr. Dirk Berg-Schlösser, Ph.D.; Philipps University Marburg/Germany

E-mail: bergschl@staff.uni-marburg.de

This course provides an introduction and overview of systematic comparative analyses in the social sciences and shows how to employ this method for constructive explanation and theory building. It begins with comparisons of very few cases and specific “most similar” and “most different” research designs. A major part is then devoted to the often occurring situation of dealing with a small number of highly complex cases, e.g., when comparing political systems or particular policy areas in the MENA region. In response to this complexity, new approaches and software have been developed (“Qualitative Comparative Analysis”, QCA, and related methods). These procedures are able to reduce complexity and to arrive at “configurational” solutions based on set theory and Boolean algebra, which are more meaningful in this context than the usual broad-based statistical methods. In a last section, the respective strengths and weaknesses of QCA and common statistical comparative methods at the macro-level of states or societies are discussed. Participants are strongly encouraged to present their own research problems and data, if available. Some basic quantitative or qualitative methodological training is probably useful to get more out of the course, but participants with little methodological training should find no major obstacles to follow.

Morning sessions are for lectures, the afternoon sessions are for discussions and introduction to the software (TOSMANA, version 1.6.1.1, available at: <https://www.tosmana.net/>). This should be downloaded before the course together with the brief manual.

Readings should be done *before* the respective session!

For preparation, lessons are also available as an IPSA MOOC (Massive Open Online Course) at: <https://www.ipsa.org/resources/ipsamooc>

For this online course the readings and lectures have been reduced to the absolute minimum condensing a two-weeks course into a single week. Participants are encouraged to present their own research projects some time in the afternoons. The entire course will be as interactive as possible.

Course schedule (mornings):

Day 1: Epistemological foundations, J.S. Mill's "canons"

Readings: Moses/Knutsen, *Ways of Knowing*, chapter 1, pp. 1 – 15.

MOOC slides 1 and 2

Day 2.1. Further Advances, Overview of comparative research designs

Readings: Rihoux/Ragin (eds.), *Configurational Comparative Methods*, SAGE, 2009,

Introduction and Chapter 1, pp. XVII – XXV and 1 – 18.

Moses/Knutsen, chapter 5, pp. 94 – 115.

MOOC slides 3

Day2.2. Most similar and most different designs (MSDO/MDSO), Matching and Contrasting of Cases

Berg-Schlosser, *Mixed Methods in Comparative Politics*, chapter 8, pp. 130 - 159.

MOOC slides 4

Day 3.1. Introduction to Boolean Algebra, main steps of QCA

Readings: Rihoux/Ragin, *op.cit.*, chapter 3

Goertz/Mahoney, chapter 2, pp.16 -38.

MOOC slides 5

Day 3.2. QCA applications, troubleshooting, Multi-Value QCA (mvQCA)

Readings: Rihoux/Ragin, *op.cit.*, chapters 4 and 6;

MOOC slides 6

Day4.1: Fuzzy set analyses, basic features

Readings: Rihoux/Ragin, *op.cit.*, chapter 5

MOOC slides 7

Day 4.2: Fuzzy set applications (fs/qca)

Readings: D.B.-S., *Mixed Methods...*; chapter 6.4, pp. 95 – 104

MOOC slides 8

Day 5.1: Contrasting statistical and configurational methods

D.B.-S. and S. Quenter, "Macro-Quantitative vs. Macro-qualitative Methods in Political Science – Advantages and Disadvantages of Comparative Procedures using the Welfare State Theory as an Example", *Historical Social Research*, vol.21,no1, 1996, pp. 3-25.

MOOC slides 9

Day 5.2: Summing up, conclusions and perspectives

MOOC slides 10

References:

Berg-Schlosser, D. (2012) , *Mixed Methods in Comparative Politics – Principles and Applications*, Houndmills: Palgrave.

Goertz, G. and J. Mahoney (2012), *A Tale of Two Cultures – Qualitative and Quantitative Research in the Social Sciences*, Princeton: Princeton UP.

Moses, J.W. and T.L. Knutsen, (2012), *Ways of Knowing – Competing Methodologies in Social and Political Research*, 2nd ed., Houndmills: Palgrave.

Rihoux, B. and Ch. Ragin (eds.) (2009), *Configurational Comparative Methods*, Los Angeles: SAGE.