

COMPASSS

Community Newsletter

10 YEARS OF QCA WORKSHOPS IN ZURICH

by Dr. Johannes Meuer

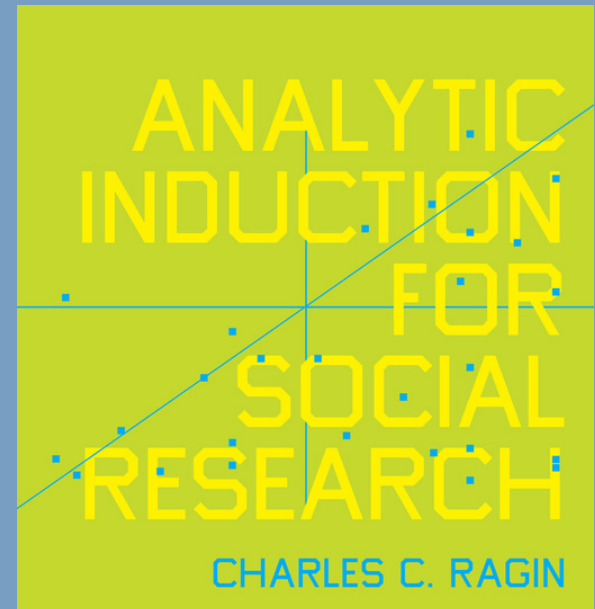


In 2013, we began organizing the 1st International QCA Expert Workshop in Zurich, hosting nearly 30 researchers from all around the world. Our idea: offer a platform for QCA experts across all academic fields to meet, discuss recent topics, and exchange ideas. By 2016, interest in the workshop had rapidly grown, so we tailored the format and began offering two complementary workshops the following year: the original expert workshop focusing on methodological and conceptual advances around QCA and a new Paper Development workshop focusing on discussing empirical research using QCA.

Over the years, we've hosted many important controversial methodological debates, witnessed the rise and fall of software packages, and saw early drafts of papers that would eventually be published in some of the most reputable of journals. The workshop also shaped, unified, and at times divided the QCA community. Many colleagues have helped organize the event, including Manuel Fischer, Sofia Pagliarin, Christian Ruppert, and myself; Julia Leib and Ryan Rumble, who joined the team in 2018; and Alrik Thiem and Michael Baumgartner who helped organize the workshops in 2013 and 2014. Interest in the International QCA Workshops grew rapidly; over the years, we gathered up to 100 participants annually. The spaghetti dinner, the cheese fondue, and late-night sessions in the infamous Gräbli Bar became a regular tradition for many in the community.

After 10 years, it is time for the “Zurich” Workshop to move ahead. Thanks to the Belgian dream team, Bart Cambré and Benoît Rihoux, for hosting the 11th International QCA Workshop in Antwerp!

NEW FROM CHARLES RAGIN



Coming in August 2023 from the University of California Press, this book explores analytic induction (abbreviated “AI”), an approach to the analysis of cross-case evidence on qualitative outcomes. A popular research technique in the early decades of empirical sociology, AI differs fundamentally as a method of social research from conventional variation-based approaches, and it differs in several important ways from its analytic cousin, QCA.

- AI is applied to outcomes that are more-or-less the same across a range of cases. AI focuses analytic attention on one outcome at a time, and avoids pooling positive and negative cases in a single analysis. Rather than analyzing a dichotomized outcome as present versus absent, AI emphasizes the separate treatment of each outcome—the focal outcome and substantively important alternate outcomes. AI is especially useful for analyses that lack “negative” cases.
- AI prioritizes the identification of antecedent conditions shared by instances of an outcome. Shared antecedent conditions, in turn, provide a basis for the specification of causal recipes, which in turn serve as guides to causal interpretation. AI is not an inferential technique; rather, it is largely interpretive.
- AI eschews the concept of negative cases, especially when the set of negative cases is defined simply by their failure to display the focal outcome. Negative cases are more appropriately viewed as positive cases of alternate outcomes.
- AI is especially well-suited for research questions addressing qualitative outcomes. The guiding question in most such applications of AI is: How did the outcome come about? ‘How’ questions prioritize positive cases and focus the investigation on combinations of shared antecedent conditions.
- AI relies heavily on interpretive inferences when assessing antecedent conditions. An interpretive inference recasts a presence-versus-absence dichotomy as a contributing-versus-irrelevant dichotomy, which in turn greatly simplifies the assessment of antecedent conditions.

ACQA: THE CONFERENCE OF THE AMERICAS



Introduction by Claude Robinson

The formation of the QCA Conference of the Americas (AQCA) can be traced back to the 2018 QCA Experts Workshop at ETH Zürich, when Claude and Peer began discussing the possibility of organizing a QCA conference for the western hemisphere. Gary joined the discussion the following May when we all attended the QCA Summer Workshops at the Antwerp Management School. All of us had been working in QCA since the early 2000s and saw an acute need—especially in North and South America—for venues in which researchers using QCA could disseminate and receive feedback on their work.

We were especially worried about the relatively-siloed application of the method and envisioned a conference that would bring together our diverse community. Disciplinary and geographic divisions were the biggest culprits. The structure of academia meant that most applications of QCA were understandably being presented within rather than across disciplines, with different disciplines applying and extending the method in unique and novel ways. And the demands of travel resulted in limited interaction among the QCA strongholds of China, Europe, Japan, Latin America and the United States.

Our discussions in Antwerp brought clarity and we have since held two conferences in the United States. The inaugural meeting was held in 2022, organized by Claude Robinson at the University of Houston–Downtown. Peer Fiss organized AQCA2023 at the Marshall School of Business, University of Southern California. We are excited to announce that Jim Mahoney will be organizing AQCA2024, which will be held at Northwestern University on March 20-23. The call for abstracts is now available at <https://compass.org/aqca/>

We asked three participants who attended both conferences to provide their thoughts and reflections, which you can read below. We look forward to seeing them again next year in Chicago and hope that you will join us too.





Reflections on AQCA: Matthew Farrell and Chris H. Willis

We have had an amazing time at both AQCA conferences, and the event comes with our highest recommendation. Our initial impetus for submitting papers was twofold. First, we are both from Old Dominion University. QCA is inculcated into us early in the PhD program there since many ODU graduates have had great publication success with the method. Those folks are all an order of magnitude more intelligent than we are, but we still try to follow in their footsteps when possible. Second, our dear friend Fatemeh Askarzadeh had graduated from our program and secured employment at the University of Houston Downtown, where the first AQCA was held.



Not only did we get to visit Fatemeh, but AQCA facilitated our meeting several wonderful people. Both Stav Fainshmidt and Peer Fiss, despite their massive fame and success in academic circles, are incredibly accessible and friendly. We thank them for being generous with their time and feedback. We also had the pleasure of meeting and chatting with other QCA rockstars like Gary Goertz, Jim Mahoney, Claude Robinson, and many others about both our research ideas and theirs. Their developmental feedback has improved both the works we presented along with our research process. Given that reviewers don't always understand QCA, it's great to be able to develop papers with a group that knows the method. The fact that that group comes from multiple disciplines only enhances the research element of the conference, giving presenters exposure to theories and literatures that they might not otherwise be aware of.



Having left the first AQCA with great feedback, new colleagues, and new friends, attending the second was a no-brainer. Highlights included Santi Furnari and Adrian Duşa giving us feedback on separate research projects and debating Claude late into the night. The location, Los Angeles on that occasion, similarly facilitated many trips to incredible restaurants. Another dining highlight was seeing Rick Robinson put Chris in his place, ending the debate with cold, clear logic and facts.



We can't wait for AQCA V3.0 in 2024! Although hanging around with Matt is usually not advisable—it tends to lower the IQ and tarnish the reputation—at AQCA, these effects will be more than offset with new friends, new connections, and new ideas.

Reflections on AQCA: Qin Huang

In April 2022, I attended my first AQCA conference in Houston, which proved to be an unforgettable and inspirational experience. I gained valuable insights and advice from esteemed scholars deeply knowledgeable in set theories and QCA. This incredibly rewarding experience motivated me to apply for and attend the second AQCA conference held in Los Angeles in March 2023. Both events were equally exceptional, and I am eager to attend the third conference and beyond.



What struck me most about the AQCA conferences was the nurturing and supportive community they fostered among QCA students. Professors and fellow graduate students readily offered constructive feedback on presentations and papers, demonstrating a remarkable level of mutual support. Additionally, ample opportunities for socializing allowed us to explore each other's research interests beyond the presented topics. Attendees were enthusiastic about making connections during the conferences and maintaining these relationships for future academic dialogues and collaborations.

The quality of papers and posters presented at the conferences was consistently exceptional, providing valuable insights into nuanced QCA analysis. Through attending presentations and engaging in Q&A sessions, I deepened my understanding of technical aspects within QCA. Furthermore, presenters from diverse disciplines, including public administration, healthcare, and management, broadened my knowledge in numerous substantive areas. These conferences were truly excellent learning opportunities.

The AQCA conferences have become some of my most anticipated academic events each year, and I often share my enthusiasm with colleagues. I am confident that AQCA's popularity will continue to grow, thanks to the dedication of our three outstanding organizers—Claude, Peer, and Gary—who are committed to helping the QCA community flourish within the U.S. academic landscape. I express my sincere gratitude for their contributions to this remarkable community.

METHODS EXCELLENCE NETWORK

by Benoît Rihoux

Launched in September 2021 with 150+ founding members around the globe, aims to promote methods training and capacity building across social sciences broadly defined. It is quickly growing and has already launched two yearly events in Europe. MethodsNET's flagship event is the Summer School in Social Research Methods (3SRM), currently hosted by Radboud University Nijmegen (the Netherlands). At its first edition in 2022, 397 participants from 62 countries followed 26 PhD-level methods courses with top interactive pedagogy. The 2nd 3SRM, offering 40 courses across the whole spectrum of epistemologies and methods, takes place from 12 to 30 June 2023

Upcoming Events

June 19 - Comparative Research Designs

Instructor: Benoît Rihoux
Venue: Radboud University, Nijmegen, Netherlands

June 19 - Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA): Performing Basics and Advanced Analyses using R

Instructor: Carsten Schneider & Ioana-Elena Oana
Venue: Radboud University, Nijmegen, Netherlands

June 26 - Introduction to Necessary Condition Analysis (NCA)

Instructors: Jan Dul & Stefan Breet
Venue: Radboud University, Nijmegen, Netherlands

July 24 - Qualitative Comparative Analysis Training

Instructor: Ingo Rohlfing
Venue: Online, University of Passau

August 4 - Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA): A Set-Analytic Approach To Studying Configurations

Instructors: Johannes Meuer & Peer Fiss
Venue: Academy of Management Boston, MA United States

August 21 - Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA)

Instructor: Patrick Mello
Venue: Università della Svizzera Italiana

For the complete calendar of upcoming events visit compasss.org



Nolan Witty, Intern

Nolan Witty has been working as COMPASSS intern since the Spring Semester. His duties include, but are not limited to: managing COMPASSS databases, posting to and updating the COMPASSS official website, and revitalizing the COMPASSS community newsletter, which you now read. Nolan is a Senior at the University of Houston—Downtown on track to complete his Bachelors in Technical Communications, along with Minors in Digital Media Studies and Communication.



Ariel Harris, Administrative Assistant

Ariel Harris has been administrative staff with the University of Houston—Downtown since 2019 and was the administrative assistant during the second QCA Conference of the Americas, providing logistical support for registration, scheduling, travel grants, and finance. A recent graduate of the University of Central Florida with a B.S. in public administration, Ariel currently attends the University of Texas at Arlington where she is completing a Master of Public Administration



Teresa Estrada, Dept. Business Admin.

Currently the Business Administrator for the Department of Social Sciences at the University of Houston—Downtown, Teresa was the administrative assistant during the first QCA Conference of the Americas, assisting with all aspects of site coordination. Following a brief stint with the Department of Natural Sciences, she returned to the Social Sciences in time to help process travel grants for AQCA2023. Teresa holds a B.S. in sociology from the University of Houston—Downtown.



Michael Stone, Student Worker

Michael Stone is a 3rd-year psychology major at the University of Houston—Downtown. He assists with all aspects of maintaining and updating the COMPASSS website, including maintaining the vents calendar of upcoming conferences, workshops and trainings, assisted with organizing AQCA2022 and provided administrative support for AQCA2023.



Darlene Ruiz, Student Worker

Darlene Ruiz is a senior at the University of Houston—Downtown on track to complete a B.S. in psychology and vice president of the UHD Women's Soccer Club. Her contributions to COMPASSS including maintaining the website and updating the bibliographic database and she assisted with organizing AQCA2022. Following graduation, Darlene plans to pursue a Master's degree in clinical and mental health counseling.

BEHIND THE SCENES: THE UHD TEAM

At the University of Houston—Downtown, student workers, interns and administrative staff support both COMPASSS and the QCA Conference of the Americas. The motley team contributes to the maintenance of the COMPASSS website, community bibliographies, and event calendar, and produces the newsletter. They have been intimately involved in many aspects of the QCA Conference of the Americas, especially the inaugural event in 2022, handling a seemingly infinite number of large and small tasks, including-but-not-limited to registration processing, managing travel grants and participant inquiries, and producing conference badges—manually cutting each to size when we discovered that our badge holders were slightly too small. The work of this team is vital to the success of both COMPASSS and the QCA Conference of the Americas, and we are grateful for (and somewhat perplexed by) their continually cheerful support.

FROM THE MANAGEMENT TEAM

We want to thank Nolan Witty, who served as the COMPASSS intern this past semester. He's the reason that we're finally able to publish a new COMPASSS newsletter, which has been on hiatus since the pandemic. Nolan has also worked with us to add more content to the COMPASSS website, update our bibliographic database and designed the new COMPASSS logo that makes it debut with this newsletter. He will be missed, as his internship is coming to an end. We hope to have another intern in place for Fall semester. Nolan has also been working with Claude to add more pedagogical resources to the COMPASSS website, a desire expressed by a number of younger CCM scholars. We now have a page devoted to recommended resources for new QCA practitioners and have plans to add additional content in the future. Expect to hear more about this in Fall semester.

As was the case in so many areas of life, the pandemic disrupted many of COMPASSS' operations and we're still recovering our momentum. But the biggest changes over the past few years were not pandemic-related: Benoît co-founded the Methods Excellence Network (MethodsNET) and Claude, the QCA Conference of the Americas (AQCA). Both of these initiatives have reduced the amount of time that we have to devote to COMPASSS, although we remain committed to carrying out its mission and vision. Help would be greatly appreciated and if you would like to become involved in COMPASSS, please contact us.