Approaching QCA: Software as Wayfinding

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QCA as both Technique and Approach

As a technique
- Measures of degree of set membership
- Subset relations measured by consistency and coverage
- Taxonomies as truth tables
- Sufficiency solutions via Quine-McCluskey minimization

As an approach
- Rihoux, et. al. (2009, Ch 1 of CCM)
- Ragin & Fiss (2017) Intersectional Inequality
No Software, No QCA

Qualitative Comparative Analysis
QCA 3.0
Serial # 030B0002
© Kriss Drass 1993
A Menagerie of QCA Software Packages
(complete list at http://ww.compassss.org)

QCA
(Drass and Ragin 1993)

TOSMANA
(Cronqvist 2017)

QCA (R)
(Duşa 2017)

QCA3 (R)
(Huang 2016)

QCApro (R)
(Thiem 2016)

fs/QCA
(Ragin, Drass, and Davey 2017)

fuzzy (Stata)
(Longest and Vaisey 2008)

Kirq & acq
(Rubinson and Reichert 2017)
TOSMANA
QCA (R)
Necessity testing
- With fs/QCA, necessity testing often *deductive* (theoretically/substantively-driven)
- Test for substitutable (ORed) conditions

Truth table
- Don’t neglect truth table

Standard analysis
- Examine, compare, and discuss all three solutions (complex, intermediate, & parsimonious)

Available visualization: Scatterplot
Kirq

- Simplest of all QCA software packages (easy to learn; hard to mess up)

- Focus on inductive/exploratory research

- Designed to support and encourage *retroduction*

- Privileges both necessity and sufficiency testing

- Perhaps ironically, no visualizations
Recommendations

- Distinguish between QCA as a technique and QCA as an approach. A good QCA embraces the approach.

- 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.

- Different software packages approach QCA in different ways; each will help you think about your analysis in different ways.

- Follow COMPASSS for updates on QCA/CCM software: http://www.compassss.org/