

The Study of Strategies of Social Change Using the Method of Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA)

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British Academy: 2008/9 and 2009/10 through June 2010

The research focuses on sharing a common interest in theoretical, methodological and practical advancements in a **systematic comparative case approach to research**.

This research project is unusual in that it is a bilateral collaboration between scholars based in Japan and UK. In Japan, there are twelve scholars involved, most of them active in the Japanese Association for Mathematical Sociology. We also have planned to produce substantive research outcomes. The primary objective of the Roundtables held in 2008 and 2009 was to increase our skills and knowledge of the Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) methodology. We are now writing up more results. A special section, 'New Frontiers in Qualitative Comparative Analysis', containing 4 peer-reviewed articles, was published in *Sociological Theory and Methods* (24:2, 2009).

Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) involves various methods of systematic analysis of the configurations of cases for a given data set. The three-day Roundtable in 2008 consisted of presentations of work-in-progress papers from both teams, technical sessions with practical exercises, and expert skills sharing of FSQCA software. Four participants were from Japan and thirteen from UK. In 2009 another event held in Japan had four UK-based participants, 2 more from Europe, and many from Japan. There is a mixture of senior researchers as well as junior researchers who are the various stages of their PhDs or early-career research projects.

We focus now on developing a web-based presence in which to share our common interest in systematic comparative case methods. We have a JISC list (QUAL-COMPARE). We stress the usefulness of a configurational logic and the existence of multiple causality (eg. multiple pathways of sufficient cause). We and the Japanese counterparts are members of COMPASSS (COMPARative methods for the Advancement of Systematic Cross-case Analysis and Small-n Studies) (Website: <http://www.compassss.org/>).

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Selected publications:

- Olsen, W.K. (2009), "Non-Nested and Nested Cases in a Socio-Economic Village Study", chapter in D. Byrne and C. Ragin, eds. (2009), *Handbook of Case-Centred Research*, London: Sage.
- Ishida, A., Yonetani, M. and Kosaka, K. (2006) 'Determinants of Linguistic Human Rights Movements: An Analysis of Multiple Causation of LHRs Movements Using a Boolean Approach', *Social Forces*, 84:4, 1937-1955.