

T11P02 / Case-Oriented and Set - Theoretic Approaches to Comparative Policy Analysis

Topic : T11 / METHODOLOGIES

Chair : Eva Thomann (University of Exeter)

Second Chair : Valerie Pattyn (Institute of Public Administration - Leiden University)

Third Chair : Stefan Verweij (University of Groningen)

GENERAL OBJECTIVES, RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND SCIENTIFIC RELEVANCE

The policy process is characterized by a considerable degree of complexity regarding institutional settings, actor and preference constellations, policy goals, contents, and tools. Simultaneously, there is a practical demand for better knowledge of “what works” in public policies and under what conditions or in what contexts. In order to better match methods with theories and empirical realities, the analysis of public policies faces several challenging tasks (Brans and Pattyn 2017). First, it needs to model the complexity that characterizes the policy process and trace the underlying mechanisms. Second, comparative policy analysis detects regularities and achieves a modest degree of generalization. Finally, comparative policy analysis often deals with small or intermediate numbers of cases.

Case-oriented and set-theoretic approaches to comparative policy analysis, such as Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA), Coincidence Analysis (CNA), explanatory typologies, and comparative process tracing, are designed to address these challenges. Situated within a “critical realist” paradigm of social research (Gerrits and Verweij 2013), they model different aspects of causal complexity, such as configurations of different factors leading to policy outputs or outcomes, equifinality (multiple configurations can result in the same outcome), contextual contingencies, and causal asymmetry. Moreover, they can be applied within a variety of small-N or large-N research approaches to evaluate as well as generate theories through a combination of systematic comparison with targeted in-depth case studies (Thomann and Maggetti 2017). As interactive and iterative methods, they also lend themselves to interpretative comparative analysis (Brans and Pattyn, 2017).

Set-theoretic and case-oriented methods are increasingly common in comparative policy analysis (see e.g. Rihoux et al. 2011; Thomann 2019), particularly in policy implementation and evaluation research (Gerrits and Verweij 2018; Pattyn et al. 2017). This panel gathers both theoretical, conceptual, and empirical contributions that deal with the state of the art of case-oriented and set-theoretic approaches and illustrate their potential and limitations to contribute to the theory and practice of policy analysis.

References

Brans, M., & Pattyn, V. (2017). Validating methods for comparing public policy: Perspectives from academics and “pracademics”. Introduction to the Special Issue. *Journal of Comparative Policy Analysis: Research and Practice* 19(4): 303-312.

Gerrits, L., & Verweij, S. (2013). Critical realism as a meta-framework for understanding the relationships between complexity and qualitative comparative analysis. *Journal of Critical Realism* 12(2): 166-182.

Gerrits, L., & Verweij, S. (2018). The evaluation of complex infrastructure projects: a guide to qualitative comparative analysis. Edward Elgar Publishing.

Pattyn, V., Molenveld, A., & Befani, B. (2017). Qualitative Comparative Analysis as an Evaluation Tool: Lessons From an Application in Development Cooperation. *American Journal of Evaluation*, DOI:1098214017710502.

Rihoux, B., Rezsöházy, I., & Bol., D. (2011). Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) in Public Policy Analysis: An Extensive Review. *German Policy Studies* 7(3): 9-82.

Thomann, E. (2019). Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) as an approach to Comparative Policy Analysis. In: *Handbook of Methodology for Comparative Policy Analysis*. Edward Elgar (Editors Guillaume Fontaine and B. Guy Peters).

Thomann, E., & M. Maggetti (2017). Designing Research with Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA): Approaches, Challenges, Tools. *Sociological Methods & Research*, DOI: 10.1177/0049124117729700.

CALL FOR PAPERS

Recent years have seen an impressive proliferation of set-theoretic and case-oriented methods in comparative policy analysis in general (see e.g. Rihoux et al. 2011; Thomann 2019), and in policy implementation and evaluation research in particular (Gerrits and Verweij 2018; Pattyn et al. 2017). Case-oriented and set-theoretic approaches to comparative policy analysis, including but not limited to methods such as Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA), Coincidence Analysis (CNA), explanatory typologies, and comparative process tracing, are designed to address the challenges of contemporary policy analysis. Situated within a “critical realist” paradigm of social research (Gerrits and Verweij 2013), they model different aspects of causal complexity, such as the prevalence of configurations of different factors leading to policy outputs or outcomes, equifinality (multiple policy strategies or instruments resulting in the same outcome), contextual contingencies, and causal asymmetry. Moreover, they can be applied within a variety of small-N or large-N research approaches to evaluate as well as generate theories through a combination of systematic comparison with targeted in-depth case studies (Thomann and Maggetti 2017).

This panel gathers theoretical, conceptual, and empirical contributions by both junior and senior scholars that deal with case-oriented and set-theoretic approaches and illustrate their potential and limitations to contribute to the theory and practice of policy analysis. We particularly invite contributions that either comprehensively review or systematize the state of the art, apply methodological innovations to empirical settings, connect methods with theories, and/or contribute to methodological innovation themselves. Papers should engage in a critical reflection of methodological aspects and their connection with the theory and/or practice of policy analysis in general, or implementation and evaluation in particular. Abstracts should include a clear puzzle, research question, outline of the approach, research design, and main contribution of the proposed paper. Preference is given to abstracts that demonstrate an understanding of recent methodological developments.

T11P02 / Case-Oriented and Set - Theoretic Approaches to Comparative Policy Analysis

Chair : Eva Thomann (University of Exeter)

Second Chair : Valerie Pattyn (Institute of Public Administration - Leiden University)

Third Chair : Stefan Verweij (University of Groningen)

Session 1Session 1

Friday, June 28th 08:00 to 10:00 (MB 3.265)

Discussants

Eva Thomann (University of Exeter)

Qualitative Comparative Analysis of governance arrangements: Identifying configurations for governing decentralized and centralized water systems

Katrin Pakizer (Swiss Federal Institutes of Technology (ETH Zurich))

Eva Lieberherr (Swiss Federal Institute of Technology)

The implementation of the female labor law in comparison of the public and private sectors in Vietnam: Using the fsQCA approach

Huong Vu Thi Thanh (University of Duisburg-Essen)

Assessing the new international development paradigm of capacity strengthening in researcher training in sub-Saharan Africa through consortia membership: Case studies from the DELTAS Africa consortia in Kenya and Senegal

Pierre Abomo

T11P02 / Case-Oriented and Set - Theoretic Approaches to Comparative Policy Analysis

Chair : Eva Thomann (University of Exeter)

Second Chair : Valerie Pattyn (Institute of Public Administration - Leiden University)

Third Chair : Stefan Verweij (University of Groningen)

Session 2Session 2

Friday, June 28th 10:30 to 12:30 (MB 3.265)

Discussants

Stefan Verweij (University of Groningen)

Approaches to Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA): A systematic review of Public Administration research

Eva Thomann (University of Exeter)

Jörn Ege (German University of Administrative Sciences Speyer / University of Exeter)

The durability of policy reforms: A fsQCA analysis of the endurance of eight policy reforms across four different countries

Joannah Luetjens (Utrecht University)

Institutional analysis of food safety regulation through QCA: evidence from 15 EU countries

Giulia Bazzan (Tilburg University)