Abstract

The complexity of many cases, such as public projects and programs, requires evaluation methods that acknowledge this complexity in order to facilitate learning. On the one hand, the complexity of the cases derives from their uniqueness and nested nature. On the other hand, there is a need to compare cases in such a way that lessons can be transferred to other (future) cases in a coherent and non-anecdotal way. One method that is making headway as a complexity-sensitive, comparative method is Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA). This contribution aims to explain to what extent QCA is complexity-informed, to show how it can be deployed as such, and to identify its strengths and weaknesses as an evaluation method. We will discuss the properties of complexity, provide an overview of evaluation literature about QCA, and present a simplified stepwise guide for utilizing QCA in evaluation studies.

Keywords

Complexity, Evaluation, Qualitative Comparative Analysis, Configurational Method
References


