

harness both top-down pressure from international organizations and bottom-up local pressure were able to achieve the most gains. This pincer-like move, however, was also contingent on having a favorable opportunity structure both domestically and internationally, such as strong global human rights norms and integration of the domestic political arena into the international one.

From Variables to Pathways and Processes

For most scholars, no single variable magically accounts for the difference between social movement success and failure. Instead, political opportunity structures typically combine with other considerations like framing or tactical choice. Such combinations underscore the argument that a group's strategy must match its organizational aptitudes and its operating environment in order to have any chance at success; a mismatch would make it difficult to have any meaningful impact (Szymanski 2003). However, even with this fluid relationship between variables and outcomes, this idea of outcomes can still feel rather static with its suggestion that particular "recipes" of variables can produce positive movement outcomes. A more dynamic approach moves away from these variables and focuses instead on the different pathways and processes by which movements are likely to influence outcomes, using methodological techniques like Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA), which is the focus of this chapter's methods spotlight. This shift in focus from variables to processes also makes it possible to consider not just how different variables and contexts might combine but also how targets can react in different ways to similar conditions as well as how the choices of movement actors, targets, and other relevant groups combine with each other to produce variable effects.

One way in which movement organizations can influence change is by serving as informational shortcuts for lawmakers. According to this perspective, people in positions of power and influence have little time and limited ability to inform themselves about the range of policy choices in front of them. Given these restrictions, lawmakers will use shortcuts like the signals that social movements send to understand the public's preferences and act accordingly (Giugni 1998; Burstein 1999; Burstein and Linton 2002). Because lawmakers presumably want to choose policies that the public favors, social movements provide government officials with one measure of what the public wants. By demonstrating en masse, Polish voters, for

Methods Spotlight: Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA)

QCA is a method pioneered by sociologist Charles Ragin (1987, 2008) that attempts to bridge large-N quantitative techniques and small-N qualitative techniques by offering an approach that allows researchers to combine detailed knowledge of individual cases with the ability to identify larger patterns and dynamics across those cases. As such, QCA is sometimes described as a "medium-N" method (Wagemann 2014). In their study of corporate responsiveness to social protest, for example, Marc Dixon, Andrew W. Martin, and Michael Nau (2016) used QCA to analyze 31 campaigns – far more than can be adequately described and analyzed using purely qualitative methods and too few for standard statistical tests; likewise, in her study of tactics used by teachers' unions to respond to unfavorable legislation, Amanda Pullum (2016) used QCA to analyze 15 campaigns. Charles Ragin suggests that QCA is particularly useful for analyzing from 5 to 50 cases.

QCA focuses on the different causal pathways by which variables (also known as "conditions") might combine to produce an outcome of interest. Because causality can be complex, there is no presumption that there is one and only one pathway that leads to the outcome; instead, QCA makes it possible to explore whether there are different "recipes" or combinations of conditions that can produce the outcome (Wagemann 2014). To use a frivolous example, you can use many different recipes to produce a chocolate chip cookie; it does not ultimately matter whether you use wheat flour or gluten-free flour, or whether you use white sugar or a combination of white and brown sugar – ultimately, many different recipes will give you chocolate chip cookies. QCA, which draws on the mathematical logic of set theory, also allows researchers to identify causal conditions that might be necessary or sufficient for producing the outcome in question. While chocolate chip cookies may not require a particular kind of sugar (and some may be made with sugar substitutes), we might agree that chocolate chips are the one necessary ingredient; without them, the end result cannot be called a chocolate chip cookie.

A researcher performing QCA identifies an outcome of interest and a set of relevant cases that include instances where the outcome is present as well as instances where it is absent. Based on these cases and relevant theoretical literatures, the researcher identifies the causal conditions that might influence the outcome of interest. This is one way that QCA allows for qualitative exploration of cases; without this case-specific knowledge, a researcher will not be able to proceed with the classification of cases that the method requires. The next step is to construct a "truth table" in which cases are sorted by the different causal recipes that they exhibit. An example will clarify this step. Let us imagine I am interested in understanding the conditions under which my fairly disobedient dog will shake hands. Having observed my dog on 40 occasions, I have identified three conditions that might be particularly important factors in successful hand-shaking: whether I offer a treat, whether he has a large audience, and whether he is feeling playful. With these three conditions, my truth table will have eight rows that, combined, will represent all possible combinations of my conditions (in the table, 1 = condition present, and 0 = condition absent).

I additionally sort my observed cases according to these combinations: in six cases, none of the conditions were present, and my dog did not shake hands; in five cases,

Treat offered	Audience present	Feels playful	Shakes hands (# of cases)	Does not shake hands (# of cases)
0	0	0	0	6
1	0	0	5	0
0	1	0	0	4
0	0	1	0	4
1	1	0	6	0
1	0	1	4	0
0	1	1	5	0
1	1	1	6	0

I offered a treat and my dog did shake hands, etc. With the truth table, I can then use specialized software that uses Boolean algebra to further analyze this table and identify specific causal pathways that might lead to the outcome of interest. With this truth table, for example, the software identifies two distinct causal pathways that lead to my dog shaking hands: he will shake EITHER when a treat is offered OR when there is both a large audience and he is feeling playful at the same time. These alternative pathways will produce the same outcome, but no other combination, it seems, will induce my dog to shake hands. With these alternative recipes, I can then go back to my cases and explore the relevant causal sequences further and think about how these pathways increase our knowledge of both the underlying theory and the chosen cases.

Explore this Method

The example given above is highly simplified; QCA with real data often involves cases that do not neatly fit, or that contradict each other. As a result, before getting hands-on with data and QCA tools, it is useful to read more about some of the specific techniques involved for constructing, simplifying, and analyzing truth tables. In addition, QCA can involve so-called "crisp sets," in which cases are coded as 1 or 0, or "fuzzy-sets" in which cases can be evaluated in a more nuanced way. Nicholas Legewie (2013) has a nice introduction to QCA techniques at www.qualitative-research.net/index.php/fqs/article/view/1961/3594. To analyze truth tables, it is helpful to have access to software that can handle QCA techniques. If you have access to statistical software like Stata or R, there are specialized commands that work within these programs that support QCA, like the "fuzzy" command in Stata and the QCATools package in R. The COMPASS research network, which connects researchers interested in this method, lists a number of other software tools that can be used for QCA (www.compass.org/software.htm#QCA3), which include stand-alone programs that can run on Windows, Mac, and Linux operating systems.

example, sent a sharp and clear message to the ruler that their support for the anti-abortion measure would not be withdrawn without public approval and perhaps a tough re-election battle in a few years. This mechanism can also work in autocratic societies where the ruler is not as strongly constrained by public opinion. Absent electoral competition, politicians do not have to worry about winning votes, but they do have to worry about losing power. Politicians will naturally want to choose policies that have little public support. All else being equal, they would rather pass laws that have little public support and, in turn, require less coercion to enforce. Policies that are of central importance to authoritarian regimes are often those that disregard unpopularity to pick policies that shore up the ruler's power, but given that even strong authoritarian states have limited resources to expend, they too would prioritize policies that enhance some public legitimacy (or at least not active opposition) that might give rise to popular challenges to their rule.

Given this causal pathway, the factors that would play to a movement's advantage would, therefore, include those that enhance its capacity to send clear and unequal messages to those in power. Size of protest, for example, can be used to show widespread public support, which might motivate the ruler to prioritize mobilization and tactics that have broad appeal and low barriers for participation. As Paul Burstein and Adam Przeworski (1999: 386) write, "when an organization makes demands of officials, the officials want to know what the organization's demands are and how meeting its demands will affect the organization's prospects. Does the organization have many members? Will they mobilize them to vote? Will their decisions about the organization be affected by what they hear from the organization? How much of collective preferences can sway undecided officials? What issues the movement cares about."

Another combination of variables, however, can also play to a movement's advantage. Because the public does not care equally about all issues, movements that are able to signal the intensity of public concern might be able to sway lawmakers, who calculate the costs of being more likely to be punished electorally by the public. A movement that is deeply invested in an issue, compared to the public, might be indifferent. Many so-called "NIMBY" (Not In My Backyard) movements have this dynamic. Such movements are often able to oppose the proposed site for a controversial project, like a nuclear power plant, a halfway house for convicts, or a project itself.