



Photo: Thies Rasmus Popp

## **QCA training workshop introduces participants to new methodological skills and perspectives bridging qualitative and quantitative research**

On October 1 and 2, participants from across the Life Sciences Faculty and IRI THESys took part in an engaging workshop to learn the fundamentals of an emerging methodology, Qualitative Comparative Analysis, and how it can enhance their own research projects in the future.

The workshop, largely aimed at doctoral candidates, was co-sponsored by IRI THESys and the Graduate Centre Life Sciences, and was led by QCA-expert Dr. Markus Siewert of Goethe University Frankfurt. The aim of the training was to introduce researchers to the theoretical underpinnings of QCA in its emergence in recent decades, and the role of this methodology in bridging key aspects of qualitative and quantitative approaches. Rooted in political sciences, QCA is becoming increasingly prominent throughout many disciplines. By drawing upon set-theory and configurational thinking, QCA enables researchers to analyze social phenomena in terms of set relations, focusing on determining necessary and sufficient conditions for certain outcomes, for example, successful climate change adaptation or national democratization. As an approach, QCA can be seen as an innovative analytic instrument to conduct cross-case analysis, while keeping a strong focus on knowledge of underlying cases.



Photo: Julia Dennis

Over the course of this two-day workshop, participants gained confidence in navigating both QCA theory, as well as the technical skills to use R with QCA-specific software packages. In addition to methodological training, it was also an important opportunity to meet with fellow scholars and compare research design questions, experiences and perspectives with the common goal of contributing solutions to today's greatest environmental and societal challenges. Many PhD students in the workshop were inspired to take their QCA experience further, and through continued practice and exchange, plan to explore the potential of QCA in the next steps of their research.

Author: Julia Dennis