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Kingdon's multiple streams approach in new political contexts: Consolidation, configuration, and new findings

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Abstract

There is a need to conduct more diverse cross-case analyses in the Multiple Streams Approach (MSA) literature which originated in the United States, to show how key concepts, such as a windows-of-opportunity and the role of policy entrepreneurs, manifest in different political contexts. We apply Qualitative Comparative Analysis for a cross-case analysis of a unique dataset representing 20 countries from four continents. This approach allows us to highlight distinct pathways to influencing policies. We identify four configurations for expanding civic spaces and two configurations for changing policies. We identify three findings novel to MSA: there are two distinctive policy entrepreneur roles involving local and international civil society actors; effective entrepreneurship is conditional on strengthening civic voice and creating civic space conducive to advocacy; and, therefore, effective entrepreneurs often must focus on expanding the civic space to discuss policy problems *and* the technical and political feasibility of policy solutions.

1 | INTRODUCTION

Kingdon's (1984) multiple streams approach (MSA) began as a study of U.S. policymaking, then became one of the most active research agendas in policy scholarship and a key contribution to studies of "policy entrepreneurs" (Frisch-Aviram, Cohen, & Beeri, 2019). Policy entrepreneurs

are individuals and organizations with the resources to engage in policy activity and seek future rewards (Bakir & Jarvis, 2017; Cairney, 2018). MSA suggests that policy entrepreneurs may induce major policy changes during a window-of-opportunity when attention to a problem is high, a feasible solution exists, and policymakers have the motive and opportunity to adopt it. Policy entrepreneurs can then invest time and money to build knowledge and connections and be in the position to spot opportunities (Kingdon, 1984, pp. 165–166). MSA's success derives from the combination of an intuitively appealing narrative alongside continuous theoretical refinement and/or empirical application (Cairney & Zahariadis, 2016).

However, reviews of the MSA literature highlight two key areas for improvement. Most empirical insights are generated through single-cases in the United States and Europe, highlighting a need for more diverse global applications (Cairney & Jones, 2016; Jones et al., 2016). This coincides with an increased interest in new methods to consolidate knowledge across multiple cases (Engler & Herweg, 2019; Herweg et al., 2015, 2018; Jones et al., 2016; Rawat & Morris, 2016). While the nascent geographic expansion of MSA is welcome, it is subject to uncertainty about how researchers operationalize its concepts in contexts not anticipated in Kingdon's original (often metaphorical) study of the United States. To address the shortcomings in MSA research, we therefore ask: how can we compare many cases across the globe, using MSA as a guide, to identify pathways that different types of policy entrepreneurs take, to (a) expand spaces for civic engagement and (b) change policies under different political contexts? In short, we conduct a systematic empirical study of diverse contexts inspired by MSA to refine key concepts (not to test or change MSA's overall theoretical framework).

This article contributes to the MSA literature by applying a methodological approach that compares cases across diverse contexts to refine key concepts from MSA (i.e., windows-of-opportunity and policy entrepreneurship). It uses a dataset of 24 cases of policy influencing by Oxfam, an international nongovernmental organization, and its local partners in 20 countries across four continents. Key aspects of these policy interventions present a unique opportunity for MSA-inspired analysis. Oxfam and its local partners can be considered policy entrepreneurs when they seek to exploit windows-of-opportunities for policy change.

This dataset representing the experience of Oxfam and its partners provides an opportunity to apply and extend key concepts from MSA to new contexts. The policy influencing efforts demand a nuanced treatment of both international and domestic policy entrepreneurs. Oxfam's goals and operations in diverse contexts also entail a wider range of concepts and perspectives to account for diverse contexts—change dynamics and influencing strategies not described in foundational MSA work—such as power and gender relations, social psychology, social learning, social movements, and complex systems (Gaventa, 2006; Mayne et al., 2018). These modifications to the traditional MSA framework are crucial to reflect: our inclusion of contexts with varying degrees of political and civic freedom, the differing degrees of legitimacy that policy entrepreneurs may have, the need for sufficient data allowing the comparison of cases along several dimensions, and the range of change strategies that Oxfam and its partners deploy.

We use Qualitative Comparative Analysis' (QCA) configurational, cross-case analytical approach because of its alignment with MSA (Befani & Mayne, 2014; Engler & Herweg, 2019).[1] QCA shares MSA's theoretical focus on treating cases holistically (case-based), identifying necessary and sufficient conditions for policy outcomes (set-theoretic), exploring how conditions combine to create outcomes (conjunctural causation), and recognizing that multiple combinations of conditions can produce the same outcome (equifinality). We also confront the limitations of this approach, wherein it is difficult to map all MSA concepts onto diverse cases while the expanded contexts require concepts less commonly deployed in MSA. The overall result is

that we can report both the results of our analysis of new cases and implications for future studies seeking to use MSA (and other concepts) and methods such as QCA to synthesize and accumulate insights across diverse contexts.

Our wider comparative approach identifies three empirical findings novel to MSA:

1. There are two distinctive policy entrepreneur roles: locally credible policy influencers and international ones (most MSA studies identify local insiders only);
2. Effective policy entrepreneurship is conditional on a civic space conducive to advocacy (most MSA studies take this space for granted); and, therefore,
3. Oxfam and its partners focus on expanding the civic space to highlight policy and governance problems *and* the technical and political feasibility of solutions. This dual focus requires a range of *influencing strategies*, including insider strategies to build a reputation inside policy networks, outsider strategies to challenge the closed nature of many networks, taking advantage of windows of opportunity, and targeting multiple policymaking levels.

1.1 | MSA: Empirical applications of a flexible metaphor

A key benefit of MSA research is the flexibility of its foundational work by Kingdon (1984). It began as an inductive study of U.S. federal policymaking. Kingdon described a tendency for attention to policy problems to rise and fall quickly, often without resolution, policy solutions to take time to become technically feasible and acceptable to the policy community, and the motive and opportunity of policymakers to select those solutions to be fleeting. He described these three factors as separate "streams."

Although initially U.S.-focused, MSA studies indicate that the assumptions underlying the three streams have a more universal feel—although the empirical substantiation of this has been primarily limited to the United States and Europe (Cairney & Jones, 2016):

- *Policymakers' attention to a problem rises* (problem stream). Compared to a policymaker's ability to understand the world, there is too much happening and too many ways to frame problems. Consequently, policymakers ignore most issues. There is high competition to focus their attention on one problem and how to frame it. When successful, attention lurches to that problem.
- *A feasible solution exists* (policy stream). Since attention can rise and fall quickly, it is too late to produce feasible solutions after attention rises. It takes time to refine solutions to make them feasible *technically* (they will work) and *politically* (they are supported). A solution must exist for policymakers before attention rises.
- *Policymakers are motivated to choose a solution* (political stream). The willingness and ability of policymakers to select that solution is fleeting, based on beliefs, perceptions of the electorate's mood, and feedback they receive from interest groups and political parties.

MSA describes the conditions for policy change as a configuration of factors: major policy change may happen during a window-of-opportunity if attention rises to a problem, a feasible solution exists, and policymakers want to select it (Cairney & Jones, 2016; Kingdon, 1984). Under these conditions, policy entrepreneurs can influence the outcome by (for example) having a feasible solution ready to propose during a lurch of policymakers' attention and motivation.

Policy entrepreneurs can influence policymakers' attention to problems and/or generate their support for a preferred solution. However, entrepreneurs' power to influence in a large, competitive political system is limited, so that they may often have to wait for a development in the problem or political stream to take advantage of, much like a surfer waiting for the big wave (Kingdon, 1984, pp. 165–166).

MSA scholarship has generated a wealth of data and new applications have begun to challenge the assumptions and conclusions of an approach built on studies from the United States and Europe (see Zhu (2008) on China). In particular, the role of actors and strategies may differ when states do not meet the assumptions of a liberal democracy. For example, as Oxfam's experience shows, policy dynamics may change when civic spaces and political freedoms are restricted (Roberts, 2019), when external entrepreneurs are met with resistance by policymakers or repression (Banks, Hulme, & Edwards, 2015), or in fragile or conflict-affected states where the impact of policy-influencing efforts are difficult to predict (Beisheim, Ellersiek, & Lorch, 2018). However, such new contextualized insights are limited to a few single cases.

Scholars have increasingly pointed to the need for MSA to make progress along two important dimensions. First, there is a need for more cross-case analyses that include diverse contexts. Most applications are single-case studies in liberal, western democracies (Jones et al., 2016). Of the 482 applications reviewed by Jones et al. (2016), 34% were in North America and 43% in Europe. There is largely untapped interest in how MSA functions within and across different contexts (Cairney, 2018). Second, new methods for cross-case analysis, such as QCA, may help operationalize MSA concepts (Engler & Herweg, 2019; Fischer & Maggetti, 2017) and address the literature's reputation as "rudderless" and unsystematic (Jones et al., 2016, p. 30).

Combined, these limitations highlight a tendency for many scholars to apply MSA without precision. As such, we know that all factors contribute to policy change somehow, but we often lack a clear story of the *configurations* of conditions that explain successful policy actions or much exploration of which conditions are necessary or sufficient for change in which context. Indeed, there is perhaps a tendency to maintain a suitable degree of vagueness to reflect the serendipity and uniqueness regarding each case's context, which is not easily reduced to a small number of factors.

MSA and QCA share a unique theory-method fit. Alongside being configurational, MSA recognizes that different combinations of factors can lead to the same outcome. Kingdon's (1984) seminal study provides a relevant example for our study of policy entrepreneurs as he found their role to be important in most cases. MSA therefore exhibits the logic of equifinality noted above. MSA is also interested in the mechanisms behind the addition and removal of items from the policy agenda. However, MSA rejects a simple, linear approach where the causes of an outcome can simply be inverted to explain the outcome's absence or opposite (Cairney & Jones, 2016). This results in a framework which is causally asymmetric. The causally complex, configurational nature of MSA shares several notable affinities with QCA (Engler & Herweg, 2019; Fischer & Maggetti, 2017).

2 | EXPLORING PATHWAYS FOR EXPANDING SPACE AND POLICY CHANGE

To address our research objective, we use QCA to analyze 24 cases comprised of effectiveness reviews of Oxfam's policy-influencing efforts between 2003 and 2017 aiming to expand civic space or change policies.[2] The combination of QCA with a geographically diverse set of policy

influencing programs allows us to extend empirical applications and implications of key concepts from MSA research by addressing the interplay of various factors across a range of policy contexts.

2.1 | A configurational perspective on MSA

QCA, as a research approach allows researchers to convert important theoretical components of MSA to analyze multiple case studies (Engler & Herweg, 2019; Thomann & Maggetti, 2017). QCA considers three tenets of complex causality: conjunctural causation, equifinality, and causal asymmetry (Ragin, 1987/2014; Schneider & Wagemann, 2013a; Schneider & Wagemann, 2013b), all characteristics relevant to MSA.

First, in studies that build on MSA, it is important to analyze how different conditions interact and how successful such interactions are in generating the outcome (Engler & Herweg, 2019). Conjunctural causation describes situations where the interplay between several conditions generates an outcome. QCA can identify these configurations, which contain complex synergies between explanatory conditions. Second, the idea that several different pathways can reach a given end-state is integral to both (cf. Thomann, 2015). Equifinality describes a situation where the same outcome can be generated in different ways. In QCA, the configurations may differ, but they all explain the presence of the same, pre-defined outcome. Third, causal asymmetry describes a situation where an outcome's absence may not be generated by simply inverting all components of a configuration that explain that outcome's presence. Different conditions may play a role in explaining the presence or the absence of an outcome and QCA is able to include them. In sum, QCA addresses important aspects of MSA.

2.2 | QCA as a methodological toolkit

QCA is case-based and builds on set theory and Boolean algebra to conduct systematic cross-case comparisons. It aims to identify configurations of conditions that explain the presence of an outcome. The method was introduced by Ragin (1987/2014, 2008) and is well-suited for the analysis of small- to medium-size samples in situations when researchers seek to go beyond in-depth case studies to identify complex associations (Rihoux & Marx, 2013; Schneider & Wagemann, 2013a; Schneider & Wagemann, 2013b). Five analytical steps apply to all versions of QCA: the definition of an outcome of interest; the selection of relevant explanatory conditions for cross-case comparison (condition selection); the transformation of data from the cases to sets (calibration); the systematization and selection of cases for further analysis (truth-table analysis); and the identification of the most parsimonious way to formulate configurations that explain an outcome of interest (Boolean minimization).

2.3 | Data: Oxfam policy interventions

The cases became available when Oxfam decided to conduct a meta-review of recent independent and randomly selected effectiveness reviews (Oxfam, 2020b). Oxfam is an international network of nongovernmental organizations with a mission to "create lasting solutions to poverty, hunger, and social injustice" (Oxfam, 2020a). As part of this effort, Oxfam has engaged in

"policy entrepreneurship" with its partners and other allies through their active citizenship, governance, and policy interventions in diverse contexts (Mayne et al., 2018). The dataset includes 22 cases of expanding civic space and 15 cases of changing policy. Thirteen cases address both outcomes. Each outcome type is treated as a separate case.

2.4 | Analyzing MSA with QCA across diverse global cases

2.4.1 | Defining the outcomes: Expanding civic space and changing policy

We defined two outcomes informed by the literature, Oxfam's frameworks, influencing strategies, and the effectiveness reviews themselves. First, we defined *expanding civic space* as policy interventions that increase the access or use of "spaces" within which civil society organizations and citizens can exert power and have their voices heard on policies. Policy entrepreneurs expand civic space, for example, through creating a forum, organization, or procedure through which citizens and civil society can promote policies. Second, we defined *changing policy* as cases that documented institutionalized changes in programs, policies, procedures, or budgets of the government, public offices, or parties.

2.4.2 | Selecting explanatory conditions linked to MSA

Drawing on MSA, the wider policy literature, and Oxfam's and partners conceptual frameworks and practices, we selected five theoretically relevant explanatory conditions. Table 1 provides an overview of our two outcome conditions and five explanatory conditions with their definition and calibration.

First, MSA suggests that a policy entrepreneur may play an important role in policy influencing (Jones et al., 2016; Kingdon, 1984). However, MSA has not sufficiently explored the distinctive role of *global policy entrepreneurs*, a condition in our study. The broader policy literature has noted that international entities can play a supportive role behind-the-scenes by providing important resources (e.g., finance, capacity building, networks, convening, and access to policymakers) (Dolowitz & Marsh, 1996). In short, they invest in other people who share their goals and are better placed to achieve them. In our setting, Oxfam supports local partner organizations (i.e., local policy entrepreneurs) who highlight policy problems and/or present policy solutions, through practical demonstrations and/or research. Depending on the issue, context, and needs of partners, Oxfam may also speak and act in its own name, often in alliance with others, to influence policies.

Second, MSA researchers have highlighted the importance of *windows-of-opportunity* for successful policy entrepreneurship. In our setting, windows-of-opportunity may be prompted by an election or change of government, a politically salient event (e.g., an international summit), some sufficiently disruptive exogenous shock (e.g., a disaster), or others. In some cases, policy entrepreneurs contributed to the creation of a window-of-opportunity.

Third, more recent MSA studies use Baumgartner and Jones' (2010) concept of "venue shopping" to identify actors who seek to influence policymakers across *multiple policymaking levels* (Cairney, 2018; Zaun, Roos, & Gülzau, 2016). Windows-of-opportunity may occur at the

TABLE 1 Definition and calibration of outcome and explanatory conditions

Type	Condition	Set definition	Calibration
Outcome conditions	Successfully expanding space	The set of cases wherein policy entrepreneurs successfully contribute to the access, use, or expansion of spaces in which civil society organizations and citizens can influence the policy agenda.	We coded both outcomes with the following calibration: 1.00: Definitely successful 0.75: Somewhat successful 0.25: Somewhat unsuccessful 0.00: Definitely unsuccessful
	Successfully changing policy	The set of cases where policy entrepreneurs successfully contribute to a change in programs, policies, or procedures of the government, public officials, or politicians/parties at any level (including supranational).	
Explanatory conditions	Prominent role of global PE	The set of cases wherein the global policy entrepreneur (Oxfam) plays a prominent role in implementing the overall influencing actions.	1.00: Prominent and leading role 0.75: Prominent but the local policy entrepreneur leads 0.25: Provides active support that is less prominent and primarily remote 0.00: Minimal engagement beyond planning and funding
	Clear use of a window-of-opportunity	The set of cases wherein policy entrepreneurs took advantage of a window-of-opportunity.	1.00: Taking strategic advantage of a window-of-opportunity 0.75: Using a window-of-opportunity but less strategically 0.25: A window-of-opportunity is present but the policy entrepreneur does not take advantage of it 0.00: No evidence for window-of-opportunity
	Targeting multiple policy levels	The set of cases wherein policy entrepreneurs target more than one level of the government, policy, or political space. Different levels include local, regional, national, and international.	1.00: More than one level are the primary targets 0.00: Primarily one level is addressed

(Continues)

TABLE 1 (Continued)

Type	Condition	Set definition	Calibration
	Clear use of an insider strategy	The set of cases wherein policy entrepreneurs use collaborative influencing strategies targeting government officials and/or politicians. Such strategies involve leveraging allies or social capital within the political arena.	1.00: Using insider strategies to prominently engage members of the target government or political parties using a collaborative and persuasive approach 0.75: Using insider strategies to engage members of the target government or political parties but the efforts are less prominent, less collaborative in tone, and/or less persuasive in nature 0.25: There is a minor or tangential mention of an insider strategy toward the target government or political parties 0.00: There is no evident insider strategy
	Clear use of an outsider strategy	The set of cases wherein policy entrepreneurs use pressure to target government officials and/or politicians related to the outcome of interest, for example by mobilizing marginalized groups through protests/public campaigns or by publicly exposing government failure. Such strategies do not involve developing allies or social capital among current policymakers.	1.00: Prominently uses outsider strategies that are confrontational 0.75: Prominently uses outsider strategies highlighting challenges and opportunities 0.25: A confrontational effort to pressure policymakers is not evident although there may be small-scale efforts to apply pressure by mobilizing the public or media 0.00: No notable activities make use of outsider strategies

subnational level, the national level, or the supranational level. Policy entrepreneurs may use this strategy to "soften" solutions to make them politically feasible at one or more venues.

Fourth, studies of "policy communities" highlight *insider strategies*, that is, collaborative influencing strategies involving building relationships with and influencing government officials and politicians, as important means for policy entrepreneurs (Jordan & Maloney, 1997). Through this strategy, policy entrepreneurs may learn and utilize the "rules of the game" to encourage support for their initiatives.

Fifth, policy entrepreneurs may also adopt an *outsider strategy*. An outsider strategy is more confrontational and may consist of mobilizing through protests and public campaigns or exposing governmental failures. This strategy exerts pressure on power-holders to induce change. Although insider and outsider strategies appear conflicting, policy entrepreneurs may use both strategies simultaneously.

In sum, drawing on MSA and other academic research and its increasing connection with complementary theories, and Oxfam's own practice, we defined two outcomes, namely expanding civic space and changing policy. We define five explanatory conditions to identify pathways for successful policy entrepreneurship: a successful interplay between global and local policy entrepreneurs, the use of a window-of-opportunity, targeting multiple policy levels, the use of an insider strategy, and the use of an outsider strategy.[3] The first two explanatory conditions are closely aligned with MSA while the others have been used by MSA scholars but originated in other political science literature.

2.4.3 | Calibrating outcome and conditions as sets

We calibrated the outcome conditions and explanatory conditions as sets (Schneider & Wagemann, 2013a; Schneider & Wagemann, 2013b) (Table 1). Membership of a case in each set varies from full membership (value is 1) to being fully out of a set, by not representing the definition of the set-membership (value is 0).

We calibrated the two outcomes as the "set of intervention projects that successfully expanded space" and as the "set of intervention projects that successfully changed policy." We calibrated the five explanatory conditions as the set of cases: "with a prominent role of a global policy entrepreneur," "with a clear use of a window-of-opportunity," "targeting multiple policy levels," "with a clear use of an insider strategy," and the "set of cases with a clear use of an outsider strategy." Using qualitative indicators, we calibrated both outcomes and four of the five explanatory conditions into fuzzy-sets with four membership values. We coded the condition of policymaking levels as a crisp set with a 1 indicating that more than one policy level was targeted and a 0 otherwise.

2.4.4 | Analyzing the truth-table

We analyzed the calibrated data using fs/QCA (Ragin & Davey, 2017). The truth-table, which lists all logically possible combinations of the five conditions, has $2^5 = 32$ rows. For analyzing the expansion of civic space, we have 22 cases; and for analyzing policy change, we have 15 cases; resulting in "limited diversity" in which not every logically possible combination of conditions has an empirical representation. The truth-tables show that limited diversity is higher in the truth-table for the model analyzing policy change (see the Online Appendix 3).

TABLE 2 Number of cases of each outcome

Policy entrepreneurs...	Succeeded in changing policy	Did not succeed	Insufficient data
Succeeded in expanding space	5	5	5
Did not succeed	1	2	4
Insufficient data	2	0	0

2.4.5 | Boolean minimization

A part of the truth-table analysis is the selection of rows for Boolean Minimization. The two selection criteria are the consistency cut-off and the frequency cut-off. For the selection of the consistency cut-off, we applied a raw consistency threshold of 0.8 (above the recommended threshold of 0.75) (Sager & Thomann, 2017; Schneider & Wagemann, 2013a; Schneider & Wagemann, 2013b) and a "proportional reduction in inconsistency" (PRI) of 0.65, also in line with thresholds applied in recent research (Greckhamer, 2016). The PRI indicates the degree to which a configuration is not simultaneously sufficient for the occurrence and the non-occurrence of the outcome. In line with the literature for small- and medium-N studies, we used a frequency cut-off of one.

QCA allows the researcher to consider different assumptions during the analysis, thus generating the complex, the intermediate, and the parsimonious solution (Ragin, 2008; Ragin & Fiss, 2008). These solutions differ by the type of counterfactuals that the researcher specifies.[4] The complex (or conservative) solution allows for no assumptions and is based exclusively on those truth table rows sufficient for the outcome. The parsimonious solution captures the terms using the fewest conditions. The intermediate solution draws on directional expectations that express the expected association between a condition and the outcome among logical remainders. While conditions identified by the parsimonious solution are considered causally relevant, conditions that appear only in the intermediate solution have a higher uncertainty of causal relevance.

To generate the intermediate solution, we specify directional expectations in both models. In the model that explains "successfully expanding space," we assume that the outsider strategy, the targeting of multiple policy levels and a window-of-opportunity must be present, while the remaining two conditions may either be present or absent. In the model that explains "successfully changing policy", we assume that the insider strategy, the outsider strategy, the targeting at multiple policy levels and a window-of-opportunity must be present, while a prominent role of the global policy entrepreneur in the influencing activity can be either present or absent. These directional expectations are aligned with MSA scholarship which suggests that policy entrepreneurs use insider access to policymakers, that public feedback is integral to directing policymaker attention and motivation, and that there should be a window-of-opportunity (cf. Jones et al., 2016). However, the MSA literature has not addressed the role of policy entrepreneurs in medium- or large-N studies (Engler & Herweg, 2019) and is largely silent on the relative prominence of local and global policy entrepreneurs.

3 | FINDINGS

The analysis resulted in the following findings for our two outcomes of how policy entrepreneurs expanded civic space and changed policy. We provide an overview of the number of

	S1: Insider-Opportunity	S2: Localized Opportunity	S3: Multilevel-Outsider	S4: Global PE-Outsider
Prominent role of global PE		⊗		●
Clear use of a window of opportunity	●	●		
Targeting multiple policy levels			●	
Clear use of an insider strategy	●			⊗
Clear use of an outsider strategy			●	●
Consistency	1.00	1.00	0.94	0.93
Raw coverage	0.65	0.42	0.30	0.24
Unique coverage	0.20	0.04	0.14	0.07
Overall solution consistency	**0.96**			
Overall solution coverage	**0.91**			
No. of cases	9	5	5	1
Contextual conditions				
Report quality	3.00	2.60	3.6	4.00
Duration	5.22	4.50	4.4	3.00
Continent				
Africa	5	2	2	0
Asia	1	0	1	1
Europe	1	0	2	0
South America	2	3	0	0

Notes: Large icons represent core conditions, small ones peripheral conditions. No icon means that the condition's presence or absence is not important for the pathway. Crosses indicate that the condition is present while empty circles represent its absence.

FIGURE 1 Pathways for policy entrepreneurs to successfully expand civic space

successful cases for the two outcomes in Table 2. Policy-influencing activities were successful at expanding space (68%) and changing policy (53%) in over half of the cases. These are encouraging results given the difficulty of influencing policies, the fact that 29% ($n = 7$) occurred in countries with restricted civic space and 29% ($n = 7$) in countries in transition, and the short time frames characterizing many of the cases (see Online Appendix 3). Among the 13 cases including both expanding space and changing policy as outcomes, half were successful at both (5 out of 10) suggesting that success in one outcome does not necessarily translate to success in the other. However, there was only one case where an influencing activity successfully changed policy without also expanding space. For each outcome, we provide an overview of the pathways to successful outcomes alongside details from a typical case and a configuration chart.

3.1 | Pathways for policy entrepreneurs expanding civic space

We identify four pathways, or configurations, for policy entrepreneurs successfully expanding civic space. The solution for policy entrepreneurs successfully expanding civic space provided by the four pathways together is highly consistent (0.96), above both our cut-off (0.8) and the recommended threshold (0.75) (Ragin, 2008; Schneider & Wagemann, 2013a; Schneider &

Wagemann, 2013b), with high coverage (0.91). Figure 1 shows the pathways' details, including their explanatory conditions and other conditions that provide context regarding the quality (min = 1, max = 4), duration (years), and location. In line with MSA, the four pathways highlight the importance of multiple factors being present for successfully expanding civic space.

S1. Insider-Opportunity approach (*n* = 9) involves using an insider strategy to take advantage of a clear window-of-opportunity. This pathway covers the broadest array of countries and policy areas. It includes countries in all continents, multiple policy areas, and has the highest raw and unique coverage. It covers different political contexts, both where civic society is relatively open and relatively restricted. In Afghanistan (Komorowska, 2016), where civic society is restricted, a window-of-opportunity was created by the substantial financial contributions of donor countries and the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development was directly involved—through a collaborative insider effort—in creating Community Development Councils (CDCs) as spaces for increased engagement in local policymaking. The case highlights how the problem stream was met by policy and politics streams, when through a collaborative insider effort the policy entrepreneurs took the lead in and supported the creation of the CDCs as a feasible solution by making use of the window-of-opportunity that was opened by external funds.

S2. Localized-Opportunity approach (*n* = 5) involves local policy entrepreneurs[5] strategically using a window-of-opportunity. It is worth noting that none of the cases illustrating this pathway are located in countries where civic space is heavily restricted. This may indicate that in countries with political systems that provide more civic space and where locally-driven domestic actions are well received by policymakers and powerbrokers, the global policy entrepreneur should be less prominent. In these contexts, a highly visible global organization may risk delegitimizing the policy action. For example, in Bolivia (Delgado, 2014), the goal was to strengthen and expand the role of the Women's Platform (Plataforma de Mujeres por la Cuidadania y la Equidad). The window-of-opportunity opened when a new Constitution was passed in 2009 that included language to promote local governance and political participation—itself an outcome of previous policy influencing. The successful efforts to expand space for female political participation was facilitated by the dominant role of a local policy entrepreneur, the Instituto de Formación Femenina Integral, in a context where global actors were "often questioned about the activities they carry out and are occasionally accused of political interference" (Delgado, 2014, p. 17). The local policy entrepreneur had more legitimacy and therefore could better take advantage of the opportunity. This highlights the strategic relevance of striking a balance within a network of policy entrepreneurs, between global and local partners to fit the local political system. Because none of the cases of this pathway were situated in a country with substantively limited civic space, further analysis needs to investigate whether changes in the relative global and local roles within a network of policy entrepreneurs are required in more restricted environments as in the fourth pathway below.

S3. Multilevel-Outsider approach (*n* = 5) involves using an outsider strategy while targeting multiple policy levels. Most (80%) cases that corresponded to this pathway were led by domestic women's organizations. This pathway highlights the importance of an outsider strategy and is the only one to include targeting of multiple levels as a condition for expanding civic space. This pathway is salient for groups who may have less access to the levers of power. Given this, an outsider strategy can direct attention to issues that are often not the focus of those in power. The combination of an outsider approach and targeting of multiple levels may be essential for marginalized groups to increase their chances of identifying opportunities to expand spaces for policy influence by spreading their nets widely. In Liberia (Heaner, 2012), the goal was to

expand spaces for women's groups to engage in policy influencing. The efforts were multilevel resulting in meetings with the Ministry of Gender and Development and President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, the establishment of two coalitions, an alliance with a traditional council, and the establishment of the 50–50 club for women locally. Outsider strategies included sit-ins and issuing a press statement calling for the removal of a Minister. While outsider strategies can play an important role in getting neglected issues onto the policy agenda, and were successful in this case, they may risk disrupting relationships with power-holders that limit opportunities for future engagement if/when allies and powers shift (Binderkrantz, 2008).

S4. Oxfam-Outsider approach ($n = 1$) involves using an outsider strategy (and the lack of an insider strategy) combined with the prominent role of the global policy entrepreneur. This case is located in a political context with a restrictive posture toward civil society (van Hemelrijck, 2017). This indicates the important brokering roles international policy entrepreneurs like Oxfam can play in such contexts, in contrast to countries where there is more possibility for local civil society to lead. In this Myanmar case, the goal was to establish local Membership Organizations that take part in local policy decisions (van Hemelrijck, 2017). The global policy entrepreneur played a prominent role throughout the process. While the large-scale mobilization of a reported 39,000 citizens constituted an outsider strategy, it was not overtly confrontational. Contrasting to the cases of the women's groups described above in pathway S3, this broad and nonconfrontational effort of citizen mobilization may have resulted from a fear of repression but may have also left future policy entrepreneurs with more opportunity for developing allies and using insider strategies in the politics streams if/when windows-of-opportunity arise.

The primary findings of the QCA are represented by the configurational findings of the pathways; however, additional reflections across the pathways are noteworthy. The first two pathways indicate the important role that the strategic use of a window-of-opportunity plays, while the remaining pathways suggest that such windows-of-opportunity are not always prominent. Contrasting the second and the fourth pathways highlights that in this set of cases there are more contexts where local policy entrepreneurs should take the lead while the global policy entrepreneur takes a less prominent role. However, the fourth pathway illustrates that there are unique political contexts with restricted civic space where the global policy entrepreneur should take a prominent role. The inclusion of cases from policy contexts beyond the United States and Europe reveals that pathways S1 and S3 are present in both Europe and other contexts, while S2 and S4 only include cases from outside the United States and Europe. The political contexts of the cases in pathways S3 and S4 had lower mean levels on the "Voice and Accountability" dimension of the Worldwide Governance Indicators at the start of the policy intervention suggesting that local and global policy entrepreneurs should employ unique strategies adjusted to such contexts (Kaufmann & Kraay, 2019).[6]

3.2 | Pathways for policy entrepreneurs changing policy

For the outcome of changing policy, the analysis of necessity reveals that an insider strategy is a necessary condition. No policy-influencing activity successfully changed policy if it did not include at least some level of an insider strategy. However, an insider strategy is not sufficient on its own to successfully change policy. Our analysis identifies two pathways to changing policy that we label the "local venue-shopping approach" and the "localized insider-outsider approach." These pathways provide a solution that is highly consistent (0.95) with a coverage of 0.56. Figure 2 provides the configuration chart for successfully changing policy.

	P1: Local Venue-Shopping	P2: Localized Insider-Outsider
Prominent role of global PE	⊗	⊗
Clear use of a window of opportunity	● (small)	
Targeting multiple policy levels	● (large)	
Clear use of an insider strategy	● (small)	● (small)
Clear use of an outsider strategy		● (large)
Consistency	1.00	0.93
Raw coverage	0.22	0.44
Unique coverage	0.13	0.34
Overall solution consistency	**0.95**	
Overall solution coverage	**0.56**	
No. of cases	2	2
Contextual conditions		
Report quality	2.50	3.50
Duration	5.00	4.00
Continent		
Africa	1	0
Asia	0	0
Europe	0	1
South America	1	1

Notes: *Large icons represent core conditions, small ones peripheral conditions. No icon means that the condition's presence or absence is not important for the pathway. Crosses indicate that the condition is present while empty circles represent its absence.*

FIGURE 2 Pathways for policy entrepreneurs to successfully change policy

P1 Local venue-shopping approach ($n = 2$) involves the use of an insider strategy by local policy entrepreneurs who strategically exploit a window-of-opportunity by targeting multiple policy levels while the global policy entrepreneur plays a less prominent role. This pathway includes two contexts that are neither traditional western democracies nor are they contexts with highly restricted civil societies. The cases illustrate how policy change can occur when a strong local policy entrepreneur uses its access to insiders to take advantage of a window-of-opportunity at multiple policy levels. In the case of Bolivia (Murray, 2012), the local policy entrepreneur (Fundación Jubileo) took the lead using an insider strategy to leverage two policy levels within the country including personal relationships (e.g., with the Archbishop of La Paz) and a national window-of-opportunity with the new constitution of 2009 and the proposal of a social auditing law in La Paz. The Fundación Jubileo invested its time, energy, and social capital to push for the passage of the social auditing law which "would not have been possible without Jubileo's contribution" (Murray, 2012, p. 35).

P2 Localized-Insider-Outsider approach ($n = 2$) involves the combination of both an insider and an outsider strategy to direct attention to the problem with local policy entrepreneurs

playing a lead role presenting solutions, while the global policy entrepreneur plays a less prominent supporting role behind the scenes. It is important to note that this pathway was supported by two cases that both focused on gender policies and were led by formal and informal women's organizations in the two countries. This might suggest that when influencing activities are focusing on policy topics related to marginalized communities, a combination of both an insider and an outsider strategy is important. This combination is important for influencing the political stream by helping direct the attention of policymakers to issues of importance to the community through a more collaborative insider approach while at the same time demonstrating the potential to increase the pressure on powerholders through mobilization and media coverage using an outsider strategy. The less prominent role played by the global entrepreneur and its focus on supporting the leadership of local female-led policy entrepreneurs was perceived as empowering and successful. In the case of England (Cambridge Policy Consultants, 2012), the local policy entrepreneurs felt that they were empowered to lead the policy influencing efforts.[7] They used insider strategies by making use of direct relationships and conducting workshops with policymakers. At the same time, more confrontational outsider strategies created the conditions for change, including large-scale manifestations and events with somewhat less future risk (compared to S3 above) due to being in less restrictive contexts.

Conditions for both pathways to changing policy are the absence of a prominent role of the global policy entrepreneur—although it still plays an important behind-the-scenes role—as a core condition and the presence of an insider strategy.[8] Successful attempts toward changing policy build on actions that are driven by local policy entrepreneurs who have higher legitimacy with governments and policymakers. Three additional contributing conditions distinguish the two pathways to changing policy: both pathways are described by strategically taking advantage of a window-of-opportunity that is supplemented by targeting multiple policy levels in the first pathway and by the use of an outsider strategy in the second pathway.

The second pathway, in which local policy entrepreneurs engage in both a collaborative and a confrontational approach, is illustrated by cases that are concerned with gender- and/or ethnicity-related changes. This may suggest that when addressing policies for politically marginalized groups, local policy entrepreneurs are more successful at changing policy when combining both confrontational and collaborative strategies. Furthermore, the cases illustrating the two pathways differ in their geographic coverage. The first pathway to successfully changing policies only includes cases from contexts outside the United States and Europe. Meanwhile, the second pathway has one case each from Europe (United Kingdom) and one from Bolivia. This may indicate productive new avenues of MSA research in these contexts, for example by looking more closely into the question of how far contextual factors (pre-)condition the scope of influencing strategies that global and local policy entrepreneurs can employ.

4 | DISCUSSION

In Kingdon's (1984) original study, policy entrepreneurs are the actors with the skills and resources to form alliances within policy communities, work on policy solutions, and find the right moment to exploit the motive and opportunity of policymakers to select them. Over 30 years of subsequent MSA research has shown that context matters to this discussion. Regardless of complexity, the contexts with more or less restricted civic space will also afford more or less opportunities for policy entrepreneurs. However, few studies include multiple cases, and fewer still include cases with different political systems and varying levels of civic and political

freedom and legitimacy granted to local or global policy entrepreneurs. In this article, we show why the inclusion of this diversity within a configurational framework matters.

4.1 | Theoretical implications

First, our results reveal how important it is to consider two distinctive roles: the local policy entrepreneur, whose credibility and influence comes partly from a long-established presence in a specific political system, and a global policy entrepreneur who provides support and whose influence relates to an ability to draw from experiences across multiple contexts and its relative freedom from local political influence. We find that a prominent role for local policy entrepreneurs is important in all but the most civically restricted contexts or when marginalized groups are involved.

Second, most studies fail to consider the political conditions necessary for such action (see Jones et al., 2016). Previous case studies in the United States and Europe focus primarily on the second step of changing policy and assume that the civic space is unrestricted and readily available for policy entrepreneurs to draw upon (see Jones et al., 2016). In other words, Kingdon and most MSA scholars initially took for granted the distinctive "politics streams" in liberal democracies that may not be apparent in other types of political systems.

In contrast, we suggest that effective advocacy is often part of a two-step process, where actors must both establish a civic space conducive to further advocacy and also work to promote policy solutions. Consequently, policy entrepreneurs cannot always rely on the insider strategies alone, in which they form informal alliances in government and follow the rules of the game, an option that often seems to be taken for granted in MSA studies of policy entrepreneurs. In many cases, their insider strategy is often only effective if combined with additional influencing strategies which influence the problems and politics stream so important to policymakers' motivation. Although QCA has limited ability to investigate temporal sequencing and we lacked sufficient cases to directly test this sequence, future research should investigate the sequencing, as well as the mix of different types of influencing interventions more directly. Finally, our analysis raises the interesting possible implication for MSA that a window-of-opportunity may be more important in certain configurations and contexts than in others where policy entrepreneurs may have only limited space to capitalize on them.

This article also illustrates how the application of a configurational approach to MSA using QCA and data from global actors working in diverse contexts can generate nuance and consolidate knowledge around key concepts from MSA, such as policy entrepreneurs and windows-of-opportunity. In some pathways, local policy entrepreneurs should be more prominent while global policy entrepreneurs less so. The analysis of a diversity of cases raises interesting questions about extensions of MSA, as indicated by the different contexts represented by our identified pathways: in some cases, the pathways are only apparent in contexts not traditionally analyzed in the MSA literature (while other pathways are apparent in both contexts).

This is an area that future MSA work should investigate: for example, how the interplay between MSA concepts and the strategies of policy entrepreneurs limit or extend the scope of strategic actions in different policy environments. However, our article also highlights the challenges of operationalizing MSA in novel contexts where new concepts are needed and where the methodology limits the number of explanatory conditions. In other words, on reflection, it may be less helpful to prioritize the mechanical "operationalizing MSA" and may be more helpful to see its metaphorical language as an asset that provides a coherent narrative covering key concepts across diverse cases (Cairney & Zahariadis, 2016).

4.2 | Methodological implications

Our article illustrates how a configurational approach to multiple case studies from diverse contexts allows for the systematic comparison and synthesis of findings necessary to move the MSA literature forward. The findings from this article alone highlight the importance of considering context and causal complexity in MSA, as QCA revealed multiple pathways for both expanding civic space and changing policy that differed by context. The systematic analysis of multiple cases from a unique dataset reflective of Oxfam's modality of working with local partners allowed us to identify differences between policy influencing efforts led by local policy entrepreneurs compared to those led by global policy entrepreneurs. The ability of QCA to investigate causal complexity enabled us to identify different configurations with the two different types of policy entrepreneurs, including those with and without the strategic use of windows-of-opportunity.

Running different configurational models for different stages of the policy-influencing process allowed us to identify important distinctions in how policy entrepreneurs expand civic space and how they change policies when they already have access to at least some civic spaces of influence. A comparison of the results for the two different outcomes provides initial evidence that windows-of-opportunity may be more important for expanding civic space than for changing policies. This finding suggests that investigating a simultaneous or two-phase model may be productive for future MSA research. The first phase would focus on the necessary and sufficient streams for expanding space for policy entrepreneurs with the second phase focusing on how policy entrepreneurs use existing civic space for policy change. Within a different dataset, with sufficient variation in both civic space and policy change success and sequencing, this tentative hypothesis could be tested directly.

These possible insights at the same time reveal limitations of our data and of QCA more generally. Our dataset provides only limited insights into the temporal sequences of policy entrepreneurs expanding civic space and changing policy, preventing us from directly investigating such a possible two-phase model. Future research may draw on in-depth case studies and possible comparative case studies to provide first insights into the sequences of policy entrepreneurship. Multi-method studies that combine a cross-case configurational approach, for example, with QCA, with an in-depth analysis of the temporal sequence of events are a possible and established methodological combination (cf. Schneider & Rohlfing, 2013).

Moreover, our article highlights two central weaknesses of QCA. First, it highlights the challenges and limitations of hypothesis-testing with QCA. As QCA provides configurational results, researchers would ideally draw on theory to develop configurational hypotheses. However, developing precise configurational hypothesis with several conjunctions and disjunctions is challenging (Thomann & Maggetti, 2017). Relatedly, and beyond the conventional deductive hypothesis testing (of single variables or conditions), it is difficult to determine how QCA results allow assessment of hypotheses. Ultimately, it appears QCA only provides limited opportunities for hypotheses-testing. Second, despite recent developments in this field (e.g., Meuer & Rupietta, 2017; Sager & Thomann, 2017; Williams & Gemperle, 2017), QCA thus far provides only limited opportunities for analyzing temporal data, such as sequences and processes, and multi-level structures, for example on local, national, and international levels. For mid-sized datasets, such as ours, QCA alone thus far provides no viable approach that would allow researchers to test temporal dynamics within pathways of policy entrepreneurs (Engler & Herweg, 2019; Fischer & Maggetti, 2017).

4.3 | Practical implications

Alongside the theoretical and methodological benefits, this approach can also identify practical insights for the policy entrepreneurs themselves. For Oxfam, the results of the analysis of multiple case studies both validated and challenged different assumptions underlying its policy-influencing strategies. In line with MSA and Oxfam's own approach to policy-influencing, the findings re-enforce the importance of combining a mix of influencing strategies adapted to context and the importance of links to insiders as a necessary, but not sufficient, condition for policy change.

The article also highlighted the positive relationships between widened civic space and policy change and the importance of the relative prominence of local compared to global policy entrepreneurs in national-level influencing, except in restricted contexts or with marginalized groups. As a testament to the potential of the application of QCA to applied policy-influencing, Oxfam has reflected on how further analysis can be conducted regarding other outcomes of interest and the set of conditions that need to be further refined and differentiated for varied global contexts.

5 | CONCLUSION

In short, the application of a configurational approach to multiple cases across diverse contexts can help refine theory, expand methodological toolkits, and enhance practical applications.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST
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ENDNOTES
[1] The majority of the individual cases in our dataset used process tracing, a method that has been successfully combined with QCA previously (Collier, 2011; Schneider & Rohlfing, 2013).

[2] None of the included cases sought to only influence global policy.

[3] Although an outcome and not an explanatory condition, strengthening marginalized groups' voice is often an important element of other conditions.

[4] In QCA, counterfactual analysis makes informed assumptions about unobserved configurations. QCA distinguishes between "easy" counterfactuals, thought experiments aligned with directional expectations, and "difficult" counterfactuals that conflict with expectations. Additionally, researchers distinguish between "tenable" and "untenable" assumptions depending on the plausibility or coherence (Schneider & Wagemann, 2013a;

Schneider & Wagemann, 2013b). We find no implausible assumptions (all configurations possible) and no incoherent assumptions (contradictions with necessary conditions).

[5] For pathways where the local or global policy entrepreneur actor is not specified this is because the distinction is not important for that pathway because it includes cases with and without the condition.

[6] See Online Appendix 1 for details.

[7] England is unique because Oxfam, the global policy entrepreneur, is headquartered in the country.

[8] Within our dataset, when the global policy entrepreneur is less prominent they continue to play a substantial behind the scenes role providing, for example, financial support, capacity building and support through brokering or convening.

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Additional supporting information may be found online in the Supporting Information section at the end of this article.