



Understanding the role of institutions in the multiple streams approach through the recognition of the diaspora as a development agent in Cameroon

Léger Félix Ntjenjom Mbohou¹

Accepted: 2 March 2023 / Published online: 18 March 2023

© The Author(s), under exclusive licence to Springer Science+Business Media, LLC, part of Springer Nature 2023, corrected publication 2023

Abstract

This article examines the potential contribution of the diaspora to development in Cameroon. It illuminates the role of institutional dynamics within the Multiple Streams Approach (MSA). Drawing on the concept of problem compatibility, this research demonstrates that problem recognition does not occur solely as a result of the work of policy entrepreneurs or problem brokers. It also depends on the institutional context within which the problem arises. Data demonstrate that the shock of the economic crisis and its repercussions in Cameroon required innovative sources of development financing, particularly capitalizing on resources from the diaspora, otherwise known as the diaspora option. This led in part to the modification of the "appreciative system" of its network on diaspora policy. Moreover, the heterogeneity of this network has reframed the view of the diaspora, long considered a threat to the stability and security of the country. This analysis, based on interviews with fifteen government officials, experts, and professionals, highlights the institutional processes that drive the problem stream.

Keywords Multiple streams approach · Problem recognition · Problem compatibility · Capitalizing on diaspora potential

Introduction

With the notable exception of one study using network theory to explain smoothing processes in the solution stream (Zahariadis & Allen, 1995), work based on the multiple streams approach (MSA) has consistently emphasized processes and agency at the expense of institutions (Barzelay & Gallego, 2006; Mucciaroni, 1992; Zahariadis, 2014). Institutions, understood as formal rules, compliance procedures, and standardized operational practices that structure the relationships between individuals within different units of the polity and economy (Hall, 1986), have been neglected by Kingdon's model (Reardon, 2018). Indeed,

✉ Léger Félix Ntjenjom Mbohou
Leger-felix.ntjenjom-mbohou.1@ulaval.ca

¹ Department of Political Science, Pavillon Charles-De Koninck, 1030, Avenue Des Sciences-Humaines, Université Laval, Quebec City, QC G1V 0A6, Canada

analyzing institutional dynamics or the role of networks allows for the theoretical power of the MSA to be developed, as it elucidates mechanisms related to problem recognition and windows of opportunity in the problem stream (Reardon, 2018). This research, which elucidates the role of institutional dynamics in the MSA, explains how institutional dynamics play out in recognizing and framing the diaspora option in Cameroon.

This paper, which applies the two propositions formulated by Reardon (2018) to the emergence of the diaspora option in Cameroon, examines the framing power of networks within the problem stream. It demonstrates how the institutionalization of frames within a network's "appreciative system" affects the recognition and definition of problems (Reardon, 2018, p. 460). A network appreciative system is an organized set of coordinated ideas and principles resulting from the exchange of resources among actors that influence the perception of problems (Smith, 2000, p. 96) and determine the categories or frameworks through which conditions are examined and then recognized as problems or not (Rocheffort & Cobb, 1994; Shön & Rein, 1994). Thus, this study, which is based on interviews with fifteen individuals, including government officials, experts, and professionals, demonstrates that due to the economic crisis that resulted in the sharp contraction of development aid, foreign direct investment and private capital flows, the appreciative system of the government-dominated policy network was radically transformed, and the diaspora option became a problem that public authorities had to address. Moreover, the diversification of actors involved in diaspora policy has facilitated a change in the situation of the diaspora, which was long considered a threat to the stability and security of the country.

This article follows work that shifts the analytical focus on framing as exclusively a tool of agency to the role of institutional dynamics in the creation of frames. By revealing the power of inclusion and exclusion in network-created frames, this work enriches the MSA, whose literature previously focused on the ability of an individual—whether a policy entrepreneur or a problem broker—to frame a problem in a way that would capture the attention of policy-makers. The problem here is therefore similar to that of Reardon (2018): namely, how the institutionalization of frames within a network appreciative system can delimit the recognition of problems.

This paper begins with a presentation of the context (Sect. "Study context") and the theoretical framework of the study (Sect. "Expectations, methods and data"). The following sections examine the data and methodology (Sect. "4") before turning to the presentation of results (Sect. "Results") and discussion (Sect. "Discussion"). The conclusion constitutes the last Sect. "Conclusion".

Study context

Because of its role and actions in Cameroon's struggle for independence in the 1950s, as well as its radical opposition to successive regimes since independence in 1960, the diaspora has always been considered by Cameroonian authorities to be the breeding ground of the opposition. It was thus discredited. It was thought incapable of playing any role other than that of destabilizing the country (Deltombe, Domergue, & Tatsitsa, 2016; Joseph, 1986; Nkoyock, 2015; O'Sullivan, 1972). This perception was reinforced in the 1990s, which were marked by democratic revolutions that shook Cameroon in particular and many African countries in general (Banock, 1992; Monga & Mensah, 2008; Owona Nguini & Menthong, 2018; Sindjoun, 2004). Thus, the idea that the diaspora could make a positive contribution to development is new. The appreciative system within the government during

this period perceived the diaspora as a threat to be contained and curbed. Two pieces of legislation perfectly illustrate and materialize the views of this system: Law No. 1968-LF-3 of June 11, 1968, part of the Cameroonian nationality code, prohibits the holding of multiple nationalities, and Ordinance No. 62-OF-18 of March 12, 1962, on the suppression of subversion aimed in particular to prevent the diaspora from engaging in activities—whatever their nature—in national territory but also to combat diaspora from abroad.

Cameroon was severely impacted by the global economic crises of the 1980s and 1990s when a structural adjustment plan was imposed by the International Monetary Fund, leading to the nation's inclusion in the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative. These repeated crises required innovative sources of development financing, particularly capitalizing on resources from the diaspora, otherwise known as the diaspora option. This is a set of strategic policy orientations aimed at utilizing not only human and social capital but also, and more importantly, the economic capital of migrants to boost investment flows, skills, and development in their home countries (Pellerin & Mullings, 2013, p. 93). Since the early 2000s, an increasing number of African governments have developed public policies aimed at capturing resources and attracting investments from their diaspora (Chacko & Gebre, 2012; Mohamoud, 2010; Ratha et al., 2011). Countries that have experienced economic and technological growth in recent years have made the diaspora option a strategic priority, thereby positively impacting real per capita income, human capital, total factor productivity, and democracy, especially in Africa (Awang, 2013; Brinkerhoff, 2012; Gninessoun & Anyanwu, 2019; Patterson, 2006; Sørensen, 2007). According to the World Bank, officially recorded remittances to sub-Saharan Africa were worth 49 billion USD in 2021 (World Bank & KNOMAD, 2022). Moreover, these remittances, which constitute a significant portion of GDP in many low- and middle-income countries, have become larger than foreign direct investment and development assistance and more stable than private capital flows (World Bank & KNOMAD, 2022, pp. 2, 59).

In Cameroon, the diaspora option has emerged on the agenda of policy-makers as a result of combining the problem stream (the economic crisis, a drastic reduction in funding sources for the State, and policy feedback calling for diversification of development funding sources), the politics stream (change of mindset within the government about the diaspora; easing of the relationship between the government and the diaspora); and the solutions stream (adoption of strategy papers and a public program for mobilizing the diaspora as a development agent). The Ministry of Economy, Planning and Territorial Development (MINEPAT) and the Ministry of External Relations (MINREX) have been the main policy entrepreneurs working to couple these streams. Similarly, through their framing of the problem and mobilization of policy-makers, these two ministries have positioned themselves as brokers of the diaspora option.

The emergence of the diaspora option in the political agenda in Cameroon occurred in several stages, culminating in 2014 with the adoption of the public program entitled Management of Cameroonians Abroad. First, the Cameroonian government created a Division of Cameroonians Abroad within the Ministry of External Relations in 2005. This division is responsible for, among other things, the development of policies and strategies for the participation and contribution of Cameroonians abroad to the socioeconomic development of their country. In a second phase, in 2009, the Cameroonian government adopted the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper and the Vision for Cameroon's Emergence by 2035. These two strategy documents call for the mobilization of the diaspora as a source of financing (MINEPAT, 2009a, p. 86), an agent for promoting foreign trade and a vehicle for strengthening national capacities for innovation (MINEPAT, 2009b, p. 18). In a third and final stage, Cameroonian decision-makers materialized these ambitions by setting up a public

program entitled Management of Cameroonians Abroad. This program postulates that many Cameroonians abroad have resources (financial, intellectual, networking) that could be beneficial to the socioeconomic development of Cameroon. In statistical terms, there were approximately 300,000 Cameroonian emigrants in 2010, nearly 1.5% of the Cameroonian population, distributed mainly among France, Gabon, Nigeria, the USA, Germany, and Italy, etc. (Mberu & Pongou, 2016, p. 109; Nkoyock, 2015, p. 109). Most Cameroonian emigrants are in Africa, especially in the Gulf of Guinea (Evina, 2009, p. 49). The data indicate a high level of brain drain. For example, in 2000, 17% of higher education graduates emigrated, with a high proportion of health workers and academics leaving the country (Clemens & Gelernder, 2006; Docquier & Marfouk, 2006; Fleischer, 2007). According to World Bank data, the volume of diaspora remittances has grown exponentially since the early 2000s, from 0.4% of GDP in 2000 to 1% of GDP in 2020: USD 15,400,000 in 2000; USD 75,400,000 in 2003; USD 185,000,000 in 2009; USD 283,300,000 in 2014; and USD 334,000,000 in 2020 (World Bank, 2022).

Management of Cameroonians Abroad mobilizes resources to strengthen the protection of Cameroonians living abroad and their interests and to give adequate local supervision to encourage them to participate more actively in the socioeconomic development of their country of origin. Finally, this program puts in place targeted measures to facilitate the activities and investments of the diaspora in the country (MINFI-MINEPAT, 2014, p. 44). The program is the material manifestation of a paradigm shift: from state action marked by exclusion and firmness vis-à-vis the diaspora, there is a new motion to openness and a call for collaboration with the diaspora in favor of Cameroon's development.

Theoretical framework of the study

First, I will address the question of problem recognition and framing in the MSA (Sect. “*Problem recognition and framing in the multiple streams approach*”) before examining the issue of institutional dynamics in the MSA (Sect. “*Problem recognition and framing in the multiple streams approach*”).

Problem recognition and framing in the multiple streams approach

To explain how a situation is defined as a problem requiring policy intervention, Kingdon (1984) identifies four elements that structure the problem stream: changes in indicators, events and crises, problem load, and policy feedback. Furthermore, on the question of who defines a situation as a problem, he indicates that problems are brought to the attention of the public and government by policy entrepreneurs who mobilize their resources (money, time, reputation, energy) to promote solutions (Kingdon, 1995). Kingdon's focus is not primarily on the definition of problems or on the people who define problems. Rather, it is on who is doing what, in and around the government, and why they are interested in certain problems. MSA places the recognition and definition of problems on the agency of the actors. In this regard, framing becomes a strategic tool in the policy entrepreneur's arsenal for coupling streams: by activating particular dimensions of a problem, he or she can match it to the solution he or she formulates in language suitable for policy-makers (Zahariadis, 2008). In the same vein, the problem broker, in turn, through his or her action within the problem stream, defines situations as public problems on the one hand and works to have

his or her framing of the problem accepted by policy-makers on the other hand (Knaggård, 2015).

The MSA is based on the garbage can model (Cohen, March, & Olsen, 1972) and revolves around processes that operate under conditions of ambiguity: there are multiple ways of perceiving and apprehending the same circumstances or phenomena (Zahariadis, 2014){Zahariadis, 2008 #39}. Furthermore, because they are based on structures of belief, perception, and appreciation, political positions produce particular constructions of problems. In this respect, the policy-making process is characterized by the existence of opposing frames of reference that generate contestations over the social meaning of a situation, both in terms of defining what is at stake and identifying the solution to be implemented (Shön & Rein, 1994, pp. 22, 23, 28). Therefore, given that a problem can be defined in a variety of ways and that there are competing frames within the problem stream, it makes sense to look beyond the agency of actors when examining the mechanisms within the problem stream. Furthermore, the MSA identifies three factors that operate in the problem stream and determine the transformation of a situation into a problem: values, comparisons and categories. These factors give problems a perceptual and interpretive dimension (Kingdon, 1995). However, as Reardon (2018) points out, Kingdon does not clarify the mechanisms by which values or categories are created, let alone why these values and categories persist. In this regard, the limitations of the MSA can be addressed by recognizing the power of networks to frame problems, institutionalize those frames, and through the power of the frame to include and exclude, affect the recognition and framing of problems (Reardon, 2018, p. 461).

Institutional dynamics in the MSA: the concept of problem compatibility

One response to calls for more systematic theoretical development of the MSA (Jones et al., 2016; Zohlnhöfer et al., 2015), and in particular its connection to other political theories and concepts (Cairney & Jones, 2016), is the examination of the institutional dynamics within the MSA. Reardon (2018) uses networks to enhance the understanding of the mechanisms of problem recognition and windows of opportunity within the problem stream. Because one of the ways policies are made today is through governance—an action with and through networks (Rhodes, 2007; Stoker, 1998)—networks produce the topography of both the problem stream and problem recognition (Reardon, 2018, p. 461).

While the concept of networks is not foreign to the MSA insofar as Kingdon discusses policy communities (Kingdon, 1995, p. 116), it must be noted that his use of networks is limited to the policy stream. Reardon (2018), however, takes a broader view of networks as "critical mediating variables that affect the distribution of power, the construction of interests and identities, and the dynamics of interaction between individuals and organizations" (Ansell, 2008, p. 75). This understanding of networks transcends streams by recognizing that a network can be made of multiple organizations whose activities may operate in one or more streams. The possibility for organizations to straddle the three streams to maximize their chances of success by influencing the mechanisms at work in each stream (Eckersley & Lakoma, 2022) does not negate the independence of the streams or some specialization of these organizations (Kingdon, 1995, p. 87). On this point, studies examining the interactions between the streams have found that their independence is tempered when institutions and actors, among others, operating in the politics stream shape policy outcomes on the one hand (Robinson & Eller, 2010) and politicize problem indicators, thereby diminishing their effect on policy-maker attention, on the other hand (DeLeo & Duarte, 2022). Thus, by

focusing on networks, one is able to explore the impact of interconnections between actors (individuals and organizations) on the processes of the MSA specifically within the problem stream (Reardon, 2018, p. 462).

Five institutional principles justify the mobilization of networks within Kingdon's model (Reardon, 2018, p. 462). (First, organizations are interdependent in terms of legal, informational, political, or financial resources (Rhodes, 1999, p. 80). Second, organizations need to exchange resources to achieve their goals. Third, despite the interdependence of organizations, the dominant coalition—those organizations with the most resources—is more likely to determine the policy approach to a situation. Fourth, the dominant coalition sets the "rules of the game" by regulating how resources are exchanged. Fifth, the goals and relative power potential of organizations determine variations in their discretion (Rhodes, 2007, p. 1245).

Through the exchange of resources, the dominant coalition in a network produces an "appreciative system." That concept emphasizes the importance of ideas in the network approach. Ideas are assertions about the world, causal relationships, or the normative legitimacy of certain actions (Béland, 2015, p. 231; Parsons, 2002, p. 48). They provide a general map for understanding and guiding a course through the environment (Rhodes, 1999, p. 83). Institutionalized network frameworks specify the goals of policies, the typology of instruments to be put in place to achieve those goals, and the nature of the problems they are intended to solve (Bosomworth, 2015, p. 1451). As a result, the interactions between the organizations in the dominant coalition will privilege the recognition of certain situations as problems requiring intervention by the authorities based on the appreciative system that articulates their values, beliefs, and worldviews (Reardon, 2018, p. 462).

Problem recognition is not solely influenced by agency, as highlighted by the concepts of policy entrepreneur or problem broker. Because networks are able to create and sustain frameworks through which problems are recognized, it is important that the MSA consider the institutional context in which problems are recognized (Reardon, 2018). To improve the understanding of how networks designate problems within the problem stream, Reardon developed the concept of "problem compatibility," which revolves around two fundamental propositions. First, problem recognition is dependent on its compatibility with the appreciative system of the dominant coalition in the policy network. Second, the number and typology of organizations within a policy network determines the likelihood that the dominant coalition will change the category of a condition if there is a change in the problem stream (Reardon, 2018, pp. 463–464). The following section details the methodology and data that support this research.

Expectations, methods and data

This paper draws on data collected as part of doctoral research whose central question is why and how the diaspora option has become a public policy objective in Cameroon. The doctoral research was approved by the university's ethics committee, and written, informed consent was obtained from each participant after giving a detailed explanation of the study objectives and assurance of confidentiality. Specifically, this paper highlights the role of institutional dynamics in recognizing and framing the diaspora option in Cameroon. To identify the actors in the diaspora policy network in Cameroon and to clarify their roles in the development of policy, I used a set of qualitative data collection methods: document analysis, previous studies and semi-structured interviews. In this study, I draw on Rhodes'

(2008) understanding of policy networks to define the Cameroonian diaspora policy network as a set of formal, institutional, and informal linkages and interactions among various interdependent actors, structured around shared and constantly negotiated beliefs and interests in the development and implementation of diaspora policy.

Hypotheses

Much research based on the MSA has failed to produce explicit hypotheses (Zohlnhöfer et al., 2022), possibly because most of the relevant studies were individual case studies (Jones et al., 2016). Zohlnhöfer et al., (2022, p. 27) recommend that scholars deduce definitive hypotheses from the MSA in their empirical work – even when it is a single case study. On the other hand, they encourage researchers to use hypotheses that have already been suggested in the literature. However, the established hypotheses are not necessarily better suited or empirically more appropriate than the hypotheses an individual researcher could come up with.

This study, therefore, builds on the two aforementioned propositions that underlie the concept of problem compatibility developed by Reardon (2018, pp. 463–464):

- Problem recognition depends on its compatibility with the appreciative system of the dominant coalition in the policy network.
- The number and typology of organizations within a policy network determine the likelihood that the dominant coalition will change the category of a condition if the problem stream changes.

Data collection

A wide range of documents from diverse sources were mobilized for this study: national strategy documents; manuals, guides and reports from the government, international organizations, and non-governmental organizations; and legislation and regulations related to the diaspora. These documents, as well as previous studies, provided perspective on the diaspora option in Cameroon, as well as key background information and additional data that contextualized the study and suggested additional questions to ask respondents. The diversity and variety of the documents also made it possible to triangulate the information obtained in interviews.

Because I was interested in understanding the perceptions and experiences of people who took part in the process, as well as how they thought about the problem and how they addressed it, I used semi-structured interviews ($N=15$) to obtain information that could not be derived from the documents. Elite interviews show the perspectives of actors who played major roles in the emergence of a policy and make legible processes that led to major policy decisions (Ntjenjom Mbohhou & Tomkinson, 2022). The respondents are or were members of organizations that contributed to the emergence of the diaspora option in Cameroon. Some were nominated by their administrations, and others were referred to the researcher because of their role and expertise. The interviews took place from November 2019 to August 2021 in Cameroon, with the exception of the interview with the expert from the French Development Agency in France, which was a videoconference. The COVID-19 health crisis complicated the fieldwork in a context already marked by a cult of secrecy and state agents were reluctant to be interviewed by phone or over video. In addition, the sensitivity of the diaspora issue and a security crisis in the English-speaking regions of the

country, fueled by segments of the diaspora, made it difficult to gain access to politicians. For instance, I was only able to interview one parliamentarian, a member of the majority party as well as part of the network of parliamentarians for the diaspora; all other parliamentarians that I contacted systematically referred me to him. By the time of the fieldwork, some of the identified participants had changed jobs or retired. They are classified according to their institutional affiliation at the time of the policy's emergence (Table 1).

It may appear that this paper takes the point of view of the state. The purpose of my doctoral research, of which this article is one component, is to understand why and how the diaspora option emerged in Cameroon. To do so, I set out to interview the actors who played a role in this process. They were identified through document analysis and interviews. My research revealed that the process had been locked down and strictly controlled by the state. For example, there were no diaspora associations among the members of the committees that elaborated the Growth and Employment Strategy Paper (GESP) and the Vision of Emergence. Moreover, the officials I interviewed made it clear that diaspora associations were not involved. In the same vein, when I interviewed the coordinator of a diaspora association (Dias'Invest 237) that is conducting projects with the Cameroonian government with the support of a French development agency, he indicated that his association had not been solicited and is not involved in the follow-up of the government program "Management of Cameroonians Abroad." Reports of the Draw a Vision of Cameroon Forum (CASANET, 2008a, b, 2009a, b), organized by the CASANET network, the most important and dynamic grouping of Cameroonian Diaspora associations (Moussong, 2015), show that they were not involved in the elaboration and adoption of the GESP, the Vision of Emergence and the "Management of Cameroonians Abroad" program. The fragmented and plethoric nature of the diaspora (Nkoyock, 2015), with associations based mostly on ethnic or community solidarity (Tangang Meli, 2015), as well as the political divisions—between pro- and anti-regime (Tchingankong Yanou, 2018)—may explain why public authorities chose not to include diaspora actors in the process that gave rise to the diaspora option (Nkuitchou Nkouatchet, 2019, 2022).

Data analysis

The data extracted from the documents and interviews were subjected to thematic analysis in two stages: first, analysis was conducted on the basis of the MSA. Second, the conceptual framework of problem compatibility developed by Reardon (2018) is discussed. In the first stage, I identified five themes in accordance with the five components of the MSA (the three streams: problem, policy, politics; policy entrepreneurs; and window of opportunity). I extracted from the data the elements that would inform each of these themes in relation to the case study. That article examines the transformation of the perception of the diaspora from Cameroon through the lens of the MSA. Building the data analysis on the MSA components, the second stage of analysis aimed to map the diaspora policy network in Cameroon using key elements of the framework developed by Reardon (2018), including network composition, the nature and quality of relationships among network actors, actor resources, the homogeneity/heterogeneity of the network, and the core idea of the network appreciative system.

In this way, I was able to compile a list of organizations active in the diaspora policy network, identify the positioning, priorities and role of the network's actors in the overall policy system, and shed light on their structural, formal, and institutional relationships. Therefore, the inclusion of an organization in the diaspora policy network depended on

Table 1 Research participants

Institution/Organization	Status	Number	Capacity
Ministry of external relations	Government	7	High-ranking officials and officials
Ministry of economy, planning and regional development	Government	3	High-ranking officials and officials
National assembly	Parliament	1	Parliamentarian
International organization for migrations	International Organization	1	Expert/professional
French development agency	Cooperation Agency (France)	1	Expert/project head
Dias' Invest 237	Non-Governmental Organization	1	Expert/professional
Camercap-Parc	Government-affiliated think tank	1	Expert/professional

whether it played a minor or major role in the development of policy on the diaspora option in Cameroon. Organizations were identified as part of the dominant coalition if they were found to have significant informational, legal, financial, or political resources allowing them to play a key role in shaping diaspora option policy. For example, if the organization was empowered to develop policies and strategies, or if it had knowledge and expertise as well as a budget to mobilize the diaspora for national development, these were marked as part of the dominant coalition. The data show that the diaspora option was developed by a network involving the government, parliament, international organizations, and various Cameroonian diaspora organizations. While some organizations held key resources to influence diaspora policy (the dominant coalition within the network), others played a more consultative or even ancillary role (the other members of the network).

Results

After presenting the evolution of the diaspora policy network in Cameroon (Sect. “[The evolution of the diaspora policy network in Cameroon](#)”), I examine the impact of the economic crisis on the appreciative system of the diaspora policy network (Sect. “[The impact of the economic crisis on the appreciative system of the diaspora policy network](#)”). Finally, I discuss how network heterogeneity and divisions within the dominant coalition have facilitated the transformation of diaspora perceptions in the face of changes in the problem stream (Sect. “[Heterogeneous network, transformation of the perception of the diaspora and changes in the problem stream](#)”).

The evolution of the diaspora policy network in Cameroon

The diaspora political network has evolved over time in its overall composition, in the constitution of its successive dominant coalitions, and in the core ideas of its appreciative system (Table 2).

From Cameroon’s independence in 1960 until 2004, due to mutual distrust and tensions between the diaspora and the regimes in power, diaspora policy was strictly controlled

by the government, particularly through its structures in charge of security and defense. These include the Ministry of Defense, the Ministry of Justice, the General Delegation for National Security, and the Directorate General for External Research.¹ This situation was the result of sociopolitical instability and a lack security before and after independence, as well as the democratic claims of the 1990s. These organizations had the informational, legal, financial, and political resources to contain the diaspora and to minimize both its nuisance potential and its influence on the conduct of the country (Deltombe et al., 2016; Nkoyock, 2015).

One element that is determinant in the philosophy or ideology of the Cameroonian authorities,² since AHIDJO, was a certain mistrust of the diaspora. —Interview with Participant 3, MINREX, November 21, 2019

The economic and financial crisis of the late 1990s and early 2000s, marked by a sharp contraction of development aid flows and scarcity of foreign direct investment, led Cameroonian public authorities to include the diaspora option in their intervention priorities. Since 2004, the diaspora policy network has shifted in favor of government structures handling economic affairs and development, which now constitute the dominant coalition in that policy network. First, in 2005, the government created a Division for Cameroonians Abroad within MINREX. Second, in 2009, under the guidance of MINEPAT, it adopted two strategy documents for development by 2035.

For the first phase, the government had the resources to put the diaspora option on the agenda. MINREX mobilized its legal and political resources (*empowered by the decree of the President of the Republic to develop policies and strategies for the contribution of Cameroonians abroad to the socioeconomic development of the country*), informational resources (*knowledge and expertise of its services*) and financial resources (*by virtue of its budget*) (PRC, 2005b). MINEPAT, the ministry responsible for development planning, had legal and political resources, as well as financial resources (*as the ministry responsible for developing the state's multiyear investment program and under its budget*) and informational resources (*knowledge and expertise as the ministry responsible for coordinating studies of national economic interest on behalf of the government*) (PRC, 2005a). It is important to note that victory in the October 2004 presidential election gave the government the legitimacy (*political resources*) to consider a number of reforms, including the reorganization of the two ministries mentioned above in 2005 and the emergence of the diaspora option.

In the second phase, Parliament played a crucial role by successively adopting, within the framework of the finance laws, an action targeting the diaspora among other programs in 2013 and then a program entirely dedicated to the diaspora in 2014, as proposed by the government. By mobilizing its legal and political resources (*as the institution empowered by the constitution to pass laws*), Parliament is considered part of the network's dominant coalition.

Other participants in the network include international organizations such as the World Bank, the United Nations Development Program, and the International Organization for

¹ Cameroon's foreign intelligence service has had different names since Cameroon's independence (Studies and Documentation Service; Directorate General of Studies and Documentation; National Center for Studies and Research) until 1984, when the name Directorate general for external research was adopted.

² Cameroon has known two regimes thus far since its independence in 1960: the regime of President Ahmadou AHIDJO (1960–1982) and the regime of President Paul BIYA (1982—present).

Table 2 Evolution of the diaspora policy network in Cameroon

Period	Composition of the network	Dominant coalition	Core idea of the appreciative system
From independence (1960) to 2003	Government Parliament	Government (Organizations in charge of security and defense issues)	The diaspora is a threat to the stability and security of the country
From 2004 to 2014	Government Parliament Diaspora organizations International and non-governmental organizations	Government (<i>Organizations in charge of economic and development affairs</i>) Parliament	The diaspora is an actor to be mobilized in order to finance the national development strategy, promote foreign trade and strengthen national capacities in terms of innovation

Migration, whose informational resources (*knowledge and expertise on migration and development*) have fueled the activities of the two ministries mentioned above. These institutions have influenced the emergence of the diaspora option by legitimizing the idea of capitalizing on their potential and relevance. The remainder of the network members is other ministries, associations and diaspora organizations. As their participation in the network is mostly consultative, these actors are not considered part of the dominant coalition. For example, the elaboration of decrees organizing ministries such as MINREX or MINEPAT is essentially an internal exercise for each ministry. Only the presidency of the Republic, as the validating body, can change the substance of the draft decrees submitted by each ministry. In addition, an examination of the drafting teams for the Vision of Emergence by 2035 and the GESP suggests that the government, through MINEPAT, had control over the drafting of these two documents. These teams were essentially made up of MINEPAT administrative officials. This shows that the state has control over the issues that emerge on the political agenda, thus promoting construction and recognition of the problem and the formulation of solutions in its own interests.

The impact of the economic crisis on the appreciative system of the diaspora policy network

Recognition or nonrecognition of a problem is not systematically dependent on factors related to its framing (seriousness, urgency, etc.), but, in some cases, on its compatibility with the appreciative system of the network to which it is addressed. Once a problem is recognized as such by decision-makers, it becomes associated with the other two streams of politics and policy by a policy entrepreneur. However, the boundaries of recognition are delineated by the policy network that handles the problem and, more specifically, by

the appreciative system of the dominant coalition (Reardon, 2018, p. 463). Because this appreciative system is the general map for guiding a course through the policy environment (Rhodes, 1999, p. 83), it is constructed by organizations with more resources, which thus constitute the dominant coalition in the network (Reardon, 2018, p. 470).

In this case study, the economic crisis and its repercussions in Cameroon have been severe; one of the consequences has been the modification of the appreciative system of the Cameroonian diaspora policy network. As a "powerful symbol" (Kingdon, 1995, p. 95), the crisis led to a change in the government's perception of the diaspora. Prior to the crisis, all diaspora issues were viewed through the prism of the country's security and stability. The diaspora was not seen as an actor that could boost Cameroon's development. The pressure on the resources and stability of the state from the economic crisis has forced public authorities to change the frameworks for addressing diaspora issues. In addition, the exchange of resources among network actors changed the principles that had underpinned the government's perception of the diaspora. The crisis allowed the government's economic structures to take priority over structures in charge of defense and security, thus tipping diaspora issues into the economic and development domain.

An imbalance of forces and interests within the government encouraged a "recategorization" (Kingdon, 1995, p. 112) of the diaspora as a development agent to be mobilized for the country. It is likely that as long as the state was able to provide for the country's needs through its own resources, reinforced by development aid, foreign direct investment and private capital flows, the dominant coalition would have continued to perceive the diaspora as a threat to the country's security and stability. The change in the appreciative system made the emergence and implementation of the diaspora option in Cameroon possible, a decade after many other African countries had already embarked on this path.

The diaspora is currently one of the levers for financing development in developing countries. We can no longer do without the diaspora on the economic, social, political and diplomatic levels. —Interview with Participant 2, Camercap-Parc, November 20, 2019

The change in the appreciative system is materialized by the repeal of exclusionary legislative and regulatory measures targeting the diaspora, the adoption of strategy documents, laws and regulations, and a public program aimed at assigning a role to the diaspora in Cameroon's development efforts. The fact that the diaspora option was not being used—even though data from international financial institutions demonstrated its relevance and effectiveness and many developing countries, particularly in Africa, had already embarked on this path—was recognized as a problem requiring the intervention of public authorities to handle the economic crisis and Cameroon's long-term development objectives. Thus, the diaspora option can be understood as a solution to the economic crisis and development challenge, while the failure to use it is a problem that public authorities have recognized and undertaken to address in a context of mistrust and tension deeply rooted in the country's history.

Leaving the diaspora aside, frankly, did not foreshadow anything good for the emergence because, in fact, the vision is the emergence by 2035. We cannot emerge without taking this force into consideration. It is impossible. It is simply impossible. —Interview with Participant 1, MINREX, November 19, 2019

The worsening of the crisis in Cameroon coincided with an update of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (2003–2009), which led to the adoption of the GESP (2010–2020). The 2003–2009 strategy paper failed to take the diaspora into account among actors to

be mobilized for the recovery and growth of the economy. The policy feedback that led to the adoption of the GESPP corrected this oversight, using indicators that demonstrate the capacity of the diaspora to boost development in their countries of origin. New interpretations of indicators can turn situations into problems (Kingdon, 1995). Based on data from international financial institutions indicating the importance of diaspora remittances and their significant share in the gross domestic product of many developing countries, the government realized the need to include the diaspora in its development equation (MINEPAT, 2009b, p. 49).

It was in the government's interest to take this idea of the diaspora in hand, especially since informal assistance from the diaspora was not subject to any conditionalities. So, the government thought it had to mobilize some of our nationals living abroad to launch this mode of financing the economy because today the amounts brought by the diaspora via contributions allocated to ancestral territories are largely superior to official development assistance. —Interview with Participant 5, MINREX, November 27, 2019

Evidence submitted by the drafting committees for the strategy papers aligned the diaspora option with the values, beliefs, interests and development objectives pursued by the state. The composition of these committees, as well as the political and informational resources made available to them, helped support the dominant coalition's goal of mobilizing all possible resources, including those of the diaspora, for Cameroon's development. Respondents also expressed frustration with the fact that strategy documents prior to the GESPP had excluded the diaspora from actors to be mobilized due to decades of tension and mutual distrust with the government:

The political context did not allow us to speak about the diaspora. Today, the political context... of multipartyism and democratic openness... allows it, even if the problem is not yet solved. We are beginning to say no, the diaspora must participate and we must break the lock. That it came late is not because we did not think about it. It was because we couldn't talk about it. —Interview with Participant 8, MINEPAT, December 11, 2019

Heterogeneous network, transformation of the perception of the diaspora and changes in the problem stream

The typology of a network (number and variety of organizations) determines policy outcomes (Compston, 2009; Somerville & Goodman, 2010). The presence of more actors implies more resources to share, as well as more interests to satisfy, with the corollary of potential tensions. Moreover, a greater variety of actors necessarily implies different interests, ideas, and value systems; the consequence can be a complication of the resource exchange process with an impact on the coherence of the network (Reardon, 2018; Rhodes, 1999). In terms of problem framing, the number and type of organizations that make up a network are likely to affect the strength of the appreciative system and, in turn, the frame through which potential problems are perceived (Bosomworth, 2015; Reardon, 2018). The fewer the actors and the more homogeneous the organizational types in the network, the stronger the resource dependencies will be. As a result, the appreciative system or framework for identifying problems will likely be stronger. On the other hand, a network populated by several actors of various types implies fractures in the shared understanding of situations, and limited coherence in the appreciative system (Marsh & Rhodes, 1992). In

sum, the configuration of a network determines the degree to which its appreciative system is open to change and, consequently, to the recognition of "new problems" (Reardon, 2018, p. 464).

In this case study, the dominant coalition was resilient, and the perception of the diaspora by public authorities remained unchanged until the crisis of the early 2000s. At that point, weakened by successive crises in the 1980s and 1990s, Cameroon was placed in a structural adjustment plan by the International Monetary Fund and admitted to the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative, jointly piloted by the World Bank and the IMF, with the obligation to adopt and implement a Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper. Official data indicate that the actions taken under this strategy paper have not significantly or substantially reduced poverty, despite the stabilization of the macroeconomic framework and the maintenance of positive growth rates until 2008 (MINEPAT, 2009b). Cameroon has therefore undertaken an update to the poverty reduction strategy in a context where international financial institutions encourage developing countries to diversify sources of financing for their economies, in particular by mobilizing their diasporas in developed countries. As one participant noted, in connection with a World Bank report of 2003:

(...) I think it was a report...Global development report...I think in 2003 for the first time brought out remittances of the diaspora for Africa. So, I think it was after that report that the Cameroonian government thought that the diaspora could be useful in development. —Interview with Participant 15, MINREX, January 27, 2020

The economic crisis redefined the role and place of the diaspora. It caused a shift in the balance of power within the diaspora policy network, which has expanded considerably since the early 2000s with the inclusion of many new actors, including several government ministries, international and non-governmental organizations, development agencies, and diaspora organizations, thus increasing its heterogeneity (Table 3).

First, within the government, there has been a split between those for and against diaspora inclusion in national development efforts. Second, the support of international financial institutions for the diaspora option (Maimbo & Ratha, 2005; Ratha, 2003, 2007a), even if they did not have instructional authority over the state, legitimized and supported with evidence the position of those who felt it was time to stop perceiving the diaspora as a threat and include it in the country's development efforts. Third, diaspora organizations in particular and the diaspora in general have been given an important role in the network, notably by being granted new political rights, such as the right to vote in presidential and referendum elections, and through a radical change in the political discourse about them, as illustrated by this excerpt:

(...) I would like you to know that I am aware of the industriousness of your communities, and for many of you, the high degree of competence that you demonstrate... it goes without saying that it is my fervent wish to see you one day put the knowledge and know-how that you have been able to acquire at the cost of so much personal effort, and for some, thanks to the assistance of the state, that you put these talents to the benefit of the development of Cameroon. --Speech of the Cameroonian president during his meeting with associations of the diaspora based in Europe, July 24, 2009, France.

Given the weight of the presidential function in the institutional architecture of Cameroon, this stance has tipped the balance in favor of state organizations that encourage the involvement of the diaspora in national development.

It seems logical in Cameroon. There is nothing that is done, in this sense, without the Presidency of the Republic. —Interview with Participant 4, MINREX, November 25, 2019.

Applying networks to MSA operationalizes ambiguity in problem recognition and reduces the perceived randomness in problem recognition and stream coupling (Reardon, 2018; Zahariadis, 2014). This ambiguity varies as a function of network structuring, which provides insight into the power of shared values and beliefs and, thus, the strength of the appreciative system against factors that open windows of opportunity in the problem stream (Reardon, 2018, p. 473).

In this case study, the occurrence of a severe economic crisis led to the instability of resource interdependencies within the network and the weakening of shared interests within the dominant coalition, resulting in a change in the national development strategy and a transformation of the perception of the diaspora. Thus, the recognition of the diaspora option cannot be explained solely by the agency of the policy entrepreneurs and problem brokers. Indeed, the use of networks in problem stream analysis shows that institutional dynamics can facilitate or hinder the policy entrepreneur's goal of taking advantage of ambiguity to achieve stream coupling (Reardon, 2018).

As long as the state appreciative system continued to perceive the diaspora as a threat and the country was able to run its economy with the resources at its disposal, MINREX and MINEPAT could not steer the beliefs and values of the network in a direction favorable to the diaspora option. They were at a disadvantage compared to other government actors who maintained a negative perception of the diaspora. These two policy entrepreneurs gained authority within the dominant coalition with the support of international actors who legitimized and demonstrated the value of the diaspora option during a crisis. As the state organization in charge of elaborating and implementing development plans and programs, MINEPAT has used its prerogatives to favor a re-evaluation of the state's appreciative system and include the diaspora option in the political agenda.

The effectiveness of the policy entrepreneur or problem broker in categorizing situations, reframing problems, or gaining recognition for a problem is not challenged by the demonstration of the institutional or network dimension of problem recognition. However, network success is not primarily dependent on an individual's skills or position within an organization, as argued by the MSA (Huitema et al., 2011; Zahariadis, 2008). In this regard, the policy entrepreneur's ability to gain recognition for a problem and couple the problem stream to the politics and policy streams also depends on the homogeneity and size of the network, which are true determinants of the strength of his or her appreciative system (Reardon, 2018, p. 474).

Discussion

Zohlnhöfer et al. (2022) argue that the development and refinement of the MSA and its current hypotheses require the amendment of established expectations in light of new empirical data. Established hypotheses gain greater analytical weight and promote knowledge accumulation to the extent that they can be replicated in similar environments or adapted to unexpected contexts. This ultimately helps define the scope of some hypotheses and refine others. In this section, I highlight the theoretical significance of the results (Sect. “[Advancing the multiple stream approach](#)”) before discussing the consistency of my

Table 3 Heterogeneity of the diaspora policy network since 2004 *Sources* (CAMERCAP-PARC, 2015; Moussong, 2015; OIM & Minrex, 2016; Tangang Meli, 2015; Tchingangkong Yanou, 2018)

	Composition of the network	Organizations
Dominant coalition	Government organizations in charge of economic and development issues	Ministry of economy Ministry of finance Ministry of external relations Ministry of trade Ministry of youth Ministry of public health Ministry of scientific research Ministry of higher education Ministry of employment and vocational training Ministry of labor Ministry of agriculture and rural development Ministry of water and energy National employment fund
	Parliament	National assembly Senate
Other actors	Government organizations in charge of security and defense affairs	Ministry of defense Ministry of justice General delegation for national security Directorate general for external research
	International Organizations and Development agencies	World bank African union European union International organization for migration United nations development program GIZ French development agency
	Diaspora organizations and think tanks	CASANET CAMERCAP CABAC CODE CCD, Etc.

results with those of Reardon (2018) (Sect. “Consistency with the concept of “problem compatibility””).

Advancing the multiple stream approach

In their work on the foundations, refinements, and empirical applications of the MSA, Herweg et al., (2018, p. 30) identified key agenda-setting hypotheses of the MSA, both overall and with respect to each of the key elements. This case study confirms the general MSA hypothesis that agenda change becomes more likely if a policy window opens, if the streams are ready to be coupled, and if a policy entrepreneur promotes agenda change. Furthermore, with respect to the problem stream specifically, this article shows that a policy entrepreneur/problem broker is likely to be more successful in framing a condition as a problem when there is an increased likelihood that an indicator becomes

negative, a focusing event is harmful and a government program increasingly fails to work as expected. These changes in indicators, focusing events or feedback open a policy window in the problem stream, allowing the policy entrepreneur to successfully couple the streams, provided he or she is persistent, and to have more access to core policy-makers.

Indeed, the negative impact of the crisis on Cameroon's macroeconomic and microeconomic indicators, accompanied by a drastic reduction in state resources and in the flow of development aid, private capital and foreign direct investment, shocked the government into tackling the problem of capitalizing on the potential of the diaspora. This awareness on the part of public authorities was reinforced by the fact that various evaluations and studies showed that the policy of excluding the diaspora, which had long been in force, was counterproductive, as it deprived the country of resources in terms of remittances and human and social capital, to name but a few. In addition, as the authority responsible for economic planning and development, MINEPAT has mobilized all of its legal, informational and financial resources to place the diaspora option at the heart of the political agenda. This ministry chairs the interministerial program evaluation committee, which validates the programs and budgets of all other government agencies. This position of power has given it privileged access to key policy-makers and the ability to influence their perceptions of the diaspora and its role in development. To this end, MINEPAT and MINREX have maintained a persistent and incremental approach that has resulted in a public program to mobilize the diaspora in national development.

However, as this work demonstrates, the policy entrepreneur/problem broker does not operate outside an institutional framework. His or her actions are dependent on formal rules, compliance procedures, and standardized operational practices that structure the relationships between individuals in different units of the polity and economy. Similarly, its definition and framing of problems are constrained by the appreciative system shared by the institutional framework. This appreciative system is not immutable. Changes in the problem stream (indicators, focal events, feedback) can substantially alter it. It is in this vein that this work focuses on the role and place of institutions in the definition and framing of problems as an element of analysis as important as the agency of actors (policy entrepreneurs/problem brokers).

Consistency with the concept of “problem compatibility”

This work takes as its starting point Reardon's (2018, p. 463) findings that highlight the role of institutions in recognizing problems. Indeed, she demonstrates that problem recognition is more likely if the problem is compatible with the appreciative system of the network's dominant coalition and that the greater number and variation of organizations in a network make it more likely that the dominant coalition will recategorize a condition if there are changes in the problem stream. The opening of a policy window in the problem stream (problem window) is subject to two conditions. First, the problem stream must be ready to be coupled. Second, policy-makers must consider the issue important and relevant (Zohlnhöfer et al., 2022). The relevance and importance of a problem are assessed by public authorities through an organized set of coordinated ideas and principles derived from the exchange of resources among actors that influence the perception and categorization of problems (Smith, 2000, p. 96), including the frameworks for examining conditions to recognize problems or not (Rochefort & Cobb, 1994; Shön & Rein, 1994). Reardon (2018) calls this organized set of ideas the appreciative system of the network. As we have shown

in this work, the perception of the diaspora and its role in development has varied according to the appreciative systems in place before and after the successive economic crises that culminated in the early 2000s with an unprecedented decline in state resources.

With respect to the key elements of the MSA, some work has tested the following hypotheses related to the political stream and policy stream: (1) policy proposals that are consistent with the general ideology of a government or legislative majority are more likely to be placed on the agenda; (2) If a policy proposal does not meet the selection criteria, the likelihood that it will be placed on the agenda, and thus coupled, decreases significantly (Herweg et al., 2018). The concepts of *general ideology* and *selection criteria* demonstrate that there are institutionalized frameworks in both of the above streams through which policy proposals are evaluated prior to their (non)adoption. The concept of problem compatibility (Reardon, 2018), to which this work subscribes, aims to demonstrate that there are institutional dynamics within the problem stream that create inclusionary and exclusionary power to recognize and define problems. The appreciative system thus represents for the problem stream what the general ideology and the selection criteria are for the political stream and the policy stream, respectively.

Regarding Reardon's (2018) second proposition, this work confirms that a network's typology (number and variety of organizations) determines whether the dominant coalition in the network will recategorize a condition if the problem stream changes. Indeed, before the crisis worsened, the diaspora policy network was rather homogeneous, consisting of state organizations dominated by structures in charge of defense and security issues. At that time, the diaspora option did not arise since the state was able to carry out its activities with its own resources and large flows of development aid, private capital and foreign direct investment. The crisis caused the heterogenization of the diaspora policy network with the inclusion of new actors and forced the government to recategorize the diaspora in general and the diaspora option in particular. In my view, this proposition by Reardon (2018) has its counterpart in a hypothesis tested in work related to the policy stream that, as the integration of policy communities decreases, entirely new ideas are more likely to become viable policy (Zohlnhöfer et al., 2022). This case study shows that the expansion of the diaspora policy network put the diaspora option on the table and built consensus, if not unanimity, on the need to use the diaspora as a development actor and tool.

Conclusion

MSA posits that problem recognition and framing rely on the agency of an actor. This may be a policy entrepreneur (Kingdon, 1984) who couples streams by activating particular dimensions of a problem to match the solution he or she proposes to policy-makers (Zahariadis, 2008), or it may be a problem broker who, through his or her action within the problem stream, defines situations as public problems and works to have his or her framing of the problem accepted by policy-makers (Knaggård, 2015). To contribute to the refinement of Kingdon's model (Cairney & Jones, 2016; Jones et al., 2016; Zohlnhöfer et al., 2015), this article drew on the concept of problem compatibility (Reardon, 2018) to examine the influence and role of institutions in problem recognition and framing.

This article examined the recognition of the diaspora's potential for development in Cameroon through the lens of the two propositions advanced by Reardon (2018). The data demonstrated that networks are a key determinant in the development and perpetuation of frameworks delineating problem definition and recognition. Indeed, the untapped potential

of the diaspora for development was recognized as a problem once this idea became compatible with the appreciative system of the network dominated by state-led structures. Moreover, the economic crisis served as a window of opportunity within the problem stream. It led to a reconfiguration of power relations within the state apparatus in favor of economic and development issues rather than security and defense affairs. This modification of the appreciative system, with a corresponding change in the dominant coalition, is a consequence of the transformation of the perception of the diaspora, which had long been considered a threat.

This study contributes to the empirical understanding of the use of networks in the analysis of the mechanisms and processes operating within the problem stream. However, it is limited to an analysis at the national level and does not take into account the local level, although it is established that diaspora action for development is much more significant at the local level (Awang, 2013; Brinkerhoff, 2008; Kane, 2001). Further research extending the diaspora option policy network to local actors (decentralized local governments, local community associations, etc.) would allow for a multilevel reading of institutional dynamics of agenda setting in general and issue recognition in particular.

Funding This article was supported by Société québécoise de science politique, Georges-Henri-Lévesque Fund (CA).

References

- Ansell, C. (2008). Network institutionalism. In R. A. W. Rhodes, S. Binder, & B. A. Rockman (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of political institutions* (Vol. 2, pp. 75–89). Oxford University Press.
- Awang, O. K. (2013). The Cameroonian diaspora: An assessment of its role in local development. *Journal of Globalization Studies*, 14(2), 82–95.
- Banock, M. (1992). *Le processus de démocratisation en Afrique: le cas camerounais [The democratization process in Africa: the Cameroonian case]*. Yaoundé: Editions L'Harmattan.
- Barzelay, M., & Gallego, R. (2006). From “new institutionalism” to “institutional processualism”: Advancing knowledge about public management policy change. *Governance*, 19(4), 531–557. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-0491.2006.00339.x>
- Béland, D. (2015). Kingdon reconsidered: Ideas, interests and institutions in comparative policy analysis. *Journal of Comparative Policy Analysis: Research and Practice*, 18(3), 228–242. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13876988.2015.1029770>
- Bosomworth, K. (2015). Climate change adaptation in public policy: Frames, fire management, and frame reflection. *Environment and Planning c: Government and Policy*, 33(6), 1450–1466. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0263774X15614138>
- Brinkerhoff, J. (2008). The potential of diasporas and development. In J. M. Brinkerhoff (Ed.), *Diasporas and development: Exploring the potential* (pp. 1–17). Lynne Rienner.
- Brinkerhoff, J. M. (2012). Creating an enabling environment for diasporas’ participation in homeland development. *International Migration*, 50(1), 75–95. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2435.2009.00542.x>
- Cairney, P., & Jones, M. D. (2016). Kingdon’s multiple streams approach: What is the empirical impact of this universal theory? *Policy Studies Journal*, 44(1), 37–58. <https://doi.org/10.1111/psj.12111>
- CASANET. (2008a). Action Plan 2008a/2009. Retrieved from Génève: <http://www.casa-net.org/documents/CASANET-PlanDaction2008a-2009.pdf>
- CASANET. (2008b). *Résolutions du Forum des compétences de la diaspora camerounaise [Resolutions of the Cameroonian Diaspora Skills Forum]*. Retrieved from Génève: <http://www.casa-net.org/documents/RESOLUTIONSdeDAVOC2008b-VF.pdf>
- CASANET. (2009a). Action Plan 2009a/2011. Retrieved from Génève: <http://www.casa-net.org/documents/CASANET-PlanDaction2009a-2010.pdf>

- CASANET. (2009b). *Memorandum of works - Draw a Vision of Cameroon 2009b*. Retrieved from Lyon: http://www.casa-net.org/documents/MEMORANDUM_DAVOC_2009b.pdf
- Chacko, E., & Gebre, P. H. (2012). Leveraging the diaspora for development: Lessons from Ethiopia. *GeoJournal*, 78(3), 495–505. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10708-012-9447-9>
- Clemens, M. A., & Gelernder, G. P. (2006). A new database of health professional emigration from Africa: Center for Global Development Working Paper.
- Cohen, M. D., March, J. G., & Olsen, J. P. (1972). A garbage can model of organizational choice. *Administrative science quarterly*. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2392088>
- Compston, H. (2009). Networks, resources, political strategy and climate policy. *Environmental Politics*, 18(5), 727–746. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09644010903157032>
- DeLeo, R., & Duarte, A. (2022). Does data drive policymaking? A multiple streams perspective on the relationship between indicators and agenda setting. *Policy Studies Journal*, 50(3), 701–724. <https://doi.org/10.1111/psj.12419>
- Docquier, F., & Marfouk, A. (2006). International migration by education attainment, 1990–2000. In C. Özden & M. Schiff (Eds.), *International migration, remittances and the brain drain* (pp. 151–199). World Bank and Palgrave Macmillan.
- Eckersley, P., & Lakoma, K. (2022). Straddling multiple streams: Focusing events, policy entrepreneurs and problem brokers in the governance of English fire and rescue services. *Policy Studies*, 43(5), 1001–1020. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01442872.2021.1892620>
- Evina, R. C. (2009). *Migration au Cameroun - Profil National 2009 [Migrations in Cameroon - Country profile 2009]*. Genève: Organisation internationale pour les migrations.
- Marsh, D., & Rhodes, R. A. W. (1992). *Policy networks in British government*: Clarendon Press.
- Rocheffort, D. A., & Cobb, R. W. (1994). *The politics of problem definition: Shaping the policy agenda*: University Press of Kansas.
- Ratha, D. (2003). *Workers' remittances: An important and stable source of external development finance*: Global Development Finance, World Bank.
- Sindjoun, L. (2004). Ce que s'opposer veut dire: l'économie des échanges politiques [What Opposition Means: The Economics of Political Exchange]. *Comment peut-on être opposant au Cameroun*, 33.
- PRC. (2005a). *Décret n°2005/195 du 10 juin 2005 portant organisation du Ministère de l'économie, de la planification et de l'aménagement du territoire*. Présidence de la République du Cameroun
- Sørensen, N. N. (2007b). *Living across worlds: Diaspora, development and transnational engagement*. New York: United Nations Publications, <https://publications.iom.int/books/living-across-worlds-diaspora-development-and-transnational-engagement>.
- Ratha, D. (2007a). Leveraging remittances for development. In *Policy Brief* (Vol. 3, pp. 1–16). Washington DC: Migration Policy Institute.
- CAMERCAP-PARC. (2015a). *The Cameroonian Diaspora, an Asset for Emergence: A 10-Point Operational Plan for Rapid Results*. Yaoundé: Centre d'analyse et de recherche sur les politiques économiques et sociales du Cameroun
- Nkoyock, A. (2015c). *Diaspora camerounaise. En dehors de l'État, au sein de la nation [Cameroonian Diaspora. Outside the state, within the nation]*: Kiyikaat Éditions.
- Moussong, B. (2015b). La fédérations d'associations de la diaspora camerounaise (CASA-NET) [The Federation of Associations of the Cameroonian Diaspora (CASA-NET)]. In A. Nkoyock (Ed.), *Diaspora camerounaise: en dehors de l'État, au sein de la nation*: Kiyikaat Éditions.
- Deltombe, T., Domergue, M., & Tatsitsa, J. (2016). *La guerre du Cameroun. L'invention de la Françafrique*. Paris: La Découverte, https://www.editionsladecouverte.fr/la_guerre_du_cameroun-9782707192141.
- Tchingankong Yanou, M. (2018). Émigration et changements politiques au Cameroun [Emigration and political change in Cameroon]. In L. Chauvet, F. Gubert, T. Jaulin, & S. Mesplé-Somps (Eds.), *Les migrants, acteurs des changements politiques en Afrique ?* (pp. 53–67). Louvain-la-Neuve: De Boeck Supérieur; DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3917/dbu.chauv.2018.01.0053>.
- Nkuitchou Nkouatchet, R. (2019). *Le Cameroun contre sa diaspora [Cameroon against its Diaspora]* (Vol. Points de vue). Paris: L'Harmattan.
- World Bank, & KNOMAD. (2022). *Migration and development brief 36 - A war in a pandemic: Implications of the Ukraine crisis and COVID-19 on global governance of migration and remittance flows* (Vol. 36): World Bank.
- Fleischer, A. (2007). Family, obligations, and migration: The role of kinship in Cameroon. *Demographic Research*, 16, 413–440. <https://doi.org/10.4054/DemRes.2007.16.13>
- Gnimassoun, B., & Anyanwu, J. C. (2019). The diaspora and economic development in Africa. *Review of World Economics*, 155(4), 785–817. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10290-019-00344-3>
- Hall, P. (1986). *Governing the economy: The politics of state intervention in Britain and France*. Oxford University Press.

- Herweg, N., Zahariadis, N., & Zohnhöfer, R. (2018). The multiple streams framework: Foundations, refinements, and empirical applications. In P. A. Sabatier (Ed.), *Theories of the policy process* (pp. 17–53). Routledge.
- Huitema, D., Lebel, L., & Meijerink, S. (2011). The strategies of policy entrepreneurs in water transitions around the world. *Water Policy*, 13(5), 717–733. <https://doi.org/10.2166/wp.2011.107>
- Jones, M. D., Peterson, H. L., Pierce, J. J., Herweg, N., Bernal, A., Lamberta Raney, H., & Zahariadis, N. (2016). A river runs through it: A multiple streams meta-review. *Policy Studies Journal*, 44(1), 13–36. <https://doi.org/10.1111/psj.12115>
- Joseph, R. (1986). *Le mouvement nationaliste au Cameroun: les origines sociales de l'UPC [The nationalist movement in Cameroon: the social origins of the UPC]* (Vol. 28). Paris: Karthala Editions <https://www.karthala.com/947-le-mouvement-nationaliste-au-cameroun-les-origines-sociales-de-lupc-1946-1958.html>.
- Kane, A. (2001). Diaspora villageoise et développement local en Afrique: Le cas de Thilogne association développement [Village diaspora and local development in Africa: The case of Thilogne development association]. *Hommes & Migrations*, 1229(1), 96–107.
- Kingdon, J. W. (1984). *Agendas, alternatives, and public policies*. Boston, Mass: Little, Brown.
- Kingdon, J. W. (1995). *Agendas, alternatives, and public policies*. HaperCollins College Publisher.
- Knaggård, Å. (2015). The multiple streams framework and the problem broker. *European Journal of Political Research*, 54(3), 450–465. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1475-6765.12097>
- Maimbo, S. M., & Ratha, D. (2005). *Remittances development impact and future prospects*. The World Bank.
- Mberu, B. U., & Pongou, R. (2016). Crossing boundaries: Internal, regional and international migration in Cameroon. *International Migration*, 54(1), 100–118. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2435.2012.00766.x>
- MINEPAT. (2009b). *Cameroun Vision 2035 - Vision d'émergence à l'horizon 2035*. Yaoundé: Ministère de l'économie, de la planification et de l'aménagement du territoire
- MINEPAT. (2009a). *Document de stratégie pour la croissance et l'emploi*. Yaoundé: Ministère de l'économie, de la planification et de l'aménagement du territoire
- MINFI-MINEPAT. (2014). *Projet de performance des administrations - Chapitre 6: Ministère des relations extérieures*. Yaounde: Ministère des Finances et Ministère de L'économie, de la Planification et de L'aménagement du Territoire
- Mohamadou, A. (2010). *Building institutional cooperation between the diaspora and homeland governments in Africa: The cases of Ghana, Nigeria, Germany, USA and the UK*. ADPC.
- Monga, C., & Mensah, A. (2008). Conversation sur l'exil [Conversation on exile]. *Africultures*. <https://doi.org/10.3917/afcul.072.0068>
- Mucciaroni, G. (1992). The garbage can model & the study of policy making: a critique. *Polity*, 24(3), 459–482. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3235165>
- Nkuitchou Nkouatchet, R. (2022). Le Cameroun et le tabou de la marginalisation de sa diaspora [Cameroon and the taboo of the marginalization of its diaspora]. *L'Espace Politique. Revue en ligne de géographie politique et de géopolitique*. <https://doi.org/10.4000/espacepolitique.9610>
- Ntienjom Mbohoh, L. F., & Tomkinson, S. (2022). Rethinking elite interviews through moments of discomfort: The role of information and power. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/16094069221095312>
- OIM, & MINREX. (2016). *MIDA-Cameroon project: Guide for harnessing the potential of Cameroonian diaspora*. Dakar: International Organization for Migrations Editing Services
- O'Sullivan, J. (1972). Union des populations du Cameroun (UPC): a study in mass mobilization. *Ufahamu: A Journal of African Studies*, 3(1), 53–72. <https://doi.org/10.5070/f731016387>
- Owona Nguini, M. É., & Menthong, H.-L. (2018). « Gouvernement perpétuel » et démocratisation janusienne au Cameroun (1990–2018) [“Perpetual government” and Janusian democratization in Cameroon (1990–2018)]. *Politique Africaine*, 150(2), 97–114. <https://doi.org/10.3917/polaf.150.0097>
- Parsons, C. (2002). Showing ideas as causes: The origins of the European Union. *International Organization*, 56(1), 47–84. <https://doi.org/10.1162/002081802753485133>
- Patterson, R. (2006). Transnationalism: Diaspora-homeland development. *Social Forces*, 84(4), 1891–1907. <https://doi.org/10.1353/sof.2006.0103>
- Pellerin, H., & Mullings, B. (2013). The ‘Diaspora option’, migration and the changing political economy of development. *Review of International Political Economy*, 20(1), 89–120. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09692290.2011.649294>
- PRC. (2005b). *Décret n°2005/286 du 30 juillet 2005 portant organisation du Ministère des relations extérieures*. Présidence de la République du Cameroun

- Ratha, D., Mohapatra, S., Özden, Ç., Plaza, S., Shaw, W., & Shimeles, A. (2011). *Leveraging migration for Africa remittances, skills, and investments*. World Bank.
- Rearidon, L. (2018). Networks and problem recognition: Advancing the multiple streams approach. *Policy Sciences*, 51(4), 457–476. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11077-018-9330-8>
- Rhodes, R. A. W. (1999). *Control and power in central-local government relations* (2nd ed.): Aldershot : Ashgate.
- Rhodes, R. A. W. (2007). Understanding governance: Ten years on. *Organization Studies*, 28(8), 1243–1264. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0170840607076586>
- Rhodes, R. A. W. (2008). Policy network analysis. In M. Moran, M. Rein, & R. E. Goodin (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of public policy* (pp. 425–447). Oxford University Press.
- Robinson, S., & Eller, W. (2010). Participation in policy streams: Testing the separation of problems and solutions in subnational policy systems. *Policy Studies Journal*, 38(2), 199–216. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1541-0072.2010.00358.x>
- Shön, D., & Rein, M. (1994). *Frame reflection: Toward the resolution of intractable policy controversies*: Basic Books.
- Smith, A. (2000). Policy networks and advocacy coalitions: Explaining policy change and stability in UK industrial pollution policy? *Environment and Planning c: Government and Policy*, 18(1), 95–114. <https://doi.org/10.1068/c9810j>
- Somerville, W., & Goodman, S. W. (2010). The role of networks in the development of UK migration policy. *Political Studies*, 58(5), 951–970. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9248.2009.00814.x>
- Stoker, G. (1998). Governance as theory: Five propositions. *International Social Science Journal*, 50(155), 17–28. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-2451.00106>
- Tangang Meli, L. (2015). Organisations de la diaspora camerounaise: vue d'ensemble et quelques pistes de gouvernance [Cameroonian Diaspora Organizations: Overview and Some Governance Issues]. In A. Nkoyock (Ed.), *Diaspora camerounaise: en dehors de l'État, au sein de la nation*: Kiyikaat Éditions.
- World Bank. (2022). *Personal remittances, received - current US\$* (Vol. 2022). World Bank.
- Zahariadis, N. (2008). Ambiguity and choice in European public policy. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 15(4), 514–530. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13501760801996717>
- Zahariadis, N. (2014). Ambiguity and multiple streams. In P. A. Sabatier & C. Weible (Eds.), *Theories of policy processes* (3rd ed., pp. 25–58). Westfield Press.
- Zahariadis, N., & Allen, C. S. (1995). Ideas, networks, and policy streams: Privatization in Britain and Germany. *Review of Policy Research*, 14(1–2), 71–98. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1541-1338.1995.tb00622.x>
- Zohlnhöfer, R., Herweg, N., & Rüb, F. (2015). Theoretically refining the multiple streams framework: An introduction. *European Journal of Political Research*, 54(3), 412–418. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1475-6765.12102>
- Zohlnhöfer, R., Herweg, N., & Zahariadis, N. (2022). How to conduct a multiple streams study. In C. M. Weible & S. Workman (Eds.), *Methods of the policy process* (pp. 23–50). Routledge.

Publisher's Note Springer Nature remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.

Springer Nature or its licensor (e.g. a society or other partner) holds exclusive rights to this article under a publishing agreement with the author(s) or other rightsholder(s); author self-archiving of the accepted manuscript version of this article is solely governed by the terms of such publishing agreement and applicable law.