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LEGON CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS AND DIPLOMACY,

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TOPIC: "SPORTS AS A TOOL FOR PROMOTING DIPLOMACY: A CASE STUDY OF AFCON"

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DECLARATION

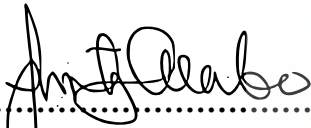
I, Samuel Adjetey Cleland, hereby declare that this dissertation is a product of a study conducted by me under the supervision of Amb. Dr. Kodzo Alabo. I further declare that no part of this dissertation has been presented anywhere for any other purpose.



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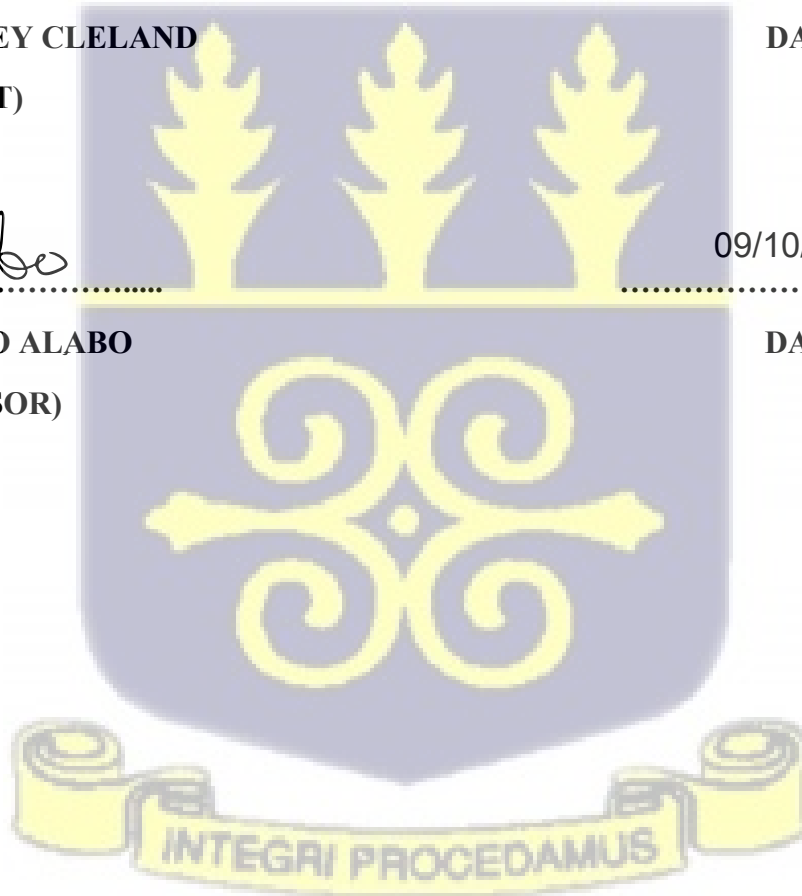
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AMB. DR. KODZO ALABO
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DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my son Nii Adjei Cleland, Bernice Anima Osei and my entire family and to everyone who contributed towards its successful completion.



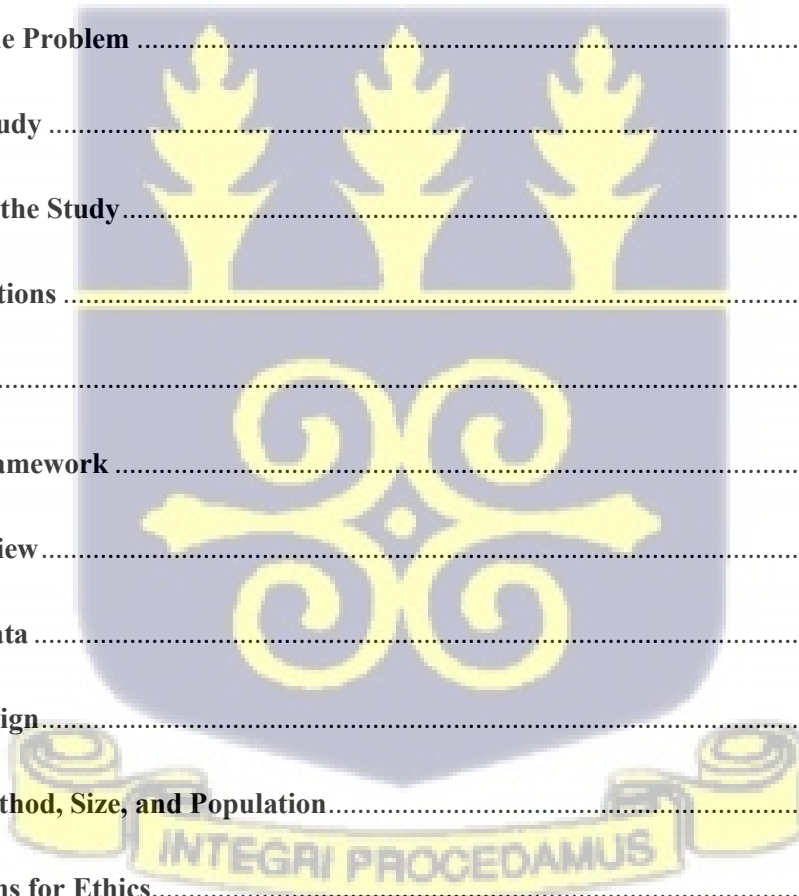
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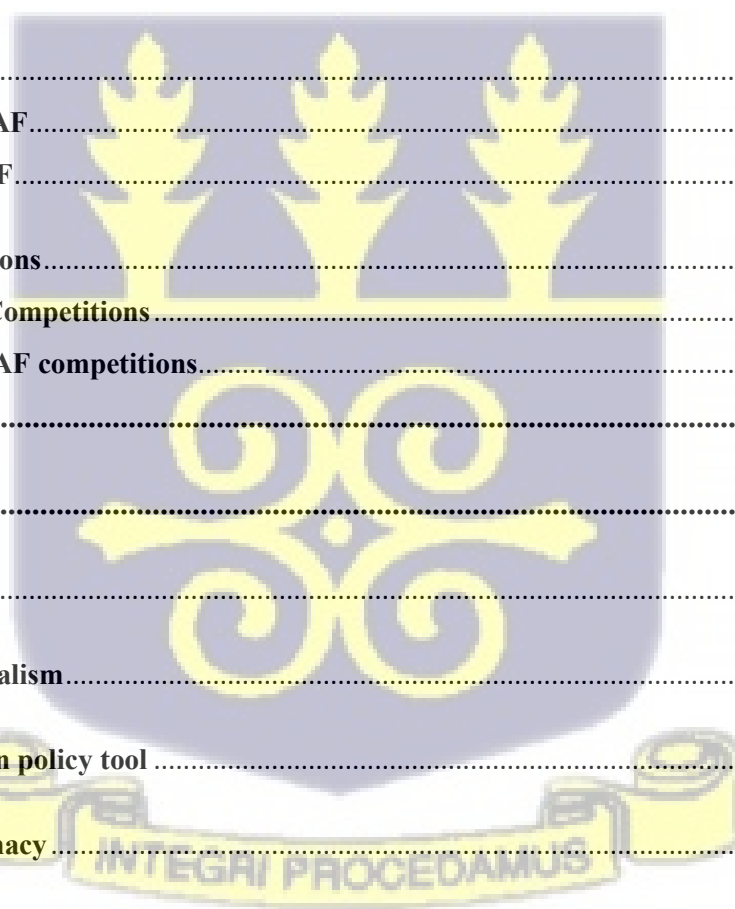


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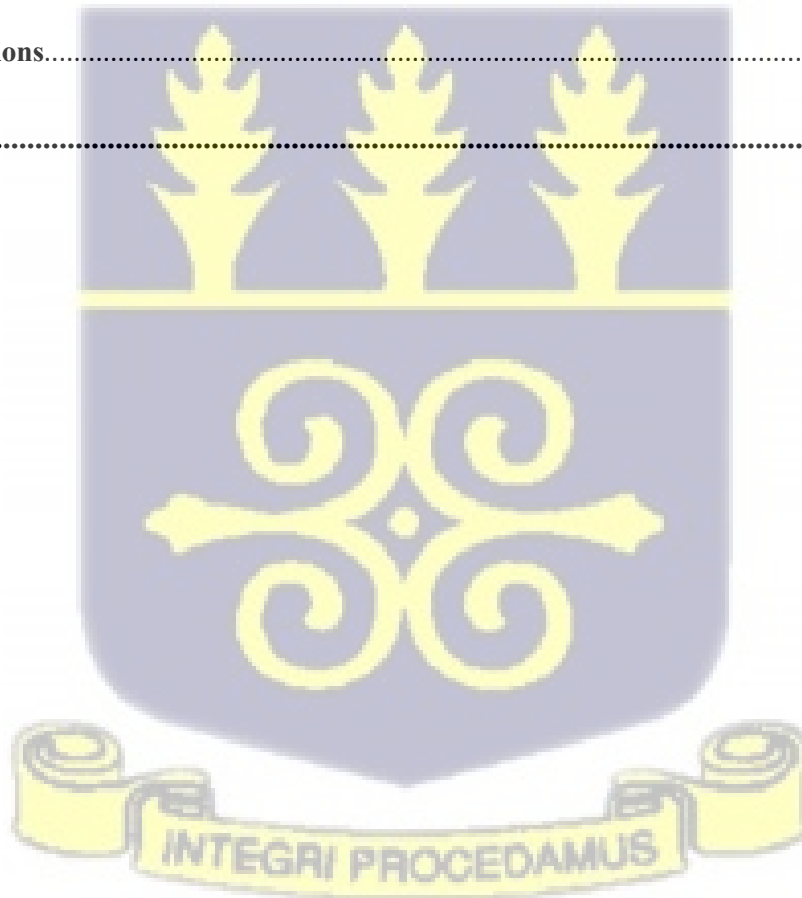
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ACRONYMS/ABBREVIATIONS

AFCON	-	African Cup of Nations
AU	-	African Union
BBC	-	British Broadcasting Corporation
CAF	-	Confederation of African Football
CNN	-	Cable News Network
COMESA	-	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
EAC	-	East African Community
ECOWAS	-	Economic Community of West African States
EU	-	European Union
FASA	-	Football Association of South Africa
FIFA	-	Fédération Internationale de Football Association
GDP	-	Gross domestic product
IOC	-	International Olympic Committee
IGAD	-	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
KPL	-	Kenya Premier League
MDC	-	Multichoice Diski Challenge
PNDC	-	Provisional National Defence Council
PSL	-	Premier Soccer League
SABC	-	South African Broadcasting Corporation
SAFA	-	South African Football Association
SASF	-	South Africa Soccer Federation
UEFA	-	Union of European Football Associations
WAFU	-	West African Football Union



ABSTRACT

For peaceful coexistence, a way of harmonizing the different cultures is key. Sports is an important tool for uniting people, friends and foes, but is also an essential tool in promoting diplomatic relations among states and international organizations. Knight (2020) argues that, diplomacy can be turned to when circumstances necessitate a debate on a round table for people from all walks of life. The research centres on how AFCON, a biennial soccer men's tournament, promotes diplomacy and, in doing so, its achievement with the contribution of all the stakeholders involved, and finally what factors have made it hard for the tournament to promote diplomacy. The research elucidates States' acknowledgement of this reality and, in some instances, has exploited their influence in global sports in the guise of soft power efforts to further their goals in international affairs. This involves developing and fostering an African identity through AFCON, collaborating with the world community through sports to construct a fair and inclusive global, financial, political, and social order, and advocating adherence for international law and treaty responsibilities, such as the abolition of apartheid and racism. The conceptual framework underpinning this study centres on the concept of power, specifically relating to soft power derived from the shoulders of the civil society. Additionally, this study employs a qualitative research method. Findings from this study show that AFCON has a critical role in fostering unity, promoting nationalism, as a tool for building nation's international image, as a means for integration and has economic benefits to participating countries despite some of the challenges the Confederation for African Football is confronted with, such as corruption and political instability in host countries, among others.



CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Within the international system, states are the leading actors and interact with other states in accelerating trade and economic activities, promoting their national interests and promoting peaceful coexistence through international organizations such as the UN and AU. One of the aims of the United Nation is to preserve and promote peace and security within the international system, and one way of achieving this is through the use of sports which is a tool for soft power by supporting the IOC in organizing the Olympic Games. Sports have the potential to promote the national interest and values of a state, and a tool for promoting diplomacy. It also attracts a lot of interest from millions of people.

The United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on Sport for Development and Peace, which analyzes the possible contribution that sport may make towards realizing the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), has published reports on this subject. Programs that promote sports for development and peace are successful in promoting the rights of all societal members to engage in sports and leisure activities. Sport and play are combined with other non-sport components in effective Sport for Development and Peace programs to increase their efficacy. They are implemented in a coordinated manner with other local, regional, and global peace and development programs so that they reinforce one another. According to the report, sport is ideally equipped to support nations' efforts to "build back better." Sport, however, cannot, by itself, guarantee peace or resolve complex social. Sport should be positioned as a highly effective tool in a broader toolkit of development practices and should be applied holistically and in conjunction with other interventions and programs.

One of the aims of the African Union is "to coordinate and intensify their cooperation and efforts to achieve a better life for the peoples of Africa", and this goal is achieved through the Confederation of African Football, which organizes the biennial competitions for both men and women football. CAF as an

actor in international sports and a member of FIFA provides the stage for African states to build and promote their image through their participation in the AFCON tournaments.

AFCON has gained worldwide recognition because of globalization in recent times and forms part of the social life of many Africans while promoting tourism, economic, social, cultural and political integration of African states. In the last four decades or more, African governments and the African Union have used AFCON as a means of strengthening diplomatic relations and accelerating development through the national interests among member-states.

AFCON competitions have paved the way for developing and emerging African countries such as Equatorial Guinea, Angola, South Africa, Morocco, Ghana, and Cameroon to host competitions to achieve their national interest as well as diplomatic successes, which are remarkable in recent years. In a similar vein, the international organizations such as UN, EU and AU which take pivotal role in the organization of such sporting competitions have established a strong track record of winning the public's trust by organizing such events. The 2021 edition of AFCON has helped to change the perception of people and institutions which are not of African origin. Prior to the tournament, there were a lot of criticisms from some European club managers and institutions against CAF's decision to go ahead with the tournament amid COVID-19 concerns, as these clubs were afraid of losing African players from their various leagues. For instance, the European Club Association (ECA) wrote to FIFA to warn against the participation of players of African descent in the tournament. Despite the numerous attacks on AFCON, Patrick Vieira, currently the only black manager in the Premier League, denounced negative sentiments and attitudes against the tournament. He expressed the belief that the tournament merited the respect shared by Ian Wright, a renowned Arsenal and England striker, that such negative thoughts were racist in relation to the African players and countries. However, some of the negative perceptions held by some managers in the Premier League like Liverpool's manager, Jurgen Klopp, changed when one of his players, Sadio Mane

lifted the trophy with Senegal. Adherent followers or reporters of football can debate that the success of Sadio Mane at AFCON gave Liverpool as a club and its fanbase a bigger recognition on the diverse and young population of the African continent. Hence, AFCON helped to improve the image of Africa to some extent and advance the fight against racism and the promotion global peace and development.

Traditional forms of diplomacy remain essential in how states relate among themselves within the international system. (Murray, 2013) opines that new forms of diplomacy have emerged which include sports diplomacy as a means for states to promote their diplomatic goals. According to (Nye, 2011), soft power is a potent factor that shapes foreign public opinion and is a less costly alternative compared to the use of force.

Sports diplomacy is a research area which has not been largely explored within the African context to help ascertain the extent to which it impacts diplomatic relations among African states. Thus, this research interrogates and analyzes its importance and the challenges therein.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Diplomacy has been used as one of the peaceful tools other than war to resolve conflicts within the international system. States have joined international organizations that employ diplomatic tools such as negotiations, peacebuilding and international conferences to promote good neighbourliness and peaceful coexistence. Diplomats try to help their own country, encourage cooperation between nations, and maintain friendly relations among nations. Diplomacy is not limited to interactions between different governments, but it can also occur between other sites of power and influence, such as huge corporations, religious organizations, NGOs, and even terrorist groups. is a crucial tool required to operate successfully in today's international system, and it is vital to ensure that humankind can navigate an ever-growing list of shared challenges such as climate change, pandemics, transnational terrorism, and nuclear proliferation that may be our undoing if left unresolved, (McGlinchey, 2017).

Sporting events such as AFCON serve as a platform for strengthening diplomatic relations among states within the international system. It is fascinating to consider sports which are competitive in nature as means of promoting diplomacy. Redeker notes that sports and diplomacy are incompatible and that the use of sports in international relations is mostly beneficial to sporting organizations than states. This is evident as he opines that, “sports are political opium, a para-diplomatic theatre where states and their international relations fall victim to the sportive illusion.”

However, scholars such as (Warren, 2018) have a different view, which is that sports diplomacy which knows no title, race, or religion is the best form of diplomacy to turn to. Hence, this study will try to explore these varying opinions by focusing on how AFCON, a biennial soccer men's tournament, has helped promote diplomacy and, in so doing, how much it has achieved with the contribution of all the stakeholders involved; finally, what factors have made it hard for the tournament to promote diplomacy.

1.3 Scope of the Study

This research first looked at how sports can be utilized as a diplomatic tool to advance world peace. It also examined the establishment of the Confederation of African Football and its objectives in promoting football in the continent. The work centered on assessing how the African Cup of Nations tourney is used to foster good relations among African states, and also examining the challenges that confront the confederation and key stakeholders. This research covers the utilization of sports in the last five decades on the African continent.

1.4 Significance of the Study

With such a rich history dating back over 60 years ago and counting, the AFCON tournament could not have been existing today if it carried no benefits with it. What AFCON brings on board as far as benefits are concerned is diverse. The benefits can broadly be categorized into two, namely, the social benefits and the economic benefits.

The social benefits help develop better and healthy relationships between the stakeholders. They include intercultural exchanges, highlighting the key issues affecting the nations in the continent like the case of Apartheid in South Africa, where the then rulers of South Africa wanted the national men's soccer team to be fully constituted of the white Boers only. The tournament helped bring this segregation into the limelight, and as a result, South Africa was not allowed to participate in the AFCON. Additionally, AFCON, in its primary pursuance, due to interaction amongst the fans, has enabled people to appreciate their differences by embracing a bigger goal of cheering on their nations.

Economically, AFCON has always presented an international market where different people can sell their ideas, goods, and services. The host nations of the tournament have always boasted of a tremendous increase in revenue during such events, with the most recent case of Cameroon reporting a revenue of about \$83 million in the just concluded AFCON 2020. The tournament, through its sponsors, also put African talent on an international platform, like the case of Total Energies being the current key sponsor of the tournament.

All these benefits then must be what keeps the stakeholders engaged in this tournament. What will this study help in achieving as far as the AFCON tournament and its promotion of diplomacy are concerned? This study will shed light on the significant role of the AFCON tournament in promoting diplomacy. Over time as stated above, international talks and conventions have been given absolute authority as the only ways through which diplomacy can be promoted; however, this study explore how sports diplomacy can play a vital role in promoting diplomacy.

1.5 Research Questions

The whole of this study will be guided by but not limited to the following questions:

- How does the AFCON tournament promote diplomacy?

- What are the roles of the stakeholders in promoting diplomacy within the CAF establishment?
- What challenges confront the CAF in promoting diplomacy?

1.6 Objectives

- To analyze the various means that the AFCON tournaments have been used as a platform to promote diplomacy.
- To provide an overview of the Confederation of African Football (CAF), the roles played by the stakeholders, and CAF structures in promoting healthy diplomatic relations.
- Ascertain the challenges faced by CAF in promoting diplomacy.

1.7 Conceptual Framework

This study was conducted within the framework of Public Diplomacy:

According to (Cull, 2009), public diplomacy was introduced by Edmund Gullion who was an American diplomat to emphasize the importance of communication in promoting international relations. He describes public diplomacy as “an international actor’s attempt to manage the international environment through engagement with a foreign public” Cull argues that, states, non-governmental organizations, multi-national corporations, international organizations and terrorist groups are ‘actors’ in the international system. Cull further categorizes the forms of public diplomacy into five which include: Cultural Diplomacy, International Broadcasting, Advocacy and Listening, as the most essential for progressive forms of public diplomacy.

Joseph Nye (the author of *Bound to Lead*) described it as being divided into two major categories; soft power, and hard power. Hard power is associated with the economic payments, military interventions, or sanctions that a state takes part in. He defines it as the capacity a state has to convert potential power when

measured using their resources, into power that can be realized as measured through others' behaviour (Nye, 1990).

According to Nye (1990), public diplomacy is a form of soft power which recognizes that power could be exercised through opportunities, human rights, different seductive values, and democratic practices. Nye had realized that as early as in his period, there was an easier way for nations to achieve the outcomes they desire using non-coercive power as compared to the increasing cost of military force when considering international relations with others. He continues to describe that the costs that are incurred when using coercive power have led to less threatening sources of power becoming more important. Nye acknowledges that in an age where economies are becoming more information-based and transnational interdependence is increasing, power shifts and becomes less tangible, less transferable, and less coercive (Tella, 2021).

Nye further argued that soft co-optive power was of equal significance to hard command power such that a state's opposition to wishes relied on its ability to legitimize its power in others' eyes. Therefore, when ideology and culture were considered enticing, others would easily follow the nation and once it created international norms that coincided with those of its society, it would be unlikely to be required to alter them.

Nye refers to Leonard's three features of public diplomacy which exist due to the fusion of the interactions between governments and cultural elements. Leonard's first dimension is "daily communications, which involves explaining the context of domestic and foreign policy decisions". His second dimension, "develops a set of simple themes much as a political or advertising campaign does. The campaign plans symbolic events and communications over the course of the next year to reinforce central themes or to advance a particular government policy", which focuses on strategic communication. His final dimension

highlights the “development of lasting relationships with key individuals over many years through scholarships, exchanges, training, seminars, conferences, and access to media channels.”

Conversely, some scholars like Berridge and Melissen contend that public diplomacy affects the real nature of how traditional diplomacy is practised. Berridge asserts that “traditionalists see public diplomacy as a modern name for white propaganda- that is, propaganda admitting its source, and directed mainly at foreign publics, but also at the domestic constituency. Because this ‘fashionable practice’ is not diplomacy in their view, traditionalists consider public diplomacy a misnomer and a largely overrated and misunderstood activity.”

Sport, therefore, plays a significant role as a manifestation of public diplomacy and is necessary to study and comprehend the different circumstances where it can be considered to have been effective. Furthermore, with the international system of today that is increasingly interconnected, states attempt to utilize the diplomatic assets they possess to their fullest. For this research, public diplomacy will be used as a concept to ascertain how sports helps improves relations among states.

1.8 Literature Review

In the book, *Diplomacy: Theory and Practice*, (Berridge, 2010) defines diplomacy as “an essentially political activity and, well-resourced and skillful, a major ingredient of power.” He opines that states achieve their foreign policy objectives through their various diplomatic measures without relying solely on coercion or propaganda. In the traditional form of diplomacy, communication is the means through which diplomats promote foreign policies which are coordinated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with their diplomatic missions in foreign countries. The functions of these diplomatic missions include advancing friendly relations between states, negotiating on behalf of their sending states and citizens in a foreign country, promoting the policies of governments, and reporting on emerging issues in the host

country. He further explains that diplomacy between states is not only conducted through the ambassador or high commissioner but through platforms such as fora, consuls, and international conferences, through which the national interest of the states are enhanced. He mentions that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs can secure the interest of the state through public diplomacy that is different from the traditional type. The essence of the traditional form of diplomacy involves decision-making, formulation and implementation of policies between state authorities and the diplomatic missions while public diplomacy also involves state and non-state actors such as citizens and private organizations in achieving the same goals.

Public diplomacy has been instrumental in promoting the Islamic religion in developed countries, promoting democratic systems and ideals in developing and third world countries, broadcasting of information through radio services and the internet, exchange programs for scholars, and promotion of language and culture through the entablement of institutions such as the Confucius institute in various countries, as in the case of the China and the Chinese language. However, some states such as China have tried to curtail the extent to which her citizens are influenced through the internet and social media on the issue, hence have censured the internet.

Conversely, Berridge asserts that “traditionalists see public diplomacy as a modern name for white propaganda- that is, propaganda admitting its source, and directed mainly at foreign publics, but also at the domestic constituency. Because this ‘fashionable practice’ is not diplomacy in their view, traditionalists consider public diplomacy a misnomer and a largely overrated and misunderstood activity.”

Nye in *The Future of Power* contests that, there are no similarities between public diplomacy and propaganda.

In *Sports Exchange As A Tool Of Shaping State’s Image: The Case Of China*, (Kobierecki, 2018) asserts China is one of the countries which are using sports to shape their image internationally, as a means to change negative perceptions for a more appealing one. He further explains that China seeks to be known

as “a country that cooperates, loves peace and develops, and that is ready to play a constructive role in international politics.”, and pursues this objective by the use of “public diplomacy and nation-building” through sporting and cultural events, radio transmission and sports. For instance, the 2008 Beijing Olympics was one of the pathways for China to brand itself and to earn international “prestige” and recognition, while also engaging in “sports exchanges.” China initiated contacts with sports federations and officials from across South-East Asia and Latin America to engage in different sports programmes. These exchanges have been of mutual benefit to all parties, which consequentially help to build a good image for China.

Kobierecki states that Africa is one of the continents to benefit from sports exchanges with China, as part of the Chinese foreign policy, to facilitate the development of sports on the continent through bilateral agreements with African states. China has sponsored the construction of stadiums in Africa, such as in Ghana and Kenya, as a symbol of friendship. He further mentions that, Kejian which is a telecommunication firm that sponsors Everton of the English Premier League as a means of branding the Chinese firm through advertisement of the firm’s logo on jerseys and club paraphernalia, while engaging in exchange of Chinese coaches and players with the English club.

Kobierecki also argues that the Chinese government uses renowned Chinese sportspeople as ambassadors as part of its branding with the assumption that, these performing athletes attract attention and recognition to the country in the quest to achieve public diplomacy. Yao Ming who was a renowned basketball player became the face of China in the NBA in the United States when he was drafted in 2002 by Houston Rockets as the number-one pick, and played for nine seasons as a professional. Yao Ming was part of the All-Star NBA Team on five occasions. This was a way to improve the Chinese global image in the United States, while also promoting the NBA to Chinese fans. He was also made the flag bearer for the Chinese

contingent at the Beijing games, serving as a role model for the Chinese athletes as well as the face of China's international image branding ambassador, which is an avenue for the use of soft power.

According to Kobierecki, China is pursuing its goal of a good image internationally by promoting the Chinese Super League which hosts foreign players and coaches from across the globe to improve the quality of the league. Chinese clubs have also entered into partnership programmes with European clubs to develop talents. Some of these European clubs like Manchester United, Liverpool, Chelsea and Arsenal have held preseason tours on Chinese soil to connect with the fanbase while also providing expertise to their Chinese counterparts. These exchanges have contributed to improving the image of China on the global stage by deploying sports as a public diplomacy tool which has so far been successful. He concludes that China has, however, not abandoned its use of traditional diplomacy to pursue a good international image.

Sports and politics on the international scene by (Carrard, 2011), explains the link between politics and sports which are established on three conceptions which are:

- States control the organization of sports in totalitarian regimes and persist in states where political structures are “rigid”
- In some countries, all sporting-related activities are left in the hands of private bodies which are autonomous and free from any influence by governments.
- In Western Europe, the governments provide a legal and general framework for all sporting activities but leave it in the control of autonomous institutions to regulate.

According to Carrard, the first model is still evident in many states that are under authoritarian rule with very stringent political institutions; the second model, the private sector solely controls sporting-related issues most especially in the Scandinavian states such as Norway, Russia, Denmark and others. The third model has been prevalently adopted by many states, where governments collaborate with private and

autonomous sporting bodies. He emphasizes that the relations between sporting organizations and the government depends on the education of the youth, the outcome of sports on electoral systems and the political system within a state.

Carrard explains the three reasons why international organizations and governments are interested in sports, Firstly, sporting organizations which are non-state actors have no form of reliance on governments for financial assistance. Secondly, these sporting institutions take into cognizance, political, economic, social and cultural issues in organizing international competitions. Finally, these international sporting events provide an opportunity to foster friendships and improve relations.

Carrard traces the link between sports and diplomacy by referring to some historical antecedents. He states that South Africa was barred from participating in the Olympics and was suspended in 1970 due to the issues surrounding the Apartheid system which contravened the provisions of the Olympic Charter, which is the legal framework of the IOC. The charter prohibited members of the IOC from any form of discrimination based on race, colour, religion or politics. The Olympic charter states that “All constituents of the Olympic Movement, in particular the Noes, are bound to comply with the Olympic Charter, failing which they may be suspended by the Ioc or even lose their recognition and thus banned from the world sports community.” This provision is in line with the ideals and aims of the United Nation.

He further explains that IOC established a special mission which was made up of renowned Judge Keba Mbaye who at the time was the “Vice-President of the ICJ and an IOC member for Senegal”, to negotiate with the South African contingent which was made up of Nelson Mandela and President de Klerk and top politicians on the reinstatement of South Africa into the Olympic Movement as it was obvious there was going to be a new constitution which will be devoid of the apartheid system. South Africa was given reinstated and gained recognition as a member of the IOC. These steps which were the initial expulsion

and subsequent reinstatement were keenly followed globally which reiterated the impacts of sports on politics.

In the conclusion of his work, he describes the “new era”, where there is a partnership between the public and private sectors in the regulation and governance of the sporting organization. For instance, the IOC has been given observer status by the General Assembly of the United Nations, which reiterates the link between politics and sports. Again, Carrard refers to the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA), which is authorized to fight against doping in sports. He posits that “The board of the foundation and all decision-making bodies are composed, in equal numbers, of representatives of the governments and intergovernmental organizations on one side, of representatives of the Olympic and sports movement on the other side; neither side has the majority and all decisions, including those relating to finances and budgets, are being debated and reached based on a consensus of both sectors.” For this study, Carrard’s work will be fundamental as it examines the three conceptions and how they determine how sporting-related activities are adopted by governments, with some examples from historical events to portray the role of sports in promoting diplomacy.

By encouraging intercultural understanding and collaboration, international sports are continually moderating tensions between governments and their people. Since the ancient Greek Olympics, using the Olympics to boost a country's image abroad or strengthen ties between countries has been a diplomatic tactic (Pigman, 2010). Sports are beneficial because they may reach the elite politicians (the governments) and their people (spectators) through their shared passion for sports. As a result, international sporting events can help to promote bilateral and multilateral relations. Bilateral sporting events were frequently utilized to enhance contact between hostile countries during the Cold War. For example, ping-pong diplomacy between the US and China permitted two foes from the Cold War to rekindle conversation in

a politically divided climate. President Nixon's diplomatic initiative thawed relations with China, resulting in better bilateral relations between the two countries in the following decades.

Another example of excellent sports diplomacy was the cricket diplomacy between India and Pakistan. Pakistan's president at the time, General Zia ul-Haq, attended a test cricket match between Pakistan and India in Jaipur just after the Soviet invasion of 1987 in Afghanistan, a visit that appears to have helped calm tensions caused by Soviet pressure on India. In addition, India toured Pakistan in 2004 after a fifteen-year hiatus while pursuing diplomatic efforts to end mutual enmity that had persisted for half a century. For each other, both sides loosened their strict visa rules, allowing thousands of supporters to cross the border.

Ahsan (2022) argues that football can be used by China as a tool of soft power in the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) to placate critics. The CPEC is a strategic trade route to the Indian Ocean that promises to expand Chinese influence in the region and help Pakistan with economic development and stability. However, the project faces challenges such as armed dissidents, corruption, and political battles at the provincial level. Ahsan argues that football can be used to promote cultural exchange and understanding between China and Pakistan, and to create a positive image of China among Pakistanis. By promoting economic development in Xinjiang and reducing militant influence on native Uyghur separatists, CPEC is seen as a national security issue for China.

According to Søyland & Moriconi (2022), Qatar's multi-actor sports strategy involves the use of sports as a diplomatic tool to gain attraction and generate soft power globally. The strategy is shaped by Qatari political leaders' proactive foreign policy to diversify the country's economy and strengthen its reputation and prestige. The country particularly focuses on football and the host of sports events as diplomatic tools.

The strategy involves the following key elements:

- Diplomacy: Qatar uses sports as a diplomatic tool to strengthen its reputation and prestige globally. The country's sports diplomacy aims to promote peace, gather people, and show values
- Critics: Qatar's sports strategy has come under heavy criticism from several actors in international football, particularly due to PSG's outlandish transfer spending since the Qatari takeover
- Legitimizations: Qatar's sports strategy aims to legitimize the country's global reputation and image. The country seeks to promote human rights and development to further its soft power and global diplomacy.

Overall, Qatar's multi-actor sports strategy involves leveraging sports for public diplomacy outcomes, with a particular focus on football, to gain attraction and generate soft power globally, strengthen the country's reputation and prestige, and promote human rights and development to further its soft power and global diplomacy.

Sport, on the other hand, can exacerbate inter-national tensions, as the case of El Salvador and Honduras demonstrates. Numerous migrants travelled from El Salvador to Honduras in quest of an improved life, causing a deterioration in relations between the two countries. These two nations had to play against each other in June of 1969 in three matches to qualify for World Cup which aggravated their strained relationship even further. El Salvador severed its diplomatic connections with Honduras and began an assault on its neighbouring country as the final game between the two nations was ongoing. This conflict has since then been known as La Guerra del Futbol or the Soccer War.

When sports diplomacy is concerned, the fact that international organizations are in charge of organizing the sports offers a diplomatically favourable environment where a neutral host and mediator between parties can be provided by a third-party civil organization. The International Olympic Committee (IOC), which organizes the contemporary Olympic Games, is one of the most well-known international sports organizations. Fédération Internationale de Football (FIFA), and International Tennis Federation (ITF) are

groups that can be both causes of mediation for cooperation as well as cultural alienation through the organization of such events (Chalip, 2006).

To put it another way, international sporting events can help to resolve international problems, but only if they are well prepared and delivered. International institutions have been identified in both sports diplomacy scholarship and international relations as platforms used to share norms among states, which facilitate collaboration but also produce tension. These events can generate a lot of money for both the government and private firms through sponsorships, government and commercial contracts, and tourism. As a result of the anthems, sports as a competition, symbolism and mass displays of patriotism, sports fans have become more emotionally invested in their national team and this results in a heightened sense of nationalism. Sport, in this case, runs counter to diplomacy, which is supposed to reduce friction. International athletic events are emotional and intense events, and the idea of utilizing sports to bring distant nations closer together may seem far-fetched (Kuper, 2010). Delay also points out that the competition causes sports to sever themselves from the laws that call for it to be civil and in the worst-case scenario, violence may arise.

Whether it's rioting or, in the worst-case scenario, war and terrorism, this inherent violence runs counter to the nature of diplomacy as peace (Heere et al., 2012). Because of the sport's competitive and often tribal nature, unscrupulous individuals can – similarly – utilize it to publicize their cause, promote terror, or disseminate a message to a large sporting audience. '171 sport-related terrorist incidents were registered between 1972 and 2005,' according to the report. These data confirm an undesirable element of sports diplomacy because just as the events provide for the propagation of certain sporting values, there is a strong connection that lies between using the same means to publicize antidiplomatic themes.

As a result, sports diplomacy has an issue with deception. We wonder if FIFA President Sepp Blatter is referring to the same game that generates Thierry Henry handballers and Zinedine Zidane head-butters

when he states that football can race mountains, develop, and move poverty because it is a representation of citizenship, good sportsmanship, and peace (Tella, 2021). Dopers, cheaters, dog-fighters, rapists, gamblers, as well as a slew of other nefarious personalities and elements, are all part of the sport's reality. As a result, when a State Department official claims that sports diplomacy is not actually about competitiveness at all, it is important to take notice. It is, therefore, about dialogue, leadership, diversity, and teamwork which may come across as a little idealistic at first. The disconnection that exists between sporting ideals and athletic realities is detrimental to sports diplomacy because of undermining the credibility of the messenger, resulting in the message falling on deaf ears despite being positive. According to Redeker, a country may think that they are utilizing sports to facilitate its ends when in a real sense its citizens are picking up the exact opposite message from the one they are delivering.

John Charles and teams like the Corinthians that are considered true heroes are the exception as opposed to being the rule, as an educated athletic public knows. For its fans, sport is a highly emotional and intense game. While sport might reflect the positive qualities that Blatter and his colleagues promote, it is primarily linked with competitiveness and winning at the expense of the rival. If there is to be a future for sports diplomacy, it is no longer necessary to promote sport as a nice and fluffy cure, because this is not the case (Rose and Spiegel, 2011). The diplomatic understanding of sport appears to be significantly different from that of the general public. As a result, there's a risk that proponents of sports diplomacy will come across as uneducated, aloof, and remotely utopian.

The sporting events can also be viewed throughout history through their contributions to the hosts and visiting states through the Successes and Failures of Sports Diplomacy:

1. Sports give international leaders an unofficial location and reason to meet where they can start dialogues. International sporting activities would therefore serve as a means of stretching and strengthening the relationship between two or more nations when either of them is the host.

2. Sporting activities provide insight into the countries hosting and educate others about its various aspects. Summer Games, as witnessed in 1936 were the first broadcast to 41 states and the hosting nations would pride in showcase how beautiful their countries were so that an image of positivity would be portrayed. Moreover, the development of technology has enhanced the experience further because more people can view sports on their devices or television and spread more information on the culture, tourist attractions, and infrastructure of the host cities.

3. Linguistic and cultural differences can be bridged using sports because the participating countries know the rules and adhere to them regardless of the differences that exist between them. Both the athletes and the sporting teams can be used to educate the people about the various states while promoting a mutual understanding of the distinct cultures.

4. Sporting events can be used to provide legitimacy for new states because international sports attract many people including political leaders as well as sports fans. The previously listed outcomes can, therefore, be achieved on this global stage while at the same time being used as a platform for the symbolic fight for the political independence of a nation.

This research paper will focus on the AFCON due to its rich history and wide fan base as seen by CNN sports reports of the AFCON being the most-watched tournament in Africa the fact that it is broadcast in 54 African territories and beyond to 107 million homes and it has a potential TV audience of 1.56 billion people (Hull, K. 2022).

The reviewed works above by the various scholars are important for this study in ascertaining the extent to which African states can use sports, for that matter AFCON can improve diplomatic relations.

1.9.1 Sources of Data

This study mostly used primary and secondary sources of data, such as information from textbooks, journal articles, and e-documents from LECIAD and the Balme Library of the University of Ghana. It was

primarily library-researched. Reports and other documents came from the websites of sports federations like CAF and FIFA, among others. However, primary information was collected from a survey administered to a retired diplomat, sports journalists from Ghana, and football fans from some selected African countries such as Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria and Tanzania.

1.9.2 Research Design

The study relied on qualitative methods of gathering and evaluating data from chosen officials and individuals relevant to the study to address the research questions and achieve the research objectives indicated in chapter one. The qualitative approach to research is an interpretative, constructive and inductive and useful approach in research that typically investigates the values, attitudes, beliefs and meanings people identify with a given occurrence in an attempt to build an understanding (Bricki & Green, 2007; Cresswell et al., 2009). The choice of a qualitative approach was based on the findings of Berg and Lune (2012), where it was demonstrated that the qualitative approach involves the scientific process of observation in gathering non-numerical data and seeks to address the questions of "how" and "why" a certain phenomenon occurs rather than how frequently. The subjective meaning of people's behavior is what the qualitative approach is most interested in, rather than measurement or evaluation to make predictions about the future, which is the major goal of a quantitative study. Another benefit of the qualitative approach is that it makes it possible to understand people's values, actions and beliefs (Neuman 2014). A focus on the interpretation of an occurrence in its naturalistic setting, which provides context in terms of the meanings individuals ascribe to these contexts, allows for a more in-depth analysis of the subject at hand as it allows for a more defined approach to gathering non-numerical data, is why the qualitative research was chosen. By having African states host and take part in the AFCON, the approaches hastened the deeper explanations of the success of sports diplomacy. Semi-structured interviews were undertaken because they provided trustworthy, comparable, qualitative data that supported the secondary

data acquired. The information and opinions gathered from the interviews were sufficient to support the research, and it were qualitatively analyzed in the form of narratives, descriptions, and explanations by using the content analysis technique.

1.9.3 Sampling Method, Size, and Population

Purposive sampling, according to Guarte and Barrios, is the purposeful selection of sampling units based on their understanding of the relevant subject topic, within a population.

Purposive sampling is advised by Frankel for use in qualitative research since it aids in access to study sites and subjects should be identified and negotiated by researchers. This was the reason the strategy of purposive sampling was employed in this study in order to identify responders that are well-versed in and comprehend the interactions between sports and diplomacy. Fifty respondents in all were questioned.

1.9.4 Considerations for Ethics

All individuals whose opinions were sought provided their informed consent after being informed of the research's intended use. No one was paid or otherwise reimbursed for their participation in the interviews or discussions; they all consented to do so willingly. The study's main body does not, however, reveal the respondents' identities due to confidentiality concerns. Respondents' requests for anonymity and confidentiality were honored.

1.10 Limitations of the Study

The study was set for a predetermined period, at the onset, the deadline was set to be met but due to certain limitations, it was not an all-rosy study. For the interviews, reaching certain sports personnel proved to be hard since most cancelled the appointments at the very last-minute owing to unavoidable circumstances. Moreover, those that agreed to participate in the interview were not all that open. The difficulty in

disclosure was due to the doubt in the minds of the interviewees regarding what were our intentions with the information we collected.

1.11 Arrangement of Chapters

The research paper is divided into four chapters. Chapter one is made up of the introduction, the methodology that was mainly involved in gathering information that was found to be relevant for this research, and the challenges faced during the study. Chapter two focuses on the review of sports diplomacy, CAF and AFCON. Chapter three focuses on the findings and analysis. Chapter four then gives the summary of the findings, the challenges and recommendations.

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CHAPTER 2

OVERVIEW OF SPORTS AND DIPLOMACY: AFCON

2. 0 Introduction

This chapter gives an overview of sports diplomacy and Confederation of African Football (CAF) while examining various aspects like the history, objectives and competitions. The chapter highlights AFCON as a diplomatic tool in Africa.

2. 1 Sports Diplomacy

Different people define sports diplomacy in different terms as per their respective views. However, the definition of sports diplomacy narrows down to the use of sports activities to strengthen regional and international relations. These relations may be cultural, political, traditional, and economical. Over the years, sporting activities have been used to build positive relations between nations in a particular region and globally.

There are different ways in which sports are used to promote diplomacy. Organizing and hosting regional and international sports tournaments is one of the most commonly used sports diplomacy strategies. Other nations simply participate in the already organized events to promote friendship through sportsmanship. Whenever countries participate in sports with their game rivals, it promotes peace, boosting diplomacy.

Sports diplomacy can also fail at times. Authors Trunks and Heere used the past situation between Honduras and El Salvador to explain how sports can worsen the diplomatic state of nations. The two countries conflicted due to many migrants moving from El Salvador to Honduras. In June 1969, the two nations had to play against each other in a world cup qualifying match. As a result,

El Salvador ended all diplomatic ties with Honduras and then began to bomb them. This rivalry resulted in the Soccer War, also known as La Guerra del Futbol (Trunks and Heere, 2017).

Sports diplomacy has different strategies and approaches taken to achieve the desired result. One of the strategies is the *High-Performance* strategy. When a sports participant performs well, it goes on record and gets the media and people's attention. Second is the *Wide Media Coverage*. This particular strategy mainly focuses on media coverage. Media coverage aims to air the sports as widely as possible globally. As a result, the games and sports acquire more fans. Thirdly, the utilization of *Competent Cultural Ambassadors*. Every country has unique cultural values. These values earn national respect on international levels. Some countries use their successful athletes as ambassadors to market their unique culture to the world.

2. 2 Importance of Sports Diplomacy

Soft power

Sports diplomacy may get used as a means to exercise soft power. Soft power is when a nation attracts international attention by marketing its values and culture. Sports provide a podium for showcasing different cultural practices and values. It is known as soft power due to its persuasive nature. Cultural practices and values can easily get exchanged during organized sports events. As a result, the friendship between nations may strengthen amid interest in each other's cultural practices and values. In addition, friendship is often not forceful since no threats or tension are involved.

On the contrary, the mutual relation grows with interest from both parties hence the term soft power. Foreign states may use sports events to reach their foreign policy agenda. Moreover, a participating party may assign clubs, sports organizations, and people with great influence to

capture a state government's attention during sports. The participant may succeed without force or pressure, acquiring soft power through sports diplomacy.

Source of cultural attraction

Sports diplomacy also acts as a source of cultural attraction. During international sports tournaments, the host nation receives visitors from other countries. Apart from supporting their teams, they may tour the host nation just to see what the country looks like. During their tour, they interact with the natives and exchange cultural values. The hosts may also use the opportunity to market their culture and values. The foreigners may then carry the new culture and values back home. The foreigners may come back as tourists to experience the sightseeing and tradition with which they were impressed yet again. Individuals from foreign states also understand each other's beliefs and learn how to tolerate one another's culture and traditions.

An example is when a tournament gets held in a Muslim-dominant state, and the participants include Christian-dominant states. The hosts would want to showcase their way of doing things, and the visitors would learn how the hosts operate. Ultimately, they learn to tolerate each other's traditions and values. Therefore, sports diplomacy is a way to exchange cultural practices and values to enhance peace and unity.

Promotion of the national interest

Sports diplomacy can also be used as a means of promoting the national interest. In a *Berlin Global* article, Petrova Anastasia, the author, states that Ministers and various Heads-of-State may take advantage of sports events to endorse a peaceful work environment (Petrova, 2018). In addition, the author states that, especially the hosts, may use the sporting opportunity to extend their international influence by highlighting their strengths to heighten their national prestige.

International sporting events also allow for dialogue as various Heads-of-State can peacefully discuss their differences.

Promotion of Inclusion and non-discrimination

Regional and global sports events often get used to discourage various forms of discrimination in the world. Currently, many nations that host different tournaments and games discourage racial discrimination. In doing so, the hosts put up written banners in the stadia or areas where the games get held with messages that discourage racism. On the side of Inclusion, countries and regions organize tournaments and games that include people with disability and women. For example, women's football has grown since many regions and states have embraced the culture of including and supporting women in the game. In addition, nations organize tournaments specifically for women. The same case applies to people with disabilities. Various tournaments like the Paralympics give people with disabilities a sense of international and regional sports inclusion.

2.3 Uses of Sports diplomacy in contemporary international relations

Politics and leadership often accompany sports. Therefore, good international relations must exist for nations to cooperate in a unified way. Many countries and states across the world have embraced the existence of sports to build strong bonds with each other. International sports have a unifying factor in that all competitors compete under the same rules. All the athletes in international competitions have similar goals in mind. Moreover, when athletes from different countries meet and identify with one common goal and sports culture, it promotes world peace, strengthening positive relations between nations and states.

Sports also gets used to create trade allies between states and nations. During sports, the host nation's leaders often take the opportunity to meet the leaders from different foreign countries with

the intent to expand trade boundaries. In this case, the sporting events provide unofficial friendly meeting reasons for heads of state and nations, where they can discuss any topic of their choice.

In the case of improving international tourism, the host nation often encourages foreigners to visit their country for sight viewing. The latter gets done with the hope that foreigners would like their tourism attraction sites for future tourism visits.

Sporting events also help state leaders market their countries and spread peaceful messages. These leaders take advantage of the speeches they can give during the tournaments. Examples are during the FIFA World Cup and other major tournaments when heads of state are allowed to speak. Their respective speeches always reach many people since the media coverage is always diverse.

2.4 Emerging Issues of Sports Diplomacy

While sports are considered one of the most successful ways to promote peace and unity, some critics put the idea in the debate. Arguably, some of Africa's most successful and elite football clubs were founded based on ethnicity. According to Pannenberg (2010), a cultural anthropologist, ethnicity has heightened football rivalry in countries like Cameroon. These matches between the Cameroonian ethnic rival teams often get viewed to determine the ruling political side. The ethnic division in football even narrows down to small village teams. The pride that comes with winning makes the stakes high enough to sparkle violence whenever a side is dissatisfied.

In Africa, football can get viewed as coming in handy with politics. When politics interfere with football, nations have rivalry and disunity due to regional or international political differences. The author, Pannenberg, in his scholarly work, gave an example of the historic incident between Egypt and Algeria during a World Cup qualifiers match in 2009. Tension was too match to the extent that some political leaders threw tantrums at their rivals in the form of abusive words and political denunciations. The hosts, Egypt, went to the extent of stoning their opponent's bus. The game got

played on a neutral ground, Sudan, where military troops took charge of peacekeeping. This incident between Algeria and Egypt shows that football can create rifts between African nations.

During CAF's early stages, African leaders used football in their Pan-Africanism endeavors. An example is the former president of Ghana, Kwame Nkrumah. The former Ghanaian president used the Africa Cup of Nations games to spread unity and good relations between Ghana and other African nations. The former president also founded a Real Republican team to spread his ideologies (Pannenberg, 2010). On the contrary, the Real Republicans team only created rivalries since it was formed on a political basis and had different political ideologies than other political groups. Ghana's success in AFCON also lasted until former president Kwame Nkrumah was out of power in 1966. Afterward, Ghana suffered a great decrease in football dominance since the ruling political side did not continue with the former president's footballing ideologies.

The author Pannenberg argues that football unity may sometimes last as long as the match lasts. Fans can maintain peace until the match's final result. Fans may create rivalry as a result of dissatisfying match outcomes. When the rivalry gets to a personal level, it may lead to war. A question can, however, get posted on whether football can end an existing rivalry or war. An example in history is the Liberia and Ivory Coast incident. In an organized match, The Ivory Coast national football team captain, Didier Drogba, pleaded with the bandits who lowered their guns and weapons. During the football match held in Bouake city, Didier Drogba pleaded with the people to stop the war.

In his work, the cultural anthropologist argued that Didier Drogba's plea for peace might not have solved the problem from its roots (Pannenberg, 2010). This reason is that football does not create existing political and power rivalries. Therefore, football, arguably, cannot eradicate a war or conflict that already exists.

2.5 Overview of CAF and AFCON

2.5.1 History of CAF

The Confederation of African Football (CAF), the current governing body of African Football, was formed in 1954 in Switzerland. It was the first time that Africa earned recognition to get representation in the FIFA Committee. Sudan, South Africa, Egypt, and Ethiopia were the four African representatives that have joined FIFA in recent years. The Confederation's first president was Abdallah Salem, who got chosen after CAF's constitutional act was signed in Sudan. It is, however, notable that before the formation of the CAF, missionaries and the colonial governments used football as a game to instill discipline and order during their leisure time (Goldman & Mashinini, 2019). Therefore, by the time CAF got formed, most African countries had gained independence, paving the way for Africa to have its own football governing body. Furthermore, football was widely used in Africa's postcolonial period to promote Pan-Africanism which eventually brought about unity. Furthermore, some African nations, like Kenya, Ghana, and Nigeria, marked their independence with football tournaments (Goldman & Mashinini, 2019).

In the case of South Africa, the country had the Football Association of South Africa (FASA), which was for whites only. FASA, originally known as the South African Football Association, was formed in 1892. FASA made it difficult for South Africa to identify with other African nations in football due to its racial segregation nature. FASA identified itself as a whites-only organization which was not received well by other football organizations pioneered by Africans. It is also of great interest how the first African leaders, like Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, used football to encourage and spread unity among African nations. It is also important to note that by the time CAF got formed, Sudan, Egypt, Ethiopia, and South Africa had already joined FIFA, and each got a representation at the FIFA Congress in Switzerland. The African representatives met in 1956 at

another Congress meeting 1956 and developed the new Confederation's rules for the Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON). It was afterward that the first Africa Cup of Nations got held, in which South Africa did not participate (Goldman & Mashinini, 2019). Following South Africa's expulsion from CAF was followed by FASA's suspension from FIFA.

Apartheid rule in South Africa pressured the team's attempts to participate in international competitions. Later, when FIFA reinstated FASA, CAF sought the Soviet and Asian National Association's assistance with the Brazilian Football Association, which helped CAF push for South Africa's suspension again (Goldman & Mashinini, 2019).

Many nations joined CAF, and it had gained a membership of fifty-six by the year 2018. The membership included other nations like Zanzibar, which had not yet gained membership with FIFA. CAF constituted regional zones which included East, West, South, and North Africa. CAF influenced the independence of many African countries, and it grew under FIFA. African football influenced the inter-continental host's rotation of the World Cup. This influence saw Africa host a World Cup tournament for the very first time in South Africa in 2010.

CAF got formulated with the overall power to oversee all football activities around the continent. These include the Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON) for both men and women, the Futsal Africa Cup of Nations, the African Nations Championship for domestic players, Beach Soccer Africa Cup of Nations, and Men and Women's Under 23, Under 20, and 17 national teams. Currently, CAF also organizes the African Champions League, where elite clubs across Africa get to compete. In addition to the African Champions League is the Confederations Cup. The tournaments are held occasionally by CAF in different host nations on the continent. Furthermore, football at the club level enables players to play for different clubs around the continent (Goldman & Mashinini, 2019).

2.5.2 Objectives of CAF

To Manage African Football

Through CAF, Africa as a continent can now manage its football games. It is important to have one unifying body that governs football in Africa as a continent. CAF is therefore responsible for organizing football tournaments and overseeing club and international football across Africa. As a result, CAF provides a senior body where a national team can take complaints and football grievances. As a senior independent body, CAF can also step in to solve football matters that arise in different African regions. The Confederation has, over the years, attracted the attention of African nations to become members for Africa to have unified football values and culture under the Confederation's government.

To make African Football globally competitive.

CAF strives to market African football to the world by organizing and overseeing African competitions. The competitions organized by CAF act as platforms for many talented African players to show the world what they can do in football. Moreover, during international football competitions, various football clubs worldwide gain interest in key talented players identified by their respective scouts. Over the years, CAF has strived to African market football by ensuring African tournaments are aired on international media platforms. This way, African football gains an intercontinental fan base. When African tournaments enter the intercontinental sports media market, African football becomes competitive worldwide. In the end, big world clubs would sign African star players for the sake of world competitions and a media fan base.

When a nation participates well in CAF-organized tournaments, it improves on the FIFA ranking list. Therefore, the more CAF organizes tournaments for teams to participate, the more the national teams get many chances of improving in the world FIFA ranking. Furthermore, match officials in

the CAF tournaments also get global recognition. This recognition is usually evident when African referees and match officials are selected to officiate football games at the world cup. The same case applies the team managers and coaches. Many African coaches managed their teams to victory in CAF tournaments. As a result, the coaches got called up to much bigger teams worldwide, which proved to the entire world that African football is competitive.

To promote good relations among the players, zonal unions and clubs, and officials.

The Confederation seeks to bring all nations of Africa into one football organization. This organization, in turn, promotes unity (CAF, 2017). Whenever CAF organizes tournaments, different match officials from different zones are selected to officiate the matches. Players also get to travel to different continental zones to participate. This movement builds the participants' exposure and unifies them, participants. For example, each team's national anthem gets played before national games, and all the other participants join their opponents as they show respect for one another's country. In addition, before the kickoff of the tournament, international leaders give unifying speeches that help the football teams identify themselves as one football community.

Players get to recognize and identify with one another's talents during football games. The players' identity promotes good sportsmanship among the players. For example, good players from the Southern zone get to meet and play with equally good players from the Western zone. On other occasions, players and coaches move from their regional home zones to other zones to further their careers. This player and staff movement strengthen the relationship between the zones from which the football sports person comes and the destined zones. The same applies to match officials who officiate CAF matches at the international level. Occasional movement of players from one zone to other helps create good bonding times whenever they meet others from different zones.

Maintaining good friendships between African football organizations and other global football organizations.

For African football to remain competitive, Africa as a continent has to maintain a good friendship with other global football organizations (CAF, 2017). CAF, therefore, represents African football at a continental level. The Confederation protects Africa's footballing interests while making intercontinental friends as well. CAF allows its players to play anywhere in the world and makes sure to follow global football rules like the FIFA rules and regulations governing global football activities.

Helps with the campaign against doping.

CAF discourages the use of drugs by taking stern measures against players found to be taking drugs. The Confederation ensures all the players undergo a scheduled drug test to identify the players involved with drugs. An example is when CAF banned Odalapo Augustine, an Enyimba FC player, in 2021 after testing positive for prohibited drugs during a drug test. CAF took the disciplinary action and suspended the player for a year (CAF, 2021).

FIFA regulations are against doping. As a result, CAF must join the fight against doping to maintain global footballing standards while at the same time maintaining a good relationship with other global footballing organizations.

Respect African Union measures for cultural, educational, and sports promotion.

The African Union also has its ethics and value codes put in place to promote sporting culture and education. Moreover, the union consists of all African countries. Hence, it tries to protect the interests of all its member states. Therefore, it is important for CAF to support AU's attempts to improve the sporting and educational culture in the continent.

Protect the independence of African football

Politics differ in different nations and regions. However, politics should not interfere with football competitions across the continent. CAF, therefore, makes efforts to protect football games in the continent by governing football independently. As a result, CAF manages football without political interference (CAF, 2021).

2.6 Competitions of CAF

The Confederation of African Football organizes football competitions for men and women at the club, national, regional, continental, and intercontinental levels.

2.6.1 Club Competitions

Africa Super League

The twenty-four-team tournament got scheduled to begin in August 2023 under CAF (Dove, 2021). The organization came after the FIFA president announced it in 2019. The tournament was launched in Tanzania to attain a financial threshold to sponsor many African football infrastructures (Tovodounon, 2021).

CAF Champions League

This tournament was known as the African Cup of Champions Club. The tournament, held every year, consists of elite clubs across Africa in double-legged group knockout stages. The honorable tournament also acquired the name TotalEnergies Champions League from its main sponsor partner (CAF, 2022). The winner of this tournament gets a chance to participate in the FIFA Club World Cup tournament. In addition, the winner also gets to compete in the CAF Super Cup. The elite tournament was founded in 1964 and later got rebranded in 1997.

CAF Confederation Cup

The CAF-organized tournament also got a name from its main sponsorship partner- TotalEnergies CAF Confederation Cup. The fifty-nine-team tournament was formulated from CAF Cup and



Africa Cup Winner's Cup under the organization of CAF in 2004. The tournament winners also get the chance to compete in the CAF Super Cup with the winners of the CAF Champions League. Like the CAF Champions League, the tournament got held once every year.

CAF Super Cup

CAF first organized the tournament in 1993. The winners of the CAF Champions League get to face the winners of the Confederation Cup. Unlike the other competitions, it only consists of two teams. That means it is a tournament already at the finals level. Therefore, the only way to qualify for the tournament would be to win the former competitions.

CAF Women's Champions League

CAF Women's Champions League is an annual women's tournament organized by CAF to support women's football across the continent. The female version of the CAF Champions League involves top-tier women's football club teams from different African zonal regions. It has a total number of thirty-three participating clubs, a number lower than that of the male counterpart teams since women's football is still on the verge of growth. The tournament got founded in 2020 despite the competition's suspension due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

2.6.2 Regional CAF Competitions

CECAFA CUP

CECAFA is an abbreviation to mean Council for East and Central Africa Football Associations. CECAFA is a FIFA-recognized competition under CAF management involving national teams in the East African Region. The nine-team tournament got founded in 1926 as one of the oldest football organizations in Africa.

WAFU Nations Cup

This competition involves competitors from the Western part of Africa. WAFU means the West African Football Union. The sixteen-team tournament got founded in 2002. However, the tournament experienced hardships after playing two matches into the tournament when war broke out in Ivory Coast the same year it got founded. As a result, it was until the year 2010 that the competition returned, which saw Nigeria hosting for the first time.

COSAFA Cup

The CAF-organized tournament is also known as COSAFA Senior Challenge Cup. The tournament got first organized by the Council of Southern Africa Football Associations. The tournament's organization came after South Africa got reinstated by FIFA. COSAFA, which currently has 14 participants, was founded in the year 1997 being operational under the CAF organization. However, this tournament has had several non-COSAFA nations participate as guest competitors. Among them were Ghana, Tanzania, Uganda, and Equatorial Guinea.

U-17 UNIFFAC Cup

The Central African Football Federations Union founded the football tournament. The competitors were teams consisting of players under the age of seventeen from the Central African Region. The competition was founded in the year 2008 and currently has a membership of eight teams.

UNAF U-23 Tournament

The competition is in the Northern part of Africa, constituting teams members of the UNAF organization. The tournament was founded in the year 2006, having a membership of five, except for the occasional guest teams. The participants present their teams with players under the age of twenty-three.



2.6.3 International CAF competitions

AFC

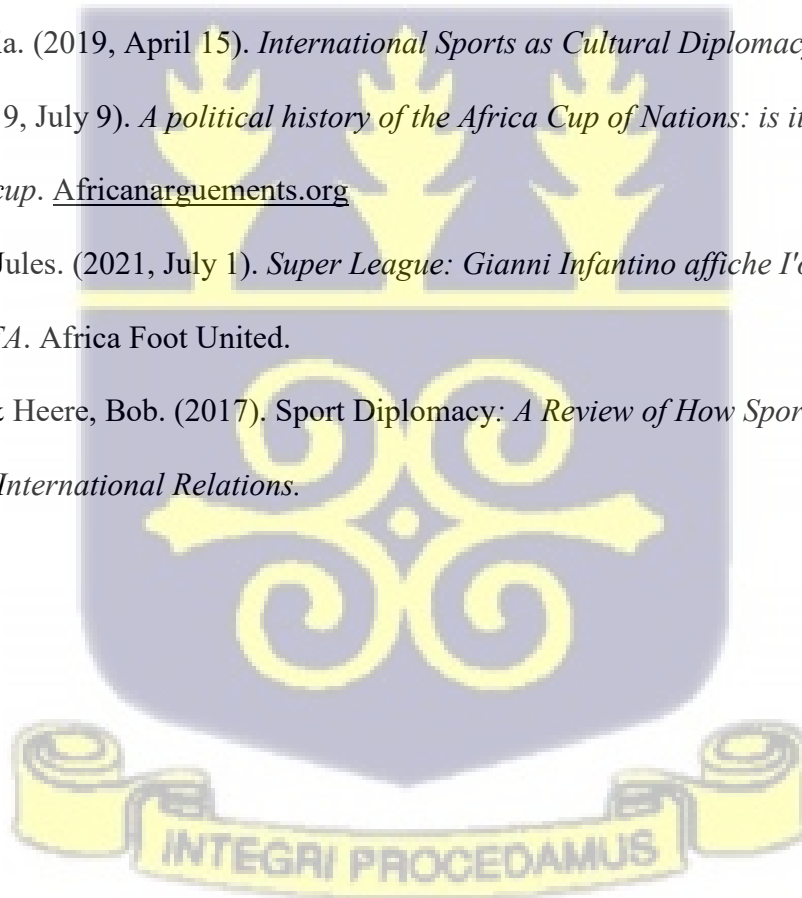
The competition, organized under CAF, was founded in 1957. It also got the name TotalEnergies Africa Cup of Nations from its main sponsorship partner. AFCON is an abbreviation name for the Africa Cup of Nations. The tournament gets held once every two years. The competition gives a chance for fifty-four participants to reach a final of twenty-four participants. In its early stages of formation, AFCON only had three members as participants; Ethiopia, Egypt, and Sudan. South Africa was eligible but could not participate following the country's disqualification on matters of apartheid (BBC, 2001). By 1998, the tournament had acquired thirteen more participants showing good international football influence. The tournament later switched to be held in years with odd numbers to keep the FIFA World Cup out of interference (BBC, 2010). The winner of this tournament is given thirty gold medals together with the honorable trophy. The second, third, and fourth-placed teams receive thirty silver, bronze, and thirty diplomas, respectively.

Women's Africa Cup of Nations

This tournament, WAFCON, also has the name TotalEnergies Women's Africa Cup of Nations, which originated from the tournament's main partnership sponsor. CAF oversees the competition's activities and holds the competition once every two years. The games look to set an improvement platform for women's football across African nations. The tournament was founded in 1991 and was set into momentum later in 1998. Moreover, the competition consists of twelve participants across Africa. The tournament is dominated by the Nigerian national women's team, having won eleven times in the competition. It is also important to note that four teams qualify for the FIFA Women's World Cup from this tournament.

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CHAPTER THREE

3.0 Introduction

The study gave a general overview of sports diplomacy, the CAF, and its tournaments in the previous chapter. This chapter uses the AFCON as a case study to examine the use of sports diplomacy. The study highlights four key expressions of the utilization of sports diplomacy within the AFCON framework, including the use of AFCON for nationalist goals, as a foreign policy tool, as a tool for building the image of states, and finally as a vehicle for integration. An analysis of the link between AFCON and diplomacy.

3.1 AFCON and Nationalism

AFCON has been utilized in the framework of sports diplomacy at specific points in African history as a means of expressing nationalist ideologies such as Pan-Africanism. Such statements have, among other things, been made to advance national interests, nation-building, or support separatist movements. The act of aligning with a state and perceiving other countries as qualitatively distinct, sometimes in negative ways, is commonly referred to as nationalism (Robinson 2014). This identification can drive many individuals to kill and sacrifice their lives for their country because it is so strong. While many academics find this dedication challenging to explain on an interpersonal basis, the majority still see nationalism as a pervasive and long-lasting phenomenon crucial to international relations (Anderson 1983). The current global system's borders are defined by Greenfeld (1993), who also offers a vital foundation for organizing civilians to support and participate in armed conflict.

Adverse effects can also result from nationalism, which is the attitude that one should identify with their state and see other countries and their inhabitants as profoundly different Hitchens (2010).

Although a shared national identity can bring a community together and lessen the chance of internal civil unrest, it can also incite "racism and xenophobia," or jingoistic emotions that cause confrontation with neighboring countries or exacerbate friction with foreigners living there (Hull, 2022). Numerous studies from the U.S. and Europe demonstrate how nationalism may result in anti-immigration sentiments. For instance, national sovereignty concerns are a powerful predictor of hostility to immigration, according to Snyder (2000) and Harris (2016). According to Wimmer (2002), at times of societal crises like the economic mobility of native citizens, retreat to national unity also coexist with the emergence of xenophobia and racism. Researchers studying international relations connect spikes in nationalism to the more aggressive citizenry and leaders and increasing state aggressiveness against foreign foes.

The inaugural African Cup of Nations, held in 1957 and won by Egypt, helped to further arouse national identity on the continent. Because they were barred from competing due to colonial control, the rest of Africa watched in jealousy as Egypt was declared the first African champion. The chance to join the larger international athletic world and become an associate of the Confederation of African Football became accessible to emerging African Nations after the imperialist constraints were lifted from the vast bulk of African States by the mid-sixties. Their membership in CAF and the option to compete in the cup of nations allowed them to compete in international athletic events. Still, more importantly, it allowed the newly independent states to assert their autonomy and sovereignty. The Africa Cup of Nations was the first platform for a new and ambitious nationalism to manifest itself. It quickly represented the passionate vitality and appeal of football in Africa (Woodwell, 2007).

A feeling of nationalism that might transcend tribal affiliations and unite Africans via shared political, social, and economic goals was identified early in establishing new independent governments. This capacity of sport was found to aid with this. Renowned Ghanaian patriot and

advocate for the pan-African cause Kwame Nkrumah believed that sports were integral to the emergence of a new Africa. He observed that sports triumphs were influential in inspiring pride and self-respect among Africans and that football played a significant role in uniting the nation's young around a shared identity (Darby, 2013). Football's importance is demonstrated by the Ghanaian people's reaction to their local team's victory in the African Cup of Nations in 1963. Nkrumah utilized Ghanaian football players to advance the cause of Pan-Africanism outside of the continent. This assertion by Kwame Nkrumah is supported by 94.2% respondents who believe that Sports or AFCON has the tendency of fostering unity towards the promotion of Pan-Africanism and unity.

Do you think the tournaments provide opportunities for African states to foster unity?

52 responses

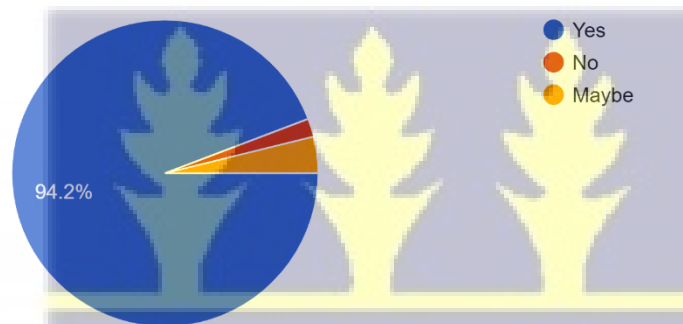


Fig 1

Confederation for African Football, the governing body of football in Africa, projects the image of being an institution that promotes African unity. Therefore, all African delegates collaborating with FIFA are expected to conduct their operations in a spirit of African camaraderie under the Confederation's rules. The Confederation for African Football's early strategic orientation makes it very evident that it believed in the idea of Pan-Africanism. This is especially clear in the case of South Africa, which was eliminated from the inaugural Cup of Nations before a single ball had been kicked due to their reluctance to have a mixed-race team. Due to South Africa's refusal to comply with the Confederation's requirement that it presents a national group made up of members

of all ethnic groupings when the event relocated to Cairo in 1959, the nation was once more barred from competing. Confederation for African football officially expelled South Africa in 1961 and barred it from competing in any continental soccer tournaments as long as its apartheid regime persisted in the world of sports. This decision was made at the pre-championship convention in Ethiopia (Busby et al., 2017). How the Confederation handled the situation with South Africa conveyed a real nationalist message to prospective members that any activities that went against or compromised the ethos of Pan-Africanism that was prevalent at the time would lead to banning. Football has a "bigger audience in Africa than any other religion.," according to Archbishop Desmond Tutu, who is mentioned in a documentary about the game (Darby, 2013). While not all Africans are Muslims, practically all favor a particular team. Players from home and foreign clubs participate in the biannual men's international football tournament, the Africa Cup of Nations. Despite being rated 71st in the FIFA rankings and still reeling from the emotional trauma of a plane accident that claimed the lives of 18 of their players in 1993, Zambia shocked the world on the route to an incredible 2012 AFCON triumph. According to the athletes and coaching staff, they were motivated to win the trophy in honor of their late fellow countrymen, demonstrating the feeling of patriotism displayed by the Zambian contingent. A record-breaking 24 teams competed in the competition in 2019. Both Kenya and Tanzania's qualification for the Africa Cup of Nations competition in 2019 was significant. Kenya has not participated in this tournament since 2004, while Tanzania has never competed since 1980. After the squad defeated Uganda to advance, the late President John Magufuli showed his admiration for the Tanzanian team by giving the players land. That year's event was timed differently so it wouldn't interfere with the Premier League, whose match ended in May. Because of the time difference, Premier League players from around the world, such as Mohamed Salah of Egypt and

Sadio Mane of Senegal, would play for their countries without the competition competing for spectators.

After their victory, Kenya would face Senegal in the second-place rankings. Tanzania and Kenya would have competed for third and fourth positions in the tournament if Tanzania had triumphed instead. We may anticipate that this tight victory will strengthen nationalism more than a sweeping triumph, given the passion and unpredictability of the game. Alternatively, even though Tanzania lost the game, their performance may have enhanced Tanzanian nationalism if they outperformed fans' expectations.

Senegal After the Teranga Lions won the country's first continental championship of the 2002 edition of AFCON, Head of State Macky Sall presented the winning team with cash incentives and land. After two previous unsuccessful attempts to win the AFCON championship, Senegal overcame Egypt 4-2 on penalties at the Stade d'Olembe in Yaounde. President Sall also praised Sadio Mane, Edouard Mendy, and Aliou Cisse individually because they each received Player, Goalkeeper, and Coach of the Tournament honors during the competition. He also praised the Teranga Lions for their team's discipline record. These confirms the role of AFCON as a tool to promote nationalism.

3.2 AFCON as a Foreign policy tool

A government's foreign policy is a set of guiding principles that establishes how it will interact with other nations. It also acts as a tool for advancing a nation's national interests. Governments use their foreign ministries, diplomats, and embassies to conduct their foreign policy and control their international relations. Generally, governments' foreign policies aim to advance their countries' socioeconomic, political, and regional stability. Governments employ various strategies, from diplomatic and peaceful dialogue to armed force, to carry out their foreign policy. This will

make it easier to examine how Ghana's participation in activities like the AFCON competition has altered the course of its foreign relations over time (Debrah, 2002).

Emam (2019), he mentions that Nkrumah's foreign policy has five primary elements in his essay on Ghana's Foreign Policy Lessons Since Liberation. Among them were safeguarding Ghana's independence, democracy, and territorial integrity and fostering its growth; liberating Africa ultimately from colonial rule; fostering political unification among all sovereign African nations; fostering cooperation among the countries of the non-partisan drive; and promoting world peace and the growth of smaller governments by working with multilateral bodies like the United Nations. Since Kwame Nkrumah, there haven't been many modifications to Ghana's foreign policy goals. The contribution is backed up by the rules for foreign policy as down in the 1992 constitution.

The premise that Ghanaians have traditionally shared Nkrumah's vision of freeing Africa and individuals of African ancestry from outside hegemony has rendered Pan-Africanism an intrinsic part of Ghana's foreign policy, in conjunction with the circumstances preceding the country's independence. Again, Nkrumah made it clear in his Independence Day address that he wanted to show the entire world that, given a chance, an African would succeed in any field of work on par with someone of any other ethnicity. Nkrumah also put a lot of effort into presenting an African identity that other countries would respect. He wanted to establish a fresh and distinct perception of the African continent and its people, as seen by his use of the phrase "a new African in the world" (Darby, 2013). Nkrumah's mission was to seek measures that would help transform the situation because the dignity of the Africans had been maligned for such a long period.

It cannot be disputed that Kwame Nkrumah intended the Black stars to serve as Ghana's ambassadors to advance its foreign policy goals. Another former Black Stars player, Wilberforce

Mum, claims in the documentary, as mentioned above, that he had free access to President Nkrumah and could meet him without making an appointment to benefit from playing for the team. According to legend, Kwame Nkrumah offered the players new homes if they could successfully defend the African Cup, they had captured in Ghana in 1963. (Darby, 2013). They were inspired by this and went on to win the contest again. Such dedication on the President's part to sports only demonstrates his conviction that certain foreign policy goals, particularly those pertaining to how the world saw Africa and the region, could be accomplished through victory in international athletic events.

C. K Gyamfi's role as the Black Stars' coordinator during their triumph at the African Cup of Nations in Accra in 1963, the nation's very first victory in the tournament, demonstrated Kwame Nkrumah's success in spreading his message of the African's ability to tackle his internal politics to the greater community, and similarly to the public as well as other benefits Ghana received as the host nation. One of Kwame Nkrumah's goals as Ghana's first president, according to former Black Stars player Joseph Agyeman Gyau in a press conference with the BBC, was to demonstrate to the world that people can take responsibility for their actions and achieve success (BBC, 2007).

It is also worth noting that, following Nkrumah's ouster, major foreign coaches, two from Germany and the others from Brazil, were hired to lead the squad without success between 1966 and 1978. An additional fact is that around forty coaches have managed the squad since the nation's independence. It is also possible to argue that Nkrumah pursued his objective of African unification through sports. In his drive for political unification, he recognized the necessity to unite the African people and establish a sense of belonging.

According to Boafo-Arthur (1993), agreements for trade relations were signed due to the visits made by representatives of the two governments. As a result, Libya provided Ghana with petroleum products worth about twenty million U.S. dollars for free in March 1982, the same month the African Cup of Nations was held. Furthermore, Ghana was granted access to oil under advantageous circumstances. Libya also assisted Ghanaians who were experiencing a prolonged drought at the event and those who had evacuated from Nigeria. It is not true that Ghana's presence in the tournament spurred Libya to provide help. However, it is realistic to assume that the nation's participation in the tournament, which took place at a time when the United Nations was conducting diplomatic visits, made a significant contribution to the improvement of the two country's relations and may have influenced the commercial relationship that was defined in both countries.

3.3 AFCON and Diplomacy

The study further affirms that diplomacy, being the art of managing international relations, is greatly influenced by sports. AFCON, being one of the biggest tournaments of Africa's CAF, had a great impact on diplomacy across Africa. AFCON competition got founded during the de-colonization era; Africa's main theme was Pan-Africanism.

Is there a link between sports and international relations?
52 responses



Fig 2

According to 98% of responses from respondents, there is a correlation between sports and international relations or diplomacy, which translates that AFCON as a sporting event has the potential to be used to promote and improve relations between African states who participate in the qualifiers and the main competition.

This study also revealed that the first tournament held in Sudan in 1957, African leaders took to the podium to communicate equality. The formation of the first AFCON tournament meant that Africa was able to manage its football affairs. AFCON brought a great wave of diplomacy across African nations on the verge of colonization. The AFCON participants got new national identities that saw Africans govern their political and cultural interests. The Pan-Africanism effects were evident in South Africa when CAF banned the country from the AFCON competition. The ban was after South Africa presented an only white national team to the tournament. The move by South Africa to present an only white team was against the ethics of CAF since the latter got founded based on Pan-Africanism, which championed equality. Therefore, CAF's members stood in solidarity against Apartheid in South Africa and supported the country's suspension until 1994 (Elliot, 2019). This assertion is reiterated by 73.1 % of respondents that the decision by member-states of CAF to exempt South Africa from participating in the competition was a protest against the apartheid system which discriminated between black and white people.

Do you think the action taken by CAF and its member-states was an act to show a common cause in fighting the apartheid regime in South African?
52 responses

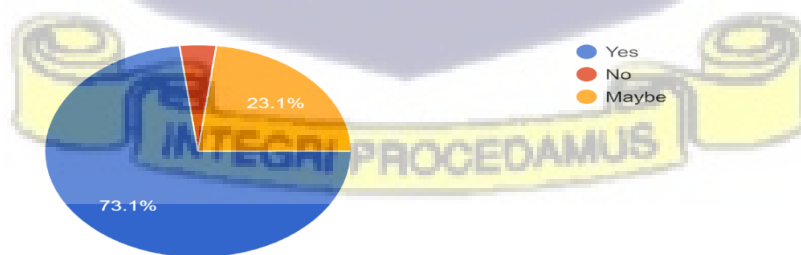


Fig 3

Again, AFCON also helped Ghana rise to football and political greatness. Ghana's first president took advantage of the country's AFCON membership to spread his political ideologies. His Pan-Africanism ideologies mainly used football as the core foundation. The move by Kwame Nkrumah, Ghana's first president, to embrace the AFCON competition brought Ghana to embrace ideologies on Africanism. Former president Kwame Nkrumah also took advantage of football for his political ideologies. Africanism was evident when he formed the Ghanaian club Real Republicans. The football club's main aim was to help spread the former president's political ideologies while at the same time encouraging and uplifting the game of football.

The pride that came with participation in the AFCON made many African nations push for participation, a move that saw them embrace Africanism and equality, which were the basic diplomatic ideologies of CAF. However, the influence of Africanism also pushed for the independence of most African countries.

When discussing the prospects of sports diplomacy, respondents indicated that President Weah, the President of Liberia comes to mind as a worldwide sports star. He understands the architecture of sports and is well-known in the sector. As a result, the nation stands to profit significantly from this crucial area of strengthening Liberia's relationships with other countries and international organizations to boost its pace of growth and alleviate its long-standing infrastructure gaps. Meanwhile, the voyage will necessitate competent and experienced diplomats to capitalize on the President's globally iconic sporting image to accomplish the desired objectives in this new sector of our foreign involvement.

Due to his global prominence and position in the sport, particularly the AFCON qualifiers and games, President George Weah's tenure may be considered the golden period of sports diplomacy in Liberia. However, there may be some challenges in realizing this essential diplomatic tool for

creating jobs, building infrastructure, and strengthening and deepening Liberia's ties with other nations and relevant international organizations such as the Confederation of African Football and others. Because of his international notoriety and prominence in the sport, particularly the AFCON competitions, President George Weah's tenure might be considered a golden age of sports diplomacy in Liberia. However, there may be some obstacles to realising this vital diplomatic tool for creating jobs, building infrastructure, and strengthening and deepening Liberia's ties with other nations and pertinent international organizations such as the Confederation of African Football and others. For example, the notion and practice of sports diplomacy are not adequately integrated into policy, and there is a lack of a competent propaganda engine and process. In addition, sport in Liberia suffers from a lack of finance; there are untapped talents, but local clubs and sports events are not as well-known as they should be. Therefore, traditional politicians cannot accomplish sports diplomacy; it is a component of public diplomacy, and nonpartisan actors such as soccer players and basketball players, among others, must be engaged. That engagement is feasible with enough sports financing and capacity growth to carry out the mission.

3.4 AFCON and promoting public diplomacy

This research highlighted that the promotion of a country's reputation, heritage, history, and ideology is referred to as public diplomacy. The concept of country promotion emerged when the world learned about propaganda via a station established by the Italian Fascist when they invaded sections of Africa (Cull, 2007). Public diplomacy, on the other hand, is neither politics nor public relations but something in between. Many researchers, authors, and diplomats describe and explain public diplomacy. According to ambassador Christopher Ross, public diplomacy is informing, engaging, and influencing foreign audiences. Conventional diplomacy occurs when an actor seeks to regulate the international environment by interacting with another foreign player (Cull, 2007).

On the other hand, public diplomacy is the actor's endeavor to govern the awareness of cultural diversity through involvement with an international public (Gillespie & Baumann, 2006). Similarly, as previous Director of the United States Information Agency Joseph Duffey noted, public diplomacy involves speaking directly to the public rather than official spokespeople or legislators to sway foreign publics. According to Cull (2009), public diplomacy provides new aspects to conventional foreign relations.

One of the key purposes of public diplomacy is intercultural contact among countries, which necessitates a platform for communication with the rest of the world. Cultural Diplomacy, Listening, Exchange, Advocacy, and International Broadcasting are all components of public diplomacy, according to Kornblut (2003). Global broadcasting is among the most powerful vehicles for delivering state messages, ideas, and policies. To actively reach the others, however, unique agendas appropriate for the intended demographic are required. Public diplomacy is not a cover for government policy.; rather, it represents the national policy and should not alter, mislead, or advance on it (Seib,2009).

Sports, in particular, are viewed as an effective vehicle for public diplomacy, which Beehner (2005) defines as a global actor's efforts to affect the international status through involvement with a global audience. People's opinions are becoming progressively significant in shaping government policy as the democratic wave sweeps the planet. In this respect, the advent of sports as a weapon for conducting diplomacy, which is getting a broader audience throughout the world as a consequence of increasing media coverage in the form of the internet, radio, and television, can only be anticipated to grow, especially when it comes to evoking equality among foreign partners.

This assertion is confirmed by responses gathered from the respondents who emphasize that sports

can be used as public diplomacy tool which gives other citizens insights about other countries, especially the host nation.

Does AFCON provide insights into the host country and educate others about it?

52 responses

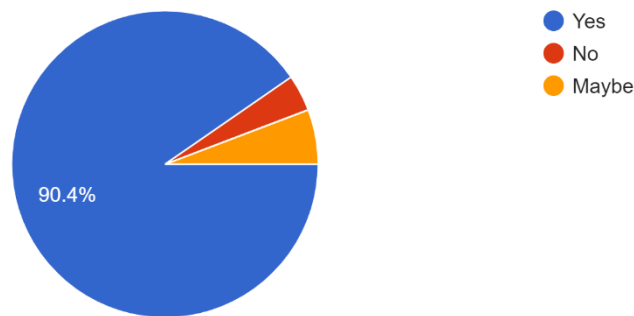


Fig 4

According to Snow (2009), public diplomacy is an international endeavor to govern the awareness of cultural diversity through contact with a foreign public. It distinguishes the distinction between conventional and public diplomacy. While traditional diplomacy seeks to exercise immediate effect on international governments, he believes that misinformation, or public diplomacy, seeks to do so covertly, that is, by persuading those with power over those countries.

Scholars such as Cull (2009) and Golan (2014) have emphasized public diplomacy as a kind of economic power that must be supplemented by traditional diplomacy. Cull (2009) differentiates five elements of public diplomacy. These include international broadcasting, cultural diplomacy, exchange diplomacy, and listening. Perhaps Nye's portrayal of soft power, symbolized by popular diplomacy, highlights the plot's relevance. According to Nye, soft power is the ability to establish a narrative to affect how others see circumstances. Soft power also refers to measures to discover people's opinions and preferences to avoid using force in difficult situations.

According to Nye (2017), while proponents of public diplomacy concur on the utility of soft power measures, there is frequently disagreement on the magnitude of their influence and the part they should represent in every state's diplomacy. While soft power strategies are used to instill trust among individuals and help them avoid negative preconceptions or false facts, critics of public diplomacy have voiced concerns about the viability of determining the success of such initiatives, particularly in terms of obtaining tangible indications in the outlook of external audiences. This is known as the measuring trap of public diplomacy, he claims.

Because sports foster positive connections between nations, it has the potential to improve collaboration in other areas, including trade ties. This is thought to have been the case between Libya and Ghana in the early eighties. The interim security and defense council overthrew the Limann administration in a mutiny in 1981. Ghana had already opted to quit another major soccer event, the African Cup of Nations, which was to be held by Libya in 1982 (Boafo-Arthur, 1993). Jerry John Rawlings, Chairman of the Provisional National Defense Council, overturned the decision right after taking office. This is not unexpected because it is normal to predict that following the coup, the temporary national defense council would enact policies contradictory to those of the previous administration and that its global partners would likely do the same. It is also understandable that the new administration would try to incite patriotic feelings through the athletic event. The Limann government favored Western countries in terms of alliances, but the PNDC was more communist in its older beginnings.

The revolution had to be justified in any circumstances. This indicated that the nation's fragile economic state, which was a major cause for embarking on the military coup, had to be addressed. The new administration sought business alliances with foreign countries to boost economic development. Darby (2013), on the other hand, has underlined how, as a result of their rejection of

the revolution, ties between Ghana and the Western nations, as well as some of its West African neighbors, had worsened, forcing Nigeria for example, to cease oil supplies to Ghana. As a result, Ghana's government explored economic partnerships with communist states such as the Soviet Bloc and Libya, which are currently facing similar criticism from portions of Africa and Western nations. Ghana's participation in the African Cup of Nations in Libya was, therefore, a good opportunity for public diplomacy, which, if correctly handled, would boost the nation's connections with the region.

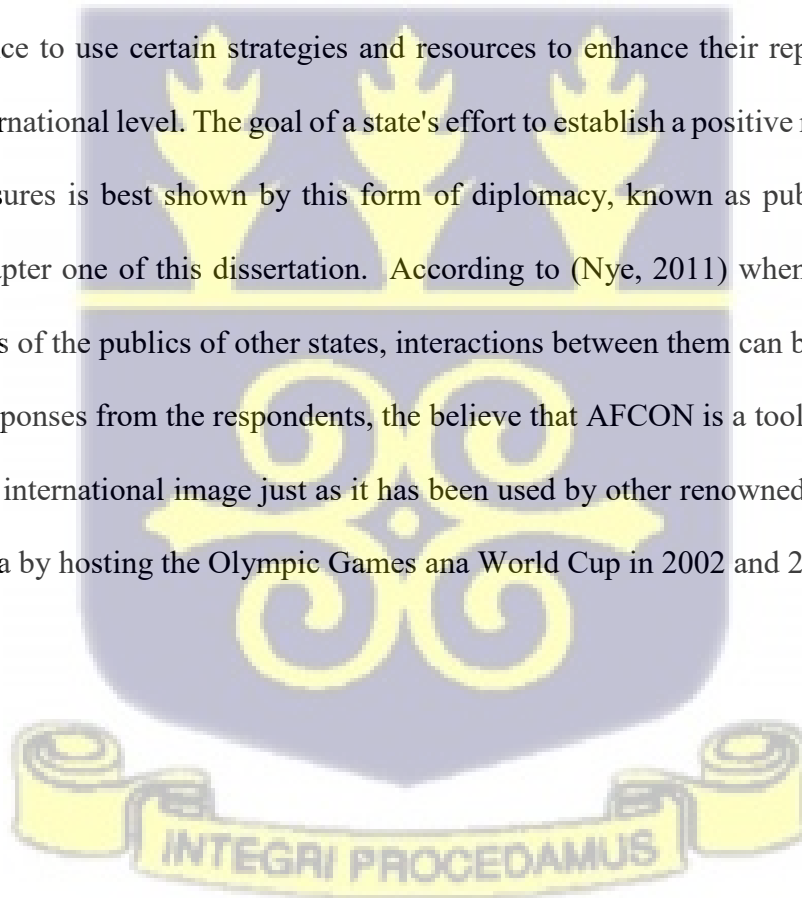
Ghana not only competed but also conquered the Africa Cup of Nations for the fourth consecutive year. It could be argued that if the Libyan government placed any weight on the Limann government's choice and that the incorporation of the Black Stars, with their impeccable record on the continent, would have aided the championship's victory, then Ghana's presence should have endeared the Rawlings administration to the Libyan administration, if not its regular population (Boafo Arthur,1993). The importance of this argument may be linked to the fact that nationalism is a crucial aspect of communist governments. Given sports' power to foster a sense of patriotism in people, the tournament's performance would have been beneficial in certifying the Gaddafi administration's credibility. As a result, it is realistic to expect Ghana's participation in the African Nations Cup to have contributed to strengthening diplomatic ties between the two governments, which were already involved in other ways.

Few of Ghana's partners, like China and Japan, have embraced sports-related projects to strengthen ties with the country. China uses sports diplomacy, which has been used multiple times in its dealings with Ghana. Recognizing the impact of sports, particularly football, on African audiences, China has emerged as a country utilizing sports facility provision as a strategy to safeguard its corporate interests on the continent. The strategy is now known as "China's stadium diplomacy."

As a consequence, China uses such projects to aid in recruiting its people in target countries, as the bulk of the projects are related to provisions that allow Chinese employees to be employed in the construction of the facilities. As a result, China's stadium diplomacy, a form of public diplomacy, is strengthening commercial ties with Ghana. Countries that have previously hosted the African Cup of Nations, such as Gabon, Angola, and Equatorial Guinea, have enjoyed comparable Chinese assistance (Will, 2012).

3.5 AFCON as a Tool for Building Good International Image

This study showed that a state's reputation is crucial to both its ability to survive and maintain diplomatic ties with other members of the international community. In essence, diplomacy gives nations the chance to use certain strategies and resources to enhance their reputation on both a national and international level. The goal of a state's effort to establish a positive reputation through soft power measures is best shown by this form of diplomacy, known as public diplomacy, as examined in chapter one of this dissertation. According to (Nye, 2011) when states have good image in the eyes of the publics of other states, interactions between them can be quite beneficial. According to responses from the respondents, they believe that AFCON is a tool for African states to improve their international image just as it has been used by other renowned countries such as China and Russia by hosting the Olympic Games and World Cup in 2002 and 2018 respectively.



Does AFCON help to improve the image of states in the international system?

52 responses

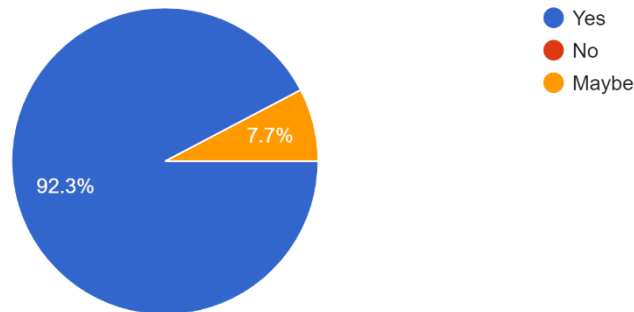


Fig 5

In an interview Nathan Quao who is a renowned sports journalist with Accra based radio station, Citi FM, he indicated that, South Africa used AFCON 1996 as a platform to change its international manage by assembling a team that represented the diverse groups in the country after the abolishment of the Apartheid system.

“Yes. We saw a team made up of white and black race coming together to fight and raise the flag of South Africa which hitherto was not so. It showed the world that people from both the black and white race can come together and work peacefully unlike what the apartheid system was trying to tell the world. It showed a country that has grown beyond its dark past and working to improve their image in the international system. Secondly it served as a spring board for the country to make a claim for themselves, a claim that further strengthened their bidding to host the 2010 FIFA World Cup-the first ever in the African continent and the 2013 AFCON. We all saw how successful and exciting the 2010 FIFA World Cup was. This I can say was a result of how they set themselves up in the public eyes.” (Personal Interview, 2022)

On a troubled yet beautiful continent, the Africa Cup of Nations seemed to be the ideal model for celebrating Africa's excellence while educating the world at large on how they might be able to

aid those in need. It brings Africa's people together for a period of celebration of the continent's most remarkable footballing talent. The AFCON 2019 average attendance was over 18,000 per match, bringing football fans from around the continent and raising revenue from tourism, hospitality, entertainment, and investments in the sites' communities. While these turnout statistics may be much higher, it is critical to acknowledge the competition for its social benefits.

Some states have employed measures to improve their image, including radio broadcasts, cultural and educational exchange programs, television and media initiatives, and educational scholarships.

Through the use of these tools, governments can now interact with foreign citizens, which encourages those citizens to form opinions about them. To build positive views and an appealing image for their foreign public around the world, countries like Japan, Germany, Russia, France, and China, for example, frequently use a combination of these public diplomacy strategies.

Most states have used sports as a significant diplomatic instrument to improve their image within the international system. A state's reputation in international relations may benefit from anything from winning a sporting event to being given the opportunity to host one, to merely participating. Sports have recently been embraced by a number of developing nations as a crucial tool for enhancing their perceptions of other nations (Wei, 2016).

Equatorial Guinea's rights to hosting of the 2015 edition of AFCON was greeted with many accusations which included corruption, extreme poverty, and repression under the leadership of President Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, who has been in office since 1979. Other grave violations, such as arbitrary detention, secret detention, and unjust trials, as well as substantial claims of high-level corruption, mismanagement of public funds and was listed as "one of the most corrupt states in the world" by the anti-corruption watchdog, Transparency International in 2014, (HRW, 2014) (BBC, 2015). Additionally, Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, president of

Equatorial Guinea, had been in power for 35 years prior to the competition was the continent of Africa's longest-serving tyrant, however, some organizations, like the international human rights organization Transparency International, did not agree with the choice and opposed the idea of Equatorial Guinea hosting the competition. Nonetheless, AFCON 2015 was an opportunity for the country to promote a good image internationally and to showcase its culture to the African continent and world as a whole. According (Hickey, 2015), President Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo in his candid statement sees football as a chance to "sell the country's image," hasn't been discreet about the sport's significance to his nation. Akon, a hip hop and R&B singer from the United States, gave a performance during the opening ceremony at Bata Stadium, with other cultural performances to showcase the cultural diversity of the country, which is a public diplomacy strategy. Again, the 2015 AFCON also served as a platform for portraying Equatorial Guinea as a nation that is actively working to restore its global image and promote her tourism sector and highlighting the nation's economic progress. The successes of hosting the tournament despite the stiff opposition contributed to the nation winning the bid to host the 2023 edition, but has recently lost the right to host it due to the current political situation in the country.

The use of sports as a soft power instrument in the pursuit of nation-branding has become increasingly common in recent years, even as states continue to use traditional diplomatic methods for image building. States can consolidate diplomatic ties with other players in the international system and accomplish their goals through the use of soft power in a more amicable way. Some governments place great importance on sports in their foreign policy endeavors as a way to improve their country's reputation abroad. Footballers and seasoned athletes can represent their countries and be used by governments in their diplomatic interactions with other states in the international system. Winning in sports competitions can increase a state's reputation globally. For

instance, the outstanding accomplishments of Zambia and Senegal at the 2012 and 2012 AFCON editions boosted their countries' international sports brands and helped Zambia and Senegal establish strong international reputations in the fields of tourism, foreign investment, and diplomatic ties (Hickey, 2015).

3.6 AFCON and Integration

Again, it emerged in this study that Africa is one of the diverse continents in the world with several languages, cultures, systems of governance. This diversity is unique to Africa and has become even more significant for African states to integrate among themselves in order to pursue their common goals. One of such means has been through the AFCON competitions which are held across the various age groups and gender, (CAF, 2017). In terms of languages, Kiswahili is the dominant African language which used across the Eastern, Southern and some parts of East Africa. Kiswahili is the language to promote Pan-Africanism by the AU, hence CAF also uses it as a means of integration of the continent during AFCON tournaments. AFCON in the era where footballers of African descent born in the diaspora are pledging their allegiance to the countries of their parents is playing a significant role in integrating these players into the cultures and societies of their new countries through their participation in the AFCON qualifiers or the main tournament. For instance, the 2017 edition of AFCON saw Wilfred Zaha naturalizing to play for Ivory Coast even though he had previously featured for the English national team. Kevin Prince Boateng also joined the Black Stars of Ghana in 2010, and participated in the 2012 AFCON even though he could have played for Germany. Nigeria's team for AFCON 2022 was made up of good number of naturalized players who were taken through a well-planned integration programme before the AFCON tournament. Such moves by some players with same backgrounds have had great impact in the performances by many African states including the reigning champions of AFCON, Senegal

who had the likes of Kalidou Koulibaly and Dieng who could have played for the French national team.

Responses from respondents also show that the Africa Cup of Nations event also has significant economic benefits, particularly in the host nation. This is why the privileges of hosting the event are so coveted and aggressively pursued. For example, after Cameroon was ineligible to host the 2019 Africa Cup of Nations owing to the concern of extremism, Egypt managed to create an anticipated income of \$85 million, which was comparable to the figures achieved by the host countries, Equatorial Guinea and Gabon, in 2015 and 2017, respectfully. This permits nations to improve infrastructure before and after the competition, increasing their economies and enhancing the citizenry's standard of living and financial status.

The CAF establishment's stakeholders play critical responsibilities in fostering diplomacy. Kenya was dropped from holding the Africa Cup of Nations Competition in 1996 due to a lack of government financial support and inadequate venues and infrastructure. CAF offered South Africa, the recently admitted member state into the Confederation, the option to hold the championship in its hunt for a new host. While critics may deem it an exaggeration to suggest the Confederation of African Football did so to use football to enhance peace in a nation that had just held a multi-party election for the first time, the moment and circumstance in Kenya at the time this choice was made may need us to give CAF some credit, because the event served South Africa well in developing a cohesive country.

This study also highlights the inherent challenges that the Africa Cup of Nations must solve to be regarded as a faultless football championship. The event has failed to escape scandal due to undereducated and underpaid sportspeople and personnel and corrupt nations or even football regulating organizations. North African groups have given life-changing payouts to needy

players in exchange for match-fixing promises, such as the claims for the 2008 Mali vs Benin game. This also affects bids to host the event, hampered by corruption and foul play allegations. Even though countries are granted the privilege to host the event, this does not always ensure they can do it. Countries such as Libya and Cameroon have recently been ruled incapable of securely hosting the Africa Cup of Nations despite being granted the competition owing to civil conflict, political instability, and security risks.

This study also revealed that one of the most severe problems for AFCON is the lack of recognition it receives worldwide. When we examine how much media and attention the Euros receive, it gives the sense that the championship is not as significant or respected as it should be. This is further proven by the reluctance of several European teams to allow their players to leave mid-season to compete for their nations. Some of Europe's greatest players, such as Sadio Mane, play in AFCON.

The concerns stem from the disincentive of participating in the Africa Cup of Nations Tournament. It is a tremendous honour for these players to embody their country, and their presence increases the attraction of the competition as a spectacle that will bring the footballing world's attention to some of the finest players on the planet. Furthermore, the larger the championship's audience, the more exposure African football and its developing players will receive. However, most young African footballers aim to find a profitable move to the European leagues, which has the bonus of earning profits for African football through their movements. However, suppose the competition does not receive the honour and international acclaim it requires. In that case, these budding stars will not receive the recognition and opportunity they need, regardless of their competence. The issue is highlighted by the number of players at

European clubs who see a shortage of acceptance and respect for the Africa Cup of Nations and hence choose to represent other nations they are qualified for rather than their African roots.

Another significant challenge faced by CAF according to respondents is the outsourcing of football players. Thousands of football fans throughout Africa rushed to stadiums to see their local club teams played twenty years ago. Football was thriving in the league as African players wanted to establish themselves at home before moving on to Europe. Today, with barely a quarter of the crowd that previously waited in expectancy, the prospects for African League football appear grim that have two sides to the history of the continent's domestic game. First, the more developed economies of North and South Africa allow teams to keep some of their players. This is reflected in the 2010 Africa Cup of Nations squads: Egypt emerged victorious with only three foreign players among the twenty-three members of its roster. However, Tunisia and Algeria had a more balanced representation of native players. Nigeria and Côte d'Ivoire, on the other side, had 23 and 22 overseas players. While national teams bring throngs of supporters wanting to see their stars in action, which has often resulted in a widespread frenzy, scuffles, and even stadium deaths, football has little effect.

An official of the Tanzanian High Commission in Nigeria opined that,

“The constant political instability in the African continent and lack of funds in making sure almost all the states get the chance to host the tournament is of concern. This could promote relations with the host nation and other states. This could go round for every state to have open interactions and discussions on how to develop their sports and how to develop other aspects of their relations. This is not the case. Just a few states get the privilege to rotate the opportunity to host. Finance has always been a major issue. Some countries may not get the chance to host certain competitions because of financial issues or the lack of standard infrastructure. CAF

doesn't entirely sponsor the construction of infrastructure and it boils down to finance."

(Personal Interview, 2022)

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter shows that a nation's participation in international competitions such as AFCON affects its diplomatic relations. AFCON has helped African states to be featured as a recognized part of the world civilization at such global gatherings and establish and develop a respectable image for itself. It is essential to know how, in the framework of the AFCON competitions, sports diplomacy has and still reveals itself in diplomatic relations. Through a number of elements, the chapter established the connection between sports and diplomacy.

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CHAPTER FOUR: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATION

Introduction 4.0

This chapter introduces a summary of the study's findings, on the basis of which inferences were made. It also gives some recommendations, mostly for academics who might be interested in exploring sports and its role in diplomacy in relation to the African Cup of Nations in the future.

4.1 Summary of Findings

This chapter highlights some critical concerns identified during the evaluation and analysis conducted in chapters one and three. Below are summaries of major findings of the study in relation to the objectives:

- In addressing objective 1 on the means that the AFCON tournaments have been used as a platform to promote diplomacy, the study revealed that CAF has been successful in using the AFCON tournaments in strengthening diplomacy on the continent which is in line with CAF's objective of promoting good relations among the players, zonal unions and clubs, officials and countries at large. AFCON is used to promote nationalism; as a foreign policy tool; promoting diplomacy; promoting public diplomacy; as a tool for building good international image; as a tool for integration. This attribute distinguishes sports as pure diplomacy that fosters relationships and collaboration across boundaries. In some cases, such as the AFCON, states use sport as a soft power tool to advance their national objectives in the international stage. Governments can use sport as a tool for foreign policy in their diplomatic engagements with other states in a number of different ways. In order to further their national interest, sports are utilized to improve the international image and status of states, especially those that are emerging in the international system. It is

observed that AFCON aids participating nations in their efforts to exhibit their nationalism, national identity, and national pride. The study reveals that during the 2012 and 2019 AFCON editions, Gabon and Cameroon were among the actors who utilized the AFCON to achieve some of their diplomatic goals.

- With regard to objective 2 on the roles played by the stakeholders, and CAF structures in promoting healthy diplomatic relations. CAF and the member-states as well as other stakeholders play a key role in the promotion of diplomatic relations in Africa. CAF, for instance, was correct to bar Libya from competing in the Africa Cup of Nations. During the disturbance, an initial limitation was placed in 2011, which was momentarily lifted in 2013 before being reinstated. Libya has been divided between opposing political and military entities in the nation's west and east since controversial elections in 2014. The Africa Cup of Nation championship has historically been political. AFCON has given individuals, businesses, governing bodies, and, to some extent, governments, the potential to make money because of its commercial appeals. Footballers earn a significant amount of money from salaries, sponsorship, and endorsements because sports are increasingly heavily funded. Due to the large number of spectators and media coverage, major sporting organizations like the CAF make massive profits from the AFCON tournaments.
- In relation with objective 3 on ascertaining the challenges faced by CAF in promoting diplomacy, one of the challenges faced by CAF according to the findings is that it is plagued by corruption, a lack of investment, and neglect, all of which contribute to the deterioration of the playing infrastructure. While African football has grown and its stars have become famous in international football, most of the players' success can be ascribed to their attempts to make it, rather than African football's purposeful efforts to improve the

game further. Ghana and Angola, the previous two Africa Cup of Nations hosts, have recently built and rebuilt their stadiums, resulting in high-quality grounds that will benefit them for several years. Unfortunately, many other countries cannot say the same. Zambia, once a football powerhouse in Africa, is a tragic testament to the continent's collapse. Nkana football stadium in Zambia once a continental footballing powerhouse, looks more of a scrapyard than a football arena. The National Stadium has been closed for renovations for nearly three years and is currently being worked on, with the upper deck slated to be removed and the waiting area planned to be reconstructed.

4.2 Conclusion

This study reveals that the Africa Cup of Nations Tournament promotes diplomacy, and a comprehensive foreign policy allows a government to engage in sports diplomacy. In terms of the country's foreign policy objectives, the study in chapter three demonstrates that as a government without imperialist ambitions, most of any country's foreign interests may be fulfilled through public diplomacy.

The research also shows that states acknowledge this reality and, in some instances, have exploited its influence in global sports in the guise of soft power efforts to further their goals in international affairs. This involved developing and fostering an African identity through the national teams, collaborating with the world community through sports to construct a fair and inclusive global, financial, political, and social order, and advocating adherence for international law and treaty responsibilities, such as the abolition of apartheid and racism. As a result, it might be claimed that the study's hypothesis is supported.

4.3 Recommendations

It is obvious that African nations can use sports as a tool to achieve diplomacy, nationalism, public diplomacy, integration, and foreign policy goals given that the governments of South Africa, Senegal, and Ghana have significant influences on the success of sports in their respective nations.

Below are recommendations:

- Firstly, it is recommended that constant government assessment of modifications in the international system through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration might assist suitable changes in the nation's foreign policy to use sports in its interactions with other governments, most especially in resolving conflicts and promoting trade, political and economic activities.
- Secondly, the Ministries of Youth and Sports and Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration must work together to develop strategies that would allow the country to capitalize on the attention generated by international sporting events, such as encouraging visitors. In this respect, the government must increase collaboration between the aforementioned ministries, the numerous sports associations, the Ministry of Tourism, and the Ghana Investment Promotion Center to synchronize their operations toward the shared aim of growing the sports industry to improve organizational performance into the nation.
- Additionally, to persuade the government to enhance investment in the sports sector, venture capitalists in the industry, such as retired athletes and administrators of football academies and boxing gyms, must produce systematic and detailed research regarding the industry's economic contribution, both qualitatively and numerically. Furthermore, major players in the sector, such as those stated above, should provide the government with an up-to-date cost-benefit analysis of the sector's economic impact. This will provide as

justification for additional government funding in the industry. For example, capital inflows have become a substantial component of a country's GDP. As a result, being able to illustrate the amount to which the numerous travelling African athletes contribute to such revenues might be a compelling argument in persuading the government that the sector's investments can be repaid. Furthermore, the government should be pushed to offer special subsidies to private enterprises in the area.

- It also suggested that African governments prioritize sports branding. This can be accomplished through cooperation between the private and public sectors to implement policies that guarantee the provision of modern infrastructure, prevent the unwarranted exodus of talented athletes abroad, and offer additional guidelines to ensure the adoption of uniform practices and patterns within each sporting fraternity in African nations. This would aid in developing sports skills in the countries and create a niche for the countries on the international stage, as Nkrumah did with the Black Stars in Ghana in the early 1960s.
- Furthermore, given the success of South Africa, Nigeria, and Egypt football teams, the governments must devote adequate importance to other different sports by ensuring sufficient facilities and funds to minimize excessive reliance on football. Most Africans claim that, while football is the most popular sport in the nation, it is a group activity that, at any one moment, only brings the nation one medal in international events if the team is triumphant. On the other hand, individual sports like boxing and athletics can provide the country with more trophies and fame.
- Lastly, it is speculated that African governments could stipulate the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration to scout for investment options overseas and facilitate shareholders in the industry. The engagement of the ministries and missions that possess

the potential to provide accurate data on overseas investment prospects and African firms will provide stakeholders with the legitimacy and confidence they need to show to overseas governments and the public. Similarly, by taking such a proactive stance, the ministry will ensure that foreign investors passing through it to certain African countries are genuine.



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