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ABSTRACT

The Fédération International de Football Association (FIFA), World Cup competition, is a quadrennial festival of world's biggest international football tournament, with the sport, entertainment, benefits, costs, and rules. Since Egypt played the World Cup held in Italy in 1934 as the first African team (ACL Sports, December 25, 2017), no African team has won the age-long coveted trophy, even though participation is open to countries which qualified among slots apportioned to regions of the world. African participation in the 2018 World Cup tournament in Russia was a huge contradiction derogatorily referred to as 'Africa United'; The victory of French 'Africa United' team in the tournament raised fiery debate. Whereas the French team with 80% African immigrants won the trophy, five African representative teams – Egypt, Morocco, Nigeria, Senegal and Tunisia were all eliminated in the 32-team group stage of the competition despite that Africa represents the second largest continent of World Cup fans, behind Asia. Despite the huge social, political and economic prospects of the tournament to national and global development, studies have been very slim. With the broad objective of examining the role of African immigrants in the French team, we underscored the specific objective of underscoring Africa global partnership in development. Using the power-based model of formal and informal institutions and their effects on development outcomes (Gandy, 1992, Helmke and Levitsky, 2004; Keefer, 2005), we concluded that Africa's poor achievement in the tournament worsened its periphery station in the FIFA World Cup and global political economy and recommended policy steps for improvement.

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I. ABSTRACT

The Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA), World Cup competition, is a quadrennial festival of world's biggest international football tournament, with the sport, entertainment, benefits, costs, and rules. Since Egypt played the World Cup held in Italy in 1934 as the first African team (ACL Sports, December 25, 2017), no African team has won the age-long coveted trophy, even though participation is open to countries which qualified among slots apportioned to regions of the world. African participation in the 2018 World Cup tournament in Russia was a huge contradiction derogatorily referred to as 'Africa United'; The victory of French 'Africa United' team in the tournament raised fiery debate. Whereas the French team with 80% African immigrants won the trophy, five African representative teams – Egypt, Morocco, Nigeria, Senegal and Tunisia were all eliminated in the 32-team group stage of the competition despite that Africa represents the second largest continent of World Cup fans, behind Asia. Despite the huge social, political and economic prospects of the tournament to national and global development, studies have been very slim. With the broad objective of examining the role of African immigrants in the French team, we underscored the specific objective of underscoring Africa global partnership in development. Using the power-based model of formal and informal institutions and their effects on development outcomes (Gandy, 1992, Helmke and Levitsky, 2004; Keefer, 2005), we concluded that Africa's poor achievement in the tournament worsened its periphery station in the FIFA World Cup and

global political economy and recommended policy steps for improvement.

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II. INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

The Fédération of International Football Association (FIFA) World Cup Competition is a quadrennial festival of world's biggest international tournament that combines social (sport, recreational and entertainment) with political and economic objectives which are governed by benefits, costs, and rules. It is a world organisation of football without discrimination.

Since Egypt played the World Cup held in Italy 1934 as the first African team (ACL Sports, December 25, 2017), no African team has progressed to win the age-long coveted trophy despite the fact that participation is open to countries which qualified among slots apportioned to each region of the world. Five teams – Egypt, Morocco, Nigeria, Senegal and Tunisia - that got the Africa's slot to Russia 2018 World Cup tournament were all eliminated in the 32-team group stage, despite that Africa represents the second largest continent of World Cup fans, behind Asia. On the contrary, French team with 80% African immigrants won the World Cup. Africa's experience, derogatorily referred to as "Africa United," was a huge contradiction, and worsened the continent's periphery station in the FIFA World Cup and global political economy.

The victory of the France 'Africa United' team in the 2018 tournament raised fiery debate.

However, despite the huge incentives and Africa's poor performances in the global competition, FIFA World Cup had neither received adequate systematic analysis in political-economy literature, nor on Africa's undertaking in the competition. To fill the gap in literature, this paper was planned into eight distinct and mutually intersecting sections viz: section 1 – Introduction; 2 - Background to the Study; 3 – the FIFA 2018 World Cup Tournament; 4 Africa's Performance at FIFA 2018 World Cup; 5 – France 'Africa United' Victory in the 2018 World Cup; 6 – Political Economy of the FIFA World Cup; and 7 - Concluding Remarks.

III. BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

The FIFA was founded on 22 May 1902 and the World Cup tournament was first played in 1930 in Uruguay, in part, to commemorate the country's centenary celebration of independence. Under FIFA President Jules Rimet, the first goal in the history of FIFA World Cup was scored by Lucien Laurent of France in the thirteen-nation event. World Cup was played up until 1938 before the 1942 edition was cancelled due to the outbreak of World War II (Tomlinson, n.d.: 19). At the end of the war in 1945, the paucity of fund and time to plan a peaceful and successful tournament led to the further postponement of the tournament to 1949; yet no country would host it (Lisi, n.d.: 44). The World Cup tournament stabilised from the 1946 South American Championship in which Argentina beat Brazil 2-0 on 10 February 1946. From then, it sailed through 1950 to 1978; 1982 to 2018, successfully unchallenged.

Since the first World Cup edition, expansion has brought the tournament to current 32 teams, selected from a two-year qualifying process among over 200 teams from around the world.

It was the duopoly of South/Central America and Europe that had the monopoly to host the tournament until the 1994 edition in the United States of America. Since the USA edition, controversy continued to trail hosting rights by countries from other continents, for instance, despite the large fans in Asia, Japan and South Korea suffered the same fate in 2002 but FIFA had stood its ground in support of hosting World Cup in other continents. Again, in 2006, South Africa managed to host amidst controversy weathered by FIFA. Based on the continuing challenges against the hosting rights of the tournament by continents that would not let others, FIFA had to reform the system by implementing a new rule which began from October 2007 restricting continents that hosted World Cup for successive two tournaments before they can re-host based on "clear sets of guidelines on the timescales and deadlines that are now required" (Bestall, 30 October 2014) in the reformed bidding process.

The World Cup had gone through transitions in the formats of "its teams and final tournaments... consists of a round-robin group stage followed by a single-elimination knockout (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_World_Cup). For the formats since 1930, see table 1.

Table 1: Changing Formats of the FIFA World Cup Final Competitions 1930-2026

1930	A group stage, followed by a knockout stage with 4 teams (group winners; not that no third-place match was played).
1934-1938	Single-elimination tournament; these are the only tournament without an official final match.
1950	A first group stage, followed by a final group stage with 4 teams (group winners); this is the only tournament without an official final match.
1954-1970	A group stage, followed by a knockout stage with 8 teams (group winners and runners-up).
1974-1978	A first group stage, followed by a second group stage with 8 teams (first round group winners and runners-up), followed by the final (second round group winners; second round group runners-up played in the third-place march)

1982	A first group stage, followed by a second group stage with 12 teams (first round group winners and runners-up), followed by a knockout stage with 4 teams (second round group winners).
1986-1994	A group stage, followed by a knockout stage with 16 teams (group winners, runners-up and the four best third-place teams).
1998-2022	A group stage, followed by a knockout stage with 16 teams (group winners and runners-up).
2026-	A group stage, followed by a knockout stage with 32 teams (group winners and runners-up).

Sources: FIFA, "Formats of the FIFA World Cup Final Competitions 1930-2010," FIFA.com. Retrieved 1 January 2008; FIFA (n.d.) "Guide to the Bidding Process for the 2026 FIFA World Cup," http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2026_FIFA_World_Cup.

The objectives of FIFA World Cup, as contained in part of the FIFA Statutes, are to:

- i) Positively promote the game of football in every way it deems fit;
- ii) Foster friendly relations among national associations, confederations, officials and players by promoting the organisation of football matches at all levels and by supporting football by all other means which it deems appropriate;
- iii) Guide the football community by taking steps deemed necessary or advisable to prevent infringements of the FIFA Statute or regulations of FIFA or of the Laws of the Game as laid down by the International Football Association Board;
- iv) Prevent the introduction of other improper methods or practices in the game of football and to protect it from abuses (<https://www.fifa.com/news/y=2003/m=4/new>);
- v) Promote the elimination of discrimination against a country or an individual for reasons of race, religion or politics in sports by sanctioning or expelling any national association that tolerates, allows or organises competitions in which discrimination is practiced or which is established in a country where discrimination in sport is laid down by law; and
- vi) Provide, by means of statutory regulations, principles for settling any differences that may arise between or among national associations (FIFA, 11 April 2003).

Operationalisation of FIFA aims necessitated fair-play rule with basic principles of

transparency, participation, objectivity, commitment to human rights and sustainability in the bidding and evaluation processes to ensure that the technical requirements – infrastructural and commercial components are adequate and meet the standard for the integrity of the process from start to finish.

The infrastructure and commercial components, weighted 70% and 30%, respectively are derived. Infrastructure components derive from stadia (35%), teams and referees (6%), accommodation (6%), transport and mobility (13%), IT & T (7%), proposed location of the International Broadcasting Centre (IBC) (7%), and the proposed locations for the staging of the FIFA Fan Fest (3%). Commercial components derives from predicted costs of the competition (10%), estimated revenue from the sale of tickets and hospitality packages (10%), and estimated revenue from the sale of media and marketing rights (10%).

The Bid Rules of FIFA, among other measures:

- (i) Stipulates obligation to always apply core ethical principles;
- (ii) Prohibits inappropriate gifts;
- (iii) Prohibit unethical collaboration and/or collusion between member associations as well as lay strict rules in relation to proposals for football development projects and the organisation of friendly matches;
- (iv) Ensures compliance to FIFA's bidding timeline (FIFA Guide, n.d.; img.fifa.com/image/upload/hgopypqt).

Despite the stringent rules guiding FIFA bidding process, Macdonald (2018) observed that competition to host events of the world cup “is fierce, as bringing the World Cup to a country spurs economic gains through tourism, broadcasting, logistics, etc., and is also a source of great prestige for the current government.” Due to widening interests for the World Cup tournament, FIFA Council on 9 May 2017, decided in favour of expanding its World Cup and agreed to a 48-slot (46 direct slots, and an intercontinental play-off tournament to determine the two remaining slots) for the 2026 World Cup edition.

IV. THE CURRENT TOURNAMENT

Russia won the bid to host the 2018 World Cup edition. FIFA President Gianni Infantino, during a session of the Supervising Board of the Russia 2018 Local Organising Committee to appraise the level of preparation by Russia for the tournament, acknowledged with a note of appreciation:

Allow me, as well, please to congratulate all of you for all the work done so far. I am involved in the organisation of major football events since around 20 years, and the level of commitment, of dedication and of professionalism that I have seen in the organisation of this World Cup is unique (Sunday Independent, 6 May 2018).

Russia did its best to organise what was regarded as the costliest World Cup in history!

At the opening session of the tournament held in the 80,000-seat capacity Luzhniki Stadium in Moscow on 14 June 2018, not only that Britain which vowed to boycott the competition was present, over 20 world leaders, including Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, Abkhazian President Raul Khajimba, Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev, Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko, Bolivian President Evo Morales, Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev, Kyrgyz President Sooronbai Jeenbekov, and President of the Presidium of North Korea’s Supreme People’s Assembly Kim Yong Nam (Sputnik News, 14 July

2018) were all present and seated with the host Russian President Vladimir Putin, chatted warmly and performed the opening ceremony of the game despite political differences. As reported by Jack de Menezes in *Independent* (14 June 2018), Putin, in his welcome address, stated:

We have been responsibly preparing to host this wonderful event and we have done our utmost for fans, athletes and experts to immerse themselves in the atmosphere of a splendid football feast and, of course, we hope they enjoy their stay in Russia - an open, hospitable and friendly, and meet new friends – people with whom they share the same values...whatever traditions we hold, football brings us together in one single team and we are united by our affection for this spectacular, vibrant, uncompromising game and also players of these teams have the great degree of mutual understanding, a unity which cannot be affected by different language, ideology or faith... our duty is to preserve this power of humanity for generations to come for the sake of developing sports and strengthening peace and mutual understanding between people... [emphasis, mine].

Putin’s hard-core message was immediately endorsed by FIFA president Infantino, who asserted: “Welcome to the FIFA World Cup here in Russia. As of today, for one month, football will conquer Russia and, from Russia, football will conquer the world. Enjoy the great celebration on earth (Menezes, 14 June 2018).

Russia, among other costly preparations, provided 12 stadia in 11 cities. Table 2 shows statistics of the stadia, capacity, attendance, number of matches played, goals scored, etc.

Table 2: Statistics of Stadiums, Attendance, Matches and Goals in the 2018 World Cup

Stadium	City	Capacity	Elevation	Matches Played	Overall Attendance	Average Attendance Per Match	Average Attendance as % of Capacity	Overall Goals Scored	Average Goals Scored Per Match
Central Stadium	Yekaterinburg	33,061	273m	4	125,437	31,359	94.85%	9	2.25
Cosmos Arena	Samara	41,970	163m	6	248,060	41,343	98.51%	11	1.83
Fisht Olympic Stadium	Sochi	44,287	1m	6	264,057	44,010	99.37%	21	3.50
Kaliningrad Stadium	Kaliningrad	33,973	0m	4	132,249	33,062	97.32%	10	2.50
Kazan Arena	Kazan	42,873	51m	6	254,451	42,409	98.92%	19	3.17
Krestovsky Stadium	St. Petersburg	64,468	13m	7	448,686	64,098	99.43%	14	2.00
Luzhniki Stadium	Moscow	78,011	151m	7	546,077	78,011	100.00%	18	2.57
Mordovia Arena	Saransk	41,685	126m	4	160,237	40,059	96.10%	9	2.25
Nizhny Novgorod Stadium	Nizhny Novgorod	43,319	75m	6	256,427	42,738	98.66%	19	3.17
Otkritie Arena	Moscow	44,190	125m	5	220,950	44,190	100.00%	16	3.20
Rostov Arena	Rostov-on-Don	43,472	0m	5	214,197	42,839	98.54%	14	2.80
Volgograd Arena	Volgograd	43,713	31m	4	160,980	40,245	92.07%	9	2.25
Total		3,080,085		64	3,031,768	47,371	98.43%	169	2.64

Sources: Adapted from various sources, e.g., FIFA.com and Goal.com in Wikipedia, "2018 FIFA World Cup Statistics, <https://en.m.wikipedia.org>

Russian stadia and cities added tourism destinations to the teams for every match they won and progressed, for example, Croatia played their matches: first, with Nigeria at Kaliningrad on 16 June; second, with Argentina at Nizhny Novgorod on 21 June; third, with Iceland at Rostov-on-Don on 26 June. At the last-16 knockout stage, Croatia played with Denmark again at Nizhny Novgorod on 1 July. At the Quarter-finals, Croatia played with Russia at Sochi on 7 July; played at the semi-finals with England and finals with France at the high-capacity national stadium Luzhniki Stadium in Moscow on July 11; and July 15 (Dutton, 2018), respectively. Table 3 that follows is quite illuminating on teams and the stadia they played at the 32-team group stage of the World Cup.

Table 3: World Cup Matches, FIFA Rating and Statistics of the 32-Team

S/No.	Group/FIFA Rating	MP (3)			W	D	L	G F	GA/GD	Pts	Group Position
	A	Team/Score	Team/Score	Team/Score							
1.	Uruguay (URU) 14		URU 1-0 KSA	URU 3-0 RUS	3	0	0	5	0/+5	9	Winner
2.	Russia (RUS) 70	RUS 5-0 KSA	RUS 3-1 EGY		2	0	1	8	4/+4	6	Runners-up
3.	S/Arabia (KSA) 67			KSA 2-1 EGY	1	0	2	2	7/+5	3	
4.	Egypt (EGY) 45	EGY 0-1 URU			0	0	3	2	6/-4	0	
	B										
5.	Spain (ESP) 10			ESP 2-2 MAR	1	2	0	6	5/+5	5	Winner
6.	Portugal (POR) 4	POR 3-3 ESP	POR 1-0 MAR	POR 1-1 IRN	1	2	0	5	4/+1	5	Runners-up
7.	Iran (IRN) 37	IRN 1-0 MAR	ESP 1-0 IRN		1	1	1	2	2/0	4	
8.	Morocco (MAR) 41				0	1	2	2	4/-2	1	
	C										
9.	France (FRA) 7	FRA 2-1 AUS	FRA 1-0 PER		2	1	0	3	1/+2	5	Winner
10.	Denmark (DEN) 12	DEN 1-0 PER	DEN 1-1 AUS	DEN 0-0 FRA	1	2	0	3	1/+1	5	Runners-up
11.	Peru (PER) 11			PER 2-0 AUS	1	0	2	2	2/0	3	
12.	Australia (AUS) 36				0	1	2	2	5/-3	1	
	D										
13.	Croatia (CRO) 20	CRO 2-0 NGR	CRO 3-0 ARG	CRO 2-1 ISL	3	0	0	7	1/+6	9	Winner
14.	Argentina (ARG) 5	ARG 1-1 ISL		ARG 2-1 NGR	1	1	1	3	5/-1	4	Runners-up
15.	Nigeria (NGR) 48		NGR 2-0 ISL		1	0	2	3	4/-1	3	
16.	Iceland (ISL) 22				0	1	2	2	5/-3	1	
	E										
17.	Brazil (BRA) 2	BRA 1-0 CRC	BRA 2-0 CRC	BRA 2-0 SRB	2	1	0	5	1/+4	7	Winner
18.	Switzerland (SUI) 6		SUI 2-1 SRB	SUI 2-2 CRC	1	2	0	5	1/+4	5	Runners-up
19.	Serbia (SRB) 34	SER 1-0 CRC			1	0	2	2	4/+2	3	
20.	Costa Rica (CRC) 23				0	1	2	2	5/-3	1	
	F			SWE 3-0 MEX							
21.	Sweden (SWE) 24	SWE 1-0 KOR		KOR 2-0 GER	2	0	1	5	2/+3	6	Winner
22.	Mexico (MEX) 15	MEX 1-0 GER	MEX 2-1 KOR		2	0	1	3	4/-1	6	Runners-up
23.	S/Korea (KOR) 57				1	0	2	3	3/0	3	
24.	Germany (GER) 1		GER 2-1 SWE		1	0	2	2	4/-2	3	
	G										
25.	Belgium (BEL) 3	BEL 3-0 PAN	BEL 5-2 TUN	BEL 1-0 ENG	3	0	0	9	2/+7	9	Winner
26.	England (ENG) 12	ENG 2-1 TUN	ENG 6-1 PAN		2	0	1	8	3/+3	6	Runners-up
27.	Tunisia (TUN) 21			TUN 2-1 PAN	1	0	2	5	8/-3	3	
28.	Panama (PAN) 55				0	0	3	2	11/-9	0	
	H										
29.	Columbia (COL) 16			COL 1-0 SEN	2	0	1	5	2/+3	6	Winner
30.	Japan (JPN) 61	JPN 2-1 COL	JPN 2-2 SEN		1	1	1	4	0/0	4	Runners-up
31.	Senegal (SEN) 27	SEN 2-1 POL	COL 3-0 POL		1	1	1	4	0/0	4	
32.	Poland (POL) 8			POL 1-0 JPN	1	0	2	2	5/-3	3	

Sources: Adapted from Urowayino Warami, Final Group Tables at 2018 FIFA World Cup,” vanguardngr.com; soccerway, “FIFA Rankings,” 2018, <https://us.soccerway.com>; “Association,” FIFA.com. Retrieved 14 November 2015; Time, “Every 2018 World Cup Team Name Code Explained,” timeinc.net; Tom Dutton, FIFA World Cup 2018 Fixtures: Semi-Final Draw, Latest Matches, Dates, Venues in Our Full Schedule,” <https://www.standard.co.uk>.

At the group stage, each of the 32 teams played three matches from a total of 48 matches slated two marches each day. Because there were no open draws in the World Cup, each national team plotted its route from its slot of three matches in the group stage into the final. Impliedly, the teams were expected to strategise for proactive

early ride through the ladder to the top of the group.

V. AFRICA'S PERFORMANCE AT RUSSIA 2018 WORLD CUP

Since Egypt played as the first African team in the World Cup in 1934, many African teams joined and by records, the 5 African teams – Egypt, Morocco, Nigeria, Senegal, and Tunisia – in Russia 2018 edition were no pedestrians in the FIFA World Cup tournaments. Egypt played in 1934, but in its three appearances (1934, 1990, and 2018) has never won a match in the World Cup finals. Morocco made 5 appearances (1970, 1986, 1994, 1998, and 2018) and finished first and best African team in group, ahead of Portugal, Poland, and England in 1976. Nigeria made 6 appearances (1994, 1998, 2002, 2010, 2014, and 2018). In 1994, Nigeria was ranked the 5th best teams in the world, the highest ever for any African team. Nigeria missed 2006 in the successive editions; and was the only African team in the group to qualify for both 2014 and 2018 tournaments. Senegal made 2 appearances (2002 and 2018). In 2002, Senegal reached the quarter-finals and in the 2018 edition, despite its 4-point tiebreak with Japan, became the first national team to be eliminated based on fair-play rule. Tunisia made 5 appearances (1976, 1998, 2002, 2006, and 2018). In the first entry into World Cup tournament, Tunisia became the first African team to win a World Cup match beating Mexico 3-1 and held defending Champions, West Germany, to a goalless draw.

African teams showed promise at entry into the World Cup tournament, going by the enviable rating of Nigeria in 1994 and successive qualifications; Morocco in 1976; Senegal in 2002; and Tunisia in 1976. Despite the promise and long period of engagement in FIFA World Cup tournaments, African teams have steadily performed disappointingly up until the 2018 edition in Russia, where they were all eliminated at the 32-team group stage due largely to observed internal and external challenges which included:

- (i) Strategic gaps through lack of inertia or lackadaisical start-up in the games;
- (ii) Individual efforts, self-pride and dribbling, lack of cohesion and group effervescence;
- (iii) lack of proactive offensive strategy resulting to defensive or reactive strategies with little prospects of success; and
- (iv) lack of cutting-edge as requisite of global competitiveness.

It is disappointing that African teams at the 2018 World Cup demonstrated lack of inertia, experience and by extension, lack of the cutting edge after many years of entry into the FIFA tournaments, due largely to strategic gaps. In football, as in other strategic endeavours, including military, one should plan to achieve maximum set objects with minimum cost possible. African teams allowed their opponents to seize the offensive initiative, took the games to their half of the pitch, pushed them to obscure position and made them vulnerable to decapitation. Worse, they failed to plan and execute their games in one-spot-inclusive strategy through win-one-win-all field-tactics.

It needs to be observed that despite the high hopes in Infantino-led executive's novel arrangements for transparency in officiating the games, high discretion and prerogatives of referees and their assistants on critical decisions, e.g., balls-to-hand, "delivery handballs," penalties, free kicks, yellow cards, etc., were by omission or commission, made to the detriment of mostly African teams. The common reservation was on the use of VAR-technology which was expected to be beneficial to football through justice and avoidance of "clear and obvious mistakes" (Roberto Rossetti quoted in Sputnik, 14, June 2018). Instead, the VARs did not adequately and impartially address issues raised by African teams. FIFA-deployed technologies could not help the knockout of African teams, in a competitive way!

Consequently, Morocco became the first country, in the history of World Cup tournament, to take its case against officiating at the Russia 2018

World Cup; it alleged “series of officiating mistakes” which facilitated its ouster from the competition, especially in matches against Portugal and Spain”. Morocco’s petition signed by the country’s FA president Fouzi Lekjaa to FIFA president Infantino, reported by Christian Okpara for *The Guardian* (29 June 2018: 48), Ed Dove for *KweséESPN* (27 June 2018), Reuters (28 June 2018), and *Sporting Vanguard*, 29 June 2018: 7), stated:

We want to express our indignation at the injustice suffered by our national team, following serious refereeing errors that led to [the team’s] premature exit from the first round of the 2018 World Cup... The severity of these refereeing errors is all the more evident in the fact that in these two matches [against Portugal and against Spain], the use of VAR served only to preserve the interests of our competitors.

The last African team – Senegal - defeated 0-1 at the last group-stage match by Colombia tied in points for a chance to join the last-16 in the knockout stage with Japan which also lost its final match of the group stage. Senegal also lost in the tiebreak decision by the application of number of yellow cards each team earned based on the “fair play” tiebreaker (*The Guardian*, 29 June 2018: 46).

FIFA Director of Competitions Colin Smith logically defended the fair play rule decision that ousted Senegal from progressing beyond a number of games thus: “We want to avoid drawing lots as we believe teams progress based on what happens on the pitch” (*Sunday Vanguard*, 1 July 2018: 45). The fair play rule was

introduced in 2015 before the 2018 World Cup tournament and yellow card offence had been a rule as old as the game; if it was not enforced it was not that it never existed nor that it served no purpose; FIFA rules must be weighted according to severity and so was the fair play rule. A yellow card can be issued when a player willfully uses hand to score a goal!

VI. FRANCE 'AFRICA UNITED' VICTORY IN THE 2018 WORLD CUP

France joined other teams into the Second Stage – knockout – the last 16 teams from the 16-group ties which began on 30 June to 3 July 2018, played 2 matches each day at 3 pm and 7 pm respectively. France progressed into quarter-finals and semi-finals, defeating Belgium and at the end of the 2018 World Cup final played at Luzhniki Stadium in Moscow, on Sunday 15 July 2018 won Croatia. Total of 64 matches were played at 12 stadia spread over 11 Russian cities. Each city had one stadium except Moscow, the Russian capital city with two. France emerged meritorious winners of the 2018 World Cup tournament with 4-2 goals scored against Croatia.

France won the World Cup with more than 80% African immigrants and richly experienced manager Didier Deschamps who took part in 4 of France 6 finals in major tournaments in history - World Cup 1998, Euro 2000 (as a player), Euro 2016, and World Cup 2018 (as team manager) (Hess, 15 July 2018). Table 4 presents the composition of French squad to the 2018 World Cup, according to the position, age, nationality, clubs, etc.

Table 4: French Squad at the 2018 FIFA World Cup Tournament in Russia

S/No.	Position	Player	Date of Birth	Nationality	Caps	Goals	Club
1.	GK	Hugo Lloris (Captain)	26 December 1986 (age 31 years)	French	104	0	Tottenham Hotspur
6.	GK	Steve Mandanda	28 March 1985 (age 33 years)	Kinshasa-French	28	0	Marseille

23.	GK	Alphose Areola	27 February 1993 (age 25 years)	Philippino-French	0	0	PSG
2.	DF	Benjamin Pavard	28 March 1996 (age 22 years)	French	12	1	VfB Stuttgart
3.	DF	Presnel Kimpembe	13 August 1995 (age 25 years)	Congo-French	3	0	PSG
4.	DF	Raphaël Varane	25 April 1993 (age 25 years)	French	49	3	Real Madrid
5.	DF	Samuel Umtiti	14 November 1993 (age 24)	Cameroon-French	25	3	Barcelona
7.	DF	Adil Rami	27 December 1985 (age 32 years)	Morocco-French	35	1	Marseille
19.	DF	Djibril Sidibé	29 July 1992 (age 25 years)	Malian- French	18	1	Monaco
21.	DF	Lucas Hernández	14 February 1996 (age 22)	French	12	0	Manchester City
22.	DF	Benjamin Mendy	17 July 1994 (age 24 years)	African-French	8	0	Atletico Madrid
6.	MF	Paul Pogba	15 arch 1993 (age 25 years)	Guinea-French	60	10	Manchester United
12.	MF	Corentin Tolisso	3 August 1994 (age 23 years)	Togolese-French	14	0	Bayern Munich
13.	MF	N'Golo Kanté	29 March 1991 (age 27 years)	Mali-French	31	1	Chelsea
14.	MF	Blaise Matuidi	9 April 1987 (age 31 years)	Angola-French	72	9	Juventus
15.	MF	Steven Nzonzi	15 December 1988 (age 29 years)	Congo-French	9	0	Serville
7.	FW	Antoine Griezmann	21 March 1991 (age 27 years)	French	61	24	Atletico Madrid
8.	FW	Thomas Lemar	12 November 1995 (age 22 years)	African-French	14	3	Atletico Madrid
9.	FW	Olivier Giroud	30 December 1998 (age 19 years)	French	81	31	Chelsea
10.	FW	Kylian Mbappe	20 December 1998 (age 19 years)	Nigeria-French	22	8	PSG
11.	FW	Ousmani Dembélé	15 May 1997 (age 21 years)	Mauritania-French	16	2	Barcelona
18.	FW	Nabil Fekir	18 July 1993 (age 24 years)	Algeria-French	18	2	Lyon
20.	FW	Florian Thauvin	26 January 1993 (age 25 years)	French	5	0	Marseille

Sources: Wikipedia, "France, National Football Team," https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/France_national_football_team; Biographical notes of the players.

France victory in the 2018 World Cup, under Deschamps, was a huge reward of long historical transitions. Since the France Football Federation (FFF) was created in 1904 around the time FIFA was founded on 21 May 1904, the French was one of the four countries that participated at the inaugural World Cup in 1930, one of the three teams that have entered every World Cup qualifying cycle of the 21 editions: played 65 matches (won 33, drew 13, and lost 19; had 120 goals for, and 77 goals against) in 15 appearances and failed to qualify 5 times since the inaugural edition in 1930 (*ESPN*, n.d.; *New York Times*, 13 July 1998; *Goal*, 25 February 2009; *Sports*, 1 December 1996) in 1962, 1970, 1974, 1990, 1994. France hosted the tournament two times (1938, 1998), and won the Cup two times, in 1998 (with Deschamps as captain) and 2018 (with Deschamps as coach).

France national football team manager was first established on 25 April 1964, following the appointment of the country's first national team manager Henri Guéri. From the period of Guéri's appointment, fifteen managers have handled the team: three of those were in short term caretaker manager roles; José Arribas, Jean Snella and Just Fontaine; Raymond Domenech (12 July 2004 – 11 August 2010) was the longest-serving team manager. Three managers won major tournaments – Michel Hidalgo (1976 - 1984), the second longest-serving team manager behind Domenech, won UEFA Euro 1984. In 1998, Aimé Jacquet won the 1998 World Cup on home soil and two years later, Roger Lemerre won UEFA Euro 2000 and 2001 FIFA Confederations Cup. On 8 August 1973, the Romanian Ștefan Kovačs, was appointed the first foreign manager, when the team was coached by several British managers – Thomas Griffiths (English), Peter Farmer (Scottish) coached the team at the 1928 Summer Olympics. From 1934 to 1936, the team was coached by Sid Kimpton. The current manager, Deschamps replaced Laurent Blanc, following the UEFA Euro 2012 on 8 July 2012.

Periods of French failures to qualify and early eliminations in the World Cup were characterised by instability occasioned by quick turnover of management and coaches. The French victory at the 2018 World Cup placed the country as the first national team that has won the three most important men's titles recognised by FIFA, twice: the World Cup (1998, 2018); Confederation Cup (2001, 2003); Olympic tournament and Europeans Championship (1984, 2000) (*BBC Sport*, 17 May 2004; 24 May 2004; *ESPN*, 9 February 2011).

Howbeit, the French victory in Russia 2018 World Cup cannot be dismissed as facilitated by African immigrants in the team. Just as the competition approached the finals, long way after African teams were eliminated in the 2018 World Cup, Kenya's deputy president William Ruto remarked that the French team is "the only African team in the finals" (Akande, 19 July 2018) and no sooner *Les Bleus* raised the World Cup in celebration of their victory than South African comedian, Trevor Noah, described French team's 4-2 victory against Croatia, as "Africa won the World Cup." Trevor argued that "many of the players in the French national team – including stars - Paul Pogba and Kylian Mbappé, who both scored in the final ... are of Africa heritage" (Akande, 19 July 2018).

The perspectives raised bouts of racist debates. Responding to Trevor's assertion, French Ambassador to the United States, Gérard Araud, reported by Segun Akande for *Cable News Network* (19 July 2018), wrote:

... the rich and various backgrounds of these players is a reflection of France's diversity. France does not refer to its citizens based on their race, religion or origin. To us, there is no hyphenated identity. .. this even in jest, legitimises the ideology which claims whiteness as the only definition of being French ... End of the argument with Trevor Noah. He said they are African. They couldn't get this suntan in the

south of France. That is they can't be French because they are black. The argument of the White supremacist.

The position of France ambassador concretely legitimises the praxis-philosophy of Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937) that great powers prevail through intellectual hegemony in more effective use of ideas to create consent and rule the masses despite Lucács' "subject-object of history" thesis (Balaam and Vesseth, 2008: 73).

Although former president of the U.S. Barack Obama waded into the debate and defended that the players were French nationals and could not be mistaken to Africa, Venezuela's President Nicolas Maduro sarcastically stated:

The French team seems like the African team, in reality, Africa won, the African immigrants who arrived in France. How much have they despised Africa, and in the football World Cup France won the trophy thanks to African players or the sons of Africans...Hopefully, France, and Europe will appreciate that us, southerners, Africans, Latin Americans, are worthy and powerful. (AFP, 18 July 2018).

Howbeit, American Law professor Khalid Beydoun with plea to France to acknowledge its immigrants and Muslim populations was more bombastic: "80% of your team is African, cut out the racism and xenophobia. 50% of your team are Muslims, cut out the Islamophobia. Africans and Muslims delivered you a second World Cup, now deliver them justice" (Akande, 19 July 2018). The debate unravels the use of "Africa United" Diaspora syndicates and cartels to advance French international football and reveals how the globalists were ready to propagate the political and economic gains while stultifying its socio-cultural imperatives.

The development is coming as a hard lesson at a time the United States President Donald Trump is globe-trotting Europe with sermons of sadness against "millions and millions" of immigration intakes which he described as destroying European culture and making the continent less

nice (Halland and Contreras, 15 July 2018; Times of Israel, 13 July 2018). Perhaps a recent example is France's winning the 2018 World Cup thanks to 80% of African immigrants in the team which revolutionised French culture into a winning spree in global football economy. The views from all sides of the debate on African immigrants in the French team and the force behind French victory at the 2018 World Cup tournament demonstrate the eminent capacity of Africans as global development partners. In the ensuing debate, none has denied the preponderance of Africa Diasporas (16 of the 23) in the team and no single African country could claim victory of the World Cup; the whole exposé is a quick and strong reminder for African unity, cooperation, good governance, reach and tap resources and skills of African Diaspora across the globe as global development partners in the development of African continent as well. The rising profile of Africa Diasporas combined with effective citizen diplomacy is a potential for better perception on, and engagement of, Africa and its peoples for continental greatness in global political economy.

VII. POLITICAL ECONOMY OF THE FIFA WORLD CUP

The world order centres on international politics and economics and by extension, international political order is rooted in the actions of the global powers to use their power position to advance their interests in the world system. Despite the French, many European countries, particularly those that carried out the international slavery of Africans such as Belgium, France, England, Portugal, Spain, boosted their teams for the World Cup with African immigrants. FIFA World Cup economy recreates colonialists' plantation economy during the era of open and destructive African slavery when Africans were exported to European plantations "via long distance slave trade... across the Atlantic, the Sahara, or the Red Sea and Indian Ocean" with huge negative impacts on Africa's demography and endogenous productive potential to economic development (Reid, 2012: 15 and 26).

7.1 Hosting Rights

As members and participants in the World Cup tournaments for the 20th edition, Africa hosted the tournament only once in South Africa despite that the continent joined early during the second edition in 1934, has the second largest fan-population behind Asia, and the opportunities

and benefits offered through hosting rights. For instance, table 5 shows different categories of ticket prices for the 2018 World Cup matches in Russia and the categories and price for Russian fans as host.

Table 5: Ticket Prices for 2018 World Cup in Russia

Match	Category 1	Category 2	Category 3	Category 4
Opening Match	£414*	£294	£166	£42**
Group Matches	£158	£124	£79	£17
Round 16 Matches	£185	£139	£87	£29
Quarter- Finals	£275	£1992	£132	£50
Semi-Finals	£565	£362	£215	£59
3rd/4th Place Playoff	£275	£192	£132	£50
Final	£829	£535	£343	£92

*Prices are denominated in GBP from USD based on current exchange rate.

**Prices are denominated in GBP from RUB based on current exchange rate.

Source: BBC Sport Football, "Russia World Cup 2018: First Tickets for Finals Go on Sale," 14 September 2017, <https://bbc.com>

The country-participants and their teams in the World Cup are entitled to rights and benefits ranging from ticket price-cuts, prize money, match bonuses, etc. Logically, in the first instance of the 2018 edition, Russian fans enjoyed ticket price-cuts through exclusive ticket price reduction between £17 and £151 in groups 3 and 4, respectively. For the 2018 FIFA World Cup tournament, the World governing body slated US\$400 million for the participating teams based on performance. The prices range as follow:

- (i) teams that reach final stage were entitled to a minimum of US\$9.5 (US\$8m for taking part in the group stage and US\$1.5m for tournament cost);
- (ii) teams that progressed from group stage but were knocked out at the round of the final 16 were entitled to extra US\$4m (a total of US\$12m);

- (iii) teams that were eliminated in the quarter-final stage were entitled to a further US\$4m (US\$16m) and each of the final 4 were entitled to different amounts, depending on how they performed;
- (iv) teams beaten at the semi-final state who contested the third-place play-off were entitled to US\$23m, with US\$24 given to the winner, while the loser received US\$22m;
- (v) team that won the final game received US\$38m while the runners-up received US\$28m of the US\$66m at stake in the final game.

The amounts were boosted by the US\$1.5m for tournament costs and all the teams were meant to be paid after the completion of the competition. The price money is represented in the table 6 that follows.

Table 6: Price Money for 2018 World Cup Participating Teams in Russia

Position	Price per team	Total price fund
Group Stage	\$8 million	\$128 million
Last-16	\$12 million	\$96 million
Quarter-Finals	\$16 million	\$64 million
Fourth Place	\$22 million	\$22 million
Third Place	\$24 million	\$24 million
Runners-up	\$28 million	28 million
Winners	\$38 million	\$38 million
	Total	\$400 million

Note: Price money is denominated in U.S. dollars.

Source: Goal, "World Cup 2018 Price Money: How Much Do the Winners Get & Countries' Bonus Payments," goal.com

The 2018 price money was higher compared to what teams were paid for participation in the 2014 edition held in Brazil. When added to \$48 million paid out to the 32 participating members as preparatory money and \$209 million in Club Benefits Programme for the clubs of the participating football players, the total price money paid by FIFA came to a total of \$657 million for the 2018 edition. FIFA contribution to the 2018 World Cup was drawn from expected total revenue of about \$6 billion.

7.2 Impacts on Hosting Nations

It is not without political and economic gains that nations bid to host the world biggest sport tournament. Hosting the World Cup tournament has many rewards including:

- (i) Promotion of the image of the country;
- (ii) Boosting of tourism economy;
- (iii) Boosting development of sport, transport and social infrastructure, i.e., stadia development, renovation and upgrading;
- (iv) Increasing job-creation in the service, transport, and trade sector to boost the economy;
- (v) Increasing the value of local currency exchange rate against other currency through large currency inflows to hosting local nations;
- (vi) The positive increase in balance of payments in favour of the hosting nations;

- (vii) Overall boost of host nation's GDP despite pressure on host nation's expenditure
- (viii) Entitlement to "legacy" balance payment, e.g., Brazil received an overall US\$100 million after the 2014 World Cup (Davydov and Evdokimova, 12 March 2018; Manfred, 20 March 2015).

7.3 Impacts on the Ranking of Teams and Players

Additional to the price money paid to teams are bonus payment awarded by FIFA to national associations, including the discretionary bonus awards by the individual associations to their teams for their performances as well. More so, the tournament offers windows for players to showcase their talents, break old records and set new ones which form part of the overall political yardstick for FIFA ranking.

Spectacularly interesting, new records were created: of the 169 goals scored in the 2018 World Cup (Metro Sport), 73 (43%) were scored from set-piece situations, 9 were scored in the 90th minute or later, more than any other World Cup edition. There were 29 penalty kicks (22 scored and 7 missed), 12 own goals, 219 yellow cards, 4 red cards, and only one (1) goalless draw (France vs. Denmark).

Christiano Ronaldo became the world 4th player after Pele, Uwe Seeler, and Miroslav Klose who scored in 4 World Cup editions (2006, 2010,

2014, and 2018). Among players with highest match appearances in World Cup tournament, outside Rafael Márquez who participated the 5th time as captain of Mexico teams equaling the record of Compatriot Antonio Carbaja and Germany player, Lothar Matthäus (FIFA, 26 June 2018), are Mascherano (20), Lionel Messi (19), and Cristiano Ronaldo and Sergio Ramos (17) each.

However, in goal-achievement, Ronaldo's 7 goals (1 each against Iran, Korea, Ghana, a hat-trick against Spain and 1 goal against Morocco), kept Edinson Cavani, Javier Hernández, Lionel Messi, and Suárez, as distant runners-up with 3 goals each. Among the best goals ranking, Belgium's Nacer Chadler goal at the 94th minute came 1st, Portugal's Cristiano Ronaldo majestic free-kick 3-3 equaliser-goal against Spain at 88th minute came 2nd, Belgium's Dries Mertens goal from a volley against Panama came 3rd, France's Benjamin Pavard slicing goal against Argentina came 4th, and Russia's Denis Cheryshev freezing goal against Croatia came 5th (Gonzalez, 15 July 2018). Ronaldo became the first player in World Cup history to score a hat-trick against Spain (Ruthven, 15 June 2018). Twenty-seven (27) of the 34 team squads have players who play in England. This reason backed the England squad pride in fielding 'young' team squad of players selected exclusively from its local league in contrast to Sweden and Senegal players who were selected from foreign leagues. Senegal had the youngest coach Aliou Cisse at 41 years and Oscar Tabárez of Uruguay was the oldest coach of the tournament at 71 years, a record 5th manager to take charge of the same country at four different World Cup finals (1990, 2010, 2014, 2018), after Walter Winterbottom (England), Josef Herberg (West Germany) and Lajos Baroti (Hungary).

Other records include the Egyptian goalkeeper Essam El-Hadary who became the world oldest player selected for the World Cup tournament at 45 years, 161 days. The youngest player was Daniel Arzani of Australia who was 19 years, 163 days (BBC Sport, 18 June 2018). Again, Sofyan Amrabat of Morocco who featured as a substitute

player for his brother became the first player in World Cup history to come in for his brother (FIFA, 16 June 2018).

Disappointingly, as the countries of the world looked toward Qatar 2022 World Cup perfecting strategies, Nigeria, for instance, was locked in political strategy of indictment and replacement of the president of Nigeria Football Federation Amaju Pinnick on pre-determined shameful allegation of wasteful spending in Russia aimed to ease him out from re-contesting the position which he used to launch Nigeria football and politics into global acclaim, especially given his recognition and roles in the World Cup matches and appointments. The politics of image-smearing to replace experience with mediocrity is in part the problem and reason the country is losing opportunities and time to critically evaluate the positive and negative factors in the Nigerian team (Okeleji, 29 June 2018: 44) and come out with effective policy steps to address the country's poor performance at the Russia 2018 World Cup.

7.4 Cost Implication of 2018 World Cup Tournament

The 2018 World Cup tournament was at the estimated cost of US\$13 billion (70% covered from the various levels of public budgets and 30% by private investors). It cost Russia US\$9.6 billion (600 billion rubles) in infrastructure alone, hosting about 3 million spectators (Armstrong, 13 June 2018) at the 2018 World Cup. The private-sector revenue sources include television (TV) rights, marketing rights, ticketing, hospitality rights, and licensing rights. FIFA contributed US\$791 million in the 2018 World Cup Competition, a 40% increase from the 2014 tournament. (Hess, 15 July 2018). For instance, in the marketing sphere, strategy for sponsorship, according to FIFA.com, expose FIFA Partners, FIFA World Cup Sponsors, and Regional Supporters differentially to:

... the FIFA World Cup as one of the most effective global marketing platforms, offering sponsors unrivalled opportunities to connect with consumers ... football is the world's favourite

sport which is played by more than 240 million players in 1.4 million teams and 300,000 clubs in over 200 countries of the world. The FIFA World Cup reaches an audience of a size and diversity that is unrivalled by any other single-sport body. Add to this a passion for the game found in all corners of the world, and you have a sporting, social and marketing phenomenon.

FIFA.com maintains that the “standard rights in support of Commercial Affiliates such as *Adidas*, *Nike*, *Puma*, *New Balance*, *Umbro* who provide vital services and product support for the entire event’s operation, include:

- (i) The use of FIFA-approved Official Marks;
- (ii) Exposure in and around the stadium, in all Official FIFA publications and on the official website, <http://www.fifa.com>;
- (iii) Acknowledgement of their support through an extensive FIFA World Cup sponsor recognition programme;
- (iv) Ambush marketing protection;
- (v) Hospitality opportunities;
- (vi) Direct advertising and promotional opportunities and preferential access to FIFA World Cup broadcast advertising; and
- (vii) Window of possibility to tailor sponsorship according to marketing strategy and needs, e.g., through the use of the Official logo to create composite logos to differentiate from third parties and give them excellent marketing tool.

FIFA World Cup tournaments have a great economic reward to the hosting nations, FIFA partners, Commercial Affiliates and the Federation. This can be illustrated using examples of 2014 and 2018:

The 2014 World Cup generated \$4.8 billion in revenue for FIFA compared to \$2.2 billion in expenses. Over the four-year cycle, the event turned a \$2.6 billion profit. FIFA made \$2.4 billion in TV rights’ fees; \$1.6 billion in sponsorships; and \$527 million in ticket sales” (Manfred, 20 March 2015).

FIFA report of the 2018 World Cup showed expected revenue of \$6.1 billion – 10% more than FIFA estimated for the tournament and \$1.3 billion more than the last World up produced in 2014 in Brazil. According to the report:

FIFA generated from television rights sales 2 percent more than its \$3 billion target; \$200 million from sponsorship deals, more than the \$1.45 billion it had projected, largely because of a slew of deals with Chinese companies. Some of the 20 companies that sponsored the tournament were Chinese, up from just one at the last World Cup. FIFA also enjoyed a 233% increase in annual royalties in 2017 from EA ports, the maker of the popular FIFA video game franchise. The company paid FIFA \$160 million in 2011. Chinese interest followed President Xi Jinping demand in 2015 that China build a sports economy, focusing on soccer at a time Western companies were becoming hesitant of doing business with FIFA following the corruption investigations by the US Justice Department. Although FIFA lost \$997, its profit for 2018 stood at \$1.1 billion (Panja, 12 June 2018).

FIFA expects a balance sheet of \$1.7 billion in cash and assets by the end of 2018, which in the words of its president, Infantino “show that FIFA is healthy.”

The FIFA World Cup trophy was designed 36cm length with 18 carat gold by Italian sculptor Silvio Gazzaniga in 1971 at the cost of US\$50,000 which today, is between US\$10 million and US\$20 million (Hess, 15 July 2018). It is a symbol of peace through sportsmanship and cooperation. In the words of Gazzaniga: “I’m very proud to have done my little bit to help spread peace in the world through sport. Sport brings people and nations together, and is much more important than many of us believe” (SportsPro Media, 18 June, 2010).

Gazzaniga’s words are very instructive from the experience garnered from Russia 2018 World Cup tournament. Although some countries, including the United Kingdom, had reservations for the

choice of Russia to host the 2018 World Cup, confessions of serene and hospitable Russia were inundating. Beyond the soccer game, Russia 2018 World Cup experience was hugely laced with carnival, diplomatic, economic and cultural salesmanship.

The World Cup exposes participants of countries to increased citizen diplomatic engagements to sale the countries' economic potentialities, image, culture, and values. For instance, Tony Ubani reporting for *Sports Vanguard* (2018:3), wrote that Nigeria used the 2018 World Cup tournament to make a cultural statement through an exhibition held on "Nigeria Day" at the Nigeria House in Moscow. The event attracted over 30,000 people, mostly Russians who were treated to Nigerian cuisine and cultural dances. Also, Nigeria used the opportunity to showcase her economic potentials and improve her diplomatic relations with Russia and many other countries. As Nigeria citizen diplomats, the conduct of the players and other Nigerians at the World Cup improved Nigeria's image and perception of their host country. For instance, one of the few Russians who speak English, Dimitov, a waiter in the hotel, Nigerian team lodged, Ubani reports, complained:

I feel sad that my Nigerian friends are nowhere to be seen. They are nice people who are warm and embrace people easily. Here, everybody keeps to himself. But Nigerians are engaging. They greet and they make friends. Before, I used to complain of their noise. Now, I know it is not noise. It is love. I am going back to my old life of loneliness. I miss their greetings.

VIII. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The aim of World Cup is tied to the global political economy which is characterised by a fortress of competition however cooperative the objective. Competition requires strategic plans to acquire the necessary planning and execution skills which provide the participants and stakeholders with the requisite cutting edge to out-market competitors through success and excellence. The pragmatism

and duality of 'Africa United' concept was a sad contradiction evident in the 80% 'preponderance' of players of African origin in the French national team that won the World Cup and exit of 'all' African team-representatives in the 32-team group stage of the Russian 2018 World Cup.

African teams at the World Cup lost at the group stage partly because of lack of execution skills in the pitch which earned them early goal deficits and forced on them reactive-rather-than-proactive steps and worsened by Africa's periphery status in the World Cup official decision-making machinery where they are not part of rule-making and rule-enforcement which was used ostensibly through the VAR-technology to the advantage of some favoured European teams and facilitate Africa's collective early exit and periphery status because they displayed collective action problem (Mehta and Roy, 2004) in the 2018 World Cup competition in Russia.

The logical expression of the role of 80% African immigrants in the French team that won the World Cup, developed French team, football and economy is, by extension, an illustration of Africa Diaspora partnership in development of host countries, particularly in Europe, more than fledgling African countries and European traditional neo-colonialist disarticulation of African development pattern through periphery economy for the overall benefits of European metropolises.

African governments should strive hard to put their house within globalisation order through good governance to enable them harness the regional resources of men and material, ostensibly its rich Diaspora, to be better able to leverage African teams and second-largest global fan population, behind Asia, for the benefits of global partnership in the development of the African continent to navigate out of inequality in the World Cup that perpetuates the continent's periphery in global political economy.

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