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Visual Identity in African Sports Communication: A Semiotic Analysis of the CAF Logo

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Abstract

This article investigates the visual identity of African sports communication through a semiotic analysis of the Confederation of African Football (CAF) logo. Drawing on Barthes' triadic model of denotation, connotation, and myth, the study examines how key visual elements—including the African map, geometric radiations, and a symbolic color palette—construct narratives of unity, pride, and modernity. The logo is interpreted not only as a branding device but also as a communicative artifact that embodies postcolonial identity, pan-African solidarity, and institutional legitimacy. By integrating perspectives from semiotics, organizational branding, and sports communication, the research underscores the role of visual identity in shaping cultural meaning and offers a framework for understanding how African sports institutions position themselves within global contexts.

Keywords: Visual identity; Semiotics; Sports communication; African football; CAF logo.

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1.Introduction

In the dynamic landscape of contemporary sports, visual communication has emerged as a central vehicle for shaping organizational identity and audience perception. This is particularly true in African sports institutions, where visual elements—such as logos, emblems, and color schemes—carry deep cultural, political, and symbolic connotations. Among these, the logo of the Confederation of African Football (CAF) stands out as a potent emblem of continental unity, historical struggle, and evolving identity within global sports discourse.

Semiotics, as a method of decoding signs and symbols, offers a robust analytical framework for unpacking the visual rhetoric embedded in sports branding. The study of logos, in this context, is not merely a matter of graphic design, but a window into broader questions of representation, cultural memory, and ideological projection (Barthes, 1977; Danesi, 2016). Sports logos are thus not neutral; they are crafted visual texts that convey institutional values, regional narratives, and aspirational identities.

As a subfield of media and communication studies, sports communication investigates how messages are constructed and disseminated within the sporting world—through language, imagery, media platforms, and symbols. In African contexts, where football serves as a sociocultural force that transcends ethnic, linguistic, and national boundaries, sports communication becomes a powerful tool of unity, identity negotiation, and public mobilization. Within this communicative terrain, the visual identity of governing bodies like CAF plays a pivotal role in shaping both internal solidarity and external image.

While Western and European sports branding has been the subject of growing scholarly attention (Kellison & Mondello, 2012; Rein et al., 2006), African sports logos—particularly those affiliated with continental bodies—remain relatively under-researched. The CAF logo, in particular, warrants critical examination not only because of its pan-African symbolism, but also due to its communicative function across a multilingual, multiethnic, and politically diverse continent.

This paper aims to conduct a semiotic analysis of the CAF logo to uncover how visual elements serve as carriers of identity, history, and power in African sports communication. Through a Barthesian lens, the study interrogates how the logo functions as a system of signs that articulates both explicit and latent meanings within the context of African football.

2. Conceptual Framework

In order to analyze the CAF logo within the realm of African sports communication, this study relies on a set of interrelated conceptual constructs that form the foundation of its analytical lens. These concepts include *visual identity*, *sports communication*, *semiotics*, *myth*, and the *logo as a visual text*. Each concept is briefly elaborated below.

2.1 Visual Identity

Visual identity refers to the strategic use of visual elements—such as logos, color schemes, typefaces, and imagery—to communicate the ethos and essence of an institution. In the context of sports organizations, visual identity serves not only to distinguish a brand but also to establish an emotional and cultural resonance with audiences (Arai, Ko, & Kaplanidou, 2013). It is a crucial component of brand architecture, particularly for federations like CAF, whose visual language must operate across a vast and diverse cultural landscape.

2.2 Sports Communication

Sports communication is a specialized branch of media and communication studies that examines how information is created, transmitted, and interpreted within sports contexts. It encompasses multiple modes, including verbal, visual, and symbolic forms of interaction. As Rowe (2004) argues, sport serves as a powerful site of cultural expression and identity negotiation, especially in regions like Africa, where football plays a deeply social and political role. Visual communication in sports—logos, kits, stadium

designs—plays a central part in constructing meaning and conveying messages to both local and international audiences.

2.3 Semiotics

Semiotics is the study of signs and symbols as carriers of meaning. Roland Barthes (1977) advanced semiotic theory by distinguishing between *denotation* (the literal meaning of a sign) and *connotation* (the cultural or ideological meaning it acquires). In this view, a logo is not a neutral image; it is a system of signs that produces meaning in context. Logos function as condensed visual codes, conveying institutional values, ideologies, and aspirations (Chandler, 2017).

2.4 Myth (Barthesian Perspective)

Barthes' notion of "myth" refers to the second-order signification in which cultural values are naturalized and communicated through symbols. In the context of the CAF logo, the symbolic use of African imagery and colors may communicate deeper ideological meanings—such as unity, heritage, or pan-African modernity—that are presented as self-evident truths. Barthes (1957) asserts that myths serve to depoliticize cultural narratives and turn constructed meanings into accepted norms, making them ideal tools for institutional representation and branding.

2.5 Logo as a Visual Text

A logo is more than a design; it is a *visual text* that communicates meaning through a blend of visual elements and cultural codes. As Underwood, Bond, and Baer (2001) suggest, logos function as "semiotic condensations"—symbols that carry compressed narratives of an organization's identity. In sports communication, this role is amplified. Logos encapsulate the spirit, mission, and history of a federation, serving as visual ambassadors in both domestic and international contexts.

2.6 African Identity in Visual Communication

African identity, as communicated through visual culture, is rooted in a complex interplay of history, tradition, and postcolonial aspiration. The semiotic analysis of African sports symbols, such as the CAF logo, must therefore take into account the continent's symbolic landscape. Scholars like Ndlovu (2013) and Akindes (2011) stress the importance of analyzing how African institutions visually perform identity in a way that navigates both local authenticity and global recognition. The CAF logo becomes a site of cultural negotiation, embodying pan-African pride while also engaging with international visual standards.

3. Literature Review

The review of literature provides the theoretical and empirical foundation for understanding the role of visual identity in sports communication and branding. It brings together insights from semiotics, organizational studies, and African sports scholarship to frame the analysis of the CAF logo within a broader academic discourse. The first part explores the significance of visual identity in sports branding, emphasizing how logos and symbols contribute to consumer attachment, brand equity, and organizational legitimacy. This is followed by a discussion of semiotics and visual communication, drawing on classical and contemporary approaches to explain how signs, symbols, and myths operate within sporting contexts. A third section examines African sports communication and symbolic representation, situating the analysis in its specific cultural and political environment. Building on this, the review turns to semiotics as a methodological tool for visual analysis, highlighting its relevance in decoding layers of meaning embedded in visual texts. Finally, the review addresses visual identity and organizational semiotics,

connecting logo design to the broader dynamics of identity construction, legitimacy, and global positioning in sports organizations. Together, these strands form an integrated framework that supports a semiotic analysis of the CAF visual identity.

3.1 Visual Identity in Sports Branding

Visual identity has become a central component of strategic branding in the contemporary sports industry. It encompasses a range of visual elements—logos, typography, color palettes, and imagery—that work together to construct and communicate an organization's identity, values, and cultural positioning (Arai, Ko, & Kaplanidou, 2013). In sports contexts, logos in particular function as powerful semiotic tools, serving not only as organizational identifiers but also as vessels for emotional connection and brand equity. This has led scholars to conceptualize logos as "visual texts" capable of encoding ideologies, histories, and aspirations (Underwood, Bond, & Baer, 2001).

Branding in sport operates at the intersection of marketing, psychology, and cultural studies. Visual elements are designed not just to appeal aesthetically, but to evoke a sense of loyalty and community among fans and stakeholders. According to Kunkel, Doyle, and Funk (2014), the visual consistency and symbolic resonance of a sports logo can significantly influence audience perceptions of authenticity, heritage, and professionalism. These visual systems are especially important in the case of large institutions, such as continental sports federations, where the identity must be communicated across diverse linguistic and cultural constituencies.

Several empirical studies have explored how visual identity shapes consumer attachment and organizational legitimacy. For example, Watkins (2014) analyzed the National Basketball Association (NBA) logos and found that visual elements like color and shape play a critical role in the development of team loyalty and recognition. Similarly, Richelieu and Pons (2011) argue that sports logos can act as cultural signifiers, especially in globalized markets, where teams and federations compete not only in athletic arenas but also in the symbolic space of identity and representation.

Despite the growing literature on visual branding in sport, much of this scholarship remains centered on Western and corporate sports models, such as the NBA, NFL, or Premier League clubs. The visual branding of African sports organizations, particularly at the continental level, has been relatively understudied. This gap underscores the need for focused academic inquiry into how visual identities such as the CAF logo operate in contexts marked by cultural hybridity, historical legacies, and aspirations for continental unity.

3.2 Semiotics and Visual Communication

Semiotics, the study of signs and symbols as elements of communicative behavior, provides a critical framework for understanding how visual identities operate in media and branding. Roland Barthes, one of the foundational figures in modern semiotic theory, emphasized that signs function at both a denotative level (literal meaning) and a connotative level (associated or ideological meanings) (Barthes, 1977). In the case of logos, this dual-level structure allows for a multiplicity of interpretations shaped by cultural, historical, and social contexts.

Barthes introduced the concept of "myth" as a second-order semiological system, whereby cultural values become naturalized through images and symbols. This is particularly relevant in sports branding, where visual elements often convey ideological narratives of nationalism, excellence, modernity, or unity. For instance, the use of specific colors (green for hope, gold for victory, black for African pride) and symbolic shapes in a logo can create a myth of continental cohesion or historical legacy.

Beyond Barthes, contemporary semioticians such as Marcel Danesi (2016) argue that in the digital and global media era, logos have become part of a global "visual language"—a semiotic code that communicates instantly across linguistic boundaries. This is especially important in the African context, where multilingualism and cultural plurality demand non-verbal strategies for representation and communication.

Furthermore, the role of semiotics in sports branding is increasingly recognized in marketing and communication research. Studies have shown that logos function not only as brand identifiers but also as powerful conveyors of meaning and memory (Phillips & McQuarrie, 2010). They act as entry points into the broader narratives organizations wish to associate with—whether success, unity, historical depth, or global relevance. Semiotic analysis thus enables scholars to unpack how logos go beyond mere design and become instruments of strategic communication.

3.3 African Sports Communication and Symbolic Representation

In African contexts, sports—particularly football—serve as more than just entertainment; they are deeply embedded in social identity, political narratives, and cultural heritage (Akindes, 2011). The role of communication in this landscape is central: from grassroots campaigns to continental tournaments, African sports institutions use a range of visual and textual strategies to represent identity, authority, and aspiration.

Despite the political and symbolic significance of African sports institutions, little research has addressed how these entities construct their visual identities in line with continental ideologies. The Confederation of African Football (CAF), as the premier governing body of football in Africa, occupies a pivotal position in shaping the continent's sports narrative. Its logo is not merely decorative but functions as a symbol of unity, pride, and modern institutional governance.

Scholars such as Ndlovu (2013) have emphasized that African sports organizations often strive to craft pan-African imagery to transcend colonial boundaries and promote continental solidarity. These efforts are communicated through both language and visual aesthetics, particularly in emblematic designs. However, many such symbols remain under-analyzed, especially from the standpoint of semiotics and communication theory.

Moreover, as African sports federations increasingly participate in global arenas, their visual identities must negotiate between local authenticity and international legibility. The CAF logo, in this context, serves not only African audiences but also international sponsors, media, and partner organizations. Analyzing its semiotic structure provides insight into how African institutions perform identity within a globalized communicative ecosystem.

3.4 Semiotics as a Tool for Visual Analysis

Semiotics provides a foundational framework for understanding how meaning is constructed and communicated through visual forms. As articulated by Roland Barthes (1977), every sign is composed of a signifier (the physical form) and a signified (the conceptual content). In the context of logos, these signifiers (colors, shapes, spatial arrangements) are loaded with signified meanings that reflect cultural, political, and ideological associations. Barthes further distinguishes between denotation (literal meaning) and connotation (implied or cultural meaning), both of which operate simultaneously in visual texts.

In his theory of myth, Barthes describes how signs can be used to naturalize ideology by making socially constructed meanings appear "common sense" or universal. This framework is particularly effective for analyzing symbols used by institutions—such as the CAF logo—which aim to communicate

authority, unity, or heritage across linguistically and culturally diverse audiences. The logo becomes a mythological structure: it does not just depict Africa—it communicates what Africa "means."

"Myth is a system of communication. It is a message, not a code."
— Barthes, *Mythologies* (1957)

3.5 Visual Identity and Organizational Semiotics

Organizational identity is increasingly shaped by visual elements. According to Hatch and Schultz (2002), a strong organizational identity is often reflected through branding that resonates both internally (among members) and externally (with audiences). In sports communication, this takes on added significance, as the visual identity is not only a marker of belonging but also a strategic tool of cultural positioning and symbolic authority (Underwood et al., 2001).

Marcel Danesi (2016) argues that logos function as "second-language signifiers" in modern societies, operating as condensed forms of identity, emotion, and power. This "language of logos" allows institutions like CAF to signal modernity, pan-African values, and historical legitimacy in a single visual symbol. These visuals serve as semiotic texts that invite interpretation and emotional investment from diverse publics.

In sports, visual identity is deeply tied to branding, fandom, and geopolitical meaning. Scholars such as Kunkel, Doyle, and Funk (2014) show that logos in sports operate beyond mere design; they construct narratives of success, professionalism, and cultural pride. Within African continental federations, such visual storytelling becomes a medium of postcolonial self-representation.

3.6 The Semiotics of Institutional Power in African Sports Communication

In the African context, where symbols are often employed to reconcile colonial pasts with aspirational futures, semiotic analysis gains further importance. The CAF logo, by integrating the African map, radiating lines, and earthy color schemes, becomes a visual text of identity, unity, and ambition. Yet this identity is not fixed—it is interpreted and contested across various publics.

Theoretical insights from African communication scholars suggest that logos in this space do more than represent; they perform. As Ndlovu (2013) explains, the semiotics of African sport is entangled with questions of legitimacy, postcolonial discourse, and the struggle for global visibility. The CAF logo, in this case, is both a cultural artifact and a political tool.

Through Barthes' framework, the study can decode how CAF's visual language participates in creating a "myth" of African solidarity—a myth that may reflect aspirations but also obscure internal diversities, inequalities, or external influences. The semiotic reading is thus not just interpretive, but also critical: it questions how meaning is constructed, for whom, and to what effect.

3.7 Historical Evolution of the CAF Logo and Visual Identity

A brief historical overview of the CAF logo offers additional insight into the federation's visual identity strategy. From 1992 to 2009, the CAF logo featured a stylized globe combining the outline of Africa with the pattern of a soccer ball. Rendered in green and gold, the design symbolized both the centrality of Africa in the global game and the continent's aspirations for unity and recognition. In 2009, the logo was redesigned to reflect a more modern, three-dimensional aesthetic. The African map became larger and more prominent, almost touching the outer ring, while the soccer ball lines were replaced by radiating golden triangles embedded within a green circle. This design reinforced CAF's identity as a

professional, forward-looking organization aligned with international branding standards, while still grounding its identity in pan-African symbolism.

The evolution of the CAF logo illustrates how sports organizations adapt their visual identity in response to shifting cultural, political, and global demands. The transition from flat, traditional imagery to more dynamic and polished forms mirrors a broader movement in global sports branding toward professionalism and marketability. Yet, the persistence of key motifs—the map of Africa, the color palette, and circular framing—ensures continuity in the symbolic narrative of continental pride and unity. This continuity highlights the dual role of visual identity: balancing change and innovation with stability and tradition, a challenge particularly pronounced in African sports institutions navigating postcolonial legacies and global ambitions.

A nuanced understanding of CAF's visual identity benefits from tracing the logo's transformation over time—an evolution that mirrors the organization's changing institutional ambitions and cultural narratives. From **1992 to 2009**, the CAF logo featured a two-dimensional globe where the African continent, interlaced with soccer-ball motifs in a combination of green and gold, served as a powerful metaphor for Africa's prominence and passion for football. This design was both straightforward and symbolically potent, embedding unity, vitality, and continental significance in a vibrant yet traditional construct.

The redesign introduced in **2009** empowered the logo with depth and a modern sensibility. The map of Africa expanded to nearly fill the emblem's circumference. The soccer-ball contours transitioned into radiating golden triangles—a decorative element embedded within a green circular border—signaling movement, growth, and sophistication. This updated visual language positions CAF as a modern, dynamic institution, signaling professionalism, and global relevance, while preserving its narrative of pan-African unity.

By weaving this transformational narrative into the literature review, we can contextualize the semiotic analysis of the CAF logo not merely as static symbolism, but as a dynamic design trajectory reflecting CAF's evolving identity. This historical lens deepens the appreciation of how the federation navigates tradition and innovation—key for studies of visual identity in African sports communication

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Figure 1. **Evolution of the CAF logo: the old emblem (1992–2009) highlighting a stylized globe with Africa at its center, and the current logo (2009–present) emphasizing the African map within a dynamic circular frame.**



***Source**: 1000logos.net. "Confederation Africaine de Football (CAF) Logo." Available at: https://1000logos.net/confederation-africaine-de-football-caf-logo (accessed 23 August 2025).*

Here are two visual representations of the CAF logo's evolution:

- The **left image** (1992–2009 version) shows a stylized globe blending Africa's outline with soccer-ball patterns, featured in vibrant green and gold.
- The **right image** (2009–present version) adopts a more three-dimensional and polished aesthetic—Africa's map dominates a golden globe, framed by dynamic golden triangles within a green circle.

4. Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative interpretive approach, specifically utilizing semiotic analysis as conceptualized by Roland Barthes (1977), to investigate the visual identity communicated through the official logo of the Confederation of African Football (CAF). The research is grounded in descriptive-analytical methods**,** allowing for an in-depth interpretation of visual symbols, their meanings, and the ideological constructs they may carry.

4.1 Research Design and Approach

The study is designed as a case study focusing on the CAF logo as a symbolic and communicative artifact. By treating the logo as a semiotic text, the research seeks to explore how visual components—such as shape, color, spatial arrangement, and iconography—generate meaning and contribute to the construction of African sports identity. This approach aligns with previous scholarship in visual communication and branding (Danesi, 2016; Phillips & McQuarrie, 2010).

4.2 Data Source and Unit of Analysis

The primary unit of analysis is the official CAF logo, as publicly displayed on its website, documents, and marketing materials. The logo is treated as a self-contained visual system composed of multiple signs, including:

- The outline of the African continent,
- The circular framing element,
- The radiating triangular patterns,
- The color scheme (green, yellow, brown),
- The typographic design of the acronym "CAF".

Each of these elements is analyzed not only for its denotative (literal) meaning, but also for its connotative and mythological implications, following Barthes' semiotic model.

4.3 Analytical Framework

The analysis follows Barthes' tripartite model**:**

1. **Denotation**: Identifying the basic visual elements and their straightforward meanings.
2. **Connotation**: Exploring the cultural, emotional, or symbolic meanings associated with these elements.
3. **Myth**: Unpacking how these connotations contribute to ideological narratives—such as pan-African unity, historical legitimacy, or modern professionalism.

This framework has been widely applied in media and branding studies to reveal the hidden layers of meaning embedded in visual communication (Barthes, 1977; Chandler, 2017).

4.4 Ethical Considerations

As the data consists solely of publicly available visual content, there are no ethical concerns involving human participants. Nevertheless, the study maintains academic integrity by ensuring accurate referencing, proper contextualization, and transparency in interpretation.

5. Analysis and Discussion : Semiotic Analysis of the CAF Logo

This section presents a semiotic reading of the CAF logo using Roland Barthes' three-tier model: denotation, connotation, and myth. Each level explores how the visual elements contribute to the construction of meaning, identity, and ideological discourse within the African sporting context.

Figure 1. CAF logo, retrieved from official CAF communications



source: https://www.cafonline.com/ar/

Table 1. Semiotic breakdown of the CAF logo following Barthes' model

Visual Element	Denotative Meaning	Connotative Meaning	Mythological Meaning
Map of Africa	Geographical outline of the African continent	Unity, shared identity, pan-African symbolism	Africa as a cohesive, singular entity bound by football
Radiating Triangles	Decorative background around the map	Energy, movement, growth	Symbol of rising African potential and influence
Green Color	One of the three main colors in the logo	Hope, vitality, land, pan-Africanism	Africa as fertile and full of promise
Yellow Color	Prominent in background and framing	Wealth, sun, optimism	The richness of African heritage and its bright future
Brown Color	Earth-toned background or contour	Authenticity, tradition, connection to the land	Rooted African identity, untouched by artificiality
Circular Emblem Shape	Encircling design around the logo	Inclusion, unity, completeness	A unified African sports community with shared vision
CAF Typography (Bold)	Clean, modern sans-serif font	Professionalism, authority, modernity	CAF as a legitimate, global institution of governance and pride

Source: Table constructed by the researcher using Roland Barthes' semiotic model (1977) to interpret visual elements across denotation, connotation, and Mythological Meaning

The logo of the Confederation of African Football (CAF) presents itself as a complex semiotic text in which each visual element contributes to the construction of a broader narrative about African identity, unity, and global legitimacy. At the denotative level, the logo features a geographical outline of the African continent, framed within a circular emblem and accompanied by radiating triangular shapes, a set

of three dominant colors—green, yellow, and brown—and bold modern typography spelling "CAF." Yet the semiotic richness of this design emerges more clearly when one moves beyond the literal to its connotative and mythological layers.

The central map of Africa functions as the primary signifier, anchoring the entire logo in a continental identity. Denotatively, it simply presents the geographic outline, but connotatively it evokes unity, solidarity, and a shared pan-African identity. Mythologically, following Barthes' notion of myth as depoliticized speech, the map transforms the continent into a singular and cohesive entity, bound not by politics or economics but by the universal language of football. This myth naturalizes the idea of a unified Africa, even though in reality the continent is marked by deep cultural, linguistic, and political diversity (Ndlovu, 2013).

Surrounding the map are radiating triangular forms that visually suggest dynamism and movement. On the surface, these are decorative motifs, yet symbolically they communicate energy, expansion, and growth, reinforcing the narrative of African football as a rising force. This resonates with branding research that stresses the importance of projecting dynamism and progress in sport logos to strengthen consumer engagement (Arai, Ko & Kaplanidou, 2013). Through this symbolism, CAF positions itself not as static but as a continental body expanding its influence and visibility within global football.

The color palette of the logo carries equally powerful semiotic weight. Green, one of the most prominent colors, is strongly associated with vitality, fertility, and hope, drawing on a long-standing pan-African symbolism of renewal and optimism. Yellow, used in the framing and background, connotes wealth, warmth, and optimism, projecting an image of abundance and a bright future. Brown, in contrast, grounds the composition in authenticity and tradition, emphasizing connection to the land and rootedness in African heritage. As Danesi (2016) argues, color operates as a visual language in itself, and in this case, the triadic palette strategically balances modern optimism with cultural authenticity.

Equally important is the circular shape of the emblem, which frames the logo and provides structural unity. Universally, circles connote wholeness, inclusion, and continuity (Chandler, 2017). Within the CAF context, the circular form reinforces the idea of African football as a complete and cohesive community with a shared vision, echoing both pan-Africanist ideals and the conventions of global sports governance emblems such as FIFA. The typography of the acronym "CAF," presented in bold and modern sans-serif letters, complements this symbolism by projecting professionalism, authority, and modernity. Here the design bridges tradition with modern global standards, suggesting that CAF is not only authentically African but also a legitimate, professional, and internationally recognized sports institution (Phillips & McQuarrie, 2010).

Taken together, these elements demonstrate how the CAF logo communicates on multiple semiotic levels. At the connotative level, it affirms vitality, growth, and professionalism; at the mythological level, it naturalizes an idealized vision of Africa as a unified, authentic, and optimistic continent bound by football. This, however, invites critical reflection. As scholars of African sport have noted (Ndlovu, 2013), the reality of African football is marked by infrastructural challenges, governance issues, and inequalities. Thus, while the logo constructs an aspirational identity, it may obscure the continent's internal complexities and contradictions. In Barthes' terms, it presents an ideological vision as natural and inevitable, masking the tensions and struggles that characterize African sport.

Ultimately, the CAF logo functions as both a symbolic and strategic tool of branding. By combining pan-African symbolism, traditional references, and modern visual codes, it strengthens CAF's image in the eyes of both African publics and global audiences. Its semiotic richness lies in this dual function: affirming African authenticity and unity while simultaneously projecting professionalism and global legitimacy. This makes the logo not only a graphic emblem but also a powerful communicative device in the construction of African sports identity in the global arena.

6. Conclusion

This study set out to examine the visual identity of the Confederation of African Football (CAF) through a semiotic lens, applying Roland Barthes' framework to unpack the multi-layered meanings embedded in the logo's design. By analyzing the CAF emblem as a visual text, the research has demonstrated how seemingly simple graphic elements—such as color, form, and iconography—function as powerful communicative tools within African sports discourse.

The findings reveal that the CAF logo does not merely serve as an institutional identifier; it also operates as a symbolic and ideological artifact. At the denotative level, it presents a stylized image of the African continent framed by vibrant geometric elements. At the connotative level, it evokes themes of unity, cultural pride, and dynamism. On a mythological level, the logo constructs a narrative of pan-African cohesion, modern professionalism, and historical continuity, positioning CAF as both a cultural symbol and a governing force in African football.

This research contributes to the broader field of visual communication and sports media by spotlighting the role of semiotic strategies in constructing identity and legitimacy in African contexts. While the study has focused on the CAF logo as a case, its implications extend to other regional and institutional logos, especially in postcolonial environments where visual identity must negotiate between heritage and globalization.

Future research may explore how audiences from different African regions interpret such visual symbols, or how changes in branding strategies reflect shifting political, cultural, or institutional goals. Ultimately, this study underscores that in the realm of sports communication, logos are not merely aesthetic choices—they are embedded narratives, strategic signs, and instruments of meaning-making across complex sociocultural terrains.

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