

# FIFA, FASCISM, STADIUMS, & TECH: 8 PROPOSITIONS

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## FASCISM: WHAT ARE WE TALKING ABOUT?

- Drawing on Aimé Césaire and Angela Davis, Alberto Toscano (2023, p. 35) offers a definition of fascism extending beyond the interwar period in Europe as: “a set of repressive tactics, as well as an encompassing political and ideological process, which differentially targets racialized and subaltern populations whose very existence and sociality are perceived as a threat”
- Much recent attention has focused on technofascism, founded in “quieter, more insidious mechanisms of control, such as data extraction, algorithmic governance, behavioral nudging, and platform monopolization” (Coeckelbergh, 2026, p. 1)
- As Norma Möllers (2025, p. 253) argues, the structural conditions of global technofascism reside in “the normal operations of the legitimate institutions of violence of the modern state—policing, prisons, borders, and the war machine” and everyday “digitized infrastructures of state violence”

## 1 | FIFA LOVES AUTHORITARIAN AND FASCIST GOVERNMENTS

FIFA covets World Cup hosts that can advance their commercial interests quickly, through implementing standards for stadium infrastructure, security, and beautification. Authoritarianism makes this easier.

For example, FIFA has happily worked with authoritarian governments in Italy (1934), Argentina (1978), Russia (2018), Qatar (2022), the United States of America (2026), and Saudi Arabia (2034)



## 2 | SPORT TECH INNOVATIONS ARE PART OF THE MILITARY-INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX



AI and technological development are key components of FIFA’s ‘strategic objectives’ for 2023-2027

But sporting technologies - from protective equipment to Semi-Automated Offside Technology (SAOT) - are based on military ‘innovations’ and increasingly (re)produce algorithmic governance

## 3 | FOOTBALL STADIUMS SHOWCASE NATIONALIST IDEOLOGIES

Sports stadiums across the world have been used by various political regimes to present nationalist and military ideologies through stadium design, architecture, and the ceremonies deployed at specific events (King, 2008).

Eg. Stadio dei Cipressi of ‘Foro Mussolini’; Hitler’s Berlin Olympic Stadium; and countless American military fly-overs at NFL stadiums



## 4 | THE DIGITIZED 'FAN EXPERIENCE' TRANSFORMS US INTO EXPERIMENTAL, CONSUMER, AND SURVEILLED SUBJECTS

The spectator experience has become a testbed for new technological innovations aimed at turning us into data points to nudge our behavior in particular directions: “games are no longer just an object of commodified spectacles but an ongoing site of data exploitation and experimentation” (Yang & Cole, 2022, p. 378). This ‘datafication of everything’ across the sporting landscape feeds into gambling and prediction markets, where every bodily movement and sporting play is dissected for parasitic extraction.

Stadium ‘dataveillance’ also entwines the spectator with new security apparatuses, such as the Aspire Command and Control Centre (ACCC) of the 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar (see Lusweti & Odawa, 2023), and facial recognition has already been used to identify spectators for non football-related arrests (Tadié, 2006)



## 5 | WORLD CUPS EXACERBATE LONG-STANDING FASCIST POLICING, SECURITY, AND SURVEILLANCE STATE SYSTEMS

While FIFA has its own set of regulations for stadium infrastructure, security, and technology, governments often use World Cups to advance their own political, economic, and social ends. As such, the “institutions of violence of the modern state” (Möllers, 2025, p. 253) are both enforced and justified through mega event hosting. Via ‘sport-washing,’ mega events further ‘legitimate’ the already-existing policing and development logics that expose Indigenous, racialized, and low income people to state violence.

Eg. migrant workers died while building mega event infrastructure in Qatar; communities have been evicted from the surrounds of LA stadiums; and the police pacification program (UPP) brought violent policing to favelas during the 2014 FIFA World Cup in Rio de Janeiro (Prouse, 2018)



## 6 | WORLD CUPS ARE 'ZONES OF EXCEPTION' THAT SUSPEND THE 'REGULAR' FUNCTIONING OF LAW

Even though mega events are often used as a means to state-centred ends, they also precipitate their own form of ‘rogue sovereignty’ through FIFA’s imposition of specific rules and security apparatuses especially in Controlled Areas, a 2km radius around stadiums.

FIFA and host cities also hire independent security companies whose tactics have been refined through wartime and genocidal ‘zones of exception.’ According to research by NOlympics LA (2025), firms such as Israel-based International Security & Defense Systems (ISDS) train local police, security, and soldiers on techniques they experimented with and perfected while serving the IOF’s genocidal colonization scheme in Occupied Palestine.”

## 7 | IMMIGRATION AND BORDER CONCERNS ARE AUGMENTED BY THIS EVENT BEING HOSTED ACROSS THREE COUNTRIES

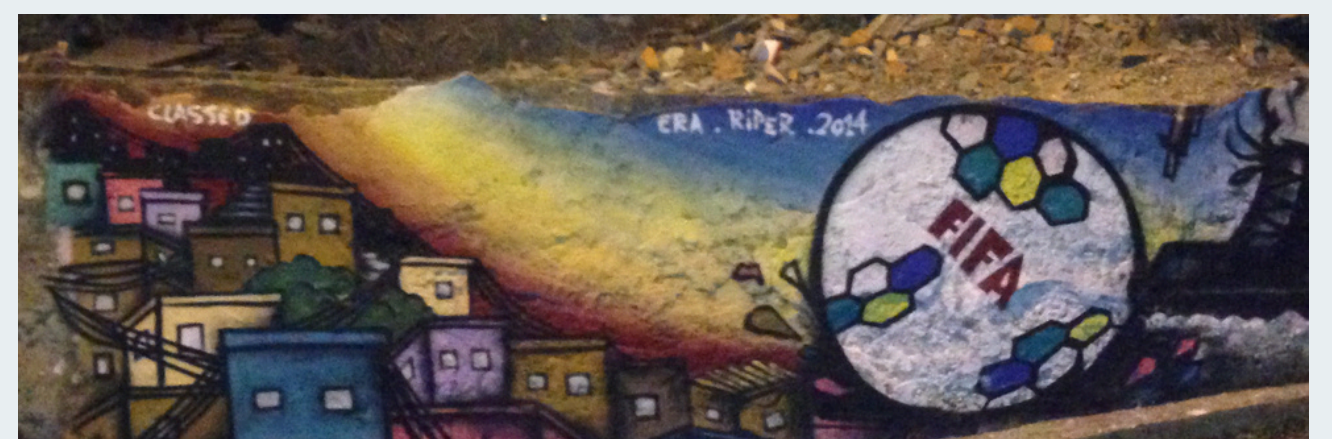


Thousands of tourists, journalists, athletes, and team staff descend upon World Cup hosting nations for the duration of the mega event. This World Cup is unprecedented for being hosted across 3 countries, meaning more people (and their digital data) will be traveling across various state borders in North America. The United States' border restrictions are already wreaking havoc on the ability of people to travel for this mega event (including the Iranian national soccer team), while ICE continues to terrorize populations in the United States. Canada's recent passing of Bill C15 paves the way for ever more sharing of digital data across borders and grants the government greater powers in revoking Permanent Residency and other status in Canada, thus curtailing possible dissent

## 8 | COMMUNITIES HAVE ALWAYS RESISTED FASCISM AND MEGA EVENTS

Where fascism exists, so too does resistance! People from all over the world have always been resisting the violence and dispossession logics of sport mega events, and will continue to do so through the 2026 FIFA World Cup. Some groups to pay attention to include:

- NOlympics LA: <https://nolympicsla.com/>
- Rio on Watch: <https://rioonwatch.org/>
- Sport Scholars for Justice in Palestine: <https://sportscholarsforjusticeinpalestine.org/>
- Centre for Sport & Human Rights: <https://www.sporhumanrights.org/>
- Football Against Fascism: <https://footballagainstfascism.org/>
- 2026 World Cup Watch <https://2026worldcupwatch.org/>



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