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## Greenwashed sports and environmental activism: Formula 1 and FIFA

Two of the most globally popular sports events, Formula 1 motor racing and the Men's World Cup of football, are directly and indirectly environmentally destructive. They serve as advertisements for heavy industry, are designed for elite as much as mass consumption, and provide sponsors with dubious social licenses to operate. This occurs through the very mechanisms of the events themselves (engines in Formula 1, tourists in the World Cup).

I have selected those two sites for three reasons. First, because they appear at first blush to be so different from one another: international elite motor racing automatically elicits critique of its class and ecological indexicality and impact, while football is associated with a more populist, accessible culture. Second, because despite those distinctions, both Formula 1 and global football have drawn the ire of a similarly transnational actor, in the form of Greenpeace, attracted by their shared association with its sworn enemies, oil companies drilling in the Arctic. And third, because the environmental issues that these competitions pose have eluded substantive critique and successful activism. I look at the greenwashing claims made about Formula 1 and football and examine attempts by Greenpeace to problematize them, juxtaposed with ways in which environmental activism might operate via counter-discourses of economic and ecological citizenship. I suggest that a progressive agenda can be forwarded by vanguard organizations working with their fellow elites in motor sport. In the case of football, the lead should come from grassroots fans rather than the usual third-sector suspects of Big Green ([http://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php?title=ig\\_Green](http://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php?title=ig_Green)).

Along with many other things, both Formula 1 and the Men's World Cup are sites where participants and sponsors seek social licenses to operate. This surprisingly overt term has been adopted with relish by extractive polluters to explain their plans for winning local, national, and international communities' approval of exploration and mining (Klein, 2012; Prno & Slocombe, 2012; Nelsen, 2006; Thomson & Boutilier, 2011). The International Energy Agency numbers social licenses to operate among its ominously titled *Golden Rules for a Golden Age of Gas* (2012). Apart from offering such direct benefits to communities as energy and employment, companies seek to buttress their searches for social licenses to operate via art and sport.

The global oil and gas company, BP, has powerful, enduring relationships with some of Britain's principal cultural institutions, including the National Gallery, the National Maritime Museum, Tate Britain, the Natural History Museum, the Science Museum, and the National Gallery. Blockbuster shows sponsored by environmental miscreants work both ways. They give alibis to the arts by countering populist claims that only elite segments of society visit such places, and they associate quality and populism alike with big oil.

Sport offers an even more direct hold on the popular imagination. The 255 public, private, and mixed projects of international development listed as utilizing sport in 2008 represented a 93% increase over five years. A high proportion involved corporations, frequently via "Astroturf" (*faux* grassroots) organizations. Sport can make corporations resemble governing agencies operating with the public good in mind, even as their actions frequently heighten north-south imbalances, promote their own wares, commodify sports, distract attention from corporate malfeasance in terms of the environment and labor, and stress international/imperial sports over local ones (Levermore, 2010; Silk, Andrews, & Cole, 2005): a classic case of a social license to operate.

Formula 1 directly incarnates Big Oil's search for a social license, because it embodies both the glamorous sphere of high performance and the quotidian necessity of transport. For its part, football accretes extractive sponsors who wish to benefit from its auratic blend of excitement and everyday life. So, BP's carbon management division (which is described as not-for-profit) cut a deal with the Fédération Internationale de Football Association

(FIFA) for the 2014 World Cup whereby ticket holders could register to have their carbon footprint offset—with the prospect of two registrants winning tickets to the Final (<https://www.bptargetneutral.com/uk/2014/04/1690/>). Hence, the symbolic significance of these events for environmentalists seeking to disrupt business as usual—emphasizing their *own* social license to operate through activism against such greenwashing.

Formula 1 is a complex field for critical scholars of the environment. Its chrome cars are coeval stars with the brash boys who ride them. The sport's advanced engineering seeks ever-greater fuel efficiency, which is in turn passed on to everyday business and domestic motoring, supposedly diminishing the latter's carbon footprints (King, 2013; Sam, 2012; Scott, 2013).

For its part, football, easily the world's most popular sport in terms of playing and watching, appears on the surface to be among the least ecologically malevolent of pastimes: it requires a ball, a field, and physical play, as opposed to engines, roads, and carbon-fueled speed. But when we take into account where the equipment is made and transported for use, the water and chemicals involved in ground maintenance, the food consumed at games, the use of electricity in powering, covering, and watching, and the impact of travel and tourism for major events such as the Men's World Cup, the story looks remarkably different (Malhado & Rothfuss, 2013).

Whilst not proposing that Formula 1 is angelic and the World Cup demonic, the basic paradoxes identified above necessitate that environmentalists inspect such circumstances with some care. Neither event has seen significant activism, apart from secondary boycott-style attempts to interrupt the link between them and polluting sponsors. Greenpeace, a rightly well-regarded and in many ways effective campaign organization, has tried to disrupt fans' views and enjoyment of Formula 1 (the Brussels Grand Prix) and football (the Champions' League) to push for secondary boycotts against Shell and Gazprom, extractive corporations that seek social licenses to operate via sponsorship of these competitions (Cohen, 2014a, 2014b; Cooper, 2013; Naidoo, 2013).

In addition to examining arguments for and against the green claims that these events make, I am also concerned to evaluate the utility of counter-discourses that are meant to raise awareness (this used to be called "consciousness") among both fans and the wider public through spectacular disruption. I conclude that the efforts of Greenpeace to appear as a grassroots organization combating Big Sports may be misguided. It might do better to recognize the reality that Formula 1 and Greenpeace are fellow multinational organizations with huge bureaucracies, then draw on that consanguinity to call for change (Sam, 2013). In the case of football, it might be advised to allow the lead to be taken by others and accept a follower's role, undertaking relevant research and encouraging grassroots fan activism.

## **Formula 1**

Most sports are about individuals or teams, but rarely both. Most sports involve the use of technology, but rarely in ways that give equal prominence and rewards to each. Most sports involve degradation of the environment, but rarely as an overt component of their very essence. Yet, along with its hyper-masculine First World class base and industrial showmanship, Formula 1 motor racing combines all these factors (Pflugfelder, 2009). It is an unusual business—and a very big one.

The sport's 2012 prospectus disclosed 2011 revenue of US\$1.5 billion and operating profit of US\$451 million, while 2013 analyses suggested annual income growth of 9% through 2016, much of it because sponsors like the fact that its events are global and its season eternal: Formula 1 is akin to an Olympics or a World Cup where the key events occur annually, year round, and across the world, rather than every four years, for a month, and in one region (Blitz, 2013). It is a perfect example of world capitalism physically transcending space and time in ways that elude other sports, which tend to be constrained by seasons and zones.

Not surprisingly, the cost of holding a Formula 1 Grand Prix is vast. For example, the annual budget of the Australian event is reportedly A\$30 million, compounded at 15% a

year. Much of that figure is met with public funds; hence the need for triple bottom-line analysis that looks at the costs and benefits of such occasions in economic, social, and environmental terms (Fairley, Tyler, Kellett, & D'Elia, 2011).

Again and again, studies of the economic impact of relocating sports teams, subsidizing stadia, attracting international events, and the like have shown the spuriousness of public subsidies for such enterprises (Nunn & Rosentraub, 2003). In the Australian case, Economists at Large (undertaking the splendidly entitled analysis, "Priconomics") have shown that the 2012 Grand Prix generated a loss to the state of Victoria of A\$60.6 million (<http://www.ecolarge.com/blog/grand-priconomics-2013/>; Campbell, 2013). This is apart from the impact on birdlife, waterways, trees, noise, trash, carbon footprints, and public utilization of the venue in Albert Park (Fairley et al., 2011).

Yet, states persist in sporting subvention, and even sacrifice their own authority as part of the process. A Grands Prix Act exempts the Melbourne event from otherwise mandatory environmental protection (Fairley et al., 2011) and the *bourgeois* media and State and Federal governments largely ignore evidence that runs counter to the boosterism that characterizes the affair and distorts its popularity (Australian Press Council, 2012; Crook, 2011).

The Save Albert Park grassroots group has produced kits on legal, economic, environmental, and traffic implications and has a regular radio show (<http://save-albert-park.org.au/sapweb/kits.html>; <http://tunein.com/radio/Save-Albert-Park-p571571/>). But its efforts draw diminishing concern because of bipartisan political support for the event (Green, 2014).

Beyond Australia, potentially positive externalities deriving from Formula 1 lead the way in state and media discourses alike. While acknowledging setbacks to green momentum caused by the global financial crisis, "Lord" Drayson (2010), Britain's former Minister for Science and Technology and a lapsed race-car driver and proprietor, told the grandly named European Cleaner Racing Conference that "motorsport can become an even greater national asset as we move to a low-carbon economy" by developing environmentally sound technologies that can be sold to commercial and customer automotive interests. Conventional press reporting leads with the same message (Elliott, 2014; Scott, 2013) even arguing that "Cyclists are miles behind Formula 1 in the environmental race"

due to the massive impact of travel on events such as the Tour de France, weighed against the "cutting-edge technology" that saw Formula 1 vehicles use a third of the fuel in 2014 compared to the previous year with no loss in performance (Pickford, 2014).

The sport's overall governing body is the Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA). But Formula 1 is a private, corporate endeavor and has significant autonomy. FIA support for greener technology cannot be mandated to cover Formula 1 and is frequently poo-hooped by participants in its richest and most prestigious competition. Formula 1 bosses are horrified, for example, by emission changes that have reduced the noise pollution of its macho toys (Blitz, 2013; Pearce, 2009; Spurgeon, 2014).

Greenpeace, a key multinational environmental activist bureaucracy with the scale necessary to coordinate campaigns in a way that is equal if not superior to its opponents, has endeavored to disrupt Grand Prix events through a now-familiar tactic: people dressing up in bright colors and climbing onto things that are owned by others. Such practices are neither *contra* the sport itself nor focused on its environmental record. Rather, they represent a kind of secondary boycott strategy directed at particular event sponsors, notably Shell, as part of a campaign to stem drilling for oil in the Arctic (Naidoo, 2013; Sam, 2013).

Greenpeace has had recent success with a secondary boycott, persuading Lego not to renew its product-placement deal with Shell in 2014 through the deployment of well-drilled child activists and expensive video art. A smart, sophisticated, and well-heeled multinational marketing campaign drew on the services of advertising agencies, appropriated trademarks, and copyrights and was further enabled via a vast network

(Miller, 2014). Unlike Greenpeace's failed interventions into sport, the campaign did not feature vanguardists craving TV coverage through perilous pranks.

There is no evidence of success in removing sponsors or changing attitudes among motorsport fans as a consequence of these latter, overly familiar, forms of direct action. Ironically, it seems that Formula 1's corporate sponsors have been more effective advocates for a green agenda than Greenpeace or spectators (Black, 2010; Allen, 2013, 2014). This is because corporations are well schooled in taking what they call asymmetrical actions against smaller but still sizeable critics. Extractive companies base their strategies on successful struggles by regular armies against *guerrilla* forces. Such activism may irritate but rarely deters them (Marshall, Telofski, Ojiako, & Chipulu, 2012). They select parts of the critique they can implement at minimal cost then move on.

It is telling that Greenpeace insists on secrecy in its direct actions, despite its faith in spectacle and calls for others to be transparent in their dealings, and boasts of marketing experts who teach it how to engage in effective branding even as it attacks public-relations discourse. There is at least a paradox here. Similarly, the organization entered a competition to design green strategies for the 2000 summer Olympics for adoption by the host committee. Its participation featured in the Australian governments' bid, with Greenpeace representatives traveling from Australia to Monaco to extoll the virtues of a Sydney-based Games on the grounds that sports were ideal sites for propelling a green agenda into the public sphere. It stayed studiously away from the most pressing environmental issue of such events—travel—and avoided upsetting most sponsors (including world-leading eco-miscreants such as UPS, Coca Cola, Kodak, and McDonalds) while endorsing the use of reclaimed polluted sites for the Olympics and the prospects for minimizing ecological damage to the region, despite its longstanding opposition to toxic dumping<sup>1</sup> (Kearins & Pavlovich, 2002). This love of the darkness and subterfuge, blended with a *frottage* with corporate expertise, reads remarkably like clandestine Australian governmental consultation with companies over Grand Prix decisions and actions (Cohen, 2014b; Lowes, 2004). It is not a good look for civil society. Moving away from secrecy would be more in keeping with the Quaker religious sources of the organization's *ethos* (Wapner, 1995).

Beyond these ethical missteps, the failure to generate change suggests that there may be greater utility for Greenpeace in using its multinational power and bureaucracy to negotiate with Formula 1 and associated sponsors, rather than alienating fans who show little appreciation of the undoubted importance of its message.

## World Cup

Staging a World Cup is also massively expensive. Brazil budgeted US\$31 billion for the 2014 Finals, though this included construction projects for the 2016 summer Olympics as well. FIFA claims the actual cost of hosting (which it calculates as the price for creating "temporary infrastructure") was US\$600 million, while the Association itself spent US\$1.7 billion and profited by US\$2.7 billion (Warshaw, 2014).

Like the FIA and Formula 1, FIFA routinely sidesteps sovereignty over space and people (Bond, 2010; Hyde, 2010)—consider the way it transcended the European Union to broker power-sharing in Bosnia-Herzegovina (Cooley & Mujanović, 2014). But the Association does have a more progressive environmental policy than Formula 1:

Issues such as global warming, environmental conservation and sustainable management are a concern for FIFA, not only in regards to FIFA World Cups™, but also in relation to FIFA as an organisation. That is why FIFA has been engaging with its stakeholders and other institutions to find sensible ways of addressing environmental issues and mitigate the negative environmental impacts linked to its activities. (FIFA, 2012)

From solar-powered stadia to free public transportation, the 2006 World Cup featured a “Green Goal,” which claimed to make the event “climate-neutral” by saving 100,000 tons of carbon dioxide through offset projects in India and South Africa and minimizing transport, energy, water, and refuse (Collins, Jones, & Munday, 2009; Mitchell, 2007). But the data excluded international travel—a crucial difference between environmental audits that focus on one country but do not consider wider ecological impacts. This has led to accusations of greenwashing (Collins et al., 2009).

Because the claims made for the 2006 tournament rang hollow, FIFA set up an Environmental Forum. Its task was to “green” stadia, training grounds, accommodation, amenities, and so on, in accordance with the UN Environmental Program’s Global Forum for Sports and the Environment (Collins et al., 2009). For the 2010 tournament, South Africa used biogas from landfills, power from wind farms, and efficient lighting. The local organizers proudly proclaimed that nine teams had their jerseys made from recycled polyethylene terephthalate bottles. Coincidentally, these nations were themselves sponsored by a major sporting goods company, which remorselessly promoted its good deed (Climate Neutral Network, n. d.).

But South Africa has one of the worst records in the world in its neglect of alternative energy. Because of poor internal transportation infrastructure and a dependence on coal-fired power, a massive carbon footprint from an influx of tourists was inevitable. Before the 2010 World Cup, the South African and Norwegian governments conducted a study of its likely environmental impact. They came up with these figures:

Component	Emissions (tCO <sub>2</sub> e)	Share
International transport	1,856,589	67.4
Inter-city transport	484,96	17.6
Intra-city transport	39,577	1.4
Stadia constructions and materials	15,359	0.6
Stadia and precinct energy use	16,637	0.5
Energy use in accommodation	340,12	12.4
Total excluding international	896,66	
<b>Total including international</b>	<b>2,753,250</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Republic of South Africa et

The South African Government generated tender documents inviting competition to offset the environmental impact of World Cup travel, but issued no contracts. Mostly fueled by European tourism, the 2010 Finals had the largest carbon footprint of any commercial event in world history, twice that of the 2008 Beijing Olympics. In the absence of high-speed rail and adequate existing stadia, 850,000 tons of carbon were expended, 65% through construction and flying (there were some improvements to municipal mass transit). Claims that corporate efforts to green things encouraged fans to act similarly remain unproven. Green Goal sought to inspire additional environmental

initiatives across time and across the country, but neither efficacy nor proliferation has been satisfactorily demonstrated (Bond, 2010; Climate Neutral Network, n. d.; Cornelissen, Urmilla, & Swart, 2011; Cartwright, 2010; Death, 2011; Mol, 2010; Shachtman, 2010).

In addition, the drain on power sources in other countries broadcasting the Cup is huge—the Carbon Trust has shown that people watching football via mobile-data phone connections multiply their footprint 10-fold in comparison with television or WiFi viewing, for example (<http://www.carbon-trust.com/media/360767/carbon-bootprint-infographic.pdf>). But this gluttony is rarely acknowledged other than as self-promotion: the UK’s National Grid highlights its management of peak electricity usage based on audience activity during half time in Finals matches, when people race to the kettle and porcelain. Power use surges by as much as 10% in what is known as the “TV pick-up” (National Grid, 2010).

The 2014 tournament in Brazil was supposed to be played in green stadia—a veritable *Copa Verde*. The green claims repeated the subterfuge of 2010 in sidestepping the international and internal transportation of over three and a half million tourists, which

amounted to 84% of emissions associated with the Finals. And misuse of public money on unsustainable construction projects led to mass protests (Estrada, 2010; Spanne, 2014). As in the South African case, positive externalities of reputation, tourism, and foreign currency outweighed such concerns in the eyes of the state, capital, and the *bourgeois* media.

Attempts by Greenpeace to problematize Big Football's impact on the environment have largely foundered. Again, they have targeted secondary entities rather than bringing the event's very existence, or at least its management, into question. Sponsors are prioritized in Greenpeace's activities, and at the cost of fans' enjoyment of matches. When it sought to interrupt the Champions' League Final of 2014 by protesting against Gazprom, an extractive sponsor, the ruse was quickly uncovered and managed (and said nothing about the unsustainability of the event itself). In defensive mode, Greenpeace used embarrassingly corporate language to say that it had "total domination in the sphere of delivery" (Cohen, 2014a). Proliferating capitalist *machismo* lives; but that suggested, as per the Formula 1 protests and the use of advertising agencies, how close the organization's vocabulary and strategy are to its apparent adversaries, and how distant from football fans—some of whom have radical ideas.

## Citizenship

In the light of Greenpeace's tendentious secondary boycott strategies and the failure of states to control the self-legislating, arrogant entities that are Formula 1 and FIFA, how might citizens respond to the environmental challenges posed by the activities of Big Motoring and Big Football?

The last 200 years of modernity have seen the expansion of citizenship—theoretically, geographically, and demographically. It occupies three zones, with partially overlapping and partially distinct historicities. These spheres are the political (conferring the right to reside and vote), the economic (the right to work and prosper), and the cultural (the right to know and speak). They correspond to the French Revolutionary cry of *liberté, égalité, fraternité* [liberty, equality, solidarity] and the Argentine left's contemporary version: *ser ciudadano, tener trabajo, y ser alfabetizado* [citizenship, employment, literacy] (Martín-Barbero, 2001, p. 9). The first category concerns political rights; the second, material interests; and the third, cultural representation (Miller, 2007). Each one has normally operated within national jurisdictions.

In the contemporary world, citizenship is difficult, if not impossible, to describe without reference to its seeming antinomy of consumption. Citizens and consumers shadow each other—*rational* subjects versus *rational* ones, altruists versus monads. Under neoliberalism, politics has become artificial and consumption natural, a better means of legitimizing social arrangements. Adopting the tenets of consumers, citizens are desirous, self-actualizing subjects who conform to general patterns of *controlled* behavior. Adopting the tenets of citizens, consumers are self-limiting, self-controlling subjects

who conform to general patterns of *purchasing* behavior. Sometimes, both sides fail to see what is "good" for them (as when citizens resist financial globalization, or consumers borrow ill-advisedly). In ecological and democratic terms, such beliefs lead to plutocratic arrangements—for example, if green activism is ordered around consumption, those who do not consume, or barely do so, are *ipso facto* excluded from the exercise of power in the same way as they are marginal to decisions made by the International Monetary Fund or the World Bank, where voting is decided by financial contribution. And ontologically, we must reject the timeless, spaceless, monadic selfishness envisioned in *bourgeois* social science (Hardin, 1968). The evidence does not support its conceits of corporate beneficence and consumer selflessness as solutions to environmental despoliation (Humphreys, 2009; Seyfang, 2005). But it would be unwise to turn our backs completely on the current hegemony of economic citizenship and reject all forms of plutocracy. The conjuncture will not permit such

comforting purity.

Beginning in the 1970s, there was a change in economic citizenship away from the welfare of the public and toward the welfare of the private in ways that deflect and infect citizenship *tout court*. In addition to fundamental policy decisions that redistributed wealth upwards and internationally, this radical change had an ideological dimension—neoliberalism. One of the most successful projects to reshape individuals in human history, neoliberalism's achievements rank alongside such productive and destructive sectarian practices as state socialism, colonialism, nationalism, and religion. Its lust for market regulation over democratic regulation is so powerful that true-believing prelates opine on every topic imaginable, from birth rates to divorce, suicide to abortion, and performance-enhancing drugs to altruism. Rhetorically, neoliberal economic citizenship stands against elitism (for populism); against subvention (for markets); against politicians (for activists); and against public servants (for philanthropists) (Grantham & Miller, 2010).

It comes as no surprise that when the Trinity was being ideologized within Christianity, something had to be done to legitimize the concept at the same time as dismissing and decrying polytheistic and pagan rivals to the new religion's moralistic monotheism. Hence *oikonomia*, a sphere of worldly arrangements that was to be directed by a physical presence on Earth representing theology's principal superstition, the deity. God gave Christ "the economy" to manage, so "the economy" indexically manifested Christianity (Agamben, 2009).

In keeping with neoliberalism's crass class project, economic citizenship has changed dramatically from social welfare to corporate welfare. Begging/demanding firms are handed taxpayers' money while individuals and social groups are told to fend for themselves. In direct contradiction to doctrines of equality and social justice, this is socialism for capitalists and capitalism for workers. The most powerful of the three conventional citizenship discourses, it adds to the burden of environmental costs, because its growth ethic is "hollowed out by a misguided vision of unbounded consumer freedoms" (Jackson, 2009, p. 5). Environmental disasters are instances of negative economic externalities whose costs that are not borne by the companies and governments that create them. This is especially true when the damage is transnational (Rosen & Sellers, 1999, pp. 585–586).

The social license to operate is a classic invocation of economic citizenship that seeks to elude state regulation by appealing to the material or affective interests of communities through a complicated *mélange* of consumerist self-interest and civic pride. This is especially troublesome because the national boundaries and interests that typically define and engage citizens are brought into question by the border-crossing impact of environmental despoliation (Dean, 2001)—and sporting agencies and bodies frequently transcend physical and legislative borders.

More than an addition to the rights and responsibilities of territorially based citizenship, green citizenship is a critique of them, a corrective that seeks to save nature, infrastructure, and heritage from capitalist growth. Bypassing localism and contemporaneity to address universal and future obligations, it transcends conventional political-economic space and time, extending rights beyond the *hic et nunc* in search of a globally sustainable ecology. Green citizenship looks centuries ahead, refusing to discount the health and value of future generations, and opposing elemental risks that are created by capitalist growth in the present (Dobson, 2003). Its concerns touch on the very essence of political activity. Bruno Latour explains:

From the time the term politics was invented, every type of politics has been defined by its relation to nature, whose every feature, property, and function depends on the polemical will to limit, reform, establish, short-circuit, or enlighten public life. (2004, p. 1)

Environmental citizenship necessitates allocating equal and semi-autonomous significance to natural phenomena, social forces, and cultural meaning. Just as objects of scientific knowledge come to us in hybrid forms that are coevally subject to social power and textual meaning, so the latter two domains are themselves affected by the natural world (Latour,

1993, pp. 5–6).

Social movements invoke citizenship imperatives against consumerist ones when they claim public rights to clean air, soil, and water that supersede the private needs of industry, identify a responsibility for the environment that transcends national boundaries and state interests, and espouse intergenerational care rather than discounting future generations in favor of ephemeral needs.

Because environmental issues transcend state boundaries, short-term priorities, and commercial rents, they must be managed by international organizations, both governmental and not. This is neither new nor entirely dissociated from national citizenship. Away from the utopic hopes of world government on a grand scale, international organizations have been working for a very long time, sometimes quietly and sometimes noisily, to manage particular issues. Seafaring, telecommunications, occupational accreditation, Catholicism, and postage all come to mind. Their business is sometimes conducted at a state level, sometimes through civil society, and sometimes via both. In almost every case, they encounter or create legal and political instruments that make them accountable to the popular will of sovereign states, at least in name.

Environmentalism may be overdetermined or co-opted via technocratic mandarinitis or corporate skill, but it remains a key site of change, generally via representative government. This has happened for both good and ill in debates over everything from bald eagles to building codes. Even the most neoliberally misinformed trade agreements generally provide for the ultimate political exception to *laissez-faire* exchange between borders—namely, standing armies as entities of the sovereign state—and may exempt environmental matters as well.

As green governance introduces aspirations into the global public sphere that counter the environmental despoliation threatening human life, it also confronts risks to nonhuman nature posed by the mounting ecological crisis. This allows mainstream environmentalism to embrace diverse environmental politics—from left eco-centrism and eco-feminism to technocratic, anthropocentric forms that privilege human interests (Swanton, 2010, p. 146).

These schools differ over values (which entities qualify for moral consideration and which matter most), rights (the protection of individual and collective entities), and consequences (responsibility for actions and motives that affect collective well-being). For anthropocentric eco-ethics, nonhuman nature has no moral standing (and hence no rights) other than in relation to how people are affected by changes in nature. Eco-centric ethics, by contrast, holds that “some or all natural beings, in the broadest sense, have independent moral status” (Curry, 2006, p. 64). Intermediate ecological ethics accords intrinsic value to nonhuman nature, albeit not as completely as eco-centrism, though it agrees that moral status can be extended to other sentient beings.

Anthropocentric eco-ethics dominates mainstream environmentalism and much state and popular discourse. It both endorses and attacks consumption, urging green citizens to buy responsibly and recycle. Its gendered notion of virtue favors a hegemonic masculinity of self-reliance, embodies a neoliberal focus on individual responsibility rather than collective and state-based action, and rejects participatory, deliberative democracy in favor of a moralistic and plutocratic republicanism (Arias-Maldonado, 2007; Barry, 2006; Latta, 2007; MacGregor, 2006). In a stronger model, Anne Schwenkenbecher argues that “citizens of states which have the power to achieve an efficient climate regime” should comply “with the moral duties they have as inhabitants of high emission countries,” not least due to the political power available within democracies (2014, p. 183).

It is clear that national and international organizations and accords have not put a stop to environmental destructiveness (Beck & Grande, 2010, p. 410). While Greenpeace makes concerted attempts to follow the precepts of green citizenship, Formula 1 and FIFA exemplify transnational actors operating with relative autonomy from states and with an abiding taste for greenwashing. Corporations such as these routinely describe themselves

as citizens but principally pursue economic interests. Their restless quest for profit unfettered by regulation is twinned with a desire for moral legitimacy and free advertising that is based on “doing right” in a very public way while growing rich in a very private one. They claim respect for the law and illustrate the desire to meddle in others’ lives: greenwashing via moralism. Social licenses to operate embody this rhetoric.

FIFA and Formula 1’s shared growth evangelism makes them part of our environmental problem in three ways: as polluters, greenwashers, and licensees. These bodies arrogate to themselves the right to make and break laws, to buy and sell territories, and to pollute the world. We should not be in thrall to this self-anointed elect’s control of sport, especially when it is deeply connected to commercial dictates and surveillance. What can green citizens do? What might be a way forward for environmental activism engaging Formula 1 and FIFA?

Parts of Latin America have seen successful mobilization in the recent past of citizenship rights for ragpickers, denizens of the informal economy who remove and recycle waste. In 2009, Colombia’s Constitutional Court ruled that they were entrepreneurs. That decision formalized their status, decriminalized their activities, protected their livelihood from shifts in state policy that had shut down dumps, and offered them the chance to tender for waste-management concessions from local government. Cali-based ragpickers were pioneers in establishing cooperatives, and held the world’s first global conference of their colleagues in 2008. Along the way, they worked closely with highly educated progressives, notably lawyers and public-health advocates who were able to translate across popular and elite discourses (Maxwell & Miller, 2012).

The Colombian example opens up questions of scale and citizenship. Top-down ties are required in the case of vast entities such as the ones I have focused on here. There are several standard ways of regulating multinational corporations and the trans-territorial challenges they pose for citizen action: “soft law [protocols of international organizations], hard law [nationally based legislation], codes of conduct [transnational norms] and voluntary self-regulation.” The process is imperfect: these strategies have not always secured a nexus between “the transfer of technology” and the transfer of “practices for using it safely” (Baram, 2009, p. 756). And their agendas must come about in consultation with the popular classes, scientific and legal counsel, and transnational as well as local perspectives in addition to traditional elites.

Decentralized, participatory governance can play a vital role in policy-making by involving community members, resource users, experts, and elites (Karpowitz, Raphael, & Hammond, 2009, p. 584). Well-organized local institutions have greater success in managing resources when external laws provide for their autonomy (involving users in their choice of regulations so that these are perceived to be legitimate) and political-economic arrangements encourage organizational relationships between enterprises and communities that share ecosystems, monitoring what works and what does not, modifying methods of resource acquisition, eliminating harmful waste, and sharing information (Ostrom, 2000, p. 47). Such models transcend the neoliberal policy framework that has dominated the ideology of growth for three decades, recognizing instead that rational outcomes may derive from stakeholder approaches to managing the commons (Kearins & Pavlovich, 2002).

That implicates activists in mainstream approaches. The stereotypical vanguardist taste for outsider status as pranksters who transgress the norms of institutions that represent the electoral public or financial shareholders can make them abjure such incorporation. But Greenpeace has shown that it can transcend that *Angst* in its sophisticated scientific research and policy proposals on such issues as electronic waste and sporting apparel, which have been more effective than its secondary-boycott sporting activities (Greenpeace, 2012, 2014).

The Colombian ragpickers represent a fascinating exemplar of the transformation of political subjects from social problems to social boons: they shifted from being regarded as unpleasant, odoriferous embodiments of an abject underclass to enterprising

citizens and targets of the contemporary development discourses of microcredit and sustainability. And their case involved a mobilization from below that borrowed elite expertise to make its mark. It could model football-fan activism supported by Greenpeace research and lobbying (not spectacle imposed from above).

When we ponder public uses of spectacle by organized vanguards in the name of a connection to the wider population, it is easy to fall into either a critical camp or a celebratory one. The critical camp would say that rationality must be appealed to in discussions of climate change, competition for emotion will ultimately fail, and grassroots ties are wildly imaginary or mechanistically cliché. Why? The silent majority does not like direct action; corporations outspend activists; such occasions preach to a light-skinned, middle-class eco-choir; media coverage is inevitably partial and hostile; and crucial decisions are made by elites, not in streets. This critique has particular resonance in the case of events that are always already animated by spectacle, such as global sporting contests.

Conversely, the celebratory camp would argue that a Cartesian distinction between hearts and minds is not sustainable; a sense of humor is crucial in order to avoid the image of environmentalists as finger-wagging scolds; corporate capital must be opposed in public; the media's need for vibrant textuality can be twinned with serious discussion as a means of involving people who are not conventional activists; and a wave of anti-elite sentiment is cresting. The lugubrious hyper-rationality associated with environmentalism clearly needs leavening through sophisticated, entertaining, participatory spectacle. A blend of dark irony, sarcasm, and cartoonish stereotypes effectively mocks the Big Sport's dalliance with Big Oil.

But has the latter occurred? No.

## Alternative strategies

There is little scholarly evidence that social-media environmental activism reaches beyond its dutiful chorines (Schäfer, 2012). This leaves us looking to engagement with sporting elites and fans, depending on the case in hand, rather than focusing on a distant clickocracy that shows outrage on behalf of the Earth via credit-card activism or participates in centrally orchestrated campaigns.

Despite the rhetoric, Big Green bureaucrats are very accustomed to sitting down far from their putative grassroots supporters in boardrooms and offices populated by corporate and public servants in order to discuss shared matters of concern. They know how to play dress-up there just as well as when they put on blue-collar hats to disrupt blue-collar work. There is nothing wrong with this. If you do not talk to your opponents, you will not get your needs met. So chatting with the FIA, Formula 1, governments, and their sponsors should not feel odd. But Big Green is much less used to engaging football fans.

Football supporters frequently draw on the discourse of citizenship to reject wholesale corporate control, as per the Football Supporters' Federation and Supporters Direct, and even call for greener bootprints (<http://www.fsf.org.uk>; Keoghan, 2014; [www.supporters-direct.org](http://www.supporters-direct.org); [http://www.gareth-huw-davies.com/environment/environment\\_blog/newcastle-united-football-club-top-of-the-green-league/](http://www.gareth-huw-davies.com/environment/environment_blog/newcastle-united-football-club-top-of-the-green-league/)). The US League of Fans' *Sports Manifesto* notes today's almost unbridled commodification, as the newer media join their elderly and middle-aged counterparts in "a frenetic rush for money." The League is concerned that this tendency diverts attention from the communality of sport—its capacity for cultural and civic expression and togetherness. One side effect is a lopsided relationship between spectatorship and participation: the media emphasize the former, notably sports in which they have financial interests. The League calls for a focus on all sports stakeholders and building "citizenship through sports activism" (2011). We see similar tendencies in college sports fans' attitudes to the environment (Casper, Pfahl, & McCullough, 2014).

Football Supporters Europe works with major non-government organizations, including Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, FIFPro (the world players' union), the International Trade Union Federation, and Terre des Hommes to construct systematic links between sporting bodies, the third sector, fans, and environmental concerns

([http://www.transparency.de/fileadmin/pdfs/Themen/Sport/MSE\\_Coalition\\_Letter\\_to\\_IOC\\_President\\_14-12-03.pdf](http://www.transparency.de/fileadmin/pdfs/Themen/Sport/MSE_Coalition_Letter_to_IOC_President_14-12-03.pdf); pers.comm).

And even the much-derided football hooligans, akin in their media representation to ragpickers, might provide organic forms of environmentalism. Marx used “hooligan” and “rag picker” almost as synonyms to signify class-based abjection:

[F]oul and adventures-seeking dregs of the bourgeoisie, ... vagabonds, dismissed soldiers, discharged convicts, runaway galley slaves, sharpers, jugglers, lazzaroni, pickpockets, sleight-of-hand performers, gamblers, procurers, keepers of disorderly houses, porters, literati, organ grinders, rag pickers, scissors grinders, tinkers, beggars (Marx, 1987, p. 63)

Several investigations of football “hooligans” reject both their romantic annunciation as working-class scions and their criminalization via moral panics (Armstrong & Young, 1997; Armstrong, 1998; Giulianotti, 1999, pp. 80–82; Schimmel, Harrington, & Bielby, 2007). Such work draws on EP Thompson’s (1971) insight that crowds may be animated by economic conditions, sexual urges, or blind rages, but also by ideological commitments and desires to comment.

Glancing at football fans, we might note the *ultràs* model of Southern-European play, with its connotations of carnival or hooliganism, depending on where you sit; the *barras bravas* of Argentina, with their spectacular arena conduct and its global intertexts for Spanish speakers; the uptake of Latin American chants on British terraces in the 1990s; and the 1999 Liverpool fans who paraded a banner reading “Cosmopolitanismo Vaincra” [Cosmopolitanism Will Win]. Whilst these groups may be queried for their maleness and violence, they are significant counters to the deracinated domain of corporatized sports—an organic rejection of neoliberalism that forcefully re-localizes the global game. And consider the radical socialism associated with fans of Sankt Pauli FC of Hamburg. German football more generally institutionalizes fan charters that form compacts between supporters and clubs. This example should be followed and enlivened environmentally with reference to pollution in local areas and the green credentials of teams (Galbiati, 2013; Montague, 2010; Totten, 2013).

It could be argued that turning to fandom as a source of environmental activism is plutocratic—that it requires targeting consumers as activists in the very way that I have suggested excludes many citizens. But football fandom rides a complex border between commerce and culture in ways that are regularly invoked by participants, many of whom see their commitments as questions of lifelong identity rather than rational purchase and are opposed to seeing “their” teams as capitalist enterprises.

## Conclusion

Like FIFA and Formula 1, corporations invoke citizenship ideals to describe themselves, while principally pursuing economic self-interest. This is part of a restless quest for profit unfettered by regulation, twinned with a desire for moral legitimacy that is based on doing right while growing rich through a respect for law and a desire to meddle in everyday life. Greenwashing is their way of combining these goals. Attempts by Greenpeace to bring environmental agendas to bear on cars and balls through secondary-boycott style activism appear to have failed on their own terms and done nothing for greener sporting events. The specious social license to operate sails on.

Thus far, there are few signs of hope in the area of Formula 1 fandom. Despite the fact that television ratings tumble, sponsors continue to sign up, because of the affluent composition of the sport’s followers and its glamor. We have already noted that motor-racing’s environmental tendencies derive from its sponsors, and that plus exerting state pressure seem advisable activities. Greenpeace should change tack and use its international *entrée* to influence those involved via research, stories in the press, policy activism, and boardroom critiques.

Football is different. Although much of the sport is growing ever more corporate, real

resistance from fans is in evidence, and this is where Greenpeace needs to study fan interests and offer resources, follow the example of the Carbon Trust's carbon footprint research, promulgate such information through its clickocracy, and aid fans just as Colombian ragpickers were assisted by civil society. This would add to green citizenship at both elite and populist levels.

## Note

1. It seems that Greenpeace's public documents in support of the bid are no longer archived on its sites. Greenpeace criticized one car-company sponsor for failing to meet promises on ecological innovation (Kearins & Pavlovich, 2002).

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