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# Everyday Borders in Calais: The Globally Intimate Injustices of Segregation

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**Abstract:** This article offers an account of the 'globally intimate' injustices of everyday borders in Calais, showing how a racialised geopolitics of global borders is embodied locally through everyday practices of segregation. The intimate everyday embodiment of this segregation is crucial to the creation of a hostile environment for people racially identified as 'irregular' and underlies the border's power of division and world-making. Yet also, in the everyday lives of those struggling with and against this segregation, we find powerful political opposition to the border's injustices embodied in intimate ways. This article argues that a 'globally intimate' lens provides important insights into the racialised violence required to maintain geopolitical borders while at the same time revealing borders as sites of political contestation.

**Key words:** Intimate geopolitics; critical border studies; racism; Calais

## 1. 'Apartheid is alive and well in Calais'

*On the edge of Calais' historic centre, where shuttered windows of residential houses and tabacs merge with industrial warehouses and canals surrounding the port, stood an empty building. Squat and grey, it bore signs of weather and disrepair. Covered steps at the entrance offered a few metres protection from the wintery sky. Here, behind patchwork tarpaulin, forty people slept. An oil drum stove, the only source of heat, often remained unlit. Until the 1990s the building housed the BCMO (Bureau Central de la Main d'Oeuvre) responsible for distributing dock-work at the port. Since closing it served as a municipal gym then a cold-weather homeless shelter. Despite freezing mid-December temperatures the doors to the empty building remained closed. Local government policy only required opening the shelter once temperatures dropped below -5C at night. Even when the mercury fell, there was little rush to respond. So, forty people remained on the doorstep of a cold-weather shelter, crammed together in this tight space, sleeping rough in the middle of winter. Entry risked reprisal from police, confiscation or destruction of possessions, or arrest and deportation because of their 'irregular' status. Maybe the shelter would open soon if it got colder. At least they would be first in line for 100 floor spaces available. But this would be a few days at most and then the doors would be locked again with them on the outside.<sup>1</sup>*

The BCMO occupants had mostly left Sudan to escape violence and persecution because of their ethnicity or political opposition to the ruling National Congress Party and President al-Bashir.<sup>2</sup> Outside a nearby church fifty people sheltered in tents or under blankets in its broad

entranceway. The majority were men but there were also families with young children, all fleeing war in Syria. For most, Calais was the latest stage in an arduous journey seeking refuge, security, and a peaceful life. Starting from Sudan and Syria, others from Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Iraq, and Iran, along the way people encountered a sprawling European border system which criminalised and disrupted their freedom of movement (Jansen, Celikates, & de Bloois 2015).<sup>3</sup>

On the 21<sup>st</sup> September 2015, French police evicted the BCMO and church occupants, completing a six-month operation closing all migrant spaces in Calais and displacing everyone to a single location, soon to gain notoriety as the 'new jungle'. Alongside the charity-run *Jules Ferry* Day Centre, this became the only 'tolerated zone' for migrants in Calais. By August 2016 over 9,000 people were living in the 'jungle' in makeshift shelters and tents (Help Refugees 2016). Two months later, it was demolished. On the day of the BCMO eviction, when police violently pushed the last migrants from the town centre, a local solidarity collective declared 'Apartheid is alive and well in Calais' (Calais Migrant Solidarity [CMS] 2015c).

The BCMO scene is not how we typically imagine a border encounter. Rather than border guards and fences we find homeless people outside an empty shelter whose destitution is actively maintained by local authorities. Yet, this scene tells us something important about how global borders are intertwined and *intimately embodied* in Calais through *everyday practices of segregation* (See also Daigle in this issue on embodied bordering practices of sexual-affective relationships in Cuba). As Scheel notes, the construction of borders is an intimate practice, 'always embodied and relational' and always possessing a particular 'materiality and situatedness' (2013, 283-285). In other words, it must always be *done somewhere by someone against some other*. In this article I argue daily acts of profiling, discrimination, harassment, and physical violence underlie a border control policy in Calais that aims to prevent 'irregular' movement across the border and to deter migrants from remaining in Calais itself. Police use an array of powers to stop and search, check identity documents, disperse from public spaces, and detain people they suspect of being 'irregular', a suspicion premised on racial appearance. They repeatedly evict spaces where migrants are sheltering, from squatted buildings to bridge archways, and disrupt charity food distributions, forcing migrants out to camps on the town's peripheries and into conditions of precarious destitution. In this way, migrants racialised as non-European are identified as 'irregular' and

segregated socially, economically, politically, and spatially from the ordinary workings of everyday life, which are thereby secured exclusively for 'regular' European citizens.<sup>4</sup>

These everyday acts of segregation are central to how the border is produced as 'globally intimate' in Calais. Repeated again and again, segregation saturates everyday life, creating a hostile environment for 'irregular' migrants alongside a privileged space for 'regularised' citizens thereby reproducing locally global divisions of racialised geopolitical borders. Global injustices and geopolitical inequalities are intimately embodied in the destitution 'irregular' migrants are forced into, the exhaustion, frozen temperatures, hunger, and illness that literally wears people down physically, mentally, and emotionally. Seeing how borders are embodied in everyday life, then, importantly reveals the 'globally intimate' injustices involved in their creation. At the same time, it reminds us of the everyday struggles with which migrants themselves confront border injustice.

### ***1.1 A note on positionality and method***

I write this article from a position of privilege. In terms of gender, race, class, and citizenship I benefit from numerous intersecting privileges, including the unequal effects of global borders, which facilitate my access to resources, education, and communities while denying this access to others. Acknowledging my own complicity in these hierarchical divisions is necessary to interrogate the injustices of global borders (see Turner and Vera Espinoza's discussion in this special issue on being implicated in the reproduction of the heteronormative state). From this position I hope not to speak on behalf of others but commit my own voice in solidarity with those who struggle against border segregation.

This article draws on field observation in Calais, France, between October 2014 to February 2015 and again in the summer of 2015, during which I participated in 'solidarity work' (CMS 2014) alongside migrants, activists, residents, charity workers and others who inhabit the milieu of border struggles in Calais. The form this work took changed daily but included distributing donated clothes, tents, and sleeping bags to migrant camps, monitoring police violence against migrants, supporting the running of squats, collecting firewood, water, or food, building shelters, conducting English language lessons and information sessions on UK asylum, transporting people to the hospital, signposting migrants to local services, fixing bikes, and co-organising protests. Globally oriented solidarity work is necessarily intimate, involving spending time getting to know others, sharing different experiences, and developing relationships between individuals which cross language and

community boundaries. It is also necessarily messy, responding to constantly moving events that characterise the border's everyday enactment. My participation in these activities brought me face to face with the border as a violently racialised political practice enacted throughout a variety of spaces in Calais, from cafes, parks, libraries, and train-stations in the centre to migrant camps contained on the peripheries.

The everyday violence and messiness of the border in Calais formed the practical ethical political context for my research and my decision not to conduct interviews. Confronted with the border's immediacy and the complex sinews of people's everyday lives in Calais, my carefully constructed theoretical framework, my questions regarding the 'politics' of borders, migrant struggles, and human rights seemed distantly abstract. Furthermore, caught up in the everydayness of solidarity work in Calais I felt my responsibilities lay less in gathering stories for my research than responding to the people and situations I encountered. This is an example of the everyday 'rough ground' of ethical politics we all must navigate (Pin-Fat, 2016). An unfortunate result is the lack of direct migrant voices in this research. More than an issue of empirical 'data' this raises questions around authorship and representation. Who am I to write about the political struggles of others or represent their experiences? Yet, in Calais, a space characterised by structural violence and precarity for migrants, to ask for someone's story itself risks replicating the demand, so often made by asylum officers and border guards, that they give an exceptional account of themselves to justify their presence. However, remaining silent in the face of border injustices is equally a privileged act.

I am not forced to live these struggles, and I make no claim to represent migrants in Calais or possess some special insight into their lives. Such claims are, I suggest, unnecessary since it is possible to grasp the injustices embodied by borders through examining the encounters which make up their everyday operation. Indeed, migrants are constantly speaking through their actions, their movement perhaps making the strongest case for solidarity and a rejection of border politics. What I write is not mine alone but has been shaped by all those I encountered in Calais and beyond. In portraying the border's violence I hope not to speak for migrants in Calais, nor portray them as object victims, but rather highlight the injustices they struggle against and so present a case for solidarity.

In this paper I evoke the border's *intimate everyday embodiment* by writing vignettes (*italicized*) portraying scenes of border encounter drawn from my own observations and

supplemented by media articles, NGO reports, and official documents. These encounters show how the border is embodied through practices of *everyday segregation*, confronting the reader with its *globally intimate injustices*, and encouraging critical ethical political reflection. Adopting an everyday 'intimate' perspective provides a useful 'aspect change' (Pin-Fat 2016) from dominant frames of international politics, 'queering' the state-centric gaze of sovereignty, security, or law (Peterson 2014), inviting instead conversation about alternative visions of ethical politics and different possibilities for local and global relations.

First, this article outlines why using a 'globally intimate' lens matters and suggests analysing borders as everyday embodied encounters. It then details how everyday bordering in Calais works through practices of segregation, constructing a hostile environment to control and deter 'irregular' migration in ways which also embody an unequally racialised global geopolitics. Finally, I point to migrant practices of protest and everyday solidarity in Calais as globally intimate challenges to border segregation.

## **2. Everyday bordering: intimate embodiments of racialised geopolitics**

Critical feminist and postcolonial scholars have long used intimacy to interrogate workings of global politics and power. Acknowledging the 'personal is political' and 'international', feminists point to the fundamental role of gendered intimate relations and 'economies' in constructing international politics as a male-centric, heteronormative, militarised, and capitalist 'pyramid of power' (Enloe 1996, 187; Conlon & Hiemstra 2017). This intimate lens reveals how multiple relations of power intersect and are embodied in our everyday relations, intertwining the local and domestic with the global and international. Similarly, postcolonial scholars trace how bourgeois governance of intimacy in colonial households was central to forming the gendered and 'racialised colonial worlds' of imperial statecraft (Stoler 2002, 9). Furthermore, they remind us of the ongoing global intimacy between the colonial past and postcolonial present, and how 'intertwined histories' of North/South continue to underpin unequal wealth, power, and exposure to violence in global politics today (Danewid 2017). On these accounts, intimate encounters of everyday life are understood not as incidental to global politics, nor as its mere reflection, but rather 'its marrow' (Stoler 2006, 3), the 'globally intimate' context where geopolitical imaginaries are made real but also tested and potentially undone (Peterson 2017). Examining everyday encounters as globally intimate we see how 'intimate violence is foundational to geopolitical dynamics of force' (Pain & Staehili 2014, 345) and vice versa, how 'the intimate and the global intertwine' (Pratt & Roesner 2006, 15)

and produce each other to make up the world in which we live. A 'globally intimate' lens allows us to interrogate how global structures of geopolitical power, and their postcolonial and racialised legacies, are not only experienced but also inform the categorisation of 'irregular' and 'regular' migrants by the border.

I suggest a globally intimate analysis of borders requires starting with their *everyday embodiment*. Not taking borders at face value, as fixed or natural geopolitical structures, but seeing them as contested political practices of statecraft. As Critical Border Studies details, borders are not simply territorial boundary lines but *performative practices of bordering* bringing nation-states into existence as sovereign institutions in relation to an international geopolitical order (Parker & Vaughan-Williams 2009; see also BurrIDGE et al. 2017). Borders are a particular way of *doing* politics, mapping the world, and relating to others. By controlling the movement of people and things across space, facilitating some and hindering others, borders produce subjects and spaces according to hierarchical distinctions of inside/outside, identity/difference, citizen/noncitizen, inclusion/exclusion and so on. While fundamental to international geopolitics, nation-state borders are an 'ontological fantasy' (van Houtum 2010) requiring constant 'work' to maintain (Rumford 2012). As Scheel (2013) points out, borders and bordered subjects are mutually constitutive and only exist to the extent they are performed in specific encounters between people on the move and efforts to control this mobility.

Analysing borders as intimate everyday embodiments, then, involves recognising how they are always *done somewhere by someone against some other*. Borders must be repeatedly made anew in numerous embodied encounters, from submissive rituals of passport control to potentially lethal restraints of deportees.<sup>5</sup> Acknowledging the centrality of *how borders are embodied* importantly denaturalises our accounts of borders as fixed and self-evident, revealing them as sites of political contestation and struggle that are local and global (Conlon & Hiemstra 2017). It also reminds us of the time, effort, resources, and violence required to maintain borders' geopolitical power as well as the limits of this power when confronted by complex mobile subjects who exceed, challenge, and resist their control (Tyler & Marciniak 2013; see also Shindo in this special issue for a discussion about language mastery as a disciplinary tool). Furthermore, it highlights the disparities of how borders are encountered differently by different people in intimate ways, and the uneven material effects that establish global inequalities as locally lived realities. Border controls predominantly restrict the free movement of people from the global south while facilitating the free movement of globally

privileged subjects predominantly from the global north, maintaining structural inequalities in the world including the unequal distribution of material precarity, political insecurity, and exposure to death (Jones 2017). These borders have their roots in colonial histories of domination, exploitation, and violence, and they continue to shape postcolonial world geopolitics according to a prejudicial 'metaphysics of "race", nation, and bounded culture coded in the body' (Gilroy 2004, 66-68; Davies & Isakjee 2018). Distinctions between spaces and subjects which continue to be foundational for international relations, such as national/international, citizen/noncitizen, native/immigrant, are therefore infused with racialised legacies of colonial rule (Bhambra 2017). As such, the everyday criminalisation and control of 'irregular' migrant bodies is crucial to the global reproduction of racialised hierarchies of humanity and power. In short, seeing borders as everyday embodied encounters reveals their *globally intimate injustices*, laying out the ethical terrain of border struggles while suggesting the possibility of political transformation and solidarity.

In Calais several intersecting borders are embodied in the policing of everyday life. Located on the Northern French coast twenty one miles across the Channel from Dover, Calais is one of the busiest crossings for goods and people between the UK and the European continent. The 1993 Sangatte Protocol established juxtaposed 'control zones' in Calais, with British border authorities operating within the port and Channel Tunnel train terminal. In this way, migrants are intercepted while still in France and so denied the right to claim asylum in the UK. Calais is also an external border of the European Schengen zone of free movement. While outside the Schengen zone, the UK participates in the Dublin arrangements, requiring asylum seekers to be processed in the first safe EU country they encounter, and makes use of EU data systems sharing biometric information on non-Europeans. Combined with stringent visa restrictions for citizens of refugee-producing countries, making 'regular' migration near-impossible, this inside/outside position makes the UK border particularly impermeable for asylum seekers. Furthermore, with the *externalisation* of EU borders, 'offshored' and 'outsourced' across the Mediterranean to neighbouring governments such as Libya who intercept, detain, and deter migrants on Europe's behalf (Bialasiewicz 2012), as well as the *internalisation* of border security through biometric technologies, discriminatory surveillance, ID checks, everyday policing, and coerced fingerprinting (Broeders 2007), migrants encounter numerous borders before ever reaching Calais. Paradoxically, this discriminatory bordering encourages 'irregular' migration towards the UK/Calais in search of a less precarious life (Davies, Isakjee, & Dhesi 2017, 11-12).



Calais exists within a wider European 'border security continuum' (Vaughan-Williams 2010) that operates globally. Enacted through discriminatory visa regulations, militarised external controls, and securitised internal policing, Europe's borders divide the world's population up into a hierarchy of national citizenship and enforce a global restriction on people's freedom of movement (van Houtum 2010; Turner and Vera Espinoza, this issue). The inequalities of wealth, freedom, and in/security produced by this global bordering contribute to a racialised postcolonial world order marked by deep divisions between the global north and global south. Europe's borders work 'as a vast machine of illegalization' (Scheel 2017) by forcing those escaping these structural violences to use irregular means of migration and criminalising them for doing so. In this way, the irregularisation and criminalisation of the free movement of large parts of the world's population goes hand in hand with the continued racialisation of world politics and power based on hierarchies of humanity.

Calais, then, is a space saturated with control where multiple local/global borders intertwine and overlap. A complex assemblage of law, geography, technology, and policing not only prevents 'irregular' migrants from crossing to the UK but actively *produces them as irregular* in the first place, creating a 'bottleneck' which ensnares people escaping violence, poverty, or persecution at the same time as it demonises their 'transgression' (Davies, Isakjee, & Dhesi 2017, 2; Squire 2011). Understanding the Calais border as 'globally intimate' we see how its everyday enactment through segregation re/produces locally a racialised global geopolitics. This allows us to 'expose and contest normalizations' regarding the legitimacy of European borders and citizenship (Peterson 2017, 2) and instead trace the violent ways they racialise and criminalise those migrant subjects they supposedly (must) secure against.

In the next section, I contextualise the 2015/2016 'new jungle' in Calais within a recent history of French and British border policy, providing an everyday perspective on the political contestations surrounding key developments, to highlight the centrality of everyday segregation for how this border works. I then unpack the globally intimate injustices embodied by a border deterrence policy based around creating a 'hostile environment' for 'irregular' migrants. I argue that everyday segregation simultaneously secures this particular border, by making transgression practically more difficult, and secures the global borders of a racist geopolitics as intimately embodied. Finally, I conclude by examining some globally intimate ways migrants contest border segregation in Calais through protest and everyday solidarity.

### 3. 'The persisting error of 2002': from Sangatte to the 'New Jungle'

While Calais border policy has been 'reactive' to shifting events and competing priorities of different actors (Freedman 2018) underlying this has been a persistently racialised political discourse on migration in France and the UK. Since the 1990s, collapsing support for Socialist parties and high abstention rates corresponded with increasing electoral success for the far-right Front National and their anti-immigrant agenda in Calais (Goodliffe 2016, 127). In the second round 2017 Presidential elections, Pas-de-Calais was one of only two departments where Marine Le Pen won a majority over Emmanuel Macron (*Le Monde* 2017), and she was eventually elected to the National Assembly seat for its 11<sup>th</sup> constituency in subsequent legislative elections. In 2014 an atmosphere of aggressive nationalism was palpable on Calais' streets. Pictures of Le Pen's stern gaze, framed by the *Tricolore*, lined the walls while *Le Parti de la France* posters cried out '*Ni minarets, ni charia! France aux Français!*' (Neither minarets, nor sharia! France for the French!). In September, local anti-immigrant group *Sauvons Calais* (Save Calais) organised a demonstration where prominent extreme-right orators evoked racist imagery and white supremacy, calling for 'a war for the survival of our country and our people, to make France for the French' (Chazan 2014). Following weeks saw violence against migrants increase, including arson attacks on a charity-run shower facility and a migrant squat (*Nord Littoral* 2014a, 2014b). At a press conference in Calais in October 2014, Le Pen claimed the presence of migrants in Calais was a national security threat and called for their automatic deportation irrespective of their asylum rights, declaring:

*'Immigration is a true poison, the most visible and most shocking consequence of which is Calais. The clandestines are illegal, they are criminals in terms of the law, who have no business on our national territory'* (Pecqueux 2014).<sup>6</sup>

In the UK, for two decades Calais has repeatedly been framed in terms of border 'crisis' by politicians and media as a weak point in British defences against tides of immigration, indicative of asylum policy failure, and synonymous with loss of sovereignty, security, and government control (Reinisch 2015). In 1999 a Red Cross centre was opened in neighbouring Sangatte to shelter refugees from the Balkans. As numbers at Sangatte approached one thousand, British media depicted scenes of chaos and invoked fears of foreign invasion that continue to resonate today. With additional pressure from the Conservative party and Groupe

Eurotunnel, who manage the Tunnel, the French and British governments agreed to dismantle the refugee centre (Schuster 2003). However, this ‘solution’ did little except criminalise migrant presence, limit their access to humanitarian support, and impose on them conditions of ‘forced nomadism’ and destitution (*Défenseur des Droits [DdD]* 2017, 4)

In 2009, a large migrant camp became the centre of another political media spectacle in Calais. Labelled ‘the jungle’, it was presented as a lawless liminal space threatening the integrity of a British nation left defenceless by its ‘soft touch’ immigration policies (Howarth & Ibrahim 2012). Again, the camp’s ritual destruction was projected as a performance of state power but ultimately only intensified the migrant precarity in Calais in what local associations denounced as the ‘persisting error of 2002’ (CMS 2009). Over the next few years migrant numbers waxed and waned with cycles of occupations and evictions of squats, jungles, and small camps across Calais, sustained by daily police harassment and violence (CMS 2011). Yet by winter 2014, in line with record levels of refugees arriving in the EU fleeing civil war, persecution, and poverty, the migrant population in Calais had again grown. Camps and squats dotted the city and its surroundings. While conditions were harsh, each location offered some vital resource: proximity to key crossing points or food distribution sites, or access to electricity, toilets, showers, or the relative security and shelter provided by walls and a roof.

*Towards the end of 2014, the largest camp was the 'Tioxide' jungle. Comprising several hundred shelters and an abandoned sports hall, the camp was built on disused land beside a chemical factory after evictions during the summer. Smoke from the chimneys smothered shelters made from salvaged wood and plastic sheeting, the rain turning to mud a thoroughfare lined with shops and cafes serving tea, cigarettes, and chicken stew. One area housing hundreds of men, women, and children was polluted with a viscous milky-white sulphurous substance. One hydrant provided water for a thousand people. Nevertheless, council workers frequently shut it off. Above the jungle, a motorway led vehicles directly into the port. Regular traffic jams would stretch for miles, offering opportunities to stowaway inside or underneath trucks, but aggressively guarded by police. Stories abounded of early morning raids on the jungle fringes, police reportedly destroying property, physically assaulting people as they slept, and conducting arbitrary arrests.*

*The other side of town, near the Channel Tunnel, 30-foot steel walls enclosed two massive courtyards and a disused factory. On one side, a large metal gate reinforced with makeshift*

*barricades stood at the end of a cul-de-sac, on the other, the words 'WE WANT FREEDOM' looked out over train tracks. 'Fort Galloo' was a squat occupied during the summer by migrants, locals, and international activists affiliated with the No Borders Network. In the courtyards people slept in abandoned shipping containers, tents, or basic shelters. Médecine du Monde erected emergency marquees while a French charity delivered chemical toilets and serviced them weekly. Others accessed the central factory hangar and a small house adjoining it. Despite the polluted air inside, the winter cold drove people to camp in the hangar, burning noxious railroad sleepers for warmth. Uniquely, Galloo residents represented most migrant communities in Calais and it soon became a hub of daily activity, a place where people could meet, charge their phones from an electricity generator fuelled by local supporters, or collect hosepipe water on their way to or from the Tunnel.*

In 2014, these were part of a network of locations throughout Calais, built around the rhythms and practices of migrants' everyday life, and linked to NGO sites providing meals, distributing basic necessities, offering French lessons or legal advice. Whilst migrants were excluded physically, legally, and bureaucratically from public spaces and civic life, the maps of everyday life for those with and without papers increasingly overlapped during this time, providing a stark display of the border's segregation. Migrant presence soon became politicised on both sides of the Channel. In August 2014, UK media reported 'ethnic riots' and 'vicious turf war[s]' amid rising migrant numbers (Morrison 2014). Politicians quickly gestured towards strengthening border security, the French increasing numbers of riot police stationed in Calais and the British providing funding and a new port security fence.

In this context Calais Mayor Natacha Bouchart first proposed opening a 'day centre' for distributing humanitarian aid based at the disused *Jules Ferry* summer camp beyond the port. Declaring the existing situation 'untenable', Bouchart argued centralising aid services in one state-supervised location and 'away from homes' would 'empty 80% of the [...] migrant presence in the town' and thereby 'relieve the *Calaisiens* who have a right to a bit of serenity' (Goudeseune 2014). In September 2014, the UK and France signed a Joint Declaration on 'cross border security' cooperation (Cazeneuve & May 2014), and two months later plans for the day centre were approved alongside further increases in riot police. In January 2015, coinciding with the day centre's opening, Bouchart introduced a bye-law prohibiting the supply of aid to migrants beyond the centre. Eviction notices went up outside all squats, jungles, and camps as the moorland around *Jules Ferry* was designated the only 'tolerated' site for migrant dwellings. Local NGOs and activists denounced the 'new jungle' as a

*'bidonville par l'État français'*, a state-sanctioned ghetto designed to evacuate the town of migrants and segregate them from its inhabitants (Salomez 2015).

#### **4. The border as segregation**

From the beginning, I suggest, the day centre and 'new jungle' were conceived within a wider border control strategy based on segregation between 'regular' and 'irregular' populations in Calais. Combining restrictive humanitarian provision with deterrence, this strategy confined migrants to a peripheral 'tolerated zone' while making the rest of town a space of zero tolerance. Offering (minimal) support in terms of food, medical assistance, legal aid, and shelter, the day centre contained the migrant population outside the ordinary places and public spaces of *Calaisien* citizenship. And it constrained migrants' mobility by tethering everyday subsistence to an isolated location away from key border crossing points, especially the Tunnel. In this way, the town's geography was divided into centre/periphery, the population segregated along European ('*Calaisien*') and non-European ('migrant') identities. This was crucial to the 'global intimate' effects of the border. Not only did everyday segregation secure *this particular border* by corralling and disrupting 'irregular' migration, it also staged everyday life as an encounter with *multiple global borders*, reproducing racialised geopolitical relations of North/South as locally embodied realities of 'regularity and 'irregularity'.

Through everyday segregation Calais replicated Europe as a racialised space, and subjectivity, of privilege and exclusion. Without it, the presence of non-European 'others' exposed the deceptive fantasy of the bounded nation-state and Europe as an 'area of freedom, justice and security' (European Union 2012) separate from and superior to the world beyond. As the French human rights ombudsman stated, border policy in Calais is characterised by a desire to conceal the presence of migrants and ultimately 'to make them disappear' (DdD 2017, 1). In Calais, those who are irregularised as liminal racialised subjects by European borders are literally forced to live on the fringes, to sleep in forests or among sand dunes on the peripheries, and compelled to travel in clandestine hiding, holding on beneath speeding lorries or concealed within refrigerated trucks. Through everyday practices of segregation migrant subjects are constructed as 'irregular', criminalised and ostracised, while the border is secured as political necessity and intimately embodied reality. Whenever migrant numbers are too large, or when they move in next door, too close for comfort, when the homogeneous

fantasies of national belonging are disrupted too much, the state steps in to round them up and clear them out.

In October 2016 the ‘new jungle’ was evicted in the grandest spectacle yet. The camp was destroyed with thousands dispersed across France into temporary accommodation, detention, or onto the streets. Nevertheless, since then human rights observers report hundreds of irregular migrants remained or returned to Calais, again facing incredibly precarious conditions, their destitution and dispersal maintained by aggressive policing measures (*DdD* 2017; HRW 2017). The perpetual cycle of segregation and violence continues. And this should not be surprising because, as I have outlined, this is not exceptional but simply how the border works in Calais, and Europe generally, through deterrence. As I argue in the next section, this deterrence necessitates everyday segregation and the intimate embodiment of global borders.

### **5. Embodying the border: the globally intimate injustices of deterrence**

Across Europe, significant amounts of work go into maintaining the myth that borders map out existing sovereign communities and divide people and places. Every day, people are monitored, chased, arrested, detained, deported, dispersed, forced into hiding, denied medical care, and more, to bring these unstable fantasies to life (De Genova 2017). In Calais this work doesn't simply police people's movement between states but also segregates everyday life in the town itself in order to create a racialised hierarchy of liveability between 'irregular' and 'regular' subjects. For 'irregular' subjects everyday life becomes a 'hostile environment', to borrow the Home Office's revealing phrase, deterring 'irregular' migration by making subversion of border controls unattractive and intensely difficult. For 'regular' subjects the border remains invisible and unobtrusive.

Since Sangatte, deterrence has been the focus of bordework in Calais. British and French declarations clarify that, in addition to technology and fences, border security entails ‘ensur[ing] all measures taken will deter illegal migrants from congregating in and around Calais’ and ‘giv[ing] no quarter to those who have no right to be here or who break the law’ (Cazeneuve & May 2014, 1; 2015, 10). This deterrence borderwork is outsourced to French police. As the police union head put it: ‘we are doing Britain’s dirty work here in France’ (Samuel 2015). Practically, this ‘dirty work’ involves imposing destitution on migrants by denying them shelter, preventing access to basics needs including food, water, clothing, and washing facilities, prohibiting aid provision to migrants, and exposing them to daily police

harassment and violence. Migrants are excluded from public swimming pools and libraries for lacking the correct documentation, refused service in shops and cafés, dispersed from parks and subjected to arbitrary yet racially-profiling ID checks, stops, and searches by police, and face physical attacks from local racists (CMS 2011). They are forced to sleep on the cold ground, under bridges, out in the open, in forests, only to be kicked awake and gassed by police, their clothes, sleeping bags, or tents stolen or vandalised (*DdD* 2017; HRW 2017, 15-16, 20-21). Witnesses speak of police deliberately contaminating food and drinking water with pepper spray (*Ibid*, 15). Arbitrary arrests lead to long periods of detention with high risk of deportation (RRDP 2017, 11). Violence is common in encounters with police. Many migrants bear the marks of these encounters on their bodies, with numerous injuries reported including broken bones, dislocated joints, and medical complications from repeated exposure to pepper spray (*Ibid*, 9-10, 13). These border encounters take their toll mentally and physically in the form of exhaustion, near starvation, dehydration, exposure, anxiety and trauma (*DdD* 2017, 4; HRW 2017, 23-24). And they regularly result in death as people risk their lives to avoid police aggression and circumvent controls.<sup>7</sup>

In the everyday encounters that make up this hostile environment, the border's racialised geopolitical divisions between regularity/irregularity are embodied as powerful realities in the local geography of Calais and intimately inscribed on migrant bodies. For the targets of deterrence, ordinary things like washing, feeding oneself, relaxing, getting warm or staying dry, keeping hold of personal affects, sitting in a park or at a bus stop without being accosted, frisked, moved on or arrested, become a constant struggle with the border. Reports of a woman forced 'to give birth in the back of a truck' while trying to cross the border intimately embody so many violent injustices of gender and race (RRDP 2016, 26). This intimacy is central to the hostile environment agenda in Calais aimed at literally making life unliveable for certain subjects divided according to racialised global borderlines. Its coercive force lies not simply in bordering space but in bordering subjects by making certain forms of life, identity, and relations almost (though never entirely) impossible. The Calais border irregularises people, marginalises them spatially, socially, and politically, while it makes irregular life unliveable, a necessarily intimate endeavour. Thus, the structural racism of European borders gets intimately embodied in the routine racism of everyday segregation in Calais, marking out boundaries of who does/not belong, who can/not move freely, in the differential lived experiences of spatial location and social relations.

The everydayness of these intimate encounters is crucial to how the border works. In a recent Human Rights Watch report (2017), migrants testify to the normalisation of destitution and abuse: 'This is normal for us, it is part of our life [...] just normal – this is something that happens everyday' (19), 'this is our life every day' (23). Through the repetitive everydayness of segregation, the border's divisions are normalised as a racialised geopolitics is embodied and given material effect. Furthermore, happening on the margins, this violence is concealed from other residents, normalising segregation and their continued complicity in its workings. Through everyday segregation the border is intimately brought to life differently for different people, reproducing the racialised, geographic, and economic divisions and injustices of global borders. For some, these borders are easily ignored or affirmed as tokens of privilege, for others they construct 'a place [s/]he runs up against repeatedly, passing and repassing through it [...] a place where [s/]he resides' (Balibar 2002, 83).

Seeing how the Calais border is produced 'everyday' confronts us with its 'globally intimate' injustices (Peterson 2017). The world is made in these everyday border encounters as unequal and divided, the privileges of some premised on the denial of others. In Calais the 'grand' racially exclusionary geopolitics of European borders is enacted through 'minor' everyday practices, the interruption of meals, contamination of water, breaking of tents, and physical assault of migrants. The border is embodied in biting winds rolling off the sea, soaking rain, invasive police frisking, relentless scabies itching, and sleepless nights running from batons and pepper spray. Importantly, I have argued, these everyday features of the border are not incidental to its geopolitical power but rather give the 'hostile environment' its texture, bringing an inequitable racialised global ontology intimately to life as an embodied political reality.

## **6. Against segregation: intimately global solidarity in everyday life**

By focusing on the intimate everyday embodiment of global borders I am not suggesting they are inescapable. People move despite border controls, subverting, escaping, evading, rejecting and resisting borders every day. It is precisely because of this that borders require so much violent everyday work. In this final section, I point to everyday acts of solidarity amid everyday bordering which practically undermine segregation and confront the global injustices of border politics.



The global racism of border segregation in Calais did not go unchallenged by migrants themselves. In everyday encounters people would reference the violences of a shared post/colonial history or the double-standards of Europe's commitment to human rights as evidence of the globally intimate injustices of their present situation. Graffiti on the entrance to one migrant squat juxtaposed the revolutionary French declaration 'liberté, égalité, fraternité' with the accusation 'why always black man?' confronting passers-by with historic contradictions of European Enlightenment values and racism still embodied in contemporary border policing.

During my visits to Calais, migrants regularly staged protests against the border, linking their daily struggles to global political events. In November 2014 Syrians in Calais held a twenty-day silent vigil outside the port calling for freedom to move and seek asylum in the UK. Later that month the Sudanese community marched through Calais's streets protesting reports of mass rapes perpetrated by government militias in Darfur and calling on the International Criminal Court to indict president al-Bashir for genocide. In September 2015, as the 'jungle' segregation was nearing completion, hundreds of migrants protested for a week in the town centre bearing signs declaring 'this border kills', 'freedom of movement for all', and 'no one is illegal'. One group of Syrian refugees held a banner with a drawing of three-year old Alan Kurdi, whose drowning on 2 September had been widely publicised, and the words 'Don't wake him up until his people are FREE' (CMS 2015b). Over the years, migrants have engaged in hunger strikes and lip-sewing protests and organised No Borders camps alongside international activists (Rigby & Schlembach 2013). All these protests addressed the globally intimate injustices of the border, protestors linking their own intimately embodied struggles against segregation in Calais with international relations of power and forms of violence that are at once local and global.

### ***6.1 The politics of 'the camp'***

Within the scholarly literature on 'migrant activism' there is a divide between those who see such protests as emergent forms of transnational citizenship and those who critique the inability of familiar political performances to radically challenge the exclusionary power of state sovereignty (Nyers 2015; Tyler & Marciniak 2013). These latter instead foreground migrants' 'autonomous' movements as offering an 'escape' from state control and the confines of citizenship towards a more revolutionary 'common' form of politics (Papadopoulos & Tsianos 2013). There is also a corresponding debate among critical border scholars between

those who emphasise sovereign power and control and those who emphasise migrant agency, resistance, and refusal in their analyses (Vaughan-Williams 2015, 123). At the intersection of these debates, scholars raise questions concerning whether migrant camps such as the Calais 'jungle' are depoliticised deathly spaces of exceptional sovereign power, dehumanisation, and abandonment (Minca 2015) or vibrantly politicised 'lived spaces' prefiguring a world without borders (Rygiel 2012).

These theoretical divisions are often presented as binary and tend to over-determine migrant camps in abstract terms of either 'control' or 'resistance' (Vaughan-Williams 2015, 123). An everyday perspective, however, allows us to appreciate migrant camps as messy contested spaces where both conditions coexist and conflict with each other. Even within the 'new jungle' in Calais, a space undeniably characterised by precarity, everyday political contestations around border segregation were evident. Nor was the 'new jungle' a unified space but divided up between the self-constructed migrant camp, the charity-run *Jules Ferry* for vulnerable people, and the heavily securitised 'humanitarian' container camp for those claiming asylum in France.

Yet, focusing on 'the camp' as the paradigmatic migrant space, politicised or depoliticised, remains problematic. Migrants escape camps even as they organise (within) them, and camps are simply one location for broader struggles between state control and migrant mobility rather than defining of them. Not all migrant spaces are camps, nor are all camps equivalent in operation and purpose (Ramadan 2013). As I indicate in this article, faced with border segregation migrants continuously create autonomous spaces to provide (limited) security and strategic mobility. At a mundane level, these spaces enable a precarious yet vital sense of 'home' (Mould 2017), offering opportunities to cook, sleep, meet others, share stories around a fire and other ordinary intimate activities denied by border segregation (King 2016). They support people to live despite the hostile environment built around them and to keep trying to cross. In doing so, they pose a powerful challenge to the border which is both practical and symbolic, banal and profound, intimate and global. Why else is so much borderwork in Calais focused on their containment, eviction, and destruction?

## ***6.2 The politics of 'chance'***

An overlooked but crucial site where migrants contest border segregation is the motorway. In 2014/2015 every day and night migrants went to the motorways around the port and Channel Tunnel to hide themselves within or underneath heavy goods vehicles bound for the UK.

There migrants encountered the border as segregation backed up by police violence, their 'irregularity' intimately embodied in their denied mobility. Yet the motorways also provided the best chance of subverting the border by collectively rushing traffic jams (ironically, caused by increased security measures at the port and Channel Tunnel terminal).

*One Sunday morning in December 2014, sounds of the Tigrinya sermon came from the tarpaulin church in Tioxide, drumbeats and singing mixing with the bustle of the surrounding camp. Suddenly, calls went up from the motorway above where a traffic jam was forming on the way into the port. All around people began running, alone or in groups, beckoning others to follow. Heads popped out of the church, shoes slipped on, as congregation members gradually jogged up the mound adjacent to the motorway to join the growing crowd. Several groups were already moving down the miles-long line of traffic and between the vehicles, working quickly some people would distract the drivers while others opened the truck doors and closed them again with people inside. Soon flashing lights and sirens of police vans arrived, driving up the hard shoulder, officers jumping out with gas at the ready, checking trucks and chasing after the mobile groups. People in the watching crowd whistled or called out warnings when the police were closing in. After an hour or so more vans arrived, spilling out riot officers with shields and armour who fired teargas grenades into the gathered onlookers forcing them back towards the 'jungle'. Returning to the tents a man said wearily but smiling 'No chance today. Tomorrow, inshallah'.*

Such encounters were a daily occurrence in 2014/2015. While spontaneous and disorganised they were routine, allowing migrants unable to afford smugglers' fees an opportunity to cross in the relative security of numbers. The mundane individual acts of support people provided each other in these moments meant at least some people had the 'chance' to cross the border each day. That these everyday acts of solidarity were also political acts against segregation was evidenced during a protest I observed in August 2015:

*A group of twenty migrants were blocked by police from leaving the 'new jungle' to attend a protest against the British Home Secretary's visit to Calais. In response, they occupied the motorway bridge above the camp, blocking oncoming vehicles and calling down for support from below. Soon hundreds of people had brought traffic to a standstill creating a tailback several miles long. Holding banners declaring 'we shall overcome' alongside an image of a figure behind bars and denouncing the 'apartheid ghetto' they pressed against gathering police lines and chanted into the newly arrived media cameras: 'We are not animals, we are*

*human beings, we are migrants, we are not criminals! We have rights to live anywhere! Open the border! Open the border!' (CMS 2015a).*

Here border segregation worked by isolating people geographically in the jungle but also by denying them access to the rights and civic space of citizenship. It was enforced through racial profiling and physical coercion. In response, migrants went where they go every day, the motorway, disrupting the border and its usual flows to highlight inequalities of freedom of movement in Europe and racialised injustices of border segregation. However, this act was not only a political spectacle for news channels. By causing a traffic jam, it also served to create practical 'chances' for people to subvert the border and reject segregation.

In this encounter, state control and migrant autonomy, clandestine movement and spectacular protest, global and everyday are intimately intertwined. Seeing border struggles as everyday reveals how intimate acts often dismissed as mundane, depoliticised, or criminal are crucial to challenging the reproduction of a racialised global geopolitics. As King has argued (2017) in the gestures of everyday solidarity, support, and community by migrants in Calais we can see a politics of 'refusal' (24-28) in which they resist the border by 'taking action in ways that effectively turn away from the state and seek to live a life as if it wasn't there' (19). The radical power of these everyday practices lies not in their embodying a form of 'transgressive citizenship' (Rygiel 2012) but in their ordinariness, how they intimately, momentarily, but concretely overcome segregation in Calais and prefiguratively embody other ways of living and doing politics without borders. For anyone interested in migrant solidarity, it is important to recognise the globally intimate politics of these everyday struggles.

## **7. Conclusion**

This article offered an account of the 'globally intimate' injustices of everyday borders in Calais, showing how a racialised geopolitics of global borders is embodied locally through everyday practices of segregation. The everydayness of this segregation is crucial to the creation of a hostile environment for people identified as 'irregular' and underlies the border's power of division and world-making. Yet also, in the everyday lives of those struggling with and against this segregation, we find powerful political opposition to the border's injustices embodied in intimate ways.

Seeing borders as intimately embodied in the everyday presents a different picture of them. Rather than assuming framings of migrants as either 'problematic' or 'positive' it shows

the work and resources required to construct and maintain the divisions of 'us'/'them' or 'citizen'/'noncitizen' borders presuppose. It highlights bordering as a practice of segregation which violently embodies racialised inequalities of identity, wealth, power, and precarity. Seeing bordering as everyday segregation also confronts us with our complicity in its violent embodiment while simultaneously pointing towards intimate everyday ways it can be and is struggled against. Seeing the geopolitical through a lens of embodied intimacy brings us back into our relations with others and our position in the world, calling on us to challenge injustice in the everyday.

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## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> In this article I use descriptive vignettes (*italicised*) based on fieldwork encounters and observations in Calais in 2014/2015 to evoke how the border is intimately embodied in everyday life.

<sup>2</sup> The Sudanese government has been accused of ethnic cleansing in the Darfur, South Kordofan, and Blue Nile regions where it has fought a decade and half conflict with rebel groups (see Human Rights Watch [HRW] 2018).

<sup>3</sup> I elaborate on this border system further in section 2.

<sup>4</sup> Labels 'regular' and 'irregular' are products of a regime of border control and governance. This language is political, as are terms like 'migrants' or 'asylum seekers', 'the jungle' etc. and *how* we use them is important. In the context of Calais, they are highly racialised labels. In this article, I use these terms antagonistically to highlight the ordinariness of migration, as the movement of people, and the violence of irregularisation experienced by some people but not others. For a good discussion see Millner (2011).

<sup>5</sup> The case of Jimmy Mubenga is a famous example. Mubenga was killed on board a plane in October 2010 during an attempt to deport him, dying of cardiac arrest because of the restraining methods used by G4S private security guards. They were later acquitted of manslaughter despite passenger testimony that Mubenga was crying out 'I can't breathe' (Webber 2014).

<sup>6</sup> Translation mine.

<sup>7</sup> CMS (2019) maintain an updated list of reported deaths at the Calais border.

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