

The Calais Jungle: A slum of London's making

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Abstract:

The Calais Jungle has existed in some form for several years. It grew in size tremendously as a result of the so-called 'refugee crisis', but was spectacularly demolished in October 2016. When the Jungle was still standing, it was a site of intense violence perpetuated by the local police, state authorities as well as French legal systems. Much of the literature that has explored the Jungle thus far has rightly depicted it as an unofficial refugee camp, a 'state of exception', and a site of biopolitical experimentation with distinct 'camp geographies'. However, it is the contention of this paper that while these experimentations occur and fuel the precariousness of the site, the Jungle can be seen as a slum, and indeed, that it can be seen as a slum of London's making.

Key words:

The Jungle, slum, neoliberalism, global city, London.

Introduction:

FIGURE 1 HERE

'London Calling' scrawled at the main entrance to the Jungle (Source: Author's photo, Jan 2016)

When the Sangatte refugee centre in Calais was closed in December 2002, under the orders of Nicolas Sarkozy, who was then French Minister of the Interior, many of the refugees seeking to gain entry into the UK formed a number of makeshift camps in the wooded areas around the ferry port of Calais (Fassin, 2005; Millner, 2011; Davies and Isakjee, 2015). Since then, these disparate camps were systematically cleared by the French police, and corralled into one large camp that became known as the 'Jungle'. As is now well known, it was this larger camp that subsequently reached international notoriety through its near-continuous representation in the media in 2015 and 2016. During this time, it continually grew in geographical size, number of occupants and the intensity of its coverage, despite attempts by the French to dismantle it. However, in October 2016 it was violently demolished by the local French police. Given that it was never sanctioned as an 'official' refugee camp, the people that had called this space home existed in a state of juridical limbo, and have since been either dispersed throughout France to other makeshift camps away from the prying eyes of the world's media, or are sleeping rough on the streets of Calais.

The Jungle was described in media depictions as 'Europe's largest slum' (Chakelain, 2016), given that it had all of the five physical UN-defined characteristics of slum conditions, to a greater or lesser degree. According to the UN, a slum must "combine to various extents" inadequate access to safe water, inadequate access to sanitation and infrastructure, poor structural quality of housing, overcrowding, and insecure residential status (UN Habitat, 2003: 12). A walk around the Jungle camp in Calais would confirm that all five of these conditions were present there. Notwithstanding the urban studies literature debating the analytical utility of the term 'slum' (Glibert, 2007; Rao, 2006; Roy, 2011), its use has been predominantly applied to urban conditions within the so-called Global South. Surely Europe, the global bastion of civilisation and Enlightenment could not permit such squalid conditions to exist on its own territory? The provocative argument of this paper is that such a site has indeed been *allowed* to exist through the continued development of neoliberal ideologies and their physical manifestation, intensification and concentration in the form of the global city¹ of London. While the Jungle has now been demolished, there are already signs that people are still making camp in Calais, while patiently hoping to be able to attempt the crossing to the UK (Bulman, 2016). As long as London continues to develop along the contours of a neoliberal ideology, it will continue to exacerbate the conditions that caused the growth of the Jungle.

The urban studies literature has comprehensively analysed the formation of slums (see Arabindoo [2011], for an overview), with Davis' (2004; 2006) seminal work encapsulating the argument that slums are not the 'engines of growth' that many neoliberal commentators would have us believe (see De Soto, 2000). Instead, slums are 'dumping grounds' for those people who have been left out of the increasingly rapid pace of a changing global economy (Rodgers, 2009). They are informal and marginalised places that are exploited by national and supra-national institutions as test-sites for neoliberal technologies (Davis, 2004). The Jungle was also such a place but the culprit for its informality, marginality and lawlessness, and as a 'dumping ground' for the thousands of displaced refugees, is not a supra-national financial institution, but I argue, the city of London. To put this more precisely, it is my contention that the Jungle was a product of the politico-economic processes of power that seek to ossify London's place atop global city hierarchies: London's 'global city-ness'. Many of the economic and geopolitical processes that originate from the centres of financial and political power in London and other global cities have direct repercussions that marginalise groups of people geographically, politically and economically (see Sassen, 2001; Massey, 2007). If we are to take seriously the thesis of planetary urbanisation (Brenner and Schmid, 2014), then we need to empirically explore how the global cities that disproportionately affect this global process exclude, marginalise and destroy people and place, as much as they smooth, monetise and produce space. This paper intends to do so. In understanding the geographies (near and far) of urban marginalisation and how they are marbled through the urbanisation processes that formulate and maintain these Leviathanical global cities, we can better prepare, critique and mobilise activism to counter it.

London, as one of the world's foremost global cities, has always marginalised unwanted bodies. Back in 1349 during the Black Death, there are records of infected bodies being displaced beyond London's city walls in mass graves creating the first reference to 'no man's land' (Lesham and Pinkerton, 2016). These unwanted, unclean and impure bodies were expelled from the city, dumped over the walls and removed from the psyche of London. Several centuries later, a similar process of 'expulsion' of unwanted bodies occurs beyond the city walls. The difference today is that those walls have been pushed out further, taking the

¹ A global city is defined as one of the world's urban centres that are argued to command and control the world economy (Sassen, 2001).

form of the UK national border that separates the wider global city region of London and the South East from Continental Europe. Much of the discourse and rhetoric revolving around the Jungle rightly pointed the figure of blame at the French systems of asylum, at their police tactics and strategies of governance (Ibrahim and Howarth, 2015). However, it is important not to be blind-sided by local axioms of broader neoliberal processes (not least for continued refugee and asylum-based activism). There are a number of reasons which can explain why the Jungle was maintained as a marginal urban space, as a slum of London's making. These include the UK Parliamentary decisions to go to war, the prominence of the London-based arms industry, the city's informal and volatile economic labour markets, and political wrangling about the UK's membership of the EU.

When she famously asked "where does London end?", Massey (2007: 13), went on to argue that "there is a vast geography of dependencies, relations and effects that spread out from here [London] around the globe. [...] In considering the politics and the practices, and the very character, of this place, it is necessary to follow the lines of engagement with elsewhere" (*ibid*: 13). Therefore, London as a global city (see Sassen, 2001) extends its influence far beyond its borders (wherever and whatever they may be), and impacts directly on places all over the world. Hence, I argue that the Calais Jungle was the subject of London's making; and if the current trajectory of London's rampant increase in neoliberalisation continues, it will reproduce a slum-like site on the shores of Northern France and even further afield; indeed any place where national borders restrict the free movement of people (such as is currently being experienced in Northern Greece [see Squires, 2017]).

Analyses of the Jungle (see Davies and Isakjee (2015), Millner (2011) and Rygiel (2011)) have thus far positioned it within the literature on 'camp geographies' (Agamden, 1998; Ramadan, 2013; Minca, 2015), which has given us important insights into explaining and theorising the experimental forms of securitization and biopolitics that were perpetrated so violently upon the Jungle inhabitants. Yet as Davies and Isakjee (2015: 2) rightly point out, there is more to this important observation. For the Jungle also had distinctly urban 'slum-like' characteristics that were a direct result of (and reaction to) the neoliberal oppressiveness enacted by London's global city processes. The Jungle was used by the UK and French governments as a test site for experimental forms of enforcement and control, using buffer zones, temporary shelters, controversial weaponry (see Feigenbaum and Raoul, 2016 for details) and violent demolition to control the 'spread' of the Jungle and the incursion of its inhabitants into the smooth spaces of global city commodity flows represented by the commercial freight to and from the UK and continental Europe. These are all camp-like characteristics, but because they stem from the neoliberal technologies and processes that emanate from London's continual performance as a global city, they rendered the Jungle - as well as whatever spatial formations might appear in coming years as a result of its destruction - into a distinctly 'slum-like' place.

This paper is based upon insights gained from a period of volunteer work conducted in the Jungle. Over separate periods in the first half of 2016, and during the final demolition, I worked on the 'build crew' of one of the volunteer groups. This involved going into the Jungle on a daily basis, helping to assemble prefabricated housing ('prefabs') for the inhabitants. I used this time to talk to people (both volunteers and people living in the camp), find out about the how the camp was managed and 'secured' (by talking to the charity leaders), sample the leisure and retail services (regularly eating at the restaurants and in people's shelters), and to engage with the social services being offered by volunteers (such as theatre groups, church services, youth clubs and so on). There was also extensive social media communication with the inhabitants and longer-term volunteers (via Whatsapp and Facebook messages and groups). As I worked

in the camp, it became clear that the data that I was 'gathering' was being coproduced with the other volunteers and the camp inhabitants. To categorise the research as ethnographic or participatory action research would be to deny the complexity in which it was situated, as well as my own activist agenda. Ultimately, by working, living and socialising with as many of the different groups of people as I could (one limitation is that I did not get the chance to speak to anyone from the police, for example), I was able to gain an understanding of how everyday life in the camp unfolded for the inhabitants, the workings of the NGOs and volunteers and the actions of the authorities. In so doing, I was able to extract glimpses of marginalisation, neoliberal oppression - *in situ* in Calais, and from further afield - and experience the brutality of everyday life in the Jungle, some of it first-hand. I did not record conversations, but instead I wrote up observations every evening in a field work diary. As a result, rather than direct quotes, this paper uses vignettes and general observations to colour the theoretical argument; that the Jungle's continual atmosphere of despair (despite brief moments of 'homeliness' and emancipatory creative action) and eventual material destruction, made it very much a product of a global city located a mere 100 miles to the northwest.

The Growth of the Jungle

There are a number of conflicting and inter-related processes that led to the rapid increase in the Jungle's inhabitants. After the closure of a refugee camp in Sangatte in 2002, the transformation from a scattering of temporary, impermanent and transient sites in and around the Nord-Pas-de-Calais area (Millner, 2011) to a more quasi-permanent site of makeshift housing, services and slum urbanism by 2016 was a direct result of the French police's attempts to control the incoming refugees, asylum seekers and migrants who were hoping to reach the UK. While these processes are often global and/or geopolitical in their theorisation, they are far more local in their articulation. In other words, the political and financial decisions that have been made by the networks of neoliberal power brokers to further London's reputation as a 'world leader' of economic globalisation and geopolitical power have intricate and specific results in Calais. For the sake of clarity, I have distilled them into three interlinked processes: securitisation, dispersal and increasing precarity.

Securitisation

The continuing political tensions within 'Fortress Europe' particularly between France and the UK have frayed relationships with these cross-Channel neighbours (Ibrahim and Howarth, 2015). This has been even more acute post-Brexit with the proposed amendments to UK-France border crossing protocols being the subject of the current French presidential elections (Cowburn, 2016). The UK has always "been a leading proponent of changes to the asylum process" (Bloch and Schuster, 2005: 509) and it continues to be one of the more draconian European states when it comes to the efficiency of deportation and the expulsion of 'unwanted' bodies' (Iordanova, 2008). The rise of David Cameron's Conservatism, which has been carried forward by his successor Theresa May, has included a determination to loosen the UK's relationship with the EU (Brexit or otherwise) and further intensify and tighten the border controls between France and the UK. In November 2015, when she was still Home Secretary, Theresa May and her French counterpart Bernard Cazeneuve signed a 'cooperation agreement' (Anon, 2015) that saw £15 million of funds from the UK being diverted to strengthen the police presence in Calais around the refugee camps, as well as to build more fences and walls around the ferry and rail terminals. In March 2016, Cameron announced an "additional £17 million in priority security infrastructure in Calais to assist the work of the French police". And again, just before the clearance in October 2016, the UK Home Secretary, Amber

Rudd, delivered a speech to Westminster in which she stated that up to £36 million would be spent on securing the border between France and the UK. Additionally, in July of that year, the UK government advertised an £80 million contract for a private security firm to conduct “security services to support its operational activities in the ports of Calais, Dunkerque and Coquelles in Northern France” (Ted, 2016: n.p.). The increase of the Jungle has catalysed a great deal of this spending, but it is clear that there is a broader policy of intense border securitisation emanating from the decision-makers in Westminster.

During my time in the Jungle, the most observable and formidable form of securitisation was the presence of heavily armed police personnel patrolling the borders of the camp and the main arterial roads going in and out - they would often stop and search vans and lorries that they suspected of bringing in provisions or building materials. However, on top of the highly visible police, a host of other agents were involved in the ‘management’ of the camp, from local judges to the mayor of Calais, from local NGOs to judges and personnel from the national home office – together making up the *‘préfecture’*; and they all received funds from the UK government. Specifically, the money went towards buying weaponry for the French police, providing legal support to local politicians, building fences and walls along the motorway and paying for extra police shifts (Anon., 2016; Ted, 2016).

With his desire to redress the UK’s relationship with the EU before the Brexit referendum, Cameron had focused on the restriction of movement across borders for migrants and asylum seekers, as well as discussions around the limit to the amount of welfare they would be able to claim if they made it to the UK. In a post-Brexit political landscape, the new Prime Minister Theresa May, has continued to tinker with policies that are intensifying the border. For instance, the government has (so far) refused to let unaccompanied children into the UK, despite the fact that a vote in Westminster aiming to keep them out ended up being overturned under intense public pressure in May 2016. Furthermore, in September 2016, £2 million of UK money was spent building the so-called ‘Great Wall of Calais’, a stretch of 13-foot high concrete that separates the area where the Jungle was from the adjacent motorway. Despite the clearance of the October 2016, the erection of the fence continued, and it was finished in December 2016. The permanence of a physical barrier despite the Jungle’s clearance, and the increasingly large sums of UK money on securitisation is an indication of how much political will there is to sure up the border and protect the smooth transport of goods and services that swell London’s economy. All the while, the London-based media narratives have provided the justifying rhetoric by espousing dehumanising and xenophobic narratives towards those in the Jungle, which only served to reinforce the ‘otherness’ and inhumanity of the Jungle’s inhabitants (Ibrahim and Howarth, 2015)².

The physical and political intensification of these border controls was evident in my visits to the Jungle. When driving off the ferry or the train, I was immediately directed onto the main road, with the fences immediately looming up either side. Built in white mesh and around 6 meters tall, the fences are laced with razor wire. Alongside the stretch of motorway that bordered the Jungle camp, police vans lined up bumper to bumper. With their blue lights flashing, they were sometimes 25 strong, forming another highly visible and securitised barrier to the main arterial routes of the transportation terminals. On the main roads into the camp, police barricades were established, sporting highly militarised aesthetics: black armour plated shoulder pads, heavy duty helmets, tear gas cannons strapped over their shoulders, pistols fastened to their thighs.

² See Elgot and Taylor (2015) and Mason and Perraudin (2016) for a few of the more moderate phrases used in the UK press.

Driving through the border points at the ferry terminals on both sides, my car was thoroughly searched, and I was questioned about where I was going. When I would explain that I was going to the Jungle to volunteer, I was subject to further questions about exactly what I was doing, and which charity I was attached to. This was a process that many of the other volunteers with whom I spoke had experienced, particularly those driving vans, or those whose physical appearance was non-Caucasian. This intense tightening of the border created a bottleneck through which fewer and fewer refugees and asylum seekers were able to pass, and hence led to the growth of the Jungle.

Dispersal

Secondly, the processes that are forcing people to 'disperse' from the Middle East have only increased over the past few years. The UK government's vote in the House in December 2015 to carry out air strikes in Syria was one of the latest political moves that served to increase the precarity of civilians in one of the already most volatile areas in the world. In July 2016, the Chilcot Report detailed how over a decade earlier in 2003, the UK government entered the Iraq War based on extremely flimsy military intelligence, and it critiqued the fact that relevant Whitehall departments were unprepared for the post-invasion occupation, creating the conditions for a large power vacuum in the region (Ali, 2016). This exacerbated the 'permawar' in Middle Eastern countries (Graham, 2004), which has only intensified and spread since, pushing people out of the area and into Europe, via perilous and often fatal boat journeys across the Mediterranean Sea. The rise of ISIS (which has itself been argued to be a relational product of the West's continued 'war on terror' [see Kundnani, 2014]) and the violence that they have inflicted towards a number of particular ethnic and religious groups has also precipitated the departure of millions of anguished people from the region.

The materials of warfare, the weaponry, military strategy and the legal frameworks for justifying the war (so called 'lawfare' [Jones, 2016]) are intertwined with the financialised landscapes into what is now described as the 'military-industrial' complex. The economic justifications for an arms industry that creates jobs, economic growth and maintains world peace are often part of the narrative from government officials. And like any other major international industry, because London is a global city and hub of financial globalisation, it is one of the nerve centres of the military-industrial complex. To illustrate this, one need only to point to the Canary Wharf-based institutions, such as HSBC, that have been implicated in the cluster-bomb funding controversy of 2010 (Taylor, 2011). Many UK arms manufacturers have their headquarters in London, such as BAE Systems, but there are also many international law professionals that have provided the legal justification for the UK government to undertake military operations, and who are also based in London (Jones, 2016). Of course, the global landscape of finance, the arms industry and international law firms connect the world's global cities in a planetary network of capitalist production (Taylor, 2004). New York, Paris, Frankfurt, Moscow and other global cities around the world are equally complicit in the perpetuation of the 'permanent war economy' (Jones and Smith, 2015) and the subsequent displacement of millions of people. However, London's concentration of military-focused politico-economic practices is particularly acute given the intense ties, both geographical and personal, between the government and industry (Merrifield, 2014). A telling example of this is the Defence Security and Equipment International exhibition (DSEI), which is held every two years and is the world's largest arms industry fair: it is held at the London Royal Docks³. London's desire to be a global financial,

³ In the year's when the exhibition does not take place the Farnborough Air Show which is held, and it is the second largest defence trade exhibition. Farnborough is a small military town about 25 minutes by train from

legal and service-providing hub therefore is highly culpable in the continuing war in the Middle East.

I spoke to several young men who had fled across Europe as a result of the violence perpetuated against their families. One in particular spoke of how he witnessed his parents and older brother killed in an explosion at his home in Singar, Iraq. Of course, this is not a unique story, and several other young men recounted the horrors of ISIS' brutal regime and their desperation to escape, often resorting to paying large amounts to local people traffickers to get them to Europe. These factors of dispersal only increase the number of people shunting up against the increasingly solid borders to the UK, swelling the need for more 'durable' accommodation, hence the perpetuation and spread of the Jungle in the final years before its violent demolition.

Increasing Precarity

Like many other slums around the world, inhabitants are drawn by the perceived work opportunities in 'the big city', and the draw of London has been the most important factor in the Jungle's existence. The main reason for which it has come to exist - and the reason why many people are staying in Calais even after its demolition - is because people are looking to get to the UK, with London the overwhelmingly preferred option (exemplified by the graffiti in Figure 2). Many have either refused asylum or the offer of work and shelter in France, Germany or any of the other states they have passed through, precisely because they want to be reunited with friends or family living in the UK. However, on top of the obvious physical barrier of the Channel, an additional legal barrier exists as a consequence of Britain not belonging to the passport-free Schengen zone. As a result, the final border between France and the UK becomes possibly the biggest obstacle in an already highly difficult and lengthy journey.

FIGURE 2 ABOUT HERE

'London my dream' painted on an MSF provided tent in the Jungle (Source: Author's photo, Feb 2016)

One of the key socio-economic conditions of global city formation is the polarization of work into super-rich financial elites and a chronically low-paid and precarious underclass of casual labourers (Mollenkopf and Castells, 1991; Sassen, 2001; Massey, 2007). In London, the casualisation of work has accelerated due to the onset of neoliberal labour technologies such as zero hour contracts, increased outsourcing to freelancers, employment agencies and project-based temporary work (Mould et al., 2014). This has meant a wider spread of employment opportunities, but all at much lower pay and with less secure and formal working arrangements. These jobs are attractive to migrant workers, refugees and traffickers as their bureaucratic and 'official' oversights are very low or non-existent, effectively annihilating the barriers to entry. However, the result is exploitation, racism and institutional prejudice (McDowell, 2009; Dyer et al., 2015).

The socio-political fabric of cities is also an important factor in the destination of migrants and asylum seekers (see Schiller and Çağlar, 2009). London's multiculturalism and ethnic diversity are also major contributing factors which explain the attempts to reach the city, either as

London Waterloo, and it is arguably part of the Global City Region that is London and the wider South East of England.

somewhere to settle, or as a base to 'acclimatise' to life in the UK before moving on to another city or region. Work on migration studies in relation to urbanisation has articulated the tensions that exist in areas of high immigration, which often realise cultural conflicts and political marginalisation. For example, Millington (2012: 7) has argued that the 'outer-city' is often the subject of political disinvestment which is "emerging as [an] unlikely meeting points for 'key workers', immigrants seeking access to the city". Focusing on Southend as a fringe 'outer-city' of London, he articulates how such 'meeting points' go on to be characterised by "racist narratives... and violence" toward immigrants (*ibid.*: 16). Even though this is not always the case, the inward migration of people from the Jungle to London can thus be met with some resistance. The media 'furore' around the 14 children that arrived in Croydon from the Jungle in October 2016, immediately prior to the final demolition, is a striking example of this. Several commentators made claims that the youths appeared to be older than they stated and that they were likely to be like adults (see, see Dominiczak and Swinford, 2016). Notwithstanding the miniscule numbers involved and the racist overtures of such claims, it highlights how the inward migration of unwanted and unnamed bodies into the social fabric of the global city is often met with resistance, xenophobia and oppression.

These three inter-related processes of securitisation, dispersal and increasing precarity go some way to explaining the 'push' factors displacing people from the war-torn areas of the Middle East, the 'pull' factors of London's precarious and informal labour market, and the securitisation of the borders. Together, they resulted in the production of the Jungle that was subsequently depicted in the world media throughout 2015 and 2016. These processes also had particularly *violent* consequences that exacerbated the Jungle as a space that was interstitial, precarious and experimental⁴. But it was also a space in which the combination of local and London-based actors deepened the vulnerability of inhabitants; a vulnerability that continues as they look to find alternative shelter now that the Jungle, their one-time home, has been so violently demolished.

Violence of the Jungle

What follows are some notes that I typed up after a particular encounter on the morning of January 29th, 2016:

I paced up the 'main street' of the Jungle carefully, my camera clutched in my hand as I navigate the large mud puddles. The air is wet and cold, but windy enough to remove the perma-sillage of human waste from my nostrils. It's roughly 10am, and the road is relatively deserted, certainly nowhere near as bustling as it is later in the afternoon and early evenings. Some of the refugees stride over mud to reach a standpipe, some huddle into their jackets as they pace aimlessly around. I pass a MSF worker and a lorry driver, arguing about where to deposit a skip. Once I pass beyond their argumentative din, I'm accosted by a young man, "hello my friend" as he grabs my hand to shake it. My immediate thought is to try and brush him off, but soon a second man comes up to me, brandishing one of the construction knives that I had used previously on the builds. He presses the blade to my stomach, "phone, phone" the knife-wielder says calmly. The other assailant pats my coat pockets. My eyes fixed on the knife, all I can utter is "no phone, no phone", and fumble in my jean pockets for some Euro notes I knew I had; €50 in total. I hand them over, and they disperse. I breathe. I continue

⁴ Drawing on Butler's (2006) broad conceptualisation of violence as a constant 'derealisation' of the Other, the Jungle is "interminably spectral" (*ibid.*: 33-34), in that for the *préfecture* and other 'managers', the refugees are neither alive nor dead, they are unnamed bodies, unstable and precarious. Violence therefore, according to Butler, is the continual act of making a subject precarious, of enacting precarity.

walking up the road, away from my parked car. I bemoan my bad luck, but feel grateful I'd held onto my DSLR camera and my phone. I carry on my task of photographing the container housing. On the way back, I notice the MSF worker banking the truck into the spot where she wants to skip to be, and as I look, the same men accoster me again. This time, they look more determined, although somehow skittish. One man grabs me, but I am able to continue my direction, pulling his rather slender frame along as I try to make my way back to my car, a mere 60m-dash away around the corner. The man with the knife again thrusts the knife toward me, but clearly being careful not to make contact. I had wedged my phone in the breast coat pocket, and my SLR into the zipped compartment inside the coat. The men pad my jean pockets, "phone, phone". I start my rebuttal, but this time, realising I had no more cash to offer, my tone was clearly stooped in panic. The men sense my diminishing guard, and press harder with the knife against my stomach. I recoil, able to resist their grips on my shoulders, but they continue to press. While my eyes were fixated on the knife, I sensed their gaze flitting from me to what was going on around them. They suddenly fall back, for reasons I do not know (although a car coming down the road surely the culprit). I don't wait to find out, and sprint (as much as you can in wellington boots across a quagmire) toward my car, bundle in and speed off, only to catch a glimpse of the attackers in my rear view mirror, banging on the boot. I accelerate away, leaving them to vanish in my mirror, as I make my way on the motorway slip road.

Muggings happen in cities all over the world every day and my encounter with these people was very mild compared to the horrific and violent encounters that can happen daily in urban settings. What it exemplifies is the desperation of the inhabitants of the Jungle, which only increased as the site became more crowded and unstable in the run up to its demolition in October 2016. Looking back, the young men (possibly children) who accosted me seemed to be constantly checking over their shoulders and looking around anxiously. I recounted this story to some of the longer-term volunteers, who said that muggings like this were rather uncommon. In large part, this is because such opportunists fully realised that if other more 'senior' inhabitants of the camp became aware that they had mugged visitors to the Jungle, they would have been severely punished (I was told that residents did not steal from volunteers – it was possibly because those in question had believed me to be a journalist that I was targeted on this occasion). When victims have reported crimes to the police, the response was usually swift and often violent, giving the police an excuse to act in order to be seen doing something. As a result, even a minor theft was always deemed a justifiable reason to intervene. Needless to say that as I was aware of this fact, I did not report the events of the day to the police.

The violence that I experienced, and the far more brutal and oppressive kind that the police have been all too eager to enact, was part of everyday life in the Jungle (see also Davies and Isakjee [2015]). By being both physically and legally violent, the London-financed *préfecture* was *enforcing* precarity in what was no doubt a deliberate technology of instability (Butler, 2006). The Jungle's multi-scalar precariousness and non-status as an unofficial camp makes it an urban space for which to 'test' methods of societal control and enforcement. Despite not being an official 'camp', the Jungle did in some part display what Minca (2015) has called 'camp geographies'. He notes that refugee camps are 'biopolitical laboratories', used as experimental political technologies of biometrics, surveillance and legal tenure. The experiments that take place in the vast number of camps across the world (detention, refugee, concentration, military and so on) influence global processes of mobility and control and Minca argues that "we are all indeed affected by the presence of camps" (2015: 80). He uses the example of how the biopolitical experimental of prisoners in Guantanamo Bay brought the

aesthetics and sensibilities of the concentration camp 'back home', specifically into the increased securitisation practices in transportation terminals. Nevertheless, while some of these camps are indeed spaces of experimentation, others can also be spaces of home, however precarious that home may be. When researching Palestinian camps in Lebanon, Ramadan (2013: 74) argues that;

"Assemblage[s] of buildings, homes, people, institutions, social relations and practices that have grown up from a gathering of destitute refugees sheltering in tents. The camps are spaces in which social formations from Palestine are reassembled and sustained in exile, and in which cultures and traditions from Palestine are recreated and performed".

He argues that these camps are "like a slum or shanty town" (*ibid.*: 73) because of their liminality and semi-formality. However, rather than being 'like' a slum, the Jungle *is* a slum precisely because such 'liminality' becomes an intrinsic consequence of London's neoliberal urbanism, as well as the broader processes of inter-continental migratory patterns. There were multiple instances of biopolitical control, but despite this oppression, more gentile spaces of home were 'sustained in exile' (*ibid.*; see also Mould [2017]). The 'controlling' processes often had more specific connotations with London's urbanisms that were at the same time slum-like, but also stemming from circulatory aesthetics of contemporary neoliberal urban imaginaries. Nowhere was this more evident than through the imposition by the French government of standardised and highly recognisable white shipping containers as living modules for residents (see Figure 3).

FIGURE 3 ABOUT HERE

The white container living quarters within the Jungle (Source: Author's photo, Feb 2016)

The whitewashed façades of the containers, wired perimeter fence(s), patrolling security guards with attack dogs and overtly detention camp aesthetics dominated the visual landscape of the Jungle (indeed, they are the only remainders of the Jungle on the site today – perhaps ominously maintained for further use in the future). Information about how these were assigned to residents was near-impossible to obtain from the *préfecture*, but to those Jungle inhabitants who did get to live in them, containers did offer warm, clean and semi-permanent shelter. What is known is that in order to gain access to these structures, residents had to provide biometric data in the form of a palm print. The people with whom I spoke were highly suspicious of these arrangements, regarding them as a form of asylum databasing technique by stealth, and they were worried that these could potentially hinder their chances of gaining legal entry in the UK.

It has been argued that the use of containers more broadly is symbolically charged (Klose, 2015). Indeed, after deindustrialisation, containers have been used in the political imaginary as technologies of concealment and temporariness. One might add that they have also become synonymous with the prevailing neoliberal epoch of hyper-mobility of goods and people. The housing of the inhabitants in containers in the Jungle therefore created an imaginary that feeds into a mass-media narrative. A narrative that positioned these structures as only a temporary part of the landscape, and that the people they contained would soon be moved elsewhere (which, of course, turned out to be the case). Indeed, as Klose (2015: 308) notes, containers evoke the narrative of "I'll be gone soon! Don't worry, this is just a temporary installation".

The container aesthetic and its alignment with new forms of temporary urbanism have roots in London. The Boxpark shopping mall in Shoreditch is credited with being one of the first 'pop-up' malls (Mould, 2015; Harris, 2015) to use containers as a temporary fix in the post-recessionary London urban landscape. Since then, the container as a temporary use in housing, office space and retail has exploded all over the world. As a result, it was possible to catch a glimpse of the spectre of London's creative urbanism over the Jungle's aesthetics, but in ways that denoted the industrialised storage of unrecognised people (Dyer, 2016), rather than an innovative commercialised venture.

In addition to physical violence, the legal infrastructure of the *préfecture* (again, funded largely by the UK Home Office funds; see Anon [2016]) enacted precarity through the local court in the city of Lille. On many occasions, cases were heard that pertained to site clearances, the legality of the shops in the Jungle and the fate of the children living there. Many of the clearances - including the final one - were decided upon in this court, and these were often labelled as 'humanitarian clearances'. However, these were sadly often anything but humanitarian, and what were supposed to be 'orderly demolitions' often escalated into violent clashes and arson attacks. Ultimately, the London-financed legal structure kept the inhabitants in a state of fear and instability with these sporadic clearances, forcing them ultimately to accept the alternative living arrangements in the containers, or deportation to other camps elsewhere in Europe after the final demolition in October 2016.

One of the first major legal procedures was to the decision to create a buffer zone between the camp and the motorway, which was initiated shortly before my visit to the site in January 2016, and which continued while I was there (see Figure 4).

FIGURE 4 ABOUT HERE

Two policemen walk across the newly created 'buffer zone' between the camp and the motorway (Source: Author's photo, Jan 2016)

The court decided that due to the increased attempts by camp inhabitants to gain access to UK-bound vehicles on the motorway by scaling the fences, they would impose a 100-metre buffer zone between the motorway's edge and the camp. In effect, they created a form of 'no man's land', which at its most visceral is a "violent encounter of the human body with the materialities of the earth" (Lesham and Pinkerton, 2015: 50). This was made all the more evident through the use of large construction machinery that reengineered the entire landscape. After evicting all who were resident in this zone, the authorities proceeded to 'flatten' the land, creating a vantage point that allowed for an increased panoptic vision of the site and its residents. Looking at the engineered vista in Figure 5 (the photo was taken atop the large embankments that borders the Jungle created by the buffer zone), it is easy to see how it facilitated the police's ability to spot people leaving the Jungle and attempting to get access to the motorway (on the right of the picture). This 'violent encounter' between the human body and the material of the earth created an interstitial zone, one that encircled almost the entire camp, ensnaring people and thereby exacerbating the precarity of the site.

FIGURE 5 ABOUT HERE

A lone child wonders across the buffer zone (Source: Author's photo, March 2016)

Before creating this no man's land, the *préfecture* gave people approximately four days notice in order to move any shelters or structures that they were occupying within this newly established 'buffer zone'. In a scramble to move shelters, many of the volunteer and inhabitant groups ceased their daily activities and set about moving shelters and prefabs to alternative areas of the Jungle *en masse*. Lorries, low-loading vans, carts, forklift trucks and teams of people lifting were all used to transport assembled prefabs across the camp. Without the collective mobilisation of the refugees and the volunteers, bulldozers and diggers would have destroyed these shelters, which would have no doubt incurred further violent clashes with the police. Moreover, according to the court's decision, three particular structures of significant social value for the residents were to remain untouched during the enforcement of the buffer zone: a church, a mosque and a school. These institutions, along with other 'social services' that included a theatre, a shelter for women and children, a youth club, and even a boxing gym, formed the heart of the 'little city' (a title used by some of the inhabitants that I worked with when referring to the Jungle). These, along with other entrepreneurial activities such as shops, restaurants, hot showers and barber shops, provided an atmosphere of urbanity to the Jungle that gave people a political constituency (Ramadan, 2013) within the site – this may indeed have been fragile, but it offered glimpses of normality. However, without warning and notwithstanding the promises, during that first major clearance in January, the church and the mosque were bulldozed. In March, during another large clearance, the hut that provided legal services and asylum advice was demolished. This left the larger church isolated so was subsequently dismantled. Such seemingly indiscriminate violence toward important home-making institutions can be seen as yet another system of the Jungle's control by London-financed infrastructures of oppression. Refusing the inhabitants structures that pertain to a more 'homely' sense of place is a domicidal strategy (Porteous and Smith, 2001; Nowicki, 2014), one that constantly maintained a state of vulnerability for the inhabitants of the Jungle, and one that is befitting of the broader relationship between a major urban centre and its slums.

The Jungle: A Slum of London

Studies of the Calais Jungle thus far in the literature have been keen to make reference to what Minca (2015), drawing on the work of Agamben (1998), has called 'camp geographies' (Davies and Isakjee, 2015; Millner, 2011; Rygiel, 2011). The Jungle, as a site of biopolitical violence, can certainly be characterised as a 'state of exception', and arguably "is ... a true political technology, determining the actual practices of citizenship today, and governing motion, governing life in important ways" (Minca, 2015: 81). Seeing how the securitisation of the camp has become normalised within media rhetoric renders these assertions largely accurate. However, to depict the Jungle only as a 'camp' underplays its specific slum-like and distinctly urban characteristics (Ramadan, 2013). There is rich humanitarian work conducted by official NGOs with an army of independent volunteer workers that provided spaces of radical sociality and 'commoning'. They acted as 'safe spaces', at least temporarily safe from the constant oppression and violence enacted by the *préfecture* (Mould, 2017). Camp inhabitants adapted the various services that the volunteers brought in, and even created semi-permanent retail and leisure facilities. They brought their own unique skills too, combining them with the material provisions from the volunteers and donations to create their own services, activities and instances of urbanity (see Ramadan, 2013). For example, the London-based 'Good Chance Theatre' was erected in Calais and provided theatrical, performance and artistic pursuits for the refugees (BBC, 2016a). In the Jungle, this performance space provided a creative outlet for the inhabitants, with music, dance and theatre performed daily, often political in their content, with particular critique toward Westminster, UK politicians and corporations. In June 2016, this

theatre was dismantled and exhibited as part of the South Bank Centre's Festival of Love program (see Figure 6), bringing (or perhaps co-opting?) the slum aesthetics of the Jungle, particularly its subversively creative aspects, back into the neoliberal heartland of London's creative infrastructure.

FIGURE 6 ABOUT HERE

The Good Chance Theatre once in the Jungle, re-erected at London South Bank's for the 'Festival of Love' (Source: Author's photo, July 2016)

Massey's (2007) poignant question from the introduction of this paper needs to be asked once more: Where exactly does London end, if it does at all? As a global city it continues its dominance as a centre of economic power through the intensification of its international financialised practices. Where does it end? In the era of planetary urbanisation (Brenner and Schmidt, 2014), London has no 'end', only sites of marginality, lack, precariousness and informality that are systematically created and maintained through London's part in global politico-economic processes. It is impossible to isolate London from the boarder suite of planetary urbanisation processes neoliberal or otherwise. As I have argued elsewhere (Mould, 2016; see also Wachsmuth, 2014), it is ontologically impossible to isolate the concept of the city from broader suite of planetary urbanisation processes, so to think of the city of 'London' as a coherent whole that is solely responsible for the atrocities of the Jungle would be counter to this theoretical position. Instead, this paper has explored the empirical realities of how the urbanisation processes that constitute London's 'global city-ness' also constitute slum-like spaces of marginality, biopolitical experimentation, violence, informal entrepreneurialism, precarity and subversive creativity. Far from being overused and devoid of analytical meaning (a la Gilbert, 2007), the term 'slum' has the ability to provide a "visibility for certain histories and the landscapes of politics" (Rao, 2006: 228). The Jungle (and whatever will take its place in the coming years) was a slum of London because, as this paper has contended, they were woven together historically, politically, socially, culturally and economically. As long as London continues to be one of the primary and most efficient coagulations of neoliberal planetary urban processes within a broader geopolitical framework of European instability and Middle Eastern permawar, there will always be a site in Northern France that acts as the 'dumping ground' for un-named and unwanted bodies. Sangatte, the Jungle and whatever socio-spatial patterns eventually replace it: there will always be a site of oppression and structural violence. It will always be the site of London's slum.

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FIGURES:



Figure 1: "London Calling" – Banksy's graffiti on the entrance to the Jungle (source: author's photo)



Figure 2: "London my dream" graffiti on a tent in the Jungle (source: author's photo)



Figure 3: The white living containers, and their manicured landscaping sit in contrast to the rest of the Jungle (source: author's photo)



Figure 4: The construction of the 'buffer zone' between the camp and the motorway (source: author's photo)



Figure 5: A child traverses the buffer zone (Source: Authors photo)



Figure 6: The Good Chance Dome Theatre at the London's South Bank Centre (Source: Author's photo)