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## **SOCIAL DEATH: THE (WHITE) RACIAL FRAMING OF THE CALAIS 'JUNGLE' AND 'ILLEGAL' MIGRANTS IN THE BRITISH TABLOIDS AND RIGHT-WING PRESS.**

**-MONISH BHATIA**

In the week commencing 24<sup>th</sup> October 2016, demolition of the Calais 'jungle' camp was officially initiated. The workers surrounded by the armed riot police<sup>1</sup>, tore down the wooden shacks using 'sledgehammers and chainsaws'; bulldozers moved in later during the week, to fully clear out the 'ramshackle shantytown' (*Mirror*). The tabloid press in Britain pursued the subject intensely and obsessively. They reported 'furious refugees' protested against demolition (*The Sun*), set camp on fire (*Telegraph*) and 'fought' a 'pitched battle' with police - terming it 'The battle of Calais' (*Daily Mail*). The 'jungle' camp was 'finally destroyed' (*Daily Mail*), which was portrayed as a victory over 'invaders', 'illegals', transgressors and security 'threats', who wanted to bring misery and instability to 'soft touch' Britain (*The Sun*; *Daily Mail*).

Immediately after the demolition, the French prefect of Pas-de-Calais Fabienne Buccio released a statement outlining that it is a 'mission accomplished' and 'there are no migrants in the camp'— news largely welcomed by the right-wing and tabloid press. However, this was neither the beginning nor the end.

In the weeks and months leading to the demolition, media cranked up the coverage of Calais, with racism inherent in the reporting. The stories of police violence and state sanctioned brutality became a regular feature. The tabloids and right-wing press published articles and images of refugee torment, mostly blaming them for their own pain, suffering and deaths. The articles legitimised policing and border control tactics, deploying the language of war, victory and defeat, and further dehumanising, demonising and 'othering' refugees. The 'jungle' was portrayed as a hyper-criminogenic space and 'bandit country'. This was accompanied by images of men (of colour) in balaclavas and faces covered with mask/scarf, who were waiting to unleash violence on the innocent white people and hardworking truck drivers (*The Sun*). The media constructed it not only as a lost territory, but also as a territory lost to the foreign vagabonds and invaders, who had unlawfully taken over a civilised and

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<sup>1</sup> See the video here: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/10/25/calais-jungle-demolition-france-to-begin-dismantling-migrant-camp/>

peaceful French coastal town. The ‘jungle’ became associated with ‘illegal’ migration and ‘bogus’ refugee seekers – a place where blacks, Arabs and men from the Muslim world exerted their dominance and ‘gang’ rule, and behaved in an uncivilised, pathologically lawless and animalistic manner. The images presented alongside these stories often projected total disorder, in turn re-asserting the need for even tougher policing and border control measures, and further demands to immobilise, and discard these undesirable bodies and protect the nation. By portraying (unprotected, vulnerable and at-risk) people of colour in this manner, media circulated, reproduced and maintained the dominant racial frame.

In the book *White Racial Frames*, Feagin (2013: 10) conducts an historical analysis to argue the ways in which white society has adopted frames, by combining its “*beliefs aspect (racial stereotypes and ideologies), integrating cognitive elements (racial interpretations and narratives), visual and auditory elements (racialised images), a “feelings” aspect (racialised emotions), and inclination to action (to discriminate) and strong positive orientation to whites and whiteness (a pro-white frame)*”. The racial frame is an *overarching worldview, encompassing important racial ideas, terms, images, emotions, and interpretations*” (2013:3). The newspapers and other print media play a role in perpetuating racist framing and circulating frames to the white society (Feagin, 2013). They have used this frame to give its readers a tool to understand, interpret and make sense of the situation, and also to generate impact. The frame by default gives a strong negative orientation to the racially ‘othered’. The criminality image is constantly reinforced, dramatising the crimes committed by the racial ‘other’ and thus strengthening and maintaining the racial frame.

The journalists shape the news reporting within a given frame reference, according to a latent structure of meaning and stimulation of public to adopt these frames from the journalists’ point of view (McQuail, 2000: 495). The use of certain frames (by newspapers and white elites) entails calling public attention to selected matters while ignoring others (Iyengar and Kinder, 1987). When it comes to the reporting of Calais and refugees, tabloids and right-wing newspapers have used a dominant ‘illegal’

migration frame<sup>2</sup>. This particular frame is powerful and it criminalises racialised bodies, and transforms the way people view, feel, believe and think about those seeking refugee protection.

In this chapter, I will analyse the racialised construction of the ‘jungle’ and its inhabitants, and manner in which the ‘illegal’ and ‘criminal’ racial framing is used and strategically deployed to legitimise violence against refuge seekers, deny their suffering, their personhood and distance them from humanitarian discourses. The chapter argues that racial framing and legitimisation of state violence and border control practices have produced a social death of refuge seekers in Calais.

### **THE RACIALISED OUTSIDER AND THE CALAIS ‘JUNGLE’**

Calais is a port town and major point of transit, tucked in the North of France, around 20.7 miles away from Dover in Britain, separated by the English Channel (See Image 1). In May 1994, the Channel Tunnel opened, connecting Britain with France and continental Europe. The ambition to make land transport for travel and trade expeditious and efficient finally became a reality. A staggering 366 million people have passed through this transport network - with around 21 million passengers in 2015 alone (57,000 passengers daily) and the rail shuttle carried more than 2.5 million cars and coaches, and 1.5 million trucks (EuroTunnel Webpage<sup>3</sup>). Similarly, Dover-Calais and Dover-Dunkirk remained two of the busiest short ferry routes, carrying roughly 9.8 million and 3.2 million passengers respectively (Department of Transport, 2016). Since Britain is part of the European Union<sup>4</sup>, British citizens can travel freely without restrictions across the Channel into Europe and vice versa (i.e. EU nationals do not require an entry permit or visa to enter Britain). However, unlike most EU countries, Britain is not a signatory to the Schengen Agreement<sup>5</sup> and retains full control of its borders (Peers, 2015). Those traveling to Britain go through immigration and legal document checks, and ‘third-country’ nationals need to seek British visa/entry clearance prior to arriving in the country, and their papers are scrutinised by the authorities at border. While there was a liberalisation of free movement for the

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<sup>2</sup> Even when word ‘illegal’ is not used in the articles, the illegal frame is still operative and illegality of migrants is implied.

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.eurotunnelgroup.com/uk/the-channel-tunnel/>

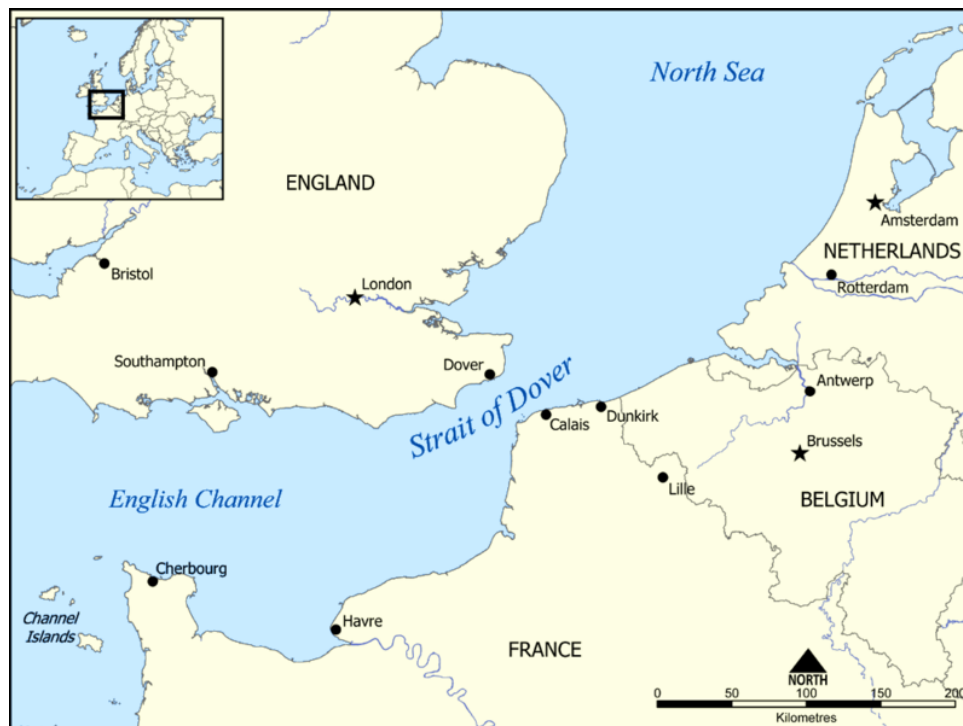
<sup>4</sup> On 24<sup>th</sup> June 2016, Britain voted to leave the European Union (termed as Brexit). This could potentially result in re-negotiating the current freedom of movement agreement set in place.

<sup>5</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/borders-and-visas/schengen\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/borders-and-visas/schengen_en)

EU nationals – this was rather different for the ‘third country’/former colonial subjects seeking refuge, who were confronted with increasingly restrictive and control oriented approaches (also see Kostakopoulou, 2000; Huysmans, 2006).

This complicates the situation at Calais (part of the Schengen zone), which is treated merely as a transit point by undocumented refugee seekers (non-Europeans, ‘non-white’, and third-country nationals) seeking to enter Britain (not part of the Schengen zone). Once in Britain, people have the right to seek asylum, and cannot be removed until final decision on their application has been reached. In addition, over the years, media circulated stories of migrants going underground and ‘living’ ‘illegally’, away from the official radar, and have racially framed them as ‘threats’ (*Daily Mail*, 2014). Therefore, the port of Calais turned into a contradictory space, where desire to retain freedom of movement was contrasted with a racialised securitisation agenda to keep the ‘other’ out. The British government consistently tried to implement a whole host of strategies to block ‘third-country’ subjects from entering – and this shaped the borders of Calais, as explained below.

*Image 1: Geography of Calais and Dover*



In 2003, the British and French governments signed the Le Touquet Treaty, a bilateral agreement, which established juxtaposed immigration controls. As per the agreement,

travellers are required to clear immigration checks in the country of departure (as opposed to arrival). The aim was clear from the outset – exclusion of people seeking asylum. The agreement made it possible for the UK Border Force to establish its operations in Calais, send more officers and direct greater resources towards border policing on the French side. These escalating measures were implemented to make sure that only those individuals who are “eligible” to travel (freely) could enter the country, and thereby detect/block all the unwanted, undocumented, ‘illegal’ and undeserving ‘third-country’ nationals from entering the Great Britain. Despite its relevance in the control of immigration, mention of the Le Touquet agreement in newspapers was extremely low until 2015 – when it suddenly grabbed British press attention in the months leading to the EU in/out referendum. This was especially so after Nicolas Sarkozy (former French President) and Xavier Bertrand (current President of the region Hauts-de-France, which Calais is part of) made a series of statements on moving asylum processing and border checks from France to England.

The tabloids and right-wing press immediately turned their focus on the ‘dangers’ of such a move, which could potentially result in a ‘jungle’ camp shifting from Calais to Dover, and “*raising the spectre of a migrant flood into the UK*” (*Express*, 25<sup>th</sup> Feb 2016). As the Brexit campaign and European refugee ‘crisis’ intensified, along with an increase in ‘terrorist’ attacks across Europe (explained later), the news articles on the Le Touquet Treaty<sup>6</sup> (published between January 2016 and June 2016) continued to dramatise spatial tensions, the supposed need for maintaining strong controls and protecting sovereignty. They continued to demand the exclusion of ‘illegals’ and undesirables from the nation state – a racial framing which has occurred throughout post/colonial history (see Smith, 1994; Webber, 1996; Solomos, 2003; Schuster and Solomos, 1999; Smith and Marmo, 2014).

The events that took place prior to/after the Le Touquet Treaty coming into existence are equally significant in understanding how Calais turned from merely a harbour into contested *borderlands* – i.e. zones around and at the periphery of borders in which border, surveillance and migration regimes, all become important elements of spatial

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<sup>6</sup> This happened regardless of the fact that, Le Touquet was not a European Treaty, but rather a bilateral agreement between two countries, and had no direct relevance to Britain’s exit from the European Union.

governance and control (Schwenken, 2014: 171). More crucially, it is important to analyse the ways in which tabloid and right-wing press shaped and re-shaped these borderlands, by renewing and maintaining the racial frames, and circulating criminalised discourses of ‘illegal’ migration, crime and deviance, identity and belonging, inclusion and exclusion, segregation and banishment (also see Gilroy, 2013). After all, such racial frames and discourses play a critical role in informing and shaping public debates about and consciousness of the racialised politics of immigration and crime (Howarth and Ibrahim, 2015; Greenslade, 2004; Hainmueller and Hopkins, 2014; van Dijk, 1983), and disseminate racist ideologies and hatred (Hartmann and Husband, 1974; van Dijk, 2015).

Around two decades ago in the winter of 1998/1999, a number of Kosovan refugees, fleeing war, arrived in Calais in the hope of seeking safety in Britain. In response to their visible plight, the Sangatte camp opened and was operated by the French Red Cross. It offered basic facilities, a roof over the head and meals twice a day. Over the three-year period, the camp population increased from 209 to 1600. Iraqi Kurds and Afghans joined the Kosovans, as the situation in their home countries turned unsafe. The overwhelming goal of the majority was to reach Britain, due to its perceived ‘favourable’ and ‘humanitarian’ asylum regime (Schuster, 2002). Initially, the camp received little attention and was irrelevant to the British press and politicians, as it was a matter for the French and located on their soil. However, things changed in the lead up to the 2001 general elections.

Due to increase in the clandestine attempts made by refugee seekers to enter Britain, the Sangatte camp became of immense interest to the tabloid press. In a bid to produce hysterical, fear and impact-generating articles, journalists often ‘smuggled’ themselves in to Britain and then reported about the people smugglers, crime and lax border controls, producing a ‘crisis’, which according to them was ignored by the British politicians (Schuster, 2002). The newspapers demanded strengthening of Britain’s borders and sending British troops to patrol the French coast, with headlines such as, ‘Stop the invasion’; ‘We can't take any more asylum seekers’; ‘Asylum invasion reaches 12,000 a month’; ‘Asylum: we're being invaded’; and ‘Refugees, run for your life’ (Schuster, 2002:8). The tabloids also deployed the terminology of natural disasters, calamities and war, to project Britain as “victim” of ‘floods’,

‘invasions’ and ‘tidal waves’ of asylum seekers (Philo and Beattie, 1999). According to a Cultural Studies scholar Sara Ahmed (2004:122) these are “sticky words”, as they create associations between asylum seekers and loss of control, and dirt and sewage. Sticky words work by mobilising fear and/or anxiety of being overwhelmed. Such words construct a nation at an absolute “breaking point” – one that simply cannot cope with the presence of the other, resulting in calls for immediate action to reverse the uncertainty and ‘crisis’.

Under immense pressure from the tabloid press, David Blunkett (Home Secretary 2001-2004) persuaded the French government to close the Sangatte camp (which happened in late 2002; Schuster, 2002). A few months after its closure, the British prime minister and French president signed the bilateral Le Touquet Agreement and introduced juxtaposed border checks. However, such controls did not deter refugees from arriving in Calais and attempting to cross the Channel. At the same time, the press in Britain increasingly turned xenophobic, Islamophobic and anti-immigrant, and waged a zealous negative campaign on ‘bogus’ asylum seekers, tainting public opinion further (Kundnani, 2001). For instance, Lynn and Lea’s (2003) analysis of readers’ letters to newspapers showed that ‘asylum seekers’ by default meant ‘bogus’ asylum seekers and ‘illegals’, while ‘genuine’ refugees were considered as rare and elusive. The very (cold and bureaucratic) term asylum seeker turned pejorative, and regardless of whether tabloid/right-wing press used the words ‘bogus’, the tone of articles indicated that all refuge seekers were ‘bogus’, fraudulent and ‘illegal’.

Those seeking asylum became associated with ‘threats’ to security and stability of the country, with their presence portrayed as likely to cause a decay of the social fabric. The tabloids and political figures promoting such views used the racial differences of people arriving in Britain (to ramp up the anti-immigration agenda and introduce range of restrictionist policies), and in the case of those seeking asylum, it was their ‘non whiteness’ (Said, 1985; Lynn and Lea, 2003). As Kundnani (2001) argues, “...we no longer hear of their different values, their alien religion, their strange language. Rather, the image of asylum seekers is defined not by what they are, but simply by the fact that they are ‘not one of us’, and are, therefore, a threat to ‘our way of life’”. (Pg 52) Over the years, Britain has directed millions of pounds into policing, surveillance and control, and constructed physical walls/boundaries around



the French harbours, to restrict the flow of those seeking refuge.

Due to the sheer volume of traffic – the large movement of people, the variety of transportation options, the opportunities of clandestine entry (hiding in train/truck/car/ferry or perilous walk through the Tunnel), and the shorter travel distance when compared to other French ports – Calais has always been considered a better transit option for undocumented refugees wanting to seek sanctuary in Britain. By implementing juxtaposed controls, neither of the governments reached for a humanitarian solution, but simply made it harder for refuge seekers to make successful entry attempts to Britain. This when coupled with the closure of Sangatte, created a “bottleneck effect”. It left refuge seekers, unsuccessful at border crossing, stranded and suffering in a spatial limbo. After 2003, politicians made a decision not to create another shelter/camp around Calais, on the grounds that it might constitute a ‘pull factor’ for ‘illegal’ migrants. From here on, refuge seekers squatted in derelict buildings in/around the Calais city, or created flimsy makeshift camps on wastelands near the Tunnel.

People seeking asylum status started calling these camps the ‘jungle’ (*Calais Migrant Solidarity website*<sup>7</sup>) – a term that not only highlighted squalid living conditions, vulnerability, ongoing trauma and suffering, but also became a medium through which suffering and struggles were made visible. Campaigners and activist groups began to use this term to raise awareness about the plight of this group, urging the governments to act compassionately, and find sensible solution to a complex humanitarian situation. The ‘jungle’ began to shed light on the hypocrisy of the British government, which on one hand continued to project itself as a beacon of human rights and refugee protection – and on the other hand, left refugees to suffer in wastelands. The ‘jungle’ showed the disposability and disregard for refugee lives. The word demonstrated sheer immorality, inhumanity and racism of the British and French states – which gave a scant regard to meeting basic needs of the vulnerable population, and only focused on directing higher investments into ‘security’ measures and controlling, or deterring the entry of, racialised bodies. The term ‘jungle’ highlighted the resistance and resilience of humans in adversity, in the zones of

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<sup>7</sup> <https://calaismigrantsolidarity.wordpress.com/>

extreme exclusion, making visible the invisible (for instance, see Godin et al. (eds) 2017 – book *Voices from the 'Jungle': Stories from the Calais Refugee Camp*)

In a bid to stop any state sanctioned or NGO camps from re-emerging, tabloid and right-wing press circulated stories of those who had arrived in Britain under the Sangatte deal<sup>8</sup>. For instance, *The Telegraph* (2006) published an article highlighting that *Most Sangatte migrants are out of work*. Similarly, other articles were published, labelling those seeking asylum in Britain as 'welfare scroungers', 'cheats' and an inherently criminogenic group of people, exploiting the generosity of 'soft touch' Britain (Malloch and Stanley, 2005; Greer and Jewkes, 2005). The stories continued to reproduce the age-old white racial frames, depicting migrants as lazy, unemployed, stupid and a burden on taxpayers (Smith, 1994; Anderson, 2013). Such representations through language and discourses are important in the meaning-making process and it constructs a tainted version of social reality (Barlow, 1998; Hall, 1997). The newspapers constructed people seeking asylum as a problem, as opposed to people who have a problem (Welch and Schuster, 2005), and highlighted 'dangers' of the 'Sangatte 2', and 'fresh build-ups of migrants' seeking to enter Britain clandestinely (*The Telegraph*, 2007; *Daily Mail*, 2014; *Express*, 2014). They started using 'illegal' migration racial frame to convey this message, thereby criminalising those seeking refuge, and rapidly moving the focus away from the human rights lens (Ibrahim and Howarth, 2012). The newspapers hijacked the term 'jungle', which was used by this group to highlight squalid living conditions, powerlessness and limbo, and gave it a new meaning. Initially in 2007, it was used sparingly, but from 2009 onward, it became the dominant term (Ibrahim and Howarth, 2012: 207).

The populist newspapers turned the 'jungle' into a powerful metaphor loaded with hyper-racist, criminalised and other negative connotations. The aim was to generate a greater impact, creating a wider distance between 'them' and us'. It was re-defined as 'a ghetto', notorious', 'a hiding place' for 'criminals', where there were ethnic 'turf wars', 'rampant' criminality and 'vicious battles between armed migrants and people smugglers' (Ibrahim and Howarth, 2012:207-208). The 'jungle' came to represent the dirt, savageness and ferocity of its inhabitants, lack of restraint and adherence to the

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<sup>8</sup> As per the deal, Britain agreed to grant work permits to 1,000 Iraqi Kurds from the Sangatte centre and take a proportion of Afghan families.

law, where the only law perceived was the survival of the fittest. The inhabitants of the 'jungle' were now turned into inferior 'other', sub-humans, who did not deserve to exist in the civilised West. The 'jungle' not only became spatially but also symbolically bordered. As Edward Said mentions in *Orientalism* (1978): "*the imaginative geography which distinguished our land from barbarian land is enough for 'us' to set up the boundaries in our own mind, whether 'the barbarians recognise them or not'. The Orient, in particular the near-Orient is regarded as the complementary opposite to the West*" (Said, 1978: 54-58). It can therefore be argued that the tabloid and right-wing press used this old Western-centred racial framing, and constructed a powerful 'truth' about the 'jungle', which strongly reproduced and maintained the West/rest dichotomy, demarcated boundaries and further removed 'the other' from compassion and humanity mind-set of its readers (Hall, 1992; Mills, 1997).

In 2009, the French government demolished the 'jungle', and the event turned into major news in the British media and tabloid press – a racial "spectacle" devised by the authorities to impress their spatial control over Calais (Ibrahim and Howarth, 2016). The new camps re-emerged within matter of days to replace the ones destroyed. There were five further camp demolitions between 2014 and 2015 (Ibrahim and Howarth, 2016) and a partial demolition in July 2016; the camps continued to re-emerge. The events in the Mediterranean and unprecedented numbers of refugees arriving in the Europe's frontier countries seeking safety renewed and retained tabloid interest in the 'jungle' (Ibrahim and Howarth, 2016). This was topped up by the political hysteria about Brexit, with strong anti-immigrant wings on both sides of "leave" and "remain" camps dramatising and dominating tabloid headlines, and disproportionately focusing on the situation at Calais and (refugees turned) 'illegal' migrants. The pro-Brexit camp argued that leaving the EU would result in tightening of 'porous' borders, a drastic reduction in 'illegal' immigrant numbers and a consequent decline in crime (Bhatia, 2016). Whereas, the anti-Brexit camp warned about leaving the safety and protection of the EU, which could result in a weakening of borders, a huge influx of 'illegal' immigrants from the 'jungle' coming into Great Britain, and consequently a rise in crime. Both discourses on anti-immigration attempted to outmanoeuvre each other by presenting extreme, ideologically biased, misleading, and faulty scenarios, lacking robust research and evidence (Bhatia, 2016). Despite the

numbers of refugee seekers in the 'jungle' not reaching beyond 10,000 people in total (which is 0.07% of those seeking protection in Europe), the tabloids and politicians portrayed it as tip of the iceberg, that everyone coming to Europe wanted to enter the Great Britain 'illegally' and that, given half a chance, they would (Crawley and Clochard, 2016).

With the increase in the 'terrorist' incidents across Europe, and warnings of further imminent attacks high on the public agenda - tabloids represented 'illegal' migrants and those seeking refuge as extremely 'dangerous' and associated the group with violence (e.g., Malloch and Stanley, 2005; Bosworth, 2008). By repeatedly linking 'illegal' migration with crime, the press has constructed an unrealistic and stereotypical portrayal of immigrants (of colour) as dangerous and pathologically criminogenic. In 2005, the Institute of Public Policy Research (IPPR) revealed a growing habit of newspapers to taint people seeking refuge by linking them with 'Islamic fundamentalist terrorists' (Greenslade 2005; also see Moore et al., 2008). The report documented details of false and inaccurate commentary about refugee seekers and their alleged involvement in terrorist activities. Likewise, Migrant Observatory Report (2013) highlighted that coverage of immigration and asylum includes a vocabulary of numbers (words such as 'thousands' and even 'million') and discourses of security or illegality (words like Islamic terrorist, suspected, sham). The aligning of 'non-whiteness' to Islamic beliefs, "*conspires to produce a visibly distinct and culturally different 'Other' that does not sit easily with the image of the 'true' Briton as it exists within the realm of common knowledge*" (Lynn and Lea, 2003:429). When a visibly distinct and culturally different 'other' gets associated with crime and violence, it produces an overwhelming image of ethnic and racial differences as a social threat and the source of conflict and deviance (Poynting, 2002). Tabloids exaggerate and strategically deploy these differences to instil fear, distortions and mystifications (Box, 1983). The complexity of 'terrorism' and absolute lack of compelling research that links increases in refugee/migrant flows with increases in 'terrorist' incidents has not stopped the tabloids from turning refugees fleeing violence and conflict into 'terrorists suspects'. They have produced ideologically loaded misinformed articles, mirroring the "clash of civilisation" effect (e.g. see the excellent analysis of media by Berry et.al, 2016).

The history of Calais, along with escalating populism, racisms and anti-immigrant sentiments, and the Conservative Party's promotion of a "hostile environment" agenda for 'illegal' migrants (see Jones et.al 2017; Mondon and Winter, 2017; Burnett, 2016), has also influenced the coverage of the 'jungle'. At the same time, politicians and policy makers have attuned themselves to tabloids and right-wing newspapers, and have deployed similar language in their speeches (for instance, use of words like 'swarms', 'swamped', and 'illegal'), to please the population and demonstrate 'leadership', but also to reinforce and maintain the white racial frames (see below). The figure of refuge seekers in the 'jungle' has transformed. Their status, their suffering, their resistance, all disguised and rendered invisible under the category of 'illegal' migrant. The following section will analyse ways in which tabloids/right-wing press has deployed 'illegal' migrant, turning refugees in to a population that is socially dead.

### **FROM REFUGEES TO 'ILLEGAL' MIGRANTS: USING RACIAL FRAMES TO (RE)PRODUCE SOCIAL DEATH**

The 'illegal' migrant, a white racial framing, pushes refuge seekers out from the humanitarian and rights-based realm and pulls them into a racialised and criminalised sphere. It switches their status from at risk individuals deserving of safety and security, to those who are risks, criminals and a source of insecurity – one that needs to be detected, controlled and stopped from entering or living in the country. For instance, *The Telegraph* article published on 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2016 headlined *7,000 illegal immigrants smuggled into Britain on ferries*. The article goes to argue that number of people entering clandestinely has doubled in the past three years. It not only deploys the use of "official" statistics (to make the article valid, objective, authoritative and unquestionable and) to strengthen the central plank of the argument, making the 'security' problem appear urgent and real. By introducing a quote from a right-wing think tank "Migrant Watch" – the article dramatises and reproduces the notion of the country being under siege and demands that more measures be introduced to strengthen border 'security'. However, the reporting does not stop here and further highlights true numbers as "*likely to be significantly higher as many illegal immigrants disappear after entering*" Great Britain, and they are "*never discovered by the authorities*". The statement creates what Ahmed calls a "bogyman": a

terrifying racialised figure that cannot be controlled, who could be anywhere and everywhere, like a ghostly presence, and induces nightmares, and terror about the future. The very words ‘illegal’, ‘entering’, ‘disappearing’ create powerful and daunting synergies. They suggest that unknown but large numbers of criminal bodies have invaded borders and they are roaming freely, unhindered, invisible and unstoppable, and likely to cause mayhem and misery. Of course, Calais and ‘jungle’ are highlighted as a source of the problem, where the ‘illegal’ migrant or bogeyman comes from, where they are based – making it a hyper-criminogenic space. Nowhere has the article mentioned that most individuals in Calais are refugee seekers, most fleeing wars and persecution, and other threats to life. The article then speculates that “3m migrants to arrive by 2030”, a projection with no explanation, which seeks to amplify the fears – three million bogeyman roaming the British streets. The end directs reader’s attention to the *Telegraph’s Border Security Campaign*, which calls for the political leaders to address the ‘porousness’ of borders and ramp-up the ‘security’.

Before going any further, it is necessary to analyse the term ‘illegal’ migrants, as that will help understand the power of the ‘illegal migrant’ framing. The term needs a racialised migrant body<sup>9</sup>, without which it is meaningless and unrecognisable. The ‘illegal’ migrant is a peculiar criminal construct that targets the individual’s existence and not their actions. Turning those seeking refuge into ‘illegal’ migrants not only results in criminalisation of racialised bodies, but also racialisation of a ‘crime’ (of undocumented migration). Like most other crimes, it is constructed as an immoral act, undeserving of sympathy, and attracting outrage and contempt. However, unlike most other crimes, being an ‘illegal’ migrant is a ‘crime’ in itself – it is a ‘crime’ of status – of racialised bodies not having a status – lack of status that is by default considered a ‘crime’ – a ‘crime’ portrayed and understood as having no ‘lawful’ status. Whether ‘illegal’ migrants commit ‘crime’ or not – their very (lack of) status, their very (lack of) ‘existence’, their very (lack of) ‘presence’ or ‘being’ – all of which is constructed

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<sup>9</sup> Note: it is important to also recognise that post EU enlargement in 2004, the Eastern European migrants have come to represent ‘degenerate’ whiteness (just as Jews and Irish before them), and media coverage has often referred to ‘cultural differences’ in law breaking and associated them with illegal activities (Anderson, 2013). Up until this stage, they have escaped the term ‘illegal’ migrants, due to being part of the EU. Nevertheless, this could change post-BREXIT, depending on manner in which media and politicians racialise and represent their status and existence in the country.

as a 'crime'. According to a Latina/Latino Studies scholar Lisa Marie Cacho (2012), the law does not produce the 'crime' of being an 'illegal' migrant, and 'illegal' migrant is not a legal term. While this is equally the case in the UK, 'illegal' is considered as an epitome of 'un-Britishness'. When pushed into the realm of 'illegal', individual reasons and circumstances for migration simply do not matter, turning 'illegal' migrants into bodies that *do not matter* (such as, refuge seekers in Calais turned 'illegal'). To target bodies for border controls and exclusion, deportation and banishment, detention and confinement – the state and the tabloid and right-wing press racialise and dehumanise them, and construct or dramatise their 'threats', 'risks' or 'dangers' and consequently criminalise them. These individuals are excluded and marginalised, and rendered invisible by the law, lacking protection, rights or status (Agamben, 1998) - as explained in following paragraphs.

The 'illegal' migrant, is someone "assigned" a criminalised status by those in power (i.e. white elites and media). Those seeking asylum are stereotyped and racially profiled as criminals, but more importantly, they are at the same time criminalised. There is a difference between the two – being stereotyped indicates that society misrecognises someone as a criminal, but to be criminalised indicates that someone by default is prevented from being considered lawful or given a chance to abide by the law (Cacho, 2012). The category of 'illegal' migrant is a criminalised status because, it creates a forced racialised exclusion of those bracketed as 'illegal' from being law abiding and also removes them from law's protection - since they are legally non-existent and therefore have no legal rights granted to citizens – but at the time it confronts them with the law's disciplinary and control mechanisms (Cacho, 2012). So, while there is no appetite for protecting 'illegal' migrants and ('bogus') asylum seekers, there is nonetheless ferocious hunger to subject them to higher deterrence and punitive controls, an aspect captured by various scholars (for instance, see Weber and Pickering, 2011; Grewcock, 2010; Bhatia, 2014,2015; Khosravi, 2010; Canning, 2017; Griffiths, 2014; Aas and Bosworth, 2013). The same applies to those 'living' in the 'jungle'. Following from the previous section it is apparent that, tabloids, right-wing press and certain politicians have constructed and used the 'illegal' category for refuge seekers, to demand and enforce restrictive border controls and policing measures in and around the 'jungle'. This is to prevent the 'crime' of 'illegal' migration, and 'illegal' migrants from coming or staying in the country, and

to block 'illegal' migrants from turning 'legal'. In the process, any violence directed against them (symbolic, cultural or "real") is portrayed as valid, rightful and legitimate functions of crime control and prevention.

The 'jungle' and Calais borderlands have somewhat become spaces of exceptions. The 'jungle' refugees are rendered apolitical, rightless, and unprotected. The 'crime' committed by them is entirely victimless (i.e. having no documents and status). However, they have yet achieved a criminalised status and their bodies have become an object of racist repression. The populist press has hidden and denied their suffering and violence of exclusions, by moving them out of the humanitarian and rights-based realm and into a criminalised domain, as explained earlier. This has also resulted in suffering and deaths of refugees presented as mere *collateral damage* of border controls or the outcome of their 'illegal' behavior or 'presence'. They are blamed for their own deaths and their deaths are portrayed as a hindrance. For instance, an article published in *the Mirror* dated October 2015 headlined: "*Migrant found dead near Channel Tunnel as 6000 people mass at Calais seeking entry to Britain*". It further states:

A migrant trying to enter Britain was found dead near the tracks of the Channel Tunnel today amid a surge in people massing at Calais. Officials announced that the number of migrants at the Calais camp has doubled to close to 6,000 people just days after another suspected migrant died after being struck on the M20 motorway in Kent...Many illegal migrants make repeated nightly attempts to break into the Channel Tunnel or the ferry port to sneak aboard lorries or trains to Britain. Mass raids of the tunnel site and rail track invasions in recent months have also led to long delays to freight and passenger trains to the UK.

The article does not highlight the desperation of those seeking refuge or lack of 'legal' and safe travel routes. More importantly, it does not recognise the deceased person as a refuge seeker. Stan Cohen (2005) argues that denial is a state in which an undesirable situation is unrecognised, ignored or made to seem normal. Once criminalised and pushed into the 'illegal' migration framework, those seeking refuge are denied victim status. The story not only follows this approach, but it further suggests that, one migrant is found dead – however, there is a *surge in people massing at Calais*, and hints that nation needs to be protected from their invasions. The



language of war constructs the group as the racialised ‘enemy other’ (see Fekete and Webber, 2010), it depersonalises their death, makes it appear insignificant and not worthy of attention. Such a portrayal removes refugees from compassion mind-set of readers, and transforms them into “undeserving victims” – (‘illegal’) *migrant trying to enter Britain* (‘illegally’) *was found dead* – death caused due to ‘illegal’ behaviour. Therefore, while the article makes readers aware of the death, at the same time it equips them with tools to distance and deny the significance of his death. It presents information in a manner that adds on to the existing fears of invasions of ‘illegal’ migrants, who happen to be alive and in abundance, and marching their way into Great Britain.

Similarly, in another article published by *the Mirror* dated October 2016, days before the Calais demolition, the headlines read: *‘Illegal immigrant’ suffocates to death in back of lorry after ‘being crushed by baby clothes magazines’*. The articles further mentions:

A suspected illegal migrant is believed to have suffocated under the weight of baby clothes catalogues as an HGV truck travelled across the English Channel. The panicked lorry driver found the body after he had travelled across the Channel through Calais hours before making the discovery at a busy Kent lorry park ... driver is believed to have discovered several people in the back of his truck at Calais, but Border Force failed to flush out all of the suspected migrants. Again when the truck was checked at the border in Dover, officers failed to find the stowaway...Police believe the man, who was pronounced dead at the scene, had travelled from France...

The story was covered in several other tabloids and right-wing outlets, using the same frame and they replicated the distancing and denial strategies of the previous articles. What sets the story apart is the sensational portrayal of death. The article turns death into an example, to dramatise the deficiencies in border control operations and porousness of borders. On the surface, article tends to highlight the failures of the border officials. However, on looking closer, the underlying message becomes clear – to stop the ‘illegals’ from dying, Britain needs tighter controls and tougher policing measures (as oppose to stating that escalating borders are forcing desperate refugees to take more risks and Britain needs a sensible humanitarian approach to save lives). The references to *stowaway* and Channel crossing turn the focus back to the ‘jungle’ as the source of ‘crime’. Further, the publication date of article is close to the

scheduled (or potential) demolition of the ‘jungle’, making it part of wider tabloid frenzy over the ‘jungle’.

The refugees turned ‘illegals’ are deprived from the status of ‘living’, and the ‘jungle’ has been transformed into space of the living dead and population “*dead to others*” (Cacho, 2012:7) – a group that simply do not matter and are denied ‘existence’. They are made what Tyler (2006) terms as “hyper-visible”, and at the same time rendered hyper-invisible. The very criminalisation takes away their rights to have rights. Even in the death, their recognition is limited to the ‘illegal’ status. What we are witnessing is a brutal *social death* of Calais refugees – who are racialised, de-socialised, made non-existent and then re-introduced to society as ‘criminals’ and subhuman entities – a product of hostile and alien culture – an enemy wanting to bring harm. This racialised social death is a desired effect produced by the tabloid rehearsal of illegality, and official practices and processes, through which individuals and groups become something other than humans and have been denied rights. The social death is a direct consequence of loss of dignity and personhood - achieved by subjecting them to violence(s), domination and exclusion, to the point that they are physically alive, but their lives considered and portrayed as meaningless and worthless.

The biological death of those who undergo *social death* is portrayed in a manner that it does not deserve sympathy and attention. As columnist called Katie Hopkins commented in *the Sun* (dated 17<sup>th</sup> April 2015): “*No I don’t care. Show me pictures of coffins, show me bodies floating in water, play violins ... I still don’t care.*” This is obviously a grotesque portrayal of refugee deaths, which gained high level of criticism and public outrage<sup>10</sup> (Canning, 2017). Not all right-wing and tabloid articles have portrayed asylum seekers’ deaths and suffering in this manner. Nevertheless, they have adopted an equally grotesque approach by deploying the ‘illegal’ migrant racial frame, and permanently excluded refugees from personhood, identity and belonging. The articles have demanded and legitimised draconian state actions and degraded refugees. In addition, when looked from a different angle, the columnist’s words and ideas are also reflective of the sentiments of the British state (and Western

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<sup>10</sup> A few months later, Donald Trump publicly declared her as a ‘respected columnist’ and praised her ‘powerful writing’.

governments in general) and its border control policies and refugee ‘protection’ regime (Canning, 2017).

The socially dead live in a state of liminality and limbo, subjected to violences, and rendered disposable. The tabloid portrayal of refugee seekers deaths repeats and reaffirms this aspect. For instance, an article published by *the Express* (11<sup>th</sup> October 2016), days before the official dismantling of the ‘jungle’, headlined “*Calais migrant dies in car crash after gang ambushes British driver in bid to reach UK*”. It further mentions:

The Eritrean migrant was part of a gang who had spent Sunday evening installing makeshift barriers ... to block traffic and force UK-bound cars and lorries to hit the brakes. The British car driver said he was ambushed by a mob of Jungle migrants – including an Eritrean couple ... at which point he was “attacked” by the group of Calais migrants, who tried to jump inside his vehicle. He is said to have knocked down the Eritrean man and his partner after having panicked and attempted to flee the scene. The driver chose not to stop, the officials said. Instead, he raced to the Channel Tunnel and “immediately” reported the accident to members of the border police force.

The article use of the term ‘gang’ indicates (violent) criminality and individuals involved in the incident being part of a larger criminal group. Just as ‘illegal’ migrants, the term ‘gang’ is a peculiar criminal construct. It racialises crime and criminalises racialised bodies. Regardless of whether these bodies are part of a ‘gang’ or not, they are by default associated with criminality (also see Williams and Clark’s chapter in this book). Further, in the case of Calais any and every act (including acts of resistance) committed by these bodies, could potentially be labelled as ‘gang’ related (violence). An overwhelming number of 2016 tabloid articles on the ‘jungle’ published visual images<sup>11</sup> of black and brown ‘illegal’ migrants in groups, who were termed as ‘gangs’, ‘mob’ or ‘thugs’. The portrayal was that of extreme chaos; thereby, strengthening the criminal construct, making the problem of ‘crime’ appear severe, and inducing a sense of ‘danger’ and fear. The ‘gang’ in this case is also a gendered term and it has leached on to the behaviour depiction of male refugees of the ‘jungle’. The unprotected individuals are unable to challenge or reverse their criminal status as ‘gang’ members (not at least through legal means, since they are legally non-existent).

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<sup>11</sup> The online version contains videos as well as images

The legal system has not assigned them a status of ‘gang’; it is rather a tabloid construction. In this particular article, refugee seeker is associated with ‘gang’, which has automatically shifted the focus onto the criminal behaviour, and devalued the death by racialising the deceased. Further, the recognition of death is strictly limited to the ‘criminal’ (and ‘illegal’) status, and there is no mention of the Eritrean man being a victim of a horrific accident<sup>12</sup>. Several tabloids/right-wing outlets published the story, but failed to highlight the desperation of these individuals trying to reach safety and protection, taking life-threatening risks. Further, what is even more concerning is the fact that none of the articles included refugee voices or quotes, or their lived experiences (at least not accurately) and have strictly enforced journalists’ ideological viewpoints – resulting in deliberate and calculated denial and silencing of refugee suffering, resilience and resistance, and reinforcing white racial frames.

Criminalisation and fear work together in the production of social death, and block the attempts of reviving those who are socially dead. The above articles do exactly this by constantly reproducing ‘danger’, or what Sara Ahmed (2000) calls “stranger danger”. According to her analysis, strangers are familiar figures and someone that is already recognised as a stranger, as opposed to someone unknown and unfamiliar. The articles use techniques to make it easier for readers to recognise strangers: loitering bodies of colour, invaders, who are out of place and without a legitimate purpose or existence, posing danger to property, person and public life. The stranger is an object onto whom danger is projected. He is recognised as someone who lurks in the dark. It is easy to judge racialised bodies as dangerous as these constructions are inextricably connected with the racist history of Great Britain and historical framing of non-whites. In a rather lengthy article published by *the Daily Mail* dated 26<sup>th</sup> August 2016 (two months prior to the demolition), there is a repertoire of stranger danger. The columnist Hopkins has narrated her personal experience of driving through the Calais passage in a truck – she mentions:

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<sup>12</sup> In another article, a 14-year-old unaccompanied child from Afghanistan died in similar circumstances. The driver swerved left and right to knock him off the vehicle. Ironically, in this case, the tabloids acknowledged the desperation of children and dangers they face. However, such acknowledgement largely occurred after their deaths (another example would be that of a 4 year old child refugee Aylan Kurdi). Nevertheless, during the dismantling of the camp, Britain took handful of unaccompanied minors and tabloids ended up waging a negative campaign, calling them fraudulent and adults posing to be children. As Berry et. Al (2016) have highlighted, when compared to other European countries the portrayal of refugees in British press has been the most negative.

Leaving the truck park at 3am an hour outside Calais with my driver Vlad, we have strict instructions. Full tank of fuel. Do not stop. Do not slow down. Just drive. Vlad is grim. Barely speaking as he heads out into the night. Everyone making this journey is tense, peering out into the gloom, looking for the trouble they know is out there, waiting ... in the early hours masked men wielding sticks felled a tree across the road outside the port. It's a driver's worst nightmare to be stationary. Left sitting vulnerable to the migrant hordes, vulnerable to being loaded with a new cargo for trade: humans ... It's a story you will hear over and over. These gangs are unrelenting...[Calais is] A territory lost to invaders ... Trucks simply cannot stop here now, cannot afford to be caught stationary on the road ... Illegal migrants are everywhere in the darkness ... After 28 hours on the road I have a new-found respect for these truckers ... One tells me he can't tell his wife what he faces or she'd never let him in his cab again.

Calais is a fortress, but outside the safety of the gates the traffickers run free. This is bandit country. Every man for himself.

The strangers become an object of fear and their bodies a phobic object. The stranger is the black, the Muslim, the Arab, the 'illegal' migrant, all too familiar, and known to be strangers. The article uses knowledge of these known strangers and projects danger on to it. The columnist states that 'illegal' 'migrant hoardes' and 'unrelenting' 'gangs' are roaming freely, and nothing is done to contain them, and nothing can contain them, making Calais a 'bandit country'. The threat of these freely roaming dangerous bodies of colour is overwhelming. By projecting danger on 'unrelenting' 'migrant hoardes', the article calls for even more restrictions and policing measures around Calais.

The tabloids have widely used several quotes from law enforcement to construct and strengthen the 'dangerous' criminal image of the Calais inhabitants – erasing their status of at-risk, vulnerable and victims. For example, *The Mirror* (12<sup>th</sup> Aug 2016) used a quote to highlight the fears of police and the 'growing numbers' of 'jihadi terrorists' that could be 'hiding' and 'lurking' amongst the 'thousands' of 'British-bound refugees' in Calais . Similarly, *the Sun* article on 13<sup>th</sup> August 2016 headlined "*Jihadis in the Jungle*" and further mentions about the 'anxious' cops, who 'fear' extremists in the 'unpoliceable black hole' of Calais.

The tabloids have also legitimised police/state violence against refugees. For instance, *The Daily Mail* published an article on 21<sup>st</sup> September 2016 (a month prior to the demolition) headlined “*The Battle of Calais*”, which highlighted the criminal behaviour of the ‘jungle’ inhabitants. The online version<sup>13</sup> of article contains a staggering 23 images and 3 videos depicting chaos, smoke firing up, people running around haphazardly, black men in groups, and (white) police officers in full riot gear, carrying batons and tear gas. Furthermore, it describes the vulnerability of officers, whom migrants attacked with ‘missiles’ and ‘objects’, causing shoulder injury to one officer. However, whilst this article (and many others) highlights the struggles of brave (white) police heroes in the ‘battlefield’, it fails to mention the sheer scale and severity of violence that refuge seekers have endured at the hands of law enforcement. On the contrary, the press has indicated that any violent treatment is a justified response to refugees’ crime/criminal behaviour<sup>14</sup> and existence. This press strategy is what Thompson (1990) describes as “expurgation of the other” – which taints the victims of state violence and make such violence appear as rational.

A recent report drafted by the Refugee Rights Data Project (2017) drawing upon responses of 213 Calais refugees reported that 89.2% of them said they had experienced police violence during their time in Calais. This was further broken into: 84% experiencing tear gas, 52.7% other forms of physical violence, and 27.7% verbal abuse. The police violence was higher for refugees from Eritrea (93%), Ethiopia (83%) and Sudan (92%), followed by Afghanistan (78%) and Pakistan (75%). Similarly, when questioned about the police treatment, 41.4% reported it to be ‘bad’ and 40% said it was ‘very bad’ – with one respondent commenting: “*Is there an option that is worse than very bad? I choose that option*” (page 10).

The report further documents and explains in detail the cases of extreme physical violence inflicted by the police. One refugee reported shoulder dislocation, while another explained that his fingers had been dislocated in a similar fashion on a separate occasion. A 22-year old Palestinian male spoke about beatings by police, and being sprayed by tear gas directly onto his face, causing injury in one eye. Women

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<sup>13</sup> <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3800712/The-Battle-Calais-Police-use-tear-gas-repel-300-migrants-try-storm-road-leading-French-port.html>

<sup>14</sup> Important note: Even if the crime has occurred (as defined by the criminal law) – it needs to be contextualised against the dire circumstances in the ‘jungle’ wastelands, life in limbo, poverty and desperation (also see Bhatia, 2015).

also experienced police violence. A 27-year old Eritrean woman spoke about physical abuse by police. Similarly, a 22-year old Ethiopian woman said, “*they pushed me to the floor and beat me.*” The quotes from refugee children also demonstrate the pain, suffering and state-sanctioned abuse:

I was sleeping with some others in the woods when the police came and told us to get up and move. I did what they asked but they still hit me with their baton on my legs which left me in pain for a while.

- Refugee from Eritrea, 16 year old

They gave me an electric shock. It happened in Calais port because they were searching the area.

- Refugee from Eritrea, 16 year old

I was on the road in the evening. They were many police and they verbally abused us, hit us with batons and sprayed tear gas.

- Refugee from Sudan, 16 year old

[The police] recognise me by my hair and they always come after me. They beat me up almost everyday. I have had tear gas sprayed on me several times

- Refugee from Eritrea, 17 year old

According to Thompson (1990), ‘expurgation of the other’ is a symbolic construction of scapegoat that must be resisted or purged. The tabloid press and official narratives distort the image of refuge seekers, and turn them from victims of violence to perpetrators and cause of violence, deserving brutal treatment. The press articles portray victims of state sanctioned abuse as dangerous/ threatening and thereby exhort their expurgation (also see, Hirschfield and Simon, 2010). At the same time, it vilifies and demonises refugees, and depicts them as predatory and racialised villains, not deserving of compassion. This also legitimises police and border control tactics and physical force, making it appear legal and justified. Here the violence(s) is not portrayed as human rights violations, but rather a logical consequence of victim’s unruly and animalistic behaviour and ‘illegal’ presence. The media have legitimised what is blatantly a deviant use of force against and abuse of refuge seekers. This fits within Grewcock’s (2010) definition of “border crimes” – unjustified, systematic, and racist violence(s) directed towards those in desperate need of protection. On looking closer, the real, substantive perpetrators are not refuge seekers, but rather British and the French state, and populist press.

## CONCLUSION

Race is a social construct – constructed by those in power, to benefit by creating a social distance from those who are racialised, in order to rationalise their historical and ongoing oppression, expropriation and exploitation. From slavery to colonialism and beyond, whites have used racial framing and racial hierarchy for their power and gain. This is what Feagin (2013:28) calls “racial capital” – reserved for the whites – benefiting from hierarchical system of racial operation. This hierarchy has persisted as the heart of systemic racism, from past to present, and used for maintaining racial power by degrading the racialised ‘outsider’ and subjecting them to violence(s). The powerful populist press in the West are part of this equation. They are driven by strong profit imperatives, and have enriched themselves and thrived by circulating/selling racist ideologies and ‘otherisation’ discourses – producing fear (xenophobia, Islamophobia, and so on). They have greased the wheels of the “immigration-industrial complex” (see Golash-Boza, 2009). These discourses demand tighter immigration laws, even tougher border security and policing measures and greater government investments in technologies of control. The media, private security companies, and (powerful, white) elite have become richer, and people of colour have suffered forced exclusion, marginalisation and social (and biological) death. This chapter has attempted to reverse the dominant racial gaze over the ‘jungle’ refuge seekers, by dissecting press narratives, and turning the focus back to the crimes of the powerful whites.



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