

## **UK secondary schools under surveillance: what are the implications for race? A Critical Race and Butlerian analysis**

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### **Abstract**

*Since September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001, and the London bombings of July 2005, the ‘war on terror’ has led to the subjection of populations to new regimes of control and reinforced state sovereignty. This involves, in countries such as the UK and the US, the limiting of personal freedoms, increased regulation of immigration and constant surveillance, as a response to the perceived increased risk of terrorist attacks. In this paper I consider new surveillance technologies in secondary schools as a moment in the “war on terror” where recognisability is key to understanding the ways in which populations are racialised. I argue that the counter-terrorism agenda is one of the reasons why schools have invested to such an extent in new technologies of surveillance and explore the implications such surveillance has for the way in which students are raced. The paper applies a framework which combines a Critical Race Theory (CRT) analysis of white supremacy with Judith Butler’s (2004a, 2010) thinking on recognisable lives and Agamben’s (2005) state of exception in order to analyse how minority ethnic young people are constructed as ‘threatening’.*

**Keywords:** *Secondary schools, surveillance, counter-terrorism, Critical Race Theory, Judith Butler, state of exception.*

### **The ‘war on terror’ and surveillance**

Since September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001, and the London bombings of July 2005, the ‘war on terror’ has led to the subjection of populations to new regimes of control and reinforced state sovereignty. This involves, in countries such as the UK and the US, the limiting of personal freedoms, increased regulation of immigration and constant surveillance, as a response to the perceived increased risk of terrorist attacks. In this paper I argue that the counter-terrorism agenda is one of the reasons why schools have invested to such an extent in new technologies of surveillance, and explore the implications such surveillance has for the way in which students are raced.

Recent years have seen an explosive expansion of new technologies of surveillance installed not just in the wider community, but also in UK secondary schools. Although there has been much discussion devoted to these new technologies and their impact in general, as an educational phenomenon, surveillance in schools is only just beginning to receive media and academic attention (for example, Hope, 2009; McCahill & Finn, 2010; Taylor, 2010). Schools have installed Closed Circuit television cameras (CCTV), screening technologies including metal detectors and alcohol and drug testing, chipped identity cards and electronic registers, biometric tools such as iris and finger print recognition, cyberspace surveillance including webcams, internet logs, websites hosting student data for parental access, and auditing

programmes including student databases and threat assessment software, among others (Hope, 2009). There have been reports of systems to log the food on a pupil's lunch tray and send this information to a website that parents can access to check their child's diet (UK Press Association, 2009) and of CCTV cameras being installed in school toilets (Chadderton, 2009).

The installation of surveillance devices tends to be justified on grounds of security (see for example Marx & Steeves, 2010). Protection from both external and internal threat of “dangerous others” provide the ostensible impetus for the installation of CCTV in schools in the UK, for example, after the stabbing of head teacher Phillip Lawrence at his school gate in 1995 and the massacre in a Dunblane Primary School in 1996 in which an outsider shot and killed 16 children and their teacher, fears around allegedly increasing knife crime, and also school and college shootings in the US such as Columbine (2001) or Virginia Tech (2007). Reasons of health and personal safety are also cited for the introduction of these new technologies, including the reduction of bullying, theft, smoking, junk food consumption and truancy.

However, there is much evidence to suggest that surveillance systems do not ensure security – indeed there was both an armed guard and video surveillance system at Columbine. This begs the question why there has been such an increase in new surveillance technologies in recent years. There are of course, as with any phenomenon, many reasons, which are inevitably interconnected. These include “a broader societal trend towards a ‘politics of fear’ (Altheide, 2006, 2009) or ‘culture of fear’ (Furedi, 2002)” (Marx & Steeves, 2010:214), and a commercial enterprise for security device businesses (Casella, 2010). Alternatively as Ragnedda (2010) argues,

Surveillance is much more than simply monitoring, watching and recording individuals and their data. [...] Surveillance is an interaction of power that creates and advances relations of domination. In practice, surveillance is a mode of governance, one that controls access and opportunities. (p. 356)

There is therefore more to surveillance regimes than monitoring and security. As yet, few have explored the links between increased school surveillance and the counter-terrorism agenda, particularly in the UK.

### **Reading the work of Judith Butler through the lens of Critical Race Theory**

In this article I use insights from CRT as well as the work of Judith Butler (2004a, b, 2010) to consider the possible racial implications of the extensive use of new technologies of surveillance in UK secondary schools. Whilst acknowledging that there are tensions in combining CRT – generally considered a structuralist approach – and the work of Judith Butler – generally located in the poststructuralist tradition although more recently shifting towards a more critical perspective - I argue that using insights from both allows us a more in-depth study of the production of race and racial identities and the implications of this for policy making in the UK (see Chadderton forthcoming 2013 for detail of this argument). I draw parallels between the two theories in order to consider the way in which some lives are recognised as fully human lives, and others are not.

CRT provides an explicit structural framework for investigating racism and the way racism operates. It considers the basis of constitutional law and all arising institutional and social arrangements to be based on the interests of those politically designated “white”, which is referred to as a system of white supremacy. White supremacy in this context does not refer specifically to extreme forms of oppression such as slavery or apartheid, or to the actions of white right-wing extremists (although these are also taken seriously), but to a system of everyday oppression and exploitation which benefits the interests of whites as a political collective (Allen, 2001). In this journal and others there has recently raged a debate between academics over the usefulness of CRT as a tool to investigate racial inequalities in the UK and whether it provides too much focus on race as a category whilst obscuring class, the more traditional unit of analysis in the UK, and the relation between race and class (see for example Cole, 2009; Hill, 2009; Gillborn, 2010; Preston, 2010). It is beyond the remit of this paper to provide an outline of this debate, however, in my discussion of CRT I will refer to many of the same themes as in this debate. Suffice to say that in my reading of CRT, race does not *replace* class as a determiner of educational experience, rather it foregrounds race as *a* key determiner, and some situations cannot be explained without an understanding of race. For example, despite being a member of the privileged classes and the president of the US, Barack Obama’s American citizenship was called into question by the US right-wing for reasons of race: his African roots and his Muslim middle name, Hussein.

The term white supremacy does not necessarily refer to skin colour, rather to structures of subordination and domination, something which tends to be misunderstood by CRT’s critics (for example Cole, 2009). Despite the official acknowledgement of structural and possibly unwitting racism in the term “institutional racism”, which identified covert racism in the police force in 1999, racism in the UK still tends to be understood in terms of extreme, violent acts, or the openly racist rhetoric of the British National Party or Neo-Nazi groups (Moschel, 2007). This structural framework is thus very useful as an analytical tool for understanding covert racism. Importantly, critical race theorists argue that white supremacy is a system so deeply engrained in western cultures that it frequently goes unnoticed, perceived simply as normal or natural (Ladson-Billings, 1998). The question in this analysis is not whether white supremacy can be identified, but how it is manifested.

As my own racial positioning is “so-called white” I do not pretend that my use of CRT is not to some extent problematic. However, I engage with CRT as a theory and analytical tool whilst explicitly rejecting those tendencies in whiteness studies for whites to dwell self-indulgently on their own whiteness, hoping that in some way this piece, even coming from a white author, has some legitimacy, operating both within and against whiteness (Ignatiev, 1997).

Critical Race Theorists have examined the role of the war on terror in shaping racial discourses and racial oppression. Ladson-Billings (2003) explores the way in which since the attack on September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001 (“9/11”), discourses around US identities have become polarised into those who are with the US, and those who are against. Oztas (2011) argues that there has been a similar response in the UK, rendered more potent through the London bombings on 7<sup>th</sup> July 2005 (“7/7”). The population is

perceived as split into two groups: a group which is to be protected from threat, and a group which is threatening (Oztas, 2011). In this case the “allegedly suspect” terrorists are Muslims, pre-defined as belonging to a culture which does not share the values of the west. This builds on longstanding discourses of Islam as an under developed culture which condones, even encourages violence. Oztas argues that the image of Muslims in the UK is also confused with notions of a visible immigrant, the Other who threatens the west with a presumed lack of civilised values. The notion of terrorism is perceived as essentially linked to this ‘incompatibility’ with western life, which in effect implicates all Muslims. Thus links with violence and threat are seen as integral to Islam, and by association, to all Muslims. As Ladson-Billings (2003) argues, the division of populations in this way has implications for who can be considered a citizen of a given nation, and who, by implication, cannot.

In this article, I read the work of Judith Butler through a CRT lens. Her work is useful for scholars exploring the way in which subjectivities are constituted, allowing a critical, in-depth study of the way in which identities are produced and re-produced through political frames which tend to favour white-western, male and middle class identities. While dealing with inequalities, her work tends to be associated with gender discrimination rather than race. However, her more recent work does have a racial focus, dealing with the way in which “recognisability” as a human is racially framed, and the implications this has for counter-terrorism measures (Butler, 2004a, 2010).

For Butler, identity categories do not reflect essential or innate subjectivities. Rather, identities are discursively constituted, by which is meant is that all identities are actually produced, by discourse. Butler’s recent work considers the way lives are divided into those which are fully “recognisable” as human, and those which are not. By recognisable, she means conceivable as lives on an equal level as other lives:

The terms by which we are recognised as human are socially articulated and changeable. And sometimes the very terms that confer “humanness” on some individuals are those that deprive certain other individuals of the possibility of achieving that status, producing a differential between the human and the less-than-human. These norms have far-reaching consequences for how we understand the model of the human entitled to rights or included in the participatory sphere of political deliberation. The human is understood differently depending on its race, the legibility of that race, its morphology, the legibility of that morphology, its sex, the perceptual verifiability of that sex, its ethnicity, the categorical understanding of that ethnicity. Certain humans are recognised as less than human.

(Butler 2004b:2)

Thus lives and bodies are understood, “recognised”, according to social norms, and will have different entitlements to rights. Those with fewer rights, she argues, will be recognised as “less-than-human”.

...specific lives cannot be apprehended as injured or lost if they are not first apprehended as living. If certain lives do not qualify as lives or are, from the

start, not conceivable as lives within certain epistemological frames, then these lives are never lived nor lost in the full sense.

(Butler, 2010: 1)

These lives which do not fully count as lives, are, on the contrary, regarded as a threat to life. This therefore justifies a defence, in cases where recognisable lives are perceived to be under threat. Lives, then, in a Butlerian framework, are produced through specific mechanisms of power,

These categories, conventions and norms that prepare or establish a subject for recognition [...] precede and make possible the act of recognition itself. In this sense, recognisability precedes recognition.

(Butler, 2010: 5)

As the discourses which constitute the subject pre-exist the subject, an individual subject is perceived as the embodiment of the discourse. This is very relevant for the differentiation of bodies through the counter-terrorism agenda. Racial frames “differentiate [...] in advance who will count as a life, and who will not” (Butler, 2010: xxix). A “frame” in Butlerian terms, is a collection of discourses which shapes perception. Contrary to early critiques of Butler’s work, she argues that these frames, whilst discursive, are not “merely” perceptual or cultural: they have material effects on real lives and interaction (see for example, Butler, 1998). I use the notion of material here, not in the historical Marxist sense, but in a critical realist sense, to refer to the ‘real’. Butler then, particularly her more recent work which has shifted away from what could be termed a more extreme poststructuralist stance, can be read materially through the use of “frames” of reference and CRT can be read through a Butlerian-materialist frame.

In this way, Butler’s work has parallels with CRT. Perceived racial heritage defines whether an individual belongs to the group which threatens the west, or that which is under threat. As Ladson-Billings (2003) argues, those who are perceived as a threat are viewed simplistically as evil and irrational and even non-human. Oztas (2011) argues that those of (perceived) Arab, North African or Middle Eastern heritage find themselves outside the law, as it is individuals from these groups whose citizenship rights are most likely to be suspended both under English (Prevention of Terrorism Act 2005; Civil Contingencies Act 2004) and US law (USA Patriot Act 2001). These racial groups, then, have become the (imagined, nevertheless, with real consequences) embodiment of threat. In being beyond the law, their position as (perceived) non-human is reified- without the rights of a citizen, it could be argued they are rendered a non-human subject. Thus in counter-terrorism discourses, (perceived) racial groups who are likely to be Muslims are recognised (in Butlerian terms) as non-human.

Some might argue that the notion of less-than-human is extreme, however, Bell’s (1993) critical race counter-narrative, “Space Traders” illustrates how “aliveness” is a conditional allowance of a system of oppression and not a universal category or “right”. In “Space Traders” the ontological existence of African Americans is withdrawn by whites when a better “offer” is made by aliens. Thus we see how even “aliveness” is an “interest convergence” that is mobilised only when it is in the interests of whites, and can be withdrawn at any time.

There are further similarities between Butler's work and CRT. Some critiques of CRT consider that, despite its emphasis on racial formation, it is essentialist and "...the essentialism inherent in the original epistemological intent of 'race' is preserved" (Darder & Torres, 2004). Hill (2009), in this journal, argued that the concept of white supremacy is "too blunt" (p3). However, the potential instability of the fixity of race to bodies presumed by Butler is, it could be argued, inherent in understanding the ways in which CRT comprehends the significance of white supremacy in making oppressive racial identifications. The fixity of race requires the everyday and ongoing exercise of white supremacy. Theorising white supremacy is therefore necessary to understanding how race is not only recognised as embodied but also how this constitutes, and is constituted by, a form of power. Ignatiev (1995), for example, demonstrates how the Irish in the US have not always been considered white, rather they actually chose to *become* white. White supremacy, understood through a Butlerian lens, is therefore a shifting and fluid notion and historically located.

### **The return to sovereignty and the "state of exception"**

Butler (2004a) has argued that the "war on terror" and its implications for citizens in western democracies is illustrative of a return from what Foucault termed governmentality – a system of governmental control in which power is de-centred and exerted by shaping the behaviour, attitudes and subjectivities of citizens in order to effect self-regulation – towards sovereignty and the more overt exercise of state power. Importantly, she argues that sovereignty was never completely replaced by governmentality, rather, it could be reintroduced by those in positions of power whenever they felt it necessary. She links this shift to sovereignty to the notion of the "state of exception", based on the work of Agamben (1998, 2005) who argues that western democracies have reintroduced a permanent state of exception, in which the so-called democratic state can suspend laws and engage in actions for which public consent is not sought. Agamben uses the situation of the Jewish people under the Nazis to exemplify the state of exception, suggesting that the Nazi terror was not necessarily exceptional, rather, an extreme form of sovereignty which can be reintroduced in a democracy by the powerful at any time. Whenever they choose, he argues, the powerful can reduce groups of citizens to what he refers as bare life, or mere physical existence, thus exercising sovereignty and removing from these groups the protection of law. He equates these dispossessed groups to the *homo sacer*, a paradoxical figure from Roman Law, who may not be used for sacrifice, but may be killed by anyone without this being considered a crime. This paradox illustrates the dual nature of the *homo sacer*: this is a figure, who does not enjoy the rights of a citizen, and therefore may not live a political life, yet s/he leads a life defined by politics. Colatrella (2011) in this journal, has critiqued the work of Agamben, arguing that he exaggerates our present situation, which cannot be compared to that of the Holocaust. However, it is perhaps worth recognising that there are common features: Butler (2004a) takes up the notion of the state of exception to consider the implications of the war on terror for western democracies, in particular the US. She argues that an indefinite, all-pervasive "state of emergency" has been introduced in which laws can be suspended at the will of those in power, giving as an example the

indefinite detention of the detainees at Guantanamo Bay, suggesting that such measures are “the means by which the exceptional becomes established as a naturalised norm” (p.67). As Douglas (2009: 37) argues “in the state of exception, what needs to be emphasised is that it is not a power relation of pure violence, but rather, of *potential violence*.”

Butler argues that there is a racial and ethnic frame through which certain groups are viewed such that they are deemed less than human, a condition she equates with the *homo sacer*- a group who are deprived of their rights as citizens, it is this condition which can be seen as a power relation of potential violence. In the case of the war on terror, the frame through which the less than human are viewed is Islam. Like the critical race theorists cited above, Butler argues that Islam is regarded as beyond the hegemonic norms of the West, which positions Muslims as suspicious or threatening. It is the fact that all Muslims, or those taken to be Muslim, Arabs, or Middle Eastern are viewed through a racial frame defining them as threatening and non-western, which means that these citizens are considered to embody the threat of terror, which they are seen to carry as an essential part of their subjectivity, and which therefore allows them to be “recognised” as non-citizens. As non-citizens, they do not enjoy the same entitlement to rights as citizens, and deprived of legal protection, Muslims become recognised as “humans who are not humans”, or the potential *homo sacer*. As such, sovereignty differentiates between humans on grounds of (perceived) race and ethnicity. Thus Butler (2004a) argues that managing a population does not only produce subjects, “it is also the process of their de-subjectivation, one with enormous political and legal consequences” (p.98). This process is justified to the population, where justification is required, on grounds of the necessity of a “state of emergency”, requiring sometimes extreme political responses to the alleged terrorist threat.

I now move on to consider how new technologies of surveillance in schools have racial implications, using a Butlerian reading of CRT.

### **Linking school surveillance, counter-terrorism and race**

Some might argue that the link between surveillance in schools and the counter-terrorism agenda is quite tenuous. However, research has shown that the counter-terrorism agenda is changing the face of our cities in particular, creating new borders, restrictions and regulations (see for example Coaffee & Rogers, 2008). The link between school surveillance and counter-terrorism in the UK has been made explicit through government policy and documentation allocating education staff a role in monitoring extremism: The Prevent strategy (re-launched and re-focused 2011) and The Channel Project both aim to prevent young people from becoming radicalised (Home Office, 2011). Although counter-terrorism agendas in the last decade have focused on various groups and ideologies, including the far right, animal rights groups, student protestors, anarchists, Irish nationalists and Islamic extremism, the present UK government has focused primarily on the Islamic threat, stating on the Prevent website, “[c]urrently, the greatest threat comes from Al Qa’ida, its affiliates and like-minded groups”. The Department for Education and Schools (2005) produced guidance for schools after 7/7 focused on their capacity to tackle terrorism directly and called for teachers to be involved “more explicitly in national security issues than at any time in British history” (Preston, 2009: 196). The Department for

Children Schools and Families (2008) introduced an “extremism toolkit” for schools, “Learning together to be safe: a toolkit to help schools contribute to the prevention of violent extremism”, also tying schools into surveillance and counter-terrorism agendas. Citizenship Education, introduced as a discrete subject on the National Curriculum for England and Wales in 2002, “has a surveillance function through identifying those who might hold extremist or negative values” (Preston, 2009: 196; see also Chadderton, 2009). Higher Education providers are expected to engage with Special Branch (a unit of the British police responsible for national security and criminal intelligence) to monitor students for signs of radicalism. In the US, in the wake of 9/11 and the Beslan school hostage crisis in which Chechan Islamic militants took 1100 people hostage at a North Ossetia school, the Department of Homeland Security made grants available for the purchase of security systems in schools (Casella, 2006, in Monahan & Torres, 2010: 4).

Of course schools have long engaged in surveillance practices such as physical observation, attendance registers, dress codes and behaviour policies, exams, tests and publishing of League Tables (cf. Foucault, 1991). However, more recently, school children are subject to much more rigid regimes – indeed, some would argue they are criminalised by such practices (Giroux, 2009). Any deviations from the norm are punished very severely: levels of exclusion from secondary schools have risen to unprecedented levels in the UK, and schools more frequently resort to punishments involving the police for misdemeanours which would previously have been dealt with by staff, parents and governors. We have also seen the introduction of on-site police officers (more common in the US, but still present at least part-time in some, particularly inner-city UK schools), the presence of whom, it could be argued, links the school and criminal justice system. Although it would be unrealistic to argue that the only reason for these shifts towards more rigid regimes of control is the war on terror, as we can see from the policies mentioned above, and following Judith Butler, it makes sense to assume that the counter-terror agenda is impacting on and feeding into education policy.

It is often presumed that surveillance is neutral and “democratic”, that is, it affects all sectors of society equally, as we are all under surveillance (Monahan & Torres, 2010). Normally, the work of Foucault and his writing on the panopticon are used when theorising surveillance. Foucault’s work certainly allows us to understand how the modern, western world is governed by biopolitical power which functions by disciplining subjects so they internalise the discipline and creating “docile bodies” (Foucault, 1991). However, Foucault did not differentiate between these docile bodies in terms of race. Viewed through a CRT lens however, surveillance cannot be considered racially neutral. The racial aspect of new technologies of school surveillance has rarely been made explicit. A small amount of work has been done in the US (Monahan & Torres, 2010; Simmons, 2010), and I have been able to find nothing in the UK. A recent project on the ‘surveilled’ (McCahill & Finn, 2010) examined the social impact of new surveillance technologies on the lives of school children living in a Northern English city, including looking at 13 to 16 year-old children in three schools. It found that children’s experiences differed across social class and gender, but did not examine the implications for race. Recent work on surveillance in general has identified “social sorting” (see Lyon, 2003) which “indicates the tendency for surveillance systems to operate as mechanisms for societal



differentiation” (Monahan & Fisher, 2008: 219). Therefore existing inequalities are likely to be reproduced by surveillance regimes (Monahan & Fisher, 2008; Simmons, 2010).

As we have seen, the counter-terror agenda is shaped by a racial frame. Since the discourses which shape the frame tend to be implicit rather than explicit, I draw on CRT to render the racial aspects of school surveillance visible. In the counter-terrorism context, as I argue above, racial minorities, particularly those who are perceived to be Muslims, are already positioned as embodying threat and thus in need of control and surveillance. Minority ethnic individuals are already disproportionately subjected to more surveillance outside school, such as police “stop and search” practices on the streets, airport controls and police profiling “which continue to rely upon racial markers of ‘risk’.” (Monahan & Fisher, 2008: 217). Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic groups (BAME) are seven times more likely to be stopped and searched than white people. The number of arrests for the white group decreased during 2010-11, however arrests of Black persons rose by 5% and arrests of Asian people by 13%. 26% of the prison population comes from BAME groups. In 2010, the highest average custodial sentence length (ACSL) for those given determinate sentences for indictable offences was recorded for the Black ethnic group, at 20.8 months, followed by the Asian and Other groups with averages of 19.9 months and 19.7 months respectively. The lowest ACSL was recorded for the white group at 14.9 months (all data Justice, 2011). Equally, in a school context, research has shown that minority ethnic young people are more likely to be excluded from school than white young people (Gillborn, 2006). It has been suggested that one reason for this is the perception of teachers, many of whom view minority ethnic children as a challenge or threat, their perceptions shaped by dominant discourses (for example, Mac an Ghail, 1988; Gillborn, 1990; Mirza, 1992; Basit, 1997).

As yet there is a lack of empirical research linking new technologies of surveillance in schools and race, and we can only assume the impact on young people’s subjectivities and racial inequalities. Other research has argued that those who are perceived to be in need of surveillance are positioned as suspects (Monahan & Torres, 2010). McCahill and Finn (2010) suggested that the females in their study were more acutely aware of being under surveillance because women’s bodies already tend to be more scrutinised than men’s. As racial minorities are already frequently positioned as threatening or suspects, and are already more scrutinised than whites, it makes sense to assume that school surveillance is likely to impact more harshly on racial minorities than their white counterparts, and these discourses are likely to build on longstanding notions of perceived essentialised links between minority ethnic bodies and criminality and threat (Oztas, 2011). Research on surveillance technologies in general has pointed to the importance of the interpretation of the body in the way in which surveillance devices are employed. In his study of young working class males, Nayak (2006: 64) showed how they are excluded from clubs and bars in the city centre because of their dress and the way they move. Equally a study by Norris and Armstrong showed that “[t]hose responsible for operating open-street CCTV surveillance cameras use them to target young working class males who have their ‘head up, back straight, upper body moving too much’, or those who were ‘swaggering, looking hard’” (Norris and Armstrong 1999: 122, cited in McCahill and Finn, 2010: 286). These examples suggest that the way in which different bodies and their behaviours are “recognised” (in Butlerian terms) is dependent on dominant discourses of race, class and gender. It

therefore seems likely that new technologies of surveillance will regulate and control bodies accordingly, and that the existing raced dynamic in schools will be reinforced by increased surveillance.

### **Reproducing white supremacy and the *homo sacer***

A CRT analysis of schooling allows us to theorise the links between school surveillance, counter-terrorism and race and see schools as sites where the counter-terrorism agenda will be played out. Critical race theorists have extended the analysis of others (for example Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990; Durkheim, 1956) to argue that not only does formal education have a specific function to teach loyalty to the state and to ensure the maintenance of the social status quo, it ensures the maintenance of white supremacy (Ladson-Billings, 1998; Gillborn, 2006). Thus we see that white supremacy is not a fixed structure, rather it requires continual maintenance work, to which this new surveillance regime potentially contributes. Following Butler, it can be argued that through the framing of specific bodies as threat, these bodies become a legitimate target. Taking the example of photography, she writes that photographs both allocate positions to those on camera, the target, and those behind the camera, the viewer, and remove the wider context in which these photographs are taken, playing a key role in producing the subject,

cameras [...] both frame and form the human and non-human target [...] In a way, that focussing on the target produces a position for the soldier, the reporter, and the public audience, structuring the visual field that makes each position possible. The frame not only orchestrates such positions, but also delimits the visual field itself.

(Butler, 2010: x-xi)

Surveillance can be seen as creating a similar process: the fact that bodies already “recognised” as threat are under surveillance, actually reproduces their subject position as threat. In the context of the “war on terror”, Muslim lives are not fully recognisable as lives, but rather are viewed as threat to life. They are, indeed, already recognised as a terrorist threat, and as “recognisability precedes recognition” (Butler, 2010:5), increased surveillance and monitoring will ensure that young people who are Muslims are the embodiment of the threat. As Butler explains, this “recognition” of threat further justifies the increase in surveillance.

Lives are divided into those representing certain kinds of states and those representing threats to state-centred liberal democracy, so that war can then be righteously waged on behalf of some lives, while the destruction of other lives can be righteously defended.

(Butler, 2010: 53)

Once Muslim citizens are recognised as a threat to life, and their surveillance is justified, they become the less-than-human, as they are recognised as the embodiment of the threat to Britishness, and therefore they are vulnerable to the potential violence of the position of non-citizen, non-human, whose entitlement to rights is very much reduced – potentially the *homo sacer*. For a group already frequently positioned as

unbritish, as explained above, Muslims, or those perceived as Muslims, their vulnerability is only compounded.

When a population appears as a direct threat to my life, they do not appear as “lives”, but as the threat to life (a living figure that figures the threat to life). Consider how this is compounded under those conditions in which Islam is seen as barbaric or pre-modern, as not yet having conformed to those norms that make the human recognisable.

(Butler, 2010: 42)

Moreover, those bodies which are caught in the background of the CCTV images, those which are not understood to be directly under surveillance, are reconfirmed in their “innocence”- indeed, recognised as full lives – in this case, those whose lives are perceived as under threat, the white British. Thus surveillance is actively producing those divided populations identified by critical race theorists. The CCTV camera, then, creates and re-creates the frame, “[t]he frame does not simply exhibit reality, but actively participates in a strategy of containment, selectively producing and enforcing what will count as reality” (Butler, 2010: xiii). Also we can observe at a micro-level the process of desubjectivation identified by Butler, in which a group of citizens, Muslims, already defined as threat, come to be recognised as the non-citizen, described as the less-than-human or the *homo sacer*, as the group whose perceived need for surveillance justifies their continued and increased surveillance, which in turn reproduces their subject position as beyond human, or indeed, de-subjectivates.

Drawing on both Judith Butler and CRT, then, I argue that the surveillance and monitoring procedures for allegedly ensuring the security of young people at school in the UK are actually reproducing structures of white supremacy and both the discourse and the materiality of race. The installation of new surveillance technologies can be seen, at least partly, as a response to counter-terrorism discourses, and in addition, feed into and re-produce these discourses. Surveillance procedures actually produce the recognisability of white bodies as lives, and minority ethnic bodies as threat, therefore maintaining the structures of white supremacy. As subjectivities are seen as discursively constituted, this is likely to have a very real effect on the way in which young people are perceived and perceive themselves.

Moreover, whilst the process may not yet be complete, it could be argued that the state of exception is creeping into the liberal democracy of the UK. The state of exception, then, is characterized by the suspension of “normal” law to protect the interest of the sovereign, and the removal from the political realm of a specific group, which is treated as bare life, in that must be “constantly monitored and exposed to the potentiality of violence” (Douglas, 2009:33). It cannot be overlooked that the demands on educational institutions to monitor young people are made in the wider context of provisions for the temporary suspension of citizenship rights. These laws, as Douglas argues, “essentially nullify the application of normal laws protecting human rights, while still holding them technically ‘in force’” (Douglas, 2009:33). It is these “exceptional” laws which justify the increased surveillance, and it is in this way that the state of exception is becoming “normal”. Douglas (2009) argues that

[m]aking people suspects is equivalent to making people bare life [...] Electronic and biometric surveillance are the tactics through which the

government is creating a space in which the exception is routine practice. The biopolitical implication of surveillance is the universalization of bare life: “History teaches us how practices first reserved for foreigners find themselves applied later to the rest of the citizenry”

(Agamben, 2004).

These new control measures have created a situation in which not only is there no clear distinction between private and political life, but there is no fundamental claim, or right, to a political life as such – not even for citizens from birth; thus, the originary biopolitical act that inscribes life as political from birth is more and more a potential depoliticization and ban from the political realm. (p. 37)

Those young people “recognised” as threatening in the counter-terrorism context fulfil the criteria of the *homo sacer*- they are constantly monitored, their rights to privacy suspended (Taylor, 2010), potentially vulnerable to the complete withdrawal of their citizenship rights, they are depoliticised whilst being hyperpolitically defined. Therefore although to some the notion of an encroaching state of exception in democratic Europe may be extreme, if we take the example of new regimes and technologies of surveillance in many UK schools, it could be argued that many features of a permanent state of emergency, thus the state of exception, are increasingly defining our lives as extreme measures are resorted to in response to a perceived threat of terrorism.

## Conclusion

In this paper I have argued that new regimes of surveillance in UK secondary schools are partially linked to the government’s counter-terrorism agenda, and have implications for the ways in which populations are divided along lines of race. Using a framework which draws on both the work of critical race theorists and Judith Butler, I have shown how the war on terror is both fed by, and reinforces and reproduces an existing regime of white supremacy. I have also suggested that the war on terror has ushered in an era of increased sovereignty, the key to understanding how this regime of surveillance is justified:

Sovereignty becomes that instrument of power by which law is either used tacitly or suspended, populations are monitored, detained, regulated, inspected, interrogated, rendered uniform in their actions, fully ritualised and exposed to control and regulation in their daily lives.

(Butler 2004a: 97).

I have suggested that racial frames differentiate who will be “recognisable” (in Butlerian terms) as human and less-than-human, and have equated this to Agamben’s (1998) notion of *homo sacer* and bare life, which, although it may seem extreme to some, seems to describe well the encroaching state of exception in the liberally democratic UK. Thus we see a shift from the decentred power of governmentality towards the more overt power of sovereignty in which existing laws can be suspended whilst still being in effect, and certain groups are marginalised to the extent of being

beyond the protection of law – in the case of the war on terror, it is Muslims or those who appear to be of Arab or Middle Eastern heritage who are “recognised” as less-than-human.

I conclude by calling for more empirical research on the extent, meaning, and implications of the explosion of new technologies of surveillance in UK schools, including further work which explores the perceptions and resistances of those implicated in this surveillance, as we cannot presume that young people are passive receivers of these regimes of surveillance (Hope, 2005). Equally, my study illustrates that more research is needed on the implications of the counter-terrorism agenda for educational spaces, and the social consequences for young people and education of this shift to sovereignty and the encroachment of the state of exception.

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