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Undercover Research: Corporate and police spying on activists. An introduction to activist intelligence as a new field of surveillance.

Eveline Lubbers

Abstract

Building on previous research published in *Secret Manoeuvres in the Dark, corporate and police spying on activists* (2012), the author proposes a new field of research called *Activist intelligence and covert strategy*.

Using exclusive access to previously confidential sources, *Secret Manoeuvres* showed how companies such as Nestlé, Shell and McDonald's use covert methods to evade accountability. The author concluded that corporate intelligence gathering has shifted from being reactive to proactive, and identified a seriously under-researched area: the state's concern with corporate interests, their close cooperation in collecting intelligence on campaigners, and a shared agenda in dealing with dissent.

This paper encompasses an introduction to the published case studies, a definition of the proposed research field, and an exploration of its positioning in a multidisciplinary area as well as its theoretical embedding. The discussion under Methods: Hybrid Projects makes a case for the fusion of journalistic and social scientific approaches to the subject matter.

Keywords

Surveillance; political policing; infiltration; undercover policing; covert operations; transparency; accountability; secrecy

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