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When Big Brother Uses Twitter, Too: Productive Forms of Policing the Seoul G20 Protests in South Korea

Abstract:

In this paper, by taking an example of the Seoul G20 summit in 2010, the authors examine the role of (new) media in producing soft, productive forms of policing transnational activism. Beyond the conventional conceptualization of policing as repression, we argue for a broader definition of protest policing that includes a process of producing counter-narratives to the movement and gaining active consent from citizens, and thereby increases the cost of participation in the protest. In particular, we examine how the (new) media can be used as platforms for state public relations campaigns to produce narratives against possible dissent around transnational events. Despite the progressive bias prevalent in the work of new media-facilitated social movements, this paper shows that the state can also use them as a form of producing ‘legitimate’ discourses and controlling counter-narratives, invoking familiar social norms and ideas at the level of micro-practices.