

American Drone Surveillance & Information Policy Implications

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ABSTRACT

With the advent of U.S. military uses of drone surveillance technologies in the early 2000s, the impact of drones or Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV) and respective surveillance and policing practices have been a minimally documented form of warfare. When U.S. federal agencies began using drone surveillance on American soil, it was argued to be an efficient surveillance tactic for America's borders, a highly unregulated use posing mounting human rights violations to this day (Flynn & Mackay, 2018; Molnar, 2024). It was in 2011 that an American police force first used drone surveillance to arrest an American citizen (Jones & Mendieta, 2021). Since then, drones have been used to scan rallies, monitor neighborhoods, and respond to crime scenes.

Unfortunately, domestic drone surveillance appears to mimic American policing, disproportionately affecting and scrutinizing marginalized communities, while inciting paranoia and fear in its wake (Davis, 2019). Beginning in the early 2010s, the legal right for the American government to not only watch civilians, but to include surveillance data within the profiles of the biometric database "Next Generation Identification" continues to exacerbate the grey area of information policies at the nexus of privacy, surveillance, and social justice (Braman, 2007; Flynn & Mackay, 2018; Suchman, 2023).

Based on preliminary information policy research on UAV policies and practices within the United States, the research team investigates implications, shares takeaways from the first author's policy briefing on these issues, and seeks to discuss strategies to uphold affected communities' wellbeing and other key stakeholders' responsibilities regarding these realities.

ALISE RESEARCH TAXONOMY TOPICS

Information Policy; Information Rights; Critical Librarianship; Social Justice; Specific Population.

AUTHOR KEYWORDS

Information Policy; Drone Surveillance; United States Policing Tactics; Surveillance Technology; Predictive Policing.

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