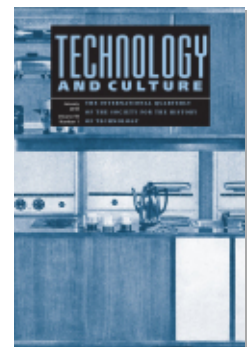*Actor-Network Theory and Crime Studies: Explorations in Science and Technology* ed. by Dominique Robert, Martin Dufresne (review)

Francisca Grommé

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Actor-Network Theory and Crime Studies: Explorations in Science and Technology.

Edited by Dominique Robert and Martin Dufresne. Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2015. Pp. 160. $109.95.

In crime control and criminal justice, science and technology are relied on to establish guilt, develop preventive policies, track suspects, and much more. This raises questions as to how facts about criminal behavior are established, how surveillance technologies spread, and how crime prevention affects everyday experiences. To answer such questions, the editors of *Actor-Network Theory and Crime Studies* propose, crime studies need to move beyond critical constructionist approaches. Editors Dominique Robert and Martin Dufresne argue that these approaches have in too many cases led to studies that critique and even "debunk" without giving satisfactory accounts of how science and technology affect legal and policing practices, and vice versa.

To appreciate the richness of science and technology as collective achievements by actors from different settings, the authors mobilize Actor-Network Theory (ANT). The editors propose to "let us give ANT a chance to irritate, destabilize and therefore inspire us" (p. 3). ANT is given this job because of a choice not to prioritize society, science, technology, or nature as pre-defined, explanatory entities, but to examine how they are outcomes of hybrid practices. A study of "crime," as demonstrated by Anita Lam, becomes a study of the situated practices in shops, police stations, and courts that bring crime into being. This is not to relativize crime into something that does not really exist, but to make it an active thing that changes along networked configurations of evidencing that we can question.

The result is a lively collection of case studies providing detailed accounts of how technologies such as genetic testing rearrange chains of authority, and also of how an everyday object such as a court administrator's desk may gain prominence. Their attention to facts, artifacts, and everyday practices enables the contributors to usefully intervene in crime studies in at least three ways. First, it enables opening up research agendas beyond entrenched theoretical frameworks. Dawn Moore and Rashmee Singh, for instance, sidestep the concept of patriarchy in their study of violence against women. Instead, they study the production of photographic evidence in "networks of viewing" (pp. 76–7). Second, several authors shift the concerns of applied criminology by taking into account unintended effects. Attending to the relations produced by interventions such as using sniffer dogs shows that practices can change in ways not anticipated by situational crime prevention strategies. In this case, networks supporting drug possession were altered, not eliminated, we learn from Jakob Demant

and Ella Dilkes-Frayne. The third intervention concerns the question of how to do public criminology. Following Bruno Latour, Michael Mopas and Robert and Dufresne propose that criminologists can contribute to public debates by reconstructing facts to make them "socially robust" (pp. 81–82). A good illustration is Cédric Moreau de Belling's chapter, in which he disentangles the efforts of scientists, legal experts, and civic rights groups to establish how tasers harm physically vulnerable protesters.

However, the book does not contain a reflection on what is gained and lost in taking up ANT, and therefore does not develop a research agenda particular to crime studies. Because the authors mean to break with previous work, they rarely connect with central issues in crime studies such as privatization, the invasiveness of surveillance, and demands for harsher penalization. But neither are the political and academic purchase (or perhaps the lack thereof) of ANT clearly spelled out. ANT is often employed as another "perspective" without recognizing that writing is an intervention with political potential because it brings into the world particular versions of science and technology (Moore and Singh's chapter is a notable exception). Moreover, abstracting ANT into three main principles in the introduction (relationality, performativity, and the agency of non-human actors) allows for a degree of freedom, but occasionally leads to performances of ANT as a detached body of work without a history. As a consequence, many authors do not connect with or contribute to scholarship inspired by ANT or sharing its theoretical roots (e.g., surveillance studies or science studies).

To conclude, this collection is valuable for its inventive and original studies of mainly French and Canadian cases across topics ranging from shoplifting to biocriminology. It succeeds in shaking up this field; the work ahead is to reflect on the resulting research agenda.

FRANCISCA GROMMÉ

Francisca Grommé is a postdoctoral researcher working the field of STS at the Department of Sociology, Goldsmiths, University of London. She wrote her Ph.D. thesis about experimental practices in crime control. Her current research concerns innovation in official statistics. This review is supported by funding from the European Research Council (FP/2007-2013 / ERC Grant Agreement no. 615588).