

## International Journal for Crime, Justice and Social Democracy



## Book Review

### Michael McGuire and Thomas J Holt (eds) (2017) *The Routledge Handbook of Technology, Crime and Justice*. London, New York: Routledge.

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Technology has undoubtedly immense impacts for contemporary society, justice and social control that require us to confront our conceptual understandings of 'technology'. Braverman's (2016) examination of 'doors, technology and the fourth amendment' demonstrates the significance of examining the mundane 'technology' of the door for policing, and the extensive body of United States Supreme Court jurisprudence this has produced. Studies such as this help criminologists to (re)configure and (re)appraise our understanding of the relationship between social actors and objects (or 'technologies'), which has been embraced in other fields of intellectual inquiry for some time, and is already familiar to science, technology and society (STS) scholars in particular. A transformational shift in the way criminologists understand the intersections of technology, society, justice and social control is necessary and overdue.

Therefore, the editors of and contributors to the *Routledge Handbook of Technology, Crime and Justice* are to be congratulated on compiling this anthology. The contributions are divided into five parts that include: theoretical and historical conceptual understandings of technology and the criminal justice system; the relationships between technology, crime and social harm; technology and social control; the impacts of technology on criminal justice processes; and emergent technologies. The content canvassed in this text, which is just short of 700 pages across 39 chapters, includes a detailed and comprehensive examination of a range of technologies and crimes including food fraud (Fenoff and Spink 2017), child exploitation material (Bryce 2017), biocrime (Sutton 2017) and firearms (Squires 2017). Aside from one chapter conceptualising copyright infringement as 'cybercrime' (Wall 2017), the text cements an important shift away from the discourse of 'the cyber' and 'cybercrime' within criminology. This alone signifies this terminology is no longer in vogue; rather, a focus on various technologies and their impacts for crime, justice and social control is now preferred (on this point, see Powell et al. 2018).

A standout chapter is Hildebrandt's (2017) piece positioned at the intersections of law, philosophy and technology, and that concerns the force of law, technology and the administration of justice. Hildebrandt examines the challenges that new technologies present for the rule of law, and draws distinctions between constitutive and regulative legal norms, before investigating a new framework of technological normativity. In doing so, Hildebrandt invokes Latour's (2000) metaphor of the Berlin key and the technologies of doors, connecting these with encryption

technologies, and how they apply extra-legal normative forces to the issue of data protection. The philosophical analyses between legal and technological normativity are pertinent in current contexts that apply the force of law to non-state entities to shape technological possibilities (for example, as witnessed in Australia with the introduction of the Telecommunications and Other Legislation Amendment (Assistance and Access) Bill 2018 (Cth)). As Hildebrandt (2017: 606) concludes: ‘technology-neutral law may require re-articulation of legal norms as compensation for the interferences of new technological infrastructures’.

Some chapters presented in the edited collection touch upon important rights issues such as privacy, albeit from the perspective of the *criminal* misuse of data—as in Puddephatt’s (2017) contribution—rather than the questionable behaviour of state or global corporate actors, which is a significant omission in a post-Snowden and post-Cambridge-Analytica-Facebook context. Others necessarily consider surveillance (Jones 2017) and its various pre-crime applications (Edwards 2017). However, the volume could have also considered the ways new and emerging technologies infringe upon other rights and, as emerging literature is beginning to demonstrate, various forms of harms including the enhanced profiling of racial minorities and other marginalised groups (see, for example, Browne 2015; Eubanks 2018; Ferguson 2017; Noble 2018), which reflects the (neo)colonial and (neo)imperial ways digital technologies are being created and used (for example, Jin 2015; Mann and Daly 2018). These factors stem from, and magnify, (data) dispossession and (data) injustice.

As with ‘technology’, there is a need to adopt wider (or ‘deeper’) conceptualisations of ‘justice’—as proposed in the chapter by Borgmann (2017)—but this could also potentially be achieved through the lens of Southern Theory (Connell 2007) and Southern criminology (Carrington et al. 2018). But, this also has the potential to paint a bleak picture of technology, crime, (*in*)justice and social control. There is certainly an important and imaginative research agenda to be advanced around the ways in which technologies may be developed and applied for social or ethical *goods* (that is, ‘Good Data’; see Daly et al. forthcoming). Many discreet technologies considered in this edited collection are ‘*dual use*’ and can be applied for both ‘*good*’ and ‘*bad*’ intents and purposes, although these are ultimately normative judgements (as per Hildebrandt’s chapter on technological normativity). The largest part of this text (17 chapters) focuses specifically on *harm* and the nefarious applications of technology at the direct expense of considering possibilities for a better and more just world. We need to question and explore the ways in which technology can be designed and developed with, for example, the view to house the dispossessed, improve access to justice, and promote data sovereignty and autonomy. For this to occur, there is a need for greater transdisciplinary exchange and further offerings from scholars in media and communications, cultural studies, political science, international relations and geography. This would have contributed to widening (and ‘deepening’) the intellectual contributions presented in *The Routledge Handbook of Technology, Crime and Justice*.

Finally, international information flows afforded by new technologies have disrupted traditional notions of sovereignty and jurisdiction that underpin the state’s legitimate authority to police and govern (see, for example, Goldsmith and Wu 2006; Hildebrandt, 2013; Johnson and Post 1996). This has significant implications for the increasingly *transnational* administration of justice and the spatiality of digital society that are also influenced by wider geopolitical, economic and trade imperatives. There are important questions of (legal) geography, place, space and (state or corporate) power that are not dealt with in this volume. This comes with a need to think differently about policing and governance in this new ‘non-terrestrial’ dimension (see, for example, Lee 2018; Mann and Warren 2018; Mann et al. 2018).

Hence, it is recommended that this text be read alongside critical accounts of the new *Digital Criminology* that consider global contexts and digital political citizenship, and that situate these developments in broader techno-social understandings of crime (Powell et al. 2018). And, of course, ‘crime’ is only ever as such because of law, which, as above, is itself jurisdictionally bound.

Accordingly, this text should also be read in conjunction with Brownsword et al. (2017) *Oxford Handbook of Law, Technology and Regulation*. These texts supplement and complement the ambitious efforts of *The Routledge Handbook of Technology, Crime and Justice*, and are all well placed on the bookshelves of scholars of technology, crime and justice. Both independently and collectively, these texts are carving out a new and important area of criminological knowledge that reinforces the redundancy of 'the cyber'.

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