

The Ambiguous Multiplicities

Materials, Episteme and Politics of Cluttered Social Formations

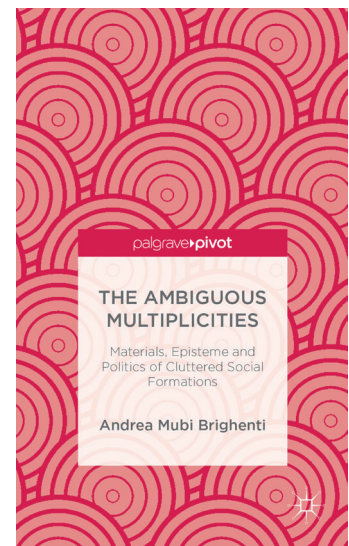
At the end of the 19th century, two famous predictions were advanced for the coming 20th century: while Le Bon prophesied that the coming century would have been the age of crowds, Tarde replied that the new century would have been the age of publics. Even in retrospect, it is not easy to tell who was right. This book proposes a historical-conceptual journey into the cluttered social formations that have remained outside of mainstream sociology. In particular, it reviews urban crowds, mediated publics, global masses, population, the sovereign people and the multitude. By doing so, it questions the image of the individual and addresses the question: 'What is the building block of the social?'. Imitation, contagion, suggestion and other phenomena of circulation within multiplicities put the idea of the individual as the building block of the social under strain. The notions of transformation and phase transition are explored as possible alternative views.

Contents:

1. Multiplicities Old and New
 2. Urban Crowds, Mediated Publics and Global Masses
 3. Population, 'the People' and the Multitude
 4. What is the Building Block of the Social? Episteme of the One and the Many
 5. Across and Within: Issues of Virality, Imitation and Reactivity
- Conclusions: Visible Multiplicities and Layered Individuals

Authors:

Andrea Mubi Brighenti is Aggregate Professor of Social Theory at the University of Trento, Italy. His main research threads include space and society, visibility, ethnography and social theory. His recent publications include *Visibility in Social Theory and Social Research*.



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