

visibility in social theory  
and social research  
andrea mubi brighenti



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# Visibility in Social Theory and Social Research

Andrea Mubi Brighenti

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**ANDREA MUBI BRIGHENTI** is Post-doctoral Fellow at the Department of Sociology, University of Trento, Italy. He researches both empirically and theoretically into space, visibility and society. He is the author of *Territori Migranti (Migrant Territories. Space and Control of Global Mobility)* and editor of the collection *The Wall and the City*.

"Brighenti is clearly an intellectual who is very widely read in various languages. This is a serious book from an erudite person who knows social theory very well...The book makes a convincing case for the centrality of visuality and visibility in social life." - *Sociologica*

'A fascinating tour that makes visibility visible - in electronic media, the public realm, urban spaces and in the expanding world of surveillance. Interacting with an array of theorists, Brighenti reveals how visibility is both socio-technical and bio-political and, importantly, vital to today's democratic project.' - **Professor David Lyon, Queen's University, Canada**

'At the intersection of political philosophy, social theory, urban, media and surveillance studies, this erudite, yet elegantly written book explores the vast territories of visibility in systematic fashion. In continuous dialogue with Tarde, Foucault and Deleuze, this sightseeing tour is a genuine tour de force. Thanks to its breadth, depth and theoretical intelligence, it may well become a foundational document of visibility studies.' - **Frederic Vandenberghe, University Research Institute of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil**

'Comprehensive in scope and clear in exposition, this book unites various strands of social theory under a new and important question: the distinction between what can be seen and what remains hidden. Andrea Brighenti charts new territory and makes numerous issues visible in a novel light.' - **Peter Wagner, ICREA Research Professor, University of Barcelona, Spain**

## About the book

What is social visibility? How does it affect people and public issues? How are visibility regimes created, organised and contested? Tackling both social theory and social research, this book provides an exploration into how intervisibilities produce crucial sociotechnical and biopolitical effects. It elaborates the concept of visibility as a general category for social theory and social research. The issue of the visibility and intervisibility of social events, subjects and sites proves relevant to a wide range of disciplines including sociology, cultural and media studies, political science, urban studies, criminology, identity studies, and science and technology studies. However, to date no comprehensive reflection on the topic of visibility as a distinct category – ranking it as a basic sociological category – has been attempted: this book fills that gap.

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