Deborah Lupton, *Digital Sociology*. London and New York: Routledge, 2015. 236 pp. ISBN 9781138022775

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In *Digital Sociology*, Deborah Lupton discusses how digital technologies have been incorporated into social contexts, institutions, and notions of selfhood and embodiment. The author argues that we now live in a *digital society* and this poses urgent challenges to sociological theory and practice. Said claim is supported by an assessment of recent debates, theoretical approaches and empirical studies directly associated with the social, cultural, and political dimensions of digital technologies. Lupton defines digital sociology in terms of both professional digital practices and analyses focusing on technology use and digital data, making explicit connections to other areas of knowledge - namely digital anthropology, cultural studies, mass communication and media studies. The author also expresses her own project of a self-reflective and critical digital sociology that pays close attention to the ways in which such technologies confront academic sociology in professional, epistemological and methodological terms.

The book begins with an evaluation of the broader articulations between digital technologies and society from the perspective of social theory, research methods, and academic practice. In the first two chapters, Lupton introduces the central themes of the book – power, knowledge, production, consumption, software and hardware, data objects, hybrid networks, assemblages, veillance, subjectivity and embodiment – through an examination of studies, theories, and research practices concerning concerned with digitally mediated social relations. The next two chapters deal with the intersection of digital technologies, higher education, and academic practice. Relationships between theory, research methods and digital data are the object of the chapter about research in the digital era. It connects theoretical and methodological developments, providing examples of the directions taken by social research in response to digitization. Following the contextualization of these efforts within a broader project to "enliven sociology" (p. 64), Lupton ponders the limitations of digital data analysis. In the chapter centered on the *digitized academic*, the author reflects on the connections between digital technologies and professional academic practice

regarding public and peer communication, academic metrics and audit cultures. Lupton complements this exposition with testimonies from her survey of academics who use social media and allows her own first-hand experiences, professional familiarity with digital spheres, and active online public engagement as an academic to transpire through this chapter.

After the reflexive incursion into the domains of sociology, research and academic institutions, the last four chapters consist on a more detailed explorations of selected issues related to digitization. In the first chapter of this part, the author offers a critical sociological account of the data constantly generated through digital media and monitoring technologies considering the algorithms and large datasets that harvest, mine, and store digital data. Lupton approaches *big data* analyses, which are often "represented as superior to other forms of knowledge" (p. 93), as sociocultural artefacts and assemblages that configure systems of knowledge, power and authority. This perspective works as a guideline through her examination of ethical issues and anxieties around data, models and predictions. The next chapter presents both statistical and in-depth qualitative investigations about social and political issues related to digital technology use, covering geographical distribution, user profiles, inequality, gender, discrimination, and ethnographic accounts from different cultural contexts. In the chapter devoted to digital politics and public engagement, the author discusses recent examples and empirical studies about questions of surveillance and privacy, activism and open data initiatives. After considering the political dimensions of digital watching and privacy, Lupton contrasts the positive rhetoric about social media's possibilities for progressive social transformation, transparency and access with how they also harbor forms of public shaming, dissemination of false information, discrimination and hate speech. Comments on strategies for pursuing commercial and state interests that push for data openness, discredit their targets, and constrain individual action and expression complement the debates around the availability of data and mediated communication platforms. The book's last chapter explores how digital technologies increasingly play a role in the configuration of bodies, spaces, and practices of the self. Some of the most interesting contributions of the book are analyses about intimacy and the boundaries between the public and private domains that emphasize the human body, physical contact and the affective relations people establish with digital technologies. Among these figures Lupton's review of her own research done two decades ago, integrated with that of others

who wrote about these subjects since then, which highlights important transformations that occurred not only in hardware, software and connectivity, but also in the often intimate relations people establish through and with digital technologies. The conclusion of the book is a quick assessment of the relevance of those technologies for sociologists and of some insights from researchers who focused on digital social life.

Lupton's book renders visible many of the ways in which social relations are becoming digitized, portraying the digital as an elusive, plural, and interconnected object of analysis that deeply impacts the discipline of sociology. The book is concise but ambitious in terms of its scope. Far from providing simplistic or impressionistic views on these subjects, the author goes great lengths to incorporate different, often dissonant perspectives. While the inclusive strategy of the book does justice to a rich, fragmented and emerging field of knowledge, the reader may occasionally feel that some themes deserved closer attention or were not sufficiently integrated. The book leans toward an anglocentric digital world and there is a prevalence of North America, Australia, and the United Kingdom in the choices of covered literature and social contexts. This may be the consequence of the positions occupied by these regions - and by the author herself - in the global knowledge economy, digital media ecologies and the sociological academic field, in addition to the status of English as the internet's *lingua franca.* Despite Lupton's explicit effort to provide statistical and ethnographic studies about other parts of the world, a greater emphasis on other realities would certainly result in a different map of digital sociology. Nevertheless, the book contains balanced and critical examinations about many ways in which the social world is becoming digitized. In line with sociology's critical and reflexive tradition, power relations and the dimensions of inequality, discrimination and exploitation are explored in these analyses. For these reasons, the book is a valuable and welcomed map of digital sociology and positively demonstrates academic sociology's relevance for informed readings about the contemporary social world.

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