*Summary*

**Data visualization in society:**

**The relationships between graphs, charts, maps and meanings, feelings, engagement**

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Today we are witnessing an increased use of data visualization in a range of genres and areas of society. In journalism, education and public information, as well as in workplaces, various forms of graphs, charts and maps are used to explain, convince and tell stories. In an era in which more and more data are produced and circulated digitally, and digital tools make visualization production increasingly accessible, it is important to study the conditions under which such visual texts are generated, disseminated and thought to benefit processes of learning and participation.

New tools and arenas imply that data visualizations are realized in potentially innovative semiotic forms and result in novel types of communication and interactivity. Thus, their potentials for meaning-making, for evoking emotions and active engagement are also in a state of transformation. While data visualizations have a growing impact and importance in society, their potentially novel forms and uses mean that we do not know exactly how they work as semiotic and aesthetic phenomena or how they support or hinder personal and social agency. These transformations sit alongside more familiar debates about whether data visualizations do ‘good’ or ‘bad’: do they promote understanding and engagement, or do they do ideological work, privileging certain views of the world?

The proposed book is a contribution to the multi-disciplined and multi-faceted academic conversation concerning the forms, uses and roles of data visualization in society. Although the individual chapters derive from a range of perspectives, the book leans on a social semiotic understanding of discourse – as the situated application of semiotic resources (words, images etc.) by human agents in order to construct and share ideas about the world and to perform social action (that is, make things happen).

The target audience include academics in a broad range of fields, such as media, cultural and communications studies, digital humanities and information studies. The book will be written in an accessible style and include real-world examples, in order to ensure that it is also comprehensible to a non-academic audience. Chapters will be relatively short, 8-10 pages. Many of them will draw on academic research, and some of them will be based on visualization projects and practices. All will have a simple and clear point to make about data visualization in society.