

Affective Publics: News storytelling, Sentiment and Twitter

Social media excite the public imagination with their potential for democratization, newer forms of news storytelling and social change. Digitally aided waves of civil unrest invite speculation on whether social media make or break the pace of revolutionary movements. Focusing on the Arab Spring and Occupy, this talk begins by examining the role and meaning of social media, and Twitter specifically, for the social networks driving these movements. Data from recent studies undertaken at the University of Illinois at Chicago are presented in explicating the relevance of the platform for contemporary news

storytelling, framing, and gatekeeping. The talk concludes with an emphasis on the concept of affective publics, and how these public formations sustain all forms of mobilization, including recent waves of populism.

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