Affective Publics: Sentiment, Technology, and Politics (Oxford Studies in Digital Politics)

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Over the past few decades, we have witnessed the growth of movements using digital means to connect with broader interest groups and express their points of view. These movements emerge out of distinct contexts and yield different outcomes, but tend to share one thing in common: online and offline solidarity shaped around the public display of emotion. Social media facilitate feelings of engagement, in ways that frequently make people feel re-energized about politics. In doing so, media do not make or break revolutions but they do lend emerging, storytelling publics their own means for feeling their way into events, frequently by making those involved a part of the developing story. Technologies network us but it is our stories that connect us to each other, making us feel close to some and distancing us from others.

Affective Publics explores how storytelling practices facilitate engagement among movements tuning into a current issue or event by employing three case studies: Arab Spring movements, various iterations of Occupy, and everyday casual political expressions as traced through the archives of trending topics on Twitter. It traces how affective publics materialize and disband around connective conduits of sentiment every day and find their voice through the soft structures of feeling sustained by societies. Using original quantitative and qualitative data, *Affective Publics* demonstrates, in this groundbreaking analysis, that it is through these soft structures that affective publics connect, disrupt, and feel their way into everyday politics.

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