Abstract

We apply the theory of brokerage to analyze the communication network around an international protest campaign launched in May 2012. We examine the cohesion of the network, and identify users in a position to span structural holes. We also consider the actual flow of information to assess how the network is used to encourage diffusion. Our findings provide evidence of fragmentation in online communication dynamics, and of a very hierarchical distribution of brokerage opportunities. We use these findings to assess recent theoretical claims about political protests in the digital age.