The role of social media in mobilizing political protest

Evidence from the Tunisian revolution

Anita Breuer

Bonn 2012
Contents

Abbreviations

1. The role of new information and communication technologies (ICT) in the mobilization of political protest 1

2. Theoretical approaches to protest mobilization and the role of new ICT in authoritarian contexts 4
   2.1 Psychological and attitudinal approaches 4
   2.2 Rational choice approaches 5
   2.3 Resource mobilization and social capital approaches 6
   2.4 Structural or network account of activism 7

3. Methodology of data collection 8
   3.1 Sampling 9
   3.2 Socio-demographic sample statistics 11

4. The role of ICT and social media in protest mobilization during the Tunisian uprising 13
   4.1 ICT infrastructure development in Tunisia 13
   4.2 ATI censorship activities 13
   4.3 The preparation phase: 1998–2010 15
   4.4 The ignition phase, 17th December – late December 2010 18
   4.5 The escalation phase, late December 2010–12th January 2011 19
   4.6 The collapse of the regime, 12–14 January 21

5. Conclusions 25