When the Personal Becomes the Political: Examining Political Engagement on Social Media

By

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Abstract

Numerous scholars have examined how political and informational uses of social media contribute to on- and offline political participation, but little is known about how non-political social media practices and social media network contexts shape political behaviors on such sites in everyday social media use. Drawing on a theoretical framework that views "the political" as an extended terrain of "the personal," this dissertation examines the relationships between passive (i.e., consuming content) and active (i.e., producing content) forms of non-political and political social media use, and investigates the extent to which these associations are stratified by political interest, education, and age, using two separate adult samples of Facebook and Twitter users. With the same focus on everyday social media use, a survey experiment is conducted to investigate the impact of network prime—when users are primed with Facebook network size, diversity (i.e., the degree to which network members are evenly divided across classifications of social groups), and perceived political similarity to groups of connections on Facebook—on users' willingness to react to political mobilization messages in various ways. The findings presented in this dissertation show that forms of non-political social media use differentially associate with political behaviors on the sites, and that these relationships are not always contingent on political interests, education, and age. In addition to social media practices, social media network contexts also shape political behaviors, such that network prime suppresses users' willingness to actively engage with certain political mobilization requests. These results broadly support the conceptualization of "the political" as deeply embedded in "the personal," raise both

concerns and hopes for the future of political inequality, and highlight the importance of social contexts in shaping political behaviors on social media sites. Future research should continue to explore how different non-political social media practices and contexts influence behavioral and attitudinal political outcomes on and beyond social media sites.

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Social media, such as Facebook and Twitter, have become increasingly important platforms that expose users to political information and enable them to express their viewpoints. One major concern with political engagement on social media is that the lower-effort political activities on social media may distract users from traditional forms of collective efforts, leading to "slacktivism," a weakened form of activism. Yet, increasing evidence has challenged this perspective by demonstrating that political activities on social media—accessing political information and expresssing political views—are important pathways to political participation beyond the web (e.g., Gil de Zúñiga, Molyneux, & Zheng, 2014; Vaccari et al., 2015). In other words, mundane political information exposure and political expression on social media may well represent important new forums of democratic participation.

Given the potential importance of political engagement on social media, however, little is known about how these political activities may arise from everyday social media use that is typically characterized by entertainment and socializing activities. Substantial research on digital media has studied the issue from a uses and gratification perspective, which considers motives of media use (Blumler & Katz, 1974) by juxtaposing political or informational use with personal or recreational use, while often assigning less weight to the latter in shaping political outcomes (e.g., Theocharis & Quintelier, 2014). Yet, this line of research may limit our understanding of the role of everyday, non-political social media use in political processes in two important ways.

First, it precludes the possibility that personal uses of social media may lead to political activities on such media, despite an emerging body of work that posits that everyday, non-political practices on networked digital media platforms can involve citizens in political processes in new and empowering ways (e.g., Bakardjieva, 2009; Dahlgren, 2009; Papacharissi, 2010). Second, some studies (e.g., Theocharis & Quintelier, 2014) comparing political and non-political Internet use may underestimate the significance of the latter by mistakenly assuming that how such forms of Internet use contribute to political outcomes is a zero-sum game. In short, we still have an incomplete understanding of the political implications of social media use that is characterized by entertainment and socializing activities.

The overall aim of this dissertation, therefore, is to draw on the emerging theoretical framework that sees social media-enabled engagement for private interests as a first step toward political participation (e.g., Bakardjieva, 2009; Dahlgren, 2009; Papacharissi, 2010), and to examine whether and how political social media behaviors might emerge out of everyday, non-political use of such forums.

Theoretical Motivation and Background

The advent of social media has conincided with an important shift in conceptualizations of citizenship, moving from a "contrast" model that sees the personal and the political as two separate domains (e.g., Lee, Shah, & McLeod, 2012), to a "extension" model that identifies forms of political engagement in the mundane activities of everyday life (e.g., Bakardjieva, 2009; Dahlgren, 2009). Earlier work in digital democracy emphasized civic virtue and conceived personal, private interests as somewhat incompatible with political, civic virtue. For example, many studies have employed a uses and gratification approach, entailing that people use media to satisfy specific needs (Blumler & Katz, 1974), and demonstrated that citizens who use the

Internet to gather news information are more likely to participate in political and civic activities beyond the web (Lee et al., 2012; Shah, Cho, Eveland, & Kwak, 2005). In contrast, recreational or entertainment-oriented Internet use is often found to have insigificant or even negative impacts on political engagement (Theocharis & Quintelier, 2014). In this way, the uses and gratification approach posits a sharp contrast between personal and recreational versus political and informational Internet use, while giving less weight to former in shaping political outcomes.

However, research that employs the "contrast" model may limit our understanding of the implications of everyday, non-political social media use for political engagment in two important ways. First, this model precludes the possibility that political activites on social media may arise from non-political use of such sites. As many people use social media for social as opposed to news or political purposes (e.g., Glynn, Huge, & Hoffman, 2012), there is evidence that social media expand the circle of political engagment to a new public who are otherwise unaware of certain political issues or unlikely to become active in traditional forms of political participation (Penney, 2014). The possible extension from non-political to political social media use is neglected by the "contrast" model. Second, the null or even negative relationships between non-political Internet use and political outcomes revealed by studies adopting the contrast appraoch while controlling for the total amount of Internet use (e.g., Theocharis & Quintelier, 2014) may not be accurate. When holding total time spent online constant, the greater contribution of political media use unavoidably decreases the contribution of non-political use to political outcomes. In doing so, these studies mistakenly assume that the contribution of political and non-political Internet use to political outcomes is a zero-sum game. As a result, the "contrast" model provides an incomplete view on the role of everyday, non-political Internet use in political engagement.

With the rise of social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter, a fresh wave of digital democracy scholarship proposes the "extension" model, which conceptualizes political life as an extended terrain of everyday life and posits that social media-enabled practices in the personal domain of interests can bring citizens into contact with the political realm (e.g., Loader & Mercea, 2011). Dahlgren (2009) proposes the idea of "civic cultures" to capture the ways in which networked communicative practices in casual cultural spaces foster a shared sense of civic identity, which in turn, becomes, a basis for formal institutionalized political participation. The idea of civic cultures is echoed by Bakardjieva's (2009) notion of "subactivism," which posits that mundane, personal online interactions can cultivate collective identity and provide a reservoir of civic energy that can be potentailly mobilized by formal political insitutions and transform into public activism. These more culturally-oriented perspectives understand the political as deeply embedded in everyday, personal use of social media, and suggest that social media use for entertainment and personal interests can lead to political use of the sites.

Given the significant shift in conceptualization of digital media and citizenship, little is known about how exactly political social media behaviors might emerge out of everyday, non-political use of sites. This dissertation, therefore, draws on a more inclusive notion of citizenship that conceptualizes "the political" as a dimension of "the personal," to understand two main forms of political engagment on social media—political information exposure and political expression. Prior work suggests that exposure to political information is a central mechanism through which individuals become aware of prominent political issues and encounter more opportunities to engage in forms of political activity, whereas political expression, the act of expressing political beliefs, is a precursor to other forms of political participation (e.g., Gil de

Zúñiga et al., 2014; Shah et al., 2005). Both forms of political engagment on social media have important implications for democratic processes.

With this overarching theoretical framework that situates political engagement on social media sites in the context of day-to-day use of the sites, the dissertation further considers three important characteristics of social media, which corresponds to three significant research questions addressed in this study. The three characteristics and their related research questions are: (1) Active and Passive Social Media Use: how are passive and active forms of non-political social media use associated with exposure to and expression of political opinions and information?;

(2) Inclusion of Traditionally Politically Marginalized Individuals: are the relationships between forms of non-political and political social media use stratified by political interest, education, and age?;

(3) Access to a Wide and Diverse Netowrk: does salience of perceived network connections on social media influence willingness to engage with political messages?

Passive and Active Social Media Use: How are Passive and Active Forms of Non-political Social Media Use Associated with Exposure to and Expression of Political Opinions and Information?

Prior research indicates that social media activities can be broadly classfied into two forms: (1) passive use, meaning the consumption of information, and (2) active use, meaning the production of content (Burke, Kraut, & Marlow, 2011; Burke, Marlow, & Lento, 2010). Furthermore, experimental evidence has demonstrated that the two forms of social media usage lead to diverse well-being outcomes (Deters & Mehl, 2012; Verduyn et al., 2015). Drawing on this theoretical distinction between types of social media use, this study examines how passive

and active non-political social media use contribute to political information exposure and political expression. The distinction between passive annd active social media use can be mapped onto two theoretical paradigms in communication research, namely, reception- and expression-effect models (Pingree, 2007). Reception-effect models address the effects of consuming media messages and are highly influential in political communication scholarship. As noted, a great deal of research has shown that consumption of news information contributes to forms of civic and political participation (e.g., Gil de Zúñiga, Jung, & Valenzuela, 2012; Lee et al., 2012; Shah et al., 2005). However, because work taking the reception-effect approach often flattens passive and active non-political media into one uniform category—recreational or entertainment use—little is known about how *non-political, passive* media use (e.g., consumption of recreational and social information), in particular, relates to political outcomes.

Expression-effect models, on the other hand, emphasize the effects produced by expressing oneself on/through media—something, in contrast, largely unexplored in political communication literature (Pingree, 2007). Recently, scholars have begun to focus on generic active online media use (e.g., producing music videos) and have found that such use is positively linked to increased on- and offline political particiaption (e.g., Ekström & Östman, 2013; Gil de Zúñiga, Bachmann, Hsu, & Brundidge, 2013; Östman, 2012). While this line of research suggests that social media use that is not necessarily political in nature may contribute to political engagement, it is unclear whether *non-political, active* social media use, in particular, contributes to political outcomes. Because the conceptualization and operationalization of generic active online media use in prior work inevitably includes active, politically-related use, it is possible that it is this active, politically-related media use that is driving the observed

relationship. Thus, a focused investigation of how non-political social media use—in both active and passive forms—relates to political outcomes is needed.

Taken together, drawing on both reception- and expression-effects paradigms, this research (Chapters 2 and 3) classifies non-political social media use into passive and active forms in order to advance our understanding of how these forms of non-political social media use are associated with political engagement on social media sites.

Inclusion of Traditionally Politically Marginalized Individuals: Are the Relationships Between Forms of Non-political and Political Social Media Use Stratified by Political Interest, Education, and Age?

People with diverse political, socioeconomic, and cultural backgrounds are engaged in forms of non-political social media use. With the theoretical view that non-political use can be extended to political use of social media, there is hope that social media may ameliorate inequalities in political participation by engaging politically disadvantaged social media users in the political processes inadvertently. Literature on Internet use and political participation often supports "the Matthew Effect" (Merton, 1968)—the dynamic of those who are already advantaged being more likely to accumulate advantage than those who are disadvantaged. For example, scholars argue that in the current high-choice media environment, those who are politically advantaged are more motivated to seek political information while the politically disadvantaged may opt out from political information exposure, exacerbating the knowledge gap between the two (Prior, 2007). Yet, there is evidence that this effect might be mitigated by social media's provision of spaces or groups oriented toward private interests, such as hobbies or recreation, but within which political discussions can take place incidentally (Wojcieszak & Mutz, 2009). Likewise, as use of social media sites, such as Facebook and Twitter, is primarily

driven by social as opposed to news or political motivation (Matsa & Michell, 2014), those who are politically disadvantaged may be involved in the political process inadvertently, raising the hope that social media use may extend political engagement to a new group of the public. Considering the possibilities, this work (Chapter 3) further examines whether the extension from passive and active forms of non-political to political social media use ameliorates inequalities in political engagement by engaging those who are politically, economically, and culturally disadvantaged individuals in the political field.

Access to A Large and Diverse Network: Does Salience of Perceived Network Connections on Social Media Influence Willingness to Engage with Political Messages?

One of the defining features of social media is the way they connect people to a wide and diverse array of people (boyd & Ellison, 2007; Ellison & boyd, 2013). While access to a wider and more diverse array of people allows the expression and exchange of information at a low cost and helps enforce social norms that promote collective political actions (Lupia & Sin, 2003), in the context of day-to-day social media use, access to an expanded network may also make users more cautious about expressing themselves politically on social media. For many people, daily political conversations are confined to a few close friends and family members, since political expression opens up risks of encountering disagreement, disrupting social relationships, and revealing social identities (e.g., Conover, Searing, & Crewe, 2002; Gerber, Huber, Doherty, & Dowling, 2012). In this sense, day-to-day offline political expression often takes place among intimate friends and family members. In contrast to offline political talk, because individuals' network connections on social media tend to be much larger and wider than their offline political discussion networks, expressing political views on social media may be perceived as disclosing one's political self in a larger "front" stage (Goffman, 1959), which in turn, may intensify

concerns about political expression (Thorson, 2013). Considering the important role of perceived audience in self-disclosure (e.g., boyd, 2011; Litt, 2012; Marwick & boyd, 2011), the dissertation (Chapter 4) also examines how a network prime—when priming people their social media network size, social media network diversity (i.e., the degree to which network members are evenly divided across classifications of social groups), and political similarity to groups of connections on social media—influences willingness to engage with political messages on such sites.

Plan of the Dissertation

The dissertation is organized into five chapters, including this Introduction, three empirical studies, and conclusion. As this dissertation examines political engagement in the context of day-to-day social media use, the second and the third chapters examine the relationships between forms of non-political and political social media use, and how these relationships differ by political interests, education, and age. Further, the fourth chapter investigates how salience of network connections influences willingness to react to political messages. In the following paragraphs, I briefly summarize the content of each chapter.

Chapter 2

Previous research indicates that social media use for news or political purposes increaes political participation, but little is known about whether and how political social media behavior might emerge out of everyday, non-political use of the sites. Using two separate adult samples of Facebook and Twitter users, this chapter examines the extent to which and how non-political, passive (NPP) social media use (consuming content about entertainment interests and personal life) and non-political, active (NPA) social media use (producing content about entertainment interests and personal life) relate to exposure to and expression of political voice and information

on the sites. The chapter sheds lights on how patterns of non-political social media use relate to forms of political engagement on the sites, while drawing attention to the possible differential political outcomes related to NPP and NPA use.

Chapter 3

Building on the theoretical framework that non-political, passive (NPP) and non-political, active (NPA) social media use can relate to political social media use, that is, exposure to and expression of political voices, this chapter further examines whether the possible extension from forms of non-political to political social media use mobilizes previously marginalized citizens, as measured by political interest, education, and age. This chapter aims to advance our understanding of the conditions under which NPP and NPA use are associated with political engagement on social media, which is critical for identifying whether opportunities to encounter political information and voice one's political views via daily social media usage are equally acted upon by all members of social media.

Chapter 4

Social media sites such as Facebook play an increasingly imporatnt role in political mobilization processes, especially for those who fall to the "left" on the political spectrum, yet little is known about how a network prime—when priming people with their Facebook network size, diversity, and their political similarity to others—impacts individuals' willingness to engage with requests for political moblization on such sites. Using an online experiment, this chapter investigates the priming effect of network characteristics on willingness to react to left-leaning moblization messages, and provides insights into the dynamics underlying these effects.

Chapter 5

This chapter synthesizes the findings from Chapters 2 to 4 to provide an overall assessment of research findings. This final chapter will also address implications, limitations of the research, and opportunities for future work.

CHAPTER 2

Examining the Relationship between Passive and Active Non-Political and Political Social Media Use

Social media such, as Facebook and Twitter, are increasingly important platforms that expose users to political information and enable them to express their viewpoints. One major criticism of political engagement on social media is that these lower-effort political activities (e.g., changing profile photos picture for political cause) may constitute a form of "slacktivism," a slack form of activism, which can distract users from traditional forms of political participation. Contrary to the "slacktivism" hypothesis, however, increasing evidence has demonstrated that two primary forms of political activities on social media—accessing political information and expresssing political views—are precursuers to political participation beyond the web (e.g., Gil de Zúñiga et al., 2014; Vaccari et al., 2015). These studies suggest that mundane political information exposure and political expression on social media may well function as important forums of democratic participation.

Given the potential significance of political engagement on social media in the political process, surprisingly little is known about how political activities may arise from everyday social media use that is typically characterized entertainment and socializing activities. Much research on digital media has employed a uses and gratification framework that juxtaposes recreational or non-political use with informational or political use, and assigning less weight to the former in predicting political outcomes. But this approach precludes the possibility that non-political activities online can be extended to political ones, and may provide misleading results among

studies that additionally control for the total amount of Internet use. As a result, we still have an inadequate understanding of how non-political Internet use in general relates to political processes.

Alongside the rise of social media, a theoretical framework has emerged, that posits that everyday, non-political practices on networked digital media platforms can cultivate civic bonds and collective identity, thus serving as the first step toward political engagement (e.g., Bakardjieva, 2009; Dahlgren, 2009; Papacharissi, 2010). This "extension" view posits the political as an extended terrain of everyday personal life and represents a significant departure from the "contrast" view, which considers the personal and the political as two separate domains and attaches more value to the latter (e.g., Shah, Kwak, & Holbert, 2001). With the significant shift in the conceptualization of digital media and democracy, this study draws on the "extension" theoretical view and examines whether everyday, non-political usage of social media does, indeed, associate with two major forms of political social media behaviors, namely accessing political information and expressing political views on social media (Vaccari et al., 2015).

I further distinguish between non-political social media use that is "passive" (i.e., consuming content) versus "active" (i.e., producing content) (Burke et al., 2011; Burke et al., 2010) to understand how non-political social media activities relate to political behaviors on the sites. In particular, it is hypothesized that NPA (non-political, active) use cultivates social bonds (Ellison, Vitak, Gray, & Lampe, 2014) that foster among users a sense of political efficacy, which, in turn, faciliates political expression when opportunities arise. Conversely, it is hypothesized that these interaction-based experiences may be absent from NPP (non-political,

passive) use. Thus, this study investigates and compares not only the relationships between non-political and political social media activities, but also *how* they are related.

Using two separate adult samples of Facebook and Twitter users, the study examines: (1) how NPP and NPA use are associated with exposure to political information; (2) how NPP and NPA use are related to political expression on social media; and (3) the possible intervening role of political efficacy in the relationship between NPA use and political expression on such sites.

NPP and NPA Social Media Use and Exposure to Political Information on Social Media

Exposure to political information is a central mechanism through which individuals become aware of prominent political issues and encounter opportunities to engage in political activities. While many users of social media such as Facebook and Twitter do not rely on them as news sources (Matsa & Michell, 2014), the social motivation that drives both NPP and NPA use may simultaneously (even if inadvertently) increase one's level of information consumption and number of opportunities to encounter political information on social media.

The primary motivation of using social media such as Facebook and Twitter is to gratify the need for social connection (Chen, 2011; Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe, 2011). With this social goal in mind, those who consume more non-political content (e.g., entertainment interests or content related to one's personal life) may also be more likely to consume other kinds of information, including political information, shared within their social networks because such information can further their understanding about their existing social contacts (Lampe, Ellison, & Steinfield, 2006) and facilitate future interactions with these contacts (Atkin, 1972). Likewise, those who frequently engage in NPA use, such as "liking" and "posting" content about entertainment interests and/or their personal life, may have greater opportunities to interact with others, perceive higher support from their networks, and become more invested in maintaining

their social relationships (Ellison, Vitak, et al., 2014). The further interactions and norms of reciprocity triggered by NPA social media use may motivate these users to consume more information from their social contacts and increase the chances of encountering political information on these sites. Thus, it is expected that both NPP and NPA social media use are positively related to exposure to political information on the sites. The following hypotheses are proposed:

H1: Non-political, passive (NPP) social media use is positively related to exposure to political information on social media.

H2: Non-political, active (NPA) social media use is positively related to exposure to political information on social media.

NPP and NPA Social Media Use and Political Expression on Social Media

Political Expression on Social Media

Before discussing how NPP and NPA use relate to another form of political engagement—political expression on social media—it is essential to understand the role of political expression in political participation processes and how characteristics of social media may shape political expression therein. Prior work suggests that political expression, the act of expressing political beliefs, is a precursor to other forms of political participation (e.g., Gil de Zúñiga et al., 2014). As social media allow expressed ideas to reach a wide audience instantly, under certain circumstances, political expressions on social media can be intensified, resulting in large-scale offline political participation (e.g., Bond et al., 2012; Valenzuela, Arriagada, & Scherman, 2012).

However, people tend to be cautious about voicing their political views in their day-to-day use of social media like Facebook (Thorson, 2013) and Twitter (Jin, 2013). Recent Pew

Research data show that 86% of U.S. adults reported willingness to have in-person conversations about the U.S. government's surveillance program, but only 42% of Facebook and Twitter users were willing to post information relevant to this issue on these platforms (Hampton et al., 2014). This pattern of findings resonates with prior work that suggests that offline political talk is often bounded within a more closed and private context of intimate others because political expression tends to open up risks of encountering disagreement, disrupting social relationships, and revealing social identities (e.g., Conover et al., 2002; Gerber et al., 2012). As social media like Facebook and Twitter constitute a collapsed context by combining both intimate and distant others in one place (Marwick & boyd, 2011), concerns about political expression on such sites may intensify given the difficulty of determining the potential audience of the expressed messages and the possibility of misinterpretation as messages are re-shared and searched over time (boyd, 2011). Given these uncertainties, typical social media users may be more careful about expressing themselves politically on these platforms than in offline contexts.

Direct Relationship: NPP and NPA Social Media Use and Political Expression on Social Media

Because individuals may be cautious about political expression on social media, I argue that NPA use may be both directly and indirectly associated with political expression on the sites, while NPP use may not, because experiences resulting from NPA use may be absent from NPP use. Regarding the direct relationship, it is possible that those who actively produce non-political information are more likely to voice their political views because they may have less concerns about expressing themselves politically in a collapsed context. As noted, political expression on such sites is considered a high-risk endeavor partly due to the uncertainty of audience and contexts for reception (Thorson, 2013), but as individuals frequently share personal

information in this blurred sphere, the distinctions between public and private spheres may be less important to them (Flanagin, Flanagin, & Flanagin, 2010). Indeed, a survey study found that those who frequently engage in generic active Facebook use (e.g., posting status updates and uploading photos) perceived freedom of expression as more important and had less concerns about privacy (Swigger, 2012). Thus, despite the uncertainties of political expression on social media, those who actively produce non-political content may be less concerned about the private-to-public transition and become more likely to express their political opinions on the sites when opportunities arise. In contrast, frequent *consumption* alone of non-political information may not help relieve the concerns about political expression in the collapsed contexts. As a result, NPP use may not be significantly related to political expression on these sites. The following hypotheses are thus proposed:

H3: Non-political passive (NPP) social media use is not significantly associated with political expression on social media.

H4: Non-political active (NPA) social media use is positively associated with political expression on social media.

Indirect Relationship: NPA Social Media Use, Political Efficacy, and Political Expression on Social Media

NPA use may also indirectly link to political expression on social media. In particular, NPA use that often involves interactions with others may cultivate collective identities and political efficacy (i.e., feelings that individual actions can influence political processes) (Campbell, Gurin, & Miller, 1954), which may, in turn, contribute to political expression on social media (Bakardjieva, 2009; Dahlgren, 2009). In particular, Bandura's (1997) social cognitive theory suggests that mastery of experiences and positive emotional states are sources

of efficacous beliefs, providing two possible theoretical insights into how NPA social media use might faciliate the formation of efficacy beliefs.

First, NPA social media use may allow indivduals to acquire mastery of resource mobilization, which, in turn, may increase efficacy perceptions. Prior work on social media use and social capital has found a positive relationship between relationship maintainance activities and bonding (i.e., benefits associated with stronger ties, such as emotional support) and bridging social capital (i.e., benefits associated with weaker ties, such as access to novel information) (Ellison, Gray, Lampe, & Fiore, 2014; Ellison, Vitak, et al., 2014). As social media lower the cost of engaging in relationship maintainance behaviors through features like birthday reminders, non-political acts on social media, such as sending birthday wishes and "liking" a family photo, often facilitate further interaction and trigger norms of reciprocity (Ellison, Gray, et al., 2014; Ellison, Vitak, et al., 2014). Thus, it is possible that through frequent NPA social media use involving exercises of resource mobilization, individuals may gain a sense of efficacy, a belief that they have the personal power to utilize network resources to produce desired outcomes.

Second, positive psychological states resulting from NPA social media use may also increase perceived self-efficacy. Past work suggests that, independent of social interaction, expression itself (e.g., expressive writing) can promote psychological well-being (Pennebaker, 1993). Likewise, in a field experimental study, Deters and Mehl (2012) found that independent of direct responses from Facebook friends, those who were asked to post more status updates on Facebook than they usually did for a week experienced reduced lonliness, compared to participants who received no instructions. As NPA use may lead to positive psychological states, such as positive affect, these positive psychological states may, in turn, induce selective recall of past successes and increase efficacious beliefs.

These experiences of resource mobilization mastery and positive psychological states, resulting from NPA social media use may enhance one's sense of personal efficacy that one can manage his/her life circumstances well, which may be extended to the political realm, increasing a sense of political efficacy. Importantly, as NPA use often involves interactions with others, collective identitification—the dicotomy of a "we" and a "they"—may emerge through the practice of NPA use (Bakardjieva, 2009; Dahlgren, 2009), which may help, in turn, to transform personal efficacy into collective forms of effiacy. Indeed, social cognitive theory perceives efficacy in the private domain as the foundation of efficacy in the public domain, as research suggests that self-efficacy to manage aspects of one's every day life increases beliefs that one can help make desired social changes (Fernández-Ballesteros, Díez-Nicolás, Caprara, Barbaranelli, & Bandura, 2002). In line with these perspectives, there is evidence that frequency of generating and sharing content online is positively associated with both general self-efficacy and political efficacy (Leung, 2009). Thus, it is expected that through frequent NPA use, individuals may feel a higher sense of political efficacy and, in turn, increase their political expression on social media. In contrast, because interaction-based experiences and positive states may not be available through NPP use, NPP use may not be associated with political efficacy. Thus, I hypothesize:

H5: Non-political passive (NPP) social media use is not significantly associated with political self-efficacy.

H6: Non-political active (NPA) social media use is positively associated with political self-efficacy, which contributes, in turn, to political expression on social media.

Methods

Sample

The survey was conducted in August 2014, using the Qualtrics, Inc. respondent panel. Respondents were a pre-selected group of adults chosen by Qualtrics, Inc. and invited to participate in the study in exchange for gift certificates and coupons. The sample was comprised of two groups of participants: 727 participants who completed Facebook use questionnaires and 663 participants who completed Twitter use questionnaires.

Measures

Predictor variables.

Frequency of non-political passive (NPP) Facebook and Twitter use. Two items comprised each of the indices asking how often Facebook and Twitter participants read two types of non-political content, namely, entertainment interests (e.g., sports, movies, food, or music) and personal life (e.g., work, school, relationships, or family). The response scale for the questions ranged from 1 (*never*) to 5 (*very frequently*). Composite measures of frequency of NPP Facebook and Twitter use were created by summing passive use for two non-political topics, respectively (2 items, Cronbach's $\alpha_{Facebook}$ = .64, $M_{Facebook}$ = 6.05, $SD_{Facebook}$ = 1.89; Cronbach's $\alpha_{Twitter}$ = .80, $M_{Twitter}$ = 6.11, $SD_{Twitter}$ = 2.30).

Frequency of non-political active (NPA) Facebook and Twitter use. Six items comprised each of the indices asking to what extent Facebook and Twitter participants actively engage with two types of non-political content, namely entertainment interests (e.g., sports, movies, food, or music) and personal life (e.g., work, school, relationships, or family). Respondents were asked, "please rate how often you do the following activities related to different topics on Facebook/Twitter." For Facebook participants, three modes of active use, including "liking," "commenting on," and "posting or sharing" were asked in loops in reference to entertainment interest and personal life. Similarly, Twitter participants answered three modes

of active use, including "favoriting," "@replying," and "tweeting or retweeting," in loops in reference to entertainment interest and personal life. The response scale for the questions ranged from 1 (*never*) to 5 (*very frequently*). Composite measures of frequency of NPA Facebook and Twitter use were created by summing three modes of active use interaction for two non-political topics, respectively (6 items, Cronbach's $\alpha_{Facebook}$ = .91, $M_{Facebook}$ = 16.92, $SD_{Facebook}$ = 5.49; Cronbach's $\alpha_{Twitter}$ = .94, $M_{Twitter}$ = 16.72, $SD_{Twitter}$ = 6.56).

Outcome variables.

Frequency of political Information exposure on Facebook and Twitter. To assess this construct, Facebook and Twitter participants were asked to rate on a five-point scale (1 = *never*, 5 = *very frequently*) how often they read content about political and social related topics (e.g., elections, government, human rights, or economics) on Facebook and Twitter, respectively (1 item, $M_{Facebook}$ = 2.66, $SD_{Facebook}$ = 1.17; $M_{Twitter}$ = 2.70, $SD_{Twitter}$ = 1.26).

Frequency of political expression on Facebook and Twitter. Four items comprised each of the indices asking how often Facebook and Twitter participants expressed opinions about political and social related topics (e.g., elections, government, human rights, or economics). For Facebook participants, three modes of active use, including "changing profile photos," "liking," "commenting on," and "posting or sharing" were asked in loops in reference to political and social issues. Similarly, Twitter participants answered three modes of active use, including "changing profile photos," "favoriting," "@replying," and "tweeting or retweeting," in loops in reference to political and social related topics. The response scale for the questions ranged from 1 (*never*) to 5 (*very frequently*). Composite measures of frequency of political expression on Facebook and Twitter were created by summing four types of political expression, respectively

(4 items, Cronbach's $\alpha_{Facebook}$ = .92, $M_{Facebook}$ = 8.91, $SD_{Facebook}$ = 4.11; Cronbach's $\alpha_{Twitter}$ = .94, $M_{Twitter}$ = 9.25, $SD_{Twitter}$ = 4.56).

Political efficacy. Following prior work that used one-item political efficacy (e.g., Gil de Zúñiga et al., 2014; Valenzuela, Arriagada, & Scherman, 2014), respondents were asked, " How much do you think that people like you can influence decisions made by government officials?" on a five-point scale, ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*a great deal*) (1 item, $M_{Facebook}$ = 2.53, $SD_{Facebook}$ = 1.11; $M_{Twitter}$ = 2.68, $SD_{Twitter}$ = 1.11).

Control variables.

News media use. Measures of news media use were adopted from Lee et al. (2012). Respondents were asked to rate on a 8-point scale ranging from 0 (0 *days*) to 7 (*7 days*) how many days in the past week they consumed the following media content: a print copy of a local newspaper; national nightly news on CBS, ABC, or NBC; local news; political comedy (e.g., Daily Show with Jon Stewart); national newspaper web sites (e.g., nytimes.com, usatoday.com); TV news web sites (e.g., cnn.com, foxnews.com), local newspaper web sites; or political blogs (e.g., Michelle Malkin, Daily Kos). The items were combined into an additive index (8 items, Cronbach's $\alpha_{Facebook}$ = .80, $M_{Facebook}$ = 15.48, $SD_{Facebook}$ = 11.81; Cronbach's $\alpha_{Twitter}$ = .86, $M_{Twitter}$ = 18.76, $SD_{Twitter}$ = 14.01).

Facebook and Twitter network size. As prior work suggests that network size of social media is related to political expression (e.g., Jang, Lee, & Park, 2014), this study controls for the effects of network size in order to isolate potential confounding effects. The measure of Facebook and Twitter network size was adopted from Ellison, Steinfield, and Lampe (2011). In an open-ended fashion, Facebook users were asked to provide an estimate of how many total Facebook friends they have, while Twitter users were asked to estimate their followers and

followings (users that they follow). Twitter network size was calculated by summing the number of followers ($M_{Twitter}$ = 216.94, $SD_{Twitter}$ = 870.19) and followings ($M_{Twitter}$ = 175.79, $SD_{Twitter}$ = 428.85). As could be expected, the distribution of Facebook and Twitter network size was skewed ($M_{Facebook}$ = 199.78, $Mdn_{Facebook}$ = 100, $SD_{Facebook}$ = 358.15, $Skewness_{Facebook}$ = 7.34; $M_{Twitter}$ = 396.80, $Mdn_{Twitter}$ = 85, $SD_{Twitter}$ = 1146.93, $Skewness_{Twitter}$ = 6.60), so they were transformed using the natural logarithm ($M_{Facebook}$ = 1.93, $Mdn_{Facebook}$ = 2.00, $SD_{Facebook}$ = .63, $Skewness_{Facebook}$ = -.52; $M_{Twitter}$ = 1.98, $Mdn_{Twitter}$ = 1.96, $SD_{Twitter}$ = .73, $Skewness_{Twitter}$ = .15).

Political interest. This study controls for the influence of political interest on political expression on social media because this construct is predictive of political participatory behaviors. To assess political interest, respondents were asked, "how much interest do you have in politics," ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*a great deal*) (1 item, $M_{Facebook}$ = 3.09, $SD_{Facebook}$ = 1.17; $M_{Twitter}$ = 3.17, $SD_{Twitter}$ = 1.20).

Demographics. Demographic variables, including age ($M_{Facebook}$ = 43.09, $SD_{Facebook}$ = 16.66; $M_{Twitter}$ = 40.19, $SD_{Twitter}$ = 15.76), gender (Facebook: 36% males; Twitter: 42% males), race (77% $White_{Facebook}$; 69% $White_{Twitter}$), education ($M_{Facebook}$ = 3.35, $Mdn_{Facebook}$ = some college; $M_{Twitter}$ = 3.37, $Mdn_{Twitter}$ = some college), and income ($M_{Facebook}$ = 3.70, $Mdn_{Facebook}$ = $50,000 to $69,999; $M_{Twitter}$ = 3.88, $Mdn_{Twitter}$ = $50,000 to $69,999) were included to control for potential confounds, as these variables have been found to be related to online political participation.

Statistical Analysis

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was conducted to examine the factor structure of non-political social media use. Results (see Table 5 in Appendix to Chapter 2) show that the two-factor model (NPP and NPA use) had a better fit than one-factor model for Twitter ($\chi^2(1) = 8.46$,

p =.004) while the statistical difference test indicated that the fit of the two models for Facebook were not statistically different ($\chi^2(1) = 1.65$, p =.199), suggesting that the two-factor models were at least as good as the one-factor models. Since prior work has supported the theoretical difference between NPP and NPA use (Burke et al., 2011; Burke et al., 2010; Ellison, Vitak, et al., 2014; Verduyn et al., 2015), the distinction between NPP and NPA use was made in this study.

To address the proposed hypotheses, ordinary least squares (OLS) regression was employed. Path analysis was conducted to investigate whether political efficacy mediates the relationship between NPP and NPA social media use and exposure to and expression of political views on Facebook and Twitter, using AMOS 18. However, as NPP and NPA social media use were highly correlated (Facebook: Pearson's r = .77; Twitter: Pearson's r = .85, see Table 1), when introduced together as independent variables in a general linear regression model, a variance inflation factor test indicated a mild multicollinearity problem (VIF (Variance Inflation Factor) = Facebook: 2.43; Twitter: 3.49)[1]. Following prior work (Gil de Zúñiga et al., 2014), NPP social media use was first introduced in a separate model, and then both NPP and NPA social media uses were included in another model.

Results

The first two hypotheses (H1 and H2) seek to understand how NPP and NPA social media use are related to exposure to political content on social media. As expected in H1 (see Table 2, Models 2 and 4), results indicate that NPP social media use is positively related to exposure to political expression on social media, supporting H1. The standardized coefficients are comparable across Facebook (β = .36, p < .001) and Twitter users (β = .32, p < .001). Similar

[1] Although the VIF values were higher than desirable, they were below the rule of thumb threshold of 10 cited as a level at which model-threatening multicollinearity is present (Neter, Kutner, Nachtsheim, & Wasserman, 1996, p. 387).

patterns of results are found for the relationship between NPA social media use and political information exposure on social media across the two platforms ($\beta_{Facebook}$ = .15, p < .001; $\beta_{Twitter}$ = .13, p < .05, see Table 2, Models 2 and 4). Thus, H2 is supported. Among the control variables, while political interest and use of other news media predict increased consumption of political information on social media, interestingly, Facebook users who have less education (β = -.07, p < .05) and Twitter users who have less income (β = -.10, p < .01) are more likely to consume political information on these sites. The presented regression models account for a total variance of 40% for exposure to political information on Facebook and 48% for exposure to political information on Twitter. Overall, results are consistent with expectations, suggesting that both NPP and NPA social media use are linked to increased consumption of political expression, and social media may constitute an alternative venue for those with lower education and/or income to access political information.

The third and fourth hypotheses examine relationships between NPP and NPA social media use and political expression on social media (H3 and H4). As shown in Table 3, Models 2 and 4, results indicate that NPP Facebook use is not significantly related to political expression on Facebook (β = -.06, p = .18), while NPP Twitter use is negatively associated with political expression on the site (β = -.13, p < .01). Thus, H3 is partially supported. As for NPA social media use, findings show that both NPA Facebook use (β = .57, p < .001) and NPA Twitter use (β = .62, p < .001) are positive predictors of political expression on the sites, supporting H4. The relationships between control variables and political expression are not always aligned across the two sites. Facebook users who are younger, male, more interested in politics, and use news media more frequently, are more likely to express themselves politically on Facebook. In contrast, only political interest and news media use are associated with increased political

expression on Twitter. The models account for a total variance of 52% and 60% of political expression on Facebook and Twitter, respectively. Together, these findings show that NPA social media use is related to increased political expression on both Facebook and Twitter, while the relationships between NPP and some other control variables and political expression differ across the two sites.

Table 1. Zero-Order Correlations Among All Variables in Chapters 3 and 4

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1. Age												
	-.06											
2. Gender	(.07)											
	.22[c]	-.05										
3. Race	(.25[c])	(.00)										
	.06	.05	-.01									
4. Education	(.09[a])	(.10[a])	(-.05)									
	.05	.10[b]	.00	.39[c]								
5. Income	(.02)	(.14[c])	(.03)	(.39[c])								
	.19[c]	.19[c]	.01	.18[c]	.17[c]							
6. Political interest	(.20[c])	(.18[c])	(.04)	(.28[c])	(.26[c])							
	.14[c]	.19[c]	-.12[c]	.17[c]	.28[c]	.41[c]						
7. News use	(.11[b])	(.27[c])	(-.08[a])	(.21[c])	(.22[c])	(.46[c])						
	-.04	.06	-.10[b]	.08[a]	.07	.34[c]	.27[c]					
8. Political efficacy	(-.11[b])	(.02)	(-.11[b])	(.12[b])	(.13[b])	(.32[c])	(.33[c])					
	-.43[c]	-.01	-.09[a]	.03	.10	.00	.04	.14[c]				
9. Network size	(-.35[c])	(.07)	(-.14[b])	(.06)	(.10[c])	(.13[b])	(.20[c])	(.15[c])				
10. Political information	-.12[b]	.07[a]	-.04	-.03	.05	.35[c]	.31[c]	.25[c]	.26[c]			
exposure	(-.09[c])	(.18[c])	(-.13[b])	(.12[b])	(.08[a])	(.47[c])	(.48[c])	(.35[c])	(.30[c])			
	-.20[c]	.18[c]	-.11[b]	-.01	.07	.36[c]	.40[c]	.34[c]	.31[c]	.75[c]		
11. Political expression	(-.18[c])	(.22[c])	(-.19[c])	(.14[b])	(.15[c])	(.41[c])	(.56[c])	(.41[c])	(.39[c])	(.80[c])		
	-.32[c]	.02	-.06	-.03	.04	.09[a]	.19[c]	.17[c]	.41[c]	.53[c]	.47[c]	
12. NPP use	(-.35[c])	(.12[b])	(-.17[c])	(-.01)	(.08[a])	(.17[c])	(.36[c])	(.25[c])	(.44[c])	(.55[c])	(.55[c])	
	-.30[c]	.04	-.07	-.05	.05	.13[b]	.29[c]	.23[c]	.47[c]	.51[c]	.64[c]	.77[c]
13. NPA use	(-.37[c])	(.16[c])	(-.23)	(.00)	(.12[b])	(.16[c])	(.41[c])	(.29[c])	(.55[c])	(.53[c])	(.68[c])	(.84[c])

Notes: Cell entries are two-tailed zero-order correlation coefficients. Twitter results are in the parenthesis. [a]$p < .05$, [b]$p < .01$, [c]$p < .001$. $N_{Facebook} = 727$; $N_{Twitter} = 663$.

Table 2. Predicting Exposure to Political Information on Social Media

	Facebook						Twitter					
	Model 1: NPP			Model 2: NPP and NPA			Model 3: NPP			Model 4: NPP and NPA		
	B	SE	β	B	SE	β	B	SE	β	B	SE	β
Intercept	.12	.24		.03	.25		.11	.24		.03	.24	
Age	.001	.002	-.02	.001	.002	-.01	-.001	.003	-.01	.000	.003	.001
Gender	-.01	.07	-.01	-.01	.07	-.01	.08	.08	.03	.07	.08	.03
Race	.01	.08	.002	.002	.08	.001	-.14	.08	-.05	-.11	.08	-.04
Education	-.09*	.04	-.08	-.08*	.04	-.07	.03	.04	.02	.04	.04	.03
Income	-.02	.03	-.03	-.02	.03	-.03	-.07**	.03	-.09	-.08**	.03	-.10
Political Interest	.28***	.03	.28	.28***	.03	.28	.34***	.04	.33	.34***	.04	.33
News use	.01***	.003	.13	.01**	.003	.11	.02***	.00	.18	.01***	.00	.16
Social media network size	.12	.06	.06	.07	.07	.04	.07	.06	.04	.03	.06	.02
NPP use	.28***	.02	.45	.22***	.03	.36	.23***	.02	.41	.18***	.03	.32
NPA use				.03**	.01	.15				.03*	.01	.13
Adjusted R^2	.39			.40			.48			.48		

Notes: *$p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$. $N_{Facebook} = 727$; $N_{Twitter} = 663$.

Table 3. Predicting Political Expression on Social Media

	Facebook						Twitter					
	Model 1: NPP			Model 2: NPP and NPA			Model 3: NPP			Model 4: NPP and NPA		
	B	SE	β	B	SE	β	B	SE	β	B	SE	β
Intercept	1.85	.85		.56	.77		1.35	.84		-.02	.76	
Age	-.03**	.01	-.12	-.02**	.01	-.09	-.03**	.01	-.10	-.02	.01	-.06
Gender	.68**	.25	.08	.67**	.23	.08	.54*	.27	.06	.35	.24	.04
Race	-.27	.29	-.03	-.34	.26	-.04	-.77**	.29	-.08	-.33	.26	-.03
Education	-.30*	.13	-.07	-.16	.12	-.04	.06	.15	.01	.18	.13	.04
Income	-.11	.09	-.04	-.08	.08	-.03	-.09	.09	-.03	-.16	.09	-.05
Political Interest	.89***	.11	.25	.84***	.10	.24	.78***	.12	.21	.86***	.11	.23
News use	.09***	.01	.25	.05***	.01	.16	.11***	.01	.33	.08***	.01	.25
Social media network size	.79***	.22	.12	.13	.20	.02	.81***	.20	.13	.07	.19	.01
NPP use	.68***	.07	.31	-.12	.09	-.06	.57***	.07	.28	-.27**	.09	-.13
NPA use				.43***	.03	.57				.44***	.04	.62
Adjusted R^2	.41			.52			.51			.60		

Notes: *$p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$. $N_{Facebook} = 727$; $N_{Twitter} = 663$.

The fifth and sixth hypotheses seek to examine the role of political efficacy in the relationship between NPP (H5) and NPA (H6) social media use and political expression on the sites. First, OLS regression analyses are performed to investigate the relationship between NPP and NPA social media use and political efficacy. As shown in Table 4, Models 2 and 4, NPP Facebook (β = -.03, p = .62) and Twitter use (β = -.05, p = .42) are not significantly related to political efficacy, supporting H5. In contrast, NPA Facebook (β = .15, p < .05) and Twitter (β = .21, p < .01) use are significantly and positively related to political efficacy, with the Facebook and Twitter models explaining 16% and 19% of the variable variance, respectively.

To further investigate the structural relationships between NPP and NPA social media use, political efficacy, and political expression on social media, path analysis is conducted. The results of the estimation are displayed in Figure 1. As expected, NPA social media use ($\beta_{Facebook}$ = .15, p < .05; $\beta_{Twitter}$ = .23, p < .01) is positively associated with political efficacy, which, in turn, predicts increased political expression on social media ($\beta_{Facebook}$ = .10, p < .001; $\beta_{Twitter}$ = .13, p < .001). In contrast, NPP social media use is not significantly related to political efficacy. I further test the possible reversed causal relationships between the variables. The results show that the paths from political efficacy to NPA social media use are not significant ($\beta_{Facebook}$ = .02, p = .55; $\beta_{Twitter}$ = .02, p = .57). Thus, in line with the hypotheses H5 and H6, there is evidence that the relationship between NPA social media use and political expression on social media is partially mediated by political efficacy.

Table 4. Predicting Political Efficacy

	Facebook						Twitter					
	Model 1: NPP			Model 2: NPP and NPA			Model 3: NPP			Model 4: NPP and NPA		
	B	SE	β	B	SE	β	B	SE	β	B	SE	β
Intercept	1.23	.27		1.14	.28		1.87	.27		1.76	.27	
Age	.00	.00	-.04	.00	.00	-.03	-.01**	.00	.00	-.01**	.00	-.13
Gender	-.05	.08	-.02	.50	.08	-.02	-.18**	.08	.03	-.20*	.08	-.09
Race	-.18	.09	-.07	-.18	.09	-.07	-.13	.09	.15	-.09	.09	-.04
Education	.02	.04	.02	.03	.04	.03	.03	.05	.57	.04	.05	.03
Income	-.02	.03	-.03	-.02	.03	-.03	.01	.03	.68	.01	.03	.01
Political Interest	.27***	.04	.29	.27***	.04	.29	.22***	.04	.00	.22***	.04	.24
News use	.01***	.00	.14	.01**	.00	.12	.02***	.00	.00	.02***	.00	.19
Social media network size	.15*	.07	.08	.10	.07	.06	-.01**	.06	.82	-.07	.07	-.05
NPP use	.04	.02	.07	-.02	.03	-.03	.04	.02	.07	-.03	.03	-.05
NPA use				.03*	.01	.15				.04**	.01	.21
Adjusted R^2	.16			.16			.18			.19		

Notes: *$p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$. $N_{Facebook} = 727$; $N_{Twitter} = 663$.

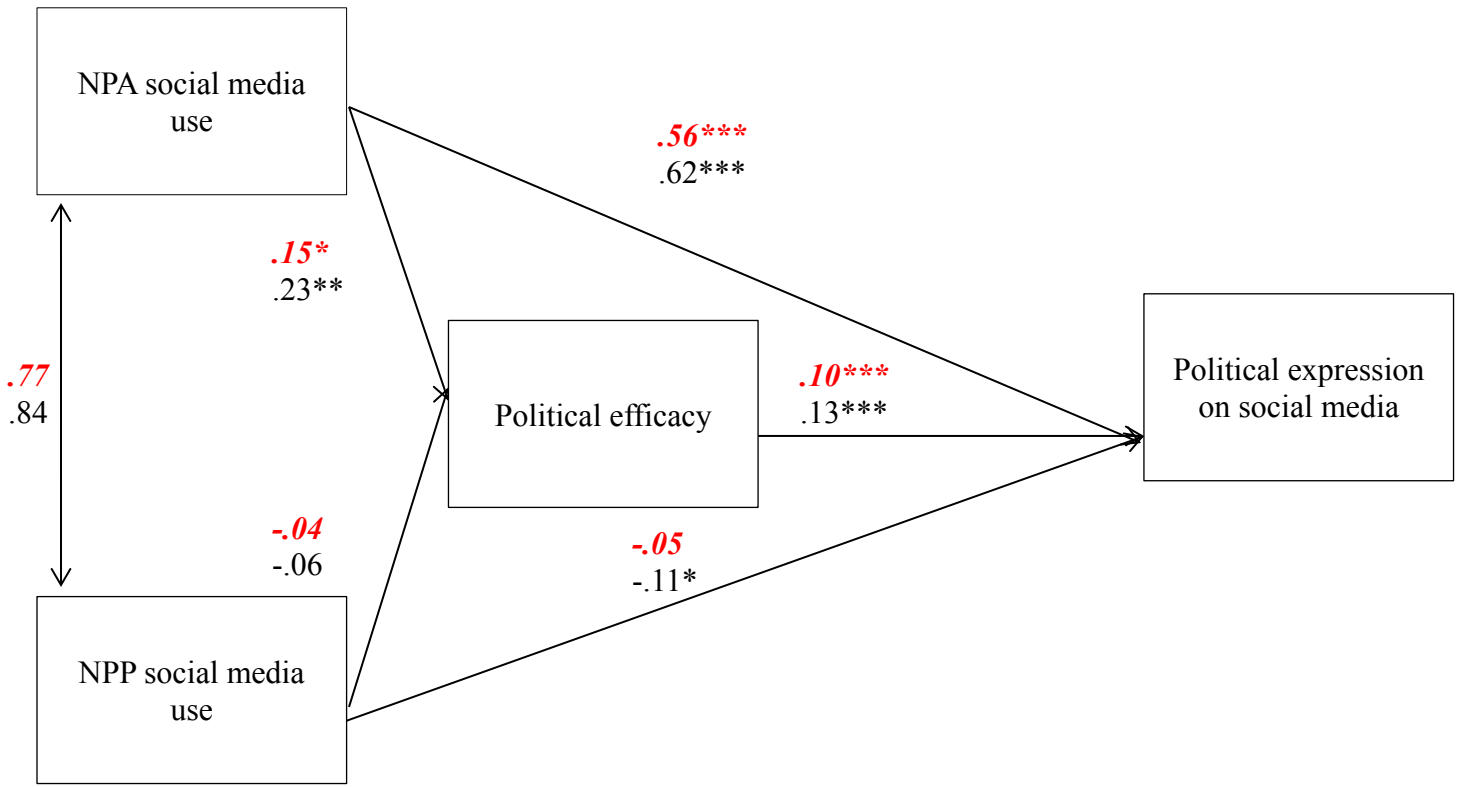

Figure 1. Path Analysis of Relationships between NPP Social Media Use, NPA Social Media Use, Political Efficacy, and Political Expression on Social Media

Notes: Path entries are standardized coefficients. Coefficients in red and italic notify Facebook results, whereas Twitter results are represented in black. The effects of demographic variables (age, race, gender, education, and income), news use, political interest, FB or Twitter network size, are controlled. *$p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$. $N_{Facebook} = 727$; $N_{Twitter} = 663$.

Discussion

This study examines how patterns of non-political social media uses are related to exposure to and expression of political views across Facebook and Twitter. This study advances existing literature on social media and political engagement by: (1) categorizing social media use as either passive consumption or active production in order to examine *whether* and *how* non-political use relates to political engagement on social media; (2) examining the possible intervening role of political efficacy in the relationship between NPA use and political expression, thus further specifying the possible pathway from non-political social media use to political engagement and the uniqueness of NPA use in comparison to NPP use; and (3) using two separate samples of Twitter and Facebook users to explore the extent to which the proposed relationships are consistent across the two sites.

With regard to political information exposure, findings show that both active and passive forms of non-political social media use are linked with increased political information exposure. However, it is worth noting that while both NPP and NPA use are positive predictors of political information exposure on the sites, NPP use is actually more strongly predictive of political information exposure than NPA use across the two sites. Interpreting the varying strengths of these relationships poses a challenge as the impact of active use is less theorized in communication research (Pingree, 2007). One possible explanation is that because frequent NPA users are constantly involved in self-presentation on social media, they may have greater accountability for the content they generate (Pingree, 2007), such as responding and attending to reactions to their posts. Given the greater accountability for content they produce, frequent NPA users may consume less content shared by others and may have relatively fewer opportunities to encounter political information, compared to NPP users.

When it comes to more active and potentially risky forms of political engagement—i.e., political expression on social media—NPA use directly and indirectly relates to increased rates of expressing political views. To explain the direct and positive relationship, it could be that through NPA use, users may feel more comfortable to express themselves politically when opportunities arise, despite that fact that political expression is often considered as a high-risk endeavor in the collapsed social media context (Thorson, 2013). Importantly, moving beyond the direct relationship, results further suggest that NPA use and political expression are partially mediated by political efficacy. This finding supports the theoretical idea that networked communicative practices for private interests can foster a shared sense of civic identity, which can become, in turn, a basis for more expressive forms of political engagement (Bakardjieva, 2009; Dahlgren, 2009).

In contrast to NPA use, NPP use plays little role or sometimes even a negative role vis-à-vis political expression on social media. Results indicate that NPP use is not significantly related to expressing views on Facebook, and is actually negatively associated with political expression on Twitter. These findings may result from the differences between the two sites. Because Twitter is a more interest-driven social media site than Facebook (Kwak, Lee, Park, & Moon, 2010), frequent NPP Twitter users may perceive expressing political views as not just irrelevant but actually inappropriate to their network, which may, in turn, decrease the likelihood of them voicing their political views. In contrast, for Facebook users, it may be that NPP use would not shape concerns about political expression, and thus has little relationship to political expression on the site. These findings highlight the importance of taking into account cultural differences across sites when examining political implications of social media use, and suggest caution when generalizing results from one site to another (Rains & Brunner, 2015).

Implications and Future Research

Findings of the study have important implications for our understanding of political engagement more broadly. In her ethnographic study, Walsh notes, "much political interaction occurs not among people who make a point to specifically talk about politics but emerges instead from the social processes of people chatting with one another" (2004, p. 35). Consistent with this perspective, findings show that those who consume more content about private interests are more likely to come across political information. Likewise, those who frequently produce content about private interests are more likely to publicly express their political views. In contrast to research that considers "the political" and "the personal" as two separate realms, these findings broadly support the theoretical idea that forms of political engagement may develop and arise from everyday, non-political uses of social media, providing an alternative way to understand the relationship between digital media and democratic citizenship.

As this study provides intial evidence that political efficacy partially mediates the relationship between NPA use and political expression, this work contributes to our theoretical understanding of the possible process underlying the relationship between the two. Future work should provide more direct evidence to establish causality. Futhermore, future studies should seek to identify the mechanisms through which NPA use fosters political efficacy. For example, as noted, it is possible that the mastery of resources mobilization (Ellison, Vitak, et al., 2014) and positive emotional states (Tamir & Mitchell, 2012) associated with NPA use may help establish efficacious beliefs, leading to increased political efficacy. These possibilities provide avenues for future research while underscoring the need for more theory building regarding the relationship between active media use and political engagement.

These findings also highlight the unique contributions of NPA use, in comparison to NPP

use, to political outcomes, while raising concerns about the inequality in political engagement over time. For example, as NPA use is directly and indirectly associated with increased political expression on the sites, those who frequently engage in NPA use may become more politically expressive and increasingly control the direction of political discussion on social media over time. In contrast, because NPP use has little or even negative relationships to political expression, frequent NPP users may remain or become increasingly silent on the sites. Thus, it is essential for future research to investigate whether the differential associations between passive and active forms of non-political and political social media may widen over time.

Limitations

This study has several limitations. One issue is that because only cross-sectional data are used, the results of this study indicate associations between measures but should not be interpreted as causal relationships. Future work with longitudinal data is needed to inform our understanding of the directionality of these relationships. In addition, as this study employs one item to capture political efficacy, future work should include more items, such as items about one's own competence to understand politics, in order to probe more about how NPA social media use may relate to various dimensions of political efficacy in a reliable way. A related note is that as the reliability of two items constituting NPP Facebook use is rather low, future research should improve the reliability of the measurement. Finally, by employing survey data, self-reported levels of social media use may be subject to recall errors and social desirability bias. Future research should use other modes of data collection, such as server-level behavioral data, and compare the extent to which self-reported and server-level data align.

Notwithstanding these limitations, this study is an important step in investigating how passive and active forms of non-political social media use are related to political behaviors on

such sites. Results suggest that while both NPP and NPA use are positively associated with exposure to political information, NPA use is positively related to political expression, and this relationship is partially explained by political efficacy. Overall, these findings support the theoretical viewpoint that "the political [is] deeply embedded in everyday life" (Bakardjieva, 2009, p. 96), suggesting that people's private use of social media may cultivate public civic attitudes and contribute to forms of political engagement.

Appendix to Chapter 2

Table 5. Results of Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Model	df	χ^2	χ^2 P-value	CFI	NFI	RMSEA	AIC	χ^2 Difference test P-value
Facebook one factor	5	45.440	.00	.985	.983	.070	75.440	
Facebook two factor	4	43.791	.00	.985	.984	.077	75.791	.199
Twitter one factor	5	47.488	.00	.987	.986	.072	77.488	
Twitter two factor	4	39.031	.00	.990	.988	.073	71.031	.004

Notes: CFI = comparative fit index; NFI = non-normed fit index; RMSEA = root-mean-square error of approximation; AIC = akaike information criterion

CHAPTER 3

How and Whom Do Social Media Mobilize?: Examining the Relationship between Non-Political and Political Social Media Use by Political Interest, Education, and Age

Chapter 2 demonstrates that people's non-political use of social media relates to their exposure to, and expression of, political voice on these sites in various ways. In particular, results show that both NPP (non-political, passive—consumption of non-political content) and NPA social media use (non-political, active—production of non-political information) are positively associated with political information exposure, and NPA use is predictive of increased political expression. Given the positive findings, it is important to note that these relationships do not necessarily imply a more equal distribution of political engagement across different individuals on the sites. If the possible extension from non-political to political social media use is primarily driven by those who are already politically, economically, and culturally advantaged, the existing political inequalities may persist or even be exacerbated. Thus, a critical follow-up empirical question is: To what extent does NPP or NPA social media use ameliorate inequalities in political engagement by engaging new groups of people—specifically, those who are politically, economically, and culturally disadvantaged in politics?

To address this key question, this study employs two separate adult samples of Facebook and Twitter users to examine the mechanism through which NPP and NPA use relate to exposure to, and expression of, political voices on the two platforms. In particular, this chapter focuses on role of three factors that have theoretical importance in predicting political engagement—

political interests, education, and age, representing one's motivation, socioeconomic resources, and cultural backgrounds, respectively (e.g., Bennett, 2008; Scheufele, 2002; Schlozman, Verba, & Brady, 2012). In doing so, this study advances our understanding of the conditions under which NPP and NPA use are associated with political engagement on social media, which is critical for identifying whether opportunities of encountering political information and voicing one's political views on social media are seized upon equally by all users of social media sites.

From Non-Political to Political Social Media Use: Implications for Political Inequality

Based on reception- and expression-effect models that address the effects of consumption and expression, respectively (Pingree, 2007), Chapter 2 distinguishes between social media use that is "passive" (i.e., consuming content) versus "active" (i.e., producing content) and suggests that both NPP and NPA social media use relate to two forms of political engagement—political information exposure and political expression on social media—in different ways. First, findings indicate that both NPP and NPA social media use are positively associated with exposure to political information, perhaps because the social motivation that drives both forms of non-political social media use may increase levels of information consumption and the chances of encountering political information. Second, with regard to expression of political views, results reveal that NPA use contributes to political expression. It is possible that NPA social media use enables users to feel more comfortable, when opportunities arise, to express their political views, despite the fact that political expression carries risks of offending others or revealing one's self-identity in front of extended networks. In contrast, however, NPP use is not related to political expression on Facebook, and is even negatively associated with such expression on Twitter. Overall, then, Chapter 2 shows that people's everyday, non-political use of social media can sometimes positively and sometimes negatively associate with forms of political use.

As one of the hallmarks of deliberative democracy is to include a broad array of citizens in the process of opinion formation and decision-making (Habermas, 1989), given the findings of Chapter 2, it is essential to further examine the conditions under which everyday, non-political use of social media relates to political engagement on these sites, and among which kinds of users. Literature on Internet use and political participation often supports "the Matthew Effects" (Merton, 1968), the dynamic whereby those who are already political advantaged are more likely to accumulate political benefits than those who are relatively disadvantaged (e.g., Norris, 2001). In offline settings, it is well documented that political participation is unequal and that, in particular, those who are disadvantaged socioeconomically are less likely to take part in traditional forms of political participation that require civic skills, time, and money (e.g., protesting and donating money to electoral campaigns) (Brady, Verba, & Schlozman, 1995). In online spaces, while the Internet lowers the barriers to political engagement by reducing the cost of taking part in political activities and providing ample information and opportunities for political participation (Schlozman, Verba, & Brady, 2010), actual access to the Internet and the capacity to shape the agenda of online discussion are still stratified by individual characteristics, such as motivation, economic resources, and cultural backgrounds (Neuman, Bimber, & Hindman, 2011). For example, prior work often supports the differential effects hypothesis, such that those with higher political interest are more likely to transform information they consume online into political action (Xenos & Moy, 2007). Likewise, research shows that those who are more educated are more likely to consume political information online than the less educated, which can, in turn, lead to a wider knowledge gap between the two groups over time (Bonfadelli, 2002; Prior, 2007). Overall, prior work on political Internet use and political participation tends

to suggest that those who are more politically advantaged are more likely to involve themselves in political processes and to acquire more political benefits.

However, there is evidence that those who are traditionally politically disadvantaged may be involved in the political process through social media use, raising the hope that social media use may extend political engagement to a new group of the public. For example, increasing research shows that social media use facilitates political participation among younger adults (e.g., Valenzuela et al., 2014). Similarly, a recent interview study shows that a recent Facebook campaign related to support for same-sex marriage grabbed the attention of those who were previously uninformed about marriage equality and engaged those who were unlikely to participate in the marriage equality movement at an organizational levels (Penney, 2014). Considering these possibilities, an important next step is to understand the implications of social media enabled political engagement for democratic equality by investigating whether the extension from non-political to political social media use further engages previously marginalized citizens. If everyday, non-political social media use only mobilizes those citizens already motivated and interested to seek political information or engage in communication about public affairs, then it may be that non-political social media use only replicates or possibly even exacerbates existing political inequalities (Norris, 2001).

Moderating Roles of Political Interest, Education, and Age in the Relationships between Forms of Non-Political and Political Social Media Use

To understand the implications of social media enabled political engagement, this study focuses on three important individual characteristics—political interest, education, and age, representing one's motivation, socioeconomic resources, and cultural background, respectively—(e.g., Bennett, 2008; Scheufele, 2002; Schlozman et al., 2012) in order to explicate

the conditions under which social media use for private interests correlates with forms of political engagement on the sites. In the following sections, I discuss how each factor might shape the relationship between NPP and NPA social media use and exposure to and expression of political voices.

Political Interest

One important psychological motivation, political interest, often functions as a catalyst that accelerates the extension from passive/private to active/public forms of political engagement (e.g., Scheufele, 2002; Xenos & Moy, 2007). For example, prior work shows that the effects of passive consumption of online news on offline civic and active political participation is stronger among politically interested citizens (Xenos & Moy, 2007). Likewise, a recent panel study using a national sample of Swedish adolescents shows that youth with high political interests are more likely to cross the boundary from private political talk (e.g., discussing politics and social issues with parents and peers) to public political expression (e.g., discussing social issues with strangers) (Östman, 2013). As political interest often facilities the transition from passive/private to active/public types of political engagement, it is reasonable to assume that those who are more interested in political matters are more likely to extend their everyday, non-political use of social media to the political realm.

First, the positive relationships between NPP and NPA use and political information exposure may be more salient among those who are politically interested. Because those with higher political interest may be more aware of political information and more likely to self-select political information, the tendency of selective attention and exposure may increase the chance of encountering political information when they consume or produce content about entertainment interests or personal life on social media. Second, it is plausible that political interest might also

facilitate the extension from NPP and NPA social media use to active forms of political engagement, namely, political expression on social media. While political expression in a collapsed context like social media carries the risk of offending others and encountering disagreement (Thorson, 2014), political interest may positively shape the relationship between NPP and NPA use and political expression because those with higher invested interests in politics may be more motivated to take that risk regardless. Taken together, then, it is expected that the relationships between forms of private social media use and types of political engagement will be stronger for those with high levels of political interest. Thus, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1: The relationship between (a) non-political passive (NPP) and (b) non-political active (NPA) social media use and political information exposure will be stronger for those with higher levels of political interest.

H2: The relationship between (a) non-political passive (NPP) and (b) non-political active (NPA) and political expression will be stronger for those with higher levels of political interest.

Education

Educational attainment is a proxy for socioeconomic resources (Hauser & Warren, 1997). While both education and income levels are traditionally used to approximate socioeconomic status, because income is a proxy for having Internet access and it become less influential in shaping online behaviors among those who are already online (Schradie, 2011), this study only focuses on education. Prior work shows that those who are more educated are more aware of political and social issues (Bonfadelli, 2002) and tend to integrate their civic and social life into the Internet more successfully (Schradie, 2011) than their less educated counterparts. Based on the assumption that the resources citizens can draw upon tend to be more abundant among the

more educated, it is possible that those who are more educated are more likely to extend their non-political social media use into the political field. When engaging in NPP and NPA use, those with higher education may be more aware of political information, which, in turn, may increase their likelihood of encountering political information, compared with those with lower education levels. Likewise, the extension from NPP and NPA use to political expression may be more likely to happen among those with higher education. Since those with higher education may integrate their civic and social lives into social media more deeply (Schradie, 2011), they may feel more comfortable expressing themselves politically in front of these connections when they encounter opportunities to do so through NPP or NPA use. Thus, the following two hypotheses are proposed:

H3: The relationship between (a) non-political passive (NPP) and (b) non-political active (NPA) social media use and political information exposure will be stronger for those with higher education.

H4: The relationship between (a) non-political passive (NPP) and (b) non-political active (NPA) social media use and political expression will be stronger for those with higher education.

Age

While younger adults are often underrepresented in traditional forms of offline political participation, increasing evidence suggests that social media use can faciliate younger adults' political participation (e.g., Valenzuela et al., 2012). As older adults are more interested in maintaining differentiated social spheres, in which they share different kinds of information with different social contacts (e.g., Gibson et al., 2010; Sayago & Blat, 2010), the possible extension from NPP and NPA use to political expression may be more difficult for older adults. There is evidence that older adults tend to avoid political discussion in online spaces because such

conversation is controversial in nature (Xie & Jaeger, 2008). A recent study further shows that generic active Facebook use is related to reduced privacy concern and increased support for freedom of expression, and importantly, these associations are stronger for younger than older adults (Swigger, 2012). These research findings suggest that it may be more difficult for older adults to extend NPP and NPA use to online forms of political expression that carry risks of encountering disagreement, disrupting social relationships, and revealing social identities than younger adults.

In contrast to political expression, because passive forms of political engagement on social media—namely, exposure to political information—involves few of the above risks, the extension from NPP and NPA social media use to political information exposure may not exhibit the same differences across younger and older age groups. In fact, it is unclear how age may shape the relationship between NPP and NPA use and political information exposure. On the one hand, as younger adults are more likely to be regular social media users (Duggan, Ellison, Lampe, Lenhart, & Madden, 2015), they may consume more content on a daily basis, which in turn, may increase their chance of encountering political information on social media, compared to older adults. On the other hand, because older adults are more likely to be civic-minded than younger adults (Delli Carpini, 2000), they may be more aware of political information and become more likely to expose themselves to such information when they engage in NPP or NPA social media use. Based on the discussions above, the following hypothesis and research question are proposed:

H5: The relationship between (a) non-political passive (NPP) and (b) non-political active (NPA) social media use and political expression will be stronger for younger than for older adults.

RQ1: Does age shape the relationship between (a) non-political passive (NPP) and (b) non-political active (NPA) social media use and political information exposure?

Methods

Sample

The survey was conducted in August 2014, using the Qualtrics, Inc. respondent panel. Respondents were a pre-selected group of adults chosen by Qualtrics, Inc. and invited to participate in the study in exchange for gift certificates and coupons. The sample was comprised of two groups of participants: 727 participants who completed Facebook use questionnaires and 663 participants who completed Twitter use questionnaires.

Measures

Predictor variables.

Frequency of non-political passive (NPP) Facebook and Twitter use. Two items comprised each of the indices asking how often Facebook and Twitter participants read two types of non-political content, namely, entertainment interests (e.g., sports, movies, food, or music) and personal life (e.g., work, school, relationships, or family). The response scale for the questions ranged from 1 (*never*) to 5 (*very frequently*). Composite measures of frequency of NPP Facebook and Twitter use were created by summing passive use for two non-political topics, respectively (2 items, Cronbach's $\alpha_{Facebook}$= .64, $M_{Facebook}$ = 6.05, $SD_{Facebook}$ = 1.89; Cronbach's $\alpha_{Twitter}$ = .80, $M_{Twitter}$ = 6.11, $SD_{Twitter}$ = 2.30).

Frequency of non-political active (NPA) Facebook and Twitter use. Six items comprised each of the indices asking to what extent Facebook and Twitter participants actively engage with two types of non-political content, namely entertainment interests (e.g., sports, movies, food, or music) and personal life (e.g., work, school, relationships, or family). For

Facebook participants, three modes of active use, including "liking," "commenting on," and "posting or sharing" were asked in loops in reference to entertainment interest and personal life. Similarly, Twitter participants answered three modes of active use, including "favoriting," "@replying," and "tweeting or retweeting," in loops in reference to two topics. The response scale ranged from 1 (*never*) to 5 (*very frequently*). Composite measures of frequency of NPA Facebook and Twitter use were created by summing three modes of active use for two non-political topics, respectively (6 items, Cronbach's $\alpha_{Facebook}$ = .91, $M_{Facebook}$ = 16.92, $SD_{Facebook}$ = 5.49; Cronbach's $\alpha_{Twitter}$ = .94, $M_{Twitter}$ = 16.72, $SD_{Twitter}$ = 6.56).

Outcome variables.

Frequency of exposure to political information on Facebook and Twitter. To assess this, Facebook and Twitter participants were asked to rate on a five-point scale (1 = *never*, 5 = *very frequently*) how often they read content about political and social related topics (e.g., elections, government, human rights, or economics) on Facebook and Twitter, respectively (1 item, $M_{Facebook}$ = 2.66, $SD_{Facebook}$ = 1.17; $M_{Twitter}$ = 2.70, $SD_{Twitter}$ = 1.26).

Frequency of political expression on Facebook and Twitter use. Four items comprised each of the indices asking how often Facebook and Twitter participants expressed opinions about political and social related topics (e.g., elections, government, human rights, or economics). For Facebook participants, three modes of active use, including "changing profile photos," "liking," "commenting on," and "posting or sharing" were asked in loops in reference to political and social issues. Similarly, Twitter participants answered three modes of active use, including "changing profile photos," "favoriting," "@replying," and "tweeting or retweeting," in loops in reference to political and social related topics. The response scale ranged from 1 (*never*) to 5 (*very frequently*). Composite measures were created by summing four types of political

expression, respectively (4 items, Cronbach's $\alpha_{Facebook}$ = .92, $M_{Facebook}$ = 8.91, $SD_{Facebook}$ = 4.11; Cronbach's $\alpha_{Twitter}$ = .94, $M_{Twitter}$ = 9.25, $SD_{Twitter}$ = 4.56).

Moderators and control variables.

News media use. Measures of news media use were adopted from Lee et al. (2012). Respondents were asked to rate on a 8-point scale ranging from 0 (0 days) to 7 (7 days) how many days in the past week they consumed the following media content: a print copy of a local newspaper; national nightly news on CBS, ABC, or NBC; local news; political comedy (e.g., Daily Show with Jon Stewart); national newspaper web sites (e.g., nytimes.com, usatoday.com); TV news web sites (e.g., cnn.com, foxnews.com), local newspaper web sites; or political blogs (e.g., Michelle Malkin, Daily Kos). The items were combined into an additive index (8 items, Cronbach's $\alpha_{Facebook}$ = .80, $M_{Facebook}$ = 15.48, $SD_{Facebook}$ = 11.81; Cronbach's $\alpha_{Twitter}$ = .86, $M_{Twitter}$ = 18.76, $SD_{Twitter}$ = 14.01).

Facebook and Twitter network size. In an open-ended fashion, Facebook users were asked to provide an estimate of their total number of Facebook friends, while Twitter users were asked to estimate their followers and followings (users that they follow). Twitter network size was calculated by summing the number of followers ($M_{Twitter}$ = 216.94, $SD_{Twitter}$ = 870.19) and followings ($M_{Twitter}$ = 175.79, $SD_{Twitter}$ = 428.85). As could be expected, the distribution of Facebook and Twitter network size was skewed ($M_{Facebook}$ = 199.78, $Mdn_{Facebook}$ = 100, $SD_{Facebook}$ = 358.15, $skewness_{Facebook}$ = 7.34; $M_{Twitter}$ = 396.80, $Mdn_{Twitter}$ = 85, $SD_{Twitter}$ = 1146.93, $skewness_{Twitter}$ = 6.60), so they were transformed using the natural logarithm ($M_{Facebook}$ = 1.93, $Mdn_{Facebook}$ = 2.00, $SD_{Facebook}$ = .63, $skewness_{Facebook}$ = -.52; $M_{Twitter}$ = 1.98, $Mdn_{Twitter}$ = 1.96, $SD_{Twitter}$ = .73, $skewness_{Twitter}$ = .15).

Political interest. To assess political interest, respondents were asked, "How much interest do you have in politics?," with the response scale ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*a great deal*) ($M_{Facebook}$ = 3.09, $SD_{Facebook}$ = 1.17; $M_{Twitter}$ = 3.17, $SD_{Twitter}$ = 1.20).

Demographics. Demographic variables, including age ($M_{Facebook}$ = 43.09, $SD_{Facebook}$ = 16.66; $M_{Twitter}$ = 40.19, $SD_{Twitter}$ = 15.76), gender (36% $males_{Facebook}$; 42% $males_{Twitter}$), race (77% $White_{Facebook}$; 69% $White_{Twitter}$), education ($M_{Facebook}$ = 3.35, $Mdn_{Facebook}$ = some college; $M_{Twitter}$ = 3.37, $Mdn_{Twitter}$ = some college), and income ($M_{Facebook}$ = 3.70, $Mdn_{Facebook}$ = $50,000 to $69,999; $M_{Twitter}$ = 3.88, $Mdn_{Twitter}$ = $50,000 to $69,999).

Statistical Analysis

Ordinary least squares (OLS) regression was employed to address the proposed hypotheses. To examine the degree to which the relationships between forms of non-political and political social media use were stratified by political interest, education, and age, interaction terms were created between NPP and NPA use and political interests, education, and age. All of the component variables as well as the predictor variables were standardized prior to the formation of the interaction terms (Cronbach, 1987) to reduce the levels of multicollinearity between the interaction terms and its components.

Results

This chapter aims to examine whether the potential extension from types of non-political to political social media use varies by political interest, education, and age, respectively. In the following sections, I discuss the role of political interest (motivation), education (socioeconomic resources), and age (cultural backgrounds) in shaping the relationship between forms of non-political and political social media use in turn.

Political interest

The first set of hypotheses (H1a-b and H2a-b) posits that political interest positively shapes the relationships between types of non-political and political social media use. Findings are reported in Table 5 and illustrated in Figure 2 and 3. For political information exposure (H1a and H1b), political interest plays a relatively minor role in shaping the relationship between NPP and NPA social media use and consumption of political information. As shown in Table 5, Models 1 to 4, of all four interaction terms, only *NPA Facebook use X Political Interest* ($b_{Facebook}$ = .08, $p < .05$) is significantly associated with increased political information exposure on Facebook. Thus, H1b is partially supported while H1a is not. Illustration in Figure 2 shows that the steeper slope for those with higher political interest demonstrates a greater likelihood to extend NPA Facebook use to consumption of political information among those with higher political interest. Regarding political expression (H2a and H2b), as shown in Table 5, Models 5 to 8, *NPP X Political Interests* ($b_{Facebook}$ = .30, $p < .01$; $b_{Twitter}$ = .51, $p < .001$) and *NPA X Political Interests* ($b_{Facebook}$ = .36, $p < .001$; $b_{Twitter}$ = .61, $p < .001$) are positively associated with political expression across two sites, suggesting that the positive relationship between NPP and NPA use and political expression are stronger for those with higher political interest across the two platforms, supporting both H2a and H2b.

Table 6. Two-Way Interactions between NPP Use, NPA Use, and Political Interest

	Political Information Exposure				Political Expression			
	Model 1: Facebook	Model 2: Twitter	Model 3: Facebook	Model 4: Twitter	Model 5: Facebook	Model 6: Twitter	Model 7: Facebook	Model 8: Twitter
Intercept	2.69*** (.04)	2.68*** (.04)	2.68*** (.04)	2.68*** (.04)	9.08*** (.11)	8.98*** (.12)	9.05*** (.11)	8.97*** (.12)
Age	-.01(.04)	.003(.05)	.003(.04)	.002(.05)	-.34**(.12)	-.24(.15)	-.32**(.12)	-.24(.14)
Gender	-.01(.04)	.04(.04)	-.01(.04)	.04(.04)	.31**(.11)	.20(.11)	.31**(.11)	.21(.11)
Race	.00(.04)	-.05(.04)	.01(.04)	-.05(.04)	-.13(.12)	-.13(.11)	-.13(.12)	-.15(.11)
Education	-.08*(.04)	.04(.04)	-.08*(.04)	.03(.04)	-.14(.12)	.18(.13)	-.14(.12)	.14(.13)
Income	-.03(.04)	-.12**(.04)	-.03(.04)	-.12**(.04)	-.14(.12)	-.26*(.13)	-.14(.12)	-.26*(.13)
Political interest	.33***(.04)	.41***(.04)	.34***(.04)	.41***(.04)	1.05***(.12)	1.02***(.13)	1.06***(.12)	1.04***(.13)
News use	.13**(.05)	.18***(.04)	.12**(.05)	.18***(.04)	.64***(.14)	.96***(.13)	.62***(.14)	.96***(.13)
Network size	.05(.04)	.02(.04)	.05(.04)	.02(.04)	.11(.13)	.08(.14)	.12(.13)	.09(.14)
NPP use	.42***(.05)	.41***(.07)	.41***(.05)	.41***(.07)	-.17(.17)	-.60**(.21)	-.23(.17)	-.60(.21)
NPA use	.16**(.06)	.17*(.08)	.17(.06)	.17*(.08)	2.29***(.18)	2.87***(.24)	2.34***(.18)	2.84***(.23)
NPP*Pol interest	.04(.03)	.05(.04)			.30**(.10)	.51***(.11)		
NPA*Pol interest			.08*(.03)	.06(.04)			.36***(.10)	.61***(.11)
Adjusted R^2	.40	.48	.40	.48	.53	.62	.53	.62

Notes: Unstandardized regression coefficients are reported with standard errors in the parentheses. *$p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$. $N_{Facebook} = 727$; $N_{Twitter} = 663$

Significant results are further plotted in Figure 3a-d, demonstrating two patterns of findings. As illustrated in Figure 3a and 3b, both slopes are positive, while the slope is steeper for those with higher political interest, suggesting a greater likelihood to extend NPA use to political expression among Facebook and Twitter users with higher political interests. Figure 3c and 3d show that the relationship between NPP Facebook and Twitter use and political expression is negative for those with lower political interest, while the slope remains flat for those with high political interest. Overall, results suggest that political interest tends to play a positive role in shaping the relationships between NPP and NPA use and exposure to, and expression of, political views.

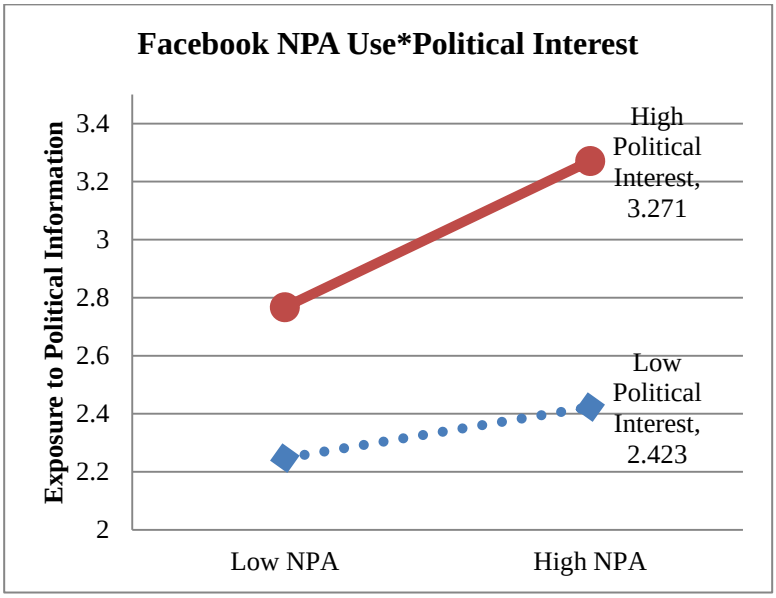

Figure 2. Illustration of Two-Way Interactions between NPA Use and Political Interest in Predicting Political Information Exposure on Facebook

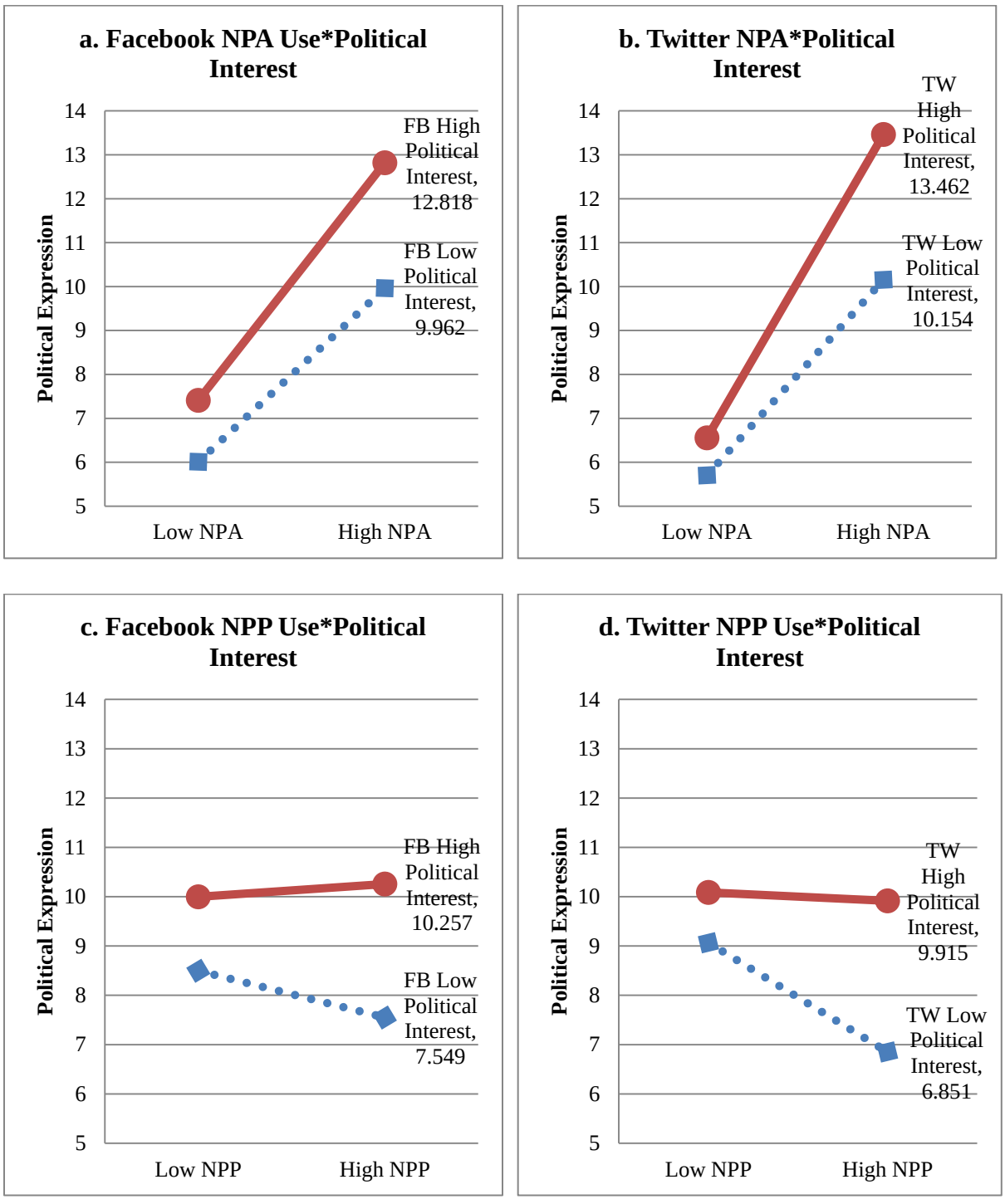

Figure 3. Illustration of Two-Way Interactions between NPP Use, NPA Use, and Political Interest in Predicting Political Expression on Social Media

Education

The next set of hypotheses focuses on socioeconomic resources, namely, education levels. It is expected that education positively shapes the relationships between forms of non-political and political use across the two platforms (H3a-b and H4a-b). For political information exposure (H3a and H3b), results show that of all interaction terms, only *NPA Facebook Use X Education* ($b_{Facebook}$ = .07, p < .05) is positively and significantly related to political information exposure (see Table 3, Model 3). Thus H3a is not supported while H3b is partially supported. Figure 4a plots the significant relationships, showing that while Facebook users with lower education levels encounter more political information when NPA use is low, those with higher education levels catch up and close the gap as their NPA use increases. Regarding political expression (H4a and H4b), of all interaction terms, only *NPA Twitter Use X Education* ($b_{Twitter}$ = .27, p < .05) is positively associated with expression of political voice on Twitter (see Table 3, Model 8). Thus, H4b is partially supported while H4a is not supported. Figure 4b shows that the steeper slope for those with higher education suggests that the extension from NPA Twitter use to political expression is greater for those with higher education. Overall, while results are inconsistent across the two platforms, compared to political interests, education plays a relatively minor but positive role in shaping the relationship between forms of non-political and political social media use.

Table 7. Two-Way Interactions between NPP Use, NPA Use, and Education

	Political Information Exposure				Political Expression			
	Model 1: Facebook	Model 2: Twitter	Model 3: Facebook	Model 4: Twitter	Model 5: Facebook	Model 6: Twitter	Model 7: Facebook	Model 8: Twitter
Intercept	2.69*** (.04)	2.68*** (.04)	2.69*** (.04)	2.68*** (.04)	9.11*** (.11)	9.06*** (.12)	9.11*** (.11)	9.06*** (.12)
Age	-.01(.04)	.001(.05)	-.01(.04)	.004(.05)	-.35**(.13)	-.27(.15)	-.35**(.13)	-.25(.15)
Gender	-.01(.04)	.03(.04)	-.01(.04)	.03(.04)	.32**(.11)	.18(.12)	.32**(.11)	.18(.12)
Race	.002(.04)	-.05(.04)	.004(.04)	-.05(.04)	-.15(.12)	-.14(.12)	-.15(.12)	-.14(.12)
Education	-.08*(.04)	.04(.04)	-.07(.04)	.04(.04)	-.15(.12)	.20(.13)	-.15(.12)	.21(.13)
Income	-.03(.04)	-.12**(.04)	-.03(.04)	-.13**(.04)	-.13(.12)	-.27*(.13)	-.13(.12)	-.27*(.13)
Political interest	.33***(.04)	.40***(.04)	.33***(.04)	.40***(.04)	1.00*** (.12)	1.01*** (.13)	1.00*** (.12)	1.00*** (.13)
News use	.14**(.05)	.18***(.04)	.13**(.05)	.18***(.04)	.70***(.14)	1.01*** (.13)	.70***(.14)	1.01*** (.13)
Network size	.04(.04)	.02(.04)	.04(.04)	.02(.04)	.08(.13)	.07(.14)	.08(.13)	.06(.14)
NPP use	.42***(.05)	.41***(.07)	.41***(.05)	.41***(.07)	-.23(.17)	-.61**(.22)	-.23(.17)	-.60**(.22)
NPA use	.17**(.06)	.17*(.08)	.18***(.06)	.17*(.08)	2.33*** (.18)	2.88*** (.24)	2.34*** (.18)	2.88*** (.24)
NPP* Education	.04(.03)	.04(.04)			.02(.10)	.20(.12)		
NPA* Education			.07*(.03)	.06(.04)			.03(.11)	.27*(.12)
Adjusted R^2	.40	.48	.40	.48	.52	.60	.52	.61

Notes: Unstandardized regression coefficients are reported with standard errors in the parentheses. *$p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$. $N_{Facebook} = 727$; $N_{Twitter} = 663$

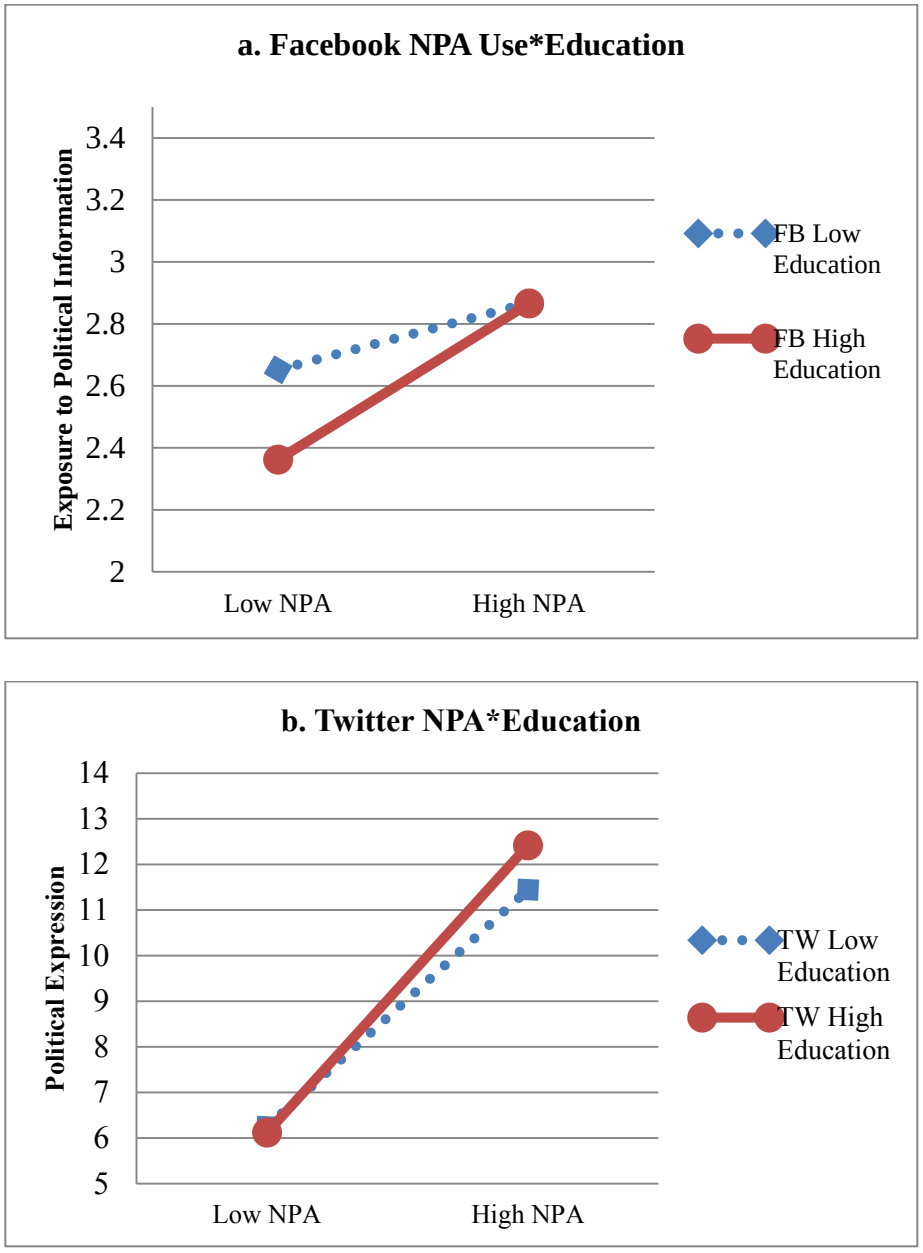

Figure 4. Illustration of Two-Way Interactions between NPA Use and Education in Predicting Political Information Exposure on Facebook (a) and Political Expression on Twitter (b)

Age

The final set of hypothesis (H5a-b) and research question (RQ1a-b) examines the role of age in shaping the relationship between forms of non-political and political social media use. As Table 7, Models 5 to 8 shows, contrary to expectations, the interaction terms, *NPP X Age* and *NPA X Age* are not significantly related to political expression across the two platforms, suggesting that the likelihood of extending non-political social media use to political expression does not differ by age. Thus, H5a and H5b are not supported. To predict political expression exposure (RQ1a-b), one significant result is that *NPA Facebook Use X Age* ($\beta_{Facebook}$ = .10, p < .01) is positively associated with political information exposure on Facebook. The illustration in Figure 5 indicates that the relationship between NPA Facebook use and political information exposure is stronger for older than for younger Facebook users. While younger Facebook users encounter more political information when NPA use is low, older adults surpass younger adults and consume more political information as NPA use increases. Overall, while results suggest that age plays little role in shaping the relationship between types of non-political and political social media use, older Facebook users are more likely to encounter political information through NPA Facebook use than their younger counterparts.

Table 8. Two-Way Interactions between NPP Use, NPA Use, and Age

	Political Information Exposure				Political Expression			
	Model 1: Facebook	Model 2: Twitter	Model 3: Facebook	Model 4: Twitter	Model 5: Facebook	Model 6: Twitter	Model 7: Facebook	Model 8: Twitter
Intercept	2.70*** (.04)	2.68*** (.04)	2.72*** (.04)	2.69*** (.04)	9.14*** (.12)	9.03*** (.13)	9.12*** (.12)	9.02*** (.13)
Age	-.01(.04)	.002(.05)	-.01(.04)	.00(.05)	-.35**(.13)	-.29*(.14)	-.35**(.13)	-.30*(.15)
Gender	-.01(.04)	.03(.04)	.00(.04)	.03(.04)	.32**(.11)	.17(.12)	.33**(.11)	.17(.12)
Race	.001(.04)	-.05(.04)	.01(.04)	-.05(.04)	-.15(.12)	-.15(.12)	-.15(.12)	-.14(.12)
Education	-.08*(.04)	.04(.04)	-.07*(.04)	.04(.04)	-.15(.12)	.18(.13)	-.15(.12)	.17(.13)
Income	-.03(.04)	-.12**(.04)	-.04(.04)	-.12**(.04)	-.13(.12)	-.25(.13)	-.13(.12)	-.25(.13)
Political interest	.33*** (.04)	.41*** (.04)	.33*** (.04)	.41*** (.04)	1.0*** (.12)	1.02*** (.13)	1.0*** (.12)	1.02*** (.13)
News use	.14** (.05)	.19*** (.04)	.15*** (.05)	.19*** (.04)	.70*** (.14)	1.02*** (.13)	.70*** (.14)	1.02*** (.13)
Network size	.04(.04)	.02(.04)	.04(.04)	.02(.04)	.08(.13)	.05(.14)	.08(.13)	.05(.14)
NPP	.41***(.05)	.41***(.07)	.41***(.05)	.41***(.07)	-.23(.17)	-.62*(.22)	-.23(.17)	-.61**(.22)
NPA	.17**(.06)	.17*(.08)	.15*(.06)	.17*(.08)	2.33*** (.18)	2.89*** (.24)	2.32*** (.18)	2.87*** (.24)
NPP*Age	.02(.04)	.004(.04)			.08(.11)	-.06(.13)		
NPA*Age			.10**(.04)	.01(.04)			.04(.11)	-.07(.13)
Adjusted R^2	.40	.48	.40	.48	.52	.60	.52	.60

Notes: Unstandardized regression coefficients are reported with standard errors in the parentheses. *$p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$. $N_{Facebook} = 727$; $N_{Twitter} = 663$

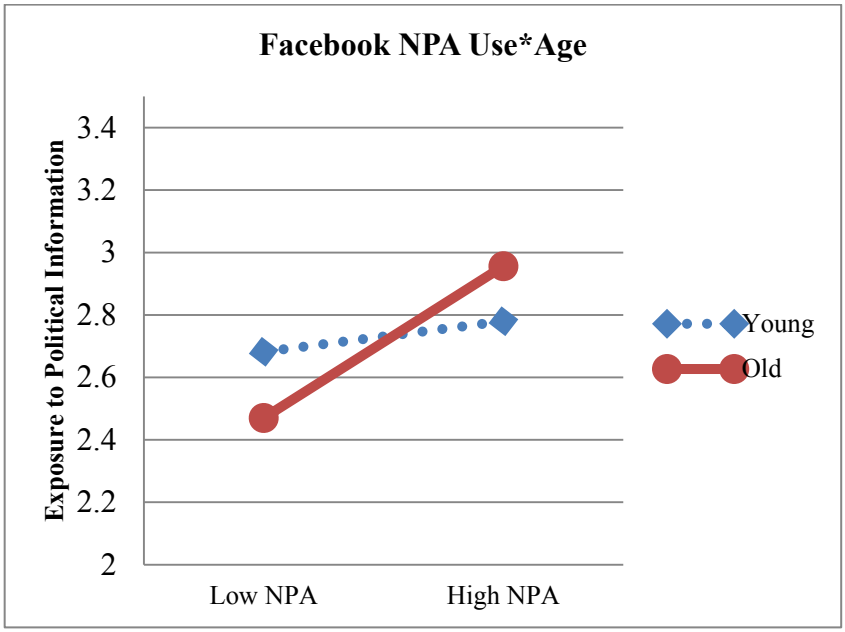

Figure 5. Illustration of Two-Way Interactions between NPA Use and Age in Predicting Political Information Exposure on Facebook

Discussion

This study investigates the conditions under which NPP and NPA social media use relate to forms of political engagement on two social media sites; it also highlights the importance of examining the dynamics underlying the relationship between non-political and political social media use. There are two streams of results based on types of political engagement on social media—political information exposure and political expression.

Political Information Exposure

To begin with, there are two notable trends of findings regarding how political interests, education, and age shape the relationships between forms of non-political use and political information exposure. First, the relationship between NPP use and political information exposure does not differ by political interest, education attainment, and age, suggesting that regardless of

individual differences in the three characteristics, the relationship between non-political and political information consumption is relatively uniform across Facebook and Twitter. This pattern of results is contrary to the dominant view that those who are already politically advantaged are more likely to acquire political information (e.g., Tichenor et al., 1970). Instead, these findings suggest that those who tend to be marginalized in traditional forms of political participation—i.e., those who are younger, less educated, and less politically interested—have relatively equal opportunities to come across political information when they are engaged in NPP social media use. Prior work suggests that entertainment and social activities are more popular among those who are less interested in politics, less educated, and younger (e.g., Hoffman, Jones, & Young, 2013; Prior, 2007). It is possible that while some factors, such as selective attention and exposure, may promote political information exposure among those who are politically advantaged, the less politically disadvantaged may be able to catch up and narrow the gaps in political information exposure through greater NPP use.

Another important finding is that, among Facebook users, the relationship between NPA social media use and political information exposure is stronger for those who are traditionally advantaged in the political sphere—i.e., those who are older, more educated, and more politically interested. As communication research on the effects of expression is limited (Pingree, 2007), it is challenging to explain these results. One possible explanation is that as Facebook users engage in NPA use more frequently, they may have greater accountability for the content they produce (Pingree, 2007), such as responding and attending to reactions to their own posts (Thorson, 2013). Given the increased accountability associated with NPA use, Facebook users who are less politically interested, less educated, and younger may be less likely to consume political information. In contrast, the increased accountability resulting from NPA use may be less

influential in terms of political information exposure among those who are older, more educated, and more politically interested, because the latter's personal interests and hobbies are more likely to touch on civic and political matters, and these interests may prompt them to consume more political information, compared to their counterparts.

It is important to note that the differential extension from NPA use to political information exposure by political interest, education, and age, only exists among Facebook users but not Twitter users. The inconsistent findings may result from the different cultures between the two sites. Perhaps because people tend to connect with existing social ties on Facebook while linking to contacts based on common interests on Twitter, recent work that compares Facebook and Twitter use among users of both sites suggests that people have higher privacy concerns and tend to disclose more intimate information when using Facebook, compared to Twitter (Choi & Bazarova, 2014). This privacy paradox phenomenon—the discrepancy between privacy attitudes and self-disclosure behaviors—suggests a greater challenge for privacy boundary coordination on Facebook than Twitter (Choi & Bazarova, 2014). Accordingly, Facebook users may feel greater accountability for non-political content they produce as they engage in NPA use, compared to Twitter users. Thus, it is possible that because Facebook users may have a greater sense of accountability for the content they generate and become more selective when consuming content than Twitter users, the differential extension from NPA use to political information exposure by political interest, education, and age is only significant for Facebook but not Twitter users.

Political Expression

The results show that political interest plays a significant role in strengthening relationships between NPP and NPA use and political expression across the two platforms in two

distinctive ways. First, the extension from non-political to political social media use is stronger for those with higher political interest, which is aligned with differential effect hypotheses that those with higher political interests are more likely to transform various resources into political actions (e.g., Scheufele, 2002; Xenos & Moy, 2007). However, the results are not entirely gloomy. The results also show that the relationship between NPA use and political expression remains positive among those with low political interest. Second, political interest also positively shapes the relationship between NPP use and political expression across Facebook and Twitter users. Results suggest that for those with low political interest, NPP use is negatively related to political expression. It is plausible that because frequent NPP users are more likely to connect to a network with similar, non-political interests, they may perceive political expression as not only irrelevant but also inappropriate to their networks, which, in turn, decreases the likelihood of voicing political views. However, the negative trend becomes flat among those with higher political interest, suggesting that concerns about political expression may be less relevant to those with higher political interests. Overall, results show that those who already have a higher level of political interest will be more likely to extend forms of non-political to political expression on the sites.

Compared to political interest, educational level and age play relatively minor roles in shaping the relationships between NPP and NPA use and political expression. Regarding education levels, contrary to expectations, the differential relationship between NPA use and political expression by education only exists among Twitter users, such that Twitter users with higher education may be more likely to cross the boundary from NPA Twitter use to political expression. Prior work has shown that those with higher education are more likely to integrate communication technology into every aspect of their lives (Schradie, 2011). It may be, then, that

because Twitter is more of an interest-based community than Facebook, those with lower education attainment may find it more difficult to integrate their social and civic life into their Twitter network. As a result, the extension from NPA use to political expression may be more difficult for Twitter users with lower education attainment, because political expression may seem less appropriate to their networks, which may be less centered around political topics.

With regard to age, while it is expected that younger adults are more likely to extend NPA use to political expression than older adults because older adults tend to have greater privacy concerns, this hypothesis is not supported. In fact, the relationship between NPA use and political expression is not significantly stratified by age. To explain the results, one possibility is that as older adults adopt social media and engage in NPA use, their concerns about privacy or public political expression may reduce accordingly. For example, Xie et al. (2012) demonstrates that older adults changed their views about social media from negative to positive through actual use of social media during a seven-week educational section. Thus, it could be that NPA use may reduce older adults' concerns about public political expression over time, leading to a relatively uniform relationship between NPA use and political expression across different age groups.

Limitations, Implications and Future Research

This study has a number of limitations. First, given that only cross-sectional data were used, the results of this study indicate associations between measures but should not be seen as indicating causal relationships. In particular, as some usage divides may decrease, expand, or get replaced over time (van Dijk, 2005), future research should employ a longitudinal approach to understand how the differential extension from forms of non-political to political social media use evolve over time. Another possible limitation of this study is that by employing survey data, self-reported levels of social media use may be subject to recall errors and social desirability

bias. Future research should use other modes of data collection, such as server-level behavioral data, and compare the extent to which self-reported and server-level data align. The final limitation concerns the representativeness of the samples. While it is a strength of this study that it uses two separate adult samples of Twitter and Facebook users to examine the extent to which the proposed relationships are consistent across the two sites, future studies should replicate the study to examine whether the study findings can be generalized to different samples of Facebook and Twitter users.

These limitations notwithstanding, this study is an important step in investigating whether the extension from non-political to political social media use may narrow or widen existing political inequality based on users' political interest, education, and age. In particular, the findings raise both hopes and concerns. On the one hand, the results bring some hope that social media use may narrow some existing political inequality. Indeed, results show that the positive relationship between NPA social media use and political expression is not confined to users in just one age group. Moreover, the extension from reading non-political to political content is relatively uniform across different age, educational, and political interest levels. These findings suggest that users who are otherwise disengaged in offline political participation may inadvertently encounter political information or even voice their political views through forms of non-political social media use.

At the same time, findings suggest that some existing political inequality may be reinforced over time. In particular, those who are more interested in politics and more educated are more likely to extend their expression from non-political to political and social affairs on some of the platforms. It is thus possible that those who are politically interested and more educated may increasingly control the direction of political discussion on some of the social

media platforms over time. In addition, among Facebook users, as the results show that the relationship between NPA use and exposure to political information is more salient among those who are older, more educated, and more politically interested, those who are younger, less educated, and less politically interested may be less up-to-date about current events, causing them to miss opportunities to express themselves politically. Considering these findings, future studies should use a longitudinal approach to understand whether the inequality in extension from non-political to political social media may widen or narrow over time

In summary, as Chapter 2 shows that people's private use of social media may cultivate public civic attitudes and contribute to forms of political engagement, this study further examines whether the relationship between forms of non-political and political social media use is stratified by political interest, education, and age. Results provide mixed support for the dominant theoretical argument, which suggests that those who are already political advantaged are more likely to acquire political benefits. While the relationship between NPA use and political expression is stronger among Facebook and Twitter users with higher political interest, and is more salient for Twitter users with higher education, but this relationship is open to those of different ages. Likewise, although those who are traditionally advantaged are more like to cross the boundary from NPA Facebook use to political information exposure, the extension from NPP use to political information exposure does not differ by political interest, education, and age across the two platforms. Overall, this study sheds light on the extent to which the extension from types of non-political to political social media use engages previously marginalized citizens based on one's political interest, education, and age, providing implications of social media-enabled political engagement for democratic equality.

CHAPTER 4

Thinking of All of Your Facebook Friends: The Priming Effect of Network Characteristics on Willingness to Engage with Political Mobilization Messages

Drawing on the theoretical perspective that "the political" is deeply embedded in the "the personal" (Bakardjieva, 2009; Dahlgren, 2009; Papacharissi, 2010), Chapter 2 examines how non-political passive (NPP–consumption of non-political content) and non-political active (NPA–production of non-political content) practices relate to two major political behaviors on the sites—political information exposure and political expression, while Chapter 3 further investigates the extent to which the potential extension from non-political to political social media use is contingent on political interest, education, and age. This chapter has the same focus on everyday social media use, but shifts attention to the effects of social media network contexts on willingness to engage in the two forms of political behaviors on the sites, as prior work suggests that the social contexts significantly influence political behaviors (Eliasoph, 1998; Walsh, 2004).

One defining feature of social media is the way they connect users to a wide and diverse array of people (boyd & Ellison, 2007; Ellison & boyd, 2013). As users expand their networks through social media to create "social supernets" (Donath, 2007), access to a large and diverse audience enables individuals to become important catalysts of collective action. Increasingly, social media users can call upon their networks to act upon mobilization requests and help to disseminate information (Enjolras, Steen-Johnsen, & Wollebæk, 2013). Thus, research shows

that social media play an increasingly important role in political mobilization processes in large-scale political and social movements (e.g., Valenzuela, 2013; Valenzuela et al., 2012). However, in the context of day-to-day social media use, the ability to reach a larger and wider network may make it more uncertain whether individuals will actually voice their political views on the sites, given the ambiguity of both the potential audience and the conditions under which political messages might be received and interpreted (Thorson, 2013). While scholars have theorized the important role of perceived audience in self-disclosure (e.g., boyd, 2011; Litt, 2012; Marwick & boyd, 2011), little research to date has examined how perceptions of network connections on social media may influence public political expression as well as private political information exposure on such sites.

Drawing on impression management (Goffman, 1959) and priming literature (Anderson, 1990), this study examines whether Facebook users' willingness to acquire more information and express their views about left-leaning mobilization posts are impacted when they receive the network prime that aims to make their perceptions of Facebook network characteristics salient in memory. The network prime consists of three questions about Facebook network characteristics—specifically, network size (i.e., total number of Facebook friends), diversity (i.e. the degree to which Facebook network members are evenly divided across classifications of social groups), and political similarity to groups of Facebook friends. It is important to note that, due to constrained resources, rather than employing political messages with diverse political affiliations from multiple social media sites, this study focuses on left-leaning political messages from Facebook as just one step in this new line of inquiry, because a number of studies show that those on the political "left" are more likely to use social media for mobilization and community-building purposes than those on the "right" (e.g., Karpf, 2008; Shaw & Benkler, 2012; Wallsten,

2008) and Facebook is the most popular social media site in the U.S. (Duggan et al., 2015). These limitations notwithstanding, this study provides initial evidence regarding the priming effect of network characteristics on Facebook users' willingness to engage with left-leaning political messages that request them to act upon the posts in various ways.

Impression Management and Reactions to Political Mobilization Messages on Facebook

Social media, such as Facebook, play an increasingly important role in mobilizing citizens to participate in politics. In particular, as social media enable users to create "social supernets" and to manage larger networks with low effort (Donath, 2007) the access to a wider and more diverse array of people allows the expression and exchange of information at a low cost and helps enforce social norms that promote collective political actions (Lupia & Sin, 2003). Research shows that civic and political agencies have effectively used social media to mobilize citizens to participate in protests (Enjolras et al., 2013). Thus, from the perspective of civic and political agencies, the ability to reach a larger and more diverse network on social media can facilitate political mobilization.

However, in the context of day-to-day social media use, access to an expanded network may make users become more cautious about public reaction to political mobilization messages on social media. Theories of impression management state that people modify their self-presentation and actions depending on who is in the audience, thus likening generic expressive behaviors to a performance (Goffman, 1959). While expressive behaviors can engender social bonds (Collins & Miller, 1994) and are intrinsically rewarding (Tamir & Mitchell, 2012), they carry risks of vulnerability and information loss as the expressers give up some control over the information about them. To balance the benefits and risks, the openness or closeness of the

contexts in which the performance takes place often guides the specific behaviors, such that individuals tend to play different roles in "back" and "front" stages in order to achieve desired outcomes (Goffman, 1959). In line with the impression management literature, prior work has consistently shown that offline political conversations are confined to close friends and family members, as political expression often opens up risks of encountering disagreement, disrupting social relationships, and revealing social identities (e.g., Conover et al., 2002; Gerber et al., 2012). In contrast to offline political expression that often takes place among intimate others, expressing political views on Facebook may be perceived as disclosing one's political self in a large "front" stage (Goffman, 1959) because individuals' network connections on Facebook are much larger and wider than their offline political discussion networks. While studies on political discussion networks often ask respondents to report up to four political discussants (e.g., Huckfeldt & Sprague, 1987; Mutz, 2002), the potential political discussants on Facebook are much broader. According to Facebook (Facebook, 2012), Facebook users had an average of 305 friends in 2012. As a result, compared to face-to-face contexts, the audience of political expressive behaviors is less salient and difficult to determine on social media.

In this collapsed social media context that combines both intimate and distant others in one place (Marwick & boyd, 2011), concerns about political expression may intensify because voicing one's political opinions in a large and more diverse social media network may increase the chances of encountering disagreement and offending others, which, in turn, may negatively impact others' impression of them (and potentially their impression of themselves) (Thorson, 2013). Drawing on priming theory, which suggests that in a memory network when a particular concept is activated or "primed," other concepts closely linked to the concept are also likely to be activated, it is possible that when Facebook users are primed with their network size (i.e., total

number of Facebook friends), diversity (i.e. the degree to which Facebook network members are evenly divided across classifications of social groups), and political similarity to their network members, they may be less willing to publicly and actively express views (i.e., "liking," "sharing," and commenting on the posts) about political mobilization posts in front of their Facebook network because political expression may elicit disagreement and pose threats to their self-image. Conversely, the network prime may not have the same effect on passive reactions—i.e., willingness to click on the links in the post—as these forms of behaviors are unavailable or non-visible to their network members. Finally, due to limited resources, this study focuses only on left-leaning mobilization posts that specifically ask readers to act upon the posts (i.e., sharing the posts) as the first step to understand the priming effect of network characteristics on willingness to perform political behaviors because prior work suggests that those who lean politically to the "left" may be more likely to use social media for political mobilization—perhaps due to progressives' long history of social movement-building (e.g., Karpf, 2008; Shaw & Benkler, 2012; Wallsten, 2008). The following hypotheses are thus proposed:

H1: The network prime will decrease willingness to (a) "like," (b) share, and (c) comment on political mobilization posts.

H2: The network prime will not significantly influence users' willingness to click on the links in political mobilization posts.

Moderating Role of Political Identification

Further, it is expected that the negative priming effect of network characteristics on users' willingness to express opinions about left-leaning mobilization messages may be stratified by political identification. In particular, as political identification strongly relates to issue attitudes and preferences (e.g., Dancey & Goren, 2010), it is reasonable to assume that, by default (or

without the prime), those who identify more with Democrats would be more willing to actively (i.e., by "liking," "sharing," and/or commenting) and passively (i.e., by clicking on links) respond positively to left-leaning political mobilization messages.

However, when people are primed with their Facebook network characteristics, those who identify more with Democrats may be more strongly influenced by the prime, becoming less willing to respond actively, such as "liking," "sharing" or commenting on the left-leaning posts, than other users in the political spectrum in two respects. First, compared to weak partisans (e.g., weak Democrats and weak Republicans) and Independents, because strong Democrats' patterns of behaviors are more likely to be governed by political beliefs, they may be more reactive to the network prime, becoming less likely to actively express their views about mobilization posts. Prior work shows that political beliefs are more chronically accessible among those with stronger political identification to guide their behaviors (Price & Tewksbury, 1997). For example, Mutz (2006) shows that there is a curvilinear relationship between partisanship and exposure to disagreement, such that strong partisans (strong Democrats and strong Republicans) are less likely to be exposed to political disagreement when discussing politics, while moderates are more likely to encounter political disagreement. Following this line of thought, because political beliefs are likely to guide strong Democrats' day-to-day political social media use, they may be less sensitive to the size, diversity, and political differences in their networks when they are engaged in political activities on the sites on a daily basis. As a result, when drawing strong Democrats' attention to the large and wide network members, the network prime may be more effective in shifting strong Democrats' willingness to publicly engage with the posts than such priming is for weaker partisans. Second, while strong Republicans may be equally reactive to the network prime as strong Democrats, the former may be unlikely to "like," "share," or comment

on mobilization messages that challenge their political views, as prior work shows that exposure to disagreement tends to prohibit political actions (Mutz, 2002). Thus, it is possible that political identification moderates the priming effect of network characteristics on willingness to publicly react to the left-leaning posts, such that the negative effects will be stronger for those who identify more with Democrats. However, since little work has addressed how salience of network characteristics shifts partisans' information-seeking behaviors, it is unclear whether the network prime differentially influences the passive form of reaction—willingness to click on the links in the posts by political identification. Thus, the following hypothesis and research question are posed:

H3: The priming effect of network characteristics on willingness to (a)"like," (b) share, and (c) comment on political mobilization posts will be stronger for those who identify more with Democrats.

RQ1: Will political identification moderate the priming effect of network characteristics on willingness to click on the links in political mobilization posts?

Method

Participants

One hundred and twenty individuals participated in the online experiment via Amazon.com's Mechanical Turk service in exchange for payment. The study was only shown to those who were U.S. residents. The recruitment announcement for studies also specified that participants should be 18 years old or older and be Facebook users.

Experimental Design and Procedure

In this study, participants were randomly assigned to either the priming or control conditions. Participants in the priming condition were asked to answer three questions about their

Facebook networks—Facebook network size, Facebook network diversity, and perceived political similarity to groups of Facebook friends—*before* they were presented two mobilization messages, whereas those in the control condition answered the three Facebook network questions *after* they read the two posts. When presenting the posts, there was a prompt stating: "Suppose that one of your Facebook friends posts the following messages." To avoid ordering effects, the two political mobilization messages were presented in a randomized order.

To maintain external validity and avoid the possibility that some participants might not believe the content in the posts, the two posts were adopted from two actually existing Facebook groups, *Gay Rights* and *Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America*. The gay rights post described the case of a high school teacher forced to resign because she decided to start a family with her same-sex partner, and asked readers to support the teacher by signing and sharing a petition to the high school. The gun control post used a murder case to explain the importance of background checks for gun sales and asked people to "like" and "share" the post in order to support an initiative that would create universal background checks for all gun sales in Washington State. The two posts were selected for two reasons. First, consistent with the goal of the study, both posts are left-leaning and contain mobilization messages that request readers to support these initiatives in front of their network members. Second, because public opinions about gay rights and gun control are divisive in the U.S. (Pew, 2014a, 2014b), it is likely that respondents' Facebook networks consist of both supporters and opponents of these two issues, which would increase the strength of the manipulation. The actual posts shown to the respondents are included in Figure 6.

a. Facebook Post about Gay Rights

b. Facebook Post about Gun Control

Figure 6. Facebook Posts Included in the Study

Measures

Independent variables. As noted above, the network prime consists of three questions, including Facebook network size, Facebook network diversity, and political similarity to groups of Facebook friends. The measures below were collected in the order in which they are listed here.

Facebook network size. Following Ellison et al. (2011), participants' Facebook network size was measured in an open-ended fashion: "Approximately how many total Facebook friends do you have?". The distribution of Facebook network size was skewed (M = 229.40; SD = 251, skewness = 2.55), so it was transformed using the natural logarithm (M = 2.11, SD = .54, skewness = -.91). While research (Ellison, Vitak, et al., 2014) shows that the number of actual friends on Facebook is more predictive of social capital than the total number of Facebook friends, I did not adopt the actual friends measure because network diversity questions capture more detailed composition of respondents' networks.

Facebook network diversity. This measure was adapted from Manago et al. (2012) and Eveland and Hively (2009). First, in open-ended fashion, respondents were asked to estimate how many of their total Facebook friends were from the following groups: family members (M = 17.85; SD = 19.31), close friends (e.g., best friends, very good friends, and good friends) (M = 20.65; SD = 24.68), old friends (e.g., high school friends) (M = 49.40; SD = 60.76), people they know through activities (e.g., hobby group or organization members) (M = 30.78; SD = 45.78), acquaintances (e.g., friend of a friend and met only once) (M = 39.86; SD = 68.47), and strangers (M = 32.50; SD = 125.92).

Then, I followed Eveland and Hively (2009) and used Simpson's measure of diversity to calculate Facebook network diversity—the extent to which Facebook network members are

evenly divided across classifications of social groups. In mathematical terms, Simpson's measure of diversity is:

$$D = 1 - \sum p_i^2$$

In this formula, P_i is the proportion in a given category. This measure may take values from 0 (*complete lack of diversity, or all occurrences in a single category*) through 1 (*completely diverse, or an even distribution of occurrences across number of categories*). Using the formula for Simpson's D, Facebook network diversity was calculated (M = .68; SD = .17).

Political similarity to groups of Facebook friends. Respondents were asked to rate how similar their political views were to the groups of Facebook friends identified by the previous measure, ranging from 1 (*Completely different*) to 5 (*Completely similar*). The group option was displayed only if respondents identified at least one Facebook friend belonging to that group in the Facebook network diversity question. The groups included: family members (M = 3.21; SD = 1.07, n = 108), close friends (M = 3.78; SD = .70, n = 114), old friends (M = 2.95; SD = .77, n = 111), people they know through activities (M = 3.20; SD = .83, n = 96), acquaintances (M = 2.85; SD = .77, n = 97), and strangers (M = 2.45; SD = .82, n = 64). An index of perceived political similarity to groups of friends was created using the formula below:

$$\frac{\sum Political\ Similarity_g \times Number\ of\ People_g}{\sum Number\ of\ People_g}$$

The index represented weighted political similarity based on number of people in the groups, which could range from 1 to 5 (M = 3.21; SD = 1.07).

Dependent variables. After presenting the posts, respondents were asked to answer two key outcome measures: (a) willingness to engage in passive reactions—clicking on the links in

the posts, (b) willingness to engage in active reactions—"liking," "sharing," and/or commenting on the posts. The measures listed below are in the order in which they were collected.

Willingness to click on the links in the posts. As the two posts contained links to additional information, such as the petition for the high school teacher, participants were asked "How likely would you be to click on the links in the post" and given a 5-point scale to respond, ranging from 1 (*Not at all likely*) to 5 (*Extremely likely*) ($M_{gay\ rights}$ = 2.87; $SD_{gay\ rights}$ = 1.33; $M_{gun\ control}$ = 2.72; $SD_{gun\ control}$ = 1.36).

Willingness to "like," "share," and comment on the posts. On a 5-point scale, ranging from 1 (*Not at all likely*) to 5 (*Extremely likely*), participants were asked to rate how likely they would be to perform the following three actions regarding each of the posts, including "liking," ($M_{gay\ rights}$ = 2.79; $SD_{gay\ rights}$ = 1.37; $M_{gun\ control}$ = 2.32; $SD_{gun\ control}$ = 1.34) "sharing," ($M_{gay\ rights}$ = 2.17; $SD_{gay\ rights}$ = 1.27; $M_{gun\ control}$ = 2.01; $SD_{gun\ control}$ = 1.27) and commenting on the posts ($M_{gay\ rights}$ = 1.96; $SD_{gay\ rights}$ = 1.11; $M_{gun\ control}$ = 2.05; $SD_{gun\ control}$ = 1.20).

Demographics and political identification. Demographics, including age (*M* = 31.64; *SD* = 11.17), gender (42.3% female), race (74.8% White), and income (*M = 3.2*, *Mdn* = $30,000 to $49,999), were assessed. Moreover, to measure political identification, respondents were asked, "How would you describe your political party preference?" Answer categories included strong Republican (1), weak Republican (2), Independent (3), weak Republican (4), and strong Democrat (5) (*M* = 3.30; *SD* = 1.11). Those who answered "others" were excluded from the analysis (*n* = 3).

Statistical Analysis

While the two posts were left-leaning and contained mobilization messages, they were concerned with different political issues. Instead of using aggregated outcome measures, ordinal

logistic regression analyses were conducted to test the priming effect of network characteristics on willingness to react to the two political messages, separately. The separate analyses allow us to understand whether the priming effects are consistent across political messages with different political topics.

Results

Main Effects

The first two hypotheses seek to understand the priming effect of network characteristics on Facebook users' willingness to "like," "share," and comment on the posts (H1) and acquire more information about the mobilization messages (i.e., clicking on the links in the posts) (H2). Patterns of results differ by posts. For the post about gay rights, as shown in Table 8, the network prime significantly reduces willingness to "like" (b = -1.07, p < .01),"share" (b = -1.08, p < .01), and comment on the mobilization post (b = -.79, p < .05), but does not significantly influence willingness to click on the posts (b = -.43, p = .21). However, for the post about gun control, while the network prime reduces willingness to share the post at a marginal level (b = -.74, p = .06, see Table 8), the network prime does not significantly influence willingness to click, like, or comment on the post. Overall, results show that the network prime significantly reduces willingness to "like," "share," and comment on the post about gay rights only, while the network prime does not significantly influence willingness to click on the links in the two posts.

Table 9. Ordinal Logistic Regression Analysis: Predicting Willingness to Click on the Links in the Posts, "Like," "Share," and Comment on the Posts

	Click		Like		Share		Comment	
	Gay rights	Gun control	Gay rights	Gun control	Gay rights	Gun control	Gay rights	Gun control
Age	.00(.02)	.00(.02)	.01(.02)	.04*(.02)	.01(.02)	.02(.02)	.00(.02)	.01(.02)
Male	-.08 (.37)	-.22(.37)	-.49(.38)	.03(.38)	-.22(.38)	-.23(.40)	.09(.39)	.78*(.40)
Race	-.11(.42)	-.52(.42)	-1.11*(.43)	-.77(.43)	-.61(.44)	-1.24**(.46)	-.31(.44)	-.32(.44)
Income	-.21(.14)	-.13(.14)	-.23(.15)	-.12(.15)	-.25(.15)	-.14(.16)	-.58***(.16)	-.23(.15)
Strong Democrat	1.76*(.74)	.74 (.73)	2.47**(.79)	2.07*(.81)	1.09(.78)	1.31(.89)	-.24(.77)	-.10(.75)
Weak Democrat	.30(.71)	-.40(.71)	.99(.75)	.89(.79)	.47(.78)	1.21(.90)	-.66(.76)	-.90(.75)
Independent	0.40(65)	-.25(.64)	1.02(.70)	.88(.73)	.09(.72)	.92(.85)	-.57(.69)	-.60(.67)
Weak Republican	1.15(.85)	.08(.84)	1.30(.89)	1.88*(.93)	1.27(.91)	2.17*(1.04)	.35(.89)	.68(.86)
Network size	-.49(.38)	-.45(.38)	-.64(.39)	-1.03*(.40)	-.63(.39)	-1.02*(.42)	-.09(.40)	-.30(.40)
Network diversity	.35(.17)	-.47(1.18)	-.94(1.21)	-.52(1.22)	-.89(1.22)	-1.35(1.28)	-.13(1.25)	.80(1.28)
Political similarity	-.15(.33)	.45(.34)	.42(.34)	.36(.36)	.51(.36)	1.03*(.40)	.69(.36)	.47(.36)
Network prime	-.43(.35)	-.24(.35)	-1.07**(.36)	-.34(.36)	-1.08**(.37)	-.74(.39)	-.79*(.38)	-.30(.37)
Pseudo R^2 (Nagelkerke)	.14	.13	.31	.26	.22	.26	.17	.11

Notes: Logit coefficient estimates are reported with standard errors in the parenthesis * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$. The reference group for party identification is strong Republican. N = 117.

Moderation Effects

The second paired hypothesis and research question examine how network prime interacts with political identification to influence willingness to actively and passively react to the mobilization messages (H3 and RQ1). The patterns of results differ by posts. For the post about gay rights, Table 9 shows that strong Democrats who are in the priming condition are less willing to click on the links in the posts (b = -5.03, p < .01), "like" (b = -4.00, p < .05), and "share" the posts (b = -3.17, p < .05) than strong Democrats in the control condition. Moreover, weak Democrats (b = -4.45, p < .01) and Independents (b = -3.75, p < .05) who received the network prime are less willing to click on the links in the posts than their counterparts in the control condition. Interestingly, strong Republicans in the priming condition are more likely to click on the links in the post than their counterparts in the control condition (b = 3.33, p < .05). For the post about gun control, as shown in Table 10, political identification does not significantly moderate the priming effect of network characteristics on willingness to click, "like," "share," and comment on the post, while negative trends of the results are consistent with the results for the gay rights post. Thus, H3 is partially supported.

Table 10. Ordinal Logistic Regression Analysis (Gay Rights): Two-Way Interactions between Network Prime and Political Identification

	Click		Like		Share		Comment	
	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE
Age	-.01	.02	.01	.02	.01	.02	.00	.02
Male	-.17	.38	-.56	.38	-.23	.39	.11	.39
Race	.06	.43	-1.05*	.45	-.65	.45	-.25	.46
Income	-.30*	.15	-.29	.15	-.29	.16	-.59***	.17
Strong Democrat	4.57**	1.36	4.63***	1.23	2.58*	1.16	.27	1.09
Weak Democrat	2.99*	1.34	2.39*	1.18	1.71	1.17	.06	1.10
Independent	2.80*	1.28	2.57*	1.12	1.45	1.11	-.16	1.04
Weak Republican	3.34*	1.53	2.64	1.38	2.24	1.38	.40	1.34
Network size	-.49	.39	-.65	.40	-.62	.40	-.12	.40
Network diversity	.26	1.24	-1.30	1.30	-1.33	1.28	-.14	1.30
Political similarity	.01	.35	.57	.36	.69	.38	.75	.38
Network prime	3.33*	1.46	1.37	1.31	1.20	1.32	.04	1.26
Prime*Strong Democrat	-5.03**	1.70	-4.00*	1.60	-3.17*	1.58	-1.02	1.54
Prime*Weak Democrat	-4.45**	1.64	-2.29	1.51	-2.28	1.53	-1.43	1.50
Prime*Independent	-3.75*	1.57	-2.56	1.44	-2.57	1.47	-.76	1.40
Prime*Weak Republican	-3.42	1.89	-2.20	1.79	-1.75	1.79	-.09	1.78
Pseudo R^2 (Nagelkerke)	.22		.35		.25		.19	

Notes: Logit coefficient estimates are reported. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$. The reference group for party identification is strong Republican, N = 117.

Table 11. Ordinal Logistic Regression Analysis (Gun Control): Two-Way Interactions between Network Prime and Political Identification

	Click		Like		Share		Comment	
	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE
Age	.00	.02	.05*	.02	.03	.02	.01	.02
Male	-.20	.37	.06	.38	-.22	.41	.81*	.40
Race	-.50	.43	-.78	.45	-1.33**	.49	-.30	.46
Income	-.11	.15	-.11	.15	-.11	.17	-.20	.15
Strong Democrat	1.08	1.06	2.88*	1.17	1.81	1.22	-.57	1.07
Weak Democrat	-.52	1.06	1.10	1.15	1.78	1.23	-.67	1.09
Independent	-.31	.99	1.27	1.09	1.59	1.18	-.74	1.01
Weak Republican	-.88	1.29	1.26	1.38	1.35	1.47	.10	1.30
Network size	-.45	.38	-1.03*	.41	-1.05*	.43	-.36	.41
Network diversity	-.56	1.23	-.86	1.29	-1.91	1.37	.84	1.32
Political similarity	.44	.36	.38	.38	1.18**	.43	.50	.38
Network prime	-.37	1.19	.19	1.34	.23	1.52	-.63	1.24
Prime*Strong Democrat	-.86	1.45	-1.70	1.59	-1.29	1.78	1.08	1.49
Prime*Weak Democrat	.24	1.40	-.26	1.53	-1.14	1.73	-.43	1.48
Prime*Independent	.10	1.32	-.70	1.46	-1.48	1.65	.27	1.37
Prime*Weak Republican	1.91	1.70	1.49	1.82	1.37	1.99	1.10	1.73
Pseudo R^2 (Nagelkerke)	.16		.30		.30		.13	

Notes: Logit coefficient estimates are reported. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$. The reference group for party identification is strong Republican, N = 117.

Discussion

While research shows that social media, such as Facebook, play an important role in political mobilization, especially for those on the political "left" who are more likely to use social media infrastructure for mobilization (e.g., Karpf, 2008; Shaw & Benkler, 2012; Wallsten, 2008), little work has examined how perceived network connections influences people's decisions regarding how to respond to political mobilization requests. Drawing on impression management and priming literature, the present study provides initial experimental evidence to demonstrate the priming effect of network characteristics—bringing to mind users' Facebook network size, diversity, and political similarity to strong and weak ties—on people's willingness to react to left-leaning mobilization messages. The priming effects on willingness to perform active (i.e., willingness to "like," "share," and comment on the posts) and passive acts (i.e., willingness to click on the links in the posts) are discussed in turn below.

For active reactions, results show that the network prime reduces willingness to "like," "share," and comment on the post about gay rights, and decreases the willingness to "share" the political message about gun control at a marginal level. Research combing survey and large-scale behavioral data shows that Facebook users consistently underestimate the audience size for their posts and esimate that their audience is 27% of its true size (Bernstein, Bakshy, Burke, & Karrer, 2013). It could be that drawing users' attention to their Facebook network characteristics makes them more aware of the potential audience, leading them to become more cautious about expressing their political views regarding controversial political messages in front of their networks, which, in turn, may lead to decreased willingness to actively react to the posts.

Moving beyond the direct effects, results of moderation analysis show that strong Democrats in the priming condition are less likely to "like" and "share" the post about gay rights

than strong Democrats in the control condition. To explain these findings, it is possible that because political beliefs are chronically accessible to strong Democrats, they may be less likely to consider political differences in their networks by default. Thus, when receiving the network prime, strong Democrats may be more responsive to the priming and become less willing to publicly react to the gay rights post than strong Democrats in the control condition.

However, it is important to note that while the trends of priming effects are similar across the two posts, the effects are statistically significant for the gay rights post only. Results of post-hoc analysis show that the two posts do not differ in terms of perceived importance, interest, and informativeness. However, because any differences between the two posts, such as the length and examples employed in the posts, could contribute to the different results, it is unclear why the results vary by the two posts. Future research should explore how different characteristics of the posts may influence the priming effect of network characteristics on willingness to actively react to the political messages. Overall, results suggest that the network prime tends to decrease willingness to actively react to posts and that these priming effects are moderated by political identification, but these effects also vary depending on the nature and topics of the posts.

In contrast to active forms of reactions, the network prime does not directly influence willingness to click on links across the two posts. Further moderation analyses show that the priming effect is contingent on political identification. Interestingly, results show that strong Democrats, weak Democrats, and Independents are significantly *less* likely, while strong Republicans are *more* likely to click on the links in the post about gay rights than their counterparts in the control condition. Overall, results suggest that the interaction between the network prime and political identification shapes not only willingness to react actively but also willingness to perform passive reactions that are not visible to their network.

Implications and Future Research

Together, these patterns of results highlight the priming effect of network characteristics on willingness to engage with left-leaning mobilization messages and have implications for research on collective actions and political polarization. First, this study underscores the importance of examining political social media use beyond the context of large political events. While research on social media and collective actions often considers access to extended networks as a desirable characterstic of social media use because these connections can reduce the cost of exchanging information and help enforce social norms that help promote collective political actions (Enjolras et al., 2013), this research shows otherwise. When people are primed with their network connections, they are less likely to actively react to certain political messages. These results provide some support for prior work that suggests that openness of the space often reduces the likelihood of political talk (Eliasoph, 1998; Thorson, 2013), demonstrating that social contexts play an important role in shaping political behaviors. Moving beyond the context of large collective political events, it is essential for future research to extend the current study by selecting kinds of political messages that are typical and popular in people's daily social media use in order to examine how users react to these messages.

Second, the findings also have implications for political polarization, which recent research shows is only increasing between Republicans and Democrats in the U.S. (Pew, 2014b). As research shows that Democrats are more likely to share like-minded partisan news articles than Republicans (An, Quercia, & Crowcroft, 2014), findings of the study suggest that the network prime on social media may "cool down" Democrats' ethusiasm to further engage with the posts. Moeverover, in particular, as findings show that those who identify more with Republicans are more likely to click on the links in the posts, this finding is consistent with

research that suggests that people do not systematically avoid political content that challenges their existing political views (Garrett, 2009; Messing & Westwood, 2012). If a network prime can trump political identification by increasing a user's willingness to consume messages from the other side, political polarization might be mitigated. Considering these possibilities, future research should investigate the extent to which these intentions to avoid or engage with political messages are actually realized and whether the experience of encountering information from the other side is valued at all by those who have the experience.

Another possible line of research for future work is to further identify the underlying mechanisms behind the observed effects. For example, post-hoc analysis show that while network size, diversity, and perceived political similarity to groups of Facebook friends do not significantly differ by conditions (see Appendices to Chapter 4, Table 11), network size moderates some priming effects.[2] That is, network size positively moderates the priming effect of network characteristics on willingness to "like" ($b = 1.48$, $p < .05$, see Appendices to Chapter 4, Table 12) and "share" ($b = 1.77$, $p < .05$, see Appendices to Chapter 4, Table 12) the gay rights post and willingness to "share" ($b = 2.05$, $p < .05$, see Appendices for Chapter 4, Table 13) the gun control post, suggesting that those in the priming condition are more likely to actively respond to the posts as their network size increases than those in the control condition. As prior work shows that those who have a larger network size tend to have higher need for popularity (Utz, Tanis, & Vermeulen, 2012), it could be that when receiving the network prime, these individuals' desire to be popular may be activated, thus making them more responsive to mobilization requests than those with a smaller network size. Considering these possibilities,

[2] The priming effect is not contingent on network diversity (see Appendices to Chapter 4, Tables 14 and 15) and perceived political similarity (see Appendices to Chapter 4, Tables 16 and 17).

future research should keep probing possible underlying processes or mechanisms behind the priming effect of network characteristics.

Limitations

Several potential limitations of this study should be noted. First, as the two posts included in the study are different in many ways, it is not clear why the patterns of results differ by the two posts. Future research should consider different characteristics of political posts and explore how the network prime may interact with post characteristics to influence willingness to react to political messages. Second, the study focuses on left-leaning mobilization messages on Facebook as one step in this line of research to understand the priming effect of network characteristics on willingness to engage with posts, because evidence shows that the left is more likely to use social media for political moblization and Facebook is the most popular social media platform in the U.S. However, future research should employ right-leaning mobilization messages to examine whether the current findings can be replicated. Likewise, it is important to explore the extent to which the findings are generalizable to other social media platforms. For example, because privacy boundary coordination is more challenging on Facebook than Twitter (Choi & Bazarova, 2014), the impact of the network prime on willingness to react to the political moblization posts may be weaker on Twitter. Third, the implications of the findings for actual reactions to the posts are limited because the outcome variables in this study rely on attitudinal measures (e.g., willingness to "share" the post), as opposed to behavioral measures, in an artificial setting. Future efforts should track the priming effects of network characteristics on actual reactions to the mobilization messages in a more realistic setting.

In summary, the current study uses an experimental approach to examine the priming effect of network characteristics on Facebook users' willingness to react to left-leaning

mobilization posts in various ways. Results show that the network prime reduces users' willingness to "like," "share," and comment on the post about gay rights. Further, results suggest that political identification moderates the priming effects on willingness to click, "like," "share" the gay rights post, such that strong Democrats in the priming condition are less willing to perform these actions than their counterparts in the control condition. Overall, while results vary depending on the nature and topic of the political mobilization posts, this study demonstrates the priming effects of network characteristics on willingness to react to certain left-leaning political moblization messages, while illuminating the mechanisms behind the effects.

Appendices to Chapter 4

Table 12. OLS Regression Analysis: Prediting Network Size, Netowrk Diversity, and Perceived Political Similarity

	Network size			Network diversity			Political similarity		
	B	SE	β	B	SE	β	B	SE	β
Intercept	1.99**	.35		.41**	.12		1.66***	.43	
Age	-.01**	.00	-.29	.00	.00	.06	.01	.01	.12
Male	-.06	.09	-.07	.07*	.03	.23	-.04	.11	-.03
Race	-.02	.11	-.02	-.02	.03	-.07	.20	.12	.15
Income	.07	.04	.18	-.02	.01	-.17	.17***	.04	.39
Party identification	-.01	.04	-.02	.00	.01	.01	.10*	.05	.20
Network size				.08*	.03	.24	-.06	.11	-.05
Network diversity	.74*	.29	.24				.53	.34	.14
Political similarity	-.04	.08	-.05	.04	.03	.16			
Network prime	.09	.09	.09	-.02	.03	-.08	-.11	.10	-.10
Adjusted R^2	.10			.07			.18		

Notes: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$. N = 117.

Table 13. Ordinal Logistic Regression Analysis (Gay Rights): Two-Way Interactions between Network Prime and Network Size

	Click		Like		Share		Comment	
	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE
Age	.00	.02	.01	.02	.01	.02	.00	.02
Male	-.03	.37	-.44	.38	-.15	.39	.15	.39
Race	-.13	.42	-1.13**	.43	-.65	.44	-.33	.45
Income	-.22	.14	-.26	.15	-.29	.15	-.60***	.17
Strong Democrat	1.74*	.74	2.58**	.80	1.23	.79	-.14	.78
Weak Democrat	.35	.71	1.24	.76	.75	.79	-.50	.77
Independent	.39	.65	1.15	.70	.23	.73	-.45	.70
Weak Republican	1.18	.85	1.41	.89	1.40	.92	.50	.90
Network size	-.86	.49	-1.18*	.53	-1.28*	.51	-.56	.52
Network diversity	.17	1.18	-1.17	1.24	-1.01	1.24	-.33	1.26
Political similarity	-.07	.34	.58	.35	.68	.36	.79*	.37
Network prime	-2.41	1.57	-4.31*	1.66	-4.87**	1.69	-3.24	1.68
Prime*Size	.91	.71	1.48*	.75	1.77*	.76	1.13	.76
Pseudo R^2 (Nagelkerke)	.15		.33		.26		.19	

Notes: Logit coefficient estimates are reported. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$. The reference group for party identification is strong Republican, N = 117.

Table 14. Ordinal Logistic Regression Analysis (Gun Control): Two-Way Interactions between Network Prime and Network Size

	Click		Like		Share		Comment	
	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE
Age	.00	.02	.04*	.02	.03	.02	.01	.02
Male	-.23	.37	.10	.38	-.10	.41	.86*	.40
Race	-.52	.42	-.80	.43	-1.33**	.47	-.33	.44
Income	-.12	.14	-.14	.15	-.18	.17	-.26	.15
Strong Democrat	.74	.73	2.14**	.81	1.45	.92	-.05	.76
Weak Democrat	-.43	.71	1.09	.80	1.56	.93	-.71	.76
Independent	-.25	.65	.99	.74	1.11	.88	-.50	.68
Weak Republican	.07	.84	1.99*	.93	2.39*	1.06	.80	.87
Network size	-.36	.49	-1.55**	.53	-1.90**	.57	-.81	.53
Network diversity	-.44	1.18	-.78	1.24	-1.75	1.32	.71	1.28
Political similarity	.44	.34	.47	.36	1.17**	.41	.58	.37
Network prime	.31	1.55	-3.23	1.65	-5.09**	1.80	-2.99	1.67
Prime*Size	-.25	.71	1.33	.75	2.05*	.82	1.25	.76
Pseudo R^2 (Nagelkerke)	.13		.28		.30		.13	

Notes: Logit coefficient estimates are reported. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$. The reference group for party identification is strong Republican, N = 117.

Table 15. Ordinal Logistic Regression Analysis (Gay Rights): Two-Way Interactions between Network Prime and Network Diversity

	Click		Like		Share		Comment	
	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE
Age	.00	.02	.01	.02	.01	.02	.01	.02
Male	-.07	.37	-.46	.38	-.25	.39	.11	.39
Race	-.11	.42	-1.11*	.43	-.61	.44	-.35	.45
Income	-.21	.14	-.23	.15	-.25	.15	-.57***	.16
Strong Democrat	1.77*	.74	2.49**	.79	1.10	.79	-.24	.77
Weak Democrat	.32	.71	1.03	.76	.44	.78	-.63	.76
Independent	.38	.65	.97	.70	.15	.73	-.68	.69
Weak Republican	1.18	.85	1.37	.89	1.23	.91	.44	.89
Network size	-.48	.38	-.65	.39	-.62	.39	-.05	.40
Network diversity	.68	1.50	-.16	1.54	-1.65	1.55	1.64	1.73
Political similarity	-.18	.34	.34	.35	.57	.36	.65	.37
Network prime	.09	1.58	.22	1.61	-2.50	1.68	1.80	1.76
Prime*Diversity	-.77	2.29	-1.94	2.33	2.10	2.42	-3.80	2.54
Pseudo R^2 (Nagelkerke)	.14		.31		.22		.19	

Note: Logit coefficient estimates are reported. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$. The reference group for party identification is strong Republican, N = 117.

Table 16. Ordinal Logistic Regression Analysis (Gun Control): Two-Way Interactions between Network Prime and Network Diversity

	Click		Like		Share		Comment	
	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE
Age	.00	.02	.04	.02	.02	.02	.01	.02
Male	-.24	.37	.03	.38	-.23	.41	.79	.40
Race	-.53	.42	-.77	.43	-1.24	.46	-.32	.44
Income	-.13	.14	-.11	.15	-.14	.16	-.23	.15
Strong Democrat	.73	.73	2.08	.81	1.33	.89	-.11	.75
Weak Democrat	-.43	.71	.88	.80	1.22	.91	-.89	.75
Independent	-.21	.65	.92	.74	.96	.86	-.62	.67
Weak Republican	.06	.84	1.86	.93	2.17	1.05	.69	.87
Network size	-.46	.38	-1.04	.40	-1.02	.42	-.30	.40
Network diversity	-.95	1.52	-1.12	1.59	-1.65	1.64	1.03	1.64
Political similarity	.47	.34	.37	.36	1.03	.41	.47	.36
Network prime	-1.12	1.59	-1.32	1.66	-1.19	1.72	.08	1.71
Prime*Diversity	1.29	2.30	1.41	2.39	.65	2.49	-.55	2.45
Pseudo R^2 (Nagelkerke)	.13		.26		.26		.11	

Notes: Logit coefficient estimates are reported. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$. The reference group for party identification is strong Republican, N = 117.

Table 17. Ordinal Logistic Regression Analysis (Gay Rights): Two-Way Interactions between Network Prime and Perceived Political Similarity

	Click		Like		Share		Comment	
	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE
Age	-.01	.02	.01	.02	.01	.02	.01	.02
Male	-.15	.37	-.47	.38	-.23	.39	.11	.40
Race	-.15	.42	-1.10*	.43	-.61	.44	-.26	.45
Income	-.21	.14	-.23	.15	-.25	.15	-.58***	.16
Strong Democrat	1.76*	.75	2.46**	.79	1.10	.78	-.30	.77
Weak Democrat	.36	.72	.96	.76	.49	.78	-.77	.77
Independent	.50	.67	.99	.71	.12	.74	-.71	.71
Weak Republican	1.16	.85	1.29	.89	1.29	.91	.32	.89
Network size	-.55	.38	-.62	.39	-.64	.39	-.04	.40
Network diversity	.20	1.19	-.89	1.22	-.93	1.23	.01	1.26
Political similarity	.09	.43	.35	.44	.56	.45	.36	.45
Network prime	1.53	2.00	-1.69	2.05	-.68	2.14	-3.22	2.21
Prime*Political similarity	-.63	.64	.20	.66	-.13	.69	.78	.71
Pseudo R^2 (Nagelkerke)	.14		.31		.22		.18	

Notes: Logit coefficient estimates are reported. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$. The reference group for party identification is strong Republican, N = 117.

Table 18. Ordinal Logistic Regression Analysis (Gun Control): Two-Way Interactions between Network Prime and Perceived Political Similarity

	Click		Like		Share		Comment	
	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE
Age	.00	.02	.04	.02	.03	.02	.01	.02
Male	-.22	.37	.04	.39	-.19	.41	.82*	.40
Race	-.52	.42	-.77	.43	-1.23**	.47	-.29	.44
Income	-.13	.14	-.11	.15	-.14	.16	-.23	.15
Strong Democrat	.73	.73	2.07*	.81	1.32	.89	-.14	.75
Weak Democrat	-.42	.72	.88	.80	1.17	.91	-.98	.76
Independent	-.26	.66	.87	.75	.87	.86	-.71	.69
Weak Republican	.08	.84	1.88*	.93	2.21*	1.05	.64	.87
Network size	-.45	.38	-1.03*	.40	-1.01*	.42	-.27	.40
Network diversity	-.47	1.19	-.52	1.23	-1.38	1.28	.85	1.28
Political similarity	.42	.43	.34	.45	.81	.47	.24	.45
Network prime	-.48	2.01	-.53	2.14	-2.81	2.63	-2.02	2.20
Prime*Political similarity	.08	.65	.06	.69	.65	.83	.55	.70
Pseudo R^2 (Nagelkerke)	.13		.26		.27		.12	

Notes: Logit coefficient estimates are reported. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$. The reference group for party identification is strong Republican, N = 117.

CHAPTER 5

Conclusion

In contrast to prior research that gave relatively little weight to the potential political benefits of people's everyday, non-political use of social technology, an increasing amount of scholarship has begun to emphasize the influence such seeming "personal" activities one people's engagement in the political realm. As Dahlgren (2009) noted, "to understand the origins of civic agency and competence, we need to look beyond the public sphere itself, into the terrain of the private – or, expressed alternatively, into the experiential domain of everyday life" (p.75). In keeping with this conceptual shift, this project examines political engagement on social media in the context of everyday use of such sites. It considers three important characteristics of social media sites: passive and active social media use, inclusion of traditionally politically marginalized individuals, and access to a large and diverse network. The three characteristics correspond to three significant research questions addressed in Chapters 2, 3 and 4. In this chapter, I briefly summarize the key findings from Chapters 2 through 4. Then, I discuss the theoretical implications of these findings. Finally, the limitations of the research and opportunities for future work are discussed.

Main Findings

As each chapter investigates a different question, I will first outline the findings of each chapter separately. Chapter 2 proposes to investigate the relationship between both passive and active forms of non-political social media use (NPP and NPA) and two major types of *political*

social media use—namely, exposure to political information, and expression of political opinions and information. Overall, results in Chapter 2 suggest that NPP and NPA social media use are differentially related to political use of the sites. In particular, across Facebook and Twitter users in the study, both NPP and NPA use are positively associated with political information exposure. But when it comes to the more active and potentially risky case of political expression on social media, NPP use plays little role and is even found to have a negative relation to political expression on the sites, whereas NPA use is positively related to political expression. Additionally, for both Facebook and Twitter users, NPA use may increase political efficacy, which in turn, contributes to political expression.

Chapter 3 turns to the question of participatory equality by examining how the relations between forms of non-political and political social media use found in Chapter 2 are stratified by political interest, education, and age. Results provide mixed support for the dominant theoretical idea that those who are already politically advantaged are more likely to extend their non-political social media use to political activities on the sites (Norris, 2001). With regard to political information exposure, although Facebook users who are traditionally advantaged—that is, those who are more politically interested, educated, and older—are more likely to cross the boundary from NPA use to political information exposure, the positive relationship between NPP use and political information exposure does not differ by political interest, education and age across the two platforms. Regarding political expression, the positive relationship between NPA use and political expression is stronger among those with high political interest across the two platforms, and is more salient for Twitter users with higher education, but this relationship does not differ by age.

Chapter 4 shifts to the significance of social media networks, since one of the defining

features of social media is the way they connect people to a wide and diverse array of people. The chapter thus examines the extent to which a network prime—that is, when Facebook users are primed with (or reminded of) their Facebook network's size, diversity, and perceived political similarity between themselves and their groups of social media friends —impacts individuals' willingness to engage with left-leaning political moblization messages on the site. The chapter provides experimental evidence that Facebook users are less willing to "like," "share," and comment on a mobilization message supporting gay rights when they are primed with their Facebook network characteristics. Additionally, results show political identification moderates this effect, such that strong Democrats are more willing to "click," "like," and "share" the post in the control condition, than in the primed condition.

Theoretical Implications

The present findings have a number of theoretical implications for digital media and democratic citizenship, political inequality, and political discourse in the contexts of social media. I highlight the implications for each of these areas in turn.

Implications for digital media and democratic citizenship. This work contributes to our theoretical understanding of the relationship between digital media and democratic citizenship. Unlike the "contrast" model, which views the personal and the political as two separate domains and attaches more value to the latter, this study broadly reaffirms the "extension" model that sees the political as an extended terrain of everyday personal life (e.g., Bakardjieva, 2009; Dahlgren, 2009; Papacharissi, 2010). This research demonstrates that those who consume more content online related to private interests are also more likely to come across political information. Likewise, those who frequently produce content online about private interests are more likely to express their political views as well. In this sense, the study suggests

that forms of political engagement on social media may arise from everyday, non-political uses of the sites.

Furthermore, the present study supports Dahlgren (2009) and Bakardjieva's (2009) ideas that networked communicative practices for private interests can foster a shared sense of civic identity, which can become, in turn, a basis for more expressive forms of political engagement. Indeed, the findings in Chaper 2 show that NPA use that involves interactions with others may help generate a collective identity in the political domain, and contribute, in turn, to political expression on the sites. Since NPA use can cultivate social bonds (Ellison, Gray, et al., 2014; Ellison, Vitak, et al., 2014) and develop among users a sense of group identity (Bakardjieva, 2009), it is likely that these social bonds and feelings of affinity can be activated and transformed into political expression when opportunities arise (Dahlgren, 2009). However, because these interaction-based experiences may be absent from NPP social media use, NPP use has little or even a negative relationship to political expression. Therefore, this work also contributes to our theoretical understanding of the processes underlying the relationship between NPA use and political expression.

As this study provides initial evidence that political efficacy may be one mechanism through which NPA social media use enhances political expression on the sites, one possible direction for future research is to further examine the processes underlying the link between NPA use and political efficacy. Social cognitive theory, which considers mastery of experiences and positive emotional states as two sources of efficacious beliefs (Bandura, 1997), provides two possible mechanisms through which NPA use links to political efficacy. For one, because NPA use often involves exercises of resources mobilization in a networked environment (Ellison, Gray, et al., 2014; Ellison, Vitak, et al., 2014), NPA use may allow individuals to acquire

mastery of resource mobilzation and establish collective identity through the interactions, which, in turn, may foster political efficacy. Another possiblity is that because expressive behaviors, like NPA use, are intrinsically rewarding (Tamir & Mitchell, 2012), positive emotional states triggered by NPA use may increase efficacious beliefs, including political efficacy. These possiblities highlight the need for further examination of the transformation processes, which will help us better understand the relevance of NPA experiences for political participation. Overall, the study supports the culturalist view that forms of non-political activity are connected to forms of political activity on social media, while revealing the underlying processes behind the link between NPA use and political expression.

Implications for political inequality. This work also has implications for political inequality in two respects. First, the findings reveal that the specific relationships between forms of political and non-political social media use vary according to the nature of social media site usage—specifically, whether it is passive or active (Pingree, 2007). While NPP and NPA use are both positively associated with passive forms of political engagement on social media—namely political information exposure—NPP use is a stronger predictor than NPA use. Because exposure to political information is one mechanism through which people become aware of political issues and potentially encounter opportunities for political participation, given the different strength of the relationships between NPP and NPA use and political outcomes, it is possible that awareness of political issues and opportunities for political engagement may diverge between these two types of use.

Regarding active and risky forms of political engagement, namely political expression, results of the dissertation show that NPA use is directly and indirectly associated with increased political expression on the sites, whereas NPP use has little or even a negative relationship to

such outcomes. One possible implication of these findings is that those who frequently engage in NPA use may become more politically expressive and increasingly control the direction of political discussion on social media, whereas frequent NPP users who do not engage in any NPA use may remain or become increasingly silent. Thus, the patterns of findings highlight the importance of differentiating non-political social media usage based on consumption and production in order to understand their unique contributions to political activities on the sites. These findings also indicate a need for future examinations to explore whether freqent NPP and NPA use may differentially widen existing gaps in political awareness and political expression.

Second, while the dominant theoretical argument suggests that those who are already politically advantaged (e.g., those who have higher political interests, higher educational attainment, and are older) will always be more likely to acquire political benefits than those without such political advantages, this study provides mixed support for this expectation. Consistent with the "rich-get-richer" expectation, political interest plays an important role in facilitating the extension from forms of non-political to political social media use. Results show that political interest positively shapes the relationship between both NPP and NPA use and political expression on social media, consistent with the differential gains hypothesis that political interest accelerates the transition from private to public forms of political engagement (e.g., Scheufele, 2002; Xenos & Moy, 2007). It is especially worrisome that the relationship between NPP use and political expression is negative among those with low political interest, raising the concern that gaps in political expression may widen between those with high and low political interest as their NPP use increases.

However, the results are not completely gloomy. When it comes to political information exposure on the sites, the relationship between NPP use and political information exposure does

not differ by political interest, education attainment, and age. This finding suggests that those who tend to be marginalized in traditional forms of political participation have relatively equal opportunities to come across political information when they are engaged in NPP social media use, which contradicts the dominant view that those who are already politically advantaged are more likely to acquire political information (e.g., Tichenor et al., 1970). To explain why the "rich-get-richer" hypothesis is not supported in this case, it could be that because entertainment and social activities are more popular among those who are less interested in politics, less educated, and younger (e.g., Hoffman et al., 2013; Prior, 2007), the greater NPP use of this group may increase their chances of encountering political information inadvertently. Thus, while some factors, such as selective exposure, may promote political information exposure among those who are politically advantaged, the less politically disadvantaged may be able to catch up and narrow the gaps in political information exposure on social media sites through greater NPP use overall. Given these findings, future research should further examine the extent to which inadvertently encountered political information decreases gaps in subsequent political outcomes, such as political awareness and political knowledge, between those who are more and less politically advantaged.

Indeed, if social media become an increasingly important source of political information among those who are less politically interested, less educated, and younger, one direction for future research is to understand what *kinds* of political views are encountered. Regarding kinds of political information shared on social media, scholars have argued that the networked political engagement facilitated by social media tends to focus on personal lifestyle values regarding environment, commercial products, and personal identity (Bennett, 2012), potentially leaving out political issues that are less directly relevant to personal experiences, such as economic policies

and international affairs. Moreover, social media contexts can also shape the kinds of political messages that are shared on the sites. In particular, to preserve self-presentation and acquire social approval in collapsed social media contexts, users often choose either not to share or only strategically share humor-oriented content in order to neutralize their political opinions (Thorson, 2013). Because the range of political discourse expressed on social media sites can greatly shape users' political knowledge and subsequent political outcomes, future research should investigate the kinds of political content social media users encounter and express in order to better understand the implications for political engagement on social media.

Implications for political discourse in the context of social media. Another contribution of this work is its attention to the ways in which political activities on the sites vary in terms of the contextual characteristics of social media, and in terms of the specific and distinct online cultures that exist on different forms of social media. As one defining feature of social media is that they connect users to a wide and large network (Donath, 2007), this study extends the literature on self-management and offline political discussion by examining whether Facebook users' willingness to react to political mobilization messages is impacted when they are primed with their Facebook network size, diversity, and political similarity to groups of friends. Prior research that examines the role of social media in large-scale political events tends to consider access to an extended network as a desirable characteristic of social media use, as such assess can reduce the cost of communication and mobilization that are crucial for successful collective actions (Enjolras et al., 2013). However, results presented in this study show that when Facebook users are primed with their Facebook network characteristics, they are less likely to "like," "share," and comment on the political message that supports gay rights, which is consistent with prior work that suggests that daily political talk tends to be repressed when it

enters more public contexts (Eliasoph, 1998). This trend of findings highlights the need to examine the impact of social media network contexts on political outcomes beyond the contexts of large collective actions.

As prior work on social media often focuses on only one social media site (Rains & Brunner, 2015) or views social media as a homogeneous category (Gil de Zúñiga et al., 2014), results presented in the study also underscore the importance of taking into account cultural differences across sites when examining political implications of social media use, and suggests caution when generalizing results from one site to another. As one key objective of social scientific research is to generalize findings (Cook & Campbell, 1979), this research employs a comparative approach to identify possible patterns of results that can transcend across Facebook and Twitter, two popular social media platforms in the U.S. This comparative approach identifies patterns of results that are consistent across the two sites, which would help advance theory building regarding uses and effects of social media. However, results presented in the study also suggest caution with regard to treating social media as a uniform media genre. Unique cultures of social media sites, resulting from the interaction among their users and the specific features they offer, may shape political outcomes differently (Pasek, more, & Romer, 2009). For example, results in Chapter 2 show that NPP Facebook use is not significantly related to expressing views on Facebook, while NPP Twitter use is actually negatively associated with political expression on Twitter. The inconsistent findings may result from the differences between the two sites. Because Twitter is a more interest-driven social media site than Facebook (Kwak et al., 2010), frequent NPP Twitter users may perceive expressing political views as not just irrelevant but actually inappropriate to their network, which, in turn, decreases the likelihood of them voicing their political views. Thus, findings of the study suggest that it is essential for future research on

social media use and political engagement to sample from or study multiple social media sites, as opposed to focusing on one social media site or treating them as one uniform category. In this way, we are able to identify common as well as unique characteristics of social media sites to theorize the uses and effects of social media.

Limitations

Because limitations of the study have been acknowledged in the previous chapters, this section provides a brief summary of major limitations for the studies presented in the dissertation. For Chapters 2 and 3, because cross-sectional, non-representative survey data were used, results indicate associations between measures but should not be interpreted as causal relationships. Findings may have limited generalizability to other social media users. Further, self-reported levels of social media use may be subject to recall errors and social desirability bias. Additionally, answers regarding political social media use may vary as respondents have different perceptions regarding what constitutes "political content" on social media. For Chapter 4, it is not clear exactly why patterns of results differ by political messages. Moreover, because respondents' attitudes toward two selected posts are measured only among Facebook users, the findings have limited generalizability to actual behaviors, to other social media sites, and to other political mobilization posts. Future research should address these limitations to further our understanding of the impact of non-political social media use and social media contexts on political social media usage.

Concluding Remarks

This dissertation examines political behaviors on social media sites—political information exposure and political expression—in the context of everyday social media use. The studies presented in this dissertation suggest that forms of non-political social media use

differentially associate with political behaviors on the sites, supporting the theoretical view that "the political" is deeply embedded in "the personal." While the possible extension from forms of non-political to risky and active forms of political social media use (i.e., political expression) is more salient among those with higher political interests, the link between passive non-political and passive political use (i.e., political information exposure) is not stratified by political interests, education, or age, raising both concerns and hopes for the future of political inequality. In addition to non-political social media practices, social media network contexts also shape political behaviors, such that reminders of network characteristics suppress users' willingness to actively engage with political mobilization requests. Future research should continue to explore how different non-political social media practices and social media contexts influence behavioral and attitudinal political outcomes on and beyond social media sites.

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