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Social media, political expression, and participation in Confucian Asia

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This study reviews and analyzes the published empirical research on the role of social media in promoting political expression and participation in Confucian Asia, including China, Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea, and Taiwan. In addition to providing a narrative review of the literature, our analyses show clear numerical estimates of the relationships among different types of social media use (i.e., informational, expressive, relational, and recreational), political expression, and participation in Confucian states. The findings reiterate the importance of the expressive use of social media, showing its moderately strong relationship with participation. The findings also show weak positive relationships with informational and relational uses. We also examine the role of political systems in these relationships and conclude that the strongest relationships are in democratic states, followed by hybrid and authoritarian systems.

Keywords: social media; political expression; political participation; Confucian Asia; political system; meta-analysis

Introduction

The popularity of social media platforms has prompted the research community to examine their social, psychological, and political implications, including their potential role in promoting citizens' participation in political life. Scholars, journalists, and commentators have also discussed how social media tools can aid social movements and assist them in challenging existing power relations (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012; Castells, 2012; Gladwell, 2010; Morozov, 2012). Although the majority of empirical studies examining the relationship between social media use and citizen participation have been conducted in the context of Western democracies, particularly the United States (Gil de Zúñiga, Jung, & Valenzuela, 2012; Macafee & De Simone, 2012; Valenzuela, Park, & Kee, 2009; Vitak et al., 2011), a growing body of literature analyzes these phenomena in the context of Asian societies (Skoric & Poor, 2013; Baek, 2015; Chan, Wu, Hao, Xi, & Jin, 2012; Hyun & Kim, 2015a; Tang & Lee, 2013; Zhang & Lin, 2014). Most of this research has focused on East Asian states, examining the implications of social media use for political participation in both democratic and non-democratic contexts.

In this study, we aim to review the empirical research on the role of social media in promoting political expression and participation in Confucian Asia, including China, Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea, and Taiwan[1]. Although they share many cultural, linguistic, and historical traits, these states have vastly different political systems, ranging from authoritarian to liberal-democratic, which shapes the impact of social media use on political life.

In addition to a review of the relevant literature, this study provides a meta-analysis of published survey studies in order to provide robust numerical estimates of the relationships among social media use, political expression, and participation. Our analysis focuses on different types of social media use, namely expressive, informational, relational, and recreational, which are expected to predict participatory behaviors (Skoric, Zhu, Goh, & Pang, *in press*). Furthermore, because political expression through social media has been shown to precurse political participation (Gil de Zúñiga, Molyneux, & Zheng, 2014; Rojas & Puig-i-Abril, 2009; Valenzuela, 2013) and given the significant restrictions on the freedom of

expression in some Confucian states (i.e., China and Singapore), we also closely examine the predictors of political expression online. To analyze the impact of political systems, we divide the states into three categories: a) authoritarian political systems (People's Republic of China); b) democratic political systems (South Korea and Taiwan); and c) hybrid political systems (Hong Kong and Singapore).

Literature review
The published research has supported a mainly positive association between social media use and political participation, noting that certain uses, particularly informational, expressive, and relational, are of greater importance, while generic and entertainment uses appear to be less important (Skoric, Zhu, Goh, & Pang, in press). Studies also have shown that the informational and relational use of social media can trigger online political expression (Gil de Zúñiga, Molyneux, & Zheng, 2014), which precurses real-life political participation. Political expression involves cognitive elaboration and frequently initiates informal political talk, which can lead to both self-mobilization and the mobilization of others (Gil de Zúñiga, Molyneux, & Zheng, 2014; Rojas & Puig-i-Abril, 2009; Valenzuela, 2013). Moreover, engaging in politics through expressive acts is considered a prevalent form of political participation on social media (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012).

Although the countries in Confucian Asia have many cultural and historical similarities, they have significant differences in terms of the potential functions of social media in the process of citizen engagement. First, in authoritarian and hybrid regimes where freedom of the press and personal expression has traditionally been restricted (i.e., China and Singapore), social media platforms have provided new channels for political news. In this context, social media platforms may serve to balance the traditional media sector that is tightly controlled by the governments (Lin, Bagrow & Lazer, 2011). In less restrictive environments (i.e., Hong Kong, South Korea, and Taiwan) this role of social media is of less importance because traditional news media provide more balanced and diversified coverage of public affairs. Nevertheless, the expressive and mobilization potential of social media in the less restrictive environments is of greater significance. It allows for rapid and scalable political action that is, manifested as in petitions, protests, and other acts of civil disobedience, as which was witnessed in 2014 during the Occupy Central Movement in Hong Kong and the Sunflower Student Movement in Taiwan. In contrast, in authoritarian states such as China, expressive acts are less likely to act precursors of real-world political action (unless they are sanctioned by the government). Research has shown that although expressions of political dissatisfaction are often allowed on Chinese social media platforms, calls for collective action and mobilization are much more likely to be censored (King, Pan, & Roberts, 2013). The filtered version of online political expression can be seen as providing a "safety valve" for citizens to vent their dissatisfaction and serving as a means for the central authorities to discipline and control local governments (Hassid, 2012).

In general, activism through social media reflects a transformative shift in citizen participation, which is increasingly decentralized and lifestyle-oriented instead of driven by established political parties and interest groups. The nature of participation has been shifting away from traditional collective action that requires formal organization, collective identity, and significant involvement from citizens, towards more personalized and expressive modes of engagement enabled by social media (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012). These new forms of participation are manifested as expressive acts of content co-production and information sharing via online networks. Social movements enabled by connective action can rapidly develop and scale up more efficiently than those requiring formal organization. Unlike traditional activism, these movements are based on the logic of personal expressions of grievances, hopes, lifestyles and identities, rather than sacrifice for the common good

(Bennett & Segerberg, 2012). We argue that these new modes of engagement may be of even greater importance in Confucian societies, where citizens often have limited experience with traditional, pre-digital forms of participatory politics and political democracy.

In Confucian Asia, connective action has been shown to have tangible, real-world consequences that range from the increased likelihood of expressing political views to the increased probability of contacting elected officials. A study by researchers in Hong Kong showed that young people's use of microblogging platforms was associated with an increased willingness to express opinions about government and politics and increased internal political efficacy accompanied by feelings that the government was not responsive to its citizens (Chan et al., 2012). In the context of Singapore, research showed that citizens who received election information from social media platforms were significantly more likely to engage in offline political activities during the 2011 general elections, including attending party rallies, engaging in resident dialogues, and volunteering to help political parties (Skoric & Zhu, in press). In Taiwan, citizens who used online media for social interaction were more likely to contact legislators and other elected officials (Hsieh & Li, 2014). South Korean citizens who discussed political issues over social network sites (SNS) were also more likely to take part in traditional political activities, such as joining political parties, signing petitions, and donating money (Hyun & Kim, 2015a).

In summary, the literature reviewed showed evidence of the increasingly important role of social media in institutional politics in Confucian societies, including the provision of new channels for information dissemination and political mobilization, as well as the creation of new platforms for individual citizens' political expression. Going beyond institutional politics, the use of social media can amplify existing grievances and encourage citizens to take direct action and hold their governments accountable. Rising social cleavages, the lack of political legitimacy, corruption, environmental pollution, and human rights violations all act as triggers of increasingly determined connective political action (Castells, 2012; Yang, 2009), which was particularly visible during the protests in Hong Kong and Taiwan in 2014. Nevertheless, concerns have been expressed about the use of social media to aid authoritarian governments' surveillance and propaganda (Morozov, 2012), which could actually thwart potential democratic changes.

In examining the uses of social media in Confucian states, it is important to pay attention to the distinct political environments in which they take place. The institutional conditions influence the form, the intensity, and the outcome of social media uses. It is therefore vital to recognize the institutional realities and analyze how they shape the relationships of social media uses with political expression and participation. We expect that the significant restrictions on freedom of expression and political participation that exist in authoritarian and hybrid systems are likely to affect the role that social media play in political engagement. Social media ecologies also differ significantly across Asian societies. For example, China has banned many global SNSs and microblogging platforms (e.g., Facebook and Twitter) but has allowed mainly homegrown services to operate (e.g., Weibo and WeChat).

Authoritarian political systems: People's Republic of China
The People's Republic of China has an authoritarian political system in which the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) holds the monopoly of power and political expression and participation are tightly controlled (Freedom House, 2014). Nevertheless, a burgeoning public sphere has emerged through the permitted social media platforms although topics are usually centered on issues that do not directly challenge the regime's legitimacy and stability, such as environmental protection, food safety, and corruption. Although subjected to heavy censorship, the social media ecology in China seems to be creating an alternative discursive

space that bypasses the sanctioned mass media and provides channels for citizens' feedback (Hassid, 2012; Jiang, 2010). In response, the Chinese authorities have integrated social media into their political institutions, channeled and forged public opinion, responded to citizens' requests, and delivered services. At the same time, they have continued to repress dissent and calls for collective action (King, Pan, & Roberts, 2013; Schlæger & Jiang, 2014). The government seems to be able to harness the potential of the new media technologies to bolster its status quo. Its hold on power has relied largely on a nationalist ideology and performance-based legitimacy (Zhu, 2011; Hughes, 2006). Thus, the question is whether social media can function as a catalyst and a central locus of political change in an authoritarian country such as China. Studies have sought to answer this question by examining the relationship between social media use and online political expression and participation in both online and offline forms.

Previous research has agreed on the importance of social media use for the online discursive participation in public affairs, and it has demonstrated that a positive relationship exists across different social media platforms, including microblogs (Weibo), SNSs, and online forums. The generic use of social media, which is measured as the intensity of use or frequency of visits, has been found to be predictive of online political expression although the effect size is dwarfed by other factors, such as political interest and efficacy, as well as specific types of social media use (Chan et al., 2012; Mou, Atkin, Fu, Lin, & Lau, 2013).

The informational use of social media is a prominent predictor of online political expression in China. In their examination of the motives of Weibo use, Chan et al. (2012) showed that people who used Weibo to obtain knowledge and perspectives on current events were more likely to talk about politics and governmental issues online. Moreover, they found that the use of Weibo for informational needs strengthened the relationship between the intensity of Weibo use and online political expression. Focusing on the use of social media to read the news, Hyun and Kim (2015b) found a positive relationship between obtaining news from online forums/Bulletin Board Systems (BBSs) and expressing opinions about politics and public affairs, with an effect size larger than that of newspaper and television news consumption. In addition, research showed that using Weibo for recognition needs (e.g., to gain respect and publicity) positively correlated with online political expression, whereas relational and entertainment-oriented uses did not (Chan et al., 2012). Instead, the entertainment-oriented use of Weibo was found to weaken the relationship between the intensity of Weibo use and online political expression (Chan et al., 2012).

With regard to political participation, the relationship varied depending on the types of social media use and forms of political participation. The informational use of social media was generally associated with the greater likelihood of political participation. Nevertheless, the relationship varied across different types of political participation. Informational and instrumental uses of social media were found to be predictive of canonical participation, such as following news on government or politics regularly, discussing politics with friends, signing petitions, joining demonstrations, and contacting media to cover events (Zhang & Lin, 2014). Using SNSs and microblogs for news consumption was positively associated with nationalistic political participation during the Sino-Japan confrontations over the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands (Hyun, Kim, & Sun, 2014). However, it was not associated with other forms of political participation, such as contacting or lobbying government officials through private means, participating in CCP-led campaigns, or becoming a candidate in CCP-led elections (Zhang & Lin, 2014). These results may indicate that being exposed to an online information environment that is more pluralistic than the traditional media may make it less appealing to participate in party-initiated political activities.

Furthermore, the review found no consensus regarding relational uses of social media. Zhang and Lin (2014) found no relationship between using SNS for networking purpose and

any form of political participation, whereas Hyun, Kim, and Sun (2014) suggested that the relationship between news consumption in social media and engagement in nationalistic political activities might be attributed to users' needs for interaction. Zhong's (2013) findings support the predictive power of relational social media uses and showed that the relationship varied between tie building and tie maintenance. Specifically, the use of SNS to build new social ties was positively associated with online participation both directly and indirectly through accruing online bridging social capital. Although the use of SNS to maintain existing social ties was not related to online participation, it was predictive of bonding social capital that facilitated political participation.

To summarize, the review of the findings in the Chinese context revealed a pattern similar to that found in the Western democracies. Despite the authoritarian rule and stringent Internet censorship in China, in general, the use of social media was positively related to political expression and participation. However, the same questions linger: Does social media use empower mainly citizens who are already engaged and interested or does it have the potential to engage the disengaged (Chan et al., 2012)? These questions may be particularly important given the chilling effect of the government's surveillance and crackdown on dissent, the low levels of political trust, and a tradition that neither encourages nor admires the public expression of personal opinions (Mou et al., 2013). Furthermore, we may need to rethink the definitions and measures of political participation in authoritarian countries such as China. As Zhang and Lin (2014) argued, because conventional participation only covers a fraction of participatory behaviors, Chinese citizens tend to exercise their political influence through private means. Besides, political acts of popular nationalism are prevalent in Chinese social media. Whether this type of political participation cultivates a participatory citizenry or simply vindicates the current political configurations in China is still contested (Hyum & Kim, 2015b; Hyun, Kim, & Sun, 2014). A major limitation of the studies is that in all the survey samples, the young, educated, and metropolitan populations were over-represented. The findings may therefore not be generalizable to less-developed areas where social media use is just beginning and grievance levels are significantly high.

Democratic systems: South Korea and Taiwan
Although they share a history of Japanese colonial rule that was followed by periods of political authoritarianism, both South Korea and Taiwan today are modern market economies in which citizens are free to express themselves politically and elect their leaders in periodic democratic elections. Freedom House (2014) classified both states as "free" but noted certain problems with corruption, abuse of authority, and media (self-) censorship. South Korea and Taiwan are both highly 'wired' societies in which the majority of citizens utilize social media platforms daily and where the Internet has played a considerable role in the political life for more than a decade. For instance, in 2014, the Sunflower Movement's strong social media effort paralleled massive protests conducted by students and civic groups that were fighting against the trade pact with China, which had been approved hastily by the Taiwanese legislature (Chen, Liao, Wu & Hwan, 2014).

Recent surveys have demonstrated that the citizens' use of social media platforms could be linked to participatory behaviors. These studies suggested that specific uses of social media could promote political participation during the elections in South Korea. A study by Baek (2015) used a national, pre-election survey to examine SNS-based predictors of voting by paying special attention to the types of use (political vs. non-political), user characteristics (voters vs. non-voters) and the directionality of messages (sent vs. received). The study found that SNS users exhibited higher intentions to vote than non-users did, noting that the impact of SNS use might have been particularly pronounced in those who had not voted in previous elections. The findings suggest that non-voters could be mobilized to vote if they received

political information from their friends on SNS, which is indicative of informational and persuasion effects. In contrast, no link was found between sending political information to others on social media and the likelihood of voting. Sending or receiving non-political information similarly had no association with voting intentions.

Hyun and Kim's study (2015a), which utilized a national survey of South Korean citizens conducted in 2014, found no evidence that generic social media use and simple news reception via social media were related to political participation after controlling for demographic, political, and news media attention variables. Instead, they found that offline political talk and political conversations on social media were predictive of political participation during the local elections, as were "following" or "friending" journalists and news organizations on social media. Furthermore, political conversation on social media moderated the relationship between news engagement on social media and participation. That is, only citizens who actively discussed news content experienced participation-related benefits.

Similarly, Hsieh and Li (2014) found that Taiwanese citizens who discussed politics with their friends online were more likely to contact political figures directly, as were citizens who used multiple online platforms for social interaction. Furthermore, based on a nationally representative sample, their findings showed that both online political discussion and socializing on multiple media platforms (i.e., five platforms, including blogs, chat rooms, and instant messaging) increased the likelihood of the public expression of political opinions, even after controlling for political efficacy, trust, knowledge, and news consumption. The authors suggested that new platforms allowed citizens to expand the audience of their political thoughts and opinions by seamlessly connecting their private spheres with the public sphere. The authors also noted that the democratic potential depended on the capacity of citizens to utilize media platforms effectively in different contexts.

In summary, the findings from the Confucian democracies largely mirror those reported in the studies of Western countries, in which the informational and discursive uses of social media are related to a greater likelihood of political participation during elections, as well as a greater affinity for the public expression of political opinions. The results also indicate that social media use, particularly information use, may lead to mobilization and help engage citizens who previously did not participate politically.

Hybrid political systems: Hong Kong and Singapore
Freedom House (2014) classified Singapore and Hong Kong as societies that are "partly free," but for different reasons. On one hand, Hong Kong is a Special Administrative Region (SAR) of the People's Republic of China and has a tradition of free press and citizen engagement, but not of universal suffrage. On the other hand, Singapore is an electoral democracy in which the dominance of the ruling People's Actions Party (PAP) has limited the competition from opposition political parties and where the freedom of expression and assembly are significantly restricted. The government of Singapore is often characterized as paternalistic, imposing sanctions when community values and harmony are seen as being threatened by social media and other platforms of opinion.

Hong Kong has a long history of active civic and political expression. Highly visible demonstrations, protests, and social movements have emerged in response to various political issues, particularly following its handover to China in 1997. Singapore, however, has not seen active political expression and participation since its independence in 1965, and scholars have pointed to high levels of political apathy among Singaporeans as recently as in the early 2000s (Lee, 2002).

Thus, despite evidence indicating that social media use has generally a positive impact on political expression and participation, understanding the socio-political contexts of both

Hong Kong and Singapore provides a finer-grained view on social media's role in political life. In Hong Kong, Facebook is often used as a tool for sharing political information and mobilizing citizens. Its use is associated with the greater likelihood of political expression and participation, even in the absence of truly democratic elections (Tang & Lee, 2013). In Singapore, the use of social media plays a slightly different role. It complements and potentially rejuvenates political expression and participation among citizens (Soon & Kluver, 2014), but usually without significant effects on mobilization except during election periods.

Recent studies on Singapore demonstrated that social media use had a weak but positive relationship with both online and traditional political participation. Hao, Wen, and George (2014) found similar results for news consumption on social media, whereas Skoric and Poor (2013) reported a positive link with the generic intensity of Facebook use. Chan and Guo's (2013) study of college students in Hong Kong and America found that Facebook use significantly predicted political participation in Hong Kong although the size of the relationship was small. Internet news use, however, was not a significant predictor of participation. Chan and Guo (2013) explained that this might be because of the availability of online political content and the less frequent use of the Internet for news in Hong Kong. However, it is possible that Facebook is often used as a source of political information, so the participants may have difficulty in distinguishing between Internet news use and Facebook use (Leung & Lee, 2014; Tang & Lee, 2013).

Studies from both Singapore (Hao, Wen, & George, 2014) and Hong Kong (Leung & Lee, 2014) clearly pointed to the importance of the informational use of social media and its relationship to both political expression and traditional and online participation. However, some divergences indicated that a nuanced understanding of social media's role in participation is needed in the analysis of relatively similar, "partly free" Confucian societies. In Hong Kong, the consumption of Internet news was not a significant predictor of political participation, but news acquisition via Facebook was predictive of protest participation (Chan & Guo, 2013). In the case of Singapore, news consumption on both the Internet and SNS was significantly correlated with traditional and online political participation (Hao et al., 2014). News consumption on Facebook may be tied to the features of Facebook itself and the intended use of Facebook for political expression and participation, whereas the use of the Internet for news consumption may also have to do with the Singapore government's control of the mainstream media. In Singapore, unlike in Hong Kong, the Internet is the only place that provides a broad range of political perspectives; the traditional news media channels tend to promote the views of the ruling party. Therefore, the consumption of information on the Internet is critical for promoting political expression and, subsequently, political participation.

Research Questions

Based on the literature review, this meta-analysis has two objectives. First, it intends to analyze published data and establish numerical estimates of the relationships between different types of social media use (i.e., informational, expressive, relational, and recreational) and political expression and participation in Confucian states. Second, it aims to determine the role of the political system in these relationships by providing separate estimates for authoritarian, hybrid, and democratic societies.

Method

Literature search

We performed a search of the databases Web of Science, PsycINFO, EBSCOhost, and ProQuest using a combination of keywords that captured social media use and political participation and/or expression in East Asian countries. We used a combination of the

following keywords: ("political participation" OR "civic engagement" OR activism OR "social movement" OR "online movement" OR "online discussion" OR "online expression" OR "opinion expression") AND ("social media" OR "social networking" OR "social networking website*" OR blog OR Facebook OR Twitter OR Plurk OR YouTube OR Flicker OR Wiki OR MySpace OR Weibo). The search criteria included only journal articles written in English; peer-reviewed conference proceedings were not included. The database search was completed in May 2015, and then the relevant studies were selected manually. Studies were included if they (a) employed a survey method, (b) estimated the correlation between social media use and political participation and/or expression, and (c) tested behavioral indicators of political participation and/or expression, excluding the variables of political attitude, knowledge, and interest. The selection resulted in 15 studies that were published between 2013 and 2015, including six studies of China, three of Hong Kong, two of Singapore, three of South Korea, and one of Taiwan.

The meta-analysis used Pearson's correlation coefficient r to determine the effect size. Because most of the selected papers reported only regression coefficients, in June 2015, we contacted the authors via email to request Pearson's correlation coefficient (2-tailed) scores and p values. By mid-July 2015, we received the requested data from 13 authors. These 13 studies were selected for the meta-analysis, comprising a sample of 9,253 participants and 63 correlations.

Coding
The selected studies were coded for three distinct dimensions: 1) type of social media use; 2) nature of political behavior (online political expression vs. political participation); and 3) type of political system in which the phenomena were studied. The coding scheme is presented in Table 1. Because the coding involved the simple categorization of variables and measures, it was carried out by only one coder (the second author), who had experience in similar studies and coding schemes.

Statistical analysis
We treated a subject sample (a study as in this analysis) as the unit of analysis and estimated the weighted mean effect size ($\overline{ES}$) based on the zero-order correlation coefficient (r) of each study. Because most selected studies estimated the correlation between more than one indicator of social media use and political participation/expression, we calculated the average effect size for each study first. The mean effect size ($\overline{ES}$) of the meta-analysis was then estimated by taking the mean of the average effect sizes of all the studies. The reason for treating a subject sample as the unit of analysis instead of the individual effect size is that multiple effect sizes generated from the study of the same subject sample are statistically dependent (Lipsey & Wilson, 2001). In addition, we avoided the use of an individual effect size as the unit of analysis also because averaging all the effect sizes would have generated a mean effect size that over-represented the findings of the studies with a large number of effects.

Following Hunter and Schmidt's (2004) method of meta-analysis, we performed a bare-bone meta-analysis prior to correcting for artifacts. First, we calculated the weighted mean effect size ($\overline{ES}$) by dividing the sum of the product of the sample size and the average correlation coefficient of each study by the sum of the sample size. We used the following formula, where N_i refers to the sample size of study i and r_i refers to the average correlation coefficient of study i:

$$\overline{ES} = \frac{\sum(N_i\,r_i)}{\sum N_i},$$

In deciding whether to stop at the bare-bone analysis, we estimated the variance of the sample correlation (σ_r^2) to determine whether it could be attributed to a sampling error (σ_e^2), that is, the variance of population correlation (σ_ρ^2) was almost or equal to zero. If that was not the case, we continued to correct for the error of the measurement. The formulas used for the calculations are listed below:

$$\sigma_r^2 = \frac{\Sigma\, N_i\, (r_i - \overline{ES})^2}{\Sigma\, N_i}$$

$$\sigma_e^2 = \frac{(1 - \overline{ES}^2)^2}{\overline{ES} - 1}$$

$$\sigma_\rho^2 \approx \sigma_r^2 - \sigma_e^2$$

We corrected the attenuation in the mean effect size produced by measurement unreliability. The corrected effect size ($\overline{ES'}$) was computed by dividing the weighted mean effect size ($\overline{ES}$) by the product of the square root of the reliability scores of both the independent and the dependent variables. The measurement unreliability indicators (r_{xx}, r_{yy}) used in the following formula were estimated by averaging the reliability scores reported in the studies. The variances of the sample correlations ($\sigma_r^{2'}$) were then re-estimated using the corrected mean effect size ($\overline{ES'}$).

$$\overline{ES'} = \frac{\overline{ES}}{\sqrt{r_{xx}} \times \sqrt{r_{yy}}}$$

To determine whether the three coded dimensions moderated the effect size, we repeated the analytical procedure and performed a series of meta-analyses with the correlations belonging to each dimension. Specifically, we estimated the mean effect size of each sub-sample and compared the difference. Because of the small number of studies in each coded category, we did not estimate the statistical significance further.

Results
At the level of individual effect, the results revealed that 90.48% ($N = 57$) of the 63 effects were positive, of which the majority ($N = 50$) were statistically significant. Among the six negative effects, two were statistically significant; 79.37% of the total number of effects was significantly positive.

Table 2 presents the mean effect sizes for the relationships between social media use and political expression and participation after correcting the attenuation introduced by measurement unreliability. Overall, the mean effect size was .30, based on an aggregated sample of 9,253 from 13 studies ($\overline{ES'} = .30$, $K = 13$, $N = 9,253$, $\sigma_r^{2'} = .016$). The variance expected from sampling error alone was .001 with a residual variance of .015. Table 3 lists the average effect size of each study. The meta-analysis had an average sample size per study of 712, indicating large statistical power (Cafri, Kromrey, & Brannick, 2010).

Because of the potential publication bias against studies reporting null results, we further performed a file drawer analysis (Andrews, Carpenter, Shaw, & Boster, 2008). The results showed that 26 studies, each with a sample size of 712 and null results (i.e., an effect size of zero), would be required in order to decrease the estimated mean effect size to 0.10; 65 of these studies would be necessary to reduce the estimated mean effect size to 0.05.

These results indicate that publication bias may have a relatively small influence on the results of this meta-analysis.

The relationship between social media use and political expression was stronger (0.46) than the relationship with political participation (0.27). The analysis of different types of social media use and their relationship with participation (see Table 4) showed that expressive uses produced the largest mean effect size (0.43), followed by informational uses (0.22), relational uses (0.16) and recreational uses (0.06). The effect size of the intensity of generic social media use was 0.13. Accordingly, we concluded that expressive uses of social media had a moderately strong relationship with participation (0.30 -.50), informational and relational uses had small relationships (0.10 -.30), while recreational uses had a very weak relationship with participation (Cohen, 1988).

With regard to online political expression, a different pattern of findings emerged. Relational uses were associated with the largest mean effect size (0.51), followed by informational (0.47), and recreational uses (0.36); the effect size for the intensity of use was 0.40. We did not include the expressive uses of social media because they are often hard to distinguish from the measures of online political expression. The relationships were generally moderate-to-strong, and there was less variability among different uses of social media than with political participation.

We also analyzed the mean effect sizes across different political systems, which are presented in Table 5. The results showed that the sizes of the relationships among social media use and political expression and participation varied according to the type of political system. For political participation, the strongest mean effect sizes were reported in democratic countries (0.31), followed by hybrid (0.27) and authoritarian systems (0.18). For political expression, the strongest relationships were again found in democratic countries (0.57) followed by hybrid and authoritarian countries (0.41 for both).

Discussion
Our findings showed that a positive relationship existed between social media use and online political expression and social media use and political participation in Confucian Asia, and that the former was stronger than the latter. Moreover, some important distinctions were found regarding different types of social media use. Expressive, informational, relational, and recreational uses of social media had varying degrees of association with expression and participation. Expressive uses displayed substantive, moderate effect-size relationships with participation. The results showed significantly weaker relationships between informational and relational uses, and recreational uses had almost negligible associations with political participation.

Recent longitudinal (Gil de Zúñiga, Molyneux, & Zheng, 2014) and meta-analytic research (Skoric, Zhu, Goh, & Pang, in press) demonstrated that political expression through social media was a robust predictor of political participation. The present study provides further evidence of that relationship, which is in line with Pingree's (2007) theory about the importance of "sender" effects in political communication. Expressing oneself politically on social media often involves a high degree of articulation, cognitive elaboration, and ability to predict reactions of both the intended and unintended audiences.

The present study also found evidence of a moderately strong relationship between informational uses and political expression, but a significantly weaker relationship with political participation. Still, studies showed that the significance of social media-based news sources may be greater in hybrid and authoritarian states in which traditional media remain controlled and censored.

Relational use, although not as strongly linked to participation as expressive and informational uses were, was significant and strongly associated with political expression.

This finding suggests that online political expression might be directly related to the strength of ties in social networks. This finding is in line with traditional research suggesting that social ties and the density of an individual's social network have a direct impact on collective action (Marwell, Oliver, & Prahl, 1988). The substantial relationship between relational use and online political expression also suggests that citizens' engagement in politics through expressive acts may be socially oriented. Hence, political expression on social media is not only a way to voice discontent and deliberate opinions, but also a way to perform political identities and lifestyles in front of a networked audience(s) (Papacharissi, 2012).

Our research also pointed to a gap in the literature and an opportunity for future research in Confucian Asia. With stronger relationships between social media use and political expression, we may see diverse action repertoires that are closely linked to the personalized action frames embedded within acts of political expression (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012). These frames and related actions are usually decentralized and increasingly integrated in everyday lives and may not be even perceived as overtly political. Although we have witnessed a rise in the number of rallies, protests, and social movements in many countries— possibly triggered by the amplification of problems via social media (Castells, 2012; Yang, 2009)—some action repertoires may go unnoticed. This calls for the development of a broader conceptualization of political expression (and participation) and the inclusion of a wider spectrum of measures of expression and citizen participation. We feel that moderately strong relationships with online political expression across all types of social media use (including generic use intensity) could indicate political ferment that might not be manifested in the form of traditional participation in some authoritarian and hybrid contexts, but nonetheless represents an important democratic resource for the future.

Unsurprisingly, the strongest effects were found for both political participation and expression in democratic political systems, followed by hybrid systems and then authoritarian systems. In democratic political systems, there are fewer sanctions and prohibitions on political expression and participation. It could also be argued that in democratic political systems, opportunities and resources for political participation are also far greater. Interestingly, even though the relationship between social media use and political participation was the weakest in the authoritarian political system, in the authoritarian context, the relationship with political expression was identical in size (moderate) to that in hybrid political systems. Given more extensive control and censorship of social media and potentially much harsher penalties for political dissent in China compared to Singapore, and especially compared to Hong Kong, this finding may be surprising. However, Esarey and Qiang (2008) offered a potential explanation in their study of Chinese bloggers: subtle forms of political expression that include satire and sarcasm are often found in blog posts and are used as a strategy to avoid direct repression when expressing political opinions in the online world.

As social media continue to pervade the everyday life across Confucian Asia, their informational uses should be of vital importance, particularly in the context of authoritarian and hybrid political systems. For citizens, the exposure to political or politicized content often leads to a greater likelihood of expressive and discursive engagement online, thereby creating civic ferment that can lead to real-world action. Yet one must be conscious that the same social media platforms can also be used manipulatively by those in power to further their nationalist agendas and preserve the status quo (Morozov, 2012).

Limitations and Future Work
This study is limited by its reliance on survey-based, cross-sectional studies that can only provide snapshots of the phenomena under study. Future work should aim to incorporate longitudinal designs and direct behavioral measures of social media use in order to shed light

on the specific temporal sequences and cognitive mechanisms that explain the reported relationships. Furthermore, the number of countries examined for each type of political system is limited in this study (as is the number of studies selected), and the categories used do not fully account for all the idiosyncrasies of political systems in Confucian Asia. In particular, the category of hybrid systems would benefit from a nuanced explication, perhaps along the two dimensions of freedom of expression and political rights, instead of the "partly free" label.

Notes
1. Following Dalton and Ong (2005), we originally included Japan and Vietnam in the study because they are nations influenced by Confucian traditions. However, the literature search did not yield any quantitative social scientific study of the relationship between social media use and participation conducted in Japan or Vietnam and published in the English language by mid-2015.

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Tables
Table 1
Coding scheme

Dimension	Category	Definition or examples
Participation vs. expression	Political participation	Political activities including voting, signing petitions, joining political parties or campaigns, participating in protests or demonstrations, contacting political figures, government officials or media, etc.
	Online political expression	Expressing views on political or government issues online (including through disseminating news on social media), conversing or discussing such issues including sending political messages to SNS friends and engaging in civic talk in online public space.
Type of social media use	Informational use	Consuming information via social media, including news, community information, and campaign information
	Expressive use	Using social media to express oneself and to articulate one's own opinions, ideas, and thoughts
	Relational use	Using social media to initiate, maintain, and strengthen relationships with others
	Recreational use	Using social media for entertainment
Political system	Authoritarian system	China
	Hybrid system	Singapore, Hong Kong
	Democratic system	South Korea, Taiwan

Table 2
Mean effect sizes

	Overall $\overline{ES'}$ ($\sigma_r^{2'}$)	Online political expression $\overline{ES'}$ ($\sigma_r^{2'}$)	Political participation $\overline{ES'}$ ($\sigma_r^{2'}$)
Social media use	.30 (.02)	.46 (.01)	. 27 (.01)

Table 3
Individual study effect size

Study	Country/territory	Averaged correlation coefficient (*r*)	*SD* of *r*s within each study	Sample size (*N*)
Baek, 2015	South Korea	0.12	0.07	1,167
Chan & Guo, 2013	Hong Kong	0.18	0.06	280
Chan et al., 2012	China	0.39	0.06	499
Hao, Wen, & George, 2014	Singapore	0.24	0.05	399
Hsieh & Li, 2014	Taiwan	0.35	0.07	1,060
Hyun & Kim, 2015a	China	0.32	N/A	500
Hyun & Kim, 2015b	South Korea	0.31	0.17	542
Hyun, Kim, & Sun, 2014	China	0.16	N/A	544
Leung & Lee, 2014	Hong Kong	0.19	0.19	1,018
Skoric & Poor, 2013	Singapore	0.14	0.03	248
Tang & Lee, 2013	Hong Kong	0.21	0.15	774
Zhang & Lin, 2014	China	0.07	0.23	311
Zhong, 2014	China	0.13	0.09	654

Table 4

Mean effect sizes across different types of social media use

Types of social media use	Political expression $\overline{ES'}$ ($\sigma_r^{2'}$)	Political participation $\overline{ES'}$ ($\sigma_r^{2'}$)
Expressive use	N.A.	.43 (.02)
Informational use	.47 (.01)	.22 (.00)
Relational use	.51	.16 (.01)
Recreational use	.36	.06
Use intensity	.40 (.02)	.13 (.01)

Table 5
Mean effect sizes across different political systems and countries/regions

Category	Types of political systems	Political expression $\overline{ES'}$ ($\sigma_r^{2'}$)	Political participation $\overline{ES'}$ ($\sigma_r^{2'}$)
Political systems	Authoritarian countries	.41 (.00)	.18 (.00)
	Hybrid countries	.41	.27 (.01)
	Democratic countries	.57 (.03)	.31 (.02)
Countries/ territories	China	.41 (.00)	.18 (.00)
	Hong Kong	N/A	.28 (.01)
	Singapore	.41	.24 (.01)
	Taiwan	.57	.46
	South Korea	.56	.22 (.01)