Will Facebook Encourage Citizen Participation?

The Case of Taiwan Legislators' Facebook Strategies

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ABSTRACT

Facebook, the most popular social media in the world, has changed the ways of citizen involvement in governance. Politicians and (elected) public administrators worldwide have adopted Facebook as an important approach to connect with citizens. This study explores whether the Facebook phenomenon can improve the process of online political communication and citizen participation. The study adapts a content analysis method and proposes six strategies for analyzing Facebook page posts of Taiwanese legislators. The authors compare Facebook posts during both election and regular sessions to see the difference in patterns of these posts and communication strategies adopted by the legislators. The findings reveal that a percentage of e-participation achieves an acceptable rate, but most communication of legislator Facebook is one way. The results indicate that legislators' Facebook is another platform to distribute public information to citizens, and many have potential to create more public values.

KEYWORDS

INTRODUCTION

As Web 2.0's sharing, interaction, and collective creation platforms become increasingly commonplace, a democratically-oriented Internet environment has been created which draws upon the fields of public administration and political communication. Facebook, which is dominant with more than 1.59 billion monthly active users as of 2015, now is the most popular Web 2.0 and social media in the world (Statista, 2016). As access has increased, Facebook has changed ways of citizen involvement in public governance and has even contributed to social change in countries such as Egypt and Iran. Scholars believe that social media could play an instrumental role in promoting open governance, strengthening the government to citizen relationship, motivating citizen participation,

and fostering transparency in the public sector (Bertot, Jaeger, & Grimes, 2010; Khan, Yoon, Kim, & Park, 2014; Patrice, 2010).

Social media have become increasingly popular as channels that enable political participation. In the aftermath of the 2016 presidential elections in the United States, Trump had 17.6 million followers on Twitter, having used Twitter as a main information channel during the campaign (Enli, 2017). Politicians and public administrators worldwide have adopted social media to communicate with citizens (Bronstein, 2013; Samuel-Azran, Yarchi, & Wolfsfeld, 2015). Following the trend, most legislators in Taiwan[1] have created personal Facebook accounts and Facebook pages as an additional way of reaching potential voters and communicating with the public. Legislators can thus efficiently organize their supporters and directly communicate with their "friends." On the one hand, legislators' Facebook pages seem to offer the promise of electronic participation (e-participation), reaching out to citizens on a common platform and allowing for citizen feedback (Schweitzer, 2005; Graham, Jackson, & Broersma, 2016). On the other hand, citizens can establish a link to legislators via the information-sharing, dialogue, and consensus-building features of Facebook (Schweitzer, 2005; Robertson, Vatrapu, & Medina, 2010). If two-way communication works properly and successfully, Facebook is effectively able to create increased citizen participation and strengthen public values (Emerson, Nabatchi, & Balogh, 2012).

The purposes of this study were to investigate differences in communication strategies and patterns of legislators' Facebook strategies between election periods and regular legislative sessions. In addition, we are exploring in terms of the Facebook phenomenon whether such strategies can improve the degree of online political communication and citizen participation, utilizing Taiwan legislators' use of Facebook as a case study.

The paper is organized as follows. In section two, we first discuss the development of citizen participation and particularly the trend of e-participation. We also utilize studies on political campaigns and election websites to summarize a list of issues commonly addressed by politicians and (elected) public administrators on their websites and blogs, such as calling for change, mobilization and participation, emphasis on the future, nostalgia for the past, moral appeal, and emphasis on personal characteristics. We apply content analysis to review and compare differences in communication strategies and patterns of Facebook posts of legislators in Taiwan during elections and regular legislative sessions. We summarize the methodological approach in section three, present the results of content analysis in section four, and in the final section we discuss how the lessons we learn from this study will help pave the way for future research on political campaigns, e-participation, and e-governance.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Development of Citizen Participation and Electronic Participation

Citizen participation, an accepted foundation of democracy, can be broadly defined as the processes by which public concerns, needs, and values are incorporated into decision-making (Emerson *et al.*, 2012). To improve legitimacy, transparency, accountability, and other democratic values in governance, public managers at all levels of government are expected to engage citizens in various public issues. Citizen participation occurs in many places and takes many forms. Arnstein (1969) first provides a ladder of citizen participation that explains levels of interaction and influence between governments and citizens in the process of decision making from non-participation to citizen power. To review the historical shifts of civic engagement in the United States, Cooper, Bryer, and Meek (2006) introduce a conceptual model to classify traditional forms of citizen participation such as social movements, voting, polling, legislative and administrative hearings, public forums, and citizen jury into five categories: adversarial approach, electoral approach, legislative and administrative information, civil society, and deliberative approach.

Recently, scholars have started to emphasize the concept of deliberative citizen participation, which increases involvement of the public in the affairs and decisions of the policy-setting bodies (Rowe & Frewer, 2005). This recognition has come about as a result of two interrelated phenomena. First, Putnam (1995) indicates that people's direct involvement in politics and public affairs has fallen progressively. Political participation is unequal in practice; representation and influence are not dispensed at random but systematically biased toward people of privilege, wealth, and better education (Lijphart, 1997). Mahler, Jesuit, and Paradowski (2014) studied the relationship between electoral participation and income redistribution by way of social transfer, using data from fourteen developed countries. They confirm that income inequality and electoral participation are important issues in democratic accountability. Second, deliberation is particularly important in democracy, but difficult to achieve with traditional participation mechanisms (Fishkin & Luskin, 2005). The decrease in deliberation goes side by side with the increase of political participation, which in turn affects the quality of public policy, and indirectly the well-being of millions of people (Huang, 2008). Ideally, citizen power or a deliberative approach can make up for the shortcomings of representative democracy, but it is limited in practice because of high resource and cost requirements, difficulties in consensus-building, and the ignorance of citizens in mass society (Irvin & Stansbury, 2004).

Fortunately, the development of information communication technologies (ICTs) provides many new ways of online participation such as online polls, discussion forums, and other forms of online consultation, and generates more deliberative participation from citizens (Milioni & Triga, 2012). Governments all over the world are increasingly becoming aware of the importance of electronic citizen participation in representative democracy. Within the framework of electronic government, government to citizen (G2C) and citizen to government (C2G) interaction, e-participation is defined as a participatory, inclusive, deliberative process of decision making, which can be achieved via (1) e-information: using ICTs to increase the supply of information useful in the process of consultation and decision making; (2) e-consultation: using ICTs to enhance consultation, and (3) e-decision making: using ICTs to support decision making by facilitating citizen participation (UN, 2003). This definition describes levels of online interaction and influence in the decision-making process from elemental to more in-depth participation (e.g., information communication, consultation, deliberation and decision making).

Applications of Web 2.0 tools, in particular social networking technologies, are becoming more and more important to equalize levels of participation. Unlike traditional participation, social media offer opportunities to communicate efficiently and enable more direct, real-time and networked ways of citizen participation in governance (Robertson et al., 2010; Näkki et al., 2011). Osimo (2008) categorizes six types of citizen engagement and participation using social networking technologies. (1) Politicians use Web 2.0 applications for more direct contact with the electorate. For example, Nicolas Sarkozy, Jean-Marie Le Pen, Ségolène Royal, three candidates of the 2007 presidential election in France, all opened head offices in the Second Life. President Obama of the United States also used Facebook pages and Twitter to interact with the public and to build up his image (Zavattaro, 2010; Bronstein, 2013). (2) By bringing citizens' participation upstream, for example, citizens are allowed to share their points of view on government documents in the Commentonthis.com (Osimo, 2008). The Slovenian government provides the participative platform "Predlagam vladi" (I propose to the government) in order to include citizens in the policy process (Oblak-Crnic, Prodnik, & Trbizan, 2010). The South Korean central government adopted Twitter as a G2C tool to communicate with its citizens (Khan et al., 2014). (3) In terms of monitoring public representatives, Theyworkforyou. com provides useful information (Osimo, 2008). I-VOD supplies session information from Taiwan's Legislative Yuan. (Ku and He, 2009). (4) Planningalerts.com and Farmsubsidy.org monitor the procedures for planning applications and public funds (Osimo, 2008). (5) In terms of public forums, "Nolitics" is a Nigerian online forum promoting discussion of public affairs (Chiluwa, 2011). (6) Finally, in terms of organizing pressure groups for specific causes, Meetup.com and change.org are

platforms which allow participants to find others interested in similar causes and connect them with politicians sharing their views (Osimo, 2008; Shirky, 2008).

Although governments provide numerous mechanisms to encourage e-participation and discussion of public policies and public affairs, most forms of participation and conversation are mainly "about" government rather than "with" government (Leighninger, 2011). The potential of social media notwithstanding, improvements in the democratic process are limited require more effective feedback from the citizenry in public affairs. For this reason, learning how to improve the relationship between government and its citizens in the web environment is extremely important and worth exploring. Two-way deliberative communication is the key factor to better governance in the development of democracy.

Web 2.0 Strategies Adopted by Public Managers

Elected politicians and public administrators worldwide have adopted Web 2.0 tools as an important way to connect with citizens. Jackson and Lilleker (2010) note that Web 2.0 usage appear dependent on party size and therefore available resources. Smaller parties appear to focus less on their formal web sites, but more on producing videos on YouTube or providing social networking presences on Facebook. However, many internet studies are concerned with technology without providing insight into the actualities in a given political context (Danyi and Galacz, 2005). Several scholars classify a range of strategies adopted by elected politicians and public administrators in various web environments and dissimilar political systems. For example, Mergel (2010) classifies three types of social media strategies: push, pull, and networking. The first two strategies simply consider social media as another type of communication channel complementing existing channels to facilitate one-way communication while networking strategy treats social media as two-way communication tools for both citizen and government to become jointly involved in the political process.

With respect to campaign research, Carlson and Strandberg (2005) investigate strategies used by web actors in Finland during the 2004 European parliament election. They classify the main strategies used into information types (e.g., candidates' biography, a list of issue positions held by candidates, candidate image building), and engagement types (e.g., contact information, online forum, donation requests). Bystrom e*t al*. (2004) categorize several personality traits frequently emphasized by candidates, including ability, toughness, persistence, experience, amiability, education, political philosophy, professionalism, youthfulness, appearance, moral values, and stylistic qualities. Bichard (2006) proposes a framing mechanism to analyze candidates' appeal strategies and examines election websites and blogs during the 2004 campaign for the United States presidential election. Bichard classifies the web strategies used by George W. Bush and John Kerry into five categories. (1) Candidate ideology focused on the candidate's positions on specific issues and/or his/her agenda for America; (2) the campaign trail focused primarily on campaigning events/activities or discussions regarding strategy and poll data; (3) testimonials or recommendations from specific supporters or groups of supporters, including official endorsements; (4) calls to action for voter participation, such as donation requests, volunteerism, online interaction and voting, and (5) attacking opponents for their views, and exposing their flaws, inadequacies, and weaknesses. Trammell et al. (2006) use content analysis to investigate the interactivity of the websites and blogs of the ten Democratic presidential primary candidates in the 2004 election. They identify strategies used by most of the candidates such as creating a voice for the masses, calling for change, inviting participation, emphasizing hope for the future, yearning for the past, traditional values, party philosophy, statistical support, expert support, identifying experiences with others, emphasis on political accomplishments, and attacking the record and personal qualities of opponents. Image building is a particularly important strategy used by candidates of both genders. Robertson et al. (2010) examine the posts from the Facebook sites of the United States presidential candidates Barack Obama, Hillary Clinton, and John McCain and analyze participation patterns of usage along dimensions of breadth and frequency. They suggest that dialogue on Facebook walls show presence of the public sphere. Bronstein (2013) uses content analysis to investigate Facebook pages

of the United States presidential candidates in the 2012 campaign. He classifies Facebook posts into three themes--ethos, pathos, and logos[2]--and finds that during the campaign, both candidates used an emotional and motivational appeal to create social capital and to present a positive personal image. In addition, the element of persuasion used on posts significantly increases the numbers of comments and likes attached to the posts. Samuel-Azran et al. (2015) also adopt three themes to examine the Aristotelian rhetorical strategies used by Israeli politicians on their Facebook walls during the 2013 elections, and their popularity with social media users. Their results show that ethos was the most prevalent rhetorical strategy used.

Owing to the limited research relevant to online strategies in a non-Western political context, Wang (2009) investigates how Taiwan's 2008 general election campaign websites and blogs differ in their strategies. Wang categorizes the strategies into six major items, calling for change, mobilization and participation, emphasis on the future, nostalgia for the past, moral appeal, and emphasis on personal characteristics. The analysis shows that the most widely used strategies are mobilization and participation, emphasis on personal characteristics, and calling for change.

METHODS AND DATA

Targeted Samples and Facebook Pages

Using the Facebook pages of Taiwanese legislators as a case study, this research applies content analysis to review and compare differences in communication strategies and patterns of the Facebook posts of legislators during the legislature elections and regular legislative sessions. The data collected for the legislature elections began on December 1, and ended on December 31, 2011. The regular legislative sessions began on October 1, and ended on October 31, 2012. The study employs a stratified sampling method to select a nationally representative sample from the two major political parties in Taiwan. Our final samples cover twenty-nine legislators from the Kuomintang (KMT) and thirteen legislators from the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), which includes all legislators, but exclusive of those who do not have a Facebook page and of those not elected. The unit of analysis is an individual Facebook post. In total, the analysis of 1,808 Facebook posts during the election period, and 951 Facebook posts in the regular sessions was conducted. The coding was carried out by two coders and trained over one training workshop. The intercoder reliability test was based on a set of Facebook posts taken from a random sample of three candidates. The reliability scores for the average pairwise Cohen's kappa were as follows: 0.87, 0.80, and 0.81. This ranges between high intercoder reliability (0.80) which is an acceptable level (Krippendorff, 2004; Viera and Garrett, 2005).

Strategies and E-Participation Patterns of Facebook

Based on the amalgamation of the available literature presented above, this study adopts the content analysis method and proposes six main strategies for analyzing the Facebook pages of Taiwanese legislators as follows:

1. **Daily information-sharing:** Legislators provide their daily information, and connect aspects of their daily lives with the experience and feelings of their supporters and citizens at large (Carlson & Strandberg, 2005; Trammell et al., 2006);
2. **Emphasis on personal characteristics:** Legislators emphasize their positive personal characteristics and distinguish themselves from other politicians. These characteristics include ability, toughness, persistence, experience/education, amiability, moral values, stylistic qualities, political philosophy, professionalism, youthfulness, and appearance (Bystrom et al., 2004; Trammell et al., 2006; Wang, 2009);
3. **Endorsement:** Legislators provide testimonials for specific supporters or groups of supporters, and provide statistics, expert and official sources (Bichard, 2006; Carlson & Strandberg, 2005);

4. **Mobilization and participation:** Legislators provide information about activities, in which they invite citizens to volunteer, donate, and participate in various campaign activities (Bichard, 2006; Trammell et al., 2006; Wang. 2009);

5. **Opponent attacks:** Legislators attack their opponents about flaws, records, inadequacies, and weaknesses (Bichard, 2006; Trammell et al, 2006; Wang, 2009);

6. **Political information:** Legislators provide information such as statements, positions on public issues, and their political ideology to express points of view on public affairs (Carlson & Strandberg, 2005; Bichard, 2006: Trammell et al., 2006; Wang, 2009).

In addition, the study goes on to probe the level of political communication and citizen participation within each category. According to the definition of e-participation (Chu & Lee, 2009) and the concept of information flow of public engagement (Hand & Ching, 2011; Rowe & Frewer, 2005), this study further classifies the degrees of participation into three levels--non-participation, e-information, and e-consultation--to investigate the level of citizen participation on the legislators' Facebook pages. As shown in Table 1, non-participation means that the postings on Facebook are irrelevant to public issues or public affairs, and only focus on personal feelings. E-information means that legislators provide citizens with helpful information on public issues, and the direction of information flow is from the legislators to citizens only, i.e., one-way communication. E-consultation, on the other hand, means that legislators and citizens exchange information on public issues interactively, and the information flow is two-way.

RESEARCH RESULTS

Demographics of Legislators

According to the official website of the Legislative Yuan in Taiwan (http://www.ly.gov.tw/), we collected the demographics of our research targets. The mean age for the legislators is 52 years old. There are more male legislators (73%) than female legislators (27%). Most of the surveyed legislators (97%) have completed college or higher degrees, and only one person lacked a college degree. Our research targets cover twenty-nine legislators from the KMT and thirteen legislators from the DPP, the two major political parties in Taiwan.

Strategies Used on Facebook

We analyze 1,808 Facebook posts from the election periods and 951 Facebook posts from the regular legislative sessions, with two independent coders, and the intercoder reliability matched well (Krippendorff, 2004). As shown in Table 2, the average number of Facebook posts per legislator during the regular legislative sessions was 22.64, and 43.05 during the election period. The findings

Table 1. The level of e-participation

Level of Participation	Definition	The Direction of Information Flow
Non-participation	The information on Facebook, irrelevant to public issues or public affairs, only focuses on personal feelings.	none
e-information	Legislators provide helpful information to citizen about public issues.	Information is conveyed from legislators to citizens only.
e-consultation	Legislators provide useful information to citizens, and offer the opportunity to discuss public affairs with citizens.	Legislators and citizens exchange information on public issues interactively, and the information flow is two-way.

Table 2. Strategies of legislators' Facebook pages

Strategy	Regular Legislative Session			Election Period		
	Posts	Mean	%	Posts	Mean	%
Daily information- sharing	318	7.58	33	530	12.61	29
Emphasis on personal characterizes	16	0.38	2	124	2.95	7
Endorsement*	3	0.07	0	144	3.43	8
Mobilization and participation*	0	0	0	240	5.7	13
Opponent attack	72	1.71	8	164	3.9	9
Political information	542	12.9	57	606	14.43	34
X^2	120.52					
df	3					
p-value	0.00					

* We exclude two strategies, endorsement and mobilization & participation, due to n<5.

show that political information, with the average posts per legislator 12.9 (57%), and daily information sharing, with the average posts per legislator 7.58 (33%), are the most frequently used strategies on legislators' Facebook pages during regular legislative sessions. Moreover, the main strategies of legislators' Facebook pages are consistent throughout the regular sessions and the election period. Political information, with the average post per legislator 14.43 (34%), and daily information sharing, with the average post per legislator 12.6 (29%), are also the most frequently used strategies on the legislators' Facebook pages during the election period. The main strategic difference comes from the usage of "endorsement, with the average post per legislator 3.43 (8%)" and "mobilization and participation, with the average post per legislator 5.7 (13%)."

It is worth noting that (1) previous studies indicate that attacking opponents is one of the main strategies during elections (Birchard, 2006; Trammell et al., 2006; Wang, 2009), however, our results identify a different scenario; (2) there are no mobilization and participation efforts, and only a few endorsement strategy implementations during regular legislative sessions. The opponent-attacking strategy, with the average post per legislator during the regular legislative session was only 1.71 (8%), and with the average post per legislator in the election period only 3.9 (9%), was used only rarely by legislators. Although Facebook is a self-owned and direct information channel, legislators seldom take advantage of it in emphasizing their personality traits and strengthening their support during the regular sessions (2% for emphasis on personal characteristics, and 0% for endorsements). The results indicate that legislators' Facebook presence continues to place emphasis on legislators' political statements and daily information. Unlike the results found on blogs and websites in Taiwan (Wang, 2009), opponent attack was not the main online social media strategy adopted during the 2012 legislative elections in Taiwan.

E-Participation Patterns on Facebook

As shown in Table 3, the non-participation pattern, the average post per legislator during the regular legislative sessions was 8.14 (36%) and the average post per legislator in the election periods was 19.05 (44%). These figures reveal that a significant percentage of messages on these legislators' Facebook pages are related to personal feelings and are not related to public issues or public affairs. E-information, with the average post per legislator during the regular legislative sessions was 9.69 (43%) and with the average post per legislator during the election period was 22.67 (53%), is the most frequently used e-participation pattern on the legislators' Facebook pages. E-consultation, with the

Table 3. E-participation of the legislator' Facebook pages

Strategy	Regular Legislative Session			Election Period		
	Posts	Mean	%	Posts	Mean	%
Non-participation	342	8.14	36	800	19.05	44
E-information	407	9.69	43	952	22.67	53
E-consultation	202	4.81	21	56	1.33	3
X^2	242.01					
df	2					
p-value	0.00					

average post per legislator during the regular legislative sessions 4.81 (21%) and with the average post per legislator during the election period 1.33 (3%), was the least frequently used e-participation pattern on the legislators' Facebook pages. Our results reveal that the concept of e-participation achieved a high rate (over 50%) on the legislators' Facebook pages, but most communications continue to be one-way (64% for e-information during the regular legislative sessions and 56% during the election period). The two-way communication of e-consultation is still not utilized frequently or successfully, possibly due to the fact that the legislators have only started to engage in dialogue or build a consensus with citizens on Facebook.

Differences in Facebook Strategies and Patterns Used at Different Periods of Time

To explore differences in communication strategies and e-participation patterns of legislators' Facebook presence, we apply a Chi-square test to compare the strategies and patterns used during the election period and during the regular legislative sessions (see Tables 2 and 3). The results show that communication strategies are significantly different between the regular legislative sessions and the election period. The strategies that are highly related to personal image building and promotion in political campaigns through the Internet increase during the legislative elections. For example, daily information-sharing, emphasis on personal characteristics, endorsement, and mobilization and participation all increase. It is worth noting that two strategies are rarely used during regular legislative sessions, namely, endorsement and mobilization and participation. Legislators in Taiwan tend to use diversified marketing strategies, and political marketing is not a major consideration for legislators using Facebook during regular legislative sessions. In addition, e-participation patterns are significantly different with respect to the regular legislative sessions and the election period. E-information was increasingly applied by legislators who provided more personal political policy statements through Facebook. The decrease of e-consultation usage reveals that legislators tend to see Facebook as a political campaign tool instead of a conversation platform during elections.

Differences in Facebook Strategies and Patterns Used for Different Types of Basic Information

We further apply Chi-square test to compare the strategies used based on gender, education, age, and political party affiliation (KMT vs. DPP). For the regular legislative sessions, we exclude two strategies, endorsement and mobilization & participation, due to the fact that they were seldom used. The results in Table 4 show that communication strategies are significantly different for factors based on gender, education, age, and political party during the election period. However, it shows no significant difference for education and age in the regular legislative sessions.

Table 4. Demographic characteristics and party differences based on strategies

	Election Periods								Regular Legislative Sessions							
	Gender		Education		Age		Party		Gender		Education		Age		Party	
	Male	Female	College	College Above	55 and Under	55 Above	KMT	DPP	Male	Female	College	College Above	55 and Under	55 Above	KMT	DPP
Daily information-sharing	327 (27.5%)	203 (32.9%)	27 (23.7%)	503 (29.7%)	192 (27.7%)	338 (30.3%)	360 (31.3%)	170 (25.8%)	244 (35.4%)	74 (28.2%)	12 (23.5%)	306 (34%)	86 (29.8%)	232 (%35)	233 (37.5%)	85 (25.8%)
Emphasis on personal characterizes	85 (7.1%)	39 (6.3%)	8 (7.0%)	116 (6.8%)	45 (6.5%)	79 (7.1%)	84 (7.3%)	40 (6.1%)	12 (1.7%)	4 (1.5%)	0 (0%)	16 (1.8%)	5 (1.7%)	11 (1.7%)	12 (1.9%)	4 (1.2%)
Endorsement	111 (9.3%)	33 (5.3%)	17 (14.9%)	127 (7.5%)	25 (3.6%)	119 (10.7%)	114 (9.9%)	30 (4.6%)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mobilization and participation	180 (15.1%)	60 (9.7%)	28 (24.6%)	212 (12.5%)	93 (13.4%)	147 (13.2%)	154 (13.4%)	86 (13.1%)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Opponent attack	87 (7.3%)	77 (12.5%)	6 (5.3%)	158 (9.3%)	98 (14.2%)	66 (5.9%)	64 (5.6%)	100 (15.2%)	43 (6.2%)	29 (11.1%)	2 (3.9%)	70 (7.8%)	31 (10.7%)	41 (6.2%)	10 (1.6%)	62 (18.8%)
Political information	401 (33.7%)	205 (33.2%)	28 (24.6%)	578 (34.1%)	239 (34.5%)	367 (32.9%)	373 (32.5%)	233 (35.4%)	387 (56.2%)	155 (59.2%)	37 (72.5%)	505 (56.1%)	165 (57.1%)	377 (56.9%)	365 (58.8%)	177 (53.6%)
Total	1,191	617	114	1,694	692	1,116	1,149	659	689	262	51	900	289	662	621	330
X^2	33.46		25.22		60.21		64.15		9.09		5.70		7.15		49.68	
df	5		5		5		5		3		3		3		3	
p-value	0.00		0.00		0.00		0.00		0.02		0.12		0.06		0.00	

The results in Table 5 show that e-participation patterns are significantly different for age and political party during the election period, and gender shows a significant difference during the regular legislative sessions. Legislators aged above 55 have higher observed frequency than those aged under 55 for e-information and on-participation. Similar to the results of previous research on political campaigns (Jackson & Lilleker, 2010), there is evidence that Taiwanese legislators still favor a monologic approach to manage their interaction with citizens on Facebook. Although Facebook has the potential to become a "public sphere" which creates a higher degree of citizen participation and instills a broader reach of public values (Robertson et al., 2010), the necessary premise is that legislators and public administrators view Facebook as a two-way communication tool that can be used to promote their relationship with their supporters, as well as to learn about and network with other citizens and groups. However, it requires a great deal of time to make full use of this two-way "social" tool.

Table 5. Demographic characteristics and party differences for e-participation

	Election Periods								Regular Legislative Sessions							
	Gender		Education		Age		Party		Gender		Education		Age		Party	
	Male	Female	College	College Above	55 and Under	55 Above	KMT	DPP	Male	Female	College	College Above	55 and Under	55 Above	KMT	DPP
Non-participation	525 (44.1%)	275 (44.6%)	52 (45.6%)	748 (44.2%)	262 (37.9%)	538 (48.2%)	560 (48.7%)	240 (36.4%)	263 (38.2%)	79 (30.2%)	12 (23.5%)	330 (36.7%)	97 (33.6%)	245 (37.0%)	251 (40.4%)	91 (27.6%)
E-information	633 (53.1%)	319 (51.7%)	57 (50.0%)	895 (52.8%)	399 (57.7%)	553 (49.6%)	558 (48.6%)	394 (59.8%)	273 (39.6%)	134 (51.1%)	25 (49.0%)	382 (42.4%)	148 (51.2%)	259 (39.1%)	230 (37.0%)	177 (53.6%)
E-consultation	33 (2.8%)	23 (3.7%)	5 (4.4%)	51 (3.0%)	31 (4.5%)	25 (2.2%)	31 (2.7%)	25 (3.8%)	153 (22.2%)	49 (18.7%)	14 (27.5%)	188 (20.9%)	44 (15.2%)	158 (23.9%)	140 (22.5%)	62 (18.8%)
X^2	1.38		0.86		22.58		35.50		10.37		3.78		14.60		25.18	
df	2		2		2		2		2		2		2		2	
p-value	0.5		0.64		0.00		0.00		0.00		0.15		0.00		0.00	

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

As the social media trend continues to grow, this paper uses content analysis to explore strategic difference in legislators' use of Facebook during regular sessions and elections. Facebook has more sociological functions and deliberative characteristics than blogs or websites (Robertson et al., 2010), which makes it not only a useful campaign tool, but also an online public sphere.

Unlike previous literature (Bichard, 2006; Trammell et al., 2006; Samuel-Azran, et al., 2015; Wang, 2009), opponent attack is not a priority for legislators even during election periods in Taiwan. In comparing the strategies of regular sessions and election periods, the study results show that political information and daily information sharing are the most frequently used strategies found on legislators' Facebook pages, and there are significant differences between these two periods in terms of emphasis on personal characteristics, endorsement, and mobilization. In general, Taiwan's legislators tend to use more diversified strategies in elections than they do in legislative sessions.

This study also reveals that the percentage of e-participation is more than 50%, but most communication on Facebook is one-way. Legislators still favor a monologic approach (Jackson & Lilleker, 2010) to manage their interactions with citizens on Facebook. The results indicate that legislators' use of Facebook creates another platform to distribute public information to citizens, and may hold the potential to propagate public values.

To improve democracy, legislators need to get more feedback from citizens by, for example, improving two-way communication on Facebook. As for two-way communication among social media users, it is suggested that legislators could use various mechanisms to achieve a greater degree of interaction between candidates and voters, such as by tracking articles that facilitate interpersonal interactions among users, unlike their website counterparts Wang (Wang, 2009), and encourage dialogue on the platform (Jackson & Lilleker, 2010).

As with any research design, this study possesses limitations. First, we focus on differences in legislators' strategies of Web 2.0 tools during regular legislative sessions and during an election period. Facebook, however, is only one type of Web 2.0 tool used by legislators. Taiwan legislators

may apply different strategies in various Web 2.0 environments. Future studies may need to further explore strategies adopted by politicians and (elected) public administrators in various Web 2.0 and social media environments. Second, the concept of e-participation includes citizen participation at the decision-making level of public policy. However, we do not delve much into defining participation in actual policy making, but broadly consider various degrees of citizen involvement. We do not attempt to analyze whether or not legislators actually take suggestions from Facebook "friends" into consideration while making public policies. Future studies may employ an in-depth interview method to qualitatively explore the actual influence of Facebook pages on legislators' policy making. In addition, our study suffers from another limitation, namely that elections are held every four years, but social media technologies and their utilization are constantly evolving. We collected our data in 2011/2012, while current legislators may use more mature forms of social media more mature and other technologies.

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ENDNOTES

[1]   The island of Taiwan has an area of 35,883 km^2 with a population of 23.4 million. The two main political parties are the Kuomintang (KMT) and the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP). According to Internet World Stats, Taiwan has 19.6 million Internet users and 18 million Facebook subscribers as of June, 2016 (Internet World Stats, 2017). In addition, Taiwan ranked NO.12 according to the IMD World Digital Competitiveness in 2017 (IMD, 2017).

[2]   Bronstein (2013) used the Aristotelian strategy of persuasion which consists of three elements (1) ethos, an ethical appeal meant to convince an audience of the author's credibility; (2) pathos, an emotional appeal meant to create fear or to invoke sympathy; and (3) logos, an appeal to reason or logic.

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