Exploring the Relationship Between Mobile Facebook and Social Capital: What Is the “Mobile Difference” for Parents of Young Children?

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Abstract
Mobile media have generally been found to reinforce close ties. Many have predicted this will bring about an onerous social insularity or “network privatism.” However, mobile media now enable frequent communication and multimedia activities with larger, more diffuse social networks. Might we be at a tipping point where certain groups benefit from weak tie connections on mobile social media? To answer this question, this study considers how mobile media altered social capital outcomes on Facebook among parents with young children, a group that are heavy users of mobile media and requiring social support. An online survey (N=262) conducted with parents with young children reveals a generally positive picture. Results show differences between desktop and mobile use of Facebook. Toward a contextual understanding of the impact of visual media, multimedia activities with social ties accrued bridging over bonding capital. Social capital was in turn correlated with mobile Facebook activities beneficial for parents’ well-being. Far from negative predictions, this study provides evidence of how mobile social media broaden our social spheres.

Keywords
mobile, Facebook, affordances, social capital
this notion, I employ an affordances perspective. Affordances describe the interaction between technological possibilities of a particular medium and social practices among particular groups (Schrock, 2015a). One way to take an affordances approach is to measure intensity or self-reported frequency of usage of certain mobile features that individuals deem useful for particular strategic goals (Boase & Kobayashi, 2008; Boase & Ling, 2013). The term “mobile availability,” as used in this study, describes the self-reported frequency of communication on mobile media. This interpretation of mobile availability draws from Licoppe’s (2004) notion of connected presence where relationships are symbolically maintained and adjusted through shorter bursts of communication. However, while connected presence implies constant connection with social ties through a web of media, my concern is specifically about the differential uses of mobile media compared with desktop environments. Mobile media are used in different ways, enabling more strategic “extractive” uses rather than immersive uses on desktop computers (Humphreys, Von Pape, & Karnowski, 2013). This study also considers multimedia activities as a particular suite of practices that are frequently accomplished on mobiles. These activities are conceptually orthogonal to availability because they involve media production, manipulation, and viewing on increasingly high-resolution “smart phones” with cameras (Koskinen, 2007).

There is good reason to believe that availability and multimedia activities may be particularly helpful for parents of young children. Parents of young children are frequent users of both mobile media and SNSs (Duggan, Lenhart, Lampe, & Ellison, 2015). The arrival of a child presents different challenges for different types of families. Raising a child leads to parental exhaustion, loss of sleep, feelings of neglecting responsibilities, uncertainty, difficulty adjusting, and curtailing outside activities (Dyer, 1963). For biological parents, childbirth can lead to postpartum depression in the mother, while adoptive families encounter social stigma. Parents can find themselves physically separated from previously active friendship networks. Ability to successfully manage this transition is contingent on support from a network of friends and family outside their primary social groups (Rainie & Wellman, 2012).

The scant research on parents’ use of social media generally indicates it is helpful for their social-psychological well-being. The support and information available on online social networks can compensate for difficulties young parents face. Both fathers and mothers have been found to seek informational and social support through social media (Doty & Dworkin, 2014). In a nationwide survey, 75% of parents were found to use SNSs for supportive contact, and 93% were friends with family members other than their parents or children (Duggan et al., 2015). Facebook was the most frequently reported (74%) social network platform. Parental communication through Facebook’s social networks has been connected with better social adjustment (Bartholomew, Schoppe-Sullivan, Glassman, Kamp Dush, & Sullivan, 2012).

Few studies to date have considered how use of social media differs when accessed on mobiles, either in general (Quinn & Oldmeadow, 2013) or specific to parents of young children (Duggan et al., 2015). To address this gap, this study connects the affordances of mobile media with social capital and related pro-social behaviors among parents with young children under 5 years old. “Mobile Facebook” refers to Facebook used on a mobile device, including web and “mobile app” versions. Social capital is a particular lens to test Campbell’s provocation that close, intimate communication on mobile media does not necessarily come at the expense of broader communication (Campbell, 2015). This article takes a resource perspective on social capital (Coleman, 1988) where increased self-reported frequency of drawing on mobile affordances is connected with social capital (Williams, 2006). After briefly outlining the theoretical lineage of social capital, I describe an affordances perspective before considering how availability and multimedia activities might impact social capital. After describing my survey methodology and results, I then return to my central research questions about the differences between mobile and desktop uses of Facebook among parents of young children.

**Social Capital**

Social capital describes the reciprocal relationship between individuals through social networks. Social capital takes the perspective that “the goodwill that others have toward us is a valuable resource” (Adler & Kwon, 2002, p. 18). Scholars variously consider social capital as network, process, and outcome (Field, 2008). Social capital is often associated with particular pro-social beliefs such as trust, positive feelings, and reciprocity (Williams, 2006). Because Facebook offers the same network to both mobile and desktop users, the “mobile difference” seems unlikely to be linked with a network effect. That is, using mobile Facebook does not give access to different social ties. Therefore, I focus on process—how mobiles augment communication with social networks.

The question of how mobile media alter communication with social ties has been of persistent scholarly interest. Rettie (2008) argued that mobile media increase access to social capital provided by networks (p. 308). Steinfield, Ellison, Lampe, and Vitak (2012) suggested that an untapped area of social capital research is in “measuring the contexts of usage, such as . . . when a user is out and about with a mobile device” (p. 128). Yet, few researchers have taken up this charge of considering how and why mobiles augment social capital (Chan, 2013; Quinn & Oldmeadow, 2013; Wilken, 2009). To fill this research gap, this study connects self-reported frequency of particular activities with social capital on SNSs (Williams, 2006). Facebook enables a wide variety of modes of communication, not all of which make a difference for
An Affordances Perspective

This article suggests that processes afforded by mobile media have particular relationships with social capital. An affordances perspective draws our attention to both qualities of a technology and individual practices. Scholars employing an affordances perspective often argue that particular forms of technology are effective for particular types of activities. Measuring time spent with activities is theoretically relevant and empirically measurable when researching SNSs (Papacharissi & Mendelson, 2011). In general, this approach has gained traction because blanket measures of use tend to be less predictive for technologies that enable a range of different activities. For example, Nicole Ellison and Jessica Vitak found support for particular “connection strategies” being more useful on Facebook because it affords broadcast communication with social supernets (boyd, 2010).

Christian Licoppe’s notion of “connected presence” (Licoppe, 2004) suggests that relationships are maintained through an ongoing series of brief interactions across various media. He argued that form of communication has moved from discrete conversations to a constant web. Mobile media are at the center of communication because they are always available and present. Mobile media have generally been found to be capital-enriching (Chan, 2013). Mobile media, when combined with increased talk with friends, result in increased capital accrual (Xie, 2014). Because mobile media are more available, they are used more frequently for relationship maintenance, leading to feelings of belonging with social groups (Quinn & Oldmeadow, 2013). In a general sense, because social capital is a result of communication, and mobile media tend to be used strategically (Humphreys et al., 2013), self-reported frequency of communication is correlated with increased social capital. Previous research generally supports the positive relationship between mobile media and bonding capital (Wilken, 2009). For this reason, mobile media have been described as a “strong booster of intimacy” among those within the social network of the user (Fortunati, 2002, p. 51).

These studies differ considerably in methodologies and approaches. They were, however, united under a common notion that particular activities with technology were correlated with improved capital conversion. Similar to this empirical work, I consider whether mobile affordances enable “particular uses of Facebook that are more likely to result in positive social capital outcomes” (Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe, 2011, p. 874). Availability and multimedia activities were selected because they appeared likely from previous literature to improve social capital accrual. This study follows in line with previous work on affordances that operationalize self-reported frequency of use as an independent variable (Quinn & Oldmeadow, 2013). Although not all effects of mobile-mediated communication relate to frequency of use (Bayer & Campbell, 2012), self-reported frequency was most feasible to collect and likely to impact social capital. Self-reported frequency of use is, therefore, here employed as an independent variable similar to previous studies (Boase & Ling, 2013) (see Appendix). For each type of use, I will briefly sketch a history and discuss why they might have particular relationships with bonding and bridging capital (Figure 1). Finally, I return to the question of what specific practices bonding and bridging should be correlated with.

Self-Reported Frequency of Mobile Usage and Social Capital Among Parents of Young Children

Rich Ling found that emergent practices with mobile media result in the reinforcing of the “intimate sphere of friends and family” (Ling, 2008a, p. 159). That is, cell phone use among young adults enabled communication that brought a peer group together and solidified their social bonds. Although parents have been far less frequently researched (Bartholomew et al., 2012), connected presence has also been found to be related to feelings of social connection (Christenson, 2009). These examples suggest that mobile media use is related to bonding capital. That is, how often
parents report reaching for their mobile device has been connected with factors in bonding capital such as frequent communication, trust, and feelings of emotional connections. It also seems probable that an individual’s perception of a positive family life is correlated with bonding capital on Facebook, which involves intimacy and communication with strong ties:

**H1A** Increased bonding capital is significantly predicted by self-reported frequency of mobile use.

**H1B** Increased bonding capital is significantly predicted by family satisfaction.

A positive relationship between availability and bridging capital has mostly been thought to be enabled by a large and diverse social network. For example, Campbell and Kwak (2011) found that mobile communication encouraged discussion among like-minded ties in large social networks. The presence of large networks of ties on mobile media is relatively new, a “missing ingredient” that might foster bridging capital in similar ways as bonding capital (Wilken, 2009). After email, it is now the most frequently used mobile platform that offers the benefits of broadcast communication. Bridging capital accrual and expenditure now seems likely on mobile Facebook. Although Facebook connects individuals who are close, it is perceived as not particularly intimate compared to voice calls (Yang, Brown, & Braun, 2013). Parents of young children are often in need of social support and are of the peak age for using Facebook (Duggan et al., 2015). Mobile Facebook would appear to be a logical route through which parents of young children maintain connections with broader social groups:

**H2A** Increased bridging capital is significantly predicted by self-reported frequency of mobile use.

**Multimedia Activities and Social Capital Among Parents of Young Children**

Multimedia activities among family members serve vital functions with online networks related to social capital. Bourdieu’s “family function” of photography referred to “reinforcing the integration of the family group . . . reasserting the sense that it has both of itself and of its unity” (p. 19). Photographs served a “social function,” acting as “an object of regulated exchange” that joined “the circuit of gifts and counter-gifts” (p. 20). Later, Bourdieu formulated these ideas as social capital. In a sense, cameras have always captured the everyday intimacy of family life. As Susan Sontag (1973) put it, “cameras go with family . . . through photographs, each family constructs a portrait-chrono..."
Visual communication has been historically neglected in computer-mediated communication (CMC) (Soukup, 2000). While there is little previous research that connects multimedia activities with social capital in naturalistic settings (Chow, 2013), research from a social-psychological perspective has employed pseudo-experimental designs to study early stages of relationships. Walther (1996), responding to media richness theory, found that trust increased between unacquainted partners when visual cues were limited. Walther, Slovacek, and Tidwell (2001) later found that pictures in long-term groups led to less affection and social interaction, although cautioned that the impact of images is likely highly contextual. This study considers ongoing relationships often formed offline years before, and the media discussed here are constantly changing and frequently updated, unlike the avatars in classic CMC studies. Furthermore, my attention is on how images connect individuals in a particular life stage.

Images and videos are far more than just “avatars” or “profile pictures.” They are an impetus for ongoing interaction: comments, likes, and reciprocity. Image-sharing has been connected with documentation and exchange practices (Hjorth, 2007) that are related to pro-social behaviors such as trust in social groups (Ling, 2008b). The basic mechanism at play might be more that images create a site for what sociologists term “shared attention.” A stream of media is symbolically rich way for individuals to share joy, frustrations, and other emotionally laden events that others can identify with. Whether or not we have started families of our own (or ever intend to), images of friends and family operate as basic sites for asynchronous social interaction. Similarity attraction refers to people being drawn to qualities of others that most reflect their own (Byrne & Rhamey, 1965). The traditional form of similarity attraction is demographic similarity. Berger (1975) described similarity attraction as “one of the most robust relationships in all of the behavioral sciences” (p. 281). Mobile social media, unlike other forms, are used to share moments where people are doing the same thing simultaneously (Kaptein, Castaneda, Fernandez, & Nass, 2014). Mobile media offer a convenient site for sharing media. It might primarily be the frequency that individuals create, edit, and post videos and images that defines how they emotionally connect with others, rather than the content of the images:

- **H1C.** Increased bonding capital is significantly predicted by self-reported frequency of multimedia activities.
- **H2B.** Increased bridging capital is significantly predicted by self-reported frequency of multimedia activities.

**Activities Related to Social Capital**

Bridging and bonding capital can be drawn on by different types of activities (Norris, 2002). This article makes the case that social capital on SNSs is assistive to specific parental goals accomplishable on mobile devices. Therefore, a final set of hypotheses concerns correlations between online social capital (Williams, 2006) and specific goals on mobile media beneficial to parents with young children. It should be stressed that although the model implies directionality, these activities have a reciprocal relationship with capital. The model is therefore a simplification of a larger cycle of social capital where activities both draw from and accrue it. As described in this study’s review of the concept, significant discussion exists over the cyclical nature of social capital itself. We might imagine that parents notice other parents on Facebook and coordinate activities, leading to photographs and image-tagging, resulting in increased trust and a greater likelihood of interacting again on Facebook or offline (Sessions, 2010). While this “full cycle” is outside of this study’s theoretical scope and methodology, it remains a potent area for successive research.

The following set of hypotheses concerns relationships between types of capital and particular activities they improve. Bonding capital is associated with increased trust and satisfaction among close ties (Valenzuela, Park, & Kee, 2009). Mobile media are often used in activity coordination (Ling, 2004). Parents coordinating children’s activities with other parents should draw from bonding capital among close friends that they trust. The more diffuse and diverse social ties of bridging capital are, by contrast, assistive to informational diversity (Vitak & Ellison, 2012). Parents have been found to get advice through Facebook (Duggan et al., 2015). Previous research has been performed on parental online forums or message boards where parents share experiences and stories (Pedersen & Smithson, 2013). Facebook groups are technically similar to forums, with threaded messages and sharing of stories and information. Therefore, their use is likely correlated with bridging capital:

- **H3A.** Increased bonding social capital will be correlated with offline trust of other parents on Facebook.
- **H3B.** Increased bonding social capital will be correlated with activity coordination with other parents on mobile Facebook.
- **H3C.** Increased bridging social capital will be correlated with getting parental advice on mobile Facebook.
- **H3D.** Increased bridging social capital will be correlated with use of parenting groups on mobile Facebook.

Finally, research to date in mobile communication has largely focused on how communication on mobile media is different in form and function than desktop paradigms. However, it has only rarely been phrased as a comparison (Humphreys et al., 2013). This study fills this gap in the literature by comparing frequency of use of desktop and mobile Facebook and considering multimedia activities on mobile
devices. One additional research question was formulated to consider the overall difference between mobile and desktop uses of Facebook:

RQ1. What is the difference between mobile and desktop uses of Facebook?

Methodology

Surveys were employed to collect data on capital-enriching practices enabled by communicative affordances of mobile media. Recruitment was performed through an online panel of parents (N=262) provided by the online survey company Qualtrics. Online panel surveys are an inexpensive source of survey data with reliability rates comparable to in-person survey methods (Buhrmester, Kwang, & Gosling, 2011). Qualtrics proved more desirable than alternative survey companies (SurveyMonkey) and crowdsourced recruitment (Mechanical Turk) for several reasons; Qualtrics provided an equal sampling of men and women, had experience with surveys for social science research, and could guarantee a rapid turnaround. Furthermore, they were able to integrate a pre-survey filtering block to eliminate participants who didn’t match desired criteria, rather than requiring a pre-survey to create a participant pool. The survey took an average of 15 min to complete to maximize completion and reduce burnout. Three additional mechanisms were employed to ensure data quality. First, an attention filter was added to detect participants who were “straight-lining” through surveys. Second, a timer was added to prevent individuals from going through too quickly.

The resulting sampling of parents was not nationally representative. For example, demographics were skewed slightly older and more educated than would be obtained from a representative sampling of residents of the United States. A quota of 40% male and 60% female was set in advance, with a final participant group of 39.6% male (N=103) and 60.4% female (N=157). A higher percentage of females was selected because online males with children were proving slower to recruit from survey pools. Despite not being nationally representative, participants included a diverse range of types of parents. Nearly half (45%) of the parents participating in the survey were a primary caregiver for one child, with 35% parenting two children and 20% with three or more children. Nearly half (47%) were married, 24% were in a long-term relationship, 10% separated or divorced, and 19% single or widowed.

Frequency of use of mobile Facebook and desktop Facebook was taken from questions 19 (“How frequently do you use Facebook on a mobile device? [include mobile app, Facebook messenger, and mobile website]”) and 20 (“How frequently do you use Facebook on a desktop or laptop computer?”). Possible responses cover a 9-item range from “never” to “about every 10 min.” This phrasing and range has been found to be more reliable than estimating time spent using a medium, which are difficult to recall (Bayer & Campbell, 2012). It also theoretically best fits the notion of mobile availability employed in this study. Overall frequency of use of Facebook on a mobile device was overall greater (mean [M]=5.92, standard deviation [SD]=2.058) than frequency of use of Facebook on a laptop or desktop (M=4.5, SD=2.222).

Frequency of multimedia activities was operationalized as taking (3 questions), curating (4 questions), and uploading (4 questions) pictures and videos of friends and family (Appendix). A factor analysis with Varimax factor rotation was conducted in SPSS, revealing an expected single factor solution. Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin’s measure was .941, indicating sampling adequacy without threat of colinearity. One item (“I take screen shots on my phone”) had a low loading value in factor analysis (extraction=.529) and highest increase in Cronbach’s alpha if removed. Additionally, this question was inadvertently phrased to refer to “phones” rather than “mobile device” as with the other questions (to include tablets and “phablets”). This wording issue may also account for its low loading value. For these reasons, it was removed from the final compound measure. The final Cronbach’s alpha for the multimedia activities scale was .932, skewness=.890, kurtosis=.439, M=30.5, SD=12.44, indicating normalcy appropriate for use in regression analysis.

Further survey measures were drawn from previous research where possible. A two-factor scale captured parental stress and dysfunctional parent–child relationships (Hasket, Ahern, Ward, & Allaire, 2006). Conversely, family satisfaction (Carver & Jones, 1992) was employed to capture positive cohesion and social support within the family. Family satisfaction (Carver & Jones, 1992) describes feelings and interpersonal functioning in a family, here operationalized to refer to immediate family. Scales for bonding and bridging social capital were taken from Williams (2006). For clarity, wording was altered to reflect “Facebook network” rather than “online” or “offline.” This fits with a resource perspective on SNSs (Vitak, 2012). Analysis found bonding (α=.855) and bridging (α=.906) scales to be reliable. A compound variable for “privacy concerns” was drawn from Vitak (2012) and created by summing questions 74–77. The variable “Anglo” was created by assigning “White or Caucasian” to 1 and all other values (“Black or African-American,” “Asian,” “Hispanic or Latin-American Ethnicity,” “Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander,” “Multiracial,” and “Other”) to 0. For regression, all non-dichotomous variables were normalized into a z-score unless otherwise stated.

Results

Mobile frequency (H1A) and multimedia activities (H1C) both had significant positive relationships with Facebook bonding (Table 1). Family satisfaction significantly and
positively predicted bonding capital. People of color (African Americans and Latinos) were significantly less likely to accrue bonding capital over Facebook in general.

Contrary to predictions, desktop frequency, rather than mobile frequency (H2A), had a positive relationship with bridging capital. Multimedia activities (H2B) had a significant positive relationship with Facebook bridging (Table 2).

Correlations between social capital and practices that matter to parents of young children (H3A–D) are listed in Table 3. Four bivariate correlations were conducted, all controlling for demographic variables of gender, age, education, income, and race (Anglo/non-Anglo). H3A verifies that bonding capital is positively correlated with trust (question 142: “I would trust one of my friends on Facebook who is also a parent to watch my children for an hour”). H3B verifies that Facebook bonding capital is positively correlated with activity coordination on mobile Facebook (question 132: “I coordinated in-person activities for my child(ren) using mobile Facebook”). Bridging capital tends to connect heterogeneous groups and leads to exposure to more diverse viewpoints and information. H3C and H3D verify that bridging capital is correlated with question-asking behavior (question 134: “I asked for advice on important issues using mobile Facebook”) and use of online groups (question 135: “I used groups on mobile Facebook to talk about topics related to parenting”), respectively.

### Table 1. Hierarchical Regression Predicting Facebook Bonding Capital.

| Block 1—demographics (p = .637, df = 255, R² = .010) | Facebook bonding capital | β | t value |
|---------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|---|---------|
| Gender (female/male)                              | −.092                    | −1.537 |
| Age                                               | −.004                    | −0.074 |
| Race (POC/Anglo)                                 | −.130*                   | −2.238 |
| Income                                            | −.042                    | −0.689 |

| Block 2—family variables (p ≤ .001, df = 252, R² = .101) | Facebook bonding capital | β | t value |
|----------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|---|---------|
| Parental stress                                          | −.037                    | −0.587 |
| Family satisfaction (H1B)                               | .238**                   | 3.758 |
| Single parent                                           | −.007                    | −0.120 |

| Block 3—mobile usage (p ≤ .001, df = 249, R² = .211) | Facebook bonding capital | β | t value |
|------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|---|---------|
| Mobile frequency (H1A)                               | .130*                    | 1.993 |
| Desktop frequency                                    | −.003                    | −0.050 |
| Multimedia activities (H1C)                          | .276**                   | 4.185 |

POC: people of color.
*p ≤ .05; **p ≤ .001.

### Table 2. Hierarchical Regression Predicting Facebook Bridging Capital.

| Block 1—demographics (p = .196, df = 255, R² = .023) | Facebook bridging capital | β | t value |
|------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|---|---------|
| Gender (female/male)                                 | −.004                     | −0.075 |
| Age                                                  | .037                      | 0.709 |
| Race (POC/Anglo)                                    | −.040                     | −0.768 |
| Income                                               | −.022                     | −0.410 |

| Block 2—Facebook and family variables (p ≤ .05, df = 252, R² = .101) | Facebook bridging capital | β | t value |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|---|---------|
| Privacy concerns                                            | −.060                     | −1.115 |
| Facebook friend list size                                   | .050                      | 0.971 |
| Parental stress                                             | .015                      | 0.288 |

| Block 3—mobile usage (p ≤ .001, df = 249, R² = .211) | Facebook bridging capital | β | t value |
|------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|---|---------|
| Mobile frequency (H2A)                               | .108                      | 1.853 |
| Desktop frequency                                    | .144**                    | 2.652 |
| Multimedia activities (H2B)                          | .484*                     | 8.192 |

POC: people of color.
*p ≤ .001; **p ≤ .01.
Results support an “added layer” of interaction perspective on mobile communication where bonding does not necessarily come at the expense of bridging capital. Self-reported frequency of mobile use and multimedia was correlated with increased levels of social capital. Frequency of use of Facebook on mobile media was positively related with bonding capital, particularly among parents of young children with relatively satisfactory family experiences. The overall effect size of mobile frequency was modest, and the relationship of multimedia activities was higher on bonding capital. Desktop availability, not mobile availability, had a significant relationship with bridging, but multimedia mobile activities had a stronger relationship with bridging capital than with bonding. As expected, bonding and bridging capital had the expected positive relationships with assistive activities specific to parents of young children accomplished on Facebook through mobile devices. Because mobiles do not exist in isolation, these activities are also likely sources of capital accrual and sites to draw on social capital.

Communication on mobile media appears qualitatively different than communication on desktops. Ten years ago, “online” and “offline” in social capital literature were regarded as separate realms where social capital existed in different forms (Williams, 2006). As many have noted, the “mobile difference” cannot now be broken down so simply. A network of ties stored on Facebook may be disproportionately created longitudinally and “offline,” even as they are predominantly accessed over mobile media out in the world. That is, mobile-mediated communication is integrated into human communication patterns in different ways than CMC. For this reason, I argue that mobile social media should not be seen as yet another new realm. Rather, mobile social media, as an extension of social media, enable new ways to “fine-tune social contact, manage time, and express identity” (Papacharissi, 2005, p. 215). Mobile Facebook is assistive to this subtle tuning, which often requires only brief social interactions between individuals who are already familiar and are relatively comfortable with their presence.

Regarding the importance of multimedia activities on mobiles, Hogan (2010) suggested that online communication can be thought of as exhibitional rather than a performance. The critical question of media-rich SNSs might be less that users self-monitor others for their reactions and shape their communication in response. Rather, their visual component is important because users can create media archives that are then searched and curated by remote friends. Parental practices involving images and video were related to bridging capital: an outward-looking perspective, contact with broad range of people, and viewing one’s self as part of a broader group. That is, by posting images they might feel more similar to and perhaps grow to trust them, even among those they differ from in other ways (such as by race, income, or ethnicity). The attention to cues and impression management in avatars that was the focus of so much CMC requires revising to align with the symbolic meaning that is given to constant streams of multimedia.

SNSs appear to resonate with a shift in the “display” of family to a flow of warmly appreciable events, identity work, and connectivity (Finch, 2007). This is not a trivial function because for families to achieve integration into their community, they need to be encountered and understood by others. Exhibitional “displaying” of children has received much criticism in the popular press regarding how youth cannot consent to their online participation. Still, this is not only about children; display of families, as Bourdieu reminds us, constitutes family life in a community.

Finally, several limitations and suggestions for future research should be mentioned. Parents on the whole used mobile social network platforms for accruing both bridging and bonding. However, an overall rosy picture should be qualified by significant differences across demographics, by race and gender. That is, we should be wary of any claims that mobile social media are universally assistive. Not all parents will necessarily adopt Facebook and use it in the same way on a mobile device. The emancipatory possibilities of mobile media exist in tension with structural inequalities that mirror demographics of particular groups. For these reasons, more research is needed on the mobile habits of minority groups in particular.

Methodological improvements are also necessary. Trace behavioral data and network data are generally more accurate than self-reported social capital measures (Boase & Ling, 2013). Lessons from this study must be carefully interpreted because of the lack of causality in the research design. Confirming the strength and directionality of these relationships requires longitudinal experimental and pseudo-experimental studies looking at how practices unfold over time. Longitudinal studies on SNSs and social capital are unfortunately quite rare. Finally, the past several years have seen massive growth of mobile multimedia platforms such as Vine, Instagram, and Periscope. Given the surprising impact of multimedia on social capital in this study, this rise should draw our scholarly attention and curiosity. Future research
might consider the mechanisms behind multimedia activities’ impacts on social capital, the impact of particular genres of media, and the situations that they become embedded in.

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Note
1. While self-reported frequency is not as accurate as digital traces—log data stored on mobile devices—Facebook’s API (application programming interface) currently prohibits collection of data such as frequency of use or time spent on their mobile application or website.

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**Author Biography**

Andrew R. Schrock (PhD, University of Southern California) is an independent researcher active in the public and educational sectors. His research and practice has two distinct areas: quotidian communication on mobile social media, and political participation and civic engagement in data-driven governance.

**Appendix**

**Questions on Multimedia Practices**

The following questions are about how frequently you do certain activities on your mobile device. For this set of questions, please answer only for the mobile device (such as a “smartphone,” tablet, or mobile phone) that you use most frequently:

43. I show friends pictures or videos on my mobile device when I’m spending time with them in-person. *(Sharing)*

44. I take “selfie” pictures with my family and friends. *(Sharing)*

45. I take videos of my family and friends. *(Sharing)*

46. I organize pictures on my mobile device. *(Curation)*

47. I think about pictures of my family on my mobile device. *(Curation)*

48. I look at pictures of my family on my mobile device. *(Curation)*

49. I take screen shots on my phone. *(Curation)* Removed from final loading.

50. I upload images or videos of my family from my mobile device to a social network site such as Facebook. *(Uploading)*

51. I share images of my family taken on my mobile device on an image sharing site such as Instagram. *(Uploading)*

52. I make status updates, messages and posts about my family with pictures or videos attached. *(Uploading)*

53. I share videos of my family taken on my mobile device on a video sharing site such as YouTube. *(Uploading)*