**SUPPLEMENTAL INTERVIEW METHODS APPENDIX**

**Sample Frame Construction**

Given that Yik Yak was an anonymous platform, there was no way to directly recruit known users to participate in our study. We therefore sampled participants from an undergraduate participant pool that consisted of approximately 300 students enrolled in an introductory communication studies course each semester. Our study was posted on the participant pool website and participants were given the choice to participate in return for course credit. This allowed us to interview students from a range of academic ranks (e.g., freshman, sophomore, junior). The limitation of this sampling frame was that it over-represented White and female participants. It was also difficult to recruit individuals who posted about politics from the participant pool. In order to address these limitations, we conducted additional recruitment via snowball sampling and direct messaging on Yik Yak. We specifically targeted those who *posted* about politics on Yik Yak and for those who were minorities. For participants recruited via these alternative methods, a $10 stipend was provided for their participation. Table A1 provides descriptions of each participant (pseudonyms provided).

**Validity (Saturation)**

It is difficult to provide meaningful non-response rates for the sample methods used in this study because many of them were passive and entailed no direct recruitment. We did however broadly assess saturation for users who did not post about politics and users who did post about politics respectively. We continued to recruit both types of users until we found that consistencies emerged among accounts in each category. It is important to note that we spoke with both liberal and conservative Yik Yak users, but by no means make the claim that our interviews captured the wide spectrum of political views emerging on the site.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Pseudonym** | **Gender** | **Racial Category** | **Sampling Method** | **Category** |
| Derrick | M | Asian American | Undergraduate participant pool | Political poster |
| Jenny | F | White | Undergraduate participant pool | Non-political poster |
| Brian | M | White | Undergraduate participant pool | Non-political poster |
| Mindy | F | Asian American | Undergraduate participant pool | Non-political poster |
| Michael | M | White | Undergraduate participant pool | Non-political poster |
| Denise | F | White | Undergraduate participant pool | Non-political poster |
| Cheryl | F | White | Snowball | Political poster |
| Veronica | F | White | Undergraduate participant pool | Non-political poster |
| Jasmine | F | Arab American | Undergraduate participant pool | Political poster |
| Jeremy | M | White | Undergraduate participant pool | Political poster |
| Shelley | F | White | Undergraduate participant pool | Non-political poster |
| Omar | M | Arab American | Snowball | Political poster |
| Ned | M | White | Snowball | Political poster |
| Shaun | M | White | Undergraduate participant pool | Non-political poster |
| Kayla | F | African American | Snowball | Political poster |
| Susan | F | White | Undergraduate participant pool | Non-political poster |
| Rebecca | F | White | Direct connection on Yik Yak | Political poster |
| Sarah | F | White | Snowball | Political poster |
| James | M | White | Undergraduate participant pool | Non-political poster |
| Sean | M | White | Undergraduate participant pool | Non-political poster |

**Table A1: Participant Description**

**Interview Protocol**

All interviews were semi-structured and lasted between approximately 60-90 minutes. We conducted interview sessions in a casual setting on campus and used between 5-10 minutes engaging in casual conversation prior to administering the interview questions in order to make participants feel comfortable. Participants were informed that their interview would be audio recorded and that they were free to take a break or stop at any time. Occasionally participants walked through their use of the app using their own smartphone. Because anonymity was required under the IRB application filed for this study, no transcripts are publicly available.

**Interview Questions**

Warm up Questions

1.     Tell me a little bit about how you use social media? Which networks have you joined?

1. What do you do on those networks?
2. Which networks/platforms do you use the most?

2. Are there social causes/issues that you’re passionate about? If so, tell me the story of how you got into that cause/issue.

3. Would you consider yourself involved politically? If so, tell me a little bit about your political involvement.

Yik Yak General

4. How did you first learn about Yik Yak and what made you decide to join?

5. How often do you go on Yik Yak? Are there specific times during the day you tend to go on?

6. Walk me through how you normally use the app?

7. What type of topics do you see reoccuring on Yik Yak?

8. What yaks do you enjoy? Which yaks don’t you enjoy?

9. Do you post on Yik Yak? If so, what do typically you post about?

10. Are there any community “rules” for using Yik Yak? What is allowed and what is not allowed?

11. How do you feel while using Yik Yak?

12. How do you feel after you have used Yik Yak?

Politics and Social Issues on Yik Yak

*Now we’re going to talk about discussion of politics and social issues on Yik Yak. Even if you don’t actively post or read political/social issue yaks, we’re curious about your opinion as a Yik Yak user of this sort of talk on the platform.*

13. What kind of political issues do you typically see discussed on Yik Yak?

14. What kind of social issues do you typically see discussed on Yik Yak?

15. Do you feel like Yik Yak is a productive space for discussion of social and political issues?

*Now I’m going to show you a few interactions on Yik Yak. I’d love your reactions. (Show screen shots)*

16. From your perspective, what are the rules about what is ok and what is not ok to post in terms of social or political issues?

17. Does the anonymity of Yik Yak let you and other users say things about politics or social issues that you/they wouldn’t normally say?

18. Yaks only exist for a short amount of time. How does this impact the political/social issue discussion on Yik Yak?

19. What do you think motivates users to post about social and political issues on Yik Yak?

20. What do you think motivates users to comment on social and political Yaks?

21. What do you think other users get out of posting about social and political issues on Yik Yak?

*If you post political or social issue yaks…*

22. What political or social issues do you yak about?

23. What are some of the reasons you post about political or social issues?

Yik Yak as community

24. Everyone who is on Yik Yak at [UNIVERSITY NAME] lives close by. How do you think that impacts discussion of political and social issues?

25. Do you think of Yik Yak as a community?

26. Are you ever urged to directly respond to Yaks? If so, during what times/instances?