Final Project Proposal  
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It is proposed, in this essay, that I will conduct an interview study of individuals actively engaged in politics in order to gain insights into the experiences and motivations that led to their decision to become involved in politics and what continues to motivate their involvement to this day. In a time such as now, when politicians are generally not well-regarded or respected by society at-large and are perceived as secretive figures pulling the strings behind the curtain and out of view of the American public, it is important to get to know people who have dedicated their lives to working within the political system of our nation at various levels, why they are involved, and what their goals and motivations are for that involvement. This will be our primary research question with the aim of demystifying the activists and professionals, placing faces to these roles in our society, learning about what they do and why they do the work they do, how they first decided to become involved, what their ‘path’ has been in civic engagement to lead them where they are, where they see themselves in the future, and what they would say to Americans who are unengaged in or distrustful of the political process.

The study will be performed by interviewing several (at least 3-5) people who are involved in some way in the political process. To qualify as a participant, subjects will need to be active in civic engagement in some way that relates directly to the political process. This may be at the local, state, or national level, and they may be activists involved in community organizing, lobbying of elected officials, party leaders, political staffers, or elected officials. Participants will be recruited through the researcher’s personal network, as he has spent over a decade working in this field and currently holds local and state-level positions within the Democratic Party of Georgia in addition to working as a full-time staffer on a campaign for the United States Senate. While there are many questions, and very many avenues that could lead to unexpected questions that may not appear on the official interview schedule, that could be asked of these participants, some of the most important could be, “Why did you first become involved in the political process?”, “What was your first ‘role’ in civic engagement and what was that experience like?”, “What is your current role? How did you end up in that position and why did you seek/accept it?”, “Do you feel more or less motivated now than when you first became politically active? Why?”, “What, if any, plans do you have for the future of your political involvement?”, “Can you tell us about any stand-out experiences you’ve had in the course of your political work and what they meant to you?”, “How have your experiences in this work changed your perspective of politics and government?”, or “What would you say to people who are unengaged or distrustful of the political process?”. These questions, of course, only scratch the surface of what could be learned about those who dedicate themselves to this line of work.

It is the hope of this researcher that this study will help illuminate a class of individuals who are often considered “shadowy figures” of sorts by much of the American people and will encourage more transparency in how the political process works, who runs it, and how every citizen can be involved and make a difference.

Sources of Previous Research

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