

587X8 Elite Interviewing

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This workshop is concerned with the technique of elite interviewing and explores the variety of issues researchers encounter with this method. Elite interviewing has become an increasingly useful tool for researchers across the social sciences, but it is a method, which political scientists in particular favour. Most political a small group of highly qualified and knowledgeable individuals, takes decisions where the black box of policymaking is often concealed, and therefore elite interviewing is often the only way of researching such processes. The shared assumptions and meanings that inform these policy communities also require exploration and elite interviewing is the most appropriate technique for such exploration.

The workshop explains what is distinctive about this technique and examines the methodological issues and problems associated with its use, such as the balance of power, positionality, access issues, ethics and analysis of results. Researchers who are employing this technique need to decide who they are going to interview, how they are going to access their interviewees, the best way to conduct the interview and how they should utilize and analyse their results. This workshop is targeted at students who intend to employ this method and want to strategize and plan for the next steps in conducting such research.

By the end of the workshop, you will be able to:

- Examine methodological issues involved with elite interviewing, with a particular focus on overcoming access issues and the problems of 'institutional memory'.
- Reflect on such issues you anticipate facing in your own research and build a tentative sample strategy.
- Think through how elite interviewing and analysis of such results can fit into your own research.
- Consider how elite interviewing fits with different theoretical positions and in triangulation with other methods.

Indicative bibliography:

Burnham, P, Gillard Lutz, K, Grant, W and Layton-Henry, Z (2008), 'Elite Interviewing', in *Research Methods in Politics*. Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan

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Goldstein, K (2002), 'Getting in the Door: Sampling and Completing Elite Interviews', *PS: Political Science and Politics*, 35(4): 669-672

Herod, A (1999), 'Reflections on interviewing foreign elites: praxis, positionality, validity, and the cult of the insider', *Geoforum*, 30(4): 313-327

Lilleker, D.G (2003), 'Interviewing the Political Elite: Navigating a Potential Minefield', *Politics*, 23(3): 207-214