"The interview method in comparative politics: The process of interviewing far right actors"

Abstract:

Interviews have been the basis for some of the greatest insights in many disciplines but have largely been on the backstage of comparative political inquiry. I first rely on bibliometric data to show the limited use of interviews in research published by major journals in the past thirty years. I then focus on how interviews are used to study a hard to reach population, far right actors. Using the extant literature and original field notes from dozens of interviews with far right leaders and functionaries, I examine in detail how interviews help investigate this phenomenon; analyze challenges related to interview access, rapport, analysis and ethics; and offer remedies. I argue that comparativists using interviews need to address these challenges by explicating and reflecting on the process through which they collect interview data rather than solely focus on the data itself.