

Interview Method in State Capitalism Literature: Main Issues and Suggestions ¹

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Abstract

Interview technique is one of the widely used methods in social sciences. This article examines how the interview method is applied in state capitalism literature. First, using the ISI Web of Science (WoS) database, it identifies 25 articles (among 177) that used the interview method in their analyses on state capitalism. The keyword "state capitalism" is searched in all SSCI articles (titles, abstracts, keywords, etc.) to find contributions on state capitalism (WoS categories of Political Science, Public Administration, Economics, International Relations, and Sociology). Then, the article investigates how the method is applied in these works. It highlights that practitioners of the interview method seldom engage with the related methodological literature. Despite intriguing debates and valuable contributions, how the interview method is drawn on to support analyses and drive main arguments are not generally clear. Thus, more engagement with the methodological literature would be useful in more explicitly and systematically describing (i) the execution of the method (date, length, mode, etc.), (ii) elaboration of saturation, and (iii) how the interview data are analyzed and presented to the readers, including coding, use of software, and use of direct quotations.

Keywords: *State Capitalism, Methodology, Interview Method, International Political Economy, Political Economy of Development*

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Devlet Kapitalizmi Yazınında Görüşme Yöntemi: Temel Sorunlar ve Öneriler

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Öz

Görüşme tekniği, sosyal bilimlerde yaygın olarak kullanılan yöntemlerden bir tanesidir. Bu makale, devlet kapitalizmi literatüründe görüşme yönteminin nasıl uygulandığını incelemektedir. Makale ilk olarak ISI Web of Science (WoS) veritabanını kullanarak devlet kapitalizmi üzerine olan analizlerinde görüşme yöntemini kullanan 25 makaleyi (177 arasında) belirlemektedir. Bu makaleler “devlet kapitalizmi” anahtar kelimesinin Siyaset Bilimi, Kamu Yönetimi, Ekonomi, Uluslararası İlişkiler ve Sosyoloji kategorilerindeki makaleler kapsamında taratılmasıyla (makalelerin başlıkları, özleri, anahtar kelimeleri, vb.) tespit edilmiştir. Makale daha sonra bu çalışmalarda görüşme yönteminin nasıl uygulandığını araştırmaktadır. Makale, görüşme yöntemini kullanan çalışmaların nadiren ilgili metodolojik yazın ile konuştuğunu vurgulamaktadır. Önemli tartışmalara ve değerli katkılara rağmen, analizleri desteklemek ve ana argümanları ortaya koymak açısından görüşme yönteminden nasıl yararlandığı genellikle açık değildir. Bu nedenle, metodoloji yazınıyla daha fazla etkileşilmesi, (i) yöntemin uygulanışının (görüşme tarihi, uzunluğu, modu, vb.), (ii) doygunluk konusunun ayrıntılandırılmasının ve (iii) görüşme verilerinin nasıl analiz edildiğinin ve okuyucuya nasıl sunulduğunun (kodlama, yazılım kullanımı ve doğrudan alıntılarının yapılması) daha açık ve sistematik olarak tanımlanmasında faydalı olacaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Devlet Kapitalizmi, Yöntembilim, Görüşme Tekniği, Uluslararası Ekonomi Politik, Kalkınmanın Ekonomi Politikası

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Introduction⁴

Interview method is an essential toolkit of scholarly research in social sciences. In international political economy (IPE), a number of classics primarily draw on interview data to conduct analysis (Evans, 1995). There is also a growing body of contemporary work which utilize interview method as part of a mixed-method research design (Tansey, 2007). Interview technique is used for various purposes, including theory building, survey design and interpretation, and hypothesis testing (Mosley, 2013a). Perhaps most importantly, “for many questions, interviews remain the only means of identifying or confirming the causal mechanisms that generate the outcomes we observe” (Mosley, 2013b, p. vii).

Interview research is especially vital for IPE scholars whose aim is to investigate state-business relationships or dynamics of a decision-making process. Research questions generated within these fields require the researcher to opt for an in-depth case study, a part of which needs to be elite-interviewing. To begin with, “scarcity of hard data” or lack of observations for statistical tests necessitate this. By way of conducting interviews with elites, researchers have a chance to access information that is not available otherwise. Quantitative methods may not be applicable, governmental and organizational documents may not reveal necessary details, or these sources may simply lack the “sensitive” information related to elite behavior or decision-making process. For instance, in the methodology section of their ground-breaking study, Peter Evans states “key informant interviews” are their main source of information. As the author notes, “interviews with dozens of current and former government officials were the primary source of my understanding of what was going on inside (...) states (...) obviously, participants offer accounts that are biased and self-interested, but the biases and self-interest are important evidence in themselves” (Evans, 1995, p. 19).

Despite its prominent role in social sciences and IPE research, many scholars have doubts about the scientific merit of the interview method. In fact, this applies to qualitative research as well. As noted, for instance, even though “there is more methodological freedom and room for creativity in qualitative research than it seems at first glance (...) there is a need for a greater methodological awareness particularly concerning possible downsides of subjectivity, the generalization of the findings, conscious and unconscious biases, influences of dominant ideologies and mainstream thinking” (Diefenbach, 2009, p. 875).⁵ Likewise, a number of concerns such as ethics, interviewer effects, sampling, validity and reliability of data, or use of quotations are cited as concerns in the use of the interview method (Mosley, 2013a). However, as many works on the interview method convincingly argue, there are various ways to encounter these problems (Beamer, 2002; Berry, 2002; Mosley, 2013a). It is especially noteworthy to emphasize that many studies employing the interview method are criticized not because they draw on the interview method *per se*, but either because they do not apply the method properly or they do not describe its application in an explicit and informative way. These errors or oversights may lead some scholars to conclude: “interviewing is rather like marriage: everyone knows what it is, an awful lot of people do it, and yet behind each closed front door there is a world of secrets” (Oakley, 1981, p. 31). This same criticism can be levelled against any method or methodological approach, if the methods are not used adequately or their application is not transparent to readers.

On that note, this study aims to contribute to the literature by examining how the interview method is applied in state capitalism scholarship. The goal is to critically assess the use of the method, and to make suggestions on how its application can be improved. The main conclusion is this: More engagement with the

⁴ I am grateful to the two anonymous referees of *Anadolu University Journal of Social Sciences* for their constructive comments.

⁵ For a list of methodological issues of qualitative research that largely draws on semi-structured interviews, see Diefenbach (2009, p. 891).

methodological literature would be useful to be able to more explicitly and systematically describe (i) the implementation of the method (date, length, mode, etc.), (ii) the issue of saturation, and (iii) how the interview data are examined and presented to the readers.

The article is sketched as follows. The next section briefly informs about state capitalism literature. The following sections describe the methodology of this article and critically examine state capitalism scholarship on the use of the interview method, respectively. The final section concludes.

A Brief Review of State Capitalism

State capitalism can be seen as a sub-field of a broader group of studies that aim to analyze state-led development. IPE literature on state-led development is rich. In fact, mercantilism (strongly favoring state-led development) is considered to be “the oldest and psychologically most deeply embedded of the three IPE perspectives (mercantilism, economic liberalism, and structuralism)” (Balaam and Dillman, 2016, p. 54). Developmental state (Amsden, 1989; Evans, 1995; Johnson, 1982; Öniş, 1991), neo-developmental state (Kalinowski, 2015; Maggor, 2021), developmental network state (Negoita and Block, 2012; O’Riain, 2004), hidden developmental state (Block, 2008), entrepreneurial state (Lamberty and Nevers, 2022; Mazzucato, 2013), investor state (Chen and Rithmire, 2020), etc. are different classifications of state-led development. Although these literatures are related, each has a different way of analyzing state-society relationships and their impact on development.

There is no consensus on the definition of state capitalism like in the case of many other widely used concepts in IPE. As it is rightly highlighted in a recent introductory article to a special issue on state capitalism: “state capitalism is notoriously difficult to define” (Alami et al., 2022, p. 249). For instance, for Belesky and Lawrence (2019, p. 1125), “the notion of state capitalism broadly refers to the commanding and strategic role of the state in fostering economic growth, directing industrial policies and guiding the emerging market economy”. Likewise, Wright et al. (2021, p. 101160) define state capitalism “as an economic system in which the state uses various tools for proactive intervention in economic production and the functioning of markets”. After highlighting that state capitalism is related to state capture in China, Milhaupt and Zheng (2015, p. 669) note, “large firms in China (...) survive and prosper precisely because they have fostered connections to state power and have succeeded in obtaining state-generated rents”. In a nutshell, many formal or informal institutions (i.e., leading to, and shaping, strong state-market relationships), modalities of state intervention (state support to domestic firms, neo-mercantilist policies, etc.) and organizational forms (state-owned enterprises, development banks, sovereign wealth funds, etc.) are considered to be the main features of state capitalism. These characteristics, which have been seen globally especially since the 2008 global economic crisis, demonstrate the greater roles that states play in political economies.

In brief, the *problématique* of state capitalism covers five dimensions (Figure 1). The analyses cover: (1) questioning of the relationship between economic and political power, (2) elaboration of why certain state-market relationships can be considered state capitalist, (3) comparison of different manifestations of state capitalism, (4) questioning of the “normal” separation between the public and the private spheres of economic activity, and (5) how the analysis informs about the changing role of the state in capitalism (Alami et al., 2022, p. 250). Based on these concerns, state capitalism literature aims to analyze how, to what degree, and with what consequences states’ “visible hand” affect development prospects, both in the Global South and the Global

North. China (Haley and Haley, 2013; Naughton and Tsai, 2015), Brazil (DuBois and Primo, 2016; Musacchio and Lazzarini, 2014), India (Hu et al., 2019; Meckling et al., 2015), Russia (Kinossian and Morgan, 2022), the US (Hopewell, 2021), and Turkey (Kutlay, 2020; Öniş, 2019) are among the countries that are analyzed in the scope of state capitalism.⁶

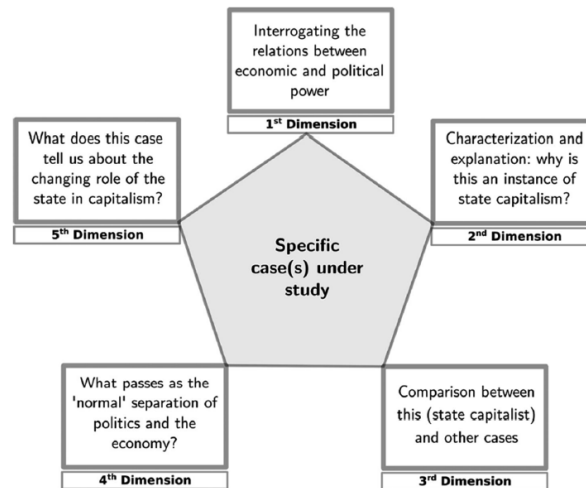


Figure 1. The *Problématique* of State Capitalism and its five dimensions. Taken from Alami et al. (2022, p. 250).

Methodology of the Study

This article takes the following steps in order to explore how the interview method is applied in state capitalism scholarship. A keyword search was conducted by using the *ISI Web of Science (WoS)* database to create a sample of articles that study state capitalism. *WoS* database is chosen for two main reasons. First, *WoS* is a commonly used database in analyses that aim to explore trends and developments in literatures. Second, methodologically more ambitious and rigorous works usually aim at SSCI journals. Accordingly, the search settings that were used while constructing the initial sample of 231 articles were as follows: ALL FIELDS: “state capitalism” (searches all fields including title, abstract, keywords, etc.); PUBLICATION YEAR: All available years; DOCUMENT TYPE: Article; LANGUAGE: English; and CATEGORY: Political Science, Public Administration, Economics, International Relations, Sociology. Only articles that were in the *WoS* category of Political Science, Public Administration, Economics, International Relations, and Sociology are taken into consideration. This is because (i) they were among the top categories, and (ii) the aim of this article is to assess state capitalism from an IPE standpoint.

After creating the initial sample of 231 articles, 54 of them were removed because (i) 45 of them were not journal articles even though they were classified as such in the initial search, (ii) eight articles were unrelated to the subject matter, and (iii) one article could not be accessed (Baer et al., 1976). Then, the remaining 177 articles were skimmed to see whether they employed the interview method. It is seen that 25 articles out of 177 (14.1%) used interviews in their analyses. While only one article was published in 2006, 2015, 2017, 2018, and 2019, this number was three for 2020, four for 2016, six for 2021 and seven for 2022.

⁶ For an elaboration on political economy of import substitution industrialization in Turkey, which is related to discussions on state capitalism, see Yıldız (2020). For state-led development in the 2000s, see Yağcı (2017).

Finally, 25 articles, the main sample of publications that apply the interview method, were coded to comprehensively analyze the use of the interview method in state capitalism literature. The following questions were answered systematically via coding:

1. Does the article cite/engage with the related literature on the interview method?
2. Does the article explicitly give information on the interview structure (semi-structured, unstructured, etc.)? If yes, which structure is preferred?
3. Is the exact number of interviewees stated? If yes, how many interviews are conducted?
4. Is any information provided on the date, length, and mode (face-to-face, e-mail, phone, etc.) of the interviews?
5. Does the article use the “interview methods table”?
6. Does the article explicitly state the purpose of the interviews?
7. Does the article explicitly elaborate on the selection procedure of the sample? (List, snowball, etc.)
8. Is any information provided on data gathering (taking notes, recording)?
9. Is any information provided on whether interviews are coded or how the data are analyzed?
10. Does the article quote from the interview data? Or does it only summarize/elaborate on them without quoting? Is there any elaboration on saturation?
11. Is any software used in analyzing the interview data?
12. Does the article elaborate on methodological issues related to the language of the interviews?

The use of the interview method in studies that examine state capitalism from an IPE perspective is explored systematically by answering the above questions.

The Use of the Interview Method in State Capitalism Scholarship: Findings

Figure 2 shows the main findings of the coding process. To start with, it is noteworthy to point out that in all studies analyzing state capitalism from an IPE perspective, information is provided on the mode of the interviews. Studies mainly prefer to give this information while they state when, where, and with whom the interviews are conducted. To exemplify, in their article where they examine state, peasant, and land relations in China, Chuang and Yasuda (2022, p. 316) note, “we collected the majority of our data in Sichuan Province, where we conducted interviews with farmers, village leaders, and county, township, and municipal state officials”. Or, Reboredo (2021, p. 354) notes while analyzing the South African state’s transformation, “this article draws on over 60 interviews conducted by the author in South Africa between August 2017 and March 2018”. The fact that interviews are conducted in a given geography does not necessarily mean that they are conducted face-to-face (one can still, for instance, make telephone interviews in Sichuan Province or South Africa). However, it is nevertheless clear in these studies that the interviews were conducted face-to-face. Furthermore, it is generally the case that studies provide information on the mode of interviews when they refer to interview evidence within the text. For instance, in their examination of the rise of “investor state” in China, a conceptualization different from developmental state and state capitalism, Chen and Rithmire (2020, p. 264) note in a footnote, “interview with former CSRC official (August 2019)”. Again, it is almost clear that this interview was conducted face-to-face. In other cases, it is more strongly emphasized that the interviews were conducted face-to-face. In their elaboration on employees’ perspectives on management experiences under neoliberalism, for instance, Telford and Briggs (2022, p. 65) note, “interviews were conducted in participants’ homes, cafes and pubs”.

Even though it is almost certain that interviews were carried out face-to-face in the above examples, it may be better to state this explicitly. For instance, similar to the above examples, Töpfer (2017, p. 146) notes, “to

investigate (...) policy changes, the paper draws on an original data-set of 91 multi-stakeholder interviews conducted in China’s main financial and political centres: Shanghai, Beijing, Hong Kong and Shenzhen”. This strongly signals that interviews were conducted face-to-face. However, the author notes later in the text, “based on snowball sampling, personal interviews were chosen as the predominant form of inquiry” (Töpfer, 2017, p. 152). What is understood here is that not all interviews were conducted face-to-face. Then, what does “predominant” refer to? It is better to explicitly state the mode of interviews to be more precise and avoid confusions regarding the execution of the interview method.

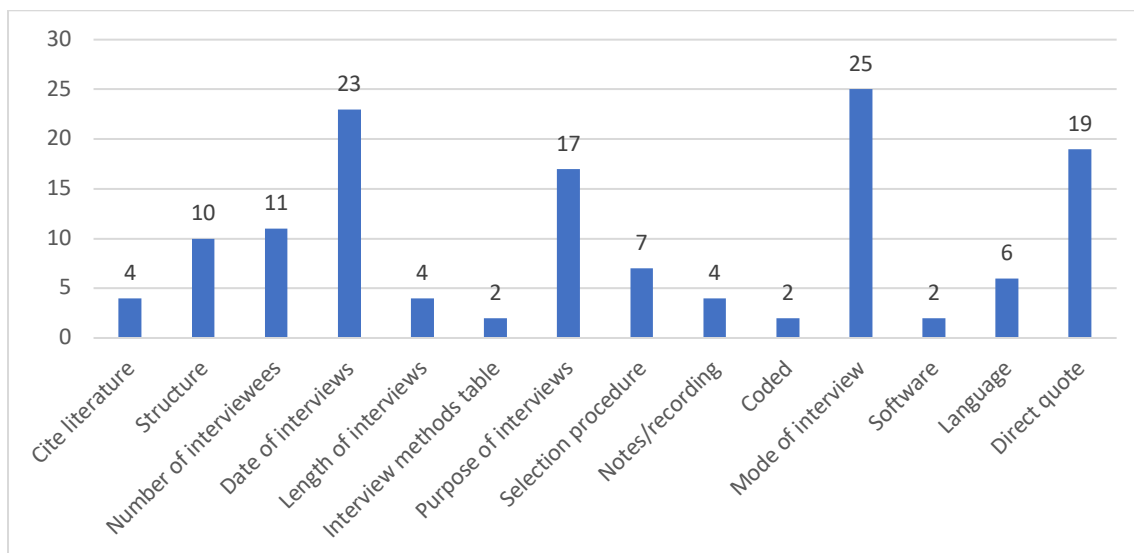


Figure 2. The Use of the Interview Method in State Capitalism Scholarship. Author’s Own Analysis

Second, it is seen that information on interview dates are provided in almost all articles (23 out of 25) (Figure 2). This information is given either (i) at the beginning of the articles while specifying the time interval of the fieldwork, (ii) within the text after each argument drawing on interview evidence, or (iii) both. However, in two articles no information is provided on interview dates. On that note, it is useful to illustrate one issue regarding the time interval of interviews. The main objective of Hopewell (2021, p. 53) is to “challenge the predominant characterization of the United States as a liberal adherent of ‘free-market capitalism,’ in contrast to the ‘state capitalism’ of the emerging powers”. In the study, the author provides information on interview dates in a footnote, “this analysis draws from a larger study of global trade politics conducted between 2007 and 2018, including over 200 interviews with trade negotiators and senior officials at the WTO in Geneva, as well as in Washington, Beijing, Brasilia, Brussels, New Delhi, Ottawa, Sao Paulo, and Tokyo” (Hopewell, 2021, pp. 53–54). Since the time interval of the interviews is wide (2007-2018), it would have been more informative if more detail had been provided on the subject matter. Although how specific this should be depends on the inquiry, it is better if addressed. For instance, Hopewell (2021, p. 69) notes in a different footnote: “interviews with developed and developing country WTO negotiators, Geneva, September 2008–June 2009”. This is more informative. Finally, Hopewell (2021) does not provide information on how many interviews were conducted in each city (Washington, Beijing, Brasilia, Brussels, New Delhi, Ottawa, Sao Paulo, and Tokyo). A brief information on this would have made the application of the interview method more transparent.

The purpose of interviews is elaborated on in 17 out of 25 articles. The general approach here is to emphasize the importance of the interview method in deriving main arguments of the article, while also giving information on the method’s application. For instance, while exploring Brazil’s state capitalism in the context

of shipbuilding, DuBois and Primo (2021, p. 4) note, “we make use of semi-structured interviews on the impact of China’s rise and the emergence of development finance rivalry between the West and China”. Similarly, Yasuda (2021, p. 129) notes while exploring China’s regulatory state, “drawing from over 200 interviews with regulators, technical advisors, and enterprise compliance directors, the study provides a glimpse into the internal logic of regulators as they go about building their institutions”. Yasuda (2021, p. 144) is more explicit about the purpose of the interview method later on, “this article does not provide new sector specific information as a large body of material already exists. Interviews were used to highlight the causal mechanisms at work”. Liu and Lim (2022, p. 5) also note that interviews were used to establish causality in their study by emphasizing how this was not possible without the interviews. Finally, Töpfer (2017, p. 152) similarly highlights how the interview method complemented other methods in their analysis.

Only in 11 articles out of 25 exact number of interviewees are provided. While in seven of them no information is given, an approximation is presented in seven of them. Phrases used for the approximations are: “dozens”, “over 60”, “over 200”, “about two dozen”, and “more than 100”. Except for the vague term “dozens”, the other uses are informative. However, not providing any information on the number of interviews is problematic for various reasons. Especially in studies that support their main arguments by (partly) drawing on interview evidence, readers have no idea about how strongly the evidence supports the claims. Readers are in the dark, as they cannot judge and question how causality is established via interview evidence. Finally, not providing any information on the number of interviews, perhaps the very first thing not to do, raises great concerns about the overall application of the method.

Semi-structured interview with open-ended questions is the most widely used technique in studies exploring IPE of development. This format “provide(s) a greater opportunity for respondents to organize their answers within their own frameworks (...) increases the validity of the responses and is best for (...) exploratory and in-depth work” (Aberbach and Rockman, 2002, p. 674). Furthermore, “elites especially—but other highly educated people as well—do not like being put in the straightjacket of close-ended questions. They prefer to articulate their views, explaining why they think what they think” (Aberbach and Rockman, 2002, p. 674). 10 out of 25 articles explicitly note that they conducted semi-structured interviews. Two additional articles in the sample state their interview format as “expert interviews”; one as “multi-stakeholder interviews”; and one as “key informant interviews”. In 11 articles, there is no explicit information on the format –even though the elaborations signal that the format is semi-structured.

Only in seven articles out of 25 the selection procedure of the interviewees is elaborated on. In six of them, the use of snowball sampling technique is highlighted. For instance, in their study on China’s party-state and the media, Lee et al. (2006, p. 587) note, “we approached some key interviewees through personal connections (...); others were referred to us by our friends or by their colleagues”. Or, Telford and Briggs (2022, p. 65) note, “fourteen respondents were recruited through utilizing five gatekeepers. The rest of the participants were recruited through snowball sampling”. Zadorian (2021, p. 1244) also emphasizes methodological problems if generalizations are made based on snowball sampling, “a potential methodological limitation of the research is that interview subjects were recruited through a snowball sampling technique. The sample is therefore not representative”. Finally, in some contexts, it is especially necessary for readers to have information on the language of interviews so that they can evaluate studies from a methodological perspective. Information on the language of interviews is provided in six studies: Chinese and English (3), Chinese and Spanish (1), “mostly Chinese” (1), and English (1).

The Use of the Interview Method in State Capitalism Scholarship: Recommendations

Three main recommendations can be made to strengthen the analytical rigor of studies that examine state capitalism by using the interview method.

- 1) Engage more with the methodological literature on the interview method: To start with, only four articles out of 25 cite the related methodology literature on the interview method. Liu and Dixon (2022, p. 12) note, for instance, by referring to Clark (1998) that “many of (the) interviews were based on relationships cultivated through close dialogue with financial professionals”. Telford and Briggs (2022, p. 65) refer to Bowen (2008) when they briefly discuss data saturation and sample size. Peng (2021, p. 450) refers to Charmaz (2008) when they discuss their coding process. Finally, Polanska and Weldon (2020, p. 1357) refer to several studies when they elaborate on how the methods they used “were supplemented by (their) insights as activist researchers who were involved with the squat from its outset”. Thus, in 21 articles out of 25, there is no reference to the scholarship on the interview method. Even though not citing methodology literature does not necessarily imply improper use of methods, considering the other findings of this article, it is strongly recommended that practitioners of the interview method engage more with the related methodology literature on the interview method. This would (i) make the application of the method more rigorous, and (ii) be instructive for early-stage researchers who are planning to use the interview method in their own research.
- 2) The use of the “interview methods table” is strongly recommended: Bleich and Pekkanen (2013) suggest the use of what they call “interview methods table” by creating “guidelines that will increase the rigor and transparency of the interviewing process and therefore enhance readers’ confidence in interview data” (Bleich and Pekkanen, 2013, p. 84). As examined in the current study, many articles drawing on the interview method in their elaborations on state capitalism do not provide detailed information regarding the execution of the interview technique. Only four articles out of 25 talks about the length of interviews; only four articles give information on the recording method; only in ten articles the structure of interviews are highlighted; only in 11 articles the exact number of interviewees are given; in eight articles the purpose of interviews are not clearly stated; and in two articles information about interview dates are not provided (Figure 2). All this essential information regarding the execution of the interview method can be provided clearly, systematically, and transparently in an “interview methods table”. In fact, two articles on state capitalism provide such tables, although they are not as comprehensive as the one that Bleich and Pekkanen (2013) suggest (Table 3). While Peng (2021, p. 450) gives information only on nationality, job titles, and total number of interviewees (Table 1), Liu and Lim (2022, p. 4) provide more information on the details (Table 2).

Table 1

“List of interviewees by nationality and job titles”

| Nationality | Job titles | Total number |
|-------------|--|--------------|
| Chinese | Managers, vice managers, heads of department | 4 |
| | Engineers, interpreters, construction workers | 16 |
| Ecuadorian | Managers, vice managers, heads of department | 3 |
| | Engineers, human resources staff, construction workers | 15 |

Source: Directly taken from Peng (2021, p. 450).

Table 2
“Interview and fieldwork information”

| Interviewees/ Respondents | Mode/ Location | Date | Topics discussed | | |
|--|---------------------------------|----------------------|---|---|----------------------------------|
| | | | Development of the Chinese economy and its impact on Southeast Asia | Evolution of the Chinese railway industry | Indonesian infrastructure trends |
| A European banking executive | Interview/ Beijing | 12 September 2017 | Yes | Yes | Minimal |
| Two business executives and nine think tank analysts | Interview/ Beijing | 18–20 September 2017 | Yes | Yes | Minimal |
| Three academic researchers, a business executive, and four think tank analysts | Interview/ Jakarta | 22–24 March 2018 | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Various participants | Public forum/ Singapore | 17 January 2019 | Yes | Yes | Minimal |
| Various participants | Public forum/ Singapore | 10 May 2019 | Yes | Yes | Minimal |
| An academic researcher | Telephone Interview/ Jakarta | 18 May 2019 | Yes | Yes | Yes |

Source: Directly taken from Liu and Lim (2022, p. 4).

Although the content and details may vary depending on the research, the use of the interview methods table would make the application of the interview method more transparent. Table 3 shows the table that Bleich and Pekkanen (2013, p. 99) suggest.

Table 3
“Interview methods table”

| INTERVIEWEE | STATUS | SOURCE | SATURATION | FORMAT | LENGTH | RECORDING | TRANSCRIPT |
|-----------------------|---|---|------------|-----------------|--------------|---|---------------------------|
| Category 1 | | | Yes | | | | |
| CDU politician | Conducted in person 4/22/2004 | Sample frame | | Semi-structured | 45 mins | Concurrent notes & supplementary notes w/i 1 hr | Confidentiality requested |
| SPD politician Hart | Conducted in person 4/22/2004 | Sample frame and referred by CDU politician | | Semi-structured | 1 hr | Audio recording | Transcript posted |
| Green politician | Conducted in person 4/23/2004 | Sample frame | | Semi-structured | 45 mins | Concurrent notes and supplementary notes w/i 1 hr | Confidentiality requested |
| FDP politician Weiss | Refused 2/18/2004 | Sample frame | | | | | |
| Die Linke politician | No response | Sample frame | | | | | |
| SPD politician's aide | Conducted in person 4/26/2004 | Referred by SPD politician Hart | | Semi-structured | 1 hr 15 mins | Audio recording | Confidentiality required |
| Category 2 | | | No | | | | |
| REP politician | No response | Sample frame | | | | | |
| DVU politician | No response | Sample frame | | | | | |
| NPD politician | Accepted 3/16/2004; then declined 4/20/2004 | Sample frame | | | | | |
| NPD lawyer | Declined 4/20/2004 | Sample frame | | | | | |

Source: Directly taken from Bleich and Pekkanen (2013, p. 99).

- 3) Detailed discussion on saturation is certainly required: As noted, seven out of 25 articles provide information on the selection procedure of the interviewees. Six of them use the snowball sampling technique. However, the issue of saturation is not explicitly discussed in almost all articles on state capitalism, which is especially crucial to highlight. Bleich and Pekkanen (2013, p. 91) rightly underline, “what is most useful (...) is not simply reporting that the researcher engaged in snowball sampling. Rather, the crucial element is reaching the point of saturation in the interview process. At saturation, each new interview within and across networks reveals no new information about a political or policymaking process”. This information should be provided in studies drawing on the

interview method. Furthermore, detailed information should also be provided because “in the case of research primarily based on interview data the selection of interviewees decides (whose) worldviews, opinions, and interests will be taken into account—and who’s will be ignored and excluded!” (Diefenbach, 2009, p. 880).

In many studies on state capitalism, phrases like the following are used: “evidence we have obtained during interviews”, “the interviewees spoke of”, “(author interviews)”, “interview evidence suggests that”, etc. A generalization and an argument are thus made based on interview data. However, how many interviewees made the claim in question? Is saturation reached? These are crucial questions that need to be addressed explicitly if the application of the interview method is to be rigorous. In fact, Bleich and Pekkanen (2013) suggest providing this information in the interview methods table (Table 3).

One example from a study on Turkey’s state-led developmentalism would illustrate this point. In their study, Erdogdu (1999) explores the importance of states’ developmental capacity in fostering economic development by comparing Turkey with South Korea. The author also uses the interview method while making their own arguments. Erdogdu (1999, p. 317) reports, for instance, “overwhelming majority of respondent workers interviewed (96.1 percent at Ford Otosan and 94.0 at Tofas) stated that if new machinery were installed, they would like to have training to operate the machine”. This kind of information is quite valuable for readers –for them to have more information on saturation and data analysis.

Finally, 19 out of 25 articles provide direct quotes from their interview data to demonstrate participants’ own expressions and support their arguments. This is quite welcoming since “quotations can bring content to life” (Eldh et al., 2020, p. 2), provided that attention is paid to saturation and other scientific principles (Eldh et al. 2020). The remaining six articles elaborate on interview evidence without providing direct quotes. A suggestion, in this context, would be to use direct quotes from the interview data by also paying attention to methodological concerns such as saturation.⁷

Concluding Remarks

The interview method is frequently used in social sciences. Interviews are particularly important for IPE scholars whose aim is to analyze various aspects of state-society relationships and decision-making processes. While a growing number of studies draw on the interview method in their analyses, there is also a growing number of works on methodological issues related to the use of the interview method. In this study, how the interview method is applied in state capitalism literature is systematically explored.

The article has emphasized that practitioners of the interview method have rarely been in dialogue with the related methodology literature. Only in four articles (out of 25) the relevant methodology literature on the interview method is cited. Not referring to studies on the interview method does not imply that the method is used inadequately. However, it still demonstrates the empirical-methodological disconnect. Furthermore, even though studies on state capitalism have raised relevant and crucial questions, generated intriguing debates, and offered valuable contributions to the scholarship, how the interview method is used to support main analyses and drive arguments have not been generally clear. As elaborated on in the article, only four articles (out of 25) give information on the length of interviews; only four articles talk about the recording method; only in ten articles the structure of the interviews are highlighted (semi-structured, structured, etc.); only in 11 articles the exact number of interviewees are given; the purpose of interviews are not clearly stated in eight articles; and there is no information on interview dates in two articles.

⁷ I would like to thank an anonymous referee of *Anadolu University Journal of Social Sciences* for raising the important issue of quotations.

Thus, this article suggests, engaging in dialogue with the literature on the interview method would be useful in more explicitly and systematically describing (i) the execution of the method (date, length, mode, etc.), (ii) elaboration of saturation, and (iii) how the interview data are analyzed and presented to the readers. There is especially room for systematic coding of interview data, using software in data analysis, and using direct quotes from interview data –provided that methodological concerns such as saturation are addressed.

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Genişletilmiş Özet

Amaç

Özellikle 2008 küresel ekonomik krizinden sonra serbest piyasa temalı kalkınma stratejileri öneren neoliberal bakış açısının küresel olarak daha ciddi bir şekilde sorgulanmaya başlanması ile birlikte devlet-odaklı kalkınmacılığı savunan yaklaşımlar daha fazla tartışılır hale gelmiştir. Çin'in devlet-odaklı kalkınmacılığı dikkat çekici bir şekilde uygulaması da bu hususta önemli olmuştur. Devlet kapitalizmi yazını bu gelişmelerle birlikte son on yılda daha da çeşitlenmiştir. Mevcut çalışmanın amacı, devlet kapitalizmi konusunu uluslararası ekonomi politik çerçevesi ile analiz eden yazında görüşme yönteminin nasıl kullanıldığını sistemli bir şekilde araştırarak tespitlerde ve önermelerde bulunmaktır.

Tasarım ve Yöntem

Mevcut makale, devlet kapitalizmi yazınında görüşme yönteminin nasıl uygulandığını araştırırken şu adımları izlemektedir. Öncelikle, devlet kapitalizmi konusunu irdeleyen çalışmalara sistemli bir şekilde ulaşabilmek için *ISI Web of Science (WoS)* veri tabanı kullanılarak bir anahtar kelime taraması gerçekleştirilmiştir. *WoS* veri tabanı iki sebepten dolayı tercih edilmiştir. Birincisi, *WoS*, belirli bir yazındaki trendleri ve gelişmeleri

araştırmayı amaçlayan çalışmalarda yaygın olarak kullanılan bir veri tabanıdır. İkincisi, metodolojik açıdan daha iddialı ve titiz çalışmalar genellikle SSCI dergilerini hedeflemektedir. Buna göre, araştırma için ilk örnekleme oluşturan 231 makale şu arama kriterleri ile tespit edilmiştir: TÜM ALANLAR: “devlet kapitalizmi” (başlık, öz, anahtar kelimeler, vd.); YAYIN YILI: Tüm yıllar; DOKÜMAN TÜRÜ: Makale; DİL: İngilizce; KATEGORİ: Siyaset Bilimi, Kamu Yönetimi, Ekonomi, Uluslararası İlişkiler, Sosyoloji. Sadece WoS Siyaset Bilimi, Kamu Yönetimi, Ekonomi, Uluslararası İlişkiler ve Sosyoloji kategorilerinde yer alan makaleler kapsama alınmıştır (En üst kategoriler arasında yer aldıkları ve çalışmanın amacının devlet kapitalizmini uluslararası ekonomi politik çerçevesinden değerlendirmek olduğu için).

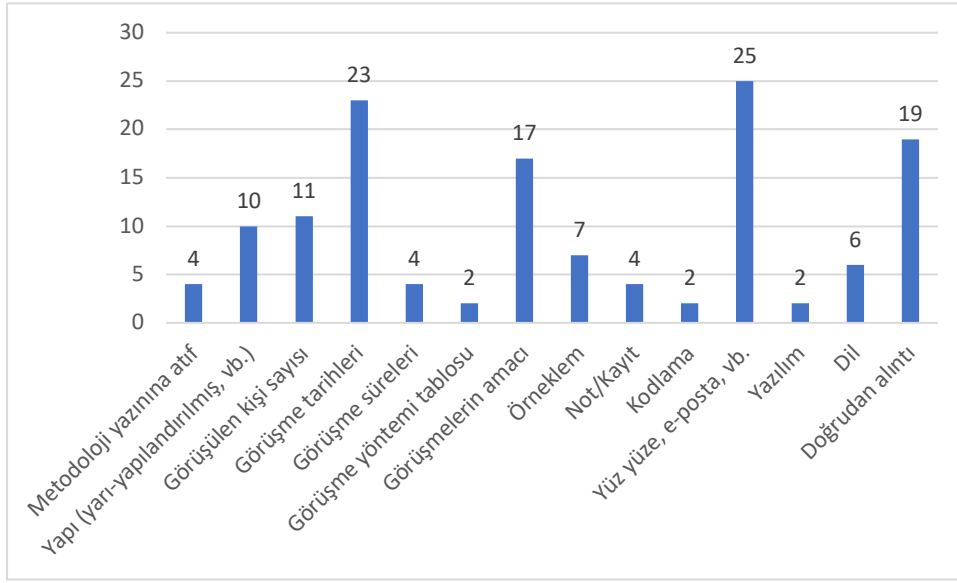
231 makaleden oluşan ilk örnekleme oluşturulduktan sonra 54 tanesi örneklemden çıkarılmıştır. Bunlardan 45 tanesi ilk aramada makale olarak sınıflandırılmasına rağmen dergi makalesi olmadığı için, sekiz tanesi konuyla ilgisiz olduğu için ve bir makaleye erişilemedi için örneklemden çıkarılmıştır. Ardından, geriye kalan 177 makale, görüşme yöntemini kullanıp kullanmadıklarını tespit etmek için gözden geçirilmiştir. 177 makaleden 25’inin (%14,1) analizlerinde görüşme yönteminden yararlandığı görülmüştür. Bu kapsamda 2006, 2015, 2017, 2018 ve 2019 yıllarında sadece birer makale yayınlanırken bu sayı 2020 için üç, 2016 için dört, 2021 için altı ve 2022 için yedi olmuştur. Son olarak, görüşme yönteminin devlet kapitalizmi yazınında kullanımını kapsamlı bir şekilde analiz etmek için bu 25 makale kodlanmıştır. Aşağıdaki sorular kodlama yoluyla sistematik olarak cevaplanmaya çalışılmıştır:

- 1) Makale, görüşme yöntemiyle ilgili yazına atıfta bulunmakta mıdır?
- 2) Makale, görüşmelerin yapısını (yarı-yapılandırılmış, yapılandırılmamış vb.) hakkında açıkça bilgi vermekte midir? Evet ise, hangi yapı tercih edilmiştir?
- 3) Kaç kişi ile görüşüldüğü net olarak belirtilmiş midir? Evet ise, kaç görüşme yapılmıştır?
- 4) Görüşmelerin tarihi, süresi ve şekli (yüz yüze, e-posta, telefon vb.) hakkında bilgi verilmiş midir?
- 5) Makalede “görüşme yöntemleri tablosu” kullanılmış mıdır?
- 6) Makale, görüşmelerin amacını açıkça belirtmekte midir?
- 7) Makale, örneklemin nasıl oluşturulduğunu açıkça detaylandırmakta mıdır? (Liste, kartopu vb.)
- 8) Veri toplama (not alma, kaydetme) konusunda bilgi verilmiş midir?
- 9) Görüşmelerin kodlanıp kodlanmadığına veya verilerin nasıl analiz edildiğine dair herhangi bir bilgi verilmiş midir?
- 10) Görüşme verisinden doğrudan alıntılar yapılmış mıdır? Yoksa görüşme verileri sadece özetlenmiş ve değerlendirilmiş midir? Doygunluk ile ilgili bir inceleme yapılmış mıdır?
- 11) Görüşme verilerinin analizinde herhangi bir yazılım kullanılmış mıdır? Veriler nasıl analiz edilmiştir?
- 12) Makale, görüşmelerin diliyle ilgili metodolojik konuları detaylandırmakta mıdır?

Bulgular

Şekil 1, kodlama sürecinin ana bulgularını göstermektedir. Öncelikle, devlet kapitalizmini uluslararası ekonomi politik çerçevesi ile inceleyen tüm çalışmalarda, görüşme şekli hakkında bilgi verilmiştir. Hemen hemen tüm makalelerde (25 makalenin 23’ü) görüşme tarihlerine ilişkin bilgilerin verildiği görülmektedir. Bu bilgi ya (i) alan çalışmasının zaman aralığı belirtilirken makalelerin başında, (ii) görüşme kanıtlarına dayanan her argümandan sonra metin içerisinde veya (iii) her iki şekilde de aynı anda verilmektedir. Ancak iki makalede mülakat tarihlerine ilişkin bilgi verilmemektedir. Görüşmelerin amacı 25 makalenin 17’sinde detaylandırılmıştır. 25 makalenin sadece 11 tanesinde görüşülen kişi sayısı tam olarak verilmiştir. Yedi makalede bilgi verilmezken, yedi tanesinde yaklaşık sayı verilmiştir. 25 makaleden 10’u yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmeler gerçekleştirdiklerini açıkça belirtmiştir. Her ne kadar ayrıntılar formatı yarı yapılandırılmış olarak işaret etse de 11 makalede görüşmelerin formatı hakkında açık bir bilgi yoktur. 25 makaleden sadece yedisinde

görüşülen kişilerin seçim prosedürü detaylandırılmıştır. Altı tanesinde kartopu örneklem tekniğinin kullanımı vurgulanmıştır. Altı makalede görüşmelerin dili hakkında bilgi verilmektedir.



Şekil 1. Devlet Kapitalizmi Yazınında Görüşme Yönteminin Kullanımı

Sınırlılıklar

Mevcut çalışma en az iki farklı yönden geliştirilebilir. Birincisi, farklı veri tabanları kullanılarak ve makale dışındaki çalışmalar da örnekleme eklenerek çalışmanın kapsamı genişletilebilir. Bu durumda mevcut çalışmanın tespit ettiği hususların ötesinde farklı noktalarda da tavsiyelerde bulunulabilir. İkincisi, devlet kapitalizmi kapsamında gerçekleştirilen bu çalışma uluslararası ekonomi politik alanının diğer yazınları için de gerçekleştirilebilir. Böylelikle görüşme yönteminin bu alanda nasıl kullanıldığı üzerine daha genel tespitlerde bulunulabilir.

Öneriler

Görüşme yöntemini kullanarak devlet kapitalizmini inceleyen çalışmalar için üç temel öneride bulunulabilir. Birincisi, görüşme yöntemiyle ilgili metodoloji yazını ile daha fazla konuşulmalıdır. 25 makaleden sadece dördü görüşme yöntemiyle ilgili metodoloji yazınına atıfta bulunmaktadır. Metodoloji yazınına gönderme yapmamak yöntemlerin gerektiği gibi kullanılmadığı anlamına gelmese de mevcut çalışmanın bulguları dikkate alındığında, görüşme yönteminin uygulayıcılarının görüşme yöntemiyle ilgili metodoloji yazınıyla daha fazla konuşmaları tavsiye edilmektedir. Bu sadece yöntemin uygulanışını daha titiz kılmakla kalmayacak, aynı zamanda kendi araştırmalarında görüşme yöntemini kullanmayı planlayan araştırmacılar için de öğretici olacaktır.

İkinci olarak, “görüşme yöntemleri tablosu”nun kullanılması tavsiye edilmektedir. 25 makaleden sadece dördünün görüşmelerin uzunluğu hakkında bilgi verdiği, sadece dört makalenin kayıt yöntemi hakkında ifadelerde bulunduğu, sadece 10 makalede görüşmenin yapısının vurgulandığı ve sadece 11 makalede görüşülen kişi sayısının tam olarak verildiği görülmektedir. Sekiz makalede görüşmelerin sayısı net olarak belirtilmemiş ve iki makalede görüşme tarihlerine ilişkin bilgi verilmemiştir. Görüşme yönteminin uygulanmasına ilişkin tüm bu temel bilgiler, görüşme yöntemleri tablosunda açık, sistematik ve şeffaf bir şekilde sunulabilir. Doygunluk (*saturation*) hakkında da ayrıntılı bilgi kesinlikle verilmelidir.

Son olarak, 25 makaleden 19'u katılımcıların kendi ifadelerini göstermek ve argümanını desteklemek için görüşme verilerinden yararlanmaktadır. Bu memnun edici bir durumdur çünkü analizler alıntılarla birlikte zenginleşmektedir (Eldh et al., 2020, p. 2). Fakat bu noktada da doygunluk gibi metodolojik hususlara dikkat edilmelidir (Eldh et al. 2020). Diğer altı makalede mülakat verisi doğrudan alıntılar kullanılmadan okuyucular ile paylaşılmıştır. Bu bağlamdaki bir öneri doygunluk gibi metodolojik kaygılara da dikkat edilerek görüşme verilerinden doğrudan alıntılar yapılması olacaktır.

Özgün Değer

Sonuç olarak, mevcut çalışma devlet kapitalizmi kavramını uluslararası ekonomi politik bakış açısı ile analiz eden ve aynı zamanda görüşme yönteminden de faydalanan çalışmalara odaklanarak, görüşme yönteminin uygulanışı hakkında tespitlerde ve önerilerde bulunmaktadır. Böylelikle hem devlet kapitalizmi yazınına hem de görüşme yöntemi ile ilgili yazına katkı sunmaktadır.

Araştırmacı Katkısı: Hüseyin Emrah KARAOĞUZ (%100).