



Developing an Evidenced-Based Approach to Enhance the Collection of  
Intelligence from Covert Human Intelligence Sources

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## **Declaration**

Whilst registered as a candidate for the above degree, I have not been registered for any other research award. The results and conclusions embodied in this thesis are the work of the named candidate and have not been submitted for any other academic award.

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## General Abstract

Law Enforcement Agencies gather intelligence in order to prevent criminal activity and pursue criminals. In the context of Human Intelligence (HUMINT) collection, Covert Human Intelligence Sources (CHIS) provide unique access to criminals and organised crime groups, and their collection of intelligence is vital to understanding England and Wales' threat picture. However, the elicitation of detailed, accurate, reliable and timely intelligence relies heavily upon the deployment of evidence-based interviewing processes. Therefore, to develop an evidence-base for source handler and CHIS interactions, the present Thesis undertook 5 studies. Study 1 consisted of structured interviews with police source handlers. Rapport was perceived as essential for intelligence elicitation, supported by a range of rapport strategies, with the majority of participants believing that rapport could be trained to some degree. Study 2 comprised source handlers' perceptions of the interviewing processes employed with informants. Five themes emerged from the interviews, (i) a comparison between interviewing and debriefing; (ii) the PEACE model in intelligence interviews; (iii) the importance of effective communication; (iv) Source Handlers' use of cognitive retrieval techniques; and, (v) Source Handler interview training. Study 3 examined the impact of a context tasking instruction on intentional memory with mock informants across three conditions: (i) *incidental encoding*, (ii) *intentional encoding* or (iii) *intentional encoding with tasking instruction*, performing a free recall and prompted recall. Results showed that the *intentional encoding with tasking instruction* condition reported more correct information during the free recall phase compared to those in the *incidental encoding* condition. A significant increase in incorrect information was reported with the tasking instruction, but at no cost to the overall percentage accuracy. The free recall phase resulted in more accurate recall than the prompts phase. Study 4

gained unprecedented access to real-life audio recorded telephone interactions between police source handlers and CHIS, exploring the impact of rapport on intelligence yield. *Overall rapport, attention and coordination* significantly correlated with intelligence yield, while *positivity* did not. *Attention* was the most frequently used component of rapport, followed by *positivity*, and then *coordination*. Study 5 explored the impact of question types on intelligence yield used by source handlers during telephone interactions with CHIS. Source handlers were found to utilise vastly more *appropriate* questions than *inappropriate* questions, though they rarely used *open-ended* questions. Across the total interactions, *appropriate* questions were associated with gathering the majority of the total intelligence yield. Taken together, an evidenced-based approach shall advance source handler and CHIS intelligence interactions, and information gathering approaches more broadly.

## **Dissemination**

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## Abbreviations

ACPO	Association of Chief Police Officers
ANOVA	Analysis of Variance
CHIS	Covert Human Intelligence Source
CI	Cognitive Interview
CM	Conversation Management
CoP	College of Policing
DSU	Dedicated Source Unit
EBP	Evidenced-Based Policing
HRA	Human Rights Act
HUMINT	Human Intelligence
ICC	Intra-Class Correlation
ILP	Intelligence-Led Policing
IPRC	Intelligence Practice Research Consortium
IY	Intelligence Yield
KPM	Kent Policing Model
LEA	Law Enforcement Agency
MANOVA	Multivariate Analysis of Variance
NIM	National Intelligence Model
NPCC	National Police Chiefs' Council
NSPCC	National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children
PEACE	Planning and Preparation; Engage and Explain; Account; Closure; and Evaluation
SEBP	Society of Evidence-Based Policing

## Chapter 1: Thesis Introduction

### 1.1. General Introduction

The effective discovery and subsequent mitigation of both criminal threat and harm to individuals and the wider society is grounded on accurate, timely and detailed actionable information (Grieve, 2004). Information, a vital element within intelligence and investigation, ensures the appropriate judicial disposal in Law Enforcement Agency's (LEA) efforts to bring offenders to justice. Therefore, in the context of intelligence practices, evidenced-based approaches to eliciting information in both formal and informal interactions, offer a significant opportunity to elicit critical strategic and tactical information that both informs and drives LEA activity. It is unexpected then, that within the context of information collection, not only are human interactions between LEA and members of the public under-exploited, but also, when the intention is to collect information, how unsatisfactorily it is approached and executed (Stanier & Nunan, 2018<sup>1</sup>). The required elicitation skills comprising of rapport-building, an understanding of memory, and *appropriate* questioning are not sufficiently taught (Stanier & Nunan, 2018). Further still, the governing policy remains overly cautious, with policy development drawn from a negligible and outdated evidence base.

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<sup>1</sup> Sections of this chapter are published in Stanier, I. P., & Nunan, J. (2018). Reframing Intelligence Interviews: The Applicability of Psychological Research to HUMINT Elicitation. In A. Griffiths, & R. Milne (Eds.), *The Psychology of Criminal Investigation: From Theory to Practice* (pp. 226-248). London: Routledge.

This thesis aimed to develop an evidence-base concerning the collection intelligence from Covert Human Intelligence Sources (CHIS). Therefore, five research studies were undertaken to achieve three research objectives: (i) understand how the practitioners (i.e., Source Handlers) perceived and experienced intelligence gathering interactions with CHIS; (ii) explore how memory encoding and tasking a CHIS impacted on memory recall; and (iii) investigated the impact of rapport-building and questions types on intelligence elicitation from real-world interactions between Source Handlers and CHIS. Whilst this thesis focused on the psychological aspects for intelligence collection from interactions between Source Handlers and informants (i.e., Covert Human Intelligence Sources; CHIS), the underlying psychological principles of conducting an effective *intelligence interview* are relevant to a wider law enforcement audience.

This chapter comprises five introductory segments. First, what constitutes *intelligence* is explored in relation to its raw product, *information*. Second, in light of *reactive* and *proactive* paradigms, a historical overview of the policing models is discussed leading to the rise of Intelligence-Led Policing. Third, the legislative framework, definition and value of Covert Human Intelligence Sources are introduced. Fourth, the emergence of Evidence-Based Policing and the lack of research concerning the elicitation of human intelligence within policing is highlighted. Finally, the facilitation of eliciting intelligence is discussed with regard to three keys areas of psychological research, namely, rapport, memory and questioning.

## 1.2. What is Intelligence?

What is meant by *intelligence* is, perhaps, the most important element in determining the success of elicitation techniques. Interpreting and measuring the effectiveness of these techniques requires common agreement on what actually constitutes *information* and *intelligence*. Grasping what each LEA understands by intelligence is important, as this will determine the direction of the interaction, how the approach is implemented, what is elicited, recorded, and subsequently made available for sharing (Stanier & Nunan, 2018).

Lowenthal (2009, p. 1) holds “information is anything that can be known, regardless of how it’s discovered. Intelligence refers to information that meets the stated or understood needs of policy makers and has been collected, processed, and narrowed to meet those needs.” Here, intelligence is described as a sub-set of information but stated that while “all intelligence is information; not all information is intelligence” (Lowenthal, 2009, p. 1). This definition is useful in acknowledging that potentially all information may, depending on the context, become intelligence. For example, a telephone book comprises information, but if it contains the address of a wanted person then the telephone entry under that person’s name may become intelligence. This does not mean, though, that the whole telephone book becomes intelligence.

The majority of intelligence gathering interactions with human sources provide, to some degree, valuable information (Stanier & Nunan, 2018). The human source may reveal personal characteristics, habits, interests, potential indicators of future criminal intent, cooperative states, social and criminal history, or indicators for opportunistic rapport building. There is an organisational expectation that what determines the intelligence value of information, is how the information is

operationally exploited. In this vein, “intelligence is information designed for action” (Grieve, 2004, p. 25) and for the purpose of this thesis, the adopted working definition, developed from Brown (2007, p. 340), is that intelligence is “all information which is significant, or potentially significant, for a police activity, or potential action.” In effect, this definition holds that, intelligence is simply information, though it is the use to which it is subsequently put that determines its significance. How this is best obtained in LEA intelligence interviews, both formally and informally, relies on a better understanding and application of psychological based research.

### **1.3. Intelligence-Led Policing**

Models of policing tend to fit within one of two paradigms, *reactive* and *proactive*. Throughout the past few decades, England and Wales has experienced numerous variations of policing models within these paradigms, ranging from Community Policing (Alderson, 1979; Ericson, 1992; Trajanowicz & Bucqueroux, 1990), Problem Orientated Policing (Goldstein, 1979, 1990; Lewis, 2011), Reassurance Policing (Bullock, 2010; Tainton, 2010), Neighbourhood Policing (Bullock, 2010; Innes, 2005), Total Policing (James, 2013), through to Intelligence-Led Policing (hereafter, ILP) (John & Maguire, 2004; Ratcliffe, 2008). Many share the same elements, including the use of intelligence, but it is the weight given to these elements that ultimately determines the model of policing. The *reactive* policing paradigm signifies the traditional police investigation, whereby the objective is to bring offenders to justice as a consequence of past criminal behaviour (Innes & Sheptycki, 2004). This *fire brigade* style of policing places primacy on a rapid response to reported crimes and represents the popular understanding of police work (James, 2017).

In contrast, *proactive* investigative methods are consistent with an intelligence-led approach, utilising the deployment of covert sources, to establish the future intentions of a criminal or organised crime group (Clark, 2007; Maguire & John, 1996). *Proactive* policing is not a new concept to England and Wales, as the *Bow Street Runners* (established in 1749, utilised methods of *proactive* detection, which were quickly adopted in 1829 when the *new police* (i.e., the Metropolitan Police) was established (Chappell, 2015). Such methods included the use of disguises and informants that have been employed across the globe for many years (James, 2017), with the aim to prevent criminal activity, or at least disrupt and reduce harm when it does occur (Innes & Sheptycki, 2004). Although acknowledged as two distinct policing paradigms, *proactive* policing realistically only supplements rather than replaces the traditional *reactive* paradigm, despite the efforts of the ILP model in trying to maximise *proactive* methods (James, 2013; Reiner, 2010).

ILP is used to reduce crime and disorder, prevent and disrupt terrorist attacks and to tackle serious organised crime, by placing an emphasis on *proactive* rather than *reactive* methods. ILP endorses the *proactive* policing paradigm (James, 2017), as an emphasis is placed on analysis and intelligence as vital elements to objective decision-making that prioritises prolific offenders, repeat victims, crime hotspots, and gangs. It also facilitates crime prevention and harm reduction through *proactive* deployment (Ratcliffe, 2016). This may be further explained by the diverse activities that ILP has incorporated across England and Wales, namely, crime mapping, social network analysis, crime pattern analysis, and covert methods such as undercover police officers and the use of informants (Chappell, 2015; James, 2017). While the roots of ILP can be traced back to the establishment of the *new police* in 1829 (Emsley, 2012), the roots of law enforcement intelligence can be traced back further still. As a product of

military and national security intelligence, references to military intelligence are present in ancient China, with writings such as Sun Tzu (2014). Additionally, current methods of LEA covert methods have developed out of military practices, especially the collection of Human Intelligence (HUMINT) (Peterson, 2005).

In 1883, the Metropolitan Police Special Branch was established, creating one of the first intelligence units. This developed to a position where there was a Special Branch capability nationwide by the 1960's (Stanier, 2013). In the modern era of policing, it may be argued that the foundation for ILP was extended by the introduction of Unit Beat Policing in 1967, which relied on community engagement in order to establish localised intelligence (James, 2013). However, it was not until the early 1990's that the ILP model was comprehensively adopted as the dominant policing model with the introduction of the Kent Policing Model (KPM). The adoption of ILP fully committed the force to intelligence-led practices that drove police action, such as police patrols informed by intelligence analysis which determined the greatest policing needs (Tilley, 2008).

Sir David Phillips, the then chief officer of Kent's police service, was determined to break the "vicious circle of reactive policing" (Audit Commission, 1993, p. 40). Moreover, the KPM prioritised calls and referred less serious calls to non-police services, enabling more time for intelligence units to undertake *proactive* duties. Although the KPM resulted in a 24% drop in crime over a 3-year period (Peterson, 2005), its life was short lived. Local stakeholders and the community complaints reached such a volume that their needs were neglected (i.e., behaviours associated with anti-social behaviour), Kent's police service was thus obliged to return to its old ways, by resuming town centre patrols, despite the lack of intelligence to support such police activity (James, 2017).

The prospect for ILP was looking bleak. With the KPM dropped, and the extent of the KPM's level of success undermined by the fact that it was never independently assessed (Amey et al., 1996; James, 2013), ILP required an injection of support. Such support was drawn from a number of sources. Firstly, the *Helping with Enquires* report (Audit Commission, 1993) provided a wealth of data in support of *proactive* policing, by evidencing the cost effectiveness of intelligence-led tactics to prevent crime and identify offenders (Stanier, 2013). Secondly, the *Policing with Intelligence* report (HMIC, 1997) began to further influence the adoption of intelligence-led methodologies (Chappell, 2015). Finally, the passing of the Police Reform Act 2002 introduced the statutory requirement for compliance with the National Intelligence Model (NIM) (ACPO, 2005; National Centre for Policing Excellence, 2005). Furthermore, Stanier (2013) noted that while the following reports were commissioned independently of one another, *Baumber* (ACPO, 1975), *Pearce* (ACPO, 1978), *Ratcliffe* (ACPO, 1986), and *Dickens* (ACPO, 1990) provided the basis for the emergence of the NIM. The NIM provided a framework for ILP, with its business approach recognising that information is central to policing. It therefore sought to professionalise and standardise law enforcement information and intelligence activities across all levels of policing, from minor offences to serious and organised crime and terrorism (ACPO, 2007; Chappell, 2015). At present, ILP appears to have reached its pinnacle with the NIM, especially in relation to revolutionising intelligence work across mainstream policing (see James, 2013, 2017 for an extended discussion on the future of ILP).

Research on both *reactive* and *proactive* policing has consistently reported that the quality and quantity of information provided by members of the public to the police is one of the most important influencing factors of investigative success (Ericson,



1993; Chaiken, Greenwood, & Petersilia, 1977; Innes, 2003; Chappell, 2015; James, 2013, 2017; Stanier, 2013). Information gathering, and consequently the collection of intelligence, is one way of strengthening the *proactive* approach to policing (Byman, 2014). Amongst the variety of overt and covert capabilities that LEAs can use to collect intelligence (Chappell, 2015), one of the collection capabilities is HUMINT. HUMINT is the discipline charged with eliciting intelligence through interactions with human sources, such as CHIS.

#### **1.4. Covert Human Intelligence Sources**

Within the intelligence literature, a number of terms are used interchangeably for an *informant*, such as spy, agent, undercover operative, confidential sources, community source or informers. Inconsistency in terminology not only causes confusion in analysis, it also weakens the efforts to instigate comparative research and essential debate. However, since the enactment of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (hereafter RIPA), the interchangeable terms used for an informant no longer accurately reflected law, policy or practice of England and Wales. For 20 years in England and Wales, the term informant had been specifically defined by section 26(8) RIPA as a Covert Human Intelligence Source when an individual:

- (a) establishes or maintains a personal or other relationship with a person for the covert purpose of facilitating the doing of anything falling within paragraph (b) or (c);
- (b) covertly uses such a relationship to obtain information or to provide access to any information to another person; or
- (c) covertly discloses information obtained by the use of such a relationship, or as a consequence of the existence of such a relationship.

The CHIS definition includes both those traditionally considered criminal informants and those colloquially known as *spies* or as RIPA defines them, *agents*. In England and Wales, even with the legal incorporation of both the term *informant* and *agent*, the *informant-agent* distinction has proved to be somewhat of a false dichotomy. In practice, the status and actions of both are legally identical. Traditional informants may receive regular payments or salaries (retainers), they can come from both criminal and professional backgrounds, and may also have no previous criminal convictions. CHIS can, and do, operate long-term, infiltrating both criminal and terrorist networks. Additionally, CHIS, especially those involved in reporting on terrorism, public order and serious organised crime can operate abroad (Home Office, 2018). Like *agents*, they are controlled and directed by their *Handlers* or, in Intelligence Agency parlance, *Case Officers*.

As a consequence of RIPA, the police service was obliged to completely overhaul its intelligence-gathering processes in response to the new challenges of RIPA compliance; in the process, bringing much greater transparency and accountability to those activities (James, 2013). Therefore, within LEA's, CHIS are managed within Dedicated Source Units (DSU) and interact with police officers known as *Source Handlers*. DSUs are responsible for the day-to-day management of CHIS, comprising Source Handlers, overseen by Controllers, and led by an Authorising Officer, who is responsible for formally authorising an individual to become a CHIS.

Rather than prohibiting particular conduct, RIPA is a permissive legislative Act of Parliament that regulates what actions LEAs should perform, concerning communications data, the interception of communications, directed and intrusive surveillance, and of particular relevance, CHIS (Akdeniz, Taylor, & Walker, 2001).

The deployment of these investigatory powers will conflict with the Human Rights Act 1998 (HRA), specifically, Article 8 right to privacy. As a consequence, any interference with a Human Right can only be undertaken if it is proportionate, necessary and authorised in accordance with law. In the case of a CHIS this is authorised by an Authorising Officer.

The deployment of a CHIS is likely to conflict with Article 8, as they establish or maintain covert relationships for the purpose of obtaining and disclosing information to a LEA. However, there are a number of grounds which permit a LEA to interfere with an individual's right to respect for private and family life. The LEA must show that its action is proportionate, lawful and necessary to protect national security, public safety, the economy, health or morals, to prevent disorder or crime, or to protect the rights and freedoms of other people.

Action is considered proportionate when it is no more than is necessary to address the problem concerned (Equality and Human Rights, 2018). Although failure to obtain a RIPA authorisation may not automatically be unlawful, it will incite judicial discretion as to whether the evidence gained from such action is admissible in court under section 78 Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (Harfield, 2010). RIPA provides a legislative basis for LEA activity, therefore, without RIPA, covert actions would be susceptible to judicial challenge (Symington, 2016).

The value that CHIS offer law enforcement and intelligence agencies means that they form a key role within the strategic and tactical response to criminality (Stanier & Nunan, 2018). CHIS have contributed intelligence against a vast array of criminality, stretching across both the online and the real world; ILP (James, 2013), robbery (Matthews, 2002), burglary (IPCO, 2019), homicide (ACPO, 2006), firearms (Duquet, 2018), drug supply (Dorn, Murji, & South, 1992; Billingsley, Nemitz, &

Bean, 2001, Newburn & Elliot, 1998), gang offending (Chappell, 2015), human trafficking (IPCO, 2019), child sexual exploitation (Northumbria Police: Operations Sanctuary, BBC, 2018; IPCO, 2019), fraud and tax evasion (HMIC, 2013), prison security (Dunleavy, 2011; IPCO, 2019; Useem & Clayton, 2009), lone actor terrorism (Eby, 2012) and increasingly, in terrorism (Brodeur, 2007; Charters, 2013; DeYoung & Pincus, 2009; Matchett, 2016; Omand, 2007).

Informant use is not without its controversies. The 1960's saw a number of cases where the role of an informant in securing the arrests of offenders was criticised by the Courts (*R v Birtles* [1969] 53 Cr App R 469). *R v Birtles* concerned the use of an informant to encourage another to commit a criminal act (i.e. an agent provocateur). Additionally, the Hoddinott Inquiry into three informants by the Metropolitan Police Service in the 1990's demonstrated the legal and community risks of handling informants who were considered high risk, in an effort to tackle organised crime. The use of such dangerous informants continued as junior officers were left to devise their own tactics without the necessary supervision and control. Corruption and informants was a feature of the Metropolitan Police professional standard investigation during the 1990s during a pre-RIPA period of unregulated informant use. The ethical and legal issues associated with handling informants who were directly involved in terrorism also posed questions for the State. The use of informants who participated in crime, including the Loyalist Ulster Volunteer Force terrorist leader Gary Haggarty and alleged Provisional Irish Republican Army informant Stakeknife.

Post-RIPA controversies also existed regarding the use of informants. Northumbria police's use of a convicted sex offender as an informant, known as XY, generated public debate. While the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) condemned the actions of Northumbria police, chief constable

Steve Ashman, argued that the NSPCC had got its facts wrong and that on the back of the convictions they had secured, it was the right thing to do. The access and relationships some criminals have can far outweigh a general member of the public (Stanier, 2013). Therefore, while considered controversial, the opportunity to secure convictions of an organised child-grooming group, paired with the risk mitigated by a professional DSU, resulted in the successful deployment of an effective informant (i.e. CHIS).

The courage shown by CHIS should not be understated. A decision to become a CHIS may be as life changing as it is with undercover officers (Love, Vinson, Tolsma, & Kaufmann, 2008). The CHIS deployment may require them to lead, what in effect is a double life, tasked to elicit as much intelligence as possible while simultaneously evading suspicion from those they are associating with. As CHIS provide unique access to the activities within organised crime groups or target individuals (Chappell, 2015), it should be of utmost importance that the processes, techniques or approaches used to elicit the intelligence from a CHIS are supported by a research evidence base.

### **1.5. Evidence-Based Policing**

The emergence of Evidence-Based Policing (EBP) in the 1990s stems from the developments within the arena of medicine, whereby the drive was to inform policy with an evidence base (Black, 2001). With policing repeatedly under scrutiny, (e.g., Stephen Lawrence Inquiry, Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Rotherham; and Undercover Policing Inquiry), and at a time when ministers were debating that British public policy required an evidence base, the agenda of EBP began to spread, bringing policing policy and practice into greater discussion. The

government progressed this discussion by introducing an evidence-based defence during the 1998 strategic defence review (Strategic Defence Review, 1998). Sherman et al. (1998) stated that EBP is a method of identifying *what works* within policing, which continuously tests hypotheses with empirical research. To maximise the potential of EBP, the EBP agenda must go beyond *what works*, by placing just as much emphasis on establishing *what does not work* within policing, which in turn can be applied as best practice (Sherman, 2013).

The popularity of the EBP model has gained momentum in recent years, evidently so by the emergence of the Society of Evidence-Based Policing (SEBP) in 2010, the College of Policing (CoP) in 2012, and the efforts of the National Police Chief's Council (NPCC). The NPCC, a rebrand of the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) in 2015, encompasses an abundance of working groups that aim to reinforce the *what works* agenda within policing, as well as working alongside the CoP to develop joint national approaches on topics such as criminal justice, value for money practices, and performance management (see NPCC, 2019).

Despite the snowballing momentum of the EBP model and enthusiasm of the SEBP, the adoption of an evidence-based approach to policing policy and practice development is still relatively embryonic (Sherman & Murray, 2015). This is particularly noticeable within EBP's negligible application within intelligence and covert policing practices. The shortcomings of EBP in developing practices within intelligence may be explained by the following challenges, such as, legal constraints, a failure to recognise that current methods are neither effective or efficient, difficulties in securing access to sensitive data sets, insufficient appropriately vetted researchers, difficulty in comparing datasets due to disparate intelligence data systems, a dearth of

proactive senior manager level EBP champions across intelligence, and minimal CoP commissioned research (Stanier & Nunan, 2018).

In order to progress an EBP agenda within intelligence practices, a strategic policing commitment to ensuring the evidence is applied to practice is required, especially when such evidence challenges the status quo. Furthermore, this progression will require policing leaders to overcome powerful but flawed anecdotal evidence and intuitive decision-making, by defending the application of the empirical research findings to intelligence practices. There are countless areas of future research within this domain of policing. As such, the research in this thesis focused on developing our understanding of intelligence interviews and maximising the outcome of HUMINT interactions, specifically, Source Handlers eliciting intelligence from CHIS.

While there is limited psychological research that is applied to the context of intelligence elicitation, investigative interviewing and evidence collection has experienced quite the opposite. Documents such as the *Memorandum of Good Practice* (Home Office, 1992) and *Achieving Best Evidence* (Ministry of Justice, 2011), exemplify a strive towards EBP, by integrating psychological empirical research into policing guidance. However, it is acknowledged that some of the above challenges for conducting research within intelligence do not apply within the realms of investigative interviewing and evidence collection, which may explain this discrepancy. Nonetheless, intelligence practices are still primarily informed by both anecdotal experience and defensive drafting in response to public, media, and judicial criticism (Stanier & Nunan, 2018). Thus, if the evidence base that has developed within investigative interviewing can be both applied to the context of intelligence

elicitation and inform new research, an EBP model within the intelligence context may be achieved.

The broad discipline of investigative interviewing has attracted extensive academic attention (Clarke & Milne, 2001, 2016; Köhnken, Milne, Memon, & Bull, 1999). Interviewing includes both the *formal* interview often undertaken as evidence gathering as part of a criminal investigation (for example, underpinned in England and Wales by the provisions of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 and its accompanying *Codes of Practice*<sup>2</sup>) and the *informal* interview, with the latter being the focus of this thesis. The *informal* interview includes all interactions between a Source Handlers and a CHIS, but this information is not formally disclosed as part of an investigative interview process. Perhaps understandably due to the lack of research, there is no agreement as to what is meant by *intelligence interviewing*. At its most general level, and for the purpose of this thesis, *interviewing* is used to describe the interaction between a Source Handler (the *interviewer*) and a CHIS (the *interviewee*). In practitioner terms, this comprises intelligence interviews undertaken as part of deliberately planned operational activities.

## **1.6. Facilitating Intelligence Elicitation**

Research funded by the High Value-Detainee Interrogation Group (2016) has provided an impetus to research in this area and demonstrated that there are gains to

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<sup>2</sup> Code of Practice for the detention, treatment and questioning of persons by Police Officers, section 11.1A states that ‘an interview is the questioning of a person regarding their involvement or suspected involvement in a criminal offence or offences which, under paragraph 10.1, must be carried out under caution.’



be made from utilising evidence-based practices in intelligence. Therefore, to effectively apply the psychological research to the collection of HUMINT, with a particular focus on CHIS, one must first appreciate that a CHIS is a type of witness, “albeit a special type of witness, but a witness nonetheless” (Billingsley, Nemitz, & Bean, 2001, p.7). The current thesis developed upon this acknowledgement, by investigating the impact of three key areas applied to the psychological elicitation of intelligence from CHIS, (i) rapport; (ii) memory; and (iii) questioning.

### ***1.6.1. Rapport: Establishing and Maintaining an Intelligence Relationship***

There appears to be a consensus amongst practitioners that rapport is a key factor to the success of information elicitation, stretching across different jurisdictions and interviewing contexts (Russano, Narchet, Kleinman, & Meissner, 2014; Semel, 2012). The PEACE model also promotes information gathering via rapport building, underpinned by psychological theory and research (Walsh & Bull, 2010). Additionally, an exploration of the interrogation techniques utilised by U.S. military and federal-level interrogators revealed that rapport and relationship-building techniques were employed most often and perceived as the most effective regardless of context and intended outcome, particularly compared with confrontational techniques (Redlich, Kelly, & Miller, 2014). Additionally, LEA interviewers reported that building rapport with suspects and witnesses was undertaken in a similar manner, comprising nonverbal (e.g., displaying understanding via empathy and sympathy) and verbal (e.g., discussing common interests via small talk) techniques of rapport (Vallano, Evans, Schreiber Compo, & Kieckhaefer, 2015). The use of rapport building is also considered significant in securing successful disclosure of information from

terrorists in an operational setting (see ORBIT; Alison, Alison, Noone, Elntib, Christiansen, 2013).

In recent years, rapport has received an increase in academic attention (e.g., Collins & Carthy, 2018; Redlick et al., 2014; Russano et al., 2014; Vallano et al., 2015; Walsh & Bull, 2015). Yet, an agreement on what constitutes rapport differs across academic research. Therefore, it is important to firstly acknowledge the underlying principles of rapport that can be applied universally. Tickle-Degnen and Rosenthal (1990) critically discussed rapport as a dynamic structure consisting of three interconnecting components: *mutual attentiveness*, *positivity*, and *coordination*. Their discussion has laid the foundations for contemporary rapport research (see Collins & Carthy, 2018), with Abbe and Brandon (2014) advocating for academics to investigate behaviours of rapport aligned to the three components. It is also acknowledged that rapport must not just be established at the start of an interview, but also be maintained throughout the interview (Walsh & Bull, 2012).

With regards to the collection of HUMINT, rapport can be defined as “developing and maintaining a working relationship with a human source, by managing their motivations and welfare, whilst ensuring they understand the purpose of the relationship in order to secure reliable intelligence” (Stanier & Nunan, 2018, p. 232). This definition is akin to the term *operational accord*, which incorporates but goes beyond rapport, providing an additional explanation of the interviewer-interviewee relationship, by exploring their mutual affinity and level of source conformity (Evans, Meissner, Brandon, Russano, & Kleinman, 2010). The relationship is benefited when the intentions, concerns, and desired outcomes of the interaction are addressed and in agreement (Kleinman, 2006). As such, rapport can

facilitate the establishment of effective professional alliances between a Source Handler and CHIS.

Successful generation of potential new sources primarily relies on the effective sustained application of rapport building techniques. Rapport plays a vital role in the recruitment of CHIS, as well as the longevity of the Source Handler-CHIS relationship. Research suggests that overly formal and officious introductions (i.e., warning about lying and an absence of rapport) generate unfavourable perceptions from witnesses (or in this context CHIS) (MacDonald, Keeping, Snook, & Luther, 2016). Conversely, when successfully applied within the first few minutes, rapport can positively inform the interviewee's first impressions (Zunin & Zunin, 1972).

A humanistic approach to rapport, and psychology more broadly, promotes the importance of autonomy and holding a holistic view of people. It was the influential humanistic psychologist Carl Rogers who revolutionised this psychological paradigm. In contrast to traditional therapeutic approaches, whereby the therapist controlled the session, Rogers believed that an effective therapist-patient relationship should be led by the patient, which overlaps with the investigative interviewing approach of transferring control to the interviewee to reduce anxiety and create an environment that can maximise recall (Memon, Wark, Holley, Bull, & Koehnken, 1997).

For an effective humanistic therapeutic approach, Rogers (1959) argued that three conditions must be met, namely, the therapist was authentic and honest, the client needs to be valued as an individual and the therapist utilises empathy. These three conditions transfer to the source handler and CHIS relationship. Firstly, the source handler must display genuine and honest actions, as a lack of trust will damage the relationship with their CHIS. Secondly, valuing the CHIS with unconditional positive regard means that while the source handler will not approve of their CHIS' behaviour

(i.e. criminality), this should not prevent the source handler from showing care for their CHIS. Finally, the source handler utilises empathy, by communicating that they have understood the discussions with their CHIS is correct on both welfare and intelligence related topics.

Post-event, rapport plays an important role in aiding elicitation. It has long been recognised that effective rapport requires empathy, especially where the information is highly personal. For source handlers, and interviewers more broadly, the ability to understand the emotional expressions of their CHIS and respond appropriately requires an appreciation of empathy. In the therapeutic setting, Rogers (1975) developed upon his own definition of empathy, by acknowledging that empathy is a process. Therefore, Rogers (1975) goes on to define empathy as understanding another's emotions and thoughts while remaining non-judgemental. Empathy encompasses the ability to understand the feelings, intentions, needs and experiences of another person (Risan, Binder, & Milne, 2016). The effective use of empathy makes it possible to show compassion (Binder, 2014). This description makes it clear that being empathic is a complex and demanding process, which is a strong yet subtle and gentle way of being.

Such behaviours associated with empathy include reflective listening, which allows for an expression of empathy by conveying an understanding of a person's experiences and ambivalence about change (Miller & Rollnick, 2013). Versatility is also viewed as a key behaviour, as this allows for a flexible approach in selecting the appropriate response to communicate, manage the relationship and be empathic (Mulqueen et al., 2012). The use of empathy in early interactions can predict the later success amongst therapeutic relationships (Barrett-Lennard, 1962). Additionally, the highest expression of empathy is considered to be accepting and non-judgemental.

This is because if an individual has already formed an opinion of another, it is impossible to be accurately perceptive of their inner world (Rogers, 1975).

Further, simply having a positive and encouraging interviewer was found to elicit more detail from a witness without increasing errors, compared with a neutral or abrupt interviewer (Collins et al., 2002). This is because rapport helps to exercise socially influence and elicit information from a source (Abbe & Brandon, 2013), and can enhance the accuracy of witness reports (Vallano & Schreiber Compo, 2011) and evidence obtained from suspects (Vallano et al., 2015). Rapport can assist with personalising the interview, and in turn aid recall by reducing anxiety on the part of the interviewee (Lipton, 1977). Rapport may also advantage memory recall due to its motivational stance, with the consequence that interviewees may try harder and use multiple attempts to recall in order to cooperate. Moreover, rapport helps facilitate transferring control of the recall process to the interviewee (Memon, Wark, Holley, Bull, & Köhnken, 1997), encouraging a non-leading retrieval process that should elicit reliable information. Ultimately, rapport is not about being soft or friendly, nor is it a something that should be done only at the beginning of an interaction or can be magically turned by saying specific words in a certain way (Alison, Alison, Shortland, & Surmon-Bohr, 2020). Rather, rapport is a mindset, an approach to creating an atmosphere grounded on honesty, empathy, open-mindedness and shared understanding (Alison et al., 2020).

### ***1.6.2. Memory: Encoding Intelligence***

Unlike witnesses to a crime, who are not anticipating an important event that requires attention and remembering, a CHIS may be tasked hours, if not days before a to-be-remembered event takes place (Ratcliffe, 2008). A CHIS tasking is linked to the law

enforcements' intelligence requirements and can be defined as the instructions provided to an informant to gather a particular piece(s) of information (Turcotte, 2008). This creates an opportunity to provide techniques prior to deployment which may later enhance recall. Techniques that can assist a CHIS' memory whilst maintaining reliability, are vital to ensuring effective intelligence gathering strategies.

However, to date, memory research has predominantly focused on enhancing post-event recall, whereby the event has taken place and an interviewing technique is tested for its impact on the recalling of that event (Kontogianni, Hope, Taylor, Vrij, & Gabbert, 2018). The Cognitive Interview (CI) is a prime example of a set of techniques that focuses on the retrieval of information (see Memon, Meissner, & Fraser, 2010). Regardless of the techniques used, in order for a CHIS to accurately recall a *to-be-remembered* event to their Source Handler, a CHIS must accurately encode the event in the first place. The lack of research exploring the encoding phase within a security context is surprising.

The Mental Reinstatement of Context (MRC) technique of the CI, does however, allude to the importance of the encoding phase. MRC instructs the interviewee to recreate in their mind the physical and psychological environment which was present at the *to-be-remembered* event, as context can significantly support retrieval cues within memory (Memon & Bull, 1991; Thomson & Tulving, 1970; Tulving & Thomson, 1973). How the environment impacts upon memory is underpinned by the *encoding specificity principle* (Tulving & Thomson, 1973), which means that the effectiveness of memory retrieval is positively linked to the congruence between the encoding and retrieval stages (Thomson & Tulving, 1970; Tulving & Osler, 1968). Thus, when the environmental context is different across encoding and recall, memory recall is hindered (Godden & Baddeley, 1975).

In practice, it seems unlikely that a CHIS will recall an event where it was physically encoded (e.g., a private location where an organised crime group meet), as this would increase the risk of being exposed. Therefore, a focus on the psychological state of encoding, and matching this at retrieval seems more plausible. An option to prepare for a future event is to task an informant to intentionally encode the *to-be-remembered* event. Encoding can be split into two processes, (i) incidental encoding, where an individual is unaware of the need to remember for a later memory test (e.g., a typical witness), or (ii) intentional encoding, where an individual is aware of an upcoming memory test and therefore intentionally remembers a *to-be-remembered* event (e.g., a tasked CHIS) (Block, 2009; Postman, Adams, & Phillips, 1955).

Research has demonstrated that intentional instructions to remember have enhanced recall compared to incidental instructions (Dornbush & Winnich, 1967; Eagle & Leiter, 1964; Postman et al., 1955). Furthermore, recent research has revealed that intentional processes outperform incidental processes with regards to memory performance (e.g., Unsworth & Spillers, 2010) with young adults (Gagnon, Bédard, & Turcotte, 2005), for misinformation of a live event (West & Stone, 2013), and for a filmed event (Migueles & Garcia-Bajos, 1999). While intentional memory may help the encoding process, the techniques used to later elicit the information will significantly impact on both the quality and quantity of the information collected.

### ***1.6.3. Questioning: Retrieving Intelligence***

An interviewer's understanding of rapport, the fundamental principles of memory, and the powerful influence they can have as an interviewer on retrieval, provides a foundation of knowledge from which successful interviewing can take place (Milne & Bull, 1999). However, an understanding of rapport and memory alone is not

sufficient, as the next phase comprises of actually conducting the interview, which incorporates strategic planning, maintaining rapport, the effective implementation of interviewing techniques (e.g., questioning), and disseminating the information post-interview. While a cooperative CHIS would be expected to divulge all the intelligence they hold, the deployment of ineffective interviewing practices can negatively impact on information retrieval (Evans et al., 2010; Vrij, Hope, & Fisher, 2014). This is because memory is a malleable construct, which may result in confabulations, errors and omissions (Loftus & Palmer, 1974; Loftus, 2003). Therefore, to retrieve reliable intelligence, evidence-based interviewing techniques must be used consistently by Source Handlers with their CHIS.

With a particular focus on questioning, national policy and training for Source Handlers lacks any detailed guidance on *appropriate* questioning techniques for the collection of HUMINT. In contrast, research involving investigative interviewing has received greater focus (e.g., Baldwin, 1993; Dent & Stephenson, 1979; Kebbell, Hurren & Mazerolle, 2006; Lamb, Sternberg, Orbach, Esplin & Mitchell, 2002; Oxburgh, Ost, & Cherryman, 2012). Although the research findings from the investigative context can apply to HUMINT interactions, the absence of research evaluating question types within the CHIS context is an area that requires attention. This is because a large proportion of Source Handler and CHIS interactions are conducted via the telephone and are less formal than investigative interviews. Especially, considering the significant impact questioning has on both the quality and quantity of the information gathered (e.g. Dent & Stephenson, 1979; Lamb, Orbach, Hershkowitz, Horowitz, & Abbott, 2007; Orbach & Lamb, 2000).

Question types are typically dichotomised as either *open* or *closed* (Gee, Gregory, & Pipe, 1999; Myklebust & Bjørklund, 2006), *productive* or *unproductive*



(Griffiths & Milne, 2006), or *appropriate* or *inappropriate* (Phillips, Oxburgh, Gavin & Myklebust, 2012). By doing so, researchers have been able to contrast the two types of question types against information quality and quantity. In order to categorise a question, while the phrasing should not be ignored (as an alternative wording may improve the quality of a question), classifying questions solely on the words used may be problematic (Oxburgh et al., 2010). This is because the context, timing, delivery and function of the question are important factors in determining whether the question is *appropriate* in the circumstances, more so than if the question was *open* or *closed* (Griffiths & Milne, 2006).

Although seminal research has evidenced what is considered to be poor questioning (e.g., the use of *inappropriate* questions, such as *multiple* and *leading* questions) and numerous interviewing guidance documents have been developed in response (e.g., the Cognitive Interview, PEACE, ABE), the quality of real-world interviewing has still been reported as often problematic (e.g., Clarke & Milne, 2016; Griffiths & Milne, 2006; Griffiths, Milne, & Cherryman, 2011; Snook et al., 2012; Walsh & Milne, 2008). Across the literature, *appropriate* questions are typically utilised less so than *inappropriate* questions (Myklebust & Alison, 2000; Walsh & Bull, 2010, 2015; Walsh & Milne, 2008). These revelations are disappointing, especially as *appropriate* questions have been evidenced to elicit more reliable information in contrast to *inappropriate* questions (e.g. Dent & Stephenson, 1979; Hershkowitz, 2001; Lamb et al., 2007; Orbach & Lamb, 2000).

## **1.7. Thesis Outline**

The central aim of this thesis was to develop an evidenced-based approach to Source Handler and CHIS interactions. Therefore, the thesis explored the psychological

principles of rapport, questioning and memory, all of which sit under *intelligence elicitation*. Rapport, memory encoding, and questioning were considered the three key areas of intelligence elicitation as they span across a CHIS' intelligence lifespan. This is because rapport must be established for a potential CHIS to *come on board* and be maintained to ensure longevity of the Source Handler-CHIS working relationship. Memory, specifically encoding, is important for the pre-event tasking of a CHIS, as well as what can be done to maximise encoding during the to-be-remembered event. Finally, how a Source Handler questions a CHIS post-event can significantly impact on the elicitation of reliable intelligence. Thus, this thesis attempted to address each of the three elements of intelligence elicitation, in order to develop an evidence-based approach to enhance the collection of intelligence from CHIS.

The thesis encompasses a range of methodological approaches (i.e., structured interviews, experimental laboratory research, and examinations of real-world data). Each chapter has been written as a stand-alone academic study so they can be independently digested. As a consequence of this compilation approach, there is some repetition throughout the thesis, as well as a reference list at the end of each chapter. Additionally, it is acknowledged that the terms CHIS and informant are used interchangeably due to the different target audiences for each chapter.

### ***1.7.1. Chapter 2: Eliciting Human Intelligence: Police Source Handlers' Perceptions and Experiences of Rapport During CHIS Interactions***

Study 1 undertook structured interviews undertaken with 24 police Source Handlers who worked within Counter Terrorism Dedicated Source Units (CTDSU). This research aimed to gather the views of practitioners to understand how Source Handlers perceive and experience rapport during interactions with CHIS. Thematic analysis was

undertaken on the qualitative data to produce several themes for each question. Exemplar quotations are displayed which best demonstrated the identified themes from the Source Handlers' responses.

### ***1.7.2. Chapter 3: Source Handler Perceptions of the Interviewing Processes Employed with Informants***

Study 2 further explored the perceptions of CTDSU Source Handlers, concerning the interviewing processes they employ with informants (i.e., CHIS). Structured interviews were utilised to gather the qualitative data, to further develop the literature regarding the interviewing processes used for intelligence gathering. Subsequently, thematic analysis was undertaken to establish several key themes from the interview data, illustrated by quotations to demonstrate the Source Handlers' viewpoints. Additionally, the applicability of investigative interviewing research and practice to interactions between Source Handlers and informants was discussed.

### ***1.7.3. Chapter 4: Intentional versus incidental encoding: An examination of tasking mock informants to remember***

Study 3 presents the findings from an experiment which aimed to enhance memory recall in mock informants of a to-be-remembered event, by exploring the impact of intentional memory and a context tasking instruction (instructions provided to an informant to gather information). Therefore, a laboratory experiment was used to allocate participants to a 3 x 2 mixed-design, with Encoding Condition (*incidental encoding* versus *intentional encoding* versus *intentional encoding with tasking instruction*) as the only between-subjects factor, Interview Phase (free recall versus

prompts) as the only within-subjects factor, and (i) correct detail, (ii) incorrect detail, (iii) confabulations, and (iv) percentage accuracy as the dependent variables.

#### ***1.7.4. Chapter 5: The Impact of Rapport on Intelligence Yield: Police Source Handler Telephone Interactions with Covert Human Intelligence Sources***

Study 4 aimed to explore the rapport used by Source Handlers with CHIS. This research gained unprecedented access to real-world data of recorded telephone interactions between Source Handlers and CHIS. The telephone interactions were analysed by way of quantifying both the verbal rapport behaviours (e.g., *attention*, *positivity*, and *coordination*) displayed by the Source Handler and the intelligence yielded from the CHIS, in order to investigate the frequencies of these rapport components and their relationship to intelligence yield. Additionally, the variability within the data (i.e., coefficient of determinations) was examined to explore the practical importance of rapport with regards to intelligence yield.

#### ***1.7.5. Chapter 6: Source Handler Telephone Interactions with Covert Human Intelligence Sources: An Exploration of Question Types and Intelligence Yield***

Study 5 further analysed the same data set from chapter 5, by investigating real-world data comprising audio recorded telephone interactions between Source Handlers and CHIS. This chapter explored the questions used by Source Handlers in order to elicit intelligence from CHIS. Therefore, the research examined the mean use of various question types per interaction and across all questions asked in the sample, as well as comparing the intelligence yield for *appropriate* and *inappropriate* questions.

### ***1.7.6. Chapter 7: General Discussion***

Finally, Chapter 7 comprises the thesis general discussion, which provides a summary of the main findings. This chapter also considers the implications for policy and practice, methodological considerations, future research, and conclusion.

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## **Chapter 2: Eliciting Human Intelligence: Police Source Handlers' Perceptions and Experiences of Rapport During CHIS Interactions**

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### **2.1. Abstract**

Rapport is an integral part of interviewing, viewed as fundamental to the success of intelligence elicitation. One collection capability is human intelligence (HUMINT), the discipline charged with eliciting intelligence through interactions with human sources, such as covert human intelligence sources (CHIS). To date, research has yet to explore the perceptions and experiences of intelligence operatives responsible for gathering HUMINT within England and Wales. The present study consisted of structured interviews with police source handlers ( $N = 24$ ). Rapport was perceived as essential, especially for maximising the opportunity for intelligence elicitation. Participants provided a range of rapport strategies while highlighting the importance of establishing, and maintaining, rapport. The majority of participants believed rapport could be trained to some degree. Thus, rapport was not viewed exclusively as a natural skill. However, participants commonly perceived some natural attributes are required to build rapport that can be refined and developed through training and experience.

Keywords: covert human intelligence source; covert policing; human intelligence; informants; police perceptions; rapport.

## **2.2. Introduction**

In security contexts, the collection of intelligence is deemed critical to both proactive and reactive forms of investigation (Innes & Sheptycki, 2004; James, 2013). A variety of methods are available to agencies, both overt and covert, in order to collect intelligence (Chappell, 2015). One collection capability is human intelligence (HUMINT), the discipline charged with eliciting intelligence through interactions with human sources, such as covert human intelligence sources (CHIS). CHIS play a significant role within HUMINT (James, Phythian, Wadie, & Richards, 2016) and are defined in England and Wales within Section 26(8) of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA). For the purposes of RIPA, a person should be considered to be a CHIS when:

- a) He establishes or maintains a personal or other relationship with a person for the covert purpose of facilitating the doing of anything falling within paragraph b or c;
- b) He covertly uses such a relationship to obtain information or to provide access to any information to another person; or
- c) He covertly discloses information obtained by the use of such a relationship, or as a consequence of the existence of such a relationship.

Within England and Wales, law enforcement CHIS are managed within dedicated source units and interact with police officers known as source handlers. While current training focuses primarily on tradecraft including counter-surveillance measures, to maximise intelligence elicitation from a CHIS, the present research holds that there are available tools and techniques that may assist source handlers and CHIS

intelligence interactions through an appreciation and application of psychological science.

### **2.3. Interviewing for intelligence**

For the purposes of this article, the term interviewing is used in its broadest sense to include an intelligence interaction between a police source handler (the interviewer) and a CHIS who may have information of interest (the interviewee). The elicitation of intelligence (i.e. an intelligence interview) can be broken down into three key sections (Stanier & Nunan, 2018). First is the use of rapport to try and secure the interviewee's engagement, to assist with recruiting the interviewee as a CHIS and to maintain the longevity of an elicitation relationship. Second, with engagement obtained, the interviewer's role is to elicit detailed and reliable information through appropriate interviewing techniques. The third and final stage is to assess the integrity of the information obtained, which is undertaken through a process of assurance, corroboration and validation, all which make up part of what is known as the provenance (Stanier, 2013).

The majority of intelligence interviews should strive to elicit the most detailed and reliable accounts from an interviewee, which can provide an insight into the workings of individuals and groups of individuals regarding past and future events (Chappell, 2015). Detailed and reliable information is essential because it helps inform subsequent investigative decision-making (James, 2013). It is crucial though that intelligence should not be obtained at any cost (Alison & Alison, 2017; Intelligence & Security Committee of Parliament, 2018). Interviewing must be ethically conducted in order to obtain intelligence that is legally admissible and factually reliable (Alison & Alison, 2017). As research has found, the history of police interviewing in England



and Wales is chronicled with the many consequences of unethical and ineffective interviewing practices (e.g. Poyser, Nurse, & Milne, 2018). Hence, a reliance on the existing evidence-base concerning the psychology of interviewing should counter policing practices based on anecdotal experiences. The focus of this article concerns the first key section of an intelligence interview, namely rapport, as rapport is also understood to be a working alliance (Billingsley, 2003; Kleinman, 2006; Tickle-Degnen, 2002; Vanderhallen, Vervaeke, & Holmberg, 2011).

#### **2.4. Rapport: cultivating HUMINT**

Operational circumstances vary, and many opportunities to gather HUMINT occur within a collapsing time frame, for example:

- a) Conducting an exploratory prison debrief to elicit information from a prisoner within the 45-min England and Wales prison legal visit period;
- b) During a port stop, whereby a passenger arrives into England and Wales, and either passes through passport control or collects baggage transfers to another journey;
- c) A cold call pitch in person or via telephone to a person of interest to assess
- d) their willingness to meet source handlers at a later date; and
- e) Within the police custody block, where prisoners are detained and regulated by the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984.

Hence, the cultivation of potential new sources of intelligence relies heavily upon the application of effective rapid rapport-building techniques, such as identifying the hooks (a way to gain attention and build rapport, e.g. personal interests, lifestyle characteristics or motivations) of an individual to influence cooperation (see Cooper,

2011). Within the context of HUMINT, rapport can be defined as ‘developing and maintaining a working relationship with a human source, by managing their motivations and welfare, whilst ensuring they understand the purpose of the relationship in order to secure reliable intelligence’ (Stanier & Nunan, 2018, p. 232). Alongside this definition, the concept of operational accord (Kleinman, 2006) acknowledges that an interviewer–interviewee relationship needs mutual affinity and conformity, thus requiring the interviewer to appreciate the interviewee’s concerns and intentions and the desired outcomes of the interaction (Evans, Meissner, Brandon, Russano, & Kleinman, 2010). Tickle-Degnen and Rosenthal (1990) stress the importance of building and then maintaining rapport, highlighting three interrelating elements: mutual attentiveness, positivity and coordination. Within early interactions (i.e. building rapport), emphasis is placed on mutual attentiveness and positivity, with mutual attentiveness and coordination considered more important in subsequent interactions (i.e. maintaining rapport). Thus, once rapport has been established, it is important to maintain that relationship over time in order to cultivate HUMINT, especially in relation to CHIS.

Overly officious introductions have been found to generate negative perceptions from interviewees, especially when this incorporates a lack of rapport and a warning to the interviewee about lying (MacDonald, Keeping, Snook, & Luther, 2016), whereas positive interviewee perceptions have found to be formed when rapport is applied successfully within the first few minutes of an interaction (Zunin & Zunin, 1972). Furthermore, throughout the interaction, an overly formalised delivery aligned with functional pre-determined questions has been shown to impede rapport (Milne & Bull, 1999). Thus, the use of nonverbal techniques (e.g. mirroring behaviour and displaying understanding via empathy, especially when eliciting highly personal

information) and verbal techniques (e.g. establishing a common ground) has been reported by interviewers as effective rapport-building techniques (Abbe & Brandon, 2013; Vallano, Evans, Schreiber Compo, & Kieckhafer, 2015). Nonetheless, while establishing rapport may be sufficient to influence the overall quality of the interaction, it is also argued that maintaining rapport throughout the interaction is crucial (Abbe & Brandon, 2013; Leach, 2005; Walsh & Bull, 2012). Thus, effective techniques that build and then maintain rapport help exercise ‘social influence, and educing information from a source’ (Abbe & Brandon, 2013, p. 237).

## **2.5. Rapport-based interviewing**

While the short operational window offered by some of the previously noted scenarios means that the interviewer is required to deploy rapid rapport-building techniques, other circumstances, such as a remanded/sentenced prisoner or an existing CHIS relationship, allow for a more patient, measured and long-term approach. Rapport is viewed by practitioners both as an important part of the interview process and as being fundamental to the success of information and intelligence elicitation (Russano, Narchet, Kleinman, & Meissner, 2014; Semel, 2012). In fact, rapport is considered important across numerous interviewing contexts. For example, rapport forms a key role in England and Wales’ PEACE model of investigative interviewing (an acronym for the five phases of the interview process; Planning and preparation; Engage and explain; Account; Closure; and Evaluation). PEACE is underpinned by the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984, and helped to shift the focus of interviewing in England and Wales from accusatory and confession-driven methods to that of information gathering (Clarke & Milne, 2001, 2016; Moston & Engelberg, 2011).

Rapport is often likened to friendship (Clark, 2014), a common theme reported across numerous interviewing professionals. For example, Russano et al. (2014) interviewed experienced military and intelligence interrogators, revealing that they believed non-coercive approaches to be superior to coercive approaches. Additionally, rapport has been shown to assist with securing disclosure from high-value detainees, which are deemed vital sources of information to identify emerging threats and disrupt terrorist planning (Goodman-Delahunty, Martschuk, & Dhami, 2014). Goodman-Delahunty et al. (2014) found that when rapport (i.e. noncoercive strategies) was employed in these particular contexts, information was more likely to be disclosed and disclosed in more detail, and was done so earlier within the interview.

Redlich, Kelly, and Miller (2014) examined U.S. military and federal interrogators' perceived effectiveness and frequency of using various interrogation techniques. Rapport- and relationship-building techniques were perceived as the most effective strategies, regardless of the intended outcome and context of the interrogation, and, more importantly, rapport- and relationship-building techniques were used most often, especially when compared to confrontational techniques (Redlich et al., 2014). Moreover, Goodman-Delahunty and Howes (2016) interviewed intelligence and investigative interviewers from Asian-Pacific jurisdictions, regarding their rapport-building techniques utilised with high-value interviewees. These interviews were analysed in line with the principles of persuasion outlined by Cialdini (1993), with liking and reciprocity discussed as the most frequently reported rapport-building strategies (Goodman-Delahunty & Howes, 2016).

In addition to influencing disclosure, research has explored the use of rapport and its influence on memory recall. Rapport building has been shown to enhance the accuracy of interviewee recall and 'diagnosticity of evidence obtained from suspects',

by reducing the amount of inaccurate and misinformation reported (Vallano et al., 2015, p. 369) – for example, by personalising the interview and transferring the control of the recall process to the interviewee, which is likely to reduce the interviewee’s anxiety, creating an environment that can maximise recall (Memon, Wark, Holley, Bull, & Koehnken, 1997). The positive motivational stance of such rapport-based interviews may encourage the interviewee to try harder and attempt multiple memory recalls (Memon et al., 1997), which, together with the use of open-ended questions, should maximise the elicitation opportunity (Vallano & Schreiber Compo, 2011).

Although rapport is considered important to interviewing and gathering information, limited research has investigated real operational field data to carefully and systematically define the behaviours that underpin rapport. Therefore, while professionals believe rapport works and self-report that they use it, this is insufficient evidence that rapport actually works. However, recent research has revealed that rapport exists within contemporary police interviews and that it is important in order to obtain information (Bull, 2014). Nevertheless, Walsh and Bull’s (2012) investigation of real-world police interviews with fraud suspects identified that opportunities to establish rapport were often missed, and even when rapport was established, it was infrequently maintained. Interestingly, a satisfactory outcome was five times more likely when interviewers managed to establish and maintain rapport throughout (Walsh & Bull, 2012).

A key development within the rapport literature was the creation of a rapport coding framework that could be applied within an operational setting, known as ORBIT (Observing Rapport-Based Interpersonal Techniques; Alison, Alison, Noone, Elntib, & Christiansen, 2013). ORBIT was developed from the counselling literature and is founded on well-researched methods of observing interpersonal skills (Tickle-

Degnen & Rosenthal, 1990), particularly motivational interviewing (Miller, Moyers, Ernst, & Amrhein, 2008; Miller & Rollnick, 1992) and the interpersonal behaviour circle (Birtchnell, 2014; Freedman, Leary, Ossorio, & Coffey, 1951; Leary, 1957). ORBIT's framework measures rapport through empathy, empowerment, respectfulness and open-mindedness (e.g. motivational interviewing; Alison, Giles, & McGuire, 2015; Rollnick & Miller, 1995) and interpersonal behaviours coded as either adaptive (beneficial to communication) or maladaptive (impedes communication; Alison et al., 2015; Birtchnell, 2014) in relation to intelligence yield (Alison & Alison, 2017).

Alison et al. (2013) utilised the ORBIT framework to analyse audio and video footage of terrorist interrogations from 181 convicted suspects. Building rapport was identified as important in securing information disclosures from terrorists as it was positively associated with adaptive behaviours of communication, which consequently increased intelligence yield (Alison et al., 2013). Similar results were found by Alison et al. (2014), whereby an adaptive rapport-based interrogation style (e.g. the use of respect, dignity and integrity) was found to be an effective approach for reducing suspects' use of counter-interrogation tactics (e.g. no comment interviews, retraction of statements or claiming lack of memory).

Additionally, Christiansen, Alison, and Alison (2018) examined the interpersonal behaviours of police interviewers across interviews with convicted terrorist suspects in a naturalistically occurring environment. Using ORBIT, their results demonstrated that maladaptive behaviours were associated with the suspect shutting down, while adaptive passive behaviours (e.g. humble and seeks guidance) were effective in the first interview. This tactic did not produce the same effects, however, in the final interview, where cooperative adaptive interviewing behaviours

(e.g. respect and trust) were associated with improved adaptive detainee behaviours throughout, highlighting the importance of being flexible in adopting different interviewing styles over the course of numerous interactions. Interestingly, such findings seem applicable to the CHIS relationship, whereby numerous interactions occur over a period of time, ultimately aiming to collect intelligence.

Despite the importance of rapport (as highlighted in the literature), no research has addressed the topic of rapport between source handlers and CHIS. As a consequence of this research gap, the present study aimed to develop our understanding of rapport with a neglected sample of police officers (i.e. source handlers). Hence this research explored source handlers' (a) perceptions, experiences and definitions of rapport in contrast to previous research, and (b) perceptions regarding whether rapport can be trained and, if so, what methods are suggested to enhance rapport practices. The present study forms part of a wider ongoing programme of research, by conducting structured interviews with police source handlers concerning their perceptions and experiences in relation to gathering intelligence from human sources.

## **2.6. Method**

### ***2.6.1. Participants***

Participants consisted of 24 police source handlers (96% male; 4% female) from several counter-terrorism dedicated source units across England and Wales. The mean age of participants was 44 years (range = 33-59 years), with a mean time spent as a source handler being 6 years (range = 1-15 years).

### **2.6.2. Materials**

The current research tailored Goodman-Delahunty and Howes' (2016) rapport interview questions for the context of police source handler interactions with CHIS. Responses from eight questions that were within a longer structured interview protocol (N = 32) are discussed within this article, all of which concern the topic of rapport.

### **2.6.3. Procedure**

Individual gatekeepers were established from each counter-terrorism dedicated source units by the second author, which provided access to a unique sample of police officers. A purposive sampling method was then employed, as the specific criteria required for participants to be eligible for this research were being a police officer (a) who worked in a counter-terrorism dedicated source units and (b) who interacted with CHIS. Having obtained ethical authorisation from the first author's university and CREST (Centre for Research and Evidence on Security Threats), structured interviews were conducted by the first author with participants who met the inclusion criteria. Spoken interviews ( $n = 15$ ) lasted between 19 and 55 min ( $M = 37$  min), which were audio recorded for later transcription and data analysis. The protection of the participants' identities was of utmost importance due to the sensitive nature of their work. Hence, alternative methods were put in place; those interviewed face-to-face ( $n = 11$ ) had the option to either sign the consent form or provide consent verbally on the audio recording device to refrain from providing a written name/signature. Due to the operational commitments and availability of the participants, some participants provided their responses via an audio recorded internet/phone interview ( $n = 4$ ) or by written responses via the designated gatekeeper's email ( $n = 9$ ). In addition, a condition of participation included that participants would read through the transcript



of their interview and provide approval for their transcript to be used for the current study.

#### ***2.6.4. Data analysis***

A systematic, thematic analysis was undertaken, which followed the principles outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006, 2012). Thematic analysis is a flexible and accessible qualitative method that allows the author to view and develop an understanding of shared perceptions and experiences (Braun & Clarke, 2012). In line with the thematic analysis principles, this research progressed in three stages. First, the overall research question was developed: how do source handlers perceive and experience rapport with CHIS? Second, in order to address the overarching research question, the interviews asked the following questions to source handlers:

1. How would you define rapport within the context of an intelligence gathering interview/debrief?
2. What is the importance of rapport in an intelligence gathering interview/debrief?
3. What strategies for establishing rapport do you find to be most effective?
4. What strategies for establishing rapport do you find to be least effective?
5. What strategies for maintaining rapport over the relationship with a source do you find to be most effective?
6. What strategies for maintaining rapport over the relationship with a source do you find to be least effective?
7. How do you know when rapport has been achieved (or not) with a source (i.e. what evidence or indicators do you look for)?
8. Do you think that rapport can be trained?

a. If yes, what aspects?

Third, the data analysis stage was partly informed by the authors' previous knowledge of the rapport literature, as well as the discussion points raised by participants whilst coding the data. For example, prior to data collection, the first author was aware of the importance of rapport to interviewing (e.g. Russano et al., 2014; Semel, 2012), the benefits of establishing and maintaining rapport throughout an interaction (see Walsh & Bull, 2012), and previous perceptions of rapport from other professionals (e.g. Goodman-Delahunty & Howes, 2016; Goodman-Delahunty et al., 2014; Redlich et al., 2014; Russano et al., 2014).

As a consequence, this research performed a combination of both inductive and deductive approaches to data coding and analysis: inductive, by means of producing codes and themes that were driven by the data, striving to give a voice to the data by 'carving out unacknowledged pieces of narrative evidence that we select, edit, and deploy to border our arguments' (Fine, 2002, p. 218); however, also deductive, as it is impossible for the author to be purely inductive as prior knowledge is not easily ignored (Braun & Clarke, 2012). Furthermore, prior knowledge of the subject matter under investigation can help the researcher to be sensitive to more subtle features when coding the data (Tuckett, 2005).

This research adopted the epistemological stance of Braun and Clarke's (2006, 2012) guidance to undertaking thematic analysis by following their six phases. Phase 1 concerned the familiarisation of the data. This phase began during the transcription of the audio recorded interviews. Verbatim transcription was undertaken to reflect the participants' interviews (Braun & Clarke, 2006) – a key process of qualitative methodology (Bird, 2005), which allowed the first author to expose themselves to the

data collected. The first and second authors thoroughly familiarised themselves with the transcriptions by way of reading and rereading the data and by making notes of key phrases or discussions raised. Such notetaking is considered helpful to the process of analysis and the generation of later themes (Braun & Clarke, 2012).

Phase 2 started the systematic analysis of the data by coding standout phrases and discussions. These initial codes were either more inductive in nature, as they mirrored the language and concepts of the participants, or considered more deductive, as they invoked the authors' prior knowledge. These initial codes acted as shorthand pithy summaries of the participants' discussions. As initial codes are created, the first author decided whether they could be applied to the next relevant text, or whether a new code was needed (Braun & Clarke, 2012). The initial codes were tabulated within a document and reviewed to avoid repetition. This process involved merging initial codes that were similar – for example, 'listening skills' and 'effective listening' were merged to create 'active listening'. This process was repeated until the data were entirely coded.

Phase 3 concerned the searching of themes, by merging related first-order codes to create fewer second-order codes, and finally creating themes (Hayes, 2000). A theme 'captures something important about the data in relation to the research question, and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set' (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 82). The creation of themes is an active process, which implies themes are generated rather than discovered (Taylor & Ussher, 2001). This phase was undertaken with a mixed approach (both inductive and deductive), as the creation of themes derived from data (i.e. inductive) as well as informed by the author's knowledge concerning rapport (i.e. deductive).

Phase 4 reviewed the potential themes, as the themes were checked against the data extracts and then in relation to the entire data set (Braun & Clarke, 2012). The coded extracts from the transcripts were labelled with the initial codes and placed under each theme. This allowed the first author to view the participants' excerpts easily under each theme to ensure the theme represented the data. Next, the relationship between the generated themes was considered to ensure they work together in delivering an overall story of the data. Braun and Clarke (2012) note that good themes work together yet are distinctive and stand alone. The first and second authors discussed and agreed on the resulting themes (see Appendix E for thematic analysis flowcharts).

Phase 5 involved defining and naming the themes, which should be related but not overlap (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The data were interpreted with an essentialist approach, allowing the first author to explore experiences and meanings in a straightforward way. This is because an essentialist approach assumes that language reflects and enables participants to articulate meaning and experience (Potter & Wetherell, 1987). Therefore, a semantic approach to the thematic analysis was performed, in that the themes were identified within the surface meaning of the data. This process progressed from description, by summarising the semantic content and interpreting the data with regard to broader implications (Patton, 1990), and was discussed in relation to the rapport literature.

Finally, Phase 6 comprises the production of the report. In line with Braun and Clarke's (2012) guidance, the developed themes within this research strived to build on the previous theme to tell a coherent story regarding rapport. While some qualitative research separates the discussion of the themes from the results, the present research incorporated the discussion of the literature into the analysis in order to avoid

repetition. As a consequence, a ‘Results and discussion’ section was produced. An integrated approach is argued to work well when the collected data hold strong connections with existing research (Braun & Clarke, 2012). This research aimed to explore the source handlers’ perceptions and experiences of rapport during CHIS interactions in order to develop our understanding of rapport from a sample of police officers who have not previously been subjected to research.

## **2.7. Results and discussion**

The next section outlines the qualitative results and discusses them with regard to the rapport-based interviewing literature and policing practices of gathering HUMINT, with a particular focus on source handler interactions with CHIS. From the analysis, six themes were developed: (i) rapport is essential: ‘no rapport, no intelligence’; (ii) defining rapport within the HUMINT context; (iii) effective communication; (iv) empathy and CHIS welfare; (v) indicators of rapport: a working alliance; and (vi) training rapport. Each of these themes is discussed in turn with exemplar quotations that best demonstrate the identified themes from the participants’ responses.

### ***2.7.1. (i) Rapport is essential: ‘no rapport, no intelligence’***

Participants were asked to comment on the importance of rapport in an intelligence gathering interaction with human sources of intelligence (i.e. CHIS). Rapport was perceived as a fundamental element when interacting with CHIS:

Very big, essential, if you haven’t got that rapport and you can’t build rapport with that person some people are very difficult, and even if you build the rapport it can still be very, very hard, because some people are not easy to speak to, it’s essential, without it you’re banging your head against a brick wall. (Participant 19)

Rapport is considered essential to the source handler and CHIS relationship due to the underlying objective of maintaining the relationship's longevity. The weight placed on rapport may depend upon the situation faced by the source handler. This is eloquently outlined by Participant 4, who discusses how a source is identified, a source's willingness to engage and the importance of joint goals as important factors in developing a rapport strategy:

If an interview is being conducted whereby the subject has identified themselves as having information of potential value to authorities, then rapport is less important than in a situation whereby the subject has been identified via other means as a person that should be approached as a potential intelligence asset. The context of this answer is that there have been numerous times whereby a person has had information that they wish to pass to the authorities, however, have no desire at all to continue with any kind of follow-up relationship. If this is the case, it should be recognised immediately, and the development of rapport should be prioritised against the importance of the information being passed if this is to be a single one-off encounter. If any lasting relationship is sought; then rapport building, and maintenance could be considered as a critical part of any interview or debrief. If common ground (or the perception of common ground) and mutual respect is not established quickly, then this may jeopardise future trust or the prospect of any continued relationship. In most cases I have dealt with, there has needed to be a prompt framework of understanding between the subject and the HUMINT officer – an idea of what we both want, where our two paths coincide, what we can agree or disagree on before being able to move forward. (Participant 4)

While previous research has reported that rapport needs to be built and maintained throughout the interview (Walsh & Bull, 2012), the importance of rapport is stressed

further when trying to encourage an individual to become an authorised CHIS. Further still, to then engage in such an ongoing relationship requires a level of coordination (Tickle-Degnen & Rosenthal, 1990) and trust in order to establish an operational accord (Kleinman, 2006; Tickle-Degnen, 2002). Providing a CHIS with an adequate level of trust and liking was expanded upon by one participant as a key element of rapport and potential intelligence yield:

Rapport is massive because you know it's voluntary [being a CHIS], although they will sometimes get rewarded, it's voluntary, you're asking them to give up their own time, to keep it a secret from their family and from their friends, the discretion, to then want to meet you, to travel out of their area to come to see you, to do certain things before they meet you, to then go home, so you're taking a good chunk of their life out so they've got to want to do that, so if they don't like you they aren't going to come and see you, so it's a massive part. (Participant 20)

### ***2.7.2. (ii) Defining rapport within the HUMINT context***

The definition of rapport within the context of an intelligence gathering interview was explored. From the responses, three subthemes emerged, reinforcing earlier definitions of rapport (e.g. Stanier & Nunan, 2018): (a) establishing common ground and trust; (b) reciprocity; and (c) a professional ongoing relationship.

#### ***(a) Establishing common ground and trust***

In order to progress a relationship, a common understanding is required, which ultimately is based on trust, and an adaptive interviewing behaviour associated with enhanced cooperation from the interviewee (see Christiansen et al., 2018). Hence, establishing trust requires not simply building up the interviewee's confidence to raise issues, but also having these addressed by the interviewer. Openness is gained through

trust, by placing the interviewee at ease and by using open questions (Vallano & Schreiber Compo, 2011), thus encouraging a willingness to share information that may be actionable (i.e. intelligence). The majority of participants in the current study provided support for the process of placing the interviewee at ease, building trust and then establishing a common ground as vital to the building and maintenance of rapport:

Trying to find some common ground with the person that you're with, so a lot of the time we'll go into a meeting and the first part of that meeting won't be work, it will be how are you doing? How's the family? How are the kids? Did you watch the football? Depends on the individual or you know, did you watch the cricket? You have that knowledge because you've built up that understanding of the person and you are putting them at ease and you're relaxing them and you are sort of imprinting on it that friendship that you have developed and you are also saying to them that I am not just here to get work from you, I am here to actually speak and get on with you, and for me that is the epitome of rapport, it's that putting someone at ease and putting someone in a relaxed situation and in a trusting relationship with you, but when it comes down to the fact that you're asking them for that information you're getting the correct information.

(Participant 16)

Prior to an interaction with a CHIS, the source handler has the opportunity to plan and prepare. Within the HUMINT context, this consists of using both open and closed sources of information to research the person of interest, as well as undertaking meetings with a source controller. However, discussions between source handlers and source controllers tend to be focused on tradecraft (e.g. how the interaction is going to take place securely and what information the source handler seeks) rather than elicitation and rapport-building techniques (Stanier & Nunan, 2018). It is therefore



unsurprising that a number of participants reported that under preparedness as being an ineffective strategy for establishing rapport, as this can lead to a limited amount of information known about the CHIS, which in turn creates fewer rapport-building hooks to utilise (Cooper, 2011). Hence, research can identify personal interests, lifestyle characteristics and motivations that may be utilised as rapport-building hooks:

I think research is important, trying to understand your candidate or customer however you want to put it, and find some themes that might resonate between the two of you and whether that is a general moral grounding on the same beliefs of wanting to improve the world or whether that is a football team or an area you have travelled to, so I think the most the important strategy for me is a bit of research and when the research fails be flexible and be guided by them.  
(Participant 17)

However:

Use of pre-prepared 'script' – very difficult to appear natural and interviewee very likely to go off script leaving you ill prepared. (Participant 1)

As Participants 1 and 17 interestingly highlight, flexibility is key to the rapport-building process, especially across numerous interactions (Christiansen et al., 2018). Hence, if the interviewer is unable to find a common ground with the interviewee, then turning the interviewee into the subject expert can (a) provide an outlet to a potentially awkward situation, (b) encourage the interviewee to talk, and (c) enhance rapport, as the interviewer will need to employ active listening to engage and show interest in the interviewee. For example:

Talking to them, asking them, and if I don't know about something if I am with somebody [second source handler] they might be the better person to build rapport, or the other way will be if that I'm not an expert on what they want to

talk about actually turning them into the expert, and actually admitting that I don't know everything, so actually I am quite human, I don't know much about football, I don't know much about [football team] so tell me about it, and actually turn them into the expert which actually puts them up on a pedestal as well.  
(Participant 18)

*(b) Reciprocity*

CHIS understand that source handlers want to gain access to the information that they hold. Similar to Goodman-Delahunty and Howes (2016), source handlers recognised that the relationship with their CHIS cannot be one-directional, but should rather be a reciprocal relationship:

It's the same as maintaining any good friendship that you've got to put the effort in, it's got to be two way, and because any relationship has got to be reciprocal, if you don't provide that effort you won't get the effort back, so you've always got to take into account from the initial contact. (Participant 22)

Furthermore, participants stated that remembering personal details of the CHIS is an important factor for maintaining rapport, for example:

Remembering about their family, remembering about their birthdays, remembering about their holidays, remembering about important stuff in their life. (Participant 20)

This invested interest has been shown to solidify relationships (Leach, 2005; Vanderhallen et al., 2011), thus maintaining rapport:

Not showing an interest in the CHIS, they'll pick up straight up, they'll pick up straight away if you don't show any interest in them, so if you say to them, if you're sat there like, how's the family? How's your son? How's your daughter? Everything alright? Good thanks, boom, move on, they will be like, really? are you interested? So, you've got to say to them like, how's your son? What's he

doing? Ah he's doing this? My lads been doing that, and he's been doing this. You interact because you pick some familiarity that you have with what they're doing and introduce it in, because that then gives them, it's like, ah actually he is a human being, he does think like me, things happen to him that happen to me, boom, you've got the relation there, there's something they can relate to.

(Participant 11)

Friendly or empathic approaches were often coupled with acts of hospitality (e.g. Goodman-Delahunty & Howes, 2016). Hence, to help build the relationship, source handlers must invest time and effort to show genuine care, understanding and empathy towards the CHIS, such as:

Doing stuff they enjoy, for instance taking them out walking, go out walking for a day, just go around the [location] just took a backpack go walking and just chat, nothing to do with the business just go and chat, just walk out, they might like motor racing take them to the races for day, you know do stuff that they like that you can just chat and get to know them a little bit, now I find that effective because the next time you go they'll think they are investing in me, they are doing this for me, so for me an effective way is doing something not work related i.e. not trying to get intelligence out of them but just go and do something for a day.

(Participant 20)

*(c) A professional ongoing relationship*

A commonality amongst the current participants was that rapport was considered to be the forming or building of an ongoing relationship that can be both built and lost (Walsh & Bull, 2012). Ultimately, interviewees are the source of vital information, and participants from the present study likened rapport to generating a professional

friendship with the interviewee, as this may help overcome any barriers, and encourage a relationship of information exchange:

It's for me one of the key most important things, I think from that initial either handshake in the front office or the phone call you make to get them into a police station, however it is you're going to do it, just actually speaking to somebody professionally, properly, politely, all those basic things which sometimes get taken for granted, that is the start of the rapport. (Participant 14)

Participants discussed rapport as critical in providing the interviewee with the confidence to open up, positively challenge the interviewer, declare concerns, to ensure that the CHIS does not put themselves at risk and to enhance a professional working alliance (Tickle-Degnen, 2002; Vanderhallen et al., 2011). One participant further acknowledged the importance of establishing rapport that was built on a professional foundation:

It's a fine balance I believe, it's a fine balance between being friendly with somebody and that person believing that you're their friend, but you have to have that professional part of you where your, when I'm in that world I'll be your friend but as soon as I step out of that world I am the professional that I need to be, but when I come and meet you I'm your friend, they have to believe that, because when you're their friend, they will tell you all kinds of things, if they see you as the authorities what they tell you might be very clipped. (Participant 11)

Moreover, underpinning the relationship requires a professional boundary. Though an informal and friendly approach is encouraged to open up the interviewee, if the relationship loses its professional foundation a CHIS may end up at risk:

I've got a source at the moment who I've had to take them to task and say, look you need to sort of switch on, because he sees me as his mate and there's the issues, some of the stuff that started happening was woah hang on a minute, yeah

we are friends however this is a professional relationship, don't cross the boundary because then your safety then gets put at risk, and we don't want that to happen, you've got to identify that. (Participant 11)

Although many participants acknowledged that an element of friendship was important to the relationship, ultimately, a level of continued professionalism demands a level of reciprocity, it can keep the interaction focused, and most importantly, it ensures the CHIS' welfare is in check (Billingsley, 2003):

You have to get that information and also how many people know what the source knows, so if the source is saying to you Mr X and Mr Y are doing this, this and this, on this day, you need to then be saying, right ok well how many people know that information? Well only I know that information, well then what can we do with that information? We've got that information but if we then leak that information out our source gets burnt, so then we have to parallel that information. (Participant 11)

Participants frequently associated the source handler and CHIS relationship with the notion of operational accord (Kleinman, 2006). This is because an appreciation of the interviewee's concerns and intentions together with the desired outcomes of the interaction are considered important elements of rapport (Evans et al., 2010):

Rapport is ongoing. When you have run a CHIS for a long time, it is about not becoming overly personal with them but continuing to be professional and to a certain extent a friend or support to the CHIS from time to time. It is worth reviewing your relationship with your CHIS from time to time in a reflective way. It is worth debriefing meetings with a controller or co-handler. It is also worth using the services of [operational partners] which can offer invaluable insight into aspects of your CHIS. (Participant 5)

### **2.7.3. (iii) Effective communication**

The elicitation of timely, detailed and reliable intelligence is vital for subsequent investigative decision-making (James, 2013), which subsequently influences the outcomes of proactive and reactive criminal investigations (Chappell, 2015; James et al., 2016). Thus, to maximise the elicitation process, it is important that the Source Handler has adequate knowledge of the intelligence requirement. This is because, even if all the elicitation techniques are maximised, if the questions themselves do not elicit relevant information, then the overall interaction is sub-optimal. One participant noted that the aims and objectives of the interview are just as important as rapport, as they ultimately work hand in hand:

So I would say, knowledge of why you're there, knowledge of your subject, knowledge of what you're after, your aims, your objectives sits right next to rapport, because you could have all the rapport in the world but how do you steer the conversation if you don't know what you are there for, secondly if you know exactly why you're there but you have no rapport with the individual the conversation doesn't take place, so they've got to be equal. (Participant 21)

The PEACE model of investigative interviewing could be successfully applied to the intelligence interview (e.g., Stanier & Nunan, 2018), especially when such importance is placed upon the planning and preparation of an interview, as well as a need for rapport development and maintenance throughout (Clarke & Milne, 2001, 2016; Walsh & Bull, 2012).

Interviews that possess overly officious interactions, and therefore lack a working alliance have been argued to impede rapport (Milne & Bull, 1999), and this especially applies within an intelligence gathering context whereby the interaction will most likely encourage cooperation through informal practices, rather than conducting a suspect-like interview with a CHIS:

Just coming straight to the point in what you're after, no pleasantries, no rapport building, just literally, thanks for coming in, this is what I want, have you got it, yes or no? Okay leave, I think that is a way to close your subject down and not get much from the relationship. (Participant 14)

However, the formality can depend upon the CHIS, and it is part of the Source Handler's role to understand what works. Participants discussed considerations such as what time and location is convenient to the CHIS, and where they would feel most relaxed.

Half of the participants stated that effective communication skills and style were beneficial to establishing rapport. Incorporated within effective communication is effective listening, a skill considered vital to a successful interview (Milne & Bull, 1999). In an attempt to establish a common ground with the interviewee, effective listening can provide the interviewer with information relating to the interviewee's interests:

Very often if you listen for long enough you find what people want to talk about rather than going in with your own preconception, research in advance, brilliant, but then listen and let's find out what that individual wants to talk about. (Participant 17)

Moreover, participants stated that effective verbal communication with a CHIS is through soft intelligence questions such as indirect questioning, supported by the following:

Paraphrasing, effective interaction between handlers, tone, and effective use of pauses. (Participant 6)

With regard to nonverbal rapport, effective observation of the CHIS' nonverbals, as well as effective use of nonverbal behaviour on the interviewer's part was considered

important by participants in the current study and by previous research (Goodman-Delahunty et al., 2014; Russano et al., 2014). Examples included mirroring and:

Good use of eye contact, good use of NVC's [nonverbal cues], and a handshake to establish appropriate personal contact. (Participant 5)

The implementation of effective nonverbal techniques (e.g., mirroring behaviour and displaying understanding via empathy) has also been perceived by other interviewers as effective rapport building techniques (Abbe & Brandon, 2013; Vallano et al., 2015).

#### **2.7.4. (iv) Empathy and CHIS Welfare**

It is important to note that RIPA legally mandates the security and welfare of a CHIS to be monitored. Nonetheless, a demonstration of empathy towards the CHIS' circumstances and welfare was perceived to be an effective rapport-building strategy. This may be demonstrated by displaying humanity and care towards the CHIS by trying to identify their worries and concerns (Abbe & Brandon, 2013):

On some occasions acting on what they're saying, so even if it's got nothing to do with the reasons why you're there, it's important to them so it's something that should be given some sort of attention, I suppose examples would be if there is an event going on in their life which has got nothing to do with what I'm there for, I'll perhaps put a welfare call in, in between my sort of process, and just purely to talk about that incident in their life, whether it be a children's football match or something just to show I was listening to what they said and in actual fact I'm paying an interest and attention, and then I won't ask anything from them on that call. (Participant 14)

A third of the participants reported that a lack of empathy has a negative influence on rapport, by not addressing welfare concerns (i.e. a frustration in delays in reward payments or concerns regarding the taskings). Moreover, as the role of a source



handler is to elicit information that is often highly personal, a lack of empathy has been shown to be damaging towards an existing relationship (Risan, Binder, & Milne, 2016) and a barrier against effective rapport building.

Throughout the process of establishing trust and common understanding, an interviewer's empathy was considered important to the process of rapport. Empathy was frequently found to be well received by interviewees when sharing highly personal information, a finding entrenched in therapeutic settings (e.g. Leach, 2005; Miller & Rollnick, 1992). Empathy can take many forms, and cover a number of a CHIS' circumstances:

Social, economic, religious consideration of the source, taking account of the sources mental state. Having a consideration for any medical needs, alternative meeting arrangements and locations. Basing the debrief initially around rapport building, researching the above factors so that common interests/hobbies etc. can be discussed. (Participant 9)

As noted, the CHIS' welfare was perceived as highly important, especially with regard to maintaining rapport. Participants stated that basic humanity, being supportive and demonstrating an understanding of the CHIS' circumstances all form part of providing welfare attention. Additionally, source handlers providing easy, regular and convenient contact was perceived to be key to reinforcing the notion of taking an interest:

Regular communication that is not interrupting in any way in time or place.  
(Participant 23)

### **2.7.5. (v) *Indicators of rapport: a working alliance***

Across the data, participants discussed an array of indicators that they perceived as demonstrating rapport. Rapport was discussed by some participants with regard to its influence on intelligence yield. Previous research suggests that rapport-based interviewing supports information disclosure across numerous interviewing contexts (Alison et al., 2013; Goodman-Delahunty et al., 2014), as well as being perceived to be the most effective interviewing approach (Redlich et al., 2014). Participants' perceptions from the current study were found to be aligned with such evidence. Rapport was considered important to the CHIS' openness, thus, impacting on not only intelligence quantity but also quality:

A relaxed CHIS is going to give you the best intel product, if they're at ease and there is no issues and they are wanting to tell you that information because of the relationship and rapport you've built up with them, then you're going to get the best product from them, and the most untainted product, because it's all about encouraging someone to openly speak to you, and the best way to do that is to get on with someone, as it is in all walks of life, if you get on with someone you're more likely to speak to them in a nice open way and just talk . . . it's that open bit that's the key bit, because if they're closed you're not going to get the full picture. (Participant 16)

Furthermore, participants discussed the CHIS' work ethic towards a task set by them as a way of understanding whether rapport was present. In line with the development of a working alliance (Vanderhallen et al., 2011), participants equated the CHIS' work ethic to having rapport with that individual. This was demonstrated by a:

Willingness of CHIS to go the 'extra mile' to satisfy a tasking (lawfully!!).  
(Participant 2)

as well as a:

General upbeat positive attitude. The source themselves asking for opportunities for development that the handling team may have missed. Having a genuine interest in the subject matter. Regular positive outcomes from tasking opportunities. (Participant 9)

The tasking outcome was also perceived to be an important indicator of rapport, whereby participants alluded to both detailed and reliable intelligence. If the use of rapport has been shown to assist elicitation in a number of interviewing contexts (e.g. Alison et al., 2013; Goodman-Delahunty et al., 2014; Redlich et al., 2014; Vallano et al., 2015), then using the tasking outcome or intelligence yield (e.g. ORBIT; Alison et al., 2013) may be one way of demonstrating that rapport is present.

From a nonverbal perspective, participants noted that observing, and to some extent sensing, the CHIS' relaxed body language (e.g. take their coat off, smiling or mirroring the source handler's behaviour) was one way of knowing rapport had been achieved. This resonates with being comfortable in the interaction and is exemplified by the following participant's response:

Body language, laughter, smiling, eye contact, if they do relax, if they do take a drink off you, you know it's just getting that whole sort of, it's hard to sort of vocalise really, it's just its understanding, looking at the person, yes, they're relaxed, it's like an intuition really, I know it sounds probably silly but it's pretty intuitive this game. (Participant 13)

With regard to the verbal aspect of an interaction, what is divulged by the CHIS and how they share that information was perceived to be an important indicator of rapport. As with personal relationships, the amount of personal information shared can heavily

depend upon the existing relationship with the person receiving that information. A lack of rapport, as a result of maladaptive behaviours (e.g. judgemental, unfriendly or distrustful; Alison & Alison, 2017) can quickly generate negative perceptions of the interviewer and thus close down the interviewee's willingness to share meaningful information (Russano et al., 2014; Semel, 2012). Hence, when an interviewee begins to share personal information, this may be a strong indicator of rapport, and that the interviewee feels the relationship is at an appropriate level to divulge such information:

How they're speaking to you, I think if they're openly discussing things with you I think that's a big one, some people might hold back in the first one or two meetings but as the relationship progresses they start telling you more about their personal circumstances, I think also you start seeing a personality of that person, so rather than just being sort of straight faced, they might start laughing and joking and throwing a little bit of themselves into it, so yeah easy to speak to.

(Participant 19)

A relaxed environment, through both verbal and nonverbal techniques, not only has been found to influence an individual to share information (i.e. quantity) but can also positively impact on the quality of memory recall (Vallano et al., 2015). Moreover, rapport-based interviewing may encourage multiple retrieval attempts (Memon et al., 1997), which, supported by the use of *open-ended* questions, should maximise the elicitation of intelligence (Vallano & Schreiber Compo, 2011).

#### **2.7.6. (vi) Training rapport**

A number of participants ( $n = 7$ ) perceived that rapport could not be something that a person can be trained to develop, suggesting that rapport appears feigned if a person does not possess an innate ability to build rapport, for example:

I think you can assess how comfortable somebody is at building rapport and certainly within [previous training] there are elements of that course that focus on that, so they'll take you into a public house environment and tell you to strike up a conversation with two different people in there and extract x number of pieces of information from them, so you can assess how comfortable somebody is as doing that, but if somebody is not comfortable at doing it I am not convinced you train them to be comfortable. (Participant 17)

However, the majority of participants ( $n = 17$ ) believed that training can help people to build rapport. Participants noted that for rapport training, individuals require an existing natural basis of interpersonal skills, which in turn can be developed through training. Participants perceived interpersonal skills to involve elements of verbal and nonverbal communication techniques, adequate self-awareness, being personable, and genuine empathy (Redlich et al., 2014; Risan et al., 2016). One participant compared training rapport to interview training:

Can you train someone to interview? Yeah you can, you can teach them a legislative framework, are they going to be naturally good at it? Maybe yes, maybe no, natural communicators are people who can naturally interview, an interview is just a conversation with some legal framework, rapport building, if you're not the sort of person who walks in, hi how you doing? Big smile, bit of eye contact, bit of confidence, then you're probably never going to do it, it's almost like a little bit false and stuttery, you can become better at it, you know there are some good skills and tricks you can teach people, but you know things naturally we do, when I am talking to you we do nod, we smile, we want to send out those receptors that you're going in the right direction, almost here now if I was saying something completely batty, you don't agree with, you're not there shaking your head tutting, because I will dry up very quickly . . . you know it doesn't matter if you agree with it, what matters is they're talking, so I think you

can train it to a point, I think there's some natural skills, some people are naturally more gregarious, we look at how people are recruited in radicalisation, you know they are naturally gregarious, if you ask someone to sit down and say why were you radicalised? What was that person like? They were engaging, they were gregarious, I had confidence in them, what do you want from your handler? Oh, I want them to be gregarious, have confidence in them, so there's quite similar skills those people with manipulation skills. (Participant 24)

Participants referred to training rapport by highlighting techniques that assist with rapport building and its maintenance, which included training on social psychology, communication and persuasion:

I've been taught it by a lecture or a training day, material about reciprocity, liking, authority, scarcity, social proof, commitment and consistency, a body of work by Robert Cialdini about sales techniques, how to build the rapport and relationship to sell them a product, all that stuff applies within CHIS handling, so I suppose if you teach that you can teach rapport building. (Participant 22)

It is likely that source handlers already implicitly use motivational interviewing skills; however, training that incorporates motivational interviewing may reinforce effective interviewers to become more aware of the skills they are using to build rapport (Alison et al., 2015). Further still, it is important that source handlers are aware of how maladaptive behaviours may be detrimental to rapport (Alison et al., 2014) and ultimately intelligence collection (Alison & Alison, 2017).

By building upon the natural communication skills that already exist within the source handler, the development of effective communication is the foundation of both establishing and maintaining rapport. Additionally, one participant highlighted that:

I think they can train the handlers to identify how they can get the hooks into the person. (Participant 11)

Training source handlers to identify the hooks of a CHIS refers to quickly understanding the CHIS' motivations (Billingsley, 2001) and establishing a common ground, and using this to influence rapport, thus in turn assisting with elicitation. Perceived to be trainable, this effective technique could significantly impact upon the outcome of an interaction, especially in relation to ideological hooks, which have shown to be influential motivators for CHIS (e.g. Cooper, 2011).

Finally, participants perceived that learning from good examples and scenario-based training were effective ways of training rapport. Exposure to various settings was considered highly beneficial to rapport development, such as training in a safe environment, learning from previous life experiences and learning from other colleagues:

Seeing how the other guys are building rapport and how they're engaging with an individual, subtly you go through that training in as much as, ah so you had somebody that does that, and they go oh I particularly like that bit, the comment that they made, the rapport that they've established by touching on that particular subject. . . . but I know that for me it more than likely wouldn't sound right but I can do the same if I make it more personal to myself, so it's making it more comfortable when I say it, so I would say working with other people, learning it on the job and then adapting it to your own personal benefit. (Participant 21)

Overall, it was found that source handlers can be made aware of techniques that can be employed to assist with rapport (i.e. mirroring, informal introductions, politeness) and through practice (e.g. various scenarios). They perceived that training rapport can help source handlers identify strategies (i.e. hooks, Cooper, 2011) that work for them

to build relationships with CHIS (Billingsley, 2001). With rapport considered essential to the outcome of an intelligence gathering interaction (e.g. recruitment, intelligence yield, maintaining the relationship, persuading someone to meet again; Alison et al., 2013; Goodman-Delahunty et al., 2014; Russano et al., 2014; Stanier & Nunan, 2018), this should reinforce rapport as a vital element of source handler training, which is currently lacking from national source handler training courses.

## **2.8. Limitations and future directions**

The present research achieved privileged access to a unique sample of police source handlers who work within counter-terrorism dedicated source units: professionals who have not previously been researched. While it is acknowledged that the sample only comprised 24 participants, a number of counter-terrorism hubs across England and Wales were represented, and all counter-terrorism source handlers are trained to the same national standard. Counter-terrorism source handling is a specialist policing role, which, as a subsection of police officers are relatively small in numbers. The present self-reported data provided a representative insight into the participants' perceptions and experiences of rapport with CHIS, allowing an element of transferability of the results. However, rapport is a dyadic relationship, and the present research has only addressed the perceptions of one side (i.e. the source handler). Future research may wish to address this by exploring the perceptions and experiences of intelligence sources (subject to appropriate vetting and access). It is acknowledged that research based upon self-reported data is susceptible to socially desirable answers and inaccurate memories of past events (Robson & McCartan, 2016). Hence, the structured interview protocol consisted of *open-ended* questions, which did not prompt participants for answers. Since reported perceptions and experiences may differ to



actual behaviour, the next phase of this programme of research coded rapport in real-life audio recorded source handler interactions.

## **2.9. Conclusion**

This research is believed to be the first of its kind in exploring the perceptions and experiences of police source handlers from England and Wales counter-terrorism dedicated source units. It was identified that rapport was perceived to be essential to the collection of HUMINT, with participants stressing the importance of building and maintaining rapport. Effective communication, establishing common ground and trust, reciprocity and a concern for welfare were considered key to rapport. The majority of participants believed rapport could be trained to some degree. While rapport was not viewed exclusively as a natural skill, participants perceived that some natural attributes are required to build rapport, with those natural attributes being refined and developed through training and experience.

Rapport-based interviewing has been shown to be effective in a range of contexts (e.g. Alison et al., 2013; Christiansen et al., 2018; Goodman-Delahunty et al., 2014; Redlich et al., 2014; Russano et al., 2014; Semel, 2012), and the present research adds to that evidence-base. The fact that a sample of specialist police officers, who have not previously been the subject of research, perceive and experience rapport similarly to other law enforcement professionals should be considered a strength that advances our understanding of rapport, rather than a limitation. An appreciation of the perceptions and experiences of HUMINT practitioners advances the academic literature, highlights areas for future research and may in turn inform practice.

This research therefore concludes that rapport should be considered fundamental to the source handler and CHIS relationship, due to its perceived impact

on maximising intelligence elicitation. Taken together, the training methods and rapport behaviours discussed by source handlers in light of previous research should be implemented into the national source handler training course. Not only should source handlers be made aware of adaptive behaviours of rapport that are beneficial, it is vital that they are also aware of how maladaptive behaviours may be detrimental to rapport (Alison et al., 2014) and ultimately intelligence collection (Alison & Alison, 2017).

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## **Chapter 3: Source Handler Perceptions of the Interviewing Processes**

### **Employed with Informants**

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#### **3.1. Abstract**

The collection of accurate, detailed, and timely intelligence buttresses critical law enforcement decision-making. However, the quality and quantity of the intelligence gathered relies heavily upon the interviewing techniques used to retrieve it. The perceptions of intelligence practitioners are key to developing an understanding of practices concerning intelligence collection. Yet, to date, no research has been undertaken that explores the United Kingdom's Source Handlers' perceptions of the interviewing processes employed with informants. The present study interviewed 24 Source Handlers from Counter Terrorism Dedicated Source Units in the United Kingdom. Five themes emerged from the interviews, (i) a comparison between interviewing and debriefing; (ii) the PEACE model in intelligence interviews; (iii) the importance of effective communication; (iv) Source Handlers' use of cognitive retrieval techniques; and, (v) Source Handler interview training. The perceived commonalities between interviewing and debriefing provided support for the transferability of investigative interviewing research and practices into the collection of Human Intelligence (HUMINT), reiterating themes (ii), (iii), and (iv). Finally, participants highlighted a need for additional training concerning intelligence

gathering techniques, as police officers who are responsible for gathering HUMINT could benefit from further professional development based on investigative interviewing research and professional practices.

Keywords: Intelligence; Source Handler; informant; perceptions; investigative interviewing; PEACE

### **3.2. Introduction**

The collection of accurate, detailed and timely intelligence supports law enforcement decision-making. Intelligence generates leads of enquires, which aim to prevent criminal activity at a local, regional, national and international level. Further still, the distinction between intelligence and information is key to what will ultimately be collected, recorded, analysed, and subsequently shared within and across law enforcement and partner agencies (Stanier & Nunan, 2018). Hence, ‘intelligence is information designed for action’ (Grieve, 2004, p. 25). However, the quality and quantity of the intelligence gathered relies on interviewing techniques. As such, maximising the amount of intelligence appears highly dependent upon a better understanding and application of psychological research on memory and communication.

This study gained unprecedented access to a range of Counter Terrorism Dedicated Source Units (CTDSU) in the United Kingdom (UK). Consequently, 24 Source Handlers were interviewed about their perceptions of the interviewing processes employed during interactions with Covert Human Intelligence Sources (CHIS, hereafter informants), and the applicability of investigative interviewing techniques and models to intelligence collection. UK CTDSUs are responsible for the

day-to-day management of counter terrorism and domestic extremist informants, governed primarily by the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000. The existing literature on Human Intelligence (HUMINT) has for the most part been conducted outside the UK (e.g. Evans, Meissner, Brandon, Russano, & Kleinman, 2010; Oleszkiewicz, Granhag, & Kleinman, 2017; Russano, Narchet, Kleinman, & Meissner, 2014). Whilst research on memory retrieval and cognition applies to informants globally, the present study fills a research gap regarding UK Source Handlers' perceptions of the interviewing processes employed with informants.

### **3.3. Interviewing for intelligence**

Interactions with human sources, and subsequently the collection of HUMINT forms a major role within the intelligence picture in the UK. HUMINT interviews<sup>1</sup> take place in a number of operational circumstances, with many occurring within a collapsing time frame. For example, conducting an exploratory prisoner debrief within a 45-minute prison visit, during a port stop whereby a passenger arrives into the country, within police custody where suspects are detained for other offences unconnected with the Source Handlers approach, and a cold call pitch (unsolicited contact) in person or via the telephone. Such interviews aim to develop a long-term rapport (see Meehan, Kelly, & McClary, 2019) to bring the human source on board as an informant, in order to conduct additional intelligence interviews going forward. Once established, secure meetings can be arranged that allow for a more thorough interview, as time and location is more flexible outside of a formal criminal justice setting.

Authorised informants are legally defined as CHIS and while not a legal requirement, it is embedded practice for all law enforcement agencies to manage their informants within Dedicated Source Units (DSUs). A DSU within England and Wales

has the responsibility to identify, assess, recruit and deploy informants. The DSU structure, subject to resourcing, may include a number of different functions; recruitment team, prison team, handling team and an analytical and research desk. In practise, it is not uncommon for the roles to be undertaken by the same Source Handlers. Informants are managed in accordance with the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA 2000) and its Codes of Practice (Home Office, 2018). RIPA 2000 and the associated national policing doctrine covers informant authorisations, informant's security and welfare and general oversight arrangements.

Despite the statutory framework outlined by RIPA 2000 and internal policy and practice, the legislation and accompanying codes are silent on the rules around the techniques used within informant interactions. Source Handlers undertake intelligence interviews of informants (i.e. CHIS) which do not fall under the provisions contained within the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (PACE 1984), regarding the detention, treatment and questioning of suspects. Moreover, current Source Handler training in the UK includes little mention of interviewing techniques. Therefore, the authors reiterate that research and training concerning investigative interviewing (e.g. Clarke & Milne, 2016; Evans et al., 2010; Fisher & Geiselman, 2019; Milne & Bull, 1999; Shepherd & Griffiths, 2013) should be applied to the intelligence context. This is because there are two key similarities between investigative interviewing and intelligence debriefing: they both aim to obtain reliable and detailed information and both concern interviewing witnesses, albeit informants are 'a special type of witness' (Billingsley, Nemitz, & Bean, 2001, p. 7).

In England and Wales, the PEACE model of interviewing has been established over 25 years (an acronym for the model's five phases of Planning and Preparation; Engage and Explain; Account; Closure; and Evaluation, College of Policing, 2019).

This model is built on interviewing techniques such as the Cognitive Interview (CI), which is designed to gather information that is based on scientific principles concerning how memories are stored and accessed. The CI has been found to increase the amount of correct information given by interviewees (Fisher & Geiselman, 1992; Memon, Meissner, & Fraser, 2010; Milne & Bull, 1999). The present study discussed the application of the PEACE model and cognitive retrieval techniques to HUMINT collection, as perceived by Source Handlers themselves.

### **3.4. The PEACE model of interviewing**

The introduction of the PEACE model<sup>2</sup> (Central Planning and Training Unit, 1992) provided the police with a flexible model, exemplifying the information gathering approach by highlighting interviewee vulnerability, the frailty of human memory, and the consequences of unethical interviewing. Supported by psychological theory and research (Walsh & Bull, 2010), the PEACE model promotes information gathering via rapport building, effective communication, open-mindedness and an understanding of memory which is equally applicable to Source Handler and informant interactions.

First, the Planning and Preparation phase would encourage Source Handlers to research the person of interest before the interview and assist with rapport building (Meehan et al., 2019). Second, the Engage and Explain phase involves the Source Handler developing and maintaining rapport in order to create conditions so the informant can talk freely and understand the purpose of the interaction, whilst assessing the informants' capabilities of providing comprehensive information (and then adapting their interview style to accommodate) (Alison, Alison, Noone, Elntib, & Christiansen, 2013; Walsh & Bull, 2012). Third, in the Account phase, the informant is given the scope to provide fully the information they know. This phase

encourages the use of Conversation Management (CM), the CI, and the relevant cognitive retrieval techniques to collect additional information (Clarke & Milne, 2016; Shepherd & Griffiths, 2013). Questions are asked to prompt the informant to provide fulsome details and clarification when required. Fourth, the Closure phase provides the informant the chance to add or clarify anything, and for the Source Handler to discuss the next steps and ensure that rapport has been maintained throughout (Alison et al., 2013; Walsh & Bull, 2012). The final phase involves Evaluation, which urges the Source Handler to reflect on the interview process, understand what information has been collected and take the appropriate actions in response. The PEACE model can provide an informative structure for effective intelligence interviews.

### **3.5. Cognitive retrieval techniques**

In the Account phase, a Source Handler should be trained to employ a range of cognitive retrieval techniques to assist information collection (Memon et al., 2010). The CI is a flexible technique which was developed to enhance the social interaction and cognitive processes (Fisher & Geiselman, 1992; Milne & Bull, 1999). The social interaction is enhanced via the employment of rapport-based interviewing (Alison et al., 2013). Redlich, Kelly, and Miller (2014) examined U.S. military and federal interrogators' perceived use various interrogation techniques. Regardless of the intended outcome and context of the interrogation, rapport and relationship building were reported as the most frequently used, and perceived as the most effective, especially when compared to confrontational techniques (Redlich et al., 2014).

Rapport-based interviewing should facilitate cognitive processes, which are supported via a range of techniques such as the Mental Reinstatement of Context (MRC) and multiple and varied retrieval avenues. Fisher and Geiselman (2019)

advocated for the CI to be utilised in non-criminal contexts, with specific reference to gathering intelligence from human sources. In particular, Leins, Fisher, Pludwinski, Rivard, and Robertson (2014) investigated the recall of multiple events from participants, reporting that the CI yielded considerably more information than a free narrative followed by direct questions. Leins et al.'s (2014) study can extrapolate to such intelligence-gathering sessions where informants attend numerous meetings with organised crime groups (Fisher & Geiselman, 2019). Thus, the CI would benefit HUMINT scenarios, which concern interviewing for intelligence (alike investigative interviews; Meissner, Surmon-Böhr, Oleszkiewicz, & Alison, 2017).

The original CI components (i.e. report everything; context reinstatement; change order; change perspective) are designed to assist the memory retrieval process (see Fisher & Geiselman, 1992). However, interactions with informants are usually constrained by time. Once the security of a Source Handler and informant meeting is in place and the welfare of the informant has been checked, time for the interaction might be limited. In investigative interviews, when faced with such time challenges it has been found that the full set of CI techniques cannot be used and modified version of the CI is often conducted (Dando, Wilcock, & Milne, 2009). Hence, research concerning modified CIs, such as those using sketch plans (Dando et al., 2009; Eastwood, Snook, & Luther, 2019), timeline technique (Hope, Mullis, & Gabbert, 2013), and self-generated cues (Leins et al., 2014), which are short and are effective at enhancing recall are beneficial to the HUMINT context.

Modified CIs have been found to be invariably effective in gathering detailed information, while reducing the time taken, when compared to the full CI (Dando et al., 2009). Two CI techniques in particular; report everything (encourages a recall in as much detail as possible without editing, regardless of perceived importance of the



details or how partially remembered) and Mental Reinstatement of Context (MRC; mentally reconstruct both the physical and emotional context of the event to assist recall) have been found effective (Milne & Bull, 2002). Furthermore, Dando et al. (2009) examined another memory retrieval technique, the Sketch MRC which encouraged the participant to draw a detailed sketch/plan of the event whilst verbally describing as they draw. Such a technique would enable informants to recall from their own retrieval cues and not be led by the Source Handler. Dando et al. (2009) found that the Sketch MRC was as effective as those interviews where MRC alone was used and faster. They also found that interviews using the Sketch MRC prompted more information than interviews that did not employ the MRC at all (i.e. 'standard interviews', where the interviewee was just asked to report everything), while also yielding fewer confabulations (Dando et al., 2009).

Cognitive mnemonics such as the timeline technique (Hope et al., 2013) and self-generated cues (Wheeler & Gabbert, 2017) may also assist in circumstances where an informant is required to recall specific details from a series of events (e.g. attending numerous secret meetings). The timeline technique confirmed that episodic memory is temporally ordered. Hence, the temporal context, which links to the chronological order, plays an important role in assisting with information recall (Hope et al., 2013). That study also found that the timeline technique retrieved more correct details than interviews that used free recall techniques.

In turn, self-generated cues would encourage the informant to generate salient details about the to-be-remembered event to facilitate further retrieval (Wheeler & Gabbert, 2017). This is a non-leading interview technique as it would have no input from the Source Handler. It has been found that self-generated cues helped participants recall more than twice as many person, conversation, action, and setting details (Leins

et al., 2014), and that self-generated cues increased reporting with no cost to accuracy compared to other-generated cues or free recall (Wheeler & Gabbert, 2017). Recent research has developed the timeline technique to incorporate self-generated cues, finding that more correct details were reported in comparison to both the other-generated cues and no cues conditions (Kontogianni, Hope, Taylor, Vrij, & Gabbert, 2018). Such developments would be applicable to informant interviews as the timeline technique and self-generated cues benefit recall.

### **3.6. The present study**

The perceptions and experiences of intelligence practitioners are key to developing an understanding of intelligence collection. However, to the authors' knowledge, no research has been conducted on Source Handlers' perceptions and experiences of the interviewing processes employed with informants in the UK. The present study attempted to address this gap by conducting interviews with 24 Source Handlers from a range of UK CTDSUs and discussing the applicability of investigative interviewing research and practice to Source Handlers and informant interactions.

### **3.7. Method**

#### ***3.7.1. Participants***

After receiving ethical clearances from the first author's university and research funders, 24 Source Handlers from a number of CTDSUs across England were recruited. 96% were male and 4% female. The participants' experience as a Source Handler ranged from 1–15 years ( $M = 6.35$ ,  $SD = 3.72$ ) with their ages ranging from 33–59 years ( $M = 44.25$ ,  $SD = 6.48$ ). 50% of participants had received PEACE training, with their most recent training course ranging from 1994 to 2016. The

participants in this study are the same sample as those from the authors' previous work, which examined Source Handlers' perceptions and experiences of building and maintaining rapport with informants (Nunan, Stanier, Milne, Shawyer, & Walsh, 2020).

### **3.7.2. Materials**

A structured interview protocol ( $N = 32$  questions) was employed and was divided into three large topics, (i) rapport (Nunan et al., 2020); (ii) interviewing processes (the present study); and (iii) provenance (the focus of further study). The data was divided into three topics due to the large quantity of qualitative data generated from the interviews, and because the research aimed to generate a number of thematic themes on each of the three topics. The present study explored the themes generated from the questions ( $n = 10$ ; see Appendix F) of subsection (ii) interviewing processes, which addressed the perceptions and experiences of interviewing processes employed with informants. Interviews were audio recorded and stored on a secure University drive.

### **3.7.3. Procedure**

Access to the police officer sample was provided by the second author, through their contacts within each CTDSU, who acted as designated gatekeepers. The first author used a purposive sampling method, which involved contacting each CTDSU gatekeeper to set up structured interviews with HUMINT police officers who matched the inclusion criteria of regularly gathering intelligence from informants. Due to the operational commitments of the participants, the first author undertook the structured interviews in one of three ways; (i) audio recorded face-to-face interviews ( $n = 11$ ); (ii) audio recorded telephone interviews ( $n = 4$ ); or (iii) participants provided written

responses via the designated gatekeeper's email ( $n = 9$ ), which resulted in a sample of 24. Interviews conducted by methods (i) and (ii) ranged between 19–55 min duration ( $M = 37.45$ ,  $SD = 12.12$ ), being later transcribed with the identifiable details redacted by the first and second author for data analysis. As the participants work within covert units, they were provided with the option to provide consent verbally before the audio recorded interview took place. Further, participants were required to read through and approve their own interview transcripts to ensure correct transcription, and to provide participants with the option to redact their transcript, if deemed inappropriate for open publication. Participants who responded via email had any identifiable details or operationally sensitive information redacted by their designated gatekeeper before it was sent to first author's University email address.

#### ***3.7.4. Data analysis***

The qualitative responses were thematically analysed based on the guidance by Braun and Clarke (2006), incorporating a deductive and inductive analysis process. The design of the interview protocol was initially deductive in nature, by exploring interviewing procedures, techniques and models. The responses were then analysed inductively, allowing themes to emerge. The data analysis process consisted of the following steps; (i) collating and listing the responses from participants under each question; (ii) the first and second authors thoroughly familiarised themselves with the transcriptions; (iii) a wealth of first-order codes were identified from the responses in an attempt to code every discussion point made by each participant; (iv) the abundance of first order codes were merged to create fewer second-order codes; and (v) second-order codes were combined further to establish five overarching themes which were then discussed and agreed upon with the second author (see Appendix G for an

example of the thematic analysis process) Inter-rater reliability was undertaken during the coding process. An independent rater coded 10% of the transcripts from the first-order codes through to the final themes. A Cohen's Kappa 0.87 was revealed between the two sets of scores, showing a strong strength of agreement (Robson & McCartan, 2016).

### **3.8. Results**

Five themes were identified from the results: (i) a comparison between interviewing and debriefing; (ii) the PEACE model in intelligence interviews; (iii) the importance of effective communication; (iv) Source Handlers' use of cognitive retrieval techniques; and, (v) Source Handler interview training. Exemplar quotations that best demonstrate the identified themes are discussed with reference to the psychological literature of police interviewing and cognitive retrieval techniques.

#### **3.8.1. (i) A comparison between interviewing and debriefing**

Participants were asked whether they believed that a difference exists between an investigative interview and an intelligence debrief with an informant. From the responses, four subthemes emerged; (a) legislative framework; (b) formality of the interaction; (c) techniques utilised in the interaction; and (d) outcome of the interaction.

##### *(a) Legislative framework*

In England and Wales, different legislation underpin police investigative interviewing and intelligence debriefs with informants. The former is controlled by the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984, which governs procedures for detaining and questioning

suspects, while the latter falls under RIPA 2000. Participants commonly contrasted suspect interviewing with intelligence debriefs in regard to such legal rules. For example, Participant 2 stated:

There are strict rules about the way the investigative interview is undertaken (PACE 1984, tape recording, access to legal advice etc). Debriefing is usually about securing historical information about an event that has already happened or about people of interest to law enforcement. There is no requirement to adhere to PACE 1984 rules although any subsequent tasking may require consideration of RIPA 2000. (Participant 2)

Participant 2 highlighted a clear distinction between the investigative interviewing and informant debriefs, demonstrating that the legislative oversight differs when comparing an evidence-driven suspect interview bound by PACE 1984 (Home Office, 2019), with an intelligence-driven debrief which may require RIPA 2000 authorisations regarding informants.

*(b) Formality of the interaction*

This theme was reported as a further difference, especially when participants compared a suspect interview with an informant debrief. Participants explained that the points to prove element of an investigative interview (the required pieces of evidence to prove the offence in question has taken place), due to a specific criminal offence or number of offences being investigated, requires a more formal interview, preceded by advice as to the interviewee's legal rights. In contrast, an informant debrief was perceived as a more informal interaction, which does not have to be conducted before the 24-hour custody clock expires, PACE 1984. For example;

The investigative interview in my view within the police they take part in a particular format, in a particular location, for a particular reason for an evidential

gathering purpose to establish a particular fact, whereas a debrief isn't that, it can be at any location, on any situation, at any given time. (Participant 22)

As noted, an intelligence debrief provides greater flexibility with regards the time and location, especially if an informant comes across new intelligence and wishes to meet. To enhance the Source Handler and informant relationship, the Source Handler will look to arrange meetings that are more suitable for the informant, as location is considered an important situational factor (Redlich et al., 2014).

*(c) Techniques utilised in the interaction*

With regards to the techniques used during the two forms of interactions, the key difference reported by the participants was the lack of challenging of the account within debriefs in comparison to interviews, where officers are trained to challenge when, for example, inconsistencies in an account remain unresolved after seeking clarifications from a suspect:

The investigative interview, you're looking at achieving sort of evidence by questioning, you're looking at challenging discrepancies, whereas in a debrief there's less of a challenge ... it's very much a recall, a detailed recall, but it's very much just a, what have you experienced, what have you seen, what have you heard, when have you heard it, it's more of a witness interview as opposed to a suspect interview. (Participant 15)

Participant 15 also highlighted a key overlap between witness interviewing and intelligence debriefing, which referred back to Billingsley et al.'s (2001, p. 7) notion that informants are a witness, 'albeit a special type of witness, but a witness nonetheless'.

*(d) Outcome of the interaction*

Half of the participants highlighted the differences in outcome of the interactions. While information received from suspects in an investigative interview would be treated as evidence, gathered intelligence was no more than actionable information. Nevertheless, despite such different labels, participants reported that both an investigative interview and an intelligence debrief are essentially one and the same:

Both are there to seek the truth and to try and validate ... I think they come from the same skill set, I think the similarities are more than the differences, both are there to try and underpin it and to corroborate that account so I think the term debrief is another word for an investigative interview so having thought about it now I think my view is they are the same but with different labels. (Participant 24)

### **3.8.2. (ii) *The PEACE model in intelligence interviews***

Participants highlighted a range of techniques associated with the PEACE model of interviewing. This theme derived from the participants' discussions concerning the importance of planning, interviewing flexibility, interview/debrief objectives, and the evaluation of the intelligence gathered (i.e. provenance). Participant 24 advocated the PEACE model:

Motivational questions are the two stock and trade, if you're not using the PEACE plan I don't think there is a better one that I am aware ... you can't just rock up and hope it all works out for you, but if you plan it, if you sit there and plan your interview, no matter how good an interviewer you are, you've got a fine chance if you've planned your interview. (Participant 24)

Interestingly, despite an awareness regarding the importance of planning for the interaction with an informant, it was reported that planning was under used. A lack of planning was discussed as impacting upon the efficiency of interviewing informants



under time constraints, planning training for the informant, and incorporating rapport-building social activities into future meetings.

I would say actually planning is under used and then actually thinking about the structure of your interview, I think too many people still think they don't need a plan, I know what I am doing, go in and talk, and actually when they come out and you say, what did they say about this? Ah I didn't ask them about that, well why didn't you because that was part of that plan? So, I think the planning ... we will say right ok who's going to do what? What are we going to do? What's the aims of this interview? Why are we having this meet today? What do we want to get from it? (Participant 18)

Additionally, a vital aspect of a Source Handler's role is to establish the provenance of the collected information to determine whether it can be safely and successfully actioned and under what operational circumstances. The process of 'provenancing' can be conducted prior, during, and post interview and thus associates to the PEACE model throughout. For example, participants described that they explain the significant level of detail in the information required from their informant. For example;

A lot of focus around, how do you know that?, why do you know that?, who else knows that?, and sort of again there is a lot of focus on risk when you're speaking to people. (Participant 12)

### ***3.8.3. (iii) The importance of effective communication***

Effective communication should flow throughout an interaction with an informant, spanning across the Engage and Explain, Account and Closure phases. In particular, the Account phase, underpinned by an uninterrupted account, encourages the use of relevant and varied cognitive retrieval techniques to retrieve additional information

(Clarke & Milne, 2016; Shepherd & Griffiths, 2013). The Account phase is also where questions are asked to prompt the informant to provide clarity and greater detail to the initial account.

Participants referenced active listening as a frequently used skill. This skill links heavily to an uninterrupted free recall phase, allowing the informant to talk freely. Active listening not only allows the Source Handler to absorb the information, but to also demonstrate that they are interested in what the informant has to say.

Giving people that time to answer, not interrupting, so I think that the skills we are taught, good interviewer, good handler will use those. (Participant 24)

Following the free recall phase, the use of open questioning aims to gather reliable information, in particular, information concerning provenance, supported by checkable facts. Open questions (i.e. Tell me, Explain to me, and Describe to me; TED questions) are known to gather both greater quality and quantity of information in comparison to closed questioning.

Well that open recall, and then the recall probe, after that you've had what you've got from them, you feel like you've got everything from it and then it's that drilling down on the accuracy of it, just exactly what was it that was said, what exactly was done, and then it's just seeking that same probing to get the provenance of it. (Participant 16)

Moreover, one participant noted that Source Handlers that are aware of the benefits of using open questions over closed questions, have most likely completed additional training in investigative interviews beyond foundational levels.

Participants also stated that once the Source Handler has exhausted their open questions, the use of probing and recapping topic areas was considered to be a frequently used interviewing technique.

Depends on your sources, you can't say there is one [memory technique] you use frequently because each person is different, you have to identify what works for your source. (Participant 11)

#### ***3.8.4. (iv) Source Handlers' use of cognitive retrieval techniques***

Participants commonly perceived interviewing techniques to incorporate a range of cognitive retrieval techniques and some elements of the CI. Probing an informant's account was supported by a range of cognitive retrieval techniques to enhance the information obtained.

Debriefing, eliciting of information so it's more conversational than anything else, but it does come to a particular point when you're looking at specifics that you then go through that process of actually interviewing, picking up on pertinent points and making those particular notes, revisiting them. (Participant 21)

The most frequently reported cognitive retrieval technique used with informants was the use of a free recall.

Open recall more than anything else because it's a nice easy relaxed way ... if you try and force it you either corrupt memory or you get them to forget things, they rush past it because they are trying to get that information out, so just letting them to, again it's conversational, just allow them to remember it and the little triggers that are important to them. (Participant 21)

Additionally, participants noted that recalling in different temporal order and utilising the mental reinstatement of context was fairly common and was undertaken by placing the informant in a suitable cognitive mind-set by putting them at ease and ensuring they remain focussed.

The most popular technique would be to ask the source to put themselves back in the place and describe everything about the situation and how they felt. This may involve asking them to close their eyes and relax. (Participant 7)

In contrast, participants highlighted that reporting from different perspectives, changing the temporal order (reverse order technique) and sketch plans were rarely used cognitive retrieval techniques.

Rather than them sitting there talking to us and us writing it down basically, so just whatever best helps them communicate, you know it might be better they actually have a bit of pen and paper and draw what they are actually talking about, things like that are probably under used and something we don't necessarily always think of at the time. (Participant 12)

Participants stated that they do not use the CI regularly or at all. This was because participants openly revealed only vague memories from their PEACE training course or did not consider the CI appropriate due to the time constraints of an informant interaction.

The cognitive interview is a very effective tool, you know for ABE [a guidance document developed to assist those responsible for interviewing victims and witness]...I've interviewed someone for a week before I was involved as a Tier 5 [an interview advisor], we interviewed her for a week and it was just amazing the amount of stuff she came out with ... do we get to sit down for a week and do a 2 hour session in the morning and a 2 hour session in the afternoon [with an informant], no, that's not real life ... checking they're safe and well that's a standing order, you know the things they are interested in you haven't forgot about, the kids, the exams, the car broke down, when it actually knuckles down into the core business time, it's quite tight, it's tighter than you might think. (Participant 24)

Interestingly, participants were unsure which interviewing techniques were most frequently and least frequently used during intelligence gathering interactions.

### **3.8.5. (V) Source Handler interview training**

An apparent lack of exposure to psychological research-based techniques was evident from the current participants' comments. Participants reported that techniques to assist memory recall must exist but there was a lack of training on this topic and 'refreshers' through continuous professional development days are needed for Source Handlers to embed such techniques into practice:

In honesty I am sure there are plenty because I don't think we are necessarily exposed to that many kinds of techniques ... I don't think we use them routinely enough at all. (Participant 17)

One aim of interview training should be to provide the Source Handler with a toolbelt of interviewing techniques to be appropriately selected for each informant. The importance of training was illustrated by participants, reporting that the use of the CI depended on whether the Source Handler had experienced some form of CI training:

By some people yes and by others not, because they have not done it [CI training], so they probably don't know about it, it's probably a better tool to use in intelligence gathering than it is in some victim based scenarios because actually sometimes what you might take a victim back to might not be the most pleasant thing. (Participant 18)

Interestingly, the attendance to CI training alone was not enough, as one participant reported that they had forgot what the CI was as a result of 6 years passing without any further interview training and called for refresher training to prevent this.

None of the participants discussed using an entire CI with an informant. This is most likely due to the CI's lengthy process (Dando et al., 2009) and the majority of interactions Source Handlers have with their informant are shorter in comparison to investigative interviews.

I suppose we do free recall, taking them back and yeah we do a bit of that, but sometimes you've got to know the individual and you've got to that stage through the rapport ... down the line then your relationship is so good with them that you can say right I need that, let's go back ... and it can become more of an investigative interview once the relationship is built down the track. (Participant 13)

Participants also referenced how training may affect their understanding of the individual differences between informants. It was noted that the techniques they utilised depended upon the circumstances of the interaction, and that it was difficult to assess which techniques should generally be used, as specific techniques may work more effectively with different informants. Therefore, participants highlighted the importance of informants' individual differences.

Everybody's an individual, everybody's different so everybody has different aspects of what they want to do, your informants are all different, and you have to assess them to see what works for them ... I wouldn't say one boot fits all. (Participant 11)

### **3.9. Discussion**

This study explored police Source Handlers' perceptions of informant interviewing processes. The findings highlighted an overlap between the underlying psychological principles of intelligence debriefing and investigative interviewing. The sample acknowledged the obvious differences between the two types of interactions, particularly the formality, legislative oversight, and evidence versus intelligence collection. Despite the acknowledged differences, both forms of interaction strive to collect reliable, timely and detailed information from a human source, which can be achieved by using the same cognitive retrieval techniques (Fisher & Geiselman, 2019).

For example, modified CIs, sketch plans (Dando et al., 2009; Eastwood et al., 2019), the timeline technique (Hope et al., 2013), and self-generated cues (Leins et al., 2014). Therefore, there are good grounds for the implementation of cognitive retrieval techniques into HUMINT practices (see Meissner et al., 2017), underpinned by the PEACE model approach.

As outlined by the first phase of the PEACE model, and emphasised by previous research (Clarke & Milne, 2016; Walsh & Bull, 2010; Walsh & Milne, 2008), interview Planning and Preparation provides a foundation for a successful interaction. Planning for an upcoming informant interaction may also assist a Source Handler to use research-based techniques during the Account phase. Additionally, the Planning and Preparation phase could be utilised to organise lengthier face-to-face meetings, to provide the Source Handler with ample time to use a range of cognitive retrieval techniques with the informant.

The application of the PEACE model to intelligence gathering should encourage a flexible interviewing structure, which utilises rapport building (Walsh & Bull, 2010) to gain a detailed and reliable account (Stanier & Nunan, 2018). The promotion of a more detailed recall concerning the information shared by the informant can also support the process of ‘provenancing’ the gathered intelligence, especially when an open to closed questioning approach is utilised, underpinned by effective communication, and cognitive retrieval techniques (Milne & Bull, 1999).

Additionally, participants noted Source Handlers are likely to have an individual approach to gathering HUMINT. This may provide further support for implementing the PEACE model into informant interactions, especially as the PEACE model’s ethos incorporates a flexible interviewing approach. Conversely, the different communication approaches to informant interactions the Source Handler’s alluded to

may highlight a diverse level of interviewing knowledge and ability across the sample. For example, participants did not commonly perceive interviewing techniques to incorporate a range of cognitive retrieval techniques and a number of interviewing techniques were reported by participants as being underused, and there was some confusion over CM (see Shepherd & Griffiths, 2013) elements such as the challenge phase, which was mentioned as a CI technique.

The upskilling of Source Handlers should promote the use of open questioning, highlight the importance of active listening, and provide the Source Handler with an armoury of cognitive retrieval techniques (Kontogianni et al., 2018; Leins et al., 2014). Participants who stated they do not regularly, or have not used, cognitive retrieval techniques, including elements of the CI, may not be maximising intelligence gathering opportunities. It may also be considered best practice to utilise techniques such as the timeline technique (Hope et al., 2013) and self-generated cues (Wheeler & Gabbert, 2017) in place of summarising. If those Source Handlers who view investigative interviews and debriefs as entirely separate interactions were to perceive them as underpinned by the same psychological and practical foundations, this may generate a further appreciation for the psychology of information gathering. In turn, this may encourage an ethos of interview planning and promote an evidence-based approach.

It is important to discuss the use of cognitive retrieval techniques with context, as HUMINT practices often take place with short time constraints, whereby statutory safety and welfare concerns take priority. Hence, this article aimed to promote the effectiveness and suitability of existing interviewing practices realistically applicable to HUMINT interactions, by highlighting the need for a toolbelt of cognitive retrieval techniques, deployable within the Engage and Explain and Account phase of a PEACE



intelligence interview. Whilst safety and welfare of the informant and Source Handler must take priority, the gathering of intelligence is the *raison d'être* for informants, so effective interviewing practices should also be considered a vital responsibility for Source Handlers.

Currently, central Source Handler training in the UK includes little mention of interviewing techniques. This tallies with the perceptions of the Source Handler sample. The concerns which have been highlighted are justified, as the training regime does not appear to cater sufficiently to the Source Handler's specialised role. A training programme specifically focused on intelligence interviewing needs to be developed to complement the existing Source Handler training course. As the benefits of training can fade over time or be applied inaccurately, interview training should be reinforced through continuing professional development and reviews (Griffiths & Walsh, 2018). Taken together, the adoption of the PEACE model and a toolbelt of cognitive retrieval techniques for intelligence interviews, all supported by a training programme is the starting point in enhancing and professionalising a specialised area of intelligence practice.

### **3.10. Limitations and future direction**

The study acknowledges that a small sample of police officers were interviewed. Though, due to the specialist area of policing (CTDSU), and use of qualitative methodology to understand the sample's perceptions and experiences, the themes identified provide a new insight into covert intelligence practices. As a result of researching operational covert police officers, a pragmatic approach to data collection was required. Therefore, the different methods of data collection may have impacted upon some responses, especially as email responses were occasionally less detailed

than face-to-face and telephone interactions. It must be also noted that this research concerns participants' perceptions rather than observations and evaluations of their actual behaviour (Robson & McCartan, 2016). Perceptions of how often interviewing techniques are used and their effectiveness may differ from their actual practices. Therefore, research should analyse actual audio recorded phone interactions between Source Handlers and informants. Future research should also explore informants' perceptions and experiences of their interactions with Source Handlers.

The lack of awareness and training from DSU staff regarding research on the gathering of intelligence is concerning and should be addressed by reviewing and redesigning informant-related training packages. This will require additional research-based techniques to be incorporated into the original Source Handler training, continuous professional development, written guidance, and the potential for bolt-on courses on intelligence interviewing. Where security permits, interactions should be peer reviewed either directly or remotely by trained assessors (Griffiths & Walsh, 2018). Moreover, academic institutions need to make their research accessible to policing practitioners. Professionalising UK intelligence practices requires a reenergised and prioritised working relationship between academics, intelligence practitioners and operational trainers. The resultant policy and practice should adopt an evidence-based approach to intelligence interviewing.

### **3.11. Notes**

1. For the purposes of this article, the term interviewing is used in its broadest sense to include an intelligence interaction between a police Source Handler (the interviewer) and an informant who may have information of interest (the interviewee).

2. While the PEACE model continues to be the police framework for investigative interviewing (see College of Policing, 2019), it is not underpinned by statutory legislation or specific codes, unlike the management of CHIS.

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## **Chapter 4: Intentional versus incidental encoding: An examination of tasking mock informants to remember**

### **4.1. Abstract**

Actionable intelligence forms a critical role in combating crime. A witness to a crime does not normally anticipate an important event that requires particular attention and recall. However, an informant may be deployed prior to an event with the express intention of information collection. This research explored the impact of a context tasking instruction on intentional memory with mock informants. 90 participants were randomly allocated to one of three conditions: (i) *incidental encoding*, (ii) *intentional encoding* or (iii) *intentional encoding with tasking instruction*, performing a free recall and prompted recall. Participants in the *intentional encoding with tasking instruction* condition reported more correct information during the free recall phase compared to those in the *incidental encoding* condition. A significant increase in incorrect information was reported with the tasking instruction, but at no cost to the overall percentage accuracy. The free recall phase resulted in more accurate recall than the prompts phase.

Keywords: Informants, Human intelligence, Intentional encoding, Incidental encoding, Tasking, Information gathering

### **4.2. Introduction**

The collection of timely, reliable and detailed information, also known as actionable intelligence (Grieve, 2004), is pivotal to law-enforcement decision-making (Stanier, 2013). One strand of intelligence collection is through human sources (HUMINT).

Within HUMINT, authorised informants undertake a critical role in combating organised crime (Chappell, 2015). The operational challenge is ensuring that opportunities to elicit intelligence are maximised.

The way in which an individual is interviewed to gather such intelligence can severely impact upon their memory recall, especially if the methods are coercive (Meissner et al., 2014), use unproductive questioning (e.g., leading questions; Oxburgh, Ost, & Cherryman, 2012), or lack an uninterrupted free recall (Dando, Wilcock, & Milne, 2009). Therefore, interactions with informants (i.e. an intelligence interview) require skilled questioning to elicit reliable and actionable intelligence.

Once legally authorised<sup>3</sup>, informants report their intelligence and take direction from officers who perform the role of informant handlers. Handlers interact with their informants on a regular basis, primarily to ensure their welfare is in check, and also to gather intelligence on criminal activity (Chappell, 2015). Requiring the informant to download their memories to their handler shortly after experiencing a to-be-remembered event has a number of benefits. The immediacy of an informant providing new intelligence to their handlers may minimise memory decay over time, reduce confusion, and potential memory contamination, and provide the handler with ‘live’ intelligence to be actioned. Ultimately, intelligence gathered from an informant will not be actioned until it has been corroborated with another source of information.

Informants may be tasked to report on both past (i.e. an investigation into a shooting) and future events (i.e. a planned shipment of illicit drugs or forthcoming

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<sup>3</sup> In the United Kingdom, covert informants are authorised under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000.

high-risk public order events), providing reliable intelligence to investigate serious and organised crime (Audit Commission, 1993). Therefore, techniques that can assist an informant's memory recall whilst maintaining reliability are vital to ensuring effective intelligence gathering strategies can satisfy organisational intelligence requirements. Unlike witnesses to a crime, who are not anticipating an important event that will require attention and remembering, an informant may be tasked hours, if not days, prior to a to-be-remembered event. Informant tasking is linked to the law enforcements' strategic and tactical intelligence requirements and can be defined as the instructions provided to an informant to gather a particular piece(s) of information (Turcotte, 2008).

The tasking of informants creates an opportunity to provide techniques prior to witnessing an event which may enhance encoding and later recall and in turn, better address the intelligence requirement. The tasking of an informant has received limited academic attention, as memory research has primarily focused on retrieval, whereby the event has taken place, and an interviewing technique is tested for its impact on the recalling of that event with witnesses and suspects. Moreover, informant handlers are generally provided with minimal training or guidance on how to elicit intelligence from an informant, with even less guidance provided to the informant themselves (Nunan, Stanier, Milne, Shawyer, & Walsh, 2020). Therefore, the present research explored the impact of proactive encoding instructions (i.e. directed attention 'tasking') on recall, that could be used before the deployment of gathering HUMINT.

### **4.3. Directed Attention: Tasking for Information**

The multistore or modal model of memory highlights the key role that attention plays in the successful encoding of to-be-remembered information (Atkinson & Shiffrin,

1968). Consciously attending to such information is a necessary action to transfer encoded information into long-term memory (Panksy, Koriat, & Goldsmith, 2005). More contemporary research emphasises that attention facilitates semantic processing (e.g., Craik, Govoni, Naveh-Benjamin, & Anderson, 1996; Naveh-Benjamin, Craik, Gavrilescu, & Anderson, 2000) and the binding of information into a cohesive event (Naveh-Benjamin, 2002). Thus, an informant who knowingly and thus fully attends to the to-be-remembered information is likely to recall more detail and with greater accuracy than an informant whose attention is overloaded or distracted (Panksy et al., 2005).

Reliable recall of an event is also aided by remembering the contextual features through a process known as binding (Kessels, Hobbel, & Postma, 2007; Lekeu et al., 2002). The manner in which contextual factors impact upon memory is underpinned by the *encoding specificity principle* (Tulving & Thomson, 1973). This principle denotes that the effectiveness of memory retrieval is linked to the congruence between encoding and retrieval stages (Thomson & Tulving, 1970; Tulving & Osler, 1968). As such, tasking an informant by highlighting the contextual features of the to-be-remembered event (i.e. directing attention to five core detail types: surrounding, object, person, action and conversation details) should benefit recall. In line with the *encoding specificity principle*, recall may be further benefited by matching the post-recall phase (i.e. prompts phase) to the same five detail types. Hence, directing the attention of an informant introduces the notion of intentionality, by tasking an informant to intentionally encode the to-be-remembered event.

#### **4.4. Intentional and Incidental Memory**

The encoding process can be divided into two strands, (i) intentional encoding, which can be defined as an individual's intention to remember a to-be-remembered event, due to the awareness of an upcoming memory test, or (ii) incidental encoding, where an individual is unaware of the need to remember for a later memory test (Block, 2009; Postman, Adams, & Phillips, 1955). The direction to intentionally remember a stimulus may lead to the allocation of rapid attentional resources, which may enhance encoding (Block, 2009). Additionally, individuals expecting a memory test may emphasise the encoding of information that they believe to be most appropriate to the test (Neill, Beck, Bottalico, & Molloy, 1990).

Indeed, intentional memory has been reported to outperform incidental memory conditions in a number of contexts. Intentional instructions to remember have been shown to enhance recall in comparison to incidental instructions (Dornbush & Winnich, 1967; Eagle & Leiter, 1964; Postman et al., 1955), as well as benefit accuracy (Herman, Lawless, & Marshall, 1957). Additionally, more recent studies have shown that memory quantity performance is superior following an intentional rather than incidental process (e.g., Unsworth & Spillers, 2010) with young adults (Gagnon, Bédard, & Turcotte, 2005), for misinformation of a live event (West & Stone, 2013), and for a film (Migueles & Garcia-Bajos, 1999).

Conversely, with regards to subsequent remembering, memory theory such as *levels of processing* ( Craik & Lockhart, 1972; Intraub & Nicklos, 1985) highlight that the intent-to-remember may be less important than how information is initially processed. Ferrara, Puff, Giola, and Richards (1978) suggested that the encoding process (i.e. they compared physical versus semantic processes) used to help remembering is more of a critical factor for the retention of information than is the

intent to learn per se. This notion is strengthened by a number of studies that have reported no benefit of *intentional encoding* (Auday, Sullivan, & Cross, 1988; Azari, Auday, & Cross, 1989; Bastin & Van der Linden, 2005; Plancher et al., 2010). For example, Castelhana and Henderson (2005) found that memory accuracy for objects incidentally encoded during a visual search (replicated by Williams, 2010) was not different to memory for objects that were intentionally memorised.

On the face of it, the literature more generally points towards a simple conclusion that intentional encoding will outperform incidental encoding (e.g., Gagnon et al., 2005; Herman et al., 1957; Migueles & Garcia-Bajos, 1999; Unsworth & Spillers, 2010; West & Stone, 2013). However, previous research (e.g., Auday et al., 1988; Azari et al., 1989; Bastin & Van der Linden, 2005; Castelhana & Henderson, 2005; Plancher et al., 2010) has also provided a mixed picture across a range of stimuli for intentional versus incidental memory, which may account for the limited research in this area over the past few decades (Block, 2009). Research has also extensively explored encoding with verbal materials, but less so with picture stimuli (Williams, 2010), and even less so with live events, virtual reality, or films as the to-be-remembered event.

#### **4.5. The Present Study**

The tasking of an informant has received little academic attention, especially with regard to encoding. Research has demonstrated the importance of directed attention and its potential effect on memory recall. Therefore, the present research explored the concept of intentional versus incidental encoding, and the impact of a tasking instruction on memory recall for a complex and realistic stimulus. The study consisted of three conditions: Condition one (*incidental encoding*), the control condition,

represented a typical witness paradigm whereby participants remained unaware of an upcoming to-be-remembered event; Condition two (*intentional encoding*) represented an untasked informant, but were aware of an upcoming to-be-remembered event; and Condition three (*intentional encoding with tasking instruction*) represented an informant who was aware of the upcoming event and tasked to think about the surrounding, objects, actions, people, and conversations whilst encoding the to-be-remembered event. All participants subsequently undertook a free recall, followed by five prompts (think about the surrounding, objects, actions, people, and conversations details). The tasking instruction was matched at the prompts phase based upon the ideology of the *encoding specificity principle* (Tulving & Thomson, 1973). It was predicted that: at free recall, the *intentional encoding with tasking instruction* would result in a greater amount of correct detail in comparison to the *incidental encoding* condition and *intentional encoding* condition (Hypothesis One); the use of prompts would be more beneficial for correct detail in the *intentional encoding with tasking instruction* condition when encoding and retrieval are matched, than in the *incidental encoding* and *intentional encoding* conditions (Hypothesis Two); and there will be no difference in accuracy rates across conditions (Hypothesis Three).

#### **4.6. Method**

All procedures performed in the present study, which involved human participants, were in accordance with the ethical standards of the institutional and funding research committee (University of Portsmouth and Centre for Research and Evidence on Security Threats, CREST). Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study.

#### ***4.6.1. Participants and design***

95 undergraduate participants were recruited via poster advertisements that were placed around the university campus. A cover story was deployed to prevent participants in the incidental memory condition from deliberately trying to remember the presented stimulus. The posters referred to research about the views of informants rather than providing any reference to memory. Additionally, the advert stated that participants would be paid 10 GBP on completion.

Five participants were excluded from the present study. Two participants were removed because they did not complete the whole experiment and three further participants were removed because they were familiar with one or more actors in the stimulus, thus possibly confounding the results. Therefore, a total of 90 participants (age range = 18-52 years;  $M_{age} = 21.92$  years;  $SD = 6.32$ ; 68 females, 22 male) were included within the present data set. A single factor between-subjects design was utilised. The independent variable was Encoding Condition and was at three levels; (i) *incidental encoding*, (ii) *intentional encoding*, and (iii) *intentional encoding with tasking instruction*, with 30 participants being randomly allocated at each level of this between-subjects factor. The dependent variables were: (i) correct detail, (ii) incorrect detail, (iii) confabulations, and (iv) percentage accuracy.

#### ***4.6.2. Materials***

The stimulus event comprised a bespoke film that depicted the planning of a drugs deal. The film lasted 3 min 51s, which was shot from the point of view of the *informant* (i.e. the participant watching the film), who was sat in the corner of the room for the majority of the film. The film started with one male greeting another male and the *informant*. The two males and *informant* walked into a living room where a third male



was sat waiting. Then three males discussed in detail how they planned to order a quantity of drugs from the online dark net to be sold onto local drug dealers. On one occasion, the camera moves closer to the central table to see the objects present. The script was designed with the help of an experienced investigator in this field (author six), to enhance the realism of the stimulus event.

#### **4.6.3. Procedure**

Participants were randomly assigned to one of the three conditions and each undertook the experiment individually. Participants assigned to condition one (*incidental encoding*) were provided with the following instruction: “Are you ready? Please watch the event”.

Participants assigned to condition two (*intentional encoding*) were instructed: “You will be playing the role of an informant, so you are going to watch an event that you will need to remember, as I will ask you to recall this event to me later in as much detail as you possibly can. Are you ready? Please watch the event”.

Participants assigned to condition three (*intentional encoding with tasking instruction*) were given the following instruction: “I am about to give you an instruction, so please listen carefully as I will only say this once. You will be playing the role of an informant, so you are going to watch an event that you will need to remember, as I will ask you to recall this event to me later in as much detail as you possibly can. To help you remember the event, I am going to give you some cues to concentrate on while you watch the event. It is like when you have lost something, like a set of keys or a pair of glasses, and you try and retrace your steps in your head searching for them, thinking about where I was when I last had them, for example, was I in the car, was I in the kitchen. So, to help you to remember later, while you are

watching the event I want you to concentrate on the following things... concentrate on where the event takes place... the layout of the room... the objects that are there and where they sit in relation to each other... the colours that are there... the people... the actions that take place... and the sounds and conversations you hear. Concentrating on these cues should help you to remember the event when you are asked to tell me about it later in as much detail as you possibly can. Are you ready? Please watch the event.”

Once participants had received their specific condition instruction, they then watched the film. After the film had finished, participants were instructed to complete a number of sudokus for 10 mins (filler task). Participants were then moved to a different room where the interview took place. All participants received the following instruction: “Earlier today you witnessed an event as an informant. Your task is to describe to me in as much detail as you can the event you just watched. I will not interrupt you in any way once you start talking, and please let me know that you have finished so I do not interrupt your thinking. At your own pace, please describe to me in as much detail as you can the event you just watched”. Once participants had exhausted their free recall, participants were then provided with the following prompts: “I am now going to give you some prompts to try and help you remember more. Think about the surroundings (pause and wait for answer). Think about the objects (pause and wait for answer). Think about the people (pause and wait for answer). Think about the actions (pause and wait for answer). Think about the conversation (pause and wait for answer)”. The experiment was complete once participants had provided their account and notified the interviewer that they had finished. On completion, participants were thanked for their participation, received a

payment slip, and were fully debriefed with the actual aims, objectives and details of the experiment.

#### ***4.6.4. Coding and Scoring***

Interviews were audio recorded and later transcribed to enable the coding process. Interview transcripts were individually coded by the first author for the number of correct, incorrect and confabulations regarding surrounding, object, person, action and conversation details (see similar coding systems: Hope, Mullis, & Gabbert, 2013; Miller, 1996; Milne & Bull, 2002; Wessel, Zandstra, Hengeveld, & Moulds, 2015). A surrounding detail consisted of peripheral items and descriptions of the setting that did not have meaning attached to them regarding the event (e.g., a *lamp* in the *corner*). Object details were defined as items that held importance to the event (e.g., *drugs* on the *table*). Person details related to information about the people within the event (e.g., *hair colour*), with action details referring to actions made by the people in the event (e.g., male one *opened* the door). Finally, conversational details were defined as anything spoken by those within the event.

Details which were vague, subjective or related to the person operating the camera who was filming in first-person were not coded. An exhaustive list was developed which contained all the details in the event, as even the smallest of details may help progress the intelligence picture of what happened. As each interview transcript was coded, any detail mentioned in the participant's interview transcript that was not on the list was added gradually, once being confirmed by watching the video of the event. The final coding scheme contained 117 surrounding details, 178 object details, 118 person details, 166 action details, and 180 conversation details, comprising a total of 759 details. The transcripts were then scored for the total number

of details reported, accuracy (calculated by dividing the number of correct details by the sum of correct, incorrect and confabulation details), and confabulations (details not present in the event). Regardless of its accuracy, any detail mentioned on multiple occasions was only counted once. To calculate inter-rater reliability, an independent rater (author 5 has experience of coding in similar contexts) who was blind to the conditions coded nine random transcripts. Across all the coding classifications, inter-rater reliability was revealed as high,  $ICC = .99$ , 95% CI [.98, .99].

## **4.7. Results**

To examine the research hypotheses, ANOVA analyses were conducted for both the free recall and the prompts phase separately.

### ***4.7.1. Free recall phase***

The mean recall performance of the free recall phase across conditions is shown in Table 1. A statistically significant difference was found between the groups with regards to the reporting of correct information during free recall,  $F(2, 87) = 3.74$ ,  $p = .028$ . A post-hoc Tukey test revealed that participants who received the *intentional encoding with tasking instruction* reported statistically significantly more correct details during free recall when compared to those using just *incidental encoding* ( $d = 0.65$ ). However, participants who received the *intentional encoding* condition did not differ from the *incidental encoding* group and the *intentional encoding with tasking instruction* group. In addition, participants who received the *intentional encoding with tasking instruction* also reported significantly more incorrect details than those in the *incidental encoding* ( $d = 0.75$ ). The comparison was non-significant when comparing the *intentional encoding* condition to the *incidental encoding* condition and *intentional*

*encoding with tasking instruction* condition. Across the three conditions, non-significant differences were found for the number of confabulated details reported and for percentage accuracy, as the accuracy rate was high across all conditions (see Table 1).

#### **4.7.2. Prompts phase**

The recall performance in the prompts phase (following the free recall phase) across conditions is displayed in Table 1. Non-significant differences were found for the reporting of correct information, incorrect information, confabulated information and accuracy across all groups for the prompts phase.

#### **4.7.3. Type of detail**

To isolate the increase in the number of correct details that emanated during the free recall phase, between-subjects ANOVAs were undertaken to explore the type of detail (i.e. surrounding, object, person, action, and conversation) reported across the three conditions. Analyses revealed statistically significant differences for the reporting of correct surrounding details across the three conditions during the free recall,  $F(2, 87) = 15.68, p < .001$ . Post-hoc Tukey tests revealed that those in the *intentional encoding with tasking instruction* condition reported significantly more surrounding details compared to the *incidental encoding* ( $d = 1.02$ ) and *intentional encoding* ( $d = 1.20$ ) conditions. A non-significant difference was reported between the *incidental encoding* and *intentional encoding* groups for surrounding details. Additionally, there was a significant difference for correct object details recalled during the free recall phase,  $F(2, 87) = 4.18, p = .019$ . Post hoc Tukey tests found that those in the *intentional encoding with tasking instruction* condition reported significantly more object details

compared to the *incidental encoding* group ( $d = 0.69$ ). There was a non-significant difference between the *intentional encoding* group compared to the *incidental encoding* group and *intentional encoding with tasking instruction* group. When detail type was split across incorrect and confabulated details, there were non-significant differences in the free recall phase. Additionally, in the prompts phase there were non-significant differences when detail type was split across correct, incorrect and confabulated details. No differences were reported for person, action and conversation details throughout.

#### **4.7.4. Percentage Accuracy**

As noted above, there were no significant differences for the accuracy rates between conditions in both the free recall phase and the prompts phase. However, across all three conditions, a paired sampled t-test showed an overall significant difference between the percentage accuracy of information reported in the free recall phase ( $M = 92.91\%$ ) and the prompts phase ( $M = 88.47\%$ ),  $t(89) = 4.24$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

**Table 1.** Means, standard deviations and confidence intervals for condition, interview phase and dependant variables

	Incidental encoding	Intentional encoding	Intentional encoding with tasking instruction
Variable	Mean ( <i>SD</i> ) [95% CI]	Mean ( <i>SD</i> ) [95% CI]	Mean ( <i>SD</i> ) [95% CI]
Correct detail			
Free recall phase	39.90 (19.26) [32.71, 47.09]	43.63 (19.11) [36.50, 50.77]	54.27 (24.55) [45.10, 63.43]
Prompt phase	23.53 (10.24) [19.71, 27.36]	25.40 (11.56) [21.08, 29.72]	22.60 (10.04) [18.85, 26.35]
Incorrect detail			
Free recall phase	02.43 (01.85) [01.74, 03.12]	03.20 (01.90) [02.49, 03.91]	04.20 (02.77) [03.17, 05.24]
Prompt phase	03.20 (02.61) [02.22, 04.18]	02.83 (02.65) [01.84, 03.82]	02.73 (02.08) [01.96, 03.51]
Confabulation detail			
Free recall phase	00.03 (00.18) [-00.35, 00.10]	00.03 (00.18) [-00.35, 00.10]	00.03 (00.18) [-00.35, 00.10]
Prompt phase	00.07 (00.25) [-00.03, 00.16]	00.10 (00.31) [-00.01, 00.21]	00.17 (00.46) [-00.01, 00.34]
Percentage accuracy			
Free recall phase	93.84 (04.59) [92.13, 95.55]	92.58 (04.73) [90.82, 94.35]	92.31 (05.33) [90.32, 94.30]
Prompt phase	87.98 (08.46) [84.82, 91.13]	89.30 (09.06) [85.91, 92.68]	88.14 (08.50) [84.97, 91.31]

#### 4.8. Discussion

The present research examined the impact of different encoding conditions (i.e. *incidental encoding*, *intentional encoding*, and *intentional encoding with tasking instruction*) on subsequent memory recall. It was found that mock informants reported more correct information with the *intentional encoding with tasking instruction* during the free recall than mock informants in the *incidental encoding* condition. Hypothesis One was only partially supported as no difference was found between the *intentional encoding* and *incidental coding* conditions. Hypothesis Two was not supported as no differences between each of the conditions for correct information was found in the prompts phase of the interview. In the free recall, an increase in incorrect information was reported by the mock informants in the *intentional encoding with tasking instruction* compared to the *incidental coding* condition, but at no cost to the overall accuracy. Hypothesis Three was supported as no difference in accuracy rates was found across the three conditions. However, the free recall phase elicited information with greater accuracy than the prompts phase (see Kontogianni, Hope, Taylor, Vrij, & Gabbert, 2020).

The lack of enhancement for memory recall when comparing the incidental and intentional condition is of interest. Contrary to previous research (e.g., Gagnon et al., 2005; Migueles & Garcia-Bajos 1999; West & Stone, 2013; Unsworth & Spillers, 2010), the current research found that memory recall was not enhanced by *intentional encoding* alone. In line with previous incidental research, this finding supports the notion that, on its own, the intent to encode may not be effective enough to enhance recall (Ferrara et al., 1978). It is plausible that the *intentional encoding* condition was too broad, as previous research that found enhancements with intentional memory referred to a specific task (e.g., sequences; Gagnon et al., 2005).



The finding that the *intentional encoding with tasking instruction* did enhance recall (partially supporting Hypothesis One) and at no cost to percentage accuracy, provided merit to the importance of directing attention towards the to-be-remembered event during encoding. In other words, a tasking instruction that incorporates contextual factors (e.g., think about the surrounding, object, person, action and conversation details), which supports the intention to encode, does appear to increase the reporting of correct information. Further still, the rationale behind tasking the participants broadly, such as *think about the objects*, rather than tasking for a specific object, was to adopt a non-leading approach in which the mock informant could use their own distinctive memory cues (Anderson & Conway, 1993). Thus, the use of self-generated distinctive memory cues may spread activation, meaning that it may lead to other associated details that increase memory recall (Anderson, 1983).

While it may be argued that the tasking instruction may have facilitated the binding of details (Kessels et al., 2007), and thus enhanced memory recall, it is possible that a criterion shift has occurred, supported by a lowered reporting threshold. By directing participants to particular types of detail, this may have directed the participants' attention to the details required by the experiment, creating a possible criterion shift (see Wright, Gabbert, Memon, & London, 2008). Although the present research asked all participants to report in as much detail as possible, the significant increase in correct and incorrect details for the *intentional encoding with tasking instruction* appears to be a consequence of the tasking instruction, as correct or incorrect details were not significantly increased by *intentional encoding* alone.

A significant increase in incorrect information was reported by the mock informants in the *intentional encoding with tasking instruction* during the free recall. Although accuracy was similar across the three conditions supporting Hypothesis

Three, an increase in incorrect information may be of some concern, especially as the effect size was larger than the increase of correct details. An increase of incorrect details may have occurred due to a lenient response criterion at recall (Wright et al., 2008). A lenient response criterion is observed in memory research exploring the cognitive interview (Fisher & Geiselman, 1992), as people are asked to report everything that they can remember. This is supported by a meta-analysis that found an increase in correct details with the cognitive interview, but also an increase in incorrect information (Koehnken, Milne, Memon, & Bull, 1999; see also Roberts & Higham, 2002). Conversely, when the number of incorrect details increases but without a change in the accuracy rate, then this increase is in proportion to the increase in correct details.

The alignment of the tasking instruction and prompts phase (i.e. *intentional encoding with tasking instruction* condition) was developed from the ideology of the *encoding specificity principle* (Tulving & Thomson, 1973). As such, Hypothesis Two predicted an enhancement of recall. Theoretically, the reporting of correct details for the *intentional encoding with tasking instruction* condition in the prompts phases was expected to be enhanced, due to the match between encoding and retrieval as previously reported (Godden & Baddeley, 1975; Tulving & Thomson, 1973). However, Hypothesis Two was not supported due to the revelation that there were no differences found across the conditions for the reporting of correct information in the prompts phase. Additionally, the accuracy of the prompts in comparison to the free recall was lower. A decrease in accuracy is concerning and may be a result of increased input from the interviewer, potentially diminishing the accuracy of the information (Kontogianni et al., 2020; Lamb, Orbach, Hershkowitz, Horowitz, & Abbott, 2007). Furthermore, the lower accuracy rate for the prompts compared to free recall could be

a result of the participants repeating information provided at free recall and possibly beginning to guess. As the prompts appear to provide little benefit, it may be worth removing them from the interview, which in practice would also save time.

#### **4.9. Limitations and Future Directions**

The generalisability of the research may be questioned as the sample is of a student population. Criminal informants are more likely to be from diverse backgrounds and this should be factored into future research. Furthermore, unlike the real world, laboratory experiments are unable to ethically reflect the stresses, risks and atmosphere an informant may experience when attending an event. It would be of interest to explore the present experimental paradigm across numerous event stimuli (e.g. capture witness recall from a physical task they were not expected to recall), under different questioning strategies, and across various time delays for recall. Although informants often report to their handlers shortly after an event takes place (if safe to do so), it is possible for informants to be deployed for longer periods of time (e.g., when deployed and tasked abroad). Such findings from future replications would also have application to the use of undercover police officers who may be deployed for days if not weeks at a time. Further research may also wish to explore the impact of focusing on specific cues (e.g. a weapon or a particular person) which may be at the expense of other cues that might be unknown or unexpectedly important to the event.

#### **4.10. Conclusion**

Unlike witnesses to a crime, who, due to their lack of awareness are encoding incidentally, an informant may be tasked before the to-be-remembered event

(Turcotte, 2008). Such taskings may be broad, especially when little is known about the upcoming event (e.g., when an informant is introduced to a new group of people and/or plan). The *intentional encoding with tasking instruction* is a simple technique that could easily be adopted into informant practices, which adds to the *toolbelt* of techniques available to informant handlers. While this technique significantly increased both correct and incorrect details, this was at no cost to accuracy, and information gathered from an informant would not be actioned until it had been corroborated. Taken together, the current findings propose that the use of *intentional encoding* together with a tasking instruction is a simple tool that may be useful for both informants and informant handlers to help maximise a reliable and increased free recall from informants.

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## **Chapter 5: The Impact of Rapport on Intelligence Yield: Police Source Handler Telephone Interactions with Covert Human Intelligence Sources**

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### **5.1. Abstract**

Covert Human Intelligence Sources (CHIS) provide unique access to criminals and organised crime groups, and their collection of intelligence is vital to understanding England and Wales' threat picture. Rapport is essential to the establishment and maintenance of effective professional relationships between source handlers and their CHIS. Thus, rapport-based interviewing is a fundamental factor to maximising intelligence yield. The present research gained unprecedented access to 105 real-life audio recorded telephone interactions between England and Wales police source handlers and CHIS. This research quantified both the rapport component behaviours (e.g., attention, positivity, and coordination) displayed by the source handler and the intelligence yielded from the CHIS, in order to investigate the frequencies of these rapport components and their relationship to intelligence yield. Overall rapport, attention and coordination significantly correlated with intelligence yield, while positivity did not. Attention was the most frequently used component of rapport, followed by positivity, and then coordination.

Key words: Covert Human Intelligence Source; human intelligence; HUMINT; intelligence; interviewing; rapport; source handler.

## **5.2. Introduction**

Everybody wants to talk. My job is to become the person he wants to talk to  
(McCauley, 2007, p. 399).

The collection of detailed, timely and reliable information plays a vital role for law enforcement agencies in bringing criminals to justice (Stanier & Nunan, 2018). The received actionable information, formally recognised as intelligence (Grieve, 2004), informs critical law enforcement decision-making concerning intelligence-led operations and investigative enquiries. One intelligence collection tactic is the official use of informants, deployed to provide insider access to criminal activity and targets of interest. Within England and Wales, an informant is legally defined as a Covert Human Intelligence Source (CHIS) under Section 26(8) Part II of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000, if they establish or maintain a relationship with another person to obtain information covertly; give access to information on another person; or disclose information covertly that they have obtained using the relationship or they have obtained because the relationship exists.

In England and Wales, CHIS report their intelligence to law enforcement officers, known as source handlers within policing. Source handlers are dedicated intelligence officers who are legally accountable for the security and welfare of their CHIS. As such, source handlers operate out of local (i.e. Basic Command Unit/Force Units) regional (i.e. Regional Organised Crime Units or Counter Terrorism Units) or national (i.e. National Crime Agency) Dedicated Source Units. Up to 80% of the overt work undertaken by law enforcement personnel comprises the elicitation of

information through purposive conversations (Newberry, 1997), although with source handlers, the daily interaction with CHIS is on a covert basis. CHIS should be considered a cost-effective tactical option to combat crime. While the financially rewarding of CHIS has been criticised for costing £22 million between 2011 and 2016 across the United Kingdom (BBC, 2017), data from 2015/2016 (Home Office, 2018) have shown that the annual societal costs for fraud (£4.7 billion), domestic burglary (£4.1 billion) and murder (£1.8 billion) are disproportionate to the cost of running CHIS, who may provide intelligence to prevent such crimes.

Research within covert policing is negligible, none more so than the topic of CHIS. This is because intelligence-related research is confronted by numerous challenges – namely, access to sensitive data, appropriately vetted researchers, an ongoing duty of care, and a failure to recognise that current methods are neither effective nor efficient (Stanier & Nunan, 2018). Intelligence interviews are more informal than evidential interviews undertaken with suspects, victims and witnesses. Though akin to investigative interviews, intelligence interviews are fundamentally an attempt to obtain a narrative of what was witnessed (Billingsley, Nemitz, & Bean, 2001). Previous research has explored ways of maximising the quantity and quality of an account, by exploring the interviewers' use of rapport (Alison, Alison, Noone, Elntib, & Christiansen, 2013; Collins & Carthy, 2019; Kieckhaefer, Vallano, & Schreiber Compo, 2014; Vallano, Evans, Schreiber Compo, & Kieckhaefer, 2015). There is now a consensus among practitioners and academics that rapport serves as an influential factor in eliciting information from a human source (Abbe & Brandon, 2013; Borum, Gelles, & Kleinman, 2009; Collins, Lincoln, & Frank, 2002; Vallano & Schreiber Compo, 2015).

### **5.3. Defining rapport**

Rapport is considered essential for both Law Enforcement Agencies (LEA) investigations (Caproni, 2008) and intelligence gathering purposes (U.S. Army Field Manual, 2006). This is because it outperforms accusatorial approaches (Evans et al., 2013) as it increases the information gained, enhances cooperation and increases trust (Alison & Alison, 2017). Some practitioners have defined rapport with regards to mutual respect and trust, while others have discussed it in terms of responsiveness to the interviewer (Russano, Narchet, Kleinman, & Meissner, 2014). Additionally, rapport has been noted as the smoothness of the interaction, rather than characterising the individual (Abbe & Brandon, 2013). Such smoothness of the interaction aligns to rapport within a clinical setting, whereby therapists discussed the importance of creating a therapeutic alliance (e.g. Bedi, Davis, & Williams, 2005) via the 'harmonious, sympathetic connection to another' (Newberry & Stubbs, 1990, p. 14).

So, defining rapport as a working relationship may provide some clarity (Abbe & Brandon, 2013; Vallano et al., 2015). This is because the working alliance concerns respect, empathy and a shared understanding of each other's goals, and lowers an interviewee's anxiety (Beune, Giebels, & Taylor, 2010, Kelly, Miller, Redlich, & Kleinman, 2013). Further, a working alliance is similar in nature to Kleinman's (2006) concept of operational accord, which goes beyond the broad definitions of rapport, by ensuring that the interviewer and interviewee have shared goals and cooperate. In the context of human intelligence gathering, rapport can be defined as 'developing and maintaining a working relationship with a human source, by managing their motivations and welfare, whilst ensuring they understand the purpose of the relationship in order to secure reliable intelligence' (Stanier & Nunan, 2018, p. 232).



#### **5.4. Rapport-based interviewing**

Surveys of police officers have commonly discussed rapport as an integral part of interviewing. For example, a questionnaire of 221 police interviewers from the United Kingdom revealed that rapport building was thought to be utilised 87% of the time (Dando, Wilcock, & Milne, 2008). However, police investigators from the United States noted rapport as the fourth most used tactic, and that 32% of investigators always build rapport in their interrogations (Kassin et al., 2007). Redlich, Kelly, and Miller (2014) surveyed U.S. military and federal interrogators regarding their perceived effectiveness and frequency of interrogation techniques. Rapport- and relationship-building techniques were perceived as the most effective strategy, regardless of the intended outcome and context of the interrogation, and, more importantly, rapport- and relationship-building techniques were used most often, especially when compared to confrontational techniques (Redlich et al., 2014). Furthermore, U.S. police officers self-reported that they use, on average, three rapport-building techniques per interview process (Vallano et al., 2015). The most common techniques comprised self-disclosure, sympathy or empathy, and establishing common ground (Vallano et al., 2015).

Goodman-Delahunty and Howes (2016) interviewed 123 experienced intelligence and investigative interviewers about rapport from five Asian-Pacific countries. The rapport-building techniques discussed were primarily represented by liking and reciprocity. Their results supported the generalisability of social influence theory to a range of jurisdictions, as well as reinforcing an earlier international survey that reported that practitioners believe rapport is critical for interviewee cooperation (Goodman-Delahunty, Martschuk, & Dhimi, 2014; Goodman-Delahunty & Sivasubramaniam, 2013). While Goodman-Delahunty and Howes' (2016) noted that

the practitioners in their study viewed the use of noncoercive methods as useful in securing cooperation, there is a risk that the deployment of social influence and persuasion, set out by Cialdini, are taken out of context. The very notion of persuasion contradicts with the core elements of rapport, that being honesty, authenticity and genuine behaviours. The use of social influence and persuasion may be argued to align with coercive methods of interviewing and interrogation models, such as The Reid Technique, which are prone to false confessions and the gathering of unreliable information (Meissner et al., 2014). It is unnerving that there has been such little scientific investigation into the types of social influence tactics being employed in police interactions (King & Snook, 2009). Therefore, the appropriateness of source handlers using social influence and persuasion techniques is rightly questioned.

However, as with the majority of self-reported studies regarding rapport, it was not possible for researchers to observe the recorded interviews to verify what the participants reported (Alison & Alison, 2017). For example, Hall (1997) revealed that police officers reported rapport as important, yet when their recorded interviews were examined, the rapport-building behaviours identified by the police officers were not present. Thus, an objective measure of rapport would provide evidence as to which verbal and nonverbal behaviours actually help establish and maintain rapport (Walsh & Bull, 2012), based on the behaviours that occurred during the interview (Collins & Carthy, 2019). Yet, despite the importance placed on rapport, it is only recently that researchers have begun to explore its actual impact on information gathering in an operational setting (e.g. Alison et al., 2013; Holmberg & Madsen, 2014; Vallano & Compo, 2011).

### **5.5. Assessing rapport in an operational setting**

Limited research has investigated real operational field data to carefully and systematically define the behaviours that underpin rapport. Alison et al. (2013) developed ORBIT (Observing Rapport Based Interpersonal Techniques) from the counselling literature, which is founded on observing interpersonal skills (Tickle-Degnen & Rosenthal, 1990), particularly motivational interviewing (Miller, Moyers, Ernst, & Amrhein, 2008; Miller & Rollnick, 1992) and the interpersonal behaviour circle (Birtchnell, 2014; Freedman, Leary, Ossorio, & Coffey, 1951; Leary, 1957).

Alison et al. (2013) examined 418 real-life terrorist suspect interviews by conducting a structural equation modelling of rapport and its impact on intelligence yield. The ORBIT framework revealed that techniques aligned to motivational interviewing were positively associated with adaptive interpersonal behaviours from the suspect, which resulted in an increased intelligence yield (Alison et al., 2013). Additionally, they reported that minimal maladaptive behaviours from the interviewer directly reduced the intelligence yield. Similar results were reported by Alison et al. (2014), as suspects' use of counter-interrogation tactics (e.g. no comment interviews, retraction of statements or claiming lack of memory) was reduced when adaptive rapport-based interrogation style (e.g. the use of respect, dignity and integrity) was used.

Similar to the ORBIT framework, a new approach to measuring rapport was established by Collins and Carthy (2019) research, which developed from the Tickle-Degnen and Rosenthal (1990) model of measuring rapport. This was because monitoring the degree of attention, positivity and coordination may provide an insight into the current state of rapport, and whether the interviewee is becoming more or less receptive (Collins & Carthy, 2019). In their study, they analysed 82 suspect interview

transcripts regarding sexual offences across three verbal rapport categories against investigative relevant information (see Collins & Carthy, 2019, for a full list of behaviours). The interviewers' verbal behaviours were classified into one of the three categories of rapport (e.g. positivity, attention and coordination; see later for further discussion), and the sum of each category was calculated. The most frequently used rapport components that were found were attention and coordination, and both positively correlated with the gathering of investigative relevant information, though positivity did not (Collins & Carthy, 2019). The findings provided support for an objective model of measuring rapport, by calculating the frequency of verbal behaviours (which were theoretically and empirically linked to the rapport literature) and their association with information relevant to an investigation.

### **5.6. Operationalising the Tickle-Degnen and Rosenthal model of rapport**

The Tickle-Degnen and Rosenthal (1990) model outlined three components of rapport – namely, attention, positivity and coordination. Rapport is said to develop when all three components are reciprocated during an interaction (Abbe & Brandon, 2014). Although their model of rapport has primarily been discussed within the context of investigative interviewing (Abbe & Brandon, 2014; Collins & Carthy, 2019; Walsh & Bull, 2012), it can also transfer into an intelligence interviewing context. This is because (a) they both aim to obtain reliable and detailed information (information is the raw product of evidence and intelligence; Meissner, Surmon-Böhr, Oleszkiewicz, & Alison, 2017; Russano et al., 2014); and (b) they both concern the interviewing of witnesses, albeit, informants are ‘a special type of witness, but a witness nonetheless’ (Billingsley et al., 2001, p. 7).

Attention signifies the degree of involvement and is believed to be present when the parties involved are interested in one another (Holmberg & Madsen, 2014). Thus, the interviewer (source handler) and interviewee (CHIS) begin to direct their focus onto the other, reinforcing a sense of cohesion. In earlier interactions, attentiveness may reinforce the continuation (or not) of the relationship, whereas later attentiveness would signify the level of cohesion (Tickle-Degnen & Rosenthal, 1990). Thus, the level of attention should not change over time in order to maintain the developed relationship. Walsh and Bull (2012) demonstrated that establishing rapport alone was not enough to satisfy the interview's quality and outcomes, as rapport needs to be maintained throughout.

Active listening, not interrupting (Milne & Bull, 1999) and attentiveness (Collins et al., 2002) have been emphasised as beneficial interviewing skills, as such behaviours encourage the interviewee to engage (St-Yves, 2006). The use of back channel responses (i.e. encouragers such as 'hmm'), paraphrasing and summarising what has previously been said demonstrate active listening and thus attention paid to the individual providing their account (Abbe & Brandon, 2013, 2014; Collins & Carthy, 2019; Walsh & Bull, 2012). Once the initial free recall has been provided, exploring and probing the information provided, as well as providing the interviewee with the chance to add anything else, have been discussed as skilful interviewing behaviours (Walsh & Bull, 2012). Throughout the interaction, the source handler should be listening out for and probing information to help identify the CHIS' motivation. By understanding why a CHIS is willing to engage, this may provide rapport-building opportunities (Cooper, 2011), adapt the approach used (Taylor, 2002) and motivate the CHIS to engage with memory retrieval (Abbe & Brandon, 2013).

The source handler and CHIS must engage in some level of attention before positivity can be established (Abbe & Brandon, 2013).

Positivity, the second facet of the model, represents the friendly, respectful and caring nature between all parties involved, which facilitates practical working outcomes (Cuddy, Fiske, & Glick, 2008; Fiske, Cuddy, & Glick, 2007; Tickle-Degnen & Rosenthal, 1990). The use of empathy has been noted to facilitate rapport (Norfolk, Birdi, & Walsh, 2007) and is viewed as a positive behaviour that skilful interviewers utilised (Bull & Cherryman, 1996). Although empathy has not been found to directly influence information gathering (see Oxburgh, Ost, Morris, & Cherryman, 2014), convicted offenders have reported that a humanitarian and empathetic approach fostered their confessions (Holmberg & Christianson, 2002). The use of empathy, together with personalising the interview (e.g. by using preferred names) may be vital to the interview's overall success (Fisher & Geiselman, 1992).

The disclosure of personal information can also help personalise the interview and has been shown to increase the positivity of an interaction (Collins & Miller, 1994), as it demonstrates liking and trust (Abbe & Brandon, 2014). However, the use of self-disclosure by source handlers must be undertaken in a way that reveals sufficient and appropriate information to build rapport (e.g. favourite football team), but does not compromise their own safety by inappropriately revealing overly personal information such as their home address or children's school (though what is deemed appropriate and inappropriate will be judged differently across CHIS). Where additional information is required to maintain rapport, then source handlers will consider developing appropriate cover stories in order to disclose non-attributable information. Self-disclosure has been found to result in less inaccurate information, protect against misinformation (Vallano & Compo, 2011), and increase the number of

agreements reached (Moore, Kurtzberg, Thompson, & Morris, 1999). Vallano and Compo (2011) argued that an informal approach supported by verbal rapport techniques (e.g. self-disclosure) can enhance rapport and memory recall. Such informality suits the source handler and CHIS relationship, as interactions are typically informal, undertaken via the telephone and physical meetings that are not bound by the formality of England and Wales' Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (e.g. interview under caution).

Establishing common ground also associates with positivity, as it encourages the source handler and CHIS to identify overlapping interests. The shared interests can be as meaningful as shared values, or as incidental as a shared birthday (Miller, Downs, & Prentice, 1998). Although is it not persuasive in itself, it can lay the foundations for influence, by prompting those involved to engage and process information more actively (Platow, Mills, & Morrison, 2000). Furthermore, of the three components, positivity may be likened to a working alliance, especially as friendliness and encouraging comments have been shown to be better predictors of a working alliance than attention (Duff & Bedi, 2010). While discussions of rapport typically place the most emphasis on positivity, coordination may be equally, if not more, important for interviewing (Abbe & Brandon, 2014).

As both attention and positivity grow, the rapport-building process promotes the third component, coordination (Holmberg & Madsen, 2014). Coordination symbolises the smoothness of interactions, exemplified by a feeling of cooperation and synchrony between the parties involved (Tickle-Degnen & Rosenthal, 1990). Abbe and Brandon (2013) introduced shared understanding into the coordination component. By doing so, they argued that a shared understanding between the parties can be pre-existing or established during the interaction. A shared understanding (e.g.

agreement) reinforces the common goal or working alliance mentality, especially when the purpose of the interaction and developing relationship are discussed (Collins & Carthy, 2019). Such conversations between source handlers and CHIS should encourage the CHIS to provide their account.

Behaviours of coordination should directly benefit memory retrieval, particularly when the source handler minimises disruptions, such as appropriately using pauses (Abbe & Brandon, 2013). In line with cooperation, coordination requires a balanced conversation, otherwise the interview can become one-sided (Holmberg & Madsen, 2014). However, in an interviewing context, if the interviewee is predominately doing the talking, then the transfer of control has been successful. Therefore, the individual with the information is talking (Collins & Carthy, 2019), and the parties involved are working towards the interview's aim (e.g. to gather intelligence on a subject of interest or organised crime group).

### **5.7. The present research**

The present research developed the Collins and Carthy (2019) verbal rapport framework so that it may be applied to a source handler and CHIS context. Following the recommendations from Abbe and Brandon (2013, 2014), the developed framework investigated rapport behaviours affiliated to Tickle-Degnen and Rosenthal's (1990) three rapport components; (a) attention; (b) positivity; and (c) coordination. The present research quantified both the rapport behaviours displayed by the source handler and the intelligence yielded from the CHIS, in order to investigate the frequency of these rapport components and their relationship to intelligence yield. It was hypothesised that an increase in overall rapport would positively correlate with the amount of intelligence yielded.



## **5.8. Method**

### ***5.8.1. Materials***

The present study expanded on (Nunan, Stanier, Milne, Shawyer, & Walsh, 2020), which explored source handlers' perceptions of rapport during CHIS interactions, by analysing rapport-building between source handlers and CHIS. Prior to data access and collection, ethical approval was authorised by those who funded the present research (Centre for Research and Evidence on Security Threats) together with the first author's University. The National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) Intelligence Practice Research Consortium (IPRC) assisted with access to the data. The present research analysed the same data set as Nunan et al (2020), and therefore, the criteria remained the same. Thus, the purposive sample comprised source handler and CHIS audio recorded telephone interactions ( $N = 105$ ) from one English police force, which involved source handlers' gathering intelligence (intelligence yield, IY) from an adult CHIS (those who are 18 years and over). The following telephone interactions were excluded: (a) missed calls; (b) voicemails; (c) interactions that did not concern the collection of intelligence, such as arranging a physical meeting between the source handler and CHIS; or (d) interactions that were merely to arrange a call back (e.g. 'I can't talk now, I'll call you back later'). From 495 interactions across seven source handlers and seven CHIS, a total of 105 interactions were put forward for analysis. The interactions were grouped in order to analyse the verbal rapport behaviours, rather than explore individual performance. The telephone interactions took place in 2018 with a mean call length of 7.03 min ( $SD = 3.55$ ).

### ***5.8.2. Procedure***

At the time when the telephone interactions took place, the source handlers were unaware that their interactions would be analysed, to ensure that their normal verbal behaviours took place. The telephone interactions were approved by the Dedicated Source Unit Controller (source handler supervisor) to ensure that the research team accessed interactions that involved a closed investigation. The first author was required to code all telephone interactions at a secure policing site due to the sensitive nature of the data. To fully comprehend the context of the telephone interaction, the first author listened to the interaction in full before coding during a second listen. It was only possible to analyse verbal rapport as the research team had access to audio recordings of the telephone interactions.

In contrast to the Collins and Carthy (2019) methodology, the present research did not divide the interactions into three equal time segments (i.e. beginning, middle and end). The reasoning was twofold: firstly, the present source handler and CHIS telephone interactions were much shorter in length than a typical investigative interview. Secondly, dividing an interaction into three equal segments is unlikely to truly represent the ‘beginning’, ‘middle’ and ‘end’ of an interaction, if the beginning is to represent the introductions to the interview, the middle as the account phase, and the end as the closure phase. Therefore, verbal rapport was analysed across the whole interaction.

### ***5.8.3. Verbal rapport coding***

The present framework of verbal rapport developed Collins and Carthy (2019) measures of interpersonal rapport (see Table 1). The framework of verbal rapport used an objective measure of rapport, by coding the frequency of each verbal behaviour,

rather than using a subjective rating scale (e.g. a Likert scale of 1–5) of rapport behaviours or the interaction as a whole. Each word or phrase from the source handler was only coded as one of the three rapport components (e.g. attention, positivity or coordination) from the developed framework (see Table 1) and could not be coded as multiple components. The sum for all three components of rapport was calculated.

The first and second authors utilised the framework of verbal rapport (see Table 1) to code the audio recorded telephone interactions. In order to ensure the coding scheme was viable, the first and second authors coded one telephone interaction together as a training exercise. The second author independently coded a random sample of 13 of the source handler and CHIS interactions. The interrater reliability was calculated using Cohen's kappa (Cohen, 1960), which revealed a high agreement between the two independent coders,  $k = .77$ , 95% confidence interval (CI) [.71, .83],  $p < .001$ .

Table 1. A framework of verbal rapport for source handler and CHIS interactions.

Component	Rapport indicator	Definition	Source
<b>Attention</b>	Back channel responses	Back channel responses act as facilitators/encourages, e.g., ‘uh huh’ or ‘hmm’, this does not include qualitative feedback such as ‘perfect’ or ‘good’ as these can be viewed as leading and therefore negative.	Abbe & Brandon, 2013, 2014; Collins & Carthy, 2018.
	Paraphrasing	Repeating back what the CHIS said which demonstrates the source handler has clearly attempted to process what the CHIS is saying.	Abbe & Brandon, 2014; Alison et al., 2013; Collins & Carthy, 2018.
	Identifying emotions	The source handler attends to the CHIS’ emotions, e.g., ‘you sound upset’.	Alison et al., 2013; Collins & Carthy, 2018.
	Explores and probes information	Goes beyond just accepting information but searches for further detail, identifying the provenance of the information provided, funnel from open to closed questioning.	Alison et al., 2013; Walsh & Bull, 2012.
	Intermittent summarising	Provides regular and accurate summarising of the CHIS’ account.	Abbe & Brandon, 2014; Alison et al., 2013; Walsh & Bull, 2012.
	Provides final summary of interaction	Final summary that accurately resumes key issues discussed and captures key probes from the CHIS.	Walsh & Bull, 2012.
	Asks if the CHIS wishes to add or alter anything	Provides opportunity for the CHIS to make any amendments or additions to their account.	Walsh & Bull, 2012.

	Explores motivation	Tries to find, with understanding, why the CHIS is willing to share their information and also use the CHIS' motivation for the conversation. source handler may use the motivation as a hook for cooperation.	Abbe & Brandon, 2013; Taylor, 2002.
<b>Positivity</b>	Use of CHIS' preferred name	'where did you buy the computer James?'	Abbe & Brandon, 2014; Collins & Carthy, 2018; Collins et al., 2002; Kieckhaefer et al., 2014; Vallano & Schreiber Compo, 2011; Walsh & Bull, 2012.
	Empathy	A sensitive approach demonstrated by empathic responses, e.g., 'I can understand why you might feel nervous'.	Abbe & Brandon, 2014; Alison et al., 2013; Collins & Carthy, 2018; Beune et al., 2010; Holmberg & Madsen, 2014; Oxburgh et al., 2014; Walsh & Bull, 2012.
	Self-disclosure	When you feel you have learned something about the source handler that you didn't know before, e.g., 'I have children too'.	Abbe & Brandon, 2014; Kieckhaefer et al., 2014; Nash et al., 2016; Vallano & Schreiber Compo, 2011; Vallano et al., 2015.
	Common ground by getting to know the CHIS	The use of questions around the CHIS' lifestyle, hobbies, family etc. to display a genuine interest towards the CHIS	Abbe & Brandon, 2014; Kieckhaefer et al., 2014; Holmberg & Madsen, 2014;

Nash et al., 2016; Vallano et al., 2015.

Equality signs / Friendliness

matches CHIS' style and does not belittle or talk condescendingly to or 'above' the CHIS. Is polite, friendly, respectful and courteous, e.g., 'thank you'; 'how are you feeling today?'

Abbe & Brandon, 2013; Alison et al., 2013; Beune et al., 2010; Collins & Carthy, 2018; Collins et al., 2002; Holmberg & Madsen, 2014; Vallano & Schreiber Compo, 2011; Vallano et al., 2015; Walsh & Bull, 2012.

Humour

The CHIS must find the use of humour as a positive, e.g., 'thanks for telling me your age, I know you said your date of birth, but I couldn't work it out as my maths isn't all that great (laughs)'

Alison et al., 2013; Collins & Carthy, 2018.

Reassurance

The source handler provides encouragement and places the CHIS at ease e.g., "we will get this sorted"; "keep at what you're doing".

Collins & Carthy, 2018.

**Coordination**

Agreement

Working towards a common goal or working alliance e.g., 'yeah that is what I meant'.

Abbe & Brandon, 2013; Collins & Carthy, 2018.

Encourages CHIS to give account

Evidence of explicitly asking the CHIS for their account and allowing the CHIS to give it without any inappropriate interruptions.

Alison et al., 2013; Walsh & Bull, 2012.

Appropriate use of pauses	source handler uses pauses to facilitate talking which are not awkwardly placed.	None.
Process, procedure and what happens next	Explains future agenda and processes, any necessary regulatory requirements such as ‘don’t tell anyone about this conversation’, maintain security and welfare, when to next contact, and future taskings.	Abbe & Brandon, 2013; Collins & Carthy, 2018; Nash et al., 2016; Walsh & Bull, 2012.

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Note. Academic sources were collated with the assistance of Gabbert, Wright, Hope, Oxburgh, Ng, and Luther’s (under review) rapport and disclosure searchable systematic map. For the purposes of this research, the term *CHIS* has replaced the term *interviewee*.

#### **5.8.4. Intelligence yield**

The information provided by the CHIS in the present research was coded if it held relevance to criminal intelligence. Intelligence yield (IY) comprised five detail types: (a) surrounding details included information about the setting (e.g. locations); (b) object details concerned items that were discussed (e.g. a phone, drugs, money); (c) person details consisted of information relating to people (e.g. names, person descriptions); (d) action details comprised information about activities (e.g. criminal offences, driving); and (e) temporal details related to the time (e.g. dates, days, years; see similar coding systems: Hope, Mullis, & Gabbert, 2013; Milne & Bull, 2002; Wessel, Zandstra, Hengeveld, & Moulds, 2015). For example, ‘around 9 pm (one temporal IY) she (one person IY) was driving (one action IY) a car (one object IY) and dealing (one action IY) drugs (one object IY) in London (one surrounding IY)’. This coding scheme was used to quantify the total IY gathered by the source handler from the CHIS per interaction.

### **5.9. Results**

Across the sample ( $N = 105$ ) of audio recorded telephone interactions between source handlers and CHIS, the means for (a) overall rapport; (b) the three components of rapport (i.e. attention, positivity and coordination); (c) overall IY; and (d) five detail types of IY (surrounding, object, person, action and temporal) were explored. Pearson’s correlation coefficients were performed to explore the relationship between overall rapport, attention, positivity and coordination with IY. The effect sizes for Pearson’s correlation coefficients were sourced from Cohen (1988), whereby .10 is a small effect, .30 is a medium effect and .50 a large effect. To display the practical importance of the results, the Pearson’s correlation coefficients ( $r$ ) were squared to



establish the coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ). The coefficient of determination represents the percentage of the observed variation that can be explained by one factor (i.e. overall rapport, attention, positivity or coordination) with another factor (i.e. IY) with regards to a linear model (reported in Table 2).

**Table 2.** Coefficients of determinations ( $R^2$ ) for rapport components against overall Intelligence Yield (IY) and detail type ( $N = 105$ )

<b>Rapport Component</b>	<b>Surrounding IY</b>	<b>Object IY</b>	<b>Person IY</b>	<b>Action IY</b>	<b>Temporal IY</b>	<b>Overall IY</b>
Attention	0.41***	0.59***	0.58***	0.65***	0.36***	0.69***
Positivity	0.03	0.01	0.03	0.05*	0.00	0.04
Coordination	0.01	0.03	0.03	0.06*	0.05*	0.05*
Overall rapport	0.29***	0.38***	0.40***	0.48***	0.24***	0.48***

Note. \*  $p < 0.050$ . \*\*  $p < 0.010$ . \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ .

### 5.9.1. Rapport and intelligence yield

Across the sample, the mean overall rapport utilised per interaction was 47.10 ( $SD = 21.75$ ). The attention ( $M = 24.77$ ,  $SD = 15.26$ ) component of rapport was the most frequently used, followed by positivity ( $M = 12.21$ ,  $SD = 6.53$ ) and then coordination ( $M = 10.12$ ,  $SD = 5.23$ ). On average, 87.26 ( $SD = 61.63$ ) IY was gathered per interaction, with the five detail types displayed in Table 3.

**Table 3.** Means and standard deviations for Intelligence Yield (IY) across the telephone interactions ( $N = 105$ )

<b>Intelligence Yield (IY)</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
Surrounding IY	11.74	12.74
Object IY	14.48	12.95
Person IY	26.89	21.87
Action IY	25.56	20.37
Temporal IY	06.11	04.92
Overall IY	87.26	61.62

### ***5.9.2. The relationship between rapport and intelligence yield***

Pearson's correlation coefficients were undertaken to explore the relationship between the three components of rapport and overall rapport with IY. Overall rapport was significantly correlated with overall IY,  $r = .69, p < .001$ . When overall rapport was broken down into its three components, attention,  $r = .83, p < .001$ , and coordination,  $r = .21, p = .028$ , were both significantly correlated with the overall IY gathered (though a high level of variability between coordination and IY was revealed). However, there was a non-significant correlation with positivity and overall IY,  $r = .19, p = .051$ .

To investigate the correlations further, the relationship between the five detail types of IY with overall rapport and its three components (attention, positivity and coordination) were also explored (see Table 2 for an  $R^2$  overview). Overall rapport was significantly correlated with all five detail types – namely, surrounding IY,  $r = .54, p < .001$ ; object IY,  $r = .62, p < .001$ ; person IY,  $r = .63, p < .001$ ; action IY,  $r = .69, p < .001$ ; and temporal IY,  $r = .49, p < .001$ . Attention also significantly correlated with all five detail types: surrounding IY,  $r = .64, p < .001$ ; object IY,  $r = .77, p < .001$ ; person IY,  $r = .76, p < .001$ ; action IY,  $r = .81, p < .001$ ; and temporal IY,  $r = .60, p < .001$ . Positivity significantly correlated with action IY,  $r = .23, p < .050$ , but not surrounding IY,  $r = .18, p = .060$ ; object IY,  $r = .12, p = .221$ ; person IY,  $r = .17, p = .075$ ; or temporal IY,  $r = .06, p = .578$ . Coordination significantly correlated with action IY,  $r = .24, p < .050$  and temporal IY,  $r = .23, p < .050$ , but not with surrounding IY,  $r = .12, p = .223$ ; object IY,  $r = .184, p = .06$ ; and person IY,  $r = .18, p = .063$ .

## 5.10. Discussion

The present research developed the Collins and Carthy (2019) rapport framework and applied it to an intelligence gathering context. Thus, the relationship between rapport and the gathering of intelligence (i.e. intelligence yield, IY) was explored in real-world audio recorded telephone interactions between source handlers and CHIS. To meet the research aims, the relationship and observed variation between overall rapport and its three components (i.e. attention, positivity and coordination; see Tickle-Degnen & Rosenthal, 1990) with IY were explored. The research findings provided further support for the application of a systematic framework to measure verbal rapport, utilised by ‘the coding of behaviours that have been theoretically and empirically linked to rapport’ (Collins & Carthy, 2019, p. 27).

Overall rapport was significantly correlated with IY and, as an independent factor, explained 48% of the variance within IY. While this finding supports that an increase in overall rapport would positively correlate with the amount of intelligence yielded, ultimately it may be argued that the hypothesis is only partially supported. That is, the explained variability in the data set does not account for 52% of the observed variation. Thus, as a reliable model of future forecast, overall rapport may not accurately model the data (see, Ozer, 1985, for a more complete report of interpreting the coefficient of determination). While rapport is considered as an influential factor in the elicitation of information from a human source (Abbe & Brandon, 2013; Borum et al., 2009; Vallano & Schreiber Compo, 2015), especially as interviews of greater quality have been positively associated with highly rated rapport behaviours (Walsh & Bull, 2012), it does not appear to be the only factor at play. Understandably so, as within real-world source handler and CHIS interactions (and interviews more broadly), numerous factors may act as a communication barrier or

encourager (e.g. elicitation techniques, interviewees' motivation to engage, memory, policy and procedures). Nonetheless, this finding has provided additional evidence to the existing rapport literature, further highlighting a positive relationship between an interviewer's behaviour (i.e. rapport) and the elicitation of intelligence (see also Alison et al., 2013; Collins & Carthy, 2019). Frequency monitoring of rapport and its three components can provide an insight into the current state of rapport in an interaction (Collins & Carthy, 2019). Perhaps, more importantly so, is the exploration of the relationship between each component of rapport with the production of IY.

Attention was the most frequently used component of rapport, followed by positivity, and then coordination. A core objective for a source handler is to maintain a working relationship with their CHIS. As attentiveness is considered an important factor to the continuation (or not) of the relationship (Tickle-Degnen & Rosenthal, 1990), this may explain why source handlers utilised this component of rapport the most. The level of attention should not change over time as rapport needs to be maintained throughout, in order to satisfy the interview's quality and outcomes (Walsh & Bull, 2012). Attentive behaviours such as active listening (Milne & Bull, 1999) and probing the information elicited (Walsh & Bull, 2012) may notify the source handler that the communicative approach they are using is suitable to the CHIS in question (Taylor, 2002). Consequently, the appropriate deployment of attentive behaviours should motivate the CHIS to engage with memory retrieval (Abbe & Brandon, 2013), thus benefiting the collection of intelligence. The present research found that attention significantly correlated to IY, and explained 69% of the variance of the data, providing support for the positive impact that attentive behaviours of verbal rapport have on the gathering of intelligence.

In contrast to Collins and Carthy (2019), the present research revealed that positivity was used more frequently than coordination. This may be explained by the differences in formality and process between the Collins and Carthy (2019) sample of formal investigative interviews with suspects of sexual offences and the present sample of informal telephone interactions between source handlers and CHIS. As such, the behaviours associated with the positivity component of rapport (e.g. humour, empathy and common ground) may be more appropriate and therefore more likely to be used in an informal setting. Additionally, behaviours associated with coordination – for example, discussing and ensuring the understanding of the process and procedures – are more likely to take place in suspect interviews, in accordance with England and Wales’ Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (see Collins & Carthy, 2019).

Discussions of rapport typically place the most emphasis on positivity; however, the present research reported that positivity was non-significantly correlated to IY, only explaining 4% of the variance within intelligence yielded. Collins and Carthy (2019) also reported a similar finding, though posited that perhaps the negative attitude towards sex offenders may have explained their finding. However, the present sample consisted of cooperative CHIS in productive relationships with their source handlers, yet still no positive correlation between positivity and IY was reported. As source handlers and CHIS in the present research had already established a relationship prior to the interactions analysed (compared to investigative interviewers who typically meet the interviewee for the first time and, with suspects, often immediately after an arrest), the increased familiarity may have resulted in a reduced impact of positivity, as it may not have been considered to be as important as coordination or attention (Abbe & Brandon, 2014; Tickle-Degnen & Rosenthal, 1990).

While positivity is commonly discussed with regards to rapport, coordination may be more important for interviewing (Abbe & Brandon, 2014). The operationalisation of coordination should differ between a source handler and CHIS compared to an interviewer and suspect due to the type of relationship that exists (Collins & Carthy, 2019). Source handlers aim to achieve a working alliance with their CHIS, which is an ongoing process, whereas the same level of cooperation is less likely to exist between a suspect and interviewer who may only meet on one or two occasions. Surprisingly coordination was found to be the least frequently used component of rapport in the present research, though it was significantly correlated to IY. However, when exploring the variability within the data, coordination could only explain 5% of the variance for intelligence yield.

Coordination behaviours should directly benefit information gathering, particularly when the source handler appropriately uses pauses (Abbe & Brandon, 2013) and encourages an account (Walsh & Bull, 2012). Furthermore, it is plausible that when the source handler explains the process, procedure and future expectations, as well as developing a shared understanding with the CHIS (e.g. agreement on when next to physically meet up, to be contacted by the telephone, or to receive financial reward payments), communication increases (Abbe & Brandon, 2013; Collins & Carthy, 2019; Nash, Nash, Morris, & Smith, 2016; Walsh & Bull, 2012). However, as source handlers rarely used pauses to facilitate communication and on occasions interrupted their CHIS, this may explain why the coordination component of rapport was the least frequently utilised.

At present, nationally delivered source handler training in England and Wales includes little mention of rapport-building techniques. The rapport framework in the present research could be utilised in a training environment to highlight verbal

behaviours associated with the three components of rapport. While the frequency of the three components of rapport differed from that in the Collins and Carthy (2019) study, the finding that both attention and coordination (though a high level of variability was revealed for coordination) were significantly related to the amount of information gathered was consistent. In terms of eliciting information, it appears that placing an emphasis on attention and coordination verbal behaviours of rapport is pragmatic. That said, positivity should not be disregarded, as these behaviours may serve a different purpose within interviewing, such as empathy, respect and reassurance to the CHIS. Positivity in a law enforcement interaction is unlikely to have the same impact as it would in a therapeutic interaction, as the aims of the two interaction types differ (Abbe & Brandon, 2013).

The present research advocates for the utilisation of the coefficients of determinations ( $R^2$ ) when examining rapport. This is because the coefficients of determinations go beyond just accepting significant correlations at face value, but rather explore how the percentage of observed variation that can be explained by one factor (i.e. intelligence yield) with another factor (i.e. overall rapport, attention, positivity or coordination). This encourages the research findings to be discussed in respect of their practical importance (e.g. the determining predictive power of rapport and its three components). As such, while coordination was reported as significantly correlated to intelligence yield, it may only explain 5% of the variance within the intelligence yielded. Therefore, a high level of variability (e.g. 95%) between coordination and intelligence yielded was revealed. Although coordination could only explain a small percentage of the variability, its statistical significance may suggest it plays a small role in gaining intelligence.

It is important to note the limitations of the present research. As a consequence of working with a sensitive data set reliant on the police providing access, the present sample originates from one police force area. It was necessary to use a purposive sample to analyse interactions that met the inclusion and exclusion criteria. While it is acknowledged that the sample is not random, the present research accessed a unique sample, which was constrained by the research aims and participating organisations, meaning that convenience and purposive sampling methods are common amongst applied research. While the findings may not reflect the general verbal rapport practices of source handlers across England and Wales, the source handlers in the present sample were trained and accredited through the same national course as those employed elsewhere in this role. Additionally, the generalisability may also be limited as a result of grouping the interactions, as the findings may not generalise to the individual level (Klein & Kozlowski, 2000). Future research may try to gather data from a broader range of source handlers, by analysing telephone interactions from numerous police force areas in order to compare and contrast practices. Finally, while the present research focused on the verbal rapport behaviours of the source handler concerning intelligence yield, it is acknowledged that rapport is a dyadic relationship. Therefore, future research may wish to include the CHIS's behaviour, as it would enable the researchers to explore reciprocal aspects of the interaction.

In conclusion, the present research has developed a systemic framework of verbal rapport, which was, for the first time, successfully applied to real-world audio recorded telephone interactions between source handlers and CHIS. The results provided additional evidence that rapport is an influential factor to intelligence elicitation. In particular, the findings indicated that the frequency of the rapport



components, as well as the verbal rapport behaviours associated with attention and coordination, had the most impact on the elicitation of intelligence.

The present research holds a number of implications for source handler training, policy and practice. The significance of the rapport and its three components should be incorporated into source handler training, especially as the present framework of rapport could be used to assess training sessions and monitor real-world interactions. Moreover, if source handlers were to place an emphasis on both attention and coordination, this may benefit the elicitation of intelligence. The implementation of an evidence-based approach to rapport and information gathering shall advance the practices of source handlers and interviewers more broadly.

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## **Chapter 6: Source Handler Telephone Interactions with Covert Human Intelligence Sources: An Exploration of Question Types and Intelligence Yield**

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### **6.1. Abstract**

Law Enforcement Agencies gather intelligence in order to prevent criminal activity and pursue criminals. In the context of human intelligence collection, intelligence elicitation relies heavily upon the deployment of *appropriate* evidence-based interviewing techniques (a topic rarely covered in the extant research literature). The present research gained unprecedented access to audio recorded telephone interactions ( $N = 105$ ) between Source Handlers and Covert Human Intelligence Sources (CHIS) from England and Wales. The research explored the mean use of various question types per interaction and across all questions asked in the sample, as well as comparing the intelligence yield for *appropriate* and *inappropriate* questions. Source Handlers were found to utilise vastly more *appropriate* questions than *inappropriate* questions, though they rarely used *open-ended* questions. Across the total interactions, *appropriate* questions (by far) were associated with the gathering of much of the total intelligence yield. Implications for practise are discussed.

## Keywords

Covert human source, intelligence, informants, intelligence, questioning, Source Handler

## 6.2. Introduction

Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs) gather intelligence with the intention to both understand current and future criminal threats and inform the subsequent decision-making concerning how to prevent criminal activity and pursue those who remain “at large” (Chappell, 2015; Home Office, 2018). To satisfy a LEA's intelligence requirement designed to tackle these threats, effective reporting processes are required. In the context of human source intelligence (HUMINT) collection, intelligence elicitation relies heavily upon the deployment of *appropriate* evidence based interviewing techniques. Against this background, the present research focused on the use of question types, specifically utilised by Source Handlers in their interactions with Covert Human Intelligence Sources (CHIS) from England and Wales.

Source Handlers are officers whose primary operational responsibility is to elicit intelligence from human sources that addresses a LEA reporting requirement (e.g., a written direction highlighting the organisational need for information that can close current intelligence gaps, corroborate or disprove existing intelligence and highlight emerging threats and risks) (Stanier & Nunan, 2018). In England and Wales, Source Handlers operate within Dedicated Source Units. The core role of a Source Handler is the day-to-day management of CHIS on behalf of a public authority (Chappell, 2015). Whilst the formal title of sources authorised to collect and report on criminal activity is a CHIS, they are more commonly referred to as informants.

The management of CHIS in England and Wales is governed by legislation, the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000<sup>1</sup> (RIPA), which provides the legal definition of a CHIS as someone who:

- a. establishes or maintains a personal or other relationship with a person for the covert purpose of facilitating the doing of anything falling within paragraph (b) or (c);
- b. covertly uses such a relationship to obtain information or to provide access to any information to another person; or
- c. covertly discloses information obtained by the use of such a relationship, or as a consequence of the existence of such a relationship.

### **6.3. Source Handler and CHIS interactions**

Source Handlers interact with their CHIS on a regular basis, primarily to gather intelligence on criminal activity (Chappell, 2015). Once a CHIS has been legally authorised, regular contact commences, which is commonly undertaken via the telephone. Unlike physical meetings which require detailed planning to address safety issues, telephone contacts can be quickly arranged. As a consequence, telephone interactions provide the CHIS the ability to download their memories to their Handler shortly after experiencing a to-be-remembered event. The immediacy of CHIS providing new intelligence to their Handlers may reduce memory decay over time and provide the Source Handler with “live” intelligence to be actioned (Billingsley, Nemitz, & Bean, 2001).

In essence, the CHIS should be treated as a vital witness to an incident, albeit not one that will be directly involved in the evidential chain. However, the value of the CHIS' intelligence collection activity, undertaken on behalf of the State, can only

be truly optimised by the Source Handler's suitable application of elicitation techniques. As such, the use of *appropriate* questioning techniques may well determine whether the necessary intelligence has been collected in a timely, reliable, sufficiently detailed and “actionable” format (Grieve, 2004) so as to inform law enforcement decision-making and prioritisation.

#### **6.4. Research and guidance on question types**

The gathering of reliable information from individuals, whether they be suspects, victims or witnesses concerned with criminal activity is integral to any investigation (Oxburgh, Ost, & Cherryman, 2012). The impact of effective questioning on information gathering is not bound by jurisdiction, the interviewees demographics, or the interviewing professional (Clarke & Milne, 2001; Myklebust & Bjørklund, 2006; Snook, Luther, Quinlan, & Milne, 2012). As such, the importance of using *appropriate* questions also applies to the intelligence context (e.g., CHIS interactions). CHIS are, in effect, a special type of witness (Billingsley et al., 2001) and there is an equivalent necessity for a Source Handler (alike investigative interviewers) to utilise effective questioning with their interviewees (i.e., CHIS). Despite the recognised importance in the literature of effective questioning (e.g., Waterhouse, Ridley, Bull, La Rooy, & Wilcock, 2018), neither the approved College of Policing training for Source Handlers in England and Wales or the official policy (NPIA 2010 Guidance on the Management of Covert Human intelligence Sources (CHIS) Second edition — Restricted) provide any detailed or sufficient guidance on *appropriate* questioning techniques for use in the area of HUMINT.

Previous research and guidance on law enforcement interviewing (e.g., the Cognitive Interview,<sup>2</sup> Fisher & Geiselman, 1992; Achieving Best Evidence [ABE],<sup>3</sup>

Home Office, 2011; the PEACE model,<sup>4</sup> Central Planning and Training Unit, 1992) aimed to enhance practise by providing an evidence base as to what techniques are considered most effective, albeit, within an evidential investigative context. Within this research and guidance, the topic of question types has received significant exploration (Baldwin, 1993; Dent & Stephenson, 1979; Kebbell, Hurren, & Mazerolle, 2006; Lamb, Sternberg, Orbach, Esplin, & Mitchell, 2002; Oxburgh et al., 2012). This is understandable, considering the substantial affect questioning has on the quality and quantity of the information gathered from memory (e.g., Dent & Stephenson, 1979; Lamb, Orbach, Hershkowitz, Horowitz, & Abbott, 2007; Orbach & Lamb, 2000).

Historically, question types have been dichotomised as either *open* or *closed* (Gee, Gregory, & Pipe, 1999; Myklebust & Bjørklund, 2006). By doing so, researchers have been able to contrast *open* and *closed* questions against the quantity and/or quality of information gained. Stern (1903/1904) compared Bericht (*open*) and Verhör (*closed*) questions, noting that longer responses and free narratives were elicited from witnesses with *open* as opposed to *closed* questions. Stern's (1903/1904) initial categorisations remains consistent with recent research (Oxburgh, Myklebust, & Grant, 2010), as the psychological memory processes accessed by *open* and *closed* questions has not changed. *open* questions, broadly speaking, tap into the free recall processes of the interviewee, whereas, *closed* questions typically align to recognition memory processes (Gee et al., 1999). The last two decades of research has repeatedly shown that information gathered via free recall processes are more likely to be accurate than memories reported through recognition processes (Hershkowitz, 2001; Lamb et al., 2007).

Powell and Snow (2007) provided a thorough explanation of *open* questions, noting that not all of these particular questions may elicit an elaborate amount of



information. Their research sub-categorised *open* questions into *open-ended breadth* and *open-ended depth*. The former question type prompting the interviewee to expand the list of broad activities (e.g., “What happened then?”), whereas the latter encourages a more elaborate response about a pre disclosed detail (e.g., “Tell me more about the part where...”). What is common to both of these types is that neither dictate what information is required (Powell & Snow, 2007). However, when question types are categorised by their wording alone, discrepancies occur between researchers and across guidance documents. For example, the ABE interview document (Home Office, 2011) and Loftus (1982) define a question commencing with “wh” (“what?,” “why?,” “when?,” “where?,” “who?”) and “how” (also known as 5WH questions) as a *probing* question, yet as demonstrated by Powell and Snow (2007), an *open* question may start with “what” depending on how they are used (Hymes, 1962). The phrasing of a question should not be ignored, as an alternative wording may improve the quality of a question. However, classifying questions solely on the words used to formulate it can itself become problematic (Oxburgh et al., 2010). Hence, question types have been dichotomised in terms of *productive* or *unproductive* (Griffiths & Milne, 2006), and *appropriate* or *inappropriate* (Phillips, Oxburgh, Gavin, & Myklebust, 2012), to take into account the question's function (e.g., information gathering versus accusatorial), timing within the interview (e.g., using a *closed* questioning strategy before exhausting *open* questions), and the context in which the question is posed (e.g., *appropriate* use of *closed* questions to establish the provenance<sup>5</sup> of the elicited intelligence once *open* questions have been exhausted) (Griffiths & Milne, 2006).

### **6.5. Appropriate versus inappropriate questions in the field**

Fisher, Geiselman, and Raymond (1987) analysed 11 police witness interviews and reported that the interviewers' questions primarily consisted of *closed* yes/no questions (which can only elicit a yes or no response), were delivered in a staccato manner, and that only three *open-ended* questions were used per interview. Comparably, Baldwin (1993) found (in his field study) that interviewers conducted poor interviews with suspects, with constant interrupting, quick-fire questioning, and did not allow the interviewee to provide a full account. Similar findings to Fisher et al. (1987) have been reported, revealing that the majority of questions posed were considered *closed* yes/no questions and only 2% were *open-ended* (Clifford & George, 1996; Daviesl, Westcott, & Horan, 2000).

Within the context of police call centres, Leeney and Mueller-Johnson (2012) analysed 40 telephone interactions between police call operators and witnesses. Their research revealed that only 2.46% of questions posed by the police call operators were considered *open* despite the fact that the majority of questions (88.5%) were categorised as productive (i.e., *appropriate*). This is disappointing, as a laboratory study which examined police call centre telephone interactions showed that the use of an *open-ended* question, namely, "tell me everything", increased the number of correct details at no cost to accuracy (Pescod, Wilcock, & Milne, 2013). Although the new interview protocol introduced by Pescod et al. (2013) increased the length of the telephone interaction, it is argued that the report everything approach gathered a detailed and reliable account. The difficulty of conducting an interview should not however be understated. Professionals who carry out investigative interviews have previously discussed the complexity of the interviewing task (Griffiths, Milne, & Cherryman, 2011; Wright & Powell, 2006), highlighting the simultaneous processes

of active listening and generating further relevant questions (Köhnken, 1995). Yet, an *open-ended* questioning strategy would free up the cognitive load associated to generating numerous relevant questions to allow for active listening instead (Griffiths et al., 2011), as well as positively impact on the interviewee by encouraging a non-*leading* free recall retrieval that is more likely to be accurate in contrast to *closed* questioning (Gee et al., 1999; Hershkowitz, 2001; Lamb et al., 2007).

Despite the seminal research evidencing what is considered to be poor questioning, and the development of numerous interviewing guidance documents in response (e.g., the Cognitive Interview, PEACE, ABE), the quality of interviewing has still been reported as problematic (e.g., Clarke & Milne, 2016; Griffiths et al., 2011; Griffiths & Milne, 2006; Snook et al., 2012; Walsh & Milne, 2008). Poor interviewing practises tend to incorporate the use of *inappropriate* questions, such as *multiple* and *leading* questions. *Multiple* questions address more than one topic or have two or more questions phrased together (Powell & Snow, 2007). *Multiple* questions make it difficult for the interviewee to interpret which part of the question requires an answer (Snook et al., 2012). Further errors include the use of *forced choice* (i.e., was the car red or blue?) or *leading* questions (Fisher, 1995; Gudjonsson, 1992; Wright & Alison, 2004). *Leading* questions represent a biased approach to the interview (Wright & Alison, 2004), as they provide information not previously disclosed by the interviewee. Additionally, they are likely to lead the interviewee into providing an answer that was influenced by the interviewer, which has been found to be less accurate in contrast to *open* questions (Brown et al., 2013; Horowitz, 2009; Lamb et al., 2003; Roberts, Lamb, & Sternberg, 2004).

A common finding amongst the research which analysed the questions deployed by interviewers, is that *appropriate* questions have been utilised less so than

*inappropriate* questions (Myklebust & Alison, 2000; Walsh & Bull, 2010, 2015; Walsh & Milne, 2008). Laboratory and field research have revealed that as an interviewers' input increases the accuracy of the information gathered is likely to diminish, as information reported from follow-up questions has been found to be significantly lower than spontaneously reported information (Kontogianni, Hope, Taylor, Vrij, & Gabbert, 2020). This is further supported by information gained from free-recall prompts (i.e., *open-ended* questions) being more likely to be accurate than information elicited via focused prompts (i.e., *closed* questions) (Lamb et al., 2007). While a free recall is reported to provide approximately one third to one half of the information extracted (Milne & Bull, 2003), it may become necessary to probe (i.e., ask additional questions, typically a 5WH worded question) for further details. *Probing* may be needed to either (i) establish the points to prove for suspect interviews (evidential information specifically required to prove a criminal offence has taken place, Griffiths et al., 2011); (ii) gather a full account across all interviewing contexts; or (iii) elicit the provenance during an intelligence interview (i.e., CHIS interactions). If an interviewer were to end an interview too early after exhausting *open* questions this may result in some key information missed, though *probing* too hard with an over reliance on *closed* questions may lead to unreliable information (Ceci & Bruck, 1993; Snook et al., 2012). Thus, once *open-ended* questions have been exhausted, meaning that they have failed to retrieve information critical to the investigation (Orbach & Pipe, 2011), is it then that *probing* questions may be considered *appropriate*, but only when utilised correctly with regard to wording, context and the timing within the interview (Griffiths & Milne, 2006; Guadagno, Powell, & Wright, 2006; see Table 1 for definitions). An *appropriate open to closed* questioning strategy was illustrated by Orbach and Pipe's (2011) funnel-shaped questioning hierarchical structure,

recommending *open-ended* questions as the most desirable method to elicit information, represented by the funnel's top wider end, whereas the bottom narrower end of the funnel represented more focused *closed* questions. This approach encourages interviewers to postpone the introduction of focused questions until *open-ended* questions have been exhausted (Orbach & Pipe, 2011).

Evaluations of interviews are key in order to highlight best practise and identify areas for future improvement (Farrugia, Oxburgh, & Gabbert, 2019). While research has explored the impact of question types with both children and adults across of range of interviewing settings (see Oxburgh et al., 2010 for a review of question types), to the authors' knowledge, no research has examined the use and impact of question types within an intelligence context, and in particular, interactions involving the Source Handler and CHIS. With privileged access and the analysis of question types used in real life telephone interactions between Source Handlers and CHIS, the present research attempted to address this deficit.

## **6.6. Methodology**

### ***6.6.1. Design***

The present research gained unprecedented access to audio recorded telephone interactions ( $N = 105$ ) between Source Handlers and CHIS from England and Wales, and therefore is the first to analyse such data. The research explored the mean use of each question type per interaction and across all questions asked, as well as comparing the intelligence yield for *appropriate* and *inappropriate* questions via ANOVA. As a consequence of previous research, the research hypotheses were twofold, (i) a larger number of *inappropriate* questions would be utilised in comparison to *appropriate*

questions, and (ii) *appropriate* questions would elicit a larger intelligence yield than *inappropriate* questions.

### **6.6.2 Materials**

A purposive sample of Source Handler and CHIS audio recorded telephone interactions were accessed following ethical approval from the first author's University, the research funders (Centre for Research and Evidence on Security Threats, CREST) and with the support of intelligence subgroups<sup>6</sup> of the National Police Chiefs' Council<sup>7</sup> (NPCC). A total of 495 audio recorded telephone interactions between Source Handlers and CHIS were accessed by the first and second authors. The approved inclusion criteria comprised audio recorded telephone interactions whereby the Source Handler attempted to elicit intelligence from an adult CHIS. For the purposes of this research, intelligence was defined as any information which was relevant to a criminal investigation. Therefore, telephone interactions were excluded if they were either, (i) missed calls; (ii) voicemails; (iii) the interaction did not concern the collection of intelligence, such as, arranging a physical meeting between the Source Handler and CHIS; or (iv) the interaction was merely to arrange a call back (e.g., "I can't talk now, I'll call you back later"). A total of 105 telephone interactions across seven Source Handlers were put forward for analysis, ranging from 2.05 to 19.40 min ( $M = 7.03$  min,  $SD = 3.55$ ). The telephone interactions originated from a Dedicated Source Unit within one English Police Force,<sup>8</sup> and were recorded in 2018 to ensure that the natural verbal behaviour (i.e., questioning) of the Source Handlers was captured.

### 6.6.3. Procedure and coding

Due to the sensitive nature of the sample, the first author attended a secure policing site where all Source Handler and CHIS telephone interactions ( $N = 105$ ) were coded. To fully understand the context of the questions asked, the first author listened to the interaction in its entirety before re-listening for a second time when the coding of the questions and responses took place. In line with Phillips et al. (2012), the authors for the present research categorised questions under the terms *appropriate* and *inappropriate*. The questions utilised by the Source Handler were coded in accordance with the coding scheme displayed in Table 1 (adapted from Wright & Alison, 2004; Dodier & Denault, 2018; Griffiths & Milne, 2006; Oxburgh et al., 2010; Powell & Snow, 2007; Waterhouse et al., 2018). With regard to *minimal encouragers*, if they were followed by a question, only the question was coded as it was that utterance which gathered the intelligence (e.g., “uh huh [minimal encourager not coded], what colour was the car? [*probing* was coded]”). *Probing* questions typically explored the provenance of the elicited intelligence, utilising 5WH questions to probe free recall. Instances where questions may be categorised as more than one type, the most *inappropriate* question type was given. For example, if a question could be coded as *multiple* and/or *leading*, in this example the question would be considered *leading*, as shown in Table 1. The CHIS' responses to the Source Handlers' questions were coded per detail type as displayed in Table 2 (e.g., “around 9 pm [1 Temporal] she [1 Person] was driving [1 Action] a car [1 Object] and dealing [1 Action] drugs [1 Object] in London [1 Surrounding],” with a total intelligence yield of seven). Ambiguous words relating to quantities (e.g., “lots of drugs”) were coded as one item.

#### 6.6.4. Interrater reliability

Due to the sensitive nature of the data, the first and second authors coded the audio recorded telephone interactions at the same secure policing site. They coded one telephone interaction together as a training exercise and to ensure the coding scheme was viable. Subsequently, the second author (blind to the coding scheme until trained) independently coded a random sample of 13 of the Source Handler and CHIS interactions. The interrater reliability was calculated using Cohen's kappa (Cohen, 1960) and was found to be .98, suggesting a very strong level of agreement between the two coders (Landis & Koch, 1977).

**Table 1** Definitions of the appropriate and inappropriate questions used by the Source Handlers

<b>Group</b>	<b>Question Type</b>	<b>Definition</b>
Appropriate	1. Open-ended breadth questions	This is a prompt that asks the CHIS to expand the list of broad activities (e.g., 'What else happened at the [event]?') or to report the next act/activity that occurred (e.g., 'What happened then/next?'). Open-ended breadth questions do not dictate what specific information is required but are used to elicit another broad activity that occurred, not necessarily in sequence.
	2. Open-ended depth questions	This is a question that encourages the CHIS to provide more elaborate detail about a pre-disclosed detail or part of the event but does not dictate what specific information is required (e.g., 'tell me more about the part where... [activity/detail already relayed by the CHIS]'; 'what happened when... [activity/detail already relayed by the CHIS]').
	3. Minimal encouragers	These are prompts that do not interrupt the flow of recollection but merely indicate that the CHIS' account is being listened to and understood and encourages open reporting (e.g., 'Uh huh'; and repeating back the last few words disclosed by the CHIS).



	4. Probing questions	Defined as more intrusive and probing, requiring a more specific free recall regarding the provenance on a subject already mentioned by the CHIS, usually commencing with ‘who’, ‘what’, ‘when’, ‘where’, ‘why’, ‘which’ or ‘how’ (e.g., ‘ <i>where</i> did that happen?’; ‘ <i>what</i> colour was the car’). The CHIS will typically answer with no more than a few words.
	5. Closed yes/no questions	Used at the conclusion of a topic where open and probing questions have been exhausted for provenance on a subject already mentioned by the CHIS. Appropriateness is based on the context, especially when time is a constraint (e.g., ‘did you see the gun that you have described?’).
Inappropriate	6. Closed yes/no questions	Used at the wrong point in the interaction and therefore becomes unproductive because they close down the range of responses (e.g., ‘do you know this man?’; also includes ‘ <i>Can/could</i> you...’ questions). Inappropriateness is based on the context.
	7. Multiple questions	Constitute a number of sub-questions asked at once (e.g., ‘ <i>how</i> did you get there, <i>what</i> did you do inside?’; or questions that ask about two concepts at once ‘what did <i>they</i> look like?’).
	8. Forced choice questions	Only offered a limited number of possible responses (e.g., ‘did you <i>kick</i> or <i>punch</i> the other woman?’; ‘was is <i>cocaine</i> or <i>heroin</i> ?’).
	9. Opinion or statement	Defined as posing an opinion or putting statements to the CHIS as opposed to asking a question (e.g., ‘I think you touched the gun’).
	10. Qualitative feedback	These are used to provide positive feedback to what the CHIS has said, which can be perceived as biased as they provide confirmation to a specific detail raised, inappropriately encouraging the CHIS to continue reporting (e.g., assigning a status to a person of interest which may create a selection bias on reporting – ‘main person’, ‘the organiser’).
	11. Leading questions	Introduces information that the CHIS has not mentioned, implies a desired response or uses suggestive techniques (e.g., ‘the car was blue, right?’).
	12. Interruptions	Questions or statements that interrupt the speech of the CHIS.

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**Table 2** Intelligence yield coding scheme

Intelligence detail type	Code	Definition
Surrounding	S	Detail of the setting and locations (e.g., crime scenes, prisons, sporting events).
Object	O	Detail concerning items that that were present (e.g., phone, drugs, firearms, money).
Person	P	Detail which refers to a person (e.g., names, person descriptions, clothing).
Action	A	Detail that relates to actions involved in the event (e.g., criminal activity, payment for the drugs).
Temporal	T	Detail relating to time (e.g., dates, days, months, years).

Note: Adapted from (Phillips et al., 2012).

## 6.7. Results

To examine the research hypotheses, descriptive statistics were utilised to explore the frequency of both *appropriate* questions and *inappropriate* questions, as well as per question type. Additionally, one-way ANOVAs were conducted to compare the *appropriate* questions and *inappropriate* questions with regard to overall intelligence yield, which was also broken down by the five detail types (e.g., surrounding, object, person, action and temporal).

A total of 2085 questions were identified across the total 105 audio recorded telephone interactions between Source Handlers and CHIS, with a percentage breakdown of the 12 question types (see Table 3). The mean number of questions per interaction was 19.86 ( $SD = 15.12$ ). Source Handlers used 15.50 *appropriate* questions ( $SD = 11.60$ ) and 4.35 *inappropriate* questions ( $SD = 4.56$ ) per interaction. With regard to the *appropriate* questions per interaction, *minimal encouragers* were the most frequently used ( $M = 9.37$ ,  $SD = 7.39$ ), followed by *appropriate closed yes/no* ( $M = 3.37$ ,  $SD = 3.41$ ) and *probing* ( $M = 2.03$ ,  $SD = 2.13$ ). *Open-ended breadth* ( $M = 0.38$ ,  $SD = 0.66$ ) and *open-ended depth* questions ( $M = 0.35$ ,  $SD = 0.62$ ) were less

frequently utilised. Of the questions labelled as *inappropriate*, *leading* ( $M = 1.10$ ,  $SD = 1.64$ ) and *interruptions* ( $M = 1.10$ ,  $SD = 1.96$ ) were the most frequently used. These were followed by *inappropriate closed yes/no* ( $M = 0.80$ ,  $SD = 1.09$ ), *multiple questions* ( $M = 0.58$ ,  $SD = 0.84$ ), and *opinion or statement* ( $M = 0.52$ ,  $SD = 0.90$ ). *Forced choice* questions ( $M = 0.17$ ,  $SD = 0.45$ ) and *qualitative feedback* ( $M = 0.09$ ,  $SD = 0.40$ ) were the least frequently used. Across the entire sample, the total intelligence yield was 9162 information items, with *appropriate* questions being responsible for gathering 87.23%, of the total information elicited.

**Table 3** Breakdown of questions ( $N = 2085$ ) utilised by Source Handlers

	Question Type	Percentage	Percentage of the total questions asked
Appropriate	Open-ended breadth	1.92	78.08
	Open-ended depth	1.77	
	Minimal encourager	47.19	
	Probing	10.22	
	Closed yes/no	16.98	
Inappropriate	Closed yes/no	4.03	21.92
	Multiple	2.92	
	Forced choice	0.86	
	Opinion or statement	2.64	
	Qualitative feedback	0.43	
	Leading	5.52	
	Interruptions	5.52	

A one-way ANOVA revealed that *appropriate* questions elicited significantly more intelligence yielded from CHIS compared to *inappropriate* questions,  $F(1, 2083) = 196.28$ ,  $p < .001$ . To isolate the amount of intelligence yield that emanated from *appropriate* questions, a series of one-way ANOVAs were performed to explore the type of details (i.e., surrounding, object, person, action, and temporal), which are displayed in Table 4. Analyses revealed that *appropriate* questions were significantly

more associated with the number of surrounding details,  $F(1, 2083) = 41.326, p < .001$ ; object details,  $F(1, 2083) = 53.58, p < .001$ ; person details,  $F(1, 2083) = 74.84, p < .001$ ; action details,  $F(1, 2083) = 128.440, p < .001$ ; and temporal details,  $F(1, 2083) = 50.52, p < .001$ , in comparison to *inappropriate* questions.

**Table 4** Intelligence yield per detail type ( $N = 105$ )

Intelligence Detail Type	Appropriate Questions		Inappropriate Questions	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Surrounding	0.70	1.05	0.36	0.76
Object	0.71	1.07	0.32	0.71
Person	1.74	1.56	1.05	1.31
Action	1.40	1.22	0.70	0.97
Temporal	0.37	0.66	0.14	0.38
Total	4.91	3.27	2.56	2.78

To investigate how the *appropriate* questions performed, a post hoc Bonferroni analysis was performed to explore the differences between the question types regarding the total intelligence yield. The means and standard deviations for the 12 question types are displayed in Table 5. *Open-ended breadth* questions were significantly more associated with the number of intelligence yielded in comparison to *probing* ( $p < .001$ ), *appropriate closed yes/no* ( $p < .001$ ), *inappropriate closed yes/no* ( $p < .001$ ), *opinion or statement* ( $p < .001$ ), *leading* ( $p < .001$ ), and *interruptions* ( $p < .001$ ). However, no differences were revealed between *Open-ended breadth* questions and *open-ended depth* questions ( $p = 1.00$ ), *minimal encouragers* ( $p = 1.00$ ), *multiple* ( $p = .06$ ), *forced choice* ( $p = 1.00$ ), and *qualitative feedback* ( $p = .08$ ).

*Open-ended depth* questions were significantly more associated with the number of intelligence yielded compared to *probing* ( $p < .001$ ), *appropriate closed yes/no* ( $p < .001$ ), *inappropriate closed yes/no* ( $p < .001$ ), *multiple* ( $p = .01$ ), *opinion or statement* ( $p < .001$ ), *qualitative feedback* ( $p = .03$ ), *leading* ( $p < .001$ ), and

*interruptions* ( $p < .001$ ). No differences were reported when comparing *open-ended depth* questions to *open-ended breadth* ( $p = 1.00$ ), *minimal encouragers* ( $p = 1.00$ ), and *forced choice* ( $p = 1.00$ ).

With regard to *minimal encouragers*, a significantly larger intelligence yield was identified in comparison to *probing* ( $p < .001$ ), *appropriate closed yes/no* ( $p < .001$ ), *inappropriate closed yes/no* ( $p < .001$ ), *opinion or statement* ( $p < .001$ ), *leading* ( $p < .001$ ), and *interruptions* ( $p < .001$ ). Non-significant differences were reported when contrasting *minimal encouragers* to *open-ended breadth* ( $p = 1.00$ ), *open-ended depth* questions ( $p = 1.00$ ), *multiple* ( $p = .12$ ), *forced choice* ( $p = 1.00$ ), and *qualitative feedback* ( $p = .37$ ). *Probing* and *appropriate closed yes/no* questions only outperformed the intelligence yielded by *interruptions* ( $p < .001$ ).

**Table 5** Intelligence yield per question type ( $N = 105$ )

	Question Type	Mean	SD
Appropriate	Open-ended breadth	6.15	4.25
	Open-ended depth	6.54	3.29
	Minimal encourager	5.36	3.31
	Probing	4.00	2.88
	Closed yes/no	3.90	2.83
Inappropriate	Closed yes/no	3.20	2.34
	Multiple	4.11	3.25
	Forced choice	4.50	3.05
	Opinion or statement	2.69	2.29
	Qualitative feedback	2.56	4.77
	Leading	3.46	2.52
	Interruptions	0.00	0.00

Note: Interruptions resulted in no intelligence yield as they stopped the flow of information.

## 6.8. Discussion

The present research sought to explore two hypotheses, and therefore analysed audio recorded telephone interactions with regard to the questions utilised by Source

Handlers with CHIS. Firstly, in contrast to hypothesis one, Source Handlers utilised more *appropriate* questions (78%) than *inappropriate* questions (22%) across the sample. Similar to Phillips et al. (2012), the present research did not confirm the hypothesis that more *inappropriate* questions will be asked in comparison to *appropriate* questions. This is particularly surprising, as the telephone interactions in the present research were informal compared to the previous literature which analysed investigative interviews. Informal interactions are more similar to an everyday conversation, taking the form of question and answer turn taking and lack *open* questions (Guadagno et al., 2006), which is why hypothesis one was generated.

It was further interesting to reveal that hypothesis one was not supported with a sample of intelligence telephone interactions, especially as previous research has established that *appropriate* questions rarely occur in practise (Myklebust & Alison, 2000; Myklebust & Bjørklund, 2006; Oxburgh et al., 2010). It is promising that hypothesis one was not supported considering a Source Handler's aim is to gather detailed and reliable intelligence from a CHIS. This is possibly due to fact that the Source Handler and CHIS relationship is different to an investigator and suspect or witness interaction. Source Handlers and CHIS endure an ongoing relationship, whereas investigators and suspects will typically meet for the first time within an interview room and experience fewer interactions. The use of more *appropriate* than *inappropriate* questions was also found by Leeney and Mueller-Johnson's (2012) in their police call centre research. Perhaps interactions undertaken via a telephone differ greatly to formal face-to-face investigative interviews, impacting on cognitive load, rapport and interviewing ability.

The majority of questions asked by Source Handlers were identified as *appropriate*, however, less than 4% of all questions asked were *open-ended* (similarly

to Leeney & Mueller-Johnson, 2012). This is consistent with previous research which has reported the use of *open-ended* questions at 2% (Clifford & George, 1996; Davies et al., 2000; Leeney & Mueller-Johnson, 2012), 7% (Phillips et al., 2012) and 10% (Snook et al., 2012). The fact that practitioners seldom use *open-ended* questions may be explained by a lack of inadequate training (Smith, Powell, & Lum, 2009) and thus practise (Snook et al., 2012), especially as everyday conversations (e.g., informal interactions) typically do not consist of what is required from effective interviewing (e.g., *open-ended* questions, *non-leading* questions and *interruptions*; Guadagno et al., 2006).

If Source Handlers, and interviewers more broadly, are not convinced by the benefits of using *open-ended* questions, then this assumption can reinforce a preference of using *closed* questions to gather information (Wright & Powell, 2006). The importance of advocating *appropriate* questions was demonstrated by the present research, as across the 105 interactions, *appropriate* questions elicited the majority (87%) of the total intelligence gathered. Although *closed* questions, on the face of it, gather information in a typically shorter time frame, the answer is more likely to be less accurate and shorter in length (Stern, 1903/1904). While the present research did not explore the accuracy of the intelligence gathered due to a lack of the ground truth which accompanies field data, research has demonstrated that *inappropriate* questions are more likely to gather unreliable information in comparison to *appropriate* questions (Lamb et al., 2007). However, this is not to say that all *closed* questions are *inappropriate* because once *open-ended* questions have been exhausted, which encourages a free narrative, *appropriate closed* questions are then suitable. It may be necessary to utilise *probing* (e.g., 5WH) questions in order to probe the unaccounted for provenance of the intelligence provided, in order to gather verifiable information

to establish the facts (Griffiths et al., 2011). Thus, Source Handlers should be made aware that as their input increases, the accuracy of the gathered information is likely to diminish (Lamb et al., 2007). Hence, the use of *open-ended* questions would transfer the control of the interview to the CHIS, encouraging them to provide a more detailed and reliable account. Furthermore, as the Source Handler begins to reinforce the use of *open* questions as well as the desired provenance that is required to action the intelligence, the CHIS should begin to learn what extra information to report without the Source Handler having to ask for it.

Secondly, in support of hypothesis two, the present research revealed that *appropriate* questions were significantly more associated with the number of intelligence yielded than *inappropriate* questions. *appropriate* questions have repeatedly been shown to generate more detailed and accurate responses in comparison to *inappropriate* questions (Lipton, 1977; Milne & Bull, 2003; Orbach & Lamb, 2000; Powell & Snow, 2007; Snook et al., 2012). This is because *appropriate* questions, particularly *open-ended* questions and *minimal encouragers*, provide the interviewee with the time to gather their thoughts, motivate the interviewee who may feel encouraged that somebody wants to listen to what they have to say, consequently promoting an elaborate memory retrieval (Wright & Powell, 2006). Moreover, such questions support free recall, which has been shown to be superior in contrast to recognition processes with regard to detail and accuracy (Lamb et al., 2007).

In addition, it was found that *appropriate* questions were significantly more associated with the number of intelligence elicited across all five detail types, namely, surrounding, object, person, action and temporal details. This demonstrates the benefit of using *appropriate* over *inappropriate* questions regardless of the targeted intelligence detail type. Hence, a CHIS reporting on a particular event will be more



likely to report more detailed and reliable intelligence across the five detail types via *appropriate* questions (Lipton, 1977; Phillips et al., 2012). While the accuracy of the intelligence yielded was unable to be explored in the present research, the benefits (i.e., reliability of the information elicited) of utilising *appropriate* questions has been evidenced by numerous previous research (e.g., Dent & Stephenson, 1979; Hershkowitz, 2001; Lamb et al., 2007; Orbach & Lamb, 2000).

The use of *minimal encouragers* were reported as the most frequent question type utilised by Source Handlers, as they contributed to 47% of all questions asked and were used on average nine times per interaction. This high use of *minimal encouragers* may be explained by the ongoing relationship between Source Handlers and their CHIS, whereas in contrast to investigative interviews, the interviewer and interviewee typically have not met before. Hence, a CHIS is usually willing to talk to their Handler and may initiate a telephone interaction. Source Handlers, therefore, demonstrated a relatively high amount of active listening, also reported by Wright and Alison (2004) concerning police witness interviews. *Minimal encouragers* were amongst the questions which elicited the greatest mean intelligence yield per interaction, behind *open-ended breadth* and *open-ended depth* questions, respectively. *Forced choice* and *multiple* questions did not differ from *open-ended breadth*, *open-ended depth*, and *minimal encouragers* with respect to intelligence yield. However, as discussed, *inappropriate* questions, such as *forced choice* and *multiple* questions should be challenged in relation to reliability of the intelligence they gathered (Griffiths & Milne, 2006; Lamb et al., 2007; Milne & Bull, 2003).

Across the sample, Source Handlers interrupted the CHIS on one occasion on average per telephone interaction, which was approximately 6% of all utterances utilised. While this may seem small, *interruptions* were more frequent than the use of

both types of *open-ended* questions. *Interruptions* of any kind are of concern, even those which intend to prevent the CHIS from digressing (Wright & Alison, 2004). This is because *interruptions* break the flow of a free narrative, thus hindering the memory recall process, which may undermine elements of rapport as well as potentially cause shortened future responses in order to avoid anticipated *interruptions* (Fisher et al., 1987; Powell & Snow, 2007).

A further aspect of concern was in regard to the use of *leading* questions. Not only did the results of the present research support the common finding that *leading* questions elicit less information than *open-ended* questions, the reliability of the information gathered via *leading* questions is thought likely to be problematic due to their suggestibility of “expected” answers (Oxburgh et al., 2010). Although the use of *leading* questions only comprised 6% of all questions asked and were used on average once per interaction, this is still considered problematic (Snook et al., 2012). Source Handlers should aim for *leading* questions to be removed entirely, as the quality of the information recalled is highly dependent on the questions used to elicit it (Powell & Snow, 2007; Waterhouse et al., 2018). Although the negative effects of *leading* questions can be decreased by using cognitive methods before *leading* questions are asked (see Geiselman, Fisher, Cohen, Holland, & Surtes, 1986), laboratory and field research has revealed that *leading* questions result in information of questionable reliability (Brown et al., 2013; Horowitz, 2009; Lamb et al., 2003; Roberts et al., 2004; Sternberg et al., 1996, 1997).

The time constraints that Source Handler and CHIS interactions are normally under in order to avoid compromise can add to the challenge of interviewing. As with such limited time, this may explain the limited use of *open-ended* questions. Thus, a pragmatic approach is required towards the *appropriate* use of a full *open* to *closed*

interviewing style, especially if the desired goal of the interaction is to elicit a single piece of information. Here, an *appropriate closed* question which is carefully worded and non-leading is believed to be a safe approach. However, if the Source Handler establishes that the CHIS has ample time to talk, a full *open to closed* interviewing style (e.g., once *open-ended* questions have been exhausted, *probing* should then be used, followed by *appropriate closed yes/no*) should be considered the gold standard (Griffiths & Milne, 2006; Orbach & Pipe, 2011). That practitioners seldom use *open-ended* questions, even with ample time, may be explained through a lack of training (Snook et al., 2012). However, even after comprehensive training about *appropriate* questioning procedures, it has been reported that interviewers still predominately use *closed* questions (Aldridge & Cameron, 1999). It appears that such training enhances knowledge but has little long-lasting effect on interviewing behaviours (Warren et al., 1999). Conversely, for training to have an impact, it should incorporate three elements, (i) continuous post-training supervision, feedback and guidance in the use of personal reflection, (ii) frequent refresher training sessions, and (iii) structure and planning towards interviewing (Griffiths & Walsh, 2018; Wright & Powell, 2006). Hence, for Source Handlers, and interviewers generally, training must not be a tick-box exercise, but rather a developed programme that adheres to the three training elements reported in order to improve interviewing practises (Smith et al., 2009; Walsh, King, & Griffiths, 2017; Wright & Powell, 2006).

## **6.9. Limitations**

It is important to note that the results from the present research are exploratory rather than definitive (Wright & Alison, 2004). First, due to the sensitive nature and reliance on police forces providing access to such data, the sample originates from one police

force, and therefore may not reflect the general questioning practises of Source Handlers across England and Wales, although the present sample were trained and accredited via the same national course as those employed elsewhere. Second, a purposive sample was necessary to analyse interactions that met the inclusion and exclusion criteria. Although this has resulted in a sample which is not random, such sampling methods (i.e., convenience or purposive) are common amongst applied research due to the constraints of the research aims and participating organisations (Snook et al., 2012). Third, as second author, the interrater may arguably not be entirely independent, as security vetting was required to access the dataset. The potential biases of the second author was minimised by independently coding a random sample of telephone interactions, and while the second author may have held preconceived notions of what the research hypotheses were, they were not privy to the actual hypotheses until the data was analysed. Fourth, as it was not possible to establish the ground truth of the intelligence provided by the CHIS, the results were more inferential when exploring the intelligence yield (i.e., quantity), rather than being able to assess the reliability (i.e., quality) of the intelligence coded. As such, the results were discussed in light of the question type used to elicit such intelligence, with the notion that the information elicited from *appropriate* question types would generate greater yield and be more reliable than information gathered from *inappropriate* question types (Hershkowitz, 2001; Lamb et al., 2007; Myklebust & Bjørklund, 2006). Finally, as the present research analysed field data, the controllable factors which a laboratory study would enable (e.g., all CHIS witness the same event) are not present. However, it may be argued that laboratory studies lack ecological validity, as they do not incorporate the stresses, consequences or realism of interviewee engagement that real-life interactions hold (Oxburgh, Williamson, & Ost, 2006).

## 6.10. Conclusion

The questioning of CHIS is a key skill required by Source Handlers to gather both quantity and quality HUMINT. By gaining unprecedented access to, and analysing such interactions, the present research encouraged the development of an evidenced-based approach to Source Handler intelligence practises. The present research has developed a methodology to analyse the questioning used by intelligence practitioners (i.e., field data), an area that is currently under researched. It is promising that the present findings reported that Source Handlers utilised vastly more *appropriate* questions than *inappropriate* questions, and that *appropriate* questions (by far) were associated with the gathering of much of the total intelligence yield. However, there is room for improvement with regard to the use of *open-ended* questions. As such, the creation of a bolt-on training course to be incorporated into the existing Source Handler training concerning intelligence elicitation, should incorporate guidance and training exercises regarding *open-ended* questioning. In practise, similar to investigative interviews, Source Handlers should plan and prepare for their interactions with CHIS, to ensure they know what questions they need to ask and how to *appropriately* word them. The present research has added to the evidence-base regarding the benefits of asking *appropriate* questions and information gathering. Ultimately, information is only as reliable, timely, and detailed as the questions asked, and it is such actionable intelligence that is vital to LEA decision-making, which subsequently tackles criminal activity.

## 6.11. Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> CHIS conduct that is required to be authorised and which will take place in Scotland is authorised under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers (Scotland) Act 2000.

<sup>2</sup> The Cognitive Interview is an interviewing approach that addresses the interviewer's and interviewee's social dynamics, cognitive processes, and communication.

<sup>3</sup> Achieving Best Evidence (ABE) is a document that provides guidance to interview victims and witnesses, and guidance on special measures.

<sup>4</sup> The PEACE model is an acronym for the model's five phases of Planning and Preparation; Engage and Explain; Account; Closure; and Evaluation.

<sup>5</sup> The provenance of intelligence (also referred to as “provenancing”) is the process of establishing the surrounding facts of what the CHIS has divulged. Provenance questions aim to identify how the CHIS knows what they are sharing, the circumstances around when the CHIS was privy to such intelligence, and who else knows about the divulged intelligence, in order to safely action the elicited intelligence.

<sup>6</sup> The Intelligence Practice Research Consortium is an intelligence subgroup of the National Police Chiefs’ Council (NPCC) Intelligence Portfolio.

<sup>7</sup> The National Police Chiefs’ Council (NPCC) replaced the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) in April 2015. The NPCC function is to coordinate policing policy, reform, efficiency and national operations.

<sup>8</sup> England and Wales comprise 43 police forces, all which operate Dedicated Source Units within their force area.

## 6.12. References

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## **Chapter 7: General Discussion**

The overarching aim of this thesis was to establish an evidence-base concerning the collection of intelligence from CHIS. In order to do so, five research studies were undertaken to investigate three key topics within the broader theme of intelligence elicitation, namely, rapport, memory, and questioning. First, the general discussion summarises the main findings of this thesis, comprising primary research which addressed the aforementioned aim. Second, the theoretical implications are discussed, focusing on the psychological theories of rapport, memory, and questioning. Third, the implication for policy and practice are considered with regards to Source Handler training, the CHIS codes of practice, and interviewing more broadly. Fourth, the methodological considerations and future research are discussed, which includes the challenges and guidance for undertaking intelligence related research. Finally, the thesis is concluded by digesting the research findings.

### **7.1. Summary of Main Findings**

Prior to this thesis, limited research had explored the psychological aspects of intelligence elicitation from CHIS. Hence, this thesis addressed this lack of research by undertaking five research studies, which consisted of three objectives: (i) explore the perceptions and experiences of Source Handlers regarding their interactions with CHIS (Study 1 and 2); (ii) develop a tasking instruction that benefits a CHIS' memory recall (Study 3); and (iii) investigate the practices of Source Handlers within real-world telephone interactions with CHIS (Study 4 and 5).

Study 1 (Chapter 2) consisted of structured interviews with Source Handlers regarding their perceptions and experiences of rapport during CHIS interactions. Rapport was perceived to be essential to the collection of HUMINT, and participants

stressed the importance of building and maintaining rapport. Effective communication, common ground, and a concern for welfare were considered key strategies of rapport. The majority of participants believed rapport could be trained to some degree. While rapport was not viewed exclusively as an inherent skill, participants perceived that some inherent attributes are required to build rapport, with those inherent attributes being refined and developed through training and experience.

Study 2 (Chapter 3) explored source handlers' perceptions of the interviewing techniques employed with CHIS. Source Handlers perceived commonalities between interviewing and debriefing, which provided support for the transferability of investigative interviewing research and practices into the collection of HUMINT. Five themes emerged from the interviews, (i) a comparison between interviewing and debriefing; (ii) the PEACE model in intelligence interviews; (iii) the importance of effective communication; (iv) Source Handlers' use of cognitive retrieval techniques; and, (v) Source Handler interview training. Finally, a need for additional training concerning intelligence gathering techniques arose, as professional development could be advanced based on investigative interviewing research and professional practices.

Study 3 (Chapter 4) aimed to explore tools to enhance memory recall for mock informants (i.e., CHIS) of a to-be-remembered event, by examining the impact of intentional memory and a context tasking instruction (instructions provided to an informant to gather information). Mock informants in the *intentional encoding with tasking instruction* condition reported significantly more correct information (in particular, correct surrounding and object details) during the free recall compared to those in the incidental condition. The free recall phase resulted in more accurate recall than the prompts phase. Non-significant differences were found during the prompts

phase. A small but significant increase in incorrect information was reported with the tasking instruction, but at no cost to the overall accuracy.

Study 4 (Chapter 5) investigated rapport utilised by source handlers within real-world audio recorded telephone interactions with CHIS. Both the rapport component behaviours (e.g., *attention*, *positivity*, and *coordination*) displayed by the Source Handler and the intelligence yielded from the CHIS were quantified, in order to investigate the frequencies of these rapport components and their relationship to intelligence yield. The results revealed that *overall rapport*, *attention* and *coordination* significantly correlated with intelligence yield, while *positivity* did not. *Attention* was the most frequently used component of rapport, followed by *positivity*, and then *coordination*. An examination of the coefficient of determinations was utilised to explore the practical importance of rapport with regards to intelligence yield.

Study 5 (Chapter 6) utilised a sample of audio recorded CHIS telephone interactions to investigate the questioning used by Source Handlers. This study explored the mean use of various question types per interaction and across all questions asked in the sample, as well as comparing the intelligence yield for *appropriate* and *inappropriate* questions. Source Handlers were found to utilise more *appropriate* questions than *inappropriate* questions, though they rarely used *open-ended* questions. Across the total interactions, *appropriate* questions (by far) were associated with the gathering of the majority of the total intelligence yielded.

## **7.2. Theoretical Implications**

The present thesis is theoretically underpinned by the psychological areas of rapport, memory, and questioning. These elements impact upon information elicitation, a

process, which if enhanced through research, would benefit the collection of a greater quantity of reliable intelligence from a human source.

### ***7.2.1. Perceptions and Deployment of Rapport***

Rapport-based interviewing has been shown to be effective in a range of interviewing contexts (e.g., Alison et al., 2013; Goodman-Delahunty et al., 2014; Redlich et al., 2014; Russano et al., 2014; Semel, 2012), yet limited research to date had explored the relationship between rapport and intelligence yielded from a CHIS.

In line with previous research, Study 1 presented in Chapter 2 identified that source handlers perceived rapport to be essential to the elicitation of information (Russano et al., 2014; Semel, 2012) and that it needs to be established at the start of the interaction as well as being maintained throughout (Walsh & Bull, 2012). Source handlers likened rapport to generating an *operational accord* (see Kleinman, 2006) with the CHIS, as this may help overcome any barriers, and encourage a relationship of information exchange. Furthermore, source handlers discussed rapport to include a professional working alliance (Tickle-Degnen, 2002; Vanderhallen et al., 2011), common ground (Abbe & Brandon, 2013; Vallano et al., 2015), trust, and empathy (Leach, 2005). These perceived features of rapport align to an appreciation of the CHIS' concerns, intentions, and desired outcomes of the interaction (Stanier & Nunan, 2018), all of which are considered important elements of rapport (Abbe & Brandon, 2014; Evans et al., 2010).

Despite an increase in academic research investigating rapport, it has shown to be both difficult to define and measure (Alison & Alison, 2017; Vallano et al., 2015). Vallano et al. (2015) argued that as rapport is a subjective experience, subjective measures of rapport (e.g., self-reported data) are deemed most appropriate. However,

self-reported data has been shown to conflict with actual behaviours. Hall (1997) revealed a discrepancy between police officers reporting rapport as an important interviewing factor yet demonstrated a lack of rapport-building behaviours when the same police officers' interviews were examined. Ultimately, an objective measure of rapport, for example ORBIT (Alison et al., 2013) and Collins and Carthy's (2019) rapport framework provide a method to examine interactions based on the behaviours that occurred during an interview.

With regards to the use of rapport by source handlers, Study 4 developed an objective measure of rapport (see Collins & Carthy, 2019; Tickle-Degnen & Rosenthal, 1990) applied to an intelligence gathering context. The research findings provided further support for the application of a systematic framework to measure verbal rapport, guided by 'the coding of behaviours that have been theoretically and empirically linked to rapport' (Collins & Carthy, 2019, p. 27). In line with Collins and Carthy (2019), Study 4 revealed that *overall rapport*, *attention* and *coordination* significantly correlated with intelligence yield, while *positivity* did not. When comparing what source handlers say they do with that they actually do, it appears that their perceptions are supported. Source handlers placed an emphasis on the role rapport plays in gathering intelligence (*attention*), followed by behaviours such as empathy and establishing common ground (*positivity*), with fewer discussions concerning behaviours associated with *coordination*. This research found that *attention* was the most frequently used component of rapport, followed by *positivity*, and then *coordination*.

Interesting, *positivity* did not significantly impact on intelligence yield, despite the fact the sample consisted of cooperative CHIS-handler relationships. This may be because the CHIS-handler relationships were already present prior to analysing the

interactions (compared to investigative interviewing research whereby the suspect and interviewer typically meet for the first time following arrest). The increased familiarity between source handlers and CHIS may have reduced the impact of *positivity* and may not have been considered to be as important as *coordination* or *attention*.

### **7.2.2. *Intentional versus Incidental Memory Encoding***

While rapport is important to the interview, it is only one facet of a multitude of factors that can help to increase intelligence yield. Hence, rapport must accompany other evidence-based techniques to ensure source handlers are maximising their intelligence yield from CHIS. The present research explored the idea that a CHIS is often aware that they will be attending an event that needs to be remembered (Ratcliffe, 2008). Therefore, Study 3 investigated different encoding conditions (i.e., *incidental encoding*, *intentional encoding*, and *intentional encoding with a tasking instruction*) on subsequent memory recall.

In contrast to previous research (e.g., Gagnon et al., 2005; Migueles & Garcia-Bajos 1999; West & Stone, 2013; Unsworth & Spillers, 2010) Study 3 revealed that memory recall was not enhanced by *intentional encoding* alone. This finding supports the notion that the intention to encode may not enhance recall on its own (Ferrara et al., 1978). Furthermore, the *intentional encoding* condition may have been too broad in scope, as previous research that reported intentional memory benefits referred to a specific task, such as sequences (see Gagnon et al., 2005).

The *intentional encoding with tasking instruction* did however enhance recall, at no cost to percentage accuracy. This finding provided some merit of priming encoding, as a tasking instruction that incorporated contextual factors (e.g., think about the surrounding, object, person, action and conversation) appeared to enhance

recall. This technique adopted a non-leading approach to which the participant could use their own distinctive memory cues (Anderson & Conway, 1993). Thus, the use of self-generated distinctive memory cues may spread activation to other associated details (Anderson, 1983), which may have facilitated the binding of details (Kessels et al., 2007), consequently enhancing memory recall overall.

Once participants had exhausted their free recall phase, prompts were used to try and gather additional information. The contextual factors from the tasking instruction were mirrored within the prompts (e.g., think about the surrounding, object, person, action and conversation) informed by the ideology of the *encoding specificity principle* (Tulving & Thomson, 1973). As previously reported, the match between encoding and retrieval was expected to enhance recall (Godden & Baddeley, 1975; Tulving & Thomson, 1973). However, it was evident that the addition of the prompts did not significantly increase overall recall. In fact, the accuracy for the prompts in comparison to the free recall was lower, though this was non-significant. It may be argued that once participants have exhausted their free recall they may begin to guess rather than provide new information. In addition, as an interviewer's input increases the likelihood of the information accuracy diminishes (Lamb, Orbach, Hershkowitz, Horowitz, & Abbott, 2007).

### ***7.2.3. Interviewing Techniques and Questioning***

An understanding of what interviewing techniques source handlers perceive to be used within CHIS interactions are key to developing the practices concerning intelligence collection. Study 2 explored the perceived commonalities between interviewing and intelligence debriefing, acknowledging that both forms of interaction strive to collect reliable, timely, and detailed information from a human source. Therefore, the same

cognitive retrieval techniques may be used to elicit information, such as modified CIs, sketch plans (Dando et al., 2009a; Eastwood, Snook, & Luther, 2018), the timeline technique (Hope et al., 2013), and self-generated cues (Leins et al., 2014).

Source handlers discussed the individualistic approach to gathering HUMINT, to which utilising the PEACE model would encourage a standardised level of preparation and utilising evidence-based elicitation techniques. The PEACE model endorses a flexible interviewing structure, utilising rapport-building (Walsh & Bull, 2010) and *appropriate* questioning (Snook et al., 2012) to gain a detailed and reliable account (Stanier & Nunan, 2018).

The use of *appropriate* questioning was explored in Study 5, by analysing audio recorded telephone interactions between Source Handlers and CHIS. Akin to previous research (Leeney & Mueller-Johnson, 2012; Phillips et al., 2012), Study 5 revealed that Source Handlers utilised more *appropriate* questions than *inappropriate* questions. This may be because telephone interactions differ greatly to formal face-to-face investigative interviews, that impact upon cognitive load and interviewing ability, and removing visible non-verbal rapport.

While Source Handlers utilised more *appropriate* than *inappropriate* questions, it was revealed that *open-ended* questions were rarely asked (e.g., Clifford & George, 1996; Davies et al., 2000; Leeney & Mueller-Johnson, 2012; Phillips et al., 2012; Snook et al., 2012). The lack of *open-ended* questions is concerning, as Study 5 also found that *appropriate* questions, and in particular, *open-ended* questions were more significantly associated with the amount of intelligence yielded (Lipton, 1977; Milne & Bull, 2003; Orbach & Lamb, 2000; Powell & Snow, 2007; Snook et al., 2012). This provided further evidence that the use *open-ended* questions should be maximised, as they support elaborative free recall (Lamb et al., 2007; Wright &



Powell, 2006), transfer control of the interview to the CHIS, and encourage a more detailed and reliable account.

### **7.3. Implications for Policy and Practice**

Taken together, conducting research on rapport, memory and questioning helps to develop an evidence base for the elicitation of intelligence from human sources. While it may be expected that a cooperative CHIS would disclose any intelligence they hold, the deployment of ineffective elicitation practices can negatively impact on information retrieval (i.e. the accuracy and quantity of recall; Evans et al, 2010; Vrij, Hope, & Fisher, 2014). The research has helped to advance the knowledge on CHIS-handler interactions by considering the practitioners' viewpoints (i.e. Source Handlers), tested an elicitation technique, and finally exploring what Source Handlers do in practice.

#### ***7.3.1. Evidenced-Based Elicitation***

This thesis adds to the existing evidence base concerning the elicitation of information, as well as acknowledging that the research and practices concerning investigative interviewing also apply to the elicitation of intelligence from CHIS. The findings promote the use of rapport, in particular, *attention* and *coordination* (Study 1 and 4), intentional encoding and tasking (Study 3) and the deployment of effective interviewing techniques (Study 2), particularly *appropriate* questioning (Study 5). If Source Handlers were to deploy such elicitation techniques with a CHIS, the quality and quantity of the intelligence gathered should be enhanced.

In order to implement such research into practice, the policy surrounding CHIS practices needs to be updated to reflect the existing literature on intelligence

elicitation. As it stands, central Source Handler training in the UK includes little mention of the vital elicitation skillset comprising rapport-building, an understanding of memory, and *appropriate* questioning. Further still, the governing policy remains overly cautious, with policy development drawn from a negligible and outdated evidence base. For change to take place, it will require a continued effort on behalf of LEAs to support evidenced-based research with a particular focus on intelligence elicitation techniques and wider intelligence related research. Moreover, an EBP ethos should be embedded within policy development methodology. Consequently, research findings should be shared with policy makers, investigators, and intelligence professionals (Stanier & Nunan, 2018). Therefore, this thesis will be disseminated to the participating officers, gatekeepers, police force research leads, and the NPCC Intelligence Practice Research Consortium, with each chapter published via open access.

### ***7.3.2. Source Handler Training***

Rapport was believed to be trainable to some degree, by this sample of source handlers. Although rapport was not viewed exclusively as an inherent skill, Source Handlers perceived that some inherent attributes are required to build rapport, with those inherent attributes being refined and developed through training and experience. Additionally, it was identified that Source Handlers (Study 5, Chapter 6) and practitioners more generally (Snook et al., 2012) rarely used *open-ended* questions in their interactions with CHIS. This may be explained by a lack of practice or inadequate training (Smith, Powell, & Lum, 2009). It should be of no surprise then, that at present, nationally delivered Source Handler training in England and Wales includes little mention of interviewing and rapport building techniques.

The lack of evidenced-based elicitation training for Source Handlers is concerning, especially when there is room for improvement regarding the use of *open-ended* questions and the utilisation of rapport with CHIS. Part of the solution is the development and implementation of an intelligence interviewing training programme, which may act as a ‘bolt on’ to the existing Source Handler training course. However, the creation of an intelligence interviewing training course is only part of the solution, as the benefits of training can fade over time (Clarke & Milne, 2001; Walsh, King, & Griffiths, 2017). Thus, an intelligence interviewing training programme requires scheduled reinforcement through continuous professional development events that can assist with keeping cognitive retrieval techniques up to date, together with self, peer, and supervisory reviews to prevent a ‘skills fade’ (Griffiths & Walsh, 2018).

Both the framework of rapport from Study 4 and the questioning framework from Study 5 could be utilised in a training environment to highlight *appropriate* questioning and verbal behaviours associated to the three components of rapport. Moreover, the adoption of both frameworks could be used to assess training sessions and monitor real-world interactions. Gold-standard future research may look to assess the skill of Source Handlers’ questioning and rapport prior to the delivery of a developed intelligence interviewing training course, and post-training evaluation could be supported by utilising the questioning and rapport frameworks developed in this research. This approach will further explore what techniques work and which methods of training are most effective (Griffiths & Walsh, 2018; Smith et al., 2009; Walsh et al., 2017; Wright & Powell, 2006).

#### **7.4. Methodological Considerations and Future Research**

It is important to note that the results from the thesis are suggestive rather than definitive, especially when discussions comprise the thesis as a whole. Each Chapter is a stand-alone academic article which aimed to advance research in an area of covert policing which remains largely untouched. It would therefore be interesting for future research to develop upon this research by investigating more than one variable within an experimental paradigm (e.g., Studies 3, 4, and 5).

##### ***7.4.1. Participants and Sample Size***

It is acknowledged that the interviews presented in Studies 1 and 2 involved a small sample of police officers. However, Source Handlers are considered a specialist area of policing, especially those working within counter terrorism, and therefore, the present thesis achieved privileged access to a unique sample. Additionally, for the purpose of utilising a qualitative methodology to understand the sample's perceptions and experiences, the generated qualitative themes provided a unique insight into covert intelligence practices. Study 3 acknowledged a lack of statistical power due to the sample size. Thus, future research may reveal a stronger effect by increasing the power of the study.

While this thesis was able to compare what source handlers *say they do* with what *they actually do* with regards to rapport, this was limited by the fact that the Source Handlers interviewed for their perceptions differed from those Source Handlers whose telephone interactions were analysed. Additionally, the research was constrained by the fact that access to the audio recorded telephone interactions was limited to one Dedicated Source Unit and approved after the structured interviews were completed. Future research could interview and subsequently analyse the

behaviours of the same Source Handlers, in order to undertake a direct comparison between perceptions and behaviours.

Furthermore, the present research has only addressed the perceptions and experiences of one of the two parties involved in a Source Handler and CHIS interaction. Intelligence interviews are a two-way process, therefore, future research, subject to appropriate vetting and access, should explore the CHIS' perceptions and experiences of their interactions with Source Handlers. This would further enhance our understanding of how a Source Handler's behaviour impacts upon a CHIS, and may highlight effective practices and areas for future improvement and research.

#### ***7.4.2. Ecological Validity: Laboratory versus Field Data***

A limitation of Study 3 was that within certain aspects of the experimental design the ecological validity may be considered low, though necessarily so. Participants (i.e., mock informants) had little contact with the experimenter (i.e., mock Source Handler) prior to recall, whereas in practice, Source Handlers would have built up a relationship with their CHIS before being deployed. The lack of rapport was necessary to ensure that the tasking instruction was the only manipulated variable across the three conditions and to prevent unequal levels of rapport between the experimenter and participants. Future research may wish to incorporate rapport into the conditions to investigate the combined effect with a tasking instruction.

As Study 3 focused on a pre-event encoding technique, the lack of delay between participants watching the to-be-remembered event and subsequent free recall (i.e., 10 minutes) may also limit the findings. Eyewitness memory research has shown that the level of accuracy and detail of recall decreases as the interval between witnessing and recalling the to-be-remembered event increases. Therefore, future

research should incorporate a condition that investigates the effect of a delayed recall on the tasking instruction from Study 3. Additionally, further research could explore different retrieval methods (e.g., timeline technique, Hope et al., 2013), and cognitive mnemonics, Kontogianni et al., 2018) with the aim to enhance recall after using the pre-event tasking instruction.

Conversely, Studies 4 and 5 analysed field data, as such, the controllable factors which a laboratory study would enable (e.g., all CHIS witness the same event) were not possible. However, it may be argued that laboratory studies lack ecological validity, as they do not incorporate the stresses, consequences or realism of interviewee engagement that real-life interactions hold (Oxburgh, Williamson, & Ost, 2006). Therefore, it is important that research concepts are tested with both laboratory and field data to provide a sound evidence base.

#### ***7.4.3. Terminology and Operationalisation***

Contention around the definition of rapport, and in particular, the operationalisation of rapport are vital discussions to be held. This is because the verbal behaviours that were used to code for the *positivity* and *coordination* components of rapport may not have been fully conceptualised in the present research, as they had little impact on Intelligence Yield. Future research should explore these components further, to establish a deeper understanding as to which verbal behaviours within these two components are holding the most impact. Individually assessing the behaviours associated within *positivity* and *coordination* may provide further evidence as to which verbal behaviours should be used going forward. While the verbal behaviours within the three components were developed from the rapport literature, many of the verbal behaviours have not been individually tested within an intelligence gathering context.

Moreover, the present research promotes the use of the coefficients of determinations ( $R^2$ ) when examining rapport. Rather than accepting significant correlations at face-value, the coefficients of determinations go beyond that by exploring how the percentage of observed variation that can be explained by one factor (i.e., Intelligence Yield) with another factor (i.e., *overall rapport, attention, positivity, or coordination*). As a result, the findings are discussed in respect of their practical importance (e.g., the determining predictive power of rapport and its three components).

## **7.5. Conclusion**

Across the five academic studies (i.e., interviews with Source Handlers, experimental research and analysis of real-world data), this thesis has provided unique insight into an area of policing which remains largely untouched by research. The next step is for law enforcement learning and development leads to produce guidance that is of sufficient depth, to enable LEAs to provide effective training on intelligence elicitation to all staff involved in investigation and intelligence processes. This should also include the commission of bespoke intelligence elicitation courses to be made available to law enforcement practitioners, underpinned by the available evidence-based research.

Professionalising intelligence practices requires a reenergised and prioritised working relationship between academics, intelligence practitioners, and operational trainers. The resultant policy and practice must adopt an evidence-based approach, incorporating what works and to reject 'what does not'. This thesis supports this agenda and has demonstrated that it is possible to research a sensitive area of policing when the appropriate mechanisms are in place, comprising a clear research

methodology and strategy to share the research findings, underpinned by research ethics. Taken together, this thesis has made a useful contribution to the development of evidenced-based techniques for gathering HUMINT.



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## Appendix A – Ethical Approval for Study 1 and 2



3<sup>rd</sup> May 2017

Dear Jordan Nunan

<b>Study Title:</b>	<b>Interviews of HUMINT officers</b>
<b>Ethics Committee reference:</b>	<b>16/17: 43</b>

Thank you for submitting your documents for ethical review. The Ethics Committee was content to grant a favourable ethical opinion of the above research on the basis described in the application form, protocol and supporting documentation, revised in the light of any conditions set, subject to the general conditions set out in the attached document.

**The Ethics Committee provides a favourable ethical opinion with the following condition:**

1. Divulging Malpractice: The risk of identifying malpractice and the strategy to address this should be further developed, ensuring that participants are warned in the Participant Information Sheet and verbally, prior to the interview commencing.

There is no need to submit any further evidence to the Ethics Committee; the favourable opinion has been granted with the assumption of compliance



The favourable opinion of the EC does not grant permission or approval to undertake the research. Management permission or approval must be obtained from any host organisation, including University of Portsmouth, prior to the start of the study.

#### **Documents reviewed**

The documents reviewed by The Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences Ethics Committee.

<i>Document</i>	<i>Version</i>	<i>Date</i>
Application Form	1	12/04/2017
Organisation Invitation Letter/Email	1	20/03/2017
Participant Invitation Letter/Email	1	29/03/2017
Participant Information Sheet	1	20/03/2017
Consent Form	1	20/03/2017
Interview Demographics/Interview Protocol	1	29/03/2017

#### **Statement of compliance**

The Committee is constituted in accordance with the Governance Arrangements set out by the University of Portsmouth

## **After ethical review**

### Reporting and other requirements

The enclosed document acts as a reminder that research should be conducted with integrity and gives detailed guidance on reporting requirements for studies with a favourable opinion, including:

- Notifying substantial amendments
- Notification of serious breaches of the protocol
- Progress reports
- Notifying the end of the study

### Feedback

You are invited to give your view of the service that you have received from the Faculty Ethics Committee. If you wish to make your views known please contact the administrator [ethics-fhss@port.ac.uk](mailto:ethics-fhss@port.ac.uk)

<b>Please quote this number on all correspondence – 16/17: 43</b>
---

Yours sincerely and wishing you every success in your research

\*\*\*\*\*

**Chair**

Dr Jane Winstone

Email: [ethics-fhss@port.ac.uk](mailto:ethics-fhss@port.ac.uk)

Enclosures: *"After ethical review – guidance for researchers"*

Appendix 1

### **After ethical review – guidance for researchers**

This document sets out important guidance for researchers with a favourable opinion from a University of Portsmouth Ethics Committee. Please read the guidance carefully. A failure to follow the guidance could lead to the committee reviewing and possibly revoking its opinion on the research.

It is assumed that the research will commence within 3 months of the date of the favourable ethical opinion or the start date stated in the application, whichever is the latest.

The research must not commence until the researcher has obtained any necessary management permissions or approvals – this is particularly pertinent in cases of research hosted by external organisations. The appropriate head of department should be aware of a member of staff's research plans.

If it is proposed to extend the duration of the study beyond that stated in the application, the Ethics Committee must be informed.

If the research extends beyond a year then an annual progress report must be submitted to the Ethics Committee.

When the study has been completed the Ethics Committee must be notified.

Any proposed substantial amendments must be submitted to the Ethics Committee for review. A substantial amendment is any amendment to the terms of the application for ethical review, or to the protocol or other supporting documentation approved by the Committee that is likely to affect to a significant degree:

- (a) the safety or physical or mental integrity of participants
- (b) the scientific value of the study
- (c) the conduct or management of the study.

A substantial amendment should not be implemented until a favourable ethical opinion has been given by the Committee.

Researchers are reminded of the University's commitments as stated in the [Concordat to Support Research Integrity](#) viz:

- maintaining the highest standards of rigour and integrity in all aspects of research
- ensuring that research is conducted according to appropriate ethical, legal and professional frameworks, obligations and standards
- supporting a research environment that is underpinned by a culture of integrity and based on good governance, best practice and support for the development of researchers
- using transparent, robust and fair processes to deal with allegations of research misconduct should they arise
- working together to strengthen the integrity of research and to reviewing progress regularly and openly

In ensuring that it meets these commitments the University has adopted the [UKRIO Code of Practice for Research](#). Any breach of this code may be considered as misconduct and may be investigated following the University [Procedure for the Investigation of Allegations of Misconduct in Research](#).

Researchers are advised to use the [UKRIO checklist](#) as a simple guide to integrity.

## Appendix B – Ethical Approval for Study 3

Professor Matthew Weait, BA (Hons), MA, MPhil, DPhil  
Dean

Direct Line: +44 (0)23 9284 6012

E: [matthew.weait@port.ac.uk](mailto:matthew.weait@port.ac.uk)

W: [www.port.ac.uk/faculty-of-humanities-and-social-sciences](http://www.port.ac.uk/faculty-of-humanities-and-social-sciences)



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### **FAVOURABLE ETHICAL OPINION (with conditions)**

**Name: Mr Jordan Nunan**

**Study Title: Proactive encoding: Does cued contextual encoding improve recall?**

**Reference Number: 16/17:27**

**Date 06/07/2017**

Thank you for resubmitting your application to the FHSS Ethics Committee and for making the requested changes/ clarifications.

I am pleased to inform you that FHSS Ethics Committee was content to grant a favourable ethical opinion of the above research on the basis described in the submitted documents listed at Annex A, and subject to standard general conditions (*See Annex B*).

With this there are a number of ethical conditions to comply with, and some additional advisory notes you may wish to consider, all shown below.

#### **Condition(s)<sup>1</sup>**

1. The methods for explaining the face-to-face research need to be explained.

#### **Advisory Note(s)<sup>2</sup>**

1. The advertising poster essentially asks if students have what it takes to be a 'snitch' or 'grass'. This may not be something that young people they would be proud of and some may have a moral dilemma with this. Perhaps further consideration could be given to the wording of the poster.
2. In 8.2, why delete the sentence that reads "This will maximise the participants' motivations, and it is necessary to reflect the real-world conditions of a paid informant (CHIS)"? Is it not useful to explain why participants paid and and/or entered into a prize draw? (Also 11.5)
3. 11.2 Further consideration could be given to what exactly constitutes a 'fluent English speaker'.

---

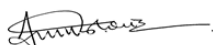
<sup>1</sup> A favourable opinion will be dependent upon the study adhering to the conditions stated, which are based on the application document(s) submitted. It is appreciated that Principal Investigators may wish to challenge conditions or propose amendments to these in the resubmission to this ethical review.

<sup>2</sup> The comments are given in good faith and it is hoped they are accepted as such. The PI does not need to adhere to these, or respond to them, unless they wish to.

4. Further thought should be given to whether the instruction that participants should not share the debriefing sheet with their peers who may not yet have taken part in the experiment is sufficient to safeguard the integrity of the data?
5. On the participant information sheet it says participants can withdraw from the study before...before what is not made explicit (later on it says before some data has been collected - how much data?).

Please note that the favourable opinion of FHSS Ethics Committee does not grant permission or approval to undertake the research/ work. Management permission or approval must be obtained from any host organisation, including the University of Portsmouth or supervisor, prior to the start of the study.

Wishing you every success in your research



**Chair**

Dr Jane Winstone

Email: [ethics-fhss@port.ac.uk](mailto:ethics-fhss@port.ac.uk)

Annexes

A - Documents reviewed

B - After ethical review

**ANNEX A - Documents reviewed**

The documents ethically reviewed for this application

<i>Document</i>	<i>Version</i>	<i>Date</i>
Substantial amendment form and Ethics application	2	17/06/2017

**ANNEX B - After ethical review**

1. This Annex sets out important guidance for those with a favourable opinion from a University of Portsmouth Ethics Committee. Please read the guidance carefully. A failure to follow the guidance could lead to the committee reviewing and possibly revoking its opinion on the research.
2. It is assumed that the work will commence within 1 year of the date of the favourable ethical opinion or the start date stated in the application, whichever is the latest.
3. The work must not commence until the researcher has obtained any necessary management permissions or approvals – this is particularly pertinent in cases of research

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hosted by external organisations. The appropriate head of department should be aware of a member of staff's plans.

4. If it is proposed to extend the duration of the study beyond that stated in the application, the Ethics Committee must be informed.

5. Any proposed substantial amendments must be submitted to the Ethics Committee for review. A substantial amendment is any amendment to the terms of the application for ethical review, or to the protocol or other supporting documentation approved by the Committee that is likely to affect to a significant degree:

- (a) the safety or physical or mental integrity of participants
- (b) the scientific value of the study
- (c) the conduct or management of the study.

5.1 A substantial amendment should not be implemented until a favourable ethical opinion has been given by the Committee.

6. At the end of the work a final report should be submitted to the ethics committee. A template for this can be found on the University Ethics webpage.

7. Researchers are reminded of the University's commitments as stated in the [Concordat to Support Research Integrity](#) viz:

- maintaining the highest standards of rigour and integrity in all aspects of research
- ensuring that research is conducted according to appropriate ethical, legal and professional frameworks, obligations and standards
- supporting a research environment that is underpinned by a culture of integrity and based on good governance, best practice and support for the development of researchers
- using transparent, robust and fair processes to deal with allegations of research misconduct should they arise
- working together to strengthen the integrity of research and to reviewing progress regularly and openly.

8. In ensuring that it meets these commitments the University has adopted the [UKRIO Code of Practice for Research](#). Any breach of this code may be considered as misconduct and may be investigated following the University [Procedure for the Investigation of Allegations of Misconduct in Research](#). Researchers are advised to use the [UKRIO checklist](#) as a simple guide to integrity.

## Appendix C – Ethical Approval for Study 4 and 5



UNIVERSITY OF  
PORTSMOUTH

Professor Matthew Weait,  
BA (Hons) MA MPhil DPhil FAcSS  
Professor of Law and Society  
Dean of the Faculty of Humanities and  
Social Sciences

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### **FAVOURABLE ETHICAL OPINION**

**Name:** Jordan Nunan

**Study Title:** Developing an Evidence-Based Approach to Source Handler Interactions

**Reference Number:** FHSS 2018-053

**Date:** 04/07/2018

Thank you for submitting your application to the FHSS Ethics Committee.

I am pleased to inform you that FHSS Ethics Committee was content to grant a favourable ethical opinion of the above research on the basis described in the submitted documents listed at Annex A, and subject to standard general conditions (*See Annex B*).

Please note that the favourable opinion of FHSS Ethics Committee does not grant permission or approval to undertake the research/ work. Management permission or approval must be obtained from any host organisation, including the University of Portsmouth or supervisor, prior to the start of the study.

Wishing you every success in your research

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jane Winstone'.

**Chair**

Dr Jane Winstone

Email: [ethics-fhss@port.ac.uk](mailto:ethics-fhss@port.ac.uk)



## Annexes

A - Documents reviewed

B - After ethical review

### **ANNEX A - Documents reviewed**

The documents ethically reviewed for this application

<i>Document</i>	<i>Version</i>	<i>Date</i>
Application Form	11/06/18	1
Research Proposal to NPCC National Source Working Group	11/06/18	1
Organisation Invitation Letter/Email	11/06/18	1
Evidence From External Organisation Showing Support	18/06/18	1

### **ANNEX B - After ethical review**

1. This Annex sets out important guidance for those with a favourable opinion from a University of Portsmouth Ethics Committee. Please read the guidance carefully. A failure to follow the guidance could lead to the committee reviewing and possibly revoking its opinion on the research.
  2. It is assumed that the work will commence within 1 year of the date of the favourable ethical opinion or the start date stated in the application, whichever is the latest.
  3. The work must not commence until the researcher has obtained any necessary management permissions or approvals – this is particularly pertinent in cases of research hosted by external organisations. The appropriate head of department should be aware of a member of staff's plans.
  4. If it is proposed to extend the duration of the study beyond that stated in the application, the Ethics Committee must be informed.
  5. Any proposed substantial amendments must be submitted to the Ethics Committee for review. A substantial amendment is any amendment to the terms of the application for ethical review, or to the protocol or other supporting documentation approved by the Committee that is likely to affect to a significant degree:
    - (a) the safety or physical or mental integrity of participants
    - (b) the scientific value of the study
    - (c) the conduct or management of the study.
- 5.1 A substantial amendment should not be implemented until a favourable ethical opinion has been given by the Committee.

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6. At the end of the work a final report should be submitted to the ethics committee. A template for this can be found on the University Ethics webpage.

7. Researchers are reminded of the University's commitments as stated in the [Concordat to Support Research Integrity](#) viz:

- maintaining the highest standards of rigour and integrity in all aspects of research
- ensuring that research is conducted according to appropriate ethical, legal and professional frameworks, obligations and standards
- supporting a research environment that is underpinned by a culture of integrity and based on good governance, best practice and support for the development of researchers
- using transparent, robust and fair processes to deal with allegations of research misconduct should they arise
- working together to strengthen the integrity of research and to reviewing progress regularly and openly.

8. In ensuring that it meets these commitments the University has adopted the [UKRIO Code of Practice for Research](#). Any breach of this code may be considered as misconduct and may be investigated following the University [Procedure for the Investigation of Allegations of Misconduct in Research](#). Researchers are advised to use the [UKRIO checklist](#) as a simple guide to integrity.

## Appendix D – Form UPR16

### FORM UPR16

#### Research Ethics Review Checklist

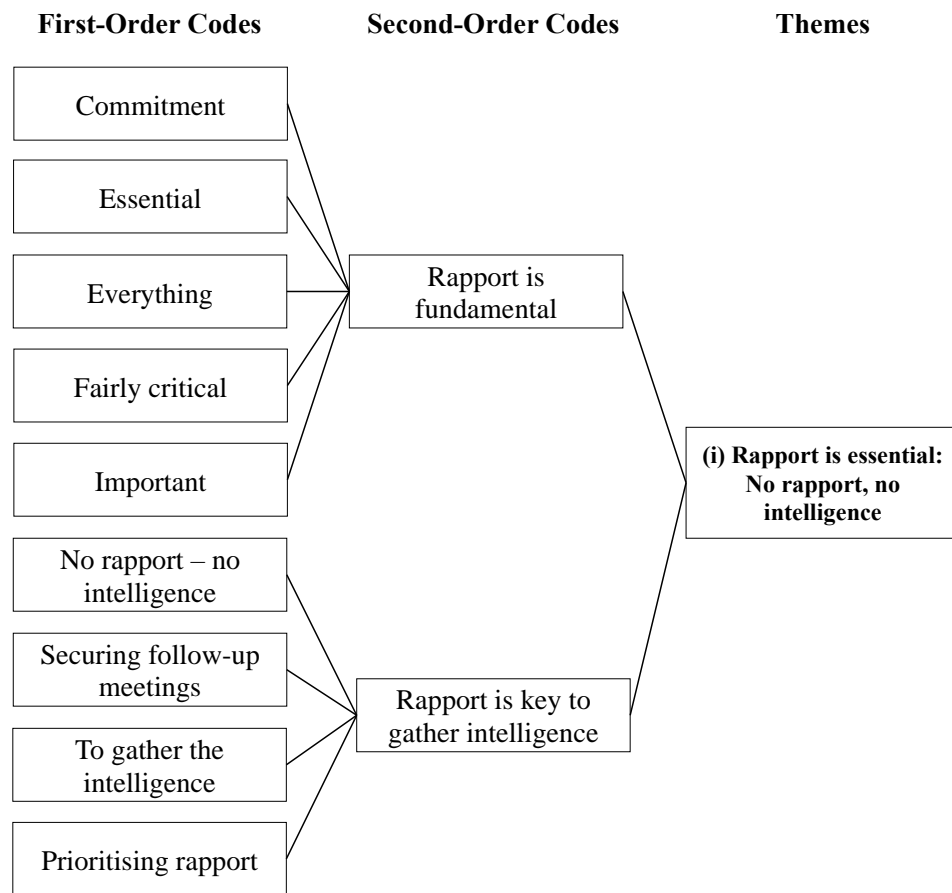
**Please include this completed form as an appendix to your thesis (see the Research Degrees Operational Handbook for more information)**

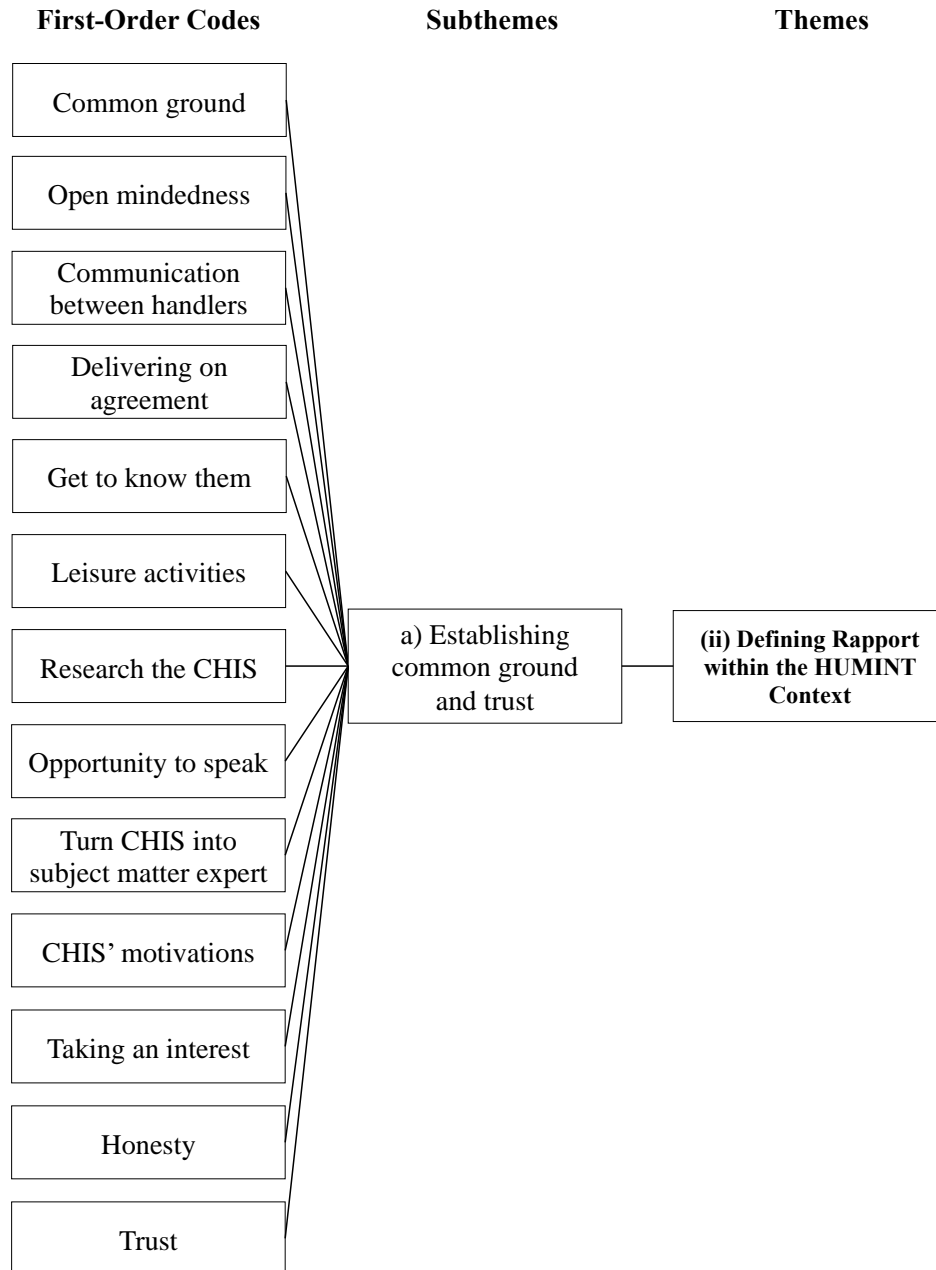


<b>Postgraduate Research Student (PGRS) Information</b>		<b>Student ID:</b>	UP662612
<b>PGRS Name:</b>	Jordan Nunan		
<b>Department:</b>	ICJS	<b>First Supervisor:</b>	Rebecca Milne
<b>Start Date:</b> (or progression date for Prof Doc students)	October 2016		
<b>Study Mode and Route:</b>	Part-time <input type="checkbox"/>	MPhil <input type="checkbox"/>	MD <input type="checkbox"/>
	Full-time <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	PhD <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Professional Doctorate <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Title of Thesis:</b>	Developing an Evidenced-Based Approach to Enhance the Collection of Intelligence from Covert Human Intelligence Sources		
<b>Thesis Word Count:</b> (excluding ancillary data)	47,196		
<p>If you are unsure about any of the following, please contact the local representative on your Faculty Ethics Committee for advice. Please note that it is your responsibility to follow the University's Ethics Policy and any relevant University, academic or professional guidelines in the conduct of your study</p> <p>Although the Ethics Committee may have given your study a favourable opinion, the final responsibility for the ethical conduct of this work lies with the researcher(s).</p>			
<b>UKRIO Finished Research Checklist:</b>			
(If you would like to know more about the checklist, please see your Faculty or Departmental Ethics Committee rep or see the online version of the full checklist at: <a href="http://www.ukrio.org/what-we-do/code-of-practice-for-research/">http://www.ukrio.org/what-we-do/code-of-practice-for-research/</a> )			
a) Have all of your research and findings been reported accurately, honestly and within a reasonable time frame?	YES	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
	NO	<input type="checkbox"/>	
b) Have all contributions to knowledge been acknowledged?	YES	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
	NO	<input type="checkbox"/>	
c) Have you complied with all agreements relating to intellectual property, publication and authorship?	YES	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
	NO	<input type="checkbox"/>	
d) Has your research data been retained in a secure and accessible form and will it remain so for the required duration?	YES	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
	NO	<input type="checkbox"/>	
e) Does your research comply with all legal, ethical, and contractual requirements?	YES	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
	NO	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Candidate Statement:</b>			
I have considered the ethical dimensions of the above named research project, and have successfully obtained the necessary ethical approval(s)			
<b>Ethical review number(s) from Faculty Ethics Committee (or from NRES/SCREC):</b>	16/17:43 16/17:27 FHSS 2018-053		
If you have <i>not</i> submitted your work for ethical review, and/or you have answered 'No' to one or more of questions a) to e), please explain below why this is so:			
N/A			
<b>Signed (PGRS):</b>		<b>Date:</b>	01/12/2020

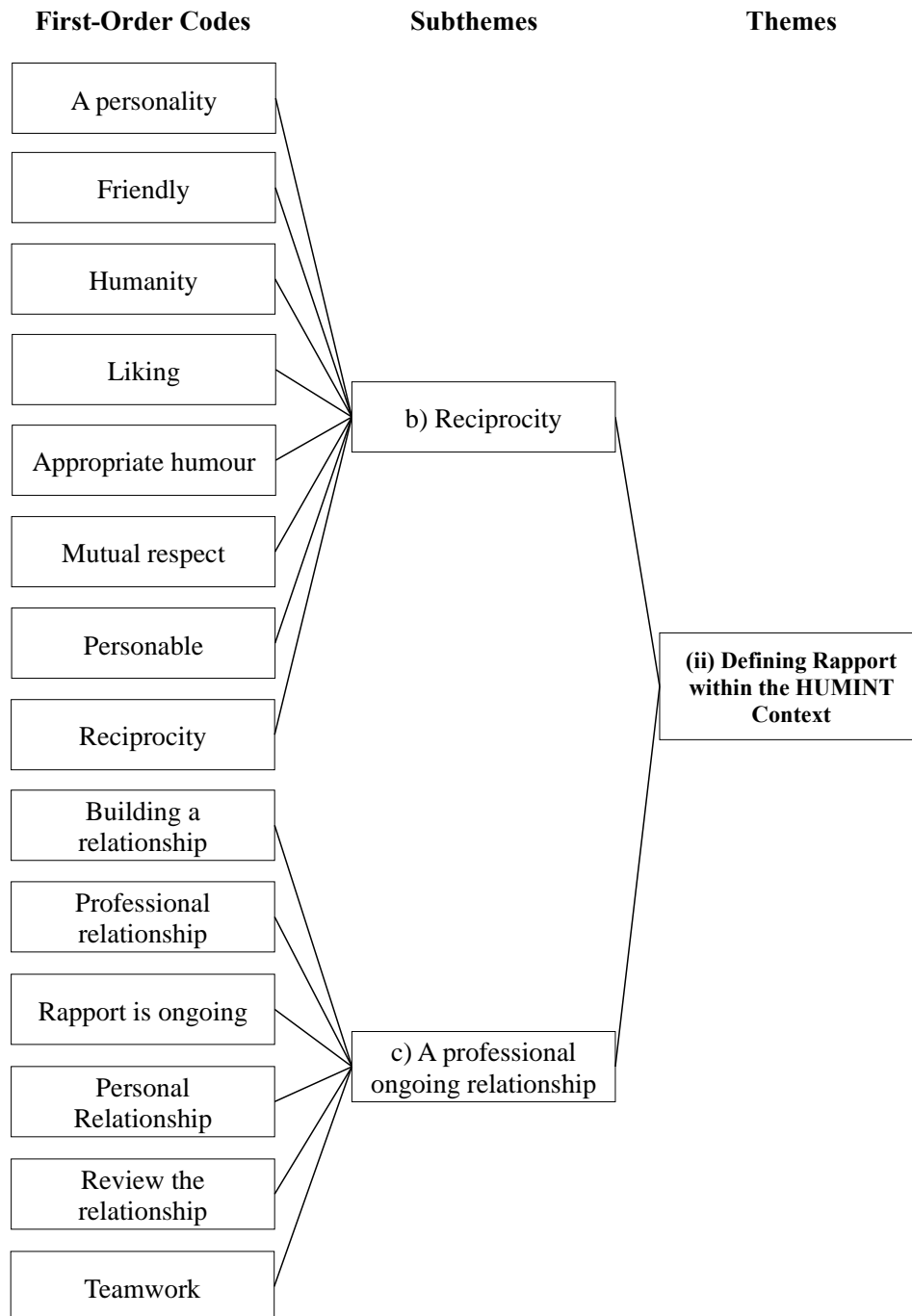
UPR16 – April 2018

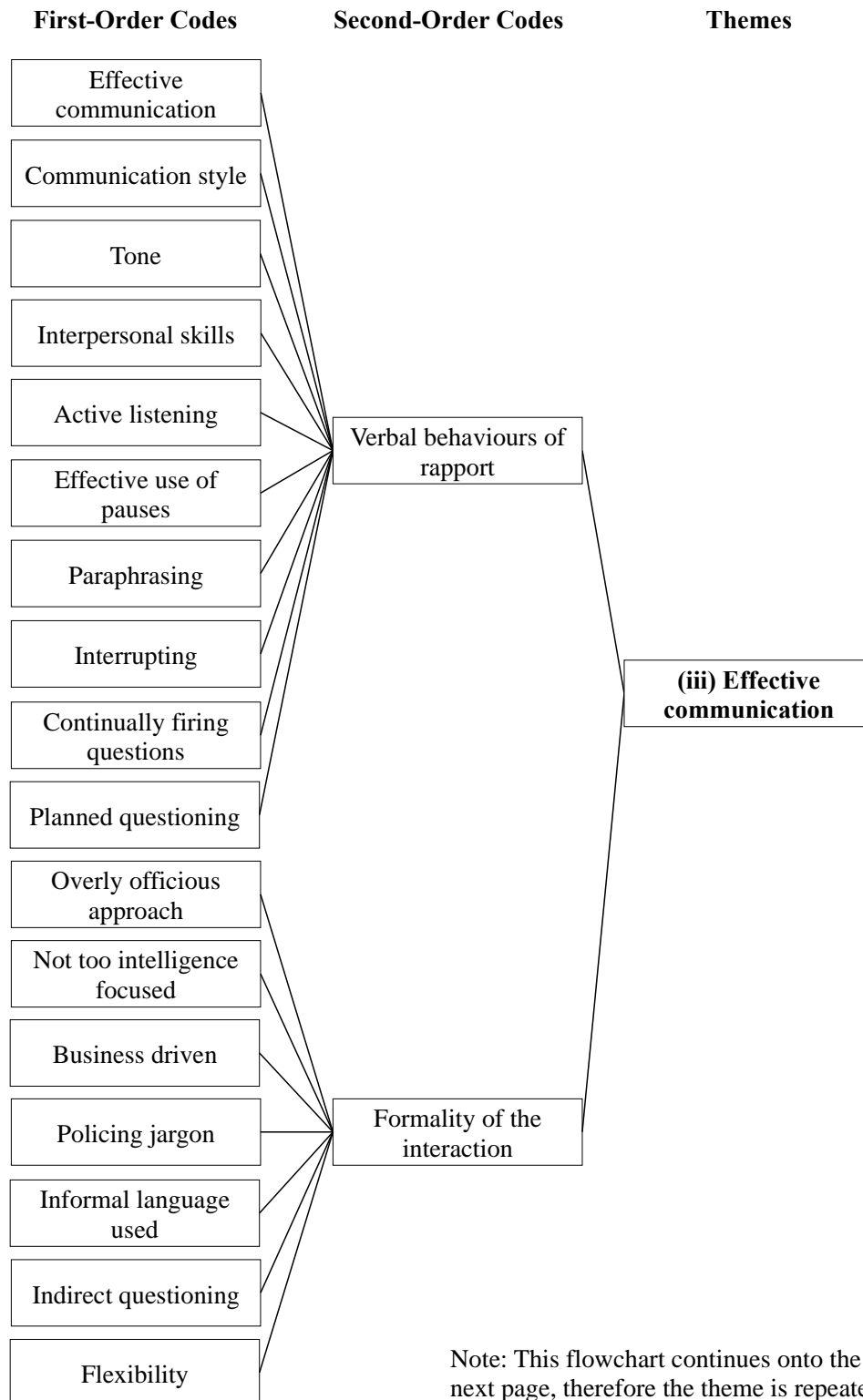
## Appendix E – Study 1 Thematic Analysis

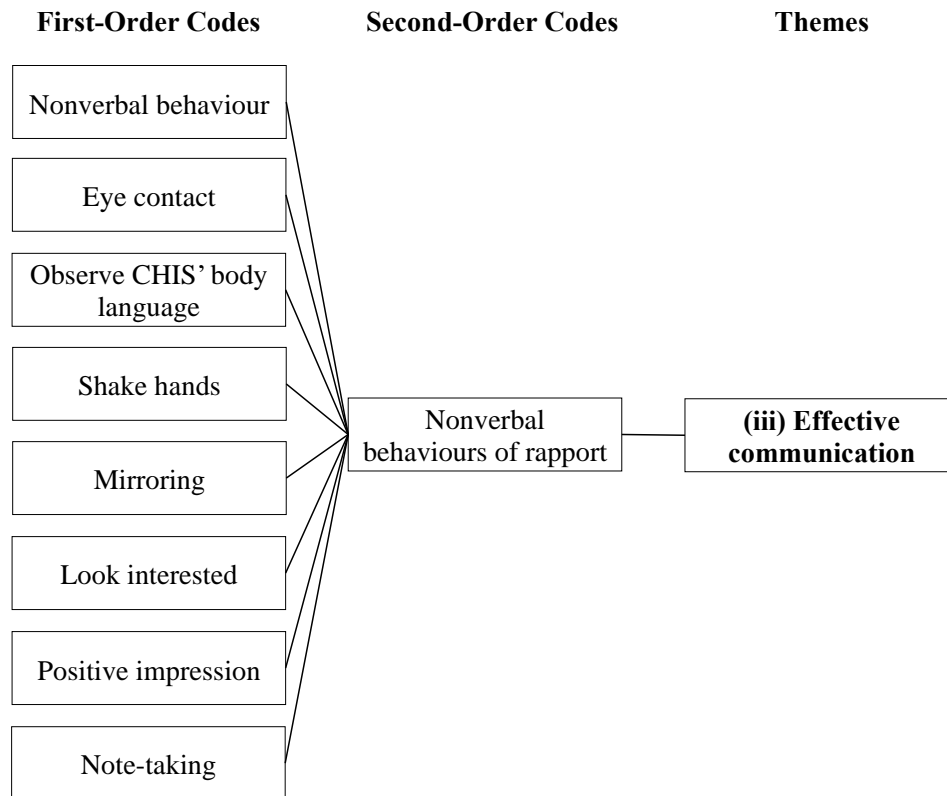




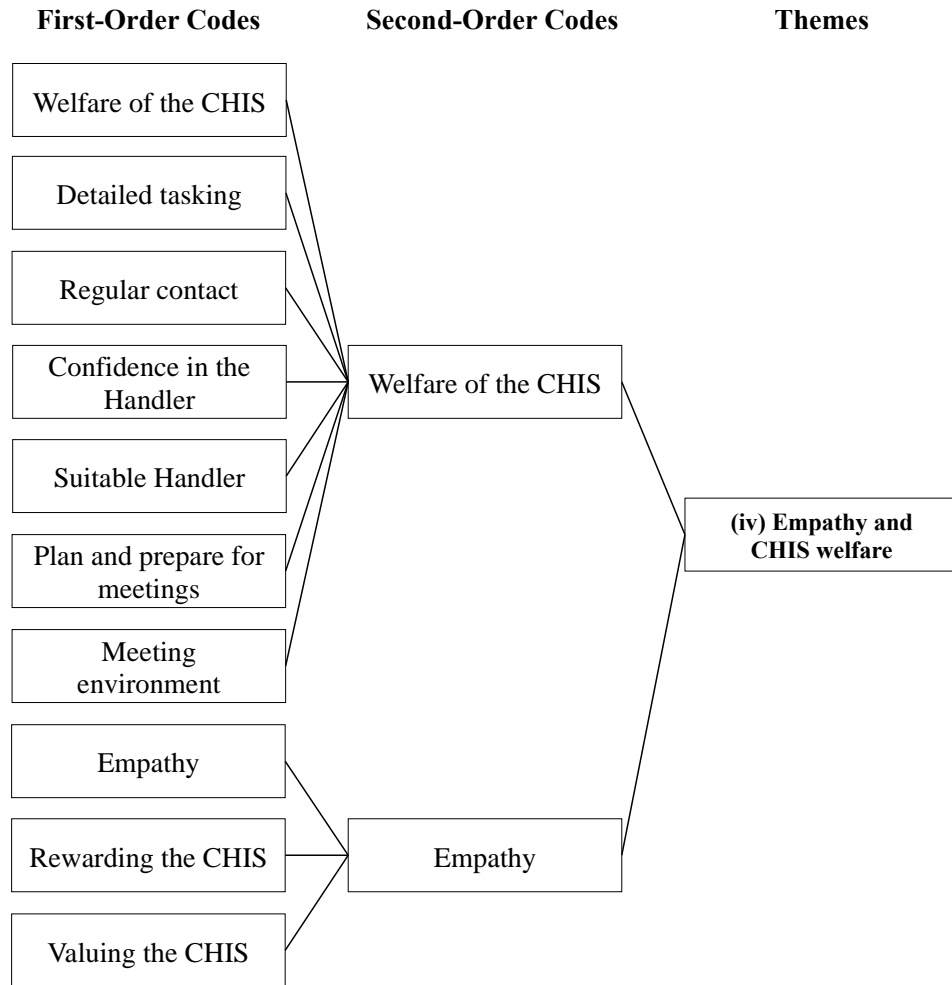
Note: This flowchart continues onto the next page, therefore the theme is repeated.

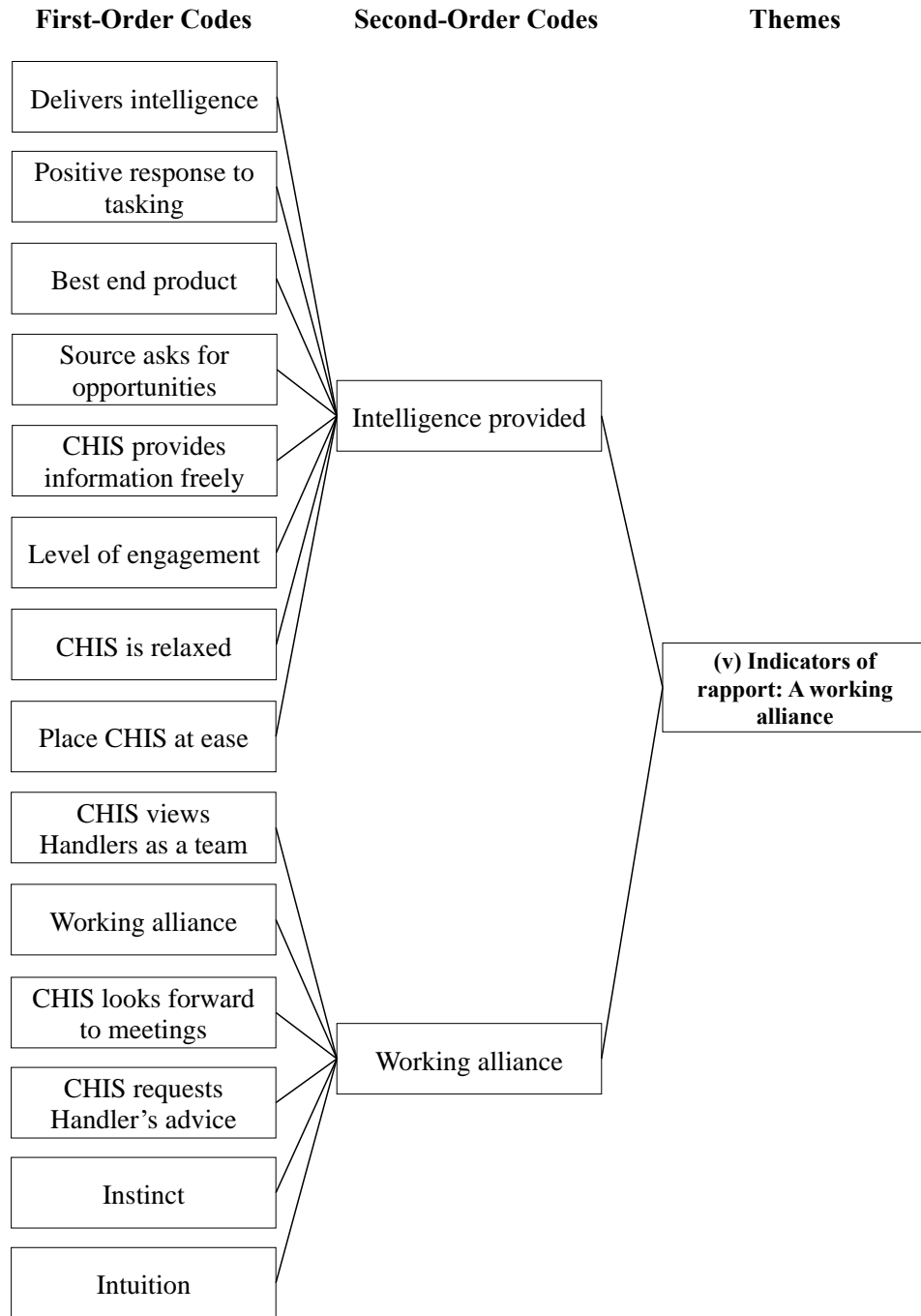


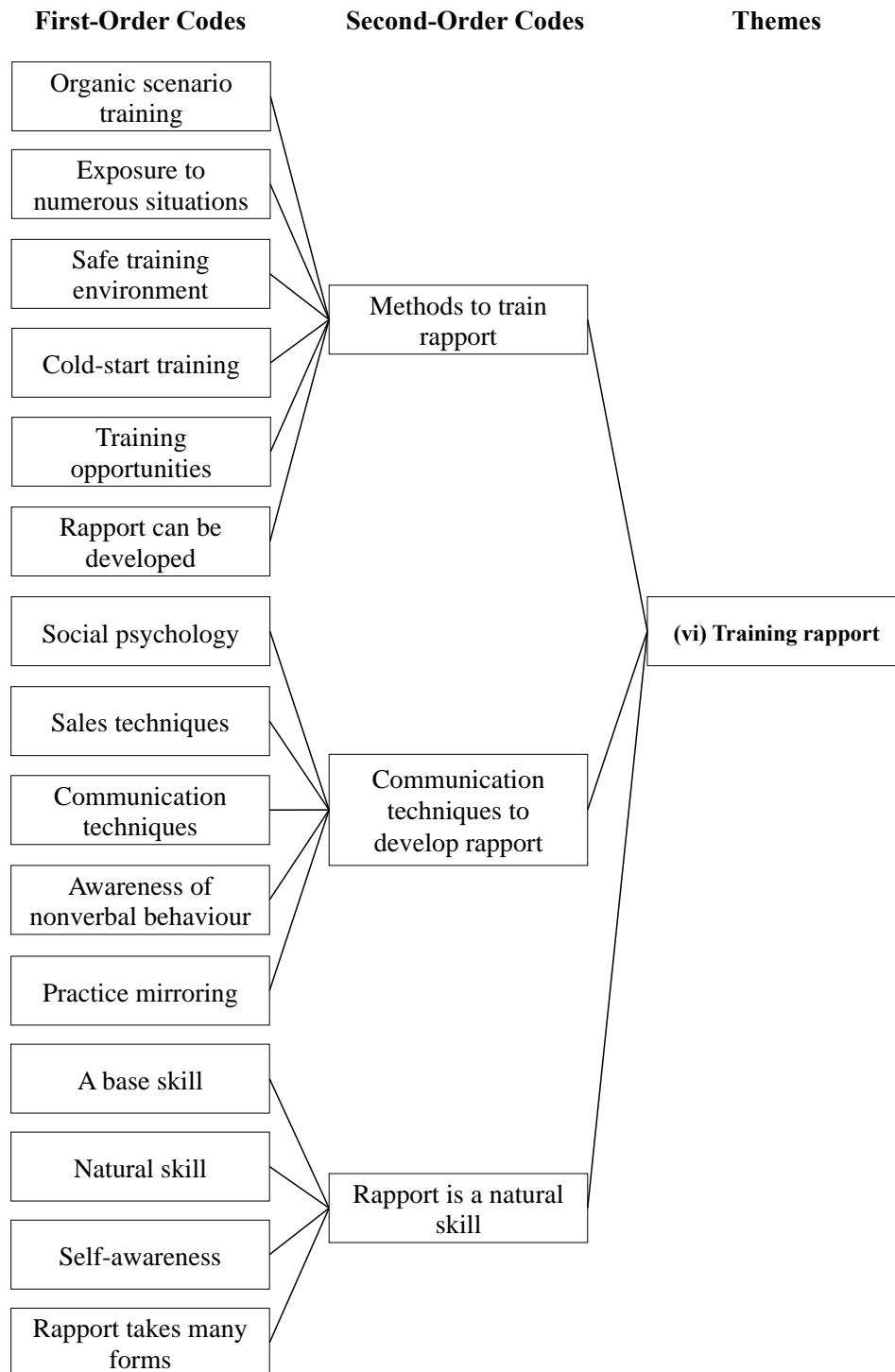












## **Appendix F – Study 2 Interview Protocol**

1. Do you believe there is a difference between an investigative interview and a debrief? Please explain in full detail
2. What interview techniques are commonly used during an intelligence gathering interview/ debrief?
3. What interview techniques should be used during an intelligence gathering interview/debrief?
4. Are memory techniques used during an intelligence gathering interview/debrief?
5. Are there any memory techniques which are used most frequently during an intelligence gathering interview/debrief?
6. Are there any memory techniques which are used least frequently during an intelligence gathering interview/debrief?
7. Is the Cognitive Interview regularly used during an intelligence gathering interview/debrief?
8. Is there an element of the Cognitive Interview which is used most frequently during an intelligence gathering interview/debrief?
9. Is there an element of the Cognitive Interview which is used least frequently during an intelligence gathering interview/debrief?
10. Are there any techniques which are under used?

## Appendix G – Study 2 Example of Thematic Coding

