

Eliciting Intelligence Using the Scharff Technique: A Tactical Framework of Presenting

Claims

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Abstract

This study examined the efficacy of the Scharff Technique in comparison with the Direct Approach. Research was conducted on a tactical framework of presenting claims within the Scharff Technique. The tactical framework focused on altering the extent to which claims are phrased as 1) *seeking a response* from the source and 2) *certain* about the information presented. High response seeking would be phrasing the claim as requesting an answer from the source, whereas low response seeking would not. High certainty would mean presenting the information as confirmed prior to the interview, whereas low certainty would indicate hesitation about the correctness of the information presented. The framework specifically focused on the impact of seeking a response and certainty presented in claims on the amount of isolated details of information elicited and the amount of new information gathered. The participants (N = 251) received background information on a radical political group planning an upcoming attack. They were given a dilemma to strike a balance between not giving too much information nor too little information during an interview. As predicted, the Scharff Technique was overall more efficient at eliciting more new information than the Direct Approach. Furthermore, the exploratory analyses on the framework indicated low seeking response claims were more effective at eliciting isolated details of information and new information than high seeking response claims and the Direct Approach. Additionally, the combination of low seeking response and low certainty yielded the most new information. The results show that further developing a tactical framework for presenting claims is a valuable step in future research.

Keywords: Scharff Technique, Direct Approach, ethical interrogation technique, intelligence elicitation, human intelligence, response seeking, certainty

Eliciting Intelligence Using the Scharff Technique: A Tactical Framework of Presenting Claims

Obtaining intelligence from a source is done through a process referred to as *human intelligence (HUMINT) gathering*. In the context of HUMINT, intelligence refers to reliable information about the past, present, or future which can benefit national security (Evans, Meissner, Brandon, Russano, & Kleinman, 2010). A source in this setting, is an individual who possesses critical information (Evans et al., 2010). This could either be a guilty party or an individual who attained information through other means than being part of the planning or executing of an event. The process of gathering human intelligence typically involves the interaction between a source and an interviewer (Justice, Bhatt, Brandon, & Kleinman, 2010). A form of such a method is *intelligence elicitation*. This is a method of gathering specific pieces of information from sources, without the source knowing the true impact of their involvement (Justice et al., 2010). Specifically, the aim of this method is to influence the source to 1) underestimate their own contribution of new information, and 2) stay unaware of the interviewer's information objective (Oleszkiewicz, Granhag, & Kleinman, 2014). The historical importance of intelligence elicitation methods and recent events of terrorist attacks have increased the need for tailored methods of intelligence gathering. This need has caused an increase in the number of tactics being developed (Intelligence Science Board, 2006). Regardless, the scientific research in understanding and evaluating the efficacy of these human intelligence gathering methods is still limited.

However, over the past decade, there has been more focus on scientific, evidenced-based deconstruction and evaluation of such intelligence elicitation techniques. The present study aims to further explore the elicitation technique called the Scharff technique.

The Scharff Technique

The Scharff technique aims at eliciting intelligence from a source. Specifically, elicitation seeks to gather specific isolated details of information, without disclosing the intent of what information is sought after (Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms, 2005). That is, the interviewer has an information objective, thus aims to make the source reveal that particular piece of information. The Scharff technique was conceptualized based on methods of interrogation used by Hanns Joachim Scharff (1907-1992) during his time in the German Luftwaffe in World War II (WWII) (Granhag, 2010). Scharff started working as an interrogator with minimal training, which later became his advantage (Toliver, 1997). Instead of following the normal protocol of schooled interrogators, Scharff would focus on trying to understand the

situation from the perspective of the prisoners of war (POWs) he interrogated. Through his ability to adopt the prisoner's perspective, Scharff was able to identify several counter-interrogation (CI) strategies used by the POWs. Based on an understanding of these CI-strategies, Scharff developed his own interview techniques to circumvent the CI-strategies. The general approach to the Scharff technique can be described by a combination of five different tactics (Granhag, 2010).

A friendly approach. This tactic involves establishing a comfortable and relaxing atmosphere for the source. In implementing this tactic, the interviewer builds rapport with the source, which is a critical aspect in motivating the source to cooperate (Abbe & Brandon, 2014; Vallano & Schreiber Compo, 2015). The interaction between the interviewer and the source is non-coercive and generates trust between the two. Generating trust is done through the display of positive traits such as ability (e.g. understanding the source and situation at hand), benevolence (e.g. considering the source as more than a criminal), and integrity (e.g. being honest with the source about the rights and regulations) (Mayer, Davis, & Schoorman, 1995; Oleszkiewicz, 2016).

Not pressing for information is established by asking as few questions as possible, and avoiding the use of explicit questions. The interviewer will rather tell a story and pose claims, which gives the source the opportunity to add details. By doing so, the interviewer is evoking information from the source as opposed to demanding it (Oleszkiewicz, 2016). This gives the source autonomy and cultivates intrinsic motivation to share information, which stimulates cooperation (Alison, Alison, Noone, Elntip, & Christiansen, 2013). *The friendly approach* and *not pressing for information* tactics combined are the foundation of the Scharff technique (May, Granhag, & Oleszkiewicz, 2014).

The knowledge illusion is created by sharing already known information with the source and indicating that the possibility of the source revealing any new information is minimal. To ensure the source that the interviewer already knows anything the source could share, the interviewer has to present a detailed and credible story (Oleszkiewicz, 2016). By sharing what is already known by the interviewer, the cooperative principle can be evoked (Grice, 1970). Furthermore, sharing information can make the source infer that the interviewer knows more than has been explicitly stated (e.g. if the interviewer knows the time and location of the attack, they probably also know the date). Based on the theory *curse of knowledge*, a person's knowledge about an event can influence their perception of other individual's knowledge about the same event (Birch & Bloom, 2007; Camerer, Loewenstein, & Weber, 1989). This psychological bias can be strengthened if there is a plausible rationale

to support this belief (Birch & Bloom, 2007). This could occur in an interview setting between a source and interviewer. As the source holds information which the interviewer does not, they can be susceptible to the curse of knowledge principle. Furthermore, when the interviewer shares correct information with the source, this gives a plausible rationale to increase the effect of this principle (Oleszkiewicz, 2016).

Ignore new information is a tactic used to imply that any new information the source revealed, was essentially already known by the interrogator. This is done by not reacting to information which is new, but rather moving on to another aspect of the interview. Since the source receives no confirmation that the information shared was new to the interviewer, the source stays unaware of their contribution. Moreover, using this tactic also masks the interviewer's information objective. This is achieved as new information is treated equally to information already known by the interviewer.

The claim tactic, also known as the confirmation/disconfirmation tactic, is the most relevant to this study. This tactic presents information the interrogator is after as claims that can be confirmed or disconfirmed. Instead of asking a question such as "When will the attack take place?", the interviewer presents the information as "We already know the attack will take place on the 27th of April". The interviewer can present information they are certain is correct, thus seeking a confirmation from the source. This use of the claim tactic would be referred to as the confirmation tactic. Another possibility would be to present information they believe to be incorrect, thus seeking a disconfirmation. This would be referred to as the disconfirmation tactic. Moreover, in presenting information in such a way, the source can confirm or disconfirm the claim, rather than having to reveal new information. This can be perceived as a less active form of compliance by the source (Oleszkiewicz, 2016). Consequently, the source feels as if they did not contribute with new information as such. Rather, they only confirmed what the interviewer already knew, or disconfirmed information which was incorrect, without telling the interviewer any additional information.

An example of Scharff using the claim tactic on a POW to elicit new information was depicted in "*the interrogator*". In this example, Scharff realized that asking a question such as "why do you use white tracer bullets?" to the POWs would result in no response. Therefore, he instead found a way to incorporate the white tracer bullets into a conversation, which was seemingly unrelated to the interrogation.

Once Scharff had established a good relationship with Lieutenant Richard Price Jr., he took him for walks where they would discuss the different ways of life between Americans and Europeans. Scharff used what he called "another very

simple bit of psychology” (Toliver, 1997, p. 103) and mentioned the logistics problems the Americans were having operating off English bases, pretending to simply continue their conversation. He stated: “it is too bad America did not have more experience in working off English bases as it sometimes overloads your industry back home, such as they now have run out of the chemicals they use to make red tracer bullets. Those white ones you fellows are using in your dogfights must be rather hard to follow with your eyes so you have to shoot a whole string of them...” (Toliver, 1997, p.103). Scharff’s hope was that the Lieutenant would want to correct him impulsively, as he had done many times throughout their conversation about American versus European habits without realizing that this time, he would share valuable information in doing so. As predicted, the Lieutenant responded with the following statement: “Ha! You’re nuts, Hanns, they haven’t run out of much of anything back home. White tracers are just our own way of warning ourselves. When ten of them, or any big batch of them shows up, you know you’d better start heading for home pronto because you have just shot out your last ammo. The guns are empty.” (Toliver, 1997, p.103).

This is one example of how Scharff would use the claim tactic to elicit isolated units of information from POWs who were otherwise unwilling to share any information beyond their name, rank, and serial number. Moreover, it also illustrates an important advantage in using the claim tactic over asking direct questions.

The Direct Approach

The Direct Approach includes posing direct, open-ended, and explicit questions, while avoiding the use of leading questions. The interviewer is further instructed to conduct the interview in a business-like manner (US Army, 2009). The Direct Approach was chosen as a comparison to the Scharff technique for two main reasons. First, the Direct Approach is arguably the most commonly used interview method by the US Army. In the current US Army Field Manual, the interrogators are given instructions to use the Direct Approach as the base technique for any interrogation (Executive Order 13491). Secondly, self-report surveys have shown that the use of the Direct Approach is widespread among US law enforcement (45%) and military interrogators (81%) (Redlich, Kelly, & Miller, 2011). Moreover, including the Direct Approach represents a neutral way of asking questions which can be used as a baseline. Finally, the Direct Approach was chosen to allow replication of past research.

Previous Research on the Scharff Technique

The first empirical study conducted on the Scharff technique introduced an experimental paradigm for studying human intelligence gathering (Granhag, Montecinos, Oleszkiewicz, 2013). This paradigm was developed to mirror aspects of a typical human intelligence interaction, which could be used to compare the Scharff technique to other interrogation techniques. Since this experimental paradigm was introduced, numerous other studies have continued the research on the Scharff technique (May, Granhag, & Oleszkiewicz, 2014; Oleszkiewicz, Granhag, & Montecinos, 2014; Granhag, Kleinman, & Oleszkiewicz, 2015; May & Granhag, 2016; Oleszkiewicz, 2016).

Throughout the research conducted on the Scharff technique, several consistent findings have been identified when compared with the Direct Approach; (1) more new information can be elicited using the Scharff technique; (2) the Scharff technique makes it more difficult for the participant to read the interviewer's information objectives; (3) the amount of new information revealed is underestimated by those interviewed with the Scharff technique, whereas those interviewed with the Direct Approach overestimate the amount of new information revealed; and finally (4) the participants being interviewed with the Scharff technique perceive the interviewer as having had more knowledge prior to the interview (May et al., 2014; Oleszkiewicz et al., 2014; Granhag et al., 2015; May & Granhag, 2016; Oleszkiewicz, 2016).

Furthermore, five measures of efficacy for interrogation techniques have also been identified; (1) the objective amount of new information elicited; (2) the source's perception of the interviewer's information objectives; (3) the source's perception of prior knowledge held by the interviewer; (4) the greater the source's misperception of how much knowledge is held by the interviewer prior to the interview, the more effective the technique is; and lastly (5) the relation between the objective amount of new information collected and the amount of new information the source believes they revealed (Granhag et al., 2015).

A study of particular relevance for the current research, was conducted by May, Granhag, & Oleszkiewicz (2014). In this study, they examined the impact of confirmation versus disconfirmation claims on the amount of new information gathered, the precision of new information gathered, the subjective perception of the interview, and the relationship between the objective and subjective measures. The method employed in this study was an interactive experimental paradigm. The participants were recruited to take part in a study about 'decision making in the forensic context'. They received background information on an upcoming attack and were told to manage a dilemma of not sharing too much information nor too little during

an interview about the attack. The participants then had a phone call with a police-contact, who employed either the Scharff confirmation technique, the Scharff disconfirmation technique, or the Direct Approach. In both Scharff conditions, the interviewer started with the *friendly approach* tactic, followed by the *knowledge illusion*. Next, an open question was posed to the participants, before four claims were presented.

This is where the Scharff conditions varied; in the confirmation condition, the claims were in accordance with the background information. Thus, the interviewer sought to confirm the information. In the disconfirmation condition, the information presented in the claims differed from what was written in the background information. Consequently, the goal was to have the participants disconfirm the information presented in the claims. In the Direct Approach condition, the interviewer started by showing interest in the participants' information. Next, the participants were asked four direct questions. All three conditions were concluded with a final open-ended question ("Is there anything else you can tell?").

Participants in the Scharff conditions revealed significantly more new information compared with the Direct Approach. Furthermore, in the Scharff conditions the participants perceived the interviewer as more knowledgeable prior to the interview compared with the Direct Approach. Nonetheless, the Scharff conditions resulted in the participants believing they revealed significantly less information than they objectively did, whereas the participants in the Direct Approach condition believed they shared significantly more information than they objectively did. This shows that the Scharff conditions are better at eliciting new information and at building the illusion that the interviewer knew more information prior to the interview in comparison with the Direct Approach (May et al., 2014).

Seeking Response and Certainty – a Tactical Framework for Presenting Claims

The general method of presenting a claim in the existing research on the Scharff technique has been to directly phrase information as already known (e.g. "We know the target is Amsterdam Central Station"). That is, the interviewer does not indicate a request for a response. Instead a statement is made which attempts to make it seem as if the interviewer already holds the information. The source can then confirm or disconfirm the information presented. Furthermore, the claims are presented as hard fact, meaning that there is no ambiguity in the information presented. This is, the statement made is explicit in details about the topic. As claims have only been presented in this manner in previous research, it was decided to explore the effects of 'seeking a response' and 'certainty' on the efficacy of the Scharff technique.

In the study conducted by May, Granhag, & Oleszkiewicz (2014), the claims presented in the Scharff conditions would be considered as a combination of low seeking response and high certainty (e.g. “We know the target is Amsterdam Central Station”). Moreover, the questions posed in the Direct Approach can be considered high seeking response and no certainty (e.g. “Where will the attack take place?”). The Scharff conditions were consistently better at eliciting new information than the Direct Approach. This could indicate that low seeking response and high certainty is more effective at eliciting new information. However, it is unknown whether the results are due to the level of response seeking and certainty within the claim tactic, or if it is related to the other tactics used in the Scharff technique. To investigate this, the proposed framework for presenting claims will include varied levels of response seeking and certainty within the Scharff technique. Moreover, to understand whether the phrasing of the claim tactic is a main contributor to the efficacy of the Scharff technique, the proposed framework only alters the phrasing of claims. The remaining four Scharff tactics will be incorporated and kept identical within all conditions and to previous research.

Seeking a response. Response seeking refers to the extent to which a claim is presented as requesting an answer. That is, a claim with high response seeking would end in a question mark, where a claim with low response seeking would end with a full stop. In the classic Scharff technique there is no use of high response seeking. Every claim presented to a source is phrased as a statement ending in a full stop (e.g. “We know the attack will take place on April 27th”). Whether the aspect of high response seeking, which is found only in the Direct Approach, is a key factor in the outcome of the study conducted by May, Granhag, & Oleszkiewicz (2014), is unknown. This raises the question of whether including response seeking in the Scharff technique would impact the efficacy of the technique. Specifically, if presenting the claims in the Scharff technique as seeking a response (e.g. “What would you say if I told you we know that the attack will take place on April 27th?”) has an influence on the information elicited. In seeking an answer to this question, the level of response seeking a claim poses, is one of two dimensions included in the proposed framework for presenting claims.

Presenting information as certain. Certainty refers to how confidently the information is presented in a claim. The more assured the interviewer presents the information, the more certainty the interviewer demonstrates in their knowledge. The Scharff technique uses high certainty (e.g. “We know the attack will take place on April 27th”). Furthermore, in the study conducted by May, Granhag, & Oleszkiewicz (2014), the information objective was better masked, and the participants perceived the interviewer as having more prior knowledge in the confirmation condition compared with the disconfirmation condition. The results suggest that

the confirmation claims are more effective than disconfirmation claims at eliciting new information and increasing the *knowledge illusion*. This demonstrates that presenting information as correct and certain, as in the confirmation condition, is more effective in both the elicitation of intelligence, and the masking of the information objective. However, it is unknown if presenting the information in the claims as less certain, rather than wrong, would result in a similar outcome. For this reason, investigating the impact certainty has on eliciting new information is the second dimension considered in the framework developed in this study.

Seeking response. More specifically, the first dimension, response seeking, was chosen since increasing response seeking can possibly influence 1) the effect of the *knowledge illusion*, 2) the source's willingness to respond and, 3) the source's perception of the information objective.

It is assumed that increased response seeking could influence the *knowledge illusion* negatively. In the Scharff technique, the interviewer shows no interest in seeking a response from the source. This is done so the source believes the interviewer already knows the information in the claim, in accordance with the *knowledge illusion*. Including the aspect of response seeking in the framework can investigate how much an interviewer can seek a response while still upholding the *knowledge illusion*.

Furthermore, if the interviewer seeks no response from the source, it could negatively influence the source's willingness to respond. Therefore, it could be that increasing the response seeking, could influence the source's willingness to respond. Moreover, if the interviewer seeks a response to only one isolated piece of information, the source might be more willing to confirm that specific piece of information, compared with other statements with low response seeking.

The possible drawback in seeking a response to one isolated piece of information, could be that the information objective becomes clear. Nevertheless, doing so with information which is not of interest to the interviewer, could mislead the source to develop the wrong perception of the information objective. In other words, there is the possibility that if the interviewer would like to mask their true information objective, they could present a piece of information besides their objective, as high seeking response to mislead the source.

Certainty. The second dimension, certainty, was chosen because it could possibly influence 1) the effect of the *knowledge illusion*, 2) the situations in which the Scharff technique can be used and, 3) the source's perception of the information objective.

The *knowledge illusion* is maintained through presenting accurate information to the source, in order to prove that the interviewer already has information about the topic. Furthermore, being certain about some information could infer that more information, not explicitly mentioned, is also known. By decreasing the certainty of information presented, this could decrease the credibility of the information presented, thus negatively impact the *knowledge illusion*. By examining how certainty influences this aspect, it can be identified how certain information presented must be to maintain the *knowledge illusion*.

Additionally, if the certainty can be decreased while still maintaining the *knowledge illusion*, the Scharff technique can be implemented in scenarios where the interviewer holds less certain information about an event. In understanding how certainty influences the effectiveness of the technique, the technique could possibly be implemented in a wider range of scenarios than currently.

Lastly, if only one isolated piece of information is presented as less certain, it could indicate to the source that this is the interviewer's information objective, as they seemingly are only missing this piece of information. However, as with response seeking, it can also possibly be used to mask the true information objective.

In sum, the two dimensions of response seeking and certainty could possibly influence numerous aspects of the Scharff technique, thus impact the efficacy of the Scharff technique. For this reason, these two aspects have been chosen in the development of the tactical framework of presenting claims (see table 1 for examples of claims phrased with different levels of response seeking and certainty). See table 2 for an overview of the source's expected perception of the interviewer's goal based on the different levels of response seeking and certainty.

Table 1

Examples of claims phrased with different levels of response seeking and certainty

		Certainty	
		High	Low
Response Seeking	High	<i>What would you say if I told you that we know that they are going to detonate the bomb at Amsterdam Central Station?</i>	<i>What would you say if I told you that we have information suggesting that they are going to detonate the bomb at Amsterdam Central Station?</i>

Low	<i>We know</i> that they are going to detonate the bomb at Amsterdam Central Station.	<i>We have information that suggests</i> that they are going to detonate the bomb at Amsterdam Central Station.
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Table 2

Source's perception of the interviewer's goal based on different levels of response seeking and certainty

		Certainty	
		High	Low
Response Seeking	High	Interviewer is interested in a confirmation	Interviewer is <i>very</i> interested in a confirmation
	Low	Interviewer <i>not</i> interested in a confirmation	Interviewer is <i>somewhat</i> interested in a confirmation

The Present Study

This study aims to develop a framework which explores the level of seeking a response in combination with the level of certainty in the Scharff claim tactic. Specifically, to investigate the effect on the isolated details of information elicited and amount of new information gathered. In past research on intelligence elicitation using the Scharff technique, the objective has been to gather as much new information as possible (quantity of information). However, an objective of intelligence elicitation, is to gather isolated pieces of information (quality of information). That is, the interviewer is after a specific piece of information from the source (e.g. the location of an upcoming attack). As research on intelligence elicitation is in its infancy, investigating the elicitation of isolated pieces of information from a source has not yet been done. To the best of our knowledge, this is the first study which aims at eliciting isolated pieces of information from a source.

In addition, the present study will compare the effectiveness of the Scharff Technique with the Direct Approach in terms of the amount of new information elicited. The amount of new information elicited will be examined to validate the new perception paradigm. That is, past research has used a paradigm in which the participants interact with the interviewer. For

this study, an online perception paradigm was used, which simulates an intelligence interview between an interviewer and a source. This means that the participants did not interact with the interviewer in real-time. Rather, the interviewer pre-recorded the interview, which was then played to the participants as audio files. The participants could not answer verbally, as in past research, but had to choose from one of seven pre-determined responses.

The set-up of the present study is partially based on previous research conducted by Oleszkiewicz, Granhag, & Montecinos (2014). In the present study, the interview is divided into three phases; 1) the introduction to the interview; 2) the presentation of the claims or closed questions (for the Scharff conditions and Direct Approach, respectively), and finally; 3) an open-ended question to conclude the interview. Post-interview checklists will be provided to examine the sum of new information shared in the interview.

Replicating past research. To test the validity of the perception study, this study will attempt to replicate past outcomes of interactive studies. Based on results in previous research, the following prediction has been made:

New Information Elicited. It is predicted that the sources will reveal more new information in the Scharff conditions compared to the Direct Approach condition (H1). This is predicted based on the ‘*knowledge illusion*’ established in the Scharff technique. In the Scharff technique, the source is likely to be under the impression that the interviewer holds a vast amount of information prior to the interview. Given that the source is depended on sharing new information, repeating information already known to the interviewer is not sufficient. This is due to the dilemma of not sharing too much information, nor too little information. As in past research, this dilemma will be given to the participants in the present study. That is, that the participants will be motivated to share new information with the interviewer to achieve their goal. Moreover, if the source uses the counter-interrogation strategy “it is meaningless to withhold what the interviewer already knows” (Oleszkiewicz et al., 2014), there is a high possibility the source unintentionally shares information which is new to the interviewer because they believe the information is, in fact, already known to the interviewer.

Examining the efficacy of a tactical framework of presenting claims. Based on the theoretical grounding of the proposed framework of presenting claims, the following predictions have been made:

Isolated details of information elicited. It is expected that the participants in the Scharff condition “high seeking response – high certainty”, will reveal more isolated details of

information regarding the location of the attack, when compared with the other Scharff manipulation conditions (“low seeking response – low certainty”, “high seeking response – low certainty”), the classic Scharff control condition (“low seeking response – high certainty”), and the Direct Approach control condition (H2). The argument for this expectation is that the source is aware that they must share enough isolated details of information to achieve their goal. Since the interviewer is seeking a response to only one piece of information, the source could assume that confirming that information is valuable enough. Moreover, given the high certainty of the information presented, the source would need to confirm a high number of details to contribute. The combination of high seeking response and high certainty covers both aspects, which is why it is expected that the “high seeking response – high certainty” condition will yield the highest number of isolated details of information regarding the location of the attack.

Furthermore, it is expected that the Scharff manipulation condition “high seeking response – low certainty” will yield the most isolated details of information regarding how the bomb will be masked (H3). The rationale behind this expectation is that the claim directly before the claim regarding how the bomb will be masked, is presented as high seeking response and low certainty. Presenting the claim in a high seeking response, low certainly manner, could lead the source to believe that the police are not aware of the answer to the claim. The source could therefore interpret giving up the information regarding this claim as too risky. If the source then decides not to confirm this claim, they could feel more inclined to confirm the following claim. Especially, since the following claim is presented as “low seeking response – high certainty”.

New information elicited. It is expected that the participants in the Scharff manipulation condition “high seeking response – high certainty”, will reveal more new information in total, when compared with the other Scharff manipulation conditions (“low seeking response – low certainty”, “high seeking response – low certainty”), the classic Scharff control condition (“low seeking response – high certainty”), and the Direct Approach control condition (H4). The argument for this prediction is similar to the reasoning made for the first prediction. High response seeking indicates that the interviewer is interested in the sources input. This can make the source more inclined to confirm the claim. Furthermore, high certainty indicates that the interviewer likely knows the answer. In order to then achieve their goal, the source must reveal information which is new to the interviewer. Since the “high seeking response – high certainty” condition includes both these aspects, it is expected that this condition will yield the most new information overall.

METHOD

Design

The study employed a between-subject design in which each participant took part in one of five conditions. Experimental conditions included the manipulations of the Scharff technique; the “low seeking response – low certainty” (LR-LC) condition, the “high seeking response – high certainty” (HR-HC) condition, and the “low seeking response – low certainty” (LR-LC) condition. Moreover, a Scharff control condition “low seeking response – high certainty” (LR-HC) and a hanging control condition, the Direct Approach (DA) were included. Hence, the independent measures included the three manipulations (regarding the phrasing of claims) and two control conditions (Scharff technique and Direct Approach). The dependent measures for this study were the isolated details of information revealed, amount of new information gathered by the use of the four claims/direct questions (see table 3 and 4 for claims, see table 5 for questions) and the total amount of new information revealed during the full interview (see appendix A).

Participants

The sample consisted of 291 participants, of which 40 participants had to be excluded due to incorrect responses on either of the memory tests. The final sample consisted of 251 participants (66% female, 33.2% male, 0.8% other) between the ages of 14 to 78 years old ($M = 24.4$). 49 participants were in condition LR-LC, 43 in condition HR-LC, 46 in condition HR-HC, 54 in condition LR-HC, and 59 in condition DA.

The participants were recruited based on the premise that they would be taking part in a police interview as a police informant. The study took place over the online survey site Qualtrics. The participants were recruited through the Behavioural, Management and Social Sciences subject test pool at the University of Twente (SONA), social media, SurveySwap, and via personal contacts. Participation was on a voluntary basis. The participants who conducted the study through SONA were compensated with course credit for their participation. Due to the nature of the study, non-fluent English speakers were excluded from participating. Furthermore, potential participants were informed that the study might include stressful situations and therefore might not be suitable for anxious individuals.

Procedure

The study started by informing the participants that the purpose of the study was to examine decision making when acting as an informant during a fictional police interview. They were then further informed regarding the procedure of the study, possible risks and discomforts, and participant rights. The participants were then asked to give their consent to continue.

Part one: Background and planning. First, the participants received identical instructions to take on the role of an individual with some knowledge of an upcoming terrorist attack due to personal ties with a member of a radical group. Specifically, the participants were informed that a radical political group was planning a bombing at Amsterdam Central Train Station. In total, the participants received 36 pieces of background information regarding the group, a previous attack, and the upcoming attack (see appendix D for background information). Of this information, the interviewer already knew 9 pieces of the total information (see appendix C for previously known information). The participants were informed that the police *possibly* held some prior information, but did not know what or how much, or if they knew anything at all.

Furthermore, the participants were presented with a dilemma, namely to strike a balance between not revealing too little information and not revealing too much information. The participants were motivated, on the one hand, by knowing that their role had taken part in a bank robbery, and giving the police enough information would secure free conduct out of the country with the stolen money (no legal consequences). On the other hand, giving up too much information included the risk of the group knowing who “ratted” them out, and consequently having the group come after the informant. Additionally, they were told their role had sympathy with the group’s beliefs and members, specifically, with one member who was a close friend.

All participants were instructed to memorize the information as well as possible. After this, a memory test was conducted on each participant to verify the participants had read the information, how well the information was retained, and to ensure participants who were withholding information, did so on purpose and not due to forgetting the correct information (see appendix E for memory test). If the participants gave the incorrect response on either memory test regarding the place or date of the attack (as these were the two key pieces of information sought after in the claim tactic), they were excluded from the analysis. Finally, an example of how the claims/questions were going to be presented, and how to answer these claims/questions was given. In the example, an audio file was played to the participant in which the claim “You are a dog person” was stated. The participants then had 15 seconds to respond

with one of five standardized responses (1. Correct; 2. Maybe; 3. I don't know; 4. Unlikely; 5. Incorrect). The participants were then informed that the interview was about to begin, and instructed to confirm they were ready.

Part two: The interview. All participants started off listening to an introductory audio file from the interviewer. A 37-year-old male with experience in intelligence elicitation research recorded the audio files using a recording device and an interview protocol for each condition (see appendix F for Scharff conditions interview protocol, see appendix G for Direct Approach interview protocol). Next, the interaction between the interviewer and source occurred in four rounds. As an example, in the DA condition, the first round consisted of an audio file which posed the question “When are they planning on executing the bombing?”. The participants then had 15 seconds to respond by clicking one of the standardized response options (see table 6 for example of standardized responses). The participants were automatically directed to the next claim/question once they clicked an option or the 15 seconds were over. If no response was chosen in the 15 seconds, it was automatically recorded as the fourth option, reflecting a non-response.¹ The interview was concluded with ‘If you would like to share any other information with the interviewer, please tick the boxes corresponding to the information you would like to share’. The participants were then presented with a list of all 36 pieces of information, so the additional information could be specified, if the participant wished to do so (see appendix A for checklist). The checklist included information which was not asked for in the four claims/questions, meaning the participants were able to share any of the background information they were given, even if the interviewer did not explicitly refer to this information. Finally, to conclude the interview, participants in all five conditions conducted a final memory test, identical to the first memory test. The following section will elaborate on the differences between each condition in the interview separately.

The Scharff conditions. During the introductory phase, a recording was played which started off as follows: “Hi, good thing you called. How are you? Okay, well, there is an important reason for you contacting me, but before we start let me point out that I understand you're in a difficult situation, but at the same time you must understand that we cannot accept this bomb attack to take place...” The interviewer used the friendly approach-tactic, by

¹ Analyses where the non-responses were recorded as ‘missing values’ rather than the fourth answer option were also conducted; no differences in results were found.

empathizing with the participants' situation, and showing gratefulness for their willingness to cooperate.

Moreover, in the Scharff condition introduction, the interviewer also made it clear that his interest lies in preventing the attack. Next, the interviewer presented general information regarding the radical political group already known to the police. After outlining this information, the interviewer stated: "Anyway, I understand that you have quite a bit of information about their current plans, but first let me share some of the information we already hold, without getting too specific". The interviewer then went on to present the information the police already held about the upcoming attack. The introduction was concluded with the interviewer stating the following: "However, I do believe they have underestimated the actual risk here, the risk to injure, or even kill people with this attack. I mean, it is quite clear that they will not be able to avoid making considerable collateral damage..." (see appendix F for the full interview protocol).

As a timer restricted the participants from moving to the next part before the whole introduction was completed, every participant listened to the introduction. The interviewer then went on to present four claims sequentially in four separate audio files. The participants could respond to each claim. Claims in all condition concerned the same information (date of the planned attack, device to detonate the bomb, location of the planned attack, and how the bomb was masked) (see table 3 for claim one, two, and four, see table 4 for claim three). The information presented in each claim was controlled for importance, meaning all four pieces of information had previously been stated to be of similar importance. The participants were given 15 seconds to choose between standardized responses from a 7-point-likert scale (see table 6 for example of standardized responses).

The claim conditions were distinct in the level of response seeking and certainty of the third claim. The first, second, and fourth claim were identical throughout the conditions and were presented as low seeking response - high certainty (LR-HC), as in the classic Scharff claim tactic (see table 3 for claim one, two, and four). The third claim was either presented as low seeking response - low certainty (LR-LC), low seeking response - high certainty (LR-HC), high seeking response - low certainty (HR-LC) or high seeking response - high certainty (HR-HC). For an overview of the differences between the conditions for claim three, please see Table 4.

Table 3

Scharff conditions claim one, two, and four

Claim	
One	<i>...and we are aware that the members of the group are quite clever, so we take this all extremely seriously, so...we were pleased to come to know that they plan to execute this attack on King's day the 27th of April...</i>
Two	<i>...we are aware that the bomb will be detonated using a cell phone...</i>
Four	<i>...we also know that they will place the bomb in a suitcase...</i>

Table 4

Claim three Scharff Conditions

Condition	Claim three
Manipulation LR-LC	<i>"We have information that suggests that they are going to blow the bomb at Amsterdam central station"</i>
Manipulation HR-LC	<i>"What would you say if I told you that we have information which suggests that they are going to blow the bomb at Amsterdam central station?"</i>
Manipulation HR-HC	<i>"What would you say if I told you that we know that they are going to blow the bomb at Amsterdam central station?"</i>
Control LR-HC	<i>"We know that they are going to blow the bomb at Amsterdam central station"</i>

The Direct Approach. The interviewer in the direct approach greeted the participant and showed direct interest in starting the interview by stating the following: "Hi, good thing you called. Take it you are well? Ok, shall we start talking about what we are supposed to talk about?" (see appendix G for full interview protocol). The introduction to the interview was in the form of an audio file. Next, identical to the Scharff condition, the participant received four audio files sequentially with a direct question from the interviewer regarding the same information as in the Scharff conditions (date of the planned attack, device to detonate the bomb, location of the planned attack, and how the bomb was masked) (see table 5 for question one, two, three, and four). For each of the questions the participant was given 15 seconds to choose a standardized response from a 7-point-likert scale (see table 6 for example of standardized responses).

Table 5

Questions one, two, three, and four posed in the DA condition

Question one	Question two	Question three	Question four
When are they planning on executing the bombing?	What device are they planning on detonating the device with?	Where will the attack take place?	How will the bomb be masked?

Table 6

Standardized responses for claim/question one for the Scharff conditions and the DA condition

	Scharff Technique	Direct Approach
1	That is incorrect	*You provide a wrong alternative* to mislead the police
2	I would say that is quite unlikely	They were talking about some different options
3	I haven't really heard anything about that	I haven't really heard anything about that
4	I only heard it will be sometime in April	I only heard it will be sometime in April
5	All I know is that it will be around that week	All I know is it will be around the last week in April
6	That's what I heard too but I am not sure	I heard something about King's Day but I am not sure
7	That is correct	King's Day (27th April)

Part 3: Post-questionnaire. The post-questionnaire consisted of three sequentially presented questionnaires (see appendix B for post-questionnaires). At first, participants were asked for demographic information such as gender, age, and occupation. Secondly, the participants were asked about their perception of the interview (e.g. How difficult was it to put yourself in the role of the informant?) and their motivation (e.g. How motivated were you to complete the "mission"?). The response option was a 7-point-likert scale (e.g. 1 - *not motivated at all* to 7 - *very motivated*). The last questionnaire was composed of checklists with all 36

pieces of information. Participants were presented with two identical checklists; one to mark the information they gave their contact person during the interview and the other to mark the information they perceived as their contact person knowing prior to the conversation. The checklists were identical to the checklist where the participants could share additional information with the interviewer during the interview. Before the final debrief, the participants could make comments regarding the study, if they so wished. Once the participants were thanked for their participation and fully debriefed, the experiment was concluded. The participants spent between 10 and 60 minutes completing the experiment ($M = 24.48$, $SD = 8.86$).

Measures

The isolated details of information revealed were measured by developing a new 5-point scale based on the 7-point scale for the response of each claim/direct question. This scale ranged from confirming the claim/fully answering a question to disconfirming the claim/providing an incorrect alternative. However, two responses considered disconfirmations (responses 1 and 2) were excluded in the isolated details of information scale (see table 6 for example standardized responses). Note that the scale is a dimension of units of information and not a ratio scale. That is, there is not an equal quantifiable difference between the units of information.

The amount of new information revealed in phase two was measured based on recoding the 5-point-likert scale used to record to participants' responses to each of the four claims. The most detailed confirmation responses (response 6 and 7) were coded as a 1 (new information) and the remaining three responses were coded as a 0 (no new information) (see table 6 for example standardized responses).

The total amount of new information revealed in the interview was measured by using a checklist (question 21) from the post-questionnaire (see appendix B for post-questionnaire). Specifically, the checklist for which the participants were asked to check off all the information they revealed throughout the full interview. The nine pieces of information previously known by the police were excluded from the analysis (see appendix C for previously known information). Each piece of information shared during the interview by the source was coded as a 1 (one piece of new information) and each piece of information not shared by the source, as a 0 (no new information). The number of pieces of information shared by each participant was then added up, and a mean was calculated for each of the five conditions.

RESULTS

Homogeneity – Levene’s Statistic

Levene’s statistic was non-significant for all variables for which a one-way between groups analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted, except for the two analyses conducted on claim four when examining the framework. Thus, the homogeneity of variance was violated for the analysis investigating the difference between all condition in terms of the effectiveness of eliciting isolated details of information regarding how the bomb was masked (claim four), $F(4, 157) = 2.84, p = .03$. As well as for the analysis investigating the difference between Scharff manipulation condition HR-LC, the Scharff control condition LR-HC, and the control condition DA in terms of the effectiveness of eliciting isolated details of information for claim four, $F(2, 102) = 4.47, p = .01$. However, the same ANOVA was conducted for all claims, regardless of a violation in the homogeneity of variance. This was done, as the violation in the homogeneity of variance only increases the probability of the null hypothesis being falsely rejected, thus creating a stricter test.

Participant Motivation and Perceived Difficulty

An ANOVA was used to compare the participants’ motivation between the five conditions. Results showed that the participants’ motivation did not differ significantly between the conditions, $F(4, 245) = .90, p = .46, \eta^2 = .02$. The mean score for the motivation of all participants was well above the midpoint of the scale ($M = 5.62, SD = 1.30$), indicating high motivation.

Furthermore, it was assessed how difficult participants perceived putting themselves in the role of an informant. The ANOVA showed no significant difference in perceived difficulty between conditions, $F(4, 245) = 2.09, p = .08, \eta^2 = .03$. The mean score was above the midpoint of the scale ($M = 4.21, SD = 1.68$). That is, the participants perceived it as somewhat challenging, but not too challenging to put themselves in the role of the informant.

Replicating Past Research

Hypothesis 1. A one-way ANOVA was used to compare the Scharff technique with the Direct Approach in terms of the total amount of new information elicited. Specifically, the amount of new information elicited regarding the date of the attack (claim one), the device used to detonate the bomb (claim two), the location of the bombing (claim three), how the bomb will be masked (claim four), and in the final statement “If you would like to share any other

information with the interviewer, please tick the boxes corresponding to the information you would like to share”.

The one-way ANOVA was statistically significant, indicating that the amount of new information revealed during the interview was influenced by the type of intelligence elicitation technique used, the Scharff technique vs. Direct Approach, $F(1, 249) = 9.21, p = .003, \eta^2 = .04$. The results show that the Scharff technique elicits more new information when compared with the DA. This confirms hypothesis 1. See table 7 for means and standard deviations.

Table 7

Means and standard deviations of the Scharff conditions and DA for total amount of new information revealed

Condition	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Scharff Technique	6.88	3.10
DA	5.47	3.14

Examining the Efficacy of a Tactical Framework of Presenting Claims

Hypothesis 2. A one-way ANOVA was used to investigate the effect the Scharff manipulation condition HR-HC, the classic Scharff control condition LR-HC, and control condition DA had on the amount of isolated details of the information shared regarding the location of the bombing (claim three). This was done by using the ‘isolated details of information scale’ score from claim three as the dependent variable and ‘condition’ as the fixed factor.

The ANOVA showed a non-significant effect of the level of isolated details of information revealed regarding the location of the bombing (claim three) between the three conditions $F(2, 145) = 2.79, p = .06, \eta^2 = .04$. See table 8 for means and standard deviations. The results do not support the expected outcome that HR-HC would elicit more isolated details of information in claim three compared with LR-HC and DA.

Table 8

Mean and standard deviation for HR-HC, LR-HC, and DA for claim three for isolated details of information

Condition	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
LR-HC	3.94	1.16

HR-HC	3.45	1.42
DA	3.43	1.08

Hypothesis 3. A one-way ANOVA was used to investigate the effect of the Scharff manipulation condition HR-LC, the Scharff control condition LR-HC, and control condition DA had on the amount of isolated details of information shared regarding the how the bomb will be masked (claim four). Specifically, to test whether HR-LC was more effective at eliciting more isolated details of information compared with LR-HC and DA. This was done by using the ‘isolated details of information scale’ score from claim four as the dependent variable and ‘condition’ as the fixed factor.

The one-way ANOVA showed a non-significant effect of the amount of isolated details of information revealed between the three conditions, $F(4, 157) = 1.46, p = .22, \eta^2 = .04$. See table 9 for means and standard deviations. The results do not support the expected outcome that HR-LC would elicit more isolated details of information in claim four compared with LR-HC and DA.

Table 9

Mean and standard deviation for HR-LC, LR-HC, and DA for claim four for isolated details of information

Condition	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
LR-HC	2.03	.81
HR-LC	2.07	1.09
DA	2.53	1.12

Hypothesis 4. A one-way ANOVA was used to investigate the difference between Scharff manipulation condition HR-HC, Scharff control condition LR-HC, and control condition DA in the effectiveness of gathering new information during phase two and phase three of the interview. Specifically, to test whether the Scharff manipulation condition HR-HC was more effective at eliciting new information compared with the Scharff control condition LR-HC and the control condition DA.

The total amount of new information was calculated by combining the amount of new information elicited regarding the date of the attack (claim one), the device used to detonate the bomb (claim two), the location of the bombing (claim three), how the bomb will be masked

(claim four), and in the final statement “If you would like to share any other information with the interviewer, please tick the boxes corresponding to the information you would like to share”.

The ANOVA was statistically non-significant, $F(2, 156) = 2.20$, $p = .11$, $\eta^2 = .03$, indicating no difference between the conditions. See table 10 for means and standard deviations.

Table 10

Mean and standard deviation for HR-HC, LR-HC, and DA for total amount of new information elicited

Condition	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
LR-HC	6.65	2.88
HR-HC	6.22	2.98
DA	5.47	3.14

Exploratory Analyses of a Tactical Framework of Presenting Claims

Isolated details of information. *One-way ANOVA analyses.* To further explore the effect various Scharff manipulations had on the amount of isolated details of information revealed in each individual claim, a one-way ANOVA was conducted comparing all three manipulations (LR-LC, HR-LC, and LR-LC) along with the Scharff control (LR-HC) and the DA control for each individual claim. This was done by using the ‘isolated details of information scale’ score from the individual claims as the dependent variable and ‘condition’ as the fixed factor.

Claim one. The ANOVA showed that none of the conditions varied in influencing the amount of isolated details of information revealed for the date of the attack (claim one), $F(4, 80) = .93$, $p = .45$, $\eta^2 = .04$. See table 11 for mean and standard deviation.

Table 11

Mean and standard deviation for all conditions for claim one for isolated details of information

Condition	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
LR-LC	1.78	.65
LR-HC	1.64	.84

HR-LC	1.47	.52
HR-HC	1.78	1.01
DA	1.40	.75

Claim two. The ANOVA showed no difference between the conditions on influencing the isolated details of information revealed for the device used to detonate the bomb (claim two), $F(4, 147) = 2.00, p = .97, \eta^2 = .05$. See table 12 for mean and standard deviation.

Table 12

Mean and standard deviation for all conditions for claim two for isolated details of information

Condition	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
LR-LC	2.06	.96
LR-HC	1.76	.87
HR-LC	2.00	1.13
HR-HC	1.85	.82
DA	2.38	1.11

Claim three. The ANOVA was statistically non-significant, indicating that none of the conditions varied in influencing the amount of isolated details of information revealed for claim three, $F(4, 230) = 1.94, p = .11, \eta^2 = .03$. See table 13 for mean and standard deviation.

Table 13

Mean and standard deviation for all conditions for claim three for isolated details of information

Condition	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
LR-LC	3.93	1.25
LR-HC	3.94	1.16
HR-LC	3.63	1.28
HR-HC	3.45	1.42
DA	3.43	1.08

However, given that including such a high number of conditions decreases the likelihood of finding a significant difference, a further ANOVA was conducted between the manipulation condition LR-LC, Scharff control LR-HC, and DA control. The reason the manipulation LR-LC was chosen for further analysis and not HR-LC, was due to the results from the post hoc analysis with Bonferroni (using an α of .05) for claim three. This analysis revealed that besides the Scharff control condition (LR-HC), the Scharff manipulation LR-LC was the closest to showing a significant result when compared with the DA.

The one-way ANOVA was statistically significant, indicating that the conditions influenced the amount of isolated details of information revealed regarding the location of the bombing (claim three), $F(2, 148) = 3.23, p = .04, \eta^2 = .04$

Post hoc analysis with Bonferroni (using an α of .05) revealed no statistical significance between either of the conditions. However, in post hoc analysis with Dunnett t (using an α of .05), in which the control condition DA was used as the control, a statistical difference was found between LR-LC ($M = 3.93, SD = 1.25$) and DA ($M = 3.43, SD = 1.08$), $p = .03$. A further statistical difference was also found between the Scharff control condition, LR-HC ($M = 3.94, SD = 1.16$) and DA, $p = .02$.

Claim four. The ANOVA was statistically non-significant, indicating that none of the conditions varied in influencing the amount of isolated details of information revealed regarding how the bomb will be masked (claim four), $F(4, 157) = 1.46, p = .22, \eta^2 = .04$. See table 14 for mean and standard deviation.

Table 14

Mean and standard deviation for all conditions for claim four for isolated details of information

Condition	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
LR-LC	2.36	1.28
LR-HC	2.03	.81
HR-LC	2.07	1.09
HR-HC	2.10	1.12
DA	2.53	1.12

Furthermore, when analyzing the post hoc test with Bonferroni (with $\alpha = .05$), Scharff control condition LR-HC was the closest to being significant in comparison with the DA

condition, followed by HR-LC. As the HR-LC condition had been previously analyzed, no further ANOVA analysis for claim four was conducted.

Pearson's chi-squared analyses. A Pearson's chi-square test of contingencies (with $\alpha = .05$) was used to evaluate whether the type of intelligence elicitation technique was related to the amount of isolated details of information revealed for the location of the bombing (claim three) and how the bomb will be masked (claim four). Pearson's chi-squared was chosen to assess the outcome from the ANOVA analyses. This was done as the dependent measure used for the ANOVA analyses was not a ratio scale, thus the suitability of the dependent measure is debatable. To ensure this did not skew the outcome, the Pearson's chi-squared was chosen to compare the results.

Claim three. The chi-square test was statistically significant, $\chi^2(16, N = 235) = 32.97$, $p = .01$. Cramer's V and Cohen's w was used to calculate the effect size, as the design was 5x5, $\Phi' = .19$, $w = .3$. Cohen's w indicated a medium effect size. As illustrated in Figure 1, a significant difference between conditions in the amount of isolated details of information shared regarding the location of the bombing, was found.

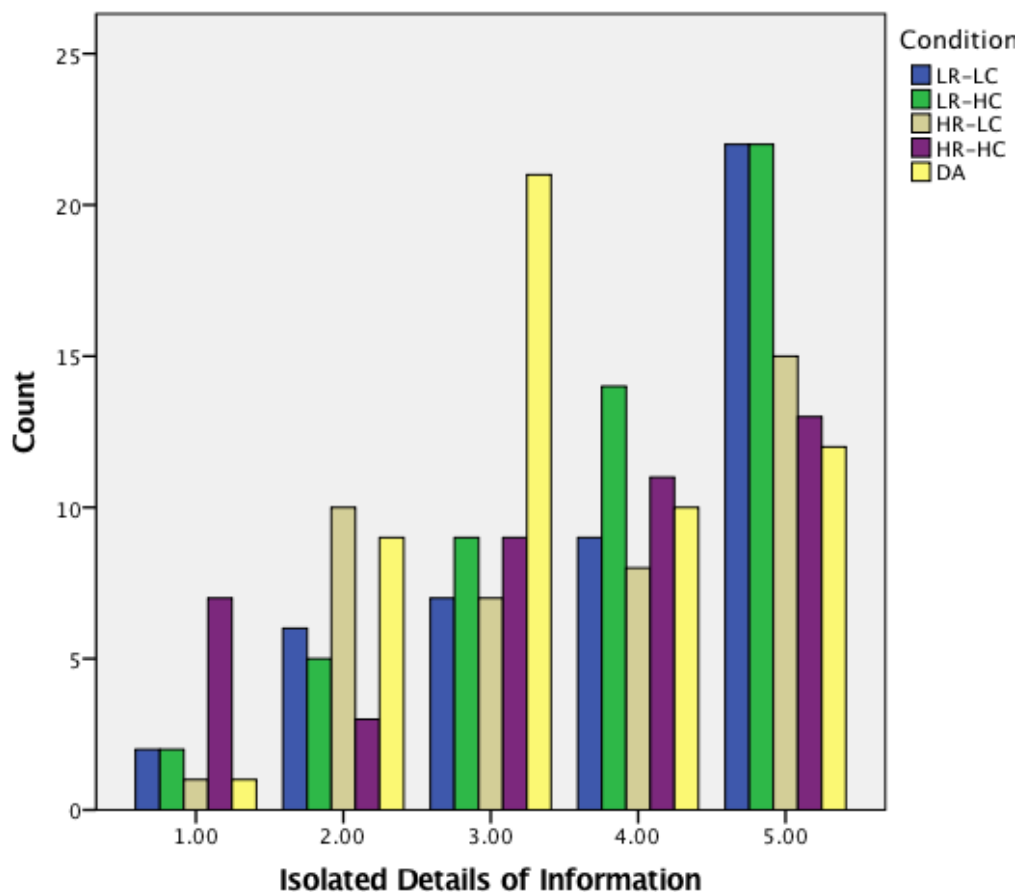


Figure 1. Clustered bar chart illustrating the amount of isolated details of information regarding the location of the bombing given in each condition.

Claim four. The chi-square test was statistically non-significant, $\chi^2(16, N = 164) = 18.70, p = .29$, indicating no significant difference in the amount of isolated details of information shared regarding how the bomb was masked, between conditions. Cramer's V and Cohen's w was used to calculate the effect size, as the design was 5x5, $\Phi' = .17, w = .3$. Cohen's w indicated a medium effect size. Figure 2 displays the differences between conditions regarding the amount of isolated details of information revealed regarding how the bomb will be masked.

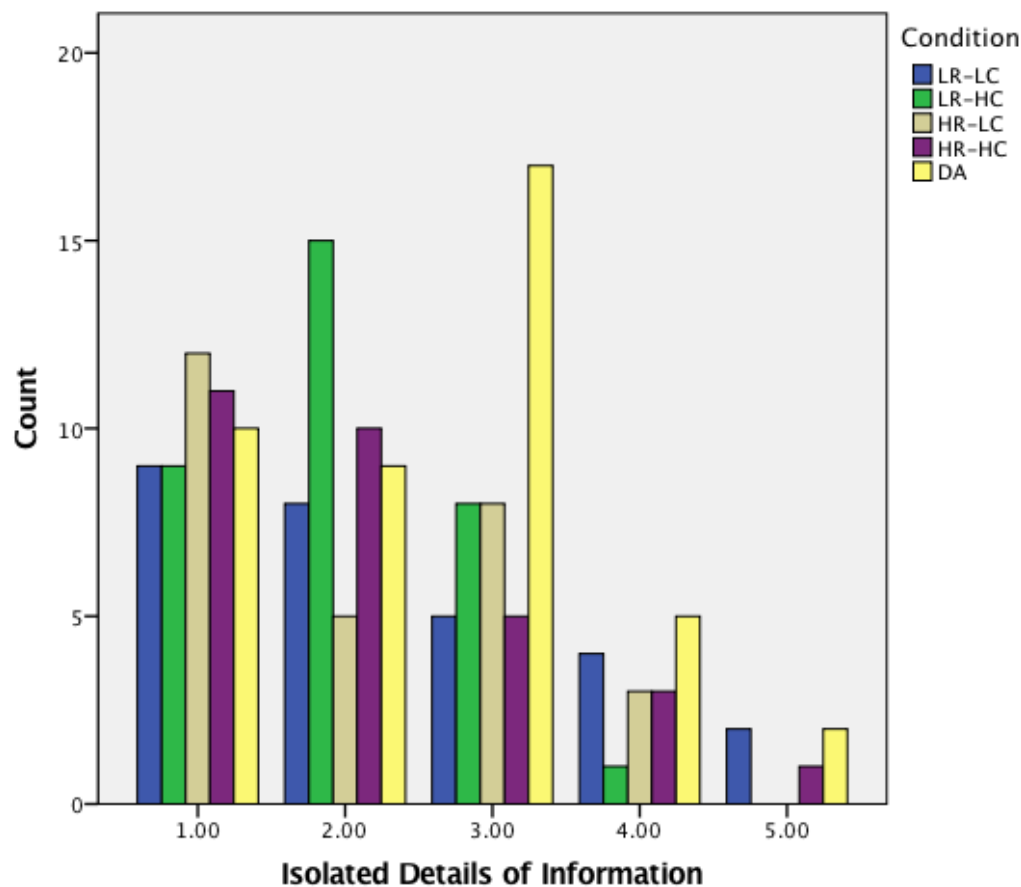


Figure 2. Clustered bar chart illustrating the amount of isolated details of information regarding how the bomb will be masked given in each condition.

New information revealed. One-way ANOVA analyses. To further explore the possible differences between the conditions' effectiveness in eliciting new information in phase 2 and phase 3 of the interview, a one-way ANOVA was conducted to investigate the impact

the difference between the Scharff manipulations (LR-LC, HR-LC, HR-HC), the Scharff control (LR-HC), and the control condition DA had on the total amount of new information revealed during the interview.

The ANOVA was statistically significant, indicating that the total amount of new information revealed was influenced by the condition, $F(4, 246) = 5.21, p = < .001, \eta^2 = .08$.

Post hoc analysis with Bonferroni (using an α of .05) revealed that the Scharff manipulation LR-LC was significantly better at eliciting new information than the DA, $p = < .001$. Moreover, the Scharff manipulation LR-LC was significantly better at eliciting new information than the Scharff manipulation HR-HC as well, $p = .03$. However, there was no significant difference between the classic Scharff control condition LR-HC and any other condition, nor between the Scharff manipulation HR-LC and any other condition.

Post hoc analysis with Dunnett t (using an α of .05), using DA as the control condition, revealed that the Scharff manipulation LR-LC was significantly better at eliciting new information than the DA, $p = < .001$. No significant difference was found between any other Scharff manipulation conditions (HR-LC, HR-HC), the Scharff control condition LR-HC, or the control condition DA. See table 15 for means and standard deviations.

Table 15

Means and standard deviations of all conditions for total amount of new information revealed

Condition	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
LR-LC	8.12	2.78
LR-HC	6.65	2.88
HR-LC	6.47	3.52
HR-HC	6.22	2.98
DA	5.47	3.14

Pearson's chi-squared analysis. A Pearson's chi-square test of contingencies (with $\alpha = .05$) was used to evaluate whether the type of intelligence elicitation technique was related to whether or not new information is revealed during the claim/question section of the interview. The amount of new information revealed can range from zero to four pieces of new information. That is, the amount of new information revealed can range from no new information in any claim, to one piece of new information in each of the four claims.

The chi-square test was statistically non-significant $\chi^2(8, N = 250) = 8.76, p = .36$, indicating there was no significant difference found between the conditions regarding their effectiveness in eliciting new information in the claim/question portion of the interview. Cramer's V and Cohen's w was used to calculate the effect size, as the design was 3×5 , $\Phi' = .13$, $w = .2$. Cohen's w indicates a small effect size. Furthermore, the results show that no condition elicited new information in more than two of four claims. Figure 3 displays the differences between conditions regarding the number of new pieces of information revealed in phase two of the interview (all four claims combined). Furthermore, figure 3 demonstrates the number of participants in each condition who revealed no new information, new information in one claim, and new information in two claims.

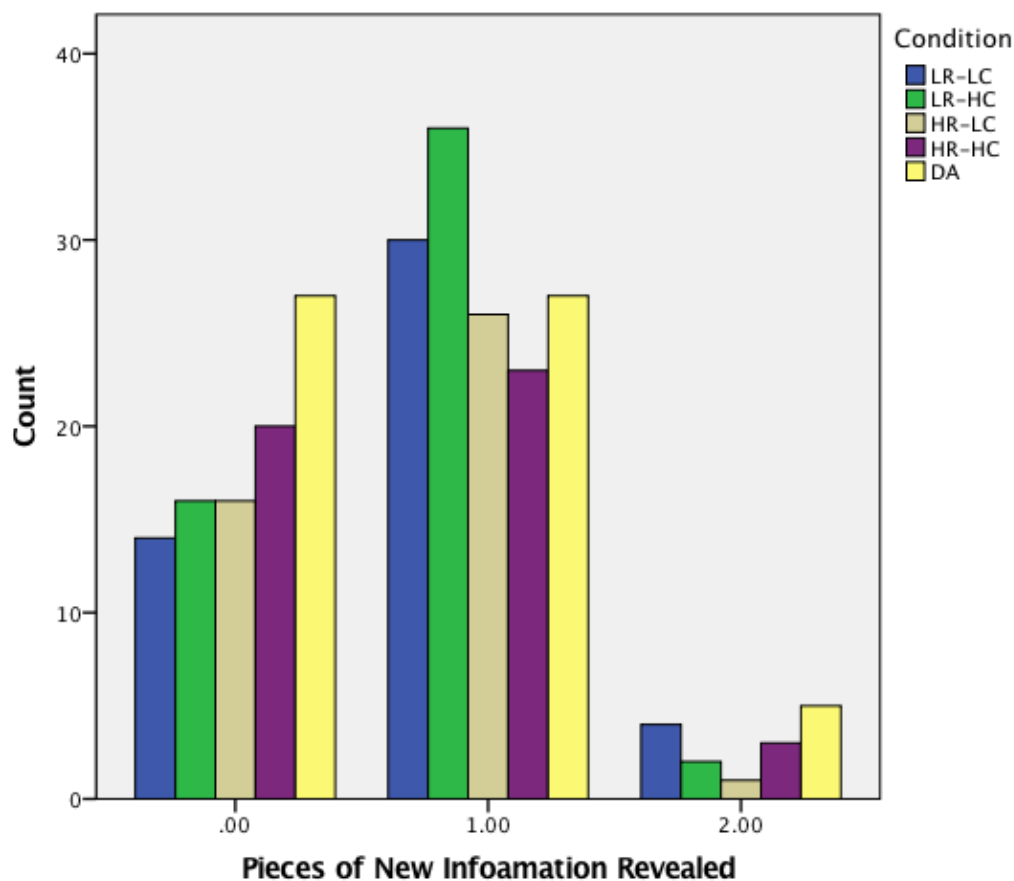


Figure 3. Cluster bar chart illustrating the number of pieces of new information revealed during the four claims/questions per condition (ranging from minimum zero to maximum four pieces of new information).

DISCUSSION

This study aimed at exploring the possible effects of a tactical framework of presenting claims. Three important findings ensued; lowering the certainty of one of the presented claims was 1) equally efficient at eliciting isolated details of information as the continuous use of the classic Scharff claim tactic, 2) more efficient at gathering new information than the classic Scharff claim tactic, and 3) the Scharff technique is more effective at eliciting isolated details of information as well as new information when compared with the Direct Approach, regardless of the level of response seeking and certainty presented in the claims.

Furthermore, two manipulation tests were done to ensure validity of the study. The first manipulation test showed no significant difference in motivation between the five conditions. The mean for motivation was well above the midpoint, ensuring the participants were motivated to take their role seriously. The second manipulation test was to ensure the participants did not find it too difficult to imagine themselves in the role. Once again, no difference was found between the conditions, and the participants did not find it too difficult.

Moreover, this study attempted to replicate past research to further validate the study. Specifically, to replicate the outcome that the Scharff technique is more effective at eliciting intelligence than the Direct Approach. The prediction that the Scharff technique will elicit more new information in total than the Direct Approach was supported by the results. This confirmed hypothesis 1.

Two hypotheses were formulated in the introduction regarding the elicitation of isolated details of information in phase 2 of the interview. The results did not support the hypotheses. First, the claim presented as high on both response seeking and certainty was expected to elicit more detailed units of information regarding the location of the attack (claim three). However, this was not supported. Second, the claim presented as high on response seeking and low on certainty was expected to elicit more detailed units of information regarding the masking of the bomb (claim four). Nevertheless, this was not supported.

In addition, one hypothesis was formulated regarding the total amount of new information gathered in the interview. The results disconfirmed the expected outcome. The expectation that the condition in which one of the claims was presented as high on response seeking and certainty would elicit the most new information in total was not supported.

Further exploratory analyses were conducted investigating all conditions and their effect on both the isolated details of information and the amount of new information elicited and will be discussed in detail below.

Replication Research

New information elicited. The study showed that the Scharff technique was significantly more effective at eliciting new information when compared with the Direct Approach. Thus, the study was able to replicate previous findings by Oleszkiewicz, Granhag, & Montecinos (2014). Although this study was a perception paradigm which was conducted online, the results indicate that the set-up produces similar effects as an interactive scenario. The results further reinforce the conclusion that the Scharff technique is a more effective intelligence elicitation technique than the Direct Approach. Moreover, the results show that the Scharff technique is more effective than the Direct Approach regardless of the level of seeking response and certainty. This shows that the aspects of low response seeking and high certainty, as in the classical Scharff claim tactic, are not alone what causes the Scharff technique to be a more effective intelligence elicitation technique than the Direct Approach.

Efficacy of the Tactical Framework of Presenting Claims

Isolated details of information elicited. The study showed that the use of low response seeking elicited more isolated details of information than the Direct Approach and the Scharff conditions with claims phrased as high on response seeking. It was expected to find a higher number of isolated details of information through the use of high response seeking and high certainty. However, it was in fact found that using the opposite combination, low response seeking and low certainty, was the most effective manipulation at eliciting more isolated details of information regarding the location of the attack (claim three). Based on the results, it can be assumed that low response seeking in a claim is a contributing factor in eliciting more isolated details of information. Given that both Scharff conditions with low seeking response were significantly more effective at eliciting isolated details of information than the Scharff manipulation conditions with high seeking response claims and the Direct Approach. This study gives an indication that the level of seeking response of a claim is more important than the certainty of the claim in terms of eliciting more isolated details of information.

Furthermore, there was no significant difference between the interview conditions in their ability to elicit more isolated details of information regarding the date of the attack (claim one), the device used to detonate the bomb (claim two), or how the bomb will be masked (claim four). It was not expected to find a difference between the Scharff conditions in terms of the date of the attack (claim one) or the device used to detonate the bomb (claim two), as these were presented identically in all three Scharff manipulations and the Scharff control. However, a difference between the Scharff conditions and the Direct Approach condition was expected.

The reason no significant difference was found could be due to the high number of conditions being tested simultaneously, which lowers the chances of finding a significant difference.

Moreover, for the piece of information regarding how the bomb will be masked (claim four), a significant difference was expected between the Scharff conditions. The reason no significant difference was found could be due to claim four being phrased identically in all Scharff conditions. The only difference for claim four between the Scharff conditions, was how the previous claim was phrased. This means there is a possibility that varying how the previous claim is presented, could have little to no effect on the outcome of the following claim. However, the homogeneity of variance was violated in claim four due to the altering of the Likert-scale. That is, the participants were given seven response options during the interview, where only five of these response options were included in the analyses on isolated details of information elicited. The two options which were excluded were disconfirmations, thus did not count as sharing information with the interviewer. In the fourth claim, a larger number of participants selected a disconfirmation response than for any of the other claims. As these individuals were therefore not included in the analysis, the homogeneity of variance in the sample analysed, was violated. It is interesting to note that the fourth claim resulted in a substantially larger number of disconfirmation than the other claims. This could be due to an order effect, as the fourth claim was the last claim. However, it is also possible that the manipulation of the previous claim could have influenced the response.

New information elicited. The results show that there was a significant difference between the conditions in their ability to elicit more new information overall. Specifically, the use of low response seeking and low certainty resulted in more new information than the classic Scharff technique and the Direct Approach.

Although no significant difference was found between conditions during the claim/question portion of the interview alone, it can be assumed that the differences were already established in phase two. This is assumed as the difference in response seeking and certainty among the conditions are only found in phase two of the interview. Furthermore, the significant difference found between the condition with low response seeking and low certainty and the condition with high response seeking and high certainty, shows that it is more effective to keep claims low in response seeking consistently throughout the interview. There was no significant difference found between the classic Scharff condition and the Direct Approach in this aspect. This indicates that including at least one claim with low response seeking and low certainty is more effective at eliciting new information than the classic Scharff claim tactic.

In sum, decreasing the certainty of the third claim presented increases the amount of new information elicited. The result gives merit to the developed framework, indicating that there is cause for further research on the effect of lowering the certainty of at least one of the claims presented to the source. Furthermore, the results also indicate that increasing the seeking response of a claim is not as effective in eliciting more new information.

Limitations

This study has a number of limitations. First, the set-up of the experiment is an online perceptual paradigm. This means the results from this study do not necessarily translate into a real-life interview. However, the preliminary results discovered in this study can be used as a basis for further research in settings with higher ecological validity, thus giving other researchers a starting point when examining the framework of presenting claims.

Secondly, in the set-up of the experiment, a mistake was made. The second claim was about the device used to detonate the bomb. However, this information was not put on the checklist. As the information was not on the checklist, the participants were not able to give this information in phase three of the interview. This could have led to this piece of information being left out, even if some participants wanted to share it. Additionally, the same checklist was used in the post-questionnaire for the participants to check off all the information they had given throughout the whole interview. This means that for the participants who revealed this information in claim two, one less piece of new information was counted toward the total amount of information revealed. Nonetheless, as it was only one of 36 pieces of information, it is unlikely that it would have made a statistical difference to the overall amount of new information given.

Third, the participants in this study were non-criminal. Due to this, it could be that criminals in such a situation as the one described in this study, would behave differently to the participants. The extent to which the differences between the participants and criminals could impact the outcome is therefore unknown. However, the Scharff technique was developed to counter-act the strategies used by sources, and could consequently be more effective in a real-life situation with criminal individuals compared with the experimental setting.

Fourth, in the analysis conducted on the isolated details of information, a one-way ANOVA was used although the dependent variable was not a ratio scale. Nevertheless, chi-squared test was conducted to explore the isolated details of information as well, and supported the outcomes found through the ANOVA analyses.

Lastly, it is important to note that the response options for the Scharff conditions and Direct Approach condition were not identical. The Direct Approach includes the use of open-ended questions, whereas the Scharff conditions present claims to be confirmed or disconfirmed. This means it is not possible to give the exact same response options for all conditions. However, the same amount of information was given in each response for all conditions, although formulated differently. Furthermore, the response options were based on previous research to ensure as much similarity between the Scharff conditions and Direct Approach condition responses as possible.

Recommendations

Based on the discussion and limitations, there are some recommendations for future research. First, it would be recommended to conduct research on the impact of the use of low response seeking combined with low certainty. Specifically, how low certainty differs from high certainty claims in eliciting isolated details and new information. It would be interesting to investigate how the results would differ from the results in this study if only low response seeking and low certainty claims were used. That is, if more new information is only elicited when a single claim is decreased in certainty, while keeping the rest as high certainty.

Secondly, it is recommended to conduct research on the framework of presenting claims in an interaction paradigm (in which the participant interacts with the interviewer in real-time and can give verbal responses), rather than a perception paradigm (in which the participant has no real-time interaction with the interviewer, thus is not able to give verbal responses). It would be important to investigate whether the same outcome would be found in a more ecological setting, or what differences might be found. Furthermore, in a perception paradigm such as in this study, the participants had no interaction with another person. The participants could complete this study from a comfortable environment of their own choosing. In an interactive study, the participants would be in a controlled environment, set up by the researchers. By being in a setting outside the participants' control, their behaviour could be influenced (e.g. they could be more nervous). Moreover, interacting with a person posing as a police interviewer could further influence their behaviour (e.g. they could feel more or less inclined to answer). Overall, conducting the research as an experimental interactive study could have an impact on the way the participants respond and perceive the study.

Lastly, it is recommended to develop an isolated details of information scale, in which there is a quantifiable difference between the options. In developing a scale which would be more appropriate for ANOVA analysis, the results would be more conclusive and would

therefore have added practical implications. The current scale was made after the participants had completed the study. That is, the response options given to the participants were not created to be used as a scale for the purpose of measuring isolated details of information. The responses ranged from confirmation to disconfirmation, however the scale used during analyses only focused on the confirmation. Excluding the disconfirmation would increase the accuracy of the scale, as all participants would have to choose between a range of more or less detailed confirmations. Furthermore, changing to confirmation options to something in which each option has one specific detail added would make the scale more appropriate for an ANOVA analysis (e.g. 1. “The bomb will be placed in Amsterdam”, 2. “The bomb will be placed in the centre of Amsterdam”, 3. “The bomb will be placed in Amsterdam Central Station”, 4. “The bomb will be placed in the luggage area of the Amsterdam Central Station”, and 5. “The bomb will be placed in locker 221 in the luggage area of the Amsterdam Central Station”).

Conclusion

Threats to national security, such as terrorist attacks, have led to an increased recognition of effective methods of gathering human intelligence. This has instigated psychological research on the efficacy of intelligence elicitation techniques. One such technique is the Scharff technique. Since 2010, several studies have shown the effectiveness of the Scharff technique. This study aimed at investigating the efficacy of a tactical framework of presenting claims when using the Scharff technique. Through exploratory analyses three outcomes of importance were found. First, decreasing the certainty in one of the claims was equally as effective in eliciting isolated details of information as the classic Scharff claim tactic. Secondly, decreasing the certainty in one of the claims posed in the Scharff claim tactic was more effective at eliciting more new information than the classic Scharff claim tactic and the Direct Approach. Third, the Scharff technique is overall more effective as an intelligence elicitation method than the Direct Approach, regardless of the response seeking and certainty presented in the Scharff claim tactic. In sum, this study has proposed a framework of presenting claims which has demonstrated a more effective use of the Scharff technique as an intelligence elicitation tool.

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Appendix A: Checklist

GROUP	☐	Called MDA
	☐	10 members
	☐	From Amsterdam
	☐	Founded after immigration riots across NL (2015)
HISTORY	☐	Planned an earlier attack
	☐	Planned bomb attack in Den Hauge
	☐	Planned bomb attack in 2016
	☐	The planned attack was cancelled
	☐	Cancellation due to internal conflict
	☐	Niek Jansen left the group after the internal conflict
ACTIVE GROUP	☐	5 persons are planning the attack
	☐	3 Dutch
	☐	2 Germans
EXPERTISE	☐	There are members with specific expertise
	☐	There are bomb experts
	☐	The Germans are the bomb experts
	☐	There is one female and one male bomb expert
AREA	☐	Amsterdam
	☐	Somewhere in Amsterdam city center
	☐	Amsterdam Central Station
	☐	The east end of Amsterdam Central Station
BOMB PLACEMENT	☐	A self-storage room
	☐	Luggage storage
	☐	In a locker in the storage area
DATE	☐	Last week in April
	☐	Around King's Day
	☐	King's Day, 27th of April
BOMB PLACEMENT	☐	At night time
	☐	Sometime past midnight
	☐	2 AM (02:00)
BOMB MASKING	☐	Placed in some sort of bag
	☐	Placed in a suitcase
	☐	Placed in a black suitcase
DETONATION TIME	☐	Day time
	☐	Sometime before noon
	☐	7 AM (07:00)

Appendix B: Post-Questionnaire

Questionnaire for informants

Finally, we ask you to answer the following questions regarding the conversation with your contact person. We ask that you answer the questions honestly and correctly (meaning you are no longer “playing a role”).

Gender: Male Female
Age: _____

Occupation: _____
Semester: _____

1. If you think back to the conversation, how much of the total information did you share with you contact person? (circle the number which represents your own perception)

No information 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 All the information

2. How much information do you think your contact person had about the attack prior to your conversation?

Very little information 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 A lot of information

3. Of all the information you shared, how much of it do you think was completely new information to you contact person?

Nothing was completely new 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 All of it was completely new

4. To what extent was it easy/difficult for you to understand the specific information your contact person was after?

Very easy to understand 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very difficult to understand

5. Briefly list the information you experienced your contact person wanted you to disclose below.

-
-
-
-

6. To what extent did you perceive your contact person as friendly?

Not pleasant at all 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very pleasant

7. If you imagine you really were an “informant”, how likely would you be to talk with your contact person again?

Not likely at all 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very likely

8. How demanding (strenuous) did you think the conversation was?

Not demanding at all 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very demanding

9. How nervous were you during the conversation?

Not nervous at all 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very nervous

10. How motivated were you to complete your “mission” (i.e. keeping the balance between not sharing too much/too little information with your contact person)?

Not motivated at all 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very motivated

11. In comparison to what you had initially planned, did you give more or less information during the actual conversation (than planned)?

Less information 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 More information

12. If you think back to what you initially planned: did you intend to give your contact person wrong information (to mislead) if a good opportunity presented itself?

YES NO

13. If you gave your contact person false information (or ended up saying something wrong), which false information did you give?

-
-
-
-

14. Relative to how much information you revealed during the conversation, to what extent did you lie (give false information) to your contact person? *If you did not lie, skip to question 16.*

Lied very rarely	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Lied very frequently
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15. If you ever lied throughout the conversation, how successful do you think you were at getting away with the lie?

Not successful at all	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Very successful
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16. To what extent were you surprised by the method your contact person used to interview you?

Not surprised at all	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Very surprised
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17. To what extent did you plan what you were going to say during the conversation prior to the conversation?

Very low degree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Very high degree
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18. To what extent are you pleased with your own efforts during the interview?

Not pleased at all	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Very pleased
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19. How eager did you experience your contact person as, in regard to extracting information from you?

Not eager at all	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Very eager
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20. At the end of the interview, to what extent did you feel trust toward your contact person?

Very low degree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Very high degree
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21. What information did you share with you contact person? Select the alternatives that describe the information you gave your contact person during the conversation. It is important you only select the alternatives you are sure you said during the

conversation. ***This information will be compared to what you actually shared during the interview.***

****Checklist from Appendix A was provided****

22. What specific information regarding the attack did you perceive as your contact person knowing *prior* to your conversation? Select the alternatives that describe the information you perceived your contact person as already knowing prior to your conversation. It is important you select only the alternatives you are sure your contact person already knew. ***This information will be compared to what your contact person actually knew prior to your conversation.***

****Checklist from Appendix A was provided****

Finally, we would like to know what you thought of your contact person's presentation and the instructions given in the study

23. How skilled did you think your contact person was at interviewing you?

Not skilled 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very skilled

24. How difficult did you think it was to understand the instructions of the study?

Not difficult 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very difficult

25. How difficult was it to put yourself in the role of an informant?

Not difficult 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very difficult

26. To what extent did you experience your contact person using a form of tactic (strategy) during the conversation?

Very low degree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very high degree

27. If you experienced your contact person using a form of tactic (strategy), please describe it below:

Appendix C: Information Previously Known to the Police

- The group is called MDA
- There are 10 members
- The group was founded in 2015
- Niek Jansen left the group after an internal conflict
- 5 persons are involved in the upcoming attack
- There are members with specific expertise
- There are bomb experts in the group
- There is one female and one male bomb expert
- The upcoming attack is happening in Amsterdam

Appendix D: Background Information

Information about the role

Background

Imagine that economic problems, not caused by yourself, made you participate in the robbery of a cash transport van in the fall of 2018. The actual robbery went fine, but three months ago, the other three involved in the act got arrested. The only one who is still free is you, but you feel that this is only a matter of time. You know where most of the stash (approximately 4,5 million EUR) is kept. You understand that your time is scarce, and you immediately need to get the stash and move yourself and your money out of the country. Some time ago you got an idea of how it could all be solved, and briefly, your plan is as follows: through a close friend, you have come by information that a radical political group in The Netherlands has future plans to perform a bomb attack in Amsterdam, around King's Day. Your plan is to reveal information about this bomb attack to the special police force (DSI: Dienst Speciale Interventies), and in favour of the information receive free conduct out of The Netherlands. Ten days ago, you contacted the special police (anonymously of course) and carefully asked if there was any interest in talking further about this matter. DSI said that they were very interested in talking more thoroughly with you, and **it is this call you are now about to make.**

The group that is planning this bomb attack is called MDA and consists of a loosely assembled network of approximately 10 members. You are a close friend with one of the members, **and you feel some sympathy for the group's opinions.** After a lot of consideration, you have decided to reveal some information about the planned bomb attack to the police. You do understand that it is possible that the police already have some information about the planning—partly because DSI have conducted their own investigations, and partly because you have heard, from your friend, that a few of the members in MDA suspects that their phones have been tapped (but this is nothing they know for certain). In brief, you don't know what the police actually know about the planned attack (or if they know anything at all).

Dilemma

But before the phone call, you have a very important additional dilemma to reflect upon:

When speaking to the police you should **absolutely not tell them everything you know.** First of all, you have, to say the least, a negative attitude toward the police. Also, if you would reveal everything you know about the planning, it could jeopardize the entire existence of MDA, including your close friend, and might get them convicted for planning a very serious crime. If you tell too much, there is also an obvious risk that they will find out that it was you who “sold them out,” which means that you will be hunted by the entire group (and you are not prepared to go that far). On the other hand, **you cannot reveal too little**, because if you do so, there is a risk that the police won't find your contribution to be significant enough to grant you free conduct out of The Netherlands. In order to be taken seriously, and appear trustworthy, you have to show some degree of goodwill and cooperation. In sum, you need to **find a good balance—neither revealing too much nor too little information.**

In spite of all the effort you have put into thinking this through, you still feel very hesitant about talking to the police at all, but nonetheless, you have decided to give it a try. However, you have not fully decided what specific information (and how much) you will reveal to the police. This decision is partly held open, and you will in some degree allow the development of the upcoming conversation to direct this matter.

What you know about the planning of the upcoming attack is as follows:

Information about the attack

General

You know that the group planning the attack is called MDA, it consists of approximately 10 members and is based in Amsterdam. You also know that the group has been around since 2015 and came to existence as a result of the various immigration riots across the Netherlands in 2015. You know that the group, in cooperation with two Germans, had plans to execute a bomb attack in a conference centre in The Hague in 2016, where a political top meeting was held at the time. But that operation was cancelled due to internal conflicts. This conflict resulted in one of the leading figures of the group, Niek Jansen, leaving MDA.

Your Relationship to MDA

David de Vries, who is your close friend, and Niek Jansen founded MDA. You know the names of most of the members of MDA: Martin, Johannes, Erik, Sara, Peter, Saskia, Lisa, but have no further personal information about them. You know the background of the internal conflict that occurred in The Hague. In brief, Niek Jansen wanted to increase the effect of the attack with human casualties, something the Germans refused to go along with. Since the other members sided with the Germans, this dispute led to Niek leaving MDA. Niek and David are currently bitter enemies, as it was David who introduced the Germans to MDA.

Specific Details about the Upcoming Attack

You know that five persons are working more specifically with the planning of the upcoming attack. Among these five there are two Germans (a male and a female) who are both experts on explosives. You also know that these two German bomb experts participated in the planning of the bomb attack that would have been performed in The Hague (2016), which was cancelled. You know that the train station subjected for the planned attack is Amsterdam Central Station, and you know that the attack will take place on King's day, namely Saturday the 27th of April. You also know that the plan is to plant the bomb during night time and that the bomb will be detonated in the morning at 7AM, remotely via an app on a smartphone. The bomb will be placed in a black suitcase, which will be placed in a locker in the luggage storing area of the station at 2AM on the 27th of April. The luggage storing area where the suitcase will be placed, is on the east end of Amsterdam Central Station. You do not know what kind of bomb it is. You do not know where the bomb is located at the moment (or if it is manufactured yet).

Appendix E: Memory Test

In this section, we will conduct a memory test to see how much information you remember

Please choose the correct statement:

- ☐ The group is called MDA
- ☐ The group is called SDF

Please choose the correct statement:

- ☐ The group is located in Berlin
- ☐ The group is located in Amsterdam

Please choose the correct statement:

- ☐ 3 people are planning the current attack
- ☐ 5 people are planning the current attack

Please choose the correct statement:

- ☐ Two of the people involved are Germans
- ☐ None of the people involved are Germans

Please choose the correct statement:

- ☐ The group has bomb experts
- ☐ The group does not have bomb experts

Please choose the correct statement:

- ☐ Niek Jansen left the group due to internal conflict
- ☐ David de Vries left the group due to internal conflict

Please choose the correct statement:

- ☐ The attack is going to take place at Schipol Train Station
- ☐ The attack is going to take place at Amsterdam Central Station

Please choose the correct statement:

- ☐ The bomb will be planted at the check points
- ☐ The bomb will be planted in the luggage area

Please choose the correct statement:

- ☐ The attack is planned for the 26th of April
- ☐ The attack is planned for King's Day the 27th of April

Appendix F: Interview Protocol Scharff Technique

Introduction Scharff Conditions

Hi, good thing you called. How are you?

Okay, well, there is an important reason for you contacting me, but before we start let me point out that I understand you're in a difficult situation, but at the same time you must understand that we cannot accept this bomb attack to take place. As you might understand, we already know quite some things about MDA and their planned attack in Amsterdam. So, I was thinking, in order to make this conversation more effective, I hope you don't mind if I start by sharing some of the information we already hold...

Okay, so we know that you and David are well acquainted and that you have known each other for quite some time; We also know that it was David who founded MDA together with Niek. Well, but now the times have changed. I am sure that you – as well as us – know that Niek is no longer part of the group after all the things that happened in 2016 – I guess this was just a matter of time as Niek never managed to get along with the bomb experts anyways.

Fortunately for the group, the other members did not have any problems with the bomb experts. ... of what we understand, Niek had a completely different philosophy than the bomb experts, when it comes to what and who to blow up so to speak. Yeah, and it was because of this conflict that their previous plans were cancelled.

Anyway, I understand that you have quite a bit of information about their current plans, but first let me share some of the information we already hold, without getting too specific.

We know that MDA is a political group which was formed in 2015 and that they consist of approximately 10 members. We also know that not everyone in the group will be involved in the actual execution of the attack. We understand that the purpose of carrying out this attack is to create political headlines for their cause, which will become quite dramatic as they plan to execute it around a national holiday. As you surely understand, it is of the highest priority for us to prevent this attack, because even if MDA doesn't aim to hurt people, the time and the location of the attack makes it very serious, considering the number of people traveling with trains and being by the station around such a big holiday.

Okay, if I should get more to the point, we know that five persons are involved in the current planning, which of course, includes the man and the woman... yeah the two bomb experts who are essential in running this difficult operation. We also know that they will want to avoid human casualties this time around, as this is more or less a condition for the people left in the group – However, I do believe they have underestimated the actual risk here, the risk to injure, or even kill people with this attack. I mean, it is quite clear that they will not be able to avoid making considerable collateral damage...

Claim one

...and we are aware that the members of the group are quite clever, so we take this all extremely seriously, so...we were pleased to come to know that they plan to execute this attack on King's day the 27th of April...

Claim two

...we are aware that the bomb will be detonated using a cell phone...

Claim three

LR-LC: ...we have information that suggests that they are going to blow the bomb at Amsterdam Central Station...

LR-HC: ...we know that they are going to blow the bomb at Amsterdam Central Station...

HR-LC: ...what would you say if I told you that we have information that suggests that they are going to blow the bomb at the Amsterdam Central Station...

HR-HC: ...what would you say if I told you that we know that they are going to blow the bomb at Amsterdam Central Station...

Claim four

...we also know that they will place the bomb in a suitcase...

Appendix G: Interview Protocol Direct Approach

Introduction Direct Approach

“Hi, good thing you called. Take it you are well? Ok, shall we start talking about what we are supposed to talk about?”

Question one

When are they planning on executing the bombing?

Question two

What device are they planning on detonating the bomb with?

Question three

Where will the attack take place?

Question four

How will the bomb be masked?