

A Taxonomy of Interrogation Methods

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With a few notable exceptions, the research on interrogation, suspect interviewing, and intelligence collection has been predominantly focused on either broad categories of their methods (e.g., information-gathering versus accusatorial models) or very specific techniques (e.g., using open-ended questions, appealing to the suspect's conscience). The broad categories, however, are not meaningful enough to fully describe the dynamic between interrogator and subject, whereas the specific techniques are too detailed to understand and research the process of interrogation. To remedy this and advance the academic and operational fields, we identified 71 unique techniques and sorted them into six domains: Rapport and Relationship-Building; Context Manipulation; Emotion Provocation; Collaboration; Confrontation/Competition; Presentation of Evidence. The resulting three-level structure consisting of broad categories, the six domains, and specific techniques forms a taxonomy of interrogation methods. Additionally, we propose a testable model of how the domains may interact in the process of interrogation. The taxonomy and theoretical model offer heuristic devices for both researchers and practitioners searching for a parsimonious and more meaningful way to describe, research, and understand interrogation.

Macro-Level:

Broad Categories

Minimization

Maximization

Accusatorial

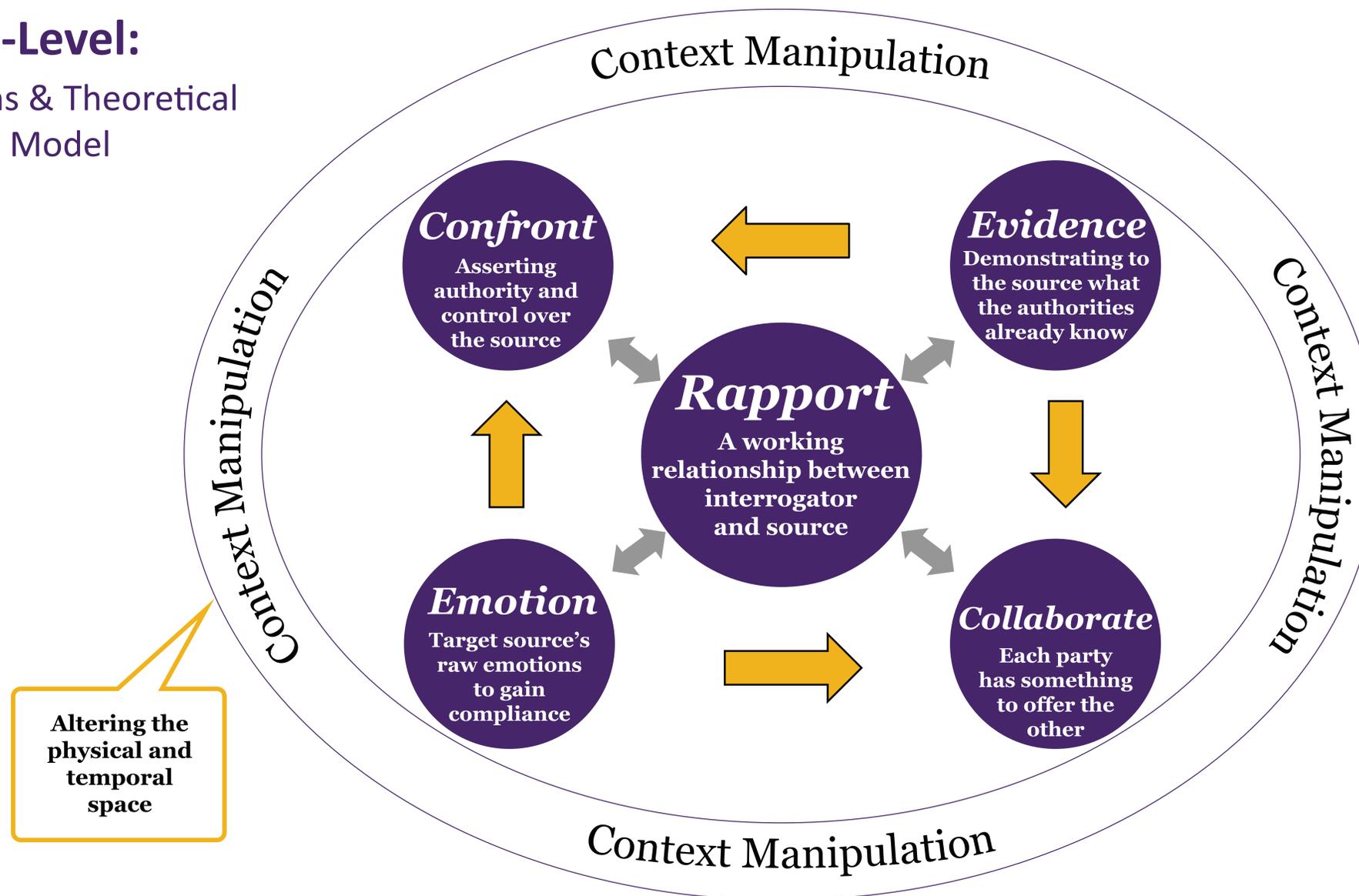
Info. Gathering

Friendly

Harsh

Meso-Level:

Domains & Theoretical Process Model



Altering the physical and temporal space

For More Information:



tiny.cc/interrogation-taxonomy

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Micro-Level:

Specific Techniques

Rapport:

- » Show kindness & respect
- » Identify & meet the basic needs (e.g., food, water)

Context Manipulation:

- » Conduct the interview in a small room
- » Position detainee in a specific place, such as away from the door

Emotion Provocation:

- » Appeal to the detainee's self-interest
- » Offer moral rationalizations to enhance cooperation

Confrontation/Competition:

- » Emphasize authority and expertise over the detainee
- » Ask questions quickly, do not allow answers

Collaboration:

- » Offer special rewards (e.g., cigarettes, candy) for cooperation
- » Show concern for the detainee and his situation

Presentation of Evidence:

- » Confront with actual evidence of guilt
- » Confront with fabricated evidence of guilt