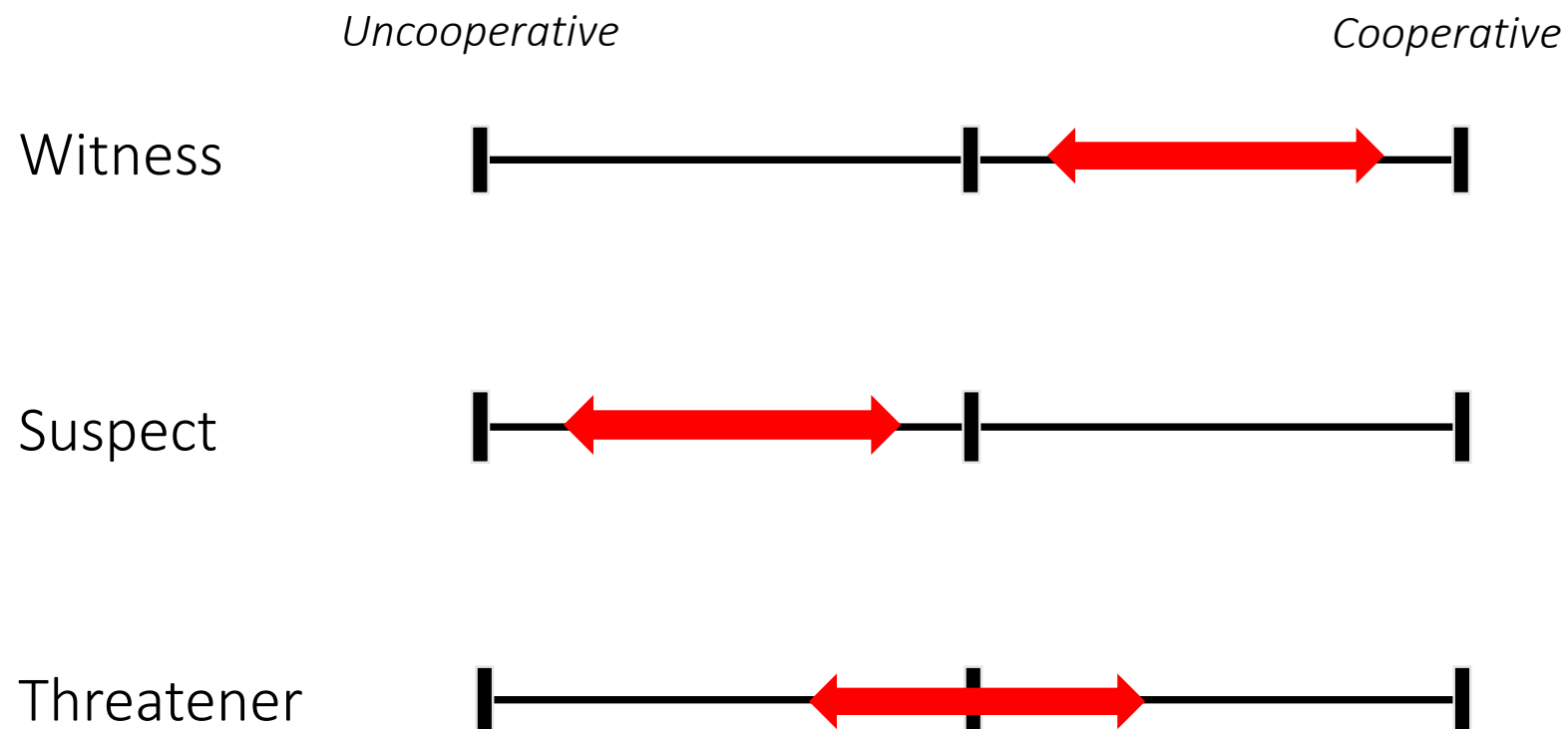


Strengthening threat assessment interviewing:  
Drawing from negotiations and interrogations

Renate Geurts

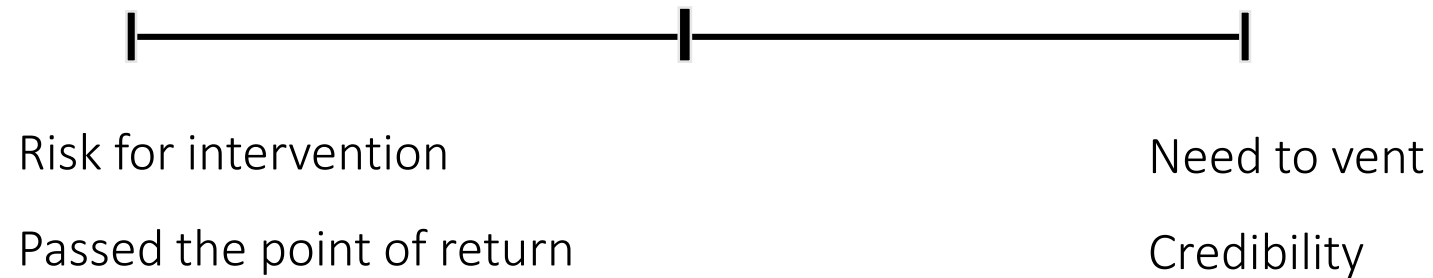
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# COOPERATION



## Semi-cooperative interviewee

- Benefits from providing some, but not all, information
- Information-management dilemma





“An obvious way to gather information is to talk to the person of concern but [...] they may be unwilling or unable to talk about it in an honest and sensible manner” (Meloy, Hart & Hoffmann, 2014)

“The interviewee may use countermeasures to thwart the interview” (Meloy & Mohandie, 2014)

“If the principal had learned of your plans and had approached you, what would you have said? I would have told the truth” (Vossekuil, Fein & Berglund, 2015)

“In most cases the employee is relatively eager to present and defend their point of view (White, 2014)

## Between and within individuals

“Threateners were found to be semi-cooperative when questioned about their harmful intentions. They were willing to discuss their case and provided information, but most of them (90%) presented their case strategically (Geurts, Ask, Granhag & Vrij, 2017)

Skilled interviewing could make a difference in a threat assessment context



## Empirical studies on interviewing techniques

	Police interrogation	Crisis negotiation	TA interviewing
1e article published	1940	1980	2013
Google Scholar hits	14500	1520	2

- Perspective taking
- Strategic interviewing

- Starting point in threat assessment:

Need to know; key questions; area's of inquiry; risk factors

→ What do we want (to know)?

- Starting point in crisis negotiations:

→ What do they want?



= Making an effort to deal with the situation from the subject's frame of reference

≠ Empathy

*Research Article*

# Why It Pays to Get Inside the Head of Your Opponent

## The Differential Effects of Perspective Taking and Empathy in Negotiations

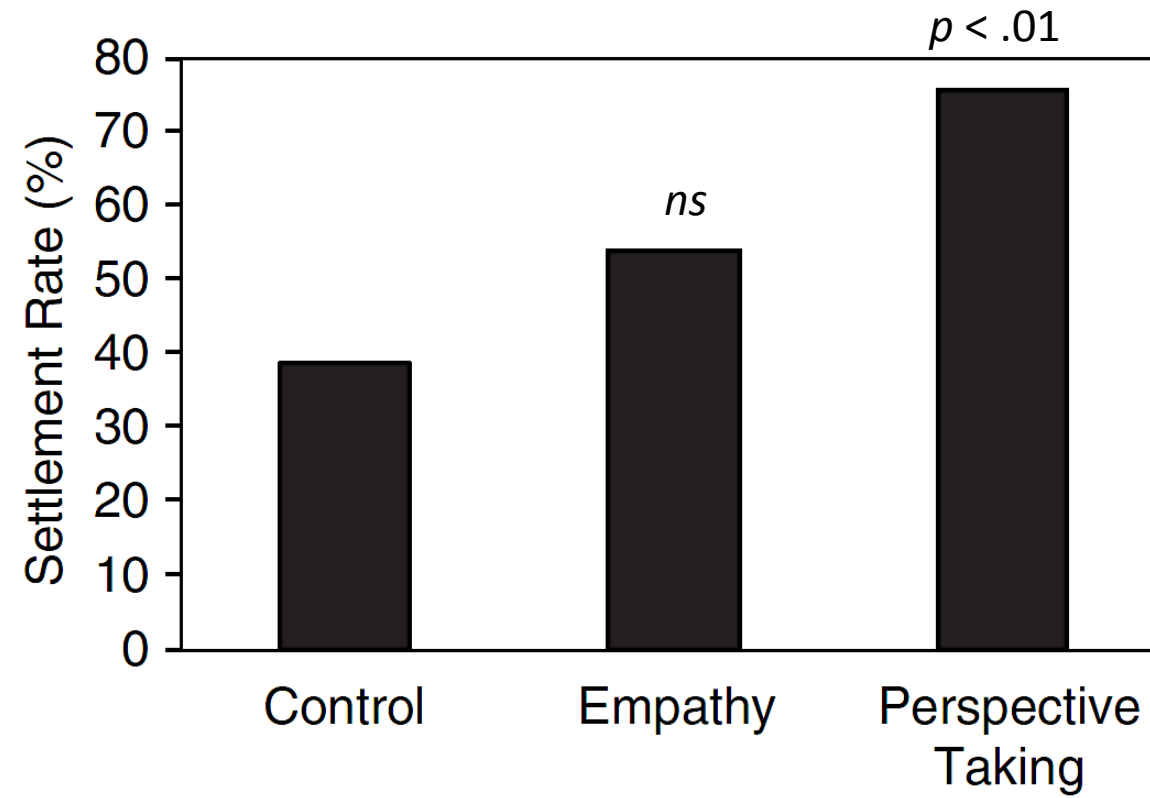
Adam D. Galinsky,<sup>1</sup> William W. Maddux,<sup>2</sup> Debra Gilin,<sup>3</sup> and Judith B. White<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Northwestern University; <sup>2</sup>INSEAD; <sup>3</sup>Saint Mary's University, Halifax, Canada; and <sup>4</sup>Dartmouth College

**ABSTRACT**—*The current research explored whether two related yet distinct social competencies—perspective taking (the cognitive capacity to consider the world from another individual's viewpoint) and empathy (the ability to connect*

Cuba in the future. This deal allowed Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev to declare that he had saved Cuba from attack, and therefore satisfied his core interests of saving face and retaining power.

*This example illustrates the powerful advantage of having a*



**Fig. 1.** Percentage of dyads reaching an agreement in Study 2 as a function of experimental condition.

Perspective taking can be seen as a smart move of self-interest

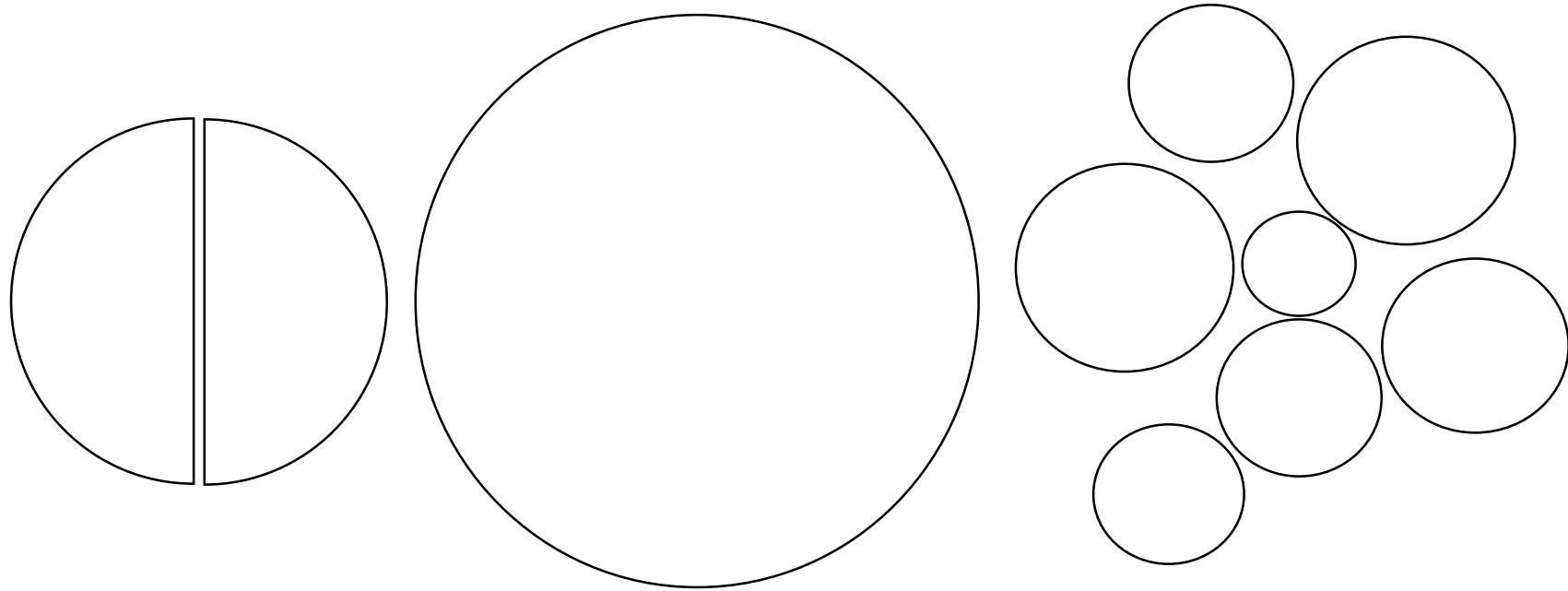
Maximizing **mutual gain**, 3 tactics

1. Focus on gains instead of losses
2. Expand the pie; unbundle the issue
3. Look for interest beyond demands

## 1. Focus on gains instead of loss

Problem I	Problem II
If program A is adopted, 200 people will be saved	If program C is adopted, 400 people will die
If program B is adopted, there is 1/3 probability that 600 people will be saved, and 2/3 probability that no people will be saved	If program D is adopted, there is a 1/3 probability that nobody will die and a 2/3 probability that 600 people will die

2. Expand the pie; unbundle the issue



### 3. Look for interest beyond the demands

“NO BUILDING IN MY BACKYARD!”

“They are not taking me seriously”

“They have never informed me on their decisions”

“If I give in, I will lose my reputation in the neighborhood”

“If I give in, it was all for nothing”

Acknowledgement

A “yesable” proposition



Table 1. Proportions of cases that engaged in approach, communication or either of these: comparison of 12-month and 2-year periods before and after Fixated Threat Assessment Centre (FTAC) intervention

Concerning behavior	Whole sample (numbers of cases) (%) ( $N = 100$ )			
	2 years before	2 years after	Percentage reduction	McNemar test ( $\chi^2$ , $p$ )
Communication	51	40	21.6%	NS
Approach	77	26	66.2%	46.173, 0.000
Either	97	50	48.5%	43.184, 0.000
	12 months before	12 months after		
Communication	49	36	26.5%	4.361, 0.037
Approach	75	20	73.3%	51.158, 0.000
Either	97	46	52.6%	46.173, 0.000

- Starting point in threat assessment:

Need to know; key questions; area's of inquiry; risk factors

→ What do we want (to know)?

- Starting point in crisis negotiations:

→ What do they want?

## Strategic interviewing

- Designed to interview semi-cooperative persons
- Take perspective, then outsmart
- Maximizing the information yield

## Different fields, different techniques, same principle

- |                            |                                 |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. Lie detection:          | Unanticipated question approach |
| 2. Suspect interviewing:   | SUE technique                   |
| 3. Intelligence gathering: | Scharff technique               |

## 1. Unanticipated question approach

- ❑ People are bad at detecting lies (54%; DePaulo et al., 2003)
- ❑ People are good at telling lies
- ❑ A well prepared lie is as good as a the truth
- ❑ Cognitively demanding > weakness
- ❑ Drawings; spatial details; reverse order

## 2. Strategic Use of Evidence (SUE) Technique

- Guilty suspects more often use avoidance strategies , whereas innocent suspects more often are forthcoming and “tell the truth like it happened”
- Ask questions without revealing evidence
- Evidence-inconsistencies
- Explanation or weak account

## 3. Scharff-technique: Eliciting information unknowingly

- Assumed counter interview-strategies:
  - “I will not tell very much”
  - “It is meaningless to withhold what they already know”
  - ”I will figure out what they are after”
- Tactics to counter their counter strategies:
  - Knowing it all
  - (dis)confirmation
  - Ignoring new information
  - Little questions

What counter-interview strategy might the interviewee adopt?

Use (the weakness of) that strategy to your benefit

There are plenty of reasons **not** to interview

- ❑ Safety of the interviewer cannot be guaranteed
- ❑ Interference with ongoing investigations (and threat is not imminent)
- ❑ Mental condition of threatener hinders coherent conversation
  
- ❑ Informed decision-making (yes – no)
- ❑ If yes, evidence-based practice



THANK YOU

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