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Urgent issues and prospects at the intersection of culture, memory, and witness interviews: Exploring the challenges for research and practice

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Abstract

The pursuit of justice increasingly relies on productive interactions between witnesses and investigators from diverse cultural backgrounds during investigative interviews. To date, the role of cultural context has largely been ignored by researchers in the field of investigative interviewing, despite repeated requests from practitioners and policymakers for evidence-based guidance for the conduct of interviews with people from different cultures. Through examining cultural differences in human memory and communication and considering specific contextual challenges for investigative interviewing through the lens of culture, this review and associated commentaries highlight the scope for considering culture and human diversity in research on, and the practice of, investigative interviewing with victims, witnesses, and other sources. Across 11 commentaries, contributors highlight the importance of considering the role of culture in different investigative interviewing practices (e.g., rapport building, questioning techniques) and contexts (e.g., gender-based violence, asylum seeking, child abuse), address common areas of cultural mismatch between interviewer–interviewee expectations, and identify critical future routes for research. We call for an increased focus in the investigative interviewing literature on the nature and needs of our global community and encourage constructive and collaborative discussion between researchers and practitioners from around the world to better identify specific challenges and work together towards evidence-based solutions.

KEYWORDS
child interviewing, cross-cultural communication, culture, eyewitness memory, investigative interviewing, memory, rapport

BACKGROUND

Given the geopolitical context of wars, terrorism, human trafficking, and organized crime, and dynamic patterns of international migration and globalization, the pursuit of justice increasingly relies on productive interactions between witnesses and investigators from diverse cultural backgrounds during investigative interviews. To date, the role of cultural context has largely been ignored by researchers in the field of investigative interviewing, despite repeated requests from practitioners and policymakers for evidence-based guidance for the conduct of interviews with people from different cultures. In this Urgent Issues article, we highlight a number of factors likely to emerge in

cross-cultural communications in the context of investigative interviews, which may affect the efficacy of interviews with victims, witnesses, and other broadly cooperative sources.[1] First, we examine what is known about the role of culture in memory formation and retrieval and consider how culture may affect a witness's memory and, ultimately, shape their account of what they have witnessed or experienced. Second, we highlight some cultural factors associated with the social context of interviewing that may have an impact on the interview outcomes. Finally, we broadly explore the extent to which existing witness interviewing techniques require further development or indeed revision for use in different cultural contexts. Methodological challenges in the field of culture-comparative research are also discussed. Moving beyond a focus on memory, each of the commentaries associated with this article, prepared by researchers and investigative practitioners from 11 different countries, examines the importance of considering the role of culture in different investigative interviewing practices (e.g., rapport building, questioning techniques, credibility assessment) and contexts (e.g., gender-based violence, asylum seeking, child abuse). The purpose of exploring these issues in an Urgent Issues article is twofold. First, we aim to highlight cultural differences in human memory and interaction relevant for the witness interviewing context while flagging potential shortcomings of research and associated techniques in the light of these differences. Second, we seek to promote a collaborative forward route for research on investigative interviewing that intentionally considers the nature and needs of our global community, rather than a narrow slice of Westernized perspective.

Culture and memory—a brief review

Culture might be defined as a dynamic and complex set of shared systems, meanings, and practices within a social group, emerging from the histories and experience of that group and shaping social interactions and relationships at all levels from the individual to the wider society. Perhaps unsurprisingly then, memory has been described as 'an open system saturated in cultural contexts' (Wang, 2021a, p. 153) that is shaped by the dynamic forces of culture. This saturation in cultural context affects a wide range of cognitive processes associated with memory. For example, comparative research shows that culture and associated linguistic preferences influence how people perceive time, space, colour, taste, and odour (Majid, 2021; see Wang, 2021a, 2021b).

Culture also influences how people attend to cues in the environment and subsequently organize and represent information in memory. Notably, the preference for analytical or holistic perceptual processing has been shown to vary across cultures (Gutchess et al., 2006; Na et al., 2010; Nisbett, 2003; Nisbett & Masuda, 2003). Analytic perception has been defined as the tendency to focus on the attributes and characteristics of an object to assign it to categories or a tendency to engage in context-independent perceptual processes (Nisbett et al., 2001). In contrast, holistic perception is the orientation to the context of an event such that individuals display a tendency to focus broadly on contextual details (Miyamoto et al., 2006; Uskul et al., 2008). Experimental research, typically using static and neutral scenes, has shown that Westerners (typically North Americans or Western Europeans) tend to focus on focal objects in the scene in contrast with Easterners (typically Chinese, Japanese, Korean) who focus on the context when viewing scenes (Chua, Boland, & Nisbett, 2005; Chua, Leu, & Nisbett, 2005; Nisbett & Masuda, 2003). Examining Arab culture, Qutub (2008) found that people from the Middle East performed similarly to those from East Asian cultures, displaying holistic processing with a focus on contextual details. In this way, culture may shape what is remembered in line with this analytic–perceptual account. For example, results for basic scene memory tests suggest that individuals from Western cultures are more likely to remember more focal (central) information, while those from Eastern cultures

[1]Throughout this article, the term 'witness interview' refers to interviews with witnesses, victims, and other sources operating in a voluntary capacity (e.g., those seeking asylum with legitimate claims, cooperative intelligence sources). While we note that interviews conducted with such individuals may involve areas of reluctance or resistance for a variety of reasons (including cultural factors such as stigma or taboo), an exploration of deliberate deception in the context of suspect interviews or related contexts lies out with the scope of the current article.

are more likely to remember more contextual (background) information (Gutchess & Indeck, 2009; Nisbett & Masuda, 2003).

Beyond perceptual processing, cultural orientation prescribing the meaning of self in relation to others, or self-construal (Markus & Kitayama, 1991), appears to play an important role in memory reconstruction. In fact, self-construal theory has recently been described as the dominant framework for studying culture and memory (Gutchess & Sekuler, 2019; see Wang, 2013a, 2013b, for extended discussion). According to self-construal theory, the social context in which an individual is socialized promotes the development of either an independent or an interdependent construal of the self. Thus, individuals socialized in individualistic cultures, where people are less embedded in social relationships, develop an independent self-construal, while those socialized in collectivistic cultures, where stronger in-group social bonds exist, develop an interdependent self-construal. In independent self-construal, the self is viewed as more autonomous, independent, and possessing unique dispositions and attributes. According to Markus and Kitayama (1991), this independent self is responsive to the social environment, and as a result, individuals with independent self-construal become more self-assertive, expressive, and less restrained (Takata, 2003; Yamagishi et al., 2008), a phenomenon referred to as self-enhancement. Self-enhancement is judged as more desirable in individualistic cultures, as individuals are seen in a more positive light when they self-enhance and express themselves confidently (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Takata, 2003). Conversely, according to this model, individuals socialized in collectivistic cultures develop a schema of the self as inherently connected to or interdependent with others in the social context with behaviour guided by consideration of the thoughts, feelings, and actions of other people. Importantly, Markus and Kitayama (2010) note that an interdependent construal of the self does not necessarily mean that individuals *cannot* express their unique attributes or function effectively without being in the company of other people. Rather, in many cultures, such as collectivist cultures in large parts of Africa, Asia, and the Middle East, this sense of independence, autonomy, and uniqueness may simply be less relevant to self-concept or self-construal. Further, individuals in this context may be seen in more positive light if they do not self-assert their unique traits and dispositions (Masuda et al., 2008). As a consequence, individuals from such cultures may be more likely to emphasize modesty in self-presentation, a phenomenon referred to as self-effacement (Suzuki et al., 2008; Takata, 2003).

What might the implications of independent–interdependent self-construal be for memory reports by witnesses? An interesting observation in the literature is that individuals from cultures that emphasize independent self-construal tend to be more elaborate and detailed in their memory reports than individuals socialized in cultures that emphasize the interdependent self-construal (Ross & Wang, 2010; Wang, 2001, 2004; Wang et al., 2017). Indeed, several decades of research show these kinds of patterns in autobiographical remembering such that accounts provided by individuals from more individualistic cultures tend to reveal more personal information, focus more on the self, and include longer accounts of specific events than accounts provided by individuals from collectivist cultures (Humphries & Jobson, 2012; Wang, 2013a, 2013b). Tests of memory for live events have reported similar findings (Chae et al., 2006; Chua, Boland, & Nisbett, 2005; Chua, Leu, & Nisbett, 2005). One emerging hypothesis is that this difference in reporting quantity reflects a cultural difference in memory specificity—and is of obvious potential relevance in the investigative interviewing context.

Memory specificity is 'the extent to which, and sense in which, an individual's memory is based on retention of specific features of a past experience, or reflects the operation of specialised, highly specific memory processes' (Schacter et al., 2009, p. 83). Examining this phenomenon through the lens of culture, Millar et al. (2013) found that North Americans showed greater accuracy on tests of specific memory (accurate memory for exact objects) than East Asians, while both groups performed similarly on measures of general memory (evidence of any memory for studied objects). As summarized by Gutchess and Sekuler (2019, p. 139), 'cultural differences in memory specificity are robust emerging for items presented with or without a background (Millar et al., 2013), for information that was neutral or emotional (Mickley Steinmetz et al., 2018), for encoding under different instructions (Paige et al., 2017) and when accounting for individual ratings of emotional intensity or congruency of the items and context (Mickley Steinmetz et al., 2018)'.

In the domain of investigative interviewing, cultural differences in memory specificity and other culturally relevant phenomena (e.g., differentiating individual and collective memories; see Wang, 2008) may well impact the content and nature of accounts provided by witnesses. As such, it is important that interviewers are aware of the role culture may play in memory reports. However, first we must ask to what extent cultural phenomena have been documented in the wider investigative interviewing literature?

Culture and eyewitness accounts

To date, little research has examined witness accounts, actual or simulated in mock witness paradigms, through a cultural lens. While it is the case that eyewitness memory research has been conducted in different laboratories around the world, using participants drawn from different races, ethnicities, and cultures, the vast majority of the literature is western-centric and almost none of this work has been comparative or tested hypotheses drawn from cultural theory. Recently, however, Anakwah et al. (2020) examined free recall reports for crime-relevant scenes provided by participants recruited in a sub-Saharan African country (Ghana) and participants recruited in the United Kingdom and the Netherlands. Participants in the main comparison groups were matched in terms of education level, and experimental stimuli were generated to reflect both cultural contexts. In contrast to predictions consistent with the holistic–analytic perspective, participants from both cultural groups provided more information about central details in the crime scenes than details about the background. However, participants with a collectivist cultural orientation reported significantly fewer details about the crime scenes in their memory reports than participants with an individualistic cultural orientation. This pattern of 'under-reporting' in mock witness accounts provided by participants drawn from a collectivist culture[2] has been replicated in several studies using different stimuli (see Anakwah, 2020; Anakwah et al., 2021) and is beginning to emerge in other applied memory research. For example, Hope et al. (2021) found a similar pattern of comparative under-reporting in a sample of Arabic-speaking mock witnesses recruited in Lebanon relative to an English-speaking British sample. Given the methodology of these studies, it is difficult to determine whether these differences are due to cross-cultural differences in memory specificity or some wider constellation of cultural factors, including the forensic context of the memory task. Interestingly, however, these findings align with recently reported observations in the deception detection literature where the quantity of details provided by interviewees is commonly diagnostic as a cue to discriminating between truth-tellers and liars (i.e., truth-tellers typically provide more details than liars; Vrij, 2008). Recent research suggests cues to deceit relying on the number of details provided may not be reliable in certain cultural contexts (Leal et al., 2018). For instance, Taylor et al. (2017) reported that participants drawn from North African communities reported more, rather than fewer, contextual details when lying about an experience.

Clearly, further research is needed to replicate existing work and expand the rather limited evidence base within the witness interviewing context. In particular, research is needed to determine the extent to which discrepancies in the amount of information reported in this context reflect fundamental memory differences or differential reporting preferences that might be addressed by an interviewer.

Beyond memory: culture and communication in investigative interviews

In the witness interviewing context, there are of course many factors beyond cultural differences pertaining to memory that are likely to affect the efficacy of the interaction. While a detailed review of all

[2]Hofstede's individualism–collectivism index estimates the extent to which countries are individualistic and collectivistic orientation. On Hofstede's index (ranging from 0 to 100), Ghana has an individualism index of 14, while the Netherlands and the United Kingdom score 80 and 89, respectively, where a higher score reflects greater orientation towards individualism.

potential factors is beyond the scope of the current article, some are worth highlighting for particular consideration in conjunction with the memory research reviewed above.

One key cultural difference relevant to the investigative interviewing of witnesses and victims long identified by communication researchers is the nature of communication preferences. According to Hall's (1976) theoretical framework, communication in individualistic cultures (low-context cultures) is more explicit, direct, and content-oriented, while in collectivistic cultures (high-context cultures), communication is more indirect and reliant on the context to communicate what is implied. Ting-Toomey and Oetzel (2001) link these preferences to notions consistent with self-construal, such that for cultures that value an independent individualized self, direct content-oriented communication is preferred. This contrasts with cultures that value relational harmony, in which it is more usual to talk around a point in order to compromise (Gelfand et al., 2001), avoid conflict, and maintain good relations (Lalwani et al., 2006). In high-context cultures, contextual cues (e.g., vocal tone) play a significant role in communication, particularly as cues to emotion (see Yang et al., 2021). Clearly, these preferred modes of communication are likely to have implications for the nature of communication in the course of an interview—particularly a witness interview. In Western contexts, investigators are typically focused on accessing facts, descriptions, and specific details in the most direct manner possible; therefore, high-context communication styles may prove frustrating for interviewers unaware of this cultural characteristic or interviewees may be perceived as uncooperative or resistant (Beune et al., 2010). Worse still, witnesses may be viewed as obfuscating or even deceptive (Antaki & Stokoe, 2017).

Although communication context has not been a focus in research on witness interviewing, there is an opportunity to draw on relevant research examining this factor in the context of suspect interviewing and negotiation. For example, Beune et al. (2011) found that mock suspects interviewees from low- and high-context communication cultures responded differently to strategic rational and relational argument sequences and that interviewees provided more information during interviews when there was a 'fit' between the strategic sequence and cultural background of the suspect (see also Beune et al., 2009). The importance of cultural fit between the nature of the interview approach and cultural background of the suspect has also been documented in research analysing recorded police interviews (Beune et al., 2010) and negotiations (Giebels & Taylor, 2009; Taylor et al., 2014). For example, examining the impact of uncertainty avoidance—a dimension of cultural differences described by Hofstede (2001) as reflecting the extent to which societies are concerned with certainty and tolerance of uncertain situations—on communication with suspects, Giebels et al. (2017) found benefits of more formal communication by police negotiators when communicating with suspects high in uncertainty avoidance. Similarly, and as noted by Goodman-Delahunty and Howes (2016), cultural differences in power distance (i.e., the extent to which members of a society accept and perceive inequality in power, prestige, and wealth; Oyserman, 2006) and associated authority may also affect the success of interviews for a variety of reasons, including impact on rapport building. For instance, hierarchy in communication norms in high power distance cultures may make it difficult for subordinates to express their views to superiors or authority figures (Ghosh, 2011; Khatri, 2009), and as a result, free and spontaneous accounts may be inhibited in interviews. Considering the communication context may facilitate greater understanding of different reporting preferences and, as such, should be explored in future research, particularly if seeking to maximize reporting by cooperative interviewees.

Finally, the importance of enabling interviewees to protect or maintain their honour and avoid 'loss of face' may be important when interviewing both witnesses and suspects (for a broad review of the implications of honour culture, see Gul et al., 2021; also, Uskul et al., 2019). While honour cultures and subcultures (see Nisbett, 2018) vary in the nature of their codes, the fundamental characteristic reflects the need to defend or maintain a good reputation (see Nowak et al., 2015). Face-threatening acts, defined as any interactional act that 'jeopardizes someone's freedom or causes them to feel left out or disliked' (Damari et al., 2015; p. 4091), have been identified as among the most common sources of cross-cultural communication problems (Beebe & Takahashi, 1989). Acknowledging the potentially face-threatening nature of questioning in community or regional interactions, work by Damari et al. (2015) in a military interaction context advocates the use of culturally appropriate strategies, such as a

'help frame' to offset conflict or perceived insults and build rapport. However, we are only aware of one study, which has directly commented on the issue of honour/face threat in investigative interviews with witnesses. In a recent thematic analysis of 30 interview transcripts with Muslim Arab children who had been interviewed about suspected child sexual abuse, Katz et al. (2020) concluded that several cultural dimensions impeded the interactions between the child and the interviewer. Consistent with the notion of honour, the authors identified that while interviewers 'encouraged disclosure to formal authorities, presenting this as a desirable outcome, the children worried that this would harm them, their families and their communities' (p. 14) due to damage to their social reputation. This research also identified a clash in the communication norms exhibited by the children and interviewers with respect to the terminology used to describe sexual acts. Addressing topics that are taboo or otherwise culturally sensitive may be a particular challenge in cultures with a strong honour-orientated culture, for example, topics associated with gender-based violence, especially rape and sexual assault. In the Katz et al. (2020) analysis, although the interviewers used direct terminology to describe sexual acts, the children used more oblique terminology and euphemisms to avoid using taboo terms (e.g., 'the shame place'; 'he did something dirty to me'; p. 10). Clearly, a greater understanding of the role of honour culture in the reporting of rape, sexual abuse, and intimate partner violence by victims and witnesses, as well as the language used to describe sexuality and sexual acts in such contexts, is likely to contribute to the development of more effective approaches to investigative interviewing in this context.

Aligning cultural factors with investigative interviewing techniques

'Best practice' guidelines for the conduct of investigative interviews are often formulated in Western contexts with little adaptation for either (i) the conduct of interviews with people from a different cultural context, or (ii) application in practice in different cultural contexts. While some studies have examined whether particular investigative interview techniques 'work' in different cultures, most of this research reflects limited comparisons of a particular technique with little or no adaptation of the technique to take account of any cultural factors. For example, there are a number of studies examining whether the cognitive interview (CI) 'works' in developing countries (Stein & Memon, 2006) or with Arabs in Israel (El Asam & Samara, 2015), but these and other similar studies have typically applied the standard CI protocol with little or no adaptation (although see Shahvaroughi et al., 2020). The same critique is applicable to research where tools and techniques are simply translated for use in other contexts (e.g., NICHD; for a similar argument, see Katz et al., 2020). Although such studies typically show a benefit of these techniques relative to other basic formats (e.g., structured interviews), it is difficult to assess the extent to which this small body of research assesses the feasibility *or* validates the technique in the target cultural context. Most importantly, this approach is a missed opportunity to maximize the efficacy of techniques developed in Western contexts for use in different cultural contexts by, for example, adapting the technique in a manner that is sensitive to cultural norms and communication preferences. Techniques insensitive to such norms and preferences are unlikely to be adopted. Perhaps worst of all, this blanket application of techniques developed in Western contexts may even impede the organic development of culturally relevant tools or approaches within those contexts.

With respect to challenges in cross-cultural interviewing contexts, anecdotally at least, Western investigators sometimes report frustrations or inefficiencies in the conduct of interviews with people from diverse cultures, which, in the light of the literature reviewed above, reflect a lack of understanding of some features of different cultural expression. For instance, failure to make direct eye contact with an interviewer may be perceived as deceptive or untrustworthy when for that interviewee making direct eye contact in this formal context may be considered rude or even immoral. Attempts to gain rapport using relatively unsophisticated approaches such as 'small talk' may be unnerving for interviewees uncomfortable with uncertainty or hierarchical power structures. Short responses to open questions, lacking in detail or emotional expression, may frustrate an interviewer attempting to access a detailed

free narrative even if they reflect a culturally normative mode of description for the interviewee due to different cognitive and social factors.

Ultimately, it is important for any interviewer to understand that these characteristics are not a 'problem' or shortcoming of the witness or victim—but likely reflect natural patterns of cross-cultural difference underpinned by different norms or expectations of behaviour (Hong et al., 2000; Wang, 2021a, 2021b). One of the primary objectives of this paper is to promote the consideration and understanding of cultural factors in investigative interviewing and in doing so drive forward applied research to develop a robust evidence base exploring the impact of relevant cultural differences. Drawing on the wider literature concerning memory and culture, communication context, and cultural norms, we highlight several broad areas where further research is needed to inform witness interviewing practice. In the commentaries that follow, contributors were invited to consider the impact of cultural factors on witness interviews as these pertain to either a specific *theme* or specific *region or culture*. Contributors worked independently on the commentaries while aware of the themes and topics under consideration, and the commentaries reflect a broadly scoped definition of culture. While certainly not exhaustive of all issues relevant to investigative interviewing from a cultural perspective, all commentaries identify current challenges and unresolved urgent issues in the study of culture and interviewing pertinent in a diverse and globalized world, where cross-cultural interactions are increasingly likely in forensic settings.

COMMENTARY 1: RAPPORT BUILDING IN CROSS-CULTURAL INTERACTIONS

Anonymous[3] & Fiona Gabbert

A typical field scenario in the context of security interviews involves being called to an interview with a foreign national with the task of trying to establish a number of facts in a relatively short space of time. Usually, this will be in the interviewee's home country. There may be little or no access to corroborative information pertinent to the facts to be established, and the relationship framework within which the interview is taking place may be opaque at best. The interviewee will be participating voluntarily in the process, but at the outset, depending on the topics under discussion, they may be anywhere on a spectrum of cooperation from fully cooperative to somewhat resistant. Aside from sound information-gathering question techniques, we have observed that a key factor in eliciting the necessary information with sufficient richness and context in such cross-cultural interactions is the interplay between rapport and trust.

First impressions matter. One of the underlying dynamics in a formal exchange is the perception of the interviewer. When adding a cross-cultural dynamic, this can be further complicated from the interviewee's perspective by who or what you as the interviewer represent: A state/organization known for fairness and openness, or a duplicitous regime who should not be trusted? Our experience has been that interviewees can be quite open in expressing their positive stereotypical impressions but may be more reticent about articulating negative stereotypes. If this is a positive image, we can hypothesize that a rapport-based approach will enhance cooperation. But if negative, will this approach confound assumed stereotypes and have a positive influence, or strengthen preconceptions and heighten suspicion that some kind of subterfuge is at play? Clearly, this conundrum is a question for future research.

The relationship between cultural attitudes to authority and the perceived status of the interviewer is also important. This is a particularly challenging area when operating in a security screening setting, for example when the aim of the interview may be to elicit information about the interviewee or their acquaintances to make assessments about risk. In societies where there is a strong hierarchical structure

[3]The author has practitioner experience of security interviews in a wide range of countries.

(high power distance cultures), a key question is whether a rapport-based approach works to best effect? It is possible that this approach diminishes the perceived authority and competence of the interviewer, or even generates suspicion through confounding anticipated norms; further empirical data are needed to explore the impact of different societal structures and associated expectations on rapport-based approaches in interviewing in different cultural settings.

Often, these exchanges will be facilitated through an interpreter. Without question, field experience has been that it is far easier to generate working rapport when a common language with a working level of fluency is used. However, if reliant on an interpreter, there are factors beyond the linguistic competencies that will have a bearing on both trust and rapport. In societies where strong tribal, religious, or sectarian divisions exist, there is a potential for mismatch between the interpreter and interviewee's shared backgrounds or a sense of confederacy through alignment between the two. Either one could destabilize the power dynamic in the room, in particular where the interpreter is native to the interviewee's country. To achieve some distance from these influences, but still benefit from cultural insights, we might opt for a native-speaking interpreter from the same country as the interviewer but with deep understanding of the cultural background of the interviewee. However, does research suggest that this is the optimum combination?

Finally, a significant difficulty for any rapport-based approach is how to frame a challenge in response to a particular assertion or claim. Where rapport has been established and instrumentalized effectively, challenge is possible without irreparably damaging that rapport. However, this can be severely tested when working with an interviewee from an honour-based culture. What follows can be an intricately choreographed dance, avoiding the challenge head on and providing openings and avenues down which the interviewee can be led until a new version of the truth is established. This can be a lengthy process requiring skill and dexterity from the interviewer (that may be made all the more difficult via an interpreter). Is there a more direct approach that could simplify this process and allow a franker exchange?

Given these specific issues, it would clearly be useful to draw upon the existing research evidence base for guidance in addressing some of these issues. A recent systematic review exploring the use of rapport in professional information-gathering contexts confirms that developing rapport facilitates cooperation and disclosure in a range of professional information-gathering contexts (Gabbert et al., 2020). The review identifies the most common verbal and non-verbal behaviours associated with building rapport, which seems incredibly useful. However, it quickly becomes apparent that *almost without exception* the behaviours used to build and measure rapport draw on theories developed with reference to interpersonal interactions and communication styles in Western contexts or using data drawn from Western, educated, industrialized, rich, and democratic (WEIRD) samples (Henrich et al., 2010). The extent to which the behaviours identified in the systematic review generalize to building rapport in other cultures is not known due to the current lack of research in different cultural contexts and across cultural contexts. In other words, there is simply not an adequate body of research to address the important and interesting questions raised in this commentary. We call for more research to inform best practice in developing rapport and trust cross-culturally across a wider range of information-gathering contexts.

COMMENTARY 2. TEACHING INVESTIGATIVE INTERVIEWING: REFLECTIONS FROM GHANA

Emmanuel Addo Sowatey & Chief Superintendent Isaac Kwasi Sorkpah

Investigative interviewing is part of the kernel of police work and an essential element within the criminal justice system in liberal democracies. It is a vital component in criminal investigations that helps to gather information from interviewees (Vrij et al., 2014). For police officers to perform their investigative interviewing professionally, one key factor is the quality of training these officers receive (Akca et al., 2021). Two critical issues arise at this stage, namely (1) the quality of course content used in training investigators, and (2) how this is delivered (i.e., pedagogy; Udrea, 2014). Although these

are not entirely novel academic inquires within the broad field of social sciences, training content and teaching styles are prominent questions that are re-emerging within police studies, particularly in fledgling liberal democracies (Arase, 2018). In this commentary, we focus our attention on how investigative interviewing is taught within the Ghanaian police context. It is our view that infusing a heavy dose of non-Western epistemological thought and experiences into course contents of investigative interviewing and situating it within particular sociocultural context constitutes an urgent reform issue for policing, and the entire criminal justice system. In other words, we need to decolonize the way investigative interviews are designed and taught in (sub-Saharan) Africa. At the same time, such training reforms must fully appreciate the complexity of transnational crime in an increasingly interconnected world.

The teaching of investigative interviewing in Ghana has undergone some reforms but generally reflects Western interviewing concepts. Where there are attempts to find culturally appropriate functional equivalents, these are done on the initiative and innovation of individual trainers rather than (i) a consistent and conscious attempt to decolonize the content through course design, or (ii) being informed by research conducted in situ. Situating the principles of investigative interviewing within the proper sociocultural context goes a long way in facilitating investigations and by extension law and order. Below is an illustrative example of how principles of building rapport are taught in the Ghanaian context:

Police investigator: Mr Yaw Osei welcome [whilst stretching a hand for handshake]. By the look on your face, you are truly a grandson of the warrior clan of kajakrom who defeated the Agbalajis.
Interviewee: [smiling]—thank you.
Police Investigator: Where do you come from?
Interviewee: Kusikrom
Police investigator: Really! I served there as a police officer and met the chief a couple of times. I love your food and the history of the migration of your ancestors which is re-enacted during the annual fire festival. The traditional dancers and their outfits are a delight to watch.

This excerpt illustrates a rapport-building process steeped in local sociocultural context and knowledge. To a non-native or someone without the requisite cultural knowledge, these interactions may have limited meaning or impact. However, in some local Ghanaian contexts (especially rural areas), these are major historical landmarks and, as such, respectful reference may be key to building rapport. The exchange above can demonstrate respect and dignity to the interviewee and his/her ethnic group and also show that the police investigator is interested in issues outside policing. This kind of rapport can also be communicated through an iterative process using local proverbs and appellations. Such local means of communication are common among some Ghanaians and are embedded with deep autochthonous philosophical undertone/depth. This type of culturally deep interaction sometimes helps to relax the interviewee and also creates an environment for cooperation and rapport building. By the same token, misapplying the norms of another culture can have the opposite effect. For example, the stretching of hand to someone is governed by unwritten rules. Among the Akan ethnic group, a young person cannot shake the hand of an older person. A *faux pas* of this kind can ruin the beginning of a rapport-building process and undermine the whole interview.

Future research should explore the extent to which local knowledge of culture may be incorporated into teaching of investigative interviewing while remaining mindful of these delicate dynamics and acknowledging that culture is complex and evolving. For example, what is culturally appropriate is partly based on gender, rural or urban locations, level of education, generational gap between interviewee and interviewer, social status, and class. This kind of cultural awareness reflects what might be described as cultural meta-knowledge, an important component of cultural competence which is the ability to interact effectively with people from different cultures (see Leung et al., 2013; see also Chiu & Hong, 2005).

Being aware of the complexities of culture and designing a flexible and easily adaptable learning curriculum will go a long way to provide skills and knowledge important to investigative interviewing and thus strengthen the criminal justice system. It is also important that a national-level culturally sensitive course design pays attention to sometimes significant internal variations and effects of urbanization and globalization on culture and police. The broader message here is that the nuances and delicate nature

of designing culturally appropriate course content must be based on evidence: This is an urgent issue in need of research attention.

COMMENTARY 3. CULTURAL FACTORS IN ASYLUM INTERVIEWING

Jenny Skrifvars[4], Hedayat Selim, Tanja van Veldhuizen, Jan Antfolk, & Julia Korkman

Legal psychology has only recently, and thus far quite sparsely, focused on investigative interviewing in asylum contexts. Promoting evidence-based interviewing practices is crucial to protect the integrity of the system, and this is necessary to enhance migration boards' ability to discriminate between truthful and fabricated asylum claims. As asylum adjudication processes take place in cross-cultural settings, cultural factors may affect how asylum seekers form and recollect memories and create barriers to successful communication between the interview participants.

Existing guidelines for asylum officials highlight differences in communication styles as an important challenge to intercultural communication (Granhag et al., 2017; Gyulai, 2013). First, what is perceived as telling the truth varies between cultures (Gyulai, 2013). In some cultures, the truth encompasses socially expected statements and hearsay; in others, it refers to exact recitals. This may lead asylum seekers to interpret instructions to 'tell everything' differently to how the official interprets such instructions (Granhag et al., 2017). Second, narratives differ in how direct the language is and how much emotions are expressed (Granhag et al., 2017). Asylum officials might falsely perceive a narrative as untruthful if it does not meet the expected level of directness and emotional expressiveness. Third, recent findings indicate that asylum officials predominantly ask closed questions, despite best practice guidelines underlining the importance of open questions (Skrifvars et al., 2020; van Veldhuizen et al., 2018). This is especially problematic for applicants originating from collectivistic cultures that favour an implicit communication style, who may provide fewer details than Western officials expect (Gyulai, 2013). Fourth, differences in the use of words and concepts, for example, different categorizations of relatives or different calendar systems, might increase misunderstandings (Granhag et al., 2017). Similar misunderstandings have been found in real-life asylum interviews (Skrifvars et al., 2020; van Veldhuizen, 2017). Finally, officials continue to consider demeanour (e.g., non-verbal cues such as eye contact and nodding) in their judgements, despite these cues' unreliability as credibility indicators (Berg & Millbank, 2009; Herlihy & Turner, 2009). Future research should explore the extent to which officials' interviewing strategies elicit varying levels of detail and allow them to obtain judicially relevant accounts of persecution. Also, further studies should explore variations in how asylum seekers from different cultural backgrounds respond to interview prompts, in terms of the number of judicially relevant details they provide, as well as the degree of directness and amount of emotion they display. This research could ultimately lead to recommendations for practitioners regarding culturally appropriate asylum interviewing techniques that maximize the retrieval of relevant information.

Interview dynamics, such as the power imbalance between the asylum seeker and the official, are also conditioned by culture. Applicants from cultures with pronounced social hierarchies may find it inappropriate to present objections or additions to an authority figure (Herlihy & Turner, 2009). Those with sensitive asylum claims, such as survivors of sexual violence, may feel shame and delay their disclosure, which might negatively affect their perceived credibility (Bögner et al., 2010). Some interviewees may have been persecuted by state actors, leading them to mistrust officials altogether (Herlihy & Turner, 2009). Moreover, although interpreters play an essential role in overcoming language barriers, a shared cultural background with the asylum seeker can create doubts about the interview's confidentiality (Jansen, 2019). The presence of an interpreter has been shown to profoundly affect the investigative aspects of asylum interviews through distortions in question content or applicants' formulations (Keselman et al., 2010). Future research should examine the role of rapport in countering power imbalances, building trust and facilitating asylum seekers' free narratives and disclosure of their claims in their interviews.

[4]The first and second author contributed equally to this text.

Finally, the stereotypes we use to navigate the complex social and physical world are based on our limited and often culture-specific experiences (Herlihy & Turner, 2009; van Veldhuizen, 2017). Decision-makers tend to hold unfounded assumptions regarding human memory and behaviour, for instance, expecting an unreasonable level of detail, without accounting for the effect of culture on how detailed a description will be (Dowd et al., 2018; Skrifvars et al., 2021). Interviewers' questions regarding an applicant's identity often reflect assumptions rooted in Western culture (LaViolette, 2017). For instance, they might expect a member of a sexual minority to describe a linear account of how their sexual identity developed (Jansen, 2019). Troublingly, this compels interviewees to conform with stereotypical expectations at the expense of truth-telling (Dhoest, 2019). Future research should systematically investigate officials' reliance on cultural stereotypes in their interview questions, which may impede applicants' ability to provide truthful accounts. Moreover, it should also explore whether demand characteristics influence asylum seekers' disclosure of their claims, while potentially undermining the accuracy and reliability of their statements. In conclusion, it is vital for asylum officials to be informed about the impact of cultural factors on identity, experiences, memory formation, and communication. More research in cross-cultural psychology on interview dynamics, including in the asylum context, is needed for putting evidence-based recommendations, training, and a transfer of knowledge into practice.

COMMENTARY 4. CULTURAL AND GENERATIONAL COMPETENCY IN INTELLIGENCE GATHERING

Simon Wells

One of the issues facing investigators, information gatherers, and many others involved in protecting national security is how to elicit information. Traditional interviewing methods, for example, the Reid Technique (Inbau et al., 2013), and structured interviewing (Shawyer et al., 2009) were primarily focused on questioning techniques. We know that this approach does not elicit as much information as techniques based on a better understanding of how memories are constructed, knowledge of how to develop trust and rapport, and evidence-based approaches to credibility assessment (Brandon et al., 2017). However, the issue we now face as practitioners is that most of the research in this field is limited in terms of what might be called cultural validity. In other words, most existing techniques have been developed and tested in a Western context. Second, and in contrast to key leader engagement where there is more emphasis on cultural competency (Abbe et al., 2007; Abbe & Halpin, 2010), information elicitation training tends to reinforce this lack of cultural validity, not because the participants or instructors do not want to be able to understand how to use techniques effectively across cultures, but because in the absence of relevant cross-cultural research, there is limited confidence that the techniques we use will work. Furthermore, and perhaps most problematically, if the techniques fail in different cultures, then the default reaction of interviewers is to fall back on ineffective question-and-answer techniques.

As an example, an individual held hostage for over a year on the Arabian Peninsula, with West African Heritage, was debriefed using the timeline technique (Hope et al., 2013). While the actual method was understood by all, the interviewers wanted to get to instrumental information (details about people, locations, activities, and times), the former hostage focused on identity and relational matters, particularly relationships and feelings. Anticipating a similar issue in an interview conducted in East Africa, rather than using the model statement (Leal et al., 2015) as described in the research (which involves the interviewee listening to a recording of a person's experience of attending a car race), the interviewee was asked to describe the experience as if they were telling the story to an Elder who would repeat it, or that they had described their experience to family. However, the same issues arose: The interviewee was more concerned with discussing matters of identity (values, beliefs, feelings, etc.) as opposed to instrumental detail (facts about people, locations, etc.). In both cases, the instrumental focus of the technique was at odds with the preferences of the interviewee. Further research is necessary to explore whether existing techniques can be adapted (or new techniques developed) to address this type of scenario.

Integrating cultural knowledge into training and practice tends to include an awareness of face, honour, dignity theories (Aslani et al., 2013), the work of Hofstede (Hofstede & McCrae, 2004), and specific research based on culture likely to be encountered dependent on deployment or need (Brandon et al., 2017). However, research conducted at the US Army War College (Abbe & Halpin, 2010) has emphasized the need to move beyond cultural knowledge to cultural competency. This includes assessment and training in how to integrate knowledge about one's own culture and others, affect, and skills (including flexibility). Expanding cultural competency is clearly an important avenue forward for the field of investigative interviewing, and more research is needed to identify best practice and to inform training and policy.

Taking a wider perspective on the term 'culture', a related area which practitioners feel needs to be considered is *generational* cultural competency. Communicating across generations often raises many of the same challenges and mismatch between norms and expectations as communicating across cultures. For example, the change from face-to-face voice interaction to interaction via text and online messaging impacts on traditional approaches to eliciting information. Research is needed to examine how culture manifests in online interactions, including efforts to elicit information, when people are no longer only part of their geographical culture but also part of a globalized online (sub)culture. Generational differences may also reflect cultural differences. For instance, it seems that in dignity cultures, text interactions tend be to briefer and more direct, which challenges the notion that rapport-based interactions always lead to more information. Similarly, when faced by an expectation violation and there is a need for adaptability, the default position is one of transactional engagement, which ignores rapport (Oleszkiewicz, 2021).

In conclusion, we are faced with the challenge of obtaining detailed and accurate information to keep all safe. However, we are currently approaching this challenge through the lens of Western culture and cross-cultural interactions often falter as a result. Any insights we can glean from research to facilitate the development, adaptation, or translation of new or existing interviewing techniques for effective use across people will make a significant operational difference.

COMMENTARY 5. INTERVIEWING VICTIMS OF VIOLENCE IN MEXICO'S WAR ON DRUGS

Javier Trevino-Rangel

In 2006, the Mexican government initiated a new and controversial security strategy with the aim, it was said at the time, of putting an end to the violence of organized crime. This move came as a surprise given that criminal violence had declined steadily over the previous 20 years. Indeed, 2006 was the least violent year in the country's recent history (Escalante, 2011). This 'war on drugs', which continues to this day, has not ended criminal violence and has resulted in the deaths of more than 250,000 people and the disappearance of at least 60,000 others (Zedillo et al., 2019). In this context and given that culture emerges from the histories and experiences within a social group, interviewing victims or witnesses of violence is extraordinarily challenging as their memories and narratives are shaped by what could be termed the culture of fear and the culture of denial.

The culture of fear affects what victims or witnesses report in two ways. First, there is a powerful fear of being stigmatized (Moon & Trevino-Rangel, 2020). The official discourse of the Mexican government has portrayed victims of violence as people who were 'involved in something' or 'they are criminals who kill each other'. According to this logic, there are no blameless victims, so victims are reticent to give testimony as they are afraid of suffering a secondary victimization: Either they are not believed or they are blamed for their fate. Witnesses of violence or relatives of the victims are also reluctant to talk because they often do not want to be linked to the victim: They fear being seen as suspicious individuals and thus marginalized from their communities. Second, there is the fear of interviewers. In the context of the war on drugs, the line dividing members of organized crime and agents of the state has blurred. Stories abound of young men last seen alive in a police

patrol car, of families detained at a military roadblock who are then tortured by security forces, and of people kidnapped by the police who are then handed over to criminal gangs or vice versa. In this context, can victims or witnesses of violence trust an unknown interviewer? Talking to the wrong person can put the lives of victims or their families at risk. Many victims of violence want to leave what happened in the past.

The culture of denial also plays a crucial role (Cohen, 2001). Denial is a powerful psychological defence mechanism that allows individuals to live through this hyperviolent context. For victims of violence, painful experiences may be difficult to forget. Yet, when interviewed, they often seem to have completely forgotten what happened. Interviewers need to invest a considerable amount of time and effort into building rapport with the victim. Only then do they seem to start to remember. Denial is particularly relevant in the testimony of witnesses of violence. When interviewed, they frequently state that they had trouble remembering anything: 'It was a long time ago', 'I don't remember the details anymore', 'I didn't really know the victim well'.[5] The culture of denial is also relevant to understanding how victims and witnesses normalize violence and how they think and talk about it. When asked if they knew anyone who had been killed or disappeared, one participant responded: 'No, I don't know anyone. Only my nephew'. Someone else recalled: 'There was a party… all the people in the party were killed… But there were not too many. Just four or five'.

Finally, recognizing the culture of denial is useful in making sense of how witnesses of violence perceive victims and thus the way they talk about them when interviewed (Trevino-Rangel, 2018). Most witnesses have adopted the government's discourse that the victims were undoubtedly linked to organized crime. Thus, when asked about their opinion of the victims, they always replied that they were 'involved in something' and therefore 'got what they deserved'. There is a shared belief among witnesses that there are no innocent victims, no lives to be grieved, and no criminal investigations to be carried out: 'Yes, the massacre happened, but it was justified: there is not much more to talk about'.

Further research is needed to examine the impact of political and historical factors in investigative interviews, a topic almost entirely overlooked in research to date. The current observations gained over the conduct of 68 interviews with victims and witnesses of criminal and state violence in Mexico highlight some of the wider cultural and contextual factors critical for interviewer to consider when planning interviews in complex socio-political contexts.

COMMENTARY 6. ISSUES AND CHALLENGES SURROUNDING INVESTIGATIVE INTERVIEWS WITH SURVIVORS OF SEXUAL AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Laura M. Stevens, Wangu Kanja, & Heather D. Flowe

Sexual violence (SV) is a major human rights issue that disproportionately impacts women and girls, with one in three women worldwide experiencing SV in their lifetime (World Health Organisation, 2017). Investigative interviews are crucial in investigating SV. The survivor's memory evidence is often the primary evidence to support the accusation (Kebbell et al., 2007), and therefore needs to be gathered using evidence-based interview methods. The need for culturally aware and context-sensitive interview approaches for investigating SV is especially urgent and pertinent in contexts with heightened gender inequality (Fatusi & Oyeledun, 2002; Yodanis, 2004). Research has found increased levels of SV in countries where women's social and economic status is lower than that of men (Yodanis, 2004). In Kenya, a country where we work, gender inequality is rampant (United Nations Development Programme, 2018), with 47% of women between the ages of 15 and 49 experiencing SV at least once during their lifetime (Ministry of Health Kenya, 2015).

[5]All quotes cited in this document were taken from interviews I conducted with victims and witnesses of violence in Mexico. These interviews are part of a research project that seeks to understand how ordinary citizens receive and digest information about criminal or state violence in the context of the war on drugs.

In Kenya, like many other developing countries, the infrastructure to support forensic investigations is inadequate, and this includes resources to support investigative interviewing practice and training (Oduor et al., 2014). Case documentation is handwritten, and intra- and interagency communication is slow (Oduor et al., 2014). Thus, there is an especially critical need to preserve and protect survivors' accounts, given there will be lengthy delays in adjudicating cases. Further, the culture in Kenya does not permit people to discuss sexual issues openly, and therefore, it is difficult for people, including the police, to handle sexual violence appropriately. Survivors often do not report to medical facilities or the police stations owing to stigma surrounding sexual and gender-based violence, with many failing to regard SV as a crime. Culturally, stigma surrounding SV acts to preserve moral order, such as the primacy of family and marriage, upon which women and children economically depend in patriarchal societies such as Kenya. Survivors who report risk backlash, threats, and intimidation by their families, friends, and communities when reporting rape, as well as reprisal from the offender. As a result of limited reporting to the authorities and the inability to inadequately investigate reported crimes, fewer than 2% of SV cases reach the prosecution stage in Kenya (Frankel et al., 2018). Indeed, the authorities themselves may be the perpetrators in contexts such as Kenya (Odhiambo, 2017), further decreasing the chances of victims accessing justice. Poverty exacerbates all of these issues and raises others (e.g., corruption, intimidation, safety, and security concerns), making the prosecution of SV highly unlikely. Therefore, investigative interviews must also take into account the innumerable risks faced by survivors who report rape in these contexts (e.g., taking steps to ensure that immediate needs are addressed, and considering the safety and security of the survivor and her children, context-sensitive rapport building, clear ground rules, and managing expectations).

One of the many urgent matters in need of research in Kenya and similar contexts (e.g., displaced communities, low- and middle-income countries, and countries in conflict) is the need to deliver evidence-based guidance and training that preserve and protect memory evidence, while tackling the limited infrastructure and resources available in conducting investigative interviews. A focus on culturally sensitive approaches to investigative interviewing in context is necessary to ensure that interviewing protocols are properly aligned with and evaluated in context (Smith et al., 2019), using survivor-centred and 'do-no-harm' approaches that call on grassroots non-governmental organizations (NGO) to take a key role in their implementation and evaluation. For instance, research is needed regarding how to encourage women, especially those in poverty, to provide detailed and accurate accounts in a culture where women often do not have a voice. As another example, we (researchers from the University of Birmingham, and the Wangu Kanja Foundation, and the Survivors of Sexual Violence Network in Kenya) work in partnership to develop tools and guidance for interviewing survivors and documenting SV cases. In particular, we are investigating methods of preserving and protecting memory evidence in SV cases in cases where the interviewers are documenting cases and are not themselves of law enforcement. We are drawing on evidence-based methods, and leadership from rape survivors themselves, who are experts in context. Survivors often will not, or are reluctant to, disclose incidents to the police because it would put them at peril, owing to the stigmatization of sexual violence in the Kenyan culture. In this context, NGOs and other community organizations often act as first responders, and document cases. Guidance and interview training for people who are not members of law enforcement are vital, and research in this regard has been scant and would be beneficial. Further cross-cultural, context-sensitive research like this, and that described in this Urgent Issues paper is key in tackling SV worldwide, especially in developing countries and other low-resource contexts.

COMMENTARY 7. CULTURAL ASPECTS IN CHILD FORENSIC INTERVIEW: AN INDONESIAN CONTEXT

Nathanael E. J. Sumampouw, & Henry Otgaar

Culture can play an important role in the investigation of child sexual abuse allegations. In this commentary, we elaborate on specific challenges pertaining to cultural aspects in child forensic

interviewing in Indonesia. Rumble et al. (2018) revealed that in Indonesia, victims of child sexual abuse seldom disclose incidents and rarely seek support. Although it is widely known that victims of sexual abuse are oftentimes reluctant to disclose their abusive experiences (McElvaney, 2015), cultural barriers might exist that increasingly impede such disclosure. Based on our experiences evaluating the validity of children's statements of alleged sexual abuse in an expert witness capacity, we have observed two main cultural barriers in Indonesia that hinder child victims to disclose their traumatic experiences.

First, generally speaking, talking about sexuality in Indonesia is considered taboo and this is especially the case for children (Zakiyah et al., 2016). As a consequence, children might feel inhibited to talk about topics that might be perceived as related to sexuality (e.g., abuse). Furthermore, children might assume that adults do not expect them to start talking about or discussing these topics. This issue is also related to research showing that in collectivistic cultures, such as Indonesia, people prefer to avoid talking about issues such as sexual abuse to avoid the feeling of shame (Wen et al., 2017). This is especially prevalent in intrafamilial abusive situations, and hence, in Indonesia, there is a strong desire to handle such domestic problems privately by family members (Syukur & Bagshaw, 2013). Furthermore, bringing family disputes for public consumption including authorities might create disgrace to the family and result in stigma from the community. These factors (e.g., taboo) clearly impede the reporting behaviour of child sexual abuse.

Second, Indonesia can be regarded as a high power distance culture (Hofstede Insights, 2019). In a high power distance culture, parents not only teach children obedience and respect but also teach them to fear older people. There are certain rules of behaviour that adults or authorities expect from children as a practice of politeness and proper manners—called *tata karma*—in an interaction (Wiryomartono, 2020). Consequently, reporting sexual abuse to authorities (e.g., police investigators, religious or community leaders) might put the children at unease because of the power dynamics.

So, how would such cultural barriers in Indonesia affect the dynamics of child forensic interviews? In our opinion, there is not enough attention in the area of child forensic interviewing to ensure culturally sensitive child forensic interviews by culturally competent professionals as interviewers (Benuto & Garrick, 2016; Fontes & Plummer, 2010). This effort should start with an awareness of the impact of culture on child forensic interviews (Hamilton et al., 2016). For example, recent research on child interviewing practices in Indonesia has shown that police officers mostly ask closed questions (Sumampouw et al., 2019). This finding together with the cultural dynamics to not talk about issues such as abuse in Indonesia warrants the need for sophisticated rapport building. Specifically, given the high power distance cultural context of Indonesia, we estimate that the rapport-building phase should be even more elaborated (e.g., explaining that everything can be said; adopting a one-down position by asking something with which a child has expertise, such as his or her favourite television show) to ensure that children feel at ease. Further research is needed to construct an effective culturally adapted rapport-building phase that empowers children from a high power distance culture to feel at ease talking about sexuality or other taboo topics to authorities.

Furthermore, we want to warn that evidence-based interview protocols cannot just be translated and used in another culture. For example, in our trainings to Indonesian police officers, we observed that when the recommended question of 'Tell me what happened' is translated into Indonesian it means that children should 'Make a story of what happened'. Clearly, if such questions would be posed to children, they might come up with confabulated responses potentially leading to false memories (Ackil & Zaragoza, 1998). In future, researchers should seek collaboration with (forensic) linguists, knowledgeable about the psychology underpinning the protocol, in order to tailor the meaning of the translated protocols to the culture in question.

In short, cultural aspects can affect child victims as interviewees and adults as interviewers in child forensic interviews. Legal enforcement personnel or other professionals working with sexual abuse case need to be aware of such cultural dynamics. The understanding of these dynamics underpins the need for the cultural adaptation of an evidence-based interview protocol and trainings in these protocols.

COMMENTARY 8. CHALLENGES AND INNOVATIONS IN CHILD INTERVIEWING IN JAPAN

Makiko Naka & Akira Kyo

Given the increasing concern about child abuse and domestic violence cases in the community, the Japanese criminal justice system needs to pay more attention to the importance of investigative/forensic interviewing of victims and witnesses, especially children. Before 2015, alleged child victims were repeatedly interviewed by multiple organizations, which causes contamination of memory and shifts unnecessary burden to the children. Responding to these concerns, the *Co-operative Interview* or *Representative Interview* has been piloted in Japan (Ministry of Justice, 2020). This approach aims not only to reduce the psychological burden on children associated with overlapping interviews by different organizations, but also to ensure credibility of evidence by following a protocol and to provide an appropriate environment for interviewing children.

The new approach ensures that alleged child victims or witnesses will be interviewed *just once*, in principle, by a single interviewer, typically representing three organizations, such as the Child Guidance Center, Police, and Public Prosecutor's Office. Staff members, except for the interviewer, monitor the interview in the next room and support the interview as a multi-agency team or the 'back staff'. Such interviews are recorded for accurate documentation. To date, the cooperative interview works well and has been rapidly adapted in the Japanese criminal investigations. This is shown in the rise of its use: from 39 in 2015, to 767 by 2017, and in the last full year's figures (2019), 1683 cooperative interviews were carried out (Ministry of Justice, 2020).

As for the method of forensic interview, the NICHD protocol (Lamb et al., 2018) and the revised version of the protocol (Hershkowitz et al., 2014) are most widely, despite the fact these protocols were developed in Western countries. Because considerable differences exist between Western and Asian cultures, languages, and legal systems that may affect human behaviours, testing each aspect of interviewing process might be considered an *urgent* issue for research. For instance, Asian children may be more reserved because of the influence of Confucianism and are observed to talk less (Wang, 2004). Given the high-context culture (Masuda et al., 2008), Japanese children may be easily influenced and be susceptible to suggestions and leading questions compared with Western children. With respect to linguistics, Japanese is a null-subject language; that is, subjects in sentences are often omitted, thereby possibly affecting the efficiency of communication. For both researchers and practitioners, the question of how interviewers should manage null-subject communication when we need an accurate identification who did what to whom is an interesting topic to pursue. For instance, an interviewer may establish the identification of people who were present at the event, request the interviewee to name the target person, or train the interviewee to mention the target: This process is necessary to establish agency when an interviewee describes the event in a passive form.

However, although no direct cross-cultural comparisons have been conducted, the use of NICHD protocol appears to work well in the Japanese context, at least compared to when the protocol was not used. During the pre-substantial phase, establishing ground rules is an effective strategy in interviewing, and rapport building is beneficial (Shiraishi et al., 2006; Yamamoto et al., 2018). For gathering information, using open-ended questions is better than using closed/option-posing questions in terms of amount and accuracy (Naka, 2011, 2012). During training, interviewers are instructed to elicit free narratives, as opposed to a one-question–one-answer script, and to obtain specific episodic information rather than routine or scripted memory (Naka, 2014). Even though our culture appreciates social relationship, and sometimes parents wish to stay with their child in the interview room, following the Western practice (i.e., interviews without the presence of parents) observably leads to better results.

Nevertheless, challenges do remain in the Japanese legal system. In the United Kingdom, Australia, Sweden, etc., video-recorded interviews can be used as evidence-in-chief through 'special measures' provisions for vulnerable witnesses, whose testimonies may be degraded. However, Japanese courts tend not to admit video-recorded interviews due to hearsay rules. Out of 1638 interviews conducted in 2019, only 24 were used as evidence by the courts. We have observed a case, where a child witness

answered in her own words to only 40% of the questions: Other responses were *yes* (35%) and *don't know/silence* (20%; Naka, 2001). Therefore, the most urgent question is how we can disseminate knowledge about the vulnerability of children, including cultural aspects of that vulnerability, in the forensic interviewing context not only to investigators but also to judges, prosecutors, and lawyers in court, and change their mindset towards the appreciation of human rights. Indeed, cultural, psychological, and legal issues may eventually require amendment of the Code of Criminal Procedure 1948. Specifically, in the Japanese context, we need to research into the cross-cultural differences in perceptions of human rights, vulnerability, the law, and the factors for/against the use of pre-recorded interviews in court. We also need to know what motivated such changes in other countries. Presenting Japanese courts with good practices in leading countries may be one thing, but we need collaborative work to find the ways to bring the conceptual changes.

COMMENTARY 9. CULTURE AND FALSE MEMORIES: WHAT WE KNOW SO FAR

Henry Otgaar & Jianqin Wang

The empirical investigation into false memories advanced significantly because of several high-profile cases in which alleged victims falsely remembered being abused (see Howe & Knott, 2015). For example, in the McMartin preschool case, children were suggestively interviewed by social workers that led to children reporting highly bizarre accounts of sexual abuse. Importantly, many of these high-profile false memory cases occurred in Western countries (Garven et al., 1998). Recently, potential false memory cases have been reported in countries such as Indonesia and China (Wang et al., 2018). For example, in the Jakarta International School case, children reported highly bizarre occurrences likely due to suggestive interviewing techniques.[6] The observation that false memories occur in different countries, each having their own culture, begs the question whether culture affects the production of false memories. In this commentary, we will discuss what we currently know about cultural effects on false memory formation and identify key areas for future research.

To date, there is limited work on how culture might affect false memory production. Such an empirical endeavour is crucial because scientific research tells us that culture can affect the encoding, storage, and retrieval of memories in general (Wang, 2021a). Cultural differences in memory processes have also been investigated in the realm of false memories. Schwartz et al. (2014) presented American (individualistic) and Turkish (collectivistic) individuals word pairs of which half of them were categorically related (e.g., pear-apple) and the other half unrelated. After this presentation, participants received the first prompt word and had to recall the second word of the pair. The authors found that American subjects were more likely to show categorically related memory errors (e.g., recalling 'banana' instead of 'apple'), while Turkish subjects were more likely to recall unrelated memory errors (e.g., recalling 'table' instead of 'apple'; see also Gutchess & Boduroglu., 2019). This suggests that organizational strategies to support memory are more likely to be used by Western individuals than non-Western individuals.

Wang et al. (2019) examined whether the self plays a role in the formation of false memories as Westerners generally value the self as more independent, while East Asians tend to view the self in relation to others (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Specifically, Western [specifically, Dutch European] and Chinese participants were presented with word lists containing associatively related words (*e.g.*, *sound*, *piano*, *sing*, *band*, *melody*) that converge on a non-presented related word (i.e., the critical lure: *music*). The words were paired with the participants' own name or another random name. Because the self is considered more important in Western contexts, one might expect that one's own name linked with associatively related words would increase attention in Westerns, thereby propelling false memory creation. However, in contrast to what we anticipated, it was found that in both

[6]See https://www.nytimes.com/2019/07/12/world/asia/bantleman-canada-teacher-indonesia-abuse-clemency.html

Western and Chinese participants, false memories were more easily evoked when words were paired with participants' own name.

However, in a recent extension of this work, Wang, Otgaar, Santtila, Shen, and Zhou (2021) used associatively related pictures instead of words and found cultural differences on source-level false memories. European and Chinese participants received pictures embedded in various contexts paired with participants' own name or another person's name. European participants were more likely to falsely remember the associated context of a picture when it was paired with their own name than Chinese participants. These results suggest that Europeans were less likely to attend to the context than Chinese participants, suggesting that false memories for peripheral details might be more easily evoked in Europeans than Chinese people.

The limited work available suggests that there may be cultural differences in the propensity to elicit false memories. Admittedly, the experimental procedures used to date are a far stretch from how false memories might be evoked in real-life settings. Future work might focus on more ecologically valid ways to examine cultural effects on false memory formation (Ito et al., 2019), including the specific dangers of false memories and suggestibility in investigative interviewing contexts. For example, research might include methods eliciting false memories induced by external suggestion such as the misinformation or the false memory implantation method, including the use of leading or suggestive questioning techniques (Loftus, 2005). Nonetheless, driven by theoretical predictions on how culture affects memory, the current work suggests that cultural influences should be taken into account in cases where memory reports are a vital piece of evidence.

COMMENTARY 10. HORSE BEFORE THE CART: SOLID FOUNDATIONS SUPPORT INFORMED ADAPTATION

Martine B. Powell, Sonja P. Brubacher, & Linda C. Steele

The extant literature on interviewing in multicultural settings has predominantly focused on the challenges of eliciting complete and accurate accounts from cultural minority interviewees. This work has highlighted how different backgrounds, language, ways of relating, and social status can influence memory formation, suggestibility, rapport, understanding of the purpose of the interview, and potential for miscommunication. Work now needs to focus on *constructive evidence-based ways* to overcome these challenges. We describe two areas of constructive focus that have evolved from our collaborations.

First, we acknowledge that culture-specific recommendations can only be addressed once interviewers have learned to master fundamental interviewing best practices known to minimize individual differences in the accuracy and detail of information provided. These practices include the interviewer adopting a non-judgemental style, clearly explaining the purpose of the interview, and relying as much as possible on non-leading open-ended questions (Vrij et al., 2014). Questions that are truly open-ended (e.g., 'Tell me what happened') are inherently supportive because they allow interviewees the time and space to report in their own words, at their own pace, and without the interviewer dictating the order or narrowing the content of information that needs to be shared (Hoffmann, 2007).

If the interviewer provides a safe and respectful context and uses open-ended prompts to advance the narrative, rather than asking numerous specific questions that reflect the interviewer's agenda, it matters less whether the interviewee's memories are analytical or holistic, specific or generic, whether they have linguistic taboos, and how they perceive temporospatial and perceptual features. As discussed in the current paper, research is needed to provide education around these specific differences so that we have a better understanding of what we can reasonably expect from interviewees of various cultures, but the first and most fundamental aspect is to get training right so that interviewers learn to use and maintain open-ended questions over the long term.

The lack of transfer from the training curriculum to the field is a widespread issue. Thus, we initially focused on understanding how interviewing is best learned and sustained (Benson & Powell, 2015). With better knowledge of how to teach interviewers to adhere to the basic competencies, we then

focused on specific adaptions needed for individual situations. Interviews tend to include common phases such as greeting (including explanation of roles and conversational expectations), establishing rapport, introducing the topic of interview, free recall, specific questions, and closure (La Rooy et al., 2015; Powell et al., 2005). Some phases already contain empirically tested adaptations depending on the target audience. For example, work with stakeholders suggested replacing the 'if I said' construction with 'I might say' for delivery of ground rules with Australian Aboriginal interviewees (Hamilton et al., 2016; see also Danby et al., 2021). Our focus has been to work with organizations and across disciplines to make adaptions in an informed way, without dilution and tainting of underlying principles of eyewitness memory theory (Powell et al., 2005).

The Standard Interview Method (SIM) is a protocol framework developed to accommodate these adaptations (Powell & Brubacher, 2020). A new SIM is created in every new partner relationship in which we work. Minor variations in wording and technique inevitably occur within and across jurisdictions due to variability in cultures, legislation, and processes. Further, variations are needed when the protocol is translated to a new language (Navarro et al., 2019). The SIM model documents and formalizes the variations allowing for tracking and empirical testing. Importantly, this capability assists interviewers to make informed adaptations when research is lacking because empirical study is unlikely to capture all possible cultural differences and because there is as much heterogeneity as homogeneity within groups.

COMMENTARY 11. SENSEMAKING AS A LENS FOR CUMULATIVE KNOWLEDGE DEVELOPMENT

Paul J. Taylor & Ellen Giebels

When a field seeks to understand the applicability of its best knowledge to diverse samples, the danger is reductionism. As researchers introduce new moderators and cut their samples into smaller 'cultures', the results will become difficult to integrate and impossible to implement. How best, then, to shepherd the growing number of case studies and non-Western replications into a coherent, practical body of knowledge? For us that challenge is best met by focusing efforts on models that help us understand how an interviewee makes sense of interaction—their *interpersonal sensemaking* (Giebels et al., 2017). We need to know the prominent differences in sensemaking so that we can infer why an interviewee may respond to a particular technique in a way distinct from that observed in Western samples. We use the term model in the loosest sense as a reference to construct(s) that seek to explain differences observed in memory or interpersonal norms across samples. It is by testing the explanatory value of these models, not by testing techniques, that a generalizable psychology of cross-cultural interviewing can emerge.

One way to address this urgent, unsolved research question is to identify pertinent cross-cultural differences and focus efforts on understanding their effects. In the crisis negotiation literature, Giebels and Taylor (2012) identified seven: rapport and reciprocity, group membership and individual rights, role differences and authority, honour and face, the involvement of third parties, the use of logic and rationality, and ultimatums. Related work provides direct points of application for overcoming the challenges created by these differences (see, Bilsky & Kurten, 2006). For example, a suspect who dislikes uncertainty and prefers rule-based interactions—as is specific to certain cultures—will likely respond better to a formal and legitimizing interaction style with references to law and regulations (Giebels et al., 2017). A suspect who shows resistance to argumentation by engaging in rational debate is, at the same time, more likely to respond to the use of arguments and logic with compromise and information provision (Giebels & Taylor, 2009; see also Beune et al., 2010). Finally, a suspect who avoids personal confrontations that challenge his personal autonomy and face is more likely to retaliate when accused (Giebels & Taylor, 2009).

Critically, this work shows the value of testing models that transcend any one culture and avoid overgeneralized 'Western/non-Western' comparisons. For example, Giebels et al. (2017) engaged participants from two Western neighbouring countries, Germany and the Netherlands, who nevertheless have a salient cultural difference in uncertainty avoidance. The understanding provided by this comparison not only

supported police in their efforts to work with local communities, but it enabled a parallel to be drawn with other countries high on uncertainty avoidance that might not be easily accessible to research.

A similar approach is likely to benefit the field of witness interviewing, and one 'top-down' model that marshals the cross-cultural literature for interviewing is Taylor et al.'s (2014) table of eight common misunderstandings. This model recognizes that interviews move through phases of interaction and that culturally determined differences in expectations pertain to each phase. For example, in the initial stages of an interaction, role differences and expectations around the 'police brand' can dramatically shape how conversation is perceived and responded to. Victims whose culture affords respect and conformity with authority will be more likely to agree with scenarios or possibilities put forward by their interviewer (Skagerberg & Wright, 2008). Similarly, in periods of dialogue focused on capturing an initial account, prominent to the interaction is the different ways in which cultures recall information. What kinds of techniques are best suited to cultures that like to engage in participatory storytelling to provide details? How can we encourage those accustomed to more fact-driven storytelling to put pejorative evaluations aside and participate in the interaction (Cook-Gumperz & Gumperz, 2002)?

When used to explain differences in sensemaking and subsequent behaviour, culture is, of course, a generalization; no better at describing an individual's beliefs, perceptions, and tendencies than the Big-5 is at describing an individual's personality. A cultural model may predict differences in behaviour when viewed in the aggregate, but applying the model to a single interviewee is, at best, a process of hypothesis exploration. The value of the model and of the evidence is constrained still further when researchers take ethnicity or country of residence as a proxy for culture. International travel and the global media have led to significant acculturation across communities. This makes cross-cultural interviewing a challenge of individual differences as much as it is a challenge of culture *per se*. An interviewee may respond in a manner consistent with research on Western samples during routine questioning but shift back to their cultural roots and act differently when under pressure.

For this reason, many professionals look to dynamic models to understand what is motivating an interviewee. By dynamic, we mean a model that helps understand the norms, beliefs, and motivations that are shaping behaviour in the moment. Some may be enduring. Others may be fleeting as a particular memory or cultural schema is brought to the fore. Drawing on Taylor (2002), the US Government's High Value Detainee Interrogation Group highlights considering the identity, relational, and instrumental framing of an interviewee's communication as a useful lens through which to understand their sensemaking. This trichotomy has the advantage of mapping loosely onto the distinction of face, honour, and dignity cultures, on which significant empirical data are available. Yet, more importantly, it encourages thinking about why there might be misalignment between interviewer and interviewee and how a different technique or approach might overcome this. This is important, because if a certain approach fails to 'work', interviewers often resort to doubling the dose rather than adapting towards another approach. To make substantiated decisions in these critical interactions, sensemaking is key.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

Methodological challenges

Before moving towards more wide-ranging discussion, a note of caution with respect to a range of methodological and measurement challenges in the study of culture is warranted—some of which have been flagged in the commentaries. While it is beyond the scope of this article to explore these challenges in depth, it is important that researchers in the field of applied memory and investigative interviewing are alert to some general conceptual and methodological factors likely to (i) affect cross-cultural comparisons or (ii) emerge in cultural contexts the researchers are not intimately acquainted with. It is also important that investigative practitioners and other end-users have some insight into factors likely to affect the reliability and generalizability of research purporting to inform cross-cultural interviewing practice.

First, it is worth noting some important 'levels of analysis' (mis)conceptions reflected in the way constructs have been applied in comparative research, in particular the classification of individualism–collectivism. As noted by Bond (2002) 'individualism–collectivism at the level of nations is not the same as individualism–collectivism at the level of individuals, either conceptually or operationally' (p. 76; see also Bond, 2002; Fiske, 2002; Kitayama, 2002; Miller, 2002). Many commentators have highlighted the difference between cultural- and individual-level effects (Fontaine & Fischer, 2011; Matsumoto & Yoo, 2006; van de Vijver & Poortinga, 2002). To be fair, Hofstede (1980) emphasized this limitation of his work, noting that his country-level analysis could not explain individual-level behaviour. There are also sizeable issues in relying on aggregated data for large geographical areas, not least that in some regions of the globe, official maps have been radically reformulated (see Orr & Hauser, 2008). Yet, this distinction is often applied uncritically. In their review and meta-analysis of the literature on individualism and collectivism, Oyserman et al. (2002) reported that although the literature supported some differences between European Americans and other groups on individualism and collectivism, the empirical support for this distinction was not as robust as expected. More recently, in more specific review tackling the 'common view' that Japanese are typically collectivists and North Americans are typically individualists, Takano and Osaka (2018) concluded that this dichotomy is not supported by empirical data—at least at the level of the individual. In the light of these observations, Matsumoto (2018) argues for the field to go beyond 'simple, dichotomous, bipolar descriptions of selves across cultures' (p. 19), which are inadequate to describe such a multifaceted, multidimensional, and likely dynamic construct (see Vignoles et al., 2016).

Data support the notion that cultural values also vary across ecological context within nations (Matsumoto, 2018; Matsumoto et al., 1997; Rhee et al., 1996) and, as such, are not static. For instance, priming studies reveal that different behaviours emerge when different self-construals are primed by contextual and other factors (Miyamoto et al., 2006; Oyserman, 2011). Also, Oyserman (2017) concluded that over-simplistic between-group comparisons carry the 'risk of reifying differences as large, inherent, deeply rooted and fixed' (p. 439) when this is not in fact the case. Going further, Fischer and Poortinga (2018) suggest that this focus on differences has distorted the literature by often neglecting similarities. For the field of investigative interviewing, whether in research or practice, a focus on similarities is at least as important as identifying differences in terms of developing and applying effective interview techniques. Similarly, appreciating the dynamic nature of interactions within interviews and the context in which they are conducted is critical. In this vein, Wang (2018) outlines a constructive 'big picture' approach to the study of cognition in cultural context using a multilevel analysis approach, which reflects the idea that 'any given psychological process is shaped by factors within the person, at the level of the person, and between persons' (p. 55). Going forward, researchers and practitioners in the field of investigative interviewing should carefully consider how factors at the individual, dyadic, group, situation, and temporal levels of analysis likely impact on outcomes.

Beyond conceptual and definitional challenges, conducting research in cross-cultural contexts comprises a special set of more specific challenges. In an era of increased focus on replicability and empirical rigour and statistical power, the cross-cultural literature, like many other areas of psychology, sometimes reflects limited sample sizes, inadequate methodological information, problematic stimuli, and measurement biases. For researchers planning to conduct research in cross-cultural contexts, Fischer and Poortinga (2018) outline factors to be considered when planning, designing, and conducting culture-comparative research, including defining/specifying the process, theory, and contexts of interest, identifying confounds or alternative explanations, careful considerations of measures, and implications of adaptation, specification of sample, and acknowledgement of within-culture variation, the need for power analysis and pre-registration, and application of appropriative analysis (which may require accounting for multilevel factors). Perhaps most importantly for the conduct of research on investigative interviewing, they identify the need to incorporate team members with adequate local expertise on sample populations who can bring relevant theoretical and methodological expertise. As long recognized in other research domains (Levinson, 2012), WEIRD researchers dropping in and out of far-flung locations with some remotely translated materials are unlikely to produce meaningful

insights—not least because that researcher brings their own cultural biases and expectations to the design and development of the research questions (for further insights, see Wang, 2016).

As a field, we need to encourage and support researchers around the globe to generate and disseminate within-culture work on best practices and increase the visibility of that research across the wider investigative interviewing literature. We also need to work to promote equitable collaboration to recognize the contributions of colleagues and increase the scientific and applied impact of diverse research in this field. There are numerous ways in which this goal might be achieved. Helpfully, a recent article by Urassa et al. (2021) outlines a number of practical recommendations to support equitable collaboration in cross-cultural social science, including fair co-authorship practices, provision of mentoring and training opportunities, recognition and mitigation of institutional, financial, and other barriers faced by collaborators, increased visibility and attention at international events, and a sharper focus on the ethics of extractive practices.

Integration and moving forward

Through exploring the potential for cultural differences in human memory and communication, and identifying a range of contextual challenges for investigative interviewing through the lens of culture, this review and associated commentaries highlight the scope for examining culture and human diversity in research on, and the practice of, investigative interviewing with victims and witnesses. Across 11 commentaries, the authors identify several important directions for research. Perhaps the prevailing challenge lies in the social context of the interview where the need for knowledge of, and sensitivity to, cultural norms during rapport building and discussion of difficult topics may well be critical to the success of the interview [Commentaries 1, 6, 7]. Similarly, cultural competence and situational awareness of contextual factors, including relevant political, historical, or social events, is likely to assist an interviewer in appreciating the cultural mindset of an interviewee and dynamic shifts within an interview [Commentaries 5, 11]. The commentaries flag that the developmental status of the interviewee contributes an additional layer of cross-generational cultural challenge, noting the additional challenges of a global online culture [Commentaries 4, 7, 8]. Assessing the expectations we have of witness memory and understanding the potential for memory error are also key with more work needed to inform techniques for obtaining detailed and reliable accounts in different cultural contexts [Commentaries 3, 9]. Finally, the importance of high-quality training tailored to contextual needs while drawing on fundamental interviewing best practice (e.g., use of open prompts, non-judgemental approach, non-leading questions) is clear [Commentaries 2, 10]. Despite the fact that much of this article has focused on the potential impact of cultural differences, this is a very important point. Put plainly, it is highly unlikely that bad interviewing practices (e.g., a hostile approach, use of leading questions, failure to engage with witnesses) will be successful in any cultural context. The roadmap forward for practitioners and researchers involves ensuring that (i) interviewers are prepared to respond to the person in front of them in terms of their cultural competence *and* interviewing skills, and (ii) the consideration of potential cultural differences has been baked into the design, development, and testing of tools and techniques to support investigative interviews.

There are, of course, a number of topics that we have not been able to address in any substantive detail within this article. In particular, our discussion of challenges in investigative interviewing in cross-cultural contexts does not extend to examine issues of systematic racism at either the individual or organizational level and how this factor might affect aspects of the investigative process, the treatment of victims or witnesses (within or outside the interview room), or outcomes within the criminal justice process (see Çankaya, 2020). Another important topic deserving of further attention and key to the practical conduct of interviews with likely sizeable implications for the social context of the interview concerns the use of interpreters (see Goodman-Delahunty & Howes, 2019; Mulayim et al., 2019; Tipton, 2021). Associated complex topics include the conduct of interviews in a second language (Calvillo & Mills, 2020; Filipovic & Abad Vergara, 2018), and impact of sociolinguistic differences relevant to culture (see, e.g., work on Australian Aboriginal witnesses; Eades, 2000, 2004). Finally, it is important to avoid dissociating culture from political,

historical, and socio-economic factors—either transient or long-prevailing. In the context of investigative interviewing and intelligence gathering, there may be many factors from personal history to recent upheaval underpinning a lack of trust in authority (e.g., police, security agencies, representatives of the state) and an associated unwillingness to report information in detail.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Given our increasingly diverse global context, productive interactions between witnesses and investigators from different cultural backgrounds are critical for the pursuit of justice. We hope this Urgent Issues article, through identifying key directions for future research, prompts constructive and collaborative discussion between researchers and practitioners from around the world to better tackle specific challenges and work together towards the evidence-based solutions. Echoing recent remarks (Meissner, 2021), we call for a focus in the investigative interviewing literature on the nature and needs of our global community.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION

Lorraine Hope: Conceptualization (equal); Project administration (equal); Writing – original draft (equal); Writing – review & editing (equal). **Nkansah Anakwah:** Project administration (equal); Writing – original draft (equal); Writing – review & editing (equal). **Jan Antfolk:** Writing – original draft (equal); Writing – review & editing (equal). **Sonja P. Brubacher:** Writing – original draft (equal); Writing – review & editing (equal). **Heather Flowe:** Writing – original draft (equal); Writing – review & editing (equal). **Fiona Gabbert:** Writing – original draft (equal); Writing – review & editing (equal). **Ellen Giebels:** Writing – original draft (equal); Writing – review & editing (equal). **Wangu Kanja:** Writing – original draft (equal); Writing – review & editing (equal). **Julia Korkman:** Writing – original draft (equal); Writing – review & editing (equal). **Akira Kyo:** Writing – original draft (equal); Writing – review & editing (equal). **Makiko Naka:** Writing – original draft (equal); Writing – review & editing (equal). **Henry Otgaar:** Writing – original draft (equal); Writing – review & editing (equal). **Martine B. Powell:** Writing – original draft (equal); Writing – review & editing (equal). **Hedayat Selim:** Writing – original draft (equal); Writing – review & editing (equal). **Jenny Skrifvars:** Writing – original draft (equal); Writing – review & editing (equal). **Isaac Kwasi Sorkpah:** Writing – original draft (equal); Writing – review & editing (equal). **Emmanuel A. Sowatey:** Writing – original draft (equal); Writing – review & editing (equal). **Linda C. Steele:** Writing – original draft (equal); Writing – review & editing (equal). **Laura Stevens:** Writing – original draft (equal); Writing – review & editing (equal). **Nathanael E. J. Sumampouw:** Writing – original draft (equal); Writing – review & editing (equal). **Paul J. Taylor:** Writing – original draft (equal); Writing – review & editing (equal). **Javier Trevino-Rangel:** Writing – original draft (equal); Writing – review & editing (equal). **Tanja van Veldhuizen:** Writing – original draft (equal); Writing – review & editing (equal). **Jianqin Wang:** Writing – original draft (equal); Writing – review & editing (equal). **Simon Wells:** Writing – original draft (equal); Writing – review & editing (equal).

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