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CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATIONS, TACTICAL-FORENSIC PECULIARITIES, AND APPLICATION PROSPECTS OF THE CANADIAN PHASED INTERVIEW MODEL IN CRIMINAL PROSECUTION

FUNDAMENTELE CONCEPTUALE, PARTICULARITĂȚILE TACTICO-CRIMINALISTICE ȘI PERSPECTIVELE DE APLICARE ALE MODELULUI CANADIAN DE AUDIERE ÎN FAZE „PHASED INTERVIEW MODEL" ÎN ACTIVITATEA DE URMĂRIRE PENALĂ

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Abstract: *The research conducted by preparing this article (scientific study) focuses on analyzing international experience regarding interview tactics, specifically the Canadian "Progressive Interviewing Model" (PIM) - also known as the "Phased Interview*

Model" – which represents a modern approach to obtaining statements during criminal investigations. The article highlights the fundamental principles of this methodology and its phased structure, which delineates successive stages of the interview aimed at achieving distinct tactical objectives: preparation and planning by law enforcement officials, establishing psychological rapport, developing the dialogue, verifying the accounts provided, strategically using evidence, and evaluating the information obtained after the interview concludes. Particular attention is paid to the model's flexibility, allowing for the adaptation of tactical-forensic procedures to the individual characteristics of the interviewee, the specifics of the investigative situation, and the concrete circumstances of the criminal case. In this context, the study examines the role of investigative communication, the importance of psychological rapport, the use of free narrative, and mechanisms for the objective verification of statements against existing evidence. The research also analyzes the advantages and limitations of applying the Progressive Interviewing Model, highlighting its contributions to reducing the risk of false statements and strengthening the protection of the interviewee's rights, while also addressing controversial aspects related to the incorporation of procedures specific to accusatorial interviewing techniques. Furthermore, a comparative analysis of the Canadian model is conducted in relation to the Reid Technique and the PEACE Interview Model – methods that influenced the design and development of this methodology.

Keywords: *Phased Interview Model, interrogation tactic, PEACE model, Reid technique, psychological contact, strategic use of evidence, criminal prosecution.*

Abstract: *Cercetarea realziată prin elaborarea acestui articol (studiu științific) este consacrată analizei experienței internaționale în domeniul tacticii audierii, cu accent asupra Modelului canadian de audiere „Progressive Interviewing Model" (PIM) sau „Phased Interview Model", ea având ca abordare modernă procesul de obținere a declarațiilor în cadrul investigațiilor penale. Articolul științific evidențiază principiile fundamentale ale acestei metodologii, precum și structura sa etapizată, bazată pe delimitarea unor faze succesive ale audierii, orientate spre realizarea unor obiective tactice distincte: pregătirea și planificarea activității reprezentanților organelor de urmărire penală, stabilirea contactului psihologic, dezvoltarea dialogului, verificarea versiunilor prezentate, utilizarea strategică a probelor și evaluarea informațiilor obținute după finalizarea audierii. O atenție sporită este acordată caracterului flexibil al modelului, care permite adaptarea procedeelor tactico-criminalistice la particularitățile individuale ale persoanei audiate, la specificul situației investigative și la circumstanțele concrete ale cauzei penale. În acest context, sunt examinate rolul comunicării investigative, importanța contactului psihologic, utilizarea relatării libere, precum și mecanismele de verificare obiectivă a declarațiilor prin raportarea acestora la materialul probator existent. În cadrul cercetării sunt analizate, de asemenea, avantajele și limitele aplicării Progressive Interviewing Model, fiind evidențiate atât contribuțiile sale la reducerea riscului obținerii unor declarații false și la consolidarea respectării drepturilor persoanei audiate, cât și anumite aspecte controversate legate de preluarea unor procedee specifice tehnicilor de audiere cu caracter acuzator. Totodată, este realizată o analiză comparativă a modelului canadian în raport cu The Reid Technique și PEACE Interview Model, metode care au influențat conceperea și dezvoltarea acestei metodologii.*

Cuvinte-cheie: *Phased Interview Model, tactica audierii, modelul PEACE, tehnica Reid, contact psihologic, utilizarea strategică a probelor, urmărire penală.*

1. Introduction

Questioning is one of the most complex criminal investigation activities, requiring the investigating officer to possess a high level of professionalism, a solid general knowledge base, and the ability to competently apply specific forensic-tactical techniques. Every accused person, suspect, witness, or victim is a distinct individual characterized by unique psychological, behavioral, and cognitive traits, necessitating an individualized approach to the questioning process.

In practice, even individuals intending to recount known circumstances in good faith may make statements containing errors, inaccuracies, confusion, subjective interpretations, or elements of imagination. Furthermore, situations may arise where the person being questioned is unable to accurately recall the events they witnessed or were involved in. In such instances, the investigating authority is obliged to identify gaps in the statements and take the necessary tactical measures to address them. However, traditional questioning methods do not always suffice to achieve evidentiary objectives. In such cases, the investigating officer must resort to alternative lawful questioning techniques capable of stimulating memory recall and facilitating the most complete and accurate possible recounting of the information held by the person being questioned. In this context, I. V. Dvoreanscov states,

> "...of particular interest are specific (non-traditional) interviewing methods, understood as the set of techniques based on reducing the influence of conscious and/or volitional control exercised by the interviewee over the content of their statements and their own behavior during the interview" (Dvoryanskov, 2006, p. 53).

Authors V. Jitariuc and V. Rusu consider that the interview constitutes an interaction between the person being questioned and the representative of the criminal investigation authority, aimed at obtaining testimony, that is, information (data, messages) regarding facts relevant to the case (Jitariuc et al., 2025, p. 414).

Traditionally, the hearing is considered a key element of criminal investigation proceedings; conducting it effectively requires not only in-depth theoretical knowledge but also a high level of psychological preparedness on the part of the person conducting it. In this

context, the view expressed by S. I. Usachev is pertinent: the practical effectiveness of a hearing depends largely on the professional experience accumulated by law enforcement officials (Usachev, 2021, p. 143). Achieving the specific objectives of a hearing requires more than just the impeccable observance of all procedural rules governing this investigative action, or the assurance of conditions that preclude any influence on the interviewee by trial participants or other parties with an interest in a specific outcome. Of decisive importance is the investigative body's ability to effectively leverage the communicative dimension of the hearing process (Sokolov, 2023, p. 13). In this regard, specialized literature emphasizes that a decisive factor in the hearing's effectiveness is the establishment of genuine communicative rapport between the investigating officer and the interviewee, achieved by creating a psychological climate conducive to dialogue. Such a climate facilitates the free, complete, and truthful exchange of information relevant to the criminal case (Repin, 2020, p. 53).

Furthermore, the tactical specifics of any interrogation must be determined by taking into account the totality of circumstances unique to each criminal case. Thus, the selection and application of forensic-tactical techniques are determined by the procedural status of the person being questioned, their individual and psychological characteristics, the state of the criminal investigation at the time of the interrogation, and their presumed willingness to provide a statement (Trubkina, 2018, p. 193).

Studying the experience of foreign states regarding the detection and investigation of crimes, as well as leveraging and implementing positive elements thereof within national practice, constitutes a key avenue for refining the state's criminal and criminal procedural policy. Adopting and adapting international best practices contributes to modernizing the operations of criminal investigation bodies and enhancing the efficiency of the evidence-gathering process in criminal cases (Kubarev, 2021, p. 88).

2. Materials and Methods

The theoretical and methodological basis of the research is grounded in contemporary doctrinal concepts within the fields of forensics, criminal procedure, and forensic psychology, focusing on

modern interview models developed in the practice of criminal investigation agencies across various states. The study's theoretical foundation draws upon the works of established researchers in the field of interview tactics, examining the role of investigative communication, the importance of psychological rapport, the nuances of the statement-gathering process, and the limits of using psychological influence techniques when interviewing suspects. The research is based on an analysis of the concepts and principles underpinning the Canadian *Progressive Interviewing Model (PIM)*, also known as the *Phased Interview Model*, as well as the methodologies that influenced its development. Methodologically, the research employs a set of scientific methods, notably: doctrinal analysis, used to examine specialized literature and theoretical concepts regarding interview tactics; the comparative method, used to identify the specific characteristics of interview models across different legal systems; systemic analysis; and scientific generalization. Principles of cognitive psychology applied to investigative work play a significant role in underpinning the research, particularly those concerning the mechanisms of memory, communication, statement formation, and the assessment of the veracity of information obtained during the interview.

3. Results and Discussion

One of the interviewing models currently gaining increasingly widespread recognition in international practice is the *Canadian Progressive Interviewing Model*, developed by Darren Carr, a specialist with the *Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP)*. In professional literature, this model is known by two names: the "*Phased Interview Model*" and the "*Progressive Interviewing Model*" *(PIM)*. The difference between the two terms lies solely in the conceptual emphasis placed on the same methodology. The term "*Progressive Interviewing Model*" *(PIM)* highlights the progressive nature of the interview, based on the gradual and systematic deepening of the information provided by the interviewee. Conversely, the term "*Phased Interview Model*" emphasizes the structuring of the interview process into distinct, successive stages, each with clearly defined tactical objectives. In essence, the two terms are used interchangeably, as they refer to the same interviewing methodology, one grounded in a phased and progressive ap-

proach to obtaining and verifying information relevant to the criminal case.

According to the methodology's creator, Darren Carr, the goal of the *Progressive Interviewing Model* is to create the necessary conditions for the interviewee to freely and comprehensively share the information they wish to provide, without being subjected to pressure or premature confrontation. The model aims to elicit the most extensive and spontaneous narrative possible, while simultaneously steering the interview toward identifying verifiable contradictions and inconsistencies between statements and other forms of evidence, as well as gradually dismantling accounts that lack veracity. Under this approach, the emphasis is not on rapidly obtaining a confession, but rather on the progressive gathering of information and the critical assessment of the statements' credibility against the body of evidence as a whole (Parker, 2017, p. 30).

The *PHASE model* is grounded in a phased interviewing process characterized by a clear distinction between non-accusatory and accusatory interviewing techniques. This phased structure allows the interviewer to adapt their tactical approach based on the progression of the communication process and the information obtained during the interview, without prematurely resorting to confrontation or direct accusations. Notably, the non-accusatory component of the *PHASE model* bears significant similarities to the *British PEACE methodology* (Glushkov, 2024b, pp. 34-39; Bull, 2023, pp. 80-91), as both prioritize obtaining the most comprehensive and accurate information possible from the interviewee. During this stage, the interviewer seeks to elicit a free and detailed account of the facts, avoiding any influence on the statements or the exertion of psychological pressure on the interviewee. Once obtained, the information undergoes a rigorous process of analysis and evaluation against the body of evidence gathered in the case. This phase involves identifying and examining any contradictions, inconsistencies, or discrepancies between the interviewee's statements and other available evidence, factors that enable an assessment of the credibility of the account provided and guide the subsequent tactical investigative strategy for the interview (Shaw, 2020, p. 12).

In the specialized literature, the *Canadian PHASE model* (*Pro-*

gressive Interviewing Model) is sometimes identified with or linked to the *British PEACE methodology* due to similarities in the general principles governing the conduct of interviews. Both models promote a non-accusatory approach focused on the progressive gathering of information, the development of effective communication with the interviewee, and the critical evaluation of statements against the body of evidence. However, while the two methodologies share a number of common principles, they are not identical.

Such an association is not unfounded, as the *Canadian PHASE model* (*Progressive Interviewing Model*) retains the fundamental principles established by the British PEACE methodology, and certain stages of the two models exhibit clear similarities. Nevertheless, the Canadian model is not merely a copy of the British methodology; rather, it represents an adaptation of that methodology to the specific characteristics of the legal system, judicial practice, and law enforcement operations in Canada (Snook, 2020, pp. 261-273).

The PHASE model was developed following an extensive two-year research program conducted by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP). The need to develop a new interviewing methodology was driven by mounting criticism of the *Reid technique* (Glushkov, 2024a, pp. 23-29), criticism stemming from numerous cases where the media and academic research highlighted practices likely to elicit false, unreliable, or involuntary confessions due to psychological pressure exerted on suspects. However, when reforming its interviewing practices, the RCMP did not opt to fully adopt the PEACE methodology. Although the British model provided an effective framework for gathering and analyzing information, it lacked sufficient tactical procedures to effectively handle situations where the interviewee was uncooperative or refused to provide explanations regarding the incident under investigation. Consequently, it was necessary to develop a model that retained the non-accusatory philosophy and information-gathering focus of the PEACE methodology while integrating, within the bounds of Canadian law and professional policing standards, certain useful tactical elements from the *Reid technique* (Andronik et al., 2015, pp. 171-176), without adopting practices prone to creating psychological coercion or the risk of eliciting unreliable statements. Consequently, the *Canadian PHASE* (*Progressive Interviewing Model*) was created as

a hybrid methodology combining principles of interviewing based on the progressive gathering of information with the selective and controlled use of tactical confrontation techniques, applicable solely in a manner that respects the fundamental rights of the interviewee and the requirements of a fair process.

The importance and effectiveness of this model were officially recognized in 2014, when the *Progressive Interviewing Model* (PHASE) was adopted as the national training standard for all Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) personnel. Subsequently, the methodology was implemented by other law enforcement agencies in Canada, including the Canadian Police College, the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary, and the Edmonton Police Service, thereby confirming its relevance and applicability to modern investigative interviewing practice.

The PHASE (Progressive Interviewing Model) is fully compatible with the Canadian legal framework, including the principles enshrining the voluntary nature of statements and the individual's right to remain silent. Conceptually, it is a hybrid interviewing model that combines two distinct components: non-accusatory interviewing, which constitutes the central and predominant element of the process, and accusatory interviewing, employed only when there is a sufficiently robust body of evidence to support the conclusion that the individual was involved in the commission of the offense. The methodology is structured into six successive phases, each with clearly defined tactical objectives and a primary focus on the collection, verification, and evaluation of information rather than on obtaining a confession. However, this assertion is not without controversy, as certain stages of the model allow for the use of tactical techniques that may indirectly lead the interviewee to admit to the facts. In this context, A. A. Șaevici defines the Progressive Interviewing Model as

> "... a structured methodology for conducting the hearing, designed to enhance the efficiency of the information-gathering process and to mitigate risks associated with manipulation, coercion, or the provision of untruthful statements. The model is developed with regard to the behavioral characteristics of the suspect and aims to build the investigator's competence in initiating and maintaining an effective dialogue by

establishing a relationship of trust, employing modern communication management techniques and specific cognitive interview procedures" (Șaevici, 2025, pp. 222-223).

This definition highlights a key feature of the Canadian PHASE Model: its focus on the strategic management of communication, as opposed to approaches based on confrontation or psychological pressure. The investigator is not trained to seek an immediate confession, but rather to foster an atmosphere of cooperation and trust that facilitates the spontaneous and comprehensive disclosure of information relevant to the criminal case.

Among the defining characteristics of the *Canadian PHASE* model is its predominantly non-accusatory nature, as the majority of the interview process unfolds in a format oriented towards dialogue and cooperation. Such an approach facilitates the establishment of a relationship of trust between the investigator and the interviewee, helping to reduce psychological resistance and create an environment conducive to open and complete communication. However, it is important to note that the model's creators have not entirely abandoned the accusatory approach (Denault, 2023). *The Progressive Interviewing Model* integrates a flexible set of tactical procedures, encompassing both techniques specific to information-gathering models and certain accusatory techniques; this grants the investigator the freedom to select and apply, based on the specific circumstances of the case and the progression of the interview, those methods best suited to achieving the intended objective. A central role in this methodology is played by the concept of the "*Strategic Use of Evidence*" (SUE) (Clemens, 2013, p. 79; Forensic Interview Solutions), which entails the gradual presentation and utilization of evidentiary information held by law enforcement authorities. Through the planned and timely use of evidence, the investigator can verify the veracity of the interviewee's statements, identify contradictions, and assess the credibility of the account provided, all without infringing upon the individual's procedural rights or resorting to coercive methods. In developing the model, the authors proceeded from the premise that behavioral analysis, examined in great detail in the specialized literature (Butoi et al., 2014) and used to detect deception, offers low reliability and cannot serve as a sufficient indicator for assessing the sincerity of statements. For this rea-

son, the *Progressive Interviewing Model* eschews deception-detection techniques based on interpreting non-verbal behavior, a hallmark of the *Reid technique* (Chen, 2021). Instead of behavioral assessment, the methodology advocates for the concept of *Objective Veracity Assessment* (OVA), an objective evaluation of a statement's truthfulness, by systematically comparing the information provided by the interviewee against objective data and other evidence gathered in the case. Under this approach, credibility assessment relies not on the investigator's subjective impressions of the interviewee's conduct or reactions, but on analyzing the consistency between their statements and the established facts and evidence. To ensure procedural transparency, safeguard the rights of participants, and allow for subsequent verification of the hearing's legality and proper conduct, the methodology recommends a full audio-video recording of the interview; where video recording is not feasible due to objective constraints, an audio recording should be made at a minimum.

The methodological guide for the *Canadian Progressive Interviewing Model* (PHASE) is structured into three main parts (excluding the introduction), each dedicated to fundamental aspects of organizing and conducting the investigative interview.

The first part of the work is dedicated to examining the essential elements of the investigator's professional activity and their role in the efficient management of the interview process. Particular emphasis is placed on the professional and personal qualities the investigator must possess, such as integrity, ethical conduct, empathy, impartiality, communication skills, and openness toward the interviewee, which are considered indispensable for establishing a relationship of trust and conducting an effective interview. Furthermore, the study analyzes issues arising from biases and cognitive distortions, which can compromise the investigator's objectivity when evaluating information and making decisions during the criminal investigation. The authors highlight that the influence of these psychological factors can lead to the misinterpretation of evidence, the formulation of flawed investigative hypotheses, and a reduction in the impartiality of the interview process. Subsequently, the limitations of methods for detecting deceptive behavior are examined, emphasizing that identifying lies solely based on behavioral reactions or non-verbal cues

does not offer sufficient reliability. In contrast to such practices, the methodology places great importance on active listening, regarded as one of the most effective tools for facilitating communication, eliciting detailed information, and critically evaluating the interviewee's statements. The guide also analyzes the risks associated with the use of fabricated evidence and inappropriate tactical methods, highlighting the negative consequences such practices can have on the legality of the interview, the credibility of the evidence, and the observance of the individual's fundamental rights. In this context, a comparative analysis is conducted between accusatorial and non-accusatorial interview models, highlighting the advantages of approaches focused on gathering information and establishing a genuine dialogue with the interviewee. A key recommendation is the mandatory audio recording of all interviews, a measure viewed as an essential safeguard for ensuring procedural transparency, protecting the rights of participants, and allowing for the subsequent verification of the legality and fairness of the criminal investigation proceedings. Furthermore, the authors examine various categories of false testimony and the factors that contribute to their occurrence, paying particular attention to the psychological vulnerabilities of suspects. It is emphasized that such vulnerabilities can be exploited, either intentionally or unintentionally, through the use of inappropriate interview techniques, potentially leading to statements lacking authenticity and undermining the objectives of the criminal proceedings. Finally, the Guide underscores the importance of managing the duration of the interview, noting that exceeding reasonable time limits can negatively affect the interviewee's psychophysiological state, thereby diminishing the quality, accuracy, and credibility of the information provided. From this perspective, proper planning of the time allocated for the interview is essential to ensuring the efficiency of the information-gathering process (Șaevici, 2025, p. 223).

The second part of the methodological guide is dedicated to analyzing the regulatory framework governing the conduct of interrogations within the Canadian legal system, with particular emphasis on the guarantees enshrined in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. This section examines the constitutional principles and criminal procedural rules that establish the legal boundaries of inter-

rogation activities and the mechanisms protecting the fundamental rights of individuals subject to criminal investigation. Specifically, it analyzes legal requirements regarding the exercise of the right to silence, detention procedures, the right to legal assistance and effective access to counsel, as well as the legal and procedural risks arising when these rights are restricted or violated. The authors highlight that adherence to these guarantees is an indispensable condition for the legality of the interrogation and the admissibility of statements obtained during criminal proceedings. Furthermore, a comparative analysis is conducted regarding interrogation procedures for individuals deprived of liberty versus those questioned while at liberty, highlighting differences in both the applicable legal regime and the procedural safeguards afforded to suspects in each scenario. Special attention is paid to Canadian case law, which has played a pivotal role in shaping judicial practice regarding interrogations. The text examines judicial precedents concerning the admissibility of statements, particularly the principle of voluntariness, which is considered a fundamental pillar of Canadian criminal procedural law. In this context, the criteria developed by Canadian courts to assess the voluntary nature of statements are examined, as are the circumstances that may indicate a violation of this principle. Relevant factors include the exertion of psychological or moral pressure on the person being questioned, misleading that person, making unfounded promises, or other forms of influence capable of compromising the freedom of will and the authenticity of the statements. Furthermore, the authors analyze the provisions of the *Youth Criminal Justice* Act (2003), which govern the specific procedures for questioning minors. The analysis highlights the special requirements imposed by Canadian legislation to protect minors within the criminal justice process, taking into account their psychological vulnerability and the need for additional procedural safeguards designed to ensure the effective exercise of their rights and to prevent the obtaining of statements that are influenced or lack a voluntary character.

The third part, which constitutes the methodological core of the guide, is dedicated to a detailed presentation of the structure of the Canadian *PHASE* Model and the principles governing the phased conduct of the interview process. This section outlines the successive

phases of the methodology, the tactical objectives specific to each stage, and the recommended procedures for obtaining and evaluating relevant information during the criminal investigation.

Through this phased structure, the *Progressive Interviewing Model (PHASE)* aims to ensure rigorous interview planning and the continuous adaptation of the investigator's tactical approach to the unfolding dialogue and the information gathered during the communication process. Each part represents an integrated component of a unified investigative strategy aimed at obtaining complete, credible, and verifiable information.

Structurally, the non-accusatory phase of the *PHASE* Model consists of six successive stages, each with a well-defined tactical objective, contributing to the gradual acquisition and verification of information relevant to the criminal case. These stages are: 1) *preparation for the interview*; 2) *establishing psychological rapport* with the interviewee; 3) *developing the interview topic*; 4) *identifying inconsistencies*; 5) *Strategic Use of Evidence (SUE)*; and 6) *summarizing and concluding the interview.*

Subsequently, the author A. A. Șaevici, along with other researchers, conducts a detailed analysis of each stage comprising the non-accusatory phase of the Canadian *PHASE* Model, examining both their theoretical foundations and their practical application in investigative interviewing. The analysis highlights the distinct role of each stage in implementing an interview strategy based on the progressive collection and systematic verification of information, in accordance with the principles of modern forensic tactics (Șaevici, 2025, pp. 223-224).

1) *Review, Preparation and Planning.* At this stage, the investigator carries out the preliminary activities necessary to organize the hearing, performing a complex analysis of the existing materials in the case file, the goals pursued by the hearing and the individual characteristics of the person to be heard. The preparation of the hearing involves the thorough study of the administered evidence, the statements of witnesses and other participants in the trial, as well as the evaluation of the information already available regarding the circumstances of the crime. At the same time, the investigator establishes the tactical-forensic strategy of the interview, formulates the specific objectives of each stage, elaborates the sequence of questions and antic-

ipates the possible scenarios regarding the evolution of the dialogue, including the likely reactions and behavior of the person interviewed. Such planning allows the hearing to be conducted in a coherent, flexible manner and adapted to the particularities of each criminal case.

2) *Introduction and explanation of legal obligations.* The second stage is dedicated to establishing psychological and communicative rapport between the investigator and the person being questioned. The primary objective is to create a favorable psychological climate, grounded in mutual respect, trust, and open communication, that facilitates an efficient hearing and the active participation of the interviewee in the dialogue. During this phase, the investigator explains the individual's procedural rights and obligations, while also providing necessary clarifications regarding the legal aspects of the hearing procedure. Fully and clearly informing the person of their procedural status and the safeguards available to them is essential to ensuring the hearing is conducted lawfully and fairly. Once these formalities are completed, the investigator seeks to develop an effective communicative relationship with the interviewee. This process not only facilitates dialogue on matters relevant to the criminal case but also allows for the gathering of additional information regarding the interviewee's psychological traits, communication style, and behavior, elements that can guide the subsequent choice of investigative tactics. The success of this stage is evidenced by the interviewee's active and voluntary engagement in a constructive dialogue, demonstrating that a sufficient level of trust and mutual understanding has been established between the participants, a prerequisite for the effective conduct of the subsequent stages of the hearing process. A fundamental principle of this stage is that the decision of the suspected person not to make a statement does not preclude the investigator from initiating and maintaining communication. However, any interaction must strictly respect the individual's right to make a free and informed choice between cooperating with law enforcement authorities and exercising the right to remain silent. Consequently, the investigator is obliged to maintain a constant balance between the need to continue the dialogue and the obligation to refrain from exerting any form of pressure or influence capable of impairing the interviewee's freedom of will or the effective exercise of their procedural rights (Șaevici, 2025, p. 224).

Regarding the essence of psychological rapport during the hearing, I. V. Kubarev and S. S. Bargan consider that it

> "consists of creating a psychological atmosphere conducive to the hearing, one that optimizes interaction and relationships among all participants in this criminal procedural act". To achieve this objective, at the beginning of the hearing, the person is informed of their procedural rights and obligations and is provided with the necessary explanations regarding the legal aspects of the hearing procedure. Subsequently, the investigator initiates a phase of getting to know and communicating with the person being heard; this serves a dual purpose: on the one hand, it allows for the supplementation and clarification of information regarding the person's character, and on the other, it contributes to their psychological preparation for active participation in the dialogue concerning the circumstances of the criminal case. According to the cited authors, "psychological rapport can be considered established when the person being heard actively engages in a constructive dialogue, demonstrating a willingness to communicate and answer questions posed by the investigator. At this stage, a sufficient level of trust and cooperation is established among the hearing participants, facilitating an efficient exchange of information" (Kubarev et al., 2021, p. 89).

3) *Dialogue*. The dialogue stage focuses on fostering open and constructive communication with the suspect. During this phase, the interviewee's statement is primarily delivered as a free narrative, even when there are objective grounds to believe that certain assertions might be untruthful. However, this methodology does not imply a completely passive attitude on the part of the investigator. On the contrary, the investigator's role is to ensure the interviewee remains focused on the subject and theme of the interview. To this end, clarifying or guiding questions may be posed to minimize digressions from key investigative aspects and to prevent the interviewee from dwelling excessively on secondary details or matters irrelevant to establishing the facts of the case. Thus, the investigator strikes a balance between allowing the interviewee to freely share information and ensuring the interview remains focused and efficient. Freedom

of narrative does not preclude the tactical steering of the communication process; rather, it entails moderate, justified intervention by the investigator, undertaken solely to elicit complete, coherent, and relevant information. During this stage, the investigator employs open-ended questions and utilizes techniques specific to the cognitive interview (Kassin et al., 2010, pp. 39-55; Bolatkhanova, 2016a, pp. 62-67; Bolatkhanova, 2016b, pp. 76-80) to elicit the most detailed and accurate statements possible. At the same time, particular attention is paid to identifying and noting any indications that the interviewee is avoiding providing details on specific aspects of their account. Such indications may include: abruptly cutting off the narrative regarding certain facts; providing incomplete information that is known to, or should be accessible to, the interviewee; avoiding the disclosure of data concerning evidence or circumstances that might already be known to the criminal investigation authorities; disrupting the chronological order of the events described; and the presence of contradictions in the description of objects, phenomena, or circumstances relevant to the case. The fundamental objective of this stage is to prompt the suspect to present their own version of events without the use of psychological pressure and without the premature formulation of accusations. Information obtained during the free narrative is of particular importance for the subsequent stages of the hearing, as it enables the investigator to analyze the version presented, identify aspects requiring further verification, and plan the strategic use of evidence (Șaevici, 2025, pp. 224-225).

The person being questioned presents information through a free narrative, even when there is an objective basis to suspect the veracity of their statements. However, the investigator's role at this stage is not entirely passive; they must ensure the interviewee stays within the scope of the established topic and steer the dialogue toward aspects relevant to the criminal case. To this end, the investigator may, when necessary, ask clarifying or guiding questions designed to prevent the interviewee from digressing into irrelevant reflections or matters unrelated to the subject of the investigation. Furthermore, the investigator pays close attention to, and separately records, any indications that the interviewee is avoiding elaboration, such as: abruptly cutting off the account of previously addressed facts; omitting information known to the

interviewee; selectively providing details in relation to evidence already held by the criminal investigation authority; failing to present events in chronological order; and inconsistencies in the description of objects, events, phenomena, or other relevant circumstances. Information obtained during the free narrative is crucial for the successful completion of the final stages of the questioning, as it enables the investigator to identify further lines of inquiry, detect potential contradictions, and plan the strategic use of evidence in subsequent phases of the process (Kubarev et al., 2021, pp. 89-90).

4. *Version Challenge.* In situations where the suspect's statements contradict facts known to the criminal investigation authority or contain gaps and inconsistencies, the investigator employs the *Strategic Use of Evidence* (SUE) technique (Clemens, 2013, p. 79). According to some authors (Kubarev I. V. and Bargan S. S.), this method allows for verifying the veracity of the version presented by the interviewee without turning the communication process into a direct confrontation or a premature formulation of accusations. During this stage, the interviewee is asked to provide explanations regarding identified contradictions, discrepancies between their statements and objective data gathered during the investigation, and any gaps in their previous account. The investigator thus aims to give the person an opportunity to clarify contentious issues and explain their position, while respecting the principle that statements must be voluntary. The questioning process at this stage should take place in a calm, balanced, and unbiased atmosphere, avoiding accusatory language, psychological pressure, or suggestions that the person is intentionally withholding information about the crime under investigation. Maintaining a neutral and professional attitude is essential for the investigator to preserve the objectivity of the interview and avoid triggering a defensive reaction from the interviewee. After the person being questioned provides their account, the investigator formulates clarifying questions aimed at delving deeper into contentious issues and further elucidating unclear circumstances. If there are sufficient grounds to believe that the information provided does not reflect reality, the person being questioned may be given the opportunity to voluntarily acknowledge the erroneous or untruthful nature of their statements. Such an approach helps reduce psychological confrontation, maintain a constructive di-

alogue, and achieve the most objective investigative results possible. Should the dialogue fail to yield the expected results, with the person continuing to maintain a version of events incompatible with the objective data gathered, the investigator may proceed to the next stage of the methodology, employing other tactical techniques.

5. *Accusation and Persuasion.* This stage is resorted to only when there is objective evidence regarding the suspect's involvement in the commission of the offense, and previous stages of the interrogation have not yielded effective results. Transitioning to this phase requires a sufficient evidentiary basis and a justified tactical need to further probe the position of the person being questioned. During this stage, the investigator may employ persuasion techniques aimed at encouraging the suspect's cooperation and prompting them to provide additional explanations regarding the circumstances of the case. However, the fundamental goal of this phase is not to secure a confession at any cost, but rather to obtain relevant and verifiable information that contributes to establishing the facts of the case. The application of tactical methods at this stage must strictly adhere to the legal limits established by legislation and case law, particularly the principles concerning the voluntary nature of statements, the right to remain silent, the prohibition of psychological coercion, and the obligation to respect the dignity of the person being questioned.

6. *Post Interview Review.* Following the interview, the investigator conducts a comprehensive analysis of the information obtained, comparing the interviewee's statements with data and circumstances already established during the investigation. This stage aims to assess the informational value of the statements, their degree of coherence, and their compatibility with the existing body of evidence. The analysis process involves evaluating the reliability of the statements, identifying any contradictions or aspects requiring further verification, determining the advisability of conducting subsequent interviews, and documenting the results obtained during the investigative procedure. This stage is of particular importance for the continuation of the criminal investigation, as it enables the investigator to determine the investigation's future direction, formulate new investigative hypotheses, and make tactical decisions based on an objective analysis of the accumulated information.

Information obtained during the hearing is deemed confirmed or refuted following a logical analysis and a comparison with evidence already existing in the criminal case. Consequently, the informational value of the statements is not assessed in isolation, but rather in relation to the totality of established circumstances and the evidentiary material gathered. In this context, even if the person being questioned remains silent throughout the entire hearing or consistently and deliberately denies all the circumstances raised, the investigator does not resort to psychological pressure tactics. On the contrary, the investigator seeks to obtain information through alternative communication methods, such as indirect questioning or repeatedly revisiting specific episodes of the offense, in order to identify new avenues for dialogue and to clarify the circumstances of the case.

The transition to the accusatory phase of the interrogation can occur in two situations: 1) when the interviewee's statements reveal indisputable facts demonstrating their involvement in the commission of the crime, and these facts align with and are corroborated by evidence gathered during the criminal investigation; 2) when all attempts to establish psychological rapport and effective communication with the interviewee have proven unsuccessful. This phase is characterized by the use of psychological influence techniques aimed at engaging the individual in the communication process and eliciting a sincere admission of the facts. However, the distinctive feature of the *PHASE* Model, compared to other accusatory interrogation tactics, is that it does not require analyzing the interviewee's non-verbal behavior for the purpose of subsequently increasing psychological pressure. At the same time, the methodology imposes a significant restriction regarding the formation of biases or preconceived conclusions by the investigator, as such assessments are largely subjective in nature and can compromise the objectivity of the interrogation process (Kubarev et al., 2021, pp. 90-91).

According to a group of researchers (B. Snook, W. Fahmy, L. Fallon, C. J. Lively, and others), this methodology is presented as being geared towards minimizing conflict between the investigator and the interviewee, as well as reducing the likelihood of errors and false confessions. To a certain extent, this assessment is justified, particularly when the model is compared to traditional, accusatory interrogation

tactics. However, given that the *PHASE Model* was developed by integrating elements from both the *PEACE Model* and the *Reid Technique*, it incorporates certain procedures derived from the interrogation methodology devised by J. Reid and F. Inbau (Inbau et al., 2013), procedures whose admissibility and compatibility with modern interrogation principles may be open to critical debate. These researchers also criticize certain techniques outlined in the *Progressive Interviewing Model (PIM)* guidelines, noting that some of the procedures employed retain elements characteristic of traditional accusatory approaches, which may jeopardize the voluntary nature of statements and the objectivity of the interrogation process.

However, the authors in question highlight, in particular, the following problematic aspects:

1) *Certain forms of minimization tactics can increase the likelihood of eliciting false confessions.* These tactics aim to diminish the subjective perception of the offense's gravity and the interviewee's assessment of the crime's negative consequences, as well as to create a misleading impression that admitting guilt could lead to avoiding or significantly reducing legal liability for the act committed;

2) *The distortion or evidence manipulation* is another aspect criticized by researchers. These practices involve either artificially creating the impression that non-existent evidence exists (claiming that certain evidence exists when, in reality, it has not been obtained) or artificially exaggerating the importance and probative value of existing elements, with the aim of using them against the suspect to induce a confession (Snook et al., 2020, pp. 261-273).

Another critical issue is the use of leading questions; such questions can prompt interviewees to provide inaccurate information, thereby distorting the perception of actions or circumstances and, consequently, compromising the authenticity of any confessions. However, the methodological guide for the Progressive Interviewing Model (PIM) notes that the use of leading questions may be necessary in certain situations, specifically to encourage uncooperative suspects to initiate a dialogue and participate in the interview process. In this context, the guide outlines five distinct types of leading questions that can be used to "fix" or "focus" the interviewee on a specific version of events and steer them toward a particular response.

Although the methodology warns against the excessive use of leading questions and advises investigators to aim for "accounts free from the influence of leading questions and other forms of information contamination", the risk of compromising the authenticity of statements cannot be entirely ruled out.

> Thus, researchers I. V. Kubarev and S. S. Bargan conclude, "The Canadian model proposes avoiding premature accusatory conclusions, aiming instead to prompt the interviewee to provide detailed explanations regarding the offense committed and to compare their statements with the evidence available in the case. Shifting the focus from obtaining a written confession of guilt to the non-confrontational identification of contradictions and discrepancies in the available information ensures proper respect for the individual's fundamental rights and freedoms, thereby contributing to greater efficiency in the process of uncovering and investigating crimes" (Kubarev et al., 2021, p. 91).

4. Conclusions

The evolution of contemporary forensic interrogation tactics is directed towards striking an optimal balance between the need to obtain information relevant to criminal investigations and the obligation to respect the fundamental rights and freedoms of the person being questioned. In this context, examining modern interrogation models developed in the practice of various states is of particular importance for refining traditional methods of obtaining statements and adapting them to the current demands of criminal proceedings. The Canadian *PHASE* model highlights a paradigm shift in the approach to interrogation by shifting the focus from obtaining a confession of guilt to the objective collection, verification, and evaluation of information provided by the interviewee. Structuring the process into successive phases, preparation and planning, establishing psychological rapport, developing the dialogue, verifying accounts, the strategic use of evidence, and post-interrogation analysis, provides law enforcement officials with a coherent methodological framework capable of ensuring a logical, controlled, and scientifically grounded interrogation process. A key element of the model is the recognition that the ef-

fectiveness of the interrogation depends largely on the quality of the official's preparation. Preliminary study of the case materials, analysis of the interviewee's personality, evaluation of available evidence, and the formulation of an appropriate tactical strategy are indispensable prerequisites for conducting an effective interrogation and avoiding premature conclusions regarding a person's guilt.

Furthermore, research highlights the fundamental importance of psychological rapport and investigative communication in the process of gathering information. Establishing an atmosphere grounded in respect, trust, and cooperation should not be viewed merely as a tactical procedure, but rather as a necessary methodological prerequisite for encouraging free narrative accounts and enhancing the quality of the statements obtained. At the same time, a critical analysis of the model reveals that its hybrid nature, stemming from a combination of *PEACE* principles and elements drawn from the *Reid* technique, gives rise to certain doctrinal controversies. The use of methods such as minimization tactics, specific forms of strategic evidence disclosure, or leading questions can create risks regarding the influencing of statements and the occurrence of false confessions if applied beyond legally established limits. Consequently, the model's effectiveness depends not only on its methodological structure but also on the professional training, ethical responsibility, and ability of law enforcement officials to distinguish between legitimate tactical influence and impermissible psychological pressure.

Comparing the Canadian model with practices in other legal systems reveals that many of its fundamental principles are also reflected in modern recommendations for conducting interviews: the need for thorough preparation by law enforcement officials, an assessment of the interviewee's personality, the establishment of psychological rapport, the provision of opportunities for a free narrative, the verification of statements against other forms of evidence, and the critical analysis of the information obtained. These elements confirm the universal nature of certain tactical-forensic principles, regardless of the specific features of the procedural system in which they are applied.

Ultimately, the Canadian *Progressive Interviewing Model (PHASE)* should not be viewed as a universal solution or an absolute substitute for other interviewing methods, but rather as a valuable methodo-

logical tool that fosters an investigative culture grounded in science, strategic communication, and respect for procedural safeguards. Implementing its principles, adapted to the specificities of the national criminal procedural system, can help enhance the quality of criminal investigations, reduce the risk of obtaining unreliable statements, and strengthen the legitimacy of the evidence-gathering process. While the professional experience of criminal investigators (and prosecutors) remains a crucial factor, it must be underpinned by solid theoretical knowledge, scientifically validated methods, and continuous training capable of addressing the complexities of modern criminal investigations.

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