

# Rapport vs. Persuasion

Alpha/Omega (carrot/stick) tactics versus  
ORBIT and the HEEAAR principles



# The angle

- The Swedish Armed Forces Intelligence and Security Centre
  - 10 weeks of training
    - From debriefing of friendlies to interrogating PoW:s
    - 2 weeklong final exercise (Tyr)
    - Coastal Rangers are captured and interrogated
- What works?
  - How efficient are we today?
  - What can we learn from science?
    - How can we implement and test science-based interviewing?

# From Gut Feelings to Ground Truth



## Moving beyond anecdotes

While personal experience, intuition and stories of success are valuable, they are difficult to validate



## Evaluate efficiency

Training  
Coding of interviews  
Close cooperation with the end-users  
Avoid or mitigate resistance  
Increase disclosure

# Persuasion strategies

- Alpha
  - Makes cooperation more attractive
  - Creates a pull toward cooperation
- Omega
  - Reduces the psychological need to resist
  - Lowers the barrier to cooperation

# Why are they resisting?

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Reactance – You

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Mistrust – Message

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Inertia – Change

# Alpha – Sweet as honey

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Follows  
from  
Cialdini  
(2001)

Liking

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Reciprocity

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Contrasts

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Commitment  
and consistency

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Social proof  
(authority)

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Scarcity

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# Alpha examples

## ***Liking***

The interviewer uses compliments, humour, charm, or perceived similarities to strengthen the relationship with the interviewee. People are generally more willing to cooperate with individuals they like or perceive as similar to themselves.

## ***Reciprocity***

The interviewer offers favours, concessions, or perceived benefits to encourage cooperation. This may include initially requesting more information than is actually needed and, after resistance, appearing to settle for a smaller request. The interaction is framed so that cooperation feels like a reciprocal exchange.

## ***Scarcity***

The interviewer creates a sense of limited opportunity or urgency. The interviewee may be led to believe that a beneficial option is only temporarily available or dependent on rapid cooperation. For example, access to improved living conditions or increased freedom of movement may be portrayed as time-sensitive.

# Omega – The carrot brings a stick

Follows from Knowles and Linn (2004)

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Increase confidence

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Redefine the relationship

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Make the proposal unpersonal

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Minimize the request

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Address resistance

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Provide guarantees

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Change the timeline

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Give alternatives

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Distract the resistance

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Consume the resistance

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Redefine the message

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# Omega examples

## ***Consume Resistance***

Resistance is treated as finite and exhaustible. The interviewer interrupts attempts to deny, justify, or explain, and persistently repeats the question in order to wear down resistance.

## ***Address Resistance***

The interviewer explicitly acknowledges the interviewee's reluctance or concerns to reduce tension and neutralise resistance.

## ***Minimise the Request***

The interviewer deliberately reduces the perceived cost, seriousness, or moral significance of cooperation. This may involve beginning with small or seemingly harmless disclosures, reframing the target behaviour as understandable or minor, or presenting cooperation as less consequential than the interviewee initially assumes. The aim is to lower psychological resistance by making the requested disclosure appear more manageable, acceptable, or routine.

# Research question



*WHAT PREDICTS  
RESISTANCE*



*WHAT PREDICTS  
DISCLOSURE*



*WHAT PREDICTS  
ENGAGEMENT*

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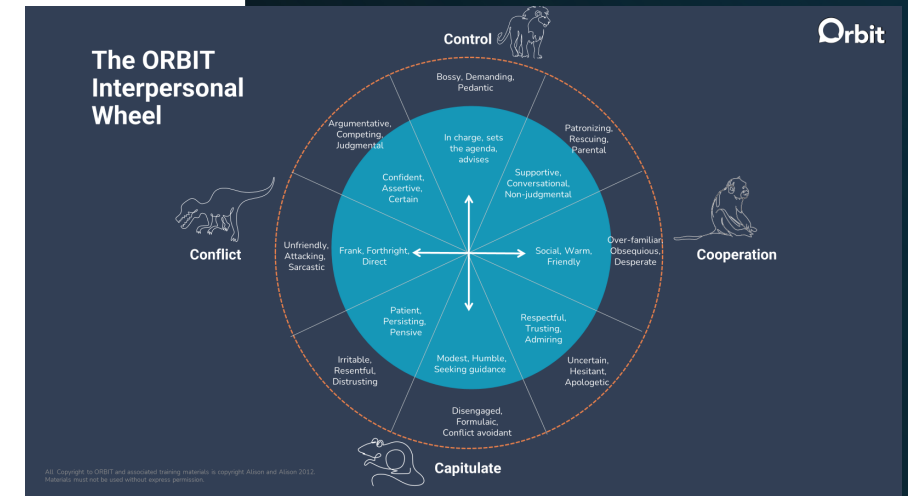
# Fenrir

- Based on ORBIT
- Predictors
  - Alpha
  - Omega
  - Themes
  - Resistance types
- Outcomes
  - Resistance
  - Engagement
  - Yield



# From observed resistance to operational impact

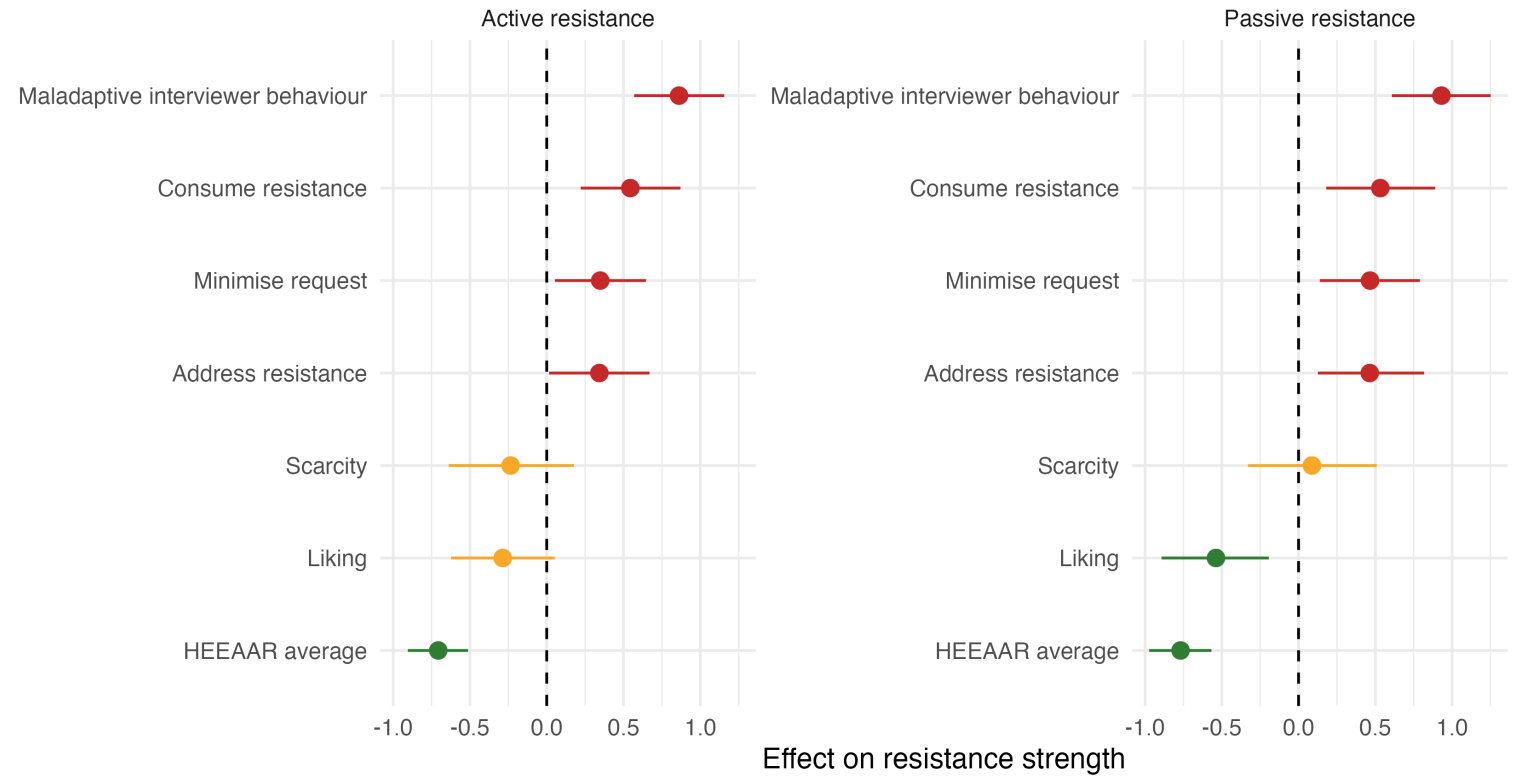
- For our analysis we grouped resistance types into two profiles
  - Passive resistance: inertia, shutdown, disengagement
  - Active resistance: reactance, mistrust, provocation, distraction
- Resistance was rated according to how much it disrupted interview progress during each 15-minute segment (no disruption; mild; moderate; severe)
- Included maladaptive interviewer behaviour



# Predicting resistance

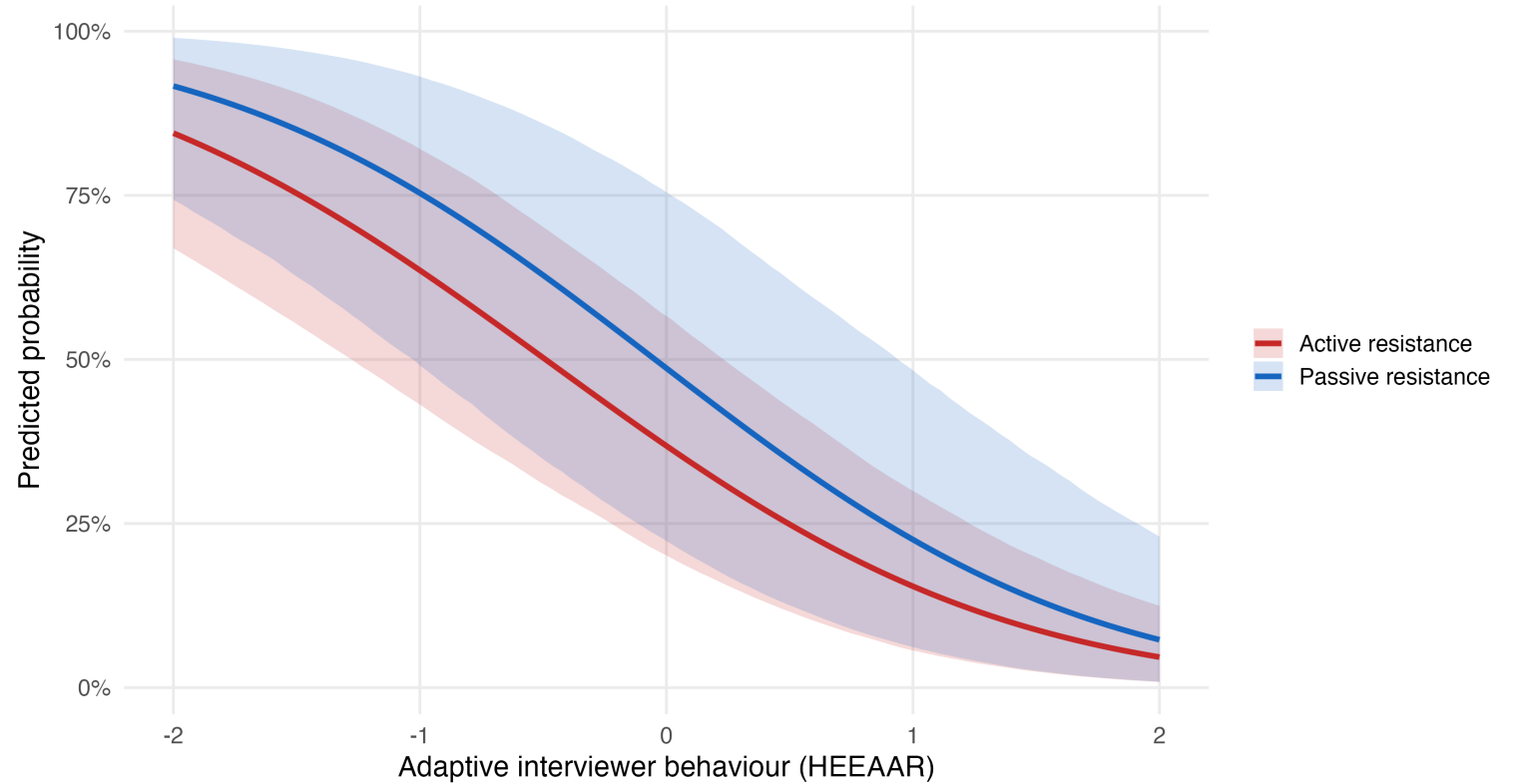
## What predicts resistance?

Adaptive rapport lowers resistance; several tactics are associated with higher resistance



# Effect of HEEAAR on resistance

How resistance changes across interviewer style  
Predicted probability of operationally significant resistance



# Why pushing often backfires



Reactance – no one likes to be pushed

Threatened autonomy  
Control struggle  
Pressure escalates resistance



Mistrust – why would I believe you

Suspicion of motives  
Manipulation cues  
Inconsistency

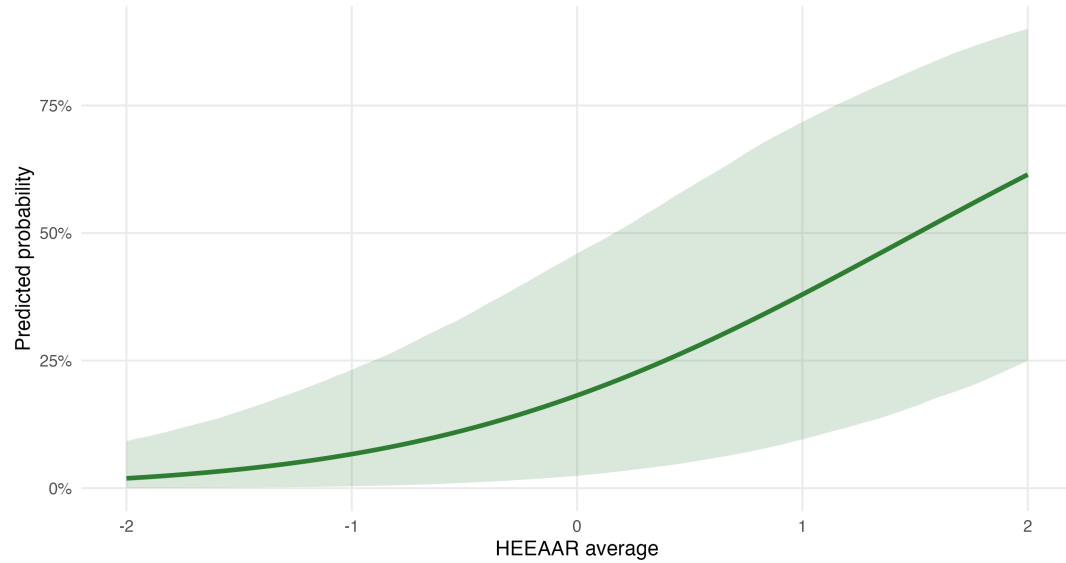


Inertia – why risk anything by talking

Preference for status quo  
Cooperation feels risky  
Silence feels safer

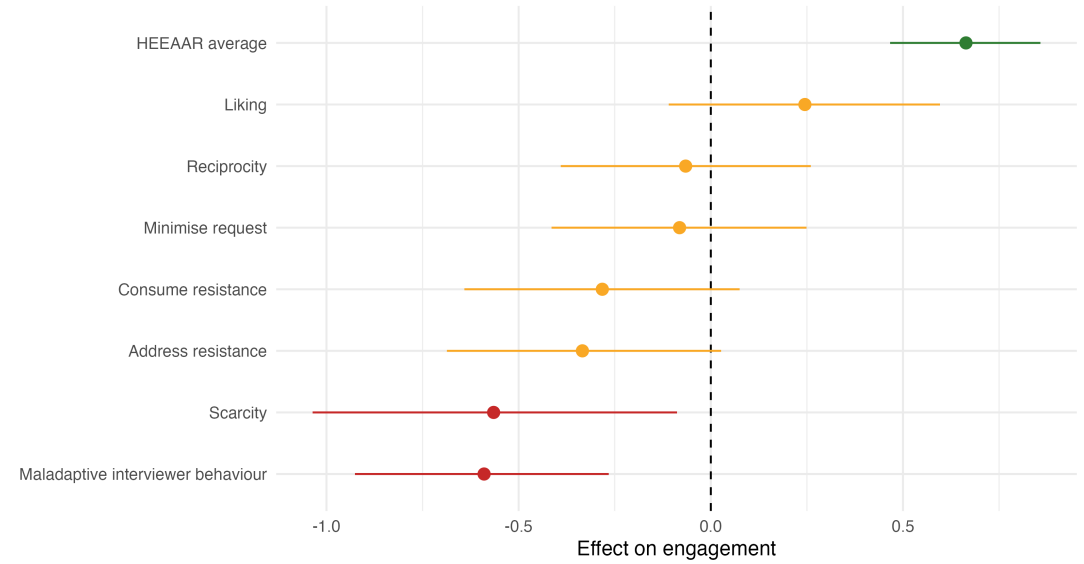
# Predicting interviewee engagement

How engagement changes across interviewer style  
Predicted probability of engaged or highly engaged behaviour



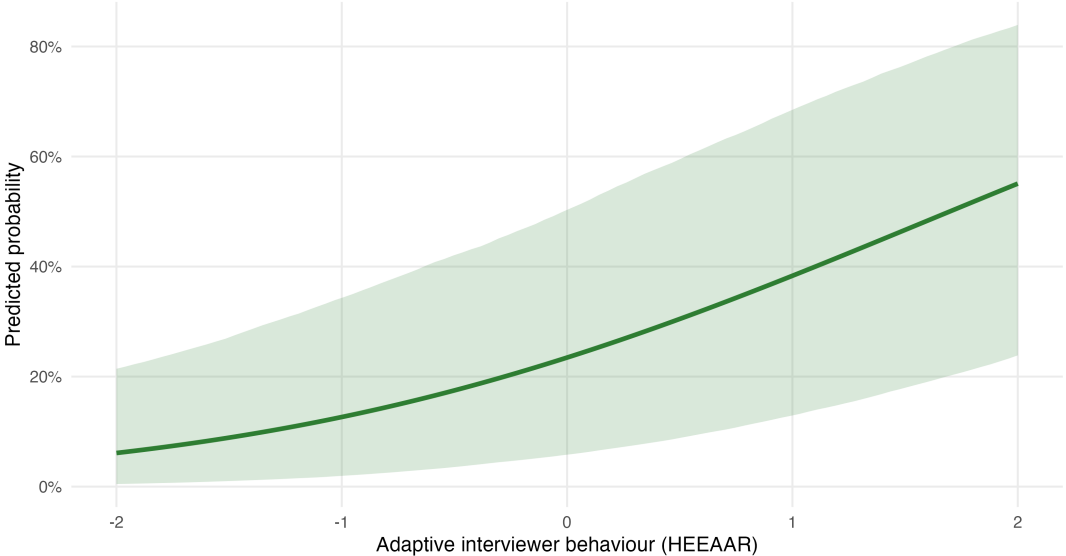
What predicts engagement?

HEEAAR predicts engagement more consistently than persuasion tactics

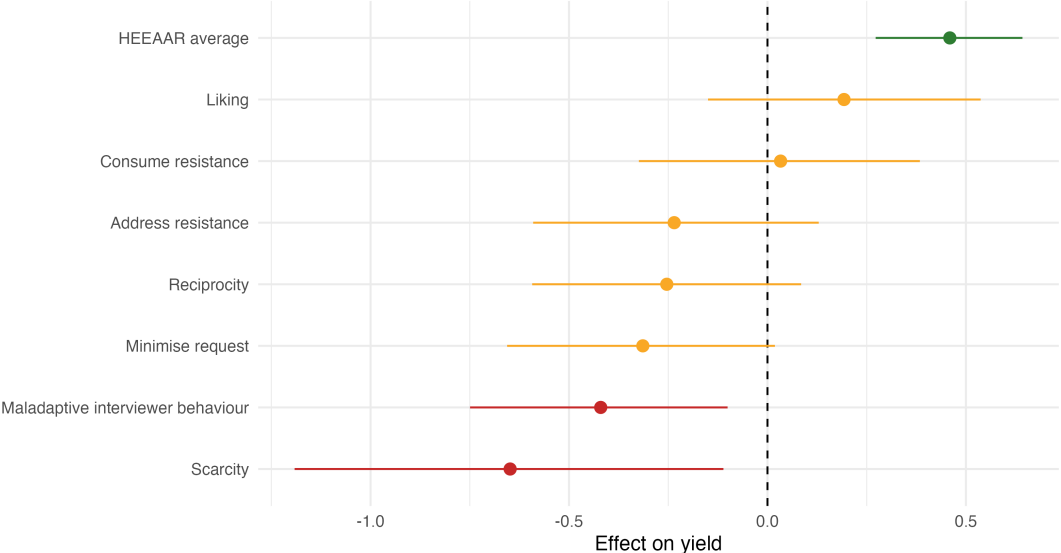


# Predicting disclosure

How useful disclosure changes across interviewer style  
Predicted probability of Moderate/High Yield



What predicts useful disclosure?  
HEEAAR predicts yield more consistently than persuasion tactics



# Key Takeaways

Rapport (HEEAAR) reduced resistance

Rapport increased engagement

Rapport increased disclosure

Persuasion techniques increase resistance

Maladaptive interviewer behavior showed the strongest negative effects

# Thanks!

- Any questions?
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