



ELICITATION IN THE COMMON-SENSE WORLD

Elicitação no Mundo do Senso Comum

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Elicitación en el Mundo del Sentido Común

Resumo Este artigo apresenta o fenômeno da elicitación por meio da fenomenologia constitutiva da atitude natural de Alfred Schutz. Ele: (1) desconstrói hermeneuticamente (interpretativamente) o fenômeno da elicitación em seus elementos constitutivos (processos), incluindo sua base proposta, uma reciprocidade de motivos evocada maquinalmente, (2) correlaciona a capacidade de elicitación de cumprir seu propósito com a atenção. do conhecimento do senso comum (tipificações), (3) discerne a elicitación efetiva como elicitación consciente e (4) recomenda que o elicitador se afaste cognitivamente de seu objetivo para aumentar as chances de atingir seus objetivos. Uma revisão do pensamento de Schutz precede a análise fenomenológica, que é complementada com observações cibernéticas (sistema geral) para amplificar suas afirmações empíricas, melhorar sua acessibilidade e aumentar a confiança.

Palavras-chave: elicitación, senso comum, tipificação, fenomenologia, cibernética, sociologia

Abstract: This article exhibits the phenomenon of elicitation by way of Alfred Schutz's constitutive phenomenology of the natural attitude. It: (1) hermeneutically (interpretively) deconstructs the phenomenon of elicitation to its constituent elements (processes), including its proposed basis, a machinationally evoked reciprocity of motives, (2) correlates the ability of elicitation to accomplish its purpose to the heeding of common-sense knowledge (typifications), (3) discerns effective elicitation as conscientious elicitation, and (4) recommends the elicitor cognitively distance himself from his objective to increase the chances of accomplishing his aims. A review of Schutz's thinking precedes the phenomenological analysis, which is supplemented with cybernetic (general system) observations to amplify its empirical assertions, enhance its accessibility, and increase confidence.

Key words: elicitation, common sense, typification, phenomenology, cybernetics, sociology

Resumen: Este artículo exhibe el fenómeno de elicitación a través de la fenomenología constitutiva de la actitud natural de Alfred Schutz. Este: (1) deconstruye hermenéuticamente (interpretativamente) el fenómeno de la obtención de sus elementos constituyentes (procesos) incluyendo su base propuesta, una reciprocidad de motivos evocada maquinalmente, (2) correlaciona la capacidad de obtención para lograr su propósito con la atención del conocimiento de sentido común (tipificaciones), (3) discierne la elicitación efectiva como la elicitación consciente, y (4) recomienda al elicitor distanciarse cognitivamente de su objetivo para aumentar las posibilidades de lograr sus objetivos. Una revisión del pensamiento de Schutz precede al análisis fenomenológico, que se complementa con observaciones cibernéticas (sistema general) para ampliar sus afirmaciones empíricas, mejorar su accesibilidad y aumentar la confianza.

Palabras-clave: elicitación, sentido común, tipificación, fenomenología, cibernética, sociología

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Introduction

The phenomenon of elicitation is the endeavor to learn private knowledge discreetly. It is a discovery process whereby concealed meanings (experiences, information, data) are furtively wrested from their hiddenness. The operation is endemic to human living and, in the Weberian sense, a “social action” inasmuch as it contains a calculus, whether latent or manifest, that is in one way or another oriented towards others (Schutz, 1943; 1967, pp. 144-146; Weber, 1978, pp. 4-24). Persons elicit in innumerable ways in myriad situations for countless reasons. They do it for the knowledge it yields, the pleasure it generates (e.g., gossip), and the psychological (and existential) security “staying in the know” speciously effects. The satisfaction intrinsic to an achievement is also contained within the goal of elicitation, even, strangely enough, when the news revealed is “disappointing,” “bad,” or “crushing.” Individuals elicit “on the fly” to protect or promote their personal interests, while others do it more strategically, maybe to clarify or validate their plans to realize specific goals. Persons elicit from friends, spouses, and associates to learn or confirm their intentions, activities, and histories, against colleagues to identify or assess their comparative advantages and disadvantages, and against intimate partners to test or disclose their loyalties. Elicitation is common to dating. Persons use it to vet their suitors, sweethearts, and lovers. Customers elicit against merchants to assess their claims, merchants against customers to learn their motivations, and negotiators against each other to increase the chances of realizing a good deal.

Social scientists and psychologists use elicitation in their fieldwork and investigative interviews to disclose tacit knowledge, organizational and management researchers use it in businesses to enhance efficiency and productivity (Gavrilova & Andreeva, 2012; Pidgeon & Turner, 1991), and software developers write elicitation algorithms into recommender systems to discover user “likes and dislikes” (Knijnenburg, Willemsen, Gantner, Soncu, & Newell, 2012, p. 454). Requirements engineers use elicitation techniques (e.g., “introspection, interviews, questionnaires”) to identify stakeholder and user needs for “computer-based systems” (Goguen & Linde, 1993, p. 152; Sharma & Pandey, 2013; Sutcliffe & Sawyer, 2013), consumer researchers and advertisers apply them (e.g., “Zaltman Metaphor Elicitation Technique”) to unearth buyer “perceptions” and “attitudes” (Coulter, Zaltman, & Coulter, 2001; Supphellen, 2000), and economists employ elicitation methods to learn “subjective values for commodities and projects” (Harrison, Harstad, & Rutstrom, 2004). Police practice elicitation in criminal investigations to surface “cues to deception” (Clemens, Granhag, & Strömwall, 2011, p. 512) and human intelligence (HUMINT) professionals use it in their work (May, Granhag, & Oleszkiewicz, 2014).

The ubiquity of elicitation and multifarious ways it happens recommend the phenomenon for rigorous interpretive analysis. This article attempts one by way of Alfred Schutz’s constitutive phenomenology of the natural attitude. It: (1) hermeneutically (interpretively) deconstructs the phenomenon of elicitation to its constituent elements (processes), including its proposed basis, *a machinationally evoked reciprocity of motives*, (2) correlates its ability to accomplish its purpose to the heeding of common-sense knowledge (typifications), (3) discerns effective elicitation as conscientious elicitation, and (4) recommends the elicitor cognitively distance himself from his objective to increase the chances of accomplishing his aims. A review of Schutz’s thinking precedes the phenomenological analysis, which is supplemented with cybernetic (general system) observations to amplify its empirical assertions, enhance its accessibility, and increase confidence in its theses.

Schutz’s Constitutive Phenomenology of the Natural Attitude

The empirical focus, rigor, and specificity of Schutz’s phenomenology (hermeneutics), what he calls, “a constitutive phenomenology of the natural attitude” (1962; Zaner, 1961), distinguish its ability to deconstruct everyday phenomena (such as elicitation) into its basic elements. Schutz situates the empirical investigation of *Verstehen*, or everyday understanding and thinking (1954, p. 264), within Husserl’s transcendental phenomenology. He, following Husserl, renders the ownmost (*Wesen*) of consciousness as “consciousness of,” or intentionality (transcendence). Rendered transcendental phenomenologically, intentionality is the unfolding correlation of the experiencing-of-phenomena (*νόησις*) and the phenomena-experienced (*νόημα*), of *nōēsis* and *nōēma*, and, thought more radically, the life-world itself, as denoted by the basic phenomenological thesis: consciousness is a transcending process (experiencing of) whose ownmost is its transcendent (the experienced). The life-world is human reality as such. It is the totality persons together are, and neither a discrete object populated by discrete subjects and objects nor a world encapsulated within a hypothesized self. The



life-world is a singular coming-to-pass (unfolding) comprising the intentionalities of human persons bound together through originary (factual) intersubjectivity (the primordial meaning of “is”) and the “interconnections of actual experience” (Gurwitsch, 1966, p. 52).

Everyday understanding and thinking, which phenomenology always thinks inclusive of their noetic and noematic dimensions, are the resident elements of *Verstehen*. They correspond to everyday intentionality and the life-world of the natural attitude. They compose the “world of daily life,” or the concrete, factual world wherein, as Gurwitsch describes it, “we find ourselves at every moment of our life, taken exactly as it presents to us in our everyday experience,” “indefinitely extended in time and space,” and comprising “natural material things,” “cultural objects,” and “animal creatures as well as fellow human beings to whom we stand in manifold relations” (1966, p. xi). The life-world is synonymous with “paramount reality,” (Gurwitsch, 1966; Schutz, 1945, 1953, 1955). It is everyday reality as it endured mundanely vice reflectively or theoretically, even less so phenomenologically, and the natural attitude is the automatic, prereflective comportment to take its facticity for granted, to presuppositionally accept it (and the meanings it encompasses) as an epistemological certainty. Schutz’s analogous descriptions of the life-world as “the world of working” and “common-sense reality” (1945, 1953, 1955; Gurwitsch, 1966;) exemplify the matter of his phenomenology, which is: the everyday world of the “wide-awake” person acting in and upon it among his fellow persons who prereflectively experience it within the same natural attitude, with the same epistemological certainty (Schutz, 1945, p. 533).

Schutz deconstructs everyday understanding and thinking by way of the phenomenological method of reduction. The phenomenological reduction (*ἐποχή*) is the resolute (but not unerring nor ever complete or final) effort to suspend the general thesis of the natural attitude and thereby idle the suppositions and theses given with experiencing to bring it and them into clearer view. This initial transcendental phenomenological step delivers Schutz to a fundamental observation of his phenomenology: the life-world of the natural attitude, everyday understanding and thinking, is a typical world. It is the “common-sense world,” and the “experiences” that constitute it “are from the outset experienced as typical ones” (Schutz, 1951a, p. 166). It is dominated by typifications, or generic, taken-for-granted, open-ended, and public meanings. Typifications, or “common-sense constructs,” as Schutz also calls them, are “open horizons of anticipated similar experiences” (1953, p. 5). They constitute *Verstehen* and the meaning of things, disclosing and saying what the phenomena intended (experienced) in daily life mean and are. They are the common-sense constructs affiliated with the business of life, and, taken as a whole, analogous with the phenomenon of common sense (Trujillo, 2021). Their location is the stock of knowledge at hand, a fractal-like matrix of idled meanings extending through consciousness and ready to come into play when activated by a corresponding transcendent or exigency. The difference between everyday understanding and everyday thinking is that the first is a more or less a passive process of interpretation whereas the second is an active one. Everyday thinking is everyday understanding that includes a calculus, judgment, decision, project, motive, or means-end relation. It comprises, as Schutz remarks, “typical solutions for typical problems available for typical actors” (1944, p. 505). Sometimes Schutz does not emphasize the distinction between everyday understanding and everyday thinking enough, which can lead to ambiguities in his phenomenology, and instead subsumes both processes under the notion, “common-sense thinking” (1953, 1954).

Typifications are postulated to be constituted associatively (analogically). Their construction is surmised to ensue from a “passive synthesis of pairing” of corresponding experiences of similar or related phenomena whose common, generic features are “intuitively” experienced as a single type (Schutz, 1955, pp. 143-144). Their meaning is tridimensional. They include the “having been,” “are,” and “will be” of the phenomena they intend (constitute), as well as, depending on the context, an imperative commonly experienced as an “ought” or “should.” Their meaning is pragmatically and socially generated. Their basis is *πράγμα*, or the thingness of things within the context of the radical dependence of human being on things to live and be (Richardson, 1967, p. 53). They enable and facilitate human living in a world of “eminently practical interests,” a wherein individuals are compelled to “dominate” and “change” to realize their purposes (Schutz, 1945, p. 534). They are patent rules for knowing, doing, and saying (Goffman, 1966, p. 194) that correspond to the pragmatic and cultural dimensions of daily living (Schutz, 1944, p. 505). They are automatically accepted (“unquestioned”) as the way things are and should be as long as they work and their validity goes unchallenged (Schutz, 1944; 1953, p. 3; 1955, p. 174). Their significance is overwhelmingly “socially derived” and “socially approved,” with only a “small fraction” sourced to “individual experience” (Schutz, 1955, p. 193) and which in one way or another is also always typically constituted. They correspond to social knowledge and are the ways of “group life” (Schutz, 1944, pp. 499-500).

Typifications hold sway within consciousness and the vernacular, which Schutz describes as “the vocabulary and syntax of everyday language” and “the typifying medium *par excellence* by which socially derived knowledge is transmitted” (1945; 1953, pp. 9-10). Their preeminence in the vernacular speaks to the radical intimacy between intentionality and language, one that Heidegger goes at lengths to elucidate both transcendental-horizontally and, even more so, being-historically in his interrogation of *Da-sein*. In the same way the phenomenon of typification connotes everyday understanding and thinking as common-sense understanding and thinking, its ascendancy in the vernacular connotes everyday language as common-sense language. Schutz describes the vernacular as “a treasure house of preconstituted types.” He discerns it as “an open hori-



zon of unexplored typical contents,” and corresponds the typifications embodied in words, as witnessed in “naming,” with the typifications constituting experiencing (1950, p. 393). Everyday language and everyday consciousness, the vernacular and *Verstehen*, as rendered by Schutz, are mutually effecting typifying processes that together constitute the world of daily life.

The Phenomenology of Elicitation

Although usually associated with dyads, the phenomenon of elicitation is not confined to two individuals nor does it, even in its indirect formulation, comprise disconnected acts among disconnected subjects. It is a single meaning or communicative process encompassing the intentionalities of the elicitor and expert—an expert is a person who possesses knowledge or experiences of interest; Briggs calls this individual a “consultant” (1986). Elicitation unfurls, to borrow from Bateson (2000, pp. 491-493), whose cybernetic interpretation of human phenomena, including communication, corresponds generally with Schutz’s project and, moreover, begs consideration of its phenomenological merits, as a “thinking system;” incidentally, in his and Fink’s *Heracitus Seminar*, Heidegger alludes to a “deeper hidden” relation between phenomenology and cybernetics (1970, p. 16).

Direct elicitation coincides with face-to-face interaction. Indirect elicitation coincides with virtual interaction, but contains the same basic meaning (informational) structure. Thought cybernetically, both states are dynamic equilibriums, or transformations (operations, processes) that operate at the edge of instability. Each also can be illustrated as “ $x_1 \leftrightarrow x_2$,” where “ x_1 ” and “ x_2 ” are variables that represent the system’s terms (i.e., the elicitor and expert) and “ \leftrightarrow ” denotes their interaction as a single flux where information (e.g., questions and answers) flows between and includes them. “ $x_1 \leftrightarrow x_2$ ” does not signify an objectification of the actors or their interaction, however. It represents one system, or a single transformation, state, or relation comprising distinct, but not discrete, intentionalities. The reason we can frame elicitation this way, as “ $x_1 \leftrightarrow x_2$,” and not compromise the phenomenological integrity of this project is because the illustration structurally corresponds to human reality. Everything, including human phenomena and the life-world, is a system, and “all systems are information processing systems” (Susskind, 2019), where “information,” individuated isomorphically, is another word for “meaning” and “experience.”

Thought isomorphically, which is what cybernetics does (cybernetics is lateral thinking), all systems, including elicitation, can be reduced to four basic elements (processes): redundancies, variances, parameters, and equifinalities (entelechy) (Ashby, 1957; Bateson, 2000; Bertalanffy, 1950, 1951). No phenomenological reduction can dispel these variables or their influence shaping the meaning and evolution of phenomena. They are integral to everything, and their phenomenal significance, the manifestation of their meaning in transcendence, invariably comes to light insofar as one resolutely yields thinking (*Entwerfen*) to its matter. Deconstructing “ $x_1 \leftrightarrow x_2$ ” into its constituent elements, then, rendering elicitation the way Bateson and other general system theorists might render it, like the use of the formalization to articulate the phenomenon, also does not oppose Schutz’s thinking. Instead, as proposed here, it increases confidence in this project’s empirical assertions and enhances their accessibility to persons unfamiliar with the phenomenological movement.

Variance within “ $x_1 \leftrightarrow x_2$,” indeed, within all systems, includes information, which Bateson defines as a “difference that makes a difference” (2000, p. 315). It also denotes noise, or ineffectual or meaningless variations (Miller, 1956). Whether variance is intended as information or noise is contingent on the referent, context, or the questions one asks. For the elicitor, variance within “ $x_1 \leftrightarrow x_2$ ” can mean, among other things, the knowledge sought, relevant typifications, the expert’s biographical experiences, the information unique to social or communicative contexts, meaningless data, or simply static. Redundancies within “ $x_1 \leftrightarrow x_2$ ” correspond with knowledge that is relatively consistent through space and time. They coincide with common-sense constructs (typifications) that are constant across social and communicative contexts and contain little or no “news” aside from the capacity to frame situations and experiencing.

The parameters of “ $x_1 \leftrightarrow x_2$ ” also are redundancies, but with a significant difference. They govern the elicitation process by way of a typical anticipation, expectation, or imperative. They are the common-sense rules of the elicitation game, and include the cognitive constructs that define the typical roles one assumes in the midst of typified others to fulfill their typical expectations. The self and other intended in this relation are not the “self” and “other” of the “I-Thou,” however. They are not the unique, total human persons that come to pass as their transcendent (i.e., the life-world). They are the objectified “self” and “other.” The typification and objectification of the “other” are covariant. They go hand in hand. When one typifies the “other,” one objectifies him. One individuates him as a subject removed from his transcendence, and the transformation is correlative. Insofar as one typifies and objectifies the “other,” one also typifies and objectifies the “self” (Schutz, 1953).

The equifinalities of “ $x_1 \leftrightarrow x_2$ ” are the potential end-states toward which elicitation can drift, gravitate, or vector. They are the possible culminating moments sheltered within the meaning or informational processes that conjoin the elicitor and expert’s intentionalities into a single flux. Although elicitation is ideally defined by its positive denouement—a state phenomenology discerns as *ἐντέλειᾷ* (*ἐν-τέλει-ἔχει*), or “a having arrived at its end,” where “end” (*τέλος*) is understood as completion, consummation, or “fullness” (Richardson,



1967, pp. 310-311, 317)—its equifinalities also include the prospect of failure, even a categorical debunking and rejection of the elicitor’s assault. Said cybernetically, they also contain the possibility of “ $x_1 \rightleftharpoons x_2$ ” falling into a disequilibrium that immediately evolves into a new state that proscribes elicitation’s purpose.

The phenomenon of elicitation is coupled to its social and communicative contexts regardless whether the transformation is direct, as witnessed in face-to-face encounters, or indirect, as seen in letters, messages, telephonic contact, social media, or knowledge acquisition programs. Direct elicitation commences in mutual presence. It begins when the elicitor and expert enter (transcend to) the same situation. Before this moment, the actors, if they have never met personally, are mere “contemporaries” and their mutual understanding is confined largely to typifications (Schutz, 1955, pp. 165-166). Each to the other signifies a typical wide-awake person, but hardly more and often less. Upon meeting face-to-face, these persons become “consociates.” They begin to divulge information to each other by their “mere presence” (Goffman, 1966, pp. 14, 103), “partake in one another’s lives” as “unique individuals” (Gurwitsch, 1966, pp. xx, xxiv; Schutz, 1955, p. 197), and grow “old together” (Schutz, 1951b, p. 97; 1953, p. 12). Their intentionalities undergo a “mutual tuning-in” and coalesce into a “We’ in vivid presence” (Schutz, 1951b). Their common-sense constructs remain in play, but the parameters relax in correspondence to the depth, extent, and freedom of their interaction, the “reciprocal sharing of the other’s flux of experiences” (Schutz, 1951b, p. 79), and their “mutual biographical involvement” (Schutz, 1955, p. 197). The reciprocal experiencing of consociates shows “a very low degree of anonymity” that decreases and “a high degree of fullness” that increases insofar as they meaningfully interact (Schutz, 1953, p. 19).

Indirect elicitation has a more narrow communicative and meaning bandwidth. It is symmetrically equivalent to direct elicitation, which means it can also be illustrated as $x_1 \rightleftharpoons x_2$ but the capacity of information to move between its terms is constrained by its prodigious reliance on reference. Indirect elicitation is virtual elicitation. It occurs outside the vivid presence of the “We” and does not contain the interpretive dynamics of mutual immediacy. The transformation signifies a correlation of experiencing that leans more on, and in some instances entirely, depending on the history between the individuals (e.g., strangers), the typifications affiliated with its medium (e.g., written language, emojis), the elicitor and expert’s stocks of knowledge, and their common-sense acumen (Schutz, 1951b, 1955). If the actors share a history of face-to-face interaction, it would include some measure of the sedimented experiences associated with those encounters too. The only reason that indirect elicitation can work “for nearly all good and useful purposes,” as Schutz implies, is because the life-world is a common-sense world. The ubiquity and reliability of the typifications upon which indirect elicitation depends allow reciprocally anonymous persons in different spatiotemporal reference frames to “establish communication” by means (e.g., electronic, mechanical, material) other than those given to mutual presence and thereby “come to terms” with each other (1955, p. 173).

Thinking elicitation through/with Schutz enables us to reduce the phenomenon, regardless its iteration, direct or indirect, to its basis (core operation): *a machinationally evoked reciprocity of motives*. The elicitor spuriously effects a typically structured situation (“ $x_1 \rightleftharpoons x_2$ ”) that speciously invites or impels the expert to supplant freely his because-motives regulating the decision to reveal private knowledge with the elicitor’s in-order-to motive to learn it. The process is tactful, muted, furtive. The elicitor machinationally enacts, communicates, or evokes typifications he assesses the expert will spontaneously associate with typically understood circumstances that condone, allow, or justify the provision of private knowledge. For example, in response to a typical situation shaped by the elicitor’s motive, “I want you to trust me *in-order-to* induce you to share the secrets I seek to learn,” the expert may reason: “*because* I trust you, I will tell you my secrets.” Or, *vis-à-vis* the typical situation structured by the intent, “I want you to judge I am your friend *in-order-to* evoke your decision to share private knowledge,” the expert may decide: “*because* you are my friend, I will answer your questions freely.” A key distinction between the two motives, whatever way they are articulated, is that the expert’s reasons are constituted automatically and the elicitor’s are composed purposefully. The expert’s because-motives are latent, typically formulated justifications (Schutz, 1953). They are prepredicated, common-sense calculi (e.g., judgments, motives), which Schutz affiliates with “conduct,” or “subjectively meaningful experiences” that emanate “spontaneously” in everyday life (1945, p. 536). The elicitor’s in-order-to motives, in contrast, are explicit objectives he machinationally labors to achieve. They are predicated, common-sense calculi (e.g., means-end relations, projects, motives), and the basis of “action,” or “conduct that is devised in advance” or “based on a preconceived project” regardless whether it is “overt or covert” (Schutz, 1945, pp. 534-536).

Efforts to evoke a reciprocity of motives proscribe coercion, although they could imply negative or punitive consequences, as witnessed in negotiations (e.g., making a poor deal for being too forthcoming) and police interrogations (e.g., imprisonment or increased jail time for not cooperating). The expert is inherently free to decide whether to reveal private knowledge. The choice is his to divulge secrets. This (phenomenological) thesis is elicitation’s first premise and the elicitor’s methodological start-point. No amount of manipulation or pressure can compel the expert to do other than what he decides to do. He cannot be removed from his inherent freedom to choose, although he can, and as everyday life generally goes, often does, forgo it. The transmutation of motives is neither produced, effected, nor generated. It is evoked, prompted, incited. The expert who submits to the elicitor’s sway volunteers information. He relinquishes it willfully. Volunteering information—as implied by the cybernetic thesis, “the purpose of a thing is what it does” (Ashby, 1957; Beer,



2002)—becomes his given or latent purpose. The power of this sway (as well as its insidiousness), its ability to incite the expert to displace his motives willfully, is commensurate with its continuity with the common-sense questioning-answering between consociates that is usual to daily life. It is consistent with the everyday formulation whereby, as described by Schutz:

In projecting my question I anticipate that the other will understand my action (for instance my uttering an interrogative sentence) as a question and that this understanding will induce him to act in such a way that I may understand his behavior as an adequate response. (I: 'Where is the ink?' The other points at a table.) The in-order-to motive of my action is to obtain adequate information which, in this particular situation, presupposes that the understanding of my in-order-to motive will become the other's because-motive to perform an action in-order-to furnish me this information—provided he is able and willing to do so, which I assume he is. I anticipate that he understands English, that he knows where the ink is, that he will tell me if he knows, etc. In more general terms I anticipate that he will be guided by the same types of motives by which in the past, according to my stock of knowledge at hand, I myself and may others were guided under typically similar circumstances (1953, pp. 17-18).

Schutz calls the “idealization” of this motive-supplanting process, whose reading guides this analysis, “*the reciprocity of motives*.” He goes on to explain that all human interaction, even the “simplest” kinds, “presupposes a series of common-sense constructs based on the idealization that one’s in-order-to motives will become because-motives of his partner and vice-versa.” Schutz corresponds the idealization with the “reciprocity of perspectives” he contends is common to the world of daily life, “since it implies that the motives imputed to the other are typically the same as my own or that of others in typically similar circumstances” (1953, pp. 17-18). One of several factors distinguishing the reciprocity of motives of elicitation from its everyday iteration is that to some degree the elicitor simultaneously stands outside and inside the natural attitude. To an extent he detaches himself from the common-sense constructs he has objectified and exploits to achieve his aims, but continues to take their meaning for granted. He intends them as objects and wields them machinationally, but still presupposes their validity. Indeed, he spontaneously counts on it.

Elicitation and the Phenomenon of Common Sense

Among all the variables elicitation’s reciprocity of motives is correlated to, including the expert’s susceptibilities, and setting aside the expert’s inherent freedom to decide and choose, perhaps the most commanding is *the heeding of common-sense knowledge*. The probability of evoking the transformation, regardless whether the contact is direct or indirect, is commensurate with the elicitor’s mindfulness of the typifications constituting the expert’s everyday understanding and thinking. This correspondence prescribes the elicitor care for the socially produced and sanctioned types embedded in the expert’s situation. It mandates he coincide his conduct and actions with the expert’s everyday understanding and thinking and with each other. It endorses a comportment attuned to the typifications expressed in everyday language, which, as Schutz thoughtfully describes it, “pertains as communication *κατ’ ἐξοχήν* to the intersubjective world of working and, therefore, obstinately resists serving as a vehicle for meanings which transcend its own presuppositions” (1945, p. 555). It compels the expert to mind the meanings he “*gives*” and “*gives off*” to ensure they (1) conform to typical standards of appropriateness, correctness, and interpretability and (2) agree with each other—Goffman, whose thinking is aligned with Schutz’s, defines the meanings one *gives off* or unintentionally emits as the “ungovernable aspects” of social action that observers commonly interpret as a “check upon the validity of what is [intentionally] conveyed” (1959, pp. 2, 7, 9). The relation commands a disposition with the right common-sense style, the proper common-sense form, and a commitment to meeting and anticipating the expert’s common-sense understanding and thinking fluently.

The correlation of elicitation’s reciprocity of motives to the heeding of common-sense knowledge is not a prescription for a doctrinaire compliance with common sense, however. The elicitor harbors a purpose that is inconsistent with typical notions of appropriateness as well as those of “correct, good, and natural” that Gurwitsch correctly asserts are common to the world of daily life (1966, p. xvii). Not only would a strict adherence to common sense disallow the elicitor’s project, it contains minimal to no power to propel “ $x_1 \rightsquigarrow x_2$ ” toward a positive outcome. It would yield hardly anything new and suppress opportunities to induce the expert to share secrets. Common sense is regular and reliable, it works fluidly and automatically, but a *de rigueur* adherence to it leaves little room for the communicative play or manipulation of types elicitation requires to fulfill itself. Briggs makes a similar observation within the context of his analysis of discourse when he notes that “the key to the meaning of individual utterances” usually does not lie in common-sense answers to common-sense questions, but, instead, “in their *departure* from the communicative norms of the conversation as a whole” (1986, p. 106). A rigid compliance with common sense would confine communication with the expert to one cliché chasing another or perhaps preclude contact with him altogether (i.e., “nothing ventured, nothing gained”). The disparity between the elicitor’s insidious intentions and the expert’s typical



expectations instead requires the elicitor work intelligently within the scope of the typically appropriate and leverage common-sense meanings to extend the horizons of the acceptable. It requires him to operate judiciously along the boundaries of the common-sense world and mindfully transmute the motives regulating the expert's everyday thinking to support his aims.

The thesis correlating elicitation's basis or core operation to the heeding of common-sense knowledge is consistent with Schutz's assertion that "the more standardized the prevailing action pattern is, the more anonymous it is, the greater is the subjective chance of conformity and, therewith, of the success of intersubjective behavior" (1953, p. 26). Typifications, those activated within intentionality, idling within the stock of knowledge, and embedded in social situation and language, are the principal parameters governing the inception, evolution, and culmination of " $x_1 \leftrightarrow x_2$." They are the baseline rules of the elicitation game. When the elicitor fails to mind the ones pertinent to his project, the expert, and the world of daily life, including those contained in language, he risks revealing his intent, provoking the expert to assess the contact for deception, and exciting the constraints within " $x_1 \leftrightarrow x_2$ " that safeguard secrets. To borrow again from Schutz, he hazards effecting a "radical modification" of the expert's "*attention à la vie*," or "relatively natural conception of the world," including its "of-course' assumptions," and inciting him to suppress any susceptibilities he may have to speak freely and openly (1944, pp. 501-502; 1945, pp. 537, 554). This "shock," as Schutz also calls it (1955, pp. 189-190), threatens to "disprove" the "validity" of the elicitor's conduct and actions as well as proscribe opportunities to engender a reciprocity of motives. Variances among the elicitor's conduct, actions, and the common-sense world are information (news) capable of generating disturbances within " $x_1 \leftrightarrow x_2$ " that could defeat the elicitor's purpose. They contain the potential to induce the expert to retreat into a defensive posture that quashes any impulses he may harbor to communicate cooperatively. The importance of heeding typifications increases insofar as the expert is a "stranger," particular one from a different "social world" (Schutz, 1944), and the elicitor is initially compelled to rely almost entirely on the most general common-sense constructs to advance his project.

Elicitation (positively) culminates when the expert freely relinquishes the knowledge sought and is left with the willingness or motivation to continue sharing other remote experiences of possible interest. It arrives at its optimal, albeit, always provisional, moment when communication between the elicitor and expert is based on a reciprocity of motives that contains, invites, or welcomes the prospect of its recapitulation. The possibility of repeating " $x_1 \leftrightarrow x_2$ " is included in elicitation's denouement. It belongs to its ideal equifinality, an outcome that can take three general forms: (1) the expert does not become aware he is sharing the information sought or does not perceive the knowledge he is sharing is private or relevant; (2) the expert becomes aware he is sharing private or relevant knowledge, and is disinterested in or comfortable with the process and, hence, does not regret it, or; (3) the expert becomes aware he is sharing information sought and is pleased, maybe even proud, to share it. The three moments are not mutually exclusive. They also do not unconditionally define elicitation's consummation. They are ideal types, and the culmination of " $x_1 \leftrightarrow x_2$ " can approximate any combination of the three in manifold ways. The failure to arrive at an end (*τέλος*) that does not correspond to any of the three types risks confining the encounter to a "one-off." It chances provoking the expert to regret or reject the contact and perhaps even avoid situations where it could be repeated.

The Way of Elicitation

Elicitation is more than a compilation of techniques. It is an art, a trade, a craft. It is a social action common to human living and the world of daily life. It commences with a presentation of the self that endeavors to fulfill common-sense expectations of appropriateness and future. It strives to maintain an interactional "tonus" that agrees with its sociocultural context (Goffman, 1959, pp. 7-9; 1966, pp. 25, 30, 35). It is contingent on heeding the typifications in everyday understanding, thinking, and language. Its culmination is correlated to the elicitor's fluency exploiting the common-sense meanings that constitute the world of working and daily life. The elicitor ensconces his project, a difference that makes a difference, within the manifold typifications contained within and intimated by " $x_1 \leftrightarrow x_2$ " insofar as he heeds common-sense knowledge. He camouflages his purpose within socially accepted notions of sensibility and appropriateness. He veils it within the "habituality, automatism, and half-consciousness" characteristic of "the cultural pattern of group life" (Schutz, 1944, p. 505).

Now, all of this talk about typifications, common-sense constructs, stock of knowledge, actors, motives, exploitation, machination, and so on and so forth is not an endorsement to objectify the expert. There are few better ways to alienate individuals than to objectify them. Persons generally, including experts, often intuitively or explicitly know when they are intended as things and usually disdain it, even when it occurs spontaneously in common-sense interaction. Moreover, they tend to avoid or spurn individuals who treat them as objects or instrumentalize them to achieve an end, such as to learn private knowledge. The expert is more than a repository of public and private experiences, and he is not an object. He is an event, a happening, a wholly "other," a world who comes to pass (intentionality thought in the broadest sense, i.e., the life-world, *Da-sein*), notwithstanding the profound finitude of human being (i.e., its limited power to comprehend, its radical dependence on things to be, and the phenomenon of death) (Richardson, 1967, p. 38) as well as the in-



herent tendency of persons to objectify each other (and themselves) (Berger & Pullberg, 1965). This point cannot be emphasized enough within the context of Schutz's thinking. The expert is his own transcendence and sedimentation of inimitable experiences. He is a temporally unfurling "who" whose ownmost is his existence (ἔκ-στασις, ἐξίστημι), and which hermeneutic-phenomenology renders as the "t/here" (*Da*) of "to be" (*Sein*), or t/here-being (*Da-sein*). The expert's transcendence is the meaning landscape the elicitor must negotiate to achieve his goal. Effectively navigating it compels him to treat the expert as he essentially is (transcendence, or, more precisely, transcending) and commonly experiences himself in daily life: "the center of the social world" which he lays out moment by moment "around himself in layers of various degrees of intimacy and anonymity" (Schutz, 1953, p. 29). Elicitation removes itself from its purpose, the thing that it does, discreetly learn hidden meaning, insofar as it ignores the ownmost of the expert. It reduces its prospects of coming to its fruition when it neglects to meet the expert as a total human person, as transcendence.

Elicitation is a humanizing process. Its way extends beyond discreetness or heeding common sense. It corresponds to a disposition that evokes trust, transparency, benevolence, and affinity. It is commensurate with an attitude of solicitude, openness, responsiveness, respect, appropriateness, mindfulness, and an economy of conduct and action. It cares for language. It listens and attends to the given and chosen aspects of the expert's biographical and social situation. It minds his past (his understanding of his history), present (his absorption in things), and future (the meanings he projects and wills). It prescribes assessing, but not judging, the expert's experiences and experiencing. The basic meaning of assessment is interpretive and contingent on affirmation. Although judging includes some measure of assessment, its basic meaning is axiological and negational. It implies categorization and refutation. It is an objectifying and dehumanizing process. It negates the other as his own "to be," as his own transcendence, and implies such messages as, "I have objectified you," "I have categorized you," "I have stripped you of your essential meaning as a human person."

The way of elicitation, as these remarks suggest, is conscientiousness as such, or as the phenomenon is rendered phenomenologically. It is authentic solicitude. It is a disposition that is attuned to, and, hence, guided by, the ownmost of the individual, namely, intentionality (transcendence), which includes the intrinsic power of the human person to be aware, free, and responsible, primitive human attributes that together mean "authentic" (αὐθεντικός). It is a comportment whose capital features include attentiveness, awareness, listening, care, adaptability, reserve, and responsiveness. It is commensurate with sensibility, sober optimism, measured affirmation, respect, gravitas, and heedfulness, including, especially, the heeding common-sense knowledge. Listening and attending to typifications, caring for them, including the ones contained in everyday language, correspond with the basic features of conscientiousness. It does not, however, include fawning or submissiveness. This needs to be clear. All manners of sycophancy are commonly associated with deceit and risk poisoning $x_1 \rightleftharpoons x_2$.

Conscientiousness wraps elicitation's basic elements into a fluid, unalarming, and benevolent whole and increases the transformation's prospects of coming to its denouement. It induces the elicitor to decline everyday tendencies of self-orientation that threaten to depress elicitation's cooperative dimensions. It disposes the elicitor to meet the expert as a "Thou," thus increasing his ability to *see* and *attend* to the typical and biographical meanings that constitute the expert's life. It reduces the chances of awakening prepredicated safeguards against deceit and machination. It enhances elicitation's cooperative dimensions and helps forestall $x_1 \rightleftharpoons x_2$ from drifting or falling into a disequilibrium. The basic characteristics of elicitation's way suggest the phenomenon's denouement is contingent on the conscientiousness of the elicitor's conduct, actions, and language. They distinguish effective elicitation as conscientious elicitation.

Conscientious elicitation is consistent with the approach Luftwaffe interrogator, Hanns Joachim Scharff, adopted toward prisoners of war (mostly American and British fighter pilots) during World War II. His method, which centered on perspective-taking, a practice that coincides with features of conscientiousness, included a friendly, relaxed, and conversational demeanor, knowledge and appreciation of the expert's customs, and a disinclination to press the expert for information (Hartwig, Meissner, & Semel, 2014, p. 213; Oleszkiewicz, Granhag, & Montecinos, 2014, pp. 1-2). Perspective-taking, which is also "predictive of success in negotiations" (Oleszkiewicz et al., 2014, p. 1), is commensurate with an attitude of openness, respect, and care toward the "other." It, like conscientiousness, creates opportunities to develop "a deep understanding of one's opponent" (Galinsky, Maddux, Gilin, & White, 2008, p. 378), and, also like conscientiousness, is distinct from "empathy," which tends to generate heuristic biases, divert attention from common-sense constructs, and vitiate the management and manipulation of types. Elicitors are hunters, not empathizers. While empathizers tend to "violate norms of equity and equality," "provide preferential treatments," and cooperate "in prisoner's dilemma games," perspective-takers tend to "step outside the constraints of their own immediate frames of reference and reduce egocentric perceptions of fairness" (Galinsky et al., 2008, p. 379). Perspective-taking minds the inherent power of individuals to be aware, free, and responsible. Empathy does not, but, much rather, displaces the possibility of heeding the expert's authenticity with the affection for the hubris and pleasure that commonly accompany altruism (Batson, Fultz, & Schoenrade, 1987, p. 22).

The ownmost of the human person, intentionality, inclusive of its inherent potentiality for authenticity (authenticity is a potentiality), obliges the elicitor to encounter the expert conscientiously (i.e., with care, attentiveness, responsiveness, maturity, respect, reserve, and appropriateness) and meet him as his own



transcendence and “to be.” Engaging the expert as the total individual he is increases the chances of evoking his trust and drawing him near. It also lowers the chances of impelling him to suspect the elicitor’s intent and assuages impulses he may harbor to defend against predatory social actions. It generates conditions and, perhaps more importantly, allows conditions to ensue that can relax the typifications restraining the communication of remote experiences. It opens the way for the expert to divulge private knowledge freely by mitigating typical or biographical resistances to communicate openly. It cedes him the long line.

The exhibition of effective elicitation as conscientious elicitation implies the phenomenon contains an intrinsic tension, however. Elicitation is surreptitious. It is a dissembling activity. It includes elements common to deception. It contains a hidden goal that it strives to achieve machinationally. It is self-orienting and self-achieving. It objectifies the human person. Conscientiousness operates inversely. It labors to avoid furtive and machinational impulses. It rejects subterfuge and eschews deception. It declines self-absorption and strives to be mindful of life and the inherent togetherness of persons. It is a humanizing process. The opposition between elicitation’s dissimulating elements and conscientiousness threatens to effect incongruities among the elicitor’s conduct, actions, language, and the common-sense world. It risks generating contradictions between the messages he gives and gives off. It suggests that failing to take steps beyond (but remain consistent with) conscientiousness and heeding common-sense knowledge to mitigate the dissonance risks freeing asymmetrical meanings to manifest and propagate within $x_1 \leftrightarrow x_2$ that could be explicitly or intuitively noticed by the expert and invoke a reluctance to share.

The conscientious elicitor can temper his project’s internal tension by relegating its purpose and the ambitions associated with it to the margins of intentionality. He can reduce, limit, or contain the dissonance between what he aims to do and the way it recommends it be done by cognitively distancing himself from his objective and demoting its meaning within transcendence, by loosely bracketing (though not suspending) its significance within consciousness and becoming a more or less disinterested observer. Withdrawing elicitation’s goal from the fore of consciousness attenuates its ability to effect disturbances within $x_1 \leftrightarrow x_2$ that could hinder or derail the process. It allays, but does not nullify, the discord the inversion can generate between the meanings the elicitor gives and gives off. It moderates the contradiction’s potential to reveal itself through inconsistencies it could effect in the course of attempting to evoke a reciprocity of motives.

The prescription to relegate elicitation’s purpose to the background of consciousness does not recommend the elicitor forget his aim and, for example, focus exclusively on developing rapport. It also does not suggest he forgo preparation and instead rely solely on improvisation (i.e., “winging it”). It is consistent with the recommendation the elicitor heed the expert’s common-sense constructs and treat him conscientiously. It proposes the elicitor disaffect himself from his goal, let his preparedness and the comportment summoned by his task commandeer his conduct and actions, and tactfully steer $x_1 \leftrightarrow x_2$ toward opportunities to induce a reciprocity of motives. It includes the recommendation to rebuff impulses to imbue his project with any extraordinary significance and resist inclinations to monitor self-progress. It conforms to the effort to produce a situation that invites the expert to surrender knowledge freely.

Concluding Remarks

Exhibiting elicitation by way of Schutz’s phenomenology reveals the meaning landscape the elicitor must negotiate to accomplish his aim. It discloses the phenomenon’s basis, a machinationally evoked reciprocity of motives, and the comportment the best chances of bringing the project to its denouement are correlated to. The accompanying cybernetic analysis amplifies the phenomenology, increases confidence in its assertions, and enhances its accessibility. The expert’s world is the world of the “wide-awake” person living in the natural attitude. It is the common-sense world. It comprises typifications that define what phenomena have been, are, and will or should be. These constructs constitute the meanings whereby conduct and action are experienced and understood. They are contained within the stock of knowledge and language. They define the sociocultural milieu. They compose the calculi embodied in everyday thinking. Elicitation techniques (e.g., assumed knowledge, criticism, false assertions, feigned ignorance, hour glass) that disregard the typical content of everyday experiencing and language, that are inconsistent with common-sense knowledge, risk generating incompatibilities within $x_1 \leftrightarrow x_2$ that could disrupt the operation. So do efforts to leverage whatever susceptibilities (e.g., tendencies to be helpful, correct others, answer truthfully, or undervalue the information sought) individuals may have to share information. Both courses will decrease the chances of engendering the reciprocity of motives elicitation requires to arrive at its desired equifinality. Their departure from common-sense knowledge, from the “unquestioned and undetermined frame of constructs of typicalities,” including “personality” and “courses of action” types, that constitute the world of the natural attitude (Schutz, 1953, p. 24), threatens to disclose the elicitor’s intent and provoke the expert to assess the contact for deception. Elicitation strategies and ploys, like all social actions, appear neither “sensible” nor “reasonable” when they depart from the “socially approved set of rules and recipes for coming to terms with typical problems by applying typical means for achieving typical ends” (Schutz, 1953, p. 21).

Thinking elicitation through/with Schutz’s constitutive phenomenology of the natural attitude distinguishes the phenomenon as a humanizing process. It underscores the ownmost of the expert as his own



transcendence, as a common-sense world who is inherently free to decide whether to tell his secrets. It yields the thesis equating effective elicitation with conscientious elicitation. It propositionally concludes that elicitation flourishes within a disposition grounded in openness, resolve, solicitude, balance, maturity, listening, and mindfulness. It suggests the elicitor enhances his ability to accomplish his purpose when he encounters the expert as a total human person within the context of his intrinsic authenticity. The phenomenology of elicitation discloses—says the elicitor increases the chances of his project coming to its culmination when he meets the expert conscientiously.

Conscientious elicitation, this report contends, mitigates opportunities for disturbances to surface within $x_1 \leftrightarrow x_2$ that could nudge the system into disequilibrium. It veils the elicitor's intent and reduces the chances of prompting the expert to scrutinize the contact for machination and subterfuge. It fosters possibilities of developing the expert's trust and transforming the typifications that regulate his decisions to share private knowledge. The extent to which the elicitor can cognitively distance himself from his project, that is, relegate his aim to the margins of intentionality and divest it of emotive significance, the analysis also contends, further enhances the prospects of a successful outcome. By idling his purpose and letting his conscientious acts steer his interaction with the expert, by engendering a situational tonus balanced between achieving his objective and freeing the expert to divulge information freely, the elicitor attenuates the dissonance intrinsic to conscientious elicitation and increases the chances of evoking the reciprocity of motives requisite to his aim.

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