

The Existential in a Practical Phenomenology Research: A Study on the Political Participation of Young Women

Authors : Amanda Aliende da Matta, Maria del Pilar Fogueiras Bertomeu, Valeria de Ormaechea Otalora, Maria Paz Sandin Esteban, Miriam Comet Donoso

Abstract : This communication presents proposed questions about the existential in research on the political participation of young women. The study follows a qualitative methodology, in particular, the applied hermeneutic phenomenological (AHP) method, and the general objective of the research is to give an account of the experience of political participation as a young woman. The study participants are women aged 18 to 35 who have experience in political participation. The techniques of data collection are the descriptive story and the phenomenological interview. Hermeneutic phenomenology as a research approach is based on phenomenological philosophy and applied hermeneutics. The ultimate objective of HP is to gain access to the meaning structures of lived experience by appropriating them, clarifying them, and reflectively making them explicit. Human experiences are always lived through existential: fundamental themes that are useful in exploring meaningful aspects of our life worlds. Everyone experiences the world through the existential of lived relationships, the lived body, lived space, lived time, and lived things. The phenomenological research, then, also tacitly asks about the existential. Existentials are universal themes useful for exploring significant aspects of our life world and of the particular phenomena under study. Four main existentials prove especially helpful as guides for reflection in the research process: relationship, body, space, and time. For example, in our case, we may ask ourselves how can the existentials of relationship, body, space, and time guide us in exploring the structures of meaning in the lived experience of political participation as a woman and a young person. The study is still not finished, as we are currently conducting phenomenological thematic analysis on the collected stories of lived experience. Yet, we have already identified some fragments of texts that show the existential in their experiences, which we will transcribe below. 1) Relationality - The experienced I-Other. It regards how relationships are experienced in our narratives about political participation as young women. One example would be: "As we had known each other for a long time, we understood each other with our eyes; we were all a little bit on the same page, thinking the same thing." 2) Corporeality - The lived body. It regards how the lived body is experienced in activities of political participation as a young woman. One example would be: "My blood was boiling, but it was not the time to throw anything in their face, we had to look for solutions."; "I had a lump in my throat and I wanted to cry." 3) Spatiality - The lived space. It regards how one experiences the lived space in political participation activities as a young woman. One example would be: "And the feeling I got when I saw [it] it's like watching everybody going into a mousetrap." 4) Temporality - Lived time. It regards how one experiences the lived time in political participation activities as a young woman. One example would be: "Then, there were also meetings that went on forever..."

Keywords : applied hermeneutic phenomenology, existentials, hermeneutics, phenomenology, political participation

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