

Doctoral Dissertation Abstract

Everyday Lifeworld of Young People Studying in Bydgoszcz

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Keywords: young students, daily life, autobiographical narrative interview

Subject and objective of the study, including scientific justification of the study

The subject of the study presented in the thesis is the everyday lifeworld of young people studying in Bydgoszcz. The choice of the research topic resulted from the state of knowledge to date concerning the experience of day-to-day life by students of higher education institutions. Existing research has not provided a holistic picture of this reality, focusing only on how students function within the specific environment of student dormitories or only on selected aspects of everyday life. Describing how everyday reality is constructed in terms of quantitative indicators such as education, cultural life, the social, recreational and health spheres and the level of satisfaction with a chosen field of study limits access to a holistic worldview. Moreover, Bydgoszcz is a university city with four public higher education institutions of different profiles within its limits, yet contemporary literature lacks studies describing how young people studying in the city function.

The research objective was to describe and interpret the everyday life of young students in Bydgoszcz. The general research question of the research project was formulated as follows: *What is the everyday lifeworld of young people studying in Bydgoszcz?* In line with assumptions of phenomenological sociology, it was defined through social relationships, undertaken activities, stock of “knowledge at hand” enriched by academic knowledge acquired through the course of the studies as well as a

stock of previous experiences that determine student behaviour. Based on these, the following specific questions were identified: *What is the “stock of previous experiences” of youth in academia?; What comprises “knowledge at hand” of youth in academia?; What meaning do students attribute to the academic knowledge acquired during their studies?; What are the social relations of youth in academia on the closeness and distance scale and what subjective meaning do students attach to them?; What activities do students undertake during their studies?*

Research methodology

In an effort to obtain in-depth descriptions of how young students structure their everyday life, the research was embedded in a qualitative strategy and an interpretative paradigm was adopted. The method of data collection was an autobiographical narrative interview, which seeks to obtain an account of a narrator’s life.

To capture the diversity of “everyday lifeworld” in the study, a purposeful sampling approach based on maximum sample variation was employed, aiming to encompass diverse cases. The group under study consisted of twelve students from different fields of study, representing four public higher education institutions in Bydgoszcz – the Feliks Nowowiejski Academy of Music, the Ludwik Rydygier Collegium Medicum, the Jan and Jędrzej Śniadeccy Bydgoszcz University of Science and Technology and the Kazimierz Wielki University.

Each interview with a student was conducted individually, beginning with an open narration about their life, followed by questions related to the subjects’ stories and based on prepared interview instructions. The recorded conversations were transcribed and, after anonymisation, sent to the participants for approval. Work with obtained material was consistent with the adopted perspective of the autobiographical narrative interview.

Results and conclusions

The biographical stories of the respondents differed in the highlighted structures of processes. Not all narratives included institutional patterns of expectations and trajectories of suffering. However, in each narrative, I have identified a biographical

action plan and a biographical metamorphosis that was related to designing plans associated with starting studies and subsequently implementing the designed project.

In the chapter where the results of the analyses are reported, various dimensions of experiencing everyday life by young students are discussed. The “everyday lifeworld” is constructed by the students through relations organised along the closeness and distance scale, with interactions with the student group being central during the period of university studies. The respondents conceive of academic knowledge as complementary to their common-sense knowledge, making it not merely a theoretical construct but integrating it with their daily activities, ways of thinking and perception of social reality.

The analysis of the empirical material enabled to reconstruct the diversity of the daily life of the young students from Bydgoszcz in the aspect of educational, professional and pro-development activities.