Narrative analysis on the relations between academic hospitality and service-learning in universities

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Abstract

This study proposes a narrative analysis aiming at understanding through a personal experience of an Erasmus+ student hosted by a Higher Education Institution in Portugal how the principles stated by academic hospitality act as an enabler of positive behavior leading to service-learning. The multicultural approach is also a key element for this study, the personal story will be used as a source for understanding how openness to integrate into a new welcoming cultural context could further develop the individual from an observer to an active benevolent participant into the new academic frame he is exposed to. The present article examines how openness for cultural and linguistic immersion is a key element in stimulating a reciprocally advantageous exchange of ideas leading to a betterment of the visitor and of the host in terms of contribution and scientific enrichment.

Methodology

Qualitative narrative analysis. In order to further develop the correlation between academic hospitality and Service-Learning an individual experience of an Erasmus+ student will be analyzed through narratives. Furthermore, a parallel with existing examples will be elaborated. The answer for the research question 'Can the narratives of the visiting students help to answer the question of how can a host university develop into a hospitality-based ecosystem?' will be completed

Narrative analysis based on a testimonial written by the author for the host university after an Erasmus+ experience of 7 months during December 2021 – June 2022. As stated by Gabriela Spector-Mersel 'The aims of narrative inquiries range from psychological questions focusing on internal, emotional or cognitive processes on the one hand, to sociological, anthropological and historical questions on the other. In between are questions focusing on linguistic and interpersonal processes, which examine narrative as a means of communication.'(p. 215, 2010).

The narrative analysis will aim to answer the research question 'How was the experience at the hosting university?'. For a further applied analysis we will formulate a new research question: 'Can the narratives of the visiting students help to answer the question of how can a host university develop into a hospitality-based ecosystem? If yes, which are the values enacted by the student and by the university?'. In order to analyze data from the testimonial and correlate key-actions with values, we will use the research design proposed by Erlingsson & Brysiewicz (2017) through creating themes and categories. The two values proposed by Shalom Schwartz will be the key-themes (universalism and benevolence), the sub-values will be the sub-themes and they will be related with examples of attitudes and actions covering the 'guesting' and the 'hosting' perspectives along with the forms of academic hospitality proposed by Phipps & Barnett (2007).

The components of the Circle of Service Learning as proposed by Rusu (manual): empowering learning experience, community, creativity, knowledge, innovation, connecting would be represented as ways for transitioning from power and achievement to universalism and benevolence.

Service-Learning activities are considered here as being those activities that were addressing the needs of the community, i.e. in this case, the host academic community, in which the visitor student was engaged in connection with his curricular offerings. Below is a representation of the needs targeted by Service-Learning proposed by the team of the project Service-Learning in Higher Education Institutions (SLIHE, www.slihe.eu, Brozmanova-Gregorova et al., 2020).
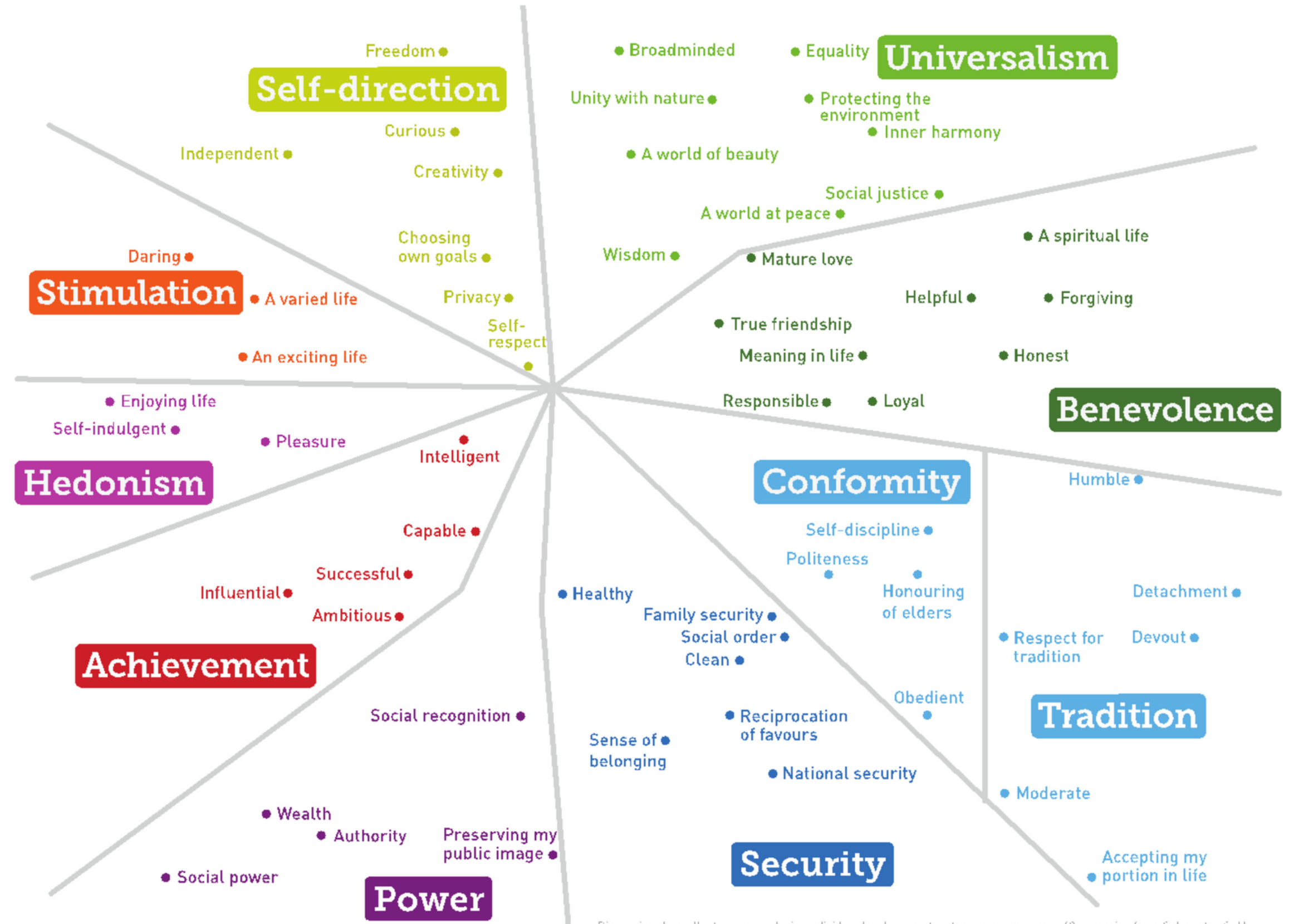
The circle of Service-Learning components is represented in Figure 2 (Brozmanova-Gregorova et al., 2020).

Schwartz's theory

According to this theory, values can be divided into four main groups:
- openness;
- altruism;
- conservatism:
- individualism.

Freedom

Self-direction

Curious

Independent

Creativity

Choosing own goals

Daring

Stimulation A varied life

Privacy

Self-respect

An exciting life

Enjoying life

Self-indulgent

Pleasure

Hedonism

Intelligent

Capable

Successful

Influential

Ambitious

Achievement

Social recognition

Wealth

Authority

Preserving my public image

Social power

Power

Broadminded   Equality   **Universalism**

Unity with nature   Protecting the environment

Inner harmony

A world of beauty

Social justice

A world at peace

Wisdom   Mature love   A spiritual life

Helpful   Forgiving

True friendship

Meaning in life   Honest

Responsible   Loyal   **Benevolence**

Conformity

Humble

Self-discipline

Politeness

Honouring of elders   Detachment

Healthy

Family security   Respect for tradition   Devout

Social order

Clean

Obedient   **Tradition**

Reciprocation of favours

Sense of belonging

National security   Moderate

Security

Accepting my portion in life

Dimensional smallest space analysis: individual level value structure average across 68 countries from Schwartz, S. H. (2006). Basic human values: theory, measurement, and applications. Revue française de sociologie, 42, 249-288.

Through the categorisation of the informational units, we aim to prove that the content of the narratives are useful in underlining the key-aspects needed for a university to become a hospitality-based ecosystem. In **Figure 1** and **Figure 2** we illustrate how a student could be motivated through Service-Learning to change his/her/they own values from a conservatorism, self-enhancement dimension to a self-transcendent one. Values such as Power and Achievement could be replaced by Benevolence and Universalism (Schwartz, 2012).

Power	Service-Learning	Universalism
Authority	➡️ Knowledge & Innovation	➡️ Broadminded
Wealth & Recognition	➡️ Community	➡️ Equality
Social power	➡️ Social Responsibility	➡️ Social justice
Public image	➡️ Creativity	➡️ Inner harmony

Figure 1. *Service-Learning components enhancing the transition from anxiety-based Power values to anxiety-free Universalism values*

Achievement		Service-Learning		Benevolence
Intelligent & Capable	➡	Knowledge & Innovation	➡	Responsible & Honest
Succesful	➡	Community	➡	True friendship
Influential	➡	Social Responsibility	➡	Helpful
Ambitious	➡	Creativity	➡	Meaning in life

Figure 2. *Service-Learning components enhancing the transition from anxiety-based Achievement values to anxiety-free Benevolence values*

Results

Q1: How was the experience at the hosting university?

Q2: Can the narratives of the visiting students help to answer the question of how can a host university develop into a hospitality-based ecosystem? If yes, which are the values enacted by the student and by the university?

Table 1 . Information units and codes for the predefined themes. The quotes are extracted from the testimonial of the Erasmus student presented in the case study.

Value Spectrum (predefined themes)	Value (categories)	Academic Hospitality (Material, Linguistic, Epistemological, Touristic)	
		Hosting	Guesting
Universalism	Broadminded	while practicing it with my neighbors from Rua das Taipas (L)	I reached a B2 fluence in European Portuguese; I'll definitely have to learn Portuguese and to read these two authors in their native language (L)
		were all examples of great pedagogical talent and scientific ability (E)	I had great learning and awareness moments during my master classes with all the teachers and the colleagues (E)

Conclusions

For a modern education, oriented to holistically develop the individual and the community in a global, multicultural context, linking hospitality and service represents a valuable approach. International students are eager to be part of their new environment and belongingness is very important for their psychological comfort, an active contribution could lead to fulfillment and a better overall international experience.