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## Collectivism and Individualism

### Implications for practice based on a qualitative inquiry with Albanians in Switzerland

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## Overview

- Introduction
- Relevant information about the study:
  - I think of my family, therefore I am: perceptions of daily occupations of some Albanians in Switzerland.
  - Franziska Heigl, Astrid Kinébanian, Staffan Josephsson (2010 Mar 25). Scand J Occup Ther. [Epub ahead of print]
- Findings
- Collectivism versus individualism
- Discussion with YOU

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## Introduction

- Culture influences the choice and performance of occupations (Dillard et al, 1992; Black & Wells, 2007).
- Understanding of the close interaction and relationship between culture and occupation is a prerequisite for occupational therapists' demanded cultural competence (Dillard et al, 1992).
- Reflexion on one's own culture is the first step in understanding culture (Kinébanian & Stomph, 2009).

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## Need for...

- ...more knowledge about the relation between culture and occupation
  - (Black & Wells, 2007; Bonder et al, 2004; Dickie, 2004; Iwama, 2003 & 2004; Kinébanian & Stomph, 2009; Lim, 2004; Odawara, 2005)

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## Purpose of study

- To increase the understanding of the interrelationship between culture and occupation by exploring the perceptions of current daily occupations of some male ethnic Albanians living in Switzerland.
- In order to attune interventions better to the needs of immigrated individuals.

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## Study Question

How do immigrant male Albanians doing blue-collar work in Switzerland perceive their current daily occupations?

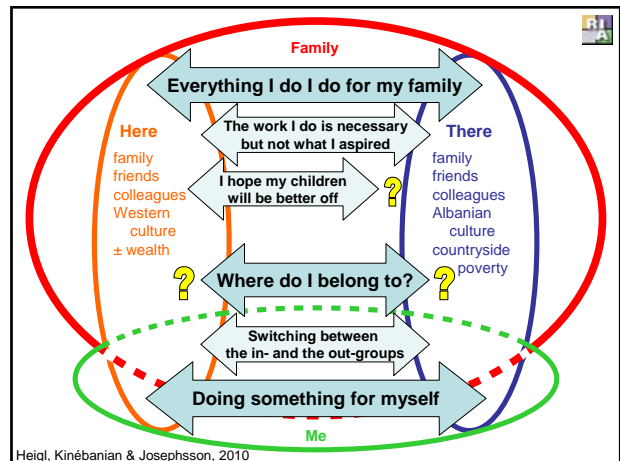
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## Methods

- Semi-structured interviews with 8 healthy Muslim men of first generation Albanian immigrants living in Switzerland
- Analysis in a comparative manner followed by an interpretation

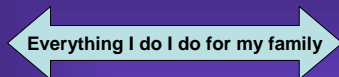


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Heigl, Kinébanian & Josephsson, 2010

## Discussion



- Collectivism (Hofstede, 2003/1991)
- Collectivist attitudes and their influence on daily occupations? (Iwama, 2003, 2004; Lim, 2004)



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## Collectivism versus Individualism

### Collectivism

- Core unit = the group
- Individuals must fit into society.
- Individuals are fundamentally connected.
- Interdependence
- Communalism
- "Eastern"

### Individualism

- Core unit = the individual
- Society promotes the well-being of individuals.
- Individuals are separate from one another.
- Independence
- Autonomy
- "Western"

Oyserman et al, 2002; Oysermann & Lee, 2008; Iwama, 2005



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## Collectivism versus Individualism???

The Tower of Babel



Pieter Bruegel the Elder, 1563

- Individualism-collectivism at the level of nations is not the same as individualism-collectivism at the levels of individuals.
- At the individual level these constructs may be conceptualized and measured as separate, not necessarily bipolar, constructs. (Bond, 2002)
- There is no support for treating individualism and collectivism as opposite types of cultures or contrasting poles on a continuum. (Fiske, 2002)



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## Implications for OT (1)

- Keep the collectivist attitude in one's mind
  - Reflect on your own beliefs and values
  - Reflect on the experiences of your clients

(Kinébanian & Stomph, 2009)



## Implications for OT (2)

- Family as a resource
  - Consider the client's well-being in his collectivist society
  - Give a „voice“ to the clients, listen carefully to their thoughts and ideas about life (Black & Wells, 2007)
- Enabling clients to work and earn money



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We have meals together so that harmony appears, and then it's just fine. (Mr. Ramiz)

You know, I try..., everything I have ever done, I have done for my family. (Mr. Nexhat)



- What are your ideas to encounter the concepts of **collectivism and individualism** in your daily practice?

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