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## **Self-construals and earliest childhood memories**

*a new perspective from Slovakia and Denmark*

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# Self-construals and earliest childhood memories: a new perspective from Slovakia and Denmark

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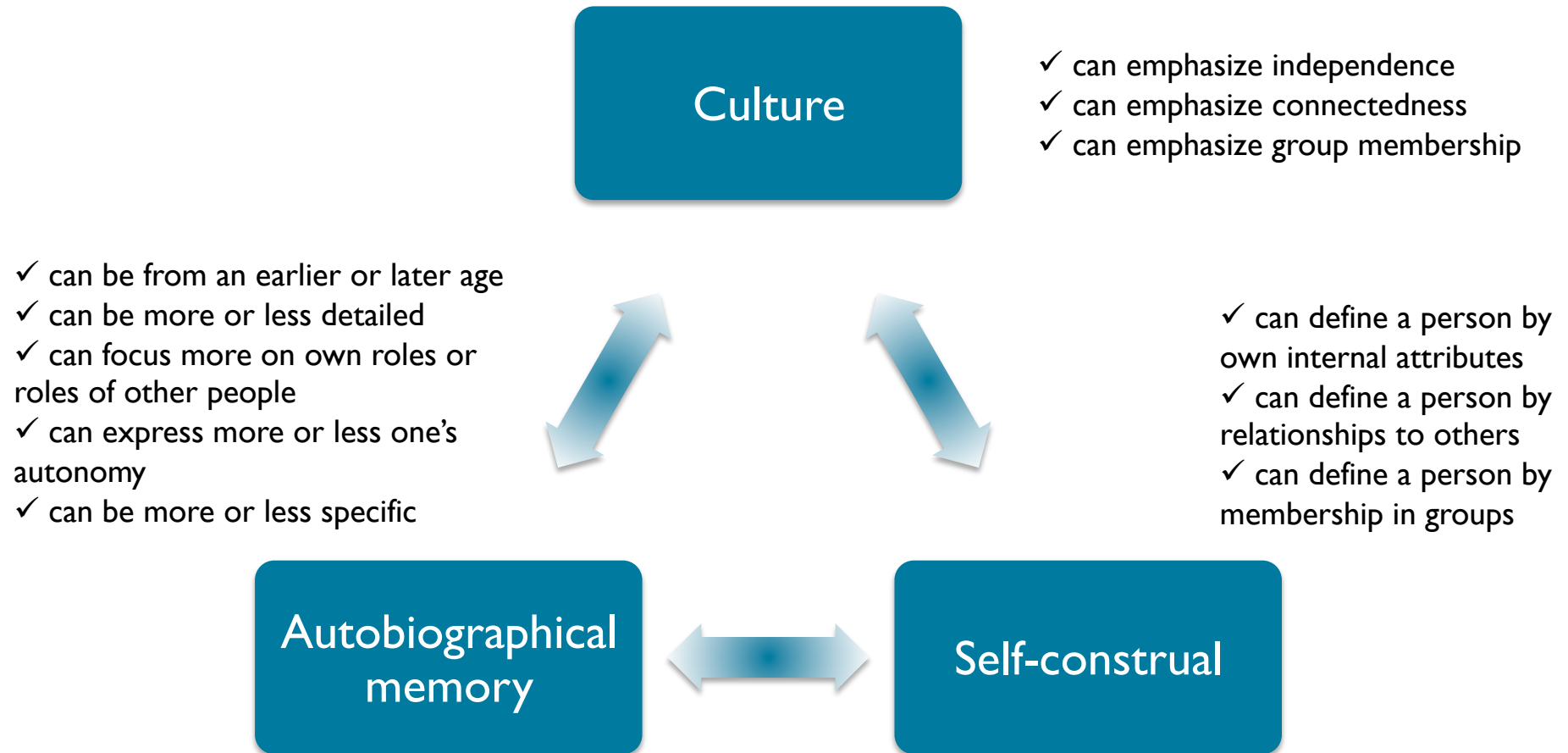
## Example 1

“Probably when I was around 4-5 years old, maybe even less, my mum was busy, she was in the garden, and I was bored.

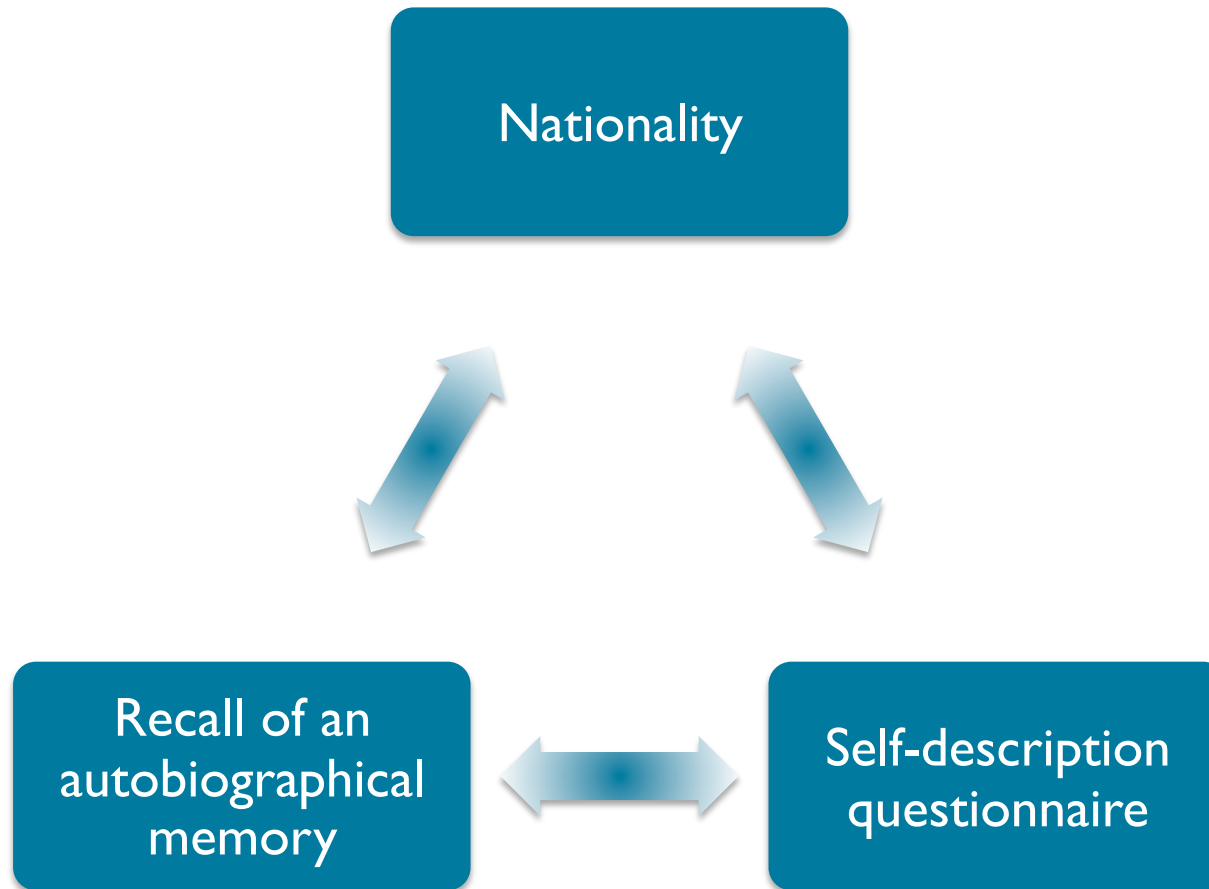
I don't even know for what reason, I went into the boiler-room and took a straw broom and stuck it into the burning boiler. Afterwards, I got scared, but I didn't let the broom loose, instead I was running around the courtyard with it, holding it like a torch and screaming that it's on fire.”

Slovak female, 19 years old

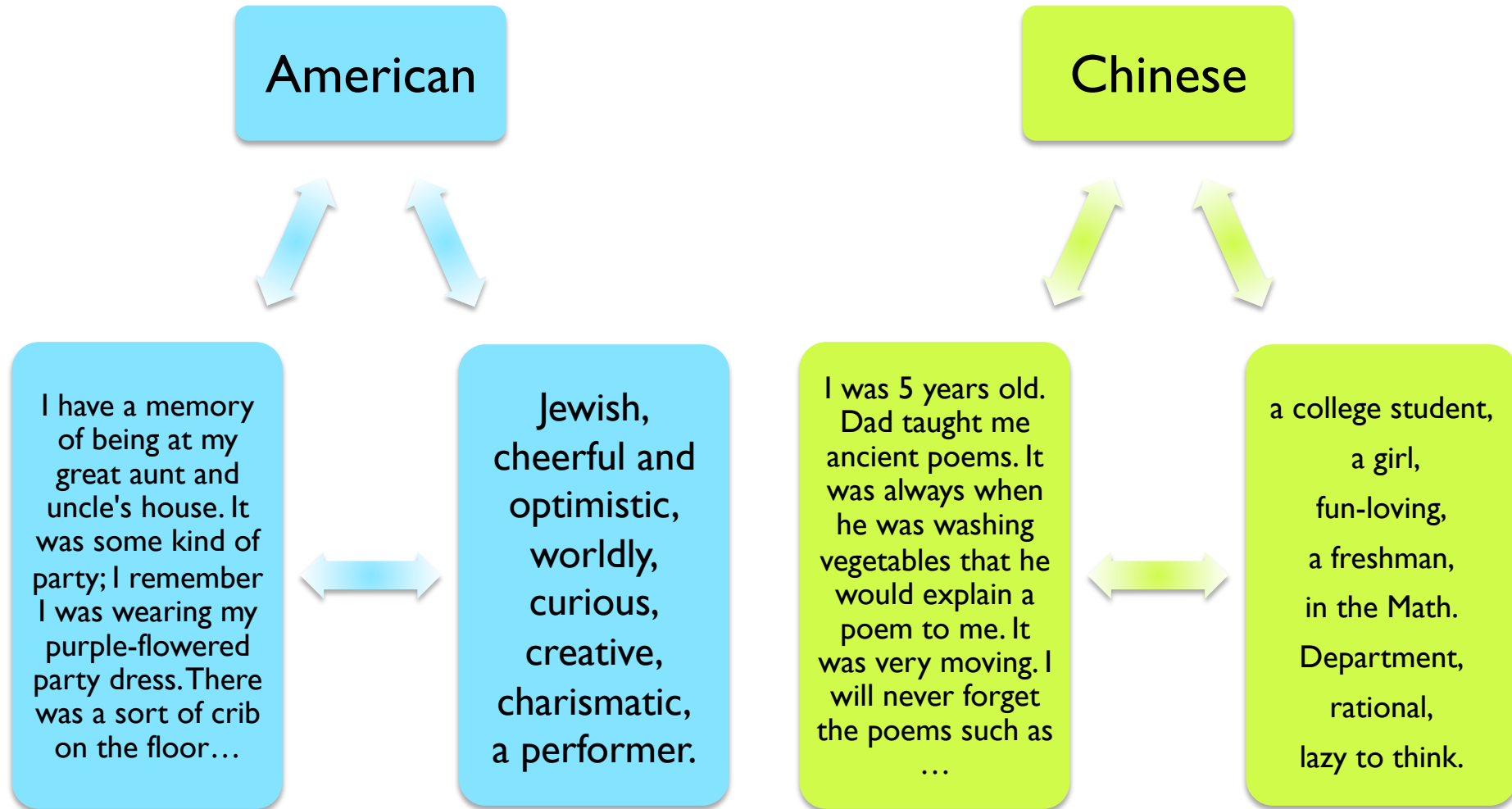
## Theoretical model



## Empirical model



## Example of an empirical study (Wang, 2001)



## East-West perspective



## A NEW East-West perspective





## Our questions

1. Will the form and content of the earliest childhood memories and the type of self-descriptions in young Danes and Slovaks display a similar profile as in members of strongly individualist cultures, such as USA?
2. Will any characteristics of the earliest childhood memories and self-descriptions reveal the specific background of participants as having been raised in post-communism or welfare state, respectively?

## Participants and method

- 80 Slovak ( $M = 17.75$  years) and 80 Danish ( $M = 18.92$  years) secondary grammar school students
- 43 females and 37 males in each sample
- Written questionnaire in the respective mother tongue consisting of:

### Recall of earliest childhood memory

- Coding for:
  - Age at the time of event
  - Volume
  - Other-self ratio
  - Autonomy ratio
  - Specificity

### Shortened Twenty-Statements Test

- Coding for:
  - Private descriptions
  - Collective descriptions
  - Public descriptions

## Results – earliest childhood memories

	Slovak		Danish		
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	
Age (in months)	51.89	23.25	51.00	23.60	$U = 3054.00, p = .818$
Volume (in words)	54.26	29.21	63.27	32.07	$U = 2657.00, p = .064$
Other-self ratio	0.65	0.51	0.94	1.81	$U = 2852.50, p = .352$
Autonomy ratio	2.91	2.75	2.38	2.48	$U = 2842.00, p = .215$
Specificity	70% specific		80% specific		$X^2(1, N = 160) = 2.133, p = .144$

\* all tests are two-tailed

## Results – self-descriptions

	Slovak		Danish		
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	
Private	81.27	21.06	88.03	13.90	$U = 2692.50, p = .067$
Collective	12.29	20.07	4.64	9.30	$U = 2632.00, p = .019$
Public	6.42	10.87	7.32	11.58	$U = 3090.50, p = .656$

\* all tests are two-tailed

## Conclusions

1. Young Slovaks and young Danes seem to display a similar independent profile
  2. Hardly any factors revealing the specific background of the participants
- Could the coding attend to other interesting features when dealing with post-communist and long-term welfare state samples?
    - References to extended family
    - Numbers of others / groups
    - Markers of the situation – Christmas, birth of a sibling, etc.
    - References to particular relationships (“glad to be around my family”) or relationships in general (“friendly”) in TST
  - Age
  - Gender

## Example 2

“What I remember is that I am outside walking with my grandmother, I am wearing green sandals, we are on our way down to the beach, I am holding her hand, the sun is shining and a light cool wind is blowing around us, cloud-free sky, the weather is warm.”

Danish male, 19 years

# Thank you for your attention!

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