

Methods of Triangulation Course

Reflexivity and Mobility in Europe: A research case of triangulation



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Structure of the lecture

- Start with a simple test...
- What is reflexivity – according to M. Archer
- Developing a measurement tool
- Quantitative on-line survey
- Qualitative research among the Slovenian students

Reflexivity

- Understood as an intensity of internal dialogue: asking questions to ourselves instead of just acting (or not acting) automatically
- Dynamic, morphogenetic nature of highly modernised societies require high levels of reflexivity
- However, internal dialogue can lead to different autocomes, represented by different reflexivity types

Reflexivity types

- **Communicative:** the context is stable and continuous; internal conversations need to be confirmed and completed by others before they lead to action
- **Autonomous:** the initial context itself lacks stability, internal conversations are self-contained, leading directly to action
- **Meta:** internal conversations critically evaluate previous inner dialogues and are critical about effective action in society
- **Fractured:** internal conversations cannot lead to purposeful courses of action, it leads to personal disorientation in action

QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

- is mobility a significant factor in enhancing reflexive capacities of students?
- are specific national contexts influencing the outcomes of such reflexive deliberations? (although social structures might be more fluid and unstable, we are still embedded in specific social context)  **measurement tool**
- **1. part** – **measuring reflexivity** – upgrading Archer's (2007) ICONI, critiques by Porpora and Schumar (2010) and including levels of intensity
- **2. part** - **measuring embeddedness in transnational social fields** (implying also specific national context of individuals) – Molina et al. 2014 - personal network methods – studying emergent transnational structures

Measuring Reflexivity: Reflexivity levels

- To measure the **levels of reflexivity** (in terms of intensity of inner conversation)
- We use 5 items based on Archer with 5-level Likert scales (each transformed into the score from 0 (minimal reflexivity) to 4 (maximal reflexivity)):

During the last year, how often did you...

Plan your own future

Rehearse what you would say in an important conversation

Imagine the best and worst consequences of a major decision

Review a conversation that ended badly

Clarify thoughts about some issue, person, or problem

- The overall reflexivity index is then calculated as the sum of scores for this set of questions ranging from 0 (min. reflexivity) to 20 (maximal reflexivity).

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Measuring Reflexivity: Reflexivity types

- To measure the **types of reflexivity** based on Archer's typology with 5-level Likert scales:

	Type of reflexivity indicator: 5-level Likert scale each transformed into scores from 0 (min.) to 4 (max.)
Communicative	Make important decisions with full agreement and support by the people close to you only.
Autonomous	Make important decisions based on your own best judgement regardless of what others think or say.
Meta	Carefully consider what are the key priorities of your life and why you are doing what you are doing.
Fractured	Feel lost and you don't know at all what to do because of the things happening around you.

- For each respondent her/his each reflexivity type is combined (multiplied) with the corresponding level of reflexivity: this results in the scores for each reflexivity type ranging from 0 to 80.

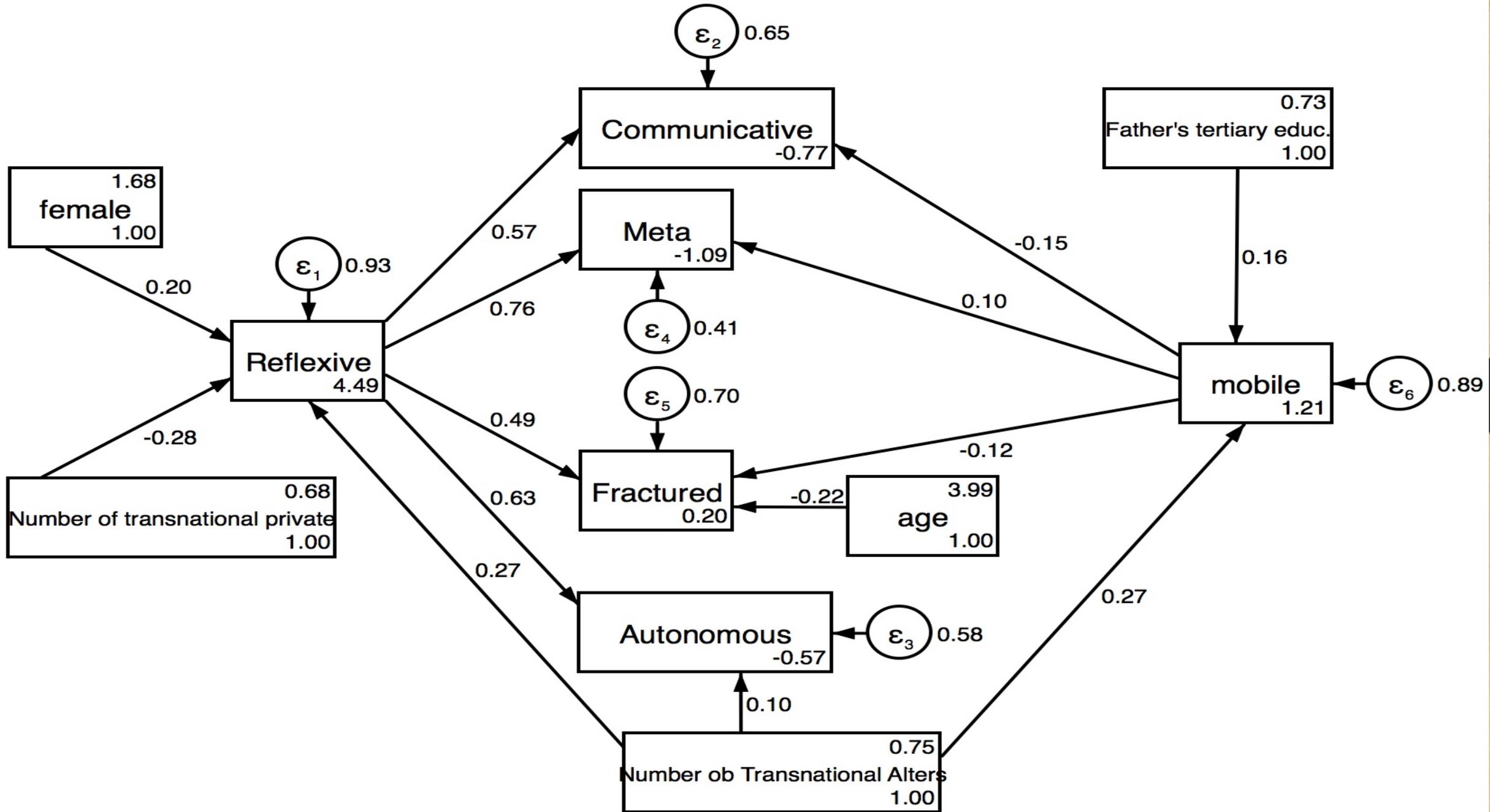
measuring embeddedness in transnational social fields

- Survey questionnaire up to now administered on-line among:
 - students of the Slovenian academic institutions (mobile + non-mobile);
 - University of Hawai'i at Manoa;
 - American University of Beirut
- Egos included: $n_{\text{EGO}} = 189$; alters identified by these egos: $n_{\text{ALTER}} = 2096$

Some definitions for the purposes of our study

- Mobility = staying abroad for study reasons for at least one month
- Ego = our direct respondent
- Alter = a person that our respondent mentions as one of (up to 20) persons “important in your current life, including your family, friends, acquaintances, colleagues, business contacts, etc.”
- Transnational alter = alter who currently does **not** live in the country where the ego/respondent has “spent most of [her/his] life”.
- Migrant = student with different country of birth than the country of living for most of her/his life

		Communicative		Autonomous		Meta		Fractured	
		Mean Score	% with Score >40	Mean Score	% with Score >40	Mean Score	% with Score >40	Mean Score	% with Score >40
Slovenia	not mobile	31.9	26.2	38.9	45.2	42.1	50.0	25.4	19.1
	Mobile	25.3	17.3	35.4	37.5	41.4	50.0	22.0	13.5
USA— Hawai'i	not mobile	32.5	20.0	43.0	60.0	42.3	50.0	26.3	20.0
	Mobile	33.1	30.0	43.4	55.0	52.0	70.0	27.1	20.0
Lebanon	not mobile	41.9	40.0	36.6	30.0	46.1	60.0	53.4	60.0
	Mobile	56.0	50.0	48.0	50.0	72.0	100.0	40.0	50.0



Methodology – qualitative research

- Added value: how students understand and transmit information from social environment
- 50 semi-structured interviews (mobile + non-mobile students)
- Sampling: snowballing, self-selection, selected regions
- Informed consent
- Open coding, axis coding
- Limitations: key: sample design (snowballing, self-selection, regional specifics); other: sample size, other related to qualitative methods

A graphical overview of results

Social structural and semantic contextuality

Mobility aspirations and experiences

Personal 'biography', aspirations, goals
Attitudes towards the Slovenian state
Attitudes towards the EU and globalisation
Relation to the past

Participating in transnational social spheres

Limited to the national social environment

Narratives distancing themselves from the semantics of the national political, economic and cultural imaginaries

more reflexive

Identities
Values
Risk perceptions
Contextual adaptation in terms of individualisation processes

Comparison between mobile and non-mobile students placed on the reflexive/less reflexive continuum

less reflexive

Narratives replicating the semantics of the national political, economic and cultural imaginaries

Some of the key political, economic and cultural imaginaries providing the narratives of the Slovenian national semantic context

- Understanding of the **state in paternalistic terms** (as an entity that should take care for us): government (not people) “should take more responsibility to ensure that everyone is provided for” (WVS 2011)
- Strongly **negative attitudes towards the political leaders, political institutions and the overall situation in the country**: the lowest confidence in the national parliament of all nations included in last WVS survey. One of the smallest shares of population satisfied with the way how democracy works in their country in the EU (EB 2015).
- Economic imaginaries characterised by the concept of **national interest**, based particularly on the idea that foreign ownership would jeopardise the Slovenian nation: public debates + the lowest FDI inward stock in the EU when compared to all other EU countries (except Greece)
- Pronounced **division based primarily on cultural-historical issues** (*Kulturkampf* or cultural struggle), particularly the role of the Roman-Catholic Church, the liberation struggle and civil war during the Second World War, and the former communist regime and life during these times. This has remained the primarily source of all major political and even social divisions,

	Mobile students	Non-mobile students
Autonomy	They have a feeling of being responsible of their lives and also that they can actually influence further courses of life.	Blame the social environment: “You can’t be satisfied if there are not conditions given in our society”
Employment	“I know young people have problems with finding jobs and the system is not so favourable in that regard, but I don’t see it as a real problem”.	Less successful in study and employment. Less ambitious, the main goal is to provide sufficient material conditions for living.
Future visions	Clear aspirations, ambitious, often planning further mobility paths	Less clear visions, strongly related to local community and family. Relying on their partners.
Attachment to home	Family life comes second to personal development.	Predominantly very much attached to their parents and local community
Reflexive thinking	Meta-reflexivity or autonomous reflexivity	Communicative and fractured reflexivity

	Mobile students	Non-mobile students
Perception of the state	<p>More than half somehow politically active (student or local level). State should should enable proper conditions, but individuals are responsible to take care of themselves. “The state should just let me breathe.”</p>	<p>Predominantly very pessimistic, negative attitudes. The state often personalised or even the role of the motherhood was attached to it. In such cases seen as a victim: “they”, i.e. the political and economic elites who “stole a country from us”.</p>
Expectations	<p>Problems of the system that are hindering their activities in terms of bureaucratic procedures etc. But also critical towards negative attitudes and complaining of the general Slovenian youth.</p>	<p>State should offer jobs, social security and other specific demands people have in their lives. Blaming the system and Slovenian states for their personal lack of success.</p>
National identities	<p>Became more aware of their homeland and its beauties and even advocated more intensive conservation of Slovenian roots. Not xenophobic or fatalistic but instrumental and accompanied by other identities, including transnational ones. Exceptions also.</p>	<p>Predominantly strong. More rooted and thus do not not seem as a strategy of negotiating one’s position in the structural environment, but more as undeliberate dissemination of national discourses and images.</p>

	Mobile students	Non-mobile students
Distance to the past	<p>All think the life is better nowadays than in Yugoslavia, where you had to follow others. The internalisation of individualisation values comes out.</p> <p>In some cases, the influence of positive social memories is obvious, but interlocutors were able to detect the semantic influences on their cognition and on that point to distant themselves.</p>	<p>“Young people were able to establish independent life, find job immediately after the high school etc.”</p> <p>They are repeating social memories without consciously distancing themselves in interpreting the past.</p>
Divisions	<p>Against the “bi-polar divisions”; their proponents are perceived as uneducated, ignorant.</p> <p>However, those, who see themselves as cosmopolitans, and reject national sentiments, see Yugoslavia as community of different nations, inducing positive connotations.</p>	<p>Continuum ranging from strong idealisation, supporting Tito on the one side, and being uninterested in the past and unconsciously repeating memories of the parents or grandparent, without even referencing them.</p>

	Mobile students	Non-mobile students
EU	<p>Positive attitudes towards the EU do not necessary necessarily lead to European identifications.</p> <p>Some individuals depicted themselves as cosmopolitans, as world citizens, and reject any kind of territory-based identity.</p>	<p>EU as a contemporary slavery, “but many people just turn a blind eye and they don’t want to see the truth... we (Slovenia) have a huge debt because of political manoeuvres of the EU.”</p> <p>Abstract and remote political entity, without social contexts. Linked to an unreflexively disseminated image of the EU acting as a scapegoat.</p> <p>Foreign countries are personalized.</p>
Migration	<p>Migrants as a inseparable part of contemporary society, as an opportunity to connect people; everyone should have an opportunity to travel.</p>	<p>Against migrants. They are blaming EU for taking care for migrants, not for us.</p>
Stereotypes	<p>Mobility undermines stereotypes</p>	<p>Africa – all poor; America – all fat</p>
USA	<p>Blamed for “bad things”</p>	<p>Blamed for “bad things”</p>