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Anomie and Anomia: an Approach towards the Measurement of Social Well-Being and Deviance

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Contents

- Theoretical Background
- Methodological Approach
- Towards Indices Construction
- Further Steps

Upon Relevance

- Anomie theories are implemented to different kinds of societies and countries, in single-country analysis and in comparative perspective (Faßauer and Schirmer 2007, Atteslander 2006, Legge 2010, Pokrovski 2000, Krivosheev 2008)
- Anomie has been claimed to be a concept central to sociology (Parsons 1968), anomia – to have empirical potential (Merton 1964)
- But for the numerous research, both theoretical and empirical having been carried out, certain gaps and problems:
 - Which anomie? Anomie is understood and interpreted differently by various sociologists (Lamnek 1996: 108)
 - Anomia is usually not differentiated from anomie or alienation (rarely used at all). Anomie is often mixed with alienation as well
 - Problems with operationalization and measurement

Main Concepts

- **Anomie** stands for a state of society characterized by lack of norms and regulations (Durkheim 1893, 1897)
- **Anomia**, a modification of anomie, characterizes the level of individual state of members of the society (such as feelings of helplessness, atomization, concern about future, etc. (Srole 1956, Lamnek 1996)).

Anomie

- Emile Durkheim (1912): two kinds of anomie:
- sharp form anomie - caused by various forms of crises that shutter the collective order and can lead both to degradation and prosperity. It causes the variability in the rate of suicide.
- anomie as a chronic phenomenon - permanent in certain fields of social life. These are the commercial and industrial life and the institute of family
- *one can differentiate between the two types of anomie and view the transitional post-soviet societies as the ones having experienced the influence of the sharp anomie. At the same time the certain rate of chronicle anomie is typical of contemporary societies*

Anomia

- The term “anomia” was introduced by Leo Srole (1956). He discriminates between the macroscopic and microscopic levels of studying the phenomenon, with anomia standing for the microscopic one. The microscopic view shows the level of integration of the individuals “in the total action fields of their interpersonal relationships and reference groups” (Srole 1956: 710).
- anomie as an objective social state, anomia as “subjectively perceived anomie” (Olsen 1969: 290).

Research Project

- **Key question:** What factors can predict anomie and anomia?

=> Find measurement of the concept

Existing measurement of anomie and anomia

- „...the first thing a sociologist in the area will want to impress on his audience is that **anomie refers to a property of a social system** and hence **cannot be directly measured by the attitudes of single individuals.**“ => anomy, anomia
(Robinson & Shaver 1973, 245)
- Anomie and alienation mixed in various scales

Scales: Anomie-Alienation

1. Anomy Scale (McClosky, Schaar 1965)
2. Anomia Scale (Srole 1956)
3. Powerlessness (Neal & Seeman 1962)
4. Political Alienation (Seeman 1969)
5. Alienation via Rejection (Streuning & Richardson 1965)
6. Purpose-in-Life Test (Crumbaugh 1968)
7. Alienation Scale (Dean 1961)
8. Alienation (Middleton 1963)
9. Political Alienation (Horton & Thompson 1962)
10. Alienation (Nettler 1957)
11. Anomie Scale (Hyman, Wright & Hopkins 1960)
12. Helplessness (Gamson 1961)
13. Alienation (Davids 1955)
14. Alienation Within a Social System (Clark 1959)

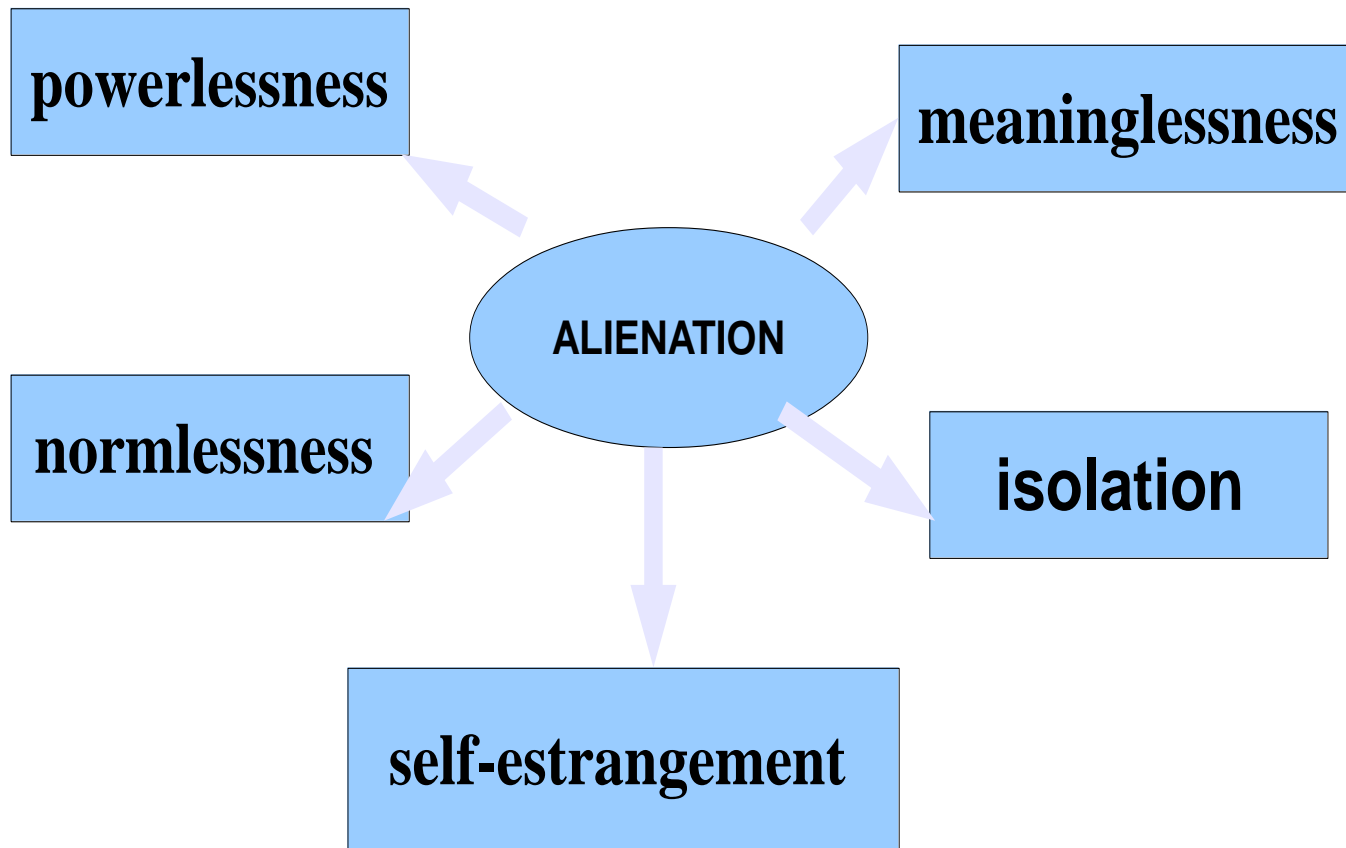
Robinson & Shaver
1973, 245

- +
15. The MOS Alienation Scale (Travis 1993)
 16. Meaninglessness (Legge et al. 2008)
 17. Don't Know Scale (Kosals & Swader, 2012)

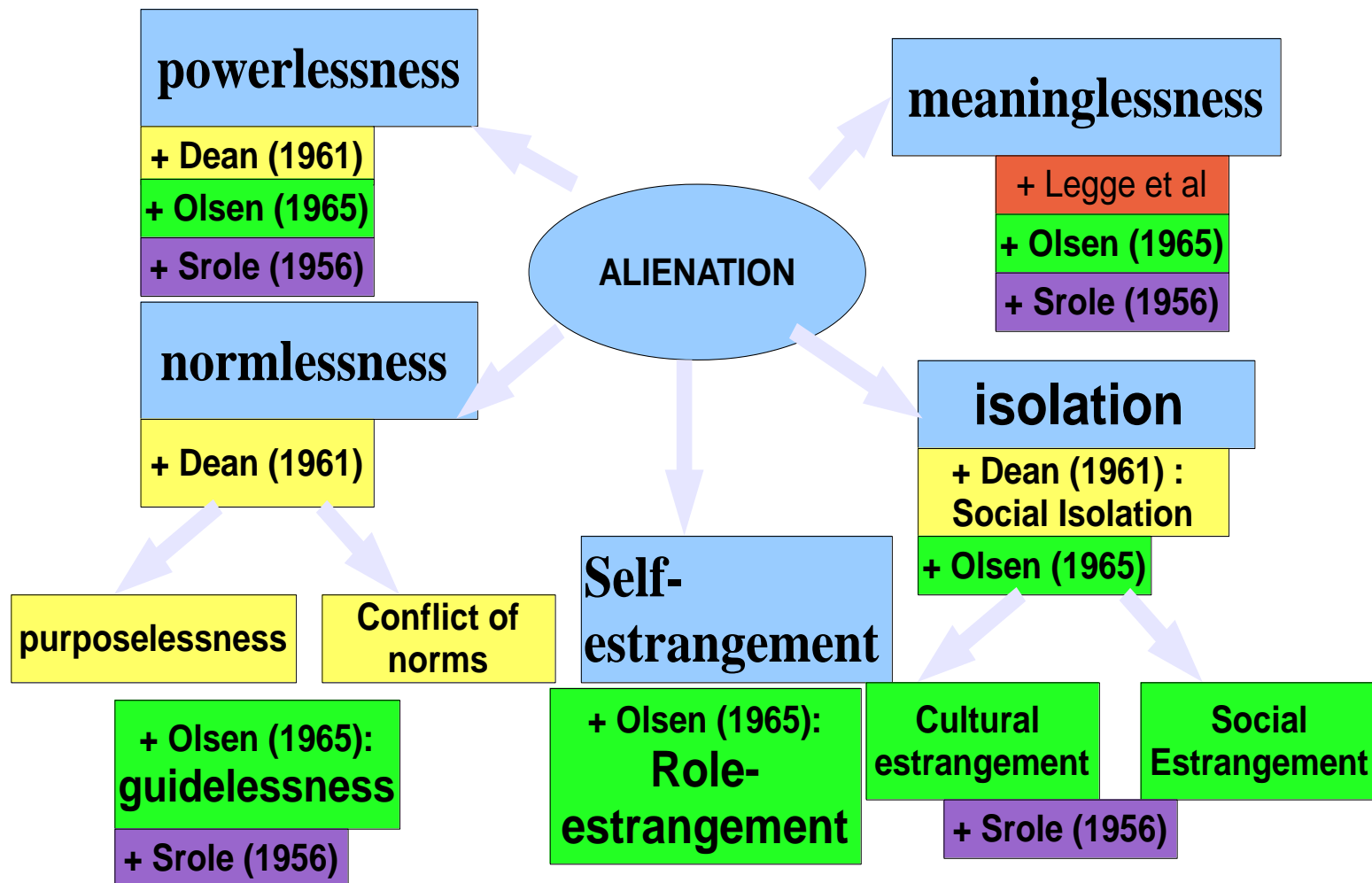
Disadvantages of the Existing Scales

- measuring **other phenomena** rather than anomie and alienation, as in case of Crumbaugh (1968) where individuals with neuroses are found out.
- **broadening the notion of psychological anomie** to feelings of anxiety, mistrust, and lack of the feeling of safety, pessimism and hopelessness (McIver, Risman, De Garcia).
- **Concepts of anomia and alienation are being mixed** (Srole 1956), there have hardly been any attempts to differentiate the concepts
- **Lack of control over agreement response set** (Srole 1956)
- **Absence of tests on reliability or validity** of various scales (McClosky & Schaar 1965)
- **Insufficient sample size** (Hyman, Wright & Hopkins 1960)
- **Inaccuracy** in constructing scales (Travis 1993)
- **Narrowing down the concepts** (in the scale used by Legge et al. 2008 the concept of anomia is shrunk to meaninglessness).

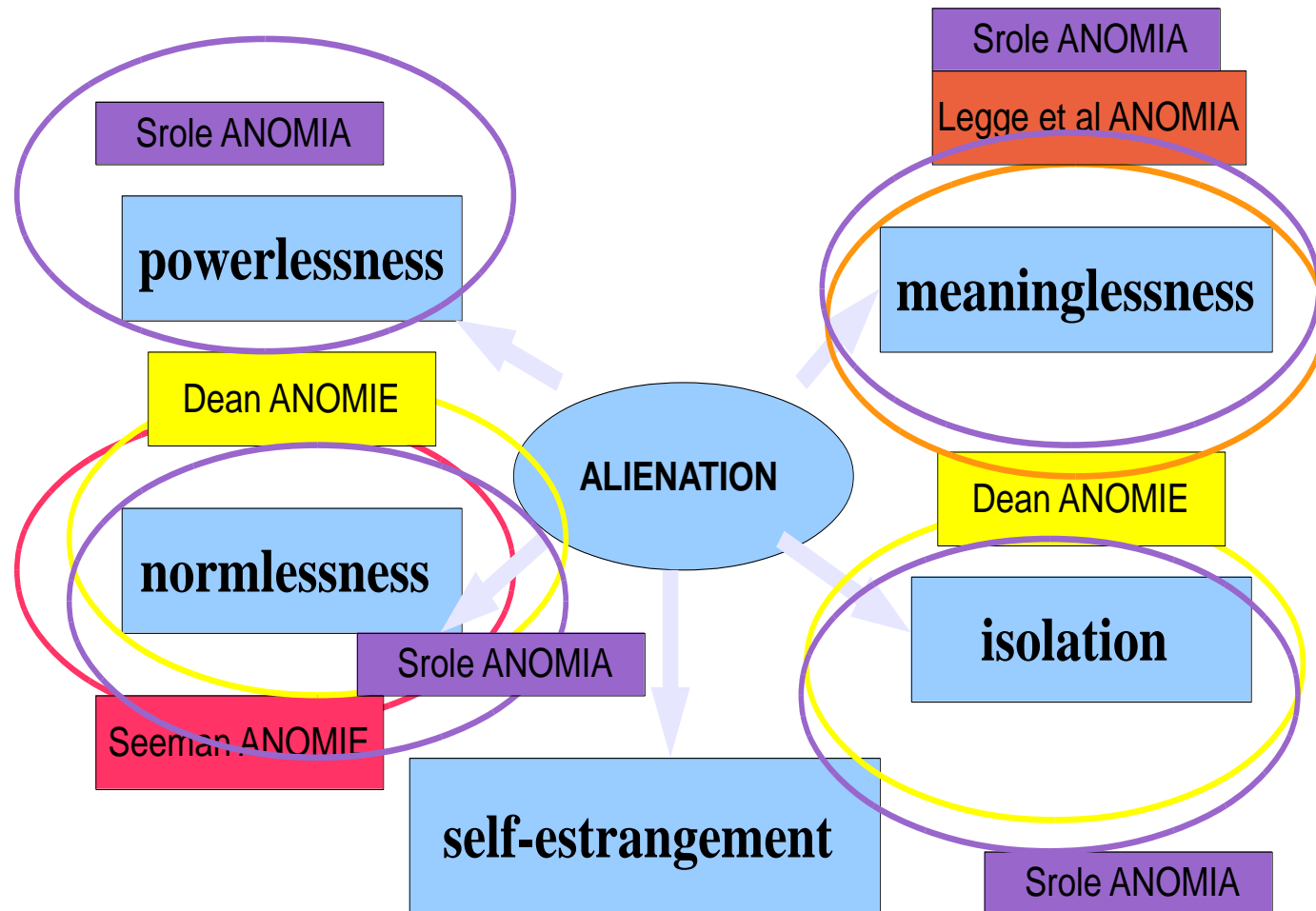
Seeman (1959): Alienation Scale



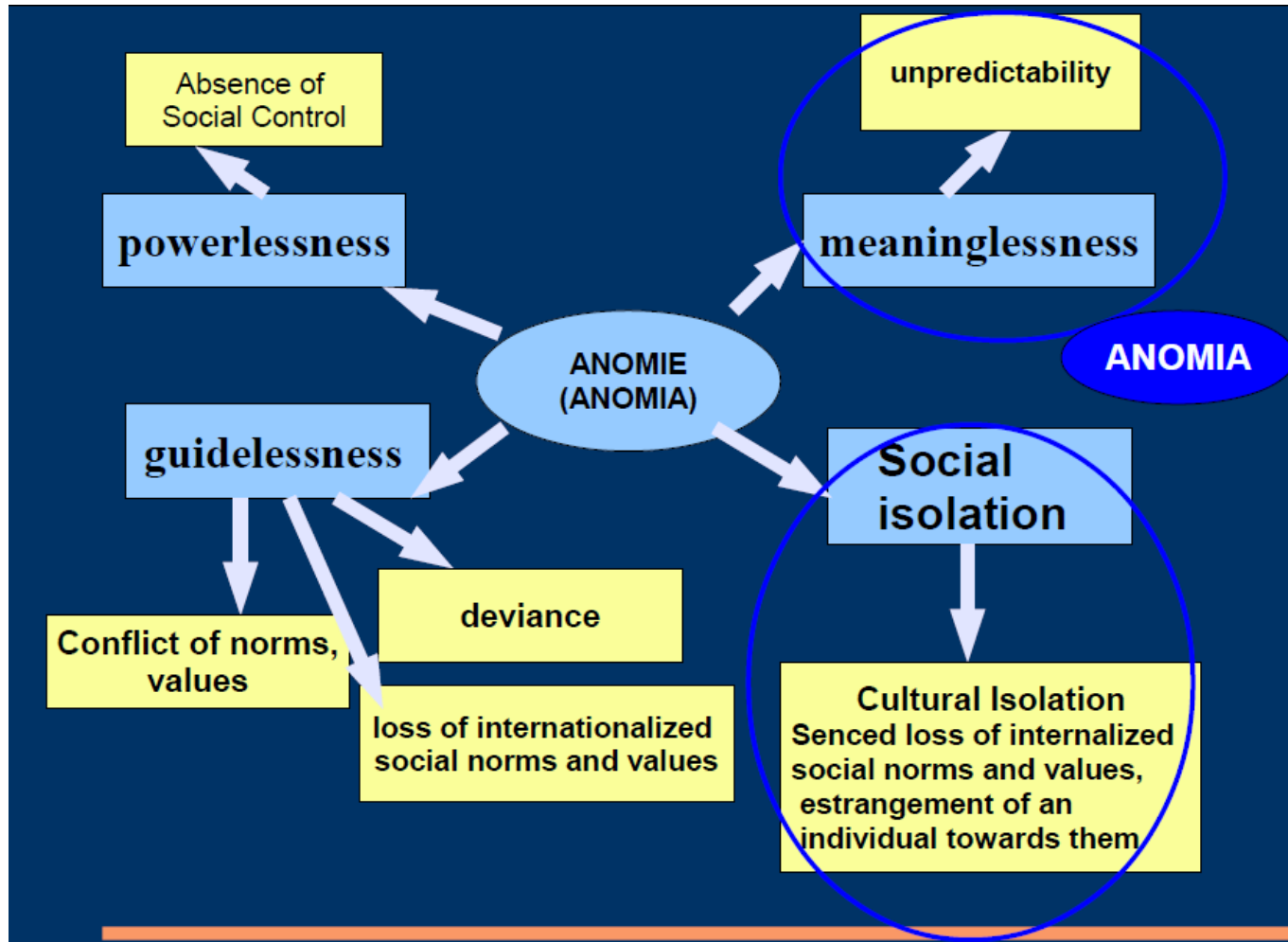
Implementation of the Scales



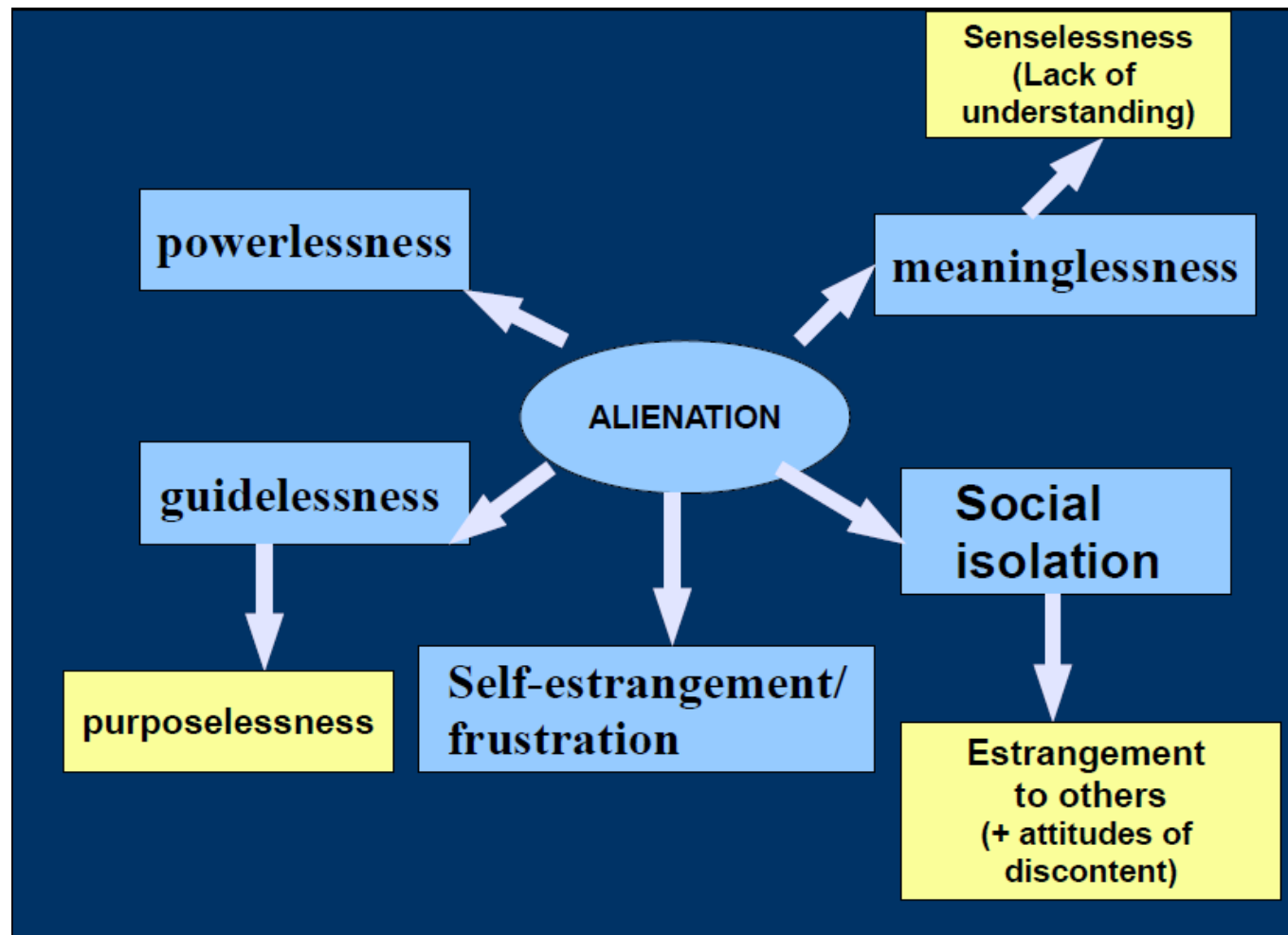
Anomie and Anomia within the Alienation-Scales



Operationalization of Anomie/Anomia



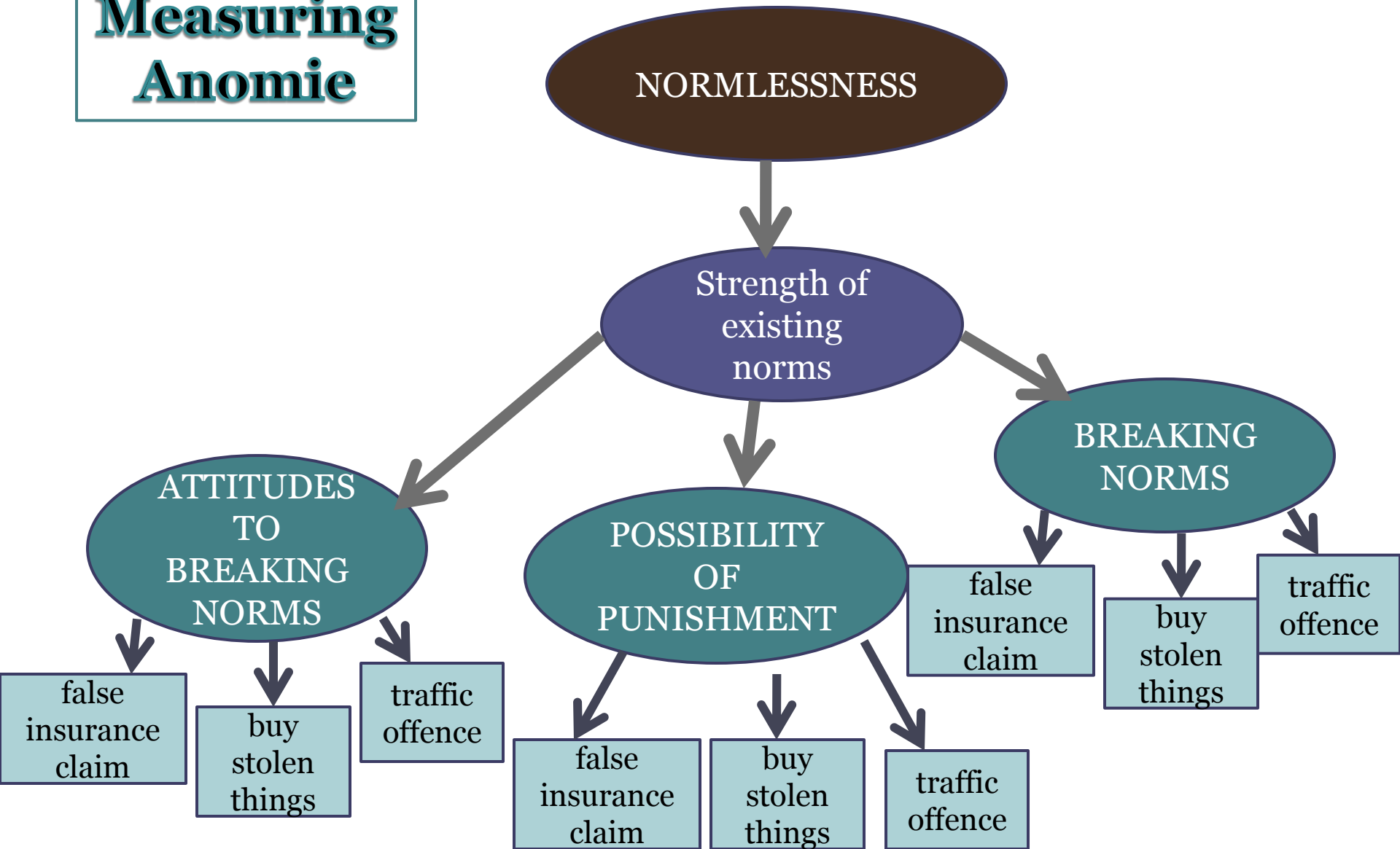
Operationalization of Alienation



Operationalization on the ESS 2010 Data Base

- The original framework was specified to narrower concepts
- The data base isn't covering all aspects of anomie and anomia
- Step: Construction of Indices for further implementation in OLS regressions

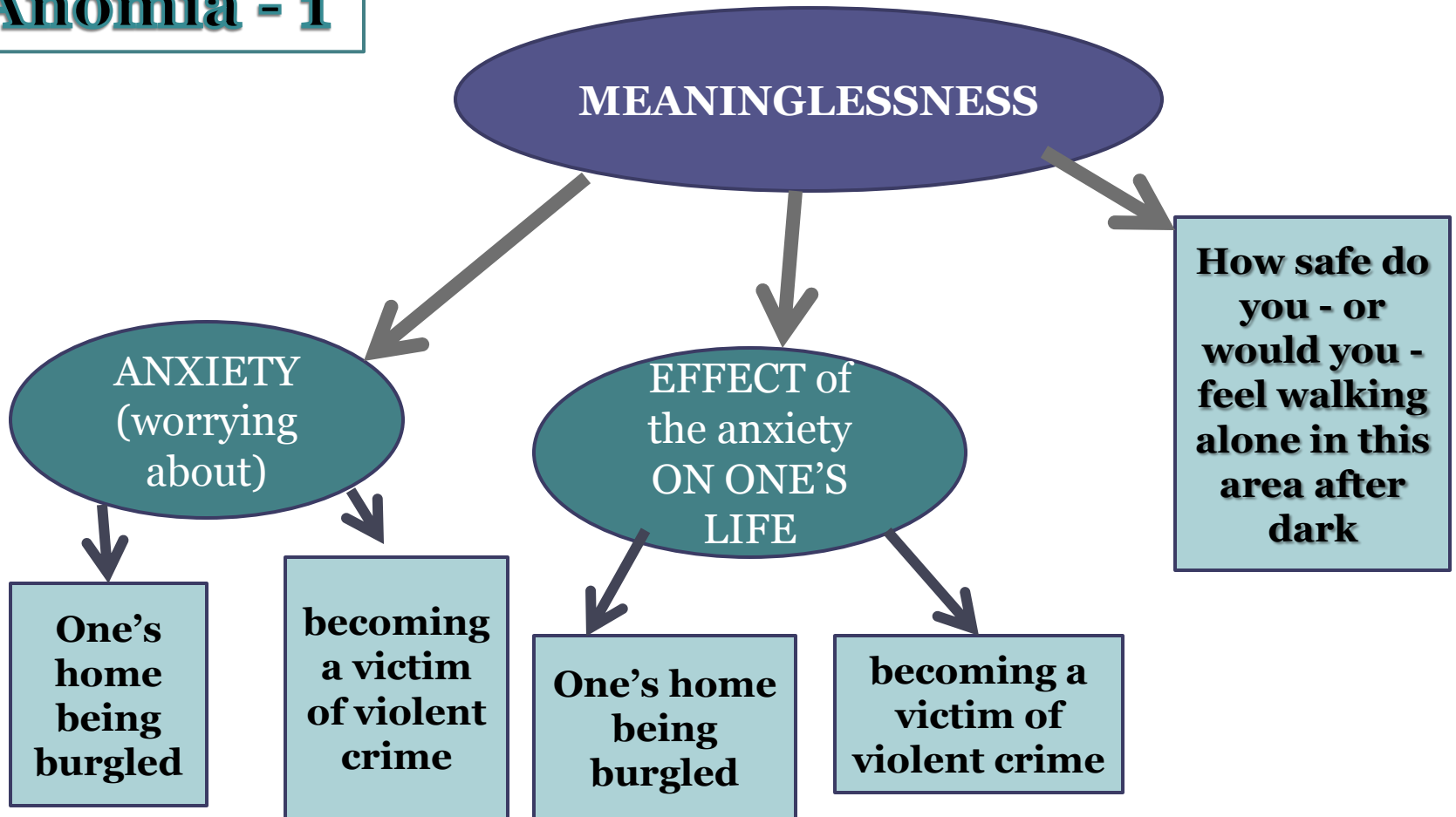
Measuring Anomie



PCA: 3 factors (61,3% of variance)

1. feeling social control (24,7%) - those feeling social control and thus expecting punishment for breaking the law. Relevant for all countries.
 2. aware of existing norms (21,5%) - estimations of people that it's wrong to make wrong insurance claim, buy stolen things, and commit traffic offence
 3. breaking norms (15%) - committing false insurance claim, buying stolen things and committing traffic offence.
- Second and third factors are different in Germany, Denmark, France and Norway.
 - In Ukraine the first factor is awareness of existing norms, and the second – feeling social control
 - traffic offence - the most problematic of the items (4th factor)
 - But for not a strong correlation between the items we consider them important theoretically (Cronbach's Alpha 0.612)
- => Decided to build indices upon items

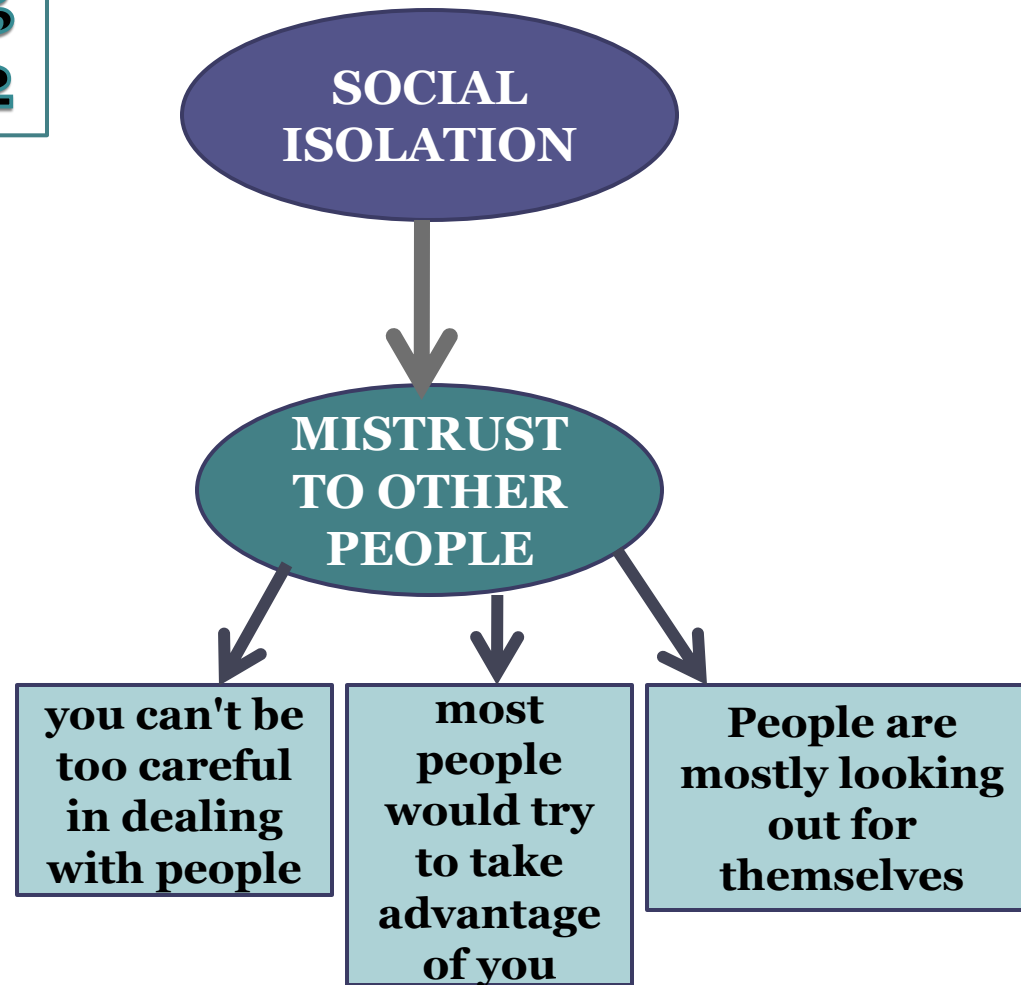
Measuring Anomia - 1



PCA: 1 factor (53,5% of the variance)

- one component
 - correlation between the items is sufficient (Cronbach's Alpha 0,768)
 - secondly all countries with the exception of Israel also are explained with one factor
 - Thus the five variables can be put into one index – meaninglessness – unsafety.
- => Decided to build an index upon items

Measuring Anomia - 2



PCA: 1 factor (69,2% of the variance)

- (Social isolation as mistrust to other people and dehumanization – close to alienation)
 - The items are also strongly correlated (Cronbach's Alpha 0,777) and build one factor – trusting/mistrusting other people
 - Relevant for all countries
- => Decided to build an index upon items

Meanings of the Indices

- Normlessness

All laws should be strictly obeyed (D35).

Doing the right thing sometimes means breaking the law (D36).

- Meaninglessness

Have you or a member of your household been the victim of a burglary or assault in the last 5 years (C5)?

- Social Isolation

Taking all things together, how happy would you say you are (C1)?

How satisfied you are with life as whole?

Using this card, how often do you meet socially with friends, relatives or work colleagues (C2)?

Compared to other people of your age, how often would you say you take part in social activities (C4)?

Using this card, please tell me how much of the time during the past week you felt lonely (G7)?

Further Steps

- It's supposed to see how the indices correlate with theoretically important variables and see how meaningful they are. Then they can be applied in OLS regressions to find out possible causes of anomie and anomia (socio-demographic indicators, attitude towards migrants (Travis 2003)).
- Later multilevel modelling can be applied. Otherwise with further analysis upon how much the theoretical framework is fitting the data a decision about possibility of carrying out structural equation modelling can be taken.

Thank you for your attention!