



HIGHER SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS
NATIONAL RESEARCH UNIVERSITY



Laboratory for Comparative Social Research

Anomie: Between Normlessness and Cognitive Disorientation

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- Theoretical framework: normlessness and meaninglessness
- EVS: towards an index of deviant attitudes at the individual level
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- Grateful: Chris Swader for the WVS 6 data for Russia

Upon relevance

- Which anomie? Anomie is understood and interpreted differently by various sociologists (Lamnek 1996: 108)
- Merton, who lay fundament to a overwhelming tradition in theoretical and empirical works on anomie, was hardly dealing with anomie directly (Gofman 2013)
- 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
- understudied: concept of meaninglessness

Two main approaches in empirical research

Survey of social (structural) anomie based on Merton's theory

- 1) Institutional anomie theory of Messner and Rosenfeld**
- 2) „strain theory“, where the key attention is paid to the tension between the social and cultural systems of the society**
- 3) Criminology studies**

(a dominant one)

Surveys on the individual anomie on the basis of the anomia concept / scale (Srole 1956)

+ survey on anomie within the concept of alienation (Seeman 1959, 1982, Olsen 1965)

- 1) «General Social Survey» (National Opinion Research Center (NORC), Chicago University)**
- 2) Longitudinal survey «Group-Focused Enmity», Bielefeld University (2002-2012)**

Research Questions

- What are the causes of anomie at the individual and country level?
- What are the sequences of anomie? Is it capable of predicting anomie at the individual/country level?
- Are the causes different at the individual and country level?
- How are normlessness and meaninglessness related to one another?

Model of Operationalization

ANOMIE

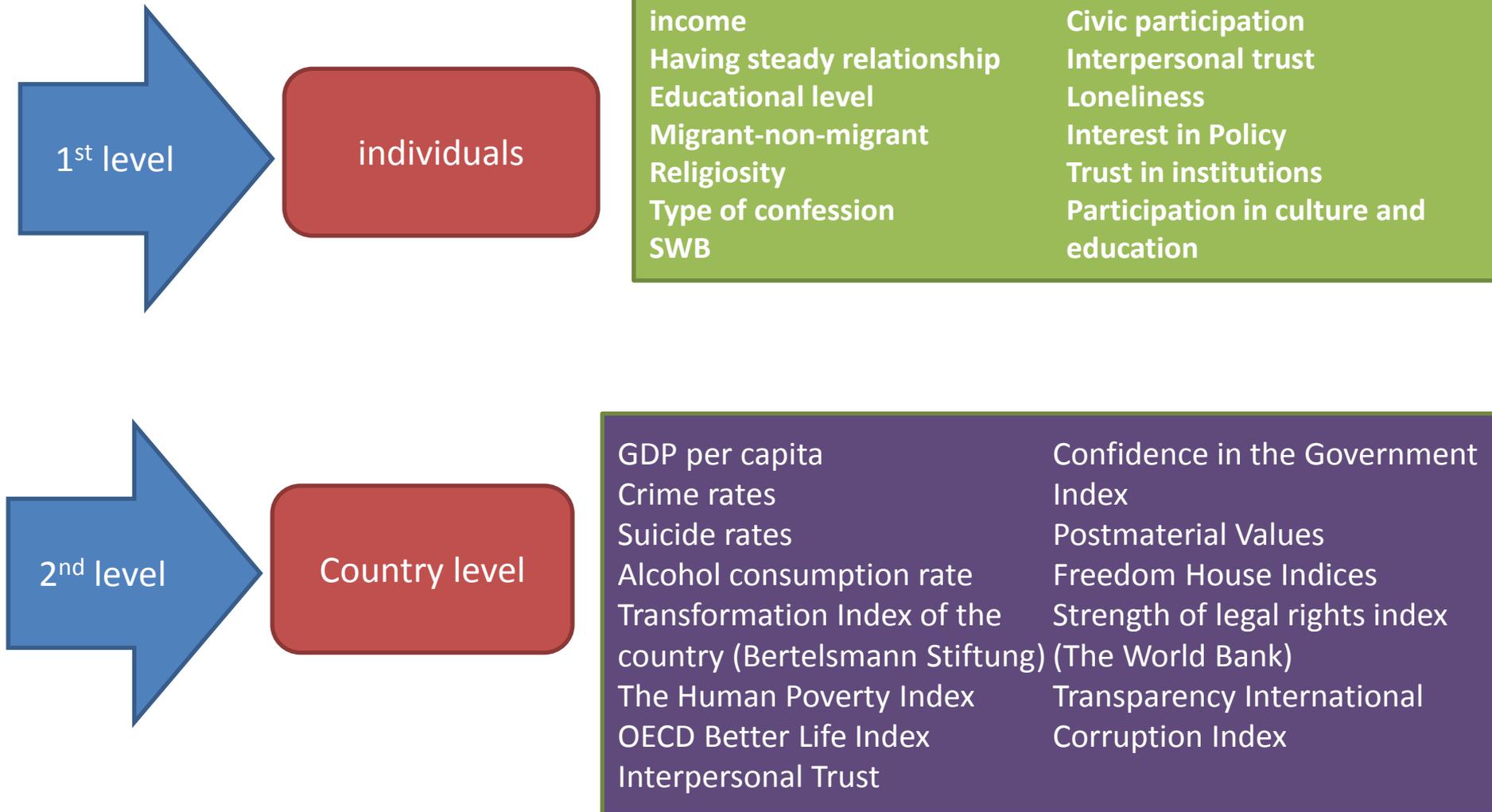
NORMLESSNESS

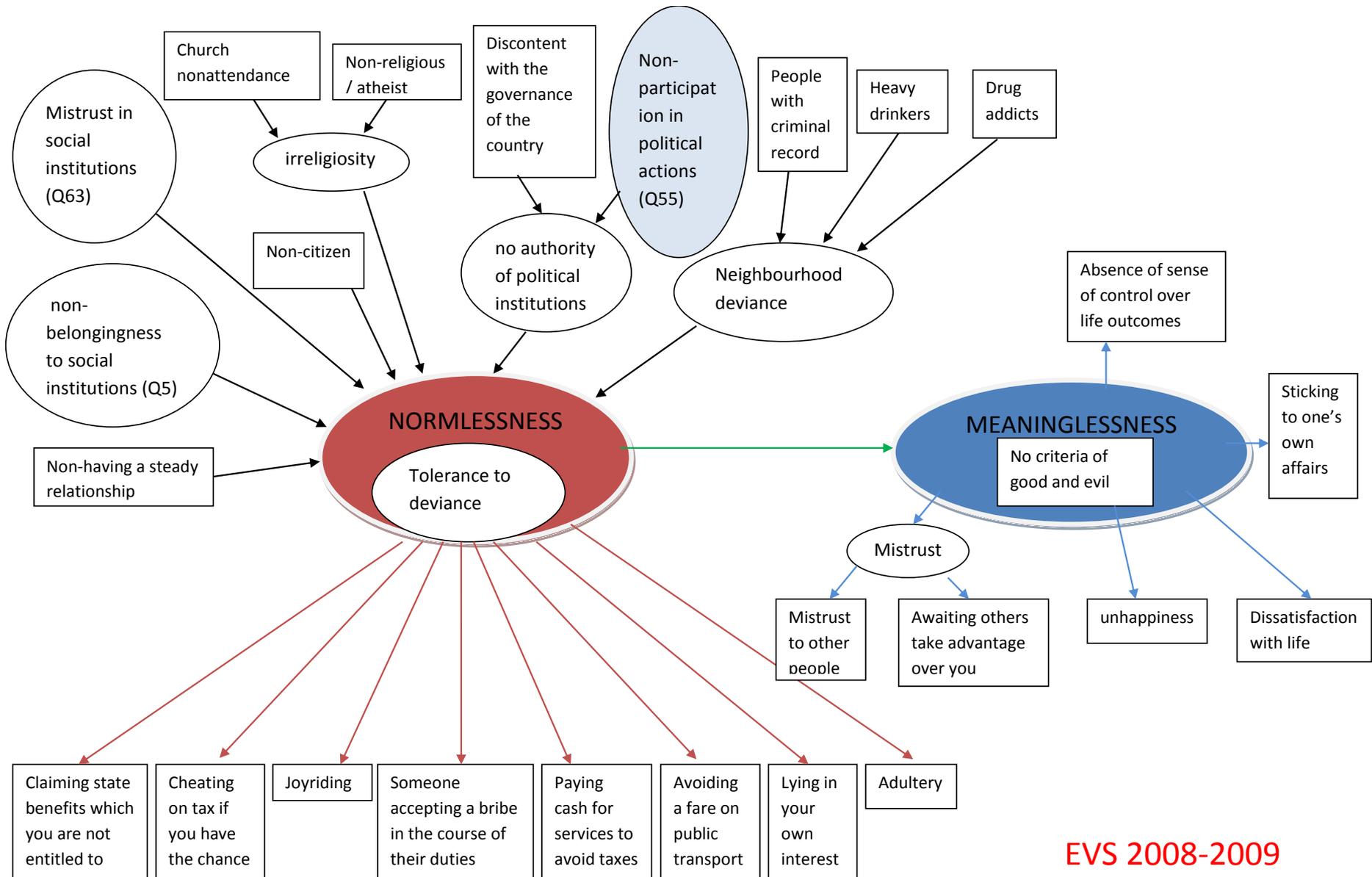
Traditional Durkheimian concept: absence of norms and values, weakening of the role of the normative and value regulation, when the society is incapable of restricting constantly growing desires of the individuals (Durkheim 1912)

MEANINGLESSNESS

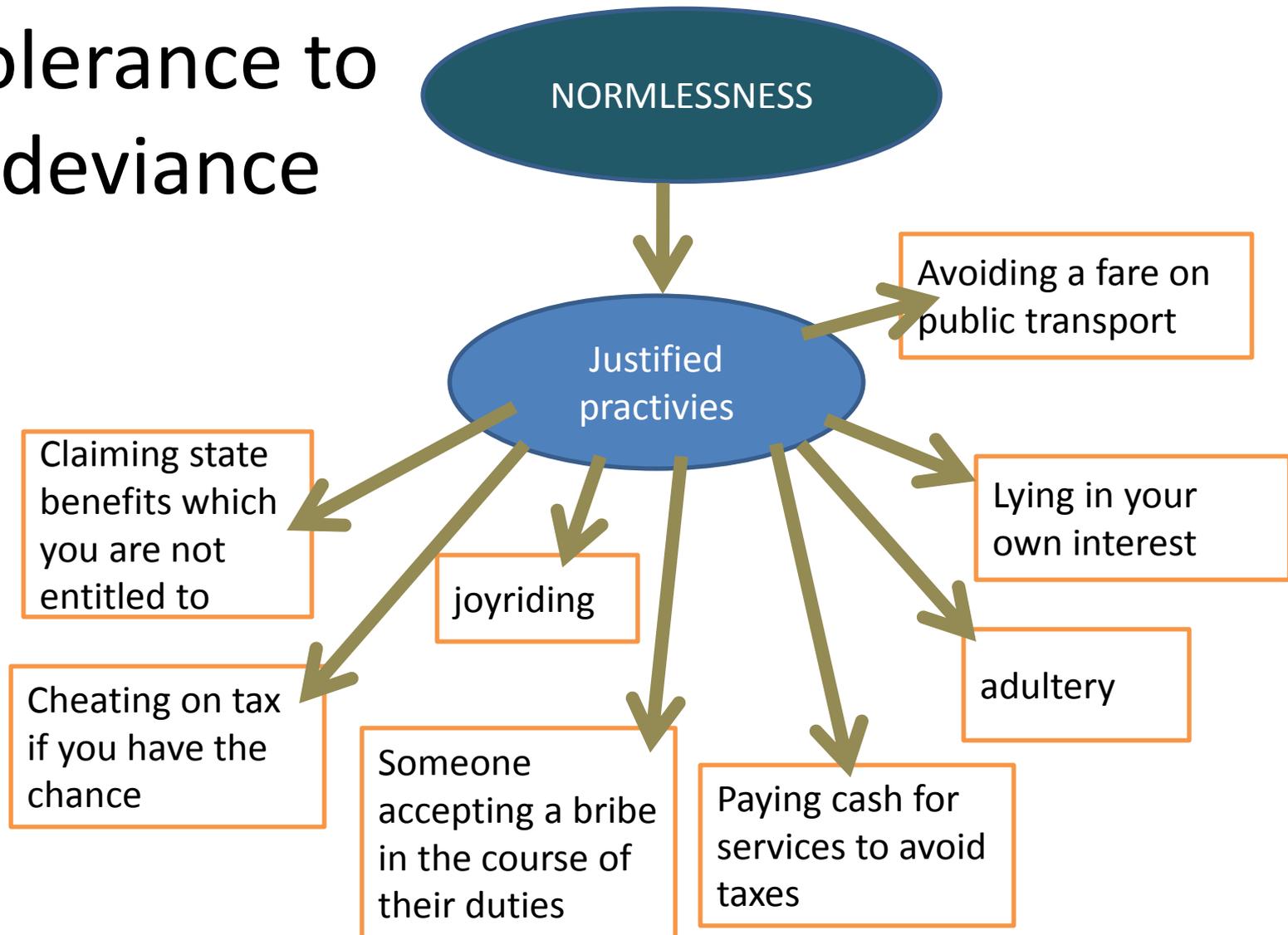
- Cognitive disorientation, devaluation of the importance of the previous experience, lower degree of the possibility of planning the future, dominance of situational identifications (Legge et al 2008: 253)
- Incapability for the individual to estimate
- невозможность для индивида определить, what to believe in, lack of the simplest standards of clarity in the process of decision making, as well as low predictability about the outcomes of actions (Seeman 1982: 786)

2-level model

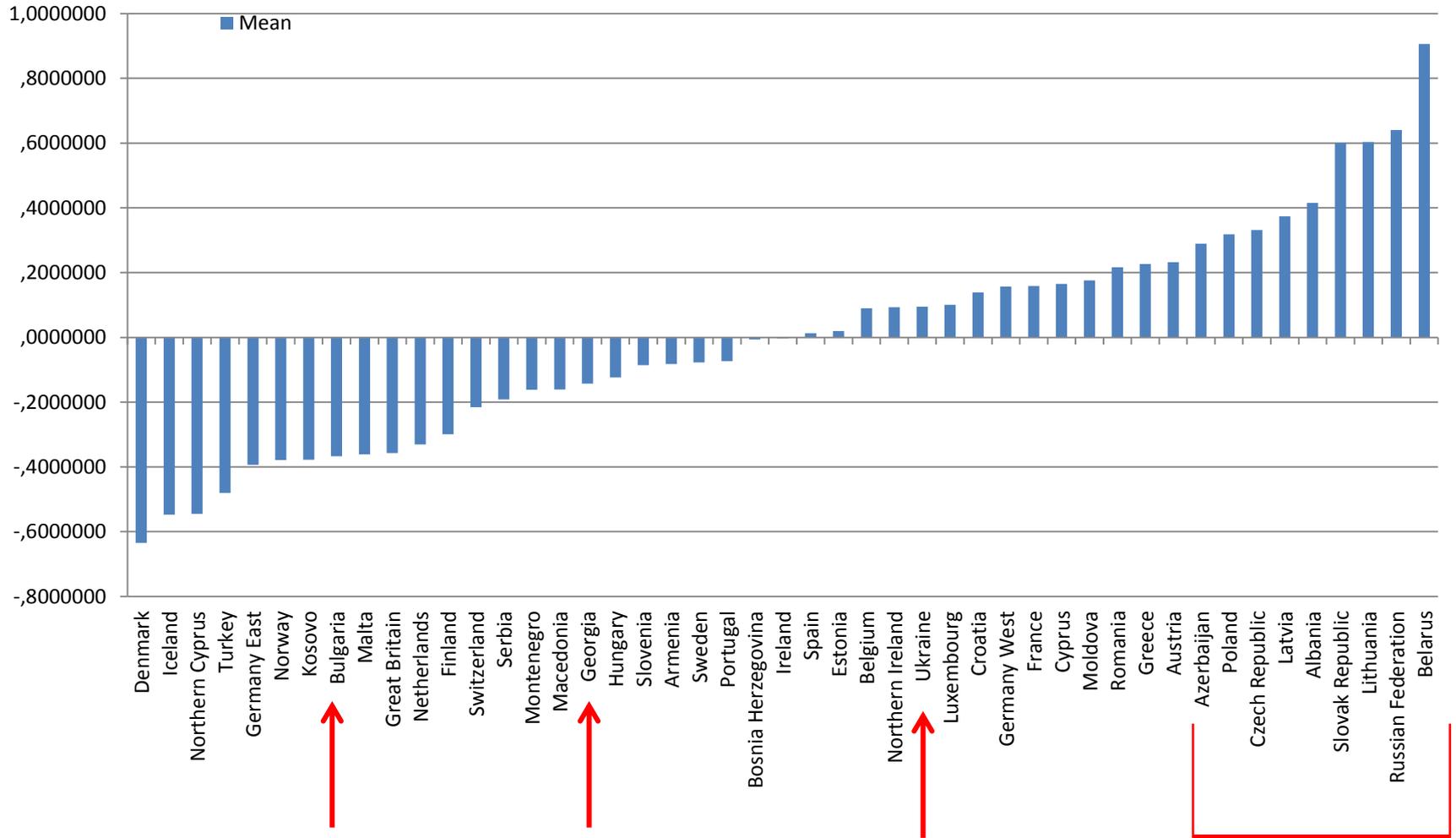




Index of tolerance to deviance



Index of tolerance to deviance



Problem: low R Square for individual level

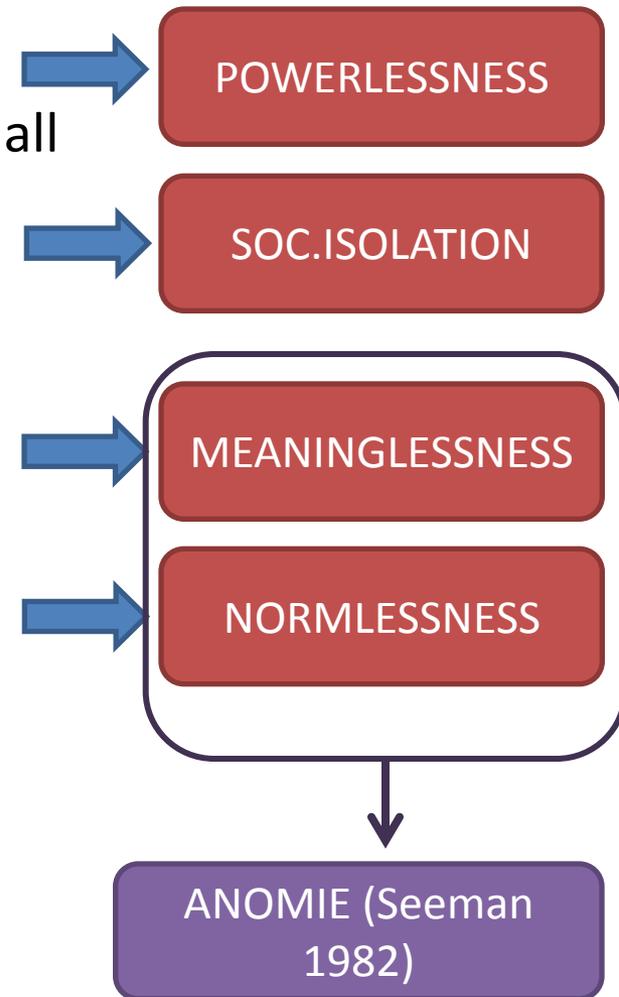
- Meaningful?
- Low R Square for individual level (when searching for causes of normlessness)

What if taking Anomie Scales?

- A better explanation?
- (WWS, 6) Russia

Anomie Scale (WWS, 6) Russia

- V58. To what extent do you agree with the statement: I don't have enough possibilities to make an influence on solving the problems we all face today.
- V59. To what extent do you agree with the statement: I often feel lonely
- V60. To what extent do you agree with the statement: Life has become so difficult that I often don't have any idea what I should do
- V61. To what extent do you agree with the statement: In order to move forward people often have to break rules
- V62. To what extent do you agree with the statement: I don't like my job



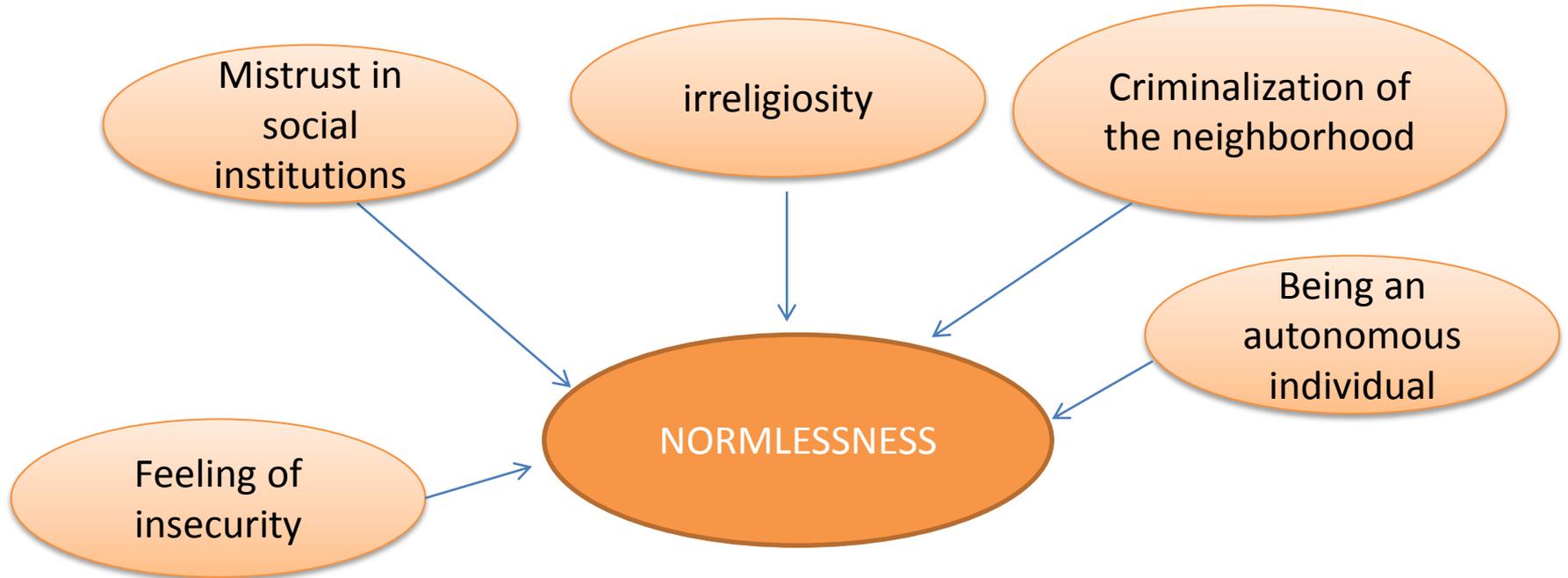
Normlessness <-> Meaninglessness

Lambda (for nominal scales)

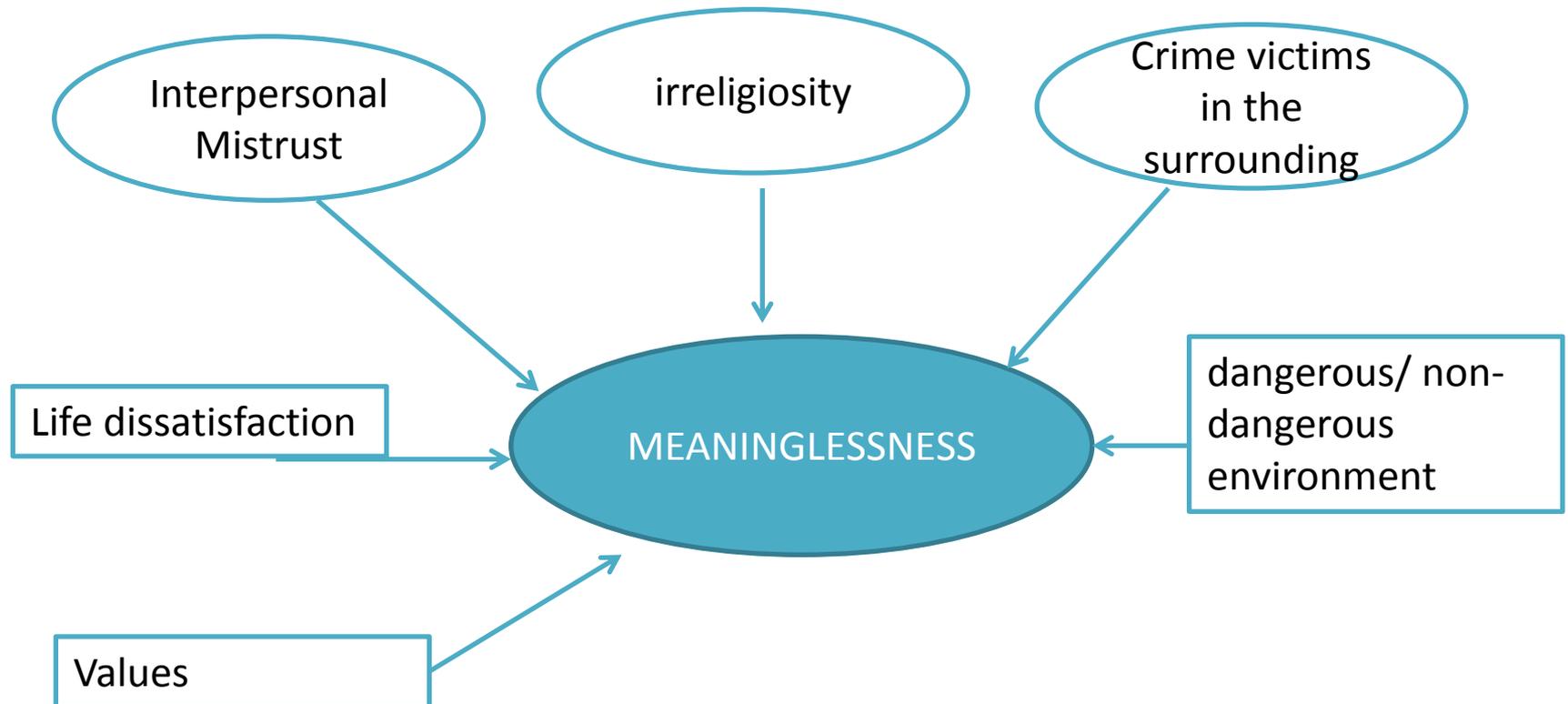
	Meaning	Value
Symmetric	0,046	0
Life has become so difficult that I often don't have any idea what I should do	0,056	0
In order to move forward people often have to break rules	0,034	0,007



Normlessness: Hypothesis



Meaninglessness: Hypothesis



what is contributing to the measurement of normlessness?

	B
(Constant)	4,501***
V142. trust in courts	-,144***
V155. Trust in UN	-,096***
V202. frequency of police interference in personal affairs	-,082***
V199. dangerous/ non-dangerous environment	-,120***
V145. trust in parliament	-,095**
V206. not going in the dark to protect oneself	-,055**
V82.means of achieving success in life, become rich	-,086**
V23.life satisfaction	-,038*
V24. trust in people	-,114*
V153. trust in humanitarian and charity organizations	,066*
V147. trust in universities	-,055
V149. trust in banks	,094**
V148. trust in big companies	-,070*
R2	.078



Is that different from the measurement of meaninglessness?

	B	
(Constant)	3,331***	
V23.life satisfaction	,089***	+
→ V207. Carrying a knife, a gun or any other weapon to protect oneself	-,099***	
V24. trust in people	-,178***	+
→ V143. trust in government	-,082**	
V199. dangerous/ non-dangerous environment	-,083**	
→ V202. frequency of police interference in personal affairs	-,036*	+
V138. Trust in mass media	,089*	
V142. trust in courts	-,068*	+
R2	0,067	

what is contributing to the measurement of meaninglessness?

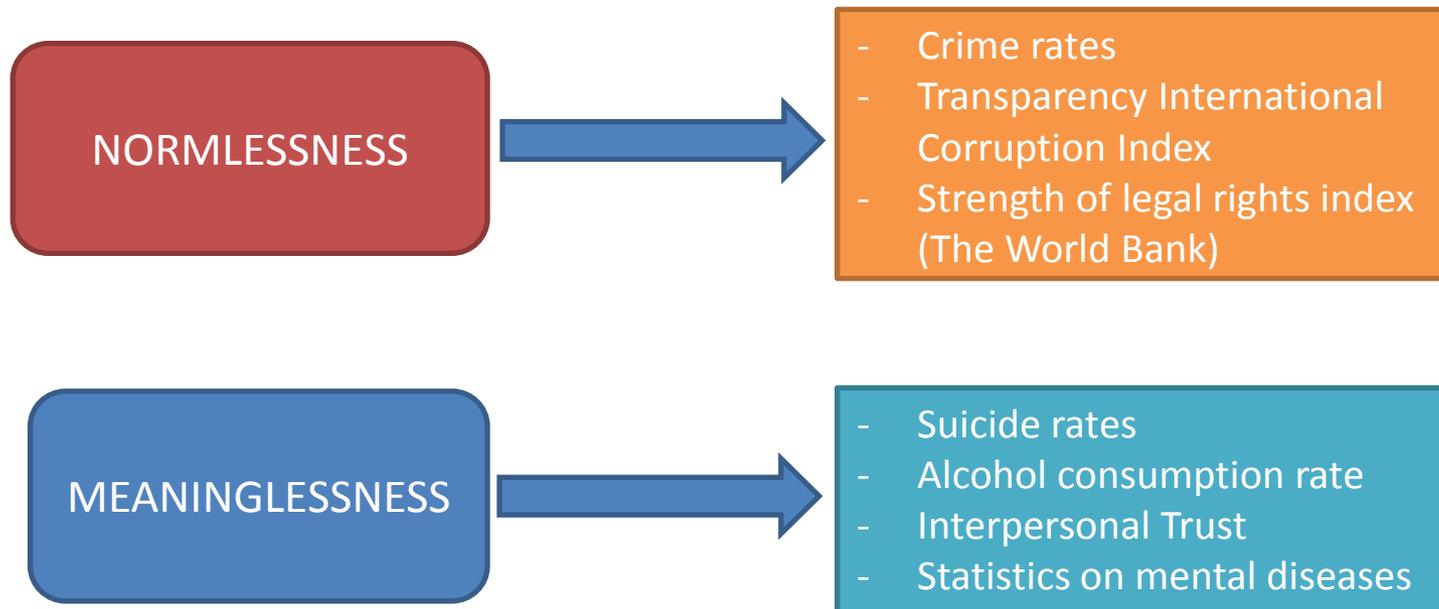
	B
(Constant)	3,389***
V133. trust strangers	-,079**
V135. trust representatives of other nationalities	-,114***
→ V218. oneself or family being afraid of crime	-,069*
V220. experiencing lack of money	,149***
→ V199. feeling safe or indangered at the place of living?	-,095**
R2	0,042

Is that different from the measurement of normlessness?

	B
(Constant)	3,778***
→ V131. trust in neighbours	-,104*
→ V133. trust strangers	-,109**
V135. trust in people of other nationalities	-,177***
V265. life quality in the last year (family).	-,057
V220. experiencing lack of money	,071
V199. dangerous/ non-dangerous environment	-,144***
V200. theft in the neighbourhood	-,091***
R2	0,044

Further Steps

- Aggregate for country level (EVS)
- Check possibility of predictability:



Thank you for your attention!