

EVIL INVARIABLES AND MORAL PANIC: CASE ESTONIA

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Abstract. The aim of the article is to introduce and provide evidence of using a novel type of indicators (evil invariables) when tackling the negative phenomena spreading in the population of Estonia. According to the working definition, evil invariable is “a numerical indicator, which describes the prevalence of a certain unfavourable social process and participants therein inadequately, because it has been constructed proceeding from hidden goals”. The article highlights the main characteristics of the evil invariables and the specificities of construing thereof; it also presents hierarchy of evil invariables, relying on size and their proportion to the whole population. The evil invariables are compared to moral panic, focussing on similarities and differences of those phenomena. At length three prominent evil invariables related to Estonia: the number of Russian citizens, the number of the HIV infected persons and the number of victims of trafficking in humans, were considered.

Keywords: evil invariables, moral panic, social construction, Estonia

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1. Introduction

The presentation of the contemporary world is in many aspects a conglomerate of diverse indicators, because only limited resources can be spared for assessment in order to delve into a given case. It is much more convenient to use a standard indicator or system of indicators, instead of comprehensive study of a complicated object and to treat it individually. Besides the purely economic indicators, those describing the social sphere at the level of country are gaining prominence. A concurrent phenomenon of the globalisation process is establishing ratings on the basis of which the countries are affixed a relative estimate. It is not difficult to notice that the grading of subjects (from men to states) has become a powerful mechanism, by the help of which those assessed are defined as excellent, non-problematic, partially generating problems or those in need of urgent intervention.

Ever more often the grading of countries is taking place on the basis of hard-to-grasp complex indicators and woe to the country, who finds itself in an untoward place in that grading.

Since 1991, the year Estonia regained independence, indicators of a novel type have been used while considering the negative phenomena teeming in the population, which attract wide media attention, are topic of academic research and subject of political debate. Certain numerical values (presented as variables) have been established for the seamy side of the social sphere. The said numerical values remaining stable for a long time, which I have named 'evil invariables', allegedly display the numbers of individuals having certain characteristics, while their rate of manifestation was asserted to imply quality of the collective body. However, they have not been obtained by way of proper survey and have been concocted by someone, either accidentally or purposefully. Those pseudo-indicators have always been used as related to social pathology or human distress, which either directly or metaphorically (Sontag 2001) depict the Estonian society. Via evil invariables a message has been transmitted that a certain social phenomenon should be taken as dangerous, significant and meriting larger attention than heretofore done.

Evil invariables are closely associated with moral panic, a social phenomenon, which was originally described as early as at the beginning 1970s (Cohen 1972; Young 1971). In case of moral panic the attention accorded to a certain problem and its bearers and the sense of threat becomes disproportionately large and is weakly related to actual rate of manifestation of the problem. With the help of indicators characterising the social sphere, it is possible to create a negative general background with regard to a certain country. Evil invariables are convenient to use for disparagement campaigns and in psychological attacks directed against countries, where the actual damaging of the targets takes place by the so-called soft manners. The term 'spinning' has been adopted, meaning feeding to the public through media the apparently reliable information, but actually serving someone's interests.¹ Such is one of the goals of regular use of evil invariables characterising Estonia – to create and to affix a general picture of the state, representing an unsustainable failure, endlessly tormented by various social controversies.

2. Main characteristics of evil invariables

The working definition of evil invariables is as follows: "Evil invariable is a numerical indicator, which describes the prevalence of a certain unfavourable social process and participants therein inadequately, because it has been con-

¹ Hence the term 'spin doctor' – a person employed by a political party to persuade journalists to put a favourable interpretation (= 'spin') on political development; a political press agent or publicist employed to promote a favourable interpretation of events to journalists. See (Roberts 2005).

structured proceeding from hidden goals". The said social process is associated with a group of people, constituting the minority of the whole population, to whose existence and problems the attention is directed. Focussing the attention always implies the failures of the larger community (e.g. the government representing the dominating population), its inadequate care regarding the minority. The evil invariable may occur as an absolute figure or ratio, it can also be a quantitative indicator for a certain temporal period (e.g. number of cases, individuals per annum), however it always characterises the quantity of individuals, displaying certain features in the whole population. The evil invariable can be used both at describing the existing situation and as a prognosis.

The evil invariable reflects the changes actually undergone by the society and its value transformations. Such indicators are also a reverberation of some real-time phenomena; however, the way how those phenomena are depicted is the distorting mirroring and not an adequate presentation of the situation. Evil invariable is related to cultural conflict, i.e. the topic is expected to trigger, in the given cultural (social) environment a strong emotional reaction. The area of use of evil invariables is always related to some sort of human distress, the level of spread, whereof showing the state of the social fabric. There are many conventional and historically changeable aspects to such indicators characterising social development. However, the pervading conception of them as symptoms of collective body dates back to the 19th century, when the concept of moral statistics was created (Friendly 2007). For instance, historically the attitude towards syphilis has changed, and towards cancer for that matter, which has mostly forfeited its semiotic implication. An important position has been occupied by AIDS, which like syphilis is an ailment contracted from the dangerous 'others', and which is considered a plague hitting those who have already been victimised (Sontag 2001).

The evil invariable operates independently, after originally being taken to use, it is reiterated from publication to publication, research to research, and its size is for a long time unchanged. The invariable is just there, all of a sudden, and it eases itself beside such indicators, which have been obtained by proper surveys. In case of evil invariable a large role is played by assessments, suppositions, and extrapolations. That aspect tends to go missing at their subsequent use, and evil invariable is then taken as the empirical fact of general knowledge. Mostly, no interest is later displayed to the exact original source or original user, and quite often the evil invariable proceeds with the so-called pendulum movement between the country of origin and the foreign countries. When used domestically, reference is made to some international organisation as an author; the same international organisation however may refer to the local origin of the data.

Invariables are regularly created from time to time and from place to place. However, only a limited number of invariables, those found efficient can be launched into the turnover. The main restriction is imposed by the size of the basic population, e.g. the majority of population might be involved, at some 'break-even point', through a certain number of minority groups, whereas the deviancy and norm would reverse the places. For instance a dozen minority groups, each sized

10% of the total population, would involve ca. 100% i.e. practically the whole population. This situation, which can be dubbed *Midsomer phenomenon*², runs counter to the sound mind and logic. The second restriction applies when the distinguishing feature of the minority group is in relief, and can be easily ascertained. The third restriction is related to reciprocal competition of topics or domains. Some topics will of necessity lose their importance, when new ones arise, because the active capacity for attention of the public is restricted.

In case of an evil invariable, it is mostly not possible to unambiguously say, whether or not it is the indicator of national statistics. Sometimes data are transposed into national statistics without adequately verifying their quality, trying to pretend that the statistics was collected on the national level. Evil invariable cannot be easily corroborated or refuted, because the related phenomena lack firm borderlines, as a rule, and its elements are impossible or very hard to demarcate, by leaving out the irrelevant elements. In case of evil invariable the borderline between the number of incidents and number of individuals, who are related to a certain phenomenon, becomes fuzzy (for instance in one year, several persons can fall victim to trafficking in human beings once, one person can fall victim several times or several persons several times). Evil invariable has no dynamics, which would associate with the internal development of the phenomenon, nor can one present for evil invariable persuasive indirect confirmations, related to a process taking place in the population. Evil invariable seems to stand separately from other indicators, and other related phenomena do not provide confirmation to the invariable.

The progenitors of the figures used as evil invariable are often anonymous or unreliable as experts. An evil invariable can be originally introduced also by a monopolist possessor of the information, whose case cannot be objectively verified or refuted by the others. Neither is it entirely impossible that evil invariable comes into being accidentally, that someone takes to use an incorrect numerical indicator, which later starts to circulate on its own. In a general case the process of creation of the evil invariable follows a certain pattern: first, by logical analysis the problem is established, which must be identifiable, and occur in a certain area (e.g. homeless children, abused sexually by perverts coming from rich countries or being of local origin). That problematic domain must be topical and there must be a high probability to obtain monetary means, subsidies, and research grants to proceed with it. The main contractor should have been concerned with such or similar field earlier (an international organisation programme or pressure group). However, it is indispensable to find a local efficient subcontractor, who is ready to identify the problem in place (e.g. non-profit organisation, research group, independent researcher). In case of need, the efforts of local subcontractors should be underpinned by international experts, whose fees will constitute a substantial part of the whole budget of the project.

² Derived from the popular TV serial “Midsomer Murders”, which is said to have ended because after the years of regular murders in Midsomer settlement the local residents had just ‘petered out’.

After the project has ended it is usually found that the problem really exists and in order to solve it, more strenuous efforts than theretofore must be applied. Here the so-called 'rule of allowance for a negative outcome' does not apply, because at a negative outcome the persons involved in the project would be blamed for bluff. The main contractor makes a very clear indication to subcontractors of a non-permissibility of such a situation (for instance the sexually abused street children or other victims must be located whatever the cost). Hence a new evil invariable has been created, *a` la*: "In Estonia, sexually abused are ___ children per year", "In Estonia, ___ women per year suffer domestic violence", "From Estonia, ___ girls and women per year are smuggled abroad as sex slaves". The resources necessary to solve the problem generally exceed many times the funds expended on its identification. To get the necessary means allocated, international political or moral pressure is exerted on the local authorities. Quite often the international organisation first earmarks the subsidy necessary to launch the programme, however obligating the target country to thence handle the domain.

3. Hierarchy of evil invariables for Estonia

The values of evil invariables manifest a peculiar 'mystique of numbers', because they tend to be on certain fixed levels. An evil invariable must carry a message, and it must have semiotic implication. The value of invariables must be selected so that the indicator would be significant, telling and that at first glance, no logical suspicion would rise with regard to its adequacy. In case of evil invariables, we usually have on hand an inverse proportionality – the larger the invariable, the lesser the deviancy; moving towards the lower level invariables, the depth of deviancy increases.

3.1. The first base level

Invariables of this level have supreme importance for the whole population not so much due to certain specificity, but first and foremost due to a large number of individuals with such characteristics. The order of magnitude of those invariables is approximately 10% of the whole adult population in Estonia, i.e. ca 100 000 people. Such individuals are not outstanding *per se*, but their numbers are significant, they occur *en masse*. The existence of groups of such individuals implies, to all evidence the need to take the phenomenon more into account or to take significantly more into account the individuals representing it, because they may have an existential meaning for the whole population.

One of the most recurrently used indicators of that level is the number of Russian Federation citizens living in Estonia, whose size is suggested to be 100 000 persons. Insofar as that topic has been on agenda since the restoration of independence of Estonia, the number of Russian citizens living in Estonia has been constantly presented as a stable figure (Postimees 03.07.1996). Although various processes are underway (e.g. the number of Estonian citizens of Russian

descent is increasing, part of Russians are leaving Estonia, the persons of advanced age depart, the children of parents of Russian origin, having come of age, obtain citizenship etc.), which should logically move that number to either direction, the number of Russian citizens in Estonia remains constant. That is incantatory as a mantra repeated from year to year, without anyone taking the trouble to give a more serious thought to how that can be and what such stability might mean.

Amazingly, that figure cannot be either confirmed or refuted due to penumbra surrounding its origin. The Russian authorities have never precisely told the Estonian officials who specifically are the Russian citizens living in Estonia, the references to the said figure come from Russia while objectively there is no sound possibility to verify the pertinence of that number. Relying on indirect ways to assess that figure, we will not find adequate corroboration. Rather the other way round: the indirect data imply the smaller number of Russian citizens in Estonia, than the version of the Russian side. For instance the number of voters in Estonia at Russian elections has remained in the recent years within 15–25 thousand, which is an exceptionally low turnout at polls (25%) and does not coincide with Russian general turnout at polls or turnout at polls in other countries (e.g. in Latvia the respective share has been nearly 70%). Neither is it conceivable why in Latvia there are only 17 000 Russian citizens eligible to vote, and in Estonia there are allegedly 110 00 (Sõnumileht-Õhtuleht 03.03.2008). It is not altogether logical: several times fewer Russian citizens live in Latvia than in Estonia, in view of the significantly larger absolute number of Russians living in Latvia. Another indirect way of assessment is the number of residence permits - all nationals of foreign countries must have a valid residence permit to stay in Estonia. As estimated on the basis of those permits it has been suggested, for instance, that as of 1 October 2007, there were 93 133 Russian citizens holding a residence permit residing in Estonia (Ärileht 01.09.2008). Under statistics of the Citizenship and Migration Board, the valid residence permits have been issued to the total of 97 572 Russian citizens as of 02.07.2009 (Citizenship and Migration Board).

There are three main possibilities to account for such divergence of figures. First, very many local inhabitants holding the Russian citizenship have also taken the Estonian citizenship. Because the Estonian laws preclude the double citizenship, those people do not dare disclose it and do not participate at parliamentary elections. The second explanation may be that Russia has for some time already been involved in generous distribution of citizenships to persons residing in neighbouring countries. The Russian authorities themselves do not know how many such citizens have been created and how many such people are officially aliens without citizenship for the Estonian authorities. The third possibility is simpler and according to it the Russian side bluffs, presenting similar high figures of Russian citizens living in Estonia. All such abstruse claims imply the possibility that it is not an indicator characterising a realistic, objective situation but an evil invariable. The goal of using that evil invariable is to show the high level of split in the Estonian society by ethnicity and the low capability of the local state

authority at integrating the Russian-speaking population into the society. Hence the 'conclusion': efficient measures and recommendations are needed, which can be delivered by western and eastern experts, who are experienced in creating multicultural societies and so on and so forth. The only way to do away with the aforementioned evil invariable is bringing the national statistics of the Estonian population to the level, which excludes further speculations on topics of the great numbers of Russian citizens.

A further evil invariable of the same level describes the present Estonian economical position and its perspectives. In connection with the economic crisis, by the end of this year (2009) over 100 000 unemployed are predicted – this is the allegation endlessly reiterated in media in connection with the economic slump. Although the unemployment has significantly grown, nobody knows exactly to which level it will eventually climb, however such numbers of the unemployed are constantly ventilated (Postimees 13.03.2009). Emphasis on that figure is like a refrain in deliberations on the topic of slump, which is supposed to persuade everybody in the inevitability of such a result. Curiously, in the local media a similar allegation was in place already before the economic crisis set in. "In the labour market of the beginning of century there were over 100 000 working age persons, whose professional skills went unused due to economic depression and whose predominant sustenance scenario had become the life supported by scanty unemployment allowance and sustenance allowance", as stated by the economics commentator (Eesti Päevaleht 30.01.2008). It means that according to the first allegation the situation was bad already 10 years ago, according to the second one the situation was just going to become worse, while the unit is the same, i.e. 100 000 persons. There are no persuasive arguments presented to support such figures.

Upon data of the UNO sub-organisation World Food Programme, concerned with the aid to hungry persons in developing countries, there were 100 000 undernourished persons in Estonia in 2008. On the "Hunger map" Estonia was painted yellow, other European countries and also Russia were marked in green, noting the better situation therein.³ As said by the representative of Estonian FAO (Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations) the experts of FAO themselves calculate the share of malnutrition, taking into account the production, trade and needs of persons in the respective geographical location (Eesti Päevaleht 05.03.2008). It can be claimed with large probability that the source data of massive malnutrition of local persons could originate only from Estonia.

3.2. The second base level

The second base level for evil invariables is ca. 1% of the adult population, i.e. for Estonia ca. 10 000. Compared to the previous level, in the given case it is a matter of serious social deviancy. Collective body is destructively affected, as is the disproportionately large numbers of individuals also by the depth of their problems. Examples of evil invariables of that level may be: the number of

³ By now the map has been updated and Estonia is of the same colour as the rest of Europe.

intravenous drug addicts in Estonia (The Estonian Drug Monitoring Centre 2005), the informers of KGB in Estonia at the end of the Soviet period, the number of women of Estonian and Russian origin, who worked in Finland as prostitutes at the end of the 1990s (Jonsson and Lidberg 2001).

The best known case of that level, with large probability related to creating an evil invariable and its active use in Estonia, is linked to the so-called AIDS epidemic, combated by innumerable organisations and interest groups both in Estonia and in the whole world. It is hard to ascertain precisely retroactively when the epidemic spread in Estonia of the HIV was first taken up as an issue. Under data of CIA fact reference book, the estimated 1.1 % of the whole Estonian adult population was infected with HIV/ AIDS as early as in 2001. By 2005 that indicator had risen to 1.3% of adult population and in 2007 the level of spreading of the virus in Estonia was assessed to be the same. The absolute number of virus carriers is suggested to be the stable ca. 10 000 (CIA 2007). The level of spreading is seconded by UNAIDS working under the aegis of the UNO, upon whose data by 2005 there were registered 10 000 HIV positive persons in Estonia, constituting 1.3% of adults (aged 15–49) (UNAIDS 2005). According to the data of the Euro HIV (European Centre for the Epidemiological Monitoring of AIDS), the number of HIV infected persons in Estonia may have reached 10 000 as early as in 2004 (EuroHIV 2004). Hence, looking at the above data there seems to prevail a relative consensus that in Estonia, by the middle of the first decade of this century, there were ca 10 000 HIV positive persons, which allows to consider Estonia as the area of the most explosive spread of HIV/AIDS in the world.

It may be said relatively confidently that the first person infected with HIV was registered in Estonia in 1988. A peaceful period followed, because in 1988–1999 there were a total of 96 new HIV-infection cases registered in Estonia, i.e. every year up to a dozen cases. In the 2nd half of 2000 there was a dramatic rise regarding the new HIV-infected, caused by a steep rise in the number of HIV-infected as from autumn 2000. The Ministry of Social Affairs announced a concentrated epidemic of HIV/AIDS on 14 February 2001. The figures, which have been presented for overview in Table 1, tell us however a different story. As of September 2009 there were 7182 HIV carriers registered in Estonia, which is, after a lapse of 10 years from the beginning of the epidemic, still below 10 000 cases. The first case of AIDS was diagnosed in 1992 and by 2001, 28 patients of AIDS were registered in Estonia. As early as in 2002 one could read for example in *Terviseleht* (Health Gazette), examining the AIDS epidemic in Estonia (Note that it did not deliberate on the HIV spread, but the AIDS epidemic [sic]), that in May of that year 2350 HIV infected were registered, which according to the opinion of the locally most known activist of HIV/AIDS was to be certainly doubled. Such multiplication was yet a modest estimate, because according to the allegation presented by the same author there had been “a hypothesis, which one was to multiply by ten” (*Terviseleht* 2002, no. 22).

In actual fact, with cases allegedly registered by today, serious problems related to statistical correctness must be acknowledged. For a long time the single

source where data were obtained on HIV spread were anonymous AIDS Testing Sites, which did not collect objective information on their clients. By arranging tests anonymously, it is not possible to characterise the size of HIV positive population, because the figures of diagnosed cases and the number of individuals get confused. Just imagine anonymous Site, where condoms and syringes are distributed free of charge and where the whole information about the clients relies solely on their own statements. It is obvious that the statistics created in that way characterises basically the work volumes of the Sites, as the employees see necessary to report it and nothing else. A similar situation has in principle continued until now.⁴ The supervision over epidemic is the responsibility of primary diagnostic groups, located in all the country's larger medical facilities and the reference laboratory in Tallinn. The latter brings together the data obtained from various places. However, that laboratory actually lacks an opportunity for serious verification of quality of (earlier) source data.

Not a single pessimistic prognosis made at the beginning of the current century has come true and reliable empirical evidence about the epidemic devastating the local population cannot be found. As it is, a large-scale AIDS morbidity and mortality in Estonia a few years after the epidemic broke out, was predicted. When viewing AIDS as something more than a clinic construction, infection with HIV is the first stage of the process of disease, followed by being taken sick with AIDS, and as the third stage - inevitable death, because the disease is incurable. By now AIDS has been diagnosed in Estonia in the total of 274 persons and 212 persons have died of that disease. There is no positive correlation between HIV, AIDS and the deaths caused by that disease and until now, no massive morbidity and mortality has been fixed. On the contrary, in recent years a significant trend in decline of registration of new HIV cases can be observed, probably due to firstly by larger organisation and checking of the said domain.

It must be admitted that there is no sufficiently reliable information for at least 10 000 persons with HIV in Estonia and to all evidence, it is an evil invariable. It has obviously been created by activists in the area (e.g. NGO AIDS Prevention Centre) with a view to more effective combating of the phenomenon and to procuring more budgetary means and means of foreign funds to tackle the problem. The said invariable has contributed to securing such means, however internationally damaging thereby the image of Estonia. The author would like to repeat at this juncture that he has not the least intention to play down the existence of the problem in the world and Estonia; the way how the epidemic has been treated in case of Estonia until now does not however meet the requirements of scientific correctness. Fortunately the situation seems to be improving. Starting from 1 October 2009 all family physicians and specialist doctors are obliged to fill out an

⁴ Testing the donor blood and transplanted organs (on the basis of Prevention and Control of Contagious Diseases Act) are, however, mandatory. All foreigners, applying for a temporary residence permit in Estonia, are obliged to undergo the HIV test. The data obtained in that manner on HIV positive persons are marginal and do not significantly affect the general picture.

electronic HIV notice,⁵ which will terminate, after a certain time the speculation on the spread of HIV and AIDS in Estonia. On the basis of the notices, the register of HIV positive persons and AIDS patients will be created and the need to use evil invariable will end. It is only by maintaining a correct register that the extent of the spread of the virus can be estimated at sufficient accuracy and realistic measures can be planned for control and prevention of that disease in Estonia.

Table 1. HIV, AIDS and mortality in the disease in 1988–2009

Year	HIV	AIDS	Deaths
1988	1		
1989	3		
1990	8		
1991	8		
1992	9		
1993	5		
1994	11		
1995	11		
1996	8		2
1997	10		3
1998	10		3
1999	12	23- total of those taken ill starting from 1992	1
2000	390	3	3
2001	1474	2	3
2002	899	4	3
2003	840	11	7
2004	743	23 (26)	21
2005	621	30	33
2006	668	34 (38)	49
2007	633	57	42
2008	545	61	42
2009	273	26	
(position in September)			
Total	7179	274	212

Data on HIV and AIDS originate from Health Inspectorate, on deaths from homepage of the Estonian Statistical Office.

3.3. The third base level

The third base level for evil invariables is for 0.04–0.05% of adult population, i.e. for Estonia ca 500. The evil invariable of that level brings into focus individuals struggling with immense problems, whose numbers demonstrate the so-called social rubble, produced by the social organism. Because it is a deviancy of large latency, the authorities try to altogether deny the existence of the problem.

⁵ See Statute of the Contagious Diseases Register: <http://www.riigiteataja.ee/ert/act.jsp?id=13208804>

Deplorably, such an attitude aggravates the situation, because this matter must be under control. Here are some examples on the use of the invariable of that level in press. According to the estimate of the head of children protection service of criminal department of the North Police Prefecture, the so-called active paedophiles may number at least 500 in Estonia (Postimees 22.07.2008). As declared by a representative of the Police Board – starting from the beginning of 1990s more than half a thousand persons have gone missing in Estonia (Delfi 23.12.2008). During the programme Riskilaps (Risk Child) it turned out that there are over 500 street children in Tallinn (Eesti Päevaleht 14.03.2001).

The most notorious use of evil invariable of that level is the allegation circulated for several years that there are 500 women and girls annually trafficked out of Estonia, who become sex slaves or prostitutes in various countries. Such a figure has moved for years from one publication into another and has allowed evaluating the position of Estonia in that domain as extraordinarily serious. The unfavourable position of Estonia in the yearly human trafficking report compiled by the U.S. Department of State (Trafficking in Persons Report i.e. TIP Report) has been largely related to the image of Estonia as an important human trafficking source country, whose basic empiric proof was specifically the same figure (U.S. Department of State, TIP Reports 2001–2009). International Organisation for Migration (O’Brian, Van den Borne and Noten 2004:38) or some non-governmental organisation was suggested as the source of data (U.S. Department of State 2003:5).

Carrying out a special research commissioned by the International Organisation for Migration on the situation of human trafficking in Estonia, the objective was to solve the issue of origin of that indicator, because the Organisation strongly denied its authorship. It turned out eventually that the said figure was presented for the first time in materials published by Luup, annex to the daily Postimees in 2002 (Uusmaa and Uusen 2002:22–23). In that issue, for the first time an allegation was presented, that the said figure originated from the International Organisation for Migration, the representatives of which vehemently denied it.⁶ In the process of the project the respective value was changed from 500 women trafficked yearly to at least 100 women trafficked within the past four years, although that was no simple matter to achieve (IOM 2005:99). It later turned out that it is the limit established by compilers of the TIP Report to group the countries depending on identified cases of trafficking. If in case of Estonia the indicator had been below 100 registered cases, the decline would have been drastic and Estonia should have been altogether stricken off the list of countries under survey (U. S. Government Accountability Office 2006:30). We managed to correct the misinforming indicator, however the new figure is rather an invariable as well and not the realistic number of persons trafficked. As regards the victims of trafficking in humans coming from Estonia, who classify as such under the UNO definition, the number ‘below 100’ is today the correct estimate.

⁶ Verbal communication in 2004 with the former representative of IOM in Estonia Ms Elina Niedre.

Table 2. Hierarchy of evil invariables

Size of evil invariable	Content of evil invariable
Over 100 000 persons ⁷	Number of Russian citizens in Estonia Number of cases of physical and sexual violence in a year, where victims are Estonian women (Pettai 2001: 436) Less employed persons in Estonia at the beginning of 21 st c. The predicted number of unemployed by the end of 2009 Number of undernourished persons in Estonia
Over 10000 people	Number of HIV positive persons in Estonia Number of injecting drug addicts in Estonia Number of KGB collaborators in Estonia at the end of the Soviet period Number of women of Estonian and Russian origin, working in Finland as prostitutes Number of injecting drug-addicts in Estonia
Over 500 people	Number of women smuggled out of Estonia for sexual exploitation Number of active paedophiles in Estonia Number of persons gone missing in Estonia starting from 1991 Number of street children in Tallinn Number of KGB officers in Estonia at the end of the Soviet period (Eesti Ekspress 09.02.1996)

4. Relation of evil invariables with moral panic

Evil invariables have evident links to ‘moral panic’. It is a phenomenon, determined as intensive state of concern expressed by a large number of population with regard to a specific group of persons, who are believed to endanger the social order (Jones and Jones 1999). According to Stanley Cohen, the moral panic arises, when “a condition, situation, person or group of persons is defined as danger to social values and interests” (Cohen 1972:9). The main features of moral panic include a clearly expressed concern of the public about somebody, something, the relatively large consensus of worry and its disproportion. Under the latter, an extraordinarily large level of the concern is meant, which does not rely on the actual spread of the phenomenon or realistic hazard.

4.1. Importance of media

In creating moral panic, media is playing a major role, tending to describe the problems selectively, exaggeratedly, obscuring their actual level and substance. In

⁷ The figure 100 000 has been used relatively frequently in case of Estonia, speaking for instance about the multitude gathered at the Song Festival Ground (the traditional national song festival of large audiences) or the number of Communist Party members in Estonia at the end of the Soviet period. When on 1 May 2009 the the meeting of minds, i.e. the citizens' initiative involving the general public in a discussion on promotion of Estonia was planned, 100 000 people were predicted to attend. Later it turned out that there were ca 10 000 participants, i.e. 10 times fewer. Actually there is no possibility to check on which the preliminarily planned number of participants based and whether later really 10 000 persons put up an appearance at that event.

the use of evil invariables the importance of media cannot be overestimated either, because through media the invariable obtains the status of a generally spread, universally known indicator and only with the help of media it is possible to keep the discussion related to the invariable topical. The goal of using the evil invariable is not however a one-time influencing the public opinion: interest groups attempt to sustain for long term the shift (new reality) created with the help of the evil invariable. Such creation of the so-called new reality is well illustrated by formation of the state of fear and its dramatic growth in the 1980s in connection with serial homicide, for which ever new facts were allegedly reported in the USA, Canada and several other countries. It was claimed that a large part (20–25%) of all murders were committed by serial killers and it was demanded from law enforcement authorities to rapidly put an end to such ‘practice’ of serial homicide. Special subunits were set up attached to police departments of the cities, and the respective research was drastically increased. However, the subsequent research carried out revealed that no more than 1% of the killed fell victim to serial homicide in the USA, i.e. approximately 200 persons per year (Jenkins 1994). The topic of serial homicide nevertheless continues to hold a high place in the context of crime control.

Evil invariables have similar properties (worry, consensus, disproportion), but with regard to many aspects clear differences are manifested. As a phenomenon, moral panic is volatile, i.e. after an explosive growth of attention, after the stage of novelty, the public gradually loses interest in the phenomenon and the attention is focused on new phenomena. As shown by present data, the evil invariable is used for a lengthier period, because drawing attention by the invariable to a certain problem is not a one-off or temporary action. Evil invariables are rather stable and attempt to attract attention for a longer time. Evil invariables may also be the result of moral panic staying on the arena for longer, i.e. even after the panic itself has ended. The evil invariable may be used for the purpose of creating moral panic, because in order to give to the problem dangerous dimensions, empiric or empiric-looking facts are needed. For creating a social problem, large numbers are needed, which are always better than the small ones. In case of moral panic, use has often been made of the relations presented figuratively, which characterise the spread of a problem (every second, third, fourth, ninth etc.). Secondly, the official figures coming from national statistics are better than non-official ones. The best are official large numbers; when they are not available, the numbers can be manipulated or presented incorrectly. In case of evil invariables, predilection to large numbers inherent in moral panic is manifested in a modified way, i.e. the size of evil invariable capable of existing must be optimal.

Both with moral panic and evil invariables, a collective body is perceived as a jeopardizing agent, the carriers of hazard being certain kind of individuals; they are identified as the outcast, not-us, which can be expressed through moral indignation or humanitarianism. In case of moral indignation there occurs, with respect to a certain group, a growth of hostility so that the people concerned become folk devils causing many problems, a target of forthright public con-

demnation. In case of humanitarianism, however, every powerful group tries to limit, control the activities of individuals of another group, seemingly in their genuine interests. Therefore if one form of expression of moral indignation is anger, the other form of reaction may be outwardly the contrary. It can even be claimed that humanitarianism is the cover or neutralisation technique to veil the moral condemnation, indignation (Young 2009:11). For instance it has been found that medical professionals used to interpret the moral indignation with respect to certain 'abuses' (e.g. masturbation) in the terms of clinical humanitarianism (Comfort 1967). The so-called 'nemesis effect', has also been ascertained when deviancy is considered, without humanitarian interventions, to be growing into more dangerous evils (e.g. use of marijuana becomes a heroin addiction, early sexual life leads to infection with sexual diseases, the adolescent pregnancy causes poverty) (Young 1971).

In case of evil invariables humanitarianism has been especially used when moral indignation is concealed and the need for intervention is substantiated by interests (on behalf) of the parties involved. It is the phenomenon that is deemed as dangerous, needing attention and better handling, while the bearers of that phenomenon are stigmatised. A typical example is related to human trafficking, where the representatives of the strong feminist direction hold the position that there is no such thing as voluntary prostitution. When proceeding in this manner, all prostitutes will be treated as victims of human trafficking independent of the fact that the parties involved see themselves frequently as sex workers. Subjecting such a position to closer scrutiny, however, reveals that such an attitude reflects the repressed specific feelings regarding the so-called others, not-us in the Western world. Dangerous may be people, for instance, who originate from the new East European democratic countries as barbaric intruders, who rock the boat of the present life organisation of the stable and flourishing old Europe (*à la* men are bandits, women are prostitutes). That 'us-them' opposition is understandably socio-psychological, allowing victimising the newcomers for problems faced by the Western world. With creating a conservative 'othering' the demonization occurs, viewing some human groups as totally alien. With a liberal version of 'othering' the deviants are rather considered sick or simply immature individuals, who need teaching new norms and values (Young 2007). A singular repellent reaction of the Western world thus emerges against those striving to enter, who are presented as poor, destitute, ill-bred, whose advent will inevitably bring about new and hard-to-solve problems. Such attitude also allows people from the West to feel a benevolent helper or a patron assigned a mission to teach the 'poor natives' the correct way of life and behaviour.

The largest difference between evil invariables and moral panic is primarily the international (global) nature of the first ones. Moral panic is a phenomenon, the problem range whereof keeps within the frame of relatively precisely delineated community (e.g. youth movements of the West in the 1960s). In case of that phenomenon, within one collective body the 'us-them' opposition is created, allowing an influential group to feel better against the background of the weakl-

ings. Evil invariables however are designed to affect internationally, and in that sense they are related to much larger, even global scales and the local human community is in a relatively passive role. Evil invariables find most use from without, i.e. with their help an estimate is given to one group by other groups in a global scale. Viewed from the standpoint of moral panic, attention has been directed to the population of the whole country (in the given case Estonia). Generalising, evil invariables signal moral panic, which arose in the Western world as a reaction to the new potential dangers.

4.2. Self-fulfilling prophecy and role of social scientists

The estimates given to circumstances and persons are not an innocent nuance of irrelevant significance. According to the classical Thomas theorem, people do not only react to realistic situations where they are involved, but they behave according to how they perceive the situation and what meaning it has for them. The effects concomitant with both moral panic and evil invariables tend therefore to be a self-fulfilling prophecy, because “when people define certain situations as actually occurring in reality, they also have realistic consequences” (Thomas and Thomas 1928:572). If people have adopted a certain attitude, opinion, stance regarding a situation, phenomenon, they react accordingly, also when the realistic situation is actually quite different. It is only too easy to form a desired attitude to things, for which the earlier knowledge and stances are altogether missing and to change the once formed attitudes is a laborious undertaking.

In the contemporary world the social deviancy (e.g. crime) has obtained in many aspects the phenomenon similar with commodity. It is packaged by someone (e.g. legal functionaries, researchers), and is thereafter systematically presented to the public and what is profitably sold at the end to consumers (e.g. taxpayers, voters, buyers of security service, TV or other media users). In case of moral panic the direct interest group, have been ‘moral entrepreneurs’, who construct and exploit the morals-related social problems. It is plausible to speak of a relatively new branch of industry with a very large turnover and profit, which can be called ‘moral entrepreneurship’ (Becker 1986).

In case of evil invariables, the circle of those interested in their use and result is – multiple and the following parties to the process can be highlighted: a) the carrier group of evil invariables, b) interest groups of evil invariables, c) the group damaged by the evil invariable, i.e. the attacked target group) and d) direct creators of evil invariables, putting the action into practice. Some parties are public (carrier group), others are semi-anonymous (those putting the action into practice, the target group), the third lie low and strive to avoid notice (the interest group). The carrier group of evil invariables is always constituted by the so-called weak minorities or individuals, who have a certain social type disability or who are somehow discriminated against (apparently or in actual fact). Their possible list seems endless: children, women, sexual minorities, drug addicts, homeless, unemployed, pensioners, migrants, those persecuted due to religion etc. The parties putting the action into practice may be public; however, they may bide their time and conceal their actual goals (e.g. the

desire of amassing material or political capital) behind resounding slogans. The target group attacked by evil invariables is precisely known only by the interest group, who can act also in conditions of the deepest secrecy (e.g. the special service of an unfriendly country).

Hence the evil invariable is also related to a certain (minority) group in the collective body, but unlike the cases of regular social panic, their activeness is not targeted against the minority group. Aiding the minority group, providing support to it has been assumed as the goal of activity (e.g. feminist movement fights for women as victims of domestic violence); their members are not considered to be enemies but victims. However, they can present a potential threat because their problems are not handled sufficiently effectively. Frequently the minority group is actually only a device for a larger interest group to achieve its goals. The activity of the interest group may be rather damaging to the members of the minority group, stigmatising (e.g. fighters against prostitution stigmatise prostitutes as irresponsible, unable to take decisions, not aware of their deplorable state as victims). On the level of state the minority group may be a national minority residing in the territory of the neighbouring country, whose existence is made as difficult as possible for the country of domicile, in order to thereby present its political ambitions against that country.

The question of what role the social scientists play in case of moral panic and evil invariables needs a separate analysis. According to the leftist way of thinking the general rule is the desire to support the weaker and it is well seen in case of the moral panic in 1960s. The young sociologists who have become classics today (Howard Becker, Stanley Cohen, Jock Young and others.) were public advocates of the new subcultures under formation. They were often participating observers, who stood in the cultural conflict much closer to the deviants than to the controlling bodies. Their message to the respectable world was that the problem of deviancy (representatives of contra-culture and their mores) was not as serious and dangerous as the public tended to think. "Calm down, do not panic, none will be injured. The true problem is not the deviant behaviour, but the general attitude, basing on unrestrained need to moralise" (Garland 2008:19). They drew attention to secondary deviance, which is concomitant with social reaction and which is, as compared to the primary deviance, more serious and doing more damage (Lemert 1967).

Quite a different picture is revealed in case of evil invariables, where many social scientists back those who create and deepen the feeling of jeopardy. One possible cause for such behaviour is a significant change of position of the social scientists in modern Estonia as compared to the Soviet period. The role of 'mandarin' (Donskis 1996) relatively well supported by the state power has been replaced by the so-called softer side of science, where contributors of the research must be located and need for research is constantly proved. Phenomenon of evil invariables implies the change of behaviour having occurred among many local analysts of Estonian social environment. Unlike the Soviet era, when the negative phenomena characterising the society did not seemingly exist or they were played down, a new tendency arose in Estonia after the restoration of independence. Now,

the situation is being dramatised in the same domains, and the negative phenomena are amplified, in order to widen their extent and influence, for which also evil invariables are used.

At the same time certain social scientists endeavour to convert into local circulation the ideas, theories, concepts used in the West to describe the processes in the republics of the former Soviet Union and East Europe. Such concepts are rather stereotypical and simplifying, as always when confronted by something strange and little known. Instead of correcting the stereotypes, and show more precisely the actual substance of matters, which would be a natural behaviour of local researchers of the social sphere, they proceed to forcefully impose the patterns created outside Estonia on local circumstances. The reason is mostly the research money coming from the West and the overall management of the project, within the framework of which they must accommodate their work. Such a situation is nothing new either, because in the Soviet period too, the money and directions came from outside Estonia, and the researchers of the local social sphere fulfilled the outsourced commission, not trying to understand what in fact was going on.

5. Conclusion

With the help of evil invariables, a large number of people are shown to be in some distress in Estonia, and the need to drastically change the societal life is emphasised. The use of evil invariables and moral panic with respect to Estonia culminated at the beginning of the 2000s. The latent goal of that action may have been the desire to suggest the incompatibility of Estonia with the European Union and NATO, due to underdeveloped social sphere. The public opinion of the so-called old democracies feared and shunned the new independent states. Such attitude was well in accord with the interest of some circles, trying at every opportunity to show that in the Russian sphere of influence everything was expectedly different than it was in the West. Luckily such an unfavourable situation ended well for us and in 2004 Estonia acceded to the basic structures of the Western world. New massive attempts in the same direction intensified in connection with the 2007 April events,⁸ suggesting the pulling of strings and coordinated activity on top level.

With the help of evil invariables, the attention is obviously directed to problems, which need attention and such amplification helps to achieve it. The positive sides however succumb to the negative ones, because evil invariable is an opposite number to the clarity and correctness at describing a certain domain or a phenomenon. The invariable as a pseudo-indicator distorts the reality and creates a

⁸ In April 2007 Tallinn witnessed mass disturbance, triggered by transfer of the monument to WWII by authorities from centre of town to the cemetery. Delegation of the Russian Parliament arrived in Estonia immediately after those events and demanded standing down of the Estonian Government.

wrong presentation of the situation. Due to evil invariables the important processes may remain concealed and their treatment thereof non-funded. Neither does evil invariable allow estimating objectively the dynamics of the phenomenon and efficiency of counter-measures. The problem of evil invariables for social science and social scientists also lies hidden in the fact that due to creation and use of invariables those sciences become ever 'softer' and less competitive, as compared to 'hard' sciences. The borderline between science, political analysis, administration and practical politics however becomes ever more obfuscated. Evil invariables can be therefore best combated by collecting and presenting objective, accurate information.

The use of evil invariables is a tendency, which evidently regularly occurs in the conditions of globalisation. As it is, the concrete phenomena, related to evil invariables are global. It is also evident that social scientists and non-governmental organisations are likewise active in the whole world. In that meaning it would be informative to compare the situation of Estonia with that of some other country. Are the evil invariables, used for other countries, communities (provided they are found) of the same proportions for the general population as in Estonia, or are the figures of the same size preferred instead? One should attempt to try solving the issue of 'mystique of numbers', i.e. why evil invariables tend to be of a fixed size? Such analysis would be very welcome and would help us better understand this important socially constructed phenomenon

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