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TRENDS OF THE INDEX OF DEMOCRACY LEVEL IN THE DIMENSION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRATIZATION

*(ARMENIA, GEORGIA, AZERBAIJAN, RUSSIA,
BELARUS, KAZAKHSTAN, KYRGYZSTAN, UKRAINE AND MOLDOVA)*

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This is an interdisciplinary research conducted to show the trends of the Index of Democracy Level in the dimension of Human Rights and Democratization in nine post-Soviet countries, namely Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Ukraine, and Moldova. The study encompasses both in-country and cross-country analyses.

In-country analysis depicts Political, Economic, Social, Educational and Health Factors affecting the Index of Democracy Level of each country within the period of 1995-2015. Nevertheless, factors and procedures influencing the Index of Democracy Level in 2015 were in more detail studied as this is the third reasearch in succession. Cross-country analysis concludes comparative Indices of Political, Economic, Social, Educational and Health Factors that conditioned the Index of Democracy Level in 2015. The research on the “Trends of the Index of Democracy Level in the dimension of Human Rights and Democratization” can be used by professors and students of universities and research centres.

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INTRODUCTION

The improvement of methods and development of new tools and approaches to measure democracy are the issues that scholars of modern political science endeavor to tackle. These approaches opt to highlight peculiarities and common patterns necessary to establish democracy in states by viewing political, socio-economic, religious and cultural aspects of the development.

In this regard, application of the measurement model of democracy level, i.e. Index of Democracy Level (IDL) was important and relevant in conducting researches on democratic processes in certain post-Soviet countries. It should be mentioned that this research is the third in sequence devoted to the study of democratization trends and their scaling range in post-Soviet countries¹.

Scientific results testify that IDL is a national assessment tool and is equally applicable for estimations of democracy level in all countries worldwide. This, in fact, underlines a universal and international significance of IDL methodology.

The Index of Democracy Level was applied to measure the level of democracy of 9 countries within 1995-2015 period. In addition, a comparative analysis as well as trends of the IDLs of the countries in question were reflected in the study, titled “Trends of the Index of Democracy Level in the dimension of human rights and democratization (Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Ukraine and Moldova).

The selection of the countries, included in the IDL model, is conditioned by their diverse international and regional integration processes. Respectively, some countries adopted European integration processes, whereas other states took the

¹ For more details see: “Comparative Analysis of the Index of Democracy Level: Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Ukraine and Moldova”, edited by Arusyak Aleksanyan, Yerevan, Yerevan State University Press, 2015; “Comparative Analysis of the Index of Democracy Level in the context of Human Rights and Democratization (Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Ukraine and Moldova)”, edited by Arusyak Aleksanyan, Yerevan, YSU press, 2016.

path of Eurasian integration. Thus, a special attention was paid to achievements and challenges of the countries that had been involved in various and diverse integration processes.

As a result, EaP countries, namely, Georgia, Ukraine and Moldova further succeeded in deepening European integration processes, evolving in 2015. In view of Armenia, Eurasian and European cooperation was reconsidered in a new format, whereas EEU member state Belarus has developed a specific economic cooperation structure. Azerbaijan, on the contrary, leads a “restraining” and reserved policy both with EU and EEU. Even though Kazakhstan is a founding member of EEU, EU-Kazakhstan relations were noticeably activated in 2015. In the meantime, Eurasian integration issues were on the agenda of the country.

As far as democratization processes in post-Soviet countries are concerned, constitutional amendments aimed at changing political system from presidential to parliamentary were initiated by Georgia, Armenia and Kyrgyzstan. In 2016, presidential elections by direct voting, which had been the first elections since 1996, simultaneously took place in Moldova. Prior to that, president of Moldova had been elected by the parliament during 2001-2012 years. Ethnic and political clashes were an integral part of the above-mentioned processes. Moreover, there has been no solution offered so far, and this is one of the most influential factors impeding democratization processes in the countries discussed.

The aim of the research is to evaluate trends of the Index of Democracy Level in the dimension of human rights and democratization. In this aspect, democratization, included in cross-country and in-country researches, implies progress in political, socio-economic, educational and health factors.

In-country analysis includes the study of democracy level of each country and the Political, Economic, Social, Educational and Health Factors, affecting it throughout 21 years (1995-2015). Taking into account the previous two pieces of research, processes occurring in 2015, as well as their influence on IDL, were examined in more detail.

Cross-country analysis is a country comparative analysis of the Index of Democracy Level and PFI, EFI, SFI, EdFI and HFI conditioning the IDL, as well as their estimation for the year of 2015.

Within the framework of this research special attention has been paid to the importance of human rights and civil disobedience aspects, occurring in democratization processes of political regimes in post-Soviet countries.

The book is composed of an introduction, executive summary, eleven chapters and Index. The methodology of the Index of Democracy Level is presented in the first chapter. Chapters 2 to 10 introduce development trends of democracy level of Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Ukraine, and Moldova, as well as factors conditioning the level of democracy for the period of 1995-2015 within the scope of in-country analysis. Index of Democracy Level of the states is estimated in Chapter 11 with the application of cross-country analysis conducted in 2015. Besides, Chapter 11 includes a comparative analysis of IDL ratings as well as its 5 components, such as Political, Social, Economic, Educational and Health Factors for all 9 post-Soviet countries.

ARUSYAK ALEKSANYAN

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The research titled “Trends of the Index of Democracy Level in the dimension of Human Rights and Democratization in Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Ukraine and Moldova was conducted by the following team: Arusyak Aleksanyan (Doctor of Politics), Ashot Aleksanyan (Doctor of Politics), and Armine Khachatryan (MA of Law) who are lecturers and experts of the Center for European Studies, and Tatevik Hayrapetyan (Doctor of History), a lecturer of Faculty of History at Yerevan State University. Qualitative and quantitative methods were applied by the experts within the framework of the research. The IDL, particularly developed and based on the method of indices formation, was measured by data of 25 indicators collected within the period of 1995-2015 for nine post-Soviet countries. The aforementioned data were combined by 5 components (PFI, EFI, SFI, EdFI, and HFI) accordingly.

IDL values measured for some years, as well as values of PFI, EFI, SFI, EdFI and HFI, estimated and collected by the research team for the mentioned period may slightly differ from those correspondingly published in the previous research. This is explained by data development and replenishment provided by World Bank, international governmental and non-governmental organizations. The input of new data may condition the change of the lowest and highest values. Hence, a slight difference of IDL data collected within the observed period is noticeable when compared to previous publications. Calculations were also made on bulletins and official data collected and published by the states’ statistical services observed in the research. As a result of the comparative analysis for 1995-2015, a repository consisting of more than 5000 data was created.

The choice of the period is conditioned by the necessity to study democratic processes generated after the independence of post-Soviet countries in question. Nonetheless, data accessibility made it possible to start the research from 1995.

In general, the IDL comprises official statistics, newly developed variables and data collected and provided by renowned international organizations. Hence, sources that were used to collect, calculate and process data necessary for this research are as follows:

1. Political Factors:

- 1.1. Rule of Law (Worldwide Governance Indicators of the World Bank),
- 1.2. Political Stability / Absence of Violence (Worldwide Governance Indicators of the World Bank),
- 1.3. Political Rights and Civil Liberties (Freedom House reports),
- 1.4. Press Freedom (Freedom House reports),
- 1.5. Corruption Perceptions Index (Transparency International reports),
- 1.6. Political System (estimated by the researcher),
- 1.7. Social Unrest and Political Pressure (estimated by the researcher),
- 1.8. Majority in the Parliament (estimated by the researcher),
- 1.9. Religion (estimated by the researcher),
- 1.10. Conflict Presence (estimated by the researcher),
- 1.11. Gender Equality (Global Gender Gap report),

2. Economic Factors:

- 2.1. Gross national income per capita, US dollars (World Bank indicators),
- 2.2. External trade rate (% of GDP)(World Bank indicators),
- 2.3. Domestic credit (% of GDP)(World Bank indicators),
- 2.4. Foreign direct investments (% of GDP) (World Bank indicators),
- 2.5. Inflation rate (%) (World Bank indicators),
- 2.6. Index of Economic Freedom (Heritage Foundation report),
- 2.7. Budget deficit (% of GDP)(World Bank indicators, data of National Statistical Service),

3. Social Factors:

- 3.1. Real wage, US dollars (data of National Statistical Service),
- 3.2. Unemployment (%) (World Bank indicators),
- 3.3. Gini index (%) (World Bank indicators, data of National Statistical Service),

4. Educational Factors:

- 4.1. Human Development Index Education Index (United Nations Development Programme reports),
- 4.2. Government expenditure on education (% of GDP) (World Bank indicators),

5. Health Factors:

- 5.1. Life expectancy at birth (World Bank indicators),
- 5.2. Health expenditure (% of GDP) (World Bank indicators).

In conclusion, observing methodology of the aforementioned organizations that were used to estimate the IDL as well as a repository of data collected, the research team appropriately analyzed and respectively estimated five factors of the IDL.

ARUSYAK ALEKSANYAN

CHAPTER 1.

THE MODEL OF THE INDEX OF DEMOCRACY LEVEL (IDL)¹

ARUSYAK ALEKSANYAN

There is a bulk of academic literature expounding a plurality of theories and definitions of democracy as well as conditions and factors affecting democracy emphasized by scholars.

Some of them emphasize the formal or institutional democracy (F. Cutright's Index of Political Development), whereas others (K. Bollen, R. Dahl, T. Vanhanen) specify its procedural feature. Moreover, some indices measure the level of implementation of declared rights (Indices of Political Rights and Civil Liberties).

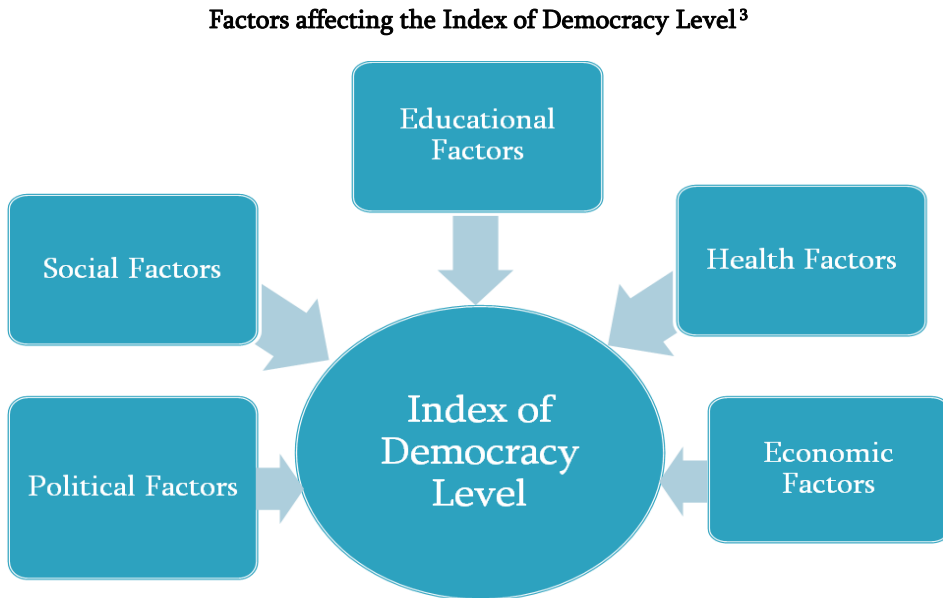
In this case, IDL includes the mentioned three aspects and, in fact, is more inclusive than the mentioned indices, as it is built upon a number of viewpoints and Indices of Political, Economic, Social, Educational and Health Factors affecting the IDL (see Figure 1).

Based on the methodology of main provisions and existing factors, the principle of five groups of factors with various rating scales and with an overall impact on democracy is taken as a base for democracy modeling. These factors are political, economic, social, educational and health².

¹ The methodology of the Index of Democracy Level was developed by Arusyak Aleksanyan within the #RO3 scholarship frameworks of Caucasus Research Resource Centre -Armenia and Carnegie Corporation of New York.

² The reason for the separation of Indices of Health and Educational Factors from the Social Factor Index is conditioned by a deeper and more profound study of their components as separate fields. The Index of Social Factors, in this case, refers only to inequality of income.

Figure1



Indicators of political dimensions are:

1. Rule of Law (RL)
2. Political Stability/ Absence of Violence (St.)
3. Indices of Political Rights and Civil Liberties (PR&CL)
4. Press Freedom (PF)
5. Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI)
6. Political System (PS)
7. Gender Equality (GE)
8. Social Unrest and Political Pressure (PP)
9. Majority in the Parliament (MP)
10. Religion (R)
11. Conflict Presence (Conf.)

Indicators of economic dimensions are:

1. Gross national income per capita, ppp (GNI)

³ The choice of the IDL variables was made on the method of correlation of matrix construction and the variable expulsion. More than 50 variables were initially selected, but then the variables with a high coefficient of correlation were excluded from the model ($R \geq 10.71$).

2. *External trade rate (Tr.)*
3. *Index of Economic Freedom (IEF)*
4. *Domestic credit (DC)*
5. *Foreign direct investments (FDI)*
6. *Inflation rate (Inf.)*
7. *Budget deficit (Def.)*

Indicators of social dimensions are:

1. *Real wage (W)*
2. *Unemployment (U)*
3. *Gini index (GINI)*

Indicators of educational dimensions are:

1. *HDI (Human Development Index) Education Index (HDI.ed.)*
2. *Government expenditure on education (EE)*

Indicators of health dimensions

1. *Life expectancy at birth (LE)*
2. *Health expenditure (HE)*

The calculation methodology and the nature of certain variables and indices included in the model are the following:

Rule of Law and Political Stability/Absence of Violence are two out of six indices aimed to assess the effectiveness of the public administration published by the World Bank (*Kaufmann, Kraay, Mastruzzi 2010, 2-3*). Rule of Law measures citizens' confidence of the law and the level of their readiness to comply with it, crime rates and effectiveness of legislative power, courts, and the police. Political Stability/Absence of Violence includes indicators that measure the stability of state institutions, drastic changes, destabilization, and probability of regime change inconsistent with the Constitutional rule (including terrorism and the use of violence within the state);

Indices of Political Rights and Civil Liberties are measured by Freedom House organization based on Freedom in the World report (*Freedom House 2016a*). The 2016 Freedom in the World report was used to measure the index in 2015, since calculations, covering the period from January 1 to December 31, 2015 were based on developments occurring in 195 countries and 15 territories. Researchers and report evaluators use diverse sources of information, such as news topics, academic

researches, analytical reports as well as reports of non-governmental organizations and experts. Political Rights indicator is based on a ten-point questionnaire and are grouped into three subcategories: electoral process (3 questions), political pluralism and participation (4 questions) and functioning of the government (3 questions). Civil liberties questionnaire comprises 15 points, which are grouped into four subcategories, such as freedom of expression and belief (4 questions), association and organizational rights (3 questions), Rule of Law (4 question), personal autonomy and individual rights (4 questions). Scores are awarded to each of these questions on a scale of 0-4. The highest score that can be awarded to Political Rights checklist is 40, whereas the highest score awarded to Civil Liberties checklist is 60. The raw points are converted into a 1-7 point rating scale, where 1 point stands for the highest freedom indicator, and correspondingly 7 points stand for the lowest. Hence, those indicators determine whether a country is classified as free (1-2.5 points), partly free (3-5 points), or not free (5.5-7 points) (*Freedom House 2016b*). The mentioned two indices are included in the model under one variable (simple average). In the model the standardized data are scaled as maximum value of 1 point and minimum value of 7 points;

Freedom House also defines Press Freedom and estimates the level of freedom of the press in 199 countries and territories worldwide. Press Freedom 2016 index was measured by events occurred in 2015, covering the period from January 1 to December 31, 2015. Surveys and assessments are connected with the following three spheres, such as “legislative atmosphere”, “political atmosphere” and “economic atmosphere”. It provides numerical rankings based on the assessments collected from these components, and states are respectively rated as “free” (0-30 points), “partly free” (31-60) and “not free” (61-100) (*Freedom House 2016c*). During the data standardization, the highest accepted value (max) is 0, and the lowest value (min) is 100;

Corruption Perceptions 2015 Index is measured by Transparency International organization and refers to the level of a state corruption perceptions in 168 countries (*Transparency International 2015a*). It is based on experts’ analyses and the index has the ranking scale from 0 -100 according to the updated methodology, where 0 point implies the highest level of corruption and effectively 10 points indicate its lowest level (*Transparency International 2015b*). The data of CPI are

calculated in accordance with the resources provided by 11 independent organizations, like Political and Economic Risks Consultancy, the World Bank, Bertelsmann Foundation, “Global Insight” World Economic Forum and etc.

The survey topics refer to the corruption, the conflict of interests, anti-corruption events and improvements, steps taken by a state to impose sanctions and to eradicate corruption. There exist issues concerning the spread of corruption not only in the public administration sphere but also among citizens of a state and in mass media circles. The corruption risks may appear in small bureaucratic institutions and escalate up to the highest instances of authority, or else there are risks for bribes offered in the spheres of export and import, tax payment offices, utility payments as well as in decision-making courts (*Transparency International 2015c*). The importance of this variable is conditioned by the fact, that corruption indicators show the quality of bureaucratic and public administration systems. During the data standardization the highest accepted value (max) is 100 points, whereas the lowest value (min) is 0 points;

The variable of the Political System in accordance with the coding system of Keefer (2012, 3-4) is divided into the following categories: parliamentary (2 points), assembly-elected presidential (1 point) and presidential (0 points). Political systems get 0 points when the head of the state cannot be elected or is elected directly by the state's citizens or electorate, yet there is no position of a prime minister. With the elected president and prime-minister the system is called presidential, if a president has: 1. veto power that the parliament can override with only a qualitative majority, 2. appoints prime-minister and/or other members of the government or ministers and 3. can dissolve the parliament by calling for a new election. Political systems with the assembly-elected president are characterized as parliamentary (2 points) with the exception when the parliament cannot easily recall the chief executive as it needs a two-thirds of the votes to impeach or dissolve itself. In this case, the system gets 1 point;

The variable of Gender Equality is measured by the Global Gender Gap reports published by the World Economic Forum that refers to the measurement of inequality between men and women in four fundamental categories and they are 1. economic participation and opportunity, 2. educational attainment, 3. health and survival and 4. political empowerment. The value ranges between 0-1 point

that stands for total equality and 0 points for total inequality (*World Economic Forum 2015*). During the data standardization, the highest accepted value (max) is 1, whereas the lowest value (min) is 0.

The variable of Social Unrest and Political Pressure is measured by the scaling range of 0-5 and includes a number of demonstrations, strikes, social unrest, particularly pressures applied, as well as cases of political imprisonment and killings during a specified span of time. Taking into account the absence of such statistics, relying on the analyses, reports and informative studies carried out by newspapers and research centres, the scaling range of 0-5 was settled for their assessment where 0 is the value for the highest number of unrest and pressure, including coup d'état and revolution and 5 is the total absence of those in question; The variable of the Majority in the Parliament is measured by the following principle: 0 points are given in case the party of the chief executive has the absolute majority in the legislative authority; 1 point is given, if the mandates are comparatively and equally distributed, and, eventually, 2 points are applied when the opposition holds the absolute majority. During the data standardization the highest accepted value (max) is 2, whereas the lowest value (min) is 0;

The variable of Religion is based on the research, which proves the close correlation of the religion and democracy and the fact, that non-Christian cultures are less compatible with democracy. Two categories are distinguished in this variable: "Christian" (1 point) and "non-Christian" (0 points);

Conflict Presence affecting democracy is measured in the following way: the absence of conflict (2 points), passive conflict (1 point), when a state is in conflicting relations with another state or states, but there are no active military actions and, active conflict (0 points), when a state conflicts with another state/states and there are active military actions carried out. The maximum value in the scale is 2 points and the minimum value is 0 points;

The Index of Economic Freedom (IEF) is measured by The Heritage Foundation and Wall Street Journal with scoring range of 0-100, according to which countries scored under 50 are "repressed", those scored in the range of 50-59,9 are considered "mostly unfree", whereas "moderately free" countries are scored within 60-69,9 range, while the next ones are classified as "mostly free" (70-79) and, finally, the designation of "free" scores of 80 to 100. It is based on 10

specific categories: 1.business freedom, 2.trade freedom, 3.fiscal freedom, 4.financial freedom, 5.government spending 6. monetary freedom, 7.investment freedom 8. property rights protection, 9.freedom from corruption and 10.labor freedom (*Miller, Kim 2015, 475-486*). IDL in 2015 was calculated on the basis of IEF estimated in 2016 as it included indicators measured during the period from July 1, 2014 to June 30, 2015. In general, IEF denotes the guarantee of the construction of legislative body and property rights and it is also considered one of the most important indicators of democracy. For that very reason, the index was included in the model as a separate variable. In the model, the value of 100 points (max) is estimated as the highest indicator, where 0 points (min) is the lowest indicator of the rating scale. During the data standardization the highest accepted value (max) is 100, whereas the lowest value (min) is 0;

Human Development Index Education Index (HDI-education) is assessed by the UNDP (United Nations Development Programme). The 2015 report of HDI-education includes the data of 188 out of 193 UN countries measured within 2013-2015. The health dimension is assessed by the overall of three separate indices, such as life expectancy at birth, years of schooling and national income. HDI reflects the degree of the well-being of the society and is considered one of an essential indicators. The latter is based on dimensions measured by mean years of schooling (it includes at most 15 years spent at school and/or vocational institutions for adults aged 25) and expected years of schooling (the number of years that schoolchildren will be expected to have after at most 18 years of schooling included Master's education (*UNDP 2016a, 198-201; UNDP 2016b*);

Gini index (incomes Gini coefficient) measures the deviation of the distribution of income from absolute equal distribution among individuals or households within a country. During the data standardization the highest accepted value (max) is 1, whereas the lowest value (min) is 0;

Real wage describes the purchasing power of nominal wage within a definite time span, i.e. the goods and services that can be purchased with wages at prices specified at a particular period. During the cross-country analysis, the average monthly wage is calculated by the indicator equivalent to purchasing power in US dollars.

All variables are standardized by the following formula ⁴

$$X' = \frac{x_i - \min\{x_i\}}{\max\{x_i\} - \min\{x_i\}}$$

$\min\{x_i\}$ and $\max\{x_i\}$ are the lowest and highest values the variable X can attain, respectively.

In cross-country analysis, the indicators estimated within the last 5 years and calculated as an average of 3 lowest and highest data were used to assess the lowest and the highest values of some variables, meanwhile, corresponding values of different time periods were used to analyze the country in question.

The calculation of each group, such as Political Factors Index (PFI), Economic Factors Index (EFI), Social Factors Index (SFI), Educational Factors Index (EdFI), Health Factors Index (HFI) was based on counting simple and weighted average of standardized values affecting the factors of democracy:

$$\text{PFI} = (2 \cdot (\text{PR\&CL} + \text{PF} + \text{CPI} + \text{RL} + \text{St.} + \text{PS} + \text{PP} + \text{MP} + \text{GE}) + \text{Conf.} + \text{R}^*) / 20$$

$$\text{EFI} = (\text{GNI} + \text{FDI} + \text{IEF} + \text{Inf.} + \text{Def.} + \text{Tr.} + \text{DC}) / 7$$

$$\text{SFI} = (\text{GINI} + \text{W} + \text{U}) / 3$$

$$\text{EdFI} = (\text{EE} + \text{HDI.ed.}) / 2$$

$$\text{HFI} = (\text{HE} + \text{LE}) / 2$$

Taking into account the impact of above-mentioned 5 groups of variables (dimensions) on the democracy level we propose to formulate the degree of interrelation between these indicators and democracy. Accordingly, the Index of Democracy Level is a weighted average of 5 computed indices⁵.

⁴ The minimum and maximum values of “negative” variables, e.g. Inflation rate, have been swamped in the formula, and the in the low values we correspondingly get the standardized higher values and vice versa.

* The rating scales of the variables of Conflict Presence and Religion have been lowered, as there aren't outcomes of a state's inner developments. Besides, the influence of the variable of Religion is partially measured by means of other variables, such as Gender Equality, and a number of conflicts can be conditioned by a right to struggle for self-determination, which has a negative impact on state's development does not contradict to democracy.

⁵ Weights are defined through calibration, which is particularly based on the calculation of democracy level in countries such as Norway, Sweden, Denmark and Iceland and on the decision of

$$IDL = (41,5 * PFI + 32,5 * (SFI + EFI + HFI) / 3 + 26 * EdFI) / 100$$

According to this IDL formula, it is mostly affected by Political Factors, followed by Social, including Educational and Health Factors correspondingly.

Another peculiarity of the model is that it opts to denote the most impacting indices and variables through regression and to what extent they impact on the stability of a political system of a state under question.

Hence, IDL consists of:

- official statistics
- developed new variables
- existing indicators regularly released by renowned international organizations

Eventually, the proposed model allows to:

1. Analyze and compare the level of democracy at different time spans,
2. Compare the level of democracy of two and more states classifying them by the definition and ranking of the applicable scale,
3. Identify the factors that have either the most positive or the most negative impact on the democracy of the given state by disclosing the fields that are mostly in need to be repaired and improved.

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Abbreviations

Conf.	Conflict Presence
CPI	Corruption Perceptions Index
DC	Domestic credit
Def.	Budget deficit
EdFI	Educational Factors Index
EE	Government expenditure on education
EFI	Economic Factors Index
FDI	Foreign direct investments
GDP	Gross domestic product
GE	Gender Equality
GINI	Gini index
GNI	Gross national income
HDI.ed.	Human Development Index Education Index
HE	Health expenditure
HFI	Health Factors Index
IDL	Index of Democracy Level
IEF	Index of Economic Freedom
Inf.	Inflation rate
MP	Majority in the Parliament
PF	Press Freedom
PFI	Political Factors Index
PP	Social Unrest and Political Pressure
PR&CL	Political Rights and Civil Liberties
PS	Political System
R	Religion
RL	Rule of Law
SFI	Social Factors Index
Tr.	External trade rate
U	Unemployment
W	Real wage
WB	World Bank

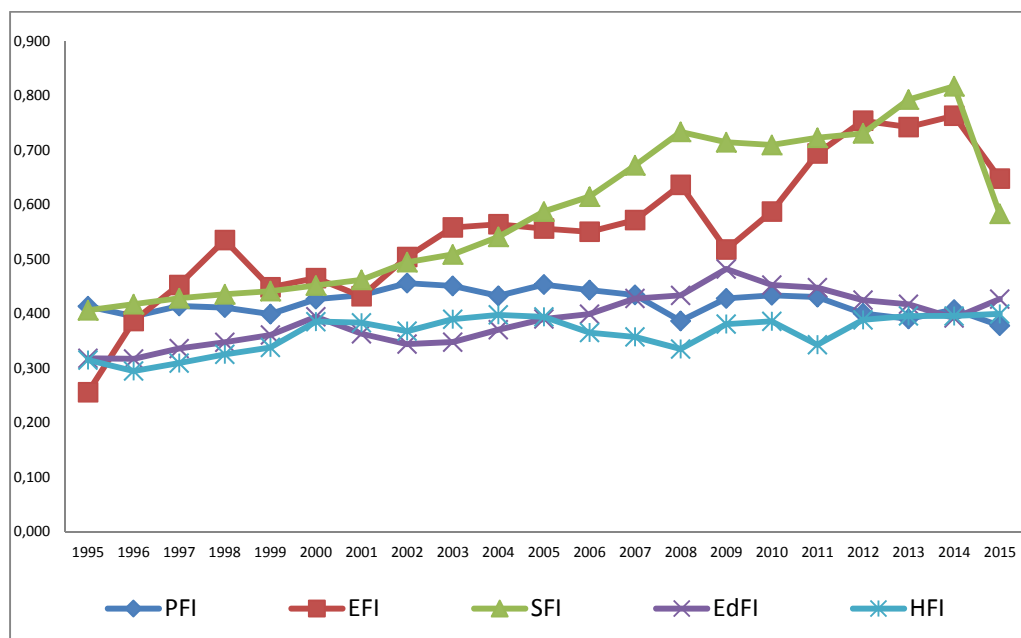
CHAPTER 2.

INDEX OF DEMOCRACY LEVEL OF ARMENIA (IDL)

ARUSYAK ALEKSANYAN

Figure 1

Indices of Political, Social, Economic, Educational and Health Factors affecting the Index of Democracy Level of Armenia in the time span between 1995-2015*



* The source is based on the calculations accumulated by the researcher.
The indices of IDL factors are comparable only by the trends.

Table 1

**Indices of Political, Economic, Social, Educational and Health Factors and Index of
Democracy Level of Armenia in the time span between 1995-2015***

Years	PFI	EFI	SFI	EdFI	HFI	IDL
1995	0,413	0,256	0,406	0,318	0,315	0,351
1996	0,395	0,386	0,417	0,317	0,295	0,376
1997	0,414	0,453	0,428	0,336	0,309	0,406
1998	0,411	0,535	0,435	0,347	0,325	0,430
1999	0,399	0,448	0,441	0,361	0,338	0,406
2000	0,427	0,465	0,452	0,394	0,385	0,431
2001	0,434	0,432	0,462	0,363	0,383	0,423
2002	0,456	0,504	0,494	0,344	0,368	0,451
2003	0,451	0,558	0,509	0,348	0,390	0,467
2004	0,433	0,564	0,541	0,370	0,398	0,468
2005	0,453	0,556	0,587	0,390	0,394	0,481
2006	0,443	0,550	0,615	0,399	0,365	0,476
2007	0,434	0,572	0,672	0,428	0,357	0,487
2008	0,386	0,636	0,733	0,433	0,335	0,489
2009	0,428	0,518	0,714	0,482	0,381	0,483
2010	0,434	0,587	0,709	0,453	0,386	0,500
2011	0,430	0,694	0,723	0,448	0,343	0,523
2012	0,400	0,754	0,731	0,425	0,389	0,529
2013	0,390	0,742	0,793	0,417	0,396	0,529
2014	0,407	0,763	0,817	0,392	0,396	0,541
2015	0,378	0,648	0,583	0,427	0,399	0,478

* The source is based on the calculations accumulated by the researcher.

The EFI, SFI, HFI, EdFI, and indices of IDL calculated during certain years may insignificantly vary in comparison to the indices of the corresponding years estimated in the previous publications in the result of updated and newly inserted data as well as changes of minimum and maximum indices.

2.1 Political Factors Index (PFI)

When studying the trends of the Political Factors Index of the IDL of Armenia a drastic fall of the PFI was again noticeable in 2015 compared to the increase registered in 2014 (see Table 1, Figure 1). The 2015 year was abundant with various civil and political movements and events. Particularly, a draft to conduct a referendum on amendments to the RA Constitution was adopted on December 6 2015¹. It shall ensure Armenia's transition from semi-presidential to parliamentary governing system, according to which the president's powers will be curtailed on account of the expansion of powers of the National Assembly and the Prime Minister. By the implementation of the whole package of constitutional reforms, the political system of RA will be considered as parliamentary in accordance with Keefer's coding principles (Keefer 2012, 3-4). Political systems with assembly-elected executive body are characterized as parliamentary with the exception, when the parliament cannot easily recall the chief executive as it needs a two-thirds of the votes to dissolve itself (see Chapter 1). In these cases, the system is not considered as fully parliamentary and gets only one point (see Chapter 1). Nevertheless, the constitutional amendments will gradually come into force. Thus, provisions relating to the National Assembly will enter into force during the 2017 parliamentary elections, whereas provisions relating to the President and the Government will be effective during the 2018 presidential election. In this respect, it should be noted that the Electoral Code was also conformed to Constitutional changes that entered into force on June 1, 2016² (*RA Constitution, Chapter 16*).

In conformity with the new Code, the minimum number of deputies of the National Assembly shall be 101. Elections of the National Assembly shall be held by the proportional electoral representation, from one multi-mandate constituency covering the whole territory of the Republic from among candidates for deputies nominated in the national and district electoral lists of political parties. Elections are entirely conducted by proportional electoral representation. In contrast to

¹ See the RA CEC official site <http://www.elections.am/referendum/election-26015/> (05.03.2017).

² RA Electoral Code, Constitutional Law (adopted on 25.05.2016).

previous 41 electoral districts, 13 electoral districts shall be constituted in the Republic of Armenia from now on with 4 in Yerevan and 9 in marzes during the NA elections (*RA Electoral Code, Article 76, 77*).

Each political party (an alliance of political parties) running in elections from each district electoral list shall nominate at least 5 candidates. The district electoral list of a political party (an alliance of political parties) may include maximum 1 candidate per 15000 electors included in that electoral district according to the Register of Electors. In reference to the first part of the national electoral list, it shall include no less than 80 and no more than 300 candidates. In fact, the last demand reduces or even excludes the participation of person-parties in the elections. In this part, the national electoral list of a political party (alliance of political parties) may include persons that are not members of that political party (any of member political parties to the alliance) the number of which may not exceed 30% of the total number of the candidates included in the first part of the national electoral list.

On top of all above-said, the national electoral list may have a second part, wherein representatives of the first 4 national minorities with the largest number of resident population shall be listed. Each national minority nominates maximum 4 representatives (*RA Electoral Code, Article 83*). Four mandates of deputies shall be distributed among national minority representatives by the principle of 1 mandate to each of the first 4 national minorities (*RA Electoral Code, Article 95, paragraph 9*). Due to the above-mentioned fact, political actors will start working closely with representatives of national minorities. In this regard, it should be added that according to "The 2011 Census of the population of RA", national minorities with the largest permanent population in Armenia are Yezidi (35308), Russians (11911), Assyrians (2769) and Kurds (2162), which constitutes 1,73% of the whole RA population (*NSS RA 2013, 255*).

Mandates of the National Assembly shall be distributed among the electoral lists of those political parties (an alliances of political parties) which have received 5%, in case of a political party, and 7%, in case of an alliance of political parties, of ballot papers with affirmative vote out of the sum of the total number of ballot papers and the number of inaccuracies. Where less than 3 political parties (an

alliances of political parties) have received at least 5 (7)% of ballot papers with affirmative vote out of the sum of the total number of ballot papers and the number of inaccuracies, 3 political parties and alliances of political parties having received the maximum number of ballot papers shall participate in the distribution of mandates.

Mandates of the National Assembly shall be distributed among political parties (an alliance of political parties) in proportion to the number of ballot papers with affirmative vote cast in favour of each of them. 50% of the number of mandates shall be given to candidates in the national electoral list of a political party (an alliance of political parties), whereas another 50% of the number of mandates shall be distributed among the candidates in the electoral district lists due to the number of ballot papers with affirmative vote cast in favour of each (*RA Electoral Code, Article 95*). In other words, it will trigger internal competition between candidates of the district electoral list nominated by the same party (an alliance of political parties).

The National Assembly elections are summed up by one round if one of the parties or alliances gained the majority of the distributed mandates. Where any political party receives the majority but less than 54% of the total number of mandates distributed, that political party shall receive as many minimum additional mandates as necessary for the number of mandates of that political party, expressed in per cents, to result in no less than 54% (*RA Electoral Code, Article 96*). There will be no second round of elections, if any political party (an alliance of political parties) having passed the electoral thresholds may form a political coalition with maximum 2 other political parties (an alliances of political parties) having passed the electoral thresholds, where the sum of the votes cast in favour of them is sufficient for receiving the majority of the total number of mandates distributed, and they have come to an agreement as to the candidate for Prime Minister(*RA Electoral Code, Article 97*).

In cases, when there is no majority formed, the second round of elections shall be held and two political parties (an alliances of political parties) having received the maximum number of affirmative votes of electors shall run in the second round of the election. Where 2 political parties (an alliances of political parties)

form a new alliance together, the next political party (an alliance of political parties) with the maximum number of ballot papers with affirmative vote shall run in the second round of election with which a new alliance may be formed as well (*RA Electoral Code, Article 98*). Consequently, the new order of distribution of mandates is made in such a way that one of the political forces or alliances shall have majority representation in parliament.

When it comes to innovations in the voting order, the lists of electors shall be drawn up by the authorized body in an electronic format as well, through special software. For that reason, electors of the given district (where the elector has obtained an identification card or a biometric passport, or a non-biometric passport) shall come to the district and the list of electors shall be drawn up electronically and shall be downloaded in the technical equipment by receiving a ballot paper. This is to exclude the possibility of the same person to vote twice (*RA Electoral Code, Article 11*).

Human rights and freedoms. In Armenia corruption and lack of transparency in governance, limited independence of judiciary system, restrictions on freedom of assembly and the press, low level of women's participation in the country's political life, arbitrary detentions and ill-treatment particularly during demonstrations, non-combat deaths in the armed forces, domestic violence and etc. are the main disturbing issues in the field of human rights (*U.S. Department of State 2016; RA Human Rights Watch 2016; Amnesty International Report 2015/16*).

The freedom of the press, radio, and TV, as well as other means of mass media, are ensured by the Constitution of RA (*RA Constitution, Article 42*). Nevertheless, there still exist certain issues related to political pluralism as well as objective and unbiased coverage (*RA Human Rights Watch 2016, 243, 148-149*). Mass media mainly express views and dispositions that correspond to those made by owners and advertisers. In contrast to print and broadcast media, online media and social networks can act as an alternative source of information, representing diverse political dispositions. During significant political events, namely during mass demonstrations, live broadcasting has become essential within the framework of online media (*U.S. Department of State 2016, 16, 17*).

The experts of human rights defenders and international organizations in their reports expressed a deep concern over the use of illegitimate force against journalists during the acts of civil protests (*U.S. Department of State 2016, 17-18; Human Rights Watch 2016, 80*). RA Human Rights Watch stated that cases of violence against journalists as well as actions interfering with their activities were reported in 2015 and no sufficient measures were taken to prevent, detect and punish those who were guilty. As a consequence, during the "Against Electricity Increase" protest on Baghramyan Avenue alarms were received, stating that law enforcement bodies prevented the journalists' from performing their activities by detaining them and damaging their equipment (*Human Rights Watch 2016, 243-244*).

According to Freedom House^{*}, the press is free in Armenia. According to the report of the organization that included the 2015 events, Armenia was decreasingly ranked the 139th among 199 states and territories, compared to the 135th place ranked in the previous year. Meanwhile, it takes the 4th place among 13 Eurasian countries, yielding only to Georgia, Ukraine, and Moldova. Compared to the previous year, Armenia's Press Freedom Index rose from 61 to 63 by respectively receiving 20, 23, 20 points in legislative, political and economic spheres (*Freedom House 2016, 24*)^{**}. Experts of the organization have substantiated their assessments on account of pressure exerted on journalists, the restriction on the independence of print, radio and TV media and a number of other issues present in the country³.

In addition, Political Rights and Civil Liberties measured by Freedom House are estimated as partly free⁴. The former estimations assigned to Armenia for

^{*} Indices of Press Freedom and Political Rights and Civil Liberties measured by Freedom House are included in the IDL model as variables of PFI.

^{**} Press Freedom Index of Freedom House is estimated by the ranking scale from 100 to 0, and states are respectively rated as "free" (0-30), "partly free" (31-60) and "not free" (61-100).

³ See the Freedom House official site at <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-press/2016/armenia> (16.03.2017).

⁴ Political Rights and Civil Liberties Index measured by Freedom House is calculated by 1-7 point rating scale, according to which states are classified as free (1-2,5 points), partly free (3-5 points) and not free (5,5-7 points).

Political Rights (5 points) and Civil Liberties (4 points) had remained unchanged since 2012⁵.

With respect to women's rights, it should be mentioned that women have not been fully involved in public, political, social and economic spheres so far. Even though women in Armenia are equally educated and men yield to women only in quantity, the latter still occupy positions in lower circles. 90,2% of high-ranking and 59,9% of leading positions are occupied by men (*UN Population Fund 2016, 4-5*). According to the 2015 situation, 13 out of 131 positions in the National Assembly were occupied by women with 3 female ministers out of 18 in the Government. Moreover, there is no female governor of the marzes and only 10 out of 65 elected for the position of Yerevan Council of Eldermen are women (*Human Rights Watch 2016, 26*). Moreover, no females are appointed for the head of 12 administrative districts of Yerevan. With respect to the new Electoral Code, the number of representatives of each sex must not exceed 75%⁶ in each group in the elections of RA National Assembly as well as in the elections of Council of Eldermen of Yerevan, Gyumri and Vanadzor. Besides, after 2022 the number of representatives of each sex must not exceed 70% in comparison to the former 80% (*RA Electoral Code, Article 83, paragraph 4 and 10, Article 130, paragraph 2, Article 144*).

According to PFI subindex of Gender Equality, which is measured by the Global Gender Gap 2016 report and which is published by the World Economic Forum, Armenia occupies the 102nd place out of 144 states improving its position by 3 points when compared to the previous year and, consequently, the number went up from 0,662 to 0,669 points. It means that issue of gender inequality has been eliminated by 67% in Armenia. Armenia is placed on the 69th place with

⁵ See the Freedom House official site <https://freedomhouse.org/report-types/freedom-world> (16.03.2017).

⁶ Before 1 January 2022 during elections of the National Assembly, the Councils of Eldermen of Yerevan, Gyumri, Vanadzor, in the first part of the national electoral list of a political party, alliance of political parties and each of the political parties included in the alliance, the number of representatives of each sex, starting from the 1st place on the list, must not exceed 75% in each integer group of 4 (1-4, 1-8, 1-12 and subsequently up to the end of the list), and the number of representatives of each sex in the district electoral list of a political party (an alliance of political parties) running in elections must not exceed 75%.

respect to economic participation and opportunity subindex, the 27th place to education attainment, the 143rd place to health and survival and the 125th place to political empowerment. So, the indicators of the education sector are the most favourable ones, whereas spheres of politics and health care seem to be the most problematic ones. In politics, low indicators are conditioned by the low level of women's representation in political sphere, whereas in health care they are caused by the gender-related artificial fetal abortion leading to a significant sex imbalance of newborns (*World Economic Forum 2016, 88-89, 11-13; WomenNet.am 2016*).

Civil disobedience*. The right to freedom of assembly is ensured in the RA Constitution and laws⁷. However, in 2015 the right to freedom of assembly was often restricted, and in some cases force was disproportionately exerted against both the participants of the gatherings and representatives of media that were covering the events. Law enforcement bodies explained the restriction on holding peaceful assembly due to the fact that they hadn't been authorized. There were cases when a peaceful assembly was not allowed in the immediate vicinity of any state institution on the grounds that ordinary working process of that body might be hindered (*RA Human Rights Watch 2016, 241-242*).

The 2015 June protests against energy price rise are one of most essential occurrences of civil disobedience in Armenia. The police with water cannon had dispersed a multi-thousand rally that lasted several days. As a result of those actions, 237 people were detained and 25 were taken to hospital (*Aleksanyan 2016, 37*). Statements condemning the actions of the police were made by a number of local and international human rights organizations considering them as a violation of the fundamental rights of assembly and freedom of speech (*RA Human Rights Watch 2016; Amnesty International Report 2015/16*). Meanwhile, according to

* Civil disobedience is a part of the "Social Unrest and Political Pressure" variable of the PFI and is measured by a number of demonstrations, strikes, social unrests, particularly pressures applied against them during a specified span of time. Taking into account the absence of such statistics, relying on the analyses, reports and informative studies carried out by newspapers and research centres, the scaling range of 0-5 was chosen for their assessment, where 0 is the value for the highest number of unrest and pressure, including coup d'état and revolution and 5 is the total absence of those in question.

⁷ For more details see RA law on about "Freedom of assembly" (adopted on 14.04.2011) <http://www.parliament.am/legislation.php?sel=show&ID=4123> (15.03.2017):

police data, 3 internal investigations and 1 check-up were carried out in the Internal Security Department of the RA Police and, as a result, 12 police officers were subjected to disciplinary penalties (*RA Human Rights Watch 2016, 59-61*).

"The 100th Anniversary Without Regime" movement is one of the initiatives aimed at changing the state's regime with the help of civil disobedience in the Republic of Armenia. The movement organized car marches to raise public awareness and to consolidate people around their program with the intention to change the existing regime. In particular, on April 24 commemoration day of Armenian genocide "The 100th Anniversary Without Regime" movement called for citizens to take to the streets and overthrow the regime (*Armtimes.com 2014*). The car marches were held in the capital city, as well as in Armavir, Ararat, Kotayk, Aragatsotn and Syunik marzes. Another march was also scheduled to hold in Artsakh on January 31, 2015. However, it was violently suspended in Berdzor by the NKR police forces (*Azatutyun.am 2015*). The anti-government rally scheduled on the occasion of the commemoration of the 100th anniversary Armenian Genocide didn't take place in Yerevan. Moreover, it had been previously authorized by the municipality. on April 7 2015, prior to those events, police arrested five members of the "Founding Parliament" opposition movement, namely Garegin Chukaszyan the president, Varuzhan Avetisyan the vice-president, Zhirayr Sefilyan the coordinator of the Secretariat and leader of "The 100th Anniversary Without Regime" and Pavel Manukyan and Gevorg Safaryan, who were also members of the movement. Law enforcement bodies searched their homes and offices and accused them of preparations for plotting mass disorders (*Human Rights Watch 2016, 79*). As reported by the information and public relations agency of the department of the Investigative Committee of RA: "organization of mass disorders at public places was suspended on April 24 2015 due to joint efforts undertaken by the National Security Service of Armenia and the RA Investigative Committee" (*CIVILNET 2015; PanArmenian.Net 2015*).

It should be noted that the next year on July 17 2016, the members of the "Founding Parliament" attacked and seized the territory of the RA Police patrol service regiment, demanding Serzh Sargsyan's resignation and release of political prisoners. Representatives of the armed rebellion named themselves as "Sasna

Tsrer". Dissatisfaction aroused by the actions of authorities triggered support among certain strata of the society for "Sasna Tsrer" movement, which later turned into a mass movement and civil disobedience. The day of July 29 was the peak of a two-week standoff of the police regiment when the marchers from Liberty Square unexpectedly turned toward Sari Tagh. The police used teargas and disproportionate force to disperse the mass protests in Sari Tagh. In total, 67 civilians and 6 policemen were injured and taken to hospital. On July 31, Varuzhan Avetisyan, a member of the armed group, announced the laying down of their weapons and surrendering to authorities as prisoners of war (*Human Rights Watch 2017, 89-90; Armlur.am 2016*).

Regarding other political variables included in the model, it should be added that Political Stability indicator grew up compared to the previous year, whereas Rule of Law⁸ indicator together with Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI)⁹ decreased. 35 points in 2015 and 33 points in 2016 were assigned to Armenia. According to 2016 data, Armenia was ranked the 113th among 176 states and territories¹⁰. Conflict Presence¹¹ variable remained unchanged in 2015. Nevertheless, it has to be mentioned that since 2014 the tension at Azerbaijan and Armenia frontier, as well as the number of ceasefire violations and injuries from both sides, increased. In April 2016 that tension turned into a large-scale military operation covering the period from April 2 to 5. Those operations were instigated by Azerbaijan and were later termed as "four-day April war".

⁸ See the official site of the World Bank <http://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/index.aspx#reports> (20.03.2017).

⁹ Corruption Perception Index is measured by Transparency International organization with a ranking scale from 0-100 (it used to be measured by 0-10 scale till 2012), where 0 point implies the highest level of corruption and effectively 100 points indicate the lowest level.

¹⁰ See the official site of Transparency International organization <http://www.transparency.org/cpi2015/>, <http://www.transparency.org/cpi2016/> (10.04.2017).

¹¹ Conflict Presence" affecting democracy is measured in the following way: a) the absence of conflict (2 points), passive conflict (1 point), when a state is in conflicting relations with another state, but there are no active military actions, and active conflict (0 points), when a state has conflicting relations with another state/states and active military actions are carried out. The maximum value in the scale is 2 points and the minimum value is 0 point in data standardization processes. Taking into account Armenian and Azerbaijan conflict, 1 point was attributed in 2015, whereas in 2016 the points decreased to 0.

Hence, periodically fluctuating PFI did not overcome significant changes for the observed 1995-2015 period. After the increase in 2014 it went down the next year, which resulted in the lowest indicator for the mentioned years. Particularly, the uprising wave of social unrest accompanied by the growing political pressure had a major impact on the decline of the 2015 index. However, the rise of civil disobedience in Armenia also indicates the formation of civil consciousness as well as the formation and activation of civil society. As it had been mentioned earlier that deterioration of Corruption Perception, Press Freedom, and the Rule of Law indices had a negative impact on the PFI in 2015. At the same time, the highest indicator was registered in 2015 which was stipulated by the improvement of the above-mentioned indices within the same period. The same highest result was registered in relation to Social Unrest and Political Pressure indices, as the 2002 year was considered one of the calmest years within the time span mentioned in the research (*Aleksanyan 2015, 22-32, Aleksanyan 2016, 28-40*).

2.2 Economic Factors Index (EFI)

According to the 2015 accumulated data, EFI had a negative impact on IDL. Precisely, the decrease of 2015 EFI was the second deepest fall succeeding the financial and economic crisis (see Figure 1, Table 1).

After the global financial crisis, qualitative shifts took place in the structure of Armenia's economic growth, mainly and preferably in favor of productive industries. The economic growth in 2015 was largely induced by the export sectors of the economy. For that reason 3% growth was registered in 2015, mainly due to the growth of agriculture by 13,2% and industry by 7,6%. Besides, 2,4% and 1,2% of the economic growth was ensured on account of agriculture sector and industry respectively. In the meantime, a growth of industry was largely conditioned by the 57,9% growth of mining industry stipulated by an exploitation of a new mine. The sector of services increased by 0,6%, which, as a result, contributed to 0,3%

economic growth. As far as construction sector is concerned, 3,1% fall was observed which negatively affected the economic growth by 0,3% (see Table 2).

Thus, in 2015 the economic progress was due to the high growth of indicators in agriculture and mining sectors. Nevertheless, economic fall was detected in almost all other key sectors of the economy, such as manufacturing industry, construction and services with an exception in energy sector, hotels and public food services (*EDRC 2016a, 9-11*).

Table 2

A real growth of economic branches for 2012-2016 years (added value)¹²

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
	factual	factual	factual	factual	predicted
GDP	7,2	3,3	3,6	3,0	2,4
Industry	6,3	6,3	-0,9	7,6	5,0
Agriculture	9,5	7,6	6,1	13,2	4,0
Construction	4,8	-7,4	-4,5	-3,1	-1,5
Services	6,3	3,1	6,7	0,6	2,6
Product taxes (subsidiaries excluded)	9,9	3,6	1,8	-5,1	-2,0

In 2015, Armenia's external debt considerably increased, going up from 14%, which is equal to \$532 million to \$4,317 billion. It constituted 41% of GDP compared to 32,6% registered in 2014. Moreover, 89% of the debt belongs to the Armenian government, whereas the remaining 11% to the Central Bank of Armenia. Hence, the debt of both the Government of Armenia and the Central Bank increased in 2015. Nevertheless, the growth of public debt is largely caused by the increase in the government's debt. The main creditor of the external debt is the World Bank, with comprised only 38% of the debt, whereas the other creditors are non-resident owners of RA Government bonds, the International Monetary

¹² The source is predictions of main indicators of RA economic and fiscal and monetary policies, Part I – B, Law of the Republic of Armenia on the State Budget of the Republic of Armenia, RA Law, (adopted on 08.12.2016), pages 66-68 // <http://www.parliament.am/drafts.php?sel=showdraft&DraftID=41571> (13.10.2017).

Fund and others (*EDRC 2016a, 13-14*). As a result, the RA public debt reached 4,805 million dollars in 2016¹³.

Individuals' remittances have a great impact on the Armenian economy. According to a number of studies, GDP of Armenia is directly linked to the value of remittances. For the last 10 years, the above-mentioned remittances have generally made up 20% of the annual GDP (*Compass Center 2017, 10*). In 2015 there was a significant decline in private remittances (through the financial formal system). The total inflow was calculated to 1,6 billion US dollars, which is 23,2% less compared to 2014. On top of that, remittances decreased by 7,8% in 2014. The Russian Federation and the USA are the main countries the individuals' remittances are transferred from, which respectively stand for 62% and 11% of the total inflow. Moreover, the number of remittances sent from Russia decreased by more than one thirds. As a consequence, the total inflow went downward regardless the fact that the number of remittances from the USA increased by 14,2%; hence recovering the level which was registered back in 2008 (*EDRC 2016a, 15; Compass Center 2017, 10*).

Observing the EFI variables included in the model and comparing them to the previous year, we can denote that a downfall of all indices was observed in 2015. So, GNI from 4,010 US dollars (verified by the index of the USA purchasing power parity) went down to 3,880 US dollars¹⁴. The volumes of Foreign direct investments were significantly reduced by 3,5% of GDP, reaching down 1,7% in the studied year¹⁵. This was conditioned by 4% decrease in food and 3% increase in non-food products and services. In 2015, state budget revenues and expenditures nominally increased by 2% and 14% respectively, which led to a considerable high amount of deficit, equal to about 240 billion drams, which, in its turn, accounts for 4,8% of GDP (*EDRC 2016a, 12-13*).

¹³ See the RA National Statistics Service official website
<http://www.armstat.am/en/?id=17007&nid=126> (15.03.2017).

¹⁴ See the official site of the World Bank
<http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GNP.PCAP.CD?locations=AM> (19.03.2017).

¹⁵ See the official site of the World Bank
<http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/BX.KLT.DINV.WD.GD.ZS?locations=AM> (19.03.2017).

The Index of Economic Freedom (IEF) had been declining since 2012 and the picture remained unchanged in 2015¹⁶. According to “the 2016 Index of Economic Freedom” Armenia occupied the 54th place out of 178 countries. In addition, Armenia's rating (67 points) is higher than the worldwide (60,7 points) and regional (66,9 points) average ratings (*Miller & Kim, 2016, 3, 64, 97-98*).

The external trade turnover had noticeably and yearly dropped by almost 4% of GDP which finally amounted to 71,8% of GDP¹⁷. In the meantime, the volume of export (about 4%), especially import of goods and services (about 26%) lessened in dollars. On the one hand, export volumes decreased by 26%, 3,4% and 38% to Russia, China and USA respectively. On the other hand, export to Georgia, Iraq and Canada increased by 73%, 62% and 20% correspondingly. With regard to import volumes, they were cut down not only from all major countries, precisely Russia (7%), China and Turkey (24%), Ukraine (40%), Switzerland (65) and Belgium (45%), but the import volumes of all major goods also decreased. A drastic decline in import sector considerably triggered the improvement of trade balance (*EDRC 2016a, 4, 16*).

Since January 2015 Armenian has become a member of EEU¹⁸, which implies the creation of the united customs territory, customs duty exemption between member states and application of a common customs duty with third countries and etc. However, in 2015 the trade turnover with the four EEU member states lowered by 17,1%, where 256,2 million dollars (21%) belonged to export and 968,5 million dollars (16,1%) to import sector. Thus, Armenia's trade volumes increased within the scope of the Customs Union for January-September period and export volumes increased by 55,2% amounting to 274 million dollars, which was more

¹⁶ The EFI for 2016 was included in the IDL model and observed as the index of 2015, since the experts of the “Heritage” foundation made their estimations largely on the data accumulated from the period of July 1 2014 to June 30 2015.

¹⁷ See the official site of the World Bank <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NE.TRD.GNFS.ZS> (19.03.2017).

¹⁸ The Treaty on the EEU was signed by the Presidents of the Republic of Belarus, the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation on May 2014, which came into effect on January 1, 2015. // “The Treaty on the Eurasian Economic Union” (signed on 29.05.2014 in Astana). The Republic of Armenia joined the Treaty on October 10, 2014 // the Treaty on Armenia's accession to the Eurasian Economic Union Agreement (adopted on 10.10.2014 in Minsk).

than the total amount of volumes used during the whole year of 2015. With respect to import sector, it went up only by 2,9% (719,1 million dollars) (*Compass Center 2017, 10-11*).

2.3 Social Factors Index (SFI)

The negative impact of the Social Factors Index on IDL is the most effective one among other sub-indices. The SFI did not only dramatically drop, but it also had the worst decline within the mentioned 1995-2015 years (see Figure 1, Table 1).

3% economic growth recorded in Armenia 2015 is not a sufficient indicator displaying a reduction of the real poverty rate. Compared to the previous year (30%) it was only reduced by 0,2% (29,8%), where 19,4% is considered poor, 8,4% very poor, and 2% extremely poor. This means that nearly three out of ten residents of the country are below the poverty line with the lowest monthly amount of 41,698 drams. The 2015 poverty level indicator, as well as the indicator recorded within the past six years, still exceeded the indicator of 27,6% recorded in 2008. Accordingly, the difference of poverty level between urban (29,4%) and rural areas (30,4%) is insignificant, whereas the difference is noteworthy when comparing Yerevan (25%) and other towns (34,4%). The poverty level also varies in marzes. The highest level of poverty was registered in Shirak region, where 45% of the population is below the poverty line, whereas the same indicator was recorded with 16-17% in Aragatsotn and Vayots Dzor regions. To overcome poverty Armenia needs 71,4 billion drams or the sum equal to 1,4% of GDP, including funds, which had already been allocated for social assistance (*NSS RA and WB, 2016, 36-46*). Gini index (0,374) also deteriorated and after the financial and economic crisis, it had been gradually increasing by underlying the polarization issue caused by salary differences of the society¹⁹.

¹⁹ See the RA National Statistical Service official website <http://armstat.am/file/doc/99499393.pdf> (15.03.2017).

On top of poverty, unemployment is another major and crucial social issue in Armenia. The unemployment rate is one of the highest ones in the world and it amounted to 18,5% in 2015, which had been the highest indicator during the recent 5 years²⁰.

This social and economic situation is also accompanied by high flows of immigration. The employment related problems were the main causes for 70% of migrants to leave the country within the period of 2012-2015, who spent 3 months or more abroad and had not come back yet per data provided in 2015. According to that, 93,4% of them left for Russia (NSS RA 2016, 108). During that period, an average of 40,000 citizens yearly crossed the border and did not return (*Compass Center 2017, 16*). According to statistical data, 937,000 Armenian citizens which are equal to 25% of its population lived outside Armenia in 2015. After Bosnia and Herzegovina, Albania and Jamaica Armenia occupies the 4th place in the world with regard to this indicator. Prevailing 56% of Armenian migrants have settled in the Russian Federation, 15% in European countries, 9,5% in the US and Canada (*Ampop.am 2017*).

The social protection sector is represented in the state budget by the "Social Security" group. The expenditures of the social sphere are the largest functional articles of the state budget. In 2015, 27,2% of the state budget which is 7,6% of GDP, was allocated to the social protection sector. It is implemented by 8 budget groups. The largest expenditure is aimed at "old age" group, which mostly includes services for the elderly, such as labor and social pensions, benefits, care and social services. It composed 73,8% of the budget (283,2 billion drams). Groups like "Family members and children", "Social protection (not a member of any other group)", "Social Privileges" respectively amounted to 15,4%, 5,2% and 3,4% of the budget allotted to that sector. Another groups, such as "Sickness and disability", "Survivors", "Unemployment" and "Housing" have little significance in social protection budget (*EDRC 2016b, 7, 10-11*).

²⁰ See the RA National Statistical Service official website
<http://www.armstat.am/en/?nid=126&id=08010&submit> (15.03.2017).

2.4 Educational Factors Index (EdFI)

The main priority of human development policy is to ensure sustainable education through improvements aimed at raising quality, efficiency and accessibility of education. In Armenia development of the educational sector is an important precondition for country's sustainable progress and development and accordingly the main priority of the state policy. Education remains an important factor in the state policy ensuring national value and socio-economic progress of the country (*MTEF 2017-2019, 101*).

Education in Armenia includes public and professional education, extracurricular education, as well as the assistance to diaspora educational institutions. In 2015 the overwhelming majority of education expenditure 77,1% was aimed at financing public education sector²¹ and 17,3% was aimed at financing vocational education programmes²² compared to 78,9% and 16,2% respectively registered in 2014 (*MTEF 2017-2019, 107-108*). When observing the ratio of public expenditure on general and vocational education within the observed years, it is noticeable that, on the one hand, general education spending had been decreasing year after year and, on the other hand, expenditure on vocational education had been increasing (see Table 3).

Table 3

Government expenditure allocated to general and vocational education sector for the 2013-2016 period (excluded the maintenance costs of state)%

	General education	Vocational education
2013	81,3	14,6
2014	78,9	16,2
2015	77,1	17,3
2016 (predicted)	76,5	18,3

²¹ Public education is a priority programme in education sector. It includes pre-school, elementary, basic and secondary education (general, vocational, special), as well as there are several programmes envisaged by public education assisting programmes. In 2006 Armenia transited to 12-years public education system with the following sequence: elementary school (4 years), secondary school (5 years), and high school (3 years).

²² Professional/vocational education programmes include pre-vocational (craftsmanship), vocational, higher and postgraduate education programs as well as other programs assisting the implementation of the mentioned ones. Professional institutions are pre-vocation (craftsmanship), vocational (college) and higher education institutions (university, institute, academy and conservatoire).

Analyzing the statistical data (see Table 4), it is observable that the gross enrollment in elementary school within the last 4 years was gradually decreased from 95,2% (2013) to 91,6% (2015). Examination of total enrollment data indicates that there is a decline in the number of students continuing their education in high schools as well. Moreover, 14,5% fall of gross enrollment in high schools covering 2015 and 2016 years can be estimated as quite high when compared to 1-2% registered in the previous years. Some students (in 2015/2016 ed. year 15,3%) after graduating from the basic school continue their education in pre-vocational (craftsmanship) and vocational institutions which have the lowest gross enrollment rate in comparison with other areas of education. This means that primary and vocational education sectors are the weakest circles of the educational sector. In contrast to this, the gross enrollment rate of students in higher education institutions is high and it had been increasing for the last four years, amounting to 52,9% in 2015/2016.

Table 4

Gross enrollment rates of pupils and students in %²³

Years	Elementary school	Basic school	High school	Vocational education	Technical secondary education	Higher education
2012/2013	95,2	94,8	74,1	4,1	11	44,9
2013/2014	94,1	92,6	74,0	12,2	12,2	46,9
2014/2015	93,1	92,6	72,4	7,4	12,2	46,8
2015/2016	91,6	96,3	57,9	7,2	10,9	52,9

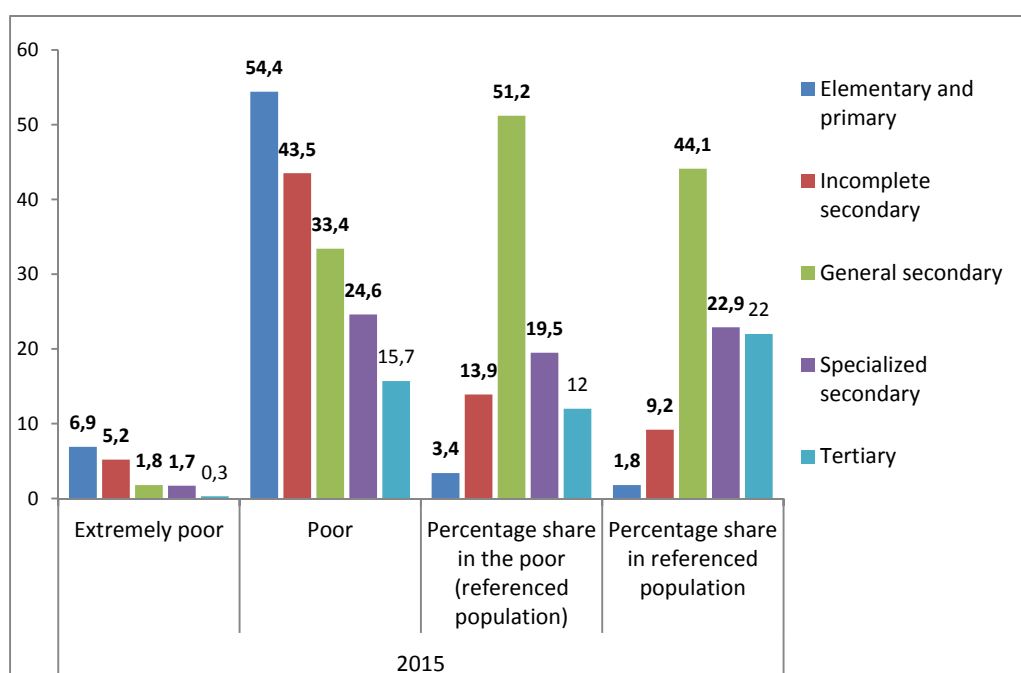
The improvement of educational level among the population is one of the important tools for fighting against poverty. Analysis of statistical data allows concluding that the level of education is connected to the poverty level in an opposite proportion. Thus, the poverty level among individuals with higher education is the lowest. It is approximately 1,8 times lower than the national

²³ Data sources: NSS RA (2012) «Social situation of the RA in 2012» (available in Armenian) // <http://armstat.am/en/?nid=82&id=1466>; NSS RA (2013) «Social situation of the RA in 2013» (available in Armenian) // <http://armstat.am/en/?nid=82&id=1590>; NSS RA. 2014. «Social situation of the RA in 2014» (available in Armenian) // <http://armstat.am/en/?nid=82&id=1689> (10.04.2017).

average poverty level and respectively 3,5 and 2,8 times lower than those who have elementary/low and incomplete secondary education. The level of extreme poverty is the lowest among those who have higher education compared to those with other levels of education. Individuals with general secondary education constitute the largest group among the poor population (see Figure 2) (*NSS RA and WB, 2016, 53-54*).

Figure 2

The poverty level of RA population aged 16 and older according to their education level in 2015 (%)



As for the HDI Education Index included in the model, it had been stable since 2011 (calculated according to a new methodology 0,729)²⁴. In contrast, government spending on education grew up compared to 2015 and made up 2,8% of GDP²⁵. The latter also conditioned the increase in EdFI in 2015 (see Figure 1, Table 1).

²⁴ See the UNDP official site at <http://hdr.undp.org/en/year/2016> (24.04.2017).

²⁵ See the official site of the World Bank <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.XPD.TOTL.GD.ZS?locations=AM> (24.04.2017).

2.5 Health Factors Index (HFI)

Health care protection is an essential part of the state policy of the Republic of Armenia and is one of the main social issues. Its main goals are aimed at prevention of diseases, their early detection, diagnosis and treatment, a better accessibility to medical care and the improvement of its quality for the period in question (*MTEF 2017-2019, 181*).

The allocations to health expenditure have an unstable tendency to increase. In addition, the level of health expenditure compared to government expenditure on other sectors is low and in 2015 it comprised 6,1% of the state budget (*EDRC 2016c, 6-9*).

Financing process of this field is presented by 5 groups in the state budget. 46,5% of health care expenses were allocated in 2015 to “Hospital services”, which is the largest group. This group includes general and specialized, as well as mother and child medical assistance of hospital services. The next significant group is “Outpatient services”, which accounted for only 32,5% of health care expenditure in 2015. The allocations to the remaining groups, namely, “Public health care services”, “Medical products, appliances and equipment”, “Health n.e.c.” are little and constitute only 20% of expenditure (*EDRC 2016c, 10-12*).

Aging of the population is also among the important problems, as 10,9% of the total population is 65 years old and above. According to the UN aging scale, if more than 7% of the population is 65 years old and above it is considered aging. This index is a consequence of long-term correlation of demographic changes, population reproduction, birth rate, mortality and immigration (*National Institute of Health MH RA, 14-15*).

There are also concerns about the overall health of the population which has increased after the post-Soviet years. Particular, in 2015 the morbidity rate was increasingly registered with 9,3% compared to 6,5% per 1000 people. According to official statistics, the major causes of morbidity are non-communicable diseases, such as malignant tumors (21,9%), diabetes (4,6%), as well as chronic obstructive pulmonary (4,2 %) and blood circulation system (46%) diseases. As a result, 75% of

deaths are imputed to above-mentioned diseases in contrast to 1% caused by communicable diseases. It should also be mentioned that 28,5% is assigned to premature mortality rate (before 65 years of age) and is one of the most important health related issues in RA. In other words, every third one dies before reaching 65 (*National Institute of Health MH RA 2016, 33-37*).

In spite of this, the mortality rate of children up to 5 years old (per 1000 live births) was 10,4 per mil in 2015 compared to 21,4 and 13 estimated correspondingly in 1994 and 2004. Reduction of this indicator is mainly stipulated by the decrease in the number of infant mortality rate, as the indicator is better in Armenian rather than in CIS and Georgia (*National Institute of Health MH RA 2016, 15-16*).

At present, Armenia is classified among the countries with a low birth rate and a woman should give a birth at least to 2,1 children to provide a simple reproduction of the population. Meanwhile, the rate was calculated by 1,4 children per woman in 2015 in contrast to Georgia and Azerbaijan with respectively 1,8 and 2,3 children²⁶.

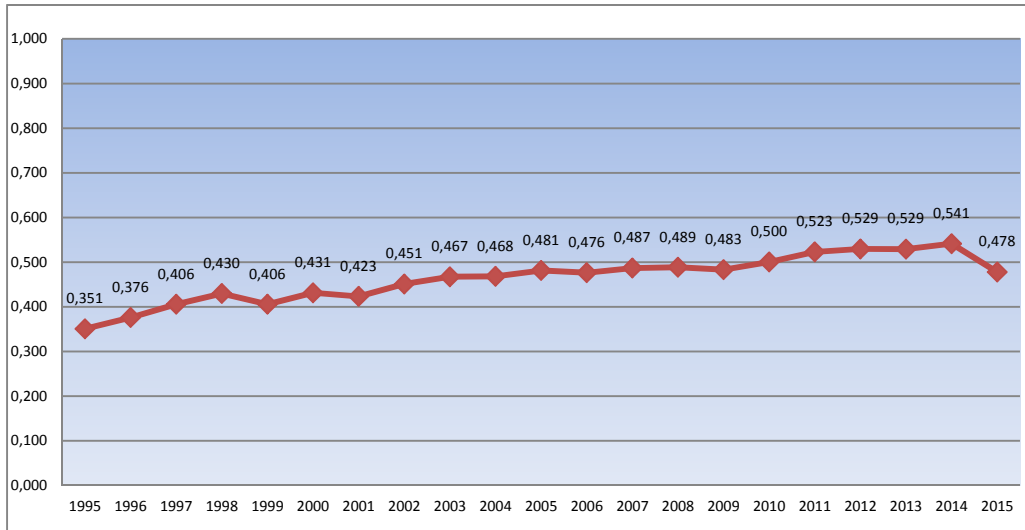
Life expectancy showed signs of growth in 2015 and 71,7 are the average years for a male, which is a higher indicator when compared with many European and Central Asia countries. In reference to a female, it amounted to 78,2 years. These two indicators excelled the corresponding levels registered in 1990 (*NSS RA and WB, 2016, 122*).

The 2015 HFI indicator underwent positive changes in comparison to the 2014 HFI indicator. Moreover, it is the highest registered for the mentioned period, which is predominantly affected by the life expectancy at birth variable.

²⁶ See the UNFPA official site <http://www.unfpa.am/demographic-situation> (19.04.2017).

2.6 Development Trends of the Index of Democracy Level

Figure 3
Index of Democracy Level of Armenia in the time span between 1995-2015*



The indices of democracy level covering the period from 1995 to 2015 are presented in Figure 3. A drastic decline was observed in 2015, which was conditioned by the decline of PFI, EFI and SFI. That year was full of both political and public process, which were actively carried out. The package for the Constitutional amendments through the referendum was adopted in 2015. As a consequence, Armenia would obtain a parliamentary system in replacement of the previous semi-presidential. The growth of civil disobedience, namely a multi-thousand protest against the rise in electricity prices, which were accompanied by pressure from the police, had a negative impact on the PFI and respectively on the IDL. In addition, indices of Rule of Law, Press Freedom and Corruption Perceptions Index deteriorated resulting in the fall of PFI with the lowest indicator registered for the observed period. The fall of EFI in 2015 was the most drastic one within the mentioned period, as it caused regression of all 7 indicators included in the model. In the meantime, in respect to other subindices, SFI's influence on IDL

* Source: calculations by the researcher.

was the most crucial. The Unemployment rate was continuously one of the highest in the world registered by 18,5% and unequal distribution of incomes in the society was periodically deepening after the financial and economic crisis. Due to unfavourable impact those three subindices caused the deepest decline of the IDL in 2015 since 1995.

2.7 Regression analysis of the Index of Democracy Level

The regression analysis illustrated the variables of Political, Economic, Social, Educational and Health Factors Indices, which had a significant influence on the IDL of Armenia.

The regression results show that there has been a significant correlation between the IDL_i^* and variables of Rule of Law and Political Stability/Absence of Violence and Corruption Perceptions Index.

$$Y' = 0,012x_1 - 0,017 \text{ (Adj. } R^2=0,629\text{),}$$

where Y' is the IDL_i (IDL cleaned from the variable of the Rule of Law), x_1 is the Rule of Law.

$$Y' = 0,003x_2 + 0,345 \text{ (Adj. } R^2=0,449\text{),}$$

where Y' is the IDL_i (IDL cleaned from the variable of Political Stability/Absence of Violence), x_2 is Political Stability/Absence of Violence.

$$Y' = 0,079x_3 + 0,221 \text{ (Adj. } R^2=0,391\text{),}$$

where Y' is the IDL_i (IDL cleaned from the variable of the Rule of Law), x_3 is Corruption Perceptions Index.

A significant correlation has been established only between IDL_i and External trade rate of EFI.

$$Y' = -0,004x_4 + 0,76 \text{ (Adj. } R^2 = 0,236\text{),}$$

* IDL_i is the Index of Democracy Level cleaned from the corresponding independent variable during every paired regression analysis.

where Y' is the IDL_i (IDL cleaned from the variable of External trade rate), x_4 is External trade rate (% of GDP).

A significant correlation has been denoted in the Social Factors Index, i.e. between the IDL_i and Gini index.

$$Y' = -0,462x_5 + 0,673 \text{ (Adj. } R^2 = 0,757\text{),}$$

where Y' is the IDL_i (IDL cleaned from Gini index), x_5 is Gini index.

The following equations were drawn from the regression analysis of the Educational Factors.

$$Y' = 1,2x_6 - 0,404 \text{ (Adj. } R^2 = 0,739\text{),}$$

where Y' is the IDL_i (IDL cleaned from the variable of HDI Education Index), x_6 is HDI Education Index.

$$Y' = 0,056x_7 + 0,349 \text{ (Adj. } R^2 = 0,290\text{),}$$

where Y' is the IDL_i (IDL cleaned from the variable of the Government expenditure on education), x_7 is Government expenditure on education (% of GDP).

The following equation was drawn in reference to Health Factors Indices.

$$Y' = 0,02x_8 - 0,981 \text{ (Adj. } R^2 = 0,834\text{),}$$

where Y' is the IDL_i (IDL cleaned from the variable of Life expectancy at birth), x_8 is Life expectancy at birth.

To sum up, the variable of Political Factors, namely Rule of Law and Political Stability significantly impact on the IDL of Armenia, where 1 unit change will correspondingly lead to the growth of the IDL_i from 0,003 to 0,012 units. The mentioned variables determine 45-64% variation of dependent variables.

The mentioned variables determine 45-63% variations of dependent variables. The corruption level impacts on the IDL which indicates a significant correlation between IDL_i and Corruption Perceptions Index. A positive change of the latter will result in 0,08 units increase of IDL.

External trade rate of EFI also impacted on the IDL. The growth of External trade rate by 1% will lead to the rise of the IDL_i by 0,004 units. It's noteworthy that the above-mentioned index has a negative impact on IDL_i . Imbalance in

external trade turnover may be one of the reasons. During the entire transition period, the trade of the RA had a negative balance, which is one of the major problems of state's economy.

Another finding illustrates that the Index of Democracy Level of Armenia is strongly and continuously affected by social indicators, where the decline of Gini index with 0,1 unit will increase the IDL_i with the magnitude of 0,05 units respectively, explaining 76% variation of dependent variables.

The rise of HDI Education Index with 0,1 unit and the change in the Government expenditure on education with 1% of GDP will bring the change of the IDL_i with the magnitude of 0,12 and 0,06 units, respectively. Particularly, the HDI Education Index has a significant coefficient of determination, which explains 74% of the variation in democracy.

A strong correlation was established between IDL_i and variable of Life expectancy at birth and its increase with 1 unit will increase the IDL_i with the 0,02 units. This indicator also highly determines 83% of variation of dependent of the IDL_i .

By summarizing the abovesaid, we can conclude that the regression analysis shows that the indicators of Political Stability and Rule of Law, Gini index, External trade rate of SFI and other Educational and Health Factors mostly affect the IDL. Nonetheless, Life expectancy, HDI Education Index and Gini index have the most significant coefficient of determination. Gini index reveals that there is an unequal distribution of incomes in the society which resulted in the formation of polarization in the population. The absence of the middle class and high rate of poverty negatively impacted the democracy level. At the same time, education sector having a significant correlation on IDL shall be paid the highest attention. And the above-mentioned factors can positively influence the development of the consolidation process of democracy, as well as the level of democracy in Armenia.

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Abbreviations

CB	Central Bank
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CPI	Corruption Perceptions Index
EdFI	Educational Factors Index
EDRC	Economic Development and Research Centre
EEU	Eurasian Economic Union
EFI	Economic Factors Index
EU	European Union
GDP	Gross domestic product
GGGI	Global Gender Gap Index
GNI	Gross national income
HDI	Human Development Index
HFI	Health Factors Index
HRD	Human rights defender
IDL	Index of Democracy Level
IEF	Index of Economic Freedom
MoH	Ministry of Health
MTIF	Medium-term Expenditure Frameworks
NA	National Assembly
NKR	Nagorno Karabakh Republic
NSS	National Statistical Service
PFI	Political Factors Index

Chapter 2. Index of Democracy Level of Armenia

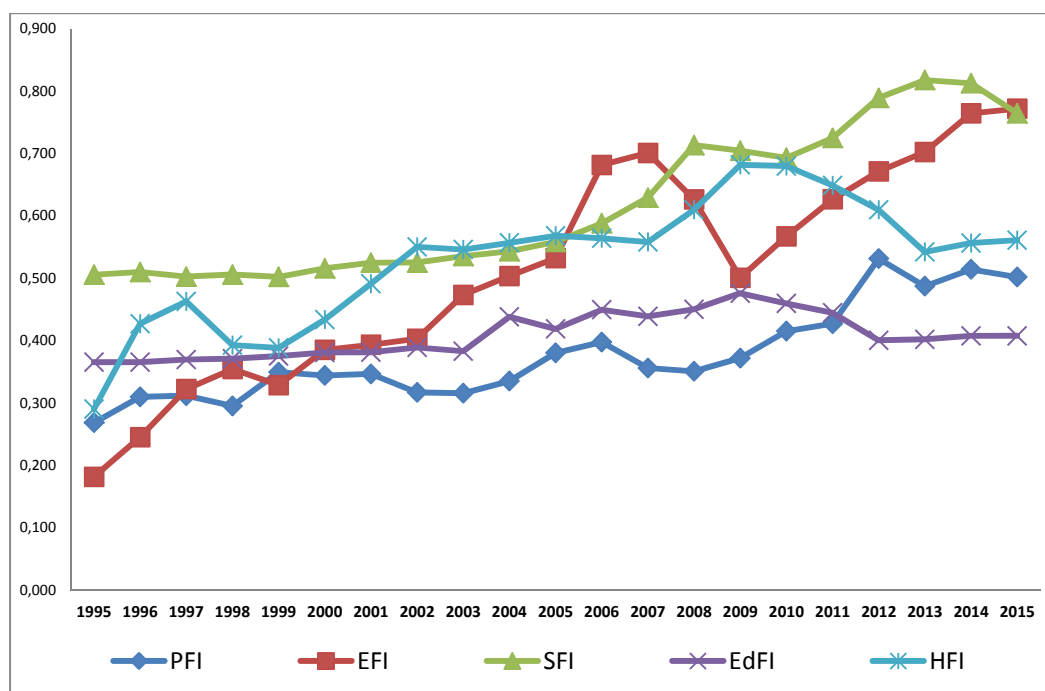
RA	Republic of Armenia
SFI	Social Factors Index
UNO	United Nations Organization
USA	United States of America
WB	World Bank

CHAPTER 3.

INDEX OF DEMOCRACY LEVEL OF GEORGIA (IDL)

ARUSYAK ALEKSANYAN

Figure 1
Indices of Political, Social, Economic, Educational and Health Factors affecting the Index of Democracy Level of Georgia in the time span between 1995-2015*



* The source is based on the calculations accumulated by the researcher.
The indices of IDL factors are comparable only by the trends.

Figure 1

Indices of Political, Economic, Social, Educational and Health Factors and Index of Democracy Level of Georgia in the time span between 1995-2015*

Years	PFI	EFI	SFI	EdFI	HFI	IDL
1995	0,269	0,182	0,506	0,366	0,290	0,285
1996	0,310	0,245	0,510	0,366	0,427	0,334
1997	0,312	0,322	0,503	0,370	0,463	0,358
1998	0,295	0,354	0,506	0,371	0,393	0,352
1999	0,349	0,329	0,502	0,375	0,389	0,368
2000	0,344	0,385	0,516	0,381	0,434	0,387
2001	0,347	0,393	0,525	0,381	0,491	0,398
2002	0,317	0,403	0,525	0,389	0,550	0,395
2003	0,316	0,473	0,536	0,383	0,546	0,413
2004	0,335	0,504	0,543	0,438	0,557	0,437
2005	0,380	0,532	0,558	0,419	0,568	0,464
2006	0,398	0,682	0,588	0,450	0,564	0,516
2007	0,356	0,701	0,629	0,439	0,558	0,506
2008	0,351	0,627	0,714	0,450	0,610	0,501
2009	0,372	0,501	0,705	0,476	0,682	0,486
2010	0,415	0,567	0,693	0,460	0,680	0,518
2011	0,427	0,627	0,725	0,445	0,649	0,537
2012	0,532	0,671	0,789	0,400	0,610	0,590
2013	0,487	0,703	0,818	0,402	0,542	0,576
2014	0,514	0,765	0,813	0,408	0,557	0,605
2015	0,502	0,772	0,765	0,408	0,561	0,597

* The source is based on the calculations accumulated by the researcher.

The EFI, SFI, HFI, EdFI and indices of IDL calculated during certain years may insignificantly vary in comparison to the indices of the corresponding years estimated in the previous publications in the result of updated and newly inserted data as well as changes of minimum and maximum indices.

3.1 Political Factors Index (PFI)

Regardless of the fact that the PFI improved in 2014, it decreased in 2015. Within the 1995-2015 period, the highest indicator (0,532) was registered in 2012, whereas the lowest one (0,269) was recorded in 1995.

Both progress/regress-oriented trends were observed in democratic processes. Steps aimed at reinforcing political pluralism in the country as well as apparent reduction in persecutions of officials of former ruling United National Movement (UNM) political party were considered as examples of positive trends. In the meantime, freedom of the press was registered with political pressures, especially targeting “Rustavi 2” opposition TV channel.

Personnel shifts among highest ranking officials, clashes between opposition and the government were one of the most outstanding events taken place in 2015. Moreover, they were also accompanied by economic crisis and deepening of international relations. On the one hand, EU and Georgia enjoy a very close and positive relationship, on the other hand, EU-Russian relations were upgraded to a new level (*RIA Novosti 2016; Echo Kavkaz 2015*).

The Prime Minister’s resignation was quite noticeable in view of staff changes in the government. PM Irakli Garibashvili announced his resignation at the end of 2015. Meanwhile in December, in his special address, he spoke of “historic results” and significant reforms during his tenure but did not give a specific reason behind the decision to step down. Association Agreement¹ signed with the European Union, as well as consent on visa-free travel rules for the citizens, was precisely mentioned by him as important achievements of the country (*Echo Kavkaz 2015*). On December 30 Giorgi Kvirikashvili, an economy minister, was named the next PM in 2015 (*Freedom House 2016a*).

¹ See “Association agreement between the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community and their Member States, of the one part, and Georgia, of the other part”, Official Journal of the European Union, 20 August 2014, http://eeas.europa.eu/georgia/pdf/eu-ge_aa-dcfta_en.pdf (20.06.2017). The Parliament of Georgia ratified it on 18 July 2014 and the Council of the EU on 18 December 2014. It became effective on 1 July 2016, which had been previously ratified by legislative bodies of all member states.

Prior to 2016 parliamentary elections, new forces and unions emerged in the political arena. In the first place, four UNM members left the party with the intention to form a new political center “Girchi”, which later grew up into a party (*Novosti-Georgia 2016*). In summer 2015, Georgian refugees from Abkhazia and South Ossetia formed a new party and named it “Party of Refugees”. The leader of the party Lela Guledani once announced that the purpose of the party was to unite all refugees and solve their problems.

The fact that a famous opera singer Paat Burchuladze entered into the political arena was quite astonishing. Furthermore, he established Georgia Development Fund in 2015. On top of that, he formed political movement “State for people” later in 2016, claiming that one of the main priorities for his fund was an enhancement of economic development in the country. Paat Burchuladze, well-known for his western orientation, had a high rating in wide strata of society (*Echo Kavkaz 2015; Sputnik 2016*).

Certain changes also took place in Georgian Dream (GD) ruling coalition on account of inner discrepancies aroused within parties. In March 2016 Republican Party left the coalition, followed by National Forum in a month. What is more, the “Industry Will Save Georgia” Party also joined them in May 2016 and left the aforementioned coalition. It should also be reminded that Free Democrats party was the first to leave the coalition back in November 2014 (*Муханов, Вадим, Скаков, Александр 2016, 79-80*).

So, two rounds of parliamentary elections were held in October 2016. In compliance with acting Constitution, the Georgian parliament consists of 150 deputies, where 77 are elected by proportional and 73 by majoritarian representation (*Constitution of RG, Article 49*). 19 political parties and 6 coalitions contested in 2016 elections. Nonetheless, only Georgian Dream, United National Movement, and Georgian Patriots political parties managed to pass 5% threshold through proportional representation defined by the Constitution (*Constitution of RG, Article 50*) and respectively obtained 44, 27 and 6 mandates.

The overwhelming victory of Georgian Dream party by majoritarian representation was very impressive during the two rounds of the elections. The representatives of the party won in all districts with the exception of two and, as a

result, 71 mandates were accordingly assigned. Consequently, Georgian Dream obtained 115 mandates in the highest legislative body by gaining constitutional majority (see Table 2).

Table 2
The ratio of seats received by political parties in the parliament in Georgia²

	Parliamentary elections in Georgia		
Parties, alliances, participants	2016		Total
	M	P	
Georgian Dream	71	44	115
United National Movement	-	27	27
Alliance of Patriots of Georgia	-	6	6
Industry Will Save Georgia	1	-	1
Non-partisan	1	-	1
<i>Total</i>	<i>73</i>	<i>77</i>	<i>150</i>

It should be mentioned that some political parties and NGOs acted with the intention to make changes in the electoral system of the country. The main goal was to fully adopt a proportional system of elections and conduct the forthcoming elections accordingly. The opposition claimed that authorities succeeded in obtaining necessary 35% for their representatives with the use of administrative resources. In view of this, the remaining 65% was disregarded. A ruling coalition, in its turn, stated that a transition to a fully proportional electoral system would have been completed by 2020 due to the time scarcity (*Echo Kavkaz 2015; Regnum 2017*). Hence, the ratio of seats in the parliament by proportional and majoritarian representation remained unchanged during 2016 elections (see Figure 2, Table 3).

² The source of the data is Nohlen, Dieter, Grotz, Florgeoian, and Hartmann, Christof. (eds). 2001. Elections in Asia and the Pacific: A Data Handbook: Volume 1: Middle East, Central Asia, and South Asia. Oxford University Press, OSCE reports on elections in Georgia <http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/armenia>, <http://civil.ge/eng/> (20.08.2014).

Figure 2

The ratio of seats by proportional and majoritarian representation in the Parliament³

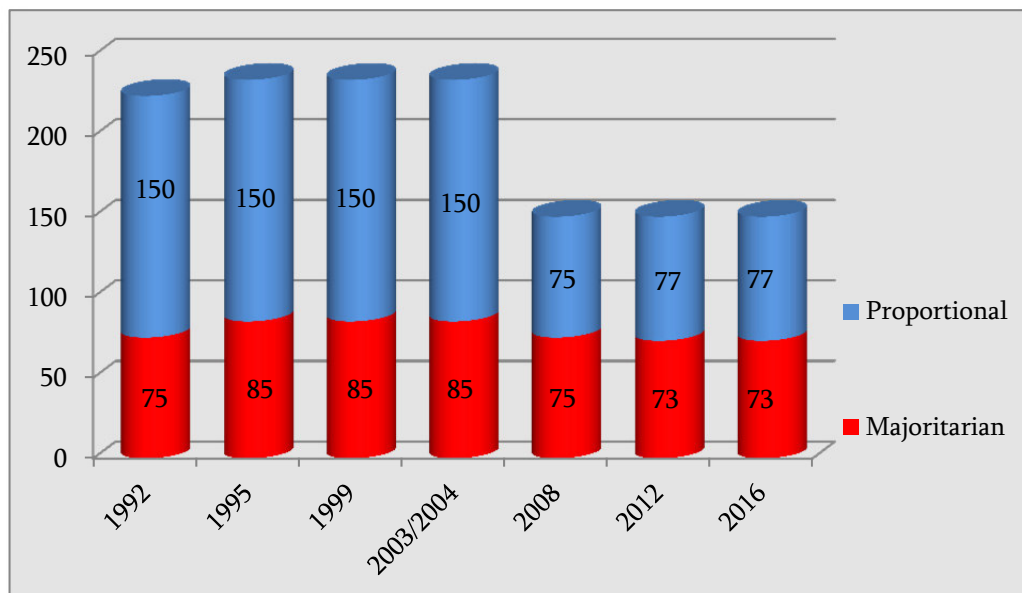


Table 3

The ratio of seats by proportional and majoritarian representation in the Parliament

Electoral representation	1992	1995	1999	2003/2004	2008	2012	2016
Proportional	150	150	150	150	75	77	77
Majoritarian	75	85	85	85	75	73	73
Total	225	235	235	235	150	150	150

Human rights and freedoms. Issues related to judicial system independence, initiations of investigations based on political motives, tortures and ill-treatment inflicted by law-enforcement bodies (policemen and prison workers), state interference in mass media activities and intolerance addressed towards minorities

³ See the official site of the Central Election Commission of Georgia (CEC) <http://www.cesko.ge/en>, OSCE reports on elections in Georgia <http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/georgia> (20.09.2017).

were the main concerns within human rights context in 2015-2016 (*Amnesty International 2015/16; 2016/17 Human Rights Watch 2016, 2017*).

The Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe pointed out that independence of judges was the main concern in the context. In addition, he stated that more severe and biased attitude was given to members of UNM rather than to pro-government activists, who were more mildly treated in identical situations (*Amnesty International 2016/17, 165; Human Rights Watch 2017*).

International observers, led by the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), concluded that 2016 parliamentary elections were “competitive, well-administered and fundamental freedoms were generally respected.” However, they also noted some procedural violations during the vote count, clashes and some cases of vote-buying, but all those found had no effect on the overall outcome. Violent incidents before the vote marred an otherwise peaceful pre-election process. On October 1, three GD activists were assaulted while campaigning; On October 2 shooting during an outdoor campaign meeting for an independent candidate wounded two people; On October 4, an explosion hit the car of Givi Targamadze, a prominent member of parliament (MP) from the opposition UNM party, injuring five (*Human Rights Watch 2017*). We should mention that journalists' and opposition members' personal secrets and covertly recorded private conversations were disclosed prior to the elections (*Amnesty International 2016/17, 165*).

The Rustavi 2 court case on the ownership of the oppositional TV company was still in process in 2016. Tbilisi City Court and the Appellate Court of Georgia upheld the decision made by first instance court in 2015. Moreover, the same verdict was adopted by the Supreme Court a year later. The European Court of Human Rights extended its freeze on a controversial court decision adopted by the Supreme Court allowing an ownership change at Georgia's largest private TV station to the former owner Kibar Khalvashi. He owns 60% of shares at present. But Khalvashi claimed that all those changes of ownership were, in fact, instigated by authorities, namely by UNM, who compelled him to sell some shares. The court case started after the statute of limitations and interference of authorities was denoted as a premeditated action to deprive the opposition of the freedom of speech and levers of influence. Moreover, international community observed it as

an encroachment on press freedom, which marred the country's international reputation (*Amnesty International 2015/16, 45, 163-164, 2016/2017, 165; Human Rights Watch 2016, 2017; Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty 2017*).

The above-mentioned issues referring to the freedom of press were reflected in various international observations. This entailed the lessening of ratings and estimations of the field in question. According to Freedom House' 2016 report which also included the events occurred in 2015, Georgia slipped down to 96th place out of 199 states and territories. It should be taken into account that the country was ranked as 93rd last year. Press Freedom index was registered with 49 points compared to previously estimated 48, and 13, 20, 16 points were correspondingly assigned to legislative, political and economic environment due to estimations carried out in 2015 (*Freedom House 2016b, 24*)^{**}. Despite the fact, the mass media was polarized and had strong ties with policy makers, it sustained the most free status in South Caucasus. With respect to various media environment, the experts ranked the country as "partly free"⁴.

Due to Freedom House estimations, Political Rights and Civil Liberties were also qualified as partly free. During 2012-2015 years Georgia was estimated with 3 points in accordance with 1-7 point rating scale (1 point stands for the highest freedom indicator, and correspondingly 7 points stand for the lowest). This is still one of the highest indicators within the 9 states observed in this research⁵.

Another disturbing problem was related to the restriction of citizens' right of freedom of movement along administrative boundaries of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Numerous cases of detention and arrests were registered. Besides, military bases of the Russian Federation were provided with some information, revealing the fact that detainees were subjected to disrespectful attitude. According to official

^{*} Freedom House indices of Press freedom and Political Rights and Civil Liberties are included in the model as variables of PFI.

^{**} Press freedom index estimated by Freedom House has a 0-100 numerical ranking. Accordingly, states are rated as "free" (0-30 points), "partly free" (31-60) and "not free" (61-100).

⁴ See the official site of Freedom House <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-press/2016/georgia> (16.02.2017).

⁵ See the official site of Freedom House <https://freedomhouse.org/report-types/freedom-world> (16.02.2017).

information, 116 and 148 people were arrested on the border line with South Ossetia in 2016 and 2015 respectively, whereas 1300 (in 2016) and 272 (in 2015) people were detained at the Abkhasian border. The number of detainees at Shida Kartli border line totalled 826 people within 2011-2016. Besides, Border Service of Russia provided some information that 14000 people were arrested at the border line with Abkhazia within 2009-2016 (*U. S. Department of State 2016 2-4, 23-24; Public Defender of Georgia 2016, 20-21; Aliq.ge 2017*).

Issues of intolerance to minorities as well as protection of their rights triggered serious disturbance among international and local human rights defenders organizations. Pressures had been recently escalating accompanied with assault and violence inflicted upon them. For example, authorities denied the request of LGBT activists to hold a peaceful rally to mark the International Day against Homophobia and Transphobia in Tbilisi on the grounds that an appeal had been filed by the Georgian Orthodox Church to mark Family day on the very same day. The latter is an annual event established by the Orthodox Church in 2014. Furthermore, on 9 August 2016 President G. Margvelashvili refused to conduct a referendum on constitutional amendments with the aim to define the notion of marriage as a “union between a man and a woman”. The president claimed that in comply with defined legislature marriage was a voluntary union between a man and woman in order to create a family (*ECRI 2016, 19-20; Amnesty International 2016/17, 166; Human Rights Watch 2017; Aliq.ge 2016*).

According to the Global Gender Gap report of the WEF, Georgia took the 90th place out of 144 countries in 2015 compared to 82nd place in 2014. The GGG evaluates the gender equality in four main areas, according to which Georgia holds: 1) the 114th place for Women Political Empowerment; 2) the 61st place for Economic Participation and Opportunity; 3) 119th place for Health and Survival and 4) 78th place for Educational Attainment Subindices. Gender inequality is mainly manifested in the area of political participation, but a completely equal distribution is observed in the education and health sector (*World Economic Forum 2016, 11, 178-179*). In this respect, it is noteworthy to mention the Tina Khidasheli was the first woman ever appointed as a Minister of Defence, whereas

Nino Gvenetadze was the first woman elected as the chairperson of the Supreme Court (*Echo Kavkas 2015*).

Civil disobedience*. In general, the right to freedom of peaceful assembly was not restricted in Georgia for 2015-2016 terms. Nonetheless, there were cases when members of GD and UNM inflicted violence on each other. For example, on 15 March 2015 clashes erupted in Zugdidi city after the GD activists approached the UNM headquarters with posters against M. Saakashvili. Supporters of ruling party were displeased with the fact that opposition leaders urged the people to participate in a peaceful March 21 rally demanding the resignation of the government. Participants moved from UNM office and approached the office of Free Zona NGO. A clash erupted first at the Zona office. Later they returned and clashes continued at the UNM office as well. As a consequence, dozens of people were injured and taken to hospital (*Express.am 2015; Caucasian Knot 2015a*). It should also be reminded that on 31 January in Zugdidi a clash between pro-government and opposition supporters flared up at the presentation of the book, written by a former minister of inner affairs Bacho Akhala (*Caucasian Knot 2015b*). Even though a multi-thousand anti-governmental rally (according to police 10-15 thousands attended the rally, whereas organizers claimed the number was about 50 thousand) was held on March 21 without any severe clashes and incidents (*RT News 2015*), the clashes between GE and UNM members didn't stop. Another violent incident in the village of Kortskheli occurred during local by-election on May 22, when leaders and activists of the opposition UNM party were attacked and beaten up. On top of that, policemen did not interfere with the attacks and allowed the attackers to flee (*Civil.ge 2016; Amnesty International 2016/17, 166*).

On 10 October 2015 thousands of people staged a rally in Tbilisi outside the "Rustavi 2" TV station. It was a protest against the government's alleged attempts to

* Civil disobedience is a part of the "Social Unrest and Political Pressure" variable of the PFI and is measured by a number of demonstrations, strikes, social unrests, particularly pressures applied against them during a specified span of time. Taking into account the absence of such statistics, relying on the analyses, reports and informative studies carried out by newspapers and research centres, the scaling range of 0-5 was settled for their assessment, where 0 is the value for the highest number of unrest and pressure, including coup d'état and revolution and 5 is the total absence of those in question.

close the country's most popular opposition TV station. Protesters accused the government of attempting to stifle media freedom and silence it prior to parliamentary elections. Meanwhile, Georgian Prime Minister Irakli Garibashvili warned that he would respond sternly to any potential breaches of the law at the rally (*BBC News 2015*).

Georgia Public defender Council in its annual observations reported the facts about involvement of local authorities and state institutions in demonstrations and inflictions of violence. Hence, the latter listed cases of violations of the right to peaceful assembly and freedom of expression. They were the following: insufficient steps taken by law-enforcement bodies in Zugdidi on March 2015, arrest of a participant in “Stop Russian” rally in Tbilisi, as well as arrest of 10 people during “PanoramaTbilisi” protest. According to public defender, all those violations should be properly treated and that would prevent similar cases from re-occurring in the future. At the same time, the public defender highly signified the fact, that March 21 anti-governmental rally as well as March 17 rally on International Day against Homophobia and Transphobia, were peacefully conducted in contrast to previous years (*Public Defender of Georgia 2015, 13*).

By analyzing other political variables included in the model, it is to mention that Political Stability index (33,3) declined. On the contrary, the Rule of Law index (65,4) increased by registering the highest indicator within 1995-2015⁶.

Corruption Perceptions Index measured by ranking scale of 0-100, (where 0 implies the total corruption and effectively 100 indicate its absence) gradually improved and reached 52 points in 2015 within the mentioned period of 1999-2016. Accordingly, Georgia occupied the 48th place out of 168 countries and territories. The indicator changed in 2016 and reached 57 points. As a result, the country held the 44th place out of 176 countries and had the highest indicator registered for the observed period⁷.

By summarizing, it should be stated that despite a positive trend of the curve, it declined in 2015. The indicator of the PFI with 0,269 points registered in 1995

⁶ See the official site of the World Bank <http://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/index.aspx#reports> (20.02.2017).

⁷ See the official site of Transparency International <http://www.transparency.org/cpi2014/results>, <http://www.transparency.org/cpi2015/> (17.01.2016).

had been gradually improving with some fluctuations and reached 0,502 points in 2015. The best indicator of the PFI was recorded with 0,532 points in 2012 mostly due to the peaceful change of power consistent with the Constitution. On the other hand, the decline in 2015 was conditioned by the growth of civil disobedience in pre-election period which were often accompanied by violent acts. Efforts aimed at restricting media freedom, as well as fall of Political Stability index, caused the decline of the curve in 2015.

3.2 Economic Factors Index (EFI)

In accordance with the results of the research, the EFI grew up and respectively had a positive impact on the IDL. Despite the fact that the highest EFI indicator was registered in 2015, the growth of EFI slowed down in the mentioned year (see Figure 1, Table 1).

The growth of the GDP of Georgia was valued with 2,8% compared to 4,6% in the previous year. A slowdown was chiefly conditioned by external factors. The severance of diplomatic relations with Russia, ongoing Russian-Ukrainian conflict, as well as decline in economic growth with regional trade partners, such as Azerbaijan and Ukraine had a continuous influence on economic developments of the country. Russia's recess also negatively impacted the economy of Georgia. As a consequence, External trade rate declined by 13%, export and import rated with 25% and 10% reduction respectively. The volumes of remittances from abroad were reduced by 25% in comparison to previous 2014 year, which was caused by the reduction of cash flows mainly from Russia and Greece. Reduction of Foreign direct investments comprised 23%. In addition, 21,4% devaluation of Georgian lari was caused by unfavourable external conditions in 2015. In reply to this, the Central Bank of Georgia gradually increased main interest rates from 4% defined in 2014 to 8% in 2015 term. Nonetheless, the situation stabilized at the end of 2016, which resulted in 6.5% rate reduction.

Issues related to budget and external payments were still challenging. In 2015 budget deficit equalled to 3,8%. The government sustained its fiscal policy based on gaining loans from international financial institutions. Accordingly, state debt

increased from 35,7% in 2014 and reached 41,5% in 2015. In the meantime, external debt reached 107% and 111% of GDP in 2015 and 2016 respectively (*European Bank for Reconstruction and Development 2016; World Bank 2016a, 1-2, World Bank 2017, 3*).

EU market had a pivotal significance in Georgia's economic development processes. Trade turnover with EU member states grew up and reached about 3,2 milliard euros and comprised 32% of the country's total trade turnover (*European Bank for Reconstruction and Development 2016*). It should be stated that Russia-Georgia trade relations had been gradually improving. Thus, Georgia-Russia trade turnover respectively totalled 788 million US dollars in 2015 compared to 325 million US dollars in 2010. In view of trade partners and total turnovers in 2015, Russia (8,1%) is the third partner preceded by EU (32%) and Turkey (17,2%). Wine and mineral water were the key export products to Russia. Export values of wine are large and comprised 62% in 2014 and 45%⁸ in 2015 (*Муханов, Вадим, Скаков, Александр 2016, 89*).

2.7% growth of GDP was registered in 2016. Hotel and restaurant services, mining industry and construction, as well as tourism, were the main sectors that stipulated its increase (*World Bank 2017*). Tourism was rapidly developing and had become an important branch for economic development. Meanwhile, aviation market was the main incentive for tourism development. Customers were chiefly attracted by reasonable prices. In reference to tourism sphere, the number of tourists travelling to Georgia reached 2,2 million within the first six months in 2016, which was 19,8% more when compared to the number recorded in the previous year (*European Bank for Reconstruction and Development 2016; EaP Think Bridge 2017, 11*). Visa ban lifting enhanced the growing number of Russian travellers to Georgia and reached 925,000 people (*Муханов, Вадим, Скаков, Александр 2016, 90*). We should denote that Russia, on the other hand, facilitated issuance of entry visas for Georgian citizens (*RIA Novosti 2016*).

Visa liberalization with EU was another achievement marked for Georgia in 2017. Citizens of Georgia would no longer need visa for travelling to the EU. Moreover, Georgia successfully implemented commitments provided by Deep and

⁸ The source of the data is the official site of National Statistics Office of Georgia http://geostat.ge/index.php?action=page&p_id=134&lang=eng (05.07.2017).

Comprehensive Free Trade Area agreement⁹, which would enhance approximation of Georgian legislature to EU norms mostly in sectors, such as exporting agricultural goods, customs regime, food security and etc (*European Commission 2015*).

3.3 Social Factors Index (SFI)

Social factors declined in April 2015. The highest indicator (0,818) was registered in 2013, whereas the lowest indicator was registered in 1999 within the period of 1995-2015 (see Figure 1, Table 1).

State budget expenses increased and respectively 38,1% (in 2015) and 39,3% (in 2016) were allocated to health and social protection issues (*Ministry of Finance of Georgia 2015, 8; Ministry of Finance of Georgia 2016, 8*). Nevertheless, major issues related to social sector continued to remain problematic for Georgia. 2012 parliamentary elections campaign promises, namely reduction of unemployment and poverty eradication, made by Georgian Dream party, hadn't been fulfilled yet. Georgia is one of the poorest countries in the region and has a high level of unemployment¹⁰. In spite of some positive trends, paces for economic development are not sufficient to provide more efficient solutions for major social issues. Hence, the results are not tangible and may not be detected by the population.

Thus, poverty reduction trend continued in 2014. Consequently, the poverty rate \$2,5 per day (PPP adjusted) decreased from 47% registered in 2010 to 32,8% in 2014-2015. In fact, poverty rate had been recently decreasing. According to WB modelling, 6% increase of inflation rate might have entailed 35,7% poverty rate increase by consuming \$2,5 per day. However, the positive trends in agriculture

⁹ See "Association agreement between the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community and their Member States, of the one part, and Georgia, of the other part", Official Journal of the European Union, 20 August 2014, http://eeas.europa.eu/georgia/pdf/eu-ge_aa-dcfta_en.pdf (20.07.2016):. The Parliament of Georgia ratified it on 18 July 2014 and the Council of the EU on 18 December 2014. It became effective on 1 July 2016, which had been previously ratified by legislative bodies of all member states.

¹⁰ See the official site of the World Bank

<http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SI.POV.2DAY?locations=GE-AM-AZ-RU-KZ-KG-MD-BY-UA> (29.06.2017).

and incomes, as well as social transfers, neutralized the impact of negative factors on poverty level. WB predicted that poverty level indicated in 2015 would decrease and reach 31% (*World Bank 2016b, 6*). In view of unemployment rate, 0,4% decrease was noted and reached 12% in 2015¹¹.

The polarization of the society in terms of income is one of the important social issues. Gini index was gradually decreasing in 2010-2013, but it was recorded with a slight increase¹² in 2014. Real wage (expressed in US dollars) was reduced in 2015 conditioned by inflation and devaluation of lari. As a result, it reduced from 450 to 381¹³ US dollars in 2015.

3.4 Educational Factors Index (EdFI)

After a deep fall caused by post-crisis years, EdFI was finally stabilized and had a slight growth noted in 2015 as such (see Figure 1, Table 1).

Even though a number of reforms and contributions were made in educational sector, issues related to an increase of education level still remained problematic. Unsatisfactory results shown by Georgian pupils in international programmes, such as PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) and TIMSS (Trends in International Mathematics Science Study) testified the gaps in the mentioned field. The major problem to provide qualitative education was conditioned by an excessive number of teachers who lacked appropriate qualification necessary for modern educational demands. Besides all these, they got the lowest salaries in state institutions (*BTI 2016, 14-15*). According to international standardized assessments of educational, Georgia took a low position in the ratings due to low expenses allocated to that sector. Government expenditure on education had recently constituted 2,9% of GDP compared to 4,75% in Central and Western Europe and 4,1% in CIS (*IMF 2015*).

¹¹ See the official site of the World Bank

<http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.UEM.TOTL.ZS?locations=GE&page=4> (01.07.2017):

¹² See the official site of the World Bank

<http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SI.POV.GINI?end=2014&locations=GE&start=1996> (01.07.2017):

¹³ The source of the data is the official site of National Statistics Office of Georgia

<http://www.geostat.ge/> (01.07.2017), calculations by the researcher.

Observing total enrollement of pupils and students, it should be mentioned, that enrollment in higher and secondary education gradually grew in contrast to technical and vocational sectors (see Table 4).

Table 4

Total enrollement of pupils and students expressed in %¹⁴

Years	Elementary education	Secondary education	Technical and vocational education ¹⁵	Higher education
2012/2013	116,9	97,7	14,6	34,8
2013/2014	116,9	99,4	10	39,2
2014/2015	116,8	103,7	9	43,4

With respect to HDI Education Index included in the model, it had a growing tendency by improving its indicators in recent years. In 2015 mean years of schooling were 12,2 years and 13,9¹⁶ were calculated as expected years of schooling. Moreover, mean years of schooling in Georgia increased by only 0,5 years, whereas expected years of schooling for 1,5 year within the mentioned 1990-2015 (*UNDP 2016, 2-3*).

3.5 Health Factors Index (HFI)

HFI increased by fluctuations during 1995-2009, meanwhile, it had a stable trend of decrease during 2010-2013. Hence, the indicator was improved only in 2014-2015 (see Figure 1, Table 1). The growth of HFI in 2015 had been conditioned by the increase of Health Expenditure (both state and private) and

¹⁴ See official site of UNESCO <http://uis.unesco.org/en/country/ge?theme=education-and-literacy> (30.01.2017).

¹⁵ It is calculated as a percentage of the total enrollment in secondary education.

¹⁶ Human Development Index Education Index (HDI-education) is assessed by two dimensions: 1. measured by mean years of schooling (it includes at most 15 years spent at school and/or vocational institutions for adults aged 25) and 2. expected years of schooling (the number of years that schoolchildren will be expected to have after at most 18 years of schooling included Master's education).

constituted 8-9%¹⁷ of GDP, which was still below the average allocated to the mentioned sector in Europe and Central Asia (*World Bank 2016a, 7*). Life expectancy at birth indicator had a positive impact on the growth of HFI. It had a stable growth trend. Hence, in 1995-2015 it was increased by 4,6 years and respectively it went up from 70,2 years up to 74,8¹⁸.

The growth was marked both in birth and mortality rates. 14 children were born and 12 people died (per 1000 people). 13 and 11 people (per 1000 people) were estimated for 2013 and 2014 years respectively. Natural growth rate remained unchanged, i.e. 2 people (per 1000 people)¹⁹. At the same time, mortality rate, infant under age 5 (per 1,000 live births) was reduced from 47 to 12²⁰ cases.

High mortality rate, neonatal and low fertility rate, as well as premature mortality rate, caused by infectious diseases, were still the major problems of the health sector (*World Bank 2016a, 15*).

¹⁷ See the official site of the World Bank

<http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SH.XPD.TOTL.ZS?locations=GE> (10.07.2017).

¹⁸ See the official site of the World Bank

<http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.DYN.LE00.IN?+locations=GE&locations=GE> (10.07.2017).

¹⁹ See the official site of the RA National Statistical Service <http://armstat.am/file/doc/99499493.pdf> (10.07.2017).

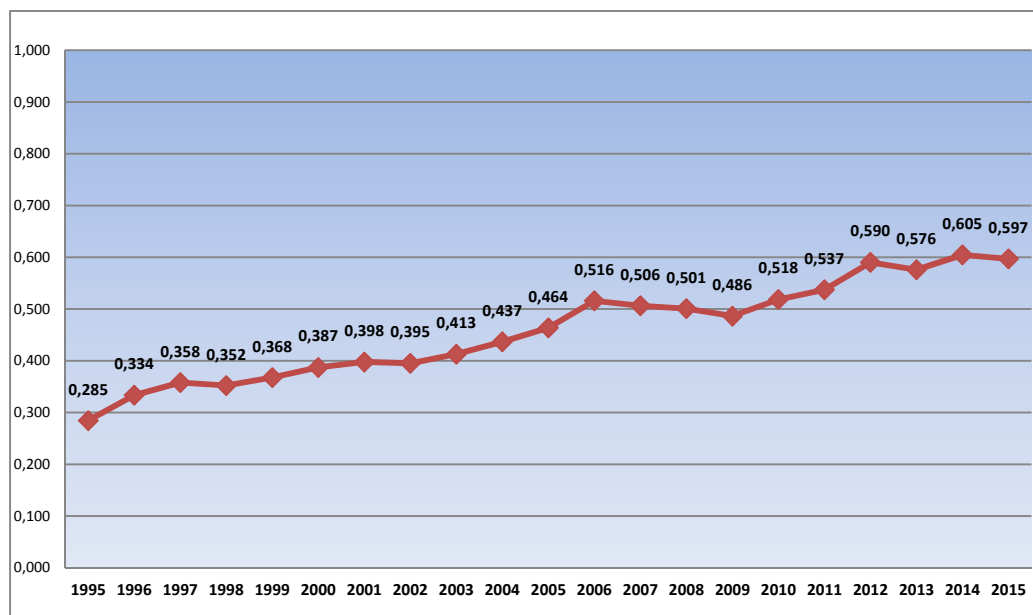
²⁰ See the official site of the World Bank

<http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SH.DYN.MORT?locations=GE> (10.07.2017).

3.6 Development trends of the Index of Democracy Level

Figure 2

The Index of Democracy Level of Georgia in the time span between 1995-2015*



Observing the data provided in Figure 2, it can be stated that the IDL trend was positive with some fluctuations of the curve in the period 1995-2015. Fluctuations occurring since 2012 had been more noticeable.

The decrease of PFI and SFI indicators caused an overall IDL decrease in 2015. The fall of PFI was conditioned by the growth of civil disobedience during pre-election period, which was mainly accompanied by clashes erupted between authorities and opposition members and by use of force. A court case related to country's most popular opposition "Rustavi 2" TV station, which was perceived by international community as an attempt to stifle and silence media, had a negative impact on democratization processes;; hence, marred international reputation of Georgia. In the meantime, economic major issues immediately affected social

* Source: calculations by the researcher.

The indices of the IDL factors are comparable with each other by the trends only.

situation. The fall of SFI was chiefly caused by Real wage reduction (expressed in US dollars), which had been conditioned by inflation and devaluation of the national currency.

The highest IDL was registered in 2014 and the lowest one in 1995 over the period of 1995-2015.

All things considered, precisely, processes aimed at enhancing freedom of the press, conducting reforms in public management sector and conducting competitive elections, liberalization of market relations, reinforcing political rights and freedoms, promoting battle against corruption and implementing other democratic norms made Georgia one of the leading countries among other 9 in question.

3.7 Regression analysis of the Index of Democracy Level

By means of regression analysis, the variables which had a significant influence on the IDL of Georgia were cleaned.

A significant correlation has been established between the IDL_i^* and political indicators, such as variable of Political Stability/Absence of Violence as well as Press Freedom included in this model.

$$Y' = 0,01x_1 + 0,282 \text{ (Adj. } R^2=0,817),$$

where Y' is the IDL_i (IDL is cleaned from the variable of Political Stability/Absence of Violence, x_1 is Political Stability/Absence of Violence.

$$Y' = -0,009x_2 + 0,947 \text{ (Adj. } R^2=0,186),$$

where Y' is the IDL_i (IDL is cleaned from the variable of Press freedom) and x_2 is Press freedom.

The following correlation has been established between the IDL_i and SFI variables of External trade rate and Domestic credit.

* IDL_i is the Index of Democracy Level cleaned from the corresponding variable during every paired regression analysis.

$$Y' = 0,005x_3 + 0,084 \text{ (Adj. } R^2 = 0,821),$$

where Y' is the IDL_i (IDL is cleaned from the index of External trade rate) and x_3 is the index of External trade rate (% GDP).

$$Y' = 0,006x_4 + 0,297 \text{ (Adj. } R^2 = 0,813),$$

where Y' is the IDL_i (IDL is cleaned from the index of Domestic credit), and x_4 is the index of Domestic credit (% GDP).

The following equation was calculated for Educational Factors.

$$Y' = 2,7x_5 - 1,5 \text{ (Adj. } R^2 = 0,942),$$

where Y' is the IDL_i (IDL is cleaned from the HDI Education Index), and x_5 is HDI Education Index.

The following equation was calculated for health indicators.

$$Y' = 0,06x_6 - 4,09 \text{ (Adj. } R^2 = 0,959),$$

where Y' is the IDL_i (IDL is cleaned from the variable of Life expectancy at birth), and x_6 is Life expectancy at birth.

In accordance with the accumulated data, the variables of the Political Stability and Press Freedom²¹ of the PFI played a significant role in the democracy in Georgia and the positive change with 1 unit will lead to the increase of the IDL_i with 0,01 and 0,009 units correspondingly. The Political Stability variable has a determination coefficient and explains 82% of IDL_i variation.

The variables of the External trade rate and Domestic credit also influenced on the IDL_i of Georgia. 1% of GDP growth of External trade rate and Domestic credit will lead to the increase of IDL_i respectively with 0,005 and 0,006 units. Economic Factors have a high determination coefficient and explain 81-82% of IDL_i variation.

In terms of EdFI, the growth of HDI Education Index (measured by 0-1 scale) by 0,1 unit will assist to the increase of IDL_i by 0,26 units accordingly. In particular, Human Development Index Education Index explains 94% of the variation of IDL_i .

²¹ Press Freedom Index is estimated by 100 numerical rankings and states receive a numerical score from 0 (the most free) to 100 (the least free).

Life expectancy change with 1 year will bring the increase of the IDL_i with 0,062 units. It must be mentioned that the variable of Life expectancy explains 96% of IDL_i variation, which is indeed a very high indicator.

There was no significant correlation between the Social Factors included in the model.

In fact, variables of Political Stability, Press Freedom, External trade rate, Domestic credit, Life expectancy and HDI Education Index mostly affect the IDL_i.

Research has found out that positive changes of all factors will lead to the growth of democracy level. The process of reforms in aforementioned areas shall be continued for ensuring progress and consolidation of democratic processes.

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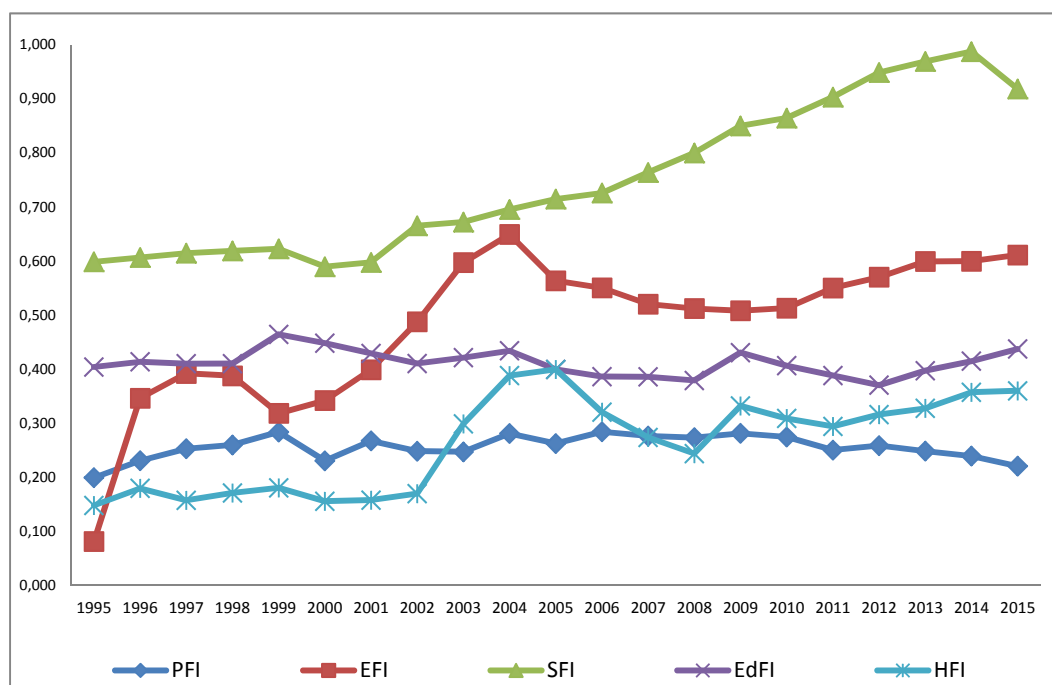
CHAPTER 4.

THE INDEX OF DEMOCRACY LEVEL

OF AZERBAIJAN (IDL)

TATEVIK HAYRAPETYAN

Figure 1
Indices of Political, Social, Economic, Educational and Health Factors affecting the Index of Democracy Level of Azerbaijan in the time span between 1995-2015*



* The source is based on the calculations accumulated by the researcher.
The indices of IDL factors are comparable only by the trends.

Table 1

**Indices of Political, Economic, Social, Educational and Health Factors and Index of
Democracy Level of Azerbaijan in the time span between 1995-2015***

Years	PFI	EFI	SFI	EdFI	HFI	IDL
1995	0,199	0,081	0,598	0,404	0,148	0,228
1996	0,230	0,346	0,606	0,414	0,179	0,316
1997	0,253	0,392	0,614	0,410	0,157	0,335
1998	0,260	0,388	0,619	0,410	0,171	0,338
1999	0,284	0,318	0,623	0,464	0,180	0,338
2000	0,230	0,342	0,589	0,448	0,155	0,314
2001	0,267	0,399	0,597	0,429	0,158	0,343
2002	0,248	0,487	0,665	0,410	0,170	0,365
2003	0,247	0,597	0,672	0,421	0,299	0,409
2004	0,281	0,649	0,695	0,434	0,388	0,450
2005	0,262	0,563	0,715	0,399	0,399	0,419
2006	0,284	0,550	0,726	0,386	0,320	0,416
2007	0,276	0,520	0,764	0,386	0,274	0,404
2008	0,273	0,512	0,800	0,379	0,244	0,401
2009	0,281	0,508	0,850	0,430	0,332	0,423
2010	0,275	0,513	0,865	0,406	0,309	0,418
2011	0,250	0,550	0,903	0,388	0,294	0,419
2012	0,259	0,570	0,949	0,370	0,316	0,433
2013	0,248	0,599	0,969	0,397	0,327	0,442
2014	0,239	0,599	0,987	0,415	0,357	0,446
2015	0,220	0,611	0,918	0,437	0,360	0,436

* The source is based on the calculations accumulated by the researcher.

The EFI, SFI, HFI, EdFI, and indices of IDL calculated during certain years may insignificantly vary in comparison to the indices of the corresponding years estimated in the previous publications in the result of updated and newly inserted data as well as changes of minimum and maximum indices.

4.1 Political Factors Index (PFI)

PFI of the IDL of Azerbaijan had a tendency to decline for the last 5 and 6 years. Ilham Aliyev's policy aimed at suppressing representatives of the opposition, eliminating freedom of press and expression in the society is the main cause for the decline. The referendum on amendments to the constitution was held in March 2009, as a result of which, restriction of the right for the same candidate to be elected more than twice was abolished, de facto granting Aliyev with the opportunity to become a lifelong president. Consolidation of Aliyev's clan in Azerbaijan is accompanied by new repressions exerted against civil society representatives. As a result of such coordinated policy, the authorities managed to neutralize all influential civil and political representatives in 2014 and 2015. The harsh criticism voiced by various international platforms had been neglected and disregarded by officials in Baku. Moreover, the government of Azerbaijan continued to exert pressure and, what is more, to intensify the policy of the authoritarian regime. The indicators of PFI were mainly decreased showing the consolidation of dictatorial regimes in the country.

After the parliamentary elections that took place on November 1, 2015¹ the ruling "New Azerbaijan" (Yeni Azərbaycan) party reinforced its strong positions.

Prior to 2015 elections, President Ilham Aliyev dismissed national security minister Eldar Mahmudov (*RFE/RL's Azerbaijani Service 2015a*). Mahmudov's dismissal on October 17 entailed a number of other outrageous dismissals in the given ministry. 4 out of 9 generals who were occupying high-ranking positions were arrested. In addition, more than 15 employees working in the same ministry were taken into custody as well. On top of all those, the ministry was dissolved and over 250 employees lost their jobs. During the trial new details appeared in the press related to money laundering and spying (*Azadlıq radiosı 2017*). After the

¹ For more details about 2015 parliamentary elections and their outcomes, see Hunanyan, Vahan (2016), the Index of Democracy Level of Azerbaijan // "Comparative analysis of the Index of Democracy Level (Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Ukraine, Moldova", edited by Arusyak Aleksanyan, Yerevan, YSU press, pages 103-106.

dissolution of the ministry, foreign intelligence and national security services were created. Mahmudov who had been in the office since 2004 was dismissed with no official clarification and it was mainly connected with a struggle in intergovernmental circles preceding the parliamentary elections (*IWPR 2015*).

In fact, on the eve of parliamentary elections, Aliyev dismissed all the officials who were imposing some threat to his regime. Nonetheless, according to one of the statements, Mahmudov's dismissal was conditioned by his financial "recklessness" (*Hayrapetyan 2015*).

In autumn 2015, a deteriorated political, social and economic situation triggered a rising wave of civil disobedience in Nardaran village after the elections. In January 2016 they were followed by protests in other regions, namely in Lenkor, Fuzuly and Beylagan (*BBC 2016*). They were generally instigated by a devaluation of the national currency manat and the rise of prices.

The Azerbaijani authorities brought forward "Karabakh" issue as a distraction to rapidly prevent the spreading of protests. The government was habitually resorting to that ploy when there was a slight possibility to stir dissatisfaction concerning political issues within the country. In 2016 large-scale military operations on the line of contact between Karabakh and Azerbaijan were initiated by Azerbaijan at night of April 1 and 2 and reached unprecedented scales. It had been actually the most brutal violation of the ceasefire regime by Azerbaijan since May 1994 taking into account both the number of casualties and the military equipment applied. On April 5 both sides agreed on the cessation of the hostilities (*Jarosiewicz and Falkowski 2016*).

Proceeding the events of the so-called "4-day April war" Ilham Aliyev took further steps to concentrate the power within his family clan. A referendum on the draft of the proposed Constitutional amendments was held in Azerbaijan on September 26, 2017. The amendments were aimed at the expansion of the president's powers. As a consequence, the president appoints the first vice-president and vice-presidents. In comply with the 1st paragraph of Article 103¹ of the Constitution, only the president has the right to appoint with no consent with other institutions. Moreover, The President of the Republic is elected for a 7-year term instead of a previously defined 5-year term in conformity with the 1st

paragraph of Article 101 (*Constitution of the Azerbaijan Republic 2016*). The proposed modifications were strongly criticized in the Western countries (*Hayrapetyan 2016a*). In particular, Venice Commission of the Council of Europe harshly rebuked the planned Constitutional amendments in its preliminary report stating that the document would endow the president with unprecedented powers, which would, in turn, break the principles of power balance. The provision to prolong the president's powers from 5 to 7 years term was harshly disparaged as the president of the country had already been granted the right to be continuously re-elected and possessed almost all leverages of power (*European Commission for Democracy through law 2016*). In the meantime, Azerbaijan severely responded to the criticism. In reply to the report provided by the Venice Commission, Ilham Aliyev announced: "They speak to us in terms of an ultimatum" (*Apnews.com 2016*).

It should be mentioned that every amendment proposed in the draft was put to the vote. Eventually, according to the data provided by the Central Electoral Commission, 91,5% voted in favour of a 7-years term, 89,29% for creation of the vice-president institution, 88,21% for lowering presidential candidates age threshold and 87,37% for granting the president the power to dissolve the parliament (*Mərkəzi Seçki Komissiyası*). Actually, Aliyev's clan occupied stronger positions in Azerbaijan on those grounds. Even though many candidates were nominated for the position of the vice-president (*Hayrapetyan 2016b*), the wife of the president Mehriban Aliyeva was appointed on February 21, 2017, as it had been predicted (*Erickson 2017*).

With respect to Western criticism toward Azerbaijan, it is noteworthy to mention that European Stability Initiative published the European Swamp investigation (Caviar diplomacy Part 2) (*ESI Report 2016*). In the report, the involvement of European high-ranking officials in the corruption mechanisms of Azerbaijan was more elaborately described. It should be reminded that the first Caviar diplomacy report was published in 2012 and was titled "How Azerbaijan silenced the Council of Europe". The authors of the report sounded it as an alarm which resulted in the coinage of caviar diplomacy term. "This time we openly

announce the names of PACE members, including Elkhan Suleymanov² the leader of this policy in Strasbourg, who distributed bribes. We describe in details how the corruption of MPs proceeded, from early visits with precious gifts meant to test the beneficiaries' reactions to long-term contracts involving huge sums of money" – as stated in a new report (*ESI Report 2016*). In fact, this report concludes and proves that in certain European platforms, namely in PACE, the issues with human rights and freedom of the press were ignored due to the fact that huge sums of money were distributed as bribes to the European high officials.

Human rights and freedoms. The state policy aimed at suppressing civil society and silencing opposition remained unchanged in 2015. The US Department of State in "Azerbaijan 2015 Human Rights Report" denotes that the most significant violations are related to increased government restrictions on freedoms of expression, assembly and association and use of force against human rights defenders, activists, journalists, and some of their relatives (*US State government 2015*).

The human rights situation had drastically deteriorated when Azerbaijan hosted the first-ever European Games in June 2015. Prior to the launch of the Games, a new wave of repression was unleashed to silence the representatives of civil society, reporters and bloggers. The government of Azerbaijan had deep concerns that protests and rallies could be initiated by civil society representatives on account of numerous foreigners. Therefore, "preventive" measures were taken. According to the Latin American television TeleSur website, 2015 European Games were "censored" and caused the deterioration of human rights situation in Azerbaijan (*Telesur.tv 2015*).

Besides, Amnesty International qualified them as "repression" games. (*Amnesty International 2015*). The organization also stated that during a monitoring visit the experts did not see any indications of the civil society activities. Human rights defenders and opposition members were silenced. Some were jailed, the others left the country or remained silent out of fear. The NGOs

² The latter is the member of the Azerbaijan Delegation to PACE MP. For more details, see PACE Bureau is satisfied with the results of the referendum in Azerbaijan, <https://ru.sputnik.az/azerbaijan/20161010/407305669/bjuro-pase-dovolno-referendumom.html> (10.10.2017).

who were critical of government faced closure and international human rights monitors were forced to leave the country. All mainstream media remained under strong government control and continued to face harassment and violence (*Amnesty International 2015*).

Within the period observed Rasul Jafarov, Intigam Aliyev, Leyla Yunus, Arif Yunus and reporter Khadija Ismayilova, who had been under arrest, were sentenced from six to eight and a half years' of imprisonment at the end of 2014.

For example, human rights defender Rasul Jafarov, founder and leader of the Human Rights Club, started Sport for Rights initiative prior to the European Games. In April 2015 he was sentenced to six and a half years' imprisonment on charges of illegal entrepreneurship, tax evasion and abuse of authority (*Human Rights House 2015*). This verdict was harshly criticized by the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Right of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (*Council of Europe 2015*).

In 2014 Leyla Yunus and her husband Arif Yunus were severely sentenced with treason charges (*Hayrapetyan 2014*). Nevertheless, after the parliamentary elections human rights defender Leyla Yunus, president of the Institute for Peace and Democracy, was given conditional sentences on appeal in December, and released in order to prevent any serious censure from the West (*RFE/RL's Azerbaijani Service 2015b*). Her husband Arif Yunus on the grounds of his deteriorating health was released in November 2015. Accordingly, his imprisonment was alternated with home confinement. Later the couple left for the Netherlands for medical treatment.

A deterioration of human rights situation is also stated by Freedom House organization and Azerbaijan was correspondingly ranked as not free based on the assessment of both Political Rights and Civil Liberties. The 7 points rating scale (1 point stands for the highest freedom indicator and 7 for the lowest), Azerbaijan was assessed with 6,5 points for two indicators compared to 6 points assessed in 2016. It is quite obvious that the indicator is closely approaching to 7 points³.

³ See the Freedom House official site <https://freedomhouse.org/report-types/freedom-world> (30.04.2017).

Civil disobedience^{*}. The post-election period in 2015 was marked by the increase in civil disobedience mainly linked to the activation of extremist Islamic movements. In this regard, the incidents of Nardaran were observed to be highly significant.

In November 2015 there were strong clashes between the police and the villagers of Nardaran, located some 25 kilometers northeast of Baku. It should be noted that the village was long known for its devout adherence to Shia Islam traditions and the authorities explained the violence exerted to the villagers as steps to suppress Islamic extremism. Nevertheless, some opposition forces claimed that such activities were initiated by the citizens to express their protest against numerous violations during the parliamentary elections (*Contact.az 2015a*). But, the main core of the protest was conditioned by the social and economic situation which was interpreted and presented as a religious cause (*Mamedov 2016*).

It is noteworthy that on October 23 2015, the Special Forces of Azerbaijan's Interior Ministry prohibited the Shia of Ganja to hold a rally during Ashura ceremonies⁴ and, as a consequence, about 30 people were arrested, but shortly released afterward (*Haqqin.az 2015*). The next day the participants of the ceremony in Nardaran were accused of oppressions exercised against the Shia of Ganja demanding Movsum Suleymanov's release, the chairman of Islamic party, as

^{*} Civil disobedience is a part of the "Social Unrest and Political Pressure" variable of the PFI and is measured by a number of demonstrations, strikes, social unrests, particularly pressures applied against them during a specified span of time. Taking into account the absence of such statistics, relying on the analyses, reports and informative studies carried out by newspapers and research centres, the scaling range of 0-5 was chosen for their assessment, where 0 is the value for the highest number of unrest and pressure, including coup d'état and revolution and 5 is the total absence of those in question.

⁴ Ashura is the date of commemoration of Imam Hussein. Hussein was the second son of the prophet's daughter Fatima and Ali Ibn Abi Talib, who was the first Imam of the Shia and the son of Mohammed's uncle as well as the fourth Caliph of Justice (656-661). Hussein and many Shia Muslims were martyred in 680, as a result of a confrontation with the army of the second Sunni Caliph Jazid Ibn Muavia (680-683) in Karbala (presently in Iraq). It is observed on the tenth day of Muharram according to the first Islamic lunar calendar. It is also called Shakhshi-Vakhsey (şaxsey-vaxsey). On that day people form large crowds and the participants beat their chests and loudly mourn Hussein's death in a very theatrical performance (taziye), stating that they are willing to sacrifice their lives for the sake of Islam. Molecron Shiites carry out a real process of torchers, by whipping and cutting themselves with chains or sharp instruments in order to recreate and re-experience the sufferings of the martyrs (*Pashayan 2014, 20*).

well as the release of other people, who had been convicted of their religious views. On top of all, they demanded to put an end to oppressions against Taleh Baghirzadeh, who was the leader of the Muslim Unity Movement (*Contact.az 2015b*). As a consequence, the Azerbaijani police undertook a new raid in Nardaran. Elchin Gasimlin, a religious servant in a mosque, and Hazrat Abbas, both officially accused of possessing weapons and ammunition, were among the arrested ones (*Caucasian Knot 2015*).

The steps taken by the police intensified the tension. By adhering to the earlier adopted severe practice they invaded “Imam Hussein” mosque in Nardaran during namaz and violently treated the crowd, arresting more than 10 people. Among those arrested during the Nardaran raid was MUM leader Taleh Baghirzadeh. Four villagers and two policemen were dead following the clashes (*Minval.az 2015*). In reply, the Nardaran villagers closed Mashtagha and Nardaran highway, whereas forces of Azerbaijan’s Interior Ministry blockaded the village. Besides, the supply of gas and electricity was disconnected and “entry” regime was established by authorities in an effort to suspend the further unfavourable developments and to subjugate the villagers (*Azadliq Radiosu 2015*). The civil disobedience in Nardaran was suppressed by painstaking efforts made by the police. As a result, 87 out of 200 arrestees had been detained since 2016 on the “Nardaran case” charges. Taleh Baghirzadeh faces up to 20 years of imprisonment (*Meydan.tv 2017*).

Nardaran cases, which were primarily motivated by social, economic and political dissatisfaction, were emphasized as cases of religious nature and contributed to a large-scale use of violence against the Azerbaijani Shia. While the Shia represent 65% to 80% of Azerbaijani. Thus, according to Shia Rights Watch, 2015 saw the death of 9 Shia and the detainment of 35. In the past six months of 2016 authorities banned 732 religious books without justification⁵.

Obviously, Social Unrest index comparatively deteriorated in 2015 because of unprecedented assaults in Nardaran.

⁵ “Azerbaijani Shia and their Struggles”- Presented at UN 33 Session of Human Rights #HRC33 – Shia Rights Watch, September 6, 2016, <http://shiarightswatch.org/azerbaijani-shia-and-their-struggles-presented-at-un-33-session-of-human-rights/> (30.04.2017).

With respect to 2015 Press Freedom index it decreased by 2 points compared to the previous one registered in 2014. Hence, by amassing 89 points, the country was classified as not free. Political Stability index underwent similar changes which are directly conditioned by violations during the parliamentary elections, large-scale application of administrative resource and the rise of oppressions.

The data of the research denote that PFI was continuously decreasing within 2015. This is not accidental as the developments occurred in Azerbaijan reinforced the ruling position of the Aliyevs family. And, after the 2016 constitutional amendments, the authoritarian regime was registered with a considerable increase, which will later be presented in the outcomes of the research.

4.2 Economic Factors Index (EFI)

An unprecedented decline in oil prices which started in the middle of 2014 and caused by political and economic factors did not stop in 2015. The Azerbaijani economy, largely dependent on the oil and gas sector, suffered serious losses due to those developments. The steps aimed at diversification of the economy did not produce any significant results. As a result, in early 2015 the national currency's exchange rate did not maintain its stability despite the promises of Azerbaijani officials. The devaluation of the manat was marked with 33,55% in February 2015 (*Farchy 2015*).

Furthermore, it is interesting to add that on January 27, a month prior to manat devaluation, Ilham Aliyev in his report about the social and economic issues of the country announced: "The national currency is stable and is not affected by the fall in oil prices. Moreover, manat is restoring its stability and today one manat is more valuable than one euro" (*President.az 2015*). Later, the further developments completely contradicted Aliyev's promises.

In 2015 Central Bank stated that the decision to devalue the currency was made to support the diversification of Azerbaijan's economy, strengthen its international compatibility and exclude the international pressure on the country's economic issues (*Agayev and Eder 2015*). One of the Azerbaijani websites

described that the society was in shock because of the drastic devaluation of manat since Azerbaijani's economy had been continuously depicted as the most stable in the world. According to independent news agency Turan, the occasion was nicknamed “Black Saturday” on February 21 (*Turan 2015*).

Devaluation of the national currency as one of the major reasons for the shock in the society was conditioned by the oil price of \$90 a barrel predicted by the government budget for 2015. This was unrealistic on account of a sweeping fall in oil prices in the international markets. In December 2014 Natig Aliyev, the minister of the economy made a statement that there was no need to review the predictions, as “oil prices had been constantly changing within the last 20 years” (*Eurasianet.org 2014*). The government didn't review them even when the oil price was lowered to 50 dollars per barrel, regardless of the fact that oil-exporting countries such as Iran and Kazakhstan reviewed their government budget predictions (*Info.az 2015*). That shortsighted and ineffective policy resulted in the change of the country's national currency by making it floating which was unwillingly reported by the Azerbaijan Central Bank on December 21, 2015. This decision consequently resulted in 47,6% manat devaluation to the dollar (*CNBC 2015*). According to 2015 official data, the manat actually devalued by more than 80%. An Azerbaijani economist Natig Jafarli ironically said: “Azerbaijan has moved to a floating exchange rate but someone forgot to teach it how to swim” (*The Guardian 2015*). This mainly referred to panic evoked within the country, as the exchange of manat to dollars was impossible then.

National currency devaluation caused 4,2% inflation, reduction of average salaries of the population as well as fall of other economic indices⁶. It should also be noted that due to manat devaluation food prices immediately went up in February 2015. In particular, the prices of cigarettes, sugar, tea and other products of immediate necessity rose (*Oxu.az 2015*). That process had been going on the whole year. For example, according to State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the price rise was denoted in the food sector (0,3%), agricultural goods (1,8%), herbal goods (1,7%) and meat products (1,9%) only within the

⁶ See the official site of the World Bank
<http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GNP.PCAP.CD?locations=AZ> (07.05.2017).

month of October (*Sputnik.az 2015*). In reference to December data, prices of food and non-food products went up by 4,5% and 7,1% respectively (*News.az 2016*). In addition, prices of medicines, air tickets, cars, metals and others also increased.

As oil export comprises 90% of export trade, it triggered the disbalance of external trade rate. Moreover, the country lost its important military reserves. It particularly refers to State Oil Fund of Azerbaijan (SOFAZ) reserves formed on the decree of Heydar Aliyev in 1999. The main source of its incomes is generated from the oil and gas sales aimed at financing of strategically and military important projects and programmes. The Central Bank applied the reserves of the fund to prevent the further devaluation of manat, which was eventually unsuccessful. If at the beginning of 2015 SOFAZ reserves amassed 37,1 USD billion, then at the end of the observed year they decreased by 9,4% reaching 33,6 USD billion (*Safarova 2016*). In addition, the Central Bank reserves decreased respectively by recording 6,2 USD billion compared to 15 USD billion registered in the previous year (*Agayev and Eder 2015*).

The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in Azerbaijan had been continuously increasing since 2010 and reached 75,2 USD billion. Nonetheless, it drastically decreased by 70,5% and reached 53,05 billion US dollars in 2015⁷.

To overcome major and serious economic problems largely conditioned by the fall in oil price diversification of Azerbaijan's economy was the main remedy. Enormous investments had been recently made in construction sphere of Azerbaijan. This was mostly directed at hosting major and prominent international events. Hence, the European Games were hosted by Azerbaijan in 2015 regardless of the crisis, the country was experiencing in the mentioned year. According to official data, approximately 1,2 USD billion were spent to organize the spoken sports event, while only 600 USA millions were used to build a stadium (*Demytrie 2015*). According to non-official data, the expenses reached 2 USD billion, where 70% of the sum was allotted to construct appropriate infrastructure (*Meydan.tv 2015a*).

⁷ The source of the data Trading Economics, Azerbaijan GDP, 1990-2017, <http://www.tradingeconomics.com/azerbaijan/gdp> (07.05.2017).

To make large investments in the construction, Azerbaijan had to sustain the incomes generated from oil sales. The fall in oil prices actually compelled Baku to use its military reserves, which had been apparently reduced in 2015. At present, the main emphasis is placed to develop the gas sector, although Azerbaijani gas reserves are more moderate than oil reserves.

Nonetheless, some positive trends were also observed. For example, according to the World Bank data, it is obvious that in 2015 Domestic credit index was registered with the highest score of 43,8%⁸ within the last 20 years. External trade rate and Foreign direct investments indices were also registered with an increase⁹.

To sum up, despite some positive trends the absence of coordinated policy aimed at diversification of economy will stem new problems in the economy, intensifying social issues and, by all means, affecting the political situation in the country.

4.3 Social Factors Index (SFI)

The SFI went downward due to manat devaluation and inflation increase in the country as it may be seen in Figure 1. The SFI fall is strongly conditioned by the Real wage¹⁰ reduction.

A sharp increase of first necessity products prices created a state of serious concern and tension in the society, most vividly depicted by the events in Nardaran. According to data provided by State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the income of the population comprised 26,7 USD billion¹¹

⁸ See the official site of the World Bank <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/FS.AST.DOMS.GD.ZS> (07.05.2017).

⁹ See the official site of the World Bank <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/european-neighbourhood-policy/enp-east/data/database> (07.05.2017).

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ See the official site of State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan "Income of population in 2015", <http://www.stat.gov.az/news/?id=2658> (10.05.2017).

in 2015, which was 47,1% less compared to officially registered 50,5¹² USD billion registered in 2014.

After an 11,8% abrupt rise of the unemployment rate in 2000, it had been continually decreasing up to 2014 and reached 4,9% then. Nonetheless, within the last two years, it had been increasing and was recorded with 5,1%¹³ in 2016. According to Asian Development Bank data, the poverty rate is 4,9%¹⁴, which is a positive indicator compared to those registered in other post-Soviet countries. The deepening of social inequality was still observed in the country, even though extreme poverty indicator decreased (*Meydan.tv 2015b*).

Due to social situation deterioration and presence of economic problems in 2015, the population expressed strong feelings of dissatisfaction and protests were rapidly curbed. On the contrary, the government kept on allotting huge amounts in order to organize and host international events as well as to acquire new military weapons and equipment.

4.4 Educational Factors Index (EdFI)

As it can be seen in Figure 1, the EdFI had a slight increase. It was stipulated by the rise of Government expenditure on education regardless of some serious social issues, occurred in the country. It comprised 3% of GDP in 2015 and 2,6%¹⁵ in 2016. It should be mentioned, that back in 2007 in comply with Ilham Aliyev's decree on approval of the state programme in the years 2007-2015, sums gained from oil sales were predicted to be allocated for the purpose of education of Azerbaijani youth abroad. It is interesting to state that officially 5000 students

¹² See the official site of State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan "Income of population in 2014", <http://www.stat.gov.az/news/?id=2658> (10.05.2017).

¹³ See the official site of the World Bank

<http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.UEM.TOTL.ZS?locations=AZ> (10.05.2017).

¹⁴ See the official site of the Asian Development Bank

<https://www.adb.org/countries/azerbaijan/poverty> (10.05.2017).

¹⁵ See the official site of the World Bank <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.XPD.TOTL.GD.ZS>, (10.05.2017).

pursued their education abroad within the eight years the State programme came into effect, where 1000 of them were financed exactly in 2015 (*Azerbaijans.com 2015*).

In 2015 UNICEF facilitated great assistance to the Ministry of Education of Azerbaijan to jointly implement reforms largely aimed at a development and improvement of teachers' professional skills and of education system on the whole, by adaptating the latter to a German education system (*UNICEF 2015*).

Nonetheless, the level of enrollment in elementary and secondary schools is quite high with 94,1%¹⁶ and 88%¹⁷ indicators correspondingly estimated in 2015. Meanwhile, the enrollment in higher education sector comprises 25,5%¹⁸.

One of the major issues that the country faces in this sector is the question of religious education. The religious freedom report conducted by the US Secretary of State has underlined the fact that there are numerous restrictions on religious education (*US State government 2015*). According to Shia Rights Watch information, 732 religious books were banned in 2015 (*Shia Rights Watch 2016*). From this point of view, we can add a constant rise of the role and significance of the religion within the society must be taken into account. Hence, any possibility of establishing and spreading religious education imposes a great threat to Azerbaijani government as it may imply grave political consequences.

HDI (Human Development Index) Education Index (HDI.ed) had remained unchanged since 2011 and equals to 0,7 points.

4.5 Health Factors Index (HFI)

Figure 1 Table 1 denotes that the HFI had been gradually increasing since 2011 and an insignificant rise was registered in 2015 compared to 2014. Health

¹⁶ See the official site of the World Bank

<http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.PRM.NENR?locations=AZ> (10.05.2017).

¹⁷ See the official site of the World Bank

<http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.SEC.NENR?locations=AZ&view=chart> (10.05.2017).

¹⁸ See the official site of the World Bank

<http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.TER.ENRR?locations=AZ> (10.05.2017).

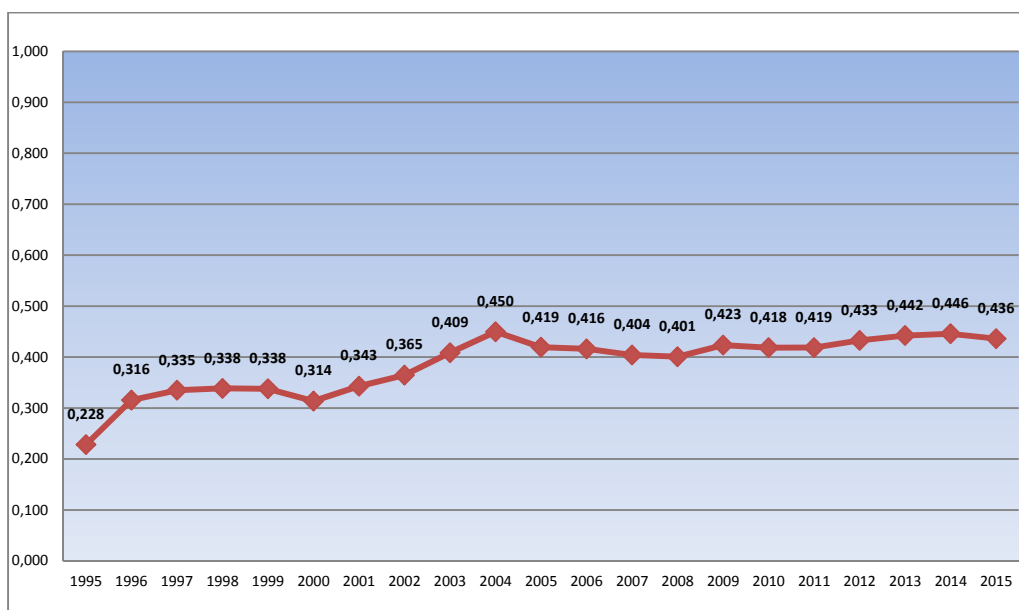
Ministry reported improvements aimed at reducing an infant mortality rate. Besides, about 600 health institutions were built in the country (*Səhiyyə Nazirliyini 2015*). Nevertheless, the rise of medicine prices (*Trend.az 2015*) had a negative impact on the health sector due to the fact that the expenditure on health care were mainly met by the population.

According to the 2011 World Bank survey, Life expectancy at birth comprised 70,8 years in 2015 repeating the previously 2014 registered index¹⁹.

4.6 Development trends of the Index of Democracy Level

Figure 3

Index of Democracy Level of Azerbaijan in the time span between 1995-2015*



¹⁹ See the official site of the World Bank

<http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.DYN.LE00.IN?locations=AZ> (10.05.2017).

* Source: calculations by the researcher.

Figure 3 shows the dynamics of IDL within 1995-2015. As we can see, some growth of the IDL was registered in the observed 2013 and 2014, yet it experienced some decrease in 2015. From Table 1 it is apparent that the fall of the IDL was conditioned by PFI and SFI, whereas its growth was stipulated by the EdFI and HFI. Despite the existing economic problems, the EFI also underwent some positive growth influenced by a positive effect of some indicators. It's noteworthy, that severe economic and political problems mainly derived from the fall in oil prices in the period examined.

The efforts aimed at diversification of economy failed and, as a consequence, social and political tension deepened. At the beginning of 2016 Azerbaijani authorities tried to exploit the Karabakh problem in order to unleash large-scale military operations on Azerbaijan and Karabakh borders. Nevertheless, the fragile ceasefire status was restored owing to excessive pressure from international communities. The ongoing decline of PFI is an evidence that the dictatorial regime, particularly Aliyev's powers, reinforces its dominance in the country.

4.7 Regression analysis of the Index of Democracy Level

Arusyak Aleksanyan, Tatevik Hayrapetyan

Within the framework of the research the regression analysis illustrated the variables of Political, Economic, and Health Factors Indices, which had a significant influence on the IDL of Azerbaijan.

The regression results show that there has been a significant correlation between the IDL^{*} and variables of Rule of Law and Corruption Perceptions Index.

$$Y' = 0,008x_1 + 0,219 \text{ (Adj. } R^2=0,622\text{),}$$

^{*} IDL_i is the Index of Democracy Level cleaned from the corresponding variable during every paired regression analysis.

where Y' is the IDL_i (IDL was cleaned from the variable of the Rule of Law) and x_1 is the Rule of Law:

$$Y' = 0,094x_2 + 0,188 \text{ (Adj. } R^2=0,492\text{),}$$

where Y' is the IDL_i (IDL was cleaned from the variable of Corruption Perceptions Index) and x_2 is the Corruption Perceptions Index:

$$Y' = 0,006x_3 + 0,056 \text{ (Adj. } R^2=0,736\text{),}$$

where Y' is the IDL_i (IDL was cleaned from the variable of Index of Economic Freedom) and x_3 is the Index of Economic Freedom:

$$Y' = 0,031x_4 + 0,403 \text{ (Adj. } R^2=0,587\text{),}$$

where Y' is the IDL_i (IDL was cleaned from the variable of the Budget deficit) and x_4 is the Budget deficit.

The significant correlation was established between the IDL_i and HDI Education Index.

$$Y' = 1,234x_5 - 0,465 \text{ (Adj. } R^2=0,627\text{),}$$

where Y' is the IDL_i (IDL was cleaned from the variable of the HDI Education Index) and x_5 is the HDI Education Index.

The following equation has been done for the health indicators:

$$Y' = 0,021x_6 - 1,053 \text{ (Adj. } R^2=0,673\text{),}$$

where Y' is the IDL_i (IDL was cleaned from the variable of the Life expectancy at birth) and x_6 is the Life expectancy.

So, in view of political factors, the variables of the Rule of Law and the Corruption Perceptions Index have a considerable impact on the IDL of Azerbaijan and one unit change of both will lead to 0,008 and 0,094 units change in IDL_i respectively. 62 % variations of the dependent variable are conditioned by the Rule of Law, and 49% variations are conditioned by Corruption Perceptions Index.

With respect to Economic Factors, the Index of Economic Freedom as well as the Budget deficit/profit both have an impact on the IDL of the country. The growth of the IEF with 1 unit will result in 0,006 unit change on IDL_i and

respectively the positive increase of 1% of GDP will lead to 0,031 unit change on the IDL_i. It should be noted that the IEF has the highest determination coefficient of 74% of the variation of democracy.

Judging by Educational Factors, the growth of HDI Education Index by 0,1 unit will result in the growth of the IDL_i with 0,12 units. And a positive change of the Life expectancy of HFI by 1 year will bring to the growth of the IDL_i by 0,021 units.

The regression analysis shows IDL of Azerbaijan is mostly influenced by the Corruption Perceptions Index, Rule of Law, Index of Economic Freedom, Budget deficit, HDI Education Index and Life expectancy.

Hence, it is of essential importance to pay more attention to the sectors mentioned above.

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Abbreviations

CB	Central Bank
EdFI	Educational Factors Index
EFI	Economic Factors Index
GDP	Gross domestic product
GGGI	Global Gender Gap Index
GNI	Gross national income
HDI	Human Development Index
HFI	Health Factors Index
IDL	Index of Democracy Level
MP	Member of Parliament
MUM	Muslim Unity Movement
NGO	Non-governmental organization

Chapter 4. The Index of Democracy Level of Azerbaijan

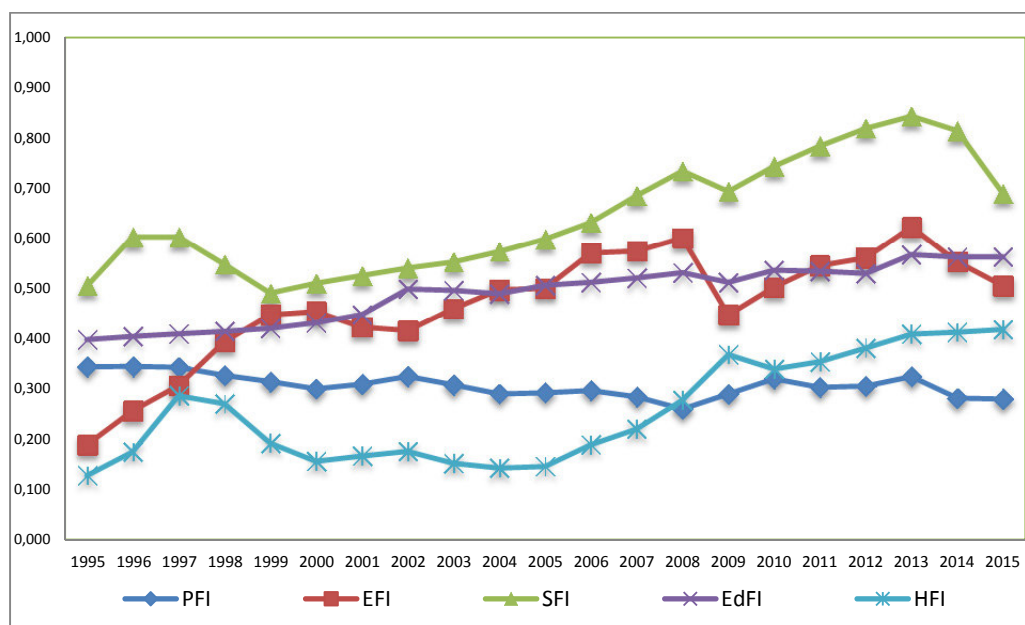
OSCE/ODIHR	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe / Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights
PFI	Political Fact Index
SFI	Social Factors Index
SOFAZ	State Oil Fund of the Republic of Azerbaijan
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

CHAPTER 5.

INDEX OF DEMOCRACY LEVEL OF RUSSIA (IDL)

ASHOT ALEKSANYAN

Figure 1
Indices of Political, Social, Economic, Educational and Health Factors affecting the Index of Democracy Level of Russia in the time span between 1995-2015*



* The source is based on the calculations accumulated by the researcher.
The indices of IDL factors are comparable only by the trends.

Table 1

**Indices of Political, Economic, Social, Educational and Health Factors and Index of
Democracy Level of Russia in the time span between 1995-2015***

Years	PFI	EFI	SFI	EdFI	HFI	IDL
1995	0,344	0,189	0,505	0,399	0,128	0,304
1996	0,345	0,257	0,603	0,405	0,175	0,338
1997	0,343	0,307	0,603	0,410	0,287	0,363
1998	0,327	0,394	0,548	0,415	0,271	0,372
1999	0,315	0,448	0,491	0,421	0,193	0,367
2000	0,301	0,454	0,511	0,432	0,156	0,362
2001	0,310	0,423	0,526	0,448	0,167	0,362
2002	0,325	0,417	0,541	0,499	0,176	0,375
2003	0,309	0,460	0,553	0,497	0,153	0,378
2004	0,291	0,498	0,574	0,490	0,143	0,381
2005	0,293	0,501	0,599	0,507	0,146	0,387
2006	0,297	0,571	0,631	0,513	0,189	0,416
2007	0,285	0,575	0,685	0,521	0,221	0,422
2008	0,260	0,601	0,733	0,532	0,278	0,431
2009	0,290	0,448	0,693	0,513	0,369	0,408
2010	0,320	0,503	0,743	0,537	0,340	0,439
2011	0,304	0,546	0,783	0,535	0,355	0,449
2012	0,306	0,561	0,818	0,530	0,382	0,460
2013	0,325	0,622	0,842	0,568	0,409	0,494
2014	0,282	0,553	0,813	0,563	0,413	0,455
2015	0,280	0,506	0,688	0,563	0,419	0,429

* The source is based on the calculations accumulated by the researcher.

The EFI, SFI, HFI, EdFI, and indices of IDL calculated during certain years may insignificantly vary in comparison to the indices of the corresponding years estimated in the previous publications in the result of updated and newly inserted data as well as changes of minimum and maximum indices.

5.1 Political Factors Index (PFI)

The observation of the PFI curve of IDL reveals that intergovernmental procedures aimed at human rights and freedoms protection, activities of civil society organizations, elections conducted for local self-governing bodies, expansion of Eurasian cooperation as well as other geographical and political developments had a significant impact on democratic transitions of the Russian Federation.

Deterioration of Russian-Turkish relations, mainly caused by the shooting down of Russian Su-24 in the Turkey-Syria border area on 24 November 2015, was one of the most important incidents in RF foreign policy. This sparked the deepening of military and political divergence as well as a diplomatic confrontation between Russia and Turkey and Russia and NATO (*BBC 2015; CNN 2015; the Washington Post 2015; Putin Today 2015; SANA 2015*). The wave of confrontation was unprecedented taking into account Russia's involvement in military operations and Russian air force attacks with the target at the Islamic States terrorist groups in Syria. An increasing foreign threat that posed to Russian security was obvious on account of the fact that a month prior to aforementioned, terrorists downed a civilian aircraft in Sinai, Egypt on 31 October 2015 (*Reuters 2015, Lenta.ru 2015*).

Russia's "hard" policy was aimed at "restraining" Turkey, as its aggressive and ambitious policy caused serious challenges to national interests of the country. Moreover, Russia attached utmost significance to combat international terrorism and ISIS in order to solve defense, security, military and political issues. Russia-Turkey relations were restored in the middle of 2016 when Turkish president R. T. Erdogan sent a letter¹ to the Russian president V. Putin, apologizing for the death of the pilot of a Russian jet downed over the Syrian-Turkish border last November. What is more, Erdogan expressed his readiness to eventually restore relations with

¹ See the official site of the Russian President: "Vladimir Putin has received a letter from Turkish counterpart Recep Tayyip Erdogan" // <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/52282> (11.05.2017).

Moscow and normalize critical situation (*Якыш 2016; Багджи, Курч 2016; Пол 2017*).

Sanctions imposed by the USA, Western European and other countries were sustainably the main concern within the scope of a foreign policy of the RF (*The U.S. State Department 2016; Council of the European Union 2015a, 2015b, 2015c, 2015d; Weiss and Nephew 2016*).

PFI curve of the IDL declined within 2009-2014 and the 2nd low indicator was registered in 2008. Besides, the curve had obviously decreased and was recorded with 0,280 points in 2015 compared to 0,344 back in 1995 (Table 1). This is an evidence that political factors had a negative impact on democratic transition processes within the mentioned 1995-2015 period.

Table 2

The ratio of seats received by political parties in State Duma of the Russian Federation²

Political Parties, Alliances	<i>RF State Duma elections</i>	
	2016	
	<i>M</i>	<i>P</i>
"United Russia"	203	140
Communist Party of the Russian Federation	7	35
Liberal Democratic Party of Russia	5	34
"A JUST Russia" Political Party	7	16
"Rodina" Political Party	1	0
"Civic Platform" Political Party	1	0
Other parties	0	0
Self-nominated candidate	1	-
Total	225	225

Many factors, precisely, change of State Duma elections date³, RF Federal Assembly decree "On deployment and use of RF Armed Forces outside of the

² The source of the data is the official site of Central Election Commission of the RF http://cikrf.ru/law/decrece_of_cec/2016/09/23/56-541-7.html, The final RF election observation OSCE report <http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/russia/290861?download=true>.

³ See Federal Law of 14.07.2015 № 272-ФЗ about amendments of Articles 102 and 5 "On deputy elections to the State Duma of the Russian Federation" Accessed on 25.12.2016 // <http://kremlin.ru/acts/bank/39952>.

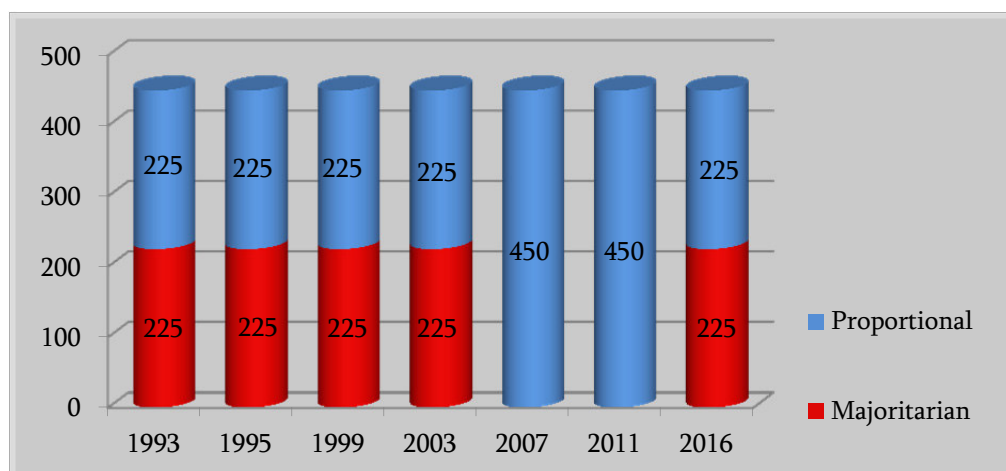
Russian territory⁴ adopted on 30 September 2017, a tense situation in southern-western regions of Ukraine and intensification of anti-Russian attitudes mainly conditioned a low level of PFI of IDL.

14 political parties participated in State Duma elections held on 18 September 2016, but only four of them succeeded in passing the threshold of proportional representation. In the meantime, one representative from each “Rodina” and “Civic Platform” political parties were chosen by majoritarian representation (see Table 2).

State Duma elections of VIIth convocation were conducted by a mixed representation in contrast to Vth (in 2007) and VIth (in 2011) convocations. In fact, the mixed representation, previously used in 1993, 1995, 1999 and 2003 convocations of State Duma elections was restored (see Figure 2 and Table 3).

Figure 2

The ratio of deputy seats by majoritarian and proportional representation in the Parliament⁵



⁴ See the Council of the Federation of the Federal Assembly of the RF decree of 30.09.2015 N 355-CФ “On deployment and use of RF Armed Forces outside of the Russian territory“. Accessed on 25.12.2016 // http://www.consultant.ru/document/cons_doc_LAW_186697.

⁵ The source of the data is Federal Law of 22.02.2014 № 20-ФЗ “On deputy elections of State Duma of Federal Assembly of the RF” (adopted with amendments and addenda) // <http://kremlin.ru/acts/bank/38146/page/1>, Federal Law of 03.11.2015 № 300-ФЗ “About the establishment of single-mandate constituencies for State Duma elections of the RF ” // <http://kremlin.ru/acts/bank/40154>.

Table 3

The ratio of deputy seats by majoritarian and proportional representation in the Parliament

Representation	1993	1995	1999	2003	2007	2011	2016
Proportional	225	225	225	225	450	450	225
Majoritarian	225	225	225	225	0	0	225
Total	450	450	450	450	450	450	450

As a result of the above-mentioned elections, the president of the country again succeeded in forming a political majority in State Duma, which helped him to strengthen his dominant position in the political arena. By emphasizing the role and significance of “United Russia” political party, the president consistently assists in reinforcing its positions in the country’s political life. One of the vivid examples of the assistance provided is the fact that activities of structural subdivisions of the party are carried out in all subjects⁶ of the federation. Besides, it established a collaboration with “All-Russia People’s Front” movement⁷, initiated by the president as well.

Table 4

Freedom House 2015-2017 reports on democratic transitions in Russia⁸

<i>Factors for Democracy Progress</i>	<i>2015</i>	<i>2016</i>	<i>2017</i>
National Democratic Governance	6,75	6,75	6,75
Electoral Process	6,75	6,75	6,75
Civil Society	6,00	6,25	6,50
Independent Media	6,50	6,50	6,50
Local Democratic Governance	6,25	6,25	6,25
Judicial Framework and Independence	6,25	6,25	6,50
Corruption	6,75	6,75	6,75
<i>Democracy Score</i>	<i>6,46</i>	<i>6,50</i>	<i>6,57</i>

⁶ The source of the data is the “United Russia” today, an official site of “United Russia” political party // <http://er.ru/party/today> (12.05.2017).

⁷ The source of the data is the official site of “For Russia” All-Russia People’s Front movement <http://onf.ru> (12.05.2017).

⁸ The source of the data is the official site of the Freedom House
<https://freedomhouse.org/report/nations-transit/2015/kazakhstan>,
<https://freedomhouse.org/report/nations-transit/2016/kazakhstan>,
<https://freedomhouse.org/report/nations-transit/2017/kazakhstan> (12.05.2017).

The trends in PFI were reflected in the Nations in Transit Freedom House reports. According to the data, rates estimating democratic transitions of political system deteriorated from 6,46 to 6,57 points within the last two years (see Table 4). Respectively, Russia is estimated with “6,0-7,0” points and has been qualified as a country with “consolidated authoritarian regime” (*Freedom House 2015a, Freedom House 2016a, Freedom House 2017a*).

Human rights and freedoms. The processes aimed at human rights and freedoms protection, formation and promotion of civil society organizations were troublesome for local and international human rights organizations in 2015-2016. In this respect, issues such as political pluralism, freedom of collective or individual participation in a political life, tortures and ill-treatment inflicted by the police or representatives of other law enforcement bodies, impunity, limited independence of judicial system, as well as NGOs and trade unions remained challenging in Russia.

According to Freedom House 2015-2016 report, Political Rights and Civil Liberties, as well as Press Freedom (*Freedom House 2016b*), were estimated as “not free” (*Freedom House 2016a; Freedom House 2017*). In this regard, the restrictions of the freedom of the press were generally conditioned by a negative influence of dominating mainstream outlets on independent mass media and dissent (*Freedom House 2016b*).

With respect to Commissioner for Human Rights annual report, 21 cases of violation of reporters’ human rights were registered. Programmes revealing illegal activities of authorities and businessmen as well as interference of authorities with the work of journalists in courts, precincts, and discussions at the council of ministers were the most frequent cases of violations (*Commissioner for Human Rights in RF 2016, 77*). According to the data provided by “Public Opinion” Foundation study and conducted by the demand of the Commissioner for Human Rights in RF, respect to human rights protection reduced by 8% compared to previous 2014 (*Commissioner for Human Rights in RF 2016, 16*). Moreover, 42% of respondents claimed that fundamental rights and freedoms were not respected in the country (*Commissioner for Human Rights in RF 2016, 16*).

Human Rights Watch 2016 report stated that activities of CSOs were continuously restricted (*Human Rights Watch 2016*). The report included the "interference" exercised by Memorial Human Rights Center as well as "undesirable" activities undertaken by the US National Endowment for Democracy (NED), Open Society Foundation (OSF) and Open Society Institute Assistance Foundation (OSIAF) (*Human Rights Watch 2016; Open Society Foundations 2015; Vedomosti 2015; RIA Novosti 2015a; Interfax 2015*). In comply with #129 Federal Law⁹, a number of changes were initiated in separate spheres of legal acts. As a consequence, new procedures were introduced with the aim to regulate "undesirable" activities by foreign or international non-governmental organizations operating on the RF territory (*Rossiyskaya gazeta 2015; Garant.ru 2015*). It should be mentioned that "undesirable" activities are perceived by Russia as counter steps against sanctions imposed by the US and EU.

Civil disobedience*. In light of civil disobedience, protests organized in 2015-2016 by CSOs, opposition parties, and movements had a considerable impact on a public and political life of the country.

A Russian opposition politician Boris Nemtsov was shot dead on 27 February 2015 in Moscow and that incident caused a new wave of civil disobedience. Anti-crisis rallies "Spring" planned by the opposition forces in Russian cities were cancelled and instead were held in commemoration of B. Nemtsov on March 1, 2015 (*Vesna.today 2015; Youtube.com 2015*).

Truck owners and drivers started large-scale nationwide strikes against Platon system charging fees on federal highways in 2015-2016 (*RBC 2015a; ИПАЙМ*

⁹ See the Federal Law of 23.05.2015 N 129-ФЗ "On amendments in separate legislative acts of the RF" (current version, 2016). Accessed on 25.12.2016 // http://www.consultant.ru/document/cons_doc_LAW_179979.

* Civil disobedience is a part of the "Social Unrest and Political Pressure" variable of the PFI and is measured by a number of demonstrations, strikes, social unrests, particularly pressures applied against them during a specified span of time. Taking into account the absence of such statistics, relying on the analyses, reports and informative studies carried out by newspapers and research centres, the scaling range of 0-5 was chosen for their assessment, where 0 is the value for the highest number of unrest and pressure, including coup d'état and revolution and 5 is the total absence of those in question.

2015; *Komsomolskaya Pravda* 2015; *Interfax* 2016; *Moskovskiy Komsomolets* 2016). Taking into account that current contradictory situation, 92 deputies of the Communist Party appealed to the Constitutional Court to define the compliance of trucks pay roll system with the RF Constitution (*Communist Party of the RF* 2015).

By referring to other PFI variables, Corruption Perceptions Index shall be pointed out since Russia occupied 119th place out of 168 states and territories in 2015, whereas in 2016 it was positioned in 131st place out of 176 states. 5,500 people were convicted of corruption in the first half of the 2015 year (*RIA Novosti* 2015b). Moreover, on account of inspections of state officials' property and income declarations, 4000 public servants were subjected to disciplinary actions and 272 were dismissed from office within the same mentioned period (*RIA Novosti* 2015c).

The lowest indicators of political empowerment were repeatedly recorded in Global Gender Gap 2015-2016 report (*Global Gender Gap Report* 2015; *Global Gender Gap Report* 2016) and, accordingly, Russia took 128th and 129th position out of 145 and 146 states and territories for the 2015-2016 term. It finally reached 75th place.

Summarizing the aforementioned, it can be concluded that a fall of PFI was mainly conditioned by a geopolitical confrontation between Russia and West. As a result, Russia became politically isolated and its influence on post-Soviet regions was reduced. The crisis in the Ukraine was one of the main reasons of geopolitical tension. In this view, on 9 May 2015, many western leaders chose not to participate in the spectacular events marking the 70th anniversary of the victory in the Great Patriotic War (*Gordonua.com* 2015; *PanARMENIAN Network* 2015). Besides, a decisive role of Russia in leading the battle against ISIS and other extremist groups, military interference in Syrian civil war as well as control over the Turkish-Syrian border was other factors that deepened a geopolitical tension. In particular, on 30 September 2015 Council of the Federation of the Federal Assembly of the RF approved the president's appeal to use RF military forces outside of the Russian territory (*RBC* 2015b; *RIA Novosti* 2015d). Strong positions of ISIS terrorist organizations in Syria were considerably weakened by Russia's

involvement in the battle against them. In fact, volumes of oil smuggling and territories taken under their control were curtailed. Despite the fact, that RF took active military and political steps aimed at regulating Syrian confrontation, a tension between Russia and US, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, NATO, and EU states gradually escalated. Resolution¹⁰ adopted by the Security Council of the UNO on 18 December 2015 was an example of overcoming military and political conflicts in Syria. The Security Council endorsed a “roadmap” for a peace process in Syria, setting out a timetable for United Nations-facilitated talks (*The Security Council of the UN 2015*).

Within the observed period there were other factors that negatively impacted the PFI; namely, prolongation of sanctions against Russia imposed by the USA, Western, European countries and Ukraine in military and industrial spheres as well as spheres of energy, finance and economy (*RIA Novosti 2017*). This step stipulated Russia to mend relations with Ukraine and fulfill obligations under the Minsk agreements (*RIA Novosti 2017*). During the period under review, the fact that Ukraine constantly blockaded the Crimea was reflected in the agenda of geopolitical actors, which consequently applied new procedures of diplomatic and military pressure on Russia.

5.2 Economic Factors Index (EFI)

The study of EFI dynamics shows that main economic indicators declined in 2015 compared to the previous year. The highest indicator of the latter was registered in 2013 over 1995-2014 years. The EFI indicator went down in 2015 compared to 2011-2014 term (see Figure 1, Table 1).

The 2015 economic situation in the Russian Federation was mainly conditioned by a number of factors, such as falling prices for basic commodities, financial sanctions, and external shocks. They gradually led to a limitation of the

¹⁰ See “Resolution 2254 (2015).” Adopted by the Security Council at its 7588th meeting, on 18 December 2015. Accessed December 19, 2016 // http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_res_2254.pdf.

total economic potential, the slowdown of resource opportunities and structural crisis of the economy (*Аганбегян 2016, 31-46; Российская экономика в 2015 году, 2016, 17; Кошкин, Новиков 2015; Кошкин, Атоян 2015*). A lasting confrontation topped with a drastic fall in oil and gas prices worldwide (*Ministry of Finance of the RF 2015, 19; TASS 2015a, 2015b*) posed a threat to the social and economic stability of the RF (*the World Bank Group 2015a, 2015b, 2015c, 2015d, 2015e*).

Treaty on the EEU entered into force on 2 January 2015, and it implied to create the common market¹¹ of goods, services, capital and workers (*Eurasian Economic Commission 2015*). Nonetheless, sanctions against Russia imposed by the international community and unfavorable conditions of financial and economic markets triggered new difficulties to raise EEU competitiveness and to foster relations among EEU member states.

Domestic credit (52.9% of GDP) and trade rate (49.3%)¹² had a positive impact on the EFI 2015 curve. Meanwhile, reduction of FDI with 0,5% of GDP, Inflation with 15,5%, reduction of GNI per capita (\$ 11450), deterioration of Index of Economic Freedom (50,6) and budget deficit (2,6% of GDP) as well as devaluation of Russian rouble¹³ conditioned a decline of EFI indicators in 2015 compared to the previous year.

5.3 Social Factors Index (SFI)

The curve of SFI had a drastic fall in 2015. Figure 1 denotes that the SFI curve had been steadily increasing with some fluctuations during 1995-2013 years. But it experienced an unprecedented fall in 2014-2015. In addition, the lowest indicator of the latter was caused by the reduction of Real wage in 2015.

¹¹ See "Treaty on the Eurasian Economic Union" (adopted on 29.05.2014, effective of 02.01.2015): <http://www.arlis.am/DocumentView.aspx?docID=95272>.

¹² See the official site of the World Bank <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/FS.AST.DOMS.GD.ZS?end=2014&locations=RU&start=1995> (25. 03.2017).

¹³ See the official site of the World Bank <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator> (25.03.2017).

Sanctions against Russia imposed by the USA and other European countries, economic restrictions and steps taken towards international isolation had a negative influence on SFI in 2015.

The Concept of RF Demographic Policy for the period until 2025¹⁴ followed by the approval of the implementation of “2016--2020 action plan”¹⁵ had a significant impact on the improvement of the demographic situation.

Successive steps and activities undertaken by the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of the RF reinforced a sustainable improvement of the social situation in the country (*Ministry of Labour and Social Protection RF 2015; Ministry of Labour and Social Protection RF 2016*). Regulation of main social issues such as dignified job, fair salary, proper pension, social assistance and an increase of family welfare were prioritized in the programmes of the Ministry in question (*Ministry of Labour and Social Protection RF 2016*).

Despite the above-mentioned approaches, the fall of SFI in 2015 denotes that there were negative trends in salary management field.

Figure 3 proves that during the observed period the measures of labour force increased with certain fluctuations by demanding the authorities to provide high level of labour force participation, improve marketing conditions, reduce unemployment and increase employees' productivity. Reduction of labour force was registered for 2012-2015 term compared to 2011, which underlines the urgency to review policies aimed at overcoming problems of labour force supply and demand.

According to Gini index, 2015 estimations income inequality in Russia reduced from 0,416 registered in 2014 to 0,413¹⁶.

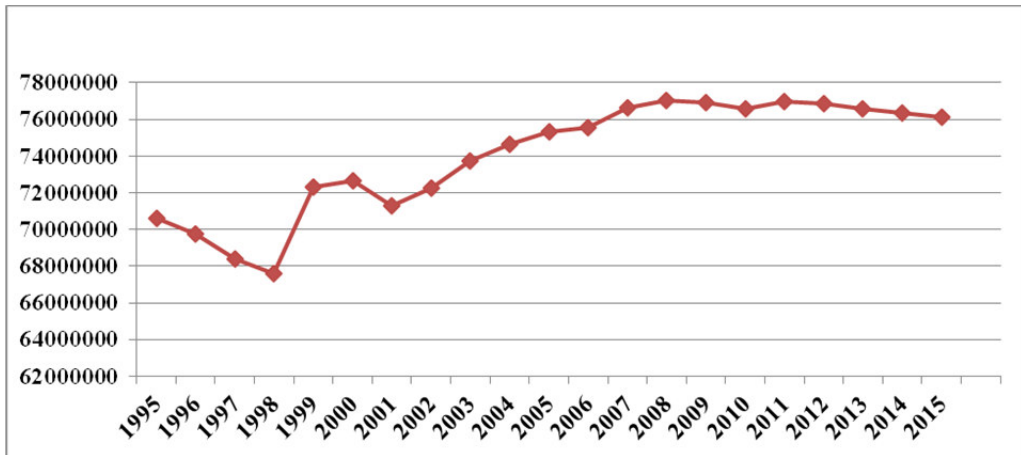
¹⁴ See "Concept of RF Demographic Policy for the period until 2025 (approved by the Decree of the President of the Russian Federation of 9 October 2007 № 1351)". Approval of "Concept of RF Demographic Policy for the period until 2025" (edited as Decree of the President of the Russian Federation of 01.07.2014 N 483). Accessed on 26.12.2016 // <http://kremlin.ru/acts/bank/26299>.

¹⁵ See "Order of the Government of the RF of 14.04.201 №669 on the action plan for 2016-2020 to implement the concept of the State Migration Policy of the Russian Federation through to 2025". Accessed on 26.12.2016 // <http://www.rosmintrud.ru/docs/government/176>.

¹⁶ See the official site of the Federal State Statistics Service <http://www.gks.ru/dbscripts/cbsd/dbinet.cgi?pl=2340003> (13.05.2017).

Figure 3

Labour Force in Russia (1995-2015)¹⁷



Major issues were prioritized in 2011-2015 “Employment assistance”, “Social assistance” and “Accessible Environment”¹⁸, programmes submitted by the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of the Russian Federation.

5.4 Educational Factors Index (EdFI)

The EdFI curve was stable for the period observed (see Figure 1). It sustained its stability, which was conditioned by the increase of government expenditure on education as well as the growth of the HDI Education Index in 2015. Thus, according to the UN Human Development Programme 2016 report, Russia was ranked 49th out of 188 countries and was estimated with 0,804 points. The indicator was improved by 0,024 points when compared to the previous year indicator thanks to which Russia was ranked among countries with a very high level of human development (Human Development Report 2016).

¹⁷ See the official site of the World Bank <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SI.TLF.TOTL.IN> (25.03.2017).

¹⁸ See the official site of the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection for the RF <http://www.rosmintrud.ru/ministry/programmms>.

The implementation of two state programmes of educational development for 2013-2020¹⁹ as well as the Russian language federal targeted programme²⁰ played an essential role in the 2015 estimations of EdFI.

According to 2015 report of the World University Rankings by Times newspaper, Russian universities were ranked as holding the 161st place out of 800 best universities (*Times Higher Education 2016*), and 188th place out of 900 world famous universities in 2016 (*Times Higher Education 2017*).

During the observed period, the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation implemented a number of programmes aimed at improving competitiveness of Russian universities among the world's leading scientific-educational centers (*Ministry of Education and Science of the RF 2017*).

5.5 Health Factors Index (HFI)

Figure 1 shows that the curve of HFI grew in 1995-2015. Moreover, the 2015 indicator was the highest over the mentioned period.

A significant portion of the federal budget expenditure was directed to health care areas of inpatient, outpatient medical care, provision and improvement of the level of emergency services (*Ministry of Healthcare of RF 2016a*). It's noteworthy that directions prioritized by the Ministry were as follows: 1.improvement of mother and child health care services, 2.provision of medicines, medical equipment and technologies, 3.battle against cardiovascular diseases (*Ministry of Healthcare of RF 2016c, 5*).

¹⁹ See "State programmes of educational development for 2013-2020". Accessed on 25.12.2016 // http://минобрнауки.рф/документы/3409/файл/2228/13.05.15-Госпрограмма-Развитие_образования_2013-2020.pdf.

²⁰ See "Russian language federal targeted programme for 2011-2015" (edited as the Order of the Government of the RF of 02.04.2012 N 281). Accessed on 25.12.2016 // http://минобрнауки.рф/проекты/405/файл/117/11.06.20-Постановление_492.pdf. Russian language federal targeted programme for 2016-2020 (edited as the Order of the Government of the RF of 20 May 2015 No 481). Accessed on 25.12.2016 // <http://government.ru/media/files/UdArRuNm2Hdm3MwRUwmdE9N3ohep3pQ.pdf>.

In 2015 in order to increase efficiency, quality of health care system and its services the government undertook a number of measures and steps to control price and quality of medicines, medical products circulation, activities of medical organizations and state-financed medical care (*Ministry of Healthcare of RF 2016a*). In aspect of the above-mentioned issues, it was important for all subjects of the Russian Federation to adopt 2015-2018 "roadmap" for common electronic health care information system (*Ministry of Healthcare of RF 2016a*).

The Ministry of Healthcare reported that increase in life expectancy, mainly due to mortality rate change for young working ages was the key achievement of health care policy conducted in 2015 (*Ministry of Healthcare of RF 2016a, Report of the Minister of Healthcare 2016*). Trends in declining indicators of infant, child, and maternal mortality rate were largely stipulated by reduction in general mortality, increase in life expectancy and fertility (*Report of the Minister of Healthcare 2016*).

A number of federal targeted programmes aimed at development of pharmaceutical and medical industry²¹, ensuring chemical and biological security²², overcoming consequences of nuclear, radiation and natural disasters²³, creating of unified emergency response state system²⁴, improving road safety²⁵ and regulating other issues of healthcare system had been continuously implemented in the country within the observed period (*Ministry of Healthcare of RF 2016b*).

²¹ See Federal Targeted Program "On Development of Pharmaceutical and Medical Industry in the Russian Federation until 2020 and its further perspective". Accessed on 25.12.2016 // <http://pravo.gov.ru/proxy/ips/?docbody=&nd=102145869&intelsearch=%EE%F2+17+%F4%E5%E2%F0%E0%EB%FF+2011+%E3.+%B9+91>.

²² See Federal Targeted Programme "On Ensuring Chemical and Biological Security of the Russian Federation for 2015-2020". Accessed on 25.12.2016 // <https://www.rosminzdrav.ru/ministry/programms/ftcp>.

²³ See Federal Targeted Programme "On Nuclear and Radiation Safety and Security in Russia until 2015". Accessed on 25.12.2016 // <http://pravo.gov.ru/proxy/ips/?docbody=&nd=102149224&intelsearch=%EE%F2+29+%E8%FE%ED%FF+2011+%E3.+%B9+523>.

²⁴ See Federal Targeted Programme "On Unified Emergency Prevention and Response State System by calling 112 for 2013-2017". Accessed on 25.12.2016 // <http://pravo.gov.ru/proxy/ips/?docbody=&nd=102164032&intelsearch=%EE%F2+16+%EC%E0%F0%F2%E0+2013+%E3.+%B9+223>.

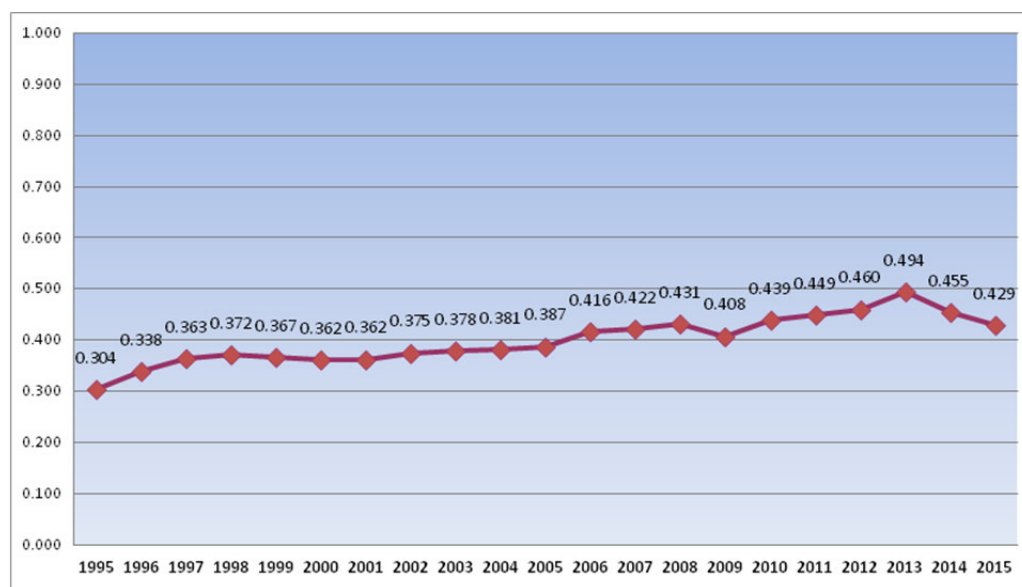
²⁵ See Federal Targeted Programme "On Improving road safety for 2013-2020 r". Accessed on 25.12.2016 // <http://pravo.gov.ru/proxy/ips/?docbody=&nd=102168120&intelsearch=%EE%F2+3+%EE%EA%F2%FF%E1%F0%FF+2013+%E3.+N+864>.

The Ministry of Healthcare was the principal executor of the Healthcare Development state programme and it comprised 11 sub-programmes²⁶. The first stage of the programme was implemented in 2015. In addition, taking into account specifications, the Federal Service for Supervision of Healthcare and Social Development, the Russian Academy of Medical Sciences and the Mandatory Medical Insurance Fund joined the 2016-2021 Action Plan of the Ministry of the Healthcare of the Russian Federation²⁷.

5.6 Development trends of the Index of Democracy Level

Figure 4

Index of Democracy Level of the Russian Federation in the time span between 1995-2015*



²⁶ See "State programme: Healthcare Development. Accessed on 25.12.2016 // <https://www.rosminzdrav.ru/ministry/programms/health/info>.

²⁷ See "2016-2021 Action Plan of the Ministry of the Healthcare of the Russian Federation". Accessed on 20.03.2017 // <https://www.rosminzdrav.ru/ministry/programms/stranitsa-922>

* Source: calculations by the researcher.

The IDL of the Russian Federation is depicted in Figure 4 over the period of 1995-2014. It declined in 2014 (0,429). The highest indicator of the IDL was registered in 2013.

As it can be seen the decline of IDL curve was caused by a constant decrease of PFI, EFI, and SFI indicators (Figure 1). Besides, the EdFI indicator was stable in contrast to HFI indicator, which considerably increased within the period in question.

Geopolitical and regional new confrontations provoked by domestic and foreign political problems were the main reasons for the downfall of 2015 IDL. In particular, the growing tension in the Russian-Ukrainian relations, a change in the Russian-Turkish relations, Russia's active involvement in the conflict settlement in Syria and a fight against the ISIS, the escalation of confrontation between Russia and West topped with sanctions, NATO's military expansion in the Eastern Europe, new procedures of "hot and information war" and etc. were the factors that triggered deterioration of social and economic situation aggravated by unfavourable environment. Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) resolutions²⁸ on account of which Russian delegation was deprived of the right to vote in PACE sessions was a vivid example of those contradictions (*Golos-ameriki.ru 2015; Sputnik News 2015*).

Policy aimed at restoring political dialogue with major geopolitical actors, ensuring the continuation of international socio-economic integration and implementation of reforms in public administration system will play an essential role in the improvement of IDL indicators.

²⁸ For more details see Resolution 2034 (2015) "Challenge, on substantive grounds, of the still unratified credentials of the delegation of the Russian Federation." Accessed December 19, 2016. <http://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/XRef/Xref-XML2HTML-EN.asp?fileid=21538&lang=en>, Resolution 2063 (2015) "Consideration of the annulment of the previously ratified credentials of the delegation of the Russian Federation (follow-up to paragraph 16 of Resolution 2034 (2015))." Accessed December 19, 2016. <http://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/XRef/Xref-XML2HTML-EN.asp?fileid=21956&lang=en>.

5.7 Regression analysis of the Index of Democracy Level

Arusyak Aleksanyan, Ashot Aleksanyan

Within the framework of the research, the regression analysis illustrates the variables of Political, Economic, and Health Factors Indices, which had a significant influence on the IDL of the Russian Federation.

According to the regression data, there was a significant correlation between IDL_i²⁹ and variables of political, economic, social, educational and health factors.

According to the analysis of the data, with respect to political indicators included in the model, a significant correlation was maintained between the IDL_i and variables of Political Stability/Absence of Violence and Rule of Law.

$$Y' = 0,006x_1 + 0,314 \text{ (Adj. } R^2 = 0,307),$$

where Y' is the IDL_i (IDL cleaned from the variable of Political Stability/Absence of Violence), and x₁ is Political Stability/Absence of Violence.

$$Y' = 0,005x_2 + 0,287 \text{ (Adj. } R^2 = 0,156),$$

where Y' is the IDL_i (IDL cleaned from the variable of Rule of Law), and x₂ is the Rule of Law.

In view of Economic Factors included in the model, a significant correlation was maintained between the IDL and Trade rate (% of GDP).

$$Y' = - 0,006x_3 + 0,715 \text{ (Adj. } R^2 = 0,388),$$

where Y' is the IDL_i (IDL cleaned from the variable of Trade rate), and x₃ is the Trade rate (% of GDP).

A notable correlation is seen in the Social Factors Index among the IDL_i and Real wage, Gini index as well as Unemployment.

$$Y' = 0,011x_4 + 0,369 \text{ (Adj. } R^2 = 0,715),$$

²⁹ IDL_i is the Index of Democracy Level cleaned from the corresponding variable during every paired regression analysis.

where Y' is the IDL_i (IDL cleaned from the Real wage), and x_4 is the Real wage (\$100).

$$Y' = -0,015x_5 + 0,507 \text{ (Adj. } R^2 = 0,504),$$

where Y' is the IDL_i (IDL cleaned from Unemployment rate), and x_5 Unemployment rate.

$$Y' = 3,724x_6 - 1,114 \text{ (Adj. } R^2 = 0,765),$$

where Y' is the IDL_i (IDL cleaned from Gini index), and x_6 is Gini index (% of GDP).

A significant correlation was observed in the Educational Factors between IDL_i and HDI Education Index.

$$Y' = 0,883x_7 - 0,295 \text{ (Adj. } R^2 = 0,809),$$

where Y' is the IDL_i (IDL cleaned from HDI Education Index), and x_7 is HDI Education Index.

A significant correlation was maintained between IDL_i and the variables of HFI Life expectancy at birth and Health expenditure (% of GDP):

$$Y' = 0,017x_8 - 0,765 \text{ (Adj. } R^2 = 0,715),$$

where Y' is the IDL_i (IDL cleaned from Life expectancy at birth), and x_8 is Life expectancy at birth.

$$Y' = 0,036x_9 + 0,172 \text{ (Adj. } R^2 = 0,268),$$

where Y' is the IDL_i (IDL cleaned from Health expenditure (% of GDP)), and x_9 is Health expenditure (% of GDP).

According to the regression analysis, the IDL of Russia is notably affected by variables of Political Stability/Absence of Violence and Rule of Law. Hence, positive change of the latter by one unit will contribute to the growth of the IDL_i by 0,006 and 0,005 units correspondingly.

Trade rate has a significant impact on the IDL of Russian and the reduction of the latter by 1% will lead to IDL_i growth by 0,006 units. A negative correlation of the external trade rate is conditioned by world economic shocks, new economic transitions and market barriers to products entry.

Real wage, Unemployment rate and Gini index of the SFI have a considerable influence on the IDL of Russia. The growth of Real wage by 100\$, decrease of unemployment by 1% and Gini index with 0,1 unit will cause the growth of the IDL_i with corresponding 0,011, 0,015 and 0,37 units.

In view of Educational Factors, the growth of HDI Education Index by 1 unit will result in the growth of the IDL_i by 0,883 units. And a positive change of the Life expectancy of HFI by 1 year will bring to the growth of the IDL_i by 0,021 units.

In reference to health factors, the variables of Life expectancy at birth and Health expenditure have a significant impact on democracy of the country. The growth of Life expectancy at birth by 1 year and 1% increase of Health expenditure will bring to the growth of the IDL_i with corresponding 0,017 and 0,036 units.

To improve the IDL of the RF it will be helpful to pay attention to the PFI, EFI, SFI, EdFI and HFI. They are of utmost importance to consistently continue democratic reforms of the federation as well as federal subjects (republics, regions, provinces, cities of federal importance), increase their effectiveness, expand international cooperation and use resources rationally.

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Abbreviations

CNN	Cable News Network
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
EdFI	Educational Factors Index
EEU	Eurasian Economic Union
EFI	Economic Factors Index
EU	European Union
FDI	Foreign direct investments
GDP	Gross domestic product
GNI	Gross national income
HFI	Health Factors Index
ISIS	Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGO	Non-governmental organization
PACE	Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe
PFI	Political Factors Index
RF	Russian Federation
SFI	Social Factors Index
USA	United States of America

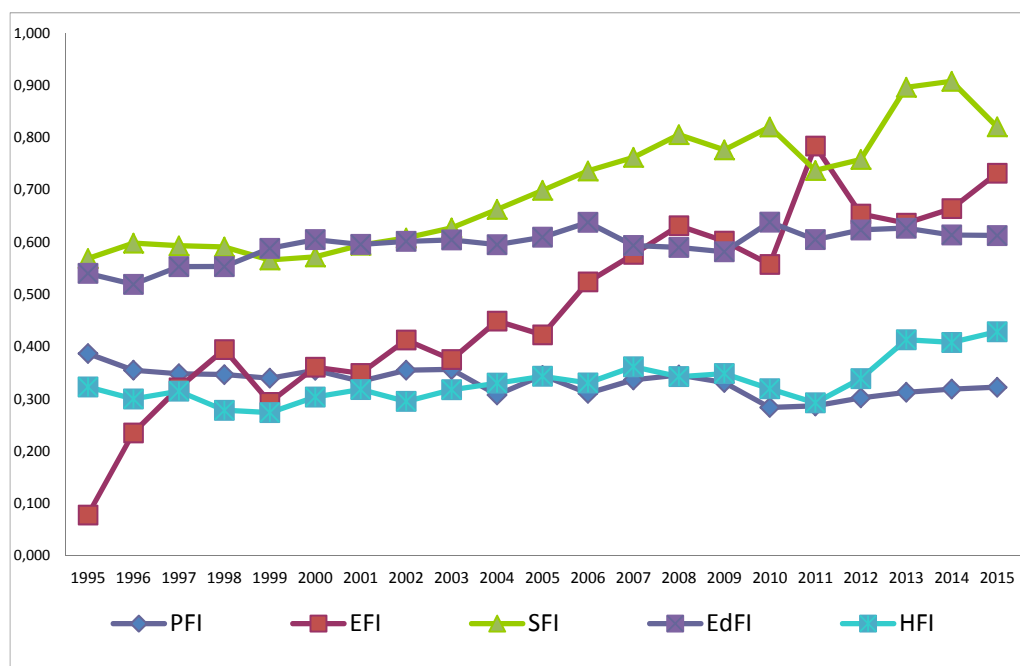
CHAPTER 6.

INDEX OF DEMOCRACY LEVEL OF BELARUS (IDL)

ASHOT ALEKSANYAN

Figure 1

Indices of Political, Social, Economic, Educational and Health Factors affecting the Index of Democracy Level of Belarus in the time span between 1995-2015*



* The source is based on the calculations accumulated by the researcher.
The indices of IDL factors are comparable only by the trends.

Table 1

**Indices of Political, Economic, Social, Educational and Health Factors and Index of
Democracy Level of Belarus in the time span between 1995-2015***

Years	PFI	EFI	SFI	EdFI	HFI	IDL
1995	0,387	0,078	0,569	0,540	0,323	0,336
1996	0,355	0,235	0,598	0,519	0,300	0,362
1997	0,348	0,321	0,593	0,553	0,315	0,386
1998	0,347	0,395	0,591	0,553	0,278	0,401
1999	0,340	0,294	0,566	0,588	0,274	0,372
2000	0,355	0,361	0,572	0,605	0,304	0,401
2001	0,334	0,349	0,594	0,596	0,318	0,393
2002	0,355	0,413	0,608	0,601	0,295	0,418
2003	0,356	0,376	0,627	0,604	0,318	0,413
2004	0,308	0,449	0,663	0,595	0,330	0,417
2005	0,345	0,423	0,699	0,609	0,343	0,432
2006	0,311	0,524	0,736	0,638	0,331	0,450
2007	0,336	0,577	0,762	0,594	0,362	0,476
2008	0,346	0,632	0,806	0,590	0,343	0,496
2009	0,331	0,602	0,777	0,582	0,349	0,479
2010	0,284	0,557	0,821	0,638	0,319	0,455
2011	0,287	0,784	0,737	0,605	0,293	0,500
2012	0,302	0,654	0,758	0,623	0,339	0,482
2013	0,313	0,636	0,896	0,627	0,413	0,505
2014	0,319	0,664	0,908	0,614	0,408	0,514
2015	0,322	0,732	0,821	0,613	0,429	0,526

* The source is based on the calculations accumulated by the researcher.

The EFI, SFI, HFI, EdFI, and indices of IDL calculated during certain years may insignificantly vary in comparison to the indices of the corresponding years estimated in the previous publications in the result of updated and newly inserted data as well as changes of minimum and maximum indices.

6.1 Political Factors Index (PFI)

PFI of Belarus went up and was recorded with 0,322 points in 2015 compared to the 0,387 indicator registered in 1995, which had been the highest for the observed period (see Figure 1, Table 1).

PFI was mostly influenced by presidential elections and processes prior to 2016 parliamentary elections, as well as by the following factors, such as priorities of foreign policy, bilateral and multi-lateral relations with Russia, implementation of EEU and activities of civil society organizations (*MoFA BR 2016; Council of the EU 2016; RIA Novosti 2016; Лазуткин и др. 2016; Сивицкий, Царик 2016*).

Positive trends of PFI were also reflected in Nations in Transit reports by Freedom House, according to which indicators of democratic transitions of country's political system were improved and correspondingly were estimated with 6,71 indicator compared to previously registered 6,61 points (see Table 2).

Table 2
Freedom House 2015-2017 reports about democratic transitions in Belarus¹

<i>Factors of Democracy Progress</i>	<i>2015</i>	<i>2016</i>	<i>2017</i>
National Democratic Governance	6,75	6,75	6,50
Electoral Process	7,00	6,75	6,75
Civil Society	6,50	6,25	6,25
Independent Media	6,75	6,75	6,75
Local Democratic Governance	6,75	6,75	6,75
Judicial Framework and Independence	7,00	7,00	7,00
Corruption	6,25	6,25	6,25
<i>Democracy Score</i>	<i>6,71</i>	<i>6,64</i>	<i>6,61</i>

A new political situation was formed after 2015 presidential elections and forthcoming 2016 parliamentary elections that initiated certain activation of civil society organizations (CSOs) (*OSCE/ODIHR 2016a; OSCE/ODIHR 2016b*).

¹ The source of the data is the official site of Freedom House <https://freedomhouse.org/report/nations-transit/2015/belarus>, <https://freedomhouse.org/report/nations-transit/2016/belarus>, <https://freedomhouse.org/report/nations-transit/2017/belarus> (12.04.2017).

The uncertainty of the Constitution and Electoral Code negatively impacted the processes to conduct and organize elections as well as to ensure democratic participation (*European Parliament 2016; European External Action Service 2016a*). Nonetheless, opposition forces and CSOs, taking into account previously gained experience, managed to raise the level of public awareness and participation. That served as an opportunity for opposition parties to have their two deputies in the House of Representatives. This was unprecedented in the history of the National Assembly of the Republic of Belarus (*Шрайбман 2016*). Table 3 displays that a prevailing number of VIth convocation deputies are nonpartisan in the House of Representatives. The latter impedes processes aimed at modernization of a political party, opposition and its programmes, parliamentary culture as well as the implementation of parliamentarism. The fact that majority in the parliament were nonpartisan once again sparked serious problems in view of political representation as the role of opposition forces was ignored and disregarded in public decision-making processes.

Table 3
The ratio of seats received by political parties in the House of Representatives in Belarus²

	Elections to the House of Representatives of the National Assembly of the Republic of Belarus
	2016
<i>Political Parties</i>	<i>Majoritarian</i>
Communist Party of Belarus	8
Liberal Democratic Party of Belarus	1
Republican Party of Labour and Justice	3
United Civil Party	1
Belarusian Patriotic Party	3
Non-partisan	94
<i>Total</i>	<i>110</i>

² The source of the data is the official site of the Central Commission of the Republic of Belarus on Elections and Holding Republican Referenda <http://rec.gov.by/ru/arhiv-vybory/vybory-deputatov-palaty-predstaviteley-nacionalnogo-sobraniya-respubliki-belarus-3>, <http://rec.gov.by/sites/default/files/pdf/Elections-PPNS6-Itogi.pdf> (18.04.2017).

Human rights and freedoms. After the presidential elections EU significantly weakened some sanctions on account of the fact that political prisoners were released in October 2015. The European Union claimed it would suspend its sanctions on Belarus for four months, including those against the President Alexander Lukashenko (*RIA Novosti 2016*). Nevertheless, a human rights situation in Belarus was still qualified as “none civilian”. Hence, the previously made commitments to prevent repressions against CSOs and form a platform for cooperation among government, business and CSOs, became very urgent.

According to Freedom House 2015-2016 reports, political rights and civil liberties, press and internet freedom were considered “not free”³ in Belarus. Hence, the Freedom House report stated that successive re-election of the acting president Lukashenko for the 5th time, the highest level of political powers centralization, restrictions on pluralism and possibilities to participate in political processes, rejections and artificial impediments for parties state registration as well as arrests and pressure on opposition representatives and civil society activists are among those numerous factors that conditioned deterioration of fundamental rights and freedoms situation in the country (*Freedom House 2016*).

Legislative restrictions on freedom of press and speech remained unchanged in 2015-2016, thereby jeopardizing the procedures of independent media formation and operation (*Freedom House 2016*).

According to Freedom House Law on Mass media⁴ of the Republic of Belarus, and its amendments and addenda effective of January 1, 2015, provided the government with additional tools to tighten state control over an informational sphere (*Freedom House 2016; Ministry of Information RB 2014*). In 2015-2016 violations of freedom of speech and fundamental rights continued to be maintained

³ See Freedom House official site <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2016/belarus>, <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2017/belarus>, <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-press/2016/belarus>, <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-press/2017/belarus> (22.03.2017).

⁴ See Law on Mass Media of the Republic of Belarus, No. 427-Z of July 17, 2008. (adopted by the House of Representatives on 24.06.2008). Accessed on 11.04.2017. <http://www.pravo.by/document/?guid=3871&p0=H10800427>.

in the spheres of informational and civilian online resources, websites and databases as well as communication technologies.

According to Amnesty International organization 2015-2016 reports, there were no significant changes in the field of human rights protection. The same situation was in 2014 (*Amnesty International 2016, 84-86; Amnesty International 2017, 82-84*).

Human Rights Watch international organization evaluated human rights protection situation as disturbing for 2015-2016 years on account of abundant incidents of assaults and violations of international law norms and human dignity in Belarus (*Human Rights Watch 2017, 121-126*). Death penalty, protection of the rights of the convicted, restrictions on the rights to freedom of expression, of association and of peaceful assembly, as well as political persecutions, remained one of the most problematic issues in place (*Amnesty International 2016, 84-86; Amnesty International 2017, 82-84; Human Rights Watch 2017, 121-126*). The above-mentioned concerns were also reflected in the UNO Human Rights Council special report⁵ strongly emphasizing the issues of systematic, widespread and gross violations of human rights in the country (*Human Rights Council 2015, 3*).

The role and activities⁶ of CSOs and the Belarusian National Platform (BNP) of the Eastern Partnership (EaP), Civil Society Forum (CSF), carried out within the mentioned period, were of high significance in human rights protection context,. They all were struggling to reinforce the institutional and participatory capacities of civil society by confronting attempts for "stagnation and governmentalization" of the civil sector (*EaP CSF Belarusian National Platform 2015a*).

Civil disobedience*. Rallies and protests, similar to previous years, were mainly organized by opposition forces and CSOs (*TUT.BY 2015a*). In overall, issues

⁵ Source of the data is the official site of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/countries/ENACARegion/Pages/BYIndex.aspx> (22.03.2017).

⁶ For more details see the official site of EaP CSF Belarusian National Platform <http://eng.npbelarus.info/?cat=3> (22.03.2017).

*Civil disobedience is a part of the "Social Unrest and Political Pressure" variable of the PFI and is measured by a number of demonstrations, strikes, social unrests, particularly pressures applied against them during a specified span of time. Taking into account the absence of such statistics, relying on the analyses, reports and informative studies carried out by newspapers and research centres, the scaling range of 0-5 was settled for their assessment, where 0 is the value for the highest number of

to reinforce national interests, independence and sovereignty of Belarus, boost the international prestige of the country, as well as issues of European integration were the main concerns of those events, initiated by the aforementioned parties. Mass protests occurred after the 2015 presidential elections and the international community was called off not to recognize the results of the elections (*EaP CSF Belarusian National Platform 2015b*).

A traditional "Freedom Day" march was organized on March 25, 2015 in Belarus, which was held in commemoration of 97th anniversary of the Belarusian Democratic Republic (*Deutsche Welle 2015; NAVINY.BY 2015; Charter 97 2015; Сивицкий 2017*). Independence of the country, solidarity with Ukraine, as well as the protest against anti-democratic policy carried out by authorities were the main issues of "Freedom Day" march (*Deutsche Welle 2015a; NAVINY.BY 2015; Belarus partisan 2015; Богдан 2015*). Organizers of "Freedom Day" march wanted to hold similar events in other cities of Belarus as well (Vitebsk, Grondo, Berezhino, Lida, and Gorky), but the permission was denied by the authorities (*NAVINY.BY 2015*).

A protest against the establishment of a Russian air base in Belarus was held on October 4, 2015. It was one of the examples where the importance of independence and nationalism was strongly underlined (*NN.BY 2015*). Meanwhile, opposition forces announced the creation of "For Statehood and Independence of Belarus" movement (*NN.BY 2015*). It is to be noted, that views of the president and opposition forces against the establishment of the Russian military bases coincided (*Deutsche Welle 2015b; Царик 2017; Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty 2015*).

In October 2015 a rally against President Lukashenko, continuously undertaken and organized by active opposition forces, as well as their constant involvement in the mentioned processes, was very influential. It was held one day prior to the presidential elections, once again demanding the resignation of the president and conducting free and fair elections (*Correspondent 2015*).

The rally held in Minsk on November 24, 2015 was an exemplary indication of respect and promotion of rule of law and human rights protection, as well as

unrest and pressure, including coup d'état and revolution and 5 is the total absence of those in question.

civil culture creation. It was devoted to the 19th anniversary of the rally, held back in 1996 by paying tribute to the missing public figures (*TUT.BY 2015b*).

In general, more than 200 incidents of civil disobedience were counted in 2015. Moreover, the number increased if compared to the previous years.

15 political parties, 31 trade unions, 2371 NGOs and about 400 charity organizations had been registered as of January 1, 2017⁷.

With respect to other PFI variables, the Corruption Perceptions Index increased compared to indicators recorded for 2005-2014⁸. A number of sub-indices of Rule of Law (24,06) and Press Freedom (91) had a positive impact on PFI.

To sum up, the PFI curve decreased in 2015 when compared to 1995. Regardless of that fact, 2015 PFI curve was, on the contrary, recorded with positive trends. The improvement of the curve was mainly stipulated by democratic transitions of the political system and procedures of Eurasian integration, efforts aimed at improving relations with the EU, mediatory mission of Belarus to peacefully solve the Ukrainian conflict and establishment of Russian-Belarusian relations on the principle of equal rights (see Figure 1, Table 1).

6.2 Economic Factors Index (EFI)

The EFI indicators denote that the curve had an increase by keeping the same trend of the previous year (see Figure 1, Table 1).

Activities initiated by EEU (*EEC 2016a; EEC 2016b; EEC 2016c*), as well as activation of economic relations with the USA, EU, and other Eastern countries had a considerable impact on EFI of Belarus.

Reduction of both external and bilateral trade shares with EEU countries was registered in 2015. Besides, certain difficulties to sustain economic stability

⁷ Source of the data is the official site of the President of Belarus http://president.gov.by/ru/society_ru (11.04.2017).

⁸ See the official site of Transparency International <http://www.transparency.org/cpi2015/#results-table> (11.04.2017).

emerged in Belarus, which were chiefly conditioned by the procedures intended for expansion of economic and trade cooperation among EEU states, as well as the formation of a single market for goods and services (*EEC 2015; EEC 2016a; EEC 2016b; EEC 2016c*).

Russia and EU constituted 40% and 30%⁹ respectively of total external trade rate of the country.

It's noteworthy that transport services comprised 50% of the total export volumes of the country¹⁰. A 9 months balance showed 27,5%¹¹ decrease in the external trade turnover between Russia and Belarus in 2015, which amounted to 26,3%¹² by the end of the year.

The EFI growth was strongly determined by an ongoing increase of trade turnover, as well as domestic credit and foreign direct investments added by the trends of inflation rate reduction. They were reflected in 2015 budget profit.

EU assistance, which was mainly concentrated on national priorities of Belarus, had an essential impact on the sustainable development of financial and economic technologies, as well as on processes aimed at overcoming modern challenges. The main goal of development programmes is to promote innovation, investments, stable economic growth and international cooperation, productive use of energy and resources, stability of the environment and to finance the costs of the reconstruction and development of regions affected by the Chernobyl disaster (*European External Action Service 2016b; European Union funded projects in Belarus 2017a, 2017b, 2017c, 2017d*). What is more, EU has defined the following common and correlated 2014-2017 priorities for Belarus and they are as follows: social integration, environmental protection and rational use of resources, as well as local and regional economic development (*European External Action*

⁹ The source of data is the official site of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belarus <http://mfa.gov.by/export> (12.04.2017).

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ The source of the data is the official site of the Ministry of Economic Development of the RF http://www.ved.gov.ru/exportcountries/by/by_ru_relations/by_ru_trade (12.04.2017).

¹² The source of the data is the official site of Embassy of the RF in Belarus http://belarus.mid.ru/spravocnye-materialy/-/asset_publisher/9CH6VzS6hIWV/content/rossijsko-belorusskoe-torgovo-ekonomiceskoe-sotrudnicestvo (12.04.2017).

Service 2016b; European Union funded projects in Belarus 2017a, 2017b, 2017c, 2017d).

In 2015 Belarus continued to participate in a number of EU funded regional projects, which resulted in providing assistance for the increase of border management efficiency and modernization of transport communication and infrastructure. European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) implements strategic programmes that are very important to sustain economic progress. They are initiated to ensure sustainable development of public services, the increase of competitiveness, an establishment of private sector and reinforcement of institutional capacities (*EBRD 2016*).

The USA partially lifted sanctions from nine Belarusian companies in October 2015 which had been imposed since 2006 because of a disruption of the democratic process (*RIA Novosti 2016*). The suspension of sanctions gave an opportunity to restore and activate international economic relations with the following economic units. For example, “Belneftokhim” state concern established relations with its American “Belshina” OJSC branch, “Grondo Azot” OJSC producing ammonia and fertilizers, “Grondo Chimvolokno” OJSC, “Lakokraska” OJSC, “Naftan” OJSC, “Polotsk-Steklovolokno” OJSC and “Belarusian oil trade house” (*RIA Novosti 2016*).

6.3 Social Factors Index (SFI)

The 2015 SFI experienced an abrupt downfall, but the curve sustained its positive results within 1995-2015 (see Figure 1, Table 1). The SFI was registered with 0,569 and 0,821 points in 1995 and 2015 correspondingly. Reduction of the Real wage was the main factor that caused SFI decrease in 2015. Even though unemployment rate increased in Belarus, it is still one of the lowest in the world.

According to the World Bank data, the unemployment rate was particularly recorded with 0,51%¹³ and labour force comprised 4,838.699¹⁴ people.

¹³ See the official site of the World Bank <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.UEM.TOTL.ZS> (26.04.2017).

As far as types of economic activities are concerned, the population was largely employed in the fields of industry (23,4%), manufacturing (20,5%), trade (14,6%), education (9,8%) and agriculture (9,7%) (see Table 4).

Table 4

Employment by types of economic activities¹⁵

<i>Types of economic activities</i>	<i>2015</i>	
	%	Thousand people
<i>Employed, total</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>4 496,0</i>
Agriculture, forestry, and hunting	9,7	434,0
Fisheries industry	0,0	1,9
Industry	23,4	1 051,0
Mining industry	0,3	15,0
Manufacturing	20,5	920,7
Energy, gas and water supply and production	2,6	115,3
Construction	7,7	345,7
Trade: Cars, repair of household goods and personal items	14,6	656,6
Hotels and restaurants	2,1	93,0
Transport and communication	7,4	333,9
Financial activity	1,6	74,5
Operations for consumers related to providing services in real estate and renting	7,9	355,6
State administration	4,1	185,1
Education	9,8	440,5
Healthcare and provision of social services	7,2	322,2
Provision of utility, social and private services	4,4	197,8

To improve an efficiency of implementation and development of social policy, the 2014-2015 State Programme approved by Ordinance of the Council of

¹⁴ See the official site of the World Bank <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.TLF.TOTL.IN> (26.04.2017).

¹⁵ The source of the data is the official site of National Statistical Committee of the Republic of Belarus <http://www.belstat.gov.by/ofitsialnaya-statistika/solialnaya-sfera/trud/godovye-dannye/> chi-slennost-zanyatogo-naseleniya-respubliki-belarus-po-vidam-ekonomicheskoi-deyatelnosti (16.04.2017).

Ministers of RB and signed between national associations of employers and the trade unions, had a significant impact in this respect (*Ministry of Labour and Social Protection Republic of Belarus 2017*). Social collaboration parties were provided with an opportunity to safeguard the agreement between employees and employers in collective labour relations by improving the performance of mutual obligations in the mentioned field.

Socially oriented programmes had been continually implemented during 2015 and were aimed at providing assistance to beneficiaries of human potential development policy, employment regulation and unemployment reduction, improvement of social and economic situation, as well as solutions aimed to reduce poverty related issues¹⁶.

6.4 Educational Factors Index (EdFI)

EdFI decreased in comparison to the previous year (see Figure 1, Table 1). Nonetheless, the curve of EdFI sustained its positive results within the observed period and in 2015 it was recorded with 0,613 points compared to 0,540 points in 1995.

The HDI of Belarus decreased by registering 0,796 points in 2015 and by placing the country on the 52nd position out of 188 states (*Human Development Report 2016, 198*). The government expenditure on education formed 5,1% of GDP and the level of literacy of adults comprised 99, 6% (*Human Development Report 2015*).

¹⁶ For more details see “Government Activities of RB for 2016-2020” // http://www.government.by/upload/docs/pdp2016_2020.pdf (26.04.2017), “Programme for social and economic development of RB for 2016-2020” // http://www.government.by/upload/docs/program_ek2016-2020.pdf (26.04.2017), “The state program on social protection and employment promotion in 2016-2020 (on decree N 1075 issued by the Council of Ministers on 26.12.2016)” // <http://www.mint-rud.gov.by/system/extensions/spaw/uploads/files/Programma-sodejstvija.pdf> (26.04.2017).

In 2015 the share allocated to the education sector in the costs of the RB consolidated budget constituted 17,1%¹⁷ (*National Bank of RB 2015*). Improvements and optimization in the education field had been carried out within 2015 aiming to raise the efficiency of education system administration, the interconnection of subsystems and their further development.

It can be seen from Table 5 that the number of preschools, general secondary, technical and vocational professional and higher education institutions diminished in the country (*TUT.BY 2015c*).

Table 5

Main educational indicators¹⁸

	2014/2015	2015/2016
The number of Preschool institutions	3972	3951
Children at school, 1 000 children	410,6	409,8
The number of secondary education institutions	3293	3230
pupils enrolled at school, 1 000 people	946,1	969,1
The number of technical professional institutions	213	206
pupils enrolled at school, 1 000 people	72,8	72,2
The number of vocational professional institutions	231	231
pupils enrolled at school, 1 000 people	129,0	121,3
The number of higher education institutions	54	52
students enrolled, 1 000 people	362,9	336,4

The implementation of measures arising from the concept of informatization of the education system, as well as the control over their outcomes essentially affected and propelled the progress in the context of the educational system of RB in 2015¹⁹.

¹⁷ The source of the data is the official site of National Statistical Committee of the Republic of Belarus https://www.nbrb.by/publications/EcTendencies/rep_2015_12_ot.pdf (16.04.2017).

¹⁸ The source of the data is the official site of National Statistical Committee of the Republic of Belarus http://www.belstat.gov.by/ofitsialnaya-statistika/solialnaya-sfera/obrazovanie/godovye-dan-nye_5/osnovnye-pokazateli-obrazovaniya (16.04.2017).

¹⁹ The source of the data is the official site "Concept of informatization of education system of RB till 2020" // <http://edu.gov.by/page-1081> (16.04.2017).

6.5 Health Factors Index (HFI)

The HFI curve increased and registered the highest value within the observed years of 1995-2014. In the meantime, the HFI was estimated with 0,323 and 0,429 points in 1995 and 2013 respectively (see Figure 1, Table 1).

The comparative growth of life expectancy indicators contributed to the improvement of the HFI in 2015.

The Ministry of Health carried out a number of state programs directed to modernization and development of the health system and services provided²⁰. Measures taken to fight against alcohol abuse and alcoholism, prevent HIV infection, provide treatment of cardiovascular diseases, eliminate consequences of Chernobyl catastrophe, provide assistance to persons with disabilities, improve the quality of social services and situation of demographic safety, ensure sustainable rural development and establishment of electronic health care system played a key role in modernization and development of the health system²¹.

By observing Table 6 we may conclude that the number of professional doctors, acting doctors, and average medical staff increased in 2015 if we compare it to 2014 estimations. Moreover, ambulatory/polyclinic institutions increased in number as well.

The development of health care system was effectively influenced by mutual efforts undertaken with the UN agencies to continue and promote collaboration. Particularly, the Ministry of Health in collaboration with the World Health Organization jointly implemented programmes aiming to increase the level and efficiency of the first aid, reproduction and perinatal health, medical technologies, services and tools, as well as to prevent and cure widely spread communicable and noncommunicable diseases²².

²⁰ See the official site of the Ministry of Health of RB http://minzdrav.gov.by/ru/static/activities/gosudarstvennye_programmy (16.04.2017).

²¹ See the official site of the Ministry of Health of RB http://minzdrav.gov.by/ru/static/activities/gosudarstvennye_programmy (16.04.2017).

²² See the official site of the Ministry of Health of RB http://minzdrav.gov.by/ru/static/activities/gosudarstvennye_programmy (16.04.2017).

Constant assistance provided by WHO and UNICEF, as well as Health 2020 Strategy played an essential role in health care policy development and implementation²³ (*WHO Regional Office for Europe 2017*).

Table 6

Main health care indicators ²⁴

	2014	2015
The number of professional doctors (total, 1000 people)	51,1	53,2
The number of acting doctors out of total number of doctors		
total, 1000 people	38,7	40,4
Per 10,000 residents	40,8	42,5
The number of average medical staff		
total, 1000 people	123,9	126,1
Per 10,000 residents	130,7	132,8
The number of hospitals	641	640
The number of hospital beds		
total, 1000 people	82,3	82,0
Per 10,000 residents	86,8	86,3
The number of ambulatory/polyclinic institutions	2309	2325

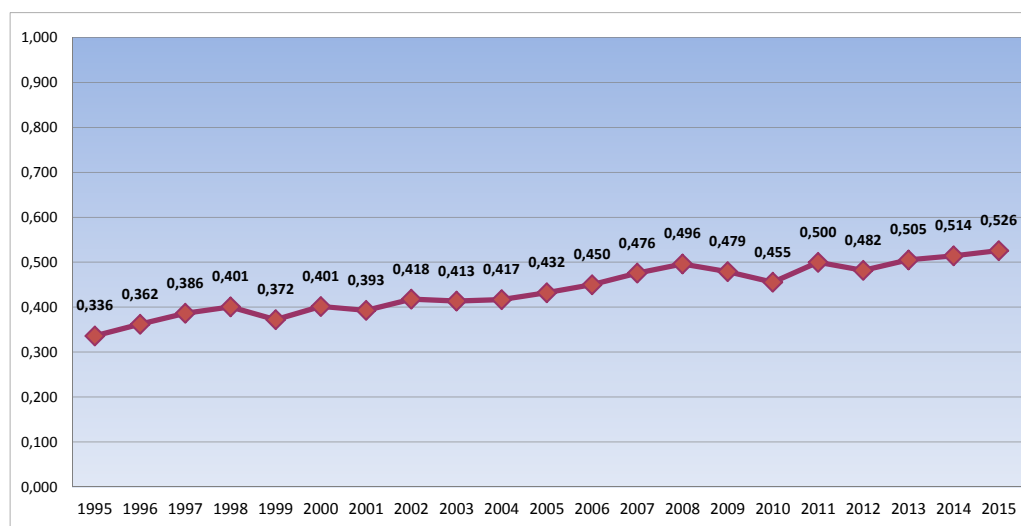
²³ See the official site of the Ministry of Health of RB http://minzdrav.gov.by/ru/static/international_cooperation/mejdunarodnye_organizacii (16.04.2017).

²⁴ The source of the data is the official site of National Statistical Committee of the Republic of Belarus http://www.belstat.gov.by/ofitsialnaya-statistika/solialnaya-sfera/zdravooohranenie_2/godovye-dannye_13/osnovnye-pokazateli-zdravooohraneniya (16.04.2017).

6.6 Development trends of the Index of Democracy Level

Figure 2

Index of Democracy Level of Belarus in the time span between 1995-2015*



IDL of Belarus measured within 1995-2015 shows institutional processes and dimensions aimed at democratization of the political system of the country.

Figure 2 depicts that the curve of IDL of Belarus had a growth trend within the years stated. The highest indicator was recorded in 2015 with the value of 0,524 points.

The 2015 growth of the IDL was stipulated by the improvement of PFI, EFI and HFI sub-indices (see Figure 2, Table 1). In the meantime, the sub-indices of the SFI and EdFI were the main negative factors that impacted democratic transitions of a political system and its progress.

Public institutions and processes of democratic transformation, as well as issues related to rule of law, democratic values, civil society participation and human rights protection, were still imposing challenges to Belarus in 2015.

* Source: calculations by the researcher.

6.7 Regression analysis of the Index of Democracy Level

Arusyak Aleksanyan, Ashot Aleksanyan

The regression analysis illustrated the variables of those indices, which had a significant influence on the IDL of Belarus.

The regression results show that there has been a significant correlation between the IDL_i and some variables of Political, Economic, Social, Educational and Health Factors Indices.

According to the regression analysis, a significant correlation was particularly maintained between IDL_i^{25} and the PFI Corruption Perceptions Index included in the model:

$$Y' = -0,046x_1 + 0,590 \text{ (Adj. } R^2 = 0,444\text{)},$$

where Y' is the IDL_i (IDL cleaned from the variable of Corruption Perceptions Index), and x_1 is the Corruption Perceptions Index.

Among the Economic Factors included in the model, a significant correlation was maintained between the IDL_i and the variables of Domestic credit % of GDP, as well as Foreign direct investments (FDI), Index of Economic Freedom and Budget deficit/profit.

$$Y' = 0,004x_2 + 0,343 \text{ (Adj. } R^2 = 0,512\text{)},$$

where Y' is the IDL_i (IDL cleaned from the variable of Domestic credit), and x_2 - the Domestic credit (% GDP):

$$Y' = 0,018x_3 + 0,405 \text{ (Adj. } R^2 = 0,223\text{)},$$

where Y' is the IDL_i (IDL cleaned from the variable of Foreign direct investments) and x_3 is Foreign direct investments:

$$Y' = 0,011x_4 - 0,024 \text{ (Adj. } R^2 = 0,655\text{)},$$

²⁵ IDL_i is the Index of Democracy Level cleaned from the corresponding variable during every paired regression analysis.

where Y' is the IDL_i (IDL cleaned from the Index of Economic Freedom), and x_4 is the Index of Economic Freedom:

$$Y' = 0,025x_5 + 0,452 \text{ (Adj. } R^2 = 0,429\text{)},$$

where Y' is the IDL_i (IDL cleaned from the Budget deficit/profit), and x_5 is Budget deficit/profit.

A significant correlation is seen in the Social Factors Index between IDL_i , Real wage as well as Gini index.

$$Y' = 0,024x_6 + 0,406 \text{ (Adj. } R^2 = 0,740\text{)},$$

where Y' is the IDL_i (IDL cleaned from the variable of Real wage) and x_6 is Real wage (\$100):

$$Y' = -2,271x_7 + 1,093 \text{ (Adj. } R^2 = 0,458\text{)},$$

where Y' is the IDL_i (IDL cleaned from Gini) and x_7 is Gini index.

A significant correlation was maintained between IDL_i and the EdFI the variable of the HDI Education Index:

$$Y' = 0,571x_8 + 0,001 \text{ (Adj. } R^2 = 0,862\text{)},$$

where Y' is the IDL_i (IDL was cleaned from the variable of the HDI Education Index), and x_8 is HDI Education Index.

A significant correlation was maintained between IDL_i and HFI Life expectancy at birth and Health expenditure (% of GDP):

$$Y' = 0,024x_9 - 1,224 \text{ (Adj. } R^2 = 0,696\text{)},$$

where Y' is the IDL_i (IDL was cleaned from Life expectancy at birth), and x_9 is Life expectancy at birth.

$$Y' = -0,076x_{10} + 0,908 \text{ (Adj. } R^2 = 0,390\text{)},$$

where Y' is the IDL_i (IDL was cleaned from the variable of Health expenditure), and x_{10} is the variable of Health expenditure (% GDP).

So, political factors, namely the Corruption Perceptions Index has a considerable impact on the IDL of Belarus. And one unit increase of the mentioned index will lead to the IDL_i fall by 0,046 units. The negative correlation of the latter

is conditioned by ineffective policy to prevent corruption, negligence of civilian dialogue and partnership procedures. There is no effective cooperation between authorities and CSOs fighting against corruption and institutionalized bribery.

In reference to Economic Factors, the Index of Economic Freedom, Foreign domestic investments, Domestic credit as well as the Budget deficit/profit have a significant impact on the IDL of the country. According to accumulated data, the growth of Foreign domestic investments and Domestic credit with 1% will bring to the increase of the IDL_i by 0,018 and 0, 004 units respectively. In the meantime, the decrease of Budget deficit/profit and one unit positive change of the Index of Economic Freedom will lead to a corresponding increase of the IDL_i by 0,025 and 0, 011 units.

Real wage and Gini index of the SFI have a considerable influence on the IDL of Belarus. The growth of Real wage by 100\$ and the decrease of Gini index with 0,1 unit will cause the growth of the IDL_i with corresponding 0,024 and 0,23 units.

With respect to Educational Factors, the growth of HDI Education Index by 0,1 unit will result in the growth of the IDL_i with 0,06 units. It should be noted that the mentioned variable has the highest determination coefficient of 86% of the variation of democracy.

In reference to health factors, the variables of Life expectancy at birth and Health expenditure have a significant impact on democracy of the country. The growth of Life expectancy at birth by 1 year and 1% reduction of Health expenditure will bring to the growth of the IDL_i with corresponding 0,024 and 0,076 units. A negative correlation of health expenditure is explained by the fact that state allocations to health care system are not sufficient to modernize and regulate the issues.

In conclusion, to improve the IDL of Belarus, it will be effective to pay attention to democratization processes of the political system of the above-mentioned political, economic, social, educational and health factors.

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Abbreviations

CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
EaP CSF BNP	Belarusian National Platform of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum
EdFI	Educational Factors Index
EEU	Eurasian Economic Union

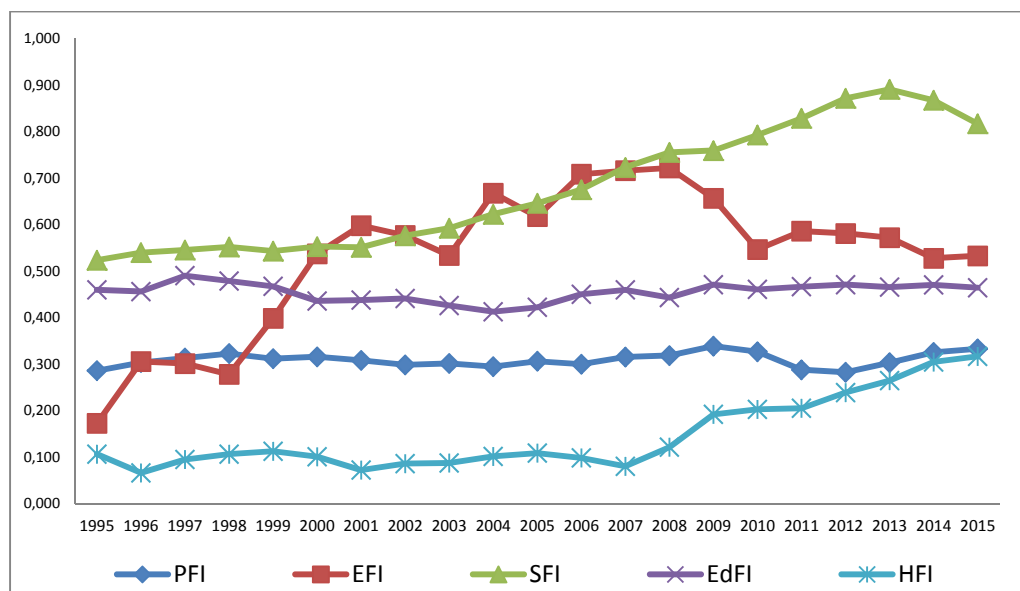
EFI	Economic Factors Index
EU	European Union
HFI	Health Factors Index
HIV	Human immunodeficiency virus
IDL	Index of Democracy Level
OJSC	Open Joint Stock Company
PFI	Political Factors Index
SFI	Social Factors Index
UNO	United Nations Organization
WHO	World Health Organization

CHAPTER 7.

THE INDEX OF DEMOCRACY LEVEL OF KAZAKHSTAN (IDL)

ASHOT ALEKSANYAN

Figure 1
Indices of Political, Social, Economic, Educational and Health Factors affecting the Index of
Democracy Level of Kazakhstan in the time span between 1995-2015*



* The source is based on the calculations accumulated by the researcher.
The indices of IDL factors are comparable only by the trends.

Table 1

**Indices of Political, Economic, Social, Educational and Health Factors and Index of
Democracy Level of Kazakhstan in the time span between 1995-2015***

Years	PFI	EFI	SFI	EdFI	HFI	IDL
1995	0,286	0,173	0,524	0,460	0,107	0,282
1996	0,304	0,306	0,540	0,456	0,067	0,321
1997	0,313	0,301	0,545	0,490	0,095	0,331
1998	0,323	0,278	0,552	0,479	0,107	0,330
1999	0,312	0,399	0,543	0,467	0,113	0,355
2000	0,316	0,537	0,553	0,436	0,101	0,389
2001	0,308	0,598	0,551	0,438	0,073	0,398
2002	0,299	0,577	0,576	0,441	0,087	0,394
2003	0,302	0,534	0,592	0,426	0,088	0,384
2004	0,295	0,668	0,622	0,413	0,102	0,419
2005	0,306	0,617	0,646	0,422	0,109	0,415
2006	0,300	0,708	0,675	0,450	0,099	0,441
2007	0,316	0,716	0,723	0,460	0,081	0,454
2008	0,319	0,722	0,755	0,443	0,122	0,463
2009	0,339	0,657	0,759	0,471	0,192	0,465
2010	0,327	0,547	0,793	0,461	0,203	0,436
2011	0,288	0,586	0,828	0,467	0,205	0,434
2012	0,283	0,581	0,871	0,471	0,239	0,440
2013	0,303	0,572	0,891	0,466	0,265	0,450
2014	0,325	0,528	0,867	0,471	0,305	0,450
2015	0,333	0,533	0,817	0,464	0,317	0,450

* The source is based on the calculations accumulated by the researcher.

The EFI, SFI, HFI, EdFI, and indices of IDL calculated during certain years may insignificantly vary in comparison to the indices of the corresponding years estimated in the previous publications in the result of updated and newly inserted data as well as changes of minimum and maximum indices.

7.1 Political Factors Index (PFI)

The PFI of the country went up in 2015 in comparison to 2014. Nonetheless, the highest indicator was registered in 2009 for the period observed (see Figure 1, Table 1).

Transition processes occurring in state institutions, reinforcement of civil stability, conduction of extraordinary presidential elections as well as activities, carried out in the framework of EEU consequently entailed obligations between Russia and other EEU members; hence affecting the IDL of the country. In addition, steps aimed to establish reliable ties with EU, as well as to sustain peace in the country had a considerable impact on the PFI. Membership¹ to the World Trade Organization (WTO), deepening of EU and Kazakhstan relations and signing of the new agreement² had a strategic significance in the context of international cooperation.

Kazakhstan and EU signed an Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement³ (EPCA) in Astana on 21 December 2015. It creates an enhanced legal basis for EU-Kazakhstan relations, providing a broad framework for reinforced political dialogue, cooperation in justice and home affairs among political, socio-economic and cultural sectors, and promoting mutual trade and investment. EPCA will enhance democratic transitions of the political system by underlying processes aimed at protection of human rights and active participation of civil society. It shall be mentioned that legislative changes were and will be highly prioritized by the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights⁴ in EU-Kazakhstan

¹ See the official site of the World Trade Organization «Kazakhstan and the WTO» // https://www.wto.org/english/thewto_e/countries_e/kazakhstan_e.htm (12.05.2017).

² See «Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the European Union and its Member States, of the one part, and the Republic of Kazakhstan, of the other part» https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/enhanced_partnership_and_cooperation_agreement.pdf (12.05.2017).

³ See the official site of the European Union External Action Service «EU-Kazakhstan relations» // https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage_en/4076/EU-Kazakhstan%20relations (11.05.2017).

⁴ The source of the data is the official site of the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights <http://www.eidhr.eu> (11.05.2017).

dialogue. As a result, the capacities of CSOs and a multi-polar political system will be upgraded. EU country roadmap for engagement with civil society (2014-2017) in Kazakhstan is a good example⁵ of bilateral cooperation as such.

In 2015 presidential dominance over systems of governance was still preserved in Kazakhstan's political life. Extraordinary presidential (26.05.2015) and parliamentary (20.03.2016) elections showed a "gradual transformation" of state institutions and re-establishment of political supremacy which led to strengthening of the president's position (*BBC 2015; Reuters 2015; Малышева 2015; Aleksanyan 2016, 189-196*). Regardless of the fact, that acting president of the country was re-elected by gaining 97,75% of the votes, distrust expressed by CSOs and stable opposition powers was considerably noticeable (*OSCE/ODIHR 2015, OSCE/ODIHR 2016*).

Lack of awareness, transparency, and publicity of extraordinary presidential elections held on 20 March 2015 were obviously noted in ODIHR reports (*OSCE/ODIHR 2015, OSCE/ODIHR 2016*). Results were repeatedly predicted and president-oriented Nur Otan party obtained 84 mandates in the lower house of the parliament, whereas the Assembly of the People of Kazakhstan (APK), headed by the president, obtained 9 mandates (*OSCE/ODIHR 2015; OSCE/ODIHR 2016*). So, the president succeeded in forming a new government with the absolute majority in the parliament.

OSCE ODIHR⁶ reports stated, no necessary changes were implemented in the country to conduct elections in line with democratic standards (*OSCE/ODIHR 2015, OSCE/ODIHR 2016*).

Nations in Transit Freedom House 2015-217 reports also reflected the trends of PFI. Hence, ratings of the country assessing democratic transitions of country's political life worsened and went down from 6,61 to 6,64 points (see Figure 2). Accordingly, Kazakhstan was estimated with 6,0-7,0 points and was consequently

⁵ The source of the data is the official site of the European Union External Action Service-Kazakhstan: EU country roadmap for engagement with civil society (2014-2017) https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/eu_country_roadmap_civil_society_en_0.pdf (12.05.2017).

⁶ The source of the data is the official site of OSCE ODIHR «Early Presidential Election, 26 April 2015» // <http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/kazakhstan/145006> (14.05.2017), «Early Parliamentary Elections, 20 March 2016» // <http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/kazakhstan/222541> (14.05.2017).

qualified as a country with a consolidated authoritarian regime (*Freedom House 2015a; Freedom House 2016a; Freedom House 2017a*). CSOs expressed a deep uncertainty in connection with steps undertaken to combat corruption in political powers, as well as in state/self-governance bodies. Judicial system and issues of safeguarding its independence were no exception and caused many concerns.

Figure 2
Freedom House 2015-2017 reports about democratic transitions in Kazakhstan⁷

<i>Factors for Democracy Progress</i>	<i>2015</i>	<i>2016</i>	<i>2017</i>
National Democratic Governance	6,75	6,75	6,75
Electoral Process	6,75	6,75	6,75
Civil Society	6,50	6,50	6,50
Independent Media	6,75	6,75	6,75
Local Democratic Governance	6,50	6,50	6,50
Judicial Framework and Independence	6,50	6,50	6,50
Corruption	6,50	6,50	6,50
<i>Democracy Score</i>	<i>6,61</i>	<i>6,61</i>	<i>6,64</i>

Human rights and freedoms. According to OSCE ODIHR reports, civil and political fundamental rights were violated during the extraordinary presidential (2015) and parliamentary (2016) elections (*OSCE/ODIHR 2015; OSCE/ODIHR 2016*). The observed violations were as follows: a lack of independent mass media sources and dissent, restrictions on observers' rights and freedoms, absence of opposition or other alternative to authorities, dominance of the president and control of Nur Otan political party over precinct and central election commission (*OSCE/ODIHR 2015; OSCE/ODIHR 2016*). ODIHR reports concluded that a dominant position of the ruling Nur Otan party at all levels of government and administration and the fact that public administration and self-governance bodies were affiliated with political parties were at odds with 1990 Copenhagen Document and other election-related commitments (*OSCE/ODIHR 2015; OSCE/ODIHR 2016*).

⁷ The source of the data is the official site of Freedom House <https://freedomhouse.org/report/nations-transit/2015/kazakhstan>, <https://freedomhouse.org/report/nations-transit/2016/kazakhstan>, <https://freedomhouse.org/report/nations-transit/2017/kazakhstan> (12.05.2017).

Data provided by Human Rights Watch denoted that noticeable steps aimed at improving human rights and freedoms and correcting violations were not properly implemented (*Human Rights Watch 2016*).

Freedom House reports negatively estimated human rights ratings as well. Respectively, Kazakhstan maintained a “not free” status and mass media outlets were qualified as “not free” (*Freedom House 2016b; Freedom House 2016c*). “Not free” qualification was mainly conditioned by violations of political rights and civil liberties as well as restrictions on mass media activities in a legal, political and economic environment (*Freedom House 2016b; Freedom House 2016c*). A nongovernmental organization Article 19 submitted a written statement to the UN Secretary General where concerns about some articles of the New Criminal Code of Kazakhstan⁸ were addressed.

Ratification of UN Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities adopted by Kazakhstan (15.04.2015) stipulated the improvement within human rights context⁹. Accordingly, a number of obligations were undertaken to enhance protection of the rights of persons with disabilities (*UN Treaty Collection 2017*).

To raise the efficiency of the protection of rights of children, the country initiated some measures which were enshrined in the fourth final periodic report conducted by the UN Committee on the rights of children (*UN Committee on the Rights of the Child 2015*). Human rights defenders positively estimated the actions for 2015-2017 to combat and prevent crimes related to trafficking in persons, as well as measures aimed at their revelation and prevention¹⁰.

Restrictions on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and association were maintained in 2015. Moreover, the reasons, as well as solutions, were reported by Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and

⁸ See “Written statement submitted by the Article 19 – The International Centre against Censorship, a nongovernmental organization on the roster” <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G15/034/56/PDF/G1503456.pdf?OpenElement> (11.05.2017).

⁹ The source of the data is the official site of The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) «Kazakhstan» // <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Countries/ENACARRegion/Pages/KZIndex.aspx>, «Documents on Kazakhstan» // http://ap.ohchr.org/documents/dpage_e.aspx?c=94&su=100 (14.05.2017).

¹⁰ See the official site of the Ministry of Justice of Kazakhstan "on Action Plan of the Government of Kazakhstan to combat and prevent crimes related to trafficking in persons for 2015-2017"// <http://www.adilet.gov.kz/ru/node/102958> (11.05.2017).

of association (*UN Human Rights Council 2015*). The government provided facts and justifications in reply to the aforementioned report¹¹ (*Savchenko 2015*).

Restrictions on political, social, economic and cultural rights and freedoms of individuals were also reported in US State Department annual report on Kazakhstan for 2015-2016 (*United States Department of State 2015; United States Department of State 2016*).

According to data accumulated within a five-months monitoring by “Kadir Kazi” public association, various and numerous restrictions on the rights to freedom of speech and of peaceful assembly were marked. Besides, 83 threats and other types of assaults were imposed against civil activists, reporters, and human rights defenders (“Kadir Kazi” public association 2015a; “Kadir Kazi” public association 2015b). Restrictions on the right to freedom of expression were also reflected in 2016 report provided by “Adil Soz” (*International Foundation for protection of freedom of speech “Adil Soz” 2016*).

Issues to enhance human rights protection in compliance with international standards were tackled in 2015 alternative reports carried out by KIBHR (*Kazakhstan International Bureau for Human Rights and Rule of Law 2015*).

Civil disobedience. More than 32,000 CSOs are registered in Kazakhstan, but only 1500 actively operate (*USAID CSO Sustainability Index 2014, 104*). In overall, active CSOs initiated peaceful assembly and civil movements aiming to raise the level of public awareness, provide civil supervision, develop a culture of combating corruption in public life spheres, build transparency and accountability in the system of state administration and self-governing bodies. The following issues were presented in Amnesty International annual report as well (*Amnesty International 2016, 212-214, Amnesty International 2017, 213-216*). In particular, violations of

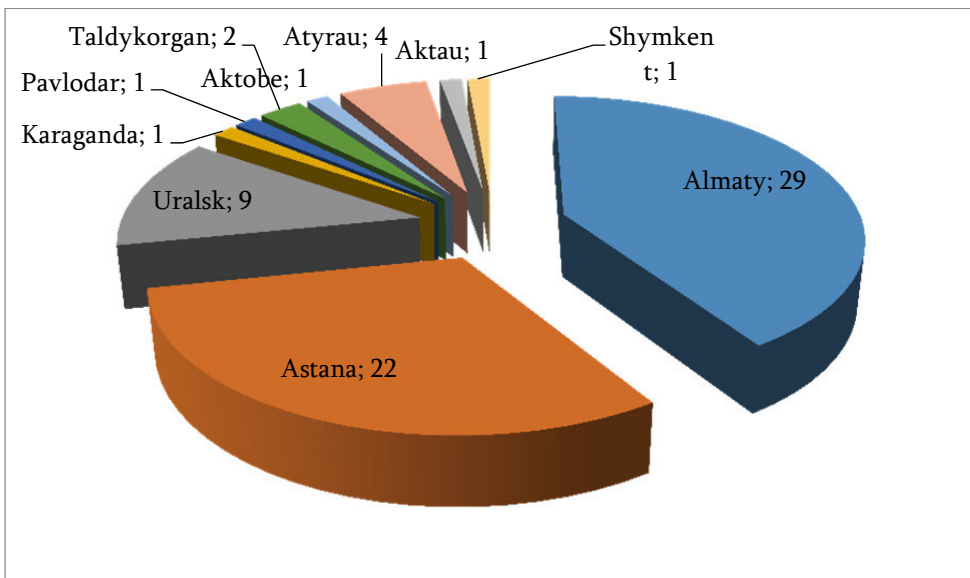
¹¹ See «The response of the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan on the report by the Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association» // <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G15/126/86/PDF/G1512686.pdf?OpenElement> (11.05.2017).

* Civil disobedience is a part of the “Social Unrest and Political Pressure” variable of the PFI and is measured by a number of demonstrations, strikes, social unrests, particularly pressures applied against them during a specified span of time. Taking into account the absence of such statistics, relying on the analyses, reports and informative studies carried out by newspapers and research centres, the scaling range of 0-5 was settled for their assessment, where 0 is the value for the highest number of unrest and pressure, including coup d’état and revolution and 5 is the total absence of those in question.

the right to civil disobedience, persecution of prisoners and members of their families, arrests, and oppression of opposition speakers were the important issues to be focused on (*Amnesty International 2016, 212-214; Amnesty International 2017, 213-216*). The National human rights action plan of the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2015-2020¹² implemented with the support of the EU delegation to Kazakhstan¹³ will play a pivotal role in the processes directed to regulation and solution of the mentioned problems.

Figure 2

Number of peaceful assemblies in Kazakhstan in 2015¹⁴



¹² The source of the data is the official site of KIBHR: “National human rights action plan of the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2015-2020“, https://bureau.kz/monitoring_2/nacionalnyi_plan_deistvii_rk_po_pravam_cheloveka/nacionalnyi_plan_deistvii_v_oblasti_prav_cheloveka_v_respublike_kazakhstan (11.05.2017).

¹³ The source of the data is the official site of European Commission “Kazakhstan” // https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/countries/kazakhstan_en?qt-node_tabs_country_=1#qt-node_tabs_country_ (11.05.2017).

¹⁴ The source of the data is the official site of KIBHR; Report on monitoring findings on the right to freedom of peaceful assembly in Kazakhstan in 2015 «https://bureau.kz/files/bureau/Docs/Docs%202016/02_Feb_16/Result_report_2015.pdf.

According to KIBHR data, in Kazakhstan 71 peaceful assemblies were organized in 10 cities within two months. In addition, 67 of those assemblies were unauthorized¹⁵ (see Figure 2) and 1230 people attended them¹⁶.

Table 3

Indicator of political participation in Kazakhstan in 2014-2015¹⁷

<i>City/ Year</i>	<i>2014</i>	<i>2015</i>
Almaty	3,5	2,4
Astana	3,1	1,8
Uralsk	1,2	0,75
Karaganda	0,4	0,1
Pavlodar	0,17	0,1
Ust-Kamenogorsk	0,1	-
Taldykorgan	-	0,17
Aktobe	0,25	0,1
Atyrau	0,17	0,33
Aktau	0,1	0,1
Shymkent	-	0,1
Kostanay	0,1	-
Zhanaozen	-	0,17

In view of civil participation indicator, Astana and Almaty cities are the main destinations where 72%¹⁸ of peaceful assemblies are conducted (see Table 3). Moreover, it can be seen that the number of peaceful assemblies decreased by 38% compared to 2014. In addition, KIBHR reports stated that 45% and 55% were intended to respectively tackle economic and social issues¹⁹. The absence of opposition and pluralism was the main reason for not conducting a peaceful assembly in order to solve political problems.

In reference to PFI variables of the IDL it's noteworthy to mention that Political Stability indicator declined in 2015. On the contrary, the Rule of Law

¹⁵ The source of the data is the official site of KIBHR; Report on monitoring findings on the right to freedom of peaceful assembly in Kazakhstan in 2015 // https://bureau.kz/files/bureau/Docs/Docs%202016/02_Feb_16/Result_report_2015.pdf (11.05.2017).

¹⁶ See *ibid.*

¹⁷ See *ibid.*

¹⁸ See *ibid.*

¹⁹ See *ibid.*

indicator (41,35) increased by registering the highest indicator for the period of 1995-2015.

According to Global Gender Gap 2015 report, the country occupied the 47th place among 145 countries and states (*The Global Gender Gap Report 2015*, 217). In this respect, Kazakhstan took 78th place for political empowerment subindex, 36th and 28th places for economic participation and education attainment (*The Global Gender Gap Report 2015*, 217).

By summarizing we denote that PFI curve increased in 2015 and was registered with 0,286 and 0,333 points in 1995 and 2015 respectively. The increase of the curve was chiefly stipulated by processes of international and regional cooperation, readiness to fulfill joint commitments and to adopt new ones defined within OSCE and UN framework. The signing of a new agreement with EU and membership to EEU and WTO had a pivotal influence as well.

7.2 Economic Factors Index (EFI)

The study of the curve of EFI depicts that it increased in comparison to 2014. Even though the observations marked drastic fluctuations of the index, it improved within the mentioned period in overall. Thus, 0,173 points were registered in 1995, whereas it went up reaching 0,533 points in 2015 (see Figure 1, Table 1).

The growth of Foreign direct investment and Domestic credit mainly stipulated the EFI growth in 2015. On the contrary, the fall of Budget deficit and Gross national income per capita had a positive impact on the index.

Kazakhstan membership to WTO on 30 November 2015 significantly affected the improvement of the EFI (*The World Trade Organization 2015; International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development 2015; BBC 2015b*). Kazakhstan assisted by the EU with multi-lateral agreements eventually succeeded in becoming a full member of WTO²⁰ after long-term negotiations that had lasted for almost 20 years.

²⁰ See "State of the Nation Address by President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev. Kazakhstan in a New Global Reality: Growth. Reforms. Development" (30 November 2015r.) <http://www.akorda.kz/ru/addresses/poslanie-prezidenta-respubliki-kazahstan-nazarbaeva-narodu-kazahstana-30-noyabrya-2015-g> (11.05.2017).

This membership will enhance the institutional development of the country's financial and economic system, modernization of economic sub-structures and production of innovative technologies. Considering all of the above, the Belarus president A. Lukashenko stated that this might cause problems, on one hand, for the EEU and, on the other hand, for a single market area (*TASS 2015*).

In 2015 EU-Kazakhstan actively collaborated and, as a consequence, bilateral trade and economic relations significantly expanded. For instance, EU was the main partner of Kazakhstan and the total trade volume of goods between the two constituted 33,7%. Meanwhile, 6,8 milliard euros fell on export from EU and 14,7 milliard euros²¹ fell on import from Kazakhstan in 2015. This all resulted in the growth of foreign direct investments in the country²².

According to data provided by the Agency of Statistics the Republic of Kazakhstan, external trade turnover considerably diminished and reached 76523,5 million dollars in 2015, which included 45955,8 million dollars for export and 30567,7 million dollars for import²³.

Programmes and strategies initiated within the mentioned period greatly triggered the EFI growth and they were as follows: 1.Strategy “Kazakhstan-2050“, 2.State program of Infrastructure Development, named “Way to the future“ of Kazakhstan for 2015-2019, 3.Strategic plan for development of the Republic of Kazakhstan until the year 2020, 4.State program of industrial-innovative development of Kazakhstan for 2015-2019, 5.State program on development and integration of transport infrastructure until 2020, 6.State program of water resources management in Kazakhstan for 2014 - 2020 years, 7.New Plan of the agro-industrial complex development named “Agribusiness-2020“, 8.“Business Roadmap-2020“. They all were aimed to reinforce a sustainable and balanced growth of the regional businesses²⁴.

²¹ The source of the data is the official site of European External Action Service “EU-Kazakhstan relations“ https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage_en/4076/EU-Kazakhstan%20relations (11.05.2017).

²² See *ibid*.

²³ The source of the data is the official site of the Ministry of the National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan Agency of Statistics the Republic of Kazakhstan “Statistics on foreign and joint trade“ <http://www.stat.gov.kz> (16.05.2017).

²⁴ The source of the data is the official site of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan “Strategies and programmes of the RK“ http://www.akorda.kz/ru/official_documents/strategies_and_programs (14.05.2017).

7.3 Social Factors Index (SFI)

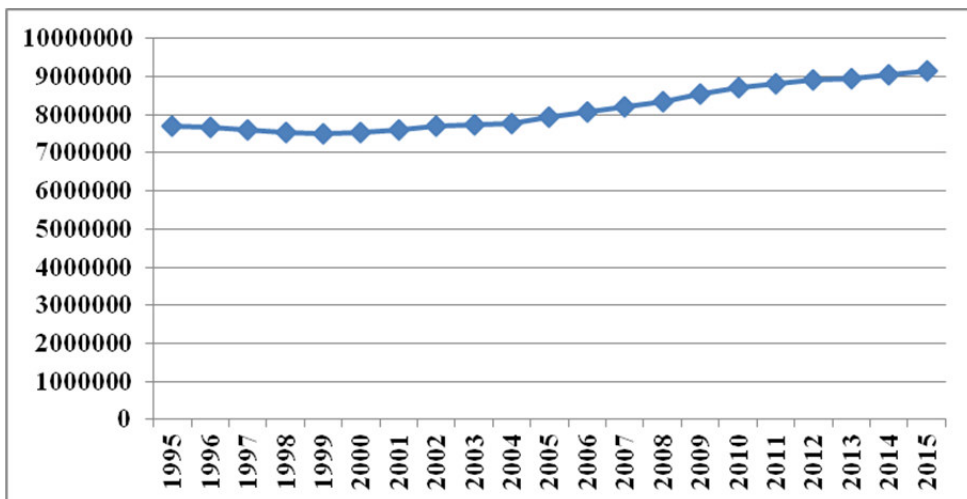
The study of the SFI displays that the curve declined in 2015, whereas the indicator registered in 2013 remained the highest for 1995-2015 years (see Figure 1, Table 1).

The decline was chiefly conditioned by a considerable reduction of Real wage. 1% inflation fall and stability of Gini index to some extent moderated the decline of the curve.

World Bank reported the rise of labour force compared to the previous 2014 and reached 9,155,963 people. Besides, that number totalled 7,717,305 people back in 1995 (see Figure 3)²⁵.

Figure 3

Labour Force in Kazakhstan (1995-2015)



State Program of Infrastructure Development for 2015-2019 was initiated to create working places for 395,500 citizens, including permanent-86,9 thousand of

²⁵ See the official site of the World Bank <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.TLF.TOTL.IN?locations=KZ&view=chart> (13.05.2017).

people and temporary- 308,6 thousand of people²⁶.

To overcome challenges of labour force and main priorities of state employment policy Kazakhstan implemented processes that had been underlined in "Employment roadmap 2020" programme²⁷. To promote stable employment and self-employment 3 main directions were developed. The first direction was aimed to ensure employment through development of infrastructure; housing and communal services was the second direction implemented to create jobs through entrepreneurship and supporting villages; and the third direction aimed to promote employment through training²⁸.

EU social services, as well as programmes of humanitarian assistance and infrastructure development, played an essential role in the enhancement of social security system in Kazakhstan²⁹. In overall, they were aimed at promoting equality and solidarity, overcoming poverty, developing human potential, increasing social protection of residents suffered from natural disasters, as well as providing stability of settlements and security of residents.

Social and demographic issues were the main concerns to be tackled and regulated by state migration policy aiming to effectively respond to new challenges and manage new situation stemmed from migration processes³⁰. In 2015 Kazakhstan's negative migration balance totalled 12,162 and 13,466 people (see Table 4). Hence, according to state information, the negative balance, in terms of departures and arrivals, is comparatively high in regions of Almaty, Southern Kazakhstan, Zhambyl and Eastern Kazakhstan (see Table 4).

²⁶ See "Nurly Zhol" State Program of Infrastructure Development for 2015-2019 years (approved by the president decree of 6 April 2015 № 1030) http://www.akorda.kz/ru/official_documents/strategies_and_programs (14.05.2017).

²⁷ The source of the data is the web portal of electronic government of the Republic of Kazakhstan: realization of the "Employment roadmap 2020" programme http://egov.kz/cms/ru/articles/zanyatost_2020 (13.05.2017).

²⁸ See *ibid*.

²⁹ The source of the data is the official site of the European External Action Service «Kazakhstan and the EU» https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/1367/node/1367_en (11.05.2017).

³⁰ The source of the data is the official site of the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of Population of The Republic of Kazakhstan "On Concept of migration policy of Kazakhstan for 2017-2021" <http://www.enbek.gov.kz/ru/node/341198> (11.05.2017).

Table 4

Migration balance of Kazakhstan (2014-2015)³¹

	<i>2014</i>	<i>2015</i>
Republic of Kazakhstan	-12,162	-13,466
Aqmola region	-4,352	2,609
Aqtöbe region	-492	-2,175
Almaty region	-5,116	-9,636
Atyrau region	726	188
West Kazakhstan region	-1,514	-560
Zhambyl region	-7,956	-8,897
Qaraghandy region	-2,862	-4,248
Qostanay region	-2,762	-1,294
Qyzylorda region	-2,537	-3,279
Mangghystau region	3,107	3,476
South Kazakhstan region	-12,194	-13,907
Pavlodar region	-2,631	-2,624
North Kazakhstan	-5,383	-3,646
East Kazakhstan	-8,068	-7,727
Astana city	17,880	-2,488
Almaty city	21,992	40,742

Negative migration balance of Kazakhstan was quite high in Qaraghandy, Qostanay, Mangghystau, Pavlodar, North Kazakhstan and East Kazakhstan region estimated by the number of those departed from the country and those arrived in the country (see Table 5).

The SFI growth was considerably stipulated by activities organized within the Strategy “Kazakhstan-2050“, State program of Infrastructure Development, named “Way to the future“ of Kazakhstan for 2015-2019 and Strategic plan for development of the Republic of Kazakhstan until the year 2020 framework³².

³¹ The source of the data is the official site of the Ministry of the National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan Agency of Statistics the Republic of Kazakhstan <http://www.stat.gov.kz> (16.05.2017).

³² The source of the data is the official site of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan “Strategies and programmes of the RK” http://www.akorda.kz/ru/official_documents/strategies_and_programs (14.05.2017).

Table 5

External migration balance of Kazakhstan (2014-2015)³³

	2014	2015
Republic of Kazakhstan	-12,162	-13,466
Aqmola region	-1,497	-1,050
Aqtöbe region	-191	-606
Almaty region	419	1,833
Atyrau region	370	219
West Kazakhstan region	-565	-731
Zhambyl region	-142	-434
Qaraghandy region	-3,403	-3,874
Qostanay region	-2,260	-2,388
Qyzylorda region	19	-45
Mangghystau region	2,091	2,791
South Kazakhstan region	1,382	593
Pavlodar region	-2,370	-2,966
North Kazakhstan	-2,671	-2,099
East Kazakhstan	-3,122	-3,511
Astana city	375	-25
Almaty city	-597	-1,173

7.4 Educational Factors Index (EdFI)

As it can be seen the EdFI curve declined in 2015 compared to the previous year. It was conditioned by the reduction in Government spending on education. Nonetheless, indicators for the observed 1995-2015 years generally improved and were registered with 0,0460 points in 1995 and reached 0,464 points in 2015. Moreover, the indicator registered in 1997 remained the highest within the time span observed in the research (see Figure 1, Table 1).

According to state statistics, internal structural costs of research and experimental works increased as compared to 2003-2014 and hit 69 million 303

³³ The source of the data is the official site of the Ministry of the National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan Agency of Statistics the Republic of Kazakhstan <http://www.stat.gov.kz> (16.05.2017).

thousand tanges (325680,9 USA dollars)³⁴. The number of enterprises (2585) with innovative potential, as well as the level of enterprises with innovative activity (8,1%) increased in the mentioned year³⁵. In spite of efforts taken to introduce enhanced technologies and enlarge capacities of innovative solutions and programmes, the number of people involved in research spheres, as well as the volume of innovative production reduced in 2015 and reached 377,197,000 tanges (1772590,7 USA dollars)³⁶. So, shares allocated to innovative production constituted 0,92% of GDP which was still comparatively low³⁷.

Pre-school institutions increased in number and totalled to 8834. As a consequence, 758,772 pupils and 80,857 educators were involved in them³⁸.

2,814,000 pupils were enrolled in 7511 daytime education and 79 evening education schools, which had been operating in the country in 2015³⁹.

Although the number of higher educational institutions increased as well, students and professorial staff lessened in number (see Table 6).

Table 6

Higher educational institutions (2014-2016)⁴⁰

	<i>2014/15</i>	<i>2015/16</i>
Number of higher educational institutions	126	127
Number of students	477,387	459,369
Number of professorial staff	40,320	38,087

Erasmus Plus programme had a positive influence on processes aimed at conducting reforms in a higher educational system, as well as shaping new

³⁴ The source of the data is the official site of the Ministry of the National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan Agency of Statistics the Republic of Kazakhstan «Science and Innovations» // <http://www.stat.gov.kz> (16.05.2017).

³⁵ See *ibid*.

³⁶ See *ibid*.

³⁷ See *ibid*.

³⁸ The source of the data is the official site of the Ministry of the National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan Agency of Statistics the Republic of Kazakhstan «Education» <http://www.stat.gov.kz> (16.05.2017).

³⁹ See *ibid*.

⁴⁰ The source of the data is the official site of the Ministry of the National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan Agency of Statistics the Republic of Kazakhstan <http://www.stat.gov.kz> (16.05.2017).

educational culture. This, in fact, enhanced the mobility of students and lecturers. 13 programmes were selected for the task to increase and develop capacities of the mentioned institutions. Moreover, 451 Kazakh students and members of professorial staff were chosen to participate in the top European universities, and 158 Europeans were sent to universities in Kazakhstan⁴¹. Master's degree scholarship was granted to 42 students and one student received a scholarship for a doctoral degree in 2015⁴².

The EdFI growth was chiefly impacted by the actions implemented within Strategy "Kazakhstan-2050", State program of Infrastructure Development, named "Way to the future" of Kazakhstan for 2015-2019 and Strategic plan for development of the Republic of Kazakhstan until the year 2020 and The State Education Development Programme for 2011-2020 framework⁴³.

7.5 Health Factors Index (HFI)

The study of the curve shows a constant increase within the period observed and the highest indicator was registered in 2015 (see Figure 1, Table 1). It was mainly stipulated by the improvement of life expectancy at birth and stable financing of the health sphere.

By observing the curve we can conclude that life expectancy increased to 72 years, which was the highest indicator registered for the period in question⁴⁴.

⁴¹ The source of the data is the official site of the European External Action Service "EU-Kazakhstan relations" https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage_en/4076/EU-Kazakhstan%20relations (11.05.2017).

⁴² See *ibid*.

⁴³ The source of the data is the official site of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan "Strategies and programmes of the RK" http://www.akorda.kz/ru/official_documents/strategies_and_programs (14.05.2017).

⁴⁴ See the official site of the World Bank <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.DYN.LE00.IN> (16.05.2017).

Ongoing processes aimed at modernization and development of health system and creation of a single information system were implemented with the support of World Bank, WHO, and EU.

According to state statistical data, the number of doctors in all areas and average medical staff grew up (see Table 7).

Table 7

Health main indicators (2014-2015)⁴⁵

	<i>2014</i>	<i>2015</i>
Number of doctors in all areas	68 864	69 722
Number of average medical staff	160,061	163,937
Number of hospital beds	105219	102489
Number of children hospital beds	18 621	18 571
Number of hospital institutions	911	901
Number of deaths from accidents	263	229
Number of casualties from accidents	2,578	2,307
Amount of damages from accidents (thousand tanges)	1,960,325.3	1,457,943.8

It's obvious that respiratory system diseases prevail among the main classifications of diseases across the population of the country in 2015 (see Table 8).

Actions implemented within Strategy “Kazakhstan-2050“, State program of Infrastructure Development, named “Way to the future“ of Kazakhstan for 2015-2019 and Strategic plan for development of the Republic of Kazakhstan until the year 2020 and The State Health Development Programme for 2011-2015 framework had a significant impact on the HFI growth⁴⁶.

⁴⁵ The source of the data is the official site of the Ministry of the National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan Agency of Statistics the Republic of Kazakhstan “Healthcare“ // <http://www.stat.gov.kz> (16.05.2017).

⁴⁶ The source of the data is the official site of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan “Strategies and programmes of the RK” http://www.akorda.kz/ru/official_documents/strategies_and_programs (14.05.2017).

Table 8

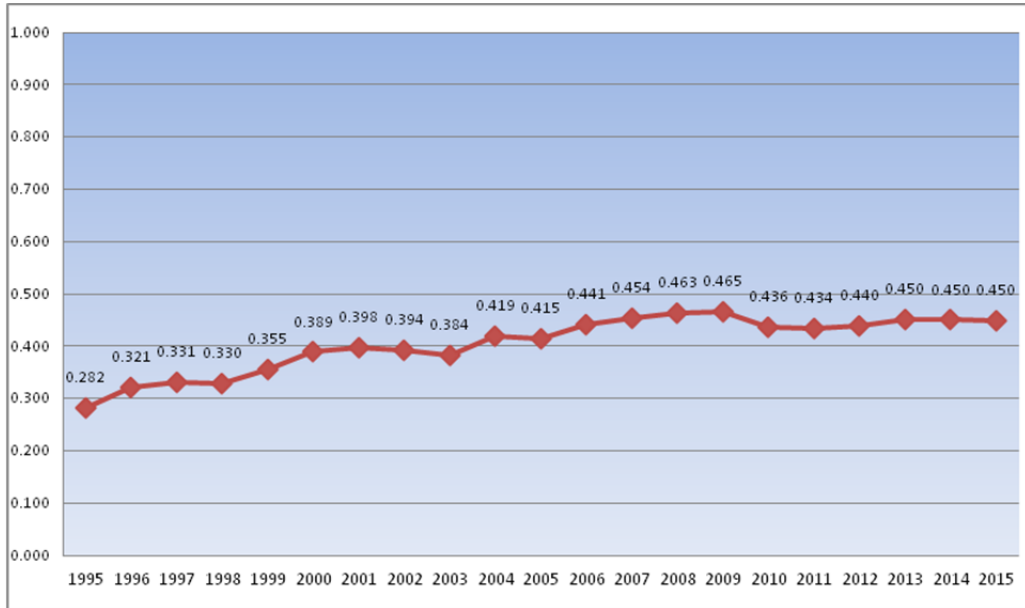
Population morbidity by main classifications of diseases diagnosed in 2015⁴⁷

Number of diseases diagnosed for the first time, total, thousand	2015	9,195.0
<i>particularly</i>		
Infectious and parasitic diseases	2,7	250,5
Neurological diseases	3,6	328,3
Ocular diseases	4,5	414,7
Otolaryngology diseases	3,1	283,4
Blood circulation diseases	4,6	426,3
Respiratory system diseases	42,0	3,863.0
Digestive system diseases	7,3	673,7
Skin and Subcutaneous diseases	4,9	450,0
Vascular system and coagulation tissues related diseases	3,1	286,3
Urogenital system diseases	7,4	675,9
Complications during pregnancy, delivery, and postnatal stages	1,8	169,7
Traumas and intoxications	6,0	556,2
Others	8,9	817,0

⁴⁷ The source of the data is the official site of the Ministry of the National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan Agency of Statistics the Republic of Kazakhstan “Healthcare“ <http://www.stat.gov.kz> (16.05.2017).

7.6 Development trends of the Index of Democracy Level

Figure 4
Index of Democracy Level of Kazakhstan in the time span between 1995-2015*



The curve of the IDL of Kazakhstan went up in 2015 when compared to indicator registered within 1995-2015 years (Figure 4). Respectively, IDL was valued with 0,282 points in 1995, whereas in 2015 it obtained 0,450 points. Moreover, the indicator (0,450) registered within 2013-2015 remained stable (see Figure 4, Table 1).

The IDL stability was sustained by the growth of PFI, EFI and HFI. Meanwhile, decline of SFI and EdFI had a negative impact on the IDL.

To sum up, we can state, that the IDL of Kazakhstan was stable within the last two years of the observed period. It's evident that policy aimed at harmonizing integration processes and enhancing social cohesion significantly improved the growth of indicators. Nonetheless, procedures supporting human rights protection, the involvement of CSOs in development of public policy and processes aimed at

* Source: calculations by the researcher.

raising the effectiveness of civilarchic dialogue will be highly effective in view of mid-term and long-term perspectives of IDL improvement.

7.7 Regression analysis of the Index of Democracy Level

Arusyak Aleksanyan, Ashot Aleksanyan

By means of regression analysis, IDL was cleaned from those variables of indices, which had a significant influence on the IDL of Kazakhstan.

The regression results show that there has been a significant correlation between the IDL_i^* and the variables of PFI as well as SFI and HFI. On the contrary, there has been no significant correlation between the IDL_i and the EFI and EdFI included in the model.

According to the results of the regression analysis, there has been a significant correlation between the IDL_i and the variables of Political Stability/Absence of Violence as well as the variable of Social Unrest and Political Pressure.

$$Y' = 0,002x_1 + 0,304 \text{ (Adj. } R^2 = 0,171),$$

where Y' is the IDL_i (IDL is cleaned from the variable of Political Stability/Absence of Violence), and x_1 is the variable of Political Stability/Absence of Violence.

$$Y' = -0,047x_2 + 0,500 \text{ (Adj. } R^2 = 0,166),$$

where Y' is IDL_i (IDL is cleaned from the variable of Social Unrest and Political Pressure), and x_2 is Social Unrest and Political Pressure.

In Social Factors Index a significant relation was observed between IDL_i and Unemployment as well as Gini index

$$Y' = -0,016x_3 + 0,535 \text{ (Adj. } R^2 = 0,745),$$

* IDL_i is the Index of Democracy Level cleaned from the corresponding variable during every paired regression analysis.

where Y' is the IDL_i (IDL is cleaned from Unemployment), and x_3 is the Unemployment.

$$Y' = -1,575x_4 + 0,887 \text{ (Adj. } R^2 = 0,478),$$

where Y' is the IDL_i (IDL was cleaned from the variable of Gini index), and x_4 is Gini index.

A significant correlation was maintained between IDL_i and the variables of HFI and Health expenditure (% of GDP):

$$Y' = -0,063x_5 + 0,669 \text{ (Adj. } R^2 = 0,152),$$

where Y' is the IDL_i (IDL was cleaned from the variable of Health expenditure), and x_5 is Health expenditure (% of GDP).

A significant impact was observed between variables of Political Stability/Absence of Violence as well as Social Unrest and Political Pressure on the and IDL of Kazakhstan. It implies that the positive change of Political Stability/Absence of Violence with 1 unit will result in the growth of the IDL_i with 0,002 units. The growth of the variables of Social Unrest and Political Pressure⁴⁸ with 1 unit will bring to the decrease of the IDL_i with 0,047 units. Taking into account an absence of “political pluralism”, violations of reporters’ rights as well as censorship and implicit restrictions on mass media in Kazakhstan the negative correlation of the mentioned variables are also explained by structural and functional restrictions on CSOs. In such non-democratic conditions, civil movements and civil disobedience continued to trigger the reinforcement of political responsibility and public consciousness; hence, being a key factor to bring forward the development of human potential.

Gini index and Unemployment variables of the SFI significantly affect the IDL of the Republic of Kazakhstan. The decrease in unemployment by 1% and

⁴⁸ The variable of “Social Unrest and Political Pressure” is measured by the scaling range of 0-5 and includes a number of demonstrations, strikes, social unrest, particularly pressures applied as well as cases of political imprisonments and killings during a specified span of time. Taking into account the absence of such statistics, relying on the analyses, reports and informative studies carried out by newspapers and research centres the scaling range of 0-5 was settled for their assessment where 0 is the value for the highest number of unrest and pressure, including coup d'état and revolution and 5 is the total absence of those in question

Gini index by 0,1 unit will bring to the growth of IDL_i by 0,016 and 0,16 units respectively. Unemployment has a high coefficient of determination and explains 75% of fluctuations of IDL_i.

In reference to Health Factors, there is a significant correlation between the IDL and Health Expenditure. Thus, a reduction of Health Expenditure by 1% of GDP will assist to the growth of IDL_i by 0,063 units. A negative correlation of IDL_i is explained by the fact, that state spending allocated to the mentioned sphere were not sufficient to provide a sustainable growth of health services. State funding gradually reduced for the health sector and as a result, serious issues were created for socially insecure and mostly vulnerable groups. Accessibility of health services as well as improvement of their quality remain one of the challenging issues in Kazakhstan.

By summing up the results of the regression analysis, it may be assumed that the growth of democracy level may be ensured by improving the aforementioned factors. The lack of legitimacy and restrictions imposed on activities of the civil society are still the issues which are difficult to solve in regard to democratic transformations of the political system of the country. The enhancement of civilizational dialogue based on state and civil society confidence, as well as results gained from international commitments, are keys to raising the effectiveness of democratic reforms in Kazakhstan's political administration.

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Abbreviations

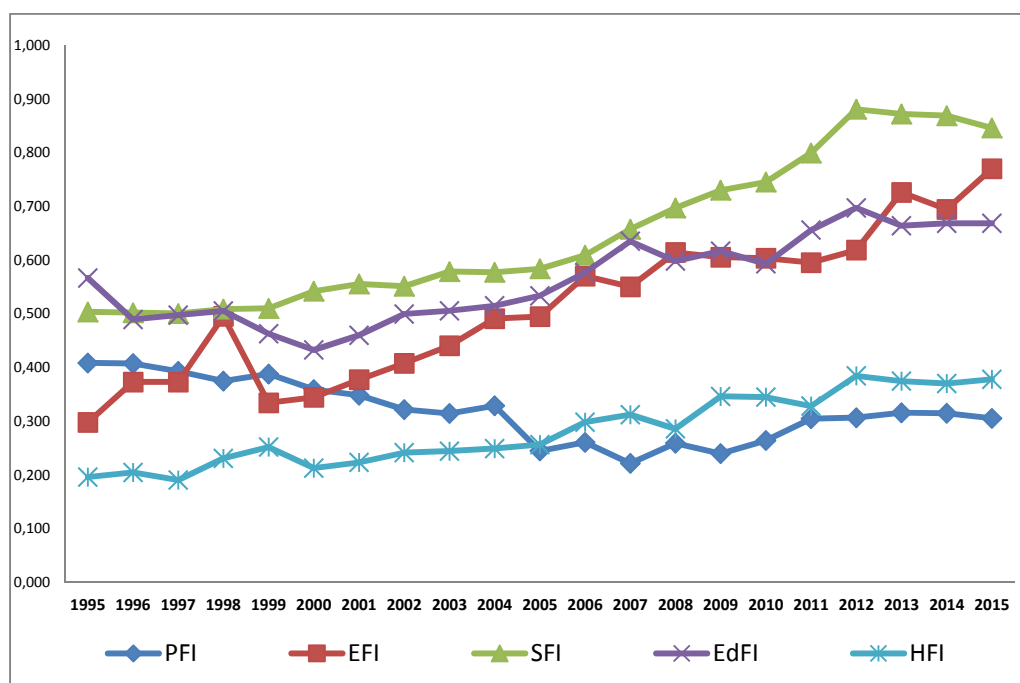
APK	Assembly of People of Kazakhstan
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
EdFI	Educational Factors Index
EEU	Eurasian Economic Union
EFI	Economic Factors Index
EPCA	Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement
EU	European Union
FDI	Foreign direct investments
GGGI	Global Gender Gap Index
HFI	Health Factors Index
IDL	Index of Democracy Level
KIBHR	Kazakhstan International Bureau for Human Rights and the Rule of Law
OSCE/ODIHR	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe/ Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights
PFI	Political Factors Index
RK	Republic of Kazakhstan
SFI	Social Factors Index
UN	United Nations
WB	World Bank
WTO	World Trade Organization

CHAPTER 8.

THE INDEX OF DEMOCRACY LEVEL OF KYRGYZSTAN (IDL)

ARMINE KHACHATRYAN

Figure 1
Indices of Political, Social, Economic, Educational and Health Factors affecting the Index of Democracy Level of Kyrgyzstan in the time span between 1995-2015*



* The source is based on the calculations accumulated by the researcher.
The indices of IDL factors are comparable only by the trends.

Table 1

**Indices of Political, Economic, Social, Educational and Health Factors and Index of
Democracy Level of Kyrgyzstan in the time span between 1995-2015***

Years	PFI	EFI	SFI	EdFI	HFI	IDL
1995	0,409	0,298	0,504	0,567	0,196	0,409
1996	0,408	0,373	0,502	0,490	0,205	0,408
1997	0,393	0,373	0,501	0,498	0,191	0,389
1998	0,375	0,495	0,509	0,505	0,231	0,419
1999	0,388	0,334	0,510	0,463	0,252	0,381
2000	0,359	0,345	0,542	0,433	0,213	0,367
2001	0,348	0,377	0,555	0,460	0,224	0,377
2002	0,322	0,408	0,551	0,500	0,242	0,380
2003	0,315	0,441	0,579	0,506	0,244	0,389
2004	0,329	0,491	0,577	0,515	0,249	0,409
2005	0,245	0,495	0,584	0,534	0,257	0,379
2006	0,261	0,570	0,609	0,577	0,298	0,417
2007	0,222	0,550	0,657	0,635	0,312	0,409
2008	0,259	0,614	0,697	0,598	0,286	0,439
2009	0,240	0,605	0,730	0,617	0,346	0,440
2010	0,264	0,604	0,745	0,593	0,345	0,449
2011	0,305	0,595	0,799	0,656	0,328	0,474
2012	0,307	0,619	0,881	0,697	0,385	0,501
2013	0,316	0,726	0,872	0,664	0,375	0,527
2014	0,315	0,694	0,869	0,668	0,370	0,518
2015	0,306	0,770	0,846	0,668	0,378	0,532

* The source is based on the calculations accumulated by the researcher.

The EFI, SFI, HFI, EdFI and indices of IDL calculated during certain years may insignificantly vary in comparison to the indices of the corresponding years estimated in the previous publications in the result of updated and newly inserted data as well as changes of minimum and maximum indices.

8.1 Political Factors Index (PFI)

The PFI curve of the country had various trends within the mentioned 1995-2015 years. Yet, in 2015 it declined when compared to previous year. 0,409 points indicator of PFI registered in 1995 remained the highest recorded for the observed period.

In 2015 political reforms aiming to curtail presidential powers, ensure political system with the majority in the parliament and reinforce the capacity of the government had been continuously implemented in order to develop democratic representation in the country.

All major political events occurring in the country were related to parliamentary elections.

On 4 October 2015 parliamentary elections were held in Kyrgyzstan. 14 political parties contested, but only 6 succeeded in passing the threshold (see Table 2). Those elections were comparatively the most peaceful within the period of a newly independent country. It was stipulated by the use of a biometric representation of a voter. Besides, all polling stations were provided with automatic ballot scanners. That ballot scanning was introduced as a control mechanism against falsification of election results thanks to which the preliminary results of elections could be counted 40 minutes later after the election (*Valdai Discussion Club 2015*).

Those were the first elections carried out in comply with a new constitutional law on Election¹ adopted in 2011. It was partially developed with the support of various international organizations and with recommendations addressed by OSCE.

¹ Constitutional Law of Kyrgyzstan on "Presidential and Parliamentary Elections" (Bishkek 2 July 2011 N68) (edited as constitutional laws of 25 November 2011, N 221, 23 April 2015 N 88) http://grs.gov.kg/ru/articles/election_2015/166-konstitutsionnyi-zakon-kr-o-vyborakh-priezidenta-/ (10.06.2017).

Table 2

The ratio of seats received by political parties in the Jogorku Kenesh of the KR in 2015²

Political parties	Jogorku Kenesh elections
	2015
	<i>Proportional</i>
Social-Democratic Party of Kyrgyzstan (SDPK)	38
Respublika-Ata Jurt Party	28
Kyrgyzstan Party	18
Onuguu-Progress Party	13
Bir Bol Party	12
Ata Meken Party	11
<i>Total</i>	<i>120</i>

In compliance with some articles of the laws, the quotas on candidate lists for gender, minorities, youth, and people with disabilities were respected at the time of registration by parties. OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission Final Report concluded that the elections “were competitive and provided voters with a wide range of choice³, while the manner in which they were administered highlighted the need for better procedures and increased transparency⁴. The elections were characterized by a lively campaign, but the amount of impartial information available to voters in the news was limited⁵.

The introduction of proportional representation was very significant to ensure stability in the electoral system of the country. Accordingly, MPs are elected for a term of five years, from a single nationwide constituency using a proportional system (see Figure 2, Table 3).

² The source of the data OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission Final Report on parliamentary elections in Kyrgyz Republic <http://www.osce.org/ru/odihr/elections/kyrgyzstan/222521?download=true> (29.06.2017).

³ See *ibid*.

⁴ The source of the data OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission Final Report on parliamentary elections in Kyrgyz Republic <http://www.osce.org/ru/odihr/elections/kyrgyzstan/222521?download=true> (29.06.2017);

⁵ See *ibid*.

Figure 2

Ratio of seats by proportional and majoritarian representation in Jogorku Kenesh

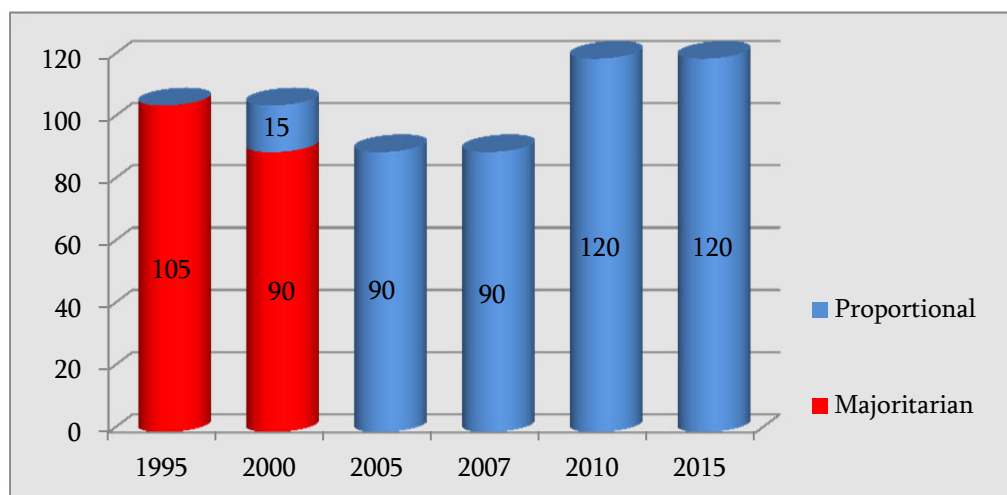


Table 3

The ratio of seats by proportional and majoritarian representation in Jogorku Kenesh

Electoral representation	1995	2000	2005	2007	2010	2015
Proportional	0	15	90	90	120	120
Majoritarian	105	90	0	0	0	0
Total	105	105	90	90	120	120

It is not an easy task to predetermine the elections final results in Kyrgyzstan in contrast to its neighbour countries. The list of MP changed significantly. Social-Democratic Party of Kyrgyzstan (SDPK) that supported the president A. Atambayev, gained the majority in the Parliament by amassing 38 mandates. Prior to the 2015 elections, the Party had 26 seats in the parliament. Two former opposition parties Respublika and Ata-Jurt united and formed a new Respublika-Ata Jurt political party. They became the second largest party in the parliament. Besides, 3 new political parties, namely: Kyrgyzstan, Onuguu-Progress and Bil Bol managed to pass 7% threshold.

Central Election Commission (CEC) reported that 2015 elections had about 60% voters turnout. Yet, the population expressed its distrust of political figures and politics on the whole. The political system of Kyrgyzstan faces serious challenges and corruption is still the most perilous one among them (*Baltic Worlds 2015*).

In fact, parliamentary elections were signified by an active participation of civil society. In general, however, the authorities continued their attempts to curb nongovernmental organization (NGO) activities. Mass media remains generally dynamic, despite cases of government pressure. Judicial sector reforms had achieved some modest results, but courts were still used as a weapon to silence government critics (*Freedom House 2016*).

Local elections and constitutional amendments were the major issues in the political environment of the country. Hence, on December 11, 2016 Kyrgyzstan held both local Kenesh (council) elections and a national referendum to revise Kyrgyzstan's constitution⁶. According to the Central Election Commission proposed amendments were approved by 79,63% of the Kyrgyz citizens and over 42,28% of eligible voters turned out to the polls⁷.

As a result, numerous transformations, stimulating the change from presidential to a parliamentary system of governance, began to evolve in the political system of Kyrgyz Republic. There had never been an election in Central Asia like the election that was shaping up in Kyrgyzstan, which was the first country to come up with such an initiation. It should be noted that positive trends were accompanied by contradicting situations as well. For instance, Paragraph 3 of the Article 72 of the Constitution of Kyrgyz Republic⁸, envisages that a deputy of

⁶ The source of the data is "Parliamentary elections results held on 11 December 2016" and "Referendum results held on 11 December 2016 " https://shailoo.gov.kg/ru/vybory-dekabr-2016_/itogi-vyborov-v-mestnye-keneshi-11dekabrya-2016-goda/ (15.07.2017); https://shailoo.gov.kg/ru/ReferendumReferendum/rezultaty_referenduma_vsenarodnogo_golosovaniya_Kyrgyzskoy_Respubliki_ot_11_dekabrya_2016_goda_/ (15.07.2017).

⁷ The source of the data is

https://shailoo.gov.kg/ru/ReferendumReferendum/rezultaty_referenduma_vsenarodnogo_golosovaniya_Kyrgyzskoy_Respubliki_ot_11_dekabrya_2016_goda_/ (15.07.2017).

⁸ See the Constitution of the Republic of Kyrgyz (entered into force on 27 June 2010) (edited the Law of the RK of December 28, 2016 No. 218)) <http://www.president.kg/ru/konstitutsija/> (25.06.2017).

the Jogorku Kenesh may be appointed to the position of the Prime minister or vice prime minister retaining the mandate and the right to vote at the plenary sessions of the Jogorku Kenesh⁹. This provision violates the principle of separation of powers by concentrating both legislative and executive powers in the hands of one representative. Another example is the Article 95, which creates preconditions for interference with the activities of the judicial system¹⁰.

Another issue in the political agenda are the presidential elections that will be held on November 19, 2017. It should be noted that acting president A. Atambayev is barred from running in the coming elections by the Constitutional Law which limits the fact that the same person cannot be elected President for more than one term. This circumstance particularly stemmed the conclusion in the opposition circles that constitutional amendments were aimed to sustain Atambayev's political powers in the future. If he were appointed as a Prime Minister, then in 2017 institutions of the political system would face non-democratic procedures (*The Diplomat 2016*).

According to Almazbek Atambayev, during the nine months before the presidential election, it would be necessary to eliminate all the shortcomings and deficiencies identified in the activities of election commissions. "Only a free and fair election ensures the legitimacy of the power and stability in the country," the head of state said. Three local candidates had already announced their intentions to take part in the presidential elections in Kyrgyzstan. They were: Temir Sariyev, the former Prime Minister and leader of the party Ak Shumkar; Omurbek Babanov, the former prime minister and head of the parliamentary fraction Respublika-Ata-Jurt and Bakyt Torobaev, the former Minister of Emergency Situations and head of the party Onuguu-Progress (*East time 2017*).

Human rights and freedoms. On 31 March, the UN Human Rights Committee urged Kyrgyzstan to immediately release prisoner of conscience Azimjan Askarov, an ethnic Uzbek human rights defender, who was sentenced in 2010 to life in prison. The Committee considered that he had been arbitrarily detained, tortured and denied his right to a fair trial. In response, the Supreme Court reviewed the

⁹ See *ibid*.

¹⁰ See *ibid*.

case on 11 and 12 July but did not follow the Committee's conclusions that Azimjan Askarov should be released, and ordered a retrial which opened at Chui Regional Court on 4 October 2016. It continued through to 20 December (*Amnesty International 2016/2017*). Chui regional Court upheld the verdict of Askarov's life imprisonment, which could be appealed only in the Supreme Court (*Amnesty International 2016/2017; Human Rights Watch 2016a*). After the hearings, Askarov announced his plan to hold a hunger strike (*Frontline Defenders 2017*).

Domestic violence, forced marriage, and other forms of violence against women and girls remained one of the most disturbing human rights issues in the region (*Amnesty International 2016/2017*). In most cases, women who survived violence did not apply to the police, due to social stigma and discriminatory attitudes, and because they had little faith in the police and justice system. Lack of economic opportunities made it difficult for women to leave abusive relationships and live independently (*Amnesty International 2016/2017; Human Rights Watch 2016a*).

According to the National Statistics Committee, 4,960 cases of domestic violence were registered in 2015 of which 158 cases proceeded to criminal prosecution (*Amnesty International 2016/2017*).

A law to help protect adolescent girls from early and forced marriages passed its final parliamentary reading on October 18. The law introduces criminal sanctions of up to five years' imprisonment for anyone involved in organizing or officiating at a religious marriage ceremony where one or both of the spouses is under the age of 18 (*Amnesty International 2016/2017*). This will include religious leaders, as well as parents of the would-be spouses.

Civil disobedience*. Kyrgyzstan had ample cases of civil disobedience actions. The Ministry of Internal Affairs of Kyrgyzstan concluded that 434 and 596

* Civil disobedience is a part of the "Social Unrest and Political Pressure" variable of PFI and is measured by a number of demonstrations, strikes, social unrests, particularly pressures applied against them during a specified span of time. Taking into account the absence of such statistics, relying on the analyses, reports and informative studies carried out by newspapers and research centres, the scaling range of 0-5 was chosen for their assessment, where 0 is the value for the highest number of

peaceful assemblies were held in 2015 and 2016 respectively of which 43% were organized in the capital (*Kloop.kg* 2017). Reports and studies conducted by international organizations and NGOs such as Freedom House, UN, OSCE, Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch described the processes and questions raised.

CSOs were the main initiators of civil disobedience who were quite noticeable for their democratic intentions. According to Freedom House, Kyrgyzstan was estimated as partly free country¹¹, whereas the Press Freedom was qualified as not free¹².

In conclusion, it should be noted that PFI indicator registered in 1995 with the value of 0,407 points was the highest over the period (see Table 1). The PFI declined and was registered with 0,306 points. The fall of Political Stability (18,57), Rule of Law (14,90) and Gender equality (0,687) subindices adversely affected the PFI.

8.2 Economic Factors Index (EFI)

The major economic indicators increased in Kyrgyzstan during 2015 and consequently, the highest 0,770 indicator was registered within 1995-2015 period (see Figure 1, Table 1).

The growth of Domestic credit (19,42) and Foreign direct investments (17,34), as well as the fall of inflation rate (6,50), had stipulated the SFI increase in 2013. Particularly, a sharp increase of Foreign direct investments was the most distinctive, hence by being registered with the highest index for the mentioned period (see Table 1).

unrest and pressure, including coup d'état and revolution and 5 is the total absence of those in question.

¹¹ See the official site of Freedom House <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2016/kyrgyzstan> (18.06.2017).

¹² See the official site of Freedom House <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-press/2015/kyrgyzstan> (18.06.2017).

The economy of the country was chiefly dominated by minerals extraction, agriculture, and reliance on remittances from citizens working abroad. The country has been seeking to attract foreign investment and to expand its export values. 2015 accession to the Eurasian Economic Union will booster trade and investments. The keys to future growth include progress in fighting corruption, improving administrative transparency, restructuring the domestic industry, and attracting foreign aid and investment (*The Odora 2017*).

The biggest sector of Kyrgyzstan's economy is services. Agriculture and mining, construction and electricity pay a pivotal role in the economic development of the country (Trading Economics 2017).

3,8% economic and 4,9% manufacturing growth was registered in 2016 compared to 2015. That result was achieved due to the production of metal ores, refined petroleum products, food products and precious metals. Besides, wholesale and retail values increased as well. In 2016 the values increased by 7,2% compared to 6,6% in 2015, whereas in the agricultural sector they increased by 3% in 2016 compared to 6,2% in 2015. The average GDP growth amounted to 3,58% for the 1996-2016 period. The highest indicator was registered in the fourth of 2013 by reaching 10,5%, whereas the lowest one was recorded with -20,08% in the fourth trimester of 1994¹³.

8.3 Social Factors Index (SFI)

The SFI curve shows that despite some fluctuations, it had a growing tendency within 1995-2012, but it had been continuously falling down during 2013-2015 years (see Figure 1, Table 1). The key factor causing its decline was the reduction of Real wage. Meanwhile, the decreasing level of Unemployment rate had a positive effect on SFI as such (see Figure 1, Table 1).

¹³ The source of the data is Trading Economics (2017), "Kyrgyzstan GDP Annual Growth Rate." <http://www.tradingeconomics.com/kyrgyzstan/gdp-growth-annual> (23.03.2017).

The socio-economic situation was aggravated by a rising poverty rate which culminated in 2015. Poverty rate grew by 1% in comparison to 2015, whereas extreme poverty rate did not change¹⁴. Particularly, poverty rate was estimated by 32,1% equivalent to 1,931,000,000 people, whereas extreme poverty- 1,2% equivalent to 75,000 people¹⁵. In addition, 67,7% of the total number of people in poverty live in urban regions¹⁶.

Implementation of reforms in the sphere of social protection, as well as the provision of social services, may play an important role in the settlement of socio-economic problems in Kyrgyzstan. Especially, activities undertaken within 2015-2017 and aimed at enhancing accessibility and development of social services, as well as cooperation between state authorities, non-governmental sector and international organizations were the key factors¹⁷ that propelled the improvement of the sector in question.

8.4 Educational Factors Index (EdFI)

The curve sustained a positive trend and 2015 indicators were stable relative to 2014, stipulated by steady values of Human Development Index and Government expenditure on education.

Kyrgyzstan had recently implemented numerous reforms in its educational system. It comprised of pre-school, school, higher and post-graduate, as well as an extracurricular education system¹⁸.

There are state, town and private general educational institutions, such as secondary schools, gymnasiums, lyceums, which are differently ranked. Within

¹⁴ The source of the data is the official site of National Statistics Committee of Kyrgyzstan <http://www.stat.kg/ru/statistics/naselenie> (14.06.2017).

¹⁵ See *ibid*.

¹⁶ See *ibid*.

¹⁷ See National Social Protection Program of Kyrgyzstan for 2015–2017 (edited the government decree of 14 October 2016 № 552) // <http://cbd.minjust.gov.kg/act/view/ru-ru/97348> (15.06.2017).

¹⁸ See the official site of the Ministry of Education and Science of Kyrgyzstan http://edu.gov.kg/univer/?lg=1&id_parent=3 (14.06.2017).

general education, classes are conducted in four languages: Kyrgyz, Russian, Uzbek, and Tajik¹⁹.

Organizations providing extracurricular education are essential to facilitate personal capacities of children. Their number totalled 1,066 by providing the following directions: 180 specified in the environment, 98 technical and 237 in general education spheres²⁰.

Kyrgyzstan has 110 pre-vocational education institutions and 131 secondary specialized educational institutions where courses are conducted in more than 100 specialties²¹.

Higher educational institutions are equally ranked as universities, academies, and institutes. Majority of universities, such as Kyrgyz-Russian Slavic University and Kyrgyz-Turkish University, cooperate on the basis of intergovernmental agreements²². Or else, some other universities were established by foreign citizens, precisely American University of Central Asia, Ataturk University and etc²³. In addition, the number of higher institutions reached 50 -31 state and 19 private-attended by more than 223,000 students²⁴.

8.5 Health Factors Index (HFI)

The HFI curve had a positive trend over the period of 1995-2015 with 0,16 points registered in 1995 and reaching 0,378 points in 2015. The indicator of HFI grew up compared to previous year, mainly stipulated by the growth of Life expectancy at birth variable.

Ministry of Health of Kyrgyzstan is the main health care policy implementor. The National Sustainable Development Strategy (NSDS) 2013-2017 improved the potential

¹⁹ See the official site of the Ministry of Education and Science of Kyrgyzstan http://edu.gov.kg/univer/?lg=1&id_parent=3 (14.06.2017).

²⁰ See the official site of the Ministry of Education and Science of Kyrgyzstan http://edu.gov.kg/univer/?lg=1&id_parent=3 (14.06.2017).

²¹ See *ibid*.

²² See *ibid*.

²³ See *ibid*.

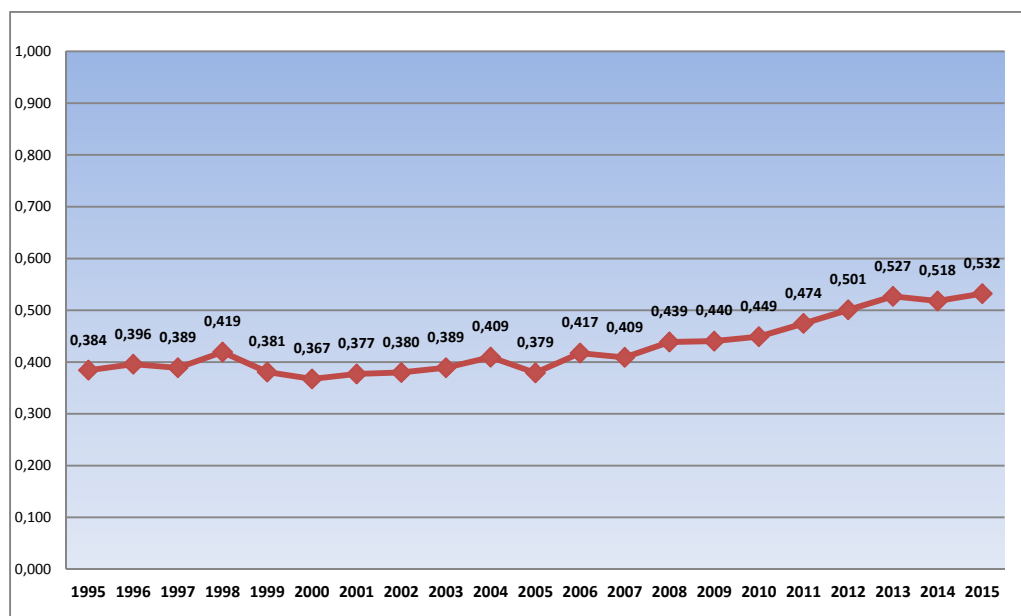
²⁴ See *ibid*.

and effectiveness of the Ministry on the whole²⁵. In particular, the issues related to improving quality of public health services, which implies medical care and appropriate quality of medical services and insurance provided and guaranteed by the state, still remain urgent. One of the most important steps to provide the implementation is the introduction and further development of electronic health care system²⁶.

8.6 Development trends of the Index of Democracy Level

Figure 3

The Index of Democracy Level of Kyrgyzstan in the time span between 1995-2015*



²⁵ See the official site of the Ministry of Health of Kyrgyzstan The National Sustainable Development Strategy (NSDS) 2013-2017 // http://www.president.kg/ru/news/ukazy/1466_tekst_natsional-noy_strategii_ustoychivogo_razvitiya_kyrgyzskoy_respubliki_na_period_2013-2017_godyi (17.06.2017).

²⁶ See Kyrgyzstan launches e-health care program for 2016-2020 (approved by the government of Kyrgyzstan of 18 March 2016 № 134) // <http://cbd.minjust.gov.kg/act/view/ru-ru/98405> (17.06.2017).

* Source: calculations by the researcher.

The IDL trends occurring within the term specified in the research are depicted in Figure 3. It made a progress in 2015 which was the highest registered indicator (0,532) for 1995-2015.

It's evident that growth of IDL curve was chiefly stipulated by the increase of EFI and HFI, as well as by a stable EdFI indicator.

On the contrary, decelerating indicators of PFI and SFI negatively affected the dynamics of IDL in 2015.

Implementation of political and social reforms will enhance the IDL growth in Kyrgyzstan.

8.7 Regression analysis of the Index of Democracy Level

Arusyak Aleksanyan, Armine Khachikyan

Within the framework of the research, the regression analysis illustrates the variables of Political, Economic Social, Educational and Health Factors Indices included in the model, which had a significant influence on the IDL of Kyrgyzstan.

The regression results show that there has been a significant correlation between the IDL_i^* and PFI variables of Political Stability/Absence of Violence and Social Unrest and Political Pressure.

$$Y' = -0,003x_1 + 0,506 \text{ (Adj. } R^2=0,177\text{)},$$

where Y' is the IDL_i (IDL is cleaned from the variable of Political Stability / Absence of Violence, and x_1 is Political Stability / Absence of Violence.

$$Y' = -0,024x_2 + 0,009 \text{ (Adj. } R^2=0,211\text{)},$$

where Y' is the IDL_i (IDL is cleaned from the variable of Social Unrest and Political Pressure, x_2 is Social Unrest and Political Pressure.

* IDL_i is the Index of Democracy Level cleaned from the corresponding variable during every paired regression analysis

The following correlation has been established between the IDL_i and FDI of SFI.

$$Y' = 0,008x_3 + 0,393 \text{ (Adj. } R^2=0,341\text{)},$$

where Y' is the IDL_i (IDL is cleaned from FDI), x₃ is FDI.

The following equation has been done for EdFI:

$$Y' = 0,034x_4 + 0,254 \text{ (Adj. } R^2 = 0,587\text{)},$$

where Y' is the IDL_i (IDL is cleaned from the variable of Government expenditure on education) and x₄ is the variable of Government expenditure on education (of GDP%).

The following equation has been done for HFI.

$$Y' = 0,030x_5 - 1,619 \text{ (Adj. } R^2 = 0,499\text{)},$$

where Y' is the IDL_i (IDL is cleaned from the variable of Life expectancy) and x₅ is variable of Life expectancy.

So, PFI variables of Political Stability / Absence of Violence and Social Unrest and Political Pressure have a significant influence on the IDL of Kyrgyzstan. The correlation between IDL_i and variable of Political Stability / Absence of Violence is negative which is explained by drastic changes, instigated by incidents of civil disobedience and revolution. All the aforementioned entailed the "Tulip Revolution" in 2005, when A. Akayev, elected as the president for three consecutive times had to resign. As a consequence, a semi-parliamentary political system was formed in the country due to a new Constitution adopted after the 2010 revolution. According to the results of regression analysis, one point decrease of Political Stability / Absence of Violence variable will lead to IDL_i increase by 0,003 units respectively. The same method is applied to explain a negative correlation between IDL_i and Social Unrest and Political Pressure variable. Accordingly, due to methodology the fewer incidents of Social Unrest the higher are indicators of the variable. In this case, the decline of the variable with one unit will result in the IDL_i increase by 0,024 units.

An indicator of FDI impacts the IDL as well. Hence, FDI increase with 1% of GDP will lead to the growth of IDL_i by 0,008 units.

1% growth of Government expenditure on education will lead to IDL_i change with 0,034 units. This factor has the highest determination coefficient and explains 59% of IDL_i variation.

A significant correlation has been established between IDL_i and variable of Life expectancy and a positive change of one year will stipulate the IDL_i growth by 0,03 units.

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Abbreviations

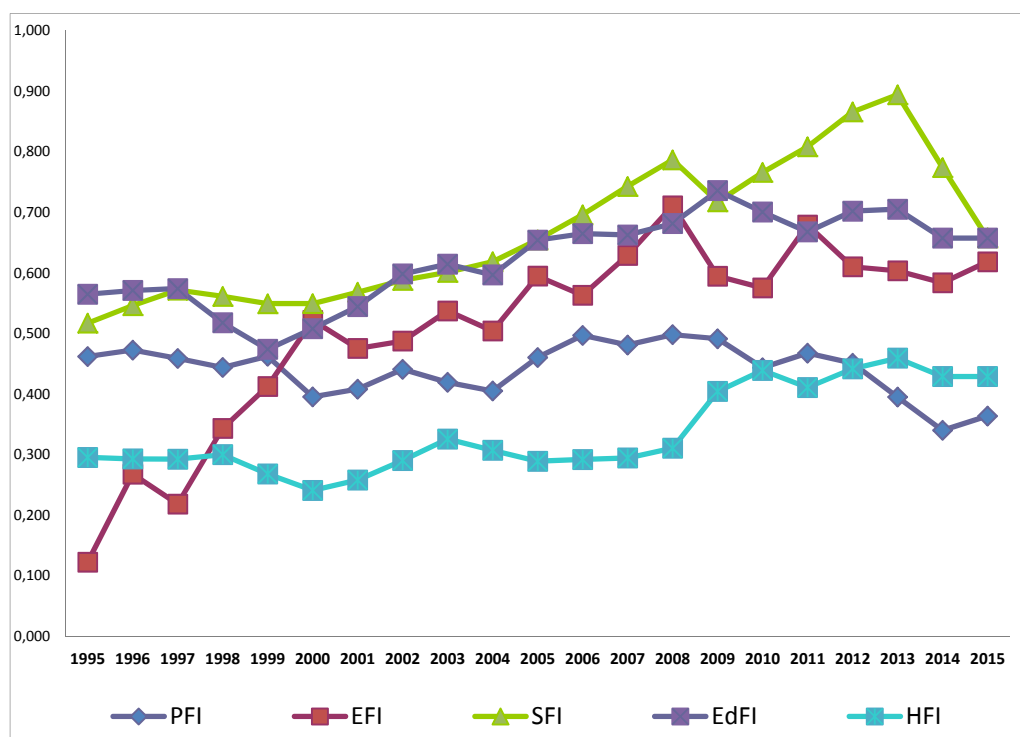
EdFI	Educational Factors Index
EEU	Eurasian Economic Union
EFI	Economic Factors Index
FDI	Foreign Direct Investments
GDP	Gross domestic product
HFI	Health Factors Index
IDL	Index of Democracy Level
JK	Jogorku Kenesh
KR	Kyrgyz Republic
MP	Member of Parliament
NGO	Non-governmental organization
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
OSCE/ ODIHR	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe / Office of Democratic Initiatives and Human Rights
PFI	Political Factors Index
SFI	Social Factors Index
UNO	United Nations Organization

CHAPTER 9.

THE INDEX OF DEMOCRACY LEVEL (IDL) OF UKRAINE

ASHOT ALEKSANYAN

Figure 1
Indices of Political, Social, Economic, Educational and Health Factors affecting the Index of Democracy Level of Ukraine in the time span between 1995-2015*



* The source is based on the calculations accumulated by the researcher.
The indices of IDL factors are comparable only by the trends.

Table 1

**Indices of Political, Economic, Social, Educational and Health Factors and Index of
Democracy Level of Ukraine in the time span between 1995-2015***

Years	PFI	EFI	SFI	EdFI	HFI	IDL
1995	0,462	0,123	0,517	0,565	0,295	0,373
1996	0,473	0,268	0,546	0,571	0,293	0,418
1997	0,459	0,218	0,572	0,574	0,292	0,403
1998	0,444	0,343	0,561	0,518	0,300	0,423
1999	0,462	0,413	0,549	0,474	0,268	0,439
2000	0,395	0,522	0,549	0,508	0,241	0,440
2001	0,408	0,475	0,568	0,544	0,258	0,441
2002	0,441	0,487	0,588	0,598	0,290	0,470
2003	0,419	0,537	0,601	0,614	0,326	0,481
2004	0,405	0,504	0,619	0,597	0,307	0,464
2005	0,460	0,595	0,655	0,654	0,289	0,519
2006	0,497	0,563	0,696	0,665	0,292	0,532
2007	0,481	0,629	0,743	0,663	0,294	0,547
2008	0,498	0,711	0,787	0,681	0,311	0,584
2009	0,491	0,595	0,717	0,736	0,404	0,560
2010	0,443	0,575	0,766	0,700	0,439	0,540
2011	0,468	0,679	0,808	0,668	0,411	0,575
2012	0,451	0,610	0,866	0,702	0,442	0,563
2013	0,395	0,603	0,894	0,705	0,459	0,544
2014	0,340	0,584	0,774	0,657	0,429	0,494
2015	0,364	0,618	0,658	0,657	0,429	0,501

* The source is based on the calculations accumulated by the researcher.

The EFI, SFI, HFI, EdFI, and indices of IDL calculated during certain years may insignificantly vary in comparison to the indices of the corresponding years estimated in the previous publications in the result of updated and newly inserted data as well as changes of minimum and maximum indices.

9.1 Political Factors Index (PFI)

The 2015 study of the PFI curve depicts that numerous issues related to political stability, effective performance of governing coalition¹, international cooperation and European integration, reinforcement of military-political security, conflict resolution and civic solidarity, human rights protection, as well as other social problems, had a great impact on Ukrainian society. Even though the PFI curve apparently grew in 2015 compared to the previous year, it still remained low for the observed 1995-2015 period (Figure 1).

Factors, such as political instability, social distrust, growing trends of civil disobedience, tension in inter-party and Russian-Ukrainian relations, geopolitical developments in Crimea and Sevastopol, implementation of anti-terrorist activities in Donetsk and Lugansk negatively impacted IDL (*Merry 2015, 27-50; Pomeranz 2015, 51-73; Trudolyubov 2015, 75-96; Wood 2015, 97-129; Motyl 2017; Ash 2016; Kozloff 2016; Judah 2016*). Meanwhile, International Criminal Court report² stated, the situation around Crimea and Sevastopol was considered equivalent to an international armed conflict between Ukraine and Russia (*The International Criminal Court 2016; The International Criminal Court 2017*).

Structural and operational reforms taking place in the country's political system were strongly affected by numerous factors, namely: European and Euro-Atlantic integration programs, constitutional amendments, decentralization of the state power³, elections of local self-governance bodies, international condemnation of Russian Federation for "temporarily occupation of Crimea and Sevastopol

¹ See "The Programme of the government of Ukraine" // http://www.kmu.gov.ua/control/ru/publish/article?art_id=247809614 (12.05.2017), "Ordinance of Verkhovna Rada on the Action Plan of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine" (11 грудня 2014 року, № 26-VIII) // <http://zakon4.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/26-19> (12.05.2017).

² See the official site of the International Criminal Court <https://www.icc-cpi.int/ukraine> (12.05.2017).

³ See the official site of the Ministry of Regional Development, Construction, Housing and Communal Services <http://www.minregion.gov.ua/decentralization> (10.05.2017); site of Decentralization of power <http://decentralization.gov.ua> (10.05.2017).

resulting from the RF military aggression⁴, Minsk agreements⁵ and joint efforts aimed at observing a ceasefire in the east of the country in 2015. Aforementioned problems shall be solved with guarantees to restore complete control over the state borders, to protect rights of residents in the East, to ensure territorial integrity by maintaining territories of self-proclaimed Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics in the Ukraine.

To deepen the processes of European integration and to facilitate bilateral relations⁶, the 17th EU-Ukraine Summit⁷ held in Kyiv on 27 April 2015 was of great significance. The latter was aimed at duly implementation of obligations, a complete assistance of democratic reforms and clarification of directions of EU's mission defined in the Association Agreement between EU and Ukraine (*Lieven 201; Boyd-Barrett 2016*).

Inner political life of Ukraine faced the issues of decentralization and constitutional amendments, whereas reforms in the system of self-governance bodies⁸ with the elections schedule on October 25 and November 15⁹, were predominant in terms of participation of political parties (*LB.ua 2015a; LB.ua 2015b; LB.ua 2015b; LB.ua 2015c*). Particularly, by decree of 3 March 2015, the

⁴ The source of the data is the official site of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine «Autonomous Republic of Crimea» // <http://mfa.gov.ua/en/about-ukraine/info/regions/1-crimea> (10.05.2017), «Місто Севастополь»: <http://mfa.gov.ua/en/about-ukraine/info/regions/2-sevastopol> (10.05.2017).

⁵ See “European Council Conclusions on external relations (19 March 2015)” // <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2015/03/conclusions-russia-ukraine-european-council-march-2015> (10.05.2017).

⁶ The source of the data is the official site of the European External Actions Service “Ukraine and the EU” // https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/1937_en (11.05.2017).

⁷ The source of the data is the official site of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine “The 17th EU-Ukraine Summit” <http://mfa.gov.ua/en/page/open/id/4610> (12.05.2017), «17th EU-Ukraine summit, Ukraine, 27/04/2015» // <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/international-summit/2015/04/27> (12.05.2017).

⁸ See the Law of Ukraine "On Principles of regional policy" (adopted on 05.02.2015, № 156-VIII, Verkhovna Rada protocols, 2015, № 13, page 90) <http://zakon3.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/156-19-paran6#n14> (11.03.2017).

⁹ The source of the data is the official site of the Central Election Commission of Ukraine http://www.cvk.gov.ua/vm_2015 (11.05.2017); OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission Final Report on self-governance bodies <http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/ukraine/223641?download=true> (11.05.2017).

President of Ukraine established the Constitutional Commission¹⁰ of Ukraine with the task to prepare a preliminary draft¹¹ for amendments to the current Constitution (*LB.ua 2015a; LB.ua 2015b; LB.ua 2015b; LB.ua 2015c; Gazeta.dt.ua 2015; ZN.UA 2015b*). The draft was adopted on 31 August 2015 by Verkhovna Rada¹² to ensure principles of the regional policy development¹³ defined by the state. The draft of constitutional amendments on the decentralization of power led to tensions, confrontations, and clashes between political parties and civil society organizations (*Deutsche Welle 2015a; Deutsche Welle 2015b*).

Verkhovna Rada adopted the “Law on local elections in Ukraine”¹⁴ on 14 July 2015 and elections of self-governance bodies were held on October 25 and November 15 in compliance with applicable requirements. The local elections took place in a challenging political, economic, humanitarian, military and security environment and were contested by 142 political parties¹⁵. Due to geopolitical conflicts, no elections took place in the Autonomous Republics of Crimea, the city of Sevastopol in Donetsk and Lugansk regions which were declared as temporarily occupied territories¹⁶, whereas regional council elections took place in 24 regions¹⁷.

¹⁰ See “Decree of the President on the establishment of Constitutional Commission” (adopted 03.03.2015) // <http://zakon2.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/119/2015> (11.05.2017), “Status of the Constitutional Commission” by decree 119/2015 of 3 March 2015 of the President of Ukraine, // <http://zakon2.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/119/2015> (11.05.2017).

¹¹ See the draft law amending the Constitution of the Ukraine on decentralization // <http://zakon3.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/656-19#n8> (11.05.2017).

¹² See “Ordinance of Verkhovna Rada on the approval of the draft law amending the Constitution of the Ukraine on decentralization” (adopted on 31.08.2015, № 656-VIII) // <http://zakon3.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/656-19> (11.05.2017).

¹³ See the Law of Ukraine “On Principles of regional policy” (adopted on 05.02.2015, № 156-VIII, Verkhovna Rada protocols, 2015, № 13, page 90) <http://zakon3.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/156-19/paran6#n14> (11.05.2017).

¹⁴ See the “Law on local elections in Ukraine” (adopted on 14.07.2015 № 595-VIII, Verkhovna Rada protocols, (2015, № 37-38, page 366) // <http://zakon1.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/595-19/print1390895289841092> (11.05.2017).

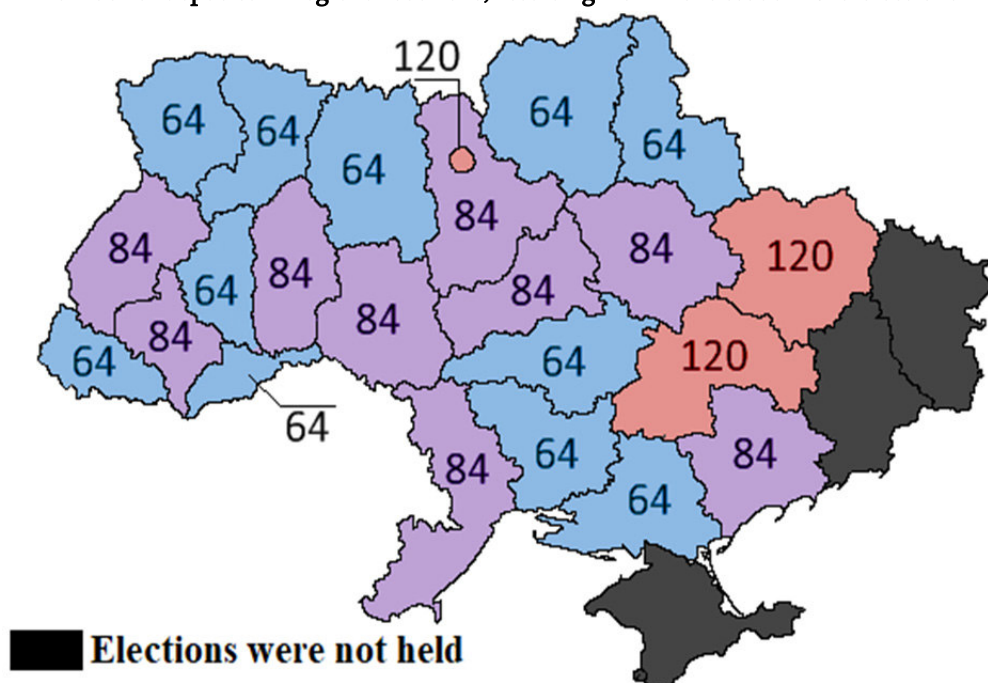
¹⁵ The source of the data is the official site of the Central Election Commission of Ukraine http://www.cvk.gov.ua/vm_2015 (11.05.2017), OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission Final Report on self-governance bodies <http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/ukraine/223641?download=true> (11.05.2017).

¹⁶ See the “Law of Ukraine “On protection of rights and freedoms of citizens and legal regime for the temporarily occupied territory of Ukraine” (edited on 05.03.2017, Verkhovna Rada protocols, 2014, № 26, page 892) // <http://zakon2.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/1207-18> (11.05.2017)).

The number of deputies was presented according to the regional councils 64, 84 and 120 (Figure 2). 84 deputies were elected in Vinnytsia, Zaporizhzhia, Ivano-Frankivsk, Kyiv, Lviv, Odesa, Poltava, Khmel'nitski and Cherkasy regions, 64 deputies in Volyn'sk, Zhytomyr, Zakarpattia, Kirovohrad, Mykolayiv, Rivne, Sumy, Ternopil, Kherson, Chernihiv and Chernivtsi, and 120 deputies in Dnipropetrovsk and Kharkiv (see Figure 2).

Figure 2.

Number of deputies in regional councils, resulting from 25 October 2015 elections



Elections of self-governance bodies will create new opportunities for political parties, that are willing to actively undertake steps aimed at implementation of reforms and participate in decision-making processes in the regional management system (*Gorshenin Institute 2015c; Gorshenin Institute 2015d*). In particular, People's Front political party refused to participate in elections of self-governance

¹⁷ See the official site of the Ministry of Regional Development, Construction, Housing and Communal Services «Довідник адміністративно-територіального устрою України» // <http://atu.minregion.gov.ua/ua/ustriydo2015> (11.05.2017).

bodies, despite the fact that it was one of the most influential parties of Verkhovna Rada (*Укрінформ 2015*).

The above-mentioned elections were held in majoritarian and proportional representation by revealing the level of public assistance in connection to political powers. Respectively, 120 deputy seats in Kyiv city council were distributed among Party Block of Petro Poroshenko “Solidarity”, “Self-Help Union” political party, Political party All-Ukrainian Union “Batkivshchyna”, Political party All-Ukrainian Union “Freedom” and Political party “Union” in compliance with proportional representation of the elections (see Figure 2).

Figure 2

The ratio of seats received by political parties in Kyiv city council¹⁸

<i>Political Parties</i>	<i>Number of elected</i>	<i>Votes received (%)</i>
Party Block of Petro Poroshenko “Solidarity”	52	43,33
“Self-Help Union” political party	22	18,33
“Batkivshchyna” All-Ukrainian Union political party	17	14,17
“Union” Political party	15	12,50
“Freedom” All-Ukrainian Union Political party	14	11,67
<i>Total</i>	<i>120</i>	<i>100</i>

In view of ratio of the mentioned political powers, a “Solidarity” Party candidate V. Klitchko got 64,1% of the votes and was re-elected a mayor of Kyiv by 2:1 majority over his main rival, a candidate for Party of Decisive Citizens Bereza, who got only 32,3% of the votes¹⁹. Block of Petro Poroshenko "Solidarity" Party had a leading position during the Kyiv regional council elections and gained 26,19% of the votes. However, the difference in votes gained in the Kyiv regional council was not big (see Table 3) and it was necessary to cooperate with other parties in the decision-making process.

¹⁸ The source of the data is the official site of the Central Election Commission of Ukraine http://www.cvk.gov.ua/pls/vm2015/PVM057?PID112=30&PID102=2&PF7691=2&PT001F01=100&rej=0&pt00_t001f01=100 (11.05.2017).

¹⁹ The source of the data is the official site of the Central Election Commission of Ukraine <http://www.cvk.gov.ua/pls/vm2015/PVM048?PT001F01=102&PT005F01=0&PID102=2&PF7691=2&rej=0> (12.05.2017).

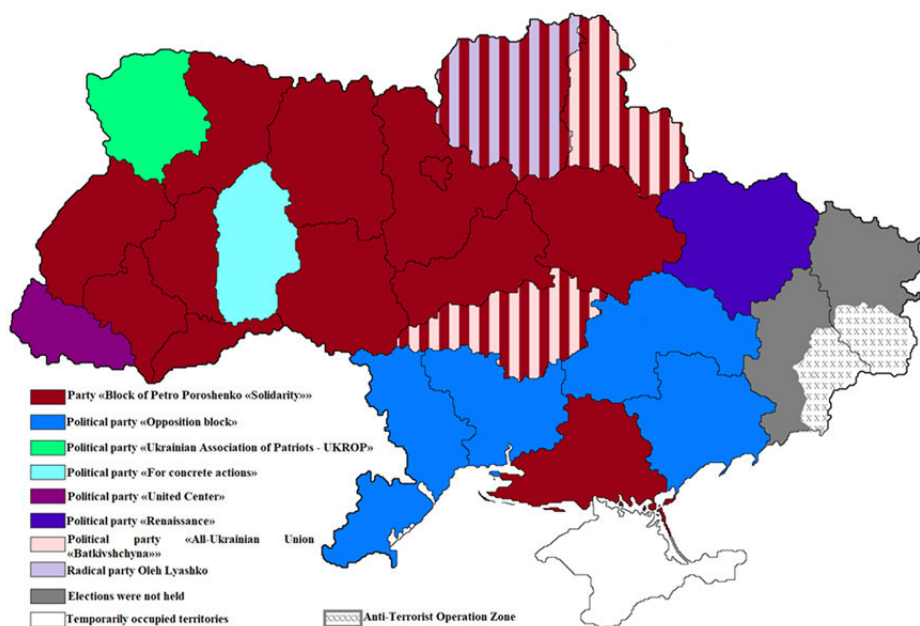
Table 3

The ratio of seats received by political parties in Kyiv regional council²⁰

<i>Political Parties</i>	<i>Number of elected</i>	<i>Votes received (%)</i>
Party Block of Petro Poroshenko "Solidarity"	22	26,19
"Batkivshchyna" All-Ukrainian Union political party	16	19,05
"Self-Help Union" political party	10	11,90
Radical party Oleh Lyashko	9	10,71
Nash Kray (Our Homeland) Political party	7	8,33
"Freedom" All-Ukrainian Union Political party	7	8,33
"Ukrainian Association of Patriots - UKROP" Political party	7	8,33
"Opposition block" Political party	6	7,14
Total	84	100

Figure 3

Final results of parties by regions during the local elections in 2015



²⁰ The source of the data is the official site of the Central Election Commission of Ukraine http://www.cvk.gov.ua/pls/vm2015/PVM057?PID112=12&PID102=884&PF7691=884&PT001F01=100&rej=0&pt00_t001f01=100 (11.05.2017).

Assuming from above-said, we may report that Block of Petro Poroshenko "Solidarity" Party won in the regional council elections with the following numbers: Vinnytsia (32,14%), Zhytomyr (26,56%), Ivano-Frankivsk (27,38%), Lviv(23,81%), Poltava (17,86%), Rivne (29,69%), Khersoni (28,13%), Cherkasy (21,43%) and Chernivtsi (23,44%) (see Figure 3). Party Block of Petro Poroshenko "Solidarity" and "Batkivshchyna" All-Ukrainian Union political party gained equal 21,88% of votes in Kirovohrad and Sumy, meanwhile Block of Petro Poroshenko "Solidarity" party and Radical party Oleh Lyashko shared the same number of 18,75% votes in Chernihiv regional council elections. Block of Petro Poroshenko "Solidarity" party came the second in Dnipropetrovsk (11,67%) and, respectively, it took the third position in Odesa (26,19%), Zakarpattia (23,44%), Mykolayiv (23,44%), Kharkiv (16,67) and Zaporizhzhia (15,48%).

Nonetheless, Figure 3 depicts that "Renaissance" political party won in Kharkiv regional council elections by amassing 41,6% of the votes, whereas "Opposition bloc" Political party gained a leading position and collected 38,33%, in Dnipropetrovsk, 33,33% in Zaporizhzhia, 26,56% in Mykolayiv and 27,38% in Odesa. "United Center" Political party had 29,69% in Zakarpattia and "For concrete actions" political party won 22,62% of the votes in Khmelnytskyi. "Ukrainian Association of Patriots - UKROP" political party won in Volyn, accumulating 26,56% of the votes²¹.

OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission Final Report concluded that the elections held on 25 October "were competitive, well organized overall and the campaign generally showed respect for the democratic process". Nevertheless, the complexity of the legal framework, the dominance of powerful economic groups over the electoral process, and the fact that virtually all campaign coverage in the media was paid for underscore the need for continued and inclusive reform" (OSCE/ODIHR 2015).

Positive trends of the PFI were also reflected in Nations in Transit Freedom House Report, according to which, ratings of democratic transitions of the political

²¹ The source of the data is the official site of the Central Election Commission of Ukraine http://www.cvk.gov.ua/pls/vm2015/PVM002?PT001F01=100&pt00_t001f01=100 (11.05.2017).

system of Ukraine improved by changing from 4,75 to 4,61 for 2015-2017 term (see Figure 4).

Figure4

Freedom House 2015-2017 reports about democratic transitions in Ukraine²²

<i>Factors of Democracy Progress</i>	2015	2016	2017
National Democratic Governance	6,00	5,75	5,75
Electoral Process	3,50	3,50	3,50
Civil Society	2,25	2,25	2,50
Independent Media	4,00	4,00	4,00
Local Democratic Governance	5,50	5,25	5,00
Judicial Framework and Independence	6,00	6,00	5,75
Corruption	6,00	6,00	5,75
<i>Democracy Score</i>	4,75	4,68	4,61

Human rights and freedoms. Processes aimed at establishing procedures to ensure human rights and freedoms protection maintained their significance in 2015.

Freedom House 2015/2016 report estimated Political Rights and Civil Liberties²³ and Press Freedom²⁴ as "partly free" in Ukraine. Besides, a number of institutional and legislative reforms were implemented in mass media and press freedom spheres. On the whole, the Freedom House highlighted the importance of newly adopted and approved procedures aimed at securing the right to access to public information, strengthening the guarantees of legal professionals of journalists and their equal opportunities, as well as ensuring privatization of state

²² The source of the data is the official site of Freedom House
<https://freedomhouse.org/report/nations-transit/2015/ukraine>,
<https://freedomhouse.org/report/nations-transit/2016/ukraine>,
<https://freedomhouse.org/report/nations-transit/2017/ukraine> (12.05.2017).

²³ The source of the data is the official site of Freedom House
<https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2016/ukraine> (21.04.2017),
<https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2017/ukraine> (12.05.2017).

²⁴ The source of the data is the official site of Freedom House
<https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-press/2016/ukraine> (23.04.2017),
<https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-press/2017/ukraine> (12.05.2017).

and community media²⁵. In this respect, the government took efforts to transform state television and radio companies and to establish public broadcast companies. As a result, a significant number of cases related to interfering with professional activities of journalists reduced in the country²⁶.

The case of Nadiya Savchenko, a Ukrainian military convicted of killing two Russian reporters was of pivotal significance in human rights protection environment (*BBC 2014; VOA 2015; Radio Freedom 2015*). Joint efforts undertaken by UNO, EU, OSCE, CoE, USA and other international, Russian, Ukrainian, European human rights protection organizations with the aim to release Ms. Savchenko were very important (*UNO 2015; OSCE Parliamentary Assembly 2015; CoE Parliamentary Assembly 2015a; CoE Parliamentary Assembly 2015b*).

A political and civil intolerance toward state officials and members of regional parties of the former government intensified after the power change, as the latter had oppressed and banned opposition rallies and civil movements. Violence inflicted against EvroMaydan activists became a subject of public debate in the society, causing clashes and a "new wave of mutual hatred" (*OSCE ODIHR TND 2015*).

A number of scandalous suicides and murders of former MPs, state officials, political and public figures were reported in 2015 (*RIA Novosti Ukraine 2015g, RIA Novosti Ukraine 2015h*). Specifically, suicides committed on 29 January 2015 by O.Kolesnyk, former governor of Kharkiv region; on 25 February 2015 by Sergey Valter, Mayor of Melitopol; on 28 February 2015 by Mykhailo Chechetov, former member of Verkhovna Rada and former deputy chairman of Party of Regions and

²⁵ See the Law on "Access to Public Information" (Verkhovna Rada protocols, 2011, № 32, page 314) {amendments adopted in comply with the Laws № 319-VIII adopted on 09.04.2015, BBP, 2015, № 25, page 192}. Accessed on 11.03.2017. <http://zakon3.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/2939-17>, the Law of Ukraine "On reforming state and municipal print media" (adopted on 24.12.2015 № 917-VIII, Verkhovna Rada protocols, 2016, № 3, page 34). Accessed on 11.03.2017. <http://zakon3.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/917-19>, the Law of Ukraine "On Amendments to Certain Legislative Acts of Ukraine on Strengthening the Guarantees of Legal Professionals of Journalists" (adopted on 14.05.2015, Verkhovna Rada protocols, 2015, № 29, page 264). Accessed on 11.03.2017. <http://zakon0.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/421-19>.

²⁶ The source of the data is the official site of Freedom House <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-press/2016/ukraine> (23.04.2017), <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-press/2017/ukraine> (12.05.2017).

O. Peklushenko, former governor of Zaporizhzhia region (*RIA Novosti Ukraine 2015g; RIA Novosti Ukraine 2015h*). Oleh Kalashnikov, MP of Party of Regions (POR) and member of Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine was shot dead on 15 April 2015 in Kyiv, (*Deutsche Welle 2015a; Deutsche Welle 2015b; BBC 2015a; Lenta.ru 2015*). Moreover, on 16 April 2015 Oles Buzin, a very provocative journalist in Segodnya newspaper and writer was gunned down in Kyiv (*Amnesty International 2016, 380; Amnesty International 2017; Deutsche Welle 2015a; Aif.ua 2015; Vedomosti 2015; Gordonua.com 2015; Gordonua.com 2015b*). He underlined the importance of unity of Slavonic nations and bilingual culture of Ukraine (*Komsomolskaya Pravda 2015*).

Amnesty International 2015/2016 reports concluded that violations of international humanitarian law, protection of the freedom of the press and rights of social groups and civil activists continued to cause deep concerns in Ukraine. The situation was mainly aggravated by armed conflicts in south-eastern regions of Ukraine, as well as growing tensions in Russian and Ukrainian relations (*Amnesty International 2016, 378-382; Amnesty International 2017, 159-162*).

Human Rights Watch 2016 report revealed numerous violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms, as well as norms of international law (*Human Rights Watch 2016*). The continuous military clashes in the eastern region of Ukraine and difficulties in providing humanitarian assistance²⁷ mainly triggered the aforementioned issues (*Human Rights Watch 2016*). All these concerns were mentioned in the reports conducted by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (*OHCHR 2015a; OHCHR 2015b; OHCHR 2015c; OHCHR 2015d; OHCHR 2016*), as well as in the report of the Human Rights Assessment Mission on Crimea provided by OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities (*OSCE ODIHR HCNM 2015*).

²⁷ More than 5 million people needed assistance and 3 million of them belonged to the vulnerable group according to 2015 data, accumulated in eastern Ukraine. Within the same period over 9,000 people were killed and injured more than 21,000; 1,4 million people were forcibly displaced and over 600,000 became refugees (The source of the data is the official site of Human Rights Watch international organization, "World Report 2016. Ukraine: Events of 2015" // <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2016/country-chapters/ukraine> (12.04.2017)).

The role and activities of CSOs and the Ukrainian National Platform (UNP) of the Eastern Partnership (EaP) Civil Society Forum (CSF)²⁸ were very significant in human rights protection context. The framework of CSFs is comparably influential in contrast to other post-Soviet countries. 70,321 public associations, 15,384 charitable organizations, 1,415 self-organized bodies, and 279 creative unions and other professional associations were registered as of 1 January 2016 in Ukraine (*USAID CSO Sustainability Index 2015*, 245). Modern CSFs are actively involved in Crimea and anti-terrorist activities, trying to form an environment for civil dialogue and confidence.

Civil disobedience*. Indicators of PFI subindex drastically declined in 2015 compared to those registered in 2013 and 2014.

Numerous protests against partial mobilization, aiming to increase the number of soldiers²⁹ and efficiency of armed force, were held in various regions and cities of Ukraine during 2015 (*Gorshenin Institute 2015*). Despite the fact, that it was foreseen to draft only volunteers, military professionals and citizens who served in the army, many protests were held against violations of prisoners' rights and against actions that were triggered by incidents in the war-torn situation and carried out by military departments (*TV centre 2015; Itv 2015; Ubop.info 2015*).

²⁸ For more details see the official site of the Ukrainian National Platform (UNP) of the Eastern Partnership (EaP) Civil Society Forum (CSF) <http://eap-csf.org.ua> (28.04.2017).

* Civil disobedience is a part of the "Social Unrest and Political Pressure" variable of the PFI and is measured by a number of demonstrations, strikes, social unrests, particularly pressures applied against them during a specified span of time. Taking into account the absence of such statistics, relying on the analyses, reports and informative studies carried out by newspapers and research centres, the scaling range of 0-5 was settled for their assessment, where 0 is the value for the highest number of unrest and pressure, including coup d'état and revolution and 5 is the total absence of those in question.

²⁹ In 2015, the total number of conscripts was envisaged to be 50,000 and additional 54,000 were to be recruited if the situation deteriorated. On 5 March 2015 Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine adopted the law "On size of Armed Forces of Ukraine" in comply with which it will increase and in the end, the total number of Armed Forces personnel would reach 250,000; (see the Law of Ukraine "On size of Armed Forces of Ukraine" (adopted on 05.03.2015, Verkhovna Rada protocols (2015, № 21, page.136)). Accessed on 11.03.2017. <http://zakon2.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/235-19>, the official site of the president of Ukraine «President approved Law on the Size of the Armed Forces of Ukraine up to 250 thousand people» // <http://www.president.gov.ua/en/news/prezident-zatverdiv-zakon-pro-chiselnist-zbrojnih-sil-ukrayi-35003> (11.03.2017)).

On February 20 a rally dedicated to the "Day of Dignity" was held at Independence Square in Kyiv to commemorate the first anniversary of victims of conflict (*Euronews 2015a, Euronews 2015b, Euronews 2015c; Gorshenin Institute 2015b*). Participants of the rally qualified the events as "Revolution of Dignity" demanding the authorities to reveal those who were guilty in killing civil activists during the mass protests in 2013-2014 (*Євромайдан 2015a; Євромайдан 2015b; Євромайдан 2015c; RIA Novosti 2015a*).

On April 21-22 coal miners initiated protest actions in the district of Kyiv demanding the president, government and Verkhovna Rada to restore state support programmes for coal industry (*Gordonua.com 2015c*). Ukrainian miners temporarily blocked the central highway in Kyiv demanding full repayment of wages and resignation of Ukraine's minister of energy and coal industry (*Gordonua.com 2015c*).

Protesters gathered in front of Verkhovna Rada on May 14, 2015 with a call to decrease communal tariffs which had been unreasonably and abruptly increased by the government (*Euronews 2015d*).

On June 7 members of the Right Sector national liberation movement rallied with a slogan "March for Truth-March of Dignity" to protest the president's actions (*RIA Novosti Ukraine 2015b*).

On July 3, volunteer battalions and civil activists held a mass rally in the capital, calling the authorities to strengthen the country's sovereignty, increase public confidence, refuse to carry out peaceful negotiations, to abolish anti-terrorist operations in eastern Ukraine, accept the imposed war, sever all interstate ties with Russia and implement effective reforms in the defense field. (*RIA Novosti Ukraine 2015e, RIA Novosti Ukraine 2015d, RIA Novosti Ukraine 2015c*). Members of the Right Sector national liberation movement in support of Kyiv rally held another protest action in Zaporizhzhia (*RIA Novosti Ukraine 2015c*).

On August 31 another rally was organized in front of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, where the participants opposed constitutional changes and decentralization of power (*BBC 2015b; Euronews 2015e; Deutsche Welle 2015c; Deutsche Welle 2015d; Deutsche Welle 2015e*). It ended with the grenade explosion and clashes between the police and protesters (*Euronews 2015e*;

Deutsche Welle 2015e). As a result, 3 policemen were dead and 130 demonstrators were injured (*Euronews 2015e; Deutsche Welle 2015e*).

Mass protests were also conducted by miners and educators on December 10 in Lviv demanding the authorities to raise, repay, as well as ensure indexation of their salaries (*Segodnya 2015a*). The same day a protest against a new Tax Code was held in Odesa which was mainly related to restrictions of rights of those who produced agricultural goods (*Segodnya 2015b*).

On December 13, 2015 the Law of Ukraine “About National Police”³⁰ triggered another civil disobedience in comply with which the former “militia” was renamed and reformed into “national police”. Law-enforcement officials and rally participants demanded from Interior Ministry of Ukraine to abolish training and re-qualification reforms organized in the mentioned Ministry (*RIA Novosti Ukraine 2015f*). A. Avakov, the interior minister, completely rejected³¹ demonstrators’ demands on the grounds of the urgency of implemented reforms (*Segodnya 2015c; Українська правда 2015; Censor.net 2015b*).

In respect to indicators of Political Stability and Rule of Law, we can state that they extremely decreased in 2015. Besides, Political Stability indicator registered in 2014-2015 was the lowest for the observed 1995-2013 period. Nonetheless, a slight improvement of the latter (6,19) was denoted in 2015, which cannot be considered sufficient so far. The Rule of Law indicator also decreased in 2015 compared to 2002-2014 years³².

In reference to Corruption Perceptions Index, the indicators were improved and Ukraine correspondingly occupied the 130th and 131st places among 168 and

³⁰ See the Law of Ukraine “About National Police” (Verkhovna Rada protocols, adopted on 02.07.2015 № 580-VIII, № 40-41, page 379). Accessed on 11.03.2017. <http://zakon0.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/580-19/page>.

³¹ Avakov, interior minister of Ukraine reported that 180,000 people were employed in the mentioned ministry at the beginning of 2015, whereas 47,000 were dismissed at the end of 2015 (See Censor.net 2015b. "Protest of dismissed policemen: opinions and assessments". "Митинг уволених міліціонерів: мнения и оценки" // http://censor.net.ua/resonance/364973/miting_uvolennyh_militsionerov_mneniya_i_otsenki).

³² See the official site of the World Bank <http://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/index.aspx#reports> (29.04.2017).

178 countries and states³³. Implementation of anti-corruption strategy for 2015-2017³⁴ had a significant impact on the reforms undertaken by the judicial system in the battle against corruption.

According to the data provided by Global Gender Gap 2015/2016 Report, Ukraine took 67th place out of 145 and 69th place out of 144 states accordingly. The lowest indicator was sustainably registered in subindex of political empowerment (*Global Gender Gap Report 2015, 2016*).

To sum up, it should be noted that the PFI curve of Ukraine went up in 2015 compared to the previous year and was estimated with 0,340 points in 2014 and 0,364 points in 2015. The lowest PFI indicators were registered in 2014 and 2015 within the indicated 1995-2015 period.

9.2 Economic Factors Index (EFI)

The curve of EFI grew in comparison to the previous year and 0,584 and 0,618 points were registered in 2014 and 2015 respectively. A comparative increase of Foreign direct investments, Trade rate and reduction of Budget deficit had a positive effect on the curve. The indicators of Gross domestic product and Domestic credit lowered as well in 2015. Nonetheless, an unprecedented fourfold increase of inflation rate (48,7 %) in 2014 negatively impacted the Ukraine economic system. Hence, it had been the highest indicator registered since 1995³⁵. Ukrainian hryvnia devaluation, a long-lasting imbalance in a consumer market, high level of foreign debt and political shocks, barriers and risks to form new trade and economic ties combined with continuous anti-terrorist operation in the south-

³³ See the official site of Transparency International <http://www.transparency.org/cpi2015> (25.04.2017), http://www.transparency.org/news/feature/corruption_perceptions_index_2016 (25.04.2017).

³⁴ See the Law “On the State anti-corruption policy in Ukraine (Anti-corruption strategies) for 2015-2017 (approved by the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine від 29 квітня 2015 р. № 265)”: <http://zakon3.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/265-2015-%D0%BF> (25.04.2017), the official site of the national anti-corruption agency <https://nazk.gov.ua/antykorupciyna-strategiya> (25.04.2017).

³⁵ See the official site of the World Bank <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/FP.CPI.TOTL.ZG?locations=UA> (09.05.2017).

eastern regions of the country were the main causes that entailed the worsening of the situation. Direct intervention of the state in processes directed to the price rise and its formation in various market fields negatively marked the economic situation. That is to say, a sharp increase in tariffs for transport and communication, housing and communal services, as well as prices for food and excised goods caused a deterioration in the spoken field³⁶.

13% reduction of industrial production was also recorded in 2015, namely, in sectors of mining and exploitation of open mines (14,2%) and sectors of manufacture (12,6%), as well as the supply of electricity, gas and clean air (12,0%)³⁷.

On-going negotiations for the implementation of Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA) ³⁸ played an essential role in the development of EU-Ukraine economic relations. Besides, EU as the largest trading partner continuously assisted in economic reforms of the country. Respectively, 32,9% of the goods (non-ferrous metals, iron ore, electric cars, grain), produced within 9 months, were exported to Europe, whereas 39,1% of goods (cars, transport equipment, chemicals, textile, clothing and agricultural products) were imported from Europe³⁹ in 2015. To sum up, trade rate between EU and Ukraine reached 20,4 milliard euros within 9 months of 2015⁴⁰.

9.3 Social Factors Index (SFI)

The SFI curve decreased in 2015 (see Figure 1, Table 1). It was registered by 0,774 points in 2014 compared to 0,658 points in 2015 (see Table 1), which was chiefly conditioned by the drastic fall of Real wage.

³⁶ See the official site of the World Bank <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/FP.CPI.TOTL.ZG?locations=UA> (09.05.2017).

³⁷ See *ibid*.

³⁸ See the official site of the EU Delegation to Ukraine https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/ukraine/1937/ukraine-and-eu_en (09.05.2017).

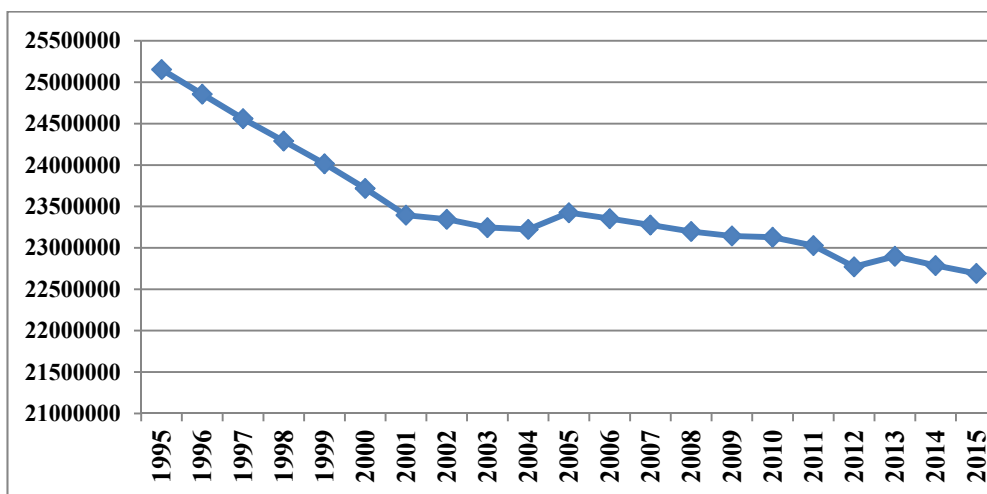
³⁹ See *ibid*.

⁴⁰ See *ibid*.

Nevertheless, 0,2% decline in unemployment rate, reaching 9,1%, positively affected the SFI, but it maintained its high level compared to 2004-2013 period.

Figure 4

Total labour force in Ukraine for 1995-2015 years



The level of international labour force migration was the lowest compared to 2010 and numbered 533,278 people⁴¹. The top two destinations were Kyiv city and Kyiv region⁴² for 2011-2015 on account of the highest average monthly salary.

The World Bank reported that labour force was reduced by 2,4 million people and reached 22,691,303⁴³ in 2015 (see Figure 4). It proves the fact, that the situation in the labor market may continue to deteriorate over the coming years. Government expenditure from the consolidated budget on social protection and security of the population constituted 176339,8⁴⁴ hryvnias (8 milliard 204 million

⁴¹ The source of the data is the official site of State Migration Service of Ukraine <http://dmsu.gov.ua/statystichni-dani/2945-statystyka> (09.05.2017).

⁴² See *ibid*.

⁴³ The source of the data is the official site of the World Bank <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.TLF.TOTL.IN?locations=UA&view=chart> (11.05.2017).

⁴⁴ The source of the data is the official site of the State Statistics Service of Ukraine <http://www.ukrstat.gov.ua> (09.05.2017).

USA dollars) in 2015, which was 25,9% of the total expenditure and 8,9% of GDP⁴⁵.

Armed conflict and humanitarian crisis in the south-eastern regions of Ukraine slowed down processes providing a solution to social inequality and poverty reduction. OHCHR data precisely stated that in total 30,211 people suffered- 9,167 dead and 21,440 injured within the conflict period from April 2014 to February 2016(*OHCHR 2016*).

According to assessments provided by various international and European organizations, 3,8 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance. Moreover, the people who are located near the line of contact live in disparate social conditions. Besides, more than 1,5 million people were displaced (*European External Action Service 2017; UN Security Council 2016; OHCHR 2015a; OHCHR 2015b; OHCHR 2015c; OHCHR 2015d*). Due to the fact, that cease-fire regime had been constantly violated, it was difficult to duly protect people's social rights and involve the community in the market, periodically estimate social situation, provide social integration in the area of conflict, meet and satisfy social needs of the vulnerable group and reinforce social unity. Therefore, financial assistance provided by EU MS to regulate and solve the above-mentioned social problems were of great significance in this respect. In total, 204,1 million euros (70,1 million by the EU) were allocated to provide humanitarian assistance to the sufferers (*European External Action Service 2017*).

9.4 Educational Factors Index (EdFI)

The EdFI curve was comparatively stable in 2015. Ukraine is qualified as a country with a high level of Human Development Index (HDI) Education Index (*Human Development Report 2016*).

Government spending on education constituted 6,39%⁴⁶ of GDP in 2015, whereas state education spending equaled to 5,34% of GDP. 127,12 milliard

⁴⁵ See *ibid*.

hryvnia (5,9 milliard USA dollars)⁴⁷ were allotted to education in the same year. State education spending averaged 18,239 hryvnias (835,1 USA dollars) per student and 15,321 hryvnias (84%) were extracted from the state budget and 2,918 hryvnias (16%) from the private sector⁴⁸.

To generally increase an efficiency of the education sector the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine⁴⁹ implemented comprehensive reforms aimed at adjusting financial policy, as well as educational programmes to meet market demands. The main goal was to form a state model that would supervise the quality of education and to adopt a financial policy of education in line with European standards, which would promote the quality of educational services.

In 2015 Ukraine joined Horizon 2020, the European Union's research and innovation funding programme. The country would benefit from support to increase the level of competitiveness of educational system and scientific researches and to deepen international scientific collaboration⁵⁰.

Ukraine maintained the projects of TEMPUS-IV⁵¹ and higher education system reforms⁵² within the framework of Bologna Process. It took an active part in Erasmus Plus Programmes as well⁵³. The recent activities and events created new opportunities for universities in Ukraine.

⁴⁶ The source of the data is the official site of the State Statistics Service of Ukraine <http://www.ukrstat.gov.ua> (09.05.2017).

⁴⁷ See *ibid*.

⁴⁸ See *ibid*.

⁴⁹ The source of the data is the official site of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine <http://mon.gov.ua/activity/regulyatorna-politika.html> (09.05.2017).

⁵⁰ The source of the data is the official site of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine <http://mon.gov.ua/activity/mizhnarodni-zvyazki/uchast-u-programax-es-erazmus-ta-gorizont-2020/gorizont-2020.html> (09.05.2017), <http://h2020.com.ua/uk> (09.05.2017).

⁵¹ The source of the data is the official site of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine <http://mon.gov.ua/activity/mizhnarodni-zvyazki/uchast-u-programax-es-erazmus-ta-gorizont-2020/baza-danix-osvitnix-proektiv-programi-es-tempus-v-ukrayini.html> (09.05.2017), official site of Erasmus + national office, <http://erasmusplus.org.ua/en/tempus-iv.html> (09.05.2017).

⁵² The source of the data is the official site of The European Higher Education Area (EHEA) <http://www.ehea.info/pid34250-cid101611/ukraine.html> (09.05.2017).

⁵³ The source of the data is the official site of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine <http://mon.gov.ua/activity/mizhnarodni-zvyazki/uchast-u-programax-es-erazmus-ta-gorizont-2020/erazmus> (09.05.2017).

9.5 Health Factors Index (HFI)

The curve of HFI was stable compared to the previous year. The indicators for 2014 and 2015 remained unchanged with 0,429 points, whereas the 2013 indicator was the highest one registered within the observed period.

The Ministry of Health of Ukraine within Ukraine-2020 programme implemented activities which were aimed at stable development of the healthcare system. It all had a considerable influence on the improvement of HFI⁵⁴.

Health expenditure of Ukraine constituted 7,8% of GDP which was equivalent to 155,2 milliard hryvnias (7 milliard 221 million USA dollars) in 2015⁵⁵. Within the scope of the general functional structure of health care system 36,7% were allotted to expenses for medical supplies (medicine and medical equipment), 24,1% for inpatient hospital services, 16% for outpatient treatment, 2,6% for rehabilitation services, 5,3% for other relevant services, 1,1 % for prevention and public services and 14,2% for other health care related services⁵⁶.

Cooperation with international and European structures played a pivotal role to fulfill main goals of public health policy of the country's health care system in general. In particular, the World Bank provided \$215 million for five years term to develop and to improve medical system and health care service of the population of Ukraine⁵⁷. The aforementioned programmes were aimed at enhancing the effectiveness of management in health care sphere, ensuring cooperation between public administration and local self-governing bodies, as well as availability and accessibility to medical care and services.

⁵⁴ See «Кабінет Міністрів України розпорядження від 4 березня 2015 р. № 213-р «Про затвердження плану заходів з виконання Програми діяльності Кабінету Міністрів України та Стратегії сталого розвитку “Україна-2020” у 2015 році» (Із змінами, внесеними згідно з Розпорядженнями КМ)» // <http://zakon1.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/213-2015-%D1%80> (11.05.2017).

⁵⁵ The source of the data is the official site of the State Statistics Service of Ukraine <http://www.ukrstat.gov.ua> (09.05.2017).

⁵⁶ The source of the data is the official site of the State Statistics Service of Ukraine <http://www.ukrstat.gov.ua> (09.05.2017).

⁵⁷ The source of the data is the official site of the Ministry of Health of Ukraine http://www.moz.gov.ua/ua/portal/wbnk_20150519.html (09.05.2017).

9.6 Development Trends of the Index of Democracy Level

Figure 5

Index of Democracy Level of Ukraine in the time span between 1995-2015*

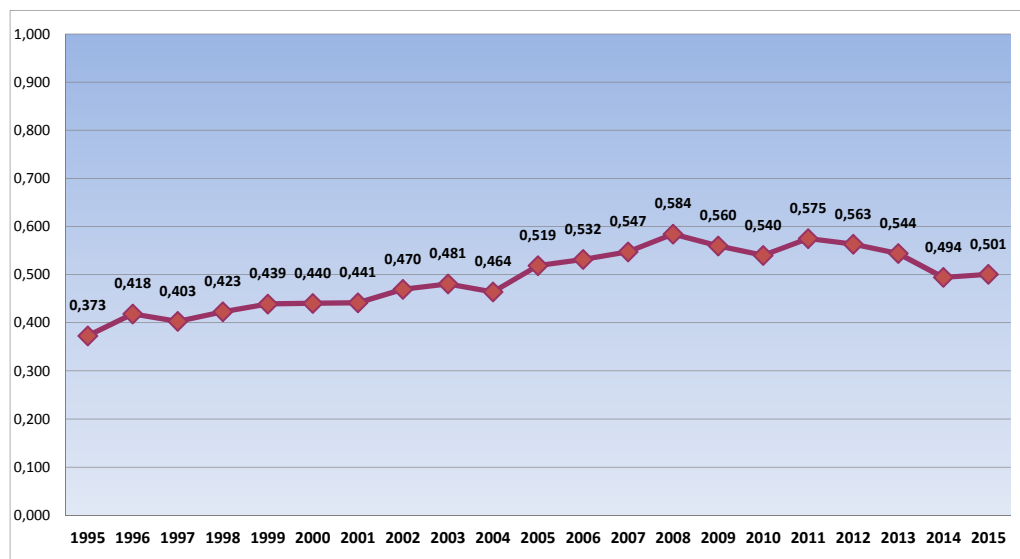


Figure 5 denotes that in comparison to the IDLs, measured within 1995-2015, the 2015 IDL slightly increased and had a higher indicator than in 1995.

When analyzing Figure 1 and 5, it becomes clear that an increase of the IDL in 2015 was mainly stipulated by a slight improvement of PFI and EFI, as well as by a comparative stability of HFI and EdFI.

The decrease of SFI had a negative impact on the IDL. Even though HFI and EdFI sustained their stability in 2015, intensification of social challenges was of certain influence.

A 2015 comparative analysis of all factors of the IDL shows that the following elements such as international and European cooperation processes, implementation of international and European commitments aimed at a sustainable development of society, deepening of EU-Ukraine bilateral relations, implementation of constitutional amendments on decentralization of power,

* Source: calculations by the researcher.

serious steps to peacefully restore territorial integrity of Ukraine, reforms in regional and self-governance system, elections of self-governance bodies conducted by new election code and CSOs active participation in decision-making processes related to civil society issues were very important for the country. Modernization of various religious and ethno-cultural norms as well as trends of linguistic and cultural changes played a pivotal role in the establishment of spiritual and cultural basis for civil society in Ukraine.

Ukrainian-Russian tense relations, the armed conflict in the south-east of the country and disabidance of laws and of the Constitution of Ukraine by self-proclaimed republics of Donetsk and Lugansk had a negative impact on the democratization of the political system in Ukraine.

9.7 Regression analysis of the Index of Democracy Level

Ashot Aleksanyan, Arusyak Aleksanyan

Within the framework of the research, the regression analysis will illustrate those variables of Political, Economic, Social, Educational and Health Factors Indices included in the model, which have the most significant influence on the IDL of Ukraine.

According to the regression data, there was a significant correlation between IDL_i and variables of Economic, Social and Educational Factors, whereas a significant correlation between IDL_i and variables of political and health factors was not detected.

According to the data, with respect to economic indicators included in the model, a significant correlation was maintained between the IDL_i ⁵⁸ and variables of Foreign direct investments.

$$Y' = 0,017x_1 + 0,444 \text{ (Adj. } R^2 = 0,349),$$

⁵⁸ IDL_i is the Index of Democracy Level cleaned from the corresponding variable during every paired regression analysis.

where Y' is the IDL_i (IDL was cleaned from the variable of FDI), and x_1 is FDI (% of GDP).

In Social Factors Index a significant correlation was observed between IDL_i and Real wage.

$$Y' = 0,036x_2 + 0,450 \text{ (Adj. } R^2 = 0,637\text{)},$$

where Y' is the IDL_i ((IDL was cleaned from the Real wage), and x_2 is the Real wage (\$100).

As a result of regression analysis of Educational Factors Index, a significant correlation was established between IDL_i and Government expenditure on education.

$$Y' = 0,046x_3 + 0,245 \text{ (Adj. } R^2 = 0,463\text{)},$$

where Y' is the IDL_i (IDL was cleaned from the variable of Government expenditure on education), and x_3 is the Government expenditure on education (% of GDP).

Foreign direct investments of the EFI also make an influence on the democracy of the country. The growth of FDI by 1% of GDP will provide the growth of the IDL_i by 0,017 units.

In reference to SFI, Real wage has an impact on the level of democracy and the growth of Real wage by 100\$ will cause the growth of the IDL_i with corresponding 0,036 units.

As for the EdFI, a change of Government expenditure on education by 1% of GDP will assist to the increase of IDL_i by 0,046 units accordingly.

By summarizing aforesaid, regression analysis shows that FDI, Real wage and Government expenditure on education along with other factors mostly influence the IDL. They indicate that the procedures aimed at increasing Real wages, Foreign direct investments and Government spending on education are of great significance to facilitate civilarchic reforms in the Ukrainian public sector.

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Abbreviations

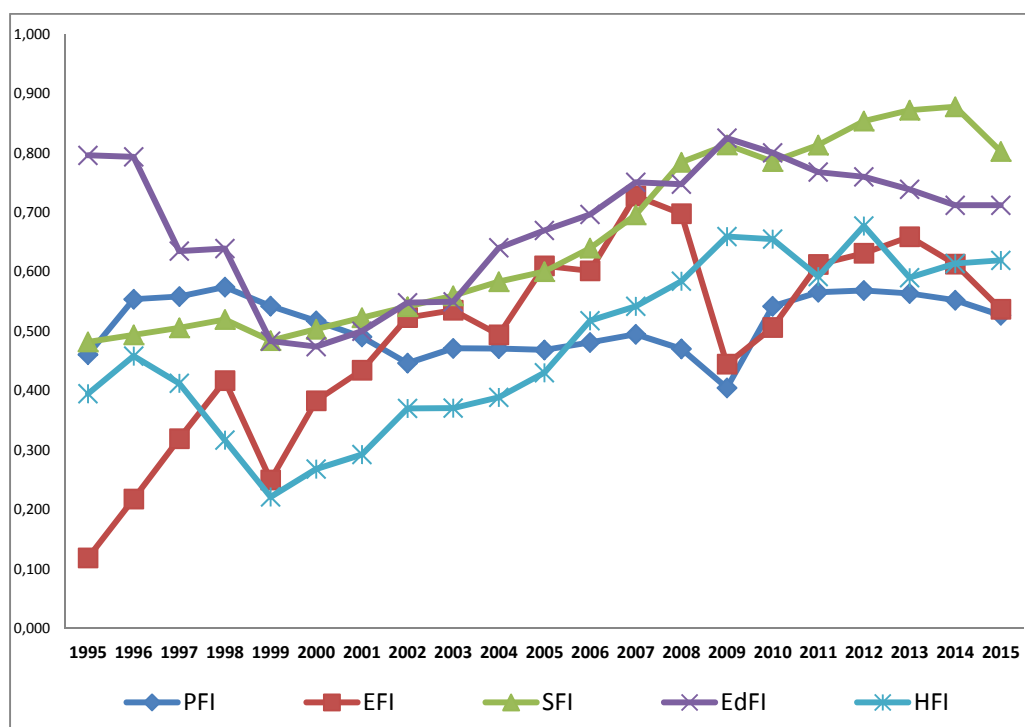
CEC	Central Election Commission
CoE	Council of Europe
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
DCFTA	Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area
EaP	Eastern Partnership
EdFI	Educational Factors Index
EFI	Economic Factors Index
EU	European Union
EU MS	European Union Member State
FDI	Foreign direct investments
GDP	Gross domestic product
HFI	Health Factors Index
IDL	Index of Democracy Level
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PFI	Political Factors Index
RF	Russian Federation
SFI	Social Factors Index
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
USA	United State of America
WB	World Bank

CHAPTER 10.

INDEX OF DEMOCRACY LEVEL OF MOLDOVA (IDL)

ARMNIE KHACHATRYAN

Figure 1
Indices of Political, Social, Economic, Educational and Health Factors affecting the Index of
Democracy Level of Moldova in the time span between 1995-2015*



* The source is based on the calculations accumulated by the researcher.
The indices of IDL factors are comparable only by the trends.

Figure 1

**Indices of Political, Economic, Social, Educational and Health Factors and Index of
Democracy Level of Moldova in the time span between 1995-2015***

Years	PFI	EFI	SFI	EdFI	HFI	IDL
1995	0,461	0,119	0,482	0,796	0,395	0,403
1996	0,554	0,218	0,494	0,794	0,458	0,476
1997	0,559	0,319	0,506	0,635	0,412	0,483
1998	0,574	0,417	0,520	0,639	0,317	0,507
1999	0,542	0,250	0,484	0,483	0,221	0,419
2000	0,517	0,383	0,504	0,474	0,268	0,449
2001	0,491	0,435	0,523	0,500	0,293	0,459
2002	0,446	0,523	0,542	0,548	0,370	0,479
2003	0,471	0,535	0,560	0,550	0,371	0,495
2004	0,471	0,494	0,584	0,641	0,389	0,499
2005	0,469	0,610	0,601	0,670	0,430	0,537
2006	0,481	0,602	0,640	0,697	0,518	0,557
2007	0,495	0,728	0,696	0,751	0,542	0,610
2008	0,470	0,698	0,785	0,748	0,584	0,606
2009	0,405	0,445	0,814	0,825	0,660	0,533
2010	0,542	0,507	0,786	0,800	0,655	0,600
2011	0,566	0,613	0,814	0,768	0,592	0,630
2012	0,569	0,631	0,854	0,760	0,677	0,648
2013	0,564	0,659	0,872	0,739	0,590	0,644
2014	0,552	0,613	0,878	0,712	0,614	0,627
2015	0,527	0,537	0,803	0,712	0,619	0,590

* The source is based on the calculations accumulated by the researcher.

The EFI, SFI, HFI, EdFI, and indices of IDL calculated during certain years may insignificantly vary in comparison to the indices of the corresponding years estimated in the previous publications in the result of updated and newly inserted data as well as changes of minimum and maximum indices.

10.1 Political Factors Index (PFI)

Moldova was thrown into a deep political crisis in the wake of banking scandal, as well as discord among parliamentary parties and prominent officials. All these led to a government dysfunction and deadlock, causing several reform efforts to stall. Details about a major fraud involving three Moldovan banks continued to be unveiling during the year, implicating high-ranking public figures and all these leading to mass protests. A mounting tension complicated processes of government formation contributing to disagreements among the political parties. In 2015 the situation ended in a political impasse since the parties were unable to create a new governing coalition.

Prime Minister Cyril Gaburich resigned from his post in 2015 when earlier, the General Prosecutor's Office of Moldova had launched an investigation with the claims that Moldovan Prime Minister Cyril Gaburich might have forged his high school and college diplomas (*RIA Novosti 2015*). In the meantime, those incidents were followed by local elections. According to OSCE observations, elections “were efficiently administered and offered the electorate a diverse choice”. Pro-European parties secured a majority in most municipalities, including Chisinau. Pro-Russian “Our Party” headed by a businessman Renato Usatai won in Balti, the second largest city of Moldova. A business magnate Ilan Shore, who was among those embroiled in the banking scandal, was elected a mayor of Orhei city, a town north of Chisinau. Elections for a governor of the Autonomous Territorial Unit of Gagauzia, the principal home of the country's ethnic Gagauz minority, took place in March. Independent candidate Irina Vlah, supported by the Party of Socialists of the Republic of Moldova, won the elections. She was a pro-Russian politician and had favoured closer ties with Russia (*Freedom House 2016a*).

On 4 March 2016 the Constitutional Court of Moldova outlawed a constitutional amendment adopted in 2000 which gave the parliament the right to elect the president. Prior to that amendment, that right belonged to citizens¹.

¹ See No. 1115-XIV Constitutional Law of the Republic of Moldova (adopted on 05.06.2000).

The case originated in a complaint lodged with the Constitutional Court on 12 November 2015 by 18 MPs of the parliamentary faction of the Liberal Democratic Party of Moldova. They demanded to amend some sections of the Constitution of Moldova that had changed the method of electing the President of the Republic of Moldova².

In public hearing, one of the authors voiced the subject of the complaint, pointing out the fact that the authors only objected against the mechanism of electing the President of the Republic of Moldova by a vote of 3/5 of the MPs. According to the authors of the complaint, the amendments adopted on 5 July 2000 by MPs in the Parliament were not endorsed by the Constitutional Court, which was not consistent with amendment rules and norms of the Constitution. MP Valeriu Ghiletschi, the author of the complaint, and Eduard Serbenko, a deputy minister of justice attended a public hearing. It should be mentioned that Parliament did not delegate a representative as such.

In public hearing, it was agreed that procedural violations took place during 2000 Constitutional amendments. As a consequence, the court underlined the necessity to conduct new amendments and specified the concept of provisions directly defined by the Constitution.

That Constitutional Court decision³ amazed the citizens, members of political institutions and scientific community of Moldova. The verdict was final and could not be appellated; it entered into force immediately after its adoption and was published in the official journal (*Constitutional Court of Moldova 2016*).

The decision triggered new diverse approaches in political and academic circles. Victor Pustsas, a former president of the Constitutional Court, expressed his suspicion of the applicability of the decision, whereas Aleksandr Arsen a constitutional expert interpreted the decision as a complete abuse of power. Meanwhile, a former judge of the Constitutional Court and scientist Nikolay Osmochatse welcomed the decision, but could not describe a current system of

² Constitution of the RM 1994, Section 2 in its entirety and the phrase „except the case provided for in Article 78.5" of paragraph 5 of Article I of Law no.1115-XIV of 5 July 2000

³ The Law on "Electing the president" (adopted on 13.12.2016). <http://www.legislationline.org/documents/action/popup/id/4707>.

governance in Moldova. Moreover, he noted that the society should focus more on differences between presidential and parliamentary system only through academic discussions. An acting president of the Constitutional Court Aleksandru Tanas mentioned in a TV programme that despite direct presidential elections, the country was a parliamentary republic, as the president was not endowed with new powers (*Moldova politics 2016*).

Therefore, 3/5 of the MPs esteemed the decision adopted by the Constitutional Court on electing the President, as well as related rules and provisions to be inconsistent with Constitution. Consequently, provisions of the Constitution on direct electing of the president were enacted (*Constitution of RM 1994, Articles 78 (1, 3, 4), 85 and 89*), which were effective until 5 July 2000⁴. In comply with the Court decision, appropriate amendments to the Electoral Code should have been made until 4 March 2016 (*OSCE/ODIHR and Venice Comission 2016*).

19 years later in 2016, the citizens of Moldova were given an opportunity to elect the president directly. That amendment satisfied 90% expectations of the Moldovan society. It was one of the main provisions recently prioritized by both pro-Russian and pro-European opposition. The opposition of the country claimed that the aforementioned decision was made under the strong influence of the Moldovan oligarch Vlad Plahotniuc. As a result, some concessions were to be made by the opposition as well. That was a complicated step and was aimed at strengthening dominant positions in the political arena in Moldova (*New Eastern Europe 2016*).

It should be noted that nonpartisan Nicolae Timofti, the president who was indirectly elected by the parliament gained 62 out of 101 votes (61,4%). Those were the last presidential elections by indirect voting, which took place in 2012 (*Hunanyan 2015, 236*). The next presidential elections occurred in 2016 which had been the first direct elections since 1996⁵.

The first round of elections on 30 October 2016, had a voter turnout of 50.95%, sufficient to be validated, as the threshold of 1/3 of voters included in the

⁴ See the Constitutional No. 1115-XIV.

⁵ The source of the data is Election Guide (Democracy Assistance & Elections News) (2016) <http://www.electionguide.org/elections/id/2983/> (20.01.2017).

voter lists required to validate elections that had been surpassed. Since none of the 9 candidates for President of Moldova met 50% of the valid votes cast, a second round was held on November 13, 2016 with the participation of the first two candidates who received the highest number of votes, namely Igor Dodon and Maia Sandu. The voter turnout was 53.45%, and Igor Dodon, the leader of Party of Socialists was elected the 5th President of the Republic of Moldova by gaining 53,45% of the votes (see Table 2)⁶:

Table 2

Votes (%) received by Moldovan presidential candidates⁷

Candidates	2016	
	I r.	II r.
<i>Igor Dodon (Party of Socialists of the Republic of Moldova)</i>	47,98	52,11
Maia Sandu ((Action and Solidarity) Party)	38,71	47,89
Dumitru Ciubasenco (Our Party)	6,03	-
Iurie Leanca (European People's Party of Moldova)	3,11	-
Mihai Ghimpu (Liberal Party)	1,80	-
Valeriu Ghiletschi (independent candidate)	1,08	-
Maia Laguta (independent candidate)	0,76	-
Silvia Radu (independent candidate)	0,37	-
Ana Gutu (Right) Party	0,17	-

Candidates, dropped out from the election race were Inna Popenko who was excluded from the race by the appeal of the Central Electoral Commission (CEC) and Marian Lupu and Andrei Nastase who, after the withdrawal from the elections, announced their endorsement of the centre-right common candidate Maia Sandu. CEC rejected the registration of 4 candidates, whereas other 8 candidates didn't manage to collect a necessary number of signatures.

⁶ The source of the data is E-Democracy. "Elections of the President of the Republic of Moldova, October 30 and November 13, 2016." [http://www.e-democracy.md/en/elections/presidential/2016/\(20.01.2017\)](http://www.e-democracy.md/en/elections/presidential/2016/(20.01.2017)).

⁷ The source of the data is E-Democracy. "Elections of the President of the Republic of Moldova, October 30 and November 13, 2016." [http://www.e-democracy.md/en/elections/presidential/2016/\(20.01.2017\)](http://www.e-democracy.md/en/elections/presidential/2016/(20.01.2017)).

The Communist Party didn't nominate a candidate. In the meantime, the party called for boycotting the elections declaring that they were illegal. Liberal-Democrat Party didn't nominate its candidate either. Instead, it supported the opposition centre-right common candidate Maia Sandu.

The next coming parliamentary elections are scheduled to be held in November 2018 (Inter-Parliament Union 2016). Elections are conducted in the following way: parties contest for 101 seats through proportional representation. In order to gain representation, political parties need to receive 6% of the valid votes to have allocated seats in the parliament. For the absolute majority in parliament, the party or alliance needs 51 seats. The threshold for electoral blocs of 2 parties is 9%, and 11% for blocs of 3 or more parties. Independent candidates need to receive 2% of the valid votes to obtain a seat. Elections are validated if the turnout is over 33%⁸.

The Republic of Moldova starting with 2018 parliamentary elections is planning to pilot a remote internet voting. On 28 June 2016 the results of the feasibility study "Introduction of Internet Voting in the Republic of Moldova" were presented by the Central Electoral Commission conducted with the support of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), within the project "Improving the quality of democracy in Moldova through parliamentary and electoral support", financed by the Governments of Sweden and Norway. Deputy Speaker of the Parliament Liliana Palihovici mentioned that the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova had had several attempts to amend the legislation for the purpose of introduction of internet voting. "One important argument in favor of internet voting is that it grants full voting rights to all citizens who reside outside the country", said Liliana Palihovici (*UNDP in Moldova 2016*).

Human rights and freedoms. Women are underrepresented in public life. Consequently, only 19 women were elected to the Parliament. Orders of protection of women who suffered from domestic violence weren't properly

⁸ The source of the data is Inter-Parliament Union. Republic of Moldova Parliament (Parliament) (2016) http://www.ipu.org/parline-e/reports/2215_B.htm (20.01.2017).

enforced. Moreover, Moldova is a source for women and girls trafficked abroad for forced prostitution⁹.

Global Gender Gap reports stated that gender inequality was mostly observed in the political sector. In 2014 it underwent a sweeping jump from 52 to 25 with respect to women's empowerment. Nonetheless, it slipped down 1 place in 2015. The Global Gender Gap Index examined subindices of economic participation and opportunity, health and survival and educational attainment, and Moldova was ranked 15, 40 and 52 correspondingly. In overall estimation, Moldova was ranked 26 out of 144 states¹⁰.

The draft legislation would make amendments to Article 88 of the Code of Administrative Offences and to Article 21 of the Law on the Rights of a Child titled "Protection of a family by the state". The law would add a paragraph to Article 21 that reads: "The state ensures protection of a child from the propaganda of homosexuality for any purpose and in any form," and Article 88 would now contain the following provision: "Propaganda of homosexual relations among minors by means of assemblies, mass media, Internet, brochures, booklets, images, audio-video clips, films and/or audio-video recordings, via sound recording, amplifiers or other means of sound amplification." The law imposes divertive fines for individual violators and for organizations found in violation (*Human Rights Watch 2016a*). On June 14, 2016, the draft legislation passed in the parliamentary human rights committee.

According to Human Rights Watch report, these provisions of the bill violate the protections on freedom of expression and assembly as well as create an environment of discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people, including LGBT children. Besides, it would endanger the work of LGBT human rights defenders. It would also threaten the health and well-being of Moldovans, including children, by restricting their access to necessary information.

⁹ See the official site of Freedom House <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2016/moldova> (20.01.2017).

¹⁰ See the official site of the GGGI <http://reports.weforum.org/global-gender-gap-report-2016/economies/#economy=MDA> (20.01.2017).

The 1994 Constitution of Moldova guarantees the freedom of thought and opinion for every citizen (*Article 32*), and equality before the law “regardless of race, nationality, ethnic origin, language, religion, sex, opinion, political affiliation, property or social origin” (*Article 16*). It also protects the right of a person to have access to any kind of information of public interest (*Constitution of RM 1994, Article 34*). “All of these guarantees would be severely imperilled by the proposed anti-LGBT “propaganda” legislation. The restrictions imposed on disseminating information about homosexuality are not only disproportionate but also discriminatory against a particular group and would place unjustified restrictions on freedom of speech and assembly”, as mentioned in the Human Rights Watch Letter to the MP (*Human Rights Watch 2016b*).

In May 2016, representatives from Moldova’s ministry of education attended UNESCO’s inter-ministerial conference in Paris and Moldova was one of 27 countries to publicly support the call for action to end school-based violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

In conclusion, representatives of the Human Rights Watch wrote: “We respectfully ask you again, as a member of parliament, to use your influence to help ensure that laws adopted in Moldova are in full compliance with national and international human rights standards. We urge you to use your vote to uphold the rights of all persons in Moldova to fully enjoy the right to freedom of expression—including the right to seek, receive and impart information—without discrimination of any kind” (*Human Rights Watch 2016b*).

A number of legislative problems hinder the development of press freedom, including weak enforcement of protections for journalists. In 2015, media representatives voiced concern about increasing government attempts to limit journalistic access to public information and events of public interest, including legislative proceedings. On several occasions during the year, the authorities denied entry to journalists from Russian news outlets.

Press Freedom Index estimated in 2015 and published by Freedom House received a downward trend arrow since 2010. Hence, Press freedom in Moldova was qualified as partly free. In comparison to previous year, press freedom

subindices of political and economic environment decreased, whereas index of political environment remained unchanged (*Freedom House 2016b*).

In March 2015, the parliament amended the broadcasting code to require media outlets to disclose information about their owners and it was one of positive steps aimed at improvement of the sphere. Longstanding assumptions that the media ownership was mainly concentrated in the hands of a few politicians and business leaders were confirmed after those measures took effect in November. Critics noted that the law did not require disclosure of information about beneficiaries registered offshore (*Freedom House 2016a*).

In spite of ongoing efforts taken by NGO with the task to improve a political and legislative environment, the overall media landscape remains restricted, with outlets often used to advance the political or commercial interests of their owners or affiliates.

In Geneva 2016 some provisions of the human rights law were reconsidered by the UN Committee of Human Rights and Moldova was one of 168 countries that ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). The Committee will review the implementation process carried out by Moldova and will discuss some issues with the delegation of the Republic of Moldova (*United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner 2016*).

Civil disobedience*. Opposition parties and civic groups, particularly the Dignity and Truth platform, organized several anti-government and anti-corruption protests during 2015 without obstruction from the authorities. In May, a group of activists held a march in Chisinau for the rights of LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender) people. But some counter demonstrators harassed participants, but fortunately, the event concluded without reports of significant violence (*Freedom House 2016*).

* Civil disobedience is a part of the “Social Unrest and Political Pressure” variable of the PFI and is measured by a number of demonstrations, strikes, social unrests, particularly pressures applied against them during a specified span of time. Taking into account the absence of such statistics, relying on the analyses, reports and informative studies carried out by newspapers and research centres, the scaling range of 0-5 was chosen for their assessment, where 0 is the value for the highest number of unrest and pressure, including coup d’état and revolution and 5 is the total absence of those in question.

Corruption related scandal and deteriorating economic situation fuelled large scale mass protests in spring 2015. They culminated in September with the number of protesters reaching 100,000 people, which had been the largest demonstration since the country became independent. Mass protests were organized by the Civic Platform Dignity and Truth, founded in February 2015. The platform was created after a major scandal had broken out in Moldova concerning the removal of a massive sum of money—\$1 billion—from three Moldavian banks. Dignity and Truth was a union of political analysts, journalists, political analysts, NGO members, public persons and lawyers (*BBC news 2016*).

On November 14 another demonstration was triggered by the winning of a pro-Russian statesman Igor Dodon in 2016 presidential election and it took hundreds of people to the streets.

Up to 3,000 mostly young Moldovans then marched to the offices of the Central Electoral Commission in Chisinau shouting "Down with the Mafia!". Nevertheless, the rally was quite peaceful (*Radio Free Europe/ Radio Liberty 2016*).

Hence, cases of civil disobedience had been quite numerous in Moldova for the last two years exceeding the forecasts from previous years which were mainly preconditioned by the coming 2016 presidential elections.

By studying the variables of PFI, it was evident that Political Stability variable had been declining since 2012 and decreased by 4,76 points in 2015. In reference to Rule of Law variable, it also recorded negative results that reached from 46,15 to 40,38 points in 2015¹¹.

Corruption Perceptions Index decreased by 2 points and had 103 place among 168 states and territories in 2015¹².

To sum up, it was evident that the PFI had been declining since 2012 (see Table 1). The decline was chiefly conditioned by the political crisis instigated by a grand banking scam.

¹¹ See the official site of the World Bank <http://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/index.aspx#reports> (06.02.2017).

¹² See the official site of the Transparency International Centre <http://www.transparency.org/cpi/2015#downloads> (06.02.2017).

10.2 Economic Factors Index (EFI)

Moldova continues to be the poorest country among those mentioned in this research despite the progress observed within the last 5 and 10 years. The economic growth of the country is strongly dependent on agriculture (fruit and vegetables, wine and cigarettes). Another key factor for economic development were remittances, equivalent to 1,12 milliard dollars and earned by Moldovans working in Europe, Russian or any other former Soviet Union countries (*IndexMundi 2016b*).

A newly elected president Igor Dodon claimed to sever the Association Agreement with the EU¹³, regardless of the fact, that Moldova's economy was dependent on financial means allotted by IMF (International Monetary Fund) and EU (*Financial Times 2016*). For that reason, on November 7, 2016 IMF approved \$178,7 million dollars loan (*Focus Economics 2017*).

With few natural energy resources, Moldova imports almost all of its energy from Russian and Ukraine. Studies pinpoint that more than \$5 milliard dollars debt to Gazprom for the natural gas supply in Transnistria region was the key reason explaining dependency of the state on Russian energy suppliers (*IndexMundi 2016b*).

Moldova had been slowly recovering from an economic collapse. 1,3% increase was recorded in the first half of 2016. Private consumption went up by 1,2%, partly due to financial payments from the state budget to households and 4% inventory increase. Nevertheless, a net export rate decreased by 3% on account of limited external demand and unstable currency rate. Fixed investments decreased by 6,7% too, as the real interest rates were high in contrast to a low public investments¹⁴.

Due to some forecasts, Moldova would undergo an economic downturn for the coming 5 years. Besides, if no systematic changes in bank, energy, and justice

¹³ EU and Moldova Association Agreement entered into force on 1 July 2016.

¹⁴ The source of the data is the World Bank (2016a) "Moldova Economic Update." <http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/moldova/brief/moldova-economic-update> (23.01.2017).

sectors were urgently implemented, Moldova would likely to remain as a state of mediocre growth for the next 10 years.

Three main constraints that were likely to affect the country's economic development were identified in the Expert Grup report: 1. banking scandal worth 12% of GDP entailing the bankruptcy of three Moldovan banks, as well as other fiscal implications; 2. low level of external assistance, resulting in the suspension of investments in infrastructure and even to "exodus" of foreign investment; 3. undermined economic competitiveness conditioned by a slow growth in labour productivity relative to growth of wage rate.

Nevertheless, the main source of risks for Moldovan economy is persistently the banking sector. With this in view, Adrian Lupusor, an executive director of Expert Grup, confirmed that the main problem of the Moldovan economy remained its poor banking system. Consequently, it is necessary to develop and implement a plan to reform the banking industry urgently, with a focus on boosting investigation on the banking fraud, improving transparency and quality of the shareholders, strengthening independence and capacities of the Central Bank and "de-offshorerization" of the banking sector" (*Expert Grup 2016*).

The growth of consumption rate in Moldova slowed down by enhancing the Central Bank to accommodate the monetary policy. Limited inner demand, low prices of imported goods, as well as an effective production of agriculture boosted the inflation rate to decelerate from the highest 13,6% registered in December 2015 to 3,6% in August 2016. In response, the central bank lessened the base interest rate from 19,5% registered in September 2015 to 10% since July 2016.

The law on State budget was adopted in July 2016 and, accordingly, 3.2% of the budget deficit was financed mainly by external assistance, namely EU and World Bank. But, due to certain financial issues, expenses were cut by 8,3% in the first half of 2016. The budget deficit amounted 1% of GDP¹⁵ during the same period.

6,3% growth of GDP was registered in the second half of 2016 relative to the same period of the previous year. The average growth of GDP was equal to 3,7%

¹⁵ The source of the data is the World Bank (2016a) "Moldova Economic Update." <http://www.world-bank.org/en/country/moldova/brief/moldova-economic-update> (23.01.2017).

within 1996-2016. The highest indicator was registered in 2013 by reaching 12,9%, whereas the lowest one was recorded with 7,4% back in 1996¹⁶.

Table 3

Moldova Economy Data ¹⁷

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Population (million)	3,6	3,6	3,6	3,6	3,6
GDP per capita (USD)	1,990	2,031	2,251	2,247	1,831
Economic Growth (GDP, annual variation in %)	6,4	-0,7	9,4	4,6	-0,5
Fiscal Balance (% of GDP)	-2,4	-2,1	-1,7	-1,8	-
Public Debt (% of GDP)	23,7	24,3	26,3	24,5	-
Inflation Rate (annual variation in %)	7,6	4,7	4,6	5,1	9,7
Trade Balance (USD billion)	-3,0	-3,1	-3,1	-3,0	-2,0
Exports (USD billion)	2,2	2,2	2,4	2,3	2,0
Imports (USD billion)	5,2	5,2	5,5	5,3	4,0
Exports (annual variation in %)	43,8	-2,5	12,3	-3,6	-15,9
Imports (annual variation in %)	34,7	0,4	5,4	-3,2	-25,0
External Debt (% of GDP)	75,2	82,6	83,1	82,0	-

The EFI had been growing since 2009 but with a slight 0,1 point decline in 2015. Moldova had 117 place among 178 states compared to 111 place registered in previous year¹⁸. Since 1995, it had been qualified as the mostly free country with the only exception, observed in 2002, when the country was accordingly estimated as a moderately free (*Heritage Foundation 2016a*).

After the financial crisis the EFI went on escalating till 2013. But, it was continually declining within the next years. Its decline was conditioned by the decrease of GDP, External trade rate, Domestic credit, Foreign direct investments as well as growth of Budget deficit.

¹⁶ The source of the data is Trading Economics (2016a) "Moldova GDP Annual Growth Rate." <http://www.tradingeconomics.com/moldova/gdp-annual-growth-rate> (23.01.2017).

¹⁷ The source of the data is Focus Economics. "Moldova Economic Outlook." <http://www.focus-economics.com/countries/moldova> (23.01.2017).

¹⁸ See the official site of Heritage http://www.heritage.org/index/pdf/2015/book/index_2015.pdf (08.02.2017).

The crisis in the banking sector and the absence of external assistance had a significant impact on the deterioration of the economic situation in Moldova.

10.3 Social Factors Index (SFI)

According to results of the study carried out by Gazette review, Moldova is number one among the ten poorest country in Europe and the average income of the population is \$2560 dollars. The data was provided by the World Bank (*Gazette review 2016*).

Nevertheless, a significant progress in the poverty reduction and inclusive growth of welfare has been reported in the country (*World Bank 2016*). 46,4% poverty level (\$5 per day) registered in 2012 was reduced to 38,2% in 2015. A high inflation rate and diminished remittances negatively impacted the unemployment rate in the first trimester in 2016. The adverse effects were alleviated by the price fall of food entailed by crop yield increase and indexation of pensions in April 2016¹⁹.

Moldova-Poverty assessment report by the World Bank stated that previous conditions promoting welfare in the Republic would likely to be less efficient in the future.

“Growth in money transfers is slowing down and the government cannot afford higher tariffs for pensions. “Hence, higher tariffs for pension should be implemented through an increase of workplaces”, says María E. Dávalos, one of the authors of the report (*World Bank 2016*).

Unemployment rate amounted to 4,9% in 2015 and was recorded with 1% growth in comparison to the previous year²⁰. Moldova youth unemployment rate

¹⁹ The source of the data is World Bank (2016b) “Moldova Country Snapshot.” <http://pubdocs.worldbank.org/en/655451475652155998/Moldova-snapshot-Oct2016FINAL.pdf> (24.01.2017).

²⁰ See the official site of the World Bank ` <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.UEM.TOTL.ZS> (24.01.2017).

averaged 16,93% from 2000 until 2016, reaching an all time high of 37% in the fourth quarter of 2000 and a record low of 6,90% in the fourth quarter of 2013²¹.

Moldova average monthly wages in November 2016 were equal to 262 dollars compared to 247 dollars registered for the same period in 2015. Moldova averaged 185 dollars from 2000 until 2016, reaching an all time high 265 dollars in July of 2016 and a record low of 26 dollars in January of 2000²².

10.4 Educational Factors Index (EdFI)

In 2005 Moldova joined Global Partnership for Education platform and received two grants (in 2005 and 2011) totalling \$13,2 million, which were solely devoted to the revitalization of Early Childhood Education. As a priority sector, the budget allocated to education over the period 2000-2015 grew steadily (18% in 2015), in particular, investments in this sector, which almost doubled, from 12% in 2000 to 22% in 2015 on the total education expenditure²³.

Government expenditure on education consists of capital and current expenses, including expenses aimed at educational institutions (both public and private), educational administration, as well as subsidiaries aimed for private units (students, households and etc.)

It should be noted that government expenditure per student in primary education comprised 2,181 dollars (in PPP), but in 2015 it decreased and reached 2,099, which was still a high indicator. In contrast to secondary education,

²¹ The source of the data is Trading Economics (2016c) "Moldova Youth Unemployment Rate." <http://www.tradingeconomics.com/moldova/youth-unemployment-rate> (24.01.2017).

²² The source of the data is Trading Economics (2016d) "Moldova Average Monthly Wages." <http://www.tradingeconomics.com/moldova/wages> (24.01.2017).

²³ The source of the data is Moldova Times (2016) "Over 150 villages of Moldova remain with no preschool enrollment programs." <http://www.moldovaitimes.com/2016/12/30/over-150-villages-of-moldova-remain-with-no-preschool-enrollment-programs/> (30.01.2017).

government expenditure per student in that sector comprised 1,934 dollars (in PPP) in 2014 and reached 1,980 dollars in 2015 (in PPP)²⁴.

Table 4

Gross enrollment ratio of pupils and students (%)²⁵

Years	Primary education	Elementary education	Secondary education	Tertiary education
2013/2014	84,76	93,06	87,32	41,49
2014/2015	84,9	92,41	86,11	41,21

The decline in enrollment ratio in primary, secondary and tertiary institutions can be explained by the fact that almost 3,500 young Moldovan want to study abroad, particularly in Romania (*Teleradio Moldova 2015*).

According to global competitiveness report, the educational system of Moldova significantly improved and escalated from 103rd place ranked in 2014 among 144 states to 79th place in 2015 among 140 states²⁶.

Moldova Education Reform Project is designed to implement necessary reforms in the educational sector with the engagement of various decision makers and educational actors in the specified field, as well as civil society representatives. It was developed by Education Support Program initiated by grants allocated by the president of open society foundation and implemented by Soros foundation in Moldova. Direct and indirect beneficiaries of the project are the educational actors, engaged in the process of transformation of education in the Republic of Moldova: national and local authorities, school managers, teachers, students, parents, NGOs and think tanks active in the field and finally, the entire Moldovan society (*Soros Foundation- Moldova 2016*).

²⁴ See the data collected by UNESCO Institute for Statistics <http://uis.unesco.org/en/country/MD> (30.01.2017).

²⁵ See the data collected by UNESCO Institute for Statistics <http://uis.unesco.org/en/country/MD> (30.01.2017).

²⁶ The source of the data is World Economic Forum. 1980-2015. <http://reports.weforum.org/global-competitiveness-report-2015-2016/economies/#indexId=GCI&economy=MDA> (30.01.2017).

10.5 Health Factors Index (HFI)

The government of Moldova is responsible for providing equally qualified medical services to all its citizens by annually allocating 17% of the budget to health expenditure. Health expenditure totalled 223 dollars per pax in 2015 and it was considered a high indicator when compared to similar countries. At the same time, inconsistency between health care expenditure and achieved results testified for the necessity to increase cost effectiveness (*World Bank Group- Moldova 2016*).

Life expectancy had been annually growing in Moldova with 71 years in 2016 and it had 157th ranking among all countries worldwide. There was a considerable difference between the genders in terms of life expectancy indicator: 67,14 years for men and 75,11 years for women²⁷.

Despite the fact that mortality rate among young age groups had been decreased within the last 15 years, an increase in cases of adult mortality had been recently registered. Accordingly, 12,6 deaths/1,000 population were registered in 2016, which was estimated as the 20th place in the world²⁸.

Due to an introduction of mandatory health insurance, about 85% of the population had been insured accordingly. Nonetheless, 40% of socially vulnerable people didn't have medical insurance. The stability and effectiveness of the health insurance system were hampered by unclear medical packages, its accessibility to a large number of categories (15 categories), and incapacity of National Health Insurance Company to manage strategic purchases of health care services (*World Bank Group- Moldova 2016*).

A mandatory health insurance cost 4,056 leu (\$204). Those who applied for the mandatory health insurance enjoyed 50-70% discount. Major issues of private enterprises, tenants and landlords and other citizens, who do not work and are not protected by the government, can pay only 50% of the package, which is equal to 2,028 leu (\$102) (*Teleradio Moldova 2016*).

²⁷ The source of the data is Geoba site (2017) <http://www.geoba.se/country.php?cc=MD> (01.02.2017).

²⁸ The source of the data is Index Mundi (2016a) http://www.indexmundi.com/moldova/demographics_profile.html (01.02.2017).

In 2012, health expenditure from private sources amounted to 45% with 70% accounted for pharmaceutical expenditures.

The Republic of Moldova continued to improve and reform the health care sector with the support of the World Health Organization (WHO) within the European Health Policy Framework (*World Health Organisation 2016*).

10.6 Development trends of the Index of Democracy Level

Figure 3

Index of Democracy Level of Moldova in the time span between 1995-2015*

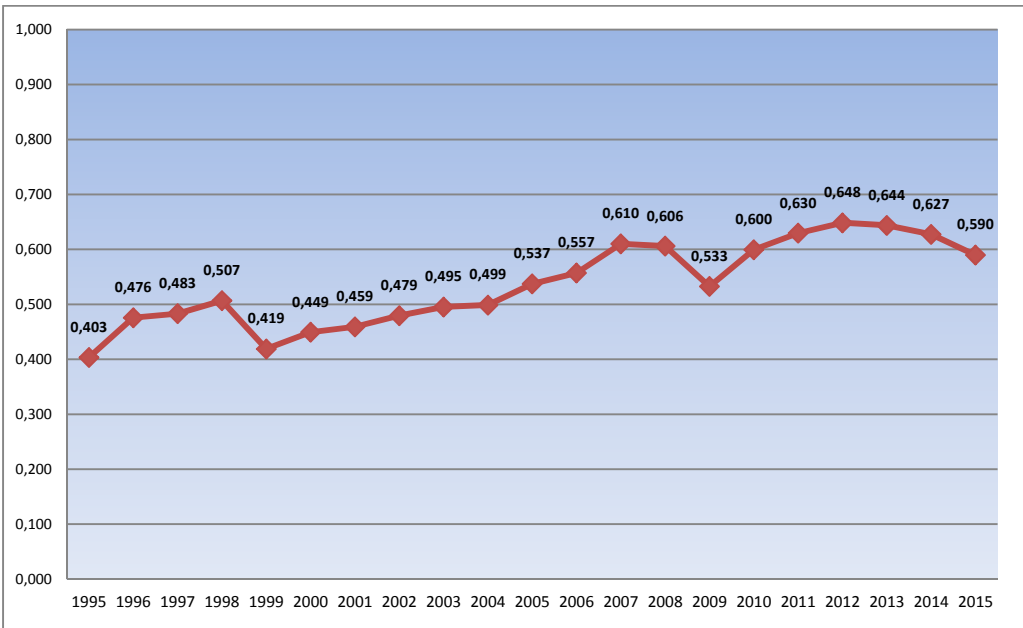


Figure 3 illustrates the dynamics of IDL of Moldova within 1995-2014. The diagram shows that after a continuous growth in 2012 the IDL of Moldova went into a decline.

* Source: calculations by the researcher.

By analyzing Table 1, it becomes clear that IDL decline was chiefly conditioned by political, economic and social factors.

The fall of PFI was particularly caused by a banking scandal as well as discord among political parties and high-ranking officials. The same year a constitutional amendment to direct president electing system was initiated in 2015. Large scale mass protests (100,000 people) triggered by a deterioration of economic system and corruption were occurring during the whole year. That had been the largest demonstration since independence of the country. A banking crisis and freezing of external assistance had a negative impact on the IDL. The SFI underwent a decline due to an increase of poverty level. In the meantime, HFI sustained its stability in 2014-2015, whereas EdFI remained unchanged.

10.7 Regression analysis of the Index of Democracy Level

Arusyak Aleksanyan, Armine Khachatryan

Within the framework of the research the regression analysis illustrates the variables of Political, Economic, Social and Health Factors Indices, which has a significant influence on the IDL of Moldova. The regression results show that there has been a significant correlation between the IDL_i^* and variable of the Corruption Perceptions Index:

$$Y' = 0,123x_1 + 0,193 \text{ (Adj. } R^2=0,420),$$

where Y' is the IDL_i (IDL was cleaned from the variable of the Corruption Perceptions Index), and x_1 is the Corruption Perceptions Index.

In reference to Economic Factors, significant correlation has been established between the IDL_i and GNI per capita and Domestic credit:

$$Y' = 0,07x_2 + 0,455 \text{ (Adj. } R^2=0,670),$$

* IDL_i is the Index of Democracy Level cleaned from the corresponding variable during every paired regression analysis.

where Y' is the IDL_i (IDL was cleaned from the variable of the GNI per capita), and x_2 is the GNI per capita (1000\$).

$$Y' = 0,009x_2 + 0,229 \text{ (Adj. } R^2=0,734\text{),}$$

where Y' is the IDL_i (IDL was cleaned from the variable of Domestic credit), and x_3 is Domestic credit (% of GDP).

In Social Factors Index a significant relation was observed between IDL_i and Unemployment and Gini index:

$$Y' = -0,023x_4 + 0,697 \text{ (Adj. } R^2=0,601\text{),}$$

where Y' is the IDL_i (IDL was cleaned from the variable of Unemployment), and x_4 is Unemployment:

$$Y' = -1,725x_5 + 1,207 \text{ (Adj. } R^2=0,796\text{),}$$

where Y' is the IDL_i (IDL was cleaned from the variable of Gini index), and x_5 is GINI index.

As a result of regression analysis the following equations were obtained for Health Factors:

$$Y' = 0,037x_6 - 2,001 \text{ (Adj. } R^2=0,673\text{),}$$

where Y' is the IDL_i (IDL was cleaned from the variable of Life expectancy), and x_6 is Life expectancy.

$$Y' = 0,027x_7 + 0,256 \text{ (Adj. } R^2=0,405\text{),}$$

where Y' is the IDL_i (IDL was cleaned from the variable of Health Expenditure), and x_7 is the Health Expenditure (% of GDP).

So, the Corruption Perceptions Index of the PFI has a strong influence on IDL of Moldova, and one unit positive change will bring to by 0,12 unit change of IDL_i .

In view of Economic Factors, GNI and Domestic credit influence the democracy (coefficient of determination about 73%). The growth of GNI per capita by 1000 USD and the growth of Domestic credit by 1% of GDP will contribute to the growth of IDL_i by 0,07 and 0,009 units accordingly.

With respect to Social Factors, the Gini index is the most influential, decrease of which by 0,1 unit will bring to the growth of IDL_i by 0,172 units. Gini index has

a high coefficient of determination and explains 80% of variation of dependent variables. The reduction of Unemployment rate with 1% will lead to the IDL_i growth by 0,023 units.

In relation to Health Factors, a positive change of the Life expectancy by one year and the growth of Health Expenditure by 1% of GDP will assist to the growth of IDL_i by 0,0037 and 0,027 units accordingly.

Regression analysis shows that IDL is mostly influenced by Corruption Perceptions Index, GNI per capita, Domestic credit, Gini index, Unemployment, Life expectancy and Health Expenditure. GNI per capita, Life expectancy and Gini index have higher coefficient of determination from the factors mentioned above.

Consequently, in order to foster the democratic development in Moldova it is required to make efforts aimed at economic development of the country and simultaneously to implement a social policy that will generate a relatively equal distribution of income and the reduction of social polarization as well as undertake such measures in the health sector that will lead to the increase in Life expectancy.

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Abbreviations

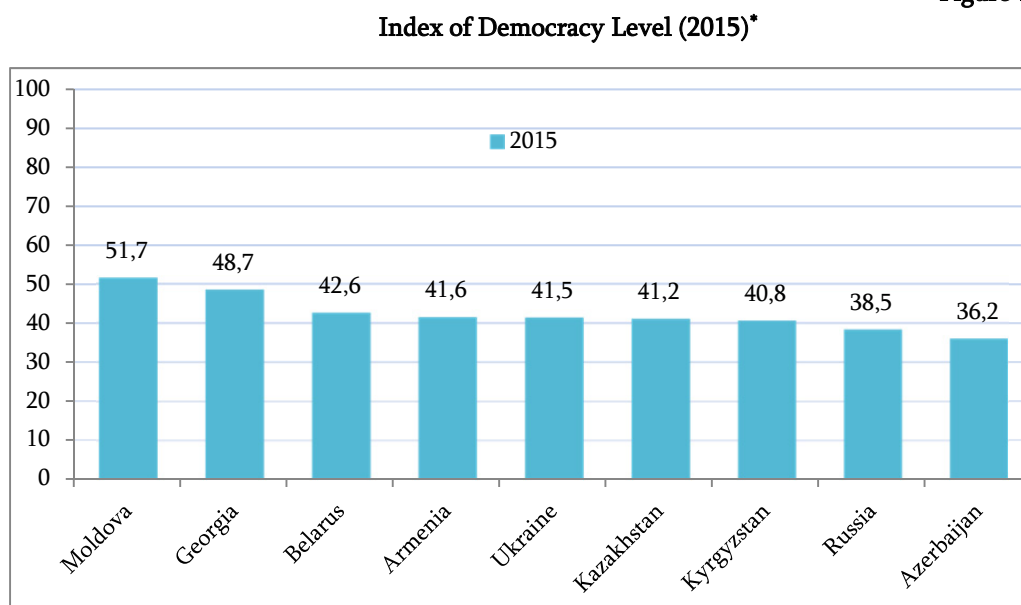
CEC	Central Electoral Commission
EdFI	Educational Factors Index
EFI	Economic Factors Index
EU	European Union
FDI	Foreign direct investments
GDP	Gross domestic product
GGGI	Global Gender Gap Index
GNP	Gross national product
HFI	Health Factors Index
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
IDL	Index of Democracy Level
IMF	International Monetary Fund
LGBT	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender
MP	Member of Parliament
NGO	Non-governmental organization
OSCE/ODIHR	Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe, Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights
OSF	Open Society Foundation
PFI	Political Factors Index
RM	Republic of Moldova
SFI	Social Factors Index
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNO	United Nations Organization
WB	World Bank
WHO	World Health Organization

CHAPTER 11.
CROSS-COUNTRY ANALYSIS OF THE INDEX OF
DEMOCRACY LEVEL (IDL)
(ARMENIA, GEORGIA, AZERBAIJAN, RUSSIA, BELARUS,
KAZAKHSTAN, KYRGYZSTAN, UKRAINE AND MOLDOVA)

ARUSYAK ALEKSANYAN

11.1 Comparative Analysis of the IDL

Figure 1



* Source: calculations by the researcher.

According to data obtained through the cross-country analysis for 2015 (see Figure 1, Table 1) all the studied states have maintained their partly free democratic status. Moldova has sustained its highest IDL indicator (51,7) but it regressed in 1,2 points compared to the previous year. Moldova is followed by Georgia registered with 48,7 points which lessened in 3 points only. Belarus, registered with 42,6 points in 2015, had noticeably progressed within the last years and gained superior position over Armenia (41,6) and Ukraine (41,5). In this respect, it should be noted that the aforementioned positive tendency was stipulated by improvements reported during presidential elections in Belarus. The release of political prisoners and positively shaped opinion about the elections prior to their conducting created highly favourable conditions to restore the “frozen“ relations. Precisely, EU suspended its sanctions against 170 individuals and 3 legal entities. In the meantime, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development outlawed the restriction on providing loans for state organizations. A continuous implementation of all those positive trends during 2016 parliamentary elections was essential for the development of the country in general (*Human Rights Watch 2017*). A drastic increase of IDL of Belarus was chiefly stipulated by SFI and partially by EFI.

IDL of Kazakhstan (41,2) has also gone up compared to the previous year outpacing IDL of Kyrgyzstan (40,8). Nonetheless, it is followed by Russia, registered with 0,9 points decline, eventually reaching 38,5 points. Azerbaijan’s index (36,2) has still remained the lowest and approaches the classification of “non-democratic political system”.

Among the studied countries, Armenia has the largest fall of the IDL compared to the previous year, conditioned by the simultaneous fall of PFI, EFI, and SFI.

Table 1

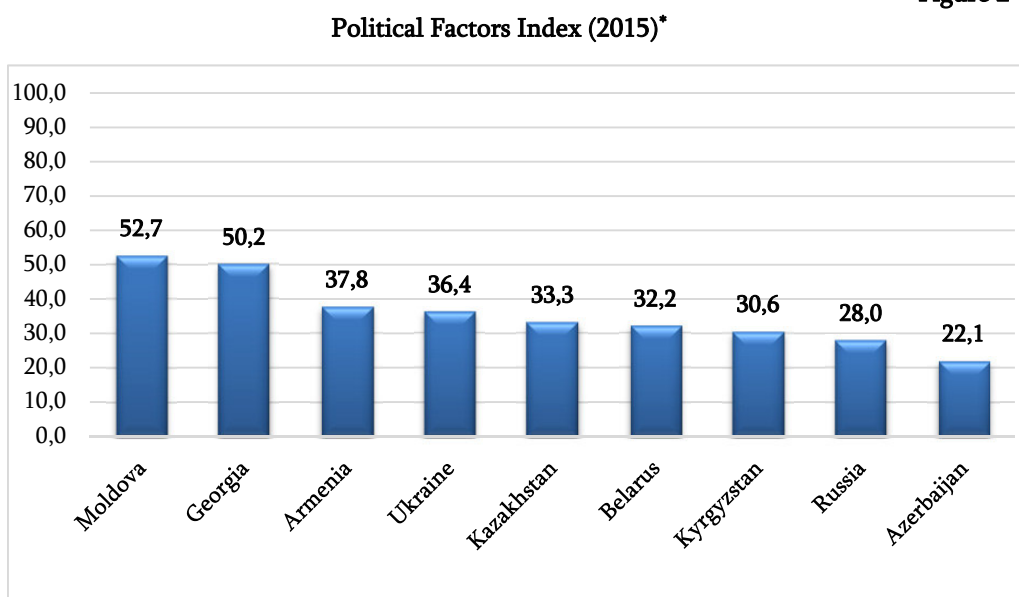
Values of the variables of the IDL
(Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Ukraine,
Moldova, 2015)¹

Main variables of the Index of Democracy Level	Armenia	Georgia	Azerbaijan	Russia	Belarus	Kazakhstan	Kyrgyzstan	Ukraine	Moldova
1. Political Stability (0-100)	35,7	33,3	22,4	12,9	47,6	42,9	18,6	6,2	33,8
2. Rule of Law (0-100)	42,8	65,4	31,3	26,4	24	41,3	14,9	22,6	40,4
3. Press Freedom (100-0)	63	49	89	83	91	84	67	53	56
4. Political Rights and Civil Liberties (7-1)	4,5	3	6,5	6	6,5	5,5	5	3	3
5. Corruption Perceptions Index (0-100)	35	52	29	29	32	28	28	27	33
6. Gender Equality (0-1)	0,668	0,687	0,675	0,694	0,734	0,719	0,693	0,702	0,742
7. Political System (0,1,2)	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
8. Majority in the Parliament (0,1,2)	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1
9. Social Unrest and Political Pressure (0-5)	2,2	2	1,3	1,7	1,4	2,9	1,7	1,2	3
10. Religion (0,1)	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	1
11. Conflict Presence (0,1,2)	1	1	1	1	2	2	1	0	1
12. GNI per capita, \$ (PPP)	9070	9350	17100	23060	17550	23490	3310	7850	5410
13. External trade rate (% of GDP)	72	107	73	49	116	53	111	107	117
14. Index of Economic Freedom (0-100)	67	72,6	60,2	50,6	48,8	63,6	59,6	46,8	57,4
15. Domestic credit (% of GDP)	48,4	57,5	42,5	52,9	49,8	45,7	19,1	85,2	37,0
16. FDI (% of GDP)	1,7	11,2	7,6	0,5	2,9	3,6	17,1	3,4	3,6
17. Inflation rate (%)	3,7	4,0	4,2	15,5	13,5	6,6	6,5	48,7	9,7
18. Budget profit/deficit (% of GDP)	-4,8	-3,7	-1,2	-2,6	1,7	-2,2	-1,5	-2,3	-2,2
19. Real wage, \$ (PPP)	696	766	716	1057	956	849	502	569	520
20. Unemployment (%)	18,5	12,0	5,0	5,6	0,5	5,0	7,6	9,1	4,9
21. Gini index (0-1) ^a	0,315	0,401	0,318	0,416	0,272	0,263	0,268	0,241	0,268
22. HDI Education index (0-1)	0,73	0,794	0,723	0,816	0,834	0,805	0,721	0,803	0,725
23. Government expenditure on education (% GDP)	2,81	1,98	2,63	3,86	4,95	2,79	5,53	5,86	7,47
24. Life expectancy at birth	74,8	74,8	70,8	70,9	73,6	72,0	70,7	71,2	71,6
25. Health expenditure (% of GDP) ^a	4,48	7,42	6,04	7,07	5,69	4,36	6,48	7,10	10,32

¹ Sources for calculations: 1, 2 - www.govindicators.org, 3, 4 - <http://www.freedomhouse.org>, 5 - <http://www.transparency.org>, 6 - <http://www.weforum.org/issues/global-gender-gap>, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 – calculated by the researcher, 12, 13, 15, 16, 17, 20, 21, 23, 24, 25- <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator>, 14 <http://www.heritage.org/index/>, 16 - <http://www.tradingeconomics.com/country-list/government-budget>, 19 - <http://w3.unecp.org/>, 22 - <http://hdr.undp.org>, a – other sources have been used in case of absence of some data for 2014 in the mentioned sources (08.05.16).

11.2 Political Factors Index (PFI)

Figure 2



In accordance with data of Political Factors Index of the IDL among the observed states, Moldova has maintained its leading position with 52,7 points. It is worth mentioning that IDLs of Moldova and Georgia (50,2) significantly differ from other remaining states. Armenia (37,8) comes the third in the list, since PFI indicator decreased compared to the previous year.

Despite the fact that Belarus is the third among the mentioned states, the PFI was registered with low indicators and, thus, it occupies the 6th place (32,2). Azerbaijan completes the circle by occupying the lowest position with 22,1 points.

Observing variables of PFI and analyzing data of the index of Political Stability/Absence of Violence published by the World Bank, it has become evident that Belarus (47,6) has sustained the status of the most politically stable country. On the contrary, Ukraine (6,2) was assessed as the most unstable among the studied states. In reference to 2015 index of Rule of Law, Georgia (65,4) recorded the best

* Source: calculations by the researcher.

indicator, whereas the Kyrgyz Republic was recorded with the lowest results² due to the the most problematic situation described in the research (see Table 2).

Despite the fact that 1 unit decline was caused by issues related to Rustavi 2 oppositional TV channel, Georgia (49) had the best indicator registered for Press Freedom³ (Freedom House). Meanwhile, Belarus showed the lowest results in the mentioned field (*Freedom House 2016a*).

It should be mentioned that according to Freedom House report (2016 report includes the events of 2015) the best Political Rights and Civil Liberties indicators were registered in Moldova (3), Georgia (3) and Ukraine (3), and respectively, the countries are classified as “partly free” approaching to the category of “free”⁴. Armenia is also among the “partly free” states having recorded 5 and 4 points in the categories of Political Rights and Civil Liberties correspondingly. Meanwhile, the study of evaluations, carried out by EEU member states experts show that except Armenia and Kyrgyz Republic (5), the rest of states (Russia (6), Kazakhstan (5,5) and Belarus (6,5)) are also classified as “not free” countries. Moreover, Azerbaijan (6,5) is considered “not free” state as well, since the Political Rights index deteriorated to 7 points when compared to the previous year. Freedom House experts stated that 2015 parliamentary elections were commonly conducted by severe violations and efforts to suppress civil society members, as well as total control over the electoral process (*Freedom House 2016b*).

In view of Corruption Perceptions Index⁵, Georgia had the best indicator and was registered with 52 points. The country had been implementing the best anti-corruption policy in the region and, respectively, the improvement of anti-

² See the official site of the World Bank <http://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/index.aspx#home> (15.06.2017).

³ Index of Press Freedom measured by Freedom House is estimated by the ranking scale from 100 to 1 where the states gained 0 to 30 are free, 31 to 60 are partially free, and 61 to 100 are not free.

⁴ Indices of Political Rights and Civil Liberties measured by Freedom House are estimated by 1 to 7 point scale where the states gained 1 to 2,5 points are free, 3 to 5 points are partially free and 5,5 to 7 points are not free.

⁵ Corruption Perceptions Index is measured by Transparency International. The index has the 0-100 ranking scale where 0 point implies the highest level of corruption and effectively 100 points indicate the lowest level of it.

corruption legislature⁶, which was one of visa liberalization requirements with the EU, positively affected the country (*EaP Think Bridge 2017, 17*). Meanwhile, Armenia (35) is the second country registered with the highest points, despite 1 point decline. In this regard, among the observed states the most problematic situation was still preserved in Ukraine (27) .

The highest level of civil disobedience⁷ was still registered in Ukraine. The same year was the calmest for Kazakhstan in regard to Social Unrest and Political Pressure.

In reference to the Political System of PFI variable and according to 2015 data, political systems of only Georgia and Moldova are described as those with curtailed presidential powers and expanded parliamentary powers. It should be mentioned that both Armenia and Kyrgyzstan initiated the Constitutional amendments due to which their political systems would be transformed from a semi-presidential to parliamentary. In the meantime, Moldova adopted a direct presidential election system in 2016. Prior to that, the president had been chosen by 3/5 of MPs during 2001-2012 years.

According to the research conducted within the frames of variable of “Majority in the parliament”, the best indicators were registered only in Moldova, Ukraine and Kyrgyz Republic in 2015 on account of relatively equal distribution of seats between authorities and opposition in their parliaments. In the rest of countries, the political party of the head of executive power enjoys an absolute majority in the Parliament, or an absolute majority of deputies who, irrespective of their party affiliation, pursue pro-Presidential policy.

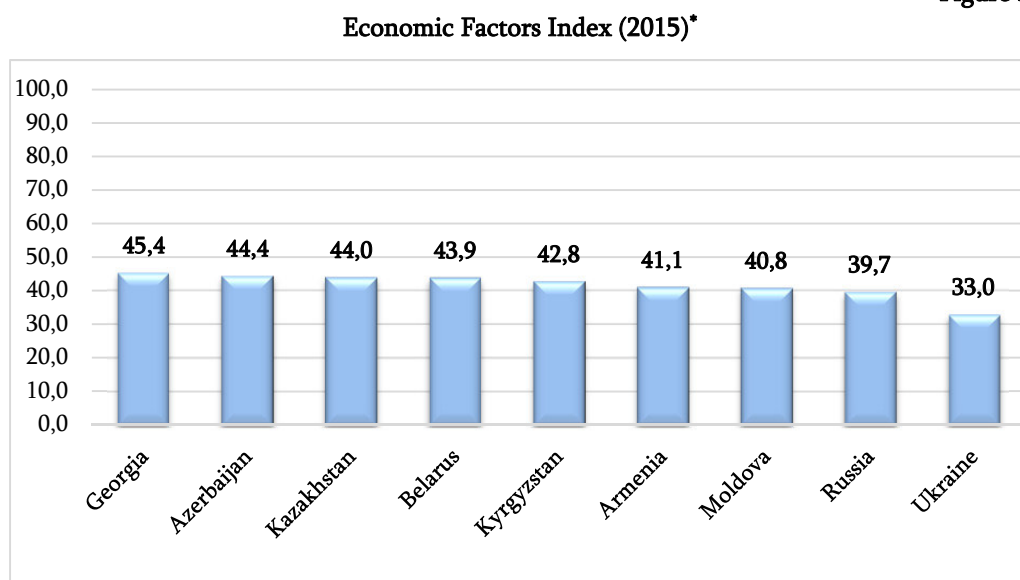
It is also significant, that all of the observed states, except Belarus and Kazakhstan, have zones of conflict.

⁶ See the “Law of Georgia on the Conflict of Interests and Corruption in Public Service” (21.12.2016 N157, shall enter into force as of 1 July 2017).

⁷ The variable of “Social Unrest and Political Pressure” is measured by a number of demonstrations, strikes, social unrests, particularly pressures applied against them during a specified span of time. Taking into account the absence of such statistics, relying on the analyses, reports and informative studies carried out by newspapers and research centres, the scaling range of 0-5 was settled for their assessment, where 0 is the value for the highest number of unrest and pressure, including coup d'état and revolution and 5 is the total absence of those in question.

11.3 Economic Factors Index (EFI)

Figure 3



According to data of Economic Factors Index of the IDL, Georgia holds a leading position (45,4), and the result recorded in Ukraine (33) yields to the rest of the states (see Figure 3).

Georgia's economy was quickly recovered after economic crisis in 2009 by 5,6% average growing per year. Reforms of a new tax code, simplification of administration, reduction of corruption and shadow economies significantly influenced economic development of the country. Overall, economic and structural reforms carried out in Georgia put the country on a new path of development. As a result, Georgia has significantly improved its position in various international rankings.

2015 was estimated as a year with an economic slowdown caused by a general decline in trade, finance, and investments. Hence, it amounted to 2,8% economic growth compared to 4,6% registered in 2014. External factors were the main reasons causing a slowdown in economic growth, in particular, socio-economic

* Source: calculations by the researcher.

and political negative events in the main trade partner countries (Russia, Azerbaijan, Turkey, Armenia, Ukraine). Devaluation of the Georgian lari was also conditioned by the influence of the external factors. Nevertheless, Georgian economy was able to effectively withstand all the challenges and obstacles the mentioned year was full of (*European Bank for Reconstruction and Development 2016; World Bank 2016a; Amirkhanyan 2016*).

The 2015 year was unfavourable for Azerbaijan too, which followed Georgia with 44,4 points, hence ranked the second in the list. Complicated processes of the global economy, economic slowdown of major oil-producing countries and other factors triggered more than threefold fall of oil prices in June 2014.

Azerbaijan's economy strongly dependent on oil sector was highly damaged by all those events occurring in 2015 as well. In addition, the main income source of state budget is generated by oil export. The total value of oil and gas export amounted to 85%, whereas 70,5% of taxes were collected due to the aforementioned sector in 2015. A significant devaluation of a manat was also conditioned by the falling of oil prices. (*The Guardian 2015; Trade Representative of the Russian Federation in the Republic of Azerbaijan 2016, 2017*). Azerbaijan's GDP per capita (\$17100 adjusted for purchasing power parity) and budget deficit (1,2% of GDP) yielded to only Georgia (see Table 1).

Moreover, the highest Index of Economic Freedom⁸ (IEF) is recorded in Georgia and continues to have a leading position in the rankings of the states under study. Similar to previous years, Armenia was the second country with the best registered indicator. As a consequence, Georgia (72,6) occupied the 11th position, and Armenia (67) held the 23rd position, while Russia (50,6), Belarus (48,8) and Ukraine (46,8) were ranked with the lowest indicators among 43 European states (*Miller, Kim 2016, 69-70*).

In comparison to previous year, Russia's IEF had a jumping increase by

⁸ The Index of Economic Freedom is measured by The Heritage Foundation. In the model the value of 100 points (max) is estimated as the highest indicator, where 0-49,9 stand for "economically oppressed" countries, 50- 59,9 stand for "generally not-free", 60-69,9 "merely free", 70- 79,9 points are for "generally free", and 80-100 points stand for "free". The calculation of the IDL for 2014 was based on the IEF data for 2015 as it comprehends indicators from July 1, 2013, to June 30, 2014.

appearing in the 8th position. The 2015 developments were especially unfavourable for Russian economy: external political tensions, financial sanctions imposed against the country, the fall of export prices, oil and gas price fall worldwide, ongoing conflict between Russia and Ukraine, capital outflow and devaluation of Russian rouble led to considerable difficulties. As a result, major economic indices of Russia fell down and 2015 year was concluded by an economic decline⁹. All those factors had some influence not only on Armenia but on other CIS countries as well.

As it has already been mentioned Ukraine has the lowest indicator of EFI. It underwent economic crisis in 2011 and had been in recession stages within 2014–2015. Russian-Ukrainian tensions and military actions in Donbas and Lugansk greatly deepened an economic crisis. 6,6% economic fall was registered in 2014, and it worsened to 9,8%¹⁰ in 2015 (*Euler Hermes 2016*). Political instability, corruption, inefficient governing and shadow economy were consistently the main issues that had been stalling the country's development. Despite some efforts aimed at fighting corruption, its level is still high. In accordance with Corruption Perceptions Index¹¹ the country holds the 130 position among 168 states. Experts estimated annual damages caused by corruption and they amounted to 30 milliard dollars (*Odna Rodyna 2017*).

In 2015 there was an unprecedented 48,7% inflation rate in Ukraine, which had been the highest since 1997¹². In the meantime, state debt amounted to 95%, whereas external debt was equal to 141,5% of GDP compared to 71,2% and 100,4% of GDP registered in 2014 respectively (*Euler Hermes 2016*).

It should be stated that international organization and bilateral donors periodically express their willingness to provide financial and other types of assistance to Ukraine. Correspondingly, 30 milliard dollars were allotted to Ukraine by IMF, World Bank, EU and other international organizations (*Miller,*

⁹ See the official site of the World Bank <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator> (14.06.2017).

¹⁰ See the official site of the World Bank

<http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.KD.ZG?locations=UA> (14.06.2017).

¹¹ See the official site of Transparency International <https://www.transparency.org/cpi2015/> (14.06.2017).

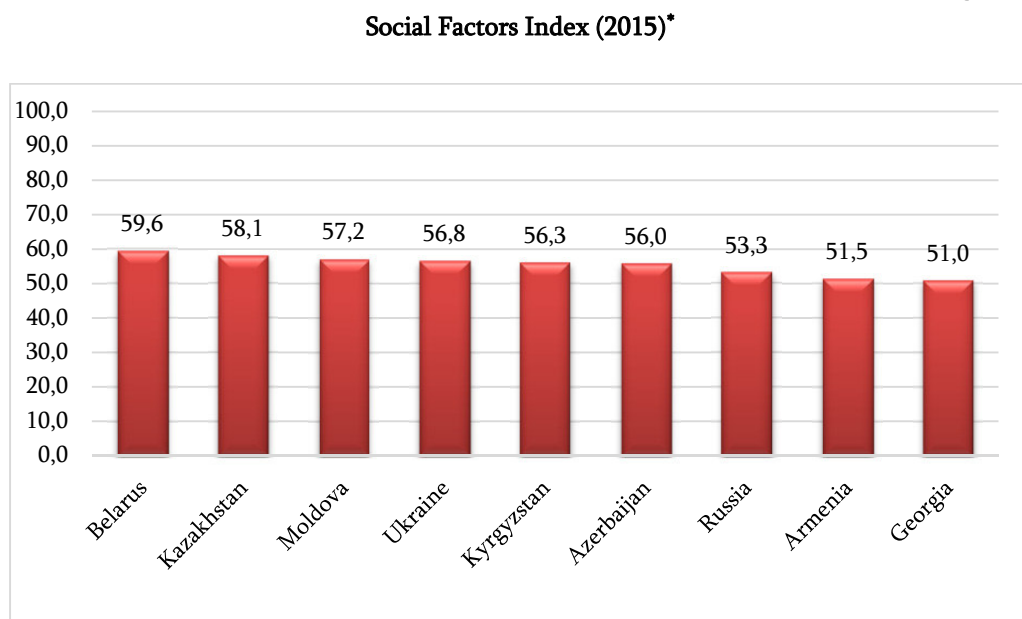
¹² See the official site of the World Bank

<http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/FP.CPI.TOTL.ZG?locations=UA> (14.06.2017).

Kim 2016, 435). In addition, statistical data testify that Ukraine has been gradually recovering from economic crisis. A positive trend for economic growth (2%) has been finally registered within the last four years¹³.

11.4 Social Factors Index (SFI)

Figure 4



The highest 2015 SFI indicator is registered in Belarus (59,6). It is followed by Kazakhstan with 58,1 points and Armenia (51,5). Georgia (51) registered with the lowest indicators, occupied the last positions in the IDL rankings (see Figure 4).

Due to effective state policy, Belarus managed to overcome particularly social problems that had been typical of post-Soviet or middle income states. According to the data provided by the World Bank, Belarus in view of middle class share of the total population had a leading position in Europe and Central Asia, as well as

¹³ See the official site of the World Bank

<http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.KD.ZG?locations=UA> (14.06.2017):

* Source: calculations by the researcher.

among other middle income countries. Hence, 80% of the total population is considered middle class¹⁴, whereas 18% is ascribed to a vulnerable group and only 2% of the population lives in poverty. Moreover, there is no extreme poverty registered in Belarus as such (*BELTA 2014*). In addition, Belarus had one of the lowest unemployment rates in the world and it comprised 0,5% in 2015. In respect to Real wage, (\$956 per PPP), the country registered the second best indicator among the states mentioned in the study, yielding only to Russia (\$1057). Kazakhstan was also registered with a high indicator of Real wage equivalent to \$849¹⁵.

It should also be noted that Kazakhstan succeeded in its efforts aimed at fighting against poverty. Accordingly, 46,7% poverty rate (national poverty line) registered within 2001-2015 shrank to 2,7%. In relation to \$5 per day, 77% poverty rate registered in 2001, decreased and gradually reached 15% in 2013 (*World Bank 2016b, 4*).

According to annual report of Human Development Index (HDI), Belarus with 0,796 points took 52nd place among 188 states with a high HDI. Countries, such as Kazakhstan (0,796), Georgia (0,769), Armenia (0,743), Ukraine (0,743) and Azerbaijan (0,759) had a high HDI as well, whereas Moldova (0,699) and Kyrgyzstan (0,664) were estimated with a middle level of HDI. Russia (0,804) was the only country that had a very high level of HDI¹⁶.

In contrast to Belarus and Kazakhstan, the poverty issues are difficult to tackle in Armenia. The national poverty line, when compared to 2014, decreased by 2% and reached from 30% to 29,8%, of which 19,4% of the population is poor, 8,4% is very poor and 2% is extremely poor. The poverty level recorded in 2015 has still exceeded the indicator of 2008 registered with 27,6%, which is the highest among CIS countries (*NSS RA and WB, 2016, 36-46*). Unemployment is another burning

¹⁴ According to World Bank, the middle class is defined as people living on the equivalent of \$10 a day.

¹⁵ The source of the data is the official site of United Nations Economic Commission for Europe <http://w3.unece.org/PXWeb/en/>, official site of international monetary fund <http://www.imf.org/en/data> (22.06.2017), calculations made by the author.

¹⁶ See the official site of United Nations Development Programme <http://hdr.undp.org/en/composite/trends> (18.06.2017).

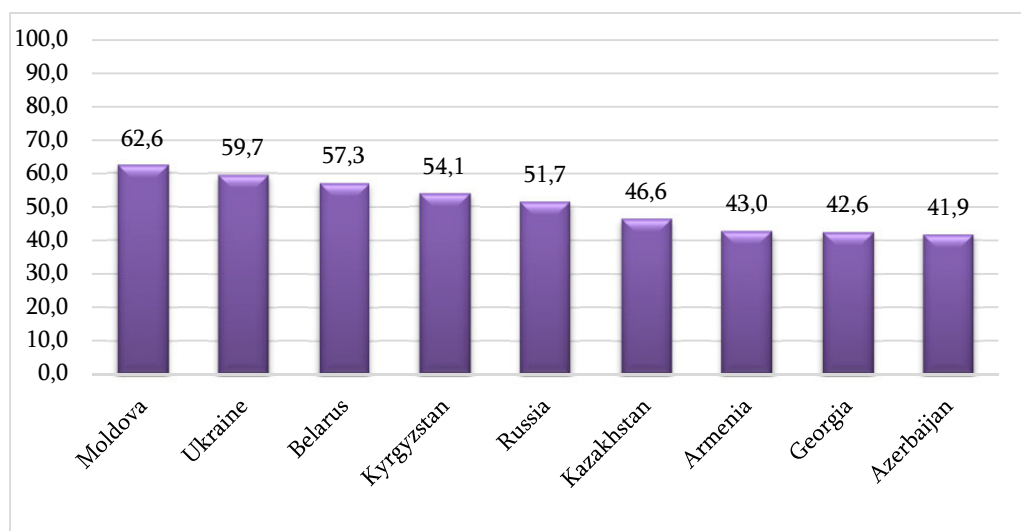
issue in Armenia and its indicator is one of the highest in the world. The unemployment rate increased by 0,9% and amounted to 18,5% in 2015¹⁷.

A severe polarization of incomes is one of the urgent social problems that Georgia faces and the lowest SFI were obtained in the country. Among the studied states, Georgia (0,401) and Russia (0,416) have the highest GINI index. Poverty rate per \$ 2,5 per day amounted to 32,8% in 2014, whereas the national poverty line was assessed with 21% in 2015. 0,4% reduction of unemployment rate constituted to 12%. Nevertheless, issues linked to unemployment are essential and the rate is estimated high in comparison to world average rate (6%)¹⁸.

11.5 Educational Factors Index (EdFI)

Figure 5

Educational Factors Index (2015)*



¹⁷ See the official site of the RA National Statistical Service

<http://www.armstat.am/en/?nid=126&id=08010&submit> (15.07.2017).

¹⁸ See the official site of the World Bank <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator> , the official site of National Statistics Office of Georgia http://geostat.ge/index.php?action=page&p_id=188&lang=eng (01.07.2017).

* Source: calculations by the researcher.

In 2015 the best EdFI indicators were recorded in Moldova (62,6) according to cross-country analysis. Armenia (43) held the 7th place, whereas Azerbaijan took the last place (see Figure 5).

Comparative analysis of government expenditure on education shows that Moldova among the studied 9 countries allocated the highest amounts (% of GDP) to education. In this regard, it should be mentioned that 18,8% of Moldovan government spending and 7,5% of GDP were directed to education, whereas the world average indicators were 14,1% and 4,7% of GDP respectively. On the contrary, Georgia was registered among countries with the lowest indicator of the Government expenditure on education¹⁹.

The calculation of EdFI is also based on HDI Education Index. According to it, Belarus had the highest indicator (0,834), whereas Kyrgyzstan –the lowest (0,721). In 2015 Armenia had a comparatively low indicator of 0,73 points²⁰ and as a result, mean years of schooling were 11,3 years and expected years of schooling were 12,7 years. Within 1990 and 2015, mean years of schooling were increased by 1,2 years, whereas expected years of schooling by 2 years (*UNDP 2016, 2-3*).

Table 2
Students gross enrollment in higher educational institutions (2015) %²¹

Belarus	87,9
Ukraine (2014)	82,3
Russia	80,4
Kyrgyzstan	46,9
Kazakhstan	46,0
Armenia	44,3
Georgia	43,4
Moldova	41,2
Azerbaijan	25,5

¹⁹ See the official site of the World Bank <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator>.

²⁰ Human Development Index Education Index (HDI-education) is assessed by the UNDP (United Nations Development Programme). It is based on two indicators: 1. expected years of schooling (number of years of schooling that a child of school entrance age can expect to receive if prevailing patterns of age-specific enrollment rates persist throughout the child's life, 2.mean years of schooling (average number of years of education received by people ages 25 and older, converted from education attainment levels using official durations of each level).

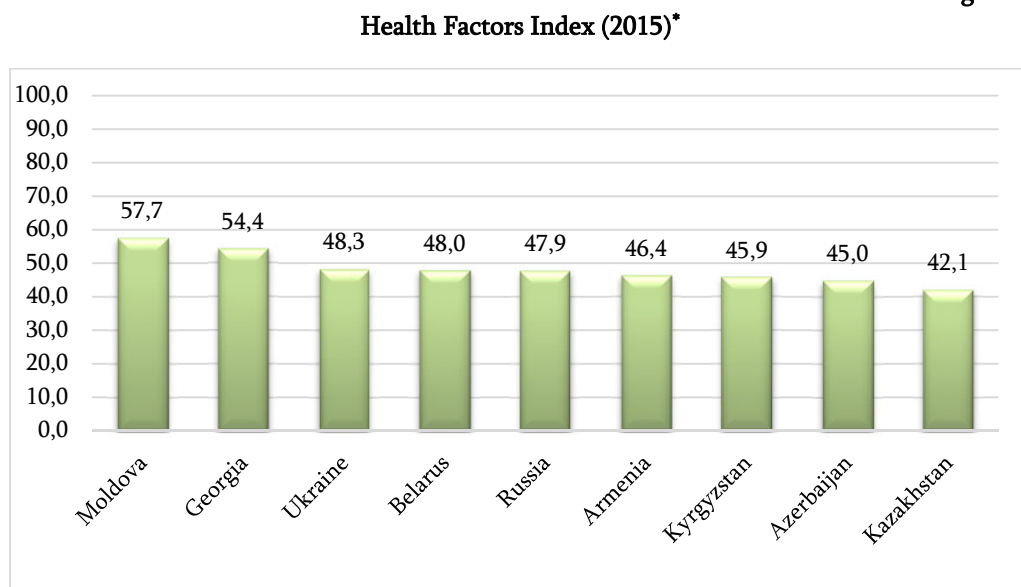
²¹ See the official site of the World Bank <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.TER.ENRR> (22.06.2017).

It should also be noted that the best indicators for gross enrollment in higher education were registered in Belarus (87,9%) and Ukraine (82,3%), and the lowest level of enrollment was in Azerbaijan (23,2%). In Armenia, this indicator was equal to 44,3% (see Table 2).

UNESCO Science Report 2015 estimated that there was a stagnation in higher education in Azerbaijan. The total number of scientists in Azerbaijan had recently remained unchanged, while the number of scientists engaged in entrepreneurship diminished. Scientists' ageing issues posed some challenges to the country as well. In 2008 the number of candidates aged 60 years or more totalled 60%, while the number of scientists under 30 decelerated from 17.5% to 13.1% during 2008-2013. On top of all the mentioned factors, the government didn't encourage or motivate young scientists to be engaged in educational processes (*UNESCO 2015, 326-328*).

11.6 Health Factors Index (HFI)

Figure 6



* Source: calculations by the researcher

Moldova has the highest indicator of Health Factors Index (57,7), whereas Kazakhstan has the lowest one (42,1) (see Figure 6).

Among the nine mentioned countries Moldova's Government expenditure on education, as well as Health expenditure, are the highest reaching 10% of GDP or 17% of budget spending (both private and public) which are equal to an average EU MS indicator. Moreover, \$223 per person were allocated to health spending, which is quite a high indicator within comparable states. According to World Bank estimations, in view of such amount allocated to health, Moldova could have achieved better results in the mentioned sector than it had at present (*World Bank 2016c*, 4-5). In contrast, Kazakhstan allocated 4,4% of GDP (both private and public) to health sector, which is the lowest indicator among the observed states²².

Life expectancy is a subindex of HFI and in Moldova, it is estimated by 71,6 years compared to 72 years in Kazakhstan. Despite that, the indicator grew by 8²³ years within the period studied in the research, it is still considered low for countries with similar income levels. World Bank experts stated that reforms and achievements in the health care system in Kazakhstan are behind from those implemented by the rapidly growing income economies (*World Bank 2016b*, 6).

Accordingly, Armenia occupies the 6th place and is recorded with 46,4 points. State financing of health care sector has had a positive trend and it amounted to 4,5% of GDP and totaled 7% of budget spending in 2015. Nonetheless, the growing tendency for health expenditure is unstable and has a low level in comparison to other spending²⁴. In reference to life expectancy, Armenia has the highest indicator (74,8 years) and the drastic growth of it had been especially noticeable since 1991 and reached 7,1 years in 2015²⁵.

²² See the official site of the World Bank <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SH.XPD.TOTL.ZS> (23.07.2017).

²³ See the official site of the World Bank <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.DYN.LE00.IN> (24.07.2017).

²⁴ See the official site of the World Bank <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator> (24.07.2017).

²⁵ See the official site of the World Bank <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.DYN.LE00.IN> (23.05.2016).

Conclusions

As a result of cross-country analysis of Political, Economic, Social, Educational and Health Factors of the Index of Democracy Level of nine states observed within the framework of the research we came to the following conclusions:

- All nine countries observed in the given research are qualified as partly free in view of IDL.
- Moldova has the highest indicator of IDL followed by Georgia, whereas Azerbaijan has the lowest Index of Democracy among the studied countries. Armenia is ranked fourth and experienced a certain decline. IDL of Belarus was registered with a jumping increase excelling both Armenia and Ukraine. IDL improvement was chiefly stipulated by SFI and EFI to some extent.
- In contrast to IDL indicators registered in the previous year, Belarus had the highest IDL (42,6), followed by Armenia (41,6), Kazakhstan (41,2), Kyrgyz Republic (40,8) and, Russia registered with the lowest level of IDL (38,5) among EEU member states.
- According to IDL of the South Caucasus countries, the succession of the states is as follows: Georgia (48,7), Armenia (41,6) and Azerbaijan (36,2).
- Moldova has comparatively the best PFI, EdFI and HFI.
- Georgia has the best EFI and the worst SFI which implies that achievements in economic sector were not effectively implemented to solve the most urgent and burning social issues.
- Azerbaijan is ranked the last in view of Political and Educational Factors Index.
- In spite of the fact, the IDL of Belarus improved and there was a PFI increase in 2015, the country is still ranked low due to numerous problems related to human rights, freedom of the press, change of the power and etc. in contrast to improvements in social and economic sectors.
- Comparative analysis of separate variables the following observation was made:

- The study of Majority in the Parliament variable shows that mandates between opposition and government representatives were almost equally distributed only in the parliaments of 3 post-Soviet states, namely: Moldova, Ukraine, and Kyrgyzstan. In reference to other 6 states, the majority was formed either by the ruling party or an absolute majority of pro-governmental deputies highly supporting the acting president.
- Georgia had the best indicators for Press Freedom, Rule of Law and sectors fighting against corruption.
- Ukraine was the most politically unstable and conflict-torn country with the highest level of corruption. Social Unrest and Political Pressure was still the highest registered for the mentioned period.
- PFI of Azerbaijan underwent a decrease and reached the lowest 7 units in 2015.
- The region is qualified with high levels of conflict intensity since all states except Belarus and Kazakhstan are involved in confrontations.

To conclude, it's noteworthy to state, according to IDL, all countries are qualified as partly free and have different levels of political and socio-economic developments. The mentioned progress and differences in development are specifically observable in political sector. The results of IDL of Armenia and states with European integration vector are higher than in Azerbaijan and other EEU member states.

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Abbreviations

CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
EaP	Eastern Partnership
EdFI	Educational Factors Index
EEU	European Economic Union
EFI	Economic Factors Index
EU	European Union
FDI	Foreign Direct Investments
GDP	Gross domestic product
GNP	Gross national product
HDI	Human Development Index
HFI	Health Factors Index

Chapter 11. Cross-country analysis of the Index of Democracy Level

IDL	Index of Democracy Level
IEF	Index of Economic Index
MP	Member of Parliament
PFI	Political Factors Index
RF	Russian Federation
SFI	Social Factors Index
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
USA	United States of America

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COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE INDEX OF DEMOCRACY LEVEL IN THE CONTEXT OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRATIZATION

*(ARMENIA, GEORGIA, AZERBAIJAN, RUSSIA,
BELARUS, KAZAKHSTAN, KYRGYZSTAN, UKRAINE AND MOLDOVA)*

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