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CHALLENGES TO THE CONSOLIDATION OF MODERN DEMOCRACY: IDL COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

*(Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Russia,
Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Ukraine and Moldova)*

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This book is a complex research carried out by methodology of the Index of Democracy Level (IDL) where a comparative analysis of features and characteristics of democratic consolidation of newly independent countries is conducted. The study encompasses nine countries, namely Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Ukraine and Moldova. This is a continuation of the previously published three books, where key issues of democratic consolidation for the 2016-2018 period were mainly observed. It contains in-country and cross-country analyses of the IDL. In-country analysis focuses on major transformations in political, economic, social, educational and health spheres of the mentioned countries as well as their impact on the process of democratic consolidation within 2000-2018 years. Cross-country analysis displays comparative indicators of five sub-indices which conditioned the Index of Democracy Level in 2017-2018. The book is proposed to professors and students of universities, research centres, as well as public servants and civil society representatives.

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ABBREVIATIONS

APK	Assembly of People of Kazakhstan
ARF	Armenian Revolutionary Federation
BA	Bright Armenia
CEC	Central Electoral Commission
CEPA	Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement
CEPR	Centre of Economic and Political Reforms
CIS	Commonwealth Independent States
CPF	Country Partnership Framework
CPI	Corruption Perceptions Index
CPPK	Communist People's Party of Kazakhstan
CPRF	Communist Party of Russian Federation
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
CRRC	Caucasus Research Resource Centre
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
CSTO	Collective Security Treaty Organization
D/LPRs	Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics
DCFTA	Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area
DPR	Donetsk People's Republic
EAEU	Eurasian Economic Union
EaP CSF BNP	Belarusian National Platform of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum
EaP	Eastern Partnership
EdFI	Educational Factors Index
EFI	Economic Factors Index
EPCA	Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement
EU	European Union
FDI	Foreign direct investments
FNPR	Federation of Independent Trade Unions of Russia
FTU	Federation of Trade Unions of Ukraine
GD	Georgian Dream
GDP	Gross domestic product
GE	Gender equality
GGG	Global Gender Gap
GGGI	Global Gender Gap Index

Abbreviations

GNI	Gross national income
GSP+	Generalised Scheme of Preferences
HDI	Human Development Index
HDI-Ed.	Human Development Index Education Index
HFI	Health Factors Index
HIV	Human immunodeficiency virus
HRD	Human Rights Defender
IDL	Index of Democracy Level
IEF	Index of Economic Freedom
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
KR	Kyrgyz Republic
LDPR	Liberal Democratic Party of Russia
LGBT	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender
LPR	Luhansk People's Republic
MOH	Ministry of Health
MP	Member of Parliament
MSA	My Step Alliance
MTEF	Medium-term Expenditure Frameworks
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NPP	Nuclear Power Plant
NSDC	National Security and Defense Council of Ukraine
OCCRP	Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project
OCU	Orthodox Church of Ukraine
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OSCE	Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe
OSCE/ODIHR	Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe/Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights
PA	Prosperous Armenia
PFI	Political Factors Index
PJSC	Public Joint Stock Company
PR&CL	Political Rights and Civil Liberties
RA	Republic of Armenia
RF	Russian Federation
RG	Republic of Georgia

RK	Republic of Kazakhstan
RM	Republic of Moldova
RPA	Republican Party of Armenia
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SDPK	Social Democratic Party of Kyrgyzstan
SFI	Social Factors Index
SIB	State Investigation Bureau
SME	Small and Medium enterprises
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNO	United Nations Organization
USA	United States of America
USAID	United States Agency International Development
USSR	Union of Soviet Social Republics
WB	World Bank
WEF	World Economic Forum
WHO	World Health Organization

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INTRODUCTION

The research, conducted to study the challenges of democratic consolidation the newly independent countries face, are of great significance under modern conditions. In this respect, methodology of the Index of Democracy Level (IDL) provides an opportunity to comprehensively reflect on political, socio-economic, educational and health preconditions for ensuring democracy in these countries.

This is the fourth research presented, where the IDL of the newly independent states displays processes of democratic developments and backsliding.¹ The latter testifies that the IDL has been effective as a tool for research and become successfully applicable in national and international research.

A comparative analysis of the IDL, conducted to observe democratization trends occurring within 2000-2018 in the above-mentioned countries, has been reflected in the given research on the “Challenges to the Consolidation of Modern Democracy: IDL Comparative Analysis (Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Ukraine, and Moldova).”

Many obstacles were encountered and are continuing to exist on the path of democratization of the political systems of the post-Soviet countries within

¹ For more details see: **Aleksanyan, Arusyak**, ed. (2017) Trends of the Index of Democracy Level in the dimension of Human Rights and Democratization in nine post-Soviet countries (Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Ukraine, and Moldova). Yerevan: YSU Press; **Aleksanyan, Arusyak**, ed. (2016) 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). Yerevan: YSU Press; **Aleksanyan, Arusyak**, ed. (2015) Comparative Analysis of the Index of Democracy Level: Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Ukraine and Moldova. Yerevan: YSU Press.

the period under consideration. They have led to an inefficient management capacities and negative consequences under the circumstances of bureaucratization of state institutions and low level of political culture.

This research on the IDL model is devoted to the political analysis of democratization strategy applied in the above-mentioned countries in international, regional and domestic transformations of the 21st century. The research has focused on developments of modern democracy in the context of integration and cooperation, as well as the impact of IDL factors on democratic potential within the post-Soviet region.

Within the framework of the research conducted by the IDL methodology, the contributors estimated progress and backslide in democratic consolidation in those countries on the grounds of modern democracy theories.² The experience gained through the previous years has shown that there is a necessity for a deeper conceptual realization of the consequences of political, socio-economic, educational and health reforms, as well as the directions and prospects for further development of post-Soviet societies.

In-country analysis includes transformations of democratic consolidation, occurring in the observed states in 2000-2018, as well as IDL trends in view of political, economic, social, educational and health factors, affecting it throughout 18 years. As a succession to the previous pieces of research, political and socio-economic events in 2016-2018 are particularly examined in more detail.

Cross-country analysis is a country comparative analysis of the Index of Democracy Level of the post-Soviet countries mentioned above and PFI, EFI, SFI, EdFI and HFI conditioning the IDL, as well as their estimation for the years of 2017 and 2018.

The book is composed of an Introduction, Executive summary, eleven Chapters and Index. The methodology of the Index of Democracy Level is

² See **Diamond, Larry** (2019) *Ill Winds: Saving Democracy from Russian Rage, Chinese Ambition, and American Complacency*. New York: Penguin Press, **Fukuyama, Francis** (2018) *Identity: The Demand for Dignity and the Politics of Resentment*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, **Laski, Gregory** (2018) *Untimely Democracy: The Politics of Progress after Slavery*. New York: Oxford University Press.

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 and their sub-indices within 2000-2018 with the focus on 2016-2018 political, social, economic, educational and health processes. In addition, Chapter 11 includes a cross-country analysis of IDL ratings as well as its 5 components, such as Political, Social, Economic, Educational and Health Factors for the period of 2017 and 2018.

Arusyak Aleksanyan

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The research titled “Challenges to the Consolidation of Modern Democracy: IDL Comparative Analysis (Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Ukraine and Moldova)” is conducted by the following team: CES experts and lecturers Arusyak Aleksanyan (Doctor of Political Science) and Ashot Aleksanyan (Degree of Doctor of Sciences (Political Sciences); lecturer at the YSU of the Faculty of Oriental Studies Artyom Tonoyan (PhD); Expert in international security and democratization Anna Sarkisyan, and an MA alumnus of European Studies and CES expert Alisa Jamalyan.

Within the framework of the research and through the IDL model, the experts compiled, estimated and analyzed political, economic, social, educational and health indicators of nine post-Soviet countries and their impact on IDL according to the outcomes obtained.

Hence, the research includes a summarized analysis of IDL and its sub-indices of Political Factors Index (PFI), Economic Factors Index (EFI), Social Factors Index (SFI), Educational Factors Index (EdFI) and Health Factors Index (HFI).

Values of IDL and PFI, EFI, SFI, EdFI and HFI, estimated for the mentioned period, may slightly differ from those correspondingly published in the previous research studies. This is explained by the fact, that the contributors incorporate the changes of data development and replenishment provided by the World Bank, National statistical services, international governmental and non-governmental organizations in every new publication.

In general, the IDL is comprised of official statistics, newly developed variables and indicators estimated and provided by renowned international organizations. As a result of the comparative analysis of IDL indicators, a repository consisting of more than 5000 data was created.

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 and 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).

Arusyak Aleksanyan

1. METHODOLOGY OF THE MODEL OF THE INDEX OF DEMOCRACY LEVEL (IDL)*

ARUSYAK ALEKSANYAN

20th century can be called the era of democratic transformations. It was marked by processes of transition from authoritarian, totalitarian to democratic systems. During the period in view, certain countries achieved consolidation of democracy, some experienced regress, while others were still in transition stages. In this context, issues related to the “victory” and “defeat” of democracy, its causes and prerequisites for consolidation and retrogression still remain relevant and important. Scholars more often recur to the key problems in an attempt to find factors that can facilitate a smooth transition to democracy and ensure its promotion. Meanwhile, they, apart from political factors and preconditions, specify socio-economic, cultural and other factors as well (*Lipset 1959; Almond and Verba 1963; Lijphart 1968; Dahl 1985; Huntington 1991; Barro 1999; Vanhanen 2003; Siegle et al. 2004*).

In this regard, the methodology of the Index of Democracy Level is based on the approach according to which democracy is not conditioned by one overriding factor and there exists a multi-factor correlation with democratization. Therefore, the principle of five groups of factors with various rating scales and with an overall impact on democracy is taken as a base for

* The methodology of the Index of Democracy Level was developed by Arusyak Aleksanyan within the #R03 scholarship frameworks of Caucasus Research Resource Centre-Armenia and Carnegie Corporation of New York.

democracy modeling. These factors are political, economic, social, educational and health.³

Figure 1

Factors affecting the Index of Democracy Level *



Indicators of political dimensions are:

1. Rule of Law (RL)
2. Political Stability and Absence of Violence (St.)

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 ($R \geq 10.71$).

* 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 incomes.

- 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)*
- 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 and Absence of Violence are two out of six indices applied to estimate the effectiveness of the public administration

published by the World Bank (*Kaufmann, Kraay, Mastruzzi 2010, 2-3*). Rule of Law measures citizens' confidence in the law and level of their readiness to comply with it, crime rates and effectiveness of legislative power, courts, and the police. Political Stability and 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);

- Political Rights and Civil Liberties are measured by Freedom House organization based on Freedom in the World report. The Freedom in the World 2019 report (*Freedom House 2019a*) was used to measure the 2018 IDL, since calculations, covering the period from January 1 to December 31, 2018 were based on developments occurring in 195 countries and 14 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. Hence, Political Rights indicator is based on a ten-point questionnaire that 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 2019b*). 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. The last Press Freedom publication, i.e. the 2017 report (*Freedom House 2017a*), includes events that occurred in the period from January 1 to December 31, 2016. Surveys and assessments presented in the report refer to following three categories, covering the “legal environment”, “political environment” and “economic environment”. It provides numerical ratings based on the assessments collected from these components, and states are respectively classified as “free” (0-30 points), “partly free” (31-60) and “not free” (61-100) (*Freedom House 2017b*). During the data standardization, the highest accepted value (max) is 0, and the lowest value (min) is 100;

- Corruption Perceptions Index is measured by Transparency International organization and refers to the level of a state corruption perceptions in 180 countries (*Transparency International 2018a*). It is based on experts' analyses and is measured by a 100-point scale, where 0 point implies the highest level of corruption and effectively 100 - the lowest level. The data of CPI are calculated in accordance with the resources provided by a number of independent organizations, i.e. Political and Economic Risks Consultancy, the World Bank, Bertelsmann Foundation, “Global Insight” World Economic Forum, Economist Intelligence Unit, Freedom House, World Bank and etc. The survey topics refer to the corruption, conflict of interests, anti-corruption events and achievements, steps taken by a state with an aim to impose sanctions and 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 posts related to corruption. Corruption risks may be in small bureaucratic institutions and escalate up to the highest instances of authority (*Transparency International 2018b, 2018c*). 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;

- Political System variable 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 (the system is presidential if only 1 demand is satisfied, or else 2 and 3 combined). 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;

- Gender equality variable 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 2018*). During the data standardization, the highest accepted value (max) is 1, whereas the lowest value (min) is 0.

- Social Unrest and Political Pressure variable 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;

1. Methodology of the Model of the Index of Democracy Level (IDL)

- Majority in the Parliament variable is measured by the following principle: 0 is assigned if 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 a 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 on a 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 a 100-point scale, according to which countries scored from 0 to 49,9 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, "free" countries are scored from 80 to 100. It is based on 12 specific categories: 1.property rights, 2.judicial effectiveness, 3.government integrity, 4.tax burden, 5.government spending 6.fiscal health, 7.business freedom, 8.labour freedom, 9.monetary freedom, 10.trade freedom, 11.investment freedom and 12.financial freedom. The 2018 IDL was calculated on the basis of IEF estimated in 2019 (*Miller, Kim, Roberts 2019*), as it included indicators measured during the period from July 1, 2017 to June 30, 2018. During the data standardization the highest accepted value (max) is 100, whereas the lowest value (min) is 0 in the model;

- Human Development Index Education Index (HDI-Education) is assessed by the UNDP (United Nations Development Programme). The 2018 report of HDI-Education includes the data of 189 countries and territories measured in 2017. The HDI dimension, assessed by the overall of three separate indices, such as Life expectancy at birth, years of schooling and national income, reflects the degree of the well-being of the society and is considered one of the essential indicators. Only the HDI Education Index was applied in the IDL model. The mentioned component 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 2018*);

- Gini index (incomes Gini coefficient) measures the deviation of the equal distribution of income of the population in the country. In case of equal distribution it is scored 0, whereas in absolute inequality cases, it is rated with 1 point. During the data standardization the highest accepted value (max) is 0, whereas the lowest value (min) is 1;

- Real wage describes the purchasing power of nominal wage within a definite time span, i.e. 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 formula⁴

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

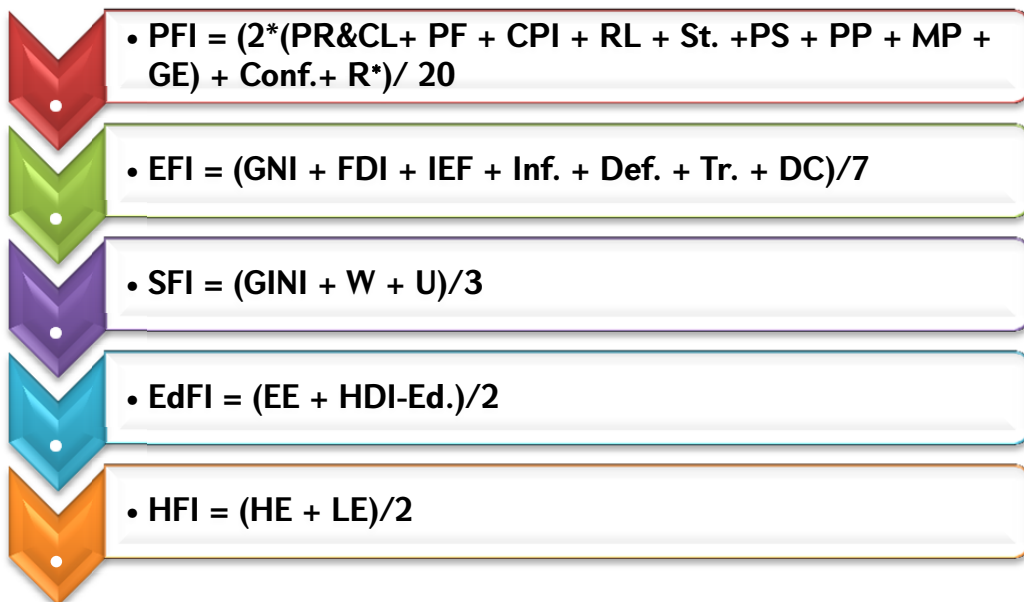
$\min\{x_i\}$ and $\max\{x_i\}$ are the lowest and highest values the variable X can attain, respectively.

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.

1. Methodology of the Model of the Index of Democracy Level (IDL)

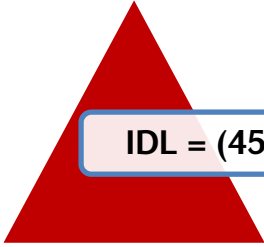
In cross-country analysis, the indicators estimated within the last 5 years and calculated as an average of 3 lowest and highest data, were used to estimate the lowest and the highest values of some variables; meanwhile, corresponding values of different time periods were used to analyze the country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



Taking into account the impact of the 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 indices, i.e. PFI, EFI, SFI, EdFI and HFI.⁵

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 the sub-indices' coefficient in them as well as on the study of theoretical democracy provisions and existing models. The weights are adjusted based on the new studies.


$$\text{IDL} = (45 * \text{PFI} + 30 * (\text{SFI} + \text{EFI} + \text{HFI}) / 3 + 25 * \text{EdFI}) / 100$$

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

Another peculiarity of the model is that through regression it opts to denote the most impacting indices and variables and to what extent they impact democratic transformations of the states 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 rankings 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 in a desperate need to be improved.

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2. NEW REALITIES IN ARMENIA: CONSOLIDATION OR INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF DEMOCRACY?

ARUSYAK ALEKSANYAN

The 2018 was a landmark in bringing about crucial changes in Armenia. The Velvet revolution followed by municipal authorities elections as well as parliamentary elections formed new political powers and realities. A nationwide excitement and euphoria has gradually declined in some strata of the society by marking some division among its members. The question posed to the statement that there has been a real increase in the level of democracy in Armenia is still among the most important ones in the given context of the mentioned significant developments; as the post-revolutionary environment has intensified a whole chain of contradictions and contrasts. On the one hand, there is a legitimate political authorities, elected in the state, but, on the other hand, there is a rupture in the society and display of extreme forms of intolerance. Or else, there exists the political will to initiate reforms, on the one hand, and there is a violation of norms of democracy as well as principle of the separation of the branches of the government, on the other hand. Such contradictions testify that Armenia has entered into a transitional stage where the political system will be more sensitive to both achievements and failures of the authorities increasing the probability of democratic backsliding.

Table 1

Indices of Political, Economic, Social, Educational and Health Factors and Index of Democracy Level of Armenia for the 2000-2018 period*

Years	PFI	EFI	SFI	EdFI	HFI	IDL
2000	0,430	0,449	0,453	0,394	0,398	0,430
2001	0,436	0,419	0,463	0,370	0,405	0,424
2002	0,458	0,489	0,495	0,351	0,370	0,449
2003	0,454	0,541	0,509	0,352	0,367	0,462
2004	0,434	0,550	0,541	0,374	0,473	0,474
2005	0,451	0,542	0,588	0,394	0,428	0,481
2006	0,441	0,541	0,615	0,402	0,363	0,473
2007	0,432	0,562	0,672	0,429	0,361	0,484
2008	0,385	0,623	0,734	0,441	0,325	0,484
2009	0,428	0,502	0,715	0,491	0,338	0,475
2010	0,433	0,563	0,710	0,455	0,363	0,492
2011	0,432	0,662	0,723	0,449	0,329	0,514
2012	0,400	0,715	0,731	0,428	0,450	0,526
2013	0,390	0,705	0,793	0,422	0,525	0,533
2014	0,406	0,721	0,817	0,399	0,604	0,553
2015	0,378	0,608	0,792	0,435	0,602	0,513
2016	0,341	0,644	0,804	0,434	0,595	0,508
2017	0,397	0,705	0,816	0,430	0,625	0,551
2018	0,482	0,798	0,802	0,430	0,641	0,610

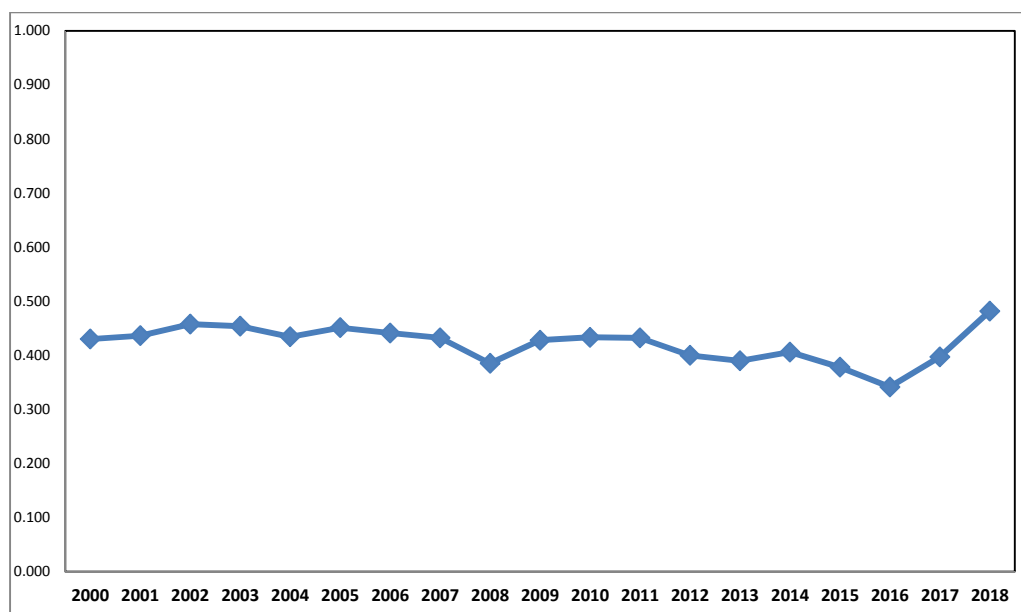
* Source: calculations by the author.

PFI, EFI, SFI, HFI, EdFI and values of IDL consequently calculated on them may insignificantly vary during certain years 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 values.

2.1 Modern challenges of the Armenian democracy in transition

Figure 1

Political Factors Index (2000-2018)*



According to the study of the trends of the Political Factors Index (PFI) of democracy level, a continual growth was recorded in 2017 and 2018 after a downcast registered in 2016, primarily caused by the fall of political stability. At the same time, the record high indicator was registered in 2018 (see Table 1, Figure 1).

Nonetheless, the obtained data and a complex IDL analysis raise a number of questions, such as: whether any revolutions in the post-Soviet region and particularly the one that took place in Armenia 2018 are considered democratic and will they result in formation of a democratic society and what is the probability of democratic backsliding?

* Source: calculations by the author.

By studying the regression processes of democracy S. Huntington (*Huntington 2003, 310-311*) identified a number of factors, such as:

- Insufficient perception and introduction of democratic values among the elite and deeper layers of the society,
- Economic crisis leading to social clashes,
- Eradication of laws and orders as a result of activities triggered by terrorist groups and insurgent movements and other.

These above-mentioned factors can be traced in Armenia as well.

The process of democracy transitions is an interim stage where diversity of transition forms and formats are most emphasized, and which chances and possibilities of retrogression and consolidation of democracy are dependent on. In this case, it is important to distinguish the process aimed at democracy consolidation⁶ from the stages of its institutionalization or stabilization. It will be appropriate to talk about stability of democracy only in a while. Moreover, stability may emerge if any party or a leader is dominant as they have weakened other participants, struggling for the power. Institutionalization is not identical to consolidation of democracy either, as established political institutions or adopted laws can obscure the true meaning of events. When a society demands that the acting government should make drastic changes and a distinctive future, it actually supports its authoritarian nature. And on the contrary, when the authorities deliberately refrain from giving unreasonable promises and the public is satisfied with such an open policy, then a society has become ready for democracy. This situation is described by Adam Przeworski as uncertainty in outcomes under the circumstances of certainty in procedures. In his opinion, the establishment of democracy is a process of institutionalizing uncertainty, where no authorities have the right to control the situation and interfere with the course and outcome of events (*Баранов 2016; Przeworski 1988, 1986, 58*)

⁶ Key issues of democracy consolidation were examined in the studies of the scholars: G. O'Donnel (*O'Donnel, Schmitter 1986*), Ph. Schmitter (*Schmitter 1992; Шмиттер 1996*), J. Linz and A. Stepan (*Linz & Stepan 1996a; 1996b*), L. Daymond (*Даймонд 1999*), S. Huntington (*Хантингтон 2003*), L. Smorgunov (*Сморгунов 1999*), A. Melville (*Мельвиль 1999*) and others.

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Those statements made by Przeworski, on the one hand, seem to legitimize the Velvet revolution in Armenia as an “outcome of uncertainty” and observe it as a truly democratic process, but, on the other hand, he points out the gaps in the post-revolutionary process and indicates that society is not eventually ready to perceive the whole spectrum of democratic values. Nowadays, post-revolutionary society has more than ever sought to gain certainty which is fully satiated with the authorities’ promises and populism.

Nevertheless, Armenia has gone through a new stage, taking into account all its advantages and disadvantages. Positive developments in the electoral field were doubtlessly among the most essential changes, and this is very typical of the post-revolutionary period, as the newly formed authorities, which came to power, enjoy a high level of public confidence and legitimacy at this very stage. The relevant international institutions provided their evaluations based on positive developments in the electoral processes (*OSCE/ODIHR 2018*). Nonetheless, it will be possible to estimate the fundamental progress in the mentioned field only during the next coming elections, as they will be conducted in emotionally healthier/calmer and more competitive conditions. When analyzing the results of the elections, first and foremost, it should be mentioned that the Electoral Code⁷ entered into force from 1 June 2016 and was brought into compliance with the Constitution amendments, adopted by the referendum⁸ in 2015 (*Constitution of the RA, Chapter 16, Article 210*). The amendment that the National Assembly shall be composed of at least 101 deputies is worth mentioning among the most significant changes (*Constitution of the RA, Article 89; Electoral Code of the RA, Article 76*). As a result, 105 and 132 deputies were elected after the 2017 and 2018 parliamentary elections respectively. It is to mention that in view of those changes the previously settled ratio of deputy seats elected by 41 majoritarian and 90 proportional representation, a transformation was made from a mixed to a complete

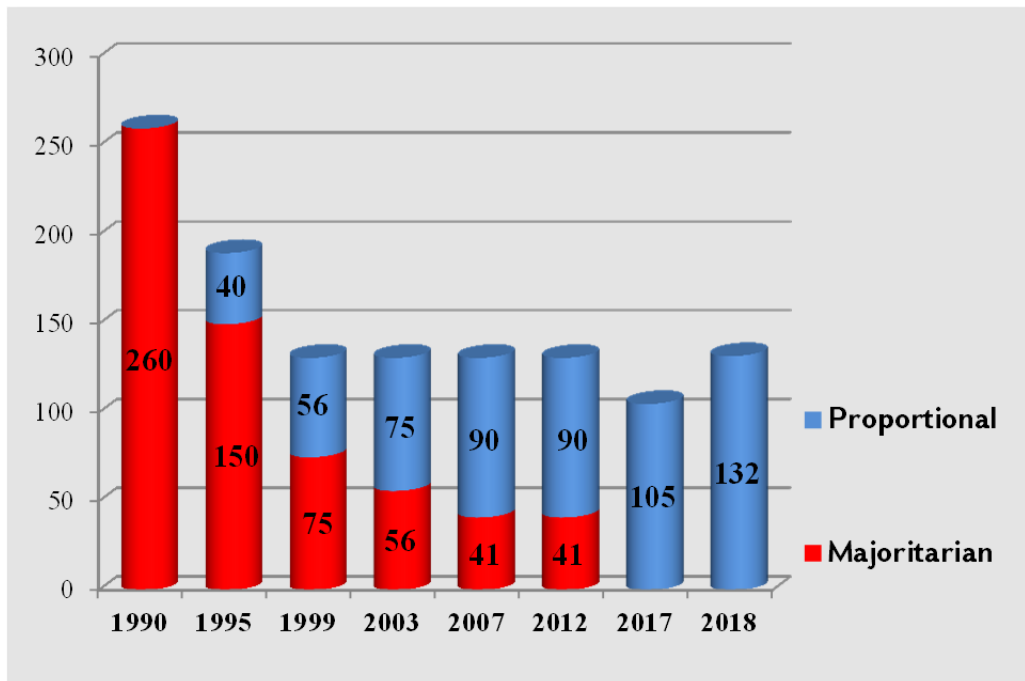
⁷ Electoral Code of the Republic of Armenia (Constitutional Law), adopted on 25 May 2016.

⁸ See the official site of the Central Electoral Commission of the Republic of Armenia <https://www.elections.am/parliamentary/> (20.06.2019).

proportional electoral system with each candidate elected from the 1 national list and 13 open district lists (*Electoral Code of the RA, Article 77, 78*), (see Figure 2).

Figure 2

RA Electoral System (1990-2018)⁹



By conducting a comparative analysis between the 2017 ordinary and 2018 snap parliamentary elections, it can be concluded that the political powers appeared in the National Assembly with a completely new distribution and representation with a difference of one year. In particular, the Republican Party of Armenia (RPA), which participated as a coalition in 1995 and 1999, had a

⁹Source of the data: Constitutional Law of the RA, Article 5 (adopted on 27.03.1995); RA law on amendments and changes to be made in the Electoral Code of the RA; Article 55, 1 and 2 points (adopted on 03.07.2002); RA law on amendments and changes to be made in the Electoral Code of the RA; Article 57, 1 and 2 points (adopted on 19.05.2005); RA Constitution with amendments adopted in 2015; Article 89, The Electoral Code of the RA (adopted on 25.05.2016).

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permanent representation in the National Assembly starting from its first convocation and, moreover, had a majority back in 2017, did not manage to pass the 5% threshold in 2018. Another party -Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF) - which was permanently represented in the newly independent Armenian parliaments as well, failed to gain 5%. On the contrary, Civil Contract Party*, which participated in 2017 parliamentary elections as a constituent of the YELK Alliance**, gained the least mandates. Nonetheless, in the next year, the party that formed My Step Alliance took part in the snap elections and obtained a qualitative majority (see Table 2).

Table 2

The 2017 and 2018 results of the National Assembly Elections of the Republic of Armenia¹⁰

Parties, alliances, participants	National Assembly Elections of the RA			
	2017		2018	
	votes %	mandates		mandates
Republican Party of Armenia (RPA)	49,15	58*	4,7	-
Tsarukyan Alliance ¹¹	27,36	31**	-	-
YELK ¹²	7,79	9	-	-
Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF)	6,57	7	3,9	-
My Step Alliance (MSA) ¹³	-	-	70,4	88***
Bright Armenia (BA)	-	-	6,4	18
Prosperous Armenia (PA)	-	-	8,3	26
Total		105		132

* PM Nikol Pashinyan is an administrative member of the Civil Contract party.

** Since May 2017 Nikol Pashinyan has been the head of a parliamentary faction My Step Alliance.

¹⁰ Source of the data is the official site of the CEC of the RA <http://www.elections.am/election-sview/>, OSCE final report on the elections in Armenia <http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/armenia> (last accessed 21.06.2019).

* 3 representatives of national minorities Yezidis, Assyrians and Kurds were also included.

¹¹ Prosperous Party, Alliance and Mission parties were included in the Tsarukyan Alliance.

** 1 representative of Russian national minorities was also included.

¹² YELK Alliance included parties of Bright Armenia, Republic and Civil Contract Party.

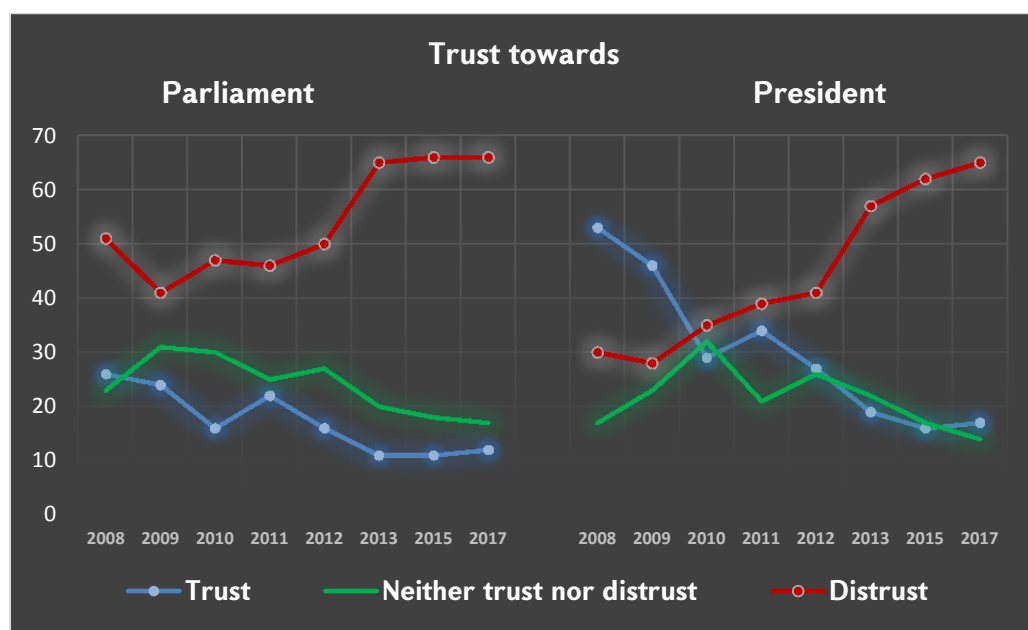
¹³ My Step Alliance included Civil Contract Party and Mission parties.

*** Each of the four largest national minorities Yezidis, Russians, Assyrians and Kurds were included.

Changes, which occurred in the political arena in Armenia, instigated Serzh Sargsyan to seek office as Prime Minister¹⁴ when his second term as President had concluded. It aroused a great wave of protests and eventually led to the Prime Minister's resignation.¹⁵ Later the parliament under the pressure of civil disobedience (*Atanesya 2018*) elected the protest leader Nikol Pashinyan the Prime Minister. In connection to it, they were far more profound and serious reasons. The most crucial factor among them was a deep fall in public trust and keen disappointment. Indicators of the public trust towards the RA National Assembly and President registered within 2008-2017 are displayed in Figure 3.

Figure 3

**Public Trust towards RA Parliament and President
2008-2017 (%)¹⁶**



¹⁴ After the amendment to the RA Constitution in 2015, Armenia would gradually shift from presidential to a parliamentary form of the government, where Prime Minister would be the supreme body of executive power of Armenia.

¹⁵ On 23 April 2018 under the pressure of civil disobedience incidents Serzh Sargsyan on the 6th day of his term formally resigned from the Prime Minister position.

¹⁶ Source of the data is the Online Data Analysis, launched by the Caucasus Research Resource Centre (CRRCC), regional site of Caucasus Barometer <https://www.caucasusbarometer.org/en/> (20.07.2019).

Consequently, in 2008 public trust towards the parliament was estimated by 26%, then it decreased to 12% in 2017. However, there was a different situation with the president, as 53% of the population had confidence in the president at the beginning of 2008 compared to 30% of unfavorable ratings. Nonetheless, the state of affairs drastically changed in 2017 and the indicators were 17% and 65% respectively. It is noteworthy that at the same time there is a sharp 15-16% increase in distrust towards the legislative branch and head of executive powers in 2012-2013. In all cases, both the president and parliament had equally high levels of distrust a year prior to the revolution.

Human rights and freedoms. Issues related to torture, violence and poor conditions in prisons, arbitrary and directed arrests and detention, police misconduct against reporters during rallies, low political participation of women, non-combat deaths in the armed forces, corruption cases, incidents of domestic violence, intolerance towards sexual minorities remain a concern in the field of human rights protection in Armenia (*RA HRD 2019; U.S. Department of State 2019; Human Rights Watch 2019; Freedom House 2019; Amnesty International Report 2018*).

The 2018 events were directly connected with changes and developments in the human rights sphere. Various national and international human rights organizations (*RA HRD 2019; U.S. Department of State 2019; Human Rights Watch 2019; Freedom House 2019*) reported about a significant improvement in the human rights field. Precisely, there is a significant increase in citizens' participation in decision-making processes occurring in various spheres of public life and there was an improvement in the exercise of the freedom of expression and speech as well as their free will. However, it has to be noted that there is a growing intolerance against dissent and escalation of hate speech, as well (*RA HRD 2019, 14, 258*), which resulted in a rupture of the society into pro-government and opposition members or else, “the new ones vs. the previous ones” in post-revolutionary Armenia.

Although the mass media freedom is enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia (*Article 42*), there are, in fact, issues in the mentioned

field mainly related to objective information coverage, pluralism, tolerance, professionalism and proper conduct of the media, as well as pressure inflicted on the Armenian media. For example, in September 2018, officers of the RA Police and Investigative Committee searched the office of the editorial of the opposition Yerevan.Today news site (*Yerevan.Today 2018; RA HRD 2019, 326-329*) with the demand to produce proof of the content of the published material (*RA HRD 2019, 328*).

In connection to press freedom, it is to point out that, online media and social networks provide some degree of political pluralism in comparison to broadcasting and print media, whereas live broadcasting has become an important tool for covering political events. At the same time, there has been a sharp increase in fake users and the latter's manipulative attempts after the revolution (*U.S. Department of State 2019, 17-18; Freedom House 2019*).

According to the 2017 Freedom House* report (where the 2016 events are included) Press Freedom is not free in Armenia. Armenia is ranked 137th among 199 states and territories and its position improved when compared to the previous year with the country rating of 139. In view of the regional countries, Armenia occupies the 4th position yielding to Georgia, Ukraine and Moldova (*Freedom House 2017a, 26*). Armenia's Press Freedom estimated by 63 points has still remained unchanged when compared to the previous year and 20, 23, 20 points were assigned to legislative, political and economic environments, respectively (*Freedom House 2017b*)**. The organization's experts state that assessments of the country are conditioned by pressures inflicted on journalists, restrictions related to independence of print, radio and television media as well as other numerous issues.¹⁷

* Indices of Political Rights and Civil liberties as well as Press Freedom defined by the Freedom House are included as PFI variables in the IDL model.

** Freedom House defines Press Freedom by providing numerical rankings from 100 to 0 and accordingly, states are rated as "free" (0-30 points), "partly free" (31-60) and "not free" (61-100).

¹⁷ See the official site of the Freedom House <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-press/-2017/armenia> (20.07.2019).

2. New Realities in Armenia: Consolidation or Institutionalization of Democracy?

According to the Freedom in the World report provided by the Freedom House (*Freedom House 2019*), Political Rights and Civil Liberties spheres are partly free in Armenia.¹⁸ It is noteworthy that there was an improvement in the rating of the index of Political Rights in Armenia compared to 2018 and it was estimated by an additional 1 point; hence, the overall rating of the Political Rights (4) and Civil Liberties (4) was estimated by 4 points which is repetition of the 2003 outcome considered the best lately registered one.¹⁹

At the same time, with regard to women's rights, it should be noted that women in Armenia have a low participation in public, precisely, in political processes. Thus, for example, only 32 out of 132 representatives, who won deputy mandates in the National Assembly 2018 snap elections, were women. Relatively, there were two female ministers in the same year and the number of female judges amounted to 26%. A similar indicator was recorded in the staff of the Yerevan Council of Elders, where 18 out of 65 members were women, which was equivalent to 27,6%. Moreover, as of June 2018, there were only 15 women out of 103 civil servants occupying the high ranking positions, 1582 women out of 3221 members in the top positions, as well as 1319 and 612 out of 2189 and 860 in senior and junior level jobs, respectively (*RA HRD 2019, 566-567; WomenNet.am 2019*). The mentioned statistics clearly indicate that the overall participation of women in the lower level is gradually increasing.

According to the 2018 report of the Global Gender Gap Index (GGGI), a subindex of the PFI introduced by the World Economic Forum, Armenia took the 98 position among 149 states. It is to be noted that within the last 3 years, the GGGI had been annually improving and reached 0,678 units (see Table 3). In comply with the data of Economic participation and opportunity subindex, in 2018 Armenia was ranked 73rd with 0,675 units among 149 states, which was

¹⁸ Indices of Political Rights and Civil Liberties are estimated by the Freedom House by 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).

¹⁹ See the official site of the Freedom House <https://freedomhouse.org/report-types/freedom-world> (16.06.2019).

less than the indicator registered in the previous year. With a significant difference in rank and score in the field of Economic participation and opportunity, Armenia occupied the 27th position in Educational attainment subindex, receiving the highest one unit score. Moreover, 46,1% of men have higher education compared to 58,7% women in this field. In view of Health and survival and Political empowerment subindex, Armenia ranked 148th and 115th, respectively. To sum up, the best results in GGGI are registered in Educational attainment, while political and health sectors are one of the most vulnerable ones (*World Economic Forum 2018, Part 1: 11, 13-14, 21-22, Part 2: 9-10; WomenNet.am 2019*).

Table 3

Global Gender Gap Index of Armenia for the 2016-2018 period²⁰

<i>GGGI Subindex</i>	<i>2016</i>		<i>2017</i>		<i>2018</i>	
	<i>rank</i>	<i>score</i>	<i>rank</i>	<i>score</i>	<i>rank</i>	<i>score</i>
Economic Participation and Opportunity	69	0,671	71	0,671	73	0,675
Educational Attainment	27	1,000	42	0,999	35	1,000
Health and Survival	143	0,939	143	0,939	148	0,939
Political Empowerment	125	0,068	111	0,099	115	0,099
GGGI	102/144	0,669	97/144	0,677	98/149	0,678

One of the most common forms of discrimination against women is gender-based violence (*Crowell & Burgess 1996; Watts, Zimmerman 2002; Лактионова 2010*), which is widespread both in Armenia and worldwide. Statistics on violence against women and domestic violence do not fully reflect the current situation, as there is no unified registers in the Republic of Armenia yet, and this type of violence is obscure and concealed as such. However, the obtained statistics prove the existence of this phenomenon in Armenia. Thus, according to the data of the RA Police, 707 cases of violence were registered

²⁰ Source of the data is the official site of the World Economic Forum
<https://www.weforum.org/reports/the-global-gender-gap-report-2016>,
<https://www.weforum.org/reports/the-global-gender-gap-report-2017>,
<https://www.weforum.org/reports/the-global-gender-gap-report-2018> (15.07.2019).

2. New Realities in Armenia: Consolidation or Institutionalization of Democracy?

during the reporting period and only 441 out of them were incidents of spousal abuse (*RA HRD 2019, 544-552*).

A study of the trends of other political variables included in the IDL model shows that the Index of Political Stability had been regularly increasing in 2016-2018 in contrast to the Rule of Law, which had gradually declined.²¹ The Corruption Perceptions Index²² remained stable in 2018 compared to the previous year. Nonetheless, it improved if compared to 2016. Consequently, in 2018 Armenia estimated by 35 points took 105th place among 180 states and territories.²³ The indicator of Conflict Presence variable decreased in 2016 conditioned by the April war, while it continually increased due to the fact that there was a still tense situation at the Armenia and Azerbaijan border in 2017-2018.²⁴

Summing up the above-mentioned, there were two major PFI declines in 2008 and 2016 within the observed years from 2000 to 2018. Besides, after the 2016 drop where the PFI was the record low it started continually increasing within the next 2 years and eventually the 2018 PFI was the highest to be recorded for the observed period. The efforts - taken by the authorities and the public on the whole in an attempt to maintain the level of democracy and growing trends in Armenia, as well as avoid democratic backsliding - should be directed to solve the above-mentioned issues, eliminate divisions in society and develop and implement clear concepts for further development.

²¹ See the official site of the WB <https://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/> (20.07.2019).

²² Corruption Perceptions Index is measured by Transparency International organization and has the ranking scale from 0 -100 (it was estimated by a 0-10 scale before 2012), where 0 point implies the highest level of corruption and effectively 100 points indicate its total absence.

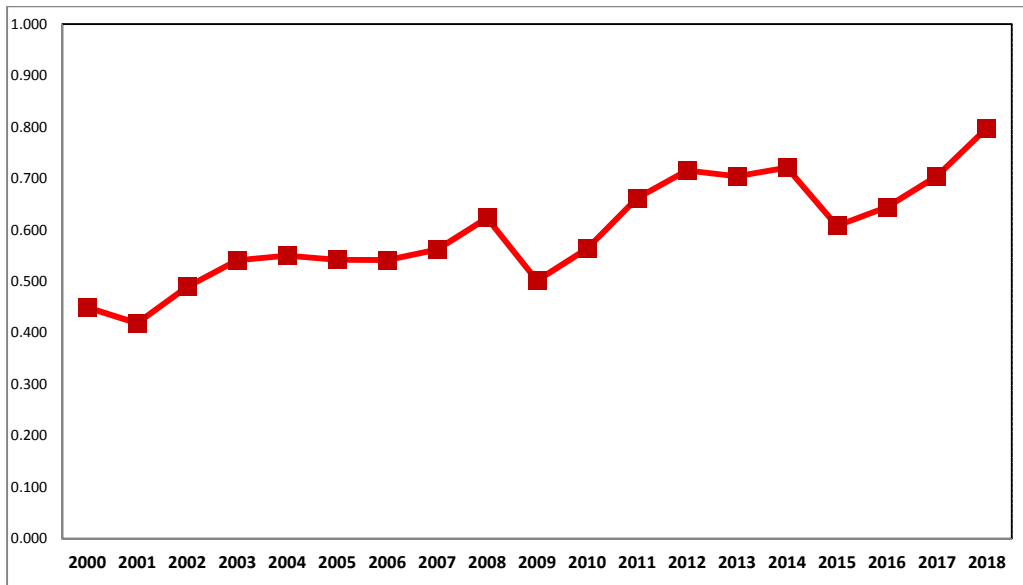
²³ See the official site of the Transparency International anti-corruption centre <http://www.transparency.org> (10.07.2019).

²⁴ Conflict Presence affecting democracy and included in the model 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 point), which described as a state conflicts with another state/states and there are active military actions carried out. The maximum value on a scale is 2 points and the minimum value is 0 point. Given the nature of the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict, it was rated with 0 in 2016, whereas in 2017 and 2018, it was estimated by 1 point.

2.2 Challenges and perspectives of economic partnership development

Figure 4

Economic Factors Index (2000-2018)*



The analysis of the data shows that the Economic Factors Index (EFI) which experienced a fall in 2015, continually improved within 2016-2018 and had a positive impact on the Index of Democracy Level. The highest and the lowest EFI were recorded in 2018 and 2001 respectively for the mentioned period (see Figure 4, Table 1).

The highest economic growth in the recent years was registered in 2017 and it amounted to 7,5% in Armenia, supported by goods and services as well as industry. The pace of the growth was sustained till the first trimester of 2018 providing 9,7% GDP growth. Nonetheless, it declined later and constituted to 5,2% of GDP annual growth (see Table 4) (*MTEF 2020-2022*, 24-26; *World Bank 2019*, 3-4; *Azg.am 2019*). In this regard, it should be noted that Armenia

* Source: calculations by the author.

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succeeded in escaping severe shocks that might have had a significantly adverse effect on the economic environment in political change processes which occurred in 2018 as well as development of post-revolutionary events.

Table 4

The real GDP growth in economy branches for the period of 2016-2018, %²⁵

	2016	2017	2018
	Fact	Fact	Fact
GDP	0,2	7,5	5,2
Industry	7,6	11,8	5,8
Agriculture	-5,0	-5,1	-8,5
Construction	-14,1	2,8	0,8
Services	3,2	10,6	9,3
Net indirect taxes	-3,7	9,7	8

By analyzing the indicators of the EFI variables estimated within 2016-2018, it can be observed that they had positive trends on the whole. Therefore, the fall in the Gross national income per capita in 2016 (\$3750, WB Atlas method) was followed by a constant increase within the next two years and reached to \$4230 in 2018. In view of this indicator, in 2018-2019 the World Bank classified Armenia in the group with an upper-middle income countries, registering its improvement from the previously assigned low-middle income (*World Bank Blogs 2018*).²⁶ Domestic credit had been incessantly growing during the years of 2016-2018 combined with a significant reduction in Budget deficit, which deflated from 5,5% to 1,8% of GDP in 2018. In contrast to it, consumer prices had steadily increased after the 2016 inflation and amounted to 2,5% in 2018. There was also a reduction in Foreign direct investments which was previously recorded with 3,2% of GDP and reached to 2% in 2018.²⁷

²⁵ “2020-2022 Medium term expenditure framework of the Republic of Armenia,” the Government of the Republic of Armenia // <https://www.gov.am/am/medium-term/> (13.07.2019).

²⁶ As of 1 July 2018, the new threshold for classification by income of the countries, estimated by the World Bank, countries with an upper-middle income group had 3896-12055 US dollars.

²⁷ Source of the data, see the official site of the Statistical Committee of the Republic of Armenia <https://www.armstat.am>, official site of the World Bank <https://data.worldbank.org> (19.07.2019).

There was a certain fall in the Index of Economic Freedom indicator. According to the 2019 Index of Economic Freedom report,²⁸ Armenia was ranked 47th among 180 countries and scored as a country with a moderately free economy. The 67,7 points assigned to Armenia is above the world averages (60,8), but is below the European region average (68,6). In the report, the experts expressed their concern related precisely to the spheres of judicial effectiveness and government integrity (corruption risks in separate sectors of the system), which also decreased in comparison to the previous year. The most decreasing downfall was observed in fiscal health sphere indicator measured for the same year (*Miller, Kim and Roberts 2019, 2, 19, 32, 86-87*).

Considerable positive changes were observed in External trade indicator, which had been steadily growing in the years of 2016-2018 and reached 90,4%²⁹ of GDP. Some changes took place in the goods diversification profile exported in 2018; export of mining commodities decreased in contrast to an increase in volumes of textile and agricultural products as well as precious metals. Exports of Armenian products to the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) countries, Islamic Republic of Iran and Iraq increased. Armenian goods are at present exported to the Eurasian Economic Union countries alongside with the Islamic Republic of Iran and Iraq (*Manookian, Bogdan 2019, 6-7*).

Armenia is gradually widening its partnership with the EAEU and the EU. By joining the Treaty on the Eurasian Economic Union,³⁰ Armenia was given the opportunity to extend and deepen its economic ties with other member states - Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, which implies creation of a common customs area and free movement of goods, services, capital and

²⁸ The 2019 indicator of the Index of Economic Freedom (IEF), included in the IDL model, was observed and calculated on the basis of IEF estimated in 2018, as the experts in the Heritage Foundation measured the 2019 IEF on the grounds of economic and other various indicators calculated during the period from 1 July 2017 to 30 June 30 2018.

²⁹ Source of the data is the official site of the WB <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NE.TRD.GNFS.ZS> (19.07.2019).

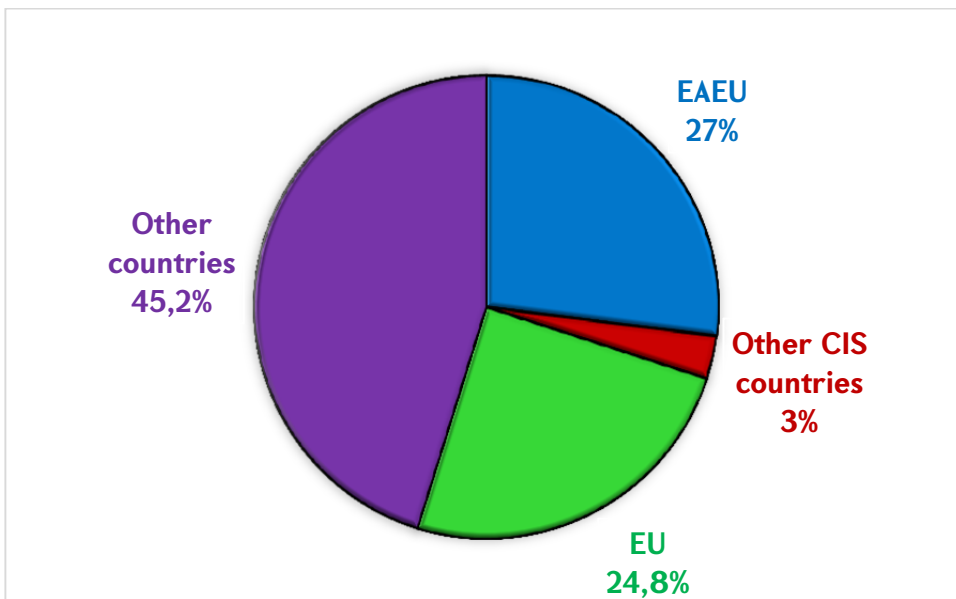
³⁰ Agreement signed on 29 May 2014 by the Republic of Armenia on the Treaty on the Eurasian Economic Union (adopted on 10.10.2014, in Minsk), which entered into force on 02.01.2015 // <https://www.arlis.am/DocumentView.aspx?docid=120340> (19.07.2019).

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labour force among the mentioned member states (*World Bank 2019, 86-87*). One of the achievements obtained in 2018 was the Interim Agreement enabling formation of a free trade area between the Eurasian Economic Union and the Islamic Republic of Iran.³¹ At the same time, negotiations aimed at forming free trade zones with Singapore, Israel, India, Egypt and Serbia are still being conducted (*Azg.am 2019*).

Figure 5

RA external trade according to the countries (January-December 2018)³²



Having a potential for enlargement, the EAEU is still passing the milestone in its development where a disproportionate growth of economic relations among member states may be an obstacle. Besides, the absence of a common

³¹ See “Interim Agreement leading to formation of a free trade area between the Eurasian Economic Union and its Member States, of the one part, and the Islamic Republic of Iran, of the other part” (signed at Astana on 17th May, 2018, will enter into force on 27th October, 2019) // http://www.eurasiancommission.org/ru/act/trade/dotp/sogl_torg/Documents/Interim%20Agreement%20EAEU-Iran_final.pdf (20.07.2019).

³² Source of the data is the official site of the Statistical Committee of the Republic of Armenia https://www.armstat.am/file/article/sv_12_18a_411.pdf (16.07.2019).

border with Armenia slackens not only the process, but also the country's full integration into the organization. And despite the fact that Armenia's export volumes to EAEU countries increased significantly in 2018, Russia has nevertheless remained the main trading partner. Thus, EAEU ratio in the external trade turnover of Armenia constituted to 27% in 2018 and 26,1% out of it was gained only from the Russian Federation. Therefore, Russia has the largest share in Armenia-EAEU trade, which amounts to almost 97%. In view of the same indicator with the EU, it has comprised 24,8% (see Figure 5).

Armenia has a preferential access to the EU market. Since 2009 Armenia has benefitted from the Generalised Scheme of Preferences (GSP+)*, which is a special incentive arrangement for sustainable development and good governance initiated by the European Commission. Thanks to this system, 66% of EU products' classification can be exported from Armenia to EU with zero custom duty. Armenia may stop using GSP+ preferences in the coming years as income per capita increases (*World Bank 2019, 86-87; EEN Armenia 2019*).

Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement³³ (CEPA) between the European Union and RA which entered into force in June 2018 is of considerable value for the EU-Armenia cooperation. The Agreement will provide a better regulatory environment, that will improve the business climate and investment opportunities for Armenian and will create more favourable conditions for political dialogue and economic development as well as further prospectives.

Country Partnership Frameworks (CPF) framed by the World Bank for the period of FY19-FY23 (*World Bank 2019*) depicts a summary of development challenges and constraints with the focus on particularly major issues, such as:

* GSP+ provides preferential access for developing countries coming into the EU market international All GSP beneficiary countries have to respect and implement the principles related to human rights, labour rights, protection of the environment and good governance.

³³ See "Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement between the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community and their Member States, of the one part, and the Republic of Armenia, of the other part" (signed at Brussels on 24th November, 2017) https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/36140/comprehensive-enhanced-partnership-agreement-between-european-union-armenia-cepa_en (15.07.2019).

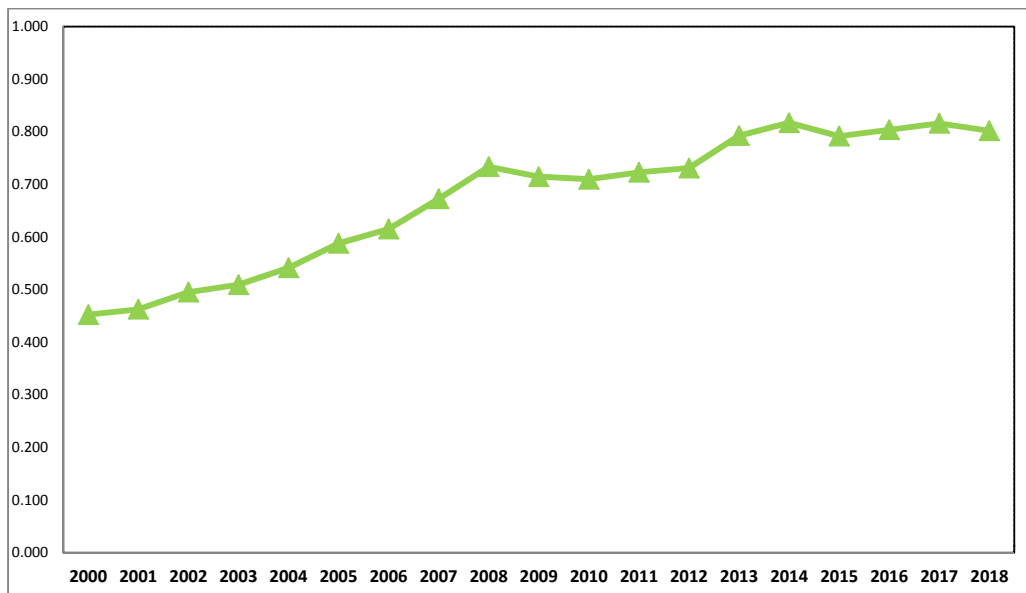
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- Exports of goods and services remain relatively low and are dominated by low-value-added commodities and other limited products,
- Important investment climate and governance gaps, related to lack of sufficient public and corporate governance and transparency, regulatory quality, rule of law, corruption and etc.,
- Deteriorating quality of human capital as a result of a significant slowdown in labour productivity growth, which is caused by migration, population aging, low participation of women in the labour market, as well as issues relevant of the education system and etc.,
- Elevated vulnerabilities in macro and microeconomics as well as demographic and environmental spheres (*World Bank 2019, 8*).

2.3 Achievements and rooted problems in social sphere

Figure 6

Social Factors Index (2000-2018)*



* Source: calculations by the author.

Social security has always been one of priority directions of the RA state policy. A tangible reduction in poverty, improvement of demographic situation, as well as provision of appropriate social guarantees for vulnerable groups of the RA population are among the priorities of the state policy to be implemented in the mentioned sector (*MTEF 2020-2022, 159*).

The growth in the Social Factors Index (SFI) within the 2016-2017 years was disrupted by a fall which occurred in 2018. The record high and low SFI indicator were observed in 2014 and 2000 respectively (see Figure 6, Table 1).

A significant progress in reducing poverty in Armenia was registered in 2017. It made up 25,7%, which was 3,7% less compared to 2016. The poverty rate was the first time recorded lower than the 27,6% indicator registered prior to 2008 financial crisis. It was supported by the employment income and increase in employment rate. Nonetheless, the economic growth registered in 2017 is probably the most important factor, stipulating this achievement in the social policy field. However, the poverty causes worries, as it is still high compared to countries in the region, which are included in the model. There is also a concern about sharp deviations in connection to poverty rate observed in Yerevan, other cities and regions. Moreover, difference in poverty in urban (25%) and rural (26,8%) areas is not as significant as it is among Yerevan (22,4%) and other cities of the RA (27,9%). Nevertheless, the highest poverty rate is observed in Shirak marz (44,3%) with the lowest in Vayots Dzor (16,9%) (*RA SC, WB 2018, 46-55; Manookian, Bogdan 2019, 11-12; World Bank 2019, 6-7*).

According to the state policy, precisely section 4,2 , adopted by the Government of the Republic of Armenia, it is envisaged to significantly reduce poverty and eliminate extreme poverty by 2023. The latter will be implemented by means of programmes aimed at raising education level, promoting employment and entrepreneurship among the poor (*MTEF 2020-2022, 159*).

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Despite the 2017 growth in SFI, it, however, declined in the next year, caused by the Real wage reduction from 365 to 349³⁴ US dollars. There was a slight decrease (17,7%) in Unemployment in 2018, which remains a pressing problem in Armenia and its rate is still considered the highest compared to neighbouring countries in the region.

Figure 7

Unemployment rate in post-Soviet region (2000-2018)³⁵

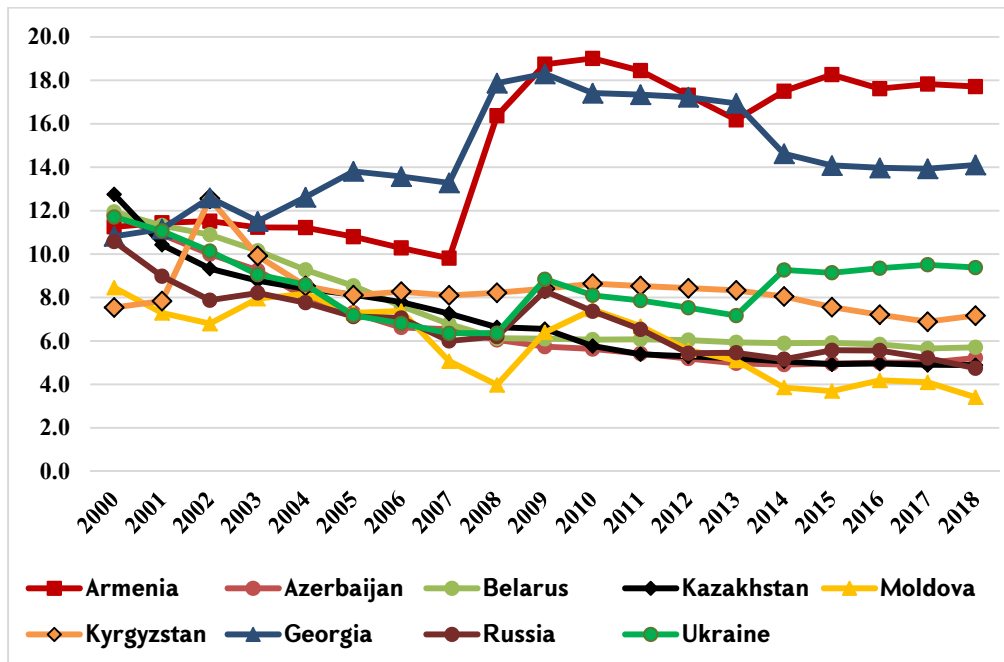


Figure 7 shows Unemployment rate estimated for the nine post-Soviet states for the period of 2000-2018. It is evident in the figure that Unemployment indicators of the above-mentioned countries, registered in 2000, were almost on the same level and were not as scattered as they were in

³⁴ Source of the data is the calculations by the author on average nominal wage, consumer price index and exchange rate on the grounds of official data obtained by the Statistical Committee of the Republic of Armenia.

³⁵ Source of the data is the official site of the WB <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.UEM.-TOTL.ZS> (19.07.2019).

2018. Hence, the Unemployment rate in Armenia had raised for over the years, therefore the deviation from the regional average grew. Georgia (14,1%), following Armenia, has the second highest, while Moldova has the lowest (3,4%) Unemployment rate.

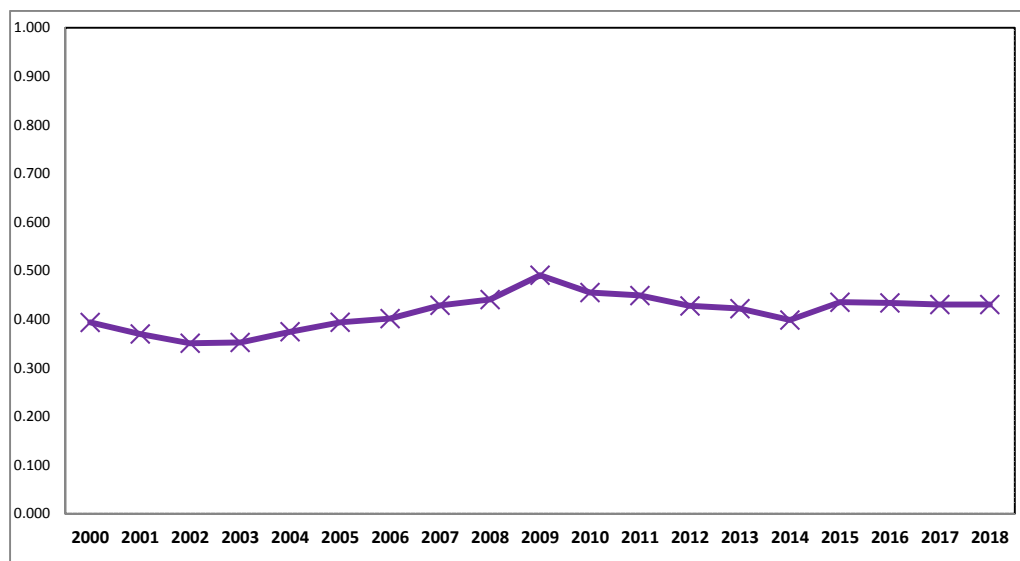
By discussing socioeconomic challenges and achievements as well as issues related to the revolution, democracy consolidation and retrogression and drawing parallels between the above terms, it is appropriate to refer to Alexis de Tocqueville's approaches, defined by professional scholars as The Tocqueville Effect or Paradox (*Elster 1998, 58-60; Finkel and Gehlbach 2018*). According to this approach, the improvement of social conditions is accompanied by the growth in social frustration. Tocqueville came to this conclusion, based on the observations, made by studying the French Revolution and further reforms in Europe and the United States. In this context, he particularly emphasizes reforms, but when implementation falls short of this promise, citizens are aggrieved as expectations are unfulfilled. And he also emphasizes that a reforming "bad government" is often at greatest risk of revolution and in this case, the regime overthrown by the revolution is almost better than the one succeeding (*Tocqueville 1955; 1969; 1986*). Improvements in socio-economic reforms and conditions within pre-revolutionary period can also be observed from examples of other post-Soviet countries. Hence, prior to the Orange revolution in Ukraine, starting from November 2004 to January 2005, the economic growth averaged 9% within 2002-2004, while it increased to 12% right in 2004, stipulated by a significant reduction³⁶ in poverty as well.

³⁶ Source of the data is the official site of the WB <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/> (15.07.2019).

2.4 Educational Factors: strategy of the state policy

Figure 8

Educational Factors Index (2000-2018)*



When analysing the trends in the Educational Factors Index (EdFI), it becomes evident that within the period of 2000-2018 it had visibly upward and downward directions, which somehow got levelled off in the middle, resulting in the curve's position remaining on the same level in general. The maximum value of EdFI was registered in 2009 stipulated by the government spending on education which amounted to 4% of GDP. At the same time, the minimum value of EdFI was recorded in 2002.

In 2017 the state allocations to education constituted to 2,2% of GDP, which is 2,5 times less than the average indicator for European and Central Asian countries (*World Bank 2019, 11*).

Nowadays, vocational and higher education systems in Armenia are not adapted and do not correspond to modern needs of the labour market. One of the causes of the problem is an indistinct cooperation between the scientific

* Source: calculations by the author.

community and private sector, discrepancies in their supply and demand. Abundance in humanities specialists and insufficient investments in STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) education exacerbate the existing problems (*World Bank 2019, 11*).

Reviewing the statistics of gross enrolment ratio, it becomes clear that enrolment in primary schools had been gradually declining over the last 7 years and reached from 95,2% in 2012/2013 to 91,1% in 2018/2019 academic year (*Aleksanyan 2017, 44*). During the period in consideration, the largest decrease (10%) was observed in secondary school enrolment. On the contrary, the number of applicants for higher education institutions had increased lately and accounted for 52,2% in 2018/2019. However, this indicator decreased compared to the previous two years, and enrolment indicator 56,4% registered in the 2017/2018 academic year was the highest during the mentioned period. The gross enrolment ratio in vocational and specialized secondary education institutions remains the lowest (see Table 5).

Table 5

Gross enrolment ratio of pupils and students, %³⁷

Academic Year	Primary school	Secondary school	High school	Pre-specialized school	Specialized secondary school	Higher institution
2016/2017	91,2	90,7	65,1	8,1	11,1	54,1
2017/2018	91,3	90,1	65,5	8,6	11,5	56,4
2018/2019	91,1	84,9	74,0	6,7	11,7	52,2

³⁷ Source of the data is the official site of Statistical Committee of the Republic of Armenia (2017) "Social situation in the RA in 2016 // <https://www.armstat.am/am/?nid=80&id=1958>, Statistical Committee of the Republic of Armenia (2018) "Social situation in the RA in 2017 // <https://www.armstat.am/am/?nid=80&id=2059>, Statistical Committee of the Republic of Armenia (2019) Social situation in the RA in 2018» // <https://www.armstat.am/am/?nid=82&id=2182> (15.07.2019).

The state policy aimed at complying Armenian education system with internationally accepted standards and rapidly solving the existing problems envisages to provide:

- Attestation and raising of professional qualification of teachers and lecturers
- Modernization and harmonization of education programmes to labour market and modern economic conditions
- Improvement of technical and material conditions of education institutions
- Transition to overall inclusiveness planned to realize by 2023
- Increase in gross enrolment ratio in general education up to 99%
- From 17% to 19% growth in the number of applicants graduating from pre-specialized and specialized secondary schools to enter higher education institutions (*MTEF 2020-2022, 92-100*).

2.5 Healthy development and issues in the agenda

The health sector is highly prioritized in the RA state policy. Although there are some tangible positive changes in the state of affairs and performance of the health sector, major challenges still are of a concern and remain in the agenda. Low level of state spending on health care impedes efficient progress and slows down achievement of goals. In 2017, Armenia's public spending on health constituted to 1,5% of GDP, which is five times lower than the average score for the entire Europe and Central Asia region. At the same time, Armenia is the country with the highest indicator in out-of-pocket payments of total health spending. Nonetheless, most of expenses are made through informal payments (*World Bank 2019, 11, 12*). A high indicator in Current health expenditure (10,4% of GDP in 2017) is stipulated by the high amount of private payments. This indicator is inappropriate for Armenia- a country with such an income- but it can be explained by the direct impact of remittances on the public income (see Figure 10) (*National Institute of Health MoH RA 2018a, 30-31*).

Figure 9

Health Factors Index (2000-2018)*

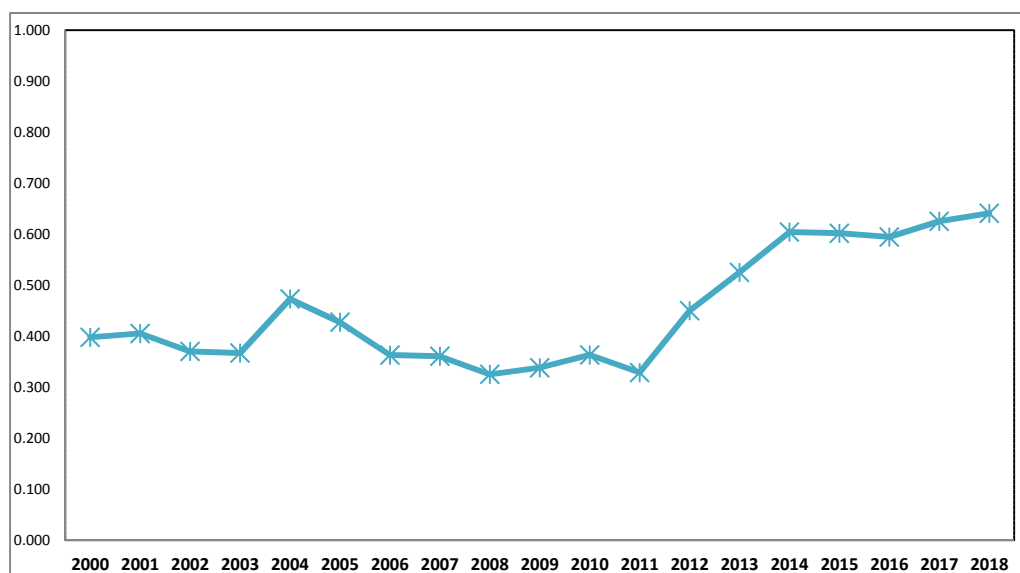
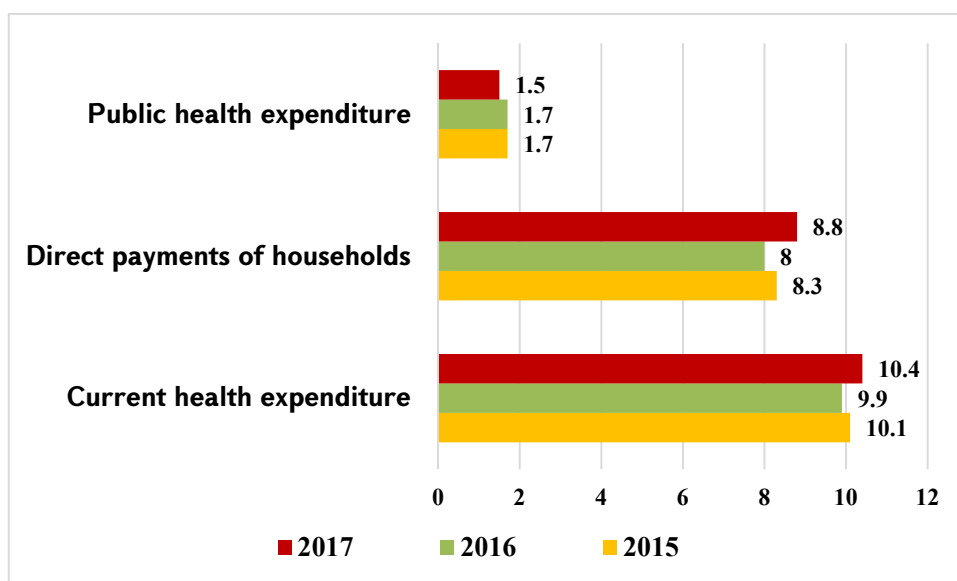


Figure 10

Health expenditure by financial sources, % of GDP



* Source: calculations by the author.

By discussing major health issues in Armenia, it is important to note the territorial disparity in the provision and access of health care services. A significant portion of the population outside the capital largely lacks the access to the services, which creates not only additional costs, but also poses a serious threat in case of urgent and critical health problems (*World Bank 2019, 12*).

One of the main challenges that Armenia has today is the ageing population and people aged 65 years and over comprise 11,6% of the Armenian population, which is 5% more than the defined 7% average indicator of the UN Population ageing rate (*National Institute of Health MoH RA 2018b, 13*).

Meantime, Armenia ranked as a country with a low fertility rate and it has the total 1,6 childbirths per woman, which is lower than a simple reproductive level having 2,1 births per woman³⁸.

By summing up and analysing the indicators of the Health Factors Index (HFI), we can conclude that they have an upward trend registered with sharp increases within certain years. Those improvements were only conditioned by an increase in Current health expenditure. Nonetheless, during 2016-2018 positive changes in Life expectancy indicator had a favourable impact on the HFI growth (see Figure 9).

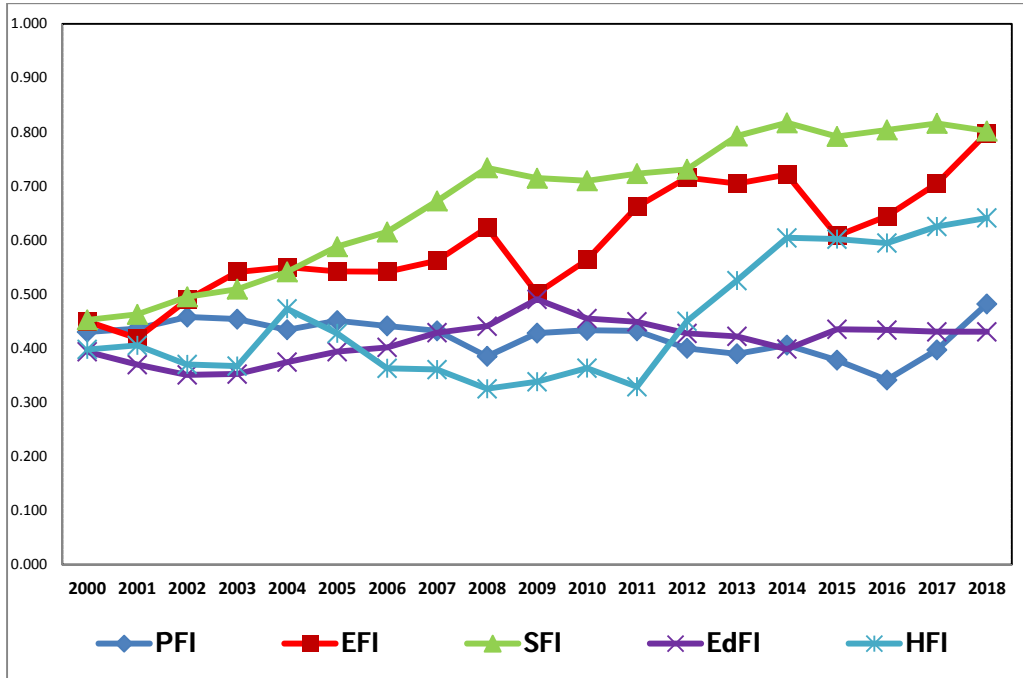
2.6 Development trends of the Index of Democracy Level

Development trends of the five subindices of the Index of Democracy Level within the period of 2000-2018 are illustrated in Figure 11. The IDL was calculated by combining the mentioned 5 subindices for the observed period (see Figure 12).

³⁸ See the official site of the United Nations Population Fund <https://www.un.org/development/desa/pd/data/index.html> UNFPA (19.07.2019).

Figure 11

Indices of Political, Economic, Social, Health and Educational Factors affecting the Index of Democracy Level of Armenia for the timeframe 2000-2018*



As it can be concluded by the data obtained, the IDL curve recovered and was registered with a sharp increase within 2017 and 2018 after the 2015-2016 downfall (Figure 12). The influence of political and economic factors, registered with a record high indicators, was of great significance for the IDL growth within the years of 2017-2018. Nonetheless, in view of the PFI curve, it was mainly stable with some fluctuations and a certain growth was denoted only in 2018. Indices of Political Rights and Civil Liberties had particularly protected a positive change in the 2018 growth of PFI which deteriorated since 2004. In the meantime, the Rule of Law was steadily declining both in 2017 and 2018. The latter testifies that the political culture in Armenia has not been properly

* Source: calculations by the author.

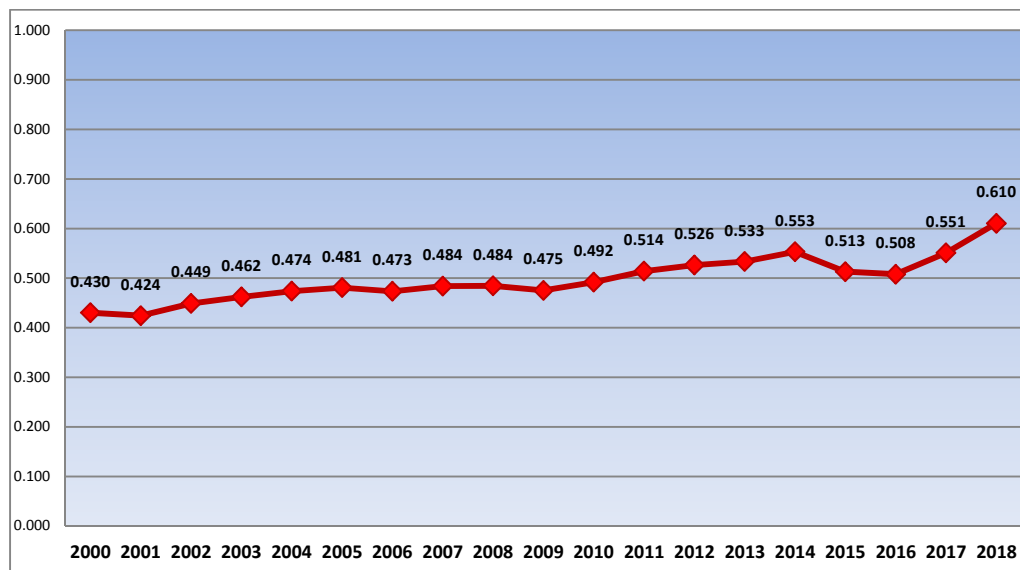
The indices of IDL factors are comparable with each other by trends only.

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formed yet and the society in general does not have a conscious and responsible approach as well as use of liberties and rights acquired.

Figure 12

The Index of Democracy Level of Armenia for the period 2000-2018*



It should be noted that the Social Factors Index (SFI) in contrast to the Political Factors Index (PFI) remained stable without sharp rises but it fell down in 2018. It was conditioned by the reduction in Real wage. In reference to Educational and Health Factors Index, they did not change and were mainly on the same level.

Hence, the 2017 growth in a number of indicators contributed to the improvement of PFI and EFI as well as IDL after the fall that had occurred within the previous years. In 2018 the post-revolutionary processes, distinguished by the formation of legitimate authorities, and a rise in indicators for Political Rights and Civil Liberties, resulted in the highest level of the IDL registered during the considered period. However, drawing parallels and comparing post-revolutionary cycles of other countries in the region, it is to

* Source: calculations by the author.

mention that democratic backsliding is not excluded and many years are required for consolidation of democracy during which the achieved level shall not be only maintained, but, moreover, new progress shall be ensured as such.

2.7 Regression analysis of the Index of Democracy Level

Within the framework of the research, the regression analysis displays the variables of Political, Economic, Social, Educational and Health Factors Indices which had a considerable impact on the IDL of Armenia.

Thereby, the correlation between IDL_i^* and political variables of Rule of Law and Corruption Perceptions Index has been established (see Table 6).

Table 6

Regression analysis of the IDL_i (PFI variables)

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Coefficient</i>	<i>Adj. R²</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>N</i>
Rule of Law	0,01	0,458	0,000	24
Corruption Perceptions Index	0,091	0,537	0,000	24

Economic variables, precisely, Gross domestic product has been significantly correlated with IDL_i (see Table 7).

Table 7

Regression analysis of the IDL_i (EFI variables)

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Coefficient</i>	<i>Adj. R²</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>N</i>
Gross domestic product per capita (\$1000)	0,03	0,613	0,000	24

Strong correlation between IDL_i and social variables of Real wage, and Gini index has been established (see Table 8).

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

Table 8

Regression analysis of the IDL_i (SFI variables)

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Coefficient t</i>	<i>Adj. R²</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>N</i>
Real wage (\$100)	0,032	0,678	0,000	24
Gini index	-0,548	0,670	0,000	24

Among the Educational Factors, HDI Education Index and IDL_i are significantly correlated (see Table 9).

Table 9

Regression analysis of the IDL_i (EdFI variables)

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Coefficient</i>	<i>Adj. R²</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>N</i>
HDI Education Index	1,256	0,812	0,000	24

As for health factors included in the model, Life expectancy at birth is considerably correlated with IDL_i (see Table 10).

Table 10

Regression analysis of the IDL_i (HFI variables)

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Coefficient</i>	<i>Adj. R²</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>N</i>
Life expectancy at birth	0,033	0,893	0,000	24

According to the results, the political factors of the IDL model, namely the Rule of Law and Corruption Perceptions Index strongly influenced the democracy in Armenia, and 1 unit growth of the mentioned variables will lead to IDL_i improvement with 0,01 and 0,091 units correspondingly. Those variables explain 46-54% of variable variation.

There is a significant correlation between one of the social indicators GDP and IDL_i. Hence, \$1000 increase will result in IDL_i rise with 0,03 units.

In reference to social factors, Real wage and Gini index can be singled out as the most influential variables. \$100 rise in Real wage will improve IDL_i with 0,032 units. In the meantime, 0,1 unit reduction in Gini index will promote IDL_i change with 0,06 units. The two variables explain 67% of the variable variation.

The rise of HDI Education Index with 0,1 unit will bring the change of the IDL_i with the magnitude of 0,13 units, respectively. Particularly, the HDI Education Index explains 81% of IDL_i variation.

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 0,033 units. This indicator also highly determines 90% of variation of dependent of the IDL_i.

To sum up, state authorities and the public should focus on as well as endeavour to make positive changes in the above-mentioned spheres in order to make processes aimed at increasing and consolidating the level of democracy in Armenia more effective and speedy.

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3. HYBRID DEMOCRACY IN GEORGIA: MODERNIZATION OF CENTRAL AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

ANNA SARKISYAN

This chapter presents trends in the Index of Democracy Level (IDL) of Georgia for the period of 2000-2018, focusing on major political, economic, social, health and educational events in 2016-2018. As it is illustrated in Figure 10, the IDL had a steady growth with the highest ranking recorded in 2018. The economic and social factors have a significant impact on the growth of the index during the mentioned period and it reflects the state's specific attention towards these two areas.

It should be noted that analysts took a keen interest in the South Caucasus countries since their independence. The fall of the Berlin Wall coupled with the collapse of the Soviet Union inspired analysts with hope that a new kind of democracy would emerge in the former Communist as well as other countries worldwide (*Wheatley 2016, 1*). Democratization processes occurring in Georgia are closely observed by Western democracies, given the country's political orientation aimed to the West. From this point of view, the following analysis attempts to establish links between the factors contributing to the progress of democracy and processes taking place in the country.

Table 1

**Indices of Political, Economic, Social, Educational and Health Factors and Index
of Democracy Level of Georgia for the 2000-2018 period***

Years	PFI	EFI	SFI	EdFI	HFI	IDL
2000	0,353	0,372	0,514	0,382	0,411	0,385
2001	0,355	0,381	0,527	0,381	0,413	0,389
2002	0,324	0,388	0,532	0,389	0,443	0,383
2003	0,317	0,455	0,537	0,382	0,474	0,401
2004	0,336	0,485	0,545	0,439	0,458	0,422
2005	0,380	0,511	0,566	0,419	0,454	0,446
2006	0,398	0,657	0,600	0,450	0,445	0,498
2007	0,356	0,674	0,644	0,440	0,441	0,488
2008	0,350	0,599	0,736	0,450	0,469	0,480
2009	0,371	0,477	0,709	0,475	0,538	0,465
2010	0,414	0,541	0,707	0,460	0,567	0,501
2011	0,427	0,601	0,739	0,445	0,529	0,519
2012	0,531	0,634	0,781	0,406	0,528	0,571
2013	0,486	0,655	0,813	0,413	0,542	0,564
2014	0,514	0,710	0,821	0,419	0,553	0,592
2015	0,497	0,713	0,766	0,427	0,532	0,579
2016	0,525	0,706	0,768	0,545	0,550	0,604
2017	0,520	0,743	0,752	0,549	0,576	0,612
2018	0,521	0,760	0,807	0,549	0,591	0,625

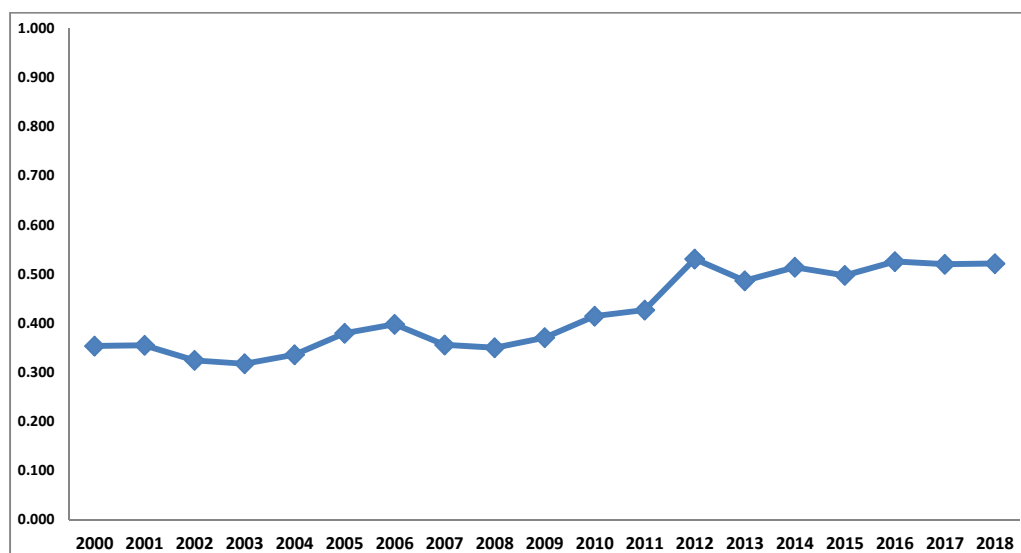
* Source: calculations by the author.

PFI, EFI, SFI, HFI, EdFI and values of IDL consequently calculated on them may insignificantly vary during certain years 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 values.

3.1 A useful art of engaging in politics

Figure 1

Political Factors Index (2000-2018)*



The analysis of the Political Factors Index (PFI) trends, primarily those of the recent years, shows that it fluctuated after a sharp increase in 2012. Nonetheless, it periodically either grew up or fell down. Those manifestations of instability, first and foremost testify the attempts aimed at facing problems related to transitional processes and overcoming challenges hampering consolidation of democracy. However, intensive fluctuations registered in 2018 gradually decreased; hence, a slight increase in PFI was consequently recorded compared to 2017.

Parliamentary and presidential elections that took place in Georgia were among essential events of the latest period. The former were conducted on 8 October 2016 with the participation of 25 parties and alliances through a mixed electoral system, i.e. proportional and majoritarian representation (*Aleksanyan 2017, 59-61*).

* Source: calculations by the author.

Those elections were highly emphasized not only for being properly and duly organized and conducted, but also for the fact that the political powers which gained the majority of votes were vested with the right to nominate a prime minister and form a government. A more detailed description of the election can be obtained from the previous volumes of this publication.

Hence, after the 2016 parliamentary elections, the party with the majority of votes in the Georgian Parliament initiated Constitutional amendments. The State Constitutional Commission (SCC), established by the decision of the Parliament on 15 December 2016, undertook a task to submit a draft of amendments to the current Constitution. The Chairman of the Parliament assigned the SCC with responsibility to draft constitutional amendments that would fundamentally change the constitutional framework of the country.

The Constitution effective prior to the amendments was a legacy handed down by the United National Movement, which was the imitation of 2010 constitutional reforms. Accordingly, the hybrid system allowed the simple parliamentary majority to enjoy free governance. The 2010 Constitution made it almost impossible to hold the government and the prime minister accountable by a procedure for obtaining a vote of non-confidence which creates additional difficulties.

On September 26, 2017 the constitutional amendments passed the parliament at their third and final hearing. The president Margvelashvili unwillingly signed the draft stating that he would prefer to have a document with a unanimous agreement rather than a simply one-party document aimed at strengthening the ruling party's political positions (*Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty 2017*).

In the context of the amended Constitution, Georgia shifts the government to a parliamentary system. Major changes concern the presidential office: since 2024 the President will be elected for a five-year term by the Electoral College which shall consist of 300 electors, including all members of the Parliament of Georgia and the supreme representative organs of the autonomous republics of Abkhazia and Ajara.

3. Hybrid Democracy in Georgia: Modernization of Central and Local Government

Besides, the threshold for parliamentary elections will be 5% with the only exception for the 2020 parliamentary elections defined with 3%. Parliamentary minorities are given the opportunity to form committees of inquiry and other purposes. The sale of agricultural land to foreigners is prohibited.

An interesting discussion was held in relation to the change of the threshold in the parliamentary elections. Hence, on June 24, Georgian Dream Chair Bidzina Ivanishvili publicly announced about the initiative to hold the 2020 parliamentary elections under proportional system and with no electoral threshold (*EPDE 2019*). As the Chairman of the Parliament Archil Talakvadze noted, this initiative would allow to have more balanced and peaceful political environment, reduce polarization and create better opportunities for cooperation (*Agenda.ge 2019*). Many authors point out the importance of political parties to be strengthened and institutionalized. The discussions lead to a conclusion that strengthening of political parties contributes to a consolidation of democracy in states and protects rejection of the authoritarian and totalitarian regime of the past (*Bader 2008, 84*).

It should be noted that constitutional amendments were not unanimously adopted by representatives of various branches of the government. Thus, President Giorgi Margvelashvili voiced out his concern on abolishing National Security Council under the current constitution. Therefore, on May 10, 2017 in the frame of Tbilisi Strategic Discussions he noted, in particular, that there was a lack of a functioning institution which would strengthen the armed forces and make them capable of facing serious challenges under the new Constitution. Instead, the newly adopted constitution, on the one hand, established the National Defense Council, which would function only during a war, and, on the other hand, Georgia's full integration into the North Atlantic Treaty Organization was stipulated within their competence (*Civil.ge 2017a*). People who are professionally involved and regionally interested, also strongly emphasize the importance of the Security Council. Specifically, Ronald Magnum, who coordinated the US retired military team from 2005 to 2011 under the Ministry of Defense of Georgia stated that the newly adopted

Constitution, by all means, was to define the framework of the National Security Council. As Georgia, a country with such small staff in the government, needs a body which will focus on analyzing national security related issues (*Civil.ge 2017b*).

The Venice Commission of the Council of Europe issued another positive opinion and stated that the Constitutional reform is worth praising as it completed the evolution of the political system of Georgia to the parliamentary system and was a step forward in improving and consolidating the Constitutional arrangement of the country (*Venice Commission 2017*).

Presidential elections took place on 28 October 2018 (*CEC 2018*). They can be singled out due to the unprecedented number of candidates as well as many other reasons. The total of 46 candidates were proposed with only 25 being registered by the Central Electoral Commission, while the registration was denied for 21 candidates. Since the independence of the state the mentioned elections were exceptional as the record high candidates participated in them. 19 out of 25 belonged to various political parties. The remaining 6, including the incumbent president Salome Zourabishvili, were nominated by initiative groups. Nonetheless, there is a small nuance. The Electoral Code of the state defines different approaches to candidates who are nominated either by parties or initiative groups. Therefore, candidates nominated by the parties enjoy certain privileges, such as free television advertising or participation in TV debates, if the party received not less than 3% of votes throughout the country in the last election. Those nominated by the initiative groups do not enjoy such privileges, though, there may be cases specified by the Electoral Code when the candidate nominated by the initiative group may be granted such privileges (*The Electoral Code of the Republic of Georgia 2011, Article 51 (8)*).

The mentioned presidential election went through two rounds. With 38,6% of the votes, Zourabichvili finished neck-and-neck with her main rival, Grigol Vashadze, who received 37,7% (*CEC 2018*). 1,637,956 voters took part in the first round, which accounted for 46,74% (*Agenda.ge 2018*).

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The second round of presidential elections in Georgia on 28 November 2018 was won by Salome Zourabishvili with 59,52% of the vote and Grigol Vashadze was the second (see Table 2).

Table 2

Candidates of the 2018 presidential election in Georgia and % of votes³⁹

Candidates	2018	
	I round	II round
Salome Zourabichvili (<i>independent</i>)	38,64	59,52
Grigol Vashadze (<i>United National Movement</i>)	37,74	40,48
David Bakradze (<i>European Georgia – Movement for Liberty</i>)	10,97	-
Shalva Natelashvili (<i>The Labour Party of Georgia</i>)	3,74	-
Davit Usupashvili (<i>Free Democrats</i>)	2,26	-
Zurab Japaridze (<i>Girchy union</i>)	2,26	-
Kakha Kukava (<i>Free Georgia</i>)	1,33	-
Other candidates	3	-

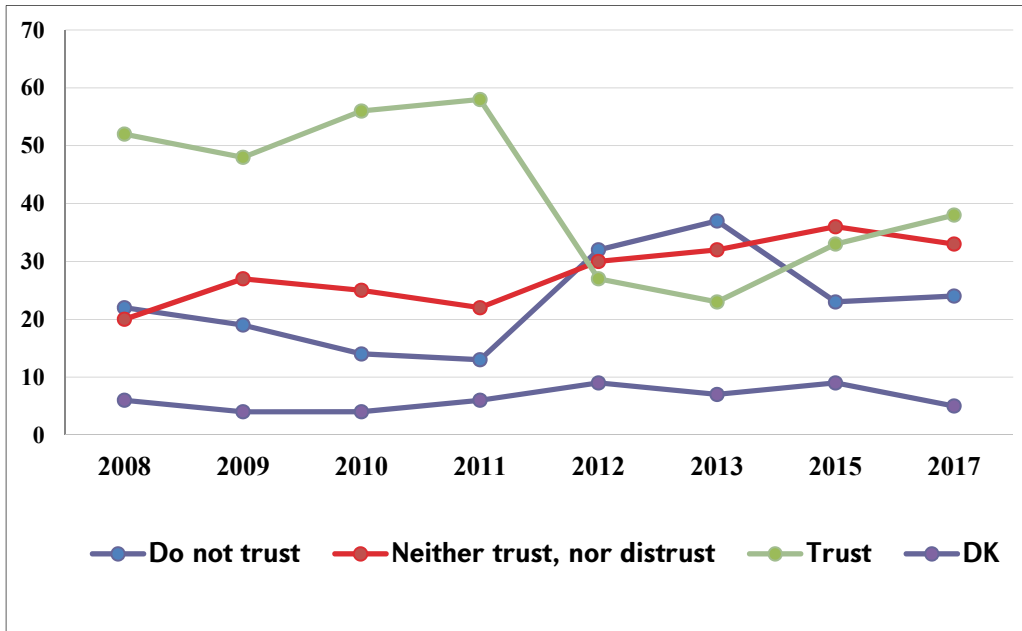
She was also the last Georgian president who had been elected in a direct election. As a result of constitutional changes, the country's president will be chosen by an Electoral College, composed of all the country's parliamentary deputies and representatives of local governments.

It should be noted that since 2012 there has been a slow growth in trust towards the presidential office. Figure 2 shows the change in the attitude of Georgian society towards this institute. At the same time, this attitude does not include a restriction of the political powers of the President due to the Constitutional amendments. Hence, from this aspect, public content increased with the appointment of Giorgi Margvelashvili, who carried out functions under a semi-parliamentary system.

³⁹ Source of the data is the official site of the Central Electoral Commission (CEC) of Georgia <https://results20181128.cec.gov.ge/eng/> (20.07.2019).

Figure 2

**Trust towards the President of the Republic of Georgia
(Caucasus Barometer 2008-2017) (%)⁴⁰**



3.2 Economy as a means of democratization

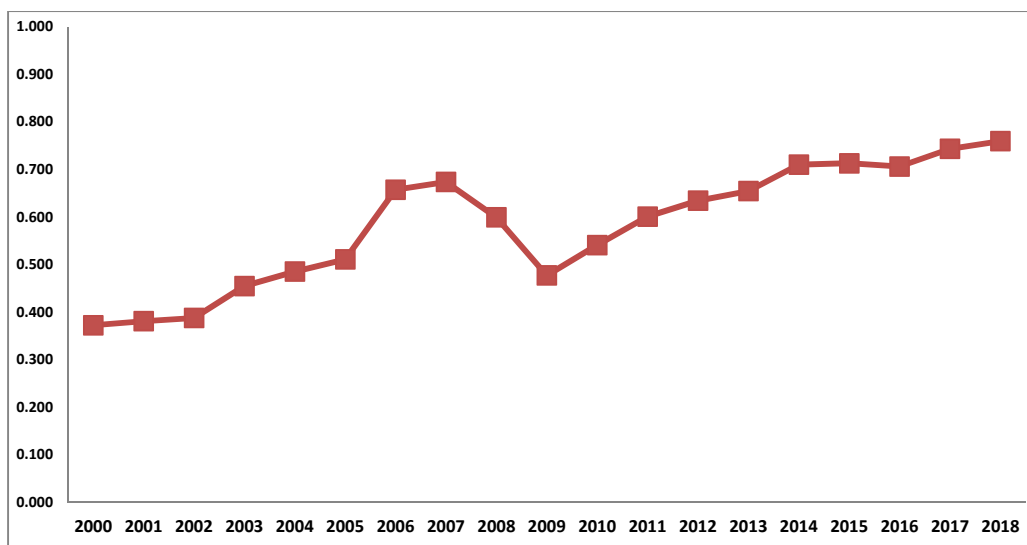
Economic Factors Index of Georgia which decreased in 2009 due to a global financial and economic crisis reported a stable growing trend. Nonetheless, a continual increase, which had been recorded since 2010, was interrupted in 2016 but afterwards it recovered with a record high indicator in 2018.

⁴⁰ Source of the data is the Online Data Analysis, launched by the Caucasus Research Resource Centre (CRRC), regional site of Caucasus Barometer <https://www.caucasusbarometer.org/en/> (20.07.2019).

3. Hybrid Democracy in Georgia: Modernization of Central and Local Government

Figure 3

Economic Factors Index (2000-2018)*



According to the World Bank report, Georgia's economy protects 4,5% annual growth on average. Deep reforms in economic management and governance have earned Georgia a reputation as "star reformer" (*World Bank 2019*).

Georgia, in pursuit of protecting its economic growth, establishes partnership with various world markets. The Association Agreement⁴¹ signed with the EU in 2014 introduces a preferential trade regime – the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA) and offers Georgian manufacturers wide opportunity of selling their products in a common EU market. 2016-2018 export indicators ensured sustainable growth and accounted for \$565,7, \$655,4, \$730,7 million in 2016, 2017 and 2018 respectively, while total export

* Source: calculations by the author.

⁴¹ 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" (20.08.2014). [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:22014A0830\(02\)](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:22014A0830(02)) (20.07.2019).

to the EU amounted to \$2,1, \$2,7, \$3,4 billion in 2016, 2017 and 2018.⁴² The previously stated numbers predict a slight upward trend, if deepening of economic relations, as well as long-term implementation of economic reforms envisaged in the framework of the above-mentioned Agreement, pledge to turn the country from a weak competitor into a full partner within the EU member states. Effective implementation of the provisions of the partnership will not only boost and propel an economic growth in the country, but also lead to strengthening of institutions, predictable and transparent legal regulations and an improved investment environment. All these factors will support progress in other areas of public life, raising the overall level of prosperity of the country.

However, there are certain reservations regarding the process and dimensions of the Agreement implementation. Although exports to the EU increased during the years following the signing of the Agreement, they were still lower than expected. There are several factors that can explain the trend. First, it should be noted that prior to the Association Agreement signing and the DCFTA implementation between Georgia and the EU, Georgia benefitted from the Generalised Scheme of Preferences known as Special Incentive Arrangement for Sustainable Development and Good Governance (GSP+), and accordingly many Georgian products had been exporting to the EU. And despite the fact that new products were added to the list compiled within the free trade area formed by the Agreement, their overall impact on the export was not significant. The added products were wine, cheese, sheep and goat meat, chocolate, raw hides and skins, fresh and canned berries, which had not previously been included in GSP+.

In addition, there is a certain degree of misperception between government bodies and manufacturers in terms of legal harmonization in view of the terms, implementation and location. This specifically refers to agricultural products manufacturers, who should be guided by sanitary and phytosanitary measures to be applied in the mentioned sphere. Uncertainties in

⁴² Source of the data is the official site of the National Statistics Office of Georgia <https://www.geostat.ge/en/modules/categories/35/external-trade> (25.07.2019).

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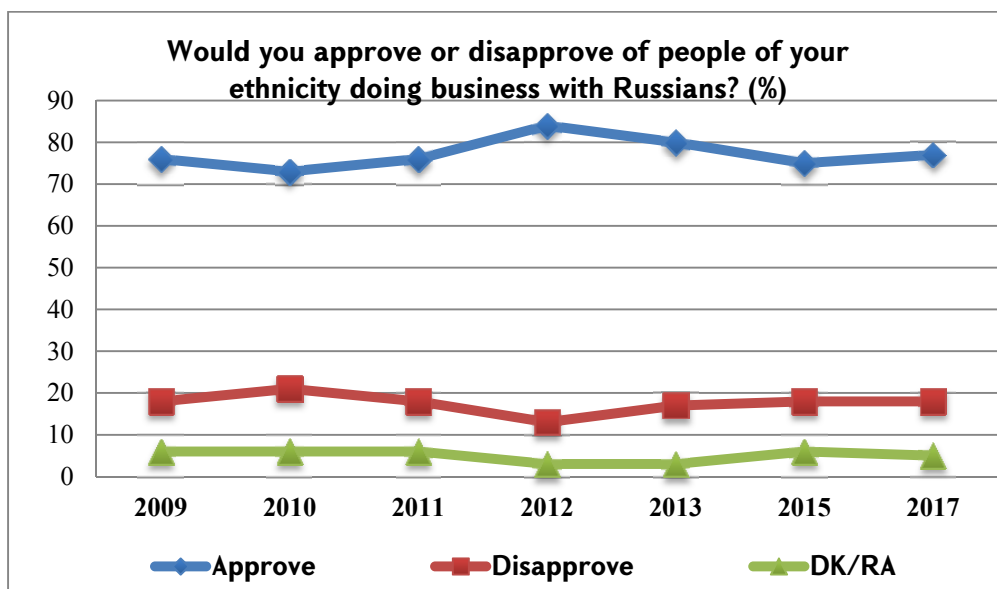
these procedures lead to a situation where farmers are hampered to export more agricultural products to the EU market (*OSGF 2016*).

Another reason for slow but yet a positive growth is the lack of production. Small and medium enterprises directly link an increase in production with availability of funds. The Georgian banks offer SMEs quite high loans, and there are no available loans aimed at sectoral development.

In addition to domestic problems, there are geopolitical realities that hamper the economic development envisioned by the Agreement. Sanctions imposed by Russia, scarce foreign investment, insufficient infrastructure slow down expected development with the EU.

Figure 4

Doing business with Russians (Caucasus Barometer, 2009-2017)⁴³



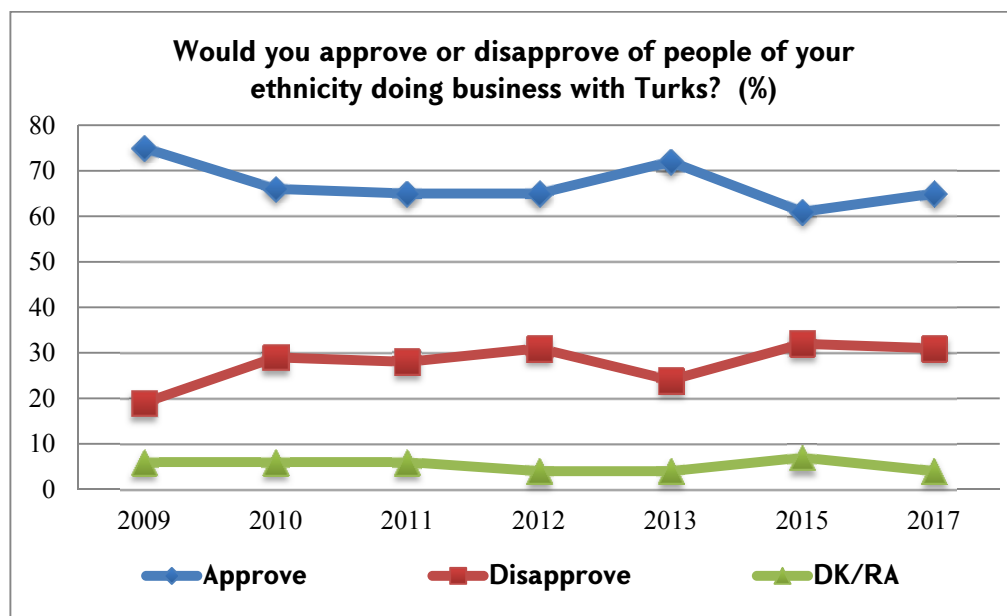
It is noteworthy that in 2017-2018 Russia remained one of the main importers of Georgian goods. 2018 exports to Russia amounted to \$436,6

⁴³ Source of the data is the Online Data Analysis, launched by the Caucasus Research Resource Centre (CRRRC), regional site of Caucasus Barometer <https://www.caucasusbarometer.org/en/> (20.07.2019).

million, which comprised 13% of total export volumes. Azerbaijan, Turkey, Armenia and China⁴⁴ are among the partners as well. Moreover, if development of economic ties with the countries of the region is quite logical and Georgia has established friendly relations with all the listed countries, than economic relations with Russia must have been presumably perceived to be in a frozen state. Meanwhile, absolute value of export volumes to Russia had been recently increasing. Hence, Russia is not viewed as a country with whom relations are undesirable both in terms of trade turnover and public perceptions (*Figure 4*). This testifies that there is a clear distinction in the consciousness of people between the perception of political problems and economic interest.

Figure 5

Public opinion survey on doing business with Turks (2009-2017)⁴⁵



⁴⁴ Source of the data is the official site of the National Statistics Office of Georgia <https://www.geostat.ge/en/modules/categories/35/external-trade> (25.07.2019).

⁴⁵ Source of the data is the Online Data Analysis, launched by the Caucasus Research Resource Centre (CRRC), regional site of Caucasus Barometer <https://www.caucasusbarometer.org/en/> (20.07.2019).

3. Hybrid Democracy in Georgia: Modernization of Central and Local Government

To compare, Georgian society is not eager to do business both with Turks and Russians (*Figure 5*). There is, by all means, a noticeable difference in the approaches and perspectives of Georgian society and the ruling elite.

Georgia was the first country in the region to sign the Free Trade Agreement with China. The agreement was finally signed on 13 May 2017 after long negotiations and was ratified on November 28, which came into play on January 1, 2018.⁴⁶ The scope of the agreement includes trade in goods, services, intellectual property rights, as well as new areas such as online trading, market competition and environmental issues (*FTA 2019*). Georgian copper and iron ores, grain, wine, gold and semi-manufactured goods will be exported to China. In the meantime, China will import to Georgia construction machinery, manufacturing equipment, steel, electronics, textiles, clothing and home appliances (*Lopatina 2018*).

Highly estimating the importance of good relations with China, some analysts, however, are cautious about pointing out progress and success achieved within the framework of the mentioned Agreement. Thus, Director of the Europe-Georgia Institute Revaz Topuria has mentioned in his article that China's interest in Georgia is conditioned not only by establishment of economic ties but it also strengthens cooperation by assigning Georgia a particular place in the Belt and Road Initiative, given the geographical location of Georgia and its recent railway communication development. Georgia, in its turn, had been attempting to get an inflow of investment and job creation, the result of which is still unsatisfactory one year later after the signing of the Agreement. The author mentions, however, that not only and not exactly parties of the Agreement have to be accused of a slow pace of economic relations, but also the geopolitical situation in the region, particularly Russia's presence and China's economic war with the United States (*Topuria 2019*). However, Georgia, having signed this

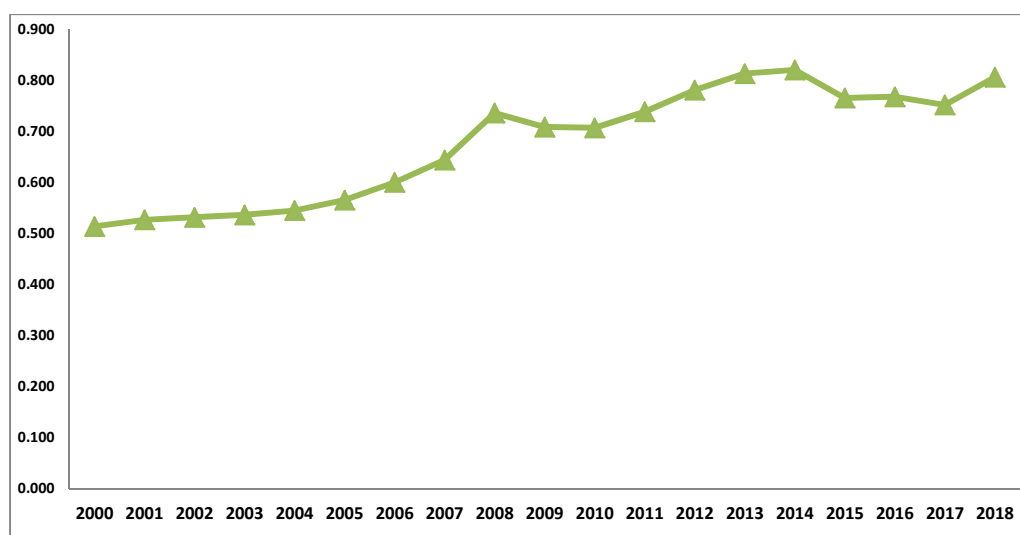
⁴⁶ See "Free Trade Agreement Between the Government of the People's Republic of China And The Government of Georgia" (May 13, 2017, Beijing). http://fta.mofcom.gov.cn/georgia/annex/-xdzw_en.pdf (20.07.2019).

Agreement, appears in a favourable position, and is the only one with an equally high level relations both with China and EU.

3.3 Developments and challenges of the social vector

Figure 6

Social Factors Index (2000-2018)*



The Social Factors Index was recorded with some fluctuations within the years of 2016-2018 and it was estimated by 0,768, 0,752, and 0,807 rating in 2016, 2017 and 2018 respectively. The decrease in 2017 indicator was mainly conditioned by the decline in the funds of the state budget allocated to the social sector, which was less if compared to the previous year (*Ministry of Finance of Georgia 2017*). And regardless of the fact that the highest rate during the entire period of time was observed in 2018, the social sector remains one of the most pressing and vulnerable sectors of the population, in

* Source: calculations by the author.

which the outcome of the government efforts aiming to carry out reforms in the long run can bring about new tangible results.

One of the innovations of the 2016-2018 period is the introduction of the mandatory pension system in Georgia. The bill adopted by the Parliament in July 2018 is imposed on legally employed people under 40 to participate in an accumulated pension system. The system implies that employers, government and citizens will contribute 2% of their salary to the fund.⁴⁷ This initiative was criticized for several reasons. On the whole, dissatisfaction is of a conceptual nature. Employees included in the mandatory pension system assume that instead of widening the scope of general taxpayers, additional burden is placed on citizens who are already included in the tax system. The main issue was linked with bringing undeclared workers into taxpayers system.

Taxpayers also disagree with the government's enthusiasm in view of the opinion that it will be possible to create "long money" by means of mandatory funded system as the number of those involved is small for bringing about major changes in the country.

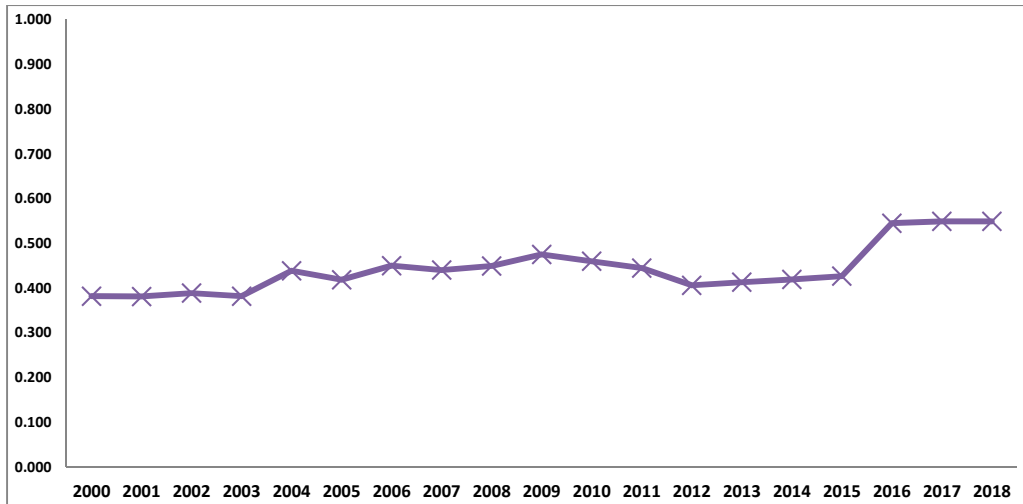
3.4 Education is light: perspectives for development projects

As it can be seen in Figure 7, the Educational Factors Index had a stable upward trend. Georgia actively initiated steps aimed at reforming the education system within 2016-2018.

⁴⁷ See "Law of Georgia on Pension Savings." No. #3303-ES, adopted on 21 July 2018. http://www.economy.ge/uploads/files/2017/ek__politika/pension_savings_law_final_ng.pdf (15.07.2019).

Figure 7

Educational Factors Index (2000-2018)*



Strengthening of the general education system is strongly emphasized on the principle of a unified strategy and approach. Law of Georgia on Early and Preschool Education⁴⁸ entered into force in 2017 and was intended to ensure the development and quality of early and preschool education in Georgia in order to make the school education system better prepared.

There are 2,085 public and 236 private schools in Georgia. According to 2016 statistics, the number of students enrolled in schools amounts to 564,729, where 508,888 go to public and 55,841 private schools. There are 65,445 teachers and 59,779 are employed in public and 5,666 in private school (*Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports 2017*).

According to the Unified Strategy of Education and Science 2017-2021, government spending on education increased in 2017 by reaching to 1,1 billion lari which accounts for 3,1% of GDP (*Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports 2017*).

* Source: calculations by the author.

⁴⁸ See "Law of Georgia on Early and Preschool Education." No. 5366-IIS, adopted on 8 June 2016. https://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/natlex4.detail?p_lang=en&p_isn=104529 (15.07.2019).

A strong assistance in conducting reforms in education and science sector was rendered through \$140 million grant, provided by the Millennium Challenge Corporation's (MCC) Georgia II Compact programme for Georgia acting since 2014. The latter seeks to improve the general quality of education, increase physical capacity of schools, strengthen the link between market demand and quality of education, and introduce high-quality programs in science, technology, engineering, and math science (*Millenium Challenge Corporation 2013*). The Memorandum of Understanding foresaw the establishment of a branch of the University of San Diego in Georgia, as well as the implementation of school teachers training programs for 2016-2019 (*Agenda.ge 2016a*).

Increase in teachers' salaries was first initiated after the Georgian Dream party had come into power, thereby emphasizing a significance of education system as such (*Agenda.ge 2016b*).

Georgia also takes efforts to ensure progress in education related field within the framework of the Association Agreement with EU.

3.5 Behavioral shifts in healthcare

The Health Factors Index was registered with no drastic fluctuations within 2016-2018. Those indicators had no serious impact, since changes that had occurred within the previously mentioned years in the health sector were insignificant. In general, it can be stated that minimum health services have become more accessible for the population as a result of health related reforms. Current health expenditure accounted for about 8%⁴⁹ of GDP for the period 2016-2018. Those improvements resulted in an increase in Life expectancy and it was rated with 72,7 in 2016, 73,5 in 2017, 74 years⁵⁰ in 2018.

⁴⁹ See the official site of the World Bank

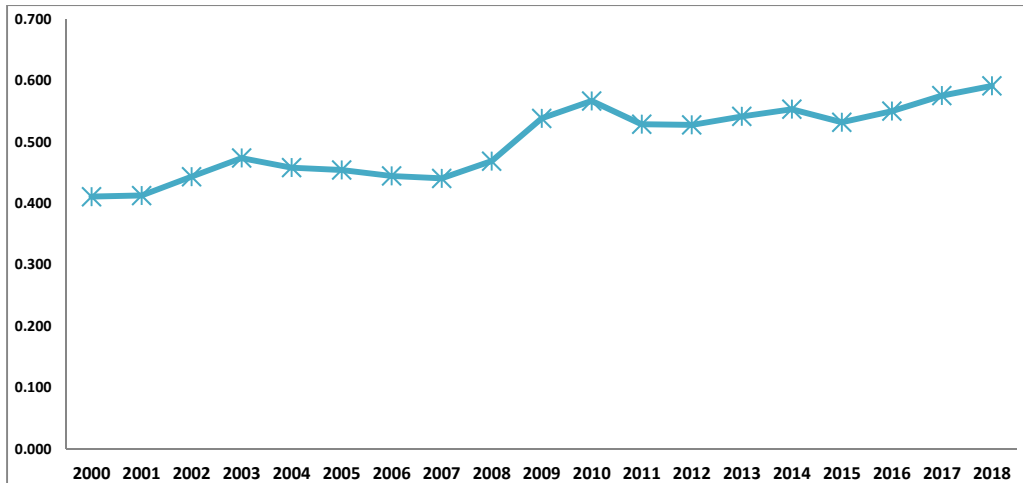
<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.DYN.LE00.IN?locations=GE> (25.07.2019).

⁵⁰ See the official site of the National Statistics Office of Georgia

<https://www.geostat.ge/en/modules/categories/320/deaths> (25.07.2019).

Figure 8

Health Factors Index (2000-2018)*



Fertility rate indicators improved as well. Correspondingly, it was ranked with 2,1 births per woman in 2017 compared to 1,6 births in 2003.⁵¹ Trend in Maternal mortality rates was positive and the number of women who die from pregnancy-related causes decreased; therefore, there were 32 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2011 compared to the indicator registered in 2018 with 25 deaths per 100,000 live births.⁵²

Infant mortality rates also fell down. Hence, in 2010 it was rated with 12,7 infants per 1000 live births who died before reaching one year of age, while the number dropped to 8,7 infants⁵³ in 2018.

Georgia's top 10 causes of death are as follows: Ischemic heart disease, stroke, hypertensive heart disease, Alzheimer's disease, lung cancer, chronic

* Source: calculations by the author.

⁵¹ See the official site of the World Bank

<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.DYN.TFRT.IN?locations=GE> (25.07.2019).

⁵² See the official site of the World Bank

<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SH.STA.MMRT?locations=GE> (27.10.2019).

⁵³ See the official site of the World Bank

<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.DYN.IMRT.IN?locations=GE> (27.10.2019).

obstructive pulmonary disease, cirrhosis, diabetes, stomach cancer and chronic kidney disease (CDC 2019).

The introduction of the universal health coverage in an attempt to change health system came into force in 2014. It is provided to cover Georgian citizens, persons with stateless status, citizens with neutral passports, as well as refugees and asylum seekers. Since May 2017, groups of beneficiaries have been adjusted based on an individual income. High-income individuals (annually 40,000 lari or more) were excluded to receive the program's main services and were eligible to receive only services related to maternity, caesarean section, pregnant women, and infectious diseases. There are no adjustments, foreseen to be applied for socially disadvantaged groups, children, the disabled, and pensioners (*Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia 2019*).

3.6 Development trends of the Index of Democracy Level

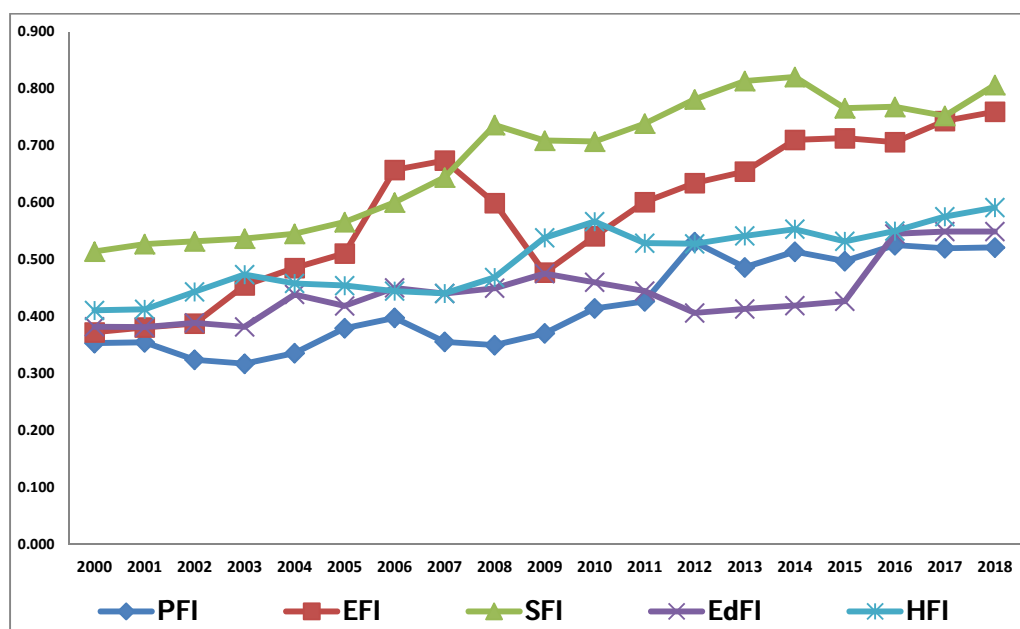
Figure 10 shows the data in accordance to which the IDL for the period of 2000-2018 had a number of drastic ups and downs (2006, 2009, 2012). Nevertheless, in general, the IDL curve had a positive trend with a considerable growth registered in 2012.

A stable growth in EFI and HFI mainly supported a positive change in the IDL dynamics for the period 2016-2018 combined with an upward trend in PFI, SFI and EdFI on the whole. In this regard, economic factors were of greater interest as they had stronger impact on it. As it is truly stated in every book, economy grows at a quicker pace under politically stable and serene conditions.

The record low IDL indicator was registered in 2002, while the highest one in 2018 within the mentioned period.

Figure 9

**Indices of Political, Economic, Social, Health and Educational Factors affecting
the Index of Democracy Level of Georgia for the timeframe 2000-2018***



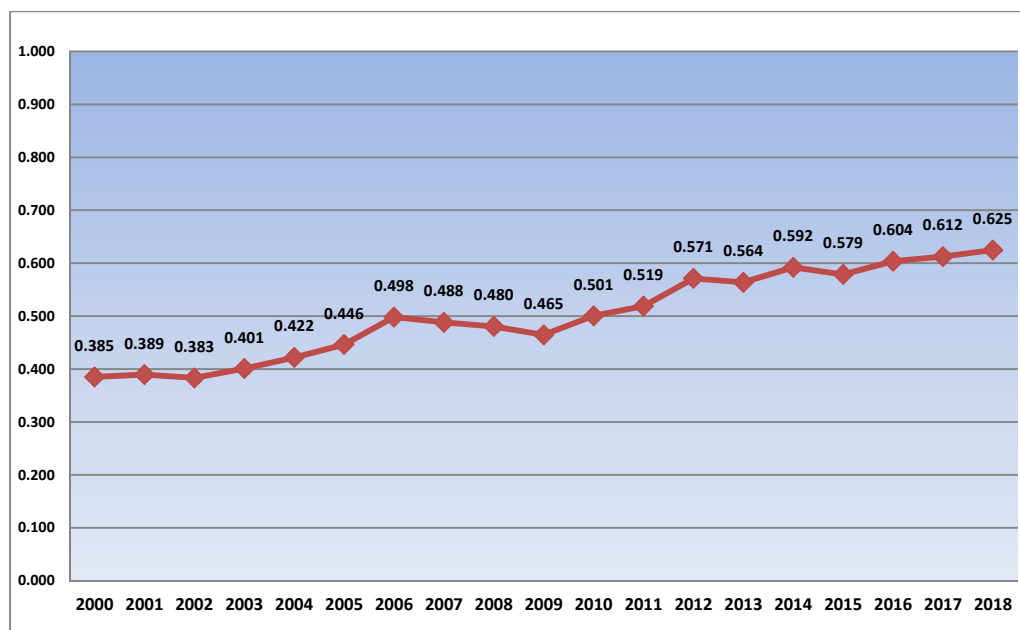
Within the observed period and the methodology applied, the Index of Democracy Level of Georgia was recorded with a steady positive dynamics due to public administration reforms, liberalization of market relations, establishment of rights and freedoms, conduct of competitive elections and implementation of other democratic norms and processes. The country has been involved in political and economic initiatives, that are implemented regionally and worldwide; hence, supporting the development of the country through external factors.

* Source: calculations by the author.

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

Figure 10

The Index of Democracy Level of Georgia for the period 2000-2018*



3.7 Regression analysis of the Index of Democracy Level

Arusyak Aleksanyan, Anna Sarkisyan

In this chapter the data obtained from the regression analysis display the most influential variables impacting the IDL of Georgia.

Thereby, the correlation between IDL_i^* and political variables of Political Stability and Absence of Violence, Rule of Law and Indices of Political Rights and Civil Liberties has been established (see Table 3).

* Source: calculations by the author.

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

Table 3

Regression analysis of the IDL_i (PFI variables)

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Coefficient</i>	<i>Adj.R²</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>N</i>
Political Stability and Absence of Violence	0,01	0,808	0,000	24
Rule of Law	0,004	0,929	0,000	24
Political Rights and Civil Liberties	-0,158	0,532	0,000	24

Economic variables, precisely, External trade rate and Domestic credit have been significantly correlated with IDL_i (see Table 4).

Table 4

Regression analysis of the IDL_i (EFI variables)

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Coefficient</i>	<i>Adj.R²</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>N</i>
External trade rate (% of GDP)	0,004	0,865	0,000	24
Domestic credit (% of GDP)	0,005	0,835	0,000	24

Strong correlation between IDL_i and social variables of Real wage has been established (see Table 5).

Table 5

Regression analysis of the IDL_i (SFI variables)

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Coefficient</i>	<i>Adj.R²</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>N</i>
Real wage (\$100)	0,045	0,795	0,000	24

The following equations were obtained through the regression analysis of educational factors (see Table 6).

Table 6

Regression analysis of the IDL_i (EdFI variables)

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Coefficient</i>	<i>Adj.R²</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>N</i>
HDI Education Index	2,101	0,902	0,000	24

3. Hybrid Democracy in Georgia: Modernization of Central and Local Government

As for health factors, the variable of Life expectancy at birth is considerably correlated with IDL_i (see Table 7).

Table 7

Regression analysis of the IDL_i (HFI variables)

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Coefficient</i>	<i>Adj.R²</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>N</i>
Life expectancy at birth	0,061	0,661	0,000	24

As it has been mentioned above, political variable, such as Political Stability and Rule of Law have a significant impact on the democracy of Georgia. Hence, one unit positive change in the mentioned two variables will result in IDL_i growth with 0,01 and 0,004 units respectively. Political Stability and Rule of Law have a high determination coefficient and explain 81-93% of IDL_i variation. One unit improvement of the index of Political Rights and Civil Liberties will lead to an IDL_i increase with 0,158 units.

The economic variables of the External trade rate and Domestic credit also influenced on the IDL_i of Georgia. 1% of GDP growth in External trade rate and Domestic credit will lead to an increase of IDL_i respectively with 0,004 and 0,005 units. Economic Factors explain 84-86% of variable variation.

In connection to social factors, Real wage increase by 100 US dollars will result in IDL_i growth with 0,045 units.

In terms of EdFI, the growth in HDI Education Index by 0,1 unit will assist to the increase of IDL_i by 0,21 units accordingly. In particular, Human Development Index Education Index has the highest determination coefficient and explains 90% of the variation of IDL_i .

At the same time, Life expectancy change with 1 year will bring the increase of the IDL_i with 0,061 units.

To sum up, reforms in relevant fields and growth in all the variables will lead to improvement of democracy level in Georgia.

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4. DEMOCRACY IN THE POST-SOVIET AZERBAIJAN: SLOGAN OR MEASURABLE VALUE?

ARTYOM TONoyAN

Prior to the presidential elections, appointed on 3 October, Heydar Aliyev, the Parliament speaker of Azerbaijan who was temporarily exercising the authorities of the president of AR, on 29 September 1993 when presenting his notions about the future Azerbaijan declared, “We must build a democratic and legal state in Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan must take a democratic path and we will never return to a totalitarian system, such as the Communist regime. Political pluralism must rule in Azerbaijan. Freedom of a person, speech, religion and language must be established” (*Əsgərov 2010*).

The post-Soviet period of Azerbaijani history, more than 90% of which has included and still covers the period of Heydar Aliyev and his son İlham Aliyev's presidency, shows that they both have pursued policies diametrically opposed to the principles which were outlined in the paragraph above. The reality would be better reflected if the word «must» were replaced by «must not» or vice versa. Having a diverse national and ethnic map and a mostly Shia society, which attempts to overcome the Soviet atheism, a clan-based political system, topped with vast oil and gas reserves, Heydar Aliyev adopted a dictatorial, not a democratic model of establishing political stability in Azerbaijan, which was and is still being followed by İlham Aliyev. The fact that democracy in Azerbaijan has been in deep crisis since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1993 can be observed in international human rights organizations and international observation missions reports as well as opposition leaders' statements. Moreover, there is a huge number of political and religious prisoners, instances

of silencing speech through fraud prosecutions and murders, numerous political refugees who fled from Azerbaijan mainly to Europe, as well as the involvement of the president, his political team members and close associates in various corruption related activities openly published in the international press.

Table 1

Indices of Political, Social, Economic, Educational and Health factors and Index of Democracy Level of Azerbaijan (1995-2018)*

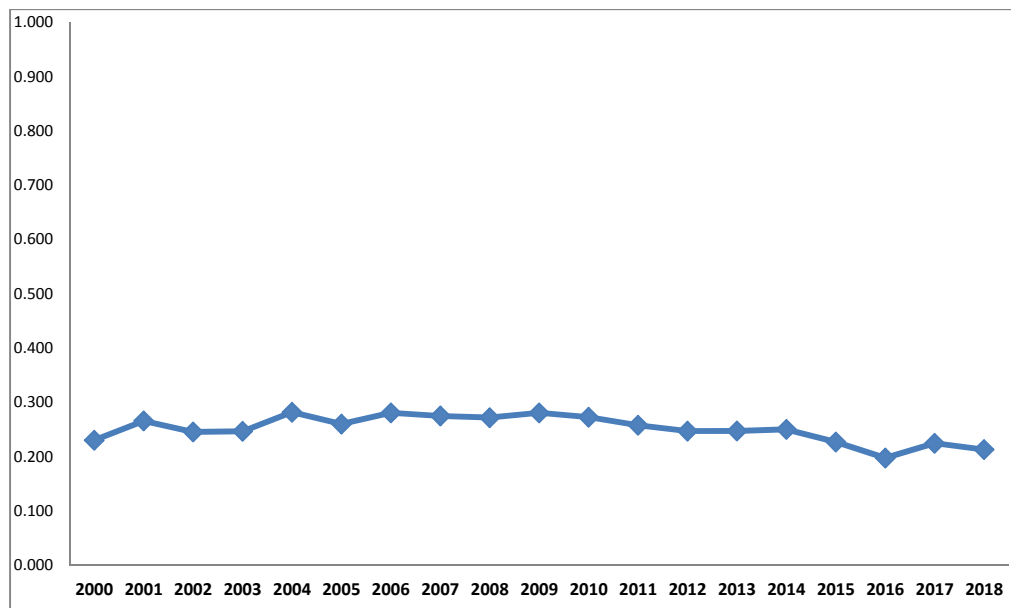
Year	PFI	EFI	SFI	EdFI	HFI	IDL
2000	0,230	0,337	0,589	0,447	0,269	0,325
2001	0,266	0,394	0,597	0,429	0,264	0,353
2002	0,246	0,481	0,665	0,410	0,275	0,373
2003	0,247	0,591	0,672	0,422	0,403	0,418
2004	0,282	0,644	0,695	0,435	0,480	0,459
2005	0,260	0,558	0,715	0,399	0,483	0,426
2006	0,281	0,547	0,726	0,387	0,393	0,422
2007	0,275	0,519	0,764	0,377	0,355	0,411
2008	0,272	0,514	0,800	0,371	0,328	0,409
2009	0,281	0,502	0,850	0,429	0,408	0,430
2010	0,273	0,553	0,865	0,401	0,385	0,436
2011	0,258	0,545	0,903	0,471	0,376	0,438
2012	0,247	0,583	0,949	0,363	0,398	0,439
2013	0,247	0,584	0,969	0,390	0,416	0,447
2014	0,250	0,572	0,987	0,406	0,440	0,451
2015	0,227	0,604	0,917	0,429	0,541	0,456
2016	0,198	0,592	0,819	0,422	0,544	0,429
2017	0,225	0,469	0,815	0,422	0,551	0,409
2018	0,213	0,499	0,837	0,422	0,551	0,414

* Source: calculations by the author. 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 values.

4.1 Political factors affecting the level of democracy in Azerbaijan and their peculiarities

Figure 1

Political Factors Index (1995-2018)*



The observation of the curve of Political Factors Index for 1995-2018 (see Figure 1) within the period⁵⁴ measured by sub-indices forming the Index of Democracy Level of Azerbaijan (IDL) shows that there was a slow and gradual decline of PFI in Azerbaijan in the last ten years, which, by the way, was relatively more noticeable during 2016.

* Source: calculations by the author.

⁵⁴ The first two IDL analyses during 1995-2014 and 1995-2015 were conducted by V. Hunanyan (2016) and T. Hayrapetyan (2017), where the index of political factors was compiled and analyzed by the same methodology. In addition, for the 1995-2017 period, A. Tonoyan (2018) also analyzed the index of political factors of Azerbaijan in view of the factors that determined the stability of the country's political system, which was, to some extent, identical to the first two in terms of the selected toolkit. In order to avoid repetition of descriptions of the events mentioned in these three surveys, the focus of this study was mainly on the 2016-2018 period.

The socio-economic crisis started in 2015 and was instigated by double devaluation of the national currency caused by plummeting oil prices in the world market, worsening situation in the banking sector, a sharp decline in Real wage and unfulfilled budgeting. It resulted in a social-political crisis marked by shocks preceding the parliamentary elections, escalation of domestic and intra-clan struggles, and, subsequently, elimination of the Ministry of National Security, resignation and lawsuits⁵⁵ against Eldar Mahmudov, the leader and other high-ranking officials and generals, as well as the Nardaran cases (*Tonoyan 2018*). The aforementioned had its logical continuation in 2016.

The key events that led to a relatively tangible decline of the PFI curve in 2016 had the following chronology:

- **January:** rallies and acts of social unrest in Siyazan, Shabran and Ghuba, Lankaran and surrounding areas,
- **May:** active representatives of civil society, namely Bayram Mammadov and Giyas Ibrahimov's arrests on false accusations,
- **April:** the Four-day war in the Karabakh conflict zone,
- **September:** referendum on Constitutional reforms.

In January 2016, decentralized mass demonstrations were simultaneously initiated mainly in the northern part of the country (Siyazan, Shabran, Ghuba) inhabited by Tats, southern part (Lenkoran, Jalilabad, and Astara) by Talysh people, as well as southwestern administrative districts (Fizuli, Aghjabedi, Baylakan and Aghsu) (*BBC 2016a*). Protests in Siyazan were ended by clashes between the troops of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and demonstrators, with the use of tear gas, hospitalization of a 13-year-old girl and arrest of 55 protesters (*BBC 2016b*). Almost identical situation was observed in the other mentioned regions. Azerbaijani authorities immediately accused the leaders of

⁵⁵ I. Aliyev's response to the crisis in the National Security System prior to the 2015 parliamentary elections and punitive actions following it, were logically comparable to the events that preceded the 2005 parliamentary elections, when 20 days before the elections due to intra-class pre-election developments, the Minister of Health Ali İnsanov, his brother Rafik İnsanov, Minister of Economy Farhad Aliyev and President's Administration Staff Manager Aqif Muradverdiyev were arrested on 16 October for accusations of preparing coup d'état (*Tonoyan 2018*).

4. Democracy in the Post-Soviet Azerbaijan: Slogan or Measurable Value?

the Azerbaijan Popular Front (*APF*) and Musavat opposition parties of «provoking» mass demonstrations on the territory of Azerbaijan (*ARBP 2016*)⁵⁶, which, in fact, jointly with the regional centers of the National Independence Party of Azerbaijan had actively participated in regional demonstrations (*BBC 2016b*). Despite the fact, that those demonstrations were instigated by social causes and driven by rising commodity prices, in particular, high Unemployment in the regions (*IRFS 2016*), however, those social movements contained ethnic factor as well. Consequently, it was possible, that they could turn into a national liberation struggle of the Tats and especially Talysh people (*Pravda 2016*); or else, according to some statements made on 14.01.2016 by General Prosecutor's Office and the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Azerbaijan, they could relate to the religion.

Conceivably, the Four-day war that broke out in the Karabakh conflict zone (*Tonoyan 2018*) implied to shut down a public and political discourse on socio-economic issues in Azerbaijan and distract society's attention, therefore allowing the president to gain some time in reducing internal social tensions and regulating domestic politics.

In terms of analyzing a declining curve of the 2016 PFI of the IDL, the young activists of NIDA movement,⁵⁷ Bayram Mammadov and Giyas Ibrahimov's politically motivated arrests,⁵⁸ allegedly accused on charges of drug trafficking aroused some interest and they were sentenced to 10 years each (*BBC 2016c*). That event made not only a great domestic and social stir⁵⁹ but also triggered a

⁵⁶ On 14.01.2016, in a joint statement made by the General Prosecutor's Office and Ministry of Internal Affairs of Azerbaijan was particularly mentioned: "A preliminary investigation revealed that illegal actions aimed at disrupting peace of the community in the cities of Siyazan, Lankaran, Fizuli, Aghjabed, Aghsu and their other administrative regions were organized by activists of the APF and Musavat parties, as well as by a number of extremist religious groups" (*ARBP 2016*).

⁵⁷ The official website of the movement is <http://www.nidavh.org>.

⁵⁸ In Azerbaijani, gül means «flower» and qul means «slave», which allowed the young activists to create an interesting wordplay. Prior to Heydar Aliyev's birthday and in observance of the Flower Holiday in Azerbaijan, they changed one letter and wrote on his statue "Happy slave holiday" instead of "Happy flower holiday" (*Meydan 2016a*).

⁵⁹ Musavat party (*Azadlıq Rədiosu 2016*) and Opposition Alliance of National Council of Democratic Forces (*Azadlıq qəzeti 2016*) strongly condemned initiations of criminal cases against

reaction beyond the borders of the country. Moreover, incidents of restriction of freedom of speech by the authorities in the Republic of Azerbaijan and gross violation of human rights were reflected in reports by international human rights organizations (*Amnesty International 2016, HRW 2016a*).⁶⁰ Later on March 16, 2019 G. Ibrahimov and B. Mammadov were released according I. Aliyev's decree on amnesty.⁶¹

The other major event that led to the downturn of PFI of the IDL were the Constitutional amendments adopted by referendum in September, according to which Azerbaijani president's powers were more extended. The provisions of the 2009 constitutional amendments created an opportunity for the President Ilham Aliyev to run for the third term (Constitution of AR, Article 101, paragraph 5), therefore allowing him to become a president for a lifetime. Furthermore, modifications made in 2016, extended the president's powers even further, transforming Azerbaijan into superpresidential or, in other words, authoritarian presidential country. According to the new Constitution, the President of Azerbaijan Republic is elected for a 7-year term instead of a previously defined 5 and can declare extraordinary elections of the President of Azerbaijan Republic (Constitution of AR, Article 101, paragraph 1); dissolve parliament and call for new elections (Constitution of AR, Article 98.1). In addition, according to the 2016 referendum on constitutional amendments, bringing the lower age limit down from 35 to 18, and possessing voting right, any citizen can be elected the President of the Azerbaijan Republic

G. Ibrahimov and B. Mammadov solely based on political motivation and for limiting freedom of speech and their 10 years imprisonment as well.

⁶⁰ Names of G. Ibrahimov and B. Mammadov were included in the 18 international human rights organizations joint statements on Azerbaijan, containing as follows: «The undersigned organizations call on the Azerbaijani authorities to stop harassment and pressure on political motives against journalists, repeal new laws criminalizing dissent and free speech, revoke indictments of G. Ibrahimov and B. Mammadov...» (*OMCT 2016a*).

⁶¹ According to AR president I. Aliyev's decree on amnesty signed on 16.03.2019, 431 persons were released from prisons. See the text (*Məhkum edilmiş bir sıra şəxslərin əfv olunması haqqında Azərbaycan Respublikası Prezidentinin Sərəncamı*, 16.03.2016) of the decree on the official website of the President of Azerbaijan: <https://president.az/articles/32416> (25.09.2019).

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(Constitution of AR, Article 100).⁶² At the same time, new positions for the first Vice President and Vice Presidents were introduced and the President of Azerbaijan Republic appoints and dismisses the first Vice president and Vice presidents of Azerbaijan Republic (Constitution of AR, Article 103.1). It is particularly noteworthy that in comply with Article 105.1 of the new Constitution of AR, whenever the President of Azerbaijan Republic resigns from his post ahead of time, extraordinary presidential elections are held within 60 days (Constitution of AR, Article 105.1). According to preliminary 20.10.2016 assessment⁶³ and in legal justifications of European Commission for Democracy through law (Venice Commission), the Article 103.1 does not comply with the norms of democracy as the new constitutional amendment allows the President of AR easily transfer power to his successor (*Venice Commission 2016, 16*). Despite the fact, that each modification had to be voted on separate ballots, the following results can be outlined. 91,15% of participants, who took part in 29.09.2016 referendum, polled to approve constitutional amendments that extended the president's term in office and empower the president to hold snap presidential elections. 87,74% voted for introducing a new position of the first vice president and vice presidents and 89,29% voted for them to be nominated and dismissed by the President. 90,96% approved scrapping the minimum age for standing as a president and 87,35% voted for president's powers to dissolve the Parliament (*MSK 2016*). Nonetheless, about a month prior to the referendum, opposition forces in Azerbaijan, particularly Musavat and Popular Front parties, Republican Alternative and NIDA movements, as well as People's Party, National Council of Democratic Forces (NC) Alliance opposed the

⁶² It is speculated, that bringing the lower age limit down from 35 to 18 in the Constitution of AR is conditioned by the possibility to transfer powers from I. Aliyev to his son Heydar Aliyev (born 03.08.1197), who was only 19 years old when constitutional referendum was held.

⁶³ US Department on 16.08.2016 advised Azerbaijani authorities to send the content of the constitutional amendments to the Venice Commission for an opinion, this did not happen. As a result the referendum was conducted on 06.09.2016 with the PACE initiative and the initial opinion of the Venice Commission was adopted on 20.09.2016 in which the proposed constitutional amendments were called negative and incompatible with European constitutional heritage (*Hovhannisyan 2018*).

constitutional amendments and initiated rallies, held under the slogans “No to monarchy! No to robbery!” which were ended up with the use of force by the authorities, arrests and filing criminal lawsuits against the activists (*Hovhannisyan 2018*). After the referendum, the PACE observation mission report concluded a number of shortcomings, in particular it regreted that the Azerbaijani authorities did not ask the respected Venice Commission of the Council of Europe to give its opinion on the draft modifications to the Constitution and the lack of proper public consultation within the country (*PACE 2016*). Therefore, arrests during the campaign for the referendum and during the demonstrations in the following weeks (*HRW 2016b*) as well as tumultuous manifestations of social unrest in January led to a significant deterioration of the sub-index of PFI of the IDL.⁶⁴

A negative change was also recorded in the Press Freedom rating scale estimated by Freedom House International organization, Press Freedom in Azerbaijan was accordingly rated with 90 points in 2016, instead of 89⁶⁵ in 2015, where 100 is the most negative score. This is provoked not only by strongly criticized political repressions against G.Ibrahimov and B.Mammadov and restriction of freedom of speech, but also by pressure intensified on Gulenists,⁶⁶ who were blamed for the attempted military coup in July 2016 in Turkey (*Freedom House 2017a, 38-39*). Television channel ANS and ANS ÇM radio station terminated their broadcasting by the demand of Ankara on suspicion of the ties with Gulen’s supporters (*IWPR 2016*). The Gulen-linked newspaper Zaman-Azerbaijan and Zaman.az webpage, as well as BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation), VOA (Voice of America), RFE/RL (Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty) were also shut down inside Azerbaijan (*Freedom House 2017a, 38-39*).

⁶⁴ Calculations by the author (*see methodology in Chapter 1*).

⁶⁵ See the annual estimates in the Freedom of the Press section: <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-press/2017/azerbaijan> (25.06.2019).

⁶⁶ Gulenists are Muslim cleric and reformer Fethullah Gulen’s supporters (born on April 27, 1941 in Erzurum, Turkey). Gulenism is a socio-religious movement originated in Turkey and one of the key ideas is the idea of compatibility between Islam and democracy. The movement has been widespread in Azerbaijan since 1991 (*see Hovsepyan 2013*).

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Restrictions and pressures on civil society continue to jeopardize Azerbaijan's cooperation with several international organizations and this was highly noticeable during 2015-2017.

In 2015 Azerbaijan, due to concerns about the threats faced by CSOs and NGOs, was downgraded from a full member to a candidate country by the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative⁶⁷ (EITI), which is a global standard to promote the open and accountable management of natural resources, with membership of 51 countries. EITI Board concluded on October 26, 2016 to retain a status of a candidate country to Azerbaijan, which was prompted by open letters from numerous international law enforcement organizations to EITI, where incidents of incessive pressures, political persecution, instigations of fraud criminal cases and arrests of CSOs representatives were still present (*EITI 2016*). On March 9, 2017 at the 36th meeting in Bogotá, the EITI Board decided to suspend the country (*EITI 2017*).⁶⁸

In 2016, taking into account the Azerbaijani authorities policy towards civil society, the Open Government Partnership⁶⁹ (OGP) Steering Committee

⁶⁷ EITI (Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative) standard covers all major issues, i.e. from natural resource extraction to its influence on citizens of the country, in particular to promote the open and accountable management of oil, gas and mineral resources. It requires information along the extractive industry value chain from the point of extraction, to how the revenue makes its way through the government, to how it benefits the public. This includes how licenses and contracts are allocated and registered, who are the beneficial owners of those operations, what are the fiscal and legal arrangements, how much is produced, how much is paid, where are those revenues allocated, and what is the contribution to the economy, including employment. In each of the implementing countries, the EITI is supported by a coalition of government, companies, and civil society. Moreover, according to EITI charter, the government of the implementing country should ensure of no obstacles to civil society participation in the EITI process and refrain from actions that may reduce or limit public discussion on EITI implementation (*EITIS 2016, 16*).

⁶⁸ See Alili 2017 for more detailed analysis about the effects of suspended membership of Azerbaijan to EITI.

⁶⁹ The Open Government Partnership was established in 2011 by the initiative of eight founding countries: USA, Brazil, Indonesia, Mexico, Norway, Philippines, South Africa, and United Kingdom. The OGP seeks achieve improved governance based on active involvement of civil society, as well as enhance public management efficiency through increased level of transparency, mutual trust and accountability in State-citizen relationship (http://www.ogp.am/u_files/-file/OGP%20Declaration%20of%20Prnciples_ARM.pdf).

suspended Azerbaijan's participation for one year, which was unprecedented for any country (*Freedom House 2017b, 8*).

It is of no coincidence that in the annual reports on Political Rights and Civil Liberties estimated by human rights organization of Freedom House, Azerbaijan continued to remain not free, repeating the worst indicator registered in 2015 in the reports of the mentioned organization (*Tonoyan 2018*). In addition, those indicators did not change in the next two years, precisely in 2017 (*Freedom House 2018*) and 2018 (*Freedom House 2019a*).

In 2017 PFI curve of the IDL of Azerbaijan had some positive alterations, partly due to the lack of electoral processes in the country during 2017, which, as a rule, had a direct negative impact on PFI in Azerbaijan (*Tonoyan 2018*). As a result, the lack of electoral processes has had an insignificant but positive impact on the field of social unrest, especially among the important components of the PFI.

On February 21, 2017 Aliyev's order,⁷⁰ naming his wife Mehriban Aliyeva as the first vice president, was probably the most significant political event in Azerbaijan Republic, which was stipulated by his powers in accordance with the constitutional amendments approved in a referendum. Taking into account the fact, that the incumbent president I. Aliyev appointed his wife the First Vice-President of Azerbaijan Republic, who in comply with Articles 105 and 106.1 of the Constitution of AR is endowed with extended powers for that position, allowed the president to further consolidate his family's dynastic control of the state. Therefore, a number of opposition figures opposed that appointment. Particularly, NFPA leader Ali Karimli and one of the key figures of Musavat party Isa Ghambar sharply criticized the above-mentioned order (*Azadliq 2017*); moreover, Ali Karimli made an online announcement that I. Aliyev sought to

⁷⁰ See the official website of the President of Azerbaijan for the text of the Order (M. A. Əliyevanın Azərbaycan Respublikasının Birinci vitse-prezidenti təyin edilməsi haqqında Azərbaycan Respublikası Prezidentinin Sərəncamı, 21.02.2017) <https://president.az/articles/-22850>.

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turn Azerbaijan into a family monarchy and called on the country's population to prevent it through peaceful demonstrations and struggle.⁷¹

In general, the constitutional referendum in September 2016 and I. Aliyev's appointment of his wife as the first vice president endowed with extended powers in accordance with the constitution, further weakened the role of parliament in the state and moved the country from basic principles of democratic governance and democracy two steps backward. According to the analysis of annual Corruption Perceptions Index published by Transparency International Organization, for the period 2016-2017 there were observed some positive changes⁷² in the AR's corruption scales, unlike the year 2018, which was marked by a negative trend.⁷³ Annual Freedom House reports registered increased corruption indicators in Azerbaijan during 2017-2018; moreover, for the two mentioned years the most negative rating was 7.⁷⁴

During 2017, AR authorities adhered to their policy of cruel force and repression against their political opponents and especially the NFPA leaders and activists, as well against journalists and active representatives of the civil society (*HRW 2018*).⁷⁵ In reference to restrictions made by AR authorities on media outlets and freedom of expression, 2017 can be outlined by authorities' focus on social networks and instigation of criminal cases against its own

⁷¹ The head of NFPA A. Karimli particularly announced about the appointment: *"It is a betrayal of the democratic heritage of the republic that people created 100 years ago in the eastern Muslim world. This is a step towards establishing a formal monarchy in Azerbaijan, even an absolute monarchy. I believe that the population of the AR should not come to terms with the establishment of monarchy in our country, its de jure and de facto levels of mastery. ... We are not going to put up with this kind of falsification of our Constitution and the reality of usurpation of power by one family. Within the constitution, we will restore the republican constitution in the country through peaceful struggle based on the principles of democracy"* (*Amerikansesi 2017*).

⁷² See the official website of Transparency International. https://www.transparency.org/news/-feature/corruption_perceptions_index_2016.

⁷³ See *ibid*: <https://www.transparency.org/cpi2018>.

⁷⁴ See the official website of Freedom House <https://freedomhouse.org/report/nations-transit/2018/azerbaijan>.

⁷⁵ According to an annual report by Human Rights Watch, 25 opposition activists, freelance journalists and civil society activists were sentenced to long-term imprisonment in the Republic of Azerbaijan during 2017 (*HRW 2018*).

citizens, as well as by development and implementation of an action plan to silence and expel those criticizing Azerbaijani authorities. It included two main points:

1. Exert pressure on relatives of those who live outside Azerbaijan Republic and actively criticize the authorities⁷⁶
2. If possible, intimidate expelled opposition members by either legal (filing a criminal case and organizing extradition)⁷⁷ or illegal (kidnapping)⁷⁸ means in order to have those persons brought back to AR and impose strict penalties against them.

Later in 2018 and 2019, the main purpose of the actions was to limit the activity of those who, under the conditions of totalitarian dictatorship, had sought asylum abroad and had been criticizing AR authorities through social networks and other means, therefore gaining large audience in Azerbaijan. It is noteworthy that AR authorities were a bit frightened that the Egyptian scenario through social networks could be replicated in Azerbaijan. In January 2017 Azerbaijani MP, member of Human Rights Commission and Chairman of the country's Press Council Aflatun Amashov stated at the committee meeting that a draft law⁷⁹ regulating the activity of social networks and bloggers should be elaborated in Azerbaijan. Hence, in March 2018, Hadi Rajabali MP representing ruling New Azerbaijan Party (NAP), announced that social networks should be

⁷⁶ For example, in February AR authorities arrested 12 relatives of Teymurkhan Orduxani, who was a political exile in the Netherlands. Moreover, in a video released by T. Orduxani, the police officer who phoned him explicitly stated that the imprisonment of 12 people had been linked to T. Ordukhan's internet activity and anti-government campaign (*Meydan 2018a*). The same series was also followed by the dismissal of five relatives of Vidadi Iskanderov in June who was a political exile in Georgia and the desecration of his father's grave (*Amerikaninsesi 2018*).

⁷⁷ See, for example, the case of Talysh politician Fakhreddin Abbasov (*Jam-news 2019*).

⁷⁸ See, for example, the cases of Afghan Mukhtarli and Fikret Huseynov (*HRW 2018*).

⁷⁹ The purpose of the above-mentioned committee meeting was to initiate discussions, either closed-door parliamentary or at least at the level of the NAP faction, to introduce restrictive mechanisms in social networks on freedom of expression, which is also evident from Sarvan Sadigov's following statement, the Head of the Legislative Examinations Division of the Parliament of Azerbaijan: "Everyone writes what suits him (on social networks - A. T.). And that is why there is chaos in this realm. This field needs legal regulation" (1news 2017).

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shut down in Azerbaijan,⁸⁰ however, it did not turn into a legislative initiative due to fierce public reactions and sharp criticism.

This was also concluded in Freedom on the Net reports published by the Freedom House International Organization, where in the South Caucasian region Azerbaijan was rated with the worst indicators 60/100 for 2017-2018, whereas Armenia and Georgia with 25/100 ratings accordingly. Besides, Azerbaijan was classified as partly free, while both Armenia and Georgia as free (*Freedom House 2019b*).

The most crucial events affecting Azerbaijan's political processes for 2018 were the snap presidential elections in April and events in Ganja in June. Moreover, another essential event that occurred in the political life and processes of the country, such as political movements that were initiated in April in the Republic of Armenia, followed by a resignation of the newly elected Prime Minister S. Sargsyan, as well as formation of new authorities as a result of mass demonstrations, brought a new agenda to the political processes of neighbouring Azerbaijan and called for new actions of the ruling elite.

On 5 February 2018, the President of Azerbaijan Republic I. Aliyev, using extended authorities endowed by 2016 referendum on constitutional reform (the Constitution of AR, Article 101.1), signed the Decree on Conducting Extraordinary Parliamentary Elections⁸¹ with no reason provided for his decision; hence catching major opposition forces off guard. Unable to prepare for it, the opposition bloc of National Council of Democratic Forces boycotted

⁸⁰ H. Rajabli, in particular, stated: “Social networks should be blocked in the RA and there should be no setback in this matter. Since Azerbaijan is on the threshold of presidential elections, the main goal of the provocateurs is to destabilize Azerbaijan. The main goal of the people of Azerbaijan today must be to maintain stability in our country. If we follow the processes going on in the world, we will see how the social networks of Egypt, Yemen and other countries have managed through social networks. It was through these provocative websites and social networks in the aforementioned countries that they launched various tricks affecting mass psychology and brought the situation to a chaotic point. Taking into account all this, the people of Azerbaijan must reveal the real faces of all the provocateurs” (*Meydan 2018b*).

⁸¹ Text of the decree (Növbədənənkənar Azərbaycan Respublikası Prezidenti seçkilərinin elan edilməsi haqqında Azərbaycan Respublikası Prezidentinin Sərəncamı, 05.02.2019), see on the official website of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan: <https://president.az/articles/22850>.

the April 11 elections⁸² and did not nominate any candidate (*Contact 2018a*). Later, the movement of the Republican Alternative joined the boycott (*Contact 2018b*) with its leader Ilghar Mammadov still in prison at that time. Musavat and Hope parties also joined the boycott (*BBC 2018*). The other seven candidates who ran in the election, despite being nominated as opposition members, were actually nominated by I. Aliyev's order to legitimize the pre-election process and results of the snap presidential elections. Numerous gross violations during the pre-election period and on Election Day were identified in the OSCE/ODIHR final report on the snap presidential elections of Azerbaijan (*OSCE 2018*). The opposition Alliance of National Council of Democratic Forces (NC) during a protest on April 14 declared that the election results, according to which I. Aliyev received 86,02% of the votes, were unacceptable (*MSK 2018*).

On July 10, a strong wave of mass marches broke out in the city of Ganja, provoked by the fact that mayor's son at the police station personally wanted to revenge on Yusif Safarov, who had attempted an assassination of Ganja mayor and his three bodyguards on 3 July. The press services for the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA), the General Prosecutor's Office, and the State Security Service (SSS) of Azerbaijan jointly released the statement on 06.07.2018. It reported that Y. Safarov's assassination attempt was aimed to sow chaos and panic in the country by killing well-known government officials, overthrowing the existing state order and establishing an Islamic state on seizing power in the country (*ARBP 2018a*). Moreover, according to the statement made by E. Najafov, Head of the Department of Interethnic Relations, Multiculturalism and Religious Issues of the Presidential Administration of the Republic of Azerbaijan, there existed an extremist religious group in Ganja, governed from outside, with its members, seeking means of various provocations to undermine Azerbaijan's social and political stability, change its secular order and create a state, that should be governed by Sharia law (*Modern.az 2018*). As a result, acts of public disobedience were brutally suppressed by the police; however, in

⁸² According to the Electoral Code, the presidential elections were to be held on the third Wednesday of October, on October 17 (*Interfax 2018*).

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the course of the action, two policemen were killed in clashes (*Mia.gov.az 2018*). In the following days, among those identified as members of religious extremist groups in the SSS's official messages,⁸³ more than ten people were detained and several were killed during a number of special operations, undertaken by the SSS (*ARBP 2018b*).

Despite the release of a number of detainees, including the leader of the Republican Alternative movement İlghar Mammadov in August 2018, however, Human Rights Watch reported that at least 43 political prisoners, including journalists, political and religious figures were still kept in prisons (*HRW 2019*). Political persecutions against political activists and active members of NFPA and Musavat opposition parties, instances of criminal proceedings on false charges related to drugs, religious activists' harassment, particularly members of the Muslim Unity Movement, whose leader Taleh Baghirzade and other 17 activists continued to remain in prison. Later, on 16 March 2019 some of the above-mentioned 17 members were released in compliance with I. Aliyev's order of amnesty, however, the leader of the movement T. Baghirzade still remains in custody.⁸⁴

In the annual report on assessment of the religious freedom in the world - United States Commission on International Religious Freedom- it was stated that Azerbaijan continued to be among the most gross violators of religious freedom in 2018.⁸⁵

⁸³ The US International Religious Freedom Commission referred to the incidents in Ganja in the annual report on the assessment of the religious situation in the world, and particularly noted in 2018: Although it is difficult to assess the events in Ganja and the government's reaction, however, human rights activists accused the authorities of using the incident as a pretext to suppress political dissent and terrify people at the risk of Islamic terror" (*USCIRF 2019*).

⁸⁴ Text of the order (Məhkum edilmiş bir sıra şəxslərin əfv olunması haqqında Azərbaycan Respublikası Prezidentinin Sərəncamı, 16.03.2016)) see on the official website of the President of Azerbaijan Republic <https://president.az/articles/32416>.

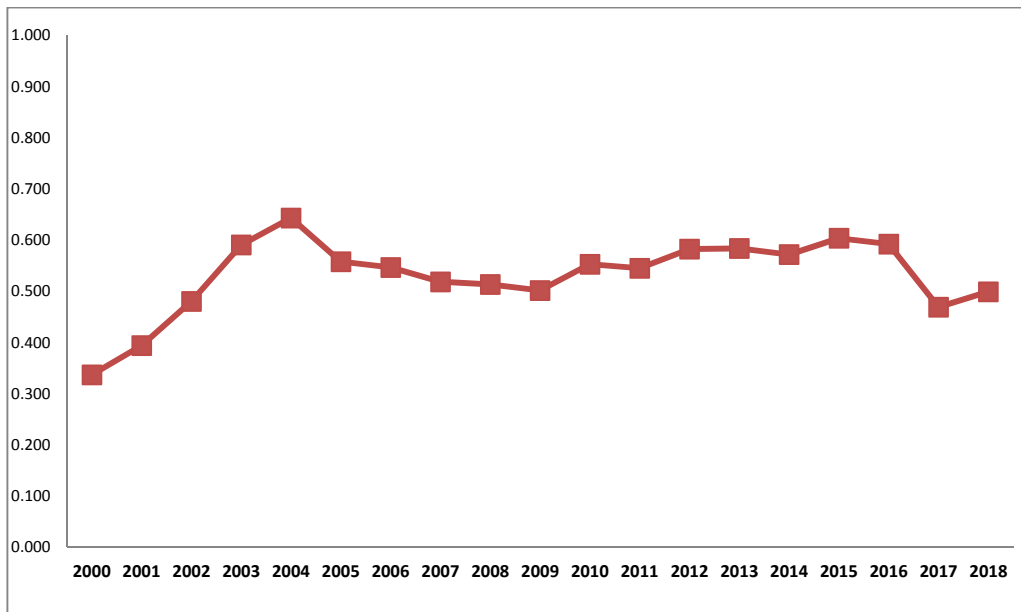
⁸⁵ There is a section in the report devoted to AR, where it is stated, that AR authorities made a positive development in securing religious freedoms. In particular, four non-Muslim religious communities received registration from the government. However, the Muslim majority of the country is being forced to endure an additional layer of scrutiny by authorities, thus trying to limit the religious influence of Muslim Unity Movement (MUM) on the territory of Azerbaijan (*USCIRF 2019, 146*).

The comparison of 2016-2018 PFI of the of IDL depicts that due to the snap presidential elections in AR and thereafter, Ganja events accompanied with obvious manifestations of mass disobedience registered a negative trend in 2018 compared to 2017. At the same time, in 2017, compared to 2016, there was a positive change in PFI of IDL, due to the absence of electoral processes. The trends in the PFI curve are comparable with those in 2003-2005 and 2013-2015, where the midterm elections of 2004 and 2014 had a higher level of PFI than their previous and subsequent years. It can be concluded from the above-mentioned, which is also testified by the example of 2016-2018, that electoral processes in AR are of great importance to the PFI.

4.2 Democracy level dependence on economic factors

Figure 2

Economic Factors Index (2000-2018)*



* Source: calculations by the author (see the methodology in Chapter 1).

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According to the results of this study, two positive peaks of the Economic Factors Index (EFI) of IDL of Azerbaijan were recorded in 2004 and 2015 accordingly with 0,644 and 0,604 ratings, nonetheless the range of 2000-2014 was comparatively stable and the first period (2004-2009) was characterized by a slow process, while the second one (2009-2015) by a slow and gradual increase (see Figure 2).

The sharpest drop in the EFI curve was observed in 2017, the main and most significant cause of which was probably the fall in oil prices that began in 2015 in the world oil market and the subsequent socio-economic upheaval in Azerbaijan as a direct consequence of the above mentioned. As a result:

1. In 2017 in Azerbaijan registered 12,9% inflation, which was the highest in the history of the country for the period 2009-2018⁸⁶ (*Figure 3*),

2. AR GNI per capita (WB Atlas method) amounted to \$4070 in 2017, which was the lowest rating for the period of 2009-2017⁸⁷ (*Figure 3*). Moreover, for example, between 2012 and 2017 it was registered with \$6440 per capita with the negative percentage amounting to about 58%.

3. Domestic credit had been extremely declining in 2017, making up only 12,4% of the country's GDP, which was again the worst indicator within the period of 2009-2018.⁸⁸ For comparison, it should be noted that it was 40,7% in 2015, which means that in 2017 there was more than a threefold decline compared to 2015 (see Figure 3).

4. During 2009-2018, the 2017 also recorded the worst results in terms of the Budget deficit, accounting for 1,6% of GDP⁸⁹ (see Figure 3).

⁸⁶ See the official website of the WB <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/FP.CPI.TOTL.ZG?locations=AZ>.

⁸⁷ Lower indicator of \$4050 per capita was recorded in the next year, in 2018 (see WB official website: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.PP.CD?locations=AZ>), which was mitigated and had no adverse effect on the EFI curve, at the expense of 2,3% Inflation rate (*Əliyev 2019, 7*) (see Figure 3) and more.

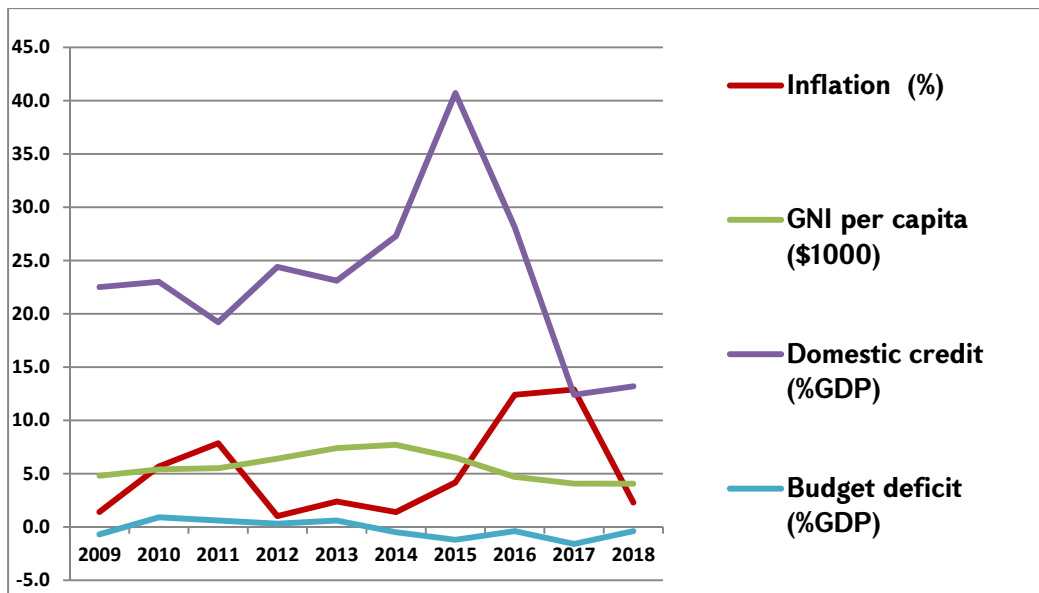
⁸⁸ See the WB official website: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/FS.AST.DOMS.GD.ZS?locations=AZ> (25.06.2019).

⁸⁹ See <https://tradingeconomics.com/azerbaijan/government-budget> (25.06.2019).

Overall, there were some positive developments, especially in 2018. Particularly, according to I. Aliyev's final report on the socio-economic achievements of Azerbaijan Republic in 2018, the inflation fell by 2,3% in the mentioned year, exchange rate of national currency manat was stabilized, foreign exchange reserve fund increased by \$3 billion reaching to \$45 billion (*Əliyev 2019, 7*).

Figure 3⁹⁰

Indicators of Inflation, GDP per capita, Domestic credit and Budget deficit in Azerbaijan (2009-2018)

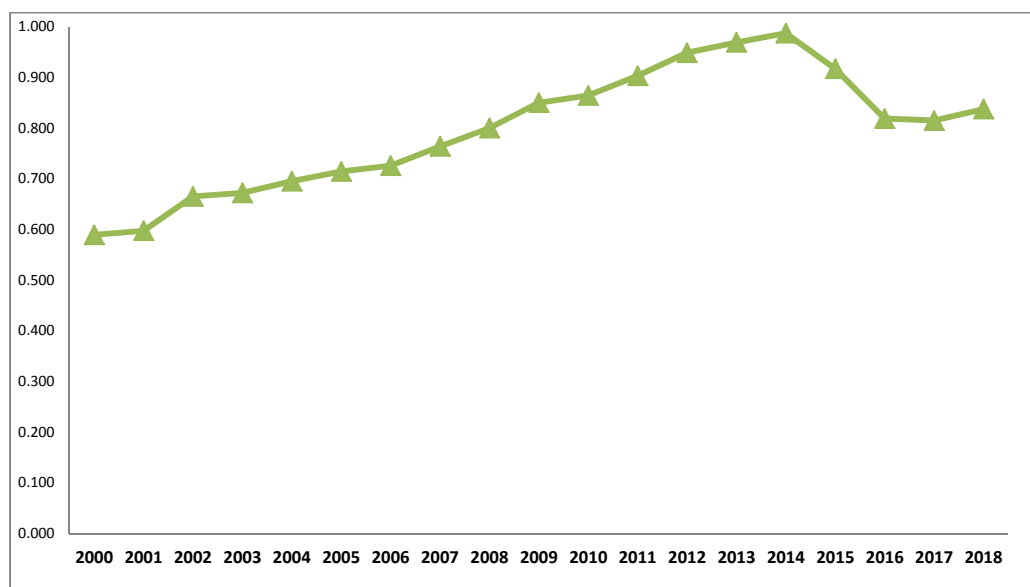


⁹⁰ Calculated according the data, published on the World Bank's official website and in "Tradeconomics.com."

4.3 Peculiarities of the impact of Social Factors Index (SFI) on the IDL of Azerbaijan

Figure 4

Social Factors Index (2000-2018)*



Observation of the Social Factors Index (SFI) curve compared with indices of other (political, economic, educational and health) factors shows that the Social Factors Index had the highest dynamics of sustainability and development among them, with an upward trend during 2000-2014. Thereafter, the SFI curve was marked by a sharp decline during 2015-2016 due to the fall in oil prices in the world market and as a consequence of the devaluation of manat, inflation and reduction in Real wage (see Figure 4).

In 2014 Real wage amounted to \$558,9 per capita in Azerbaijan, then in 2016 it decreased by more than 50%, reaching to \$277,9.

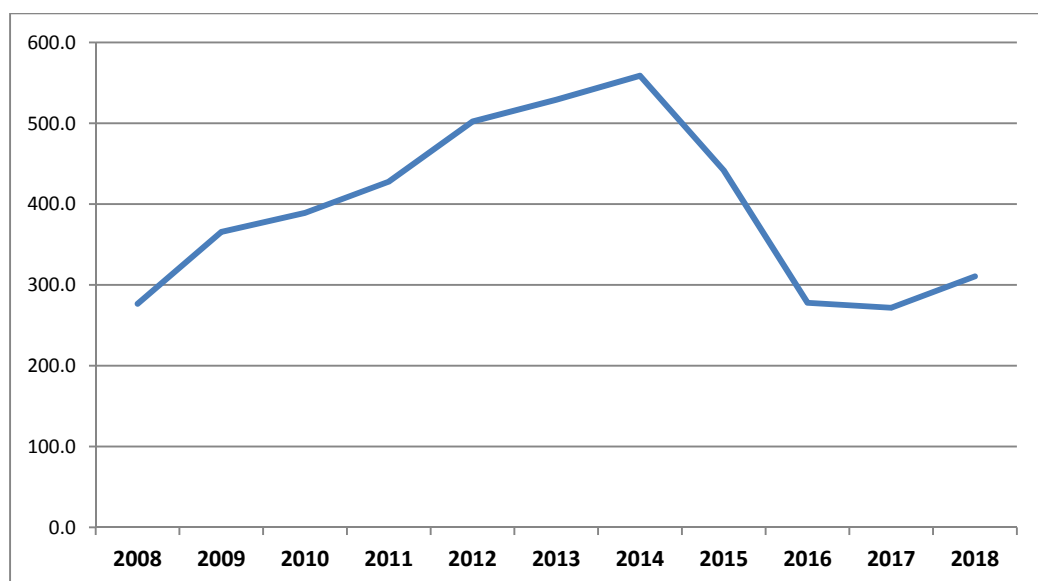
The above-mentioned negative trend was maintained in 2017 too, when the Real wage per capita was equivalent to \$271,7 per month, unlike 2018, when

* Source: calculations by the author (see the methodology in Chapter 1).

due to 2,3%⁹¹ low Inflation rate (*Əliyev 2019*), there was a 14,2% increase in Real wage amounting to \$310,5 (see Figure 5).

Figure 5*

Real wage dynamics in Azerbaijan (US dollars) (2008-2018)



Unemployment in Azerbaijan is a key factor affecting the SFI, and according to the country's statistical service and World Bank's official websites, its level is quite low and had 4,9-5,9%⁹² fluctuations during 2008-2018.

According to official website of SSS, the same situation can be observed in view of the poverty rate in AR. As it was mentioned in the source above, poverty rate in Azerbaijan fluctuated from 4,9 to 5,4% during 2013-2018. When compared to 2005, the indicator was recorded with 29,3%.⁹³

It is of no coincidence that since 2003, AR President I. Aliyev in his discourse with Azerbaijani audience has highly and continually emphasized

⁹¹ Accordingly, 12,4% in 2016 and 12,9% in 2017 (*Tonoyan 2018, 135*).

* Source: calculations by the author (see the methodology in Chapter 1).

⁹² See WB (<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.UEM.TOTL.ZS?locations=AZ>) and SSS official websites (https://www.stat.gov.az/source/demography/ay/az/004_2.xls)(25.06.2019).

⁹³ See AR SSS official website: <https://www.stat.gov.az/> (25.06.2019).

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recurrence of his theses aimed at improving social situation as well as presentation of the data obtained from various statistical services that confirmed the aforementioned.⁹⁴

Despite a relatively stable social situation, it is difficult to estimate the actual number of the population of Azerbaijan, taking into account the tradition of falsification of the real number of population in the country (*Tonoyan 2018*). In any case, on April 6, 2019, the birth of 10th million citizen was celebrated in Azerbaijan.⁹⁵ According to the data obtained from the official website of the SSS of AR, the population of AR was 7,953,400 in 1999 and 8,922,400⁹⁶ in 2009, which means that its population had been growing by a million every ten years.

4.4 Education and democracy: the educational factors as components of the formation of the IDL of Azerbaijan

According to the Figure 6, the EdFI curve in Azerbaijan had shown stability during the last few years (2012-2018), which is mainly due to a modest increase in public funds allocated to the education sector and a slow growth trend. So, the trend of annual growth in state budget allocations to the sector of education had not been tangible during 2014-2017, then for 2018 government spending on education increased up to 17,7% compared to the previous year (see Table 1).

⁹⁴ For example, during the 6th NAP Congress held in Baku on February 8, 2018, it was decided to nominate I. Aliyev in the upcoming snap presidential elections to be conducted on April 11, 2018.

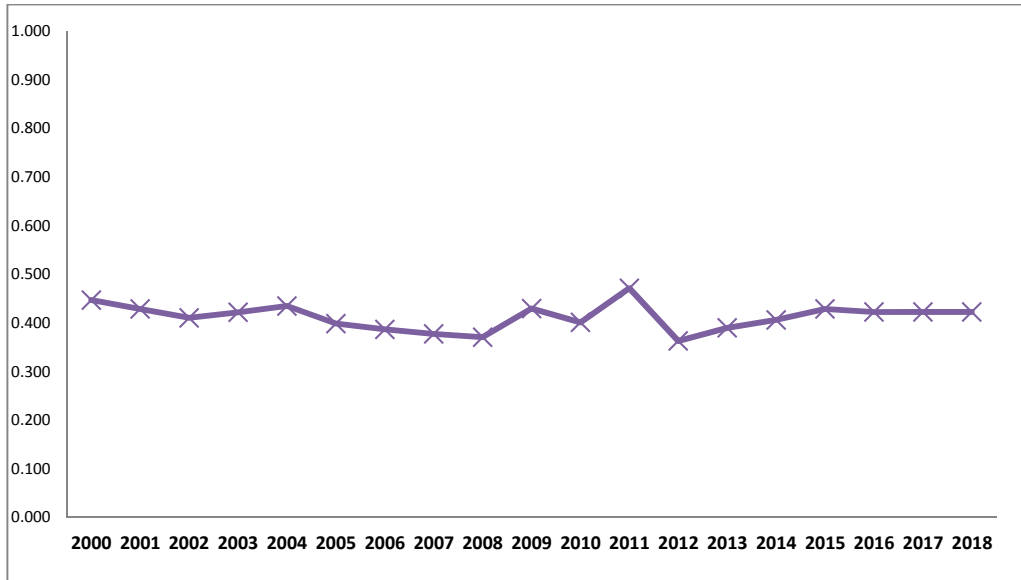
I. Aliyev stated in his speech: *“Remarkable success has been achieved in the field of consistent and systematic social policies, in particular, improving living standards and promoting well-being. First of all, 10-fold reduction in poverty from 50% to 5% and creation of 1,900,000 new jobs should be noted. During this period (2003-2018 – A.T.) average salaries, pensions, and real incomes increased 5, 8, 2.6 times respectively»* (Əliyev 2018, 41).

⁹⁵ See the official website of New Azerbaijan Party (NAP). <http://www.yap.org.az/az/view/news/-32999/azerbaycan-ehalisinin-sayi-10-milyon-nefere-chatib>: (25.06.2019).

⁹⁶ See the official website of SSS of AR: https://www.stat.gov.az/source/demography/az/001_4-6.xls. (25.06.2019).

Figure 6

Educational Factors Index (2000-2018)*



It is interesting that state allocations to the field of general education increased by 15,9% in 2018 compared to 2017, while increase in budget allocations to pre-school education was about 27,2% for the same period. Nonetheless, state funding for higher education had a negative tendency in 2016 with approximately 5% decrease compared with 2015, however, funding for higher education in Azerbaijan increased again over the next two years and in 2018 reached to 42,7 million manats, which, in the end, exceeded allocations of 2015 by 8,9% (see Table 2).

* Source: calculations by the author (see the methodology in Chapter 1).

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Table 2

Government spending on education in Azerbaijan (2014-2018)

	State allocations (in manats) during 2014-2018				
	2014 ⁹⁷	2015 ⁹⁸	2016 ⁹⁹	2017 ¹⁰⁰	2018 ¹⁰¹
Education field	1,653,445,192	1,711,180,403	1,713,513,135	1,736,052,890	2,043,989,508
Pre-school education	158,653,570	165,575,447	157,372,405	137,786,562	175,314,065
General education	851,029,044	898,254,044	940,134,626	933,517,278	1,082,159,571
Preliminary professional	78,614,372	34,287,423	33,724,900	23,058,384	27,977,633
Vocational education		44,646,660	43,563,736	42,887,794	41,302,250
Higher education	32,978,063	39,215,650	37,235,595	41,383,900	42,716,929

According to the World Bank's official website,¹⁰² government spending on education in Azerbaijan, with the exception in 1999 (4,2%), did not reach the threshold of 4% of the country's GDP over the past 25 years. The worst indicator for this period was registered in 2012, at about 2,07%, after which spending on education sector in Azerbaijan did not reach 3% of GDP till 2016 (see Table 7). In comparison to Armenia, government spending on education did not reach 3% of GDP during 2012-2016, whereas Georgia was the only country in the South Caucasus, where allocations (3,78%)¹⁰³ were significantly higher than 3% of GDP in 2016.

⁹⁷ See official website of the president of AR: <https://president.az/articles/10554> (25.06.2019).

⁹⁸ See *ibid*: <https://president.az/articles/13772>(25.06.2019).

⁹⁹ See the official website of the Ministry of Finance of the AR:
<http://maliyye.gov.az/sites/default/files/BUDCE%20-%202016%20AN%20YENI.pdf> (25.06.2019).

¹⁰⁰ See official website of the president of AR: <https://president.az/articles/22346>(25.06.2019).

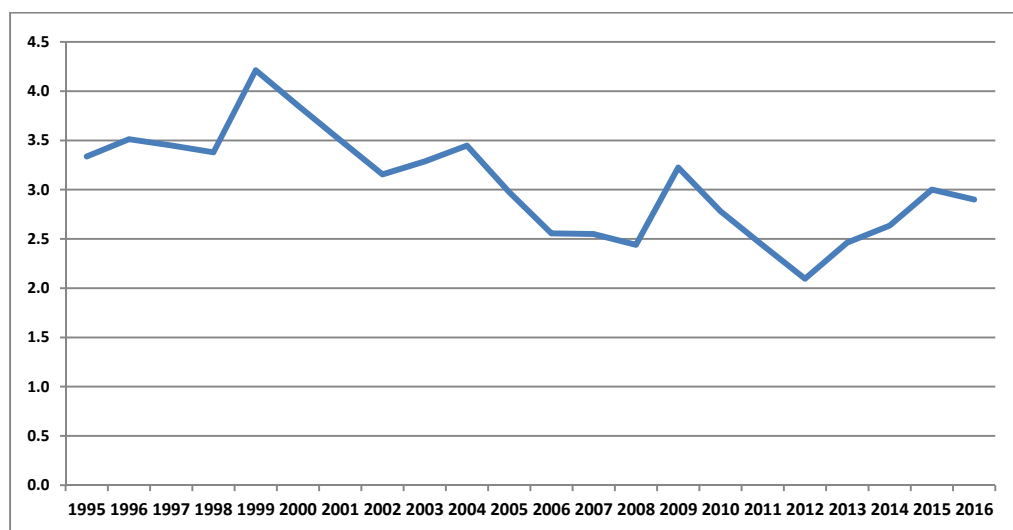
¹⁰¹ See *ibid*: <https://president.az/articles/26596>(25.06.2019).

¹⁰² See the official website of the World Bank:
<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.XPD.TOTL.GD.ZS?locations=AZ> (25.06.2019).

¹⁰³ See the official website of the World Bank:

Figure 7¹⁰⁴

Spending on education as a share of GDP in Azerbaijan (1995-2018)



Recent developments in the educational field of Azerbaijan are notable for the closure of the Caucasus Institute by the Azerbaijani authorities on July 20, triggered by the military coup attempt in Turkey in July 2016, whose activities were linked to Gulen and supporters of Gulen ideology (*Meydan 2016b*).

Besides, changes to the Law on Freedom of Religion, initiated during 2015-2017, also arouse some interest, as they are connected with persons, who have received religious education outside Azerbaijan and with their further activity in the country. Article 21 paragraph 3 of the above-mentioned law states that citizens of AR educated abroad can conduct religious rituals and events only after obtaining an appropriate agreement with the administrative authority. Moreover, in comply with the changes made on December 4, 2015 this is applicable to those, who are citizens of AR and received education in Azerbaijan, whereas the modifications on May 16, 2017 were additionally

<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.XPD.TOTL.GD.ZS?locations=AZ-AM-GE> (25.06.2019).

¹⁰⁴ Data obtained from the United Nations Development Program of Educational Index (see <http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/education-index>) and the World Bank's official website Government spending on education (% of GDP) (25.06.2019).

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amended and consequently, a citizen of AR who was educated abroad is prohibited from conducting religious rituals and events related to Islam.¹⁰⁵

4.5 The dynamics of changes in Azerbaijan's health care system and its impact on the IDL of this country

Figure 8¹⁰⁶

Health Factors Index (2000-2018)*

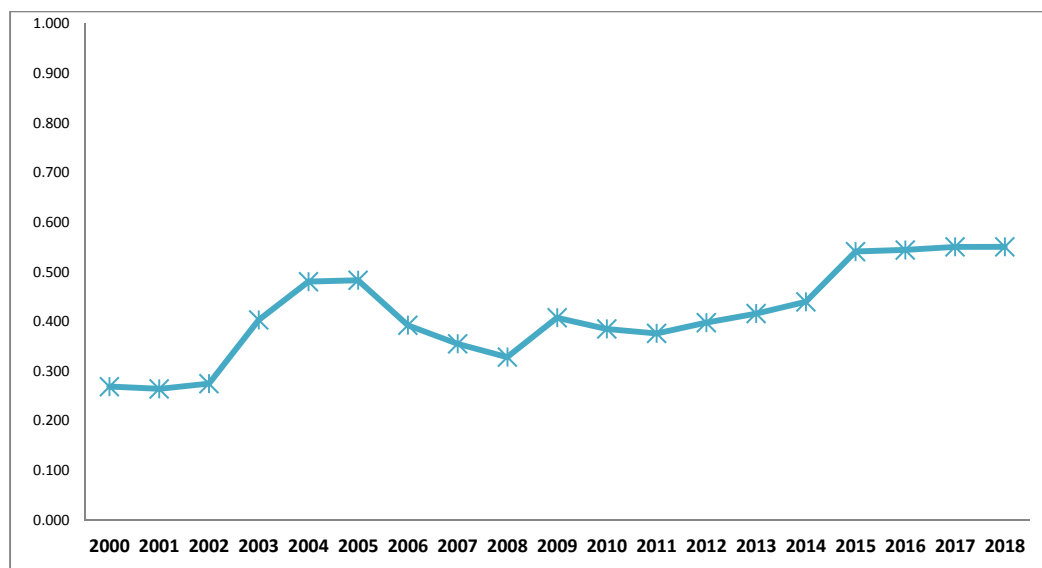


Figure 8 shows, that health care sector in Azerbaijan is stable and slowly developing. According to data released by the World Bank's official website,

¹⁰⁵ See the unified online database of normative legal acts of the Ministry of Justice of Azerbaijan Republic <http://www.e-qanun.az/framework/7649> (25.06.2019).

¹⁰⁶ It was compiled on the basis of a study of the annual changes in the «Average Life Expectancy» thresholds submitted by the State Statistical Service of Azerbaijan (see the official website of SSS of AR https://www.stat.gov.az/source/demography/en/002_4en.xls) and Current health expenditure (% of GDP) published on the World Bank's official website (see the official website of the World Bank <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SH.XPD.TOTL.ZS> 25.06.2019)).

*Source: calculations by the author (see the methodology in Chapter 1).

especially Current health expenditure as a share of Azerbaijan's GDP had steadily increased from 4,63% in 2011 to 6,89% in 2016.¹⁰⁷

However, it is noteworthy that state budget allocations to the health sector of Azerbaijan especially for the period 2014-2018 remained unchanged (see Table 3), while the increase in Current health expenditure as a share of GDP, in fact, was conditioned by the growth in private payments.

Table 3
Allocations from the state budget of Azerbaijan to the health sector (2014-2018)

Year	Amount (in manat)
2014 ¹⁰⁸	725,586,166,0
2015 ¹⁰⁹	777,668,395,0
2016 ¹¹⁰	744,855,809,0
2017 ¹¹¹	745,381,258,0
2018 ¹¹²	739,334,330,0

According to the State Statistical Service of Azerbaijan, the average Life expectancy in the post-Soviet period also increased. Respectively, it was 69,1 years in 1995, while it reached 75,4 in 2018 (see Figure 9).¹¹³

¹⁰⁷ The highest rate in current health expenditure in Azerbaijan as a share of GDP was recorded in 2004 (7,34%) and 2005 (7,39%), and the lowest one in 2002 (3,71%).

¹⁰⁸ See the official website of AR president <https://president.az/articles/10554> (25.06.2019).

¹⁰⁹ See ibid: <https://president.az/articles/13772> (25.06.2019).

¹¹⁰ See the official website of the Ministry of Finance of AR
<http://maliyye.gov.az/sites/default/files/BUDCE%20-%202016%20AN%20YENI.pdf> (25.06.2019).

¹¹¹ See the official website of AR president <https://president.az/articles/22346> (25.06.2019).

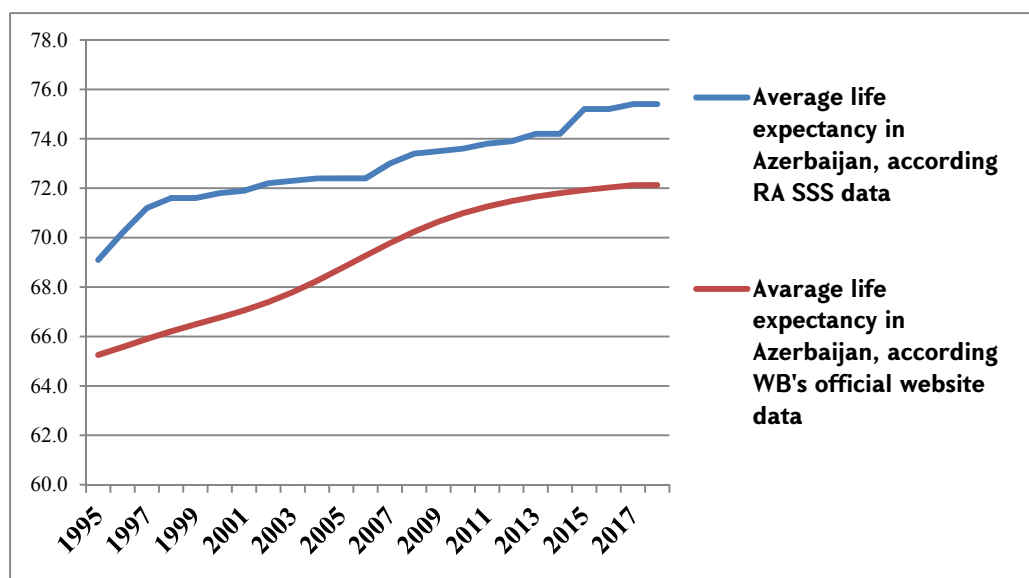
¹¹² See ibid <https://president.az/articles/26596> (25.06.2019).

¹¹³ Azerbaijan's SSS data are, to some extent, inconsistent with the World Bank's official website on average life expectancy in Azerbaijan, according to which, average life expectancy in 1995 was 65,2 and 72,1 in 2018 (see Figure 9).

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Figure 9

Average Life expectancy in Azerbaijan, according to SSS and WB data
(1995-2018)



Content analysis of the speeches of the President of AR for 2016-2018 shows that I. Aliyev repeated his several theses, while talking about the health issues of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the health situation in the country, which are more of propaganda nature than a tendency of recording the achieved results. They are mainly the following:

- over 600 hospitals have been built, rebuilt and renovated in Azerbaijan over the past 15 years;
- average Life expectancy has increased;
- maternal and infant mortality rates have declined;¹¹⁴

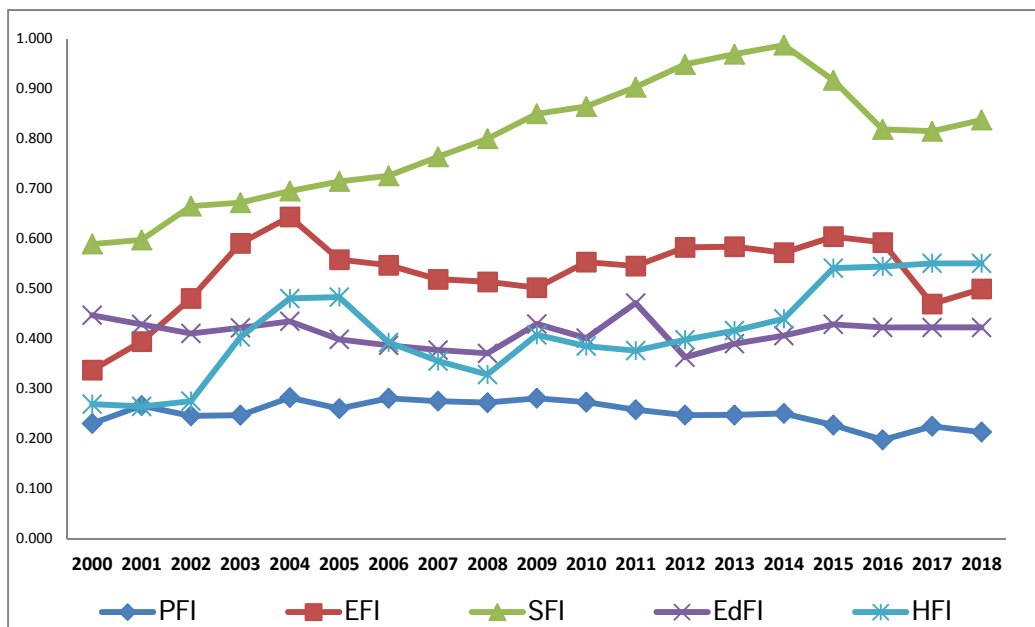
¹¹⁴ Despite Azerbaijan's SSS data during 2011-2017 incidents of female deaths during pregnancy and childbirth has steadily decreased (see the official website of the SSS of AR: https://www.stat.gov.az/source/demography/az/004_6.xls 25.06.2019)), however, the issue of women's mortality during pregnancy and childbirth is one of the most sensitive and urgent topics in the opposition press and civil society. According to the statements made within the framework of the aforementioned, cases of female deaths in childbirth are increasing in number year-by-year, not decreasing. The main reason for the mentioned is the lack of doctors' professional skills and lack of profession related knowledge (see, for example, *Aznews* 2018).

- Azerbaijan's positions have improved in the World Health Organization rankings;
- Major investments have been made in health infrastructures;
- Citizens of AR receive free medical examinations every year (*Əliyev 2016, 2017, 2018*).

In general, citizens of AR have some mistrust towards their own country's health care system, which makes hundreds of thousands of Azerbaijani citizens to seek treatment in neighbouring countries, especially in Iran (*Tonoyan 2018, 135*).

4.6 Development trends of the Index of Democracy Level of Azerbaijan (2000-2018)

Figure 10
Political, Economic, Social, Educational and Health Factors Index affecting the IDL of Azerbaijan for the timeframe 2000-2018*



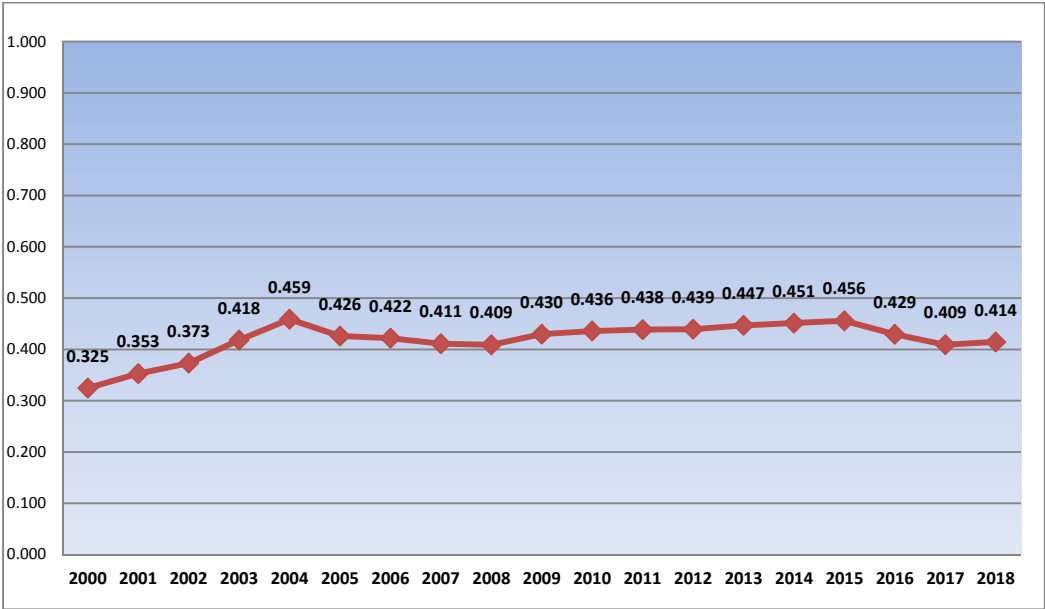
* Source: calculations by the author (see the methodology in Chapter 1).

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During the period of 2000-2018, the IDL of Azerbaijan (see Figure 11) calculated by compiling the data of the five (political, economic, social, educational and health) factors and the sub-factors that form them (see Figure 10), had had a certain sustainable development trend during 2009-2015.

Figure 11

Index of Democracy Level of Azerbaijan for the period 2000-2018*



The aforementioned section of the IDL of Azerbaijan, driven mainly by rising oil prices in the world market and increased volumes of Azerbaijani oil exports and thus a sharp upward of GDP growth per capita is also reflected in SFland EFI, which indicates that socio-economic factors in Azerbaijan have a tangible impact on the country's IDL. This is also confirmed by the 2016-2017 social and economic downturns and negative trends due to a drastic decline in oil prices worldwide. Besides, the indicator registered during the first global economic crisis back in 2008 (0,409) was repeated in an indicator of 2017 IDL of Azerbaijan.

* Source: calculations by the author (see the methodology in Chapter 1).

It is noteworthy that during the two above-mentioned periods (2009-2015 and 2016-2017) the impact of social and economic factors on the IDL was significant, while in 2004 the highest index of IDL (0,549) along with the political factor was registered the period under review (see Figure 11).¹¹⁵

4.7 Regression analysis of the IDL of Azerbaijan

Within the framework of the research, the regression analysis displays the variables of Political, Economic, Social, Educational and Health Factors Indices that were included in the model and which were of a comparative importance to estimate the IDL of Azerbaijan.

In comply with the results, achieved through the regression, it is concluded that there has been a significant correlation between the IDL_i ¹¹⁶ and the PFI variables of Rule of Law and Corruption Perceptions Index (see Figure 11). Accordingly, increase in Rule of Law variable by 1 unit will result in IDL_i increase by 0,005 units and a positive change in the Corruption Perceptions Index by 1 unit will positively affect the IDL_i in that country and lead to an increase of 0,068 units (see Table 4).

Table 4

Regression analysis of the IDL_i (PFI variables)

Variable	<i>Coefficient</i>	<i>Adj.R²</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>N</i>
Rule of Law	0,005	0,431	0,000	24
Corruption Perceptions Index	0,068	0,393	0,001	24

¹¹⁵ In the context of the above-mentioned, it is noteworthy to mention Azerbaijani opposition leader Ilghar Mammadov's open letter to international human rights organizations on January 20, 2017. He stated that international investments in Azerbaijan's oil and gas sector, in particular credit and non-credit resources allocated to Azerbaijan for the implementation of the Southern Gas Corridor project to export gas from Shah Deniz field to Turkey, directly affect the democratic processes of the country and keep Azerbaijani civil society representatives in prisons (Mammadov 2017).

¹¹⁶ IDL_i is the Index of Democracy Level cleaned from the corresponding variable during every paired regression analysis.

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According to regression analysis data, Index Economic Freedom and Budget deficit are the most influential economic factors of IDL_i of Azerbaijan. Specifically, the positive change by one unit in the Index of Economic Freedom will lead to an 0,005 units increase in the IDL_i of Azerbaijan, whereas Budget deficit, if increased by 1%, will cause IDL_i increase by 0,027 units (see Table 5).

Table 5

Regression analysis of the IDL_i (EFI variables)

Variable	<i>Coefficient</i>	<i>Adj.R²</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>N</i>
Index of Economic Freedom	0,005	0,634	0,000	24
Budget deficit	0,027	0,537	0,000	24

In view of the variables included in the Social Factors Index, the Gini index variable has relatively high impact on IDL_i of Azerbaijan, which means that 0,1 unit increase in Gini index will bring to IDL_i decrease by 0,029 units. In the meantime, Real wage increase by \$100, will improve IDL_i by 0,015 units (see Table 6).

Table 6

Regression analysis of the IDL_i (SFI variables)

Variable	<i>Coefficient</i>	<i>Adj.R²</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>N</i>
Real wage (\$100)	0,015	0,344	0,002	24
Gini index	-0,029	0,705	0,000	24

According to the regression analysis, HDI Education Index has the most significant impact on the IDL_i in Azerbaijan and consequently, positive increase with 1 unit will bring to IDL_i increase by 0,521 units (see Table 7).

Table 7

Regression analysis of the IDL_i (EdFI variables)

Variable	<i>Coefficient</i>	<i>Adj.R²</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>N</i>
HDI Education Index	0,521	0,275	0,005	24

From the HFI variables, Life expectancy has a relatively strong influence on IDL_i of Azerbaijan, and an increase by 1 year will lead to an increase in IDL_i by 0,023 units (see Table 8).

Table 8

Regression Analysis of IDL_i (HFI variables)

Variable	Coefficient	Adj.R ²	Sig.	N
Life expectancy	0,023	0,534	0,000	24

The regression analysis shows that IDL_i of Azerbaijan is more sensible to changes in Corruption Perceptions, Economic Freedom, and Gini indices. In addition, variables such as Rule of Law, Budget deficit, Real wage, HDI Education index, and Life expectancy have a significant influence on the IDL_i of Azerbaijan, too.

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5. DEMOCRATIC TRANSFORMATION OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION IN THE CONDITIONS OF GLOBAL COMPETITION AND SANCTIONS

ASHOT ALEKSANYAN

Modern globalization processes impact the democratic transformation of the Russian Federation's (RF) public life predetermining their civilizational nature and main directions. The period of 2016-2018 reforms, occurred in the Russian political system, reveal the "gap" between theoretical models of democratic consolidation processes and their practical introduction. Despite the results achieved, however, procedures aimed at democratic division of public authorities and ensuring their operational balance in the country have remained contradictory. They require the country's political elite to clarify operational powers of public administration and local self-government bodies; therefore, making the constitutional principle of securing the division of powers urgent.

Democratic consolidation processes in the RF are taking place within the context of neo-authoritarian transformations of the society's political system, intensified global competitiveness and geopolitical sanctions. They are non-linear socio-political processes carrying a systemic nature and encompassing all spheres of country's public life. The latter has a negative impact on the country's transitional society, as socio-economic subsystems periodically lose their balance and stability, ending up in an environment of unequal interactions. In this regard, democratization on the grounds of non-linear realities, but with a linear vision aimed at developing and introducing new strategies to implement administrative changes is of great significance in Russia

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(Ачкасов 2018, 19-29; Кирюхина 2018, 22-28; Кулик 2017b, 4-22; Медведев 2016, 56-67; Никонов 2015, 2-41; Потапов 2018, 27-49; Ратленд 2016, 55-72; Сафронов 2016, 27-37; Тасиц 2017, 112-130; Цветкова 2019, 940-950).

Table 1

Indices of Political, Economic, Social, Educational and Health Factors and Index of Democracy Level of the RF for the 2000-2018 period

Years	PFI	EFI	SFI	EdFI	HFI	IDL
2000	0,301	0,444	0,507	0,432	0,129	0,356
2001	0,310	0,416	0,523	0,448	0,138	0,357
2002	0,325	0,409	0,537	0,499	0,144	0,369
2003	0,309	0,454	0,550	0,495	0,153	0,376
2004	0,291	0,491	0,569	0,488	0,114	0,375
2005	0,293	0,500	0,597	0,503	0,116	0,383
2006	0,297	0,569	0,630	0,510	0,158	0,412
2007	0,285	0,568	0,678	0,518	0,186	0,415
2008	0,260	0,595	0,734	0,527	0,207	0,422
2009	0,290	0,440	0,697	0,504	0,272	0,395
2010	0,320	0,488	0,737	0,528	0,240	0,423
2011	0,304	0,537	0,788	0,528	0,259	0,436
2012	0,306	0,548	0,812	0,521	0,280	0,444
2013	0,325	0,608	0,842	0,564	0,304	0,478
2014	0,282	0,534	0,802	0,561	0,315	0,438
2015	0,280	0,481	0,690	0,539	0,335	0,411
2016	0,267	0,549	0,701	0,533	0,350	0,425
2017	0,272	0,547	0,744	0,527	0,376	0,434
2018	0,276	0,567	0,733	0,527	0,383	0,440

Political, economic, social, educational and health factors have strongly conditioned the RF democracy level (see Table 1). They demonstrate the following: democracy, as such, is not only a combination of civilizational values, ideological principles, culture and rules, but also a unique approach to modernizing and developing a country's political system. In this respect, actors of the politics, having numerous issues as well, are required to obtain new qualities to realize the country's vital interests, ensure its security and prosperity, establish a dialogue and partnership with administration, self-government and civil society organizations.

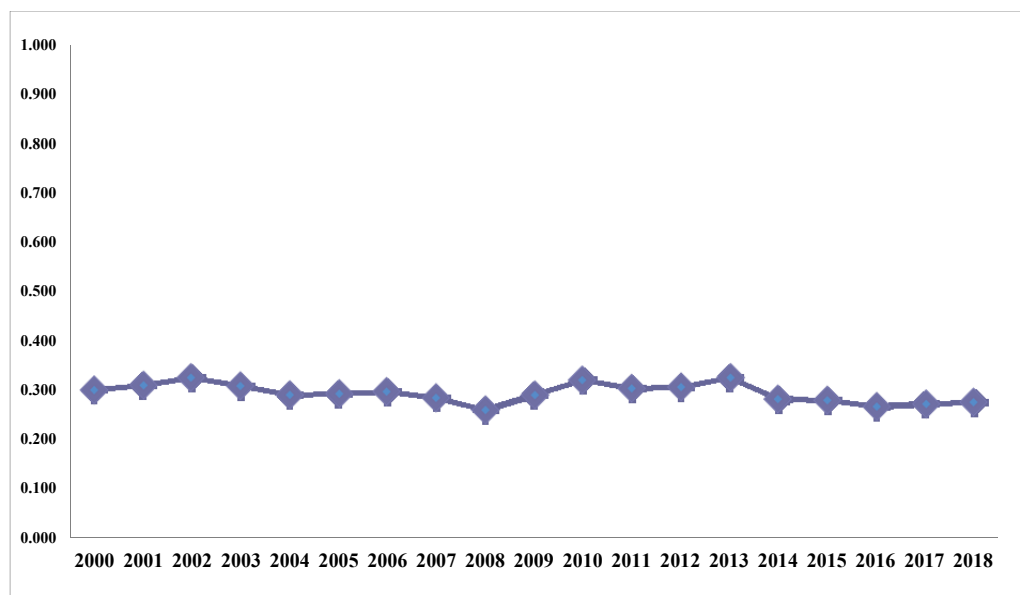
5.1 Fundamentals of federal citizenship and liberalism of sovereign democracy

By considering the Political Factors Index (PFI) of Russia's Democracy Level estimated within 2016-2018 in view of new political realities, it is concluded that processes aimed at consolidating democracy and reforming political institutions remain of a concern. A fundamental consolidation of democratic institutions and procedures in Russia is largely conditioned by the progress of the above-mentioned processes; hence making democratic achievements irreversible. Thereby, democratization in Russia is to be viewed as accompanied by numerous and increasing risks which require new and rapid responses to solve a number of hardly tackled contradictions and problems.

Issues related to the complementary interrelation between participatory democracy and federal and local levels, procedural and institutional significance of democratic reforms, as well as concerns about democratism have been the subject of widespread debate among conservatism, liberalism and modernity supporters as well as within parties, CSOs, social movements, ethnic and religious groups.

Figure 1

RF Political Factors Index (2000-2018)*



The 2018 curve of Russia's IDL improved compared to 2016-2017, but it was continually on the low level (see Figure 1, Table 1). Moreover, it is clearly depicted in Figure 1 that 2018 curve still had a low level in comparison to 2000 within the mentioned 2000-2018 period.

2018 PFI of the IDL was mainly conditioned by the policy adopted since 2014 by EU, USA and other Western countries of imposing sanctions on Russia as well as by a number of processes, triggered by global confrontation. The main aim of sanctions is to particularly restrict Russia's geopolitical involvement and influence, by enforcing the country's military and political elite to reconsider its foreign policy (Клямкин 2017, 163-230; Охотский 2017, 160-175; Посадский 2016, 89-141; Севастьянов, 2017, 31-61; Федотова 2017, 63-77). The crisis in Ukraine was primarily the main reason for imposing anti-Russian sanctions, but since 2016, the scope of sanctions has gradually expanded. It is evident, that countries and organizations, initiating those

* Source: calculations by the author.

sanctions, have an intention to make use of the most vulnerable factors of the country's socio-economic infrastructure and society. They are as follows: 1) country's need for cheap loans and investments, as well as its dependence on US controlled financial-economic processes and global financial system, 2) dependence on the supply of high-tech equipment in a number of economic sectors, 3) country's economy being sensitive to changes in commodity markets, 4) social sector vulnerability, the risk of turning economic problems into social protests in conditions of persistent inequality and polarization; 5) integration and involvement of the elite, intellectual and business associations as well as influential social groups in worldwide institutions and processes.

The most important worldwide events, including a incessant conflict in Donbas, Brexit, 2016 presidential elections in the US, military conflict in Syria, Turkey's failed coup attempt occurred within the mentioned period, essentially impacted the democratic transformations in the RF.

Democratic transformations in the political system of the RF were significant during the 2018 presidential elections with Putin's victory by 76,69% of the votes (see Table 2).

The above-mentioned elections were characterized by a number of peculiarities. At first, a standard succession of presidential and parliamentary elections cycle was deviated in 2018. Hence, RF State Duma elections, conducted in 1995, 1999, 2003, 2007 and 2011, were succeeded by presidential elections, held in 1996, 2000, 2004, 2008 and 2012. Meanwhile, the State Duma 2016 elections followed by 2018 presidential elections impacted the results of the latter. Second, electoral processes and federal campaigning were carried out under complicated geopolitical conditions, as the president V.Putin periodically had to respond to key problems¹¹⁷ of a global importance. Third, the Communist Party of the RF facing many organizational difficulties, made a decision to nominate a new political figure P.Grudin from the party's federal electoral list. Fourth, one of political parties, namely, A Just Russia political party, refused to nominate a candidate by expressing its support for

¹¹⁷ For more details, see Putin's site <http://putin2018.ru> (19.06.2019).

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Putin. Fifth, a split occurred in liberal forces that resulted in nominating two candidates; precisely, an experienced politician G.Yavlinsky and a newcomer to politics K. Sobchak.

Table 2

2018 presidential election results in the RF¹¹⁸

<i>Candidate</i>	<i>Nominating entities</i>	<i>Number of votes received</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
PUTIN Vladimir	Independent candidate	56,430,712	76,69
GRUDININ Pavel	Communist Party of the Russian Federation (CPRF)	8,659,206	11,77
ZHIRINOVSKY Vladimir	LDPR	4,154,985	5,65
SOBCHAK Ksenia	Civic Initiative	1,238,031	1,68
YAVLINSKY Grigory	Party Yabloko	769,644	1,05
TITOV Boris	Party of Growth	556,801	0,76
SURAIKIN Maksim	Party Communists of Russia	499,342	0,68
BABURIN Sergei	Russian All-People's Union	479,013	0,65

All those developments prompted the incumbent president Putin to self nominate, and with the help of the presidential elections form an agenda of a consolidated domestic policy, hence initiating a new cycle of foreign policy. Regardless of the fact, there were also “alternative” candidates, Putin was afforded with an opportunity to unite voters and become the “main” candidate of the elections. This process is accompanied, first and foremost, by a considerable influx of “new” constituents from various parties and forces

¹¹⁸ Source of the data is the official site of the Central Election Commission of the RF <http://www.cikrf.ru/analog/prezidentskiye-vybory-2018/itogi-golosovaniya>, OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission Final Report Final report on the RF <https://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/-383577?download=true> (19.06.2019).

directed by ideologies. It is noteworthy that the presidential elections allowed the candidates to publicly speak about the grave social issues of the country. Representing views and interests of certain strata of the society, each of them attempted to conduct a meaningful debate and political discourse. Electoral culture, rules of public speech and participation are still in the process of formation in the Russian environment of political communication. One of its examples, in particular, was that incumbent President Putin refused to participate in public debates and present any program. This was explained by the fact that in 2012, president candidate Putin put forward his pre-election theses in a series of articles written in the best traditions of Russian political thought, which introduced the author's worldview and value system. So, he came up with his own pre-election program, apart from the United Russia party. After assuming the post of the head of state, those publications became known as president Putin's May Orders.¹¹⁹ The document consists of more than 200 orders that are expected to be implemented in 2012-2020.¹²⁰ It is worth mentioning that most of the May Orders had already been fulfilled by the end of 2013. In particular, those that are related to development and clarification of program provisions, concepts, and strategies. However, the May Orders contain many issues which the federal government either remains silent on in the report or adjusts and redefines the method in a way for the orders to be formally executed. On the other hand, beginning the fourth term of his presidency, Putin was more pragmatic and was adequately summarizing the interim results of his previous years in office, assuredly highlighting election results and key directions for further activities. In this respect, he has had an obvious advantage because he is the only presidential candidate who does not only say what he will do but how he will do it.

¹¹⁹ For more details, see Decree of the President of the RF from 7 May 2012 №Nº 594, 596, 597, 598, 599, 600, 601, 602, 603, 604, 605, 606 // http://www.rsr-online.ru/doc/2012_06_25/-6.pdf (28.06.2019).

¹²⁰ See *ibid.*

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The creation of favourable opportunities for improving quality of life and maintaining sustainable development is still a key issue for Russian President Putin and the ruling United Russia party. Since, in view of short, medium, and long-term aspects, socio-economic instability and regression continue to pose a serious threat to the country's sovereignty; hence limiting Russia's foreign policy abilities.

Table 3

Freedom House report on democratic transformations in Russia (2018)¹²¹

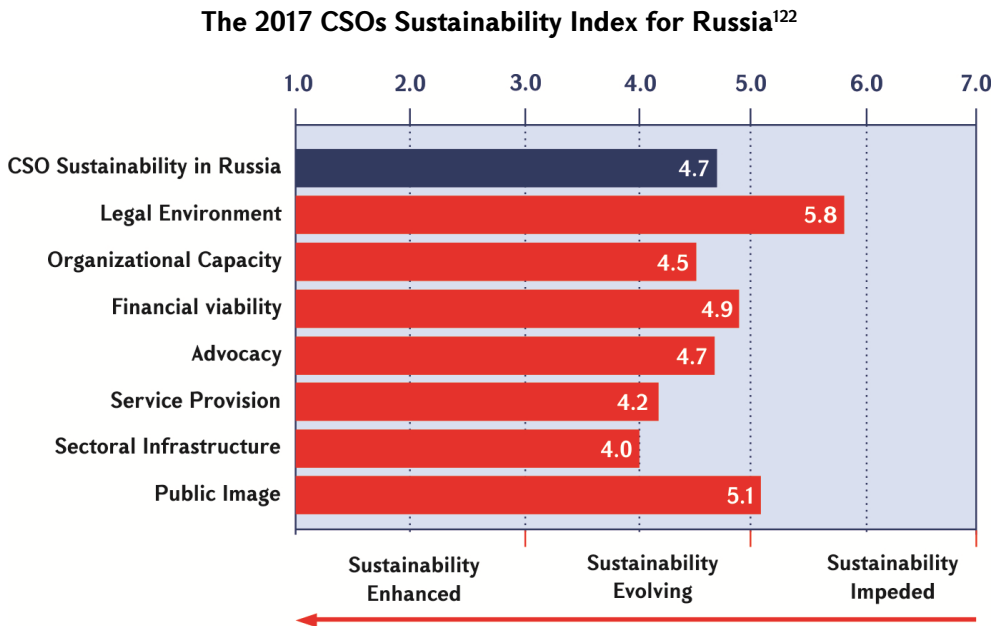
<i>Factors for Democracy Progress</i>	<i>2018</i>
National Democratic Governance	6,75
Electoral Process	6,75
Civil Society	6,25
Independent Media	6,50
Local Democratic Governance	6,50
Judicial Framework and Independence	6,75
Corruption	6,75
<i>Democracy score</i>	<i>6,61</i>

Table 3 displays a poor level of democratic transformations in Russia that is typical of consolidated authoritarian regime (*Freedom House 2018a, Freedom House 2018b*). This indicates that there exist social and political difficulties that impede the formation of civilian independence of the Russian statehood, progressive and balanced development of CSOs and individuals. For example, the federal government in order to alleviate or mitigate political and socio-economic tensions accumulated in various Russian entities, exerts bureaucratic tensions on territorial and management team, sometimes restricting their powers, independence, and self-governance functions (*Civil Initiatives Committee (CIC) 2018; Centre of Economic and Political Reforms (CEPR)*

¹²¹ Source of the data is the official site of the Freedom House <https://freedomhouse.org/report/nations-transit/2018/russia> (20.06.2019).

2018). It is evident, that it does not lead to elimination of existing problems, but simply covers their revelations to the public; by that undermining modernization processes of the federal subjects of Russia's management system and reducing their ability to effeciently respond to new challenges.

Figure 2



As it is shown in Figure 2, improvement of constitutional and judicial atmosphere is very essential to enforce procedures of partnership between CSOs in Russia. Moreover, in 2017 stability of the latter is in a developing phase and the public perception and legal environment are at stake (USAID 2018). In this regard, there are some restrictions that thwart activities of 220,000 formally registered non-commercial organizations, 4,000 political parties and civil movements and, consequently only 15-20% of them is active (USAID 2018).

¹²² Source of the data is USAID site of CSOs Sustainability Index <https://www.usaid.gov/europe-eurasia-civil-society> (16.05.2019).

Factors of counteracting, checking and balancing challenges and risks of domestic and global security are the key preconditions for democratization of the Russian political system. They require the military and political elite of the country to adopt and implement political decisions that will improve the level of democracy, mutual human and national security. Given dimensions of secure democracy and democratic security as well as international experience for democracy, it is possible to improve democratization of the regime, as well as the fight against internal and external threats. Democracy of security, as such, is to develop capacity and opportunity of democratic institutions in various stages of political situations and positions, as well as to implement constructive countermeasures against national security threats, challenges, dangers and risks, by forming a complex of factors and procedures that will ensure regular and sustainable development of the country (*Баранов 2014, 73-79; Клямкин 2017, 163-230; Старостин 2015, 76-80; Старостин, Верецагина, Самыгин 2016, 150-155*). It gives an opportunity to consolidate efforts of public authorities, local self-government bodies and CSOs to effectively regulate cooperation procedures and supervise conflict situations between various federal subjects of the country, as well as socio-political and ethnocultural groups. All this leads to a fact that public administration and local self-government bodies are required not only to improve the security environment but also to strengthen democratic institutions and enhance integration processes (*Барсенков 2017, 54-67; Камерон 2017, 162-185*). In this respect, on the one hand, Russian state and CSOs strategies coincide with a concept to provide citizen-centric security, and on the other hand, state and CSOs periodically conflict over the choice of civil procedures. This is conditioned by the fact that the state seeks to pursue it in an attempt to strengthen statehood, whereas civil society aims at protecting civil rights and interests. Thereby, complementarity of vertical, horizontal and partnership relations and ties is very essential in such situations. At the same time, conceptual approaches of modern democracy are almost identical in terms of ensuring citizen-centric security.

Table 4

CSTO member countries 2017 Global Militarization Index

<i>Country</i>	<i>Military Expenditure Index Score</i>	<i>Military Personal Index Score</i>	<i>Heavy Weapons Index Score</i>	<i>GMI Score</i>	<i>Rank</i>
Armenia	6,41	6,11	2,9	860,05	3
Russia	6,53	5,33	3,22	838,53	6
Belarus	5,98	5,83	2,98	819,07	10
Kyrgyzstan	6,35	3,6	2,58	671,45	62
Kazakhstan	5,9	3,6	2,68	648,3	85
Tajikistan	5,97	3,3	1,65	565,34	126

Judging by the data displayed in Table 4, it is evident, that 2017 Global Militarization Index in Russia is high among Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) member states. In particular, compiled by Bonn international center for conversion, Russia is still one of the most militarized countries worldwide in post-Soviet region and is positioned 6th among 155 countries (*Mutschler and Bales 2018*). It is worth mentioning, that Military expenditure of Russia constituted 64 US billion, as a 3,9% share of GDP. ¹²³

Domestic and international procedures for establishing rule of law, protecting human rights and freedoms are of key importance to ensure civilizational progress of democracy in the country. To establish civil culture and federation in the course of current conditions, it is important for citizens to practically share common values, ideological guidelines, and conduct norms that must, in turn, be reflected in the activities of political institutions. In this regard, federal democracy is anchored in CSOs in the federal subjects of the RF in view of their activities aimed at protecting human rights and humanitarian initiatives. In particular, according to 2018-2019 Freedom in the World reports, a combined rating of Political Rights and Civil Liberties is estimated by 6,5 and defined as not free (*Freedom House 2018a; 2019*).

¹²³ Source of the data: «Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) Military Expenditure Database» // <https://www.sipri.org/databases/milex> (10.06.2019).

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Pessimistic tendencies of illiberalism and deterioration of civic activities within the period in review were also reflected in political rallies and other protest activities. Moreover, the number of protests referred to political as well as socio-economic and labour spheres has increased. In this respect, 2016-2018 is considered a period of escalation of rallies, mass protests and acts of disobedience. Specifically, a significant increase in protests along the RF subjects was observed within 2017-2018, with a record high 2,526 protests (CEPR 2018). Besides, 16,4% was of political nature and was related to federal and local agendas (CEPR 2018). In reference to the abovesaid, the Communist Party of the RF was relatively active in the country's political system. The former, being a parliamentary party with branches in the RF territory, had attempted to influence processes related to social policy reforms; precisely, the pension reform. The rest of parliamentary and extra-parliamentary parties had been relatively more active in certain federal subjects of the country, depending on the activity of a particular territorial constituency or socio-political situation.

Figure 3

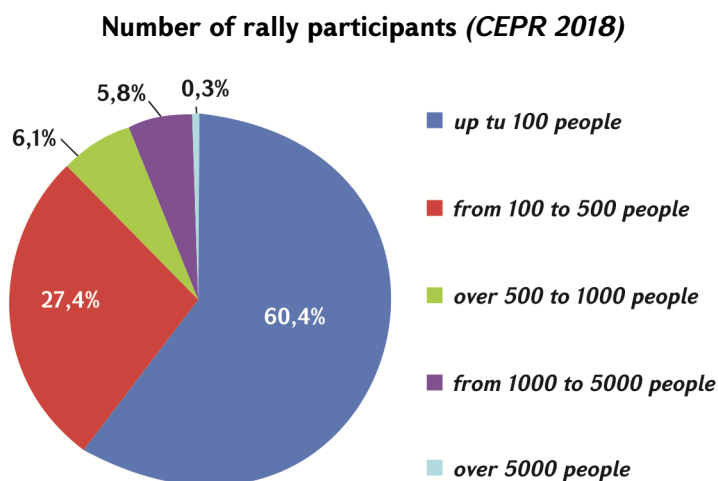


Figure 3 displays that up to 100 people participated in 60,4% of a registered protests, from 100 to 500 people in 27,4%, over 500 to 1000 people in 6,1%, from 1000 to 5000 people in 5,8% and over 5000 people in

0,3% (CEPR 2018). At the same time, an opposition politician A. Navalny's supporters organized a significant portion of political rallies, and various parties and CSOs either joined or supported them. It is noteworthy that mass protests and other forms of citizen participation, typical of direct democracy, are mainly hampered by a weak multiparty system, fragmented opposition parties, passive CSOs, de-politicized social networks and etc. (Григорьев, Павлюшина 2017, 58-71; Дука, Швая 2017, 203-211; Лихачев 2018, 5-16). In view of previously stated reasons, socio-economic protests are rarely politicized, as a rule, and participants appeal to authorities to meet specific demands seeking to recover or defend their violated rights. The main concern is that even political parties do not transform them into political demands, and they remain only as acts of protest, being satisfied with slogans of resignations of local authorities or some officials.

Increase in effectiveness of anti-corruption policy in RF entities has had a positive impact on the PFI growth during the period under review. Despite all government efforts and CSOs commitment to democratic values, corruption has become a socio-political and economic threat to the country's civil security and development. It is quite systematic and sustains its high level. For example, according to Corruption Perceptions Index, in 2016 Russia took 131th position among 176 states, 135th place in 2017 and 138th¹²⁴ in 2018 among 180 states. Consequently, international organizations detect the willingness of the political elite to effectively fight against corruption as a key indicator for establishment of a civilized state. In this respect, more democratic attitude towards the legal framework for the fight against corruption is of great importance and is envisaged not only by the Russian Constitution, but also by federal and other constitutional laws, international law and treaties, legal acts issued by the RF President and Government, state and federal entities of the Russian Federation.

¹²⁴ Source of the data is the official site of Transparency International <https://www.transparency.org/research/cpi/overview> (21.06.2019).

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National anti-corruption plan 2016-2017 and 2018-2020¹²⁵ and others are particularly important. The mentioned plans include not only measures aimed at pursuing corruption related crimes, but also preventive activities, intentions to raise citizen's legal awareness, professionalism and civiliarchic education. Thus, reduction or elimination of corruption offenses is conditioned by promotion and spreading of anti-corruption standards as well as formation of anti-corruption as a behaviour.

Table 5

Global Gender Gap Index (GGGI) of the RF in 2016-2018¹²⁶

Subindex of GGGI	2016		2017		2018	
	<i>rank</i>	<i>score</i>	<i>rank</i>	<i>score</i>	<i>rank</i>	<i>score</i>
Economic Participation and Opportunity	41	0,722	41	0,724	31	0,741
Educational Attainment	45	0,997	50	0,997	28	1,000
Health and Survival	40	0,979	1	0,980	1	0,980
Political Empowerment	129	0,066	121	0,085	123	0,085
GGGI	75	0,691	71	0,696	75	0,701

In reference to Global Gender Gap Index (GGGI), which is one of the PFI of the IDL included in the model, Russia ranked 75th in 2016 and 71st in 2017 among 144 countries, whereas in 2018 it occupied 75th position among 149 states (*World Economic Forum 2016; 2017; 2018*). It's noteworthy that Russia had a record low rating registered for Political empowerment subindex in 2016-2018 (see Table 5), whereas a record high indicator was registered for 2017-2018 Health and survival subindex, therefore placing the country on the top of the list (*World Economic Forum 2017; 2018*).

¹²⁵ See the RF president decree from 01.04.2016 №147 "On National anti-corruption plan 2016-2017" // <http://pravo.gov.ru/proxy/ips/?docbody&nd=102393795>; the RF president decree from 29.06.2018 № 378 "On National anti-corruption plan 2018-2020" // <http://kremlin.ru/acts/bank/43253> (21.06.2019).

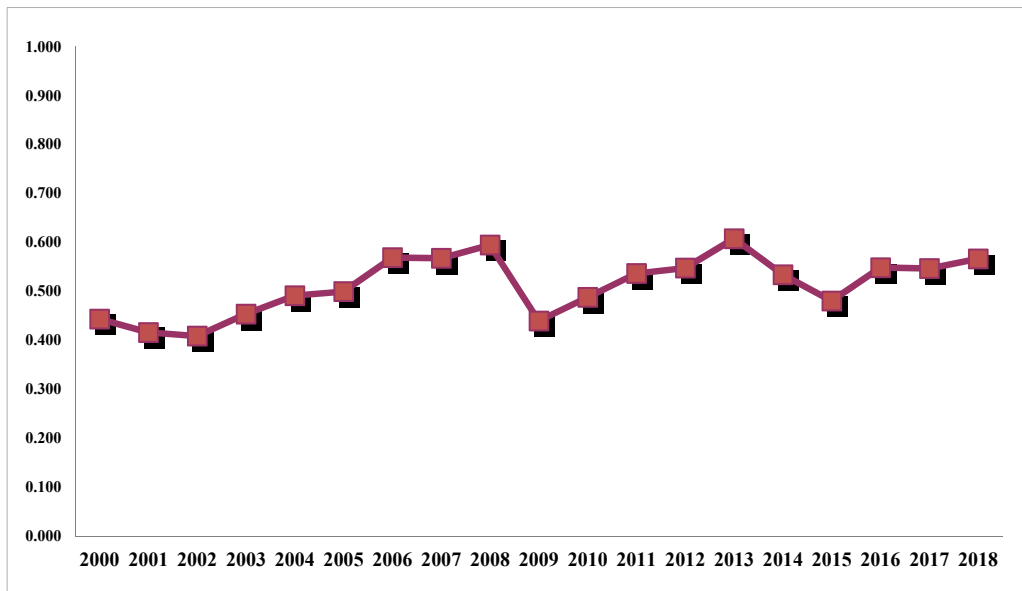
¹²⁶ Source of the data: official site of the World Economic Forum
<https://www.weforum.org/reports/the-global-gender-gap-report-2016>,
<https://www.weforum.org/reports/the-global-gender-gap-report-2017>,
<https://www.weforum.org/reports/the-global-gender-gap-report-2018> (21.06.2019):

5.2 The causal link between levels of economic development, modernization and democratization

2016-2018 comparative studies of democratic preconditions of market economy and economic development in Russia prove the notion that democratization of the regime has provided greater opportunities for the country to consolidate and modernize the federal government and local government bodies by ensuring higher levels of social security, welfare, increase in incomes and education.

Figure 4

Economic Factors Index in the RF (2000-2018)*



Analysis of social factors index (SFI) of Russia's IDL, conducted in the period of 2016-2018 shows that establishment of democratic institutions depends on the level of economic development (see Figure 4, Table 1). Democratic transformations of Russia's political system and regime have to

* Source: calculations by the author.

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comply with domestic economic needs and high paces of sustained economic growth. In this case, the country will be able to raise its competitiveness and respond to international challenges by efficiently integrating with post-industrial system of the global economy. Russia is, therefore, one of transitional countries with a "manageable" democracy, where public authorities along with private sector still keep control of natural resources. The sustainability of a "managed" democracy depends on state controlling and administrating the process of national income distribution. It is much more difficult to achieve such control in countries with diversified economies because the sources of wealth are concentrated in the hands of not one, but numerous entrepreneurs, based on entrepreneurial initiative rather than raw material exports. There seems to be a marked decline in the role of the private sector in the near future.

A slowdown or retreat of democratic transformations, systematic corruption, brain drain, failure to enhance productivity of information technology and innovative ideas, as well as instability of e-society pose serious obstacles to the development and progress of the country's knowledge-based economy. Besides, the modernization of the country leads to stability of democratic governance, an increase in national wealth and other elements of socio-economic structure. Although democracy can occur at any level of economic development and due to various reasons, on the contrary, democratic transformations are most effective in countries of the post-Soviet region with a high level of "open" economy and economic integration, where average GDP per capita is high. Consequently, it is important to establish economic preconditions for a constructive democracy.

The main purpose of programs executed by the RF government in the field of economy is to improve and develop the country's economic situation, as a result of which the economy will upgrade to a new level. Factors, including an increase in incomes and living standards, expansion of domestic demand, growth in consumers and investments are of great significance in terms of strengthening the economic foundations of democratic transformation and they will lead to industry improvement. All this will require institutional changes and

reforms of economic infrastructure, thereby triggering expansion of services and increase in export volumes. The above-mentioned should contribute to the strengthening of the country's internal and external sovereignty, interethnic harmony and formation of a “good” economy, as well as improvement, modernization and further accomplishment of public policy in social, demographic, scientific and educational, health, armed forces, military industrial, military technical and other spheres. Besides, strategic prediction containing the best scenarios for overcoming socio-economic development and national security threats should serve as the basis for the development of an entire system of interrelated strategic planning documents (*Френкель, Тихомиров, Сергиенко, Сурков 2018, 24-49*).

A study of the RF SFI depicts that key indicators had generally improved in 2016-2018 and kept an upward trends afterwards (*Federal Service for State Statistics 2016; 2017; 2018*). Moreover, 2018 SFI improved in comparison to the previous year, but it remained low compared to 2013 indicators, which were the highest within the observed period (see Figure 4, Table 1). The fact that after 7 years there was a budget profit for the first time in 2018, comprising 2,7% share of GDP and exceeding all expectations.¹²⁷ This was of a key importance for social system improvement. It is noteworthy that budget deficit comprised 1,4%, 3,5% and 2,6% of GDP in 2017, 2016 and 2015 respectively.¹²⁸

2018 SFI growth was mainly conditioned by improved indicators of GNI per capita, External trade rate, Index of Economic freedom and Budget profit. On the contrary, the main causes of the negative impacts are reductions in Inflation, Foreign direct investments and Domestic credit.¹²⁹

Trends of avoiding Foreign direct investments are one of the first push factors to revise economic policy in the mentioned period. Economic transformations not only adversely affected the readiness of large enterprises

¹²⁷ Source of the data: Federal Service for State Statistics http://www.gks.ru/wps/wcm/connect/-rosstat_main/rosstat/ru/statistics/publications/catalog/doc_1138717651859 (28.06.2019).

¹²⁸ See *ibid*.

¹²⁹ Source of the data is the official site of the World Bank <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/-BX.KLT.DINV.WD.GD.ZS?locations=RU> (28.06.2019).

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and depicted restrictions on economic activity, but also caused an intensive withdrawal of funds from production turnover and their distribution in bank accounts. Likewise, situation negatively affected investment environment, therefore requiring the federal government to take steps to create an atmosphere of confidence among businesses by avoiding drastic changes in economic policy following the 2018 Russian presidential election.

Development and implementation of large-scale geopolitical projects (Public Joint Stock Company (PJSC) Gazprom 2019) is very important to ensure Russia's economic integration and progress. The mentioned projects demand relevant infrastructures and also contain a number of uncertainties. Risks related to reimbursement of resources, investments, trades and etc. are largely driven by anti-Russian sanctions imposed by the US.¹³⁰ It is of no coincidence that Nord Stream, Nord Stream-2, Blue Stream, TurkStream, The Power of Siberia and other gas pipelines have emerged in such difficult and critical situations (PJSC Gazprom 2019). Another examples are the events targeted at raising international reputation and credit of the Russian Federation, including organizing issues for 2018 FIFA World Cup Russia and the 29th World Winter Universiade in 2019 and others. In this regard, the Russian economy bears the additional burden of costs and risks, which later may increase if the country decides to be fully engaged in a geopolitical competition with the United States. Above all, the US-Russian relations will become strained if tensions over the actions of Russian military and air forces in Syria as well as over Iran and North Korea's nuclear and missile programs happen to increase or else, the US-China economic interests collide. Russia's economic development, among geopolitical and structural factors, has been affected by external shocks, which have become more significant since 2014 (*Медведев 2016, 5-30; Медведев 2018, 5-28*). They mainly include financial and technological sanctions, which have a various negative impact on the dynamics of prices of oil, gas and other products

¹³⁰ See Public Law No: 115-44 (08/02/2017), H.R.3364 - Countering America's Adversaries through Sanctions Act // <https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/house-bill/3364/text> (24.06.2019).

exported from Russia. In view of these conditions, proportionality between Russia's geopolitical ambitions and potential of economic resource is an important precondition, excluding the necessity for abrupt maneuvering of the country's resource and formation of impasse situations when external economic shocks periodically occur (Агаһбеґян 2017, 8-29; Агаһбеґян 2018, 7-26). An increase in Russia's share in the global GDP is given priority and as such, it is a long-term process that requires considerable efforts from the country's political elite.¹³¹

5.3 Social dimensions of democratic transformations

During the Russian democratic transformation, creation and sustainability of favourable conditions to improve the quality of life and sustain population's vitality is the core element of social policy. The preconditions for democratization of the country's political regime, if aimed at improving social protection and security, are of social significance, therefore becoming an instrument to implement human-centered policy.

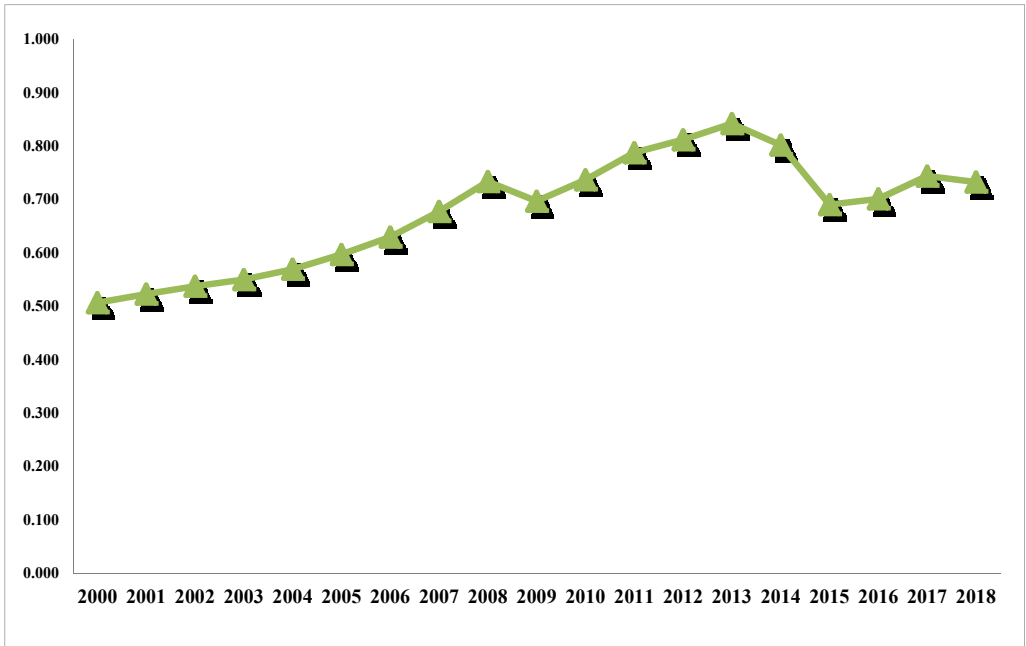
In terms of social dimensions for establishing democracy in Russia, the role of the "middle" class, owners of small and the medium-sized enterprises is significant as they are socially interested in liberalism and democracy. This is because they consider protection of their freedoms and rights not only as a means of political participation, but also as efficient and practical means of protecting their interests from the interference of public bureaucracy. Formation of this new civilized owners' class can really guarantee progress for democratic transformations in Russia. Judging by the trends in income growth per capita, this newly formed class is actively emerging in Russia. Nonetheless,

¹³¹See RF president order from 07.05.2018 № 204 "On National Goals and Strategic Objectives of the Russian Federation through to 2024" // <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/57425> (24.06.2019).

it is difficult to make any predictions for their independence in the future, for their unified political will or what is called taxpayer democracy as well.

Figure 5

Social Factors Index of the RF (2000-2018)*



As seen from the study of SFI of Russia's IDL, its indicators improved in 2016-2018 but were on the same low level within the observed period (see Figure 5, Table 1). Figure 5 depicts that democratic transformations positively impacted social dimensions and were mainly conditioned by solution of key issues related to social and labour spheres and improvement in real wage and employment indicators. In this respect, reduction of social and labour related risks, their efficient management as well as improvement of social protection policy, which is exercised and initiated by federal and territorial authorities, is quite important. At the same time, social policy in Russia is implemented through population's indexed earnings, provision of minimum social guarantees

* Source: calculations by the author.

(by income), settlement of state standards and regulations by giving benefits to citizens of certain categories. In view of humanitarian assistance, it is also essential to provide compulsory social security as well as social assistance services to vulnerable citizens who are deprived of basic living conditions.

The highest SFI indicator was recorded in 2013 within the 2000-2018 years. Despite the fact, that the 2017 SFI indicator improved compared to 2015-2016, but it remained low compared to 2011-2014 (see Figure 5, Table 1).

Russia's social policy is based on a number of legal act; particularly, the RF Constitution, Family, Labour and Civil Codes as well as Federal Laws and etc., that regulate the activities of various entities in this field, enabling them to realize their rights and obligations, freedoms and responsibilities. In reference to the powers¹³² of the government in the above-mentioned field, the following key points and responsibilities should be taken into consideration. The Government of the Russian Federation shall:

- 1) ensure the implementation in the Russian Federation of a single state policy. It shall also establish state social support and social security, ensured to the vulnerable persons, envisaged by their constitutional rights. 2) shall promote forms of charity; 3) shall make essential decisions in reference to implementation of citizens' labour rights; 4) shall be engaged in development of new programs or improvement of old ones, reducing and completely eliminating Unemployment; 5) shall ensure implementation of programmes, guarantee protection of citizens' rights and freedoms as well as social protection if needed.

According to the Institute of Regional Expertise (IRE),¹³³ there were four levels of protest activities and rallies in the Russian Federation subjects in January 2019 (see Figure 6). They were high, notable, moderate and low levels of civil disobedience and protest activities. It should be noted, that the overwhelming majority of rallies and protest activities, which is about 74% of the

¹³² See Constitution of the RF // <http://constitution.kremlin.ru> (24.06.2019).

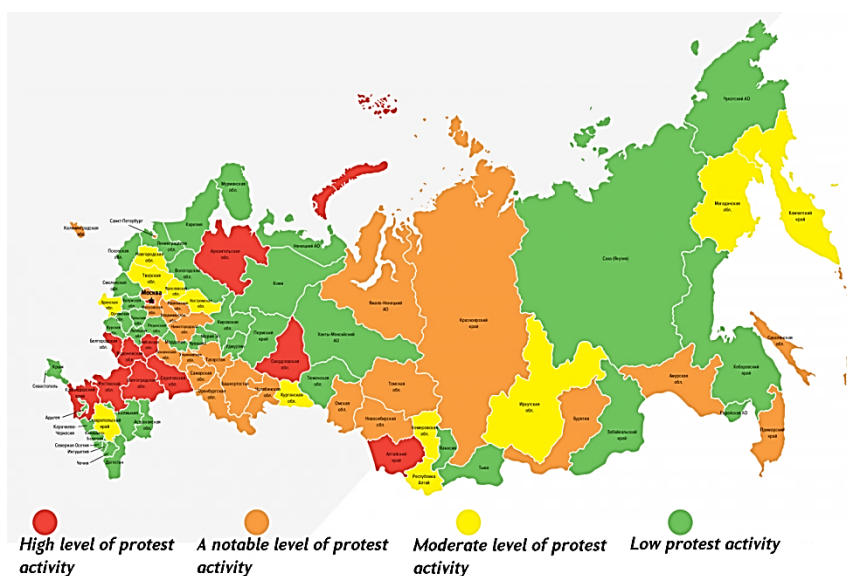
¹³³ For more details, see the official site of Institute of Regional Expertise <http://irex.group/-analytics> (24.06.2019).

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total, were due to various socio-economic difficulties, attempting to instigate public discontent over social policies developed and implemented at federal and local levels (*CEPR 2018*). For obvious reasons, about 65% of the protests were held in the capital, major cities and administrative districts of the Russian Federation subjects (*CEPR 2018*). It is evident that every protest activity is caused by discontent with federal and local authorities. In particular, these are the cases when trade unions are involved and the government is unable to solve the relevant social problem. If the existing problem cannot be solved by means of social dialogue and partnership, protest activities become non-stop, which trade unions, as a rule, politicize, with the presence of political slogans.

Figure 6

Rating of the protest activity of the regions of the RF (January 2019)
(ANO IRE 2019)



Socio-economic, socio-labour protests and strikes had one important peculiarity- they were held only locally. However, trade unions attempt to form public centers for coordinating social protests and strikes. They were the social issues related to real wage increment, provision of affordable and comfortable

households to citizens, better quality of housing and utilities, implementation of long-term social security policies, and so on. In this respect, the social factors of the RF IDL are of strategic importance because social security is one of essential parts included in protection of individual's social rights and freedoms. It has an improving effect on the status of individuals, families, communities, social groups and various levels of the society with efficient participation of social NGOs, partnerships and trade unions as well as through implementation of democratic processes. It is obvious that policy that is aimed at social development is a factor of democratic progress in Russia. If democratic transformations are not accompanied by social prosperity and economic growth of a society, driving forces and incentives for social and economic participation of members of society are weakening (Шестопал, Смулькина 2018, 26-44; Шестопал 2019, 9-20).

Figure 7

Labour force in Russia in 2016-2018¹³⁴

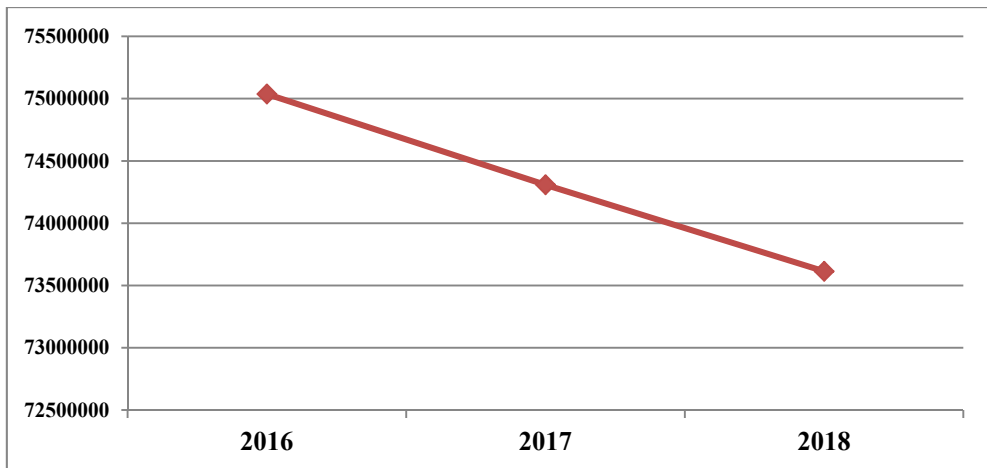


Figure 7 shows that within 2016-2018 Labour force indicator drastically fell down compared to the previous year. Therefore, 75,360,834 people were

¹³⁴ Source of the data is the official site of the World Bank <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/-SL.TLF.TOTL.IN?locations=RU> (28.06.2019).

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registered in 2016, whereas it decreased to 73,613,697¹³⁵ people in 2018. It indicates that the number of working age population reduced, hence by impacting the level of engagement in working. Meanwhile, Unemployment constituted 4,7% in 2018, which is the lowest indicator for the period of 1991-2018.¹³⁶

During the 2016-2018 period, elements of different models, posing some problems for the country's efficient management, were included in the process aimed at developing and implementing RF social policy. In particular, RF social policy simultaneously includes features of paternalistic, liberal, socio-democratic, conservative and other models. Thereby, on the one hand, RF social policy is an embodiment of a paternalistic model, and is defined by the state's responsibility for citizens' socio-economic situation and their social security. Consequently, it causes a high level of citizens' dependence on the state, occurring in such situations, when the state cannot always ensure well-being of the whole population. On the other hand, social policy defines procedures characteristic of a liberal model with each member of a society sharing a responsibility. In this case, state's independence and socio-economic self-development of citizens are of great importance. In another case, the social-democratic model of a social policy is displayed, in comply to which social security is a citizen's right, guaranteed by the state and its institutions. As far as financial aspect is concerned, a high level of labour productivity is maintained through social dialogue and partnership procedures. Moreover, social policy has recently been characterized as containing some elements of a conservative model that focuses on employment rather than on redistribution of social benefits and resources. In this case, employees with high and average salaries may find the result desirable, while others have to rely on charitable organizations and public support.

¹³⁵ See *ibid.*

¹³⁶ Source of the data is the official site of the World Bank <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/-SL.UEM.TOTL.ZS?locations=RU> (28.06.2019).

A draft law submitted to the RF State Duma on reforms in the pension system¹³⁷ can be viewed as an example of collision of all above-mentioned approaches. A draft envisaged to raise the retirement age in the country and revise social responsibility procedures. This initiative, proposed by the federal government, aroused a strong wave of criticism, civil disobedience, mass protests and strikes. Moreover, parliamentary opposition parties launched a political process seeking to file a lawsuit to the Constitutional Court against the pension reform draft (*Vedomosti* 2018; *Federal News Agency* 2018). In the meantime, trade unions, parliamentary and extra-parliamentary opposition parties considered pension reforms as contradictory to the state's social nature. The Federation of Independent Trade Unions of Russia (FNPR) demanded that the government should conform those reforms with social partnership standards by holding meetings, marches, rallies and other collective actions (*Central trade-union newspaper "Solidarnost"* 2018a; 2018b; 2018c; 2018d; 2018e). Besides, FNPR, national associations of employers, and the Government of the Russian Federation signed the General Agreement 2018-2020 on 29 January 2018 (*FNPR* 2018). In essence, the regulation principles of socio-labour and socio-economic relations were defined at the federal level by the mentioned agreement (*FNPR* 2018). This, in turn, would ensure social prosperity through development of labour potential, by reinforcing a trilateral, i.e. society-business-state cooperation. Thus, the new General Agreement becomes a means of balancing interests of the social policy subjects and sets the foundation of their activity, demanding that everyone should be guided by "a working man should not be poor" slogan.

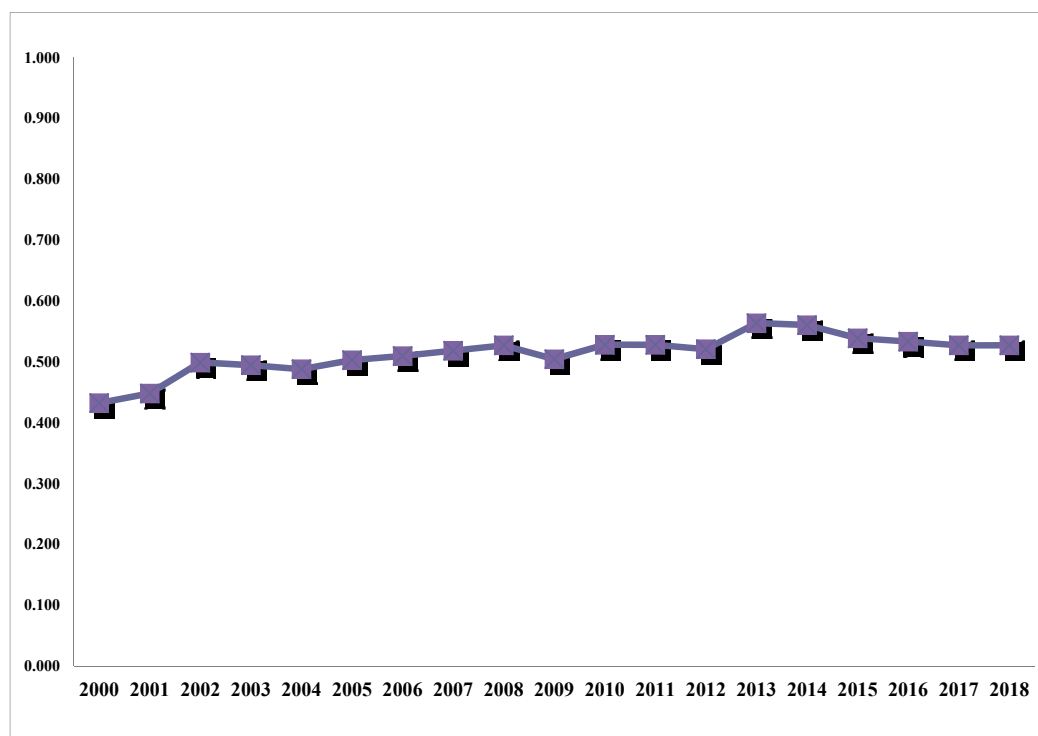
¹³⁷ See order from 16 June 2018 №1192-p. "On submitting to the State Duma a draft law on changes in the pension system" // <http://government.ru/activities/selection/301/32902> (19.06.2019).

5.4 Trends in the internationalization of the education system

Integration and development of the Russian educational system, educational technologies and a unified area of science and education creates a certain social and cultural atmosphere for aims, content and forms of education.

Figure 8

RF Educational Factors Index (2000-2018)*



As it can be seen in Table 8, the curve of the EdFI of the RF IDL fell down compared to the previous year within the mentioned period. It is conditioned by

* Source: calculations by the author.

reduction in Government expenditure on education during 2016-2018.¹³⁸ Nonetheless, according to the UN Development Programme the 2018 Human Development Index (HDI) report, RF took 49th place out of the 189 countries and was in the very high human development group (*Human Development Report 2018*).

Significant improvement in efficiency of the state education policy, development in quality of education, enhancement of outcomes and increase in competitiveness, modernization of the content of current education, compliance of educational system with democracy and internationally accepted standards had an essential influence on PFI indicators for 2016-2018. Education national programme¹³⁹ was very essential to solve major problems in the sphere. It pursued the following aims: 1) to ensure its global competitiveness and ranking among 10 leading countries in terms of quality of education, 2) to bring up a developed and socially responsible individual based on spiritual and moral values as well as historical and national-cultural traditions of the Russian peoples.¹⁴⁰

In the era of knowledge-based society, Russia also faces socio-economic, political, cultural and other challenges of the educational system.

Table 6 displays that a considerable part of 2014-2017 Government expenditure on education was allocated for general (46-48%) and pre-school (21-22%) education spheres. Besides, spendings were comparatively stable in the mentioned spheres, except for higher and post-graduate education (from 17,1% to 15,6%). This is partly conditioned by systematic reforms implemented in higher education institutions and reduction in tuition free places (*Interfax.ru 2019*).

¹³⁸ Source of the data is the official site of the World Bank <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/-SE.XPD.TOTL.GD.ZS?locations=RU> (28.06.2019).

¹³⁹ For this, see the official site of the Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation <https://edu.gov.ru/national-project> (19.06.2019).

¹⁴⁰ See *ibid*.

Table 6

The structure of expenditures of the consolidated budget of the RF for 2014-2017 (%) ¹⁴¹

Year	2014	2015	2016	2017
Education	100	100	100	100
Preschool Education	21,7	22,8	21,9	22,2
General Education	46,6	46,3	48,0	48,2
Secondary special education	6,6	6,5	6,4	6,3
Vocational training, retraining and advanced training	0,7	0,6	0,7	0,7
Higher and postgraduate professional education.	17,1	17,0	16,3	15,6
Youth policy and children's health	2,0	1,9	2,1	2,1
Applied research in the field of education	0,5	0,4	0,4	0,4
Other issues in the field of education	4,7	4,3	4,3	4,4

During the period in review, the government developed a toolkit to ensure education development, integration and effective governance into state policy in the field of education. Other factors that were very essential for the mentioned field were improvement of quantitative and qualitative indicators, fulfillment of international commitments, monitoring of modernization of RF educational system, analysis of information obtained from the results of sociological surveys and etc. In particular, as mentioned in the report of the Russian Government on “Implementation of state policy in Education in 2018, it is vital to develop the export potential of the education system as well as enhance its attractiveness and competitiveness, for education to be efficiently integrated into the global educational space (*Government of the RF 2019*).

¹⁴¹ Source of the data is the official site of Federal Service for State Statistics http://www.gks.ru/wps/wcm/connect/rosstat_main/rosstat/ru/statistics/finance/# (19.06.2019).

It is planned for the period of 2016-2019 to implement complex programs to evaluate effectiveness of state assistance aimed for higher education institutions in federal and regional areas (*Government of the RF 2019*). It is worth noting the 5/100 project, is to maximize the competitive position of leading federal and and national Russian universities in the global research and education market thanks to financing provided within 2013-2018 (*Government of the RF 2019*). Thus, as of 2018 data, 11 Russian universities got into the top 100 universities, and 18 into the top 200 universities worldwide in view of institutional and other ranking (*Government of the RF 2019*). In the meantime, taking into account scientific and educational potential of the universities, it is necessary to set up modernization and integration requirements, which if fulfilled, will enable universities to receive state supported programs and projects. They also include federal entities, territorial administration and bodies of local authorities.

5.5 Public responsibility of an effective health system

In terms of healthcare requirements necessary for democracy establishment in Russia, activation of state healthcare policy, access to healthcare and medical services, as well as insurance and a sustainable growth of Life expectancy were very important. Meanwhile, the main indicators of citizens' health status and health security indicate that Russia lags behind developed countries. Moreover, citizens assume the healthcare system to be the most anticipated field of state support and investments. In recent years, federal and territorial authorities have consistently implemented a number of programs aimed at improving the quality of life and developing human capital; hence, promoting healthy lifestyles, healthy food, growing mass physical activities and sports.

Figure 9

RF Health Factors Index (2000-2018)*

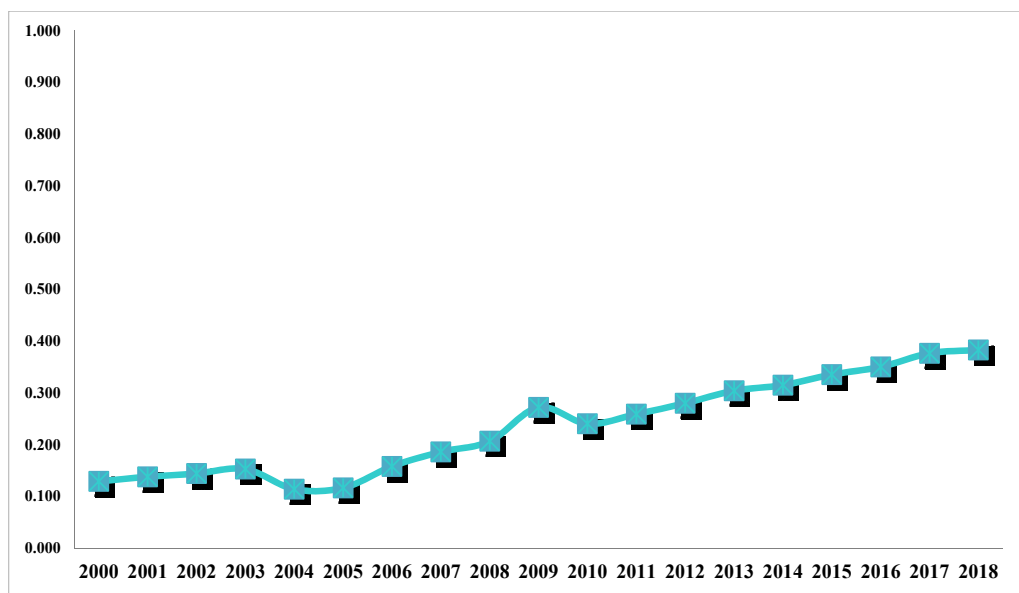


Figure 9 displays that within the 2000-2018 years the curve of the Health Factors Index (HFI) of Russia' IDL increased in general with the highest indicator in 2018.

Increase in Health expenditure and Life expectancy had a significant impact on 2016-2018 HFI indicators (see Figure 9, Table 1), whereas Life expectancy 2016-2018 indicator was the highest for the period 1995-2018.

State policy procedures¹⁴² aimed at population involvement in sport and fitness and promotion of healthy lifestyle played an essential role in the improvement of the system. Within the framework of the events, including step-by-step implementation of all-Russian physical culture and sports complex, Ready for Labour and Defense program was among the first to support that movement (*GTO 2019*).

* Source: calculations by the author.

¹⁴² See the official site of the government of the RF <http://government.ru/docs/5599> (20.06.2019), official site of the Ministry of Sport of the RF <https://www.minsport.gov.ru/activities/federal-programs/2/26363> (20.06.2019).

During the period under review, state health policy focused on modernizing an efficient healthcare system, enhancing the quality of health education, preventing diseases, developing infrastructures of healthcare and medical services, expanding health research, improving medical and pharmaceutical activities, upgrading technical equipment, establishment of medical insurance system and etc.¹⁴³ In this regard, within the framework of the state health policy on reduction in alcohol abuse and alcohol prevention, cooperation with CSOs was of key importance.¹⁴⁴

Reforms in obligatory medical insurance system had an essentially humanitarian influence on modernization of the Russian healthcare system. This gradually forms conditions to fully cover almost all types of medicare guaranteed by the state through obligatory medical insurance.¹⁴⁵ This updated system has significantly reduced the inconsistency of providing medical care to citizens in various Russian entities and areas. The latter calls forth urgent reforms in methods to cover healthcare expenses, ensuring efficient distribution of increasing financial flows. Accordingly, distribution of medical services funding is being transformed into an effective health insurance system, thereby offering citizens the widest possible range of healthcare services.

In 2016-2018 the Ministry of Health of the Russian Federation implemented federal targeted programs related to socio-economic development of healthcare, namely: healthy lifestyles, medicament, sanitation, food, labour, road traffic as well RF South, Far East and Transbaykal areas and etc.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴³ See the official site of the Ministry of Health of the RF <https://www.rosminzdrav.ru/ministry/-programms> (20.06.2019).

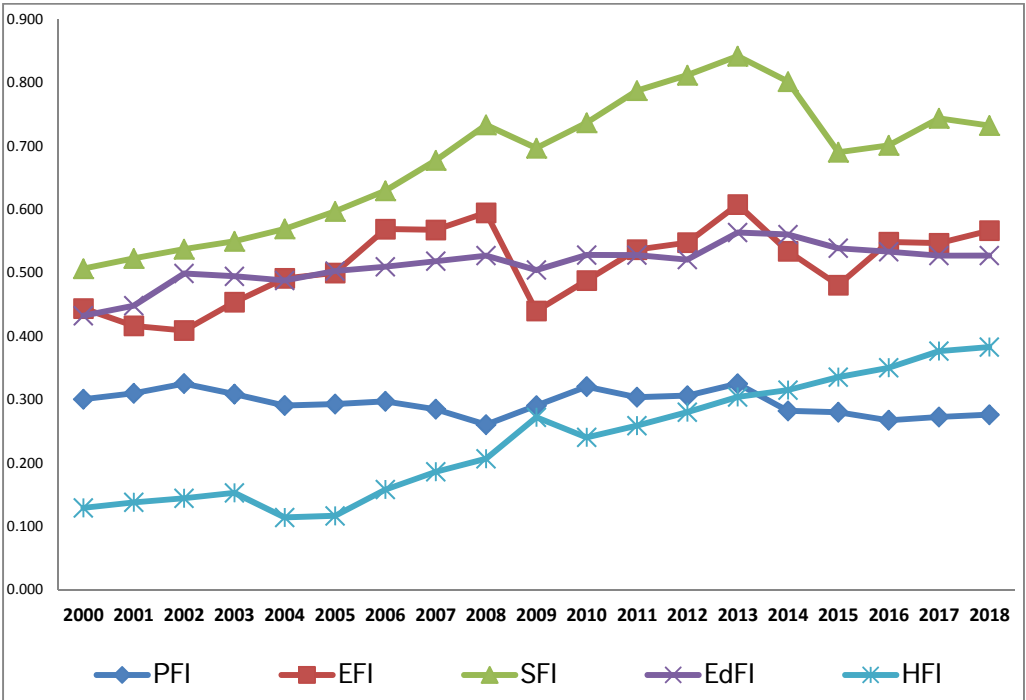
¹⁴⁴ See the official site of the RF Federal Service for alcohol market regulation http://www.fsrar.ru/policy_of_sobriety/koncepcia (23.06.2019).

¹⁴⁵ See the official site of Federal obligatory medical insurance fund <http://www.ffoms.ru> (23.06.2019).

¹⁴⁶ See the Ministry of Health of the Russian Federation <https://www.rosminzdrav.ru/ministry/-programms/ftcp> (26.06.2019).

5.6 Development trends of the Index of Democracy Level

Figure 10
Indices of Political, Economic, Social, Health and Educational Factors affecting the Index of Democracy Level of RF for the timeframe 2000-2018*



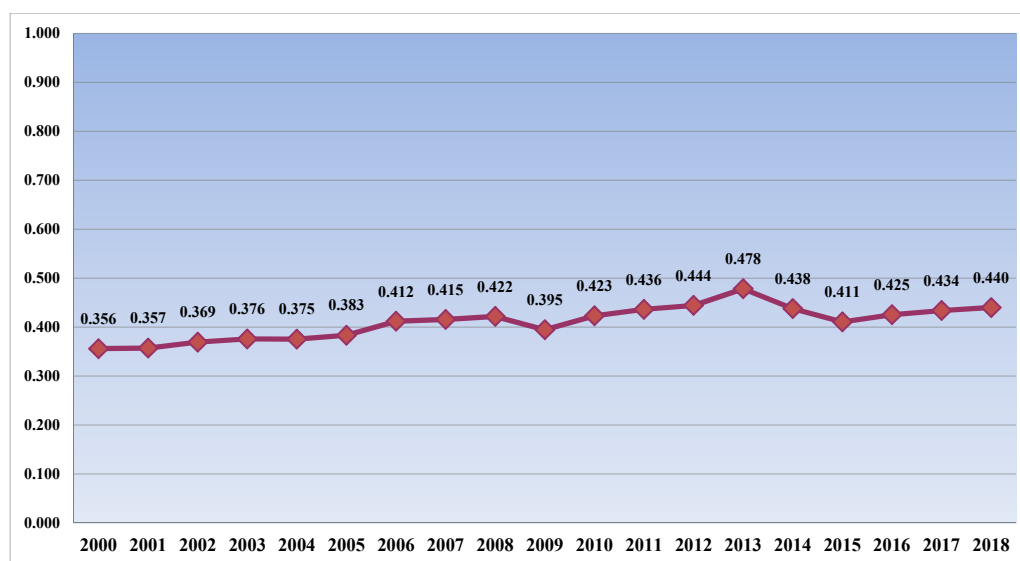
Development trends of the IDL covering the period of 2000-2018 are presented in Figure 10 and 11. It increased (0,440) in 2018 with the highest level registered in 2013 within the above-mentioned period.

Figure 11 displays that the 2018 increase in IDL curve was mainly stipulated by the growth in PFI, SFI, EdFI and HFI indicators. Despite the fact, that SFI indicator fell down in 2018, it comparatively got stabilized recently (see Figure 10, 11).

* Source: calculations by the author.

Figure 11

The Index of Democracy Level of RF for the period 2000-2018*



Democratic reforms in Russia have mainly included the following priorities: sustainable socio-economic growth, development of science and innovative technologies,¹⁴⁷ modernization of information and telecommunication infrastructures, international cooperation, global competitiveness of the country in the market, response to sanctions imposed, guarantee for military and political security, protection of the state border¹⁴⁸ and others. In this context, reestablishment of cozier relations between Russia and Turkey from 2016 was of major military-political importance. Besides the two countries mutually cooperated in activities aimed at cessation of hostilities in Syria (*Ministry of Defense of the RF 2017*).

* Source: calculations by the author:

¹⁴⁷ See Decree of the RF president from 01.12.2016 № 642 “About the strategy of scientific technology development of the Russian Federation” // <http://kremlin.ru/acts/bank/41449> (12.06.2019).

¹⁴⁸ See Decree of the RF President from 30.11.2016 № 640 “About approval of foreign policy concept of the RF” // <http://kremlin.ru/acts/bank/41451/page/1> (12.06.2019).

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In a transforming world, multilateralism, soft power, balance of threats, and flexible security are inherent elements in RF foreign policy. In this regard, a new US-Russia global and regional confrontation is regulated with a double containment strategy. Accordingly, there is a bilateral and multilateral competition with superior concentration on vital national interests. This means weakening regional competitors by blocking strengthening either the one or the other's positions.

In the transformation of the Russian political system CIS, CSTO and EAEU raised a number of structural and functional problems linked to Eurasian integration processes. The fact that Russia has more than ever stressed the importance of maintaining a concept of equal partnership in CIS, CSTO and EAEU was naturally aimed at promoting the balance of interests of the countries involved.

Sanctions imposed on Russia have created an unfavourable geo-economic environment, thus becoming the main cause of a deteriorating geopolitical situation. Therefore, the US, the European Union and a number of other Western countries had been pursuing a policy of sanctions and restrictions against Russia since 2014.

Within new geopolitical challenges and with sanctions having a negative impact on sources of state fundings and key sectors of the country's economy, Russia is revising its strategic approaches to economic security.¹⁴⁹ Russia sees Arctic extraction with huge potential and natural resource reserves, therefore it pays a special attention to the region.¹⁵⁰ The latter enables Russia to actively cooperate with China, which is a major investor in infrastructure and hydrocarbon projects in the region.

In the observed period, democratization and integration processes of Russian political system specifically affected a multi-ethnic, multi-religious and

¹⁴⁹ See the Order of the RF President from 13.05.2017 №208 "On Strategic Objectives of the Russian Federation through to 2030" // <http://kremlin.ru/acts/bank/41921> (12.06.2019).

¹⁵⁰ See Resolution from 31.08.2017 №1064 "On Socioeconomic Development of the Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation" // <http://government.ru/docs/29164> (24.06.2019).

multi-cultural Russian society both at domestic and international levels. In this respect, political democratization must be in line with social, economic and cultural one, playing a civilarchic role in lives of every citizen and social groups. It is obvious that democratic transformation does not refer only to democratization of the Russian political system and its administration and economic liberalization, but also to the lifestyle of each and all, formation of a democratic citizen and his activities (*Шестопал, Смутькина 2018, 26-44; Шестопал 2019, 9-20*).

Civil reforms are essential in terms of democracy to be established in the diverse Russian society and will contribute to the development of political culture of the ruling elite, as well as to compatibility of political democracy with national, ethnic and religious discrepancies (*Шестопал, Смутькина 2018, 26-44; Шестопал 2019, 9-20*). As ensuring inter-ethnic harmony and promoting inter-religious dialogue by federal and territorial authorities is a vital factor for the country's sustainable development.

5.7 Regression analysis of the Index of Democracy Level

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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 the most significant influence on the IDL of RF.

Through regression, above-mentioned factors in various situations and with the highest level of importance are classified to explain the nature and outcomes of democratic transformations in Russia.

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The regression outcomes reflect that there has been a significant correlation between the IDL_i¹⁵¹ and political, economic, social, educational as well as health variables.

Hence, the correlation between IDL_i and political variables of Political Stability and Absence of Violence as well as Social Unrest and Political Pressure has been established (see Table 7).

Table 7

Regression analysis of the IDL_i (PFI variables)

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Coefficient</i>	<i>Adj.R²</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>N</i>
Political Stability and Absence of Violence	0,006	0,362	0,001	24
Social Unrest and Political Pressure	-0,088	0,312	0,003	24

Out of the economic variables included in the model, there has been a correlation between IDL_i and Gross national income per capita and External trade rate (see Table 8).

Table 8

Regression analysis of the IDL_i (EFI variables)

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Coefficient</i>	<i>Adj.R²</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>N</i>
Gross national income per capita (1000 US dollars)	0,006	0,562	0,000	24
External trade rate (% of GDP)	-0,005	0,428	0,000	24

By underlining the role of democratic procedures in the process of ensuring social justice, harmony and security, correlation between IDL_i and social variables of Real wage (100 US dollars) and Unemployment is significant (see Table 9).

¹⁵¹ IDL_i is the Index of Democracy Level cleaned from the corresponding variable during every paired regression analysis.

Table 9

Regression analysis of the IDL_i (SFI variables)

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Coefficient t</i>	<i>Adj.R²</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>N</i>
Real wage (100 US dollars)	0,662	0,662	0,000	24
Unemployment (%)	-0,014	0,588	0,000	24

Considering the preconditions for promoting democratic citizenship and human rights education in Russia, it is obvious that Human Development index (Education Index) as well as Government expenditure on education are of the variables that strongly correlate with IDL_i.

Table 10

Regression analysis of the IDL_i (EdFI variables)

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Coefficient</i>	<i>Adj.R²</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>N</i>
HDI	0,697	0,718	0,000	24
Education Index				
Government expenditure on education (% of GDP)	0,067	0,623	0,000	24

In view of healthcare variables, Life expectancy at birth is significantly correlated with IDL_i (see Table 11).

Table 11

Regression analysis of the IDL_i (HFI variables)

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Coefficient</i>	<i>Adj.R²</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>N</i>
Life expectancy at birth	0,009	0,520	0,000	24

As it has already been mentioned above, IDL_i and the variables of Political Stability and Absence of Violence and Social Unrest/Political Pressures are strongly correlated. One unit improvement in Political Stability and Absence of Violence variable will lead to the IDL_i growth by 0,006 units. At the same time,

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Social Unrest/Political Pressures variable, if increased by 1 unit, will increase IDL_i by 0,088 units (see Table 7).

In view of economic indicators, growth in GNI per capita by 1000 US dollars will result in IDL_i growth by 0,006 units. It is worth mentioning that sanctions adversely affected GNI and had a deteriorating effect on external trade, country's competitiveness and investment attractiveness. In this regard, 1% reduction in External trade rate will lead to IDL_i decrease by 0,005 units (see Table 8). A negative correlation between Russia's External trade rate and IDL_i is mainly caused by restrictions and sanctions against Russia imposed by the United States, EU and a number of other countries, which had a negative impact on Russia's economic integration, Russian market and prospects for expansion of production. The reduction in the trade turnover reveals a dual impact of reciprocally imposed sanctions in interstate relations and tools to restrain economic growth.

Real wage and Unemployment are the social factors that significantly influenced democracy in the country. \$100 increase in Real wage and 1% reduction in Unemployment will cause IDL_i growth by 0,01 and 0,014 units respectively (see Table 9). Real wage and Real income has a multifaceted dynamics, which is quite remarkable especially when wage increases but income decreases. As for unemployment, it is mainly related to labour price fluctuations, labour market adaptation and changes in the economic situation. In this situation, a high and stable level of employment is ensured, but there are sharp fluctuations in wages.

Variables of Human Development index (Education Index) and Government expenditure on education are the educational factors that are of significant influence on IDL of Russia. As such, 0,1 unit change in HDI Education Index will lead to IDL_i growth by 0,007 units, whereas 1% of GDP increase in Government spending on education will result in IDL_i growth by 0,067 (see Table 10). Access to education and its quality and many other key issues of specialization are the main factors improving effectiveness of educational policy. Increase in government spending on education contributes to the country's political,

economic and socio-cultural progress, development of human capital, improvement in civil culture and rise in awareness. It is essential for educational policy to be implemented through cooperation of federal and territorial authorities. As effective participation of CSOs in the process of setting a state policy of education in line with the needs of the knowledge-based society is vital.

In view of health factors, the annual increase in Life expectancy will result in to IDL_i growth by 0,009 units (see Table 11). In this regard, it is important to implement a number of strategic plans aimed at human capital development that should contribute to the increase in Life expectancy.

Thus, the regression analysis of the level of democracy in Russia allows to verify the relationship between democracy and the quality of institutions. It is worth noting that results obtained through IDL methodology display an extremely high correlation between the quality of institutions and democracy level. At the same time, calculated values of IDL variables contribute to making and enforcing civil decisions on the grounds of causal links among the above factors.

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6. PROSPECTS FOR THE MODERNIZATION OF BELARUSIAN STATEHOOD: FEATURES OF STATE- BUILDING AND CIVIL DISCOURSE

ASHOT ALEKSANYAN

Modernization processes, occurring in Belarusian society within 2016-2018, revealed a number of internal contradictions in the country's development procedures, and weaknesses in the public administration system, such as low efficiency, isolation from lower levels of governance, and lack of democratic leadership procedures. Reforms, effected to improve country's government system, were not so much aimed at enhancing efficiency of the administration, forming legal culture, promoting dialogue with civil society organizations (CSOs) and methods of civil participation, but rather at making the government's activities bureaucratic, which had been detrimental to its very essence. Meanwhile, democratic transformations of the modern political system of Belarus urgently demand to eliminate recently intensified systemic contradictions which exist in the spheres of public administration and local self-government bodies. In particular, it refers to incompatibility of the quality and level of administration activity, that the 21st century is challenged with.

A certain "algorithm" for modernizing the public administration system exists in Belarus, where constitutional and legal acts as well as legislation are considered essential in the first stage. Furthermore, establishment of stably functioning institutions and organizations in the public administration system is vital too. Afterwards, they actively work to improve the overall efficiency of the entire system, based on the analysis of current issues and creation of an "ideal"

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model of for public service. It is obvious that modern developments of Belarusian statehood are mainly related to peculiarities of civil and national identity, "dialectical" Russia-Belarus unity state, Eurasian and European integration processes (*Свиридов 2016; Наматбекова, Сергеев 2019; Абраменко 2017; Анохина 2018*). The latter includes civilized foundations of the Belarusian people, national values and interests, as well as protection of all aforementioned.

The current stage of development of the civilization requires a strong statehood where human rights, freedoms and interests are essential. In this regard, it causes a concern when participation of the state administration and local self-government bodies in a public life is transformed into "interference", leading to a decline in the human rights protection and democracy. Hence, civilarchic institutions and procedures, which can ensure proper regulation through partnership, should be implemented in an attempt to minimize those trends. To implement it, the president and the ruling elite are demanded to create such constitutional and legal environment where public authorities will maintain ability to make sovereign decisions, safeguard appropriate level of socio-economic development and inter-community solidarity and stability, by preventing or minimizing ethno-religious and other conflicts (*Dimitrova et al 2018; Moshes, Nizhnikov 2019; Беспалая 2018; Струзов 2016*). The above-mentioned requires active participation of the state in the areas of public life with CSOs involvement in relevant issues. Moreover, state and non-state institutions need to carry out complimentary activities to regulate certain strategic issues, when transition and redistribution of authorities takes place so that CSOs become key players in the political system.

Democracy level of Belarus during the period under review was conditioned by political, economic, social, educational and health factors (see Table 1). Therefore, the current agenda of the country's democratization processes has included development of state institutions and state building initiatives, as well as enhancement of their efficiency under the conditions of external instability, accelerated structural and institutional reforms. Those

reforms were sometimes hampered by internal problems and have not affected the implementation of external processes and national goals.

Table 1
**Indices of Political, Economic, Social, Educational and Health Factors of Belarus
for the 2000-2018 period ***

Years	PFI	EFI	SFI	EdFI	HFI	IDL
2000	0,355	0,350	0,534	0,606	0,270	0,391
2001	0,335	0,341	0,559	0,595	0,278	0,383
2002	0,357	0,390	0,574	0,600	0,258	0,404
2003	0,357	0,371	0,596	0,605	0,282	0,405
2004	0,307	0,431	0,634	0,595	0,296	0,405
2005	0,345	0,401	0,673	0,610	0,308	0,420
2006	0,309	0,487	0,713	0,637	0,299	0,434
2007	0,336	0,553	0,742	0,594	0,334	0,464
2008	0,343	0,604	0,788	0,590	0,318	0,483
2009	0,330	0,561	0,759	0,582	0,313	0,462
2010	0,284	0,534	0,803	0,626	0,325	0,447
2011	0,287	0,746	0,719	0,595	0,288	0,487
2012	0,303	0,627	0,740	0,613	0,359	0,474
2013	0,313	0,607	0,878	0,616	0,397	0,493
2014	0,319	0,622	0,890	0,604	0,399	0,499
2015	0,325	0,685	0,808	0,603	0,458	0,515
2016	0,366	0,667	0,777	0,613	0,478	0,528
2017	0,379	0,683	0,830	0,606	0,488	0,543
2018	0,381	0,726	0,862	0,606	0,491	0,559

* Source: calculations by the author.

The EFI, SFI, HFI, EdFI and the indices of certain years estimated in accordance with IDL may have a slight difference in comparison to the indices of the corresponding years estimated in the previous publications in the result of updated data, the insertion of new data and the change of minimum and maximum values.

6.1 Trends in the political consolidation and control of the presidential form of government

Within the mentioned period, democratic reforms effected in the political system had internal and external outlines, whereas the accumulated political capital, management potential and other resources were not always sufficiently effective.

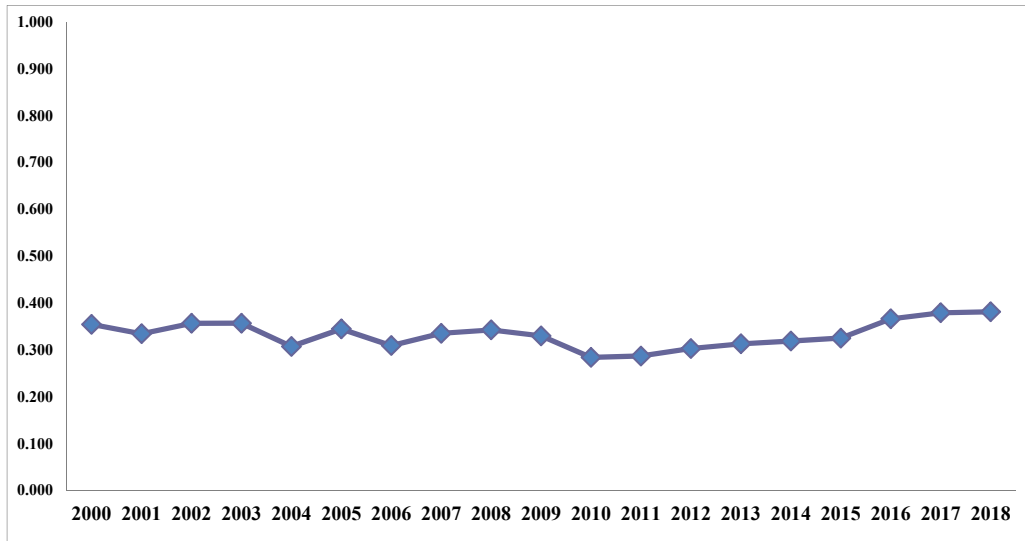
The new stage of development of Belarusian statehood is closely linked to the transformation of the office of the president. It sought to unite the political elite to ensure the further progress and independence of the statehood. However, the reforms of the above-mentioned institute and system of public administration led to *bureaucratic democracy*, rather to development of *democratic bureaucracy*. As a result, controlling and ruling functions of officials were extended, in contrast to raising professionalism, accountability and transparency of the public service. Another problem that the country faces is the development of a new paradigm in the public administration, i.e. civilarchic bureaucracy, because the former models of governance are no longer compatible with the current realities of public life. Therefore, it is necessary to quickly review important directions of the democratic reforms in Belarus by incorporating them into government programs.

Political Factors Index (PFI) of democracy of Belarus improved in 2016-2018 when compared to the previous year (see Figure 1, Table1). Nonetheless, 1995 PFI indicator remains the highest for the 1995-2018 period (*Aleksanyan 2015, 101-115; Aleksanyan 2016, 136-149*).

Within 2016-2018 PFI influence on democratic transformations were mainly conditioned by modernization of the office of the president and public administration system, 2016 parliamentary and 2018 local self-government elections, Eurasian, Union state and European integration processes, activities of parties, trade unions, CSOs and media (*Vyatr 2017; Малышев 2019; Буццук 2017; Антонович 2018; Гавриков, Котляров 2017; Ласточкина 2018*).

Figure 1

Political Factors Index (2000-2018)*



Trends in transforming the presidential form of the government, which is envisaged by the country's constitution, continued to erect a new model of the Belarusian government during the period under review. A declared principle of separation and counterbalance of branches of the government was transformed into a principle of interaction between the legislative and executive branches “under the auspices” of the President of the country. In the meantime, the role and significance of the parliament in the country's political life was diminished by the president and government. Moreover, as it can be concluded from the Belarusian experience, the strong presidential power ensures an optimal solution to overcome the socio-economic crisis. In this regard, democratization of presidential form of the government will be urgent to implement, by opening a new stage in the development of Belarusian statehood. However, the political elite and a significant part of the society have not yet understood a legal and political status as well as functions of the presidency the country's even with an

* Source: calculations by the author.

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acknowledgement of Western democracies experience. It is obvious that excessive concentration of powers in the hands of the president threatens democracy; hence, leading to a consolidated authoritarian regime.¹⁵² In order to prevent this situation, check and balance process in the branches of the government needs to be structured. One of the most striking examples is the joint exercise of powers and the President of the country A. Lukashenko carries out a number of functions in collaboration with state bodies (House of Representatives, Council of the Republic, Council of Ministers). On the one hand, they imply cooperation with the National Assembly, and on the other hand, prevent implementation and realization of unilateral authoritarian decisions

In reference to the Union State, in 2016-2018 there was a slowdown or "delay" in establishing union relations, which has continued up to this day. The main reason is apparently explained by discrepancies of the goals pursued by Belarusian and Russian integration participants. If the Union State is viewed as a viable geopolitical union by Russia, then Belarus is satisfied by the "fragility" of Russia-Belarus Union State (*Скриба 2016; Сошникова, Шерпаев, Щелоков 2019*).

The "union" state building was in the "freezing" stage within 2016-2018. At the same time, a "protracted" integration hiatus was due to internal political problems, as well as European and international integration processes. The CSOs and opposition forces, which called allied relations with Russia in question, took the most active part in the aforementioned processes. A similar situation was created in view of military and political commitments made by Belarus and CSTO, issues referring to unconditional support to the CSTO allies, as well as Russian-Ukrainian relations, the status of Crimea and Sevastopol. Belarusian leadership did its utmost to help settle the conflict in neighbouring Ukraine (*Андрощук 2019*).

¹⁵² See the official site of the Freedom House <https://freedomhouse.org/report/nations-transit/2018/belarus> (25.06.2019).

Nations in Transit reports published by the Freedom House observed, that ratings of democratic transformations of the political system in Belarus slightly improved and reached from 6,64 to 6,61 (see Table 2).

Table 2

Freedom House report on democratic transformations in Belarus (2018)¹⁵³

<i>Factors for Democracy Progress</i>	<i>2018</i>
National Democratic Governance	6,75
Electoral Process	6,25
Civil Society	6,75
Independent Media	6,75
Local Democratic Governance	6,75
Judicial Framework and Independence	7,00
Corruption	6,00
<i>Democracy Score</i>	<i>6,61</i>

The mentioned reports reveal legal procedures of the reforms of the judicial system remain one of the most important issues in the country. In particular, ratings of Judicial Framework and Independence (7), which is the lowest¹⁵⁴ on the scale, have remained unchanged since 2012. It is apparent that judiciary plays an essential role in the establishment of civil society and development of the national economy. Since independent and impartial resolution of disputes by courts, is one of the conditions for ensuring investment attractiveness and boosting entrepreneurial activity in the state. In this respect, it is important that the right and law, as tools affecting social reality, be used clearly and in time by revealing their constructive potential. All legal reforms implemented in the country must be incorporated into a single concept of legal development.

¹⁵³ See the official site of the Freedom House <https://freedomhouse.org/report/nations-transit/2018/belarus> (25.06.2019).

¹⁵⁴ See *ibid.*

Table 3

The ratio of deputy seats of local councils in Belarus¹⁵⁵

<i>Political party</i>	<i>2018</i>	
	<i>Total elected</i>	<i>%</i>
Non-partisan	17653	97,48
Communist Party of Belarus	309	1,71
Republican Party of Labour and Justice	127	0,70
Social Democratic Party of Popular Accord	11	0,06
Liberal Democratic Party of Belarus	5	0,03
Belarusian Socialist Sporting Party	4	0,02
Belarusian Patriotic Party	1	0,01
Agrarian Party of Belarus	1	0,01
Total	18110	100

Indicators of the PFI of the IDL were significantly impacted by the elections of the House of Representatives of the National Assembly of the Republic of Belarus conducted on September 11, 2016 (OSCE/ODIHR 2016). Besides, the elections of the Council of the Republic were held on September 16, 2016.¹⁵⁶ Given that the majoritarian electoral system is applied in Belarus, it continually had an adverse effect on establishing a multi-party system. It should be noted that 94 out of 110 members of the House of Representatives were non-partisan.¹⁵⁷ As a result, 16 deputies, affiliated to political parties and two from opposition parties were elected to the House of Representatives. Despite a number of positive assessments made by European structures, they still deemed it urgent to carry out comprehensive electoral reforms (OSCE/ODIHR 2016; EEAS 2016). It is noteworthy that concerns about local democracy,

¹⁵⁵ See *ibid.*

¹⁵⁶ See the official site of the The Central Commission of the Republic of Belarus on Elections and Holding Republican Referenda <http://rec.gov.by/sites/default/files/pdf/Elections-SRNS6-soob2.pdf> (28.06.2019).

¹⁵⁷ See the official site of the The Central Commission of the Republic of Belarus on Elections and Holding Republican Referenda <http://rec.gov.by/sites/default/files/pdf/Elections-PPNS6-post-61.pdf> (28.06.2019).

electoral culture and civil participation were also reflected in the elections of deputies of local councils that took place on 18 February 2018.¹⁵⁸ Particularly, a considerable part of 18,110 deputies of the local councils were non-partisan again¹⁵⁹ (see Table 3).

Domestic and international procedures aimed at protecting human rights raised concerns in Belarus during the period under review. The Human Rights Plan for 2016-2019,¹⁶⁰ which was adopted in Belarus for the first time ever since its independence, had a positive impact in terms of improving the current situation. It is aimed at ensuring fulfillment of the country's international obligations in the field of human rights, improvement of legislation and law enforcement structures (*Хамутовская 2018; Самусевич 2017; Matsevich-Dukhan 2016; Bruns and Happ 2016*). However, Belarus is the only country in Europe where the death penalty is applied to perpetrators of serious crimes. Therefore, its application had a negative impact on EU-Belarus integration and international cooperation (*Human Rights Committee 2017; EEAS 2018; OSCE/ODIHR 2018; Council of Europe 2019*). Therefore, UN emphasizes the importance of establishing national human rights institution in Belarus, by studying international experience in this field.¹⁶¹

According to Freedom House reports, spheres of political rights and civil liberties, press freedom and internet freedom were estimated not free¹⁶² within 2016-2018.

¹⁵⁸ See the official site of the The Central Commission of the Republic of Belarus on Elections and Holding Republican Referenda <http://rec.gov.by/ru/vybory-2018> (28.06.2019).

¹⁵⁹ See *ibid*.

¹⁶⁰ See the official site of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Belarus http://mfa.gov.by/upload/doc/-plan_all_ru.pdf (18.06.2019).

¹⁶¹ Source of the data is the official site of United Nations Human Rights Office of High Commissioner <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/countries/ENACARRegion/Pages/BYIndex.aspx> (19.06.2019).

¹⁶² See the official site of the Freedom House <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2018/belarus>, <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-net/2018/belarus>, <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-media/freedom-media-2019> (29.06.2019).

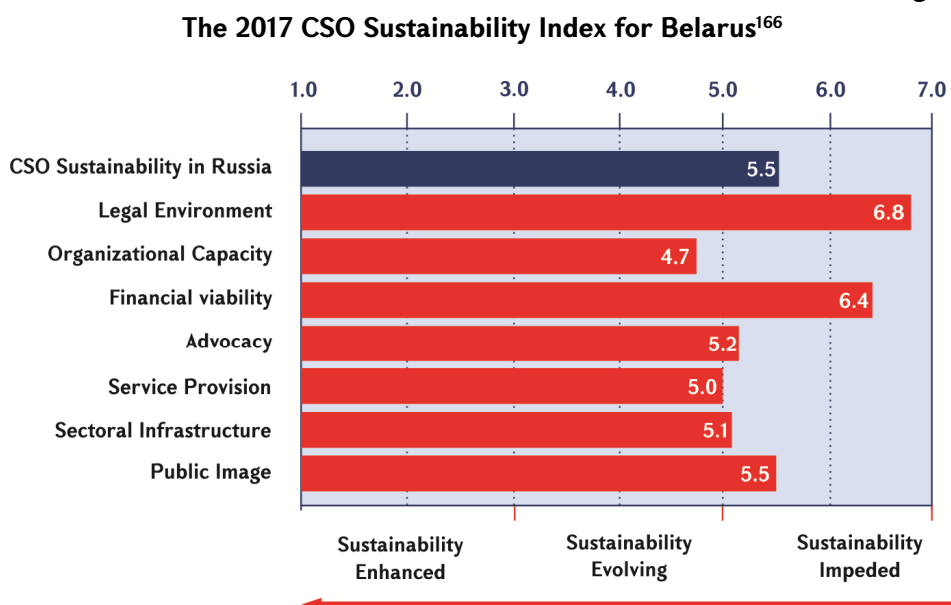
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Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch organizations also reported about authoritarian and lack of freedom trends in the political system of the country in 2017-2018.¹⁶³

In reference to activities carried out by CSOs, EaP CSF Belarusian National Platform¹⁶⁴ worked towards strengthening sovereignty of the state, addressing and implementing priorities of civil society, improving ecology related policy and etc. Moreover, EaP CSF Belarusian National Platform¹⁶⁵ attempted to exert efficient public control; hence, raising the level of political participation and transparency of state bodies.

Figure 2



¹⁶³ Source of the data is the official site of Amnesty International <https://www.amnesty.org/en/countries/europe-and-central-asia/belarus> (18.06.2019), official site of Human Rights Watch <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2019/country-chapters/belarus> (18.06.2019).

¹⁶⁴ For more details see the official site of EaP CSF <https://eap-csf.eu/eap-csf-belarusian-national-platform-adopts-resolutions-on-priorities-for-civil-society> (29.06.2019).

¹⁶⁵ See the official site of EaP CSF Belarusian National Platform (29.06.2019).

¹⁶⁶ Source of the data is the official site of the USAID CSO Sustainability Index https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1866/2017_CS0_Sustainability_Index_for_Central_and_Eastern_Europe_and_Eurasia.pdf (15.06.2019).

It is depicted in Figure 2 that CSOs Sustainability index is ranked 5,5 and their sustainability is endangered. Moreover, organizational capacity of CSOs is ranked the highest, whereas legal environment the lowest in Belarus (*USAID 2017; 2018*). Low levels of public image of civil society continued to cause a concern (see Figure 2), which reveals the gaps in civil discourse and political culture. For obvious reasons, they reduce functions of CSOs to exert public control and consolidate the potential. In this situation, CSOs had been consistently endeavoring to change the attitudes of community members, consolidating active citizens and attempting to respond to social challenges. Nonetheless, non-democratic restrictions and rise of populism are significant in authoritarian regime and a strong state sector.

15 parties, 28 trade unions and 24,523 trade union organizations, 2,923 non-governmental unions, 3,524 religious organizations and about 400 charity foundations were registered in the country as of 1 January 2019.¹⁶⁷

In connection to variables included in the PFI of the IDL, the 2016-2018 Corruption Perceptions Index grew up compared to the previous years.¹⁶⁸ Nonetheless, improved ratings of Gender equality sub-index positively affected the PFI growth for the mentioned period.¹⁶⁹

To sum up, the PFI curve improved in 2018 when compared with the year 2000 (see Table 1, Figure 1). In particular, the recorded positive trends reveal the following: distribution of functions and responsibilities of public authorities is the key factor of the principles to develop a democratic state and ensure “good governance” in Belarus, in contrast to over-centralization on political decision-making and implementation. This is applicable only in critical situations. The president and the political system are, to some extent, treated

¹⁶⁷ Source of the data is the official site of the President of the Republic of Belarus http://president.gov.by/ru/society_ru (19.06.2019), Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Belarus https://minjust.gov.by/directions/compare_coverage (19.06.2019).

¹⁶⁸ See the official site of the Amnesty International <https://www.transparency.org/cpi2018> (23.06.2019).

¹⁶⁹ See the official site of the World Governance Index (WGI) project <https://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/#home> (23.06.2019), World Economic Forum <https://www.weforum.org/reports/the-global-gender-gap-report-2018> (23.06.2019).

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with interrelated trust in the processes of consolidating the Belarusian society. It is obvious that, they can be eliminated by means of gradual reforms alongside with many shortcomings, existing in the presidential form of government. Thus, if there is a decline of trust in the president, then the number of citizens supporting democratic reforms is expected to increase. In this respect, expansion of CSOs functions and increase in public control exercised from the «bottom», based on the growth in civil consciousness and participation, is very important in terms of democracy.

6.2 Market and non-market consequences of economic integration

International and regional economic integration processes transform the Belarusian economic system by defining the nature and priorities of its further development. The main purpose of these processes is to establish new procedures for international and regional cooperation. An alternative of the liberalization of the market is one of those components, which implies a reduction in state administration procedures of the economy, as such. The favourable trade regime between Russia and Belarus, as well as lower prices of Russian oil and gas imports, have also contributed to this.

The economic model of Belarus can be characterized by numerous features that were stipulated by an active participation of the state, viewed as a key regulator, a more significant player, and a catalyst for innovative development and modernization, and an accurate combination of market relations. Consequently, market regulation, a high level of control over restrictions as well as extensive Russian assistance, are of market or non-market nature. It is interesting to mention that Russia assisted Belarus to preserve its economic stability in the crisis, and ensured its competitiveness in the development. However, given the amount of benefits and donations granted by the Russian Federation, the current economic model managed to overcome

a number of negative phenomena in the economy. They required the reduction of the role of the state in the economy, assurance of the growth of entrepreneurial freedoms and activities, development of market institutions in the financial sector, change in the pricing system, and so on.

The demand for Belarusian goods and services, which are sold in foreign markets, is increasing in the new era of globalization. A successful market entry of Belarusian products has become possible only with the production of competitive as well as innovative-driven goods. In the meantime, the government of the country was developing the National export support and development programme for 2016-2020¹⁷⁰ and as a result, it set a task before Belarusian producers to increase export volumes. Moreover, issues related to export promotion and development of the country's internal export were also supported in the Belarus National Strategy of Sustainable Social & Economic Development –2030.¹⁷¹

Indicators of the Economic Factors Index (EFI) of Belarus display that the curve grew up in 2018 compared to 2012-2017 (see Figure 3, Table 1).

2018 growth of the EFI of Belarus was mainly driven by a continual increase in external trade and improved economic freedom environment, as well as a trends of reduction in inflation.¹⁷² The recently observed budget profit had a positive impact on it, too. It is noteworthy that 2016 Economic freedom and 2017-2018 Budget profit indicators were the highest, whereas inflation - the lowest for the period 1995-2018.¹⁷³ In this respect, domestic credit policy had significantly been activated resulting in the largest

¹⁷⁰ See the official site of the Government of the Republic of Belarus <http://www.government.by/-upload/docs/fileaff83a3fc04eb9c0.PDF> (25.06.2019).

¹⁷¹ See the official site of the Ministry of Economy of the Republic of Belarus (25.06.2019).

¹⁷² See the official site of the World Bank

<http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/GC.BAL.CASH.GD.ZS>,

<http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/FP.CPI.TOTL.ZG>,

<http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NE.TRD.GNFS.ZS> (26.06.2019), Heritage Foundation

<http://www.heritage.org/index/explore?view=by-region-country-year> (26.06.2019).

¹⁷³ See *ibid*.

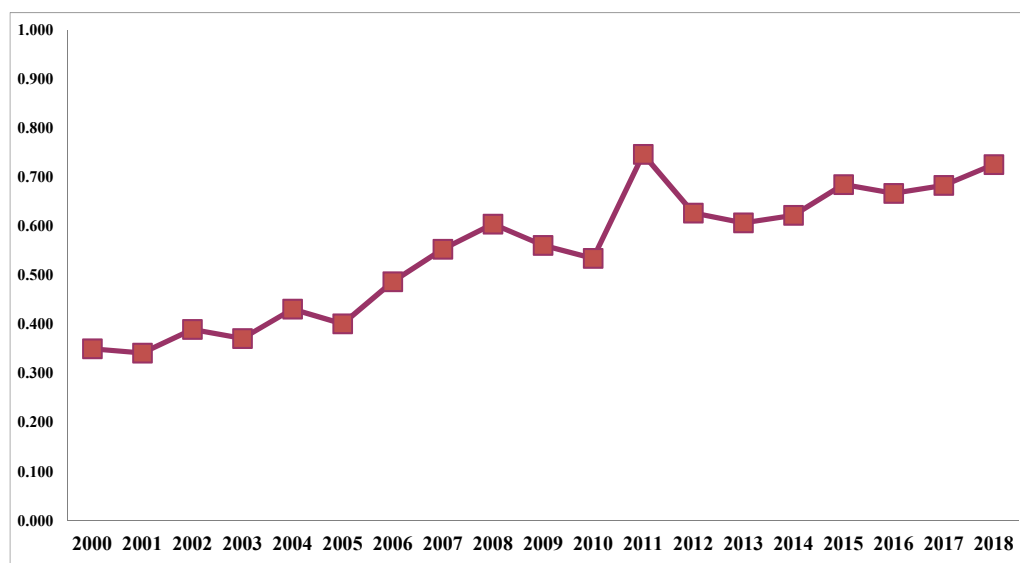
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denomination of the national currency¹⁷⁴ since July 1, 2016 and strengthening of the latter.

Figure 3

Economic Factors Index (2000-2018)*



The implementation of the project to build Belarusian Nuclear Power Plant¹⁷⁵ (NPP) had been in progress within 2016-2018, which would contribute to enhancing the country's energy security and prospects for the development of nuclear energy. Nonetheless, the operation of the NPP will lead to excessive energy capacity in the region, enabling modernization of the existing fuel and energy systems in Belarus.

Belarus, as a "small open" economy, is deeply integrated by many functions into world economic relations, whereas dynamics of the country's external economic sector allows us to estimate effectiveness of its components (*Рудый*

¹⁷⁴ See the official site of the President of the Republic of Belarus http://president.gov.by/ru/-news_ru/view/kommentarij-k-ukazu-450-ot-4-nojabrja-2015-g-12489/ (26.06.2019).

* Source: calculations by the author.

¹⁷⁵ See the official site of the Ministry of Energy of the Republic of Belarus http://minenergo.gov.by/o_ministerstve/yadernaya_energetika/stroitelstvo_atomnoy_elektrostancii (26.06.2019).

2019; Шурубович 2018a; 2018b; Кийко, Терещенко 2016). It is noteworthy that the role of the state in regulating economic processes and activities of business entities was maximized by the Belarusian economic model with preserving the country's industrial potential. It was the policy set by President Lukashenko aiming to maintain and assert the state's dominance in economic and social spheres (Dobrinsky 2016; Shraibman 2018).

During the period under review, the EAEU activities were of significant impact on the EFI of Belarus (EEC 2017a; 2017b; 2018a; 2018b; Aleksanyan 2018). Belarus particularly faces two important issues in view of developing external trade relations with the EAEU countries. Firstly, it is the distribution of profitable products, when increase in their export will be very beneficial to the country. Secondly, it is the clarification of the products with a new prospective export to each of the EAEU country. Moreover, the Belarusian new export positions should be close to the export basket in each of the EAEU countries. In view of the short-term period, it was important to understand that a probability to develop the potential of Belarusian production and export was largely conditioned by existing production capacities and gained experience. It was obvious that Belarusian high-quality products were predominantly exported to Russia and Kazakhstan. It was prompted by longer foreign trade relations between the mentioned countries as components of different stages of economic integration. In comparison to highly profitable export shares, they were much lower to Armenia and Kyrgyzstan, which was conditioned by mutual trade turnover indicators, and, in general, by the level of external economic activity among the aforementioned countries.

In 2016-2018 interregional relations for Belarus in the EAEU territory were formed and developed in a bilateral format, as there are no relevant institutions at interstate and transnational levels. Large businesses and state-owned enterprises mainly participated in relations of the Eurasian economic integration. It is conditioned by the fact that small and medium enterprises in the EAEU are not practically involved in regional trade and economic flows. At the same time, all the benefits of Eurasian regional integration are not yet

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visible to the Belarusian population, opposition parties and CSOs.

In reference to trade turnover between Belarus and the EU countries, it was adversely affected by the EU sanctions imposed against Russia and by Russian sanctions in response. It was basically the main reason that Russia's partners- Belarus and other EAEU countries - appeared in a difficult situation to carry out their foreign trade activities. Since it was very essential not only for Belarus but also for other EAEU countries to strengthen their transit positions and participate in the formation of their own trade routes as an integral part of the Silk Road economic zone rather than to engage in trade with Europe with bypassing Russia.

During the mentioned period, Belarus and Russia maintained the transparency of the common border, by using various arrangements of interstate cooperation. This was greatly facilitated by common qualities of the two peoples' national identities based on their ethno-cultural and linguistic proximity. In the meantime, various political systems and socio-economic government models continued to develop in the countries. In this context, economic development programs of the regions adjacent to Belarus and Russia arouse certain interest combined with an assessment of the impact of intergovernmental integration in view of their effectiveness, as well as possibility of forming an international region on the border between Russia and Belarus. Based on geo-economic procedures, the latter is aimed at boosting foreign trade relations between Belarus and Russia and increasing revenues; meanwhile, gradually expanding markets for certain commodities and diversifying sources of external income, and increasing competitiveness of the national economy. To implement this, Belarus and Russia apply the measures, such as the creation of infrastructures in line with modern requirements, including the infrastructures of the EAEU and Russia-Belarus Union State, introduction of innovative technologies and digitization of the economy, participation in international cooperation and integration processes. All these aspects are important to expand the market and freely move production resources on the cross-border (*Долинина 2019; Власенко 2018*). This, in turn,

promotes the development of the Belarusian economy by providing a special tax regime in the specific areas and etc. Under such economic conditions, integration processes will have a positive impact not only on the civil, but also on the regional level (*Тереник 2018; Буховец 2016*). Regions on Russia-Belarus border have failed so far to establish a consumer market that could become a center for both local residents and citizens of the Union State. It is worth noting that many region related issues which can be resolved at national level have arisen in the process of economic integration of the Union State. Thus, in overall, economic area of the Union State is very polarized. It is characterized by the territorial division of integration activities, which is reflected in the concentration of external economic activity in large cities and organizations (*Пасюкевич 2018; Ткалич 2019; Неменский, Холодков 2017*). Regions, districts, villages and settlements in Belarus distinctly differ from those in Russia by their socio-economic development, which also affects the level of their involvement in interagency and cross-border cooperation. Most of the regions in the countries were characterized by underdevelopment of investments, innovations and inter-regional social interactions. At the same time, in accordance with the strategic provisions of the socio-economic development of the Belarusian regions, their implementation was based on the efficient use of external economic potential, creation of conditions for the factors of innovative economy and effectiveness of competitive advantages. The latter, in its turn, was aimed at improving the quality of life and human capital of the country's population. Therefore, innovation-driven factors for developing and modernizing economy in communities are of great importance to fulfil requirements aimed at increasing competitiveness of the national economy. This is reflected in the Belarus National Strategy of Sustainable Social & Economic Development – 2030; the National Social and Economic Development Program 2016-2020; State program of the digital economy and information society development 2016-2020; Strategy of informatization development in the Republic of Belarus 2016-2022, as well as a number of documents ensuring the

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development of an innovation-driven economy at the regional level.¹⁷⁶

During the period in view, the following measures were taken to promote Belarusian products in the EAEU market:

1. to comply its legal framework with EAEU member states that would allow Belarus to make the transition to real market relations with perfect competition, stabilizing rising prices of goods and services;
2. to speed up activities aimed at creating a single EAEU information system in transiting to the digital economy that would allow Belarus to set up a database of market procedures in participating countries;
3. to develop a common training strategy of relevant specialists enabling Belarus to work actively in transiting to the digital economy.

6.3 Social policy issues

A significant increase in the effectiveness of social policy is observed in democratic transformations of Belarus, as it is one of the most important factors determining the quality and features of the society's development, which was aimed at the country's prosperity, protection of social security and stability, as well as further development and integration of the economy.

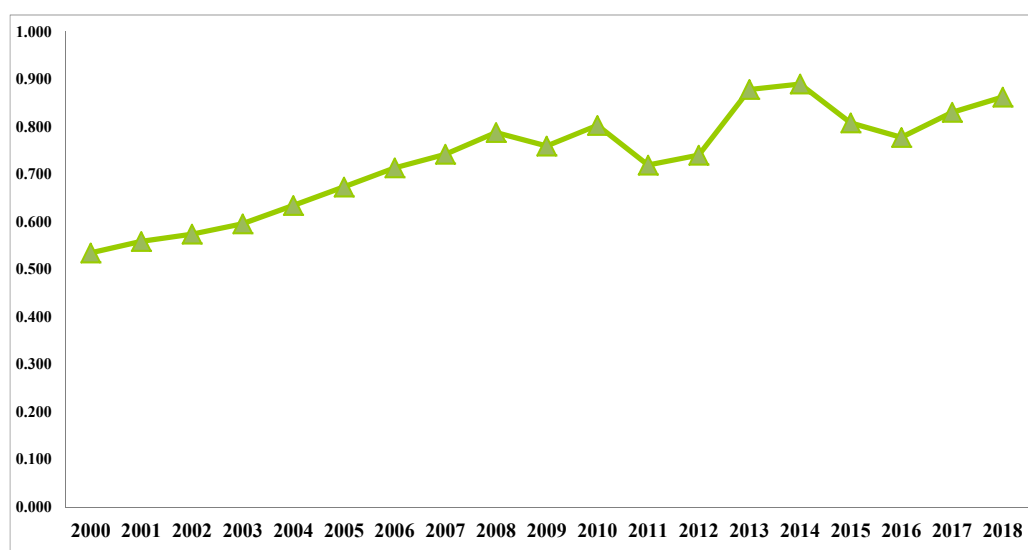
The Belarusian social policy system was in the stage of transformations for the period 2016-2018 by relying on the results of implemented projects and gained experience of developed countries which was viewed from an improvement perspective. Procedures for the protection of human social and labour rights were significantly prioritized in the country's social policy in an

¹⁷⁶ See the official site of the Ministry of Economy of the Republic of Belarus <http://www.economy.gov.by/uploads/files/NSUR2030/Natsionalnaja-strategija-ustojchivogo-sotsialno-ekonomicheskogo-razvitiya-Respubliki-Belarus-na-period-do-2030-goda.pdf> (25.06.2019), <https://www.economy.gov.by/uploads/files/Programma-2020.pdf> (25.06.2019), Government of the Republic of Belarus <http://www.government.by/upload/docs/file4c1542d87d1083b5.PDF> (25.06.2019), e-Gov.by official site <http://e-gov.by/zakony-i-dokumenty/strategiya-razvitiya-informatizacii-v-respublike-belarus-na-2016-2022-gody> (25.06.2019).

attempt to reduce the social polarization and improve spiritual and material needs of members of the society. In this regard, solution to the issues related to the formation of a rational structure of incomes and expenditures, employment and labour policies, social support and protection of all members of the society, development of social infrastructure, demographic improvement, areas of health and environmental security and etc. were highlighted.

Figure 4

Social Factors Index (2000-2018)*



2016 indicator of Social Factor Index (SFI) of Belarus decreased when compared to the previous year, whereas it improved in 2017-2018 (see Figure 4, Table 1). Nonetheless, the SFI curve sustained its positive outcomes which were of great importance for the observed period (see Figure 4, Table 1). Respectively, in 2000 SFI was estimated by 0,534 units, while it reached to 0,862 in 2018 (see Figure 4, Table 1).

The curve had a positive effect on ratings of Gini index and Unemployment in 2016-2018.¹⁷⁷ Despite the fact, that Real wage increased in 2017-2018

* Source: calculations by the author.

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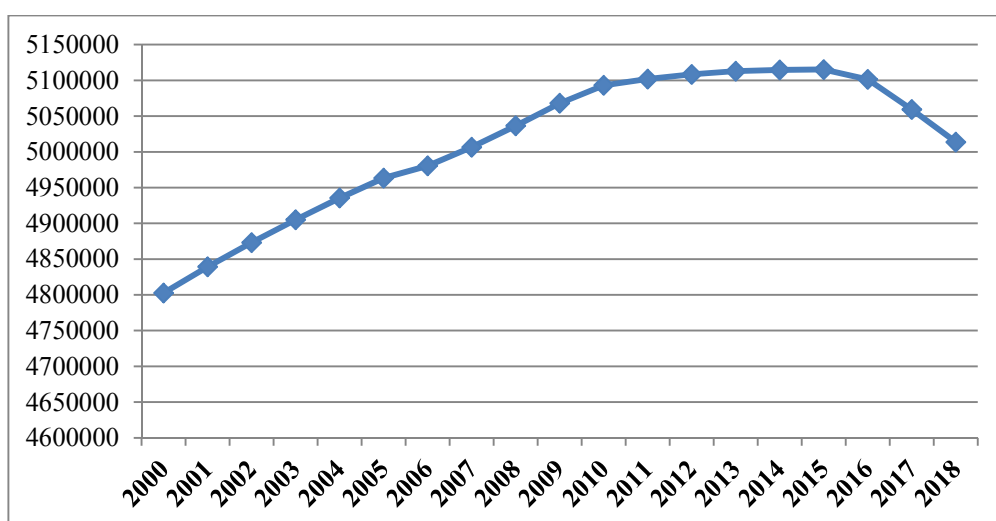
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compared to the previous year, it remained low in comparison to indicators of 2013-2014.¹⁷⁸

Assurance of a proper quality of life and a high level of citizens' well-being is the main goal of a socially oriented market economy of Belarus. In this regard, the level of labour force continued to cause a concern, which had been steadily growing from 2000 to 2015, but declined since 2015 (see Figure 5).

Figure 5

Labour force in Belarus (2000-2018)¹⁷⁹



Distribution of the Belarusian population employed in the spheres of education and agriculture, processing and manufacturing industry, trade and reconstruction was significant in 2016-2018 (see Figure 4).

¹⁷⁷ Source of the data is the WB official site <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.UEM.TOTL.ZS>, <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.POV.GINI?locations=BY> (13.06.2019).

¹⁷⁸ Source of the data is the official site of National Statistical Committee of the Republic of Belarus <http://www.belstat.gov.by> (13.06.2019).

¹⁷⁹ Source of the data is the official site of the World Bank <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.TLF.TOTL.IN?locations=BY&view=chart> (20.06.2019).

Table 4

Employment by kind of economic activity¹⁸⁰

<i>Employment by kind of economic activity</i>	2016		2017		2018	
	%	<i>Thousand persons</i>	%	<i>Thousand persons</i>	%	<i>Thousand persons</i>
<i>Employed in the economy, Total'</i>	100	4 405,7	100	4 353,6	100	4 337,9
Agriculture, forestry and fishery	9,6	425,1	9,6	416,6	9,3	404,9
Industry	23,3	1 027,1	23,5	1023,3	23,7	1 028,6
Mining	0,2	10,6	0,2	10,4	0,2	10,6
Manufacturing	19,8	870,6	19,9	865,8	20,2	874,8
Electricity, gas, steam, hot water and air conditioning supply	2,2	99,3	2,3	98,2	2,2	96,7
Water supply; waste management; remediation activities	1,1	46,6	1,1	48,9	1,1	46,5
Construction	7,0	308,0	6,4	280,7	6,4	276,2
Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles	14,4	633,5	14,2	616,3	14,2	617,7
Transportation, storage, postal and courier activities	6,7	297,0	6,9	299,0	6,9	298,1
Accommodation and food service activities	2,2	95,4	2,2	94,8	2,2	93,9
Information and communication	2,2	98,8	2,4	104,5	2,6	113,9
Financial and insurance activities	1,6	72,7	1,6	70,4	1,6	68,0
Real estate activities	2,0	88,1	1,8	76,1	1,7	73,0
Professional, scientific and technical activities	3,1	136,5	3,2	140,2	3,2	137,3

¹⁸⁰ Source of the data is the official site of the National Statistical Committee of the Republic of Belarus <http://www.belstat.gov.by/ofitsialnaya-statistika/solialnaya-sfera/trud/godovye-dannye> (21.06.2019).

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Administrative and support service activities	2,1	91,5	2,3	102,1	2,3	101,4
Public administration	4,3	188,8	4,2	184,4	4,2	181,2
Education	10,3	451,8	10,4	451,5	10,4	452,6
Health and social work activities	7,3	320,5	7,4	323,6	7,5	325,3
Arts, sports, entertainment and recreation	2,1	91,0	2,1	90,0	1,9	84,5
Other service activities	1,7	74,1	1,7	74,0	1,7	73,8
Activities of households as employers; goods-and services-producing activities of households for own use	0,1	5,8	0,1	6,1	0,2	7,5

For the observed period, the country's social policy was aimed at ensuring a proper quality of life, creating a favourable social atmosphere in the society, upholding the principle of social justice, providing social benefits and assistance, and others. Those goals are achieved by addressing and solving issues related to a rise in fertility and Life expectancy, increase in labour productivity and improvement of working conditions, development of social infrastructure and, in general, creation of more comfortable living conditions for the population (*Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of the Republic of Belarus 2018; Бурова 2018*).

The role of CSOs in implementation and development of social policy of the state was essential for the period 2016-2018 (*Federation of Trade Unions in Belarus 2019; Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of the Republic of Belarus 2019*); particularly, by signing the General Agreement between government, employers and trade unions for the period 2019-2021 (*Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of the Republic of Belarus 2019*). It defined the main functions of trade unions, which would be of a democratic significance in the spheres, regulating social and labour relations. All this will enable trade unions to be properly involved in stages of developing and implementing socio-economic policy for 2019-2021.

6.4 Educational system on the way to integration

The Republic of Belarus has an agenda to actively establish international cooperation, which includes main goals, issues and priority partners in the spheres of science, education and technology. In spite of the fact that international scientific and technical cooperation of Belarus adheres to the principles of multilateralism, Russia's role as a key partner is undeniable and has been increasing over the years.¹⁸¹

The European vector of international scientific, technical, research and educational cooperation is implemented through cooperation with EU Member States and EaP countries. It can be vividly exemplified by the deepening of bilateral cooperation with the EU, participation of Belarusian scientists and learners in EU scientific and educational programmes as well as in the EaP regional platform, and others. Besides, Belarus has signed bilateral international treaties with 15 EU countries in the field of science and education and a significant part of them, also covers a wide range of issues related to trade, economy and culture. It is obvious that the EU sanctions policy against Belarus during the years of 2010-2016 hampered the development of a relevant contractual framework in the fields of science and education, limiting the level of expansion and funding of projects with partners. Consequently, after the lifting of sanctions, new perspectives for international scientific-technical integration and cooperation were opted for the country's scientific and educational system.

2016-2018 education and scientific policy was aimed at regulating the following key problems, such as: 1) integration and introduction of Belarusian scientists into European scientific network and formation of a new partnership for a successful implementation of projects and joint submission of new applications; 2) formation of a favourable environment to participate in Horizon

¹⁸¹ See the official site of the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Belarus <http://edu.gov.by/-sistema-obrazovaniya/upravlenie-mezhdunarodnogo-sotrudnichestva/otchety/index.php> (24.06.2019).

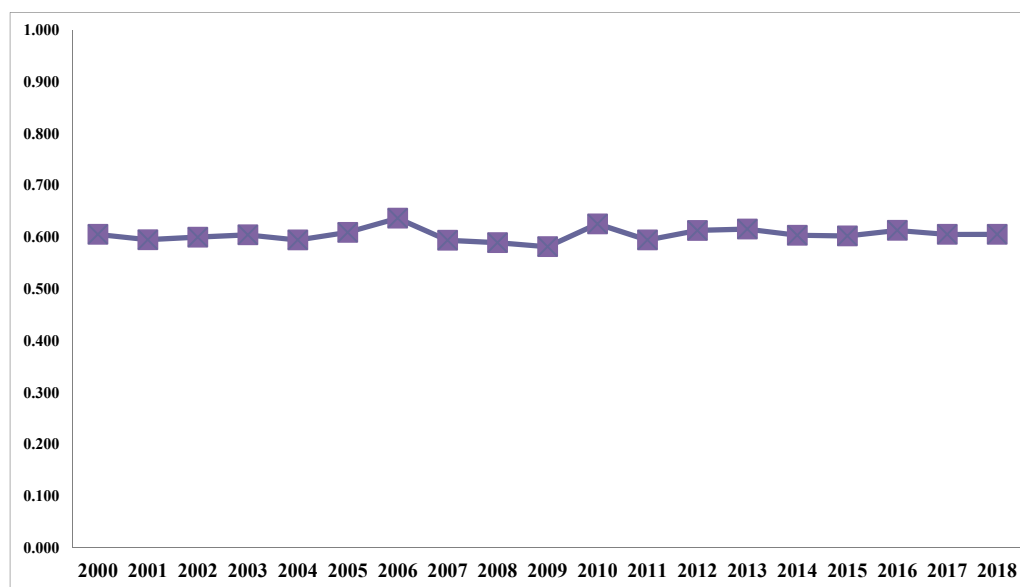
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2020 programme, hence reinforcing the development of scientific research in areas of priority; 3) implementation of a number of activities that have contributed to the preservation and development of the science and education sector, as such.

Figure 6

Educational Factors Index (2000-2018)*



2017 indicators of Educational Factors Index (EdFI) of Belarus decreased compared to the previous year (see Figure 6, Table 1). Figure 6 depicts that the EdFI grew up in 2016, therefore having a positive impact on democratic transformations. It should be mentioned that despite EdFI curve fluctuations that occurred within 2000-2017, an equivalent indicator was registered both in 2000 and 2017 (see Figure 6, Table 1).

2016-2017 HDI Education Index improved in comparison to the previous year and was recorded with 0,838 units, while Government expenditure on education amounted to 5%¹⁸² as a share of GDP.

* Source: calculations by the author.

The state Programme on Education and Youth Policy for 2016–2020¹⁸³ had a significant impact on raising the efficiency of education policy in Belarus. It defines the main objectives and priorities to develop and implement state policy in the education and youth spheres.¹⁸⁴

Table 5

Main indicators of education¹⁸⁵

	2016/ 2017	2017/ 2018	2018/ 2019
Number of pre-primary education institutions	3879	3812	3803
Enrolment, thous.	418,1	426,3	435,1
Number of general secondary education institutions	3155	3067	3 035
Enrolment, thous.	982,3	994,5	1010,4
Number of vocational-technical education institutions	196	182	180
Enrolment, thous.	70,3	66,9	65,7
Number of secondary specialized education institutions	230	226	226
Enrolment, thous.	117,8	114,1	113,3
Number of higher education institutions	51	51	51
Enrolment, thous.	313,2	284,3	268,1

¹⁸² See the official site of the UN HDI report <http://hdr.undp.org/en/data> (16.06.2019).

¹⁸³ See the official site of the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Belarus <http://edu.gov.by/about-ministry/obshchaya-informatsiya> (24.06.2019).

¹⁸⁴ See *ibid.*

¹⁸⁵ Source of the data is the official site of the 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 (24.06.2019).

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As it can be seen in Table 5, in view of key educational indicators, the number of pre-primary, general secondary education, secondary specialized and vocational technical higher and secondary institutions reduced.

State innovation development program of Belarus for 2016-2020¹⁸⁶ and package of events for 2017 had a decisive importance in the context of the progress achieved in education system and development of the national innovation system. In this regard, the development of scientific-technical information system was significant.¹⁸⁷ It promoted the formation and effective use of national information resources as well as their integration into the worldwide information space. Moreover, Belarusian users had an access to information resources worldwide, thereby contributing to the creation and marketing information products and services. In the pursuit of realization of this goal, modernization of scientific and technical libraries, information centers and foundations was strongly emphasized. They focused on the regulation of pre-primary, general secondary, vocational and higher education, as well as post-graduate, adult and inclusive secondary education issues.

6.5 Challenges to health modernization

Modern socio-demographic processes, economic growth and development of medical technologies pose serious challenges to the Belarusian healthcare system. The population expects the healthcare system to effectively counteract a rising trend in mortality, especially in the working-age population. Despite the decline in maternal deaths and infant mortality rates in recent years, it still requires much greater efforts from the Belarusian healthcare system to maintain that trend. The growth in the number of older persons in their population also implies numerous radical changes in the healthcare system,

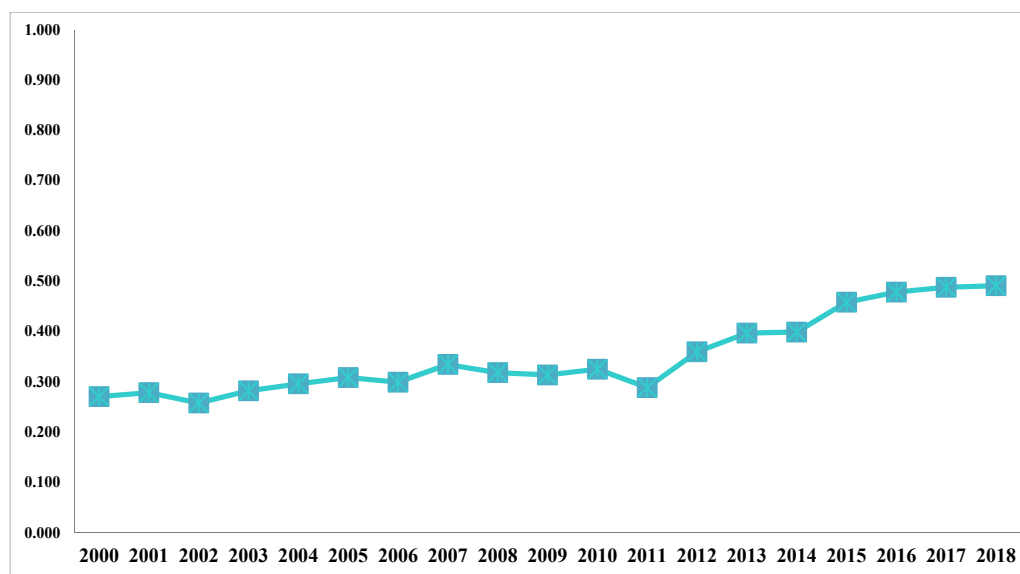
¹⁸⁶ See the official site of State Committee on Science and Technology of the Republic of Belarus <http://www.gknt.gov.by/deyatelnost/innovatsionnaya-politika/gpir/> (24.06.2019).

¹⁸⁷ See the official site of State Committee on Science and Technology of the Republic of Belarus <http://www.gknt.gov.by/deyatelnost/obespechenie-razvitiya-gsnti.php> (24.06.2019).

demanding higher expenditure on medicare, medical and social services. Moreover, economic growth will also result in registering stronger impact on organizing and financing medical assistance with the help of the state, business, population, and professional medical communities.

Figure 7

Health Factors Index (2000-2018)*



The curve of the Health factors Index (HFI) of Belarus for 2016-2018 improved by registering the highest indicator for the 2000-2018 period (see Figure 7, Table1).

It is stipulated by the growth in indicators of Life expectancy and Current health expenditure¹⁸⁸ for the years 2016-2018. The state program Health of the nation and demographic security for 2016-2020¹⁸⁹ was of decisive significance

* Source: calculations by the author.

¹⁸⁸ Source of the data is the official site of the National Statistical Committee of the Republic of Belarus http://www.belstat.gov.by/ofitsialnaya-statistika/solialnaya-sfera/zdravoohranenie_2/godovy-dannye (20.06.2019).

¹⁸⁹ See the official site of the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Belarus <http://minzdrav.gov.by/ru/ministerstvo/gosudarstvennye-programmy/index.php> (20.06.2019).

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in this context. It aims to improve the population health, raise public awareness of risky factors that may threaten to the society, promote healthy lifestyles, strengthen family values, and reduce mortality, especially in the working-age population, increase Life expectancy. Besides, it seeks to find solutions to the key issues related to improvement of quality and affordability of healthcare services, as well as optimalization of internal migration processes.¹⁹⁰ All the aforementioned will urge the country's government to consider a certain growth in healthcare expenditure in the near future, meanwhile demanding to increase efficiency in the use of the resources. As innovative medical technologies and emergence of new medications will increase possibilities for early detection and treatment of diseases in the country. At the same time, this progress will serve as a major cause for raising prices of medical services in Belarus, as the overwhelming majority of new technologies require large investments and ongoing spending.

Within 2016-2018, the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Belarus had initiated activities to develop a computerized medical and scientific information network, replenish medical information servers, and modernize information resources for healthcare organizations. All this was implemented on the basis of the telecommunication hub of the Republican Scientific Medical Library. Meanwhile, it enabled to provide scientific and informational support to health institutions by informing them of new methods of medical assistance, such as diagnosis, treatment, prevention of diseases, medical rehabilitation of patients, prosthetics. It is noteworthy that the Ministry of Health provides free and fast access to various types of relevant medical information, which is focused on one information resource, i.e. the MED.BY medical scientific information domain, which minimizes the time required by specialists to find the needed information. Moreover, it enables professionals to save resources aimed at acquiring and storing such information that is published in a variety of sources (*Ильина, Ильин 2017*). Therefore, an integrated interagency approach will be gradually emphasized in Belarus, where close interaction among health,

¹⁹⁰ See *ibid.*

educational and social protection infrastructures, as well as local governments and enterprises is required.

Table 6

Main indicators of public health¹⁹¹

	2016	2017	2018
Number of physician specialists (total, thsd)	54,5	54,8	55,4
Out of total physician specialists – medical practitioners			
total, thsd	41,5	42,0	42,5
per 10 000 population	43,7	44,3	44,9
Number of paramedical personnel			
total, thsd	125,8	126,3	126,9
per 10 000 population	132,4	133,1	133,9
Number of hospital facilities	636	622	612
Number of hospital beds			
total, thsd	80,3	80,0	79,5
per 10 000 population	84,5	84,2	83,9
Number of outpatient-and-polyclinic facilities	2 311	2 196	2 230

According to main health indicators, displayed in Figure 6, the number of physician specialists, acting doctors and paramedics increased compared to 2016-2018.

BELMED international technical assistance project, funded by the European Union and implemented in collaboration with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), WHO and others,¹⁹² continued its activities during the period under

¹⁹¹ Source of the data is the official site of the National Statistical Committee of the Republic of Belarus http://www.belstat.gov.by/ofitsialnaya-statistika/solialnaya-sfera/zdravoohranenie_2 (22.06.2019).

¹⁹² See the official site of the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Belarus <http://minzdrav.gov.by/ru/ministerstvo/mezhdunarodnaya-deyatelnost/proekt-belmed.php> (20.06.2019).

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consideration. BELMED initiated the prevention of noncommunicable diseases, promotion of healthy lifestyle and support to modernization of the health system in Belarus.¹⁹³ It is worth mentioning activities undertaken within international accreditation of testing laboratories for medical products and support to healthcare¹⁹⁴ annual programme implemented by a bilateral Belarus-EU cooperation.

The state has recently made considerable investments in the country's healthcare system; nonetheless, there are still many compiled issues that need urgent solutions. Therefore, in order to overcome new challenges, it is necessary to modernize the health system of the country by increasing its technological, organizational and professional level. It is noteworthy that the state, business, media, CSOs and professional medical community consistently pursue disease prevention policies in an attempt to raise health value, which are the citizens' priorities in Belarus.

6.6 Development trends of the Index of Democracy Level

In the current stage of Belarusian statehood building, the country's political system is characterized by strong presidential powers, with significant involvement of the government and parliament, on the contrary to a limited involvement of political parties and CSOs in the country's political life. This is in the case when further progress of Belarusian society and statehood building is linked to the development of parliamentarism, multi-party system and civilarchic culture, as well as appropriate use of their potential.

During the period under consideration, national and geopolitical issues related to the EAEU and the Union State building, were also significant in the political transformations of Belarus. They concerned the correlation of the supranational component of the institutions of the Union State and Belarus and

¹⁹³ See *ibid.*

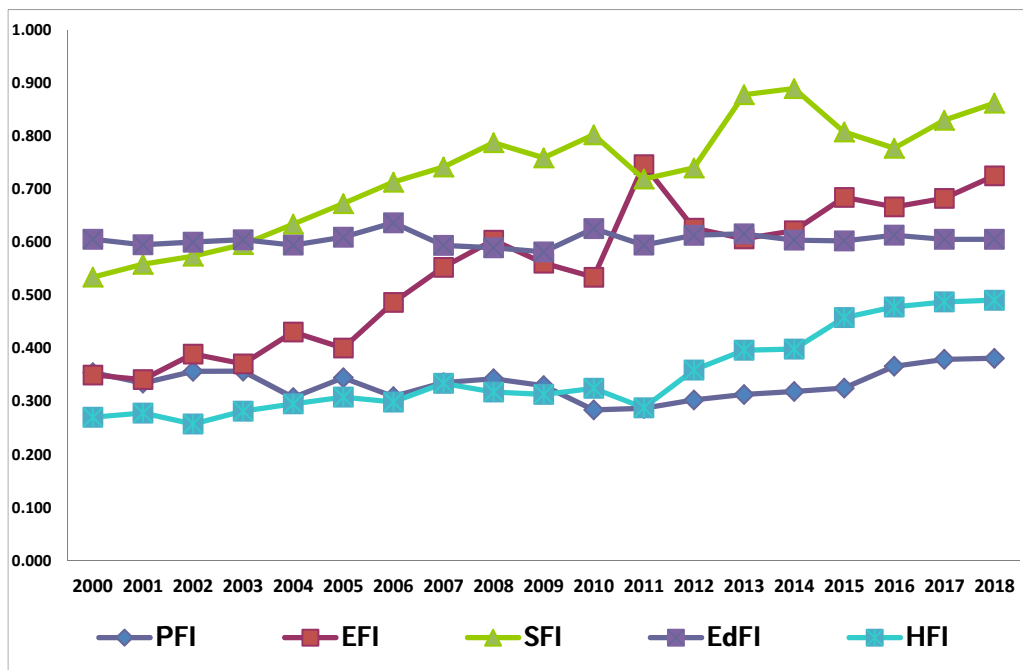
¹⁹⁴ See *ibid.*

Russia sovereignty. Nonetheless, the present-day state of "united" integration between the two countries, however, can hardly be considered "promising". In this context, a multi-vector foreign policy pursued by Belarus fostered the protection and implementation of national interests.

With democratic transformations of the Belarussian political system, effective cooperation with the EU was of particular importance to the President and the political elite, as in case the European integration of Belarus deepens, the EU's obligations in terms of financial and economic support and technological modernization of the republic will increase.

Figure 8

Indices of Political, Economic, Social, Health and Educational Factors affecting the Index of Democracy Level of Belarus for the timeframe 2000-2018*



* Source: calculations by the author.

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

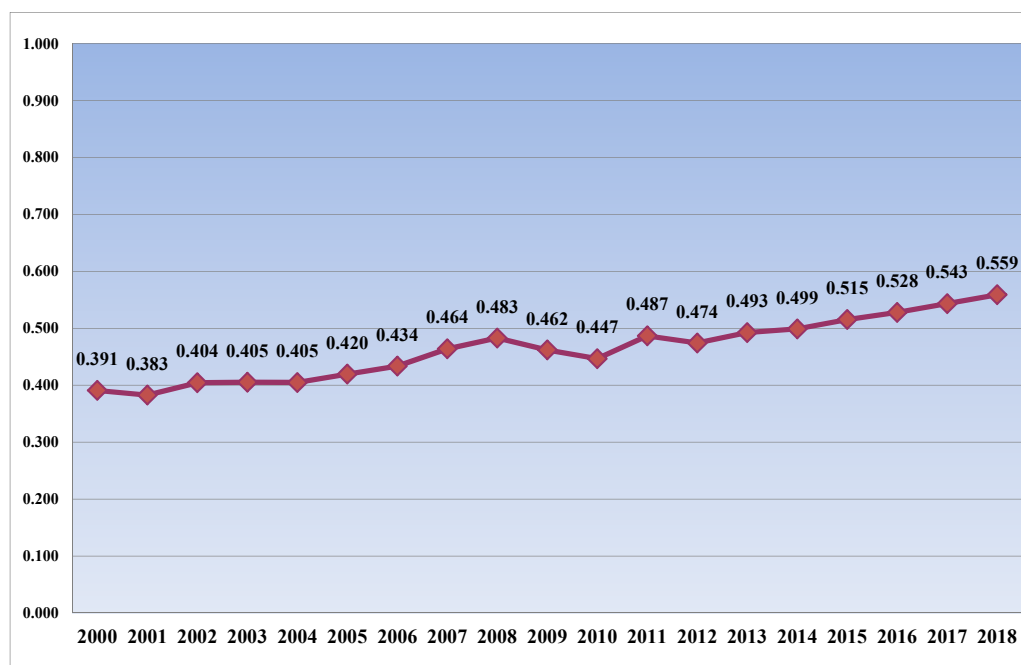
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The curve of the Index of Democracy Level (IDL) of Belarus, studied within the period of 2000-2018, was observed with a certain growth (see Figure 8, Figure 9, Table 1). As it can be concluded from Figure 1 and 2, the highest and the lowest IDL indicators were registered in 2018 and 2001 respectively.

Figure 9

Index of Democracy Level of Belarus for the period 2000-2018*



Improvement of 2017-2018 IDL of Belarus was mainly protected by a constant growth of PFI, EFI, SFI and HFI subindex indicators (see Figure 8, Figure 9, Table 1). In this respect, 2016 indicators of EdFI subindex had a favourable effect, as well. Nonetheless, a 2017 decline of the former adversely affected the civiliarchic situation in the country.

A civiliarchic participation of opposition forces and CSOs as well as their ability to consolidate social groups and protect the citizens' interests remained of a concern during democratization and state building stages of the Belarusian

* Source: calculations by the author.

political regime in 2016-2018. On the one hand, president's supremacy over the political system, pressure exerted on political parties and CSOs by state administration and local self-government bodies, as well as attempts at governing them "from the top" had a negative impact on a complete establishment of civiliarchic control. On the other hand, insufficient level of civiliarchic culture, low efficiency of parties and CSOs have a partial influence on internal processes.

6.7 Regression analysis of the Index of Democracy Level

Arusyak Aleksanyan, Ashot Aleksanyan

Within the framework of the research, the regression analysis displays the variables those indices that were included in the model and which had comparatively essential influence on the IDL of Belarus.

Accordign to the results, compiled through the regression, it is concluded that there has been a significant correlation between the IDL_i^{195} and and political, economic and social variables. In reference to educational and health factors, there was no significant correlation between IDL_i and their variables.

Thereby, in comply with the results, achieved through the regression, the correlation has been established between IDL_i and political variable of Press Freedom (see Table 7).

Table 7

Regression analysis of the IDL_i (PFI variables)

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Coefficient</i>	<i>Adj.R²</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>N</i>
Press Freedom	0,006	0,234	0,010	24

¹⁹⁵ IDL_i is the Index of Democracy Level cleaned from the corresponding variable during every paired regression analysis.

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Economic variables, precisely, Domestic credit, and Index of Economic Freedom have been significantly correlated with IDL_i (see Table 8).

Table 8

Regression analysis of the IDL_i (EFI variables)

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Coefficient</i>	<i>Adj.R²</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>N</i>
Domestic credit (% of GDP)	0,004	0,627	0,000	24
Index of Economic Freedom	0,009	0,766	0,000	24

Strong correlation between IDL_i and social variables of Real wage, and Gini index has been established (see Table 9).

Table 9

Regression analysis of the IDL_i (SFI variables)

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Coefficient</i>	<i>Adj.R²</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>N</i>
Real wage (\$100)	0,028	0,724	0,000	24
Gini index	-2,65	0,636	0,000	24

As mentioned above, Press Freedom indicator had a significant impact on the IDL of Belarus. It implies that one unit change of Press Freedom will result in IDL_i reduction by 0,006 units. Despite numerous and heated discussions about media in Belarus, the situation is quite "clear". Their activities are resembled with the condition of the Belarusian economy, politics and public opinion. From this point of view, the country's media have become an tool for democratizing the authoritarian regime; the tool that is still actively governed by the state and business with insufficient consideration of the civil society's interests. It is obvious that the financial dependence of the media affects the quality of information, and the country's ruling elite use it to manipulate public opinion.

In view of economic factors that have an essential influence on the IDL of Belarus, increase in Domestic credit and indicator of the Index of Economic

Freedom can be singled out. Hence, 1% growth in Domestic credit and one unit change of the Index of Economic Freedom will lead to IDL_i growth by 0,004 and 0,009 units accordingly.

Social factors, i.e. Real wage and Gini index are the most significantly influential on the IDL. \$100 increase in Real wage and 0,1 unit decrease in Gini index will protect the IDL_i growth by 0,028 and 0,27 units respectively.

In an attempt to improve the IDL of Belarus, it will be efficient to focus on the aforementioned political, economic and social factors, as their sufficient observations will contribute to a solution of the issues of strategic importance aimed at modernization of Belarus statehood and sovereignty. In this respect, patterns for statehood building and development of civil society and democracy make up a system of combined factors that are applied in a specific succession.

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7. CYCLES OF CONTAINMENT OF DEMOCRACY AND LIBERALISM IN KAZAKHSTAN: REGULATED AND CHANGING ORDER OF POWER

ASHOT ALEKSANYAN

Globalization and regional integration processes have accelerated the modernization of political, socio-economic, cultural and scientific spheres in Kazakhstan. As a result, radical changes in the geopolitical situation, occurring in the regions of Central Asia, have affected institutions, values and norms as well as culture of the Kazakhstan society, which is still being in transition stage.

Preconditions for democratization of Kazakhstan's political system stirred special interest in comparison to similar processes, taking place in other Central Asian countries within 2016-2018. They reflected common features and peculiarities of conservatism and liberalization that turned Kazakhstan into most successful, influential and sustainably developing country in Central Asia. The experience of this country is interesting for the fact that Kazakhstan has succeeded in overcoming certain social, ethno-national, religious and ideological divisions of its traditional society. However, during the period under review, the country's president and ruling elite have still failed to abandon the model of domestic conflict resolution, by resorting to a compromise between political actors as the main tool of interaction.

Within the mentioned period, political, social, economic, educational and health factors were of great significance in the democratic developments of

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public institutions in modern Kazakhstan and the Central Asia region, as such (see Table 1).

Table 1

**Indices of Political, Economic, Social, Educational and Health Factors of
Kazakhstan for the 2000 and 2018 period***

Years	PFI	EFI	SFI	EdFI	HFI	IDL
2000	0,318	0,557	0,553	0,436	0,099	0,395
2001	0,311	0,599	0,551	0,439	0,072	0,400
2002	0,301	0,586	0,576	0,441	0,086	0,397
2003	0,303	0,551	0,593	0,427	0,085	0,389
2004	0,296	0,668	0,622	0,413	0,109	0,420
2005	0,305	0,647	0,646	0,423	0,098	0,421
2006	0,296	0,721	0,675	0,449	0,080	0,441
2007	0,316	0,722	0,723	0,460	0,049	0,452
2008	0,321	0,723	0,755	0,444	0,092	0,461
2009	0,338	0,659	0,759	0,471	0,156	0,462
2010	0,328	0,574	0,793	0,461	0,118	0,434
2011	0,288	0,607	0,828	0,466	0,123	0,431
2012	0,280	0,604	0,871	0,471	0,171	0,437
2013	0,303	0,603	0,891	0,465	0,185	0,450
2014	0,325	0,563	0,867	0,470	0,213	0,449
2015	0,328	0,566	0,817	0,464	0,248	0,449
2016	0,324	0,664	0,730	0,477	0,286	0,469
2017	0,328	0,498	0,761	0,474	0,303	0,432
2018	0,330	0,509	0,767	0,474	0,309	0,437

* Source: calculations by the author.

The EFI, SFI, HFI, EdFI and the indices of certain years estimated in accordance with IDL may have a slight difference in comparison to the indices of the corresponding years estimated in the previous publications in the result of updated data, the insertion of new data and the change of minimum and maximum values.

The national and civil identity of Kazakhstan is naturally linked to the country's geopolitical position, while historical and cultural traditions and norms set the functional and structural basis of the country's public authority. It is evident that major problems existing in transitional society and related to the state's political regime and presidential form of government have not been sufficiently explored within the framework of the "third wave of democratization." It is noteworthy that Kazakhstan's experience arouses much interest and calls up urgency for the comparative analysis of post-Soviet institutional transformations.

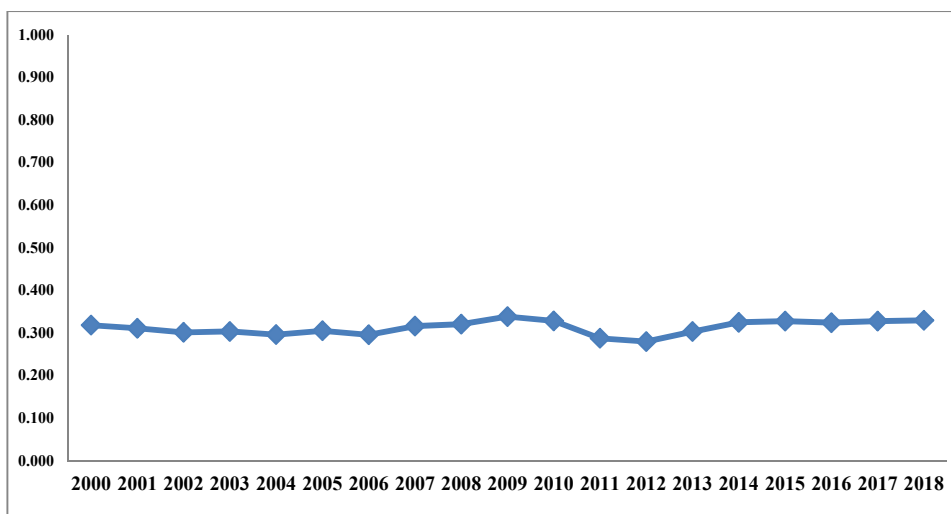
7.1 The system of institutionalization of forms of government: functional and organizational aspects

Within the given conditions, stability of constitutional and judicial order of Kazakhstan largely depends on the level of expansion of functions of presidential form of government and political regime. The aforementioned allowed the state and local government bodies to increase control over activities, undertaken by opposition forces, civil society and social movements. The President's steps aimed at strengthening presidency and presidential form of government were considered the most significant in this context. This was quite evident in processes related to political modernization of the society, constitutional reforms and adoption of laws, separation, electivity and accountability of state authorities and many other issues. It was apparent that the "vertical" strengthening of the executive branch weakened the position of the legislative one; additionally, making parliamentary and representative bodies elections more formal than before.

Political Factors Index of the Republic of Kazakhstan (RK) improved in 2018, when compared to 2016-2017 (see Figure 1, Table 1). Moreover, the 2018 indicator was only lower than the 2009 one within the given 2000-2018 period (see Figure 1, Table 1).

Figure 1

Political Factors Index (2000-2018)*



One of the main features of political transformations was that they were synchronous with economic reforms in Kazakhstan. If succeeded, they strengthened and reinforced each other. On the contrary, if transformations were unsuccessful in one area of public life, they resulted in the failure of reforms in other areas.

Institutional transformations of the country's political system on micro, meso and macro levels were significant in view of their impact on PFI of Kazakhstan. In particular, macro-level institutional transformation were aimed at developing a culture of representation; therefore, implementing reforms of the executive, legislative and judicial branches, including the electoral system, as well. Whereas meso level transformations encompassed procedures aimed at representing public interest through parties, trade unions, CSOs and other public unions. It is noteworthy that success or failure of the representation are conditioned by possibility and efficiency of democratic consolidation on macro, meso and micro levels.

* Source: calculations by the author.

Extraordinary parliamentary elections conducted on 20 March 2016 had an essential impact on the PFI. As a result, 3 out of 6 political parties entered the Majilis¹⁹⁶ (the lower house of parliament). The ruling party Nur Otan and the Assembly of the People of Kazakhstan¹⁹⁷ (APK) gained an absolute majority. Ak Zhol and the Communist People's Party of Kazakhstan (CPPK) each won 7 seats respectively. It should be noted that the political landscape and electoral procedures were characterized by the president of the country Nursultan Nazarbayev's dominance. Consequently, contradictions between the ruling party and the opposition, government and the CSOs remained unregulated in terms of political tolerance. Within the context of democratic reforms, an urgent solution to issues related to reduction of shadow economy and poverty, activation of anti-corruption policy, protection of social justice, and etc. are particularly vital for CSOs. Peculiarities of organizing political life in those processes, on the one hand, were conditioned by geopolitical position and economic ties of Kazakhstan worldwide, and, on the other hand, by traditional social order, based on a unique approach to a relationship between ownership and powers.

Draft constitutional amendments and changes proposed by the President Nursultan Nazarbayev had a considerable impact on the 2016-2018 PFI. The draft¹⁹⁸ was originally formulated by a special working group set up by presidential decree. The proposed constitutional reforms were submitted to nationwide discussions,¹⁹⁹ which formally started on January 25th and ended on

¹⁹⁶ Source of the data is the official site of the OSCE/ODIHR <http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/-kazakhstan/222541> (24.06.2019).

¹⁹⁷ See the official site of the Assembly of the People of Kazakhstan <https://assembly.kz> (29.06.2019).

¹⁹⁸ See the draft Law on Amendments and changes to the Constitution of Kazakhstan" (1 March 2017). Accessed: 23.06.2019. https://online.zakon.kz/document/?doc_id=33660150#pos=6;-155.

¹⁹⁹ See the Decree of the President of Kazakhstan from 25 January 2017 №141: "On nationwide discussions for proposed draft law on amendments and changes to the Constitution of Kazakhstan. Accessed: 23.06.2019. https://online.zakon.kz/Document/?doc_id=35543562#pos=-0;59.

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February 26th. It was signed²⁰⁰ by the President after the approval of the Constitutional Council.²⁰¹ The following statement made by Constitutional Council is noteworthy: "The constitutional reforms initiated by the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, who is entitled as Elbas,* are in line with the country's historical evolution and provide for the further development of democracy, when more responsibilities are assumed by the parliament and government under the stable presidential form of government²⁰²." It is worth noting that these constitutional reforms were aimed at unveiling the President Nazarbayev's "100 Concrete Steps"²⁰³ nationwide program.

The aforementioned constitutional reforms reinforced the President's powers in implementing efficient functioning of the branches of state administration and ensuring their interaction in the areas of country's defense and foreign policy, state administration and Constitution protection. At the same time, a significant portion of the president's powers in socio-economic sphere were handed over to the government. It was also important that a new effective procedure for the protection of human and citizen's constitutional rights and freedoms had been established. According to it, Kazakhstan both recognizes and, in fact, guarantees human and civil rights and freedoms. In terms of state building, independence and integrity of the state is enshrined by the Constitution; nonetheless, the Constitutional Council's conclusion is mandatory if any amendments and changes to the law are initiated.

In the modern world order, Kazakhstan's economic progress has paved the way for making transformations in the authoritarian regime, hence, leading to

²⁰⁰ See the Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan from 10 March 2017 № 51-VI: "On introduction of amendments and changes to the Constitution of Kazakhstan. Accessed: 23.06.2019. https://online.zakon.kz/Document/?doc_id=32937557#pos=3;-155.

²⁰¹ See a normative act of the Constitutional Council of the Republic of Kazakhstan from 9 March 2017 года №1 «On amendments and changes to the Constitution of Kazakhstan be in line with the Constitution. Accessed: 23.06.2019. https://online.zakon.kz/Document/?doc_id=36772838#pos=-3;-137.

²⁰² See *ibid*.

²⁰³ See "100 Concrete Steps to Implement Five Institutional Reforms," Accessed: 23.06.2019. <http://www.adilet.gov.kz/ru/articles/100-shagov-po-5-institucionalnym-reformam>.

rearrangements of the government system. It used to require much more time for the president to adopt and implement any such decision before, because the ruling elite and party clashed against different, sometimes totally contradicting interests. On the one hand, it was noticeable that reformers, who favoured for changes within the ruling elite, gained new opportunities to strengthen their positions under the given circumstances. On the other hand, the "discourse" on proposing a successor, which was usually rejected by opposition forces and CSOs, was on the agenda. However, the country's integration into a global economy as well as its economic growth has contributed to expansion and strengthening of the "middle class" as a force that is more interested in establishing democratic procedures, as economic and political systems which are based on democratic values can effectively solve the problems that their society is faced with.

There was a growing discontent in the state's society, opposition forces, CSOs and foreign investors with the authoritarian rule, restriction of political liberties, instances of corruption, nepotism caused by the abuse of powers by the police and government. Most of the population, civil movements and especially a younger generation perceived the aforementioned as a barrier to the further development of the country. It is clear that the goal of democratization in Kazakhstan should be not only defined by stability but also by the possibility to initiate stable and expected changes. They can lead the Kazakh society not by the "laws" defined by historical necessity, but by the path chosen by the society.

The main vectors, pursued by the country in the foreign policy and aimed at raising the international image of the state, had an essential effect on the 2016-2018 PFI of Kazakhstan. Kazakhstan had been efficiently cooperative with the UN lately, having a traditionally leading position in the region, especially in areas, such as health, migration, ecology, fight against illicit drug production and trafficking, as well as protection of children and women's rights. UN launched programmes to assist Kazakhstan in closing Semipalatinsk test site

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and recovering the Aral Sea which was an example of a productive cooperation (*UN 2018; UN News 2019*).

Within the observed period, Kazakhstan managed to establish the UN Hub in Almaty, designed to promote the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals in Central Asia until 2030.²⁰⁴ It should be added that the country actively continued its cooperation within the framework of the United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia,²⁰⁵ as well as United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.²⁰⁶ Surely, on 28 June 2016 Kazakhstan's election to the United Nations Security Council as a non-permanent seat on the UN Security Council in 2017-2018²⁰⁷ was a landmark diplomatic event of the country. Besides, another important fact was that Kazakhstan, for the first time in its history, assumed the Presidency of the United Nations Security Council²⁰⁸ in January 2018. In this respect, the country emphasized promotion of interests of the Central Asian region with the worldwide focus on them. Thus, it became the first country in the region elected to the UN Security Council, which actively indicated the problems of Central Asia, proposing its concepts and visions for regional development. A number of initiatives were implemented within the month of the country's presidency. Perhaps, the most important of those were bedates on building a regional partnership in Central Asia and Afghanistan as a model to link security and development. Presidency of the UNSC has a significant international status; hence, it raised the country's international image. This is an important regionally observed indicator, especially when compared to other Central Asian countries by taking into account Kazakhstan's active participation in UNESCO, EAEU, CSTO, Organization of Islamic

²⁰⁴ See the official site of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan <http://mfa.gov.kz/en/content-view/v-almaty-otmetili-25-letie-ofisa-oon-v-kazahstane> (26.06.2019).

²⁰⁵ See the official site of United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia <https://unrcca.unmissions.org> (26.06.2019).

²⁰⁶ See the official site of the UNO <https://www.un.org/counterterrorism/ctitf/en/uncct/press-release-kazakhstan-supports-uncct> (26.06.2019).

²⁰⁷ See the official site of the Embassy of the Republic of Kazakhstan in Georgia <http://mfa.kz/ru/tbilisi/content-view/clenstvo-kazahstana-v-sovete-bezopasnosti-oon-2> (26.06.2019).

²⁰⁸ See *ibid*.

Cooperation (OIC) and Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States²⁰⁹ (the Turkic Council) in 2018.

In the context of the above-mentioned observations, the Fifth Caspian Summit²¹⁰ held on August 12, 2018 in Aktau, was of much significance, as the presidents of five countries, namely, Azerbaijan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Russia and Turkmenistan adopted the Convention On the Legal Status of the Caspian Sea.²¹¹ Accordingly, new Caspian Sea legal procedures were established with an aim to deepen comprehensive coastal cooperation (*Kadir 2019*).

The mission of Kazakhstan as a mediator in the peaceful settlement of the Syrian conflict was important for the PFI as well. Despite the fact that the civil war in Syria still continues, the Astana process had influenced the strengthening of negotiations and peace settlement procedures. In particular, the Astana peace process, launched since January 2017, has continued up to 2018-2019 (*AFP 2018; The Astana Times 2019a, The Astana Times 2019b*). During the period, there was reported progress on establishing and separating ceasefire zones, de-escalation of the conflict and military-political tensions as well as establishing monitoring on cease-fire regime and etc.

Within the given period, Kazakhstan continued to take an active part in the process of developing common rules and standards in the EAEU by reinforcing integrated strategies. In contrast to the previous integration projects, EAEU political influence is much more tangible to Kazakh citizens due to formation of a single labour market and creation of certain social guarantees. Deepening of an effective integration and strengthening of institutional links have not contributed only to a development of Kazakhstan-Russia economic cooperation,

²⁰⁹ See the official site of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan <http://mfa.gov.kz/en/content-view/ois> (26.06.2019), official site of the Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States <https://www.turkkon.org/en/turk-konseji-hakkinda> (26.06.2019).

²¹⁰ See the official site of the President of the RF <http://en.kremlin.ru/catalog/countries/KZ/events/58300> (26.06.2019), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan <http://mfa.gov.kz/en/content-view/zulfia-amanzolova-kaspijdi-kkykytk-mrtebesi-aktau-konferenciasyny-mni> (26.06.2019).

²¹¹ See the official site of the President of the RF <http://en.kremlin.ru/supplement/5328> (26.06.2019).

but also to improvement of the current allied and political interaction (*Осадчая 2018, 35-54; Дробот 2018, 194-222; Шлыков 2017, 58-76; Никулина, Торопыгин 2017, 60-67*). Nonetheless, there were some changes in Kazakhstan and Eurasian cooperation format triggered by the events, happening in Crimea and Ukraine. It is noteworthy that the EAEU partners did not support Russia's response to the sanctions imposed by the Western countries. Moreover, it had a negative impact, but did not provide the reason to reject further development of the EAEU. At the same time, the country developed a foreign policy based on Eurasian oriented ideas and multi-vectorism. (*Редакция газеты «МК в Казахстане» 2019; ГУ «Библиотека Первого Президента РК-Елбасы» 2019; RIA News 2015; Панченко 2016*). Thus, Kazakhstan's participation in the Eurasian integration process was not only meant to satisfy its economic interests, but also to ensure an implementation of Kazakhstan's Eurasian ideas in practice. It is worth mentioning that, Eurasian orientation has become both the basis of mapping out foreign policy strategy, and, to a certain extent, the state's ideology.

EU Country Roadmap for engagement with Civil Society 2018-2020 in Kazakhstan²¹² had an indispensable effect on enhancement of CSOs' role and strengthening of Kazakhstan-EU bilateral cooperation. The main document, being a landmark achievement in the country's foreign policy, is the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between EU and Kazakhstan, signed many years ago (*Official Journal of the European Union 2016*). Post-Soviet Kazakhstan has always been one of the priorities in EU foreign policy vector. This very fact has led to a shift in the balance of forces in the region and changes in priorities of states with Eurasian integration intention. However, since 2015 the EU and Kazakhstan relations, to some extent, have been conditioned by Russia-EU relations.

²¹² See the official site of the EU delegation to the Republic of Kazakhstan « EU Country Roadmap for engagement with Civil Society 2018-2020 in Kazakhstan» // https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/kazakhstan/61233/eu-country-roadmap-engagement-civil-society-2018-2020-kazakhstan_en (26.08.2019).

According to Nations in Transit report published by the Freedom House, the state's democratic indicators had a downward tendency. The gross democracy score was estimated by 6,61 units in 2016, but it deteriorated in consecutive 2017 (6,64) and 2018 years (6,71) (see Table 2). Respectively, based on the indicators, Kazakhstan was classified as a country with a "consolidated authoritarian regime".²¹³ At the same time, CSOs have deep mistrust of the state authorities, local self-government bodies and political forces in their fight against corruption. They also have a negative attitude towards provision of guarantees for judicial system independence.

Table 2
Freedom House report on democratic transformations in Kazakhstan (2018)²¹⁴

<i>Factors for Democracy Progress</i>	<i>2018</i>
National Democratic Governance	6,75
Electoral Process	6,75
Civil Society	6,75
Independent Media	6,75
Local Democratic Governance	6,50
Judicial Framework and Independence	6,75
Corruption	6,75
<i>Democracy Score</i>	<i>6,71</i>

During the period under review, repressions against a number of Kazakh trade unions as well as their leaders continued, in particular, and the Federation of Independent Trade Unions that replaced the Federation of Free Trade Unions was dissolved. It caused concern that movements organized by trade unions and acts of civil disobedience were accompanied by arrests and trials (*Central trade-union newspaper "Solidarnost" 2019*). Despite the fact that international, European and Russian trade unions supported their Kazakh

²¹³ See the official site of the Freedom House <https://freedomhouse.org/report/nations-transit/nations-transit-2018> (20.06.2019).

²¹⁴ Source of the data is the official site of the Freedom House <https://freedomhouse.org/report/nations-transit/2018/kazakhstan> (20.06.2019).

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counterparts, the country's authorities showed disregard. It is worth noting that the aforementioned authoritarian interventions were also recorded in the report of international human rights organization published by Human Rights Watch (*Human Rights Watch 2019, 321-331*). In such situations, the government of the country, as a social partner, recognized the Federation of Trade Unions of the Republic of Kazakhstan.²¹⁵ On 31 January 2018, the General Agreement for 2018-2020 was signed by the Federation, the republican association of employers and the government.²¹⁶

Recurring to other PFI variables, it should be noted that Political Stability and Rule of Law indicators reduced in 2018 when compared to the previous year, whereas the Corruption Perceptions Index increased and had a record high indicator for the period of 2000-2018.

Table 3

Global Gender Gap Index (GGGI) of Kazakhstan for the 2016-2018 period²¹⁷

GGGI subindex	2016		2017		2018	
	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score
Economic participation and opportunity	31	0,745	30	0,744	32	0,741
Educational attainment	58	0,995	48	0,997	30	1,000
Health and survival	1	0,980	36	0,979	42	0,979
Political empowerment	77	0,153	93	0,130	94	0,130
GGGI	51	0,718	52	0,713	60	0,712

²¹⁵ See the official site of the Federation of Trade Unions of the Republic of Kazakhstan <http://fprk.kz/en> (20.06.2019).

²¹⁶ See *ibid*.

²¹⁷ Source of the data is the official site of the World Economic Forum <https://www.weforum.org/reports/the-global-gender-gap-report-2016>, <https://www.weforum.org/reports/the-global-gender-gap-report-2017>, <https://www.weforum.org/reports/the-global-gender-gap-report-2018> (21.06.2019).

In reference to the Global Gender Gap Index (GGGI), as a PFI of the IDL, it must be stated that Kazakhstan occupied the 51 and 52 positions within 2016-2017 out of 144 states, while in 2018 it took 60th place out of 149 states (*World Economic Forum 2016; 2017; 2018*). Table 3 displays that Political Empowerment subindex was registered with the lowest indicator for the period of 2016-2018 (see Table 3).

By summing up, it has to be mentioned that the 2018 PFI curve grew up in comparison to the previous years. This is mainly conditioned by processes of transition from authoritarianism to democracy in Kazakhstan, and a combination of various stages aimed at regime transformation. Despite some positive tendencies, however, major issues related to liberalization and democratization the country's political life, implementation of political and economic reforms were usually settled by means of various toolkit that were typical of authoritarian regime.

7.2 The potential for modernizing economic growth

Economic growth is a key indicator in macroeconomics, which helps to estimate not only a complete growth in production, but also the country's ability to meet growing needs of its population, as well as support improvement of the quality of life and democratization. Moreover, economic growth is an indicator of the growth in the country's economic capacity by increasing real GDP production and services. All this, by all means, is related to qualitative components such as improved production factors with the help of scientific and technological progress, improved management methods at macro and micro levels, as well as an increase in general educational, cultural and level of financial security of the population. In this regard, economic growth factors of the country are important, which opt to adequately assess democratic transformations, as well as show their positive and negative effects impacting the sustainable development of the country.

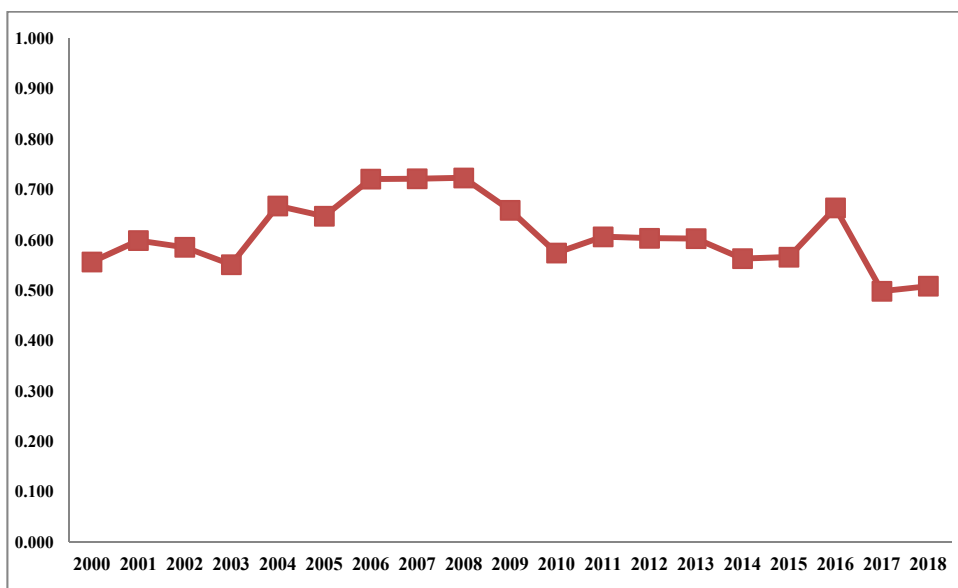
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Strategic interests of the most important countries worldwide, i.e. US, Europe, China and Russia, have focused on Central Asia, because the region has huge reserves of energy resources that are essential for further development of the world economy.

2016-2018 Kazakhstan's state and local self-government bodies faced numerous major economic problems. They were mainly caused by unpredictability of free “open” market, as well as the country's deep integration into the world economy. The latter was particularly noticeable given the fluctuations in the value of shares in the national currency and stock market, rise in inflation and bank interest rates, pressure on public debt and etc. Moreover, abuses related to shadow economy hampered the effectiveness of the government's economic policy. At the same time, there existed concerns about the volatile trends in the economy, reluctance of investors and creditors to be engaged in such risky environment.

Figure 2

Economic Factors Index (2000-2018)*



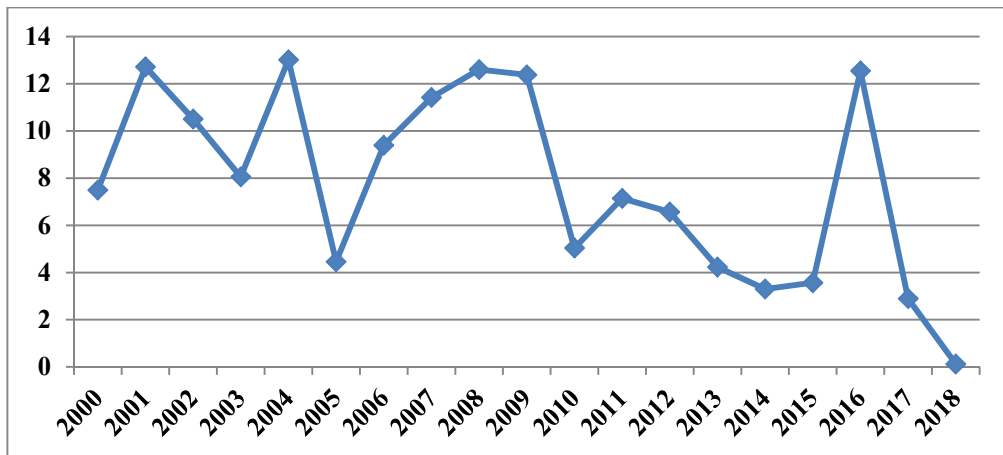
* Source: calculations by the author.

The analysis of the Economic Factors Index (EFI) curve of the IDL of Kazakhstan conducted for the period of 2016-2018, displayed that it grew in 2016 in comparison to 2009-2015 (see Figure 2, Table 1). Nonetheless, it drastically fell in 2017; hence registering a record low rating for the observed period, which was mitigated, to some extent. As it is depicted in Figure 2, the EFI curve of the IDL was registered with certain fluctuations during 2000-2018. As a result, it had a negative trend. Consequently, it was measured by 0,557 units in 2000, whereas in 2018 it went down to 0,509 (see Figure 2, Table 1).

Reduction in Foreign direct investments (FDI), Index of Economic Freedom and GNI per capita had a decreasing effect on the 2018 EFI.²¹⁸

Figure 3

Foreign direct investments in Kazakhstan for the period 2000-2018 (% of GDP)²¹⁹



It is evident in Figure 3 that FDI indicator was unstable in Kazakhstan during 2000-2018. Therefore, in 2017-2018 it decreased compared to an increase in 2016.²²⁰ Moreover, the 2018 FDI indicator was the lowest in the

²¹⁸ Source of the data is the official site of the World Bank <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/-BX.KLT.DINV.WD.GD.ZS?locations=KZ> (24.07.2019), Ministry of National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan Statistics committee <http://www.stat.gov.kz> (24.07.2019).

²¹⁹ Source of the data is the official site of the World Bank <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/-BX.KLT.DINV.WD.GD.ZS?locations=KZ> (24.07.2019).

²²⁰ See *ibid*.

period 2000-2018. To address this problem and ensure structural reforms of the economy, it is crucial to attract foreign capital into the country's economy. Judging from Kazakhstan's experience it can be concluded that the inflow of foreign capital has had a positive impact on the economy. Investments have assisted in strengthening private entrepreneurship by mobilizing and accumulating capital for large-scale projects implementation. It is also noteworthy that economic integration processes undertaken by Kazakhstan in EAEU are still challenging in terms of investment. (*Ministry of Energy of the Republic of Kazakhstan 2017; 2018a; 2018b*). However, it needs to be underlined that reduction in investment does not prove that EAEU has an ineffective impact on Kazakhstan, since the state's membership in the aforementioned union coincided with extremely negative phenomena, occurring in Russia's economy. It is noteworthy that Kazakh government considers strengthening of economic ties within the EAEU as a means to increase foreign investors' confidence in the post-Soviet region, which will result in a number of investment opportunities for the country (*Ministry of Energy of the Republic of Kazakhstan 2017; 2018a*). In spite of the government's reforms in an attempt to improve its business environment; nevertheless, international reports stated insurmountable obstacles impeding flows of investments. In particular, issues related to corruption in state institutions, low levels of judicial independence as well as deficiencies in the spheres of protection of intellectual property, customs, anti-monopoly, tax administration, and transport sector. All those mentioned problems undermine interrelation of strategic goals and objectives of the government, while there is no enough budget to fully assist in their implementation.

Activation of innovative policy was of great importance for further improvement of EFI indicators. In this respect, the choice of key technologies with a decisive impact on raising efficiency and competitiveness of production in various branches of economy was the main task to develop and implement the innovative policy in the RK.

Figure 4

The share of innovative products (goods, services) (% of GDP)²²¹

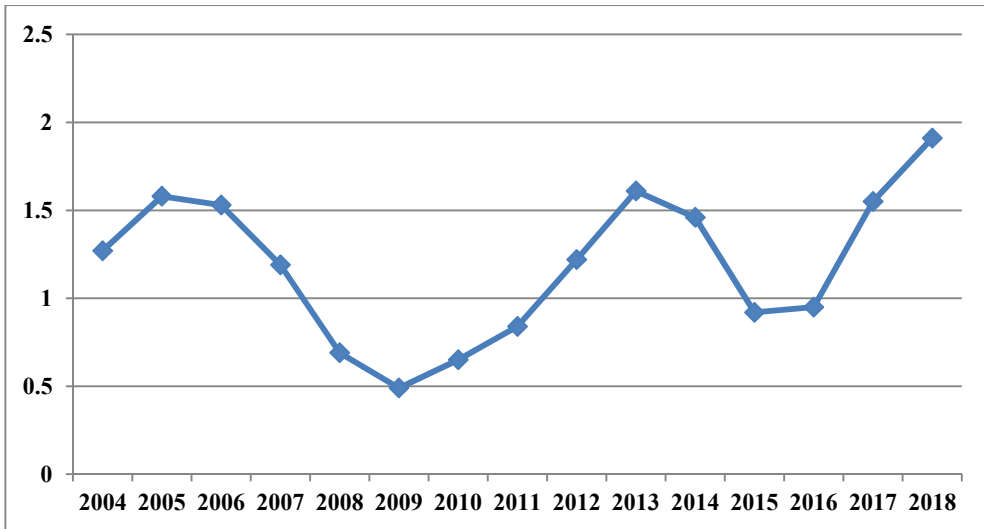


Figure 4 shows that 2016-2018 positive trends were recorded in the area of innovation policy. In particular, the share of innovative products (goods, services) in 2018 amounted to 1,91% of GDP, which was the highest rate for 2004-2018.²²² Even though the mentioned figure was low, innovative development in the RK, combined with information/communication technologies and biotechnologies, laid the foundation for scientific and technical transformations. Consequences of regression, accumulated over many years, were conditioned by weak infrastructures for innovative activity rather than low potential of national research. Examples include introduction of innovations initiated by manufacturers as a means of competition, or, on the contrary, indifference towards it and postponement of the latter. All this has led to a reduction in demand for the potential of applied sciences and techniques in the country. Taking into account the current state of the country's economy, innovative policies, occurring in market reforms, are aimed at developing

²²¹ Source of the data is the official site of the Ministry of National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan Statistics committee <http://www.stat.gov.kz> (24.07.2019).

²²² See *ibid*.

scientific and technological potential, as well as modernizing sectors of economy and increasing competitiveness of products.²²³

A current demand in domestic and foreign markets of the state's industrial production has become crucial both for structural changes in the main industrial funds and for their development prospectives. It was quite expected and usual for the government to initiate projects, aimed at empowering and strengthening those sectors that had managed to introduce their production in the world market, such as fuel and energy complex, metallurgy, chemistry. This is an important precondition for increasing efficiency of their production potential. At the same time, other sectors producing potentially competitive products (machinery and defense complexes) in the world market need government's support to enter the world market. Nonetheless, a branch of industry that is mainly focused on domestic market (food and light industry, industry of building materials) demands more attention from the government. It is noteworthy that the innovation policy, pursued in the aforementioned sectors of industry, differs in its nature and by the scale of assistance, which are necessary to replenish and modernize production potential on the grounds of scientific and technological achievements of the country. In this respect, the main areas, where the state innovation policy is to be implemented areas follows: 1) development and improvement of normative and legal support for innovation activities, establishment of a system to promote its incentives and institutional reforms; 2) protection of intellectual property in innovation field and its introduction into economic circulation; 3) creation of a comprehensive support system for innovation activities, development of production by raising its competitiveness and export of high technology products; 4) participation of CSOs, state bodies, commercial structures, financial and credit institution in activation processes of innovation activities becomes quite urgent at national, regional and district levels.

²²³ For more details, see the official site of the Ministry of National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan Statistics committee <http://economy.gov.kz/ru/kategorii/tekushchaya-deyatelnost> (29.07.2019).

Nowadays, Kazakhstan is rapidly becoming one of the largest oil producers and exporters in the world. Oil and gas sector are among priorities in the development of Kazakhstan's economy (*Ministry of Energy of the Republic of Kazakhstan 2019a; Forbes.com LLC 2019; Ювица, Елеукулова 2016*), as oil and gas industry projects are implemented in the country, foreign economic relations are established and cooperation agreements are signed (*Ministry of Energy of the Republic of Kazakhstan 2019a; 2019b; Корешкова 2019; Горбунова 2018*). Kazakhstan is becoming not only one of the largest oil-producing powers, but it is a subject of interest to foreign oil and gas companies, as well (*Корешкова, 2019; Горбунова, 2018; Нуреев, Бусыгин 2017; Лавров, Алексанян 2017*). However, there are some peculiarities of the activities, carried out by foreign companies in Kazakhstan's oil industry.

7.3 The main directions of social policy

Main directions of comprehensive social modernization are very essential in the stages of social policy development and implementation, obtained by Kazakh government. Procedures for the establishment of a social state, sustainable human development and harmony are laid out in Kazakhstan 2050 Strategy, Concept on Family and Gender Policy for 2030,²²⁴ Strategic plan for development of the Republic of Kazakhstan until the year 2025 and a number of other documents.²²⁵ At the same time, the government is actively attempting to improve the quality of modernization of the economy as well as empower human capital development in order to respond to global challenges.

In the new stage of public reforms, Kazakhstan is implementing social modernization with the use of advanced world standards. On the one hand, it is the European experience of social modernization, taking into account

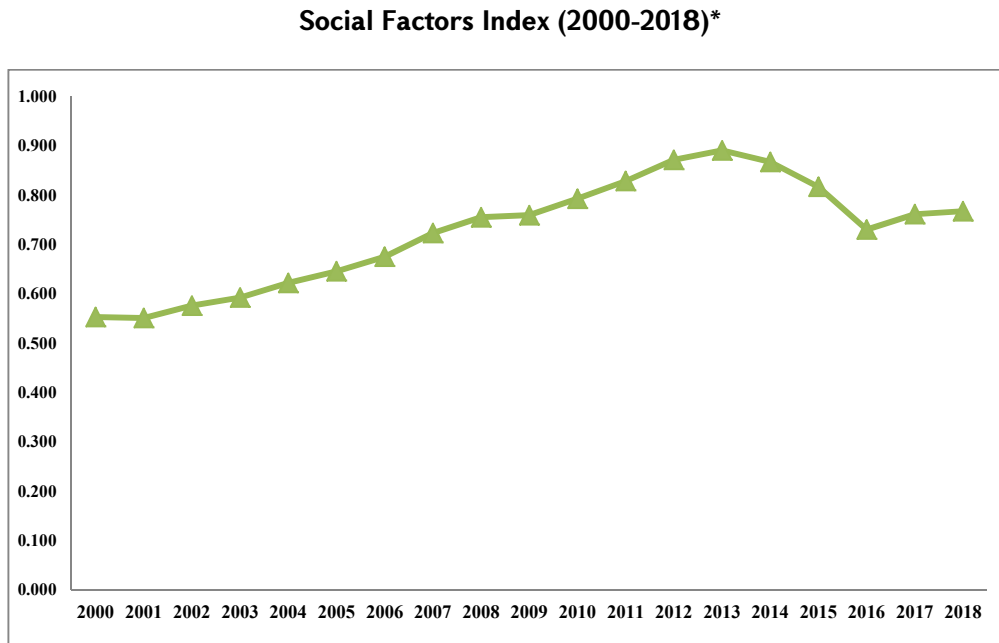
²²⁴ «Concept on Family and Gender Policy for 2030 (approved by the President's Decree from 06.12.2016 № 384)». Accessed: 25.06.2019. <https://egov.kz/cms/ru/law/list/U1600000384>.

²²⁵ See the official site of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan http://www.akorda.kz/ru/-official_documents/strategies_and_programs (26.07.2019).

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civiliarchic norms and impact of the global financial and economic crisis. On the other hand, it is the experience of Asian states where public relations are usually harmonized through traditional ethical norms.

Figure 5



The 2000-2018 analysis of the curve of the Social Factors Index (SFI) of the IDL depicts that the SFI indicators slightly improved in 2018 (see Figure 5, Table 1). Nonetheless, 2016-2018 SFI indicators decreased when compared to the period of 2010-2015 (see Figure 5, Table 1).

2016-2018 decline in the SFI was mainly due to a significant reduction in the real wage of the labour force and an increase in the Gini index.²²⁶ In this respect, the government programmes aimed at mitigating the level of social polarization and overcoming inequality were essential. The current social protection system is characterized by a balance of state obligations, as the funded pension system, procedures of social benefits and payments are being

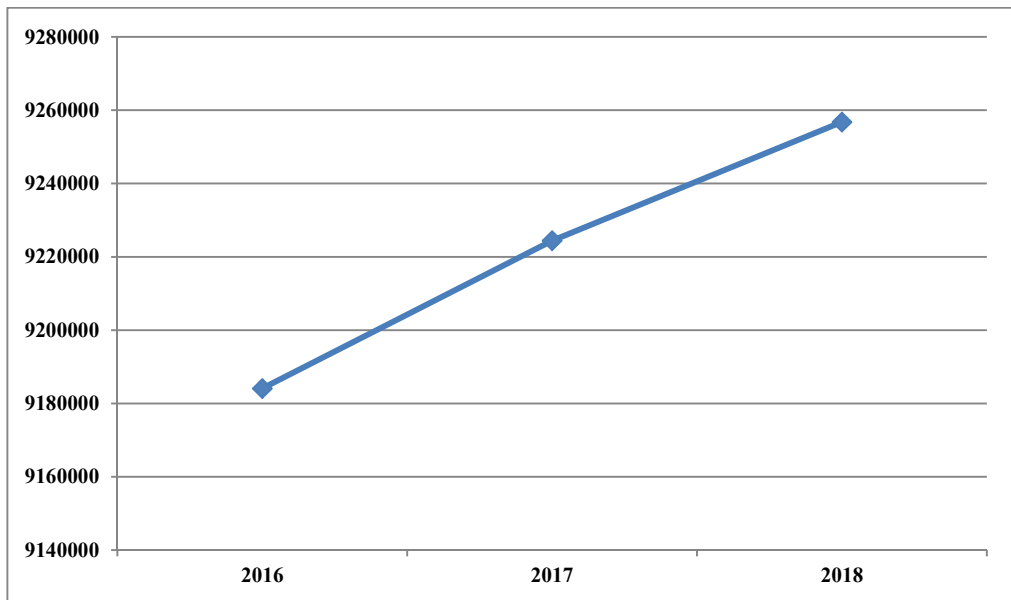
²²⁶ Source of the data is the official site of the World Bank <http://www.stat.gov.kz> (24.07.2019).

modernized in an attempt to strengthen the state social assistance targeted for the poor. In these conditions, many issues related to pension savings, social security and improvement of living standards, as well as the existing disparities of social payments and salaries remain in the focus of the authorities (*OECD 2018; Maltseva and Saltanat 2018; UNICEF 2017*).

According to labour force data provided by the WB, the country had a quantitative growth of labour force resources in 2016-2018 compared to the previous years. Hence, the total number of labour force was equivalent to 9 ml 184 thousand people in 2016, whereas in 2017 and in 2018 it went up to 9 mln 224 thousand 403 and 9 mln 256 thousand²²⁷ people respectively (see Figure 6).

Figure 6

Labour force in Kazakhstan (2016-2018)



In the conditions of transformation processes occurring in the political system of the country, it is important to fully support activities of trade unions

²²⁷ See the official site of the WB <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.TLF.TOTL.IN?locations=KZ&view=chart> (19.06.2019).

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in enterprises in order to solve social and labour problems. Moreover, it is necessary to strengthen specialized links of expertise, social counselling and support of the Federation of Trade Unions of the Republic of Kazakhstan (*FTUK 2019*). However, in the context of limited resources, priority must be given to improving the social partnership system, introducing innovative approaches, enhancing, targeting and expanding private sector participation.

Table 4

Migration balance of Kazakhstan (2016-2018)²²⁸

	2016	2017	2018
<i>Republic of the Kazakhstan</i>	-21,145	-22,130	-29,121
Akmola region	-15,219	-341	-5,421
Aktobe region	-3,251	-1,650	-2,119
Almaty region	-1,504	-2,672	-15,466
Atyrau region	38	169	-379
West-Kazakhstan region	-2,984	-2,020	-2,154
Zhambyl region	-16,257	-17,313	-11,701
Karaganda region	-12,415	-11,685	-11,599
Kostanai region	-7,722	-6,343	-5,585
Kyzylorda region	-6,671	-4,654	-3,718
Mangistau region	-958	846	1,014
South-Kazakhstan region	-29,029	-13,848	-
Pavlodar region	-6,877	-6,908	-5,497
Nord-Kazakhstan region	-7,244	-5,463	-4,697
Turkistan Region	-	-	-37,266
East-Kazakhstan region	-14,998	-13,956	-12,870
Astana city	76,314	33,511	22,799
Almaty city	27,632	30,197	31,082
Shymkent city	-	-	34,456

²²⁸ Source of the data is the official site of the Ministry of National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan Statistics committee <http://stat.gov.kz/official/industry/61/statistic/8> (25.06.2019).

As it can be seen in Figure 4, the state's migration negative balance reached from 21,1450 to 29,121 people. In fact, the negative balance of departing and arriving is quite high in the regions of Zhambyl, Karaganda, East-Kazakhstan and South-Kazakhstan, Turkistan as well as in Almaty city (see Table 4).

Table 5

External migration balance of Kazakhstan (2014-2015)²²⁹

	<i>2016</i>	<i>2017</i>	<i>2018</i>
Republic of Kazakhstan	-21,145	-22,130	-29,121
Akmola region	-1593	-2,231	-2,148
Aktobe region	-713	-1,071	-1,261
Almaty region	2210	3,753	542
Atyrau region	238	185	36
West-Kazakhstan region	-526	-786	-1,206
Zhambyl region	-626	-479	-449
Karaganda region	-5483	-5,571	-5,255
Kostanai region	-3692	-4,169	-4,820
Kyzylorda region	-51	-27	-35
Mangistau region	1381	1,087	1,114
South-Kazakhstan region	501	754	-
Pavlodar region	-3974	-3,888	-4,173
Nord-Kazakhstan region	-2533	-2,651	-3,210
Turkistan Region	-	-	336
East-Kazakhstan region	-3712	-4,306	-5,582
Astana city	-636	-926	-1,276
Almaty city	-1,936	-1,804	-2,096
Shymkent city	-	-	362

²²⁹ Source of the data is the official site of the Ministry of National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan Statistics committee <http://stat.gov.kz/official/industry/61/statistic/8> (25.06.2019).

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Judging by data, depicted in the Table 5, the state's negative balance of external migration in 2016-2018 was measured on the grounds of the number of arriving and departing people, which was comparatively high in Kostanai, Karaganda, Mangistau, Pavlodar Nord-Kazakhstan and East-Kazakhstan regions (see Table 5).

During the period under review, the national model of social policy in Kazakhstan was chiefly focused on deriving benefits and taking opportunities of sustainable economic growth in an attempt to improve people's well-being. Its implementation has allowed the government to reform labour relations and employment sphere, reduce Unemployment,²³⁰ transform to a funded pension system, introduce new types of social benefits, create a targeted social assistance system.²³¹ This, in its turn, has ensured the country's leading position in the post-Soviet region by registering a positive dynamics. It is obvious, that the growth of the country's economy propelled expansion of the state social security system in three directions: 1) expansion of the social security sector, 2) increase in number of socially protected groups, 3) improvement in the level of social security services and increase in their quantity. In this regard, it is essential to increase the role of social partners in the government, i.e. trade unions and employers' associations in the social security system, since the social protection system is directly or indirectly funded by employees and employers.

Pension reforms undertaken in the country were important for improved SFI indicators for the period 2016-2018. Principles of separating pension responsibility between the state, employees and employers were crucial among them. In particular, it is envisaged to introduce the concept of conditional-funded component from January 1, 2020 for the purpose of further modernization of the pension system.²³²

²³⁰ See the official site of the WB <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.UEM.TOTL.ZS?locations=KZ> (19.06.2019).

²³¹ For more details, see the official site of the Ministry of Labour and Social Security of the Republic of Kazakhstan <https://enbek.gov.kz/ru/taxonomy/term/104> (18.07.2019), Electronic government of the Republic of Kazakhstan https://egov.kz/cms/ru/articles/pension/pensionnaya_sistema (18.07.2019).

²³² See *ibid.*

7.4 Priorities for the strategic development of the education system

Socio-cultural transformations are continually occurring in the education system of modern Kazakh society. Contradicting issues between education and upbringing are conditioned by availability and quality of education, its fundamental nature and specialization. The role of educational factors is essential in processes of the country's democratization, socio-economic development, cultural integration and modernization. They have drastically raised competitiveness of the national education system, its socio-economic and cultural role, tackled issues related to combination of traditional and distance learning, as well as the most effective procedures for managing educational development. These issues are prioritised in strategies aiming to implement changes in the country's education system and meet those consequences in the context of globalization.²³³

The 2000-2018 analysis of the curve of the Educational Factors Index (EdFI) of Kazakhstan shows that the 2017-2018 curve decreased in comparison to the previous year (see Figure 7, Table 1). The fall of the EdFI indicators was chiefly caused by reduction in Government spending on education.²³⁴ Nonetheless, they had a positive trend and improved within 2000-2018. Therefore, it was registered with 0,436 units in 2000, while it improved and was rated with 0,474 units in 2018. Besides, the 2016 EdFI indicator was the highest for the period of 2000-2018 (see Figure 7, Table 1).

²³³ See the official site of the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Kazakhstan <http://edu.gov.kz/ru/deyatelnost> (21.07.2019).

²³⁴ Source of the data is the official site of UNDP Human Development Data <http://hdr.undp.-org/en/data> (18.07.2019).

Figure 7

Educational Factors Index 2000-2018*

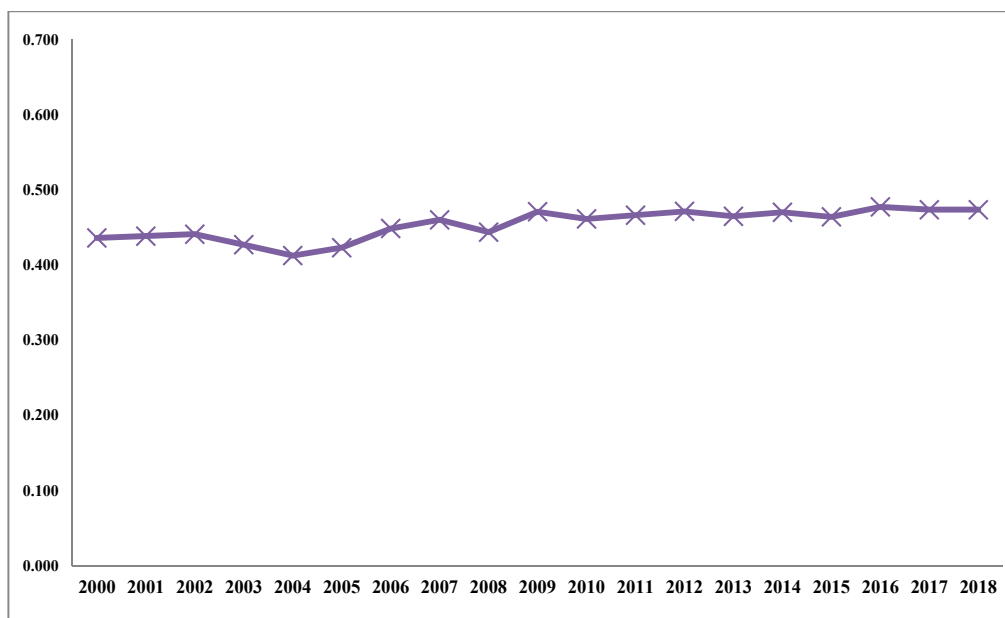


Table 6

Higher education institutions²³⁵

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Number of higher education institutions, units	125	122	124
Number of students, people	477,074	496,209	542,458
Number of professorial-teacher staff, people	38,241	38,212	38,275

In 2016-2018 the number of pre-primary institutions increased if compared to the previous year. As a result, there were 9,410 institutions in 2016, but 9,828 and 10,314²³⁶ were registered in 2017 and 2018, respectively.

* Source: calculations by the author.

²³⁵ See *ibid.*

²³⁶ See *ibid.*

Besides, more than 880,000 children and 94,000 teachers were enrolled in them.²³⁷

Nonetheless, the number of higher education institutions as well as students and professional teaching personnel had a downward trend within 2016-2018 (see Table 6).

The quality of higher education has significantly changed in Kazakhstan over the past years which is entailed by new socio-economic, cultural and political realities of the regime in transformation (*EUA 2018; European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice 2018*). First, higher education has significantly expanded. Second, higher education available for masses has transformed into education services; consequently, new types of educational institutions emerged, distance education expanded and the number of students increased. Third, there has been a diversification of funding sources and procedures for higher education institutions, as studying on tuition fee basis, implementation of sets of scientific, experimental and constructive research are of great importance in order to ensure profitability of universities. In this context, a procedure has been introduced, which is as follows: to finance them based on obtained results and distribute allocations on competitive grounds. Finally, education institutions are actively attempting to raise the level of international recognition and establish network interaction between institutions in Kazakhstan and academic groups, students and institutions of developed countries.

Modernization and internationalization of the education system in Kazakhstan is an inevitable process, given the dynamics of the country's information space, science and technology development. Moreover, an increase in efficiency of the education system has rapidly transformed the country's public administration and local government infrastructures as well as their participation and leadership qualities by demanding that members of the society prepare to master the changing technologies (*Dubok and Turakhanova 2017; World Bank Group 2018; International Monetary Fund 2018; Maltseva and Janenova 2018*). All the aforementioned has significantly expanded modern

²³⁷ See *ibid.*

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requirements of formal and non-formal education, university, school and vocational education. It is noteworthy that, in the knowledge age, an individual's efficiency is defined not by the knowledge the former gained, but by the variety of skills he masters and possibilities for them to apply. Consequently, the citizens' standard of living and quality of life generally depends on the efficiency of the education system.

Table 7

**Gross domestic expenditure on research and development by fields of science
(mln. tenge)²³⁸**

	2016	2017	2018
Total	66,600.1	68,884.2	72,224.6
<i>including:</i>			
Natural Science	23,496.2	22,428.3	21,083.9
Engineering and Technology	30,193.4	31,459.4	35,596.8
Medical Science	2,277.9	3,278.3	2,207.7
Agricultural science	6,884.6	6,528.0	7,953.5
Social Science	1,072.2	1,650.8	1,586.9
Humanitarian science	2,675.8	3,539.4	3,795.8

It is shown in Table 7, that according to fields of science, gross domestic expenditure on research and development increased in 2016-2018. It is noteworthy, that spending on engineering and technology, as well as in the fields of natural science were prioritized, as such (see Table 7).

Table 8 shows that current domestic expenditure on research and development by type of activities for 2016-2018 were mainly allocated to basic and applied research, as well as to experimental, constructive and technological development.

²³⁸ See *ibid.*

Table 8

Current domestic expenditure on research and development by type of activities
(mln. tenge)²³⁹

	<i>2016</i>	<i>2017</i>	<i>2018</i>
Total	66,600.1	68,884.2	72,224.6
including:			
Research and development:			
Basic research	13,809.2	10,785.9	10,629.0
Applied research	35,841.1	40,909.6	43,278.3
Experimental development:			
Design and engineering	12,341.7	14,817.7	16,387.9
Prototyping, lots of products (goods)	2,478.1	885.3	1,518.6
Design for construction	2,130.0	1,485.7	410.8

Introduction of modern educational technologies and nationalization of the best education models has provided the country with an opportunity to receive qualitative education, regardless of a residence place. At the same time, a sufficient and balanced state policy, pursued in the field of education, solves the problem related to a political stability in Kazakh society. It is also very essential that state education policy of the Republic of Kazakhstan has become a key tool of interaction between domestic and international institutions. However, it is evident that there are issues linked with the civil society's insufficient involvement and its limitation in the process of developing such a state education policy, which meets the modern requirements. The current stage of education policy, particularly, shows that the the education system is regarded by the government as a means of ensuring priorities of the ruling elite. This occurs in the conditions when the market environment brings forward new requirements for the internal management of the country's education institutions, as well as for the efficiency of the whole system.

²³⁹ See *ibid.*

It is impossible to raise competitiveness of the state's education and to make it a real resource with an aim to develop the country's human capital if the state has such an education policy system that takes into account only those tasks which are set by the high-ranking political authorities. If scientific developments and research directions are not properly developed in the field of state education policy, governmental risks will significantly increase.

In the context of a knowledgeable society, state education policy in the RK should include the needs of all subjects which are somehow involved in the development of the education sector. If knowledge is gradually, but steadily becoming the main resource of the country's economic development, then the education system must also become a priority area of public policy.

7.5 Health system management and modernization issues

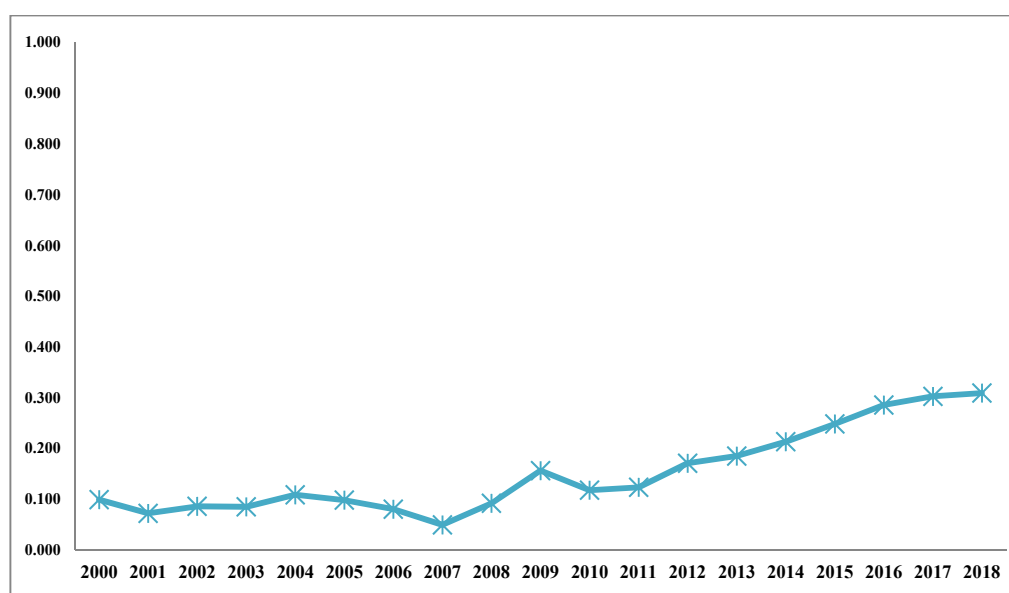
Modernization of the health system made it urgent to develop a national model of healthcare that would reflect contemporary realities of Kazakhstan. The complexity of this problem is caused by a number of health-related peculiarities and it includes not only medical and preventive institutions, but also programs linked with environment, social security services, labour safety and human capital improvement. They have ensured the quality of labour resources by contributing to an economic development of the country. Therefore, investments in health have created both economic and social advantages, as the population's health condition determines effectiveness of the state's social policy.

The 2000-2018 analysis of the curve of the Health Factors Index (HFI) of Kazakhstan displays that it grew in 2016-2018 in comparison to the previous years (see Figure 8, Table 1). In 2018 the HFI was the record high for the period of 2000-2018.

2016-2018 growth in HFI indicator was mainly protected by improvement in Life expectancy and stability of Current health expenditure.²⁴⁰ In particular, increase in government spending on health sector is stipulated by the introduction of the Unified National Healthcare System, which assisted in increasing the autonomy of medical organizations, as well as creating a competitive environment between them (*PLQ3 2017*).

Figure 8

Health Factors Index (2000-2018)*



The study of the HFI curve shows that within 2016-2018 Life expectancy grew and reached to an average of 73 years which was the record high in Kazakhstan for the observed period of 2000-2018.²⁴¹

²⁴⁰ Source of the data is the official site of the Ministry of National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan Statistics committee <http://www.stat.gov.kz> (20.07.2019), official site of the WB https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SH.XPD.CHEX.GD.ZS?fbclid=IwAR100nEFGQ3MfB13vPeA_zIsz4prJhZ8A92Jf48HavFASkbbaimFcNEyYaE&locations=KZ (20.07.2019).

* Source: calculations by author.

²⁴¹ See *ibid*.

Table 9

Main indicators of public health (2016-2017)²⁴²

	2016	2017
Number of physicians of all specialities, thsd. people	74,6	72,1
Number of paramedical personnel, Thousand, people	170,8	175,2
Number of hospitals	877	853
Number of hospital beds, thousand	100,1	99,5
Number of hospital beds for sick children, thousand	18,4	18,2
Number of victims in accidents, connected with labour activity, including fatal, people	2034	2045
Death-roll in accidents, connected with labour activity, people	225	211
Material consequences of accidents, thousand tenge	1 278 543,8	1 503 460,7

As seen in Figure 9 the number of physicians of all specialities decreased, but number of paramedics increased. In this regard, it is necessary to improve procedures aimed at increasing efficiency of the medical staff and reaching the desired results.

State programs for the development of healthcare were of great importance for the growth in HFI indicators of the IDL. During the implementation of the state health program in 2011-2015, healthcare system was significantly upgraded, modern procedures were introduced, and a number of structural reforms were carried out. These areas of health development were subsequently included in the 2016-2019 program.

²⁴² Source of the data is the official site of the Ministry of National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan Statistics committee <http://www.stat.gov.kz> (16.05.2017).

Densaulyk²⁴³ state programme for healthcare system for 2016-2019 as well as the concept of the state programme for 2020-2025²⁴⁴ were included in the sectors of health development.

Table 10
Results of the Ministry of Healthcare of the RK assessment²⁴⁵

<i>Assessment area</i>		<i>Assessment of 2014</i>			<i>Assessment of 2015</i>		
		<i>Place in ranking</i>	<i>scores</i>	<i>Mean score by central</i>	<i>Place in ranking</i>	<i>scores</i>	<i>Mean score by central</i>
1	Achievement and implementation of the strategic goals and objectives	3	87,6	82,3	6	87,2	87,0
2	Management of budgetary funds	2	75,7	64,5	1	82,5	71,7
3	Rendering of the state services	2	73,7	53,8	7	53,6	56,1
4	Management of personnel	4	74,2	73,6	7	76,1	74,5
5	Application of information technologies	1	90,1	80,1	1	91,6	76,7
	<i>Place in total</i>	1	82,93		3	78,2	

²⁴³ See the official site of the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Kazakhstan <http://dsm.gov.kz/ru/pages/gosudarstvennaya-programma-razvitiya-zdravoohraneniya-respubliki-kazakhstan-densaulyk-na-2016-0> (26.07.2019).

²⁴⁴ See the official site of the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Kazakhstan <http://dsm.gov.kz/ru/pages/proekt-rasporyazheniya-premer-ministra-respubliki-kazakhstan-o-sozdanii-rabochey-gruppy-po> (26.07.2019).

²⁴⁵ Source of the data is the official site of the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Kazakhstan <http://dsm.gov.kz/ru/kategorii/pokazateli-effektivnosti-ministerstva> (26.07.2019).

Table 10 shows indicators of the Ministry of Health estimated by their activities undertaken in 2014-2015 and assessed by a monitoring of the functions of the central state and local executive bodies of the country.²⁴⁶ It is noteworthy that sectors of public service, human resource management and strategic planning remain challenging (see Table 10). It is worth mentioning that effectiveness of the country's healthcare depends on competitiveness of medical services offered to consumers and organizations (*World Health Organization 2018; WHO European Region 2018*). Moreover, the private sector is actively involved in financing the country's health system. High private spending is usually related to the fact that state funds are insufficient to meet a demand for free medical services. That is why the population has to turn to the private sector that provides paid medical services. Therefore, the population has to turn to the private sector that delivers medical services which have to be paid. In addition, increase in state expenditure on health simultaneously leads to an increase in private expenditure, due to the purchase of more expensive medicine which is not covered within the framework of a guaranteed free medical care. Hence, increase in private expenditure on health has adversely affected the access to medical care and differences in obtaining medical care continued to deepen by placing additional burden on vulnerable groups of the population. Therefore, the main task of the government is to increase the level of public confidence in getting medical services by ensuring their availability and quality. In this respect, the population's health condition is directly dependent on allocations made for the sector, the number of trainings and quality of medical staff, as well as the population's income and quality of life. Consequently, the government needs to implement social security and integration programs in an attempt to improve the population's quality of life and health condition.

²⁴⁶ See the official site of the Ministry of Industry and Infrastructural Development of the Republic of Kazakhstan <http://www.miid.gov.kz/ru/pages/itogi-ocenki-effektivnosti-deyatelnosti-cgo-po-realizacii-gosudarstvennoy-politiki> (29.07.2019).

7.6 Development trends of the Index of Democracy Level

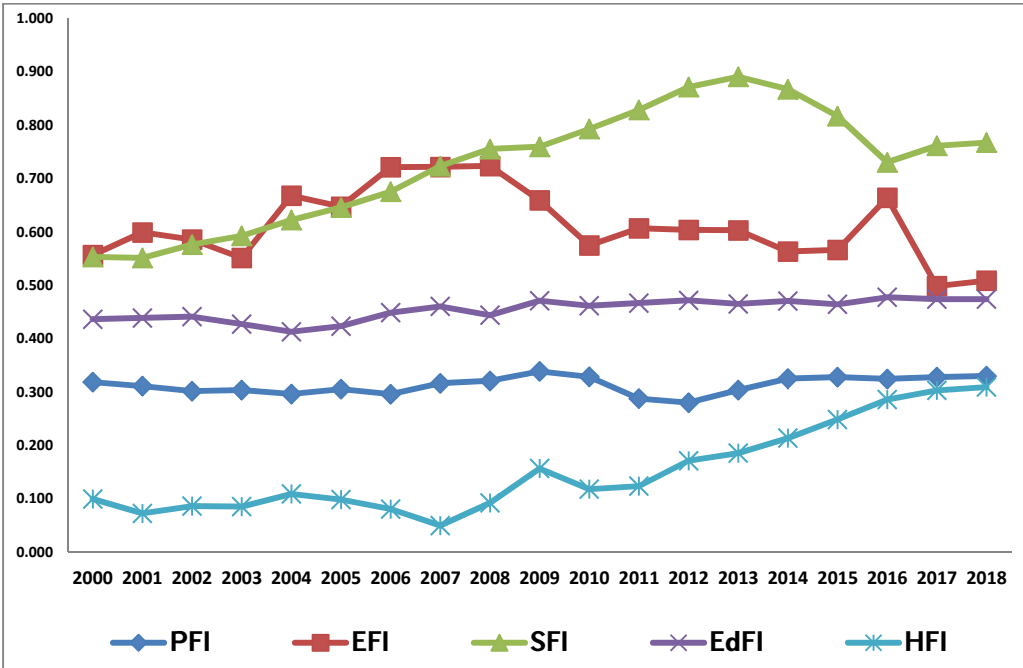
Preconditions for forming the Kazakh model of democracy are conditioned by processes of globalization and modernization, integration and political transformations. The further development of the country's political system is propelled by democratization of the regime and the presidential form of government, as well as implementation of the principles of democracy in all areas of public life.

Kazakhstan needs to promote its citizens' initiative and creative potential in order to be competitive in modern conditions. It requires the President and the ruling elite to establish procedures aiming to establish a constructive dialogue and partnership between state authorities and CSOs, enhance their capacities and raise efficiency. Development stages of private property and market relations succeeded with the CSOs' involvement.

During the period under review, the country continued its policy of developing a market economy and attracting foreign investment. This was conditioned not only by the fact that Kazakhstan had rich mineral resources but also by a stable political situation. All the aforementioned had strengthened political and socio-economic grounds of modernization; hence, making Kazakhstan as one of the most competitive post-Soviet countries.

Figure 9 and 10 display that indicators of the Index of Democracy Level (IDL) of Kazakhstan, measured for the period of 2000-2018, improved. Respectively, the 2000 IDL was estimated by 0,395 units, whereas in 2018 it reached 0,437 (see Figure 9, Figure 10, Table 1). The 2016 IDL curve of Kazakhstan was the highest within the observed period, while in 2017 it decreased with a slight improvement registered in 2018 (see Figure 9, Figure 10, Table 1).

Figure 9
Indices of Political, Economic, Social, Health and Educational Factors affecting
the Index of Democracy Level of Kazakhstan for the timeframe 2000-2018*

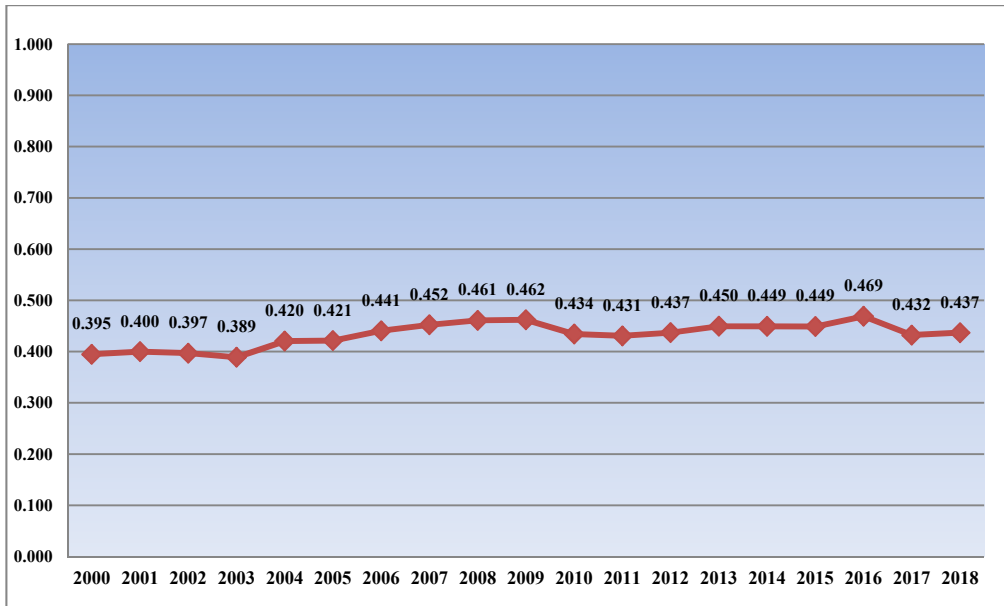


The 2016 growth in IDL was protected by improvement in EFI, EdFI and HFI indicators. Nonetheless, PFI and SFI indicators had a negative impact on the IDL and led to its decrease. It should be mentioned that market relations in Kazakhstan are currently developing with the main focus of economic reforms on development and implementation of investment policy, set by the state. The attraction of foreign investment and its effective use in the country's economy have contributed to the expansion of mutually beneficial economic cooperation with the developed countries. It was aimed at ensuring high rates of economic growth, and boosting efficiency in education and health sectors, too.

* Source: calculations by the author.
The indices of the IDL factors are comparable with each other by the trends only.

Figure 10

Index of Democracy Level of Kazakhstan for the period 2000-2018*



In 2017, the IDL was adversely affected by the fall in EFI and EdFI indicators. However, improved PFI, SFI and HFI indicators maintained trends of civil transformations in the RK. During the mentioned period, intensive activities had been undertaken to further modernize the country's political system. There are new crises and risks and to overcome them that the country needs to be prepared for various challenges of Eurasian integration. They include internal disruptive factors (distrust, inter-ethnic tension, separate actions of EAEU member states, etc.) or external factors (competition for integration). However, in order to combine eastern and southern vectors, Kazakhstan has succeeded in overcoming the competition between integration alliances by means of organizing an equal partnership.

The positive dynamics of IDL in 2018 is stipulated by the growth in PFI, EFI, SFI and HFI indicators, which was accompanied by the stable EdFI. Given

* Source: calculations by the author.

the evolution of democratic processes, it should be noted that Kazakhstan is a transitional society today. It is influenced by the "vertical" presidential form of government and strong executive power. The country faces many issues that need to be solved in the context of shifting from a consolidated authoritarianism to democratic reforms. They include an effective integration into regional and global economic and political processes aimed at strengthening state building and sovereignty. Only a gradual and systematic implementation of the reforms will solve most of the problems that Kazakh society is challenged with. This has allowed the ruling elite to maintain internal political stability and withstand difficult stages of social transformation.

7.7 Regression analysis of the Index of Democracy Level

Arusyak Aleksanyan, Ashot Aleksanyan

Within the framework of the research, the regression analysis displays the variables those indices that were included in the model and which had comparatively essential influence on the IDL of Kazakhstan.

According to the results, compiled through the regression, it is concluded that there has been a significant correlation between the IDL_i^* and political, health and social variables. In reference to educational and economic factors, there was no significant correlation between IDL_i and their variables.

Thereby, in comply with the results, achieved through the regression, the correlation has been established between IDL_i and political variable of Rule of Law as well as Press Freedom (see Table 11).

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

Table 11

Regression analysis of the IDL_i (PFI variables)

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Coefficient</i>	<i>Adj.R²</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>N</i>
Rule of Law	0,003	0,387	0,001	24
Press Freedom	0,006	0,791	0,000	24

Economic variables, precisely, Real wage, Gini index and Unemployment were significantly correlated with IDL_i (see Table 12).

Table 12

Regression analysis of the IDL_i (EFI variables)

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Coefficient</i>	<i>Adj.R²</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>N</i>
Real wage (100\$)	0,013	0,411	0,000	24
Gini index	-1,516	0,507	0,000	24
Unemployment	-0,015	0,726	0,000	24

There was a strong correlation between IDL_i and Current health expenditure (% of GDP) (see Table 13).

Table 13

Regression analysis of the IDL_i (HFI variables)

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Coefficient</i>	<i>Adj.R²</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>N</i>
Current health expenditure (% of GDP)	-0,076	0,694	0,000	24

Rule of Law and Press Freedom had a significant impact on the democracy level of RK. This implies that one unit growth in Rule of law variable will result in IDL_i growth by 0,003 units. At the same time, one unit positive change will lead to IDL_i growth by 0,006 units (see Table 11). In this respect, it is important to maintain a balance between political dynamism and social stability. This can contribute to an active involvement of CSOs, media, social groups and networks

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in decision-making processes. Moreover, one of the key tasks that the country's ruling elite pursues is the establishment of sustainable political institutions, since institutional stability, based on sustainable state institutions and empowered civil society, will be able to ensure the rule of law and freedom of the press.

In view of social factors of the IDL of the RK with a strong correlation on democracy, we can single out the Real wage, Gini index and Unemployment variables. 1% reduction in Unemployment and 0,1 unit decrease in Gini index will positively affect the IDL_i with 0,015 and 0,15 units respectively (see Table 12). Simultaneously, increase in Real wage by \$100 will increase IDL_i with 0,411 units (see Table 12). Indicators of poverty of the population and polarization of the society particularly have a negative impact on economic development of the republic, hence, impeding the development of social state institutions. Deepening of inequality and poverty hampers the formation of the middle class, which amounts to the majority of the solvent population. In the context of globalization and integration processes, the country should pay a special attention to issues related to prevention of socio-economic instability in society, low indicators, estimating the quality of life and access to medical assistance, as well as the rights of people with low incomes.

Health expenditure, as a variable of the HFI of the IDL and IDL_i established an essential correlation. Therefore, 1% reduction in Current health expenditure will cause the IDL_i growth by 0,694 units (see Table 13). In this respect, procedures attempting to enhance medical and social security of the population is a precondition for strengthening national security. These issues have gained unprecedented political significance, therefore demanding that the government make continuous investments in processes aimed at improving the quality of human capital.

Most of the country's modernization initiatives are implemented "from the top", as the country's president is a key initiator. This situation can be explained by several factors. First of all, it should be noted that the President of the country has succeeded in consolidating a capable ruling elite who initiates

and implements various integration and modernization projects. Hence is the illustration of the fact, that formation of one-party system in the Parliament of Kazakhstan is inadmissible as it may eventually lead to devaluation of basic principles of democracy and political modernization. It is obvious that the opposition parties have not yet emerged as a civilizational force, but their role in establishing a multi-party system and responding to the needs of a transformed society is significant.

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8. DEMOCRACY DEVELOPMENT PROCESSES IN KYRGYZSTAN

ALISA JAMALYAN

The years following the independence of post-Soviet Kyrgyzstan have been attended with a number of reforms initiated to improve its political and socio-economic systems. Nonetheless, Kyrgyzstan, similar to other newly independent countries, could not evade the elements negatively affecting the country's democratization; namely, corruption, human rights violation, features of an authoritarian system, internal political tension, conflicts, and others. Incessant changes in the government, interethnic clashes, insufficient representation of ethnic minorities in the state bodies, the impact of the former totalitarian system, economic as well as other issues have been impeding the country's stability and democracy development.

In this chapter, IDL trends in the Republic of Kyrgyzstan were analyzed in view of indexation and comprehensive analysis of those factors that had affected Kyrgyzstan IDL within the period of 2000-2018 years (see Figure 6, 7). To conduct a comprehensive analysis of Political, Economic, Health and Educational factors were tackled in separate sub-chapters, whereas the most negative and positive factors strongly affecting the IDL were cleaned and illustrated through a regression analysis.

Table 1

Indices of Political, Economic, Social, Educational and Health Factors and Index of Democracy Level of Kyrgyzstan for the 2000-2018 period*

Years	PFI	EFI	SFI	EdFI	HFI	IDL
2000	0,365	0,352	0,542	0,434	0,198	0,370
2001	0,352	0,380	0,554	0,461	0,196	0,376
2002	0,323	0,410	0,550	0,501	0,195	0,376
2003	0,315	0,442	0,576	0,507	0,266	0,392
2004	0,329	0,490	0,574	0,516	0,284	0,413
2005	0,244	0,497	0,599	0,533	0,346	0,391
2006	0,262	0,571	0,607	0,578	0,385	0,427
2007	0,221	0,552	0,648	0,635	0,316	0,409
2008	0,259	0,618	0,689	0,599	0,311	0,441
2009	0,240	0,609	0,718	0,620	0,352	0,441
2010	0,264	0,616	0,733	0,597	0,361	0,453
2011	0,307	0,593	0,784	0,657	0,379	0,479
2012	0,308	0,613	0,861	0,700	0,469	0,507
2013	0,316	0,720	0,853	0,668	0,458	0,533
2014	0,314	0,695	0,850	0,595	0,471	0,519
2015	0,306	0,772	0,821	0,623	0,419	0,529
2016	0,308	0,673	0,851	0,663	0,395	0,510
2017	0,321	0,597	0,864	0,702	0,403	0,502
2018	0,335	0,663	0,885	0,702	0,413	0,528

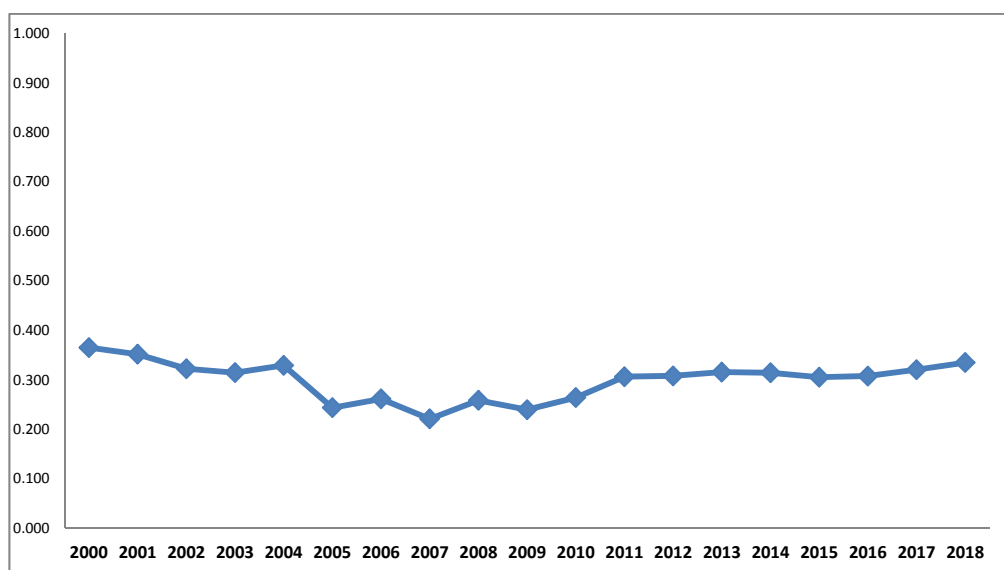
* Source: calculations by the author.

PFI, EFI, SFI, HFI, EdFI and values of IDL consequently calculated on them may insignificantly vary during certain years 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 values.

8.1 Kyrgyzstan is shaping its political settlements

Table 1

Political Factors Index of Kyrgyzstan
(2000-2018)*



The PFI curve of the country underwent diversified trends within the years of 2000-2018. Particularly, since 2016 it had registered a regular growth and reached 0,335 points in 2018. Besides, the highest PFI index was registered in 2000, with the lowest one being recorded in 2007 (see Table 1, Figure 1).

2015-2018 were the years when political settlements and consolidation had been shaping in the Republic of Kyrgyzstan and the country had been recovering from revolutions and ethnic conflicts. The situation got comparably stabilized. However, despite the fact that there was a political competition to some extent, Almazbek Atambayev's influence was still noticeable (*Bertelsmann Stiftung 2018, 3*). After the 2005 and 2010 revolutions, the authoritarian KR presidents were no longer significant figures in the country's political system

* Source: calculations by the author.

(*Tokmakov 2015*). However, the political elite managed to centralize and consolidate the power in their hands, wide spreading corruption in the state (*Freedom House 2018*). Atambayev was attempting to strengthen his party's positions, thereby threatening political pluralism. Similar to the previous government, the present one persisted in thwarting opposition activists as well as national minorities. Presidential elections held on 15 October 2017 were among Kyrgyzstan's political agenda (*Tynan 2017*). It should be noted, that in comply with the KR Constitution²⁴⁷, both the president, elected by popular vote and the prime minister shall exercise executive powers of the government. The president is elected for a single six-year term with no probability of re-election (*Freedom House 2018*). In accordance with the Article 83²⁴⁸ of the KR Constitution, the president, who is the head of the state, is vested with significant powers. In the meantime, the government is headed by the Prime Minister, who appoints members of the government. The Government shall be the highest body of executive power in the Kyrgyz Republic. In compliance with Article 64²⁴⁹ of the KR Constitution, the president shall represent the Kyrgyz Republic inside and outside the country; shall sign or repeal laws by veto; shall call new elections, shall submit candidates as judges of the Supreme Court and members of the Government (*Central Intelligence Agency 2019*). However, despite president's limited powers envisaged by the Constitution, his dominance is still vivid in the country (*Bertelsmann Stiftung 2018, 10*).

Regardless of the fact, that 2017 presidential elections were the second in the history of independent Kyrgyzstan and were marked by a peaceful transition of presidential power as well as by inappropriate use of government

²⁴⁷ See "Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic" ((Put into force on 27. 06. 2010 in comply with the KR Law) (In edition of the KR Law of 28.12.2016 N 218)) // <http://www.president.kg/ru/-konstituciya/> (27.03.2019).

²⁴⁸ See "Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic" ((Put into force on 27. 06. 2010 in comply with the KR Law) (In edition of the KR Law of 28.12.2016 N 218)) // <http://www.president.kg/ru/-konstituciya/> (28.03.2019).

²⁴⁹ See "Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic" ((Put into force on 27. 06. 2010 in comply with the KR Law) (In edition of the KR Law of 28.12.2016 N 218)) // <http://www.president.kg/ru/-konstituciya/> (28.03.2019).

resources. As a result, Sooronbay Jeenbekov won the elections, who had been appointed the Prime Minister of Kyrgyzstan during Atambayev's presidency. Numerous reports were issued on voter intimidation, including pressure on public-sector employees. International observers also reported about the bans on holding pre-election assemblies and restrictions on civil society observers' participation in the polling stations (*Human Rights Watch 2018*). Omurbek Babanov was also accused of violating the election rules and received three warnings from the Central Election Committee. At the same time, Babanov's team complained that national security employees exercised pressure on their candidate by recording his meetings, conversations and arresting his supporters (*BBC News 2017*). Only 13 out of 60 candidates, who applied for the elections, were successfully registered. Later 2 candidates were left out of the electoral register. In fact, out of eleven presidential candidates, standing for election, Jeenbekov, the leader of the Social Democratic Party won securing 54,22% of the vote, whereas Babanov, the leader of the Respublika-Ata Jurt (Homeland) parliamentary faction placed second with 33,49% (see Table 2) (*Central Intelligence Agency 2019*). The next day of the elections, to be precise, on October 16, Babanov held a press conference, where he declared his decision not to recognize the results of the elections and congratulate Jeenbekov. He also spoke about the present public system of the country and asserted that any action initiated by him would be prevented by the courts and legal acts. Although none of the candidates, apart from Jeenbekov, openly recognized the elections results and very few complaints had been filed about their being not fair. According to the statement, made by the leader of the United Kyrgyzstan party Adakhan Madumarov, the elections, as such, cannot be fair due to the fact that a great number of the population, living abroad, have not been involved in the mentioned elections. Moreover, inaction by law enforcement officials permitted violations (*OSCE 2018, 24*). International observers report the Central Commission for Elections and Referenda has exhibited political bias during the 2017 presidential elections. Amendments to the election law made it more difficult for nongovernmental organizations

8. Democracy Development Processes in Kyrgyzstan

(NGOs) to field observers and appeal decisions by election officials (*Freedom House 2018*).

Table 2

Results of KR 2017 Presidential Elections²⁵⁰

<i>Candidates</i>	<i>Candidates nominated by political parties or through self-nomination.</i>	<i>Number of vote</i>	<i>Percentage of vote</i>
Sooronbay Jeenbekov	Social Democratic Party	920620	54,22
Omurbek Babanov	Respublika-Ata-Jurt parliamentary faction	568665	33,49
Adakhan Madumarov	United Kyrgyzstan party	110284	6,57
Temir Sariev	Akshumkar party	43311	2,55
Taalatbek Masadykov	Self-nominated	10803	0,64
Ulukbek Kochkorov	Self-nominated	8498	0,50
Azimbek Beknazarov	Self-nominated	2743	0,16
Arstanbek Abdyldayev	Self-nominated	2015	0,12
Arslanbek Maliev	Self-nominated	1621	0,10
Ernis Zarlykov	Self-nominated	1554	0,09
Toktayim Umetalieva	Self-nominated	1473	0,09
Total		1,697,868	100
<i>Voters' participation</i>		<i>3,014,434</i>	<i>56,32</i>

It is noteworthy that unresolved constitutional ambiguities regarding the division of power among the president, the prime minister, and the parliament have contributed to the instability of governments in recent years, which is vividly exemplified by the fact that the prime minister has been replaced nearly a dozen times since 2010. The number of prime ministers has exceeded the

²⁵⁰ Source of the data is the Central Commission for Elections and Referenda of the Kyrgyz Republic, "Central Commission defined the results of the presidential elections, held on 15.10.2017, 31.10.2017" // <https://shailoo.gov.kg/ru/news/1973/> (16.02.2019).

number of years of independent Kyrgyzstan. It can be assumed that a constantly changing government is the main reason for the created difficulty to meet responsibilities proposed by the political agenda in the country. On 26 August 2017, Sapar Isakov, who was also a former President's Chief of Staff, was nominated the Prime Minister and held the position till April 19, 2018 (*Freedom House 2018*). A day after Atambayev's ally Isakov resigned, the Kyrgyz parliament elected Mukhammedkalyi Abylgaziev as the country's prime minister. Meanwhile, Atambayev-led coalition immediately refused to support Isakov, and 101 out of 112 deputies voted against him. Atambayev, who supported Jeenbekov during the election, began to publicly criticize his previously favorite successor. Nevertheless, it did not have any serious impact on the political system (*Radio Free Europe / Radio Liberty 2018*).

Kyrgyzstan defined as a parliamentary republic, with the help of its foreign policy strongly endeavors to retain its stability that had been so strenuously acquired. Being a member of a dozen international organizations; precisely, UNO, OSCE, IMF, The Armenian Red Cross, ILO and etc., it makes great efforts to overcome socio-economic as well as political challenges, the country is facing (*U.S. Department of State 2018*). It should also be noted that the EU-Kyrgyz cooperation has been strengthening every year, creating more platforms for deeper collaboration. Moreover, due to ethnic clashes which occurred in 2010, EU external action service is chiefly aimed at maintaining peace in the country by providing financial support for institutional reforms (*European External Action Service 2018 a*).

Human rights and freedoms. Pursuant to Article 16²⁵¹ of the KR Constitution, human rights and freedoms are of superior value and no one may be subject to discrimination on the basis of sex, race, language, disability, ethnicity, belief, age, political convictions, education, background, proprietary as well as other circumstances. However, this article is often violated and

²⁵¹ See "Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic" ((Put into force on 27. 06. 2010 in comply with the KR Law) (In edition of the KR Law of 28.12.2016 N 218))) // <http://www.president.kg/ru/-konstituciya/> (11.02.2019).

ignored. Ethnic Uzbeks have been disproportionately affected by the violence, followed by numerous cases of arbitrary detention, ill-treatment, and torture.

Long-term human rights concerns persisted in the first year of Sooronbay Jeenbekov's presidency, in particular, cases of violence against women (kidnapping, trafficking, impunity for torture) were not frequently disclosed. Besides, wrongfully imprisoned human rights defender Azimzhan Askarov is still in custody and Kyrgyzstan continues to ignore its obligation to fulfill a 2016 UN Human Rights Committee (HRC) decision to release him. At the same time, attacks on media freedoms became less frequent, and the president appeared to seek more constructive engagement with civil society (*Human Rights Watch 2019*).

In September 2018, Kyrgyzstan's prime minister signed a decree initiating ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)²⁵², which will improve the degree of human rights protection in the country (*Human Rights Watch 2019*). However, representatives of non-governmental human rights organizations often face threats, harassment, and physical attacks. For example, human rights activist Cholpon Djakupova was sued for allegedly defaming the president, and she was ultimately ordered to pay a large sum in financial damages (*Freedom House 2018*). The judiciary is not independent and remains dominated by the executive branch. International observers noted a serious lack of due process in cases against opposition leaders and other critics of the government during 2017, since corruption among judges is widespread (*Freedom House 2018*).

The fact is that citizens have the freedom to organize political parties that must win at least 0,7 percent of the vote in each of the country's nine regional divisions to secure seats in the parliament, which discourages locally organized groups from participating in national politics (*Freedom House 2018*). In the meantime, the political system of the country has been rather disjointed as the Ministry of Justice has officially registered more than 200 political parties

²⁵² See "Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities" // <https://www.un.org/disabilities/-documents/convention/convoptprot-e.pdf> (28.03.2019).

(*Kabar Agency 2016*). Moreover, majority of the parties do not have a definite and clear ideology and are strongly personalized with an influential personality of the leader (*Ibrayev 2017*). And party leaders are mostly successful businessmen who intend to secure and prioritize their business interests by getting an MP mandate (*Machavariani 2017*). That is the main reason why the country's political system is concentrated in the hands of people in power rather than in organizations with clear ideologies and policy platforms. In reference to other political variables included in the model, it needs to be added that 2010 constitutional reforms (*Temirkulov 2012*) aimed to ensure political pluralism, prevent corruption as well as reemergence of an authoritarian, superpresidential system. Hence, the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI)²⁵³ has been recently improving and Kyrgyzstan was estimated by 28 units in 2016 and 29 units in the next two years. In August 2017, Omurbek Tekebayev, the leader of Ata Meken opposition party and Atambayev's vocal critic, was sentenced to eight years in prison. A number of Tekebayev's allies were also subjected to prosecutions during the year. In November, Babanov, the leader of Respublika party was accused of "incitement to interethnic violence," fled the country after his resignation (*Freedom House 2018*).

Although The Law²⁵⁴ of the Kyrgyz Republic adopted in 2012 ensures "the right of citizens to assemble peacefully, without arms, and hold assemblies and demonstrations and actions of civil disobedience," assemblies were banned with the consent of the courts in a number of areas in Bishkek, prior to the 2017 presidential elections. Then, on November 8, Bishkek court banned peaceful demonstrations and assemblies until December 1 by explaining it with the president's inauguration appointed on November 24 (*Human Rights Watch 2018*).

²⁵³ Corruption Perceptions Index is measured by Transparency International organization by the ranking scale from 0 -100 till 2012 and by the updated methodology from 0-10, where 0 point implies the highest level of corruption and effectively 10 points indicate its lowest level.

²⁵⁴ See Law of the Kyrgyz Republic "On peaceful assemblies" No 64 of May 23, 2012 // <https://www.osce.org/bishkek/100475?download=true> (29.03.2019).

According to 2017 population census, it consists of Kyrgyz 73,2%, Uzbek 14,6%, Russian 5,8%, Dungan 1,1%, other 5,3% (*Central Intelligence Agency 2019*). Although ethnic minorities comprise a large number, they are often subjected to political pressures and are not sufficiently represented in constituencies, even in areas where they are represented as the majority. Kyrgyzstan ratified a number of gender equality international agreements on human rights issues, and in 2012 it ratified the “National Strategy on the Achievement of Gender Equality” (*EuroPlus Consulting & Management 2018, 9*). In view of 2018 the Global Gender Gap published by the World Economic Forum, Kyrgyzstan took the 86th place out of 149 countries and was registered with 1 point decline in comparison to the previous year. According to GGG subindices, it holds the following positions in the categories, such as: 1.Economic participation and opportunity -78th position, 2.Educational attainment – 79th position, 3.Health and survival – 1st place, and 4.Political empowerment – 93rd position (*World Economic Forum 2018*). In contrast to ethnic minorities, women have equal political rights in the country and hold certain leading positions. However, in the parliament, they are represented by 19,2% (*Freedom House 2018*). Women frequently face the problem of their limited economic participation, as a number of employment sectors are prohibited by legal provisions (51,7% of Kyrgyzstani women are employed in certain types of jobs; there is a separated list of 400 jobs where women are not allowed to work) (*EuroPlus Consulting & Management 2018, 9*). The UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women found after an inquiry published in September 2018 that a “culture of abduction, rape and forced marriage violates women’s rights in Kyrgyzstan,” and called on Kyrgyzstan “to strengthen its legislation and law enforcement, to punish and prevent all crimes of abduction and related sexual violence (*Human Rights Watch 2019*). According to the 2014 research, 12% women in rural as well as 14% in urban areas got married before they turned 18 (*National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic, UNICEF 2014*).

2017 domestic violence law²⁵⁵ should have efficiently stopped impunity for widespread domestic violence. Nonetheless, similar to laws punishing the cases of forced or optional child labour, trafficking and exploitation, it has not been factually applied yet (*Human Rights Watch 2018*). In July 2018, the Prosecutor General's Office commented in the media that “in the last two years” it had registered more than 9,000 cases of violence against women and children and had opened 5,456 administrative cases and 784 criminal cases (*Human Rights Watch 2019*). Cases of domestic violence are of increasing occurrence, as Kyrgyzstani women are financially dependent upon men.

Various international reports have spoken about main issues of the independent media. In the 2017 Freedom House* report, covering the 2016 events, Kyrgyzstan was ranked 67th out of 199 countries and territories, with the following 20, 27, 20 rates in legislative, political and economic environment respectively. In comparison to the previous year, Press Freedom ranking has remained unchanged and is still estimated as “not free” by experts (*Freedom House 2017*).** Kyrgyzstan's laws on access to public information are considered relatively severe, but implementation is poor in practice, as public officials are rarely held accountable for failing to disclose information on their personal finances. In addition, corruption scandals over the sale of state assets have been frequented in recent years (*Freedom House 2018*). Media landscape is quite diverse and incitement to hate speech about ethnic groups is subject to criminal responsibility; however, articles containing elements of racism can openly and frequently be found in the media. Laws are contradicting, such as the Law²⁵⁶ adopted in 2014, according to which in the media dissemination of

²⁵⁵ See Laws “On protection from family violence” and “On amending certain legislative Acts of the Kyrgyz Republic on protection from family violence” of April 28, 2017.

* Indices of Press Freedom and Political Rights and Civil Disobedience of Freedom House are included in the IDL model as the PFI variable.

** Freedom House defines Press Freedom by providing numerical rankings from 100 to 0 and accordingly, states are rated as “free” (0-30 points), “partly free” (31-60) and “not free” (61-100).

²⁵⁶ See “The KR LAW” ((Put into force by the decree of the Supreme Council of the KR from 2 July 1992 N 939-XII) (In edition of the KR LAW of 17 May 2014 N 69, 4 January 2017 N 1)) //

false information about crime or offense is considered a crime, which does not comply with the 2011 law²⁵⁷ on decriminalization of defamation. Civil suits against journalists and media outlets became more common in 2017. The General Prosecutor's Office filed a lawsuit against news outlet Zanos and Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, accusing them of spreading false information about Atambayev. Also during the year, a number of journalists were fined and two foreign reporters who had covered domestic affairs in Kyrgyzstan, were denied entry. Whereas Ugulbek Babakulov, a contributor to a Russian-based news site, fled the country in June and was charged with reporting anti-Uzbek content. The Sentaybr television station was closed in August for allegedly transmitting extremist content and its owner was sentenced to prison (*Freedom House 2018*). At the annual EU-Kyrgyzstan human rights dialogue in June 2017, the EU encouraged and called on to ensure press freedom and protect ethnic minorities' rights. During the meeting with Atambayev, UN Secretary-General António Guterres highly estimated the efforts of the government in ensuring rule of law and human rights protection in the country (*Human Rights Watch 2018*). In February and May 2019, Kyrgyzstan's current and former presidents withdrew their respective claims for unfounded defamation lawsuits against journalists in 2017, somewhat lessening the pressure on media outlets (*Human Rights Watch 2019*).

Meanwhile, Political Rights and Civil Liberties indicators measured by Freedom House organization are considered partly free.* Kyrgyzstan steadily got 5 points in the sphere of Political Rights within 2010-2017, but in 2019²⁵⁸ the index of Civil Liberties improved by a point gaining eventually 4.

https://shailoo.gov.kg/ru/ZakonodatelstvoMyyzambar/ZakonyMyyzambar/O_sredstvax_massovoi_inform/ (28.03.2019).

²⁵⁷ See "The KR LAW" (In edition of the KR LAW of 11 July 2011 N 89) // <http://cbd.minjust.gov.kg/act/view/ru-ru/203332/10?cl=ru-ru> (29.03.2019).

* Indices of Political Rights and Civil Liberties are measured with 1-7 point rating scale by Freedom House organization, according to which a country is classified as free (1-2.5 points), partly free (3-5 points), or not free (5,5-7 points).

²⁵⁸ See the Freedom House official site <https://freedomhouse.org/reporttypes/freedom-world> (01.04.2019).

In connection to freedom of expression of academic and personal opinion, the government does not formally restrict academic freedom, though teachers and students have reportedly faced pressure to participate in political campaigns and voting, including in the 2017 presidential election (*Freedom House 2018*).

In comply with 2008 Law on Freedom of religion²⁵⁹, all religious organizations must register with the state authorities that is rather long and complicated procedure. Apart from Muslims and Orthodox Christians, adherents of other religions have reportedly been subject to discrimination and harassment. Government makes strides to control and restrict Islamist groups that it regards as a threat to national security (*Freedom House 2018*). The majority of Kyrgyz people still live with the following preconception: they belong to a certain religion not because they choose it, but as it has been practiced in their families. NGOs are active and productive, but they often focus on capital issues, ignoring the most important socio-economic issues in rural communities. Numerous local organizations are involved in issues related to human and civil as well as consumer rights. Therefore, environmental issues, rural community issues, migrants' rights remain off the agenda (*Bertelsmann Stiftung 2018, 14*).

Discrimination against LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender) people is pervasive. Constitutional amendments²⁶⁰ adopted in 2016 prescribe that same-sex marriage is legal. Consideration of an anti-LGBT bill, which would ban “propaganda of nontraditional sexual relations,” remained stalled in parliament (*Human Rights Watch 2018*).

²⁵⁹ See Law “On freedom of Religion and Religious Organizations” No 282 of December 31, 2008 // <https://www.osce.org/odihr/124810?download=true> (29.03.2019).

²⁶⁰ See “The KR Constitution” ((Put into force by the KR Constitution of 27 June 2010) (in edition of the the KR Constitution of 28 December 2016 N 218)) // <http://www.president.kg/ru/konstituciya/> (28.03.2019).

8. Democracy Development Processes in Kyrgyzstan

In relation to the conflict presence²⁶¹, it should be noted that the populations of Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan had long lived in Fergana valley,²⁶² thereby the territorial disputes have repeatedly caused hatred and intolerance (*Akiner 2016*). Since 1991 domestic political tensions were incessantly accompanied by the struggle between north and south and therefore, politicians often attempt to minimize the clan influence in the country (*Peace Insight 2015*). In May 2018 concluding observations, the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) noted that the government's official inter-ethnic relations policy "focused on creating a national identity that is not explicitly inclusive of all ethnicities and may tend to reignite past conflicts (*Human Rights Watch 2019*). Eight years have passed after the June 2010 inter-ethnic violence. Nevertheless, victims continued to wait for justice. Ethnic Uzbeks still remain underrepresented in the politics, their language is not legally restored in the region and inter-ethnic issues have been impeding the resolution of the conflict.

In summary, corruption, domestic political tension, episodes of violence, international relations, insecurity along the borders as well as acts of terrorism are the issues that the country continues to face.

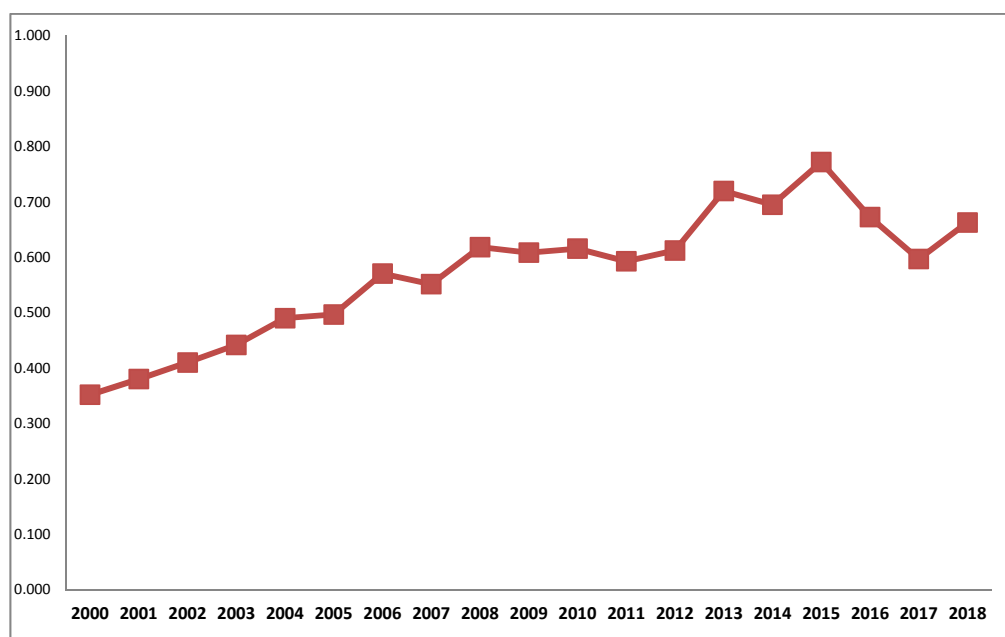
²⁶¹ Conflict Presence affecting democracy and included in the model is measured in the following way: the absence of conflict (2 points), passive conflict (1 point); when a state is in conflicting relations with another state or states, but there are no active military actions; and, active conflict (0 point), which described as a state conflicts with another state/states and there are active military actions carried out. The maximum value on a scale is 2 points and the minimum value is 0 point.

²⁶² Fergana Valley is an enormous depression between the Tien Shan and Gissar and Alay mountain systems, lying in Uzbekistan and in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. Among the mineral deposits that are exploited are coal, gas, oil, copper and other metals. It is a major producer of cotton, wine, and raw silk in the region (*Encyclopaedia Britannica 2013*).

8.2 Main issues of the economic development

Figure 2

Economic Factors Index of Kyrgyzstan
(2000-2018)*



In general, economic indicators improved in 2018, resulting in EFI growth compared to 2017 (0,597), and it reached 0,663. Within the mentioned period of 2000-2018, the highest indicator (0,772) was recorded in 2015 (see Figure 2, Table 1). Its 2018 growth was chiefly stipulated by improvement of GNI (\$1220 per capita), External trade rate (101% of GDP) and Domestic credit (22 % of GDP) as well as by reduction of Inflation rate (1,5%) and Budget deficit (-1,1% of GDP). In view of Foreign direct investments, they were drastically cut and sloped down to -1,39%²⁶³ in 2017 compared to 17,13% of GDP in 2015. The Kyrgyz Republic has 6.3 million people and is a land-locked country with a

* Source: calculations by the author.

²⁶³ See the official site of the World Bank <https://data.worldbank.org/> (15.07.2019).

significant potential for the expansion of its agriculture sector, hydroelectricity production, and tourism industry. Its economy is heavily dependent on remittances from Kyrgyz migrants working in Russia and Kazakhstan, and it is equivalent to about 27% of GDP in 2017. A slow but steady growth of agriculture, mining, construction and service sectors has sustained the reduction of poverty in the rural areas. It has rich endowments, including arable land (7% of the country), pastures (48%), and substantial forests and minerals, which provides numerous opportunities to expand the agriculture sector (*World Bank 2018*). The combined value of exports and imports is equal to 102,2% of GDP. As of June 30, 2018, according to the WTO, the Kyrgyz Republic had 17 nontariff measures in force. The overall investment climate is subject to considerable risk (*Heritage Foundation 2019*). Financial institutions – such as a strong banking system, investment capabilities, microfinancing and personal finance management – are all key points to sustaining an economic growth of a country. Few people, especially those in rural areas, have access to banks and therefore have no ability to invest or save. All these are one of the main impediments that undermine the country's economy. Even at a national level, money is frequently mismanaged. Credit costs remain high and about 46% of adult Kyrgyzstanis have access to an account with a formal banking institution and the sums are not duly regulated on the national level (*Bradley 2017*).

GDP growth slowed down in the period covering January and November 2018 and decreased to 3,5% compared to previously recorded 4,7%. It was conditioned by a drastic downfall of gold mining industry (Kumtor made up 10% of GDP). Regardless of the fact, that the Eurasian Economic Union fosters trade opportunities, the volumes of export were not sufficient and have been hindered as such (*World Bank 2019 a*).

Table 3

Kyrgyzstan Economy Data ²⁶⁴

	2016	2017
Population, million	6,1	6,3
GDP, current US\$ billion	1,118	1,204
Economic growth (GDP, annual variation in %)	4,3	4,7
Fiscal balance (% of GDP)	-4,4	-3,2
Public debt (% of GDP)	59,1	58,8
Inflation rate (annual variation in %)	0,4	3,2
Trade balance (USD billion)	-2,1	-2,4
Exports (USD billion)	1,6	1,8
Imports (USD billion)	3,7	4,2
Exports (annual variation in %)	-0,7	12,9
Imports (annual variation in %)	-3,0	12,1
External debt (% of GDP)	115	108

The Kyrgyz Republic's economic freedom score is 62.3, making its economy the 79th in the 2019 Index. The Kyrgyz Republic is ranked 17th among 43 countries in the Asia-Pacific region, and its overall score is above the regional and world averages (*Heritage Foundation 2019*).

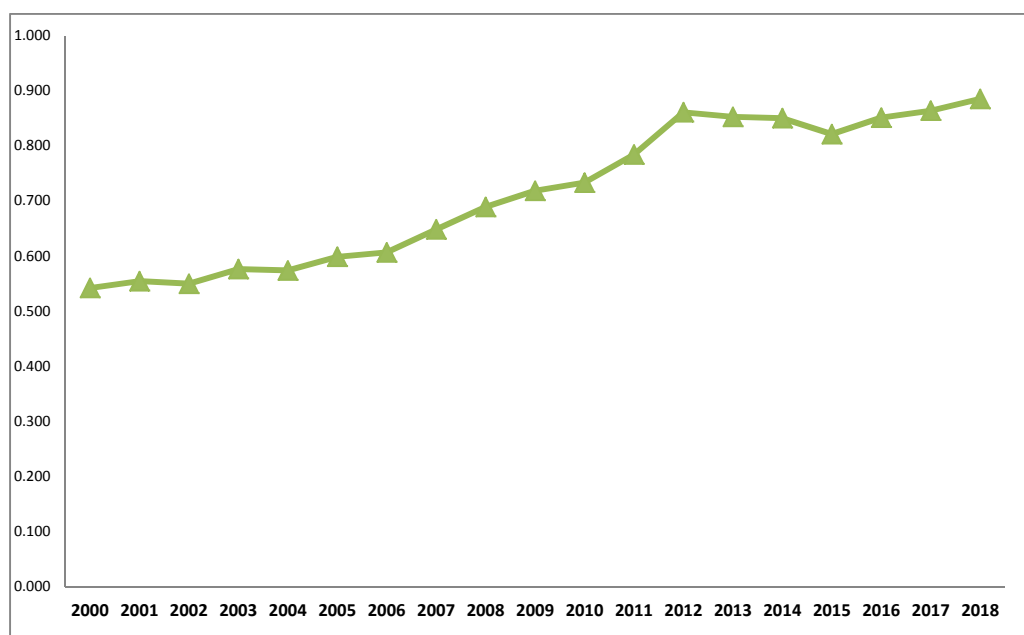
To sum up, overall improvement in the Kyrgyz Republic's entrepreneurial environment has been slow and uneven. Political rivalries and interests often hold back implementation of deeper structural reforms. Elements of the former system are still evident in many areas; the economy still lacks the institutional foundations of greater economic freedom, whereas creation of favourable atmosphere for private-sector investment is of constant problem (*Heritage Foundation 2019*). Socio-economic and political events of the last several years have hampered the solution to structural issues that are so necessary.

²⁶⁴ Source of the data is Focus Economics. "Kyrgyzstan Economic Outlook". <https://www.focus-economics.com/countries/kyrgyzstan> (12.07.2019).

8.3 Inequality discourse and social support policy

Figure 3

Social Factors Index of Kyrgyzstan
(2000-2018)*



The SFI curve of the IDL reflects that within the mentioned 2000-2012 years, it had had a steady increase despite some variations. Nonetheless, the curve had been falling down in 2013-2015, which only tended to improve in 2016 due to real wage increase²⁶⁵. Increment in salary has been carried out in April 2019 amounting to 16346 soms, equivalent to 234 US dollars. It should be added that since 1999 an average salary amounted to 7546 soms (\$158), and the highest indicator - 21339 soms (\$305)²⁶⁶ was recorded in December 2018.

* Source: calculations by the author.

²⁶⁵ Source of the data is National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic, "Wages by types of enterprises and territory", 1.07.00.16 // <http://www.stat.kg/en/statistics/trud-i-zarabotnaya-plata/> (20.07.2019).

²⁶⁶ Source of the data is Trading Economics (2019 b), "Kyrgyzstan Wages".

2018 Unemployment rate, when compared to the previous year, rose by 0,28%. Thus, during the 2000-2019 years the highest (12,55%) and the lowest (6,89%)²⁶⁷ indicators were registered in 2002 and 2017, respectively.

Table 4
The number of registered unemployed people within 2016-2018²⁶⁸

	2016	2017	2018
<i>Total</i>	<i>55,579</i>	<i>57,578</i>	<i>70,869</i>
<i>Higher Education</i>	7,198	6,503	5,691
<i>Special Vocational Education</i>	10,734	10,529	8,399
<i>Secondary education</i>	30,097	33,194	44,700
<i>Incomplete secondary education</i>	7,550	7,352	12,079
<i>Men</i>	26,106	28,296	35,510
<i>Women</i>	29,473	29,282	35,359

It is evident that increase in poverty rate in 2017-2019 had adversely influenced social and economic situation in Kyrgyzstan. Perhaps one of the largest causes of poverty in Kyrgyzstan is its dependence on Soviet support and later its termination. And in spite of its dependence on agriculture, there is a gap in knowledge and resources. Two-thirds of the population live in rural areas and these people are not adequately trained in land management, cattle breeding, veterinary practices and harvest techniques. This results in land that can no longer produce food and feed animals at full capacity and 12% of the population cannot subsist on insufficient food sources (*Bradley 2017*).

<https://tradingeconomics.com/kyrgyzstan/wages> (29.06.2019).

²⁶⁷ See the official site of the WB

<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.UEM.TOTL.ZS?locations=KG> (20.07.2019).

²⁶⁸ Source of the data is National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic, "The number of registered unemployed by sex and education", 1.07.00.19 // <http://www.stat.kg/en/statistics/z-anyatost/> (15.07.2019).

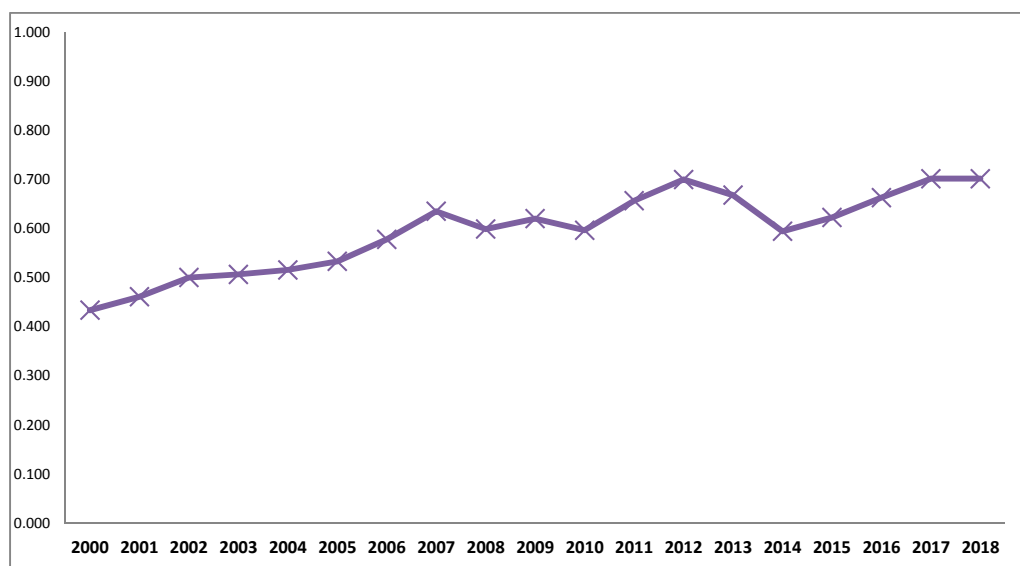
8. Democracy Development Processes in Kyrgyzstan

The Development Program of the Kyrgyz Republic for the period 2018-2022 ensures social support for vulnerable groups of the population, such as pensioners, the disabled and those living in extreme poverty. With the help of material support they will easily be integrated into the society, which will enhance the economic growth of the country. A special attention shall be paid to resolve the gaps in the mentioned sphere and various international organizations will opt to make strides in finding solutions to its issues by means of conducted research²⁶⁹.

8.4 Challenges to educational “capital” development

Figure 4

Educational Factors Index of Kyrgyzstan
(2000-2018)*



²⁶⁹ The source of the data is “The Development Program of the Kyrgyz Republic for the period 2018-2022” (Approved by the Decree Jogorku Kenesh of the Kyrgyz Republic of April 20, 2018 No. 2377-V) // https://www.unpage.org/files/public/the_development_program_of_the_kyrgyz_republic_for_the_period_2018-2022.pdf (15.07.2019).

* Source: calculations by the author.

The EdFI²⁷⁰ curve of the IDL had a tendency to grow, yet with certain variations in the period of 2000-2017. Since 2015 its indicators had systematically gone up and the highest indicator (0,702) was topped in 2017, stipulated by increasing and sustaining allocations on Human Development Index Education Index²⁷¹ and Government expenditure on education²⁷² (see Figure 4, Table 1).

Prior to the fall of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s, the Central Asian countries demonstrated many achievements, such as increase in adult literacy, high school graduation rates, good levels of student achievement in mathematics and natural science. However, since gaining its independence in 1991, the Kyrgyz Republic has faced a number of challenges in ensuring the sustainable education of its citizens. Almost thirty years later, the cumulative effects of insufficient financing, dilapidated infrastructure, and teachers' limited professional capacity have resulted in poor literacy abilities among youth (*Информационное Агентство "24.kg" 2018*). Since 2014 USAID has been working on integrating an inclusive education and providing qualitative education for ethnic minorities, helping to introduce modern programmes and supporting reforms in education management (*USAID from the American People 2019*).

For the timeframe 2013-2018, the EU had allocated €17 million of aid to the Kyrgyz Republic to implement Education Development Strategy (EDS) to contribute to the improvement of the education quality in general. As a result, it improved the performance, transparency and accountability of the public education sector. In the meantime, the Ministry of Education and Science achieved 96,66% of the 290 indicators established in the EDS 2020 (*European External Action Service 2018 b*).

²⁷⁰ Due to the lack of certain data, 2018 EdFI is subject to adjustment.

²⁷¹ Source of the data is the official site of UNDP

<http://hdr.undp.org/en/data?fbclid=IwAR3drTmCN1nJ0yy2yNnDj2wbuos4NY5RrEtOIQes7g1EqKwi ekN6C9SwQhk> (25.07.2019):

²⁷² Source of the data is the WB official site

<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.XPD.TOTL.GD.ZS?locations=KG> (25.07.2019).

Islamization and radicalization processes influencing the education system in Kyrgyzstan is very evident. More than 2,500 madrasas (a Muslim school that is a part of a mosque) have been constructed by is gaining more and more influence over different directions of socioeconomic life of the population. Almazbek Akmataliyev, a Candidate of Philosophical Sciences, claims that madrasas serve as ancillary institutions to study the foundations of Quran, learn the Arabic language, which, in its turn, enforce moral upbringing of a child. Nevertheless, a number of parents deprive their children of the right to get a proper education, as religious education does not include all compulsory subjects (*Bulan Institute for Peace Innovations 2017*). This concern may be solved by raising the level of responsibility of government in this educational field.

Therefore, it may be concluded that a high number of schoolchildren is not a safeguarding parameter or a guarantee to have a good education level, since schoolchildren of poor families lack motivation topped with the fact that in some cases, teachers do not possess sufficient abilities and skills. This all result in the fall of the education level.

8.5 Possible solutions to increase Kyrgyzstani living standard

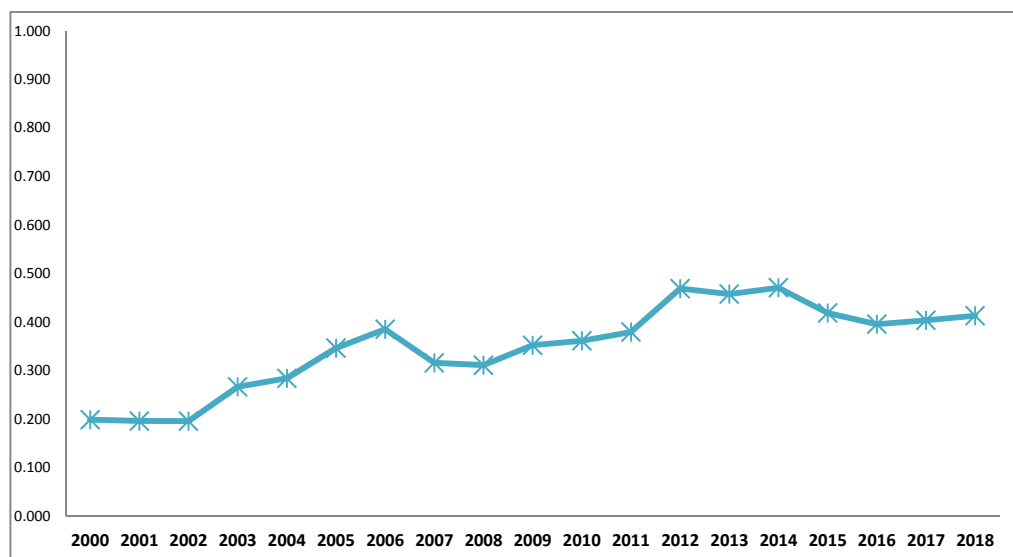
The HFI curve of the IDL improved with certain variations from 2000 to 2018, and 0,198 registered in 2000 amounted to 0,413 in 2018. The variable of Life expectancy at birth chiefly contributed to the growth²⁷³ of HFI indicator in 2018 in comparison to 3 previous years (see Figure 5, Table 1).

²⁷³ Source of the data is the WB official site

<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.DYN.LE00.IN?locations=KG> (25.07.2019).

Figure 5

Health Factors Index of Kyrgyzstan
(2000-2018)*



Kyrgyzstan allocates 8% of GDP to Health expenditure. Indeed, the country has achieved better health outcomes compared to other countries with a similar income level (*World Bank 2019 b*). The Kyrgyz population enjoys Life expectancy today, equivalent to 71,5²⁷⁴ years, which is still one of the lowest among other Central Asian countries. Modern health care is not available as the health care system is based on the Soviet style of health care. In general, medical personnel are knowledgeable but the system lacks the modern health care technologies that will surely enhance greater success in the mentioned sector (*U.S. Embassy in the Kyrgyz Republic 2018*).

On 7 June 2019, the World Bank endorsed a new Primary Health Care Quality Improvement Program for the Kyrgyz Republic. It is financed to the amount of \$20 million from the International Development Association (IDA),

* Source: calculations by the author.

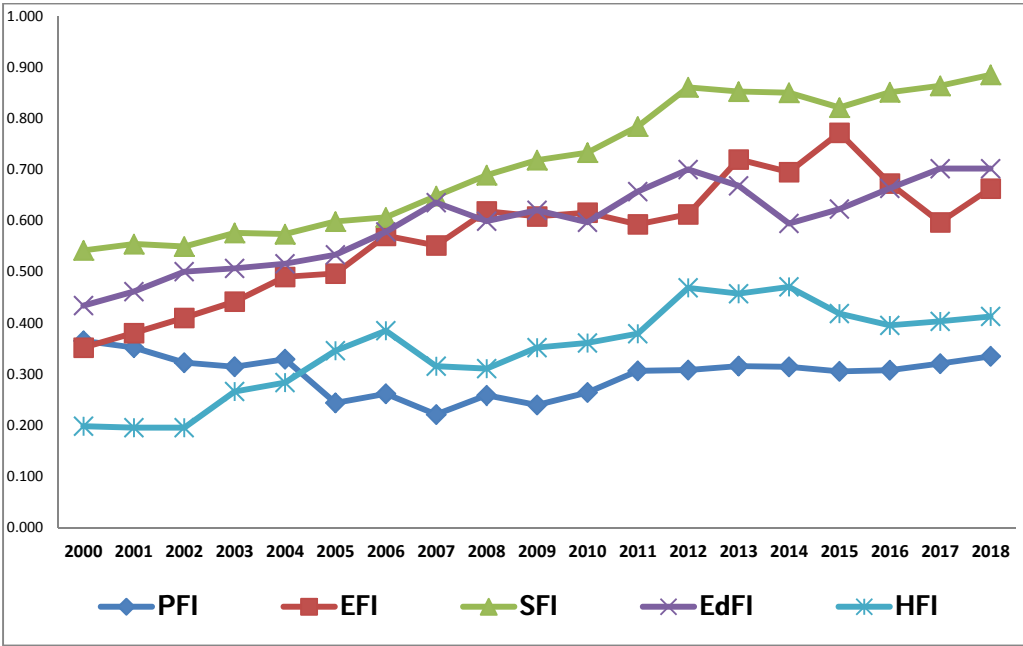
²⁷⁴ Source of the data is the official site of the National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic <http://www.stat.kg/ru/statistics/naselenie/> (30.07.2019).

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including \$10 million as a concessional credit and \$10 million as a grant. An additional grant of \$17 million is also being provided by a Multi-Donor Trust Fund supported by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and the German Development Bank (KfW). The project supports the Kyrgyz Republic’s new health strategy for 2019-2030, "Healthy Person - Prosperous Country," and will provide an opportunity for reaching the largest share of the population of various social layers by enabling them equally enjoy first aid services (*World Bank 2019 b*).

8.6 Development trends of the Index of Democracy Level

Figure 6
Indices of Political, Economic, Social, Health and Educational Factors affecting the Index of Democracy Level of Kyrgyzstan for the timeframe 2000-2018*



* Source: calculations by the author.
The indices of IDL factors are comparable with each other by trends only.

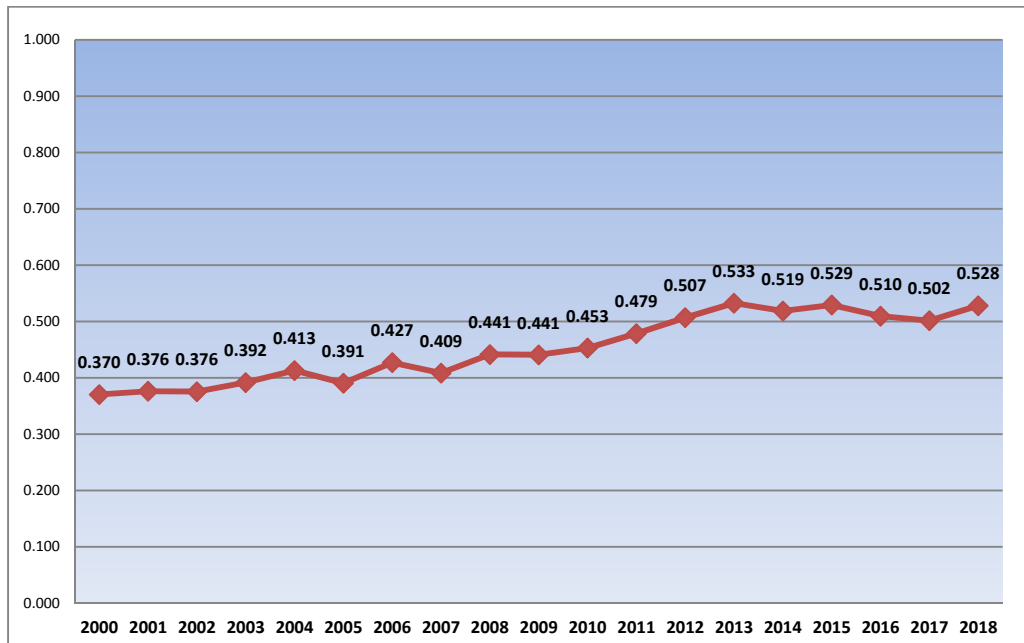
2000-2018 IDL trends are displayed in Figure 7. In fact, the IDL (0,528) increased in 2018 compared to 2017 and 2016, but the highest indicator (0,533) was recorded in 2013.

Figure 6 concludes that the 2018 IDL curve grew mainly stipulated by PFI, SFI and HFI as well as accompanied by the stable EdFI indicator.

To sum up, both political and socio-economic reforms are essential to stabilize indicators of Kyrgyzstan IDL.

Figure 7

The Index of Democracy Level of Kyrgyzstan for the period 2000-2018*



* Source: calculations by the author.

8.7 Regression analysis of the Index of Democracy Level

Arusyak Aleksanyan, Alisa Jamalyan

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 comparatively significant influence on the IDL of Kyrgyzstan.

The regression outcomes reflect that there has been a significant correlation between the IDL_i²⁷⁵ and political, economic, social, educational as well as health variables.

Hence, the correlation between IDL_i and political variables of Rule of Law, Corruption Perceptions Index and Social Unrest and Political Pressure has been established (see Table 5).

Table 5

Regression analysis of the IDL_i (PFI variables)

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Coefficient</i>	<i>Adj.R²</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>N</i>
Rule of Law	-0,004	0,237	0,009	24
Corruption Perceptions Index	0,012	0,445	0,000	24
Social Unrest and Political Pressure	-0,026	0,209	0,014	24

Out of the economic variables included in the model, there has been a correlation between IDL_i and Gross national income per capita and Index of Economic Freedom (see Table 6).

Table 6

Regression analysis of the IDL_i (EFI variables)

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Coefficient</i>	<i>Adj.R²</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>N</i>
Gross national income per capita (1000 US dollars)	0,123	0,909	0,000	24
Index of Economic Freedom	0,011	0,455	0,000	24

²⁷⁵ IDL_i is the Index of Democracy Level cleaned from the corresponding variable during every paired regression analysis.

Correlation between IDL_i and social variables of Real wage and Gini index is significant (see Table 7).

Table 7

Regression analysis of the IDL_i (SFI variables)

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Coefficient</i>	<i>Adj.R²</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>N</i>
Real wage (100 US dollars)	0,1	0,900	0,000	24
Gini index	-0,497	0,263	-0,006	24

HDI Education Index as well as Government expenditure on education are of the variables that strongly correlate with IDL_i when observing the regression analysis (see Table 8).

Table 8

Regression analysis of the IDL_i (EdFI variables)

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Coefficient</i>	<i>Adj.R²</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>N</i>
HDI	1,097	0,530	0,000	24
Education Index				
Government expenditure on education (% of GDP)	0,034	0,513	0,000	24

In view of health care variables, Life expectancy at birth and Current health expenditure are significantly correlated with IDL_i (see Table 9).

Table 9

Regression analysis of the IDL_i (HFI variables)

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Coefficient</i>	<i>Adj.R²</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>N</i>
Life expectancy at birth	0,029	0,564	0,000	24
Current health expenditure (% of GDP)	0,029	0,357	0,001	24

Upon the regression analysis, it is concluded that political factors; namely, Rule of Law, Corruption Perceptions Index and Social Unrest and Political Pressure have a significant impact on IDL_i of Kyrgyzstan (see Table 5). Subsequently, 1 unit decline of Rule of Law and Social Unrest & Political

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Pressure variables will lead to IDL_i increase by 0,004 and 0,026 units. A negative correlation between IDL_i and the observed variables is explained by numerous factors, including power transition triggered by revolutions and civil disobedience acts (for example, during the 2005 revolution the president Akayev's resignation, who had been consecutively elected for 3 terms), caused by the president Akayev's resignation, who had been consecutively elected for 3 terms, overthrow of the old regime, adoption of a new Constitution and others. In the meantime, 1 point increase in Corruption Perceptions Index will result in 0,012 increase in IDL_i (see Table 5).

By analyzing the data, it can be concluded that IDL_i and GNI per capita as well as Index of Economic Freedom are interrelated. Therefore, 1 unit increase in IEF will amount to 0,011 increase in IDL_i , whereas 1000 dollar increase in GDP per capita will entail 0,123 units increase in IDL_i (see Table 6).

In connection with IDL social factors, Real wage and Gini index can be underlined as the most essential ones affecting the democracy in the country. Thereby, 100 dollar increment in Real wage and 0,1 decline in Gini index will reflect the IDL_i growth in 0,1 and 0,05 units, respectively (see Table 7).

0,1 unit increase in HDI Education index measured by 0-1 rating scale, and 1% growth in Government spending on education will have a positive impact on IDL_i with 0,11 and 0,034 units (see Table 8).

Another factors that are correlated with IDL are variables of Life expectancy at birth and Current health expenditure; therefore, Life expectancy increased by 1 year and 1% of GDP increase in Health expenditure will favourably influence on IDL_i with 0,029 units growth (see Table 9).

Consequently, through regression analysis, aimed at measuring the level of democracy in the KR, we can identify what political, economic, social, educational and health factors are mostly essential to efficiently implement democratic processes in the country, as well as emphasize a pivotal significance of established institutions attempting to enhance democracy in Kyrgyzstan.

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9. POTENTIAL OF CONSOCIATIONAL CONSOLIDATION IN UKRAINE: LIMITS OF CIVILIARCHIC SECURITY

ASHOT ALEKSANYAN

Issues linked with strengthening sovereignty and state building, ensuring civilarchic security, peace, national security and identity, unity, promoting European integration and deeper international cooperation were of importance in Ukraine's democratic consolidation processes, covering the period of 2016-2018. It is noteworthy that the country's political elite, leaders of parliamentary and extra-parliamentary parties, representatives of local self-government bodies had been attempting to form a *securitization discourse* in internal political arena. This allows the president and military-political administration to keep strained Russian-Ukrainian relations, ongoing anti-terrorist operations in the self-proclaimed Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics (D/LPRs) and others in the agenda of the country's public life. In this context, the EU leaders' position to adhere to policy of non-recognition, illegal annexation, condemnation and sanctions can also be considered (*EEAS 2017b*). International response to the incident that took place between the Russian Federal Security Service and Ukrainian Naval Forces in the Azov Sea and Kerch Strait testifies the aforesaid (*Council of the EU 2019, Gorenburg 2018*). The decision to impose a state of martial law²⁷⁶ in the country, which was sparked by

²⁷⁶ See Decree of the President of Ukraine №393/2018 "On imposing a state of martial law in Ukraine". Accessed: 13.06.2019. <https://www.president.gov.ua/documents/3932018-25594>; Law of Ukraine "On approval for the Decree of the President to impose a state of martial law" (The

9. Potential of Consociational Consolidation in Ukraine: Limits of Civiliarchic Security

that very incident, was proposed by the Ukrainian president, and was approved by the Verkhovna Rada and parliamentary parties. He demanded to expand sanctions and increase international pressure on Russia's military and political leadership. Despite the fact that a state of martial law was declared not on the whole territory of Ukraine, but only in certain areas, the internal political tension escalated.

In comply to the procedure, the president proposed to the National Security and Defense Council of Ukraine (NSDC) that a state of martial law be imposed in Ukraine. Moreover, NSDC stressed the importance to implement a number of urgent measures for reinforcing state sovereignty and independence²⁷⁷. *Securitization discourse* was especially noticeable when opposition forces and CSOs initiated mass protests, rallies, assemblies and other likewise events. As acts of civil disobedience were observed by the political elite as a threat to the country's sovereignty, internal and external security as well as to protection of international reputation, security, and so on. However, Ukraine's commitments within the framework of the European Association Agreement, security and military-political integration with NATO and a number of other documents were of civiliarchic and political significance to ensure democracy and security of the country. It meant a democratic security discourse guaranteeing the compliance between human rights and the rule of law in securitization (Bourne 2018, 23-46; Walter 2018, 79-95; Bruns and Happ 2016, 139-159). In other words, preconditions for security related issues become urgent precisely during democratization processes of the political regime. Legitimacy of anti-democratic actions is not possible in them.

Verkhovna Rada Laws, 2018, № 48, page 381). Accessed: 13.06.2019. <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/2630-viii>.

²⁷⁷ See the Verkhovna Rada on national security and defense of Ukraine on 26 November 2018 "On emergency measures to ensure state sovereignty and independence of Ukraine and introduce martial law in Ukraine" (Entered by Presidential Decree on 26 November 2018 № 390/2018). Accessed: 13.06.2019. <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/n0012525-18#n8>.

Table 1

**Indices of Political, Economic, Social, Educational and Health Factors of Ukraine
for the period 2000 and 2018***

Years	PFI	EFI	SFI	EdFI	HFI	IDL
2000	0,400	0,522	0,549	0,505	0,221	0,440
2001	0,412	0,454	0,568	0,542	0,238	0,435
2002	0,444	0,467	0,586	0,596	0,265	0,462
2003	0,423	0,515	0,601	0,612	0,292	0,473
2004	0,405	0,499	0,619	0,594	0,272	0,459
2005	0,461	0,574	0,655	0,651	0,273	0,512
2006	0,497	0,544	0,696	0,663	0,281	0,525
2007	0,483	0,610	0,743	0,661	0,264	0,540
2008	0,497	0,689	0,787	0,679	0,238	0,570
2009	0,494	0,575	0,717	0,734	0,329	0,547
2010	0,444	0,574	0,766	0,699	0,399	0,535
2011	0,468	0,678	0,808	0,663	0,408	0,574
2012	0,451	0,658	0,866	0,698	0,429	0,574
2013	0,394	0,603	0,894	0,697	0,449	0,542
2014	0,340	0,582	0,774	0,649	0,409	0,491
2015	0,362	0,618	0,653	0,622	0,427	0,495
2016	0,378	0,591	0,694	0,596	0,424	0,496
2017	0,382	0,573	0,741	0,596	0,434	0,499
2018	0,378	0,540	0,792	0,596	0,427	0,494

* Source: calculations by the author.

The EFI, SFI, HFI, EdFI and the indices of certain years estimated in accordance with IDL may have a slight difference in comparison to the indices of the corresponding years estimated in the previous publications in the result of updated data, the insertion of new data and the change of minimum and maximum values.

At the same time, CSOs are granted with an opportunity to actively participate in various activities, by exercising their right to democratic and civilian control over the armed forces;²⁷⁸ thus, contributing to establishment of civil culture and raising of public consciousness, and consolidation of a system of democratic values.

The democracy level in Ukraine was conditioned by political, social, economic, education and health factors within the mentioned period (see Table 1). They depict that progress of modern Ukrainian society is directly linked to a further development of democracy in this period of globalization. Consequently, democratization of public administration, by raising political accountability and transparency of the authorities is among the most important issues in order to ensure a sustainable development of the country.

9.1 Trends in the securitization of democracy and politics

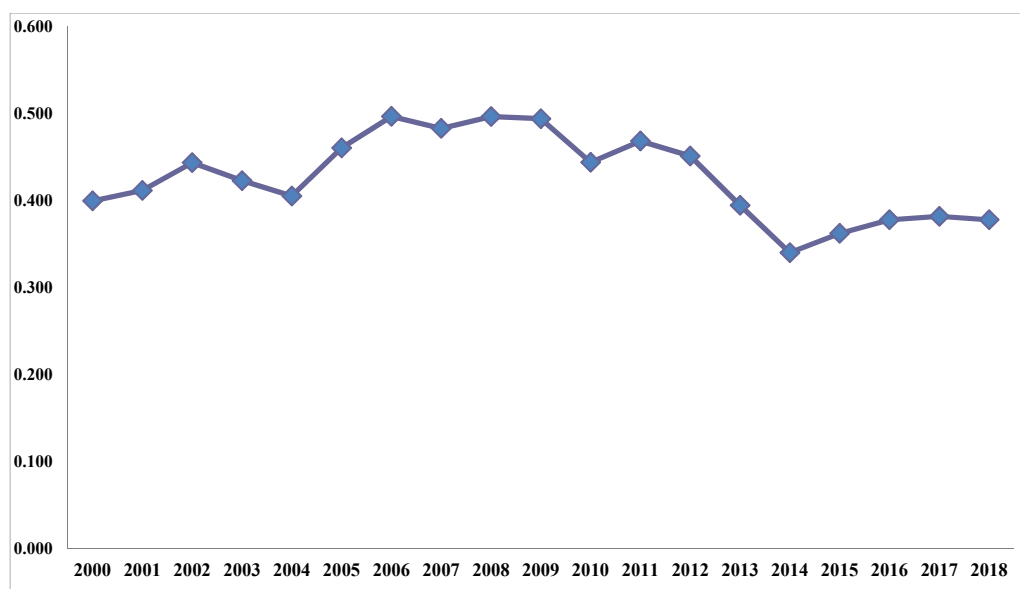
A study of 2016-2018 PFI curve reveals that the following factors were of key importance for the Index of Democracy Level, i.e. effective governance, rule of law, media freedom, anti-corruption policy, public participation of CSOs and social groups, deepening of international and European integration, regulation of ethno-political and ethno-cultural issues, social partnership, constructive dialogue and others.

Figure 1 depicts that the 2018 PFI curve reduced when compared to the previous year, hence remaining on the low level in comparison to 2000-2013 (see Figure 1, Table 1).

²⁷⁸ See Law of Ukraine “On National defense of Ukraine” (Laws of the Verkhovna Rada (BBP), 2018, № 31, page 241). Accessed: 19.06.2019. <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/2469-19>, “Cyber Security Strategy” (approved by the President’s decree from 15 March 2016 №96/2016). Accessed: 19.06.2019. <https://zakon5.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/96/2016>, “Cybersecurity action plan for 2018 for realization of the Strategy” (Cabinet of Ministers in Ukraine approved on 11 July 2018 № 481-p). Accessed: 19.06.2019. <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/481-2018-%D1%80>.

Figure 1

Political Factors Index of Ukraine (2000-2018)*



Instability in the political system and administration combined with steps initiated to strengthen sovereignty, ensure military-political security and integration, restore civil unity and territorial integrity, manage conflict in the South-East regions and “balance” Russian-Ukrainian relations had a significant impact on Ukraine's democratic consolidation processes (*Dobysh 2019, 51-64; Resende 2018, 23-41; Nikolko 2018, 69-93; Fiedlschuster 2016, 71-91; Kostyuchenko and Akulenko 2016, 115-138*). For example, an agreement on termination of the Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Partnership between Ukraine and the Russian Federation²⁷⁹ was signed on 1 April 2019. Or, the EU adopted non-recognition policy for Crimea and Sevastopol and it continues to

* Source: calculations by the author.

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

²⁷⁹ See the Law of Ukraine on “On the termination of the Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Partnership between Ukraine and the Russian Federation,” (The Verkhovna Rada laws (BBP), 2019, № 1, page 2). Accessed: 23.06.2019. <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/2643-19>.

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strongly condemn this violation of international law as well as illegal annexation of the above-mentioned territories (*EEAS 2017b*).

Geopolitical developments and a complicated military situation created in self proclaimed L/DPRs persistently had a negative influence on 2018 PFI of the IDL. In fact, on January 18, 2018 the Parliament of Ukraine adopted in full Law “On the peculiarities of state policy on the restoration of the state sovereignty of Ukraine over temporarily occupied territories in Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasts,”²⁸⁰ hence defining the country’s legal and political approaches to RF actions. They testify that issues related to the country’s sovereignty have an immense effect on social and political stability in Ukraine (*Степуко 2011, 171-184*). It is obvious that Ukrainian identity encompasses civil, territorial, linguistic, cultural, religious and other components that are common for all citizens of the country. Moreover, Ukrainian civil identity is closely linked to a choice of the country’s foreign policy vector.

In modern Ukraine, democracy is perceived not only as a system of civiliarchic values, a unity of ideological principles and rules, but also as a unique form of social development as well as a phase of political modernization when a combination of public welfare and political culture is required for it to be successful (*Becker 2018, 43-68; Budrytė 2018, 155-177; Martsenyuk and Troian 2018, 129-153*). Principles of constitutionality and humanity, as well as special role of political elites and party leaders shall be preserved in it, as the latter are responsible for achievements and failures of the country's domestic and foreign policy. In this respect, democratization and integration in Ukraine face increasing ethno-cultural and ethno-religious risks that demand their urgent solutions (*Makhortykh 2018, 219-247; Nuzov 2017, 132-153; Osipian and Osipian 2012, 616-642*). Those risks threaten stability of the political system, as the content and expectations of civil unity diminish in the activities of

²⁸⁰ See Law of Ukraine “On the peculiarities of state policy on the restoration of the state sovereignty of Ukraine over temporarily occupied territories in Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasts” (The Verkhovna Rada Laws (BBP), 2018, № 10, page 54). Accessed: 23.06.2019. <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/2268-19>.

the country's president and ruling party (*Karnaukhova 2018, 249-274*). The Law on “National security of Ukraine”²⁸¹ was adopted in 2018, and it defined the general priorities of national security system and the main objectives to provide protection from threats as well as development of equal and mutually beneficial relations with other states. Among Ukraine's fundamental national interests, the law lays down the country's integration into European political, economic, legal and security space; gaining membership in the European Union and NATO.²⁸² That process is implemented in re-integration format restoring and recovering the integrated ties and relations.

Strategic integration is among issues fixed in the agenda of democratic development of modern Ukraine, taking into account its negative, positive, real and formal aspects. Currently, integration in Ukraine is simultaneously accompanied by disintegration processes. As for the period observed, trends to “freezing” and disintegrating relations between Ukraine and Russia are quite evident; e.g. formerly close political, socio-economic and cultural ties between the two countries were weakened or even severed. It is noteworthy that integration processes taking place even in the post-Soviet region (CIS, EAEU) proceed not by restoring former economic ties, but by establishing new ones due to changes in socio-economic conditions.

Trends of an increase in militarization and military expenditure, conflicts in South-East regions, a tense situation in self proclaimed D/LPRs, worsening of Ukrainian-Russian relations on territorial discrepancies and restoration of integrity, had adversely affected the level of democracy in Ukraine (*Council of the EU 2018*).

Table 2 displays that according to data of Global militarization index, Ukraine took 14 position among 22. In particular, according to Bonn International Center for Conversion ratings, Ukraine took 14 position among 155 countries in 2017.

²⁸¹ See the Law of Ukraine “On National Security of Ukraine” (The Verkhovna Rada Laws (BBP), 2018, № 31, page 241). Accessed: 19.06.2019. <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/2469-19>.

²⁸² See *ibid*.

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²⁸³It can also be stated that Ukraine's military expenditure comparatively comprised 3,7%, 3,2% and 3,8% as a share of GDP within the 2016-2018 (SIPRI 2019).

Table 2

Global militarization index of Ukraine²⁸⁴

<i>Years</i>	<i>Military Expenditure Index Score</i>	<i>Military Personal Index Score</i>	<i>Heavy Weapons Index Score</i>	<i>GMI Score</i>	<i>Rank</i>
2013	6,26	5,04	2,73	769,15	22
2014	6,37	5,02	2,65	770,67	20
2015	6,49	5,19	2,66	789,8	14
2016	6,46	5,2	2,64	786,89	15
2017	6,43	5,2	2,64	785,13	14

Due to geopolitical orientation of Ukraine, the international community does not pay due attention to the fact that escalation of the conflict in the eastern regions was mainly sparked because of a domination of regional identity over Ukrainian in these regions. Thus, the overwhelming majority of the population uses the Russian language, under the influence of ethno-cultural and information and communication sphere. The issue of territorial identity, triggered by different events, collides with the civil one, because residents of these regions are Ukrainian citizens (Степуко 2018, 48-54; 2016a, 68-74; 2016b, 163-170). Nonetheless, after a transition of power in Ukraine in 2014, clashes of division into a territorial and Ukrainian identity led to the spread of centre-oriented trends among Crimea and Donbas residents (Степуко 2017, 39-46; Розумний 2016, 160-167). Thus, the issue of territorial identity is extremely important for understanding the essence of democratization processes in the period under consideration.

²⁸³ See *ibid.*

²⁸⁴ See the official site of Bonn International Center for Conversion <https://gmi.bicc.de/index.php?page=gmi-publications> (14.06.2019).

Ukraine's foreign policy direction is enormously essential in view of its special position in international relations system (*Стенуко, Черненко 2017, 178-183; Розумний 2016, 33-41, 91-95*). An increased attention paid to Ukraine by the world's leading countries is primarily linked to its socio-economic potential and geographical location. In addition, diversified historical developments of the western and eastern regions as they used to a constituent part of different European countries, led to cultural closeness and formation of foreign policy orientations. This, in turn, predetermined particular attitude from EU and Russia towards Ukraine and each side sought to preserve Ukraine in its sphere of influence. Cultural ties of the Russian and Ukrainian peoples, massive spread of the Russian language, and strategic advantages of close cooperation defined Russia's aspiration. It is worth noting that Ukraine's political stability and the rule of law largely depend on ethno-cultural, linguistic and citizenship factors. If the modern Ukrainian political elites choose one of them, harmony of communities and territorial integrity and, consequently, dominant positions of those elites will be jeopardized. However, 2016-2018 events revealed that the Ukrainian political elite, parties and CSOs made their geopolitical choices in favour of further integration and close cooperation with the EU and the US. The President of the country P.Poroshenko had gradually abandoned a multivector strategy in foreign policy sphere, by promoting deeper European integration processes, at the same time being "cautious" with Russia in terms of their mutual relations. The processes aimed to approach to Western democracies and promote European integration were fully implemented by the ruling elite and CSOs, whereas the idea of joining the EU became a dominant concept among intellectuals and the youth, residents in large cities and Western region. This model appealed to a significant number of Ukrainians and was linked to peculiarities of their territorial identity and attitude.

Membership of neighbouring states to the EU and establishment of traits of democratic citizenship in the country is equally important for Ukraine in terms of activating its regional ties.

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The right of free movement of persons, improvement of living standards, access to education for the youth in EU member states and continuation of domestic reforms are strongly emphasized among the main advantages of Ukraine's possible membership to the EU. In this regard, the adoption of the regulation on visa liberalisation for Ukrainian citizens since June 11, 2017 is an important development for Ukraine (*EEAS 2017a*). This enabled the citizens of the country to enter the Schengen area without visas, which would help strengthen ties between the people of Ukraine and the EU (*European Commission 2017a; 2017b*). Moreover, On 1 September 2017, the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement came into full force, including its Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA) provisionally applied since January 1, 2016 (*European Commission 2019; EEAS 2017c*). All the mentioned agreements will enhance EU-Ukraine cooperation and dialogue on democratization in a number of sectors; namely, foreign policy, security, socio-economic and others.

It is crucial to establish civilization related components to raise democracy in the country. In this context, the President, Government, leaders of parliamentary parties, politicians and CSOs made great efforts with an aim to unite all citizens of Ukraine. Principles of civil, ethno-cultural and consociational society with the preservation of the Ukrainian language and Ukrainian culture are of great importance for them. The pursuit of unifying values in the society through continuous and real dialogue can be the basic principle to consolidate the Ukrainian nation. Nonetheless, this dialogue is based on the preservation of the principle of cultural diversity, recognition of each ethnic culture as an important and integral component of a national culture. It is worth noting that the most important task of democratic consolidation is the formation of a national or superethnic consciousness in a multiethnic society, that can be substantially supported by key actors in the political system, i.e. the state, local bodies, parties, CSOs, social networks, intellectuals, churches, and etc. On the one hand, civil identity can unite people of different ethnic origin but belonging to the same state. For example,

ethnic Russians living in Ukraine can have Ukrainian citizenship with no Ukrainian ethnic identity. On the other hand, the Ukrainian ethnic identity unites citizens of different states who are representatives of the Ukrainian Diaspora. They are ethnic Ukrainians but do not have Ukrainian civil identity because they do not have Ukrainian citizenship. In this context, the term "Ukrainian" defines both Ukrainian citizens and Ukrainians by nationality. It is obvious that strengthening of democratic foundations of statehood and consociational consolidation is central to the formation of civil identity in modern Ukraine.

Different approaches to Ukraine's place and role in the international relations system defined by the political elites of the two countries, were one of the main reasons that thwarted a full development of Russian-Ukrainian relations in modern global transformations. Therefore, it was natural for Russia to keep Ukraine in the sphere of its influence. Meanwhile, Ukraine chiefly took the path of expanding and deepening cooperation with the EU. In general, Russian ruling elite explained the main reason for such an approach, which was traditionally linked to historical and ethno-cultural factors. Accordingly, long-term co-existence of the observed territories within a single state (Russian Empire, USSR) supposes to maintain close relations by force of habit even after Ukraine obtained its independence. Another reason, as a rule, relates to common linguistic and cultural traits of the two peoples. Moreover, the thesis "about Russians and Ukrainians being one people" has been repeatedly used by Russian President V.Putin²⁸⁵ even after Russian-Ukrainian conflict (*Ауф 2016; Известия 2018*). However, it should be noted that common ethno-cultural traits did not contribute to the strengthening of political ties between the two states. Besides, 2016-2018 Russian-Ukrainian relations had a negative dynamics. It proves that ethno-cultural commonality is not connected with independent state building processes. It is conditioned by the fact that civil characteristics of a nation have been prioritised these days, and in this sense

²⁸⁵ See "Appeal of the RF President". Accessed: 11.06.2019. <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/-news/20603>.

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Ukrainian society is in the process of forming a civil nation. On the other hand, Russia's military-political administration viewed relations with Ukraine mainly in the context of global opposition to the United States, the EU and NATO. Meanwhile, many Russian-Ukrainian joint projects, including humanitarian and cultural ones, were mainly implemented and were personally initiated by public and political figures of the two countries.

According to Nation in Transit 2016-2018 report provided by Freedom House, ratings of democratic transformations in Ukraine's political system were improved and decreased from 4,68 to 4,64 (see Table 3). Moreover, its political regime was classified as a transitional government or hybrid regime in view of gross ratings of democracy score.

Table 3

Freedom House report on democratic transformations in Ukraine (2016-2018)²⁸⁶

<i>Factors for Democracy Progress</i>	2016	2017	2018
National Democratic Governance	5,75	5,75	5,75
Electoral Process	3,50	3,50	3,50
Civil Society	2,25	2,50	2,75
Independent Media	4,00	4,00	4,25
Local Democratic Governance	5,25	5,00	4,75
Judicial Framework and Independence	6,00	5,75	5,75
Corruption	6,00	5,75	5,75
<i>Democracy Score</i>	4,68	4,61	4,64

As it can be seen in Table 3, Civil Society scored the highest among the factors for democracy progress, but it gradually worsened in 2017-2018 compared to 2016, whereas National Democratic Governance, Corruption, Judicial framework and Independence are among the factors, rated with the lowest scores (see Table 3). In reference to corruption, the most infamous

²⁸⁶ Source of the data is the official site of Freedom House <https://freedomhouse.org/report/-nations-transit/2018/ukraine> (24.06.2019).

incident was about the Ukrainian president's offshore agreements, a report by Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (*OCCRP 2016*).

According to Freedom House 2016-2018 data, Ukraine in terms of political rights and civil liberties, press and network freedom was classified as partly free.²⁸⁷ In this regard, violence, exerted against journalists remains of a key concern. For example, Pavel Sheremet was shot dead on 20 July 2016 (*RadioLiberty 2018*).

2017-2018 report by Amnesty International stated that members of law enforcement agencies continued to use torture and other ill-treatment, and committed other human rights violations; there was continued impunity for past and ongoing violations of international humanitarian law (*Amnesty International 2018, 292-298*). As observed in the above-mentioned report, procedural shortcomings in the activities of State Investigation Bureau²⁸⁸ (SIB) were among the causes for a deteriorating situation (*Amnesty International 2018, 293*), as the SIB a stand-alone agency was created to undertake investigations independently of other law enforcement agencies and other officials

2016-2018 reports of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights documented violations of international humanitarian law. Most of them are caused by the armed conflict in the south-eastern regions of Ukraine and lack of conditions for a peaceful settlement. Despite a number of legal procedures adopted by the Verkhovna Rada, situation in Donetsk and Luhansk regions still remains tense. The armed conflict in eastern-western Ukraine and absence of conditions for its peaceful settlement continued to be the major cause of documented violations. Regardless of a number of legal procedures²⁸⁹

²⁸⁷ Source of the data is the official site of Freedom House
<https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2018/ukraine> (24.06.2019),
<https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-media/freedom-media-2019> (24.06.2019),
<https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-net/2018/ukraine> (24.06.2019).

²⁸⁸ See the official site of State Investigation Bureau <https://dbr.gov.ua> (24.06.2019).

²⁸⁹ See Law of Ukraine "On Creation of Necessary Conditions for Peaceful Settlement of the Situation in Certain Areas of Donetsk and Luhansk Regions" (Laws of the Verkhovna Rada (BBP), 2017, № 40-41, page 384). Accessed: 12.06.2019. <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/2167-19>, Law of Ukraine "On adoption of changes of Article 1 "On the special order of local self-

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adopted by the Verkhovna Rada, Donetsk and Luhansk regions were still in tense situation (*OHCHR 2018a; 2018b; 2018c; 2018d; Human Rights Watch 2018*). Attempting to end an armed conflict, eliminate violations of illicit detention and change the atmosphere of impunity, the President and parliament introduced a special order of self government bodies.²⁹⁰ This will ensure pocesses aimed at peacefull settlement of the conflict by removing all illegal armed units, military equipment, as well as fighters and mercenaries²⁹¹ from the country. Besides, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights reported, the total civilian death toll of the conflict reached 3,321 and more than 7,000 injured for the entire conflict period covering from 14 April 2014 to 15 February 2019.

Table 4

Conflict-related civilian casualties during the entire conflict period (2016-2018)²⁹²

<i>Years</i>	<i>Killed</i>	<i>Injured</i>	<i>Total</i>
2016	112	476	588
2017	117	487	604
2018	55	224	279

Table 4 displays that there was a drastic fall in the number of civilian casualties for the period of 2016-2018 which was stipulated by ceasefire activities, periodically violated on both sides (*OHCHR 2019b*). If adding 5,2 million people who suffered from the conflict and 1,3 residents who were dislocated or isolated from communities along the contact line, then the actual scale of the conflict becomes clearer (*Humanitarian Response 2019; OHCHR 2019b; 2017*).

government in separate regions of Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasts” (Laws of the Verkhovna Rada (BBP), 2018, № 42, page 333). Accessed: 12.06.2019. <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/-2588-19>.

²⁹⁰ See *ibid*.

²⁹¹ See *ibid*.

²⁹² Source of the data is the official site of UN High Commissioner for Human Rights <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Countries/ENACARregion/Pages/UARReports.aspx> (11.07.2019).

About 3,5 million people require humanitarian assistance and protection in Ukraine. Population of D/LPRs had been struggling to access social benefits, such as pensions within the mentioned period and it is still of a key concern for the government (*Humanitarian Response 2019; OHCHR 2019b*); with the number of pensioners comprising to 347,954 in Luhansk and 778,903²⁹³ in Donbas. Taking into account the upcoming pre-election period (2019-2020), the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights had elaborated a number of suggestions for inter-social integration (*OHCHR 2019a*). They are aimed at ensuring fair and democratic electoral processes in Ukraine. This implies an effective protection of human political rights and freedoms during elections without violating rights of CSOs, political activists, journalists and lawyers.

2016-2018 efforts initiated by the Ukrainian political leadership to create a unified and independent Orthodox Church of Ukraine (OCU) were very monumental. The president, representatives of the ruling elite and numerous public figures were actively involved in a fight for OCU to be broken away from the Russian Orthodox Church (*HURI 2019*). Despite the fact that this church is an autonomous body in the country, religious tension and opposition took on new political implications. Particularly, the Verkhovna Rada adopted a draft law²⁹⁴ to make amendments in the Law on Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations. This refers to names of religious organizations by forcing the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate) to be under the jurisdiction of the Russian Orthodox Church and add «Russian» to its name.²⁹⁵ This is explained by the fact that the Ukrainian Orthodox Church is a part of Moscow Patriarchate and the latter is an organization whose governing center

²⁹³ Source of the data is the official site of Pension Fund of Ukraine <https://www.pfu.gov.ua/informatsijna-mapa> (11.07.2019).

²⁹⁴ See Law of Ukraine “On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations” (Laws of the Verkhovna Rada YPCP (BBP), 1991, №25, page 283) {Із змінами, внесеними згідно із Законами №2581-VIII від 02.10.2018, BBP, 2018, №46, page 371; №2598-VIII від 18.10.2018, BBP, 2018, №46, page 373; №2662-VIII від 20.12.2018, BBP, 2019, №3, page 23; №2673-VIII від 17.01.2019, BBP, 2019, №6, page 40}. Accessed: 12.06.2019. <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/987-12#n67>.

²⁹⁵ See *ibid*.

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is based abroad in a country waging war against Ukraine.²⁹⁶ Therefore, this organization is obliged to change its name to reflect its affiliation to an appropriate religious organization outside Ukraine. It is noteworthy that for spiritual leaders the independence of the OCU was a question of religious and cultural identity and security, whereas it was a matter of increasing legitimacy and personal authority for the country's president and politicians.

In view of preconditions to establish civil society within 2016-2018 in Ukraine, efficacy of CSOs is highly dependent on public administration and civiarchic procedures of local self-government bodies.

Figure 2



The 2018 CSO sustainability index, as depicted in Figure 2, reached 3,2 by indicating the fact that civil society is still developing in Ukraine. According to 2016-2017 data, the highest rating of CSO sustainability index was registered in

²⁹⁶ See *ibid.*

²⁹⁷ Source of the data is The CSO Sustainability Index by USAID https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1866/2017_CS0_Sustainability_Index_for_Central_and_Eastern_Europe_and_Eurasia.pdf (15.06.2019).

advocacy, whereas the lowest one in financial viability spheres (*USAID 2017; 2018*). This forces the activation of state policy to promote civil society development in the country. Consequently, there were 80,461 public associations, 1,254 associations of citizens, 25,223 religious organizations, 27,601 trade unions, 311 creative unions, 17,726 charity organizations, and 1,552 self-organized bodies registered in Ukraine as of January 1, 2018 (*USAID 2018, 220*).

2016-2018 activities, implemented by the National platform of Ukraine of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum²⁹⁸ (EaP CSF) were mainly focused on promotion of justice, rule of law and execution of functions of a social and legal state as well as expanding rights and freedoms and deepening of democratic procedures. All the aforementioned complies with programmes of Ukrainian integration policy as well as with the 2013-2014 modernization agenda of Revolution of Dignity. In the meantime, civil society anticipated that the government would support a stronger engagement of it in the design and implementation of public policies through legal framework and cooperation policy. It is prescribed in Ukraine-EU Country Roadmap for engagement with Civil Society 2014-2017 and 2018-2020 (*Delegation of the EU to Ukraine 2014; 2019*).

Recurring to Political Stability ratings of the IDL for the period of 2016-2018, they can be stated to be consistently low compared to 1995-2013. Moreover, Press Freedom and Political Rights and Civil Liberties ratings remained of a concern. Meanwhile, 2016 Rule of Law indicator improved compared to the previous year, whereas Corruption Perceptions Index had a record high indicator compared for the period of 1995-2015.²⁹⁹ Ukraine improved indicators for Corruption Perceptions Index for 2016-2018 and was

²⁹⁸ See the official site of Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum, National Platform of Ukraine <http://eap-csf.org.ua> (28.04.2017).

²⁹⁹ See the official site of the World <http://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/index.aspx#reports> (14.06.2019), official site of Transparency International <https://www.transparency.org/cpi2018> (14.06.2019).

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accordingly ranked 131st, 130th and 120th³⁰⁰ among 176 and 180 states. Draft Law of Ukraine (#8324) on the 2018–2020 Anti-Corruption Strategy³⁰¹ played a crucial role in reduction of the corruption level in the country. The latter was prepared by the National Agency for Corruption Prevention³⁰² (NACP) and included new principles of state anti-corruption policy, which would define major directions for prevention and fight against corruption for the upcoming three years.

Table 5

Global Gender Gap Index (GGGI) of Ukraine in 2016-2018³⁰³

GGGI subindex	2016		2017		2018	
	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score
<i>Economic participation and opportunity</i>	40	0,722	34	0,736	28	0,747
<i>Educational attainment</i>	26	1,000	28	1,000	26	1,000
<i>Health and survival</i>	40	0,979	51	0,978	56	0,978
<i>Political empowerment</i>	107	0,098	103	0,107	105	0,107
<i>GGGI</i>	69	0,700	61	0,705	65	0,708

According to Global Gender Gap Index data (*World Economic Forum 2016, 2017; 2018*), Ukraine was ranked 69th (2016) and 61st (2017) among 144

³⁰⁰ See the official site of Transparency International <https://www.transparency.org/country/UKR> (14.06.2019).

³⁰¹ See “Draft Law of Ukraine On the 2018–2020 Anti-Corruption Strategy”. Accessed: 18.06.2019. http://w1.c1.rada.gov.ua/pls/zweb2/webproc4_1?pf3511=63942.

³⁰² See the official site of National Agency for Corruption Prevention <https://nazk.gov.ua/uk> (14.06.2019).

³⁰³ Source of the data is the official site of the World Economic Forum <https://www.weforum.org/reports/the-global-gender-gap-report-2016> (21.06.2019), <https://www.weforum.org/reports/the-global-gender-gap-report-2017> (21.06.2019), <https://www.weforum.org/reports/the-global-gender-gap-report-2018> (21.06.2019).

countries, and 65th among 149 states in 2018 (*World Economic Forum 2016; 2017; 2018*).

It can be seen in Table 5, that 2016-2018 Political empowerment subindex is still ranked the lowest among the others in Ukraine (*World Economic Forum 2016; 2017; 2018*). Furthermore, 2016-2018 Educational attainment subindex and E2017-2018 Economic participation and opportunity subindex are ranked the highest (*World Economic Forum 2016; 2017; 2018*).

As a conclusion, it can be assumed that the PFI curve of the IDL of Ukraine decreased by fluctuations for the period of 2000-2018 (see Figure 1, Table 1). In 2000 it was registered with 0,400 units, whereas 0,378 units were assigned to the curve in 2018. Besides, 2018 indicator of the curve aligned with 2016 and reduced in comparison to 2017. The highest PFI indicator covering the period of 2000-2018 was recorded in 2006, whereas the lowest one in 2014 (see Figure 1, Table 1).

9.2 Possible consequences of European economic integration

Procedures targeting European economic integration have become an integral part of Ukraine's sovereignty and sustainable development strategy in short, medium and long-term perspective. Being at the geopolitical centre of Europe, Ukraine is at the crossroads of European and Eurasian integration processes. If Ukraine regards expansion and deepening of economic cooperation with the EU as a main strategy for development, then restoring economic ties with a number of post-Soviet countries is viewed as a matter of short-term adaptation. Ukraine has always been a central partner to Europe's energy security, and the country has played a special role as a transit route mainly for Russian gas and oil.

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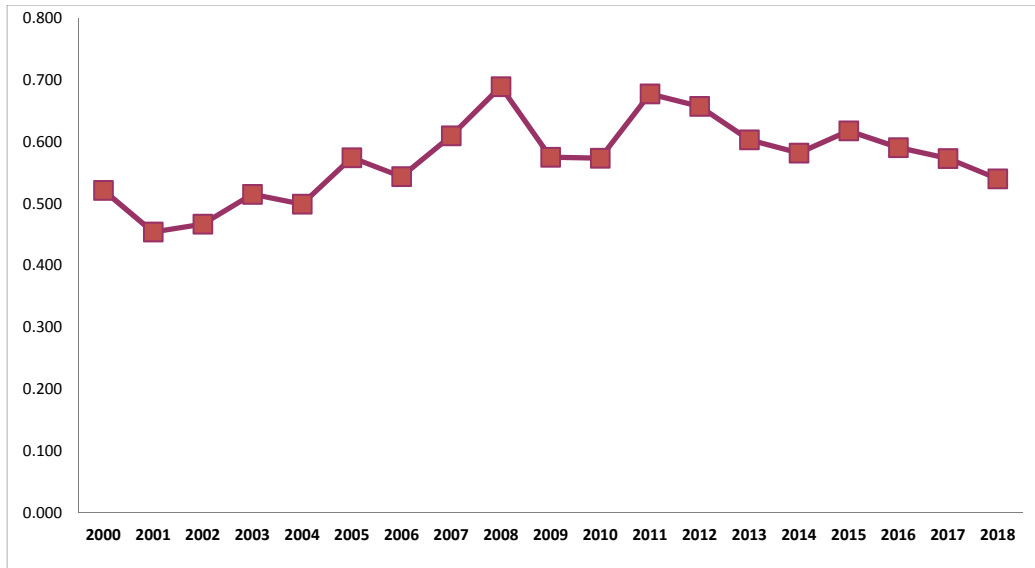
Relations between Ukraine and the European Union began long time before the development and signing of Ukraine - EU Association Agreement. Throughout the history of independent Ukraine the deepening of relations with EU countries, including the development of economic relations, was one of the main goals of Ukrainian foreign policy. This was a multi-task process, as EU countries were also interested in the economic integration of Ukraine as well as other newly independent countries. They believed that after Ukraine had transformed into a market economy, a new plan of accelerated economic development would be realized, given that the country has a large potential for economic growth. In this respect, priorities were determined in the following sectors: adaptation of Ukrainian legislation to that of the EU, economic integration, development of trade relations and industry, integration into European security system, political association, adaptation of social policy to the EU standards, environment protection and cooperation in areas of education, technology, culture and etc.

Democratic perspectives of the Ukrainian economy, analysed in the context of European integration and expanding cooperation, have aroused some interest in observing the transformation of Russian-Ukrainian relations. This is due to the following reasons: these countries historically have had interdependent economic and deep socio-cultural relations and inevitable geopolitical position as neighbouring states.

2016-2018 curve of the Economic Factors Index of the IDL of Ukraine fell down compared to the previous year. In 2015 it was estimated by 0,618 units, whereas in 2018 with 0,540 (see Figure 3, Table 1). The EFI curve was influenced by instability in Foreign direct investments, Budget deficit, Gross national income, reduction in Domestic credit and External trade rate. Tense military situation in south-eastern regions in Ukraine adversely affected the processes aimed at ensuring economic security and integration.

Figure 3

Economic Factors Index of Ukraine (2000-2018)*



The policy implemented by the government of Ukraine and the Central Bank within 2016-2018 aimed at curbing inflation had a positive impact on stability of the economic system. As a result, 14,4% estimated in 2017 decreased to 11%³⁰⁴ in 2018. This was thanks to an effective implementation of anti-corruption strategy by raising the population's confidence towards the government as well as increasing competitiveness and attraction for foreign investments. Annual studies conducted to estimate corruption level will allow to evaluate the effectiveness of anti-corruption strategy with the aim to successfully reduce shadow economy and protect economic competitiveness in the country. The most important ones among them are the reforms launched by the Group of States Against Corruption³⁰⁵ (GRECO), as well as by the actions

* Source: calculations by the author.

³⁰⁴ See the official site of the WB <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/FP.CPI.TOTL.ZG?locations=UA> (21.06.2019).

³⁰⁵ See the official site of the Group of States against Corruption (GRECO) <https://www.coe.int/en/web/greco> (21.06.2019).

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carried out by The Istanbul Anti-corruption Action Plan in the framework of Anti-Corruption Network³⁰⁶ (ACN) programme of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

The period of 2016-2018 was very monumetal for Ukraine- EU relations. The Association Agreement that entered into force on 1 September 2017 included negotiations on a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area³⁰⁷ (DCFTA) between the EU and Ukraine. They offer Ukraine a framework for modernising its economy and infrastructures, harmonising and aligning with EU standards in the mentioned sectors. In particular, one of the main benefits for Ukraine will be an assistance to solve the issue related to depreciation and extremely worn part of the Ukrainian gas transmission system. The DCFTA has been provisionally applied since 1 January 2016,³⁰⁸ constituting a major milestone in bilateral trade relations and offering new economic opportunities to both the EU and Ukraine. Particularly, according to the data obtained in the first half of 2017, trade in goods between the EU and Ukraine increased by 23% and overall, the EU accounts for around 40% of Ukraine's total exports.³⁰⁹ It is worth mentioning that the EU has pledged a €12.8 billion support package³¹⁰ for the next few years to support the reform process and systemic integration, as well as investments from the International Monetary fund that will have a significant impact on the country (*IMF 2019*). These include infrastructure reform and modernization in all areas of public life.

³⁰⁶ See the official site of Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) <https://www.oecd.org/corruption/acn/istanbulactionplan> (21.06.2019).

³⁰⁷ See the official site of the EU delegation to Ukraine https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/ukraine/1937/ukraine-and-eu_en (21.06.2019).

³⁰⁸ See *ibid*.

³⁰⁹ See *ibid*.

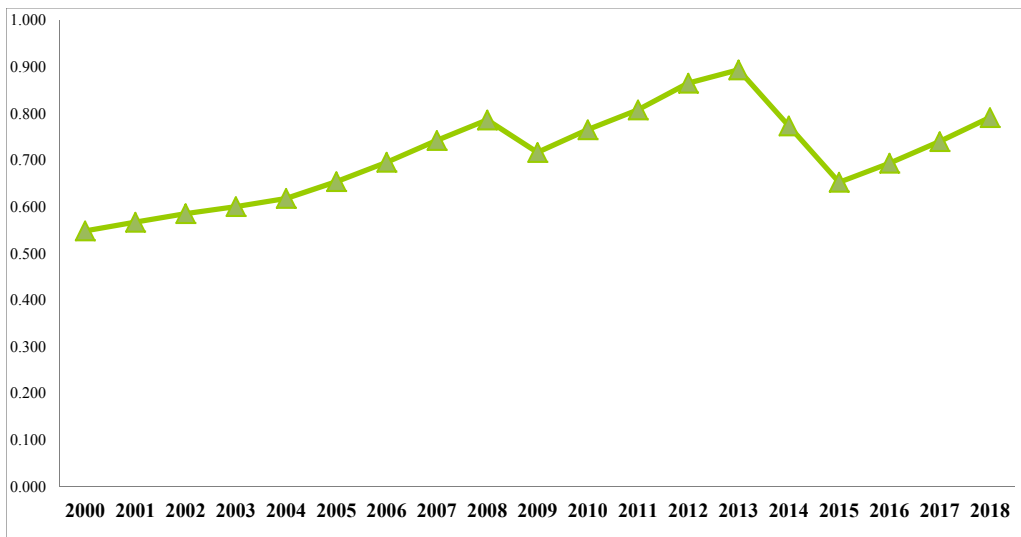
³¹⁰ See *ibid*.

9.3 Trends in social transformation

Social policy is very crucial in the present stage of democratization of the Ukrainian society. It envisages to protect social and labour rights and freedoms of the peoples by creating preconditions for reproduction of social capital of members of the society and to ensure stability of social systems. 2016-2018 social policy in Ukraine was aimed at achieving certain social indicators (to increase the population's well-being, develop human potential, and reduce income inequality) that suffice the country's sustainable development goals. At the same time, the policy chiefly focused on an increase in labour force and improvement of living standards, access to education, creation of civilized conditions for medicine and other spheres. In this regard, social policy has included an increase in social benefits, pensions and public sector salaries, as well as an entire system of measures aimed at addressing the key issues of ensuring fair and prosperous life in the country.

Figure 4

Social Factors Index of Ukraine (2000-2018)*



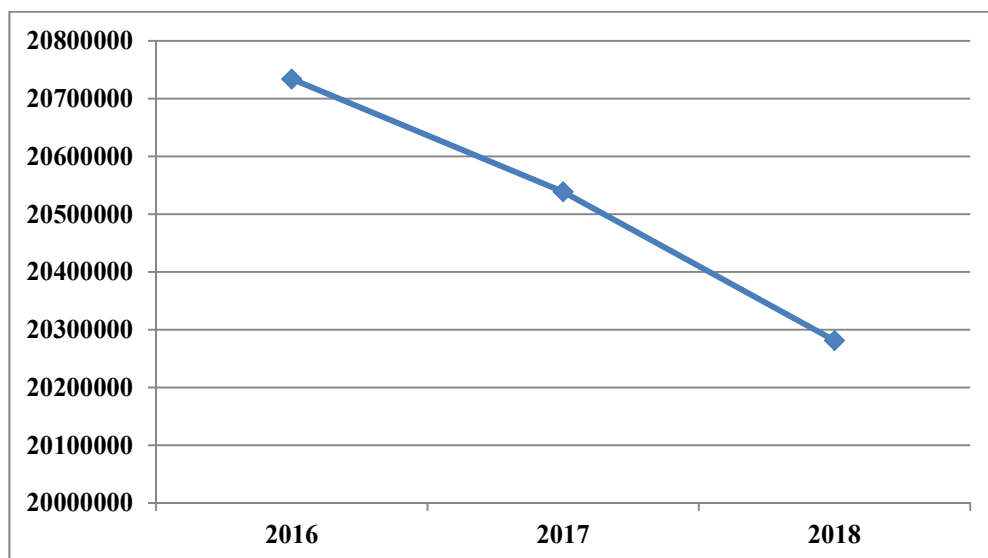
* Source: calculations by the author.

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The curve of the Social Factors Index (SFI) of IDL of Ukraine had been constantly growing up in the period of 2016-2018 (see Figure 4, Table 1). In 2016 it was recorded with 0,694 units, whereas in 2017 and 2018 it had 0,741 and 0,792 units respectively (see Table 1). The growth in the 2018 SFI curve was mainly stipulated by increase in Real wage and the Ministry of Social Policy³¹¹ played a crucial role in implementing activities aimed at European social integration. The latter was intended to improve social situation and standards of social security and protection in Ukraine, which stemmed from mutual obligations envisaged by the Association Agreement between Ukraine and the EU.

Figure 5

The total number of Ukrainian labour force (2016-2018)



³¹¹ See the official site of the Ministry of Social Policy in Ukraine <https://www.msp.gov.ua/ru/-/timeline/evropeyska-ta-evroatlantichna-integraciya.html> (21.06.2019).

0,1 reduction in unemployment that amounted to 9,4%³¹² had a positive effect on the Social Factors Index in 2018. Nonetheless, the Unemployment that generally went up and reached 9,4%³¹³ on the entire territory of the country for the period of 2016-2018 caused much concern.

According to the World Bank data, labour force in Ukraine comprised 20,281,397³¹⁴ people in 2018 which was low than in 2016-2017 (see Figure 5). In particular, decreasing trends in labour force posed a great risk since 1995 by hindering the social and economic progress in Ukraine.

Pension reforms³¹⁵ adopted on 3 October 2017 were the most notable event in social sphere within the observed period. They envision to make gradual changes in the pension system within the upcoming 10 years, by ensuring social solidarity and justice in the country. Ukrainians will have new retirement rules every year as an insured service period has been extended. In fact, retirement age for men and women remained unchanged, but requirements for service period added. It should be noted that they are still insufficient to improve the quality of life of 11,5 million³¹⁶ retirees. This is explained by the fact that most of retirees in Ukraine live below the poverty line. Moreover, there are numerous procedures that can lead to an increase in the retirement age, a reduction in the number of pension recipients, and in some cases be in the risk of not getting retirement-age pension.

Social development in Ukraine was thwarted not only by external factors, but also by a complex of internal socio-economic and political situations within the 2016-2018. Production becomes incompetitive, enterprises come to be financially unstable, and all this is triggered by a lack of investment to initiate essential modernization. As a result, the decline in economic activity limits

³¹² See the WB official site <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.UEM.TOTL.ZS?locations=UA> (21.06.2019).

³¹³ See *ibid.*

³¹⁴ See the official site of the World Bank (26.06.2019).

³¹⁵ See Law of Ukraine "To Amend Several Legal Acts of Ukraine Pertaining to Pension Rises" (Laws of the Verkhovna Rada (BBP), 2017, № 40-41, page 383). Accessed: 13.06.2019. <https://zakon3.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/2148-19>.

³¹⁶ See the official site of the Pension Fund of Ukraine <https://www.pfu.gov.ua> (21.06.2019).

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workers' social and labour rights and guarantees, reduces workplaces and diminishes levels of social protection, worsens working conditions, increases social tension among the working staff and so on. Under these conditions, the functions of the Federation of Trade Unions of Ukraine³¹⁷ (FTU) are expanding, in an attempt to strengthen the trade union movement, increase the unity and solidarity of workers. FTU, especially, makes considerable efforts to develop a social state in Ukraine, create a social dialogue and ensure dignified conditions for workers. By improving the aforementioned components, it will be possible to adapt the quality and level of life in line with European standards. The latter were reflected in the 2016 General Agreement on the regulation of the basic principles and norms of socio-economic policy and labour relations in Ukraine.³¹⁸

Humanitarian aid totals €88.1 million that had been provided by the EU to support people afflicted by the military and political conflict in the south and eastern areas. In addition, the EU contribution to early recovery and peacebuilding operations totals €177 million.³¹⁹ In terms of developing a culture of tolerance, social policy addresses not only employment, demographic and housing related issues and their solutions, but it also defines to support a complete realization of each citizen's potential and their right to a dignified life by considering all these as one of the most important tasks in Ukraine.

The main objective of social policy is to raise the population's standard of living, develop human potential, form a middle class, reduce income inequality and provide targeted assistance. It entails development and implementation of such a social policy that will aim to reduce poverty in the country, increase protection of socially vulnerable households that are unable to solve these problems on their own and are in need of the state support, ensure socially acceptable quality of social benefits, and others. That is to say, in the context of

³¹⁷ See the official site of International Trade Union Confederation <http://www.fpsu.org.ua/-generalna-ugoda-galuzevi-ugodi-teritorialni-ugodi> (21.06.2019).

³¹⁸ See *ibid*.

³¹⁹ See the official site of the EU Delegation to Ukraine https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/-ukraine/1937/ukraine-and-eu_en (21.06.2019).

social factors in Ukraine, social protection of citizens becomes a priority, focusing on the quality of social and labour rights and quality of social services delivery.

9.4 Prospects for European educational integration

An effective education policy, implemented currently in European integration processes of Ukraine, was very important, and it opened new perspectives for achieving the country's strategic goals. European education integration, observed for such a short period of time, shows what a strong influence educational factors have on the level of socio-economic integration of Ukraine.

2016-2018 education policy of Ukraine intended to form a normative basis and set basic principles for European education integration, thereby reinforcing international mobility and educational dialogue between Ukraine and the EU. It is obvious that without social consolidation there cannot be a further political and economic integration between the two mentioned countries. This very problem is being solved through social reforms in Ukraine, where education, as an institution, plays a key part in socialization of an individual. However, European education integration of Ukraine proceeded neither smoothly nor fluently as the main states, involved in the process, had desired. The European education area is primarily characterized by a diversity of traditions and education systems of the EU member states vary greatly, whereas the right to make decisions in the field of education remains at EU member states level.

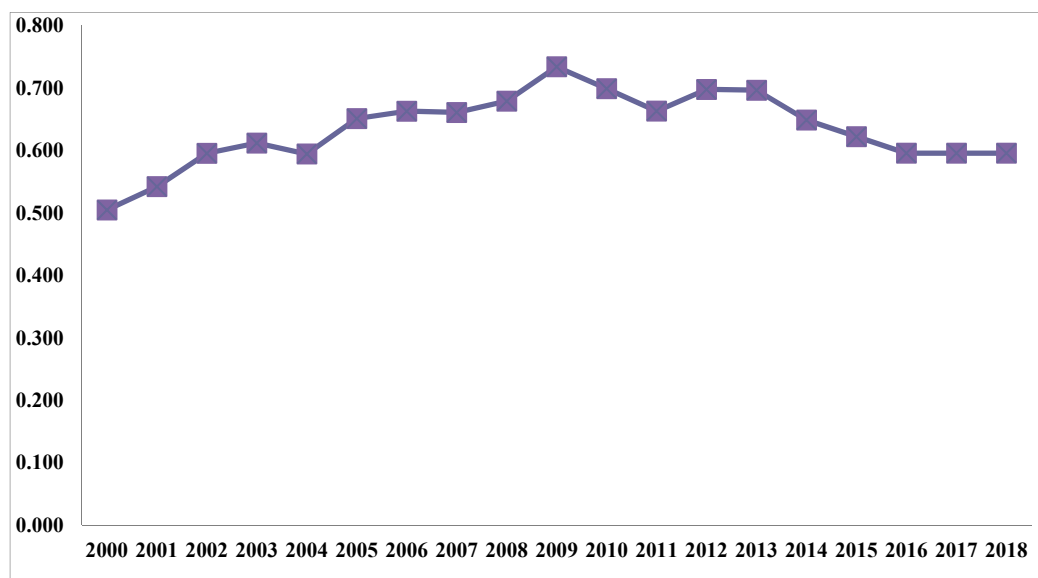
Democratic citizenship and human rights education programmes played a pivotal role in a contemporary education system of Ukraine. The programmes were reflected in the adoption of the Council of Europe Charter on Education

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for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education by the Committee of Ministers.³²⁰

Figure 6

Educational Factors Index of Ukraine (2000-2018)*



The 2018 curve of Educational Factors Index of IDL remained on the same level registered back in 2016-2017.³²¹ Nevertheless, the 2016-2018 curve decreased when compared to 2015 (see Figure 6, Table 1).

Government expenditure on education covering the period of 2016-2017 comprised 5%³²² of GDP, whereas 2017 Human Development Index (HDI) Education Index positioned Ukraine on the 88th place out of 189 countries by

³²⁰ See “Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education” (Adopted in the framework of Recommendation CM/Rec (2010)7 of the Committee of Ministers). Accessed June 19, 2019. <https://rm.coe.int/16803034e5>.

* Source: calculations by the author.

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

³²¹ Due to the lack of certain data, 2017-2018 EdFI is subject to adjustment.

³²² Source of the data is the official site of the World Bank <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.XPD.TOTL.GD.ZS?locations=UA> (26.06.2019).

reporting a high level of human development (*Human Development Report 2018*).

A complex project to swiftly reform education system was initiated by the Ministry of Education and Science. The New Ukrainian School Concept ³²³ was a key component of the former. It implies a step by step approach to changes in line with state education standards. They will be tried out by 3 stages: 1st stage, covering the period of 2016-2018, 2nd for 2019-2022 and 3rd for 2023-2029.³²⁴ Hence, according to the new primary education standard, the first-graders will start school on 1 September 2018. Moreover, state education standards will be introduced in general and high schools within the period from 1 September 2022 to 1 September 2027 (*Факти 2018*). In the meantime, a number of laws on education, scientific, scientific and technical activities as well as amendments³²⁵ were of high significance.

A number of international and European programs within 2016-2018 were of central importance to raise and improve the quality of higher education in Ukraine. International technical assistance in implementing priorities of the country's educational reforms were quite significant. In particular, the EU's Erasmus+ Program continually and actively supported the implementation of numerous projects to be implemented in the Ukrainian education system, aimed at strengthening partnership relations, mobility and training.³²⁶ In view of all this, the Law of Ukraine On Higher Education³²⁷ establishes main scientific, financial and organizational basis and a concept based on a principle of autonomy of higher comprehensive institution. It is obvious that this law has

³²³ See the official site of the Ministry of Education and Science <https://mon.gov.ua/storage/app/media/zagalna%20serednya/nova-ukrainska-shkola-compressed.pdf> (26.06.2019).

³²⁴ See *ibid*.

³²⁵ See Law of Ukraine "On Education" (Laws of the Verkhovna Rada (BBP), 2017, № 38-39, page 380). Accessed: 13.06.2019. <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/2145-viii>, Law of Ukraine "About scientific and scientific and technical activities" (Laws of the Verkhovna Rada (BBP), 2016, № 3, page 25). Accessed: 13.06.2019. <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/2145-viii>.

³²⁶ See the official site of the Ministry of Education and Science <https://mon.gov.ua/ua/tag/-erasmus+> (26.06.2019).

³²⁷ See Law of Ukraine "On Higher Education (Laws of the Verkhovna Rada (BBP), 2014, № 37-38, page 2004). Accessed: 13.06.2019. <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/1556-18>.

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created new opportunities for the development of academic autonomy, democratization of a university life and development of a student self-behaviour. In this respect, a tangible progress is noticed, which is supported by financial and other organizational related autonomy and without it there will be no perceptible growth in quality. Besides, in likewise situations, academic autonomy can be viewed from the perspective of additional engagement rather than new opportunities.

At present, the European educational space encompasses numerous network structures. Their dynamics and cooperative approaches make it possible to implement such type of reforms in the Ukrainian education system, the flexibility and mobility of which are directed to rapidly adapt to any changes in the external environment. At this stage, effectiveness of cooperation among the network of EU educational institutions is ensured and evaluated through joint forces and resources based on a dialogue and consensus, which is very important for the Ukrainian education system, as such. In other words, educational integration in the EU is based on the principles of network management, which modernizes the Ukrainian education system.

Constitutional and legislative procedures to reaffirm the status of the Ukrainian language as the only state language of the country were initiated, which had a significant effect on education within the mentioned period. A draft law was developed and later adopted by the Verkhovna Rada.³²⁸ On the one hand, it enhanced the Ukrainian language as the only state language. On the other hand, actions aiming to introduce multilingualism are considered unacceptable, as they viewed as unconstitutional or against constitutional order, identical to actions aimed at forcibly overthrowing constitutional order; thereby instigating feud on linguistic ground, national confrontations and hostility in the country. In this context, the Law also obligates every citizen of Ukraine to speak the state language, as well as those who acquire Ukrainian citizenship.

³²⁸ See Law of Ukraine “On Ensuring the Functioning of the Ukrainian Language as a State Language” (Laws of the Verkhovna Rada (BBP), 2019, № 21, page 81). Accessed: 12.06.2019. <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/2704-19>.

Meanwhile, the use of Ukrainian is mandatory throughout the entire territory of Ukraine in the exercise of powers by public authorities, local self-government bodies, judges, deputies, heads of universities, officials as well as persons working in medical and educational settings and others. It also requires that Ukrainian be used in all official bodies, meetings, and legal documents as well as in events of a territorial and central location.

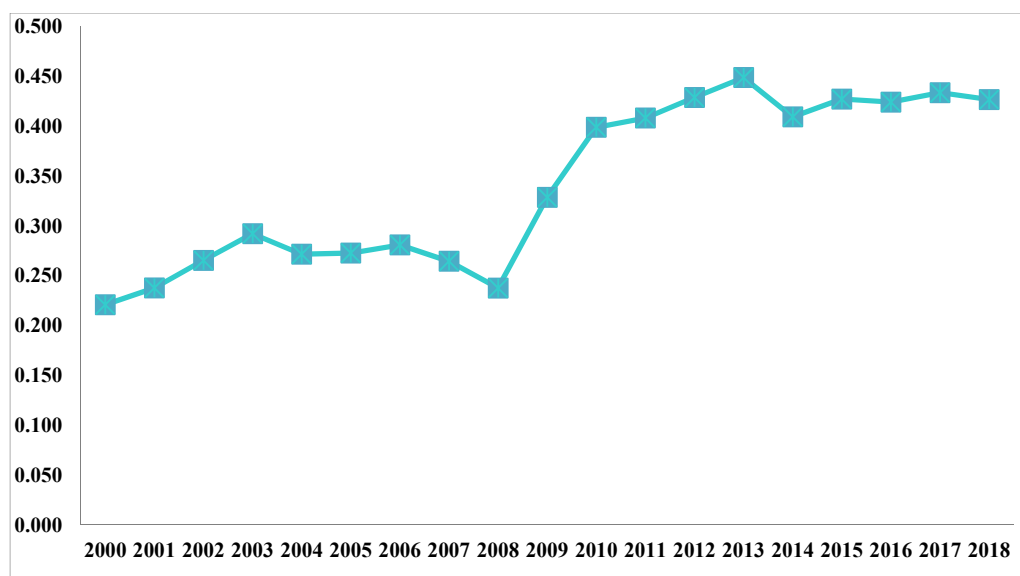
9.5 Competitive advantages of an innovative healthcare model

Introduction, modernization and innovations of information and communication technologies in the healthcare field are of great importance under the current democratization processes, occurring in the Ukrainian political system. They give powerful impetus to make reforms in the field related to treatment and prevention of diseases, as well as to develop telemedicine and medical infrastructures, by expanding the scope of medical services provided to the population and ensuring improvement of their quality. This all is needed to improve healthcare affordability and quality of citizens' life, lead a healthy lifestyle and increase Life expectancy. Innovative approach to a healthcare development is the most optimal means to essentially improve the population's health and quality of life, prevent and decrease premature deaths, and address the country's demographic problems.

The Health Factors Index (HFI) curve of the IDL of Ukraine fell down if compared to the previous year of 2017. HFI of the IDL improved in 2017 and was registered the second highest within 2000-2018 (see Figure 7, Table 1).

Figure 7

Health Factors Index of Ukraine (2000-2018)*



Improved indicators for Life expectancy and stable Current health expenditure positively impacted on the HFI of the IDL in 2017. The latter amounted to 6,7%³²⁹ of GDP. The Concept of Reforming of the Health Care Financing³³⁰ adopted on 30 November 2016 was aimed to raise efficiency of the allocations to the healthcare. It should ensure modernization of the existing healthcare model and efficiency of healthcare delivery in an effort to satisfy the needs of the community. This implies that investments in healthcare should not only contain financial aspect, but also preserve social significance and be

* Source: calculations by the author.

³²⁹ Source of the data is the WB official site https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SH.XPD.CHEX.GD.ZS?fbclid=IwAR100nEFGQ3MfB13vPeA_zlsz4prJhZ8A92Jf48HavFASkbbaimFcNEyYaE&-locations=UA (14.06.2019), the official site of the State Statistics Service of Ukraine <http://www.ukrstat.gov.ua> (14.06.2019).

³³⁰ See the “Concept of Reforming of the Health Care Financing Концепція реформи фінансування системи охорони здоров’я (The Cabinet of Ministries of Ukraine approved on 30 November 2016 № 1013-p)”. Accessed: 17.06.2019. <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/1013-2016-%D1%80#n8>.

measurable in terms of human potential. In other words, to implement health industrialization policy in Ukraine, it is necessary to establish a cooperative atmosphere between the Ukraine and the EU (*Romaniuk and Semigina 2018*).

Activities sprouted from the National Health Reform Strategy³³¹ and state policy planning to apply widely computerization of the health system were still in process within 2016-2018. Its main purpose was to develop the provision of information in various areas of healthcare by creating economically justified infrastructures that would enable the use of modern information technologies effectively (*ГС “Фонд підтримки реформ в Україні” 2018*). It should be noted that a highly qualified medical personnel with sufficient knowledge in applying the advanced technologies is a key tool for providing such services. It is very crucial that Ukraine's model of healthcare shall lead to high indicators of the population's health (*WHO 2018; The USAID HIV Reform in Action Project 2018*).

Under the conditions of Ukraine's European integration, innovative healthcare model had competitive advantages, which had been achieved through an effective introduction of scientific achievements to be practically implemented in medicine, combined with highly qualified and trained staff, possessing scientific knowledge and practical experience. The above-mentioned advantages were reached with the help of introducing modern research clinics in the Ukrainian health care system; thus, gradually establishing social state partnerships in the field of healthcare.

9.6 Development trends of the Index of Democracy Level

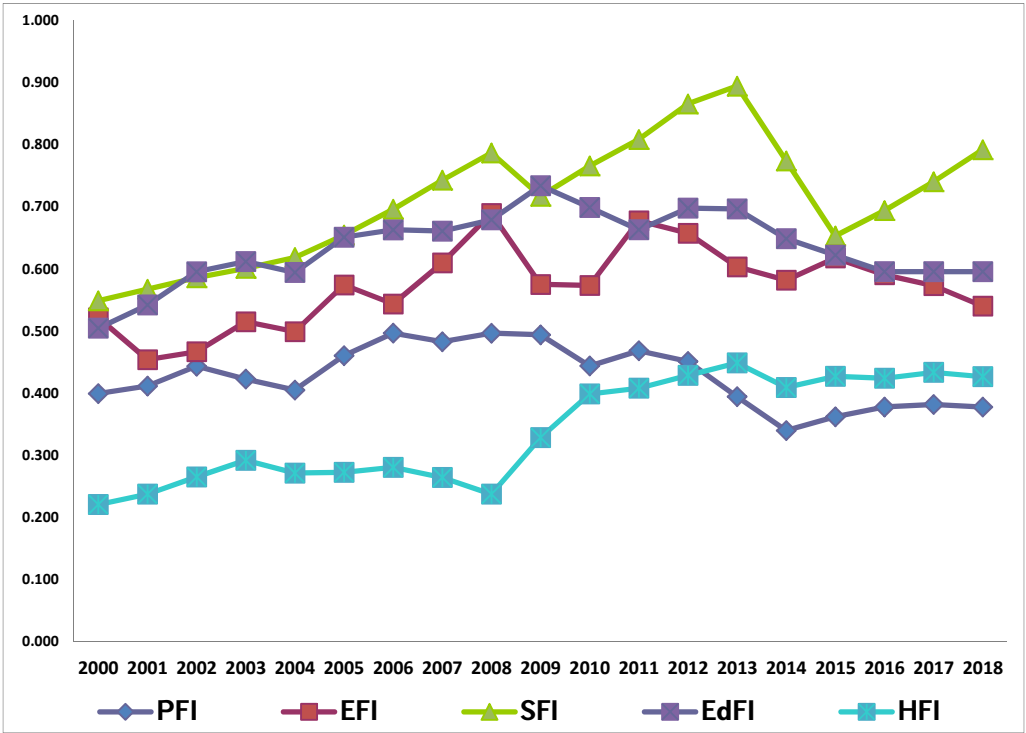
PFI, EFI, SFI, EdFI and HFI of the IDL of Ukraine are displayed in Figures 8 and 9, covering the period of 2000-2018. As it can be observed from the Figures, 2016-2018 IDL indicators were stable yet with some fluctuations.

³³¹ See the official site of the Health Ministry of Ukraine «The National Health Reform Strategy for Ukraine 2015-2020», <https://moz.gov.ua/strategija> (14.06.2019).

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Nonetheless, 2018 IDL indicator was low in comparison to 2016-2017. Moreover, according to gross indicators, 2018 IDL was higher than the 2000 (see Figures 8, 9, Table1).

Figure 8
Indices of Political, Economic, Social, Health and Educational Factors affecting
the Index of Democracy Level of Ukraine for the timeframe 2000-2018*



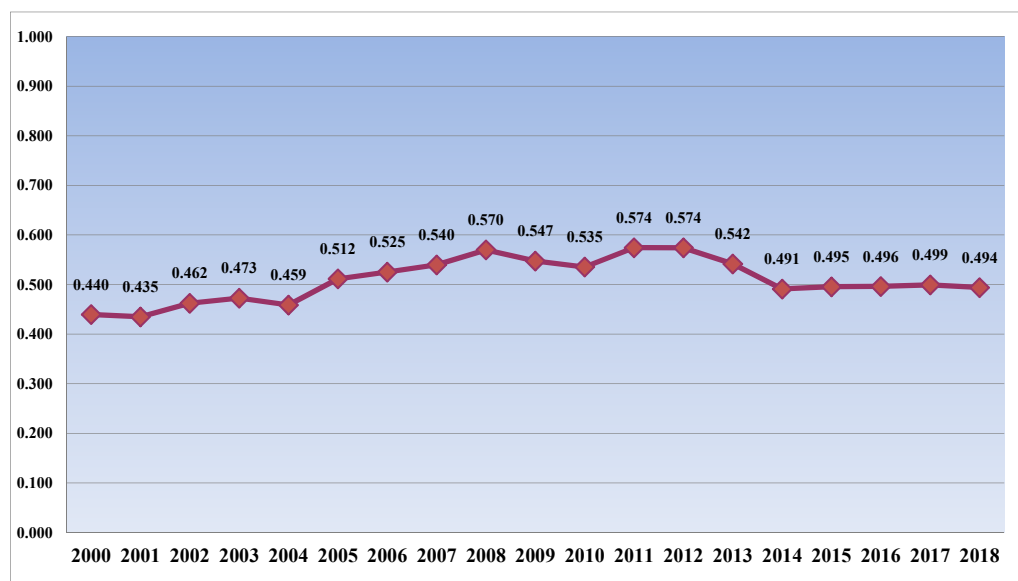
Figures 8 and 9 denote the fact that the IDL increased in 2016 due to improvement in PFI and SFI indicators. It was stipulated by a number of significant changes, such as a collapse of a ruling coalition, formation of a new government headed by Groysman, EU integration processes, negotiations on visa liberalization, real start of a fight against corruption and electronic asset declaration. Moreover, anticorruption activities were undertaken for the whole

* Source: calculations by the author.
The indices of the IDL factors are comparable with each other by the trends only.

2016 year, as it was one of the conditions for Ukraine's visa liberalization process. Hence, actions of previously formed anticorruption bodies had a political and legal significance.

Figure 9

Index of Democracy Level of Ukraine for the period 2000-2018*



2017 IDL growth was mainly conditioned by improvements in indicators of PFI, SFI and HFI, as well as a comparative stability of EdFI (see Figures 8, 9). In this respect, possibility for Ukrainian citizens to enter the Schengen area without visa, massive exchange of hostages between the conflicting parties, increase in a minimum wage, reforms in pension, health and education fields were very essential for the Ukraine.

2018 IDL fell down caused by a decrease in indicators of PFI, EFI and HFI (see Figures 8, 9, Table 1). It should be noted that negative impacts of political, economic and health factors on the decline of democracy were, to some extent, mitigated by the improvement of social factors. In general, 2018 was abundant

* Source: calculations by the author.

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in political events topped by a start of presidential election campaign at the end of the mentioned year. Despite an unprecedented number of candidates, but there were major candidates- Petro Poroshenko, Yulia Tymoshenko and Volodymyr Zelenskiy. They were the main candidates that expressed the moods of the Ukrainian society.

In 2018, a new wave of ethno-political tension had its reflection on the IDL. It was mainly triggered by the unsettled conflict in D/LPRs, as well as the Ukrainian Law "on the peculiarities of State policy on ensuring Ukraine's State sovereignty over temporarily occupied territories in Donetsk and Luhansk regions" that entered into force on February 23, 2018.

The aforementioned tension escalated and transformed into an ethno-cultural and ethno-religious conflict, evoked between Russia and Ukraine. On 17 April 2018 the President P. Poroshenko officially addressed the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople with a request to grant Tomos on autocephaly and his step was the major cause of the tension. The Verkhovna Rada also supported his idea and joined with a call for it. The Patriarchate of Constantinople satisfied the wish of the Ukrainian government and granted Poroshenko a church document (tomos) on autocephaly to the Ukrainian church. In the future, this would allow Ukraine to form a united and independent Orthodox Church. All this evoked a great international response, by then exacerbating political, religious and cultural relations with Russia. Another example of tense relations was a new military-political conflict, triggered by an armed clash between Russian and Ukrainian ships at the Kerch Strait on November 25, 2018. Afterwards, Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko proposed that the Verkhovna Rada (parliament) back a 30-day martial law. At the same time, Ukraine began negotiations with the US, EU and NATO on imposing new sanctions on Russia.

A comparative analysis of the 2016-2018 factors of the Ukrainian IDL states that consociational consolidation is largely linked to civil identity and patriotism, civiarchic culture, individual rights and freedoms, civilized regulation of ethno-cultural and ethno-religious contradictions, CSOs participation, values of

pluralism and tolerance. Moreover, they are structural and functional preconditions for the democratization of the Ukrainian political system. Given the civilizational significance of consociational consolidation, it is evident that Ukraine's democracy is given serious trials. To successfully overcome the aforementioned, the following conditions need to be satisfied: 1) strengthening of constitutional-legal foundations of democracy; 2) providing reliable guarantees for unity and evolution of Ukrainian society, which will eliminate social shocks; 3) ensuring political, socio-economic and cultural transformations, which are irreversible as such; 4) a dynamic transition to a market economy, by gradually integrating into the global economic system.

9.7 Regression analysis of the Index of Democracy Level

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The regression analysis illustrates the variables of Political, Economic, Social, Educational and Health Factors Indices included in the model, which had a comparatively significant influence on the IDL of Ukraine.

The regression outcomes reflect that there has been a significant correlation between the IDL_i and variables of political, economic, social and educational factors. In view of health factors there has been no significant correlation with IDL_i .

According to the data obtained through regression, correlation between IDL_i ³³² and political variables of Rule of Law and Political Rights and Civil Liberties has been established (see Table 6).

³³² IDL_i is the Index of Democracy Level cleaned from the corresponding independent variable during every paired regression analysis.

Table 6

Regression analysis of the IDL_i (PFI variables)

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Coefficient</i>	<i>Adj.R²</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>N</i>
Rule of Law	0,011	0,436	0,000	24
Political Rights and Civil Liberties	-0,053	0,218	0,012	24

In relation to economic indicators, IDL_i and Foreign direct investments (FDI) are strongly correlated as depicted from the data (see Table 7).

Table 7

Regression analysis of the IDL_i (EFI variables)

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Coefficient</i>	<i>Adj.R²</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>N</i>
Foreign direct investments (% of GDP)	0,015	0,303	0,003	24

IDL_i and Real wage of the social factors index have a close correlation (see Table 8).

Table 8

Regression analysis of the IDL_i (SFI variables)

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Coefficient</i>	<i>Adj.R²</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>N</i>
Real wage (100 US dollars)	0,033	0,634	0,000	24

There has been an essential correlation between IDL_i and Government expenditure on education (see Table 9).

Table 9

Regression analysis of the IDL_i (EdFI variables)

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Coefficient</i>	<i>Adj.R²</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>N</i>
Government expenditure on education (% of GDP)	0,039	0,376	0,001	24

Upon the regression analysis, it can be observed that IDL_i of Ukraine was significantly affected by the variables of Rule of Law, Political Rights and Civil Liberties (see Table 6). One unit increase in an independent Rule of Law variable will result in IDL_i growth by 0,011 units. In the meantime, a positive change by one unit of the Political Rights and Civil Liberties variable will impede IDL_i improvement by 0,053 units (see Table 6). It is worth mentioning that existing issues in human rights sphere related to manifestations of not free approaches had a destructive effect on it. They resulted in creating a non-civiliarchic environment for democratic consolidation and reintegration of Donbas into the country. Meanwhile, risks and threats to human and public security, including cultural, information and social security are increasing. They typically require systemic solutions, which are often incompatible with particular political interests. Inter-ethnic intolerance is the most vulnerable aspect of the mentioned problems leading to politicization of ethnic identity and aggravation of the conflict.

Therefore, FDI of the economic factors has a high impact on the Ukrainian democracy, therefore 1% increase in FDI will improve IDL_i by 0,015 units.

Real wage is one the most influential social factors and if it increases by 100 US dollars, IDL_i will grow by 0,03 units.

With regards to Educational Factors Index, 1% change of GDP will result in IDL_i growth by 0,039 units.

Hence, regression analysis displays that the above-mentioned independent political, economic, social and educational variables have a significant influence on IDL. Under the conditions of Ukrainian integration it is necessary to review the approach to the Rule of Law, Political Rights and Civil Liberties by providing guarantees for their proper and complete implementation. Establishment of the rule of law in Ukraine is inextricably linked with preconditions to prioritize and supervise the Constitution, reinforce consociational democracy and civil identity as well as formation of a real state. Therefore, economic and geographical location of the given country is highly emphasized by propelling the policy to increase external trade, investments and

innovations. It is observed from the FDI dynamics that Ukraine needs to develop a rational participation strategy for its economy in the future. It should, first of all, take into account objectives of the country's socio-economic security, and secondly, it should have a comprehensive approach to the FDI. As reforms were more effectively implemented in Ukraine due to an active involvement of the FDI, whereas foreign entrepreneurs, as representatives of different institutional cultures, helped to create a new environment for economic partnership. A social significance of these processes is underlined and supported by an improvement in Real wage and Government spending in education. To ensure a sustainable development of the Ukrainian society, citizens' readiness to use democratic procedures is very important in an attempt to make the majority of people feel as citizens who are ready to participate in the processes of civiarchic governance and self-governance.

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10. STRENGTHENING OF DEMOCRACY IN MOLDOVA

ALISA JAMALYAN

Domestic political developments and dependence of the state on geopolitical changes are of particular significance to initiate democracy processes in newly independent Moldova. Legislative changes and a newly adopted mixed electoral system have not contributed to the elimination of corruption risks and the formation of a liberal society; on the contrary, they have been repeatedly criticized by civil society and international organizations. The agenda of the state includes the issues, such as Transnistrian conflict, tense relations with Russia and Romania, disagreements between pro-European and Eurosceptic forces. It should be noted that political uncertainty, weak administrative systems, structural flaws, energetic dependency, economic pressures and a lack of transparency, have fragmented the society. Moreover, emigration often impedes the formation of a democratic state, as such.

The trends of the Index of Democracy Level (IDL) in Moldova have been evaluated on the grounds of comparative analysis of political, economic, social, health as well as educational factors. Qualitative and quantitative descriptions of the mentioned factors Indices are presented in Chapter 8, whereas the processed data are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

**Indices of Political, Economic, Social, Educational and Health Factors and Index
of Moldova's Democracy Level for the 2000-2018 period***

Years	PFI	EFI	SFI	EdFI	HFI	IDL
2000	0,523	0,435	0,521	0,474	0,232	0,463
2001	0,497	0,534	0,533	0,500	0,255	0,484
2002	0,453	0,565	0,553	0,547	0,325	0,489
2003	0,478	0,563	0,561	0,550	0,309	0,499
2004	0,473	0,566	0,581	0,640	0,420	0,521
2005	0,470	0,634	0,593	0,669	0,457	0,546
2006	0,482	0,634	0,615	0,697	0,517	0,563
2007	0,496	0,745	0,663	0,751	0,552	0,613
2008	0,470	0,731	0,728	0,747	0,560	0,606
2009	0,405	0,541	0,755	0,825	0,724	0,558
2010	0,544	0,452	0,731	0,800	0,656	0,580
2011	0,569	0,520	0,755	0,767	0,604	0,602
2012	0,571	0,551	0,789	0,759	0,619	0,615
2013	0,563	0,589	0,805	0,735	0,599	0,619
2014	0,553	0,560	0,813	0,707	0,606	0,606
2015	0,530	0,484	0,758	0,680	0,606	0,567
2016	0,508	0,439	0,810	0,655	0,545	0,543
2017	0,517	0,439	0,846	0,657	0,549	0,551
2018	0,520	0,463	0,902	0,657	0,542	0,564

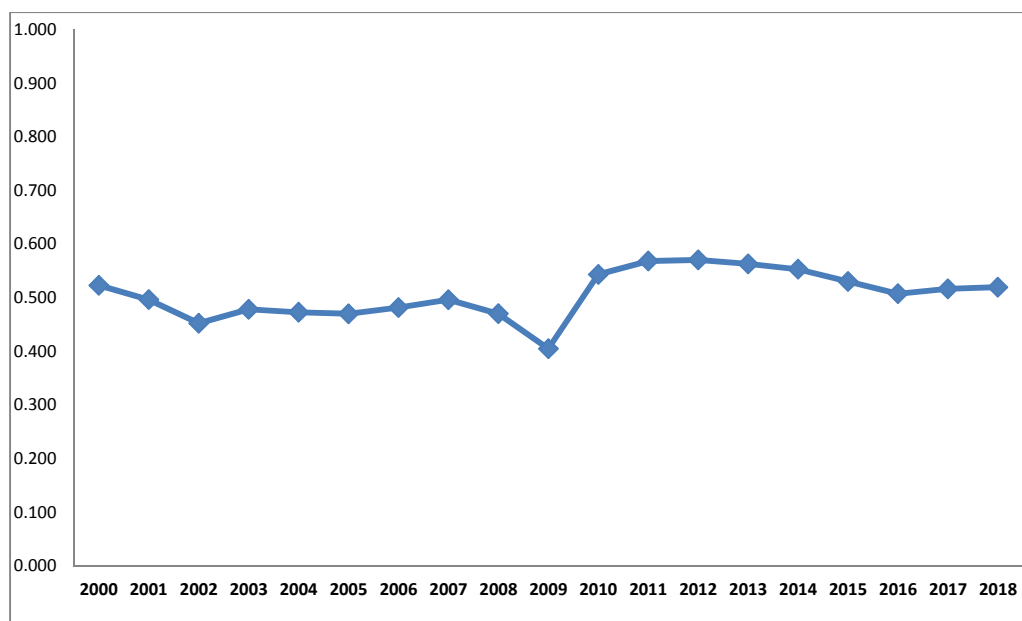
* Source: calculations by the author.

PFI, EFI, SFI, HFI, EdFI and values of IDL consequently calculated on them may insignificantly vary during certain years 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 values.

10.1 Electoral Code reforms as an important issue of the present political agenda

Figure 1

Political Factors Index of Moldova
(2000-2018)*



The PFI curve of the Index of Moldova's Democracy Level had various trends in the period of 2000-2018. Particularly, it had been periodically growing since 2016 and finally it reached 0,520 in 2018. Besides, the highest PFI indicator was registered in 2012, whereas the lowest one in 2009 (see Figure 1, Table1).

Moldova is a multiparty democracy, ranked among the countries with a competitive electoral system, and where the rights to peaceful assembly, freedom of speech and religion are protected by the law. It continually

* Source: calculations by the author.

struggles to curb and eliminate corruption among public officials as well as within the judicial system. National ideology discussions and state dependence upon geopolitical issues remain one of the key problems in the policy of Moldovan state. Besides, prevalence of such issues during public debates and discussions often contributes to the emergence of populism (*European Forum for Democracy and Solidarity 2018; Bertelsmann Stiftung 2018, 5*). The banking scandal that emerged in 2014 and succeeded by multi-thousand people protests fostered a deep mistrust in the political establishment of the state. In 2017 democratic processes were accompanied by periodic crises, since the newly adopted mixed voting electoral system received strong criticism from civil society and international organizations, parliamentary and extra parliamentary opposition parties, including the Venice Commission. The Russophile president Igor Dodon, by establishing closer ties with Russia and creating a favourable platform for a bilateral dialogue, prompted confusion about the sustainability of the country's European integration agenda. Moreover, during 2017, Dodon had at least six bilateral meetings with Vladimir Putin and high-ranking Russian officials, during which he negotiated more favourable conditions for Moldovan labour migrants. Dodon had caused the division of society into two camps, pro-Western and pro-Eastern (*Freedom House 2018*). At present, these camps endorse the Party of Socialists, which has the most seats in the parliament and is a strong opposition to the acting coalition, extraparlimentary Our Party and Party of Communists, which carries out a constructive opposition (*Bertelsmann Stiftung 2018, 5*).

Since 2016, the President of the Republic of Moldova is elected by freely-expressed, universal, and direct suffrage. If after the first ballot no candidate has obtained 50% of votes, a second ballot shall be held to choose from the first-placed two candidates (*Constitution of the Republic of Moldova 1994, Article 78*). Based on the majority of at least two thirds of the votes cast by its members, the Parliament may decide to indict the President of the Republic of Moldova in the event the latter commits a criminal offence or violates constitutional provisions. The President shall be legally removed from office at

the date of ultimate delivery of the court sentencing (*Constitution of the Republic of Moldova 1994, Article 81*). The President of the Republic of Moldova is entitled with the legislative right, whenever he has certain objections regarding a law, to submit it within two weeks at the most to the Parliament for reconsideration. Should the Parliament abide by its previously adopted decision, the President promulgates the law (*Constitution of the Republic of Moldova 1994, Article 93*). In the event of impossibility to form the Government or in case of blocking up the procedure of adopting the laws for a period of 3 months, the President of the Republic of Moldova, following consultations with parliamentary fractions, may dissolve the Parliament only once in the course of one year (*Constitution of the Republic of Moldova 1994, Article 85*).

The Prime Minister, nominated by the President, is the supreme representative in the government and in the event the former resigns, the government shall be dissolved (*Freedom House 2018*). The Parliament, upon the proposal of at least a quarter of its members, may express no confidence to the Government, with the vote of the majority of the members of Parliament. A vote of no confidence shall be examined within 3 days from the date of its submission to the Parliament (*Constitution of the Republic of Moldova 1994, Article 106*).

In July 2017, the modification of the electoral system from a proportional to a mixed system took place. This electoral law³³³ was one of the most controversial and heavily debated subjects in the country. Opposition parties claimed that it aimed to change the law to sustain oligarch Vladimir Plahotniuc and his Democratic Party in power. Moreover, the Venice Commission strongly called on to change the law as it did not comply with voters' interests (*Freedom House 2018*).

³³³ See "Parliament of the RM, Code on election " ((Entered into force in comply with the Law of Moldova on 21 November 1997 № 1381-XIII) (In edition of the Law of Moldova from 20 July 2017 №154)) // http://base.spinform.ru/show_doc.fwx?rgn=99259 (08.05.2019).

Table 2
Results of the 2019 parliamentary elections in the Republic of Moldova³³⁴

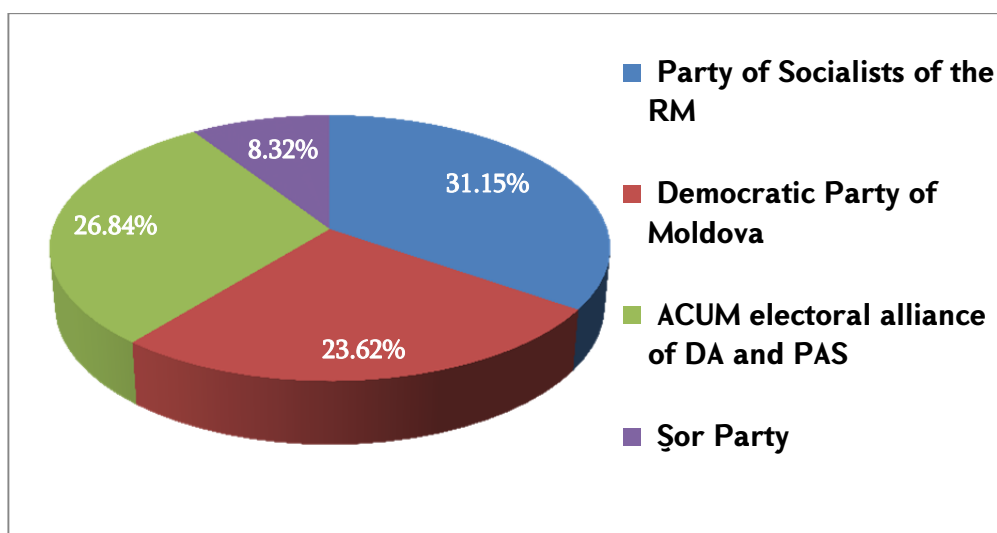
Political parties, alliances	2019				
	Number of seats in the parliament			Votes	%
	P	M	Total		
<i>Party of Socialists of the Republic of Moldova</i>	18	17	35	441,191	31,15
<i>Democratic Party of Moldova</i>	13	17	30	334,539	23,62
<i>Election Bloc ACUM</i>	14	12	26	380,181	26,84
<i>Political Party Sor</i>	5	2	7	117,779	8,32
<i>Party of Communists of the Republic of Moldova</i>	0	0	0	53,175	3,75
<i>Political Party "Our Party"</i>	0	0	0	41,769	2,95
<i>Liberal Party</i>	0	0	0	17,741	1,25
<i>Other parties</i>	0	0	0	29,984	2,12
<i>Independent parties</i>	-	3	3	-	-
<i>Invalid</i>	-	-	-	40,861	-
Total	50	51	101	1,457,220	100
<i>Registered voters</i>	-	-	-	2,959,143	49,24

³³⁴ Source is the official site of the Central Electoral Commission of the RM https://a.cec.md/ro/-cu-privire-la-totalizarea-rezultatelor-alegerilor-parlamentului-republicii-moldo-2751_92705.html (08.05.2019).

Parliamentary elections were held in Moldova on February 24, 2019. They were accompanied by some violations and instances of abuse of state resources. Nonetheless, the OSCE reported that it saw competitiveness and respect for fundamental freedoms (*OSCE 2019*). However, among the disadvantages observers noted biased and politicized media ownership that reduced news consumers' exposure to diverse viewpoints. Moreover, in the pre-electoral period, more than 200 Facebook users, who aroused certain suspicion and were allegedly linked with employees of the Moldovan government, were blocked or removed. It should be noted that the elections took place under a controversial new voting system which the OSCE said was created "without inclusive public debate and consultation" (*BBC News 2019b*).

Figure 2

Votes of the parties in percentage that won in the parliamentary elections of the Republic of Moldova³³⁵

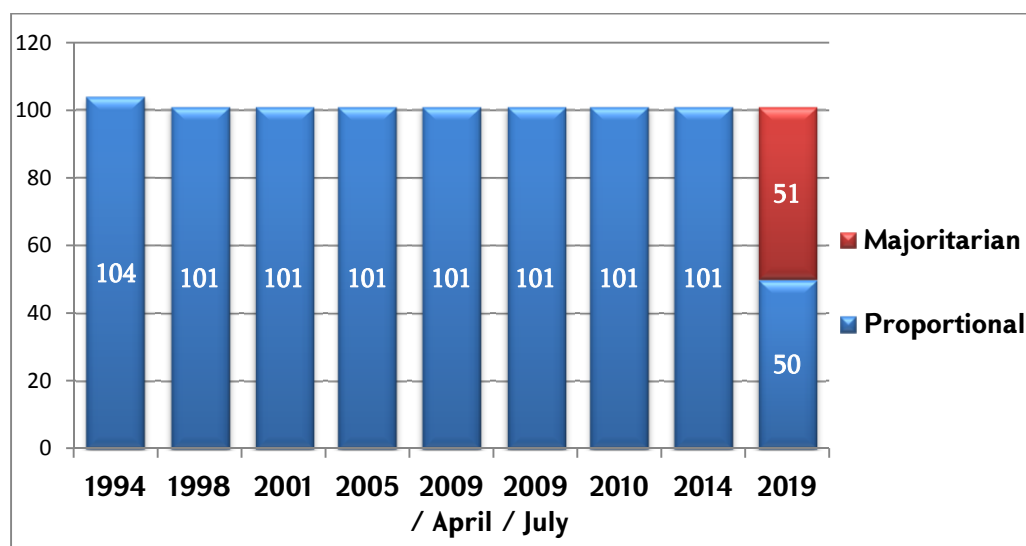


³³⁵ Source is the official site of the Central Electoral Commission of the RM https://a.cec.md/ro/-cu-privire-la-totalizarea-rezultatelor-alegerilor-parlamentului-republicii-moldo-2751_92705.html (13.05.2019).

According to the Central Electoral Commission of the Republic of Moldova, 1,457,220 voters (49,24% of the voters) participated in the parliamentary elections and 76,583 were given the right to vote in the polling stations abroad, with 37,257 residents to vote in the polling stations, opened on the left bank of Dniestre river, Bender and Kaushan regions (*Central Electoral Commission of the RM 2019*). As a result, the election was a victory for four parties, namely, Party of Socialists of the Republic of Moldova, Democratic Party of Moldova, Alliance of Party of Action and Solidarity and Dignity and Truth Platform Party (“ACUM”), and Political Party Sor. The Party of Communists of the Republic of Moldova had not passed the threshold for the first time ever since Moldova’s independence (see Table 2 and Figure 2).

Figure 3

Ratio of deputy seats by proportional and majoritarian representation in the parliament³³⁶



³³⁶ See the official site of the Central Electoral Commission of the RM https://a.cec.md/ro/alegeri-si-referendumuri-2830.html?election_type=1&year=2019 (13.05.2019).

It should be noted that 2019 parliamentary elections weren't anything at all like the previous ones in view of the following factors: they were held in a mixed electoral system (see Figure 3), and there was a consultative referendum on the election day with an allowance of campaigning; 4 types of ballots were introduced, voting by expired identity documents was prohibited, personal attendance of candidates for registration was compulsory, and about 40% women candidates were proposed in party lists (*Parliament of the RM 2018*). The above-mentioned legislative changes were strongly criticized by the opposition due to the fact, that they were of no profound consideration and consequently transparency provisions were ignored in decision making processes.

The corruption level remains a widespread problem in the country, as anti-corruption laws are inadequately enforced and often violated by the very representatives of the legislative body. According to the 2017 report published by the National Anticorruption Center, the level of corruption grew up and reached 23% in 2016 compared to the previous year (*National Anticorruption Center 2019*). Besides, the lowest indicator (30) of the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) was registered in the same year since 2012. Nonetheless, it increased to 31 and 33³³⁷ points respectively estimated in 2017 and 2018. Cases of corruption mostly prevail in judiciary, banking and financial spheres. Anticorruption activities, carried out in April 2017, targeted the politicians involved in local self-government bodies. Later in August, the verdict to Yuri Chirinchuk, was announced. The former head of the Ministry of Transport was sentenced to 1 year 4 months imprisonment conditionally (*Transparency International 2018*). In July 2018, the Parliament adopted a controversial “fiscal amnesty” measure that came under sharp criticism from the opposition (*Agora.md. 2018*), and it permits people to declare and register assets without providing information about where they came from, if they pay a 3%tax. The provision, signed by the President as part of a larger financial reform package,

³³⁷ See the official site of Transparency International <https://www.transparency.org/research/cpi> (13.05.2019).

was tantamount to legalizing fraud. The World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) also expressed concern about the package, as it could undermine the Moldovan government's commitment to fighting corruption (*Freedom House 2019*).

The Moldovan government strives for establishing more close ties with the EU that has continually assisted in strengthening security sphere and reforming the judiciary, improving the business climate, ensuring respect for freedom of expression, improving health and social conditions and cooperating on issues such as migration and the fight against trafficking, organized crime, corruption and money laundering (*European External Action Service 2018*).

However, flaws in the rule of law, the convergence of political and economic elites and their impact on the country's economy continue to be a major obstacle to the country's sustainable development.

Human rights and freedoms.

Excessive political and oligarchic influence in the media outlets, intolerance towards minorities, independence of judicial system are one of the key problems that Moldova continues to face in the dimension of human rights. National minority groups, namely: Romani 7%, Ukrainians 6,6%, Gagauzians 4,6%, Russians 4,1%, Bulgarians 1,9% and others 0,8%³³⁸ do not face legal barriers to political participation, though Gagauzian and Turkish minorities remain underrepresented in the political system of their country (*Freedom House 2018*). Moreover, Gagauzians are still the poorest residents and are in great dependence on subsidies allocated by the government. Most of them do not support the euro integration vector, as they consider its negative impact on low living standards, the country has and deterioration of the trade with Russia. Consequently, they chiefly have pro-Russian and Eurosceptic attitude, which resulted in the fact, that almost 99% Gagauzians cast their votes in favour of joining the EAEU in a referendum, conducted in 2014 (*Stratan, Aleqsandr 2018, Minority Rights Group 2018*).

³³⁸ Source: Central Intelligence Agency <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-fact-book/geos/md.html> (07.03.2019).

According to the Gender equality variable, measured by Global Gender Gap Index (GGG) and introduced by the World Economic Forum (WEF), Moldova took the 35th position among 149 states, which is 5 points less compared to the previous year. In view of Economic participation and opportunity, Educational attainment and Health and survival variables, it occupied the 18th, 69th and 1st place, respectively; whereas it took the 72nd position by the variable of Political empowerment (*World Economic Forum 2018*). Law No. 71 adopted in 2016 to promote gender equality in politics, says that women must make up a minimum of 40% of every political party's candidates and of cabinet nominees (*Freedom House 2018*).

Every citizen shall be guaranteed the freedom of thought and opinion, as well as the freedom of expression (*Constitution of the RM 1994, Article 32*). Nonetheless, the media environment is highly polarized and dominated by outlets connected to people affiliated with political parties. Almost 70% of the market is controlled by Plahotniuc, who owns 4 out of 5 domestic television stations. Besides, reporters often experience political pressure inflicted by the government officials in an attempt to hamper their participation in public discussions (*Bertelsmann Stiftung 2018, 10*). Hence, according to Freedom House* 2017 report (which includes events of 2016), Moldova is on the 56th position out of 199 states and territories and gained 17, 21, 18 points in legislative, political and economic atmospheres. In comparison to the previous year, Press Freedom index has remained unchanged and experts classified the country as partly free (*Freedom House 2017*)**.

According to the Freedom House report, the spheres of Political Rights and Civil Liberties are partly free.*** The indicators for Political Rights (3) and

* Indices of Political Rights and Civil liberties defined by the Freedom House are included as PFI variables in the IDL model.

** Freedom House defines Press Freedom by providing numerical rankings from 100 to 0 and accordingly, states are rated as “free” (0-30 points), “partly free” (31-60) and “not free” (61-100).

*** Indices of Political Rights and Civil Liberties are estimated by the Freedom House by a 1-7 point rating scale, where 1 point stands for the highest freedom indicator, and correspondingly 7

Civil Liberties (3) were the same in the period of 2010-2017, whereas the indicator for Political Rights deteriorated and registered 4 points in 2018³³⁹.

The Constitution of the RM protects the right of individuals to practice their religion (*Constitution of the RM 1994, Article 16*) and states religious groups are autonomous and independent from the state, it however, recognizes the “exceptional importance” of Orthodox Christianity. Minority religious groups, including Jehovah’s witnesses, Jews, Baptists and Pentecostals were subject to violations, which testifies the religious intolerance in Moldova in 2017 (*Freedom House 2018*).

In reference to freedom of peaceful assembly, which is ensured by the Constitution (*Constitution of the RM 1994, Article 40*), it should be noted that police have been incessantly exercising violence against demonstrators (*Amnesty International 2018*). LGBT in Moldova enjoys the right to freedom of peaceful assembly, but protests and marches initiated by them have triggered a strongly aggressive attitude from the Orthodox Church and political parties with conservative views. In such cases, as a rule, the government is unable to guarantee the participants’ security (*Bertelsmann Stiftung 2018, 10*). The police cut short the 21 May LGBT Pride march, stating that they were unable to guarantee their security in the event of violent attacks by counter-demonstrators. The President publicly criticized the LGBTI community, described the Pride march as being contrary to the country’s “traditional values”, and participated in a parallel demonstration named the “Traditional Family Festival” (*Amnesty International 2017/2018*).

NGOs are also actively involved in Moldova. However, in July, the Ministry of Justice unexpectedly introduced three articles into the draft without consulting the Working Group. These articles would compel NGOs involve in political activities to publish financial reports and disclose the origin. Non-

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).

³³⁹ See the official site of the Freedom House

<https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2019/moldova> (11.05.2019).

compliance would incur severe penalties, exclusion from the government-run financial mechanism, and potential closure of the NGO (*Amnesty International 2017/2018*).

The division of powers in Moldova is not properly and effectively implemented, therefore Moldova's judicial branch is susceptible to political pressures that hamper its independence. Judges have been dismissed for their decisions and verdicts. For example, Domnica Manole was dismissed in 2017 requiring the CEC to hold a referendum on Constitutional amendments. Manole faced criminal charges for her ruling; even though there were no public discussions in reference to that. Representatives of the European Union and civil society have repeatedly criticized Moldova's politically motivated allegations. In 2017, the media and the public were denied access to court documents during the trials, and lawyers persisted that a number of defendants became victims of unfair trials within the mentioned period. Corresponding bodies do not guarantee equal rights for all, as ethnic minorities are often discriminated against in housing, education and employment spheres. Moreover, trafficking continues to be a pervasive problem in Moldova.

Voluntary or forced child labour is one of the key concerns within the human rights dimension. According to the 2017 report conducted by the government, 24% of children at the age of 5-14 are actively engaged in certain jobs (*Freedom House 2018*).

In Moldova, cases of domestic and sexual violence are widespread and systemic phenomena (*Cheianu-Andrei, Perevoznic, Zaporozjan-Pîrgari, and Grosu 2015*). According to the Report on Costing of Domestic Violence and Violence against Women in Moldova, there are more than 63% of women and girls from the age 15 who have experienced at least one form of violence (physical, psychological or sexual) during their lifetime (*Women's Law Center, UN Women Moldova 2016*). Corruption in law enforcement bodies and judicial systems impedes the fair investigation of trafficking cases as well as prosecution of officials. It should also be noted that trafficking investigation cases had significantly increased reaching from 151 (in 2016) to 185 in 2017. According to

surveys, conducted over the past five years, Moldova is one of the countries with a large number of sex trafficking and forced labor, including forced begging cases. Victims, who are mainly 13-15 aged girls living in rural areas or from orphanages with a very low level of education, are trafficked not only to Moldova, but to Russia, Ukraine, Europe, the Middle East, Africa and a number of Asian countries (*U.S. Department of State 2018a*).

Prisoners have experienced maltreatment and torture. Prosecution for such offenses is rare, and very few of those convicted in torture cases receive prison sentences. The case of Andrei Braguța is very significant, who in 2017 was jailed and beaten to death by his cellmates (*Freedom House 2019*). Overcrowding and unsanitary conditions and lawlessness within the penitentiary system often draws domestic and international attention and arouses criticism.

In connection to the long-lasting Moldova and Transnistria conflict³⁴⁰, which is strongly supported by Russia, it should be stated that to sustain territorial integrity EU assistance and Chisinau's more active involvement is very essential as well as Transnistria residents' opinions should be taken into account (*Grant 2017; 2018*). In 2018 the minister of foreign affairs of the Republic of Moldova during the UN General Assembly session in New York called upon the UNO to engage appropriate institutions in order to protect sovereignty of the Member States. He noted that the UN should spare no effort in resolving the conflict by using its international reputation and removing from the region Russian troops stationed in Transnistria. He claimed that their illegal presence hampered to ensure neutrality and impeded the country's unification and integrity (*EurAsia Daily 2018*). The lack of political will and compromise as well as trust between the parties leads to ineffective negotiations on the issue and urged the necessity for external actors for a mutually agreed intervention (*Osipov, Vasilevich 2019*).

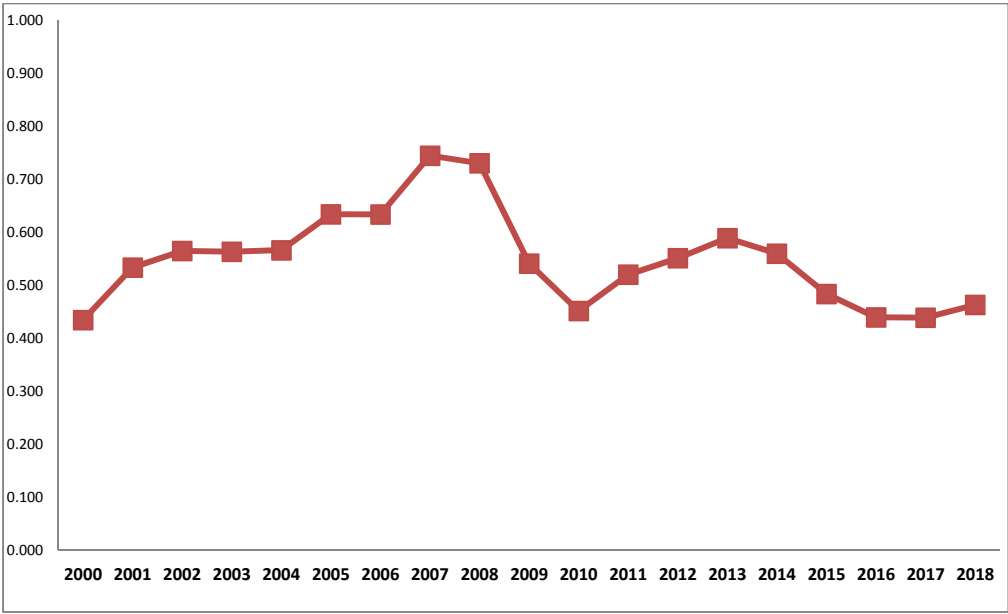
³⁴⁰ Conflict Presence affecting democracy and included in the model is measured in the following way: the absence of conflict (2 points), passive conflict (1 point); when a state is in conflicting relations with another state or states, but there are no active military actions; and, active conflict (0 point), which described as a state conflicts with another state/states and there are active military actions carried out. The maximum value on a scale is 2 points and the minimum value is 0 point.

By analyzing PFI of the IDL in the Republic of Moldova, it is noted that Political Stability indicator had fallen compared to the ones registered within 2011-2014. Nevertheless, 2017 indicator increased and recorded 3,81 points in comparison to 2016. Rule of Law indicator improved by 4,33 points reaching to 37,5 in 2017. It can be concluded that the main causes that had inflicted the fall of the PFI (see Table 1) since 2012 were as follows: deterioration of political stability, discrimination against minorities, pervasive corruption in the political system as well as discrepancies between pro-Russian and pro-European forces.

10.2 Targets to develop economy

Figure 4

Economic Factors Index of Moldova (2000-2018)*



* Source: calculations by the author.

During 2018, the major economic indicators improved (0,463); therefore, contributing to the EFI growth compared to the previous year indicator (0,439). The highest indicator (0,745) was recorded in 2007 within the mentioned 2000-2018 period (see Table 1).

Despite the fact, that Moldova has a moderate and favourable climate, incurring progress in economy, it remains one of the poorest countries in Europe in 2019. Moldova's economy relies on its appropriately developed agriculture sector, which propels the growth of economy. Moldova also depends on annual remittances of Moldovans working abroad which comprise almost 15% of GDP. With few natural energy resources, Moldova imports almost all of its energy supplies, mainly from Russia's natural gas supplier Gazprom company. Nonetheless, in 2018 Moldova awarded a tender to Romanian Transgaz to construct a pipeline connecting Ungheni to Chisinau, bringing the gas to Moldovan population centers. Moldova also seeks to connect with the European power grid by 2022 to lessen Russian influence on the state's economy (*CIA World Factbook 2019*).

The government's stated goal of EU integration has resulted in some market-oriented progress. Moldova experienced better than expected economic growth in 2017, largely driven by increased consumption, increased revenue from agricultural exports, and improved tax collection (the EU purchased over 65% of Moldova's exports (*CIA World Factbook 2019*).

Moldova's economic activity grew a strong 4,4% in annual terms in the first quarter of 2019 compared to 3,8% in the last quarter of 2018 (*Focus Economics 2019*). Moldova's Economic Freedom overall score has increased by 0,7 point and reached 59,1 point in comparison to 2018, conditioned by government spending, and a decline in labour freedom. Moldova is ranked 40th among 44 countries in the Europe region, and its overall score is below the regional and world averages. In view of a productive farmland, Moldova's economy in theory should be more prosperous. However, the domestic political tension undercuts structural reform and realization of the country's potential. The government has tried to address weaknesses in the financial sector, but

growth is hampered by endemic corruption in the state, higher fuel prices, unresolved territorial conflict in the Transnistria region and a Russian ban on imports of Moldova's agricultural products. All the above-mentioned factors have made the country vulnerable and more dependent on remittances. Bureaucracy and lack of transparency make the formation and operation of private enterprises burdensome. Labour regulations set restrictions on work hours, thereby arousing great dissatisfaction among employees (*Heritage Foundation 2019*).

Table 3

Moldova Economy Data³⁴¹

	2016	2017
Population (million)	3,6	3,5
GDP per capita (USD)	1,925	2,349
Economic growth (GDP, annual variation in %)	4,3	4,5
Fiscal balance (% of GDP)	-2,1	-
Public debt (% of GDP)	42,1	-
Inflation rate (CPI, annual variation in %)	6,5	6,6
Trade balance (USD billion)	-2,0	-2,4
Exports (USD billion)	2,0	2,4
Imports (USD billion)	4,0	4,8
Exports (annual variation in %)	4,0	18,6
Imports (annual variation in %)	0,8	20,2
External debt (% of GDP)	90,6	83,0

Moldova's large-scale out-migration, combined with decreasing fertility rates, has led to an alarming decline in the elderly people which puts pressure on the pension system and limits the country's long-term competitiveness (*World Bank 2019a*). According to 2019 data provided by the World Bank, to

³⁴¹ Source of the data: Focus Economics (2019) "Moldova Economic Outlook" // <https://www.focus-economics.com/countries/moldova> (02.07.2019).

produce the same product it takes a year for a Moldovan employee and 18 days for a German employee. Real GDP increased by 4,0% in 2018 compared to 4,5% in 2016 and 4,7% in 2017. Despite large investments, the economic growth stalled by 4%. Nonetheless, tax cuts, 45% growth of non-financial assets, 15% increase in government spending on social issues settlement, 23% steep wage increase, and remittances supported the real growth of income, whereas increase in Foreign direct investments ensured the inflation slowdown, profitable interests and state investments. Import rate increased by 8,9% and export rate decreased by 3,4% (*World Bank 2019a*).

EFI increased with some variations till 2013, but it had been gradually falling till 2017. Nonetheless, a certain EFI growth can be noticed in 2018, but it never surpassed the indicator recorded in 2013. 2018 growth was supported by improvements of GDP, External trade rate and Foreign direct investments indicator as well as decrease in Inflation³⁴² (see Figure 4 and Table 1).

To sum up, along with declining external financial flows and productivity and existing structural weaknesses, Moldova's economy still remains vulnerable to corruption, political uncertainty, weak administrative systems, energy dependency, Russian political and economic pressure, agricultural export restrictions, and unresolved Transnistrian conflict.

10.3 Attempts to veil social risks

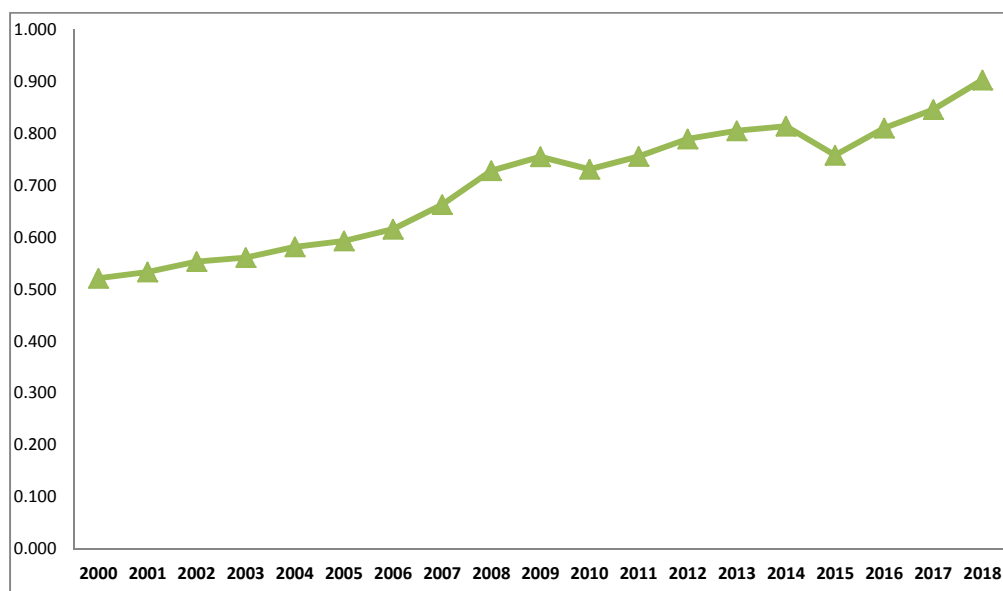
20,6% of Moldovan young people (21,6% of male and 19,7% of female youth) are engaged in the labour market. More than one third of the economically active youth works in the informal sector, being largely engaged in agriculture, wholesale and retail trade, as well as in hotels and restaurants. They often face a clear labour market disadvantage and exploitation in Moldova,

³⁴² See the WB official site <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/FP.CPI.TOTL.ZG?locations=MD> (02.07.2019).

conditioned by unemployment risks (*Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development 2019*).

Figure 5

Social Factors Index of Moldova (2000-2018)*



According to International Labour Organization (ILO) data, Unemployment rate had experienced very few variations within the last 4 years³⁴³. Therefore, urban area residents, youth and men are more active than elderly people, women and rural area residents (see Table 4). Youth Unemployment rate in Moldova averaged 15,71% from 2000 until 2018, reaching an all-time high of 37% in 2000. However, a record low of 5,5% was registered in the fourth quarter of 2018³⁴⁴, which was the lowest indicator in the observed period. In connection to Unemployment rate for the fourth quarter in 2018, it decreased

* Source: calculations by the author.

³⁴³ Source of the data: official site of the National Bureau of Statistics of the Republic of Moldova http://statistica.gov.md/public/files/publicatii_electronice/Moldova_in_cifre/2019/Breviar_en_2019.pdf (12.07.2019).

³⁴⁴ Source of the data: Trading Economics (2019e) "Moldova Youth Unemployment Rate" // <https://tradingeconomics.com/moldova/youth-unemployment-rate> (11.07.2019).

by 3,3% and reached 2,9% compared to the indicator of the previous year. Within the period of 2000-2018 the average Unemployment rate comprised 6,03%, with the highest 13% indicator registered in the first quarter of 2006 and the lowest 2,20%³⁴⁵ indicator in the second quarter of 2018.

Table 4
Youth Unemployment rate in Moldova by age group, gender and area³⁴⁶

	2016	2017	2018
Total (%)	4,2	4,1	3,0
Under 25	11,2	11,8	7,4
25 and older	3,6	3,5	2,6
Men	5,5	4,8	3,5
Under 25	10,9	10,9	7,5
25 and older	5,0	4,3	3,1
Women	2,9	3,3	2,5
Under 25	11,7	13,0	7,2
25 and older	2,3	2,7	2,2
Urban area resident	6,0	5,7	4,5
Under 25	14,1	14,3	10,7
25 and older	5,4	5,1	4,0
Rural area resident	2,6	2,7	1,8
Under 25	8,9	9,9	4,8
25 and older	2,1	2,7	1,6

It should be mentioned that lack of employment opportunities in decent circumstances is the main push factor for youth migration, mainly residing in rural areas, where Unemployment is higher. Russia and Italy are the major countries of destination, followed by Ukraine, Turkey and Israel. 60% of the young migrants are from rural areas, where the lack of real employment

³⁴⁵ Source of the data: Trading Economics (2019d) "Moldova Unemployment Rate"// <https://tradingeconomics.com/moldova/unemployment-rate> (11.07.2019).

³⁴⁶ Source of the data: official site of the National Bureau of Statistics of the Republic of Moldova http://statistica.gov.md/public/files/publicatii_electronice/Moldova_in_cifre/2019/Breviar_en_2019.pdf (12.07.2019).

possibilities as well as vocational training institutions is most oppressive. Gender differences are significant as more young women than men choose to emigrate in quest of obtaining new skills and professional qualifications. At the same time, female young migrants are more vulnerable to lack of social and medical protection (*Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development 2019*).

Moldova's number one problem isn't corruption, foreign policy and geopolitical struggle, as President Igor Dodon has told, but a divided society and the fact that young people leave the country, which turns Moldova into a country of pensioners (*Radio Free Europe / Radio Liberty 2018*). Retirement age for women in Moldova averaged 57,10, whereas retirement age for men in Moldova averaged 62,10 from 2004 until 2018, reaching an all time a record low of 57 for women and 62 for men in 2005 and, an all-time high of 58 for women and 63 for men in 2018³⁴⁷.

An average wage in Moldova, the poorest country in Europe, amounted to 6923 leu per month (equal to \$388) in the first quarter of 2019 compared to 6987,50 leu per month (equal to \$391,6) in the fourth quarter of 2018. Wages in Moldova averaged 2594,12 leu per month (equal to \$145,4) from 2000 until 2019, reaching an all-time high of 6987,50 leu per month (equal to \$391,6) in the fourth quarter of 2018 and a record low of 329,60 MDL/Mo leu per month (\$18,5) in the first quarter of 2000³⁴⁸.

Even though, the poverty reduction is strongly conditioned by a steep increase of remittance from workers abroad that are essential for rural area residents, it is still not sufficient to improve living standards of elderly people (*Bertelsmann Stiftung 2018*).

Hence, the SFI curve of the IDL had been continually increasing since 2015. Wage increases were the main pushup factor impacting the SFI growth in

³⁴⁷ Source of the data: Trading Economics (2019b) "Moldova Retirement Age-Men" // <https://tradingeconomics.com/moldova/retirement-age-men> u Trading Economics (2019) "Moldova Retirement Age-Women" // <https://tradingeconomics.com/moldova/retirement-age-women> (11.07.2019).

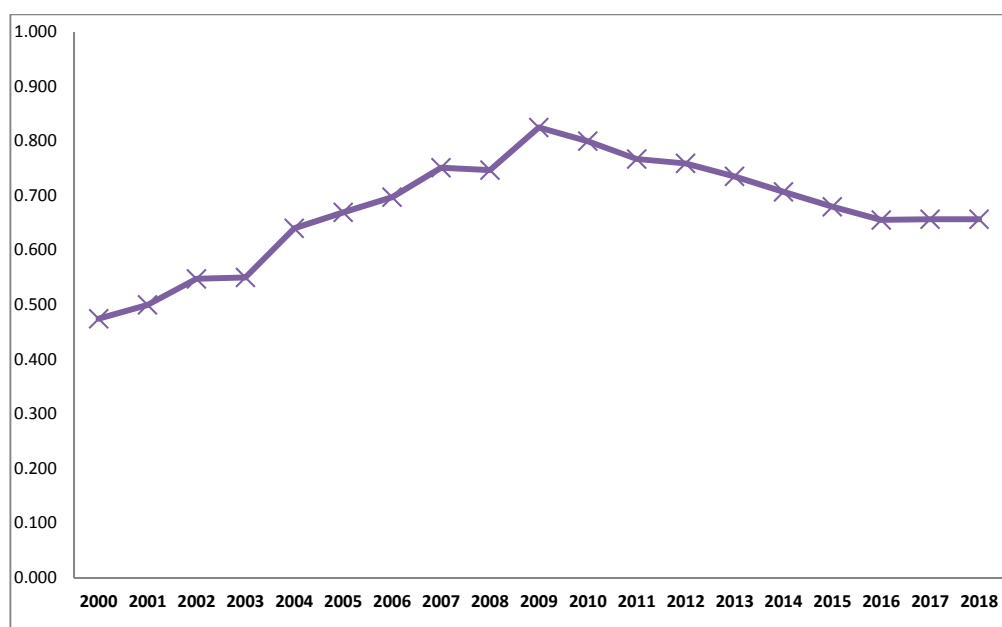
³⁴⁸ Source of the data: Trading Economics (2019a) "Moldova Average Monthly Wages" // <https://tradingeconomics.com/moldova/wages> (11.07.2019).

2018. The lowest and the highest indicators were registered in 2000 and 2018, respectively within the observed period (see Figure 5 and Table1).

10.4 Educational reforms scope

Figure 6

**Educational Factors Index of Moldova
(2000-2018)***



Judging from Figure 6, we may conclude that the EdFI curve of the IDL in Moldova was stable from 2016 to 2018, conditioned by the stable indicators of Government expenditure on education and HDI Educational Index. The lowest and the highest EdFI, stipulated by a high indicator of Government

* Source: calculations by the author.

expenditure³⁴⁹ was recorded in 2000 and 2009 respectively within 2000-2018 (see Figure 5 and Table 1).

The number of young people enrolled in primary and secondary education decreased steadily over the past decade, which is one of the major challenges. Moreover, the education sector suffers from a persistent lack of efficiency and educational quality, including inadequate curricula, out-dated learning materials and poorly trained teachers. Ethnic minorities and marginalized groups – young people from rural areas, poor households and Roma minorities face significant barriers in accessing basic education. 60% of overall students continue their formal education in secondary schools; about 30% choose a vocational training program in private or state institutions (*Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development 2019*).

Moldova's main challenges relate to management, monitoring, and evaluation of the education sector. Education 2020, the country's sector plan, encompasses seven strategic objectives, such as: increase access and level of participation in education, provide access to inclusive education and make a 12-year general education compulsory, increase access to vocational/technical education, and increase participation in higher education and adult training programs; ensure relevance of study for life, and career success through adjusting the content of early education, ensure the relevance of primary, secondary, and vocational/technical education by modernizing university curriculum, and promoting scientific research. Moreover, it is necessary to optimize resource management through improving educational institutions and modernizing the infrastructure of educational institutions. At present, it is of great significance to provide quality education through expanding students' participation in decision-making, ensure effective parent education, and develop partnerships in the field of education, which will create an institutional framework for quality assurance (*Global Partnership for Education 2019*).

³⁴⁹ See the WB official site

<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.XPD.TOTL.GD.ZS?locations=MD> (02.07.2019).

Moldovan government has initiated a number of projects and programmes to implement reforms in educational sector. The conference “Promoting Democratic Values through Education in the Republic of Moldova” was funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and held on 16 May 2019 in Chisinau. The conference was organized on the occasion of launching the Council of Europe project “Education for Democracy in the Republic of Moldova”. It aims to form citizenship education in accordance with Council of Europe standards, built on the fruitful cooperation with the Ministry of Education, Culture and Research of the Republic of Moldova as well as district education departments, education experts, teacher training organizations, methodologists, school directors, teachers and of course schoolchildren (*Council of Europe Portal 2019*).

It should be noted that what was once introduced as an extra-curricular subject almost ten years ago has now found its way into the national curricula in Moldova. Moldova developed the first Human Rights Education curriculum and materials. It was revised and new modules on non-discrimination and sustainable development were introduced, which were approved by the Ministry of Education and National Council for Curricula. Since 2015, Moldova has been training teachers and building on its Human Rights Friendly Schools programme in Moldova. In 2018 alone, it trained around 150 teachers (*Amnesty International 2019*).

As for government spending on education, according to the World Bank, since 2009 public expenditures on education have fallen as a share of GDP and of the total national budget year-on-year; however, the education sector remains among the top government priorities in terms of budgetary allocations. When compared to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the EU, no country exceeds Moldova in terms of the share of its public budget spent on education (*World Bank Group 2018, 19*).

So, it can be assumed, that Moldovan government deeply recognizes the role of education in creating a knowledgeable society and it has been developing numerous programs to improve the quality of citizens’ life and

increase the scope of opportunities. Therefore, a centralized, traditional education system gradually corresponds to a student-centered and European system of values.

10.5 Absence of human capital in the healthcare system of
the Republic of Moldova

Figure 7

Health Factors Index of Moldova
(2000-2018)*

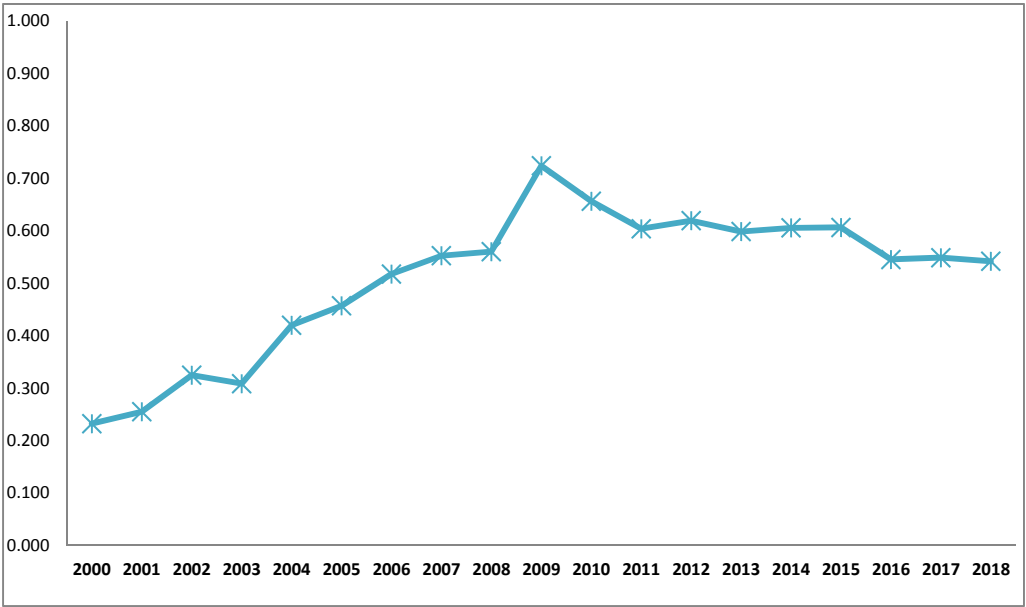


Figure 7 displays that HFI curve of the IDL in Moldova had an upward trend within 2000-2018 with a record high indicator in 2009. However, the reduction of Health expenditure in recent years had a negative impact on the curve causing its decline.

* Source: calculations by the author.

The Moldovan state has a universal healthcare system. Healthcare in Moldova is generally poor by European standards, and access is limited in certain rural areas. Presently, there has been a lot of improvement in the Moldovan healthcare sector with the assistance of various non-governmental organisations working there. The American International Health Alliance aided by the USAID has introduced new programs in controlling the spread of tuberculosis in Moldova. This organization has also taken up various projects to prevent the spread of HIV and Hepatitis B and C. The Moldovans mainly suffer from cardiovascular diseases, cancer and complications aroused during pregnancy and respiratory diseases. The consumption of alcohol, cigarettes and other harmful chemicals is so high among the Moldova citizens that it has turned into a major reason behind the deaths occurring in Moldova (*AP Companies 2019*). In 2017, there were 36,7 doctors and 69,2 medical staff per 10 000 inhabitants. Compared to previous years there is a reduction in the number of beds, per 10 000 inhabitants there were 52 beds³⁵⁰.

2018 birth rate decreased by 4,3% compared to 2017 rate and 32,6 thousand live births were registered. The average Life expectancy has been recently increasing. In 2016 it valued 71,6 years, whereas in 2017 it equaled to 71,7 years.³⁵¹ There is a significant difference between male and female population. Current values are 69,3 years³⁵² for men and 77 years for women.

Moldova ranked 17th among 225 countries by the death rate of adults. It was estimated by 12,6 deaths per 1,000 population³⁵³ in 2017. This indicator

³⁵⁰ Source of the data is the official site of the National Bureau of Statistics of the Republic of Moldova http://statistica.gov.md/public/files/publicatii_electronice/Moldova_in_cifre/2018/Breviar_en_2018.pdf (12.07.2019).

³⁵¹ Source of the data is the WB official site <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.DYN.LE00.IN?locations=MD> (22.07.2019)

³⁵² Source of the data is the official site of the National Bureau of Statistics of the Republic of Moldova http://statistica.gov.md/public/files/publicatii_electronice/Moldova_in_cifre/2019/Breviar_en_2019.pdf (12.07.2019).

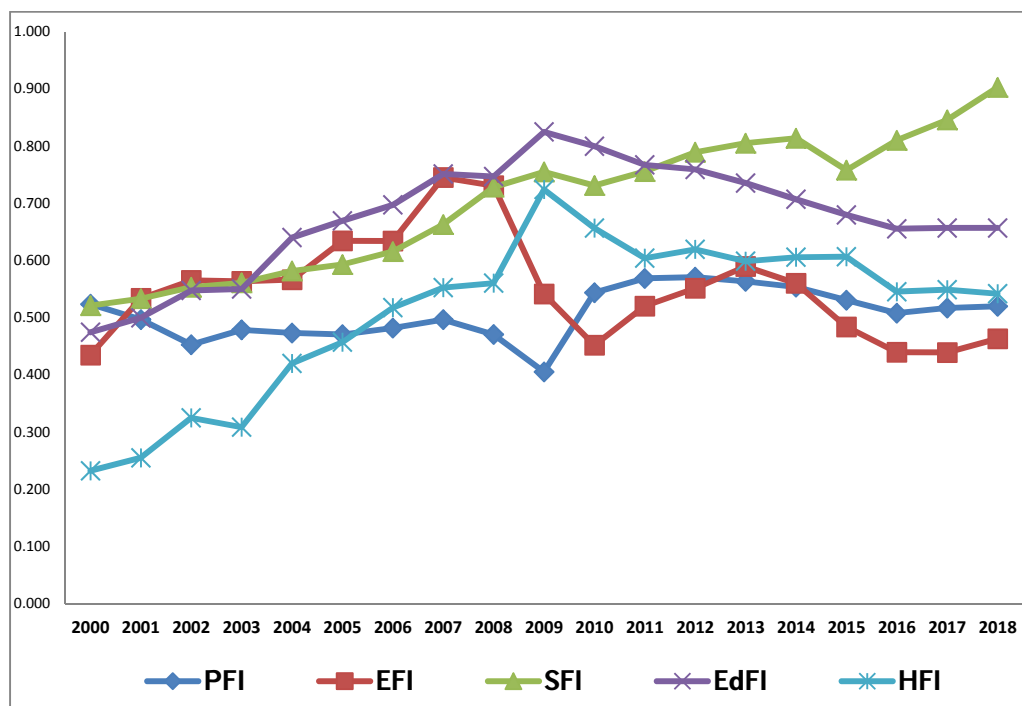
³⁵³ Source of the data is Index Mundi (2017) // <https://www.indexmundi.com/g/r.aspx?c=md&v=26> (11.07.2019).

increased by 1,2% during 2018. Infant mortality rate has been gradually decreasing since 2015 and it has reached 326 from 375³⁵⁴.

10.6 Development trends of the Index of Democracy Level

Figure 8

Indices of Political, Economic, Social, Health and Educational Factors affecting the Index of Democracy Level of Moldova for the timeframe 2000-2018*



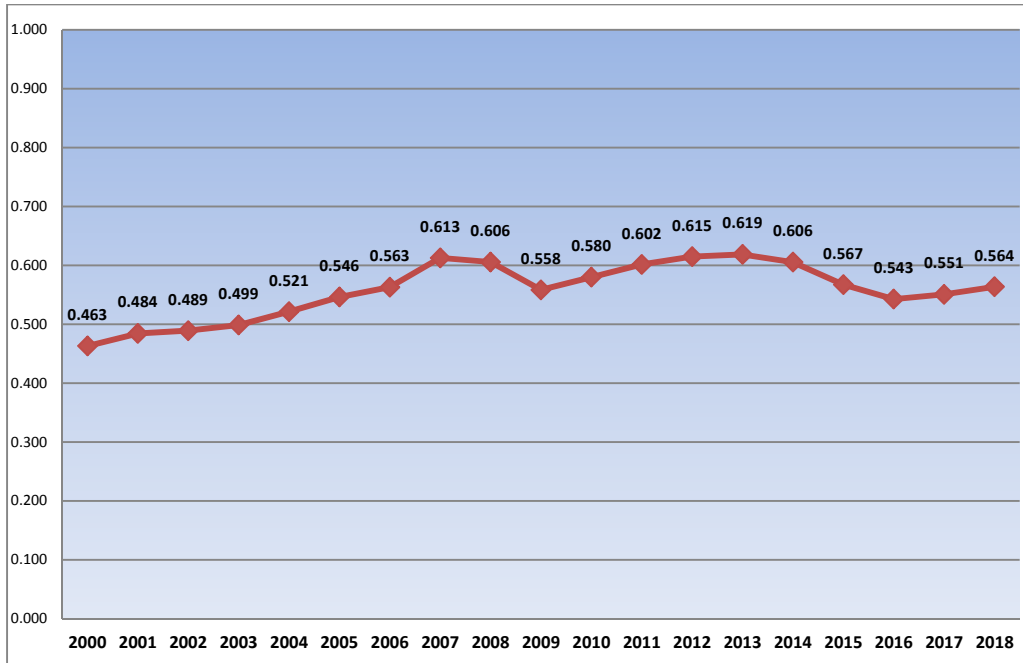
³⁵⁴ Source of the data is the official site of the National Bureau of Statistics of the Republic of Moldova http://statistica.gov.md/public/files/publicatii_electronice/Moldova_in_cifre/2019/Breviar_en_2019.pdf (11.07.2019).

* Source: calculations by the author.

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

Figure 9

The Index of Democracy Level of Moldova for the period 2000-2018*



Trends of the IDL of Moldova are displayed in Figure 9, and it is obvious that after the increase recorded in 2013, it had been slowly falling till 2016 within the mentioned period of 2000-2018.

Figure 8 shows the fact that the curve of IDL was mainly conditioned by an increase in PFI, EFI and SFI, as well as a stable EdFI indicator from 2017 to 2018.

Hence, since 2016 PFI had been steadily rising supported by the growth of Political Stability and Rule of Law indicators. On the contrary, economic factors, including banking crisis, increase in budget deficit and lack of foreign assistance had adversely affected IDL. In view of SFI, it was improved with the help of a decline in Unemployment rate and Real wage increment. The 2017

* Source: calculations by the author.

Educational Factors Index³⁵⁵ of ILD dropped when compared to the previous year, but slight variations of HFI registered in 2016-2018, still kept it on the same level.

10.7 Regression analysis of the Index of Democracy Level

Arusyak Aleksanyan, Alisa Jamalyan

Within the framework of the research, the regression analysis displays the variables of Political, Economic, Social, Educational and Health Factors Indices that were included in the model and which were of a comparative importance to estimate the IDL of Moldova.

In comply with the results, achieved through the regression, it is concluded that there has been a significant correlation between the IDL_i³⁵⁶ and political, economic, social, educational as well as health variables.

Thereby, the correlation between IDL_i and political variables of Political Stability and Absence of Violence and Press Freedom, as well as Indices of Political Rights and Civil Liberties has been established (see Table 5).

Table 5
Regression analysis of the IDL_i (PFI variables)

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Coefficient</i>	<i>Adj.R²</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>N</i>
Political Stability and Absence of Violence	0,003	0,224	0,011	24
Political Rights and Civil Liberties	-0,078	0,252	0,007	24
Press Freedom	-0,008	0,535	0,000	24

³⁵⁵ 2018 EdFI indicator, calculated by a lack of certain data, is subject to adjustment.

³⁵⁶ IDL_i is the Index of Democracy Level cleaned from the corresponding variable during every paired regression analysis.

Economic variables, precisely, Domestic credit, Foreign direct investments and Budget deficit have been significantly correlated with IDL_i (see Table 6).

Table 6

Regression analysis of the IDL_i (EFI variables)

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Coefficient</i>	<i>Adj.R²</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>N</i>
Domestic credit (%of GDP)	0,011	0,244	0,008	24
Foreign direct investments (% of GDP)	0,017	0,145	0,038	24
Budget deficit (% of GDP)	0,021	0,155	0,032	24

Strong correlation between IDL_i and social variables of Real wage, Unemployment and Gini index has been established (see Table 7).

Table 7

Regression analysis of the IDL_i (SFI variables)

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Coefficient</i>	<i>Adj.R²</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>N</i>
Real wage (100 USD dollars)	0,026	0,792	0,000	24
Unemployment (%)	-0,071	0,598	0,000	24
Gini index	-3,311	0,829	0,000	24

As for health factors, Life expectancy at birth and Current health expenditure are considerably correlated with IDL_i (see Table 8).

Table 8

Regression analysis of the IDL_i (HFI variables)

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Coefficient</i>	<i>Adj.R²</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>N</i>
Life expectancy at birth	0,049	0,143	0,039	24
Current health expenditure (% of GDP)	0,026	0,145	0,037	24

Regression analysis has reflected a significant correlation between IDL_i and political factors, such as Political Stability and Absence of Violence, Indices of

Political Rights and Civil Liberties as well as Press Freedom. Consequently, one unit improvement in Political Stability and Absence of Violence will entail IDL_i change by 0,003 units. Simultaneously, one unit increase in Indices of Political Rights and Civil Liberties and Press Freedom will result in IDL_i growth by 0,078 and 0,008 units respectively (see Table 5). Taking into account a newly adopted electoral system which, to some extent, ensures political pluralism and civil liberties as well as protection of journalists' and media outlet rights, rule of law and corruption reduction are one of the main components to safeguard democratization processes in the country.

According to the collected data, economic factors that are of great influence upon IDL_i are Domestic credit, Foreign direct investments and Budget deficit. 1% of GDP growth in Domestic credit and Foreign direct investments will improve IDL_i by 0,011 and 0,017 units accordingly. At the same time, 1% reduction in Budget deficit will positively impact IDL_i with 0,021 units (see Table 6).

Unemployment, Real wage and Gini index are the social factors of IDL with a strong influence on democracy in Moldova. Hence, 1% reduction in Unemployment and 0,1 units in Gini index will cause IDL_i increase by 0,071 and 0,3 units. Moreover, 100 dollars increment in Real wage will improve IDL_i by 0,026 units (see Table 7).

In connection to health factors, additional year in Life expectancy at birth and 1% of GDP growth in Current health expenditure will result in IDL_i growth by 0,049 and 0,026 units respectively (see Table 8).

To sum up the aforesaid, regression analysis of the Index of Democracy Level in the Republic of Moldova allows to define the most influential political, economic, social, educational and health factors, affecting democratization processes; however, to improve democracy in the observed state it will be efficient to focus on reforms to democratize the mentioned spheres of the political system.

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11. PECULIARITIES OF POST-SOVIET DEMOCRATIC TRANSFORMATIONS AND MODERNIZATION: CROSS-COUNTRY ANALYSIS

**(Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Russia, Belarus,
Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Ukraine and Moldova)**

ARUSYAK ALEKSANYAN

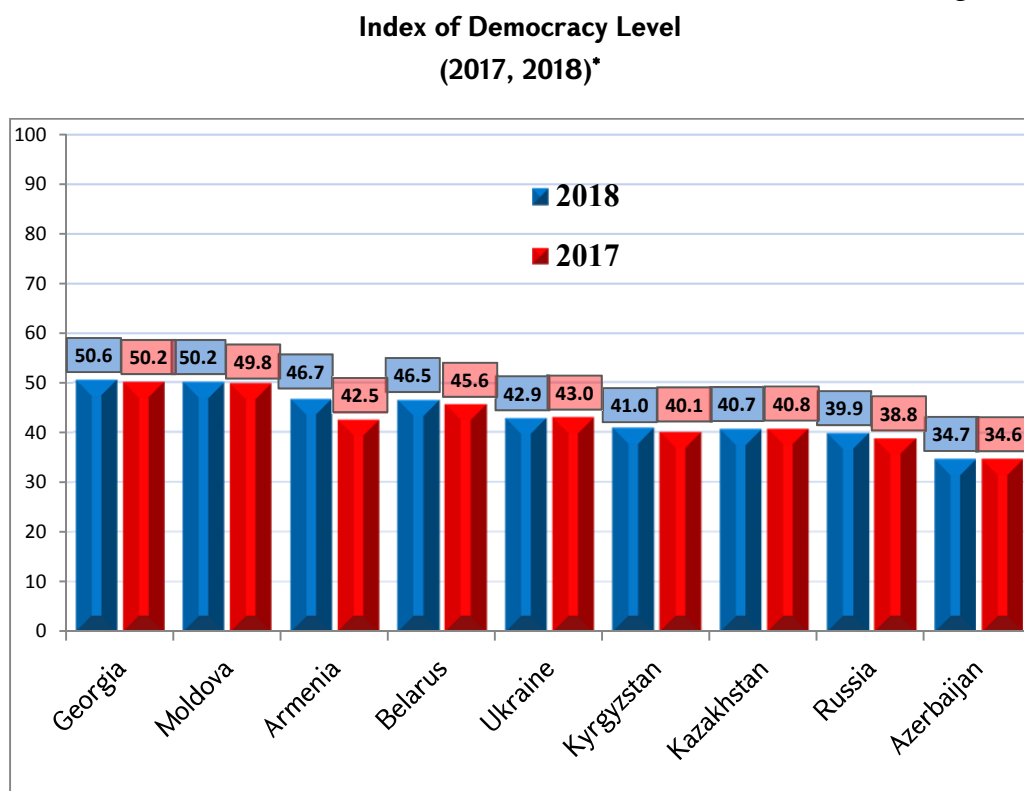
This chapter presents a comparative cross-country analysis of Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Ukraine and Moldova, according to which they were classified in view of the 2017 and 2018 Index of Democracy Level (IDL) and where the tendencies of development and backslide have been revealed.

The study of democratization in post-Soviet countries (*Hale 2015; Way 2015*) focuses on displaying peculiarities of each state in transition. Newly independent countries had experienced both advancement and backslide periods in various stages of transition (*Valiyev 2012; Dresden and Howard 2015*). In this context, the main question is related to what lessons can be learned from the experience of the countries in transition (*Knott 2018; Antonov, Galushko 2018*).

It is also important to note that if democracy as a system of values and ideology is considered universal, then democratization as a process is unique too, and each state has its own roadmap in this respect.

11.1 Comparative analysis of the Index of Democracy Level

Figure 1



Outcomes of cross-country analysis estimated for 2017-2018 are depicted in Figure 1 and accordingly, all countries included in the study are partly democratic. Georgia estimated by 50,6 points heads the rating table of 2018 IDL. It yields 0,4 points to Moldova which comes second. It should be mentioned that the mentioned two countries had always leading positions in the IDL study of the last years and regularly took either the first or second positions. In relation to Armenia, it is the third in a row with 46,7 points which has been registered with

* Source: calculations by the author.

Cross-country index is measured from 0 to 100, according to which states are classified in the following way: 0 – 32 is “non-democratic,” 33 – 66 is “partly democratic,” 67 – 100 is “democratic.”

a steeping growth in comparison to the previous year (see Figure 1, Table 1). Belarus follows Armenia, which has significantly improved its IDL ratings. Moreover, if the IDL growth was mainly stipulated by social and economic factors during the previous years, then a high 2018 IDL rating of Belarus was recorded in a number of political variables. Ukraine takes the fifth place and has 42,9 points. In reference to Kyrgyzstan (41), it shifted its position in 2018 if compared to the previous year and exceeded Kazakhstan (40,7). Russia (39,9) follows Kyrgyzstan, while Azerbaijan registered with 34,7 points has still remained the last which is very close to a country with non-democratic political system classification.

Table 1

**Comparative Analysis of the Index of Democracy Level
(2017, 2018)***

Countries	2018	Changes compared to 2017	2017
Georgia	50,6	0,4	50,2
Moldova	50,2	0,4	49,8
Armenia	46,7	4,2	42,5
Belarus	46,5	1,0	45,6
Ukraine	42,9 ↓	-0,1	43,0
Kyrgyzstan	41,0	0,9	40,1
Kazakhstan	40,7 ↓	-0,1	40,8
Russia	39,9	1,0	38,8
Azerbaijan	34,7	0,1	34,6

* Source: calculations by the author.

By comparing 2017 and 2018 IDL ratings, it becomes evident that all countries except Ukraine and Kazakhstan recorded improvements (Table 1). It is worth mentioning that a positive change in Armenia was estimated by about 4,2 points, while changes in other countries were in the range of 0,1 to 1 point. Some political indicators improved after the 2018 Velvet revolution. International institutions, particularly reported on progress in the spheres of political rights and electoral processes (*Freedom House 2019; OSCE/ODIHR 2018*). However, it is early to make any type of a conclusion about sustainable growth and, moreover, about consolidation of democracy in Armenia. Positive changes in the field of political rights and electoral processes are very typical of the post-revolutionary period (especially in cases of peaceful revolutions), as the society is provided with the opportunity to legalize its legitimate leader. Real changes will possibly occur only during the next election, when the leader and his political team having full access to administrative resources will not gain a complete support of the public they used to have before. This is the exact period when both progress and backslide processes as well as real image of democracy become more vivid and tangible.

Analyses of post-revolutionary experience of other former Soviet states (Georgia, Ukraine, and Kyrgyzstan) are of great importance in this respect, as the mentioned states have undergone stages of democratic advancement and backslide, topped with recurrences of revolutions (Kyrgyzstan, Ukraine) that were not peaceful for the second time and were marred by intense clashes and human losses.

Table 2

2018 Values of the IDL variables
(Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Ukraine, Moldova)³⁵⁷

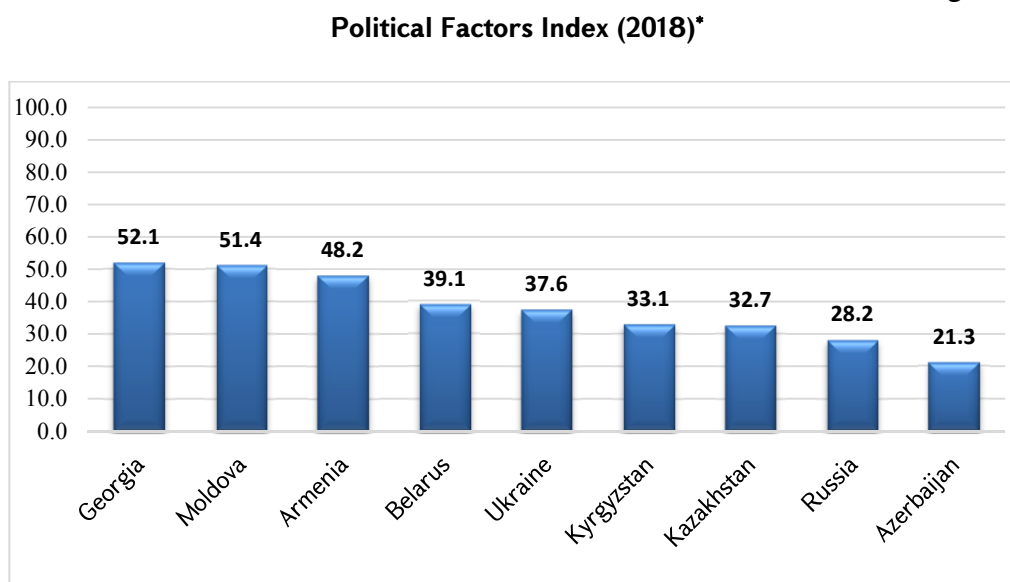
Variables of the Index of Democracy Level	Armenia	Georgia	Azerbaijan	Russia	Belarus	Kazakhstan	Kyrgyzstan	Ukraine	Moldova
1. Political stability (0-100)	30,5	30,0	21,0	29,0	58,1	45,7	25,2	6,2	32,9
2. Rule of Law (0-100)	48,6	63,9	29,3	20,7	19,2	35,6	17,8	24,0	37,0
3. Press Freedom (100-0) ^a	63	50	90	83	83	85	67	53	56
4. Political Rights and Civil Liberties (7-1)	4	3	6,5	6,5	6,5	6	4,5	3,5	3,5
5. Corruption Perceptions Index (0-100)	35	58	25	28	44	31	29	32	33
6. Gender equality (0-1)	0,678	0,677	0,68	0,701	0,747	0,712	0,691	0,708	0,733
7. Political system (0,1,2)	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
8. Majority in Parliament (0,1,2)	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1
9. Social Unrest and Political Pressure (0-5)	1,9	3	1,3	1,7	3,5	3,1	2	1,9	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)	10460	10900	17070	26470	19200	24230	3780	9020	7680
13. External trade rate (% of GDP)	90,4	121,7	92,0	51,5	139,3	60,6	101,1	99,0	86,7
14. Index of Economic Freedom (0-100)	67,7	75,9	65,4	58,9	57,9	65,4	62,3	52,3	59,1
15. Domestic credit (% of GDP)	62,8	68,6	29,6	53,9	35,4	31,8	22,4	50,6	20,9
16. FDI (% of GDP)	2,0	7,3	3,0	0,5	2,5	0,1	0,6	1,9	2,1
17. Inflation (%)	2,5	2,6	2,3	2,9	4,9	6,0	1,5	10,9	3,1
18. Budget profit/deficit (% of GDP)	-1,8	-2,3	-0,4	2,7	3,8	-1,4	-1,1	-1,66	-1
19. Real wage, \$ (PPP)	856	1141	1173	1719	1427	1310	713	877	839
20. Unemployment (%)	17,7	14,1	5,2	4,7	5,7	4,9	7,2	9,4	3,4
21. Gini index (0-100) ^a	33,6	37,9	33,7	37,7	25,4	27,5	27,3	25,0	25,9
22. HDI Education index (0-1) ^a	0,749	0,845	0,709	0,832	0,838	0,814	0,735	0,794	0,71
23. Government expenditure on education (% GDP)	2,7	3,8	2,5	3,7	4,8	2,8	6,1	5,4	6,7
24. Life expectancy at birth	75	73	73	72	74	73	71	72	72
25. Health expenditure (% of GDP) ^a	1,6	3,1	1,4	3,0	3,9	2,1	2,6	2,9	4,4

³⁵⁷ 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/>; 18, 19 - data provided by National statistical services, 22 - <http://hdr.undp.org>.

a - in case of absence of some data for 2018, data of the previous year/years of the mentioned source was used 08.08.2019).

11.2 Political Factors Index (PFI)

Figure 2



Georgia with 52,1 points holds the top position in the IDL ratings followed by Moldova and Armenia (see Figure 2). It is to mention that in previous publications (*Aleksanyan 2016; 2017*) Georgia and Moldova, sharing the 1st and 2nd places, had a considerable difference in points compared to other countries, whereas in 2018, according to the data on political factors index of the IDL, Armenia reached closest to the results obtained by them, thereby reducing the gap. On the contrary, Azerbaijan has the lowest Political Factors Index (21,3) and is the last country in the ratings.

Recurring to separate variables of the Political Factors Index (see Table 2) it should be added that according to 2018 data of the Rule of Law variable measured by the World Bank (WB), Georgia (63,9) has the highest and Kyrgyzstan (17,8) the lowest indicator among the nine countries in question. At the same time, Belarus (58,1) ranked the highest and Ukraine (6,2) the lowest

* Source: calculations by the author.

2018 Index of Political Stability and Absence of violence. The second best indicator in the above-mentioned index was registered in Kazakhstan (45,7).³⁵⁸ In addition, we have to state that there are no conflict zones in Belarus and Kazakhstan in comparison to other states. Therefore, the mentioned two countries are registered with the best indicators in Conflict Presence³⁵⁹ variable.

According to Press Freedom³⁶⁰ indicator measured by Freedom House, Georgia (50) and Azerbaijan (90) are ranked with the best and worst indicators (*Freedom House 2017*). Georgia (3) has the best indicators in Political rights and Civil liberties³⁶¹ too and then comes Moldova (3,5) and Ukraine (3,5) with some points decreased in comparison to the previous year. Indicator for Belarus (6,5) decreased as well. In this field, a positive change was registered only in Armenia (4) and Kyrgyzstan (4,5) in comparison to the previous year. Respectively, Freedom House classified Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova, Armenia and Kyrgyzstan as partly free, whereas Belarus, Azerbaijan, Russia and Kazakhstan as not free countries (see Table 2) (*Freedom House 2019*).

In reference to Corruption Perceptions Index³⁶² (CPI), the best result is registered in Georgia (58). Despite the fact that Georgia has a leading position in the region with the fight against corruption, scholars still express certain

³⁵⁸ See the official site of the World Bank <http://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/index.aspx#home> (20.07.2019).

³⁵⁹ 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 on a scale is 2 points and the minimum value is 0 points during the data standardization.

³⁶⁰ Freedom House also defines Press Freedom and estimates the level of freedom of the press by a ranking scale from 100 to 0 and states are respectively rated as “free” (0-30 points), “partly free” (31-60) and “not free” (61-100).

³⁶¹ Indices of Political Rights and Civil Liberties are measured by Freedom House organization based on a 1-7 point rating scale, and accordingly, a country is classified as free (1-2.5 points), partly free (3-5 points), or not free (5.5-7 points)

³⁶² Corruption Perceptions 2015 Index is measured by the ranking scale from 0 -100, where 0 point implies the highest level of corruption and effectively 100 points indicate its lowest level.

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concerns related to backslide in some aspects of democracy* and it makes the country vulnerable in its fight against corruption. The second best CPI indicator is registered in Belarus (44) and combined with Georgia and Montenegro (45) their indicator turned out higher than on the average (43) in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. The lowest CPI was in Azerbaijan (25), which even decreased by 6 points in comparison to the previous year. Reduction is mainly caused by restrictions of activities carried out by independent journalists, civil societies and international organizations (e.g. by means of attempting to suspend international funding). Moreover, according to investigation results published in September 2017 (*OCCRP 2017*) by Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP), Azerbaijan was involved in \$2,9 billion money-laundering operations. According to the source, the funds were used to raise Azerbaijan's international reputation with the aim to distract attention from incidents of human rights violations (*Transparency International 2019*).

The Global Gender Gap Index, which is estimated by the World Economic Forum and is a variable of IDL, the highest indicator of Gender equality is registered in Belarus (0,747) in 2018. It is ranked fourth among 26 Eastern Europe and Central Asian countries. Meanwhile, the lowest GGGI was recorded in Georgia (0,677) preceded by Armenia (0,678) with a slight advantage (*World Economic Forum 2018, Part 1: 10-11, 16, 37*).

The highest level of Civil disobedience³⁶³ was continuously recorded in Ukraine triggered by pre-electoral processes and various tense political

* According to the scholars of Transparency International organization, one of the issues related to democratization in Georgia is connected with lack of accountability of law enforcement bodies, interference into judicial system due to political reasons, abuse of official position, pressures against civil society organizations and etc.

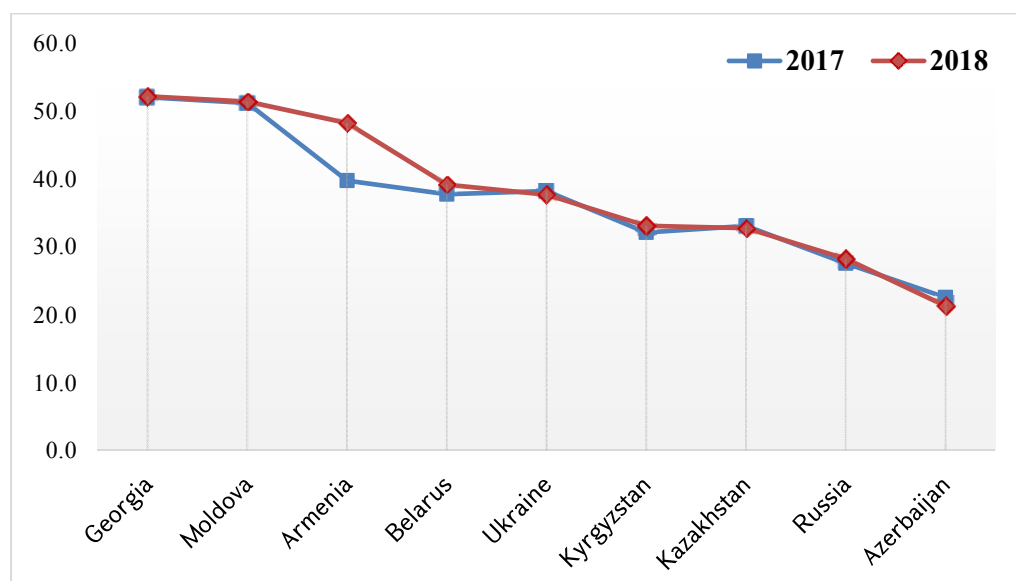
³⁶³ The variable of Social Unrest and Political Pressure is measured by the scaling range of 0-5 and includes a number of demonstrations, strikes, social unrest, particularly pressures applied, as well as cases of political imprisonment and killings during a specified span of time. Taking into account the absence of such statistics, relying on the analyses, reports and informative studies carried out by newspapers and research centres, 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.

situations. In 2018, the level of civil disobedience was also high in Armenia conditioned by revolutionary events, but they were mainly of peaceful nature.

The 2015 Constitutional changes which set Armenia to transit to a parliamentary system of governance by the end of the RA President's term and the assumption of the newly elected President entered into full force in 2018. Accordingly, the 2018 data of the Political system variable of PFI, showed that Armenia, along with Moldova and Georgia, was a country with such a political system where the Parliament is vested with extended powers.

Figure 3

Political Factors Index (2017, 2018)*



Comparing the results of the 2017 and 2018 Political Factors Index (see Figure 3) it becomes clear that Armenia made significant progress compared to the last year. Progress has been largely driven by positive changes in the Political system variable and indices of Political Rights and Civil Liberties. In connection to other countries, there was some noticeable increase compared to the previous

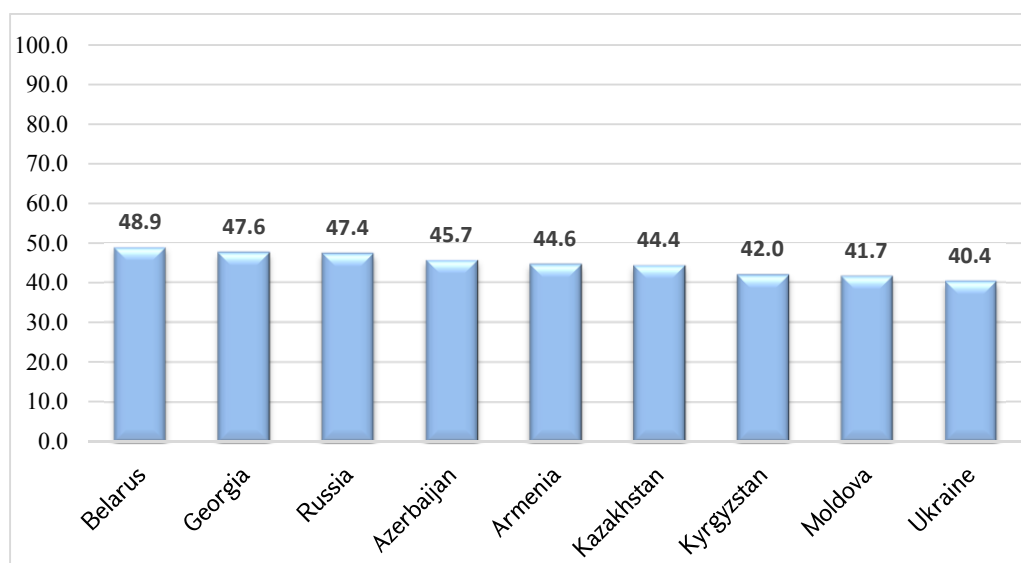
* Source: calculations by the author.

year with the exception of Ukraine, Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan. The most significant improvements were recorded in the PFI of Belarus and Kyrgyzstan, whereas Azerbaijan had the biggest setback due to deterioration of the Rule of Law indicator, unprecedented reduction in the Corruption Perceptions Index and increase in social unrest and pressures against them in the country.

11.3 Economic Factors Index (SFI)

Figure 4

Economic Factors Index (2018)*



The best 2018 Economic Factors Index of the IDL was registered in Belarus (48,9) and then in Georgia (47,6). In reference to Armenia, it took the 4th position among the countries. The lowest EFI indicator was recorded in Ukraine (see Figure 4).

Belarus's economy grew at a rapid pace in 2018 which was a restoration

* Source: calculations by the author.

after the 2015-2016 fall. Economic growth amounted to 3%, where activity of households consumer goods and industry were major contributors, while agriculture had a deterrent effect. In view of EFI variables, Belarus has the highest indicator in external trade turnover, which accounted for 139% of GDP.³⁶⁴ In 2018, there was also an increase in budget profit (3,8% of GDP) due to external economic activity and indirect taxes. Effective policy to reduce inflation was continually implemented and in the same mentioned year it reached a record low 4,9% (*Eurasian Development Bank 2019*). And despite the existing positive trends, it should be noted that Belarusian economy is heavily dependent on external factors.

Georgia has the highest indicators in Domestic credit, Foreign direct investments and Index of Economic Freedom³⁶⁵ (IEF) among the Economic Factors Index variables of the observed countries (see Table 2), while Armenia has the second best indicator in IEF. Georgia (75,9) occupied the 8th and Armenia (67,7) 24th place among 44 countries in the European region. Ukraine took the last 44th place and was classified as mainly not free altogether with Moldova, Russian and Belarus (*Miller, Kim, Roberts 2019, 32, 52*).

It should be noted that since 2014 Ukraine has been at the bottom of the EFI rating list. In 2014-2015 deterioration of Russia-Ukraine relations and outbreak of hostilities, as well as imposition of reciprocal sanctions, had a major impact on the Ukrainian economy, hence exacerbating the economic crisis. Therefore, downfall in economy was marked with 6,6% in 2014 and worsened to 9,8% in 2015. Nonetheless, in 2018 Ukraine's economy recovered to some extent and was registered with 3% growth, which is, in fact, highly vulnerable

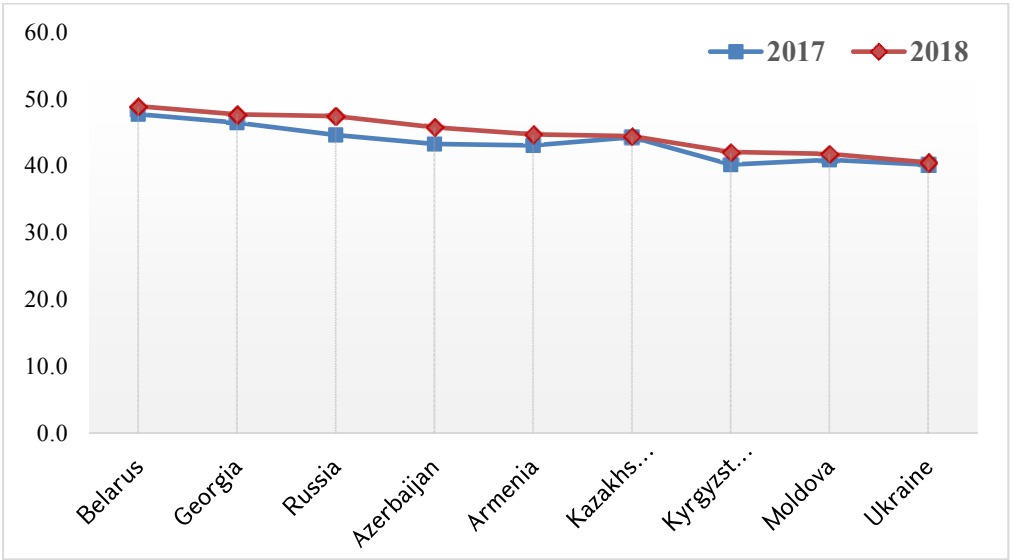
³⁶⁴ See the official site of the WB <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NE.TRD.GNFS.ZS> (20.07.2019).

³⁶⁵ The Index of Economic Freedom (IEF) is measured by The Heritage Foundation and Wall Street Journal based on 10 specific categories and with scoring range of 0-100, according to which countries scored in the range of 0-49,9 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. 2018 IDL was calculated on the basis of IEF estimated in 2019 as it included indicators measured during the period from July 1, 2017 to June 30, 2018.

and heavily dependent on international financial support. Experts predict that Ukraine again will have faced a number of economic challenges related to Russia's ban on importing oil products to Ukraine by 2019. The amount of oil and coal imported from Russia accounts to 35% and 65% of Ukraine's total import volumes, respectively (*Euler Hermes 2019*).

Figure 5

Economic Factors Index (2017, 2018)*



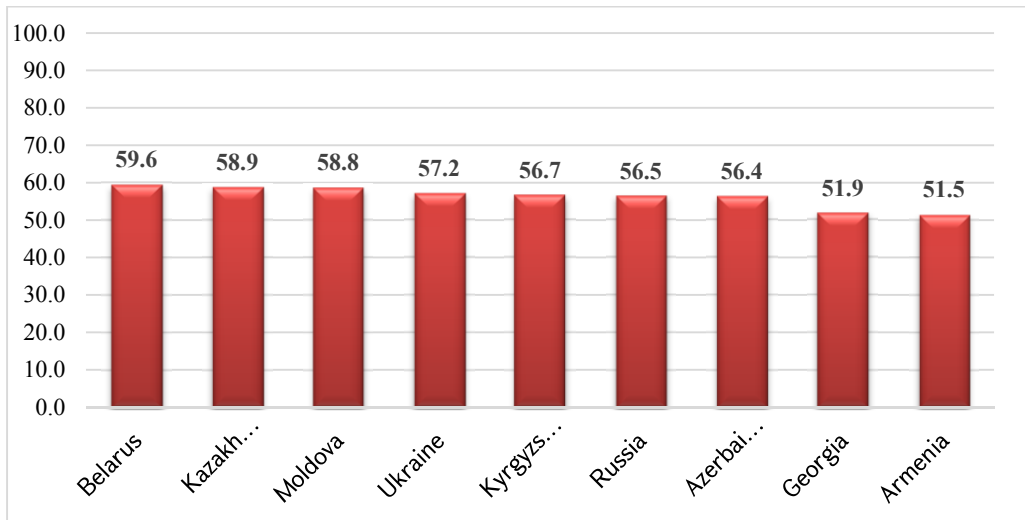
A comparative analysis of economic factors of 2017-2018 shows that all countries experienced some progress in 2018 when compared to the previous year. The highest growth rate was estimated in Russia, while Kazakhstan was rated with the lowest rate (see Figure 5). After the economic crisis of 2015 Russian economy had been restoring, therefore registering considerable improvements both in EFI positions and ratings (*Aleksanyan 2017, 259*).

* Source: calculations by the author.

11.4 Social Factors Index (SFI)

Figure 6

Social Factors Index (2018)*



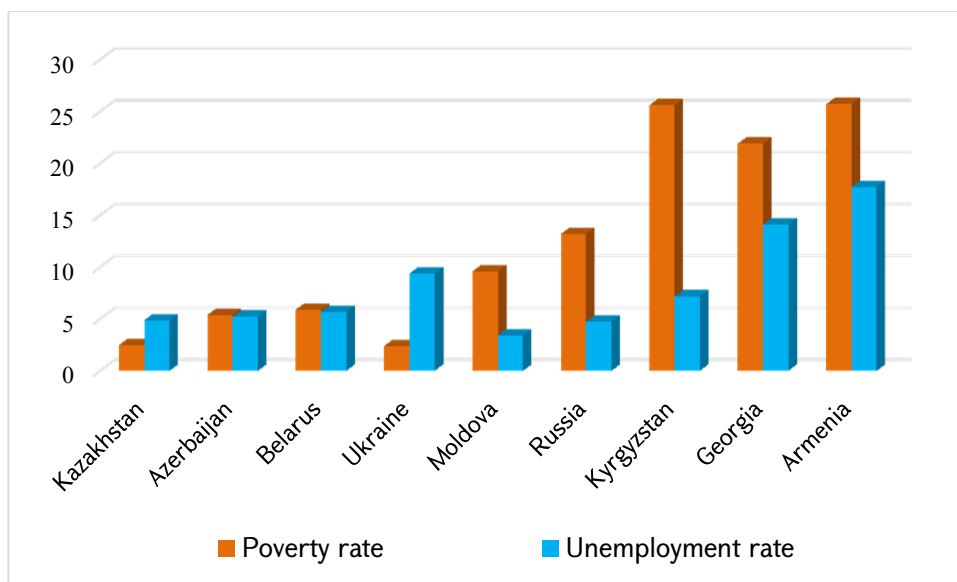
According to the analysis of IDL cross-country data, the best 2018 indicator in Social Factors Index was registered in Belarus (59,6). Kazakhstan follows it and is estimated by 58,9 points. It should be mentioned that both Belarus and Kazakhstan had leading positions - the 1st and 2nd places in SFI ratings. In the meantime, the lowest indicator in SFI was registered in Georgia and Armenia with 51,9 and 51,5 respectively (see Figure 6). The mentioned states were always positioned at the bottom, but with the only exception, that Georgia used to follow Armenia within the previous years (*Aleksanyan 2015, 215; 2016, 285; 2017, 256*). It was conditioned by the growth in Real wage, which increased from 984 to 1141 US dollars in Georgia (adjusted purchase power parity), while it decreased from 895 to 856 US dollars in Armenia.³⁶⁶ The record high Real wage indicator is registered in Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan (see Table 2).

* Source: calculations by the author.

³⁶⁶ Source: calculations by the author based on official data of average nominal wage, consumer price index and exchange rate.

Figure 7

Poverty and Unemployment rates in post-Soviet region³⁶⁷



Poverty (national poverty line) and unemployment rates of the countries in question are presented in Figure 7. The record high Unemployment rate was registered in Armenia (25,7%) and Kyrgyzstan (25,5%), followed by Georgia (21,9%). Nonetheless, if Unemployment rate is modest in Kyrgyzstan, and is registered with 7%, then in Armenia it amounts to 17,7%, which is the highest among states in question, while the average global rate of Unemployment amounts to 5%. The lowest Unemployment rate is in Moldova (3,4%), whereas Ukraine (2,4%) and Kazakhstan (2,5%) has the lowest poverty rate.

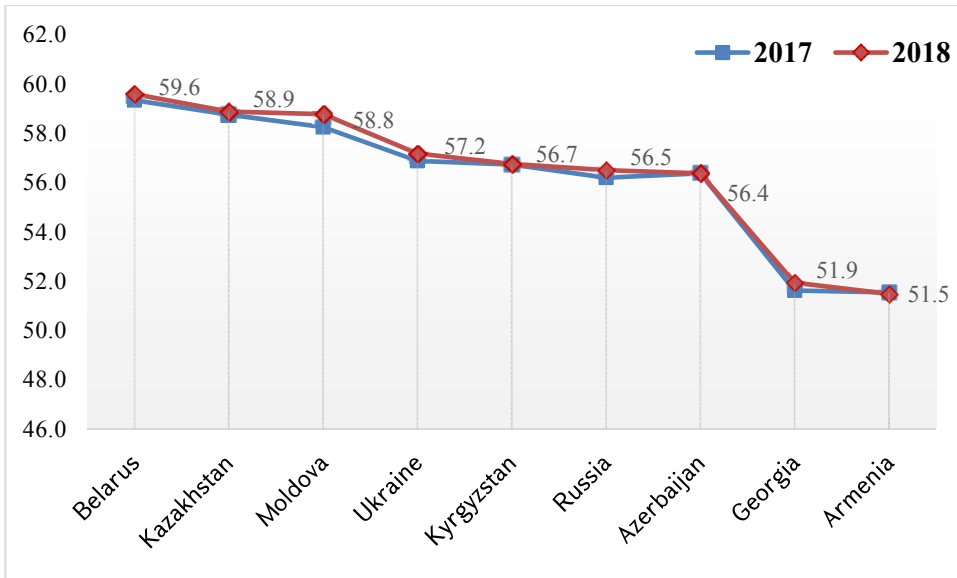
Another important social issue is the polarization of society's incomes. Gini index, an income centralization coefficient, is the highest in Georgia (37,9) and Russian (37,7), while in Ukraine (25) and Belarus (25,4) it is the record low.³⁶⁸

³⁶⁷ Source: data provided by WB and National statistical services.

³⁶⁸ See the official site of the World Bank <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SI.POV.GINI> (20.07.2019).

Figure 8

Social Factors Index (2017, 2018)*



By observing 2017-2018 SFI trends, we can state that all the countries except Armenia registered rising indicators. The most significant progress is observed in Moldova which is stipulated by the growth in Real wage and reduction in Unemployment rate (see Figure 8).

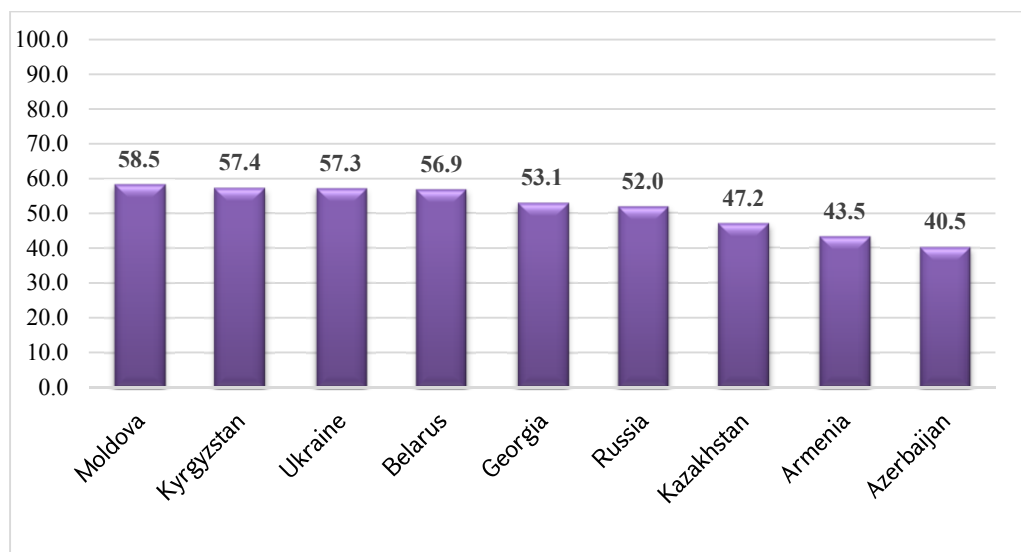
11.5 Educational Factors Index (EdFI)

According to a cross-country analysis of IDL Educational Factors Index data obtained for 2018, we can conclude that the best indicator was registered in Moldova (58,5) and then Kyrgyzstan (57,4). Armenia with 43,5 points is the second last, while Azerbaijan is the last one in the ratings (see Figure 9).

* Source: calculations by the author.

Figure 9

Educational Factors Index (2018)*



A study of the data of the government spending on education shows that among the listed countries, Moldova is consistently the one that allocates most of its resources for health care (as a share of GDP). Hence, in 2017 Moldovan government allocated spending on education, which constituted to 6,7% of GDP and 18,3% of the total budget spending. It should be noted that they have been yearly reduced triggered by the financial and economic crisis. To illustrate the abovesaid we can compare the spending on education in 2009, which was equivalent to 9,5% of GDP, whereas it amounted to 22,3% of budget expenses in 2010. Kazakhstan, Armenia and Azerbaijan are the countries with the least spending on education with rates not exceeding 3% of GDP (see Table 2).³⁶⁹

The highest and the lowest ratings of HDI Education Index, which is a sub-index of EdFI, is recorded in Georgia (0,845) and Azerbaijan (0,709)

* Source: calculations by the author.

³⁶⁹ See the WB official site <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.XPD.TOTL.GD.ZS> (20.07.2019).

respectively. Armenia is estimated by 0,749 points.³⁷⁰ In comparison to previous years, the mean years of schooling in Armenia increased and reached to 11,7 years in 2017, while expected years of schooling was estimated by 13 years. Within 1990-2017 mean years of schooling in Armenia increased by 1,6 with expected years of schooling by 2,3 years (*UNDP 2018, 2*).

Table 3

Gross enrolment ratio in tertiary education (2018), %³⁷¹

Belarus	87,4
Ukraine (2014)	82,7
Russia (2017)	81,9
Georgia	60,3
Armenia	54,6
Kazakhstan	54,0
Kyrgyzstan	41,3
Moldova	39,8
Azerbaijan	27,7

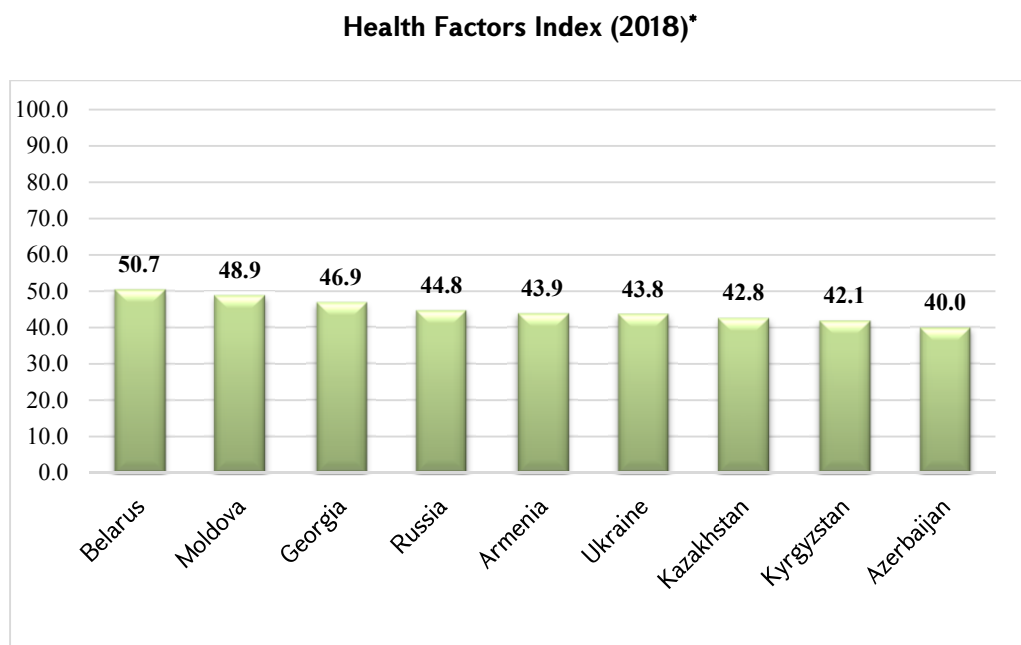
Belarus was and still remains the country with the best indicator (87,4%) in gross enrolment ratio of students in tertiary education in 2018. Belarus is followed by Ukraine (82,7%) and Russia (81,9%) with similar ratings. Armenia's gross enrolment in tertiary education comprises 54,6%, which has lately displayed a tendency to rise. Belarus and Ukraine showed the best growth dynamics, since the gross enrolment in tertiary education increased by more than 30% when compared to 2000. On the contrary, Azerbaijan (27,7%) has remained the country with the lowest ratio of enrolment (see Table 3).

³⁷⁰ Human Development Index Education Index (HDI-Education) is based on 2 dimensions measured by 1. 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). Source: United Nations Development Programme, Human Development reports <http://hdr.undp.org/> (20.07.2019).

³⁷¹ See the WB official site <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.TER.ENRR> (22.07.2019).

11.6 Health Factors Index (HFI)

Figure 10



By calculating the 2018 data of the Health Factors Index of the IDL, Belarus has a leading position and is estimated by 50,7 points. Meanwhile, Moldova (48,9) is coming second. Armenia is in the 5th position with 43,9 points and the lowest 40 points are assigned to Azerbaijan (see Figure 10).

Medical services are equally accessible to the population, but not completely effective in Belarus. It has reached major achievements in seeking solutions related to public health issues such as infant mortality and infectious diseases. Quality improvement of provided services as well as efficient use of public resources are one of the current challenges to public health care (*World Bank 2018, 6*). Health expenditure in Belarus amounted to 3,9% of GDP, which is the second best rating in the observed 9 states. Nonetheless, Moldova has the

* Source: calculations by the author.

highest state allocations to health equivalent to 4,4% of GDP, whereas Azerbaijan with 1,4% of GDP, on the contrary, has the lowest allocations.³⁷²

Armenia estimated with 75 years has the highest rating in Life expectancy at birth - a sub-index of HFI. The second best indicator is assigned to Belarus with 74 years, while Azerbaijan is recorded with the lowest indicator of 72 years.³⁷³ All states have a vivid disparity in life span indicator based on gender. For example, women live 10 years longer than men do in Ukraine, Belarus and Russia. It is highly important to initiate and implement activities aimed at eliminating its causes.

Conclusions

To sum up the study of cross-country analysis of the Index of Democracy Level, we can highlight the following points and conclusions:

- Georgia has the best IDL rating, Moldova is the second, while Azerbaijan is the last in the list,
- All 9 states are classified as partly democratic with a difference - Azerbaijan's recorded indicator is very close to the non-democratic political system category,
- Armenia occupying the 3rd position has made the best progress in comparison to the previous year,
- Armenia has the best IDL outcome among EAEU member states which is followed by Belarus, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan, while Russia has the lowest indicator,
- Belarus has the best ratings not only in certain PFI variable, but it also has a leading position in Economic, Social and Health Factors Indices,

³⁷² See the official site of the World Bank <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SH.XPD.-GHED.GD.ZS> (23.07.2019).

³⁷³ See the official site of the World Bank <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.DYN.LE00.IN> (23.07.2019).

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- Armenia and Georgia have continually the lowest indicator in Social Factors Index and have the highest Unemployment rate among the observed countries,
- Azerbaijan is the last in the list of ratings in view of Political, Educational and Health Factors Index.

According to a comparative analysis of the IDL separate variables, the following conclusions were made in reference to 9 countries:

- ✓ Georgia has the best indicators in the fields of Political Rights and Civil Liberties, Press Freedom, Rule of Law and fight against corruption,
- ✓ Belarus has the highest political stability level and the best indicator in Gender equality,
- ✓ Ukraine has the lowest level of political stability and the highest level of conflict,
- ✓ Azerbaijan has the worst indicators in Press Freedom and Corruption Perceptions Index, whereas it shares the worst indicator in Political Rights and Civil Liberties with Russia and Belarus,
- ✓ Political systems of Armenia, Moldova and Georgia are characterized by extended powers of the Parliament and curtailed powers of the President.

Hereby, the studies testify that, each and every state sets its own agenda and draws its specific roadmap in post-Soviet democratic transformations, where opposing, contradicting processes and events can be converged through democratic progress and backslide stages. And if democracy as a system of values and principles is universal, then its "localization" process is unique to each state, conditioned by historical, cultural, religious and other values.

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**CHALLENGES TO THE CONSOLIDATION
OF MODERN DEMOCRACY:
IDL COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS**

*(Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Russia,
Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Ukraine and Moldova)*

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