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RESILIENCE OF CIVILIARCHIC DEMOCRACY IN THE FACE OF CHALLENGES AND GAPS IN EUROPEAN INTEGRATION: THE POLITICAL DIMENSION OF THE INDEX OF CIVILIARCHY

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Abstract

The Eastern Partnership (EaP) countries face significant challenges in achieving democratic consolidation amid geopolitical tensions, authoritarian tendencies and regional conflicts. This paper examines the resilience of civiliarchic democracy as a framework to understand and address these challenges. The study employs a mixed methods approach including comparative analysis and the Civiliarchy Index to explore the interplay between European integration, democratic resilience and anti-civiliarchic forces. To identify the main principles of EU foreign policy in the EaP countries and its normative component, a qualitative targeted content analysis of official EU documentation was used. Additionally, the method of discourse analysis was used to consider the narrative regarding the participation and lobbying from the EU and European institutions and values within the EaP countries, as well as prepare for the negotiations with EU and EU member states for the interests of EaP countries. Europeanization and democratization determine both the political and social prospects for sustainable development of the EaP countries, as well as the hybrid challenges of strategic security and the dichotomy of inter-integration conflicts. The paper analyzes the gaps in European political integration in the EaP countries for the period from 2013 to 2023. The authors rely on studies on Europeanization and European political integration in the tradition of neo-institutionalism, as well as on the resilience of the EaP countries. The findings of the paper imply that the civiliarchic democracy the EaP countries face is thwarted by internal instability, external pressures and shortcomings in EU policies. But EU's strategic and engagement can in some extent tackle authoritarian trends and improve democratic institutions. Theoretical and practical insight into the concept of civiliarchic democracy and its resiliency in light of the

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democratization literature is the main contribution of the study. Policy and scholarly implications of the findings in support of improving democratic institutions and further inclusive European integration in the EaP region are suggested.

Introduction

In this article, the consolidation of democracy in the post-Soviet countries since 2013 is analyzed and challenged by the rise of interstate populism from the Russian political elite, which has created difficulties in the Europeanization and democratic transition of Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova and Armenia. In this sense, the aim of this article is to fill the theoretical gap in the political analysis of democracy and civilicracy indicators, to employ the index of civiliarchy, and to explore the measurement of civiliarchic democracy in the context of post-Soviet interstate populism with a special focus on the challenges of European political integration of the EaP countries.

The research, of which this article forms a part, aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of the Political, Economic, Social and Cultural dynamics of civiliarchic democracy that shape the democratic transition processes in the EaP region. However, in this paper, we focus exclusively on the political dimension of the Civiliarchy Index, with the aim of providing a detailed description of all its subcomponents.

Thus, this article uses the Civiliarchy Index to measure and compare the foreign policy resources of the West and the EU, identify the capabilities of the West and the EU in conducting foreign policy towards the EaP countries, and analyze the prospects for European integration and the emergence of a space of multifaceted cooperation, where the resources of the EaP countries, the West, and the EU could complement each other to achieve common interests. In doing so, drawing mainly on the theoretical framework of polyarchic democracy (Dahl 1971), liberal hegemony (Mearsheimer 2018), world-systems analysis (Wallerstein 2004), the theory of waves of democratization and civil society (Huntington 1991a, 1991b), regime transformation (Linz and Stepan 1996; Galtung 1996), resilience of European integration and Europeanization (Schramm 2024a, 2024b; Debus and Schweizer 2024; Costa 2023), the institutionalization of democratic procedures and and strategic peace (Galtung 1996; Gutbrod and Wood 2023), primarily legal and legitimate change of political power, laid the foundations for the consolidation of democracy (Dahrendorf 2006; Zakaria 1997).

The anti-civiliarchic boiling point and aggressive war against European integration of post-Soviet countries became the Eastern Partnership (EaP) summit in Vilnius from 28 to 29 November 2013, when hybrid pressure from Russia became the main reason why both Ukraine and Armenia announced a change in their foreign policy priorities, abandoning European integration. The political elites of both countries expressed a desire to distinguish between the European political and economic dimensions, thereby offering the EU political integration, and the Customs Union (CU) under the leadership

of Russia offering economic integration. It was quite obvious that the decisive role in the issue of refusing to sign the Association Agreement (AA) with the EU (Van der Loo 2017), as well as in the choice of Ukraine and Armenia, was played by the risks of national security, the main guarantor of which for both countries was Russia. If the war for Ukraine began back in 2014 with the annexation of Crimea by Russia and the incitement of conflict in the south-east of Ukraine, then for Armenia it began on September 27, 2020, when Azerbaijan launched a full-scale war against Nagorno-Karabakh and, in fact, a proxy war against Armenia.

With the start of negotiations on the the EU's Association Agreements (AAs) and Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Areas (DCFTAs) with Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova and Armenia found themselves in a situation that resembled a 'dichotomy of inter-integration conflicts' (Alexanian 2014). During this time, the EaP countries, united by a network of integration projects and initiatives, achieved impressive economic results, significantly strengthened their financial situation, as well as the situation of the majority of the population. Until 2013, Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova and Armenia were increasingly mentioned in official EU documents as good examples of sustainable development and expansion of the range of geopolitical ties, considering them as pillars of the emerging civiliarchic world order (Davutoğlu 2020).

However, already at the initial stage of the EU's AAs and DCFTAs, signs of an unfriendly reaction from Russia, both within and between integration organizations in the post-Soviet space, began to clearly appear. In contrast to the level of resilience of the European integration of Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia and Armenia with the EU, regional integration with Russia and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), the CU, the Eurasian Economic Community (EurAsEC) and the CSTO faced internal crises that practically paralyzed the integration dynamics. An additional obstacle was the changing attitude of the West towards Russia, the confrontation between Russia and the West and the shift in priorities of political influence (Pradhan and Kakoty 2024; Gel'man 2003). There was a need to adequately respond to the changes taking place in the post-Soviet space and the EaP countries, simultaneously resolving the accumulated contradictions and systemic crises. After the eastern enlargement of the EU, in Eastern Europe, in the space between Russia and the EU, there are only four countries that have retained the ability to choose institutional and political scenarios for their development – Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia and Armenia. The parallel interest of Russia and the EU in cooperation with them, the close ties of these countries with Russia and the EU, the role of these countries in energy and transport communications with the EU, as well as the imperative resilience to take into account the positions of Russia and the EU when conducting foreign policy show the main factors that since 2013 have been considered by Russia as a space of confrontation with the EU and the West (Malinova 2022; Gel'man 2022).

On February 24, 2022, Russia launched a full-scale military invasion of Ukraine, which became an open and brutal cycle of aggressive war against European integration not only of Ukraine, but also of other EaP countries (Ehrhart 2024). The continuation of the anti-integration war has become another indicator of the use of post-Soviet populism towards Ukraine by the Russian political elite (Pintsch and Rabinovych 2025; Freudlsperger and Schimmelfennig 2025). The Russian-Ukrainian war for Russia has

become a way to preserve its 'traditional sphere of influence' and 'strategic interests' in the European space through hard power and limiting Ukraine's sovereign decisions. The EU and other Western countries, unlike Russia, are taking steps to strengthen relations with Ukraine and other countries of the post-Soviet space, which is a priority of the EU foreign policy, promoting sustainable integration, preserving sovereignty and maintaining the resilience of these countries.

Since in the EaP countries, along with the ongoing radical transformation in various areas, many problems arose: from reforming the political, social, economic model, the need to establish internal stability to major interethnic conflicts and armed clashes, the EU had no choice but to reconsider its Eastern policy strategy and try to establish close ties and cooperation with Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia and Armenia (Upadhyay 2024; Müller and Slominski 2024; Minesashvili 2022).

Thus, the EU is faced with a difficult task, since it is still trying to integrate these EaP countries into the pan-European union. In the context of the limitations of liberal democratic ideals and the military realities of international relations, we examine the various mechanisms of support for democratization of post-Soviet transitional political regimes by the EU and Western democracies, as well as the interactions among CSOs, political institutions and movements in the EaP countries. By critically analyzing its arguments, this article seeks to understand how the theory of Civiliarchy can shed light on the problems that post-Soviet countries face in their authoritarian and democratic consolidation. In particular, we analyze the capacity of the civiliarchic foundations of democratization in Armenia, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine, as well as the anti-civiliarchic foundations of authoritarianization in Azerbaijan and Belarus. This reveals the mechanisms of countering populist tendencies and the role of European integration in shaping democratic trajectories in the EaP countries (EEAS 2022).

By analysing the theory of civiliarchy and theoretical perspectives on civiliarchic democracy, this article aims to contribute to the existing discourse in the social sciences on the non-linearity of civiliarchic challenges to democratisation in Armenia, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine, as well as non-civiliarchic and anti-civiliarchic challenges to autocracy in Azerbaijan and Belarus. It seeks to provide new insights into the resilience of civiliarchic democracy in the face of non-civiliarchic and anti-civiliarchic challenges to autocracy.

The findings of this study can inform policymakers and stakeholders in their efforts to strengthen democracy and promote more inclusive European political integration in the EaP countries. The study employs a mixed methods approach, including a literature review, case studies, comparative analysis and a Delphi method involving expert opinions. The aim is to provide a comprehensive understanding of the political, economic, social and cultural dimensions of civiliarchic democracy that shape the transition processes in the EaP countries and the complexities of European integration. Through this comprehensive analysis, we aim to shed light on the complex dynamics between civiliarchic democracy, anti-European populism and European integration, thereby contributing to a deeper understanding of the challenges and opportunities in the pursuit of democratic consolidation (Heinisch, McDonnell and Werner 2021; Malkopoulou and Moffitt 2023).

A comprehensive literature review establishes a theoretical framework, including relevant scientific perspectives, and provides an understanding of key theoretical concepts and terms. The results of this study contribute to a deeper understanding of European integration transitions, challenges and opportunities in the pursuit of democratic consolidation in four EaP countries, and authoritarian consolidation in two countries. By examining the resilience of civiliarchic democracy in the face of anti-religious populism and gaps in European political integration, this study develops a strategic framework for the stability of democratic institutions and the promotion of more inclusive European integration (Rašković, Haynes and Vangeli 2024).

In the following sections, we delve into the theoretical foundations of civiliarchic democracy, examine the causes and consequences of anti-European populism, study the resilience of civiliarchic democracy in the face of populist leaders and groups (Saxonberg and Heinisch 2022; Crowder 2023; Venizelos 2024), assess the gaps in European political integration, and discuss the civiliarchic implications for strengthening democratic institutions and overcoming existing divisions.

Methodology

This study used a mixed methods approach to investigate the political, economic, social and cultural dimensions of the Index of Civiliarchy in the EaP countries. The research design included a literature review, case studies, comparative analysis and the Delphi method to collect expert opinions and assess the security, participation, transparency, representation, control, dialogue, partnership, accountability and development aspects of the political, economic, social and cultural dimensions. A comprehensive literature review and document analysis were conducted to create a theoretical framework, gain insights into the concepts of civiliarchic democracy, EU integration challenges, gaps and achievements. In particular, the literature review focused on examining the sustainability of civiliarchic democracy (Aleksanyan 1999, 2010a, 2010b) in the context of post-Soviet populism and gaps in European integration. The review covered scholarly works that examined the challenges and dynamics of democratic consolidation, the impact of populism on democratic processes, and the complexities of European integration in post-Soviet countries (Freudlsperger and Schimmelfennig 2025; Griffiths 2013; Holden 2017; Sweetman 2021; Weissenbacher 2022; McLarren 2024). A prominent place in the literature review was occupied by the analysis of the critique of liberal democracy (Sharlamanov 2022) as a theoretical basis for understanding the tensions and limitations inherent in liberal democratic ideals and the realities of international relations (Wallerstein 1995a, 1995b). This perspective provided insights into the complexities of democratic transitions, the role of political institutions, and the interaction between civil society and anti-European populist movements in the context of the EaP countries.

The study conducted case studies in six EaP countries to obtain empirical evidence on the resilience of civiliarchic democracy. These case studies aimed to examine political processes, populist movements, democratic backsliding and consolidation, and the impact of European integration on these processes (Heinisch, Saxonberg, Werner and Habersack 2021). To this end, the case studies allowed for an in-depth examination

of political systems and the influence of various factors on the transition processes. The analysis also considered how the theoretical framework of the critique of liberal democracy can be applied to assess the resilience of civiliarchic democracy in the face of authoritarianism and populist challenges and the gaps in European integration in the EaP countries. The case studies contributed to a deeper understanding of the factors influencing the democratic trajectories of these countries and shed light on potential strategies and approaches to strengthen democratic institutions and overcome the gaps in European integration (Aleksanyan 2018a; Aleksanyan 2011, 2014; Alexanyan 2005).

The Delphi method[1] was applied to gather expert opinions and evaluations on the Political, Economic, Social and Cultural dimensions of the Index of Civiliarchy in the EaP countries. 15 experts were included in the Delphi survey based on their expertise in the field of EaP countries' political, social and economic processes, European integration and democratic issues. The experts were provided with a questionnaire consisted of 36 factors/aspects of mentioned dimensions to rank each dimension on a scale from 1 to 9. The Delphi survey was conducted in several rounds to ensure convergence of opinions and to reach a consensus among the experts. Median and quartile ranges were calculated to determine the final estimations for each dimension and finally for the aggregate of the Index of Civiliarchy. A comparative analysis was conducted to identify patterns, similarities, and differences among the EaP countries in terms of the political, social, economic and cultural dimensions and overall score of the Index of Civiliarchy.

Theory of Civiliarchy: an attempt to fill the gap in the concept

Civiliarchy or civilicracy is a civilized and civil government, as well as a form (order) of civilized and civil government, self-government. Civiliarchy is interpreted as civilized government (civiliarchic legitimacy) as opposed to violence and barbarity, and as civilized governance, control, and regime as opposed to military or war dictatorship (civiliarchic legitimacy gap). In the context of civiliarchy, we can also use the concept of 'civilianarchy', which indicates the degree of intolerance and conflict among actors and institutions where constitutional order and the rule of law are violated or threatened (de Ghantuz Cubbe 2022; Cocozza 2023). This can take the form of military coups, terrorist attacks, armed conflicts, civil wars, etc. In the above context, civiliarchy is also an anti-civiliarchy.

Civiliarchy is a civilization- and civic-centered society, as well as a value-rational and goal-rational situation of the activities of public institutions. In politics, they are actors who promote the protection of human rights and the rule of civilized norms and laws.

Civiliarch is an actor who wields civilized power and exercises civilized rule, as opposed to a monarch or a tyrant. In another sense, a civiliarch or civilicrat is a civil ruler or civil servant, as opposed to military rulers and military servants. To

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[1] Ethical considerations were taken into account throughout the research process. Informed consent was obtained from the participants involved in the Delphi survey, and their anonymity and confidentiality were ensured. The research adhered to ethical guidelines, and the study was conducted in accordance with relevant ethical standards.

supplement the semantic meaning of this concept, one can use civiliphobia, which is the unacceptability of civilized existence, as well as an atmosphere of general fear among people and CSOs. The general progress of civilization is considered unacceptable by authoritarian leaders, chieftains, groups or various public associations who are afraid that they will lose their individual and oligarchic domination, levers of power and resources in the context of general civilizational development and national progress. Civiliphobists often take advantage of illiteracy, backwardness or ignorance of society and consider any progress to be anti-national and destructive. And by resorting to various measures (terrorism and other barbaric acts) in civilized societies, they create an atmosphere of general fear. In this way, they try to achieve the results desired for their dominance and hegemony.

The relationship between civiliarchy and democracy: civiliarchic democracy

Civiliarchic democracy reflects the complementarity and inseparability of the process and outcome of democracy. It also manifests itself as a civil-centric axis in global and domestic political systems. It is impossible to imagine democracy, democratization, domestic and international procedures for the protection of human rights and freedoms without civiliarchism.

The correlation between the concepts of 'democracy' and 'civiliarchy' shows that the concept of 'democracy' is wider than the concept of 'civiliarchy'. Which means that democracy includes civiliarchy.

Civiliarchic democracy is such an institutional order of preparing, adopting, implementing and controlling political decisions, in which the winning actors as a result of the civilized competitive struggle for the votes of the people receive the powers of the civilized exercise of public power. Here, the fact that the political competitive struggle can be both value-rational (Wertrational) and value-irrational, and goal-rational (Zweckrational) and goal-irrational in its content and form (Cocozza 2023; Weiss 1985; Boudon 1997; Jakobs 2022), as well as the fact that not only the exercise of public power, but also the civilized exercise of authority is urgent. Which also implies ensuring the civiliarchic legitimacy of public power, because democracy is not only a way of life, but also a civilized way of life, where both the process and the result of the implementation of that way of life are reflected. In this context, civiliarchic democracy tries to overcome the contradictions of legitimacy, equality, liberalism and others, because, as we have seen from the above discussions, not every freedom, equality or legitimacy can necessarily presuppose the existence of democracy (Boulter 2024; Joppke 2021; Wallerstein 2006). And on the other hand, it is simply impossible to lead the whole public life to government relations.

Civiliarchic strengthening and supplementation of liberal democracy

Comparative study of liberal democracy in the EaP countries, as well as civiliarchy and the related European integration and Europeanization, is one of the most important areas of modern political science (MØller 2008; Lijphart 1969). The problem of resilience, survival and transformation of democratic regimes in the EaP countries is

becoming especially relevant in the era of globalization, when the worldwide triumph of democracy is gradually encountering obstacles and attempts to restrain it from authoritarian regimes. Since 2013, the democratization of political regimes in the EaP countries has been experiencing one of the deepest crises in history, both at the level of values and in the sphere of practical institutions. Due to the European integration of the EaP countries, in particular Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia and Armenia, Russia and the Western countries have slid into counterstruggle and a new cold war. The EU and NATO are moving towards ensuring comprehensive security in accordance with the agreements and their roadmaps of the EaP countries in order to seek ways of effective interaction with these countries. The modern steps of the post-Soviet EaP countries to implement liberal democracy, comprehensive European integration and future EU membership are considered unfriendly by the Russian political elite (Malinova 2022), thereby closing the political dialogue with the U.S., EU and NATO.

The obstacles to liberal democracy were particularly acute in Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia and Armenia, as the implementation of values and institutions in these countries caused a negative response and hybrid war from Russia, which, unlike the EaP countries, thereby demonstrates its inflexibility and inability to adapt to rapidly changing conditions of the external environment. The goal of the hybrid policy in the EaP region, conducted by Russia, was and remains to cause serious damage to the image of the EU, trying to devalue human rights, the rule of law and democracy as European values and a political brand. In the current situation, since 2013, the political leadership of the EU has been particularly acutely faced with the question of choosing the further path of resilience and sustainable development of the EaP countries.

The problem of finding a civiliarchy that strengthens liberal democracy is faced not only by the EU political system, but also by the European community and CSOs. It is especially relevant for the new democracies of the EaP countries, which include Armenia (Suciu 2018). The model of civiliarchic democracy that has developed in Western Europe has proven itself to be one of the most effective and at the same time one of the most democratic in the world. The study of civiliarchic democracy as a unique phenomenon of political life and strengthening the liberal democratic development option seems very promising and useful. However, since 2013, civiliarchic democracy in Europe has also faced a number of serious problems, most of which are of a complex multi-stage security nature. The fate of the EaP region and the future of democracy in Europe depend on the ability of civiliarchic democracy to cope with hybrid security challenges. In this regard, it is important to analyze the complex transformations that are also taking place in a number of EU member states (Heinisch and Jansesberger 2022; Heinisch and Jansesberger 2021).

Is it possible to proclaim the advent of the era of civiliarchic democracy? Considering that civiliarchy is characterized by the resilience of democratization and Europeanization of the EaP countries, since this form of democracy must keep up with the pace of securitization and effectively cope with hybrid challenges (Gritschmeier 2021a, 2021b). All this and the security dilemma have become especially acute in the EaP countries since 2013 in the conditions of neither war nor peace, as well as hybrid war and Russia's hard power against the post-Soviet EaP countries.

The model of social, economic and political organization of social democracy that has developed in Western Europe has proven itself to be effective and one of the most democratic in the world. At the same time, social democracy has deep liberal roots, being in fact the successor of the liberal democratic model (Platzer 2024). The study of social democracy as a distinctive phenomenon of political life and as a potential basis for liberal democracy seems to the authors to be very promising and useful (Heinisch and Werner 2024). An analysis of scientific ideas about the dimensions of civiliarchy and deomratization of the political system of the EaP countries allows us to present the scientific novelty of this study, which consists in the following:

- two approaches to understanding the political dimension of civiliarchy are presented: 1) elements of the political dimension as part of human rights and freedoms; and 2) European political integration;
- political dimensions of civiliarchy are proposed;
- the specificity of elements of political dimensions in various types and models of political systems of the EaP countries is shown;
- the main structural elements of the political dimension of civiliarchy are identified: actors, institutions, norms and communications;
- an idea of the main characteristics of elements of the political, economic, social and cultural dimensions of the civiliarchy of the EaP countries is given.

As a result of the study, two main approaches to understanding the political dimension of civiliarchy have been identified. The *first approach* defines the political dimension as part of human rights and freedoms. So, taking interests and goals as the basis of national and human security, we single out political interests from the totality of national interests as part of the national one; through threats - against the background of various societal threats, we derive political threats (regional conflicts and wars, political terrorism, mistakes and miscalculations of political leaders); through the governance level - along with public institutions, CSOs also act as actors of national and human security; through the political system - national and human security includes many subsystems (Barbieri and Aleksanyan 2024). The *second approach* - political dimensions as European political integration as the basis for its definition can be based on political goals and values, political stability and stability, threats, conflict.

Not only threats, values, interests or other separate political elements should be considered as an object of the political dimension, but a set of elements that are closely interconnected with each other and involved in a single system - the political one. The selection of a political system among numerous political phenomena as an object is due to the following features of it. It is a set of elements closely interconnected with each other and functioning as a single whole, which makes it possible to study political security as a complex phenomenon, coexisting and interdependent with other political categories (interests, values, goals, threats, political actors, politics); the political system covers only those phenomena and processes that are united by the concept of political power, which contributes to the formation of not an interdisciplinary approach, but a purely political one to political security; the political system of society is characterized by temporal, spatial, cultural, historical and legal aspects that allow us to analyze political security in the context of modern European integration of the EaP

countries and identify the causes that cause the emergence of various types of political security (Juška 2024).

The political security of the European integration of the EaP countries has its own specific structural elements, which include: political actors (institutions, groups, organizations, individuals) that fix the forms of political activity, ways of exercising power, management methods; determine political goals and ways to achieve them in accordance with the interests of the individual, society and the state, taking into account social and political practices, ideas, value orientations and attitudes; regulatory and legal provisions and principles that implement the regulation of the activities of the political system as a whole and its individual elements (political institutions, organizations, citizens); and also determine the conditions, possibilities and boundaries of the functioning of the entire political system; and, finally, communications that take place both within the political system (between the legislative and executive branches of government, between individual political leaders, between voters and deputies), and outside the political system, that is, the interaction between the political system and the environment (between state and citizens, political leader and people, non-profit, public organizations and authorities, and so on).

The Europeanization of the EaP countries has an ambiguous impact on political security: information technology breakthrough, increased interdependence of countries, social and economic integration, development of infrastructure and services, science, etc. As the pace of European integration and Europeanization of the EaP countries accelerates, negative consequences and hybrid challenges from Russia become increasingly visible (Paustyan and Busygina 2024): the energy and environmental problem has worsened, new dangers have emerged due to war and the aggravation of frozen conflicts, and the problem of intervention is acute. As a result, the space of complex multi-stage security is expanding: it includes not only issues related to military and political security, but also security in almost all areas of human activity. In this sense, as the relations between the state, society and citizen of the EaP countries undergo democratic transformation, and under the influence of Europeanization, political security is filled with new content, its paradigm is changing (Baltag and Romanyshyn 2024).

The key element of the renewed paradigm of liberal democracy is the resilience of public authorities of the EaP countries. In this regard, there is a need to rethink the methodological and conceptual foundations of political security in the EaP countries. Ensuring political security, being one of the key functions of a sovereign state, is conditioned by the peculiarities of the political regime, which determines the main priorities of the policy of European integration and Europeanization. In the political space of the EaP countries, there are different democratic and authoritarian practices that create variability both in the understanding of political security and in the formation of a complex multi-stage system and its provision. Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia and Armenia are fully or partially consolidated democracies, but at the same time, Azerbaijan and Belarus have authoritarian regimes. This is due to the fact that in the context of the Russian hybrid war against the European integration of the EaP countries, weak institutions of liberal democracy are not an effective mechanism for finding and selecting political decisions, as well as implementing initiatives of

individual citizens, social groups and public associations, including on issues of ensuring the political security of public authorities, society, and individuals. However, under the influence of external and internal factors, different types of regimes in the EaP countries are developing systems of political security and methods of ensuring that do not always correspond to ideal ideas about liberal democracy. According to our research, since 2013, the EaP countries have shown a tendency towards a decline in the development of democracy, the main reason for which was and continues to be the weak resilience of the civiliarchic foundations. Hybrid new dangers and threats forced the leading democratic EaP countries to partially limit freedoms and human rights, and because of the security dilemma, even slow down reforms to strengthen democratic institutions. The paradox, however, is that these situational restrictions are becoming the norm and are extrapolated to everyday life. Deviation from democratic principles in the name of ensuring political security ultimately creates dangers and threats for both the individual and civil society and public authorities. Therefore, modern researchers of liberal democracy in the EaP countries are faced with the task of finding a balance between democracy and political security, as well as identifying the civiliarchic features of its provision in conditions of neither war nor peace.

Political dimensions of cooperation between the EU and EaP countries

Since 2013, the normative power of the EU has been developing unevenly in different periods of the formation of EU foreign policy as a global actor and having heterogeneous influence, depending on the context of application. The main criterion for the existence of normative influence is its recognition by other actors.

The study is intended to contribute to a constructive understanding of EU foreign policy in the EaP countries, its relationship with internal political processes and foreign policy strategies of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine. The study provides an opportunity to consider the factors influencing the motivation of political elites to form political alliances with global actors, as well as to trace the results of cooperation between the EaP countries and the EU since they gained independence.

Studying the political influence of the EU in various areas of relations with each of the EaP countries is of interest for several reasons. Determining the democratic factors that influence the success of foreign policy cooperation and trigger the process of change is important not only within the framework of the study of EU foreign policy, but also in the context of integration initiatives: interdepartmental programs, development assistance policies, humanitarian policies and other aspects of interstate relations (EUR-Lex 2016; EUR-Lex 2019). The listed areas of cooperation serve the purpose of ensuring the national interests of the EaP states and are part of the foreign policy of regional actors.

The study makes it possible to study the political transformations taking place in the EaP countries, which affect the goals and objectives of statehood, formulated by national political elites. Based on this, we will consider the EaP as a community of countries that interact with the EU along with other global and regional actors, building

their foreign policy in conjunction with the domestic political process and public demand for change.

Analysis of political dimensions devoted to cooperation between the EaP countries and the EU in the field of civiliarchic reforms complements publications discussing the eastern direction of EU foreign policy, the liberal world order (Mearsheimer 2018; Wilford 2023), the spread of ideas of civiliarchic democracy in post-Soviet countries, the role of CSOs in the EaP countries; features of the distribution of power in the EaP countries; on promoting democracy in regions with high conflict potential (EUR-Lex 2016; EUR-Lex 2019).

In political science research, there is not enough discussion of what exactly is meant by civiliarchic and democratic reforms, how their quality is assessed, and what are the limitations of development assistance programs for third countries carried out by international organizations that postulate democracy as a way to achieve stability and improve the well-being of citizens. The issue of political sovereignty of the EaP countries has a significant impact on the choice of a particular research paradigm, but there is still no broad discussion on this issue in scientific publications in the social sciences (Baltag and Romanyshyn 2024; Lavrelashvili and Van Hecke 2023; Lavrelashvili and Van Hecke 2023).

The subject of the study is the political integration between the EU and the EaP countries for the period from 2013 to 2023, as well as the political factors of civiliarchy in the relations between the EU and the EaP countries. The aim of the study is to identify the influence of the political factors of civiliarchy on the relations between the EU and the EaP countries for the period from 2013 to 2023.

To achieve the goal, the following tasks were set:

- To establish the meaning of norms and ideology in the neoliberal theoretical tradition, to outline the criteria of the EU's civiliarchic influence;
- To identify the foundations of the EU's partnership with the EaP countries, enshrined in the European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations, the EU's Global Strategy for Foreign and Security Policy;
- To identify the political factors of civiliarchy that influence the choice of one or another format of partnership with the EU by the EaP countries;
- To analyse the achievements and limitations of the EU's foreign policy in the EaP region;
- To characterise Russia's position in the EaP region;
- To determine the degree of influence of the political factors of the EU's civiliarchy in each of the EaP countries, depending on the format of interaction in the areas of democratic reforms, improving the well-being of citizens and regional security.

Construction of the Index of Civiliarchy[2]: Political, Economic, Social and Cultural Dimensions

Figure 1. Dimensions of the Index of Civiliarchy
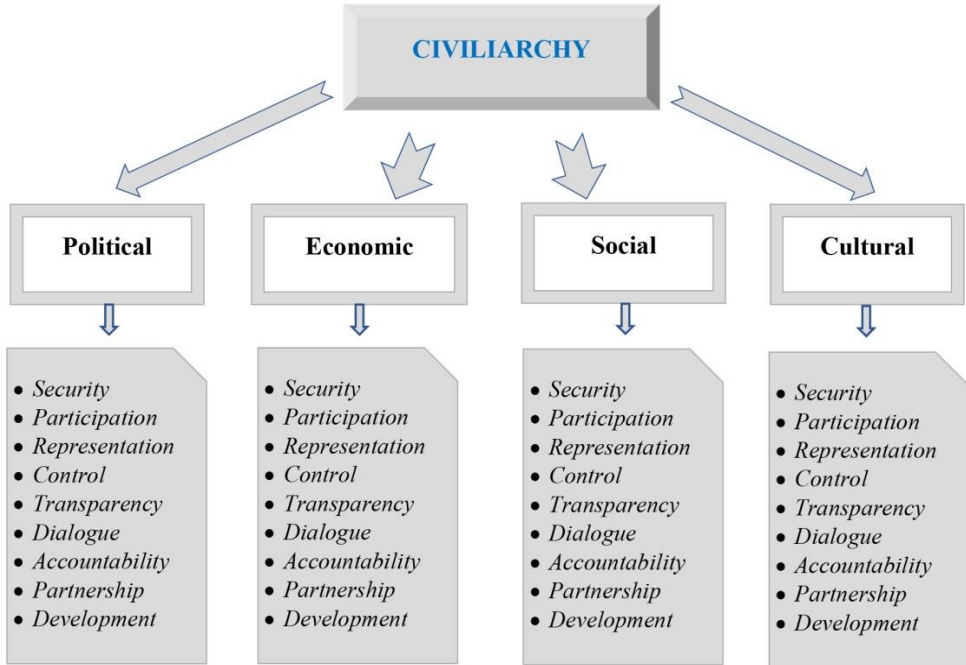
As shown in Figure 1 the Index of Civiliarchy has four dimensions or sub-indices: Political, Economic, Social and Cultural. Each sub-index has 9 indicators covering different aspects of the given conception. The indicators are: Security, Participation, Representation, Control, Transparency, Dialogue, Accountability, Partnership, and Development. The interrelationship and comprehensive analysis of these indicators reveals the quality of civiliarchy and democracy, as well as civiliarchic democracy.

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[2] In this article we have only considered the political dimensions of the index of Civiliarchy.

Figure 2. Political Dimensions of the Index of Civiliarchy
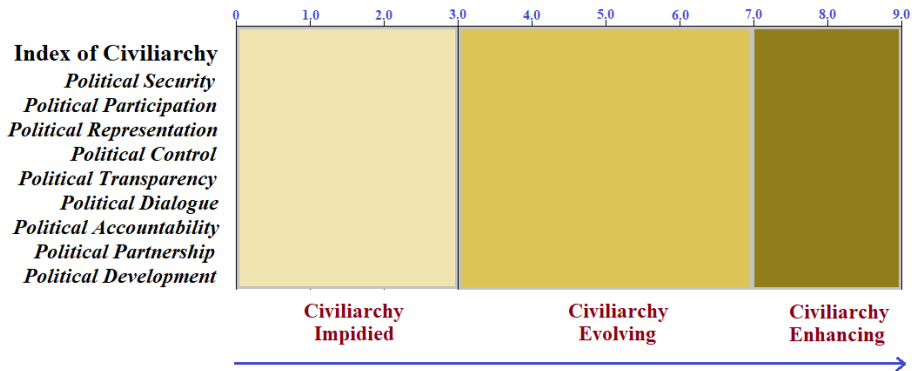
Figure 2 illustrates this using the political dimensions of the Civiliarchy Index as an example. But taking into account also the other dimensions of the Civiliarchy Index, it can be stated that the indicators and subindices of the Civiliarchy Index are ranked from 1 to 9, where 1 is the lowest level of the measured level of Civiliarchy, and 9 is the highest. For the final definition of Civiliarchy index levels, the following three sections are defined (see Figure 2):
- Impidied Civiliarchy (anti-civiliarchy and non-civiliarchy): 1 - 2.9 points;
- Evolving Civiliarchy: 3 - 6.9 points;
- Enhancing Civiliarchy: 7 - 9 points.

Political Dimensions of the Index of Civiliarchy of the EaP Countries from 2013 to 2023

Political Security

Definition. Political security refers to the condition in which a political system, its institutions, and the overall governance framework are stable, resilient, and able to maintain order, protect individuals' rights, and provide a sense of security for population, society and public administration. It encompasses the stability, legitimacy, and effectiveness of political institutions, as well as the fight against threats and risks that could undermine the functioning of the system. Political security can be inferred through political interests, political values, political threats, political order and development. This approach can only lead to a detailed description of individual areas of European political integration.

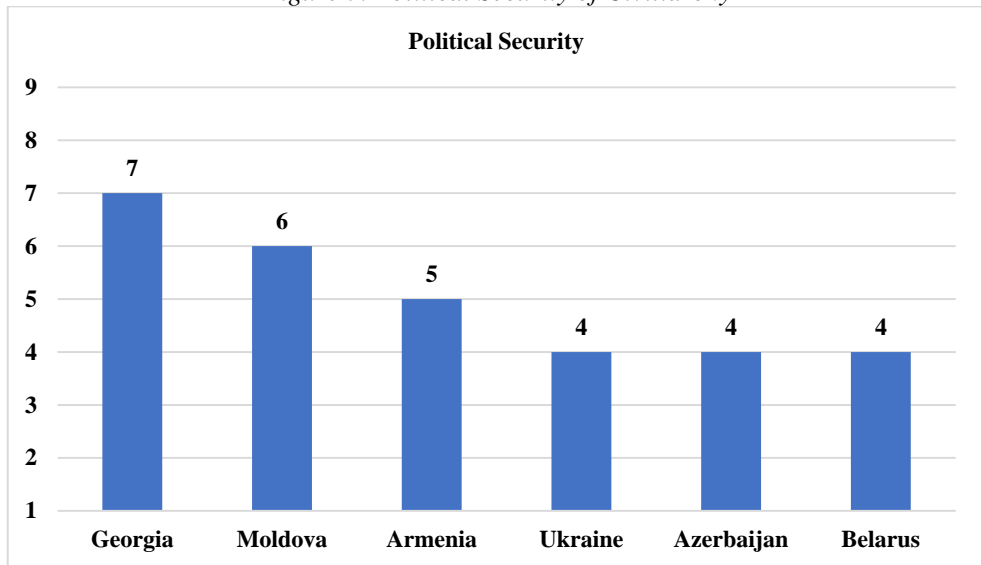*Figure 3. Political Security of Civiliarchy*

Figure 3 shows the ranking of the EaP countries from 2013 to 2023 by the dimension of political security of Civiliarchy, which is largely related to the various challenges of European integration and which the EaP countries face when interacting with other EU member states and various EU institutions (Santaniello and Barbieri 2024). From 2013 to 2023, there was a rapid development of social, economic, political, cultural areas in the study of security in the EaP countries. Scientists began to actively develop, review and rethink new dimensions of national security in the EU and the EaP countries, and in parallel with it, its varieties: constitutional, political, economic, informational, social, and so on. In most cases, the dimensions of political security of the Civiliarchy index are considered as an integral element of complex multi-stage security with its subtypes of foreign policy and domestic policy.

European integration has significantly changed the external and internal environment of the political systems of the EaP countries, necessitating a new look at numerous political phenomena, including political security. Since 2013, the traditional understanding of political security as protection from deliberate threats from countries or blocs of countries, which has existed for a long time, has lost its significance and requires a different interpretation with its broader functions, goals, with other methods and means, and other consequences. Before, during and after the Vilnius Eastern Partnership Summit in 2013, the main sources of the main threats and risks to European political integration became obvious, which went beyond the EaP countries and their allies. These already include: Russian hybrid interests and war, international and ethnopolitical conflicts, gaps in nation-building, corruption, polarization, various manifestations of the human factor in the sphere of governance, that is, incompetent officials and politicians, acute intra-political struggle among political parties, social groups and CSOs.

As the main events of European political integration in the EaP countries, as well as the integration policy of the EU, show, modern political security as a system for protecting the vital interests of the individual, CSOs and the state testify to its understanding in the traditional sense (Klimovich 2023). At the current stage of European political integration of the EaP countries, threats can also come from the development of a democratic political system and from an individual, and from CSOs, and from public authorities, as well as from state institutions themselves. In this context, European integration should promote the resilience of the political systems of those EaP countries whose political elites, public authorities, CSOs and other groups have effectively worked and are working for the resilience of their countries (Schramm 2024a, 2024b).

The EaP countries that have not been actively involved in the implementation of their roadmaps for European integration have led and continue to lead to a decline in the prestige of citizenship, manifestations of internal polarization, the initiators of which are often the public authorities of a number of countries (Azerbaijan, Belarus). In the case of Azerbaijan and Belarus, it can be concluded that they declare the same values and goals in official legal documents, but by their actions they sow hostility and conflict between nations, representatives of various political parties and groups, businesses, and between people whose incomes differ significantly. And all this is done for one purpose, to preserve the significance of their authoritarian power as the main social institution of political security.

In connection with the trends of Europeanization of political life and politicization of public life, the development of constructive/destructive and positive/negative economic, social, cultural and other processes in political systems, the role of the political elite and CSOs, capable of helping to eliminate certain challenges, is increasing. Therefore, in the structure of political security bodies, those scientific studies that are aimed at studying various phenomena within the country, developing measures against destructive processes that threaten European integration and the foundations of public authority and political order are of particular importance.

The development of theoretical and practical tasks of political security of the EaP countries, the analysis of the functions corresponding to it and its institutional design (government agencies, special services), the mechanism of security management, the preparation of the concept of comprehensive political security, forecasting and eliminating political dangers are becoming increasingly in demand.

Political Participation

Definition. Political participation refers to actions taken by citizens or groups of citizens with the aim of influencing public policy, the management of public affairs, or the choice of political leadership, leaders at any level of political power, local or national. Political participation is a voluntary activity through which members of a society participate in the selection of rulers and, directly or indirectly, in the formation of public policy. It can be permanent or episodic, using legal or illegal methods of power, organized or unorganized.

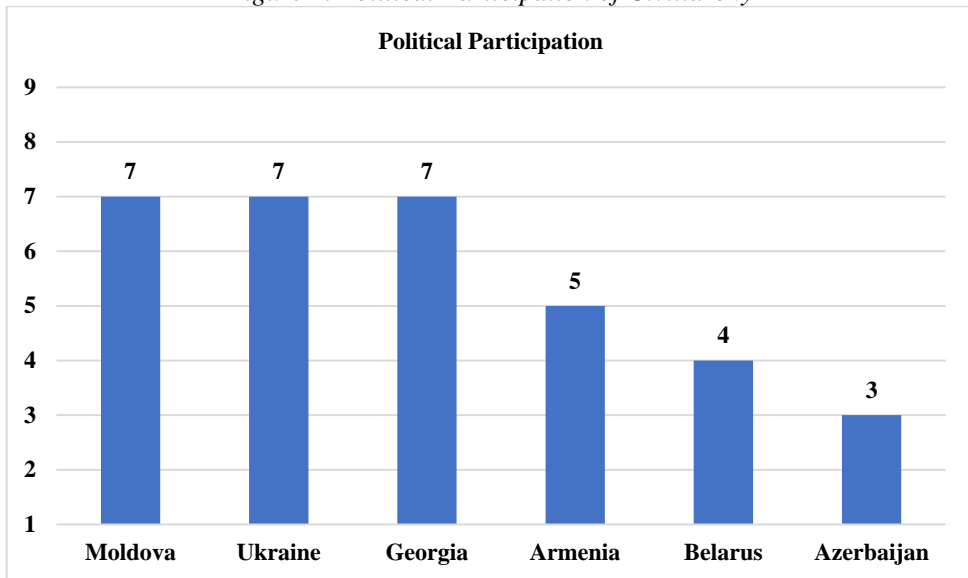*Figure 4. Political Participation of Civiliarchy*

Figure 4 shows the ranking of countries by the political participation dimension of the Civiliarchy Index, which requires a qualitative understanding of the sustainability of political development in the context of European integration, which encourages us to study the existing dynamic imbalance of political exchanges, the asymmetry of political relations in the communicative discourse through the prism of asymmetry and symmetry, stability and sustainability of the development of the EaP countries. Real needs to change the quality of integration processes and political participation actualize the tasks of studying the nature of interaction between government structures and CSOs, media and communications. Sustainable political development, increasing the social efficiency of public authorities necessitate an integrated approach to legitimizing political changes, which allows eliminating social and cultural gaps in the space of the EU integration policy in relation to the EaP countries (European Parliament 2024a, 2024b, 2024c).

The ranking of countries shows that Moldova, Ukraine and Georgia have implemented democratic mechanisms of political participation at various levels, which is due to the fact that these countries are going through a period of reforms related to the Europeanization of public relations (see Figure 4). A new type of interaction between the main actors of the political process is being formed, which implies the active involvement of CSOs in public policy. The reform of political life in Armenia gradually leads to the state losing its monopoly position in politics before the Second Karabakh War of 2020, but in post-war Armenia the situation has changed. The transformations taking place in Armenia create conditions for the development of civil society, real participation of NGOs in political activities, and the emergence of new forms of influence on public authorities. At the same time, there are a number of factors that hinder further deepening of European integration in Belarus and Azerbaijan

(see Figure 4): a deep crisis in all spheres of society, transformation of the state apparatus into a self-sufficient corporation focused on realizing its own interests, marginalization of a significant part of the population, lack of stable democratic traditions, etc. The current authoritarian circumstances in political life in Azerbaijan and Belarus make the problem under study relevant, especially during the presidential and parliamentary elections. Non-civiliarchic tendencies were dominant in the Azerbaijani presidential elections on October 9, 2013 and April 11, 2018, as well as in the parliamentary elections on November 1, 2015 and February 9, 2020. In Belarus, non-civiliarchic political participation was during the Belarusian presidential elections held on August 9, 2020, the results of which directly contradicted European values.

Political Representation

Definition. Political representation refers to the process and practice of elected political parties, leaders, social groups and movements acting on behalf of the interests of their electorate and part of the population for European political integration. Political representation is one of the most important elements defining the main characteristics of modern liberal democracy. It serves as a link between the ruling party and parliamentary parties, between political parties and the political system, between citizens and CSOs, allowing their voices and points of view to be heard and considered in the development and implementation of public policy.

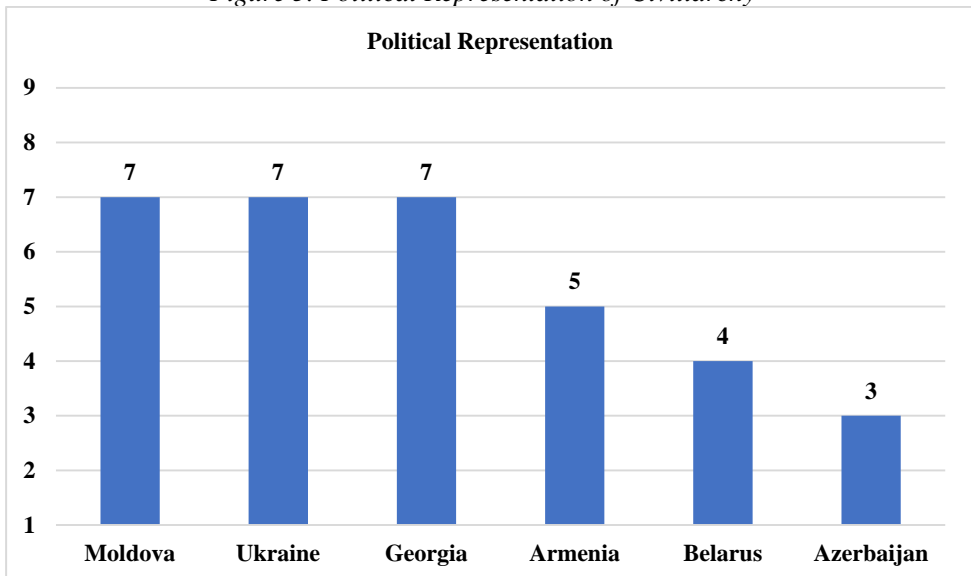*Figure 5. Political Representation of Civiliarchy*

Figure 5 shows that Moldova, Ukraine and Georgia are the leaders among the EaP countries in terms of political representation, while Azerbaijan ranks last. It is obvious that all EaP countries still have a lot to do to become civiliarchies and democratic public authorities, where direct participation of each citizen in all political decisions

would be possible. Direct democracy applies to a very limited range of decisions made through the direct participation of CSOs and active citizens. In this context, Moldova, Ukraine and Georgia have successfully reformed political representation, when CSOs and active citizens delegate their public powers. It is through political representation that public authorities and local self-government bodies are formed, and it is through political representation that citizens of Armenia are given the opportunity to transfer their demands into the sphere of political decision-making. The mechanism for implementing political representation is the electoral system and legislation, which include non-civiliarchic mechanisms in Azerbaijan and Belarus.

The task of identifying the most democratic form of political representation and civiliarchic mechanisms for its implementation at the current stage of European integration of the EaP countries is particularly relevant. Despite the deepening of democracy in Moldova, Ukraine, Georgia and Armenia, there is a simultaneous tendency for citizens to decrease their trust in the main institutions of civiliarchic democracies, including parliament and political parties. This is evidenced by the data of our study, according to which there is distrust not in the democratic institutions themselves, but in how they function.

Political Control

Definition. Political control refers to the bodies and persons exercising public authority powers to develop and implement decisions in various areas of European political integration. This may include the president, parliament, government, regional and local authorities, as well as CSOs. It includes the mechanisms and practices by which actors exercise control over political institutions, policies and results.

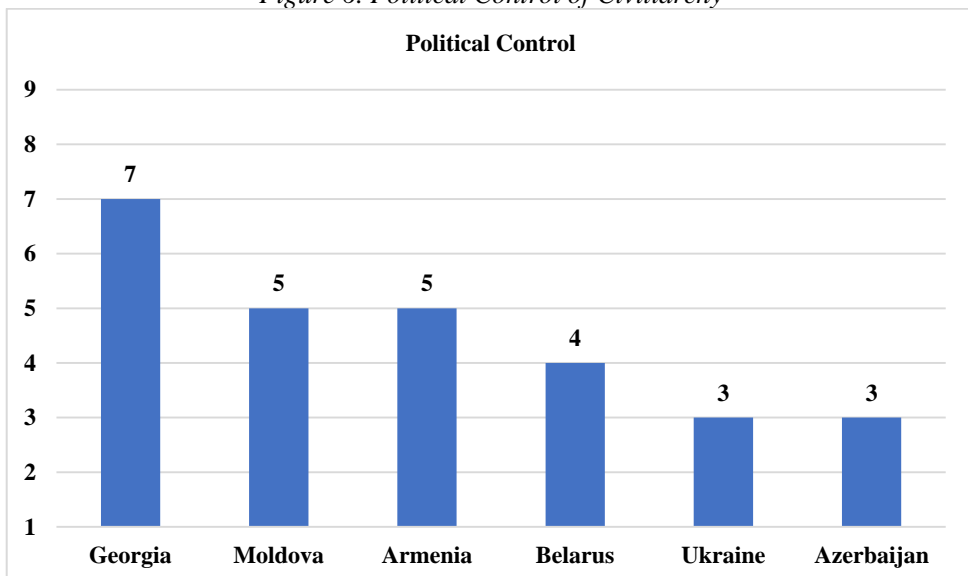*Figure 6. Political Control of Civiliarchy*

Figure 6 shows that Georgia is the leader among the EaP countries, represented by the government and the ruling party, exercising effective control over various aspects of public authority and local government. If we turn to the scale of corruption control in the EaP countries, it is customary to compare it with the level of corruption in the EU member states. Corruption damage in the EaP countries is particularly complex, since it stands out in the structure of property losses not only of public authorities, but also of other economic actors. At the same time, the level of corruption in Georgia, Armenia and Moldova is formed by territorial segments. Against this background, the state of regional economic security is determined by the specifics of the impact of corruption, typologized taking into account modern trends in public administration, business management, and public-private partnership in the EaP countries.

Thus, scientific ideas about anti-corruption control in the system of ensuring the security of European integration and modern management practice are in dynamics, which is manifested in individual gaps and contradictions that require theoretical and methodological understanding. Strategic approaches to ensuring the political security of actors through the system of anti-corruption control in the EaP countries require revision and updating, taking into account the achievements of European integration (European Parliament 2024a, 2024b, 2024c). Therefore, the study of the influence of control mechanisms on effective anti-corruption policy in Ukraine should be based on a holistic view not only of their nature, but also of development factors, including the conditions for the institutionalization of European criteria in the political and economic systems. In this context, the implementation of the developed European fundamental principles and recommendations for the prevention of corruption in the sphere of political and economic relations, consisting in ensuring managerial conditions for combating corruption as a factor in the security of the European integration of the EaP countries, is of civiliarchic importance. Their implementation in the public administration of the EaP countries will increase the effectiveness of preventive measures in the field of combating corruption. It is shown that the EU criteria that contribute to the allocation of special types of such control should not be territorial conditions, but principles that allow achieving openness and transparency of preventive anti-corruption measures. It is proposed to classify anti-corruption control in Azerbaijan and Belarus into internal and external according to the criterion of economic interest of the actor implementing verification activities, and to classify the actors of anti-corruption control themselves into conditionally independent and conditionally interested.

Political Transparency

Definition. Political transparency refers to the principle and practice of openness, accessibility in political processes, institutions and decision-making in the context of European integration. Political transparency and openness of public administration are necessary not only to increase respect and trust in public authorities, but also to ensure the resilience of both the public administration system and the Europeanization of the political system of the EaP countries. Openness and transparency of public administration are the institutional basis for the functioning of feedback mechanisms,

ongoing relations and interactions between civil society and government, as well as government accountability to civil society and citizens.

In terms of dynamically increasing the level of openness and transparency of the activities of government bodies among the EaP countries, Moldova and Ukraine are the leaders (see Figure 7), which is a qualitative sign of European political integration in the context of the concept of e-government.
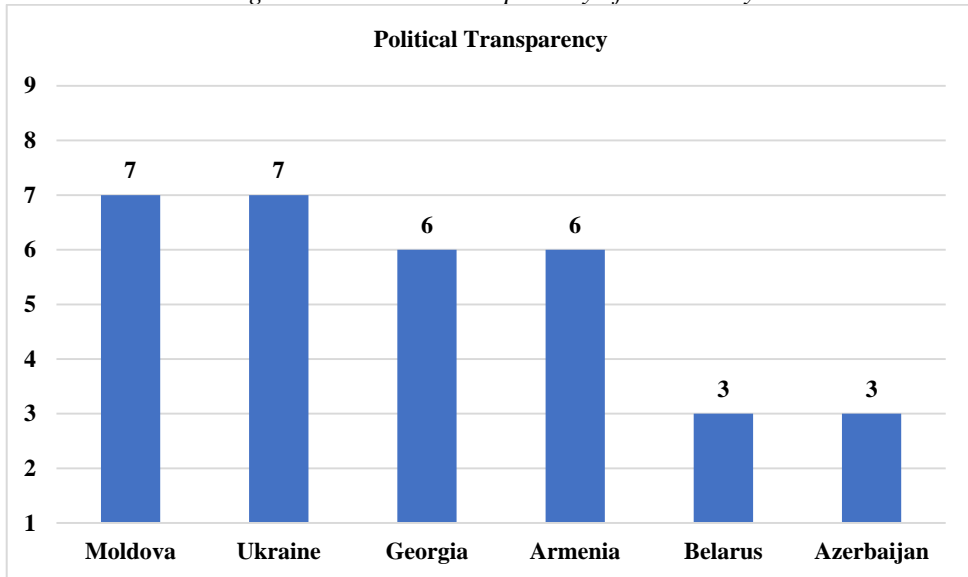
Figure 7. Political Transparency of Civiliarchy

Figure 7 shows the level of transparency of public authorities of the EaP countries in the context of European political integration, as well as the extent to which their actions become open, understandable and accessible to citizens. This means that the dynamics of political transformations of the EaP countries aimed at increasing the efficiency and legitimacy of power are impossible without the participation of CSOs, citizens and the population. The issues of accessibility and openness of public authorities of the EaP countries have always been and remain important for the European community (Jang 2023). The mechanism of transparent interaction between the EaP countries and the EU has been and remains important. In the European understanding, transparency in the activities of public authorities of the EaP countries is associated with maximizing the openness and accessibility of information flows regarding public decisions made, their validity and effectiveness.

Increasing the level of information openness of public authorities is associated with the European political integration of the EaP countries. The Europeanization of political processes and CSOs is very complex and contradictory. It is based on democratic legislation and the activities of political associations created democratically on the one hand, and on the other hand, on European traditions and values, which, unfortunately, are not always and slowly implemented in the EaP countries. For

example, the political associations of Azerbaijan and Belarus are subject to various influences of an authoritarian and undemocratic, and sometimes non-civiliarchic and illegitimate nature.

In modern conditions, with the assistance of the EU, new broad opportunities for effective interaction between public authorities and civil society are opening up in connection with the development of information and communication technologies in the EaP countries. With the help of which it is possible to significantly reduce the distance between public authorities and civil society, as well as establish feedback, make public policy as accessible as possible. But, unfortunately, despite the fact that certain work is being done in the direction of information development, the state bodies of Azerbaijan and Belarus are not transparent enough, they remain closed to control by civil society, and the society itself is poorly informed about the activities of public authorities. In Azerbaijan and Belarus, the development and adoption of legislation on information openness of government bodies has become protracted and ambiguous (Jonasson 2024). This situation does not meet the relevance of the problem of regulatory support for the right to information in these countries, nor the European standards of freedom of access to information, the obligations for the implementation of which these countries have undertaken.

The problem of legal support for information openness of government bodies and the mechanism for access to it by consumers is particularly relevant in the context of the administrative reform carried out in Azerbaijan and Belarus. In order to assess the effectiveness of government bodies in the EaP countries, accessible, reliable, and trustworthy information on the conditions and results of their activities is needed.

Political Dialogue

Definition. Political dialogue is above all the ability of public authorities to ensure constructive and pragmatic interaction. The forms of political dialogue are diverse: these are disputes, a wide exchange of opinions both in the audience and in the media; the purpose of the dialogue is to clarify the essence of phenomena, processes, points of view, to reach agreement on the issues under discussion, and most importantly, to carry out coordinated actions in the name of social cohesion and stabilization. Political dialogue is a determining condition for the development of a democratic political system, as it reflects the multi-party system of society.

The solution of the complex tasks of European integration that the EaP countries have faced since 2013 is impossible without an extensive social and civil dialogue between public authorities and CSOs, interest groups and active citizens. The effectiveness of government decisions, large-scale projects, and the success of virtually any significant social and political action depend on their support from CSOs. In order to be effective, current public policy must rely on public opinion and take into account the support of CSOs.

Figure 8. Political Dialogue of Civiliarchy

Political Dialogue

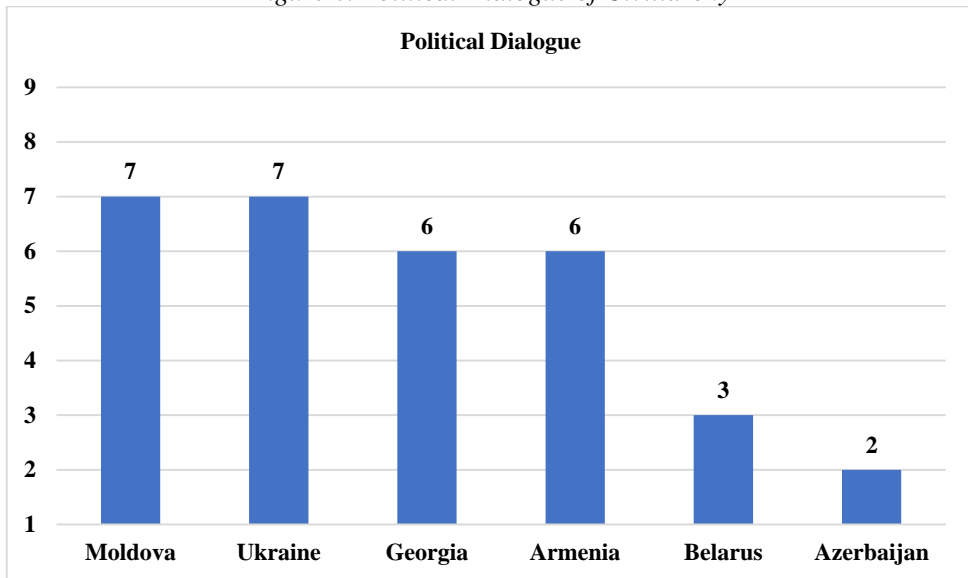| Moldova	Ukraine	Georgia	Armenia	Belarus	Azerbaijan
7	7	6	6	3	2

Figure 8 shows that among the EaP countries, Moldova, Ukraine, Georgia and Armenia have the best scores, as the long-term integration experience of these countries is considered very useful for the development of integration processes in the post-Soviet space. The EU supports the idea that in the EaP countries, political dialogue and public opinion should act as a means/channel of communication between CSOs and public authorities. It should be one of the effective instruments of civil society, with the help of which NGOs, trade unions, social movements and groups can promptly express their trust or distrust in public authorities and thus establish each time the measure of its legitimacy. At the same time, political dialogue and interaction of public opinion with public authorities is multifaceted. Public authorities themselves try not only to take public opinion into account, but also to shape the dialogue in the direction they need, also with the EaP Civil Society Forum (CSF). The reason for this may not necessarily be the interests of the political elite, but a more competent understanding of the current tasks of public policy. As is known, the competence of CSOs, as well as their ability to solve complex public problems, have specific limits in the EaP countries.

Important for our study are the successes and failures at different stages of the inclusion of civil society of the EaP countries in European integration, as well as the evolution of the institutionalization of EU relations with civil society at both the national and supranational levels (Council of the EU and the European Council 2024; Council of the EU 2022). As studies show, the participation of civil society of European countries in the integration of Azerbaijani and Belarusian CSOs was of a conflicting nature, since problems and contradictions arose on the path to creating and developing mechanisms for interaction between CSOs and EU institutions.

The study of the case of the mechanism of the dialogue of the EaP countries in principle seems to be especially relevant, since each of the six countries is one of the EU partner states. As a result of the dialogue, the trust in European institutions on the part of CSOs and the population gradually began to grow, while the ruling elites and new political forces often challenged the legitimacy of the existence of the permissive consensus, which the pro-EU elites had used since the beginning of the European construction of the EaP. It is characteristic that these two processes took place in the EaP countries simultaneously and were interdependent: on the one hand, critical sentiments towards the integration process began to appear in societies, and political parties, following their electorate, could not help but take this trend into account in building their political line, on the other hand, the political parties themselves ceased to treat the European project as a given and openly and publicly began to doubt its effectiveness where it did not correspond to their own interests and, thus, conveyed their doubts to society.

Despite the fact that after the Second Karabakh War of 2020 (Council of the EU 2022) and the Russian-Ukrainian War since 2022 (Müller and Slominski 2024), a number of studies have appeared on the party Euroscepticism of the EaP countries, conclusions about how critical these forces are of the EU are made mainly on the basis of individual bright statements, while, in our opinion, objective conclusions about the place of Euroscepticism in the policies of these parties can only be reached by finding a match between their anti-EU slogans and real actions. Due to the fact that in their domestic policies, these parties, being in opposition for a long time, could appeal to Euroscepticism in order to discredit the ruling political elite and pro-European political groups, it is of particular interest to study their international activities, where they did not have direct competition with the ruling political elite, which means that manifestations of Euroscepticism in it are independent and reflect the real goals and political line of the groups in question.
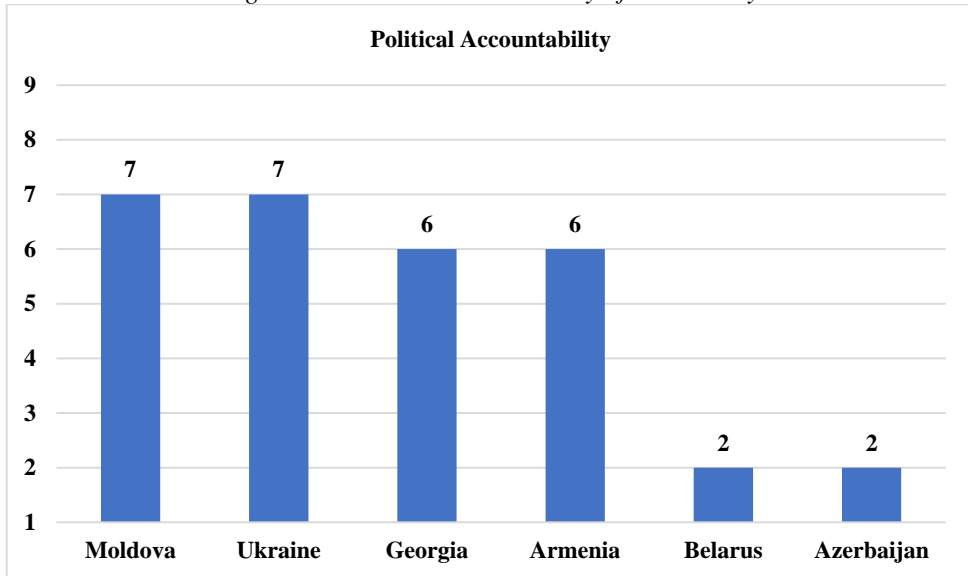
Political Accountability

Definition. Political accountability refers to the responsibility of individuals, groups or institutions in the political sphere to be held accountable for their actions, decisions and policies. Political accountability is one of the cornerstones of representative government. Its absence can effectively lead to authoritarianism, containing the risk of long-term instability. In an accountable political system in the EaP countries, the president, government and parliament should be accountable to voters, political parties, CSOs and citizens to the greatest possible extent. Voters and political actors should be able to influence the composition of the government, either by changing the coalition of governing parties or by removing from power a party that has failed to deliver on its responsibilities. In European political discourse, the rules and procedures necessary for accountability and good governance are inextricably linked to democratic legitimacy.

In the post-Soviet EaP countries there is and continues to be a problem of accountability, a balanced model of separation of public powers and ways of organizing public power in the context of European integration. During the confrontation between the president, government and parliament, a special Moldovan,

Ukrainian, Georgian and Armenian model of constitutionalism was born. In contrast, in Azerbaijan and Belarus, an authoritarian regime and strong presidential power have strengthened.

Figure 9. Political Accountability of Civiliarchy

Political accountability of the president and government to parliament in the EaP countries remains complex, despite the progress made in Moldova and Ukraine in this direction (see Figure 9). The institution of government accountability to parliament is developing in Moldova, Ukraine, Georgia and Armenia as an important component of the constitutional agreement, unlike Azerbaijan and Belarus, which is trying to become a link of accountability, according to which officials are responsible to ministers, who in turn are responsible to parliament, which is responsible to the people and civil society (see Figure 9). The constitutional practice of these four EaP countries recognizes individual and collective forms of government accountability, and is distinguished by the use of a wide range of ombudsmen.

Individual ministerial responsibility should be of a political nature as part of government and political accountability in the EaP countries, which in turn has two forms: 1) responsibility to parliament; 2) responsibility to the prime minister. It is assumed that the minister should be responsible for both personal mistakes, miscalculations, incompetence, and the actions of subordinates. According to our research in Moldova, Ukraine, Georgia and Armenia, the minister's responsibility to the prime minister and parliament is real, since the minister's incompetence becomes a reason for resignation. It is advantageous for the ruling party to publicly demonstrate this, thereby seeking to maintain the support of voters and CSOs. As for Azerbaijan and Belarus, the minister's responsibility to the president is more real than to parliament, since the minister's incompetence can be hidden for a long time, and it is

unprofitable for the president to demonstrate it due to the desire to maintain the support of voters. Therefore, resignations and dismissals due to incompetence have become a rare phenomenon in Azerbaijan and Belarus.

At the same time, the individual responsibility of a minister can in some sense replace the responsibility of the government as a whole, when guilt is officially recognized for a specific person, and not for the entire government, which will help to save the government from dissolution. At the same time, when a minister loses the confidence of parliament and CSOs, he or she becomes a burden for the government in Moldova, Ukraine, Georgia and Armenia. In these four EaP countries, the government has collective/command political responsibility to parliament through the following forms of control: vote of no confidence, questions and debates, opposition-initiated debates, standing committees, public hearings, etc.

Political Partnership

Definition. Political partnership is a process that requires compliance with certain conditions in European integration: 1) readiness of the ruling party to develop partnership relations with the parliamentary opposition; 2) readiness of the political elite to develop partnership relations with parliamentary and non-parliamentary political parties, CSOs, civil movements; 3) awareness by all political parties of their role as initiators and key players in various political processes; 4) the desire of citizens to defend their interests, as well as the ability to defend their own initiatives; 5) the formation and subsequent development of an effective partnership mechanism among political parties.

The main forms of political partnership can be: regular negotiations; mutual consultations; thematic round tables; discussions and open communications; multilateral agreements; participation of representatives of political parties and CSOs, who gained more than 3% in elections to representative bodies of power and other working bodies of departments and government; expert activities in the framework of joint work on the development of draft laws. In addition, political participation presupposes recognition, along with institutional support, of broad rights and freedoms of citizens of the EaP countries to increase their political participation, as well as free elections, the results of which determine (directly or indirectly) the composition of the government. At the same time, it is fundamentally important to take into account the following: specific attempts at democratic transformations from 2013 to 2023 have sufficient grounds to be considered not only as isolated intra-state phenomena, but also as a more general process of global scale that transcends the framework of the EaP countries. At the same time, the model of such a process itself, many of its patterns, the interactions and interrelations involved in it are essentially transnational in nature, that is, again, they go beyond the specific EaP countries (Council of the EU and the European Council 2024).

Figure 10. Political Partnership of Civiliarchy

Political Partnership

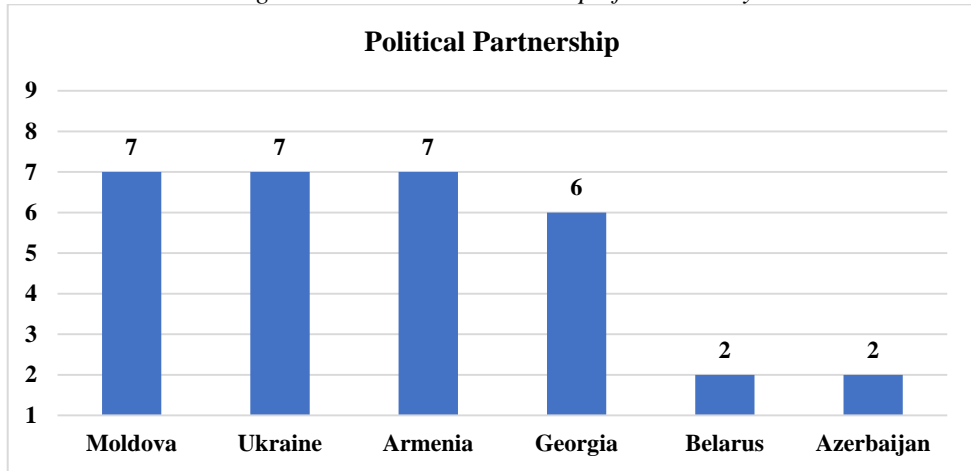| Country	Score
Moldova	7
Ukraine	7
Armenia	7
Georgia	6
Belarus	2
Azerbaijan	2

Figure 10 shows that among the EaP countries, Moldova, Ukraine and Armenia have the same scores, and Georgia is fourth in the ranking. One of such significant for the EaP countries in European integration is the formation of political partnership, since the partnership interaction of public authorities with diverse CSOs generates civiliarchic consequences for all actors. Political partnership in Moldova, Ukraine, Armenia and Georgia is in constant motion: it is being improved, developed; it arises both spontaneously, on an initiative basis, and as a result of social design; it can generate agreement between the parties or conflicts. In Moldova, Ukraine, Armenia and Georgia, unlike Azerbaijan and Belarus, an essential element of the partnership type of political relations is mutual trust between the public authorities and CSOs, which are simultaneously the basis, a necessary condition for political partnership and its civiliarchic result. The basis for the development of civiliarchic partnership between public authorities and CSOs in the EaP countries is the relationship of mutual political trust and responsibility (Council of the EU and the European Council 2024). In this sense, we can link the relationship of political trust between citizens and public authorities, between CSOs and public authorities with the most important foundations of constitutionalism in the EaP countries, and the absence of such trust can be considered non-civiliarchic or anti-civiliarchic, that is, extremely dangerous for the basic foundations of the rule of law, democracy, and human rights.

Political partnership in the EaP countries is directly related to many constitutional principles (democracy; separation of powers; direct and representative democracy; protection of human and civil rights and freedoms; social nature of public authority; creation of conditions for mutual trust between public authority and CSOs) and is one of the mechanisms for their civiliarchic implementation.

The constitutions of the EaP countries enshrine the modern principles of democratic and legal statehood, political diversity, the priority of human rights and the possibility of their protection, the direct effect of the Constitution, etc. At the same time, the main guarantee of the reality of these principles is the construction of systems of public authorities based on the separation of powers together with the inherent civiliarchic

mechanism of checks and balances. However, both the practice of public life and our comparative analysis show that the named principles do not sufficiently predetermine the civiliarchic activity of public authorities. In this sense, the goal of European political integration of the EaP countries is to promote and support changes and clarifications of the most important elements of the civiliarchic model of separation of public powers. For full membership of the EaP countries in the EU, the model of separation of public powers established by the constitution of these countries, development and functioning in accordance with the democratic mechanisms of the EU is of key importance.

Political Development

Definition. Political development is a process of changes in political systems over time leading to the improvement and advancement of governance, political institutions, policies and practices to better meet the needs and aspirations of societies. In this context an effective development policy must take into account the non-linear nature of social and political development in the EaP. it is necessary to develop a unified social development strategy, including infrastructure projects, plans for regional and local development, as well as initiatives from below. Among them: the intellectual potential and various social and technological innovations, the development and use of situational analysis and forecast centers for making managerial and political decisions, the use of numerous public and group initiatives from below, the social and cultural diversity of the regions of the EaP countries, the ability of most of their citizens to mobilize and concentration of efforts in the face of serious external threats, the potential for the development of small and medium-sized businesses in the high-tech sectors of the economy of the EaP countries, the reduction of bureaucratic pressure and the refusal to focus on purely formal indicators in science, education and other areas.

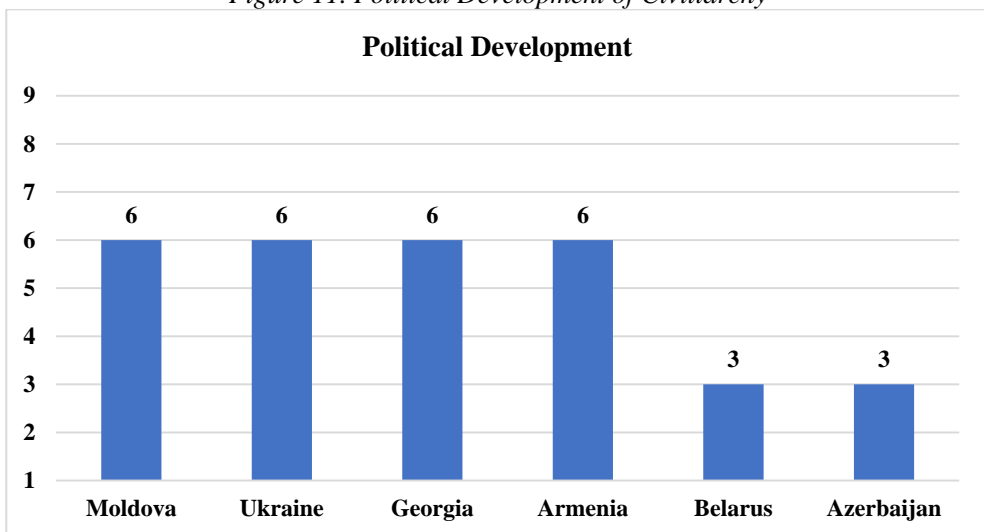*Figure 11. Political Development of Civiliarchy*

Figure 11 shows that among the EaP countries, Moldova, Ukraine, Georgia and Armenia have the same scores. The EaP countries have their own agendas for European integration as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. European resilient integration has become evidence that the concept of sustainable development has gained the status of a key and system-forming theory of global development in the 21st century. The expansion of the range of challenges and threats that the EaP countries have faced in the context of European integration since 2013 has determined the appropriateness of interpreting sustainable development as requiring the simultaneous solution of political, social, economic and environmental problems at the national and European levels. Thus, the EaP countries are faced with the urgent task of finding additional sources and innovative approaches to financing sustainable development and ensuring European resilient integration

The main characteristics and trends in the development of the political system of the EaP countries in the context of European integration reflect the specifics of transformation processes, representing a complex set of qualitative changes in the structure, functioning and methods of interaction of the political system with the regional environment. The institutions and value orientations of the EU simultaneously act in relation to the EaP countries and to each other both as a condition for cooperation and as a result of integration priorities. In the political transformation of the EaP countries, a number of problems were encountered that are typical for transition countries (high social costs of transformation, oligarchic form of ownership, spread of corruption, instability of democratic institutions). The transformation of the political system of the post-Soviet EaP countries took place in difficult geopolitical and regional conditions, since the traditional components of the value system, the established types of political consciousness, and the dominant strategies of political behavior to a certain extent prevented the assimilation of democratic norms and the rooting of democratic institutions. Therefore, democratic transformations in the EaP countries, as in most transition countries, are accompanied by value delegitimization of European political innovations.

The dangerous geopolitical environment and the limited social and economic base for the transformation of the political system of the EaP countries at the regional level determine the instability of democratic institutions and the high level of inversion of political processes in Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia and Armenia, which leads to the delegitimization of public authority. The success of political transformation is indicated by the depth of the multi-level integration process aimed at increasing the legitimacy and consolidation of society. The sustainability of the EaP societies depends both on the quality of the value system and on overcoming the problems associated with the formation of political resilience (limited social capital, deficit of democratic actors, misalignment of value priorities of groups of different statuses, gaps in political culture and consciousness, need and orientation towards a strong leader). Ignoring the main features, structure and mechanisms of political legitimacy on the part of the EU not only entails the emergence of various kinds of institutional distortions, but also generally affects the dysfunctionality of the result of transformation and European integration.

Political Dimension of the Index of Civiliarchy

According to the methodology, the level of political dimension of the EaP civiliarchy index depends on the following 9 indicators listed above: security, participation, representation, control, transparency, dialogue, accountability, partnership, development. Comparative analysis of these interrelated indicators in the space of common neighborhood of the EaP countries as key foreign policy players of European political integration, their integration proximity to the countries of common neighborhood. The EU foreign policy resources are considered as a kind of starting point for the strategy of European integration of the EaP countries, and foreign policy is considered as a sphere of resilience, which is directed outward with the aim of influencing the EaP countries and actors of European integration to achieve interests, goals and disseminate European values.

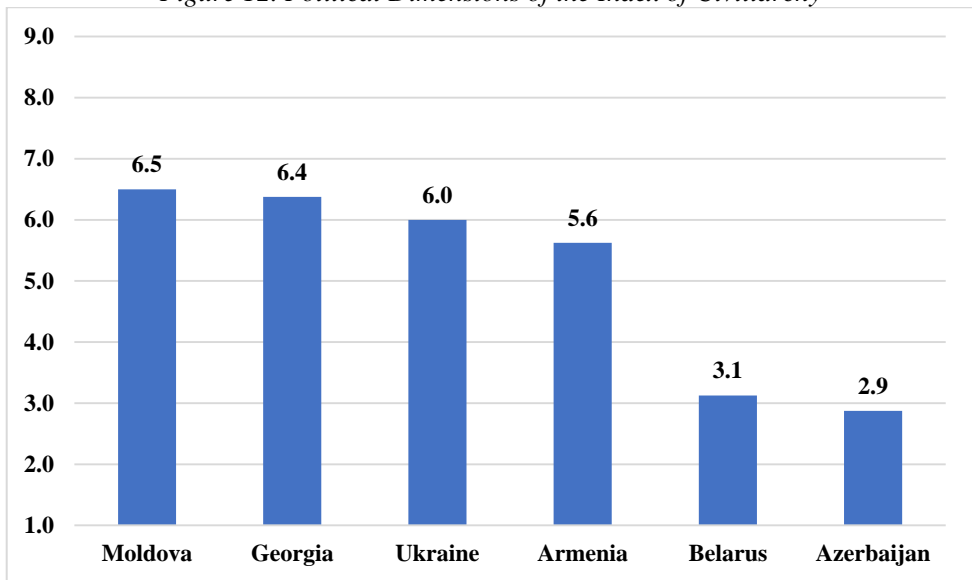*Figure 12. Political Dimensions of the Index of Civiliarchy*

Figure 12 shows the ranking of the EaP countries according to the summarized Civiliarchy Index data for the period from 2013 to 2023. According to these data, Moldova, Georgia, Ukraine and Armenia, unlike Azerbaijan and Belarus, have civiliarchic prerequisites for further deepening of European political integration. We associate these data with the events that took place after 2013, which became the boiling point of Europeanization, as well as the point of confrontation between the EU and Russia over the future membership of the EaP countries. Among the events of 2013 were, among others, the Vilnius Summit of the EaP, the challenges of signing the Association Agreement with the EU by Georgia and Moldova, and the non-signing of Ukraine and Armenia. Due to the armed confrontation and conflict in the East of Ukraine with Russia, Ukraine was able to sign the AA later, and Armenia began new

negotiations on revising the AA with the EU, which led to the Armenia-EU Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement (CEPA), which was signed on November 24, 2017.

The EU became an external factor for Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine, which had a decisive influence on the formation of a common neighbourhood from six post-Soviet countries (Rogov 2013). At the same time, Azerbaijan and Belarus were not fully united within the framework of a single institutional scheme created by the EU, due to consolidated authoritarianism, domestic political instability and/or an unfinished process of dependence on Russia, and in the case of Azerbaijan, also an alliance with Türkiye.

By the end of 2013, the EU had already realized the competitive nature of its relations in the common neighborhood, as the EU's resource potential began to increasingly collide with Russia's resources. Russia and the EU, despite the declared differences in the methods of implementing foreign policy, have created various cooperation formats for states along their borders, that is, the broadest possible in terms of the composition of participants and the range of issues under consideration, which gradually began to have a rigid character, violating the previously established general framework for interaction. Such formats, created for the purpose of maintaining contacts with their neighbors and involving them in more active bilateral relations, include the CIS and the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP).

In the European political integration of the EaP countries, there is a discrepancy between the existing institutional characteristics of their political systems and values, which hinders democratization. The gap is the result of the reproduction of the mobilization model of development by the political system of the EaP countries. In this regard, new tasks of political research and determination of the measurement of the Civiliarchy index are becoming relevant, which contribute to overcoming destructive anomic phenomena and forming value foundations of political changes that ensure sustainable social and political development of the EaP countries. Therefore, the relevance of this study is determined by the following factors: firstly, the need for in-depth understanding of political phenomena in unity with social and cultural processes of European integration underlying social, political and cultural development of the society of the EaP countries; secondly, the need for a detailed analysis of the mechanisms of sustainability of political development at the regional level in the context of European integration and transit; thirdly, strengthening the role of CSOs to ensure effective political governance in the context of civililiarchic transformation. There is a need for scientific knowledge reflecting, on the one hand, the essence of social and political dimensions of European integration of the EaP countries, and on the other hand, the formation of new management tools and technologies of European integration based on modern methods that affect the sustainability of political development of the EaP countries; fourthly, the need to overcome social and cultural faults between the public and CSOs in the perception of the vector of European political transformations; the need to develop European civic culture.

Civiliarchic transition, institutionalization of democratic rules and procedures in the post-Soviet EaP countries, which entailed changes in political culture and behavior of citizens, have exacerbated the need to study the patterns of interrelation of institutional

and non-institutional factors that influence the resilience of the political systems of the EaP countries. For theoretical understanding of the mutually laid foundations for the study of factors and mechanisms of formation, variability and conditions of functionality of civiliarchic changes in European integration. These studies allow us to significantly expand the factual and analytical base of the article, presenting governance in the integrity of European political integration, analyzing the political space in the EaP countries, comparing them with other spheres of European public life.

Figure 13. Three levels of political dimensions of the Civiliarchy Index: Impidied Civiliarchy, Evolving Civiliarchy, Enhancing Civiliarchy
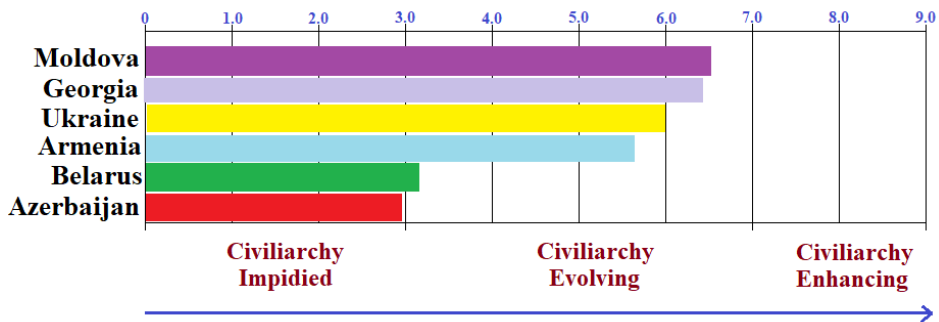
Figure 13 shows that the Civiliarchy Index uses a nine-point scale from 1 to 9 to rank the Civiliarchy levels of the EaP countries, which was explained above. From Figure 13 it is also clear that Moldova, Georgia, Ukraine and Armenia have a level of Evolving Civiliarchy, while Azerbaijan has a level of Impidied Civiliarchy. In this sense, it is important to note that all EaP countries still have much to do to develop civiliarchy and deepen European political integration. Based on the analysis of support to governments and parliaments, social groups and CSOs in the European political integration of the EaP countries, the ruling parties of these countries play an important role in the integration processes, helping to ensure the efficient and effective use of public resources.

Linking European political integration with the EaP countries' priorities for civiliarchy, democratic needs and human rights can enhance its impact on poverty reduction and inclusive growth. Based on these principles, the EU intends to strengthen its support to the EaP countries' efforts to strengthen domestic systems of political accountability, enhancing the role of CSOs in anti-corruption policies, alongside parliaments, high political partnership institutions, public budget oversight agencies and social media. The EU will support the efforts of EaP CSOs to effectively participate in these systems in the long term, including at the local level, where a wealth of diverse and innovative approaches is emerging in the field of political accountability, including through the use of new technologies.

Conclusion and discussion

In the EaP countries, one of the most important development problems is maintaining the necessary level of political stability of democratic institutions to organize their effective activities (Aleksanyan 2018b). The problems of the formation of civiliarchic democracy, for all their specifics, are not unique, and therefore may have solutions similar to the experience of other states. The logic of the post-Soviet development of the EaP countries and other countries testifies to a single set of tasks for implementing the principles of institutional democracy. Of course, this does not lead to the conclusion about the possibility of live broadcasting of European analogues, but attention to them is of particular interest, since it demonstrates different approaches to solving the problems of democratic transition, and from the point of view of the results of democracy consolidation achieved so far, it can serve as a description of possible development prospects democratic institutions of power in the EaP countries.

The formation of a new system of political relations in the EaP countries has a number of features that are not sufficient to determine the qualities of the previous era. Studying the positive and negative experience of democratic transition and subsequent consolidation of social democracy in the countries of the region is of interest from the point of view of developing new approaches to studying the problems of the transition period. The process of formation of the institutional structure of a democratic regime in these states attracts attention by the variability of forms and manifestations. The study of national models of transition to democracy raises a very important question about the adequacy of the choice of ways to consolidate democracy, when there is a natural comparison of the values of the entire civilization and the selection by nations and their public of its achievements. Based on the assumption that the more developed a country is in social and economic terms, the less the polarization of society in it, the more grounds there are for putting forward goals that are revolutionary in content and achieving them by evolutionary methods, the Armenian, Georgian and Moldovan experience attracts special attention. The transition in these countries, denounced in various forms in outward expression, led to a single result of the breakdown of the totalitarian system of political rule.

A significant research problem is the uncertainty of the results of the democratic process, which involves different social and political forces with different goals, interests and capabilities. The Georgian national model of transition is interesting not only for the outward manifestations of the dialogue of political elites (Dzebisashvili 2024), but also makes it possible to consider the problem of linearity of political processes at an empirical level, not so much in the framework of the theory of modernization, but in the context of correlating the processes of liberalization and democratization (Lacher and Wamsley 2023). In addition, the choice of study countries is associated with problems of stability and efficiency of the state entities themselves in the conditions of not only political, but also social and economic transformation, and here, the negative experience of the Armenian in trying to maintain the unity of the country with a high level of development and activity of political actors, generates interest to the personal side of democratic transition. First of all, the role of political elites is important.

The process of European integration, which has been changing the political, economic and social image of Europe since the second half of the 1990s, is gaining momentum. The prospects for successful integration of the EaP countries are largely determined by the level of their political development, including the stability and adequacy of democratic institutions in the internal situation. The European direction has always been one of the priorities of the foreign policy of these countries. Although after 2020, the attention to European political processes in Azerbaijan and Belarus has significantly weakened and is on the decline, both political and economic interest in the countries of the region, which in turn requires an understanding and objective perception of the ongoing processes. At present, a decade after the beginning of the transition, it is relevant to identify and evaluate the preliminary results of democratic transition, not so much from the standpoint of the prospects of the process, but from the standpoint of its results.

The history of the political development of the EaP countries in the post-Soviet period indicates that the establishment of the principles of civiliarchic democracy in the political life of society is associated with the effectiveness of the state and its institutions. In general, the effectiveness of the state is the most important criterion for the consolidation of democracy, while the absence of a strong state, in turn, can lead to the discrediting of democracy (Aleksanyan 2019; 2017). Determining the effectiveness of the state is possible according to various criteria, nevertheless, it seems to us that in the political sphere, the institutional approach can serve as such a tool for changing the effectiveness of the state. Since the study of the democratization of political institutions makes it possible to identify a number of country and historical features, to determine further prospects for the political development of the states under consideration.

A comparative analysis of democratic transitions in the countries under study makes it possible to single out several main qualitative characteristics of civiliarchic democratization at the subregional level. All countries are characterized by differences in the pace of transformation of the highest bodies of state power and party systems. Power institutions have gone through the path of transformation much faster than political parties. Here, the direct dependence of public authorities to effectively manage political processes on the adequacy of the perception of democratic norms by political actors is revealed. Formal consolidation of the principles of institutional democracy in the constitutions, without their real development by political actors, is completely insufficient to define new political regimes in the post-Soviet countries as institutionalized democracies.

The lag in the transformation of party systems gives rise to the danger of destabilization of government institutions and the establishment of populist regimes, which is not excluded for any of the countries under consideration. One of the essential characteristics of the transit of the EaP countries is to overcome the logic of revolutionary development. Indeed, in the EaP countries, the revolutionary political processes of the beginning of institutional democratization were denounced in the form of broad democratic movements, the demands of which the authorities do not fulfill, or were forced to fulfill. Here we are dealing with a more multifaceted phenomenon than revolution. A broad transitological interpretation of the political phenomena of the last

decade in the states under study is more adequate to the realities of post-socialism, given the uncertainty of their final result.

The identification of regional trends and factors of influence and country-specific features of the process of institutional democratization allows us to assert that external factors had a decisive influence at the initial stage of democratization, which resulted in the overthrow of the totalitarian regime of the USSR, and at the stage of consolidation of democracy, internal trends acquire paramount importance. Significant mutual influence of national models of transition, however, can be traced at the regional level. If democratization is viewed as a global phenomenon caused by corresponding large-scale causes, then the choice of model: revolution or transition is associated exclusively with internal development trends, and, to a lesser extent, with the influence of neighbors (Jang 2023).

Determining the adequacy of the statutory normative and legal requirements for democratic institutions of power, the post-Soviet political reality required not only a comprehensive study of the legislative acts themselves, but also an analysis of the transformation of the legal system of the countries under consideration. The main attention was drawn to the problems of implementing democratic procedures in the activities of political institutions. Despite the fact that in 4 countries the political elites strive to comply with formally democratic rules and procedures, in our opinion, the legislation of Armenia, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine still, like the legal system, suffers from.

Conflict of interests
The authors declare no ethical issues or conflicts of interest in this research.

Ethical standards
The authors affirm this research did not involve human subjects.

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