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Comparative Review of Socio Economic Levels in Balkan Countries

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Abstract

The paper analyses the state of Balkan Countries' socio economic levels and their structures based on development indicators. The main objective of the research is to identify the main differences between the Balkan countries' and relate them to the differences existing in the overall. The socio-economic performance of Balkan Countries have been discussed elaborately making a comparison between them. The general aim of research is to determine whether differences in socio-economic levels in Balkan countries between 2000 and 2017. This region is a developing countries' geography. Also a comprehensive research encompassing of Balkan Countries is still lacking. It is important to determine the socio-economic status of this region in which political developments and changes have been bring out in the recent decades. The research included in current study is based on secondary data analysis. Indicators from economy, population, health, environment gender, tourism, etc. were determined in the base of social and economic status. Research data were obtained from DataBank of World Bank. As a result of this research, although they are in same region and have similar conditions, main differences on socio-economic situations were found. Reducing socioeconomic inequalities depends upon speeding up structural reforms in Balkan Countries. The results obtained from this research can be used as a source for planning the structural reforms (if needed).¹

Keywords: Balkan Countries, Socio-Economic Levels, Comparison.

1. Introduction

While there is a huge literature studies the effect of socio economic levels on development among worldwide countries, there are less comparative studies related to Balkan countries. Furthermore, while much interest to Europe, there is a knowledge gap in literature among Balkan's region. Addressing this gap, this research may undertake the differences among Balkan countries in some development indicators.

The Balkan Peninsula has a multicultural geography where different races live and various languages are spoken. In fact, these differences create a diversity as an abundance and cultural richness. "The Balkan region constitutes today an inseparable part of the under formation 'new' European space" (Demetropoulou, 2002:87).

Throughout the last decade, although many studies emerged about the impact of the socio-economic levels in European countries, Balkan region's researches are limited. This region is a developing countries' geography. The Balkan Peninsula has changing and transforming structure in politics, economics and social. Due to this structure; differences between Balkan

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Countries are raised. It is important to determine the socio-economic status of this region in which political developments and changes have been brought out in the recent decades. The paper analyses the state of Balkan Countries' basic socio-economic levels based on development indicators. The main objective of the research is to identify the differences between the Balkan countries'. In this study, comparison between Balkan countries tried to be done according to some of their basic socio-economic indicators, because a comprehensive research encompassing of Balkan Countries is still lacking.

An analysis of different development levels eradication requires examining the differences in socio-economic levels among countries. The research seeks to contribute to find out the status of Balkan Countries by undertaking a systematic assessment of the development levels, looking at the levels of socio-economic indicators. By focusing on development levels, this research also contributes towards filling this gap.

1.1. Why Focus on Socio-Economic Differences?

By including the differences and inequalities on Balkan country indicators, the research covered by attention to many important dimensions to justify the use "socio-economic" in the title. In addition, the focus of the research is the development level comparison of social and economic level among Balkan countries. Development remains one of the most important global targets facing humanity. Extending "development in all its forms everywhere" while at socioeconomic levels is a long-standing goal, rearticulated as the first United Nations Sustainable Development Goal. As differs from the other researches, The study focused on both economic and social indicators of development on Balkan countries as development has both social and economic dimensions.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

The research is focused to determine differences in socio-economic status in Balkan countries between 2000 and 2017. The research included in current study is based on secondary data analysis. Indicators from economy, population, education, health, environment etc. were determined in the base of social and economic status.

2.1 Methodology

In this study, the subject examined by using "Exploratory Research" method has been discussed with all aspects. This study is a compilation of information related to the subject and scanning of statistical data. Research data were obtained from DataBank of World Bank and The World Development Indicators(WDI). The World Development Indicators is the World Bank's premier compilation of cross-country comparable data on development.

The research includes a current study based on secondary data analysis. Secondary data is data that was originally obtained for another purpose of the research that is currently use it, and they are to be found already organised in a certain form. Secondary data can be either internal or external (Tapescu, 2015:379). There are various steps when using secondary data for research: firstly, the need of data must be identified; secondly, data sources must be searched; thirdly, data must be collected; fourthly, the need of additional data must be identified (Ctoiu et al., 2009).

The paper based on external secondary data obtained from DataBank of World Bank and The World Development Indicators(WDI). Data Bank is the statistical office of the World Bank, whose mission is to provide of high quality statistics on World and to provide statistics at worldwide level that will enable comparisons between countries and regions. Data Bank is an analysis and visualisation tool that contains collections of time series data on a variety of topics. World Development Indicators (WDI) is the primary World Bank collection of development indicators, compiled from officially recognized international sources. It presents the most current and accurate global development data available, and includes national, regional and global estimates.

2.2. Limitation

This study is further limited by Balkan Countries and datas about soscio-economic conditions. The study paper examines Balkan countries for 2000-2017 time period using a comparable data set. The socio-economic performance of Balkan Countries have been discussed elaborately making a comparison between them.

2.3. Theoretical Framework

In recent years, studies on the development performance difference between countries and regions have attracted great interest for the researchers. There are three main approaches to the analysis of the performance of countries in the literature (Deliktaş and Balçılar, 2005: 8). The first and most common is the approach to income level or GDP growth. This indicator is the representative variable of living standard in the country. The second approach is the Measurement of the inequality

in the global distribution of income. The third approach is to assess efficiency performances and multi-factor productivity measures. These approaches are mostly used in economic comparison of countries. In addition, studies which include comparisons between countries in terms of social aspects are also carried out from researchers. Some of them is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Cross-Country Comparison Researches In Literature

Author/s	Year	Countries	Data Set Period
Färe and others	1994	OECD countries	1979-1988
Vehid	2000	15 EU Countries and Turkey	1998
Güran ve Cingi	2002	55 Countries	1995
Mackenbach and others	2003	Finland, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, England and Italy	1981–1985, 1991–1995
Deliktaş and others	2005	15 EU Countries and Turkey	1980-2002
Kök and Deliktaş	2004	25 developing country and 22 OECD country	1991-2002
Pires and Garcia	2004	75 countries	1950-2000
Deliktaş and Balcılar	2005	25 Transition Economies	1991-2000
Güran and Tosun	2005	OECD countries	1951-2003
Kunst and others	2005	10 European Countries	1980-1990
Gwatkin and others	2007	56 Developing Countries	1992-2003
Bambra and Eikoma	2008	23 European Countries	2002-2004
Karabulut and others,	2008	EU Countries and Turkey	2001-2005
Demiray Erol E.	2013	EU Countries and Turkey	2009-2011
Daştan and Çalmaşur	2014	EU Countries and Candidates of EU	1995-2012
Tunç, Ertuna	2015	Balkan Countries and Turkey	1980-2013
Asadullah and Savoia	2018	89 Developing Economies	1990-2013

3. General Overview of Balkan Countries

This section of the research provides an overview on the Balkan Countries. The word "Balkan" is Turkish and means "forest and mountainous area". The peninsula is dominated by mountain type of landform. The name "Balkans" which was established with the plural suffix of the Turkish, has been used with the meaning of family, height, nation, community (Özey, 2016: 3). The mountains, which divide Bulgaria from the middle in the east-west line, and located to the north of the peninsula, are also called the Balkans. The name of the Balkan mountains was given to the peninsula in time (Todorova, 2003: 116) The term Balkan peninsula was first used by German geographer Johann August Zeune in 1808. The term was widely used in 1893 after the criticism of the geographer Theobald Fischer.

The name Balkan refers to the mountainous structure and geographical location of the region, but over time it began to use to define new states. In the first quarter of the 19th century and the first quarter of the 20th century, while the political and ethnic divergence of the region was mentioned, it was named as the "Balkanization". (Arısoy, 2013: 83)

Balkan Peninsula is bordered in the north by Hungary, in the northwest by Italy, in the northeast by Moldova and Ukraine, and in the south by Greece and Turkey or Mediterranean. The Balkans are also bordered by the the Black Sea in the east, Adriatic Sea in the west, and the Ionian Sea in the southwest.



Source: Encyclopædia Britannica, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Balkans/images-videos/An-introduction-to-the-Balkan-Peninsula/18983/media/50325/62181>, Retrieved date: 05.11.2018.

The Balkans are characterized as Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, and Slovenia—with all or part of each of these countries located in the peninsula. A small portion of Turkey are also located within Balkan Peninsula.

In this section, brief information about general situation of the Balkan countries such as the borders, economic structures and sources are given.

*Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia Herzegovina, Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro became independent as a result of the dissolution of Yugoslavia. Slovenia is bordered in the east by Italy, by Austria in the north, by Hungary in the northeastern, by Croatia in the southeast. It has an agriculture-based economy. The main agricultural products are grains, potatoes and various fruits. Significant sources of income include forestry, livestock and winter sports tourism. There are various mineral resources, especially coal and mercury. In the field of industry, metallurgy and weaving have an important place (Yiğit, 2015).

*Croatia is located to the northwest of the Balkan Peninsula. Slovenia draws its borders in the northwest, Hungary in the north, Bosnia and Herzegovina in the south, the Adriatic sea in the west and Serbia in the northeast. The economy of the country is based on agriculture and animal husbandry until the Second World War. The post-war industry develops rapidly and oil operated. Coal and bauxite sources are available. The major sources of income are ship transport and tourism (Yiğit, 2015).

*Bosnia Herzegovina borders by Serbia and Montenegro in the east and southeast, and by Croatia in the north and west. The economy is based on agriculture. Mainly agricultural products cereals and potatoes, vegetables, sugar beet, flax and tobacco are grown. Forestry and sheep breeding has an important place in the economy. In Bosnia fruit growing, and in Herzegovina viniculture developed. Coal, iron, copper, manganese, lead, mercury and silver are mining in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Lumber, iron and steel, tobacco, leather and sugar are important in industrial products (Yiğit, 2015).

*Serbia borders by Romania in the northeast, by Bulgaria in the east, by Macedonia in the south, by Montenegro in the southwest, by Bosnia and Herzegovina in the west, by Croatia in the northwest and by Hungary in the north. Serbia has an agriculture-based economy. In Serbia, approximately 22% of the people are engaged in agriculture. Major agricultural and livestock products; barley, wheat, corn, oats, potatoes, rye, tobacco, sunflower, sugar beet, hemp fiber, prune, meat and

wool. Serbia has various mineral resources. Major industrial areas are steel, forestry products, cement and textiles. Tourism has an important place in the national economy. Road and rail transport is well developed(Yiğit, 2015).

*Montenegro borders by Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia in the west, by Albania in the southeast, by Kosovo in the northeast and by Serbia in the north. Montenegro's natural resources; bauxite, coal mines and hydroelectric energy. Cereals, oilseeds and legumes are grown in agriculture. There are also vineyards and orchards(Sarisaçlı, 2011).

* Kosovo borders by Montenegro in the west, by Serbia in the north and east, by Macedonia in the southeast and by Albania in the southwest. The main source of income is agriculture and animal husbandry. Cereals, tobacco, sugar beets, hemp and various vegetables are grown, viticulture and fruit growing are done. Sheep breeding and forest products management are other economic resources. Kosovo has the largest lignite basin known as reserve in Europa. Zinc has lead deposits such as lead, copper, silver, gold and chrome. The industry has not developed.

*Macedonia borders by Serbia and Kosovo in the north, by Albania in the west, by Greece in the south and by Bulgaria in the east. The main source of income is agriculture. Grain, tobacco, fruit, grapes are grown. Iron, lead, zinc, manganese are underground sources. The industry has not developed(Yiğit, 2015).

*Albania borders by Montenegro to the north, by Kosovo to the northeast, by Macedonia to the east, by Greece to the south and by Adriatic and Ionian to the west. Albania is rich in natural sources and underground assets, also rich in chrome, nickel, copper, bauxite, phosphorus, and a small amount of underground sources including oil and coal. Economy based on agriculture(Taşçıoğlu, 2011).

*Greece borders by Turkey in the east, by Bulgaria in the north, Macedonia and Albania in the northwest draws. In addition, 400 island is connected to Greece in the Aegean Sea. Greece is one of the largest lignite producers. Also produces bauxite, marble, iron ore and bentonite. Lead, magnesite and salt are other important mineral sources. Coal, gold, silver and zinc mines are operated. Greece has a small but extremely open economy. The economy is predominantly based on the private sector. Industrial construction is limited. Agriculture, forestry and fishing are among the income recourses(Özey, 2016).

*Bulgaria borders by Serbia and Macedonia in the west, by the Black Sea in the east, by Romania in the north, by Greece in the southeast, by Turkey in the south. The Bulgarian economy is an economy that operates according to free market conditions.(“Bulgaristan Genel Ekonomik Durumu”, 2017) In Bulgaria crops such as wheat, corn, rapeseed and sunflower are grown and sugar beet and alfalfa cultivation is made. Bauxite, copper, lead, coal, oil and natural gas sources are available. In industrial products; electricity, gas, water; food, beverages, tobacco; machinery and equipment, base metals, chemical products, coke, refined oil, nuclear fuel are available.

*Romania borders by Moldova in the east, by Ukraine in the north, by Hungary in the northwest, by Serbia in the southwest and by Bulgaria in the south. The agricultural sector is developing slowly but, Romania has rich agricultural lands and can grow a wide range of agricultural products; grain, beetroot, sunflower seeds, vegetables and fruits. Natural sources of oil, natural gas, coal, minerals, timber are available. In industrial products; coal, petroleum, gas, chemicals and metals, machinery production, shipbuilding industry, land and rail transport equipment, communication equipment, tractors and construction equipment, electric power generation, electrical energy production, medical and scientific instruments, durable consumer goods, textiles and the food industry has evolved.(“Romanya Ülke Raporu”)

*Turkey borders by Bulgaria in the northwest, by Greece in the west, by Georgia in the northeast, by Armenia, Iran and Azerbaijan (Nakhichevan) in the east, by Iraq and Syria in the southeast. The majority of Turkey's territory is in Anatolia. A small part is located in the Balkans. Turkey has natural resources and qualified workforce. Moreover, due to its geopolitical location, it is considered as an important center which can be invested by connecting Europe and Asia continents. The economy is based on agriculture, the service sector and to a lesser extent, industry. Underground sources are iron, chromium, copper, boron, bauxite, sulfur, manganese, mercury, lignite and petroleum.

Table 2: General Information About Balkan Countries

Countries	EU Status*	Currency Unit**	Income Group**	Surface area (sq. km) (thousands)**
Greece	01.01.1981 entry	Euro	High income	132
Slovenia	01.05.2004 entry	Euro	High income	20,3

Romania	01.01.2007 entry	New Romanian Leu	Upper middle income	238,4
Bulgaria	01.01.2007 entry	Bulgarian Lev/Euro	Upper middle income	111
Croatia	01.07.2013 entry	Croatian Kuna/Euro	High income	56,6
Turkey	Candidate	Turkish Lira	Upper middle income	785,4
Albania	Candidate	Albanian Lek	Upper middle income	28,8
Macedonia, FYR	Candidate	Macedonian Denar	Upper middle income	25,7
Serbia	Candidate	New Serbian Dinar	Upper middle income	88,4
Montenegro	Candidate	Euro	Upper middle income	13,8
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Potential candidate	Bosnia Herzegovina Convertible Mark	Upper middle income	51,2
Kosovo	Potential candidate	Euro	Lower middle income	10,9

Source* https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/countries_en#tab-0-1, Retrieved data 10.09.2018

Source **<http://databank.worldbank.org>, Retrieved data 17.09.2018

4. FINDINGS

Having presented the data of socio economic levels, this section provides status on development of Balkan countries. This section introduces the descriptive development indicators. It also offers cross-national development statistics, comparing countries at different socio-economic levels. This section provides a descriptive data on the Balkan Countries, while also briefly describing their economy, population, health, environment, gender, etc. in the base of social and economic status, not before highlighting the main aspects and particularities.

4.1. Are differences in development levels among Balkan countries narrowing?

The information used for the purpose of this research consists of series for 2000-2017 period, regarding descriptive socio economic indicators. The collected data topics are such as economy, population, health, environment, gender, etc in the base of social and economic status.. In addition to indicators on basic socio-economic level, Data were identified on such as GDP, Inflation, Income level, HDI, Life Expectancy, Gender Equality, Internet users, Carbon dioxide emission, Fertility rate etc. in Balkan countries. After collecting the data, a comparison was drawn between the Balkan countries'.

Table 3: Population Status

Countries	2000		2017	
	Population, total (millions)	Population growth (annual %)	Population, total (millions)	Population growth (annual %)
Turkey	63,24	1,5	80,75	1,5
Greece	10,81	0,4	10,76	-0,1
Bulgaria	8,17	-0,5	7,08	-0,7

Albania	3,09	-0,6	2,87	-0,1
Bosnia and Herzegovina	3,77	0,2	3,51	-0,3
Kosovo	1,7	-3,6	1,83	0,8
Macedonia	2,03	0,5	2,08	0,1
Serbia	7,52	-0,3	7,02	-0,5
Croatia	4,43	-2,9	4,13	-1,2
Slovenia	1,99	0,3	2,07	0,1
Romania	22,44	-0,1	19,59	-0,6
Montenegro	0,6	0	0,62	0

Source: <http://databank.worldbank.org/data/source/world-development-indicators>, Retrieved data 10.09.2018

Critical factors - such as population size and growth rates have a direct impact on development, particularly human resource development. Population is one of the fundamental building blocks of sustainable development and population growth must be balanced with available resources if development strategies are to become reality. Table 3 shows that Turkey has the biggest population among Balkan countries. However, that should not be forgotten that there is only included in Turkey's Thrace region of the Balkans. Thrace's population is 1,9 billion(TUIK, 2018). There are differences about population size and growth in Balkans. The country with the lowest population is Montenegro. Controlled population is preferred but also the negative growth in the Bulgaria, Albania, Bosna- Herzegovina, Serbia, Croatia and Romania population points to the existence of a problem.

Table 4: GDP and GDP growth

Countries	2000		2017	
	GDP (current US\$) (billions)	GDP growth (annual %)	GDP (current US\$) (billions)	GDP growth (annual %)
Turkey	272,98	6,6	851,1	7,4
Greece	130,13	3,9	200,29	1,4
Bulgaria	13,15	4,9	56,83	3,6
Albania	3,63	6,7	13,04	3,8
Bosnia and Herzegovina	5,50	5,5	18,17	3
Kosovo	1,85	27	7,13	4,5
Macedonia	3,77	4,5	11,34	0
Serbia	6,54	7,8	41,43	1,9
Croatia	21,77	3,8	54,85	2,8
Slovenia	20,34	4,2	48,77	5
Romania	37,44	2,4	211,8	6,9
Montenegro	0,98	3,1	4,77	4,3

Source: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.CD?locations=BG-GR-MK-TR-RS-ME-RO-XK-BA-HR-AL-SI>, Retrieved data 10.09.2018

GDP which is an indicator of production capacity, is an important economic data for countries. GDP is the sum of gross value added by all resident producers in the economy plus any product taxes and minus any subsidies not included in the value of the products. According the production levels, countries differ from GDP and also GDP growth ratios. Table 4 shows that Turkey has the largest GDP but again should not be forgotten that there is only Thrace region of Turkey in the Balkans.

Table 5: International Tourism Data

Countries	2000		2016	
	International tourism, receipts (current US\$) (000)	International tourism, receipts (% of total exports)	International tourism, receipts (current US\$) (000)	International tourism, receipts (% of total exports)
Turkey	7,636	15,2	18,743	14,2
Greece	9,219	31,5	14,725	30,1
Bulgaria	1,074	19,5	3,653	12,2
Albania	389	71,8	1,693	52,9
Bosnia and Herzegovina	233	15,6	723	12,8
Macedonia	38	7,7	280	5,3
Serbia	77	9,7	1,150	7,6
Croatia	2,758	37,7	9,633	38,8
Slovenia	961	9,5	2,427	7,6
Romania	359	3,3	1,730	2,8
Montenegro	379	41	933	55

Source: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/ST.INT.TVLR.CD?end=2016&locations=BG-GR-MK-TR-RS-ME-RO-XK-BA-HR-AL-SI&start=2000&view=chart> Retrieved date 22.11.2018

Tourism is an important contributor to the economy such as income and receipts levels for development, as it is the lead export sector (ILO and UNWTO, 2009). Table 5 shows that tourism receipts has great impact on the Balkan country's income and export levels. Albania, Croatia and Greece contribution rates to export are higher than other countries.

Table 6: Inflation

Countries	2000	2010	2017
	Inflation, GDP deflator (annual %)	Inflation, GDP deflator (annual %)	Inflation, GDP deflator (annual %)
Turkey	49,3	7	10,8
Greece	1,6	0,7	0,7
Bulgaria	7,3	1,1	1,2

Albania	4	4,5	1,4
Bosnia and Herzegovina	28,8	1,4	2,3
Kosovo	11,4	4,7	-0,3
Macedonia	13,8	2	3,5
Serbia	78,6	5,9	2,8
Croatia	4,4	0,8	1,2
Slovenia	5,4	-1	2
Romania	43,1	3,5	5,3
Montenegro	20,2	1,6	2,7

Source: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.DEFL.KD.ZG?locations=BG-GR-MK-TR-RS-ME-RO-XK-BA-HR-AL-SI>, Retrieved data 17.08.2018

Inflation is a situation continuous and noticeable increase in the general level of prices. Price stability in conjunction with economic growth are the main goals of the economic policy. It is generally accepted that price stability is necessary for economic and social development. Tablo 6 shows that Turkey and Romania couldn't control the general level of price increases. The other countries have tolerable inflation rates.

Table 7: HDI Scores and HDI Indicators

Countries	Human Development Index (HDI)	HDI rank	Life expectancy at birth (years)	Gross national income (GNI) per Capita 2011 PPP \$	Mean years of schooling (years)
Slovenia	0.896	25	81.1	30,594	12.2
Greece	0.870	31	81.4	24,648	10.8
Croatia	0.831	46	77.8	22,162	11.3
Montenegro	0.814	50	77.3	16,779	11.3
Bulgaria	0.813	51	74.9	18,740	11.8
Romania	0.811	52	75.6	22,646	11.0
Turkey	0.791	64	76	24,804	8.0
Serbia	0.787	67	75.3	13,019	11.1
Albania	0.785	68	78.5	11,886	10.0
Bosnia and Herzegovina	0.768	77	77.1	11,716	9.7
Macedonia, FYR*	0.757	80	75.9	12,505	9.6
Kosovo*	0.739	*	71.3	10,066	10.7
High Human Development Group	0.757		76.0	14,999	8.2

WORLD	0.728		72.2	15,295	8.4
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Source: <http://hdr.undp.org/en/composite/HDI> Date: Retrieved data 22.09.2018

Human Development Index is considered as an important indicator of the socio-economic performance of the countries. Results for HDI are given in Table 7. in each country for which data are available. According to the Human Development Index (2017), Balkan countries ranked between 25th in Slovenia and 80th in Macedonia. HDI index differs between 0,757 and 0,896. Slovenia has the higher HDI score. However, when the economic, health and education indicators are compared, there are various differences among countries.

Table 8: Gender, Communication, Environmental Sustainability, Fertility Rates

Countries	Gender	Internet users,	Carbon dioxide	Fertility rate,
Turkey	0.922	58.3	4.5	2,1
Greece	0.964	69.1	6.2	1,3
Bulgaria	0.990	59,8	5.9	1,5
Albania	0.970	66.4	2.0	1,7
Bosnia and Herzegovina	0.924	54.7	6.2	1,4
Kosovo	0.927	63.9	2.8	2,1
Macedonia	0.946	72.2	3.6	1,5
Serbia	0.976	67.1	5.3	1,5
Croatia	0.991	72,7	4.0	1,4
Slovenia	1.003	75.5	6.2	1,6
Romania	0.985	59.5	3.5	1,6
Montenegro	0.956	69.9	3.6	1,7
WORLD	0.940		4.9	2.1

Source: <https://data.worldbank.org/topic/gender?locations=BG-GR-MK-TR-RS-ME-RO-XK-BA-HR-AL-SI>, Retrieved data 22.09.2018

Gender and Development issues in the developing world and in emerging economies of Europe become more important (Momsen, 2009). Gender equity and gender problems come across in certain aspects of policy-making, which are important both from the gender perspective and development perspective as Gender equity is essential in addressing major sustainable development challenges (Gender, 2009: 12). Balkan countries have differences about Gender equity, internet use and carbondioxide emissions. Fertility rates are similar in many countries except Turkey and Kosovo.

5. Results and Discussion

This research examined the socio economic levels of Balkan Countries and explained this through reference of development levels data. Therefore, the research tested for Balkan countries comparing differences in development levels in the period 2000-2017. The results underscore the differences of socioeconomic levels in Balkan countries. The Balkan peninsula is a developing countries' geography. As a result of the research, although they are in same region and have similar conditions, main differences on socio-economic situations were found. In addition to differences on basic socio-economic level, differences were identified on such as GDP, Inflation, Income level, HDI, Life Expectancy, Gender Equality, Internet users, Carbon dioxide emission, Fertility rate etc. in Balkan countries.

The main finding from the research is that socioeconomic inequalities in development indicators showed a difference in Balkan countries. This finding points to the evidence that socioeconomic inequalities are persistent in Balkans. The

differences was observed cross-national comparisons for the 2000s and 2017s both. Development level is an important factor in this region. Balkan countries have similar conditions but different development levels. Single-country studies have shown that socio-economic levels are different from each other in Balkan countries. Differences in the national socio-economic levels may reduce the ability of countries to consider economic growth policies in Balkan region and to create development. Reducing socioeconomic differences and inequalities depends upon speeding up structural reforms in Balkan Countries.

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