



**COMPRASION OF MAIN ECONOMIC INDICATORS OF TURKEY AND ITS
TERRITORIAL NEIGHBOR COUNTRIES**
**TÜRKİYE VE SINIR KOMŞULARININ TEMEL EKONOMİK GÖSTERGELER
AÇISINDAN KARŞILAŞTIRILMASI**

KEREM KARABULUT

Prof. Dr., Atatürk University, Faculty of Economic and Business

kerem@atauni.edu.tr

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3159-3289>

DİLEK ÖZDEMİR

Dr. Lecturer, Atatürk University, Faculty of Economic and Business

pdilek@atauni.edu.tr

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8048-7730>

SERAP BEDİR KARA

Assoc. Prof., Erzurum Technical University, Faculty of Economic and Business

serap.bedir@erzurum.edu.tr

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7459-8533>

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TÜRKİYE'NİN TEMEL EKONOMİK GÖSTERGELERİNİN KARŞILAŞTIRILMASI VE TERRİTÖRAL KOMBİNE ÜLKELERİ

Kerem KARABULUT, Dilek ÖZDEMİR, Serap BEDİR KARA

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ÖZET

Bu çalışmada Türkiye ve sınır komşuları, temel ekonomik göstergeler açısından incelenmiştir. Bu bağlamda, insani gelişmişlik endeksi, eğitim endeksi, nüfus, ortalama yaşam beklentisi, işsizlik, enflasyon, enerji tüketimi, askeri harcamalar, cari işlemler dengesi, gelir dağılımı ve coğrafi konumu açısından Türkiye'nin avantaj ve dezavantajları değerlendirilmiştir. Dolayısıyla, Türkiye'nin coğrafi konumu ve önemi iktisadi, sosyal ve politik açıdan değerlendirilmiştir. Sonuç olarak, Türkiye'nin her türlü kaynak ve potansiyeli, küresel ve bölgesel ekonomik kalkınmaya katkıda bulunmak ve dünya barışını desteklemek için uygulanabilir ve uygulanmalıdır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Türkiye, sınır komşusu, enerji geçiş koridoru.

COMPRASION OF MAIN ECONOMIC INDICATORS OF TURKEY AND ITS TERRITORIAL NEIGHBOR COUNTRIES

ABSTRACT

In this study, the main economic indicators of Turkey and its land border neighbor countries have been examined. In this context, advantage and disadvantage of Turkey have been evaluated according to human development index, education index, population, life expectancy, unemployment, inflation, energy consumption, military expenditure, current account balance, income distribution and geographical position. So, the place and importance of Turkey has been evaluated as economics, social and political aspect. As a result, as a compliment to this, Turkey's any kind of resources and potentials could and must be applied to contribute to the global and regional economic development and to support world peace.

Keywords: Turkey, territorial neighbor, energy transportation corridor.

Introduction

Turkey is neighbor country at its territorial borders with Iran, Iraq, Syria, Azerbaijan (through Autonomous Republic of Nakhichevan), Georgia, Armenia, Bulgaria and Greece. Turkey's *sui generis* characteristics could make this country more advantageous than its territorial neighbor countries from social, economic and political aspects. As known, before the disintegration of The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) in 1991, during the so-called Cold War era there has been a bipolar world since the end of Second World War. At this dual poled (bipolar) world, one side has been headed by United States of America (USA) which was implementing free market economy and the other side has been headed by USSR which was implementing centrally planned economic policy. Turkey has been positioned itself on the Western block headed by USA and politically played a role of shield as against to USSR. This was caused mainly by the geographical location and constellation of Turkey in the region. But, although the disintegration of USSR in 1991 gave an end to Turkey's this function of being a military and political shield as against to USSR on the behalf of the Western bloc, its advantages caused by its geographical position still exist. 71.5% of natural gas reserves are situated in the area surrounding Turkey (such as in the Middle East holds the largest proved reserves 40.9% of the global total and CIS (Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Russian Federation, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan and other CIS) 30.6% of the global total) and the transfer of energy sources from Khazar, the Middle East, and Central Asia to the European and the world markets empowers Turkey's position (Statistical Review of World Energy 2018). Besides to these, as a "republic" and also as the sole Muslim country who adopted in principle of secularism among other Muslim countries, Turkey is an indispensable partner in the region for the developed countries. On the other hand, in addition to Turkey's geographical position based advantages to its neighbor countries (Barkey (2011); Demiryol (2013); Yeşiltaş (2013); Bulut, (2017)), the two other aspects that makes it more preminent are Turkey's territorial and population sizes which are greater than all of them except Iran. Although Iran is one of the considerably great country in the region, its regime makes its integration with the rest of the world difficult, and so, Turkey is a indispensable gateway for Iran's opening to the world.

The most problematic territorial neighborhood country of Turkey is Armenia. The fundamental reasons of problems between Turkey and Armenia are the historical events took place in Anatolia through the First World War and Armenia's invasion of Dağlık Karabağ through 1988 to 1993 which is actually a part of Azerbaijan. Although the existing problems between Armenia and

Turkey, Armenia's socio-economic condition has not a size to affect its surrounding countries.

As of 2011, political turmoil and conflict in the Middle East influenced Syria and Iraq, which Turkey shares its longest southern border with, which caused an increase in regional risk factors for Turkey. After Syria was dragged into a civil war, risks toward the security of Turkey's southern border became more severe. In particular, the conquest of significant areas of Syria and Iraq including oilfields by the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS) has deepened the political crisis in Syria and Iraq (Kakışım, 2017:434). At this point, based on the support of both the USA and the European Union (EU) in the transfer of Iraqi natural gas to Europe through Turkey, Turkey's geographical importance still continues. However, political instability in Syria negatively affects Turkey's national security and energy policies. Though there have been some problems in the affairs with Greece from time to time, these do not constitute a major obstacle in front of the development of the relations between Greece and Turkey. After Bulgaria gave up discriminatory policies against the Turkish-Muslim minority in this country, the relations with Bulgaria too took a positively developing tendency. With Azerbaijan and Georgia, for all time Turkey has cooperative and productive relations.

Turkey's political attitude towards its neighbor is inclined to be in positive relations. Under existing circumstances, it is clear that Turkey is in line with the international rules and regulations as against the countries with which it is in diplomatic relations and there is no evidence about application of various ethnic, religious etc. policies by Turkey towards its neighbors.

As mentioned in above, due to its geographical position, Turkey should be considered as a natural bridge between the western markets with high demand of energy, and oil and natural gas exporting countries like Iraq, Iran, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan. Turkey has been regarded and will be regarded in the near future too as a "major transit country" or in other words "East and West Transportation Corridor" linking the South Caucasus and Central Asia to Turkey and the Mediterranean Sea. That is to say, Turkey accords a major importance to transportation of energy through its land. In the framework of existing international relations among the countries in the region, Turkey's status is becoming more and more important. In this study, Turkey's geographical, political, economic and social conditions will be evaluated through a set of comparisons based on several social and economic indicators.

1-Turkey's Status to Became an Energy Transportation Corridor and Bridge

The most important political-economic issue in the international agenda of 21th century is the very high demand of energy especially by the developed and developing countries and supplying this increasing demand for energy by producer countries. Due to the fact that, with the coming of the end of 20th century, global integration of national markets is coming closer to be a completed process, the issue of energy becoming more and more important. Today, the continent of Europe has the biggest share in world's energy consumption. In this context, Turkey is located in the middle of the triangle constituted by Balkans, Caucasus and Middle East; and, Turkey is on the most secure way of crude oil and natural gas pipelines that would connect producer and consumer/seller and buyer sides. By region, the Middle East holds the largest proved oil reserves 47.6% of the global total and CIS 8.5% share of total; the Middle East holds the largest proved oil reserves 40.9% of the global total and followed by CIS 30.6% share of global total in 2017 (BP Statistical Review of World Energy: 2018). This reality of being located in between of two sides –producer and consumer- makes Turkey a bridge from Middle East-Middle Asia to Europe-Mediterranean Sea; also, due to the increasing level of consumption and the need for security, Turkey become more strategic and important country for its geographical position. The security in the area of energy supply is a fundamentally effective factor on countries' economic and national safety (Çomak; 2007, p.71).

For this reason, every state must provide itself with reliable, uninterrupted, cheap, clean and diverse sources of energy. Besides to this, they should use energy as much as possible effectively. In 2017, United States of America with 20.2% share in world's oil consumption and 20.1% share in world's natural gas consumption has a growing need for energy importing. Also, USA has been trying very specific strategies to secure its energy need and to control other great powers' access to this "limited" source. Due to the natural concentration of oil and natural gas reserves at confined territories of mainly Middle East and other areas (Russia, Africa, Caspian Sea...etc), the control over these resources and their pricing causes to international conflicts and in many cases could threaten certain countries.

Turkey is located in between of the areas with very rich natural gas reserves like Middle Eastern countries, Caspian region and Middle East, and European and other consumption zones which have a very rapidly growing need for importing energy. So, Turkey is the ideal country for the transportation of this

energy. In addition to its geographical position's advantages about being on the routes for the transportation of oil and gas pipelines, Turkey has one of the most rapidly developing economies of the world and therefore, Turkey has a continuously increasing need for energy that is provided by the way of importing oil and natural gas. As another important issue, as the crossroad of the most important energy corridors - transportation routes from North to South and East to West, Turkey's geo-strategic position could contribute to the development of economies of its surrounding region; and this economic contribution would yield a sustainable peace for the region and the whole world too. But, yet this important potential has not been realized completely (Pamir, Türkyılmaz; 2007 pp.16-18).

Unfortunately, although Turkey has very extensive domestic energy resources, such as hydroelectric-lignite-renewable sources of energy...etc, there is a reality of structural dependency to energy importing. Turkey is not able to fully apply to its own domestic sources to cover its needs. In Turkey, total energy consumption is composed of 30.9% rate of oil, 28.3% rate of coal, 28.2% rate of natural gas and the rest 12.6% rate of hydroelectric and other renewable energy sources (BP Statistical Review of World Energy: 2018). 75.2% of energy use is provided via imported energy sources (World Development Indicators: 2018). In short, energy transportation pipelines are not only a matter of being on the route for Turkey, but also, Turkey is a very critical buyer of the energy it transported.

Turkey's international agreements especially about natural gas are promising a very optimistic schema of future. Their details are in Figure-1 in below. In addition, the ones that can be considered within the context of other significant agreements are as follows: As a significant steps of the Southern Gas Corridor (SGC) project, which is planned to provide natural gas flow between EU countries and supplier countries in the Khazar Region and the Middle East, the construction of the Trans-Anatolian Natural Gas Pipeline (TANAP) was initiated. The construction bid for the Şırnak Natural Gas Pipeline, which is planned to transport the natural gas under the control of Iraq's Kurdish Regional Government (IKRG) to Turkey and European countries, was held in April 2017. Construction of Turk Stream, another natural gas pipeline project to carry Russian natural gas to Turkey and EU countries, has been started. In addition to these projects, Turkey aims to transport natural gas reserves from the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of Israel, Cyprus, and Egypt in the Eastern Mediterranean to the EU countries. Natural gas pipelines are being planned and constructed alternative routes to meet the natural gas demands of both Turkey and EU

countries. Through these pipelines, Turkey will be able to collect natural gas supplies from several supplier countries in its energy network as a requirement of being a natural gas center.

Table-1: Natural Gas Agreement of Turkey

Existing Agreements	Amount (Plato) (Billion m ³ /year)	Date of Signature	Status
Russ. Fed.(West)	5-6	14 February 1986	Active
Algeria (LNG)	4,4	14 April 1988	Active
Nigeria (LNG)	1.3	9 November 1995	Active
Iran	9,6	8 August 1996	Active
Russ. Fed. (Black Sea)	16	15 December 1997	Active
Russ. Fed. (West)	8	18 February 1998	Active
Turkmenistan	16	21 May 1999	2005
Azerbaijan	6.6	12 March 2001	2005
Azerbaijan	6	25 October 2011	
TANAP		19 September 2013	
Russ. Fed. (The TurkStream Pinepine)	14	10 October 2016	

Source: BOTAŞ (01.01.2019) http://www.botas.gov.tr/dogalgaz/dg_alim_ant.asp

Caspian region is a new energy supplier area of the world and its significance is growing day by day. More importantly, after the dissolution of USSR, and of the global powers could not dominate this region completely. Due to Turkey's religious, ethnic, political, cultural, economic affinity to Caspian basin makes it most advantageous country in the region. Depending on Turkey's ability to facilitate these advantages on behalf of its interest together with the opportunities provided by being energy transportation corridor; Turkey will also provide its energy need at a relatively low cost. As a critical component of the regional security, Turkey's powerful army is a fundamental factor. Realization of Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan crude oil pipeline is an indicator of effectiveness provided by Turkey's all of above mentioned advantages.

As an another and relevant matter is that, Turkey's eastern neighbor Iran is one of the leading oil and natural gas producers of the world. And, Turkey has active energy ties with Iran. But, as mentioned in above, Iran's political regime is preventing it from direct political-economic and cultural contact with the rest

of the world. But, at this point, Turkey's importance is emerging one more time; Turkey is the gateway for Iran to open itself to the rest of the world.

Since Georgia gained independence from USSR, this country has been a matter of interest for Turkey at prime importance, because of the Georgia's military, economic, ethnic, historical and strategic significance. In addition to this, according to the clauses of Kars-Gumru Agreement (1920), Turkey has the guarantor ship rights over the status Acaristan which is a part of Georgia. It is possible to argue that, crude oil and natural gas pipelines stemming from Middle Asian Turkish Republics also connect Turkey to these countries from commercial, logistics, cultural and security aspects. An economically developed and territorially unified Georgia has the prime regional-strategic importance for Turkey. Because, these countries in the Caucasus region are transit zone between Turkey and Middle Asia, so their security is a critical matter for Turkey (Külebi; 2005). Baku-Tbilis-Ceyhan crude oil pipeline and Kars-Tbilis-Baku railway Project is the concrete indicator of developing relations between Turkey and Georgia; the volume of trade between these two countries is growing at a rapid rate.

Depending on some historical and recent events and reasons, the relations between Turkey and Armenia is in a very poor condition for today. These historical and recent events and reasons are can be summarized as that; at the last decades of Ottoman Empire the civil conflict took place in many parts of Anatolia, the Armenian population in here eliminated by exile or losing their lives and today Armenia is accusing of Turkey with massacre; although Armenia has not gat any legitimate basis, demanding territory from Turkey and this is another matter of conflict between two countries; for more than ten years Armenia has been keeping under occupation a very big part of Azerbaijan.

Due to mainly these historical and recent problems, unfortunately there haven't been any social and economic relationships between Turkey and Armenia. As a result of wrong policies applied by Armenia as against to its neighbors, this country's relations with two of its other three neighbors, that is, with Georgia and Azerbaijan, are not well too. Only Iran is an exception for Armenia about good relations. But, it is clear that, in any way good relations with its neighbors is in line with the interest of Armenia which has no territorial link with seaside. Otherwise, there is no possible socio-economic development chance for Armenia which has only 2 million populations and also is clearly in need of international commercial relations with its neighbors for its economic development.

2- The Comparison of Turkey with its Territorial Neighbors at Various Socio-economic Indicators

In this section, Turkey is being compared with its neighbors from social and economic aspects according to the indicators placed in the table. In terms of human development and education index (Table 2): Turkey is in the high range of human development among 177 countries of the world. Looking at Turkey's neighbors, Greece, Bulgaria, Georgia, Armenia, Iran, and Azerbaijan have high levels of human development while Iraq has a medium level and the Syria has a low level. Parallelism in the education index indicates that human development level and education are correlated, so education policies are important. Turkey is in a better position in education only when compared with the Syrian and Iraq, which may be attributed to several factors; for example, many Turkish people have radical religious and ethnic views and do not lean toward reading and writing, population size, and economic difficulties.

Table- 2: Human Development and Education Index

Country	HDI				EDU INDEX			
	1990-1996	1997-2003	2004-2010	2011-2017	1990-1996	1997-2003	2004-2010	2011-2017
Greece	0,76	0,80	0,85	0,86	0,62	0,68	0,77	0,82
Bulgaria	0,69	0,72	0,76	0,80	0,64	0,68	0,73	0,79
Georgia	--	--	0,72	0,76	--	--	0,76	0,82
Türkiye	0,60	0,65	0,71	0,77	0,42	0,49	0,56	0,67
Armenia	0,61	0,65	0,71	0,74	0,64	0,66	0,70	0,74
Iran I.R. of	0,62	0,67	0,73	0,79	0,45	0,53	0,62	0,73
Azerbaijan	--	0,64	0,71	0,75	--	0,64	0,67	0,70
Syrian	0,57	0,59	0,64	0,57	0,42	0,44	0,52	0,46
Iraq	0,56	0,60	0,64	0,67	0,38	0,42	0,49	0,51

Sources: United Nation Development Programme (UNDP), Economic Performance, Human Development Reports (1992-2017), www.undp.org.tr

Some other significant economic and social indicators are presented in Table 3. To briefly summarize the data in the table: When compared about population number, in comparison with its neighbors, Turkey has the highest population density with the Republic of Iran. This becomes another advantage when considered together with its powerful army for the perpetuation of regional peace.

Turkey has a lower life expectancy at birth than its neighbors Greece and Bulgaria, the same as that of the Republic of Iran, and a higher life expectancy than all other countries. In recent years, there have been positive developments in life expectancy.

Although Turkey is in a better condition than all of its neighbours except Greece and Azerbaijan about the rate of unemployment, it could be argued that there is a serious unemployment problem in Turkey due to its huge population. The economic crises and economic growth rates with negative scores took place in Turkey through the last years has been contributing and deepening the economic instability. This caused to incensement of the number of unemployed people and unemployment rate. But, when considered with the unemployment rates in Greece and Bulgaria (two of which has been members of European Union), it could be argued that the condition in Turkey is within normal intervals. Especially the institutionalization tendency brought by the Program for Transition to Powerful Economy (put into force in 2001) and the laws for adoption to European Union standards and more significantly political stability all together yielded a growing economy for Turkey. This process also made Turkish economy more durable as against to external economic stagnation and shocks. It is possible to say that, in parallel with this positive tendency in Turkish economy would cause a lower rate of unemployment in the long run. Therefore, with the reduction of unemployment rate, the stagnant part of Turkish economy's labor force would be brought into a productive status and this would result in a more rapidly growing economy.

Regarding inflation, although the consumer price index (CPI) measure of inflation is lower than that of Iran, an upward trend has started in prices, especially since 2006, and this upward trend has continued in recent years.

Table 3: Economics and Social Indicator

N	Rang e	POP	LIFE X	u	CPI	GDPPC	ENERG Y	MILEX	CA
Greece	1961-1965	8477334	69	--	1,17	8392	391	3,84	--
	1966-1970	8720815	70	--	1,32	11628	681	4,32	--
	1971-1975	8931463	72	2,70	1,85	15895	1199	4,45	--
	1976-1980	9423470	73	2,26	3,78	18491	1507	5,43	-3,09
	1981-1985	9839118	75	--	9,70	18421	1612	5,21	-4,63
	1986-1990	10058216	76	--	22,40	18989	1913	4,03	-2,59
	1991-1995	10450896	77	9,06	46,68	19657	2120	3,49	-1,25
	1996-2000	10711615	78	10,63	67,43	21851	2355	3,41	-4,80
	2001-2005	10926936	79	9,92	79,96	26148	2661	2,85	-6,49
	2006-2010	11075007	80	9,50	93,70	28908	2671	2,88	-12,06
2011-2016	10934065	81	24,12	102,56	22913	2249	2,43	-2,89	
Bulgaria	1961-1965	8076543	70	--	--	--	--	--	--
	1966-1970	8372326	71	--	--	--	--	--	--
	1971-1975	8626610	71	--	--	--	2400	--	--
	1976-1980	8812858	71	--	--	3224	3045	--	4,81
	1981-1985	8933908	71	--	0,02	3555	3334	--	0,80
	1986-1990	8901247	72	1,70	0,03	4265	3403	4,11	-4,17

	1991-1995	8498900	71	13,34	0,72	3696	2558	2,70	-2,97
	1996-2000	8262495	71	12,50	40,38	3862	2437	2,52	-1,33
	2001-2005	7799492	72	--	66,23	4848	2472	2,65	-6,06
	2006-2010	7495793	73	8,55	91,04	6586	2555	2,01	-4,97
	2011-2016	7241514	75	10,77	106,48	7354	2484	1,46	0,53
Georgia	1961-1965	3814380	65	--	--	1785	--	--	--
	1966-1970	4043000	67	--	--	2098	--	--	--
	1971-1975	4240300	68	--	--	2650	--	--	--
	1976-1980	4402020	70	--	--	3556	--	--	--
	1981-1985	4583060	70	--	--	4348	--	--	--
	1986-1990	4768800	70	--	--	4132	2585	--	--
	1991-1995	4843220	70	--	19,77	1460	1431	--	--
	1996-2000	4501160	71	3,70	46,92	1327	698	1,23	-8,78
	2001-2005	4295880	73	12,65	62,78	1808	626	1,50	-7,98
	2006-2010	4030400	73	15,29	88,99	2731	774	6,48	-5,57
2011-2016	3773233	73	13,46	110,84	3705	1023	2,74	-1,06	
Turkey	1961-1965	29545647	48	--	0,00	3381	420	3,57	--
	1966-1970	33276700	51	--	0,00	4068	499	3,20	--
	1971-1975	37485509	54	-	0,00	4645	628	3,72	-2,63

	1976-1980	42061521	57	--	0,00	5276	735	4,22	-3,56
	1981-1985	47067025	61	11,53	0,00	5360	753	3,84	-2,24
	1986-1990	52039440	63	8,15	0,03	6360	915	3,32	-0,39
	1991-1995	56658730	66	--	0,53	7038	989	3,90	-0,68
	1996-2000	61330549	69	--	9,73	8049	1159	3,80	-1,20
	2001-2005	66066318	72	10,15	52,14	8534	1171	3,16	-1,70
	2006-2010	70493363	74	10,10	85,89	10427	1408	2,36	-4,76
	2011-2016	76430197	75	9,44	131,03	12989	1582	1,99	-5,56
Armenia	1961-1965	2076981	67	--	--	--	--	--	--
	1966-1970	2400857	69	--	--	--	--	--	--
	1971-1975	2711495	71	--	--	--	--	--	--
	1976-1980	2996045	71	--	--	--	--	--	--
	1981-1985	3240380	70	--	--	--	--	--	--
	1986-1990	3484697	68	--	--	1797	2179	--	--

Table 4: Economics and Social Indicators (Continued)

N	Range	POP	LIFEX	u	CPI	GDPPC	ENERGY	MILEX	CA
Armenia	1991-1995	3362432	68	5,10	20,27	1087	1020	2,85	-9,52
	1996-2000	3113718	70	10,17	61,62	1257	603	3,60	-19,07
	2001-2005	3016846	72	--	71,61	2029	695	2,83	-5,51
	2006-2010	2913134	73	18,87	88,50	3257	927	3,56	-10,82

	2011-2016	2899833	74	16,74	117,15	3731	999	3,95	-6,69
Iran I.R. of	1961-1965	23699096	47	--	0,15	3681	--	2,68	--
	1966-1970	27050994	50	--	0,16	5811	--	5,06	--
	1971-1975	30955178	53	--	0,21	8855	672	5,60	--
	1976-1980	36088404	55	--	0,41	7880	954	8,74	5,11
	1981-1985	43712693	54	--	0,93	4979	1095	7,21	0,17
	1986-1990	52906648	60	14,20	2,19	3927	1137	5,19	-1,09
	1991-1995	58985662	67	11,10	6,02	4566	1499	2,16	1,26
	1996-2000	63877758	69	9,10	18,85	4663	1774	2,42	4,30
	2001-2005	68786274	71	12,10	37,74	5288	2156	1,39	--
	2006-2010	72871920	73	11,39	77,77	6250	2701	3,02	--
	2011-2016	77904925	75	11,55	220,89	6257	2868	2,49	--
Azerbaijan	1961-1965	4313234	62	--	--	--	--	--	--
	1966-1970	4955517	63	--	--	--	--	--	--
	1971-1975	5481219	64	--	--	--	--	--	--
	1976-1980	5958834	64	--	--	--	--	--	2,02
	1981-1985	6454999	65	--	--	--	--	--	-3,74
	1986-1990	6993612	65	--	--	3119	3165	--	3,78
	1991-1995	7486000	65	0,45	10,31	1949	2297	3,02	-0,24

	1996-2000	7909120	66	1,02	50,75	1401	1443	2,38	2,12
	2001-2005	8243120	68	--	53,99	2240	1488	2,38	3,86
	2006-2010	8766165	70	5,71	86,30	5104	1421	3,14	1,95
	2011-2016	9471317	72	5,13	115,30	5962	1455	4,60	--
Syrian	1961-1965	--	54	--	1,47	--	--	--	--
	1966-1970	--	57	--	1,64	--	--	0,01	--
	1971-1975	--	61	--	2,26	--	--	2,37	--
	1976-1980	--	65	--	3,82	--	--	9,84	--
	1981-1985	--	67	--	6,90	--	--	7,63	--
	1986-1990	--	70	--	23,36	--	--	13,42	--
	1991-1995	--	71	7,18	46,45	--	--	19,20	- 13,13
	1996-2000	--	73	7,80	60,91	--	17	18,91	- 19,88
	2001-2005	--	74	10,51	63,50	--	18	21,38	- 13,91
	2006-2010	--	73	8,85	89,33	--	17	21,83	26,01
2011-2016	--	70	14,72	123,98	--	--	--	12,25	
Iraq	1961-1965	7907296	52	--	61,57	--	--	7,77	--
	1966-1970	9272562	57	--	68,36	1457	--	9,74	--
	1971-1975	10960762	60	--	86,72	1613	438	11,52	--
	1976-1980	12859866	61	--	121,56	2529	690	8,15	--

1981-1985	14818507	60	--	--	2897	793	10,83	--
1986-1990	16677505	64	--	0,03	3013	1098	--	--
1991-1995	19043689	68	--	3,27	2053	1449	--	--
1996-2000	22197801	69	--	15,02	3594	1365	--	--
2001-2005	25628722	69	--	36,28	3668	1053	1,96	-6,68
2006-2010	29171423	68	8,65	91,73	4285	1012	2,42	9,37
2011-2016	34451845	69	7,96	114,50	5267	1391	3,22	8,70

N: Country, POP: Population (total); LIFEX: Life expectancy at birth, total (years); u: Unemployment, total (% of total labor force) (national estimate); CPI: Consumer price index (2010 = 100); GDPPC: GDP per capita GDPPC (constant 2010 US\$); ENERGY: Energy use (kg of oil equivalent per capita); MILEX: Military expenditure (% of GDP); CA: Current account balance (% of GDP)

Source: World Development Indicators, The World Bank Databank

Turkey has the highest GDP per capita after Greece. It is the highest revenue generating economy when compared with its neighbors. This is the result of Turkey's global integration based on its post-1980 export-oriented growth policy, population, geographical size, and underground and over ground resources.

The energy sector is one of the most fundamental inputs during the economic growth period. As an indicator of economic development, energy use plays a significant role in determining policies as it affects the economic development level and therefore social welfare. Among its border neighbors, Turkey ranks fourth in terms of energy use, which gives an indication of the country's level of development. Thus, there is a clear parallel relationship between electricity use and human development.

Syria is making the highest amount of defense expenditure in the region. Syria is followed by Azerbaijan, Armenia and Iraq in defense sector. The fundamental reason of Syria's high defense expenditures is simply conflicts with Israel. Turkey too resorts to make big defense expenditures due to terror. Also, the non-dense conflictive case between Turkey and Greece, and competition

between Turkey and Iran are also contributing factors to regional defense expenditures.

In terms of balance of payments, Turkey has the highest rate after Georgia. Turkey's balance of payment most of time gives debit. This have been caused by a exporting structure depended of imported goods and services. The matter should be emphasized at this point is that, Turkey transformed its economic model and growth strategy from import substitution to export oriented economic development strategy through beginning of 1980s; but this new economic model and paradigm has been corrupted by policies allowing to the rise of a import dominated economy and this process made export more and more dependent to imported goods and services. In this context, while the applied foreign exchange policy has been elastic foreign exchange policy; the contention against to high inflation based on application of high interest rates inflicted flow of hot money towards Turkish economy, and then allow these factors yield in a low exchange rates and relatively cheaper importing costs. Through recent years, the normal chain of "regular exchange rate-export-economic growth" was transformed into a chain of "cheap imported inputs - export-economic growth" in Turkish economy. In this transformation process, the real element of exchange rate in export oriented economic growth model, turned into a factor contributing to economic growth by encouraging import. The most dangerous aspect of this condition is possible interruptions in flow of hot money and economy's inability to finance importing without this hot money. Only closed economies of Iran, Azerbaijan, Syria and Iraq provided surplus through this period and obviously the reason for this is isolated natures of these two economies. It is possible to say that, in addition to the reality of sustainability for debits of Turkey, a more realistic exchange rate policy would support a more comprehensive and productive foreign trade and this would make Turkey as the owner of the most developed economy in the region.

When considered according to *Gini* co-efficient measure about income distribution: According to the UNDP 2018 Human Development Report, in 2010-2017, Azerbaijan had the lowest Gini coefficient (16.6) while Turkey had the highest (41.9). Turkey is in the worst condition in the region for very unbalanced income distribution. The basic reason for this is that, in Turkey resources and its usages are distributed very unequally among regions. For instance, trade, industry and health-education facilities in Turkey are overwhelmingly concentrated in developed western parts of country. Also, integral migration for economic reasons and terror in eastern parts also

contributed to en-equal income distribution in a negative direction. Although to all of these unfavorable realities, the ongoing process is inclined to be positive

Conclusion

Turkey has very peculiar to itself socio-economic indicators and some of which is in better characteristics than several neighbour countries' and some of which in worse characteristics than several neighbour countries'. In most cases European Union Member Countries of Greece and Bulgaria are in better conditions than Turkey; and, Turkey is in better conditions than its eastern and southern neighbours. But, it is not enough to judge or evaluate Turkey's condition upon existing indicators, since Turkey has very critical advantages that will be in effect in near future and these can be summarized as follow:

As mentioned in above, due to its geographical position, Turkey should be considered as a natural bridge between the western markets with high demand of energy, and oil and natural gas exporting countries like Iraq, Iran, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan. Turkey has been regarded and will be regarded in the near future too as a "major transit country" or in other word "East and West Transportation Corridor" linking the South Caucasus and Central Asia to Turkey and the Mediterranean Sea. That is to say, Turkey accords a major importance to transportation of energy through its land. And, there is no any other country over the world with such a geographical position.

Besides to these, as a "republic" and also as the sole Muslim country (also surrounded by Muslim countries at its eastern and southern borders) who adopted in principle of secularism among other Muslim countries, Turkey is an indispensable partner in the region for the developed countries. Also, Turkey is a bridge position between west and Muslim countries through its regime and geographical position.

About the economic growthness, Turkey is among the 20 greatest economies of the world and also at a leader position about the issues of economic growthness in the region.

From the aspects of territorial size and population numbers, Turkey and Iran are at the leader positions in the region; these two counties also have very long standing state traditions. Also, the issue of Iran's integration with the rest of the world makes Turkey an important country again.

In addition to these, Turkey has been trying to be a member of European Union, and in near future this endeavour will result in success and this development will effect global political-economy at a significant level.

As well-known and extensively debated in the international and national agendas, global climate changes went into a non-returnable route. The main cause of this is obviously environmental pollution. Global warming and soil pollution transforms the agriculture and agricultural products into a strategically important matter. At this point, with its relatively less polluted environment and fertile soil structure and vast labor force (it should not be forgotten that, humanity made neheolithic/agricultural revolution in Anatolia, and this is due to perfect suitability for agriculture) is going to become a strategically important country for agricultural food production.

In summary, Turkey has the most advantageous characteristics within the region among its neighbour countries from many aspects. As a compliment to this, Turkey's any kind of resources and potentials could and must be applied to contribute to the global and regional economic development and to support world peace. The cores of potentials owned by Turkey are basically caused by its geographical position to be bridge / crossroad between East and West / North and South.

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