

# Well-Being – Resources, Happiness and Capabilities: Theoretical Discussions and the Evidence from the Western Balkans<sup>1</sup>

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**ABSTRACT** – *The aim of this paper is two-fold. On the one hand, it aims at presenting discussion on advantages and disadvantages of different approaches to well-being, its indicators and measures. On the other, it aims at presenting empirical evidence on the level of well-being of the peoples in the Western Balkan region. Although resources are necessary for the good-quality life, personal well-being cannot be fully assessed by looking only at the resources people have command of. The alternatives are to focus on people's subjective well-being, then to create certain objective measure of well-being, as the one within human development approach, or the combination of the two, as within gross national happiness concept or happy planet approach. According to the available data on well-being in the countries of the Western Balkan region for 2012, Croatia is the only country in the region that belongs to a group of upper middle income countries, and which also records high human development. The others are middle income countries with medium level of human development. It is interesting noticing that Albania, which is with Bosnia and Herzegovina at the bottom of the list based on the gross national income (GNI) per capita and human development index (HDI), is region's leader in the happy planet index (HPI), and among top 20 countries in the world based on this indicator, particularly due to low level of ecological footprint. According the data on the subjective well-being, we can notice that the greatest satisfaction with one's life is experienced by the people in Croatia. It is also noticeable that reportedly more people in the Western Balkans experience positive feelings than they feel the negative.*

**KEY WORDS:** *well-being, subjective well-being, happiness, capabilities, Western Balkans*

## Introduction

Among many other definitions, development is also defined as „a multi-dimensional and multi-sectoral process, involving social, economic and political change aimed at improving people's life" (Alkire and Deneulin, 2009, p.4). In order to achieve the goal of development – improvement in people's life, it is necessary to define what a good-quality life entails, and also to create an indicator or a measure of improvement.

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What does it mean to improve people's life? How do we express the improvement? How can we measure it? In defining what a good-quality life requires we could look at the resources people have a command of. For example, we could look at their income or a commodity bundle they possess. An alternative approach is to express the quality of one's life in terms of happiness. Finally, we could examine capabilities – person's substantive freedoms to choose a life one has reason to value.

The aim of this paper is two-fold. On the one hand, it aims at presenting discussion on advantages and disadvantages of different approaches to well-being, its indicators and measures. On the other, it aims at presenting empirical evidence on the level of well-being of the peoples in the Western Balkans region.

### **Different approaches to well-being<sup>2</sup>**

Development has been equated with the economic growth for decades, where the increase in the gross national product (GNP) per capita has been an indicator of the increase in the quality of people's life. Although economic growth is certainly a necessary condition for increase in personal well-being, it however does not necessarily correspond with the improvement of people's life conditions. For example, it is noticed that, in some countries, relatively high level of gross national product GNP per capita is not followed by the high quality of life as expressed in terms of life expectancy, adult literacy, and infant mortality (Sen, 1999, Ul Haq, 1995). For instance, while Saudi Arabia had fifteen times higher GNP per capita than Sri Lanka, people from the latter country on average lived longer, were in greater number literate, and the infant mortality in this country was on the lower level (HDR 1990). In addition, GNP per capita does not tell anything about distribution of growth (Ul Haq, 1995). Chile is often mentioned in the literature as an example of a country that, after the introduction of neo-liberal policies, has experienced a period of high economic growth, which is however obtained with high level of inequalities (Spence, 2009). Moreover, economic growth does not correspond with the high level of happiness people report. For example, „the world's economic superpower, the United States, has achieved striking economic and technological progress over the past half century without gains in the self-reported happiness of the citizenry” (Sachs, 2012, p. 3). Therefore, focusing only on the country's gross national product per capita we cannot have a full picture of how its citizens live.

We have seen that GNP per capita is not an adequate measure of personal well-being. But, would we have a more precise picture of the quality of one's life if we knew his income? It seems that the more financial sources one has the higher personal well-being she achieves. Even if we agree that, in general this is true, it is so because financial sources allow people to obtain something that they consider as valuable rather than because of its intrinsic value. In other words, the resources are not valuable in themselves - they are just means to more valuable ends (Sen, 1999). Therefore, resources cannot be an expression of personal well-being. Moreover, someone can achieve higher personal well-being with less resources than the other person with more. Also, as Sen rightly points out, a person who for example suffers

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<sup>2</sup> This section draws on my paper “Human Development Index as a Measure of Human Development”, published in the journal *Philosophy and Society* (3/2011), pp. 193-208.



from certain illness would need more resources to reach the same level of well-being as a healthy person (Sen, 1999). Therefore, the level of income or commodity bundle one has a command of cannot be an expression of the quality of his life. In short, although people cannot live, let alone live a good-quality life, without goods and services, the resources they have a command of do not tell us much about the level of personal well-being they achieve. Therefore, we need more precise indicator of the quality of one's life.

What could be better indicator of well-being than the happiness a person experiences? A long philosophical tradition views happiness as a driving force and a final goal of one's life. However, philosophers do not agree on the definition of happiness. The happiness is seen as the final goal both within eudemonism and utilitarianism, but what happiness entails is perceived differently. The Greek word eudemonia, translated into English as happiness, means „a life that is rich and fulfilling for the one living it“ (Russell, 2012, p. 7). The Greek moral philosophers, particularly the founders of the school within the moral philosophy known as virtue ethics, were concern with the question: What is the best way to live? They were preoccupied to define a final end – an end we pursue for its own sake, and for the sake of which we pursue all other goals. Such an end, as they believe, is eudemonia – giving ourselves a good life, where a good life involves both human fulfilment and individual fulfilment (Russell, 2012). Eudemonia is seen as the happiness of a creature with its „characteristic mode of life“ (Russell, 2012, p.9). Since our characteristic human way of living is a rational way, acting with wisdom and sound emotion is what Aristotle means by virtuous activity (Russell, 2012). Thus, a virtuous activity is the most important thing for happiness, though not a sufficient. In other words, happiness, as seen within virtue ethics is not an affective state, but rather a fulfilled life of a human being, which can be objectively examined. This approach is known as eudemonism. Quite a different approach to happiness can be found in the utilitarian tradition. In this approach, happiness is equated with utility and defined as a pleasure and absence of pain (Bentham, 1982, Mill, 2001). According to the founding fathers of utilitarianism, „nature has placed mankind under the governance of two sovereign masters, pain and pleasure“ (Bentham, 1982, p.1). In other words, people by nature seek to reach as much pleasure as possible, and to avoid painful actions. Within this school, happiness is seen as an affective state and a person as the best judge of the level of well-being she achieves. As such, it is a hedonistic approach to happiness. Though both schools define happiness as the final goal in one's life, and personal well-being equate with the level of happiness a person achieves, there is a difference in the way they define happiness. Thus, depending on the philosophical foundations, the indicators of happiness differ.

How can the level of happiness be measured and expressed? In general, there are three possibilities. One way is to ask people to judge the level of well-being they achieve. This approach is known as subjective well-being (SWB), which falls within hedonistic perspective of happiness. The other is to construct certain objective criteria, for example to look at the capabilities – person's substantive freedoms to choose a life one has reason to value. Finally, there is a possibility to combine objective and subjective indicators of well-being. Such approach can be found, for example, within the concepts of gross national happiness or world happiness index.

Subjective well-being is defined as 'a person's cognitive and affective evaluations of his or her life' (Diener, Lucas, and Oshi, 2002, p. 63). Cognitive element refers to what one thinks



about his or her life satisfaction in global and also in certain domains such as work, relationships, etc. The affective element refers to emotions, moods and feelings. Affect could be positive or negative. It is considered positive when the emotions, moods and feelings experienced are pleasant (e.g. joy, laughter, etc.), while it is negative, when the emotions, moods and feelings experienced are unpleasant (e.g. stress, anger, sadness, etc.). The level of well-being is estimated based on the reports in the surveys. A person who reports a high level of satisfaction with her life, and who experiences a greater positive affect and little or less negative affect, has a high level of SWB. The greatest advantage of this approach is that people and their experiences are put in the centre of attention. Unlike the approaches that focus on resources, the subjective well-being is concerned with people and their views and feelings. However, the main advantage of this approach is at the same time its main challenges. Research within psychology indicates that the level of experienced well-being is to a great extent influenced by the personality. In other words, if someone is by nature an optimistic person, she would score high on the subjective well-being scale, although it might be that she has an ailment which makes her life difficult (Sen, 1999). People adapt to changes in their lives and return to their baseline levels of happiness. Moreover, people adjust to the circumstances and try to make the best out of it. In other words, someone may score high on the subjective well-being scale, although it might be that she lives in extreme poverty. Such life, seen from the viewpoint of an impartial spectator would not be considered as valuable. Therefore, it is necessary to define some objective measure of well-being.

As an attempt to overcome the imperfections of the two approaches to well-being, at the same time taking their good sides, a new concept of development emerged in the late 1980s and early 1990s titled human development. As Amartya Sen and Mahbub Ul Haq pointed out, human development is about people realizing their potentials, increasing their choices and enjoying the freedom to lead lives they value (Sen, 1999, Haq, 1995). Philosophical foundations of the human development approach could be traced back to eudemonism. In this approach, resources are seen as necessary for a good-quality life, but they are just means for more valuable ends – substantive freedoms. People should be in the centre of attention of the policies aiming at country's development. However, due to above mentioned challenges related to subjective well-being, personal well-being should be defined in more objective terms.

As it is already mentioned, within human development approach, development is seen as „a process of expanding the real freedoms that people enjoy“ (Sen, 1999, p. 3). Under the substantive freedoms Sen means the capabilities „to choose a life one has reason to value“ (Sen, 1999, p. 74). A person may value a number of different doings and beings which Sen calls functionings. For example, one may value to be adequately nourished, while the self-realisation is the valuable functioning for someone else. However, an individual is not always capable of enjoying the functionings she values, and then she faces unfreedom. For instance, someone who values adequate nourishment may not be capable of achieving this being because she is lacking financial resources. There is a need for conversion factors to translate a doing/being that one values to her capability to enjoy it. Capability therefore „refers to the alternative combinations of functionings that are feasible for her to achieve“ (Ibid: 75). Moreover, in reaching the substantive freedom, a person has to be an agent of her own life – has to have an „ability to pursue and realize goals she values and has reason to



value" (Alkire and Deneulin, 2009, p. 22). What are the capabilities that one has reason to value? Sen refuses to make a list of valuable capabilities. He believes that each society should, through democratic process, decide the list of basic capabilities (Sen, 1999)). The main advantage of this approach is that, in Sen's version, it presupposes the engagement of the whole community in defining the capabilities that need to be in focus of public policies. However, such approach involves the problems with the implementation of deliberative democracy. It seems necessary to develop certain list of basic capabilities. Nussbaum frames these basic principles in terms of ten capabilities: Life, Bodily Health, Bodily Integrity, Senses, Imagination, and Thought, Emotions, Practical Reason, Affiliation, Other Species, Play, and Control over One's Environment (for more details see Nussbaum, 2000). However, any list of capabilities, even the one that Nussbaum proposes is on the one hand limited – it may lack some of the capabilities certain community values, and on the other hand, it is too comprehensive for the operationalization – creation of a measure.

As a measure of human development, the Human Development Index (HDI) emerged. The HDI indicates a country's average achievements in three dimensions of human development: health, as measured by life expectancy at birth; knowledge, as measured by the adult literacy rate (with two-thirds weight) and the measured by combining the expected years of schooling for a school-age child in a country today with the mean years of prior schooling for adults aged 25 and older (with one-third weight), income, as measured by purchasing-power-adjusted per capita Gross National Income (GNI). The HDI is calculated as the geometric mean of the three dimension indices<sup>3</sup>. This indicator is an objective measure of personal well-being. However, since it is based only on three components it certainly does not fully capture all capabilities that people have reason to value.

Now, we will turn to the concepts that combine subjective and objective well-being – the Gross National Happiness (GNH) index and the Happy Planet Index (HPI). The Gross National Happiness concept, developed in Bhutan, is the first serious attempt in the world with an aim to measure happiness (Helliwell, Layard and Sachs, 2012). Since 1970s, Bhutan pursues a holistic approach towards development basing it on the concept of gross national happiness. This approach relies on four pillars: good governance, sustainable socio-economic development, cultural preservation, and environmental conservation. The four pillars have been further classified into nine domains: psychological wellbeing, health, education, time use, cultural diversity and resilience, good governance, community vitality, ecological diversity and resilience, and living standards. All those components of the GNH concept are the means for reaching the happiness of the people which is the end of the country's policies. What makes it similar to the subjective well-being concept is that the Bhutanese's satisfaction with life and state policies are directly assessed through a survey. Concentrating on the nine indicators of the GNH concepts, where subjective well-being is only one of the components, decision-makers in Bhutan are expanding people's opportunities which make this concept

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<sup>3</sup> The maximum value of HDI is 1 and the minimum is 0. Countries are divided into four groups according to the level of the HDI. The counties with the HDI that exceeds 0.900 are consider to have a very high human development, while those with the HDI between 0.800 and 0.899 are of the high human development. A country belongs to a group of medium level of human development if its HDI is between 0.500 and 0.799, while human development is on a low level in the countries with the HDI below 0.500.





similar to the capabilities approach. The gross national happiness concept is based on the premise that adequate standard of living, health and education of population, then vitality and diversity of ecosystem, as well as cultural vitality and diversity, use and balance of time, good governance, community vitality and emotional well-being are necessary for a good quality life. As an indicator of the level of personal well-being and country's development a gross national happiness index is created. GNH Index provides an overview of performance across 9 domains of GNH. This approach is limited to the territory of Bhutan, but it however served as inspiration for the development of the indicators of happiness.

Another indicator that combines subjective and objective measures of personal well-being is Happy Planet Index (HPI). It has three components: life expectancy, experienced well-being and ecological footprint. The experienced well-being is assessed using a question called the 'Ladder of Life' when respondents are asked to imagine a ladder where 0 represents the worst possible life and 10 the best possible life, and to report the step of the ladder they feel they currently stand on. The ecological footprint is a measure of resource consumption. It is a per capita measure of the amount of land required to sustain a country's consumption patterns, measured in terms of global hectares (g ha) which represent a hectare of land with average productive bio-capacity. The HPI is then calculated as following: life expectancy is multiplied by experienced well-being, and it is then divided by ecological footprint. The index value is between 0 and 100, where the bigger value indicates the better score.<sup>4</sup> This indicator is calculated for countries around the globe and it offers a possibility for international comparisons. Since it is based both on subjective and objective measures it shares advantages and challenges of the two approaches. Moreover, since it includes only three components it is certainly limited.

To sum up, in this section I have briefly discussed different approaches to well-being. We have seen that although resources are necessary for the good-quality life, personal well-being cannot be fully assessed by looking only at the resources people have command of. The alternatives are to focus on people's subjective, experiences well-being, to create certain objective measure of well-being, or the combination of the two. Each of the approaches has its advantages and happiness. Therefore, best picture about the well-being one gets by analyses of several indicators.

## **Evidence from the Western Balkans**

In this section, we will focus on the well-being of the peoples in the Western Balkan Region. I will present the data on gross national income (GNI) per capita, human development index (HDI), happy planet index (HPI) and data on subjective well-being. The presented data are for the year 2013.

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<sup>4</sup> Each component of the HPI is evaluated separately. The life expectancy is evaluated as good if it is more than 75, middling if between 60 and 75, and poor if less than 60. Experienced well-being is good if it is more than 6.2, middling between 4.8 and 6.2, and poor if less than 4.8. Finally, the ecological footprint is good if it is less than 1.78, middling between 1.78 and 3.56, poor between 3.56 and 7.12, and very poor more than 7.12.



According to the GNI per capita in 2012, most of the Western Balkan countries are in the group of upper middle income countries<sup>5</sup>, while Croatia is in the group of upper income countries. The lowest level of the GNI per capita is recorded in Bosnia and Herzegovina (7.713), followed by Albania (7.822). Macedonia records the GNI per capita of 9.377, Serbia 9.533 and Montenegro 10.471, while Croatia is the region's leader with the GNI per capita of 15.419 \$ PPP. Croatia also records the highest level of human development, with the HDI of 0.80 which place it in the group of countries of high human development. All other countries of the Western Balkan region belong to the group of the countries with medium level of human development. With the HDI of 0.735, Bosnia and Herzegovina is a country with the lowest human development in the region, followed by Macedonia (0.740), Albania (0.749), Serbia (0.769) and Montenegro (0.791). The data on GNI per capita and HDI for 2012 are presented in the Table 1.

Table 1. GNI per capita and HDI in the Western Balkans in 2012

Country	GNI per capita PPP terms (constant 2005 international \$)	HDI
Albania	7.822	0.749
Bosnia and Herzegovina	7.713	0.735
Croatia	15.419	0.805
Macedonia	9.377	0.740
Montenegro	10.471	0.791
Serbia	9.533	0.769

Source: UNDP

Quite a different picture about the well-being of the peoples in the Western Balkan countries one gets by looking at the data on Happy Planet Index. Albania, with HPI of 54.1, scores the best in the Region, particularly due to the fact that none of the components of the HPI is poor and also due to the good ecological footprint. The region worst score of HPI of 28.3 records Macedonia, with two components evaluated as poor (ecological footprint and experienced well-being). Croatia records HPI of 40.6, with ecological footprint evaluated as poor, while the experienced well-being is poor in Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, which have HPI of 41.3 and 42.4, respectively. It is interesting noticing that Serbia is the only country in the region that does not score as good in any of the components. The data on HPI are presented in the Table 2.

<sup>5</sup> The World Bank groups economies based on the GNI per capita as following: low income, \$1,035 or less; lower middle income, \$1,036 - \$4,085; upper middle income, \$4,086 - \$12,615; and high income, \$12,616 or more.



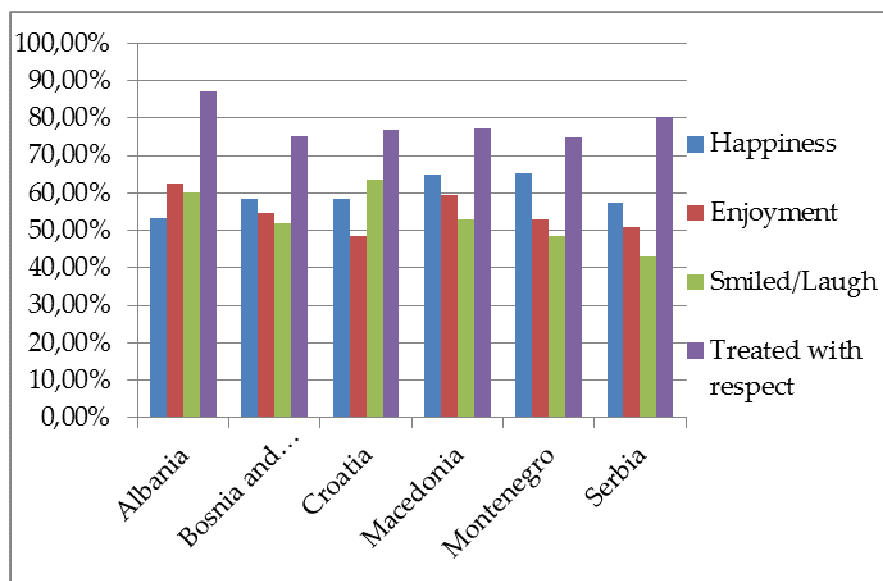
Table 2. HPI in the Western Balkans in 2012

Country	Life-expectancy	Experienced Well-being	Ecological Footprint	HPI
Albania	76.9	5.3	1.8	<b>54.1</b>
Bosnia and Herzegovina	75.7	4.7	2.7	<b>42.4</b>
Croatia	76.6	5.6	4.2	<b>40.6</b>
Macedonia	74.8	4.2	5.4	<b>28.3</b>
Serbia	74.5	4.5	2.6	<b>41.3</b>

Source: Happy Planet Index

Now we will turn to the question of how people in the Western Balkan countries perceive their well-being. As it can be noticed from the HPI, the highest well-being is experienced by the people in Croatia. Croatians, when asked to imagine a ladder where 0 represents the worst possible life and 10 the best possible life, on average report 5.6 as the step of the ladder they feel they currently stand on. They are followed by Albanians (5.3), then by the people in Bosnia and Herzegovina (4.7), Serbia (4.5) and Macedonia (4.2).

Graph 1. Subjective well-being – Positive affect in the Western Balkans in 2012



Source: Gallup, Balkan Monitor

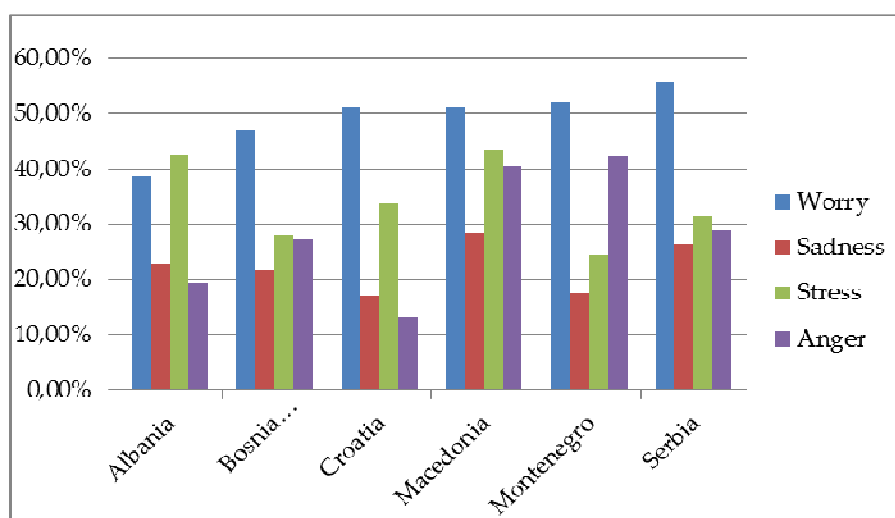
The data on positive and negative feelings of the people in the Western Balkans are collected by the Gallup within the Balkan Monitor. Here, I will present some of the data for 2012. The participants in the survey are asked whether they experienced the feelings such as happiness, enjoyment, worry, sadness, stress, anger, whether they smiled or laughed, were treated with respect during a lot of the previous day. Relatively the greatest number of respondents in Montenegro (65.20%) reported that they felt happy most of the previous day,



followed by participants in Macedonia (65.10%), Croatia (58.40%), Bosnia and Herzegovina (58.30), Serbia (57.30%) and Albania (53.40%). Relatively the greatest number of respondents in Albania (62.70%) said they felt enjoyment the previous day, followed by people in Macedonia (59.30%), Bosnia and Herzegovina (54.60%), Montenegro (52.90%), Serbia (50.90%), and Croatia (48.60%). On average, the greatest number of people in Albania (87.20%) feels they are treated with respect, while relatively the least number of respondents in Montenegro feels the same (74.90%). In Serbia 80.30% respondents stated that they were treated with respect during the previous day, while 77.10% in Macedonia, 76.80% in Croatia and 75.20% in Bosnia and Herzegovina reported the same. Relatively the greatest number of citizens of Croatia (63.60%) smiled/laughed during the previous day, followed by Albanians (60%), Macedonians (52.90%), Bosnians (52%), Montenegrins (48.60%) and Serbians (43.10%). The data on positive feelings are presented in the Graph 1.

It is noticeable that reportedly more people in the Western Balkans experienced positive feeling than negative. According to the collected data, among the Western Balkan countries, the greatest number of citizens of Serbia (55.70%) is worried, while Albanians (38.70%) worry the least in the region, followed by people in Bosnia and Herzegovina (47.10%), Macedonia (51.10%), Croatia (51.20%) and Montenegro (52%). The sadness is felt by the relatively smallest number of Croatians (17.10%), while this negative affect is felt by the relatively greatest number of people in Macedonia (28.50%). In Montenegro 17.60% of the respondents reported they felt sadness during the previous day, followed by Bosnia and Herzegovina (21.60%), Albania (22.80%) and Serbia (26.40%). The greatest number of respondents in Macedonia (43.60%) reported they felt stress, followed by Albania (42.50%), Croatia (33.80%), Serbia (31.50%), Bosnia and Herzegovina (27.90%) and Montenegro (24.50%). The anger is felt by the greatest number of people in Montenegro (42.40%) followed by people in Macedonia (40.50%), Serbia (28.80%), Bosnia and Herzegovina (27.40%), Albania (19.40%) and Croatia (13.20%). The data on negative feelings are presented in the Graph 2.

Graph 2. Subjective well-being – Negative affect in the Western Balkans in 2012



Source: Gallup, Balkan Monitor



## Conclusion

In this paper I have briefly discussed different approaches to well-being and I have presented the data on well-being in the countries of the Western Balkan region. Although resources are necessary for the good-quality life, personal well-being cannot be fully assessed by looking only at the resources people have command of. The alternatives are to focus on people's subjective, experiences well-being, to create an objective measure of well-being, or the combination of the two. While the greatest advantage of subjective well-being approach is that the quality of life is directly assessed by the people who are experiencing it, there are some challenges that this approach faces. For example it is argued that personality influences the perception of one's own situation and the feelings one experiences, and also that people adjust to the life circumstances no matter how bad they may seem to the impartial spectator. In order to overcome the imperfections of the two approaches to well-being, at the same time taking their good sides, a new concept of development emerged in the late 1980s and early 1990s titled human development, which is about people realizing their potentials, increasing their choices and enjoying the freedom to lead lives they value. An objective indicator of personal well-being is sought within human development approach. The main challenge of this concept is the choice of core capabilities. Finally, there are some attempts that combine objective and subjective approach to well-being such as gross national happiness and happy planet.

The main challenge of each approach is creation of an adequate measure of the well-being. The gross national product (GNP) and gross national income (GNI) per capita are the most often used measures that indicate resources that individuals on average have command of in a certain country. The human development index (HDI) indicates a country's average achievements in three dimensions of human development: health, knowledge and income, while the happy planet index HPI combines subjective and objective measures of personal well-being and it has three components: life expectancy, experienced well-being and ecological footprint. Finally, subjective well-being is evaluated through surveys on life satisfaction and experienced affect.

According to the available data on well-being in the countries of the Western Balkan region for 2012, Croatia is the only country of the region that belongs to a group of upper middle income countries, which also scores high human development. The other countries of the region are middle income countries with medium level of human development. It is interesting noticing that Albania, which is with Bosnia and Herzegovina at the bottom of the list based on the GNI per capita and HDI, is region's leader in the HPI, and among top 20 countries in the world, particularly due to low level of ecological footprint. The greatest satisfaction with one's life is experienced by the people in Croatia. It is noticeable that reportedly more people in the Western Balkans experience positive feeling than negative.

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## **Blagostanje – resursi, sreća i sposobnosti: teorijska analiza i stanje na Zapadnom Balkanu**

**REZIME** – Cilj ovog rada je dvostruk. Sa jedne strane, on ima za cilj analizu prednosti i nedostataka različitih pristupa blagostanju, a sa druge da predstavi empirijske podatke o stepenu blagostanja u zemljama Zapadnog Balkana. Iako su finansijska sredstva neophodna za kvalitetan život, ona ne mogu biti adekvatan indikator blagostanja. Alternative su formiranje subjektivnog pokazatelja blagostanja, potraga za objektivnim merilima, kakav je koncept ljudskog razvoja, ili kombinacija ova dva pristupa, kao u slučaju bruto društvene sreće ili pristupa srećne planete. Prema raspoloživim podacima o blagostanja u zemljama Zapadnog Balkana za 2012. godinu, Hrvatska je jedina zemlja u regionu koja pripada grupi zemalja sa gornjim srednjim dohotkom po glavi stanovnika, koja takođe beleži i visok nivo ljudskog razvoja. Ostale zemlje su u grupi zemalja sa srednjim dohotkom po glavi stanovnika i srednjim nivoom ljudskog razvoja. Zanimljivo je primetiti i to da Albanija, koja je sa Bosnom i Hercegovinom na dnu liste na osnovu bruto nacionalnog dohotka (BND) po glavi stanovnika i indeksa ljudskog razvoja (HDI), regionalni lider prema indeksu srećne planete (HPI) i među prvih 20 zemalja u svetu prema ovom pokazatelju, prentstveno zbog niskog nivoa ekološkog otiska. Što se tiče subjektivnih pokazatelja blagostanja, najveće zadovoljstvo svojim životom doživljavaju stanovnici Hrvatske. Primetno je i da veći broj ispitanika u zemljama Zapadnog Balkana svedoči da doživljavaju pozitivna osećanja nego što je to broj onih koji svedoče o negativnim.

**KLJUČNE REČI:** blagostanje, subjektivno blagostanje, sreća, sposobnosti, Zapadni Balkan

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