



By: **Emre Alkin**

The Causes, Consequences, and Damages of the Young Leader's Retreat



First of all, let me clarify the definition of "young." Around the world, the population over 65 now **exceeds** the population under 5. Additionally, people are beginning to live comfortably up to the age of 90.

Therefore, those at 65 are considered "old but strong," while individuals between 40 and 55 are regarded as "young leaders." Now, let me get to the main topic:

Last year, we helped a friend who was struggling to find his place and live through difficulties by providing him with an opportunity suited to his abilities.

Within a year, he returned and told us he wanted to leave. When we asked, "Did you find a new job?" he said no. He simply couldn't be happy in his current job. "I will earn less, but I will live happily," he said, and left. We respected his decision.

I've observed that many young high-level professionals—bankers, financiers, CEOs, and CFOs—have left their jobs and moved to quiet towns, never to return.

Instead of trying to become something, they prefer "not to be anything." People should live as happily as they see fit.

However, I couldn't ignore how abruptly the disappearance of such talented individuals might affect the global economy.

While discussions often focus on the lives of those who own major hotels and restaurant chains across Europe or those who went from bank employees to bank owners, no one talks about the quiet exodus I mentioned earlier. So,

I decided to examine the causes, consequences, and potential damages of these silent disappearances.

The rise of urban living and individual freedom

My observations indicate that most of these

individuals tend to seclude themselves alone rather than with their spouses, and many are single. So, let's start by answering the question: Who prefers to live alone?

One of the main reasons for the increasing trend of living alone in Europe and the US is the rise of urban living and individual freedom.

Analyses published in major newspapers like The New York Times and The Guardian show that independent living among young adults has increased by around 50%.

For example, the percentage of people living alone in the US was around 13% in the 1950s and has risen to approximately 28% by 2020—almost doubling.

Some figures to illustrate:

- About 55% of young people aged 18-29 in the US **prefer** living alone, an increase from roughly 30% in the 1980s (Pew Research Center).
- In Europe, this varies by country, but specifically in Germany, Italy, and France, the share of those living alone in urban or abroad settings is around 20-30%. The 2022 German census shows that 24% of the population lives alone.

There are several main reasons for this trend:

Desire for individual freedom and independence: People now want to shape their own lives. According to an article in The Economist, young people are **moving** towards their own fields, different lifestyles, and distancing themselves from traditional family structures. This trend is especially strong among city dwellers.

Widening access to work and education: Thanks to remote work and online education, many prefer their own homes. For example, a Forbes study **reports** that the proportion of people working from home in the US increased from 30% in 2019 to 45%, noting the significant impact of the pandemic.

Changing family structures and sociocultural factors: Marriage rates are declining while divorce rates are rising. A report in The New York Times indicates that divorce rates in Europe are approaching 40%, encouraging more people to live alone.

Economic factors and living costs: In some countries, young people face high rent and property prices but still aspire to live alone, trying to overcome economic hurdles.

Globalisation and modern lifestyles: People are more freely moving internationally and creating their own spaces. Analyses in The Guardian indicate that around 20-25% of city dwellers are immigrants or second-generation immigrants choosing to live independently away from their homelands.

Of course, living alone has both advantages and challenges. Some studies suggest that individuals living alone may be more prone to psychological health issues, especially depression. Nonetheless, the sense of freedom and self-reliance makes this lifestyle attractive.

Improving quality of life

Let's now examine those who have left their professions and moved to quieter areas based on different occupational groups:

High-income professionals and managers: This group is particularly composed of those aged 40-50, working in high-income and prestigious fields. For example, some articles published in Forbes magazine state that around 60% of this age group prefer to change their living environments to improve their quality of life or manage stress. These individuals typically have annual incomes exceeding \$200,000.

Entrepreneurs and finance professionals: These individuals work in sectors offering high earnings. According to an article published in Harvard Business Review, about 35% of this group, often at a young age before 40-45, have relocated to calmer areas. Their incomes are quite high, usually over \$300,000 annually.

Healthcare workers and engineers:

In these professions, due to stress and long working hours, it is common for younger individuals to prefer more peaceful locations. For instance, an analysis in The Economist indicates that about 20% of this group, with annual incomes between \$150,000 and \$200,000, have changed their lifestyles.

Low- and middle-income individuals:

This smaller group makes decisions primarily to improve their quality of life rather than due to economic reasons. Although their incomes are generally below \$80,000 annually, factors like lifestyle and stress are key considerations.

According to research in various magazines, the main motivation behind these decisions is often stress levels, quality of life, and personal preferences. Additionally, especially after COVID-19, thanks to "global communication and technological possibilities," these individuals can more easily relocate to distant areas.

A high-income manager in their 40s may eventually live on the California coast or buy a small house in Italy

In summary, surveys and articles generally **show** that about 10-15% of young high-income professionals and top managers give up their careers to move to calmer, nature-connected places.

For example, in England or America, a high-income manager in their 40s may eventually live on the California coast or buy a small house in Italy. These individuals typically prefer to distance themselves from big city life, with about 75% opting to improve their quality of life.

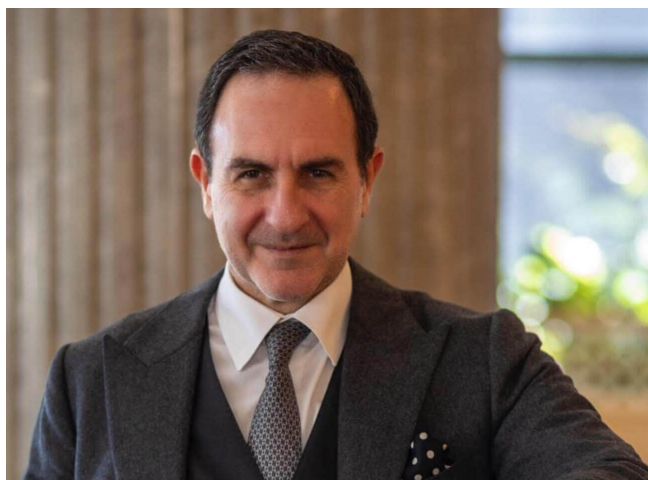
"I've had enough, I'm leaving" mindset

Now, moving to my third question: Does the resignation of these talented people harm the

global economy?

Firstly, many economic analyses emphasise that young managers and entrepreneurs are significant drivers of innovation and growth. An article in Harvard Business Review states that young entrepreneurs contribute dynamism to the economy thanks to their high risk-taking potential and innovative approaches.

If young leaders leave their jobs and withdraw from the scene to pursue other interests, this dynamism could weaken.



The departure of young professionals from their jobs can negatively impact the underlying dynamics that drive the global economy and innovation - Emre Alkin

Another source, an article in The Economist, mentions that decisions and initiatives by young managers not only create employment but also open new markets.

Thus, their choices can impact global supply chains and economic diversity. At this point, the withdrawal of young leaders from trade seems to lead to a decrease in new startups and investments.

Of course, anyone can say these things—so let's look at the current research:

One analysis suggests that a decrease in global entrepreneurship rates could increase in societies where young managers leave their jobs and move away by about 15-20%.

Reports from the World Economic Forum **show** that in developing countries, the

slowdown in young people's entrepreneurship is associated with slower economic growth.

According to a Forbes article, while a sector growth rate of about 25-30% is expected where young leaders are employed, failing to retain them could reduce this to about 10-15%.

Moreover, a slowdown in the pace of global innovation may also occur as a consequence of these decisions. Information from Bloomberg indicates that young leaders tend to take high risks and direct venture capital investments. A decline in this activity could hinder technological advances and new solutions.

In summary, losing young leaders may lead to:

- Decreases in employment and productivity,
- Slower innovation and technological progress,
- Reduction in new markets,
- Slower overall economic growth.

Meanwhile, young entrepreneurs who move to calmer areas tend to take fewer risks or adopt more traditional approaches; if these positions are filled by less risk-taking profiles, overall growth may become slower and more stagnant.

In conclusion, the departure of young professionals from their jobs can negatively impact the underlying dynamics that drive the global economy and innovation. Many economists and business analysts emphasise the importance of supporting young leaders and keeping their entrepreneurial spirit alive.

Personally, I try to discourage a few people almost every month from that "I've had enough, I'm leaving" mindset. I'm not sure if I'm doing the best for them, but I am confident that I'm doing what's right for the country.