

*Research Article***Opportunities and Obstacles: A Study of Turkish Migration to Argentina¹****Mustafa Şeref Akın²****Abstract**

This study explores the migration of individuals from Turkey to Argentina, focusing on their motivations. Argentina and Turkey, situated on separate continents with significant geographical distances, harbor distinctive cultural identities, customs, traditions, histories, and languages, posing potential challenges for meaningful interactions and cultural exchange between their populations. The research delves into the stories of 17 migrants who have chosen to move to Argentina or stay long-term. Through an in-depth analysis of social media videos created by these migrants, the study gains first-hand insights into their decision-making processes and the factors influencing their choices. Buenos Aires is portrayed as an attractive destination due to its appealing lifestyle, delicious and affordable gastronomy, well-organized city, rich entertainment scene, elegant European architecture, and freedom of expression with the spoken Spanish language. However, the country's economic opportunities are perceived as limited, leading migrants to seek additional foreign income for a better quality of life. The study reveals that spending around 600/1200 USD per month on essential expenses, such as housing, food, transportation, and dining out, can result in a significantly improved lifestyle for single/couple migrants from Turkey. Successful migration transition occurs when foreign income is received, language barriers are overcome, and a robust social network is established.

Keywords: Turkish migration, Argentina, economic opportunities, language barriers, social network.

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*Araştırma Makalesi***Fırsatlar ve Engeller: Arjantin'e Türk Göçmenliği Üzerine Bir Araştırma****Öz**

Bu çalışma, Türkiye'den Arjantin'e bireylerin göçünü inceleyerek, onların motivasyonlarına odaklanmaktadır. Arjantin ve Türkiye, önemli coğrafi mesafelerle ayrı kıtalarda bulunmaktadır ve farklı kültürel kimliklere, geleneklere, tarihçelere ve dillere sahip benzersiz toplumsal yapıları barındırmaktadırlar. Bu farklılıklar, toplumlar arasında anlamlı etkileşimler ve kültürel alışveriş için potansiyel zorluklar doğurabilir. Araştırma, Arjantin'e taşınmayı veya uzun vadeli olarak kalmayı seçen 17 göçmenin hikayelerine odaklanmaktadır. Bu göçmenler tarafından oluşturulan sosyal medya videolarının derinlemesine bir analizi ile, çalışma, onların karar alma süreçlerine ve seçimlerini etkileyen faktörlere ilişkin birinci elden içgörüler elde eder. Buenos Aires, cazip bir destinasyon olarak öne çıkar; çünkü hareketli yaşam tarzına, lezzetli ve ekonomik gastronomiye, düzenli bir şehre, zengin bir eğlence sahnesine, zarif Avrupa mimarisine, İspanyolca diline ve siyasi özgürlüğe sahiptir. Ancak, ülkenin ekonomik fırsatları sınırlı olarak algılanmaktadır, bu da göçmenlerin daha iyi bir yaşam kalitesi için ek yabancı gelir aramalarına neden olur. Çalışma, Türkiye'den tek başına/çift olarak gelen göçmenler için konut, gıda, ulaşım ve dışarıda yeme gibi temel harcamalara ayda ortalama 500/1000 dolar harcama sonucunda Türkiye'ye göre yaşam kalitesinde önemli bir iyileşme sağlanabileceğini ortaya koymaktadır. Başarılı göç geçişi, yabancı gelirin alınması, dil engellerinin aşılması ve sağlam bir sosyal ağın kurulmasıyla gerçekleşecektir.

Anahtar kelimeler: Türk göçü, Arjantin, ekonomik fırsatlar, dil engelleri, sosyal ağlar.

Introduction

Migration is often seen as a catalyst for growth, encompassing economic, social, political, and personal motivations (Hoppe & Fujishiro, 2015; Rosenblatt & Sheaffer, 2001; Wanniarachchi et al., 2022). However, the migration from Turkey to Argentina appears to deviate from these conventional criteria. Argentina faces economic challenges (such as high inflation and low minimum wage), constant political turmoil, is geographically isolated (distant from Turkey), and encounters substantial language and cultural differences. Despite these factors, the increasing trend in migration from Turkey to Argentina demands thorough exploration and understanding.

This study aims to delve into the motivations, challenges, and outcomes associated with migration from Turkey to Argentina. By scrutinizing the economic, cultural, social, and political dimensions of migration patterns, it seeks to illuminate the factors shaping the migratory process and the experiences of individuals in their pursuit of an enhanced quality of life from one developing country to another. Additionally, it is imperative to consider the physical and cultural disparities between the two countries. Through an academic lens, this research strives to contribute to a more profound understanding of migration dynamics and to inform practices that facilitate the successful migration and integration of Turkish citizens in Argentina, representing two ostensibly distinct developing countries.

The migration from Turkey to Argentina represents a significant journey across continents, encompassing diverse challenges for individuals. Predominantly, economic factors, such as the pursuit of affordable living expenses and better employment prospects, are often key drivers in this migration pattern (Bah, 2023, p.60; DeVoretz & Pivnenko, 2004, pp.9-17). However, Argentina has faced a profound economic crisis for a long time. Given the lack of economic opportunities, why are Turks still willing to migrate to Argentina? What might be opportunities for this dilemma? In this exploration, we delve into the factors that influence the quality of life in Argentina and the importance of certain aspects such as affordability, cultural experiences, freedom, and social support systems. We discuss the significance of style over luxury, the impact of crime rates in other South American countries, and the value of preserving nature in urban environments. Additionally, we explore the challenges individuals face when leaving their home country and migrating to a new one, such as cultural adjustments, language barriers, and building new social networks. We also recognize the importance of socialization in facilitating adaptation to a foreign country and the benefits it brings, including the development of support networks, learning languages, cultural integration, and personal growth.

The Migration Root from Turkey to Argentina

The current migration from Turkey to Argentina falls into the category of international migration, presenting challenges related to adaptation to the environment, culture, language barriers, and social systems (Kutor et al., 2021, pp. 490-495 et al., 2022, p.1). Unlike some seasonal migration patterns where individuals move to different regions or countries for temporary work and return home afterwards (Shah & Lerche, 2020, pp.719-722), Turkish migrants to Argentina historically sought long-term opportunities.

The historical roots of Middle Eastern migration to Argentina date back to the late 19th and early 20th centuries, marked by significant waves of migration from the Ottoman Empire to Argentina. During this period, Argentina experienced rapid expansion in its agricultural sector, driven by government initiatives to attract European immigrants to settle and cultivate vast expanses of fertile land. Ottoman migrants, mainly originating from regions such as the Middle East and the Eastern Mediterranean, were among the diverse groups of settlers who sought opportunities in Argentina. Although “El Turco” is a nickname commonly used in Argentine politics to refer to former President Carlos Menem, who was of Syrian descent, the cultural and historical ties between Turkey and Argentina remain relatively weak.

From a historical perspective, the migration from Turkey to Argentina is not consistent with Turkic origins, and therefore, a deep cultural connection between these two nations does not exist. Moreover, unlike some migrant communities that establish mosques, cultural associations, and businesses to preserve their cultural heritage and provide mutual support, Middle Eastern migrants of 19th century in Argentina did not necessarily maintain strong ties due to geographical distance.

The primary driving force behind international migration is the pursuit of economic prosperity and a better quality of life. Migrants venture abroad in search of opportunities such as land ownership, employment, and entrepreneurial prospects. Labor migration, which involves movement for work opportunities motivated by regional economic disparities and wage differences, has been a significant factor in migration patterns (Massey et al., 1998, pp.100-120). Another notable trend is step migration has been observed, characterized by gradual movement from rural to urban areas in pursuit of better opportunities and improved living conditions (Grigg, 1977, pp.41-43).

Various forms of migration contribute to shaping global demographics, including forced migration, voluntary migration, temporary migration for employment, student migration, brain drain, humanitarian migration, and environmental migration (Abel et al., 2019, pp. 239-245; Becker & Ferrara, 2019, pp.1-5; Bakewell, 2021, pp. 124-126; Çiçek, 2023, p.67). These diverse migration patterns reflect different motivations and circumstances driving people to move from one place to another.

In Turkish literature, Argentina is often associated with economic poverty (Urcan, 2023, p.697), financial crises (Işık, 2005, pp.88-89; Koyuncu & Şenses, 2004, pp.22-28), and the country's relationship with the IMF (Özdemir, 2023, pp.157-158), and political instability, such as coups (Gezgüç & Uzun, 2017, pp. 153-165). Overall, the portrayal of Argentina in Turkish literature tends to be negative, focusing on challenges and difficulties rather than positive aspects of the relationship and opportunities.

Method

Design

To investigate the experiences of Turkish immigrants living in Argentina, the study analysed open source video interviews that are publicly available online between 2022 to 2023. 17 Turkish residents', long-term settlers' and social media bloggers' stories of Argentina were watched (Table 1). All of the YouTubers' videos (1000+) are followed to understand the context and investigate the lifestyle and motivations of Turks who migrated or stayed long. Thanks to the opportunities provided by social media, the experiences of people were listened to first-hand decision-making processes.

Analyzing Data and Saturation

In the literature, qualitative content analysis is widely recognized as a systematic approach for analyzing qualitative data. The approach involves identifying patterns, themes, and concepts within the data to generate meaningful insights and understanding (Lindgren et al., 2020, pp. 2-6). Content analysis is utilized to condense and abstract a sizable amount of textual data and directly extract participant messages (Gupta et al., 2018, pp.10-59) without imposing a researcher's viewpoint to gain fresh insights into the study phenomena.

To address the study's central question, "What are the motivations, challenges, and outcomes of migration from Turkey to Argentina, and how do economic, cultural, social, and political factors shape the migratory process and experiences of individuals seeking a better quality of life in Argentina?"

Qualitative research was planned from interviews conducted on social media to gather insights into the decision-making processes of emigrants or long-term residents. Socio-economic and demographic characteristics are not prioritized in the interviews (Kumar, 2012, pp. 15-35). People's thoughts, feelings and behaviours are recognized (Agafonoff, 2006, pp.115-120). The most important criterion for participant selection is that Turkish people have some experience with migration.

The aim of the qualitative research is to uncover concepts (trends, patterns). Although 10-15 participants usually elicit concepts (Faulkner, 2003, pp. 379-383) the abundance of migration story videos available on social media was utilized to reinforce understanding of decision-making processes. In a qualitative study, Hennink and Kaiser (2022) statistically proved that the saturation point is reached when nine and sixteen participants have the same (homogeneous) topic. In this study, 17 settlers/migrants (same status) from Turkey (same country) were interviewed about their experiences of migration abroad (same topic). According to Hennink & Kaiser (2022), the number of participants should be increased as heterogeneous elements emerge (for example, in a study comparing Indian and Turkish migrants).

Setting and Participants

The dataset reveals that the majority of these Turkish YouTubers are young males, with a notable gender imbalance—13 males compared to 5 females. Most individuals fall within the “young” age category, reflecting a trend where younger generations are more active in digital content creation. Regarding marital status, eight are married, seven are single, and a few fall into less common categories such as widowed or in long-term relationships. This diversity suggests that personal circumstances do not significantly limit participation in content creation. Interestingly, 12 out of the 18 individuals have active YouTube channels, indicating a strong inclination toward leveraging digital platforms for sharing personal experiences, travel narratives, cultural insights, and earn income (Youtube payment and building a business).

Content-wise, the YouTubers tend to focus on themes related to travel, lifestyle, and cultural exploration, often reflecting their personal backgrounds and experiences abroad. Channels like “Turkish Family in Argentina” and “Voices Faces Roads” highlight cross-cultural narratives, while others like “Fatih Snatcher” and “Mert Aktas Travel” emphasize adventure and travel content. The prevalence of married couples running channels together (e.g., Tarık and Hülya) suggests that content creation can also be a shared family activity, while single creators often focus on solo travel and personal development. This blend of personal storytelling and cultural exploration likely appeals to audiences seeking authentic, relatable content that bridges diverse cultural contexts. These YouTubers are extremely important in decision-making since everyone who recorded videos (as YouTubers or for hobby purposes) stated that they exclusively watched the previously uploaded videos before migrating to Argentina (table 1). I provided the URL link to YouTube videos.

Table 1*Participants*

#	Code-Name	Age	Marital status	Gender	Profession	URL Channel (for YouTubers)
1	Tarık	Upper Middle	Married	Male		Turkish family in Argentina https://www.youtube.com/@Arjantindeturkailesi
2	Hülya	Upper Middle	Married	Male		Turkish family in Argentina https://www.youtube.com/@Arjantindeturkailesi
3	Ali	Young	Single	Male		If not, we'll be back https://www.youtube.com/@Olmazsadoriz
4	Cansu	Young	Single	Female		If not, we'll be back https://www.youtube.com/@Olmazsadoriz
5	Deniz	Young	Single	Female	Dancer	
6	Mehmet	Middle	Married	Male	Technician	
7	Mert	Young	Long-term relationship with an Argentine	Male	Bookmarker	
8	Gökтуğ	Young	Single	Male	Traveller	https://www.youtube.com/@goktugsgn
9	Sinan	Young	Married	Male	Office worker	
10	Gamze	Young	Married	Female	Office worker	
11	Berkcan	Young	Married	Male		What will happen now? https://www.youtube.com/@nolacaksimdi
12	Deniz	Young	Married	Female		What will happen now? https://www.youtube.com/@nolacaksimdi
13	Deniz's mother	Upper Middle	Widowed	Female	Retired	
14	Gökhan	Young	Married	Male		Voices Faces Roads https://www.youtube.com/@sesleryuzleryollar
15	Mert	Young	Single	Male		travel https://www.youtube.com/@MertAktasTravel
16	Fatih	Young	Single	Male		Fatih Snatcher https://www.youtube.com/@ifkoparan
17	Özgür	Young	Widowed	Male		Tell Me a City, Dad https://www.youtube.com/c/BanaBir%C5%9EehirAnlatBaba
18	Sezer	Young	Single	Male		Sezer Fugitive https://www.youtube.com/@sezery%C4%B1maz2

Findings

Low cost/benefit ratio

The most remarkable issue is the low cost/benefit, which implies that the advantages involved in migrating from one country to another outweigh the risks of making that move. This could indicate that the perceived benefits of migration, such as improved living conditions, are substantial enough to justify the challenges or difficulties associated with the process. Indeed, Argentina offers a great deal of benefits in terms of the cost of living.

In Argentina, the cost of living is relatively affordable, especially compared to many developed countries. Besides affordable and delicious gastronomy, a well-organized city infrastructure, a rich entertainment scene, and elegant European architecture all contribute to an appealing lifestyle for migrants. Moreover, the spoken Spanish language adds to the ease of integration and communication for newcomers.

While Argentina may have limited economic opportunities, the lower cost of living allows individuals, especially singles, to maintain a decent quality of life with a threshold spending of approximately 500 USD. This makes the country an attractive destination for those seeking to improve their lifestyle without incurring significant financial burdens.

Affordable cost of living

Comparing the prices in the migrated country and the prices in the country of origin can provide individuals with a useful reference point to assess the affordability and potential benefits of relocating to a different location. By considering factors like housing costs, transportation expenses, healthcare, groceries, and other essential goods and services, individuals can determine if the migration destination offers a more affordable or costlier living environment compared to their current home. As Hülya observed, “It is 50% cheaper than the prices in Turkey,” underscoring how such comparisons can reveal substantial differences in affordability.

Additionally, evaluating transportation costs, such as the price of taxis or public transit, can further illuminate the economic appeal of a destination. Fatih shared his experience, noting, “Argentina offers a quality of life at a low cost of living; I paid only 3 dollars for a 20-minute taxi ride.” Such examples illustrate how relocating to a place with lower living expenses can help individuals maintain their desired lifestyle, save money, or even improve their financial situation by benefiting from reduced costs or enhanced job opportunities.

Affordable food options, especially meat, are crucial for individuals and families with limited financial resources, as meat has become a luxury product in Turkey. Access to affordable meat ensures a varied and balanced diet

without placing excessive strain on the budget, which can enhance financial stability, reduce stress related to food costs, and provide adequate nutrition for individuals and families, positively influencing their overall quality of life. Göktuğ highlighted the affordability elsewhere, stating, “Market prices are very affordable compared to Turkey; meat is 2 dollars a kilo, and a bottle of wine is 1 dollar.” Further illustrating the stark contrast, Berk noted, “To understand the difference in cost with Turkey, you can eat meat for one-tenth, chicken for one-twentieth, in a restaurant where you can consume unlimited meat for \$12 per person, while in Turkey, fast food chains such as McDonald’s and Burger King offer the menu for close to \$10.” These comparisons emphasize how migration to a destination with lower food prices can contribute to a higher quality of life by offering affordable access to essential dietary items.

Eating out, especially when it comes to beverages, and participating in entertainment or social activities have become increasingly expensive in Turkey. For many, these activities are now difficult to afford. Gamze provides a telling example: “A couple earning 1,000 dollars in Turkey pays 75 dollars to eat out, meaning that one-fifteenth of their salary goes away, whereas here it costs very little.” Cansu also shared her experience, noting, “I drank 4 margaritas and ate a plate of tacos, getting drunk for 52 TL, which I couldn’t have done in Turkey—it would have cost 500 TL.” These examples highlight how migrating to a country with more affordable dining and leisure options can significantly enhance one’s quality of life by making social activities accessible without straining the budget. This affordability allows individuals to enjoy social interactions and entertainment while maintaining financial stability.

Retired individuals often prioritize affordability when choosing a place to live, as many retirees depend on fixed incomes, such as pensions, retirement savings, or social security benefits. Ensuring their limited financial resources cover daily living expenses, healthcare, and other necessities throughout their retirement years becomes essential. Tarık explained their choice, stating, “We chose Argentina because it is a place where we can live comfortably for 250,000 pesos, which is the equivalent of our pensions of 12,000 TL abroad. Even renting a house in Turkey for 12,000 TL, which matches my pension, makes it difficult to survive. After we retired, we wanted to live somewhere other than Turkey, and our first choice was Argentina because Europe is expensive.” However, the decision to relocate for retirees is not always easy. As Cansu shared, “It would be hard for retired couples to leave their grandchildren and families, but I would like to come to Argentina for six months to experience a different country and get a spacious room in a central location for 200 dollars.” Ali also added insight, stating, “A person with the lowest pension in Turkey, equivalent to 370 dollars, cannot make a living in Buenos Aires, but if he is married, he can live comfortably on the pension of both of them.” Living within a specific budget provides a sense of financial stability. Participants suggest that singles can live on around 600 USD and couples on approximately 1,200 USD in Buenos Aires under certain conditions. Managing to live within

these budgets indicates that individuals or couples can find affordable housing, cover day-to-day expenses, and maintain a reasonable standard of living. Tarık noted, “For a decent living for two people, you need 1,100 USD per month.” Gamze added her perspective: “As a couple, you can stay in a shared house for 600 dollars, travel, eat out three days a week, and do whatever you want as long as it is not too expensive.” Berk further explained the breakdown of expenses: “Rents of houses are 500 dollars and of rooms 200 dollars, your grocery shopping is 150-200 dollars, and even if you have private insurance, you can live comfortably for 1,000 dollars as a couple, especially if your pension matches this amount.” However, if a couple stretches their budget slightly beyond 1,000 USD, they can significantly enhance their quality of life. Cansu shared, “You can live ‘a super life’ in this city for six months for 10 thousand dollars (1,500 dollars a month) for two people.” Similarly, Gamze added, “As a couple, you can live comfortably in a separate house for 1,200 dollars without cutting down on food and drink.” Argentina has experienced significant currency fluctuations and high inflation rates in recent years. In such circumstances, earning income in a stable foreign currency like the US dollar can provide financial stability and protection against currency devaluation. Sezer remarked, “If you have dollars, you can buy anything; you can consider yourself rich.” Fatih elaborated on the benefits, explaining, “If you have dollars, life in Argentina is very good—dolce vita—because you get double the exchange rate against the dollars you carry in cash, not on credit cards.” In terms of business opportunities, Berk noted, “Brazil is better than Argentina for starting a business, but if you have a house in Turkey and an income of 1,000-1,500 USD, Buenos Aires is the best city to choose.” He added, “Argentina is a very sweet and livable city for someone who likes Europe, earns dollars, drinks at the bar on the weekend, eats at restaurants, and manages their online business during the weekdays.”

Quality of life

Quality of life matters because it encompasses the fundamental aspects contributing to individuals’ happiness, well-being, and overall satisfaction. It is a reflection of the opportunities, resources, and conditions that allow individuals to lead fulfilling and meaningful lives.

Gastronomy is deeply connected to cultural traditions and experiences. Exploring different cuisines and savoring diverse culinary offerings can deepen one’s understanding and appreciation of various cultures. It offers the chance to immerse oneself in local traditions, flavors, and culinary heritage, enriching one’s quality of life. Food is a fundamental source of human enjoyment and pleasure. Access to a wide variety of flavors, ingredients, and culinary experiences can spark joy and enhance overall well-being. Sharing meals with loved ones, trying new dishes, and enjoying different tastes create memorable and pleasurable moments. Fatih emphasized the centrality of food in Argentina’s culture: “The food culture is based on meat, and it is incredibly delicious. You can come to Argentina just to eat this meat.” Similarly, Mehmet expressed his admiration for the city’s food and atmosphere, stating, “Buenos Aires is a very beautiful city; I fell in love with the city. It is a free city, the people are happy, and I ate meat and drank beer like an animal.”

Civilized behavior promotes social cohesion and harmonious interactions within communities. It involves treating others with respect, empathy, and kindness. When individuals engage in such behavior, they help create a positive and supportive social environment, fostering stronger relationships and a sense of community. Berk shared a personal experience, stating, “They treat my pregnant wife very well and give her a seat on the bus and support her every time.” Hülya added, “We were energized by the smiling and calmness of the people here.”

Traffic congestion is a significant issue in large cities in Turkey. Reduced congestion not only means less time spent in traffic jams and delays but also allows individuals to use their time more efficiently. Heavy traffic is a common source of stress, leading to frustration, impatience, and elevated stress levels. Furthermore, congestion negatively impacts economic productivity by causing wasted time, increased fuel consumption, and inefficiencies in transportation and logistics. Ali highlighted the differences, noting, “The roads are wide and flat, suitable for bicycles; there are no traffic jams, you can do sports, and the bicycles belonging to the municipality are free of charge.” He also emphasized the overall livability of Buenos Aires: “A livable city where there is no social pressure, where there are smiling people, where there are no traffic jams, and where people are not in a hurry.” Cansu added, “In Buenos Aires, there is not a crowded and complicated public transportation system with long waiting times like in Istanbul. Your bus arrives within 3 minutes, and you can reach anywhere with a transfer for a very cheap ticket of 2.5 TL.” Ali further expressed his love for the city: “Everywhere you come across cute cafes in charming neighborhoods. I am very happy to live calmly with an incredible bus system—people fall in love with this city.”

Cultural and entertainment activities foster personal growth, social engagement, and mental well-being while promoting diversity and enhancing the local economy. They provide opportunities for individuals to explore, learn, connect, and enjoy the richness of human expression, ultimately enriching their quality of life. Göktuğ observed, “Although Argentines have no money, they know how to have fun, and they are very friendly.” Gökhan added, “There is a festival culture—they are always having fun, drinking, and marijuana is free.” Berk highlighted the vibrant nightlife, noting, “They love to have fun; the cafes are open until the morning, and then they go to work as if nothing had happened.” Özgür echoed this sentiment: “I love it here because, in Brazil, you can’t find anyone on the street after midnight; everything is closed, whereas here the streets are ablaze, even the markets are open 24 hours a day.” He also encouraged his friends to experience this lifestyle: “Rent out your house in Turkey and live your life in Argentina; you can go to places, watch the theatre, and eat meat every day for free compared to Turkey.” Fatih emphasized Argentina’s cultural depth: “The chess tournament in the middle of the bar is amazing.” He further noted, “They are very advanced in culture, art, and architecture. Maybe they are not rich, but they have high standards—they don’t say, ‘Let’s build a building on empty land,’ they make good use of it.”

Freedom empowers individuals by enabling personal expression, protecting rights and liberties, fostering economic opportunities, ensuring fairness, and promoting personal security and safety. It allows people to lead fulfilling, meaningful lives, contributing to the overall well-being and happiness of individuals and communities. Ali highlighted Argentina's openness toward marginalized communities, noting, "In 2010, America became the first country to allow LGBT marriage, and here there are many homosexuals who are not judged in society." Cansu added, "There is freedom in everything, including freedom of thought." Ali also pointed out, "Up to 8 stems of cannabis are free to use on your own, provided you don't trade or organize." Mert emphasized how personal freedoms influenced his attraction to Argentina: "In Turkey, they interfere with your lifestyle in every aspect, including meat and alcohol, but the freedom in Argentina is what attracts me here." He further reflected, "I ask my 20-year-old friends in Turkey: can you have fun like these young people?"

A social state plays a crucial role in providing a safety net, promoting equality and social justice, ensuring access to essential services, supporting health and well-being, investing in education and skill development, prioritizing work-life balance, and fostering social cohesion. It creates a society where individuals have the support and opportunities needed to lead fulfilling and meaningful lives. Ali highlighted Argentina's inclusive approach: "Argentina, as a social state, accepts everyone who considers Argentina their homeland." Cansu noted a striking contrast with other countries, saying, "I've never seen as many homeless people in Argentina as in the USA." Mert emphasized the accessibility of healthcare: "If you work, you are insured, and even if you come with a tourist visa, state hospitals are free for the first six months." Hülya shared her positive experience with the health system: "I went to the nearby clinic 4-5 times. They were interested, spoke a little English, and gave me only one medicine instead of a bag full, but it was good."

Education is also highly accessible; as Tarık pointed out, "You can enrol your children immediately." Berk added, "Universities are free after obtaining a work permit, but without a work permit, they charge between 5-15 thousand dollars." Gamze shared another aspect of the healthcare system: "When you go to the state hospital, no one asks for your ID card, and if you don't have money for medicine, there is a pharmacy inside the hospital where you can get your medicine." Seda emphasized the importance of these services for families, saying, "It is a good place to raise children because Argentina is a welfare state, so education and health are free."

Preserving **nature** within cities provides numerous benefits for quality of life, including improved physical and mental health, access to green spaces, biodiversity conservation, climate resilience, cultural and educational value, and enhanced aesthetics. Integrating nature into urban environments fosters sustainable, resilient, and enjoyable cities where residents can live, work, and thrive. Cansu highlighted Argentina's abundance of green spaces, saying, "I am a lover of Argentina; every street is green, and there is a park at the end of the road. On

Friday afternoons, people do sports and take lessons from a yoga instructor at a very affordable price.” Gökhan added, “One of the reasons we settled in Argentina was the longing for nature that we experienced in Istanbul.” Sezer also emphasized the greenery, noting, “The streets are green everywhere, and every shade of green can be seen.” Fatih shared his personal experience with nature in Buenos Aires: “Buenos Aires is an amazing city because every road leads to a park and a statue. The front of my house in Buenos Aires is a park, and I enjoy the sea, the wonderful climate, and the nature of Latin America.”

An **organized** city promotes efficiency, safety, cleanliness, public health, community engagement, and environmental sustainability. It ensures residents have access to essential services, creates a sense of order and security, fosters social interaction, and contributes to a more livable and enjoyable urban environment. Tarik noted the contrast with Istanbul: “Compared to Istanbul, Buenos Aires is much more organized. The nature is unspoiled, so I don’t experience the congestion that I do in Istanbul.” Ali expressed his sense of relief, stating, “It felt extremely good to leave the chaos of Istanbul, and I found peace.” He further reflected, “Buenos Aires, despite being a city of 12 million people, has preserved order and maintained the city’s essence through economic hardship and coups, while we have destroyed Ottoman heritage architecture.” Hülya emphasized the cultural aspects of organization, explaining, “People are very calm, they have delicate rules, their system is very good, and those coming from Turkey should not spoil it.” Deniz’s mother shared her personal experience, saying, “I retired and came for the birth of my daughter... we came to Buenos Aires for civilization, the Paris of Latin America.”

Concerns about high crime rates in South America are prevalent, as the region faces various challenges related to theft, robbery, drug-related crimes, and violent incidents. Countries like Brazil, Venezuela, and Colombia have struggled with crime in some of their major cities, impacting both residents and travellers. In this context, it is essential to be cautious and aware of one’s surroundings to ensure safety. Travellers are often advised to avoid poorly lit areas, refrain from displaying valuable items openly, and stay vigilant in crowded places. Despite these challenges, not all areas in South America are unsafe. Many cities and regions, particularly in countries like Chile, Uruguay, and Argentina, are generally considered safer for both locals and tourists. Tarik shared, “Our first choice in South America was Brazil, but after watching YouTubers’ videos, we realized that the crime rate was high, so we gave up even though we had started studying Portuguese.” Berk added his perspective, saying, “I have witnessed a safe robbery incident outside of urban and very touristic areas, but I have not heard of any robbery stories involving threats or violence.” He further noted, “Argentina is safer than Brazil but less safe than Turkey; however, in general, it is a comfortable place to live.”

In Turkey, there is a significant emphasis on luxury and material possessions within certain segments of society. The desire for luxury permeates various aspects of life, including fashion, cars, homes, and lifestyle choices. Luxury is often associated with success, social status, and prestige. Many people in Turkey value luxury brands and high-end products, aspiring to own items such as designer clothing, luxury watches, and expensive accessories as symbols of wealth and achievement. This pursuit extends beyond material goods to experiences, such as dining at upscale restaurants, staying in luxury hotels, and travelling to exotic destinations. The desire for luxury is not confined to the wealthy elite—it is also present among the middle class and even some lower-income groups, who may strive to own luxury items and indulge in high-end experiences to elevate their social status and boost self-esteem.

In contrast, Argentina embraces a different perspective on personal expression. Hülya explained, “Argentinian people around us are suspicious of those who dress in luxury; they feel inferior and avoid engaging in dialogue, thinking you are not one of them.” Tarık added, “One cannot adapt to Argentina without understanding that luxury is valued in Turkey but not in Argentina.” Ali further emphasized this difference: “It shows that in Argentina, you can be stylish without wearing a brand.” Sinan shared his observations about the cultural attitude toward luxury: “People here don’t care about luxury and vanity and believe spending money on it is wasteful rather than improving oneself—they even see you as a slave of capitalism.” Gökhan noted the individuality expressed in personal style, albeit in unconventional ways: “Every person we see on the street has an aesthetic and style problem in their hairstyle, piercing, and accessories.”

As seen in Turkey, architectural and population similarities to Europe can create a sense of cultural connection and familiarity for individuals with European roots or those who appreciate European culture.

This connection enhances cultural diversity and fosters opportunities for cross-cultural exchanges, celebrations, and the appreciation of European traditions. A familiar cultural context can enhance a sense of belonging and contribute to a higher quality of life for individuals who value European influences. Cansu observed, “This place is more like Europe than Latin America—you can feel like you are in Barcelona.” She further noted, “After Italy, Argentina has the highest Italian population.” Ali added historical context: “In the 1900s, Italians fleeing the economic depression settled in Argentina, making up 36% of the population, hence the delicious ice cream and pizzas.” Berk highlighted the architectural connection, saying, “This is the Europe of Latin America; you feel like you are in a European city, and in this respect, it is close to Turkish culture and architecture.” Fatih reflected on cultural integration, noting, “The meeting of European migrants and locals offers a unique experience.” Göktuğ shared his preference, stating, “Among the Latin American countries, I like Buenos Aires the most. It has become a European country with immigration from Europe, similar to Turkey.”

Exit from Turkey

‘Political, Social and Psychological Bottlenecks

Moving abroad offers Turkish individuals an opportunity to reduce stress by distancing themselves from political and social disputes in their home country (Tuygan, 2023). Relocating to a country with a more stable political and social environment can provide a sense of security and peace of mind, freeing individuals from the stress and uncertainty associated with political conflicts and allowing them to focus on personal and professional pursuits.

Hülya explained, “We didn’t leave because we hated our country but because we were tired of the troubles and fights around us and in the news.” Similarly, she reflected, “Although we love our country, we left so that our grandchildren can live in peace, away from turmoil, fighting, politics, and polemics.” Cansu shared a personal story: “When Ali and I were at our lowest point in Istanbul, instead of spending money on psychologists, we set off for this trip and this city with the encouragement of my mother.” Mert emphasized the contrast between Turkey’s tense atmosphere and Argentina’s positive environment: “Especially as a person coming from Turkey, I know the tension, unhappiness, pessimism, and internal fights of people in Turkey, so I am extra happy to see the happiness of people in Argentina.” Tarik reflected on the complexity of leaving, saying, “I don’t want to enter into polemics on the homeland because I don’t think you love my homeland as much as I do after working in it for 30 years; I suggest you take off your blinders and put on your world glasses.” He also added, “When coming to a country, it is important to think about why you are coming: Peace, money, or something else? Argentina is very good in terms of peace of mind.” Sinan shared his reasons for leaving Turkey: “We had taken over the management of a café in Istanbul. Then the bombs exploded, my business collapsed, and the coup attempt happened. We realized we could no longer continue, and we decided to travel the world for a few years.” Merve expressed her outlook bluntly: “I don’t see a future in Turkey.”

Monotonous life

In Turkey, many retirees and middle-income individuals spend much of their time in coffeehouses and watching TV series (Şener et al., 2007, pp.30-36), leading to a monotonous and routine life. However, in Buenos Aires, they have the opportunity to break away from this routine and explore new possibilities. Migration offers individuals the chance to seek personal and professional growth, break free from routine, and embrace new experiences and challenges. This pursuit can foster fulfilment, a sense of achievement, and personal development. Hülya shared, “After living in Turkey for 50 years, we decided to spend the rest of our lives getting to know other countries instead of getting bored watching TV series.”

Similarly, Tarık explained, “After retiring, we decided to travel the world for a new country and a new life.” Özgür highlighted Argentina’s vibrant cultural scene: “Don’t think that what you see on this street is a pavilion; they are all show centers, artistic spaces—everywhere is full of them. Can there be another country that loves art so much?” Cansu reflected on how Argentina offers meaningful activities for retirees: “If I came as a retiree, I would take very affordable tango lessons in Argentina for 10-15 dollars a month, engage in sports activities, go to the seaside just 2-3 hours away, and rent a house for 300-350 dollars outside the city. Thanks to the cheap transportation network, I would explore the city, the country, and even neighboring countries like Brazil and Uruguay.” Ali added, “As a retiree, I would especially learn Spanish—not only to engage more in social life but also as the best exercise for brain health.” Hülya emphasized the need for a mindset shift, saying, “I think the world is ours. We need to research the places where we want to settle, break the thought patterns, and get out of our shells.” Tarık echoed her sentiment: “We need to get rid of the stereotypes and pressures in Turkey. We’ve lived in our country and seen that this world exists for all of us. We need to change our thinking; God didn’t create us to spend our entire lives in our village and finish it there.”

Visa-free access, residency, citizenship

The Turkish passport allows visa-free entry to nearly all countries in Central and South America. Visa-free access eliminates the need for time-consuming and complex visa applications, sparing travellers from gathering documents, submitting applications, and waiting for approval. This convenience simplifies travel planning and logistics, enabling individuals to explore new destinations more easily. Ali shared his experience: “You came to Argentina for 3 months visa-free, then stayed for another 3 months without leaving the country. There’s also the option to extend your stay beyond 6 months by paying a penalty of 60-100 dollars.” Hülya highlighted the importance of choosing visa-free countries: “Among the countries I chose in the world, there were those with strong social rights that did not require a visa.” In addition to visa-free travel, the ability to obtain a residence permit easily is essential, as it ensures individuals can legally reside in a country and comply with immigration laws. This allows for a long-term presence for purposes such as work, study, or family reunification. Hülya noted, “If you have an income in Turkey, you can get a residence permit without any problems.” Fatih also emphasized Argentina’s accessibility, stating, “It is an easy country to get a residence visa.” Deniz shared a strategy for securing citizenship: “Parents can become citizens after 1 year in Brazil and 2 years in Argentina, so we moved to a small Brazilian town close to Argentina to shorten the time.”

After obtaining residency, individuals can apply for naturalization after 2-3 years. Citizenship grants legal rights and protections within a country, ensuring individuals have access to the full range of rights and benefits afforded to citizens, including the right to vote, run for public office, and utilize social services. Ali emphasized

the strength of the Argentine passport: “The reason why its passport is so strong is that its population is made up of Spaniards and Italians. You can even enter the UK without a visa with an Argentine passport.” He explained the naturalization process further: “After 2 years of residence, you can apply for citizenship. It takes about 2 years to complete the application due to heavy bureaucracy—come from Turkey, improve your language, stay 4 years, get a passport, and leave if you want.” Deniz highlighted the importance of a second passport for Turks: “The Argentine passport allows visa-free travel to Canada, the UK, and Schengen countries.” He also shared his family’s decision: “We wanted to give birth abroad, but the visa for giving birth in the USA was too expensive, so we decided on Argentina.”

On the Road

In this section, we explore the obstacles people face during their journey abroad. Leaving Turkey was an emotional experience for many. Hülya shared, “It was not easy for us to distribute our furniture, which also has sentimental value, and to pack our suitcases, but finally, we entrusted our home to a couple we knew.”

The cost of expensive airline tickets can place a significant financial burden on individuals or families considering migration. Berk noted, “Flight tickets are 17 thousand Turkish lira—around 1,000 USD—we are very sad, but there is nothing to do.” Ali added, “Travel costs a lot of money, so you need to save in advance. Recently, a friend of mine found a 1,000 USD plane ticket, and I said to buy it immediately.” Sezer Firar highlighted the economic challenges locals face, saying, “You can fly to Brazil cheaply, but Argentinians cannot afford to go to Europe due to the economic situation. A good salary here is around 425 dollars, and the minimum wage is between 150-200 dollars.”

Crossing international borders and transporting personal belongings can also be challenging. Customs regulations, documentation requirements, and language barriers create anxiety. Hülya recounted, “Coming from Turkey, we worried about problems with the border police while bringing steel pans, teapots, coffee pots, tea, coffee, spices, pomegranate syrup, raki, etc., in six suitcases weighing 23 kilos each, thinking we wouldn’t find good quality here.” Ali added, “Raki—a traditional alcoholic beverage—is always welcome.”

There are also concerns about planning for a return trip. Tarık explained, “We didn’t buy a return ticket, but we made a return reservation because they might ask at the airport, or we might not like Argentina.” Ali shared a precautionary approach: “As there were friends who were turned away for not having a return ticket, we took a flexible return ticket to be safe since we didn’t know when we’d return.”

The cost of everyday items in Argentina also adds pressure. Cansu noted, “Bed linen products are so expensive—one set costs 6,000 TL. I am looking for someone to come from Turkey soon.”

Long journeys can take a toll on physical and mental well-being. Fatigue from extended periods of sitting, disrupted sleep, and jet lag are common issues. Hülya described her experience: “After we got off the plane, we were jetlagged. Our heads were swollen, numb, and tired—we couldn’t even remember our names.”

Challenges in the initial settlement in Argentina

Accommodation

Accommodation in Buenos Aires presents various challenges, including finding suitable homes, securing affordable prices, navigating regulations, and managing utilities. As a popular destination for both tourists and expatriates, Buenos Aires experiences high demand for housing, especially during peak tourist seasons. The rise of short-term rental platforms, such as Airbnb, has further impacted the long-term rental market, as many property owners prefer renting to tourists, reducing the availability of long-term options.

Sinan shared his experience with frequent moves: “Our 13th house in 5 years, but while we changed frequently in the first two years, the intervals decreased over time.” Cansu added, “If you can arrange your flight and accommodation, the rest is easier than surviving in Turkey.”

While long-term rentals can be scarce, Fatih mentioned, “If you rent the houses in the long term, you can find wonderful homes between 150-1,000 dollars.” Berk highlighted how student housing impacts the market: “This is a student city. The universities are high quality and affordable, but when 3-4 students rent together, the rents go up.”

Renting a property can also involve complex legal procedures, particularly for foreigners. Tarık explained the local rental practice: “Two people residing in Buenos Aires must act as guarantors. The reason for requiring a guarantor is that they don’t know how to fight or shout; they don’t want chaos.”

Utilities also present challenges. Berk reflected on the cultural history: “In the old days, nobody had a washing machine in their house because the rich people did their laundry outside.” Hülya further explained, “Dishwashers and washing machines are considered luxuries and are not available in houses, not even in Airbnb rentals.”

These challenges reflect the complexity of securing housing in Buenos Aires, from limited availability and rising rents to cultural differences in utilities and household appliances. However, despite these obstacles, long-

term planning and adjusting to local practices can help residents navigate these difficulties and find suitable accommodations.

Family and friends

Leaving behind family, friends, and the comforts of home can be emotionally challenging for those relocating abroad. Being far from loved ones and familiar surroundings can create feelings of isolation and homesickness. The high cost of airfare and the length of the journey add additional barriers, making it difficult to visit the home country regularly.

Mert expressed the emotional toll of the distance: “For 5 years, I can’t go to Turkey.” Gamze shared, “I’ve been able to go twice in the last 7 years,” adding, “I miss my mom and my friends.” Tarık reflected on the geographical challenge: “We say ‘the other side of the world’ as an expression—Argentina truly is the other side of the world, 15,000 kilometres away.”

Cultural and Language Differences

Moving to a country with different cultural norms, customs, and languages can present significant challenges. Adapting to a new culture, learning a new language, and understanding local customs requires openness, flexibility, and a willingness to learn. It can take time and effort to adjust to a new way of life. Language barriers are often one of the most significant hurdles. Communication difficulties can complicate everyday interactions, make it harder to build relationships, and limit access to services. Learning the local language is essential for navigating daily life and integrating into society, though it can be a slow and challenging process. Sinan emphasized the importance of language in cultural immersion: “Spanish is a must to learn the culture in order to communicate. Before learning Spanish, we saw life in 2D, and after learning it, it became 3D—you cannot live without knowing Spanish.” Hülya shared her humorous experience with language barriers: “It would be very good if you know enough Spanish to express yourself, as they don’t speak English. Otherwise, you’ll end up imitating chicken sounds to buy eggs at the market like we did.” Mert reflected on his personal struggle with language learning: “I learned Spanish late because my job is in English, and I’m shy to speak it, but it is essential to enjoy life here.”

Distinct food cultures

Food is an essential aspect of daily life, and the availability of diverse, nutritious, and culturally suitable food options can greatly influence an individual’s quality of life. When a country’s food culture differs significantly from a migrant’s preferences and dietary habits, it can lead to dissatisfaction and reduce their sense of well-being, potentially prompting them to consider relocating to a place with a more compatible food culture.

Tarik noted the cultural differences around breakfast: “Since there is no breakfast culture in Argentina, they are surprised by our rich and varied breakfast.” Hülya shared her negative experience with a local dish: “In Argentina, they make a dish with blood sausage. I tasted it a little, and my psychology deteriorated—it’s sold in black color in the markets, do not buy it.” She also reflected on the challenge of finding familiar flavors abroad: “Our food has a taste, a flavor, an aroma of our culture. Although we try to find something close in Chinese and Arab shops, it never quite matches the flavor of our own cuisine.”

Ali remarked on the cultural differences in dining habits: “I was surprised that they eat dinner very late in the evening and that they have scones at night, as is the custom in Britain.”

Financing

Moving to a new country involves significant financial considerations, including relocation costs, housing, living expenses, and potentially supporting family members. Adjusting to a new cost-of-living standard and managing finances in a different currency can be challenging, especially during the initial stages of settling in a new environment.

Tarik emphasized the need for financial preparation: “Even when moving from one city to another, savings are required, but when changing continents, travel and transportation costs are essential.” Sinan shared his experience, saying, “Even though it’s not as much as we wanted, we came with 6,000 dollars from the gold we collected at the wedding.”

Hülya added, “Savings are necessary for the first move, but you can live on a pension of 12 thousand TL, and you can also take on side jobs, even work as a craftsman.”

People may fear getting ripped off in Buenos Aires due to concerns about scams, fraud, and dishonest practices that can occur in certain situations. Like any major city, Buenos Aires has its share of petty theft and opportunistic scams that target both tourists and locals.

Airport Scams: Tarik shared his experience: “At the exit of the airport, we were worried about being ripped off when the taxi we expected to cost 10 dollars asked for 50 dollars. We started to bargain, but it turned out that there were two airports, and we landed at the more distant one.”

Car Fraud: He added, “In Argentina, like in Turkey, there is fraud. The license plate and chassis number of the car we thought about buying didn’t match.”

Taxi Scams: Berk warned, “If you don’t negotiate with taxi drivers upfront, you can get ripped off because they might charge per piece.”

Exchange Issues: Fatih described his encounter at a currency exchange: “I exchanged money, and he gave me fewer pesos than he should have. I got my money back by threatening to go to the Turkish embassy. If you’re not alert, you’ll get robbed.”

House Purchase and Rental Scams: Tarik advised against remote payments: “If you like a house priced at 10,000 dollars from Turkey, don’t send a deposit. See the house in person, make your agreement, and pay at the notary public.” Sinan recounted his rental experience: “The house we rented on Airbnb for cheap accommodation in Argentina turned out to be fake, but luckily, we were able to stay at our friend’s boyfriend’s aunt’s house during the sale period.”

Despite these challenges, Tarik pointed out that Turks may have an advantage: “As in Turkey, scams are widespread, but people from Turkey are used to such issues.”

Sluggish and low-quality service sector

Individuals who experience sluggish or low-quality service often feel dissatisfied with their overall experience. This can lead to frustration, disappointment, and negative perceptions of the service provider. Slow or inefficient service can waste time and effort, with long waits, delays, and errors causing frustration and reducing productivity. For those relying on services for important or time-sensitive needs, dealing with sluggish service can also cause stress and anxiety.

Cansu shared her frustration: “The most negative situation I encountered in Argentina was waiting for half an hour in front of the checkout at the supermarket—they are so relaxed, and the rights of employees are strong.” Tarik commented on the automotive industry: “I don’t like the quality of Argentine auto mechanics; they don’t fit the parts correctly; even the worst mechanic in Turkey does it better.” He also noted issues in the tourism sector: “Argentina has great tourism potential with its nature and architecture, but the quality of touristic facilities is very low. I found the pictures on the internet deceptive.”

Berkcan observed, “Because of the slowness of the service sector here if you are fast, you can earn a lot.” He also expressed frustration with real estate services: “I am constantly writing to the realtor, but they are slow to respond—people here are very comfortable and lazy; they don’t seem to want to earn money.” Berk highlighted

the unusual working habits of some businesses: “There is a man who has a restaurant; he opens at 7 o’clock and closes at 9 o’clock—he just makes enough for his expenses. They have strange working hours and are fond of their pleasure.” He further added, “People are lazy here; I went to the café, and the waiters never came near me, even when I made eye contact. Orders are always delivered late.”

Ali also reflected on the service sector: “Except for the slowness of renovations, I’ve never seen anything bad in Argentina.”

Limited job opportunities

Finding employment in a new country can be challenging due to unfamiliar job markets, different professional requirements, and competition from local candidates. Additionally, salaries in Argentina are relatively low. Acquiring recognition for foreign qualifications and adapting to new work cultures can also be hurdles. Building a new professional network and establishing oneself in a new career path requires persistence, networking, and adaptability.

Sinan explained, “Argentina is not a capitalist society where you can easily find a job and earn a high salary.” Gökhan echoed this: “In Argentina, job opportunities are limited, and salaries are low.”

Challenges in Doing Business

Argentina’s economic instability—marked by high inflation, currency devaluation, and fiscal deficits—makes future planning difficult and impacts profitability. Ali pointed out, “There are difficulties in doing business in Argentina—high taxes, a weak economy, and big brands not entering the market.” He added, “It’s difficult to make money here; people are poor, but not too poor—they are happy.”

Mert shared the challenges of entrepreneurship, saying, “I try to get by selling bracelets, but due to the economic crisis, purchasing power is low, and no one buys anything. If you come here, you need to save money.” Özgür reflected, “When I say you don’t do business, I mean business can be done, but you won’t become a king.”

Fatih provided insight into Argentina’s economic dynamics: “In Argentina if you go to sleep for a few days and wake up, you’ll see that many things have changed. But if you sleep for 10 years and wake up, you’ll realize nothing has really changed. In the long run, no matter what is done, things stay the same.”

Personal Economic Survival

The dedication of early settlers in Argentina is marked by perseverance and sacrifices to make a living and avoid returning to Turkey. Gamze shared, “Although I didn’t speak Spanish, I made salt cakes and sold them in the

park. I also delivered food to shopkeepers, and that's how I learned the trade." Sinan added, "I work in a doner shop and for a company that sells tours to Turks and Americans."

Gamze highlighted the importance of frugality: "To resist and avoid returning to Turkey, we didn't spend anything except on groceries, vet expenses, and rent." However, the uncertainties of survival are ever-present. Cansu expressed her concerns: "In Argentina, we are uncertain whether we will be able to pay our rent, find a job, go to language classes—in other words, whether we will be able to survive."

Foreign Companies and Unique Skills

Opportunities for earning a high salary in Argentina are more likely in international companies, as relatively few Argentinians speak English fluently or in roles that require unique skills not readily found in the local workforce. Sinan noted, "Here, we have a chance to find work in global companies since Argentinians have poor English."

Gamze highlighted another skill gap: "Here I made two short films because they have weak acting skills, and I made good money." However, such opportunities are limited, creating challenges for newcomers trying to establish careers. Early settlers expressed frustration and uncertainty while waiting for recruitment, often contemplating returning to Turkey due to job instability and difficulties adapting to a new work environment. Sinan shared his experience: "While I was waiting for the American manager to arrive at the foreign company, I was going insane and saying that I would return to Turkey."

Expensive Items:

While Argentina is generally cheaper than Turkey, certain items, such as clothing and kitchen equipment, are more expensive. Berk pointed out, "Clothing is very expensive here. What I buy for 30-40 liras in Turkey costs 300-400 liras here. Zara is the only known brand like this."

Lack of a beach

Argentina's coastline is diverse, with different regions offering varied coastal landscapes. While some areas have long stretches of sandy beaches suitable for swimming and beach activities, other regions feature rugged coastlines, cliffs, or rocky shores, which may not be ideal for traditional beach activities. Sezer Firar remarked, "The cafes are nice, the food is delicious, and everything is generally very good in Argentina, but the only problem is that there is no sea; that's why Argentinians go to Brazil."

Two Nations That Don't Know Each Other:

Argentina and Turkey are located on different continents and are geographically far apart, making interactions and cultural exchanges between the two countries challenging. Argentina and Turkey have distinct cultural backgrounds, customs, traditions, and histories, which can lead to misunderstandings or hesitation in forming connections.

However, Turkish TV series, often referred to as “Turkish dramas,” has had a significant cultural impact on Latin America over the past decade. These dramas have provided Latin American audiences with a glimpse into Turkish culture, traditions, and way of life, fostering cultural exchange. The series often depicts authentic Turkish settings, landscapes, and cultural practices, creating a bridge between the two cultures. Sezer Firar observed, “Argentinians don't know the food culture and geography of Turkey, but they know Turkey in many different ways because of watching TV series.”

“El Turco” and Historical Migration:

The term “El Turco” has historical roots in immigration patterns from the Ottoman Empire (which included present-day Turkey) to Latin American countries during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Immigrants arriving from the former Ottoman lands in the Middle East were often referred to as “Turcos” regardless of their actual ethnic background, as the term broadly described those holding Ottoman passports. Ali noted, “People who migrated from the former Ottoman lands in the Middle East and came with Ottoman passports are also called el Turco.”

Climate confusion

Immigrants coming from countries with different climate patterns may experience significant changes in weather and seasons. Turkey's winter is Argentina's summer because these two countries are located in different hemispheres. Climate can influence cultural practices and traditions. Immigrants may need to adapt to new customs related to seasonal holidays, food preferences, and recreational activities that are specific to the host country's climate. Climate differences can impact physical and mental health. Immigrants may need to adjust to new temperatures, humidity levels, and allergens that can affect their well-being.

“Since Argentina is in the southern hemisphere, its summers and winters are opposite to us; I recommend you to come here, especially in winter, because hotels and accommodation are cheaper stated by Tarık.

Overcome the Struggles

Based on immigrants' statements, Argentina is a very attractive place. There are two main issues: social integration and foreign earnings.

Socialization Efforts

Solving Integration through Socialization: Migrants address the challenges of integration through socialization, which helps them build support networks and establish meaningful connections in their new country. Having a social circle provides emotional support, practical assistance, and a sense of belonging. Socialization not only facilitates practical integration but also enhances personal well-being, cultural understanding, and a sense of belonging. Actively engaging in social activities, building relationships, learning the language, and participating in the local community significantly contribute to a successful and fulfilling experience in a foreign country.

Housing with a Social Environment: Tarık explained the importance of choosing accommodation that encourages social interaction: "When we first arrived here, we didn't want to rent a house and lock ourselves in. We preferred temporary accommodation with a social environment where we could talk a lot in the common area and get to know the people and culture. Once we decided to settle, we stayed in places where we could be in contact with others to socialize."

Neighbors and Cultural Exchange: Hülya shared her experience building connections with neighbors: "We developed very warm relations with our Argentine neighbors. We prepare breakfast for them, and they prepare barbecue for us. We came to get to know them, and they want to know us too—they even want to listen to Turkish music. We set up tables where we are; one day we invite the neighbors, the next day they invite us. We came to get to know them, but they were even more eager to get to know us. We've had good conversations, made friends, and built a social circle."

Making Friends: Mert described how having a relationship helped him adapt: "Having a girlfriend three months after I arrived helped me to get to know and adapt to the Argentine culture."

Building Trust: Tarık emphasized the value of family in fostering trust: "Coming as a family was very useful in terms of establishing an atmosphere of trust with those around us."

Language Learning: Sinan shared how living in a shared house accelerated language acquisition: "We had Colombian and Italian friends in the house we shared, and no one spoke English. So, we took some Spanish lessons and learned Spanish at home and in the park."

Test Drive

Conducting a trial period or “test driving” in a potential migration destination can be highly beneficial. Many individuals initially arrive in Argentina with long-term intentions rather than immediate plans to migrate permanently. This approach allows them to familiarize themselves with the new environment before committing fully to migration. Test driving provides an opportunity to experience first-hand the local culture, lifestyle, climate, and amenities. It helps individuals assess whether the destination aligns with their preferences, needs, and expectations. Sinan shared his experience: “At first, we thought like you—we will come to Argentina, travel around Latin America, and look for a place to settle down.”

Foreign Source

Argentina offers a fantastic lifestyle with its delicious and reasonably priced gastronomy, vibrant entertainment scene featuring music and theatres, and elegant European architecture. However, one of the primary challenges is the limited economic opportunities. While the weak economy can limit job prospects, it also results in lower living costs, making Argentina an affordable destination for foreigners.

Gökhan highlighted the importance of foreign income: “If you have a foreign currency income, you will live very well.” Cansu added, “It would be very enjoyable for someone with resources not to search for a job in these poor economic conditions but instead work remotely, get to know the environment, and travel.”

The positive aspect of relying on foreign-source income is that the amount required to live comfortably is reasonable. Özgür emphasized, “This place is only good if you have money. You can’t do business here but don’t need a lot—having a retirement income is enough.”

Discussion: Income Type

Traditionally, the flow of migration within the labor movement was predominantly from less developed to more developed countries, geographically occurring from the Global South to the Global North region. However, recent trends indicate a rapid increase in the migration flow from less-developed economies to newly emerging countries in the developing world, referred to as ‘South–South’ migration (Hujo & Piper, 2010, p.7; Ratha & Shaw, 2007, pp.1-2; lai, 2020, pp.1-5). Nevertheless, Argentina is not an emerging country; on the contrary, it faced economic challenges while being considered a high-income country in the 1930s (Acemoglu and Robinson, 2015).

Personal finance determines the type of migration from Turkey: those with passive incomes and those without. Turkish emigrants who have retired, capital, and rental incomes can lead a decent life in Argentina, especially in Buenos Aires. Those without passive income need foreign sources through online businesses or finding jobs in foreign companies.

There are several issues with active earnings: i) lack of sustainability and ii) time. Active income is viable only as long as foreign companies employ individuals, and earning through social media takes a long time. One needs passive income to mitigate risks and build a network to establish a business. Therefore, all Turks arrive in Argentina and bring some amount of cash. Rather than cash, how much capital is needed for a passive income to sustain a decent life in Buenos Aires? For instance, let's consider an individual with a minimum requirement of \$500 per month to maintain a comfortable lifestyle in Buenos Aires. If he chooses to invest part of their savings, say \$60,000-70,000, in Turkish Eurobonds that offer an 8-10% return, it implies an annual return of \$6,000 (8-10% of \$60,000-70,000). This return, denominated in US dollars, can help offset the impact of currency depreciation on the individual's purchasing power.

Why would a financially independent person or someone with a sustained foreign income from Turkey choose Argentina, especially Buenos Aires? Is the price/performance ratio significantly superior compared to similar developed countries in the Western world? There are various opportunities to enjoy a fulfilling and enriching life around a \$500-\$1000 budget. With a rich cultural heritage, independent individuals can immerse themselves in Argentina's vibrant arts, music, dance, and theatre. They can attend local festivals, art exhibitions, and concerts to experience the country's unique cultural expressions. Argentina is renowned for its delicious cuisine, especially its famous beef dishes and traditional 'asado' barbecues. The financially independent person can indulge in the diverse culinary offerings, including empanadas, dulce de leche, and fine Argentine wines. Argentina is a vast and diverse country, offering stunning landscapes, from the majestic Andes mountains to the breathtaking Iguazu Falls and the scenic Patagonia region. They can travel and explore these natural wonders. Argentina's geography provides ample opportunities for outdoor enthusiasts to enjoy hiking, trekking, skiing, and other recreational activities in the country's beautiful natural settings. Being financially independent may allow them to dedicate time to volunteering or getting involved in social causes that align with their interests and values. Most importantly, with financial independence, they can pursue hobbies, interests, or personal projects that may have been limited by financial constraints in the past.

Conclusion

The cultural appeal of Argentina plays a pivotal role in the decision to migrate from Turkey. **Argentina boasts a rich and diverse cultural heritage shaped by European influences and a vibrant mix of traditions, arts, and gastronomy.** The allure of the tango, the passion for football, and the renowned Argentine cuisine attract individuals who seek to immerse themselves in a culturally vibrant society and explore new horizons. In addition, social and political factors contribute to the attractiveness of Argentina as a migration destination for individuals from Turkey. The emphasis on social welfare programs, universal healthcare, educational opportunities and freedom of speech present a supportive social state that appeals to those seeking a sense of security and social

well-being. However, the migration process from Turkey to Argentina is not without its challenges. Employment, cultural adaptation, language barriers, and the establishment of social networks pose significant hurdles for individuals as they navigate their way into a new environment.

Having an **income source from Turkey** is advantageous, but it comes with the challenge of **dealing with fluctuations** in the value of the Turkish lira against the US dollar. To mitigate this risk, individuals may consider hedging strategies by diversifying their assets and holding **foreign investments**, such as **US stocks and Eurobonds**. These foreign assets can act as a buffer against currency volatility and provide stability to one's financial position. Earning online business or employing foreign companies are viable solutions but need time to succeed it. Based on emigrant experiences, carrying a cash reserve to sustain at least one year is crucial.

Adapting to a different cultural context, learning the Spanish language, and building social connections require resilience, open-mindedness, and a willingness to embrace new experiences. The essential condition for building a social network in Argentina is learning Spanish. Language plays a crucial role in forming social connections and integrating into a new community. Spanish is the predominant language in Argentina and serves as the primary means of communication in various aspects of daily life. For individuals migrating to Argentina, learning Spanish becomes a fundamental requirement for effectively interacting with locals, making friends, and participating in social activities. By acquiring proficiency in the local language, newcomers can bridge the communication gap and better understand Argentina's culture, customs, and traditions. This language skill facilitates basic interactions like grocery shopping or seeking directions and enables meaningful conversations, establishing deeper relationships, and feeling more at home in the new environment. Moreover, speaking Spanish opens doors to job opportunities and professional networks, as most workplaces and businesses conduct their affairs in the local language. Language fluency enhances employability and improves the chances of career advancement.

Overall, having a modest foreign income source and learning Spanish are key steps in the integration process and play a vital role in building a robust social network in Argentina. They allow individuals to connect with the local community, experience the rich culture, and make the most of their life in this diverse and vibrant South American country.

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