

**T.C.  
GALATASARAY UNIVERSITY  
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES  
DEPARTMENT OF RADIO, TELEVISION AND CINEMA**

**NEGOTIATED SEASIDE TOWN THROUGH LIFESTYLE  
MIGRATION: NEW LIFE PRACTICES, REPRODUCTION OF  
SPACE AND PLACE NARRATIVES IN URLA**

**DOCTORAL DISSERTATION**

**Betül AYDOĞAN**

**Supervisor: Prof. Dr. H. Serhat Güney**

**DECEMBER 2024**

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## RÉSUMÉ

La migration de style de vie désigne une forme de mobilité, temporaire ou permanente, vers des lieux offrant une meilleure qualité de vie. Contrairement aux migrations forcées, dictées par des pressions politiques, des crises économiques ou environnementales, elle résulte d'un choix volontaire d'individus ou de familles cherchant à construire une vie plus idéale. Cette mobilité peut concerner un déplacement vers des villes offrant de meilleures conditions de vie ou des caractéristiques spécifiques favorisant le bien-être. Toutefois, elle s'exprime fréquemment par une migration vers des zones côtières ou rurales, souvent perçues comme des environnements propices à des modes de vie plus calmes et équilibrés. Dans la littérature académique, la migration de style de vie est fréquemment associée à la migration de retraite, perçue comme une transition marquée par des événements de la vie. Cependant, elle englobe une diversité de formes, telles que le retour à la terre, l'engagement dans des activités agricoles inédites ou la mobilité de la classe créative. Ces déplacements, guidés par des idéaux, des aspirations ou la quête d'un nouveau départ, s'accompagnent souvent de formes variées de capital, capables de transformer le tissu économique, social ou culturel des régions d'accueil.

Cette dissertation analyse le rôle de ces mobilités, motivées par l'objectif de bâtir une vie meilleure, dans la transformation socio-économique et spatiale d'une ville côtière de la région Egéenne en Turquie. En se focalisant sur les migrants de style de vie à Urla, villes balnéaires près d'Izmir, et en adoptant une perspective d'anthropologie urbaine, elle éclaire les interactions entre l'espace et ces communautés, qui s'installent en milieu rural tout en préservant leurs habitudes urbaines. L'étude se penche également sur les altérations sociales, culturelles et économiques induites par les pratiques des migrants à travers le transfert de capital au sens Bourdieusien du terme et leurs façons de négocier les espaces ruraux. À cet égard, le cadre conceptuel s'appuie sur la théorie de "la production de l'espace" de Lefebvre et sur le cadre analytique de Bourdieu, en particulier les concepts d'habitus et de capital. Les approches "Capital Framework" et "Localités Rural" de Gkartzios et al. (2022) et Halfacree (2006a), respectivement, sont également basées sur les cadres susmentionnés et guident cette thèse. Elle guide la dissertation dans l'approfondissement des discussions et leur transmission à travers des perspectives plus contemporaines.

Les principales questions de recherche de la thèse portent sur : (1) comment les migrants transforment le tissu socioculturel et économique d'Urla à travers leurs

pratiques spatiales et leurs interventions basées sur le capital ; (2) comment les qualités environnementales bâties et naturelles de cette ville côtière sont reproduites ; (3) comment les migrants médiatisent les récits de la nouvelle vie et du nouveau lieu à Urla et recréent la campagne à travers des représentations. Dans ce contexte, la dissertation est divisée en trois sections principales. Tout d'abord, le point fort de la thèse, "Les villes balnéaires en transition : gérer et planifier une nouvelle vie à Urla", qui constitue le centre de l'étude, traite de la relation entre l'identité rurale changeante d'Urla et les transferts de capitaux des migrants dans la macro-relationnalité de l'anthropologie urbaine. Par conséquent, les négociations intragroupes des migrants, l'engagement avec les communautés locales ou le gouvernement, ou les institutionnalisations telles que les associations sont également inclus dans la discussion dans le cadre des interventions des migrants de style de vie à Urla. Le troisième chapitre de la thèse, intitulé "La reproduction de la ville balnéaire par la migration de style de vie : la transformation de l'environnement naturel et bâti à Urla", adhère au cadre général des interventions de reproduction spatiale et des transferts de capitaux. Il explore les transformations de l'identité d'Urla à travers la ségrégation spatiale, les modifications de l'environnement naturel et bâti, ainsi que les nouvelles exigences esthétiques, en mettant en évidence les preuves du changement dans le cadre matériel. Finalement, "Récits de ville balnéaire : représentation et médiatisation de l'espace par les migrants de style de vie" analyse comment ces migrants façonnent le paysage rural en tant que narrateurs à travers leur contenu médiatique et examine la capacité des représentations rurales à redéfinir les pratiques de l'espace social. Le récit de la dissertation, fondé sur la migration de style de vie et la négociation de l'espace, intègre la dimension communicative des changements au sein des macrostructures et des micro-environnements dans son dernier chapitre. Ainsi, la thèse complète son cadre conceptuel en se concentrant sur le transfert de diverses formes de capital et la production d'espace.

Dans le cadre de l'approche anthropologique urbaine visant à examiner ce qui se passe avec la migration de style de vie à Urla, l'étude a incorporé un travail ethnographique sur le terrain, y compris des entretiens approfondis et une observation participante. Une enquête exploratoire a été menée dans le cadre de la recherche sur le terrain, abordant des thèmes tels que les lieux de vie, la répartition par âge, l'espérance de vie dans les nouveaux établissements, les professions, ainsi que les défis rencontrés par les migrants à Urla. Sur la base de cette enquête, qui a impliqué 102 participants, 42 entretiens approfondis ont été menés entre novembre 2022 et août 2024. Des méthodes complémentaires de collecte de données ont enrichi le processus de recherche, notamment, marcher et parler, la documentation photographique et les notes de terrain autoréflexives. Des données secondaires ont également été exploitées, notamment des rapports publics issus d'institutions telles que l'Agence de développement d'İzmir, la municipalité d'Urla, le ministère de l'Environnement, du Climat et de l'Urbanisation, la municipalité métropolitaine d'İzmir, ainsi que des articles de presse.

Le deuxième chapitre, qui constitue le cœur de la thèse, souligne que les facteurs traditionnels identifiés dans la littérature sur les migrations de style de vie, tels qu'un mode de vie sain, un meilleur environnement physique et des préférences esthétiques, s'appliquent également à la mobilité dans la région d'Urla. Cependant, une constatation spécifique au contexte turc émerge, liée à des facteurs tels que l'insécurité urbaine, une population croissante de réfugiés, l'instabilité économique et l'hégémonie socioculturelle, qui ont incité les élites urbaines à se réfugier à la campagne comme un noyau plus "abrité" sur le plan social. Les villes Égéennes, connues pour la souplesse de leurs conditions de vie, la dynamique communautaire, l'identité culturelle, la prospérité et le bien-être, offrent aux migrants en quête d'un certain mode de vie et dotés d'un capital économique, social et culturel significatif l'opportunité d'améliorer leur situation sociale et économique. En outre, le potentiel de la région en matière de tourisme viticole et gastronomique offre un environnement entrepreneurial stable et prometteur à ceux qui aspirent à créer de nouvelles entreprises en milieu rural. En outre, les dynamiques sociales limitées de la ville balnéaire permettent aux migrants de style de vie de former plus efficacement des communautés exclusives, évoquant un désir nostalgique des relations sociales ouvertes et de valeurs séculaires perçues comme disparaissant dans la vie urbaine.

Cependant, ces qualités rurales, associées à une vie sociale plus résiliente, ne sont pas inclusives en raison du coût élevé de la vie et des déplacements causés par la migration. Il a été observé que les conditions de vie des communautés, telles que la population locale et les retraités qui ont précédemment migré à Urla, sont devenues de plus en plus difficiles et que la question de la résilience rurale est un processus qui fonctionne en faveur de l'élite des migrants. Dans le cadre de ce chapitre, la révélation des dynamiques intragroupes et des interrelations des migrants à Urla a été l'une des contributions importantes de la dissertation à la littérature sur les migrations de style de vie. Sept sous-groupes ont été formés en tenant compte du capital économique, social et culturel, des valeurs et des modes de vie des migrants, des communautés avec lesquelles ils sont en conflit ou coopèrent, et de leur capacité à créer une valeur partagée. Les sous-groupes comprennent (1) les entrepreneurs, (2) les investisseurs, (3) les nouveaux agriculteurs, (4) les employés, (5) les personnes socialement responsables, (6) les créatifs ou les artistes, et (7) les retraités ou semi-retraités. Ces groupes divergents peuvent coopérer en matière d'activités entrepreneuriales, de défense de l'environnement naturel et de soutien aux activités culturelles. Cependant, ils peuvent aussi s'opposer sur les valeurs environnementales, les approches de production, le transfert de la propriété foncière et les habitudes spécifiques à la ville. En outre, les petits agriculteurs, les retraités et les employés se retrouvent souvent marginalisés et exclus, car les investisseurs et les entrepreneurs rendent l'accès à la terre et au logement de plus en plus difficile. Parmi ces groupes, les migrants entrepreneurs, qui veulent faire d'Urla une ville touristique qui se distingue par ses qualités durables, constituent le groupe dominant qui détermine le développement rural d'Urla et sa vision de l'avenir grâce à leurs stratégies d'association, d'élargissement des réseaux sociaux, de négociation avec les gouvernements locaux, d'action avec une tendance à la planification sur des questions telles que le patrimoine

historique, les réglementations environnementales et les interventions dans les infrastructures, et d'élargissement de leurs réseaux internationaux. Ce groupe stimule la croissance d'Urla en tant qu'écosystème entrepreneurial. Les agriculteurs entrepreneurs forment un autre sous-groupe qui collabore avec les migrants de style de vie dominant. Les agriculteurs entrepreneurs dominants d'Urla se distinguent des autres agriculteurs par leurs investissements dans des zones non agricoles, en particulier dans le secteur du tourisme, en combinant ces entreprises avec l'agriculture. Une fois de plus, ce chapitre montre que les communautés d'entrepreneurs associées à l'agriculture, ou plus généralement aux activités de production basées sur la terre, ralentissent la transformation vers l'urbanisation en prenant des initiatives pour protéger la nature et maintenir l'identité productive du monde rural, parallèlement au monde rentier des investisseurs ou du secteur de la construction.

Le deuxième chapitre montre que les migrants, grâce au pouvoir de leurs capitaux dans la transformation des ressources spécifiques au lieu, négocient la trajectoire de transformation entre les destinations durables, le tourisme de terroir, l'embourgeoisement rural et les mondes de vie idéalisés. Cette négociation renforce le lien entre la production et l'entrepreneuriat en développant la multifonctionnalité au sein du paysage rural. Les migrants ont créé un système soutenu par le capital économique grâce à leurs activités entrepreneuriales, leurs modes de consommation urbaine et leurs investissements. Cependant, leur aspiration à une vie rurale saine et épanouissante, combinée à leurs attentes d'authenticité, de richesse culturelle et d'esthétique, constitue la principale sphère où convergent leur capital social et culturel pour façonner l'avenir de leur mode de vie à Urla. Un autre aspect essentiel de la transformation d'Urla est la croissance du secteur de la construction, la perte de la valeur d'usage des terres agricoles et leur ouverture à une économie de rente. Alors que le deuxième chapitre explore ce processus à travers le prisme des pratiques d'attachement temporaire et axées sur le profit des migrants investisseurs, le troisième chapitre se penche sur la dégradation de l'environnement résultant de cette transformation.

Le troisième chapitre révèle les marques concrètes de la transformation d'Urla en une trajectoire axée sur l'investissement et le tourisme grâce à des interventions urbaines telles que la sur-commercialisation de l'environnement bâti, l'embourgeoisement et la résidentialisation. Cette période de transformation, qui se situe à l'intersection des politiques d'expansion urbaine du gouvernement central et des autorités locales et de la migration liée au mode de vie, se caractérise par la formation d'identités hybrides par les migrants de style de vie, plutôt que par les caractéristiques distinctives des zones rurales. Bien que cette situation soit souvent décrite dans la littérature comme la périphérisation des zones rurales, Urla se distingue par l'émergence d'une géographie fragmentée caractérisée par des qualités distinctes telles que l'hybridation, la texture rurale et l'urbanisation, qui résultent des différences de capital culturel et économique. Urla reste un district en proie à des problèmes d'infrastructure rurale, où la paysannerie et les communautés rurales locales poursuivent leurs traditions de production et de culture et où les terres agricoles et les

zones forestières s'étendent sur une zone plus large que les zones résidentielles. L'encerclement des quartiers centraux par des espaces orientés vers la consommation, la formation de nouvelles zones économiques et sociales où les modèles urbains sont repris, et l'extension des zones résidentielles de luxe remplies d'entreprises de construction, démontrent deux extrémités distinctes de la péri-métropolisation. Malgré ces limites, les deuxième et troisième chapitre dessinent les contours d'une nouvelle identité rurale. Ils dépeignent une nouvelle ruralité marquée par des inégalités croissantes, l'intégration des relations de production dans des réseaux nationaux et internationaux, le remplacement de la production agricole par les géographies expérientielles du tourisme et l'expansion des frontières rurales par une résidentialisation croissante.

Le quatrième chapitre situe les dimensions des représentations rurales résumées ci-dessus, telles qu'elles sont reconstruites par les migrants, et les élève au niveau du récit ou du discours en analysant leurs qualités communicatives. Pour cette dissertation, qui se positionne à l'intersection des études urbaines et rurales et des études culturelles, l'intention d'incorporer les médias dans la production de l'espace est ancrée dans la médiatisation. En abordant les médias et la société comme une structure complexe et entrelacée, ce cadre intègre les perspectives théoriques Lefebvriennes et Bourdieusiennes avec les dimensions hégémoniques et de cadrage de la narration. Dans ce contexte, la principale conclusion du quatrième chapitre est que les migrants de style vie dominant utilisent les récits médiatiques pour planifier l'écosystème entrepreneurial et maintenir des représentations rurales idéalisées, en plus de leurs interventions dans le cycle de production-consommation, la sphère culturelle et la reproduction de l'environnement bâti. Les entretiens réalisés, ainsi que l'analyse du contenu des magazines locaux produits par les migrants, révèlent plusieurs représentations rurales prédominantes dans les médias. Il s'agit notamment du patrimoine culturel et des influences architecturales d'Urla, de la vitalité introduite par les communautés créatives et les artistes, d'un mode de vie étroitement lié aux ressources naturelles, de l'accent mis sur la durabilité et des expériences gastronomiques offertes par le tourisme de terroir et la viticulture. Ces représentations, qui résument ce qui a été révélé dans les deuxième et troisième chapitres, servent à la fois de récit pour attirer le tourisme et d'outil de relations publiques, tout en renforçant les modes de vie idéalisés des migrants. En résumé, le quatrième chapitre soutient que les médias agissent comme un moyen par lequel la communauté construit une représentation qui rend tangible l'aura et l'utopie rurale qu'elle envisage pour son habitat. En plus de faciliter la reconstruction de l'espace en tant qu'outil pour les ambitions entrepreneuriales, les médias intègrent l'espace avec les valeurs symboliques de ses migrants, positionnant la vie quotidienne d'Urla au cœur de l'expérience migratoire, englobant le développement économique, la durabilité, les opportunités d'investissement, et un riche éventail de possibilités culturelles.

Bien que cette thèse porte sur la migration de style de vie vers une région côtière de Turquie, elle met également en lumière les menaces globales qui pèsent sur les zones rurales, touchant les équilibres économiques, environnementaux et sociaux. Elle

appelle à un examen critique de la paysannerie, des politiques agricoles, des conditions de vie en milieu rural, de la planification locale et nationale, ainsi que de l'habitabilité des villes en Turquie. De plus, elle plaide pour une gestion plus réfléchie et planifiée des relations entre ces mobilités et les établissements ruraux.



## ABSTRACT

Lifestyle migration is a type of migration that involves temporary or permanent resettlement to places that enhance the quality of life. Unlike forced migration driven by political pressures, economic hardship or climate crises, lifestyle migration is driven by the desire of individuals or families to create a more ideal life. This form of mobility may involve migration to cities that offer better living conditions or special qualities that raise the standard of living. Still, it often involves moving to coastal or rural areas, often associated with healthier and more tranquil lifestyles. In the academic literature, lifestyle migration is often associated with retirement migration as a displacement due to life events. However, it includes a variety of forms, such as a back to the land, engaging in new farming, or the mobility of the creative class. These mobilities, driven by ideals, aspirations, and the pursuit of a new beginning, carry with them various forms of capital that have the potential to reshape the economic, social, or cultural fabric of their destinations.

The present dissertation aims to investigate the role of these displacements, which share the same goal of building a better life, in the socio-economic and spatial transformation of a coastal town in the Aegean region of Türkiye. This dissertation, focusing on lifestyle migrants in Urla, a coastal town in İzmir, using the perspective of urban anthropology, reveals the relationship between space and these communities, who predominantly migrate to the countryside while maintaining urbanized habits. It also dives into the social, cultural, and economic alterations brought by migrants' practices through the transfer of capital in the Bourdieusian sense and their ways of negotiating rural spaces. In this respect, the conceptual framework relies on Lefebvre's "production of space" theory and the analytical framework of Bourdieu, especially the concepts of habitus and capital. The "Capital Framework" and "Rural Localities" approach by Gkartzios et al. (2022) and Halfacree (2006a), respectively, is also based on the abovementioned frameworks and guide this dissertation. It allows for more contemporary insights and a greater nuance in discussing issues.

The main research questions of the dissertation focus on: (1) how migrants transform the socio-cultural and economic fabric of Urla through their spatial practices and capital-based interventions; (2) how the built and natural environmental qualities of this coastal town are reproduced; (3) how migrants mediatize the narratives of new life and place in Urla and recreate the countryside through representations. In this context, the dissertation is divided into three main sections. First, the weight point of the dissertation, "Seaside Towns in Transition: Managing and Planning New Life in

Urla”, which constitutes the focus of the study, deals with the relationship between Urla’s changing rural identity and migrants’ capital transfers within the macro-relationality of urban anthropology. Therefore, intra-group negotiations of migrants, engagement with local communities or government, or institutionalizations like associations are also included in the discussion within the scope of lifestyle migrants’ interventions in Urla. The third chapter of the dissertation, titled “The Reproduction of the Seaside Town through Lifestyle Migration: The Transformation of the Natural and Built Environment in Urla,” adheres to the overarching framework of spatial reproduction interventions and capital transfers. It examines Urla’s identity alterations through residential differentiation, alterations in the built and natural environment, and emerging aesthetic demands, uncovering the evidence of change within the material environment. Ultimately, “Seaside Town Narratives: Representation and Mediatization of Place By Lifestyle Migrants” examines how migrants frame the rural landscape as narrators via their media content and rural representations’ capacity to reshape social space practices. The dissertation’s narrative, grounded in lifestyle migration and negotiating space, integrates the communicative dimension of changes within macrostructures and microenvironments in its final chapter. Thus, the dissertation completes its conceptual framework by focusing on the transfer of various forms of capital and the production of space.

As part of an urban anthropological approach to address what is happening with lifestyle migration in Urla, the study incorporated ethnographic fieldwork, including in-depth interviews and participant observation. An exploratory survey was initiated for the field research, addressing themes such as living spaces, age distribution, life expectancy in new settlements, occupations, and the challenges migrants face in Urla. Based on this survey, which involved 102 participants, 42 in-depth interviews were conducted between November 2022 and August 2024. Complementary data collection methods enriched the research process, including walking and talking, photo documentation, and self-reflective field notes. Secondary data sources were also used, such as publicly available reports from institutions like the İzmir Development Agency, Urla Municipality, Ministry of Environment, Climate and Urbanization, İzmir Metropolitan Municipality, and newspaper articles.

The second chapter, which forms the dissertation’s core, emphasizes that the traditional factors identified in the lifestyle migration literature, such as healthy living, a better physical environment, and aesthetic preferences, are also applied to mobility in Urla. However, a specific finding to the Turkish context emerges related factors such as urban insecurity, a growing refugee population, economic instability, and conservative cultural hegemony, which have prompted urban elites to seek refuge in the countryside as a more socially “sheltered” core. Aegean towns, characterized by flexibility in living conditions, community building, cultural identity, prosperity, and well-being, offer lifestyle migrants with significant economic, social, and cultural capital the opportunity to improve their social and economic standards. Moreover, the region’s wine and gastronomy tourism potential provides a stable and promising entrepreneurial environment for those aspiring to establish new ventures in rural



settings. Moreover, the constrained social dynamics of the seaside town allow lifestyle migrants to more efficiently form exclusive communities, evoking a nostalgic yearning for open social relationships and secular values perceived as disappearing in urban life.

However, these rural qualities, associated with a more resilient social life, are not inclusive because of the high cost of living and the displacement caused by migration. It has been observed that the living conditions of communities, such as local people and retirees who have previously migrated to Urla, have become increasingly challenging and that the issue of rural resilience is a process that works in favour of elite migrants. Within the scope of this chapter, revealing the intra-group dynamics and interrelationships of lifestyle migrants in Urla has been one of the important contributions of the dissertation to the literature on lifestyle migration. Seven sub-groups were formed by considering the economic, social, and cultural capital, values, and lifestyles of the migrants, the communities with which they experience conflict or cooperate, and their capacity to create shared value. The sub-groups include (1) entrepreneurs, (2) investors, (3) new farmers, (4) white-collar employees, (5) socially responsible, (6) creatives or artists, and (7) retired or semi-retired. These divergent groups may cooperate on entrepreneurial activities, defending the natural environment and supporting cultural activities. Still, they may also clash with environmental values, production approaches, land ownership transfer, and urban-specific habits. Moreover, small-scale farmers, retirees, and white-collar workers often find themselves marginalized and excluded as investors and entrepreneurs make access to land and housing increasingly difficult. Among these groups, entrepreneurial lifestyle migrants, who want Urla to be a tourism town that stands out with its sustainable qualities, constitute the dominant group that determines Urla's rural development and future vision with their strategies of association, expanding social networks, negotiating with local governments, acting with a planning tendency on issues such as historical heritage, environmental regulations, and infrastructure interventions, and expanding their international networks. This group feeds Urla's growth as an entrepreneurial ecosystem. The entrepreneurial farmers form another subgroup that collaborates with the dominant lifestyle migrants. Urla's dominant entrepreneurial farmers differ from other farmers in their investments in non-agricultural areas, especially in the tourism sector, combining these ventures with agriculture. Again, this chapter reports that entrepreneurial communities associated with farming, or more broadly with land-based production activities, are slowing down the transformation towards urbanization by taking initiatives to protect nature and maintain the productive identity of the rural, alongside the rent-based world of investors or the construction sector.

The second chapter proves that migrants, with the power of their capitals in transforming place-specific resources, negotiate the transformation trajectory across sustainable destinations, terroir tourism, rural gentrification, and idealized life worlds. This negotiation strengthens the link between production and entrepreneurship by developing multifunctionality within the rural landscape. Migrants have created a system sustained by economic capital through their entrepreneurial activities, urban consumption patterns, and investments. However, their pursuit of a healthy and

fulfilling rural life, along with their expectations for authenticity, cultural richness, and aesthetic appeal, emerges as the primary sphere where their social and cultural capital converge to shape the future of their lifestyles in Urla. Another pivotal aspect of transformation in Urla is the growth of the construction sector, the loss of the use value of agricultural lands, and their opening for a rent-seeking economy. While the second chapter explores this process through the lens of investor lifestyle migrants' profit-driven and temporary attachment practices, the third chapter delves into the environmental degradation resulting from this transformation.

The third chapter reveals the concrete marks of Urla's transformation into an investment- and tourism-oriented trajectory through urban interventions such as over-commercializing the built environment, gentrification, and residentialization. This transformation period, which occurs at the intersection of the urban expansion policies of central and local governments and lifestyle migration, is characterized by the formation of hybrid identities by lifestyle migrants, rather than the distinctive characteristics of rural areas. Although this situation is often described in the literature as the peripheralization of rural areas, what sets Urla apart is the emergence of a fragmented geography characterized by distinct qualities such as hybridization, rural texture, and urbanization, which result from cultural and economic capital differences. Urla remains a district plagued by rural infrastructure issues, where peasantry and rural local communities continue their production and cultural traditions and where agricultural lands and forest areas spread over a wider area than residential areas. The encirclement of the central districts with consumption-oriented spaces, the formation of new economic and social zones where urban patterns are carried over, and the spread of luxury residential areas filled with construction companies, demonstrate two distinct ends of peri-metropolitanization. Despite these edges, both the second and third chapters outline the contours of a new rural identity. They depict a new rurality marked by growing inequalities, the integration of production relations into national and international networks, the replacement of agricultural production with the experiential geographies of tourism, and the expansion of rural boundaries through increasing residentialization.

The fourth chapter situates the dimensions of the rural representations summarized above, as reconstructed by migrants, and elevates them to the level of narrative or discourse by analyzing their communicative qualities. For this dissertation, positioned at the intersection of urban and rural studies and cultural studies, the intention to incorporate media into the production of space is grounded in mediatization. By approaching media and society as a complex and intertwined structure, this framework integrates the Lefebvrian and Bourdieusian theoretical perspectives with the hegemonic and framing dimensions of narrative. In this context, the main finding of the fourth chapter is that dominant lifestyle migrants use media narratives to plan the entrepreneurial ecosystem and maintain idealized rural representations, in addition to their interventions in the production-consumption cycle, the cultural sphere, and the reproduction of the built environment. The interviews conducted, besides the analysis of local magazine content produced by lifestyle

migrants, reveal several prominent rural representations in the media. These include Urla's cultural heritage and architectural influences, the vibrancy introduced by creative communities and artists, a lifestyle closely connected to natural resources, a focus on sustainability, and the gastronomic experiences offered through terroir tourism and viticulture. These representations, serving as a summary of what was revealed in the second and third chapters, simultaneously serve as a narrative to attract tourism and function as a PR tool, while also reinforcing the idealized lifestyles of lifestyle migrants. In summary, the fourth chapter argues that the media acts as a medium through which the community constructs a representation that makes the aura and rural utopia, they envision for their habitat appear tangible. Beyond facilitating the reconstruction of space as a tool for entrepreneurial ambitions, the media integrates the space with the symbolic values of its migrants, positioning Urla's everyday life at the heart of the migration experience, encompassing economic development, sustainability, investment opportunities, and a rich array of cultural possibilities.

While this dissertation is about lifestyle migration to a coastal town in Türkiye, it also underlines the holistic threats rural areas face concerning economic, environmental, and social balances. This calls for a critical review of peasantry, agricultural policies, rural living conditions, local and central planning about rural areas, and the livability of cities in Türkiye. Additionally, it advocates for a more deliberate and planned approach to managing the relationship between these mobilities and the rural settlements.

## ÖZET

Yaşam biçimi göçü, yaşamı kalitesini artıracak niteliklere sahip yerlere geçici ya da sürekli hareketliliğe denk düşen bir göç biçimidir. Siyasi baskılardan, ekonomik zorluklardan ya da iklim krizinden kaynaklanan zorunlu göçlerden farklı olarak, bireylerin ya da ailelerin kendi istekleri ile daha ideal bir yaşam kurmak üzere göç etme motivasyona bağlı olarak ortaya çıkmaktadır. Bu hareketlilik biçimi, yaşam standardı açısından daha iyi koşullara ya da otantik niteliklere sahip kentlere olabileceği gibi çoğunlukla daha sağlıklı ve huzurlu bir hayat ile özdeşleştirilen kıyı bölgelere ya da kırsal coğrafyalara doğru gerçekleşmektedir. Literatürde yaşam biçimi göçü çoğunlukla hayat olaylarına bağlı bir yer değiştirme şekli olarak emeklilik göçü ile ilişkilendirilse de toprağa dönüş, yeni çiftçilik, yaratıcı sınıfın hareketliliği gibi farklı niyetlerde ve biçimlerde ortaya çıkabilmektedir. Yeni bir yerleşime doğru idealler, istekler ve arayışlarla gerçekleşen bu hareketlilikler, yöneldikleri mekânın ekonomik, sosyal ya da kültürel niteliklerinde dönüşüme yol açabilecek sermaye türlerini de beraberlerinde getirmektedirler.

Bu tez, ortak amacı daha iyi bir yaşam inşa etmek olan bu hareketliliklerin, Türkiye’de Ege Bölgesi’ndeki bir sahil kasabasının sosyo-ekonomik ve mekânsal dönüşümünde oynadığı rolü ele almaktadır. İzmir’in sayfiye yerleşimlerinden Urla ilçesindeki yaşam biçimi göçmenlerine odaklanarak ve kent antropolojisinin bakışına yaslanarak çoğunlukla kent soylu alışkanlıklarla kırsala göç etmiş bu toplulukların mekanla kurdukları ilişkiyi tartışmaya açmaktadır. Özetle tez, göçmenlerin sayfiyedeki yeni hayatlarının hangi sosyal, kültürel ve ekonomik değişimleri tetiklediğini, Bourdieusian anlamda sermayelerini aktarma pratiklerini ve kır nasıl müzakere ettiklerini ortaya koymayı amaçlamaktadır. Bu amaç kapsamında, tezin kavramsal çerçevesini, Lefebvre’in “mekânın üretimi” yaklaşımı ve Bourdieu’nün habitus ve sermaye gibi kavramlara yaslanan analiz çerçevesi oluşturmaktadır. Ayrıca bu kavramsal çerçevelerden türetilmiş “Sermayeler Çerçevesi” (Gkartzios et al., 2022) ve “Kırsal yerellikler” (Halfacree, 2006a) yaklaşımları da, tartışmaların derinleştirilmesi ve daha güncel perspektiflerden aktarılması konusunda teze rehberlik etmektedir.

Tezin temel araştırma sorunsalları, (1) göçmenlerin mekânsal pratikleri ve sermaye temelli müdahaleleri ile Urla’nın sosyo-kültürel ve ekonomik dokusunu nasıl dönüştürdüklerine; (2) bu kıyı kasabanın yapı ve doğal çevresel niteliklerinin nasıl yeniden üretildiğine; (3) Urla’daki yeni yaşam ve yer anlatılarının göçmenlerce nasıl medyalastırıldığı ve kırın temsillerle yeniden yaratıldığına odaklanmaktadır. Bu

kapsamda tez üç ana bölüme ayrılmıştır. Öncelikle tezin ağırlık noktasını oluşturan “Geçiş Sürecindeki Sahil Kasabaları: Urla’da Yeni Yaşamın Yönetilmesi ve Planlanması” başlıklı bölüm, Urla’nın değişen kırsal kimliğinin göçmenlerin sermaye aktarımlarıyla ilişkisini, kent antropolojisinin makro ilişkiselliği içinde ele almaktadır. Bu yüzden göçmenler arası müzakereler, yerel topluluklarla ya da yerel yönetimle ilişkilennmeler ya da dernekleşmeler gibi kurumsallaşmalar da yaşam biçimi göçmenlerinin Urla’ya müdahaleleri kapsamında tartışmaya dahil edilen bileşenlerdir. Mekânı yeniden üretim müdahalelerinin ve sermaye aktarımlarının makro çerçevesinin ardından tezin ikinci ayağını, “Yaşam Tarzı Göçüyle Sahil Kasabasının Yeniden Üretimi: Urla’da Doğal ve Yapılı Çevrenin Dönüşümü” başlıklı bölüm, dönüşümün materyal çevredeki izlerine odaklanarak mekânsal ayrışmaları, yapılı ve doğal çevredeki yeni düzenlemeleri, yeni talepler ya da estetik yaklaşımlarla Urla’nın kimliğinin nasıl dönüştürüldüğünü tartışmaktadır. Son olarak “Sahil Kasabası Anlatıları: Yaşam Tarzı Göçmenleri Tarafından Mekânın Temsili ve Medyatikleştirilmesi” başlıklı üçüncü ayak ise, göçmenlerin kırsalı kendilerine ait medya içerikleri aracılığıyla anlatı kurucular olarak nasıl çerçevelediklerini ve kır temsillerinin sosyal mekandaki pratiklerin yeniden şekillendirici potansiyelini ele almaktadır. Tezin yaşam biçimi göçü ve yerin müzakeresi biçiminde örülen izleği, son bölüm ile birlikte makro yapılar ve mikro çevrenin değişimine iletişimsel boyutu dahil etmektedir. Böylece tezin sermayelerin aktarımına ve yerin üretimine dayanan temel kavramsal çerçevesi tamamlanmaktadır.

Urla’da yaşam biçimi göçü ile ne olup bittiğini ele almanın ve kent antropolojisi yaklaşımının bir gereği olarak, derinlemesine görüşmeler ve katılımcı gözlemden oluşan etnografik bir saha çalışması yürütülmüştür. Bu saha çalışmasına ise Urla’daki göçmenlerin yaşam alanı, yaş dağılımı, yeni yerleşimlerdeki yaşam süreleri, işleri, hayal kırıklıkları gibi konuları kapsayan keşifsel bir anket öncülük etmiştir. 102 kişi ile yapılan keşifsel anketin ardından Kasım 2022-Ağustos 2024 tarihleri arasında 42 derinlemesine görüşme yapılmıştır. Bu görüşmelerin dışında “yürüme ve konuşma,” fotoğraf kaydı, özdüşünümsel seyir notları gibi ek veri toplama yöntemlerinden faydalanılmıştır. İkincil kaynak olarak ise İzmir Kalkınması Ajansı, Urla Belediyesi, Çevre, İklim ve Şehircilik Bakanlığı, İzmir Büyükşehir Belediyesi gibi resmî kurumların kamuoyu ile paylaştıkları raporlardan ve gazete haberlerinden faydalanılmıştır.

Tezin ağırlık merkezini oluşturan ikinci bölümü kapsamında, yaşam biçimi göçü literatüründe yer eden sağlıklı yaşam, daha iyi fiziksel çevre, estetik beklentiler gibi klasik tetikleyicilerin, Urla’daki hareketlilik için de geçerli olduğu görülmüştür. Buna karşın Urla örneği kapsamında ulaşılan ve Türkiye’ye özgü bir farklılığa işaret eden sonuç, güvensizleşen kentlerin, artan mülteci nüfusun, ekonomik belirsizliklerin ve toplumsal kültürel hegemonyanın, kent soyluları toplumsal açıdan daha “korunaklı” bir sosyal çekirdek olarak kıra itmesidir. Yaşam şartları, topluluk inşası, kültürel aidiyet, iyi olma hali ve refah açısından dirençli bir yaşama denk düşen sayfiye niteliğindeki Ege kasabaları, ekonomik, sosyal ve kültürel sermayesi yüksek yaşam biçimi göçmenlerine sosyal refah ve ekonomik standartları yükseltme imkânı

sunmaktadır. Bölgenin şarap ve gastronomi turizmi için taşıdığı potansiyel, kırdaki yeni bir iş kurma hayali taşıyan göçmenler için güvenli bir girişim limanı sunmaktadır. Ayrıca yaşam biçimi göçmenlerinin içe kapalı topluluklarını, kırsal sınırlı sosyal yaşamında daha kolay oluşturabilmeleri de kentsel yaşamda kaybettikleri açık toplum ve seküler değerlere nostaljik bir çağrı niteliğindedir. Bununla birlikte kırsal daha dirençli bir toplumsal yaşama denk düşen bu nitelikleri, göçün tetiklediği hayat pahalılığı ve yerinden etmeler neticesinde kapsayıcı bir nitelik göstermez; yerel halk ve Urla'ya daha önce göç etmiş emekliler gibi toplulukların yaşam koşullarının gittikçe zorlaştığı ve kırsal dirençliliği meselesinin elit göçmenlerin lehine işleyen bir süreç olduğu görülmüştür. Bu bölüm kapsamında Urla'daki yaşam biçimi göçmenlerinin grup içi dinamiklerinin ve ilişkilenmelerinin ortaya konması, tezin yaşam biçimi göçü literatürüne önemli katkılarından biri olmuştur. Göçmenlerin ekonomik, sosyal ve kültürel sermayeleri, değerleri ve yaşam biçimleri, çatışma yaşadıkları ya da iş birliği yaptıkları topluluklar ve ortak değer yaratma kapasiteleri göz önünde bulundurularak yedi alt grup oluşturulmuştur: (1) Girişimciler, (2) Yatırımcılar, (3) Yeni çiftçiler, (4) Beyaz yakalılar, (5) Sosyal sorumlular, (6) Yaratıcılar ya da sanatçılar, (7) Emekliler ya da yarı-emekliler. Bu ayrışan gruplar, girişim faaliyetleri, doğal çevreyi savunma, kültürel etkinlikleri destekleme gibi konularda iş birliği içinde olabildikleri gibi çevre değerleri, üretim yaklaşımları, tarım arazilerinin el değiştirmesi, kente özgü alışkanlıklar gibi konularda çatışma yaşamaktadırlar. Ayrıca özellikle küçük ölçekli çiftçiler, emekliler ya da beyaz yakalılar, yatırımcıların ve girişimcilerin araziye ve konuta erişimi zorlaştırmaları karşısında dışlanan, ayrıştırılan gruplar olarak kalabilmektedirler. Bu gruplar içinde Urla'nın sürdürülebilir nitelikleri ile öne çıkan bir turizm kasabası olmasını isteyen girişimci yaşam biçimi göçmenlerin, dernekleşme, sosyal ağları genişletme, yerel yönetimlerle müzakere içinde olma, tarihsel miras, çevre düzenlemeleri, altyapı müdahaleleri gibi konularda planlamacı bir eğilim ile hareket etme ve uluslararası ağlarını genişletme stratejileri ile Urla'nın kırsal kalkınma ve gelecek vizyonunu tayin eden dominant grubu oluşturdukları görülmüştür. Bu grup Urla'nın girişimci bir ekosistem olarak büyümesini beslemektedir. Dominant yaşam biçimi göçmenleri ile iş birliği içinde olan bir diğer alt grup ise girişimci çiftçiler olarak öne çıkmıştır. Urla'nın dominant girişimci çiftçileri, diğer çiftçilerden tarım dışı alanlarda, özellikle de turizm sektöründe yatırımları olması ve tarımla bu girişimlerini birleştirmeleri ile ayrışmaktadır. Yine bu bölüm, çiftçilikle ya da daha genel anlamıyla toprağa dayalı üretim faaliyeti ile ilişkilenen girişimci toplulukların, yatırımcıların ya da inşaat sektörünün ranta dayalı dünyasının yanında, doğayı korumaya yönelik inisiyatif almaları ve kırsal üretici kimliğini sürdürmeleri ile kentleşmeye dönük dönüşümü yavaşlattıklarını aktarmaktadır.

İkinci bölüm, aynı zamanda yere özgü kaynaklar üzerinde sermayeleri ile dönüştürme gücünü ellerinde tutan göçmenlerin, değişimin rotasını sürdürülebilir destinasyon, terroir turizmi, kırsal soylulaşma ve idealize ettikleri yaşam dünyaları arasında müzakere ettiklerini göstermektedir. Bu müzakere süreci kırsal çok işlevli bir niteliğe bürünmesini beraberinde getirdiğinden üretim ve girişimcilik arasındaki bağları kuvvetlendirmektedir. Göçmenler gerek girişimleri gerek kentli tüketim

alışkanlıkları gerekse yatırımları ile ekonomik sermayelerle beslenen bir sistem yaratmışlardır; ancak kıra yönelik iyi ve sağlıklı yaşam arzuları; kültürel ortamın otantikliği, zenginliği ya da estetiği yönündeki beklentileri ile sosyal ve kültürel sermayelerini en çok bir araya getirdikleri alan, Urla'daki yaşam tarzlarının geleceğine yöneliktir. Urla'daki dönüşümün diğer bir merkez noktasını, inşaat sektörünün büyümesi ile tarım arazilerinin kullanım değerini yitirmesi ve ranta açılması oluşturmaktadır. İkinci bölüm, bu süreci yatırımcı yaşam biçimi göçmenlerinin kar odaklı ve geçici aidiyet pratikleri açısından yorumlarken, bu dönüşümün doğal çevrede ortaya çıkardığı yıkım üçüncü bölümde ele alınmaktadır.

Üçüncü bölüm, yapılı çevrenin aşırı ticarileştirme, soylulaşma, konutlaşma gibi kentsel müdahalelerle Urla'nın yatırım ve turizm odaklı bir yörüngede değişmesinin somut izlerini göstermektedir. Merkezi ve yerel yönetimlerin kentsel genişleme politikaları ile yaşam biçimi göçünün kesişiminde ilerleyen bu dönüşüm süreci, kırın özgün niteliklerinin yerine yaşam biçimi göçmenlerince oluşturulmuş melez kimliklenmelerin oluşturulması ile seyrine devam etmektedir. Bu durum literatürde kırın periferileşmesi biçiminde yankı bulsa da, Urla'nın ayrışan niteliği, hem kültürel hem de ekonomik sermaye farklılıkları nedeniyle, melezleşme, kırsal dokusunu ve kentleşme biçiminde birbirinden ayrı nitelikler taşıyan dağınık bir coğrafyanın ortaya çıkmasıdır. Urla hala kırsal özgü altyapı sorunlarının olduğu, köylülük ve kırsal yerel topluluklarının üretimlerini ve kültürel geleneklerini sürdürdüğü, tarım arazilerinin ve ormanlık alanların yerleşim bölgelerinden daha geniş bir araziye yayıldığı bir ilçedir. Sanat Sokağını da içine alan merkez bölgelerin tüketim odaklı mekanlarla kuşatılması, kentsel alışkanlıkların taşındığı yeni ekonomik ve sosyal bölgelerin oluşması, inşaat şirketlerinin doldurduğu lüks konut bölgelerinin yayılması, peri-metropolitenleşmenin iki ayrı ucunu göstermektedir. Bu uçlara karşın hem ikinci hem de üçüncü bölüm, yeni kırsal kimliğinin ana hatlarını, eşitsizliklerin arttığı, üretim ilişkilerinin ulusal ve uluslararası ağlara açıldığı, tarımsal üretimin yerini turizmin deneyimsel coğrafyasının aldığı ve konutlaşmayla sınırlarını genişleyen bir kırsal tablosu çizerek özetlemektedir.

Dördüncü bölüm ise bulgular kapsamında yukarıdaki özetlenen kırsal temsillerinin göçmenler tarafından yeniden inşa edilen boyutlarını, iletişimsel nitelikleri ile ele almasıyla, anlatı ya da söylem düzeyine çekmektedir. Kent ya da kırsal çalışmaları ve kültürel çalışmalar kesişiminde konumlanan bu tez için, medyayı, yerin üretimine dahil etme niyeti, medyatikleşme kavramından dayanağını almıştır. Medya ve toplumu girift bir yapı olarak bu yaklaşım aracılığıyla, tezin Lefebvrian ve Bourdieusian kuramsal çerçevesi, anlatının hegemonik ve çerçeveleyici yönleriyle birleştirilmiştir. Bu kapsamda dördüncü bölümün temel bulgusu, dominant yaşam biçimi göçmenlerinin, üretim-tüketim döngüsündeki, kültürel alandaki ve yapılı çevrenin düzenlemesindeki müdahalelerinin yanında, medya anlatılarını da girişimci ekosistemi planlamak ve kırsal için idealize ettikleri temsilleri yeniden üretmek için kullanmalarıdır. Yaşam tarzı göçmenleri tarafından üretilen yerel dergi içeriğinin analizi ile desteklenen görüşmelerde, medyada yaratılan temel kırsal temsilleri ise Urla'daki kültürel miras ve mimarideki izleri, yaratıcı toplulukların ve sanatçıların varlığının sunduğu kültürel zenginlik, doğal kaynaklarla bütünleşik yaşam, sürdürülebilirlik,

teruar turizminin sunduđu gastronomi deneyimi ve bağıcılık kùltürüdür. Tezin ikinci ve üçüncü bölümündeki bulguların da kısa bir özeti niteliğinden bu temsiller, bir tarafta turizm için bir çekim anlatısı oluşturmayı ve PR bülteni olarak işlemeyi üstlenirken diğeri tarafta ise yaşam biçimi göçmenlerinin arzu ettikleri yaşam biçimlerini pekiştirmektedir. Özetle, dördüncü bölüm, medyanın, topluluğun, yaşam alanları için inşa etmeyi arzu ettikleri auranın ve kır ütopyasının gerçek görüldüğü bir temsil yaratmalarının kaynağı olduğunu iddia etmektedir. Medya, girişimci amaçların inşasında bir enstrüman olarak mekânı yeniden inşa etmeye aracılık ederken, göçmenlerinin sembolik değeri ile mekânı bütünleştirerek ekonomik kalkınmadan, sürdürülebilirliğe, yatırım fırsatlarından kùltürel olanakların çokluğuna Urla'nın gündelik hayatını, göç uzamı odağına yerleştirmektedir.

Bu tez, Türkiye'deki bir kıyıda kasabasına yaşam biçimi göçünü tartışsa da aynı zamanda kırsal alanların ekonomik, çevresel, sosyal dengeler açısından bütüncül olarak bir tehdit altında olduğuna işaret ederek, Türkiye'de köylülüğün, tarım politikalarının, kırsal yaşam şartlarının, kırsal yönelik yerel ve merkezi planlamaların ve kentlerin yaşanabilirlik niteliklerinin gözden geçirilmesine ve bu hareketliliklerin kırsal ilişkilerinin daha planlı yürütülmesine bir çağrı niteliği de taşımaktadır.



## **1. INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1. Purpose and the scope of the study**

As a person who grew up in a small town in İzmir, I feel a deep sense of affinity for the rural culture and daily routines of the peasant people who irrigate farmland, tend to animals, tour the summer houses to sell vegetables or fruits they grow and organize beach days depending upon the influx of daily tourists. After all those days, once I was old enough to adjust to daily life as a child, I returned to the city, from my grandmother's house to my family's apartment. It is still a village with slow daily routines and a culture of cultivating olive and tangerine. However, the second homeowners or residential migrants not only live in the coastal region but also move to the neighborhoods of local groups. They have gotten involved in agricultural activities due to altering land ownership.

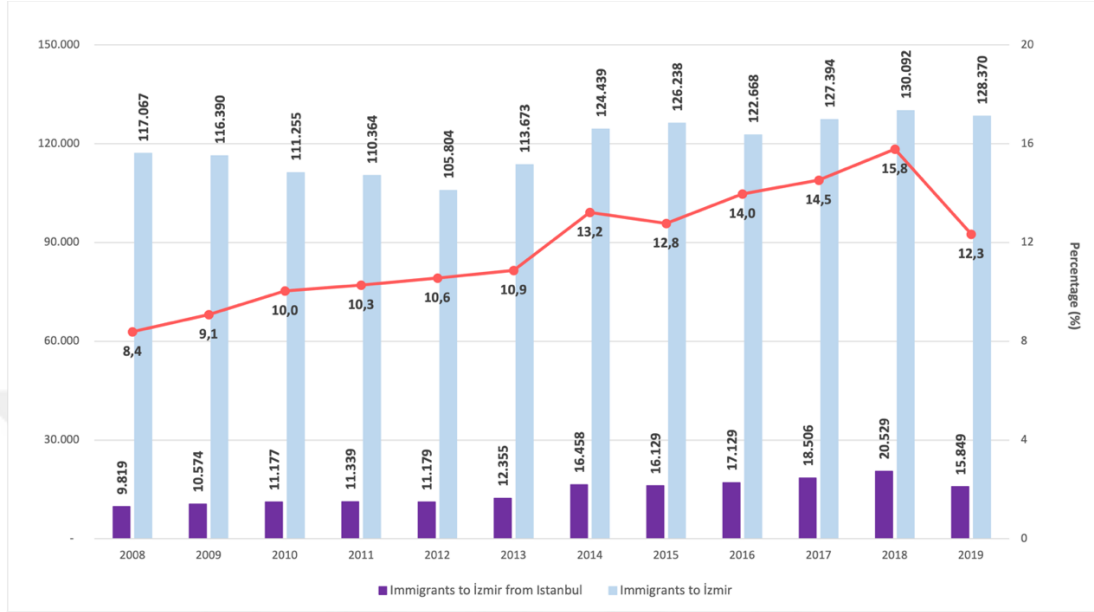
Another place where my childhood is rooted is Urla, the case study of this dissertation. As a child from a working-class family, I spent the most enjoyable parts of my summer vacations at the social facilities (the State Railways camp and the Police camp) in this seaside town near İzmir, where we would go as a weekend summer activity with my family. During this period, which coincided with the late 1990s and early 2000s, Urla had not yet established itself as a vineyard or migration destination. It was a region where middle-income families from İzmir purchased secondary residences or at least enjoyed its seaside atmosphere as a nearby summer resort. The area we were familiar with was limited to the coastline; the villages were not as well-known as they are today, and Art Street, now one of the main routes for daily tourism, had not yet been established. Years later, as this small place became part of the tourist experiences for my friends in Istanbul and even came up in conversations about migration, I realized that I was beginning to view both the village where I spent my childhood and Urla—once a charming day-trip destination in İzmir—as potential

career and lifestyle options. While the story of many Istanbulites leaving the city for the countryside or tourist towns makes me think of managing the family land and tangerine production as an ideal lifestyle, I realize that I need experience and knowledge to manage both the agricultural and sales processes effectively. On the other hand, I also see that Urla's former identity has become a nostalgic memory of childhood. It has transformed from a place where middle-income families visited with modest expectations into a destination now characterized by luxurious lifestyles and the influence of various communities. Much like the village where I grew up, this town, with its beach, is evolving into a stage for new practices while retaining its rural qualities.

In the context of my nostalgia for the rural life of my childhood and the contemporary phenomenon of urban-to-rural mobility, I wonder if returning to the village where I grew up or migrating to a place like Urla could one day become a desired way of life in my personal story. After seeing the percentage of migrants to İzmir reported in the newspapers, these inquiries led to further questions about the circumstances of this imagined place: with whom, within which group, under which political context, and with what economic resources do these people build a new life? Do they achieve the conditions they envisioned, or what actions do they take to attain the expected lifestyle? On the other hand, the other aspect of this mobility phenomenon concerns how the place they move to is affected, replanned, or negotiated as a result of this search for a new life.

This phenomenon, called "lifestyle migration," is temporary or permanent mobility to a place, which includes not only cities with a higher quality of life but also rural and summer resort areas, to improve the living standards based on more affordable living costs and/or housing (Benson and O'Reilly, 2009: 610). Lifestyle mobility is not limited to retirees, and it comprises active businesspeople and groups with high socio-cultural capital, which could change the migrated region's demographics and cultural and economic structure. In Türkiye, İzmir is one of the provinces where lifestyle migration is intensely experienced. According to the "Socio-economic Indicators" report of the İzmir Development Agency (İZKA), in 2019, the number of people who migrated to İzmir only from İstanbul was 15,849, and this corresponds to people from İstanbul comprising 12,3% of the total migration. In 2018,

the ratio of people migrating from Istanbul to İzmir was 15,8%, indicating the highest rate. According to Turkish Statistical Institute (TUIK) data (2018), the group that migrated from Istanbul to İzmir mainly consists of educated people with high incomes.



**Figure 1.1:** Migration to İzmir (Source: İzmir's Socio-Economic Indicators Report 2004-2019)

Once the migration rates of the districts are examined, it can be deduced that the investments in agriculture and industry have increased in Torbalı (14%), Seferhisar (19%), Foça (13,1%), and Urla (13 %) have become tourist attractions besides standing out in internal migration (Ünal, 2020: 205). TUIK's data on population and growth rates by provinces and districts for the year 2023 shows that the population growth rate in Karaburun, Urla, and Seferihisar regions of İzmir is remarkable.

**Table 1.1 :** Annual growth rate of population in İzmir and its touristic districts (Source: TUIK 2024 report for provincial/district center, town/village population, and annual growth rate of 2023)

| Province and district | Province and district Population | Annual growth rate of population (%) |
|-----------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| İzmir                 | 4.479.525                        | 3,91                                 |
| Çeşme                 | 50.028                           | 22,31                                |
| Dikili                | 48.379                           | 21,29                                |
| Foça                  | 36.000                           | 29,71                                |
| Güzelbahçe            | 38.044                           | 7,68                                 |
| Karaburun             | 13.379                           | 92,25                                |
| Seferihisar           | 58.570                           | 63,02                                |
| Selçuk                | 38.467                           | 8,25                                 |

|      |        |       |
|------|--------|-------|
| Urla | 77.599 | 37,59 |
|------|--------|-------|

Due to the increase in internal migration to İzmir, Urla, which constitutes the field of this study, has become an area of new socio-economic groups with new social expectations, initiatives, and encounters. This dissertation titled “Negotiated Seaside Town through Lifestyle Migration: New Life Practices, Reproduction of Space and Spatial Narratives in Urla” aims to reveal lifestyle mobility magnetized to a seaside town in Türkiye (İzmir) in the interaction of theoretical and methodological frameworks of Lefebvre’s “Social Production of Space,” Bourdieu’s field theory based lexicon (habitus and capitals), and urban anthropology to clarify lifestyle migrants spatial practices and interventions in the macro-level social structure (ideological conflicts, economic and social investments) and as well the micro-level space of the immigration by place-specific narratives and re-production of material spaces.

The main issues that build the dissertation are what “lifestyle migrants” brought with them to the town, how the town is negotiated along with new life practices, capital-based performances, reproduction of space, and spatial narratives. The mentioned micro and macro contexts allow us to divide the dissertation into three chapters. The opening chapter is designed under the heading “Seaside Towns in Transition: Managing and Planning the New Life in Urla” to highlight new life and rural planning strategies of lifestyle migrants encompassing socio-cultural conditions, their transmutable capitals, entrepreneurship, community leadership, and institutional negotiations. The second chapter, entitled “Reproduction of the Seaside Town through Lifestyle Migration: Transformation of the Natural and Built Environment in Urla,” aims to describe how migrants organize the natural and built environment of Urla in their search for a new life, how lifestyle concepts are embodied in the physical-material environment, how daily habits are formed during the process of re-establishing space. Finally, the last chapter is “Seaside Town Narratives: Representation and Mediatization of Place By Lifestyle Migrants.” This chapter strengthens the representational component of the dissertation and discusses how lifestyle migrants who are content producers or engaged in media-related activities reproduce place through narratives about Urla.

## **1.2. Theoretical Framework**

### **1.2.1. The Concept of “Lifestyle Migration”**

The first two articles on “lifestyle migration” were published in 1998, and the term has been used to refer to the mobility towards the urban-rural fringe (Swaffield and Fairweather, 1998, as cited in Walford & Stockdale, 2015: 99) and to the factors such as physical environment, climate, comfortable lifestyle that gravitate people towards migration (Walmsley et al., 1998, as cited in Walford & Stockdale, 2015: 99). Lifestyle migration differentiates from displacements like labor migration, refugee, and asylum. Its distinctive qualities comprise the prioritization of aesthetic expectations such as life quality over economic concerns, including income and occupation (Benson & O’Reilly, 2009; Benson & Osbaldiston, 2014).

The literature on lifestyle migration within Europe focuses on international migration from Northern and Central Europe to the Mediterranean coast and its rural hinterland (Kordel, 2016; Sardinha, 2018; Balkır & Südaş), rural France (Benson, 2011) or more urban-qualified areas (cited in Kordel & Weidinger, 2019: 4; O’Reilly and Benson 2009: 6). Besides Europe, these movements are also witnessed from the North towards the coastal areas of Latin America or its authentic regions as Mexico, Panama, Chile, Ecuador or the countries of the Global South as Thailand, Malaysia (Ono, 2015; Rainer, 2019). In addition to the quieter and more peaceful life promised by the countryside or coastal areas, the lifestyle migration literature offers only a limited exploration of the mobilities of groups with relatively higher social status and economic capital in their countries, moving from the Global South to the Global North into cosmopolitan cities like London and Berlin. Their motivations include becoming world citizens, pursuing freedom and anonymity, and self-cultivation in the cosmopolitan life of big cities (Griffits & Maile, 2014; Robins, 2019).

The “Lifestyle migration” concept, which focuses on relatively privileged and affluent forms of migration, mainly reveals the motivation behind the mobilities. However, it treats migration as a process rather than a one-off act that ends when the destination is reached (O’Reilly & Benson, 2009; Benson & O’Reilly, 2016). It is argued that the freedom to migrate based on lifestyle choices constitutes a central dynamic in identity formation projects. Furthermore, there is a consensus that lifestyle

mobilities are predominantly consumption-oriented rather than production-focused (Benson & Osbaldiston, 2014; Benson & O'Reilly, 2016). However, as a complex phenomenon, “it holds at its core social transformation and wider processes; it is at once an individualized pursuit and structurally reliant, and it is a response to practical, moral and emotional imperatives.” (O'Reilly & Benson 2009: 11)

#### **1.2.1.1. Factors Triggering Lifestyle Migration**

It would be appropriate to unpack the complex narrative of place-based identity construction, which proceeds lifestyle migration as an individual project, and explain “pull and push factors” as an act of migration to understand the general framework of the concept. Hoey (2005, as cited in Torkington, 2012: 73) states that the lifestyle migrants make conscious choices regarding where to live alongside having the competency to choose how to live. Changing the place of residency is more than just acquiring better opportunities. Still, it is driven by the intention to achieve a higher quality of life by altering the lifestyle (Torkington, 2012: 73). Lifestyle migration is not an act but rather a quest or project where personal choices predominate with the apprehension of life satisfaction, finding one self's true desires, creating a new life, or enhancing the current conditions (Benson & O'Reilly, 2009: 610). Therefore, push and pull factors, which form the fundamental theoretical basis of mobility studies, are also valid for lifestyle migration. Although lifestyle migrants do not live in conflicts, drought, and hunger that force them to migrate, they may migrate due to political intolerance, uncertainty, and improved socio-economic conditions. Despite Torkington (2012: 72) arguing that lifestyle migrants are independent of political or economic factors, Huete, Mantodon, and Estevez (2013: 333) assert the opposite by saying that the mobility of the wealthy group is also tied to the economic factors. While the protagonists of mobilities are more often (pre)retirees due to the availability of financial resources and leisure time, economically active people are also increasingly familiar figures in the lifestyle migration literature. The fact that middle-aged self-employed tourism entrepreneurs consider working as part of their desired lifestyle stretches the boundaries of the literature beyond the consumption of leisure time and available resources (Kordel & Weidinger, 2019: 4). Certain qualities of the migration destination, such as low cost of living, property prices, and facilitation of investment opportunities, are listed as attraction factors. As starting a business is typical to finance

the new lifestyle, economic factors are among the reasons for migration. Still, it is crucial to recognize that the financial expectations of lifestyle migrants are linked to recreational, consumption, or pleasure-focused outdoor activities, differentiating lifestyle migration from labour migration, where economic factors take precedence in improving living conditions (Huete et al., 2013: 335). One important point to note about the economic capital of lifestyle migrants is that migration is related to factors that are not necessarily linked to the wealth of the migrants, particularly when viewed in the context of international mobility. For example, in migrations from the West to countries such as India, inevitably, the capital owned may be a resource that can mobilize a better way of life regarding the destinations' social and economic structure. Therefore, as Benson and O'Reilly (2016: 29) remind us, social and spatial inequalities due to global or local conditions can also reproduce the capitals that enable lifestyle migration to be seen as privileged.

Lifestyle migration of western or northern Europeans to the South or the East and its mystical values are considered a kind of escape from the consumption-oriented or hectic lifestyle of the city (Benson & O'Reilly, 2009; Korpela, 2009). It proves that the ambiguous conditions of the cities are becoming prominent causes for lifestyle migration as socio-cultural values are being questioned besides material opportunities. A profound sense of self-realization, being close to nature, having a sense of community, and establishing work-life balance are among the motivations of lifestyle migration (O'Reilly & Benson, 2009: 3-6). These factors that are part of the lifestyle arrangement are also indicators of the identity's reconstruction, a process defined as self-reflexive modernization by Giddens (1979) (Benson & O'Reilly, 2009; Torkington, 2012; Huete et al., 2013). Social actors exposed to a more flexible and precarious world have a constant obligation to face the questions regarding how they should define themselves and how they should live. Since the place of residency is an essential dynamic in the narrative of identity formation, thus taking lifestyle decisions (Torkington, 2012: 74), the individuals' identity production and self-identification influence their mobility. Being part of a community aligned with one's political or social actions can also be a source of attraction for mobility as a means of self-realization.

Although lifestyle migration is associated with retirement migration, amenity migration, counter-urbanization, secondary housing ownership, the search for improved living conditions, seasonal migration, its complex structure, and its elements have not been fully conveyed (O'Reilly & Benson, 2009: 2). On the one hand, lifestyle migration is evaluated concerning age-life events such as retirement, work, or educational mobility. On the other hand, it is considered a result of personal choices. Both approaches aim to enlighten the triggers of a relatively unpredictable and complex phenomenon (Walford & Stockdale, 2015: 104). As a third perspective, categorizations and conceptualizations based on geographical preferences can be included. In this context, counter-urbanization and amenity migration will be guiding concepts.

#### **1.2.1.2. Geographic Preferences: Counter-Urbanization and Amenity Migration**

Walford and Stockdale (2015: 104) state that even if geographical differences in lifestyle migration may exhibit repeating commonalities to some extent, they argue that geographical scales, structural factors such as employment, the housing market, and cultural context might influence its diversification. Bensen and O'Reilly (2009: 611), in their classification of lifestyle migrants according to their geographic clusters/preferences, emphasize three types of lifestyle migration: residential tourists, rural idyll seekers, and bourgeois bohemians. The first group, residential tourists, settle on the coastal resorts - primarily the Mediterranean or touristic places – that they have previously visited for touristic purposes. This group aims to overcome the permanence of their daily routine and the monotony of their existence by rendering the vacation-related concepts such as relaxation, escapism, and continuous leisure aspects of their life. The second group, the rural idyll seekers, yearn for nature and the past, desire a more straightforward and better life and want to belong to a community. This group, whose fundamental motivation for mobility is to move away from the city, intends to live in a peaceful, calm, and green setting, lower the living costs, and raise their children in a safer environment (Bensen & O'Reilly, 2009: 612-614). The third group, the bourgeois bohemians, seeks to live among open-minded people like themselves or search for a cultural experience and alternative lifestyle that could satisfy them spiritually, artistically, or creatively (Bensen & O'Reilly, 2009: 613).



It is possible to find the roots of discussions relating to the motivations behind migration mainly from urban to rural areas (touristic or second-home geographies, countryside, or suburbia) and the interactions between migrants subjectivities and places in the concept of “counter-urbanization” (McIntyre, 2013; Bensen & O’Reilly, 2016). The term counter-urbanization, which emerged in the United States in the 1970s as a result of a significant demographic shift towards the countryside, has been used to refer to the revival of previously depopulated rural areas (Halfacree, 2022: 45). Although the unequal spatial dynamics of capitalism are emphasized in the discussions on its causes, it is mainly justified with human-oriented concept sets such as “amenity migration” or “lifestyle migration” (Murdoch, 2006; Halfacree, 2022: 45).

As can be seen in the geographical preference categorization example above, the attractiveness of specific landscapes, the socio-cultural quality of the places that represent a better life, the escape from what the city represents through migration, and the interconnectedness of place and identity construction are the main discussions of the lifestyle migration literature grounded on space (Bensen & O’Reilly, 2016: 22). The concept of “amenity migration,” in conjunction with the lifestyle migration literature, contributes to the fusion of migration with rural development and transformation discussions (Gosnell & Abrams, 2011). The second concept, more orientated towards natural or cultural amenities, draws a particular trajectory and frames the change due to migration in rural areas through brought urban values and expectations. This context, in which lifestyle migrants are also included, can make visible some of the social, economic, and political contexts mostly ignored by lifestyle migration literature (Bensen & O’Reilly, 2016: 22). Accordingly, linking the lifestyle migration literature, which has a broader context in terms of motivation, destination, place-specific practices of migrants and representations of place, with the context of transformation enables a more layered view of geography-specific qualities and has the potential to delve deeper into the internal dynamics of migration practices.

Since lifestyle migration is a broad phenomenon covering many factors comprising the migration patterns of different communities, the arrival destinations of these communities, the structural/historical elements in the host geography, and the global and local dynamics, it signifies the need to address thoroughly and the presence of variances within the groups’ similarities. To grasp the lifestyle migrants’ different

mobility patterns deeply, the prominent factors of the lifestyle migrants' experiences, the geographies of these mobilities within the cultural, political, and economic characteristics, and the expectations and the negotiation of the migrants with these places should be investigated. In the literature, some mobilities intersect with lifestyle migration. These concepts describe migrants' intentions and practices and what they take to their destination. A brief mention of these concepts, which may relate to lifestyle migration, could be instrumental in better understanding the mobilities discussed in the research.

### **1.2.1.3. Different axes in rural lifestyle mobilities**

#### **1.2.1.3.1. Back-to-the-land Migration**

The “back-to-the-land movement,” which aims to simplify and increase self-sufficiency and adopt a sustainable lifestyle, was born as a reaction to modern processes such as industrialization, urbanization, and environmental destruction (Halfacree, 2006b; Orhon, 2020; Sandström, 2023). However, back-to-the-land migration is underrepresented compared to the body of work on more conventional counter-urbanization and lifestyle migration occurring in the surroundings of towns and cities (Sandström, 2023: 546). Back-to-the-land living was rooted in the “hippy heyday” of the 1960s and became more prominent in the 1970s when counter-urbanization debates emerged. It is based on the need to reconnect with what has been lost mainly in urban society (Halfacree, 2006b: 315; Halfacree, 2022: 46; Sandström, 2023: 547). In the USA and European communes, the rural areas underwent a “productivist” restructuring emphasizing intensive agricultural use during this period. Still, it also offered attractive opportunities for the creation of counter-cultural projects (Halfacree, 2022: 46). In these years, the evolving dynamics of radicalism, such as anti-war activism, environmentalism accompanying resistance to social conformity, and the challenge to consumerism, economic competition, and politics, drew their strength from the return to the rural (Wilbur, 2013: 153). Political radicalism does not emerge through social or organized action, but rather through experiences of self-sufficiency, living in alternative structures and communities (Wilbur, 2013).

Halfacree (2022: 61) notes that the back-to-the-land movement declined in the 1980s due to these communities' struggles to integrate into urban society, but it

resurged in the late 1990s. While studies have focused mainly on rural England (Halfacree, 2006b), the emergence of new spaces of the struggle for food sovereignty through peasantization in Spain (Calvário, 2017), the development of local food networks in Italy (Wilbur, 2013), and “eco-entrepreneurship” in Sweden, which emphasizes an entrepreneurial re-connecting with the land, describe new practice grounds of return to the land (cited in Sandström, 2022: 547-548). According to Halfacree (2022: 62), in today’s back-to-land practices, which emerged simultaneously with the COVID-19 crisis, there is a strengthening of tendencies such as gaining personal control in everyday life, becoming more connected and harmonized with the rhythms, senses, and vitality of nature, becoming self-sufficient in terms of food production; there is an increasing sensitivity in sustainability and eco-politics compared to previous periods.

While dynamics related to lifestyle migration, such as improved housing standards, lifestyle qualifications, and coronavirus pandemics, are factors of attraction to the countryside (Sandström, 2022: 546), according to Halfacree (2006b), what distinguishes back-to-the-land migration from other forms of counter-urbanization is the desire to achieve a life that is “identical” with the land, territory, and places settled. However, for this dissertation based on lifestyle migration, this form of mobility should not be ignored; as Sandström (2023) emphasized, it reveals new understandings of how the rural food environment has changed both materially and discursively, especially the ideals and practices adopted by migrants coming to Urla to cultivate.

#### **1.2.1.3.2. New Peasants and Newcomers**

Another concept intertwined with “back to the landers movements” regarding food and production is “new peasants.” On the one hand, this concept provides a framework for discussing how peasants can survive within the dynamics of neoliberalization and what economic, political, and social consequences this resistance brings. On the other hand, with the concept of “repeasantization,” those who migrate from urban to rural areas are also considered within the scope of the new peasantry typology (Pelek & Orhan, 2024: 219). The “repeasantization,” which encompasses the practices and initiatives of various rural groups, refers to the transformation of rural communities' connections to land and production. This shift emerges as a response to

the decline of industrial agricultural practices, market dependency, and the traditional peasant ways of life and production disrupted by the capitalist system (Rosset & Ule Muñoz, 2024: 3-4). In other words, it corresponds to the peasants' capacity to reduce external dependency and meet their own needs by gaining control over their mode of production. While encompassing social struggles within the peasant movement—such as autonomy, livelihood struggles, and the transformation of land ownership relations—the concept also captures the collective process in which urban lumpen communities occupy rural land as a survival strategy, redefining peasantization through legal land ownership and agroecological production methods (Van der Ploeg, 2008; Fernandes, 2013; Rosset & Ule Muñoz, 2024). Van der Ploeg (2008: 277), one of the pioneers of this terminology, gives the example of the landless people's movement, the movement of migrants from favelas to rural settlements in Brazil. Aiming to regain their dignity and build a better life for their children, these communities, subsequently known as peasants, initiated a significant organic farming movement in rural areas. According to Van der Ploeg (2008: 37), in many parts of the world, these non-peasant communities have constructed grey zones between entrepreneurship and farming through investments and involvement in peasant modes of production (Van der Ploeg, 2008: 37).

This two-way process of repeasantization, which tries to survive with more autonomous and resilient systems in the face of neoliberalized agriculture and food sovereignty, frames the formulation to grasp how rural land, the commodification of agriculture, and production relations must be reformed to create an alternative production cycle through counter-hegemonic initiatives (Van der Ploeg: 2008; Öztürk et al., 2018). The secondary layer, related to lifestyle migration, pertains to the ambitions of urban escapists who envision the drudgery of rural life as an ideal existence (Öztürk et al., 2018: 253). Pelek and Orhan (2024: 219) remind that communities migrating to the countryside can also enter the new peasantry typology by working in non-agricultural jobs such as ecotourism, restaurants or souvenirs. Because capitalist farming, the movement of people from the city back to the village, non-agricultural employment, and the dual lives between urban and rural areas all present different perspectives on these typologies (see also Öztürk et al., 2014).

Another concept that characterizes the new life forms in rural areas and “urbanites coming to the countryside” is “newcomers.” This group, whose primary motivation is a high quality of life, is discussed within the scope of rural development and the change they create in rural areas through entrepreneurship, employment capacity, environmental vision, and transformation of the local housing market (Gosnell & Abrams, 2011; Akgün et al., 2011; Rishworth et al., 2022). The temporal categorization of amenity migration into newcomers and oldcomers allows differentiation between newcomers and previous migrants. This indicates that newcomers possess diminished social integration and community investment capabilities, are prone to imposing their values on rural societies, exhibit inflexibility regarding property rights, and are more susceptible to dissatisfaction with pastoral living conditions (Gosnell & Abrams, 2011: 310).

#### **1.2.1.3.3. The mobility of the creative class**

A notable concept related to the influx of newcomers or amenity migration is the mobility of the “creative class” and its impact on the development and transformation of rural areas. The core of this concept, which has also been adapted to rural areas, is based on the rise of the creative class in the hierarchy of the urban economy. The rise of the creative class, which heralds the significance of creativity in the urban economy, and the mobile lifestyle adopted by this class have led to a new fraction in the conceptualizations of lifestyle migration. The reversal of the brain drains, the recovery of expertise, the revival of creative industries, the launch of leisure-based business forms, and the transformation of the places of migration into centers of attraction are essential foci of the discussion (Luckman, 2015: 109). The creative class can be briefly defined as “dreamers” who create new practices for the experience economy. The prominence of creativity as an economic resource has fueled the competition between cities and generated recent management trends such as “creative city” and “creative region.” (Richards & Wilson, 2007: 13). Richard Florida (2012: 11) classifies the creative class, which constitutes more than 40% of the workforce in large metropolitan areas as of 2010, into two groups. The first group he describes as the “super-creative core” includes scientists, engineers, professors, poets, novelists, artists, actors, designers, architects, think tank researchers, analysts, editors, and cultural figures (Florida, 2012: 38). On the other hand, the second group, “creative professionals,”

corresponds to highly educated human resources working in knowledge-intensive industries such as high technology, financial services, business administration, law, and health professions (Florida, 2012: 39). This approach, prevalent both in academia and on the policy agenda, has been criticized for its metacentrism and dematerialization of cultural practices. However, it constitutes a suitable setting for discussion the intersection of “rural revitalization” with migration, as it points to the infrastructure necessary for economic development, the construction of an open and tolerant local environment, and the attraction of entrepreneurs and highly qualified workers to non-metropolitan areas (Argent et al. 2013: 90). The discussions in this context emphasize the diversity of local businesses, employment, especially in tourism, and the attraction of new investments to the countryside, which the creative class can provide for the realization of regional development (McGranahan et al., 2011; Herslund, 2012; Argent et al., 2013).

These labels or categorizations shed a deeper perspective on the underlying motivations behind lifestyle migration, as well as an overview of the different axes of spatial practices of communities migrating from urban to rural areas. The mobilities accompanied by economy, culture, talent, or knowledge show that many performances work together in rural areas and intersect with the literature on lifestyle migration. However, to avoid getting stuck in the frames, the perspective of the lifestyle migration concept, which can be bent and twisted, has been preferred for the overall scope of the dissertation.

### **1.2.2. Urban to Rural Mobilities in Türkiye**

In the 1960s, Türkiye experienced rapid industrialization and urbanization as more people moved into the cities, especially Istanbul. Rural-to-urban mobility between 1975 and 2000 was recorded at 3.5 million. Still, the urban sprawl and population outmigration to periphery areas suggest that more than half of the population movement was not from rural to urban, but rather between metropolitan areas. Until the 1980s, policies promoting farming and the increased role of the state in agricultural finance supported the continued growth of the rural population despite the mechanization of agriculture (Öztürk et al. 2017: 3). After 1980, the national regulatory regime on agriculture and food sector began to shift away from protectionist

policies and towards liberalization wave, marking a significant departure from previous approaches. Agricultural producers are left to their fate in the face of uncertain market conditions (Keyder & Yenal, 2020: 50). Following 2000, due to the neoliberal policies, the large-scale withdrawal of state support for agriculture, the denationalized agricultural industries and the financial crisis were the primary factors triggering the decline in the rural population (Öztürk et al., 2017: 4).

The level of detachment from the peasantry in Türkiye varies significantly across different regions. It is influenced by factors such as land fertility, the marketability of agricultural products in the national market, and the degree of farmer adaptation to state policies geared towards the international market. Many small landowners, unable to adapt to the market-oriented regime and impoverished, moved toward the cities (Keyder & Yenal, 2020: 50). On the other hand, throughout the 25 years leading up to 2000, net rural-urban migration stood at a modest 400,000 individuals because of the “reverse” migration patterns (especially between 1975–1980 and 1995–2000) (Öztürk et al., 2017: 3). As noted by Öztürk et al. (2020: 101), the return to the countryside of the impoverished people who migrated to the city and encountered challenges in maintaining their livelihoods is a way of finding shelter against the adverse conditions of urban life. These returns are to areas where sufficient land and income sources are sustained; essential services are accessible, and potential for development as residential or investment areas exist. For this reason, the reverse migration of peasants who cannot support themselves in the cities appears to be an essential pillar of urban-rural mobility, especially in harsh conditions like the rental crisis and high inflation, which make urban life increasingly difficult. Notably, on the Aegean and Mediterranean coasts, the demand for tourism and commercial agriculture from peripheral cities, along with the emergence of several employment opportunities, has led to an increase in the population of villages in coastal areas (Keyder & Yenal, 2020: 52).

The re-emergence of rural living has become a tangible phenomenon in Türkiye, particularly since 2011, as evidenced by a statistically significant rise in agricultural employment. According to Keyder (2020: 209-215), the implementation of price support by the AKP government, along with its pursuit of micro-policies aimed at enhancing productivity, diversifying products, and promoting competition in

agricultural production, as well as its efforts to facilitate market participation for producers, resulted in a noticeable increase in farm employment and the attractiveness of agriculture-based income during the 2007-2011 period. Especially in the Aegean Region, this increase reaches % 50 of overall agrarian employment. Keyder (2020: 211) interprets this growth, which continues according to TUIK 2012 data, as increasing the allure of rural areas and farming. It should be noted that there are differences according to geographical regions in Türkiye, and It is not feasible to attribute an identical increase in attractiveness to each village.

While cities, towns, or villages in Eastern Anatolia are not attractive due to their geographical and climatic disadvantages, interventions such as village evacuations caused by wars and conflicts in the region have initiated a rural wave towards the central cities of Eastern and Southeastern Anatolia, vibrant villages of the Aegean and Mediterranean, along with migration out of Istanbul. Therefore, another phenomenon within rural flows in Türkiye is the relocation of Kurds (Keyder &Yenal, 2020: 51; Öztürk et al., 2014: 378). Those who cannot find jobs in the east or southeast central cities have created an important ethnic labor reserve as seasonal agricultural workers (Pelek & Orhan, 2024).

Retirement migration represents another mobility pattern in Türkiye, characterized by the movement from urban to rural areas. This type of reverse migration often involves retirees, such as former civil servants or laborers, returning to their hometowns—rural areas where they maintain familial ties and benefit from developed amenities. This is often pursued to alleviate the challenges associated with urban living and keep their possession over any property retained in the village (Tezcan, 1989; Keyder &Yenal, 2020: 182). While retirement migration is not a new phenomenon, the tendency of older people to move to rural areas such as seaside villages or tourist-oriented towns instead of their hometowns is leading to population growth and transforming second homes into permanent residences. This is particularly noticeable in the Mediterranean and Aegean regions (Emekli, 2014; Öztürk et al., 2014; Öztürk et al., 2017). The differentiating aspect of these mobilities in Türkiye, which are commonly seen worldwide, is their excessive transformative power over space; the increase of new constructions and the accelerated agglomeration of urban culture results in a rapid transformation rather than development (Öztürk et al., 2014:



374). The second differentiation is observed through the prevalence of home gardening. This production type is driven by nostalgic preferences for organic produce and connection to the land, but also by saving needs stemming from low pension rates in Türkiye.

In recent years, there has been a notable trend of urban residents, both retired and non-retired, relocating to rural areas in Türkiye. This phenomenon, widely observed in different parts of the world, is called “lifestyle migration.” In the past, these relocations, whose predecessors were seen in Western Anatolian settlements such as Şirince, Doğanbey, Orhanlı, Yağcılar (see Yücel-Young, 2007), have evolved into more frequent mobility in the last few years with the widespread of remote working, the involvement of urbanites in new entrepreneurship in sectors such as tourism or agriculture, and the opportunities to continue arts and crafts in the countryside. This type of mobility corresponds to the movement of upper-middle class or wealthy groups, described as lifestyle migration, who are relatively affluent and have the power to live the life they desire. One of the limited studies on this subject in Türkiye belongs to Yücel-Young (2007), who discusses the conflicts and complexities in the new lives of “urbanite villagers” migrating to Orhanlı and Yağcılar villages, drawing on class-based identities, colonialism-rooted controlling, and global consumer culture. In another study, Datta and Yücel-Young (2007) examine the settlement of urban elites from İzmir in gated sites boomed Urla and the socio-spatial factors of this rural escapism in terms of intra-urban rural migration. According to them, the recent trend of leaving urban areas’ physical and cultural degradation, especially in big cities such as Istanbul and Ankara, is also gaining popularity among upper-middle-class and middle-aged couples in İzmir. The construction of high-rise buildings along the Gulf, the increasing population, the change in the microclimate, the risk of earthquakes, and the risk of living in high-rise buildings have led residents with economic capital to seaside towns outside the center, where they can live the ideal conditions of their social class in a healthy town (Datta & Yücel-Young, 2007: 47).

In addition to the urban elite migrants who have caused urbanization in the countryside, new farmers who have established enterprises or who produce with ethical-political motives must also be mentioned. Lifestyle migrants focus on agriculture, which Türkkan (2021) characterizes as the new peasants in Türkiye who

have education and capital and worked in white-collar professions before their migration. Although their first-degree families were not farmers, they returned to the rural area and engaged in agriculture or animal husbandry. Tendencies such as clean eating, self-care, and environmental awareness are the reasons that triggered their mobility and their desire to lead a life based on production. As per the research findings, the new peasants have thought that traditional agricultural practices rely on exploiting the ecosystem and are carried out in an unscientific manner and differentiate their practices from the former peasants (Türkkan, 2021: 89). Therefore, new peasant or the back-to-the-land movement, which focuses on farming activities such as agroecology practices and sustainable agriculture, is one of the lifestyles mobilities that emerged in Türkiye amid the food crisis and de-ruralization debates (Öztürk et al., 2012; Türkkan, 2021; Ak-Kuran & Kuran, 2022). The return to the land as a distance from the city-related qualities also emerges as a means of criticizing capitalist and industrialized society with ethical-political motives (Orhon, 2020: 42). Orhon (2020) examines the return to the land with a focus on Türkiye and underlines the political potential of the return to the rural, which she interprets as a form of reclaiming lost values against the destructive appearance of modernization in AKP governance.

Among lifestyle migrants who bring their urbanite agricultural visions or their reactions against what the modern represents to the rural, entrepreneurs are involved in service-related endeavors, such as tourism. In their study on the Kuşçular neighborhood of Urla, Gücü and Çıkış (2021:79) emphasize that newcomers concentrate on grapes and olives and create brand products focused on olive oil and wine by improving production. Therefore, it is evident that these urban communities, bringing their professional urban mindset to the rural, also approach agriculture from an entrepreneurial perspective.

Under this heading, which aims to draw a general overview of internal migration mobility from urban to rural areas in Türkiye, the main pattern of the mobilities, a summary of their relations with the current economic and political structure, and descriptions in different forms such as “back-to-the-landers,” “newcomers,” “new peasants,” “urbanite villagers” have been tried to be conveyed. This dissertation, on the other hand, attempts to evaluate the trends, as mentioned earlier, that can be

holistically categorized under lifestyle migration in terms of cultural and economic practices and socio-spatial transformations in Urla.

### **1.2.3. Seaside Culture and Second Residences**

Seaside towns, derived from “the place to live in summer,” are desirable destinations to unwind from work-related stress. These towns offer accommodations such as houses or temporary residences, providing individuals with the opportunity to relax and rejuvenate in a coastal environment (Bora & Aksu, 2014: 9). However, the purposes and users of the seaside town, as well as its corresponding natural and built environment, have changed over historical processes. In the Middle Ages, the wealthy classes moved away from the urban environment by going to their castles (Nouza et al., 2013: 20). In the 17th and 18th centuries, there were elite geographies where aristocrats and bourgeois took sea baths that were not accessible to others (Urry, 2009: 39). As of the 19th century, dynamics such as new transportation opportunities, industrialization, urbanization, and the emergence of leisure culture enabled wider social groups to be included in this entertainment/leisure culture (Urry, 2009; Nouza et al., 2013). After increasing social welfare, the dream of living/being in a summer resort has been realized with a secondary residence or a summer house and touristic visits. As in the past, today’s leisure culture corresponds to a cultural performance (Bora & Bora, 2014:10). Although the socioeconomic group to which one belongs is influential in choosing seaside destinations, tastes, lifestyles, and capital fractions also play a significant role in shaping the design and use of spaces. Likewise, a seaside town is a “state of invention” that points the transformation towards a coastal settlement or holiday resort (Şentürk, 2014: 73). The process of turning a place into a seaside town involves developing the natural environment for new investments, establishing zoning regulations, improving transportation infrastructure, ensuring a variety of services, and reproduction of the place (Şentürk, 2014: 73-74).

The development of summer resort culture in Türkiye can be traced back to the new settlement arrangements and transportation services in Istanbul during the Ottoman period. In the 1850s, ferry services from the Prince Islands, including nodes such as Kadıköy, Eminönü, Üsküdar, and Bosphorus villages, provided transportation between the shores of the Bosphorus and the islands (Alkan, 2014: 24-25). These ferry services significantly impacted the city’s expansion along the coasts. The rural

character of the Marmara Sea coast on the Anatolian side persisted until the mid-19th century. However, the *sayfiye*<sup>1</sup> culture in these regions began with the construction of railways in the 1870s and the development of settlements around the stations (Salah, 2013: 44–45). The daily movement of the population to the city center via trains and ferries also contributed to identifying the countryside as a place of escape from state control and traditional lifestyles. Rural areas transformed into settlements have also coincided with the field of experience of modern social dynamics where the longing for independence and privacy and the wish for separation are cultivated (Salah, 2013: 60). Thus, the transformation brought about by modernization in the 19th century created regions where upper bureaucratic groups were in demand, such as summer resorts in Istanbul (Alkan, 2014: 33-37). By the end of the 19th century, when the habit of seaside living became widespread among the public, recreational areas such as sea baths, beaches, summer cinemas, theatres, casinos, and sports clubs were included in the use of seaside settlements in addition to residences (Alkan, 2014: 40-41; Kara, 2019: 101).

These elit residential suburbs, characterized by an upper-class lifestyle, expanded from Istanbul to Yalova during the Republic's early years. However, as Refik Halit Karay describes in his column, by the 1940s, Istanbul had become a countryside destination for civil servants from Ankara. Although other parts of Anatolia also offered promising holiday destinations, the lack of accommodations caused these cities to fall off the list of preferences (Kara, 2019: 103). Albeit Karay's columns describe a state of summer involving civil servants, the summer residence preserved its privileged structure belonging to the upper class until the 1950s, and transhumance continued to be a common form of seasonal mobility (Alkan, 2014: 44).

The accelerated urban transformation in Istanbul from the 1950s onwards has replaced residential neighborhoods with vertical architecture. Interventions on the urban coasts and increasing industrialization have been the first triggers of the shift of the *sayfiye* culture to urban peripheries such as Kumburgaz and Silivri (Kara, 2019: 105). Since the rapid urbanization in Istanbul and other cities, the awareness of

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<sup>1</sup> This concept “*sayfiye*”, which can be used in place of “seaside” in Turkish, refers to a place or settlement used for seasonal recreation and entertainment during the summer months. It comes from “*sayf*”, meaning summer in Ottoman Turkish. In Türkiye, before it was surrounded by secondary housing development, the term referred to houses with large gardens encompassed by vineyards and *bostans* (Salah, 2013; Bora & Bora, 2014).

benefiting from the sea and the sun, and the new concepts brought by modern business life such as holiday and annual leave increased the touristic and recreational orientation in this period, seaside settlements emerged in different geographies of Anatolia (Kara, 2019: 105; Kılıçaslan, 2006: 148). Facilities are also included in these settlements; however, there has been a rapid increase in secondary residences, especially on the coasts after the 1960s, as a means of investment or as a symbol of class advancement; the first planned residential settlements were constructed on the shores of İzmir-Cesme in the 1950s (Emekli, 2014).

The late 1960s and 1970s witnessed the rise of tourism businesses with investments made to open the coasts to foreign tourism in parallel with tourism-oriented development policies; since the expected international tourists did not arrive, a new regionalization culture was invented, blending tourism and secondary housing (Arkon, 1997: 36). While public lands on the coasts were opened to these allocations, the investments were also supported by the state through loans and incentives. In the shadow of these policies, another initiative affecting Türkiye's coastal culture was the state's facilitation of secondary housing ownership through the cooperative law. Cooperative Housing complexes have made it easier for the middle-income group, especially people from various professional groups, public or company employees, to own a house on the coasts. Again, the timeshare system, an extension of cooperative housing, has allowed those with middle-income levels to participate in recreational activities at fixed times of the year (Kara, 2019: 104). This period marked the first instance of including the term "social tourism" in development plans. In Türkiye, policies pursued within social tourism include organizing facilities to provide affordable accommodation for public employees and involving municipalities and professional organizations in camp construction (Ak et al., 2013; Savur, 2017).

Especially after 1980 in Türkiye, with the construction sector being the driving force of the economy and the opening of lands to rent-seeking, summer residentials, and hotels increased (Bora & Bora, 2014: 9; Alkan, 2014: 44). As a result of the İzmir master plan, Çeşme became a major tourist attraction during this period, with five-star hotels, pensions for foreign tourists and seasonal cottages for local tourists. In the 20 years following the 1972 masterplan, the İzmir peninsula's southern and northern coasts were filled with cottages (Datta & Yücel-Young, 2007: 46).

The allocation of treasury lands for secondary residences, housing loans, and changes in zoning laws have caused the coasts to be filled with construction (Emekli, 2014). In the early 2000s, the enactment of the law allowing Europeans to own property in Türkiye increased the demand for secondary residences, especially on the Aegean and Mediterranean seashores (Kılıçaslan, 2006; Emekli, 2014; Kara, 2019).

The seaside culture, altered by neoliberal policies, has also confronted Urla with similar processes. Today, seaside towns such as Urla are turning into geographies of permanent residence due to migration. These sub-regions, alternatives to the city, coincide with the new regionalities where the distinction between city and countryside is blurred. They also imply a process in which the urban/spatial identity of the seaside town is reinvented. In the section where Urla is presented as the dissertation field, the transformation of Urla as a seaside town is mentioned briefly.

#### **1.2.4. Problematic**

McIntyre (2013: 193) states that lifestyle migration has two axes to be noticed. One is migration due to the basis of mobility; the other is counter-urbanization with the potential of rediscovery and colonization. According to him, not only migrants but also capital, knowledge, skill, and information mobility (Castells, 2000; Appadurai, 1996) should be associated with lifestyle mobility. Therefore, lifestyle migration corresponds to a broader phenomenon than the mobility of people with the prospect of a better life, encapsulating risk, uncertainties, ambiguities, as well as the flow of skills, capital, and knowledge. The dynamics that explain counter-urbanization can also be grasped from this inclusive perspective. One of the main issues in this process is the social, cultural, and economic luggage of the lifestyle migrants have carried with them.

According to Benson and Osbaldiston (2016: 408), the conceptualizations of individualization and mobility create a “ready-made explanation” risk for this phenomenon and a limited ground for understanding lifestyle immigration. They emphasize the need to open the “black boxes” of new individualities and see individuals’ choices and privileges through structural analysis. This situation requires

associating preexisting concepts with new insights and patterns while avoiding repetition.

Besides theoretical similarities, international mobility (Stone & Stubbs, 2007; Benson & O'Reilly, 2009; Torkington, 2012) is at the forefront of lifestyle migration research. Therefore, even though this study has common features with international migration studies, the experience in a different region of the same cultural geography may have its own characteristics. It is also essential to consider why these groups move within the borders of the same country to escape or search for a new life instead of heading abroad.

Another trend that frequently comes to the fore in the lifestyle literature is the regional development created by lifestyle migrants. The studies on entrepreneurial migrants or creative class mobility, as a form of lifestyle migration, frame the links between regional and economic development and human capital migration (Florida, 2012; Shearmur, 2007; Brelot et al., 2010). It is an ongoing debate whether the region is open to lifestyle mobility with its living standards and economic development level or the regional growth experienced by the newly arrived communities. There is an economical, development-oriented perspective in which mobility is placed at the center; macro and micro frameworks do not complement each other. In addition, regional development or the transformation of a place is a process that must be considered independent of a single factor - the arrival of the lifestyle migrants. Factors such as the region's location, industrial structure, geographical relationship with significant markets, and local culture should also be considered (Shearmur, 2007: 38). However, the research context, based on seaside town transformation rather than regional development, stands out as the difference in the study. In addition, the studies mentioned earlier were carried out for lifestyle mobility in the USA, Canada, and European cities.

Even though this study accepts the mentioned community as one of the reference groups, with the scope of the seaside town transformed by lifestyle migration, it is worth remembering that the dynamics stated by Shearmur are considered within the scope of economic and social structure. In addition, as expressed in the title of

“lifestyle migration,” mobility is discussed with the flexibility of being reconstructed with original differences in Urla, described with new professions and cultural baggage.

Another overlooked point about lifestyle migration is how media narratives are associated with mobility. In this sense, the issue of how lifestyle migrants are represented in media is worth examining (Lawson, 2015; Wallis, 2017; Chueh & Lu, 2018). In addition, the media has been considered a representative power that mainly guides migration during the decision process by defining the representations or the imagined worlds (Ono, 2015). However, how this process accompanies the social production of the space and how the narratives negotiate with the social structure remain in a limited discussion field (Torkington, 2012; Jansson, 2018; Åkerlund & Sandberg, 2015). Overlooked micro-processes by economic development centrism, the class attributes interpreted by indices, disconnected macro and micro-processes, lack or superficiality of personal orientations, encounters, and conflicts require framing the lifestyle migrants with cultural theories and ethnographic approaches. In this research, Urla, currently undergoing a transformation driven by lifestyle migration, cannot be analyzed in isolation from institutions, actor relations, spatial reproduction processes, and power dynamics. For this reason, the perspective of urban anthropology, which provides a holistic theoretical and methodological framework, is used as a guide in associating micro and macro dynamics.

#### **1.2.5. Research Questions**

The main issue of the dissertation is Urla’s transformation with emerging lifestyle migration and the effects of this mobility on the sociocultural and economic fabric of a traditional seaside town. The starting point can be described around how a seaside town has been negotiated through spatial practices, power struggles, reproduction of space, and mediated spatial narratives. This framework has been divided into three research questions:

- How does lifestyle migration change the socio-cultural and economic fabric of Urla through spatial practices and capitals-based activities?



- How has the seaside town been reproduced in terms of built and natural environments with lifestyle migration?
- What are mediated new life and place narratives in the seaside town created by lifestyle migrants?

The dissertation consists of three chapters entitled “Seaside Towns in Transition: Managing and Planning the New Life in Urla,” “Reproduction of the Seaside Town through Lifestyle Migration: Transformation of the Natural and Built Environment,” and “Seaside Town Narratives: Representation and Mediatization of Place By Lifestyle Migrants to reveal the macro and micro processes of the transformation experienced in Urla.

#### **1.2.6. Analysis Framework**

##### **1.2.6.1. “Social Production” of Rural**

Lefebvre’s production of space theory argues that space is a social product in an emerging process through representations, practices, and ideological and material relations. The components of the triad proposed by Lefebvre, which are dialogically interlinked, are spatial practices, representations of space, and representational spaces. In a nutshell, spatial practices refer to the merging of daily reality (daily routine) and urban reality (nets and routes that connect workplaces, private life, and leisure) in perceived space which is put forth and presupposed in a dialectical interaction to possess and as well appropriate it (Lefebvre, 1974/2016: 38). This cohesion of the members of society to space requires a level of competence and performance to presume and negotiate pre-existence conditions of space by their presence, actions, and discourse (Lefebvre, 1974/2016 :57). Representations of space describe the space of “scientists, planners, urbanists, smashing and organizing technocrats, some near-scientific artists” who determine the lived and perceived space by equating them with designed codes, signs, speculations (Lefebvre, 1974/2016: 38). Lefebvre indicates the practical impact of the representation of space because of its interference and transforming power on spatial fabric, which has traces of practical knowledge and ideology. The mentioned control and intervention emerge as a project entrenched in spatial fabric and not limited to or vanished into symbolic realms. Then, it should be

taken into account that the impact of the representations is embedded in spatial context or fabric rather than the construction of a specific monument or structure (Lefebvre, 1974/2016: 42). Finally, representational spaces encapsulate the environments (lived spaces) of users, inhabitants, some artists, and a group of writers or philosophers. It is dominated, defined, or passively experienced by those social actors in the intersection of material-physical space and its symbolic values associated with dreams, symbolism, and traditions of inhabitants (Lefebvre, 1974/2016: 41- 42).

This interlinked triadic model points to a processual structure constantly rewoven by patterns, context, and conditions. The fabric of the place coincides with the practices, performances, struggles, and discourses knitted by social actors and power holders. The perspectives that suppose the space as a socially emerged offer a rich framework both for macro and micro contexts of the study that aims to deal with what lifestyle migration brings to the seaside town and how it transforms the spatial fabric and social field through new life practices, reproduction of spaces, and place narratives. As the theoretical framework of the study, “social production of space” presents a ground-breaking perspective to reveal the socio-economic space related to settlement strategies, material relations; the practices embodied in the functioning of daily life; the concrete traces in the built environment; the meanings produced about the space; the power relations; and the types of representation.

However, Lefebvre does not discuss the production of rural space concretely except for his depiction of “urban fabric,” where urbanization absorbs the rural. This context, detailed in the next chapter, emphasizes the universality of the emergence of similar spaces under capitalism rather than the disappearance of the rural. Whereas Lefebvre constructs an almost indeterminate narrative of space in his dialectical approach to the production of space, as Merrifield (2000) noted, he left “us to add our own flesh and to re-write it as part of our own chapter or research agenda” (cited in Halfacree, 2006a: 49). Rural corresponds to a multidimensional and complex space with its dynamic socio-cultural structure and its existence within economic-political relatedness; it is filled with practices and representations that are present in everyday life, from political management to agricultural production, or from development to consumption relations, as found in Lefebvre’s triad (see Lefebvre, 1974/2016; Halfacree, 2006a). Halfacree (2006a), adapting Lefebvre’s triad, briefly states that

distinctive spatial practices of the rural are reflected in everyday life through flows, interactions, and production-consumption activities within “rural localities.” “Formal representations of the rural” emphasizes the commodification of the rural in terms of exchange value and the production of representations of the rural by capitalist interests and politicians. Finally, conceptualizing “everyday lives of the rural” involves interpreting and negotiating cultural aspects of the countryside.

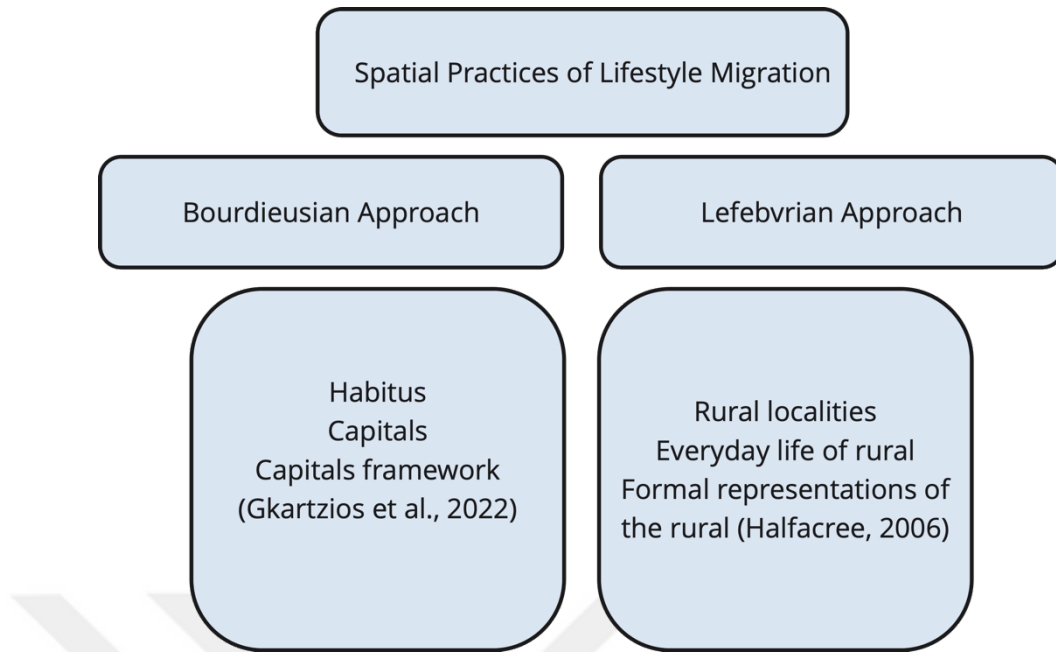
In a nutshell, Lefebvre’s spatial focus is an abstract model based on situatedness embedded in relations of production and on values shaped by interactions. In this regard, it establishes a framework for a deeper understanding of how lifestyle migrants negotiate the space they migrate to and how they reproduce the rural through their spatial practices and representations. Despite generating a broad discussion due to its emphasis on practice, this dissertation, which is based on the ethnographic field and examines the practice, requires an additional framework to analyze the agents’ actions with more concrete relationality. The best answer to this need is Bourdieu’s toolkit, which also can analyze the dynamic relations between social space and the built environment. Similarly, as Wacquant points out (2024: 25), Bourdieu, with his ability to navigate between levels of abstraction and empirical scales, has the capacity to link large power structures to the intermediate level of institutions, the minutiae of everyday interaction, and the subjectivity expressed in the term practice. However, Wacquant (2024: 11) argues against potential similarity relations between Bourdieu’s symbolic, social and physical trialectic and Lefebvre’s approach. He states that Bourdieu’s perspective differs from Lefebvre’s formulation through the social actions’ narrative embodied in three different forms (body, institution, and materialities as a repository of history), the distribution of material and symbolic capital by those actions, the creation of power disparities, and the integration of domination within the social structure. However, Bourdieu’s flexible concepts, such as field, habitus, and capital, offer a robust framework for urban studies by addressing the accumulation, differentiation, and contestation of various forms of capital, as well as the intersection of different habitus (Wacquant, 2024: 25). The aim of this study is not to present the similarities of these two different tripartite structures, but to establish a holistic framework that more comprehensively exposes the dynamics in the social transformation of the rural. Therefore, Bourdieu’s concepts of habitus, practice, and

capital facilitate an understanding of agents' practices, which are partly intangible in the "production of social space" framework.

#### **1.2.6.2. Practices in a New Social "Field"**

Bourdieu (2002/2023), a researcher from the countryside, was born in a village in France and conducted one of his first studies in Béarn, where he was born. In brief, this study explores the symbolic dissolution of the peasantry and its changing social position. Béarn study, in which the traces of many concepts, such as habitus, can be seen, explores how urban cultural models infiltrate village life, transforming its social field. Bourdieu defines (2016: 43) habitus, one of the concepts derived from this ground of changing social world, as "a system of dispositions, that is of permanent manners of being, seeing, acting and thinking, or a system of long-lasting (rather than permanent) schemes or schemata or structures of perception, conception, and action." Habitus, as the patterns of thought and behavior that shape individuals' interactions with the social field, is a regulating principle in practice. It is not fate or a repetitive system in a closed circle but produces improvisations within certain limits. It is even a "structuring structure" that can selectively perceive and transform the objective structure according to its own structure. Meanwhile, it can be restructured and transformed with the pressure of the objective structure when faced with conditions different from the conditions under which the disposition system was built (Bourdieu, 2016: 45-46).

Capital is another concept that accompanies "habitus," which forms the basis for actions within the social field and enables the actors to understand their position (their own and others') in the field. Their social interactions and position in this field are not independent of the cultural, economic and social capital they possess in relation to their habitus inherited from their past lives. Therefore, it seems useful to include the lexicon of habitus and capital in the practices of lifestyle migrants in order to understand how they are embedded in rural power dynamics and how they reproduce place-related capitals.



**Figure 1.2 :** Analysis framework

Although the analysis framework visualized above sets a path for the dissertation as a whole, it is used selectively according to the needs of each chapter. The first main chapter, entitled “Seaside Towns in Transition: Managing and Planning the New Life in Urla,” discusses how the power mechanisms and commodification processes over the rural are embodied in everyday life and place-making practices are discussed with the Lefebvrian lexicon. The way migrants utilize place-specific capitals and engage in practices that influence social structures, such as transferring their capital to a new location, is explained through the “Capitals Framework” developed by Gkartzios et al. (2022). This framework is based on Bourdieu’s analysis of capital and incorporates key concepts of habitus and various types of capital.

The second main chapter, “Reproduction of the Seaside Town through Lifestyle Migration: Transformation of the Natural and Built Environment in Urla,” shifts the focus from the macro context of transition, rural management, and planning to the material scale of the built and natural environment encompassing everyday life spaces. In this context, Lefebvre’s “representation of space” and “representational space” are ed components of the trilogy. Bourdieu’s “taste” and “lifestyle” concepts (as an extension of habitus and cultural capital) provide a pathfinder ground to reveal the connections between the material environment and the created values in the cultural

sphere. In addition, the alignments of lifestyle migrants are also handled with Bourdieu's analysis framework, especially within the scope of the subheadings in which the gated communities' boom is discussed.

The last chapter of the dissertation, which goes into the microcosm and negotiates with other parts of the dissertation (material, symbolic, and social) related to the production of rural fabric, is "Seaside Town Narratives: Representation and Mediatization of Place By Lifestyle Migrants". The Lefebvrian perspective guides this chapter, mainly as it is based on the representation of symbolic space. So, after the previous two chapters, spatial narratives complete the communicational dimension of the "negotiated seaside town."

While each section benefits from the perspectives of both sociology and cultural studies disciplines, urban anthropology's inclusive approach allows for the integration and interlinking of all chapters.

### **1.3. Methodological Perspective: Urban Anthropology**

This study considers both cities and city-connected settlements, specifically a seaside town, as an ongoing socio-spatial process instead of seeing them as static settlements where communities, economic activities, and infrastructure systems are piled up (Massey, 1991; Lefebvre, 1991, 2016; Brenner & Schmid, 2014). In their book chapter titled "Place in Context: Rethinking Humanist Geographies," Adams, Steven Hoelscher, and Karen E. Till (2001, xiii-xiv) use the "texture" to point out the "paradoxical nature of place" surrounded by material, symbolic and social relations. Even though "texture"<sup>2</sup> may be seen as a superficial layer, it draws attention to a surface where the subject and object blend. According to Adams et al. (2001, xiii), "the shape, feel and texture of place each provides a glimpse into the process, structures, spaces, and histories that went into its making" (Adams et al., 2001, xiii). So, the texture of place defines social, spatial context, and meanings continuously in the production and redefinition process. The main aim of grasping what lifestyle migrants brought with them to the Urla - to the place texture- encapsulates the merging

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<sup>2</sup> The roots of the texture of place are embedded in Henri Lefebvre's triadic perspective and "urban fabric" conception.

of object and subject in terms of the interventions to the space, new settlement patterns, narratives, daily rhythms, negotiations, staged spaces, Etc. However, to capture the paradoxical nature of this place, the macro processes, such as economic, cultural, and social structure based on the new daily life in Urla, and micro texture of everyday life, such as the arrangement of spaces, social interactions, and economic initiatives should be related. Therefore, urban anthropology is used as a methodological framework to support all three main chapters. The contexts that can be evaluated within the scope of urban anthropology can be listed as follows: Migrants' new life practices and intervention performances in the seaside town due to capitals, power struggles, negotiations, and local policy to create a designed cultural environment; reproduction of the place; place narratives, and micro-stories framing the place image and migrants' lifestyle seeking.

Different approaches have emerged during the historical development of urban anthropology, including the ecological model, community, family, and network analyses, criticism of architectural and planning power/knowledge, and economics, political, discursive, and representative urban models (Low, 1996: 387). The Chicago school's contribution to these approaches is the ecological perspective, which is based on local studies that address economic, political, and moral phenomena and communities, forming the basis for the development of urban ethnography (Deegan, 2001: 22). This sociological point of view, focusing mainly on specific groups of people in certain environments, provides the methodological basis for urban ethnography to relate people to broader systems. Besides "Anthropology in the City" of the American Chicago School of Sociology, the other main theoretical tradition is "anthropology of the city," which originated in Europe. The European perspective concentrated on "locating the subjects of urban ethnographies in terms of their larger social and historical context and the built environment and the urban landscape." (Schwanhäußer, 2016: 13). Despite the sensibility to the methodology of the American perspective, anthropology of urban is positioned between social sciences, humanities, art, and architecture. Pardo and Prato (2012:10) note that new urban research conducted by British-trained anthropologists is primarily dedicated to exploring the interrelations among political, cultural, and economic aspects. However, they have not adequately addressed the relationship between micro and macro processes, instead, they focused on understanding local dynamics and changes within the context of

national and global historical processes, which challenges the validity of traditional fieldwork. The other current research (i.e., Spyridakis 2006 and 2010) referred by Pardo and Prato (2012:10) contains and interrelates the local and national scope and policies reproducing global order in connection to local people's lifeworld in alignment with the framework of urban anthropology advocated by Pardo and Prato. According to them (2012: 3), urban anthropology offers the opportunity to position and comprehend economic relations, negotiation with urban spaces, the difficulties of gender roles, identity, and cultural diversity, the rural-urban relationship, local-supralocal, and citizenship issues in a broader social context perspective. In "Ethnography and City" Book, Richard E. Ocejo (2013: 3) defines urban ethnographers' aims as figuring out the way people understand their circumstances in their lives, considering the links between their micro-level- thoughts and actions and the macro-level social structure, and explaining the generalized behavior and relating them to the social groups with their similarities or distinctions. The central idea is ingraining in a place and among a group, building relationships with people to grasp a new phenomenon and broaden current recognitions.

It is reasonable to question why this dissertation, which focuses on a seaside town located in a "rural" space, is approached from the perspective of urban anthropology rather than rural anthropology. Rural-focused anthropology encompasses a broad field and cross-disciplinary study areas, including rural sociology, covering various topics such as local traditions in small communities, kinship and community relations, rural inequality, agricultural production, the rural economy, food and farm crises, state policies regarding rural development, and improvements in villages (see Berdichewsky, 1979; Blancheet & Laflamme, 2019). Although this broad perspective (Brown & Shafft, 2011)—which raises new questions such as the emphasis on social change, the adaptation of the countryside to modernization, the current meaning of the countryside, and who lays claim to it—deepens many of the questions relevant to this dissertation, urban anthropology is considered a well-suited framework for this study. This dissertation examines the impact of urbanite flows on the countryside and urban-rural interactions. Moreover, since the urban and rural are not treated as separate units of analysis within the dissertation, and Urla is viewed as a research field where holistic elements converge, urban anthropology provides a synthesizing lens for understanding socio-spatial



practices. Consequently, the multifaceted nature of new practices in rural landscapes and the socio-spatial traces of mobilities in rural areas can be examined more comprehensively through the perspective of urban anthropology.

### **1.3.1. Multi-sited Ethnography and Multi-Method Approach**

This study concentrates on the mobility of lifestyle migrants to a seaside town and discusses local transformations in Urla. It aims to reveal the local impacts of the mobility of wealthy/skilled or creative migrants, a global phenomenon that triggers spatial changes. Therefore, multi-sited ethnography (Marcus, 1995), which seeks to interlink "lifeworld" and "system" and supports the holistic approach of urban anthropology, has been accepted as the basis of the research design.

According to Marcus (1995: 95):

“Ethnography moves from its conventional single-site location, contextualized by macro-constructions of a larger social order, such as the capitalist world system, to multiple sites of observation and participation that cross-cut dichotomies such as the ‘local’ and the ‘global’, the ‘lifeworld’ and the ‘system’.”

Marcus indicates that this type of ethnography moves beyond the single locations and local contexts of traditional ethnographic study designs to investigate the movement of cultural meanings, artifacts, and identities across diffuse time-space. Even though this perspective seems to state the boundedness of a single-site location and has been used for comparative studies of different locations, the main idea is “understanding something broadly about the system in ethnographic terms as much as it does its local subjects.” (Marcus, 1995:110). Marcus makes this distinction because “strategically situated ethnographies” can interpret and align their implications with events occurring in other locales, even if those locations fall outside the study’s immediate research field (Marcus, 1995:110). Since the study specifically focuses on mobility, it necessitates examining mobility to Urla within broader systems and the intersections of life worlds. It also entails “following people, objects, metaphors, life stories or biographies, and conflicts” (Marcus, 1995, 106-110).

Understanding the divisions among lifestyle migrants is crucial before beginning the interview phase. As such, the first step involves conducting an exploratory survey to analyze these divisions and design the interview questions accordingly, ensuring a strategic and focused in-depth interview phase. A total of 102 surveys and 42 in-depth interviews were conducted. The in-depth interviews included a series of questions aimed at exploring why lifestyle migrants chose Urla as their migration destination, their daily activities and work practices, their place of residence, the challenges they face, the advantages they experience, the qualities they wish to change, their vision for Urla's future, and their assessment of the local government. The interviewees to whom these questions were addressed were selected from the survey respondents who volunteered for in-depth interviews, as well as from critical actors encountered during the field research who did not participate in the survey, or from individuals referred by the interviewees contacted during in-depth interviews. In this context, the snowball technique was employed in addition to non-random sampling. In selecting the interviewees, care was taken to include lifestyle migrant groups in Urla, encompassing different demographic and socio-economic categories, residents from various areas such as gated communities, the coastline, central areas, and villages, as well as individuals from diverse occupational groups. Thus, the in-depth interviews included agricultural producers, restaurant and café owners, wine producers, retirees, cooperative members, content creators, tourist guides, architects, academics, artists, white-collar workers, software developers, advertisers, and other individuals or groups who relocated to the seaside town of Urla from central districts of Izmir or other cities, offering insights into a variety of diverse practices. The discussions presented in the dissertation are mainly based on field research conducted between November 2022 and August 2024.

Methods such as mapping, life stories, observation, second resources (policy reports, local strategic plans, etc.), media contents, and case studies, which are also in the toolkit of urban anthropology, are used in the research. In addition, it is thought that the intersection of multi-sited ethnography with fields such as cultural studies and media studies (Marcus, 1995: 95) provides the ground to include place narratives in the media for the study. The multi-method approach allows us to predicate and associate the representations, plans, policies, and what is happening on the ground.

## 1.4. The Research Field of the Study: Urla

### 1.4.1. From an ancient city to a seaside town: Urla's History

Urla is a district 38 km from the center of İzmir. With 40 kilometers of coastline and 37<sup>3</sup> neighborhoods, it has a 728 square kilometers 5 surface. With a history dating back to the Neolithic period, Urla is home to the ancient city of Klazomenai, a center specialized in olive oil and wine production. In the 13th century, Urla, where Byzantine Greeks, Turks, and Genoese lived, became Ottoman territory in the 15th century (Tunçağ, 2022:28). During this period, the Islamization policies led to the resettlement of Greeks from the surrounding islands near İzmir and resulted in a change in the demographic distribution of Urla. When the Greek islands fell under Ottoman authority, Greeks from areas like Chios were relocated to Urla upon compulsion of the Ottoman rulers. In the 16th century, Urla was an agricultural center known for its wheat, barley, olives, figs, and soap (Tunçağ, 2022: 28). At the same time, it has also served as a trade center since the neighboring district Çeşme became a port city (Datta &Yücel-Young, 2007). The increase in vineyards in the region coincides with the end of the 1700s, the Greeks who migrated to Urla from the island of Chios<sup>4</sup> brought their expertise in viticulture with them; Urla thus became an important center in terms of grapes and raisins production, with its vineyards, which are still mentioned today (Tunçağ, 2022: 46; Datta &Yücel-Young, 2007: 47).

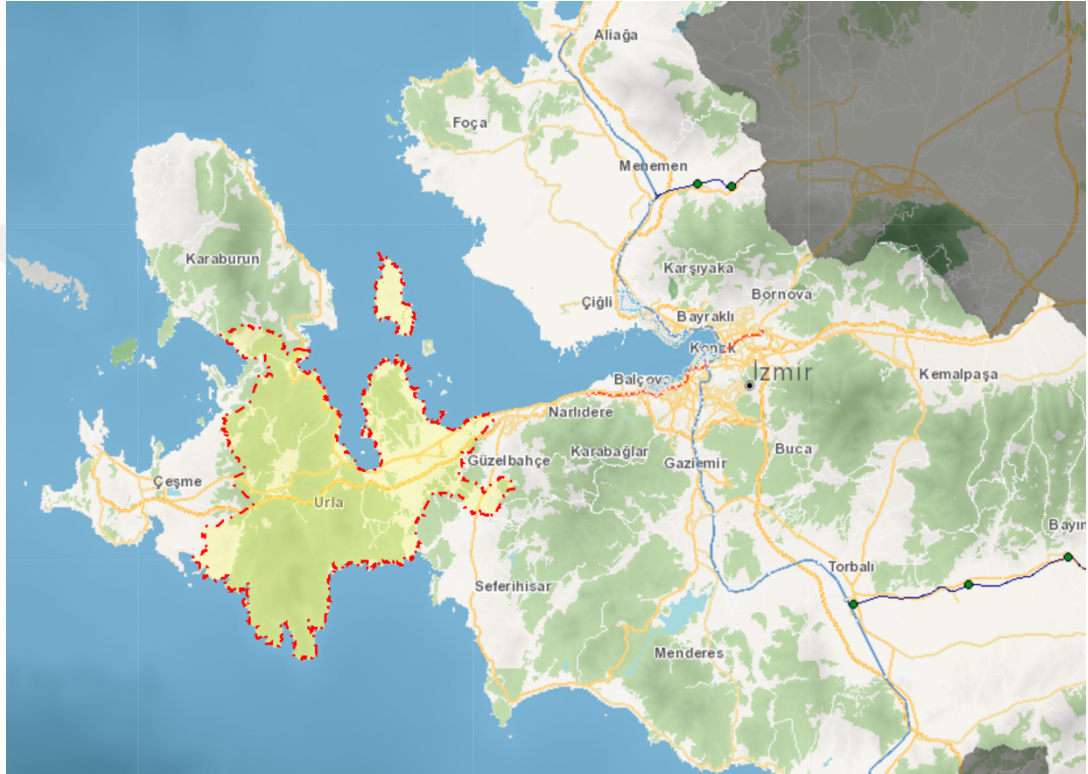
The most significant transformation in Urla's demographic structure traces back to the recent past: the population exchange of 1923. Following the population mobility after the establishment of the Republic of Türkiye, during which the Greek and Turkish populations were mutually displaced, the new inhabitants of Urla were settled in Greek houses. They continued their lives with tobacco farming, a practice they had brought from the Balkans. As a result, tobacco cultivation gradually supplanted grape production in the region (Datta &Yücel-Young, 2007; Tunçağ, 2022). The Urla pier lost its transportation function due to the shift of trade to other ports, and Urla residents' connections with the city and the outside of town were connected by road.

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<sup>3</sup> In November 2012, Law No. 6360 transformed the status of villages within metropolitan boundaries into neighborhoods. In 2019, a decision was made to reclassify neighborhoods in rural areas as rural neighborhoods and to carry out settlement arrangements within this new classification. However, it is necessary to apply for a change of status on a neighborhood basis (<https://www.voaturkce.com/a/mahalle-ye-donusen-koylere-yeni-statü-kirsal-mahalle/5771461.html>, Access Date, 17.07.2024).

<sup>4</sup> Chios has a winemaking tradition that dates back to ancient times. In 1566, some of the Greeks from the island were resettled in Urla after it came under Ottoman rule (Tunçağ, 2022: 46).

However, in the early 1960s, the road between İzmir-Çeşme took 3 hours and did not pass directly through Urla. Therefore, the development gap between the city and the town has widened, and most of the young people from Urla have migrated to the city to work. Since the mid-1960s, in line with the town's local planning, attempts have been made to publicize many places, such as the area used today as the square and the idle grape warehouses on the pier (Tunçağ, 2022: 351-352).



**Figure 1.3 :** Urla's location in İzmir (Source: İzmir Mayorship website)

The 1960s was a period when the entertainment culture in İzmir was quite lively. It was not only enjoyed by city residents but also drew visitors from surrounding provinces, distant cities, and various parts of the world (Savur, 2017: 174). This mobility is not limited to recreational activities in the center; the city's interaction with the sea is also present in many coastal areas. Urla is one of the first districts to meet the holiday needs of İzmir since the 1960s. Although the highway was not built in these years, there are country houses, mansions, hotels, and casinos on the coastline of Urla, such as Çeşmealtı and Güzelbahçe. Along the coast are facilities and natural or camping fields (Savur, 2017: 167).

While Çeşme was where wealthy families had their summer houses, Urla also served as a summer resort for İzmir residents with secondary residences (Savur, 2017: 167). Although the first steps had been taken to expand the province to welcome foreign tourists in Nebioğlu Holiday Village, which opened in 1969, it has failed to attract the expected tourist mobility. Also, in this period, recreational facilities were opened for public institutions and organizations, such as the State Railways Camp and the Police Camp, and the region was developed around social tourism. After the 1980s, it became a recreation area primarily visited by the residents of İzmir as a daily touristic activity. However, it has not developed as much in terms of tourism infrastructure (hotels, restaurants, and bars) compared to the nearby popular tourist destination, Cesme (Emekli, 2004b: 72).

Although the villages and settlements of Urla located outside the coastline were not part of these recreational activities, tourism created a non-agricultural source of income for the town. However, the period that turned the tide for the town and differentiated Urla residents' perspectives on land and production corresponds to the late 1980s. The news about the planning of the İzmir – Çeşme highway is a decree of change for Urla, which was a small agricultural town except for the summer houses along the coastline (Datta & Yücel-Young, 2007: 47, Tunçağ, 2022: 352).

#### **1.4.2. The economic pillars of Urla**

Under the pioneering of the mayor of the period, thinking the new road would benefit the town, decisions such as establishing cooperatives and introducing floor limitations were implemented to prevent unplanned growth (Tunçağ, 2022: 352). However, these plans did not ensure that control was maintained. The opening of the İzmir-Çeşme Highway brought significant changes to Urla. Greenhouse farming activities in Balçova were relocated to Urla because of the highway, and small-scale industrial establishments were developed around the highway route (Datta & Yücel-Young, 2007: 47). The low land prices in the 2000s and the opening of the İzmir-Çeşme highway strengthened the region's connection with the center; tourism is concentrated primarily in second-home use (Güdücüler, 2012: 73). Due to the increase in second-home ownership, service sector initiatives have also created a source of income for the local people.

The construction of the highway has brought new jobs and tourism activity to the region and shortened the distance between Urla and the city center. Despite the seemingly positive developments in localities, according to Datta & Yücel-Young (2007: 48), the most notable change in Urla was the development of the construction sector<sup>5</sup> on agricultural land designated for olive and grape production. The strengthening of the center-periphery relationship over the coast and the increasing demand for secondary residences caused the region's lands to be surrounded by the construction sector (Can et al., 2018: 639). Land use and zoning law numbered 3194, passed in 1985, and the highway connection, as mentioned earlier, heightened the capital share in Urla; construction companies have started to sell their projects in both the coastal and agricultural areas close to the highway. Although these constructions include cooperative housing, villa-type residences, and gated communities also exist. Akyol-Altun (2012: 56), while discussing the dynamics of gated communities in İzmir, emphasizes differences in the profile of the construction market and the scale of investments. According to her, there are no large-capital, national, or international-scale companies like in Istanbul, and mostly small-capital, local-scale entrepreneurs come to the fore. Due to the limited capital and the lack of buyers in the market, sites with a small number of residences are being built in İzmir instead of large-unit residences (Akyol-Altun, 2012: 56). However, with its proximity to İzmir and its urban opportunities, Urla has evolved into geography where not only secondary homes, but also primary residence areas are growing (Can et al., 2018: 639).

Despite the suffering of being connected to the city, agricultural activities continue in village-type settlements<sup>6</sup> in Urla. In addition, industries related to agriculture exist in Urla. The development of heavy industry is not tolerable because of the possible harmful effects on natural resources (Emekli, 2004b: 69). Agricultural activities are carried out in 12.2% of the total hectare area of Urla, on an area of 8600 hectares. However, the small-scale local farmers have limited resources and land scales (Güdücüler, 2012: 71). Small-scale family enterprises are affected by the opening of olive groves to housing projects and the fragmentation of the farmlands

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<sup>5</sup> The third chapter of the dissertation presents in detail, which mentions the transformation of the material environment, the boom in sites, and its consequences for the natural environment in Urla.

<sup>6</sup> refers to settlements in Urla that are still referred to as villages but officially have the status of neighborhoods.

because of the patrimony divisions, etc. (Koday & Akbaş, 2020: 695). İzmir Metropolitan Municipality and İZKA support small family businesses in the villages with grants within the scope of rural development financial support programs. In addition, local producers supported by the Chamber of Agriculture are directed to cooperatives, and their cooperation stands out as a vital factor in marketing the regional products. In recent years, the upswell interest in rural tourism has brought about the arrangement and diversification of regional products in Urla, intending to contribute to tourism. The fields where rural tourism stands out can be listed as follows: growing agricultural products having geographical indications potential, such as olives and grapes and received indication as artichoke; the revival of viticulture, winemaking, and olive oil culture; and organic farming (Güdücüler, 2012: 73).

#### **1.4.2.1. Rural Development-Focused Institutionalizations in Urla**

İzmir Institute of Technology (IYTE) is one of the institutions of the region which cooperates with many institutions besides Urla Municipality, such as İzmir Metropolitan Municipality and İzmir Development Agency (İZKA). IYTE, established in 1994 and providing academic instruction on the Urla Güzelbahçe Campus since 1999, has a critical position in the region through architectural restoration projects of many historical buildings (TEKEL<sup>7</sup> building, PTT<sup>8</sup>, Rome Hammam, Old Laundry) within the scope of architectural restoration, architecture, and civil engineering departments (Aydın et al., 2015). IYTE is also one of the leading actors in the region's sustainable development, with its Geothermal Research Center (JEOMER) including a geothermal area inside (İZKA, 2014). Technopark İzmir is the research and development ecosystem that includes companies operating in the renewable energy sector. It is located on the IYTE campus and leads to the development of regional public-private partnerships. The foundations of the innovation center, which reached this scope in 2016, are based on the İzmir Technology Development Zone supported by İZKA in 2011. İZKA states that this environment will enable potential entrepreneurs to create technology-oriented innovations and provide an up-to-date and continuous business network (İZKA Website, Access Date 17.11.2021). Even though it seems speculative, it is possible to

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<sup>7</sup> Turkish tobacco and alcoholic beverages company

<sup>8</sup> Turkish Post, Telephone and Telegraph Institute

evaluate the political aims and the organizational roles of the local institutions to magnetize skilled and IT-based migrants and their economic capabilities to Urla.

In addition to technological investments, İZKA provides financial support to businesses to survive ancient production techniques and the region's sustainable development. It modernized one of the enterprise's manufacturing sites in Urla to expand and support the production of lithographic olive oil. One of the fields it reinforces within the scope of the sustainable development program is grape growing and winemaking. İZKA supported machinery and equipment renewal to obtain higher-quality wine from the grapes produced in the vineyards of Urla Winery. It also provided equipment for packaging and preserving the products to increase the brand value of Urlice Viticulture and Winery. Thus, strengthening Urlice's brand value brought a touristic place to Urla. One of the wine production grant programs supported in succession by İZKA in 2015 is the "Urla Vineyard Route" project, which was implemented in partnership with the İzmir Metropolitan Municipality, Urla Municipality, and Urla Wine Producers and Viticulture Association. İZKA declares that this project creates a clustering opportunity, mediates the development of the current value in the region, enables new investments, and creates a complementary tourism activity. The support provided by the Development Agency to the Kite Surfing Center is one of its activities for creating an alternative tourism potential.

Other prominent organizations in the region are cooperatives. One of the reasons that make the cooperatives stand out is the municipality's incentives, as mentioned within the "İzmir Model," to support the producers for rural development and strengthen their production capacities. The cooperatives in the villages of Urla are listed in the table below. Within the UN's 2030 sustainable development goals seeking a new framework for cooperation between local governments and non-governmental organizations, Urla Women's Initiative Production and Business-Cooperative have been added to these cooperatives.



**Table 1.2 :** Cooperatives in Urla (Source: İZKA Peninsula Sustainable Development Strategy, 2014: 100)

|      | Name of the Cooperative                                   | Number of Partners | Ratio | Subject of the Study & the Capacity of the Applied Project |
|------|-----------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|-------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| Urla | Uzbek Agricultural Development Cooperative                | 54                 | 2,4   | Olive Oil Factory                                          |
|      | Uzunkuyu Agricultural Development Cooperative             | 152                | 6,7   | 100X2 Süt Siğ 5 T/G Shd Mandıra                            |
|      | Bademler Agricultural Development Cooperative             | 235                | 10,4  | 20 T/G Zeytinyağı Fab 50 DA Turf. Sebze Çiçek Yet.         |
|      | Kuşçular Agricultural Development Cooperative             | 98                 | 4,3   | Consumption                                                |
|      | Urla District Center Agricultural Development Cooperative | 71                 | 3,1   | Olive Cultivation                                          |
|      | Altıntaş Agricultural Development Cooperative             | 7                  | 0,3   | Outdoor Ornamental Plant                                   |

### 1.4.3. Recent Cultural and Touristic Activities

Within the scope of tourism activities, which are essential for rural development, one of the strategies followed for social regeneration and economic vitality is creating tourist routes. Touristic routes offer a framework of experiences with localities in order to attract tourists to undiscovered cultural values (Briedenhann & Wickens, 2004). Urla is a coastal town endowed with many routes with a similar dynamic. In categorizing these routes, one would start with the vineyard route, which constitutes a fundamental aspect of the region's territorial tourism. In 2015, the “Urla Vineyard Route” project, implemented in partnership with the İzmir Metropolitan Municipality,



**Figure 1.4 :** Urla vineyard route (Source: Urla Vineyard Route Association)

Urla Municipality, and Urla Wine Producers and Vineyard Route Association, aims to determine vineyard districts and brand the region as a national and international vineyard route and tourism destination. Furthermore, alongside the boutique wine producers engaged in this endeavor, enterprises within the gastronomic tourism cluster integrate regionally produced wines into their restaurants, broadening the vineyard's familiarity and outreach among tourists.

Another initiative following the Urla vineyard route is the gastronomy route. Urla Gastronomy Route was established in 2019 by gathering six restaurants in Urla. The central claim of this initiative is “to present the geography of Urla with its unique atmosphere and menus to all the explorers of the route.” (Urla Gastronomy Route Website, Access Date 18.07.2023). In addition, within the scope of the Michelin Guide for 2024, 3 Michelin stars and three green stars were awarded to restaurants in Urla, and the quality of the gastronomy route was recognized by Michelin, which is known as a prestigious guide in this context.

Along with initiatives combining wine and fine dining, the olive oil mill, which has historical roots in the ancient city of Klazomenai, and the region's olives have also been included in this gastronomic route. In 2015, the Zeytinçe Association's initiatives resulted in the establishment of an olive route that encompasses monumental olive trees, mills, water sources, and olive oil factories, reaching as far as İzmir, to provide a nature-focused experience on the Urla Peninsula (Zeytinçe Association Website, Access Date 18.07.2024). Launched in 2021, the Urla Art Route seeks to combine the agricultural museums in Urla, which display the cultural heritage of ancient civilizations, with the art galleries that have been clustered in the area since 2015 (Urla Art Route Website, Access Date 18.07.2024). This initiative aims to establish Urla as a hub for artists, bringing creativity to tourism through events, art days, and guest artists.

### **1.5. Contribution to the Academic Literature**

The “Urban to Rural Mobilities in Türkiye” section overviews the various forms of lifestyle migration observed in Türkiye. This section presents studies on lifestyle migration and transformation under human impact, particularly in Urla, to assess the

dissertation's contribution to the field. Since the dissertation began to be written in 2019, Urla's evolution into a trendy spot has piqued the curiosity of not only tourists and lifestyle migrants but also academia. While an understudied subject might offer greater academic contributions, the academic attention Urla has received still highlights the need for further exploration, as it serves as evidence of the region's ongoing and profound transformation. Assuming this ongoing transformation has different dimensions, intricate relationships, and grey areas, there is still a reason to write the dissertation. Since this study focuses on internal migration, this review does not include mobility from abroad to Türkiye. It would be suitable to outline the key discussions surrounding the dissertations generated on this recently trending topic.

Cemre Zekiroğlu's (2020) master's dissertation, focused on "Lifestyle Migrants in Datça" within the scope of the post-80 generation, covers the reasons/motivations of the mobility, how the group created their social and economic capital in Datça and how the migrants see their mobility within the gentrification process in the settlement. Zekiroğlu's research concludes that lifestyle mobility is the answer of the post-80 generation to modernity. In this respect, she places the motivations of a generation to leave the city and create new lifestyles in a self-reflective focus. The mobility experience conveyed through micro-stories is valuable as it shows intra-generational dynamics.

Füsün Kurmuş's (2018) master's dissertation, "Lifestyle Migration from Big Cities to Coastal Towns: A Qualitative Study on the Case of Bodrum," focuses on the mobility of white-collar workers and professionals. It examines the dynamics of their migration decision, the given-up elements related to the city, leisure activities after migration, and relations within the community.

Although Datça and Bodrum have similarities with Urla regarding seaside town characteristics, the primary objective of the studies mentioned above was centered on the mobility towards the rural or coastal concept and settlement process rather than the characteristics of the place. Mobility has been interpreted with dynamics such as the compulsive factors of urban life and modernity. It is also emphasized through the perception of migrants that the rural characteristics of the migrated regions are lost.

The İzmir-focused study that examines the relationship with the place of migration in the context of place images is authored by Bahar Kaba (2023). The primary contribution of this PhD dissertation, “Lifestyle Migration from Istanbul to İzmir,” lies in its exploration of migration connections between the two cities. It delves into the causes, practices, and relationships with the lives left behind. It analyses the motivations behind migration to the coastal districts of İzmir, including Urla, place selection practices, and the dynamics of socio-spatial change. While the dissertation shares some similarities with this dissertation in its coverage of Urla and discussion of the influence of İzmir’s images on migration decisions, as well as socio-spatial changes, it does not address the micro dynamics in Urla due to its focus on city mobility. Likewise, it is stated in the dissertation that a detailed study should be carried out based on districts, especially in terms of gentrification. In addition, the traces of transformation were evaluated within the scope of general categorizations such as overcrowding, overpricing, traffic problems, and social conflicts.

One of the recent theses that conducted fieldwork at the Urla scale is Sena Çınar’s (2023) master’s study, which explores the relationship between the creative communities that arrived in Urla and the urban identity. This study, which deals with the qualities related to the natural environment and socio-cultural identity that are effective in the preference of Urla by the creative class, is also shaped mainly through motivations. A relevant study that focused on Urla and closely corresponds with the dissertation is the doctoral dissertation entitled “A Survey on Spatial Effects of Newcomer Entrepreneurs in Rural Urla” authored by İlker Güçü (2022). It examines the impact of entrepreneurial migrants on rural landscapes through architecture, focusing on the designs of individual entrepreneurs rather than broad spatial transformations. Discussing the relations of entrepreneurs with space and environment in this context, Güçü draws attention to the conscious preferences of newcomers in design practices and the design of their places with multifunctional qualities. Undoubtedly, this study serves as a source for the dissertation chapter titled “Reproduction of the Seaside Town through Lifestyle Migration: Transformation of the Natural and Built Environment”; however, the intersection cluster of studies is narrowed as it is aimed to reveal other micro-spatial practices related to rural gentrification that do not only focus on the spatial designs of entrepreneurs.

One of the theses written on Urla within the scope of neighborhood transformation is Yasemin Çınar's (2019) master's thesis titled "An Analysis of Gated Communities in Terms of Housing Typology, Housing Production Type, and Real Estate Value: The Case of Urla," which discusses the spatial distribution of gated communities in Urla over the years, the typology of houses and property prices within the discipline of "architecture" rather than migration. Although the focus is not on gentrification, it comprehensively discusses the story of housing estates over the years.

The master's and doctoral dissertations referenced above highlight the main motivations behind lifestyle migration in Türkiye, particularly to coastal towns, in ways that align with the international literature. By narrowing the research focus to groups such as the 1980s generation, migrants from Istanbul, newcomer entrepreneurs, or the creative class, these studies analyze lifestyle mobility within its internal dynamics. The fact that most of these theses are produced within the fields of urban and regional planning or architecture demonstrates that lifestyle migration is not solely a subject of sociology, anthropology, or geography as a form of human mobility; it is also deeply connected to processes such as planning and design. However, a more explicit exploration of power relations in space, spatial practices embedded in daily life, and the embodiment of capital from a social science perspective is still needed.

The strength of the research lies in its grasping of what is happening in Urla because of lifestyle migration with an urban anthropology approach and discussing the dynamics of migration by including the cultural fabric of the place. In addition, as a dissertation produced in the media and communication studies doctoral program, it also includes the communicational paradigm of representation in the cultural texture; it evaluates the connected place-specific processes layer by layer within the macro model of the dissertation.

## **2. SEASIDE TOWNS IN TRANSITION THROUGH LIFESTYLE MIGRATION: MANAGING AND PLANNING THE NEW LIFE IN URLA**

### **2.1. Chapter overview**

This chapter, which constitutes the center of gravity of the dissertation and encompasses its primary debates, aims to discuss how lifestyle migrants transform their economic, social, and cultural capitals along with place-specific resources and how they plan and manage the countryside they move to with the ideals and desires. Thus, we aim to reveal the new life strategies of lifestyle migrants, their negotiation with existing social, economic and cultural dynamics and materialities, as well as with local politics in Urla. By presenting the dissertation's context, "what is happening on the ground," it will lay open material, political, and economic alterations within the macro relations perspective of urban anthropology.

A multi-method approach will reveal all this mutual space production and negotiation process. This "explanatory sequential mixed methods" approach is primarily based on an exploratory quantitative study conducted sequentially, moving from the quantitative phase to the qualitative phase to deepen the research (Creswell, 2013: 34-35). This preliminary stage, often referred to as an "exploratory survey" in the dissertation, can also be framed as an informal survey in research based on an anthropological perspective; Rhoades (1985: 214-215), in his anthropological research on farming practices, states that such informal surveys can help in making initial inventories such as mapping regions and developing farmer typologies.

While Rhoades (1985) recommends using dialogic questionnaires designed with open-ended questions instead of closed questions, this research focuses on discovering

patterns and predicting specific tendencies rather than on a technical data collection approach where predetermined hypotheses are tested, which is his other recommendation. In this context, insights into the universe of lifestyle migrants through the preliminary findings of the exploratory survey provided a starting point for drawing a general framework on the social ruptures, socio-economic divergences, forms of mobility, and rural practices and reasons that triggered their mobility. These issues are explained by supporting them with findings from the in-depth interviews. Since the practices of lifestyle migrants are intricate, their lifestyles are based on heterogeneous qualities, and the sample requires a broad range of clustering variables; exploratory survey<sup>9</sup> and in-depth interview methods were preferred over cluster analysis.

Cluster analysis is a technique that makes it challenging to establish quantitative data-based relationships between groups containing many different dynamics, such as those in lifestyle migration. Likewise, the population structure of lifestyle migrants, characterized by seemingly similar yet distinct patterns and practices, and their interaction with the rural environment together place ethnography at the core of this research. Therefore, a sequential mixed methods design was preferred to maintain this focus and ensure a manageable research process. Based on exploratory questionnaires and in-depth interviews, the findings were also supported by ethnographic methods such as photo documentation, monitoring of lifestyle migrants' social media accounts, conversations with locals, and go-along interviews with lifestyle migrants. The exploratory survey made it possible both to select people strategically and to deepen the questions of the in-depth interviews (from the second step on) in order to get more specific information about new life aspirations and practices. A total of 102 surveys and 42 in-depth interviews were conducted. The in-depth interview comprises a series of questions that examine why lifestyle migrants choose this specific location, what their daily activities and work involve, where they reside, the challenges they face, the advantages they experience, the changes they would like to see, their vision for Urla's future, and their evaluation of the local administration. Moreover, questions were added according to the interviewee's profession; for example, interviews with winemakers included questions about their aesthetic preferences for the winery, viticulture processes, branding, and stories of route creation. Therefore, non-random

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<sup>9</sup> The survey questions are in the "Appendix" section.

sampling was used to reach people or groups who moved to the seaside town of Urla from the central districts of İzmir or other cities, including agricultural producers, restaurant and café owners, wine producers, retirees, cooperative members, content creators, tourist guides, architects, academics, artists, white-collar workers, software developers, advertisers, and others who could provide insights into relatively diverse practices. The discussions presented in the dissertation are based on field research conducted between November 2022 and August 2024. All interviews were fully transcribed and coded according to the categorization scheme outlined in the capitals framework and recurring themes about the underlying meanings of what was said. Situations encountered in daily life and informal conversations with actors were also documented as field notes. Capitals framework, which goes beyond universal definitions of the countryside and forms of planning and can be adapted to different places (Gkartzios et al., 2022), offers a flexible ground for conducting ethnographic research to reveal the unique dynamics of place. Likewise, the capitals framework, which highlights the intention to “map constituent place capitals,” is based on figuring out the workings between social actions and material assets that reconstitute/define the territory. As Hamilton (2016: 299) reminds us, the ethnographic inquiry is the ideal method to break away from the narrowly defined countryside concept as a place where not much happens and to dive into the complexity of the blurring boundaries of the countryside.

Under the guidance of urban anthropology, this chapter broadly addresses how lifestyles, tastes, and expectations are transferred to new settlements, how cultural, social, and economic dynamics transform during this process, whether any benefit is generated for local communities, and how new economic and socio-cultural activities and plannings reshape the rural landscape. As outlined in the introduction, the ongoing social changes in Urla related to lifestyle mobility and the ways lifestyle migrants negotiate their relationship with the place are examined from a broad perspective. Although not the primary focus of the research, the local government is analyzed in terms of its role in planning, political engagement, and managing everyday life from the perspective of lifestyle migrants. This analysis provides insight into how the local government, functioning as a collaborator or rule-maker in the production of space, intersects with place-related practices and planning processes. As elaborated in the introductory chapter, these complex and interrelated practices are approached through



a Lefebvrian framework for understanding the production of space and a Bourdieusian analytical lens for examining the redeployment of capital in the countryside.

## **2.2. Theoretical Framework**

### **2.2.1. “Urban Age” versus Rural**

With 50% of the world’s population starting to live in cities, the urban debates of the 21st century have evolved towards the claim of the “urban age.” However, since the functions of the city, where its borders extend, its scale, and its morphology are constantly restructured, the “urban age” remains more of a meta-discourse (Brenner & Schmid, 2014: 731- 735). However, the prevailing emphasis on the urban age has led to disregarding the dynamics of rural-urban interaction. Non-urban areas are perceived as relics of traditional society poised for an unavoidable shift toward urbanization (Ghosh & Meer, 2021: 5). Concepts such as “extended urbanization” (Brenner & Schmid, 2015) and “planetary urbanism” (Brenner & Schmid, 2014), which address the city in terms of its destructiveness, relationality, and inequitable contexts beyond dynamic agglomeration areas, raise new questions about socio-spatial transformations that transcend the city. The growing emphasis on the “urban age” meta-discourse and the emergence of new epistemological debates on the city raise questions about what rural life represents, what dynamics it is associated with, and how it persists under the city’s dominance through processes such as hybridization or continuum. Elaborating on this complex and multifaceted relationality begins with examining the dynamics and conceptualizations that enhance the city’s economic and political power and drive the expansion of the urban fabric into non-urban spaces. A diverse array of urban development trends has been unfolding in the wake of the crisis of national-developmental models of territorial growth, the breakdown of state socialism, and the integration of cities into global economies. The restructuring and rescaling of the state with the international political and economic transformations experienced after the 1970s form the basis of new urban paradigms. The expectation of overcoming the financial crisis with neoliberal approaches has brought the restructuring of the distribution of central power and the space’s function and organization. New regionalism is the first of the debates about the dissolution of Fordist production, the disappearance of developmental welfare states, and the re-functioning/scaling of space. According to this perspective, the most durable spatial unit against the

competitive environment triggered by the global economy is “city regions”; the spatial proximity of cities with their backgrounds is turned into an advantage in production efficiency and profitability, thereby increasing their competitiveness (Jonas & Ward, 2007: 169-173; Genç et al., 2021: 38-40). The common feature of new city-region approaches is that, in addition to being multifocal, they function holistically and rescale spatial organizations through their commercial, social and cultural linkages with the global economy (Hall, 2001; Scott, 2004: 27). According to Soja (2000: 179), these city-regions are not always clustered around a metropolis; they spread as networks of urban nodes, encompassing suburbs, towns, villages, open spaces and urbanized landscapes. These expansions imply networks that cross city boundaries or are based on cooperation with other cities, the convergence of labour markets, shared infrastructure and resources, and, more generally, a social and cultural agglomeration economy (Jonas & Ward, 2007: 171).

Discussions on urban regions are accompanied by debates on the relationship between cities and their surrounding hinterland, as well as the functions they are endowed with for creativity, innovation, development, and competition in a globalizing economy (Jonas & Ward, 2007: 170). One of those competitive paradigms emerged in the 1980s after the decline in capital capacity and deindustrialization of cities: urban entrepreneurialism. As fiscally weakened local and regional governments have implemented several economic stimulus strategies to attract investment and encourage property redevelopment, the entrepreneurial form of urban governance spread throughout the European city system (Brenner, 2009: 61). Competition between cities has surrounded the political repertoire of local governments with public or private investments, capital circulation, or economic conflicts (Harvey, 1989: 3-5). Hall and Hubbard (1996:154) point out that fundamental management issues are moving away from social services or welfare, as urban entrepreneurship-oriented policymaking is related to the well-being of the local economy, investment, and attracting jobs. Rural local governments are also participating in this governance trend in the face of threats such as limited capacity, diminishing local resources, and global competition. They are focusing on governance strategies that will revitalize the countryside to develop the local economy through entrepreneurship and improve the quality of life of the local community (Barrett & Vodden, 2023).

The changes in the reasoning behind governance and the rescaling of the city indicate that the need for profit drives commodification. Brenner and Schmid's (2015) term "planetary urbanization," which refers to a broad perspective on the spreading capacity of modern urbanization, also describes a scenario in which even "wild" spaces cannot save themselves from the planetary destruction of capitalist urbanization. This sprawl involves the development of megacities and the restructuring of surrounding rural, agricultural, and natural resource regions, the concentration of infrastructure, and the creation of new economic zones. Additionally, large-scale industrial agriculture and land grabbing contribute to the commodification of rural areas. The city's destructive and transformative effect on the countryside can be traced in Lefebvre's (1968/2015: 86) dialectical relationship between rurality, centrality, and urban fabric. According to Lefebvre, capital accumulation, especially in industrial cities, constructs the relationship of domination and exploitation over rural environments more subtly than in the past; the expanding city attacks the countryside, devouring and destroying it. Lefebvre's (1968/2015) perspective on absorbed rural is supported by Merrifield (2006:82), who writes that "rural places have become an integral part of industrial production, swallowed up by an "urban fabric" continually extending its borders, ceaselessly corroding the residue of agrarian life, gobbling up everything and everywhere that will increase surplus value and accumulate capital." Lefebvre's (1968/2015: 29) expression of "urban fabric" is based on a broad concept not limited to the urban built environment but also describes other geographies where urban-specific lifestyles, objects, and value systems occur.

Political-economic perspectives, which claim that the rural and urban are restructured through capital accumulation, shared resources, financialization, and socio-environmental degradation (Brenner & Schmid, 2015) and that their duality is erased, tend to see rural space as ghost geography (Cloke, 2006; Halfacree, 2006a). Halfacree (2006a: 57) refers to the blurring of the urban and rural boundaries through these processes as "effaced rurality." According to Cloke (2006: 20), these approaches that blur the rural-urban distinction excessively focus on factors operating outside the rural context by concentrating on the power fields or apparatuses of social production in the re-functionalization of the rural or in explaining any case specific to rural areas. Nevertheless, Marsden (1999) argues that for an in-depth analysis of rural change, it

is necessary to ask what is happening in rural space in an integrative approach without ignoring the social processes that cause rural transformations.

It is important to note that this study, focusing on migration, should not view the rural and the city as separate entities, but as interconnected parts of the whole from an anthropological perspective. According to Öztürk et al. (2014), migration as a dynamic phenomenon can only be grasped through a reevaluated dialectical rural-urban perspective by replacing old dichotomies (rural-urban distinction). As they noted, this connection is crucial for recognizing the realities in the field. Therefore, neither the rural is a geography that is completely urbanized or belongs to farming, nor the city is a settlement that completely erases it; accepting both as relational geographies in a constant state of becoming seems to be more compatible with the theoretical framework of the dissertation that interprets the cultural field in the relationality of capitals.

This section aimed to draw a general framework for understanding the urban-rural interaction, emphasizing the rural position within the urban dominance. The reciprocal existence constitutes a critical foundation for the main chapter, which seeks to convey how a seaside town is re-planned and reorganized with new practices due to the mobility of lifestyle migrants. Therefore, it is crucial to recognize the discussions surrounding the socio-economic transformation of rural areas, which face challenges in achieving self-sufficiency while becoming increasingly exposed to urban dynamics, capital control, and globalization. Given all that has been mentioned, examining these geographies under pressure through a rural lens is essential for understanding the contrasting perspective.

### **2.2.2. Rural “Restructuring” and “Changing Rural” Discussions**

While the ever-changing social and physical landscape depicts the decline of rural areas (Brenner & Schmid: 2015: 747), it brings new debates, leaving traditional definitions behind and deepening what has changed in the rural (Antrop, 2000; Hoggart & Paniagua, 2001). Rural studies carried out at the beginning of the 2000s mainly emphasized how the conception of rurality has changed regarding new rural identities and realities (Svendsen, 2004; Cloke, 2006), as well as new rural typologies

(Antrop, 2000). Efforts to redefine rurality grounded on the rural studies' conceptions such as changing discourse on local power (Wood, 1997), "rural restructuring" (Hoggart & Paniagua, 2001), "new characterizations of rural change" (Hodge & Monk, 2004). By emphasizing the empowerment of local governments and the influence of globalization on rural (Wood, 1997), the incorporation of new functions into the traditional rural landscape (Antrop, 2000; Hoggart & Paniagua, 2001; Hodge & Monk, 2004), shifting social and spatial composition of rural areas (Paquette & Domon, 2003) or the scale of the change along with market relationships, the state and civil society (Hoggart & Paniagua, 2001).

"Restructuring," included in the redefinition of the countryside and as one of the critical concepts in rural change debates, emerged due to the crisis in the Fordist production system and the collapse of the accumulation regime. It is based on a "regularist" approach that aims to understand the predicaments arising from the radical change of the constituent elements such as market relations, the state, and civil society; it paved the way for the development of regional development models and the inclusion of rural areas in these models (Day et al. 1989; Hoggart & Paniagua, 2001; Marsden et al., 2005: 14-15). The concept of "spatial divisions of labour" introduced by Massey (1984) focuses on the changing role of regional and local economies in accumulation processes and argues that former functions and new dissolutions come together to reorganize localities (Day et al., 1989: 228; Marsden et al., 2005: 15-16). Since the late 1970s, the political economy of agricultural development has been an active field of study in this debate. Holistic perspectives, including the role of the state in intervening in agricultural development, the international food system, and the alternative forms of agricultural production in monopolistic capitalist societies, have framed the transformation of agrarian society within broader economic development contexts beyond regionalism (Marsden et al., 2005: 15). Since the early 1980s, social and economic restructuring debates, particularly in the UK, have drawn rural areas into national and international political economy (Marsden, 1998). Increasing competition, the new order of free market ideology, demand for local and regional systems rather than heavy state governance, demographic changes, changing social values, the emergence of new actors in the use and ownership of rural resources, adaptable labour supply of rural spaces, new technological and infrastructural developments, and new social and political conflicts following these ruptures are among the main

transformation dynamics on which rural restructuring<sup>10</sup> debates focus (Wood, 1997; Marsden, 1999; Hoggart & Paniagua, 2001; Marsden et al., 2005).

However, as emphasized by Marsden et al. (2005: 15), the position of rural areas and the people living in these geographies needs to be improved in the current restructuring debates. According to them, there is a necessity for a more profound consideration of this term as the agents are deeply connected to the restructuring processes. Studies attempting to understand the links between the political economy of rural change and simultaneous cultural representations, political strategies, and social conflicts (see Goodwin et al., 1995) can be seen as a response to criticisms of regulatory rural theories (Philips, 2014: 38). On the other hand, the commodification, agency territories, and new arrangements that have emerged in the trajectories of change in rural areas point to new conceptualizations that will facilitate an understanding of the social, political, and economic relations dominated by “post-productivist” conditions and the new rural distinctions arising from these relations (Marsden, 1998; Marsden, 1999). Two fundamental and interrelated dynamics stand out in the debates on the trajectory of rural change in the early 2000s. The first of these factors pointed out by Halfacree is the changing and intensifying impact of capitalist globalization; it manifests itself primarily through food systems. The second factor accompanying this scenario of market forces, in which the state’s relationship with agriculture is diminishing and progressing through global agreements, is the increasing role of rural places towards consumption (Halfacree, 2006a: 53). Discussing the frameworks of change such as the evolving balance between production and consumption, the globalization of the food industry, the multifaceted nature of rural areas, and the dynamic property relations, will lead to a better understanding of the position of lifestyle migrants within this structure.

#### **2.2.2.1. Post-Productivist, Differentiated and Multifunctional Countryside**

As outlined in the previous titles, the urban paradigm encompassing the rural is indeed based on the modernist perspective that sees the countryside as an area that will

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<sup>10</sup> Rather than a unidirectional transformation or a happening in the ordinary course of life, the term “restructuring” refers to a radical re-making that is a multidimensional, relational, and holistic rupture. (Hoggart & Paniagua, 2001).

only break out of its traditional identity through modernization, such as urbanization and industrialization. However, due to the processes mentioned earlier (globalization, restructuring, market forces on agricultural production, etc.), the meanings assumed by the rurality sign are gradually diversifying and disconnecting from its fundamental grounds (Cloke, 2006: 206).

As the prevailing literature on “rural transition” or “rural change” discussions, British rural geography (Marsden, 1998; Marsden, 1999; Wood, 1997; Cloke, 2006; Halfacree, 2006a; Halfacree, 2006b) stated that the rural landscape in which agriculture was positioned as a production maximizer was shaken off after the 1980s. The concept of “post-rurality” has been coined to refer to the increasing detachment of socially constructed geographical land from functional rural space (cited from Murdoch & Pratt, 1997 in Cloke, 2006: 206). In short, this approach suggests that rather than a global or unique definition of rurality, such places can be characterized by variable rurality, considering how power operates in their production.

Likewise, especially in the British countryside, farmers have had to cope with surplus or overproduction or are struggling with the environmental damage caused by overproduction and the different economically or socially contradictory situations for agriculture. Farmers and their families, as essential actors in rural areas, are therefore trapped in a countryside characterized by high debts, insecurity, and uncertainty (Halfacree, 2006a: 55). As a geographic discourse emerging from this context, the “post-productivist transition” or the “post-productivist countryside” describes the evolution of new material and symbolic rural landscapes shaped by the power of local socio-economic groupings and changing institutional structures at the nation-state level, where the agricultural productive capacity of the land is increasingly subsumed by its symbolic qualities (Philips 2014: 57; Argent, 2002: 98).

According to Argent (2002: 98), the main characteristics of the post-productivist countryside can be listed as follows: the gradual expansion of areas devoted to non-agricultural uses, the increasing number of small-scale farms focusing on low-tech yet sustainable agriculture to produce small batches of food for local and/or regional markets, the preservation or commodification of rural buildings - especially farm buildings - with a rural idyllic motive, and heterogeneity in the use of land,

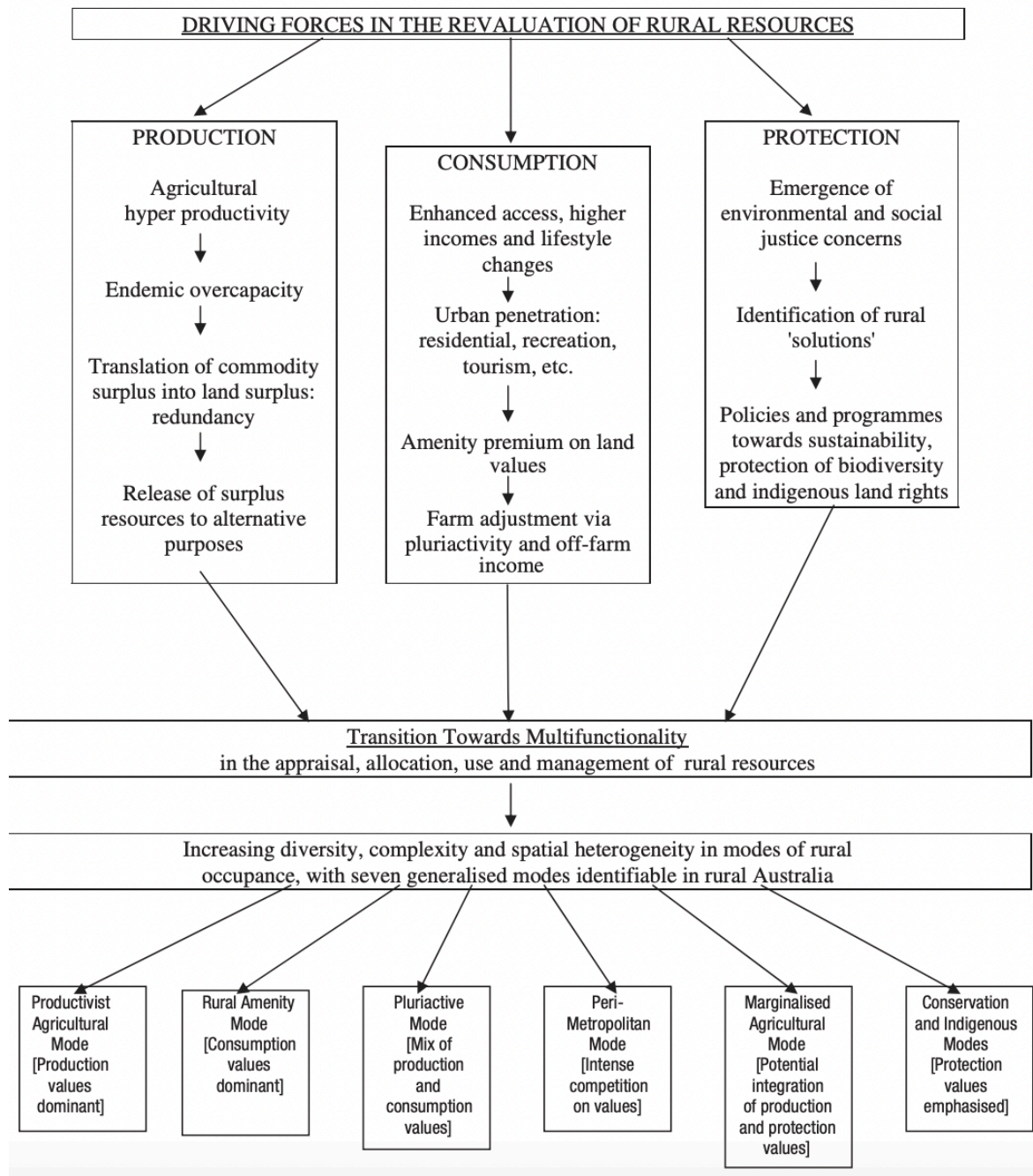
employment, and business forms. Ilbery and Bowler (2014: 72-78) list the empirical evidence of the post-productivist transition as follows: reform programs such as fallow measures or the promotion of recreational activities pursued by the EU to reduce excessive production intensity and promote environmental benefits; the transition from conventional agriculture to a diversified rural economy such as organic farming, farm tourism and increasing farmers' non-agricultural sources of income; the involvement of voluntary programs in the management of rural areas that seek to increase biodiversity and protect the environment.

In brief, on the one side, initiatives include new activities in the countryside against overproduction and adopting land protection. On the other hand, contradictory activities that lead to the overconsumption of land are also discussed in the context of this transitivity. Although a protectionist ethos surrounds the management of rural areas and resources, the orientation of global market rules, the inclusion of new interest groups in the rural landscape, and the continued obligation of the rural to provide goods and services to the city depicts a scene in which rural consumption is reinforced (Marsden, 1999; Halfacree, 2006a; Clock, 2006; Holmes; 2006). This type of rural change, primarily characterized by economic development based on externalizations, is situated on an axis where the countryside's leading spatial practices evolve towards consumption, mainly leisure, residence, and associated migration (Holmes, 2006: Halfacree, 2006a: 57). The rise of aesthetic representations of the rural (Murdoch & Marsden, 1994: 215-16; Barrett & Vodden, 2023) can also be seen in managerial and planning practices, as well as in the circulation of rural imagery within global market discourse through place branding (cited from McCarthy in Jansson, 2013: 95), highlighting a shift driven by dominant capitalist systems (Wood, 1997; Halfacree, 2006a; Jansson, 2013).

Efforts to understand the direction of change while emphasizing that rural landscapes have undergone an intensive re-evaluation process, as Argent (2002) puts it, have been criticized for superficially labeling historical occurrences and progressions and for not deeply engaging the local-scale phenomena. It has been argued that post-productivism is inadequate in addressing contemporary rural issues, as various ruralities have surfaced due to factors like the shifting ground of agricultural production, the place-specific marketing patterns, the preservation of protected rural



lands alongside gentrifying regions, and the differentiation of farmers' practices across regions (Argent, 2002; Holmes, 2006).



**Figure 2.1 :** The transition to multifunctional resource use of rural space in Australia (Source: Holmes, 2006: 144)

According to Holmes (2006: 142), the shift from productivism to post-productivism also does not provide a visible context in the Australian case he studies. Instead, such a transition can be understood through the site-specific shifts in the dominance of production, consumption, and conservation patterns within the

landscape. These three dynamics, which determine rural resource assessment, allocation, utilization, and management, emphasize a “multifunctional” rather than post-productivist transition (Holmes, 2006: 145). Production is characterized by agricultural overcapacity, consumption by market-oriented amenity-focused uses, and conservation by rural protection objectives and social values of sustainability (Holmes, 2006: 145). In the model for understanding rural change in rural Australia, Holmes proposes seven different typologies of the countryside, classified according to various patterns of resource use and the domination of three driving forces. This grouping, each characterizing a different form of occupation, is classified as follows: “a productivist agricultural mode (production values dominant); a rural amenity mode (consumption values dominant); a small farm or pluriactivity mode (mix of production and consumption values); a peri-metropolitan mode (intense contests between production, consumption and protection values); a marginalized agricultural mode (potential integration of production and protection values); and conservation as well as Indigenous modes (protection values emphasized)” (Holmes, 2006: 146).

An early alternative to multifunctional transition, which would enable the necessary managerial or protectionist solutions for the rural future to be envisaged, is the concept of “differentiated countryside” proposed by Marsden et al. (1993) and developed by Murdoch and Marsden (1994) (cited in Marsden, 1998: 108). This concept, which describes the diversity that can emerge from the underlying economic, social, and political processes that shape the countryside, raises issues about the organization and governance of rural areas. The concept of differentiated countryside examines the various strategies that different rural areas have developed either in collaboration with or in opposition to the state or broader economies. It also discusses the evolving regulations in rural landscapes and the social structures that result from them, taking an interactional perspective (Marsden, 1998: 108). The four components of this analytical framework for exploring rural change are outlined in the table below.

**Table 2.1 :** The concept of differentiated countryside

|                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Preserved<br/>Countryside</b> | These are areas where a strong anti-development and protectionist attitude influences decision-making processes. If these areas are to undergo redevelopment, the middle class is likely to take a stand to protect their special advantages. In doing so, they may lend their support to developments in leisure, industry, and residential property. |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

|                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Contested Countryside</b>     | It refers to areas outside the main transport zones and without a special environmental quality. Here, farmers (as landowners) can be politically dominant and push for development proposals. Another attitude in these areas of migration from urban areas is the defence of preserved countryside by newcomers. The development process can, therefore, create increasing conflict between old and new groups. |
| <b>Paternalistic countryside</b> | It refers to areas where large private estates and large farms still dominate and where the development process has been decisively shaped by established landowners and/or large owner-occupied farms. Many of the farms and estates have faced income uncertainty and are seeking new sources of income. These areas are likely to be subject to development pressures of the above two types.                  |
| <b>Clientelist countryside</b>   | It is found in remote rural areas where agriculture and agriculture-related political institutions still hold power, but where farming and the rest of the rural economy can only be sustained by state subvention. Rural development processes have traditionally been dominated by farming, land ownership, local capital and state institutions, often working in close corporatist relationships.             |

Hence, the rural landscape is no longer primarily characterized by agricultural activities, shifting from rural economies or resource-limited approaches. The commodification extending beyond agriculture, as Marsden describes, and the decreasing agricultural land and changing rural values, as indicated by the concept of post-productivism, and the countryside constructed in different ways within the dynamic structure of the cycle of production-consumption and conservation, lead us to a phenomenon of change in which social and political processes redefine rural objects, spaces, commodity values and attribute multiple meanings to the countryside (Halfacree, 2006a, Holmes, 2006, Cloke, 2006, Philips, 2014). Thus, as the concept of rurality is viewed as a social structure that is reconfigured in diverse contexts and is utilized in various ways, it sparks a range of discussions, including its future, its positioning in management paradigms, and its connection to concepts such as locality and development (Ray, 1999; Bell & Jayne, 2010; Galani-Moutafi, 2013; Argent et al., 2013). The rural's changing characteristics bring new trends and needs in development strategies and rural planning perspectives through new demands arising from social recomposition, new implications in traditional agriculture, and the

increasing complexity of consumption and production in rural materiality (Paquette & Domon, 2003: 426; Halfacree, 2006a: 53; Holmes, 2006: 142-147).

Lifestyle migration can be seen as a factor that has reshaped the social composition of the countryside and introduced new demands. Different forms of rural experience, such as leisure, recreation, housing, and employment, have become desirable attributes of urban existence and culture. These new dynamics confront the countryside with non-agricultural interests and actors' efforts to create new ruralities based on their own imaginations (Halfacree, 2006a; Argent, 2002). The following section outlines how lifestyle migrants have become part of this transformative process and how they drive these changes.

#### **2.2.2.2. Changing Rural through Lifestyle Migration**

As rural communities and rurality transition from traditional land uses, economic activities, and social arrangements to a post-productivist or multifunctional era, human mobility plays a significant role in this transformation. It is both a driving force and a result of these dynamics. Urban-to-rural migration is embedded in social, economic, and political processes, in addition to issues such as ownership, use, and management of rural land, contributing to the fundamental transformation of rural communities (Gosnell & Abrams, 2011: 303; Philips, 2014).

In line with the lifestyle migration literature, Marsden (1999: 514) also observes that primary factors such as the environment, healthy lifestyles, leisure opportunities, picturesque rural landscapes, rural culture, and community life, along with emerging values associated with the countryside - such as disused buildings, affordable housing, and dependable, cost-effective labor - attract many individuals to these areas. Marsden (1999: 508) also indicates that, especially in highly urbanized nation-states (such as the Netherlands), more people tend to consume social or physical rural resources to temporarily or permanently escape the pathologies of urban life. This situation also indicates that the countryside will keep evolving based on the imaginations and identities of those who consume its resources, highlighting the significant social influence of the demands placed on rural areas.

In addition to using rural resources, these groups, which are included in the social structure and are not exempt from local policy, trigger a multi-layered changing process with their initiatives, investments, interventions in the built environment, social activities, interactions, and lifestyles rather than a monotonous transition. According to Gosnell & Abrams (2011: 312), amenity migration, a form of lifestyle migration, brings about economic consequences for rural areas due to the migrants' greater wealth compared to local residents and their independence from traditional rural activities (such as agriculture, forestry, fishing, or manufacturing). They also exhibit more "urbanized" consumer habits, leading to increased demand for new goods and services or changes to existing ones (see also Halfacree, 2006a). Rural land, which was previously seen only in terms of its production value, has now been integrated into the domain of capital accumulation and identified with commodity value, making it something that can be bought and sold as an ideal or a lifestyle convenience (Gosnell & Abrams, 2011: 312; Philips, 2014: 36-38).

Lifestyle migrants are not merely communities that demand services, invest in housing and land, and participate in the rural economy through direct consumption. Instead, they are seen as critical agents in strengthening local entrepreneurialism and enhancing local resources with their economic, social, and cultural capital (Cloeke, 2006; Stockdale et al., 2000; Herslund, 2012). Lifestyle migration, the subject of literature investigating human-induced changes in rural environments, is discussed concerning individual desires and activities as well as the participation of newcomers in capital accumulation cycles like rural revitalization, rural gentrification, and political ecology (Abrams et al., 2012: 272). Through revalorizing the local capitals with initiatives focused on agro-food products, built environment and architecture, landscapes or cultural heritage and tourism, various place-making strategies, and new "outsider" visions, lifestyle migrants become essential actors in policy-making and construction of territorial culture and economy (Galani-Moutafi, 2013: 104; Bell and Jayne, 2010: 212).

Lifestyle migrants who are involved in rural economies, which are largely sustained by self-employment and small businesses, either through service sector investments or agricultural production, can promote rural development by use of rural capital, or they can further open the rural to the commodification processes mentioned

above by making it part of the competitive landscape (Marsden, 1998; Akgün et al., 2011: 1210). Bosworth and Glasgow (2012: 146–147) observe that the relationship between migration and entrepreneurship has been evident in rural England since the early 1990s. They note that by the early 2000s, many rural businesses were established by individuals who had relocated from urban areas, motivated by the appeal of an improved quality of life. Regarding the mobilities that bring entrepreneurial behavioral patterns to the countryside, it is assumed that rural capital investors are mostly migrants rather than local residents due to conservative attitudes in rural areas, and changes occur with the integration of these migrants groups into the countryside (Akgün et al. 2011: 1210). Their social capital, know-how, ability to adapt to change, the employment they create, and their innovative capacity were the themes discussed at the intersection of economic rural change and lifestyle migration as concrete indicators that can be pursued (Stone & Stubbs, 2007; Akgün et al., 2011; Bosworth & Glasgow, 2012).

Similarly, the clustering of the creative class in rural areas, which can be considered within the scope of lifestyle migration, is discussed as contributing to rural revitalization (Herslund, 2012; Argent et al., 2013). In a similar pattern of economic gravitation, the relocation of high-tech firms to rural areas and the rural preference for professional services and business capacity has led to high growth rates in the South of England (Keeble & Nachum, 2002, cited in Murdoch, 2006: 175). Additionally, the demand for service created by lifestyle migrants without their own businesses, such as retirees or remote workers, is interpreted as a positive economic outcome for rural areas. This leads locals to respond to these demands and shift towards non-agricultural job opportunities like tourism (Akgün et al., 2011; Gosnell & Abrams, 2011; Keyder & Yenal, 2020). In addition to their economic contributions, protecting the environment, seeking solutions to rural issues, or contributing to the development of socio-cultural life through the social and cultural capital they bring are subjects that literature also investigates. Driven by motives such as shaping the values of the landscape they wish to live in and preserving natural qualities to sustain a healthy environment, they often incorporate ethical principles into their work and assume social responsibility for the places they migrate to, regardless of their professional activities (Murdoch, 2006; Holmes, 2006; Bosworth & Glasgow, 2012; Shucksmith, 2018; Gallent & Gkartzios, 2019).

In addition to the positive aspects of urban-to-rural mobility previously discussed, this phenomenon can also serve as a catalyst for negative socio-economic outcomes in rural areas. Argent (2002:98) highlights that coastal and peri-urban regions with high environmental quality and sensitive agricultural land are particularly vulnerable to uneven development patterns, resulting in economic disparities and environmental pressures driven by lifestyle mobility. Migrants, who often prioritize locations with specific environmental or lifestyle amenities, profoundly reshape the social and political structures of established rural communities (Smailes, 2002, cited in Argent, 2002:98). These changes manifest through various processes, including social conflict, rapid housing development, and commodification, which are accompanied by rural gentrification and the displacement of local populations. Furthermore, these dynamics lead to significant social ruptures, often disrupting the cultural fabric of rural areas (Gosnell & Abrams, 2011:311; Tomay & Berger, 2024).

The term “counter-urbanization” refers both to the association of the rural with population growth rather than population loss—thus altering its traditional social formation—and to the material world, such as economic relations and the built environment, shifting away from rural patterns and adopting characteristics similar to the urban fabric, echoes the mentioned negative process (Philips, 1998; Murdoch, 2006). Although some relatively positive aspects are noted, such as the increased prosperity in rural areas and the renewed attractiveness of the countryside for local communities, as well as the efforts of incoming groups to challenge prejudices about rural areas (Murdoch, 2006), the term primarily signifies the consumption of the rural landscape and the movement of urban ideals and expectations into rural places (Gosnell & Abrams, 2011). According to Perkins (2006: 250), this process has been created mainly by those who continue to depend on employment opportunities in urban areas while living in villages and towns, especially with new technologies and transportation facilities. The urban-to-rural mobility paradigm stretches cities’ boundaries, sparking debates about rural areas becoming residential and consumption hubs for urban residents and being integrated into metropolitan areas (Sieverts, 2003, as cited in Herslund, 2012: 237).

The process of counter-urbanization, which also underpins discussions of rural gentrification, frames the displacement of low-income groups by those with the capitals to afford rural living without being dependent on production activities (Clark, 2005; Gosnell & Abrams, 2011; Somerville, 2014; Tomay & Berger, 2024). The concept of gentrification, which is used for both rural and urban areas, may follow different paths in rural areas even though it has identical characteristics; however, it generally corresponds to a process in which urban nobles transform local assets according to their values, tastes, and visions, thereby making rural social and natural assets attractive (Somerville, 2014; Tomay & Berger, 2024). Darling (2005: 1017) explains the changes in the region's social structure, and material, social, and cultural practices due to gentrification through four main parameters: changes in rural class structure, post-productivist rural capital accumulation, changes in rural actors, and changes in rural housing composition. Although gentrification is often described in terms of conflict situations such as social polarization, rising class distinctions, displacement, and spatial inequalities (Clark, 2005; Nelson & Nelson, 2011; Gosnell & Abrams, 2011; Tomay & Berger, 2024), it is also possible to observe complex social patterns in which migrants make efforts to be accepted for their work, integrated into the community, and to understand local knowledge (Gülümser et al., 2009; Dias & Silva, 2021).

Local governance is another factor that enables lifestyle migrants to position themselves as active agents within rural areas and to drive change. The integration of innovation, entrepreneurship, and financial or intellectual capital into a specific place, often featured in narratives such as regional identity building or rural revitalization as an extension of the new development paradigm, is closely linked to the attraction of lifestyle migrants to rural areas (Ray, 1999: 259; Argent et al., 2013: 88). Institutional arrangements are emphasized to coordinate with connected regions in terms of production, business, and settlement, aiming to increase cities' competitiveness. It is aimed to eliminate the cultural and economic inequalities between the city and its backgrounds that may hinder competitiveness, to include these regions in growth policies (Özgül, 2020: 93-96), as well to stand out in terms of creativity, innovation, development, and competition not to be excluded from globalization processes (Genç et al., 2021: 44). Argent (2013: 88) notes that the focus of economic growth has evolved towards the economic regeneration capacity of new regions and the qualities



of the inhabitants in terms of the neoliberal regional development agenda. Rural areas are increasingly integrated into the cultural economy. They are experiencing significant transformations driven by the flow of labour, capital, and technology, as well as the rise of new forms of mobility and entrepreneurial opportunities (Bell & Jayne, 2010: 210; Galani-Moutafi, 2013: 104). Thus, the potential of lifestyle migrants to bring new knowledge, skills, creative capacity, and knowledge-intensive labor from outside, thereby creating regional networks and funding or enhancing rural prosperity (Herslund, 2012), makes them a desirable group for local governments (see also Florida, 2012).

### **2.2.3. New Life Searchers Practices in the New Settlements**

In the introduction, the mobility of the wealthy groups has been described as lifestyle migration. It is framed as a project by which achieving a qualified or alternative life and following a new path to realize self-desires are possible. However, this project or the desire to change life is a “massive upheaval” that is not only related to the decision-making process but that the migrants must manage throughout their life (Bensen & O’Reilly, 2009:7). In this process, the lifestyle migrants face many challenges, individually or as a subject of a group, and learns how to live due to lifestyle choices (O’Reilly & Bensen, 2009:7). As part of seeking ways to achieve their dreams, they get involved in many processes, such as integrating into local life and building new relationships, maintaining wealthy conditions, building the immigrated place’s future, resolving the uncertainties of daily lives, and engaging with the political environment.

First, expressing what the lifestyle corresponds to would clarify the practices that do not end with the migration decision and continue through the attempts to construct a new life as an ongoing process. Giddens (1991:81) defined lifestyle as “a more or less integrated set of practices which an individual embraces not only because such practices fulfill utilitarian needs but because they give material form to a particular narrative of self-identity.” As mentioned previously, lifestyle migration is related to the attraction factors of geography, which emerges as beneficial or better conditions for individuals as the practical side of the mobility and self-definition process, including concrete practices. MacCannell (1999, as cited in Hoey, 2005: 592)

determines lifestyle practices in terms of migration as “a combination of work and leisure, ...replacing occupation as the basis of social relationship formation, social status, and social action.” MacCannell (1999, as cited in Hoey, 2005: 592) sees lifestyle migrants’ act as an affirmation of social values that defend escaping the work life to the solace of leisure where the individual is believed to have more discretion. In addition to these outstanding social values, which are a rebellion against the values of capitalism, it should not be overlooked that individuals, who are increasingly losing meaning and context in contemporary societies, create new contexts for themselves through their life practices (Elliott and Lemert, 2006, as cited in Åkerlund & Sandberg, 2015: 356). To summarize, lifestyle coincides with a practical view towards better conditions and practices that the individuals desire to rebuild themselves. However, these lifestyle-based practices cannot be considered apart from the material and structural conditions of the contemporary world. Therefore, relocating or mobility can be viewed as repositioning an individual’s lifestyle, which includes transitioning to a life with new possibilities, re-questioning and constructing identity, managing spatial practices, negotiating with social values, and rethinking the role of occupation in life.

The relation between lifestyle, place, and mobility is grounded in settlement strategies or, in other words, “residential practices” that are an essential aspect of identification, providing a sense of belonging that can influence how people identify their place in the social structure (Benson & Jackson, 2013: 795). In order to capture individuals’ sense of belonging to a place and their positioning within the social structure, researchers frame these strategies or practices through concepts such as “belonging” (Leach, 2016; Savage et al., 2005), “territorialization” (Leach, 2016), and “place-making” (Schnekloth & Shibley, 1995). Benson and Jackson (2013: 801) examine the place-making activities of middle-class residents in Peckham, highlighting migrants’ acts of territorialization and belonging through everyday activities, such as shopping and home renovations, as well as collective efforts to shape the place’s future, like participating in local campaigns. Schnekloth and Shibley (1995:1) describe place-making as creating homes, neighborhoods, and spaces for ‘work and play.’ This process involves not only transforming or preserving physical environments but also forming social communities. Both approaches draw attention to the daily activities, physical practices as well as relationships with the community. However, Stakowski (2002: 368) reminds us that placemaking is a socially

constructed, ambiguous process open to the manipulative control or conflict of the desired ends and encapsulates the distribution of social and physical resources. Therefore, place-making encompasses a broader context than constructing concrete spaces or relations, even “the rights to the city” and power struggles for a place. With a Lefebvrian perspective, Lepofsky and Fraser (2003: 129) state that, especially in the fabrics of the cities’ cultural meanings, to whom it belongs, is a field of struggle, and this struggle corresponds to place-making (Lepofsky & Fraser, 2003: 129). It is worth remembering that the cultural debate over the meaning of cities has been exacerbated by urban revitalization, notably in community-building and appeals for civic involvement. In this regard, the place-making strategies of lifestyle migrants can be interpreted as the revitalization of rural for them, considering the contexts, such as the cultural meaning they want to ascribe to the seaside town and the desired geography with the belonged community.

In addition to place-making strategies, “belonging” is a broad concept covering positioning in social structure as well as the ontological approaches that include “spatial attachment” (Savage, Bagnall & Longhurst, 2005: 29) and the process of producing spatial meaning. According to Savage et al. (2005: 29), belonging does not imply a stable community with defined limits; on the contrary, it is more fluid and corresponds to the spaces that are sites to perform identities. Individuals link their biography to their “selected” home area to create stories about how their arrival and subsequent settlement are consistent with their sense of self (Savage et al., 2005: 29). So, it is worthy of indicating that settlement strategies encapsulate belonging or the place-making process as a redefinition of the place and its community depending on newcomers’ lifestyles. Savage (2010) defines this settlement and mobility practice as “elective belonging.” According to them, “belonging” is the ability of middle-class individuals to claim moral rights over the place by moving to and establishing roots in a specific destination that was not only practically significant to them but also symbolically (Savage, 2010: 116). The affiliation to a “particular place” is created and claimed by its unique “aura” and identity, which dissociates with places such as “faceless suburb” or “generic village” (Savage, 2010: 117). Elective belonging’s geographies are “landscape construed as a destination on a personal map, a landmark on their own journey.” (Savage, 2010: 118). Jansson (2018: 127) interprets the “elective belonging” concept, inspired by Bourdieu’s sociological work, as “a socially

structured logic according to which relatively well-off people find and create home-places that fit their tastes.” So, it is possible to say that the lifestyle migrants are looking for well-fit surroundings, communities, and auras to their “personal journey” and transfer their tastes, habitus, and cultural capital to the migrated location as a part of elective belonging practices. However, in the literature on mobility, some studies show that people’s connections or ties to a “particular space” are not necessarily based on sentiments of belonging and that individuals can reside and have bonds based on strategic or practical concerns (Åkerlund & Sandberg, 2015: 354). The concept that expresses this situation is “mooring”: “Like boats to a mooring, people are tied to their environments by investments in their property, by the many community contexts in which they find meaning, by friends and family whose proximity they value, by the experiences of the past, and by lifestyles that weave these strands together into patterns of satisfying activity” (Longino, Perzynski, & Stoller, 2002, as cited in Åkerlund & Sandberg, 2015: 354). On the one hand, although there are emotional ties such as identity, community, and social relations, material and economic investments can provide sufficient conditions/bonds to continue living in a place. Therefore, including lifestyle migrants in the production process by transferring their economic capital to Urla is a dynamic that should not be missed in understanding the settlement process and place-making.

The transfer of habitus, cultural capital, and economic capital to spaces recalls the question of the novelty of life established in the seaside town. Even though some determinations of lifestyle mobility emphasize creating a new life, improving current situations, and altering lifestyles (Torkington, 2012; Benson & O’Reilly, 2009), adaptation of existing lifestyles to new conditions and inclusion of existing geographic references in the settlement cause cultivation practice as part of alteration of place. Likewise, according to Bourdieu (as cited in Leach, 2016: 298), habitus is a dynamic field of position-taking in which individuals inherit the characteristics of one context and adjust them in a new one. Thus, processes such as the social production of space, gentrification, counter-urbanization, as well as community-building, and self-positioning should be thought related to Bourdieu’s terminology of habitus and cultural capital. From the perspective of habitus and cultural capital, the spatial practices of migrants, their relationships with the social structure, and their roles in the social production of space are closely interconnected. In this context, Lefebvre’s

triadic model and Bourdieu's terminology provide a strong analytical foundation for the research. Lefebvre's concept of the social production of space also offers insights into how the spatial strategies of local governments—aimed at integrating migrants into the social structure and navigating power struggles—interact with the settlement tactics of migrants. Although lifestyle immigration literature often risks serving as a “ready-made explanation,” it is important to note that the strategies and methods of migration management vary significantly across different locations, conditions, and migrants groups. This chapter, therefore, presents a detailed portrait of how migrants live within new belonging landscapes in Urla, focusing on their settlement patterns, occupations or entrepreneurial activities, leisure practices, and ways of navigating ambiguities. At the same time, it provides a broader context for understanding how these individuals are integrated into existing economic structures, social investments, and political struggles.

### **2.3. Findings and Discussion**

As mentioned earlier, the primary purpose of this chapter is to explore how lifestyle migrants manage and plan their lives and the seaside town. So, discussing how micro-practices, initiatives, or interventions alter or have the potential to change the socio-cultural and economic fabric of Urla, with the intersection of everyday life and the macro-structure, has been determined as the path that the chapter has followed. In this context, while the axes of migrants changing migration destinations, as emphasized in the literature, are taken into consideration, Urla—or Türkiye-specific triggers, planning processes, differences among migrants, and their negotiations with one another and the local administration stand out as the key problematics of the chapter that deepen the literature discussions and frame the main themes of the findings.

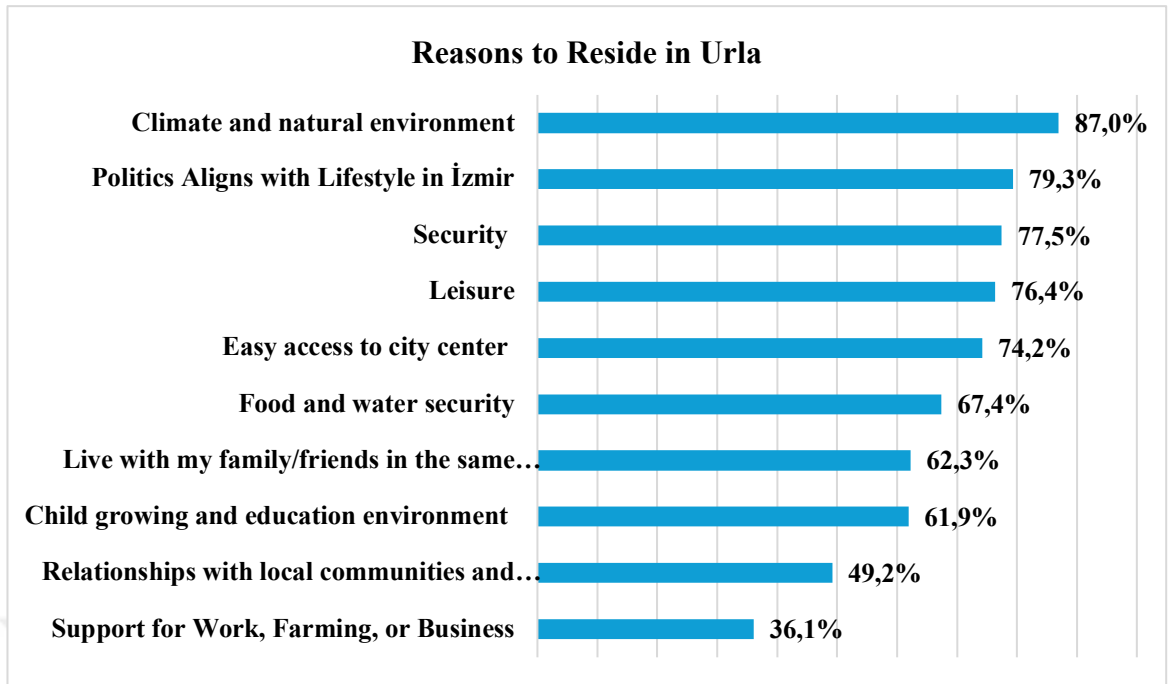
With reference to the “Capitals framework,” these chapter demonstrates how lifestyle migrants have constructed Urla, transforming it into a seaside town in transition through planning, interventions, spatial practices, and capital-based activities. As mentioned at the beginning of the second chapter, an exploratory survey was initially conducted to gain insights into the main focal points of the field and migrants' intentions regarding location and mobility. This survey provided a foundation for the subsequent in-depth interviews. In total, 102 surveys and 42 in-

depth interviews were conducted. The interviewees were selected from both survey respondents and non-participants using non-random methods and the snowball sampling technique to gain an in-depth understanding of the practices of lifestyle migrant groups.

### **2.3.1. Factors Triggering Mobility to Urla**

Before presenting the migrants' plans and practices about Urla, Examining the driving purposes behind various forms of mobility, the Türkiye-specific social dynamics is critical. In this way, it will be possible to understand the trajectory of their lives in the seaside town or Urla's hybrid rural-urban identity, as well as their practices and place imaginations. Although community belonging and identity are intertwined and significant concepts in defining lifestyle migration, they are inadequate for comprehending the social fracture that underlies mobility within the same country and the lifestyle migrants' desired way of life.

Within the scope of the survey conducted for exploratory purposes to see general tendencies, when the interviewees were asked about their reasons for choosing Urla, "climate and environment" was the leading reason, with a rate of 87%. Unsurprisingly, those who choose to migrate for lifestyle reasons often do so in pursuit of a more tranquil and natural environment with better climatic conditions, as this aligns with the findings of the existing literature on lifestyle migration. Likewise, in the classification of lifestyle migration made by Benson and O'Reilly (2009: 612-614) according to geographical clustering/preferences, the motivations of the group described as rural idyllists, longing for nature, living a simpler life, and dreams of getting away from the city overlap with the motivations of those who migrated to Urla. The other most prominent reasons for this group are security (77,5%), suitable conditions for raising children (61,9%), and food and water security (67,4%). The second most frequently cited reason, after climate and the environment, was that İzmir is politically more suitable for one's lifestyle (79,3%).



**Figure 2.2 : Reasons to reside in Urla**

The prevailing literature on lifestyle migration does not commonly mention political concerns as the main reasons people relocate. However, the Urla case illustrates that political, natural, environmental, and economic dynamics significantly influence migration choices. As previously outlined, lifestyle mobility, which is also anchored in the “identity” perspectives of Giddens and Bauman, is regarded as an ongoing process of self-redefinition by social actors in uncertain, precarious, or flexible circumstances. Although community belonging and identity are intertwined and significant concepts in defining lifestyle migration, they are inadequate for comprehending the social fracture that underlies mobility within the same country and the lifestyle migrants’ desired way of life. As mentioned above, the situation is also evidenced, albeit implicitly, in the analogy of “a European-like life,” as encountered in the in-depth interviews. This situation is discussed in detail under the heading “Factors Triggering Mobility to Urla.” Examining the underlying social structure that shapes this phenomenon is essential, as it offers insights into the fundamental drivers of lifestyle migration to seaside towns in Türkiye.

### **2.3.1.1. Sense Of Being Trapped Due to Political Situation**

Even though the AKP pursued liberal policies in the first years of its rule through negotiations on EU membership, its solutionist approach to ethnic issues, and its

moderate view on Islam, as Erensü and Alemdaroğlu (2018: 19) emphasize, narratives of Türkiye's authoritarian trajectory point to a breaking point where the AKP switched gears and moved into a repressive mode. Although there is no consensus on what the most critical turning point was, there is a groundswell of agreement that the party's repressive mode evolved into a sectarian, authoritarian, and patriarchal character (Erensü & Alemdaroğlu, 2018: 19). The AKP revived the security state of the 1990s in response to the rise of democratic politics, especially after the Gezi Uprising and the June 7, 2015 elections (Yılmaz & Turner, 2019: 694). In a political environment that has evolved into securitization and Muslim nationalism, increasing authoritarianism and identity politics have deepened polarization and triggered diverse social struggles and demands (Aydın-Düzgit & Balta, 2017). According to Yılmaz (2018: 62), the Gezi Park protests, as an expression of these social struggles, represent "a challenge to the increasing authoritarianism of the governing party; its permanent denial of people outside the current power bloc (such as Alevis, Kurds, secularists, LGBTI people, Westernized and secular youth, women, and the new middle classes)." Orhon (2020: 36) argues that the Gezi uprising crystallized the opposing cultural identities excluded from the AKP's social imaginary and that the state violence during the uprising provoked an emotional rupture. Yılmaz and Turner (2019: 697) state that even though rebellious citizenship was experienced during the July 7, 2015 elections, the constitutional referendum (April 16, 2017), the Justice March (June 15, 2017), the March 31 local elections and the renewed Istanbul municipal elections on June 23, 2019, the feelings of hope and solidarity emerged during these times were later overshadowed by feelings of despair and loneliness. Likewise, majoritarianism has been the dominant form of governance, where dissenting opinions are marginalized not only through political party discourse but also by restricting fundamental rights and freedoms within the democratic sphere (Aydın-Düzgit & Balta, 2017: 6).

The research titled "Political Polarization in Türkiye" conducted by KONDA research company in 2019 does not deny the identity-based policies of political parties in deepening polarization; it states that populist ideologies that consolidate the vote base and increase authority are reproduced in a mutualist relationship with social polarization. Among the critical parameters of the survey, fear of restriction of freedom, feeling as a second-class citizen, negative opinions on religion (compulsory religion classes, freedom of speech, etc.), pessimistic attitudes towards the future of



children increase as the level of education rises and lifestyle modernizes (KONDA, 2019: 33-47).

Cultural policies, which reshape society's struggles, trends, and class structure, carry these polarizations into everyday life through fears or hopes, visions of the future, citizen practices, and lifestyles. Therefore, the system of values differentiating between the "socio-culturally liberal and secular" classes and the more "religiously conservative" masses (Aydın-Düzgit & Balta, 2017: 6) is shaped by divergences ranging from political partisanship to lifestyles (Akçaoğlu, 2022). Oppressive regulation permeating everyday life impacts the cultural identity of individuals who feel excluded or oppressed within the existing political system (Orhon, 2020: 40).

One of the areas where cultural policies take place is undoubtedly cities. The reproduction of urban spaces, the transformation of cultural practices and consumption patterns, and the construction of new mechanisms for accumulating financial resources and political power can be counted as forms of the manifestation of political power over urban and environmental policies (Batuman, 2019; Geniş, 2020; Akçaoğlu, 2022). In Türkiye, Istanbul in particular, and the other metropolitan cities of Ankara and İzmir have also witnessed the same transformations (Batuman, 2019; Özet, 2022). Istanbul, the mega-city besieged by neoliberalization, has undergone a real estate boom, especially since 2010; behind the profit-making urban transformation projects, a series of political and legal changes bring about the displacement and dispossession of the poor and middle classes. Behind the seemingly successful urban policies of the AKP, which was positioned as a work facilitating power in the international economy during this period, there lies gentrification, the destruction of cultural heritage, and the masking of large wealth transfers with speculations and state-led real-estate creation (Erensü & Alemdaroğlu, 2018: 24). While listing the ways of neoliberal restructuring of urban life, Geniş (2020: 13) adds to these dynamics spatial and housing policies that increase the socio-spatial segregation and polarization of social classes, the creation of private spaces for the consumption of elites, gated communities, attempts to eliminate or increasingly surveil public spaces, keeping urban space under security and militarist control, depoliticizing the city through decentralization strategies, and closing it to the participation of opposing social groups. As Batuman (2019:167) points out, political Islam builds its power over the city on housing production, spatial control, and the

production of new Islamist environments, which it combines under the notion of urban transformation, i.e., accumulation, domination, and reconstruction of the nation as a nationality.

The increasing authoritarianism, social polarization, despair, erosion of the publicness of the urban space, and the loss of citizens' political rights and freedoms in the face of conservative cultural hegemony, which has been mentioned since the beginning of the chapter, narrow the areas of resistance, especially for secular groups. The departure of the opposition groups following the increasing authoritarianism, especially during the Gezi Park protests, marked the beginning of a new wave of migration from Türkiye to Western Europe. This group includes secular, liberal, highly educated members of the middle class and members of the LGBTQ+ community, as well as members of religious and ethnic minority groups, followers of religious-political groups such as the Gülen movement, and others criminalized by the government (Kaya, 2023). Additionally, the post-2018 currency and debt crisis has led to many people leaving the country, including diverse groups such as asylum seekers and wealthy businesspeople, all seeking a restart elsewhere (Erdi-Öztürk & Taş, 2022).

While international mobility offers to escape current constraints by moving to another country and establishing new official ties, including the possibility of obtaining citizenship, to ask what the internal lifestyle migration emerges as a substitute for in the form of starting a new life outside the city or in a seaside town, which the dissertation also opens up for discussion, seems to be worth noting within the political constrictions, polarizations and search for a way of life in question.

İrfan Özet (2022: 272) emphasizes that the AKP's growing pursuit of hegemony, particularly after 2010, has fragmented the cultural sphere. Consequently, urban-secular populations increasingly seek to reside in relatively more "sterile" spaces, distant from political Islam or provincial conservatism, while developing a sense of "subalternity" or "minority" consciousness. Orhon (2020) points out that collective mobility has lost its possibilities in the face of rising authoritarianism and destructive modernization in AKP's Türkiye and states that settling in the countryside/coastal areas is a tendency that strengthens a utopian-nostalgic search for existence. Orhon (2020: 40-42) suggests that the return to the land is rooted in collective nostalgia and

is seen as a way to distance oneself from the destructive and aggressive aspects of modernity promoted by the AKP. This is especially evident following the Gezi uprisings and is motivated by ethical and political considerations, as it represents a departure from the city and the associated vanished ways of life and social power structures. Orhon (2020: 47) highlights that within the distancing concept, an emotional structure is influenced by a dream of change and a longing for a new homeland. This emotional structure can be seen as an extension of utopian nostalgia, and it seeks to explore possibilities in contrast to turning away from the present.

The broad contextual question about why they prefer Urla, which was directed to the interviewees during the field research, leads us to the escape that Orhon (2020) and Özet (2022) point to, which stems from the dissolution of social ties with the changing socio-political and cultural conjuncture. While explaining his mobility, Ali described the Gezi as a turning point or a societal rupture. The country's political authoritarianism affects many areas, ranging from the economy to urban life, and the possibility of radicalization, economic collapse, and political tension that may arise in the city prompted Ali to migrate. He is orientated towards a rural settlement that includes the Technopark infrastructure where he can continue his current job.

Gezi is like a state of defeat. (...) We started to predict that the country would regress politically, that political tension could bring economic collapse, that radical ruptures were coming, and all kinds of risks; that's why being in the city is risky (Ali, 48, software developer and designer, NGO member).

Another example where Gezi reference is given is that the new environments they are involved in or create in Urla revitalize the nostalgia related to previously shared values.

During the events we organized, many people said that the environment here was like the atmosphere in Gezi. People who had seen and lived there, who had stayed in the tents and defended the trees in Gezi Park, said that they got the spirit of Gezi and wanted to live here (Pınar, 47, product developer, NGO member).

The discussion about being together again and revitalizing the socio-cultural environment shared in Istanbul in the countryside points to a nostalgia narrative about the communal togetherness of the past. The artist complains about Beyoğlu, a district in Istanbul, and how its cultural atmosphere changed after the Gezi Park protests. He attributes the reason for remembering the cultural spirit there to the fact that people who used to attend events like art exhibitions in Istanbul may have fled to places like Urla.

We had an exhibition opening here last month. People from İzmir or those who live here attended, and for a moment, I felt the spirit of Beyoğlu in the 2010s. There was a pleasant atmosphere. (...) I thought that probably the people I knew or talked to in Beyoğlu at that time had fled to such places (Serkan, 37, artist).

These references to the loss of the former way of life, daily life satisfaction or the sense of security, and the sense of nostalgia related to the social values of the past living in the town, point to İzmir as the geography of change or the continuation of the values of the previous life.

The change in Türkiye, i.e., the change in the regime, the change in Istanbul, the refugee migration to Istanbul. (...) In other words, people are already looking for other places because they have started to feel uncomfortable in Istanbul. (...) When I think of a more democratic, freer place to live in Türkiye, the first place that comes to mind is İzmir or the Aegean region (Zeynep, 38, permaculture designer).

Recently, I came here due to political reasons, the conditions in Türkiye, economic conditions, life, age, and the advantage of being from İzmir. (...) My parents moved to Urla ten years ago, so there has been a reconnection with Urla (Cem, 50, ex-advertiser, cafe owner).

Zeynep links migration to changing government policies and the transformation of Istanbul. She left the city due to its increased population compared to previous periods and the transformations that made daily life increasingly complex and disturbing. Instead, she prioritizes İzmir for its representation of freedom and democracy. Cem also pointed to similar dynamics and stated that he had returned to

İzmir, his hometown. The discourse of democracy that Zeynep mentioned can be traced back to the period after 2000 when Türkiye's main political focus shifted to the AKP, and İzmir leaned towards the CHP (Yıldırım & Haspolat as cited in Özet, 2002: 140). The CHP's success, on the other hand, stems from the İzmir public's strong association with modernity, secularism, the devotion to Atatürk, and the existential meanings attached to the Republic (Tosun as cited in Özet, 2002: 140). Özet (2022: 104) states that İzmir is surrounded by a geographical and social structure that is outside the rising power and conservative cultural hegemony of the AKP; like the Berlin Wall that divides Germany into two different worlds, he proposes a symbolic border that forms the other social world of Türkiye: "İzmir Wall."

I am not from İzmir; my wife's family lives in İzmir. All my close friends at university were here in İzmir. (...) I always had it in my mind. If I settle somewhere, with my perspective and way of living, it was not Urla in the first place, but İzmir (Onur, 44, sales manager).

Onur states that while determining the migration route, they preferred a city that they associated with the way of living rather than a specific location or district. This choice recalls Savage's (2010) conceptualization of "elective belonging" based on the Bourdieu perspective. This concept, which is not only related to practices, points to a symbolic world and expresses the selection of the geography where tastes, lifestyle, and habitus fit in with the living space and the claiming of rights over the place (Savage, 2010: 116). İzmir, which Özet (2022) interprets as a geographical and social structure and a symbolic border beyond the AKP hegemony, corresponds to a place of belonging chosen by the "anxious moderns"<sup>11</sup> of Istanbul, where the nationalist view is gaining strength, with their secular sensitivities. Stating that "hyper-agora life and open social relations" are at the center of the core values centered around "being from İzmir," Özet (2022: 300) describes how social relations take place in İzmir, especially in the public sphere. Zeynep and Mehmet also describe their lives in İzmir as comfortable and free without encountering bigotry and interference in their lifestyles. Open social relations are essential for their social life.

<sup>11</sup> One of the groups that emerged in the clusters was made within the scope of the lifestyles survey conducted by the KONDA research company. For the column written by the founder of the research company: <https://t24.com.tr/yazarlar/bilinmeyen/endiseli-modernler,2658>

We do not like bigotry in people, like most people. The social segment should not consist of people who interfere with each other; in İzmir, you can live more freely without religious pressure (Zeynep, 38, biologist).

In Istanbul, I could not see two women sitting opposite each other in a tavern and drinking rakı. Now there is, but when I come to İzmir, people sit here comfortably. The people of İzmir are very conservative. They are religious, but they are open like this; I mean, they are not bigots (Mehmet, 66, retired tourism manager and farmer).

The issue that needs to be deepened here is why they live not in the center of İzmir but in the countryside, on its periphery, or in a seaside town that evokes the rural. Celal expresses that he would like to return to İzmir, where he spent his student life; however, due to factors such as excessive urbanization, they do not go to the center of İzmir. Instead, they plan to settle in a rural area around İzmir to live peacefully.

Looking back, İzmir in the 2000s is not the İzmir of the 1970s. It is uglier, worse, more unplanned, and tasteless and has lost many characteristics (Celal, 64, actor and writer).

Despite the fact that the primary drivers of lifestyle migration from the city to the countryside, such as the urban chaos and the desire for a quieter life, are the main factors, it is seen that the central districts have lost their attractiveness due to reasons such as receiving migration of secular groups since the end of the 90s and the increase in the urban population, the construction of high-rise buildings on the coastline, the rise in the housing market and the heightened fears about multi-story living following the recent İzmir earthquake (Datta & Yücel Young, 2007; Özet, 2022). Therefore, cultural migration is based on the combination of geographical choice and the rural ideal, triggered by feeling politically trapped or seeking the healthier, socially distant, and peaceful life offered by seaside towns. Cultural, political, or individual distancing towards sterile and non-conservative town life has led secular groups to move into coastal districts such as Urla, Çeşme, and Seferihisar (Özet, 2022: 272).

Although the migration of highly skilled people from Türkiye to other countries because of the country's current socio-political and cultural situation, it is accurate to suggest that internal mobility towards the coastal cities is an alternative to abroad

migration by serving relatively ideal conditions to sustain life in the country. The migration of urbanites—including anxious moderns, secularists, Gezi protesters, opponent artists, and the middle class, whose boundaries have become increasingly blurred amid the economic crisis—can be understood as simultaneous processes of dissolution and reunion, where new relationships intersect with old values and forms of belonging amid social structural changes. Subsequent chapters of the dissertation explore the practices of lifestyle migrants, examining how these foster reunions or reestablished rural lives as part of a critical discussion on the dynamics of mobilities. However, in this chapter, it is worth noting that the practices of those with political motives were not shaped similarly. Some turned to business management, while others pursued creating cooperatives for social problems with more idealistic aspirations.

### **2.3.1.2. COVID-19 Pandemic**

The COVID-19 pandemic has been marked by various measures that disrupted the flow of everyday life and by lockdown/restriction-style policies implemented nationally or internationally (González- Leonardo, Rowe & Caparrós, 2022; Wallin Aagesen, Järv & Gerber, 2023). According to Wallin Aagesen et al. (2023: 361), the possibility of remote work and the availability of second homes in rural areas contributed to a rise in urban-to-rural mobilities. This period of increased remote work was largely framed in dominant academic and public discourse as a time when urban and metropolitan tourist destinations lost favor among residents and visitors. In contrast, rural destinations were discussed as places of renewed interest. Recent studies show an increase in internal migration from dense cities to rural areas in 2020 in Spain (González -Leonardo et al., 2022b), Japan (Fielding & Ishikawa, 2021), the United Kingdom (Rowe et al., 2022), Sweden (Vogiazides & Kawalerowicz, 2022) and Australia (Borsellino et al., 2022) (Cited in González- Leonardo et al., 2022: 332).

Underlying this interest is the fact that urban dwellers seek greener and safer spaces, reiterating the search for the “rural idyll,” an essential concept previously mentioned in the lifestyle literature (Goodwin-Hawkins, Mahon, Farrell & Jones, 2023: 379). Although this situation does not correspond to a specific mobility reason for Urla, since it expresses a relatively new break, it has been included in the dissertation within the factors triggering mobility as a phenomenon that contributes to

the literature and also has consequences in Urla. According to TUIK population data, while the population of Urla was 67,339 in 2019, it reached 69,550 after the year when the World Health Organization officially declared COVID-19 a pandemic (11 March 2020.) It is seen that the population was 72,741 during the pandemic, which continued in 2021 with the emergence of new variants. Although there was a 3.9% increase in 2017, the population growth trend before the pandemic ranged from 2.3% to 2.8% between 2015 and 2018. However, after the pandemic restrictions in 2019, the trend shifted upward, with growth rates of 3.3% in 2020 and 4.6% in 2021 as shutdowns were eased.

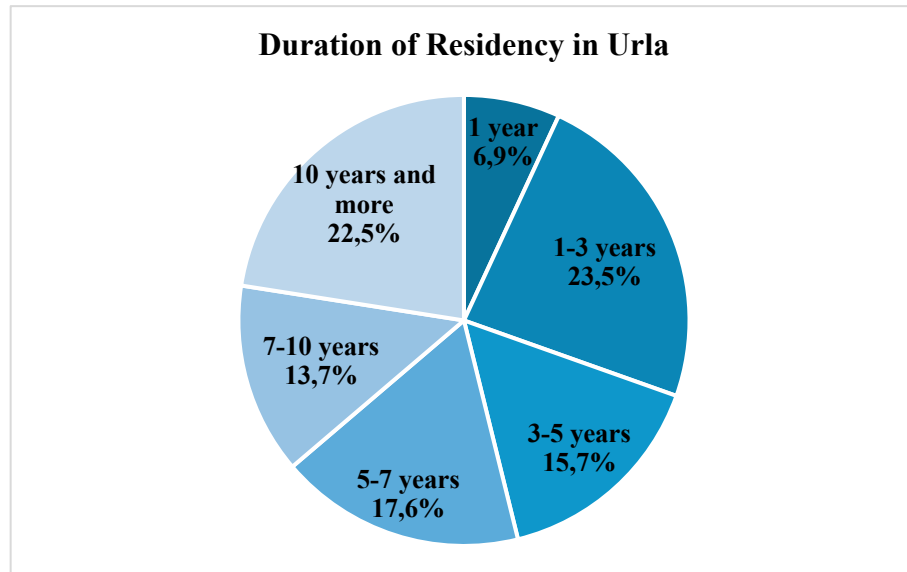
**Table 2.2 :** Annual population growth rate

| Year | Population of Urla | Annual Population Growth Rate |
|------|--------------------|-------------------------------|
| 2023 | 77,599             | 3,8%                          |
| 2022 | 74,736             | 2,7%                          |
| 2021 | 72,741             | 4,6%                          |
| 2020 | 69,550             | 3,3%                          |
| 2019 | 67,339             | 1,5%                          |
| 2018 | 66,360             | 2,3%                          |
| 2017 | 64,895             | 3,9%                          |
| 2016 | 62,439             | 2,8%                          |
| 2015 | 60,750             | 2,7%                          |
| 2014 | 59,166             | 4,3%                          |

During the in-depth interviews, participants were asked when they moved to Urla. Additionally, the questionnaire inquired about the duration of their residency in Urla. Looking at the answers, those who have moved between 2020 and 2023,<sup>12</sup> (23.5%) are in the first position. This group is followed by those who have lived in Urla for over 10 years (22.5%). Therefore, it is reasonable to consider that most of the interviewees who participated in the survey have been living in Urla for a long time or have moved due to the pandemic.

<sup>12</sup> The survey was conducted between October 2022 and January 2023. Therefore, it reflects the period one and a half years before the completion of the dissertation (October 2024).





**Figure 2.3 :** Duration of residency in Urla

Confinement to apartments during pandemic lockdowns led people to consider alternative ways of living that allowed greater connection to the outdoors while maintaining isolation. Urla, with its geographically dispersed villages, addressed this need for isolation by offering settlements of detached houses (gated communities or neighborhood settlements) that enabled continued interaction with the street, even during the lockdown.

With the pandemic, there has been much migration from outside the city, especially from Istanbul, as people desire a more natural and isolated life. Istanbul and Ankara lead as big cities (Işık, 33, wine-tasting expert).

With this pandemic, Istanbul started to scare me more and more, and I said everyone should return to their villages (Gözde, 33, chef and restaurant owner).

With the expansion of remote working, people have already said, ‘ If I can work from home, I should live in a detached house. Ok, I will go to the Aegean, but when I go there, I should be close to the city; I need to be close to the airport; I can easily go to Istanbul.’ Urla is a place that has won with its location (Zeynep, 38, biologist).

These places were always considered summer residences, but after the pandemic, these neighborhoods boomed because everyone wanted a house with a yard. With the pandemic, people wanted to be isolated from people and with

people locked in their homes (Selin, 35, ex-pharmaceutical representative and housewife).

The emergence of remote working, changing work styles, and establishing the home office culture are important triggers of lifestyle migration. The breaking of the link with the place of work and the freedom created by the pandemic to redefine living spaces, albeit home-centered, have created new mobility paths. The increase in time spent at home has increased the need for larger houses, gardens or courtyards, especially where families can be locked down together (Hughes, 2020; Marsh, 2020); the densely populated dynamics of urban life have made the threat of the virus more daunting, while the closure of retail shops and activities and the reduction of leisure and consumption opportunities in cities have been factors in reducing the attractiveness of cities (cited in González-Leonardo et al., 2022: 332). The interviewees' emphasis on mobility away from major cities, or in simpler terms, "Istanbul is starting to scare me," reveals that the fear of succumbing to the pandemic continues to be a concern provoked by urban centers.

The pandemic triggers all these new individual needs, new work practices, changing urban and rural connotations, as well as a broader portrait of the countryside popularized by mobilities. It is a recent concrete example of rural life framed by social, economic, and political agendas often beyond local control or communities. Likewise, the questioning of space and rights in the focus of the pandemic and lifestyle migration has fueled many debates related to rural displacement, the right to be in the rural, counterurbanization, spatial inequality, or the inability of everyone to migrate to the rural under challenging economic conditions of the pandemic (Weeden, Hardy & Foster, 2022; Goodwin-Hawkins et al., 2023).

The unequal spatial distribution of rights and resources related to the rural puts forward how individuals' capacities to access, live in, and use rural areas affect the space and how this differs from urban space. This raises the power imbalances in the countryside that have become prominent during periods of high demand, particularly during a crisis like the pandemic. Weeden et al. (2022: 738), on the one hand, combine the right to mobility with the demand to be in the rural and ask whether "insider access" to rural communities is possible, especially as seasonal rural dwellers turn into long-term residents with the pandemic; on the other hand, by asking how the right to be in

the countryside is acquired and by whom, they highlight the delicate balance the rural community must maintain between the risk of virus exposure brought by newcomers and commodification processes, and the need to prevent economic decline. An examination of the Urla landscape shows that individuals who established new settlements during the pandemic and those with existing family ties or secondary residences in Urla have turned to the area as a shelter in different ways. Therefore, the houses used as summer cottages turned into permanent residences where lifestyle migrants adapted during the pandemic and most likely afterward.

People started investing here with the logic that 'buying a house in Urla will make a good profit.' After buying that house, they used it as a shelter during the pandemic and then connected to Urla and stayed (Pınar, 47, product developer, NGO member)

People start using their summer houses in summer and winter, selling or renting their homes in Istanbul (Ali, 48, software developer and designer, NGO member).

The surge of lifestyle migration, which has turned investment properties and existing family homes into permanent residences, has led to population growth, infrastructure inadequacies, and urban issues such as traffic congestion. The real estate market's growth, a general consequence of lifestyle migration, has accompanied the right to stay healthy during the pandemic. On the other hand, it has accelerated the migration-related dispossession and displacement of locals. Besides, the situation works similarly in different countries; what differs in Urla is the migration caused by the İzmir earthquake on October 30, 2020, coinciding with the pandemic period. After the earthquake, which destroyed some of the city's multi-storey settlements, people moved from the central districts of İzmir to detached houses or low-rise apartment buildings in the countryside. İpek explains how the property market transformed when she moved to Urla at the intersection of the pandemic and the earthquake period.

The earthquake was very influential in migration and the increase in house prices. The pandemic increased house prices here for a while, but after the earthquake, the rupture led to a remarkable acceleration. (...) When we arrived, we could buy two houses in Urla. Now, the houses in the center are cheaper than those here (İpek, 41, pharmacist and beauty center owner).

Goodwin-Hawkins et al. (2023: 379) argue that the lockdowns in the United Kingdom and Ireland brought house prices in rural areas near to those in urban centers. In Urla, a real estate market boom surpassed the city. No matter how accelerating the relationship between the pandemic and real estate is, the property speculation process pre-dates the pandemic, as seen in the example of “secondary residences for investment” that Pinar pointed out earlier. Özlem describes the step-by-step rupture from the rise in the square meter value of the land to the soaring market and market prices as follows:

This increase in real estate, or the rent-seeking economy, started long before the pandemic. The pandemic was the catalyst. It must have been 6-7 years ago. (...) Urla probably has Türkiye’s highest square meter value, not only in buying and selling land and property but also in the market and the rent...(Özlem, 57, winery owner and Urla Vineyard Route member).

These descriptions provide a general picture of the transformation triggered by lifestyle migration to Urla, positioning the pandemic as a catalyst in this process. However, it is important to note, as Özlem points out, that Urla had already begun attracting attention as a coastal town even before the pandemic. Therefore, as Eimermann and Carson (2023: 350) emphasize, some attractive rural destinations, such as coastal regions and mountain resorts, which are closer to major metropolitan centers and have service and transportation infrastructures, have experienced more severe migration and real estate demand growth. As can be seen in the quotations above, Zeynep’s statement that “Urla wins with its location” corresponds to this situation. Although the economic or social consequences of mobility can be foreseen, as mentioned above, questions such as what kind of consequences it will have for a town or coastal settlement, how its future will be shaped, and whether there will be returns or not can be researched and monitored, as they are the continuation of a new phenomenon. The interviewees emphasized a similar uncertainty for Urla and the inevitability of a return to the city.

If you live in that nature, you have to be strong enough to fight with everything from insects and snakes to scorpions, dogs, and pigs. Our electricity and water are still cut off. (...) After the pandemic, everyone is talking about nature, but

can they truly live in it? I see this as temporary; people will likely move away after a few years. I am looking for a place to escape but cannot escape (Nazan<sup>13</sup>, 55, cafe owner).

You may have heard it said in Urla that if you can live there for a year, you stay, but if not, you leave. (...) Some leave for busier places because their children are small, some leave due to school or a lack of social connections. (...) A few leave because they can't handle the tranquility, but they are rare. Those who came with intentions stay (Berna, 44, boutique owner).

Within the scope of both lifestyle migration and pandemic mobility, a subset of it, the new problematics for the rural future are identified, including the disruptions that new patterns of mobilities or returns may occur, unexpected shocks, or the decline in tourism development for rural areas that emerged until recently (Eimermann & Carson, 2023: 350).

### **2.3.1.3. Refugees and the Quest for Security**

Sandercock (2016: 222) argues that the foreigner or outsider is seen as a threat to the social order on a broad spectrum, extending from the imagined community of the nation to familiar neighborhoods. While individual foreigners are seen as disturbing, their increasing numbers can lead to fears of an invading group, the dissolution of borders, or the disappearance of identities (Sandercock, 2016: 222). In the face of these unsettling situations, Ulrich Beck (1998) emphasizes the need for “order” and a distinction between “them and us.” The wave of migration towards Türkiye following the civil war in Syria has led to a huge increase in the number of refugees in the cities. Problems including means of livelihoods, humanitarian aid, and services, and the failure to follow the right policies have made the lives of refugees more difficult and paved the way for urbanites to see refugees as one of the new crises of urban life. Urban life, where encountering refugee communities during daily activities is considered threatening, has begun to be interpreted as a dangerous geography where “those who are not like us” infiltrate. In addition to the fear of disturbance to the way of life and the class boundaries constructed in urban

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<sup>13</sup> In the following field research, I saw that the café was a real estate agency, and I thought Nazan had escaped as she said.

environments, refugeeism, which is also integrated into the national discourse, is one of the important issues of social tension in Türkiye.

Cities stand out as more suitable settlements for refugees due to the formal or informal employment opportunities, more advanced transport, education, and communication infrastructures compared to camps or rural settlements (Vesek & Suğur, 2021: 172). According to the 2023 data from the Refugees Association, Istanbul, Gaziantep, and Şanlıurfa host the highest number of Syrian migrants. These provinces, which include temporary accommodation centers, are followed by Mersin, Bursa, and İzmir. İzmir holds a critical position for refugees on their way to Europe. Additionally, the easy access to smugglers facilitating these illegal crossings makes the city an important route for refugees (Yıldız, 2017: 9-10).

While İzmir's rural coastline creates an illegal transit route for refugees, their presence is not very conspicuous in the daily life of seaside towns. When asked about their migration destination as Urla, lifestyle migrants cite the absence of refugees in daily life as a significant factor. This response is linked to the perception of encounters with refugees in urban settings as a crisis or an issue. This social tension, marked by consequences such as changes in lifestyle standards, security concerns, and increased population density, can be seen as a factor shaping urban-rural mobility patterns unique to Türkiye.

There are no refugees in Urla; I think those who come from big cities are mostly fleeing from them. (...) I have seen and heard of Afghans as laborers, but they do not live in Urla. They work in the construction industry and carriages (Zeynep, 38, biologist).

Two to three years before we moved, we would not usually see them in Acıbadem. (...) But I realized that Syrians started coming and begging. Acıbadem was a place that did not receive many people from outside until then. But there are none in Urla (Beste, 41, corporate communication manager).

Distinguishing herself from the lifestyle migrants, Zeynep stated that those who came to Urla to build a better life were fleeing from the dense crowds and refugees; she emphasized that there is no space for encounters with refugees in everyday life.

Confirming what Zeynep had said, Beste explained how the Syrian migration had transformed the area they lived in Istanbul and how the spatial habitus had been ruptured. Similarly, according to Hage (1998), migration as a national issue leads to a struggle at the local level to regain control over one's spatial habitus in the face of security threats and risks of displacement. This struggle, which goes in the opposite direction of adapting to social change, is evident in phenomena such as hate crimes, complaints in the planning system, aggression, or neighborhood abandonment (cited in Sandercock, 2016: 224). While this phenomenon of abandonment manifests in various forms, including the emergence of gated communities within urban areas and the construction of homogeneous peripheries, another notable manifestation is the creation of sterile areas within rural settings. The sterile space frames of lifestyle migrants are linked to their idealization of the rural landscape. Bensen and O'Reilly (2009: 612-614) delineate how lifestyle migrants construct rural life with the group they term "rural idyll seekers." The individuals in this group are characterized by a desire to belong to a community, to live a more tranquil and peaceful life in nature, and to raise their children in a safe environment. The focus on security, peace, and a sense of belonging to a community encapsulates life away from the city's diversity. This is evident in Urla's relatively isolated settlements, offering relief from urban anxieties and even including gated communities.

Onur, Beste, and Cem, who live in gated communities in Urla, explained during in-depth interviews that the seaside town allowed them to distance themselves from the anxiety-inducing elements of urban life. Cem emphasizes the city's homeless and begging population, which is also associated with refugee status. He states that seeing homeless people or beggars on the streets in Istanbul indirectly confronted him with the degradations of social rhythms. Onur also highlights the security of their new settlement, Urla, and the low crime rate as positive aspects and interprets the absence of Syrians as a great opportunity.

I do not see beggars on the street and homeless people in Urla. In İstanbul, while smoking a cigarette with a friend in front of a restaurant, he interrupts your conversation to sell flowers; you get angry or upset because this child is also hungry and in need. (...) It is the story of big cities. I realized they affected me negatively in my subconscious, and not seeing them here profoundly changed my life (Cem, 50, ex-advertiser, cafe owner).

It's a safe place, with very little theft, no murders, and no muggings. Our greatest opportunity is that we have no Syrians (Onur, 44, sales manager).

The absence of marginalized individuals in idealized rural landscapes indicates that such sterile spaces serve to reveal differences and facilitate the policing of borders. Individual preferences for order and exclusionary practices facilitate the integration of institutions into security discourse and the policing of borders (Sibley, as cited in Cloke, 2006: 449). Despite his criticism of the government's refugee policies, Onur asserts that security in Urla is notably reinforced through institutionalized measures.

This is a strategy, a plan made by the public order and the district administration. We have the sea both north and south of us to escape from here to the islands; you can go to Chios, Kos. (...) They cannot stay here for work either. There is not much work here, and what is available is left to the locals. There is no cheap labor from outside here; it is the same in the agricultural fields (Onur, 44, sales manager).

Discourses of fear about the city accompany urban and social policies with the demand for "order" (Sandercock, 2016: 219). The transfer of these fears to rural areas seems to have brought along a similar management approach and securitization. The transfer of these fears to the countryside appears to have introduced a similar management paradigm and securitization. It can be argued that lifestyle migrants reject inadequate control and surveillance mechanisms in the city and the sense of insecurity that comes with its heterogeneity. Instead, they seek to combine the peace of the countryside with a security-focused lifestyle that may exclude others. From a Lefebvrian perspective, the practices embodied in residential differentiation and discourse illustrate that the countryside is implicitly a middle-class space (Benson & Jackson, 2013: 802). Furthermore, these practices reconfigure preexisting fears and distinctions within the rural context.

It is the least affected by Syrian and Afghan migration; Urla is not affordable for poor people. (...) We forget the existence of migrants here when we do not hear about them in the news (Eren, 41, IT expert).



The angle of the pruning knife or the harvesting shears, what to cut, and how to cut is something that develops over time, and since the villagers have the know-how, the same villagers usually work. Since viticulture is a more sterile business, refugees do not get involved (İhsan, 49, ex-chef, farmer, and entrepreneur).

The assumption that the unseen is distant is connected to the hypothesis that Urla's economic situation renders it unlivable for refugees. The social conditions and the human resources required, especially in agriculture, have created a natural mechanism that excludes refugees. Pointing to the vineyards in Urla, İhsan emphasizes the risk that may arise from this delicate agricultural work—which requires specialized cutting and maintenance techniques—being carried out by individuals who lack knowledge in this area. Therefore, one of the reasons why refugees cannot be accommodated in Urla is the lack of a production system in which refugees can participate.

These narratives, in which the desired life depends on preserving the social composition, provide an important starting point for grasping the expectations upon which lifestyles migrants build their new lives. How these expectations are harmonized or negotiated with the sociocultural and economic fabric, how place-making practices reproduce Urla, and what lifestyle migrants bring to Urla are discussed in depth in the following sections.

### **2.3.2. Divergences within Lifestyle Migrants**

In Urla, it is possible to see the traces of various fractions in terms of lifestyle migration, such as “retirement migration,” “urbanite villagers,” “new peasants,” “back-to-the-landers,” and “newcomers,” as mentioned in the introduction chapter of the dissertation under the subtitle “urban-rural mobilities in Türkiye.” As a broad theoretical framework, categorizing the diverse manifestations of lifestyle migration in Urla could itself serve as a research topic. Within these limits, however, the aim is to present a general overview of the main divergences to uncover the basic patterns. After analyzing the responses from the exploratory questionnaire and the in-depth interviews, we initially identified differences in the mobility of lifestyle migrants. These differences in mobility are presented in terms of their perspectives on

place, sense of belonging, and future paths. The most challenging part of the definition is the effort to create a comprehensive overview under the category of “socio-economic fractions” related to the actions of lifestyle migrants, the classifications in the literature about lifestyle migration, and their economic, social, and cultural capitals. This effort takes on a more scientific form in the following chapters of the dissertation, especially in the section discussing the findings on practices and planning. Lastly, the subheading “Alignments from Belonging to Divergence,” based on the views of lifestyle migrants described in in-depth interviews as “me and others,” discusses how lifestyle migrants construct differentiation through narratives about each other and their own practices. It is crucial to remember that the core of this discussion lies in the interactions of lifestyle migrants with each other. The title “Approaches to Local Communities and Community Wealth Building Capacities” presents a comprehensive framework for broader alignment. Since mobilities have their own dynamics and temporal, socio-economic, or spatial variations, they intersect within the same social universe, are shaped by interaction, and can give rise to place-specific communities.

### **2.3.2.1. Divergences in Mobility Patterns**

Lifestyle migration is more than a static way of life; as mentioned earlier, it is an ongoing project for migrants’ life trajectories. Thus, how they view the place they have migrated to within their life plans and future mobility paths, as well as how they manage their lives geographically, is connected to their in-group differentiation and mobility patterns. In addition, where they migrated from or whether they have a prior connection (material or social) to the place they migrated is also an important reference for their spatial attachment. In the in-depth interviews, while describing how they sustain their lives in Urla, they also discussed their important connections with other cities, such as work and housing, as well as whether they consider their lives in Urla to be permanent. Based on these patterns and the definitions in the literature, mobility patterns in Urla are categorized into three: multi-place living, boomerang migration, and mobile elites.

### *Multi-place living*

While lifestyle migration describes mobility from one place to another, it also includes hybrid lives in different places/cities/settlements. Öztürk et al. (2014: 384) argue that people increasingly divide their lives between two or three places in both rural and urban areas. They note that these multiple lives tend more towards combinations of places, such as rural households, family settlements, villages, local towns, foreign countries, nearby cities, or distant metropolises. They emphasize that in Türkiye, these two ways of life are also emerging in forms where work and life meet in geographies with different identities, such as rural agriculture and urban settlement, urban employment, and family farm residence. This situation may refer to white-collar workers who live in the city but carry out their production activities in the countryside, or to those who work in the city center while residing in a seaside town. It also evokes the individuals who divide their lives into distinct parts.

While the study included people who lived in Urla all year round, it was later realized that this was a restrictive view and that lifestyle migration was based on more flexible mobilities. Due to Urla's strategic location, migrants who stay connected to the city through work can commute from their rural lives to jobs in the center of İzmir, while also maintaining jobs linked to Istanbul or other cities owing to the ease of access to the airport.

I work for a company in the center of İzmir; when I first started, everyone said, "Are you crazy to spend so many hours on the road?" The road is not a big challenge for a person coming from Istanbul. (...) at least when I come home, I am not in an apartment or between four walls (Beste, 41, corporate communication manager).

I still keep the house in Fulya. (...) I go when I have work, but I do not want to stay long because of the crowds in Istanbul (Mehmet, 66, retired tourism manager and farmer).

Artists, in particular, have been observed to lead these dual lives more effectively. They use rural life as a recreational space while not leaving their homes in

the city and continuing to maintain their relatively previous lives during periods of intense work, such as on sets.

When you ask why Urla, no sentence is as fascinating as “There is a highway; I can go to Istanbul in three hours.” We also love Assos, but it is far. This place strangely says you can return to Istanbul whenever you want (Celal, 64, actor and writer).

I am in Istanbul when the work is intense, and sometimes, the commute can be tiring. I am also here in quieter times. Since the nature of our work also fluctuates, it is not predictable how much I am here and there (Metin, 52, actor)

Aynur, an academic who has to spend two to three days a week in Istanbul due to her job, mentioned that the distance is 3 to 4 hours. She stated that she does not feel like changing cities by plane and can manage her life between the two cities. However, it is also possible to see dual lives within the same family. There may be private educational institutions in Urla, but children’s education is as much a cause of these divisions as work.

I usually travel to Istanbul on Tuesdays and return to Urla on Thursdays. I accept this schedule because it feels normal to me. Fortunately, my family still lives in Pendik, and Sabiha Gökçen airport is very close. They pick me up from the airport. The university is nearby, so I do not tire of visiting the city. (Aynur, 48, academic).

When we first moved here, we immediately moved our residence. Then, I took it back to Istanbul because of my son’s school situation. That was one of my first disappointments: we rushed a little too fast. We took our residence back to the house there to return to his old school (Celal, 64, actor and writer).

According to Öztürk, Hilton, and Jongerden (2014), the challenges faced by lifestyle migrants, including family and work-related issues, result in them living more flexible and multi-location lives. As a result, they lead dual or multiple lives, blurring the lines between rural and urban areas. Through this new mobility pattern, lifestyle migrants give rise to their unique geosocial realities and socio-spatial products (Öztürk et al., 2014: 372). This view, which treats migration as a living structure rather than a

discontinuity, points to “a sense of space/place as defined in relation to time/movement, with ‘structures’ as the arrangements/patterns of spatiotemporal locations and ‘living’ as the human dynamics of this, the changing (re)construction and more or less flexible employment of these in people’s lives.” (Öztürk et al., 2014: 372).

*Boomerang migration or intra-urban mobility*

Out of 102 respondents, 28 mentioned that they had previously lived in İzmir. In the in-depth interviews, some interviewees had moved to Urla from the central settlements of İzmir. Yet, others had left İzmir for education or work and later decided to return, choosing to move to Urla. The individuals were found to have connections to Urla due to their families’ previous relocations to Urla or investments in land or real estate in the area. These ties to Urla are associated with being born in İzmir or having lived in İzmir for a certain period, as well as the mobility of their families.

When I was studying at university, we did not come to Urla much. I mean, 10 years ago, because it was very quiet. We would come for breakfast by the sea. After my family moved to Urla, I started to see a metamorphosis. As my interest in cuisine increased, the cuisine, gastronomy, local producers, vineyards, and wine world became more attractive. It was like the birth of such a gastronomy center (Gözde, 33, chef and restaurant owner).

Gözde, who migrated to Urla from Istanbul, states that Urla was not a frequent destination when she lived in İzmir. Still, after her family moved to Urla, she saw the change in Urla and preferred it because it promised a future. Therefore, while the family’s arrival plays a role in the discovery, the main driver of migration is recognizing the potential for professional growth in Urla.

Before Istanbul, I lived in İzmir, in Balçova. I left in 2015 and worked as a copywriter for different agencies in Istanbul for about six years. (...) It was one of my plans; I even considered moving back to İzmir and opening an agency in 2023. My family’s move to Urla accelerated the plans (Bartu, 33, advertiser and agency owner).

The retirement planning of the previous generation has facilitated the establishment of businesses in rural areas for the second generation. The family’s

resources and social network in the migration geography can be seen as important sources that create the capitals of lifestyle migrants. Zehra's knowledge of Urla comes from the fact that Urla was a route they used to pass through on their way to the summer house when they were children and that her family had owned farmland as part of their retirement plan and cultivated vineyards. The family network's confidence made buying their land and establishing a winery in Urla easier. Likewise, Mehmet's retirement plans were shaped by the land his father had once bought for farming.

My family and our relatives bought land in Urla and planted 5-10 acres of vineyards; they built a house there and came here in their retirement. So that was their initiative. (...) We have a family network in Türkiye, which is more extensive than the one in the US. So, you know that someone will always be there to support you if you find yourself in a difficult situation (Zehra, 61, winery owner, Urla Vineyard Route, and NGO member).

In the 1970s, my father came and bought land on the Yıldıztepe side and another land next to it. (...) We have a small house in the İskele region, right against the sea. (...) I came from Istanbul sometimes. When my father passed away, the farming fell to me. Among the siblings, I managed the cultivation of those lands (Mehmet, 66, retired tourism manager and farmer).

The interviewees who returned to İzmir followed a certain life trajectory. This included leaving İzmir, spending a period outside of the city for education or work, and then choosing to settle in Urla, the countryside of İzmir, instead of living in the city center due to the following reasons explained earlier: the İzmir Earthquake, İzmir's loss of its former attractive qualities due to reasons such as climate change or increasing construction and triggers such as the pandemic, which encouraged a return to nature.

Described in the literature as "boomerang migration," this form of mobility, most often identified with young adults, refers to returning to the family home or the environment in which that home is located. Young adults wish to increase their well-being and have a high quality of life by rejoining the social networks of the society where they grew up (Olofsson et al., 2020: 920). However, there are motivational differences between moving in with the family and moving to the neighborhood where

the family lives, especially due to the urban housing crisis, high cost of living, and job insecurity. Olofsson et al. (2020: 923) argue that, unlike individuals in their 30s and 40s, most young adults return to the neighborhoods where their parents reside driven by factors other than the need to provide care for their families. Motivations such as receiving support from family members for childcare, maintaining easier contact with family, being part of a larger network of friends and relatives, and receiving help to invest in place-specific capitals are among the factors cited. For interviewees like Bartu, who wants to start his own advertising company; Zehra and her husband, who wants to buy a piece of land to grow grapes; or Gözde, who wants to open her restaurant, Urla, where their families also live, is the ideal location to bring their projects to life. The idea of family support is a crucial source of reassurance and plays a facilitating role in the risky process of starting a new business.

Even though the family is not originally from İzmir, their investments in Urla significantly attract lifestyle migrants back to Urla. This return is not a sudden decision but a planned process as part of the lifestyle migrants' life trajectories.

I had plans to move here, but the pandemic has pushed plans forward. (...) The prices were much more affordable when my father bought houses in Urla. He had bought a couple of houses in the housing complex built by the cooperative. When I decided to move, one of the houses was already in my name, so I moved into my home. So, it was a smooth transition for me (Suna, 54, psychologist).

Suna, who decided to move to Urla during the pandemic, says the house her family bought back made the transition very smooth. She was able to proceed quickly with a process she had planned beforehand. The concept of “mooring,” which has been previously discussed in terms of place attachment/place-making practices, has been stated to refer to feelings of place, identity, social relations, as well as rights or material investments in place (Akerlund & Sandberg, 2015: 354). Hence, it can be argued that parents' investments in Urla draw other family members there. This continuous investment remains in the same location rather than being directed elsewhere, and belonging is not just limited to a financial investment but also becomes an aspect of identity.

*Mobil elites in Urla*

Boomerang migration refers to returning to one's family home or relocating to benefit from social networks and capital opportunities in one's hometown. This trend in lifestyle mobility is important to consider. However, it is equally essential to acknowledge individuals who choose not to settle in one place, driven by a desire to seek new beginnings continually.

André Jansson (2016: 422-423) argues that the late modern period altered class structures. The transformation of international economies into transnational or global structures blurred regional boundaries and control arrangements, leading to new class divisions. The differences between factions are primarily due to their managerial capacities. Another significant factor in the shifting of class structures is the challenge faced by the old elite groups rooted in industrial or political domains to adapt to conditions that demand active engagement, mobility, and networking, such as immediate communication and integration into global networks. Therefore, network capital (Urry, 2007) and cosmopolitan capital (Bühlmann et al., 2013) emerge as dynamics that define groups having more mobile qualities (as cited in Jansson, 2016: 423). In the context of mobile elites, Jansson (2016) refers to Urry's concept of network capital to explain its relationship with the possession of resources that facilitate travel/mobility, such as communication devices, access to travel documents, or convenient meeting places. He defines cosmopolitan capital as skills and qualities that can be embodied, such as language skills, international experience, and educational degree, which can facilitate traveling worldwide.

Among the lifestyle migrants in Urla, some interviewees talked about not belonging to a single place, the temptation to constantly move to a new place, and building temporary lives. The interviews indicated that the boundaries of this mobility could extend as far as Asia.

To be tied to a place in life, to be rooted somewhere, I am severely lacking in that respect, and this is probably the same for those who have migrated here. I do not feel that I belong anywhere, or after a while, the appeal of a place that initially attracted me tends to fade away (Vedat, 57, Barista Trainer).



Previously, I spent five years each in Istanbul, Milan, and İzmir. However, I have committed ten years to Urla. I have completed my sixth year here, and if this place deteriorates further, I may move elsewhere, perhaps to Asia (Serkan, 36, artist).

I have rented a furnished house. Buying furniture is challenging if there is a probability of moving elsewhere. This is just a trial period for me - I plan to stay for three to five months. (...) I would like to stay and see the spring before making further decisions (Mavi, 40, sustainable agriculture auditor, expert, and NGO member).

Mavi, who works remotely in Urla for a Portugal-based project and is still applying for jobs in Europe, humorously refers to İzmir as a stopgap before her possible move, saying, “When I could not go to the West, I thought I should go to İzmir.” Ali also traced the trajectory of mobility in Türkiye, noting that those who first moved to Yeldeğirmeni or Moda in Istanbul moved to places like Çanakkale villages or Urla and then, as Mavi pointed out, to Europe. After the elective belonging neighborhoods in Istanbul, Urla runs through the lives of lifestyle migrants as a sports or competition course that tests the resilience and versatility of participants in multi-sport events such as “triathlon.” The stronger one moves to the other track of the race. Therefore, it would not be wrong to say that mobile elites do not always have the financial resources to achieve the mobility they desire. Still, they have the knowledge and partial budgets to collect the economic capital step by step.

Many people who arrived around the same time as us in Urla have moved abroad. People who previously found living in Istanbul unbearable have relocated to Yeldeğirmeni, Moda, and said again that “we could not do it here.” Some have even moved to villages in Çanakkale or Urla before eventually going abroad, with a majority now residing in England or Germany. They initially came to this area from Istanbul, saw it as a triathlon, relaxed, and left (Ali, 48, software developer and designer, NGO member).

What Ali is saying is, of course, a projection of life influenced by Türkiye’s political constraints and economic conditions. Interestingly, the next stop after Moda is Urla, a coastal town in İzmir, and this experience moves towards Europe. The reasons for choosing İzmir and Urla are discussed in detail under the heading “Factors

Triggering Mobility to Urla.” The idea of Europe can be linked to both the better life, more freedom, and easy mobility offered by the cosmopolitan identity. Thus, while mobility is essential in the lives of lifestyle migrants, especially of mobile elites, their ability to control and plan their mobility stands out as an important quality or capacity layered within all forms of capitals.

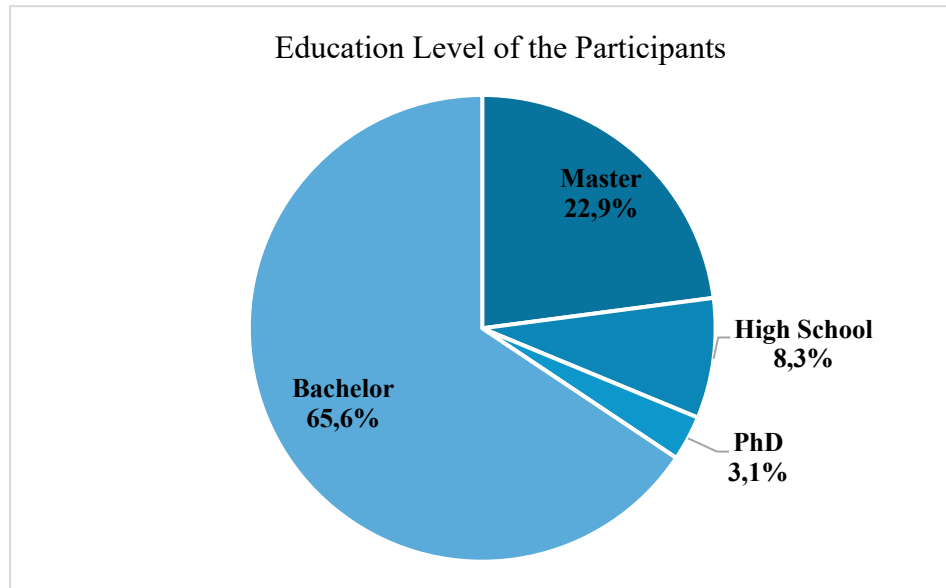
#### **2.3.2.2. Socio-Economic Fractions**

In his work *Distinction*, Bourdieu (1979/2021) describes three classes that differ sociologically in terms of capital’s volume and composition and are instrumental in understanding the social structure: Dominant class, middle class or petite bourgeoisie, working class, or dominated class. In summary, the dominant class holds the highest economic and cultural capital and is divided into different factions. This division can include groups with high economic capital and low cultural capital, like big business owners, as well as groups with high cultural capital and low economic capital, such as academics or artists. The middle class, or petite bourgeoisie, possesses an intermediate cultural and economic capital level and aspires to upward mobility through education and professional achievements. This group also has internal distinctions shaped by cultural, economic, and educational capital variations. The working class, characterized by the lowest capital volume and limited economic and cultural resources, remains the most socially disadvantaged.

Bourdieu (1979/2021) explains how different groups both define and differentiate themselves from others in the social world by addressing these differentiations through the interrelationships between social positions and lifestyles. As explained in the first chapter of the dissertation, Bourdieu (1979/2021) uses the concept set of habitus, field, and capital to discuss social identities and lifestyle diversities formed due to social divergences. In the context of the dissertation, while these concepts are instructive in understanding the practices of lifestyle migrants, they do not provide a framework within which class distinctions can be made for Urla. Due to the challenge of creating clear-cut class distinctions in today’s society, it may be more suitable to consider socioeconomic divisions based on lifestyle, economic status, and social identity rather than relying on rigid class definitions. This perspective also follows Bourdieu’s ideas in a more appropriate way for the dissertation.

As mentioned above, understanding socio-economic divisions requires considering multiple parameters, including income, education, lifestyle, cultural capital, etc. Since the dissertation does not include a study based on a wide range of statistical data on these parameters, the evaluations under this heading are based on the findings from the exploratory survey, in-depth interviews, and field observations. First of all, to get an impression of the families of lifestyle migrants, the question of the parents' occupation was included in the survey questions. According to the distribution of the 102 responses, the survey indicates that most lifestyle migrants who participated in the survey come from middle-class families who retired from the civil service (28%). Most women are housewives (36%), followed by retired civil servants (9,8%) and teachers (6,8%); other single responses included psychologists, secretaries, software developers, pharmacists, and nurses. Among the mothers who are housewives, some have husbands who are civil servants or workers, while others have husbands who are engineers or military officers; their children who participated in the survey stated that even though they are housewives, these mothers practice painting or tile making. The prominent occupational groups in the distribution of parents' professions are as follows: teachers 11,7%, small business owners 11,7%, engineers 9.8%, labor retirees 7,8%, private sector retirees (architects, advertisers, etc.) 7,8%, military retirees 6.8%, high-income public officials (doctors, bureaucrats, etc.) 5%.

Regarding the educational level of the respondents—children of families assessed based on occupation—8.3% are high school graduates, 65.6% hold a bachelor's degree, and 22.9% have a master's degree. Therefore, consistent with the literature, the case of lifestyle migration in Urla is associated with a highly educated group.

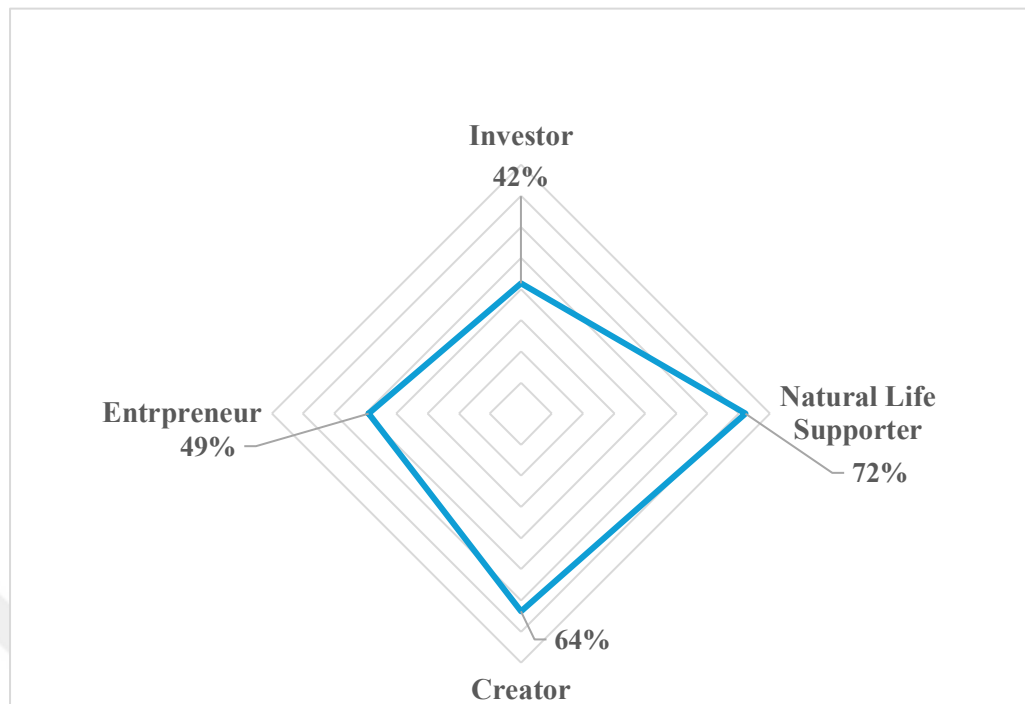


**Figure 2.4 :** Education level of the participants

Since lifestyle migrants were asked about their occupations while living in Urla, a percentage distribution could not be provided because the survey was exploratory and limited to 102 participants. In addition, since the distribution of professions ranges from biologists to psychologists, the most crucial observation in this context is that 13 people are engaged in two or three concurrent work roles. Chef and café/restaurant owner; artistic professions and remote white collar; remote white collar and investor; agricultural producer, restaurant owner; agricultural producer and winemaker; artistic professions and agricultural production are combinations of professions within the concurrent roles. In addition, retirees working in real estate or managerial positions or continuing their lives in agricultural production can be considered in terms of dual occupations. Among those who indicated a single occupation, the most common responses were as follows: 16 people identified as employees, 13 as retired, and ten stated they worked in the city center. Six people said that they were engaged in agriculture. In summary, as a contribution to this question, it is reasonable to say that agriculture-related jobs and art/design-related professions are included in professional/entrepreneurial practices as secondary or tertiary activities in Urla. Lifestyle migrants were also asked about their income levels to understand economic fractions. Based on the minimum wage and average salaries of civil servants during the period when the survey was conducted (October 2022–January 2023), the income options were categorized as follows: below 15,000 TL, 15,000–24,000 TL, 25,000–34,000 TL, and 35,000 TL and above. By August 2024, the average minimum

wage had tripled, making it reasonable to update these figures to reflect the current economic situation. The respondents' income distribution is as follows: 44.5% earn below 45,000 TL, 24% earn 105,000 TL and above, 20% fall within the 45,000–72,000 TL range, and 11% earn between 73,000–104,000 TL. The exploratory survey highlights a landscape predominantly occupied by low- and middle-income groups. While it does not serve as a definitive statistical indicator, it suggests income inequality exists among Urla's lifestyle migrants besides the local residents, indicating that economic opportunities are not equally distributed across all segments.

Lifestyle migrants were asked a question consisting of four groups of responses about how they define themselves. The basis for this question is that lifestyle migrants are categorized based on references or definitions such as creatives, entrepreneurs, investors, and nature-oriented individuals in the literature. Therefore, the four subcategories mentioned are illustrated by professions or activities that may fall within the scope of these four subcategories. They are presented as follows: Creative (artist, writer, craftsman, director, etc.); Investor (in land, real estate, construction, and ups, restaurants, hotels, etc.); Natural Life Supporter (sportsperson, activist, organic farmer, etc.); Entrepreneur (e.g. founders of new businesses such as start-ups, value-added product producers, restaurant owners etc.). The question allowed for multiple responses and aimed to provide insight into how the participants evaluate their practices in Urla. The results showed that the groups most identified with by the participants were the natural life supporters, followed by the creators. Investment and entrepreneurship were favored in similar proportions. It is justifiable to claim that the participants may attach importance to environmental sensitivity or to revealing their creative aspects in the way they relate to their business or economic activities. However, the weighted proportions appear to indicate a preference for natural life and creativity over entrepreneurship or investment. This suggests that the participants' primary values and motivations may be nature and creativity and that some groups do not associate themselves with entrepreneurship or investment. In summary, many participants ascribe more than one role to themselves and define themselves as active in these roles. Furthermore, recognizing the limitations of the definitions, the "other" option is also included in the survey choices. Seven out of 102 respondents selected this option, indicating identifications or self-groupings such as semi-retired, from Istanbul, civil society volunteer, and independent of any group.



**Figure 2.5 : Self-identified groups**

Based on the data gathered from this exploratory survey, as well as insights gained from in-depth interviews and observations during field research, lifestyle migrants in Urla can be divided into different groups. While the specific details are not included here, these groupings are discussed more in the subsequent research sections.

#### *Investors and High-Income Earners*

- This group has more investment-oriented house or land buyers, more explicitly retail investors. Notably, they are waiting for contractors or construction companies to buy their land at high prices and increase the value of their investments.
- The presence of real estate and land investors in Urla is based on investment rather than living preferences. They reside in their transient settlement while the area becomes more popular and developed.
- While there are contractors within this group, the real estate sector is mostly controlled by companies from outside Urla.

- Those who have set up facilities for processing products in the region or their own products, like olive oil or wine production facilities, are entrepreneurial lifestyle migrants. In addition, industrial facilities such as polyester factories and fish processing plants, which used to operate in İzmir, are moving to Urla, and larger investors, beyond just lifestyle migrants, are utilizing Urla spatially.
- Urla Technopark, serving as a hub that attracts high-income executives and investors, fosters the clustering of this group. However, investors, in particular, tend to stay in Urla for a short time and migrate abroad as their investments grow.

#### *Entrepreneurs and Small Business Owners*

- During the ethnographic research process, the most common group of entrepreneurs was those who opened restaurants, cafes, and hotels for gastro and/or mainstream tourism. However, their practices, incomes, and relations to production differ depending on the focus of gastro and mainstream tourism.
- Gastro-tourism entrepreneurs are more attached to the discourse of local production and consumption, sustainability, and Urla cuisine.
- Mainstream tourism operators are smaller enterprises that can cater to almost everyone compared to gastro tourism entrepreneurs. They adapt local values to the traditional tourist gaze or follow the classic cafe-restaurant-hotel standards.
- Wine producers are part of the entrepreneurial community, and they exhibit similarities to investors with their economic capital due to their high value-added production. However, they differ from industrial agricultural investors in that they maintain agricultural land production, limit gated communities' agglomeration capacity, and engage with peasants in terms of labor and land.
- Even though there is a separate subheading for new farmers, including this group among entrepreneurs is possible. The primary difference lies in whether

farmers process the crop they receive from the field and how this product is delivered to the end consumer.

- With the emergence of sales channels such as e-commerce and Instagram, entrepreneurial new farmers who sell their products by canning, or introducing products with a high price per liter, such as olive oil, to the national and international markets are in the intersection cluster. Therefore, their economic standing also differs from that of the farmer who sells the product directly without processing. However, processing costs, knowledge, and intermediation requirements may make direct sales easier for them.
- Another community that forms an intersection cluster in the context of entrepreneurship is creatives/artists. Gastro-tourism attracts an elite group of tourists to the region, leading to the opening of galleries or cultural venues for these tourists that may be associated with the arts.

#### *New Farmers*

- Many people could invest in land before the increase in land prices caused by the demand created by migration and inflationary conditions. Additionally, those who inherited land from previous family investments and use this land for agriculture can also be included in this group.
- Due to the high prices per square meter of land, there has been an increase in the number of those engaged in agriculture turning to “ecrimisil” (land lease for farming). However, the possibility of these lands being sold anytime puts their efforts and production at risk.
- Beyond land ownership, the most important differentiation within this group is related to the production methods they adopt. Organic agriculture, using heirloom seeds, and sustainable production are the most common agricultural production practices. Besides these methods, traditional agriculture, which will enable them to obtain more products, is also within their practices.



- Among those engaged in agriculture, the majority are individuals who process and sell the products they grow. In addition to traditional products such as olive oil and canned artichokes, they also produce niche products such as hot pepper sauce, vegetable powder, and lavender oil. In this way, they generate income by overcoming agricultural production costs with value-added products.
- Wine producers, while familiar with agricultural practices such as land and vineyard care, are distinguished from this group by the fact that they produce wine, which is more valuable than other value-added products, mostly in their production facilities, have spatial sales channels, and are involved in the service sector.

#### *Creators / Artists*

- As mentioned in the section on entrepreneurs, some focus on high-profile clients and more affluent lifestyle migrants attracted by galleries, cultural venues, and gastro-tourism, as well as artists who produce in their studios in settlements outside the center.
- The economic wealth of artists is divided widely; some live more bohemian lives, staying in the creative residency of which they are members, while others live in gated luxury communities.
- Ceramics, fashion design, and handicraft practices such as tailoring, painting, and jewelry design are the new occupations of lifestyle migrants in this group. Handicrafts and artisan activities are combined with workshops to create spaces where production and consumption come together.
- Although artists such as writers, actors, theater artists, painters, and sculptors are encountered, the most common creative group in Urla is the potters. The interest of lifestyle migrants in participating in ceramic production workshops as a leisure activity has contributed to the growth of this group.

### *Middle-Income White Collars*

- This community, which has migrated due to remote working practices resulting from the pandemic, mostly lives in gated communities.
- Those working in the companies in the city center by commuting between rural and urban are also included in the same group.
- Despite their income was enough to buy a house when they first moved to Urla, they complain about how expensive the town had become. Along with retirees, they are the most economically vulnerable community among lifestyle migrants.
- Those who have not purchased a home have had to transition from the initially luxurious living conditions of low-rent villas to returning to an apartment, or they are trying to maintain the detached lifestyle they initially found affordable by paying high rents.
- The group, along with entrepreneurs and investors, has brought the urban service sector to Urla.

### *Retired or semi-retired*

- This group's income range is quite wide, like that of artists. In Urla, some retirees have invested, relocated, or purchased property or land for retirement purposes. Some have retired and moved to live in rented housing.
- While those who have retired from high-income professions such as management can more easily sustain themselves economically in Urla, those who pay rent with their low salaries face difficulties. While those who have retired from high-income professions such as management can more easily sustain themselves economically in Urla, those who pay rent with low salaries face difficulties.

- Due to the current economic crisis, those who once bought summer houses have started renting their villa-type houses by dividing them.
- The concept of Early Retirement (EYT) has opened a new shift for lifestyle migration in Türkiye. Urban residents who retire around the age of 45-50 are able to explore different lines of work, such as farming, artistic pursuits, and craftsmanship, while residing in rural areas. Their lifestyle in the countryside resembles semi-retirement.

### *The Socially Responsibles*

- This community, mostly with high economic capital, comprises those who do not prioritize capital, intervene in social/ecological problems, or create the socio-cultural and environmental conditions of the geography they desire.
- They have a high level of environmental and social awareness.
- They may mobilize through cooperatives or civil society organizations or form informal communities.
- Their motives range from not using pesticides in agriculture and protecting the environment to producing food for stray animals or supporting the right to education.
- Even though it is more limited for investors, it is possible to encounter socially responsible people in all other groups.

### **2.3.2.3. Alignments from Belonging to Divergence**

This subtitle focuses less on how groups within lifestyle migrants are segregated and more on how they position themselves within these divisions. It draws on Bourdieu's "logic of practices," which he proposes as a resolution to the objectivism/subjectivism divide. While the earlier chapters explore habitus and practices in the seaside town, these concepts are instead depicted through an objective

reality. This title addresses how the migrants perceive one another and Urla, as well as how they situate themselves within this field. Thus, it aims to present a holistic narrative of divergences that complement each other in terms of objectivism and subjectivism. How they place themselves in the social structure of Urla and interpret the social world in Urla is an essential indicator of segregation and belonging. Similarly, subjects' perceptions and pervasive representations of space or others are not merely the result of free-floating subjectivity but are perspectives from specific occupation points within the constructed positionings (Wacquant, 2024: 190). This context is also crucial for understanding the interplay between spatial practices and everyday perceptions of space from a Lefebvrian perspective. It is instructive to examine the narratives about how representations of place, which continue to be constructed, are subject to "negotiation," a critical term embedded in the dissertation's main title.

In the in-depth interviews with lifestyle migrants, they pointed out that while aligning into the social and economic structure of Urla, their economic capital did not cover the migration or entrepreneurial investment costs they had previously handled and that they are not among newly wealthy migrants in Urla. They even emphasized that they do not do, or have difficulty doing, many things in Urla's social life, from enjoying local boutique wines to going to chef restaurants or niche events. According to their accounts, the wealthy are driving up costs in Urla, making it a more expensive and challenging place to live through their demands and investments in high-value luxury villas.

As Clark (2005: 258) argues, gentrification is a process that transforms the land-using population, driven by the arrival of new users with a higher socio-economic status than previous ones and by the differentiation of the environment through capital investment. The greater the difference, the more pronounced the process becomes. The areas where economic capital creates segregation among lifestyle migrants are not only related to their social lives, the rent increases or housing prices discussed in previous chapters, or the emerging crises in their housing or jobs. The lack of involvement in daily life, particularly among those who prefer gated luxury residences, reflects Paul Watt's (2009) concept of "selective belonging" for middle-class residents, which involves establishing boundaries around less desirable places. This group often

struggles to fully appropriate their neighborhoods (cited in Benson & Jackson, 2013). The ex-mayor distinguishes between wealthier newcomers and other migrants, geographically and in terms of practices.

Many people from Istanbul are criticized for maintaining their city habits even when they move to a seaside town, and those who live in luxury villas are sometimes accused of not participating in the local social and cultural life. However, lifestyle migrants seem to appreciate and rely on the support of those engaged in agriculture the most. This group helps them maintain the natural lifestyle they seek, especially in places like Urla, a seaside town.

Dila, who is from Urla and returned to agriculture after studying in Istanbul, expresses her support for those involved in agriculture and mentions her appreciation for the products by referring to a farmer from the business world. Dila's wish is as follows: "Let us all keep producing, whether we are from Istanbul or Ankara." To briefly outline, the new farmers, who are also discussed under the heading of changes in the means of production, are presented by the lifestyle migrants as important actors in the continuation of rural production and even in the maintenance of the town, with their more conscious methods compared to the local farmers and their stays up to date with the latest agricultural trends. In addition to this community, which was considered more suited to the countryside than those who lived in villas, some people considered themselves as part of gentrification. They have enough cultural capital to understand and use the term "gentrification" in the context of their mobility. Therefore, they are aware of the changes their presence in Urla has caused in social and economic life. This awareness sometimes leads to them being unable to change their urban habits, bringing their social circles to Urla, or being surprised by the initially affordable prices.

Table 2.3 : Alignments from belonging to divergence

| Alignments from Belonging to Divergence                 | Observation                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | In-depth interview                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|---------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Economic Segregation and Lifestyle Barriers             | Economic investments and rising property values create a divide, making it challenging for earlier or economically modest immigrants and locals to maintain their place within social structure or participate in Urla's high-end social life | <p>As someone who came seven years ago, we were among those who jumped on the last train wagon. Those times were the <u>last periods of cheapness in buying houses or renting such businesses</u> (Cem, 50, ex-advertiser, cafe owner).</p> <p>For example, as <u>someone who lives here, I cannot buy Urla wine</u>. (...) You go to a winery in Urla, and they charge 800 TL for a bottle. We <u>dream of becoming a Tuscan, but you can buy it for 8 euros in Tuscany</u> (Onur, 44, sales manager).</p> <p>There are <u>nice niche events</u> here that <u>I would like to attend</u>, and people who can afford them go to those events. That's why I say <u>I don't fit in Urla</u> (laughs), but that's not my goal (Mavi, 40, sustainable agriculture auditor, expert, and NGO member).</p>                                    |
| Selective Belonging among High-Capital Immigrants       | Gated communities foster a closed social environment, where luxury villa residents remain separated from everyday local life                                                                                                                  | <p>I resent some actions among these groups (...) they sit here <u>in their expensive villas and drove off the highway without contributing anything to the city</u> (Dilek, 53, ex-mayor, head of women's producer cooperative).</p> <p>Those from Istanbul demand to settle in villas and to bring their urban habits here (...) <u>not adapting well</u> here and are <u>not satisfied with the natural life</u> (Deniz, 48, ex-chair of the artichoke festival committee, lecturer, and potter).</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Farmers Appreciated for the Survival of Rural Life      | Agricultural activities by lifestyle migrants support Urla's rural economy, contributing to the preservation of its natural lifestyle                                                                                                         | <p>A couple from Istanbul recently moved to Bademler village, and they are <u>growing lavender and producing cosmetic products</u>. They not only contribute to <u>the continuation of agricultural production</u> here, but also bring a <u>new production value to Urla</u> (Deniz, 48, ex-chair of the artichoke festival committee, lecturer, and potter).</p> <p>The <u>only group I care</u> about is <u>new farmers</u>, and I watch them with pleasure and admiration. They <u>take care of the land much more than townspeople do</u>. While there is <u>wisdom in the methods handed down from their parents</u>, <u>the way olives are produced and collected has changed</u> (Celal, 64, actor and writer).</p>                                                                                                            |
| Reflexive Awareness of Social Impact and Gentrification | Immigrants with higher cultural capital acknowledge their influence on Urla's social and economic landscape, viewing it as a form of gentrification                                                                                           | <p>There's a German word, "<u>Gentrifizierung</u>." It's <u>like what's happening here</u>. Maybe we're displacing them, but it shouldn't be like that (Mete, 38, chef).</p> <p>The <u>middle class</u>, especially <u>white-collar people</u>, and <u>managers of different companies</u>, came to give speeches at our event, and then they looked for land and stayed in Urla. I think <u>we triggered the migration a bit</u> (Ali, 48, software developer and designer, NGO member).</p> <p>We were 1% of the population - Istanbulites, Ankaraites - and now we make up 50%. This leads to a debate: <u>is it right or wrong?</u> We have <u>begun to adapt our own culture</u>. The <u>service sector</u> has more proactivity and acceleration, along with <u>increased traffic discussions</u> (Onur, 44, sales manager).</p> |
| Belonging through Local Interaction                     | Daily interactions in local spaces like markets and town squares contribute to a sense of belonging distinct from selective belonging                                                                                                         | <p>The shopkeepers have already opened, the flowers have been watered, everyone is saying <u>good morning</u>, and <u>you feel like you belong</u>. (...) We live in a lovely house <u>close to the central district</u>, and we think we have a <u>more harmonious life than Kuscular</u>. (...) When we first moved to Urla, people used to say we were going to Izmir, and I used to make fun of them. "<u>Isn't this Izmir already?</u>" <u>I have become that person now</u> (Begüm, 35, boutique hotel manager).</p> <p>I am very interested in the <u>crowd drinking tea in Malgaca, sitting in the square, queuing for lokma</u>, and looking around. I wonder what they are thinking. (...) Because <u>I'm from Urla, that's how I feel</u> (Celal, 64, actor and writer).</p>                                                |
| Protectionist Attitudes                                 | Some lifestyle migrants seek to prevent Urla from experiencing the same rapid urbanization that affected Alaçati, focusing on sustaining local identity                                                                                       | <p>Both as <u>people who produce ideas and live here</u>, and of course, in terms of <u>public administration</u>, <u>lessons should be learned</u> from the things happened in Alaçati, but <u>civilians always have a duty</u>. That is, they are always <u>responsible for steering the elected in the right direction or in the direction they want</u>. (...) There needs to be <u>mutual tolerance and respect</u>. While the locals benefit financially from the influx, it's important to ensure that any changes do not force them to leave their homes and relocate and get stuck in an apartment (Zehra, 61, winery owner and Urla Vineyard Route and NGO member).</p>                                                                                                                                                      |
| Integration and Habitus Transfer                        | Immigrants bring their existing habits to Urla while adapting to the local context, blending urban and rural practices in a way that transforms the social field                                                                              | <p>That's the nature of human beings, <u>they try to do what they know</u> there, <u>they bring what they know</u>. Today, yes, we continue to do the same, although we did not migrate under the same conditions (Zeynep, 37, biologist).</p> <p>We are <u>beings that carry ourselves wherever we go and influence our surroundings in return</u>. We <u>resemble to the places we inhabit, but we also leave a mark on them</u>. This is the only way it can happen; if no one forces their ways onto others or shuts themselves off, then something appropriate for that area will naturally emerge (Celal, 64, actor and writer).</p>                                                                                                                                                                                             |

One group of people who dislike being categorized includes investors and entrepreneurs. Celal, an artist, was asked if he thought it was a problem to call himself an “art entrepreneur” in the dissertation about the cultural and artistic center he established. He responded that this label did not align with his vision, and he did not

want to be seen as following trends in entrepreneurship in Urla. The trend he refers to with the wind is the transformation of Urla into a Michelin-starred town as a step towards opening it up to gastro-tourism among entrepreneurial lifestyle migrants:

I cannot call myself an art entrepreneur. (...) when I say entrepreneurship, it means business, and you cannot be in business at 64. We did not come here with that intention. “Urla is waiting for us; let us go there and make some strange art initiatives.” Those sentences do not explain the reasons for our presence here. The words in the market about Urla have never dared to influence me, the shining star, Michelin Star, or the valleys of Tuscany (Celal, 64, actor and writer).

Another differentiation within the positioning of the practices in Urla is related to investment. By stating that the house they bought was not for investment but to live in, Onur emphasizes that the economic logic for investing in Urla is over, that everything is much more expensive than it is worth, and that their lives are not based on investment but on a way of life that they like. Their discourse of belonging to Urla, which can be seen as an extension of this emphasis, is framed by their references to being in everyday life. Unlike other migrants, they express their belonging to Urla by greeting the local people, living in the terroir, and not retreating to the gated communities, spending time in places like the Malgaca bazaar where the locals gather, and participating in local activities.

According to Savage and his concept of “elective belonging,” Begüm and Celal feel a sense of belonging by moving to a region that holds both functional and symbolic significance. This feeling stems from their representation of rural places, shaped by their encounters with locals in everyday life spaces. The lifestyle groups in Urla share a common goal of shaping the future narrative of the area to differentiate it from the rapid gentrification process occurring in the nearby town of Alaçatı. As Alaçatı nears its capacity and risks losing its rural identity to new investors, there is a push for a protectionist partnership discourse in Urla to prevent the same fate. It is important to note that luxury villas, which represent a significant portion of these investments, are not included in this protective alliance.

The landscape that emerges with migration, especially with tourism development, becomes a concrete expression of how habitus infiltrates space. Even if they feel partly responsible, lifestyle migrants emphasize that reshaping Urla's social field through reciprocal relations and the transfer of habits is an inevitable and natural process.

Therefore, there is a shifting and constantly negotiated ground between differentiations and belongings. As Benson and Jackson point out (Benson & Jackson, 2013: 797), habitus has generative or manipulative dimensions within these spaces. It is necessary to look more deeply into the relations between people and places, the interactions within the same group, and the performative dimensions of belonging or differentiation. In the following chapter, how capitals are transferred to the field and how interactional relations shape dominations over the field are put forward to fill this gap.

### **2.3.3. Rural Plannings and New Life Practices of Lifestyle Migrants**

Bourdieu uses the term field to refer to the whole set of actors and organizations involved in an arena of social or cultural production and the dynamic relationships between them (cited in Reid, 2021). In other words, it consists of a set of positions that are separate from each other, coexisting, external to each other, defined by each other, by their common exteriority, and by their relations of proximity, neighborhood, or distance, as well as by the hierarchical relations below, above, and between them (Jourdain & Naolin, 2016: 112). In one sense, it is a field of power where those in established positions impose their own rules or determinations. These structures influence social actions, and existing norms continue to be accepted as the usual way of life, a doxic relationship. On the other hand, it is a struggling field in which individuals compete for positions; each agent involved in this field competes indirectly with others playing the same game (cited in Reid, 2021).

Lefebvre (1974/2016: 87) emphasizes that without an appropriate spatial production, changing life and society would be meaningless; he refers to the need for new spaces for new social relations. This criticism of the Soviet constructivists implies that better life, quality of life, and the need for nature and the environment are



embodied in political discourses. Still, as long as everyday life remains unchanged beyond technical improvements (e.g., transportation and relative comfort) or the separation of spaces for work, leisure, and residence persists, the project of transforming life remains an abandoned discourse. Political actors such as central governments and local administrations play a role within this structure. Alongside these governmental actors, it is important to examine how migrants, engaging with the formulaic discourse of a better and desired way of life, negotiate to achieve a good quality of life. It should also reveal how their spatial practices align with existing representations in everyday life. All these interactions can be seen as part of the struggles described by Bourdieu. The rural imaginations of people coming to Urla to build a new life and adapt to a new structure, alongside migrants having substantial economic capital entering Urla and new farmers building familiarity with evolving agricultural methods, create a complex and multifaceted scene. Urla is, therefore, a geography reshaped and planned not only by discourses or imaginations but also by practices and the relations of intersecting groups. As Benson and Jackson (2013) emphasize, placemaking and the trajectories of belonging can be repeated subjective acts of creating places of residence. However, they are also based on practices that classes actively remake and maintain through their class-based attributes.

Moreover, they argue that it is much more than adopting a place or choosing a place that fits one's habitus: "People do not merely select a place to live that matches their habitus; rather places are made through repeated everyday actions and interventions that work on both the neighborhood and the individual." (Benson & Jackson, 2013: 797). As Wacquant (2024: 202-203) observes, particularly in cities, while people move driven by desires shaped by their social positions and trajectories, we are witnessing the end of a world where objective predispositions perfectly align with expectations. This shift is due to the expanded social fields of metropolitan life and neoliberal conditions. In such a context, the rural landscape, where habituses are increasingly diversified, has been transformed into a settlement where disappointments and incompatibilities multiply.

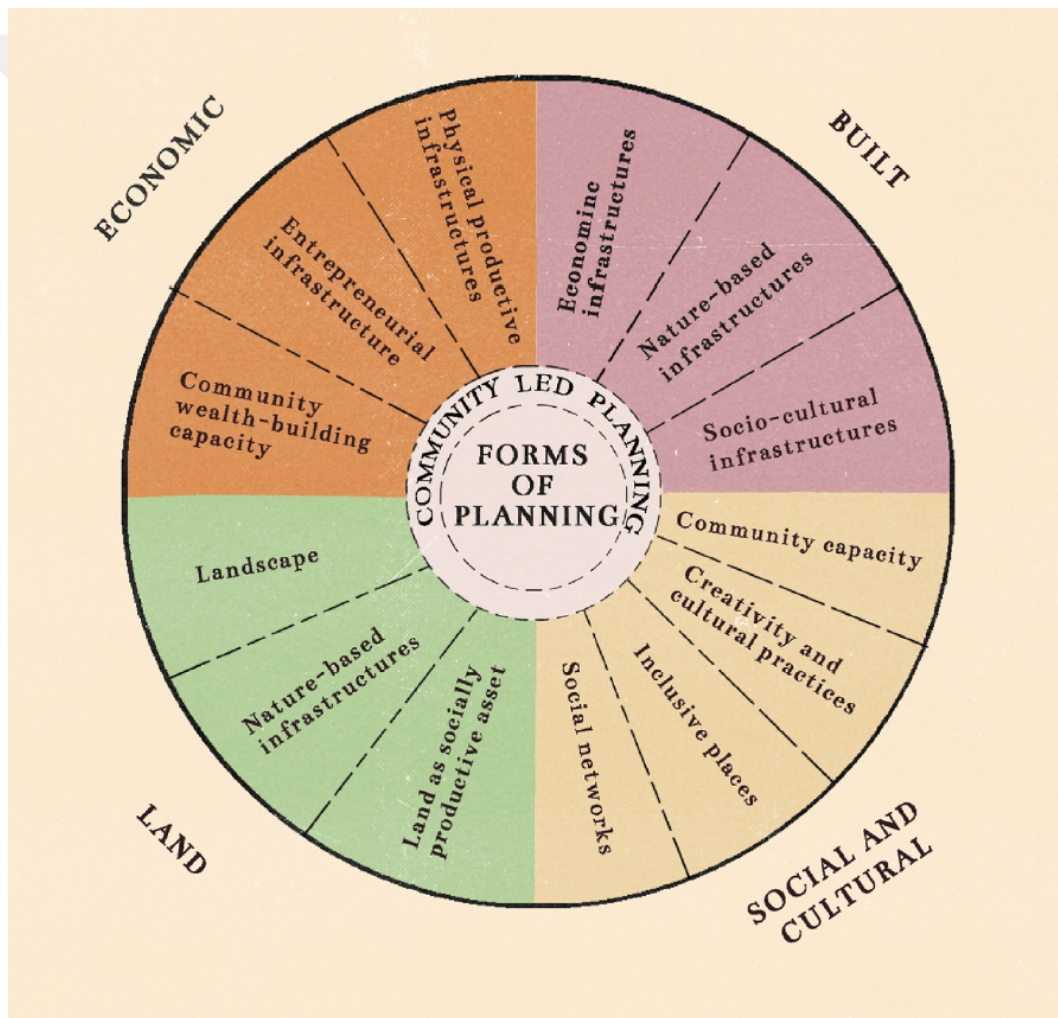
It should be noted that the dominant migrants in rural planning, one of the main concepts of this chapter, are entrepreneurial migrants with economic, cultural, and social capital who work in coordination with local authorities and have the economic

power to invest in the rural area and have strong networks. Although most of the lifestyle migrants in Urla point to problems that they fear for the future of the place and that need to be changed (infrastructure problems, a construction boom, opening up of agricultural land for construction, rising cost of living, overtourism, etc.), the way they can act is through citizenship by communicating the issue of concern to the local administration or through creating public opinion and social responsibility activities through civic initiatives and communities. Yet, entrepreneurial lifestyle migrants have the potential to transform specific resources of a place by combining their new life with significant investments. This is achieved by integrating economic, social, and cultural capital, ultimately striving for a “better rural and better life.” Therefore, entrepreneurial migrants are the dominant actors in shaping practices. However, actions undertaken by civil initiatives or new farmers, which can also be interpreted as resistance or a new entrepreneurial movement, also contribute significantly to shaping the discussion.

People who come to Urla typically have sufficient capital to invest in tourism and gastronomy. Urla has become a destination for those interested in farming as well (Esra, 46, sustainable gastronomy and agriculture entrepreneur).

As mentioned in the literature section of this dissertation chapter, the rural is being reproduced with new meanings and practices, shifting from its functionality associated solely with agriculture. The reproduction of the rural is brought about by regulations of change or, in common parlance, rural planning, which is realized in both political and everyday practices. Gallent and Gkartzios (2019: 94) criticize the narrow confinement of planning to public policy, reminding us that how organizations or individuals plan or manage change is a much broader phenomenon, especially in rural areas with built spaces, natural environments, or farms. Gkartzios et al. (2022) developed the “capitals framework” perspective that goes beyond jurisdictional boundaries and current planning systems to understand rural places’ internal workings and planning interventions. They emphasize the necessity of constructing a relational capital model rather than unidirectional planning approaches that remain limited in comprehending the complexities of restructured or differentiated rural places. What makes up rural places are capitals, objectified as material assets (land, infrastructure, built heritage, or the wider environment) or embodied social actions (what people do and think, how they behave and interact). The concept of transmutability and

relationality among capitals, as proposed by Bourdieu, is re-examined within the capitals framework in terms of the interactions between the functions of planning and different types of capitals. The assertion that much of what is commonly perceived as planning is embedded within everyday socio-spatial actions, encompassing private investments, charitable undertakings, as well as institutional arrangements aimed at achieving desired outcomes, brings ideas and practices to the forefront of the capitals framework (see Figure 2.6). According to Gkartzios et al. (2022: 2-4), the planning perspective is grounded in planning and implementing desired changes through everyday socio-spatial actions, ideals, and practices rather than functioning solely as a managerial, bureaucratic, or controlling instrument. It is possible to include lifestyle



**Figure 2.6 :** Wheel of place: Forms of capital and forms of planning (Gkartzios et al., 2022 : 5 )

Migrants in these endeavors, practices, and ideals of a place; likewise, they plan and shape their surroundings following their rural idyll and expectations, as they view

themselves as capable of determining and constructing the rural future (Cloe, 2006:19; Savage: 2010: 16; Shucksmith, 2018).

This framework, which offers a comprehensive and detailed basis for analysis in line with the Bourdieusian and Lefebvrian perspectives of the dissertation, both elucidates how migrants put their imagination of place into practice and provides a valuable overview of how they revalue place-specific resources using their social, cultural, and economic capital. Although it is difficult to fit the whole framework into the subtitle of a dissertation, it provides a grounding for the interpretation of the prominent theorists of the dissertation. This framework is used both in this chapter and in the next chapter, which discusses how lifestyle migrants construct the natural and built environment.

#### **2.3.3.1. Place-Specific Resources' Management of Lifestyle Migrants**

Concerning place-specific resources, rural landscapes offer a wide range of natural assets such as agro-food products, forests, water resources, and soils, as well as cultural heritage like historical ruins and local cultural traditions (Garrod et al., 2006; Gosnell & Abrams, 2011; Du & Shi, 2019; Gkartzios et al., 2022). At the same time, as reported in the rural change literature, the shift from productive activities (e.g., farming, ranching, or forestry) to multifunctional land uses in rural areas also diversifies forms of land and resource management. Organic or low-impact agriculture practices, conservation or restoration of natural ecosystems, and/or intensive recreational uses are trends seen in rural areas with migration and residential development (Abrams et al., 2012: 274). According to Garrod et al. (2006: 123-124), investment in countryside capitals comprising landscape, wildlife, biodiversity, rural settlements, local customs, festivals, ways of life, etc., provides the competitive edge for boosting tourism potential, improves local communities' facilities, and securing the quality of life for people living in rural regions. As noted by Gosnell and Abrams (2011: 310), the ways newcomers interact, participate in civic and political activities, invest, and use land may impact social dynamics as well as rural capitals. As previously mentioned, investing in or using place capitals is also intricately linked to planning performance.

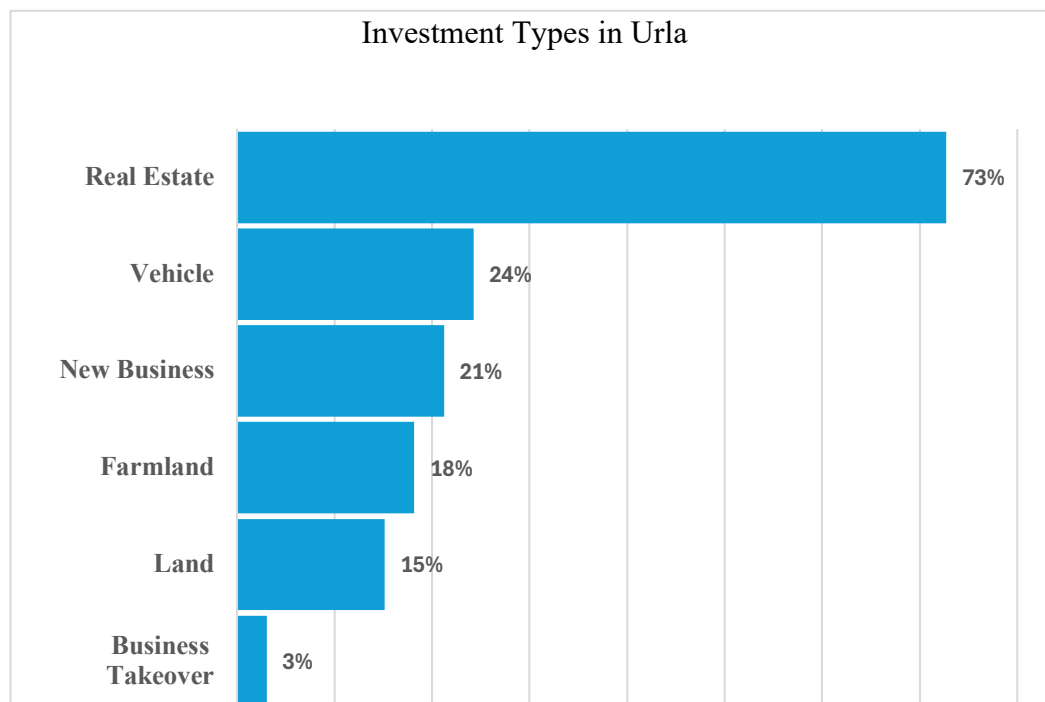
The economic rural capital provides a perspective on which rural assets migrants monetize while planning and acting within the place. Dynamics such as forms of monetization (foreign investment, rent, local value creation), reinvestment of economic capital in the countryside, employment opportunities, and rural welfare provide insights into how economic rural capital functions (Gkartzios et al., 2022: 6). Some of these investments may grow in value either directly or through financial assets, whereas others can be transformed into productive assets that offer employment prospects for local people. How wealth is distributed, whether capital is reinvested in rural areas, and whether it is transformed into new forms of capital are essential for rural resources to benefit rural landscapes and communities. However, investments focused on the long-term increase in land value through private ownership, and rent-seeking activities, may not benefit the local economy and can even lead to the siphoning of land by outside investors (Gkartzios et al., 2022: 7). The interaction of planning and economic capital is divided into three parts: physical productive infrastructure, enterprise infrastructure, and the capacity to generate social welfare.

#### *Physical productive infrastructure and Land Speculation*

Physical productive infrastructure intersects with economic infrastructure in built capital, including land that is the source of traditional land-based production such as food, the productive value of land, its location, tangible assets such as buildings on land, or assets with use value for economic development (Gkartzios et al., 2022: 7). Whether land, the most fundamental rural resource that underpins the rural economy, is used for food production or is opened to non-primary uses for housing development, is critical to how value is generated from land.

Similarly, housing has become an important tool for wealth accumulation. Looking at the practices of lifestyle migrants in terms of physical productive infrastructure, 73% of respondents to the exploratory survey indicated that they invested in real estate, 18% in agricultural land, and 15% in land. Interviewees who invested in real estate in Urla before or just after the emergence of the pandemic stated that they had acquired a significant investment tool due to the rising prices. Developments such as the pandemic and the earthquake, which increased the demand for rural areas, the decrease in housing stock, the subsequent increase in construction

companies in Urla, and the potential for attraction and tourism development created by its location in the coastal region and its proximity to the city have paved the way for land speculation. Holmes (2006: 147) discusses how the land has been occupied in different ways and forms of rural change in the context of “the transition of rural areas to multifunctional resource use in Australia,” mentioning similar indicators, especially in the context of land speculation. According to Holmes (2006: 147), the real estate market is influenced more by consumption values than by production, as an indicator of the new “geographies of value,” particularly in cases where tourist towns or rural areas near the city are increasingly surrounded in a consumerist manner. In the context of this issue, which is further explored in the next chapter of the dissertation when discussing the ongoing transformation of the built and natural environment, the destruction of Kuşçular, which used to be an agricultural plain, and its transformation into a landscape clustered by gated communities embody the course of the real estate market. Holmes (2006: 147) describes the areas near coastal or resort areas, which promise reputational value, as “prestige countryside.” In the in-depth interviews, some of the narratives reflected that living in Urla has become a representation of prestige. For example, Eren stated that having Urla as the address on people’s business cards in İzmir is seen as a prestigious sign.



**Figure 2.7 :** Investment types in Urla

Despite the protective framework of laws, heritage sites and natural protected areas remain valuable rural assets. In Türkiye, pristine landscapes, natural wonders, and even archaeological sites are often designated for construction and surrounded by tourist attractions and social amenities. This pattern has become a hallmark of tourist destinations with significant economic potential, including Urla. This trend extends beyond the concept of “lands appreciating in value because of lifestyle migration” and is reflected in discourses emphasizing the state’s role in supporting this structure. Archaeological lands in the center of Urla were protected from being opened to construction as a catalyst for tourism (the ancient city of Klazomenai). In contrast, archaeological sites in the villages, particularly those near the sea, have not escaped the fate of being opened to development, thereby fostering rent-seeking as an extension of land speculation.

The transfer of economic capital within the “physical productive infrastructure” scope also occurs through acquiring agricultural land and land with the expectation of residential permission by lifestyle migrants in Urla. Therefore, as Marsden (1998: 112) emphasizes, agricultural property is a resource pool that becomes the focus of non-agricultural activities, both for those in rural areas and for outsiders to receive services such as hotels and holiday villages. The issue of agricultural land also involves the practices of new peasants or farmers who come to rural areas to cultivate the land, which requires a separate discussion.

However, allowing zoning in proportion to the square meters of land, especially when carrying out agricultural and livestock activities in natural protected areas, can be effective for investment in these regions. In the in-depth interviews, it was observed that there is a similar tendency in many of the agricultural lands in Urla, even if the added constructions are not used.

Table 2.4 : Land as geographies of value

| Land as geographies of value      | Observation                                                                                                                                                                        | In-depth interview                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Land with a building permit       | <p>Control of the real estate market and gated communities construction</p> <p>Prestige countryside</p> <p>Tourism-related facilities</p> <p>Small-scale production facilities</p> | <p><u>The construction companies ruined it; the area was empty</u>, and in just two years, they filled it with buildings... Companies like Mesa and Folkart <u>congested the area</u> (Ayşegül, 50, winery owner and Urla Vineyard Route member).</p> <p>Places that were once villages <u>no longer retain as villages</u>. (...) They are areas where people, tired of city life and from a <u>certain economic class</u>, escape to, but they end up buying homes at high prices, thereby <u>creating their own spaces</u> (Işık, 33, wine tasting expert)</p> <p>For Izmir-centred employees, <u>having Urla as address</u> written on their business cards, etc., <u>is a sign of prestige</u> in the eyes of the people they do business with (Eren, 41, IT expert).</p> <p>We have a forest that is 2400 dönüm, but we can't construct anything there because <u>it's classified as a forest</u>. <u>That's why we bought this place, so we can have our own production area</u> (Esra, 46, sustainable gastronomy and agriculture entrepreneur).</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Agricultural land                 | <p>Transforming the identity of agricultural land</p> <p>Hobby land</p> <p>Residential permission and land speculation</p> <p>Creating zoning opportunities</p>                    | <p>A lot of <u>agricultural land there has been converted into sites and villas</u>. This happens a lot in Urla (İhsan, 49, ex-chef, farmer, and entrepreneur).</p> <p>When zoning regulations were implemented, they <u>ended agriculture, particularly in areas close to the center</u> (Dila, 25, farmer and industrial engineer).</p> <p>This <u>is not for commercial purposes</u>; it is <u>just a hobby</u> and entirely natural. While some farmers may use pesticides, fertilizers, etc. to increase their yields, we choose not to do so (Mehmet, 66, retired tourism manager and farmer).</p> <p>Everyone is trying to do something in their garden but <u>can't come together to form a cooperative</u> (...). They prefer to do so <u>as a form of consumption, a lifestyle, rather than a means of production</u>. (...) <u>If land starts to be worth more than the product it yields, production in that area becomes impossible</u> (Melih, 76, strategy and corporate structure design consultant).</p> <p>In terms of urban planning, in this area, the minimum land size is 5 dönüm. (...) You have permission to build one house on 5 dönüm... <u>A vast area remains empty, and at that time, it was fashionable to plant grapevines for winemaking, which was also quite profitable</u> (Zehra, 61, winery owner and Urla Vineyard Route and NGO member)</p> |
| Protected areas or heritage sites | <p>Archaeological sites still resisting</p> <p>Opening up natural protected areas to exchange value</p>                                                                            | <p>Since the road connecting the pier to Urla is <u>an archaeological site</u>, it was able to <u>remain as agricultural land</u>. It prevented the upper parts of the pier from being zoned for construction (Deniz, 48, ex-chair of the artichoke festival committee, lecturer, and potter).</p> <p><u>The state is opening the seaside for construction</u>. They open this parcel, <u>a first-degree protected area, for accommodation, social facilities, etc.</u> But this is an incredible place that is hard to get to by car, one of the most pristine places in Turkey (Aziz, 72, architect, winery owner, and Urla Vineyard Route member).</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |

Abrams (2012: 274) also points out that the agricultural or forested lands acquired by migrants with high capital wealth are more likely to be used for recreational or aesthetic purposes than their productive neighbors. Small enterprises can also encounter small-scale production practices where farming is seen as a hobby rather than a source of income (Holmes, 2006: 147).



Melih, on the other hand, emphasizes that these hobbyist pursuits have created a detachment from production, which is the main principle of agriculture, and that Urla has evolved into a touristic landscape that is more associated with consumption as the land is worth more than the product by turning into a lifestyle. The question “Why should the farmer pursue agriculture?” frequently voiced in the interviews, emerges from such a context. This accumulation of lifestyle choices, which resulted in most villagers selling their land, has created a rent-seeking rural economy for Urla’s farmland. However, how the practices of new producers/entrepreneurs who approach agriculture and land as more than a hobby is a crucial component accompanying the follow-up issue to the question “Why should the farmer cultivate?”. Here, it would be appropriate to discuss how new farmers or entrepreneurs alter the use of place-specific resources and modes of production.

*Rural economic capital in the hands of new farmers*

The increasing complexity of the relationships between agriculture, rural and urban areas, the urban dependence on rural regions for nutrition, agricultural policies on crop production, and both local and central policies affecting rural areas have made agriculture part of a more intricate network of relations, regulations, and production. Marsden (1999: 509) describes this as a landscape influenced by intricate and varied demands, more localized markets, and distinct regulatory frameworks. He also reminds us that new pressures on production have led to various bifurcations, such as specialized farming roles targeting distant markets, small rural entrepreneurs, and farmers managing the local environment. Challenging market conditions, environmental factors, new financial perspectives, challenges related to rural development, and potential changes in agricultural policies are expected to diversify further current bifurcations and the functions of farmers (Marsden, 1999: 509).

Since the 1990s, the intervention of globalization in rural areas, along with the inclusion of producers and production relations as well as consumers and consumption demands in the agricultural issues, has created an agricultural market in which supermarketization is a defining factor. Multinational corporations are establishing their dominance over seeds and chemical inputs, with production and consumption balances being shaped by global markets (Pelek & Orhan, 2024: 215). In a nutshell,

when looking at the regulations and dynamics behind agricultural policies in the world and Türkiye, the support policies for farmers are undergoing fundamental changes. The subsidies or price guarantees provided as support have led to a significant drop in the prices of products offered in the market due to overproduction. The basic approach that has been adopted in response to this is to continue support with policies that do not depend on the volume of production (Keyder, 2020: 200). In the early 2000s, this situation in Türkiye was addressed by eliminating support prices and input subsidies and introducing direct income support.

The period from 1999 to 2001 was characterized by financial crises, increased cooperation with international actors, and adoption of policies aimed at liberalizing agriculture. Critical policies adopted during this period included abolishing import tariffs, privatizing state-owned enterprises (such as Çaykur and TEKEL), and removing subsidies. The restructuring of cooperatives to be operationally autonomous but financially independent and the privatization of other public institutions led to the inefficiency of institutions focusing on agriculture (Keyder and Yenal, 2020: 61; Pelek and Orhan, 2024: 216).

The abolition of the direct income support, which was envisaged within the scope of the Agricultural Reform Implementation Project (ARIP) carried out in Türkiye as an extension of the World Bank's agricultural policies, with the announcement of the project's end in 2008, led to a return to policies aimed at increasing crop-based support, as well as payments such as differential payments and premiums, and input supports for diesel fuel and fertilizers (Yenal, 2020: 205; Karakaya-Ayalp, 2020: 57). As emphasized in the introduction of the dissertation, Keyder (2020: 209-215) states that these policies facilitated the market participation of producers between 2007 and 2011, increased agricultural employment, and enhanced the attractiveness of agricultural income. However, the fact that farmers left their crops in the field or distributed them without charging, because the cost of harvesting the product was higher than the income from it, as reported in the summer of 2024, along with the rise in farmers' protests market policies, indicates that the situation did not remain as positive as it had been towards 2012.

An analysis of state and municipal governments' agricultural production policies and practices regarding agricultural activities, local development plans, and subsidies in Urla reveals a reduction in production. This deterioration is intricately connected to the wider national context, chiefly influenced by escalating input costs. Particularly pressured by urban planning and tourism, this situation threatens the “gastronomy route” and “agro-tourism” focused development goals outlined for the region. The strategic plan prepared by the local government for Urla advances at the intersection of tourism and agriculture due to targeted tourism concepts, ensuring that agriculture is not excluded from the rural development agenda. Local government plans for agricultural production include olive cultivation, viticulture, olive oil, and gastronomic products that emphasize Mediterranean cuisine. In İzmir Metropolitan Municipality's 2020-2024 development plan<sup>14</sup>, the dissemination of good agriculture and organic practices, the organization of training on cooperatives, and the processing and storage of agricultural products are included in the scope of services for economic activities.



**Figure 2.8 :** Training on cooperatives and asparagus cultivation organized by Urla Municipality (Source: Urla Municipality's Instagram account)

The Municipality's press release also points to agro-tourism and emphasizes the need to integrate agriculture with R&D, communication, and cultural activities. The

<sup>14</sup> İzmir Metropolitan Municipality 2020-2024 Strategic Plan  
([https://www.izmir.bel.tr/CKYuklenen/Dokumanlar\\_2020/Stratejik%20Plan2024.pdf](https://www.izmir.bel.tr/CKYuklenen/Dokumanlar_2020/Stratejik%20Plan2024.pdf))

most striking emphasis is the announcement of agricultural support for high-income-generating products, such as strawberries, asparagus, and dragon fruit, in response to requests from Urla<sup>15</sup>. Niche products adapted to global markets seem central to new support plans. In adapting to global demands, these niche products, standardized with good agricultural and organic agricultural practices and food safety, create favorable conditions for their competitive advantage in the global market. The geographical indication registration for artichokes is one of the agricultural policies implemented by the İzmir Chamber of Commerce, local governments, Ege University, Provincial/District Chambers of Agriculture, producer unions, and cooperatives to raise recognition of the region and market its products.

On the central government (Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry) side, as of 2021, agricultural subsidies are provided on a performance-based basis under five main headings: crop production, animal husbandry, rural development, aquaculture production, and agricultural research and development. Within the 2024 Crop Production Support Decision scope, the increasing emphasis on good agricultural practices and organic agriculture supports the cultivation of products with high export potential while encouraging environmentally friendly production methods. According to data from the Ministry of Environment, Urbanization, and Climate Change, good agricultural practices have been practiced by 651 producers since 2007, reaching 9,570 producers in 2022. The number of organic products has grown from 150 in 2002 to 268 in 2022, illustrating significant growth over this period, and the number of farmers has increased from 12,428 to 44,927. Furthermore, R&D-related incentives can be linked to lifestyle migration, emphasizing the changing needs of the new generation of farmers. These farmers are better equipped than traditional producers to evaluate innovative production techniques and solutions and can be considered key contributors to sustainable agriculture goals. Their ability to apply new supports, including digital agricultural technologies, smart farming practices and resilient techniques, positions them as vital players in the modern agricultural landscape.

Although plans and practices for agricultural production are more sustainable, environmentally friendly, and in cooperation with small producers, agricultural

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<sup>15</sup> For the press release see : <https://www.izmir.bel.tr/tr/Haberler/urla-nin-degerleri-tarimla-guclenecek/51038/156>

employment has fallen to 18.6% in 2021. According to Pelek and Orhan (2024: 217), the transformative consequences of state policies on product preference, production, labor relations, and forced migration due to the conflict between the PKK and the Turkish Army in southeastern and eastern cities led to a decline in the proportion of the population working in agriculture, from 56% in 1980 to 18.6% in 2021. Pelek and Orhan (2024: 216) interpret the agricultural employment rate of 18.6% as promising resistance, indicating that small producers can maintain their position in market conditions. They refer to the literature discussing the strategies “new peasants” employed to survive. It is worth reminding that the new peasants, which were also referred to as a group within the lifestyle migrants in the first part of the dissertation, do not only consist of migrants, but also refer to a local resistance typology that continues its life with peasant-type production, where family members support the continuation of this type of production by working in non-agricultural sectors (Van der Ploeg, 2008; Öztürk et al., 2018; Pelek & Orhan, 2024).

On the other side of the conceptualization, some new peasants create alternative production cycles with autonomous strategies in neoliberalized agriculture and food sovereignty (Van der Ploeg, 2008). Their approach to place-specific resources and rural capitals is oriented towards the protection, nourishment, and restoration of ecological systems (Türkkan, 2023: 81). To elaborate further, it represents a unique model characterized by coordinated, organized, cooperative, and solidarity-based production practices that stand in opposition to globalized food regimes (Karakaya-Ayalp, 2020: 60; Vizuite, 2024: 1287). Their continued production of traditional products from Urla’s agricultural ecosystem, such as olives, artichokes, broad beans, and okra, demonstrates their involvement in a production cycle that aligns with local resources. The production practice described by Van der Ploeg (2008: 167), which highlights new peasantization practices in Europe that rely on local assets as much as possible while selectively incorporating external elements and combining resources productively, is also prominently observed in the new farming approaches adopted by urbanites in Urla. In particular, the interest shown by some lifestyle migrants who produce the region’s geographically marked product, the mastic artichoke, in using heirloom seeds as an alternative form of production outside the existing input market is an essential pattern in Urla. While hybrid production or conventional agriculture is based on getting more produce, heirloom seed production is quality, organic,

restorative agriculture that does not maximize the use of the ecosystem. In addition, crops that are also part of the local ecosystem, such as artichoke flowers, rosemary, and olive leaves, which can be used in aromatherapy, cosmetics, or pharmaceutical industries, are also grown organically. Moreover, new farmers have introduced alternative crops such as avocado, lavender, asparagus, and strawberries, also covered by the government's incentives for plant production, into Urla's agricultural ecosystem.



**Figure 2.9 :** Bioinnovation by lifestyle migrants (Source: Opencampus Instagram account)

In addition to producers directly engaged in agriculture, the new villagers have taken on the mission of guiding others toward non-toxic, natural forms of production as alternatives to the products imposed by the food regime, even if they are not directly involved in farming. Within this group, some members are engaged in agriculture, while others are involved in the City Council and civil society initiatives. Some are dedicated to promoting conservation agriculture methods as a planning for the future of Urla. These efforts include cooperative-oriented production collaborations, the implementation of new production techniques, as well as the adoption of digital agricultural technologies and smart agricultural practices. Additionally, they emphasize good practices such as permaculture, organic agriculture, and value-added production stages.

İhsan, who does not work directly in farming but is involved in the agricultural production process, stated that having previously worked as a chef and product development specialist before migrating, regional producers can seek assistance in tasting and providing feedback on value-added products. He points out that some lifestyle migrants are trying to obtain more products through hybrid production and are losing flavor in value-added local production. The group he associates with good agricultural practices are urbanites in producer and consumer cooperatives; however, the urbanites he refers to are families and their children, especially those who came out of the village institute and whose personal rights were deprived. Their efforts to spread their knowledge of local products, seeds, and chemicals to the countryside contribute to making the food production process both sustainable and ethical by linking it to the ecosystem.

During the fieldwork, no volunteers were associated with the Village Institutes, as described by İhsan in Urla. However, the cooperative initiatives of people born in Urla and later became involved in politics are crucial for the region. However, Mahmut Türkmenoğlu, who also served as a parliamentarian, strengthened the cooperative movement through his efforts and created a solid cooperative legacy that facilitated the emergence of movements in surrounding villages such as Gödençe (Karakaya-Ayalp, 2020: 63). In addition to this cooperative, which is still active today, the Urla Women's Cooperative was founded under the leadership of ex-mayor Sibel Uyar, also born in Urla. The cooperative brings together region's agricultural producers, middle-class migrants, retirees, and housewives. It focuses on processing and branding agricultural products, as well as processing and marketing tourism materials such as textiles.

In Urla, mastic artichoke is a significant product, branded by the women's cooperative and sold internationally. New farmers also cultivate it through direct capital investment. Through a collaborative organizational process between the municipality and migrants, the artichoke, featured in a festival, has become a product increasingly adopted by local farmers. As a local product, it shortens the food chain, enables direct sales, allows farmers to engage in commercial activities, and supports the sustainability of agricultural production. These activities, though limited, played an



instrumental role in fostering the peasants' autonomy in agricultural production and were discussed under the heading of community wealth-building. This includes projects such as sharecropping, encouraging peasants to plant vineyards, and establishing facilities for olive oil production.

**Table 2.5 : Physical productive infrastructure**

| Physical productive infrastructure                              | Observation                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | In-depth interview                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| New Farmers and Agricultural Practices                          | <p>Prioritization of good agricultural practices or organic agriculture</p> <p>Sensitivities on sustainability and regenerative agriculture</p> <p>Boutique productions and short supply chains</p> <p>Following the standards in international markets</p> <p>R&amp;D and innovation for value-added products</p> <p>Medium and small entrepreneurs targeting international markets</p>      | <p>In total, we produce 300,000 bottles of wine from 750 hectares. <u>This is our policy: we do not expand.</u> (...) Maybe the demand is 3,000,000, but I <u>do not want to produce more</u> (Suat, 64, winery owner and Urla Vineyard Route member).</p> <p>There should not be a restaurant in Urla today that does not use olive oil produced in Urla on its table and even brings branded bottles like in Italy. <u>As a restaurant owner, I serve the wines of all Urla wine producers in my restaurant. As an olive oil producer, I would like to see my olive oil on the tables of Urla restaurants</u> (Esra, 46, sustainable gastronomy and agriculture entrepreneur).</p> <p>I went to an <u>aromatherapy festival</u>. We tried to make <u>artichoke oil from the purple parts of the artichoke flower</u>. (...) I am <u>constantly researching</u> how to use their active ingredient in the <u>pharmaceutical industry</u>. (...) Everyone is canning, but there <u>must be a difference; it must be a product that can be sold abroad</u> (Dila, 25, farmer and industrial engineer).</p>                                                    |
| Wise peasants and the Autonomization of Agricultural production | <p>Heirloom seeds and organic methods creates a sustainable alternative to conventional farming</p> <p>Cooperative-based practices play a key role in promoting sustainable and community-based agriculture; and support autonomization in production</p> <p>Sharing knowledge related to new technologies, production techniques</p> <p>Supporting short supply chains and local markets</p> | <p>As an <u>Urla City Council Women's Assembly member</u>, I wanted to <u>support organic production</u> and take steps to <u>preserve Urla's values</u>. We aimed to support the participation of local women in production by <u>visiting villages to document local recipes, products, and heirloom seeds</u> (Deniz, 48, ex-chair of the artichoke festival committee, lecturer, and potter).</p> <p>It is precious that <u>urbanites</u> are starting to <u>spread ethical and sustainable practices in the cooperatives in the countryside</u>. (...) Thanks to their <u>visionary perspective and intellectualism</u>, peasants have somehow started to <u>gain that awareness</u>. Many of them are the children of families from Village Institutes (...) (Ihsan, 49, ex-chef, farmer, and entrepreneur).</p> <p>It is even vital to <u>ensure the relationship between cooperatives</u>. We have experimented with the <u>artichoke stalks produced by the agricultural development cooperatives</u>, and we have produced building materials, and it works (Pinar, 47, product developer, NGO member)</p>                                         |
| Challenges Posed by New Farmers for Local Farmers               | <p>Certification requirements and new competition conditions</p> <p>Resistance to new techniques</p> <p>Difficulty of R&amp;D processes and exclusion from new practices</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | <p>Everyone is doing organic farming. Inspections and certifications have begun. There's no incentive to protect the existing structures, and <u>when something becomes trendy, you tell the farmer to do organic farming</u>. The poor farmer goes and applies for a certificate. (...) <u>Farmers end up paying a fortune</u> for the certificate. However, they must buy because it's a trending topic, and once you grab one end, it <u>starts pulling you in both good and bad ways</u> (Ihsan, 49, ex-chef, farmer, and entrepreneur).</p> <p>When I mention that pesticides are not used, they often <u>find it difficult to believe</u>. As a result, <u>convincing them of this practice is not easy</u> (Zeynep, 37, biologist).</p> <p>There is a canning company; we deliver the peeled artichoke to them and put it into the production process, <u>comparing our recipe with theirs</u>. (...) It is the <u>only factory in this region</u>. Next year, we are thinking of doing it ourselves. <u>We are in the R&amp;D process; if you leave it for a minute longer, it becomes like fava</u> (Dila, 25, farmer and industrial engineer).</p> |



These groups, which act with motives such as the protection and diversification of agricultural production, including cooperative activities and the transfer of innovative techniques, are referred to in the literature as “wise farmers.” The term refers to solidaristic farmers who develop, transfer, or use methods that enable the improvement of processes that damage the soil or the ecology in a broader sense through industrial or chemical processes (Kocagöz, cited in Karakaya-Ayalp, 2020: 60). The presence of individuals in Urla who collaborate voluntarily with the municipality, participate in productive solidarity networks through cooperative practices, and provide expert advice on agro-ecological production highlights the emergence of new peasants. These individuals are pioneering alternative approaches to agricultural production and rural development. Nevertheless, rather than their presence, the transformation in agricultural production depends on whether the mentioned practices are incorporated into the agricultural process and how they have impacted the forms of production in the region.

While lifestyle migrants are more active in transferring knowledge among themselves, divisions between locals and newcomers are evident in agricultural production practices, with the most noticeable divergence being the resistance to new production approaches. Zeynep explained that she wanted to use her permaculture training to work with a local farmer, demonstrate sustainable ecosystem practices, and gain hands-on experience. She stated that she met with farmers for this purpose, but they were cautious because pesticides were not used, so the process of transferring information was not as much as thought. Moreover, Dila states that knowledge is needed not only in the production stage but also in other steps that can add value to agricultural production, such as R&D and development of contract manufacturing, and that farmers are trapped in the production stage due to the lack of economic capital and the difficulties of being involved in these processes.

The transfer of organic or good agricultural practices from lifestyle migrants to local peasants, or the standardization of competition conditions in the local market, creates new challenges for the peasants. While organic farming or sustainability may become the primary discourse in the agricultural activities of lifestyle migrants, offering advantages in preserving the ecosystem and creating autonomous systems, it can also create a dominance that pressures villagers to integrate into the emerging

production patterns. Organic certification processes create material and moral difficulties for farmers. As the local agricultural economy and demands are shaped in this direction, farmers inevitably become involved in this form of production. As İhsan points out, this situation puts organic farming on dubious ground, as the third parties that issue agro-ecological certificates are generally for-profit companies and rely on an expensive analysis process (Türkkan 2023: 88). In addition, another complexity arises from how the logic of agricultural production relates to financial or industrial capital.

It is essential to analyze how new farmers, as key drivers of emerging trends in agriculture, shape the evolution of farming practices beyond traditional methods. To ensure robust agricultural production, relying solely on a single crop is insufficient. Instead, farmers should diversify by cultivating various crops, such as broad beans, okra, corn, olives, and other regionally suitable options. This diversification allows farmers to reduce the risks they face in competing with large agri-business commodity markets (Van der Ploeg, 2008: 152; Keyder & Yenal, 2020). However, the same resilience was observed in transforming a single product into various value-added products that cater to different markets. Dila points out that the possibility to produce artichoke oil and its essence expands its potential applications in the pharmaceutical industry.

Dila's effort is to extend the agricultural production process beyond the resources controlled by the agro-industry and to add craftsmanship to the production process. Van der Ploeg (2008: 153) interprets craftsmanship as the combination of cognitive and manual labor to directly control and fine-tune the production process, which involves the development of new-generation technologies and the pursuit of product-related innovations. This approach is accompanied by a focus on short supply chains, ensuring that the product is manufactured with minimal waste for the environment. Although using local products in restaurants in Urla creates a system of solidarity and local consumption in terms of short supply chains, it is not easy to access the products produced by the villagers in chain markets or delicatessens in Urla. Esra states that this structure is not very effective for olive oil in restaurants and that products produced by villagers cannot find a place in short supply chains. The interviews emphasize the challenges of surviving in Türkiye and the necessity of

selling abroad to sustain production and reverse the system, which undermines the principles of local and short-circuit actions—fundamental aspects of the new peasantry conception. So, while short-circuit actions are often perceived as a rebellion against the existing structure and a step toward greater autonomy, the discourse of the new peasantry on protecting the ecological system and promoting sustainability is weakening. Although current agricultural policies support new production trends and farmers by encouraging the use of digital technologies, promoting organic and good agricultural practices, and increasing funding for niche agricultural products, certain requirements continue to pose obstacles for new peasants. These include the mandatory use of certified seeds and the requirement of land ownership or lease contract for registration in the farmer system. Production practices observed in Urla, such as farming through land leasing without contracts or using heirloom seeds, remain outside the scope of these supports.

The emerging trends related to the new peasantry in Urla emphasize the importance of preserving traditional agricultural practices, demonstrating environmental sensitivity, and rejecting the methods associated with industrial agriculture. However, as the reference to Marsden at the beginning of the title emphasizes, agricultural practices in Urla are also bifurcated and even operate in mixed models intertwined with entrepreneurship. When describing current farming practices, Van der Ploeg (2008:2) includes two other clusters alongside the new peasantry—the entrepreneurial type of agriculture, where scale-up is the main objective. Based on financial and industrial capital, it is fully market-oriented, and its producers act market-dependent; state-led agricultural modernization is a crucial source of development within these practices. Production is specialized; the entrepreneurs' primary objective is the potential for further partial industrialization. The second cluster, the corporate farming sector, is a complex mobile farm business network that relies heavily on salaried employees. The primary objective is to maximize financial gains.

Van der Ploeg (2008: 2) states that the main difference between these groupings, which he groups as the new peasantry, entrepreneurial type of agriculture, and corporate (capitalist) agriculture, is based on scale. However, he emphasizes the importance of examining various farming practices and their connection to social and

material patterns. It focuses not on the land's productive capacity, but on the construction of the new peasantry as a social category that is in many ways different from corporate farmers and entrepreneurs. As Halfacree (2006a) emphasizes in adapting Lefebvre's framework to rural areas, rural localities are reconstructed through modes of interaction, production-consumption relations, and the reproduction of exchange value. The practices in Urla are also characterized by discourses of not expanding production, not losing quality, and developing a "boutique" capacity, especially in wine production. Nevertheless, the size of the area or production capacity contains important signals about the type of production and capital ownership. Producers of artichokes, olive oil, corn, and fava beans, who create their own consumer networks through e-commerce and establish their sales channels through these systems, generally keep their production capacity at a level that can sustain these services.

Although their specialization in value-added products and partial industrialization tendencies bring them close to the entrepreneurial typology, the environment in which they migrate and their sensitivity to sustainability put them in a well-rounded position. Therefore, it is reasonable to suggest that lifestyle migrants are more inclined to engage in eco-entrepreneurship, prioritizing environmental benefits and sustainability over purely economic objectives. However, some producers among them aim to adhere to a fully autonomous production logic, akin to the back-to-the-land movement discussed in the introduction chapter. Production activities related to social projects, such as transforming fibrous plants into construction materials through bio-innovation and creating building materials for use in crises like natural disasters, represent the most concrete examples encountered during fieldwork. Aside from this, self-sufficient production systems, such as home gardening for non-commercial purposes, are also production trajectories pursued by lifestyle migrants, both for healthy nutrition and as an activity that aligns with their desired daily lifestyle. Retirees, in particular, are the group most likely to engage in hobby gardening; the increase in the price of olive oil and the proliferation of poor-quality oils on the market have made producing oil from one's gardens a common practice. The people in the semi-retired category interested in farming for entrepreneurial purposes often exhibit similar divisions to those found among new farmers.

The entrepreneurial group can be characterized as small or medium-sized entrepreneurs. It is possible to extend the scope of these entrepreneurial migrants from those who apply the farm-to-table concept to the restaurant they have established with their organic agricultural production to wine producers with high added value through viticulture. These agricultural operations, covering extensive land areas, encompass not only production but also various components such as processing value-added products and integrating gastro-tourism or, in more comprehensive terms, “territorial tourism” into the entrepreneurial production systems as a business model. Therefore, although linking agriculture to both social and material aspects is the right approach, within the framework of lifestyle migration, a multifunctional structuring has been adopted that is not solely based on agricultural production and product processing. The central dynamic revealing the town’s structuring is that Urla, as a coastal settlement, is undergoing an economic restructuring driven by gastro-tourism. It is instructive to look at how lifestyle migrants construct the means of production concerning the service sector to recreate the desired representation of the countryside, using both their own capitals and rural-specific resources.

*Practices on economic resources at the intersection of agriculture and tourism*

The use of resources and the transfer of capital, which involves restructuring spatial practices and rural localities, is rooted in a framework that, although not as extensive as the one operating in the cities, will lead to accumulation and diversification. The transitivity between urban and rural areas, discussed in detail in the literature section, accelerates the transfer of capital accumulation to the countryside and, thus, the diversification of material and cultural production fields. Marsden (1999:509) points to the pressures on rural resources, noting that although agriculture remains the principal occupier of land, it no longer dominates rural areas in terms of employment. In addition, according to Marsden (1999: 509), other economic and social sectors, such as manufacturing, services, and tourism, are putting pressure on rural resources by generating new demands combined with new patterns of recreation and environmental concerns. While capital is diversified, the extent to which resources are utilized creatively and innovatively, the types of economic relationships (Marsden, 1999), and their connection to the rural ecosystem are essential parameters for evaluating entrepreneurial activities.

In the coastal town Urla, capital diversification is progressing - in the directions Marsden emphasizes - particularly through tourism and the service sector demands of newcomers. Since the 1960s, Urla, a resort settlement on the coast of İzmir, has been attracting people from the city and its surroundings. However, the focus of tourism investments shifted towards inland settlements in the early 2000s due to the construction of highways and the boom in building secondary housing (Emekli, 2004b; Güdücüler, 2012; Emekli, 2014; Savur, 2017). Urla emerged as an alternative for domestic tourists after Çeşme became overpriced, driven by the environment shaped by lifestyle migration—through both initiatives and demands—which positioned Urla at the forefront as a tourist town. For many years, seasonal residents or retirees, in a broader sense, have lived in secondary residences along the coast, evolving Urla's identity as a tourist destination catering primarily to middle-class tourists. Territorial tourism builds on this new layer, further enhancing Urla's tourism identity by emphasizing gastro-tourism, showcasing local cuisine, and fostering a winemaking culture.

More commonly used concerning wine tourism but also associated with values-based regional food networks or various forms of agricultural production, terroir-driven tourism aims to develop and sustain critical social, environmental, and economic values to invest in the survival or revitalization of rural economies (Senese et al., 2016; Tomay & Tuboly, 2023). Kastenholz et al. (2021: 402) emphasize the expanding “touristic terroir” concept, referring to creating experiences on the natural, cultural, and physical qualities that make a region more appealing and authentic. Territorial focus on experiences, lifestyles, and place identity as extensions of local resources, along with a healthy food supply system and the promotion of natural and cultural landscapes, make terroir tourism geographies appealing not only to tourists but also to lifestyle or amenity migrants (Senese et al., 2016; Rainer, 2016: 105). Since the terroir-specific projection of destination incorporates many symbols, such as quality of life and status (Senese et al., 2019), it offers lifestyle frameworks to promote the belonging of migrants to the place. Increasingly thriving externally-oriented sectors such as manufacturing, tourism, and business services make the know-how, network, and, more broadly termed, the “entrepreneurial behavior” of lifestyle

migrants vital for rural regions (cited in Herslund from Keeble & Nachum; Smallbone et al., 2012: 238).

The new development strategy, driven by market-led objectives of valorizing material resources and human capital, incorporates cultural resources into its agenda to promote economic opportunities (Bell & Jayne, 2010: 211). Accordingly, rural areas are increasingly integrated into the cultural economy and undergoing continuous changes due to the flow of labour, capital, and technology, as well as the emergence of new mobility and entrepreneurial opportunities, along with trends like leisure ventures and the re-evaluation of place-specific resources such as agri-food products and cultural heritage (Bell & Jayne, 2010: 210; Galani-Moutafi, 2013: 104, Argent et al., 2013). In addition, gaining a competitive advantage for the destination and sustaining successful tourism development depends not just on the creation of attractive images but also on the effective use of place-specific resources to enrich the experience (Kastenholz, 2021; Haven Tag & Jones, 2014: 247) and on strengthening the link between tourism and its underlying rural capital assets (Garrod et al. 2006: 126).

Wine producers are the first lifestyle migrants group to engage in terroir tourism activities in Urla. They lead in planning the region and utilizing its resources, focusing on integrating agriculture and tourism. This group, which aims both to carry out viticulture as an agricultural activity and transform it into wine production with entrepreneurial intentions, has an average of 20 years of experience in resource planning and management. Before the rise of investment speculation in the area, those entrepreneurial lifestyle migrants had accumulated capital through various means besides production, including purchasing land and benefiting from the increase in its value over time. In the meantime, since the soils in Urla have a calcareous nature, they have a challenging geography regarding agricultural product diversity and cultivation. Investors know these calcareous soils were used for viticulture before the population exchange. They have increased the production value of Urla's calcareous lands by producing high-value-added agricultural products and converting grapes into wine with high sales value. The economic and cultural capital to provide production value is not in the possession of local people; thus, lifestyle migrants have revitalized a source of capital for Urla that existed in the past but could not continue.

The attempts to create locality, also linked to agricultural heritage making, are essentially related to Halfacree's concepts of "rural localities" and "everyday lives of the rural" in his interpretation of Lefebvre's trilogy to the countryside. Rural localities are interpreted in terms of recreated "spatial practices" concerning production or consumption activities. Everyday lives of rural, expressed as an extension of "spaces of representation," refers to a symbolically appropriated local space that includes individual or social components. However, lifestyle migrants also interact with official constituents of "representations of space," such as local authorities or tourism ministries, as subjects, presenting a complex scene regarding meaning-making and legitimization processes. These relations or practices also involve the risk of commodification of the countryside regarding exchange value (Halfacree, 2006b: 57). Esra summarizes what is happening at the intersection of agriculture and tourism in Urla. She defines the distinction between farmer and entrepreneur in terms of the final product, stating that if there is ownership of a vineyard house in addition to agricultural activities or reliance on non-agricultural motivations such as operating a restaurant, the individuals engaged in these activities cannot be classified as farmers. For agriculture to coexist with tourism interventions, the new localities created must include farmers in the system. Therefore, the intersection of agriculture and tourism, led by wine producers and triggered by entrepreneurs in the fields of gastronomy and the service sector, creates an entrepreneurial system that will ensure the survival of farmers on the one hand but make them among the groups with the lowest benefits from production on the other hand.

Nevertheless, the tendency to engage with and involve local communities in production, also discussed in the context of community wealth building, is a model that exists, albeit in a limited way, in winemaking and the short supply chain of restaurants. Entrepreneurial infrastructure, another economic resource that Gkartzios et al. (2022) point to as an essential component in building economic capitals of place, refers both to the social capital networks and to surrounding enterprises with local activities through human resource support, short supply chains, and the building of local value chains (Gkartzios et al., 2022: 6). Viticulture, which requires economic capital and an average of 6<sup>16</sup> years to get the first crop, corresponds to a production

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<sup>16</sup> In some interviews, the time it takes to produce a crop was also described as 5-8 years.



process consisting of different strategies, such as buying grapes from the basins of the region or controlled viticulture and controlled capacity maintenance. Similarly, restaurants can establish this system by creating local supply chains for continuous purchases under the “farm-to-table” concept, used in the context of sustainability, freshness, taste, and contribution to the local economy. Still, particularly winemaking, which requires significant financial investment and widens income disparities in the production process, creates social hierarchies in production, as villagers can only participate in farming through their land and labor and cannot benefit from a value-added production system.

An important component of winemaking that differentiates it from farming and requires a large amount of economic capital is its dependence on materials such as bottles, barrels, and corks imported from international markets and costly production infrastructure. This dependent relationship clarifies one of the crucial reasons why winemaking in Türkiye is an investment that requires economic capital, and shows that while the grape, as an agricultural raw material, plays an essential role in determining the taste, it is just a tiny part of the entire process. Therefore, winemaking settles in Urla as a tourism-related entrepreneurial activity dominated by lifestyle migrants and in which locals cannot be fully involved in production. Especially Özlem, who says that they look rich and snobbish from the outside, describes the economic conditions of the wine industry and conveys that they are not actually “vigneron” people with a cultural capital inherited from the family. She states that due to the lack of development of the winemaking sub-industry in Türkiye, people with economic competence have been able to set up a system that works with imported products.

So, while grapes, as an agricultural raw material, are a rural resource that creates the local value of winemaking with the climatic and ecological qualities that give the wine its flavor, the entrepreneurial challenge is to add to production, international market relations, marketing, and involvement in policy-making or planning processes to create a touristic attraction. In this way, the rural imaginaries of wine producers work in harmony with the reproduction of space under the control of dominant interests. Local policies are also aligned with the touristic desires of lifestyle migrants for the region’s development in territorial tourism; the support of economic capital through grant programs is the most concrete example. Meanwhile, government

agencies, particularly the Ministry of Tourism, aim to strengthen local or regional tourism dynamics, such as gastro-tourism or agro-tourism, which have a higher return to the rural economy due to the potential to attract mostly international tourists. They also engage in interventions in regions such as Urla through media relations, promotional support, organizing tours, and providing grants. While some lifestyle migrants emphasize the need for broader interventions, it can be argued that rural positioning and production relations function in tandem with political actors or institutions. As Marlowe (2022) explains, their entrepreneurial planning focuses on creating a “taste of place,” which integrates elements of the terroir concept and enhances the locality’s geographical, economic, and cultural dimensions to make it more appealing to wine tourism. This initiative demonstrates practices and planning that extend beyond the area’s local dynamics. It incorporates social and economic capital and is implemented as part of regional development activities within central or institutional planning frameworks.

This territorial tourism movement, in which lifestyle migrants are also active agents, can fulfill desires to promote the region, create a rural imagination, or attract the expected tourists. Urla Vineyard Route, as an association, also strives to implement plans that will improve the economic and cultural capitals of Urla through strategic collaboration with local wine producers, managing challenging issues related to alcohol advertisement prohibition, establishing national and international wine networks, and engaging in official dialogue with local governments. On the other hand, their effort stimulate a competitive environment that may lead to the exploitation of local resources by non-regional actors who do not even produce in Urla. Urla’s Michelin-starred restaurants and award-winning wines have attracted the attention of wine-producing investors after Urla proved its worth in the national and international press and the wine and gastronomy world. Although the interviewees stated that their main goal in creating the Urla Vineyard Route was to increase the number of vineyards in the region and establish a gastronomic center through a combined approach with winemaking, they have recently been trying to develop a system to protect themselves from outside investors.

**Table 2.6** : Economic resource at the intersection of the agriculture and tourism

| Economic Resources at the Intersection of Agriculture and Tourism | Observation                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | In-depth interview                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| The Integration of Economic Resources into the Ecosystem          | <p>Increased benefits from local resources (generating value from calcareous soils, revitalization agricultural heritage, establishing entrepreneurial infrastructures)</p> <p>Involving local farmers in tourism value creation</p> <p>Designing a holistic territorial experience</p> <p>Entrepreneurial protection of the ecosystem (business-related sustainability goals)</p>                                                                                                                                                          | <p>The soil of this peninsula is <u>clayey, calcareous, and generally poor</u>. (...) In the third year, when we cleared the slopes of this place, amphora shards began to emerge. We discovered that <u>not just the Greeks</u> but also <u>the ancient city of Klazomenai had produced wine here in the past</u> (Suat, 64, winery owner and Urla Vineyard Route member).</p> <p>Upon meeting with the immigrants who came as part of the <u>population exchange</u>, they disclosed that they <u>had removed the vineyards and replaced them with tobacco, tomatoes, and melons</u>. We decided to <u>replant vineyards</u> ((Aziz, 72, architect, winery owner, and Urla Vineyard Route member).</p> <p>There is a brand that produce with <u>good agricultural practices</u>; I buy artichokes from them. (...) We have a <u>seasonal and sustainable changing order in procurement</u> (Gözde, 33, chef and restaurant owner).</p> <p>We are mainly self-sufficient in terms of supplying, but there are things that we do not produce; of course, we either get them from the producer or have a geographical limit (...) We have a forest of 2400 hectares. (...) If you look at the forest only as a place where olive oil is produced, it is <u>not economically sustainable</u>. So, when we said how we could look at <u>this place more holistically</u> and how we <u>include all the plants in the system</u>, we came up with the <u>idea of making a kitchen, making the whole forest edible, making this place a restaurant where we put the olive oil in the center, and the products are sold there</u> (Esra, 46, sustainable gastronomy and agriculture entrepreneur)</p> <p>There is a <u>rule in gastronomy</u> that food, wine and perhaps cheese, <u>all products produced in a region, go well together</u> because they <u>come naturally from the same soil</u>. (Özlem, 57, winery owner and Urla Vineyard Route member).</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|                                                                   | <p>Expectation of economic continuity to maintain living standards</p> <p>Focus on local value systems and planning for tourist attractions</p> <p>Agriculture as a secondary activity to core businesses</p> <p>Long-term benefits and high capital requirements in winemaking</p> <p>Dependence of winemaking on imported inputs</p> <p>Competitive environment attracting new investors</p>                                                                                                                                              | <p>For this place to open to <u>the tourists we want</u>, there must be investors like me, <u>brands that can express themselves</u>. Still, apart from that, <u>at the state level</u>, the configurations that will open <u>the channels</u> that will allow these people to come here, <u>both in terms of infrastructure and business relations, must be resolved</u> (Esra, 46, sustainable gastronomy and agriculture entrepreneur).</p> <p>This land, initially transformed by investors with enough capital to turn it into an <u>agricultural and gastronomic tourism venture</u>, is becoming a place where <u>farming is not prioritized</u>. If we look at the <u>real farmers</u>, what I mean by real farmers is that 'you are doing it on a <u>specific scale</u>, or you are taking the product that you are making to the market as a <u>pure agricultural unprocessed product</u>' (Esra, 46, sustainable gastronomy and agriculture entrepreneur).</p> <p>You need a <u>certain level of financial guarantee</u> to engage in viticulture and winemaking. Planting a vineyard takes <u>an average of eight years</u>, harvesting and bottling the wine, and then selling it. (...) <u>without receiving anything financially</u>, always giving for 8 years (Işık, 33, wine tasting expert).</p> <p><u>Only the grapes are local; the bottles, labels, corks, and everything else come from abroad</u>. We can call <u>wine a semi-finished product</u> (Ayşegül, 50, winery owner and Urla Vineyard Route member).</p> <p><u>We are perceived as snobs. 'they had money, came and founded wineries, and made wine'</u>. I wish we had ancestors, mothers, and fathers who did this work. (...) <u>A sub-industry would have been formed</u>. Unfortunately, <u>only economically capable people can do this work</u> in Turkey (Özlem, 57, winery owner and Urla Vineyard Route member)</p> <p>This <u>region looks appealing</u> from the outside, but, unfortunately, <u>all the wine produced in Turkey is marketed here</u>. This region has <u>attracted the attention of large industrial producers</u>. (Özlem, 57, winery owner and Urla Vineyard Route member).</p> |
| New Localities and Modes of Production                            | <p>Cooperation with farmers in agricultural production (supply chain, controlled viticulture, farm to table concept)</p> <p>Local farmers remain at the lower end of the hierarchy of agricultural benefits</p> <p>Protectionism for socio-business networks and informal support mechanism</p> <p>High capital and quality-oriented production/consumption, High skills and expertise</p> <p>Involvement with the international market (dependence on equipment, raw materials, etc., reward systems, networks, sales and hospitality)</p> | <p>Viticulture equals wine, and <u>wine equals whoever does viticulture is rich</u>. So, there is a <u>capital</u> here, but if we take the example of grapes, <u>they do not produce all the grapes themselves</u>; they produce in or buy some of them from the Orhanlı Basın (İhsan, 49, ex-chef, farmer, and entrepreneur).</p> <p>Women are currently <u>cleaning houses for 1,600 Liras</u>. They don't want to come and <u>work in the farmland for 700-800 Liras</u> under the sun all day. (...) Those who work are <u>at least 60 years old, and young people do not want to work in farms and gardens</u> (Ayşegül, 50, winery owner and Urla Vineyard Route member).</p> <p>Of course, you can make a winery, but you <u>cannot be a member of us</u>. You must <u>take at least 70 percent from your vineyards in Urla</u> (Suat, 64, winery owner and Urla Vineyard Route member).</p> <p>It is not easy to reach the people who will feed the region regarding <u>food and beverage intermediaries</u>, who have that job, that <u>education, and who want to advance that path</u> (Ebru, 46, business development manager in winery).</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |

The interviewees, who are members of the vineyard route, listed the membership conditions that they are particularly looking for as follows: the winery should be located in Urla, and wine grapes should be grown mainly in Urla in order to support the fabric and development of the peninsula and a maximum production of 350,000 liters for boutique winemaking. The protectionist arrangements of lifestyle migrants in the wine business, which progress through association and rule-making regarding the vineyard route, show that they see themselves as responsible for planning the future of Urla and the rural idyll in their minds (Cloke, 2006:19; Savage: 2010: 16; Shucksmith, 2018).

This protective approach to business-related landscapes is not only found among winemakers but also among winemakers and tourism-related entrepreneurs. While the gastronomy route is not as active as the vineyard route, it is committed to developing the gastronomic capacity that is the missing pillar of terroir tourism. As builders of the entrepreneurial ecosystem, these groups' actors collaborate with the local government to formulate tourism strategies and jointly plan the town that Urla is transforming. The preservation of local cultural heritage and natural ecosystems, the holistic territorial experience, are the main focus of their marketing narratives and planning. Entrepreneurial protection of the ecosystem is linked to providing diverse tourism experiences and extending the time that the high-capital wine tourist will spend in Urla. With strong social capital, these entrepreneurs strengthen each other's economic capital through informal support systems, such as recommending new restaurants to their customers and prioritizing the presentation of the region's wines.

Moreover, pairing regional products is not only a natural process of terroir but also a focus that wine producers and the fine-dining sector are emphasizing. Despite these solidarity systems, it has been observed that they compete in terms of concepts, menus, communication activities, awards, etc., partly due to crises caused by processes such as the pandemic in the food and beverage sector. Additionally, some have created self-sufficient systems within the sector. In chef-driven restaurants, this is achieved by establishing their own agricultural production cycles, including land management, a thoughtful combination of crops, and integrating sustainable practices. In addition, holistic initiatives that place self-produced olive oil at the center of the gastronomic experience and turn olive oil production into a touristic activity within the production

facility exemplify the transformation of local resources into high-value-added and authentic tourism experiences. The fact that they still rely on the environment within the supply chain and do not grow all products does not prevent them from moving away from local production in a closed economic system. However, since this structure restricts local involvement, it is essential for the survival of the local economy that its practitioners remain scarce and confined to a symbolic area.

Although protectionism and control interventions are framed in terms of their entrepreneurial activities, lifestyle migrants have the potential to shape everyday life to encompass the expectations of the good countryside<sup>17</sup> (Gkartzios et al., 2022: 2-4). The created local value systems are related to their rural embeddedness; since they are dependent on the rural landscape for both market and residential space, they need to maintain a balance between production and consumption (Akgün et al., 2011; Tomay & Tuboly, 2023) within the entrepreneurial ecosystem. Concrete examples of this balance are making their daily consumption or business purchases from local markets, including region-specific products such as artichokes in their menus, volunteering in events such as artichoke festivals that do not directly benefit them economically, and implementing concepts such as seasonality/sustainability in their businesses that support the circular economy and respect place-specific resources. For example, the Natural Cuisine Urla Association<sup>18</sup> aims to protect region's ecological and agricultural diversity, prevent pesticide use, and keep the cultural cuisine alive. These local value systems are also related to their rural embeddedness; since they are dependent on the rural landscape for both market and residential space, they need to maintain a balance between production and consumption (Akgün et al., 2011; Tomay & Tuboly, 2023) within the entrepreneurial ecosystem. Concrete examples of achieving this balance include sourcing daily necessities and business supplies from local markets, featuring region-specific products like artichokes on menus, volunteering at events such as artichoke festivals that do not provide direct economic benefits, and incorporating principles of seasonality and sustainability into their businesses to support the circular economy while respecting local resources.

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<sup>18</sup> It is an institutional organization where wine producers support and even play a founding role.

In the context of this sub-title discussing how lifestyle migrants use place-specific resources in the context of agriculture, tourism, and land speculation, it can be said that the practices are based on a broad spectrum, from those who flee industrialization and urbanization of the city to the land in a way reminiscent of the back to the land movement and produce self-sufficiently or become autonomous, to those who invest in agricultural lands to wait for them to be re-zoned for construction. While those who continue agricultural production have a high level of environmental sensitivity regarding the use of local resources, there is also what Holmes (2006: 144) calls a “Transition Towards Multifunctionality” regarding the examination, implementation, and management of rural resources. Holmes’ (2006:158) emphasis on the multifunctional countryside, shaped by the relative prioritization of production, consumption, and protection values, is embodied in the different manifestations of rural tourism and the rural trajectories that emerge depending on how people use rural capitals.

In Holmes’ framework, Urla seems to fit the “rural amenity mode” where consumption values dominate, driven by market amenity uses such as housing, recreation, lifestyle, and investment opportunities. As a result, farm households become increasingly dependent on non-farm income. Similarly, the increase in the cost of living, the penetration of urban practices and values such as tourism and the service sector, the accumulation of capital through land transformation and transfer, and the consumption-driven real estate market are all present within the framework outlined in the findings. Nevertheless, the active pursuit of agriculture as part of multiple initiatives, within the context of the “good countryside”—rooted in discourses of sustainable resource management, nature preservation, and landscape protection—necessitates considering the “pluriactive mode,” where production and consumption are intertwined. The ability to practice agriculture through specialized, niche, or diversified activities, along with the capacity of part-time farmers to maintain their agricultural land through the diversification of capital they generate, limits non-agricultural residential land use. This suggests a geography defined by both pluriactive and rural amenity modes.

Changes in the use of rural resources in Urla are largely driven by lifestyle migrants who are not primarily motivated by creating an ideal living environment but

rather by utilizing various non-agricultural or agriculturally related rural resources to achieve their desired standard of living in the countryside. While they hold considerable economic power, many—particularly entrepreneurs—aspire to build wealth and tend to operate cautiously within the entrepreneurial ecosystem, avoiding risks and managing resources judiciously. Consequently, agricultural production becomes unsustainable when it depends on low-value-added products and processes. This unsustainability is shaped by both central policies and current conditions, including the challenges faced by farmers experiencing losses in their production. Given the agricultural crisis and the failure of production-oriented policies and efforts, it is difficult to say that the formal representation of the rural—namely, policymakers regarding production—has a dominant influence on the agricultural practices or interventions of lifestyle migrants. And yet, the municipality’s policy of localization in production based on the geographically indicated mastic artichoke also attracts lifestyle migrants to this semi-tourist product. However, practices related to the commodification of leisure in Urla, policies aimed at making rural areas attractive, formal representations of rural interventions by policymakers, and lifestyle migrants, all contribute to creating a common ground for changing the framing of “spatial practices.” Whether or not these resources produce benefits to the community is also an important debate in terms of resource use and to see how lifestyle migrants tend to plan and manage territorially.

#### **2.3.3.2. Approaches to Local Communities and Community-Wealth Building Capacities**

While conducting field research on the lifestyle practices of migrants, it has been encountered and conversed with numerous local individuals, such as taxi or minibus drivers, market vendors, and grocers. In this field experience, shaped by everyday encounters, the mobilities of lifestyle migrants were conveyed through narratives that explored contexts such as the housing crisis, price increases, challenges of living, and dispossession—key elements that characterize the stages of gentrification. They have mostly referred to others who partake in “what belongs to them” as “Istanbulites.” Turning to the other side of this perspective, the approaches of lifestyle migrants to local communities, we see those who do not protect the “desired countryside.” The judgment of “not protecting or being unable to protect” is based on the peasants’

selling agricultural lands to newcomers like themselves. This led to changes in the land's usage, opened it up to construction, and altered the rural landscape. This judgment has two main axes: justification and criticism. Between these two poles, Esra and Gözde point to the peasants' shock at the valorization of their land and property; they summarize the destruction of the use-value of the fields with the increased valuation of their assets and the peasants' detachment from what they know how to do:

There was a lot of land division in Urla at that time because of inheritance. (...) Money talks and it is just easier to sell. The lady who comes to my house as a day laborer sold a piece of land. Recently, people were suddenly faced with a massive amount of money, which was like a serious shock. (...) They do not care; as long as it is sold, it is like whatever happens, happens (Esra, 46, sustainable gastronomy and agriculture entrepreneur).

When your village became valuable, your house, your land, and your fields all increased in value, and now they don't know what to do with it (Gözde, 33, chef and restaurant owner).

The sale of properties to newcomers was seen as a way for peasants to consciously benefit from seeking rent and escape the harsh conditions of peasant life, particularly in production. On the other hand, it was argued that the prevailing economic systems and agrarian policies pushed the peasants to adopt this mindset.

There is another intention, and the farmer or the producer is aware of it. They offload the land to Istanbulites, buy a house for their son in Seferihisar, get an apartment for themselves in Balçova, stash some money in the bank to earn interest, and then disappear. (...) If you roughly calculate whether you can sell artichokes here for 20 years or sell the land to someone from Istanbul (Celal, 64, actor and writer).

Why should they continue farming? By selling the land, they realize its value. It is already worth millions, so the locals' perspective has changed significantly (Zeynep, 37, biologist).

Dila, who returned to Urla after her university education and a brief business career and farms with her father, draws attention to the new generation's tendency to



sell out and prioritize “making easy money” as both a local and a lifestyle migrants. The belief that the peasants are not putting in enough effort and are eager to obtain urban property claims that they are neglecting their responsibilities, relinquishing their land, and not opposing the changes happening around them, regardless of whether they view it as a chance to improve their situation. Based on stories from their surroundings, the interviewees stated that the peasants moved to apartments in a nearby neighborhood, became poorer by losing their means of production, and were dispossessed due to their inability to utilize the incoming capital, thereby framing the “views about peasants.” These approaches are linked to the peasants’ inability to make the right moves in response to rapid transformation or the sudden loss of their accumulated economic capital. This is primarily because most locals remained passive observers in the evolving entrepreneurial ecosystem due to their lack of knowledge, limited social capital, and challenges in managing economic capital beyond their habitus.

It is a large amount of money for someone who works in agriculture in Kuşçular. (...) But two years later, they return and work as a security guard for the place they sold. Money does not last forever, right? Then, the place turned into a construction site, and they either security guards it or worked in the vineyard if it was (Ayşegül, 50, winery owner and Urla Vineyard Route member).

A generation remains interested in farming, suggesting that artichoke cultivation will continue for some time. When it passes to the next generation, it will be sold; I know that, too. I know someone here who is as a guard on the land he sold (Dilek, 53, ex-mayor, head of women’s producer cooperative).

It would not be wrong to say that the “security guard” example manifests the dispossession experienced by the villagers in Urla. Bryden suggests that those who come from the dominant culture, those from urban backgrounds in rural cases, blame the people who remain in societies on the brink of cultural erosion for their lack of initiative and entrepreneurship (cited in Ray, 1999: 264). In the Urla case, although there is no direct blame on the approaches of lifestyle migrants, narratives of missed opportunities are set alongside justifications such as the mismanagement of economic disruption, the inability to engage with Urla’s potential, or the failure to implement local development policies. Locals selling land to newcomers are perceived as

abandoning traditional values and are often criticized, especially by those who see agricultural land being turned over to non-agricultural uses, impacting the rural landscape and causing local detachment from traditional livelihoods.

**Table 2.7 : Justifications of criticism of local communities**

| <b>Justifications or Criticism of Local Communities</b>                    | <b>Examples &amp; Observations</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>"Not protecting or being unable to protect the desired countryside"</b> | <p>The sale of land to newcomers is seen as a break from traditional values, sparking criticism for disrupting the rural landscape and distancing the community from its agricultural roots.</p> <p>The belief that the peasants are not putting in enough effort to defend agricultural land protection and are eager to obtain urban property</p> <p>Generational shift in land use and commitment to rural heritage in terms of selling land for profit</p>                                                                                                                        |
| <b>"The peasants' inabilities"</b>                                         | <p>"The peasants' inability" to make the right moves in response to rapid transformation or the sudden loss of their accumulated economic capital</p> <p>Passive observers in the evolving entrepreneurial ecosystem, owing to their lack of knowledge, social capital, and difficulties about managing economic capital</p> <p>The peasants' shock at the valorization of their land and property</p> <p>the emphasis on the locals' lack of aesthetic perspective and the difficulty in succeeding in the service sector due to the slowness associated with the Aegean culture</p> |
| <b>The manifestations of income inequalities</b>                           | <p>The peasants' detachment from what they know how to do</p> <p>Became poorer by losing their means of production, and were dispossessed due to their inability to utilize the incoming capital</p> <p>The peasants moved to apartments in a nearby neighborhood</p> <p>Working as a security guard as an example of displacement and dispossession</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Cultural adjustments</b>                                                | <p>Narratives reflect judgments on locals' perceived lack of aesthetic sensibility in home and business presentation, which contrasts with the lifestyle migrants' standards</p> <p>Resistance to change of locals</p> <p>Gated communities, private schools, and the expensive social spaces of gastronomic tourism are spaces where encounters are minimized or even erased.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                    |

The local population should be included in development efforts. (...) Ideally, they should not leave; the land should be cultivated with other incentives. It should be encouraged and supported instead of just changing the local fabric. I hope we can create more enjoyable living spaces or economic opportunities with a more balanced model (Ebru, 46, business development manager).

The local communities should also be part of the vineyard route, but it has not happened yet. Only one lawyer is on the vineyard route. However, for example, the gastronomy association was founded; apart from the chef restaurants, there is Beğendik Abi. (...) These are entrepreneurs and merchants from Urla. (...) Nobody can force anything; these are just a few examples. What we can do is provide examples. (Zehra, 61, winery owner and Urla Vineyard Route and NGO member).

Since merchants are more familiar with trade than farmers, they have been relatively more agile in the face of change and have been involved in touristic activities in which lifestyle migrants are active actors. However, the emphasis on the locals' lack of aesthetic perspective and the difficulty in succeeding in the service sector due to the slowness associated with the Aegean culture reflects the critical perspectives lifestyle migrants have towards the way the local population conducts business. The lack of aesthetic vision they mention is not only part of the initiatives' success or economic survival in the rural areas. They stated that the same deficiency also surrounds the spaces of everyday life.

There is a famous fish restaurant in Özbek. When we went there, I thought it was like a kebab place. Everything we ate was incredibly delicious; you think, "I could not get food like this even in Florence." But then you look at the building, you wonder, "Are we in the right place?" (Beste, 41, corporate communication manager).

People in the town do not maintain their homes, even if they have the money. In the evening, they sit under harsh white lights without trying to add beauty. In Greece, people put a lamp, a decoration, or a flower in front of their house. It is not just about being poor; it is about adding little things to your life - a flower, a vase. (...) Then, someone from Istanbul buys the house to much money, and they are surprised at how beautiful it becomes (Mete, 38, chef).

In addition to themes like "not appreciating the value and beauty of what they have" and "urbanites enhancing the rural," resistance to change comes to the fore in the narratives of lifestyle migrants about the local people. Ebru suggests that it will

take some time for the locals to embrace the opportunities brought by change; entry of new participants in the system requires observation and understanding:

It will take some time for the local people in Urla to accept this migration, as there is resistance to change due to uncertainty. The area that was previously considered safe has begun to evolve, with new players entering the game. (...) On the other hand, change also brings opportunities. I believe that these issues will require more time to resolve. (Ebru, 46, business development manager)

The inclusion or exclusion often debated within the context of local development or gentrification is, in fact, reflected in many interviewees' views on locals—such as discourses on the capacity or inadequacy of local communities to engage in change and the tendency to perceive local encounters as integral to rural life and a sense of belonging. Similarly, their sense of belonging to the local community or the countryside, along with their efforts to foster such sentiment, serves as a significant indicator of their perception of the local community. This also illustrates that inclusion can be relevant for lifestyle migrants as well.

We are very lucky in our neighborhood in Urla. It is one of the oldest neighborhoods, and the people living here have been here for at least fifty years. Most of our neighbors are wonderful aunts, many women whose husbands have passed away. They are like mothers to everyone. Sometimes, we feel rushed in the shop; for instance, when ten kilos of okra are bought, the entire neighborhood gathers, and it gets sorted out in just five minutes. They do not complain about the loud noise in the café (Cem, 50, ex-advertiser, cafe owner).

Speaking in the local dialect to avoid being an outsider or hanging out in places where local communities gather and help each other are practices of belonging and interacting with locals. However, the choice of these encounters is framed by the kind of life or work lifestyle migrants want to lead. Gated communities, private schools, and the expensive social spaces of gastronomic tourism are spaces where encounters are minimized or entirely erased. These examples can be seen as similar to the contextualized spaces highlighted by Watt (2009) with his emphasis on “selective belonging”; like the way consumers differentiate their living spaces from others, classes create their territorial differentiation (Jackson & Butler, 2015: 2361). However,

markets, authentic local squares (Malgaca), streets in villages, or neighborhoods where local people still live can also be classical places of encounter.

In rural gentrification, the higher social status and capital of newcomers compared to locals shift the power dynamics and agency within the community, even though the host community appears to have greater influence over the processes of inclusion and exclusion. Tomas and Berger (2024: 14) argue that in environments where roles are reversed, rural gentrifiers take the initiative by creating spaces and conditions shaped by their habitus. This dynamic, in turn, empowers lifestyle migrants with the ability to include or exclude others. Tomas and Berger (2024: 14) warn, however, that these practices are based on a structure that is multi-layered and complex: “While there is a clear dominance of newcomers in the local business sector and property market, this is not the case in interpersonal relations, where gentrifiers recognize that their outsider status will never grant them full admission among the locals.” Therefore, as mentioned at the beginning of this section, both sides’ inclusion and exclusion practices represent a process that is reshaped through work relationships or interactions within daily life.

In Urla, the key intersections related to work include restaurants sourcing local products, exchanging agricultural knowledge, and employing locals in lifestyle migrants’ businesses. As noted by Tomay and Berger (2024), it is essential to examine how lifestyle migrants, as key actors in these interactions, integrate inclusion into their plans and initiatives. Additionally, it is important to evaluate their effectiveness in generating benefits for the community.

Lifestyle migrants’ initiatives—such as fostering a circular economy and job creation, investing in local resources, and transforming their work-related infrastructure in ways that also enhance village infrastructure—can be regarded as indirect contributions to local communities. However, one of the key dynamics related to place capitals and new life practices involves initiatives or mechanisms specifically designed to directly support the welfare of local communities (Gkartzios et al., 2022: 6). Therefore, it is essential to examine migrants’ “community-wealth building” capacities to evaluate whether rural development or revitalization efforts are genuinely community-centered and to understand how local communities are strategically

positioned to benefit from improved rural development. How lifestyle migrants understand development or rural revitalization determines how the benefit is framed. Tourism-oriented planning of the place is more often associated with actors in the tourism business, whether local or not, supporting each other and acting together. Yet, the employment of locals as part of the workforce in businesses has also been linked to the region's economic development.

Development occurs if we all grow together. I mean, while we were preparing the map of the vineyard route, there were only pide shops in Urla, no restaurants. Did these restaurants appear on their own? No, they noticed that a vineyard route was forming here. As the route developed, a restaurant opened. Then another. (...) the vineyard route triggered everything. When the restaurants came, people started looking for places to stay, and accommodation options began to multiply. (...) Waiters, cleaners, and others started coming. (...) All the suppliers in the region started benefiting (Ayşegül, 50, winery owner and Urla Vineyard Route member).

With the winery's opening, the development of many places in our neighborhood was ensured. People who did not have any income in the village started to work here because it was very close to their homes. It had been also a great advantage for the students. The smallest business opened means the livelihood of at least 30 people (Işık, 33, wine-tasting expert).

Since society's well-being depends on keeping value locally, the types of jobs and income levels for locals, the design of local services, and the ways of returning the generated value to the region are dynamics that need to be understood. Employing local people in Urla is seen as contributing back to the region. The development of the service sector creates alternative livelihoods for local people engaged in agriculture, which, as Öztürk et al. (2018) and Keyder and Yenal (2020) point out, is a source of financing to support agriculture or a source of alternative livelihood that secures the family economy by having a member of the household work in a non-agricultural field. Interviewees have mentioned that local people are employed mostly as waiters, waitresses, kitchen staff, and security guards at various venues, as well as in gardening and housekeeping. Among the employment opportunities created by the service sector, the most common pattern in Urla involves restaurants or agro-food producers purchasing villagers' products with an annual purchase guarantee. This

entrepreneurship model is important for building local economic cycles and sustainability so that villagers can continue to farm.

Our goal is not to accumulate capital, but to earn enough to live on and to benefit those around us. It is very valuable to me. What kind of benefit? (...) Local tangerines are more expensive and more uniform. (...)When you give money in advance and guarantee that you will buy it a year later, no matter what happens, farmers suddenly improve the quality of the product they grow and start to change it. Türkiye's agricultural system will also change (İhsan, 49, ex-chef, farmer, and entrepreneur).

However, the fact that the service sector operates with skilled personnel limits the employment opportunities for local people or needs improvement. It was stated that finding qualified employees in Urla is difficult, especially since gastronomy personnel should be trained as intermediate staff. The gastronomy departments of universities are the primary source that meets the service needs of wineries and restaurants. Their planning for local entrepreneurship also works in terms of developing the knowledge capacity of the workforce. For example, a wine producer and a business development specialist in a winery emphasized that the wine service and degustation staff undergo a training process to represent the region's wine better in the restaurants where they serve their products. In another example, future visions regarding human resources are supported by the idea of making chef restaurants informal education institutions to train people interested in gastronomy.

When we can work hand in hand with the staff here, I think we can create something completely different. I said one or two times to those in the gastronomy route community, "Let us give the staff a 5-year or 4-year education like a school" (Mete, 38, chef).

As mentioned partly, although they create jobs for locals in the service and agriculture sector, they mainly recruit from outside the region as they expect different skills, particularly in the wine production process. Therefore, the discourse that lifestyle migrants create job opportunities for the region through their businesses is confined to a limited range of jobs and offers less income. It is important to note that the shift towards the service sector indirectly creates challenges in finding labor for

vineyard work. This implies that local residents may not consider participating in agricultural production worthwhile unless they are tending to their own land. Still, in the vineyards, peasants, especially women, are the labour force that provides economic benefits to the entrepreneurial ecosystem. Furthermore, wineries and restaurants are investing in outsourced labour and triggering the arrival of additional skilled migrants (Stone-Stubbs, 2007; Bosworth & Glasgow, 2012; Dias & Silva, 2021) such as oenologists, chefs, product development specialists, chemists, etc. to improve their business.

Nevertheless, easy access from their village and insured employment opportunities, which are not primarily possible for agricultural labour, seem advantageous for local communities. In addition, supporting the cultivation of vineyards on local lands through the controlled vineyard system<sup>19</sup> and buying the grapes grown for wine production serve as mechanisms that provide community benefits, even though they have yet to be widely applied. Because this system creates difficulties for high product quality, and landowners tend to sell their land at rising rates.

We inevitably take moral responsibility for the village in our way. For example, the vineyards on the other side belong to the villagers. We have planted many vineyards for them and arranged for incoming friends to cultivate vineyards; we tend to vineyards and guarantee their purchase. We are developing this village in that direction (Aziz, 72, architect, winery owner, and Urla Vineyard Route member).

If your vineyard areas are insufficient, you can make agreements with vineyards close to your land, control them, take their grapes, and process them. (...) We all have a few controlled vineyards that are not very big; unfortunately, we are all trying to process our vineyards. Because of the rent-seeking in Urla, nobody thinks of buying land, making a vineyard, and sustaining lives with the earnings. Instead, they prefer to sell it at astronomical prices (Özlem, 57, winery owner and Urla Vineyard Route member).

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<sup>19</sup> The controlled vineyard can be summarised as incentivizing the farmer to cultivate the appropriate yield for the land with a purchase guarantee.



As they present fine-dining concepts and sell unaffordable products for local communities, discussing local wealth-building services within the scope of entrepreneurial activities is impossible. While they seem isolated from local communities besides the work and production relationship, the intersection of living spaces and work areas maintains their rurally embedded presence. As part of their ongoing entrepreneurial efforts, they can undertake activities that benefit the local economy and communities (Bosworth & Farrell, 2011). One of the best examples comes from the emphasis on “moral responsibility for the village” mentioned in the quote above, where villagers’ land is included in the vineyard-raising process, the management of which is very costly. The same producer, an architect, involves the villagers in redesigning their stone houses. Efforts to improve the village land for agricultural purposes and contribute aesthetically to the village demonstrate that lifestyle migrants are concerned with the aesthetics of their living spaces, the health of rural resources, and their commercial value (see Galani-Moutafi, 2013). Benson and Jackson (2013: 801) argue that migrants’ support for local businesses is rooted in maintaining the neighborhood’s class vision. They observe that while migrants ensure the stability of shops that align with their preferences, they do not extend the same support to those that do not fit this vision. Even though the above example connotes aesthetic arrangements fitted to class preferences, it can also be interpreted as a community wealth-building activity that enables local people (mainly farmers and current shopkeepers) to participate in tourism activities and generate income. Therefore, the interaction of entrepreneur lifestyle migrants with local communities leads locals to become more entrepreneurial (Akgün et al., 2011; Dias & Silva, 2021) and generate additional income sources besides agriculture.

We design projects and guide them for municipality procedures. We also made some renovations in the village. (...) I arranged the two rooms under the 2-story ones as hotel rooms and told them they would not enter there. They now rent rooms like Airbnb and are satisfied. (Aziz, 72, architect, winery owner, and Urla Vineyard Route member).

Activities supporting the presence of local actors, such as dealing with local producers for trade (local product supply) (Bosworth & Farrell, 2011) or capitalizing on rural assets (Garrod et al., 2006), building support networks (information sharing, training, etc.), and participating in local events (artichoke festival) (Bosworth &

Glasgow, 2012; Shucksmith, 2018), can be considered the main ways of building community-wealth by lifestyle migrants in Urla. They also reinvented the relationship between culture and agriculture as a form of service (Galani-Moutafi, 2013: 109) and strengthened the terroir tourism experience by promoting the presence of local shopkeepers or farmers and providing new market opportunities to support their businesses/products.

The growth of gastronomy allows visitors to discover the local products. It creates an awareness like, ‘Oh, this has such a unique flavor; let me buy some while I am here...’ This, in turn, supports the local producers. In this sense, the service sector has been beneficial. Additionally, some locals around me are involved in accommodation, such as renting out their homes through Airbnb (Dila, 25, farmer and industrial engineer).

While villas would be built on the lands, the festival incentivized the local people to continue agriculture as their families did instead of divesting, and they saw that they could make money from it. Artichoke production has increased in the region. (...) At the festival, we also organized a session with agricultural engineers on artichoke cultivation and clean agriculture practices for locals (Deniz, 48, ex-chair of the artichoke festival committee, lecturer, and potter).

As a training ground and selling channel, the artichoke festival opens a long-term development field for locals through participating in tourism-based revitalization and economically beneficial agricultural product farming. In addition, the women’s cooperative<sup>20</sup> and regional producers sell artichokes, which have become a local brand product, not only during the festival period but also online, using the sales and production techniques they have learned from workshops. In summary, the entrepreneurial system established by lifestyle migrants yields socio-economic outcomes that carry social concerns and mutual benefits for all involved parties. It is not just about boosting capital, but also about interacting with the local community and environment. However, since the research is limited to lifestyle migrants, whether locals find these practices useful should be addressed in depth by another study. Nevertheless, migrants’ investments increase house prices, create a lack of low-cost housing (Akgün et al., 2011), and dispossess villagers who do not have enough capital

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<sup>20</sup> The Urla Women’s Cooperative exports the Karya brand, created for artichokes and local products.

to participate in economic production shows that community benefit is not possible for everyone. It is also worth noting that, as Heatherington emphasizes (cited in Gallani-Moutafi, 104), farmers have become living embodiments of symbolic place production due to hypermodern consumption. Therefore, in assessing the community wealth capacities of lifestyle migrants, it is important to consider not only how they create employment or economically transform resources for the region, but also the mechanisms they establish to prevent the exclusion of marginalized groups in areas such as education, social support, and access to institutional structures, as well as their efforts at community development (see Marsden, 1999). This issue is also briefly addressed in the social and cultural capital discussion.

### **2.3.3.3. Socio-Cultural Capitals and Creative Practices**

Socio-cultural capital is not exempt from the reciprocal relationships of locals and newcomers, and thus in community capacities, and is embedded in migrants' intentions and practices to revitalize the place economically and socio-culturally. As a starting point, examining how lifestyle migrants integrate their social capital into the community and their lives in Urla is useful to understand how they enhance their cultural influence through social connections. Although it is widely discussed, social capital can be summarised as the resources and power acquired through social networks (Hillier & Rooksby, 2016: 24). The main issues discussed within the scope of social capital include the structure of interpersonal relationships, the nurturing of social capital through trust and mutual exchange (Tomay & Tuboly, 2023), and how power imbalances are reflected in the capacities of creating benefit (Gkartzios et al., 2022: 7).

Within the scope of lifestyle migration, social capital plays a crucial role in influencing the decision to migrate. Previously migrated circles not only provide a guiding framework for migration destinations but also ease the migration process and strengthen the sense of belonging to the new place. Support in housing search, sharing information about children's schooling, and integrating into the social life of communities with similar migration experiences are unsurprising contributions of social capital in the migration process. Social networks that draw similar social groups to rural areas and help them build comfortable lives despite the challenges of the countryside, such as social life, infrastructure, and work, create a framework that

facilitates both the interaction channels of migration and the core principles or codes of spatial practices. Moreover, the initiatives of entrepreneurial lifestyle migrants, in particular, seem to be endowed with social capital. When establishing a new business, they actively engage in networks in Urla and leverage their social connection from their pre-migration lives.

The context of entrepreneurial infrastructure indicated that lifestyle migrants had strengthened their networks with shared objectives and similar cultural capitals, aiming to position Urla as a prominent gastro or terroir tourism destination. In this context, the institutional initiatives mentioned earlier, such as the Urla Vineyard Route and the Gastronomy Union, consist of social networks formed by those engaged in similar businesses who aim to build the future of Urla in connection with their work along a similar tourism axis. As previously discussed in the section on how economic resources are utilized at the intersection of tourism and gastronomy, social networks are supported by a structure that prioritizes the inclusion of creativity, cultural capital, knowledge, and the continuity of relationships to create local value chains, business-oriented resistance, and solidarity mechanisms.

The members of the vineyard route meet regularly every month. The meeting venue can be wineries or new places that are members of the gastronomy union. Tourism maps are created, and generally, everyone talks about what can be done better; relationships are kept warm (Işık, 33, wine-tasting expert).

Entrepreneurial lifestyle migrants seem to have fulfilled the potential of a “self-developing community” (Tomay & Tuboly, 2023) in Urla with their similar cultural capital and common interest in enhancing the place of settlement and business (Cloke, 2006:19; Savage: 2010: 16; Shucksmith, 2018). This is why their social capital serves as a crucial driver of the entrepreneurial ecosystem and contributes to rural well-being. Moreover, coordination and strategies for achieving and implementing the desired outcomes for the place (Shucksmith, 2018; Gallent & Gkartzios, 2019) are also accomplished through relationships and involvement in other organizations, including the Hoteliers Association, participating in meetings organized by Urla Municipality, and even creating new projects through their acquaintance with the Mayor of İzmir Metropolitan Municipality. They mobilize their visions of place through community capacities and active citizenship skills based on social capital (Gkartzios et al., 2022:

7). The fact that they work together with local governments in festival or terroir tourism processes shows that they both take part in the planning of their settlement as an active citizen. They are aware that the development of Urla in the direction they want is possible by working in cooperation with policymakers.

As people who produce ideas and live here and in terms of public administration, lessons should be learned from bad examples; citizens are always responsible for orienting those elected in the right direction or outcomes they desire (Zehra, 61, winery owner and Urla Vineyard Route and NGO member).

Presenting their visions for Urla in meetings linked to İzmir Metropolitan Municipality or the Ministry of Culture and Tourism is also within the scope of place-making practices in interaction with policymakers within their social capital:

I have not missed a single meeting that will support Urla. I even shared my ideas for road signs for Urla. So, creating a brand here is something I have truly been working on for 27 years. (...) When I opened the Winery, I wondered if we could attract 3,000 to 5,000 visitors in ten years, like Tuscany or Bordeaux... In the first year, we had 3,800 visitors. (...) Last year, we closed with 120,000 (Suat, 64, winery, arboretum owner, and Urla Vineyard Route member).

Although entrepreneurial lifestyle migrants stated in the interviews that they received information from local people in areas such as the cultivation of vineyards, artichoke recipes, local herbs, heirloom seeds, etc., there is a hierarchical relationship in the flow of information in areas including marketing, tourism, planning, project management, etc., by having more knowledge depending on their tourist background or work experience (Stone & Stubbs, 2007). On the one hand, imagining a better rural in their way proves that social capital can operate tricky between private interest and public good (Gkartzios et al., 2022).

The reason for coming here was the greenery and the peaceful lifestyle. We need not to lose this way of life. In order to sustain it, we need to take some initiatives. (...) Suggested to the municipality that there should be an Herb Festival because herbs are a part of our culture. (...) Additionally, as Natural Table Urla volunteers, we aim to support artichoke producers and to provide

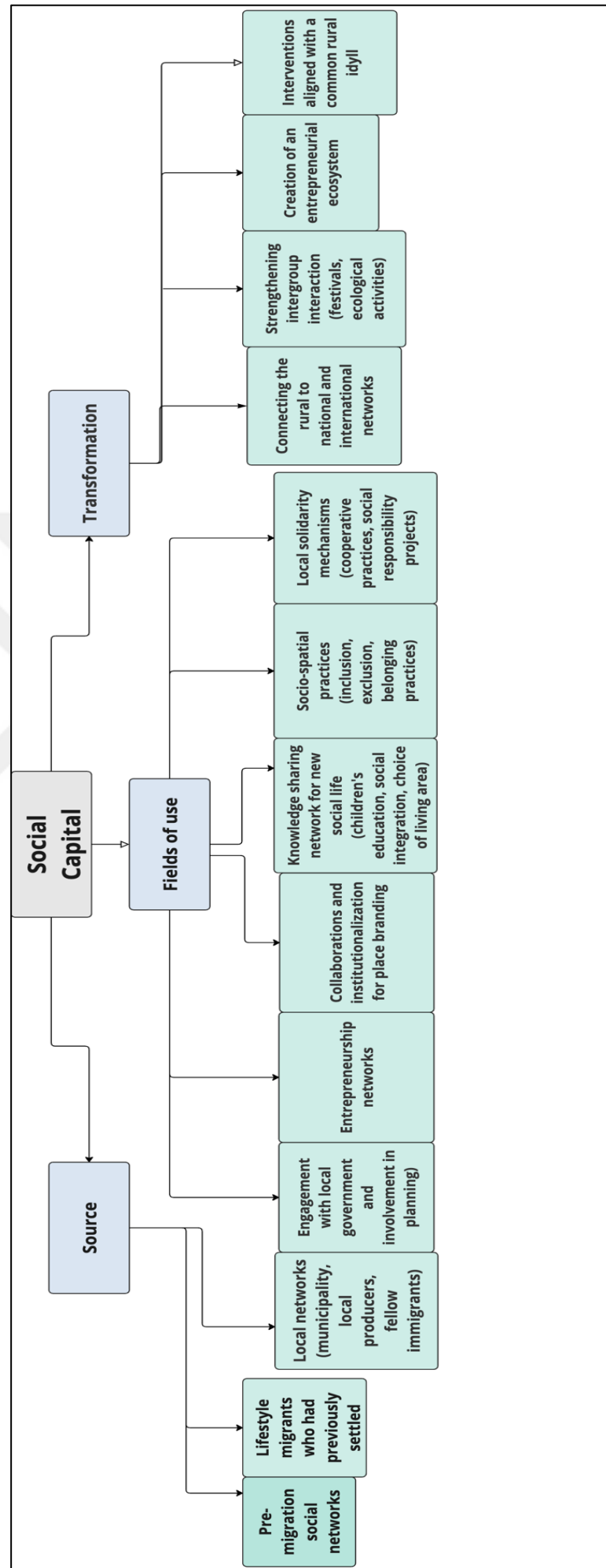
them with better earnings, especially since Urla has a unique artichoke (Zehra, 61, winery owner and Urla Vineyard Route and NGO member).

The Urla 9th of March Herb Festival, inherited from Urla's past, is one of the significant events organized to revive traditions in Urla with the support of the Natural Table Urla Volunteers. (...) We aim to carry out all these activities that align with Urla's values and culture, preserving the local culture and conveying its traditional values (Deniz, 48, ex-chair of the artichoke festival committee, lecturer, and potter).

Emphasizing local festivals and revitalizing local values and culture strengthen the authentic pillar of tourism. On the other hand, these activities exemplify how past tourist experiences and migrants' cultural capital are transferred to practices in Urla. This also demonstrates that social and cultural capital is embedded in work-independent activities as much as integrated into the entrepreneurial ecosystem. According to Bosworth and Glasgow (2012: 141), entrepreneurship is defined as the investment by an individual or a business in various forms of human, social, and financial capital with the aim of improving the local economy and community. This concept can also encompass skills that are relevant to non-economic activities. In this context, lifestyle migrants, who bring their social and cultural capital with them, can both incorporate ethical principles into their work and undertake various initiatives for the places they migrate to, independently of work. Their motives include building the values of the landscapes they wish to inhabit and protecting natural qualities to ensure they can continue living in a healthy environment (Murdoch, 2006; Holmes, 2006; Shucksmith, 2018; Gallent & Gkartzios, 2019).

We have been organizing many events under corporate communications. I was thinking about what we could do for Urla's development. I had plans on how to implement this in practice and with people. I wanted to create a social project supported by the municipality, ensuring it would not have any profit but serve as a social service (Beste, 41, corporate communication manager).

I want to be involved in more initiatives aimed at developing Urla, maybe in collaboration or as a consultant. The new mayor asked about my social media account on Urla. I now have a lot of experience related to Urla. Given my



**Figure 2.10 :** The functioning of social capital in Urla

background in urban planning. (...) Then, we could focus more on conservation than just enjoyment (Ecem, 49, Urla-focused social media account owner)

Beste, a corporate communications specialist, and Ecem, a social media content producer, emphasize the necessity of using their cultural capital and knowledge to achieve the Urla they dream of, even though they are not part of the entrepreneurial community as in the previous examples. The “voluntary” approaches taken by the lifestyle migrants in planning, such as preserving the environment to which they migrated and creating the conditions for the social life they desire (for example, hosting a jazz festival) and making appropriate plans for tourism, demonstrate not only their urban spatial tendencies but also the cultural capital associated with it. While their habitus and spatial practices are primary factors in the gentrification of the countryside, their need to preserve and rediscover local values is, as Marsden (2005) emphasizes, related to the predominance of qualities of rural life, such as proximity to nature and tranquility. The transfer of cultural capital to Urla and restructuring the area’s cultural qualities also reflect the logic of multifunctionality and the convergence of multiple expectations. This tendency transforms Urla into an environment where various rural neighborhoods, settings, social projects, cultural practices, spatial uses, and local values are reconstructed within a differentiated rural framework. Lifestyle migrants plan to develop place-specific cultural assets for a better rural life in accordance with their cultural awareness and aesthetic preferences, in short, their cultural capital. These culture-focused plans include creative activities such as diversification, new place-based products, alternative tourism ventures (Gkartzios et al., 2022), or new cultural narratives about the countryside (Bell & Jayne, 2010: 211). In Urla, especially in constructing these narratives, it was observed that they managed their media relations well because of their social capital and produced content with many broadcasting organizations, including BBC<sup>21</sup>. Cultural activities complement these preceding narratives about the type of place experience encountered.

Blutv, BBC, TRT came to Urla for shooting. Blutv, BBC, TRT came to Urla for shooting. I generally explain Urla’s historical importance and olive oil. It is necessary to highlight the region’s unique values to emphasize that all producers

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<sup>21</sup> Link of the program: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m001qr2k>



in the region and this place are whole (Esra, 46, sustainable gastronomy and agriculture entrepreneur).

Another creative practice through which cultural capital materializes in Urla is related to revitalizing the cultural heritage associated with winemaking. The scientific study carried out jointly with the university within the scope of region-specific historical grapes shows that lifestyle migrants, with their endowments and cultural advantages, seek elements that will add uniqueness to their production and act as a bridge to ensure that local culture extends to the future. However, since the focus of their creative activities is tourism, they create a cultural landscape that will attract either potential tourists or lifestyle migrants who, like them, envisage a countryside enriched with cultural facilities.

Ancient Urla Karası<sup>22</sup> has a name, but we didn't know if it existed. We went out to look for it, it took 6 years to find (...) We did a project with the university and finally found one in Karaburun and one here in Ovacık. There was no DNA analysis to prove it. (...) It entered the world encyclopedia as saved. Since last year, I have given Urla Karası to all the Vineyard Route producers in Urla (Suat, 64, winery and arboretum owner and Urla Vineyard Route member).

The use of cultural capital to create a taste of place makes lifestyle migrants one of the organizing actors acting with the municipality in the artichoke festival. The artichoke festival is a component of a multifaced experience where rural-specific products are not only produced or consumed but also culturally and symbolically embedded in the landscape. As Gallani-Moutafi points out (2013:104), agriculture has overstepped its role as the primary production sector. It serves as a burgeoning tertiary that meets the needs of metropolitan and international tourists who want to experience rural landscapes. Their managerial and creative capacities place cultural elites in the same hierarchy as decision-makers; in addition to planning, they participate in the festival in many roles, such as panelists and trainers. Another pillar of these creative activities within the scope of terroir tourism that has recently come to the fore is the region-specific menus of Michelin-star chef restaurants. Likewise, other restaurants exhibit creative elements to differentiate themselves with a similar creative approach,

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<sup>22</sup> *Urla Karası* is an old and extinct grape specific to the region.

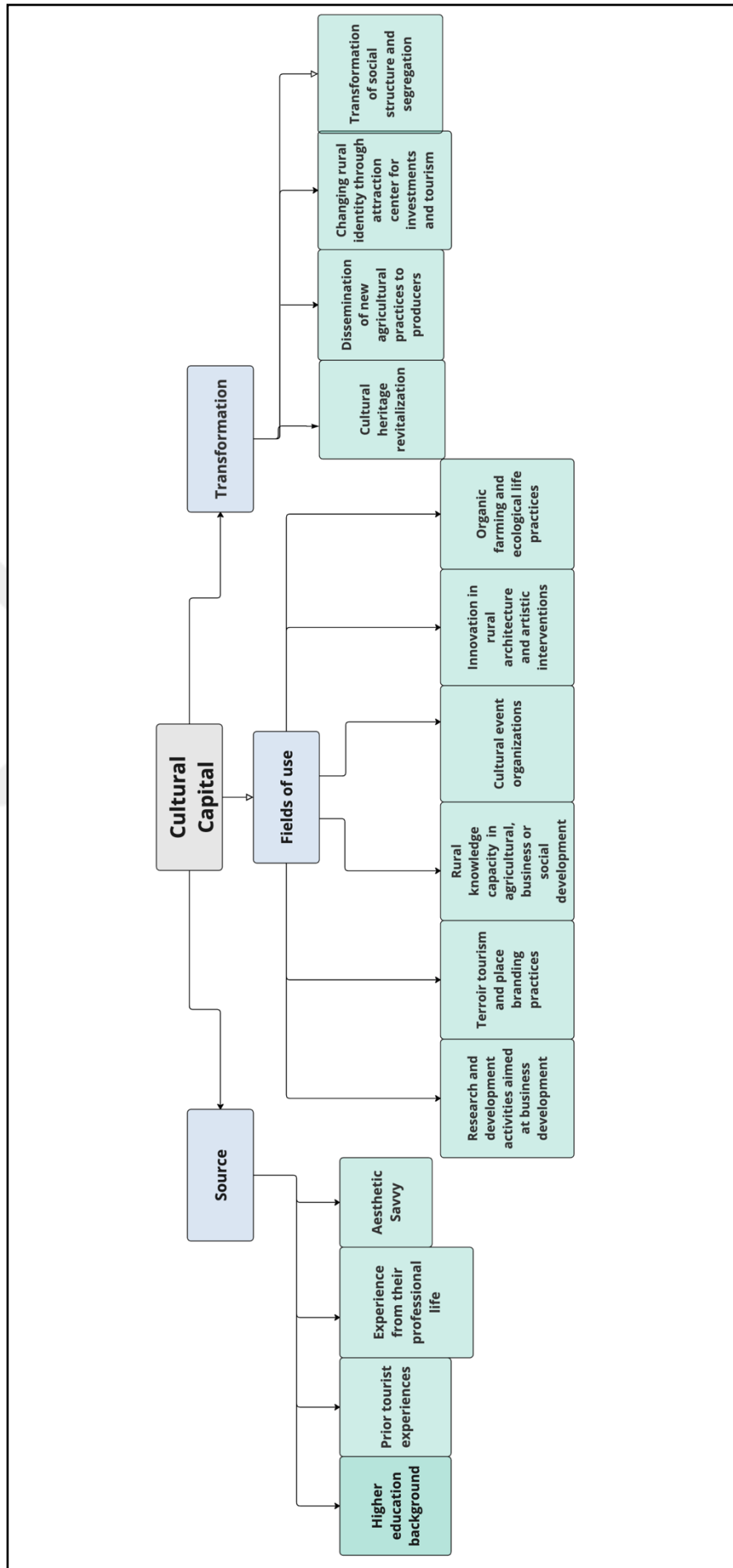
such as presenting a “Green Urla Plate,” creating special recipes with artichokes, and making landscape arrangements for agricultural production.

Here, we have a dish called the “Green Urla Plate.” The Green Urla Plate fully represents Urla. It contains asparagus and artichokes. Everything on the plate is grown in Urla, and the plate itself is made in Urla as well (Kerem, 42, chef).

Creating a “Digital Urla Museum” is a planning initiative where creativity and social capital come together within the scope of tourism. This planning to create a cultural heritage inventory such as *Urla Karası* is also based on creative thinking to differentiate among tourism destinations. Besides agricultural/production museology or ruins such as ancient cities, it is desired to add a museological experience consisting of video art and digital animations that can be considered an extension of the post-rural in Urla. The aesthetic and environmental creative activities related to this spatial experience are discussed in more detail in the next chapter of the dissertation.

I had envisioned a beautiful digital Urla museum. We worked with award-winning husband-and-wife architects to create designs that could be featured on the cover of international magazines. While considering how to bring this idea to fruition, the then-mayor of İzmir suggested that we turn it into a municipal project and asked me to assist by sharing all these ideas. The digital Urla museum will animate Urla’s past and continually update its future (Suat, 64, winery and arboretum owner and Urla Vineyard Route member).

Creating place-specific cultural narratives, organizing events to integrate with these narratives (digital Urla history museum, artichoke festival, etc.), and documenting cultural heritage (regional cuisine recipes, heirloom seeds, etc.) are the ways in which creativity and cultural capital take place in Urla. The raw materials of rural capital stock, such as landscape, biodiversity, and historical elements (Garrod et al., 2006: 119), are considered vital inputs to support terroir tourism with cultural awareness. Therefore, it is possible to include artists among the lifestyle groups associated with entrepreneurship. The organization of the second Urla Art Week in 2024 results from entrepreneurs’ plans to seek a strong and lasting complement to gastronomy and wine.



**Figure 2.11** : The functioning of cultural capital in Urla

The potential of art galleries, as well as activities like plant and agricultural museology, to attract gastronomic tourists with strong cultural and economic capital highlights the importance of strengthening the presence of artistic activities and creative groups in Urla. In addition, ceramic studios, writing, painting, or sewing courses are spreading as hobby areas to fill the increasing leisure time of lifestyle migrants in the countryside as a form of creativity in rural life. These clusters, which are based on the demands of lifestyle migrants, such as the expansion of the service sector, nurture semi-retired productions/craftsmanship for tourism that will provide economic benefits as well as cultural capital transfer or exchange. Some artists focus on creating a village life independent of the commercialized ventures intertwined with craftsmanship. In contrast, others seek an assertion that goes beyond the artistic activities or creative practices that have become standardized in Aegean towns. Celal envisions creating a focal point in Urla, different from a standard Aegean town art center. He aims to organize unique events drawing from cultural industry hubs like Istanbul. Therefore, the art-focused tourist is also included alongside the gastro or terroir tourist; Urla's cultural and artistic activities are not only designed to meet the needs of its residents or lifestyle migrants but are also planned as a unique layer of the desired tourism for the region:

We want to create a kind of renaissance in Urla. Otherwise, why should I imitate what some x art center in Istanbul does? I am not a place where only three to five names come to mind when you think of artists or events, so why would I spend my time, money, or effort on something like this? If I am going to do something unique. I chose Urla. Just as Urla is a fortune for us, we also bring fortune to Urla (Celal, 64, actor and writer).

Practices that integrate cultural and social capital, shaped by the creative capacities of lifestyle migrants, primarily focus on tourism. However, they also aim to create inclusive spaces and generate benefits for both local communities and the environment. Organizing running events annually in collaboration with the municipality to educate underprivileged children in the region; bringing together policymakers and producers to develop an ecological system, advocating for the protection of the village square, creating income opportunities for locals, preserving heirloom seeds, and recognizing women's contributions to production are practices that can be considered as creative cultural practices of groups described in the

dissertation as “socially responsible.” These groups operate independently of work or prioritize non-work-related endeavors while striving to generate social benefits and projects. Within this group, social, economic, and cultural capital are distributed quite differently. Social projects developed as leisure activities by well-off retirees, artists utilizing their cultural capital to support local craftsmanship development in villages, and white-collar or middle-income groups, as well as farmers involved in cooperatives, highlight the varied distribution of these practices. These projects or forms of social responsibility can be within the scope of Urla, or they can be in the form of larger-scale plans, such as creating pilot projects and spreading them throughout Türkiye.

As a model on the urban periphery, we are exploring what we can do to enable the people to coexist with the ecosystem, bringing together rural and city, and thinking about transforming ways these areas into incubator spaces and how to address the housing problems of intellectual individuals, particularly doctoral students. We aim to create a place that produces while also nourishing the city, addressing many overlooked needs within the city that are not being met. (...) We have a project to launch and scale the first pilot in İzmir. (...) If there is a food problem in the city, it is linked to production issues in the countryside (Ali, 48, software developer and designer, NGO member).



Figure 2.12 : Education fundraising run (Source: Urla Municipality Instagram account)

As Cem also stated, volunteer activities in Urla are not devoid of economic capital and the time that this capital provides. These activities also serve to create the means of social capital production, such as breaking the routine of rural life, establishing social spaces, and fostering consensus.

Social work requires time and demands a certain level of financial power. (...)

We want to add something beautiful to our surroundings. When everyone is on the same page, it naturally creates a unified sense of purpose. (...) For example, a new art project aims to create an academy that will also serve as a social space, featuring a bar, a restaurant, a theater, and a concert area. This place will provide training opportunities for many young people. An incredible investment has also been made with the design library: the project brings the books of a very esteemed professor from the US, making them accessible to all of us (Cem, 50, ex-advertiser, cafe owner).

However, Melih mentioned that lifestyle migrants who seek his assistance due to his expertise in project design do not want to engage in larger social initiatives, such as establishing a university, despite their cultural, economic, and social capital. He attributes this to the migrants' tendency to view social activities as a "leisure club" for themselves; therefore, it is important to recognize that the main objective of individuals engaged in these activities is to fulfill their need to feel good in a social environment that is distinct from urban settings, such as the countryside, where there are abundant opportunities for leisure.

There are well-educated people, possess valuable connections, resources, and the time necessary to make a difference. However, their efforts often fall short. Initially, It seemed they may lack knowledge in project management, or design. Throughout my experiences, I've observed that it was more related to being unwilling to collaborate. Many have found comfort in small, insular groups where they engage in their own interests. For instance, a few individuals may focus on fundraising to provide clothing for children, while another group spends time playing bridge, resembling more of a social club than a collective effort for change. Despite having the financial resources, opportunities, and a genuine need for established universities, these initiatives remain unrealized due to the reasons I explained (Melih, 76, strategy and corporate structure design consultant).

Creative initiatives related to cultural capital in terms of place branding, such as terroir tourism and gastronomy destinations, have also faced criticism. Individuals with strong social responsibility and environmental awareness, including new farmers, argue that tourism can negatively impact the town's future. They point to the recent investments by companies looking to build 4- to 5-star hotels in Urla as a concerning sign of this trend<sup>23</sup>. Therefore, cultural capital transferred to tourism, as a trigger of economic capital, can also create conflicts between migrants' rural idyll by attracting foreign investors and the construction sector. Ercan critiques the discourses around wine and gastronomy, which highlight parallels between Urla and Tuscany and focus on Michelin-star-centered narratives to create a gastronomic town. He argues that these approaches, driven by the logic of space consumption, primarily benefit economically motivated groups, such as real estate developers, rather than promoting cultural richness.

The discourse or plannings I've encountered have never truly impressed me—be it the shimmering star ratings, Michelin stars, or the valleys of Tuscany. The perspective behind this sentiment comes from a lack of understanding of Urla or failure to represent it accurately. (...) This is neither Toscana nor the Michelin stars here hold little significance. For real estate agents, perhaps, and maybe for some residents of Urla, this area shines. I find myself quietly observing these enthusiasts of Tuscany and Michelin. On one the hand, I strive to set the right example of what I wish to achieve here (Celal, 64, actor and writer).

Lifestyle migrants, as described in the literature, primarily seek a good life and a close connection to nature. However, their interpretations of what makes a good life can vary widely; these differences are influenced by their life expectations, understanding of a healthy environment, definitions of social benefit, and views on the relationship between work and social life. Therefore, their ways of transferring cultural and social capital, as well as their initiatives and creative activities related to the cultural fabric of the place, highlight different axes according to these varied perspectives. Still, it was observed that they utilized their social and cultural capital as

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<sup>23</sup> The 4- star hotel plan, which was in the planning of Egeland company, was canceled by termination of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process (see : <https://www.birgun.net/haber/bakanlik-once-tahsis-etti-sonra-iptal-etti-573139>).

an extension of their work, primarily in planning to distinguish regional tourism activities. While various groups and lifestyle migrants engage in voluntary activities related to social or environmental issues, these efforts remain limited compared to tourism initiatives. These limited examples do not change the fact that entrepreneur lifestyle migrants bring their terroir vision to the rural areas, triggering gentrification and acting through national and international networks that enrich their commercial endeavors.

### **2.3.4. Local Government, Negotiations and Collaborations**

#### **2.3.4.1. Management Paradigms in Türkiye, İzmir and Urla**

The 1980s marked the emergence of urban entrepreneurship strategies both in Türkiye and globally. As discussed under the heading addressing the rise of the urban age, increasing competition between cities has constrained the repertoire of local governments with public or private investments, capital circulation, and economic competition (Harvey, 1989: 3-5). Cities are being serially reproduced for investment mobility, employment, and discretionary spending (shopping streets, luxury hotels, tourist areas, cultural venues, etc.), where identical spaces of supply and standardized strategy packages constitute the fundamental parameters of this production (Peck, 2005: 740). This competitive trend compels cities to be innovative, exciting, creative, and safe places to live and visit. It also pushes them to present the image of a dynamic community through festivals, cultural events, and artistic production (Harvey, 1989: 9).

Urban entrepreneurship-based management process in Türkiye, primarily evident in decision-making, has been formalized through development plans, sector-based strategy reports, and action plans prepared by ministries (Özgül, 2020: 149). While planning efforts between 2001 and 2005 aimed to reduce regional inequalities, an urban development-focused approach gained prominence in the subsequent period (Özgül, 2020: 150). This process, which coincided with the early years of the AKP government, saw urban governance decisions shaped by the principles of good governance and expediency, aligned with the EU negotiation process. The enactment of the “Municipal Law” in 2005 led to the establishment of City Councils, legally incorporating representatives from chambers of commerce and industry, labor unions,



universities, and NGOs into municipal decision-making processes (Genç et al., 2021: 75). In 2006, the “Law on the Establishment of Development Agencies” introduced another institution with a developmental mission, further expanding the actors involved in urban governance (Genç et al., 2021: 75).

The ninth development plan, prepared in the aftermath of this period, emphasizes collaboration among public, private, and non-governmental sectors to accelerate regional development driven by urban actors. Furthermore, the tenth development plan, promulgated in 2013, highlights improving the quality of urban life, envisioning cities as attractive hubs for skilled human resources, supranational location preferences, and enhanced competitiveness (Özgül, 2020: 153). According to Özgül (2020: 160), although public-private partnerships have been implemented, plans are designed to support urban entrepreneurship strategies, and municipalities’ responsibilities have been expanded through legal regulations, local governments primarily serve as practitioners rather than directing or initiating projects. Consequently, lifestyle migrants, despite their relocation, are not entirely free from the influence of central government policies. However, even though city councils function as advisory boards, they provide a platform where various urban actors, including lifestyle migrants, can engage in shaping local policies.

Despite the management paradigms in Türkiye disclosed by Özgül, it is essential to review the circumstances in İzmir as that will provide further context about the social and economic structure of Urla. İzmir is a multi-functional urban region where peripheral settlements undertake different roles in an expanded field, such as industry, agricultural activities, tourism-related services, finance, and service centers, which are integrated with the city center (Genç et al., 2021: 110). While İzmir represents a central socio-economically prominent region throughout history, it has made no headway besides the development many Anatolian cities have achieved in the global and local conjuncture, especially since the 2000s. The local bourgeoisie and political elites disillusioned economically and politically, got involved in the initiatives and cooperated with the local government regarding plans and projects to ensure urban development (Genç et al., 2021: 112). İzmir Metropolitan Municipality has put forward a systematic approach to local development, and these efforts formed the basis of the perspective expressed as the “İzmir Model” in 2018.

This view envisages a new vision for İzmir with a stress-free, inclusive, welcoming, and interactional city depiction through focusing on increasing quality of life, being a design city, and empowering participatory governance practices (Tekeli, 2018: 13-15). There are four critical components in the predicted route for development: market expansion interventions for rural development (chambers of agriculture, cooperation with small scale-enterprises, etc.), increasing foreign trade capacity, developing tourism potential, creating a sustainable and livable urban landscape (Genç et al., 2021: 128-129). Genç et al. (2021: 129) states that improving the quality of life is related to attracting the educated population to İzmir, and therefore, arrangements have been made for the infrastructure and cultural fabric, such as cleaning the bay, urban tram line, as well as revitalizing the ecology of culture and arts institutions. As one of the settlements that make up the tourism pillar of İzmir, Urla represents new institutions, initiatives, spatial arrangements, and collaborations in tourism activities and urbanization processes.

Urla's place identity consists of many different components: urban near highway environment, second home expansion, alternative tourism experiences (ecotourism, rural tourism, culinary tourism, Etc.), agricultural initiatives on olive growing, and viticulture (Güdücüler, 2012). In addition, the opening of Ege University Fisheries Faculty and İzmir Technology Institute adds new layers to its multifaced environment. (Emekli, 2004a: 115). Emekli (2004a: 115) states that Urla's seaside and agricultural town qualities have been transformed into a seashore city after the rapid growth and expansion of the İzmir metropolitan area. The ease of access by the highway and the opening of the Technology Institute brought urban functions to the fore. The agenda of local governments, along with their institutionalization, economic investments, and collaborations with new actors, are critical to understanding Urla's mixed identity as both a seaside town and a city, as well as its transformations driven by new lifestyles in this preferred destination for internal migration.

#### **2.3.4.2. Urla Municipality Strategic Plan and Lifestyle Migrants**

Planning, public-private partnerships, creating similar supply spaces to attract investments and foster employment, developing innovative and creative living environments, and forming productive communities enriched with cultural activities

are among the key priorities outlined in Urla Municipality's governance plan. In the 2020–2024 Strategic Plan, the mission of the Municipality of Urla is described as: “To be a municipality that adopts a quality-focused approach within the cycle of coexistence and coproduction, while preserving the internal dynamics and values of its inhabitants and districts” (Urla Municipality Strategic Plan, 2020: 8). Its vision is articulated as: “To become an exemplary district that supports sustainability and freedom by joining the network of creative cities.” The emphasis on the production cycle, the quality-focused approach, and participation in the creative cities network suggest that Urla Municipality is aligning its strategic planning with urban entrepreneurship principles. Within the district's lifestyle mobility framework, key considerations include establishing conviviality, preserving values, supporting freedom, and promoting sustainability.

Under the İzmir model, planning efforts to enhance the city's commercial, touristic, agricultural, and financial capacities have also been extended to surrounding districts like Urla, which had previously received road investments and possess strong tourism potential. Although rural development plans aimed at reducing interregional inequalities have been implemented, İzmir also demonstrates selective and fragmented growth driven by competitiveness and image production, in line with Peck's (2005: 740) observations. The revitalization of Urla as both an attractive peripheral settlement and a touristic district of İzmir is based on the design of new economic activities, cultural production, and creative industries (activities related to design, gastronomy, technology, tourism, media, etc.) beyond agricultural production.

Within the framework of this perspective shaping Urla's local governance vision, the goal of becoming part of the creative cities network cannot be achieved solely through cultural strategies and economic interventions. As an extension of the İzmir model's planning to enhance living standards and attract an educated population, it requires the clustering of creative human resources in Urla and their contribution to generating economic value by transferring their creativity, talent, and know-how to the district. Therefore, lifestyle migration is not only an ideal life-making mobility and a spontaneous transformation process, but also an important component of the economic diversification that local governments wish to create for rural areas, linking local values to global markets and creating new region-specific attractions and capitals (see

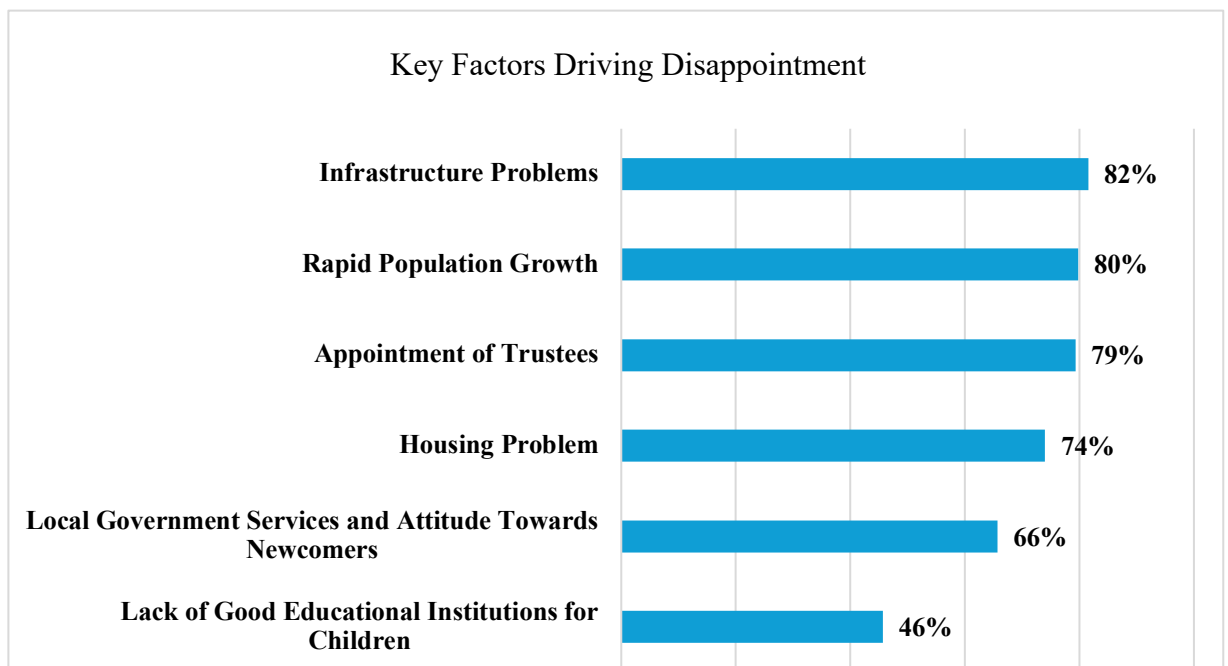
Wood, 1997; Gosnell & Abrams, 2011). In this context, two main strategies crystallize that Urla Municipality can pursue: (1) improving physical infrastructures and rural services, ensuring high standards of quality of life and creating attractive cultural environments; (2) accelerating the transfer of international connections and creative/entrepreneurial capacity to the countryside by creating mechanisms and collaborations to support the initiatives of creative migrants.

However, as the trustee was appointed to Urla Municipality in December 2019<sup>24</sup>, most of the period covered by this dissertation's fieldwork was under trustee administration. Therefore, analyzing the planned strategic projections for lifestyle migrants faced a complicated period. This transition, widely interpreted in the media as an intervention in lifestyle choices and voter political decisions, initially appeared to me as a compelling subject to explore as a researcher, particularly within the context of this dissertation, which examines lifestyle-oriented mobility, as it also carried the potential of a "back to the land" movement towards the Aegean towns against the cultural hegemony of the central government. Although it will be discussed under the next heading in the context of lifestyle migrants' perspective on local governance, when we look at the local policies pursued in this period, the general tendency is to maintain municipal services such as infrastructure, protect environmental quality, organize agricultural development activities, and maintain the agendas established for tourism. Strategic plan, prepared precisely during this period, emphasizes "differences of opinion arising from the fact that elected and appointed officials belong to different political parties." Consequently, the municipality's stance aimed at preventing disruptions in implementation is reflected in its risk analysis as a potential factor that could slow down service delivery.

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<sup>24</sup> In the local elections held on March 31, 2019, Burak Oğuz, the mayor of Urla, was elected from the CHP party. He was subsequently arrested and dismissed from his position as part of an investigation into charges of being a member of the Fetullahist terrorist organization. Following his dismissal, a trustee named Önder Can was appointed to take over, but he was later dismissed for being passive regarding land investigations in the region. Additionally, six individuals, including forestry chiefs, engineers, and civil servants, were arrested for illegally selling treasury lands. This situation highlights the issues surrounding land use in Urla, where high rents have led some investors to resort to illegal activities ([https://www.izgazete.net/politika/chp-kayyumlarinin-urladan-baslamasi-sembolikh42263.html?fbclid=IwAR0VNJeEZCur59eI\\_Mz4GCGQpy1Af7adWsimoPQRfSuKIR1GT\\_OgOsZDEEQ/](https://www.izgazete.net/politika/chp-kayyumlarinin-urladan-baslamasi-sembolikh42263.html?fbclid=IwAR0VNJeEZCur59eI_Mz4GCGQpy1Af7adWsimoPQRfSuKIR1GT_OgOsZDEEQ/))

When analyzing the strategic plan regarding lifestyle opportunities, it is evident that the municipality is seeking solutions to improve the quality of life based on citizen surveys. The responses to the open-ended question regarding services and projects aimed at enhancing life quality highlighted transportation, green areas, parks, employment, investment, tourism, promotion, roads, and infrastructure as the top priorities (Urla Municipality Strategic Plan, 2020: 40). The exploratory questionnaire conducted with lifestyle migrants for this dissertation identified rapid population growth, local administrative services, and the administration's approach to newcomers as disappointing factors.



**Figure 2.13 :** Key factors driving disappointment about Urla

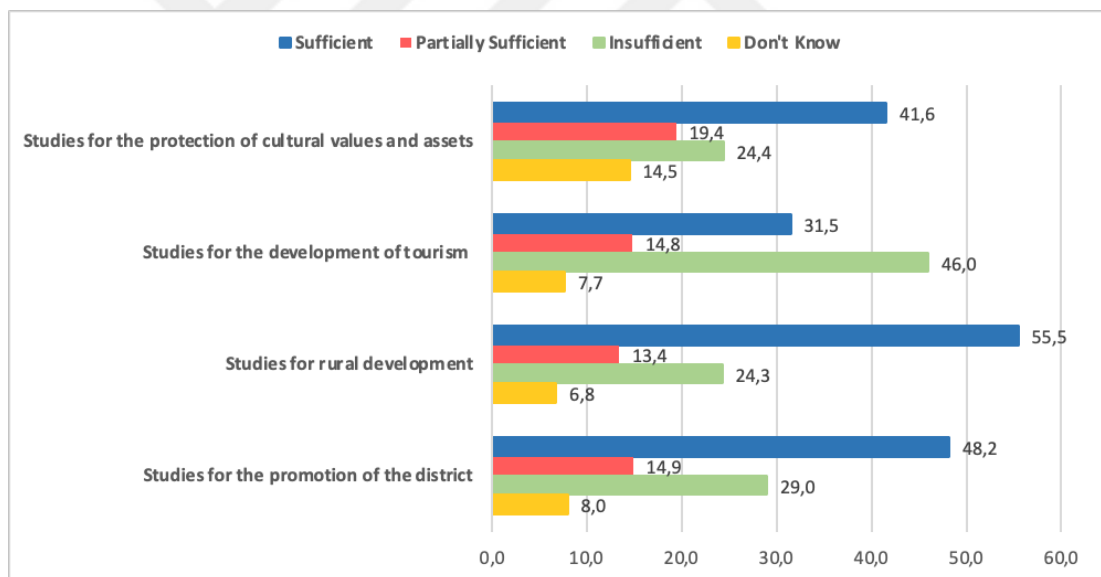
In the PESTLE analysis conducted to determine the macro needs of the strategic plan, under the heading “Economic Factors / Problems,” it is emphasized that the district has experienced rapid migration, leading to an expanding service sector and increasing demand, while economic resources are insufficient, and income-increasing measures should be applied (Urla Municipality Strategic Plan, 2020: 53). Moreover, most migrants’ expectations related to urban landscapes and standards make it challenging to meet these demands under rural conditions. Nevertheless, migrants’ spatial interventions, initiatives, and the triggering of services aligned with their urban habits in Urla, alongside the proliferation of gated communities and the transformation of construction into a significant capital tool, are indicators that the newcomers are

shaping spatial arrangements unique to themselves, even if not directly facilitated by the municipality.

**Table 2.8 : Local government strategies and lifestyle migration**

| <b>Local Government Strategies and Lifestyle Migration</b>     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Applying global formulas to the seaside town management</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Urban entrepreneurship in rural planning</li> <li>• Selective and fragmented growth driven by competitiveness</li> <li>• Clustering of creative human resources</li> <li>• Linking local values to global markets</li> <li>• Focus on joining the network of creative cities</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>Creating new resources</b>                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increasing migration and infrastructure needs putting pressure on economic resources</li> <li>• Strategic partnerships in public-private partnerships (universities, technoparks, international institutions, etc.)</li> <li>• Izmir Planning Agency's financial support for projects and tourism-oriented partnerships</li> <li>• Nurturing the entrepreneurial ecosystem and partnerships with investors and entrepreneurs</li> <li>• Branding local products</li> </ul>                                          |
| <b>Conflict management role</b>                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plans to strengthen cooperatives and revitalize agriculture</li> <li>• Building bridges between local people and lifestyle immigrants for conviviality</li> <li>• Efforts focus on increasing the achievements and enhancing the capacity of the local people and</li> <li>• Providing new employment opportunities</li> <li>• Management of opinion differences emerged because elected and appointed officials belong to different political parties, a consequence of the previous trustee management</li> </ul> |
| <b>Lifestyle focused implementations</b>                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creative city-oriented projects and organizations</li> <li>• Business or lifestyle centers where the creative class will cluster</li> <li>• Creating attractive cultural environments</li> <li>• Building green spaces, parks, transportation networks, strengthening infrastructure and adapting it to the growing population</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                           |

Nevertheless, the overarching policy report underscores the importance of ensuring that designs, zoning plans, housing projects, and public buildings harmonize region's landscape, aesthetics, and identity. This approach aims to strengthen Urla's cultural values by fostering the development of art, tourism, sports, rural initiatives, and social services. It also emphasizes the need to ensure cultural identity compatibility in urban transformation and points to encouraging branding practices for significant spaces that contribute to Urla's identity, thereby maintaining its focus on creating "attractive cultural environments." (Urla Municipality Strategic Plan, 2020: 35). Likewise, in the municipality survey directed to citizens, four main headings were presented in order to measure the adequacy of the services provided for the promotion of the district and the protection of the historical structure. While activities for rural development were found to be sufficient at the highest rate by the participants, the most inadequate services were the initiatives to develop tourism (Urla Municipality Strategic Plan, 2020: 38-39).



**Figure 2.14 :** Citizen surveys: Adequacy of services provided for the promotion of the district and the protection of the historical structure (Source: Urla Municipality Strategic Plan, 2020)

The signs of transformation reflected in the dissertation interviews, including gentrification and rising prices, together with the report, point to a conflict that Urla Municipality has to manage. The rural character, conviviality, and inclusiveness in the Municipality's plans are not exempt from the preservation of authentic or local elements as part of the attraction and the necessity of local representation. Likewise, in the title of sociocultural factors of this analysis, it was stated that there is

“incompatibility (economic, cultural, etc..) between the local people and the people coming from outside due to migration.” As a solution, it envisaged “bringing together at common points by increasing the achievements and capacity enhancement of the local people.” (Urla Municipality Strategic Plan, 2020: 51). The municipality’s agriculture-focused training and organizational planning involving local communities, previously discussed under the heading related to agricultural production, operate as an extension of this strategy.

The municipality’s mechanism for managing issues related to lifestyle migration is to create revenue-generating private-public partnerships and to act as an intermediary in bringing together local administrations, the private sector, and civil society, especially in the delivery of culture and arts services.

The first chapter, under the subheading “Rural Development-Focused Institutionalizations in Urla,” discusses the main supports provided by the İzmir Development Agency (İZKA) in collaboration with the İzmir Metropolitan Municipality and the Urla Municipality. This agency, operates under the Ministry of Industry and Technology, and is not independent of central policies. These institutional frameworks, which support the initiatives of lifestyle migrants and outline the ways local municipalities engage with these supports, can be summarized as follows:

*Support for Innovation, Academia, and Technology:* The İzmir Institute of Technology and the Technopark in Urla support İZKA’s goal of attracting technology initiatives and innovative projects to the region, aiming to establish Urla as a technological hub on the periphery. These institutions, centered around the university, also strive to cluster knowledge production and technology in close collaboration. Within the scope of these projects, Urla Municipality acts as a strategic partner, bringing together the private and public sectors while nurturing the entrepreneurship ecosystem. This transition includes creating the necessary infrastructure, establishing local cooperation networks, and building connections to enhance the technological capacity of businesses in the region. The interviewees from the software industry highlighted that Technopark has become a stagnant investment—a mere symbolic location where companies gather to organize launches. They noted that many companies tend to leave after solidifying their investments, often relocating to



countries like Germany or the Netherlands. This situation indicates that local skilled human resource planning is not aligned with global trends and that strategies do not universally apply to every group of lifestyle migrants.

*Tourism, Local Production, and Rural Revitalization:* İZKA has also provided financial support programs to support gastronomy and wine tourism and branding local products. As presented in the table below, a key strategy within the sustainable development of Urla is to facilitate the necessary technical and technological investments for branding wine producers, thereby supporting the revitalization of the agricultural heritage of Urla. The financing provided to the Urla Wine Producers and Viticulture Association has facilitated the region's branding as both a national and international vineyard route, transforming it into a destination for terroir tourism. Although development agencies are typically aligned with central government policies, İZKA has implemented a planning process in İzmir that prioritizes economic factors over ideological concerns. This shift is largely due to the export potential of wine, its connection to gastronomy tourism, and its role in supporting rural development through viticulture. The institutionalization and support provided to this initiative have been bolstered by promotional activities, international networking, and logistical and organizational assistance from both İzmir and Urla Municipality, presenting a significant opportunity for the region's promotion.

*Strengthening Cooperatives:* In the context of strengthening the local economy, incentives seemingly aimed at increasing the resilience of the local population to the transformations taking place are one of the conflict management practices municipalities follow when faced with changing social structures and income inequality. At the same time, this practice also supports the presence of middle-income lifestyle migrants in cooperative systems as producers or supporters.

Considering the activities of architect mayor Selçuk Balkan, who came to power in the 2024 local elections following a period of trustee administration, it becomes evident that the emphasis on creativity persists as a continuation of the 2020-2024 strategic plan. In September 2024, Urla Municipality hosted the Urla Creative City Coordination meeting as a participant in the "Create in İzmir" project organized by İzmir University of Economics. This meeting brought together sector representatives,

including olive oil producers, wine producers, chefs, new farmers, architects, urban historians, and content creators, who actively contribute to developing Urla's entrepreneurial ecosystem <sup>25</sup>. Therefore, lifestyle migrants are not only desirable groups for Urla Municipality to attract but also experts whose desires are listened to, included in decision-making processes, and who formulate strategies to increase the region's future competitiveness within the scope of development planning based on creativity and sustainability.

Therefore, entrepreneurs, shareholders, investors, and artists are desirable lifestyle migrants that the Municipality includes in its tourism-oriented management planning. However, the rise in migration introduces new challenges, such as the need for additional resources and infrastructure and addressing social incompatibilities. Furthermore, it is important to note that planning for technology-oriented human resources in Urla has not advanced as in technology zones in other parts of the world, meaning that the same strategies may not function everywhere. Nevertheless, with their capital, creative capacities, and knowledge that feed the entrepreneurial system, they are important actors in the ideals of "rural development" in tourism. The diversity and scale of lifestyle migrants' activities are critical for resource creation and the local government's destination management.

This title, which shows how social hierarchies are constructed in the region, supports Wood's proposition that intertwined rural power and cultural strategies in the countryside form the basis of social transformations. While it is not possible to speak of a strict feudal order in Türkiye as in Europe, the land system, concentrated in the hands of powerful local families and tied to the central authority, combined with the dominance of these families in local administration, created a semi-authoritarian system during the Ottoman period (see Berktaş, 2016). The modernization of land ownership with the establishment of the Republic of Türkiye did not completely eliminate the influence of powerful families over the land (İnci, 2010). While Wood (1997: 453) discusses how local power structures are transformed through the political involvement of small elites in a broader context, this framework also applies to Türkiye

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<sup>25</sup> My knowledge of this event expanded beyond the attached news article when a lifestyle migrants who had been interviewed and involved in the municipality's communication activities asked me for recommendations for potential participants (For more information on the event, see: <https://www.kentvebaskan.com.tr/haber/21747225/urla-yaratıcı-kent-koordinasyon-toplantisi-gerçekleştirildi>)

—in Urla’s case, affluent lifestyle migrants—who exert influence over local government units, even if control is not concentrated in the hands of a single dominant elite. The next section briefly outlines how lifestyle migrants view local government interventions, the appointment of trustees and how migrants are involved in the political process.

#### 2.3.4.3. Lifestyle Migrants’ Views on Local Government

As highlighted in the previous section, the trustee issue, which appears to be a compelling topic within the axis of migration from cities dominated by centralized policies and increasing conservative cultural hegemony to secular Aegean towns, emerged as a significant theme at the beginning of the fieldwork. It was also one of the topics discussed during in-depth interviews, where interviewees shared their opinions on local governance. The appointment of trustees to HDP municipalities, followed by the same centralized intervention in a district of İzmir, a city known as a CHP stronghold, with this particular district attracting significant investment and migration, sparked debates in news articles<sup>26</sup> about interference in voters’ decisions and its impact on the way of life. Academician Ayşen Uysal<sup>27</sup>, in an interview with her about the deputation of the trustee, said the following words about Urla, which stands out with its “lifestyle” and has high worth for investors:

Urla exhibits significant sociological characteristics and is increasingly seen as a rising value. In recent years, it has received substantial migration, particularly from Istanbul, primarily consisting of an educated upper-middle-class population. It has become a haven for those seeking to escape the regime’s pressure and interference in their lifestyles. İzmir, as a whole, attracts upper-class populations, and Urla specifically hosts affluent enclaves. It serves as a sociological field where class analysis, particularly from Bourdieu’s perspective on lifestyles, can be effectively conducted. Unlike Çeşme or Alaçatı, which are predominantly seasonal destinations preferred in summer, Urla is a place of year-round habitation. Additionally, it has a high proportion of unearned income, which contributes to escalating conflicts over acquiring

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.bbc.com/turkce/haberler-turkiye-50846361>; <https://t24.com.tr/haber/kayyim-yonetimindeki-urla-belediyesi-nden-13-milyon-tl-lik-arazi-satisti,1080844>; <https://www.sozcu.com.tr/urla-kayyumu-gorevden-alindi-wp6188563>

<sup>27</sup> The source of the statement: <https://bianet.org/yazi/urla-ya-kayyim-geldi-219081>

more. Politically, Urla is one of the districts where the CHP secures its highest vote share in Türkiye. Considering these dynamics, the strategic and symbolic importance of the trustees' actions, starting from Urla, becomes increasingly apparent.

Related to the issue of trusteeship, which is linked to observations such as the migration of the educated upper-middle class, the area's transformation into a permanent residence, the presence of affluent enclaves, and its role as a refuge from governmental pressures, it was revealed that the story encompassed unexpected dimensions beyond these connections when migrants were consulted. Politics, which is considered as an important link of the Urla debate within the framework of the dissertation, emerged with an exceptional process during the field experience as a temporary pause to the CHP administration, which has become an established political culture in İzmir.

Lifestyle migrants have predominantly interpreted the trustee administration in Urla as the government's backup plan amidst the chaos, during which discussions about the mayor's alleged corruption emerged. Some lifestyle migrants highlight that, unlike the political interventions seen in the eastern provinces, the central intervention in this case focuses on the economic capital accumulated in a town at a crossroads, where the tourism potential is becoming increasingly evident. In Türkiye, although the central government is an important authority in zoning decisions, decisions on neighborhoods, roads, buildings, and the planning of tourism facilities are all within the purview of local governments. Interpreted through the narratives of lifestyle migrants and lacking official evidence, it would not be wrong to state that the central government increased its authority in Urla following the acceleration of the rent-seeking mechanisms of construction, driven by tourism and migration.

Similarly, Nazan highlights this era of critical rupture and underscores the importance of the municipality's decisions and actions in shaping what kind of place Urla will become. In the next chapter of the dissertation, which delves deeply into the transformation of the built environment, the conversion of agricultural land in the Kuşçular region into residential development is criticized as a process under the local administration's responsibility. In fact, the transformation of agricultural lands proceeds under the authority of the central government, with the Ministry of

Agriculture and Forestry granting permission for non-agricultural use, the Ministry of Environment, Urbanization, and Climate approving the environmental layout plan, and the last step, Urla Municipality implementing sub-scale plans and practices based on the upper-scale plans<sup>28</sup>. Similarly, the former mayor emphasizes that, although lifestyles cannot be interfered with, the trustee administrations, with their tendency to put everything up for tender, disregard the fact that the area is a place where people live. However, when examining the general trend of opinions regarding the trustee issue, it becomes apparent that complementary urban planning initiatives between the central government and local authorities were facilitated under trustee administration. Nevertheless, it is emphasized that the political identity of those in power or who assume authority does not significantly impact the process due to rent-seeking dynamics.

In the interviews conducted as the trustee period advanced, initial fears of intervention were replaced by discussions suggesting that no critical transformation occurred due to the adaptability and diligence of the state-appointed district governor, that the tourism targets set for Urla were maintained, that the AKP needed to provide good services to garner votes, and that the situation was viewed as a temporary process, with anticipation for change in the next local elections. It was also stated that infrastructures continue to be a problem in Urla; roads not used much outside the center are fixed, or temporary solutions are produced rather than building the infrastructures the region needs. Another point of criticism is that when generating opinions or seeking consultations, the focus is primarily on merchants. Individuals or groups without an economic relationship to the region are often excluded from these processes. These exclusions or inclusions can be interpreted as a criticism that those outside the dominant lifestyle migrants are not included in the Municipality's scope.

A few entrepreneurial lifestyle migrants mentioned experiencing difficulties in Urla, as the first step required applying to the municipality for a business license before obtaining a license for an alcoholic venue. Although they expected the process to proceed smoothly due to the area's touristic nature, the proximity to religious or

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<sup>28</sup> For the legal regulation about protection, utilization, and planning of agricultural land :  
:https://www.tarimorman.gov.tr/TRGM/Belgeler/Duyurular/TARIM%20ARAZ%C4%B0LER%C4%B0N%C4%B0N%20KORUNMASI%20KULLANILMASI%20VE%20PLANLANMASINA%20DA%C4%B0R%20UYGULAMA%20TAL%C4%B0MATI.pdf)

educational institutions posed obstacles, regardless of whether these institutions were open or closed. Mete, who settled in Urla with the dream of opening a restaurant but faced numerous bureaucratic obstacles while searching for suitable venues, stated that he believed this was done strategically, particularly in touristic areas. He argued that state buildings such as libraries and dormitories were deliberately allocated to certain regions in a pre-planned manner to hinder the acquisition of alcohol licenses. Therefore, entrepreneurial lifestyle migrants identify shortcomings and conflicts in bureaucratic processes (licenses, permits, environmental regulations) or tourism operations despite they cooperate with the local government on tourism,

While the trustee administration has assumed a temporary role and is still subject to some criticism, what lifestyle migrants emphasize about the political situation in İzmir, and therefore Urla, is that the CHP has secured votes for the region, which has become a classic narrative of criticism for İzmir. Therefore, the focus is not on whether there is a good candidate in the administration or sufficient service provision. Those who have lived in Urla for more than 10 years have stated that they have rarely met an administrator they were already satisfied with, that there is no foresighted planning for the future of Urla, and that infrastructure works are not systematic. The interesting detail lies in what Zeynep describes as the entrenchment of a relationship of mutual interest between the Urla municipality and its residents, which she believes ensures that the CHP will continue to be elected regardless of circumstances. This relationship of reciprocity, according to Zeynep, stems from the risk that another administration might remove many illegally constructed roads and houses. Consequently, Zeynep argues that the officials elected in Urla are not effective administrators and hinder the town's development.

Onur adds the status quoism of the local administration in İzmir to what Zeynep said. He states that there is an attitude of protecting the status quo, not changing the cadres, and maintaining council memberships, which aims to protect the cadres rather than develop Urla. The issue of appointing a trustee was also reflected in the narratives for speculative reasons, such as the CHP not researching its candidate sufficiently and internal party conflicts.

Table 2.9 : Negotiating Urla with the local government

| Negotiating Urla with the Local Government                         | Observation                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | In-depth interview                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Concerns about the appointment of a trustee - the ongoing politics | <p>Focuses on the economic capital accumulated in a town at a crossroads</p> <p>Tendency to put everything up for tender</p> <p>The impossibility of interfering with the lifestyle in the Aegean region</p> <p>Trustee's Adaptability Without Critical Transformation in town</p> <p>Shortcomings about infrastructure and conflicts in bureaucratic processes (licenses, permits, environmental regulations) or tourism operations</p> | <p>Urla is <u>currently at a critical juncture</u>. If it can overcome this phase and truly well-planned projects, Urla can become a great place to be fully appreciated. This is the responsibility of municipalities. But it is <u>at a breaking point right now</u> (Nazan, 55, cafe owner).</p> <p>They <u>cannot interfere with lifestyles</u>, yet the <u>first trustee removed the women's cooperative</u> from the pier, while <u>this trustee allowed it</u>. Based on what criteria? The same law, the same issue... The area they set up in the back <u>resembles an impound lot</u>. (...) This trustee planted a few trees here and there but <u>is putting everything up for tender</u> (Dilek, 53, ex-mayor, head of women's producer cooperative).</p> <p>Up until now, it has been about paving stones and landscaping; let's see what happens next. They aim to provide services, but they <u>also have political agendas</u>. (...) Ultimately, they <u>seek to win the people's votes</u> and earn approval (Zehra, 61, winery owner and Urla Vineyard Route and NGO member).</p> <p>The issue of <u>Urla's development is complicated</u> because there are many <u>unresolved problems due to the trustee</u>. The Urla Municipality's social media accounts share posts like 'we built a sidewalk here' or 'we did this there,' <u>but who knows where they are actually doing it?</u> The roads they show are usually in inner neighborhoods that are rarely used (Cem, 50, ex-advertiser, cafe owner).</p> <p>Since the mayor is a trustee, everything they do in terms of <u>building a relationship with the community is already done through shopkeepers</u>. When they say they are listening to public concerns, they visit the <u>shopkeepers in Urla</u>. When they claim to gather public opinion, they gather the <u>shopkeepers' opinions</u> (Melih, 76, strategy and corporate structure design consultant).</p> <p>Six months passed at the municipality, and we looked at two locations, but neither worked out. <u>One was 20 meters away from a dormitory but was inactive</u> as it was a Fethullah-linked dormitory. It feels like a <u>strategy to me—distributing state institutions like this and then banning alcohol within a 100-meter radius</u> (Melih, 76, strategy and corporate structure design consultant).</p> <p>All trustees, even in special cases like ours, <u>act on the command of those in charge on the spot</u>. I don't want to be unfair to them; there may be actions they attempt in good faith. (...) However, he is a central administration representative, and the citizens wanted him to leave as soon as possible. They desired to govern this place with their own will and have someone represent them, for better or worse (Celal, 64, actor and writer).</p> |
| Criticism of CHP                                                   | <p>Confidence in being the party's stronghold and status quoism</p> <p>No foresighted planning for the future of Urla, and the non-systematic infrastructure services</p> <p>Mutual interest between the Urla municipality and residents because of illegally constructed roads and houses</p> <p>Hindering the town's development</p> <p>Rent-Seeking overrides political identity</p>                                                  | <p>Are the <u>CHP members currently in the provincial municipal council</u>, who were elected by the council, <u>exceptional people</u>? No, they are not. <u>If it were up to them, would Urla develop?</u> (...) I'm speaking <u>specifically about Izmir</u>, not about Turkey as a whole or the party leadership. There is a <u>sense of status quo here—let us preserve the current state, let nothing be renewed, let nothing improve</u>. (Onur, 44, sales manager).</p> <p>The reason why the municipality cannot manage well here might also be the people. (...) Doing something often <u>means disturbing the residents, because there are many illegally built houses, roads, and so on here</u>. If the Mayor <u>were to truly govern in full compliance with the laws, many locals in Urla would be affected negatively</u> in some way. That might be <u>why development is not happening</u> (Zeynep, 37, biologist).</p> <p>If two or three people dislike both trustees, they are likely from the CHP municipality or the provincial council. That's because they could not benefit financially. There are substantial rent-seeking opportunities present. In other words, they would like to profit significantly from the municipality, but the trustee doesn't allow it (Beste, 41, corporate communication manager).</p> <p>I see that the trustee is actually doing work. Whether or not he stole does not concern me—they all do. But he accomplished things here. He demolished the coastal areas they could not touch because of votes and brought order. I just want someone who gets things done; whether it's AKP or CHP does not matter to me anymore Ayşegül, 50, winery owner and Urla Vineyard Route member).</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Ways of political engagement and negotiation                       | <p>Limited NGO memberships and environmental activism</p> <p>Tourism-oriented collaboration of entrepreneurs</p> <p>Apoliticization</p> <p>Escaping into micro-worlds and social isolation in rural</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | <p>I do not have much connection with local governments, <u>nor do we have any influence over these matters</u>. If you live in this district or town, <u>we should organize</u>. But the biggest impact of the 1980 coup was the <u>blow it dealt to the organization</u>. Unions and similar structures were completely dismantled. <u>If people were organized, they could not dismiss the mayor</u> (Vedat, 57, Barista Trainer).</p> <p>The people I know in Urla, like my veterinarian, for example, are not originally from here—he's from Istanbul. Another friend, who owns a pet shop, is from Balıkesir. I've realized that among the people I connect with and share a similar outlook on life, there's almost no one who is originally from Urla (Suna, 54, psychologist).</p> <p>The nice thing about living here is that I don't watch the news, so I'm not exposed to it. Honestly, it helps me feel more at ease. I intentionally try to stay away from current events. (...) I've deliberately chosen to distance myself, so to speak (Mavi, 40, sustainable agriculture auditor, expert and NGO member).</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Issues of negotiation                                              | <p>Projects for the revitalization of agriculture</p> <p>Protection of cooperative spaces</p> <p>Aesthetic ordering of the landscape</p> <p>License issues and zoning plans</p> <p>Improvement of disturbing aspects of the natural environment and infrastructures</p> <p>Controlled construction and prevent environmental destruction of villages/natural areas</p>                                                                   | <p>Regarding personal matters rather than official positions, personal ambitions can come into play, along with different political maneuvers or unpleasant situations. There might even be financial expectations, and that is how things tend to work in Urla. Normally, a hotel project is planned here, but we have not been able to proceed with it for three years because we could not get the necessary permits. Yet, ahead of us or behind us, permits are easily granted (Işık, 33, wine-tasting expert)</p> <p>The election is approaching. Once again, everyone is buying land, constructing buildings on it, and getting numbers assigned, and so on. This is, of course, a problem related to the municipality—they shouldn't allow this to happen ((Zeynep, 37, biologist).</p> <p>They build houses and <u>construct buildings but never bother with the landscaping or exterior surroundings</u>. (...) Look at <u>all the newly built houses</u>—do they have proper landscaping or environmental planning? No, they do not. Yet the prices are high. It is all about putting in a window and a door and enclosing four walls. (...) It might be an old settlement, but it can still be clean. The municipality should also address these issues (Nazan, 55, cafe owner).</p> <p>Altunköy-Demircili area, this region is a first-degree protected site. Yet, they are opening it up for accommodations and social facilities. This is an incredibly remote, pristine area that's difficult to reach even by car—an area that should not be developed. Moreover, there are issues related to geothermal energy here as well. It's truly unfortunate (Aziz, 72, architect, winery owner, and Urla Vineyard Route member).</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |

While lifestyle migrants expressed in interviews that they wished to live freely, in a democratic environment, following their preferred lifestyle, and in a province predominantly composed of secular voters, they are highly critical of the party they vote for at the ballot box. This situation, of course, is not unique to CHP voters in İzmir; the scenario in Urla also indicates that even within the political and cultural structure they feel a sense of belonging to, an ideal functioning for them does not exist. Lifestyle migrants express concerns about their local living conditions and their involvement in politics. They feel that casting votes doesn't result in meaningful change in areas where local government plays a key role, such as the quality of services, living standards, and rural development.

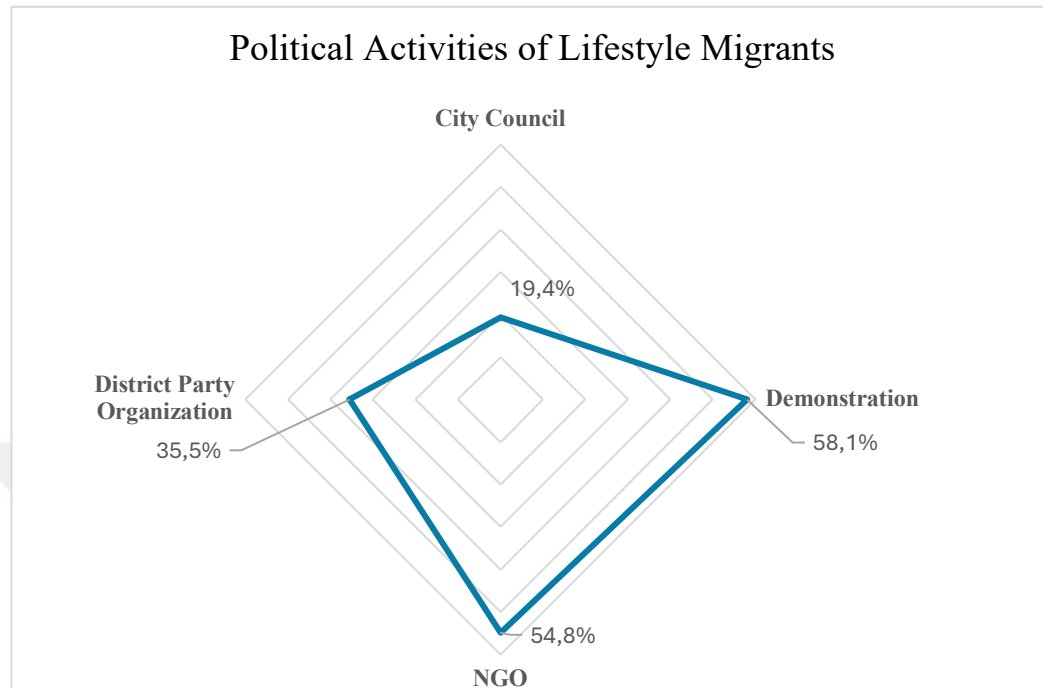
Despite the criticisms, it is difficult to assert that lifestyle migrants in Urla demonstrate effective political engagement with the problems or administrative issues they identify. While some artists, back-to-the-landers farmers, socially responsible people, and retirees state that they are members of civil society organizations or district councils, particularly on issues related to environmental preservation, lifestyle migrants generally aspire to a landscape in Urla that allows them to remain distant from political agendas and enjoy a peaceful living environment. Arif stated that they lacked organization and did not have the power to resist issues such as the mayor's dismissal. Even though he mentioned participating in political protests during his university years, particularly in the early 1980s, he criticized himself for failing to organize, attributing this to the broader apoliticization in Türkiye rather than his personal stance.

Likewise, the exploratory survey conducted within the scope of the dissertation shows that migrants are more likely to work in civil society organizations or participate in some demonstrations rather than district council membership and political party engagement.

Some environmental interventions they have responded to include deforestation during the construction of wind power plants, geothermal drilling, and protests against quarries. They have also participated in protests and marches concerning the land allocated to partisan contractors during the trustee municipality period as part of the Park project. Moreover, as mentioned in previous sections, their cultural and economic



engagement in policy-making primarily focuses on developing tourism that emphasizes a holistic experience.



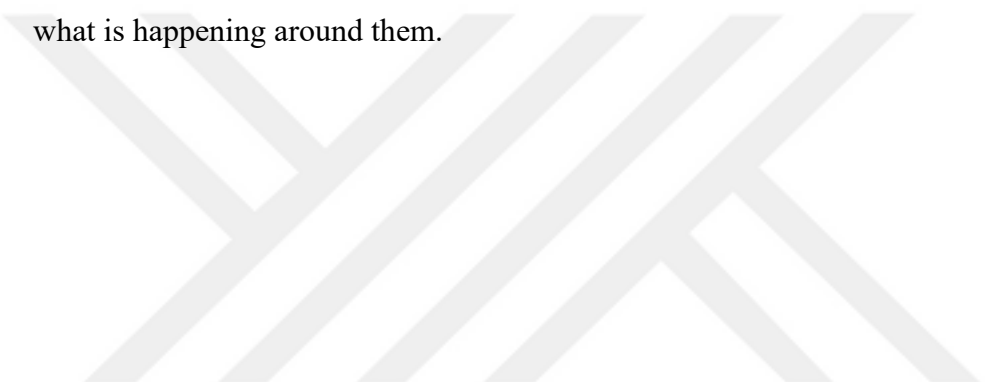
**Figure 2.15 :** Political activities of lifestyle migrants

The common issue they negotiate in Urla is that the living space they came to Urla for, its natural qualities, should not turn into a touristic, expensive, and concretized settlement like Çeşme, Bodrum, Kuşadası and that economic interest gangs such as the mafia should not come to Urla. Their suggestions in this direction are that the local administration should control these interest relations, that the municipality should strictly control zoning plans, and that the administration should make local objections to transforming agricultural lands and protected areas into construction zones. Although they are among the parties fueling change, they point to the Municipality as the main actor in Urla's future.

The limited engagement in political activism, apart from environmentally conscious and socially responsible lifestyle migrants—which represents a small subset of the interviewees—can also be interpreted as an escaping into micro-worlds (Özet, 2022). This concept, which opens to the dispersed settlement of the countryside, which provides space to move away when desired, and to the establishment of socially, economically, and culturally smaller-scale lives, also expresses a conscious

withdrawal from the reflections of what is happening in the country (rent-based relations, social conflicts, environmental destruction, central government-municipality conflicts, economic crisis) in Urla.

Avoiding engagement with current affairs, remaining within a limited social environment, organizing settlements according to these preferences, and sustaining life by relying on resources from the countryside point to a process that can result in social isolation. Therefore, it is important to highlight that, alongside migrants who interact and negotiate with the local government on issues such as work, life, environmental concerns, and cultural activities, there are also apolitical groups and sociopolitically exhausted individuals who prefer not to participate in social struggles or engage with what is happening around them.



### **3. REPRODUCTION OF THE SEASIDE TOWN THROUGH LIFESTYLE MIGRATION: TRANSFORMATION OF THE NATURAL AND BUILT ENVIRONMENT IN URLA**

#### **3.1. Chapter overview**

The second main pillar of this dissertation explores how lifestyle migration has transformed the built and natural environment of the coastal town of Urla. Following the previous chapter, based on the macro-level dimensions of lifestyle migrants' transfer of cultural, social, and economic capital into Urla's social fabric, this chapter focuses on the material transformations of Urla's landscape. While addressing broader axes of governance and planning, it primarily aims to show changes in micro-scale aspects of everyday life, such as encounters, settlements, socialization spaces, and consumption zones. In this context, this chapter aims to shed light on how the built environment has absorbed the natural environment and how lifestyle migration has shaped emergent practices of spatial reproduction in Urla. The prominent themes within the scope of this chapter include the re-functionalization of spaces, emerging architectural patterns, the development of new residential areas, areas set aside for tourism and recreational practices, and the symbolic reconfiguration of the natural environment. Therefore, while this chapter provides a limited perspective within a Lefebvrian framework of spatial production, it emphasizes that the re-functionalization of spatial practices and the planning roles undertaken by political administrators, planners, and market actors, and the ways lifestyle migrants either support or transform this structure through their spaces of action collectively offer valuable insights into the transformation of the environment. Briefly, the chapter looks at how migration changes Urla's settlement fabric by creating representations or

interventions, such as mixing rural and urban textures, hybridizing, and weaving rural representations together.

We have used Bourdieu's concepts of taste and habitus (extensions of cultural capital) to understand the symbols and representational spaces created by lifestyle migrants, highlighting the links between the material environment and cultural relations, in-group relationality, and spatial distinctions. In addition, the literature on rural gentrification, addressing aspects such as aestheticization, commercialization, the domination of spatial representations through changing demographic structures, and the creation of residential differentiation, provides a supportive perspective that guides this chapter. However, interpreting gentrification exclusively as the change of physical space while disregarding its context constitutes a reductionist perspective. This chapter reveals capital flows and rural residential trajectories as the drivers of the alterations in the built and natural environment. The main questions of the chapter can be listed as follows:

- How are the living spaces of lifestyle migrants clustered within Urla, and what are the main segregation patterns between spaces?
- How is lifestyle migration incorporated into the embedded spatial culture? What new functions and spatial patterns are added to current spatial functionalizations?
- How is capital (cultural and economic) transferred to the built and natural environment with lifestyle migration?
- How are lifestyle migration and its dynamics reflected in central and local governments' spatial planning and reproduction?

The methodological approach used to answer these questions is urban anthropology, as discussed in the previous section, constitutes the focal point of the research. Urban anthropology provides the method and framework to unravel the ideological intentions and material consequences of urban planning and landscape designs (Low, 1996: 402), and also it covers the intentions of the actors in the reproduction of space, their spatial practices, how the dwellings and leisure spaces are connected, as well the methods that will reveal the new functions they take. So, urban anthropology has been preferred as the methodological approach to be used in this

section. We created the data set using the urban anthropology toolbox, which included in-depth interviews, photo documentation, social media monitoring, conversations with locals, and go-along interviews. Secondary sources, such as local planning reports, regulations on the change of protected areas announced in the official gazette, or reports on the change of the environmental plan announced by the Ministry of Environment, Urbanization, and Climate for İzmir were also used to convey the planning of both local and central governments for Urla. Newspaper reports also supported these regulations and environmental changes.

In the scope of 42 in-depth interviews between November 2022 and August 2024, interviewees were asked exploratory questions to understand the transformations in the built and natural environment. These questions included their perceptions of the landscape, the reasons they chose their settlement area, their opinions on other settlements, and the most significant changes they observed for those who had settled for more than five years. Additionally, interviews conducted with different lifestyle migrant groups included specific questions for entrepreneurs, such as the decorative and architectural elements they consider when designing their spaces and their thoughts on the environmental/architectural arrangements of other businesses. We used non-random sampling to ensure diversity and to reflect different perspectives and interventions in place, ranging from landscape architects to vineyard owners, from retired and new farmers to white-collar employees living in gated communities, and from café owners to hotel managers.

### **3.2. Rural Gentrification and Reproduction of Rural Through the Habitus of Migrants**

Brown-Saracino (2013: 11) observes that while there are numerous broad and overlapping definitions of gentrification, the one offered by Gina Perez (2004: 139) effectively encapsulates various dimensions of the concept. Perez's definition, presented below, emphasizes widely recognized features of gentrification, including the movement of capital and the resulting social, cultural, economic, and physical transformations.

“An economic and social process whereby private capital (real estate firms, developers) and individual homeowners and renters reinvest in fiscally neglected neighborhoods through housing rehabilitation, loft conversions, and the construction of new housing stock. Unlike urban renewal, gentrification is a gradual process, occurring one building or block at a time, slowly reconfiguring the neighborhood landscape of consumption and residence by displacing poor and working-class residents unable to afford to live in ‘revitalized’ neighborhoods with rising rents, property taxes, and new businesses catering to an upscale clientele” (Perez as cited in Brown-Saracino, 2013: 11).

As the definition reveals, gentrification is a gradual process consisting of spatial interventions by different actors, which may be neighborhood-based in scale or grow step by step, displacing low-income, working-class residents. From a Bourdieusian perspective, it coincides with a logic of neoliberal rebranding in which regions define and position themselves in a relationship of opposition to others. The process can culminate in stigmatizing spaces like the ghetto or pave the way for gentrification (Wacquant, 2024: 193).

Brown-Saracino (2013: 12) argues that three main questions stand out in the struggle to define gentrification: (1) defining it in terms of its causes, consequences, and the way it shapes everyday life; (2) discussing it in terms of which dimensions predominantly accompany causes and consequences; and (3) defining it in terms of where gentrification takes place.

This study, while examining the physical transformation of a seaside town, shifts its focus to “rural gentrification” by exploring the third question, although its primary objective is not to define it. Phillips (2005: 477) critiques rural gentrification as often oversimplifying the complexity of rural transformations and failing to provide a fully developed framework for analyzing changes in rural contexts. However, he also notes that, given their common features and interrelationships, it is difficult to separate changing rural from urban gentrification processes. This emphasizes that understanding transformations in rural areas poses a much more complex challenge than initially assumed.

Somerville (2014: 183-184) reminds us that the issue of rural gentrification is not simply a conflict between locals and newcomers but encompasses new relations that emerge when the former interests of land ownership and production based on agriculture come together with the new interests of the new middle class in search of a rural utopia. He also puts urbanization at the heart of the gentrification of the countryside; since the demand for the city leads to lower values of rural properties (land and buildings) compared to urban properties, new buyers target these more affordable goods and come to the countryside to improve their living conditions.

In linking lifestyle migration to the pursuit of a more economical and higher standard of living, Somerville notes that the groups he identifies are predominantly service-class workers residing in suburban areas near cities, along with retirees who prefer to live farther away in seaside resorts (Boyle and Halfacree, as cited in Somerville, 2014: 185). He argues that both groups primarily view the countryside as a space for consumption, contributing to and furthering gentrification processes.

Philips's (2005) perspective grounds Somerville's causalisation of change based on property and population in a broader social structure. Philips (2005) argues that former large landowners and modern planners have limited the development of the countryside through their protectionist approach to preserve its existing status. This restriction has resulted in the preservation of the historic property structure, the built and environmental values of the countryside, which represent an idyllic naturalness, and finally, a limited housing stock, resulting in a restricted space for the more affluent classes.

What may initially appear as a paradox in this depiction is a revaluation process triggered by shifts in the countryside's roles in production and consumption. As outlined in the previous chapter, the diminishing agricultural production value of rural land gives rise to what Neil Smith (1979) terms the "rent gap" (Cited in Phillips, 2005: 478). To briefly explain the "rent gap," it was originally developed to reveal the unbalanced development in urban areas and how neighborhoods that have long been disinvested and devalued are opened to gentrification (Darling, 2005: 1016). Phillips (2005) and Darling (2005) applies the "rent gap" concept to rural areas, illustrating

how land and buildings lacking agricultural production value are acquired by individuals or institutions based on their potential for future value.

Day et al. (1989: 235) argue that changing investment cycles manifest in industrial structure, economic indicators, and population trends. Pointing to the 1960s and 1970s in the UK, they emphasize that the most prominent feature of the transformations they highlight is the marked redistribution of population and employment toward small towns and settlements. Therefore, the main emphases in rural gentrification are embodied in (1) population mobility towards the countryside, (2) changes in the ways and values of agricultural production, (3) the conversion of potential value into investment value by rearranging the rural environment, and (4) the imposition of consumption and lifestyle-oriented economic value on the countryside through capital flow. We can also incorporate the displacement of low-income groups, resulting from the limited housing supply and the growing demand for newcomers' housing, into this formulation. Somerville (2014: 186) asserts that low-income groups either cannot afford the current housing prices or face pressure or coercion to relocate.

While the population structure of rural settlements is changing due to the exclusions and influxes of new groups, lifestyle migrants are bringing their material, social, and cultural practices to these areas, exerting a dominant influence. This situation is also interpreted as post-productivity (Phillips, 2014: 57; Argent, 2002: 98), indicating a transition from agricultural production to a rural identity influenced by diversified economies and consumption patterns. The previous chapter discussed a related term, post-productivism, which manifests rural gentrification (Phillips 2014: 57; Argent, 2002: 98). The transition is characterized by the predominance of non-farming populations in rural areas and the transformation of the still productive landscape through improved living standards, new symbols, and recreational arrangements. In this context, Darling (2005: 1017) summarizes the dimensions of change in the rural gentrification literature: (1) changes in rural class structure, post-productivist rural capital accumulation, changes in rural actors, and transformations in rural housing structure.

The process that occurs at the intersection of post-productivism and rural gentrification, characterized by economic growth through externalization, results in



environmental changes as the primary spatial uses in rural areas increasingly focus on consumption, particularly leisure and residential purposes, along with aesthetic representations (Murdoch & Marsden, 1994: 215–216; Holmes, 2006; Halfacree, 2006a: 57; Barrett & Vodden, 2023). Philips (2005: 477) criticizes concepts such as counter-urbanization, rural migration, rural demographic change, and rural development, which are also part of post-productivism, for their failure to incorporate the context of class and gentrification when discussing rural change. However, counter-urbanization is one of the important concepts for understanding environmental alterations. Counter-urbanization, discussed in detail in the previous chapter, refers to the changing economic and social structure alongside the increase in population in rural settlements and the rural material universe acquiring characteristics like the urban fabric. Therefore, the concept of counter-urbanization roots the aspect of gentrification that involves transforming rural areas with consumer- and housing-centric qualities, positioning them at the periphery of the metropolis (Gosnell & Abrams, 2011).

Perkins (2006: 250) states that relocating former urban dwellers to independent dwellings in rural areas, farms, and large plots of land, or small settlements, is an important pillar of the counter-urbanization movement. It points to a process of commodification that is not detached from the society of spectacle. Philips (2005: 479) provides one of the most concrete examples of this commodification and environmental change. “Barn conversion” exemplifies how new actors re-evaluate and residentialize marginal rural resources or spaces. The transformation of barns, as a concept symbolizing buildings that have lost their agricultural function and become idle, essentially involves the conversion of mills, dairy farms, and dairies into housing by new migrants through zoning applications. Not only agricultural buildings but also post offices, schools, workshops, and warehouses, which have lost their value due to the decline or discontinuation of local services, can similarly be repurposed for residential use (Philips, 2005: 486).

When gentrifiers residentialize these dilapidated buildings or buy old houses, it’s not just about evaluating an affordable building; it’s also about building houses according to their tastes, a form of self-expression. Thus, they also cultivate a gentrification aesthetic that aligns with their personal preferences or social class (Tomay & Berger, 2024: 2-3). In this framework, Tomay and Berger (2024)

incorporate Bourdieu's habitus concept into interpreting rural gentrification steps. As a result of the intertwining of their tendency to idealize rural life and their urban habitus, migrants may act with different tendencies, such as aestheticizing and reviving the nostalgic past or incorporating urban services into a peaceful and aesthetic environment. This mixed spatial habitus may even envision rural life in diverse ways, such as removing animal husbandry from the natural space or substituting traditional animal husbandry with animals that appeal to class aesthetic needs, such as ponies (Tomay & Berger, 2024: 13).

This molding can be reflected in the natural environment, as in the example above, or it can also encompass the interior of dwellings. They can extend the good living standards in the countryside from decorating their houses and gardens to breeding recreational animals (Salamon, 2006: 331). Romanticizing, tidying, and sanitizing rural life and embracing the material culture of the past form the basis of their aesthetic approach. It is so eclectic that they transform functional kitchen utensils from the countryside into decorative lamps or art objects and display them in the household (Harris as cited in Salamon, 2006: 331).

However, gentrification is not solely dependent on housing; just as capital flows into cities for recreational or retail activities and the construction of revalued spaces, they also create similar spatial functionalizations in rural areas (Philips, 2005: 479). This situation, which is also related to counter-urbanization, may result in lifestyle migrants creating many new rural recreation or tourism forms or even commodifying local people's traditional practices or daily activities. The situation escalates to the point where, due to altered economic conditions that demand a reassessment of the activities' potential profitability, what was formerly a local pastime becomes a product for tourists visiting the area (Perkins, 2006: 252).

Smith (2003) argues that generalized gentrification and commercialization trends have been led by globalization and created common patterns in many urban regions. This development is directly related to the international professional classes, who often seek refurbished residential neighborhoods in alignment with their lifestyle preferences. Moreover, it is a trend actively facilitated by city governments (as cited in Atkinson & Bridge, 2013: 51). Yücel-Young (2007: 36) explains the complex and

conflicting relations experienced in the villages of Yağcılar and Yeni Orhanlı due to migration, global consumption culture, and class conflicts. According to Yücel-Young (2007), the portrayal of the countryside in lifestyle magazines and films creates globalized imaginations that spark increased interest in peasant life and contribute to the development of authentic rural living patterns. She stated that in İzmir's villages, the traces of these patterns could be observed in the forms of construction, in the use of farming tools or vintage items as decorative objects while creating a "provincial" atmosphere, in distressed shop signs, and the rural aesthetics formed by vineyards. Therefore, rural gentrification has a representational traditionalist aspect that encompasses both imagined and real global expectations about the countryside, diverging from the gentrification processes of urban spaces in this respect.

Öztürk et al. (2014: 374) also states that the qualifications of alteration due to the settlement movement in a town on the Mediterranean and Aegean coasts are similar to the experience of counter-urbanization in the West through the development of new settlements. However, he distinguishes the urbanite migration to coastal towns in Türkiye from global impulses by emphasizing the development of new housing projects instead of the renovation of old properties and by concentrating on emerging suburban villages around metropolises such as Istanbul. In this respect, he even emphasizes that new housing projects have emerged independently of the old settlements and have been formed through an unbalanced development plan without a centralized plan to control the concentration of wealth (Öztürk et al., 2014: 374).

### **3.3. Findings and Discussion**

#### **3.3.1. Fragmented Geography of Urla and Lifestyle Migration Settlements**

İskele region is a world of its own; its center feels like a different world, and Kekliktepe is yet another – no part of it resembles the other. Foça, on the other hand, feels uniform; the same can be said for Çeşme or Alaçatı. (...) Once, I took a friend around Urla to show him the area from above. He remarked that all the neighborhoods looked like slums. The women sitting on doorsteps in the streets and the many old houses we passed caught his attention the most. Yet, my focus was on showing him the gulf and the islands. (...) In Urla, no part feels like another (Melih, 76, strategy and corporate structure design consultant).

The in-depth interview excerpt provided above offers a concise summary of the physical and natural characteristics of Urla. With its wooded and mountainous landscapes, agricultural fields, coastal villages, an expanding urban center, neighborhoods with informal housing, and the Pier district still carrying traces of a summer retreat culture, Urla emerges as a multi-faceted and multi-functional district. Thus, discussing the transformation brought by lifestyle migration corresponds not to a one-dimensional progression but to one shaped by the lifestyles of the migrants and the qualities the region offers them. For this reason, we found it necessary to first outline the current state of Urla, from its central settlements to its villages, along with its spatial dynamics and the legal/structural mechanisms driving change.

### **3.3.1.1. Exploring Urla's Built and Natural Environment**

The key concept of this section, “spatial practices,”–“rural localities” as conceptualized by Halfacree in his adaptation of the triad to rural contexts– offers us a dual framework for understanding what is happening in the physical space of Urla: the interaction between the “representation of space” (formal planning) and the “representational space” (the realm of actions for migrants and other actors), ultimately discussing how the physical environment of the rural is reproduced on the scales of Urla and İzmir.

Understanding Urla's rural or hybridized fabric is a complex topic for a subheading. However, it is essential to emphasize that this chapter examines the spatial regulations shaped by rule-makers and the “representational space,” where migrants integrate symbolic values with the material environment. Within this framework, the discussion covers: (1) how Urla, as a peripheral district of İzmir, is positioned in urban planning; (2) the environmental planning by the Ministry of Environment, Urbanization, and Climate Change, also including Urla; (3) central regulations concerning protected areas; and (4) the failure to balance development and environmental preservation due to conflicting interests and governance inconsistencies. In summary, the chapter explores how macro and micro representations of Urla's formal spatial arrangements are reflected in spatial uses. Additionally, the traces left by lifestyle migrants in the everyday spaces of rural life are analyzed through elements such as housing typologies, the symbolic values

attributed to different settlements, and transformation pathways. This second dimension is further explored in the chapter's other sections, particularly focusing on lifestyle migrants' settlements, spatial differentiations, and entrepreneurial infrastructures, delving deeper into their sphere of action in the physical space.

When examining Urla's settlement structures and fabric, as noted by Can et al. (2018), it is evident that it is shaped by a dual-core structure consisting of the Central district (Merkez) and the İskele (The Pier District), both at the urban scale and in terms of usage and living practices. As highlighted in the introduction chapter, İskele and the adjacent coastal areas (Kalabak, Güvendik, Denizli, Atatürk neighborhoods, etc.) have borne the traces of early summerhouse and secondary residence architecture since the 1970s, stemming from the development of its identity as a summer retreat. Merkez (Central District) (Hacı İsa, Yaka, Yelaltı, Yenikent neighborhoods, and their surroundings), on the other hand, became part of this summer culture after the completion of the highway section extending to Urla between 1990-1992. This shift added secondary residences to the region's traditional housing typologies and local usage patterns (Datta & Yücel-Young, 2007; Can et al., 2018). This hybrid condition reflects not only architectural differentiation but also distinctions in residents' spatial usage demands, which have become more pronounced in the Center. Furthermore, the physical distance between İskele District and Central District requiring vehicular transportation, coupled with the presence of an archaeological site along the road to İskele, has contributed to the segmented development of these two areas (Emekli, 2024; Can et al., 2018).

Emekli (2004:43) summarizes the current usage patterns of the coastal area, including İskele district, as follows:

- Recreational uses for vacation, include accommodation facilities, secondary residences, restaurants, and tea gardens.
- Fishing harbors, ports, and piers designated for commercial and amateur fishing activities (Yücesahil-Kalabak, İskele neighborhood, Çeşmealtı, as well as the villages of Gülbahçe, Özbek, and Balıklıova).

- Roads passing along the coastline and reclaimed areas (coastal infill and residential developments in settlements such as Yücesahil, Çeşmealtı, Torasan, and İçmeler).

Emekli (2004:43) highlights that secondary residences outnumber local homes along the coastal areas of Zeytinalan, Çamlıçay, Yücesahil, Kalabak, İskele, Çeşmealtı, Denizli, Kocadere, Gülbahçe, Balıklıova, and Özbek. Notably, settlements like Çamlıçay, Zeytinalan, Yücesahil, İskele, and Çeşmealtı stand out as the coastal areas with the highest concentration of tourist accommodations and recreational facilities. As discussed in the seaside culture section in the introduction, the İzmir Master Zoning Plan approved in 1972 marked a critical turning point for the development of these areas. While the plan aimed to regulate construction and protect coastal areas by incorporating them into the zoning framework, insufficient oversight and the region's rent potential led to unchecked development, ultimately damaging the coastal ecosystem. The allocation of public lands for secondary residences, housing loans, and amendments to zoning laws further accelerated the urbanization of coastal areas (Emekli, 2014). Consequently, Urla, due to its proximity to a tourism hotspot like Çeşme and its provision of affordable housing options for the middle class, witnessed the rapid proliferation of secondary residences and tourist facilities in its



**Figure 3.1** : New and old coastal residences (Source: Google Earth)

coastal regions such as Çeşmealtı, İskele, Zeytinalan, and Kalabak. As a result, the housing typology in Urla's coastal areas, particularly in İskele, is dominated by summerhouse projects constructed between 1970 and 1990. Field observations reveal that some houses, particularly in neighborhoods between Neyzen Tevfik Street and the coastline near Atatürk Neighborhood, close to the beginning of İskele's commercial zones and facing Karantina island, are undergoing reconstruction or have been replaced by new homes (see Figure 3.1). Similarly, this temporal duality is evident in İskele neighbourhood's old pensions and restored stone boutique hotels. Thus, the seaside culture in Urla's coastal settlements, rooted in the 1970s, is being redefined through the influences of gastronomic and terroir tourism and the momentum brought



**Figure 3.2 :** The spread pattern of new settlements (Source: Google Earth)

by lifestyle migration. The area between İskele and Çeşmealtı (Denizli Neighborhood) is one of the coastal regions rapidly integrating into this transformation, characterized by gated communities and stone house typologies.

As shown above, the new settlements along the coastline are expanding toward Çeşmealtı, characterized by gated communities with swimming pools. Similarly, Kalabak and Zeytinalan form the other axis of this development. The Klotemenai and Limantepe excavation sites, which surround the İskele area, are designated first-degree archaeological sites, preventing this expansion from encroaching further inland. These protected areas, which mold Urla's dispersed settlement pattern and slow its uncontrolled growth, serve as a partial safeguard not only for the İskele district but also for the surrounding woodlands, agricultural fields, and surroundings of the



villages. However, the misalignment between İzmir's metropolitan planning processes, central urban planning, and local-scale actions, coupled with the failure to balance natural resource conservation with urban development, has undermined these protective qualities. The prioritization of construction as a significant driver of economic rent has further eroded these safeguards (Salata et al., 2022).

The 2019 revision of the Regulation on the Conservation of Natural Assets introduced a reclassification of protected areas, a narrowing of multi-authority governance, and reassessing control mechanisms over construction pressures on protected sites. Under this new framework, second-degree protected areas were redefined as “qualified natural protection areas,” while third-degree protected areas were labeled as “sustainable protection and controlled usage areas.” While this redefinition grants local authorities a more active role in planning, it has been criticized for weakening conservation principles. Consequently, as of 2019, the legal flexibility for construction and tourism-oriented investments, as well as privatizations, has significantly increased, raising concerns about preserving these areas.

As reflected in media coverage, the downgrading of protection levels for Urla's designated sites has led to various environmental interventions. Examples include the reclassification of a first-degree archaeological site in Yağcılar<sup>29</sup> to third-degree status, allowing construction in the area; the redefinition of Özbek, previously within protected and agricultural zone boundaries, as a “sustainable protection and controlled usage area,” thereby opening it to low-density residential development<sup>30</sup>; and the modification of zoning plans in Kalabak<sup>31</sup>, where seafront public lands were rezoned for commercial, tourism, and residential use and subsequently put up for sale. As the Construction Boom section delves into the specific cases of Kuşçular and Kekliktepe, these development projects collectively accelerate the loss of natural and cultural

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<sup>29</sup> For updates on the opening of the archaeological site in Yağcılar related to construction, see: <https://www.egayebakis.com/kurul-karari-imzalandi-izmir-de-arkeolojik-sit-alani-yapilasmaya-acildi/75776/>

<sup>30</sup> Announcement by the Ministry of Environment, Urbanization and Climate regarding protected area: <https://izmir.csb.gov.tr/urla-ilcesi-sinirlari-icerisinde-bulunan-34.-grup-dogal-sit-alani-tescili-duyuru-441865>

<sup>31</sup> First, zoning; then, sale by the Privatization Administration in Urla <https://www.egeligazete.com/haber/urla-da-ozellestirme-idaresi-nden-once-imar-sonra-satis-doga-harikasi-denize-sifir-kamu-arazileri-elden-cikariliyor/180837>



heritage, along with the contraction of agricultural practices, a defining feature of Urla's rural identity.

The privatization and rezoning of public spaces in Urla during the 2023-2024 was closely linked to the ParkUrla project, which sparked a widespread debate. This initiative involved leasing a 33-decare public area for tourism development under a trustee administration, granting a 10-year lease. Encompassing recreational arrangements along the Kum Denizi coastline, the project was criticized for effectively opening public land to construction by favored contractors<sup>32</sup>. Following the local elections on March 31, 2024, and a subsequent change in municipal administration, the project was halted. This highlights the negotiation process referenced in the dissertation title, as exemplified even by the ParkUrla case, where debates over local governance, central zoning plans, tourism ambitions, demands for new spatial arrangements, and the redefinition of coastal identity converge.



**Figure 3.3 :** ParkUrla project concept plan (Source: Pencere Haber)

Looking at Urla's central area, which has not been spared from abandoned and incomplete construction projects, we encounter a transformation where the gentrification often emphasized in various sections of this dissertation becomes highly visible. While the chapter on the commodification of streets provides tangible examples, particularly through narratives about the transformation around Art Street, the central neighborhoods stand out as the areas where commercialization, the transfer

<sup>32</sup> ParkUrla Project and Protests: <https://www.pencerehaber.com/video/urla-park-urla-projesi-icin-ihale-yetkisine-itiraz-etti-10.html>

of urban habits, and the divergence in practices are most intensely observed. The stone houses inherited from the Greek-Orthodox population are in high demand among the town's new residents, leading to a rapid wave of renovations. Many homes in side streets remain on the market, awaiting their turn in this transformation. The high costs of restoration and the challenging conditions associated with the age of these houses accelerate the willingness of the local population, whose properties have increased in value, to sell. Thus, the dynamic of selling off agricultural lands, discussed in the previous chapter, also applies to the single- or two-story houses in central areas. Moreover, as the area becomes increasingly commercialized, through the proliferation of cafés and other businesses, rising living costs make it ever more challenging for residents to maintain their daily lives within these neighborhoods.



**Figure 3.4 :** Central neighborhoods and historic stone houses (Source: Personal archive)

Nonetheless, the central neighborhoods where the local population continues to reside, such as Yaka, Yeni, Camiatik, and Hacı İsa, remain key spaces for daily interactions among various social groups, with their small squares, courtyards, and market areas. The area marked in red polygons on the map below, encompassing both administrative and sociocultural spaces, such as the Zafer Street, Necati Cumalı Street, and the intersection of Bülent Baratalı Street with the Urla town square near the municipal building, includes Art Street (purple polygon), Malgaca Market, the Producers' Market, District Governor's Office, Population Directorate, and the District Directorate of Agriculture and Rural Affairs. Thus, central Urla is the town's other nucleus, in which the negotiations between the local residents and lifestyle migrants are more visibly embodied compared to İskele district. The Malgaca Market and its surroundings, where local tradespeople still operate bakeries, feed shops, craft

coffeehouses, and agricultural equipment stores, offer lifestyle migrants an authentic rural backdrop. This authenticity corresponds to the resistance of change in the central area, which is not only reflected in the practices of the community but also in the architectural language of its buildings and homes.



**Figure 3.5 :** Administrative center and surrounding neighborhoods (Source: Google Maps)

One of the qualities that makes the town center attractive for lifestyle migration is its proximity, a five-minute drive, to the highway toll booths. This makes it one of the settlements with the fastest connection to the city. In contrast to the gated communities forming in the upper areas of the highway corridor, the central district offers a more integrated alternative to local culture, supporting the mobility capacity of migrants whose ties to İzmir's urban core are strong due to reasons such as schools, work, culture and arts, and consumption. The relatively preserved local fabric, associated with the qualities of an Aegean town, aligns with lifestyle attributes such as community, belonging, cultural slowness, tranquility, and calmness, as discussed in the previous chapter. The Producers' Market, which features products brought by local farmers, further supports healthy eating expectations and facilitates such practices. Following the classification of coastal areas above, the current uses of the central district can be categorized as follows:

- Recreational uses, including boutique hotels, secondary residences, restaurants, and cafés for leisure, vacation, or daily tourism purposes
- Primary residences for local residents and lifestyle migrants



- Administrative functions (e.g., the District Governor's Office, Municipality, Directorate of Agriculture and Rural Affairs, and Population Directorate)
- Sociocultural and economic uses in public spaces such as markets, bazaars, and the town square
- Healthcare services, including hospitals, clinics, pharmacies, and opticians



**Figure 3.6 :** The authentic background of the rural (Source: Personal archive)

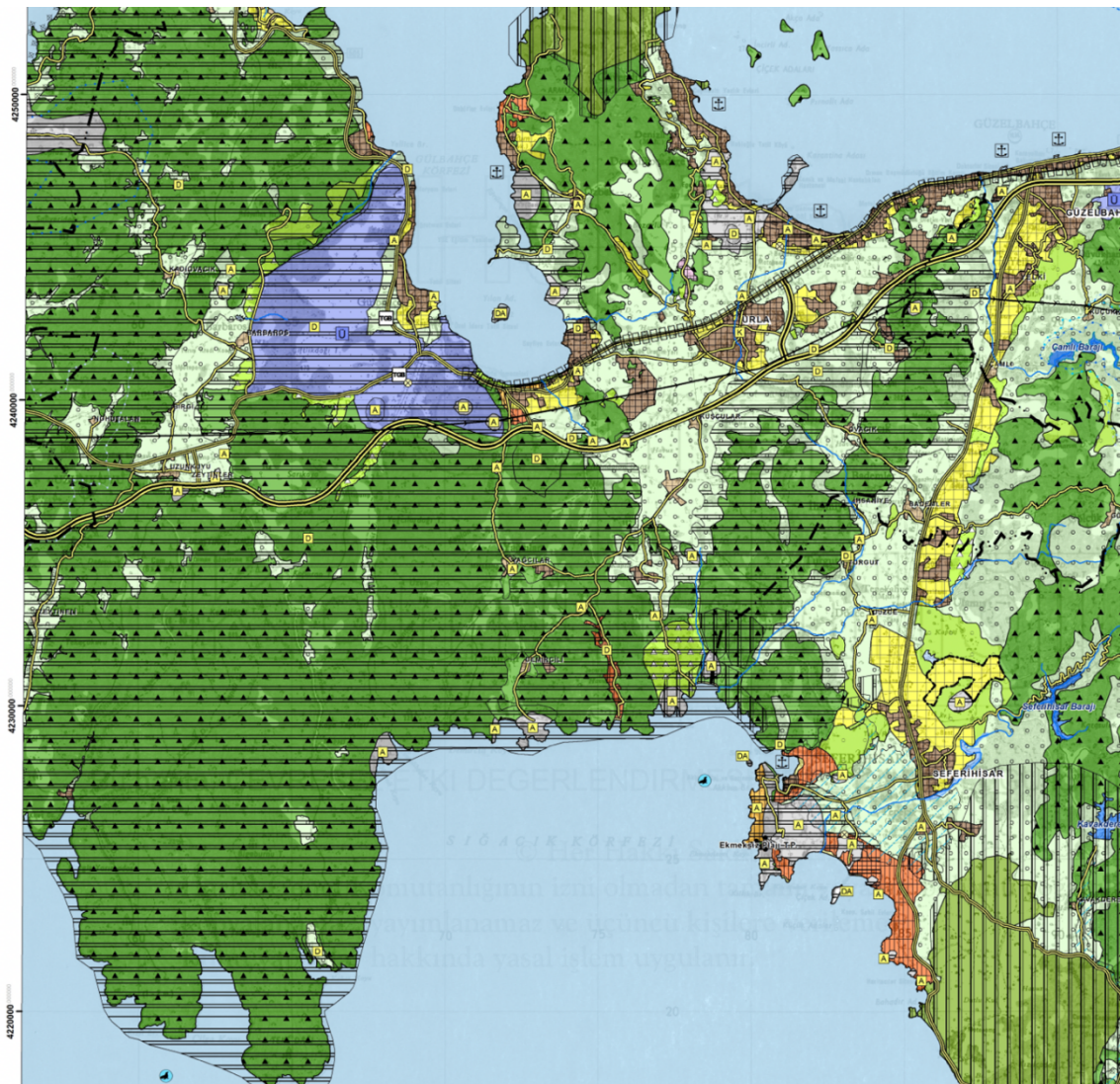
On the peripheries of the center, neighborhoods (formerly villages under their previous legal status) and agricultural lands mark areas where gated communities are beginning to spread. Despite their reclassification as neighborhoods in 2004, agricultural activities, local relationships unique to the rural population, and the relatively larger expanse of farmland or natural areas compared to settlements, sustain the dominance of rural identity in these regions. However, the situation of villages in Urla became somewhat ambiguous between 2004 and 2012 with the enactment of Law

No. 5216 on Municipalities. This law, which expanded the jurisdiction of metropolitan municipalities to include a 50-kilometer radius from the urban center, aimed to broaden the authority and responsibilities of local governments. Nonetheless, its criticized outcomes included the incorporation of settlements on the outskirts—where modern infrastructure and services lagged—into the urbanization process, the blurring of boundaries between rural and urban areas, and the endowment of rural regions with urban functions (Salata et al., 2022). This regulation, applied to İzmir, resulted in some villages in regions like Urla being incorporated into urban administrative boundaries, while others beyond the 50-kilometer radius, now designated as neighborhoods, remained under provincial administrative authority. These latter areas faced less pressure for construction or urbanization, preserving their legal village status and maintaining their rural characteristics. However, they also experienced planning imbalances in terms of service provision due to the fragmented responsibilities between administrative bodies. Urla's villages outside the 50-kilometer radius include Yağcılar, Kadıkalesi, Bademler, Gülbahçe, Özbek, and Balıklıova. Located in Urla's forested or mountainous areas or regions with weaker connections to the center, these villages continue to embody a rural character while grappling with uneven service delivery.

The Environmental Planning Report by the Ministry of Environment and Urbanization, dated 2022 and prepared at a 1/100,000 scale, highlights significant secondary housing development in rural areas incorporated into municipal boundaries in 2012, particularly on plots without detailed zoning plans (Environmental Planning Explanation Report, 2022: 39). The report notes that Urla already featured a fragmented settlement structure before 2004, which became even more segmented after 2004 due to the reclassification of villages, neighborhoods, and the central municipality. Additionally, it mentions that changes in jurisdiction and varying planning decisions over time have led to differences in construction densities and land parcel division regulations. In the plan below, areas marked in yellow indicate zones allocated or planned for urbanization in Urla. Notably, the area around Bademler village has emerged as a focal point for new developments, such as building of the gated communities like Folkart. Similarly, Yelki, a fringe area of the city, is projected to be another hotspot for this urban sprawl. One of the most striking features of this urbanization trend is the emergence of urbanized settlements in forest villages such as



Yağcılar and Demircili, which are located far from Urla's central district. Developments like Çamlıtepe Forest Homes, Doğa Farmhouses, and Ova Olivia Site, constructed outside Yağcılar and Demircili villages, illustrate the spread of urban elements into rural landscapes. The area near Demircili, including the Altıncıköy Farmhouses, located across from Demircili and opening to Altıncıköy Beach, is marked in dark orange and classified as a “preferred usage area.” This designation, which suggests the land can serve multiple purposes, indicates the region's tourism potential will likely be exploited to its maximum capacity.



**Figure 3.7 :** İzmir-Manisa planning region 1/100,000 scale environmental plan (2024)

Although the land areas of villages have begun to expand through zoning, field observations reveal that traditional rural lifestyles continue to persist. Since gated communities are built outside village neighborhoods, creating residential differentiation, they do not alter the housing typologies of the villages. Visits to

villages like Bademler, Yağcılar, and Barbaros indicate that central village neighborhoods retain their traditional courtyard houses, lime-painted walls, and overall old-style village housing forms. Migrants living within the village neighborhoods also seem to strive to preserve the existing structures. Restoration of old stone houses, however, has become a prominent feature, turning these buildings into symbols that reflect the presence of newcomers. The decline of the younger population due to urban migration has left the local population predominantly elderly. This demographic shift, combined with the settlement of lifestyle migrants, is gradually reducing the proportion of the local population in the villages. During the fieldwork in Bademler, it was evident that zoning and urban expansion policies have drawn significant migration to the area. Conversations with villagers casually emphasized that the majority of the population now consists of newcomers and that agricultural lands are beginning to lose their original functions. However, the local population holds a longstanding culture of cooperativism dating back to the 1960s. Practices such as adapting to new agricultural methods like good and organic farming, experimenting with tropical crops like dragon fruit, and creating natural life villages under cooperative rural tourism initiatives serve as mechanisms of resistance or adaptation to the changes occurring in these villages.



**Figure 3.8 :** Bademler village theater and architectural texture of Barbaros village (Source:Personal archive)

Bademler Village, home to Türkiye's first village theater and a point of interest for day-trippers, offers lifestyle migrants a way of living more intertwined with nature and the local population, distinct from İskele, Çeşmealtı, or the central neighborhoods. The village's architectural features that enhance the sense of authenticity, its rural culture, and the slower pace of daily life, unlike the urbanized and accelerated practices seen in the town center, make it a more profound alternative to urban life. Another Urla village sought for such an experience is Barbaros, known for the *Oyuk Festival*



(a type of scarecrow). This village, also drawing the attention of day tourists, features art spaces, workshops, and cafés, as seen in other villages. These developments mark the inclusion of villages in the gentrification trajectory. Yet, this simultaneously presents an opportunity for villagers to engage in village tourism and generate additional income through agricultural production or entirely new income sources. This acceptance of change is further demonstrated by the formation of organizations such as the Barbaros Culture, Art, Tourism, and Rural Development Association, which enables villagers to take a more active role in shaping the process. These institutional efforts highlight the dual nature of the transformation: both as a challenge and an opportunity for the local community.



**Figure 3.9 :** Villages within the gentrification pathway  
(Source: Urliva cafe website and Mimas art website)

The current functional uses of Urla villages, where lifestyle migrants settle to immerse themselves directly in rural culture rather than hybridized living environments, can be categorized as follows:

- Agricultural use, incorporating new production practices such as good and organic farming, along with the cultivation of new agricultural products like tropical fruits (e.g., dragon fruit)
- Recreational uses for village tourism (particularly day tourism), emphasizing local festivals and cultural elements
- New residential areas either within the village or on its outskirts
- Coastal village-specific uses, such as fishing harbors or seafood restaurants (e.g., Özbek and Kalabak villages)



- Allocation of surrounding hills or village peripheries for renewable energy sources



**Figure 3.10 :** Expanding villages: Bademler village (Source: Personal archive)

The area marked in purple on the map (Figure 3.7) between Barbaros Village and Gülbahçe is planned to become a university district. This area is situated behind the Gülbahçe settlement, which hosts İzmir Institute of Technology and its Technopark. It is envisioned as a hub for student housing/dormitories, workplaces for the creative class, and a technology development zone. Additionally, it is designated to serve as a venue for events such as EXPO and similar large-scale organizations. With projections estimating that Urla's population will reach 112,000 by 2025, expansion plans have been directed toward this area beyond the Gülbahçe axis (Environmental Planning Explanation Report, 2022: 23). This approach prioritizes shifting the pressure from regions with clustered agricultural lands, such as Kuşçular, Uzunkuyu, and Bademler, toward the western axis, aiming to preserve the rural characteristics of these areas. However, as noted in the "Construction Boom, Natural Environment and Agricultural Lands" section, the micro-level practices and stories emphasize the need for more comprehensive measures and conservation frameworks to ensure the protection of agricultural production and rural integrity.

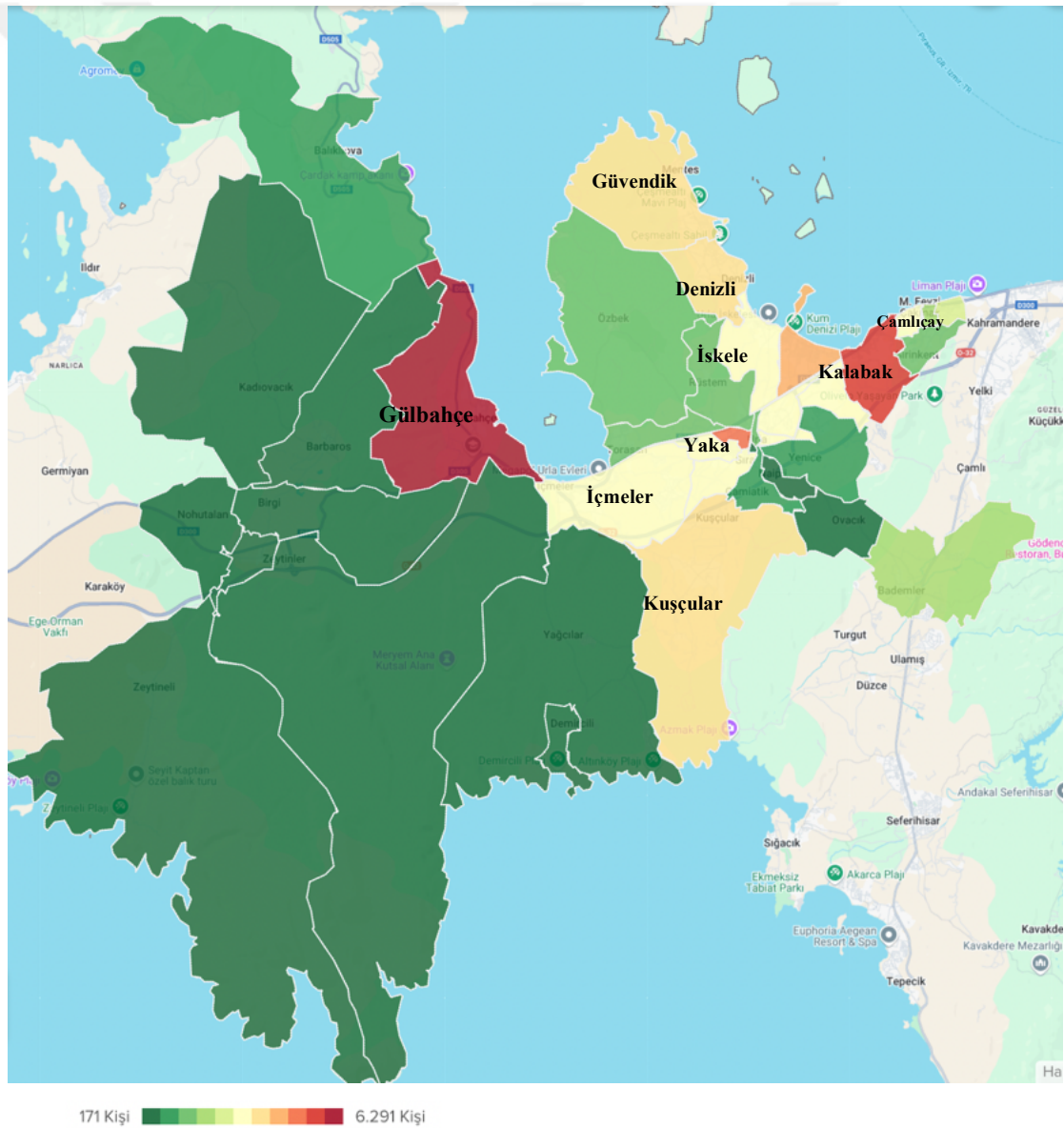
Before delving into the interviews with lifestyle migrants and discussing their practices and the meanings they assign to Urla, this section provides an overview of the growing population, changing spatial functions, and housing typologies of İskele, Merkez (The Pier district), and surrounding neighborhoods. It also summarizes the legal regulations on land use and statuses, highlighting the processes these areas have

undergone and their trajectories amidst migration. While lifestyle migrants contribute to this macro-level transformation, understanding the intentions behind their settlement choices and the subgroups they form in these regions offers a crucial perspective for interpreting the broader impacts of migration.

### **3.3.1.2. Settlement Neighborhoods of Lifestyle Migrants: Spatial Descriptions and Place-Based Differentiations**

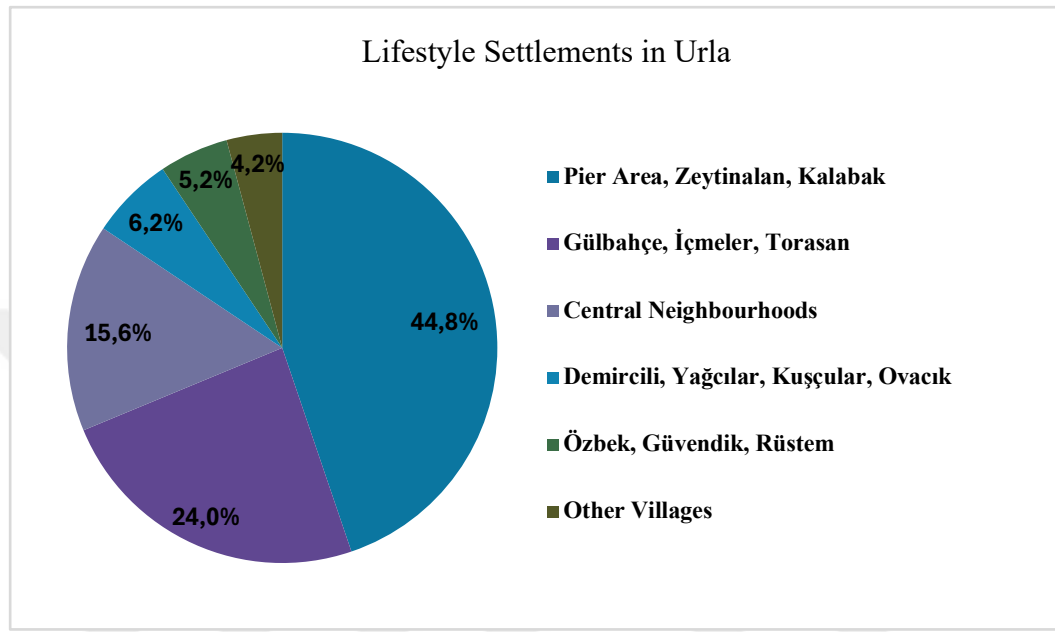
In this section, which traces the impact of lifestyle migrants across Urla's neighborhoods, Bourdieu's (1979/2021: 322) concept of distinction plays a crucial role. Beyond aesthetic judgments and the transfer of habitus, lifestyle migrants—particularly those seeking spaces that align with the aura of their class—contribute new representations of distinction to Urla's fragmented structure. While central and local planning efforts, in Lefebvrian terms, reproduce space through decision-making processes, lifestyle migrants' preferences and autonomous spaces shaped by their diverse forms of capital and tastes position them as another rule-setting force in the production of space. Thus, in constructing rural localities, the habitus, tastes, and urban inclinations of lifestyle migrants act as transformative tools that shape symbolic spaces. Wacquant (2024: 145-148), adapting Bourdieu's concepts from micro-level everyday relationships to urban clusters and social cores like ghettos and suburbs, highlights that symbolic space is inscribed into the embodied social space of the built environment. Wacquant (2024: 148-149) further elaborates that social space encompasses the reciprocal externalities, relative distances, and social hierarchies of agents with varying volumes and compositions of capital, reflecting these tensions in the physical, social, and symbolic structures of urban life: "the built environment is a manifestation of struggles going on in social space, including struggles over the shaping and appropriation of physical space through the geographical distribution of people, institutions, and material and symbolic goods."

To understand migrant settlements in Urla, examining the population distribution across its regions provides valuable insights into both settlement density and the smaller societal structures that define rural identity. According to the map below, the most populous areas are Gülbahçe, Kalabak, Yaka, Atatürk Neighborhood, Kuşçular, Güvendik, and Denizli Neighborhoods. In contrast, the least populated areas are Birgi, Demircili, and Nohutalan, which also have relatively smaller land areas compared to other villages. This distribution highlights the enduring significance of the coastal relationship, reflecting the ongoing primacy of seaside culture in a town historically shaped by it. In the coastal zone, Gülbahçe has already begun experiencing urbanization as envisioned by the İzmir-Manisa Environmental Planning Report, evidenced by visible population growth and the accompanying development of



**Figure 3.11 :** Distribution of population by settlements in Urla (Source: Endeksa, a platform that provides real state value, location data analysis and insights)

infrastructure and housing. Meanwhile, Yaka stands out on the map as a prominent central settlement due to its advantageous location between İskele and the surrounding villages. Its proximity to central amenities such as markets, bazaars, administrative units, the district bus terminal, and the cluster of venues around Art Street further reinforces its role as a key residential area in Urla.



**Figure 3.12 :** Lifestyle settlements in Urla

The exploratory survey conducted as part of this dissertation provides a starting point for understanding how lifestyle migrants integrate into Urla's population distribution, rather than examining the general demographic structure. While not a large-scale survey, the finding that 44.8% of respondents preferred İskele and its surrounding coastal neighborhoods indicates that lifestyle migration in Urla is primarily directed toward areas with a seaside character. The second most preferred locations were Gülbahçe, İçmeler, and Torasan. The growing housing pressure along the coastline and Gülbahçe's combination of sea-view plots and rural areas make it an appealing alternative for lifestyle migrants. Additionally, the presence of İzmir Institute of Technology in Gülbahçe has accelerated the "studentification" of the area, with student housing, dormitories, and venues catering to students reshaping the local demographic. This transformation has also attracted academics to reside in the area, further contributing to its demographic shift. The central neighbourhoods ranked third, reflecting the factors previously discussed, such as proximity to essential services and amenities. Villages, while fragmented due to their geographical locations, were

collectively as popular as the central neighborhoods in the survey. Thus, alongside the appeal of the seaside character, the rural culture of Urla also emerges as a defining feature shaping the orientation of lifestyle migration in the region.

Although a general impression of the settlements has been established, this chapter of the dissertation, which discusses the capacity of lifestyle migrants to reproduce physical space, also focuses on how actors define Urla's changing physical environment and differentiate spatial practices in the region. This analysis is valuable for uncovering intergroup distinctions and the ability of migrants to shape space. During fieldwork, interviewees were asked about the primary changes they had witnessed in Urla since moving there. It was observed that they categorized Urla into distinct zones based on their narratives, forming the basis for this chapter's classification framework.

#### *Old Villages – New Elite Communities: Kuşçular and Kekliktepe*

Kuşçular and Kekliktepe are former village settlements with fertile agricultural lands, now increasingly dominated by gated communities. These areas, discussed under the “Construction Boom, Natural Environment and Agricultural Lands” section in terms of entrepreneurial practices and agricultural production, were frequently mentioned in interviews as emblematic of rural identity transformation (with their previous legal status as villages).

The preceding chapter highlighted these areas as representative of the residential spaces of wealthy or “A-plus” migrant groups, associated with investors and high-income individuals. In the spatial classifications provided by interviewees, Kuşçular and Kekliktepe consistently ranked as the highest tier in a hierarchical system. This categorization reflects a space where wealth and capital concentrate as a way of life, characterized by luxury developments, vineyards, chef-driven restaurants, and exclusive communities along the İzmir-Çeşme highway corridor.

Datta & Yücel-Young (2007: 48) describe the built environment in these areas as gated, luxurious, and composed primarily of secure and detached homes. Luxury in these developments is not limited to the design of the houses or their natural and coastal views but is also tied to their capacity to maintain distance—both from the urban center



and from the agricultural lands they have appropriated. Although economic and social connections to İzmir city center remain, these communities are physically detached both from the city and from the rural areas they inhabit. Although access to these gated communities, described as “the most luxurious,” was not possible during the fieldwork, a few interviews conducted in other similar sites provided insights into their architectural organization. These communities typically feature gardened, two- to three-story detached homes on small parcels. Common amenities include shared swimming pools, secure gated entries, social facilities for children, small fitness centers, and landscaped walking paths, indicating a standardized set of features across these developments.



**Figure 3.13 :** The Instagram advertisements of gated communities in Urla

Datta & Yücel-Young (2007: 49) conducted a more detailed field study on luxury housing, examining aspects such as interior decoration, the distribution of scenic views within rooms, and the dynamic relationship between housing and the surrounding landscape. Features like large glass windows, expansive verandas, and

strategically elevated locations on Urla's hills highlight these homes' detachment from highways and lower-lying areas, creating aesthetic and class-based distinctions for the elite. Both the fieldwork and interviews, along with the aforementioned research, illustrate how these communities construct hyper-regulated living spaces that bridge urban and rural contexts without compromising their class standards or comforts. The preference for luxury residences in peripheral areas over the central district reflects a combination of economic power, aesthetic tastes, and a tendency to choose secluded, physically less accessible locations overcrowded tourist hubs. The infrastructure, however, has yet to meet the standards expected by these groups, which necessitates not only vehicle ownership but also the use of luxury off-road vehicles (such as jeeps), enabling easier access to these exclusive areas. This reliance on specialized vehicles further facilitates the physical separation and exclusivity sought by these groups.

The most popular area is Kekliktepe; you could call it A-plus. The top luxury estates are located there. (...) I went there once; my sister was giving private lessons. The father of the child we went to for the lesson worked at Amazon. (...) Football players and artists mostly buy properties in Kekliktepe. I've never seen them around here, though. (...) Çeşme is getting increasingly crowded, and I think they're bothered by it (Selin, 35, ex-pharmaceutical representative and housewife).

It's all big estates, and some people, when chatting, say things like, "It's like they never come down here; they've created their own world. Who are they, really?". (...) There's this other side of Urla where a mysterious group of people live (Onur, 44, sales manager).

Along with the luxurious lifestyles, the question of who these people are—a theme that also informs the research—sheds light on what they do in these spaces. The professional identities that emerged prominently in the in-depth interviews, including the one mentioned above, often align with high-ranking corporate roles, such as CEOs of large companies, as well as football players and popular artists. Details such as which gated communities these celebrities reside in, based on media reports, were frequently mentioned by interviewees, adding nuance to their understanding of these exclusive lifestyles. Interestingly, these individuals are not only followed through the media but also discussed among residents as if part of the small-town gossip, reflecting

the fascination with and detachment from these figures. Phrases like “I’ve never seen them around here,” while tinged with curiosity, underscore that residential differentiation is not limited to lifestyle migrants and locals, it also occurs within the lifestyle migrant community itself. The lack of overlap in daily life, such as these individuals’ absence from public spaces like marketplaces or town squares, reveals the extent of spatial withdrawal. This division highlights how both physical separation and the absence of shared routines reinforce the exclusivity and isolation of these groups.

Kuşçular is where people at the highest level of Türkiye’s socio-economic hierarchy live. The value of the places they live in and the properties they own is immeasurable. They have no real connection to Urla. They don’t dine out in Urla, socialize, or go to the town center. They simply reside in Urla (Onur, 44, sales manager).

Kuşçular is the most expensive area in Urla, and residential development there has only intensified over the past 2-3 years. Previously, it was agricultural land but opening it up for construction without proper infrastructure is a highly debatable issue. The houses are extremely luxurious, yet a sewage truck still comes to the neighborhood, and the whole place smells. (Ecem, 49, Urla-focused social media account owner).

The encirclement of exclusive living spaces, while insulated from Urla’s everyday life, does not fully escape the challenges of rural conditions or the difficulties of controlling the surrounding environment. Issues such as odors caused by infrastructure deficiencies, the cold winter conditions, and problems with central heating systems emerge as factors that threaten the perfection of these luxurious lifestyles.

This region, offering opportunities for scenic views and the aesthetic arrangement of nature, also coincides with a route featuring Michelin-starred or fine-dining restaurants and vineyard estates. These touristic enterprises, established before the concentration of gated communities, had already shaped the landscape to align with the tastes of the wealthy class. Through architectural features, landscape designs, the strategic distribution of vineyards, and efforts to integrate buildings harmoniously with the natural surroundings, they contributed to a land aesthetic that resonated with



affluent preferences. As discussed in the previous chapter regarding the spread of entrepreneurial infrastructures, despite emphasizing sustainability, circular economy, and seasonality in their narratives, these developments have laid the material foundation for rural gentrification.

Normally, events like these used to be held in Alsancak, İzmir. Recently, La Roche had a launch, and it was held in Kuşçular. After that, Sanofi, a large pharmaceutical company, introduced a new product and held the event there. So, the focus has shifted to these luxury venues in Urla for these kinds of launches (İpek, 40, pharmacist and beauty center owner).

An extension of the luxurious residential and consumption qualities of these two areas is the increasing preference of brands to use these locations for product launches or photo shoots in recent years. This trend provides one of the most tangible examples of how the alignment of capital with lifestyle preferences, along with class-based elements, becomes embodied in physical space. The chain-like relationship between brands, venues, and consumption is firmly established in Urla's gentrifying areas, highlighting the intersection of elite lifestyles and spatial practices.

#### *Center with urban-type amenities*

While the functions of Urla's center were summarized under the section on its built and natural environment, this subsection focuses on lifestyle migrants' perspectives on the central district. Understanding what it means for these migrants to position themselves, or, more simply, establish their living spaces—in the center is essential.

Being in the center is often associated with integrating into the local fabric, making it a natural choice for lifestyle migrants who wish to maintain a strong sense of belonging to their new environment. Social practices such as visiting neighborhood markets, frequenting coffeehouses, or participating in communal activities like distributing *aşure* (a traditional dessert shared in neighborhoods) illustrate how the symbolic values of rural *representational space* are reinforced through social interactions. The rural characteristic of fostering close social bonds—allowing less anonymity compared to urban life—continues to be a defining feature in Urla's central

neighborhoods. Among migrants settling in the center, semi-retirees or retirees appear to be more satisfied with these close social connections compared to middle-income white-collar workers or high-income remote professionals, who may prefer more privacy or autonomy in their lifestyles.

In 2013, we bought an old house here (...). This part feels like a place with a soul because of its history and people. (...) For example, this week, everyone cooked and shared aşure, and they also brought some to me. So, I also prepared some to share with my neighbors (Aynur, 48, academic).

The people I know from Urla—my neighbors or the veterinarian I chat with—are from Istanbul, for example. And the friend who owns that pet shop is from Balıkesir. (...) I can't say I've been able to establish that kind of closeness with people from Urla (Suna, 54, psychologist).

The center, beyond its social connections, also offers practical advantages that mitigate the challenges of rural living. Accessibility to transportation, infrastructure services, and social spaces aligns the center with urban qualities, making it an appealing choice for lifestyle migrants. Features such as natural gas availability, well-maintained roads, and more frequent public transportation compared to villages or peripheral settlements enhance its attractiveness. Additionally, the smaller average size of homes in the center, compared to the larger and more luxurious houses in gated communities, provides a relatively affordable option for those wishing to reside in this area. As a result, regardless of their comfort level with close social relationships, the center serves as a viable settlement option for middle-income lifestyle migrants or artists. While the central neighborhoods clustered around Art Street may be less accessible due to higher living costs, areas slightly further from these hubs remain feasible. The settlement narratives of artists, one of the pioneering groups of gentrification, illustrate this dynamic. Initially, artists established workshops around Hacı İsa Neighborhood, but rising rents have pushed many to move to backstreets or even nearby villages. Those who have managed to remain are often integrated into the local fabric through their galleries. This group, defined in the dissertation as entrepreneurial artists, has leveraged the cultural and economic capital brought by elite tourists attracted to the region's gastronomic and terroir tourism, opening galleries that cater to this audience.

My friend thought it would be better for me to settle in the center of Urla. It might offer a more active lifestyle. Since I want to be close to the sea, I accept the consequences—waiting for a minibus and taking a taxi if it doesn't come. Transportation can be an issue (Mavi, 40, sustainable agriculture auditor, expert, and NGO member).

The area around Art Street is the center of Urla. Being there means being close to spaces where you can socialize and dine. A little further from Art Street is an area with a shopping center, Bambu Mall (Işık, 33, wine-tasting expert).

About 50 meters past Darüşşafaka, houses are on both sides of the road. None of them have access to the city water supply. None of them have internet infrastructure either. Fortunately, it has reached here (Beste, 41, corporate communication manager).

Beyond offering urban amenities, the center has been described as one of the areas where the architectural changes driven by migration are most evident, alongside the villages experiencing a construction boom and the expanding coastal belt. In particular, the area behind Art Street, one of the oldest parts of the town, was once a destination for service sector workers, civil servants, or retirees seeking a peaceful life. Over time, however, it has shifted toward becoming a space for those with the economic capital to afford the restoration of historic buildings or to establish entrepreneurial ventures. A local academic residing in the center noted that while many restorations respect the region's traditional masonry construction culture, incompatible structures, such as those with columned designs, have also been approved by municipalities. They added that non-residential ventures, such as hotels, cafés, and restaurants, dominate the restoration trend. This academic also observed that public squares once used for local socialization have diminished due to migration, leading to a decline in everyday local culture. Thus, the area around Hacı İsa Neighborhood is undergoing a commodification process, situated at the intersection of gentrification and touristification, increasingly losing its function as a residential space. Another feature of this commodification is the clustering of real estate offices along certain streets. Attracting interest as a promising market for both residential and land investments, the area has become a stage for these market actors.

We lived in the center of that area for a very long time. Of course, others like us came from outside, but they were mostly people from certain professions, civil servants, or those looking to spend their retirement (Rüya, 39, wine-tasting expert).

They built a house with columns, approved by the Monuments Board. Things without connection to the local architecture or regional style are being built here. However, in general, restorations aim to preserve authenticity. Of course, these restorations are mostly for purposes like boutique hotels, cafés, or restaurants. (...) Local men used to sit in the area with the marble fountain. (...) Now, they are no longer visible. The elderly population has disappeared entirely (Aynur, 48, academic).

In conclusion, the center offers a variety of spatial components to lifestyle migrants, including urban amenities, socialization opportunities, ease of transportation, local connections, and a promise of authenticity. With options ranging from smaller apartments to courtyard or gardened authentic old houses, the center appeals to diverse groups within the lifestyle migrant community. However, the formation of commodification zones, such as those around *Sanat Sokağı*, has begun shifting settlements toward areas like Yaka Neighborhood and the central axis of Sıra Neighborhood. Meanwhile, Yenice, İçmeler, Yenikent, and Kuşçular, due to their proximity to or intersection with the highway corridor, form Urla's urban fringe, creating a "new" urban axis that surrounds the center and contributes to the town's expansion. As one interviewee noted, the influx of migration-driven developments, ranging from mass housing and gated communities to segregated areas resembling ghettos, disrupts the organic growth of settlements, giving Urla a fragmented appearance and undermining the center's traditional functions.

There is no center; everything is completely scattered. The influx of migration creates clusters that eventually turn into ghettos here. While most cities grow organically, this one feels artificial, with mass housing developments being built. You have no idea who the people there are or where they come from. It's most likely a form of profiteering; they move in, and a few months later, when a better offer comes along, they sever their ties with the place (Ali, 48, software developer and designer, NGO member).

*İskele (The Pier District): Transitions between the countryside and residence*

The coastal line, including İskele and the center, is shaped by lifestyle migration layered onto the summerhouse culture, much like the second wave of migration following the service-oriented migration of groups such as civil servants. In older summerhouse areas like Atatürk Mahallesi and Kalabak Mahallesi, it has been observed that seasonal summer residents have permanently settled in these homes, or their children have started using inherited properties as primary residences. Therefore, in the coastal region, which can also include Çeşmealtı, transformations such as renovations, conversions into guesthouses, or dividing rooms in old summerhouses are notable in the processes of property transfers or redefinitions. Another observed phenomenon in these old summerhouse neighborhoods, where summerhouse living is being reproduced, is retirees struggling to make ends meet by renting out guesthouses or rooms as a way to cope with financial difficulties. The proximity to the sea increases tourist demand for these areas during the summer months, turning properties bought in the past into a source of income. Consequently, practices like gardening, which minimize costs in the villages, shift towards small-scale tourism activities along the coastal line.

In İskele, among the rental properties, you can find retirees, but most homeowners are either locals or retirees who moved here some time ago. There are also young people living in their own homes and those who decided to relocate earlier or, like me, moved in with their family or partner (Bartu, 33, advertiser and agency owner).

For instance, in the Çeşmealtı, some retirees had purchased garden villas years ago. Some have converted the ground floor into a separate apartment to rent out, while others have divided their homes into individual rooms, renting them out like guesthouses to summer visitors. Even these villa owners struggle to make ends meet in Urla with just one or two pensions (Mavi, 40, sustainable agriculture auditor, expert and NGO member).

Thus, the most vulnerable group among retired migrants in Urla's coastal belt or central areas consists of former civil servants, seasonal residents, and workers who

settled earlier. This dynamic makes it increasingly difficult for the middle-income lifestyle group (e.g., İzmir-based workers or remote white-collar professionals) to find affordable housing. Those who did not purchase homes during favorable market conditions often continue to live in rental apartments. However, it is challenging to find apartment-style housing in the coastal belt, which predominantly features summerhouse-style villas or gardened detached homes. Dividing summerhouses into separate units provides a partial solution to this issue. Additionally, the practice of renting these homes for high prices during the 2–3-month summer period, leaving them vacant during the winter, poses challenges for the İskele district in terms of service planning and fostering a sense of belonging. In recent years, new residence-style buildings featuring small luxury apartments have been constructed toward Çeşmealtı. These projects cater to the demands of high-income white-collar professionals, remote workers, and specialized groups within the luxury service sector. The area, including Denizli and Güvendik neighborhoods, hosts vacant land suitable for construction, enabling vertical expansion through the development of luxury housing complexes. This trend also reflects a shift in investments from areas like Kekliktepe and Kuşçular to these neighborhoods by investors and high-income groups.

Summer residents primarily populated İskele, but now the houses are changing hands. The seaside properties have started turning into restaurants. Some of the houses further inland have become guesthouses, while others have been renovated and converted into year-round residences. What used to be a typical summer destination for civil servants and retirees is now seeing the construction of luxury housing. (...) Luxurious housing developments appear in Çeşmealtı, resembling apartment-style residences (Ecem, 49, Urla-focused social media account owner).

İskele, with its complex demographic structure, is not only home to the clustering of local real estate offices but also serves as a hub for global real estate networks. Alongside the central district, these two areas are the most frequented by outsiders and have become focal points defined by Urla's shifting market value, which is unsurprising given their strategic importance.

The promise of a healthy and ideal lifestyle, centered on walkable proximity to the sea and access to nearby beaches, forms the core narrative of this region. However,

the influx of day-trippers from the city center who use these beaches or frequent venues there is a source of frustration for migrants, prompting some to retreat from these spaces. Consequently, during the summer, many migrants create autonomous spaces by visiting more secluded beaches or rarely leaving their gardened homes. In summary, İskele districts's position as a gateway to Urla, combined with its seaside town qualities, such as the sea, beaches, piers, and entertainment venues—continues to sustain its historic appeal, making it a favored destination for lifestyle migrants as well.

*The route for nature lovers: Villages*

In the first chapter, the transformative capacity of new farmers—those practicing self-sufficient production or supporting autonomous food systems and alternative food networks—was associated with the “Back to the land” movement. Villages are the primary scale where this transformation is most evident. These individuals play a vital role in preserving farmland through their agricultural activities, though the number of people residing in rural areas remains limited. Bademler, Kuşçular, Yağcılar, Barbaros, and Özbek are among Urla's well-known villages and have become key destinations for these groups. Notably, Kuşçular, discussed in detail under the subsection on *elite villages*, is the village with the highest concentration of producers. This village exemplifies the blending of new farming practices with entrepreneurial initiatives and the rise of terroir tourism. The transformation of its natural and built environment is further elaborated in the sections on “Construction Boom and Entrepreneurial Infrastructures in the Built Environment.”

While new farmers continue their agricultural activities in Urla's rural regions, some also opt for areas that lie between urban and rural zones, such as Çeşmealtı, Gülbahçe, and İçmeler, which are less densely populated than İskele or the central district. Interestingly, one new farmer interviewed during fieldwork chose to relocate to a village in Seferihisar, drawn by its promise of a more economical and tranquil lifestyle while still maintaining agricultural activities in Urla's countryside.

When an investment arrives, it tends to attract additional investments. By additional investments, I mean a clustering effect occurs, and in Urla, I believe this clustering is particularly evident in Kuşçular. Although Urla's coastline is very beautiful, Kuşçular offers more suitable spaces for production than simply

being a coastal area (Özlem, 57, winery owner and Urla Vineyard Route member).

As noted in the first chapter, these new farmers contribute to the development of village economies by introducing local communities to new production techniques and crops and by identifying ways for villagers to participate in tourism. Their efforts serve as a bridge for integrating entrepreneurship into rural economies. Furthermore, their environmental awareness, as discussed under the “Neighbourhood Activism” subsection, drives them to take responsibility for issues affecting the natural ecosystem, such as opposing the establishment of quarries, protecting olive trees, and advocating for sustainable use of agricultural chemicals. During interviews, members of these communities were frequently highlighted as defenders of villages, often perceived as being more proactive than the locals in safeguarding farmlands and serving as the guarantors of Urla’s natural environment.

In villages such as Barbaros and Bademler, which host festivals and preserve traditional practices, artists and their workshops are particularly prominent. The natural environment, often associated with creativity and offering an ideal of life detached from urban pressures, fosters a more romanticized relationship with rural life for these artists. However, conversations with local villagers reveal a recurring pattern: some individuals, drawn by the romanticized image of rural life without fully considering its realities, eventually leave. Villagers noted that some artists establish workshops in the villages but later become bored and relocate to the center or coastal areas, reflecting the idealized expectations many bring to rural living.

The villages of İzmir were already famous. But now, even the villages of Urla are no longer like traditional villages; we could call them developed villages. These are places where people from a certain economic class, tired of city life, escape. They buy houses at high prices and create their own spaces (Rüya, 39, wine-tasting expert).

A sculptor lives in a village house with two rooms. That’s where she lives, and she has also set up a workshop in her garden. I think artists in the villages are creating their little world (Gözde, 33, chef and restaurant owner).



Artists who witness the ambivalent realities of rural life often participate in environmentally focused movements, much like new farmers. However, they tend to struggle with integrating into local life, as they rarely build partnerships with villagers in terms of production. Instead, they primarily interact with other migrants who have relocated to the village or its vicinity, often through workshops they organize. This limited engagement with the local community underscores their challenges in becoming fully integrated into rural life.

Retirees have been observed to be the group most easily adapting to the local life of villages. This may partly be attributed to their age group, which facilitates their integration into the community. They tend to build neighborly ties with villagers, actively participate in local cooperatives, and support the rural economy by purchasing agricultural products grown within the village. Their role as both consumers and engaged community members enables them to integrate more seamlessly into the fabric of village life.

While lifestyle migrants who move to villages are often viewed as beneficial to local economies and development—preserving traditions, demonstrating sensitivity to local culture, advocating for children’s education and environmental protection, and introducing new products and production values to Urla—they are also subject to criticism. One critique is directed at those undertaking larger-scale investments, which are seen as triggering investment clustering within villages. This not only drives up prices, similar to trends observed in the center, but also leads to the creation of exclusive spaces within or around villages. Such practices are perceived to homogenize villages, eroding the unique cultural identities that once distinguished each settlement. Additionally, the municipality’s uniform approach to managing all villages, without accounting for their cultural differences, is also cited as a contributing factor to this loss of distinctiveness.

Barbaros Village, Birgi, Bademler Village, and Özbek Village all preserve the traditional village culture and organize festivals. Those who migrated to these places participated in these events, supporting peasants and development (Işık, 33, wine tasting expert).

In Barbaros, there is a significant contribution from newcomers. There is also a teacher who graduated from the Village Institutes. They have contributed substantially (Deniz, 48, ex-chair of the artichoke festival committee, lecturer, and potter).

Artists and people interested in agriculture and wanting to create something within nature moved to these villages. For example, a couple in Bademler Village started cultivating lavender, producing oils and cosmetic creams. While contributing to the continuity of agricultural production, they also bring a new production value to Urla (Deniz, 48, ex-chair of the artichoke festival committee, lecturer, and potter).

Urla has 14 villages, each with unique characteristics, (...) Scientists or people like us could study its history and propose to the local municipality that settlement here could develop in a certain way (...). Otherwise, the wholesale approach of municipal governance unfortunately destroys it (Aziz, 72, architect, winery owner, and Urla Vineyard Route member).

Briefly, lifestyle migrants' narratives about villages and migration emphasize that the groups settling within villages do not create significant disruptions and, in fact, contribute to the local economy by establishing supportive infrastructures. This perspective aligns with the notion that they help preserve rural identity. However, issues such as the proliferation of gated communities around the villages and the rezoning of protected areas within the villages for development and tourism purposes do not change the fact that these regions are also subject to agendas of profit-driven exploitation and ghettoization.

### **3.3.2. The Manifestations of Capitals in the Built Environment and Nature**

In the previous chapter, while discussing how lifestyle migrants transfer their economic and social capital to Urla through the "Capitals Framework", the components of "Land" and "Built Capital" were left unaddressed. This section, focusing on the transformation of the built and natural environment through lifestyle migration, revisits the Capitals Framework (Figure 2.6) as the guiding model. One of the framework's components, built capital, is defined as comprising three overlapping

sub-capitals: economic, environmental<sup>33</sup>, and socio-cultural infrastructures. These are embedded within various natural environments alongside social and economic activities. Their functions, contributions to rural places, and their susceptibility to human actions offer a lens through which to understand the complex dynamics of capital transformation (Gkartzios et al., 2022: 4). Therefore, when evaluating findings related to environmental transformation, the analysis follows a categorization that examines new spatial formations or infrastructures linked to entrepreneurship and the service sector, the construction boom and the encroachment of rural areas by gated communities, the risks posed to agricultural activities, the commercialization of central settlements, and alternative spatialities and sensitivities toward space.

### **3.3.2.1. Entrepreneurial Infrastructures of the Built Environment**

Economic infrastructures include offices, restaurants, cafes, etc., for income-generating means, transportation infrastructures, temporary infrastructures for social activities or festivals, public services, or energy infrastructures that enable the transfer of capital to the community (Gkartzios et al., 2022: 5). This transformational or re-evaluative relationship of the lifestyle migrants with the built environment lies at the intersection of cultural and economic capital. While the previous chapter discusses economic transfer, this chapter examines how spaces for entrepreneurship—and, more broadly, for capital—intersect with and transform everyday life, infrastructure, agricultural lands, and, more generally, the coastal town of Urla.

The most significant power of entrepreneur lifestyle migrants is holding economic capital (financial resources for land ownership and production infrastructure) to create income-generating means/spaces. Utilizing their properties by repurposing land or buildings, managing restoration processes for older structures, creating aesthetic elements to attract elite tourists, constructing necessary production infrastructure, or implementing sustainability-oriented structures (e.g., renewable energy systems, solar panels) requires substantial financial investment, time, and comprehensive architectural planning.

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<sup>33</sup> According to Gkartzios et al. (2022: 5), environmental or nature-based infrastructures include intervention processes related to natural assets such as reservoirs that provide water and energy, access roads to nature-based infrastructures, the establishment of control mechanisms for natural risks (flood risk reduction, etc.), and fencing to protect valuable natural assets. Planning, actions, or practices of entrepreneurial lifestyle migrants have yet to be encountered in this framework.

In Urla, the most long-term entrepreneurial infrastructure projects revolve around vineyard estates, which are critical to terroir tourism. Beyond the vineyards themselves, these estates require significant planning and investment in elements such as the design of the estate house, importing various components for production facilities, repairing and lighting village roads for better access to the vineyards, and even improving access to nearby airports. The environmental arrangements necessary for viticulture, such as planting vines, terracing land, cooling and storage systems for wine cellars (often dependent on high-cost, imported products), and multifunctional spaces blending lifestyle and utility (e.g., tasting rooms, event spaces, and relaxation areas), make these estates not only centers of production but also hubs for social interaction and entertainment. Consequently, capital shifts from production-focused environmental use to designs centered on experiential consumption.

This experiential consumption is framed by architectural forms ranging from stunning structures that surprise visitors within a seemingly untouched natural setting to rustic designs reminiscent of the European countryside. Thus, a hybrid rural aesthetic emerges, where traditional functions and architectural elements are reinterpreted within modern, capital-oriented designs. As a niche tourism trend, local and organic wine tourism in Urla draws heavily on aesthetic codes rooted in the Mediterranean (see Tassinari et al., 2013). The architectural language commonly associated with global wine destinations like Bordeaux and Tuscany—characterized by the use of stone, wood, and iron to create a rustic atmosphere—is the predominant design formula in the region. The use of local limestone for walls and repurposed elements such as old doors and decorative objects in interior design reflect choices that aim to convey the uniqueness of the rural setting and Urla's architectural heritage. Modern elements like expansive glass windows overlooking the vineyards and concrete floors are blended with landscape design, while interiors often evoke the prestigious chateaux of European wine estates. These vineyard estates, situated within Urla's terroir, serve not only as production spaces but also as venues for consumption and experience. Vineyard estates are concentrated primarily in the Kuşçular region. However, according to the 1/100,000 Environmental Plan, this area, squeezed between forested lands, agricultural fields, and urban settlement zones, faces intense urbanization pressures despite the conservation-oriented characteristics of gastronomy

tourism. The rising popularity of the area, coupled with increasing land demand and the proliferation of gated communities, places significant strain on the region's rural character.



**Figure 3.14 :** The interior and exterior design of vineyard houses (Source: Personal archive)



Table 3.1 : Entrepreneurial infrastructures of the built environment

| Entrepreneurial Infrastructures of the Built Environment | Observation                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | In-depth interview                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|----------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Dependence of built capital on rural infrastructures     | <p>Need for repair and lighting of roads surrounding entrepreneurial infrastructures</p> <p>Strengthening connectivity with the airport for international tourism operations</p> <p>Re-functionalization of historic buildings or historic production facilities (olive oil press) in the countryside</p> <p>The “good countryside” infrastructures holistically draws the tourist in</p> | <p>Mayor Aziz also wanted to host a dinner for 600 people with ministers and journalists in our area. (...) Meanwhile, <u>I already knew he couldn't bring them along that road</u>. There's this Kuşçular road that comes to us—it's so uneven it could make your insides churn. He came once or twice already, <u>gave the order to fix the road, and it was done</u>. (Can Ortabaş)</p> <p>We used a <u>grant from the Izmir Development Agency</u> here, which <u>allowed us to build our poles along the road</u>." (Meltem)</p> <p>Urla is a <u>very reachable place, but there are no direct flights</u>. Open us flights, <u>put us three flights in 4 days from major European cities and America</u>. Those channels are blocked, and we say on every occasion that we want people to come here. (...) There is no tour agency or engaged operator. How can they come? (Duygu)</p> <p>There are a <u>historical quarantine station, a very old olive oil facility, baths, and beautiful 18th-century houses</u>. (Bilge)</p> <p>(1) An <u>agricultural experience in nature</u>, (2) the <u>experience of processing agricultural products</u> accompanied by training and hands-on workshop activities, and (3) experiencing the region's cuisine in a gastronomic restaurant and in an <u>award-winning restored building in the old historic city center</u>. In short, we established a small initiative for agricultural and gastronomic tourism, <u>offering a full experience across three different locations</u>. (Duygu)</p> <p>There are <u>good architectural examples</u>, but their number is very limited, and they should be highly valued. The other houses must be <u>redesigned and restored appropriately</u>, using a <u>unified type of stone and architectural model</u>, working with architects, and following the municipality's master plan. The neighborhood <u>should be closed to traffic and opened to pedestrians for this renewal</u> (Ercan)</p> |
| Multiple Functions of Spaces                             | <p>Vineyards where production and consumption are intertwined</p> <p>Different functionalities within the same space for social interaction and leisure (tasting rooms, event spaces and relaxation zones, hotels)</p> <p>The design of an experiential consumerism</p>                                                                                                                   | <p>If the winery has a small tasting room or a restaurant, people can spend more time there, breathe in the air, and immerse themselves in the vineyards. This helps them recognize its value. They come to understand that it is not just a commodity purchased from the market but something that originates from these lands (Bilge)</p> <p>We are constructing a hotel designed to embody the principles of rural tourism or agro-tourism. The rooms, measuring 110 m<sup>2</sup>, 90 m<sup>2</sup>, and 70 m<sup>2</sup> gross, are distributed among the pine trees, like a village. (...) We plan to produce oil from our own grape seeds, which will be used in peels and massages. We have experimented with these products and allocated two rooms in the hotel's spa (Can ortabaş)</p> <p>I really liked Manej. I initially thought it was just a restaurant or a place to have a glass of wine, like a casual date spot. However, inside, there are actually horses and a beautiful atmosphere. (...) They only accept reservations; it's not a place where you can just show up unannounced. It's a very exclusive venue. (Merve)</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Re-representation of rural aesthetics                    | <p>The construction of global rustic codes of wine tourism in the design of spaces</p> <p>Hybrid use of modern elements and local rural identity</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | <p>Wine is very intertwined with art and aesthetics. When we acquired this land, we thought we should be harmonious with the surrounding architecture. The old prototype buildings of Urla are smaller and made of stone. They used wood very well. We wanted a structure like that (Serpil)</p> <p>To build the winery, we visited wineries around the world. We did it by understanding what they did and what difficulties they had. When we first built it, we had many things that needed improvement. Because no architect in Turkey knew winery architecture (Meltem)</p> <p>We wanted the restaurant to <u>embody a sense of the past, to possess a soul and a history, while embracing newness in the presentation of the dishes as much as possible</u> (Özge)</p> <p>Hearing the sounds of the neighborhood surrounding the restaurant, a customer once remarked, "<u>Close everything off over there; I don't want to see the neighboring buildings</u>." But <u>we embrace being part of the neighborhood and the town—we enjoy it</u>. The hotel owners have crafted a beautiful space. Visitors navigate the narrow streets of Urla, reminiscent of Marrakech, and then <u>step into a completely different world</u>. Passing through the courtyard offers a transformative experience, evoking entirely new emotions. (Atilla)</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| The Embodiment of Gentrification                         | <p>The development of regions with a concentrated service sector</p> <p>The division between consumption spaces and residential areas</p> <p>The unequal distribution of infrastructural services between rural centers and their peripheries</p> <p>Spatial disparities and the alienation of rural identity</p>                                                                         | <p>Just diagonally across, there's a couple in their 80s or 85s. (...) He said he would leave soon because he feels isolated. "<u>I have no neighbors left here</u>," he said. When asked where he would go, he replied, "<u>I'm going to sell my house. Look, that place has turned into a coffee shop. You opened a restaurant, and there's another one over there. I'm all alone here</u>." (...) In the evening, he puts his chair out and sits on the sidewalk, but now, he directs his frustration at the cars passing by. (Özge)</p> <p>There are aspects of Urla that <u>even its longtime residents may not know</u>. For instance, Klazomenai houses the oldest olive oil mill in Anatolia. On our tours, we start there and then visit the boathouse (...) <u>Between the bazaar and the coffee stops, we immerse ourselves in 4-5 different themes</u>. Later, we visit Arkas Urla, followed by olive oil tasting and a walk through the backstreets. Dinner is at Beğendik Abi, and we also enjoy wine tasting at Urla Winery before heading to the Arboretum. (...) <u>With so many diverse stops—food, olives, wine, history, and archaeology</u>. (tur rehberi gökhan)</p> <p>The <u>priority should have been planning aimed at improving the welfare and happiness of the residents</u> here. (...) Instead, the <u>focus of municipality has been on turning an Aegean town into a tourist hub with gastronomy, festivals, and similar attractions</u>, which has caused the real estate market to skyrocket. It has become a <u>destination for the wealthy to migrate to</u>. But <u>what about the locals?</u> (Kübra)</p> <p>When the municipality provides a service and shares it on their page, I often check the comments. I notice that residents of Urla frequently write things like, "<u>Come to this neighborhood; you haven't addressed this issue in our area for two years</u>," or they mention recurring electricity problems. (Cem)</p>                |

Lifestyle migrant entrepreneurs, while emphasizing the role of architects in designing vineyard estates, often highlight that their international travels serve as a critical source of cultural capital in constructing rural-specific aesthetics. In their interventions in the built capital, especially in reconstructing rural-specific aesthetics, winemakers have the cultural and economic capital to travel and see examples worldwide to understand the winery-specific architectural culture. Beyond aesthetics, these trips also offer opportunities to develop knowledge about essential elements such as production facilities, storage solutions, and cellar construction.



**Figure 3.15:** A vineyard house in Urla reminiscent of a castle (Source:Arkitera website)



**Figure 3.16 :** A hidden oasis at the end of the road (Source: Peronal archive)

Although Urla features old stone houses (architectural heritage of the local Greek Orthodox communities), encountering consumption and entertainment venues amidst

nature in an Aegean town embodies a shift away from the daily flow of rural life. For the local population, this transformation contributes to a sense of spatial alienation, the physical manifestation of gentrification, and, in other words, a change in the aesthetic language of the environment.

Chef restaurants, which play a complementary role in terroir tourism, also extend this function architecturally. While rustic details are evident on the exterior façades, the interiors are often designed with modern elements. Thus, it would not be inaccurate to state that their collaboration contributes to unifying the aesthetic language of outdoor spaces. Another component of this synergy is boutique hotels. However, what sets boutique hotels and central consumption spaces apart is that they often operate within restored buildings, adding a layer of historical preservation to their functionality. This integration underscores their unique position within the broader network of terroir and gastronomic tourism in the region.



**Figure 3.17 :** Gastro-tourism spaces (Source: Personal archive)

Traditional stone Greek houses and historical agricultural structures are integrated into the entrepreneurial ecosystem as elements that preserve culture and enhance the cultural tourism potential of rural spaces by referencing the area's past and local traditions. While the continuity of these structures aids in preserving rural identity and maintaining cultural heritage, they are increasingly tailored to the cultural and aesthetic preferences of lifestyle migrants through ownership changes.



Consequently, historical buildings have become material resources through which migrants control or reconstruct the aura of rural life.



**Figure 3.18 :** Boutique hotels near Art Street (Source : Personal archive)

The “good countryside” aura that supports both living and working does not function solely through business establishments; as previously mentioned, infrastructural arrangements connecting these spaces to Urla and its surroundings are also essential. The “good countryside” infrastructures are imagined in a functioning where the landscape holistically draws the tourist in, where vineyards, buildings, transportation, hotels, restaurants and daily life complement each other. Thus, lifestyle migrants continue to plan the built environment as a wider grid in which these businesses are embedded. Improving transportation infrastructure, especially, seems vital to sustaining the entrepreneurial ecosystem of terroir tourism. Fixing the roads of the vineyards and lighting the neighborhoods outside the center intersected with vineyards, establishing efficient transportation channels for international flights, and managing these networks as part of the tourism operation are the projections of lifestyle migrants for the future of Urla. These initiatives related to neighborhoods have indirectly contributed to the environmental possibilities of public life. Especially regarding tourism operations situating Urla in the international wine tourism market, they expect active participation from the central and local governments in developing built infrastructure.

The entrepreneurial infrastructures of the rural built environment are not entirely separate from public services, particularly given the trend of competitive urban governance and the support of both central and local policies for tourism-oriented

infrastructure and investments. Consequently, terroir tourism often redirects economic activities or development budgets, typically concentrated in urban areas, to disadvantaged rural or peripheral regions (for the UK example, see Goodwin-Hawkins, 2023: 389). However, at the local level, the spatial expansion of services often prioritizes improvements that bolster tourism and migration potential, such as infrastructure development, coastal arrangements, road improvements in central areas, and recreational interventions. This focus, in turn, exacerbates the disadvantage of rural areas located on the periphery of these developments. As a result, the entrepreneurial infrastructures of the built environment appear to have extended the prioritization of services and financial strategies from the urban-rural dichotomy to a new dynamic of spatial inequality between rural centers and their peripheries.

The most prevalent manifestation of entrepreneurial infrastructures is the concentration of service sector spaces, such as those catering to health, education, culture, and entertainment, within rural areas, driven by both tourism demands and the preferences of lifestyle migrants. As discussed in the previous chapter, this transformation fosters economic diversification in rural areas, provides wealth-building mechanisms for entrepreneurial locals, and generates employment opportunities. However, it also leads to embedding urban habits and consumption trends within the traditional fabric of rural life. This process is closely linked to linked migration, contributing to social transformation, and, when combined with the construction sector, accelerates economic change. Hairdressers, beauty experts, architects, and ceramic artists relocating from major cities like Istanbul, either by following the mobility of their clientele or recognizing the potential in Urla, bring urban capital into the material environment, manifesting counterurbanization. High-end businesses catering to affluent customers create a daily rhythm that the local population struggles to participate in or finds itself excluded from, thus constructing the spatial organization of gentrification imposed by the economic and cultural dominance of lifestyle migrants.

This process accelerates the separation of commercial areas from residential zones. In particular, the residents of neighborhoods surrounding İskele and Art Street have begun relocating due to the rising property values driven by cafés, restaurants, boutique hotels, and other consumption spaces. This movement, observed as a shift

toward backstreets or relocation to more affordable districts, transforms these areas into urban-style entertainment hubs by equipping them with social spaces.

### **3.3.2.2. Construction Boom, Natural Environment and Agricultural Lands**

The land is the scene of all the built and economic capital occurrences mentioned so far. Still, it also corresponds to the holistic field of natural or human-made entities specific to the environment. In the capitals framework, the relationality of human activities on land, the natural environment, and socio-economic conditions are described by three sub-capitals: “land as a socially productive asset; landscape as cultural capital; and nature-based infrastructure.” (Gkartzios et al., 2022: 7).

The main requirement of “Land as a socially productive asset” is to establish inclusive land tenure systems for the socially just use of land, control land-based value extraction and generate social benefits. In Urla, where land value is rapidly increasing, and the unequal distribution of ownership prevails, it is becoming increasingly difficult to create social wealth through land or maintain local access to land. The transformation of former villages into new elite communities, the boom in gated communities, the expansion of village boundaries through the rezoning of agricultural lands or protected areas, and the phased residential projects, as exemplified in the cases of Kuşçular and Kekliktepe, create notable pressures on Urla’s natural environment and land distribution. The main transformative governmental plans in Urla are summarized below, including the master plans, the highway project, the transformation of village statuses, the latest legal regulations concerning protected areas, and their spatial axes, as previously discussed in the context of Urla’s existing built and natural environmental culture. As the steps in the table show in detail, the natural environment and rural identity of Urla, as a region on İzmir periphery, has been encircled by the built environment since the 1950s through development such as the improvements of road infrastructure, modifications to zoning regulations and land classifications, and alterations in the authority of decision-makers concerning village governance. The housing demand from lifestyle migrants, the increasing population, and the trend of luxury residences among urban migrants have led various actors, from global real estate players to İzmir-based or national construction companies, to set their sights on the natural environment. In this context, as shown in the table below, a

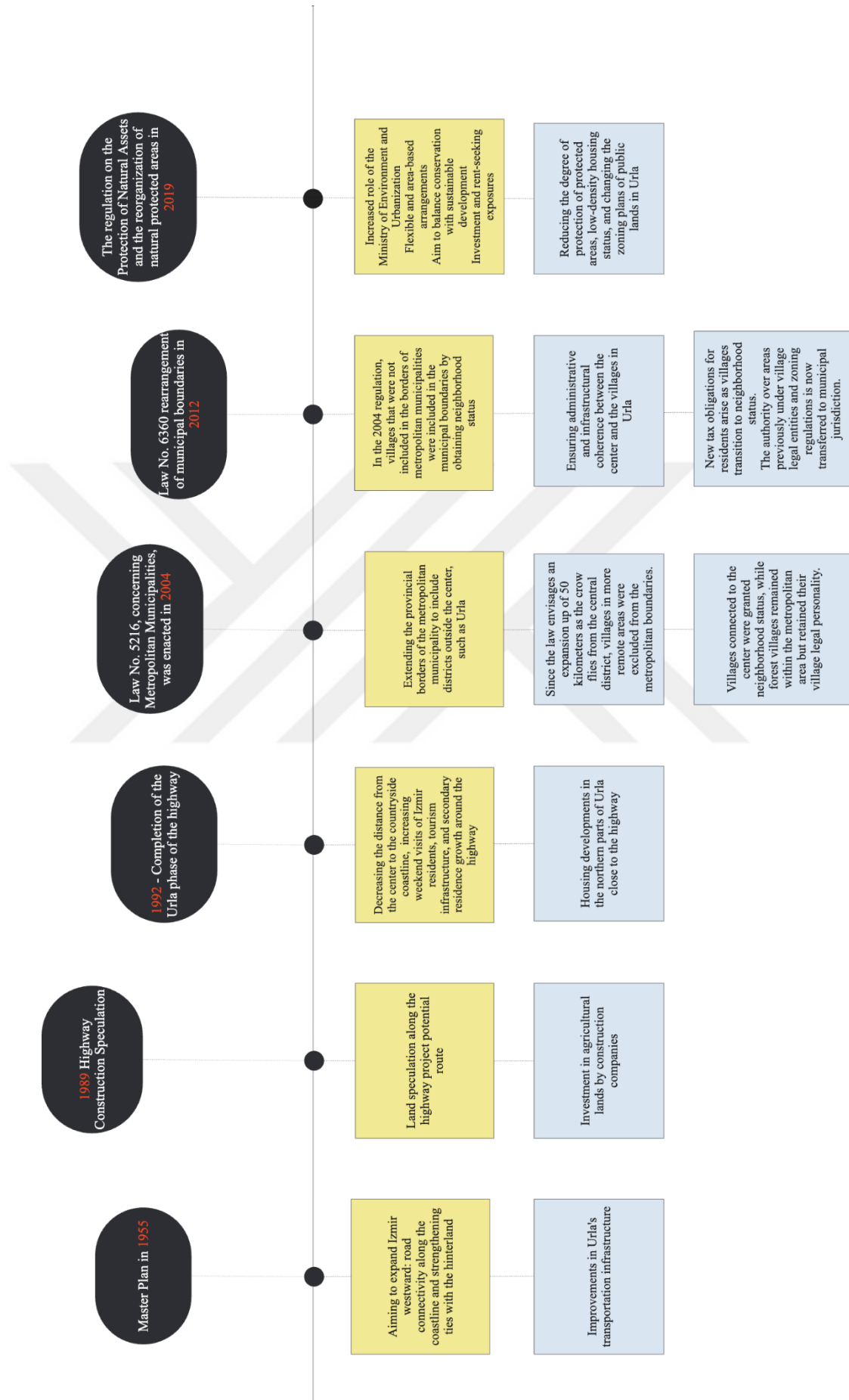


Figure 3.19 : Surrounding the natural environment with construction

construction companies over the last seven years reveals that land scales have expanded to as much as 202000 square meters.

Akyol-Altun (2012:56), in her study on the development of gated communities in İzmir, including the projects in Urla, notes that the market profile and scale of construction investments in İzmir, emerged after 2000, differ from those of large-scale companies in Istanbul. According to Akyol-Altun (2012:56), İzmir's construction sector is predominantly driven by small capital, local entrepreneurs, or the proliferation of cooperative housing estates. Small plots, limited numbers of houses, and phased construction of housing estates are strategies adopted by small-scale construction companies to mitigate risk. Consequently, housing estates have developed incrementally over the years, resulting in the production of a significant number of housing units.

A decision by former mayor Bülent Barata to restrict construction to two floors has been a significant advantage for this area. However, it is certain to experience rapid development. (...) I believe we will lose agricultural land in Kuşçular and Bademler (Aynur, 48, academic).

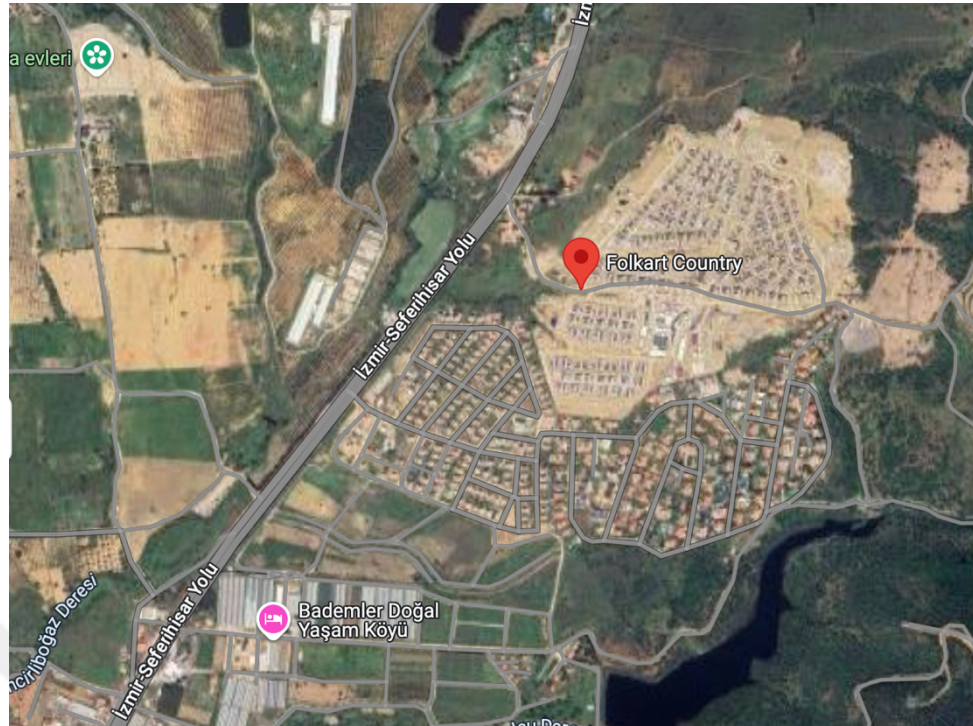
As Aynur emphasized, Urla has undergone a similar process in this context. In Kuşçular, it is widely observed that development progresses in a way that leaves agricultural lands fragmented, with construction spread over limited areas, such as 5,000 square meters, often closely clustered on farmland. However, particularly in the last five years, the scale of companies has shifted from local to national, and both the size of the land plots and the number of villas, as well as the areas occupied by estates, have expanded. Notably, companies like Mesa Mesken and Demir Construction originate from Istanbul. Additionally, Ankara-based CYC has been active in the region for the past six years and continues to make new investments. However, it has been observed that Akyol-Altun's emphasis on İzmir-oriented, relatively smaller companies remains relevant in Urla. As a result, land rent in Urla continues to be dominated by İzmir-based companies operating on smaller-scale plots with projects similar in texture and architecture, often clustered together. Nevertheless, among these companies, Folkart, one of the leading groups in İzmir's construction sector, has expanded its luxury residential investments to Urla, adding to its portfolio in the city center and Istanbul. Emerging as a strong competitor to the relatively smaller companies in Urla,

Folkart has developed a project of 180 villas in Bademler. This neighborhood has recently become a market favorite, beyond its earlier focus on Kuşçular and Kekliktepe.

**Table 3.2 :** Major recent construction projects of the gated communities

| Project                     | Initiated on Year | Location         | Developer       | Description                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|------------------|-----------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Tan Urla Project</b>     | 2021              | Bademler Village | Tanyer Yapı     | Completion in 2025, a modern village concept, spanning 50,000 square meters                                                                                                                 |
| <b>Kekliktepe Project</b>   | 2023              | Kekliktepe       | Ege Yapı        | Completion in 2025, it offers a housing experience integrated with nature, spanning 83,000 square meters                                                                                    |
| <b>Mesa Urla Kekliktepe</b> | 2022              | Kekliktepe       | Mesa Mesken     | Completed in 2024, combining comfort and nature in a location provides easy access to the region's beaches, spanning 68000 square meters                                                    |
| <b>Casamarine Çeşmealı</b>  | 2021              | Çeşmealı         | Eruz Yapı       | Completed in 2023, healthy living and the soothing effect of nature with its proximity to healing waters, spanning 10,500 square meters                                                     |
| <b>Folkart Country Urla</b> | 2021              | Bademler Village | Folkart Yapı    | Completed in 2024, where true luxury meets five-sensory living, spanning 202,000 square meters                                                                                              |
| <b>The Village Urla</b>     | 2018              | Kekliktepe       | CYC             | Completed in 2022, design inspired by nature, spanning 50,000 square meters                                                                                                                 |
| <b>CYC Select Urla</b>      | 2024              | Rüstem           | CYC             | Completion in 2027, “a life raising living standards with its sea, villages, bays, fine dining restaurants offering high-end flavors, unique vineyard route”, spanning 21,000 square meters |
| <b>Olira Kuşçular</b>       | 2022              | Kuşçular         | Demir İnşaat    | Completed in 2023, the landscape embraces every shade of green, Urla-specific flora, and olive trees, spanning approximately 7,300 square meters                                            |
| <b>Sokak Urla</b>           | 2017              | Kuşçular         | Sabancı İnşaat  | Completed in 2019, bay windows combined with Urla architecture and modernism, unique nature, spanning approximately 6,000 square meters                                                     |
| <b>Elegant Urla Deluxe</b>  | 2021              | Kuşçular         | Gencer Mimarlık | Completed in 2023, “in the village of Kuşçular, that fascinates with its vineyards,” spanning approximately 11,680 square meters                                                            |





**Figure 3.20 :** Folkart’s land domination (Source: Google Maps)

These projects have not only triggered a construction boom, reduced Urla’s natural land capacity and erased its rural character through residential development, but have also multidimensionally transformed the functional qualities of the land through the recreational activities they have introduced. These areas, which now serve as social extensions of residential spaces, are increasingly used for consumer-oriented activities such as horse riding and golf, rather than for production. In addition, migration has positioned landscaping as a dynamic force in Urla, reshaping land use patterns in areas near the highways, where housing developments have proliferated, and along the İskele district line.

This corresponds to the description of “landscape as cultural capital,” as proposed by Gkartzios et al. (2022: 7), where cultural capital transfer also influences the natural environment. Lifestyles and tastes, even without large-scale construction on the land, can destroy its productive activity. Creating terroir tourism landscapes is one example of how cultural capital can alter the natural environment. As previously mentioned, the sustainability of terroir tourism depends on the preservation of agricultural land and nature, distinguishing landscape interventions in this field from solely profit-oriented material investments. Specifically, agricultural lands, such as

vineyards owned by new farmer-entrepreneur lifestyle migrants, face challenges to product quality and, consequently, the added value for tourism, as they are squeezed between ongoing construction. This tension represents one of the primary conflicts between investors and farmer-entrepreneurs concerning the natural environment. In interviews, Kuşçular, where vineyards are concentrated, emerged as the region with the highest increasing value and agricultural quality, yet it remains under siege, caught between agriculture, construction, gastronomy, and tourism.

As nine members, we aimed to protect nature and expand the vineyard lands, but I cannot say we have achieved this. Vineyard areas are also increasing; unfortunately, rent-seeking has increased much faster (Özlem, 57, winery owner and Urla Vineyard Route member).

Kuşçular is destroyed. The poor vineyards are under construction. The air corridors are closed. There will be more diseases. (...) The hills are the only remaining fields for viticulture. However, they have purchased and invested in a notable amount of land. How can they move it? (Ayşegül, 50, winery owner and Urla Vineyard Route member).

Despite managing consumption-oriented spaces, lifestyle migrants who own vineyards are aware of their potential vulnerability to gentrification and land grabs by housebuilders due to their focus on production-based businesses. For some lifestyle migrants, purchasing land near the vineyards may be a viable solution. However, the rising land cost due to speculative investments has prompted investors to expand vineyards toward the more reasonably priced Gödence and Gölcük regions.

Furthermore, the establishment of permanent rights of passage for roads surrounding lands is presented by real estate agents as an asset to their customers. Accordingly, the flow of capital into Urla is closely tied to various planning decisions made by local or central governments, ranging from the administrative planning of roads within the natural environment to changes in the categorization of protected lands.

Sustainability efforts driven by entrepreneurial activities remain limited in terms of “nature-based infrastructures” that should protect and enhance Urla’s natural beauty



and unique habitat values. While these efforts do not form a comprehensive network for the entire habitat, specific initiatives, such as preserving forest quality, protecting vineyard districts, combating pesticide usage, and promoting heirloom seeds and biodiversity, serve as buffer zones against urbanization and help maintain Urla's quality of life.

### 3.3.2.3. Commodification and New Spatial Demands

The notion, frequently mentioned by lifestyle migrants, that Urla was long considered merely a “stop on the way to Çeşme,” reflects its previously unappealing built environment, lack of activities, and underemphasis on local values in terms of tourism. Lifestyle migrants who have lived in Urla for over ten years or those who knew the town as tourists in the past have noted how the image of Urla as a “stop over place”, uncommodified and lacking tourist amenities, has transformed with the rise of wine tourism, the opening of chef restaurants, and the establishment of Art Street.

Art Street is a movement we started. It was created to ensure that Urla wouldn't just be a place people pass through on their way to Çeşme, but rather somewhere they could stop and spend time (Deniz, 48, ex-chair of the artichoke festival committee, lecturer, and potter).

Although the transformative capacity of entrepreneurial infrastructures shaping the built and natural environment on the outskirts of the center was discussed in the previous section, it is essential to examine the commodification process around Art Street and its surroundings. This area, which generates day-trip tourism activity and serves as a leisure hub for both migrants and tourists, is crucial for understanding the trajectory of Urla's transformation. While a similar pattern can be observed around İskele, the story of Art Street's reinvention as a touristic space is relatively recent.

Lifestyle migrants often highlight the new spatial arrangements that have positioned Urla as a primary destination, and many entrepreneurial migrants view this as a positive development. However, more critical voices, such as back-to-the-lander new farmers, environmentally conscious social advocates, retirees dissatisfied with crowds, and middle-class white-collar workers, point to how these flows and spatial transformations disrupt their rural ideals.

Art Street, one of the key tourism hubs in Urla, exemplifies a story of commercialization shaped by the practices of lifestyle migrant entrepreneurs and their ideals of rural living. As Tomay and Berger (2024: 2-3) remind us, the process whereby gentrification pioneers with relatively lower economic capital but higher cultural capital acquire dilapidated buildings, transform them to align with their spatial habitus, and establish their own unique aesthetic of gentrification has unfolded similarly in Urla.

Art Street is an extension of Zafer Avenue, one of the main axes of Urla's center. Historically, it was a 19th-century district predominantly inhabited by the Greek-Orthodox population, with many of its original buildings still intact (Pala Azsöz, 2022). By the 2000s, the street had become a derelict area with abandoned historic buildings or residences occupied by locals. It began to draw the attention of artists from outside the region, marking the beginning of a transformative process that illustrates the entry of migrants to Urla and the practices of its first gentrifiers. In 2009, a group of pioneers discovered the street and organized an event to host artists from other cities, bringing the area to the attention of artists and art enthusiasts (Demircioğlu, 2016: 49). In the following years, the street saw a wave of spatial habitus being transferred through the purchase, restoration, or rental of its historic buildings, resulting in the transfer of built heritage from local residents to new settlers. By 2011, the artists formalized their presence by founding an association for the street. The Urla Municipality officially recognized these practices in its 2013 activity report, incorporating the street into its local planning efforts and defining its boundaries with signage in 2014.

When we examine the trajectory of the street during this period based on the narratives of lifestyle migrants and secondary sources, we encounter a space where urban habitus and the idealization of rural life are embodied. As Tomas and Berger (2024: 13) point out within the scope of rural gentrification, first and second-wave gentrifiers have begun to construct the historical heritage of the rural areas according to their own rural imaginations (representations) with the "tastes" brought by their artistic capacities. These transformative capacities are not free from urban inclinations (social life needs, urban services, etc.). Therefore, they imagine the rural with their

own spatial habitus, designing it from a perspective distant from the infrastructural, economic, and social reality of the rural, that is, from peasantry. In this context, the first gentrification process of the street began with the construction of workshops in fields such as painting, sculpture, ceramics, and music; boutique stores and book cafes also began to take their place as the first commercial spaces alongside art. These spaces, which could not be seen side by side in traditional rural settlements, offer lifestyles that are suitable for their cultural capital in the rural representations that lifestyle migrants materialize in their daily lives.

As I mentioned, even the so-called art street was once quite desolate—a street full of dogs you’d be afraid to walk through. It was just the place we went to visit the health center (Zeynep, 37, biologist)

It used to be a street that looked abandoned. Rents went up, buildings were restored, and people from Istanbul or elsewhere started investing in the street. I’m not sure whether it deserves to be called an art street, but now it’s full of cafés, bars, and the usual things (Mehmet, 66, retired tourism manager and farmer).

The initial transition of the street from a space characterized by local homes, vacant buildings, and essential services like a health clinic and nearby pharmacies into an art-filled avenue was viewed positively. However, lifestyle migrants who witnessed this transformation have expressed difficulty in reconciling the original artistic intentions with the street's current state. Artistic aspirations have largely been replaced by entrepreneurial ecosystems and the influx of tradespeople migrants.

This counter-urbanization or gentrification process, which began in Art Street and expanded throughout Urla, aligns with Halfacree’s (2006: 57) framework of the differentiation of the rural, particularly in its shift toward the consumption of the rural idyll. In this transformation, driven by migration and with agriculture relegated to the background, spaces like residences and amenities take precedence. The next phase of this marginalization of rural qualities is the blurring of distinctions between rural and urban areas, leading to the dissolution of the rural as a distinct entity. Ultimately, the rural becomes reduced to a nostalgic or folkloric element within the concept of rural localities and spatial practices.

This idyllic transformation, which can unfold unevenly, tends to build aesthetic representations on economic foundations but can also manifest as resistance to inappropriate rural development (Halfacree, 2006: 57). In the case of Art Street, the third wave of gentrification following the artistic movement has shifted more decisively toward economic aestheticization. While the initial interventions aimed at enhancing the built environment's aura rather than fostering entrepreneurial potential, the arrival of tradespeople lifestyle migrants seeking to create economically viable sources of income in the rural area spurred rising rents. This, in turn, pushed artists to relocate to the street's back alleys and Urla's villages. As Melih noted, the lack of a comprehensive planning process, as he had initially advised for the Art Street Association, led to the emergence of fragile new communities unable to afford rising rents alongside the displacement of local populations.

With the file we prepared together, they were recognized as the most successful civil society organization of 2015. At that time, I suggested they document the current rents and property prices, if they wanted to make the Street more valuable so they could track the changes over time and gain control. They didn't grasp it, but in later years, they realized it. Now, they can no longer afford the rent. The small establishments that replaced them don't last long, either (Melih, 76, strategy and corporate structure design consultant).

Deniz, who previously had a workshop in Art Street and is one of the displaced artists, states that the replacement of their workshops with a clothing chain store, Mudo, has detached the street from its spirit and transformed it into a profit-driven space.

The opening of Mudo is one of the clearest signs of this transformation, a store with no connection to local production being there demonstrates how the area has shifted to a more profit-driven focus (Deniz, 48, ex-chair of the artichoke festival committee, lecturer, and potter).

I don't think every place needs to be like Çeşme or Alaçatı. There's hardly any significant difference anymore. Urla's art street, I call it a mini Alaçatı, feels like it's been shaped to imitate it (Bartu, 33, advertiser and agency owner).

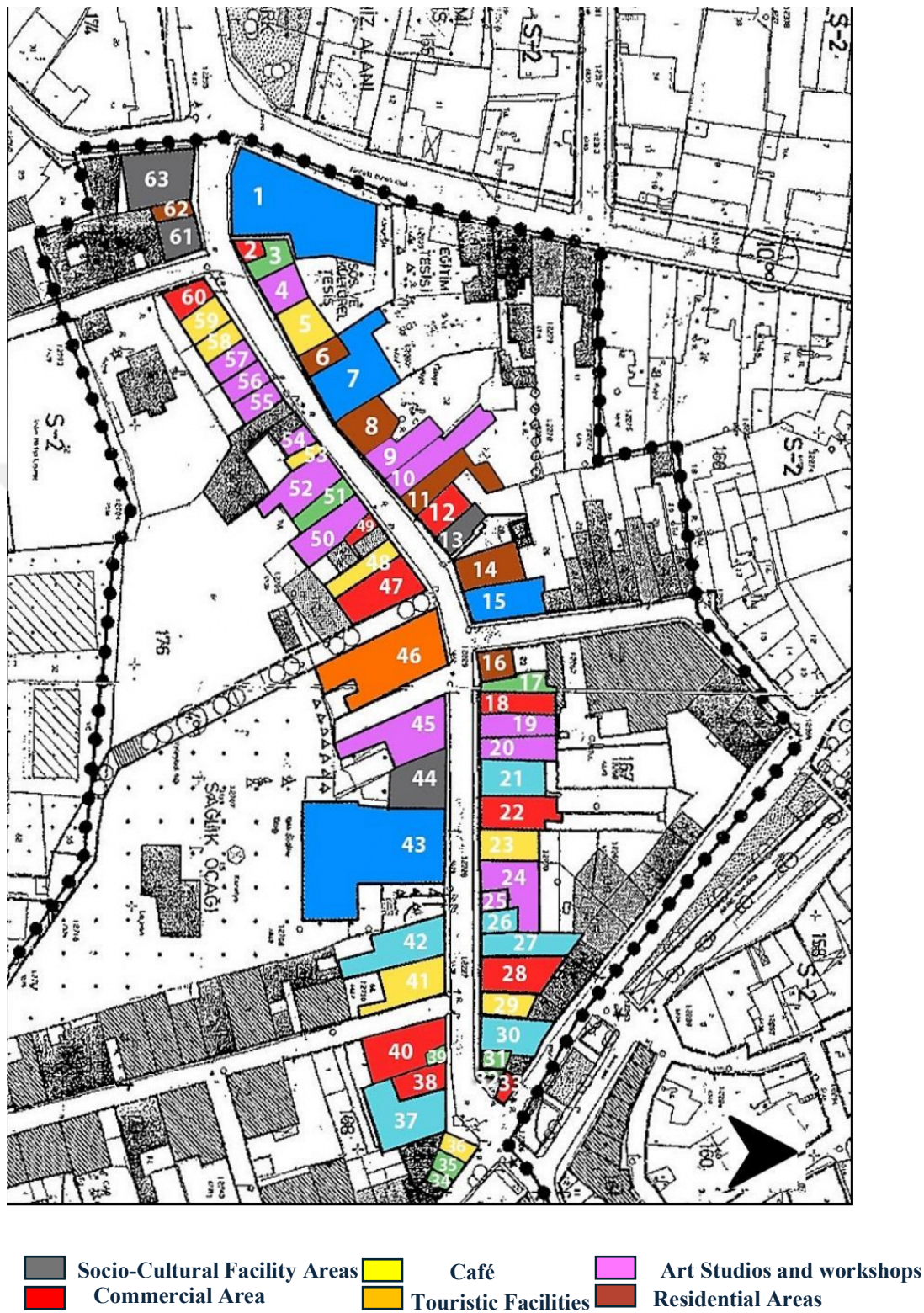


Figure 3.21 : Building function analysis (Demircioğlu, 2016)





Figure 3.22 : Spatial function in the Art Street, 2024

The cafés, restaurants, bakeries, boutiques, and souvenir shops, primarily established by lifestyle migrants and catering to day-trippers, may not generate substantial capital but form an infrastructure where rural production shifts toward consumption. Darling's concept of post-productivist rural capital accumulation and the transformation of rural actors (cited in Somerville, 2014: 185) are among the most prominent dynamics observed in Urla. A master's thesis written in 2016 about Art Street, along with the functional map prepared for this study, reveals that over the past eight years, cafés and restaurants have largely replaced artistic spaces on the street, with residential functions and artist workshops on the verge of disappearing. This finding underscores the necessity of incorporating the transformation of residential composition as a crucial parameter for Urla. Grocery stores, bakeries, design shops, souvenir stores, cafés, and restaurants have taken over the spaces once occupied by artist workshops. However, the continued presence of the health clinic and the strong visibility of pharmacies along the street remain unchanged. Although hotel functions are not yet dominant in Art Street (currently hosting three hotels), converting old Greek stone houses into hotels is becoming increasingly visible in the backstreets intersecting the main street.

Using these transformed houses as boutique hotels or guesthouses might disrupt the area's identity. I believe there are too many of them. For example, there are currently seven on this street alone, and since summer, I've hardly seen anyone in three of them (Aynur, 48, academic).

It has also been observed that those targeting fellow lifestyle migrants rather than tourists tend to open their cafés in quieter, more authentic neighborhoods located behind Art Street. This can be interpreted as a process of differentiation between consumption spaces for tourists and those for lifestyle migrants.

It's become a trend—everyone puts a speaker in front of their door and directs the music from their backyard to the street so people can hear it. It feels like one of those tacky bar streets in Marmaris (Cem, 50, ex-advertiser, cafe owner).

Art Street is already very touristic—imagine a main street meant to host all the tourists, and it takes just two and a half minutes to walk through. It's called Art

Street, but there's nothing artistic left about it anymore. We hardly ever go there  
(Onur, 44, sales manager).

Another parameter of Darling's framework on the gentrification process is the transformation of the social class structure in rural areas. While such a bold assertion cannot be made within the scope of this research, it is evident that local businesses and the property market are increasingly shaped by migrants, creating economic and spatial dominance over locals through shifts in capital and property ownership.

Beyond Art Street, the commercialization and transformation into consumption spaces catering to tourism are also evident in the İskele district, as previously emphasized. However, since İskele's identity has long been intertwined with its resort-like qualities, it has not undergone the rapid shift from residential to commercial spaces seen in Art Street; its tourism-oriented evolution has been more gradual. Notably, chain supermarkets have been opening successively in areas with concentrated settlements, such as Gülbahçe, İskele, and central neighborhoods. While access to healthy food remains a priority for lifestyle migrants, it is clear that both locals and newcomers are converging in their consumption habits. High-end supermarkets like Macrocenter, catering to affluent groups, have also begun to establishing themselves in Urla. Thus, capital distribution is not limited to socialization spaces or residential clusters but also extends to fundamental consumption networks.

Other emerging forms of spatialization in rural areas include agricultural museums, cultural and arts venues, offices of architecture, design, or international real estate firms, as well as alternative spaces such as eco-villages and yoga centers, which will be discussed further in the text. However, the most notable regionalization tied to commercialization has occurred with the establishment of the school district. This clustering of private schools, covering various educational stages such as kindergarten, primary, and high school, has been fueled by the expansion of both national and international educational institutions into the area. Additionally, these schools represent spaces of capital production where lifestyle migrants participate as entrepreneurs, forming a segment of the entrepreneurial ecosystem that serves migration rather than tourism. Located in and around Yelki, the "schools district" integrates urban lifestyles into the rural context. These "good schools" assure lifestyle migrants of maintaining their children's access to urban educational opportunities



while pursuing their desired rural life. Another parameter of Darling's framework on the gentrification process is the transformation of the social class structure in rural areas. While such a bold assertion cannot be made within the scope of this research, it is evident that local businesses and the property market are increasingly shaped by migrants, creating economic and spatial dominance over locals through shifts in capital and property ownership.

All the Istanbul lifestyle schools are located in Yelki. This is a great advantage, my children also attend one of the schools there. Naturally, this influenced my decision to choose this area (Esra, 46, sustainable gastronomy and agriculture entrepreneur).

There aren't as many schools as possible in Çeşme. This place is less of a retirement town and more of a vibrant area with a young, dynamic population. The abundance of schools reflects this (Aynur, 48, academic).

I have observed many new school initiatives emerging towards the Güzelbahçe area. Even schools offer Montessori education (Selin, 35, ex-pharmaceutical representative and housewife).

Moreover, the absence of such schools in many other vacation-home alternatives highlights Urla as a preferred destination for lifestyle migrants with children. As Aynur mentioned, the presence of these schools is a key factor contributing to Urla accommodating not only retirees but also a younger population.

Another pillar of commodification is the ever-increasing number of real estate agents, as previously observed with the concentration in the İskele and central areas. While local residents initially ventured into this business to cater to the growing demand for housing among migrants, today, it is possible to see international real estate offices such as Keller Williams and Re/MAX operating in Urla. The interest shown by investors and high-income groups in Urla's real estate market, coupled with the presence of upscale real estate projects, has brought the professional services of global real estate firms to the region. These strong market players are among the key factors driving Urla's transformation value and the continuous rise in property prices. Furthermore, as global customers are increasingly interested in properties such as

holiday resorts, these companies serve as critical commodification agents in integrating global networks with the local market. For local actors to participate in this game, they must go beyond being a traditional seaside town realtor. As Bartu pointed out, they need to institutionalize and position themselves with branding strategies capable of targeting multimillion-dollar sales.

They are establishing themselves not just as real estate agents but as companies. This is because property prices in Urla have now reached millions, and if we consider vacation resorts and similar properties, perhaps even billions. Since global sales are also included, real estate has transformed into a more corporate business (Bartu, 33, advertiser and agency owner).

Internationally based firms like Re/MAX and Coldwell Banker are opening offices. People living in Urla or the center register with these offices. (...) They share information among themselves. Increasingly, they want to focus on the Urla and Çeşme regions because property values here have risen significantly, boosting their profit margins (Selin, 35, ex-pharmaceutical representative and housewife).

In summary, the integration of lifestyle migrants into Urla's entrepreneurial ecosystem through real estate ventures, the touristification of Sanat Sokağı, the creation of the schools district, and the commodification of spatial functions are dynamics that bring Urla closer to urban habits. These dynamics facilitate the stages of counter-urbanization, shifting the local economy from agricultural production toward tourism, urban-type services, and real estate.

#### **3.3.2.4. A Kind of Gated Community: Technopark**

Technoparks are knowledge-based regions that aim to create jobs, attract foreign investment, and promote regional development by incubating high-tech industries in urban peripheries (Peck et al. 1996: 54). Since their formation and functioning depend on synergies between central policies, local objectives, institutions, and individuals, their innovation and research dimensions, business models, and local/regional outcomes may differ (Peck et al., 1996: 54; Tsiouris, 2024). According to Peck et al. (1996: 54), some technoparks are created by collaborating

with academic institutions' scientific endeavors, while others aim to draw in particularly big technology-based businesses. Despite differing levels of cooperation and synergy, technoparks built in rural or outlying areas have a few things in common: they generate new jobs for the region, plan according to local needs and resources (Peck et al., 1996: 56–62), draw and keep skilled workers, and boost regional income, all of which support a sustainable local economy (Kyriakopoulos, 2024: 2).

The Technopark in Urla, much like the previous example, operates in collaboration with the İzmir Institute of Technology, yet it also houses the headquarters of major companies. Its objectives extend beyond regional goals to encompass national interests, such as attracting foreign capital into the country, enhancing international competitiveness, developing an export-oriented infrastructure for industry, and fostering international collaboration in R&D activities. Additionally, it emphasizes sustainable development, university-industry partnerships, the adaptation of small and medium-sized enterprises to new and advanced technologies, and innovation in production methods, all of which contribute to the economic growth of the İzmir and Urla regions.

In-depth interviews were conducted with lifestyle migrants who are not directly employed by Technopark but work in related fields such as technology and software. These interviews provided an opportunity to discuss the Technopark's contributions, disadvantages, and capacity to transform the local environment in Urla. Participants highlighted that Technopark offers advantages by attracting large companies to open offices in Urla with state support, facilitating collaboration among clustered firms, and creating opportunities for establishing international connections. These dynamics strengthen Urla's entrepreneurial ecosystem in design and software (e.g., social media consultancy, e-commerce infrastructure, graphic design, and architectural design). However, arguing that they contribute to holistic and sustainable development (community-wealth building) in collaboration with the local population is challenging. While some innovative projects under university-private sector collaborations focus on "digitalization in agriculture" to support local production, enhance climate adaptability, and promote high-value crops such as medicinal plants, there are no structured initiatives to integrate Urla's producers into these efforts. As a result,

agricultural innovation has yet to influence Urla's farmland or production processes visibly.

The environmental hazards associated with applications of artificial intelligence, software development, game development, wind and solar energy systems, new plants, and agricultural technologies are significantly lower than those found in industry-oriented technoparks. There is a lack of sources detailing the environmental consequences of applications such as medical components and nanotechnologies that may have chemical or biological effects in Urla. Wind turbines have faced criticism for encroaching on Urla's rural areas, disrupting the aesthetics of the landscape, causing noise pollution in nearby villages, and potentially harming air quality in the region. This puts vineyards, as well as other wind and solar energy systems, new plants, and crops at risk. However, since the companies within Technopark are mostly working on energy system software, they do not have such a direct impact on the environment.



**Figure 3.23 :** Technopark region (Source: IYTE website)

Although Technopark seems to have brought human capital to the region, both for İzmir and Urla, the most visible environmental impact of this mobility is the increased demand for housing and, as previously mentioned, the shift of urbanization and projected population growth towards this region in planning efforts. Nevertheless, although Gülbahçe currently accommodates a population below the planned capacity,

issues such as flooding and service disruptions, which interrupt the flow of daily life, reflect infrastructure crises stemming from the transformation of its rural identity.

I live in Gülbahçe, where IYTE is located. (...) During the summer, when the area becomes overcrowded, the infrastructure struggles to meet the increased demand. This is because the area wasn't originally designed to handle many people. Water shortages and frequent power outages are significant issues. Despite the high cost of housing, the services provided fall far short of expectations. There's no natural gas available in this area either. (...) Flooding is a common problem, and the water infrastructure wasn't built to accommodate such conditions (Işık, 33, wine-tasting expert).

The Presidential Decree dated June 3, 2022, doubled the physical area (77,171 square meters) initially allocated to Technopark within the university campus when it was established in 2002, paving the way for expanding the built environment in region<sup>34</sup>. Additionally, as part of the central government's Informatics Valley (Bilişim Vadisi)<sup>35</sup> project, one of the four pillars of the technology and innovation hub was inaugurated in Urla in May 2023, signaling that the Gülbahçe line is poised for technology-driven growth.

The aim is to encourage students to engage in these areas and to promote R&D among companies that do not currently invest in it. However, all the companies are large-scale enterprises that, with state support, register their highly paid employees there to claim tax deductions, even though those employees don't actually work in the offices. (...) It does not fulfill its purpose. It can't really be said that it's training students either. (...) The manager is well-intentioned, but they couldn't do much because the key spots were already claimed before Technopark was even established (Eren, 41, IT expert).

We were living in Gülbahçe and thought that Urla might be advantageous for us due to the presence of Technopark, but that didn't happen. Türkiye lacks a coherent R&D policy, and the bureaucracy was not supportive of us. (...) These companies mainly exploit the tax advantages without engaging in actual R&D.

<sup>34</sup> <https://www.bthaber.com/teknopark-izmir-buyuyor/>

<sup>35</sup> <https://bilisimvadisi.com.tr/>

(...) Most of what we see is just PR news, and the root of the problem is a lack of collaboration (Ali, 48, software developer and designer, NGO member).

Technopark is a small hub, but it has potential and does not use even one percent of it. Most of the people in Technopark who founded the company came from Istanbul, opened an office, and settled in Canada, Germany, America, etc. (Pinar, 47, product developer, NGO member).

Despite this expanding structure, Technopark's spatial use corresponds to an intermittent or multi-functional work/life cycle. As stated in the remarks above, practices such as holding meetings, organizing cooperation launches, "being visible in Technopark" for prestige, coming together for newsworthiness, and presenting it as an office for tax deductions make this space a symbolic space that is used part-time and does not fulfill its functions at full capacity. Therefore, it can be said that this organization, whose connection with the region is limited apart from entrepreneurial collaborations, functions more as a launch and a pool for social capital, while creating a business-focused separation like that of gated communities. Similarly, the interviews revealed that its contribution to students is limited and fails to deliver the expected synergy between the region, institutions, and the rural landscape in Urla, as seen in similar techno-structures worldwide.

### **3.3.2.5. Specialization in Landscaping and the Transformation of the Physical Environment into a Design Landscape**

The changing dynamics of landscaping and the ornamental plant trade represent another factor influencing environmental representation and the transformation of spatial practices driven by lifestyle migration in Urla. In the literature on lifestyle migration, the search for a simple life, the association of this pursuit with the natural qualities of rural areas, and the dependence of the desired environment's aesthetic value on its naturalness are frequently mentioned as key aspects of migrants' views of the environment (Benson & O'Reilly, 2009; Abrams, 2012). Meanwhile, it has been noted that these rural representations, framed by "simple" aesthetics associated with nature, are rearranged by migrants' rural ideals. Migrants alter Urla's landscape to fit their idea of the "good countryside," influenced by their cultural capital and class preferences.

Gated communities are among the most common landscapes where these overly organized aesthetic representations, which go beyond local vegetation, are frequently implemented. The rise of hotels, restaurants, and vineyard houses that prioritize landscaping as a key component in their design adds artificial oases to the countryside. These landscaped areas blend with fields and natural vegetation. As a result, landscape designers, alongside architects and planners, form a creative group that not only caters to the demands of those who have moved to Urla but also often settle there themselves, becoming lifestyle migrants seeking a new way of living. The landscape architect interviewed for the study emphasizes the relationship between spatial arrangements and cultural and economic capital. He observes that the need for landscaping in Urla has increased recently, and he attributes this development to the rise in people looking to raise their standard of living:

You can see the value they place on the landscape through how people behave, move, and approach things when they settle here. Plus, since Urla is on the coast and close to places like Çeşme, it has become a spot that offers endless design opportunities. Landscaping also evolves with the economic status of the area. Here, you notice how people who are already financially well-off invest in themselves and focus on elevating their living standards further (Cihan, 29, landscape architect).

The preferred plants vary depending on the location. Still, as the degree of luxury increases, there is a growing detachment from the local ecosystem and a rise in the use of expensive plants that are not part of Urla's natural ecosystem. Luxury hotels are at the forefront of driving these demands. On the one hand, these tourism-related recreational arrangements make nature appear "better" and "more enjoyable" within the daily flow of life in Urla.

This aestheticization movement, driven by the spatial demands of migrants, the arrangements of entrepreneurial infrastructures, and the process of touristification, has also created its own industrial dynamics. In areas of Urla such as Bademler, Kuşçular, Kalabak, Gülbahçe, İskele, Rüstem, and İçmeler, horticulture, or the cultivation of outdoor plants for domestic or foreign markets, is a significant agricultural and commercial activity. According to data from the Urla District Governorship, 28

enterprises produce and sell plant varieties such as palm, cypress, taflan, fenix, and yucca across 200 decares. The annual number of fruit saplings is reported to be 24,000, and field-grown cut flowers span 38 decares.

When the establishment years of the enterprises were examined, it was found that ornamental plant production in Urla dates back to 1985. Additionally, Emekli (1991: 182) states that greenhouse activities were introduced to the Seferihisar and Urla region after the 1970s and gained momentum in the 1980s. Emekli (1991: 183) also highlights that Urla's ecological environment suits flower species and emphasizes its wide market opportunities. She adds that another factor facilitating flower growing, encouraged by İzmir's market and export capacity, is its location on the İzmir-Urla highway, which reduces transportation risks. In the early 90s, when Emekli conducted her research, these production and sales activities were small family businesses.

Gür and Nemutlu (2022: 317), in their research on ornamental plant enterprises in the Urla Region, state that specialists such as landscape architects and agricultural engineers are also employed by the firms they interviewed. In other words, there is a move towards specialization. The research highlights the dimensions of the change in producers' shift from nursery cultivation to specialty plant production and their tendency to expand sales markets, even incorporating a café with a botanical concept into the sales area. This indicates that ornamental plant production is not merely a demand-driven market in Urla but also an expanding component of its entrepreneurial ecosystem.

For this sector to thrive, not only must people move to Urla to create a more comfortable life and personalized spaces, but those designing and shaping these spaces must also settle here. (...) In resort areas or places where people feel better, an increase in landscaping and related businesses, and production capacity is inevitable (Cihan, 29, landscape architect).

Even in the morning, we experience 4-5 themes in our Urla tours. We go to Arkas Urla, and from there, we taste olive oil and Klozemenai (...) We walk the back streets, and we have dinner. We do wine tasting at Urla Winery and go to the Arboretum (Serdar, 50, tour guide and Urla-focused social media account owner).



A giant enterprise in this growing field is the Urla Arboretum, which functions as a plant museum and sells tropical plants to the international market. This arboretum, whose establishment dates back to 2002, has added new aspects to the production and sale of nursery or ornamental plant production and sales in the countryside, such as the width of the production area, the function of plant museums, social areas such as cafes and tours, the identification and presentation of plants with QR codes, the inclusion of tropical plants with fewer water needs in the plant diversity, and the ability to be used by brands/individuals as an event space. According to the interviewee, this entrepreneurial ecosystem, established by a lifestyle migrant through initiatives in various fields, comprises a team of approximately 150 people, including professionals with diverse institutional roles, such as landscape architects, agricultural engineers, agricultural workers, marketing teams, and administrative officers handling logistics processes.

We also have specimen plants; we source and sell plants from around the world, including Paraguay. We are one of the largest suppliers in Europe for palms and cypresses and are on our way to becoming one of the biggest global suppliers of desert plants. The plant landscape of the future will rely on species that require little to no water (Suat, 64, winery and arboretum owner and Urla Vineyard Route member).

In the arboretum, there are many plants of foreign origin, such as Mexican or Italian plants. The cypresses in production there are all of Italian origin. (...) They are imported from Italy when they are 15 centimeters tall, and if you want to grow them larger, it can take up to 25 years. (...) Desert plants, of course, are not plants you originally have in this area. But once you obtain their seeds, you produce them here. So, you could call them local plants of foreign origin. They can be sold in both domestic and international markets (Cihan, 29, landscape architect).

Thus, lifestyle migration leads to the control and transformation of outdoor spaces and rural landscapes into forms that align with the aesthetic preferences of their community. These spaces, serving as an extension of living areas, also constitute a component of an entrepreneurial ecosystem focused on external markets. Furthermore, the plant cultivation business, whose scale was detailed above alongside its workforce,

is difficult to compare with small-scale enterprises. Nevertheless, despite the difficult competition, Urla's reputation for specialization, diversification, and clustering in landscaping has enabled Urla to become a marketplace in this field. Although they cannot sell at the volume of a large-scale company, the need for lifestyle migrants for landscape planning tools/actors sustains small-scale businesses.

To summarize, in terms of the "rural fabric," Lefebvre's conception of planners should also encompass rural landscape experts and the industrial dynamics that emerge in these settings. The aesthetic rural identity envisioned by lifestyle migrants permeates the everyday life of the countryside, reshaping the rural experience and the perception of naturalness into a reimagined landscape.

When we consider the findings and discussions under this heading, "Capital's Aspects in the Built Environment and Nature", from a Bourdieusian perspective, it becomes evident that at the center of the struggle over the physical environment in social space are the agents of domination: the state through central planning, municipalities through local interventions, and interest groups (such as large construction companies and hoteliers) driven by the expectation of capital. The lifestyle migrant groups that find a place within this spatial domination of symbolic and material power—varying in volume and composition depending on the social group—are investors/wealthy groups and entrepreneurs. Within the middle group, two distinct subgroups can be identified. The first group includes market players from the service sector, real estate agents, small-scale entrepreneurs, architects, and construction companies. The second group comprises new farmers, retirees, artists, creatives, and individuals who adapt to spatial domination with varying economic and cultural capital levels. Conversely, the sub-group consists of middle-class residents and lower-class neighbors, whom Wacquant (2024: 96) describes as the inhabitants of stigmatized spaces. When Wacquant's terminology is applied to the spatial distribution and divisions in Urla, it refers to villagers, retirees, farmers, residents of Romani neighborhoods, and the spaces occupied by middle-class and lower-class populations.

## **4. SEASIDE TOWN NARRATIVES: REPRESENTATION AND MEDIATIZATION OF PLACE BY LIFESTYLE MIGRANTS**

### **4.1. Chapter overview**

The present chapter explores how lifestyle migrants create narratives of the seaside town they migrated to through media content and how these representations influence and reshape social practices within rural spaces. The chapter thus completes the communicative dimension of the negotiated seaside town advanced in the title of the dissertation, by underpinning the complex relationship between place-based narrative and the evolving identity of rural. To achieve this, “mediatization” serves as the complementary framework. As a fragmented concept, interpretable also from a Lefebvrian perspective, “mediatization” is briefly defined as the process by which media shapes social relations, daily life, practices, and individual mobility (Jansson, 2018). Accordingly, this chapter not only investigates the representation of narratives but also analyzes how they manifest and lead transformation in social life as an ongoing process. The concept of “spatial production” developed by Lefebvre also constitutes one of the key theoretical frameworks of this dissertation chapter, insofar as he underlines the transformative role of representations within spatial production.

Since space is shaped not only by practical functions but also by symbolic values, Lefebvre’s triadic approach offers valuable insights into the constitution of rural representations. It also sheds light on how the narratives of place generated by migrants are integrated into the production-consumption cycle and contribute to constructing the rural idyll. This reciprocal process of spatial reproduction, wherein “representations of space” and “representational space” intertwine to shape what Halfacree (2007:127) describes as the “everyday lives of rural.” It encompasses (1) a

space imbued with cultural, social, and personal meanings and (2) the incorporation of symbols and values produced by migrants into local knowledge and lived experience.

Jansson (2018: 42–43), in discussing the transformative power of mediatization within the social sphere, proposes a hybrid approach that emphasizes both the media's role as a hegemonic tool in economic and ideological relations and its active function in the reproduction of capitals in the Bourdieusian sense. Within this culturalist framework, the shaping of social order from the ground up, through everyday experiences, and the transformation of the social sphere's boundaries via norms and values are central links connecting media to the broader social fabric. Furthermore, the normalization of representations in the rhythms of everyday life, the validation of lifestyles, their diffusion into the symbolic realm, and the mechanisms of exclusion and inclusion are integral to this context (Jansson, 2018: 81–82).

The main questions answered in this chapter are the following:

- What new life and place narratives are encapsulated in the representations produced by lifestyle migrants in the seaside town?
- Through what focal points does the mediatization process of place narratives form rural identity and social space?

In this context, the questions of what representations lifestyle migrants create in constructing space narratives and how they construct rural identity while reproducing space make lifestyle migrants the main actors of this chapter. Based on the concept of mediatization, the chapter draws on data from in-depth interviews and content analysis of the local lifestyle magazine “Dergi Urla.” A three-pronged classification of findings has been created: (1) narrative constructors, which discuss the main functions that lifestyle migrants attribute to the media; (2) the representations produced through the magazine; and (3) the transformative capacity of the media in terms of rural identity and spatial change, linking both the narratives and the contexts from the previous chapter.

In this narrative construction process, lifestyle migrants were interviewed, including influencers, associate editors of local magazines, tour guides, professional content creators, and entrepreneurial migrants who were directly or indirectly involved in media content production. Interview questions included the themes prioritized, and topics emphasized when describing Urla, as well as whether entrepreneurs received professional help in shaping the narratives of their businesses. The local lifestyle magazine “Dergi Urla” has been chosen as a medium by which the rural imaginations and desires of the narrative constructors are embodied. The content analysis of this magazine (an e-magazine consisting of four issues) was conducted by reading the news and interviews in the magazine and then labeling them according to the determined subject distribution; in this context, three categorizations were determined, and labeling was done under these subheadings. The three main pillars of this categorization are lifestyle, migration, and rural representation. As indicated in the diagrams under the heading “Representations Created” in the findings, other sub-labeling was done around these foci.

Whereas such representations highlight the intentions of lifestyle migrants by uncovering the ways they build narratives and rural identities influenced by their rural idylls, they remain limited by focus on the reframing of the rural. Mediatization complements this pillar by encompassing the structural shifts mediating the incorporation of social space and practices into these framings to address such limitations.

## **4.2. Mediated Place Narratives**

### **4.2.1. Place Narratives: From Social Construction to Media Representations**

As discussed in other chapters of the dissertation, even if rural connotes a material landscape of land use, small-scale settlements, and harmonious lives whose representation is contained in an array of meanings that redefine what the concept encompasses (Clope, 2006: 380). Such culturally embedded meanings that Cloke (2006: 380) claims are mostly featured by a depiction of the countryside, where lifestyle improvement opportunities are provided, and which distinguishes itself from the city also through its pace and quality. The meaning of the countryside can serve as a barrel of norms and values which suggests or posits what is valuable in a region,

nation, or community at a political level, while simultaneously being tied to peace, goodness, wholeness, and ease of living. Cloke (2006) demonstrated the existence of different rural representations whose meanings may even differ through regions or countries, even while in doing so he is describing a process of social construction that is not homogeneous but whose structure and texture change over dynamic social factors and are open to global influences.

The spatial narrative framework constitutes only a limited part in shaping this multi-faceted social world vision. However, it is crucial to deepen the understanding of the rural or spatial dimension, which is inseparable from culture and representations. When examining how narrative and space intersect, a two-way relationality emerges. The first ground is how people give meaning to the places in which they exist, embedding those spaces in their ontological stories accompanying their actions and make sense of their life experiences through these narratives. The second one is that place is projected into fictional or non-fictional spheres through cultural representations; literature (travelogue, comics), architectural structures, and graphic narratives in several ways, while also simultaneously altering perceptions and practices of real-life space (Bieger & Maruo-Schröder, 2016: 4-6). Regardless of the medium helping to construct narratives about place, Bieger & Maruo-Schröder (2016: 6) highlight that these narratives do not simply represent places, but rather move beyond their mediated, imaginary, or real qualities to play a constitutive role in the spaces we inhabit.

Lichrou et al. (2008: 35), while evaluating the concept of “place narratives” in terms of touristic spaces, offer an explanatory description that provides a framework for the relationship with the place: the concept of “place narrative” highlights how narratives can reshape existing representations and spatial practices by recognizing the power to transform places into destinations, providing a context that assigns new meanings to cultural spaces, and emphasizing the symbolic processes involved in the construction of destinations and the consumption spaces. But these place narratives are also not fixed in their symbolic values and meanings; they are contested and active processes that are structured around the interests or positions of the dominant groups in the meaning-making process (From Meethan cited in Lichrou et al., 2008: 35). According to Massey (cited in Åkerlund & Sandberg, 2015: 354), meanings of places

and regions are conceived and positioned through discourses and narratives, “whereby the more ‘powerful’ voices enforce an interpretation”.

When these power-based reinterpretations are directed toward the countryside, economic and social construction processes, such as globalized food industries, production, increased mobility of people, and the commodification of space, emerge as the main factors. However, these components are not separate from the narrative. The intersection of the rural and spatial narratives is rooted in the ubiquitous influence of urban mass media and other cultural outputs on the countryside, rendering these regions increasingly urban-like (Cloke, 2006: 380). The narrative framework also includes elements, which have previously been accentuated, such as commodification, consumption, and human mobility. Still, the narrative focus and circulation capacity attribute a unique role to the media within the context of place narratives.

Media plays an important role in constructing imaginations, realities, place interactions, and the formation of the symbolic language, both as a mediator and as the communication process in constructing place narratives (Jonasson, 2012: 19). Therefore, circulated media representations are the source of the imagined worlds whereby more people are interested in the fantasy of going (Appadurai, 2001: 297); and in utopias about country life and migration. Urry (2009: 15-20, 140), with his concept of “tourist gaze”, states that the spatial experience or the view of space corresponds to a culturally constructed process; in this context, media representations also put the meaning given to space into a commodifying cycle and create a romanticized approach. When we apply this perspective to the rural context, Bell’s (2006) discussion of variations in rural idylls proves to be highly instructive. Bell (2006), reminding us that the genealogy of the rural idyll is rooted in the city, reiterates that the creation of rural imaginations, as mentioned by Williams (1973), is essentially an urban problem bound up with modernization and industrialization. As claimed by Bell (2006: 150), it is the work of popular culture, television, novels, music, interior decoration, that nourishes the idyll sprouting in the bourgeoisie’s imagination. In this context, Bell (2006: 155- 156) creates to the concept of “media idyll,” explaining that rural life has turned into a representation, produced by the entertainment industry and not related to real-life experience. This leads to also an idealization of the countryside under such labels as pastoral landscapes, farmhouse, healthy food, an escape-place for

peace, or nostalgia. The worldwide spread of such clichés through the entertainment industry profoundly affected how the urban bourgeoisie dreamt of rural paradises (Bell, 2006: 154).

Tourism advertisements, television shows promoting moves abroad, and real estate agents' mediation attempts are all part of "the imagining of lifestyle destinations as pleasure peripheries" constructing and sustaining these pervasive conditions. Besides mediation activities, "movers" or lifestyle migrants also participate in this place narrative transmission by sharing what happened to them with their families, friends, or with other migrants (Åkerlund & Sandberg, 2015: 354). Entertainment and informational narratives, referred to as lifestyle media or journalism, which provide audiences with lifestyle insights or advice, are not only about drawing the attention of large audiences to rural areas; they also have the potential to create an ideological orientation by seemingly changing perceptions of rural life (Chueh & Lu, 2018: 133). In this regard, lifestyle migrants may even rely on media that convey narratives of rural life when selecting their destination (Åkerlund, as cited in Chueh & Lu, 2018: 133). Moreover, migrants' value for places or their evaluation of a destination may derive from past experiences, as well as the cultural perceptions they have been exposed to through the media, marketing, and images created by real estate agents, particularly the framings around the life of retirement (Leonard 2016: 122).

Despite the discussed mediatized place narratives and representations have positioned audiences, who are consumers of place images, in a passive role, it is crucial to focus on the shared performance space where actors, specifically lifestyle migrants in the context of this dissertation, actively produce these stories. As Jonasson (2012: 19) wrote: "rural spaces are co-produced and performed by actors who consume rural representations, present or represent a rural space, and reproduce these attractive images of rural life, sometimes unwittingly, sometimes by observing each other." Thus, although popular culture represents a prime purveyor of images (or discourses) through which rurality is reproduced, some rural images come to be reproduced by those living or wishing to live in these geographies via different mediums, including popular media.



#### 4.2.2. Mediatization and Reproduction of Space

“Mediatization” is a concept that emphasizes the inseparable connection between media and social processes in society, highlighting that what we call culture cannot be constructed independently of the dynamics of communicative tools (Hepp, 2015). Drawing its intellectual heritage from institutionalization<sup>36</sup> and social structuralist approaches, mediatization links transformations in communication tools to social and cultural changes (Hepp, 2015: 14-18). According to this concept, media goes beyond being a mere tool for transmitting information and is embedded in a comprehensive process that can exert profound effects on various levels of social life over time, depending on cultural and historical contexts. Hepp (2015: 98-99) cautions against technological determinism and technology-as-a-findings approaches in this multi-layered change process. While technological determinism dominates the idea of transformation by suggesting that media technologies emerge and become a driving force on their own, the “technology-as-a-finding” perspective presents a dependent approach disconnected from societal change.

André Jansson (2005: 1689) defines informational societies as increasingly mediatized environments, depending on the texture of urban life, policies, and plans regarding the city is in negotiation with media space. Hence, this broad concept, though limiting, can be described as an approach that considers the media as a part of social processes and as a tool that shapes the communicative process. Friedrich Krotz (2009: 25), described this mediatization approach as being based on the change of communication as the fundamental practice of how individuals form the social and cultural environment:

“Grounded in the modification of communication as the basic practice of how people construct the social and cultural world. They do so by changing communication practices that use media and refer to media. Hence, mediatization is not a technologically driven concept, since it is not the media as a technology that are causal, but the changes in how people communicate when constructing their inner and exterior realities by referring to the media.”

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<sup>36</sup> It is an approach that defines media as an institution and examines its relationship with other social institutions, emphasizing how culture and society are increasingly dependent on communication tools and the logic of these tools (as cited in Hjarvard by Hepp, 2015: 15).

Hepp (2015) emphasizes that this long-range process, which Krotz describes as a meta-process, is important for understanding the course of mediatization; thus, this approach provides an appropriate frame for understanding the wide-ranging transformation processes. However, in this chapter, which focuses on how place narratives are mediatized and included in social structure and daily life within lifestyle migration, it seems impossible to conduct an analysis that spans as many years as mentioned. The mediatization process is limited to the scope of how narratives are mediated and constructed within lifeworld and how they relate to daily life.

The social space that Lefebvre describes is simultaneously individual and social; that is, in the production of both individual and society; the space is also the agent and founder in both individual and social processes (cited in Avar, 2009: 7). The position of lifestyle migrants is also in an ambiguous place in this process; because, on the one hand, migrants can be the actor (with their habitus and cultural capital) involved in the dominant discourse of the power (such as creating the consumption spaces concerning the entrepreneurial policies, Etc.), they can also produce discourses opposed to the space of capital and power as inhabitants of space.

Jansson (2013) incorporates the role of media into Lefebvre's framework on the production, perception, and experience of space with the concept of the "mediatization of social space." In this approach, media transcends its function as a communication tool to examine how it reorganizes social life and reproduces space in a communicative dimension. Related to "Representations of Space," Jansson emphasizes that media plays a formative role in creating and circulating spatial representations, thereby shaping the social world's understandings, expectations, and imaginations. From making a location's touristic qualities appealing to presenting news about a place from a specific perspective, these changing forms of representation, conveyed through images and narratives, not only predefine experiences but also guide future actions (Jansson, 2013: 282). Jansson (2013: 284) further explains that the other component of Lefebvre's triad, corresponding to individual and collective experiences and symbolic meanings of space described as representational or lived space, is closely linked to media interventions. These interventions result in cultural, ideological, or emotional outcomes such as social normalization, behavioral transformations, and

shifting expectations about a place. Regarding spatial practices that concretize the interactive functioning of the triad, media becomes a vehicle through which certain spatial objectives materialize in the social environment, tied to infrastructures or physical usage practices. According to Jansson (2013), within the dialectical functioning of the triad, mediatization acts as a process that transforms expectations around information sharing, alters norms of social interaction, and materializes in the tangibility of everyday life. This process provides a socio-spatial foundation for developing new understandings of the transformation of social space. André Jansson (2007: 200) points out “the spatial fabric of communicative process” by referring to Lefebvre’s concept, which supposes communication as a mediator between structural properties of space and spatial/communicative practices that produce space. According to Jansson (2007: 200), considering the communicational aspect of the production of space allows for solving the often-overlooked interactions between material, symbolic and imaginary dimensions of spatial production. Although the interpersonal relationships of everyday life and the communicative dimensions of spatial encounters are not discussed in this section, mediatized place narratives also have an essential role in functioning the symbolic and imaginary dimensions of place.

In view of this, the context of place narratives has been primarily examined in terms of representation, focusing on the functions attributed to space by narrative framers through media and how they utilize media for these purposes. Subsequently, these representations have been opened to discussion by leveraging the macro perspective of the dissertation to analyze how they negotiate the social world in Urla.

### **4.3. Findings**

#### **4.3.1. Narrative Framers: Co-Producing the Rurality in Media Narratives**

As the chapter’s introduction outlines, the findings are organized around a three-pronged structure. The first focus is on how lifestyle migrants construct narratives of place, the roles or functions they attribute to the media, and how their aspirations for a specific place shape these narratives. In this context, it is relevant to underline that the narrators are mainly entrepreneurial lifestyle migrants. Their need to promote and market their businesses, as well as to strengthen public relations channels, positions them as more active and influential narrators of place.

Likewise, Jonasson (2012: 17) highlights that the production and consumption of visual and narrative representations of the countryside represent a form of co-performance, emphasizing what makes rural areas attractive. In Urla, this often involves the collaborative efforts of entrepreneurial lifestyle migrants, who work toward creating destinations. While the impacts of these performances extend to the staging of everyday life, the organization of spaces, and interactions with nature (Edensor, 2006: 492), the narratives simultaneously reflect these performances. Likewise, Edensor (2006: 493) describes the field of action within this overarching concept as a layered process, consisting of the actors' skills, the context in which the performance occurs, and the ways in which the audience interprets it. This approach opens performances to the audience as a form of narrative. Lifestyle migrants, particularly when constructing narratives around terroir tourism, engage in a form of storytelling performance by combining the contexts they create with their narrative abilities. While the platforms where they give interviews may not be their own content channels, these interviews still enhance the focus on terroir tourism and sustainability they have identified for Urla, reinforcing their performance.

They already have a theme, which is why they came to us. We naturally come up when they search for themes like sustainable agriculture, women farmers, gastronomy, and Urla. However, I do intervene because the message we want to convey must be properly edited; I do not work with a professional team for this (Esra, 46, sustainable gastronomy and agriculture entrepreneur).

Esra emphasizes that elements of Urla's rural or countryside identity (such as sustainable agriculture, gastronomy, viticulture, wine, new farming practices, and olive oil production) are now well recognized. When an interview or television program about Urla is planned, even a brief search will reveal the prominent local narrators associated with Urla. Therefore, it should be underlined that the touristic representation of Urla has already been created in national and international media, and lifestyle migrants contribute to maintaining these constructed symbolic values. The pioneers of the early narratives created about the touristic qualities of Urla are columnists who experienced Urla as tourists and documented their experiences. In addition, the inclusion of Urla in social networks as a wine tourism destination has further consolidated these already entrenched images through international media

coverage. In addition, the fact that some of the scenes of the television series “Kavak Yelleri”<sup>37</sup> were filmed in Urla was also highlighted in the interviews as an element that draws attention to Urla’s old streets and the fabric of the countryside in the media.

“Kavak Yelleri” was what made Urla known as a name; everything started with it. They were filming both at the pier by the sea and in a house in the backstreets. (...) Its popularity grew as Urla started appearing in local newspapers and columns, with celebrities visiting, famous restaurants opening, and influencers coming and sharing their experiences (Zeynep, 37, biologist).

As far as I have observed, Ertuğrul Özkök came, wrote about Urla, and praised its wines. Before that, “Urla wine” was not something people knew about. No one liked Urla’s olive oil, either. (...) A sense of curiosity about Urla emerged; you know how media brings those who say, “Let me go and see it” (Mehmet, 66, retired tourism manager and farmer).

We once had a PR agency and carried out certain operations with their activities. However, in the past 3–4 years, platforms like BBC, TRT, and BluTV have started coming without our initiatives (Esra, 46, sustainable gastronomy and agriculture entrepreneur).

While lifestyle migrants benefit from the momentum of pre-established images, they still manage to steer the narrative toward their room for maneuver. Their social, cultural, and economic capitals enable them to adapt and transfer maneuverability effectively. Collaborative communities of migrants, particularly wine producers who are entrepreneurs seeking to strengthen the vineyard route, operate within a framework of joint action to narrate the place effectively. This collaboration implies developing a common social media account for the vineyard route, elaborating on content for the website, evaluating PR possibilities, and making common decisions regarding activities that could visualize the route or enhance its attractiveness.

Both of them are marketing geniuses. In every meeting, whether it was relevant or not, they promoted this vineyard route. In every speech they gave, tirelessly,

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<sup>37</sup> *Kavak Yelleri* is a youth drama TV series produced by Tims Productions, which aired on Kanal D from 2007 to 2011.

everywhere, they put in a much bigger effort. As for us, let us just say we did the grunt work, like preparing the map and so on (Ayşegül, 50, winery owner and Urla Vineyard Route member).

As an association, we introduced a new destination to people, which worked. We received support from İZKA, printed brochures and maps, and even made a film while working with an agency. It was not a film that introduced each business here one by one but rather a beautiful piece that conveyed what people could feel as a lifestyle when they visited (Zehra, 61, winery owner and Urla Vineyard Route and NGO member).

As Ayşegül stated, one or two individuals actively take on the role of the face or opinion leader of these narratives, while others align themselves with these common narrative practices. She also mentioned they received professional support, particularly in managing the association's communication activities. The experiences and lifestyles that visitors to Urla will encounter, as highlighted in their films, embody these performative narratives.

In 2024, the Vineyard Road Association was included in the list of the first 100 Sustainable Destination Stories worldwide, prepared by Green Destinations, certifying their narrative construction. Applications to this list are submitted by presenting a project or achievement in a story format. In the stories that are expected to have qualities such as developing an innovative approach to sustainability and contributing to society, Urla's prominent points can be summarized as follows: revitalizing the old winemaking culture in the region, providing economic development through cooperation with local producers; providing information about the route through communicative tools such as maps, brochures and signs in physical space; adopting environmentally friendly production techniques<sup>38</sup>. This narrative's pillar of displaying winemaking culture forms the basis of the communication practices of lifestyle migrants in their media. Although a content analysis of the social media of lifestyle migrants could not be conducted within the study's limitations, in-depth interviews revealed themes and strategies followed.

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<sup>38</sup>Green Destinations Top 100 stories website, Urla's Vineyard Road Story: [https://www.greendestinations.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/Top-100-2024-GPS-Izmir-Unveiling-Urlas-Wine-Heritage\\_-The-Birth-of-the-Urla-Vineyard-Route.pdf](https://www.greendestinations.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/Top-100-2024-GPS-Izmir-Unveiling-Urlas-Wine-Heritage_-The-Birth-of-the-Urla-Vineyard-Route.pdf)

The main themes of the social media narrative emphasized are sharing information about wine, enjoying life in Urla, highlighting nature, vineyard landscapes and production processes, announcing events, and showing the togetherness of vineyard members on social media. Their strategies also vary from the association's approach to institutionalization and professionalization, especially in managing their own accounts. In addition, hiring a social media expert or photographer and collaborating with an agency are different solutions to marketing communication activities. Factors such as their cultural capital, marketing strategies, past work experiences, social networks, and, importantly, their decision on whether to allocate economic capital for promotional work (e.g., advertising, agency support, hiring experts) can lead to differences in their communication activities.

We receive professional communication support. I can't say we're very active. We have a streamlined social media profile, and we prefer to keep it that way. We are progressing entirely through organic growth using ads and similar methods. (...) As for content, we focus on sharing information, announcing events, and creating small video clips aimed at sharing our wine (Ebru, 46, business development manager).

We do not work with an agency. It is all very spontaneous. Sometimes, my husband shares his experiences living in Urla on this account, which might make it more interesting (Zehra, 61, winery owner and Urla Vineyard Route and NGO member).

The view of the vineyards is incredible; it's the most important thing we have beautiful scenery from harvest season to autumn. Urla, of course, is the same: the nature, the venues, and the work done around wine. We also gather with other producers and share moments from those meetings (Suat, 64, winery and arboretum owner and Urla Vineyard Route member).

The explained media performances are specific to terroir tourism and, consequently, entrepreneurialism performances, which can be defined as creating an attractive rural place. By engaging in the practice of generating mediatic places, lifestyle migrants shape the rural landscape with discourses of the entrepreneurial ecosystem (Jonasson, 2012: 18). This trend, which highlights Urla's vineyard region

and diversifies rural representations, stems from a dynamic where entrepreneurs develop these narratives by closely observing and aware from one another.

Creating a common rurality among entrepreneurs, closely tied to place framing, contributes to shaping narratives or discourses about specific places while potentially overshadowing others or triggering competition between them (see Martin, 2003). Martin states that these frames of place can sometimes serve a social or political agenda, act as a way of understanding a place, or highlight certain aspects while downplaying others. Entrepreneurs tend to avoid using as content unaesthetic neighborhoods, poor infrastructure, signage they view as visual pollution, or central settlements resembling cities due to excessive overbuilding. Another entrepreneurial community where place narratives are shaped through similar framing consists of chef restaurant owners.

The place narratives of chef restaurants often draw on different elements as they align with a broader context of gastronomy rather than wine. It concerns, especially with the concept of farm-to-table, telling stories about local farmers who supplied the produce, showcasing agricultural products, emphasizing the authenticity of the dishes, and conveying restaurant ambience. The tendency to follow each other's narratives in creating stories about place reflects a drive to produce similar content with a sense of competition rather than partnership. Leyla, who manages the social media account for one of these businesses, notes that similar social media content is frequently created competitively, with the aestheticization of edible plant landscaping emerging as a competitive factor in both spatial and content terms.

They rent a land but present it as their garden in their narrative. This is, of course, a wonderful and sustainable approach. However, in our narrative, we emphasize that these gardens are ours and that we are involved in every aspect, from the soil to production and even the design. Sustainability and employment are not just about renting a place and using its produce. (...) We also need to highlight the chef to some extent (...) For the ingredient of the month, we go to a different location for showing its production process (...) It seems as though there are three farm-to-table restaurants in Urla, and practices like edible plant gardens have started to feel repetitive (Leyla, 37, a chef restaurant' social media account manager).



In Urla, where rurality discourses reflected in media content are shared to promote tourism through competition or cooperation, another narrative-building group consists of influencers. These lifestyle migrant influencers function as intermediaries collaborating with venues in Urla and providing the local public relations channel for tourism narratives. Their intermediate position also functions as a channel for disseminating performances of urban lifestyles linked to consumption, particularly in Urla, or as a medium for sharing announcements within the community. Ecem, who describes her passion for storytelling and emphasizes that she started influencing without any monetary motive, states that meeting people, enriching her social life, and discovering new places are her primary motivations. Thus, establishing place narratives in Urla becomes a way of creating social capital, even though it also emphasizes destination creation.

I love listening to stories. For example, when a café opens, (...) what dreams bring this person here? Most people come here to fulfill their dreams without worrying about money. (...) I also announce artistic events in Urla. Occasionally, I get requests for other things, like announcing a lost dog. I'm not exactly a news account, but I try to share those things as much as possible. However, my main goal is to support the venues (Ecem, 49, Urla-focused social media account owner).

In sum, the overall depiction that arises when considering the media narratives of lifestyle migrants, particularly as in the reproduction of place in line with their lifestyles, reflects the fact that these communities tell the world around them in the direction they desire and through common maneuvers (Edensor, 2006: 493). While these maneuvers include alternative narrative constructions, such as creating a communication platform that enables all actors in Urla (cooperatives, producers, chefs, etc.) to access one another, the general tendency is towards a tourism discourse framed by sustainability. Therefore, integrating these narratives, which could be micro examples of lifestyle media, with elite tastes while engaging with entrepreneurship, reveals a form of “taste” dominating and framing the rural environment (for another example, see Chueh & Lu, 2018). What lifestyle migrants bring to places, as a part of the social, cultural, or material structure, is related to how they construct the meaning and narratives they are involved in. This demonstrates that dominant lifestyle migrants

also maintain their hegemonic position in shaping narratives. Their collaborations or partnerships are primarily aimed at refining Urla's charm as a destination for tourism and an ideal lifestyle. This claim is further reinforced by the content produced by lifestyle migrants in "Dergi Urla".

#### **4.3.2. Identifying the Lifestyles: A Lifestyle Magazine for Place- and Taste-Making**

Another tool for creating representations in the production of rural place narratives—or performances in a broader sense—is the local lifestyle magazine, curated under the editorship of a lifestyle migrant and based on the narratives of other lifestyle migrants. The chosen feature topics, interviewees, and news content provide a significant platform that reveals which migrants hold the capacity to shape narratives about the place and what stories they choose to tell about Urla.

To outline a general framework for the magazine, it is a lifestyle publication that highlights key tourism axes such as art galleries, vineyard routes, and gastronomy trails as its main feature topics. Through interviews predominantly featuring entrepreneurs such as event organizers, art gallery owners or artists, architects, owners of gastronomy establishments, chefs, and winemakers, the magazine showcases Urla's cultural and consumption spaces, social life, local cultural values (venues, villages, cultural heritage, historical communities, etc.), the best practices of lifestyle migrants, Urla's gastronomy culture, and its tourism potential.

I have a section, sometimes spanning up to 8 pages, titled *Urla's Newcomers*. I also conduct interviews for this section. (...) In the magazine, a content editor assigns topics based on the issue's theme. These include interviews at venues or with individuals. They distribute the interviews among us, and I conduct 4-5 interviews per issue (Ecem, 49, owner of a Urla-focused social media account).

Wallis (2017: 19), in her study on the magazine "Country Style", describes rural lifestyle magazines as cultural tools that suspend realities and present readers with rural micro-myths, allowing them to explore new ideas and lifestyles. Wallis (2017: 21) examines this culture-shaping tool within the Australian context, embedding a post-colonial critique by exploring the relationship between lifestyle migrants' desires,

identities, and sense of belonging with the colonial gaze. She highlights that this gaze's foundation lies in taste-making and habitus functions, emphasizing how lifestyle migrants imagine compatible living possibilities within a discursive space. These compatible living possibilities are discussed in this dissertation using the Bourdieusian concept of "elective belonging" (Savage, 2010: 116). To summarize, this concept suggests that lifestyle migrants are drawn to places that hold symbolic meaning for them, not merely for practical reasons. It argues that the middle class creates and claims spaces with an "aura" that aligns with their personal journeys. Therefore, it can be suggested that place narratives fundamentally serve as instruments for crafting spatial auras aligned with desired directions.

Bourdieu's (1979/2021: 230-231) analysis of how lifestyles function through the mechanics of founding choices describes the construction of practices or stylistic similarities by the middle class or *petite bourgeoisie* according to calibrated preferences. The negotiation of taste cultures, based on status, continues by reconstructing boundaries in opposition or connection. Lifestyle media serve as significant taste-making tools within this system, facilitating the ongoing negotiation between elite and mass cultures. Referring to lifestyle magazines, Bourdieu (1979/2021: 206-209) points out that women's and business magazines simultaneously produce themselves as cultural tools in their presentation of the art of living. They serve their own class cultures while acting as mediators between classes. This mediation, softening forms of domination and adopting a public relations mission, determines dispositions by creating needs. The dominant or elite migrants, described as narrative creators in the previous section, similarly portray elective belonging practices. While crafting the aura elements that distinguish spaces suitable for themselves, they also generate a taste-promoter media for rural areas.

Within these imagined worlds, where rural habitus and representations are central, one of the primary concepts is lifestyle. Through a dual reading of "Dergi Urla's" four-issue archive and identifying recurring lifestyle patterns, five subcategories have been determined: (1) Living in harmony with nature, (2) A gastronomic lifestyle, (3) A life intertwined with art, (4) Luxury and comfort, and (5) An active lifestyle.



**Figure 4.1 :** Lifestyle representations in local magazine

The subcategory of “Living in harmony with nature,” which is closely tied to representations of the rural natural environment, is depicted in the magazine as the tranquility and peaceful atmosphere that escaping the city provides. Narratives of a lifestyle integrated with nature, which legitimize migration and reinforce a sense of belonging to the countryside, position the relationship with nature in two distinct realms. The first realm highlights the practices of healthy food production by new farmers, businesses, cooperatives, and local producers (mostly women) in Urla, emphasizing the ease of eating well in the rural setting. Interviews with producers or new farmer lifestyle migrants provide a framework for understanding how their

dreams or ideals have evolved within a natural lifestyle context. Particularly, discourses linking migration preferences to Urla's nature, climate, and soil offer narratives that extend beyond production, merging with the environment and culminating in the pursuit of healthy food. As complementary elements of these narratives, concepts previously discussed in earlier chapters, such as "sustainability" and "farm-to-table," are presented in the magazine as values that support local producers and habitats. Thus, the representation of rural life and business creation at the intersection of lifestyle migration and natural living reinforces the value systems of migrant groups regarding the environment through media.

On the other end of the spectrum from production and healthy food lies a narrative of living in harmony with nature, where Urla's fertile lands are reduced to a scenic backdrop. Here, nature is portrayed as an aesthetic space viewed from a distance, an activity to engage in, or a resource to exploit for its wealth, aligning more with a consumptive pleasure derived from the landscape. In the magazine, advertisements for gated communities feature images surrounded by greenery, accompanied by slogans like "inspired by nature" and "a natural wonder." These advertisements are complemented by content highlighting vineyard routes, rural life, and olive trees, collectively reimagining the material representations of a tranquil environment.

Including luxury residences indirectly within these narratives, alongside promotional PR pieces for boutique hotels, fine-dining restaurants, wineries, and art venues, frames the concept of a comfortable life or vacation in Urla. The theme that allows narrative-building entrepreneurial lifestyle migrants to reinforce their accounts of their ventures and bolster the entrepreneurial ecosystem—previously discussed—is created not only through content about a gastronomic lifestyle but also through narratives of luxurious and comfortable living. The comfort of this lifestyle is supported by stories emphasizing the availability of every desired service or product, even in a rural setting, and the continuation of social life enriched with diverse alternative practices.

What necessitates distinguishing gastronomic lifestyle narratives as a subheading is their role in crafting the desired aura associated with Urla—namely, that

of a gastronomic tourism and lifestyle hub characterized by its aesthetic values and discourses. On one hand, these narratives adopt a strategy of reimagining local images to position Urla as an “authentic rural” destination. On the other hand, as Wallis (2017: 27) describes in framing the rural imaginations of lifestyle migrants, the rural reality is shaped to support migrants’ own transformations or sense of belonging, creating a tacit partnership of rural idealization through pastoral storytelling for readers. Examining the dossier content and interviews with lifestyle migrant entrepreneurs in the fields of wine and gastronomy reveals that “rural paradise” narratives are constructed with discourses emphasizing becoming one of the world’s premier gastronomy and wine destinations, celebrating Urla’s ancient culture and flavors, the excitement of seasonal products, nourishment from the land and climate, and proximity to local producers and high-quality products. This portrayal of rural life offers not only a lifestyle entwined with production and consumption harmonizing with nature’s rhythms but also transcends the romanticization of the rural. It serves to envision the town’s future, essentially delineating an economic development pathway for Urla.

Another pillar of the lifestyle narratives, now intertwined with the town’s transformation and cultural development, is the concept of living immersed in art. News articles announcing art collections, temporary exhibitions, and events serve not only as informational pieces but also reflect traces of the “legitimate” culture associated with the evolving tastes and identity of Urla. From interview dossiers aimed at promoting Urla’s art scene to guides on how to start an art collection, the content strives to familiarize Urla’s readers with the art industries and encourage them to engage with a lifestyle incorporating an art route as part of the town’s living spaces. The factors contributing to the emergence of a lifestyle immersed in art, the aura created by Urla’s lifestyles, and the narratives migrants construct about their ideal ways of living can be outlined as follows:

- The need for accessible spaces where people can connect with art and artists, rather than confining art to big cities or museums.
- The perception of Urla as a region inhabited by individuals with a refined sense of aesthetics.

- The presence of prominent art institutions like Arkas, art-focused hotels, and the establishment of artist studios, which have normalized gallery culture in the rural setting and fostered tourism development.
- The potential for fostering an appreciation for contemporary art aesthetics and artworks among Urla's new communities.

Another lifestyle representation idealizing rural life revolves around practices that enable an active life (sports, hobbies, events, etc.). This representation is constructed through narratives about the activities available in Urla, both for its residents and in terms of diversifying its tourism route. Among these, surfing, which is typically associated with Alaçatı, stands out as a key activity integrated into Urla's narrative alongside its terroir and gastronomy story. Reflections of this activity in the narratives include descriptions of various surf schools in Urla, entrepreneurs' remarks in interviews about Urla's surfing potential, its year-round capacity to train athletes, and its role as a unique activity, especially for children living in the area. However, the framework of an active lifestyle is not limited to sports. Content focused on healthy eating, as mentioned earlier, and a life intertwined with art also align with the concept of active living. These narratives emphasize creating spaces in the town where individuals can nurture their physical, mental, and social well-being. Other discourses tied to active living include adopting values like sustainability, embracing environmentally conscious lifestyles, and integrating social awareness into daily life.

The lifestyle narratives about Urla, categorized under five themes, encapsulate the practices of place representation that Jonasson (2012: 18) describes as the collective performance of a life that makes rural areas appealing. These narratives serve as reference points for "rural localities" or "spatial practices", shaping both the current and future uses of Urla by those who live and work there. From practices associated with living in harmony with nature to galleries, gastronomically rich venues, initiatives that prioritize healthy eating and sustainability, the daily life of the rural environment is framed by specific tastes. Consequently, the lifestyle magazine not only creates symbolic values related to the place and produces representations of *place-making* but also acts as a cultural intermediary, portraying the kind of life that can be led in Urla to other lifestyle migrants. In addition to conveying tastes associated with particular lifestyles, the magazine plays a role in supporting the lives of lifestyle

migrant communities. Even though, as addressed in the next section, values such as villages, rural life, and peasantry are presented as cherished cultural qualities of Urla, the success stories that follow migration—business ventures, entrepreneurial efforts, and exemplary practices like sustainability—or the varied but similar portrayals of new lives contribute to creating a “vision” schema of legitimate forms of migration and lifestyle enrichment, adding economic and cultural value to Urla. Thus, the capacity of lifestyle migrants to shape place representation is not only a function of the forms of capital transferred to daily life but also stems from their role as narrators and representatives of life stories and forms in Urla. They assert their position as figures who actively shape Urla’s evolving identity through their influence on the discourse surrounding the place.

**Urla'da Kitesurf Yapılabilecek Yerler**

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**Figure 4.2 :** The content of places to go kite surfing (Source: Dergi Urla)

The discourse space created by lifestyle migrants, although presented with a local character to readers from or visiting Urla, extends its representational power beyond Urla. This is achieved through its circulation as an e-magazine and its presence in venues located in cities like Istanbul.

In the initial issues, we covered routes such as gastronomy, art, and vineyard tours. We interviewed members and external supporters involved in these routes, sharing their stories through these interviews. The magazine doesn't just focus on Urla but also covers other engaging topics like healthy living. To my knowledge, these magazines are sent to Istanbul as well. The editor has a lot of



connections there, so the magazines go beyond İzmir and are placed on tables of people in Istanbul too. In this sense, it significantly contributes to the promotion of Urla (Ecem, 49, Urla-focused social media account owner).

The portrayal of both the venues and what kind of place Urla is, as Ecem also emphasized, adds a destination-making function to the magazine's role in place- and taste-making. The traces of this destination-making function, rooted in the narrative of an authentic tourist town, are explored in the section titled "Rural Representations: Nearby Villages and Rural Paradises."

### **4.3.3. The Urla Outside Lifestyle Frames**

As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, the framing of place—keeping desired aspects within the narrative and excluding qualities that cannot be polished—leaves certain realities of Urla outside the scope of the three functions discussed above. Naturally, destination-making relies on narratives that highlight appealing aspects of a place and omits characteristics that might negatively influence tourism. However, since "Dergi Urla" also serves as a local magazine, the social issues it addresses about Urla's fabric rarely go beyond topics like supporting women entrepreneurs or preserving natural and cultural values. Apart from occasional references in interviews where lifestyle migrants hint at challenges in adapting to life in Urla, issues such as infrastructure problems, traffic, high costs, tensions with the local community, and the disappearance of agricultural lands—frequently raised in in-depth interviews—remain excluded from the idealized life narratives presented in the magazine.

As discussed in previous sections or chapters, sustainability emerges as a key narrative theme at the intersection of migration and place, driven by tourism narratives and lifestyle migrants' tendencies to protect their living environments. Topics such as natural living, organic food, avoiding chemicals, waste management, and composting appear as themes within the socially responsible and conscientious lifestyles of migrants, frequently highlighted in news articles. While the magazine features content aimed at raising awareness, issues like unplanned urbanization, profiteering, and pollution—hidden behind these trendy concepts—find no place in the idyllic rural representations depicted in the narratives.

Tourism, a topic closely linked to environmental issues, is framed in the magazine as a theme that will foster Urla's development, often in a celebratory manner. However, the pressures it places on local life and the environment, as well as issues like inadequate infrastructure, are notably absent from the narrative. Similarly, as discussed in the next section, the presentation of local production, farming, and craftsmanship as Urla's defining values excludes the challenges faced by the local population, their economic struggles, or the difficulties encountered in sustaining agricultural activities.

The historical and cultural fabric of Urla is approached with a preservationist perspective in topics such as the history of Karantina Island, the significance of the harbor, and the cultural life of past communities, portraying them as elements of cultural richness. However, the transformative processes driven by urban sprawl and gated communities, as well as criticisms related to these developments, are not addressed. Thus, the magazine aligns with the characteristics of a classic lifestyle publication, highlighting themes of social life and social responsibility. However, issues such as social divisions, inequalities, or broader societal challenges in Urla remain concealed behind the positive rural narrative and success stories.

In conclusion, Urla is promoted as an attractive destination both in terms of lifestyle and tourism. The primary narrative form with which lifestyle migrants identify is lifestyle journalism. Consequently, their narrative practices align with "affirmative" lifestyle content that portrays their lifestyles, auras, and aspirations through positive imaginaries, rather than creating a critical local newspaper. However, within this broader framework, the initiative to combine the idea of creating an urban ecosystem with the municipality's demand for narrative-building for tourism has relatively diversified the communication practices related to the place. The founding actors of this platform, which aims to showcase what Urla has and lacks to visitors and those outside Urla, have also emphasized the importance of communicating what Urla does not offer.

We wanted people here to become aware of where they live—who is here, what is here? And for people outside, we aimed to help them see more clearly what Urla does not have. I think explaining "what is not here" is very important. For instance, what's not here? There are no discos, no wild parties, no overpriced,

absurdly trendy places like the ones in Alaçatı selling lahmacun for 750 liras. Here, we have a focus on sustainable development. It's a small place, and this is what we're trying to convey. (Pinar, 47, product developer, NGO member).



**Figure 4.3 :** Urla urban ecosystem platform website

Although not all Urla's realities outside the defined narrative frame are addressed, Pinar's emphasis on the absence of certain lifestyles popular in other touristic towns or settlements signals a call to expand the narrative framing of life in Urla. While the discourse of this platform falls outside the scope of this research due to its limitations, it aims to create a local network spearheaded by the municipality rather than focusing solely on media narratives. The goal is to connect Urla's key actors—cooperatives, NGOs, communities, and individual entrepreneurs—around sustainable development objectives. Among these objectives, promoting gastronomy and agro-tourism plays a key role, with place-based characterizations still serving an attraction-building purpose. Thus, while the narrative emphasizes “what is not here,” positive imaginings continue to exclude the critical themes discussed earlier. For this reason, it is difficult to claim that lifestyle migrants have yet to establish a platform for a critical media narrative. Instead, Urla is presented through representations centered on lifestyle, a tourism-driven entrepreneurial ecosystem, and a focus on sustainable development.

#### 4.3.4. Rural Representations of Urla: Nearby Villages and Rural Paradises

Chueh and Lu (2018: 134) argue that rural representations in Western media can be categorized under three main themes. The first portrays the countryside as a nostalgic settlement where old-fashioned virtues and lifestyles connected to these values persist. This narrative spans from depictions of rural areas as harmonious spaces where social classes coexist with tolerance (Bunce, 1994) to representations of these values being on the verge of disappearing (Urry, 2002, cited in Chueh & Lu, 2018: 134). Chueh and Lu (2018) highlight the dominance of a rural utopia in media that stirs longing for traditional social values. According to Chueh and Lu (2018), the second category of Western media representations is the “rural neighbourhood” image, which often symbolizes an escape from modernity and the stressful conditions associated with urban life. This retreat or return to simplicity is followed by a third category: “new-build idylls in the form of gated or enclavic settlements,” referred to as a “fortress of exclusivity” (cited in Bell, 2006; Chueh & Lu, 2018: 134). Consequently, motivations frequently observed in lifestyle migration literature—such as seeking a simple life, building a sense of community, or returning to the land (Benson & O’Reilly, 2009; Korpela, 2009; Orhon, 2020)—and their associated visions of authenticity, slowness, nostalgia, and belonging are similarly reconstructed in media representations (Bell, 2006; Wallis, 2017; Chueh & Lu, 2018).

The rural representations in “Dergi Urla” do not significantly deviate from the overarching themes of rural depictions discussed above. However, it is important to consider which aspects are emphasized or whether there are any divergences in the components of the “rural idyll” or rural idealization. Upon reviewing the content of “Dergi Urla,” a comparison of pieces focused on promoting entrepreneurs, businesses, or framing lifestyle narratives with those addressing villages and rural life reveals a heavier emphasis on the former. While life in Urla is often associated with rural imagery—such as slowness, tranquility, health, and peace—content explicitly representing rural life is limited. Examples include articles on the art house in Barbaros Village, water culture heritage, an agricultural development cooperative, the history of Balıklıova Village, and the practice of a woman in Kuşçular baking bread using traditional methods. Beyond this, the rural landscape is primarily depicted as a backdrop for entrepreneurial ventures, an element in architectural projects, or, as

previously discussed under the theme of “living in harmony with nature,” a scene viewed from a distance by lifestyle migrants. Thus, the fertile lands of nearby villages or rural areas are mostly reflected in narratives as sources of healthy food or as the stage for entrepreneurial stories. The rural narratives produced in Urla are framed not as a lived reality but as an alternative lifestyle imbued with nostalgia. This rural nostalgia is articulated in the limited articles mentioned above, emphasizing social relationships, ways of life, and cultural practices in villages. These narratives highlight the stories of both locals and migrants who have established new lives or businesses in these areas. Rural life is portrayed through values increasingly lost in modern society, such as hospitality, traditional production methods, solidarity, cooperative practices, and the continuation of cultural events and celebrations. These performances of narrating the rural, aligning with an authentic tableau, include elements like “sharing both joy and sorrow” and “strong neighborhood ties,” which evoke solidarity. They also integrate features that sustain rural tourism, such as village theater and local festivals. The tourism narrative reflected throughout “Dergi Urla” stages villages as spaces for authentic experiences. Simultaneously, stories of newcomers living alongside villagers, sharing social values, and collaborating toward common goals—such as the Water Culture Heritage Project in Barbaros Village, support for the local art house, or examples of entrepreneurial initiatives—suggest that villagers easily integrate newcomers into rural life, fostering a vision of harmonious social coexistence. These relationships between locals and lifestyle migrants, presented through idealized examples and good practices, imply that Urla’s villages offer not only fresh air, natural beauty, and healthy living but also a warm environment. This perspective on rural life, constructed within the framework of promotion and tourism, tends to overlook or gloss over issues such as infrastructure complaints due to population growth, environmental problems, economic hardships, or conflicts stemming from migration. However, the narrative does incorporate a discourse on preserving the cultural heritage and values of villages to prevent the loss of authentic qualities. Examples include highlighting traditional bread-making through the stories of a villager dressed in traditional “şalvar”, projects reviving old water wells and water management practices to combat drought, and emphasizing the continuation of traditional activities like village theater. These reflect how lifestyle migrants’ rural utopias are rooted in traditional values. According to Wallis (2017: 27), the search for these rural motifs or authenticity—difficult to find in modern life—stems from the

more complex consumption patterns of lifestyle migration narratives. In simpler terms, evoking a bygone version of life aligns not with simple pleasures of consumption but with the pursuit of a nostalgia that is harder to attain.

Beyond the villages that provide comfort simply by their proximity, even if not frequently visited, the rural environment is framed as a rich and fertile habitat. Regional specialties such as Aegean herbs, geographically indicated artichokes, seafood, and their associated recipes and benefits are highlighted as unique, authentic elements that distinguish *Urla*. This emphasis is part of the magazine's strategy for framing the place. While rural life narratives, as previously noted, lean toward complex consumption paths focused on vanishing imagery, simpler consumption patterns are also constructed through the direct promotion of specific tastes and desires. The narratives catering to these tastes align with the commodification of the countryside, reflecting its commercialization or objectification (Marsden, 1999: 506), where rural spaces are encircled by developers, new residents, tourists, and more broadly, consumers. Although representations of *Urla* are shaped by the urban, consumption-oriented habits of lifestyle migrants (cafés, restaurants, design, services, and lifestyle narratives), the depiction of products grown in the countryside and their unique flavors enhances the value of local cuisine within gastronomic tourism. These representations also resonate with the lifestyle migrants' emphasis on "healthy eating habits." Thus, the countryside's unique products are positioned as drivers of commodification, increasing their exchange value while embedding them within broader commercial and cultural contexts.

The staging of the countryside or its construction as a performative space is also a result of its encirclement by a consumerist gaze. Traditional values and production methods, as noted in this section, are framed as objects of indirect consumption through a protective nostalgic tendency, while also representing a form of reenactment of rural life. Stories such as that of a woman engaged in beekeeping or a rural woman making bread depict a slice of rural life; however, rather than emphasizing the harsh conditions of rural life or production for women, they present a clean environment, symbolic rural attire, and romanticized settings and characters. (Bell, 2006: 152). However, Bell notes that controlling these rural fears through idealizations is not feasible. Instead, exclusion zones are created to limit direct encounters, or rural archetypes are categorized and othered as idyllic or anti-idyllic. In the case of *Urla*, the

most prevalent method of controlling the countryside is its presentation as a sterile and aestheticized landscape, stripped of rural archetypes.



**Figure 4.4 :** The peasant woman bakes bread (Source: Dergi Urla)

The task of creating rural stagings, as featured in “Dergi Urla” shoots and mentioned in interviews, transforms the countryside into a fully scripted performative space. This staging work, undertaken by entrepreneurs in Urla to integrate their rural-related products with aesthetic images of the countryside during their branding or professionalization processes, shifts the aforementioned indirect and narrative-driven romanticization of the rural into a purely aesthetic image, detached from its context.

In summary, these rural representations of Urla demonstrate that the space is being reimagined through a consumerist lens and that narratives about the place are not isolated from the new power dynamics and economic or social structures shaping the rural. Ecem, one of the assistant editors of the magazine, emphasizes that they ensure at least one piece of content related to rural areas is included in every issue, succinctly summarizing the magazine’s core approach in alignment with the narratives described above:

They decorate, set up tables, and share their work. Occasionally, our magazine team collaborates with this group. Depending on the season, they decorate in

rural areas, fields, or a specific venue. Or someone living in Urla might cook a dish presented on a beautifully designed table, and a recipe is shared (...) In every issue, we cover a rural topic. For example, in the art route feature, there was also a member from a village, and I interviewed about their life there. I discussed village life and the process of artistic production... In the upcoming issue, I wrote about a woman here who practices beekeeping; her story is included (Ecem, 49, owner of an Urla-focused social media account).



**Figure 4.5 :** The staging the rural as a profession (Source: Dergi Urla)

Another rural representation accompanying these narratives in Urla is the good practices of lifestyle migrants who have ventured into villages or rural areas. These good practices, intertwined with the act of escaping to the countryside and participating in rural production methods, not only offer a romantic and nostalgic representation of integrating into village life but also portray an exemplary initiative that benefits the social environment -local communities- and emphasizes environmental awareness. Consequently, the success stories mentioned earlier in this section are presented with a perspective that values sensitivity to sustainability and rural preservation—depicting ventures that are conscientious and non-detrimental to the countryside.



The case of rural fortresses, presented as the third category at the beginning of this section and described as dream homes in media representations, has not been a prominent element in the representations created for Urla. To briefly explain, Chueh and Lu (2018: 134), referencing Bell (2006), describe the tendency of the middle class to create pastoral, fortress-like protected spaces as a response to rural fears and a desire for distinguished and respectable communities. These tendencies are also reflected in media discourses and reproduced through narratives of dream homes. While the issue of residential differentiation, as discussed in the built environment section, operates as a transformative factor in Urla's identity, it has not emerged as a significant theme in the narratives covered by "Dergi Urla." However, news and interviews on interior design, architecture, or stylistic trends provide a framework for envisioning the characteristics of dream homes in rural areas. As such, elements of potential homes for lifestyle migrants reflected in media, as previously mentioned under the lifestyle migration subsection, are conveyed through gated community advertisements or architects shaping spatial designs in Urla. These dream home projects, situated not in the center but within rural settings, are portrayed not as residential differentiation fortresses but rather as insulated structures designed to withstand nature's harsh elements—such as wind and cold—while offering tips on how to create ideal conditions in a rural environment. Therefore, representations of dream homes in Urla's rural areas, although accompanied by site advertisements in the texts, emphasize a fortress against nature rather than one of social segregation.

The three sections addressing the findings have discussed how lifestyle migrants represent their ordinary spatial experiences and processes of place-making as part of taste-making, both for themselves and other lifestyle migrants. In this context, the study has summarized how these migrants construct their narratives in the media they shape, integrating their lifestyles with rural landscapes and stories, and highlighting specific representations to build the aura of the places they inhabit. However, to complete the broader framework of the dissertation, the question of what potential these narratives hold for Urla and what impact they have on the rural context lies in the reinterpretation of practices within the framework of "mediatization."

#### 4.3.5. Mediatization of Urla

The first of the key findings that helps answer the question of how the process of mediatization shapes rural identity and social space is the power derived from the media turning Urla into a center of attraction for tourists, investors, and migrants seeking new lifestyles. The “premediation” process (Jansson, 2013: 284-285), which Jansson associates with the media’s function of creating expectations about how future events and experiences will be perceived, proves that the idealization of Urla within the scope of migration and tourism progresses not only in the present but also through future-oriented actions. Therefore, the representations created about the imagined countryside reinforce its consumption qualities, while also indicating that these spaces are pre-scripted by the social communities (especially the narrative framers) who use them, in addition to being approached either through an authentic or aesthetic lens. As a result, these narratives, alongside consumption, trigger the rural area to become a marketable commodity by merging with new symbolic elements and values, such as agricultural lands, local lifestyles, or public spaces, as described in the dissertation’s other chapters. This, in turn, fosters a platform for new investments, capital, and developments by forecasting secure routes for geographical pursuits, thus reinforcing the rising value of the space through narratives. Media narratives also help model the lifestyle migrants, portraying rural life as one closely intertwined with nature, offering healthy food, providing aesthetic landscapes, and promoting a lifestyle based on a kind of physical and social distancing from urban life. Jansson (2005: 1672), drawing attention to similar physical modeling in the mediatization process associated with an urban transformation project, highlights the media’s capacity to redefine space when defining future lifestyle codes. In the transformation of a former industrial site in Malmö’s abandoned harbor into an object of desire, the media played a crucial role in drawing global attention and resolving local fears regarding the uncertainty of the economic and social future of the place, thus acting as a transformative agent both symbolically and practically (Jansson, 2005: 1667).

On the other side of premediation—the pre-constructed representations of space by lifestyle migrants—lies the transformation of local communities’ expectations, fears, and practices concerning their geography. While the focus of this dissertation is to narrate a world shaped by the capital transfer of migrants with an emphasis on

lifestyle migration, it has been observed that local communities are either integrated into these future-oriented imaginaries, adapting to them, or are entirely excluded, experiencing alienation from these plans within a dual structure. In this way, these stories about the spatial identity of Urla, while building expectations, can also perpetuate views among precarious groups that life is becoming increasingly intolerable in terms of living costs and create feelings of hopelessness for the future. On the other hand, there is a sense of trust in the economic development that tourism is bound to bring. This revitalization perspective, reinforced by the narratives of entrepreneurial migrants, can persist through the acceptance of new aesthetic norms or production-consumption values by local communities who possess the economic capital to engage in commerce. Consequently, mediatization can potentially trigger the inclusion of local communities' material and practical world into the imagined universe. Thus, while implicitly constructing distinctions between local communities and newcomers within the public sphere, it also makes the differentiation codes within this social field more visible. In this context, one of the guiding concepts in discussing mediatization and the social texture or identity of the space is "normalization." Jansson (2013: 285) highlights that with the adoption of media, the "normalization of social practice" can lead to changes in social norms, traditions, and daily life activities at the level of everyday practices. While "premediation" is associated with creating formal representations within Lefebvre's triad, "normalization" corresponds to the ongoing negotiations surrounding representational spaces.

The discussion above about the positioning of local communities within the process revolves around the acceptance or rejection of new norms—or, more concretely, tastes framed by media—by individuals in their ways of using space or communicating about it. The same poles of acceptance or rejection also apply to other lifestyle migrants, as they are actors within the social field. Different lifestyle groups may accept and adapt the hegemonic narratives of place established by dominant migrants, depending on their positions within the entrepreneurial ecosystem, the habits they bring from urban contexts, and the ways they integrate into the imaginative construct. Alternatively, they may critique these narratives as factors that trigger the arrival of larger investors to Urla. However, this chapter demonstrates that in Urla's discursive game, those who set the norms are the dominant migrants, leveraging their media capacities and the power drawn from their cultural, economic, and social

capitals. The rural idealizations reflected in the media are becoming standardized and normalized to align with the new local lifestyles of global tourism towns—peaceful, immersed in nature, yet distanced and conducive to active living. Consequently, rural settlements with similar cultural, social, or spatial characteristics are being drawn into the trend of sharing a similar trajectory of transformation. Thus, the mediatization of place narratives, in one respect, formulates rural identity under specific tourism and lifestyle concepts. These formulas contribute to the normalization of new rural lifestyles and spatial arrangements, fostering the internalization of spatial transformations as processes shaped by deeply embedded social and cultural practices, rather than as spontaneous developments.



## 5. CONCLUSION

Focusing on lifestyle mobility toward Urla, a seaside town in Türkiye's Aegean Region, the dissertation examines the social, cultural, and economic transformations initiated by migrants' new lives in the countryside. It investigates the social, cultural, and economic transformations brought about by migrants establishing new lives in the countryside. The dissertation delves into the practices in which lifestyle migrants transfer their various forms of capital, the internal diversity within these migrant groups, their shared or differing aspirations, and the ways they negotiate the countryside along three primary dimensions. Firstly, in the process of changing rural identity experienced with migration, the framework of the alteration is based on which plans and interventions, which dominant groups are behind these interventions, and which functions encircle the countryside in the reproduction of the rural are discussed in the chapter titled "Seaside Towns in Transition: Managing and Planning the New Life in Urla." The chapter, "Reproduction of the Seaside Town through Lifestyle Migration: Transformation of the Natural and Built Environment in Urla," examines the transformative processes shaping the material environment. It highlights aspects such as residential differentiation, new configurations in both the built and natural environments, as well as the associated needs and aesthetic considerations. The final chapter, titled "Seaside Town Narratives: Representation and Mediatization of Place by Lifestyle Migrants," explores how representations and discourses about place are formulated in the content produced by lifestyle migrants and examines how these narratives serve as support points for interventions and aspirations related to the place.

While Urla's broad lifestyle universe occasionally challenges the narrative's coherence within the dissertation's overall structure, the conclusion provides an opportunity to unify the chapters and juxtapose the various dimensions that reveal the negotiation processes. The core arguments of the dissertation are framed around a

trajectory that examines the fundamental characteristics of sub-groups observed within the realm of lifestyle mobility and their intra-group interactions, the factors triggering the departure from urban life, and how the practices of lifestyle migrants unfold in Urla in terms of the transfer of various forms of capital.

*From Urban Triggers of Migration to Alternative Rural Living: Redesigning Life within the Possibilities of a Resilient Countryside*

To understand the spatial practices of the actors, the primary factors that triggered their departure from urban life were first identified, along with the solutions they sought in the countryside to address these triggers. The literature on lifestyle migration identifies dissatisfaction with urban living standards (unhealthy lifestyles, disconnection from nature, climate, and physical environment) (Walford & Stockdale, 2015), the increasing difficulty of affording urban life (Huete et al., 2013), and the prioritization of aesthetic expectations (Benson & O'Reilly, 2009; Benson & Osbaldiston, 2014) as key drivers of mobility. While these dynamics are also central to the movement toward Urla, the case of Urla reveals distinct triggers. These include the perceived insecurity of urban areas, the increasing refugee population and its association with crime, the heightened challenges of experiencing pandemics in crowded cities, the growing impact of economic uncertainties on daily life, and the amplified presence of conservative cultural hegemony in urban environments. In Türkiye, economic drivers are shaped not by global shifts in production relations but rather by the imposition of specific local conditions. The country has faced high inflation, primarily due to factors such as currency fluctuations, significant increases in energy and food prices, low interest rate policies, and the devaluation of the Turkish lira. Consequently, cities in Türkiye have related to challenges such as rising housing and food prices, increased living costs, and escalating social tensions. Therefore, in this dissertation, which examines migration to a seaside town in Türkiye, the relationship between economic conditions and migration points to a broader context than the investment and business opportunities or low cost of living often discussed in the international lifestyle migration literature (Cordel & Weidinger, 2019). When the above-mentioned triggers, including economic uncertainties, are considered together in their mutually reinforcing effects, it becomes clear that the countryside is

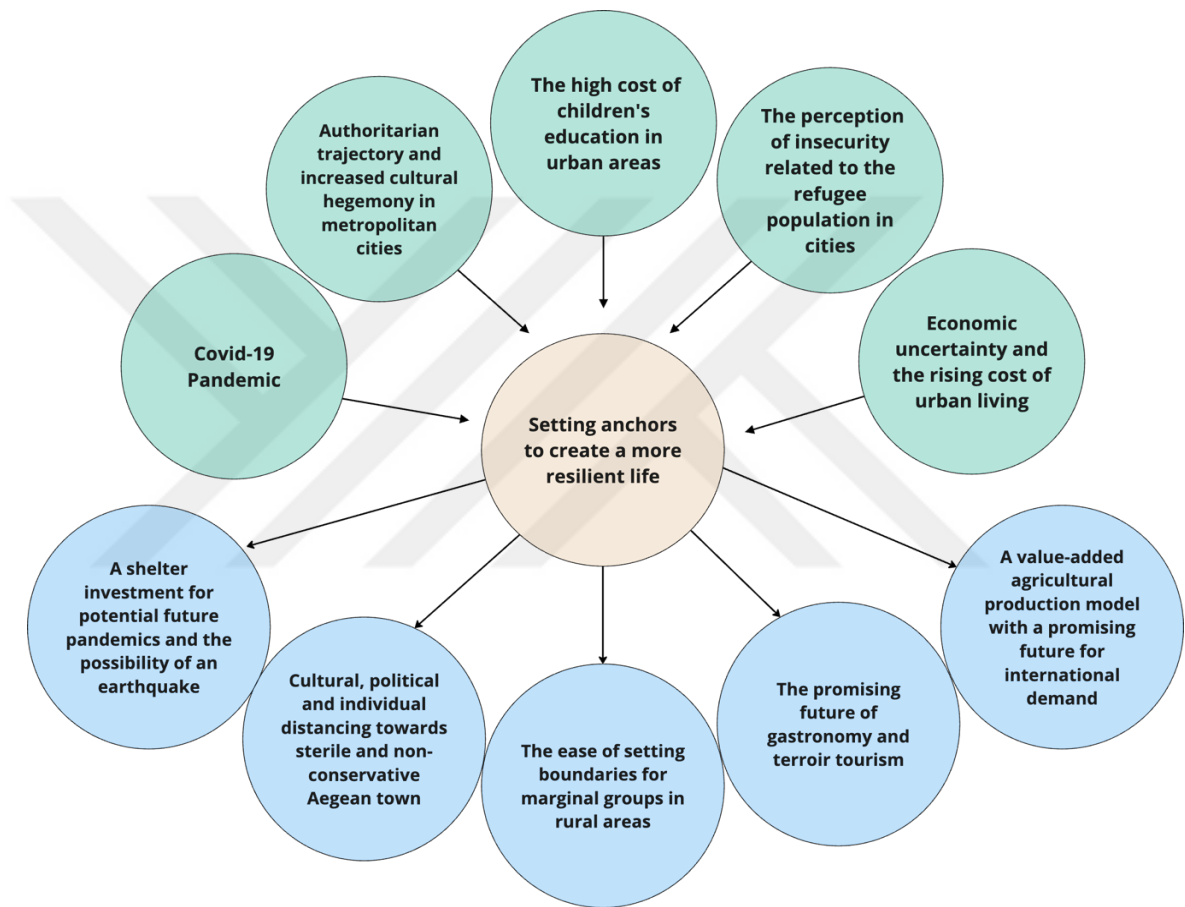
increasingly positioned as a more resilient social unit and settlement form, serving as an alternative to urban living.

Although “resilience” has become a widely used concept in urban studies literature, it rather provides a framework that underpins the context of “the countryside as a substitute for the city.” Rural resilience refers to the ability of social systems—whether through individuals or collective actions—or local governments via rural development policies to adapt to external shocks and changes, maintain essential functions, or develop a balance in response (McManus et al., 2012; Scott, 2013). In the context of this dissertation, a resilient life associated with rural living can be summarized as the ability of individuals and communities to adapt to changes, challenges, and unexpected events, effectively utilize their resources, and maintain their well-being. This study demonstrates that, under Turkey’s economic, social, and cultural conditions, touristic seaside towns in the Aegean region provide a conducive environment primarily, and rather exclusively, for economically privileged migrants to sustain a resilient life in terms of living conditions, community building, cultural belonging, well-being, and overall prosperity. Rural areas, despite economic, environmental, or social changes in the country, continue to fulfill functions such as production, community relations, and healthy living for lifestyle migrants. They offer lifestyle migrants opportunities for social well-being and economic development.

The multidimensional relationship between rural resilience and individual resilience is embodied in the activities of entrepreneurs with economic capital who combine the ideal of a better life with business endeavors. Urla’s potential for gastronomy and terroir tourism offers a secure harbor for future-oriented ventures. Similarly, for entrepreneurial new farmers aiming to engage in agricultural production and access international markets, the availability of local products that can be transformed into value-added goods renders investments promising and the future of such enterprises hopeful despite the rising costs of agricultural production.

However, focusing solely on the investments, ventures, or production efforts of economically privileged groups and their potential to build a more resilient life against the country’s economic conditions would represent a limited perspective. Lifestyle migrants with high environmental awareness and a nature-centered approach

contribute to strengthening the countryside's capacity to endure change. Their efforts in engaging in self-sufficient agricultural production, incorporating sustainability projects into their business practices, and demonstrating responsibility toward natural resources enhance the resilience of rural areas. Additionally, during the pandemic, the countryside's role as a refuge in terms of self-sufficiency and mitigating health risks reinforces the dissertation's argument that "the anchor of a more resilient life lies in the countryside."



**Figure 5.1 :** From triggers of urban escape to the common ground of more resilient rural living

For middle-income white-collar migrants, certain entrepreneurs, and retirees or semi-retirees, one factor that justifies their decision to leave urban areas is the perceived invisibility of the refugee population in Urla and their expressed satisfaction with this situation. Refugee communities, often viewed as one of the primary causes of insecurity in cities, remain distant from lifestyle migrants due to residential differentiation created through gated communities, elite zones, and gentrified neighborhoods. Even though refugee communities are present along migration routes on the Aegean coast, lifestyle migrants are largely shielded from encounters with them.



Thus, for lifestyle migrants, creating boundaries for marginalized groups appears easier in rural areas compared to urban settings. In this context, the seaside town represents a more secure social structure, associated with sanitization and perceived as resilient, particularly in response to what is interpreted as a social problem. Lastly, another factor that complicates integration into the cultural fabric of cities is the increasing dominance of cultural hegemony and conservatism. Politically sensitive groups, including artists, socially conscious agricultural producers, white-collar workers, café owners, and other small-scale entrepreneurs, often nostalgically cherish memories of their lives and social circles before the societal shift toward conservatism. In Urla, perceived as an extension of İzmir's secular and open societal structure, they hope to rediscover their personal, political, economic, and social freedoms, as well as the cultural belonging they feel they have lost. The shared values and communal lives of lifestyle migrants who possess similar economic, social, and cultural capital make rural living more resilient for these groups. However, the influx of investors and entrepreneurs, coupled with a construction boom, triggers economic transformations and rising living costs (such as education, daily expenses, and housing), turning this once-resilient lifestyle into a fleeting period of prosperity—an ultimately unattainable dream now lost for retirees and middle-income groups. Consequently, Urla's capacity for resilience, which is perceived as more favorable than urban settings and capable of maintaining prosperity despite societal changes, loses its relevance for communities excluded from the entrepreneurial ecosystem. Therefore, local governments, particularly in coastal settlements like Urla, must reevaluate entrepreneurial governance paradigms prioritising human capital mobility and investments to foster inclusive rural resilience. For a rural life that enhances the resilience of local communities and vulnerable groups, it is essential to manage resources equitably and efficiently while strengthening support for housing, employment, skills development, and production systems that enable adaptation to changing conditions.

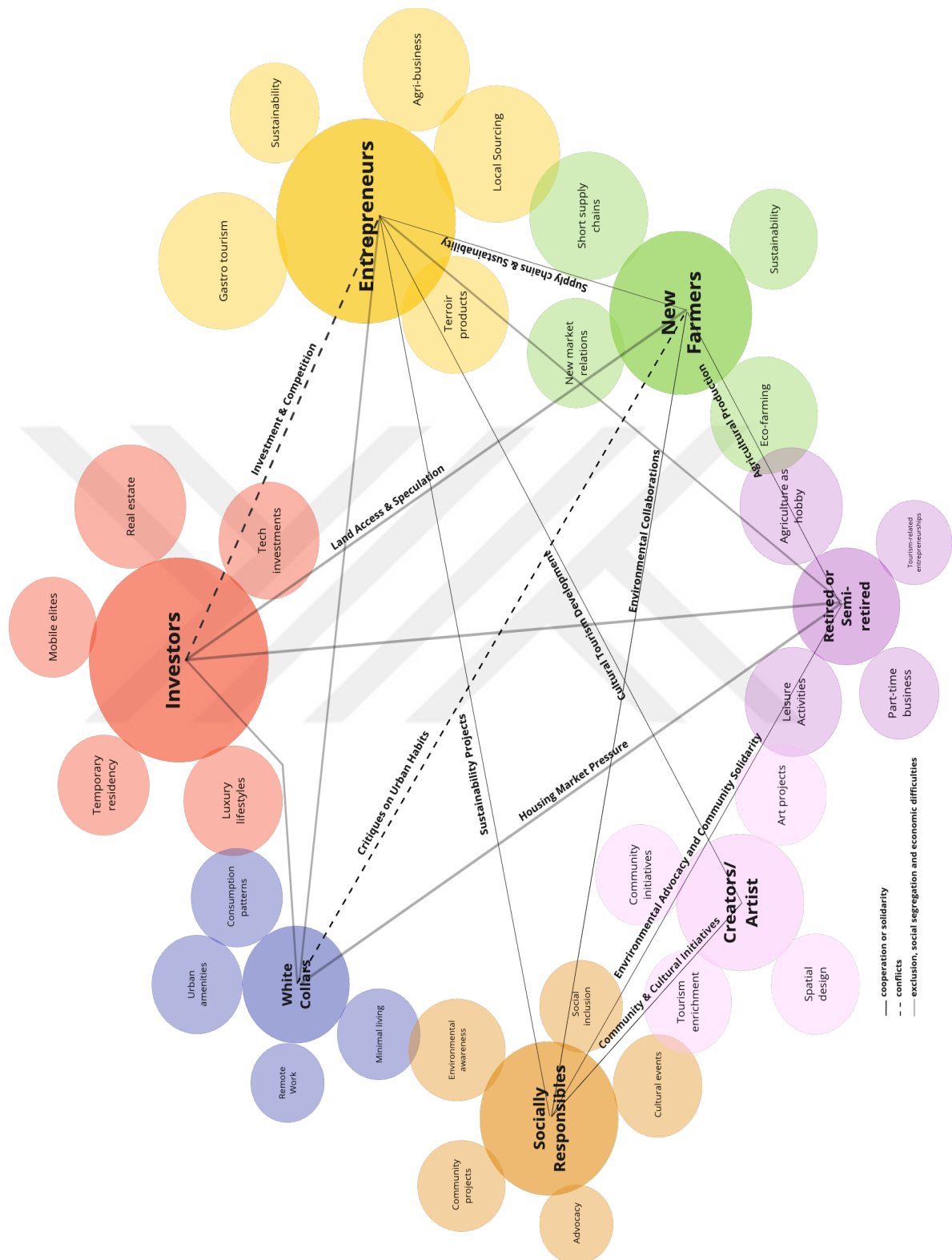
#### *Sub-Groups of Lifestyle Migrants in Urla: Practices, Planning, and Interactions*

The primary argument of the dissertation revolves around how lifestyle migrants negotiate Urla socially, culturally, or economically. As such, the most practical answer to the question “what is happening on the ground?” has been to uncover the core practices and planning efforts of these migrants. While the triggers and opportunities

mentioned above may exclude certain groups, they collectively point to a shared universe. However, the broad spectrum of the lifestyle migrant community constructs a heterogeneous field of practices, marked by varying intersections and conflicts within the same geographic context.

Therefore, based on the economic, social, and cultural capital, values, and lifestyles of the migrants, as well as the communities they either conflict with or collaborate with and their capacity to create shared value, seven sub-groups have been identified. The following diagram provides a summary of how actors across various typologies negotiate Urla within the broader universe of lifestyle migration. It highlights their core intra-group values, their use of space and place-specific resources, and the ways they transfer their social, cultural, and economic capital to Urla. Within this framework, three types of relationships have been identified: (1) cooperation or solidarity; (2) conflicts; (3) exclusion, social segregation and economic difficulties creation.

Within this categorization, investors and high-income lifestyle migrants are the group that triggers the formation of a rent-seeking economy, residential differentiation, and social exclusions in Urla. This group operates with an economically profit-driven tendency, and their presence in Urla is largely investment-oriented. Consequently, they establish temporary lives tied to the period in which they can maximize value rather than permanent living arrangements. They are the pioneers of introducing external capital to Urla and facilitating an urban economic growth logic rooted in the construction sector. The transformative influence of the investor and high-income group in Urla extends beyond real estate and land investments. It also encompasses investments spurred by the attraction of the technopark, class-based clustering, and their industrialization of local products through facilities they establish. Their luxury lifestyles and exclusive socialization tendencies within their own group further exacerbate residential differentiation. While the region's chef restaurants and vineyard houses cater not only to elite tourists but also to this group, the daily interactions with broader life in Urla are observed to be indirect. These interactions or encounters are mostly limited to the local individuals or other lifestyle migrants who enter and exit their living spaces for reasons such as employment, private lessons, or events.



**Figure 5.2 :** The relationships and interactions between sub-groups

New farmers, service sector workers, and retirees, despite being lifestyle migrants themselves, find it difficult to accept investors into the communities they have migrated to and blame them for driving up the cost of living in Urla. The most significant conflict in Urla arises between investors and new farmers due to the transfer of agricultural lands and their conversion into zones for development. Lifestyle migrants engaged in agricultural production within the entrepreneurial ecosystem, particularly those involved in wine production, strongly oppose the gated communities and construction boom fueled by investors. This opposition stems from the reliance of viticulture on soil and air quality, and the destruction caused by these developments threatens the *terroir* characteristics essential for production. In contrast, investors view tourism-oriented ventures as a component of economic growth, arguing that such initiatives bring attention to the region and increase the value of their investments. Consequently, the investor and high-income community functions as the most prominent and powerful link in the process that threatens Urla's identity as a producer region. This aligns with Lefebvre's critique of capitalism, eroding rural life's fabric.

Another group that shares similarities with the investor group in terms of high economic, cultural, and social capital is the entrepreneurial lifestyle migrants. Entrepreneurs with substantial economic capital project their investments into long-term ventures by engaging in land investment; thus, we identified that they have either reached a capacity to compete with other investors or hold an advantageous position due to their past investments. However, within the entrepreneurial group, there are also smaller business owners such as café, restaurant, and boutique hotel operators; they have limited financial resources due to operating on a small scale. This situation risks experiencing greater losses in the event of failure. This subgroup, which utilizes its social and cultural capital to develop the enterprises they have established, has created local solidarity mechanisms to counter external investors. Within the scope of the study, we observed that they pursued creative strategies such as integrating local cultural values and art with gastro-tourism to enrich the entrepreneurial ecosystem. We found that the support of gastro or cultural tourism by local governments and the Ministry of Culture and Tourism as a significant economic resource increases both the economic and administrative maneuverability of entrepreneurial lifestyle migrants. These communities, which are consulted in the formulation of local policies and hold

a say in decision-making, transform the rural identity through the entrepreneurial ecosystem they have built. Moreover, their role in shaping Urla's future and development positions them as the dominant group of lifestyle migrants in the rural context.

Entrepreneurs can establish collaborative networks with new farmers on issues such as sustainability and the creation of short supply chains. Additionally, collaborations with farmers who operate with an entrepreneurial capacity are aimed at integrating Urla into international networks (such as fairs and food-gastronomy communities) and strengthening market relations. However, these entrepreneurial efforts not only attract the targeted tourists to Urla but also draw high-capital groups like themselves and investors—often blamed for the commercialization of agricultural lands—thereby perpetuating the cycle of gentrification. Thus, although they engage with production and demonstrate sensitivities toward environmental conservation, their integration of the rural's productive identity with tourism and their establishment of consumption spaces carry the risk of triggering land speculation and raising the cost of living. This further exacerbates the economic disadvantages faced by relatively vulnerable groups, such as locals, middle-income individuals, and retirees.

Art projects and artists have been identified as the missing component of Urla's entrepreneurial ecosystem. The final step in entrepreneurs' cultural tourism-oriented planning and collaborations often involves artistic initiatives that would attract the attention of elite tourists. Collaborations between entrepreneurs and creative communities frequently focus on events, social responsibility projects, the revitalization of cultural heritage, and the projection of cultural, social, or environmental aspirations for Urla. These projects may include the establishment of museums, artistic residences, galleries, concerts, interior design, landscaping, or the construction of cultural and arts spaces. The activities of creative communities in Urla are not solely focused on the commercial gains of tourism. They are also fueled by lifestyle migrants' aesthetic demands and their interest in hobby-related activities, which sustain the presence of these communities in Urla. Since the economic capital of creative lifestyle migrants varies compared to investors and entrepreneurs, their lifestyles and expectations from rural life also differ within the group. The most marginal members of this group are observed to lead a bohemian, reclusive life in more

isolated rural settlements or rustic artist residences. These individuals may gain social acceptance by participating in communal labor or addressing local problems in villages, although they may also face exclusion by locals. The primary reasons that can lead to their exclusion include their potential to trigger increases in property values and rents, lifestyles deemed incompatible with traditional values (ranging from local environmental arrangements to social circles), and the perception among villagers that they are merely temporary residents. Taking on responsibilities for the community and using their creativity to plan inclusive projects or activities often fosters solidarity with socially conscious individuals.

We have observed that creative communities' capacity to build cultural attraction in terms of tourism enables them to establish shared spheres of action with entrepreneurs. In this way, we have demonstrated that the creative/artist group forms a significant pillar of the dominant migrants' practices and ideals related to Urla. However, it is essential to note that within this group, there are "back-to-the-landers" who have retreated to rural areas in response to the conservative cultural hegemony and restrictions on freedoms in cities. These individuals are often politically critical, nostalgic for former values, and focused on personal sanctuary. As Wilbur (2013) points out, such communities tend to avoid participation in social or organized actions, instead concentrating on self-sufficiency and living within alternative structures or communities.

Another subgroup reflecting the traces of the "back-to-the-land" movement in the literature is the new farmers. Unlike the nostalgic and solitary existence of artists, new farmers' initiatives against hegemony are framed by a harmonious relationship with nature and ecological farming activities aimed at self-sufficiency. To generate economic resources for their nature-focused lifestyles and sustain their production, they market their goods to their urbanite networks or other lifestyle migrants in the village seeking healthy nutrition. They keep their activities aligned with the principles of sustainability, often limiting their sales to local markets or short supply chains. Retirees, on the other hand, often keep their agricultural activities at a self-sustaining level, focusing on healthy living or creating additional income through short supply chains, which creates a point of intersection between retirees and new farmers.

The concept of “neo-peasantry” encompasses activities aimed at remaining autonomous, establishing an economy independent of the food regime, delivering products directly to consumers without intermediaries, and supporting community agriculture through collaborations with local farmers. These practices are focused on preserving and nurturing the agricultural ecosystem. New farmers are the most appreciated group among lifestyle migrants in Urla, as they actively protect the region’s natural characteristics and sustain its productive functions. Agricultural cooperatives and the inclusion of women farmers in production, along with the sharing of strategies to address agricultural challenges (e-commerce, niche products, innovative production techniques, etc.), further strengthen local solidarity networks and shape the local environment. However, new farming practices do not always align with the components of the “back-to-the-lander” movement, as they often manifest in forms where roles and farming functions diverge. As Marsden (1999:509) highlights, the fragmentation of farming roles is evident in Urla in the following forms: (1) specialized farming targeting distant markets, (2) small-scale rural entrepreneurs, (3) dominant entrepreneurial farmers who integrate farming with ventures in relatively diverse fields. While there are overlaps and transitions among these groups, we observed that communities expanding their capacity within the region’s agricultural economy are primarily entrepreneurs with strong ties to tourism. Although the essence of their work remains agricultural, and they sustain the productive capacity of the rural area, as frequently emphasized in the text, they bolster an environmentally conscious and locally integrated supply chain within their entrepreneurial ecosystems. Their organization of events and advocacy activities for environmental conservation, participation in demonstrations, and discourse on fostering cooperativism align them with socially conscious individuals and create inclusive support mechanisms for locals. However, due to their agricultural production activities, they encounter conflicts with locals under the following points:

- The domination created by the broad scope of their activities as entrepreneurs,
- Their role as trendsetters in production by transforming organic or good agricultural practices and sustainability principles into fundamental characteristics of the local agricultural market,
- Their privileged position in the hierarchy of knowledge compared to locals due to their access to new production knowledge,
- Their tendency to maintain urban bourgeois lifestyle practices,

The group most criticized by new farmers, however, consists of investors, who are accused of generating land speculation and restricting access to agricultural land. Additionally, new farmers express discontent with white-collar urbanites, investors, and tourism entrepreneurs for their urban consumption habits and for contributing to the erosion of nature and rural identity. And lastly, despite these conflicts, new farmers' concerns about Urla's future and their initiatives to protect nature, coupled with their maintenance of the rural's producer identity despite their entrepreneurial activities, have been observed to slow down Urla's material, symbolic, and urban transformation.

Middle-income white-collar workers are one of the groups most affected by economic uncertainty, insecurity narratives (especially concerning their children), and rising living costs in urban areas. These factors, combined with the trend of nature-centric living and remote working opportunities that gained popularity during the COVID-19 period, have driven this group toward rural areas as lifestyle migrants. They lack direct ties to agriculture or the entrepreneurial ecosystem, positioning them as observers and consumers in the region's economic transformation. However, by transferring their urban habits to rural areas, demanding consumption spaces, and indirectly driving the growth of the service sector, they act as indirect agents in the economic and spatial transformation of the countryside. Despite maintaining ties to the city, white-collar workers construct their lives in Urla around minimalism, downsizing, and healthy living. However, the arrival of higher-income groups such as investors, entrepreneurs, and wealthy artists exacerbates their economic vulnerabilities, making it increasingly difficult for them to maintain their previous standards of living (e.g., houses with gardens, a vibrant social life). As a result, middle-income lifestyle migrants are among the groups negatively impacted by gentrification. Moreover, the demand from white-collar workers for moderately priced housing—creating pressure on the housing market—has been observed to increase the housing costs for retirees and semi-retirees, shaping relationships in an exclusionary manner. Moreover, we observed that the luxury lifestyle habits and expectations for urban services of investors and high-capital entrepreneurs often overlap with the consumption patterns of white-collar workers, even though the latter have significantly less economic capital than the former. The clearest division within the middle-income



group is between earlier migrants and those who arrived more recently. Migrants who moved to Urla over five years ago often blame newcomers—fellow urban migrants—for transforming what was once a quaint and affordable town into an expensive, urban-like settlement. Additionally, economically affluent “back-to-the-landers” farmers, artists, and hipsters are criticized by this group for excessively romanticizing the rural as a space of aesthetic and spiritual experience, detaching it from its practical realities.

Retirees and semi-retirees represent one of the most diverse groups within lifestyle migrants in terms of economic, cultural, and social capital. This group includes individuals who spent their careers in Urla and retired locally, as well as high-income retirees who moved to the area seeking a healthier and more peaceful lifestyle, often participating in social planning activities alongside dominant migrants. Additionally, semi-retirees who continue to work flexibly as new farmers or entrepreneurs are also part of this group. Urla’s entrepreneurial ecosystem, which supports flexible work opportunities, and its agricultural production activities provide a lifestyle model that allows them to maintain financial security while transitioning smoothly into retirement. Their motivations for generating income can stem from utilizing their free time in the countryside and staying active, as well as the inability of their pensions to sustain the life they desire. In fact, it has been observed that some retirees, despite owning duplex houses purchased in earlier years, face financial difficulties and resort to renting out rooms to tourists. Similar to middle-income individuals and white-collar workers, some retirees also struggle to maintain their lives in Urla as it transforms into an expensive town. A shared characteristic with these groups is their consumption-oriented lifestyle, which drives the urbanization of the countryside by increasing the demand for the services they expect. However, retirees involved in agricultural production, cultivating self-sufficient fruit and vegetable gardens, or engaging with socially conscious communities focused on preserving the natural environment distinguish themselves as active migrants contributing to rural conservation efforts.

While many members of the socially conscious group possess high economic capital, this group also includes artists or retirees with less economic capital than entrepreneurs or investors, as well as back-to-the-landers whose agricultural income is modest. As a result, they navigate a complex balance between societal welfare, work-

related interests, and the qualities of the rural life they aspire to sustain. Entrepreneurial migrants, in particular, consider environmental sustainability as a fundamental social responsibility in both their professional endeavors and personal lifestyles. Recognizing that terroir tourism can only develop in alignment with sustainability and the preservation of the natural environment, and fearing the loss of the surroundings they wish to live and work in, they lean toward a social entrepreneurship model where profit and environmental/social benefits converge. Through associations, cooperatives, and collaborations with local governments—often involving retirees, artists, and middle-income groups with time to spare—they aim to preserve rural heritage, enhance social and environmental awareness, and steer Urla's transformation process toward their desired outcome: a sustainable destination. Consequently, the primary focus of the socially conscious group is Urla's future and its ongoing transformation. In addition to these practices, led by dominant lifestyle migrants, back-to-the-landers and artists also implement social responsibility projects aimed at reclaiming values lost in urban settings (political, cultural, and environmental) and transferring these values into their living spaces. Their environmental sensitivities translate into social missions such as preserving village-specific architecture, rural practices, and values; sustaining artistic production within a community resembling their former networks; and promoting regenerative agriculture practices. In summary, the socially conscious group contributes a "rural preservation" component to the production and consumption cycle of lifestyle migration—whether through work-focused, hybrid, or socially beneficial practices.

### *The Transfer of Capitals and Key Transformations*

In both the chapter discussing how lifestyle migrants' planning and management have transformed the seaside town and the chapter examining practices within the built and natural environment, the capitals framework developed by Gkartzios et al. (2022) has been utilized as a Bourdieusian guide for rural analysis. While the framework serves as a theoretical reference, Table 2 builds upon it to emphasize that the central driving force of Urla's transformation lies in the entrepreneurial ecosystem. Accordingly, the findings from these two chapters reveal that the transformation of economic, built, land-based, and socio-cultural capitals is strategically planned within the framework of the entrepreneurial ecosystem, guided by the interventions of

dominant lifestyle migrants. The convergence of site-specific resources and migrants' capitals outlines the trajectory of Urla's ongoing transformation. Rather than depicting a completed process, the transformation in Urla is characterized by various emerging forms—such as sustainable destinations, terroir tourism, eco-villages, and rural gentrification. In Urla's rural settlements, the dominant direction(s) within the “production-consumption-conservation” cycle will ultimately be determined by the balance between agricultural production, sustainability, and rural-specific localities (e.g., natural resources, local communities, land), versus forces such as rent-seeking, environmental degradation, over-commercialization, and socio-spatial inequalities.

Within the dynamics shaping Urla, the transfer of economic capital and the ways in which local resources are utilized reveal critical trends, as detailed in the descriptions of sub-groups. Notably, investors' focus on the exchange value rather than the use value of land has accelerated processes such as the rezoning of agricultural land, environmental degradation without benefiting the local population or creating value for the rural context, and the establishment of a rent-seeking economy. This aspect of transformation represents the most significant threat to Urla's rural identity. The rapid encroachment of agricultural land by gated communities, driven by the construction sector, is in direct negotiation with tourism and agricultural production activities, vying to determine Urla's future trajectory. Agricultural production constitutes the weakest link in this chain, both due to high costs and the exceedingly high exchange value of farmland. Nonetheless, the rise of agricultural entrepreneurship, coupled with sustainability-driven trends in terroir and gastro-tourism, has fostered resilience mechanisms. These include the creation of short supply chains, the integration of organic products that support regenerative agricultural practices into supermarket networks, and the dissemination of sustainability discourses, leading to the emergence of new, albeit limited, forms of organization centered around food. The general tendencies of entrepreneurial groups in transferring economic capital revolve around the development of tourism activities, enhancing Urla's destination value, and trading value-added products. By combining Urla's historical agricultural trade habitus, port of İzmir's international logistics infrastructure, the city's global networks, and export advantages, these groups have revitalized Urla's economic landscape. Thus, the entrepreneurial ecosystem emerging

in Urla is intrinsically linked to İzmir's commercial capacity, neoliberal urbanization, and broader capital flows.

In addition, the spaces and new socio-cultural activities established as the infrastructure of the tourism-oriented entrepreneurial ecosystem have driven gentrification, a process accompanied by the construction sector, which serves as a key component of economic growth in Türkiye. As an extension of the intervention of market mechanisms and capital accumulation into rural spaces, İzmir-based construction firms and contractors have joined the economic negotiation alongside tourism and agricultural activities. This involvement stems from the rising rent values driven by new ventures, investments, and the increased housing demand brought about by migration.

For the relatively less affluent groups of lifestyle migrants and local communities, Urla has transformed into a local economic environment that rivals urban centers. Although the primary focus of this research is not the local communities, the evaluations made by lifestyle migrants about these groups and observations of their interactions reveal that local communities either adapt to the economic restructuring process by reassessing their economic assets, continue their lives under challenging conditions, or are forced to leave Urla.

The transformation of the built environment and capital, grounded in the intersection of economic, cultural, and socio-cultural capitals, is shaped not only by the interventions of the construction sector but also through the collaborations between entrepreneurial lifestyle migrants and creative communities. In Urla, the transformation of the built environment by these groups involves the construction of tourism-oriented spaces such as restaurants and cafes, the development of transportation infrastructure, temporary spatial arrangements for events like festivals, and built initiatives aimed at benefiting the community. Entrepreneurial lifestyle migrants utilize their economic, cultural, and social capital to create an experiential

terroir. This involves developing their own spaces—such as hotels, restaurants, cafes, production facilities, and workshops—while also establishing aesthetic landscapes that connect these spaces. To construct a rural-specific aesthetic vision, they rely not only on their cultural capital but also seek support from architects to realize these designs.

The codes of the collaboratively constructed rural aesthetic are rooted in a rustic representation that draws references from European villages or wine routes in Europe. In this context, stone buildings serve as the core component of this rural aesthetic. Furthermore, the region's historical heritage and built environment contribute to this aesthetic, fostering the development of a restoration culture. While grounding rural life in a rustic aesthetic is not a new finding in the study of lifestyle migration, this

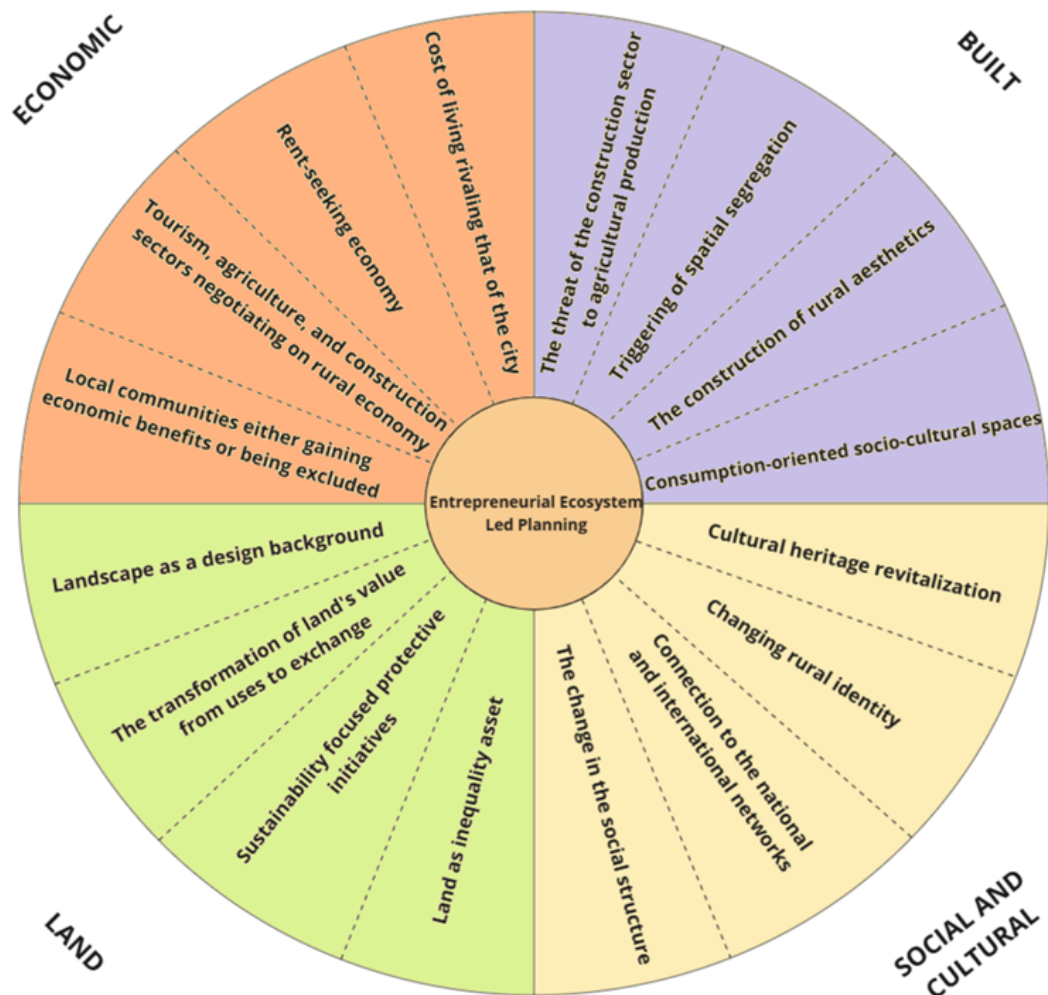


Figure 5.3 : Transformation of capitals in Urla

dissertation highlights a distinct trend related to the built environment: the significant development of landscape design as a rural-specific aesthetic market in Urla. Beyond

traditional small-scale businesses selling ornamental plants, the presence of a 2,000-decare arboretum in the area signals the potential for a broader market driven by the environmental design demands of lifestyle migrants and local tourism. It also indicates Urla's integration into this emerging market.

The reconstruction of the landscape as a design background is also an extension of the debates surrounding post-rurality and the disconnection of the countryside from its geographically functional identity. As rural representations and imaginaries become increasingly detached from their roots and replaced by new representations, the identity, fabric, daily life, and material spaces of the countryside are being restructured. One of the most significant reflections of this change in Urla's daily life is the rapid proliferation of gated communities, which has surged dramatically compared to the spread of secondary housing developments that began in the 2000s. These gated communities exacerbate residential differentiation, delineating the boundaries of social inequalities between newcomers and locals, and suffocate rural identity by imposing a "residence" character on the countryside. While villages still allow for a relatively heterogeneous population mix, central neighborhoods—where the market, art street, public squares, and institutions are located—are the areas where property exchanges between locals and migrants are most prevalent, making them the focal points of gentrification.

As the built environment and natural environment increasingly overlap due to dense construction, it becomes challenging to distinctly separate land-specific transformations. Therefore, the natural environment is discussed as an extension of the built environment. Land itself has transformed from a functional asset into a commodity whose value is determined by its proximity to the town center or the sea, its location relative to gated communities, landscaping, access to local services, infrastructure quality, road conditions, and the surrounding natural environment. As a result of the growing dispossession of local farmers and the concentration of land ownership in the hands of economically privileged classes, land has become the core asset driving economic and social inequalities in the countryside. Nevertheless, within the entrepreneurial ecosystem, there are efforts to establish buffer zones to protect land, foster activist movements, and implement sustainability projects tied to work.

These initiatives introduce future-oriented land preservation networks as counterpoints to the commodification of land and the reproduction of inequalities.

We observed that the primary domain where lifestyle migrants construct their utopias, aspirations, and representations for the countryside—and most closely integrate their future plans with their lifestyles—is focused on the transfer and transformation of social and cultural capitals. Place-specific resources form the authentic and experiential values of their new lives, communities, and the entrepreneurial ecosystem they aim to create. Consequently, the revitalization of rural heritage, both architecturally and culturally, lies at the core of migrants' rural ideals. Despite these revitalization efforts, the resulting rural identity is shaped by an investment- and tourism-oriented trajectory. This identity, therefore, aligns not with the original functions and fabric of the countryside, but rather with a new representation constructed by migrants. The contours of this new rural identity, concentrated in Urla's central settlements, are defined by a heterogeneous and increasingly unequal social structure, production relations connected to national and international networks and markets, an experiential geography of tourism that replaces traditional agricultural production, and land transformed into residential developments.

#### *Urla Narratives and Media as Instruments of Aura Creation*

Media serves as an indispensable component in the transformation of the countryside, functioning as a tool for lifestyle migrants to socially construct and reproduce the rural identity. The narratives about Urla, produced by lifestyle migrants as local e-magazines and social media content, act as an archive of what migrants do in Urla and how they envision rural life. Supporting the concept of “elective belonging” (Savage, 2010:116) as discussed in lifestyle migration literature, the aura expected from the place of migration is socially constructed through the transfer of tastes, habitus, and cultural capital. Thus, media operates as an instrument for creating this aura. Since symbolic values, as well as practical elements, are integral to the lifeworlds of lifestyle migrants, media facilitates the construction of the symbolic values of rural utopias. This aligns with Lefebvre's “spaces of representation” and Halfacree's later redefinition for the countryside, “everyday lives of the rural.”

Through media, representations of the rural are crafted in the desired direction and integrated into daily life, encounters, and the production-consumption cycle. To summarize the patterns in which these values are constructed, the key themes explored in websites and e-magazines include traces of cultural heritage's multi-layered identity (from the legacies of diverse ethnic communities historically residing in Urla) in daily life and architecture, the cultural richness offered by the presence of creative communities and artists, life integrated with natural resources, sustainability and waste management, gastronomic experiences and viticulture/winemaking culture within the scope of terroir tourism, and reflections of rural-style modern living in architecture, and practices related to community and solidarity culture. It should be noted that the aforementioned lifestyle magazine is not the sole source for creating this aura. Institutional entities operating in Urla, such as the wine route, art route, gastronomy route, and the hoteliers' association, along with their social media accounts and websites, also contribute to shaping the place's aura. Additionally, the social media content of venues along these routes—restaurants, galleries, wineries, and vineyard houses—serve as channels that reinforce the place's narrative.

The extent to which the aura is achieved and how the rural identity, constructed through representations and imaginaries, is reflected in the physical space, the use of place-specific resources, and the transfer of capitals—essentially in practices—cannot be considered independently of media and lifestyle migrants' place narratives. Media and place narratives possess a transformative power that reconstructs the rural identity and reshapes the social space through the following processes:

- Strengthening the entrepreneurial ecosystem: The transformative and developmental aspects of migrants' practices are emphasized, highlighting their economic success stories and their capacity to support local production. This frames the transfer of capital within a narrative that builds social networks and channels for relationships with local communities, thereby strengthening the entrepreneurial ecosystem.
- Economic development and ideal transformation: Place narratives, while rooted in local resources, have the potential to guide capital owners seeking new geographies for investment or entrepreneurship. Success stories, the expanding entrepreneurial ecosystem, and the enriched cultural environment frame an ideal



rural transformation for investment and entrepreneurship. Thus, rural areas are portrayed in narratives not just as escape destinations but also as regions with significant economic potential for lifestyle migrants.

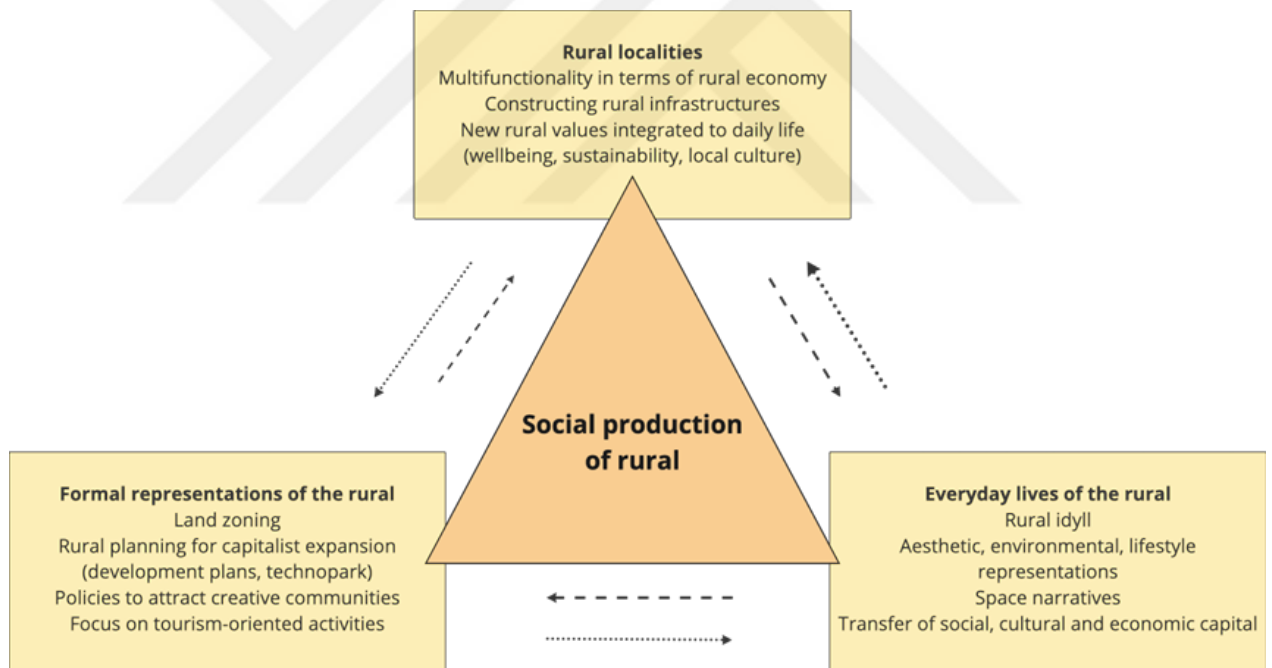
- The desired aura for the countryside: Narratives about the place, presented within the framework of “lifestyle media,” depict the countryside as a kind of paradise or a geography with an ideal aura for migration. Themes such as tranquility, the opportunity to live close to nature, healthy living, community activities, and a rich cultural environment reinforce the attractiveness of the countryside as a migration destination.
- “There’s a village nearby”: While natural living is part of the desired aura, urban habits, urbanized infrastructure, and practices remain fundamental to the daily lives of lifestyle migrants. Place narratives serve as reminders that rural values, traditions, access to healthy food sources, and the essence of village life are within accessible proximity and part of the migrated location.
- The terroir tourism image: With its award-winning wines on the wine route and its Michelin-starred gastronomy route, Urla appears to have made strides toward the terroir tourism image desired by entrepreneurial migrants. The most significant tools for integrating these migrants into international networks and attracting the desired tourists to the region are the representations of place narratives in the media. While social media content and local magazine *Urla* function as stones dropped into the water to create ripples of representation, interviews with international media amplify these ripples into broader waves.

*Peri-metropolitan production specific to Urla*

Up to this point, the subheadings of the dissertation have outlined the interconnected outcomes of lifestyle migration in Urla, explaining what has been unfolding as a result of this phenomenon. However, for the conclusion, returning to one of the dissertation’s theoretical frameworks—the social production of space—is essential to integrate these findings. While the capitals framework, rooted in Bourdieu’s terminology, provides a dominant narrative throughout the dissertation, the underlying and often invisible structure shaping the text is the production of space.

Drawing from Halfacree's (2006) adaptation of spatial production to the rural context, the practices and transformations observed in Urla can be interpreted through the lens of rural localities, encompassing the shifting dynamics of physical operations and production in the countryside as they transition toward consumption. The spatial practices reflected in daily life through migration in Urla are categorized as follows:

- Multifunctional economic framework: Strengthening the connections between production and entrepreneurship, blending tourism with sustainability, and the construction sector infiltrating this multifaceted economic structure.
- The adaptation of rural spaces to urbanite habits, reshaping physical infrastructures and spatial functions in alignment with these practices.
- Incorporating values such as well-being, sustainability, and locality into the daily lives of lifestyle migrants.



**Figure 5.4 :** Social production of rural through lifestyle migration

The interventions that shape the components of rural localities are based on the planning efforts of investors, local governments, and particularly dominant lifestyle migrants—essentially, the negotiations between the formal representations of the rural and the everyday lives of the rural. Zoning plans and the rapid transformation of agricultural land into construction sites rely on complex relationships and regulations spanning from local to central governance. The commodification of the rural through

rent and speculative real estate markets represents the rule-setting aspects of official mechanisms linked to migration. Since rural development and the creation of work and living spaces for creative communities are interdependent processes, these dynamics form the foundation for collaborations between local governments and migrants as part of governance programs. The rural, with its recreational qualities, strategic location, and viticulture heritage offering tourism potential, does not operate solely in favor of lifestyle migrants. It is also incorporated into local politics and the destination-creation agenda of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism as a key component of rural development policies. As a result, a multi-layered policy-making process—ranging from international tourism operations and local festivals to infrastructure projects like highways and initiatives such as gastronomy diplomacy—actively intervenes in the production of space.

Finally, the spatial imaginaries of lifestyle migrants and the grounds on which they negotiate spatial practices are shaped through the processes outlined in the conclusion—capital transfers, place narratives, and their desires for the rural, along with the construction of environmental, aesthetic, or lifestyle-related values, ultimately reflecting their tastes. These processes actively support the formal representation of the rural. However, within this framework, it is crucial to acknowledge the presence of communities such as back-to-the-landers, social responsables, nature activists, and artists, who, despite lacking the same level of maneuverability as dominant migrants, resist the destructive elements of tourism and new lifestyle practices that threaten the rural fabric. These groups, through their resistance, shape spatial practices in opposition to the dominant narratives and contribute to an alternative understanding of rural space.

All these interventions, initiatives, and alternative struggles concerning the identity of the rural offer traces of an ongoing transformation process. They align with Holmes' (2006) argument that rural areas are no longer solely associated with production but also incorporate goals of consumption and environmental conservation, giving rise to new multifunctional rural forms. In line with Holmes' proposition, examining the balance of production, consumption, and conservation dynamics to understand this complex multifunctionality reveals parallels with the peri-metropolitan occupance category—a concept that describes the hybridization of rural and urban

spaces—within the context of Urla’s transformation process. These characteristics can be summarized as follows (Holmes, 2006:148):

- Proximity to fast access to the metropolis
- Heterogenization of the social structure and conflicts as a result of rapid change processes
- Multifunctional use of rural areas related to activities such as agricultural production or urban consumption
- A constantly fluctuating land market driven by capital gain pursuits stemming from land use changes
- Utilization of rural resources (agricultural production and recreational/lifestyle activities) directly tied to metropolitan demand and increasing pressure on environmental resources

The peri-metropolitan mode emerged in Australia within a unique cultural context shaped by a combination of historical conditions, including urban sprawl, technological advancements, and shifts toward lifestyle changes driven by rising incomes. In contrast, the framework for rural transformation in England—a frequent subject of shared discussions within rural studies and lifestyle migration literature—centers on a departure from production-oriented agricultural activities, the socio-political voids created by macro-scale structural changes in the agricultural regime, and the introduction of consumption-oriented goods and experiences into rural areas (Halfacree, 2006b; Richards & Wilson, 2007; Gosnell & Abrams, 2011; Ilbery & Bowler, 2014). While these approaches offer insight into similar characteristics of transformation and form a framework for the formulas that local governments might apply to rural development imaginaries, the unique qualities and dynamics of Urla’s rural transformation, shaped by mobility, have emerged in this study as follows:

- The indirect continuation of agriculture’s relevance due to the dependency of terroir tourism and gastronomy on agricultural production
- The persistence of older farmers’ adherence to traditional lifestyles and production methods, despite the pressures of the speculative real estate market

- While urban consumption patterns concentrate in central areas, villages maintain rural-related living habits, social relationships, and production-consumption practices
- The presence of diverse practices within the same lifestyle migration movement, ranging from environmental activism to industrial agriculture, or from modest retirement living to luxurious lifestyles
- The transformation of rural space in different directions by various lifestyle groups based on their capital capacities and divergent rural ideals
- The emergence of power hierarchies in the transformation process and the differentiation of appearances among Urla's settlements and regions
- The potential of tourism initiatives in Urla being strengthened by İzmir's legacy as a commercial port city, along with the strong global networks established by the Metropolitan Municipality and local investors
- In the face of rising political tension and conservative cultural hegemony in Turkey, Urla, a district of Izmir and an Aegean town, represents an imagined rural space characterized by secularism and a relaxed, liberated social atmosphere.
- The failure of the formula, seen in the global market, of creating areas such as technoparks to attract the creative class to the countryside to work effectively in Urla
- The dominance of the construction sector as a key source of economic growth in Türkiye, fostering a rent-based rural economy that competes with the service-sector-focused rural growth highlighted in international literature
- The relaxation of regulations on converting agricultural and forested lands into construction areas or privatizing public lands in Türkiye, with legal or planning gaps favoring interest groups, particularly in the allocation of land for tourism purposes

As a location near the metropolis where agriculture, consumption, and conservation activities intersect, Urla embodies the region-specific conditions of the peri-metropolitan mode through its threefold identity of rural, hybrid, and city zones. As depicted in the table below, Urla remains a district with distinct rural characteristics: persistent infrastructural challenges, the continued agricultural production and cultural traditions of rural communities, and agricultural and forested

lands spanning a wider area than residential zones. At the same time, the consumer-oriented spaces surrounding central areas like the Art Street, the emergence of new economic and social zones reflecting urban habits, and luxury residential zones filled by construction companies (e.g., Kuşçular, Kekliktepe, and Çeşmealtı) showcase the dual extremes of peri-metropolitanization. The current microcosm of Urla operates as a negotiative structure attempting to balance adaptation, transformation, and resistance. Although resistance mechanisms established by socially responsible lifestyle migrants, cooperatives, and local communities striving to resist change partially slow down the transformation process, the lifestyle migration movement toward coastal towns in Türkiye —particularly from the Northern Aegean to the Southern Aegean—continues to accelerate under the pressures of global capital, speculative land purchases, and environmental strains.

This lifestyle migration toward coastal towns highlights a broader societal issue that holistically threatens the economic, environmental, and social balances of rural areas in Türkiye. The loss of the countryside's role in food supply chains, the collapse of the interdependent rural-urban ecosystem, the dispossession of local populations, and the emergence of new power hierarchies underline the urgent need to reassess

**Table 5.1 : Peri-metropolitan mode specific to Urla**

| Rural                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Hybrid Qualities                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | City                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Challenges specific to the countryside, such as the fly problem, the smell of dung, and infrastructure issues</li> <li>Including neighborhoods referred to as villages and rural local communities</li> <li>Low population density compared to central districts</li> <li>Large, scattered settlements with low-rise housing</li> <li>Agriculture as the main economic resource in village settlements</li> <li>Associating with the slowness typical of Aegean towns</li> <li>Natural resources, forested areas, agricultural lands, green areas are larger than residential areas</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gated communities in prestige countryside</li> <li>Combining rural tranquility with urban comfort with constructions such as luxury villas, ecological living spaces and boutique hotels surrounded by nature</li> <li>Extending infrastructure, road improvements, transportation networks and public services</li> <li>Entrepreneurship and tourism oriented policies along with local development goals</li> <li>Farmers, entrepreneurs, artists or white-collar employees are not exempt from the national and international market conditions</li> <li>Integration of vineyards and olive oil production with gastronomy tourism and adaptation of rural economy to urban consumption habits</li> <li>Coexistence of traditional rural festivals and city-specific modern events (art festivals, concerts, gastronomy events)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>"45 minutes to airport"</li> <li>Close to city-related facilities and spaces, such as shopping malls, cultural venues, chain supermarkets, etc.</li> <li>Consumption spaces (restaurants, cafés, stores, boutique hotels etc.)</li> <li>The rise in the urban-origin population and diversifying demographic qualities</li> <li>Adoption of urban lifestyles</li> <li>Izmir-Çeşme Highway, proximity to the city and the development of the transportation network</li> <li>New economic and social zones for the expanding periphery of the city (e.g. tourism, service sector, gastronomy and small-scale industry)</li> <li>The increasing number of housing projects, gated communities, apartment buildings, and the construction of modern residences</li> <li>The presence of research institutions, such as university and technology park</li> </ul> |

Türkiye's rurality, rural living conditions, agricultural policies, local and central planning for rural areas, and the livability capacities of cities.

### **5.3.1. Recommendations for future research**

This dissertation aims to understand what is unfolding in Urla through the lens of lifestyle migrants. However, due to research limitations, it narrows the broader scope of a seaside town's dynamics to focus exclusively on lifestyle migrants. As a result, it falls short of examining how local communities experience transformation with the arrival of migrants, as well as the fundamental conflicts or collaborations between these groups. Future research should consider evaluating lifestyle migration from the perspective of local communities, offering a more comprehensive analysis of the tangible progression of gentrification, and conducting comparative studies of transformations in village settlements versus central areas. Such approaches would enable a more comprehensive framework for understanding the reproduction of rural spaces. Despite these limitations, this dissertation provides a solid foundation for new discussions by uncovering the primary motivations of lifestyle migrants, the trajectories observed in a Turkish Aegean town, and the ideal living habitats they aspire to construct.

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## APPENDIX

### Appendix A: Survey Questionnaire

First of all, we sincerely thank you for your interest in this survey. This survey is part of doctoral dissertation research at Galatasaray University, focusing on the experiences of people who have migrated to Urla from cities and the ways they rebuild their lives there. The survey will take approximately 25–30 minutes, and you will only be asked about your reasons for choosing Urla, your business activities or hobbies, and your media usage.

Your participation is entirely voluntary. Please note that the survey does not include any questions about your identity or the institutions you may be affiliated with. We assure you that your responses will remain confidential and will only be accessible to the researchers involved in this study. The data will be processed and used solely for scientific publications.

Thank you again for your valuable time.

☐ I hereby confirm that I have read the information above and I attend the survey voluntarily in order to contribute the study.

1. Please indicate your gender.

☐ Female      ☐ Male      ☐ Nonbinary

2. Please select the range that your age falls into.

☐ 18-24      ☐ 25-34      ☐ 35-49      ☐ 50-64      ☐ 65 or older

3. Please select the option that represents the highest educational level you have attained.

☐ Elementary School  
☐ High School  
☐ Bachelor Degree  
☐ Master Degree  
☐ PhD Degree

4. Please indicate the occupation of your parents.

|        |       |
|--------|-------|
| Mother | ..... |
| Father | ..... |

5. Please select your marital status.

☐ Single ☐ Married

6. Where did your childhood pass between the options sorted below?

- ☐ In a Village or Countryside  
☐ In a City, in a flat  
☐ In a City, at a garden house  
☐ In a Seaside Town

7. How long has it been since you migrated to Urla?

- ☐ < 1 year ☐ 1-3 years ☐ 3-5 years ☐ 5-7 years ☐ 7-10 years  
☐ >10 years

8. Please indicate where you have lived before arriving Urla.

.....

9. From which of the following source(s) did you get information about Urla before migration?

- ☐ I talked with local people.  
☐ I read books about Urla.  
☐ I watched documentaries about Urla.  
☐ I watched series or movies shot in Urla.  
☐ I watched the video content of those who migrated to Urla.  
☐ I followed social media content about Urla.  
☐ Other: .....

10. Which neighborhood/district of Urla did you choose to live in?

- ☐ Demircili, Kuşçular, Bademler, Ovacık, Yagcılar (South Villages)  
☐ Özbek, Güvendik (North Villages)  
☐ Barbaros, Uzunkuyu  
☐ İçmeler, Torasan, Gülbahçe  
☐ Kalabak, around Urla dock  
☐ Zeytinalan and around

**11.** How did you find the house that you live in Urla?

- ☐ Real Estate Agent  
☐ Websites  
☐ A friend oriented me to a landlord  
☐ Social Media  
☐ Other: .....

**12.** Which aspect(s) was/were important when you chose your present house?  
 (You may choose as many as applicable)

- ☐ Price ☐ Near workplace ☐ Property for rent  
☐ Property for sale  
☐ Property size ☐ Antique house ☐ Recently built house  
☐ Property with garden  
☐ Convenience (e.g near shopping centers, hospitals, etc.)  
☐ Other: .....

**13.** Do you have any other house outside Urla?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

**14.** Please rate the groups you feel belong to in Urla among the ones listed below.  
 (You may consider that 5 represents the group you feel most belong to while  
 0 represents the group you do not feel belong to.)

|                                                                        | 0                     | 1                     | 2                     | 3                     | 4                     | 5                     |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Creators (artist writer, craftsman/craftswoman, director, etc.)        | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Entrepreneurs (starts business by a start-up, restaurant, hotel, etc.) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Investors (land, house, agriculture, etc.)                             | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Naturalists (athlete, activist, organic agricultural production, etc.) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

**15.** Please indicate if there is a group that you feel belonged to, other than mentioned above

.....

**16.** Did you quit your previous job because of migration to Urla?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

- 17.** If your answer is “Yes” for the preceding question, please indicate your previous job before moving to Urla.

.....

- 18.** In your previous job, which of the following options best describes your monthly household income?

- ☐ Under 15,000 TL   ☐ 15,000-24,000 TL   ☐ 25,000-34,000 TL  
☐ 35,000 TL and more

- 19.** In Urla, which of the following business lines are you dealing with?

- ☐ Chef  
☐ Cafe / Restaurant / Hotel Management  
☐ Waiter / Waitress  
☐ Academician  
☐ Art / Atelier / Design  
☐ Musician  
☐ Sports / Yoga Studio Owner  
☐ Architect  
☐ Food Production  
☐ Winery  
☐ Information Technology  
☐ Home Office White-collar  
☐ Other Business in City Center  
☐ Officer  
☐ Agriculture  
☐ Other: .....

- 20.** How many hours of your daily life do you devote to work?

- ☐ Less than 5   ☐ 5-8   ☐ 8-10   ☐ 10-12   ☐ 12-15   ☐ more than 15

- 21.** Is this duration shorter than the time you spend in your previous job before migration?

- ☐ Yes   ☐ No

- 22.** Please select one of the following options that best fits your business scope/scale in Urla?

- ☐ Only in Urla
- ☐ In Urla and Izmir
- ☐ In Izmir
- ☐ National Scope
- ☐ International Scope

**23.** Which opportunity/opportunities do you believe that Urla offers for your career? (You may tick more than one option.)

- ☐ Sustainability of the business network
- ☐ Tourism potential
- ☐ Investment opportunities
- ☐ Increase of the creative communities' mobility to the region
- ☐ Technopark support
- ☐ Municipality's support for entrepreneurs
- ☐ Other: .....

**24.** Please rate the difficulties you experienced in Urla among the options below. (You may select 5 for the highest difficulty and 1 for the lowest.)

|                                                | 1                     | 2                     | 3                     | 4                     | 5                     |
|------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Work                                           | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Accommodation / Housing                        | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Integration to the daily life                  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Rural life standards / Infrastructure problems | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Children education                             | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Local policies                                 | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

**25.** Please rate your strategies for dealing with the uncertainties in your new life search. (You may select 5 for the one you most frequently use and 1 for the one you use rarely.)

|                                                          | 1                     | 2                     | 3                     | 4                     | 5                     |
|----------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| I ask to local people.                                   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I ask to the people who have migrated to Urla before.    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I apply to the relevant departments of the municipality. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

|                                                                                                                   |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| I apply to central government units (prefecture, governorship, government offices).                               | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I make alternative plans.                                                                                         | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I try to keep the conditions ready in order to return back to my previous life if uncertainties are not resolved. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

- 26.** Please rate the below risks that a person starts to do a business in Urla might face, according to their importance from 1 to 5 (You may select 1 for the most important option and 5 for the least important one)

|                                            | 1                     | 2                     | 3                     | 4                     | 5                     |
|--------------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Financial Damage                           | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Returning to previous work                 | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Failure in career                          | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Being disappointed                         | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Inability to adapt to local life / demands | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

- 27.** Please rate your strategies for dealing with the uncertainties in your new career (You may select 5 for the one you most frequently use and 1 for the one you use rarely.)

|                                                                                                          | 1                     | 2                     | 3                     | 4                     | 5                     |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| I had training to improve my competencies.                                                               | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I did not spend all my financial savings on the new business.                                            | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I did not sell my house or car.                                                                          | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I kept my previous business network.                                                                     | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I got ideas/support from those who invested in the same business / started the same career.              | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I benefited from sectoral supports (real estate, fair organization etc.) and new loan packages announced | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

|                                                        |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |
|--------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| by the government in April and May 2022.               |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |
| I became a member of trade unions and associations.    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I followed the new consumption trends on social media. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

**28.** Please select the investment(s) you did in Urla from the ones listed below.

- ☐ I bought a house  
☐ I took over a business.  
☐ I started a new business.  
☐ I bought a land.  
☐ I started farming on the land I bought.  
☐ I bought a vehicle.  
☐ Other: .....

**29.** Have you received any government or municipality-supported grants for your investments?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

**30.** If your answer is “Yes” for the preceding question, please indicate which grants you received.

.....

**31.** Did you migrate to Urla by yourself or with your family or partner?

- ☐ By myself  
☐ With my wife  
☐ With my wife and child(ren)  
☐ With my parents  
☐ With my partner

**32.** Please rate your reasons for choosing Urla among the options listed below, according to their importance. (You may select 5 for the most important reason and 1 for the least important one)

|                                         | 1                     | 2                     | 3                     | 4                     | 5                     |
|-----------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Climate and natural environment         | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Food (farm) and water                   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Child growing and education environment | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Leisure                                 | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |



|                                                                     |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Reliable support for employment, farming or starting a new business | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Easy access to İzmir center.                                        | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Security                                                            | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Ability to live with my family / friends in the same environment    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Suitability of İzmir to my lifestyle in terms of politics.          | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

- 33.** Please rate the groups below according to how much time you spend your daily life in Urla. (5 for the most time spent and 1 for the least ones.)

|                        | 1                     | 2                     | 3                     | 4                     | 5                     |
|------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| My colleagues          | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| My family              | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Other migrants like me | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Local people           | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

- 34.** Please select where you spend your holidays from the one(s) below.

- ☐ Abroad  
☐ In summer towns of Turkey  
☐ In other alternative tourism towns  
☐ In Urla  
☐ In our summer house outside of Urla  
☐ In hometown  
☐ In the city where I lived before  
☐ Other: .....

- 35.** Please select the activity/activities you do in your leisure time in Urla.

- ☐ Trekking  
☐ Outdoor activities with family/children  
☐ Meeting friends at a restaurant or a cafe  
☐ Art workshops  
☐ Sport activities such as yoga, football, basketball, beach volley, cycling, etc.  
☐ Gardening  
☐ Other: .....



☐ National newspapers      ☐ Web sites

**42.** How often do you follow the news about Urla?

☐ Once in a week      ☐ Twice in a week      ☐ 3 or more times in a week  
☐ Everyday

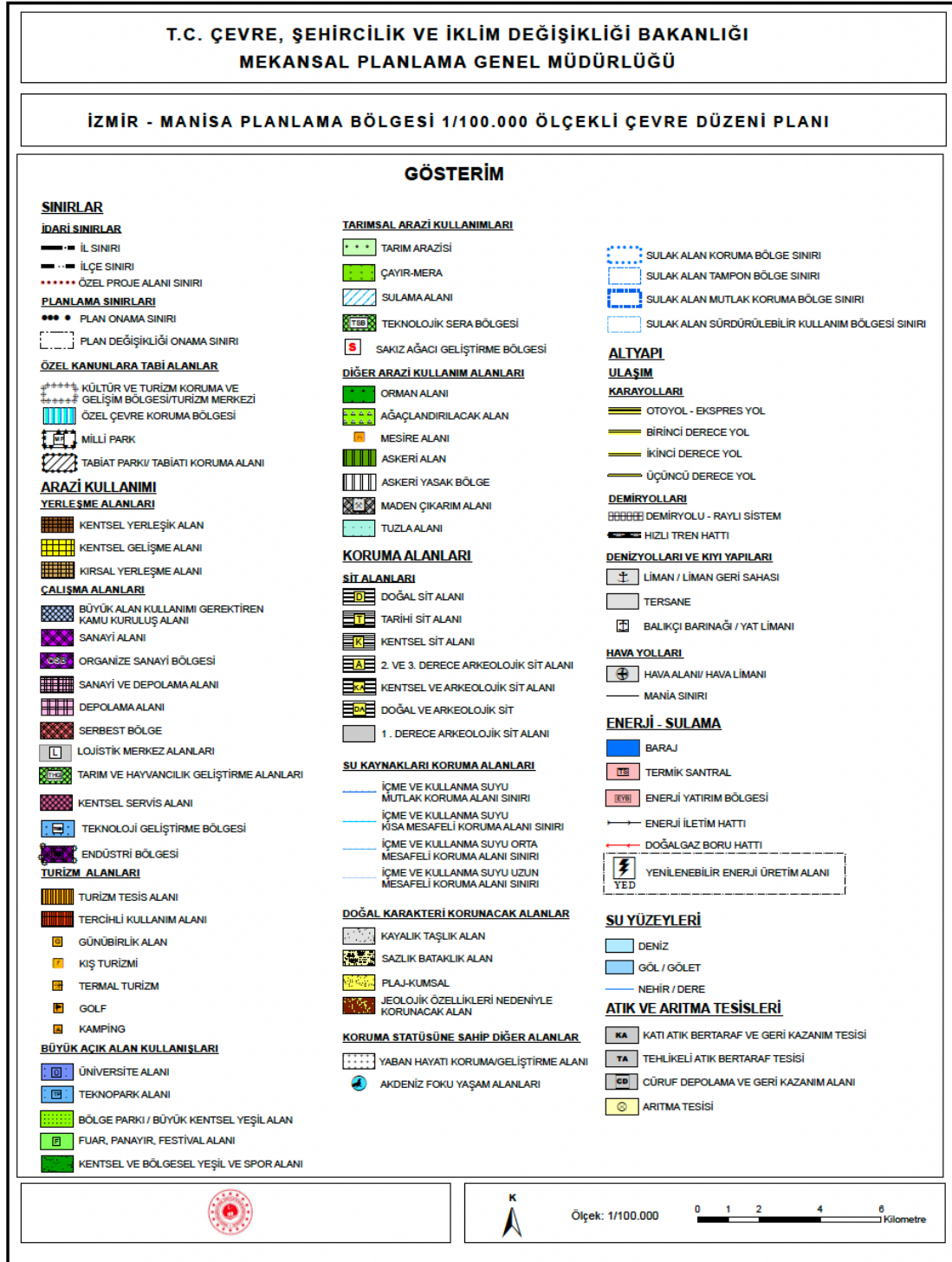
**43.** Please rate the following topics according to your level of interest. (You may score 5 if you are most interest and 1 for least interested)

|                                              | 1                     | 2                     | 3                     | 4                     | 5                     |
|----------------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Updates about the appointment of the trustee | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Zoning laws                                  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| New projects                                 | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Tourism related contents                     | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Local economy                                | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| News about the municipality                  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

**44.** Please rank the titles below from 1 to 5 according to the frequency of the content you share on social media. (You may select 1 for the one you share most frequently about and 5 for the least frequent one.)

|                                                             | 1                     | 2                     | 3                     | 4                     | 5                     |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Content related to my work                                  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Places I went to in Urla (cafes, restaurants, beaches etc.) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| My daily life                                               | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Trips                                                       | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Hobbies                                                     | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

## Appendix B: İzmir - Manisa Planning Region 1/100,000 Scale Environmental Plan – Legend



**TEZ ONAY SAYFASI**

Üniversite : T.C. GALATASARAY ÜNİVERSİTESİ  
Enstitü : SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ  
Hazırlayanın Adı Soyadı : Betül Aydoğan  
Tez Başlığı : Negotiated Seaside Town Through Lifestyle  
Migration: New Life Practices, Reproduction of Space and Place Narratives in Urla  
Savunma Tarihi : 14 /01/2025  
Danışman : Prof. Dr. H. Serhat Güney

**JÜRİ ÜYELERİ:**

Unvan, Ad-SOYADI

İmza

Prof. Dr. H. Serhat Güney

Doç. Dr. Ece Vitrinel

Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Murad Özdemir

Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Taylan Acar

Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Candan Türkkkan

Prof. Dr. Ulun AKTURAN  
Enstitü Müdürü