

## REVIEW / DERLEME

# Who Moves to the Countryside, and Why? A Systematic Review of Urban-to-rural Migration

## *Kırsal Alanlara Kim Neden Göç Ediyor? Kentten Kıra Göç Üzerine Sistemik bir İnceleme*

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### ABSTRACT

As urban areas face issues such as overcrowding and high living costs, rural destinations are attracting diverse migrant groups seeking alternative lifestyles and improved quality of life. This study aims to provide a comprehensive overview of who these migrants are and what drives their decisions to relocate. Following PRISMA guidelines, we analysed 337 peer-reviewed articles from Scopus and Web of Science databases up to 2024. Our findings reveal that urban-to-rural migrants are a heterogeneous group spanning various ages, educational backgrounds, and socioeconomic statuses. Motivations for migration are multifaceted, encompassing economic factors like lower living costs and entrepreneurial opportunities, as well as non-economic drivers such as community connection and proximity to nature. The COVID-19 pandemic has further influenced these trends, accelerating remote work possibilities and health-related concerns. This review highlights the complexity of urban-to-rural migration, emphasizing its potential impacts on rural community dynamics, economic development, and policy-making.

**Keywords:** Characteristics of migrants; motivations of migrants; PRISMA method; systematic literature review; urban-to-rural migration.

### ÖZ

Kentsel alanlar kalabalıklaşma ve yüksek yaşam maliyetleri gibi sorunlarla karşı karşıya kalırken, kırsal alanlar alternatif yaşam tarzı ve iyileştirilmiş yaşam kalitesi arayan farklı göçmen gruplarını çekmektedir. Bu çalışma, bu göçmenlerin kim olduklarına ve taşınma kararlarını nelerin etkilediğine dair kapsamlı bir genel bakış sunmayı amaçlamaktadır. PRISMA yönergelerini takip ederek, 2024 yılına kadar Scopus ve Web of Science veri tabanlarında yayınlanmış 337 makale analiz edilmiştir. Bulgular, kentten kıra göç edenlerin yaş, eğitim geçmişi ve sosyoekonomik statü açısından heterojen bir grup olduğunu ortaya koymaktadır. Göç motivasyonları çok yönlüdür; düşük yaşam maliyetleri ve girişimcilik fırsatları gibi ekonomik faktörlerin yanı sıra, bir topluluğa ait olma ve doğayla iç içe olma gibi ekonomik olmayan itici güçleri de kapsamaktadır. COVID-19 pandemisi, uzaktan çalışma olanaklarını ve sağlıkla ilgili endişeleri hızlandırarak bu eğilimleri güçlendirmiştir. Bu inceleme, kentten kıra göçün karmaşıklığını vurgulayarak, kırsal topluluk dinamikleri, ekonomik kalkınma ve politika oluşturma üzerindeki potansiyel etkilerini öne çıkarmaktadır.

**Anahtar sözcükler:** Kentli göçmenler; göçmenlerin motivasyonları; PRISMA metodu; sistemik literatür taraması; kentten kıra göç.

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## 1. Introduction

The traditional paradigm of rural-to-urban migration has been increasingly challenged by a growing trend of population movement from urban centers to rural areas. As cities grapple with issues such as overcrowding, high living costs, and environmental degradation, rural areas are experiencing renewed interest as destinations for those seeking alternative lifestyles, economic opportunities, and improved quality of life (Benson, 2011; Argent et al., 2013; Friedman, 2023).

The complexities of urban-to-rural migration extend beyond simple demographic shifts, encompassing a wide range of social, economic, and environmental factors that influence both the decision to migrate and the subsequent experiences of migrants in their new rural settings. Understanding these complexities is important for developing effective policies and strategies to manage the impacts of this migration trend on both urban and rural communities (Hoggart & Buller, 1995; Johnson, 1991; Mendham & Curtis, 2010).

Building upon this understanding, this review aims to synthesize current research on urban-to-rural migration, with a specific focus on two key aspects: the characteristics of migrants and their motivations for relocating. By examining these elements, we seek to provide a comprehensive overview of who these migrants are and what drives their decisions to leave urban environments for rural destinations.

## 2. Methodology

This systematic literature review followed the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines to ensure a comprehensive and transparent review process (Moher et al., 2009). The literature search was performed using two primary academic databases, Scopus and Web of Science, and was limited to publications up to the end of 2023. These databases were chosen for their comprehensive coverage of peer-reviewed research across multiple disciplines relevant to urban-to-rural migration studies. The search terms included the following combinations and variations of keywords related to urban-to-rural migration: “urban-to-rural migration,” “lifestyle migration,” “return migration,” “amenity migration,” “neo-peasantry,” “new-rurality,” “retirement migration,” and “rural gentrification” in the studies conducted before 2024.

Analysis of 337 studies revealed distinct regional patterns for each migration type. **Return Migration;** Predominantly in Asia (45), especially China. This type involves individuals moving back to rural origins, often driven by family ties and desire to reconnect with roots (Black, 1993; Xu, 2010; Demurger & Xu, 2011; Chunyu et al., 2013). **Retirement Migration;** Concentrated in Europe (16) and North America (8). It involves older adults choosing rural settings for post-work years, seek-

ing a slower pace of life and lower costs (Glasgow, 1995; Bennett, 1996; Von Reichert et al., 2011; Stockdale, 2017; Egidi et al., 2020). **Amenity Migration;** Most common in the Americas (42), Europe (24), and Oceania (15). This type is based on natural or cultural amenities in rural destinations, often seeking higher quality of life (Argent et al., 2013; Ikutegbe et al., 2015; Matarrita-Cascante, 2017). **Lifestyle Migration;** Primarily studied in Europe (30). It refers to movement seeking to escape urban stresses for a more fulfilling rural life (Benson, 2011, 2012, 2013; Eimermann, 2015). **New-Peasantry;** Mainly focused in Europe (23). This involves urban individuals taking up small-scale farming or traditional rural livelihoods (Milone & Ventura, 2019; Verinis, 2011). **Rural Gentrification;** Widely studied across regions. It occurs when affluent urban dwellers move to rural areas, potentially changing local dynamics (Phillips, 1993; Smith & Higley, 2012; Friedberger, 1996).

From an initial 1,432 records, 337 were ultimately selected for review through a systematic screening process (Fig. 1). After removing duplicates and non-English/Turkish publications, 815 full-text articles were assessed for eligibility. The final selection excluded book chapters, non-research papers, and studies not primarily focused on urban-to-rural migration, leaving 337 relevant records for data extraction and analysis.

In the following sections, we present our findings from the systematic review on the characteristics of migrants and their motivations for moving to rural areas.

## 3. Characteristics of Migrants

Understanding the characteristics of migrants is important for comprehending the dynamics and implications of this demographic shift. Research on urban-to-rural migrants has revealed a diverse range of characteristics, reflecting the complexity and heterogeneity of this population. These characteristics can be broadly categorized into demographic factors and socio-economic status.

**Demographic Characteristics:** The age distribution of urban-to-rural migrants spans a wide range, challenging the notion that this phenomenon is limited to a single life stage. While research indicates a prevalence of older individuals, particularly retirees, moving to rural areas seeking a peaceful retirement and better quality of life (Glasgow, 1995; Marjavaara & Lundholm, 2016; Lundholm, 2012; Stockdale, 2016), evidence also highlights a significant proportion of younger migrants, including those in their 20s, and 30s (Stockdale & Catney, 2014; Bijker et al., 2012; Eimermann, 2015; Stockdale, 2016). These younger migrants are often motivated by career opportunities, lifestyle preferences, and family considerations (Stockdale & Catney, 2014; Bijker et al., 2012; Eimermann, 2015). This diversity in age distribution suggests that urban-to-rural migration is not limited to a single life stage but occurs across the life course.

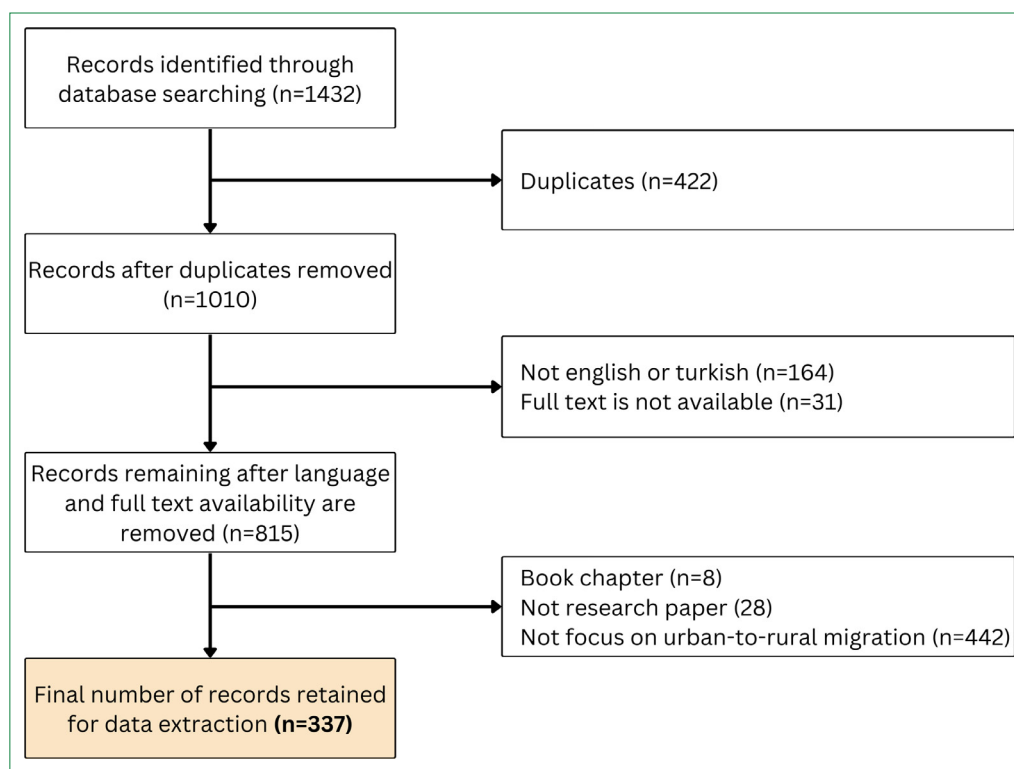


Figure 1. Flow diagram of literature review.

Family structures among migrants vary considerably, including couples without children, families with young children, and single-person households (Eimermann, 2015; Bijker et al., 2012; Stockdale, 2017). In particular, the presence of children and the desire to raise them in nature, away from the hustle and bustle of the city, was identified as a factor affecting migration decisions and experiences (Sandow & Lundholm, 2023; Haartsen & Thissen, 2014). Gender dynamics also play a role, with some studies highlighting the differences in migration patterns and experiences between men and women. Some of the articles have noted the emergence of female-led migration in retirement contexts (Stockdale, 2017) and the increasing role of women in rural entrepreneurship (Pilgeram, 2019; Ollenburg & Buckley, 2011). Stockdale (2017) observes a shift from “trailing wives” to “trailing husbands” in some retirement migration contexts, indicating changing gender roles in migration decision-making. Additionally, women increasingly take leadership roles in sustainable agriculture and rural business ventures, challenging traditional rural masculinities (Pilgeram, 2019).

Researchers have documented urban-to-rural migrants from diverse cultural and national backgrounds moving to rural areas in search of new lifestyles and opportunities (Eimermann & Kordel, 2018; Kordel & Pohle, 2018; Benson, 2013). The detailed geographical information can be found in Table 1.

**Socio-economic Status:** Urban-to-rural migrants often possess higher levels of education compared to local rural residents,

potentially contributing to human capital in rural areas (Chunyu et al., 2013; Milone & Ventura, 2019; Bijker et al., 2012; Stone & Stubbs, 2007). This trend is particularly notable among lifestyle migrants and neo-peasantries and those engaged in rural entrepreneurship, who often possess university degrees and professional qualifications (Eimermann & Kordel, 2018; Benson, 2013; Milone & Ventura, 2019; Kordel & Pohle, 2018).

The literature identifies a range of occupations among migrants, including professionals, entrepreneurs, artisans, and individuals involved in tourism and agriculture (Carson et al., 2018; Eimermann, 2016; Xie, 2021). A growing trend of migrants engaging in small-scale businesses, particularly in the tourism and hospitality sectors, has been observed (Nijhoff & Torkington, 2023; Ollenburg & Buckley, 2011; Chen et al., 2022).

The socio-economic status of urban-to-rural migrants is more varied than often assumed. While some studies suggest that migrants are often from middle to upper-middle-class backgrounds with the financial resources to support their lifestyle choices (Benson, 2013; Hines, 2010; Phillips, 1993), others highlight a more diverse socioeconomic profile, including individuals from various income levels (Bijker et al., 2012; Stockdale, 2016; Golding, 2021). Golding (2021) notes that the income profiles of urban-to-rural migrants are not significantly higher than those in urbanized counties, challenging the assumption that all migrants are affluent. Some research indicates that lateral rural migrants may appear wealthier due

**Table 1.** Distribution of concepts based on continents and countries

Types of migration	Africa	America	Asia	Europe	Oceania	Total
Return migration	Egypt (2), Ethiopia (1), Ghana (3), Niger (1), Nigeria (2), Tanzania (1) [Subtotal=10]	Canada (3), Chile (1), Mexico (1), U.S (9) [Subtotal=14]	China (30), India(3), Indonesia(1), Iran (3), Japan(2), Pakistan(1), Taiwan(2), Turkey(2), Vietnam(1) [Subtotal=45]	Albania (1), Denmark(2), Ireland(4), Italy(1), Netherlands(2), Romania(2), Portugal(2), Scotland(1), Spain(2), Sweden(4), Switzerland(1), UK(1) [Subtotal=23]	French Polynesia(1) [Subtotal=1]	93
Retirement migration	Ethiopia (1) [Subtotal=1]	Canada (1), Costa Rika (1), U.S (6) [Subtotal=8]	China (3), Korea (1) [Subtotal=4]	Croatia(1), Cyprus(1), France(2), Greece(1), Malta(1), Portugal(2), Portugal(1), Spain(2), Sweden(3), UK(2) [Subtotal=16]	Australia (3) [Subtotal=3]	32
Amenity migration	-	Argentina (1), Canada (3), Chile (7), Costa Rika (4), Ecuador (1), Mexico (1), U.S (25) [Subtotal=42]	China (1), Japan (2), Turkey (2) [Subtotal=5]	Austria(2), Czechia(2), Finland(1), France(3), Germany(2), Greece(1), Italy(4), Norway(2), Poland(1), Scotland(1), Slovenia(2), Spain(1), Switzerland(2) [Subtotal=24]	Australia (12), New Zealand (3) [Subtotal=15]	86
Lifestyle migration	South Africa (1) [Subtotal=1]	Argentina (1), Chile (3), Costa Rika (1), Ecuador (4) [Subtotal=9]	China (2), Japan (4), South Korea (1) [Subtotal=7]	Finland(1), France (6), Germany(1), Hungary(1), Ireland(1), Norway(1), Portugal(2), Romania(1), Slovenia(1), Spain(4), Sweden (10), UK (1) [Subtotal=30]	Australia (4) [Subtotal=4]	51
New-peasantry	-	Brazil (1), Canada (2), Paraguay (1), U.S (1) [Subtotal=5]	China (1), Israel (1), Turkey (1) [Subtotal=3]	Finland (1), France (3), Greece (2), Italy (6), Portugal (4), Spain (6), Sweden (1) [Subtotal=23]	-	31
Rural gentrification	Kenya (1) [Subtotal=1]	Canada (2), Colombia (1), Costa Rika (1), Ecuador (2), Mexico (1), U.S (28) [Subtotal=35]	China (13), Israel (3), Russia (1), Turkey (5) [Subtotal=22]	Central and Eastern Europe(1), France(2), Greece(1), Hungary(1), Ireland(1), Norway(3), Netherlands(1), Spain(3), Poland(3), Scotland(4), Sweden(1), UK(15) [Subtotal=36]	Australia(3), New Zealand(1) [Subtotal=4]	98
<b>Total</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>39*</b>

\*: The numbers in the tables total more than 337, because some studies are counted more than once because they use different concepts together, and some studies are counted more than once because they include a comparative analysis rather than a single country or region.

to more economically active households, while others may have more modest means (Stockdale, 2016). This diversity in economic backgrounds challenges the stereotype of urban-to-rural migration as exclusively a phenomenon of affluent urbanites and suggests a more complex socioeconomic landscape among rural migrants.

#### 4. Motivations and Decision-making Processes

The decision to migrate from urban to rural areas is a complex process, influenced by many factors and careful deliberation. Research has shown that potential migrants often gather extensive information, weigh options, and sometimes make exploratory visits before deciding to relocate (Eimermann, 2015; García Martín et al., 2019; Remoundou et al., 2016). This decision-making process is not isolated but rather intertwined with various life course events such as marriage, childbirth, or retirement, which can prompt a reevaluation of priorities and lifestyle choices, making rural migration an attractive option (Bennett, 1996; Clout, 1986; Lundholm, 2012; Paquette & Domon, 2001; Ria-Maria, 2023; Wall & Von Reichert, 2013).

Family considerations play a significant role in this process, particularly for those with children or aging parents (Smith & Higley, 2012; Stockdale, 2017; Zhang, 2013). The availability of services, educational opportunities, and healthcare in rural areas can be crucial factors in the final decision (Egidi et al., 2020; Lyu et al., 2021; Zhao, 2002). Moreover, individuals with prior connections to rural areas, either through childhood experiences or second-home ownership, are more likely to engage in urban-to-rural migration (Lundholm, 2012; Marjavaara & Lundholm, 2016).

Individuals with prior connections to rural areas, either through childhood experiences or second-home ownership, are more likely to engage in urban-to-rural migration (Lundholm, 2012; Marjavaara & Lundholm, 2016). Additionally, urban-to-rural migrants often have previous experience with migration or mobility, which can influence their adaptation to rural life (Eimermann & Kordel, 2018; Haartsen & Thissen, 2014; Black, 1993). This earlier experience can manifest in various forms, such as seasonal migration patterns or maintaining multiple residences, allowing migrants to navigate between urban and rural environments more effectively (Eimermann & Kordel, 2018).

The motivations and decision-making processes behind urban-to-rural migration are complex and multifaceted, influenced by various economic, social, cultural, environmental, and psychological push and pull factors. Push factors are the conditions in urban areas that motivate individuals to leave, while pull factors are the attractive features of rural destinations. Table 2 presents a comprehensive overview of these factors, categorized by economic, social-cultural, environmental, and psychological dimensions.

**Economic Factors:** Economic considerations play a significant role in urban-to-rural migration decisions, encompassing both push factors from urban areas and pull factors towards rural destinations. In urban areas, several economic conditions motivate individuals to consider rural alternatives. High living costs, job insecurity, and economic downturns often create financial pressure and uncertainty (Argent et al., 2013; Eimermann, 2015; Reichert, 1993). Job loss, high retirement living costs, and dissatisfaction with the capitalist system further contribute to the push away from cities. Many urban dwellers find themselves seeking an alternative work-life balance, prompting them to explore opportunities beyond metropolitan centers.

Conversely, rural areas attract migrants with various economic incentives. Lower costs of living and affordable housing serve as powerful pull factors, offering financial relief to those burdened by urban expenses (Carson et al., 2018; Ikutegbe et al., 2015; Stone & Stubbs, 2007; Bijker et al., 2012; Jończy et al., 2021; Stockdale, 2016). Rural settings also present entrepreneurial opportunities, including prospects for family businesses, which appeal to those seeking economic autonomy (Wang & Yang, 2013; Eimermann & Kordel, 2018; Démurger & Xu, 2011; Stone & Stubbs, 2007; Eimermann, 2016; Xu, 2010). Affordable retirement destinations in rural areas draw older migrants looking to maximize their retirement savings. The potential for self-sufficiency and sustainable livelihoods in rural areas attracts those seeking alternative economic models. Many migrants, particularly lifestyle migrants, are drawn to these opportunities as they seek to escape urban financial pressures while exploring new economic possibilities in rural settings (Benson, 2011; Hoey, 2005; Kordel & Pohle, 2018).

The COVID-19 pandemic has further amplified these economic motivations, reshaping urban-to-rural migration patterns. Remote work opportunities, accelerated by the pandemic, have enabled many urban dwellers to consider rural relocation without sacrificing their employment (Von Reichert et al., 2011, 2014b; Erlandsen & Haase Svendsen, 2023; Low et al., 2023; Memiş et al., 2024; Öncü et al., 2023; Nelson & Frost, 2023). This shift has led to increased interest in rural properties and highlighted the potential for economic diversification in rural communities (Hjerpe et al., 2020; Ramsawmy et al., 2020; Zhao, 2023). The pandemic has not only reinforced existing economic push and pull factors but has also created new dynamics in urban-to-rural migration, potentially leading to long-term changes in settlement patterns and rural economic development.

**Social and Cultural Factors:** Social and cultural factors significantly influence the decision to migrate from urban to rural areas. Urban push factors often include a sense of anonymity, weakened community ties, and social pressures (Bijker et al., 2012; Klien, 2022; Ni Laoire, 2007). Feelings of displacement, changing social networks, and overcrowding can also drive individuals to seek alternatives.

**Table 2.** Push and pull factors in urban-to-rural migration

Urban push factors	Economic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Job loss</li> <li>• Economic downturns</li> <li>• High retirement living costs</li> <li>• Seeking alternative work-life balance</li> <li>• High cost of living</li> <li>• Job dissatisfaction</li> <li>• Dissatisfaction with the capitalist system</li> </ul>
	Social-cultural	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feeling of displacement</li> <li>• Changing social network</li> <li>• Overcrowding</li> <li>• Anonymity</li> <li>• Urban stress</li> <li>• Lack of community</li> <li>• Alienation from food production</li> </ul>
	Environmental	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Urban decay</li> <li>• Unsuitable urban infrastructure</li> <li>• Limited access and disconnect from nature</li> <li>• Pollution</li> <li>• Congestion</li> </ul>
	Psychological	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nostalgia</li> <li>• Cultural disconnect</li> <li>• Desire for tranquility</li> <li>• Urban fatigue</li> <li>• Desire for change</li> <li>• Self-fulfilment</li> <li>• Seeking alternative lifestyle</li> </ul>
Rural pull factors	Economic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family business opportunities</li> <li>• Affordable retirement destinations</li> <li>• Remote work possibilities</li> <li>• Lower living costs</li> <li>• Entrepreneurial opportunities</li> <li>• Self-sufficiency</li> <li>• Sustainable livelihoods</li> </ul>
	Social-cultural	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family ties for return migrants</li> <li>• Cultural familiarity</li> <li>• Age-friendly communities for retirement</li> <li>• Recreational opportunities</li> <li>• Sense of community</li> <li>• The slower pace of life</li> <li>• Connection to land and food production</li> </ul>
	Environmental	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Favourable climate</li> <li>• Accessibility to nature</li> <li>• Scenic beauty</li> <li>• Outdoor activities</li> <li>• Natural amenities</li> <li>• Open spaces</li> <li>• Ecological living</li> </ul>
	Psychological	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sense of belonging</li> <li>• Cultural identity</li> <li>• Fulfilment of retirement dreams</li> <li>• Improved quality of life</li> <li>• Self-realization</li> <li>• Authenticity</li> <li>• Ideological fulfilment</li> </ul>

Rural areas, in contrast, may attract migrants with promises of stronger community bonds, social support networks, and a sense of belonging (Eimermann & Kordel, 2018; Haartsen & Thissen, 2014; Sandow & Lundholm, 2023). Pull factors include family ties for return migrants, cultural familiarity, age-friendly communities for retirees, recreational opportunities, and the desire for a slower pace of life (Farrell et al., 2012; Sandow & Lundholm, 2023; Almonacid, 2023; Cawley, 2020; Kopliku & Drishti, 2023). The desire to preserve traditional ways of life, engage in cultural practices, and contribute to rural community development can be powerful pull factors (Charney & Palgi, 2014; Chen & Kong, 2021; Verinis, 2011).

**Environmental Factors:** Environmental considerations are increasingly prominent in urban-to-rural migration decisions, reflecting growing concerns about quality of life and sustainability. Several environmental factors act as push forces in urban areas, motivating individuals to seek alternatives in rural settings. These include pollution, noise, lack of green spaces, and a general disconnection from nature, all of which can negatively impact residents' well-being and health (Friedman, 2023; Osbaldiston, 2022; Persson, 2019). Urban decay and unsuitable urban infrastructure can also motivate individuals to seek rural alternatives.

On the other hand, rural areas exert a strong pull-on potential migrants through their natural amenities, scenic landscapes, and abundant opportunities for outdoor recreation (Benson, 2012; Löke et al., 2020; Hjerpe et al., 2020; McKiernan & Gill, 2022; Marchant & Rojas, 2015; Vukomanovic & Orr, 2014). The promise of a favorable climate, easy accessibility to nature, and vast open spaces appeal to many urban dwellers seeking a change in their living environment. Additionally, rural areas often offer opportunities for ecological living, which aligns with the values of individuals looking to reduce their environmental impact and live more sustainably (Santiago, 2017; Osbaldiston, 2022; Kolářová, 2023; Oliveira & Penha-Lopes, 2020; Klien, 2022).

These environmental factors frequently intertwine with lifestyle motivations, creating powerful incentives for urban-to-rural migration. Many migrants are drawn to rural areas by the prospect of a perceived higher quality of life, characterized by a slower pace, closer connection to nature, and opportunities for self-sufficiency (Boucquey et al., 2012; Kolářová, 2023; Wallis, 2019). This desire for a lifestyle change acts as a significant pull factor, particularly for those feeling overwhelmed by the fast-paced, disconnected nature of urban living. Amenity migrants, a specific subset of urban-to-rural movers, are especially attracted to rural destinations for their natural beauty and recreational opportunities (Bartoš et al., 2009; Matarrita-Cascante, 2017; Perkins et al., 2015). For these individuals, the envi-

ronmental attributes of rural areas are not just background features but central motivations in their decision to relocate, offering the promise of a life more in tune with nature and personal well-being.

**Psychological Factors:** Psychological factors play a crucial role in the decision to migrate from urban to rural areas. Urban life may push individuals to seek change due to stress, burnout, or a sense of unfulfillment (Friedberger, 1996; Leebriick, 2015; Sutherland, 2022). Urban fatigue, cultural disconnect, and a desire for change can motivate individuals to seek rural alternatives.

Rural areas, conversely, can pull migrants with promises of personal growth, self-realization, and the pursuit of long-held dreams or ideals (Hayes, 2015; Lorenzen, 2021; Snikersproge, 2023). A sense of belonging, cultural identity, improved quality of life, and opportunities for self-fulfilment serve as strong psychological incentives. For many migrants, the decision to move to a rural area represents a significant life change and an opportunity for personal reinvention (Calvário, 2017; Pisa, 2019; Woods, 2011). This is particularly evident among lifestyle migrants and neo-peasants, who often view rural migration as a path to authenticity and alternative ways of living (Drozda, 2023; Koenler, 2020; Oliveira & Penha-Lopes, 2020).

## 5. Conclusion

This systematic literature review has provided a comprehensive analysis of urban-to-rural migration, focusing on the characteristics of migrants and their motivations for relocating. By examining 337 articles, our study reveals a complex and nuanced picture of this demographic phenomenon, challenging simplistic narratives and highlighting the diversity of migrants and their reasons for moving.

Our analysis shows that urban-to-rural migrants are a heterogeneous group, spanning a wide range of ages, educational backgrounds, and socioeconomic statuses. While earlier research often emphasized retirees seeking rural amenities, more recent studies have highlighted the significant presence of younger migrants, including families and professionals. This diversity underscores the need for a more nuanced understanding of rural in-migration patterns.

The motivations driving urban-to-rural migration are equally diverse and multifaceted. Economic factors, such as lower living costs and entrepreneurial opportunities, play a significant role for many migrants. However, non-economic factors, including the desire for a stronger sense of community, proximity to nature, and the pursuit of alternative lifestyles, are increasingly recognized as powerful drivers of this migration trend. The "rural idyll" concept continues to influence migration decisions, although our review suggests that migrants often have a more realistic view of rural life than previously assumed.

Recent global events, particularly the COVID-19 pandemic, have further complicated the landscape of urban-to-rural migration. The pandemic has accelerated existing trends and introduced new motivations for urban exodus, including health concerns and the increased feasibility of remote work. This shift has potential long-term implications for both urban and rural development patterns.

While our review provides a global perspective, it's important to note that the intensity and nature of urban-to-rural migration can vary significantly between countries. For instance, although urban-rural migration is an increasing phenomenon in Turkey, there are relatively few studies (10) on this topic in international publications. This highlights the need for more research and international academic attention on urban-to-rural migration patterns in countries like Turkey, where this trend may be evolving differently from other regions.

This systematic literature review contributes to a more nuanced understanding of urban-to-rural migration by synthesizing current research on migrant characteristics and motivations. The range and complexity of topics covered in the analyzed literature suggest that urban-to-rural migration is a rich and diverse field of study with numerous pathways for further exploration. As this demographic trend continues to evolve, particularly in the wake of global events like the COVID-19 pandemic, ongoing research employing interdisciplinary approaches and diverse methodologies will be essential in comprehending its full implications for both urban and rural areas.

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