

## REVIEW / DERLEME

# The Rural Dimension of Gentrification: Tourism, Agriculture, and Industry

## Soylulaştırmanın Kırsal Boyutu: Turizm, Tarım ve Sanayi

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### ABSTRACT

Rural gentrification, characterized by land privatization and displacement, intensified in the 1990s with state-driven interventions further integrating into the system. Despite historical references, gentrification is generalized, affecting rural spaces beyond city centers. This particular development is articulated by focusing on the works concentrating on urban and rural bases. In the contemporary discourse, rural spaces are portrayed as hybrids between industrial urban and natural rural settings, with leisure and tourism increasingly shaping their consumption without excluding the effects of capital flow. In the Global South countries, industrialization alongside tourism facilities contributes to rural gentrification. These processes predominantly manifest in the service and production sectors, blurring the distinction between urban and rural spaces and presenting challenges for research and conceptualization. Addressing this gap, this study aims to contextualize the blurred urban-rural situation through a review of contemporary spatial issues with a theoretical contribution. By examining transformation processes in tourism, industry, and agriculture, it seeks to offer discussions on the production of rural space. Employing a literature review and qualitative research on significant examples, this study will explore rural gentrification via new demographic data within the frameworks of urban and rural studies, providing insights into its implications and practices. Accordingly, the effects of new capital flow through the rural space will be explored.

**Keywords:** Agriculture; gentrification; rural gentrification; rural industrialization; tourism.

### ÖZ

Kırsal soylulaştırma, arazi özelleştirmesi ve yerinden edilme ile karakterize edilen bir süreç olup, 1990'larda devlet güdümlü müdahalelerin sisteme daha fazla entegre edilmesiyle yoğunlaştı. Soylulaştırma tarihsel referanslarını kaybederek, genelleşmiş bir olgu olarak kent merkezlerinin ötesindeki kırsal alanları da etkilemektedir. Bu özel gelişme, kentsel ve kırsal temeller üzerine yoğunlaşan çalışmalar üzerinden ele alınmaktadır. Günümüz söyleminde kırsal alanlar, sanayi kenti ve doğal kırsal ortamlar arasında birer hibritleşme alanı olarak tasvir edilmekte, bu alanların tüketimi, sermaye akışının etkilerini dışlamakta ve giderek daha fazla dinlenme ve turizm üzerinden şekillenmektedir. Küresel Güney ülkelerindeki çalışmalar incelendiğinde, sanayileşme fonksiyonu da turizm ve ikincil konut sürecinin yanı sıra kırsal soylulaştırmaya katkı sağlamaktadır. Bu süreçler, hizmet ve üretim sektörlerinde ağırlıklı olarak ortaya çıkmakta, kentsel ve kırsal alanlar arasındaki ayrımı bulanıklaştırarak araştırma ve kavramsallaştırmada zorluklar sunmaktadır. Bu boşluğu ele alarak, bu çalışma, güncel mekânsal sorunlar üzerinden kentsel-kırsal durumun bulanıklığını teorik bir katkı dahilinde bağlamsallaştırmayı amaçlamaktadır. Turizm, sanayi ve tarımdaki dönüşüm süreçlerini inceleyerek, kırsal alan üretimine dair gelişmiş ve gelişmekte olan bağlamlarda tartışmalar sunmayı hedeflemektedir. Literatür taraması ve önemli örnekler üzerinde nitel araştırma yöntemleri kullanılarak, bu çalışma yeni demografik veriler aracılığıyla kentsel ve kırsal çalışmalar çerçevesinde kırsal soylulaştırmayı inceleyerek, bunun etkilerine ve uygulamalarına dair içgörüler sunacaktır. Buna uygun olarak, kırsal alana giren yeni sermaye akışının etkileri de araştırılacaktır.

**Anahtar sözcükler:** Tarım; soylulaştırma; kırsal soylulaştırma; kırsal sanayileşme; turizm.

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## 1. Introduction

Contemporary rural areas have undergone significant social and spatial transformations, largely driven by migration from urban areas. This migration is bolstered by rural development initiatives led by governments, NGOs, and individuals. These efforts encompass interventions across interventions in agricultural and non-agricultural industries, tourism, and secondary housing developments (Cloe & Goodwin, 1992; Cloe et al., 1999; Woods, 2004). As a result, rural regions have adjusted their economic models by integrating innovative practices into local culture, daily life, and spatial organization. Furthermore, the infusion of various forms of capital—financial, social, and cultural—has fuelled shifts in social class structures, accelerating this process of adaptation (Newby, 1980).

This integration of capital into rural spaces catalyzes processes of gentrification. Understanding rural gentrification, particularly within context of diverse rural landscapes, necessitates prioritizing region-specific characteristics throughout the process. The contextual framework plays a critical role in shaping the manifestation of gentrification. This research adopts a two-pronged, non-systematic literature review approach. First, it examines rural gentrification through urban and rural perspectives, then explores its role within Lefebvre's concept of complete urbanization. Second, recognizing that rural studies are predominantly grounded in context-specific arguments, the study investigates the various modes of rural gentrification in Türkiye, focusing on tourism, industry, and agriculture with a theoretical contribution.

The history of rural gentrification in Türkiye dates back to the 1950s within the context of tourism, with a notable acceleration in the 1980s due to the influence of neoliberal policies (Uysal Başaran & Sakarya, 2018). In the industrial sector, the development of industrial areas in the 1970s and their subsequent transformation into organized industrial zones in the 1990s spurred residential developments in rural settlements, facilitated by advancements in transportation infrastructure. Furthermore, following the agricultural mechanization of the 1950s and the rise of niche entrepreneurial activities within the post-production paradigm of agriculture in the 2000s (İslamoğlu, 2017), the integration of agricultural restructuring and its impact on gentrification has become a significant focus of this study. In this context, it is intended to provide a comprehensive perspective on how the frequently observed examples of rural gentrification in Türkiye are addressed on a global scale.

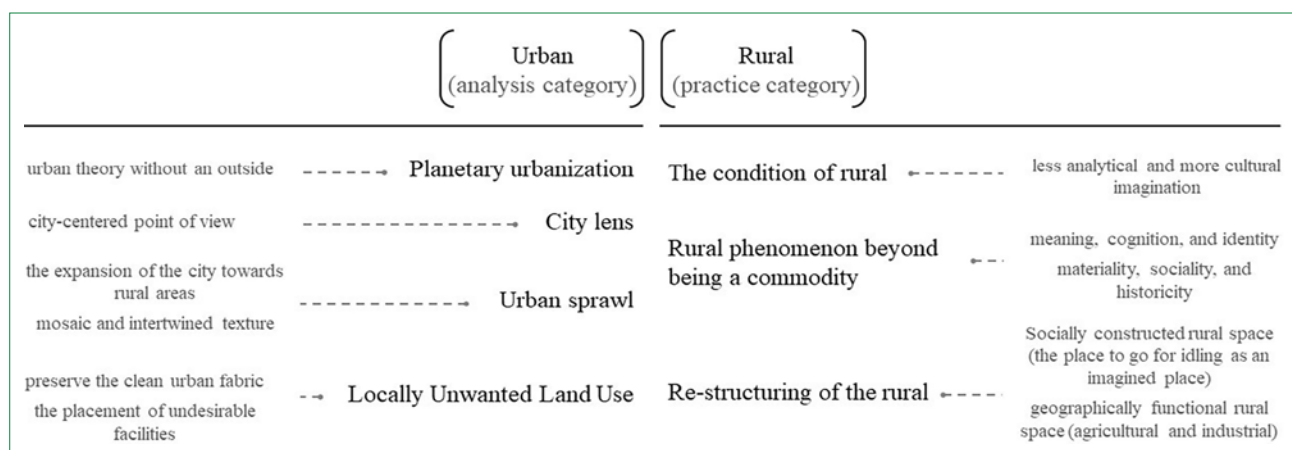
Rural gentrification is evaluated in the literature as an extension of urban gentrification. Hackworth and Smith (2001) describe three waves of gentrification, highlighting its expansion to rural areas—using the word non-urban, in the 1990s through state-driven projects. Typically, gentrification involves class shifts, rising rents, and displacement, which retain

their meaning (Ghertner, 2014). Especially from the 1980s, rural areas have gained importance in political and social research, with new operational ways emerging in response to the Green Revolution and broader socio-economic changes (Beck et al., 1992; Newby, 1980). These shifts have positioned rural spaces as key sites for tourism, industry, and agriculture (Cloe & Goodwin, 1992; Cloe et al., 1999; Woods, 2004). By the 2000s, the theorization of rural space began emphasizing its interaction with broader contexts (Crouch, 1992).

In rural investments, an idealized Western image of rurality frequently emerges, blending industrial urban with natural rural elements (Sargin, 2000). This transition from imagined to experienced rural spaces repositions them as sites for leisure and tourism consumption (Macnaghten & Urry, 2000). Since the 1980s, industrialization has also emerged alongside tourism as a significant driver of rural gentrification (Eftekhari et al., 2002). Scholars working on urban often extend their methods for analyzing gentrification to rural spaces, while scholars searching on rural emphasize the unique characteristics of rural gentrification. These practices generally fall into two categories: service-oriented (e.g., tourism, amenities, and pastoral landscapes) and production-oriented (e.g., agricultural and non-agricultural industrialization). In both cases, evidence can be gathered to highlight the blurring and merging of urban and rural categories. The infusion of gentrification dynamics into rural spaces generates hybrid urban-rural formations, complicating both practical and theoretical research approaches (Angelo, 2017; Phillips et al., 2022).

This study seeks to address gaps in rural knowledge production by investigating how industrialization and tourism reshape rural areas under gentrification, employing urban-rural theoretical frameworks. Examining transformation processes in tourism, industry, and agriculture provides a hybrid understanding of contemporary rural spatial production.

While not all rural transformations lead to gentrification, many interventions create the material and discursive conditions that facilitate its emergence (Phillips, 2005a). This study provides a theoretical contribution by examining how industrialization, tourism, and agricultural transformations shape rural development and spatial change, thereby establishing the foundations for gentrification. The present study employed a non-systematic narrative review approach to explore these dynamics. While economic production alone does not constitute gentrification, the flow of capital and the actors and institutions involved often facilitate its emergence. Rural gentrification, in particular, encompasses transformations driven by capital investments in areas of high cultural capital (Zukin, 1990). Most importantly, the concept of gentrification, which transforms rural spaces, illustrates how urban elements penetrate rural fabric by positioning themselves within the conflict zone of Lefebvre's (1991) concept of complete urbanization.



**Figure 1.** Main arguments of rural space in urban studies and rural studies.

## 2. Rural Gentrification

The progression of rural gentrification displays characteristics resembling urban gentrification, such as rising real estate prices, and this increase in exchange value is reflected in the forms of rural residential construction and housing stock (Phillips et al., 2021). However, these similarities do not necessarily constitute a standardization of the changes in rural life, as noted by Martin Phillips (2005b; 2005a; 2021), one of the leading figures in rural gentrification studies. According to him, while rural gentrification initially emerged as an extension of urban gentrification, it has since developed distinct characteristics, both in comparison to urban gentrification and across different rural contexts (Phillips et al., 2021). Moreover, he indicates, “Rural gentrification likewise may be seen as one form of the revalorisation of resources and spaces which have become seen as unproductive or marginal to agrarian capital, and indeed a variety of other rural capitals” (Phillips, 2005a, p. 479).

Phillips et al. (2021), to understand the shortcomings of studies on rural gentrification, categorizes gentrification into urban and rural studies. Additionally, the critique of the concept of “rural” within both rural and urban studies is examined (Phillips et al., 2022). Therefore, as a critical outcome of employing binary frameworks in rural gentrification studies, a distinction emerges between the categories of analysis and practice (Angelo, 2017). The former is frequently explored within the scope of urban studies on rural gentrification, whereas the latter is predominantly addressed in rural studies (Fig. 1).

### 2.1. Focusing on Urban Issues

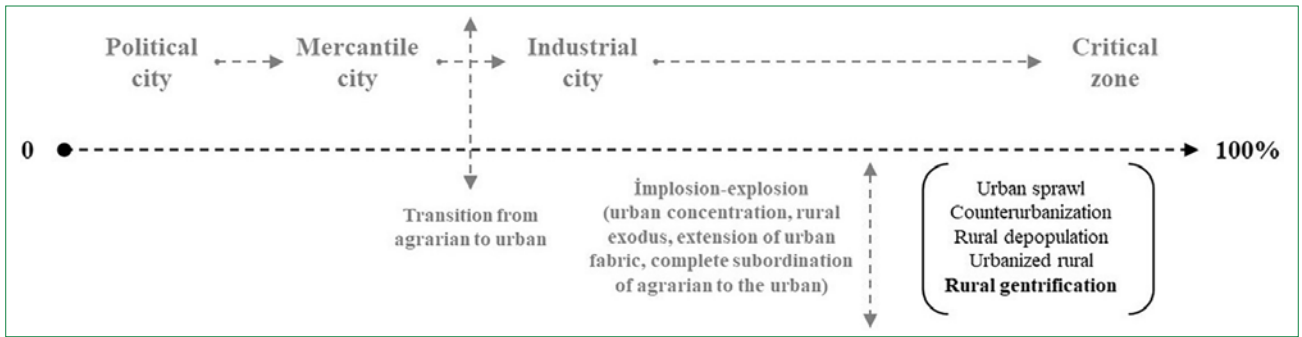
In urban studies, rural gentrification is often analyzed concerning global trends of land privatization, which seek to dissolve the urban-rural distinction and promote a comprehensive framework by transcending spatial boundaries (Brenner & Schmid, 2015; Ghertner, 2015). However, the planetary urbanization approach “urban theory without the outside” (Brenner & Schmid, 2014), has drawn criticism for its urban-

centric focus rooted in the development of industrial cities (Phillips et al., 2022). While gentrification is commonly defined as a shift from industrial to post-industrial society by class restructuring (Hamnett, 2000), this perspective prioritizes consumption-driven changes. These include the influx of wealthier households bringing urban amenities to rural areas, which in turn alters local consumption patterns (Gosnell & Abrams, 2011; Uysal Başaran & Sakarya, 2018). Conversely, rural studies focus on the production-oriented aspects of gentrification, particularly in agrarian contexts (Phillips, 2004, 2005a; Phillips et al., 2022; Sutherland, 2012).

Phillips et al. (2022) critique urban perspectives that position rural areas as subordinate to the city, reinforcing a post-colonial framework (Angelo, 2017). Day (1989) highlights that rural spaces, beyond agriculture, can be perceived, represented, and experienced differently (Ghosh & Meer, 2021). However, such views often separate rural representations from their realities (Halfacree, 1993) and prioritize city-oriented interpretations (Angelo, 2017). This urban conceptualization undermines rural sociological frameworks (Newby, 1977; Phillips et al., 2021) and dilutes the unique power of rural sociology (Hoggart, 1990). Consequently, planetary urbanization is critiqued as producing an “undefined urban and ill-conceived rural” (Lees et al., 2016; Walker, 2015; Ziebarth, 2018). Ghosh and Meer (2021) argue that linking rural studies with urbanization, including agriculture as part of planetary urbanization, remains underdeveloped.

### 2.2. Focusing on Rural Issues

In the early 1980s, rural gentrification studies began to emerge, albeit tentatively, as neoliberal policies influenced rural areas, often framing them as an alternative to urban spaces (Marsden, 2006). However, these studies did not position the rural as an independent subject in its own right (Mormont, 1990). By the 1990s, during the third wave of urban gentrification, rural areas became integral to state economies through agricultural, touristic, and industrial activities. Rural studies critique



**Figure 2.** Diagram illustrating Lefebvre's concept of complete urbanization and rural transformation categories (contributed by the author).

the commodification of rural spaces, arguing that they are more than mere commodities. Industrialization transformed rural areas and their natural resources into the service sector, particularly agricultural production (Marsden, 2006), while the locality became commodified as a tourist attraction (Murdoch et al., 2003). Thus, rural spaces are understood in two ways: geographically functional (agricultural and industrial) and socially constructed (imagined places for leisure) (Murdoch & Pratt, 1993). Researchers emphasize the significance of considering local social structures, as rural conditions are more culturally imaginative than analytically defined (Hillyard, 2007; Newby, 1977; Phillips et al., 2022). The idyllic image of rural areas resulting from gentrification has been extensively studied (Cloe, 2006; Cloe & Perkins, 1998; Halfacree, 1993, 2006).

In countries of the Global North, rural gentrification often redefines rural areas as destinations for retirees (Moss, 2008; Skelley, 2004), amenity immigrants (Hines, 2010; Kandel et al., 2011; Lichter & Johnson, 2006), and tourists (Paniagua, 2002). Accessibility to urban centers, rising land prices, and the commodification of rural life attract newcomers by transforming rural areas into "imagined places" (Becker & Soosay, 2013; Carter et al., 2008; Helbich & Leitner, 2009). In contrast, rural studies in the Global South countries primarily focus on rural-to-urban migration and the associated economic decline due to reduced employment opportunities (Qi et al., 2022). These areas often transition from agriculture to manufacturing, with rural industrialization becoming a key factor since the 1990s, introducing diverse enterprises to villages (Chen, 2009; Yao, 1999). These industries attract local and migrant laborers, reshaping rural economies (Knight & Song, 2003).

### 3. Hybrid Conceptualizations of Rural Gentrification

Analyzing the dialectical unity of urban and rural is crucial in the context of rural gentrification shaped by hybridization. Lefebvre (1991) contends that this unity drives the transformation of rural spaces toward complete urbanization (Fig. 2). His earlier work (Lefebvre, 1970) advocates for merging urban and rural spaces, a phenomenon increasingly visible in urban peripheries and rural areas targeted for gentrification. This merg-

ing attracts investment in previously underdeveloped areas, reflecting a revalorization of space (Smith, 2002). Significantly, rural gentrification differs from terms like urban sprawl, counterurbanization, rural repopulation, and urbanized rural, which only partially overlap with rural transformation processes.

The heterogeneous nature of agents and agencies in rural gentrification necessitates a hybrid approach to understanding its structure (Angelo, 2017; Mackay et al., 2009). This hybridity, characterized by the blurred boundaries between rural and urban, is exemplified by Gottmann (1957, p. 217) observation that "urban people and activities have taken on more rural aspects, and traditionally rural pursuits have acquired urban characteristics." Beilin et al. (2015, p. 1306) further describe such hybrid spaces as "neither clearly rural nor definitively urban," shaped by reciprocal relationships and life practices. To fully grasp these transformations, historically variable relational embeddedness must be prioritized over categorical distinctions.

Local differences in rural spaces also play a significant role, emphasizing not only uneven urban development but also diverse modes of subjectivity (Angelo, 2017). Rural gentrification reflects these variations through integrating local communities, evolving economic dynamics (Misra, 1985), and regional skill development (Haq, 1979). Rural development often involves internal innovations or adaptations to urban economic systems to prevent decline (Vidich & Bensman, 1958; Li et al., 2019). Examples of these combinations include retirement communities, local business centers, recreational areas, academic hubs, government facilities, and tourism ventures (Li et al., 2019). However, economic restructuring of rural space with the urban-centric view challenges rural areas as hinterlands (Westlund & Kobayashi, 2013).

Examining the production of rural areas requires a deep analysis of the economic contexts and relations with urban areas (Woods, 2009; Li et al., 2019). For that purpose, Li et al. (2019) offer four categories of rural spaces: transitioning villages, rural areas within metropolitan regions, intermediate rural areas with integration potential, and peripheral rural areas. Each represents a different stage of transformation and sustains valuable insights for development strategies. Woods (2009) focuses on

the same problem the uncertain interactions of urban and rural space and the impossibility of understanding the complexities.

The location of gentrified rural spaces—whether in village centers, near villages, or urban peripheries—depends on the interplay of economic and social capital investments. The blurring of urban and rural boundaries underscores the need for regional analysis and identification of the actors and networks driving gentrification. Murdoch (1995) and Marsden (2005) apply actor-network theory to explore rural development parameters and their connections to urban dynamics. Murdoch emphasizes how actor networks construct spaces, erasing distinctions between units and relationships, while Marsden considers economic, social, and political factors across scales to differentiate rural areas.

#### 4. Hybridized Pathways of Rural Gentrification through Lenses of Tourism, Industry and Agriculture

When the transformation of rural areas through gentrification is considered, it is possible to find common grounds that conceptually emerge within the triad of tourism, industry, and agriculture. Although these generalizations may vary geographically and culturally at the micro level, they are linked to common aspects at the macro level, such as drivers of gentrification, scale and intensity, policy and governance, and socio-economic impacts.

##### 4.1. Effects of Tourism on Rural Gentrification

Tourism acts as a significant catalyst for rural gentrification, warranting evaluation from economic, social, and cultural perspectives (Urry, 1999; Crouch, 2006). Central to this process is the commodification of rural spaces, transforming them into consumable objects that leverage representations of landscape, nature, and wildlife (Cloke & Perkins, 1998; Crouch, 2006; Urry, 2002). During the 1980s and 1990s, research focused on sustaining the production of rural spaces through gentrification, often supporting the development of tourism facilities (Urry, 1999). Media promotions during this time framed rural areas as sites for financial gain and leisure, further integrating them into the tourism industry (Mordue, 2001; Urry, 2005).

Due to their climate, visual appeal, and capacity to provide comfort and seclusion, rural locations are being utilized increasingly for secondary homes in addition to tourism (Osti et al., 2019). However, by combining the needs of people and visitors, rural gentrification processes diverge from conventional tourism development and frequently result in complex interactions. When visitors see the realities of rural areas, their imagined and preconceived ideas of them are sometimes challenged (Crouch, 2006).

A more comprehensive focus on the local effects of gentrification, especially about tourism and secondary housing,

replaced the commodification of rural areas by the 2000s (Marsden et al., 2005). As Harvey (1997) points out, one major worry is the detrimental impacts on farmers and rural communities when rural regions experience colonization. Rural communities are frequently standardized and homogenized due to this post-colonial process (Massey et al., 1998). Notwithstanding these obstacles, assessing rural areas based on their administrative, social, and historical aspects has made it possible to create hybrid rural areas that could support sustainable development initiatives.

##### 4.2. Effects of Industry on Rural Gentrification

Industrialization is promoted in rural areas to preserve urban assets and counter out-migration caused by rural poverty (Eftekhar et al., 2002). This trend, observed in many countries, is often a result of economic restructuring associated with the industrialization of agriculture in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the decline in agricultural incomes. A profound transformation in rural life and landscapes emerges as predominant agricultural practices transition from predominant agricultural practices to non-agricultural activities (Marsden, 1998; Zang et al., 2020).

Rural areas are increasingly industrialized through both private and public initiatives. The state often offers tax incentives and infrastructure development to facilitate the gradual transformation of local industrial areas into structured industrial zones (Shi & Ganne, 2009). This process is accompanied by labor migration and, in some cases, counterurbanization—the movement of industrial zones in rural areas closer to urban centers due to improved transportation networks. For example, highways with advanced technological features significantly enhance connectivity between industrial zones and urban centers, fostering conditions conducive to rural gentrification (Buchori et al., 2023).

The cultural change of the local population is one of the distinctive features of rural gentrification brought about by industrialization. Instead of being uprooted, locals frequently adjust to the changes while staying in their neighborhoods. The Semarang-Bawen transportation corridor in Indonesia serves as an example of this phenomena since industrialization has resulted in the construction of opulent dwellings alongside pre-existing ones. The presence of factory owners, managers, and employees in nearby areas—rather than in the industrial zones—further drives the demand for housing and reshapes the region's cultural fabric (Buchori et al., 2023).

Despite its rarity, industrialization-induced rural gentrification highlights the complex interplay between urban and rural transformations. While industrial zones often lead to urbanization rather than gentrification, they can indirectly trigger rural gentrification in adjacent, easily accessible areas. Recognizing this distinction is crucial for understanding the broader impacts of industrialization on rural spaces.



### 4.3. Agricultural Restructuring and Impact on Gentrification

Between the 1950s and 1980s, agriculture shifted from productivist (high input-output with industrial equipment) to post-productivist approaches focusing on sustainable, low-input, high-quality systems (Ilbery & Bowler, 2014). By the 1990s, growing concerns over consumption and supply chain complexities prompted policies favoring consumer interests, exacerbating agricultural spatial inequality (Reardon et al., 2000). Non-agricultural investments, tourism, and industry contributed to rural decline, while gentrification and agro-industrialization transformed rural areas into controlled systems within the neoliberal economy. The service sector is also integrated into rural spaces to support agricultural logistics (Halfacree, 2006).

The rationalization of agriculture led to standardization, prompting a search for region-specific diversity (Marsden, 2006). Prodi (2002) emphasized rural areas' role in agricultural diversity, while state-produced agri-food systems often sidelined independent rural producers (Keating, 1997). Over time, private and public agri-food systems gained control, incorporating consumption facilities into rural areas (Marsden, 2006). In developing countries, efforts to operationalize vacant lands are aimed to counter depopulation and unemployment (Zhou et al., 2023). Moreover, despite agriculture-driven incomes, state-supported housing policies, including tax breaks, enabled middle- and upper-class gentrification in depopulated rural areas, even without tourism or industry (Gkartzios & Scott, 2012).

## 5. Discussion and Conclusion

When examined in the context of Türkiye, various rural development projects and renovation initiatives have contributed to gentrification processes in rural areas. Particularly after the 1980s, with the increasing influence of neoliberal policies and the growing power of the private sector, rural spaces have undergone significant demographic, economic, and spatial transformations. Advancements in transportation and communication technologies have shaped these changes, the diversification of non-agricultural income sources, and shifts in agricultural production and livestock breeding methods. Furthermore, transformations in settlement structures encompass modifications in the forms, patterns, and styles of settlements, as well as changes in the design, layout, and extensions of housing units (Canpolat & Hayli, 2018).

The variation in rural characteristics and developmental trajectories suggests that these differences are shaped not only by political and spatial urban development decisions at the international level but also by diverse geographical, cultural, and social transformations within a single country. Consequently, these transformations contribute to the production of distinct spatial configurations. In Türkiye, while tourism-driven gentrification is particularly evident along the western coasts, the country's

transition from a predominantly commercial economy to an industrial one during the Republican era has resulted in fragmented industrial developments. These developments, often accompanied by the integration of luxury residential areas, exemplify a process in which access to rural spaces is initially established, followed by their subsequent gentrification. Furthermore, spatial policies have played a crucial role in the gentrification of rural areas. The enactment of Law No. 6360 in 2013, which reclassified villages as neighborhoods under metropolitan municipalities, along with the Village Law, first introduced in 1924 and revised periodically until 2024, demonstrates how rural transformation has been shaped by legislative and policy frameworks.

Although these processes unfold within their specific contexts, significantly contributes to rural gentrification, through distinct mechanisms, integrates urban elements and plays a crucial role in the hybridization of rural and urban spaces (Angelo, 2017; Beilin et al., 2015). Rapid urbanization has led to rural areas becoming a service hinterland for urban areas, making rural gentrification a key topic in rural studies. With rural gentrification, the boundaries between rural and urban blur as consumption and production become interconnected. The hybridization of rural and urban features is seen in labor, entrepreneurship, capital, goods, and services, leading to rural areas' integration into broader local and global governance. This reshapes demographic compositions and spurs significant population shifts, driven by factors, such as transportation, migration, tourism, industry, and local socio-natural endowments (workforces, community infrastructure, ecological features, and skills). Consequently, rural areas undergo gentrification through tourism, industry, and agriculture, shaped by geographical, demographic, and cultural variations. Given Türkiye's significant rural history and its developments in industry and tourism, further studies could focus on case studies that explore the differences in gentrified rural areas regarding spatial, social, economic, and cultural transitions.

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