

Bridging Rural and Urban Dynamics within the Framework of Rural Gentrification: Urladam as a Transformative Public Space

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Abstract

This paper explores the role of artistic practices in rural transformation, regarding their influence on rural gentrification and spatial dynamics in particular. Urladam, an art space located in Urla, is examined as a threshold where rural and urban, public and private, and artistic and communal dimensions intersect. Through a hybrid methodology, including archival review, spatial analysis, mapping, and interviews, the study evaluates Urladam's architectural setting and public presence.

Findings suggest that Urladam operates as a transitional zone where artistic engagement contributes to reconfiguring rural identity. The paper underscores the potential of art spaces in re-shaping inclusive rural development, and question their role in socio-spatial change and inequality.

It illustrates how art mediates spatial transition and fosters dialogue between contrasting rural-urban identities.

Keywords: Rural Gentrification, Art Spaces, Threshold, UrlaDam

1. Introduction

Rural areas, once viewed primarily as peripheral, low-density agricultural zones, have increasingly become central sites in global economic and spatial transformations. Far from being passive landscapes, these regions now host complex networks shaped by cultural, economic, and political dynamics. Across the globe, including Türkiye, rural territories are being reshaped by processes such as counter-urbanization, real estate speculation, and the cultural industries, prompting new forms of investment, lifestyle migration, and cultural production. As rural gentrification intensifies, rural spaces have become contested terrains where traditional identities, market forces, and new socio-spatial imaginaries intersect.

The district of Urla, located along the Aegean coastline of İzmir-Türkiye, exemplifies this rural transformation. Originally characterized by its agricultural and coastal heritage, Urla has increasingly attracted white-collar professionals and cultural entrepreneurs seeking alternatives to metropolitan living. The COVID-19 pandemic further accelerated this shift, amplifying desires for proximity to nature, flexible spatiality, and cultural immersion. In this context, cultural venues such as art spaces have proliferated, transforming not only the aesthetic landscape, but also the social and symbolic dynamics of rural life.

This paper examines Urladam, a contemporary art space situated in Urla, through the conceptual lens of the "threshold." Drawing from Stavros Stavrides' theoretical framework, thresholds are understood not merely as transitional boundaries, but as spaces of encounter, where distinct social, cultural, and spatial domains are negotiated. Urladam, in this regard, operates as a site where the rural and the urban, the traditional and the contemporary, the private and the public come into contact. The study explores how such an art space mediates socio-spatial dynamics associated with rural gentrification, contributes to community engagement, and influences cultural identity within its locale.

Rather than presenting a data-driven case analysis, this paper offers a theoretical and conceptual reflection grounded in broader research. It investigates how contemporary art spaces in rural contexts may function as semi-public environments, shaping new modes of visibility, participation, and cultural production. By focusing on Urladam, the study asks: To what extent can an art space act as a transformative public realm within a rural gentrification process? What forms of publicness does it enable, and for whom?

These questions are addressed through an interpretive reading of the literature and field experience, while empirical data and detailed case analysis are reserved for forthcoming academic publications. This methodological choice enables a focus on the theoretical relevance of the process, drawing from the recently completed master's thesis "*URLADAM: Investigation into Emerging Rural Artification*" (Izmir Institute of Technology, 2025). The study contributes to broader debates on public space, cultural production, and rural transformation, offering insights into how art can intervene in the redefinition of the rural as a lived and represented space.

In order to explore how such an art space navigates its role within rural gentrification, the next section outlines the conceptual lens of "threshold spaces." This framework draws from interdisciplinary literature on spatial theory and cultural production, offering a foundation for analyzing Urladam's positioning at the intersection of rural identity and contemporary artistic practices. To investigate how an art institution like Urladam navigates its role within ongoing processes of rural change, the next section elaborates the concept of "threshold spaces." This framework unveils interdisciplinary literature on spatial theory and cultural production, including the spatial triad of Keith Halfacree (2006), Henri Lefebvre's (1991) concept of lived space, and Nancy Fraser's (1990) idea of subaltern counterpublics. Together, these insights provide a foundation for a deeper understanding of how contemporary art engages with rural gentrification and socio-spatial reconfiguration.

2. Conceptual Framework: Threshold Spaces and Publicness

This section explores the conceptual framing of "threshold spaces" to analyze the transformative role of art institutions, particularly Urladam, within the processes of rural gentrification and socio-spatial transformation. Art spaces, when situated in rural contexts, not only function as platforms for cultural production but also operate as mediating environments that engage with local identities, economies, and spatial configurations. Building upon the insights of scholars such as Stavros Stavrides (2010, 2016), Henri Lefebvre (1991), and Keith Halfacree (2006), this study positions Urladam as a spatial threshold that connects traditional rural character with emerging dynamics of urban cultural production. Within this framework, the concept of "threshold" is employed to describe spaces of transition, sites that simultaneously separate and connect divergent socio-spatial domains. The threshold is thus not a fixed border but a dynamic zone of interaction, negotiation, and transformation. The integration of art spaces into rural environments contributes to the redefinition of these locales, a process often catalyzed by counter-urbanization and rural gentrification. This dual dynamic migration from urban centers and the attraction of investment, alters the cultural, social, and spatial fabric of rural areas. In this sense, art spaces are not passive reflections of change but active agents in producing new meanings, practices, and representations of rural life.

In Urladam's case, its architectural flexibility, hybrid programming, and public accessibility position it as a site of both cultural production and social engagement. Through exhibitions, community events, and participatory practices, Urladam facilitates encounters between diverse user groups and fosters the visibility of emergent identities and narratives. Its existence exemplifies Nancy Duxbury's (2011, 2020) argument that rural cultural practices are not merely residual or traditional but actively shape new forms of localized resilience and identity.

Furthermore, this conceptual framing draws upon Adorno and Horkheimer's (2002) critique of the culture industry to interrogate how art spaces participate in commodification processes. Urladam's hybrid model, balancing between market pressures and inclusive cultural production, enables a more nuanced understanding of how rural art institutions negotiate their roles within capitalist dynamics without fully succumbing to them. The tension between artistic autonomy and market integration becomes particularly significant in rural contexts

where economic infrastructures are fragile.

This study also considers how Urladam diverges from the “White Cube” paradigm (O’Doherty 1986) by resisting spatial and ideological neutrality. Instead of isolating artworks within sterilized environments, Urladam incorporates contextual references, local materials, and flexible spatial arrangements that reflect its embeddedness within the community. This spatial strategy enhances its function as a threshold, allowing for site-responsive engagements and multi-directional flows between the institution and its surroundings.

Through this conceptual lens, Urladam is analyzed as a site of spatial negotiation, socio-cultural interaction, and economic integration. It serves as a node in wider artistic and cultural networks while remaining grounded in its immediate rural environment. By operating within this threshold zone, it becomes a space where urban desires, rural traditions, and contemporary cultural practices converge.

In doing so, this section lays the groundwork for section 3, where Urladam’s spatial configuration, public representation, and everyday interactions will be analyzed through a three-fold methodological lens. The goal is to trace how the conceptual framework of “threshold” becomes materially and experientially embodied in Urladam’s architecture, programming, and role within Urla’s evolving socio-spatial context.

3. Rural Context and the Rise of Contemporary Art in Urla

Urla is located 38 km from the city center of İzmir and plays a significant role in the province’s urban. Situated on the western edge of İzmir and covering 728 square kilometers, Urla has become a focal point of rural transformation in Türkiye. Its strategic location, Mediterranean climate, and historical depth have long shaped its identity; however, recent demographic and socio-spatial shifts have redefined its role within the regional context. According to the Turkish Statistical Institute (TUIK), Urla’s population grew from 62,439 in 2016 to 77,599 by 2023, a 24.5% increase reflecting broader post-COVID trends of urban-to-rural migration.

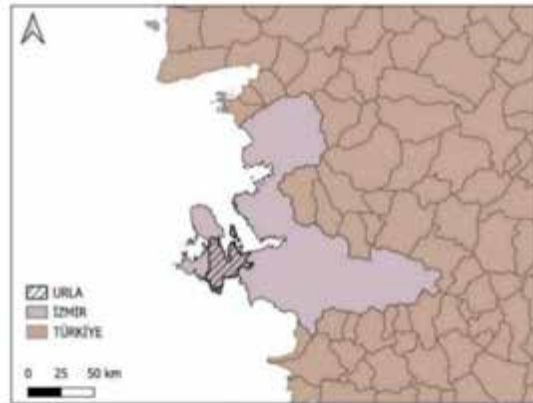


Figure 3.1. Location of Urla District
(Source: Google Earth Software and QGIS).

Traditionally rooted in agriculture and coastal trade, Urla’s economy and spatial configuration evolved through various historical layers, from Ionian settlements to Ottoman-era migrations. This multi-layered heritage is visible in its built environment and agrarian practices, particularly olive oil and wine production. The contemporary restructuring of Urla’s identity is not only material but also symbolic, shaped by shifting class dynamics and cultural investments.

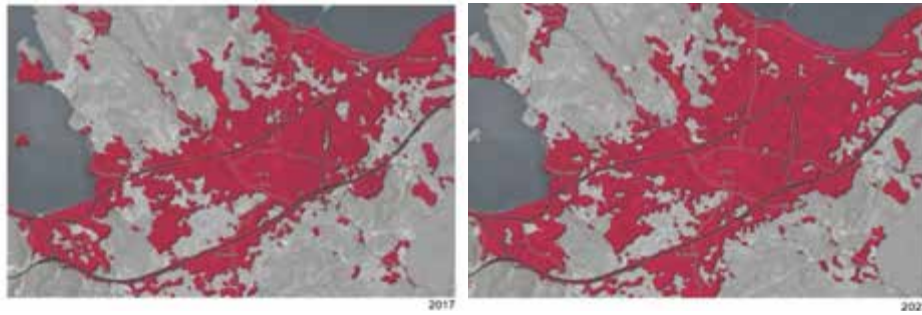


Figure 3.2. Population Change between 2017 and 2023
(Source: TÜİK).

In recent years, Urla has attracted cultural entrepreneurs, artists, and white-collar migrants seeking alternatives to urban life. This transformation is particularly evident in the rise of gastronomic tourism, art venues, and boutique accommodations. Initiatives such as the Urla Vineyard Route (Urla Bağ Rotası), organic food markets, and Michelin-starred restaurants reflect a shift toward curated rural lifestyles. Yet, these developments have also fueled property speculation and displaced traditional communities, an unmistakable marker of rural gentrification.

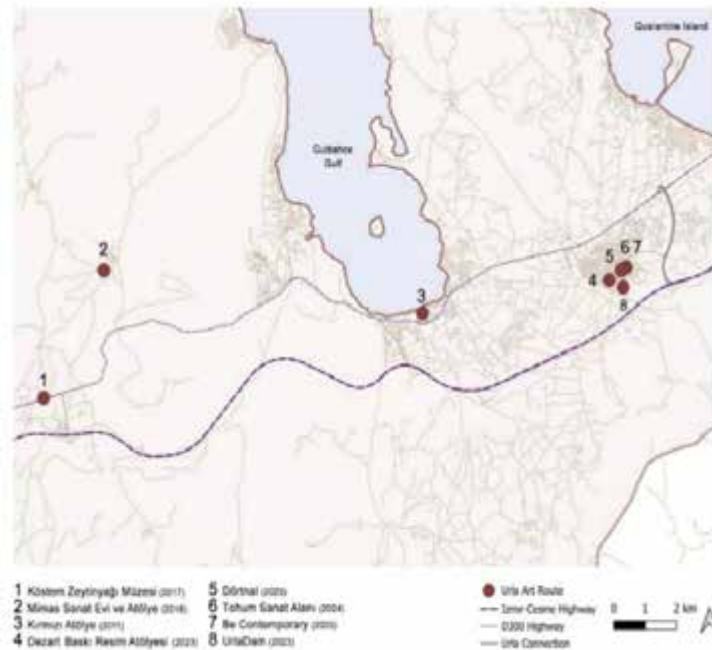


Figure 3.3. Location of Urla Art Spaces
(Source: Google Earth Software and QGIS).

Urla's emerging cultural infrastructure includes a network of decentralized art spaces that engage with both local heritage and contemporary practices. Institutions such as Köstem Olive Oil Museum, Mimas Art House, and UrlaDam contribute to a multi-layered cultural ecosystem. These venues not only support artistic production but also play a role in spatial redefinition, shaping new patterns of cultural participation and visibility.

UrlaDam, in particular, represents a large-scale intervention into the rural cultural landscape. Founded in 2023, the venue integrates performance spaces, workshops, and accommodation facilities within a single compound.

Positioned at the intersection of rural heritage and contemporary cultural production, it exemplifies the duality of cultural revitalization and exclusivity. While offering opportunities for creative engagement, UrlaDam also underscores key tensions around publicness, commodification, and social inclusion.

This evolving cultural scene calls for a nuanced assessment of how creative industries reshape rural space, not just economically, but socially and symbolically. The next section delves deeper into UrlaDam's representational strategies and everyday practices, exploring how its operations reflect and negotiate broader dynamics of rural transformation.

4. UrlaDam and the Everyday: Threshold Public Space in a Cultural Campus

This section examines Urladam as a lived and represented rural cultural public space, drawing upon Keith Halfacree's (2006) triadic model of rural space, which comprises material practices, representations, and everyday experiences. Rather than serving as a neutral space for artistic display, Urladam functions as a site where cultural identity, publicness, and rural transformation intersect.

From Henri Lefebvre's (1991) perspective of "lived space," Urladam's spatial organization and programming generate opportunities for encounter and interaction. Open-air stages such as Ağacli Sahne and modular venues like Hangardam promote flexible and accessible forms of engagement, allowing artistic practices to merge with the rhythms of everyday rural life. Events such as exhibitions, concerts, workshops, and children's programs support this integration of art into daily experience. Brian O'Doherty's (1986) critique of the "white cube" further contextualizes Urladam's rejection of traditional gallery neutrality.

Founded in 2023 by renowned Turkish actors Ercan Kesal and Nazan Kesal, Urladam emerged from the couple's vision of establishing an independent arts space rooted in Urla's unique cultural and ecological landscape. While Ercan Kesal is primarily known for his appearances in television and cinema, Nazan Kesal is a prominent figure in Turkish theater. During interviews conducted with Ercan Kesal on August 14, 2024, as part of this study, the founder emphasized the significance of İzmir and Urla as places of cultural inspiration and personal renewal (Kesal Ercan 2024). He noted that the couple began spending more time in Urla during the COVID-19 pandemic, which eventually led to the idea of creating a cultural campus in the region (Kesal Ercan 2024). This direct engagement enabled a deeper understanding of the intentions behind the formation and spatial design of the space. As a private enterprise, Urladam was established with the aim, in Ercan Kesal's words, of creating a place where people can spend time freely, relax, and engage in artistic production (Kesal Ercan 2024). Its design highlights the connection to the rural environment through the use of natural materials and open spaces, promoting local participation. This contributes to a more open, locally grounded mode of artistic production.

Architectural and symbolic choices, such as the naming of spaces like the Sabit Kemal Bayıldiran Library, shape the venue's identity and suggest links to specific cultural narratives. While these associations enrich the space's meaning, they may also reflect selective curatorial visions shaped by personal or philanthropic influence.

The semi-private nature of Urladam introduces tensions between accessibility and exclusivity. Although many events are free of charge, features such as a luxury cafe and on-site accommodation imply a dual audience: one that is local and community-focused, and another that is more affluent and mobile. This dynamic raises important questions about who participates in cultural life, and under what conditions.



Figure 4.1. View of UrlaDam from above
(Source: Izmir.Art, 2024).

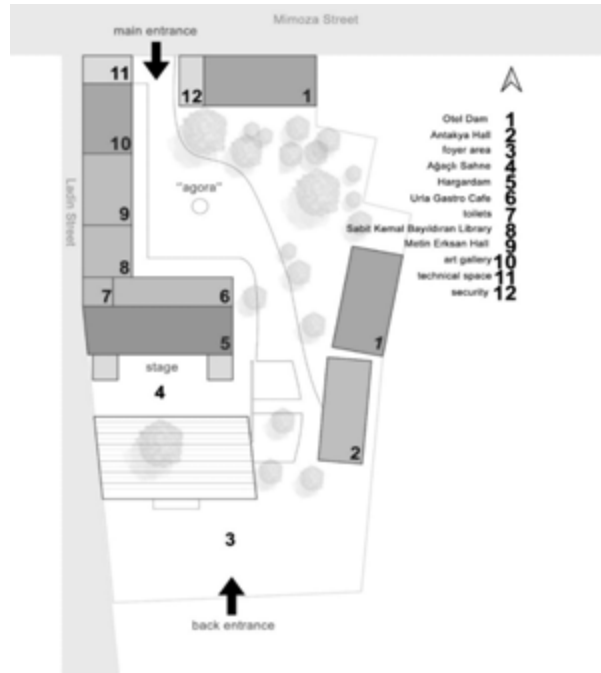


Figure 4.2. Non-scaled Plan Indicating Functional Areas.
(Source: Created by the author).

In spatial terms, Urladam's design contributes significantly to its threshold character. The site is anchored by two main entrances, one facing Mimoza Street and the other connected to a secondary parking area, linked by a clearly defined circulation axis that organizes access and movement. These physical boundaries demarcate the internal campus from its surroundings, generating a sense of both inclusion and separation. Upon entering through the main gate, visitors encounter a central plaza organized around a decorative fountain and red basalt paving stones. Surrounded by multifunctional structures, this semi-enclosed space functions as an informal gathering point and transitional zone.

The spatial configuration reflects various embedded thresholds: the Art Gallery, a single-story exhibition space with a skylit steel roof that echoes the "white cube" typology, establishes a zone of aesthetic focus. Nearby structures such as the Metin Erksan Hall (a small-capacity venue used for talks, screenings, and workshops) and the Sabit Kemal Bayıldiran Library (a poetry-focused library and intimate reading space) provide more dialogic and discursive environments. Gradual elevation changes across the site, especially from the Hangardam (a large, single-story multipurpose indoor hall with a stage used for fairs and screenings) toward the open-air Ağaçlı Sahne (an outdoor stage integrated into the sloped landscape, with seating organized around a preserved tree for concerts and performances) support fluid yet layered experiences of movement and encounter. Notably, the arched stone entrance leading into Ağaçlı Sahne physically marks a passage from the public plaza to the event space, reinforcing spatial symbolism.

The Antakya Hall (a single-story venue with a stage located near the exit and accommodation area) and the adjacent foyer area (a grass-covered transitional space used for pre-event gatherings and sponsor installations) further exemplify how function and spatial sequencing contribute to the condition of threshold. Material choices also reinforce this layered threshold quality. The reuse of local stone, red basalt pavement, and wrought iron details evoke vernacular aesthetics while reinforcing site-specificity. Meanwhile, preserved trees integrated into the design, such as those embedded within the seating rows of Ağaçlı Sahne, blur the boundary between natural and constructed environments.

These design strategies enhance both the temporal and social dimensions of threshold space: while visitors may arrive for a scheduled performance, they often linger—perhaps spending time at the Urla Gastro Cafe (a semi-open cafe overlooking the central plaza), interacting with artists staying at the Otel Dam (a two-story accommodation unit serving both resident artists and guests), or browsing a book fair between concerts. Events such as the D&R Book Festival or children's painting workshops utilize different segments of the site simultaneously, expanding the experiential depth of the venue. Additional infrastructural spaces such as the technical area (a support zone for logistical and technical needs) and security (the main controlled access point at the Mimoza Street entrance) define the operational thresholds of the site, balancing openness with necessary regulation.

In sum, Urladam exemplifies the evolving character of rural public spaces, neither entirely open nor wholly exclusive, but shaped by spatial design, curatorial decisions, and patterns of social access.

Beyond its spatial configuration and material articulation, Urladam's threshold character is further reinforced by its intensive and diverse programming. Throughout the year, the venue hosts a remarkable number of events, from exhibitions and concerts to workshops, film screenings, and literary festivals. This consistent density of cultural programming not only activates physical spaces but also cultivates a dynamic temporality, one in which the site is continuously reanimated by diverse publics and practices.



Figure 4.3. D&R – UrlaDam Book Festival

Between July and October 2024 alone, Urladam hosted 9 exhibitions, 10 theater and performing arts events, 16 concerts, and 12 distinct types of workshops, amounting to a total of 46 sessions. Additionally, 25 festivals and film screenings and 17 author talks and book signing events were organized across various venues. These events were not always sequential; some took place simultaneously in different spaces across the site. This simultaneity is made possible by Urladam's spatial configuration, which accommodates diverse programming capacities, while one visitor may attend a workshop at Metin Erksan Hall, another might enjoy a concert at Ağacli Sahne, and a third may simply have coffee at the cafe. This diverse and continuous event calendar exemplifies the multiplicity and layered temporality of Urladam's cultural life. Its role in Urla's cultural ecosystem reflects both the potentials and contradictions of art-led rural transformation, operating as a threshold that bridges the everyday and the exceptional, the local and the curated, the physical and the symbolic.

The data gathered was further visualized through a spatial circulation analysis, highlighting patterns of movement and interaction across Urladam's venues. This analysis also incorporated insights derived from user feedback and field observations, particularly regarding the frequency of visits to shared spaces like the cafe. It was found that the cafe emerged as one of the most frequently used and crowded spaces, due to its proximity to major event venues and its social function. Visitors often used the cafe after attending exhibitions, concerts, and theater performances, turning it into a central hub for informal interaction. Moreover, due to parking challenges in Urla, Urladam has increasingly functioned as a public site for external visitors, offering both a parking solution and access to its cafe, reinforcing its spatial and social utility. A graphic representation of this circulation analysis is provided below to more clearly illustrate these spatial dynamics.

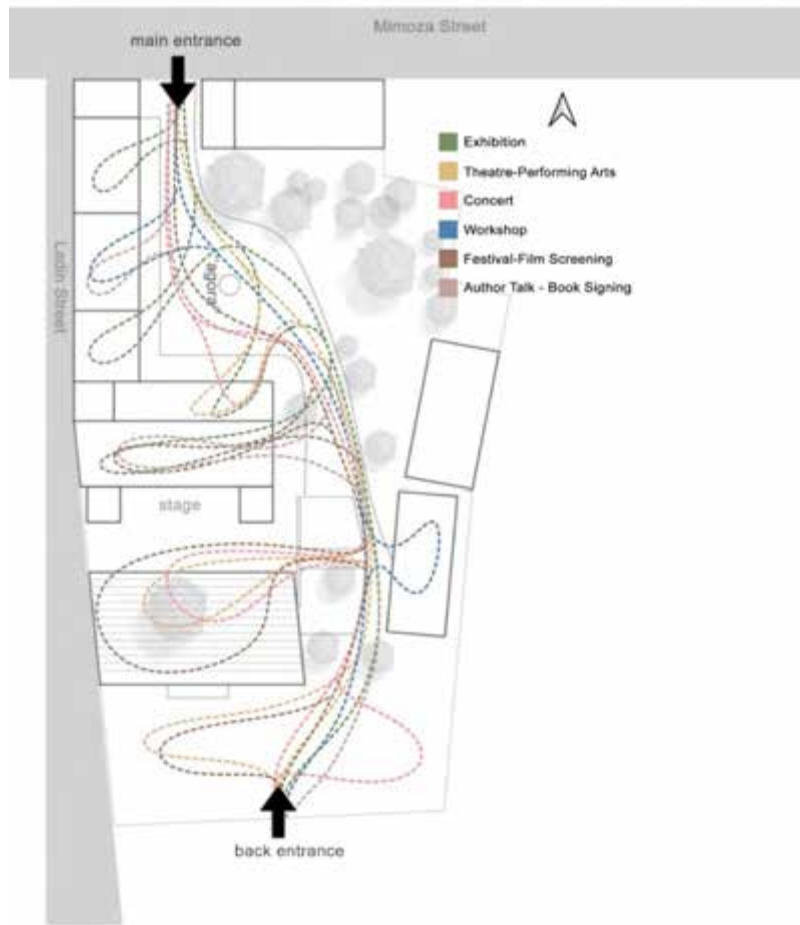


Figure 4.4. Circulation Analysis Based on Spatial Usage Analysis
(Source: Created by the author).

In parallel with its spatial circulation and architectural organization, UrlaDam also pursues an aggressive strategy in terms of media visibility. Although in interviews Ercan Kesal emphasized that their primary goal was to let UrlaDam be known through word-of-mouth, the venue actively utilizes platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, and its official website to promote upcoming events, share interviews, and foster audience engagement. These digital platforms serve not only as tools of communication but also as extensions of the venue's publicness in the virtual realm, reinforcing its threshold status by broadening access to its content.

UrlaDam's Instagram account functions as a visual archive, documenting the rhythm of its artistic life through curated photographs and stories, while its YouTube channel hosts interviews, event footage, and commentary, enabling asynchronous participation for geographically distant audiences. This constant digital activity contributes to the emergence of a hybrid public sphere, where physical presence is no longer a prerequisite for participation. In 2023 and 2024, UrlaDam was featured in 22 newspaper articles across local and national media outlets such as Sabah, Milliyet, Karar, HaberEkspres, and GazeteDuvar. This strong media presence demonstrates that UrlaDam aims not only to function as a local cultural center but also to establish itself as a national point of interest within Turkey's cultural scene. Media coverage was particularly amplified during large-scale events like the D&R Book Festival and Urla Jazz Festival, further solidifying the venue's image as a hub of cultural activity.

The strategic integration of both traditional and digital media illustrates how UrlaDam cultivates a multifaceted presence, merging physical, symbolic, and digital thresholds and offering multiple points of access to a diverse audience. This strong media visibility reinforces UrlaDam's role not merely as an event venue, but as a producer

of cultural practices that permeate everyday life. Its presence across both digital and traditional media platforms extends beyond physical events, making visible the intersections between art and daily routines. In doing so, UrlaDam's impact evolves into a deeper "lived space" experience, not limited to a static cultural calendar.

UrlaDam's influence on everyday life in Urla can thus be interpreted through the lens of lived experience and everyday practice. Its diverse programming, ranging from art exhibitions and literary talks to concerts and workshops, establishes a recurring rhythm of public engagement, integrating artistic expression into the routines of local residents and visitors alike. Rather than remaining isolated as cultural spectacles, these activities become woven into the fabric of the town's everyday life, creating shared moments of reflection and participation. In line with this vision, Urladam's owner Ercan Kesal has emphasized that Urladam was intended not only to contribute to cultural enrichment, but also to strengthen social cohesion by functioning as a permeable and inclusive space (Kesal Ercan 2024). This section explores how such experiences resonate with broader debates on rural transformation and the redefinition of public space in contemporary Türkiye.

5. Discussion: Publicness at the Edge of Rural Gentrification

This section critically engages with the concept of publicness within the framework of rural gentrification, drawing upon the theoretical concepts introduced earlier and building on the observations and in-depth interview discussed in the previous section.

Publicness is traditionally associated with accessibility, inclusivity, and collective use. However, in gentrifying rural contexts such as Urla, it becomes a layered construct shaped by economic, cultural, and symbolic power. Rural gentrification initiates spatial and social restructuring through the influx of upper-middle-class populations, leading to rising property values, aesthetic curation, and cultural displacement.

Urladam exemplifies this paradox. As explored in section 4, it functions as a "threshold space" neither fully public nor entirely private, inviting wide participation while embedding selective forms of access. Its architectural configuration, diverse programming, and curatorial framing reflect a model of selective inclusivity: outwardly open, yet subtly aligned with the preferences of culturally privileged groups.

The venue's simultaneous hosting of multiple events, such as workshops, concerts, and literary talks, demonstrates an impressive cultural density. Yet this density does not automatically translate into egalitarian access. While many events are nominally open to the public, their aesthetic, linguistic, and symbolic framing often appeals to urban-educated, mobile demographics. As emphasized by Ercan Kesal in interviews, Urladam was intended to be a space "where one can breathe, create, and rest." But who can afford to breathe there, and who feels invited, remains a socially mediated question.

This duality aligns with Nancy Fraser's (1990) notion of "subaltern counterpublics," where alternative publics emerge within dominant cultural frameworks but remain structurally marginalized. Urladam creates moments for new voices, especially during festivals and workshops, yet it simultaneously participates in hierarchies of taste, access, and legitimacy. Spatial-symbolic elements further complicate the idea of publicness. Open-air stages and features like the preserved tree at Ağacli Sahne signal inclusivity, while donor naming, selective cultural references, and visual branding introduce soft exclusions. The spatial circulation study also highlighted the cafe as a central informal gathering point, but its pricing and ambiance arguably cater more to a visitor profile shaped by lifestyle migration than local everyday life. As a whole, Urladam exemplifies how cultural infrastructures can operate as subtle engines of rural gentrification. These spaces do more than host artistic programs, they contribute to shaping cultural legitimacy, aesthetic norms, and everyday rhythms. In doing so, they influence who feels welcome, who belongs, and under what conditions participation becomes possible.

In sum, publicness at the edge of rural gentrification is not a static attribute but a continuously negotiated and contested process. Urladam, as a threshold cultural space, reflects this ambivalence: open yet selective, dialogic yet curated, inclusive in rhetoric yet exclusive in effect. Recognizing this ambivalence is crucial, not to

dismiss such initiatives, but to reframe future strategies in rural cultural development toward equity, grounded participation, and spatial justice.

6. Conclusion

This study set out to explore UrlaDam as a cultural infrastructure embedded in the shifting terrain of rural transformation, offering a nuanced examination of public space, artistic engagement, and social stratification. Through the analysis of spatial, representational, and everyday practices, it has been shown that UrlaDam functions as more than a venue for cultural programming, it is a site where the complexities of publicness, artistic identity, and rural gentrification converge.

Rather than offering final answers, the findings encourage deeper interrogation of the paradoxes within contemporary rural public spaces. While UrlaDam aspires to inclusivity through its programming and open-access philosophy, in practice, the socio-economic and spatial filters embedded in its structure and operation reveal selective modes of participation. Its dual identity as both a public space and a private cultural institution reflects broader tensions in the cultural field, where autonomy, accessibility, and aesthetic value are constantly negotiated.

By operating as a threshold space, between urban and rural, private and public, exclusive and inclusive, UrlaDam highlights the symbolic and material ambiguities of contemporary cultural development. Its visibility in digital media and participation in global cultural networks situates it within a broader system of artification, where aesthetic and institutional logics reshape not only space but also social relations. This contributes to rural gentrification, not merely as a material process of displacement but as a symbolic restructuring of belonging and identity.

In sum, publicness at the edge of rural gentrification is not a static attribute but a continuously negotiated and contested process. Urladam, as a threshold cultural space, reflects this ambivalence: open yet selective, dialogic yet curated, inclusive in rhetoric yet exclusive in effect. Recognizing this ambivalence is crucial, not to dismiss such initiatives, but to reframe future strategies in rural cultural development toward equity, grounded participation, and spatial justice.

As a result, this research underscores the need to approach rural cultural infrastructures with a critical lens, recognizing their potential to generate both engagement and exclusion. The findings suggest that the presence of art in rural areas should not be taken as inherently democratic or transformative, but must be evaluated in terms of who participates, who benefits, and how these dynamics shape rural futures. Ultimately, the case of UrlaDam invites reconsideration of what constitutes a public art space in a rural setting. It raises critical questions about how cultural venues can navigate the fine line between creative autonomy and social responsibility, between curatorial vision and inclusive participation. While the site may offer moments of artistic encounter and cultural dialogue, these are shaped—and at times constrained, by economic, spatial, and symbolic forces.

Rather than concluding the conversation, this paper proposes new lines of inquiry, particularly for future academic work that seeks to align cultural production with principles of spatial justice and social equity. UrlaDam is not simply a site of cultural production, it is a node in the broader reconfiguration of rural space, offering both inspiration and caution in thinking about the future of art, community, and territory.

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