

Exploring the Politics of Gastronomy Tourism and Gentrification Nexus: Gastro-Driven Development and Peri-Urban Geographical Change in the case of Urla Izmir

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Abstract

This study examines the intersection of gastronomy tourism, gentrification, and reverse migration in Urla, a peri-urban area in İzmir. It introduces “gastro-driven gentrification” to explain how culinary tourism reshapes space, fuels property speculation, and displaces long-term residents. While promoting economic growth and global visibility, these changes intensify socio-spatial inequalities and cultural commodification. Reverse migration accelerates transformation by bringing affluent newcomers focused on lifestyle over local identity. The study highlights tensions between development, justice, and sustainability, situating Urla’s case within broader tourism and environmental crises. By situating Urla’s transformation within the broader context of planetary crises and unsustainable tourism trends, it calls for sustainable planning that balances growth with cultural authenticity, ecological resilience, and spatial equity.

Keywords: Gastronomy Tourism, Gastro-Driven Gentrification, Reverse Migration, Peri-Urban Transformation, Urla Izmir

1. Introduction

Gastronomy tourism has emerged as a significant global trend, intertwining culinary experiences with cultural exploration in both urban and rural contexts. Over recent decades, this relationship between tourism and gastronomy has undergone remarkable transformations, driven by globalization, technological advancements, and a growing demand for authentic and localized experiences, making gastronomy play a crucial role in tourism planning and destination branding, making it an essential focus for understanding socio-spatial and economic dynamics (Pérez et al., 2024). Food, as a universal cultural and social phenomenon, continues to influence urban life profoundly. According to Sasaki Report (2014), which tried to answer, “What makes a city great?”, 82% of urban residents value their city’s culinary offerings, while 41% highlight food and restaurants as essential aspects of their consumer activities and 46% go out of their neighborhood to try a new restaurant, demonstrating food’s role as a major driver of social and economic interactions.

This article focuses on the relationship between gastronomy tourism, gentrification, and reverse migration in peri-urban geographies. The dual connection between tourism and gentrification offers a compelling framework for analysis. Gravari-Barbas and Guinand (2017) suggest that tourism both results from and facilitates gentrification, a dual process, evolving through different phases as neighborhoods transform. Early stages of gentrification often stimulate tourism, while more advanced phases may resist further tourism-driven developments. Within this context, Clark’s (2005) definition of gentrification becomes particularly relevant. It emphasizes two key dimensions: demographic shifts in land-users, closely tied to migration, and physical transformations of the built environment, reflecting changes in urban geography. These processes take on unique forms in peri-urban areas, as Lees (2011) points out, where “different forms of gentrification emerge in different places at different and indeed the same times,” underscoring the spatial complexity of gentrification in these intermediate spaces between urban and rural settings.

Despite extensive research on tourism’s role in urban gentrification and economic development in urban (Gravari-Barbas & Guinand, 2017; Cocola-Gant, 2018) and rural (Xu, Wang, & Zhang, 2022; Ma & Su, 2023) context, significant gaps remain in the literature. Peri-urban geographies, which are the regions that blend rural and urban characteristics, have been relatively overlooked, even though they are uniquely positioned to exhibit mixed land

uses, dynamic demographics (Rajendran et al., 2024), and the overlapping influences of urban and rural transformations. Furthermore, while tourism-driven gentrification has been well-documented in urban centers (Bourlessas et al., 2021; Lütke & Jager, 2021), and relatively less-documented in rural (Nemes & Tomay, 2022), limited attention has been given to how gastronomy tourism, particularly through high-end establishments like Michelin-starred restaurants, drives gentrification and socio-spatial inequalities in peri-urban areas.

This study aims to address these research gaps by analyzing the dynamic interplay between gastronomy tourism, gentrification, and reverse migration in the peri-urban context of Urla, Türkiye. Through a critical examination of how Michelin-starred restaurants act as catalysts for spatial and socio-economic transformation, the research contributes to a deeper understanding of the socio-spatial impacts of gastronomy tourism. It also evaluates the implications of these transformations for urban justice, particularly in terms of inclusion, displacement, and accessibility.

The research is guided by three primary objectives: (1) to explore the relationship between gastronomy tourism, gentrification, and reverse migration; (2) to analyze how these processes transform peri-urban geographies; and (3) to evaluate the socio-spatial impacts of gastronomy tourism. Central to this exploration is the fundamental research questions: How are the co-constitutive relationships between gastronomy tourism, reverse migration and gentrification processes have been established? and how does this relationships transform peri-urban geography in the case of Urla, İzmir?

By addressing these objectives and questions, the study not only contributes to the theoretical discussions on tourism and gentrification; but also provides practical insights as well into the socio-economic and spatial dynamics of peri-urban areas. This research is particularly relevant in understanding how gastronomy tourism reshapes local geographies and offers a framework for ensuring more equitable and sustainable development in rapidly transforming regions like Urla.

2. Theoretical Framework

Tourism has long been a driver of socioeconomic and spatial transformations, but its impact on gentrification is increasingly nuanced and multifaceted. Tourism gentrification, as defined by Cocola-Gant (2018), is a process where the influx of visitors disrupts the existing population's right to remain in place. In advanced economies, this phenomenon is often framed through a cultural economy lens, emphasizing the consumption patterns of tourists and gentrifiers who share similar tastes and spaces. In contrast, in peripheral economies, tourism gentrification is heavily influenced by state and private capital initiatives aimed at creating destinations as a means of economic development. Across these contexts, tourism reshapes urban and rural spaces, often leading to residential, commercial, and place-based displacement. Residential displacement occurs as housing is increasingly converted into tourist accommodations, while rising land values accelerate commercial displacement by replacing local stores with visitor-oriented amenities. These processes are accompanied by place-based displacement, where local residents experience tensions as their neighborhoods are transformed into spaces primarily designed for tourism consumption (Cocola-Gant, 2018). Collectively, these changes drive socio-economic inequalities, such as reduced housing accessibility and economic restructuring, while altering spatial landscapes, including the transformation of agricultural and commercial spaces.

Tourism itself is evolving in response to changing consumer demands, technological advancements, and the proliferation of low-cost airlines. Traditional forms of tourism, which prioritized visual observation, have given way to a growing desire for immersive, multi-sensory experiences that foster deeper connections with destinations (Gálvez et al., 2017). This evolution has significant implications for gastronomy tourism and its role in gentrification. High-end dining establishments, such as Michelin-starred restaurants, and viticulture activities have played a critical role in the typology of gastronomy-driven gentrification, raising important questions about how these spaces contribute to displacement and broader socio-spatial transformations.

The role of restaurants on gentrification has been evaluated with different accounts. Restaurants play a significant role in shaping gentrification processes through their cultural, social, and economic impacts on neighborhoods. For example, Hyde's (2014) research from the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver highlights how restaurants frame notions of "authenticity" and "ethical entrepreneurialism" in ways that attract affluent newcomers while reshaping the symbolic value of low-income areas. These establishments, often praised for their eclectic and casual gourmet offerings, reflect broader shifts in high-status consumption from exclusivity to populism. They also underscore tensions between achieving cultural distinction and addressing structural inequalities in gentrifying neighborhoods. Similarly, according to Zukin et al., (2015), online restaurant reviews, such as those on Yelp, contribute to gentrification by constructing positive or negative perceptions of neighborhoods, thus influencing economic investment. Reviews often valorize "authentic" cuisines and locales in ways that favor affluent.

Food, as Lütke and Jager (2021) suggest, transcends its physical purpose, serving as a cultural and spatial force that can create displacement atmospheres. Within these atmospheres, food culture becomes a form of symbolic capital, enabling privileged consumers to assert social distinction and facilitating broader urban development projects (Bourlessas et al., 2020; Kinkaid and Platts, 2024). The quest for authenticity, often tied to food culture, is a powerful driver of urban economic growth and socio-spatial differentiation (Zukin, 2010; Rossi, 2017/2022). Gastronomy tourism, by responding to this demand for authenticity, not only transforms culinary landscapes but also catalyzes gentrification processes.

The dynamics of authenticity and food consumption further illuminate the complexity of urban culinary geographies. Ritzer's (1993) concept of "McDonaldization" captures the standardization and predictability of fast-food culture, appealing to the Fordist "McBody" consumer (O'Neill, 1999, as cited in Bell, 2002). In contrast, the post-Fordist "la petite bourgeoisie nouvelle" (Bourdieu, 1979, as cited in Stock and Schmiz, 2019) consumer seeks authenticity, scarcity, and distinction through high-end, artisanal food experiences. These twin modalities—McDonaldization and authenticity—are interdependent, defining each other through their oppositional characteristics while shaping the socio-spatial dynamics of urban foodscapes (Bell, 2002).

Several key concepts help elucidate the relationship between gastronomy tourism and gentrification. The concept of "foodification," introduced by Bourlessas et al. (2021), critiques the growing emphasis on food culture in urban environments and its gentrifying consequences. Their study on Turin's Porta Palazzo highlights how high-end food spaces create a "displacement atmosphere" through three interrelated elements: discourse, materialities, and practices.

Discourses of food quality and urban regeneration stigmatize traditional markets as outdated, while the aesthetic and material transformation of food venues appeals to affluent consumers seeking distinction. These shifts are accompanied by changes in consumption patterns, favoring knowledge-based, sedentary experiences in new eateries and bars, ultimately contributing to broader urban gentrification and the exclusion of marginalized communities. Complementing this, Lütke and Jager (2021) propose the concept of "gastrofication," emphasizing how the proliferation of gastronomic venues reshapes neighborhoods by catering to elite tastes. While they argue that gastrofication alone does not trigger gentrification, it functions as a key component within broader structural and commercial redevelopment. In a rural context, Nemes and Tomay (2022) analyze the transformation of Hungarian villages into "gastro villages," showing that while gastro-tourism brings economic benefits—such as rising visitor numbers, real estate values, and business activity—it also produces challenges like population displacement, socio-economic inequality, and "split realities" between tourism and local life. The authors stress the need for neo-endogenous development strategies that integrate tourism with local sustainability, cautioning that without such measures, gastro-tourism risks eroding the very cultural and social foundations that make rural destinations attractive in the first place.

When we approach the issue in peri-urban contexts, the initial movement of population in gentrification process takes on a different form as reverse migration. As many study indicate a defining characteristic of gentrification is the migration of middle-class individuals into economically disadvantaged neighborhoods (Lütke and Jager,

2021). Nemes and Tomay (2022) also identify the first stage of gastronomy-driven gentrification as initial attraction due to the unique gastronomic offerings. For a peri-urban or rural context, this movement takes place from metropolitan or urban to peri-urban or rural, which means “reverse migration”. As another form of migration, amenity migration which is described as “the movement of largely affluent urban or suburban populations to rural areas for specific lifestyle amenities” (Abrams et al., 2012) gives insight for understanding this type of population movement as well. According to Takahashi et al. (2021), food is an important common value of this type of migration. Nemes and Tomay (2021), similarly, highlights the role of food and gastronomy in creating a romanticized rural idyll, which appeals to urban tourists seeking slower, more authentic experiences.

A cultural political economy perspective provides a valuable framework for analyzing these dynamics, particularly in peripheral regions such as the Mediterranean. As Cocola-Gant (2018) notes, tourism gentrification in these regions has been underexplored compared to studies of advanced capitalist cities in the global North. By examining gastronomy-driven gentrification in the peri-urban context of Urla, Türkiye, this study highlights how cultural and economic processes converge to reshape local geographies.

Within this context, the key indicators of gastro-driven gentrification include the presence of gastronomy-related planning actions, the rise of Michelin-starred restaurants, the increased tourism revenues, the commercialization of local culinary heritage, and the proliferation of gastronomy-related events such as food festivals. These processes are accompanied by economic transformations, including rising property values and shifts in business types, as well as social impacts, such as demographic changes and socio-economic inequalities. Physical transformations, such as land-use changes and urban planning interventions, further illustrate the profound effects of gastronomy tourism on peri-urban geographies. Together, these interconnected processes provide a comprehensive framework for understanding the socio-spatial dynamics of gastronomy-driven gentrification.

3. The Case Study: Urla, İzmir

Urla in the city of İzmir, with its population of 77.599 (TURKSTAT, 2023), a district in western Türkiye, is located within the Aegean Region. Situated approximately 35 kilometers from İzmir’s city center, Urla occupies a strategic position along the southern coast of the İzmir Peninsula, extending from coastal regions to inland areas (Fig. 1). Known historically for its olive groves, viticulture, vineyards, and maritime activities, Urla’s significance as a center of commerce and agriculture dates back to ancient times (Urla Şarapçılık, n.d.). Today, Urla exhibits a distinct peri-urban character, blending rural and urban features, making it an ideal site for analyzing the socio-spatial dynamics of peri-urban transformations. Its recent evolution into a hub for gastronomy tourism and reverse migration has accelerated significant changes in its socioeconomic and spatial structures, offering valuable insights into the complex interplay of tourism, urbanization, and gentrification.

The genesis of Urla’s gastronomic transformation is deeply rooted in planning initiatives and infrastructural developments spanning decades. Planning decisions from the 1950s onward illustrate Urla’s shifting identity. During this period, the district’s agricultural character began to integrate with a second-home-focused structure, driven by İzmir’s coastal development strategies. The 1955 İzmir Master Plan further reinforced Urla’s connectivity to İzmir along the Çeşme-Pınarbaşı axis (Güner, 2006), while the 1973 İzmir Master Plan designated the district and its surroundings as key areas for tourism (Arkon & Gülerman, 1995) and second-home production, solidifying its identity as a summer resort destination.

The 1980s marked a turning point with the planning of the İzmir-Çeşme Highway. With the opening of the Çeşme Highway in 1994, this infrastructure development significantly enhanced Urla’s accessibility, catalyzing an influx of second-home developments along its coastline (Güner, 2006). The leading factor in the district behind the second-home dominated development, especially from the mid-1990s and rapidly increasing from the 2000s to the present, is the İzmir-Çeşme Highway passing through the district of Urla (Can et al., 2018). Although its center is approximately 40 km far from the city center of İzmir, Urla has become an accessible site of living, thanks to the construction of the highway in the mid-1990s.

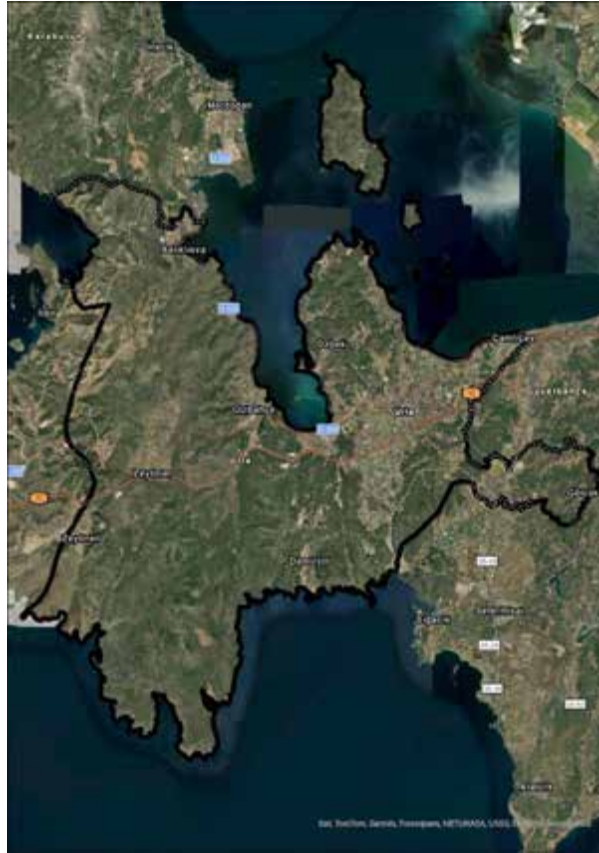


Figure 1. The Location of Urla

Zoning laws enacted during the same period accelerated speculative real estate activities, transforming the district's spatial dynamics and by the late 1990s, Urla's rural identity began to erode, with luxury housing projects and gated communities driving rural transformation and early stages of gentrification (Avar et. Al, 2024). The establishment of the İzmir Institute of Technology (İZTECH) in 1992, further contributed to these shifts, increasing the young population and employment opportunities, while fostering socioeconomic changes (Can et al., 2018).

In the 2000s, Urla began to attract high-income groups as a desirable living space. Efforts to revive traditional agricultural activities, particularly viticulture and olive groves, were initiated under sustainable development strategies led by the İzmir Development Agency (İZKA) and İzmir Metropolitan Municipality (Avar et. Al, 2024). These strategies emphasized Urla's gastronomic potential and introduced projects promoting sustainable tourism and agrotourism, leading to the rise of high-end wineries, luxury restaurants, and countryside hotels, which have become defining features of Urla's transformation as well as seasonal festivals promoting local products, such as the Artichoke Festival and Herb Festival (Avar et. Al, 2024). These developments reinforced Urla's reputation as a center for gastronomy and tourism.

By 2013, the establishment of the Urla Vineyard Road marked a significant milestone, attracting luxury wine producers and high-end gastronomic establishments. Events organized to promote local culinary heritage, including thematic festivals, contributed to the region's identity as a gastronomic destination. "The Peninsula Sustainable Development Strategy" (İZKA, 2014) further positioned Urla vision as "an alternative living city with its natural texture intact, cultural richness preserved, planned, contemporary culture and art city, world-renowned for its olive oil and wines, prominent for agrotourism and gastronomy tourism, developed sea tourism, productive and participatory."

In İzmir Regional Plan (İZKA, 2015), Urla was identified within regional settlement belt together with Torbalı, Kemal-

paşa, and Aliağa. Together with these districts, Urla was planned as a regional growth focus which are districts that are the gateway to the region, where certain service functions are concentrated and developed to serve their surroundings and where innovative sectoral formations with high added value are supported.

The COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 accelerated reverse migration trends (the highest annual growth rate in last 15 years in 2021 with 4,58% (TURKSTAT, 2023)), with many individuals relocating from urban centers like İzmir to Urla in search of lifestyle changes. This shift coincided with the district's emergence as a global gastronomy tourism destination, marked by the opening of Michelin-starred restaurants and the growing popularity of local vineyard houses, wine production facilities, and farm-to-table restaurants. These developments have solidified Urla's position within the international gastronomy tourism market, aligning with sustainable gastronomy principles that prioritize the use of local products and traditions.

In 2023, when the Michelin guide included İzmir and Bodrum in its selection for the first time outside of Istanbul in Türkiye, Urla achieved significant success by receiving 6 Michelin stars alone. This accomplishment is particularly noteworthy when compared to Athens, a city with a population of 5.5 million, which received five Michelin stars in 2019. This distinction underscores Urla's emergence as a significant gastronomic destination, highlighting the region's dedication to culinary excellence and its potential to rival established European culinary hubs (Özkök, 2023a). At this point, Urla has 10 Michelin-starred restaurants.

In current conditions of urban development, Urla serves as a microcosm for understanding the impacts of gastronomy tourism on peri-urban geographies. Its evolution reflects the complex interplay between infrastructure development, planning decisions, reverse migration, and the commodification of local culture. The district's rise as a gastronomy hub, particularly through the influence of Michelin-starred restaurants, exemplifies how tourism can drive significant socioeconomic and spatial transformations in peri-urban contexts. As such, Urla offers a valuable case study for exploring the intersections of tourism, gentrification, and urban justice in rapidly transforming regions.

4. Methodology

This study employs a qualitative case study methodology to explore the interrelated dynamics of gastronomy tourism, gentrification, and reverse migration in the peri-urban context of Urla, Türkiye. The case study approach is particularly suited to uncovering the complex, place-based interactions between socio-economic processes and spatial transformation.

Data were gathered through a combination of secondary sources, including planning documents, regional development reports, academic literature, and statistical data from institutions such as TURKSTAT, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, and the İzmir Metropolitan Municipality. These sources of data provided insights into demographic shifts, economic indicators, and tourism development patterns.

To analyze spatial change, land cover data from ESRI for the years 2017 and 2023 were used. GIS-based visual analysis was conducted to identify changes in built-up areas, cropland, rangeland, and tree-covered zones. This spatial data supported the assessment of land use transformations linked to tourism and urban expansion.

By triangulating spatial, statistical, and conceptual data, the methodology aims to reveal the socio-spatial consequences of tourism-driven transformation in peri-urban areas, with Urla serving as a representative and timely case.

5. The Transformation of Urla Within the Broader Contexts of Gastronomy and Gentrification

5.1. Socioeconomic Indicators

Urla has undergone significant demographic, socioeconomic, and spatial transformations in recent decades, driven by an influx of upper-middle-class counter-urbanizers (Avar et al., 2024) and a burgeoning gastronomy tourism sector. These changes have redefined the district's identity and dynamics, positioning it as a prominent

peri-urban destination. The demographic growth in Urla has been remarkable. Its population increased from 26,066 in 1980 to 77,600 in 2023, reflecting a steady rise over the decades (TURKSTAT, 2023).

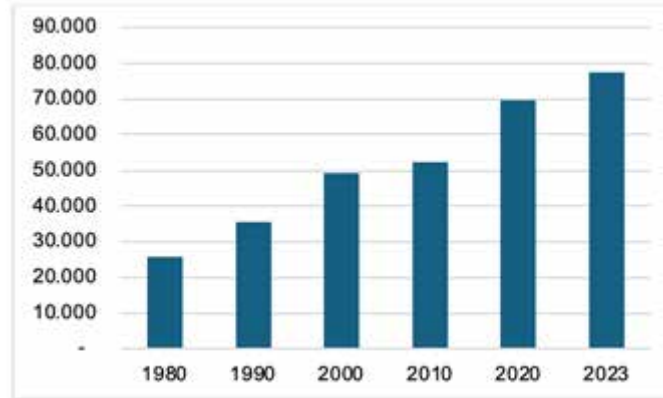


Figure 2. Urla Population Change Between 1980 - 2023

This growth accelerated particularly after the COVID-19 pandemic in 2021, outpacing comparable peri-urban districts such as Çeşme. The influx of counter-urbanizers, predominantly white-collar professionals commuting from İzmir, has been a key driver of this population increase (Avar et al., 2024). These newcomers have brought with them higher education levels and a relatively affluent socioeconomic profile, contributing to Urla's distinction as more developed in terms of education and socio-economic status compared to Türkiye's and İzmir's averages. In terms of the rate of university and postgraduate students, Urla ranked 6th with 30.6% in 2020, the year the pandemic began, as of 2023 Urla ranks 4th with 34.5%, among the districts of İzmir, after the central districts of Güzelbahçe, Karşıyaka and Narlıdere (İzmir Büyükşehir Belediyesi, 2023). However, while Urla surpasses Çeşme in education levels, it lags behind in overall socio-economic status as measured by wealth indicators (Endeksa, n.d.).

Socio-economic data further illustrate Urla's evolving profile. According to the Socio-economic Development Index (SEGE), Urla ranked 32nd among 858 districts in 1996, 43rd in 872 districts in 2004 (T. C. Devlet Planlama Teşkilatı, 1996 / 2004), dropped to 93rd in 2017, and climbed back to 59th in 2022 (T. C. Sanayi ve Teknoloji Bakanlığı, 2017 / 2022). These fluctuations reflect both the challenges and opportunities associated with its rapid transformation.

The district's fertile lands, close proximity to İzmir, and the migration of middle and upper-income groups have fostered rural entrepreneurship, altering livelihoods in the countryside and driving economic diversification (Güçü, 2022). The rise of gastronomy tourism has also contributed significantly to Urla's development. The number of facilities with operation and investment certificates grew from just two facilities with 154 beds in 2012 to 21 facilities with 514 beds in 2023, illustrating the rapid expansion of tourism infrastructure (T.C. Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı, 2023). This development has been accompanied by the establishment of high-end wineries, restaurants, and farm-based businesses, further solidifying Urla's status as a gastronomic hub. However, this growth has also driven significant changes in the real estate market. Between 2018 and 2024, the square meter prices of houses for sale in Urla increased by 1,432%, nearly double the rate observed in Çeşme (Endeksa, n.d.), highlighting the intense speculative pressures on Urla's land market (Uştuk, 2024).

These economic and demographic shifts have not been without consequences for native residents. The influx of affluent settlers, particularly from İstanbul, has created an expensive standard of living that many long-term residents find difficult to sustain. Rising land and rental prices have contributed to the displacement of native inhabitants, driven in part by what Uştuk (2024) describes as an "exile strategy" employed by new elite settlers to fulfill their gentrification demands. This gentrification process, coupled with the increasing commodification of local culture and heritage, has reshaped Urla's socio-spatial fabric.

In sum, Urla's transformation over the past decades illustrates the multifaceted impacts of counter-urbanization, rural entrepreneurship, and gastronomy tourism. While these developments have brought economic growth and enhanced its cultural appeal, they have also exacerbated socio-spatial inequalities and raised critical questions about sustainability and inclusivity. As the district continues to evolve, the tension between preserving local identity and accommodating the demands of its affluent newcomers will remain a key challenge.

5.2. Spatial Indicators

The spatial transformation of Urla, influenced by gastronomy tourism and related development, reveals significant changes in land use, particularly in agricultural and rangeland areas. While agricultural production continues on some lands, rural livelihoods are increasingly diversified with new functions such as consumption and experience, which are associated with the growing gastronomic sector (Güçü, 2022). However, these shifts in land use reflect a broader trend of changing priorities in rural areas, where production is supplemented by tourism and leisure activities.

Between 2012 and 2021, Urla's total agricultural land decreased significantly, shrinking from 9,421 hectares to 6,869 hectares, marking a substantial reduction in the district's agricultural footprint (Urla Belediyesi, 2015; T.C. Tarım ve Orman Bakanlığı İzmir İl Müdürlüğü, 2023). This trend highlights the increasing pressure on agricultural land as it is repurposed for urban development and tourism-related activities.

In order to understand the effects of these changes on the peri-urban geography of Urla, land cover change was analyzed using land cover data for the years 2017 and 2023 obtained from ESRI. When examining land use changes across the entire district between 2017 and 2024, built areas increased by 18%, reflecting the district's rapid urbanization. Concurrently, cropland decreased by 27%, while rangeland saw an 8% decline, and tree-covered areas increased slightly by 5% (Table 1). These changes underscore the competing demands on land as urban development and tourism infrastructure expand at the expense of agricultural and grazing areas.

Table 1. Urla District Land Cover Change (2017-2023)

	Built Area	Crops	Rangeland	Trees
2017	7.629	3.332	26.830	35.063
2024	9.041	2.426	24.675	36.954
Percentage Change	18%	-27%	-8%	5%

The land cover maps of 2017 and 2023 visually reinforce these trends. The expansion of built-up areas, particularly around Urla's urban core and coastal zones, is clearly observable, signaling intensified urbanization. Simultaneously, there is a noticeable reduction in cropland and rangeland, especially in peripheral and formerly agricultural zones, indicating the displacement of productive land uses. While there is a slight increase in tree-covered areas, the overall trend reflects a shift away from traditional agricultural and pastoral land uses toward residential, touristic, and leisure-oriented development. This spatial reconfiguration highlights the competing pressures on land and the transformation of Urla's peri-urban geography under the influence of gastronomic and lifestyle-oriented change.

6. Discussion and Conclusion

Urla's transformation illustrates how gastronomy tourism, when combined with reverse migration and planning strategies, can rapidly reshape peri-urban geographies. The concept of gastro-driven gentrification captures the dynamics at play—where high-end restaurants and lifestyle-driven newcomers contribute to rising land values, changing land use patterns, and the displacement of long-term residents.

While these developments have boosted Urla's global visibility and economic appeal, they have also intensified

socio-spatial inequalities and placed pressure on agricultural landscapes. Land cover analysis confirms a shift from productive uses to consumption-oriented spaces, reflecting broader tensions between development and sustainability.

Ultimately, Urla's case underscores the need for planning approaches that prioritize spatial justice, ecological preservation, and community inclusion. Without such efforts, gastronomy-led growth may deepen inequalities and erode the very cultural and environmental assets it seeks to celebrate.

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