

## REVIEW / DERLEME

# From Urban Dwellers to Rural Residents: Housing, Employment, and Integration Challenges of Urban-to-Rural Migrants

## *Kent Sakinlerinden Köylülere: Kentten Kıra Göç Edenlerin Konut, İstihdam ve Entegrasyon Güçlükleri*

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### ABSTRACT

This review article examines the phenomenon of urban-to-rural migration, with a special focus on the post-migration experiences of individuals who relocated from urban centers to rural areas. Employing a systematic literature review methodology, the study analyzes 154 peer-reviewed articles from Scopus and Web of Science databases, synthesizing findings across various migrant types, including lifestyle migrants, return migrants, retirement migrants, amenity migrants, second-home owners, neo-peasants and rural gentrifiers. Two key dimensions of after-migration experiences were analyzed: (i) housing and employment challenges and (ii) initial adaptation processes and emerging patterns of everyday life experiences. The findings highlight the varied strategies migrants employ to secure housing and employment, the challenges they face in adapting to rural environments, and how they establish new everyday lives. By examining diverse migrant experiences, this review aims to provide a nuanced understanding of the multifaceted nature of urban-to-rural migration, contribute to the growing literature on rural in-migration, and offer valuable insights for policymakers, researchers, and practitioners involved in rural development and migration studies.

**Keywords:** Adaptation processes; everyday life; housing and employment; systematic literature review; urban-to-rural migration.

### ÖZ

Bu derleme makalesi, kentten kıra göç olgusunu, özellikle kent merkezlerinden kırsal alanlara taşınan bireylerin göç sonrası deneyimlerine odaklanarak incelemektedir. Sistematik bir literatür taraması metodolojisinin benimsendiği bu çalışmada, Scopus ve Web of Science veri tabanlarından seçilen 154 hakemli makale analiz edilerek; yaşam tarzı göçmenleri, tersine göç edenler, emeklilik göçmenleri, refah göçmenleri, ikinci ev sahipleri, yeni köylüler ve kırsal soylulaştırıcılar gibi farklı göçmen türlerine ilişkin bulgular sentezlenmiştir. Göç sonrası deneyimlerin iki temel boyutu analiz edilmiştir: (i) konut ve istihdam zorlukları ve (ii) ilk uyum süreçleri ve ortaya çıkan gündelik yaşam deneyimi örüntüleri. Bulgular, göçmenlerin konut ve istihdam sağlamak için kullandıkları çeşitli stratejileri, kırsal ortamlara uyum sağlamada karşılaştıkları zorlukları ve yeni gündelik yaşamlarını nasıl kurduklarını vurgulamaktadır. Bu derleme, çeşitli göçmen deneyimlerini inceleyerek, kentten kıra göçün çok yönlü doğasına dair kapsamlı bir anlayış sağlamayı, kırsal göç literatürüne katkıda bulunmayı ve kırsal kalkınma ve göç çalışmalarında yer alan politika yapıcılar, araştırmacılar ve uygulayıcılar için önemli iç görüler sunmayı amaçlamaktadır.

**Anahtar sözcükler:** Uyum süreçleri; gündelik yaşam; konut ve istihdam; sistematik literatür taraması; kentten kıra göç.

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## 1. Introduction

The phenomenon of individuals relocating from urban centers to rural areas has increasingly gained the attention of scholars across various disciplines in the last 50 years. As urbanization continues to dominate global trends, this counter-movement offers a unique perspective on changing perceptions of rural life, evolving lifestyle preferences, and the complicated relationship between urban and rural spaces in the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Phillips, 1993; Halfacree, 2007; Benson & O'Reilly, 2009).

The urban-to-rural migration phenomenon encompasses various forms, each with distinct characteristics and implications. Key concepts within urban-to-rural migration include return or reverse migration, retirement migration, amenity migration, lifestyle migration, new peasantry, and rural gentrification. Return migration involves individuals returning to their hometowns after spending time in urban areas (Rhoades, 1978; Richling, 1985; Farrell et al., 2012; Ni Laoire, 2007; Thi Le & Nakagawa, 2021; Pedersen & Therkelsen, 2022). Retirement migration is a subset of lifestyle migration, where older adults choose to spend their post-work years in rural settings (Burley, 1982; Glasgow, 1995; Bennett, 1996; Egidi et al., 2020). Amenity migration refers to the demographic shift wherein individuals are drawn to rural areas, motivated by the allure of environmental features or cultural attractions unique to these locations. (Löffler & Steinicke, 2006; Bender & Kanitscheider, 2012, 2013; Ulrich-Schad, 2018). New peasantry describes a movement of people, often from urban backgrounds, who take up small-scale farming or other traditional rural livelihoods (Verinis, 2007, 2011; Niska et al., 2012; Del Renau, 2018; Milone & Ventura, 2019; Wilbur, 2014; Sandstrom, 2023). Rural gentrification occurs when more affluent urban dwellers move into rural areas, potentially leading to increased property values and changes in local services and community dynamics (Phillips, 1993; Friedberger, 1996; Smith, 2002; Ghose, 2004; Nelson et al., 2010; Başaran-Uysal & Sakarya, 2018). Lifestyle migration as an umbrella concept describes the voluntary relocation of individuals who prioritize enhancing their quality of life over purely economic motivations (Benson & O'Reilly, 2009; Benson, 2013; O'Reilly & Benson, 2016).

Studies on urban-to-rural migration can be broadly classified into two categories based on the temporal phases of the migration process: pre-migration and post migration. Pre-migration research investigates the factors that led urban dwellers to consider countryside living, examining the reasons and drivers of such a significant change. This aspect was comprehensively examined in our previous systematic literature review (Erkan-Öcek & İslam, 2025), which analyzed the profiles, characteristics, and motivations of urban-to-rural migrants. Post-migration studies, on the other hand, examine the period following relocation, exploring newcomers' adaptation processes and analyzing how their presence reshapes both the social fabric and physical landscape of rural areas.

This article concentrates on the latter, specifically exploring how literature addresses migrants' lives after relocation. Through a systematic literature review, we've identified two principal themes encapsulating urban migrants' post-relocation experiences: (i) housing and employment challenges, (ii) initial adaptation and integration processes, and everyday life experiences. The next section outlines the methodological approach employed in this review, followed by an in-depth exploration of each thematic category.

## 2. Methodology

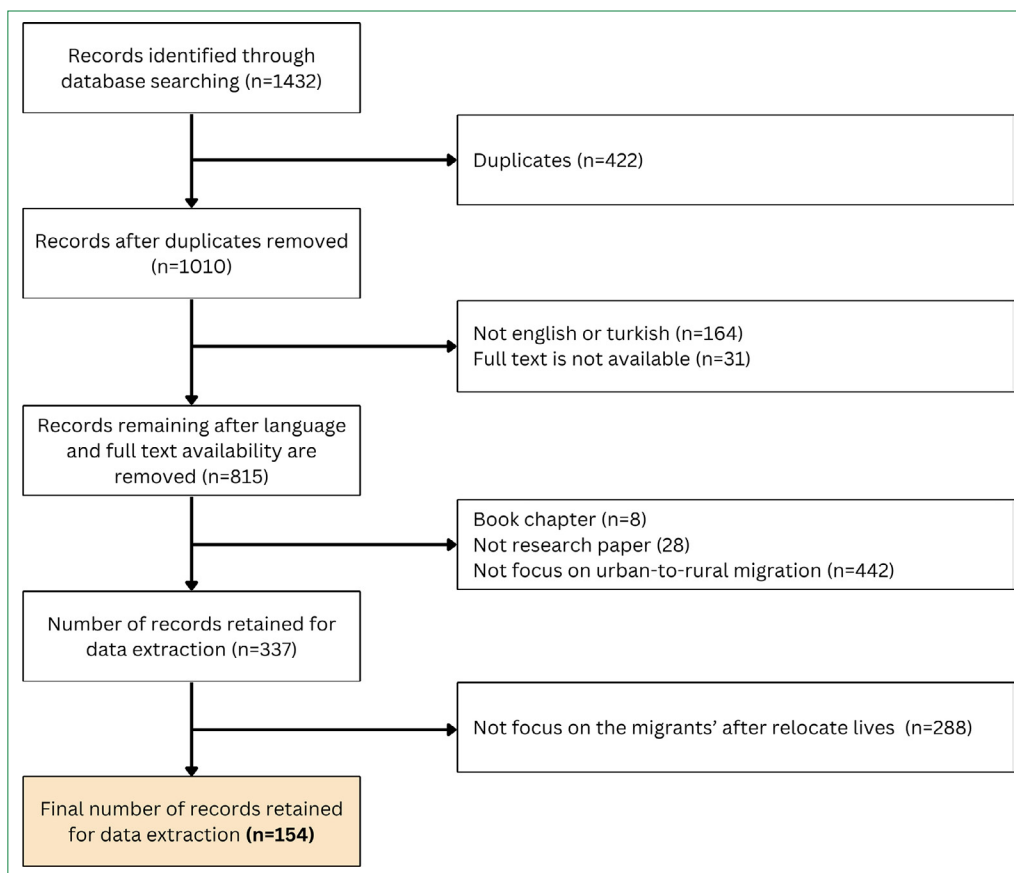
This study employs a systematic literature review following PRISMA guidelines to examine urban-to-rural migration research (Moher et al., 2009). A comprehensive search was conducted using Scopus and Web of Science databases for publications up to 2024. The search terms utilized included "urban to rural migration," "retirement migration" AND "rural," "reverse migration" AND "rural" OR "return migration" AND "rural," "lifestyle migration" AND "rural," "amenity migration" AND "rural," "rural gentrification," and "neo-peasantry" OR "neo-rural" OR "neo-rurality." These keywords were chosen to directly reflect the defined types and key aspects of urban-to-rural migration as discussed in the introduction. The aim was to include both long-standing and recently emerging categories to ensure a comprehensive and balanced coverage of the literature.

The initial search yielded 1,432 records. After applying exclusion criteria—removing duplicates, non-English and non-Turkish studies, those without full text, book chapters, non-research papers, and studies not focusing on urban-to-rural migration—337 articles remained for analysis (Fig. 1). Of the 337 studies, 154 articles specifically address migrants' lives after relocation, which form the core focus of our detailed analysis in this research.

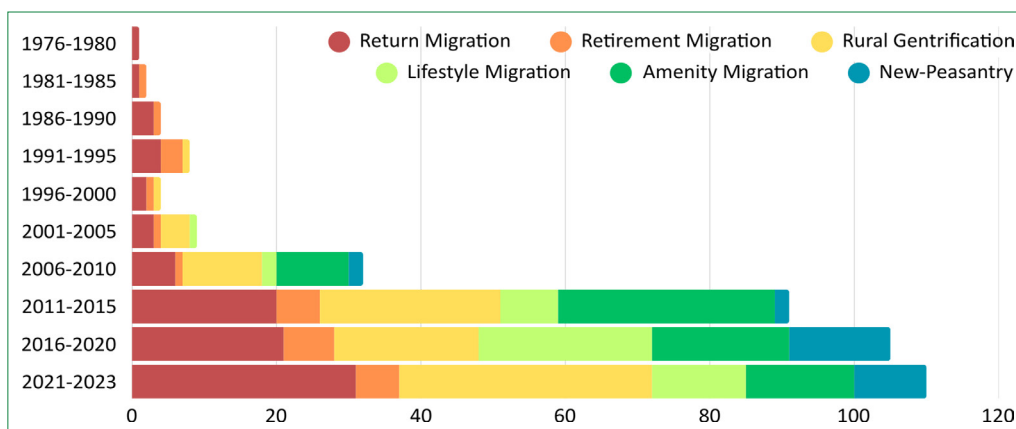
In our previous systematic review (Erkan-Öcek & İslam, 2025), we presented a detailed continent- and country-based classification of the 337 studies included in the dataset. That analysis revealed notable geographical trends: return migration was predominantly addressed in Asian contexts, retirement migration in Europe and North America, amenity migration appeared mostly in studies from America, Europe, and Oceania, while lifestyle migration and neo-peasantry were primarily studied in European settings. Rural gentrification emerged as a cross-regional concept with representations across diverse geographical contexts (Erkan-Öcek & İslam, 2025).

To further contextualize the evolution of urban-to-rural migration research, we conducted a temporal analysis of the same dataset, based on all 337 studies. Figure 2 shows how migration typologies have evolved from 1976 to 2023, marking key thematic shifts. This analysis reveals four key phases:

- 1976–1990 | Early Period: The literature was sparse and largely focused on return and retirement migration, often linked to aging populations returning to rural hometowns.



**Figure 1.** Flow diagram of literature review. Sources: Scopus and Web of Science.



**Figure 2.** Temporal distribution of urban-to-rural migration studies by migration type (1976–2023).

- 1991–2005 | Conceptual Expansion: New concepts like rural gentrification began to emerge, reflecting a growing interest in the socio-spatial transformation of rural areas.
- 2006–2020 | Diversification: There was a sharp increase in both the number and variety of studies. Terms like lifestyle migration, neo-peasantry, and welfare migration gained prominence, highlighting the multifaceted drivers of migration.
- 2021–2023 | Contemporary Surge: Research activity intensified, likely driven by the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and structural changes in work-life patterns. This period marks a shift in focus toward post-migration experiences and the everyday life in rural settings.

While both the geographical and temporal analyses are based on the entire corpus (N=337), this review narrows its focus

**Table 1.** Key aspects of housing in the urban to rural migration literature

Key aspects of housing	Migrant types	Description
Acquisition strategies	Lifestyle migrants	Property purchase, renovation of existing properties
	Return migrants	Leveraging family connections, property investment
	Retirement migrants	Property purchase based on specific criteria
	Amenity migrants	Purchase of properties with specific natural features
	Second-home owners	Purchase of secondary properties in rural areas
	Neo-peasants	Purchase or lease of land for farming
Housing preferences	Lifestyle migrants	Preference for character properties, often renovated
	Return migrants	Preference for familiar properties or areas
	Retirement migrants	Focus on properties near services in a good state of repair
	Amenity migrants	Preference for scenic views, proximity to natural amenities
	Second-home owners	The desire for recreational amenities, seasonal suitability
	Neo-peasants	Seeking properties suitable for small-scale agriculture
Market impacts	Lifestyle migrants	Increased demand, potential price increases in local markets
	Amenity migrants	Rising property prices, changing land use patterns
	Second-home owners	Seasonal market fluctuations, reduced availability for locals
Housing challenges	Lifestyle migrants	Balancing renovation desires with the preservation of rural character
	Return migrants	Readjustment to local housing norms and expectations
	Retirement migrants	Ensuring accessibility, managing maintenance of larger properties
	Amenity migrants	Competition with locals for housing, potential gentrification
	Second-home owners	Difficulties in community integration, issues with seasonal occupancy
	Neo-peasants	Adapting urban housing expectations to rural realities
	International migrants	Navigating language barriers, unfamiliarity with local housing markets

to a subset of 154 studies that specifically explore the post-relocation phase. These include studies on housing, employment, adaptation, and everyday life, and form the core of our thematic analysis in the subsequent sections.

### 3. Housing and Employment Challenges

#### 3.1. Housing Strategies and Challenges

The literature reveals that the housing experiences of urban-to-rural migrants are influenced by various factors such as migrant types, economic resources, and local housing markets. Our analysis identifies four key aspects of housing for urban-to-rural migrants: acquisition strategies, preferences, market impacts, and challenges (Table 1).

**I. Acquisition strategies:** Urban-to-rural migrants employ various strategies to secure housing in their new rural settings. These strategies often differ based on the type of migrant and their resources:

Lifestyle migrants frequently invest in property purchases or renovations, viewing homeownership as a key aspect of their rural lifestyle aspirations (di Campli, 2019; Hayes, 2015).

These migrants often seek properties that offer a sense of authenticity or allow for renovation projects, aligning with their idealized vision of rural life (Benson, 2013).

Return migrants often leverage family connections, either moving into existing family properties or using local knowledge to find suitable housing (Reichert, 1993; Xu et al., 2017; Zhao, 2002). In developing countries, returnees may invest in housing as a way to display their migration success, sometimes leading to changes in local architectural styles and housing norms (Zhao, 2002; McCormick & Wahba, 2004; Liu, 2020).

Retirement migrants typically purchase properties based on specific criteria that align with their needs and preferences in later life (Hoggart & Buller, 1995). Amenity migrants often seek to purchase properties with specific natural features that align with their desire for a particular rural lifestyle (Paquette & Domon, 2001a; Mendham & Curtis, 2010).

Second-home owners tend to purchase secondary properties in rural areas, contributing to a pattern of part-time residency (Galyan Moghaddam & Amar, 2012; Rye, 2015). Neo-peasants, driven by agricultural aspirations, often purchase or lease land suitable for farming (Wilbur, 2014; Milone & Ventura, 2019).

**Table 2.** Key aspects of employment in the urban to rural migration literature

Key aspects of employment	Migrant types	Description
Employment strategies	Lifestyle migrants	Entrepreneurship, remote work, self-employment
	Return migrants	Reintegration into local labor markets, self-employment
	Retirement migrants	Part-time work, consultancy, volunteering
	Amenity migrants	Tourism-related businesses, creative industries
	Neo-peasants	Small-scale agriculture, artisanal production
Economic sector	Lifestyle migrants	Tourism, services, creative industries
	Return migrants	Agriculture, small businesses, self-employment
	Amenity migrants	Tourism, hospitality, environmental services
	Neo-peasants	Organic farming, specialty food production
Labor market integration & challenges	Lifestyle migrants / Amenity migrants	Creation of niche markets, potential competition with locals, Limited local market size, seasonal fluctuations
	Return migrants	Challenges in skill matching, half-time work outside the village with farming, Reintegration difficulties, potential underemployment,
	Neo-peasants	Agricultural market access, economic viability
	International migrants	Language barriers, qualification recognition issues

**2. Housing preferences:** Housing preferences vary significantly across migrant types, reflecting different motivations for rural living:

Lifestyle migrants often seek properties with distinct character, sometimes prioritizing historical or traditional rural architecture (Benson, 2013; di Campli, 2019). Return migrants typically prefer familiar properties or areas, often tied to their past experiences or family connections (Reichert, 1993; Xu et al., 2017).

Retirement migrants prioritize properties that balance rural charm with accessibility to essential services and are in a good state of repair (Hoggart & Buller, 1995; Winterton & Warburton, 2012). Amenity migrants often prefer properties with scenic views or easy access to natural amenities (Paquette & Domon, 2001; Gillon, 2014).

Second-home owners desire properties with recreational amenities and seasonal suitability, reflecting their part-time usage patterns (Rye, 2015). Neo-peasants seek properties suitable for small-scale agriculture, aligning with their farming aspirations (Milone & Ventura, 2019; Suh, 2019).

**3. Housing market impacts:** The influx of urban-to-rural migrants can significantly impact local housing markets:

Lifestyle migrants' demand for rural properties can increase local market prices (Hayes, 2015). Amenity migration often results in rising property prices and changing land use patterns in rural areas (Finewood, 2012; Holmes & Argent, 2016; Hayes, 2015). Sutherland (2021) and Phillips et al. (2021a) note that the influx of urban buyers can lead to increased property prices, potentially causing affordability issues for local residents.

Second-home ownership contributes to seasonal market fluctuations and can reduce housing availability for local residents (Galyan Moghaddam & Amar, 2012).

**4. Housing challenges:** Urban-to-rural migrants face various housing challenges in their new rural settings:

Lifestyle migrants often struggle to balance their desire for renovations with the preservation of rural character (Benson, 2013). Return migrants may face challenges in readjusting to local housing norms and expectations (Zhao, 2002).

Retirement migrants often need to ensure accessibility and manage the maintenance of larger rural properties (Hoggart & Buller, 1995). Amenity migrants' presence can lead to competition with locals for housing and potential gentrification (Hayes, 2015).

Second-home owners may face difficulties in community integration and issues related to seasonal occupancy (Rye, 2015). Neo-peasants often need to adapt their urban housing expectations to rural realities (Milone & Ventura, 2019).

### 3.2. Employment Strategies and Challenges

Employment issues are important in the after-migration adaptation of migrants, with challenges and opportunities varying significantly across different migrant groups and geographical contexts. Our analysis identifies three key aspects of employment for urban-to-rural migrants: employment strategies, economic sectors, and labor market integration with challenges (Table 2).

**1. Employment strategies:** Urban-to-rural migrants adopt various strategies to secure livelihoods in their new rural settings. Lifestyle migrants often create their own employment opportunities through entrepreneurship or remote work (Eimermann, 2015a; Eimermann, 2016; Stone & Stubbs, 2007; Liu, 2020). This self-employment approach allows them to combine their professional skills with their desired rural lifestyle (di Campli, 2019; Hayes, 2015).

Return migrants, particularly in developing countries, face the challenge of reintegrating into local labor markets. Many opt for self-employment or start small businesses, leveraging skills and capital acquired during their migration experience (Banerjee & Das, 2023; Xu, 2010; Demurger & Xu, 2011; Chen & Wang, 2019; Wang & Yang, 2013; Xu et al., 2017).

Retirement migrants may engage in part-time work, consultancy, or volunteering activities, balancing income generation with lifestyle preferences (Von Reichert et al., 2011). Amenity migrants often establish businesses in tourism-related sectors or creative industries, capitalizing on the natural and cultural assets of their chosen rural locations (Matarrita-Cascante & Suess, 2020; Carson et al., 2018).

Neo-peasants typically engage in small-scale agriculture or artisanal production, often driven by ideals of sustainable living and connection to the land (Chiodo et al., 2019; Milone & Ventura, 2019; Soldi et al. 2019).

**2. Economic sectors:** The economic sectors migrants engage in vary based on their skills, interests, and local opportunities. Lifestyle and amenity migrants frequently participate in tourism, services, and creative industries (Carson et al., 2018; Eimermann, 2015a, 2016). Their businesses often cater to niche markets or offer specialized services that may not have previously existed in the area.

Return migrants, especially in developing countries, often engage in agriculture or establish small businesses in various sectors (Black, 1993; Démurger & Xu, 2011). Their sector choice may be influenced by local economic conditions and their own skill sets (Xu, 2010).

Neo-peasants predominantly focus on agriculture, often specializing in organic farming or specialty food production (Chiodo et al., 2019; Milone & Ventura, 2019; Gongora et al., 2019). This aligns with their motivations for moving to rural areas and their desire for sustainable living practices (Milone & Ventura, 2019; Perez et al., 2020).

**3. Labor market integration and challenges:** Return migrants often face reintegration difficulties, and challenges in skill matching, and may experience periods of underemployment (Banerjee & Das, 2023; Xu et al., 2017; Wang & Fan, 2006). The skills and experiences gained abroad may not

always align with local labor market needs, making the transition from urban to rural employment contexts particularly challenging (Chiodo et al., 2019).

Lifestyle and Amenity migrants may create niche markets for their services or products but can sometimes face competition with local businesses and challenges related to limited local market size and seasonal fluctuations in demand, particularly in tourism-dependent areas (van Rooij & Margaryan, 2019; Stone & Stubbs, 2007, Bakas et al., 2019; Matarrita-Cascante & Suess, 2020; Carson et al., 2018). Their success often depends on their ability to integrate into local business networks and adapt to local economic conditions (van Rooij & Margaryan, 2019).

Neo-Peasants often grapple with challenges related to agricultural market access and ensuring the economic viability of their small-scale farming operations (Gongora et al., 2019; Chiodo et al., 2019). The transition to agricultural livelihoods can be particularly challenging for those without prior farming experience. International Migrants may encounter additional barriers such as language difficulties and issues with qualification recognition (Mendoza et al., 2020; Mendoza, 2023).

These initial housing and employment experiences set the stage for broader processes of adaptation and integration. As migrants navigate these fundamental aspects of rural life, they encounter a range of additional challenges and opportunities that shape their long-term prospects in rural communities. The following section will examine these processes of initial adaptation and the various challenges faced by urban-to-rural migrants as they settle into their new environments.

## 4. Initial Adaptation, Integration Processes, and Everyday Lives of Urban-to-Rural Migrants

### 4.1. Initial Adaptation and Integration Processes

The transition from urban to rural environments presents a complex set of challenges and opportunities for migrants. This section examines the initial adaptation processes and community integration efforts faced by various types of urban-to-rural migrants. The literature in this field reveals distinct patterns and experiences across different migrant categories while also highlighting common themes in the adaptation process. The analysis considers how different scholars have approached the complex dynamics involved in rural adaptation.

Urban-to-rural migration is not a homogeneous phenomenon; rather, it encompasses a diverse range of migrant types, each with unique motivations, expectations, and experiences. While all migrants face the general challenge of adapting to a new environment, the specific processes and difficulties can vary significantly based on the type of migrant. Some may struggle with cultural differences, others with economic challenges, and still others with rebuilding

**Table 3.** Initial adaptation and early challenges of urban-to-rural migrants

Migrant type	Initial adaptation processes	Community integration	Early challenges
Lifestyle migrants	Adjusting to the rural pace, learning local customs, embracing a new lifestyle	Participating in community events, sharing cultural experiences	Cultural differences, establishing social networks
Return migrants	Reconnecting with old networks, adapting to changes in hometown	Reintegrating into a familiar yet changed community	Readjustment to rural life, managing changed expectations
Retirement migrants	Seeking leisure activities, health-focused adaptations	Joining local clubs, volunteering	Access to healthcare, building new social circles
Amenity migrants	Exploring natural amenities, adapting to seasonal changes	Engaging in outdoor activities, local environmental initiatives	Balancing urban expectations with rural realities
Second-home owners	Seasonal adaptation, maintaining dual residences	Periodic community involvement, balancing local and non-local identity	Integration challenges due to part-time presence
Neo-peasants	Adopting agricultural practices, embracing the rural lifestyle	Engaging with local farming communities, participating in rural traditions	Adapting to agricultural work, economic viability
International migrants	Language acquisition, cultural adaptation	Forming connections with both locals and other migrants	Language barriers, cultural shock, legal challenges
Locals' perspectives	Adapting to changing community dynamics	Integrating newcomers, maintaining local identity	Balancing tradition with new influences

social networks. At the same time, there are commonalities in the experience of adjusting to rural life, such as adapting to a different pace of life, understanding local customs, and integrating into tight-knit communities.

To provide a comprehensive overview of these variations, we have synthesized findings from relevant studies in Table 3.

**Lifestyle migrants:** Lifestyle migrants, as studied by Benson (2013, 2016) and Hoey (2005, 2006), are often driven by a quest for a better quality of life. Their initial adaptation process involves adjusting to the rural pace of life and learning local customs. Eimermann (2015a, 2016) and Matarrita-Cascante (2017) note that these migrants typically engage enthusiastically in community events and share their own cultural experiences. However, they face challenges in establishing new social networks and navigating cultural differences. The idealized vision of rural life that attracts lifestyle migrants can sometimes clash with the realities of rural living, leading to a period of adjustment and reassessment.

**Return migrants:** Return migrants face a unique set of challenges in their adaptation process. Ní Laoire (2007) and Farrell et al. (2012) highlight the complexities of reintegrating into familiar yet changed communities. These migrants must reconnect with old networks while adapting to changes that have occurred in their absence. Thi Le and Nakagawa (2021) and Rodríguez and Egea (2006) observe that return migrants

often struggle with managing changed expectations, both their own and those of their community. Wall and Von Reichert (2013) note that personal circumstances, such as the reason for return (e.g., retirement, family obligations, or economic factors), significantly influence the reintegration process.

**Retirement migrants:** Retirement migrants, as explored by Winterton (2021) and Philip and MacLeod (2018), often focus on health-related adaptations and seek leisure activities in their new rural homes. Winterton and Warburton (2012) and Glasgow (1995) note that these migrants typically join local clubs and engage in volunteering activities as a means of integration. However, they face challenges in accessing health-care services and building new social circles. Sampaio and King (2019) highlight that retirement migrants often bring valuable skills and experience to rural communities but may struggle with feelings of isolation or loss of purpose.

**Amenity migrants:** Amenity migrants are primarily attracted by the natural features of rural areas. Matarrita-Cascante et al. (2015) and Osbaldiston (2022) observe that these migrants often engage in outdoor activities and local environmental initiatives as part of their adaptation process. Ulrich-Schad (2018) notes that while amenity migrants contribute to local economies, they may face challenges in balancing their urban expectations with rural realities. Pisa (2019) highlights that seasonal changes can significantly impact these migrants' experiences, requiring ongoing adaptation.

**Second-home owners:** Second-home owners represent a unique category of part-time rural residents. Kocabiyik and Loopmans (2021) and Wu and Gallent (2021) observe that these migrants face the challenge of maintaining dual residences and identities. Their adaptation process involves seasonal adjustments and periodic community involvement. These migrants can struggle with integration due to their part-time presence, often navigating between being perceived as outsiders and contributing community members.

**Neo-peasants:** Neo-peasants, as explored by Snikersproge (2022) and Milone and Ventura (2019), typically embrace a rural lifestyle centered around agricultural practices, with their initial adaptation process involving acquiring new farming skills. Dal Bello et al. (2022) note that these migrants engage with local farming communities and participate in rural traditions as part of their integration. Giordano et al. (2018) highlight that neo-peasants often face significant challenges in adapting to agricultural work and ensuring economic viability. Their integration into rural communities can be complex, as they may introduce alternative practices that differ from traditional rural norms.

**International migrants:** International migrants (whether lifestyle migrants, retirement migrants, or neo-peasants) face additional layers of complexity in their adaptation process. Verinis (2007, 2011) and Eimermann and Kordel (2018) emphasize the importance of language acquisition and cultural adaptation. Mendoza et al. (2020) and van Rooij and Margaryan (2019) note that these migrants often connect with locals and other migrants, creating unique social networks. However, they face significant challenges related to language barriers, cultural shock, and navigating legal and administrative hurdles specific to international migration.

**Locals' perspectives:** The adaptation process is not limited to newcomers; local rural residents also undergo changes as their communities evolve. Matarrita-Cascante et al. (2017) and Simard et al. (2018) explore how locals adapt to changing community dynamics, often balancing the integration of newcomers with maintaining local identity. Rivera-Escribano (2007) and Ooi et al. (2015) highlight that this process can enrich rural life and create tensions between traditional and new influences.

The initial adaptation and integration processes of urban-to-rural migrants, while varied across different migrant types, set the stage for their long-term experiences in rural communities. As migrants navigate these early challenges and establish their place within their new environments, they begin to develop routines and practices that shape their everyday lives. The following section will examine the everyday lives of urban-to-rural migrants, exploring how their initial adaptations translate into daily practices, social relationships, and ongoing negotiations of identity and belonging in their new rural homes.

## 4.2. Everyday Life Experiences

This section investigates migrants' daily routines, social interactions, and engagement with the rural environment to understand how they navigate and construct their new lives in rural settings. The analysis considers research from various disciplinary perspectives, including sociology, anthropology, and geography, to provide a diverse view of migrants' everyday experiences. Particular attention is given to how different studies conceptualize and investigate the notion of 'everyday life' in the context of rural migration and adaptation.

The everyday lives of urban-to-rural migrants have received increasing attention in recent years, with scholars recognizing its importance in understanding migration experiences. Michaela Benson's works have been particularly influential in this area, emphasizing the role of everyday practices in shaping migrants' experiences and identities (Benson & O'Reilly, 2009; Benson, 2011, 2013, 2016). This section synthesizes findings from various studies, including Benson's seminal works, to provide a comprehensive overview of the everyday lives of urban-to-rural migrants.

Table 4 categorizes the everyday activities of urban-to-rural migrants as reported in the literature. It reveals the diverse range of activities migrants engage in as they adapt to their new rural environments.

**Mobility and everyday practices:** Benson (2011) provides a crucial framework for understanding the everyday lives of urban-to-rural migrants through the lens of mobility. Her study of British lifestyle migrants in rural France revealed that various forms of mobility - physical, imaginative, and communicative - were fundamental to how newcomers evaluated the outcome of their relocation and their pursuit of an improved lifestyle. Migrants engaged in activities such as grocery shopping, visiting friends, and exploring their new surroundings, which contributed to shaping their social worlds and understanding of a better life.

Benson (2016) further explored the emotional dimensions of everyday life for British migrants in rural France. She found that despite the apparent privilege of these lifestyle migrants, their everyday experiences were marked by emotional negotiations and ambivalence. Migrants often experience disappointment, frustration, and loneliness in their new environment, challenging the notion that migration is a straightforward path to self-realization.

**Agricultural and gardening:** A significant portion of urban-to-rural migrants' everyday lives revolves around agricultural and gardening activities. Santiago (2017) found that lifestyle migrants in rural Chile engaged in organic farming and permaculture practices, often taking leadership roles in promoting sustainable agriculture. Wilbur (2014) observed that back-to-the-land migrants in Northern Italy prioritized

**Table 4.** Everyday activities of migrants analyzes in literature

Everyday activity category	Specific activities
Mobility and everyday practices	Physical travel (e.g., grocery shopping, visiting friends), imaginative travel, communicative travel
Agricultural and gardening	Organic farming, permaculture, crop cultivation, livestock rearing, gardening
Community engagement	Participating in local clubs, volunteering, attending community events, organizing cultural performances
Leisure and recreation	Hiking, cycling, yoga, meditation, exploring nature, participating in sports clubs
Entrepreneurship	Running B&Bs, restaurants, local specialty stores, offering tourism services
Home maintenance	Renovating houses, maintaining gardens, and domestic chores
Cultural activities	Engaging in traditional music, arts and crafts, local festivals, pursuing authenticity
Environmental conservation	Reforestation, waste reduction, environmental education
Social networking	Chatting with neighbors, entertaining guests, building relationships with locals
Shopping and errands	Grocery shopping, visiting local markets, supporting local businesses
Transnational connections	Communicating with family/friends abroad, watching foreign media
Seasonal activities	Adapting routines to local climate, engaging in season-specific tasks
Learning and skill development	Attending workshops, learning local languages, acquiring new rural skills
Identity negotiation	Performing rural identities, differentiating from tourists, striving for authenticity

self-sufficiency through farming and gardening. However, Pisa (2019) noted that many migrants underestimated the complexity and physical demands of maintaining a garden, highlighting the learning curve associated with these activities.

**Community engagement and social networking:** Building on Benson's (2011) observations about the importance of social connections, other studies have confirmed the crucial role of community engagement in migrants' everyday lives. Suh (2019) reported that new settlers in rural South Korea actively participated in various social clubs, ranging from traditional music to sports, which played a significant role in their integration with local communities. Philip and MacLeod (2018) found similar patterns on the Isle of Bute, where migrants contributed to organizing and running various community groups. Wu et al. (2023) highlighted the importance of daily communication and mutual assistance among residents, including migrants, in a rural tourism destination in China.

**Leisure and recreation:** Benson's work (2011, 2016) highlights how leisure activities are not just pastimes but are integral to migrants' identity formation and their pursuit of a better way of life. Leisure and recreational activities form an important part of migrants' everyday lives, often centered around the natural environment. Osbaldiston (2022) observed that migrants in rural Tasmania adapted their leisure activities to align with the local climate and environment. Winterton and Warburton (2012) found that retirees in rural areas engaged in various outdoor activities, appreciating the natural surroundings of their new homes.

**Entrepreneurship and economic activities:** Many urban-to-rural migrants engage in entrepreneurial activities as

part of their everyday lives. Klien (2022a, 2022b) examined lifestyle migrants in rural Japan who ran guesthouses, restaurants, and other small businesses. Eimermann (2015b) observed similar trends among Dutch migrants in Sweden, who engaged in multifunctional rural land use and entrepreneurial activities. These economic activities not only provide livelihoods but also contribute to the local rural economy.

**Home maintenance and domestic life:** The everyday lives of migrants often involve significant time spent on home maintenance and domestic chores. Benson (2013) explored how lifestyle migrants in rural France engaged in practices of distinction through their everyday lives, including home renovation and maintenance. These activities were not just practical necessities but ways of performing their new rural identities. Pisa (2019) found that many migrants were surprised by the amount of physical work required to maintain a rural home and garden. Wilbur (2014) noted that women migrants, in particular, often faced challenges in balancing agricultural work with domestic responsibilities.

**Cultural activities and identity negotiation:** Engagement in cultural activities plays a role in migrants' everyday lives and their identity negotiation in new rural settings. Benson's work (2013, 2016) provides rich insights into how migrants negotiate their identities through everyday cultural practices. She observed that migrants often sought to differentiate themselves from tourists and other migrants, striving for authenticity in their rural lives. Suh (2019) and Philip and MacLeod (2018) both also highlighted migrants' participation in local cultural events and traditions. Wallis (2019) examined how migrants' everyday choices in dress and self-presentation contributed to their adaptation to rural life.

**Environmental conservation:** Environmental conservation activities feature prominently in the everyday lives of many urban-to-rural migrants. Santiago (2017) found that migrants in rural Chile often took leadership roles in environmental education and protection. Gillon (2014) observed how migrants in rural residential estates negotiated their everyday practices to accommodate wildlife and promote biodiversity.

**Transnational connections and mobility:** Benson's (2011) emphasis on the importance of various forms of mobility in migrants' lives is particularly relevant here. Despite moving to rural areas, many migrants maintain transnational connections as part of their everyday lives. Beyaz (2020) observed that migrants often adopted a dual-location lifestyle, maintaining connections with their places of origin. Klien (2022a) found that lifestyle migrants in rural Japan balanced local commitment with transnational connections, often incorporating global elements into their daily lives. These included maintaining friendships through international online communication, using foreign objects such as Scandinavian blankets, cooking international cuisine with local ingredients, and drawing inspiration from overseas travel experiences to reinterpret local nature and daily practices.

**Seasonal activities and climate adaptation:** The everyday lives of urban-to-rural migrants are often shaped by seasonal patterns and local climates. Osbaldiston (2022) found that migrants in Tasmania adapted their daily routines to align with local weather patterns and seasons. Kocabiyık and Loopmans (2021) observed how seasonal migration patterns influenced everyday life in a Turkish small town. Their study revealed that the return of seasonal migrants—particularly during summer—created temporary social intensification, changes in economic activities, and spatial shifts in public life, influencing how year-round residents experienced daily rhythms and used communal spaces. Hoey (2006) provides additional insights into how migrants adapt their lifestyles after relocation. His study reveals that many migrants embrace a slower pace of life, allowing them to synchronize more closely with natural rhythms and seasons. Interviewees in Hoey's research described taking control of their lives, redefining success, and prioritizing balance and meaningful connections.

**Learning and skill development:** Benson (2013) noted that lifestyle migrants often saw their move to rural areas as an opportunity for personal growth and learning. This aligns with findings from other studies. Suh (2019) noted that migrants in South Korea often participated in workshops and classes to acquire new skills. Klien (2022a) observed similar patterns among lifestyle migrants in Japan, who invested time in learning local languages and traditional crafts.

The daily experiences of those moving from urban to rural areas are marked by various activities, showcasing the difficulties and possibilities found in country living. These activities span from traditional rural practices like farming and gardening to modern entrepreneurial ventures and maintaining transnational connections. The engagement in community activities, environmental conservation, and continuous learning demonstrates migrants' efforts to integrate into their new communities while shaping rural landscapes according to their values and aspirations. Future research could benefit from more in-depth, longitudinal studies of these everyday practices to understand how they evolve over time and contribute to long-term rural development and social change.

## 5. Conclusion

This systematic review provides a comprehensive overview of urban-to-rural migrants' experiences after relocation, focusing on housing and employment challenges, adaptation processes, and everyday lives. The study reveals both areas of consensus and ongoing debates within the field while also highlighting less-studied areas requiring further research.

Building on the foundation, post-migration research encompasses a diverse array of investigations into the multifaceted experiences of migrants following their relocation. These studies examine various aspects of migrants' lives in their newly adopted rural environments, including but not limited to the transformative nature of their quotidian routines, the complex processes of adaptation to unfamiliar sociocultural landscapes, the challenges encountered in securing adequate housing and gainful employment; and the nuanced interplay between urban-rural migration patterns and their consequent impacts—both beneficial and detrimental—on rural regions and their indigenous communities. Such comprehensive analyses serve to illuminate the complex dynamics of population movement and its far-reaching effects on both migrants and host societies. Among the key areas of focus in this research:

Housing and employment emerge as critical factors in the early stages of urban-to-rural migration, significantly influencing migrants' initial experiences and adaptation processes. The diverse strategies and challenges observed across different migrant types reflect the complexity of rural in-migration and its varied impacts on rural communities. Housing choices not only shape migrants' immediate living conditions but also interact with local housing markets and community dynamics. Similarly, employment strategies and challenges highlight the intricate balance between migrants' skills, aspirations, and the economic realities of rural areas.

Housing experiences vary significantly among migrant types, with acquisition strategies, preferences, and challenges closely tied to migrants' motivations and resources. The diversity

of housing strategies observed across migrant types, from property purchases and renovations to leveraging family connections, reflects the complicated interactions between migrants' aspirations, economic resources, and the specific characteristics of their chosen rural destinations.

Employment strategies and challenges differ markedly across migrant groups. Some migrants, particularly lifestyle and amenity migrants, often create entrepreneurial opportunities, while others, such as return migrants and neo-peasants, face significant challenges in reintegrating into local labor markets or establishing economically viable agricultural practices. These employment experiences play a crucial role in shaping migrants' overall adaptation and integration into rural communities.

The initial adaptation and integration processes highlight the diverse ways in which different migrant types navigate their new rural environments. From adjusting to the rural pace of life to rebuilding social networks, migrants employ various strategies to integrate into their new communities. However, challenges such as cultural differences changed expectations, and the need to balance urban-acquired skills with rural realities are common across migrant types.

The transition from initial adaptation to established rural living is not always clear-cut; rather, it is a gradual process where early experiences inform and evolve into daily habits and social interactions. Our examination of everyday life experiences reveals the distinct patterns of activities migrants engage in as they construct their new rural lives. These activities, ranging from agricultural pursuits and community engagement to transnational connections and identity negotiation, demonstrate the active role migrants play in shaping rural landscapes and communities.

The literature also reveals several areas where researchers hold divergent views. One key debate centers on the effectiveness of different integration strategies across various migrant types and their impact on daily routines. Another area of disagreement relates to the long-term sustainability of urban-to-rural migrants' lifestyle choices and their influence on everyday satisfaction and well-being.

While there is substantial research on initial adaptation, studies examining the everyday life experiences of migrants are comparatively less prevalent. This area of research, focusing on the daily realities of migrants as they settle into their new rural environments, presents an opportunity for further exploration and understanding of the long-term integration process. The role of sensory experiences in rural adaptation and how these contribute to migrants' sense of place and belonging is one of the less studied areas. Research on everyday experiences that examines how factors such as gender, age, ethnicity and socioeconomic status in-

tersect or have differential effects to shape the daily lives of migrants in rural settings also requires more attention. The impact of digital technologies on migrants' everyday practices and social interactions in rural areas is an emerging area of interest that requires specialized research. How migrants navigate their daily experiences regarding affect (emotional response or expression), belonging, and potential isolation also provides an important area for researching migrants' everyday rural life. Additionally, how urban-to-rural migrants incorporate sustainability practices into their daily lives and the intergenerational dynamics within migrant families experiencing and negotiating daily life in rural settings are areas that could benefit from further research. These less studied areas have the potential to provide a more nuanced and comprehensive understanding of the long-term experiences of urban-rural migrants.

The post-relocation experiences of urban-to-rural migrants emerge as an intricate and diverse phenomenon. While offering opportunities for lifestyle changes and personal growth, it also presents significant challenges in terms of integration, identity negotiation, and adaptation to rural life. The diversity of migrant experiences highlighted in this review underscores the need for nuanced, context-specific approaches to understanding and supporting urban-to-rural migrants in their new environments.

As global trends continue to evolve, particularly in light of changing work patterns and perceptions of rural life, understanding the lived experiences of urban-to-rural migrants will remain important. Further exploration of the less-studied areas highlighted in this review could inform policies and support systems that not only enhance the integration and well-being of urban-to-rural migrants but also address the needs and impacts on established rural communities.

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