



Motivations Influencing Relocation to the Suburbs: The Case of İzmir

Banliyölere Taşınmayı Etkileyen Motivasyonlar: İzmir örneği

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Öz

Hızlı kentleşme eğilimi, çevresel bozulma ve kent sakinlerinin refahında azalma gibi çeşitli zorluklara neden olmuştur. Ekonomik faktörler tarihsel olarak kentsel göçün ana nedeni olmuşken, son araştırmalar plansız kentleşme ve getirdiği problemler olan azalan yeşil alanlar, trafik sıkışıklığı ve hava kirliliği gibi etkenlerin bu göçte etkili olduğunu göstermektedir. Sonuç olarak, daha iyi bir yaşam standardı arayışında olan bir grup insan kentsel alanlardan banliyö bölgelere taşınmaya başlamıştır. Bu değişim, demografik, sosyoekonomik ve sosyokültürel değişimlerin karmaşık etkileşimini yansıtmaktadır. COVID-19 pandemisinin başlangıcından bu yana, uzaktan çalışma fırsatları ve kentsel yaşam koşullarına ilişkin endişeler nedeniyle banliyö bölgelerine artan ilgi gözlemlenmektedir. Bu çalışma, Türkiye'nin İzmir şehrindeki banliyö yaşam motivasyonlarını Villakent mahallesine odaklanarak incelemektedir. Katılımcıların demografik özelliklerini ve banliyö yaşamını tercih etme nedenlerini anketler ve mülakatlar yoluyla araştırmaktadır. Araştırma, 123 katılımcının anket sorularına ve 15 detaylı mülakata dayanan sonuçlara dayanmaktadır. Bulgular, katılımcıların bahçeli bir evde yaşama isteği ve şehir merkezlerindeki rahatsız edici kalabalıkların banliyö taşınmasında önemli faktörler olduğunu göstermektedir. Mülakatlarda, şehir merkezlerine göre, banliyölerde konutların uygun fiyatlı olması da banliyöye yerleşmeyi tercih etmede önemli bir faktör olduğunu ortaya koymuştur. Ayrıca, yapılan çalışma, COVID-19 pandemisinin banliyö taşınmaları üzerinde etkisi olduğunu ve İzmir'deki deprem riskinin de insanların şehir merkezlerinden uzaklaşma isteğini artırdığını göstermiştir. Mülakatlarda, katılımcıların Villakent tercihi detaylı olarak incelenmiş olup, olumlu ve olumsuz yönleri tartışılmıştır. Kentleşme zorluklarıyla başa çıkmak ve sürdürülebilir kentsel gelişimi teşvik etmek için politika yapıcıların bu alanda yapılan çalışmalarını dikkate alması gerekmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Banliyö hayatı, Şehir-Banliyö göçü, Konut sakinlerin tercihleri, Kentleşme

ABSTRACT

The ongoing urbanization trend has led to various challenges including environmental degradation, and decreased welfare among city dwellers. While economic factors have historically been the primary driver of urban migration, recent research suggests that unplanned urbanization and the problems it brings such as decreased green spaces, traffic congestion and air pollution are gaining significance. As a result, a group of people has been relocating from urban to suburban areas, seeking an improved standard of living. This shift reflects a complex interplay of factors including demographic, socioeconomic, and sociocultural shifts. Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been an increased interest in suburban areas due to remote work opportunities and concerns about urban living conditions. This study examines motivations for suburban living in İzmir, Turkey, focusing on Villakent neighbourhood. Through surveys and interviews with residents, it explores demographic characteristics and reasons for choosing suburban life. The research is based on the results of a sample of 123 participants of a survey questionnaire and 15 in-depth interviews. Findings have indicated that the participants' desire for living in a house with a garden and the discomforting crowds in the city centers was the important factors in suburban relocation. In interviews, it was also revealed that the affordability of housing in the suburbs compared to city centers is also an important factor in choosing to settle in the suburbs. Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic has had an impact on suburban relocation, and the earthquake risk in İzmir has also increased people's desire to move away from city centers. In the interviews, the preference for Villakent was discussed along with its positive and negative aspects in detail. Policymakers must consider these insights to address urban challenges and promote sustainable urban development.

Keywords: Suburban life, Urban-Suburban migration, Residents' preferences, Urbanization



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INTRODUCTION:

The number of people living in urban areas is rising, and this led to several negative consequences, including unplanned urbanization, increased negative effects on the environment, and lower welfare among city dwellers. Although the majority of research supports the theory that the popularity of city living today is primarily driven by economic factors, an increasing amount of research indicates that consumption factors like *urban amenities*, *aesthetics*, and *quality public services* also hold significant importance (Chen & Rosenthal, 2008). On the other hand, a consistent yet limited group of individuals have been relocating from urban to suburban areas, seeking an improved standard of living. Cities are experiencing both urban sprawl and various forms of suburban growth at the same time. A significant and growing portion of urban inhabitants worldwide reside in suburban low-density regions, even though certain suburban areas are declining (Booi et al., 2019). Despite the belief that city living has become the primary choice for numerous individuals and families, suburbanization remains a crucial aspect of modern urban development. Moreover, the prosperous cities in today's economy are situated within metropolitan areas where suburbs play a significant role. Indeed, there's a noticeable shift in residential patterns within regions: urban cores are drawing a greater number of educated, wealthier, younger households, while suburbs are experiencing increased social and ethnic diversity (Tzaninis & Boterman, 2018).

Suburban developments date back to the early stages of industrialization. The migrations have intensified towards cities where industrial establishments exist, and urban populations have rapidly increased. Suburban emerged as a refuge for upper-class citizens seeking relief from the crowded urban environment of that time (Sonmez, 2007). These initial suburban areas set the standard for future suburban development and were considered attractive solutions to the growing urban challenges (Baldassare, 1992). During the later stages of the urban-industrial period, suburbs experienced significant expansion. The widespread adoption of automobiles and the construction of extensive highways set people free from the necessity of residing close to their workplaces. Families with small children who do not attend school have started to evaluate options between living away from the city or remaining within it. During the latter half of the 20th century, the expansion of suburbs in the developed regions of the world largely relied on families transitioning from urban to suburban areas (Mulder, 1996). The majority of the suburban population consisted of middle-class families with children, predominantly commuting to the city daily. According to Guimera (2003) and Munoz (2003), the same suburban growth trend was observed in developing countries as well. Additionally, the economic trends of the twentieth century with globalization have impacted the urban growth patterns of mega-cities in developing nations (Booi et al., 2019). However, the movement from the city to the suburbs has become more diverse and complex. Studies (Boterman et al., 2010; Smith, 2012) revealed that gentrification and effective city branding have made urban living appealing once more. There appears to be a rising trend of middle-class families choosing to reside in urban areas because in their opinion, living in a suburb would not be feasible (Karsten, 2007). These similar patterns have been seen in several places of the world in recent decades.

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, it has become evident how sensitive cities are to crises. Dynamics such as human mobility, population density, and excessive urbanization create highly conducive environments for the spread of viruses, significantly increasing the number of cases (Oztaskarli & Celikyay, 2020). This, together with the widespread adoption of remote work has had a substantial impact on migration trends. Based on this, there has been an increased interest in suburban and rural areas with fewer human interactions, compared to urban areas. Moreover, larger houses,

parks, and a feeling of community are the hallmarks of suburban areas, which have drawn many people to relocate from the bustle of the city. This change is indicative of a complex progression in the choices people make for their homes and lifestyles. Hence it is interesting to get a better understanding of why people are moving to rural from urban areas. Although various researchers have tried to explain urban-suburban differences, they did not find conclusive evidence of what drives these motivations (Andersen, 2016; Boterman, 2012; Öztürk et al., 2018).

The preferences for urban life may be influenced by demographic, socioeconomic, or sociocultural shifts differences (Booi et al., 2019). Moving to more suburban locations might be less popular overall as the proportion of urban-oriented households—students, single-parent households, and households with higher levels of education—increases inside the city. In the suburban experience, the shaping process and the preferences of residents differ in each country due to the influence of global and local forces. Each country should separately be investigated in the context of urban-suburban patterns. These tendencies have also been observed in Turkey's megacities. On the outskirts of large cities, the affluent and upper-middle class are already creating their living conditions (Sonmez, 2009). This article focuses on Izmir, the third biggest city in Turkey, which has also been experiencing economic restructuring since the 1980s due to global economic shifts. Izmir's spatial pattern began to shift mostly as a result of these developments, and as a result, the city is now more significant than it was within its expanded metropolitan area. One of these changes in Izmir's physical landscape is the rise of suburban areas.

The city of Izmir serves as an ideal example for studying shifts in residential mobility within urban areas. The city's central urban area has seen significant increases in population and rapid changes in the socio-economic status of its residents. In 1992, with the completion of the Izmir-Cesme main road, the construction of new settlements further away from the city, particularly consisting of villa-style houses, began. Studies mostly focused on the sites on the East-West axis such as Urla, Seferihisar, Narlıdere, etc. However, recently, with the effects of COVID-19 and earthquakes, sites on the North-South axis have gained importance. Particularly, Villakent took a position as a new suburban belt of the Izmir city region. However, there are few studies conducted in Villakent. This study will investigate the motivations to live in suburban by conducting an online survey and interviews with residents of Villakent.

1. Urban-Suburban Mobilities and Preferences for Suburban life

1.1. Urban-Suburban Development in Izmir

Particularly in the previous 20 years, Turkey's major cities' urban development patterns have undergone significant change. The major cities have grown, extending both at their edges and through the establishment of new smaller cities along the highways. These extensions have included a range of land uses, including commercial, industrial, and residential. Izmir is among the cities that went through suburbanization as a result of its nineteenth-century integration with commerce and industrial capitalism. Since its incorporation as a port city into trade capitalism in the seventeenth century and industrial capitalism in the nineteenth century, the metropolitan city of Izmir has been a component of the global economy. As a result, the city's economy, social organization, and settlement were all impacted by the port's commercial activity. For instance, the installation of new buildings began to alter the physical layout of the city (Kiray, 1972). Additionally, a new housing design accompanied the establishment of the city's new socio-economic structure. The suburban development on the city's outskirts followed this trend. The upper-income foreigners and upper-middle-income merchants wanted to live in villages with large gardens outside of the city. This was the initial stage of suburbanization in Izmir. Izmir's nineteenth-century suburban neighborhoods grew and by the second half of the twentieth century, they had also evolved into mixed-use residential communities catering

to different income levels. Massive housing developments, planned industrial parks, and office buildings resembling campuses began to appear by the 1970s (Sonmez, 2009). In 1965, with the legislation on Flat Ownership, single-owner, four-story rental houses transformed into high-rise apartment complexes with individual unit ownership around Izmir Bay. In the end, large-scale uses were added to cities, causing them to grow and become industrial cities as opposed to metropolitan areas. While this allowed more people to reside near the sea, it also caused a surge in the city's population, leading to issues like traffic congestion and pollution. Additionally, the taller buildings obstructed the Aegean breeze to the inner-city areas, altering Izmir's skyline and microclimate irreversibly. These concerns eventually provided the ideal circumstances for the urban elite to seek 'cleaner' environments elsewhere in their quest to leave the city.

There was a common pattern of urbanization in several significant Turkish cities until the 1980s. Urban rehabilitation and growth, new mass housing projects, large-scale industrial investments, and the formation of sub-centers in addition to the city center were the initial factors that reshaped cities after the 1980s. Izmir also experienced a comparable urbanization development. The majority of Izmir's high-class residents at the time favored living in the inner city, particularly near the bay. The urban fabric of Turkish cities has seen significant alterations due to investments made in urban space from the latter part of the 1980s. The tendency of suburbanization on the edges of cities developed together with expenditures on the construction of highways and urban infrastructure. The data show that there was a 61% rise in the number of buildings in rate between 1984 and 1999 in Izmir (The Official Web Page of The State Statistics Office). The most obvious indicators of both domestic and international investment flows into Izmir, aside from housing investments, have been retail centers. As a result, 17 commercial centers totaling 543,232 square meters were added to the Izmir metropolitan region between 1999 and 2001 (Sonmez, 2001). The growth in investments in urban land has led to a growing tendency for suburban-style dwelling projects. As mentioned earlier, the expansion of this development type in Izmir is linked to the increase in the population belonging to upper-income groups and their need for a place away from the city center.

Moreover, as previously indicated, there were many concerns about how Izmir's position was unsuitable from an environmental standpoint. There was a strong desire among the residents of Izmir to relocate to the countryside due to the city's frequent earthquakes, rising building expenses, and the dangers of residing in high-rise flats in an earthquake zone. Traveling to and from the countryside to Izmir became easier with the construction of the highway. Those financially capable of living beyond the city limits and affording commuting costs began to move to the areas that were accessible by the expressway (Datta and Young, 2007). Starting in 2020 with the COVID-19 pandemic and the earthquake of 30th October 2020 in Izmir with a magnitude of 6.9, people began searching for new places away from city centers that they perceived as risky. Studies related to Izmir have mostly focused on the sites along the Izmir-Cesme expressway. However, recently, more areas have been developing on the other side of Izmir. Villakent is also one of the areas that has seen an increase in population and popularity, which is the subject of this study.

1.2. Residents' Preferences for Relocation to the Suburbs

Residents' preferences for suburban living depends on different factors. According to Booi and Boterman (2019), residential preferences encompass a multifaceted and occasionally contradictory array of elements tied to various factors, including the property itself (tenure, cost, size, etc.), its location (embracing the social and symbolic essence of that area), its proximity to amenities like schools, and its ability to foster social connections among friends and family. These tastes are unique to each person and change throughout time. Based on this, we can say that demographic perspectives play an important role in residents' preferences. The population expansion of suburban regions around cities has traditionally been dependent on migration from the main metropolis. The dynamics of

suburban and urban growth are strongly correlated with population trends. For instance, urban areas draw in singles, students, and both local and foreign migrants, whereas suburbs appeal more to traditional family units. The current shifts in urban and suburban expansion and decline can be attributed in part to evolving migration patterns and changes in how families are formed. Young people in their early years are drawn to center cities, and when they desire to establish a family, they relocate to the suburbs. This mechanism is based on the notion that people's choices for housing change throughout the course of their lives and that their housing demands vary depending on their stage of life (Van Ham & Manley, 2012; Mulder, 1993). Since their family situation is still unstable, young people—who undergo many of these changes—move more frequently (leaving the home, relocating to another city to school, moving for a new career, etc.). As kids become older and enter school, families tend to settle down and become less mobile. Accordingly, preferences fluctuate during the course of a person's life (Mulder 1993), while historically they have shown to be remarkably consistent (Fuguitt and Brown 1990; De Groot et al., 2011). It is still very much the case that an individual's life cycle affects their residential mobility, which in turn drives the dynamics of movement within urban areas.

Household characteristics aren't the sole influencers of residential preferences; the housing supply in a particular area and the availability of specific residential environments also significantly impact these preferences. A significant aspect of the ideal suburban lifestyle is linked to how the housing supply is distributed geographically. A primary motivation for relocating to suburban areas is the accessibility of larger, more cost-effective homes that can be owned. Numerous central cities are experiencing rising costs driven by gentrification. Meanwhile, suburbs are undergoing increased socio-economic and cultural diversity, and in some cases, they too are facing the prospect of gentrification (Paccaoud & Mace, 2018). However, in contrast to this opinion, the communities in İzmir, especially affluent suburban estates with fancy homes and gardens, are unique markers of the upper middle class's standing in Turkey (Sönmez, 2009). Stated differently, residing in such homes was regarded as luxurious, particularly within the İzmir environment. But with new structures going up in city cores, urban areas had become more significant. Preferences that exist beneath the surface can become prominent when new housing options emerge (Storper & Manville, 2006). Put differently, the decisions regarding price, ownership, location, and other home-related aspects are influenced by changes in the surrounding context. For example, an increase in the construction of urban single-family homes might lead families to choose to remain within the city. Therefore, the decision between staying in the city or moving to a suburban is not solely about where to live, but also related to housing availability concerning price, space, ownership, and various other factors.

There are also different factors affecting residents' moving preferences which are unique to that region. İzmir has extremely dense populations with multi-story buildings, particularly in the center of city districts. Many people in İzmir were eager to leave due to the dangers of residing in high-rise flats in an earthquake zone. A significant portion of Turkey is susceptible to earthquakes, and İzmir is among the cities with a high risk of natural disasters (Figure 1). On October 30, 2020, a magnitude 6.9 earthquake struck the city of İzmir. Significant damage was inflicted by the earthquake to residential structures, particularly in the Bornova and Bayraklı districts.

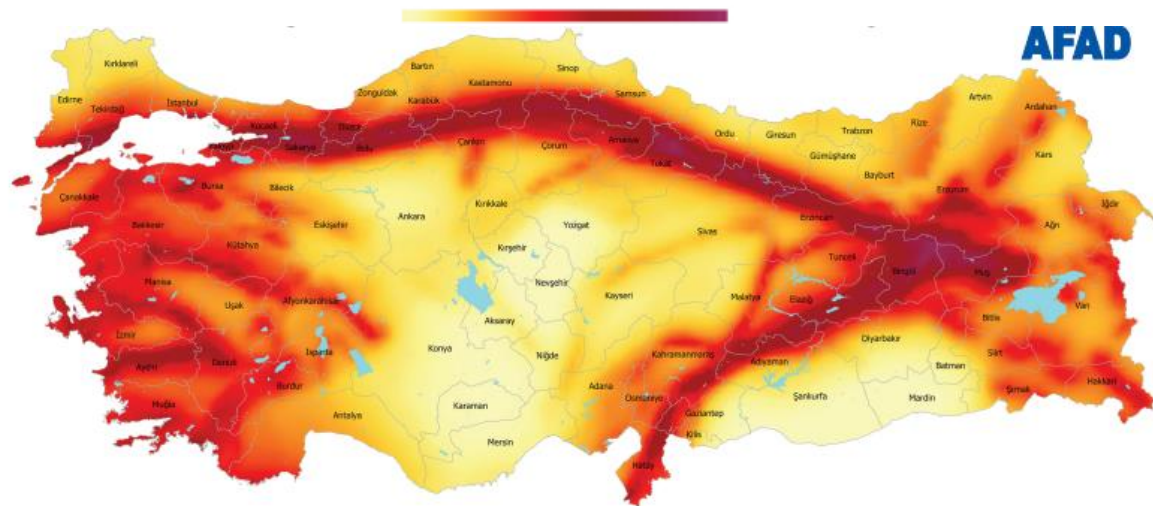


Figure 1. Turkey's Earthquake Hazard Map (AFAD, 2018).

Alongside the development of cities and urbanization, pandemic illnesses have caused large numbers of deaths in both people and communities, especially in densely populated places. Dynamics such as human mobility, population density, and excessive urbanization produce favourable conditions for the spread of viruses, significantly increasing the number of cases (Cam, 2020). Due to the COVID-19 pandemic's quick spread over the world, individuals were asked to utilize fewer of the places they usually frequented in different nations. Business hubs, transit hubs, parks, retail areas, public service buildings, theatres, and historical sites were among these locations. These were also the first locations in our nation to be shuttered as part of pandemic precautions, which also included partial curfews. To stop the development of COVID-19 in our nation, the main objective of these efforts was to limit social connections, especially in metropolitan areas where there was a greater danger of transmission. It is known that the most prevalent cases of COVID-19 in Turkey are observed in densely populated cities such as Istanbul, Ankara, and Izmir etc. There was a noticeable shift from city centres, especially in Istanbul, Izmir, and Ankara, to second homes in rural areas (mostly summer houses) during this time, when the decision for entry and exit restrictions was made. The problems brought about by unplanned urbanization resulting from intense migration from rural areas to cities have increased people's desire to escape to nature, alongside the challenges of everyday life. This, in turn, has heightened interest in second homes in rural areas near major cities.

2. Methodology

2.1. Study Area

Recently, Villakent has gained importance as a new suburban belt of the Izmir city-region. It is located in the Seyrek District between Karşıyaka and Menemen. The distances from Villakent to some central districts of Izmir are shown on the map (Figure 2). It covers approximately a 2.5 million square meter area and hosts 1000 villas with 22 different types of projects implemented on an individual plot basis. The villas range in size from 210 to 390 square meters, with the settlement starting in 2003. The garden areas vary between 175 and 650 square meters (EgeKoop 24th Ordinary General Assembly Working Report, 2008). Advertisements for this project emphasize 'spaces embraced by nature' as their slogan and aims to offer up to 60 square meters of green space per person (Karadag, 2000). Eyüp Sevimli, the president of IZBAŞ Izmir Free Zone, explained that factories relocated to Menemen due to their presence in the city center. Consequently, the city expanded to this area, encompassing Villakent, and the space between was designated as a residential zone in the zoning plan. According to the population data for the year 2023, the total population in Villakent is 2137 (Figure 2). Of this population, 1,218 are male (49.3%), and 1,253 (50.7%) are female. Approximately 59.6 percent of the

population is married, and those with a bachelor's degree or higher education level constitute approximately 56 percent of the population.

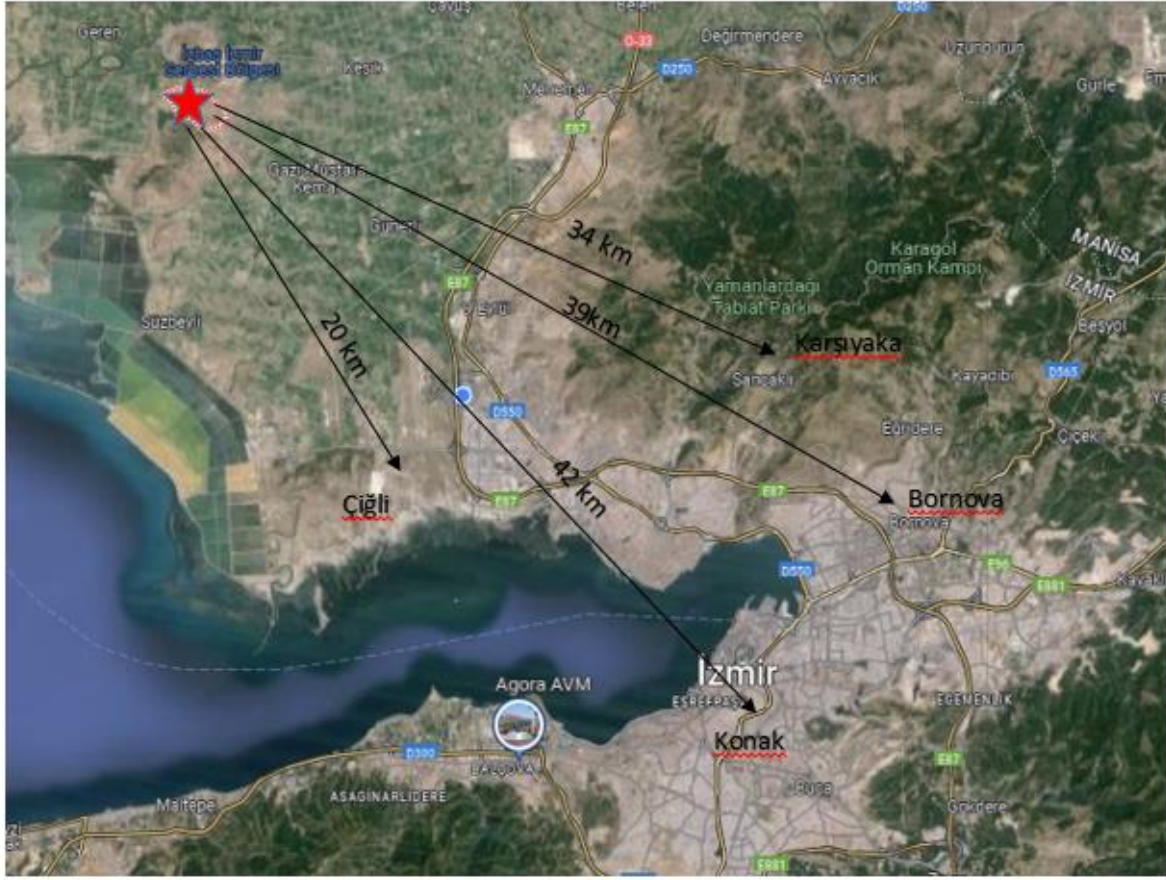


Figure 2. The distances from Villakent to the central districts

The figure below illustrates the population changes in Villakent between the years 2007 and 2023 (Figure 3.) Since the emergence of COVID-19 and the Izmir earthquake in 2020 until the present, there has been an approximate 32 percent increase in the population. In 2020, the price per square meter (m^2) was 3000 TL for houses, whereas currently, it is around 57000 TL. When calculated in terms of Turkish Lira (TL), there has been an approximate 1529 percent increase.

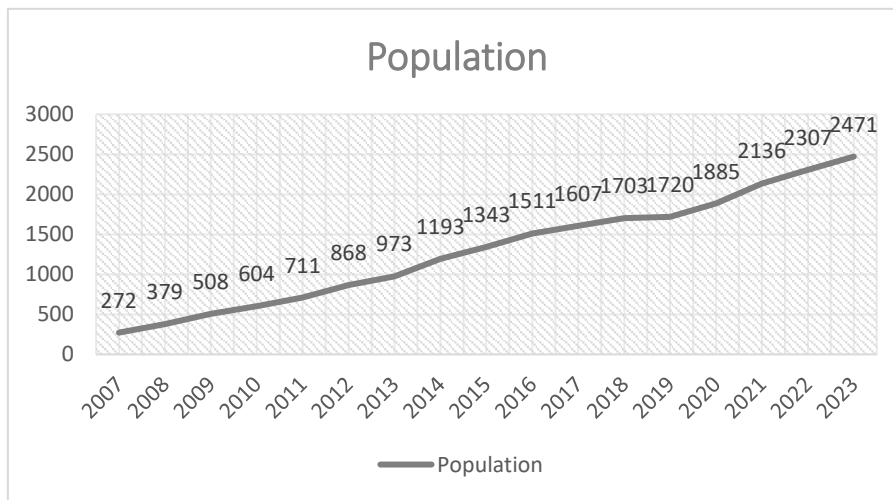


Figure 3. Villakent Population by Years (TÜİK, 2007-2023)

Villakent consists solely of planned villas and is part of the northern development of Izmir. While it was initially a closed settlement with security measures, by the common decision of the residents of the site, it was administratively connected to the Menemen district with the status of "neighbourhood". It is surrounded by nearby villages and the coastal tourism center of Foça to the north. Seyrek neighborhood, where Bakırçay University is located, is approximately a 5-minute distance from Villakent (Figure 4). With the presence of the university, social amenities in this area have increased. Its accessibility has significantly increased with the provision of public transportation services (such as İZBAN and municipal buses).

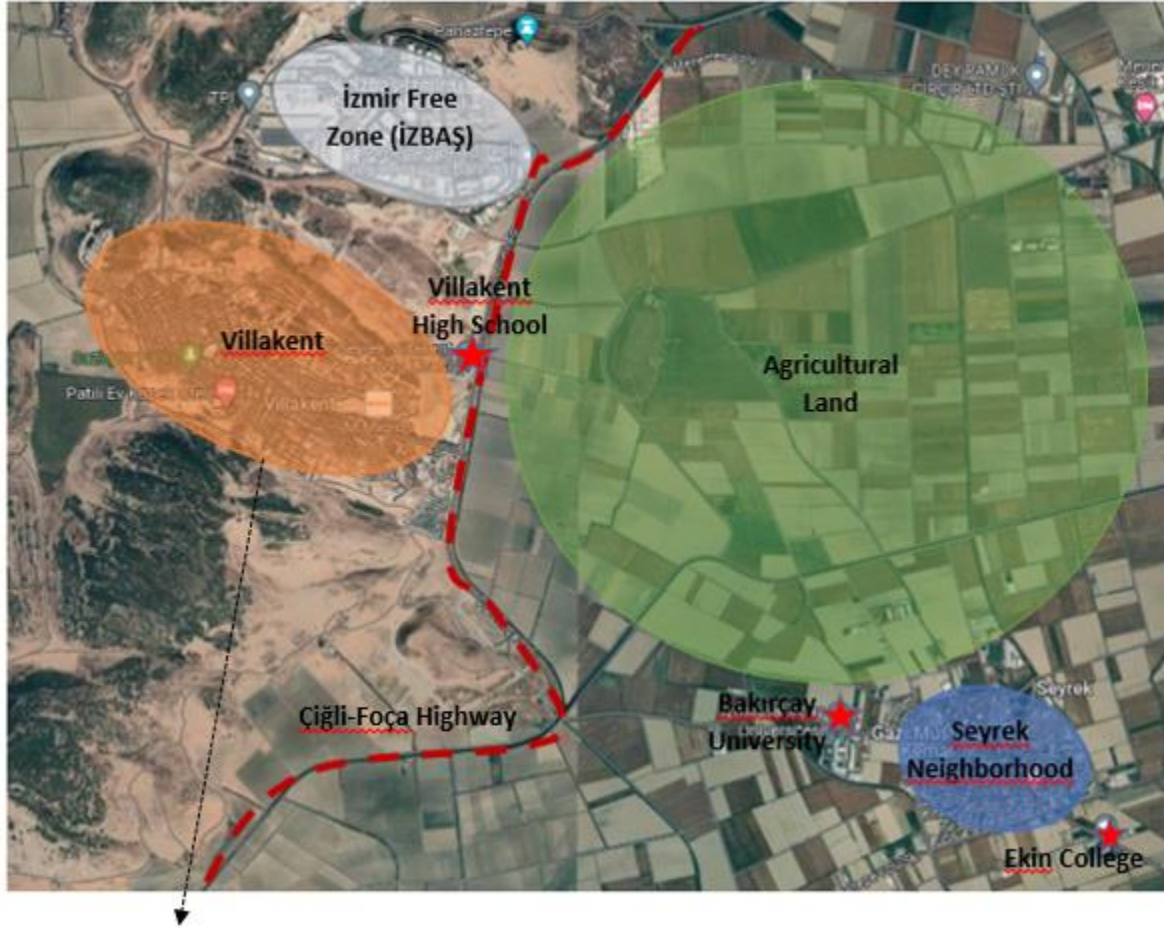


Figure 4. The Surroundings of Villakent (above) and Aerial View of the District (below) (EgeKoop 24th Ordinary General Assembly Working Report, 2008)

2.2. Survey and Interviews

For this study, we conducted a questionnaire and interviews. For academics and practitioners seeking a deeper knowledge of their study topic, mixed methods research may provide a multitude of benefits. Mixed methods research can increase the validity or trustworthiness of the research, by providing a richer and deeper data set that can capture the diversity and complexity of the research phenomenon.

Even while surveys can reveal trends in big groups of people, qualitative interview data frequently yields more detailed information on the attitudes, ideas, and behaviors of participants (Kendall, 2008).

For these purposes, we contacted with headman of Villakent and asked to share the survey on their official accounts. The sampling technique is called convenience sampling. Convenience sampling involves selecting participants who are readily available and accessible to the researcher (Flicker, 2009). Volunteer people also shared the survey with their neighbours. The head of the home is the target of the survey, and the spouse may also reply. While spouses may have differing moving intents, in general, they will work to get over these differences so that the survey responses represent the preferences of the household as a whole rather than just one partner's. Only households that are already independent are included in the survey design. The study does not include the residence preferences of adults who are still living with their parents.

Regarding the preferences of residents for suburban, we obtained their reasons for residential relocation and important factors influencing their residential choices. To provide a detailed description of the sample data, descriptive statistics were computed. Descriptive statistics offer an overview and a basic description of the sample data using quantitative data. In the current study, percentages were used to characterize the characteristics of our data.

One of the survey questions asked if individuals would like to volunteer to participate in interviews related to this topic and requested those interested to contact the researcher. Fifteen people volunteered to participate in the interviews. In this research, interviews were carried out, lasting between 15 to 25 minutes, aimed at capturing the preferences of residents regarding the suburban life in Izmir. Semi-structured interviews were utilized throughout the study to encourage candidate responses and facilitate the emergence of novel viewpoints. The interviews were digitally recorded, and oversight was provided by an Institutional Review Board (IRB). Subsequently, transcriptions and coding were conducted to extract essential information from the interviews.

3. Results

3.1. The Survey Results

3.1.1. Demographic Results

This study investigated the demographic characteristics for 123 respondents—more females (62.6%) than males (37.4%). Table 1 shows demographic information for the participants. The results indicated that 51.2 % of the participants were late middle age (50–64). The youngest age group of 18–29 years made up the sample's minor proportion (0.8%). 39.8% of the participants graduated from a four-year program. The demographics results show that most respondents (33.4%) reported that their household income was over \$90K per year. About 31% of homeowners reported that the market value of their house was between 20000 TL-40000 TL. Regarding length of residency, the largest group contained 51 participants (41.5%) who lived in Villakent between 0-4 years.

Table 1. Demographics of Participants

		Count (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	46	37.4
	Female	77	62.6
	18-29 years	1	0.8

Age	30-49 years	43	35.0
	50-64 years	63	51.2
	over 65 years	16	13.0
Education	Less than high school	2	1.6
	High school graduate	15	12.2
	Some college	24	19.5
	2-year	6	4.9
	4-year	49	39.8
	Master degree/Ph.D.	27	22.0
Income	< 10000 TL	8	3.4
	10001-20000 TL	34	27.6
	20001-40000 TL	41	33.4
	> 40001 TL	33	26.8
Marital Status	Married	113	91.9
	Single	10	8.1
Number of children	None	13	10.6
	1	50	40.7
	2	53	43.1
	3 or more	7	5.7
Number of people in household	1	4	3.3
	2	47	38.2
	3	46	37.4
	4	15	12.2
	5 or more	10	8.1
Length of residency (in years)	0-4	51	41.5
	5-10	38	30.9
	11-15	23	18.7
	16 or more	11	8.9

Number of cars	None	10	8.1
	1	72	58.5
	2	34	27.6
	3 or more	6	4.9
Home ownership	Rent	16	13.0
	Owner	106	86.2

3.1.2. Descriptive Statistics for Residents' Preferences

Participants were asked where they lived before moving to Villakent (Figure 5). Among the respondents, 48 (44.4%) moved from Karşıyaka. Karşıyaka is a risky area in terms of earthquakes. The next largest group (18.5%) consisted of individuals who relocated from other cities. Those who moved from Çiğli district accounted for approximately 8.3%, while those from Menemen district comprised 7.4% of the respondents. These districts are listed as risky areas in terms of earthquakes in Izmir. That could be one reason for their relocation to Villakent. When we look at the table, 6 (5.5%) individuals have moved to Villakent from abroad. The other 6 (5.5%) individuals consist of people who have moved from other districts within Izmir, not shown in the Figure below.

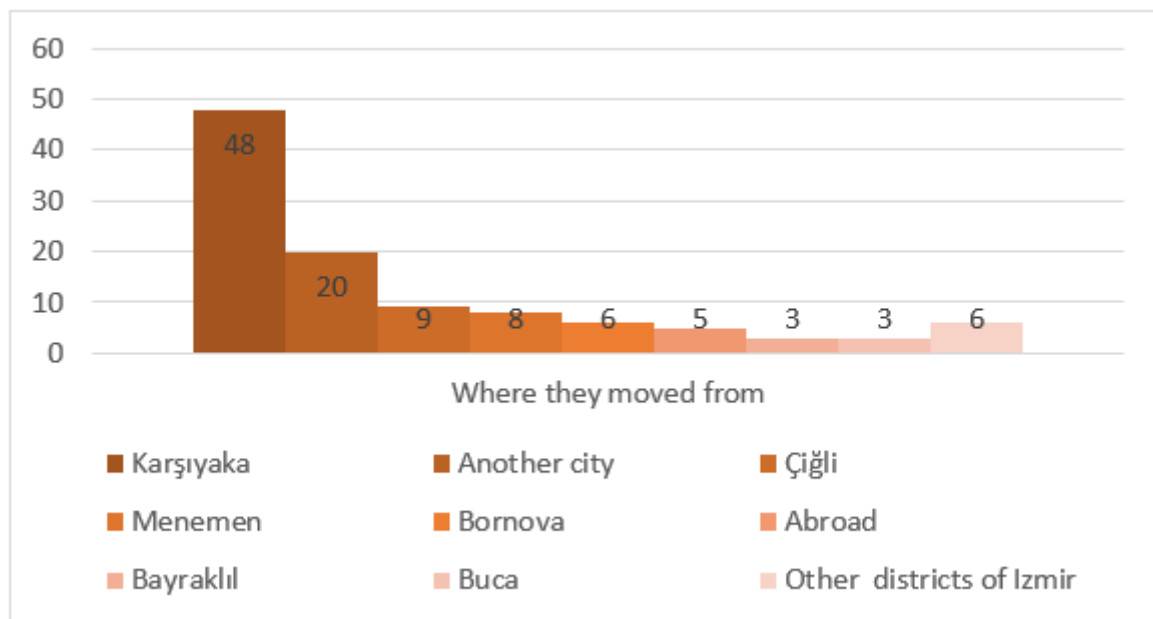


Figure 5. Survey Results of Where the Participants Moved From

The participants were asked why they moved to the Villakent in the questionnaire (Figure 5). It was stated that they could choose several options from the provided choices, and another tab was added for them to write down if they had any other reasons. According to the responses of 108 participants, 106 (98.1 %) of them stated that they moved to the Villakent because they wanted a house with a garden. 80 participants (74.1 %) preferred to move away from the noise and crowds of the city center. 63 individuals (58.3%) chose to move away from the center due to the risk of earthquakes. 40 people (37%) mentioned that they moved because it is safer compared to the city center. 23 of the participants (21.2 %) moved because their children's school was nearby, while 10 of them (9.2%) moved because it was close to their workplace. Only 4 people (3.7%) mentioned that they moved because they had pets.

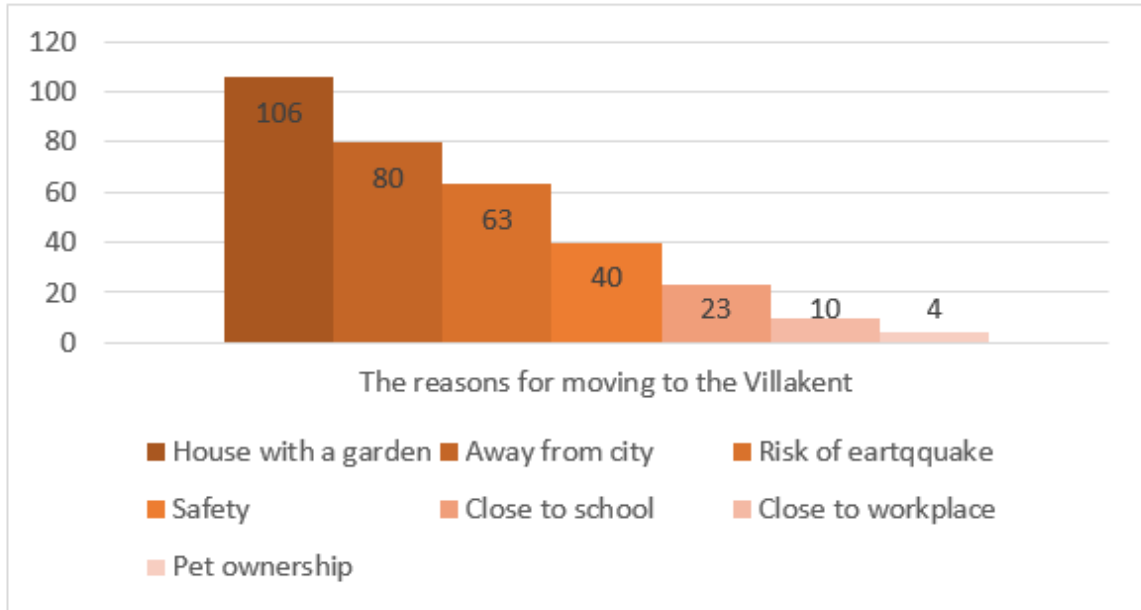


Figure 5. Survey Results of the Motivations for Moving to the Villakent

3.2. The Interview Results

Residents who completed the survey were asked if they are volunteers for an interview. 15 people was contacted with the researcher as volunteers for interview. Interviews were made at houses of residents. Following the interviews recorded with the permission of the interviewees, they were transferred into written text. The results of the interview are depicted in Table 2. Detailed interview results are further explored in this part.

The participants were asked for their demographic information. They were also asked why they preferred suburban life, why they chose villa district specifically, to mention the positives/negatives about living in the villa district, and whether their expectations were met. All participants are married with children. Four of them are renting, while the others are homeowners. Their education levels are university and above, and their age range is between 35-50 years old. Five of them work from home office. During the interviews, questions were posed in a conversational manner to ensure that the participants felt comfortable, and adjustments were made to the questions based on the responses of the interviewees. As a result, the answers obtained were predominantly personal in nature.

Table 2. The Interview Results

Reasons to move suburban	Why Villakent?	Positive aspects of Villakent	Negative aspects of Villakent
Home with a garden (11)	Affordable prices (9)	Tranquility (9)	The lack of infrastructure (8)
Increase in housing prices in the city center (10)	Independent parcels (7)	Home with a garden (8)	Transportation difficulties (8)
Crowded in the city center (9)	Close to school/workplace (5)	Clean air (8)	The lack of social places (7)

The risk of earthquake (8)	Eartquake-resistant (4)	Neighborhood relations (3)	Limited educational opportunities (5)
COVID-19 (6)			Stray animals (4)
Air pollution in the city center (4)			
Sense of community (1)			

3.2.1. Deciding to Move to Suburban

The literature has suggested that various factors influence the choices of residents when it comes to suburban living. These factors vary from person to person; however, within the scope of this study, participants' desire for living in a house with a garden has been the most significant factor for their decision to move from the city.

Interviewee 12. Living in a house with a garden is almost impossible in city centers. Even green spaces are scarce. Because I have children, it is important to me that they grow up with in touch with soil.

Interviewee 4. We have a dog, a somewhat large one. Approximately 33 kilograms. Taking care of it in the apartment has started to become quite difficult. That's why we have started looking for a house with a garden.

Interviewee2. We started looking for a house with a garden, dreaming of growing our own fruits and vegetables in our backyard.

Most participants complained about the crowded in the city, highlighting that it was an important factor for moving out of the centers.

Interviewee 2. We used to live in Karşıyaka. However, Karşıyaka started to become increasingly crowded. With the growing population, urbanization also increased. We started looking for a quieter place.

Interviewee 4. Personally, my preference for an isolated life is also related to this. I wouldn't want to live in the city center with the same dynamics. The city center is crowded and exhausting.

Interviewee 4. My workplace is currently far from the house I live in, but I prefer commuting a long distance every day rather than living in the chaos of the city center.

Interviewee 6. We used to live in a very central location in the city. Cafes and the beach were within walking distance. However, after having two children, living in the city center became challenging. With parking issues and traffic problems, we wanted to move a bit away from the center.

One of the factors discussed in literature was the property itself such as cost, size etc. (Booi and Boterman, 2019). In other words, one of the main reasons people move to suburban areas is the availability of larger, more affordable homes that can be owned. Results from interviews indicated that most interviewee preferred to move suburban because of increased house prices in the city centre and the size of the apartments.

Interviewee 3. We decided to buy a house. We were living in Bornova. The prices in that area were quite high, and the houses were small. In general, houses in locations close to the center in Izmir were beyond our budget. Honestly, we couldn't find a house that met our preferences. That's why we decided to look into settlements a bit away from the city center.

Interviewee 7. Nowadays, especially in newly constructed buildings in city centers, the square meter area is quite small. We have two children, and living with two kids in a small apartment can be challenging at times. That's why we decided to move away from city center.

Since this study was conducted in Izmir, earthquakes were also cited as an important factor in people's decisions to move away from city centers. Six out of fifteen participants mentioned that they decided to move away from the city center after the 2020 earthquake in Izmir. Moreover, four out of fifteen participants mentioned that the global pandemic disaster influenced their decision to live away from city centers.

Interviewee 6. In the 2020 earthquake, we were living in a building in Karşıyaka that was built in 1955. We felt the earthquake quite strongly. After that incident, we decided that we no longer wanted to live in the city center.

Interviewee 1. During the pandemic, there were lockdowns nationwide. We couldn't leave our homes. We were living in an apartment at that time. Spending this period in an apartment was challenging, especially with a young child. We started considering moving to a house with a garden during that time. Later, after the earthquake in 2020, we decided that it was time to move to a detached house for good.

Interviewee 2. One of the most significant changes in our lives with the pandemic is the opportunity to work remotely. Even after the pandemic, I have the chance to work remotely for 2-3 days a week, if not the entire week. Therefore, I did not give much consideration to the proximity or distance to the workplace.

Some participants (Two out of fifteen interviewees) mentioned air pollution in city centers and the need for clean air as reasons for wanting to move outside the city.

Interviewee 2. There is a lot of air pollution in the city. That's why we wanted to move away from the polluted air of the city.

Only one person mentioned preferring to move away from the city because the participant believed that neighborhood ties were fading in urban areas, and thought he could find a sense of community in suburban life.

Interviewee 4. For me, living in an apartment has become increasingly difficult. I believe that people's social structures have deteriorated. Concepts like neighborliness and mutual respect seem to have disappeared with urbanization. That's why I started looking for a place away from the city where I could experience neighborhood connections like in the old times.

3.2.2. Reasons for Choosing Villakent

When participants were asked why they preferred living in Villakent, seven out of fifteen participants said they chose it because they found it economically more feasible compared to other alternatives.

Interviewee 3. Villakent is a residential area that offers the opportunity for a life with a garden. In a crowded city like Izmir, it was important for us to find a place like this without moving too far from the city center. In these areas, there is also Sasalı where we could find similar amenities. However, economically, when we looked at it, Villakent had more affordable prices.

Interviewee 6. When you desire a house with a garden in Izmir, there aren't many options. Compared to other concepts of houses with gardens, villa complexes are more budget-friendly.

The majority of participants stated that they preferred villa complexes because of the independent parcels of land within them.

Interviewee 3. Beforehand, we came and explored. The houses were exactly as we wanted, individual. That is, no apartment life. Tranquil, away from the crowds, the air is clean...

Interviewee 4. Because my child's school is in this area, we never considered Urla or Güzelbahçe. In this region, our options were Villakent and Sasalı. However, we didn't choose Sasalı because the houses there are mostly within housing complexes. We desired an individual lifestyle, and Villakent offered exactly what we were looking for, with houses completely independent from each other.

Results from interviews indicated that participants preferred Villakent because it was more resilient to earthquakes and other natural disasters due to their rocky terrain.

Interviewee 8. In Izmir, the options for obtaining independent living are very limited. On our side, there are Sasalı, Villakent, and if you go further, there is Emiralem. Since Sasalı is situated below sea level, I believe it poses a significant risk in terms of natural disasters. Prices are also high. In Villakent, both prices are more reasonable, and it is located on a hill, reducing the risk. We also had the ground examined, and it is solid.

Interviewee 6. I don't feel comfortable in city centers, especially in Izmir, as it is in an earthquake-prone region. The houses in Villakent being low-rise, situated on a hill, and having a rocky terrain reduce the risk of earthquakes, which is a significant advantage. Moreover, having this advantage without being too far from the city is essential for us.

Three of fifteen interviewees stated that Villakent was the only option for them because it is close to their children's schools or workplaces.

Interviewee 1. We chose Villakent because it is close to my son's school. We did not consider other options.

3.2.3. Positive Aspects of Villakent

Participants were asked to mention three positive and three negative features about Villakent. Studies have generally shown that the suburbs in the region around the city are preferred for their clean air, abundance of green spaces, and a more peaceful way of life that encourages a deeper connection with the natural world. This study supports these findings. Most participants mentioned that they liked the tranquillity of the Villakent the most.

Interviewee 5. It's definitely a very calm place. Calmness is exactly what we wanted. After spending many years in the city center, this tranquillity is good for us.

Some participants described the presence of neighbourhood relations, clean air, and the opportunity for having a garden as the most positive aspects of Villakent.

Interviewee 4. I would like to know who lives to my right, left, in front, and behind the building. Knowing these people is very important to me. Being in communication with them is crucial. I can experience this here (Villakent). In city centers, especially in apartment buildings, no one knows each other anymore.

Interviewee 4. The opportunity of having a house with a garden is one of the most positive aspects for me. I have a child, who is 2 years old. I believe that being in touch with nature is crucial for his development and spending quality social time.

Interviewee 6. Having children makes it one of the most positive aspects for me to be in a neighbourhood concept where they can play outdoors in the street.

Interviewee 2. The air is clean compared to the city center. I especially feel this more strongly when we spend some time in the city and then return home.

Some participants also listed the abundance of green spaces compared to city centers, spacious houses, and the absence of traffic and parking problems as positive features of the villa complex.

Interviewee 8. People have sufficient personal space here. There is no crowding like in city centers. Additionally, there is a considerable amount of open space per person.

Interviewee 7. We used to live in Çiğli before. Nowadays, especially in newly constructed buildings in city centers, the square meter area is quite small. The spaciousness of the houses in Villakent is a significant advantage.

Interviewee 5. In Izmir, traffic is particularly heavy, especially during rush hour. However, there is no traffic problem when going to and coming back from Villakent. This is a significant advantage for us.

Interviewee 6. We lived in Karşıyaka for many years. I used to spend almost 1 hour looking for a parking spot for my car, and this was happening every day. In Villakent, we are extremely comfortable in that regard. I can easily park my car in front of my house.

3.2.4. Negative Aspects of Villakent

When it came to negative features, most participants mentioned the lack of infrastructure and transportation difficulties as the two most negative aspects.

Interviewee 2. The infrastructure is inadequate. There are frequent power and water outages. Additionally, there is no internet infrastructure.

Interviewee 15. My workplace is in the city center, and the road I use to return home is definitely very dangerous. It's a single-lane road, and trucks and tractors are actively using it as well. I love living here (Villakent), but this could be the only downside for me.

Interviewee 12. My workplace is in the city center, and the road I use to return home is definitely very dangerous. It's a single-lane road, and trucks and tractors are actively using it as well. I love living here, but this could be the only downside for me.

Another negative aspect mentioned by the participants is the lack of places to go for socializing when they want to socialize.

Interviewee 6. The options for socializing around are quite limited. Typically, we go to the city center, such as Bostanlı or Alsancak, to meet up with friends.

Interviewee 13. It lacks social facilities that would meet all our needs internally. Therefore, we are forced to go to the city center to fulfil our social needs.

Other participants mentioned the limited educational opportunities and/or the absence of weekend courses around Villakent for their children's extracurricular activities as a negative aspect. Additionally, four participants stated that the high number of stray animals was a negative aspect.

Interviewee 7. Although it's a suitable place for walking, unfortunately, we can't walk due to stray animals. There are a lot of them, and they roam in crowded groups.

Interviewee 12. I have two school-aged children, and unfortunately, there are very few school options. Additionally, I wanted to enrol my daughters in weekend courses, but I have to go to the city center for that.

In conclusion, all participants stated that their expectations prior to moving to the Villakent were met and expressed their enjoyment of living there despite any negatives.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

Migration can bring about favourable outcomes like the provision of new home and lifestyles, the creation of new possibilities both social and professional. Conversely, it can also result in adverse effects such as the result of expectations and physical isolation. While the suburban lifestyle offers many rewards, it's not without its challenges. Access to amenities and services may be more limited, requiring adjustments in terms of healthcare, shopping options, and entertainment. Commuting distances may increase, and a self-reliant mind-set becomes more crucial when living farther away from urban conveniences. Embracing a different set of values and priorities is often necessary when transitioning from a consumer-driven city lifestyle to a more sustainable and self-sufficient suburban life.

According to the interview conducted with the residents of Villakent neighbourhood, it has been concluded that those who migrated here from the city center are generally satisfied. The main problems of those migrating from urban to suburban areas relate to adapting to the new settlement area. To address these challenges, it's crucial to examine the emergence of migration needs, the decision-making process behind migration, and the qualitative traits of the migrant individuals. Those prefer different settlements from the city center primarily and predominantly desire to be in close proximity to natural surroundings. This "natural environment" could be limited to a small garden allowing contact with the soil, like in Villakent. Especially those with children stated that they moved for their children to grow up in a greener area with cleaner air. Findings indicating that the quest for having a garden at home is a predominant factor in moving away from the city. This emphasizes that the decrease in green spaces in cities negatively affects people and highlights the importance of even a small garden where they can have contact with soil. Accordingly, priority can be given to increasing green areas in cities. The improvement of quality of life is closely linked to accessing natural environments within the city.

The majority of participants also indicated that they want to move to suburban areas because of the increase in housing prices in city center. House prices are increasing day by day. However, currently, not only in city centers but also in suburban areas, house prices have risen. Getting away from the city crowds follow closely behind. Traffic congestion and the associated stressful environment emerge as the two most significant factors prompting people to move away from the city. Therefore, increasing recreational areas as much as possible and improving public transportation options to reduce the stress caused by traffic, but especially alleviating the parking problem will mitigate the impact of these negative features. When looked at from the perspective of Izmir's concept, earthquake risk also plays an important role in people's desire to move away from the city. By constructing earthquake-resistant buildings, this risk can be reduced. Overall, these findings are important considerations that must be taken into account by policymakers to enhance the quality of life in the city.

Etik Standart ile Uyumluluk

Çıkar Çatışması: *Yazar, kendileri ve / veya diğer üçüncü kişi ve kurumlarla çıkar çatışmasının olmadığını veya varsa bu çıkar çatışmasının nasıl oluştuğuna ve çözüleceğine ilişkin beyanlar ile yazar katkısı beyan formları makale süreç dosyalarına ıslak imzalı olarak eklenmiştir.*

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