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## Araştırma Makalesi • Research Article

### Rural Policies and Community's Attachment to Rural Settlement in Aydın (Turkey)\*

#### *Kırsal Politikalar ve Halkın Aydın'daki Kırsal Yerleşime Bağlılığı (Türkiye)*

Gökçe Şimşek<sup>a,\*\*</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Assoc.Prof., Faculty of Arts and Sciences, Adnan Menderes University, Turkey  
ORCID: 0000-0002-8520-0620

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#### ÖZ

Türkiye'de 2000'li yıllardan bugüne köylerin mekânsal ve ekonomik yönleri değişmektedir. 6360 sayılı Büyükşehir Yasası (2012) ile çok sayıda (16102) köy "mahalle" statüsüne geçmiştir. Kırsal alanlar genellikle yukarıdan aşağıya politika yaklaşımıyla şekillenmektedir ve son yıllarda, uluslararası ve ulusal bazda kırsal alanların şekillendirilmesinde yerel halkın katılımının önemi giderek önemsenmektedir. Ancak, ülkemizde bu alanda sınırlı sayıda çalışma olduğunu belirtmek mümkündür. Bu makale, yerel halkın kırsal yerleşime olan bağlılığının nedenlerini ve Baltaköy'deki (Aydın, Türkiye) yerel halkın zeytin yetiştiriciliği, mimari ve geleneksel unsurlar arasındaki ilişkiyi anlamaya yönelik bir girişimdir. Makale, yerel sakinlerin yaşlarına bağlı olarak iki karşıt yaklaşıma sahip olduklarını göstermektedir—yerel evleri, zeytin değirmenlerini ve kırsal yaşam tarzını korumak ya da onları dikkate almamak.

#### ABSTRACT

In Turkey, the spatial and economic aspects of villages have changed since the 2000s. A great number of (16102) villages have become a "quarter" through the Metropolitan Law No. 6360 (2012). Rural areas have been generally shaped through centralized vertical approaches. In recent years, the importance of the participation of the local people in shaping rural areas are emphasized. However, there is limited study. The paper is an attempt to understand the reasons behind the local residents' attachment to rural built-up environments and the architectural and traditional elements of olive oil processing in Baltaköy (Aydın, Turkey). The article indicates that residents have two opposing approaches—conserving vernacular houses, olive mills and the rural lifestyle and neglecting them—depending on their age.

## 1. Introduction

Rural areas and villages have attracted attention from policies and planning efforts worldwide in recent decades. On the one hand, problems such as the decrease in rural populations, loss of food sovereignty, the increasing dominance of industrialized agricultural practices, loss of

biological diversity, changes due to the pressures of development, abandonment of land, loss of traditional and local knowledge, and poverty (Scazzosi, 2014; Mitchell and Barrett, 2017; Ruben and Pender, 2004) have been among the main factors. On the other hand, other factors, such as the increase in urbanization, the estimated doubling of the world's urban population by 2050 (United Nations, 2017)

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\*\* Sorumlu yazar/Corresponding author.  
e-posta: [gokcesk@hotmail.com](mailto:gokcesk@hotmail.com)

and the approach that views rural needs as a peripheral part of urban understanding (García-Esparza, 2015), have been shaping the future of rural communities and architecture

The issues of rural communities and vernacular architecture are considered from different viewpoints. For instance, the understanding and conservation of vernacular architecture has been the subject of research and policies for a long time (Rapoport, 1969; Oliver, 2006; ICOMOS, 1999). Approaches that view traditional buildings in rural areas as cultural practices and social rituals (Rapoport, 1969; Maudlin 2010) and as the architecture of the people, that is, as traditional, anonymous, native or indigenous to a specific time and place (Oliver, 2006), have been widely adopted. The “landscape” approach to heritage has been developed to eliminate the separation between nature and culture for the cultural heritage of rural areas in the context of the World Rural Landscapes Initiative (Scassosi, 2018). In the Norwegian case, Daugstad et al. (2006, 78) criticize the approaches that “...tend to see the link between agriculture and cultural heritage as something mainly historical, something separate from agriculture...”. In rural Norway, farmers are the main defenders of the cultural heritage linked to agriculture, which is viewed as a crucial economic sector to produce food, tourism and the “provider of identity” (Daugstad, Rønningen and Skar, 2006: 78). García-Esparza (2015) also emphasizes that the value of rural space as an economic, a social and an environmental surrounding. From the perspective of Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the concept of “globally important agricultural heritage systems” (GIAHS) has been developed as a living, evolving system of human communities in relationship with their territory, agricultural landscape and social environment (n.d.: 3).

In another context, tourism is integrated into the lives of rural communities to ensure the development of local communities. The approach that views rural areas as places of folklore, nostalgia and tourism, rather than as places of agricultural production, has been debated. Using rural architecture for tourism also has benefits such as economic growth, sense of locality, development of entrepreneurial activity, and revitalization of handicrafts (Evans, 2002; Shipley and Snyder, 2013; Silva, 2014). However, some negative impacts of tourism, such as the endangering of animal and plant species, changes to handicraft techniques, loss of privacy, restrictions on new housing construction, and the uneven distribution of tourism revenues (Yan, Liang and Zhiwen, 2017; Schellhorn, 2010; Silva, 2014), are identified.

In the time of a globalized world, there is a great need to develop a holistic approach that integrates the social dimension of agricultural and food production, as a reflection on vernacular architecture, and the daily life of residents as the main witnesses, which is valuable to identify local characteristics to be conserved. Therefore, local people are included in the research process. Generally, in the field of conservation, the participation is limited with the house

owner’s viewpoint. However, understanding views of different age groups provide a comprehensive look for the future of vernacular architecture and rural settlement.

In the time of a globalized world, rural areas that are taken into account through the lenses of urban understanding are coming to resemble urban areas, and thus rural communities are gradually losing their local identity and authentic characteristics. Loss of agricultural and food production causes irreversible changes in rural communities and settlements. Therefore, for rural areas, it is fundamental to develop people-centred approaches and to determine how local people view and interpret the intangible and tangible components of agricultural and food production and associated with built-up areas as a whole for identifying local characteristics to be conserved. These local characteristics can be identified differently depending on the ages of rural residents. Understanding these differences will support decisions of conservation and managing changes for the sustainable development.

In this context, vernacular architecture is viewed as the constructed artefacts linked to agricultural and food production that are at the centre of the everyday activities of a rural community and associated rural social life. The aim of this study is to understand the reasons behind local residents’ attachment to rural built-up environments and architectural and traditional elements in relation to olive oil processing in Baltaköy (Aydın, Turkey) as a whole for conservation. The rural community is at the centre of this study that aims to understand their connections with rural architecture and the traditional elements of olive oil production and farming. The study investigates the meanings of vernacular houses, olive oil presses and agriculture centred on olive growing for the community and the reasons behind their motivations for conservation (Aydın, Turkey). The article indicates that residents have two opposing approaches—conserving vernacular houses, olive mills and the rural lifestyle and neglecting them—depending on their ages.

## 2. Context and Background

In Turkey, rural areas have been seen as a new policy area since the 2000s (Yenigül, 2017: 21). Since 2007, national strategies and policy documents for rural areas have been developed: The National Rural Development Strategy (2007-2013), the National Rural Development Plan (2010–2013), the National Rural Development Strategy II (2010–2014) and the National Development Strategy III (2014-2020). For instance, according to the National Development Strategy of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs, a great number of rural settlements that are small in size and dispersed distribution (2007) were emphasized (Turkish Republic State Planning Organization National Development Strategy). According to Furat (2013), some obstacles to the implementation of these policies are bureaucratic culture, and social and cultural prejudices. Yenigül (2017) expresses that centralized vertical

approaches in rural areas have been replaced with participatory approaches based on horizontal cooperation.

In 2012, a great number of (16102) villages became a “quarter” with the declaration of municipalities as “Metropolitan Municipalities”. Many challenges, such as the transformation of settlement patterns in a way that is similar to the cities and the loss of the authentic qualities of vernacular architecture are explained (Öğdül and Olgun, 2015; Duygulu, 2015). In addition, agricultural land uses have gradually disappeared (Bayar, 2018: 189). However, olive cultivation lands have been increasing in recent years (Bayar 2018, 189). Among the Mediterranean countries leading olive production in the world, Turkey is the fourth largest country (Worldatlas, Leading Olive Producing Countries). According to the Turkish Statistical Institute (TUIK), the number of olive trees has increased from 144.329 (2007) to 174.596 (2017) in ten crop years (TUIK 2018). Olives are grown in five regions—Aegean, Marmara, Mediterranean, South-eastern Anatolia and the Black Sea (International Olive Council).

In the 2000s, the spatial and economic aspects of villages in Turkey changed through alternative tourism, nature tourism and eco-tourism. The process of change has generated both negative and positive impacts on settlement characteristics and, in some cases, a loss in local identity (Öğdül et al., 2018). On the one hand, the necessity to insert “rural heritage” into the Law on the Conservation of Cultural and Natural Property is emphasized (Eres, 2013: 449; Akyüz-Levi and Taşçı, 2017). The conservation of rural areas as “heritage” is currently interpreted and practised in the context of “urban heritage” (Eres 2013, 448). On the other hand, the village design guides have been an important tool for rural areas (Öğdül et al., 2018). For some regions, such as the Balıkesir Region (Çorapçıoğlu et al., 2010) and Küre-Ersizdere (Öğdül, Olgun and Çalışkan, 2015), village design guides have been prepared. However, a design guide is expected to have strategies for a specific village and it is not very appropriate to use a design guide for all types of villages (Boyacıoğlu et al., 2015)

It has been suggested that including the knowledge of the local people to reflect the distinct local characteristics and their use in the revision of the guide and ensuring the continuity in participation of the local people are important issues for the success of the village design guides (Öğdül et al., 2018). In addition, the problems of rural settlements and vernacular architecture, such as poor quality building construction, migration from rural settlements (Aran 2015), decentralization of works, lack of cooperation between different institutions (Duygulu, 2015), decrease in agricultural activities, loss in income and employment, environmental pollution (Öğdül and Olgun, 2015) and low level of comfort conditions in some spaces, such as the kitchen and bath (Akyüz-Levi and Taşçı, 2017), have been discussed.

In Turkey, the olive grove lands have become part of regional policies. Heritage olive trees and traditional

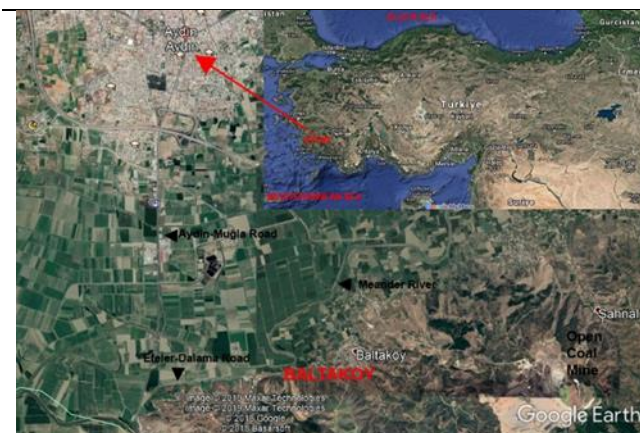
elements of olive oil processing propose opportunities for developing tourism in Turkey, as in many other countries in the Mediterranean Region. In the Tourism Strategy 2023, the olive route was defined as one of the seven thematic routes in the South Marmara Region, including Bursa and Çanakkale ve Balıkesir (Ministry of Culture and Tourism 2007). In addition, the olive route, including Clazomenia, with the first olive oil workshop in the world located in Çeşme Peninsula (İzmir Büyükşehir Belediyesi Yarımada İzmir Gezi Rotaları), has been developed. The site of the “Ayvalık Industrial Landscape”, located in the Aegean Region of Anatolia, is listed on the World Heritage Tentative List (UNESCO 2017). In addition, the studies have been conducted to develop olive oil tourism, such as the determination of the “olive oil food route” (Özkaya et al., 2018) and the implementation of a SWOT Analysis to develop olive oil tourism in a specific region (Cankül and Ezenel, 2018). As explained, these projects are generally based on the tourism dimension of olive oil processing, but there is a great need to include local people and develop a holistic approach that includes the interaction of rural communities with natural and built-up environments as a whole.

In this context, the paper is based on the approach that views “rural built-up environment” as part of the rural lifestyle based on agricultural and food production and conservation of vernacular architecture that basically depend on the sustainability of agricultural production and the rural lifestyle. Therefore, local residents’ attachment to natural and built-up environments is evaluated as a whole.

### 3. Study Area

Baltaköy is a rural settlement located 7 km away from the city centre of Aydın (now called Efeler) and is a significant centre of agriculture, especially olive growing (25% of Turkey’s olive production), in the Aegean Region of Turkey (Fig. 1).

**Fig. 1.** Map of Turkey and location of Baltaköy, Aydın\*



\*The map is derived from Google Earth

**Fig. 2.** Baltaköy and its surrounding

a. General view from the settlement b. The main road passing through the settlement c. Changing old part of the settlement. (The map is derived from GoogleMyMaps)

**Fig. 3.** General plan and public buildings in Baltaköy

a. View from the Mosque b. Tomb of Baltalı Dede

The economic activities in Aydın are mainly based on agricultural production in the inner part and tourism on the coast. According to the Strategic Plan 2015-2019 of the Aydın Metropolitan Municipality, 45.3% (368.336 hectare) of the lands within the limits of the Metropolitan area are used for agriculture.

The main crops are fig, chestnut, cotton and olive. In addition, 1.611.505 people are members of agricultural organizations (T.C. Aydın Metropolitan Municipality).

However, the low technological standards of the table olive processing firms, small scale of family firms dealing with table olive processing, lack of planning in olive cultivation in Turkey, low level of productivity, preferences for low costs in olive processing, lack of qualified employees and unfair competition are problems for the olive oil sector (Aydın Commodity Exchange).

Baltaköy is located on the northern slopes of the hills south of the Meander River and is founded on rocky hills,

presumably where the stone for the vernacular houses had been quarried. There are agricultural lands and two coal mines nearby. The main road connecting Efeler to Baltaköy passes through the edge of the residential area. There is a primary school (with 258 students), two mosques and a tomb, a social centre, a health centre, a PTT (Post and Telegraph Organization), two pharmacies, and a few coffeehouses. The mosque and the tomb of “Baltalı Dede”, who gives his name to the settlement, are located opposite of the the Mosque (Fig. 2 and Fig. 3).

Baltaköy became “a quarter” in the Metropolitan Municipality of Aydın, which had been declared a “Metropolitan Municipality” through Law No. 6360 of 2012. In relation with this development, rural settlements like Baltaköy were reclassified as districts instead of villages. Baltaköy is out of the borders of planned areas in Aydın. New buildings below 6.50m high and settled 40%

of the parcel lot are allowed according to Zoning Regulation for Unplanned Areas. Two-storeyed and multi-storeyed houses were added to the settlement, which was composed of one-storey stone houses surrounded with courtyard walls (Fig. 2). Besides new two-storeyed houses have been constructed as weekend houses or for leisure times. New buildings and courtyard walls in concrete present an incompatible view (Fig. 2). Traditional olive oil presses, the so-called “Mola Olearia”, located on the streets of Baltaköy are authentic elements. These industrial elements, so-called “Mola Olearia”, are no longer used (Fig. 3).

Today, 1184 people live in Baltaköy. There has been a decrease in the number of residents from 1308 (2007) to 1184 (2017) in the last ten years (TUIK). Almost one fourth of the population are students. Currently, residents generally grow olive trees, cotton and corn. Animal husbandry and mining are other areas of work.

**Fig. 4.** Views from the settlement



a. Efeler-Dalama Road b. View from inner road c. View from houses

#### 4. Methods

In this study, as research methods, architectural documentation, site observations, semi-structured interviews and literature reviews were used. In recent years, the studies on the perceptions of the users of rural built heritage includes residents and visitors for understanding conservation approaches (Var & Kobayashi, 2019; Giannakopoulou & Kaliampakos, 2016) and the impacts of heritage making (Silva, 2016). The study focuses on the social dimension of vernacular architecture, residents in different age groups selected to determine how traditional food production and farming affect residents’ lives in Baltaköy. It was assumed that different age groups within the community have different experiences and attachments to farming, especially olive tree growing, olive oil production and vernacular houses. Data were obtained from field surveys. During field trips in March, April, September and December 2018, twenty-nine parcel lots were investigated architecturally and the residents were interviewed. In other word, the data are obtained in 2018. Sixty-four residents were interviewed. The questions of the semi-structured interviews were based on three themes: (1) olive tree growing, (2) traditional way of olive oil processing and the associated architectural and industrial elements and (3) vernacular architecture. Throughout the interviews, the residents were encouraged to explain their views in detail. Through the interviews, the motivations that connect people

to olive tree growing and the memories of traditional ways of olive oil processing and related problems were asked about. Notes were taken during interviews, and verbal data were classified.

The natural environment, rural built-up environment and community are viewed as the main components of the study. The study is an attempt to investigate the interactions between (1) the rural community and olive tree growing, (2) the rural community and the traditional way of olive oil processing and (3) the rural community and vernacular houses. In particular, vernacular architecture and the so-called “Mola Olearia”, which act as a public element on some streets, can have great potential to provide information to understand the attachment of residents to traditional ways of olive oil processing and the definition of past social life of an olive growing community.

#### 5. Results

##### 5.1. Rural architecture and changes in the settlement and houses

The settlement has an organic patterned street. (Fig. 3, Fig 4) Vernacular houses are built by the traditional stone construction technique (with mud mortar) and, new dwelling units are constructed with brick masonry similar in size and height with stone ones prior to declaration of the Law No. 6360 (2012). The architectural elements of olive oil

processing, such as olive pits, hand presses in the courtyards of the houses (which are rarely observed at present), and the traditional olive oil presses, the so-called “Mola Olearia” located on the streets, are unique characteristic elements that are no longer in use.) Baltaköy has been facing various problems and difficulties due to the especially low level of income and policies that do not support agricultural production. The rural settlement has been changed through the abandonment of stone houses, construction of new dwelling units and stables, higher buildings and changes in lifestyle. In addition, the lack of craftsmen capable of constructing vernacular houses, the difficulty in accessing the houses located at the top of the hills and changes in olive oil processing, new buildings (two-storeyed or more) disturbs the authentic rural built-up pattern that is composed

of one-storey buildings. The construction of unlicensed buildings (relatively larger buildings in mass and height) is another disturbing type of change.

Other major changes that are pointed out in this paper are related to the traditional elements of olive oil processing that are not currently being used. The so-called “Mola Olearia”, which consist of one cylindrical millstone supported by a vertical shaft attached to the central oil mill to crush olives through a millstone rotated by animal force or, in some cases, human force, are the authentic elements of olive processing (Fig. 5). Of the five olive oil presses on the streets, one has recently been demolished in the process of asphalt construction.

**Fig. 5.** Current situation of traditional elements of olive oil processing



a. Hand mill b. View from so-called Mola Olearia c. Drawing of the so-called Mola Olearia.

The major changes in the parcel lot scale are the division of parcel lots due to inheritance, the construction of new dwelling units for the married son’s family, construction of new WC-bath unit and/or new stable and enlargement of traditional dwelling unit. The authentic parcel lot, which is composed of a one-storey dwelling unit, WC, olive pits, hand mills and, in some cases, stables, has generally been changed through the construction of a new dwelling unit made of brick masonry or a concrete skeleton system or through the addition of a new WC-bath unit and/or new stable. New dwelling units that were one storey high prior to 2012 have been built with more than one-storey height. This is the result of the legal regulation (the Law 6360) that declared villages as a “quarter” of the “Metropolitan Municipality”, and in this case, standard regulation allowing new buildings below 6.50 height for the whole country, which is valid for the village. (Fig. 6)

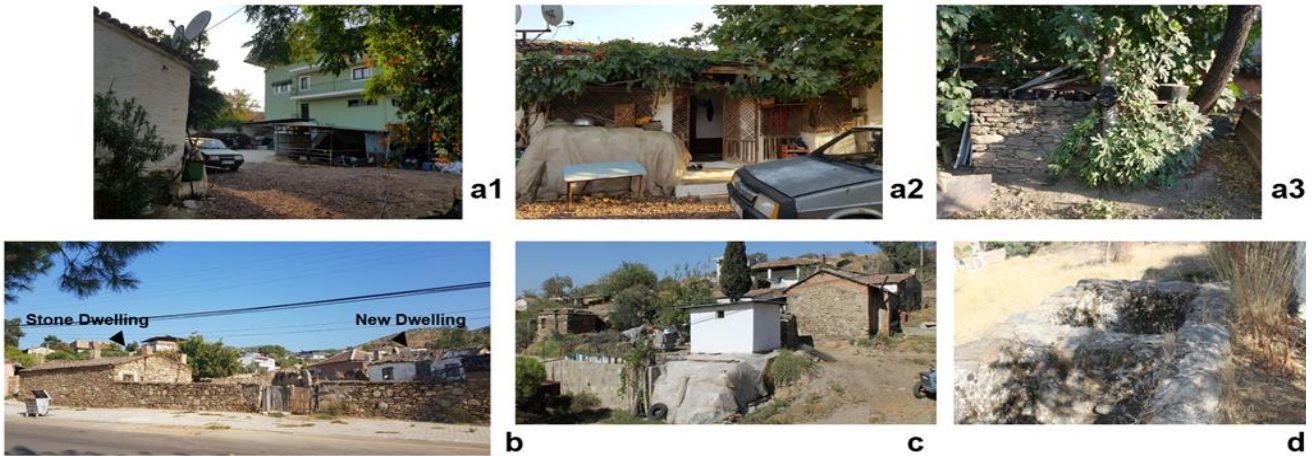
Located in the courtyards, only a few olive pits (2) have survived as an authentic element for storing harvested olives until they are processed into olive oil. The majority of these elements have been lost or transformed into other architectural elements, such as hencoop or a storage area. In addition, only one hand press, as a local version of the primitive olive pressing tool consisting of a slab stone and a cylindrical stone at the top, has survived. The hand presses, where the olives were crushed by swinging the cylindrical crushing stone by the members of the household (including

children) crouched down around the slab stone, were the main elements for oil processing for Baltaköy residents prior to the construction of the olive mills, the so-called “Mola Olearia”, prior to the early 1970s (Fig. 6).

The local community called the local houses with specific phrases, “bir göz bir seertme/seğertme” and “iki göz, bir seertme/seğertme”, which depicts the plan schemes of the dwelling unit. Therefore, there are two common plan types for dwelling units. Some vernacular houses (7) were documented through measured drawings and others are documented through sketches to understand the current situation and the changes. The changes in the housing level were observed and analysed (Table A).

The authentic plan scheme of the stone dwelling unit, which is composed of a heightened entrance space, the so-called “seertme” or “seğertme” in the front and two rooms at the rear, has been changed in some cases. The most common spatial changes in the stone dwelling units have been the addition of a bath/WC unit, the closing of the “seertme” (semi-open entrance space), “seertme” enlargement to convert it into a room and division of “seertme”.

**Fig. 6.** Changes in parcel lot level



a1. Parcel lot added new dwelling unit a2. Stone dwelling unit a3. Olive pit b. Parcel lot added new dwelling unit prior to 2012 c. Parcel lot added WC/bath unit d. Current situation of survived olive pits e. Division of parcel lot. A. Stone dwelling unit A1. New dwelling unit B. Stone stable

In cases where the old dwelling units are used by the elders and the new dwelling unit has been constructed for the married son, the spatial characteristics of the old dwelling units have generally not changed. The elders are served by the son’s family, and the new dwelling units are used for cooking and bathing. However, in some houses a wall is added to have a WC/bath into the “seertme”. Besides, in some houses, in which the old parents live, the kitchen has hardly changed. A few respondents stated that “we changed the kitchen and closed the hearth and have a modern kitchen”. Only one respondent stated that low comfort levels of the service spaces (kitchen, toilet) are a problem. The “seertme” is enlarged in order to have one more room. This is a solution for the parcel lot small in size. In addition, stone stables are generally not used, and in most cases, they have

collapsed. In general, new s2s have been constructed. The flat roof of the stone dwelling unit, which was covered with straw mat and earth, has mostly been converted into a gabled roof covered with terracotta tiles. Stone dwelling units are generally used by the older member(s) and/or single members of the household. Most of the stone houses located on the upper parts of the hills are not currently in use (9). Vernacular houses that were constructed to meet the needs of the local community were the products of local building craftsmen, who are no longer available. In addition, the lack of timber beams for the stone masonry technique is among the main reasons for demolition. As briefly explained above, there have been diverse changes in settlement and stone housing. (Fig. 7)

**Fig. 7.** Typical plan schemes of stone dwelling units and the changes R. Room K. Kitchen SE. Seertme OP. Olive Pit



a. Plan type “iki göz, bi seertme/seğertme” with olive pits b. Plan type “iki göz, bi seertme/seğertme” with a closed “seertme/seğertme” and addition of bath C. Plan type “bi göz bi seertme/seğertme”

## 5.2. Questionnaire Survey

In this survey, the same number of participants from different age groups (seven groups) between the ages of 18 and 75 (the oldest participant is approximately 83) (Table B) are selected to understand the different experiences, feelings, thoughts and place attachments regarding olive growing, traditional olive oil processing and vernacular houses. For the same reason, 50% male and 50% female participants are selected. However, the differences in interviewees' perceptions in relation to gender are not included in this paper.

The level of education of interviewees varies. Out of the 64 respondents, four (4) had been to university, and a further twenty-five (25) had attended high school. Nineteen (18) of all respondents had attended secondary school, and thirteen (12) of them had attended primary school. Five of them, especially the women over 65, have had no education (Table B).

The sample overall includes housemakers, farmers, animal husbandry workers, students, inactive (old and not working) people and other occupations. Fourteen (14) interviewees are classified as "farmers", eight (8) interviewees as "animal husbandry workers" and nine (9) interviewees as farmers and animal husbandry workers. The main crops are olive, corn, cotton, fodder and vegetables. Residents, especially the men, have inherited olive cultivated land. In some cases, (2), a small amount was given to woman, who is single. Four (4) of the interviewees work in other sectors as drivers and cooks and these are referred to as "others".

In addition, two (2) of the interviewees are students and fifteen (15) of the interviewees are classified as "housemakers". Twelve (12) of the interviewees over 62 years old live with their sons and do nothing and these are classified as 'inactive'.

To understand the reasons that connect people to Baltaköy, the questions were mainly based around three themes: (a) olive growing, (b) olive oil processing and (c) vernacular houses.

To understand the link between residents' perceptions of olive growing, the relationship between two variables, that is, the number of olive trees that the interviewees have and the values attached by the residents to olive growing, is investigated first.

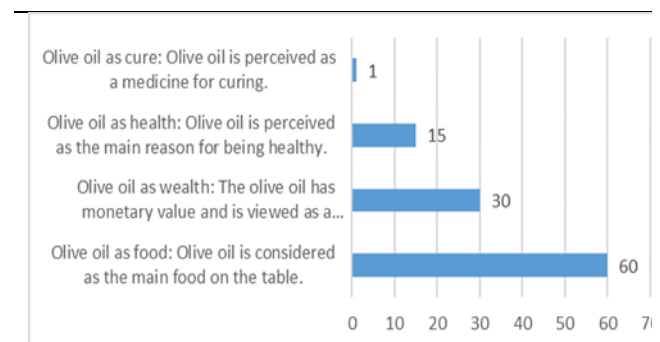
Most of the interviewees (26) have 50-100 olive trees, some of them (13) have 20-50 olive trees and some others (9) have 100-300 olive trees. Those who have more than 100 olive trees (13) mostly describe economic issues related to work opportunities and earning money as the main reason for valuing olive tree growing. Among those who have between 50-100 olive trees (26), some state that the economic gain is not always sufficient. An old man (61) states that "we need to grow other crops such as corn, animal food and cotton in order to make a living. Olive growing is not sufficient".

Some interviewees explain that they share table olives and olive oil with their children or parents and/or siblings. In some cases, neighbours help pick the olives, and a small amount of olives is given to them. The majority of the interviewees (38) mainly identify olives and olive growing as a way of living. A woman explains that "olive trees and olive oil are our life". Some of them state that "they have lived with olives since they were born". For instance, one of the men (54 years old) states that "olives are our life; we eat them and do not use other oil types". Some respondents (14) mention that "neighbours help each other when olives are picked and in

case the neighbours do not have an olive tree; they are given olives". Therefore, olive picking has the potential to improve social relations and develop cooperation among members of rural communities.

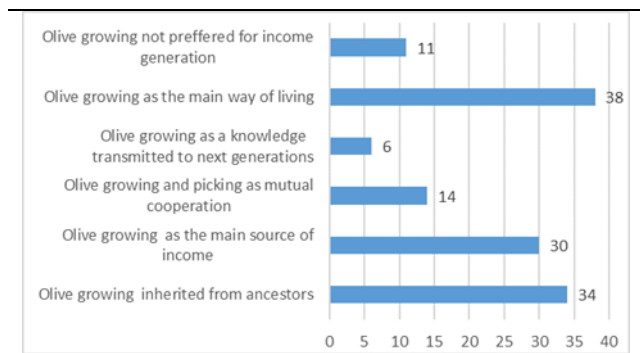
More than half of the respondents (34) state that "olive growing is inherited from ancestors". Out of 34 interviewees, those (21) who have between 20-50 olive trees (13) or less than 20 (8) mention that "olive growing is inherited from ancestors; however, it is not sufficient as a source of income anymore". They complain that "they don't have many olive trees. The trees were shared among siblings and there are fewer olives, just enough for themselves. There are not enough to sell". In addition, women interviewees living alone generally explain that the olive trees belong to her brother and/or son. However, some young people explain that "they prefer not to deal with olive growing and agriculture. They prefer to work in the city". Those preferring not to work in agriculture give the following reasons: (1) the heavy economic burden of agricultural production, (2) insufficient economic gains and (3) lack of diversity of places where they can socialize. When asked about their reasons for why they prefer to work in the city, the routine, boring and insufficient social life in the rural settlement is given as the main reason for finding the city more attractive (Fig. 8).

**Fig. 8.** Views from the changes in dwelling units



a. Heightened roof b. Dwelling unit enlargement c. WC/Bath unit addition d. Division of "seertme/seğertme" to have WC/bath or a closed kitchen e. Closed "seertme/seğertme".



**Fig. 9a.** Motivations attached by residents to olive oil production.

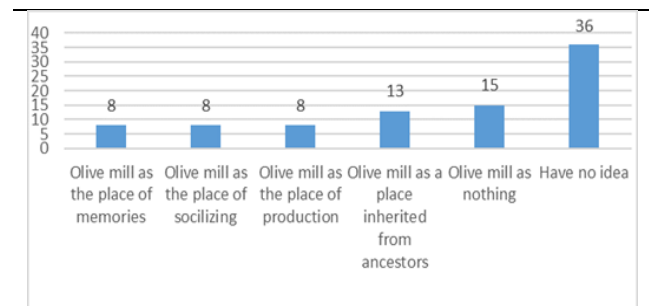
On the other hand, the main problems related to olive growing generally mentioned by the interviewees are (1) decreases in the number of olive trees per family due to inheritance, (2) the decrease in economic gain, (3) low level of productivity, (4) negative effects of air pollution due to coal mines and (5) young people's preference to not farm.

Reasons for the attachment to olive oil and motivations for the conservation of the so-called "Mola Olearia", as a traditional method of olive oil processing, are also investigated. The respondents were asked to give the three factors most important in their attachment to olive oil production. After receiving various reasons, answers were grouped to make them easier to analyse, as shown in Fig. 9a.

Most of the respondents give the following reasons for their attachment to olive oil: the main food (60), economic gain (30), health value (15) and cure value (1). Most of the respondents explain that olive oil is the main food. Some respondents explain that economic value is important; however, olive oil was the basic source of income in the past. Some respondents are aware of the importance of olive oil in the diet. For instance, a woman (79 years old) states that "olive oil cures us. It was used for healing and for accelerating the falling of the stump of new-born babies". However, traditional uses of olive oil for curing are almost forgotten and lost.

The interviewees were asked whether they remember the use of olive mills when they were child. One-eighth of the respondents (above 65 years old) remember the use of olive mills on the street and have good memories. However, most of the respondents do not have any opinion about the use and importance of these elements for the community.

The interviewees were asked to list the main motivations for the conservation of the so-called "Mola Olearia". For one-eighth of the respondents (8), olive mills are places for socializing, memories and oil production. For instance, one of the women (80) mentions that the "neighbours were gathered around olive mills. They had great fun; the families processed olive oil one by one. Those days are unforgettable". The majority of the interviewees remember olive harvesting. The olives started to be given to factories when they were children.

**Fig. 9b.** Reasons for the attachment of local people to olive oil mills according to age groups.

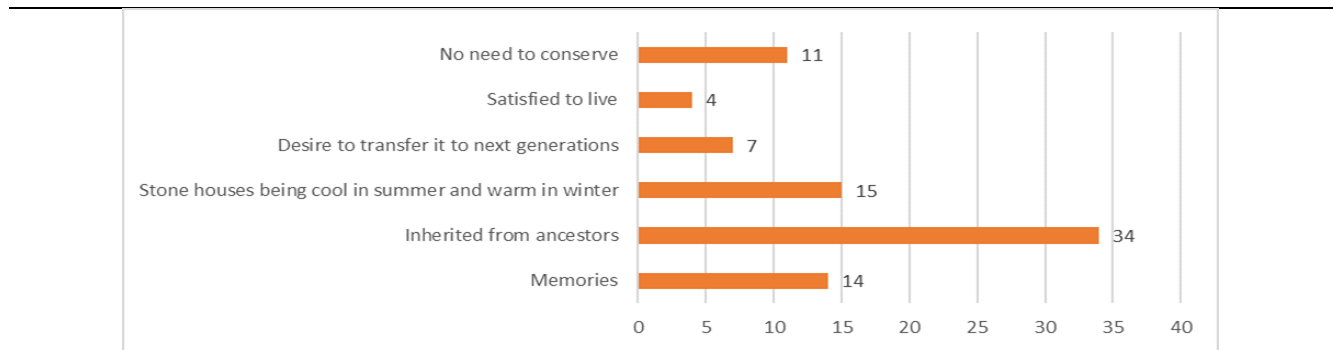
Therefore, people younger than approximately 65 generally did not experience the use of the "Mola Olearia", and they do not have any idea of or attachment to these elements (Fig. 9b).

The motivation for the conservation of the vernacular houses was asked about (Fig. 10). The majority of interviewees (53) have positive opinions about conserving vernacular houses. Out of 64 respondents, 34 respondents said that the houses were inherited from ancestors. A man (58) mentions that "the vernacular house is from our father and we use it. We have to preserve it".

Some respondents (14) express the importance of their memories. A woman (54) said that "she grew up in this house with her daughter, brother, and family and that they had good days. It is a part of her life". The houses have use value and memory value. Some residents (15) find stone houses healthy due to the natural construction material and climatic conditions. They generally say that "the stone house is warm in the winter and cool in the summer". Some explain (7) that they want to transfer the house to the next generations. However, 11 of them who are young state that "there is no need to conserve". Only 4 respondents (over 65 years) reported that "they prefer to conserve; however, they did not know whether her/his children will preserve the house or not after they pass away". Based on their responses to the question about their preferences for "living in a vernacular house" or "an apartment", the majority of respondents (42) prefer to live in a vernacular house. Currently, the majority of the interviewees over 55 live in stone dwelling units. If the father was alive, a new house was constructed for the married son within the same parcel lot. If the father had passed away, the son inherited a vernacular house.

The interviewees were asked whether they remember the use of olive pits and hand presses located in the courtyards. The majority of them (55) explain that they do not remember their use. The elder members of households generally have information about the use of hand mills and show their place.

The majority of interviewees generally have no idea and do not have any memories or cultural connections with these elements, which are mostly lost. The elder respondents describe how they used the hand mills, olive pits and associated tools.

**Fig. 10.** Reasons for the motivations of local people for conservation of vernacular houses.

## 6. Discussion

The results of the questionnaire and architectural documentation indicate that Baltaköy residents have a high motivation to grow olives, unless there are the problems mentioned above. Among the main problems and risks of discontinuity in agricultural production are the economic burden and low-income level. The decrease in the economic income of families due to the decrease in the number of olive trees per family and the decrease in the level of productivity are some of the challenges. Additionally, the young people's preference for working in cities can gradually result in the loss of local people's desire for olive growing, which is traditionally based on family farming. Moreover, mine quarries near olive lands are among the main problems due to environmental pollution decreasing productivity. Resident statements support the low level of productivity, and it is mentioned as one of the problems of agricultural production by the Aydın Commodity Exchange (Aydın Ticaret Borsası).

There has been a strong link between the rural community and olive growing and olive oil processing. However, the transformation of olive oil processing methods has resulted in a loss of connection between the olive mills and community members. This means the loss of social life that is offered by the so-called "Mola Olearia", which acted as public spaces in rural settlements where community members and neighbours gathered, helped each other, chatted and had fun. The olive mills and social life have been forgotten, except for some elders with memories. In this context, the so-called "Mola Olearia" are no longer in use and have no value for the majority of the residents.

The use of stone houses by a few people can be considered an opportunity for conserving authentic characteristics. Although the addition of new baths and the renewal of kitchens are necessary for the continuity of use, the addition of new dwelling units with new installations allows the preservation of the authentic characteristics of stone houses and the upgrading of comfort conditions without changing authentic spatial characteristics. The users of vernacular houses, who bath and cook in the new dwelling units belonging to the son's family, are generally satisfied with the comfort conditions of stone houses. However, the young

generations below 25 are generally not aware of their value. The respondents between ages of 25-55 are generally satisfied with living in new buildings.

The motivation for the conservation of stone houses mentioned by the residents is basically related to inheritance, the interior climate conditions, which are considered healthy, and memories. The use of the stone houses by a few people and the construction of new dwelling units have resulted in limited changes in the authentic dwelling units. However, no craftsmen with knowledge of stone construction techniques survive at present. In addition, brick and concrete units are preferred in the construction of new buildings. As a result, the elders of the community are more willing to conserve vernacular houses and transmit their knowledge on traditional ways of olive growing and food production to young people.

Among the main issues is that the stone houses not used in the upper part of the settlement are under threat of demolition for reasons such as ignorance, lack of local craftsmen knowing local construction techniques, economic constraints and young generations not being aware of their value. In that respect, awareness-raising education programmes and craftsmen training programmes should be developed to heighten awareness among the young generation as well as to create local business. In addition, technical support programmes should be developed for the repurposing and repair of stone buildings.

Another significant issue is the low level of information about the authentic architectural elements associated with olive oil processing located in the courtyard. Because of the changes in olive oil processing methods and tools, most of the hand mills and olive pits have disappeared. Hand mills within the courtyards, as early evidence of traditional ways of olive oil processing prior to the construction of the so-called "Mola Olearia", have mostly been lost. Therefore, residents below 65 do not usually have any information on the traditional methods of olive oil processing. Olive oil processing with hand mills was among the main everyday activities of rural life. Therefore, social and local values associated with traditional methods of olive oil processing are not being experienced by young generations. The elders

who have memories are the last witnesses of the social dimension of traditional ways of olive oil processing.

New buildings that are higher and larger in mass than stone houses and the use of brick and concrete in courtyard walls create incompatibilities with the characteristics of rural settlement. These changes need to be considered carefully because the changes may have irreversible impacts on settlement characteristics. Although there is a need to increase the comfort conditions of the houses and a need for the construction of new buildings, the balance between the residents' needs and the conservation of authentic characteristics of rural settlement should be considered.

## 7. Conclusions and Suggestions

The study is an attempt to develop an approach that views "rural built-up environment, agricultural and food production and the natural environment as a whole" as the product of the everyday life of a rural community that gives crucial information on the social dimension of rural life, which is under threat of loss. In this context, understanding how residents view agricultural production, traditional ways of food production and vernacular architecture as a whole greatly contributes to understanding not only the past but also the rural residents' tendencies to sustain rural life and conserve vernacular architecture. The study indicates that the people of Baltaköy are divided between conserving agricultural production and local heritage and not conserving local heritage and working in the city. The farmers and people over 60 years of age are the main defenders of the cultural heritage linked to agriculture, and they view olive growing, vernacular houses and oil mills as providers of local identity.

The research indicates that changes in food production methods have resulted in the loss of the ways of olive oil processing, including hand mills, olive pits and the so-called "Mola Olearia". These changes reflect the loss of social activities and social relations within the community, which are traced in the memories and experiences of the elders. The abandonment of the places of the so-called "Mola Olearia" acted as a public space has resulted in the loss of local social life and social relations developed in that space. In that respect, there is a great need for community participation and information sharing between different age groups of the community to give young people the opportunity to understand local history and local characteristics. In that regard, understanding rural architecture and the architectural elements of traditional ways of food production requires in-depth interviews with community members and the inclusion of different age groups who witness the local lifestyle. In addition, there should be attempts to conserve and revitalize both tangible and intangible dimensions of the heritage of olive oil processing as social components of rural life. In this context, eco-tourism can be presented as a solution to those who are willing to work in sectors other than agriculture. A vernacular house, utilized as a museum that tells the local history and that allows people to experience the traditional ways of olive oil processing, can

support the rural community to build a local identity and pride.

The architectural documentation of vernacular houses and the semi-structured interviews demonstrate that the authentic plan scheme of stone dwelling units has generally been conserved, although some spatial characteristics have changed. Although the elder members of households are currently satisfied with living in vernacular houses, it is estimated that vernacular houses will disappear when the elder members pass away. The residents, except for the elders who are living in new houses, do not have a strong connection with the vernacular houses. Therefore, there is a need to register a few examples of vernacular houses as cultural property through Law 2863. In addition, the conditions of new building construction should be revised to avoid losing authentic settlement characteristics.

For olive growing, the problems of environmental pollution, low level of productivity, high costs of farming, division of land into small pieces and low-income levels act as an obstacle. In that respect, there is also a need for developing incentives and legal tools for supporting farmers and olive growers.

As a result, the changes in rural settlements of Turkey have been accelerating since 2012 with the Law 6360. Although some efforts have been given for conserving and sustaining authentic characteristics of some settlements, the residents' understandings on their natural and rural built-up environment and preferences on conserving rural architecture and lifestyle have generally neglected. This research indicates that the current situation of rural communities, the preferences of different age groups, the problems with olive growing, the loss and transformation of the social dimension of rural lives, and the low level of attachment of young people present a challenging issue that should be considered as a whole. On the one hand, there is a great need to find solutions for these problems within the context of regional development plans. However, the application of international approaches that are based on standard targets for all the different situations (García-Esparza, 2015) should be avoided, and the rural needs, problems and preferences of rural community should be at the centre. A local office, including a team of experts from several disciplines such as planning, agriculture, conservation, tourism and economics, should be founded to develop a comprehensive approach. The local office can act as the place of change management, where the local community participates. The definition of the different roles of the community for sustainable development and the provision of feedback will support change management. Creating local job opportunities such as stone craftsmanship and eco-tourism, defining the limits of new construction activities and conservation schemes for vernacular houses and encouraging farming can provide sustainability for rural communities and lead to more successful conservation. Regarding the continuity of olive growing and the associated lifestyles, necessary regulations such as educational

programmes for farmers and young people, environmental planning on a regional and local scale, legal tools for the appropriate division of land, and local development programmes should be developed.

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