

# Linkages Between Cultural Landscapes, Settlement and Ethnicity In Rural Areas: Example Of DüzceUğursuyuand Aksu Watersheds

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## Abstract

Rural settlements are environments where local architectural examples are widespread, and reflect the geographical conditions, cultural structure, and lifestyle of societies to spaces. Unlike cities that are increasingly similar to each other under the influence of globalization, rural areas are still peculiarly shaped by their geographical location, climate, traditions, worldview, religion, social structure, production, and consumption. However, the problem of uniformization imposed by globalization in urban areas poses a threat to rural areas of Turkey, as well as in Europe. The European Council for the Village and Small Town (ECOVAST) was founded in 1984 and its aims are: to foster economic, social and cultural vitality and the administrative identity of rural communities throughout Europe, and to safeguard, the sensible and imaginative renewal of constructed and natural environments of such communities. Turkey's National Rural Development Strategy, which has been underway since 2014 and is scheduled to continue up to 2020, emphasizes improving the landscape in rural settlements, increasing the quality of life in rural communities, protecting and developing environmental and cultural values within those areas.

Düzce and its immediate surroundings, which are located in the western region near the Black Sea in Turkey, were determined as a study area, and have formed an important cultural mosaic with migrations from different regions. This cultural mosaic influenced the behavior and approaches of the first immigrant communities from their site selection to their settlement, and to current scale of the gardens. In addition to its

cultural landscape values, Düzce is a rich area with its natural landscape values and is located in the center of two big cities, which are Ankara and Istanbul. The existing ethnic diversity in the DüzceUğursuyu and Aksu watersheds has significant influence on settlement types in villages, rural architecture, livelihoods, worldviews, in cultural landscape design.

In order to evaluate the relationship between settlement forms, ethnic structures and cultural landscapes of the villages in Düzce Uğursuyu and Aksu watersheds, 50 villages in the area were visited and were used for cultural landscape analysis. Within the scope of this aim, information about the importance of villages in the historical process, the existence of historical archaeological elements, local architectural structures, handmade crafts, religious places, festivals, ethnic structures, agricultural production forms, highland traditions, organizational status, and monumental preservation, have been obtained. The data obtained from 50 villages were graded on a scale of 1 to 4, and feature tables related to villages that were created, and correlation analysis was performed via the IBM SPSS Statistics 22 program. As a result of the analysis, it was determined that there is a statistically significant relationship between ethnic structure, village settlement patterns and cultural landscaping elements. It has also been determined that the societies from the Caucasus Mountains, and Black Sea Region reflect their cultural characteristics effectively on their surrounding landscapes, and protect their identity to a large extent.

All the villages in the study area are grouped in regards to their characteristics and ethnic structures, such as being of Caucasian origin, Black Sea origin, Georgian origin, Habitan origin, Balkan origin and mixed origins. The villages, which best reflect the cultural texture of each group were identified by a team consisting of five people. Strategies and suggestions were developed for the protection of the rural identities, enhancement of landscape values and the increase of prosperity levels of the identified villages.

**Keywords:** Cultural Landscape, Düzce, Ethnicity, Human, Settlement, Rural Area

## **Introduction**

Rural settlements are areas where local architectural examples are common, reflecting the natural and cultural structure of the region and the life style of the period in which they belong (Eminağaoğlu and Çevik 2007). Unlike the cities that are

increasingly similar to each other due to globalization, rural areas are still shaped by their geographical location, climate, tradition, world view, privacy, religion, social structure, production and consumption. However, uniformization problems of globalization imposed in cities, also pose a threat to the rural regions of Turkey as well as in Europe (Erdem, 2012; Kiper, 2013; Muskara, 2017). Landscape changes that differ from the traditional building face the problem of "identity loss".

Identity as specified by Ocakçı (1996); is the case of being unique that separating any creature or object in nature from other living or objects and perceived by other senses such as visual, auditory, etc. Being specific can be understood by the interaction between other living or nonliving entities. Therefore, relationship is defined as the necessary form of action in the emergence of identity (Erdem, 2012). According to Gürsel (1993), the formation of urban or rural identity; cultural heritage or traditions, necessities of society, geography, topography, climate and natural factors, technological developments, ability to adapt to the changing conditions have been associated (Erdem, 2012). It is very important to develop quick solutions about the protected parts of cities and villages, and to increase the number of academic studies related to rural heritage (Muşkara, 2017).

According to the Protection of the World Cultural Heritage contract provisions (Turkey has been a side of this contract since 1983); states have committed to the protection of cultural and natural assets within their borders. Founded in 1984 European Council For The Village and Small Town (ECOVAST)'s formal aims are: to foster the economic, social and cultural vitality and the administrative identity of rural communities throughout Europe; to safeguard, and to promote the sensitive and imaginative renewal of the built and natural environments of such communities. Turkey's National Rural Development Strategy, which has been underway since 2014 and is scheduled to continue up to 2020, emphasizes improving the landscape in rural settlements, increasing the quality of life in rural communities, protecting and developing environmental and cultural values within those areas.

Cultural Landscapes have been defined by the World Heritage Committee as distinct geographical areas or properties uniquely representing the combined work of nature and of man. According to The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN); Cultural landscape is defined as "the geographical areas associated with a historical event or an activity, that encompasses both of cultural and natural resources as well as wildlife and domestic animals, or that exhibit various

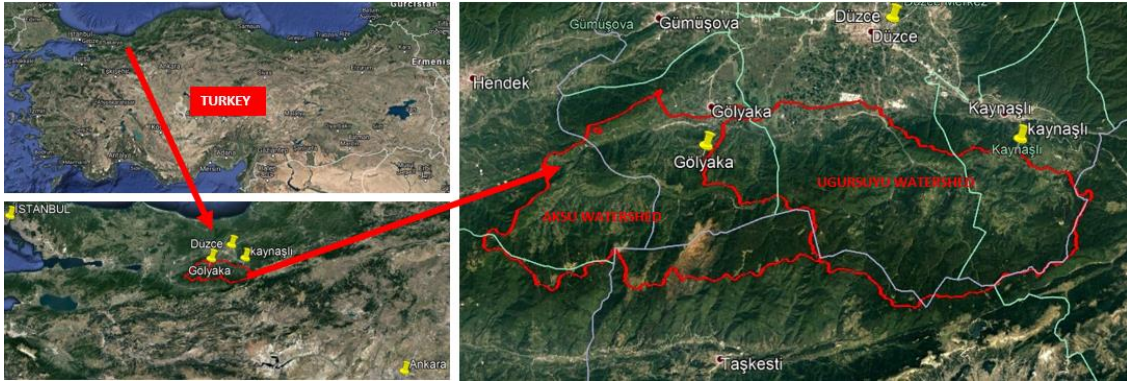
cultural and aesthetic values”.

In the occurrence of the concept of cultural landscape, it is emphasized that the idea that mankind is a part of nature is effective (Çöteli, 2012). Landscapes have different value judgments in accordance with the cultures and societies (Erdem, 2012). Thus, the ethnic origins and traditions of the societies can be said to be influential in the formation of the place where the first settlers of the societies they live with, and in the formation of the cultural landscape pattern. Some of the reasons why people living in rural areas prefer certain locations for settlement; ethnic characteristics as well as topography can be determinant. Human communities with a specific cultural origin form the basis of the cultural landscape by creating differences in the landscape character type of the region in their own cultural backgrounds in different regions of a country.

Ethnic diversity in the Düzce Uğursuyu and Aksu watersheds, which are identified as the study area, has a direct impact on rural identity by affecting the location of villages, rural architectural texture, local people's livelihoods and cultural landscape patterns. The aim of the study is to group all the villages in the area according to similar characteristics, to reveal the relationship between the ethnic structure, cultural landscape and settlement types in a tangible way. In addition, it is aimed to develop strategies for preserving the natural and cultural landscape values of the villages with different rural identity characteristics and increasing the well-being of the local people.

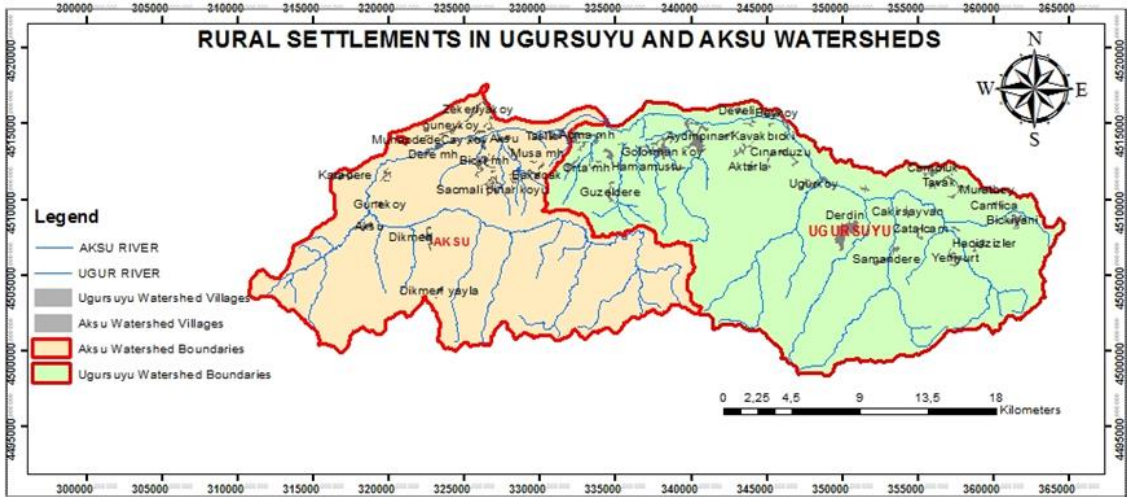
## **Material**

The main material of the study is the area constituted by the 339,5 km<sup>2</sup> Uğursuyu and 280 km<sup>2</sup> Aksu watersheds (Fig. 1). Uğursuyu and Aksu watersheds are located in the central district of Düzce, Gölyaka, Kaynaşlı and within the borders of Hendek District of Sakarya. The study area is rich in natural and cultural landscape values. In addition, it is a tourism center that the two big cities such as Ankara and İstanbul need for a day trip or a weekend vacation. Uğursuyu watershed is located within the boundaries of Düzce and Kaynaşlı districts.



**Figure 1.** Study Area

Aksu watershed is located in the district of Gölyaka in Düzce province and the district of Hendek in Sakarya province. Uğursuyu and Aksu watersheds feeding the streams are the branches of the BüyükMelen River and are located in the western Black Sea watershedno 13. There are a total of 50 villages in Uğursuyu and Aksu watersheds (Fig. 2).



**Figure 2.** Rural Settlements in Uğursuyu and Aksu Watersheds

The data and resources of the study area are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1.** The data used in the study area

<b>Data obtained in the study</b>	<b>Data source</b>
Preparation of the slope, aspect, settlement maps and the altitude groups, surface waters, transportation lines.	1 / 25.000 scaled topographical maps of 1997 prepared by General Command of Mapping
Land cover, stand types, closeness, proximity to forest	2008 forest management plan and report
Population information	Turkey Statistical Institute dated 2017 AddressBased Population Registration System and Information received from the village headman
Tourism data	Nature Tourism Master Plan 2013 and information received from Düzce Provincial Culture and Tourism Directorate
Festivals/Carnivals	Düzce Municipality, Düzce Provincial Directorate of Culture and Tourism Data
Agriculture and animal husbandry data	Düzce Provincial Directorate of Food, Agriculture and Livestock 2016 briefing reports
General information about the study area and its surroundings	Düzce Province Development Plan (2004), Scientific studies related to the field

## Methods

The method of study consists of 3 stages as Inventory-Analysis-Synthesis.

At the 1st stage of the method, the boundaries of the study area were determined on the watershed scale based on ecological foundations. At this stage, the literature on the natural and cultural landscaping elements of the study area had been made. Simultaneously, data on the method were collected and village information forms were formed. The data obtained by the field surveys were stored in the platform of geographical information systems, and the analyzes (slope, view, height groups) were made to help the field studies. According to the watershed and sub-basin boundaries, land travel plans were created, tourist attraction points were determined with natural and cultural factors relating to villages and their surroundings.

In the 2nd phase of the method, village information forms were filled in line with

the meetings of the headman. With village information forms; the importance of historical archaeological elements, local architectural structures, handicrafts, religious places, festivals and carnivals, ethnic structures, forms of agricultural production, highland tradition, organization status, non-formal education, women's education and monumental protection information had been obtained, village tags of each village were formed. The expert group consisting of 4 landscape architects and 1 forestengineers evaluated the information obtained from the village information forms in the range of 1-4. Statistical analysis was performed in order to reveal the relationship between ethnic structure, settlement type and cultural structure. Correlation analysis was performed by using IBM SPSS Statistics 22 program and it was determined that there were 3 different groups of villages. Four sample villages, which represent the best of each group and which are in the high score range in the evaluation of expert group, were selected in terms of natural and cultural landscape elements varieties.

In the 3rd stage of the method, strategies were developed in line with the main goal of ecotourism and rural development by evaluating the relationship between ethnicity, cultural structure and settlement types. Suggestions had been made towards sub-goals of identity, cultural structure, gastronomy, traditions, quality of life, increasing the level of welfare and raising the awareness of the local people.

## **Results**

### **Determining Settlement Properties and Statistical Analysis**

The villages in Uğursuyu and Aksu watersheds had evaluated with the ECOS method and Cultural Landscape Analysis Methods which contained in “Konya, Bozkır-Seydişehir-Ahırlı-Yalıhüyük districts and Suğla Lake Region Landscape Management” and “Conservation and Planning” projects by Uzun et al. (2010). The criteria were adapted to the study area and some simplifications and additions were made. As a result of the evaluations, the settlements were evaluated in four classes as low (27-47 points), medium (48-68 points), high (69-89 points) and very high (90-108 points). During the evaluation, information forms filled by village headmen, topographic maps, field observations, written sources related to the region were used. The evaluation of the possibilities and cultural characteristics of the villages in the Uğursuyu and Aksu watersheds are given in Table 1 and Table 2.

**Table 1.** The possibilities and cultural characteristics of the villages in the Uğursuyu Watershed

Settlement Criteria	Settlements												
	Kavakbıçkı	Kaledibi	Gölrmanı	Develi	Derdin	Çınardüzü	Çakırhacı İbrahim	Bıçkıyanı	Beyköy	Avçılınar	Aktarla	Konaklı	Duraklar
Topographic Structure Diversity	4	3	3	2	4	3	3	4	2	4	4	2	2
Forest Existence	4	3	3	1	4	3	3	4	1	4	4	1	1
Proximity to Efteni Lake	3	3	4	3	1	3	3	1	1	4	3	4	4
Young Population Existence	3	2	4	2	1	1	2	3	3	3	2	2	1
Education Status	2	2	2	3	4	3	3	4	3	3	2	3	3
Tourism Awareness Level	2	3	3	2	3	2	2	4	4	4	2	4	3
Facilities of Accommodation for tourists	1	1	2	1	3	1	1	2	3	4	1	3	1
Transportation Infrastructure Quality	3	3	4	4	2	3	3	3	4	4	2	4	4
Distance to center district	3	2	2	2	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	4	4
Health Institution	3	1	3	1	1	1	1	2	4	4	1	2	2
Infrastructure service (waste water, electricity, water, communication etc.)	2	2	2	2	4	2	2	2	4	4	2	4	2
Food & beverage locations (trout facilities etc.)	2	2	3	1	3	1	1	3	4	4	1	4	3
Current recreational activities	2	2	3	2	3	2	2	4	4	4	2	4	3
Plant Production	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	3
Animal production	3	3	3	3	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
The importance in historical process	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	3	2	2	2
Historical archaeological features and areas	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1
Local architectural structures	2	2	2	2	3	2	2	2	2	4	1	2	2
Handicrafts	2	2	2	1	2	1	1	2	1	4	1	1	1
Religious places	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Festivals and carnivals	1	1	1	2	2	1	1	2	3	3	1	4	2



Agricultural industry	1	1	2	2	1	1	1	2	2	3	1	2	2
Highland tradition	2	2	1	1	3	3	2	1	2	4	2	1	1
Associations and Cooperatives	2	1	2	2	2	3	1	3	2	3	2	2	2
Facilities of Non-formal training	2	2	2	1	1	2	1	2	3	4	1	2	2
Women's training	2	1	2	1	2	1	1	2	2	4	1	2	2
Object that necessity to protect	1	1	2	1	2	1	1	1	1	4	1	1	1
Total Points	60	53	64	50	69	54	51	67	68	94	51	69	58

**Table 2.** Possibilities and cultural characteristics of the villages in Aksu Watershed

Settlement Criteria	Settlements															
	Aksu	Bakacak	Bekiroğlu-Günevk	Camlibel	Cavköv	Dikmen	Hacısüleymanbey	Hacıvakup	Kadifekale	Hamamüstü	Yunusefendi	Zekeriva	Muhabdede	Sacmalınar	Taslıkköv	Sarıdere
Topographic Structure Diversity	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	3	3	4	3	3	4	3	2
Forest Existence	3	4	4	4	3	4	4	3	4	3	4	3	4	4	3	2
Proximity to Efteni Lake	3	3	4	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	3	2	2	2	2
Young Population Existence	3	3	2	2	2	2	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	3	2	2
Education Status	3	2	2	2	2	2	4	4	2	2	2	2	2	3	2	2
Tourism Awareness Level	4	2	2	2	2	2	4	2	2	2	2	2	2	4	2	2
Facilities of Accommodation for tourists	3	1	1	1	1	1	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1
Transportation Infrastructure Quality	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	4	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	3
Distance to center district	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	3	2	3	3	3	3
Health Institution	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	3	1	1	1	1	1	3	1	1
Infrastructure service (waste water, electricity, water, communication etc.)	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	2	2
Food & beverage locations	3	3	2	2	2	3	3	3	2	3	2	2	2	3	2	2

(trout facilities etc.)																
Current recreational activities	4	2	2	2	2	3	3	2	3	2	2	2	2	3	2	2
Plant Production	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Animal production	3	3	3	3	3	3	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	2
The importance in historical process	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Historical archaeological features and areas	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Local architectural structures	2	2	2	2	2	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Handicrafts	2	2	2	2	1	2	2	3	1	2	2	2	1	2	1	1
Religious places	1	1	2		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1
Festivals and carnivals	2	1	2	2	1	1	2	3	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	1
Agricultural industry	2	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1
Highland tradition	2	2	2	2	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	2	2	2	1
Associations and Cooperatives	2	2	1	2	1	1	2	3	1	2	2	1	1	2	2	2
Facilities of Non-formal training	2	2	2	2	1	2	2	2	1	2	2	2	2	2	1	2
Women's training	2	2	2	2	1	2	2	2	1	2	2	2	2	2	1	2
Object that necessity to protect	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Total Points	68	57	56	54	50	55	66	69	52	56	56	51	53	65	49	48

When examining the Table 1 and Table 2; It has seen that Aydınpınar village has been determined as very high in terms of its cultural texture and facilities. The villages of Konaklı, Derdin and Güzeldere have been seen that have high opportunities and cultural texture. In terms of ethnic background; The Güzeldere village represents the settlers of Karadeniz, Konaklı and Derdin villages represent the Caucasian origin settlers, and Hacıyakup village represents Georgian origin settlers. Aydınpınar is a settlement with mixed ethnic origin settlers in the area. Each settlement reflects a distinct diversity of ethnic diversity and cultural landscape textures.

Correlation analysis has performed by using IBM SPSS Statistics 22 program in order to explain the relationship between settlement characteristics, cultural texture and ethnicity. There is a statistically significant relationship between topographic structure, presence of local architectural texture and ethnicity (Table 3).

**Table 3.** Topographical structure, Local Architecture Texture and Ethnicity Correlation Analysis

		Topographic		
		Architectural	Structure	Ethnicity
Architectural	Pearson Correlation	1	,040	-,184
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,784	,201
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	10,880	,440	-6,160
	Covariance	,222	,009	-,126
	N	50	50	50
Topographic Structure	Pearson Correlation	,040	1	-,708**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,784		,000
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	,440	11,220	-24,080
	Covariance	,009	,229	-,491
	N	50	50	50
Ethnicity	Pearson Correlation	-,184	-,708**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,201	,000	
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	-6,160	-24,080	103,120
	Covariance	-,126	-,491	2,104
	N	50	50	50

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

During the analysis, the topographic structure (sloped or flat) and local architectural texture (present or absent) were evaluated in two classes. In addition, ethnicity was evaluated in 5 classes as Georgian, Black Sea, Caucasian, Balkan Migrant, Habitans (Native Turkish) and Mixed. The only village of Balkan migrant in the area is the village of Sarıdere. Habitan villages have been under the influence of Black Sea and Circassian villages. There is a high level of correlation between ethnicity and residential area.

3 main types of settlements formed by settlers from Black Sea, Caucasian and Georgian origin were determined. It has been examined in terms of characteristics of

settlements with mixed ethnic origins.

The village of Aydınınar is the most populous village in terms of population and is the richest village in terms of ethnic diversity. Also, it is located close to major tourism resources such as Efteni Lake, Toptepe promenade, Güzeldere waterfalls, Pürenli, Derebalık and Balıklı highlands, hiking trails etc. This village also separates from other villages in the vicinity by the reason of it has school, health unit, trout facilities etc. Aydınınar village is located 10 km away from the city center of Düzce (Gültekin and Gültekin, 2017).

Derdin Village is 21 km away from the city center of Düzce and its elevation is 1000 m. Its population is 355 people. This village is resembled Caucasian settlement. The houses have single or two storey and which are very well maintained (Uzun et. al. 2016).

Konaklı Village is 7 km to the city center of Düzce and the population of the village is 175 people. The land of the village is located on a very flat and less sloping area. In accordance with the Caucasian culture, the houses in the village are very well maintained and the gardens of the houses are limited with the walls (Uzun et. al. 2016).

Hacıyakup Village is located 15 km away from city center of Düzce where there are settlements of Georgian origin. It is located close to the Efteni Lake Wildlife Development Area in the study area. Its elevation is 149 m and the population is 1642 people (Uzun et al. 2016).

Güzeldere Village is 28 km away from Düzce City. It shows the Black Sea type settlement characteristics. The locations of the houses are located on the sloping terrain, distant and dispersed. The village of Güzeldere is located at an elevation of 630 m, and there are about 80 houses in the village. The Güzeldere Waterfall, located on the Bıçkı Creek passing through the Güzeldere Village, is 135 m. height and aesthetically, it has a privileged position in the region. Güzeldere Waterfall is registered as a forest resting place by The Ministry of Forestry - General Directorate For National Parks And Wild Life, General Directorate For Hunting-Wildlife Protection (Uzun et al. 2016; Anonymous 2018a).

## Conclusion

In this study, it has been observed that the cultural diversity of the Caucasus and Black Sea communities living in Uğursuyu and Aksu watersheds is very significant. In

this context, it has been emphasized the necessity of protecting the original life style, different folkloric elements, traditions, gastronomy and rural identity elements arising from ethnic structure.

It is recommended to develop ecotourism activities in the region, nevertheless there are festivals and carnivals, nature conservation areas, walking paths, important viewpoints, fishing areas, horse riding places and waterfalls in the highlands and settlements in the study area. In this way, the preservation of cultural values, the quality of life of the local people and the level of welfare will be increased.

In the research area, the most important problem of social life is the intensive migration and the young population decreasing gradually in the settlements. Providing resources for tourism by advertising the natural and cultural resources of the region will provide an alternative source of livelihood for the young population. Other important problems of the field are the substructure and superstructure deficiencies, the low level of ecotourism consciousness of the local people, the emergence of uniformity by losing the local characteristics of the architectural texture, the disappearance of local identity in some villages, and the sustainability of the cultural texture is endangered.

The village of Derdin reflects the settlements of Abkhaz, in a similar manner the Hacıyakup village reflects the settlements of Georgian, Konaklı village reflects the settlements of Circassian, Sarıdere village reflects the settlements of Balkans, Güzeldere village reflects the settlements of Blacksea, Develi village reflects the settlements of Habitans, and the Aydınpınar village reflects the settlements of the best mixed ethnicity. However, the characteristics of the Balkans and Habitans are at the level of extinction. Black Sea and Caucasian settlements are more protected. Local products specific to these cultures should be diversified and branding studies should be initiated. Efforts should be made to revitalize lost cultures. Local flavors are very important in ecotourism. Units should be established to introduce the specific foods of the region and restaurants should be diversified on local flavors. For instance, in the village of Konaklı, where the Circassians live intensively, a local meal is sold. With the increase of restaurants offering Black Sea, Georgian and Abkhazian dishes, a business area will be created especially for women. In addition, the production of dairy products can be made in the villages of Circassian and Abkhaz (such as Derdin, Hacısüleymanbey, Konaklı and Duraklar), especially the production of Circassian and Abkhaz cheese is recommended.

The Uğursuyu watershed is a watershed with a larger number of Circassian and Abkhaz villages. The proportion of young people in these villages is quite low. When the population structure of the villages is evaluated, it is seen that the average age is 50 years and over. It should be ensured that the young generation who will continue these cultures in the region take an active role in ecotourism activities. Black Sea settlements are more common in Aksu watershed. In the Black Sea settlements located in the high and sloping land of the watershed, there are more young population than the Caucasian settlements. However, the migration of the younger generation also takes place in these settlements. Since the Black Sea settlements are located at steep slopes where transportation is limited, it should be ensured that especially the women living in these villages can be included in the production and working life.

This study which was conducted for Uğursuyu and Aksu watersheds, are important in understanding the importance of rural areas across Turkey and Europe, providing of local specific features, bringing alternative sectors such as ecotourism and sustainability to forefront.

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