Hyper-Traditions/Hip Villages: Urbanite villagers of Western Anatolia

SEBNEM YÜCEL YOUNG

This article analyzes the emerging phenomenon of urban migrants to the villages of Western Anatolia — specifically, the case of two villages, Yeni Orhanli and Yagcilar. Also referred to as “urbanite villagers” in the popular media, these urban migrants, like many suburbanites, are searching for healthier, more authentic lives for themselves and their families. In the process, they have created a phenomenon I call “hip villages” — villages with “country” style. However, their standing in these villages is one of isolation and intrusion: isolating themselves to protect class-based distinctions, and intruding whenever they see a need for improvement. In relation to Yeni Orhanli and Yagcilar, hip villages in the making, the article discusses the conflicts and complexities that emerge from the formation/manifestation of class-based identities and from manifestations of colonial discourse and global consumer culture.

It is hard to pinpoint the date when certain Western Anatolian villages, which I call “hip villages,” first began to gain popularity. But it is possible to say their makeover was an outcome of social and economic transformations in Turkey during the late 1980s and early 1990s. This was a period when new professions like advertising, tourism and marketing became popular; when a new class of “yuppies” (young urban professionals) appeared; and when Turkish people first began to indulge in global consumer culture thanks to a liberalizing economy, expanded media, and improved communications networks.

Hip villages are villages with style — “country” style. This is produced from many referents, real and imaginary: a site visited in Tuscany, an image from a lifestyle magazine, a scene from a movie. It is thus globally produced but locally realized, embellished with details that show off the cultural capital of a new class of village residents for a target audience — people like themselves.

Several Anatolian hip villages, including Sirince, Yesilyurt and Adatepe, are now well known. Before being re-created as hip, however, they all shared certain characteristics. First was the presence of an attractive, but degraded (and largely abandoned) building stock.
The villages had rich cultural histories, frequently dating to ancient times, and the resulting built environment was composed of ancient remains, mosques, churches, and houses. During the nineteenth century these villages generally housed both Greek and Turkish families, but two twentieth-century events contributed to their abandonment. First were the wars and population exchanges between Greece and Turkey in 1923 and 1924, which brought Turkish immigrants from the Balkans and Greek islands to houses left by former Greek residents. Second was a wave of migration in the late 1950s by villagers seeking city jobs, leaving their former settlements half-abandoned and condemned to fast decay.

Another common characteristic of hip villages before transformation was their location. All were situated in the mountains — which isolated them to an extent, ensuring their “unspoiled” character. All were also located in relative proximity to popular summer destinations, enabling their “discovery” by urbanites. Such locations generally also provided them with a picturesque quality, with winding cobblestone roads and traditional stone and timber houses, and with beautiful views of the sea or nearby hills covered with pine and olive trees.

The transformation of these villages to hip status usually began with the arrival of one or more pioneer urbanites, who purchased old houses, restored them, and converted them into boutique hotels and restaurants. Soon, however, other urbanites followed, usually upper-middle-class professionals frustrated with what they considered the cultural and physical pollution of Turkey’s cities. The next section will look at some of the features of these villages, with examples taken from Sirince, the epitome of hip villages, as well as Yesilyurt and Adatepe (fig. 1).

HIPPED: SIRINCE AND OTHERS

Nestled on the mountains near the ancient city of Ephesus in Izmir, Sirince is an old settlement, dating to the fifth century AD. It is believed Sirince’s population was more than 4,000 in the 1900s. But it shrank significantly after the beginning of World War I (1914), and the village was completely abandoned by its Greek residents in 1922 at the end of the Turkish Independence War.1

Sirince remained abandoned for two years until the relocation of some Turkish Macedonians there in 1924. By 1927, records indicate the population had risen to 1,740. But a new cycle of abandonment then began, with the population dropping to only 718 by 1975.2

During the late 1980s Sirince’s fortunes were dramatically altered by a resurgence of interest in Turkey’s historic and natural sites. The resulting tourist industry brought attention to the town on the part of potential new settlers and attracted back some former residents.3 Among the new residents, one person, Sevan Nisanyan, requires further discussion.

Nisanyan — “the pioneer of humanist tourism in Turkey,” according to one newspaper — was born in Istanbul to an Armenian family.4 After completing elite private schools there, he studied political science in the United States at Columbia and Yale Universities. He then returned to Turkey and worked as a CEO in large companies. However, he later quit the corporate world to write travel books targeting an international market.5

No stranger to Sirince from his travel writing, Nisanyan settled there around 1995, restoring the houses he purchased and running them as “little hotels.” His guidebook, Kucuk Oteller Kitabi (The Little Hotel Book), first published in 1998 and then annually ever since, soon also became popular among young urban professionals, helping to publicize his establishments and promote others like them (fig. 2). Nisanyan was not the first to run a hospitality business in Sirince; pensions were already operating there in the late 1980s. But he was the most successful at promoting “little hotels,” and in doing so, he transformed Sirince into the tourist success that it is today (fig. 3).6

Today’s urban migrants to Sirince are involved in several businesses that have made the village famous: running a “little hotel” or restaurant, making boutique wines, or selling rugs, jewelry and memorabilia to tourists.7 Tourist shops today dominate Sirince’s shopping district. Indeed, the

\[\text{FIGURE 1. Map showing “hip” villages of Sirince, Adatepe and Yesilyurt.}\]
whole village is a shopping district, with its winding cobblestone roads lined with the stands of women selling lace, toy dolls, and herbs.

Such conditions are also typical of other hip villages as well, like Yesilyurt and Adatepe on Kazdaglari (Ida Mountain) near the ancient city of Assos. As in Sirince, the increasing popularity of these villages has also attracted some former villagers back. But not everybody is there to settle — only to do business.8 If villagers have not already sold or converted parts of their houses to pensions, they are running them as gozleme houses, serving savory pastries with different fillings; or else they have transformed them to sell local produce and handmade products (fig. 4). Everybody is now so professional in their new business ventures one might wonder if there are any “real” villagers left, or only people dressed to create a village-like atmosphere.

The buildings in these villages also tend to display certain common characteristics. Rusticated garden furniture and old farm machinery are used to furnish courtyards, and a self-conscious “country” atmosphere is established inside through the use of handmade fabrics, paintings, or even murals depicting idyllic settings and scenes from mythology (fig. 5). Locally produced jams, wine, and olive oil, together with agricultural produce like squash and pears, are also scattered around as decorative elements (fig. 6).

Following the old building style, new additions are constructed from natural materials like stone, timber or reed. Since old houses are frequently restored with a lack of sensitivity for acquired patina (only a rigor to “clean” the environment), this often makes it hard to tell addition from original structure (fig. 7). Shop signs, carefully crafted to look old, if not romantic, are another important part of the composition (fig. 8).

Ambition for a country style also does not reveal itself only in physical details and decorations. Indeed, its most direct enunciation may be discursive. In the middle of a Turkish conversation, the English word “country” may pop up to describe the atmosphere the urbanite villagers have a mind to create.

In establishing such a style, authenticity or locality are not of primary importance. Design elements may be drawn from an English country home, an old Tuscan villa, or a

![Figure 2. A restored house in Sirince functioning as a “little hotel.”](image1)

![Figure 3. Street view from Sirince.](image2)

![Figure 4. A bakkal (corner grocery store) selling local produce in Yesilyurt.](image3)
French home in Provence. The aim is only to create an imagined village, not a real one. After all, the urbanite villagers are not real villagers.

It is important to note there are precedents for such an imaginary re-creation of Turkish villages. During Turkey’s early Republican period the transformation of its villages was considered an important component of a national modernization project. During that time, more than 80 percent of the population lived in villages, and Turkey’s leaders based their hopes for the new nation-state on their advancement. In a manner similar to contemporary European perceptions of colonized populations, the villagers were viewed as having the potential to be acculturated and modernized. But Turkey’s leaders agreed this would have to be undertaken as a “civilizing mission” by the urbanite elite. Thus, in a 1933 article titled “Village Missions” — a forerunner of peasanism (köycülük) in Turkey — Nusret Köymen stated:

*The era of combating the cannibals in African jungles in order to spread Christianity is over. Nor would one any longer consider it bravery to force the gates of Vienna with swords. The missionary work of today is listening to the problems of the people whose blood, feelings, and sweat we share in our bodies and spirit, and to search for solutions to these problems. The bravery of today is to force the walls of illiteracy, conservatism, laziness, and despair, which are more formidable than the most formidable fortifications.*

In the following sections I describe the impact both of these early Republican policies and that of later rural migration to the cities. The discussion is intended to show how in Turkey the spaces of the urban and the rural, and the statures of urbanite and villager, are inextricably bound together, despite all their differences.

**F I G U R E 5.** Interior of a cafe in Yeşilyurt.

**F I G U R E 6.** Local produce placed as decorative elements, adding to the “country” atmosphere.

**U R B A N I N T H E R U R A L**

Early Republican efforts to improve the situation of Turkey’s villages had legislative, educational and architectural components. The first act promoting “modern” and “healthy” villages was the 1924 Law on the Villages. It was supported by loans and tax policies aimed at reducing the burden on peasants.

Equally important were education initiatives, however. Government agencies first tried to systematically define and characterize the educational needs of peasants; then they embarked on a series of rural educational strategies. Indeed, when problems became apparent with implementation of the Law on the Villages in the late 1930s, the government turned to the educational system for the solution.

At the time, teachers were seen as the main agents of “enlightenment” in the villages, the real representatives of the state. As a result, the education of village teachers was taken very seriously. Village Teacher Schools (Koy Öğretmen Okulları) were founded in 1926, and Village Instructor Courses (Koy Eğitmen Kursları) followed in 1937 to train substitute teachers from among literate peasants. Finally, Village Institutes (Koy Enstitüler), started in 1936 and were legalized in 1940. Aimed at producing educational protagonists from select peasants and enabling an “enlightenment of the villages” from within, they proved to be the height of the education project.
Teaching the villagers/peasants not only how to read, write, and think, but also how to live in a “civilized” manner, was likewise the duty of architects. Architect Zeki Sayar, in a 1936 article titled “Interior Colonization,” identified the “civilizing mission” of architecture as follows:

Although we must consider the habits and lifestyles of the peasants when we are constructing the new villages, we should not hesitate to go against these traditions wherever they clash with contemporary social and hygienic standards. The new village plans should also provide the users with the means for civilized living. A revolution in life styles is also necessary to teach them to sleep on individual beds rather than together on the earth, to teach them to use chairs and tables rather than sitting and eating on the floor. . . .

Architect Abdullah Ziya, in a 1933 article “Village Architecture,” was even blunter. “It is our responsibility to construct their villages and to make our brothers talk, dress, and live like us,” he wrote.

Sibel Bozdogan has argued that during this period terms like “missionaries” and “colonization” were devoid of negative connotations. However, the comfortable and uncritical use of such terminology, and the similarities to colonial discourse in enunciating a policy that so clearly separated “us” from “them,” is thought provoking. If nothing else, it pointed to a socioeconomic and cultural division that placed urbanites above villagers — a division that continues today.

**RURAL IN THE URBAN**

Turkey went through a political and economic transition in the 1950s, a time marked by the end of one-party rule by the Republican People’s Party. After the Democrat Party won the 1950 elections, they emphasized foreign investment and the development of the private sector. The majority of programs on villages, like Village Institutes, came to a halt during this period. This was also a period of agricultural mechanization, which changed both cities and villages irrevocably.

Mechanization of agricultural production worked to the benefit of large landowners who could afford to buy machinery for agribusiness. Together with the continued division of land among siblings, which created smaller and smaller parcels (often too small to sustain a family), mechanization caused many villagers to migrate to Turkey’s cities. Between 1950 and 1960 this resulted in a 60 percent increase in the country’s urban population.

Migration to cities also created a new urban form — squatter settlements called gecekondu. As Gulsum Baydar Nalbantoglu has observed, these were developed in areas close to business centers, but on “topographical thresholds such as steep slopes, and areas threatened by landslides and floods.”

Gecekondu districts, which started to appear as early as the 1930s, also provided a sharp contrast to the “modern urban” environments that were the dream of Turkey’s urban elite.

Indeed, many urban dwellers did not consider gecekondu, with their “maze-like” dirt roads, to be part of the city at all; rather, they were regarded as “transitory areas.” Yet today, sixty years after their first appearance, gecekondu settlements have proved far more than transitory. And their elimination or transformation into “urban environments” continues to be a major issue for city planning departments and municipal governments.

Considering the lack of “transformed” gecekondu areas, however, gecekondu have had a far more important impact in terms of transforming cities than the other way around.

This transformation is today generally described as a “ruralization of cities.” Ruralization (köylesme) is here a term of relative inferiority, related to a degeneration of the urban environment and the destruction of refined tastes and metropolitan manners. This ruralization has, however, created its own spaces (gecekondu neighborhoods); organizations (associations formed by migrants of specific places); music (arabesk);
and food habits (kebab and lahmacun houses). Interestingly, these are neither taken from the village or the city; they are hybrid, marginalized formations that have reached a degree of acceptance only during the “postmodern” period since the mid 1980s. According to Bozdogan:

We all began learning to suppress our contempt for gecekondu taste, arabesk music, kebab houses, intercity bus terminals, and cheap little mosques with aluminum domes, if we did not begin rather to like them, as we confronted our own ambivalent experiences of modernity.22

Such a confrontation with local forms of modernity has corresponded with the onset of a truly global economy. In Turkey, among other things, this has allowed the birth of a new yuppie class, the introduction of global consumer culture, and the perpetuation of a new “myth of ideal home” through media and advertisements.23 This latter imaginary has created its own new urban formation: the gated community. In this case, however, it has been the “genuine” urban dwellers who have attempted to separate themselves from “the crowd” by creating controlled, “civilized” environments.24 Depending on financial resources, gated communities have now been realized in Turkey either in suburbs, as detached houses with gardens for the rich; or in cities, as highrise apartment blocks with garden areas and recreational facilities for the upper-middle class.25

Even more recently, a new group of separatist urbanites has emerged, those choosing to relocate to villages. However, the move has forced these migrants to confront their privileged identity in ways that would not be as necessary in an upscale urban neighborhood or a suburban gated community. In particular, it has revealed stereotypes and generalizations implanted through their enculturation as “urbanites,” involving differences that are not only seen to exist, but which are expected to exist. The result of an ingrained sense of superiority, these have become unintentionally manifest in patterns of speech and manner. The next section examines these patterns in greater detail.

HIP IN THE MAKING: NEW YENI ORHANLI AND YAGCILAR

Two villages I have studied, Yeni Orhanli and Yagcilar, are representative of the implicit distinctions between urbanite villagers and existing rural populations — but in different ways. Hip in the making, both are located in the Izmir metropolitan area within convenient commuting distance of the city, making it possible for new residents to live in or near them while working in the city (fig. 9).

Of the two, Yeni Orhanli, located 37 km. south of Izmir, does not possess the physical features typically associated with a Western Anatolian village. These have generally been understood to include an organic pattern of development, dirt or cobblestone roads, and structures built from natural materials like stone, wood, or mud brick. There is an asphalt secondary highway running through Yeni Orhanli, dividing it into two unequal halves. However, since this highway connects the seaside town of Seferihisar with Menderes, it becomes crowded on weekends, providing support for a growing number of roadside businesses.

Most of the houses in Yeni Orhanli are relatively new, one-story, concrete-frame/brick-infill structures (fig. 10). The key to this newness and alikeness can be found in the name Yeni Orhanli (“New Orhanli”). There is, in fact, an “old” Orhanli, a mountain village founded nearly two hundred years ago by nomadic Turkic groups (yoruk). Yeni Orhanli was founded in 1976, after the majority of the inhabitants of the original village demanded to be relocated to a site with running water in the houses and easy access to other towns and villages. (There are some who did not leave their houses in the original Orhanli — as well as new residents who are currently purchasing and restoring old houses there.26)

The very newness of Yeni Orhanli has been further enhanced by the arrival of urbanites. One such person even joked to me about changing the name to “New Yeni Orhanli.” The very addition of the English word “new” provides a veiled declaration of who is moving there: people with college degrees, who speak a foreign language(s), and who can separate Yeni Orhanli not only from Orhanli but also from Yeni Orhanli before their arrival. In short, the demographics of “New Yeni Orhanli” include both young and retired urban professionals, as
well as a significant number of retired teachers (whose case is slightly different both ideologically and economically, and which deserves more attention than can be given here).

The other village I studied, Yağcilar, is located 50 km. from Izmir. But since 30 km. of this distance can be traveled on a major expressway, it takes less time to reach it from Izmir than Yeni Orhanlı. Yağcilar’s current residents are descended from villagers moved there from near Selanik in the Balkans during the population exchanges of the 1920s. Formerly, they raised tobacco, which was subsidized by the government during the first half of the twentieth century. Then, as tobacco lost its sustaining value, the village grew poorer. Nevertheless, residents continued their agricultural livelihood by growing and selling fruits and vegetables, like okra and melon, and breeding goats.

Unlike Yeni Orhanlı, Yağcilar is today surrounded by gated communities, residents of which refer to it in blogs as “their village,” and who publicize its beauty by posting photographs of it (fig. 11).

There is only one urbanite living in the actual village of Yağcilar, however. He is an architect who recently received the national architecture award for his “Architect’s Office” there. Since settling in the village, his work has brought considerable publicity to Yağcilar, and this publicity may eventually have a similar impact as Nisanyan’s did for Sirince.

Compared to Sirince or Yesilyurt, both of Yeni Orhanlı and Yağcilar are considerably less attractive in terms of their traditional building stock — a precondition for hip transformation. However, compensation for this condition seems to have been provided by ambitious marketing. On the website for Orhanlı, under the heading “Hidden Eden Orhanlı,” is an explicit invitation to buy property there. “Would you like to purchase your land from one of the hidden paradises of Turkey, Orhanlı?” it asks.

The site then describes and depicts in photos thyme-scented picnic grounds, natural water springs, the village’s high-quality honey and olive oil, its wine production, and the success of its folk-dance troupe in national competitions. It also gives a detailed village history, describes how to buy its products, and explains how to reach it from nearby urban centers.

None of the new residents claim the website had any impact on their decision to move there. They were already “captured” by the beauty of surrounding pine forests or by the efforts of friendly real estate agents. The typical new property owners in both villages are upper-middle-class professionals, either retired or still working, with plans for village-related future businesses, like “little hotels” or restaurants. Although they have moved to the country, they still maintain contacts and relations with the city, however — either directly for shopping and visiting friends, or indirectly by phone, fax and Internet.
Such a benign image hides a more difficult dynamic in terms of the relationship between new urbanite and older villagers. These conflicts and complexities exist in the formation of class-based identities, an “aestheticized view of the world” on the part of newcomers, and the impact of global consumer culture. In certain regards, the attitudes the new urbanites are also similar to those of early Republican urban intellectuals, who saw it as their duty to develop/modernize the villages by “colonizing” them. I will turn to these issues in the following section.

CULTIVATION OF THE MINDS

Many urbanite villagers, especially in Yeni Orhanli, occupy actual houses in the villages. But for them, this situation is perceived as only being temporary; their real country houses will go on land they have purchased on the village outskirts (fig. 12). Thus, their plans do not exactly follow the Sirince model. In fact, the new Yeni Orhanli residents do not want Yeni Orhanli to be like Sirince. As one woman remarked:

Sirince is more like a village-museum, a showroom for tourists. The reason for its [unacceptable] current state is tourism. The products they sell from dolls to vines are not even produced there! The dolls are from Konya and wine from other places with Sirince label. It is all marketing. . . . You can hear roosters in the morning in Sirince as well, but even that rooster is there for the sake of the show!

Ironically, the tourism this woman so vehemently criticizes also provides a basis for her future business plans — only not exactly as in Sirince. She imagines a place just outside the village: a house with couple of bungalows, a pool, olive trees, and a garden for herbs, vegetables and fruits. The house will be made from stone and wood — not necessarily resembling the village houses, but something not very different. What she really has in mind is this:

A complete country atmosphere! There may be examples of that in Italy. Maybe I am imagining an Italian village-like place. It is a house that fits there better. But there are houses like that in Turkey, which I saw in magazines like Country Homes.

In a way, what the woman desires is a hip place in a not-so-hip village. It follows that her business will not have any negative consequences on the village. Moreover, the land she develops will remain in harmony with nature — providing there are no other developments nearby to spoil the dream. Duncan and Duncan have talked about a similar dilemma of development that produces a politics of anti-development in reference to the town of Bedford:

Like Western tourists who seek ‘unspoilt’ countries where they can return in fantasy to simpler ways of life, so Bedford and other attractive country towns located near large cities are sought out as places where one can lead a more wholesome, authentic life. The irony, as with tourism, is that the more people arrive seeking unspoilt landscapes, the more likely it is that qualities that attracted them will disappear.

What Turkey’s the visions of urbanite villagers thus involve is an expectation of difference between village and city, but one built upon childhood memories of picnics with the family, romantic novels set in unspoiled nature, television shows with a rural theme, or TRT documentaries about the “disappearing” traditions in Anatolia that give special attention to local cuisine, wedding ceremonies, and folkdances.

Urbanite villagers move to the countryside with the expectation that they will be able to experience all these things. But it is in the area of ceremonies and rituals (not so much cuisine) that they frequently experience deep disappointment. “What bothers me is they want to be like city folk!” complained one.
The disappointment is not simply with changes to supposed “unchanging” rural ways; it is also with the resemblance of the village culture to that of “uncultured” city folk, themselves marginalized groups of former rural migrants. It is in the music they hear, the hair, in the outfits. For urbanite villagers, hybrid forms of expression and “mimicry” damage the purity and innocence of their countryside. In other words, both they and their villager-like-villagers are more respectable than the villager-like-urbanites. The dislike for such a “crowd” is so apparent that one person told me she would not go to the seaside nearby, because “[it] is crowded with lower classes. I mean we do not go to swim [near] here. In the summer, this village is more elite than that [crowd].”

It is ironic that while complaining about the desire of villagers to move freely between urban and rural realms, the urbanite villagers claim precisely that right for themselves — as a matter of nature. For them, however, urban should stay urban, and rural should stay rural. That way they can leave one for the other whenever it gets too over-bearing. According to one: “I do get tired of seeing people with salvar all the time. Sometimes I want to see normally dressed people around me.”

What is implied here is a hierarchical order that allows urbanites to cross class boundaries without losing their so-called real selves — but not villagers. A married urbanite couple, who had lived in a village for nearly fifteen years, told me: “We are the ones who are more villager-like today, because we did not change. We are the same persons as before. But they are in constant change.”

Of course, if change is unavoidable, it is the duty of the “conscious individual” to direct change for the better; and this involves teaching people who to be and how to behave. Indeed, the new urbanites I talked to saw themselves as teachers, carrying out this “civilizing mission” — again, very naturally. “I cannot change them into my likeness. I did not take them in front of me and lecture; but they are influenced from my lifestyle, the way I sit, the way I stand up, the way I talk,” one told me.

The act of teaching, however, requires intrusion into the traditions and habits of the villagers. And despite the complaints about the disappearance of certain authentic village qualities, there are also real village qualities the urbanite villagers do not find appropriate. This implies dividing the ways of villagers by appropriateness: those that should not change (outfits, rituals, cuisine); and those that should (local dialect — especially incorrect use of words — readiness to adopt marginalized urban habits, etc.).
In one vineyard near Yagcilar are two structures that are visited by Turkish architects all year round. One an office, the other a residence, they belong to an architect urbanite villager, Serhat Akbay. The site is located just on the village outskirts, bordering a pine forest. Here the residence is placed in the middle of a vineyard — a small wooden structure elevated above the ground (fig. 13). Compared to the stone houses in the villages, it looks more like a pier. The office, a one-story rectangular structure made of stone, received the National Architecture Award in 2006 (figs. 14, 15).

Not surprisingly, Akbay’s place and ideas differ from those of other urbanite villagers. He had no intention to realize “country style,” and did not have a village-related (especially tourism-related) business in mind when he created the two structures. Today he simply carries on his business the same as if he lived in a city.

However, there is something special about an architect’s design for his or her own house — a chance to realize dreams that might not be possible in projects for other clients. Such projects are very personal and provide a chance to showcase what he or she really wants to design. Naturally, the location of Akbay’s house in the country also provides a freedom perhaps unavailable in an urban context, subject to greater physical restrictions and government regulation.

But even if he was not concerned with country style, there were other issues with which Akbay, as an architect, had to deal — like locality, globality and authenticity. Such a vocabulary of concerns locates this house within architectural discourse. Thus, it too can be seen as a product of global culture — but architectural culture this time.

Another well-known Turkish architect, Nevzat Sayin, has described Akbay’s house as follows:

*Despite its relation to traditional forms and the use of traditional building technologies, it is a modern structure.
Despite its familiarity, it is “authentic.” In a world that is homogenizing under the name of globalization, “new regionalism” must be something like this.*

What makes Akbay house regional? Not its materials (Russian pine), nor its form (although it can be likened to many traditional structures from boardwalks to temporary vineyard grape depots). Rather, it is the special dialogue it forms with its site. Akbay described this stance as one of “timidity,” by which he implies a desire to avoid disturbing the site and a readiness to leave whenever desired (fig. 16).

Yet it also embodies contradictions. Its careful and rational positioning manifests assertiveness, not timidity. It is located so as to occupy the only part of the site unsuitable for planting vines. It divides the site in two, facing the only possible approach. Furthermore, at the same time it is raised on pilotis, it is also anchored via steel members, and its wooden structure is braced with steel cables. Clearly, this house is ready to stand against inhospitable weather — with every intention of permanence. It thus aspires to belong and not belong simultaneously, just like the urbanite villagers themselves.

The houses of other urbanite villagers of Yagcilar and Yeni Orhanli are also located — or will be located, when they...
**Figure 14** (above). Akbay’s office on the same site, which won him the 2006 National Architecture Award in Turkey.

**Figure 15** (right). Interior of Akbay’s office.

**Figure 16**. Looking at the Akbay house from below.
are finally designed and built — on the village outskirts.35 There they will function more like country homes than village ones. Yet, despite physical separation from the village, these houses will be tied to the rest of the world by both visible and invisible lines of communication. This is a necessary condition for urbanites.

In terms of construction, local wood or stone will be used to build these new houses, but not to produce traditional forms. This is neither surprising, nor an enunciation of “critical regionalist” sensibilities. Traditional houses reflect traditional lifestyles that no longer exist, or are even desired. Even the restored houses of Sirince, the epitome of hip villages, were “adapted” to the needs of contemporary users. What is left in Sirince is a traditional shell, with a new interior adorned with traditional decorations. Given the chance to build their own houses, the urbanites I interviewed preferred to manifest their own lives, their own appreciations — be it in the form of a Tuscan villa or a modern box.

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REFERENCES


2. Ibid.

3. The population of Sirince was 829, according to the 1985 census. Ibid.


5. For more information on Sevan Nisanyan, refer to www.nisanyan.com.


7. Ibid.

8. Studies in Sirince showed that money from tourism ventures raised the financial stature of its residents, which resulted in higher expectations of their environment in terms of cultural and social amities.

Today especially younger generations are leaving the village to settle in the cities. For more information, refer to Beker, Sirince Kentsel Sıt Alani Koruma Amaçlı Imar Planı Arastırma Raporu. There are also families in Yesilyurt who live in the town, as they run a shop in the village where they sell local produce like olive oil.

9. It is not possible to find a direct correspondence in English for the Turkish word köyçilik. The term refers to a movement and a body of activity aimed at improving the conditions of the villages, reaching and enlightening the peasants. Sibel Bozdogan translated the word as “training of the peasants,” while Joost Jongerden has used the term “peasantism” to denote it. See S. Bozdogan, Modernism and Nation Building (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2001), p.97; and J. Jongerden, “Rural Constitution of a Turkish Popular Identity: Peasants, Modernization, and the Nation in the Work of Nusret Kemal Köymen,” paper presented at the graduate workshop, Nationalism, Society and Culture in Post-Ottoman Southeast Europe, organized by the Oxford Balkan Society and SEESOX, May 29—30, 2004, Oxford, U.K. In this article I use the term “peasantism.”


12. Ibid.


15. Sibel Bozdogan suggested that during the 1930s in Turkey, “...the term ‘colonisation’ was devoid of all its negative connotations: it signified a progressive and enlightened state bringing civilization to the countryside.” Bozdogan, Modernism and Nation Building, p.103.


and Nalbantoglu, “Silent Interruptions.”
20. The use of the word rural in this sense is similar to the use of “provincial” in contrast to “metropolitan.” Refer to R. Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), p.266.
21. Arabesk is a music type that emerged in Turkey in the late 1960s, and reached popularity by late 1970s. According to Meral Ozbek, “The term ‘arabesk’ was originally coined to designate — and denigrate — these popular songs, but it later came to describe the entire migrant culture formed at the peripheries of Turkish cities.” M. Ozbek, “Arabesk Culture,” p.211.
24. In Turkey gated communities have not emerged out of a desire for more safety and security, as common in the West. Rather, the gates are there to pronounce the enclaves’ exclusivity, like a private club.
26. Indeed, “old” Orhanli village fulfills more of the prerequisites to become hip: it is abandoned, it has attractive buildings, and it is located in the mountains. However, the greater current involvement of urbanite villagers with Yeni Orhanli was the reason for its selection for this study.
27. One good example of such a posting is that by Yesim Meric. She posted Yagcilar Koyu images and her own description of the village on Urla Online Communication Portal, http://www.urlaonline.com/urlaaktif/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=106&Itemid=108.
30. Words not in italic were used in English during the interview: “Tam bir country havasi.”
32. The word “mimicry” is used here in the same sense Homi Bhabha gave it in *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1994).
35. There is only one exception to this situation.
36. One example of the re-creation of the colonial environments for exposition is the Egyptian street put together for the 1889 Paris Exposition. For more information, refer to T. Mitchell, *Colonizing Egypt* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988).

All photos and drawings are by the author.