THE COSMOPOLITANIZATION OF CULINARY "CONSUMPTION":

STEAKHOUSES AS INSTANCES OF THE CULTURE INDUSTRY

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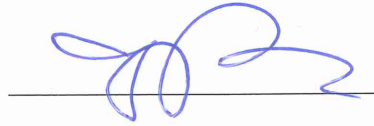The thesis of Erdem Akgün

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ABSTRACT

The Cosmopolitanization of Culinary "Consumption":

Steakhouses as Instances of the Culture Industry

This thesis is one of the firsts in Turkish context and literature in analyzing how culture industry and transforms culinary consumption into a cosmopolitan practice through steakhouses. Using the methods of thematic analysis and discourse analysis, the data collected from 40 interviewees including both the people who have been to steakhouses and who have been not has been theoretically and practically analyzed. As a result, it has been observed that steakhouses have an expert, western-connoting, and socioeconomically high perception in the eyes of the consumers; and this perception promoted by culture industry has been observed to be reproduced in popular discourse. Furthermore, steakhouses have been concluded to be effectively-functioning ideological instruments of culture industry operating in the co-existence of cosmopolitanism, globalization, and capitalism by selling perceptions full of associations symbolizing better life standards and high-level capitals. It has also been found that in addition to the primary and secondary functions of eating as existing theories suggest, dining-out at steakhouse can also be regarded as a tertiary activity in which people try for meaning-making via symbolic performance activities through which they continue to spend money, construct ideal identities, and buy cultural products such as high-SES experience.

ÖZET

Yemek 'Tüketimi'nin Kozmopolitleşmesi:
Kültür Endüstrisi'nin Bir Örneği Olarak Steakhouselar

Bu tez kültür endüstrisinin yemek tüketimini steakhouse'lar aracılığıyla nasıl kozmopolit bir eylem haline getirdiğinin incelenmesi konusunda Türkiye bağlamında ilgili literatürdeki ilk çalışmalardandır. Tematik analiz ve söylem analizi yöntemleri kullanılarak, hem steakhouse'lara gitmiş hem de gitmemiş insanlardan oluşan 40 kişilik bir gruptan elde edilen mülakat verileri teori ve uygulama temelinde incelenmiştir. İnceleme sonucunda tüketicilerin steakhouse'lara yönelik uzman, batıyı çağrıştıran ve sosyoekonomik olarak yüksek bir algısı olduğu saptanmış ve kültür endüstrisi tarafından desteklenen bu algının da popüler söylemler aracılığıyla sürekli yeniden üretildiği görülmüştür. Ayrıca steakhouse'ların bir amaç doğrultusunda kültür endüstrisi tarafından etkin olarak kullanılan ideolojik araçlar olduğu ve bu araçların daha iyi yaşam standartları ve daha yüksek sermaye sağlayacağı algısını satarak kozmopolitleşme, küreselleşme ve kapitalizm üçgeninde faaliyet gösterdiği gözlemlenmiştir. Bunların yanı sıra, yemek yemenin mevcut teorilerin öne sürdüğü birincil ve ikincil işlevlerine ek olarak, steakhouse'larda yemek yemenin üçüncül bir işlevi daha olduğu görülmüştür. Bu üçüncül işlev dâhilinde insanların para harcayarak, alternatif kimlikler inşa ederek ve sosyoekonomik olarak yüksek bir tecrübe satın alarak belirli anlamlar yüklediği sembolik bir performans sergilediği gözlemlenmiştir.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

To my beloved mother

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

"Tell me what you eat, and I will tell you who you are."

Jean Anthelme Brillat-Savarin (2011, p. 3)

This study is one of the firsts in Turkish context and literature aiming at understanding how culture industry transforms culinary consumption into a cosmopolitan practice through steakhouses in urban Turkish context. To achieve this aim, it studies the motivations and perceptions of consumers regarding steakhouse restaurants. Moreover, it analyzes the dynamics of culture industry regarding food consumption at steakhouses in urban Turkish context based on the data collected through semi-structured interviews.

The studies in this field are actually the products of a special food-cultural enthusiasm; and researchers have become more and more interested in the relation of food studies to this interdisciplinary field of cultural studies. In my first quests for this topic, I felt highly surprised by the fact that although researchers in the field showed up interest in food as an object of culture industry from time to time, it has never developed as an area of study. Accordingly, I observed that food – especially meat – consumption in urban Turkish context, where and how people consume it bear associations related to class, socioeconomic and sociocultural identities and practices, and the historical and sociocultural background of meat consumption in Turkish culture. My decision to research more and explore this issue led to this study. Therefore, it tries open up a reading of food consumption in a specific context such as steakhouses through an interrelated examination of culture industry,

globalization and sociology of food studies. I hope it can offer an idea about the basic understanding on food consumption as an object of culture industry under specific contexts because food consumption as a cultural phenomenon need to be discussed also with regards to main cultural processes such as production, standardization, associations-representation, consumption, and identity. By doing so, it can develop new ideas and research paths in the field through this study of food consumption at steakhouses in urban Turkish context.

Similar to the global trends, urban Turkish context has recently experienced economic development which has led to a wider-penetrating capitalism. In addition, with the increasing number of urban population, the tendency towards town-food, dining-out and fine-dining has risen up. Accordingly, in this period, international interactions and the global circulation of people who experience different cuisines and concepts have also increased (Topsümer & Elden, 2016). This, in return, has led to the increased presence of global franchises and a socioeconomic differentiation among consumers in the urban Turkish market. As a result of these changes, today culinary culture is mainly considered a popular consumption-influenced, and a power-relations-reflecting practice; thus, steakhouses can be approached as an example to observe such a transforming culinary practice.

Under the circumstances described above, a specific identity, a specific image, an experience opportunity, a physical place, emotions, and a social media post have become icons of socioeconomic status, and thus sellable commodities with 'capital' value for the culture industry. For this reason, dining-out at steakhouses has become tools to sell consumers the realizations of illusionary needs and desired associations. As churches can be considered the organizational realizations of the institution of Christianity religion; accordingly, steakhouses can be regarded as the

organizational realizations of cultural and culinary 'consumption', globalization, high capital practice, and overall capitalism. This is especially observable in food consumption where people's choices of what foods to consume contribute to an individual's identity construction (Bauman, 1998). In this context, dining-out at a steakhouse, in other words, 'steakhouse culture' can be regarded as a tertiary experience in which people continuously try for meaning-making via symbolic performance activities through which they continue to spend money, construct ideal identities, and buy cultural products such as high-SES steakhouse experience.

The steakhouse restaurant brands serve in different concepts such as *Köfte - Döner* (Meatball - Gyro), *Kasap - Steakhouse* (Butcher - Steakhouse), and Burger. Rather than Köfte - Döner and Burger, I will focus on the steakhouse concept since it stands out in the sense that it has value-laden associations, and it sells 'steak' which, allegedly, is not originally Turkish with the way it is called (in English in Turkey), cooked, and served in urban Turkish context. In addition to being a highly expensive concept, steakhouses as meat restaurants have a highly central position in Turkish culinary culture because they sell meat dishes which are central to Turkish culture. Meat is a frequently consumed type of food in Turkish culture, so Turkish consumers are more prone to going to steakhouses.

As a critical analysis on the relation between food consumption at steakhouses and culture industry has not been studied prior to this thesis, it studies the relation between dining-out as a cosmopolitan practice and meat consumption at steakhouse restaurants as a practice full of associations which is perceived and reflected through specific discourses. These discourses are built by strategies as advertisements, décor, menu, dish names; and by the details of consumer reactions to those perceptions. Among these reactions, identity performance stands out because

perceptions and patterns of food consumption also have behavioral impact. In other words, food practices are reflections of food perceptions; and they can be observed in the narratives of consumers which explain their food choices and eating practices. This research is based on one main question:

    1. What are the urban Turkish consumers' perceptions of steakhouses and their clientele?

This question includes such specific sub-questions, as well:

- How are steakhouse concepts related to cosmopolitan meat consumption?
- How is the food, particularly meat, served at steakhouses regarded?
- What do the steakhouses provide other than serving food?
- What are the similarities or differences between the impressions of those who have been to steakhouses and those who have not?

    The discussion of the answers to these questions will follow four key themes which have emerged during the analysis: i) expertise in serving meat-based dishes, ii) western references made regarding the restaurants and the food, iii) socioeconomic status associations made regarding the customers, and iv) identity performances of the customers.

    The organization of the thesis is as follows. In Chapter 2, the theoretical framework of the study will be discussed. Beginning with the historical progress of food consumption studies as a cultural phenomenon, food consumption at steakhouses will be theoretically situated in the intersection of culture industry, globalization, and Bourdieu's (1984) concept of capitals, especially symbolic capital. This chapter will be followed by Chapter 3 which presents the data collection details

of the study and the rationale behind the choice of the specific methodology. In this chapter, such details as the demographics of participants, their recruitment, and the analytical methods will be explained. Afterwards, Chapter 4 will present the findings demonstrating the recurrent patterns emerging in the answers to the interview questions. These recurrent patterns indicate a tertiary function of eating at steakhouses, which include the desirable associations attributed by culture industry to steakhouses such as feeling like high-SES people, feeling as if being in a western country, elite, popular, and high-class; all are reflected through the décor, clientele, or the locations of steakhouses. In Chapter 5, the findings about perception with the focuses of expertise, western references and socioeconomic status associations, and the identity construction and performance will be discussed. Finally, Chapter 6 will briefly summarize the main points of the study and state and state the limitations and the possibilities for further research.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, in order to constitute a foundation for the study, I will present a

theoretical background on the interrelation of the following concepts: cosmopolitan

food studies, globalization and glocalism, metrolingualism and metrosocialism,

capital and habitus, social role and organizational styling of restaurants, and culture

industry.

2.1 Culture industry

All the following theoretical perspectives and frames could be more applicable and

related when firstly contextualized in relation to culture industry and its functioning,

which I will elaborate on more. The term of culture industry was first coined by the

critical theorists Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer (1989) who suggest

that popular culture is like a factory which manufactures standardized cultural

products such as films, books etc. They are enacted to manipulate mass society into

'guided' and passive consumption of the common pleasures of popular culture,

presented by mass production and mass media. All make people docile and happy

consumers, no matter how difficult the economic conditions they live in are; the

meaning of 'culture' has been, thus, emptied and made a solid part of consumption

industry. The underlying ultimate aim and potential danger of culture industry is to

create and cultivate unreal psychological needs which could be satisfied through the

products of monopoly capitalism. Therefore, Adorno and Horkheimer (1989)

believed that mass-produced cultural products are dangerous for technical and

intellectual 'high arts'. On the contrary, according to them, real psychological human needs should be freedom, authentic happiness, and creativity as stated by Herbert Marcuse (1964). Culture industry, in a way, produces cultural content in capitalist societies and is based on a supply-driven cultural economy. As steakhouse concept does, first the supply is served to people with the false perception of its being served as a result of need; and both the demand and the 'sale and continuous consumption' are, thus, guaranteed. Such products of culture industry rely upon the existence of mass-produced culture which is formed and disseminated by specific institutions. The aim is to make it widely consumed by passive and homogenized target people, which may also remind of the term 'fad' used by Americans for trends which spread like an epidemic by powerfully dominant economic powers and hegemonic discourse.

Cultural production – as a whole – is an inextricable part of capitalism. Theorists in the field such as Urry (1995), Adorno and Bernstein (2007), Tomlinson (2011) claim that culture has now been unified and standardized more than ever. In today's world, culture infects everything with similarity to each other. Films, magazines, and sociocultural practices constitute a system together. Each of these fields has a unity and conformity within themselves. Culture has apparently become an industry which conforms to the rules of any meta producing sector. What Adorno (1991) claims by saying 'the schema of culture industry' clarifies that because by saying it he actually argues the fact that culture industry schematizes experience. In other words, it gives it a shape, a form which everyone is expected to fit in if they want to 'experience and enjoy' that cultural 'item'. At this point, as I have already emphasized, at first the standardized forms of supply is served and the demand is created with the expectation that people will feel the 'need'. To do so, firstly a

realistic dissidence - a clash of ideas - is expressed in order to make people feel that there is a clear need for that product and sell it to them. This concept promises a new, unfamiliar and a different experience; it brings new, different and an appealing sociocultural phenomenon to people who have experienced the ordinariness, the routine and the common for so long.

A critical concept which functions effectively in this process is 'cultural lag'. It is mainly used in relation to the American culture as the hegemonic culture which exports mass-produced cultural metas. Cultural lag means the state and feeling of having a developmental (technological, cultural, medical etc.) backwardness in cultures when compared to the dominant American culture (Parasecoli, 2008). Therefore, as considered the hegemonic culture, what comes from 'America' is a sign of development and a step towards it. Moreover, the steakhouse concept which is traditionally Argentinian has been observed to go through 'America' to be global, to be known world-wide. If this is the case, then what reflects American culture and what comes from it are readily accepted and regarded as a sign of quality and prestige, as a sellable 'commodity'. This is definitely not applicable to all cultures. However, in urban Turkish context where people tend to believe that America has higher capitals and is far more developed in terms of economy, technology, medicine, and overall prosperity; it becomes a sign of prestige under the long-dated equation of quality with Euro-American based western world especially in Turkish context.

The key in culture industry, as mentioned before, is to serve the supply and create the deception of its being needed, and then the demand is guaranteed. On this, according to Adorno and Bernstein (2007), the fundamental law of culture industry is to make sure that consumers will not reach what they desire fully, and try to satisfy it

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incessantly with an eternal feeling of deprivation. Presenting people with something and preventing them to have it at the same time are the same just like the use of erotic scenes and connotations in, for example, ice-cream commercials; consumers are expected to buy that product with a belief to feel that sexual satisfaction implied. However, the promised pleasure is constantly delayed. One crucial principle of culture industry is to show that all consumer needs can be met by itself while adjusting these needs in a way to ensure that consumers will remain as consumers and loyal 'objects' of culture industry, which guarantees continuous consumption. By doing so, culture industry not only makes people buy this deception as satisfaction, but also plants the idea in consumers' minds that they have to be content with what they have or reach (Adorno & Bernstein, 2007). Culture industry keeps consumers as cogs of daily life but at the same time, it promises an escape from it. That's why, as the data suggests for instance, steakhouses can make their guests feel like they are in America or Europe, but actually creates a deception to make sure that they will keep coming in order to feel so although they will never be in America, Europe or somewhere in the desired West by coming to steakhouses.

In this market of culture industry, individualism and agency are partially destroyed intentionally and left with only a deception of their existence. When consumption patterns are standardized, the individual differences should disappear in accordance so that everyone can feel the same needs and enjoy the same ways - established before - to satisfy them. The false perception of individualism is accorded only when consumers are believed to identify with each other in the desired way. This genuine quality of the self is a socioculturally constructed form of monopoly but it is expected to seem totally natural in order for anyone not to suspect its authenticity. Consumers, as individuals, are constructions/products of economic and

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sociocultural tools although they are seemingly 'free'. The point is, people are susceptible to psychological manipulation to a great extent, and ones who are dedicated to do so are scientifically and practically very competent at this; thus, they try and succeed mainly. As the data suggests, people who prefer to eat at steakhouses are probably aware of the fact that it is a relatively recent phenomenon and their motivations are extrinsic. However, they still go there to feel the way they want to desire, like the ones who can go there, who can afford eating there and to feel like being somewhere where they actually desire to be at those times. This can be best exemplified by an analogy; most people are like fish whose only option is to be aware of the streams they swim through but not given a chance to live outside.

As culture industry has transformed into something planned and managed, and presents sociocultural products in a way that they are incontestable giveaways, promotional offerings in both private and public domains, it would be a free opportunity for people to have them, to benefit from them. Thanks to the ideology, as Adorno (1991) argues, developed and disseminated by culture industry in accordance with the unquestioned and readily adopted concepts of status quo, consciousness has now been replaced with conformance. He also emphasizes that culture seems irrational only to those who have the least experience with it because when the status quo is begun to be experienced in-depth, people get used to the concept; and, this part is key to the success of culture industry, they begin to 'reproduce' all the concepts therein including the concept and discourse of steakhouse, which exemplifies Adorno and Bernstein's (2007) claim that consumers add their own parts to the advertising part of culture industry through the way they use language.

One of the tools serving this function is advertisements. The dominant, i.e. common, taste takes its ideal from advertisement; in other words, it gathers its power

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and its ideal from commercial aesthetics. This may justify Socrates in claiming that what is beautiful and aesthetic becomes useful. The value emerging as a result of buying a specific cultural product, the value ascribed to that product, and the motivation to consume that cultural meta constitute the use value, which has now turned into 'prestige addiction'. This value change owes its transformation to advertisements to a great extent because in Adorno and Bernstein's (2007) terms, advertisement is the elixir to the culture industry. Masses of people are not a criterion but an ideology of culture industry; hence, culture industry cannot exist unless it adopts those masses of consumers according to its own mechanism. This way, most of the consumers become a part of that specific cultural product and when they 'talk', they reproduce the hegemonic discourse and concept; therefore, each and every product of culture industry including consumers becomes its own advertisement tool by advertising itself thanks to written media, social media, daily language use and interaction among people etc.

The people who have visited steakhouses mainly talk about them and reproduce the discourse; for instance, it is possible to see direct or indirect marketing and advertisements of various popular steakhouse brands on social media. The encoders create and publish them; in return, the target people retweet, share and send them on different platforms to various people. They keep reproducing them even while they are talking about those specific advertisements vis-à-vis other people around; they are informed about them verbally even though they do not use social media whether actively or not at all.

In this context of culture industry, capitalism is primarily concerned with the aim of keeping people in a constant flux of consumerism day and night. For this reason, a concept has been needed to be developed so that capitalist system will

continue to benefit from people even after work hours, for example dining-out at restaurants including steakhouses as a social activity. That system utilizes many tools including, and perhaps the biggest of all, entertainment sector. Therefore, the economic activity of working during day time is not disconnected from after-work cultural activities. In this context, culture can be regarded as a part of life in which people continuously try for meaning-making via symbolic performance activities through which they continue to spend money and buy cultural 'commodities'. According to Tomlinson (2011), there are two main grounds relied on at this point: instrumental symbolization and instrumental rationality. The former is what culture industry does with steakhouses. First of all, steakhouses are loaded with connotations through discourse and advertisements; they come to be seen as symbols of upper-middle socioeconomic status, cosmopolitan elite lifestyle, high-quality food, Euro-American qualities, privilege and the like. Following that it promotes instrumental rationality; people who use instrumental rationality focus primarily on the question 'how fast and how easily can I reach my aim?' Here mind is used as an instrument which figures out the shortest way to reach what is being tried to reach, without questioning the target itself but pursuing what it actually symbolizes. Many steakhouse visitors dine out there to reach those aforementioned symbols, which are made public via the instrument of advertising as Adorno and Horkheimer (1989) have emphasized.

In this regard, there is also a binary opposition created to facilitate the work of culture industry in a host culture. This opposition is between the concepts of 'local' and 'cosmopolitan', which is explained by Tomlinson (2011) as the case of dispraising or finding local sociocultural experiences and practices not 'adequate' and sophisticated (sometimes indirectly), or situating them to a secondary place. At

its most superficial definition, this notion means that the 'cosmopolitan' connotes itself as a social privilege, a cultural cream of society which is far away from the duly concerns of daily life, which promotes the message that 'if you also want to have that privilege and be away from the ordinary daily practices, go for cosmopolitan experiences'. That's why, a binary opposition of cosmopolitan vs. local serves well to manifesting and promoting different ideologies. The conceptually different constructed restaurants of the same brands such as 'köfte - döner' and 'burger' concepts as opposed to 'steakhouses', and the several emphases in the data about the center and periphery opposition regarding steakhouses could set a perfect example in the urban Turkish context to Tomlinson's (2011) argument. In so doing, different target groups are set for different concepts and also for different locations of one concept. This might indicate that there is no definite and already-drawn 'classes' in society; however, this opposition makes people to align themselves with one by addressing them differently, by proposing them different products and experiences, and by providing them with choices. People, as consumers, are not assigned to different socioeconomic strata but they are made to feel the freedom to assign themselves to a so-called dynamically changing 'class'; naturally, they make one seem fancier. The deception already mentioned above works here too, people are in the false belief of making choices freely; however, they are discreetly guided towards a desired path by the use of discourses, ideologies, experiences etc. The cosmopolitan is what can live on the local and global simultaneously, which is made real by the introduction, application and adaptation of globally circulating goods and services to the local and particular contexts and markets which have been on an increase in variety (Robertson, 1995).

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2.1.1 The concepts of capital and habitus

Habitus is a class-related term coined by Bourdieu (1984), and it means the set of internalized tendencies, values, tastes, and practices which are shaped by and reflect the surrounding sociocultural environment; in short, all cultural practices and choices are expressions of one's habitus. Bourdieu (1984) mentions three main classes: dominant class, petit bourgeoisie, and the working class. The bourgeoisie is the highest one in the social hierarchy, which makes it 'the dominant class'. Such a position comes with a chance to determine the legitimate taste; in other words, the standard taste which is taken as the reference value for the majority of the people. This superiority can even be seen as a symbolic violence on the 'lower' classes. This top class consists of the dominant people with hedonist consumption towards the elite and luxury. At this point, the questions may arise on how this ranked system keeps going as it is and how lower classes in this system consent to that. However, Bourdieu (1984) explains it with 'cultural good will', which means that the lower classes have respect and try to improve themselves just like the legitimate dominant class. They aspire to be like them; for that, they imitate the dominant class. The need to be like the dominant class, and to live like them is a deception; and it is injected into the minds of people. Dining-out at steakhouses, or any posh restaurant, doing what socioeconomically suitable people do, going to places they go, buying the brands they buy, eating sushi, using iPhones etc. begin to seem as if they were real needs for all people, which again means creating the demand after providing the supply firstly.

As stated above, the first mechanism explaining the taste hierarchy by Bourdieu (1984) is imitation. Each class aspires to be of the higher one; therefore, they imitate the practices and tastes of the higher class. Nevertheless, as I stated

before, it is a deception; and full satisfaction is always delayed. They imitate what the higher class does to feel like the way they initially desire but it is just a reduced form of it at the end because if full satisfaction of those 'needs' are provided, then that need becomes no longer a need. Nonetheless, if those needs remain to be needs, the effort to satisfy them, spending money in this regard, and the continuity of the existing system will be guaranteed. People may go to steakhouses; however, they will never feel the way as if they were somewhere in the begrudged West such as America, or they will never have the opportunity to spend money carelessly as the people they aspire just by dining out at steakhouses.

However, while this homogenization from bottom to top is desirable, people of higher classes do not feel content with this because their current criteria and ways of life become the same as those of lower classes. That degree of homogenization causes higher classes to desire something different, something unique only to them. At such a point, they will go for a distinction because what has gone common becomes less valuable. This distinction is not only about spending money but it is a search for difference in sociocultural practices and aesthetic preferences. Earlier, there were special and limited-in-number posh restaurants located only in upper-middle SES districts of Istanbul; however, many of them have many branches in many shopping malls. They got widespread and have become ordinary; therefore, people of upper-middle class were made to believe by the capitalist introducers of new concepts that those upper-middle class people needed a new specific concept, and then steakhouses have come to fill the gap. They proposed those people a new experience which was not existent in the urban Turkish context; in return, those people readily accepted it.

Why do generally the people of higher class lead, and the others follow and adapt so easily? Jourdain and Naulin (2016) answers this by saying that the legitimacy and validity of a sociocultural practice relies upon the social legitimacy of the people practicing it. Hence, as argued before, the people of upper-middle classes have the opportunity to set trends. What Goblot (1925) states supports it, "pleasure is the key which brings the members of one class together. Pleasure is useful for both adapting to one's own class, and diverging from the members of other classes" (p. 38). He also highlights, like Bourdieu (1984), that bourgeoisie is not known for the richness of its people, but for their practices. This supports the argument that this positioning is not something given once-and-for-all, but it is a dynamic process. It happens, in Bourdieu's (1984) terms, in 'social place' which can be defined as inter-individual space-time, the social reality itself. The dominant class/bourgeoisie impinges their own norms and values onto the lower classes, but how? What gives them such an opportunity? The answer is capitals; this class has efficiently all sorts of capitals and distinguishes itself in relation to other classes on purpose whereas the working class holds the least amounts of them.

Bourdieu (1986) believes that there are four main varieties of capitals: economic, cultural, social, and symbolic. Economic capital means money and wealth. Social capital means the network of acquaintances, friends, families, and associates who can help one access to goods and resources. Symbolic capital represents the resources an individual has such as honor, recognition, and prestige; for example, a national hero has a higher chance when running for the office. Finally, cultural capital means the accumulation of social assets of an individual such as education, style, intellect, behavior, knowledge, skills etc. Cultural capital might present itself in three sub-forms: embodied state (knowledge, culture, cultivation, skills etc.),

objectified state (material objects, paintings, what one does/practices), and institutionalized state (academic or business qualifications, titles etc.).

In the light of these definitions, it should not be surprising to figure it out that the dominant class, the bourgeoisie holds all these capitals to a great extent, which gives them the chance to set their tastes as the recent trends, impinge their norms on others, and influence the habitus of other people - i.e. the sociocultural environment and the values and practices internalized by an individual. The dominant class legitimizes its norms and practices but most of the time, people of lower 'classes' are not aware of the mechanisms of this process such as discourse, advertisements, popular culture etc.; thus, all seem natural to them and they do not question any of the prevalent doxas. However, people are not robots and they are not completely devoid of free will and agency; sometimes people might continue to adopt those 'higher' lifestyle practices and ideas despite being aware of at least some of the mechanisms.

Bourdieu (1998) calls this phenomenon an "illusio" like the frequently-referred concept of deception but a deception with awareness. To resemble it a game, people prefer to play it if they believe in it, if they are convinced of the yields to be acquired at the end. The state of joining the game, becoming wholly absorbed in it, believing in the award at the end, and believing it will worth playing is described as "illusio". Hence, whether intentionally or not, people try to adopt and imitate the characteristics of the habitus of higher classes. This should not, again, necessarily mean that there are clear-cut classes in the society as Marxist idea argues. It is not possible to claim that there are no classes in the society as the nominalists claim, either. If one could have the potential and probability to affect others, then all these

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'classes' are defined and shaped in comparison to the capitals other individuals and groups hold, which is a dynamic process.

It should still be noted, though; there is also a parallelism between the social space of the producers of a certain production such as steakhouses, and that of their target consumers. In other words, the background of steakhouse restaurants is parallel to the structure of their consumers in the sense that there is a specific dominant class or culture which sets the trends in consumption of steakhouses; however, there is also a specific dominant class or culture which sets the trends and structures of the production process of steakhouses. In short, if the production part positions itself as high-quality, it will also try to draw people of high quality or upper-middle 'class'; and if the production part is moderate, then the moderate people i.e. the relatively lower classes will be targeted. Dominant class consumers lead, lower class ones follow; dominant class of steakhouse producers and managers (primary and well-known brands and their owners) define how a steakhouse should be, many other traditional '*kebapçı*' (kebab restaurant) etc. restaurants adopt those standards. For the last couple of years, it is possible to witness that the steakhouse concept restaurants have mushroomed primarily in Istanbul. They were either established from scratch or transformed from a 'kebapçı' or some other similar concept by imitating the trends and standards set by the dominant steakhouse producers. These standards include using the name 'steakhouse', using mainly wooden materials and décor, giving foreign names to dishes etc. because those restaurants also 'need to be like the well-known steakhouses' if they want to draw attention to make profit with the belief that consumers now want such concepts in food culture.

Regarding these capitals, there are two main strategies of struggle between high-capital holders and relatively lower-capital holders: maintenance and destruction (Coleman, 1990). At the base of that lies the fact that the acts of individuals are to maintain and improve their social positions. High-capital holders show acts of maintenance because ones who hold the capitals of their social fields would like to maintain them. Relatively lower-capital holders who are probably new in that specific social field and thus want to have a share, thus try to destruct the status quo and re-distribute the capitals. Steakhouses are perfect places to observe those both because they are constantly connected to popularity, celebrities, high quality, expensiveness, western and the like, which is a sign of maintaining the status quo. At the same time, many lower-capital holders try to find a way to visit steakhouses, share photos of their experiences on social media in order to position themselves in that social field and to signal that they also share that 'privileged' habitus. Some steakhouses even facilitate that by creating two different concepts of the same brand to address people from different levels of capitals. With the relatively lower concept, steakhouse owners and managers try to provide not high-capital holder consumers with a chance of being a part of that brand. By doing so, those consumers are made to feel as if they were destructing the status quo – actually reproducing their own status quo and habitus, and highlighting the boundaries in-between. This way, they covertly acknowledge that they are, capitalwise, incapable of being a part of the upper social hierarchy. Steakhouse brands still promote their all concepts in order to maximize profit. They might be using celebrities in the advertisements of steakhouse concepts; however, this strategy even works for other concepts too because at the least, the brand is the same – no matter which concept or restaurant of that brand it is.

Using celebrities or establishing popular connections between the brand (a specific steakhouse) and its target consumers as a marketing strategy has an absolute effect on people, which is called the "Dreyfus Effect" (Topsümer & Elden, 2016). People want to be, live, and feel like the popular celebrities they see in an advertisement, they want to identify themselves with them as they are positioned higher in the social hierarchy with higher capitals. Interestingly, despite not being a celebrity, even when an ordinary friend from one's social environment who shares almost the same level of capitals and of close habitus dines out at a steakhouse restaurant which has been identified with popularity, high-capital consumption, and high-quality food and service, that person still wants to practice the same experience. The reason is, as argued before, people try to increase or at least maintain their positions in relation to their social environment. Therefore, even when someone who is not a celebrity but an ordinary person from the same social environment goes there, other people will try to keep up with them so as to maintain their positions – again – in relation to others around.

Sometimes a steakhouse uses a celebrity, or gains popularity through a unique feature it offers, or through the creation and then popularization of a 'signature' of its own. For example, a specific steakhouse brand has been known to advertise images of its celebrity consumers on social media (to benefit from the Dreyfus Effect), and to create a unique popular image of its owner. Figuratively speaking, such celebrity-including social media posts, and the characteristic gestures or a characteristic style of that owner have provided that steakhouse with a very satisfactory popularity. From that moment on, those posts and a popular gesture identified with that owner such as #saltbae, or the owner itself function as 'signatures' of that steakhouse. Jourdain and Naulin (2016) state that those signatures transform the economic and

symbolic value attributed to its product into a higher-capital consumption and a luxury good without making any changes in the product itself.

A celebrity is not a must, even a place which is more or less connected with popularity and celebrities can serve the same function; for instance, one of the well-known steakhouse restaurants owner once said in an interview by Alfa Media (2016) that they introduced themselves to the world first at 'İstinyePark' (a famous posh shopping mall with upscale international brands and elite, prestigious clientele), then they introduced themselves to the people of Istanbul with a branch in Etiler (a popular upper-middle class district in Istanbul). Both İstinyePark and Etiler are identified with 'upper-middle class', popularity, internationality, fame, chiefly western-oriented modernism and so on. Hence, the first branches at İstinyePark and in Etiler become the signatures of that steakhouse, which creates and increases the symbolic capital of it. Therefore, all the products and practices which are developed and offered to people from then on will benefit from that existing symbolic capital. Then, all potential consumers will assume that those products, practices, and the experience there will be of high-quality, thus promise high-level of satisfaction; and the experience to be had in the restaurants of that particular steakhouse will make them feel 'different', prestigious, and unique (Jourdain & Naulin, 2016). In short, these restaurants are physical places; they are symbolically value-laden, and thus have the potential to create and transform values attributed to the products and experience to be had there.

2.1.2 Glocalism

Glocalism is introducing and adapting a globally known concept or product to a local context. The adaptation emphasis is important here because the last section mentions a binary between cosmopolitan and local; however, these two concepts are not in a constant clash, rather they are adapted. These two concepts do not represent a clear-cut polarization; they form a set of intertwined principles. This intertwined feature signals a homogenization. Culture industry highlights some basic differences such as socioeconomic status; however, there does not exist an individual definition of 'cosmopolitan' for each person, culture industry defines what cosmopolitan is and how one could become cosmopolitan. The methods are determined; for example, there are limited ways to become cosmopolitan in terms of food culture, which includes dining-out at steakhouses. The experience, the taste, the methods are standardized, homogenized for everyone. Nonetheless, culture industry holds capitalist aims and thus is in pursuit of profit maximization; in this regard, it has to sell every kind of product including steakhouse, köfte, döner, burger etc. Therefore, it has to create a different target group for each product so that each can be bought by potential consumers. There exist differences but each difference is standardized in itself. One person dining-out at steakhouses is considered to have the same tastes and hence to pursue the same experience with another one dining-out at steakhouses; this is the same for the target groups of other concepts. There are no inter-personal differences, there are inter-group differences – again all are standardized groupwise.

However, the critical question here can be 'How does culture industry make sure that those people come to have the same tastes and can be satisfied through the same methods?' The answer is two-fold; the first is, people are made to feel they really need what is provided to them, therefore they are made to believe that they

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share the same needs with some other people. The second is adaptation, in other words, glocalizing that specific product or concept through such strategies as McDonald's offering a McTurco Mangal Burger, or adding the word 'kasap' to steakhouses in the urban Turkish context. In addition to the localization effect of the word 'kasap' by providing both global amenities and local authenticity together as in the dish names on the same menu such as New York Steak or Lokum, it also indicates an upgrading from a mere kasap to a glocal kasap - steakhouse concept. This adaptation also includes a notion of community; a glocal concept lays its locality on the sense of community because it is "almost always invoked as an unequivocal good, an indicator of a high-quality of life, a sense of belonging. Locality is used to cover the placelessness idea of global capital and thus it invokes a particularity of identity, social relations, and capital" (Joseph, 2002, p. 1). For instance, following the trend of steakhouses, a new steakhouse restaurant calls itself 'The X Society'; this signals a sense of distinguished community with privileged, elite, and cosmopolitan dining experiences while presenting a non-local concept with references to locality.

Tomlinson (2011) puts forward that culture defined in relation to space, and the transformation of food culture in 'glocalities' are the two crucial attitudes of cosmopolitanisation in culture industry. Moreover, according to him, a cosmopolitan needs to be both universal and pluralist. Such people should seek for the universal with the aim of becoming a part of a larger world (as with steakhouses of western origin) in order to experience the feeling of 'estranged identity'. They should also be open to pluralism in society because as Robertson (1995) argues, diversity sells. Furthermore, those people would like to be 'like specific people' while trying to be 'unlike specific people', which highlights both different socioeconomic and

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sociocultural perceptions existing in people's minds regarding their positions in relation others. These positions do not assume already-existing 'classes', people position themselves in relation to the ones around themselves dynamically. Urry (1995) argues that this is a paradigmatically-shaped modern experience implying that people chase after an experience which is like a framework, a model, or a pattern used to formulate generalizations based on shared needs, assumptions, concepts, methods, and practices.

One final characteristic of glocalism in relation to space and experience is included in Urry's (1995) concept of aesthetic cosmopolitanism, which portrays a cosmopolitan as a very mobile, curious and reflexive individual who enjoys consuming difference. Although he believes that it is tightly linked to popular culture, he sees an aesthetic cosmopolitan slightly higher in a way that such people are open to new cultural practices, enjoy and promote them, and they are also knowledgeable in terms of historical, anthropological, and cultural aspects of those practices. It is like an 'ideal cosmopolitan' image. However, there are important limitations to the realization of such an ideal cosmopolitanism. They include the privileged accessibility of cosmopolitanism to a specific socioeconomic group of people who can afford to visit different cultures, countries, to be informed about them etc., and its emphasis on consuming 'place' as a cultural and industrial commodity. In line with what Urry (1995) argues, it is clear that steakhouses can be considered as sociocultural places which are industrially 'consumed'; consumers go there to consume what culture industry presents them with: a sense of being a cosmopolitan, a chance of accession to high quality food, and the phenomenal feeling of globally moving – to different cultures and countries by just visiting those steakhouses.

2.1.3 Social role of restaurants

Tomlinson (2011) puts forward the idea that while analyzing the connections in this connectivity of globalization, food studies, and culture industry; one should closely study "the meaning-construction context of globalization and culture industry, that is, the identity seek of people, place, and their selves which is in a close relation with places" (p. 38). Hence, place is crucial because people have the potential to go where they go in search of an identity, to perform an identity, to make a desired meaning out of that performance as can be exemplified by steakhouses as such 'places'. The great majority of cultural experiences for many people are composed of daily experiences lived at physical places rather than being a constant movement (Tomlinson, 2011). Therefore, it can be understood that people need a physical space such as steakhouses, restaurants, theatres, symbolic places such as Eiffel Tower, or Times Square to complete the sense of experiencing a full cultural practice. All these make it possible to consider dining-out at steakhouses a cultural practice as a collectively built symbolization of earthly practices which make a certain lifestyle continue as it is. With this motive, for example, people might dine out at steakhouses to keep their already existing cosmopolitan, upper-middle socioeconomic lifestyle as it is.

Specific physical places come to be seen as the countries whose cultures they represent and physically and symbolically re-enact. Giddens (1991) mentions the impact of globalization on people's phenomenal worlds on the basis of their mandatorily local contexts. If Istanbul as an urban Turkish context is taken an example, Istanbul with its local cuisine culture and the places where one can enjoy it constitutes the local context. However, globalization brings along a new cuisine practice and restaurant concept: steakhouse, which symbolizes and represents its

country and culture of departure. As the data in this research and many various interviews of famous steakhouse owners support, people are expected to feel like they are having their dinners 'there' at this new context; in other words, they are made to feel as if they are somewhere in the West (considering the concept is of western origin, understood by frequent Euro-American references) through décor, the menu, the visitor profile, the service and even the linguistic interventions such as in-English dish names (New York Steak, Virginia Steak, Dallas Burger etc.) on the menu. This is a phenomenological experience because as Herz (2017) argues, food has the potential to connect consumers to the rest of the world and other people around. This cultural practice is a 'deterritorialized' one, making that place feel like both as an extension to that specific country or culture although that restaurant is not physically in that country, and as a 'mediator' for the people who visit those as Giddens (1991) supports:

> Under the conditions of late modernity, we live in this 'world' in a more different way when compared to the earlier periods. Everyone continues to live a local life, and the physical limitations of the body cause people to be continuously contextualized in a physical place and a period of time. Still, the transformations of places and the intervention of the ones afar to the ones local, when united with the centrality of the mediated experience, change what actually the 'world' is. Everyone lives a local life; however, most of their phenomenal worlds are actually global. Phenomenal world now barely means the world an individual physically moves in . . . and the language [referring to discourse] is key to this. (pp. 187-8)

Dekkers (2000) was right in claiming that "with such dynamics [culture industry in relation to cosmopolitan consumption], people who cook a lot have more prestige than who eat a lot . . . Eating out is a perpetual experiment and the potential source of culinary-cultural prestige" (p. 53). Upper-middle socioeconomic scalers, hence, eat out at restaurants where they can enjoy the difference, aesthetics, and appetite for different performances, sophisticated experience and prestige. Urry (1995) states that "social role of space applies to social roles of restaurants" (p. 10).

Sloan supports her argument by further explaining that at the base of her (Urry) argument lies her belief that restaurants can be regarded 'architects of desire', and "social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power" (Pratt, 1991, p. 34).

Therefore, it is clear that as a result of these developments in 1980s, restaurants came to match the idea of nouvelle cuisine, and in that concept both the visual and oral aesthetics of a dish are privileged over its being merely a biological fuel (Ashley et al., 2004). Preferences have changed regarding meat types, and the taste preference and awareness towards steak has increased. Consumers have begun to search for a privileged-experience for authenticity and novelty. They also began to look for new places to exercise sociocultural capitals, and to enjoy the décor and the culinary aesthetics which restaurants offer. When all these changes combined, a gentrification of food consumption has occurred in meat consumption at steak-houses just like that "sushi used to be sold as a street snack, then turned into a high-class craze at glamorously-decorated restaurants" (Guptill et al., 2013). Hence, steakhouse concept is worthy of analysis in terms of understanding how it mixes dine-out at restaurants trend with the increasing preference and superiority idea of steak over other meat types.

2.2 The triangle of globalization-cosmopolitanism-culture

Another critical dimension to complete the necessary theoretical framework here is an intersection of globalization, cosmopolitanism and culture. They can be considered as interacting and inter-dependent mechanisms of capitalist economic structure. In the center of modern culture lies globalization; and in the center of

globalization lie culture and cultural transfers. The politics and economy of globalization rely upon the transformative power and processes of culture because culture is a set of concepts, notions, and practices through which new concepts and ideas are introduced and disseminated as cultural experiences. This transformation affects, and sometimes changes, the meaning of culture in a specific context. For this interaction among globalization, cosmopolitanism, capitalism, and culture, Tomlinson (2011) coined the term 'complex connectivity' which means a network of interdependent connections and additions of procreative globalization utilized to characterize modern world. It considers globalization as an empiric fact of modern world, and by saying empiric, it claims that globalization is not solely a solid material outside human body and mind, but a practice under the complex connectivity of culture, globalization, and capitalist economic system.

The transformation of culinary practices such as meat consumption is thought to be a result of the sociological transformations of post modernism, and late capitalism (Sloan, 2004) which form the "global food-scapes" (Appadurai, 1990). According to Sloan (2004), late capitalism affected culinary taste and related consumer behavior, particularly as expressed in the restaurant sector. He emphasizes that the main assumption of late capitalism is that class-based and traditional social structures, with the potential to have influence on social conventions, are being deconstructed, which led to either "the emergence of free individuals to construct their own identities through consumption" (Sloan, 2004, p. 40) or "the decline of traditional social structures forcing us to adopt alternative forms of social interactions primarily through consumption" (Sloan, 2004, p. 40) This adopting a new lifestyle occurred in a new setting regarding differentiation on the basis of social-cultural capital and status. Steakhouses in urban Turkish culture can be considered as such a

new setting where individuals construct their own identities through a particular culinary consumption practice. "Evidence from the restaurant sector suggests that culinary taste, and associated consumer behavior, could be considered important aspects of lifestyle and feel membership to a stylized group" (p. 40). This indicates a process of cosmopolitanism and eliteness in terms of food consumption as dine-out, on which I will elaborate on in a few lines.

This new view of consumption as a late capitalistic and socioculturally transformative process has led to the study of dining-out as a specific concept in terms of 'everyday culinary cosmopolitanism' (Cappeliez & Johnston, 2013). Restaurants have a special importance in terms of dining-out. Standardization of food contributed to the rise of restaurants; McDonaldization is an example to this. When McDonalds was first introduced, it was something novel and represented experimentation and quality for a while; however, as its franchises have increased, it has become more accessible and ordinary for the high-SES people who prefer to go for new trends, and difference rather than ordinariness (Sloan, 2004). "Such standardization process simplified product ranges, emphasizes quantity over quality and values uniformity over experimentation" (Sloan, 2004, p. 45). Reactive to this process, people higher on socioeconomic scale have begun experiencing prestige, novelty that people of lower socioeconomic scale do not experience. This new and different tendency – just like the steakhouses in our culture – gave birth to a taste-based food hierarchy (Featherstone, 1991). While dining-out at restaurants, people higher on socio-economic scale have sought for scarcity rather than quantity. As high-SES people have higher capitals, they are thought to be practicing higher capital reflecting experiences such as eating steak which represents "a kind of elite scarcity that cultural capital [of those high-SES consumers] requires" (Sloan, 2004, p. 28).

Meat still keeps its central and relatively more valuable position in a cuisine regarding such transformation of eating habits. However, despite keeping its central position, the consumption dynamics of meat have been subject to some change. Grunert (2006) discusses that the way we eat meat has been changing and everyone talks about it. Both variety of meat-including meals and the places we consume it have changed; "[m]eat is (still) a central element in our eating, and the role of meat stays same . . . However, we have begun consuming it as dine-out, at first-class restaurants" (Grunert, 2006, p. 2). Warde and Martens (2000) show that the average number of meals taken outside home per person per week rose from 1.775 to 3.18 between 1974 and 1995, implying an on-going increase by then. Besides when they asked 'Do you consider this evening eating out?', 21 out of 23 interviewees said yes to restaurant meal while only 2 said yes to 'sandwich at workplace' and only 1 said yes to 'at neighbor's home' (p. 171). Therefore, it is clear from the statistics that while there has been an increasing trend to dine out, there is also a trend of choosing primarily restaurants as dine-out places rather than dining-out at a friend's home or enjoying a light and quick meal in a break from work. The same trend is observable also in Turkey as this finding states: "Out-of-home consumption (OOHC) sector in Turkey has increased by 13% in 2015 which is almost three times of the world average" (Şendilmen et al., 2015).

The recent symbolic value of elite scarcity, novelty, and prestige attributed to meat consumption and specific meat products can be regarded as coming out of a post-industrial, Euro-American world, and this change has two crucial results: the emergence of steakhouses, and the changing preferences on meat types depending on the socioeconomic scale level where consumers are located. Firstly, eating out at steakhouses is a relatively recently-developed cosmopolitan trend in the western

countries, more and more meat consumers prefer steakhouses to eat meat. Moreover, the role meat plays in that activity is central to the out-home dinners thanks to its high nutritious value, high quality/price rate and elite scarcity. MacClancy (1992) states that meat is a very valuable food and at mealtimes, it comes to the center and around which everything else is positioned. Secondly, people have differed regarding what kind of meat they prefer on a class-based hierarchy in "this gastronomic game in which laboring classes go for cheap and nutritious foods . . . As one ascends the particular social scale that goes from manual workers to foremen to industrial and commercial employers, the diet becomes increasingly rich, both in cost and calories such as beef. Though its price has risen over 500% in the last sixty years, its per-capita consumption has remained remarkably steady" (MacClancy, 1992, pp. 116-7). However, these studies were conducted in the Euro-American contexts and the findings might not apply to the Turkish context where the consumption of meat has different meanings and comes from different traditions.

Meat has been always central in this food consumption because of its highly nutritional and symbolic values. Regarding its symbolic value, Adams (2010) sees all these dimensions as 'texts of meat'. She claims that by saying texts of meat, we position the production and consumption of meat's symbolic meaning in a political-cultural context by assimilating it into our lives with the expectation that people should eat meat because meat is good for them (nutritionally and symbolically). Thus, meat clearly has a message, a connotative value in its all dimensions such as production, distribution and consumption. Adam's claims are useful for this thesis in the process of analysis because I take steakhouses as texts and try to read them through the discourses constituting the interviews. In addition to its having an important symbolic value of elite scarcity, novelty, and prestige; meat – throughout

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the history – has also been a highly valuable economic good; controlling and consuming it gave power to those who did so. For this nutritional value, Baker (1973) states that World War II led to a "beef madness … when richly fatted beef was force-fed into every putative American warrior" (p. 72). However, later studies mostly analyzed these symbolic values. Wee (2015) claimed that populations have become more diversified regarding ethnicity and social class; in this diversification and differentiation, relatively unfamiliar patterns of interaction, cuisines, and gentrification have appeared. Hence, globalization, cosmopolitanism, and social and economic capitals have begun to reflect that symbolic value and meat consumption as a cosmopolitan privileged-group indicating activity.

As emphasized before, dining-out at steakhouses is a cosmopolitan urban activity. At this point of being a primarily urban activity, two other key concepts, metrolingualism and metrosocialism, become relevant. Metrolingualism can be defined as the contemporary form of creative uses of various linguistic and paralinguistic codes in mainly urban contexts while transcending settled political, cultural, social and historical boundaries of identities and related ideologies (Otsuji & Pennycook, 2010). An operational definition would be the use of semiotic (mainly linguistic but not excluding non-linguistic) resources in specific discourses to express and convey meaning or a message in an urban context with urban-related purposes and functions. Metrolingualism, thus, puts forward that naming a familiar and traditional place in different words or languages (in urban Turkish context, English as the indicator of modern, western, and global) positions it differently than its counterparts.

Metrolingualism is a part of metrosocialism which studies social dynamics in urban contexts. It, therefore, helps explain that the words 'steakhouse' and 'kebapçı'

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differ in meaning in the urban Turkish context, and this difference has been born thanks to urban life. Related to this study, it claims that despite having the similar characteristics of a 'kebap' restaurant, steakhouses are not called 'kebapçı'. The reason is, 'steakhouses' need to be called so because they are the more modern and urban versions of 'kebapçı' for urban people. This way, they can be different and sell; and they can be classified as more modern, urban, and western meat restaurants.

The reason why it is based on an urban context is that it is primarily concerned with daily creativity alongside forms of special playfulness of eliteness. Urban contexts are clearly more suitable places where possibility of international, intercultural, and interlingual interaction is higher than local points. This steakhouse concept belongs predominantly to an urban context, and it transcends some established sociocultural boundaries in the Turkish culture such as the way meat is consumed (ızgara/*grill*, mangal/*barbecue*), the form it is cooked (commonly köfte), and the places it is served or eaten (ocakbaşı/*traditional Turkish meat restaurant with fireside eating* and kebapçı). It is relatively a new and foreign theme in the Turkish context which may promise an experience of a different identity (western-based).

The interviews demonstrate the reflections of a creative use of semiotic resources to imbue words, visuals etc. with symbolic connotations or index new meanings. Just to exemplify, some interviewees have mentioned several visual advertisements on social media describing a 'köfte - döner' concept restaurant as a relatively mid-socioeconomic status (m-SES) one when compared to steakhouses because it includes meat in the most common form of it, meatball. Moreover, what stands next to meat in the center on the plate are also such things which one can easily find at an ordinary restaurant: fries, grilled pepper and tomato, rice etc. They add, however, a 'steakhouse' concept restaurant which is of relatively higher

socioeconomic status (h-SES) includes meat in a high-quality and rare form, steak with grill marks on it.

In addition, the things surrounding meat on not a regular but a wooden plate are such things as steamed vegetables, hand-chopped potatoes (implying that the presentation matters when eating is a secondary activity) along with some verbal messages referred such as 'art' connoting cooking and serving a proper meat is an art form with the emphasis on 'steak', which reminds me of the famous saying: "Steak is to meat what Cadillac is to cars" by Harris and Ross (1978: 2). This point of collaboration between text and image can also be supported by Barthes' (1977) anchorage and relay concepts. The former means to use written text to complete the somehow indeterminate or missing message of the visual image whereas the latter is enacted so as to deepen and explain the message of the image; in this regard, considering that all the visuals and discourses designed and produced are strategic in terms of encoding a message for the audience. By saying so, it should not be assumed that this is only a one-way process; rather it includes audience and gives them agency, which results in an interaction because meaning formation and its deduction is generally a fact of co-construction among social actors and the role of 'the audience as co-author' (Duranti & Brenneis, 1986). This research, therefore, does not necessarily assume connections in the discourses around steakhouses between cultures, nationality, language, socioeconomic status etc.; nevertheless, it tries to explore how such relations are produced in and through them, and how all familiar semiotic signs and already permeating ideas and concepts are recontextualized.

As the analysis suggests, steakhouses symbolically function as metrosocial places and metrolingual 'texts' by (1) bringing at least two cultures together (Euro-

American and traditional Turkish), (2) combining two diverse 'texts' (sociocultural phenomena which can be read, interpreted, and understood distinctively under different cultural filters), (3) challenging a dominant sociocultural phenomenon (steakhouse vs. kasap/*butcher*, kebapçı, ocakbaşı), and (4) transforming culinary and social practices regarding the consumption of food (eating as a biological fuel) to those observable in sociocultural activities (performance and pleasure). Hence, metrolingualism remains as a practical shorthand for a wide range of contemporary, not entirely 'new' though, sociolinguistic practices which can be found in mainly urban contexts. Those practices are affected by global circulation of ideas, texts, images, and also people – all challenging the existing traditions to create new possibilities for meaning-making and self-expression (Jaworski & Thurlow, 2011). In so doing, steakhouses become indexical and "enregistered" standard (Agha, 2003) of new associations such as consumers' class; and they obtain the symbolic and cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1991) of global concepts and brands to their local adaptations. In short, as Jaffe (2009) states, metrolingualism redirects us to a new set of contemporary practices and ideas, which requires various ways for people to position themselves regarding the things they say or do themselves, or the things other people say or do (here, dining out at steakhouses just like most people do as the data suggests).

2.3 Cosmopolitan food studies

Although sociological and anthropological analysis of food has a long history which dates back to the 19th century[1], food consumption as a cultural activity has a relatively shorter one. Goody (1982) began conducting introductory studies in the early 1980s on the material and symbolic values of food, which is very crucial in terms of contemporary food studies and differences within societies regarding 'low and high cuisines' in his terms. He was followed by Weismantel (1989) and Counihan (2004) who explored globalization in relation to culture, talking about food, culinary developments, cooking and eating routines and specifically identity (ethnic, gender, transnational as a result of globalization). Holtzman (2009) studied dietary changes within a society resulting from economic development, decreasing dependence on pastoral way of life and increasing tendency towards 'town-food'. Zick and Stevens (2011) argued that there are two main eating activities reflecting class, social, economic and working conditions: eating as a primary or secondary activity; the former means cooking and eating and the latter means paying and eating, and socializing (dining out). This secondary activity has gained a lot of global popularity. For example, as dining-out has begun to be associated with further values and the preference towards town-food has increased, eating as a primary activity decreased from 1995 to 2006-7, but time spent as a secondary activity doubled - from <20 min. to 60min. + (Albala et al., 2014). Today the main discussions acknowledge that food consumption includes desires gathering around its production and

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[1] cf. E. B. Tylor (1865), Colonel John Bourke (1888), and Meyer and Sonia Fortes (1936) are the leading figures in the field who studied food production, distribution, preparation and consumption in relation to beliefs, rituals and tribal social hierarchy attached to them.

consumption, which makes culinary practice a popular culture phenomenon reflecting power relations and class.

The food has been studied as a cultural phenomenon in several studies. These studies approach food from three different aspects. Structuralist approach studies "food as a cultural system and as a code continuously and culturally producing signs that allow a specific community to engage in meaningful symbolic culinary action"; in other words, this approach considers food as a sociocultural practice with the potential of producing symbolic values; Culturalist approach focuses on "the value of people and their agency", Certeau (1984) sees these consumption tactics as resistance towards economic and political powers through the practices of individuals, and lastly as Parasecoli (2008) states that Gramscian approach points out to culinary consumption in "hegemonic dynamics engendering prevalent narratives, and the examination of consumption and lifestyles as identity markers" (p. 55). These new emphases on food consumption, especially the Structuralist approach, as an experience of a symbolic value are useful for this particular research because this research positions steakhouse experience as a cultural one through which consumers acquire symbolic value. Apart from the physical need for food, therefore, these approaches also indicate the existence of a 'symbolic' appetite which consumers try to satisfy through reaching the associations attributed on meat production and consumption at steakhouses. They also implicate a specific and privileged identity performance which are offered along with western-connoted (meaning the Euro-American world and values in this urban Turkish context) references.

Seymour (2004) argues that taste is a social construction and the food tastes we have and the choices we make about what, how and where to eat are determined by social factors which are filtered through such layers as region, class, religion,

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gender and so on. On this point, Bourdieu (1984) questions how taste is formed and used in struggles of social recognition and status gaining. He argues that taste is a social construction through class-based habitus and "since habitus is embedded in class position, choices and tastes are a matter of class" (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 62). This claim is also supported by Sloan's (2004) argument that food tastes and related practices in particular oftentimes point out to the deepest tendencies of one's habitus. This can explain why people of approximately same economic, social and cultural capital dine out at places which can offer them more than merely food but also the opportunity to perform those capitals and the aesthetic dimension of their lifestyles. Bourdieu (1984) argues that differences in the size and structure of global capital form different habituses and life styles within large class groups, which are expressed in different tastes of food consumption. However, the real principle governing these differences in tastes in food is the opposition between the tastes of luxury (or freedom) and the tastes of necessity (Bourdieu, 1984); therefore, a taste of luxury such as steak has different associations of symbolic value than a taste of necessity such as bread.

2.4 Organizational styling

People are born, organizations are created. Thus, people come to world with no pre-specified purpose; however, organizations are formed with specific purposes on the agenda. The motivations behind this formation of organizations identify their primary and ancillary purposes. Primary purposes of a given profit-oriented restaurant could include earning money with such possible ancillary purposes as representing a specific culture, being the top high-quality provider of a specific

cuisine etc., which are shaped by and are kept in line with specific institutional myths and ethical regimes. As Selznick (1957) argues, such organizations and institutions can be seen as vehicles to embody chosen key values and the concrete realizations of those institutional myths. To exemplify, just like churches can be seen as the organizational realizations of the institution of Christianity religion, restaurants – and here steakhouses – can be regarded as the organizational realizations of the institution of cultural and culinary 'consumption', globalization, achieving high capitals, serving a profile of a business catering to high-SES consumers, and overall capitalism. This is especially observable and clear in consumption studies where people's choices of what foods to consume contribute to an individual's identity construction (Bauman, 1998). If it is possible to talk about such institutional myths in which organizations operate, then it is also possible to attribute habitus to organizations, which in return brings along a specific organizational culture. All these contribute to an identity construction process and once you have a distinguishable image, then you can talk about branding. The aim of branding is to construct a name or also a symbol which consumers associate in a desirable way with specific products or services provided. About that, Richey and Ponte (2011) claims, "Brand value is not only built on estimates of sales, but also incorporates estimates of the attention, buzz, loyalty, and social standing that the brand can generate, in other words, 'the affective and relational complexes that arise as commodities circulate in the social" (p. 166). In return, such branding also brands a particular experience to feel in a specific way because the symbolic capital acquired from social media shares, social interactions at such places, or even just visiting those organizations – here steakhouses – become sellable commodities of that brand value. Such branding

is externally oriented towards consumers whereas styling is both externally and internally oriented towards employees.

Organizations operate in line with some ethical regimes. An ethical regime means the standards and targets based on which business practices and outcomes of any profit-driven entity are judged according to their direct economic, moral, social, and business worth. There might be more than one ethical regime in business including consumption culture. Among them, the one that can be called the master ethical regime is enterprise culture as a by-product of neoliberalism. In every sub-ethical regime, neoliberalism promotes such characteristics of neoliberal entrepreneurship as self-reliance, willingness to take risks, innovation, leadership with references to historical narratives such as 'since (year X narratives)', and profit maximization. Oftentimes, all those are generally attributed to the founder/owner in profit-driven organizations.

This ethical regime might have different interpretations because the discourse of enterprise culture can be considered diverse, and appropriated by people in many ways depending on their positions, conditions, and the economic, social, cultural, political habitus they are in. This enterprise culture has come to such a point that it now permeates to every social aspect of life that "we drifted from having a market economy to being a market society" (Sandel, 2012, p. 10). In this market society, a specific identity, a specific image, an experience opportunity, a physical place, emotions, and a social media post – all are indexical of socioeconomic status – have become among sellable commodities with 'capital' value which an organization seeks to nurture and protect. In this process, such organizations are closely reliant on customers as individuals because those organizations expect the customers to embody the values and the image they represent. If they achieve this goal, then it

means that a specific group of customers is formed as a 'target customer profile' with determined and distinct tastes and of similar socioeconomic indicators.

This has led to the formation of two categories and also tension between them: marketability and uniqueness. Taking steakhouses as an example, they both need to carry particular similarities to each other if they wish to remain in line with the marketplace and to be identified relevant by the consumers; however, they should also distinguish themselves from the similar ones because that uniqueness is expected to draw people to that particular place.

At this point, a question may arise; how can enterprise culture driving organizations be reflected and decoded in the part of people as consumers? The answer is that thanks to the permeating factor of neoliberalism, enterprise culture is not limited to financially-driven organizations. Now as it is possible to take anything a step forward, to next level, enterprise culture has encroached into more social and personal areas of life and made consumers to feel the need to exceed themselves, do better than earlier incarnations and experience one step 'higher' of what they have done last including dining-out at steakhouses instead of ordinary traditional restaurants. Therefore, enterprise culture and consumer culture share one characteristic; both fuel values such as innovation and risk-taking, and encourage consumption and the belief that consuming will in return generate gains. Thus, the two intersect because producers produce for consumption, and consumers consume what is produced. In other words, producers are supposed to be responsive and attentive to consumer preferences; for instance, one of the criteria consumers look at is knowledge, expertise, skill, devotion, and perfection in the productions they decide to consume (Abercrombie, 1991). However, enterprising consumers are also anticipated to be judicious in their consuming choices. Hence, consumers need to be

incessantly exposed to new temptations in a state of never satisfied excitation and expectation (Bauman, 2005). By delaying a permanent satisfaction, consumers are ensured to constantly seek for satisfaction, which guarantees constant consumption in search of satisfaction.

Another aspect of organizational styling under the surveillance of enterprise culture is the use of narratives such as narratives of growth, equality, expansion, uniqueness, popularity, or gentrification which are all like the equivalents of personal biographies for organizations. In this regard, organizations can be said to be 'talked into being' through the conversations of their producers, their consumers, and any other observant third parties which all contribute some part to discourses built around them. Consider a company (a steakhouse) selling a particular food/product. A customer who tries that may share her experiences on social media with a probable effect of influencing people, which makes her a third party to that company's styling strategy that is a very common aim pursued by organizations. That being said, it can be thus argued that an organizational identity aimed to be constructed through styling may not necessarily overlap with the image at the end due to the any possible effect of that third party. This might be the case since enterprise culture privileges the market authority which necessitates attention to the needs and desires of people as consumers; thanks to the increased use of social media, potential consumers often wonder about what other consumers think desirable and trending at a given time prior to their final decisions.

As can be seen, all the above do not necessarily mean that organizations are completely and passively subject to discursive changes, and they are devoid of any agency. They eventually have corporate identities but in a constant situation of grapple with existing structural and cultural conditions, which puts steakhouses as

organizations somewhere between individual and more comprehensive macro-social structures in terms of agency according to Archer (2003). With those identities, for the context of organizations, agency can be argued to exist to the extent of accountability because in order to have a specific and distinguishable identity, they should be loyal to their aforementioned primary purposes and espoused values as argued by Selznick (1957). In other words, they should be accountable to those characteristics that shape their identities, which can find actualization through discourse. If they stick to those characteristics, that culture will be embodied, reproduced and ossified through consumers and thus, discourse. Therefore, it can be also discussed that it is a reflexive process as in the example of globalization. It is a direct object of cultural consumption but at the same time, it is also something people are enculturated into as a result of their consumption and taking part in any related activities. As Wee (2015) suggests, the circle is completed this way in the sense that organizations highlight and market specific values and experiences, and consumers in return endorse them. If specific 'Discourses' are analyzed, the character of what is being focused on must be readable as long as that organization has stability in accountability, which is the case with steakhouses as the data in the related answers suggests.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, I will explain the participant recruitment details and procedure in addition to data collection specifics and analysis process.

3.1 Recruitment and sampling

Volunteer participants who currently reside in Istanbul have been selected as the focus group through snowball sampling method. The total number of participants is 40. Of this number, 23 are the ones who have been to any steakhouse already; and the other seventeen 17 are the ones who have not been to any yet. All the participants are over 18 years old with the average of 28.48; a relatively balanced distribution has been considered during the snowball sampling. The 18 of all the participants described themselves as man, and the 22 of all described themselves as woman with no pre-given gender options on the demographic information sheet. 26 of all the participants have allegedly undergraduate academic degrees, 11 of all have reportedly graduate degrees, and 3 people stated to have high school degree. The participants were from diverse professions including academic (graduate students to professors) and non-academic (from engineers to news reporters, translators etc.).

In the process of snowball sampling method, the main criterion applying for all participants was that all were required to be currently working at a regular paid job in order to guarantee that they have at least the minimum economic stability which can make them to dine out as a routine secondary activity (eat to socialize) as

the main theories suggest. The participants have not been expected to meet any further specific additional requirements in order to see if there is any recurrent pattern for any group of participants based on education, age, gender, etc. The data collection process ended when the saturation was considered to be reached. Around the 35th participation, the answers came to the point of repeating itself; then planned rest five or six participants were interviewed to check the fact that the saturation was reached. None of the volunteer participants have been offered any such return as prize, gift, course credits, or money.

3.2 Data collection and analysis

The analysis is based on the data collected through the semi-structured interview questions which have been approved by the Boğaziçi University-INAREK/SBB Ethics Sub-Committee (SOBETIK) (See Appendix A). Demographic information of the participants has also been included in the interpretation process. The analysis basically follows a thematic analysis with some help of the multi-modal discourse analysis (MMDA) on the relation of culture industry, and how and what kind of messages are 'encoded' in the various discourses around steakhouses and how participants 'decode' or interpret them.

This is a descriptive and a qualitative study; thus, qualitative thematic analysis is used. In the interview, following the demographic information, sixteen semi-structured interview questions were asked (See Appendices B and C). The interviews have been audio-recorded, then been transcribed; and the necessary quotations are provided in this thesis only with the initials of the participants. As the

final step, the data collected through the participants has been analyzed qualitatively, and with the help of the tools of discourse analysis.

I have chosen interviews as the focal method because I supposed that I could find answers in them to the questions I have in my mind. These answers embed large-scale discourses which are value-laden in the sense of carrying a purpose of increasing sales and profit. Such discourses serve also as functional marketing tools in which messages in accordance with the ideologies and targets of the restaurants are delivered to the target group of consumers. The discourses I have come across are especially interesting because such restaurants do not advertise much in its traditional popular sense, they advertise indirectly through subliminal messaging with the discourses they create and contribute to. They do not target only an increase in sales and profit, nor do they try to reach people from all the strata in the society; instead, they –firstly– 'create' and then 'chase after' that increase in a specific, privileged group: the elite, crème de la crème meat consumers. Therefore, the strategies detected in the discourses as perceived by the interviewees for steakhouses, and for their different concepts such as Köfte - Döner, and Burger differ gravely. As different strata of the society are targeted and different experiences are offered, while these messages are given, they are encoded in and through different visual images, word choices, supporting items – i.e. different discourses. All the data seems imbued with the answers to my questions regarding the relation of meat consumption at steakhouse restaurants and cosmopolitanism.

I followed thematic analysis based on the four themes I have determined after the preliminary analysis of the data: expertise, western references, socioeconomic status associations, and identity performance. However, I also used content analysis at some specific points regarding the frequency of the most repetitive phrases. This

step seems necessary to me so as to determine not only the existence of specific words which signal the discourse, or preferences of a specific group of customers or culture, but also the concepts in the interviews. Following this introductory part, I turned to the method of discourse analysis for the reasons that content analysis simply includes word counts; it oftentimes disregards the context of the text and thus, it is reductive when dealing with complex multimodal texts. It cannot explain 'why's or 'how's of the content, either; it is descriptive but not explanatory. While analyzing the 'snippets of discourse', I looked for any repeating patterns. I specifically tried to detect the ways the interviews index such concepts as performance, prestige, and high-quality food consumption experience. This close-up analysis also included the intentionality and the stance taken by the encoder of the messages and that of the target receiver to which they are positioned by the same encoder. Furthermore, in this discourse analysis, I tried to understand the relation between the use of those specific 'Discourses', and the sociocultural, contextual issues. These issues include power, dominance, westernization, ideology, identity, and expertise in relation to meat consumption at steakhouses as a cosmopolitan dine-out practice. Finally, the study aimed to question how all these are associated with one another and manifested in verbal elements in the interviews.

Answers reflecting such 'Discourses' reproduce existing power asymmetries because as people talk, more people hear and in return, they will talk. However, it is necessary to talk because these answers might reveal hidden ideologies. They even indicate the structure of the target group of consumers, their eating habits, their preferences regarding meat consumption such as prestige, expertise, or cheap but authorized meat products by a well-known source, or brand. For instance, as shown by these answers, in the two different sets of advertisements for two different

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concepts (Köfte - Döner, burger vs. Steakhouse) referred in the interviews; same product is advertised: meat. Nevertheless, the form of meat (and the supplementary features such as background, and the side dishes on the plate) changes from a popular and the most affordable form of meat: 'meatball' to relatively 'high-identity' consumption form of meat: a big, juicy and medium cooked steak with grill marks on it.

The methodology I have mostly benefited from in thematic analysis was discourse analysis, with its noteworthy advantages. It is oftentimes the only available method because of any access or time arrangement problem, and it can reveal macro-level structures at minimum costs and maximum convenience. Moreover, discourse analysis can provide a positive sociocultural critique of most phenomena. For my research, through discourse analysis, I could critically decode the relations among verbal elements in the objects. By doing so, I had the chance to trace the covert ideology and the structure of target consumer group, the offerings presented to them, and the mechanisms of the lure visible through discourses. Discourse analysis is advantageous because it helped me to figure out how specific performance-based and 'elite' messages are reflected and constructed in speech. This 'critical' advantage made me look for what kind of expertise, performance, western, and cosmopolitanism based signs are used and how they are constructed. At the same time, it provided me with an insight on how they construct meat consumption at steakhouses, and the transformed meaning of butchery in the contemporary urban context.

Food studies draw in general on both qualitative and quantitative methods. When one seeks to collect data on the frequency and practices of dining-out, many studies use quantitative data based on interviews. However, qualitative data sheds a

light on how advertising and marketing of 'dining-out' work on a stratified society through discourses. In addition, that data also explains how a specific group of people are made to feel and experience in a different way through culinary consumption when compared to other groups in a society.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS OF THE INTERVIEWS

This chapter presents the responses given to the interview questions following a short introductory description. It should be noted that some questions in the interview vary depending on whether the participants have already been to steakhouses or not.

A few answers diverge from most answers and predictions; notwithstanding, the answers to the interview questions show that the answers of both the people who have been to steakhouses and those who have not generally confirm the theories mentioned earlier.

Overall, the answers describing perceptions of and experiences with steakhouses can be classified into five main categories: restaurant-descriptive, product-descriptive, expertise-descriptive, experience-descriptive, and socioeconomic status-descriptive. Restaurant-descriptive comments include the physical evaluations of steakhouses such as décor, menu styles, and background music. Product-descriptive comments evaluated what is served at steakhouses in general and what is eaten specifically with appearance-based and association-based comments. For example, the food served at a steakhouse is generally described on tastiness, being juicy, high-quality, photographic, and extra-ordinary with such associations as prosperity, wealth, and high-culture. Expertise-descriptive comments included evaluations about high-quality meat sources, preparation, cooking, serving processes of food, the competence of the chefs based on the taste, serving of food and the like. Experience-descriptive comments were the most frequently mentioned type of evaluation in the answers. These answers mainly talk about how the

ambience, décor, service, and food presentations are at steakhouses. They also include how the experience of dining-out at steakhouses makes the interviewees feel, and whether their pre-existing perceptions have changed or solidified. Interviewees, moreover, mentioned how their sociocultural lives and psychologies were affected in relation to other people who have been to steakhouses and the ones who have not. Finally, the socioeconomic status-descriptive comments were seen to include socioeconomic evaluations of the people who dine-out at steakhouses. They also include the overall impression and value of steakhouses, and the motivations of people who would like to dine-out at steakhouses. The details of the answers in these categories shed light on the understanding of steakhouse image and its relation with the culture industry.

Following this brief categorization of the answers with their contents, it would be better to look at the general tendencies and results in the interviewees question by question. By doing that, the question of what has been observed and found at the end of these interviews will be structurally answered, and they will form a general scheme to follow prior to the phase of elaborated discussion on these results.

4.1 Analysis of the interview questions

Q1 and Q2: Do you dine out? and If yes, how often and in what kind of places?/ If no, is there any specific reason for that?

This question was asked as an introductory one to look for perceptions later on. All of the participants unanimously answered positive. However, the answers change in terms of the frequency of this activity with the minimum one and maximum five per week.

People who said yes showed that they dine out with an average of 4.3 per week and they stated that if they are in a rush, or too tired to spend so much time outside, they prefer fast-food. However, if it is a special day or there is a special occasion to be celebrated, they prefer mostly slow-food restaurants suitable for a celebration in that they can sit comfortably for a long time and enjoy their dining-out. Although none said no, people who gave relatively lower answers emphasized that they cannot, or do not prefer, dine out frequently on the grounds of economic and sanitary reasons claiming that they eat out because they are working but they find homemade food more economical and hygienic. The relatively high rate of dine-out was not surprising as all the interviewees are working people on a daily basis, and thus reportedly may prefer dining-out.

Q3: Do you think that eating at home and dining-out are different? If yes, in what respects?

This was asked to gain insight about the related perceptions of interviewees. This question was among the questions to which interviewees responded quite long and detailed. All interviewees responded positive, and all agreed that eating at home is more economical and hygienic. However, they believed that it is more demanding timewise and energywise. These people thought that dining-out is more expensive but fast and practical. They also stated that whereas you can eat more different and diverse food outside, the food eaten at home tends to be ordinary and standard. More

diverse food (in terms of ingredients and preparation-process/time) is more suitable to be eaten at a restaurant.

Furthermore, they argued that they eat at home mainly as it is a biological need; notwithstanding, if they want to have fun, to socialize, to meet their friends etc., they prefer dining-out as they think 'dining out is more of a social activity'. For this reason, one of the common answers to this question also highlighted that if they are eating at home, they only prepare food. Nevertheless, if they dine out, they are the ones that are prepared, not the food. This supports the classification of eating as a primary and secondary activity.

Q4: What does dining-out mean to you, what kind of an activity is that do you think?

This was also asked to delve into the related perceptions of dining out. 38 out of 40 interviewees clearly stated that it is a social activity for a special celebration or meeting friends to spend quality time. They also included that it is a 'luxurious', 'modern' and practical activity when compared to eating at home because one enjoys 'being served'. Thus, when they dine out, they also enjoy not dealing with preparation and cleaning.

Two interviewees said that they find it uncomfortable and thus do not prefer it unless they are obliged to. However, while elaborating on what they meant by being obliged to, they told about circumstances in which they have to eat with friends or colleagues as part of their job. They believe that they have to fit in the group as part of a social gathering, which also supports that they see it as a social activity although they do not particularly enjoy it.

Q5: What do you expect from a place which is a restaurant?

The answers to this question were quite similar to each other. The most frequent answer was hygiene. Almost all of the interviewees strongly emphasized that a restaurant should be hygienic in all the ways possible from curtains to the food served. Following this priority, interviewees stated that they expect fast service and service-friendliness. This included that such people tend to see expert service personnel with the ability of providing guidance and advice on what to eat, how to eat if it is a specific cuisine, and what goes well with what. After these top two expectations, in the third place, people highlighted that they want to be served with high-quality food. In other words, they would like to be satisfied with the preparation, cooking, serving, and tasting steps of their food experience. In addition, they continued to say that according to them, a restaurant should have visuality and aesthetic décor with mainly wooden furniture and materials. About one third of all the people emphasized that they would like to see 'antique and rustic' décor. To 23 of them, a restaurant should also be dimly lit along with soft background music, preferably classical music. People also expect expertise from the chefs regarding the focus cuisine(s) of the restaurant; and on that, 17 people of all the 23 who have been to steakhouses directly or indirectly mention a difference between a cook and a chef. Interviewees frequently noted that if they do not feel 'satisfied with the expertise', that restaurant loses credits in their eyes.

Among the features of a restaurant mentioned, there is also the necessity of having a view. 19 out of 40 clearly stated that they would prefer a restaurant with beautiful scenery, and for this reason, they added that having a 'better-off' location is key to a restaurant. One of the most frequently stated reasons was an interesting one to hear because 28 interviewees mentioned that if they go to a restaurant not only to

meet their biologic needs, but also to spend some quality time with company; taste may have a secondary importance after the top priority of the popularity, elegance of the restaurant. Upon the request of clarification on the elegance of a restaurant, these people mentioned wooden and high-quality, modern décor and materials, the meticulous and elaborate presentations of food, and the elite clients with high sociocultural profile. Moreover, while explaining 'modern', 21 out these 28 people said 'of western style'.

Q6: What kinds of associations come to your mind when you hear the word 'steakhouse'? What do you think makes a restaurant have a steakhouse concept?

The answers to this question were in parallel with others. A steakhouse, by definition, is a restaurant which sells different types of meat. However, the results show that the first things people told were all about its connotations and associations. Only 3 people out of 40 talked about only meat or various meat types such as T-bone or hamburger. The answers of the remaining 37 people included most frequently its being a high-quality, expensive, distinguished, and modern concept. 19 people clearly stated that they are high-quality and expensive, and being expensive makes it serve higher-quality meat in a quite consistent manner in terms of taste when compared to its counterparts. One interviewee even added that for him, steakhouses are places where they can buy quality, tranquility and eliteness. Following this, people mostly referred to its potential consumer profile mentioning they are upper-class restaurants; they are not ordinary and address a distinguished profile of consumers.

26 people contrasted steakhouses with 'ocakbaşı' concept from Turkish culture; and all believed that they were quite different concepts in that steakhouses

are more modern, more global places with its décor and presentations unlike ordinary and masculine 'ocakbaşı' restaurants. 29 people told that associations regarding being different came to their minds when they heard it. They mentioned that steakhouse restaurants are different from other ordinary meat restaurants from the animal raising phase to the way they process and serve meat. Reportedly, the meticulous and elaborate way meat is processed and cooked, the elaborate way it is presented, the special techniques they apply, thus their expertise, and the variety of meat and concepts (steakhouse, burger/köfte etc.) make them stand out among similar-concept restaurants. Furthermore, while mentioning expertise, 12 people talked about waiters and waitresses at steakhouses who are considered experts on meat with their capacity to guide consumers accordingly; 4 people even named them 'meat experts'. 33 people out of 40 mentioned the name 'Nusret' among their first answers to the question; while saying Nusret, they both mentioned the steakhouse and the figure/owner of that steakhouse, which shows a clear direct connection between 'Nusret' and the word 'steakhouse'.

Other most frequently mentioned associations include high-quality, meat with grill marks on it (as a sign of being high-quality), and the details about décor. The most commonly stated detail is its being 'wooden' and having a cowboy-associating image. 21 people told that wooden tables, wooden plates, wooden accessories etc. came to their minds; and these people also mentioned that a mainly red and dimly-lit ambience followed such associations. Connected to this wood-covered emphasis, 5 interviewees stated that they imagined steakhouses with high-quality meat on 'display' within wooden cabinets as part of a 'show'.

One of the most interesting findings in the answers was associating the word steakhouse with western and American references. Interestingly, 34 people out of 40

mentioned steakhouse is not a Turkish concept but a foreign one; and 23 of them associated it with the word 'western'[2]. 12 out of these 23 people even told that the word steakhouse associates particularly the words 'America' and 'American'. However, while some of them were neutral towards steakhouses, some interviewees told that this association they have was a negative one because to them, it is a 'wannabe' concept we took from westerners, a kind of 'foreign mania'. This also contributed to its being a popular concept according to such people. They, thus, see steakhouses as places to which people mainly go to feel as one of its parts, and announce that they have been there. These people drew special attention to the use of word 'steakhouse' in English in our Turkish urban context. Moreover, they stated that steakhouse is the English word for 'kebapçı' in Turkish; it is 'biftek evi' (literal translation of steakhouse).

Q7 and Q8: Have you ever been to a steakhouse? and If yes, which steakhouses and which branches specifically?

23 people out of 40 answered positive to the seventh question while 17 people said that they have never been to one yet. Of these 23 people, 21 answered all experience-related questions in parallel to one another unlike the other two. Actually, this result gets more important and clear with the following questions in the interview. In this regard, the next question was asked, and the following findings were reached.

19 people out of 23 (ones who have already been to one), listed 'Nusret' and 'Günaydın' steakhouses in top three, followed by 'Elb-et Steakhouse' and 'Gürkan Şef SteakHouse' and then they named less widely known local steakhouses of Istanbul. The other 4 people did not include any of them in the list. This finding was

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[2] It is not clear in the data when 'western' is used to refer to western countries and cultures, and when to the 'Wild West' and wilderness theme.

expectable and parallel with the widespread association of steakhouse with Nusret as the data indicated before. Regarding the second part of the question, the first branches listed were Etiler, İstinyePark, Aqua Florya, and Nişantaşı. All these branches are located in high SES districts of Istanbul with a residence profile similar to the estimated one in the earlier answers. Even 7 out of all 12 local steakhouses mentioned in the answers were in these districts. This shows a clear connection with the perceptions about those districts and the preferences of steakhouses people have been to.

Q9a/b: a. To the ones who have been to one, what did you eat there? and b. To the ones who have not been to, what would you like to eat if you happen to go there?

The answers to the option A included New York Steak, Lokum, Dallas Steak, Texas Burger, Fumé Burger, and Roll from red meat – from the most frequent to the less. The names of the dishes were told in English as they were given on the menus of the restaurants mentioned. Interestingly, all the names except for Lokum (in Turkish) were in English; thus people were seen to have learned and use them in English.

In their answers to the Option B, based on what they already know and have heard so far, people included four of the six dishes listed above: Lokum, Dallas Steak, Texas Burger, and Rolls. This parallelism between the answers of the two focus groups points out to an overlap between the perception and experience in terms of the dishes preferred.

Q10a/b: a. To the ones who have already been to, would you like to go to a steakhouse again? and b. To the ones who have not been to one yet, would you like to go to a steakhouse? Is there any specific steakhouse you would like to try?

The option A of the question was asked in order to see implications about whether the perceptions of people who have been to steakhouses changed after experiencing them. The answers certainly showed all the 23 who have been to steakhouses stated that they would like to go again, and the perceptions of 21 people did not change whereas the perceptions of the remaining two slightly changed. Those 2 people stated that after having experienced steakhouses, they thought they were a bit exaggerated; however, added that if there happens any chance to go there, they would enjoy it despite feeling not as excited as their first times.

Among the reasons of this positive attitude towards going there again, interviewees listed high-quality presentations of food, the charming atmosphere of those restaurants, the sense of feeling special there, the high-quality meat, and the popularity of those specific steakhouses - from most frequently stated to less.

As for the option B, 14 of 17 people told that they would like to go. For the second part of the question, 11 of those 14 listed Nusret and Günaydın steakhouses in their lists – one told that it does not matter, and the other two listed different steakhouses. The other 3 people who told that they would not like to go to any steakhouse stated that they found steakhouses as a temporary hype and there is nothing attractive about them. Quite interestingly though, two of those 3 people stated that they were vegans or vegetarians but although they would not prefer, they wonder the atmosphere of steakhouses and whether they were as phenomenal as they were told. The negative answers including that the way both raw and cooked meat is displayed and treated is disgusting can be considered as if meat is 'abject' for them; they find it hideous and thus stay away.

Q11a/b: a. If yes to the former question: If you want to go again, which steakhouse and which branch - if any - specifically? and b. If no to the former question: If you do not want to go to a steakhouse again, why?

As for the option A, all the 23 people who told that they would like to go again were consistent in their answers and repeated their answers to the question asking about the steakhouses they have been to. Among their motives to go again, they mentioned high-quality experience including both the food and the service, popularity of those particular steakhouses, and the sense of feeling special there – from the most frequent answer to the less. Surprisingly, the 4 people who did not list Nusret, Günaydın, Elb-et, or Gürkan Şef in the top three among the steakhouses they have been to, this time listed 3 of them (Nusret, Günaydın, and Elb-et) in the list of steakhouses they would like to go.

As for the option B, the 3 people who told that they would not like to go to any steakhouse restated that they found steakhouses as a temporary hype and they realized that there is nothing attractive about them.

Q12: There are different concept restaurants of steakhouse brands at various places such as burger, or köfte/döner; what do you think about them?

The answers clearly go around the main perception that these different concepts are intentional economic strategies aiming to reach different SES strata of the society. 31 people out of 40 mentioned a difference between them regarding that köfte/döner and burger concepts are more affordable and more suitable for middle class in addition to providing lower-quality food and service. On the other hand, they argued that steakhouses are more expensive, provide more diverse menu, more personal service, and more sophisticated presentations along. These people associated steakhouses

with fine-dining in their answers and told that steakhouses are not that kind of restaurants one can visit often.

These people highlighted that the menus offered are different from one concept to another because their target consumer profiles are different; and thanks to such different concepts, they can draw more potential consumers from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds. To them, this is an apparent strategy of segmentation based on the income level of consumers with the aim of creating consumption variations to address people of different SESs, and increasing demand - after offering the supply first. Moreover, they also mentioned that köfte is the most commonly-found form of meat in the market and easily accessible everywhere as it is relatively cheaper; thus, one can eat köfte/döner or burger at various places. However, steak is expensive, and if one wants to eat steak, steakhouse is the one and only address.

Interestingly, 13 people out of 40 contrasted these concepts based on comfort too. These people believed that köfte/döner and burger concepts are more like fast-food in that they are places one does not spend much time while sitting and eating, these places in a way make them eat and leave fast. However, they argued that steakhouses are spacious and luxurious in addition to their being more cosmopolitan places and high-quality restaurants which are at the same time more suitable to sit with company for a long time and enjoy the experience leisurely unlike those other eat and leave concepts.

24 people exemplified Nusret and stated that even when they can only afford dining-out at a burger concept restaurant of Nusret, they would feel happy because the brand is still Nusret; it is a Nusret restaurant anyway. Then finally, there are also people who claimed that steakhouse is an imported concept from the West; however,

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they benefit from the local codes in order to set roots in the Turkish urban context. Such global brands make use of local cultural practices such as the menu items of McDonald's McTurco, and Mangal menus or adding 'kasap' (butchery) to the name of the steakhouse, which all make people see steakhouses as 'glocal' concepts while contributing to marketing and profit maximization.

Q13a/b: a. To the ones who have been to a steakhouse, can you describe how your experience was? and b. To the ones who have not been to one yet, what kind of an experience do you think it would be if you go there?

The most frequent answers to the option A observable in 21 people of all the 23 who have been to a steakhouse included the emphasis on feeling special and unique, and they stated that overall it was a nice and quality dinner activity. They mentioned that the service was unique and distinguished, and they felt that they reached a kind of elite scarcity. As told, they felt so privileged and special. They stated that the décor was extraordinary; and 5 people added that they even saw a wooden cabinet in which meats were displayed with celebrity names on them. All were remarkable details to them. Reportedly, the décor was western and European (both were attributed). It was also attractive and special thanks to the wooden furniture and design in a dimly-lit place with soft background music, which made them feel the restaurant high-quality and their experiences privileged. 11 out of 23 people stated that the ambience and the high-quality taste made them feel 'elite' and also as if they had been eating at a similar place in the West. 16 people out of 23 argued, they told themselves that they were at the restaurant where celebrities come and go, and where everyone from their close circles goes and takes photos. Another quality-referring response was about waiters and waitresses; they were told to be guiding visitors thanks to their well-

satisfactory expertise, which (expert service personnel) was considered an important indicator of high-quality.

Furthermore, interviewees also realized that steakhouses mostly function like a medium for entertainment after trying them based on their popularity and suggestions; however, they acknowledged that this popularity might also have a connection with the high-SES location of steakhouses. Nevertheless, the 2 people who stated that they may not like to go to a steakhouse again said so on the grounds that they found steakhouses overrated, and they believed that steakhouses change the way meat is consumed in Turkish culture. To them, 'how it is cooked and served' is not important in Turkish cuisine culture. Furthermore, one of them added that steakhouses even make the lives of by-standers miserable through the traffic congestion they contributed in such high SES districts as Nişantaşı, Etiler etc.

On the other hand, as for the option B, 14 people who would like to go to a steakhouse out of the 17 people who have not been to one yet agreed on the comment that they believed it would be an interesting, fascinating, different, special and a new-to-Turkish-culture dinner experience if they go there one day. They thought that after the first time, it would be clear for them that it is not the type of a place where they can go often. However, the remaining 3 people who stated that they would not like to go to a steakhouse argued that elite people and pretentious ambience make them feel uncomfortable, and feel something too unreal; it is not worth it because it is just food after all.

Q14: What draws you to a steakhouse, what are they if any?

This question was again a perception-eliciting one. The most frequently repeated answers circle around these themes: popularity, high-quality experience, and feeling

special. 17 people of the 23 who have been, and 11 out of the 17 who have not been (28 out of 40 in total) mentioned that as steakhouses are popular concepts, they would like to go there with such reasons as 'if it is popular, it serves quality food and service' and 'if it is popular, being there can make one feel special'. The answers included the admittance of aspiring people who have been there, desiring to go to steakhouses as other people do, and many people's claiming that they were quite satisfied with their steakhouse experiences.

People who mentioned popularity also touched on that this popularity is a result of 'branding' issue thanks to Youtubers, bloggers, and gourmets going to and publishing about these restaurants. 27 people out of 40 directly or indirectly stated that what they found at steakhouses is a show business, a kind of performance. These are especially noteworthy to mention if they are 'famous' steakhouses, and they can be accessed more easily in high SES districts but not everywhere.

Q15: There are various advertisements of steakhouses on various platforms such as printed media and social media. Is there anything that has caught your attention or you find interesting and noteworthy to mention, can you remember any such details thereabout?

The answers to this question were quite parallel to and mainly overlap with the other answers. One of the most frequent answers was that the advertisements were not ordinary in that owner-based advertisement strategies were applied by most of the steakhouses such as Nusret and Gürkan Şef - as the names of the steakhouses are indeed the name of their owners. For instance, these people told that Nusret and his interesting and outstanding personality came to their minds at first. Following that, 33 people out of 40 clearly showed that Nusret steakhouse advertisements are

remembered mostly and people here referred to Nusret's 'saltbae' gesture and considered this as his steakhouse advertisement. Regarding this 'saltbae' gesture, one interviewee even told that it came to an unbelievable point that even his grandfather was familiar with it.

The following most frequent answers were that people remembered wooden décor and material in addition to the western and American details such as bull skulls (mentioned by 27/40 people), emphasis on red and its connotations including flames, the color of the meat and the background, and the elaborate details about presentations of food. There were also results comparing and contrasting the same food product such as hamburger in changing forms and qualities in different advertisements with melting cheddar on juicy meats etc. Hence, interviewees claimed that visuality was more highlighted in the advertisements of popular steakhouses such as Nusret as far as they could remember. Then, different preparation steps and presentations with the whizzing sound of the steaks with grill marks on them, and also the sharp knives were among the features of advertisements they could remember in general.

6 people out of 40 claimed that animal love, petting the raw meats or animals, giving roses to them etc. came to the point of becoming an industrial meta in the advertisements. Furthermore, those aforementioned 33 people also continued that what they remembered from the advertisements was actually a show by famous steakhouses; in those advertisements reportedly were big, rare-cooked, or bloody-juicy meats. Closely connected to that, there was also the underlying message that this was the main way to eat meat at steakhouses just like the people in the western countries do – rare-cooked, blood-juicy, and with elaborate presentations. In addition, answers indicate that the fact that English was used in some of the

advertisements drew special attention as 11 people believed that this way such advertisements address only to English speaking clientele who are generally working, better-off, or international strata of the society. Other less commonly attributed associations include expertise such as chefs' talking about meat consumption and food during religious holidays to inform public with their expertise.

Nevertheless, 3 people were exceptions. One stated that he/she remembers nothing from the advertisements. The second person said that he/she does not know much about social media, and thinks that advertisements on social media are not ordinary, regular, and standard advertisements unlike those with flames, red meat etc. in printed media which he/she more frequently comes across. Lastly, and the third interviewee told that she/he never saw any advertisement about steakhouses.

Q16: Do you think that all steakhouses are the same or different? Why, and in what ways?

Although there were people claiming that all are the same, most answers tell that they are different. Interestingly, those 11 people who thought that steakhouses are the same or highly similar mentioned many differences about quality, décor, and target clientele in their answers. They even included such an advice that everyone should experience steakhouses at least once since one can find quality meat only in steakhouses but one should also be careful because the meat cooking, serving and the hygiene might not be of the same quality in every one of them – still implying they differ.

The idea that they are the same was expressed by 11 people while the remaining 29 clearly argued they are different. The main similarity was about what they sell, meat; and the way steakhouses seem. Interviewees stated that all

steakhouses use wood, black and red in their advertisements and décor, and such restaurants are generally dimly-lit. The steaks bear grill marks on them in every steakhouse; furthermore, all steakhouses offer virtually the same menu. One of the surprising results was that answers show, steakhouses are regarded very similar on the grounds that somehow they are attractive for both the people who really enjoy eating meat, and the ones who do not do so much. According to these people, the reason is that dining-out at steakhouses is more like a social phenomenon during which people sit and eat for a long time instead of satisfying purely biological grounds of filling stomachs for the daily-required energy quickly. However, despite this similarity reported, these people continued to highlight that quality is subject to change in steakhouses based on its location.

Another reason for steakhouses to be considered highly similar is that newer steakhouses have been imitating and copying the earlier, primary and the popular ones such as Günaydın and Nusret steakhouses (given as examples by the interviewees). People mentioned two examples of such concept-copying restaurants; the first was Paşa Döner, people told that Paşa Döner was opened with an intense use of red in the décor, and then dozens of 'dönerci' *(gyro restaurant)* then copied its décor. Likewise, regarding steakhouses, people thought that newer steakhouses have transformed from 'kebapçı' concept into steakhouses by copying the rich menu and the wooden-weighted western décor and concept of Günaydın and Nusret steakhouses. Nevertheless, according to the observations of the interviewees, in spite of such standardization as a result of this copying and imitation, the primary and more widely-renowned steakhouses develop a way to differ themselves from the rest at some point.

As for the differences, people listed many features with the implication that all steakhouses are regarded different from each other to some extent in many ways. One of the most surprising and frequently mentioned differences was based on a categorization and classification among steakhouses. People claimed that real steakhouses are not to be found everywhere because some steakhouses are just mere replications of 'real' steakhouses such as the ones with the trendy brand names ending with '-et' (meaning meat in Turkish) like 'Ahm.et', and 'Şerb.et'. An interviewee exemplified it with 'Nusret' as a first-class steakhouse. Interestingly, there is a tendency to believe that there is a culinary-cultural transformation from local 'kebapçı' and 'ocakbaşı' restaurants to global steakhouse-concept restaurants. The answers argued that there are some 'kasap steakhouse' or 'köfte', 'döner' selling restaurants, and just 'steakhouse' restaurants which have expertise on only steak while adding that the former is an example to the transformation mentioned above. Regarding this transformation, there was also a clear emphasis on the origin of steakhouse concept. 19 interviewees mentioned this in various ways; however, one stated that only a few steakhouses have succeeded in this transformation to steakhouse in Turkey while many more are still more like a 'kebapçı', implying that steakhouse is not an indigenously Turkish concept. Even four interviewees directly told in their answers that some steakhouses are more 'western' and thus authentic.

4.2 Recurrent patterns emerging in the answers

Just as important and surprising as others, there was a highly interesting perception which showed up through the answers; not all the steakhouse restaurants are regarded similar or the same, and there is a center-periphery based classification

among them. Interviewees who both have been and not have been to steakhouses share this perception, 31 out of 40 people mentioned such a difference. They think that steakhouses which are similar in terms of the high quality are already in similar or the same districts with the most-frequently cited examples of Etiler, Nişantaşı, İstinye, Moda, Bağdat Street, and Ataşehir. However, other steakhouses to be found in farther locations such as Bakırköy, Eminönü, Kağıthane, Bostancı, and Maltepe are not that satisfying to feel the 'steakhouse' experience unlike the central ones.

Some included such answers as 'bazıları daha steakhouse' (some are more like a steakhouse- by F.U.) and 'bazıları sıradan ama bazıları daha özel ve ayrıcalıklı hissettiriyor' (some are quite ordinary unlike others which can make one feel more special and privileged - by F.U.). Upon the request for clarification, while elaborating on the reasons of such perceptions, people referred to the expertise, and the socioeconomic and sociocultural structures of the districts these steakhouses are located in. They told high SES for Etiler, Nişantaşı, İstinye, Moda, Bağdat Street, and Ataşehir whereas they told relatively lower SES for Bakırköy, Eminönü, Kağıthane, Bostancı, and Maltepe. Such a SES-based classification, to them, affects the target clientele profiles of each steakhouse. For instance, one interviewee stated that a restaurant with the word 'steakhouse' in its name in Esenler has to sell köfte, lahmacun (a kind of Turkish pizza), and soup if it wants to draw customers from the districts it is located in. Another person supported such an explanation with an argument and put forward that such an SES-based difference is necessary because this is the normal marketing strategy when the target market and its dynamics are taken into account.

Some people were quite clear and direct about the degree of difference they believed among steakhouses; 3 interviewees described the difference with the phrase

'dağlar kadar' (a Turkish expression meaning to be different as chalk and cheese in English). Answers show that having different locations also brings along a difference regarding the degree of the expertise of chefs, and the degree of sanitation and hygiene. It was argued that better chefs are to be found in better-off locations such as Etiler, Moda and the others listed along with these above. Accordingly, the expertise of chefs decreases in such districts as Eminönü, Maltepe and the others listed along with these above. As can be expected from these answers, one person mentioned that if he ate something at a steakhouse in Nişantaşı when compared to Güngören, they would feel safer with the hygiene. However, interestingly, when asked why they felt so, they said that they did not know why but just felt so.

Likewise, another answer argued that not all steakhouses can make them feel the same; dining-out at steakhouses in Etiler or in similar districts can make them feel as if they were of higher SES and thus privileged. This opinion is supported by another person claiming that dining-out in such steakhouses feels like having dinner in an elite art gallery, hence feels more elite and of higher SES, which might imply a phenomenological experience too with a reference to interspatial perception. However, when asked what could be the reason or reasons of this perception, they said that they did not have an answer either; they just stated that they felt so.

Another answer mentioned that even the décor differs according to the location of a steakhouse. The observation was as follows, if a steakhouse is not in a high SES location or if it does not have a strong budget and thus of lower quality, it tends to have a gilded-based, eye-straining and 'heavy' décor - just like a poorly-imitated 'petit palace' - to draw customers with nothing else to offer. This observation ended by setting 'Nusret' steakhouse as an example for the opposite of

those, and even 5 of the people who mentioned such difference stated that the place which makes one experience the best steakhouse concept is 'Nusret Steakhouse'.

There is an interesting finding here. In these comparison and contrast answers, Nusret and Günaydın steakhouses were oftentimes discussed, which indicates that when people hear and think about steakhouses, in general Nusret and Günaydın steakhouses come to their minds primarily. People who talked about them contrasted their advertisements at first. They claimed that although they treat quite similar concepts in their advertisements, they prioritize different ideas such as show and quality respectively. They sometimes address different target consumers because Nusret Steakhouse uses English (even in those for its clientele in Turkey) and refers to its branches abroad very frequently in their advertisements whereas Günaydın Steakhouse stays more local and in Turkish. Secondly, such answers argued that Nusret Steakhouse is more preoccupied with the show part. These answers pointed out that there were also people who found Günaydın more professional. On that, 9 out of the 23 interviewees directly or indirectly stated that they did find the food in Nusret Steakhouse overrated, and claimed that people go there mainly as many others go there too, and to buy a similar experience to that of those people, which is desirable and understandable. As a result, they said that they would choose Günaydın in the first place.

There has been observed a primary emphasis on 'meat' and its connotations. Interviewees stated that they prefer eating meat in general; however, it is an expensive food and not always reachable. For this reason, apart from and more frequently than mentioning high-nutritious value of meat, they oftentimes talked about the connotations of meat consumption. They believe that if a restaurant sells such a precious and expensive food in a very satisfying and expensive way, this helps

it have an elite scarcity because meat has already 'elite scarcity'. In return, consuming it provides the consumers with a way of access to that elite scarcity. According to the answers, this contributes to the overall 'eliteness' and high-value of steakhouses and its related preference over the others.

Accordingly, the answers showed that in addition to the primary and secondary functions of dining-out as theories suggest, there is also a tertiary function of eating as well. People dine out as a primary activity in which they eat in order to satisfy their hunger; they also dine out as a secondary activity through which they socialize with friends, or even by themselves as a social activity. However, the answers showed that people dine out also as a cosmopolitan activity and a prestige indicator, to reach the abovementioned 'elite scarcity', to increase their social and cultural capitals with more connotative meanings along so as to move towards the higher strata in relation to others in the society they live in. As expected, the references people have made in their answers were primarily about these tertiary and secondary activities, followed by its being as a primary activity.

Another recurrent pattern was that the word 'steakhouse' has been shown to have the associations of eliteness, cosmopolitanism, and having wannabe aspirations. It brings popularity to people's minds and they consider experience of steakhouses as a show; and an elite, cosmopolitan activity, which is also the main motive of people who go there. Interestingly, one of the interviewees who were vegetarian still stated that it might be interesting to see and be at a steakhouse if she ends up there somehow. Nevertheless, she knows that she would feel disturbed. However, while there are people who said that they go or want go to steakhouses as they are popular; there are also a few people who would not like to go there for the same reason that steakhouses are overrated.

According to the interviewees, steakhouses are 'glocal' concepts. They mix local and global in one concept. Many answers indicated that people are of the opinion that steakhouse concept is an imported one from the western cultures with the way they are designed, their menus and dish names, and the perceptions and reactions of both the people who have been there and who have not been. However, they mentioned that steakhouses sometimes use 'kasap' in their names, and they have more traditional-concept restaurants and foods in their menus such as 'köfte' and 'döner'. To them, they do so because in order to have a permanent place in the urban Turkish context and culinary market, they have to seem familiar to the already existing trends and to the culture into which their potential customers have probably been enculturated. Hence, they have to present something different for them while at the same time making it bear local characteristics as well in order to stand out among their ordinary counterparts. Therefore, while seeming familiar to some extent, they also provide people with a chance to increase their 'capitals', and to differ from the many others in terms of the common sociocultural practices.

Related to the glocal reference above, there is the perception that 'ocakbaşı', 'kebapçı' restaurants and steakhouse restaurants differ gravely despite offering basically the same thing, i.e., meat. People stated that décor in steakhouses are more modern and western whereas that of 'ocakbaşı' restaurants is more traditional and simple. Similarly, the service is also more inattentive, and ordinary in the latter; nevertheless, it is more professional with more expert service personnel in the former. It has been also observed that people tend to think of 'ocakbaşı' restaurants more 'masculine and thus traditional' again while they believe that steakhouses are more 'global and thus suitable for women and cosmopolitan people'.

Familiarity with steakhouses and their popularity have been found to be higher among young and middle-aged adults (18-35)[3]. The answers of these people were closer to each other about the discussions they included, and their perceptions and reactions oftentimes overlapped. However, older adults (35+) have been observed to have confusion with related concepts including steakhouse and globalization. Such people sometimes tend to think of every restaurant which serves meat as steakhouse, however, they still are aware of the functions and details of steakhouses of which younger people are aware too.

Moreover, now that people have been observed to dine out at steakhouses also as a tertiary level activity in order to feel different, and increase their prestige and 'capitals'; it is possible to argue that the socioeconomic and sociocultural statuses are fluid and boundaries in-between are subject to change. This finding is important in the sense that it shows there are no clear-cut boundaries and ready-to-assign classes in a given society; but rather, unlike what Marx and Engels (2011) argues, these are dynamic, relational, and performative processes. In those, people can move upwards and downwards through the use of capitals they currently hold and in relation to the people around along with their socioeconomic and sociocultural ranges. If classes do not define people but instead people perform them, steakhouses might as well be the stage, a tool to utilize in other words. This, in return, also shows that the theory of performativity in gender studies by Butler (1988) can also apply here to claim that there is no SES essence but people construct, deconstruct, reconstruct, perform, and play with 'classes' per se.

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[3] This range is according to the disciplines of Adult Education and Developmental Psychology.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

"The presence of food in everyday life is pervasive, permeating popular culture as a relevant marker of power, cultural capital, class, gender, ethnicity, and religion."

Parasecoli (2008, p. 2)

Before moving on to the details of this chapter, it would be better to have an overview of what all these above might mean. As can be interpreted from the data collected and as can be explained on the basis of the results above; it is possible to argue that culture industry standardizes a cultural activity for everyone (Tomlinson, 2011), through many tools including firstly globalization. After standardizing a cultural experience, culture industry sets it to seem appealing and also functional in increasing 'capitals', underneath of which lies the motive of guaranteeing profit maximization and continuous consumption. Clearly, culture industry at first provides the supply; by doing so, the demand is created later on. Moreover, culture industry also intentionally benefits from steakhouses' being not accessible in every district and for everyone. Hence, it delays complete satisfaction with this steakhouse experience as well with the aim of making people further feel the need to be satisfied which is not possible entirely.

Culture industry, through steakhouses, sells a culinary element and many sociocultural associations along with it such as cosmopolitanism, western way of living, feeling privileged and having access to quality standards – as cultural experiences – in various cultures just like selling mass-produced replicas of a

painting with mainly capitalist objectives. Therefore, 'steakhouse' (used also in English in a Turkish context) concept and its experience become industrial commodities; thus owning them moves people from one SES to an upper one like owning a car or a house. Especially with globalization, cultural imports flow from hegemonic cultures towards mainly-consumer ones; and such material imports bring along also such value imports as the associations listed above, which might even be considered an example to cultural imperialism side of globalization.

This study discusses the findings under two main titles which are perception, and identity construction and performance. The former one talks about the perceptions people hold of steakhouse concept, and their interpretations from a cultural analytic point of view. Regarding these perceptions, findings suggest three main emerging themes into which interviewee answers can be classified. These are expertise, western references, and socioeconomic status associations. On the other hand, the latter one argues the reactions of cosmopolitan people to those perceptions which mainly gathers around the theme 'identity construction and performance'. In greater detail, it demonstrates how people interpret those perceptions, how they react to them, what kinds of values they ascribe on these perceptions and steakhouse experiences, in what ways these perceptions lead them to behave, and finally what all these mean from a cultural analytic point of view.

As stated earlier, this discussion considers steakhouse concept as a sociocultural text of meat. For steakhouses, the production and consumption of meat's symbolic meaning is recontextualized. Thus, meat evidently has a message, a connotative value in its all dimensions such as production, distribution and consumption. These texts are multi-author including culture industry, globalization, capitalism, food studies, and many others. These texts – steakhouses – have writers,

audience, and a purpose; and consist of different semiotic systems such as words, visual items, sounds, numbers, décor etc. For this reason, it would be appropriate to consider this discussion as if it were a comprehensive cultural-critical deconstruction and interpretation of a text.

5.1 Perception

Regarding steakhouse restaurants, the interviewees most frequently mentioned perceptions related with expertise, western references, or socioeconomic status associations.

5.1.1 Expertise

Interviewees believe that steakhouses are expert restaurants at cooking and serving meat. For the interviewees, unlike other meat restaurants, steakhouses reflect expertise in all the processes including production of meat in farms, logistics, cooking, and serving. By doing so, the steakhouses draw an image of being involved in every step, following each closely, and being competent at what they do. This expertise, hence, situates them somewhere close to being extra-ordinary, high-quality, noteworthy, and something to be benefited in social life.

First of all, 19 out of 37 interviewees who found steakhouses as expert, high-quality, distinguished, and expensive clearly stated that steakhouses are expert at cooking and serving meat. I believe, this meat emphasis is crucial because this expert image is directly related to what they sell. They sell meat which is, in general, expensive, nutritious, highly-preferred, and requires know-how. In Bourdieu's

(1984) terms, there are two types of tastes: tastes of luxury and tastes of necessity; in this context, meat – and steak – is an example to the former one. Thus, to be able to offer this to consumers properly by different strategies including engaging in every step of production and to be appreciated by consumers make steakhouses expert places, according to the interviewees.

Expertise is almost always associated with further positive values. Therefore, an expert restaurant selling an item of elite scarcity – meat – can be naturally expected to be expensive, and also popular. Nevertheless, as the data suggests, people have a reversed way of reasoning.

> "I'd go because it's popular. If famous people like Bülent Ersoy (a Turkish vocal artist) go there, then this shows that it's quality. I could go there just for this prestige." (P. G.)

They believe that steakhouses are experts and serves high-quality food because they are expensive and popular places.

> "Prices are a little higher than ordinary meat restaurants, so we understand that they are higher-quality." (C. H.)

This image of "astonishingly professional, visually appealing ambience, and special service" (G. K.) helps them stand out among similar-concept restaurants.

> "The steakhouse we visit doesn't just offer food, it is also important to enjoy scenery, extra-ordinary service, and its famous high-quality." (G. K.)

This indicates that firstly the supply is provided through such concepts as popularity, difference, and expertise. Following that, its perception is created and the demand is guaranteed. This strategy directly benefits from the association of popularity and being expensive with being high-quality.

> "Expensive, popular, and elite-profiled restaurants come to my mind; so this makes me think that they serve high-quality meat there." (O. A.)

Interviewees claim that a high-quality and expertise-reflecting meat is generally steak; to them, it is superior to any other meat form including the most ordinary one: meatball. Sloan (2004) argues that while dining-out at restaurants, people higher on socioeconomic scale have sought for scarcity rather than quantity and common; "a kind of elite scarcity that cultural capital requires" (Sloan, 2004, p. 28). Therefore, steakhouses prioritize steak because as Harris and Ross (1978) claims "steak is to meat what Cadillac is to cars" (p. 2), thus it is a more scarce form of meat, which is already a food item of 'elite scarcity'.

Steak is a widely-preferred form of meat, but as steak is harder to attain and requires more competent cooking, it has come to be associated with aforementioned high-quality standards and such consumers. Therefore, eating steak has become an indicator of prestigious culinary practices. Interestingly though, there seems to exist a standard, common perception of good steak. Interviewees who described high-quality steak by steakhouses stated that it should be rare-cooked and bloody-juicy in addition to the grill marks on it just like people in the West do.

> "The steaks I've eaten at steakhouses are just like how famous steakhouses prepare and serve steak in western countries. They have grill stripes on them and they are medium-rare cooked and a little juicy as well." (Y. Y.)

The idea that the standard and the proper way to cook and serve meat is the one people in the West do shows that what the West, and the dominant culture (as steakhouse is a western-origin concept), does is regarded as the standard and the correct; and therefore, as a sign of quality and prestige.

Even for the advertisements, what people mostly remember was a piece of steak with grill marks on it along with a whizzing sound of it while being cooked. This common form of memory about steak demonstrates that culture industry

standardizes the experience of ideal steak - just as it does the same regarding the

unrealistic beauty standards imposed on women in the cosmetic sector. In this

standardization, advertisements are crucial tools because in Adorno and Bernstein's

(2007) terms, advertisement is the elixir to the culture industry. It, thus, aesthetically

and quality-wise standardizes the image of high-quality steak, which in return,

functions indeed as a sign of preference and popularity. This is parallel to what Urry

(1995), Adorno (1991), and Tomlinson (2011) claim by saying that culture industry

schematizes meanings, experience, and perceptions of consumers – in a way

reconstructing the way consumers perceive specific concepts. This popularity and

high-preference rate brings along the perception of expertise, and the desire to reach

it. Therefore, all potential consumers might be supposing that the products, practice,

and experience there will be high-quality, and guarantee high-level satisfaction, and

the experience in the restaurants of specific steakhouse will make them feel different,

prestigious, and unique (Jourdain & Naulin, 2016).

As an example to advertisements, a few interviewees mentioned that owners

of some popular steakhouses show up on various TV programs to give recipes and

explain how to cook meat properly on special days like religious holidays. In further

explanation, for instance, many interviewees told that Nusret (the #saltbae figure) as

the most popular and high-quality steakhouse came to their minds. When asked about

the reason, the answer was about his popularity on social media.

> "Nusret shows that he has know-how and expertise on meat, which I could
> verify too, because celebrities and tourists go and eat there." (F. B.)

The identification of the owner of a steakhouse with such concepts of the utmost

popularity and highest quality shows that an owner or a gesture like 'saltbae' can

function as a signature of that steakhouse. This, together with all mentioned,

transform the economic and symbolic value attributed to its product into a higher-capital consumption and a luxury good without making any changes in the product itself (Jourdain & Naulin, 2016).

> "I'd like to try Nusret; I wonder about him, his popularity, and the luxury there. Clearly he has expertise but I don't wonder its meat that much." (Z. K.)

At this point, one question begins to linger on minds: Do those figures show up as a reference because they are experts, or because they are popular; which brings along the other here?

Moreover, people believe that the show part of dining-out at steakhouses comes from this expertise as well. For them, it is possible to witness their expertise while they complete the last cooking steps of steak or anything next to your table in your presence. Clearly, what steakhouses serve is not limited to food itself; they also sell show, and alternative experiences to its consumers as a requirement of being unique, different from its counterparts. This is required since consumers need to be incessantly exposed to new temptations in a state of never satisfied excitation and expectation (Bauman, 2005).

> Such a "show is definitely a plus. Even if you find quality meat somewhere else, chef's cooking next to you while it's going 'cızzz', or pouring the sherbet of baklava next to your table is something that can draw me there, it shows quality." (D. G.)

Here it can be deduced that this has also come to a point of being considered an asset of symbolic capital which consumers, apparently, tries to reach. Therefore, it is possible to argue that 'expertise' and 'entertainment' are also industrial items which are sold by steakhouses to draw people even before their primary purpose and product: meat.

The image of expert steakhouses in people's mind is so inclusive that they believe, even the service personnel at steakhouses are (and required to be) experts. Interesting enough, upon a request of clarification, the service-friendliness and fast-service are the less frequently mentioned characteristics. Nonetheless, the most frequently mentioned one is that people working at steakhouses are experts with the ability of providing guidance and advice on what to eat, how to eat if it is a specific dish, and what goes well with what.

> "I don't choose generally; I don't look at the menu. The expert personnel there already know the best combination." (T. E.)

> "When you go to a steakhouse, a 'meat expert' comes to you and guides you while choosing what to eat." (Y. B.)

> "The high-quality meat, elite clientele and popularity may make me want to go to steakhouses again." (G. K.)

Closely related to the expert serving personnel, the perception of chefs at steakhouses is worth mentioning. 17 people of all the 23 who have been to steakhouses directly or indirectly mentioned a difference between a cook and a chef. Based on expertise, it has been observed that the cooks of steakhouses are called chefs. Interviewees believe that one can find expert chefs at steakhouses. Nevertheless, they continued to compare and contrast steakhouses with 'ocakbaşı' and 'kebapçı' restaurants. While talking about the expertise of cooks of the latter ones, they used 'usta' who were believed to have less expertise when compared to those of steakhouses. On the contrary, for the cooks of steakhouses, they always used 'şef'.

> "Given kebapçı restaurants, they are kind of more traditional, alaturka; their 'usta's are, you know, ordinary but steakhouses seem more professional, modern, and luxurious to me. Even the chefs of some steakhouses are popular." (G. D.)

> "You know, 'aşçı' and 'şef' are different things. 'Aşçı' just cooks meal just like in a catering company but 'şef's are expert also about the delicacies of cooking and presentation. I watch foreign, American channels as well, the 'şef's of steakhouses remind me of them. I know that the 'şef's of the real, first-class steakhouses grow along real professional 'şef's." (E. K1.)

The interesting point is, 'şef' does not have that culinary-related meaning in Turkish according to TDK (Turkish Language Society) – the official linguistic authority on Turkish language in Turkey. TDK defines 'şef' as following: "1.Yetki ve sorumluluğu olan, yöneten kimse (one who rules or has authority) 2. Önder, lider (pioneer, leader)" (*Tdk.gov.tr*, 2019). As one can see, 'şef' in Turkish does not have the meaning of 'aşçı' (cook). The word 'şef' is attributed a new meaning in a specific context, which is probably a semantic transfer from the English word 'chef' used in culinary contexts. It is a perfect example to metrolingual use in the sense that this is a creative and an alternative use of a linguistic code in a mainly urban context while deconstructing the traditional, already-in-use and settled boundaries of its meaning and context in addition to de- and reconstructing some relatively fixed social categories such as 'ocakbaşı' or 'kebapçı' restaurants by re-defining and transforming them (Otsuji & Pennycook, 2010).

> "The way I like to have meat has changed after steakhouses. I realized that there is a specific style of meat I like most, I understood that I like to eat it medium-rare and in such prestigious restaurants." (O. A.)

As can be seen, while culture industry – in cooperation with capitalist motives – imports and adapts a foreign concept, steakhouse, to the urban Turkish context; some words and concepts are imbued with new meanings, connotations, and values. For instance, despite having the similar characteristics of a 'kebap' restaurant, steakhouses are not called 'kebapçı'. The reason is, 'steakhouses' need to be called so because they are the more modern and urban versions of 'kebapçı' for urban people. This way, they can be different and sell; and they can be classified as

more modern, urban, and western-style meat restaurants. It is, thus, clear that naming a familiar and traditional concept in different words or languages (in urban Turkish context) positions it differently than resembling others. This is parallel to the metrolingual use of 'şef vs. usta' example; and also discussable from the viewpoint of structuralist approach which studies food "as a cultural system and as a code continuously and culturally producing signs that allow a specific community to engage in meaningful symbolic culinary action" (Certeau, 1984). Thus, food, (here specifically steak) serves as a system which manipulates the meaning of some words and concepts for specific capitalist and 'culture industrial' purposes.

This shows that neither 'kebapçı' and 'ocakbaşı' concepts nor steakhouse concept is a 'found object'; they are creatively constructed on the multicultural landscape of their environments and changing contexts as a result of global circulation of concepts, styles etc.

On the other hand, despite the consensus of the majority, a few interviewees believed that expertise and thus quality are of secondary importance at steakhouses. They think that steakhouses are overrated, and show and the 'illusion' parts are prioritized.

> "I really find steakhouses overrated, hype. They're just a show; people are attracted not to its food but to this show." (N. U.)

For this reason, they would not particularly enjoy such an experience but they may try it just for once to have first-hand experience.

> "I don't want to go, and I don't think that I may say 'let's try this one' because they are too popular and too crowded either. Still, I may try it just for once to see the ambience and the widespread steakhouse craze." (F. U.)

This shows that although culture industry standardizes this culinary experience to great extent and the majority of people seem to adapt to the main flow, it is still not

quite possible to claim a monotype of consumers. On the contrary, this shows that they may have agency and critical attitude towards the dynamics discussed here.

The theme of expertise (often accompanied by location) emerges as an interesting difference between köfte/döner, burger, and steakhouse concepts. 31 people out of 40 mentioned various differences between them regarding that köfte/döner and burger concepts are more affordable and more suitable for middle class in addition to providing lower-quality food and service, and lower levels of expertise. On the other hand, they argued that steakhouses are more expensive, provide more diverse menu, more personal service, more sophisticated presentations, and higher levels of expertise.

> "For ordinary and middle income people like us, standard meatball, French fries and rice are enough, but if you're rich, go to a steakhouse to eat meat with grill marks on it along with julienne vegetables." (E. A.)

Consumers, for this reason, seem to spend more time at steakhouses.

> "Köfte/döner, burger etc. are more like on the run and faster, but steakhouses are places where I can dine for longer and with more pleasure." (U. G.)

In addition, they argued that köfte is the most commonly-found form of meat in the market, it is easily accessible everywhere as it is relatively cheaper and does not require special expertise. Thus, one can eat köfte/döner or burger at various places unlike steak. If one wants to eat steak, as they are believed to provide the sufficient level of expertise.

> "Steakhouses are the one and only address to eat meat, especially steak unlike any other kebapçı or ocakbaşı restaurant." (H. Ö.)

Interestingly though, about eating common meat forms, consumers still tend to prefer such branches of steakhouse brands.

> "If one would like to eat 'köfte', they can choose the 'köfte/döner' concepts of steakhouse brands again as they are already expert." (Z. K.)

By saying so, they actually transfer the expert perception of steakhouses to other concepts as well.

As Selznick (1957) claims, organizations can be seen as instruments to embody certain key values and symbols, and the solid actualizations of related perceptions. Accordingly, these people associated steakhouses with expertise reflecting fine-dining in their answers and added that steakhouses are not that kind of restaurants one can visit often.

> "Dining at a steakhouse is different than that at home; the way it's cooked and served, and even the grill is of higher-quality and everything is as if they are coming from the West." (O. B.)

Therefore, for many people, this expertise emphasis – along with its associations – makes them also proper places also for special days and celebrations.

> "Steakhouses are more like luxurious restaurants where I can go with my colleagues for a business meeting; or to celebrate some special occasion with my friends, family etc." (E. O.)

Even the people who argued that they do not particularly enjoy eating at steakhouses would rather go there for a business meeting or celebration as they are expert and hence, high quality restaurants.

> "If I were to choose, I wouldn't go there to dine out just for pleasure but if it's a special event organized by my friends etc. and if they would like to go, then I can try. At least, I would try something that famous and quality." (S. T.)

Apparently, people tend to believe that when location changes, expertise does so. As expected, the expertise of chefs is also claimed to be decreasing in such 'not-better' districts as Eminönü or Maltepe.

> "There are steakhouses in Bağcılar but fake, it sells meatball, fries, and soup. If you say authentic steakhouse, I'd say that those in Etiler, Nişantaşı, Levent are real." (Z. K.)

> "If I ate something at a steakhouse in Nişantaşı when compared to Güngören, I would feel safer with the hygiene." (S. A.)

However, interestingly, when asked why they felt so, they said that they did not know why but just felt so. It will be discussed in detail in the following sections; however, by saying better locations, people actually refer to higher-SES locations in Istanbul.

As Bourdieu (1984) supports, the bourgeoisie is the highest one in the social hierarchy, which makes it 'the dominant class'. Such a position comes with a chance to determine the legitimate taste; in other words, the legitimacy and validity of a sociocultural practice relies upon the social legitimacy of the people practicing it (Jourdain & Naulin, 2016). Hence, it can be seen that higher-SES strata of the urban Turkish society are considered the dominant one, and so it determines the perception on taste and expertise standards. So, could this mean that lower-SES is not worthy of, or deserve expertise? MacClancy (1992) has an explanation to that. People have differed regarding what kind of meat they prefer on a class-based hierarchy in "this gastronomic game in which laboring classes go for cheap and nutritious foods . . . As one ascends the particular social scale that goes from manual workers to foremen to industrial and commercial employers, the diet becomes increasingly rich, both in cost and calories such as beef" (pp. 116-7). Is expertise a luxury item to crave for then? It clearly seems so; expertise is more than a value of high-quality to enjoy. Therefore, it would not be wrong to claim that in this perception, people consider expertise (here experienced at steakhouses) as a way to increase their capitals and socioeconomic and sociocultural standards.

Holtzman (2009) observed that dependence on pastoral way of life has decreased while the tendency towards 'town-food' has increased. Steakhouses, benefiting from such tendency, transcends some established sociocultural boundaries in the Turkish culture such as the way meat is consumed (ızgara, mangal), the form it is cooked (commonly köfte), and the places it is served or eaten (ocakbaşı and kebapçı). Secondly, an urban context is the place one can find people who work and have the opportunities of interpersonal and intercultural exchanges more frequently when compared to those living in rural cities. Higher-SES culinary practices are, accordingly, found in metrosocial contexts where opportunities are wider and more frequent. However, relatively rural places have a more stable and uniform SES communities as the opportunities to differentiate people based on SES are more limited.

As a result, when combined with the standardization of culinary experiences, people higher on socioeconomic scale have begun experiencing prestige, novelty that people of lower socioeconomic scale do not experience. In return, this new and different tendency - just like steakhouses in this Turkish urban context – gave birth to a taste-based food hierarchy (Featherstone, 1991). Therefore, in metrosocial contexts, providing people with new opportunities and variations to make the urban context different is required since consumers need to be incessantly exposed to new temptations in a state of never satisfied excitation and expectation (Bauman, 2005). Diverse and extra-ordinary food and culinary practices are one way to accomplish that.

"Steakhouses attract me because there I can find different meat, different dressings, something different and new." (E. O.)

5.1.2 Western references

Steakhouses draw on visual and verbal Euro-American (oftentimes only American) references in order to give the impression that people can find the same experience and quality at steakhouses which they find in the restaurants in specific western countries; behind this idea lies the widespread acceptance of the association of high quality with the western standards in Turkish context. This association, thus, aims to position steakhouses among the first-class world restaurants in their eyes because although "[m]eat is (still) a central element in our eating, and the role of meat stays same . . . We have begun consuming it as dine-out, at first-class restaurants" (Grunert, 2006, p. 1); therefore, it has become more important to invest in the restaurant part of this experience such as décor and presentation of the dishes in order to manage the overall perception.

Sometimes directly and sometimes while explaining the word modern as a characteristic of steakhouses, interviewees generally supposed an association between the steakhouse concept and the word 'western'. They think that it is a clearly western concept, and sometimes they even emphasized that it is not related to eastern cultures.

> "When you enter a steakhouse, it's obvious that this concept came from the West. It's not like Turkish or Anatolian culture; you don't feel like as if you were eating in an eastern country such as Iran, just the opposite, it's totally western." (E. K3.)

Furthermore, interviewees believe that steakhouses are quality restaurants also because they are western. By doing so, they situate western as an indicator of quality.

> "You know, a high-quality western style restaurant comes to my mind… new in Turkish culture, something western, specifically American. It's like the quality restaurants I can see in Europe or America, so that's the kind of restaurant I'd like to go for a special occasion or something, you know." (H. Ö.)

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At this point, the question may arise about whether this is purely the perception of consumers or it is deliberately instigated by the steakhouse owners. In an interview made by Alfa Media (2016), a famous steakhouse owner explains, "We first made the world know us in İstinyePark, then we opened up to Istanbul in Etiler. We try to surpass the best steakhouses in the world such as the ones in Atlanta, Europe, and the South America". As understood, even the encoder part (the steakhouse owners) tries to establish such a perception and disseminate it to the consumers' minds. This is another example to culture industry schematizing and making consumers think and act in the desired way in accordance with pre-determined capitalist motives. The fact that almost all the interviewees talk about the same characteristics and associations (including the western one) regarding steakhouses supports this one-way constructed steakhouse perception.

Another point where western associations have been observed is ambience and visuality in general. Here visuality is about both the food that is served and the décor. As mentioned earlier, while describing the meat that steakhouses serve, interviewees almost unanimously described it as medium rare along with grill marks and a whizzing sound. They stated that the standard steak they have tried in western countries or seen in Hollywood movies looked exactly like that.

> "I think they are expert because at steakhouses I can find steak of the same quality as I've eaten in America. They are bloody-juicy, rare-cooked, have grill stripes on it and they serve it quite impressively." (D. G.)

Furthermore, it has been observed that the common décor of the steakhouse concept is also a standard which was defined and settled by the steakhouses in the West. Interviewees stated that a décor of a steakhouse should be aesthetic on the basis of some commonly-held steakhouse décor criteria. The atmosphere of a steakhouse should include red color very frequently, be dimly-lit and have some soft

instrumental or classical background music. To exemplify, additionally, interviewees mostly mentioned wooden décor including bull skulls, Wild West style design, and flame visuals. It seems as if wooden décor is a common framework all restaurants should adopt in order to be regarded a steakhouse.

It can sound sensible for people to assume a common décor for all steakhouses; however, the interesting part is the rationale behind. These people seemingly do not assume so just because they think wooden décor suits well to that concept; rather, they assume so because wooden décor – along with the other expectations – is a feature of a 'western' steakhouse. What matters is not the décor's being wooden but is the fact that steakhouses in western countries are designed that way.

> "Steakhouses are in general in western style, namely, covered in wood from top to toe, everything is wooden. They have expert chefs and stunning presentations. They are not brightly lit, kind of dark. In a way, they remind me of Wild West movies. So, they are like a restaurant in a western country I've seen in the Hollywood movies …" (C. V.)

Therefore, through such western-connoting ambience, people come to regard how restaurants in western countries seem as the original style of steakhouses; they take what comes from the West as the reference value against which each steakhouse in Istanbul is evaluated. Even the reference to movies can be discussed separately; American culture disseminates and establishes this faulty perception of standard also through cinema which I could call an 'ideological culture-industry apparatus'.

There is a steakhouse in almost all the districts; however, data shows that they are not considered equally authentic. Some steakhouses are considered 'more like a steakhouse' than others. There are many factors causing such a difference such as expertise as we have discussed previously; nevertheless, the underlying main

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criterion seems to be location. Interviewees believe that the locations of steakhouses are, or at least should be, western. They attribute a western image to the districts of Istanbul where 'authentic' steakhouses are located in. The quality changes from one location to another; and location seems to differ on two grounds: presumed SES level of the location (to be discussed in the next section), and its level of having 'western' characteristics.

> "I think, they are not the same. You tell me, can a steakhouse in Bayrampaşa be of the same quality as one in Etiler or Nişantaşı? Of course not. Quality is normally higher in more modern, elite, western districts of Istanbul like Nişantaşı, Moda, Cihangir, Etiler, Levent etc." (P. B.)
>
> "Steakhouses in those districts cook and serve food just the way people do in western countries in a quality way." (S. A.)

The steakhouses are considered higher-quality as they are in more western-like districts with the probable presumptions that western brings quality, and western deserves quality. When asked to clarify, most of the interviewees said, by western, they meant modern, elite, and expensive.

The fact that the great majority of the items on the menu is in English seems to have caught people's attention. When asked what they would like to eat at a steakhouse, they listed New York Steak, Dallas Steak, California Meat Roll, Texas Burger etc. English dish names are one of the many factors that contribute to this western perception of steakhouses. English is a western language; moreover, all these English dish names are actually city names from the United States. They reinforce the American (western) image of this steakhouse concept by constantly using these names and subliminally referring to America. This makes consumers suppose that steak is indigenously an American cuisine specialty.

"If I happen to go there, I'd like to try New York Steak or Texas Burger instead of Lokum or meat sushi because if you go to this American restaurant, you should try American cuisine. It's like, you know, you don't eat sushi at an Indian restaurant." (İ. B.)

Upon my follow-up comment-like question "So steak is an American food, and you should try that one if you go there?"; the same interviewee told:

"Yes, exactly. New York steak, Texas burger." (İ. B.)

The answers of both people who have been to a steakhouse and those who have not seem to be overlapping, which shows that the perception that steak is a part of American cuisine has already been internalized. That food items on the menu of steakhouses are called in a western language reinforces the western image of steakhouses. As emphasized earlier, this is a common perception.

"As its name is in English, it must have a western origin." (M. Ü.)

Through steakhouses, culture industry benefits from the values coming from the USA's existing high economic, social, and cultural capitals. The USA is, thus, the dominant culture to export its products and ideas through its language over the others just like the position of Hollywood and English globally. What Bourdieu (1984) argues for the bourgeoisie as the dominant class with a chance to determine the legitimate taste (the standard taste which is taken as the reference value for the majority of the people), also applies here. American culture, being the dominant one in the platform of globalization, holds the position to determine its values and practices as the standard. English names for the dishes on the menu equip them with the values associated with that language, its symbolic power and value.

"Its name is in English in a Turkish context. The aim is to go international, to create a perception of being more luxurious and high-quality thanks to the use of English." (F. Ü.)

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This superiority can even be seen as a symbolic violence on the 'lower' ones, causing a homogenization while blurring 'the others'.

From the perspective of culture industry, this phenomenon is called 'cultural lag' (Parasecoli, 2008). It is mainly used in relation to the American culture as the hegemonic (in a Gramscian way) culture which exports mass-produced cultural metas. Cultural lag means the state and feeling of having a perceptual developmental (technological, cultural, medical etc.) backwardness in cultures when compared to the dominant American culture. Therefore, as considered the hegemonic culture, what comes from 'America' is a sign of development and a step towards it. If this is the case, then what reflects American culture and what comes from it are readily accepted and regarded as a sign of quality and prestige. In urban Turkish context where there is long-rooted association of quality and development with the West – sometimes directly with America; it becomes a sign of prestige.

Data also draws attention to the fact that even the advertisements are in English, for example #saltbae. Through these advertisements, steakhouses target a cosmopolitan, English speaking, elite profile with probably more international and intercultural opportunities and exchanges. By doing so, they reinforce the desired perception of steakhouses as restaurants more suitable for a higher-SES clientele.

> "I don't remember so much about advertisements but I keep seeing social media posts which are also advertisements I think. I realize that they use almost always English in them such as 'marble et', 'steakhouse', the famous hashtag and the gesture #saltbae etc." (G. G.)

While people were discussing that steak is western, or sometimes directly American, they also compared it to köfte and döner claiming that they are traditional and ordinary.

> "They are different concepts. One sells köfte and döner which are traditional Turkish food and can be found almost anywhere but steakhouse sells steak which is not originally Turkish and can be mainly found in western countries." (Ş. S.)

Upon a further follow-up question asking what makes them think köfte and döner are traditional and ordinary but steak is western; that interviewee continued:

> "I don't know, prior to steakhouses in Istanbul, we didn't know much about steak. Of course you can find similar meat at kebapçı and ocakbaşı, but steak with grill marks and the ambience you eat it are different. Before I ate it at steakhouses, I used to see it in American movies." (Ş. S.)

In total, 34 interviewees out of 40 directly or indirectly argued that steakhouse is not a Turkish concept but a foreign one. Of these 34 interviewees, 23 associated it with the word western with no single reference to eastern cultures or countries. 12 out of these 23 people even claimed that the word steakhouse connotes especially the words 'America' or 'American'.

> "It's, you know, something new to us . . . It reminds me of American concept, it feels like an American ambience there." (E. K3.)

Nonetheless, some of them were neutral towards steakhouses whereas some argued that this association of western perception was a negative one because they believe, it is a 'wannabe' concept imported from westerners, and it is a kind of 'foreign mania'. For these people, this western image and the use of English language also contributed to its being a popular concept. These interviewees put special emphasis on the use of word 'steakhouse' in English in Turkish urban context. Moreover, they added that steakhouse is the English translation for 'kebapçı' in Turkish. Thus, English 'steakhouse' in a predominantly native Turkish culture might have been chosen to index a prestige perception by benefiting from the long-rooted association of modernity and quality with 'western'.

This discussion, however, included a crucial characteristic of the western perception of steakhouse: the steakhouse does not remain Western when it moves to the urban Turkish context.

> "They [steakhouses] are not originally Turkish but they benefit from the local codes in order to set roots in the Turkish context." (G. A.)

As the data indicates, steakhouse is considered a western concept with an intentional pinch of local codes such as using the word and concept of 'kasap' in the restaurant, and offering 'köfte' and 'katmer' (a traditional dessert) on the menu.

The mixture of global and local brings the discussion to the point of glocalism. Glocalism means introducing and adapting a globally known concept or product to a local context. Steakhouses are places where local and global merge in one concept, which also causes the imported concept of steakhouse to face a temporary deterritorialization, it becomes something that one cannot easily claim its original territory is western.

> "First of all, I think that steakhouse is a wannabe concept taken from foreigners but steakhouses are more like luxurious restaurants in which something international – especially American – is blended with what we call 'traditional meat restaurant' in our culture. Western style huge portions of meat, the décor etc. are being adapted to us." (A. E.)

Nevertheless, interviewees also mentioned that steakhouses sometimes use the aforementioned local codes in order to address local clientele.

> "Steakhouse is an imported concept. For that imported concept to enter a local market, it needs to include some kind of local items such as adding the word kasap to its name, having traditional köfte/döner concept branches, and selling traditional köfte, döner, Lokum etc." (A. E.)

When combined with high-SES associations, this glocal structure of steakhouses makes them also cosmopolitan living on the local and global simultaneously, which is made real by the introduction, application and adaptation of globally circulating

goods and services to the local and particular contexts and markets which have been on an increase in variety (Robertson, 1995).

To such people, steakhouses do so because in order to have a permanent place in the urban Turkish context and culinary market, they have to seem familiar with the already existing trends and with the culture of their customers. This is exactly an economy-driven balance between marketability and uniqueness. Taking steakhouses as an example, they both need to carry particular similarities to the local cultural context and to each other as well if they wish to remain in line with the marketplace and to be identified relevant by the consumers; however, they should also distinguish themselves from the similar ones because that uniqueness is expected to draw people to that particular place.

As the discussion above suggests, steakhouses symbolically function as metrosocial and glocal 'texts' by (1) bringing at least two cultures together (Euro-American and traditional Turkish), (2) combining two diverse 'texts' (sociocultural phenomena which can be read, interpreted, and understood distinctively under different cultural filters), (3) challenging a dominant sociocultural phenomenon (steakhouse vs. kasap, kebapçı, ocakbaşı), and (4) transforming culinary and social practices regarding the consumption of food (eating as a biological fuel) to those observable in sociocultural activities (performance and pleasure). Those practices are affected by global circulation of ideas, texts, images, and also people – all challenging the existing traditions to create new possibilities for meaning-making and self-expression (Jaworski & Thurlow, 2011). In so doing, steakhouses obtain the symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1991) of an 'enregistered' standard (Agha, 2003), and the cultural (mainly objectified) and symbolic capitals (Bourdieu, 1991) of global concepts and brands to their local adaptations.

This concept of glocalism including an adaptation of global concept to the local host culture with capitalist motives and elite associations is also mentioned by Tomlinson (2011) with his term complex connectivity. It means a network of interdependent connections and additions of procreative globalization utilized to characterize modern world. It considers globalization as an empiric fact of modern world, and by saying empiric, it claims that globalization is not solely a solid material outside human body and mind, but it is a lived experience[4] under the complex connectivity of culture, globalization, cosmopolitanisation, and capitalist economic system. In this connectivity, globalization turned into a tool for capitalist economic system to transfer consumption-based culinary culture with further practical associations such as cosmopolitanism as frequently mentioned by the interviewees. In other words, thanks to globalization, "We drifted from having a market economy to being a market society driven by consumption" (Sandel, 2012, p. 10) to acquire additional symbolic assets.

Steakhouse concept should be analyzed under this connectivity. It comes to settle in urban Turkish culture which is filled with already existing culinary traditions, and the reason of the journey is about capitalist motives. Furthermore, consumers should perform this steakhouse experience in order to reach its associations and values; in other words, they have to go there, eat the food, take and share photos etc. Therefore, it is an empiric phenomenon. Unless you perform it, you do not benefit from it. All the interacting sides discussed so far constitutes such a form of connectivity, in that they benefit from each other to have the desired result. This glocal steakhouse concept, hence, poses a great example to this interdependent connectivity term because although it may seem that there is a binary relation

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[4] Lived experience is a term in phenomenology meaning subjective interpretations of experiences.

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between cosmopolitan and local, these two concepts are not in a constant clash, rather they are adapted.

In addition to the expertise criterion discussed in the previous section, 'kebapçı' restaurants and steakhouse restaurants differ also gravely on being western or not. Firstly, interviewees stated that décor in steakhouses are more modern and western whereas that of 'kebapçı' restaurants is more traditional and simple.

> "They are not like traditional and ordinary meat restaurants such as, you know, kebapçı in our culture. They both sell meat but steakhouses are more western, modern, high-quality but kebapçı is ordinary and traditional. For example, cosmopolitan, elite people would not prefer kebapçı because steakhouse is more suitable for them because of the reasons I told." (E. K2.)

Secondly, steakhouses change the traditional way meat is consumed in the traditional 'ocakbaşı' and 'kebapçı' urban Turkish culture.

> "It [steakhouse] is like a butcher but decorated more luxuriously. It's far from the traditions of Turkish culture; it serves as a butcher but transforms that concept to a more untraditional and western way." (D. G.)

> "With the way they prepare, cook and serve meat, they change the way Turkish people consume meat. The aroma, the bloody-juicy appearance, basically the emphasis on the way meat is cooked and served is new to Turkish people because meat is generally eaten as it is nutritious for many but steakhouses are aimed to enjoy meat eating." (Y. B.)

In the light of such a difference and the perception that kebapçı/ocakbaşı concepts seem more outdated and ordinary when compared to steakhouses, interviewees have been observed to be in the opinion that there is a cosmopolitan transformation from the former concepts towards the 'western' steakhouse concept.

> "Steakhouse is the more modern, westernized, and cosmopolitan transformation of self-catering ocakbaşı concepts." (İ. B.)

However, not all transformations are considered successful; most of them are considered 'fake' and imitation as in the examples of the ones with the trendy brand names ending with '-et' (meaning meat in Turkish) like 'Ahm.et' and 'Şerb.et'

whereas Nusret (the #saltbae figure) was set as an example to the authentic ones. 19 interviewees mentioned this in various ways; however, one stated:

> "I like that this concept is developing and settling in Turkey; but only a few steakhouses succeed in this transformation to steakhouse in Turkey while many others are still more like a 'kebapçı', seems like an imitation." (O. A.)

> "The successful ones are like boutique steakhouses, you know, like boutique hotels which serve only for more special and elite people. For example, the steakhouse next to our school was 'Hazal Ana İskender' two days ago but at one night, they became 'steakhouse'. Can you believe that such a traditional concept named Hazal 'Ana' became a western concept suddenly." (S. A.)

The answers emphasizing such a transformation almost always included comments on the aforementioned global origins of steakhouse concept as well. As steakhouse being a cultural production, it is an inextricable part of capitalism. For this reason, culture industry has a concrete connection with such social transformation by disseminating a deceptive perception of globalization as can be seen in the culinary transformation process exemplified by 'new and popular' steakhouses in urban Turkish context.

Finally, the western perception of steakhouses regarding décor, food preparation, cooking, and presentation details made people to feel as if they were having dinner somewhere in the West. 11 out of 23 people stated that the western-style ambience and the high-quality taste made them feel 'elite' and also as if they were eating at a similar place in the West.

> "They [steakhouses] are luxurious, well-designed, and high-quality restaurants just like the ones I have been to in Europe, or seen in American films. You know, there are famous steakhouses in Istanbul too, and when I go there, I feel like I'm in one of those restaurants. I think, people go there because meat is tasty but it also makes one feel different, more elite too." (E. O.)

This is more like an experience-based phenomenological discussion because such western associations and the value consumers ascribe to steakhouses have the

potential to make people 'move internationally' with a symbolic value despite physically remaining restricted within the borders of a restaurant. Wee (2015) claim that populations have become more diversified regarding ethnicity and social class; in this diversification and differentiation, relatively unfamiliar patterns of interaction, cuisines, and gentrification have appeared. Hence, the aforementioned complex connectivity of globalization, cosmopolitanism, and social and economic capitals have begun to reflect that symbolic value of steakhouse experience and meat consumption as a cosmopolitan activity.

5.1.3 Socioeconomic status associations

Interviews suggest that people tend to associate their comments regarding steakhouses also with socioeconomic status and its indicators. Steakhouse concept in general is believed to reflect high socioeconomic status with its customers, advertisements, locations, types of food served, the décor, the service, and the like.

> "They [steakhouses] are meat restaurants like kebapçı but when you speak of steakhouse, it sounds like a version of meat restaurants which addresses an elite profile, it is like the God of meat with its presentations etc." (S. T.)

On the contrary, köfte/döner, kebapçı, ocakbaşı concepts, and other meat restaurants are considered ordinary and traditional with frequent references of low socioeconomic status indications.

> "Prices are more affordable in classical köfte/döner concept. They sell food which are more easily accessible and can be eaten almost anywhere. They address more middle-class people unlike steakhouses which are not easily accessible at all." (P. B.)

> Interviews have already shown that as steakhouses are considered 'special' in various ways, they are also believed to be proper places for a special occasion as

emphasized in greater detail in the previous sections. However, while commenting on that, interviewees were observed to pay special attention on the socioeconomic associations of steakhouses and thus their being worthy of such occasions.

> "They [steakhouses] are upper-class meat restaurants where I don't always go like rich people do. They are elite places. For example, I go there if it's a special evening, or for a special celebration, business dinner, etc." (S. A.)

Upon a question of why they have such a perception, interviewees told that the décor, the location, the prices, and the popular image on the social media etc. make them upper-class. They clearly have the impression that upper-class people 'naturally' live by such standards.

> "I don't know but they are like, you know, very popular among celebrities and business people etc. They are extremely expensive and more elite places fat cats go, one can't afford going there often . . . but this is normal I guess for a restaurant in such elite places as Etiler [chuckles]. Unless it's a birthday, anniversary etc., I would choose more middle-class restaurants because it's more suitable for my budget unlike steakhouses." (P. B.)

> This is all an impression, steakhouses are like stalls where culture industry

sells consumers more than meat such as high-SES experience, upward class shift, eliteness and cosmopolitanism.

> "Yes I can go there again. Steakhouses are expensive, correct; but it's not important for me. There I can buy quality, tranquility, and eliteness because one needs to be financially-capable to be a steakhouse consumer; and this financial expectation draws people to quality and eliteness." (Y. B.)

Eventually, this is a market society in which all discussed above including a specific identity, a specific image, an experience opportunity, a physical place, emotions, and a social media post become indexical of socioeconomic status.

> "Going to steakhouses has become an indicator of status now." (S. A.)

Thus, they have become sellable (industrial) commodities of culture industry with 'capital' value which an organization seeks to nurture and protect (Sandel, 2012). By

doing so, constant consumption is guaranteed in both ways. Already-consumers go there to sustain those 'side dishes' per se whereas people who have not been to steakhouses yet desire to go there to reach them.

In addition to expertise discussed earlier, also high SES attribution has been observed to be a hierarchy among meat products. It has been observed that interviewees believe meat products vary based on socioeconomic status of consumers. For instance, an answer clearly claims:

> "Steak is not like meatball. It is okay to sell meatball etc. in those [köfte/döner, burger] concepts but it doesn't fit to a steakhouse. Therefore, steakhouses sell higher-quality meat that is, steak. Otherwise, would all those upper-class people go there to eat the ordinary meatball?" [laughs] (M. E.)

Apparently, while ground meat in the form of meatball is thought to be more suitable for lower-SES, steak is thought to be a high-SES consumer item. As Harris and Ross (1978) argue, "Steak is to meat what Cadillac is to cars" (p. 2). Therefore, steak is a rarer and tastier part of an animal clearly; and accordingly, it requires special expertise, utmost care, effort, and attention. The way it is prepared and cooked requires more ingredients, more competence; it is a more complex process. This value of steak makes it to be an item of elite scarcity, and it is marketed to the ones who can afford this 'eliteness' thanks to this perception of elite scarcity. As expected, the places which serve steak and are known with it in their names are attributed that elite scarcity as well. So, what is marketed through steakhouses is all the things which symbolize what is elite and what is positively scarce, in other words, an opportunity to be different than most of the people.

Accordingly, as the data suggests, steakhouses – unlike 'köfte/döner' and burger concepts – are regarded as places more suitable for upper-class people who

slow down eating at steakhouses to savor it; in other words, to spend longer time to eat while chatting with friends etc.

> "Steakhouses are luxury places for 'fine-dining' [uttered originally in English], not for middle-income people because you stay longer at steakhouses when you go there. As you sit, you drink something, eat something. This means more money." (F. Ü.)

A short diversion; however, that köfte/döner and burger concepts are thought to target more lower-SES people should not mean that quality is also low in them; on the contrary, the value of those specific brands makes those köfte/döner and burger concepts higher-quality than their counterparts.

> "There are huge differences between the burgers 1000-year-old McDonalds, Burger etc. serve and the ones steakhouses serve. For example, the meat in the former is as thick as one A4-size paper but in the latter, meat is as thick as a pack of A4-size papers." (M. E.)

Enjoying the food as part of a social dining-out experience is an example to eating as a secondary activity. However, the interesting part is that although non-high SES consumers are not completely excluded from eating as a secondary activity, it is thought to be more suitable and normal for high-SES ones. Moreover, unlike köfte/döner or burger concepts, steakhouses are believed to be the places this secondary activity can be experienced better by more "decent, elite, and upper-class people who pay less attention to what they eat than where to eat what they eat" (G. K.). Therefore, as secondary purpose of eating is more strongly associated with high-SES, and steakhouses are considered high-SES restaurants; it is expectable to associate better secondary experience with steakhouses. Hence, culture industry promotes a better experience of this secondary activity through steakhouses; in other words, it promotes a chance to 'enjoy it', to buy 'this experience'. All these, in return, position dining-out at steakhouses as a social phenomenon rather than being

just a culinary activity. However, offering eating as a secondary activity with further associations such as high-SES feeling is more than just offering a social dine-out experience; it becomes from now on a tertiary activity.

As discussed earlier, interviewees believed that elaborate visuality of meticulous presentations, aesthetic décor, dimly-lit ambience, and soft background music indicate a western style quality restaurant.

> "I think, what makes a restaurant steakhouse is its being an upper-class meat restaurant." (N. C.)

Upon the question of what makes it upper-class, they added:

> "They have in general a modern, expensive, and darkish design like a cowboy-themed western restaurant to which rich people can go . . . They also garnish the meat during the presentation as if it was a painting on a plate." (N. C.)

As understood, having a modern, expensive, Western-themed darkish design and elaborated food presentations are also considered as indicators of high-SES, which could also be pointing out to a perceived correlation between western and high-SES as well in the context analysed. Unlike 'köfte/döner' and 'ocakbaşı/kebapçı' concepts, steakhouses need those because eating there is not just a mere biologic satisfaction as interviewees emphasized. They have to complement the mere act of eating to turn it into a complex experience with such additional values as western and upper-class.

Segment-creating strategy of steakhouse brands aims to address people of different SESs in order to increase the variety of what they offer, and to earn more; this is called 'profit-maximization' in capitalism. The same principle of profit maximization which steakhouses as financial entities adopt also applies here from the

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perspective of consumers. Consumers also try to get more than the equivalent of what they pay.

> "It leaves me with such an impression that steakhouses are places people look for something other than food like popularity. Meat is already a luxury food, eating that at steakhouses, thus, comes with a return of the popularity of that brand. It becomes a plus value for you in your close circle." (C. V.)

Therefore, to do so, through steakhouses, culture industry implants the perception in consumers' minds that they will buy more than just tasty meat with what they pay; in return, people will go there by thinking that they will eat good meat and they will also experience something upper-class; referring back to an earlier interviewee again:

> "There [at steakhouses] I can buy quality, tranquility, and eliteness." (Y. B.)

Steak alone is not enough for this experience, one can eat that at another place or by a competent chef at home; if consumers want to have this experience, they need more. As already highlighted, they need what steakhouses additionally provide such as elaborate presentations, décor, and western and high-SES associating items. If they do not eat steak in the existence of such a 'steakhouse atmosphere', then it will not be enough to enjoy it. This is an ideal example to what Tomlinson (2011) argues by saying instrumental symbolization, and instrumental rationality. The former is what culture industry does with steakhouses. Culture industry positions steakhouses to symbolize high quality elaborate presentations, décor, and western and high-SES associations; they come to be seen as symbols of upper-middle socioeconomic status, cosmopolitan and elite lifestyle, high-quality food, Euro-American qualities, privilege and the like. At the same time, culture industry promotes instrumental rationality; people who use instrumental rationality focus primarily on the question 'how fast and how easily can I reach my aim?' Here mind is used as an instrument which figures out the shortest way to reach what is being

tried to reach, without questioning the target itself but pursuing what it actually

symbolizes, which can be seen above.

However, these associations attributed on steakhouses become the value of

their brands; in other words, this additional value of steakhouses turns into a

symbolic capital for specific steakhouse brands. For this reason, consumers try to

reach and perform this symbolic capital through steakhouses. This capital is not

limited to steakhouse concept; even the less elaborate concepts of steakhouse brands

become an instrument for consumers to increase their symbolic capitals.

> "If you're rich, go to a steakhouse; but if you're middle-income, go to the less
> elaborate others [concept]. In both cases, one can say 'I've been to X
> Steakhouse." (Z. K.)

This high-capital and distinct image of steakhouses is created by themselves.

They address high-SES, the internationally and interculturally more eligible and

wealthy clientele. Even that they use English in their advertisements or posts shows

that they target preferably English speaking, higher capital (economic, cultural, and

symbolic) holding, and international clientele. High-SES people are more likely to

travel to foreign countries especially western ones, and access to new and different

concepts (elite scarcities) there thanks to their economic capitals, which in return

gives an opportunity to increase their social, cultural, and symbolic capitals as well.

Therefore, as mostly high-SES consumers try those concepts as first-hand experience

in their original places, offering lower-SES people what those high-SES ones reach

in their local contexts becomes a way for non-high SES consumers to feel like high-

SES ones. As a result, lower-SES people go there to increase their symbolic capitals.

> "Yes I'd like to go again because it serves quality meat, and it makes me feel
> like I'm eating at a restaurant in America and under such conditions, which I
> can't normally afford in reality. But you can experience it at well-known
> steakhouses." (Z. Ö.)

Steakhouses provide people with such an opportunity. They sell an illusion with further values attributed; they actually sell a complex experience rather than only quality meat.

In the previous section, the level of having western characteristics was argued to be one of the two grounds on which location (regarding quality) is evaluated; and the other one is the perceived SES level of the location. As the data suggests, this clearly represents a center vs. periphery distinction regarding steakhouses; not all steakhouses are believed to be of the same degree of high-SES. The main cause of all differences is about location which seems to affect almost every other criterion.

> "Some parts of Istanbul have become central, and although there are no boundaries separating them, invisible social boundaries get shaped based on socioeconomic statuses." (S. A.)

As understood from this answer, specific districts of Istanbul are considered high-SES whereas some are considered lower than them; therefore, steakhouses in the high-SES districts are regarded 'more authentic' steakhouses.

Furthermore, steakhouses are thought to be more reliable as well depending on the SES level of their locations.

> "We go to renowned steakhouses, we trust only them. In the end, we don't go to steakhouses in the ghettos of Istanbul, they are unreliable in terms of taste and quality." (P. G.)

When asked why think so, the answer was:

> "I don't know, it doesn't give me that confidence." (P. G.)

Moreover, if steakhouses are located in such lower-SES districts, then they are considered more like imitations. Accordingly, the most commonly listed steakhouses by the interviewees are all located in high SES districts of Istanbul such as Etiler,

Moda, and Nişantaşı; among them, Etiler is the most frequently cited high-SES

district. This points out to a clear connection with the perceptions about those

districts and the preferences of steakhouses. The following interviewee reactions

exemplify these arguments:

> "They serve the same thing, meat but they are still different. There are many
> steakhouses in my neighbourhood – I live in Küçükçekmece – but they are,
> like, fake and not like the original steakhouses in Etiler such as Nusret." (E.
> K2.)
>
> "You don't live in Etiler but you can go to a steakhouse there; at least you get
> how it feels." (E. K3.)
>
> "The overall quality of steakhouses differ, you can't expect them to be the
> same in Yenibosna and Etiler. They are naturally better in Etiler where elite
> people live and eat." (N. C.)
>
> "If I ate something at a steakhouse in Nişantaşı instead of Bayrampaşa, I
> would feel safer with the quality and hygiene. Plus, if you go to a steakhouse
> in Nişantaşı or something, it would be expensive but it would be more
> relieving with the quality, and also you get the privilege to eat with higher-
> class people there." (I. G.)

Certain districts are clearly set as the standard for steakhouses; the elaborate way

meat is served there is configured as if it was a privilege too.

Taste is eventually a social construction and the choices about what, how, and

where to eat are determined by social factors such as socioeconomic status of the

consumers (Seymour, 2004). Thus, socioeconomically more prosperous consumers

determine the legitimate taste and the standards in their 'social place' (Bourdieu,

1984). It is like Barbie dolls; these more prosperous consumers set the beauty

standards and they sell those standards in various sectors including toy industry or

cosmetics. Barbie determines what is beautiful. Likewise, the stratum holding more

capital determines what the standards of a steakhouse and meat are; in return, the

culture industry promotes and supports these standards, and tries to sell them to the

people who do not hold that much capital. It sells an illusion of achieving those

standards and the additional value offered but those people who do not hold that much capital do not acquire it; they just experience that capital for a very short time. For this reason, as what they experience is not permanent, they keep consuming to experience it. By doing so, culture industry guarantees constant consumption while constantly delaying a complete and permanent satisfaction.

As more people go to steakhouses with the motives described so far, more steakhouses 'mushroom' per se; and as expected, steakhouses as profit-driven institutions try to benefit from the popularity of this trend. Nevertheless, this 'over-resemblance' leads to the concept to become ordinary and common; for this reason, some steakhouses (especially the primary and more widely known ones) begin to seek for difference to stand out as I have already discussed in the previous sections. They begin to do so because their clientele wants to differ from the common practices that many people begin to experience; this is called "aesthetic cosmopolitanism" by Urry (1995) which portrays a cosmopolitan as a very mobile, curious, and reflexive individual who enjoys consuming difference. In other words, while lower-SES people try to feel and live like high-SES ones, high-SES people try to maintain their difference because their elite scarcity will become ordinary and accessible to everyone if all become like them. As can be understood, there is a struggle between high-capital holders and relatively lower-capital holders: maintenance and destruction (Coleman, 1990). At the base of that lies the fact that the acts of individuals are to maintain and improve their social positions. High-capital holders show acts of maintenance because ones who hold the capitals of their social fields would like to maintain them. On the other hand, relatively lower-capital holders who are probably new in that specific social field and thus want to have a share try to destruct the status quo and re-distribute the capitals. Steakhouses are

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perfect places to observe these destruction and maintenance phenomena. By continuing to visit specific well-known steakhouses, higher-SES consumers associate them with their higher-SES image, and keep it a popular, high-quality place where celebrities, business people etc. can go; this is a sign of maintaining the status quo. At the same time, many lower-capital holders try to find a way to visit steakhouses, share photos of their experiences on social media in order to position themselves in that social field and to signal that they also share that 'privileged' habitus. This is an incessantly working plan because this way, there will always be a difference between each social stratum, and each will keep trying to exceed what they currently have as a result of the neoliberal enterprise culture. By doing so, culture industry guarantees to keep this capitalist system as it is for its own good.

All in all so far, it is possible to observe that culture industry sells the illusion and hope of becoming high-SES and having such capitals through consumption and taste at steakhouses. Bourdieu (1984) argues that taste is formed and used in struggles of social recognition and status gaining. He is actually supported by Seymour (2004) who argues that taste is a social construction through class-based habitus, and "since habitus is embedded in class position, choices and tastes are a matter of class" (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 62). Hence, a steakhouse culture along with the perception of a standard 'taste' has been produced and it is being sold. However, these are more than just a secondary socialization activity of eating during which people go to a steakhouse with their friends for a celebration, or colleagues for a business meeting etc. As understood from this section, people are offered prestige, a capital upgrade, and a chance of a novel and high-SES experience through dining-out at steakhouses. This functions as an opportunity to position oneself in higher SES strata (even temporarily) because as Sloan (2004) argues, "[e]vidence from the

restaurant sector suggests that culinary taste, and associated consumer behaviour, could be considered important aspects of lifestyle and feel membership to a stylized group" (p. 40). This also highlights that there is no clear-cut boundaries between SES strata; rather, those boundaries are fluid and defined performatively in Butler's (1988) terms. As Urry (1995) argues, this is a paradigmatically-shaped modern experience implying that people chase after an experience which is like a framework, a model or pattern used for generalizations of needs and practices. In this case, people chase after this high-SES steakhouse experience (as it is encoded as a model and generalization) to play with those fluid boundaries through some instruments and practices. One of them is what we see here, in the way I call it, 'eating as a tertiary activity'.

5.2 Identity construction and performance

In the previous chapters, we have argued that steakhouses function as an instrument through which culture industry sells a foreign culinary element and various values associated with it including quality, cosmopolitanism, western atmosphere, and feeling privileged in the form of mass-produced 'cultural experiences'. Therefore, 'steakhouse' concept and its experience turn into industrial commodities; for this reason, having those makes people move from one SES to an upper one like buying a luxury car or a house. Especially with globalization, cultural imports flow from dominant hegemonic cultures towards predominantly-consumer ones (Scott & Lury, 2007); and such material imports come with value imports and perceptions such as the associations listed before. Urban people have various perceptions about dining-out at steakhouses, and they interpret and react to them in specific ways which can be

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combined into an umbrella theme to be discussed here: 'identity construction and performance'. Under a broader discussion from a cultural analytic point of view, this theme includes details about how people interpret those perceptions, how they react to them, what kinds of values they ascribe on these perceptions and steakhouse experiences, and in what ways these perceptions lead them to behave.

As discussed earlier, a seminal theory by Zick and Stevens (2011) about the relation of food studies and sociology divides the activity of eating into two: primary and secondary activities. People dine out as a primary activity in which they eat as a result of their hunger; but they also dine out as a secondary activity during which they get together with their families, friends or even by themselves as a social activity. The following interviewee exemplifies these both functions together:

> "[to steakhouses] I go to meet my friends generally after work. At the same time, I fill my stomach too." (I. G.)

From these two, the secondary activity has gained a lot of popularity. For example, similar to the global trend, "Out-of-home consumption (OOHC) sector in Turkey has increased by 13% in 2015 which is almost three times of the world average." (Şendilmen et al., 2015).

However, an interesting finding shows up when the critical perspective of cultural studies is taken into account in the analysis of this phenomenon. The answers showed that people dine out also as a tertiary cosmopolitan activity and a prestige indicator, to increase their social, cultural, and symbolic capitals with more connotative values. Accordingly, the references people have made in their answers were primarily about these tertiary and secondary activities. These are followed by its being a primary activity, for which only 2 people stated that only feeling hungry would draw them to steakhouses with no additional explanations. However, it should

still be noted; in this tertiary activity, the role meat plays is central thanks to its high nutritious value, high quality/price rate and elite scarcity. Therefore, consumers position the production and consumption of meat's symbolic meaning in a political-cultural context by assimilating it into their lives assuming that people should eat meat because meat is good for them (nutritionally and symbolically).

The data indicates that eating can be modified 'as a tertiary activity' as well with different perceptions and motivations than eating only to satisfy biologic appetite, or eating as a way of leisure activity. Emphasizing "hegemonic dynamics engendering prevalent narratives, and the examination of consumption and lifestyles as identity markers" (Parasecoli, 2008, p. 55), the Gramscian approach argues that these perceptions and motivations are about culinary consumption as a way of identity construction, and a specific socioeconomic and sociocultural performance. Sloan (2004) connects this change primarily to globalism as a by-product of late capitalism. He argues that late capitalism affected culinary taste and related consumer behavior, particularly as expressed in the restaurant sector. He emphasizes that the main assumption of late capitalism is that class-based and traditional social structures, with the potential to have influence on social conventions, are being deconstructed. In return, this led to either "the emergence of free individuals to construct their own identities through consumption" (Sloan, 2004, p. 40) or "the decline of traditional social structures forcing us to adopt alternative forms of social interactions primarily through consumption" (Sloan, 2004, p. 40) This change occurred in a new setting regarding differentiation on the basis of social-cultural capital and status; one of such new this new settings is steakhouses where these two probable outcomes can be observed.

This new view of consumption as a late capitalistic and socioculturally transformative process has resulted in the study of dining-out as a specific concept in terms of 'everyday culinary cosmopolitanism' (Cappeliez & Johnston, 2013). In that vein, the meaning of restaurants has changed from restorative to a fashionable and appropriate place to eat (Sloan, 2004). This change is closely related to the standardization of food consumption such as McDonald's (Wood, 1998). Reactive to such standardization, people higher on socioeconomic scale wanted to experience novelty and prestige which people of lower socioeconomic scale cannot experience. This new and different tendency – just like the steakhouses in our culture – gave birth to a taste-based food hierarchy (Featherstone, 1991). While dining-out at restaurants, people higher on socio-economic scale have sought for scarcity rather than quantity, "a kind of elite scarcity that cultural capital requires" (Sloan, 2004, p. 28). Therefore, steakhouses seem to be perceived as places where eating as a secondary and a 'tertiary' activity is more prioritized and marketed.

> "It's like a 'let's go to steakhouse' kind of special activity. It's not 'let's go eat something' but 'let's go to a steakhouse.'" (O. A.)

> "I like burger very much. I used to eat it at fast-food restaurants but now I prefer steakhouses as they are higher-quality and make me feel special." (O. A.)

As is clear, people tend to prioritize not the food but the secondary and tertiary functions there as a result of such a cosmopolitanization.

> "I don't prefer steakhouses just for food; being there makes me feel psychologically well too. Being there and eating there are much better when compared to ordinary restaurants. I have much higher-quality time with my friends there and I feel better, you know, more special and privileged, which is a kind of experience I'd like to tell my friends about. This is very effective for me to go there." (O. A.)

There are many restaurants where people can socialize (eat as a secondary activity); nonetheless, the interesting part here is that people tend to prefer steakhouses most

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because they believe eating at steakhouses is a luxurious, modern, and cosmopolitan activity.

> "If I happen to go out to dine, I can go there [steakhouses]. I don't normally go to such places and when I go, I want to eat at somewhere famous, elite and have some proper service so I can get my money's worth." (M. Ü.)

People seek for upper-class and prestige associating characteristics in addition to a restaurant's being suitable for socialization. This, again, shows that they would like to attain more than food when they pay; they try to maximize their profit, which shows that people hold a tertiary level perception regarding steakhouses.

In such answers, one of the strongest emphases was on the word 'cosmopolitan'. Regarding steakhouses, in all the interviews, the total number of 'cosmopolitan' tokens is 43. Besides, 38 of them are used together with the word 'elite'. This means that people tend to use the words 'cosmopolitan' and 'elite' almost interchangeably in urban Turkish context as in these two examples:

> "When I hear it [the word steakhouse], an elite meat restaurant lights up in my mind . . . They are highly expensive and thus only upper-class people can go to such cosmopolitan restaurants." (B. Ç.)

> "This [steakhouse] is relatively a new concept in our [Turkish] culture. It's like a traditional meat restaurant but sounds more elite . . . Therefore; more cosmopolitan people go to such places." (E. E.)

Hence, when they say that they regard steakhouses cosmopolitan or eating at steakhouses as a cosmopolitan activity, they mean that they regard them 'elite'.

> "Eating at steakhouses is an important cultural experience." (G. K.)

Therefore, such perceptions shed light on the interpretation of eating at steakhouses also as a 'tertiary level' cultural phenomenon when considered from the standpoint of Structuralist approach which studies "food as a cultural system and as a code

continuously and culturally producing signs that allow a specific community to engage in meaningful symbolic culinary action" (Parasecoli, 2008, p. 55).

Regarding this symbolic value attributed to steakhouse experience, let alone the corresponding perception of the interviewees who have been to steakhouses; even 14 interviewees out of the 17 (ones not having been there) agreed that it would be an interesting, fascinating, different, and special new-to-Turkish culture 'experience' if they go there one day. Actually, the 3 interviewees who stated to be vegan or vegetarian told that they wonder the atmosphere of steakhouses, how it feels, and to see it first-hand.

> "It was told that it would be wonderful, a 'once-in-a-lifetime experience' [uttered by the interviewee in English]. So, I don't eat meat but I may consider going there one day to see if they are as phenomenal as they were told." (S. T.)

As is understood, therefore, such culinary practices can indeed be argued to point out the deepest tendencies of one's current and desired habituses (Sloan, 2004).

The most frequent three points emerging in the interviews to highlight this experience side of the phenomenon are popularity, high-quality experience, and feeling special. It was highly interesting to observe that in the answers about these three themes, the most frequently used expression has been '-miş gibi hissetmek' (feeling as if …) implying a feeling or an experience which is not authentic indeed.

> ". . . On the other hand, steakhouses make you feel as if you belonged to a higher-class with their ambience, décor, and service." (P. B.)

This 'as if' feeling was oftentimes listed as a motive to go to steakhouses.

> "They [steakhouses] make you feel like more affluent, richer. They give you the chance of getting spoiled. That's why people like going there." (Ö. G.)

> "I like feeling as if I was a special customer and being served as if I was a celebrity. They achieve that very well." (C. H.)

"You feel like an important person thanks to the special feeling it creates. The meat you eat there doesn't deserve the amount you pay but the experience I had there draws me there again." (H. K.)

". . . I also look for a feeling of quality and pleasure in more special restaurants. That feeling comes from the exceptional, cosmopolitan, and western-like ambience, and the special cooking and presentation of the food in such an ambience." (A. E.)

However, as discussed in relation to SES level of steakhouse locations, such 'as if' feeling is not possible to be experienced to its full extent in all the steakhouses; the steakhouses to be found in farther (from the supposed centers of Etiler, Nişantaşı etc. as the data suggests) locations such as Bakırköy, Eminönü, Kağıthane, Bostancı, and Maltepe (as named by the interviewees) are not that satisfying to feel the 'steakhouse experience' unlike the central ones. Some of them are considered 'fake' whereas some are considered authentic.

"There are steakhouses in Bağcılar but fake […] If you say authentic steakhouse, I'd say that those in Etiler, Nişantaşı, Levent are real." (Z. K.)

"Some are more like a steakhouse . . . Some are quite ordinary unlike others which can make one feel more special and privileged." (F. U.)

". . . so not all steakhouses make me feel the same; going to a steakhouse in Etiler makes me feel more prestigious, more privileged." (E. K3.)

"Dining-out in such steakhouses feels like having dinner in an art gallery, hence feels more elite." (C. H.)

Such desire to reach a high-SES experience and such associations manifests itself in the answers of 37 people out of 40; however, when asked what could be the reason or reasons of this perception, they said that they did not have an answer either; they just stated that they felt so. Evidently, the criteria which make a steakhouse more like a steakhouse are those aforementioned trio: popularity, high-quality experience, and feeling special; and as the interviews suggest, these 3 criteria are evaluated by one main criterion: its high-SES value including location. Briefly, as the data suggests,

people prefer steakhouses not based on meat or steak but on the high-SES experience and associations they can offer.

The motive of feeling 'as if' is visible in two kinds of experiences. Firstly, interviewees mentioned that they felt or would like to be and 'feel as if' they were like those higher-SES people for whom dining out at steakhouses is believed to be a routine. Among their motives upon the question 'What draws you to a steakhouse?', 37 people mentioned buying quality, eliteness, charming atmosphere, feeling special there, and high-class experience at steakhouses; this also shows an overlap between the perceptions of people both who have been there and not. 27 interviewees out of all the 40 stated that they consider experience of steakhouses as a show; and an elite, cosmopolitan activity, which is also among the main motives of people who go there.

> "I think it's a hype. People mainly go there not just to eat steak; they go there to announce that they've been there and they've eaten there with Instagram posts etc. It's a big cosmopolitan show including the fancy presentations there and Instagram posts." (G. K.)

> "[…] not for filling stomach, people go there to have social media posts and show people that they're at a steakhouse." (S. A.)

While elaborating on these motives, 29 of those 37 above talked specifically about associations of 'being different' like the distinguished upper-class profile steakhouses are believed to address. More in detail, 21 of all the 23 who have been to steakhouses argued that they feel special and unique at steakhouses.

> "You get a special care and attention there, and you feel contented with it. Special cooking for you, special service regarding what you additionally order etc. …" (E. K1.)

They further stated, they felt that they reached a kind of elite scarcity, felt so privileged and special like people who go there normally. Hence, they listed 'to be and feel like those people' as a very frequent motive for them to go to steakhouses,

which sets a well-explanatory example to "Dreyfus Effect" (Topsümer & Elden, 2016) discussed earlier.

> "They go there [steakhouses] to say that they went there too like famous, upper-class people." (T. E.)

> "Being able to be at that famous place where many celebrities share photographs... to post photographs from there like them." (G. A.)

Nevertheless, not only people who want to be like higher-SES people go there, but also people who believe that they are already high-SES go there because they like being at places where people in their SES stratum go.

> "I frequently go to steakhouses when I go out because there are people like me. It's a white-collar class type of social practice." (Y. B.)

What Adorno (1991) claims by saying 'the schema of culture industry' explains the dynamics of such a motivation and that culture industry schematizes experience. In other words, it gives it a shape, a form which everyone is expected to fit in if they want to 'experience and enjoy' that cultural 'item'; it is what culture industry does here as well. Likewise, 16 people out of 23 (ones having been to steakhouses) argued to have felt special and excited to be at the same place where celebrities and elite people go in their daily lives.

> "Definitely, I'd love to go again. It felt different, but good different, to be at the place I kept seeing in famous people's social media posts. I was excited because I constantly looked around to see if one of them is here now too [chuckles]. I felt special like them and also a bit pampered due to the ambience." (I. G.)

This motive is so strong that even if they cannot afford going to popular steakhouses they would like to go, they would willingly go to lower-SES concepts of the same brand to have that experience. For example, 24 people exemplified Nusret (the #saltbae figure) as one of the most popular steakhouses they know and as one of the steakhouses they went or would like to go. Then they stated that even when they can

only afford dining-out at a burger concept restaurant of Nusret, they would feel

happy because the brand is still Nusret; it is a Nusret restaurant anyway, and they

believe it would still feel 'different'. In the end, people get the chance to experience

that steakhouse brand for a cheaper price.

> ". . . The brand's value comes along too. So although concepts are different, people go to köfte/döner or burger concepts because it's still that steakhouse brand and feels similar." (Ş. Ş.)

> "Steakhouses sound like more luxurious and higher-quality. They are more suitable for a night-out but köfte/döner etc. is more suitable for middle-class; it is in somewhere between steakhouses and fast-food. People go there to say 'I went there too' not to feel staying behind the trend." (F. Ü.)

These above also exemplify the motive of 'cultural lag' discussed by Parasecoli

(2008) in food consumption studies. This consumption experience, in return, works

as an instrument for these 'aspiring' people to move upwards among the fluid

boundaries of SES strata performatively in Butler's (1988) terms. In other words,

consuming not the steak but the steakhouse provides the consumers with a way of

access to that elite scarcity. According to the answers, this contributes to the overall

'eliteness', high-value of steakhouses and its related preference over the others.

The second kind of experience in which the motive of feeling 'as if' is visible

is 'feeling as if' they were somewhere else in the West, especially in America, when

they are at steakhouses.

> "It feels like I'm in a foreign country, it's not comfortable." (Z. K.)

> "It was a different experience, I felt like I was somewhere in America" (İ. B.)

In accordance, 11 interviewees out of 23 (ones having been to steakhouses) stated

that the ambience and the high-quality taste made them feel 'elite' and as if they had

been eating at a similar place in the West; this is a common perception and motive

for people to go there.

> "When I stepped into the restaurant, it felt not like Turkey but a foreign
> country. I liked that feeling, so I can go there again to feel like I'm in London
> or somewhere." (Z. K.)

Even when it comes to what they know or would like to try from the menu, they

listed NY Steak, Dallas Steak, Texas Burger most frequently.

Such comments remind us the term 'global food-scapes' (Appadurai, 1990)

used for global-concept restaurants. To him, restaurants are global places where

different cultures and cuisines meet. In that vein, people visit these global

steakhouses just like they visit a foreign country, a foreign landscape to enjoy. As is

clear, even the dish names represent American cities and such associations.

However, that these dishes are named so by the people in charge at steakhouses

proves that this is a reciprocal perception in which the encoders would like to create

such a western and American image, and in return, consumers accept that image and

are willing to experience it. This might as well imply a phenomenological experience

because as Herz (2017) claims, food has the potential to connect consumers to the

rest of the world and other people around. Hence, this cultural practice of

steakhouses is 'deterritorialized' making that place feel like both as a 'mediator' for

the people who visit them, and as an extension to that specific country or culture

although that restaurant is not physically in that country. To put it another way,

people - with an interspatial perception - feel as if they were somewhere else of

higher capitals and western. Giddens (1991) elaborates on and supports it:

> Under the conditions of late modernity, we live in this 'world' in a more
> different way when compared to the earlier periods. Everyone continues to
> live a local life, and the physical limitations of the body cause people to be
> continuously contextualized in a physical place and a period of time. Still, the

transformations of places and the intervention of the ones afar to the ones local, when united with the centrality of the mediated experience, change what actually the 'world' is. Everyone lives a local life; however, most of their phenomenal worlds are actually global. Phenomenal world now barely means the world an individual physically moves in . . . and the language [referring to discourse] is key to this. (pp. 187-8)

Another response by the interviewees based on the word 'feel' was that they would like to 'feel satisfied' with their steakhouse experience as a whole.

> "Going to a steakhouse like Nusret, for example, is like doing something I normally don't. I eat good meat at many places but, you know, steakhouse is more different. You have good scenery, good service, good ambience etc. there. I go there to have them like a package, all in one. We buy the whole experience, that's why I think I feel more satisfied at the end." (C. V.)

> "It [steakhouse] is a way to get together with people, but we choose it mainly because it offers a special feeling, and upper-class experience except for the food." (D. G.)

To the interviewees, their experience of steakhouse seems to be a multi-faceted experience including 'feeling satisfied' with the preparation, cooking, serving, and tasting steps as well. Visuality of the food, aesthetic décor, background music, having beautiful scenery, and feeling 'western' complement the experience for these people. They need to feel satisfied with every one of them to the extent that it is possible since these make them feel that they savor the food more in depth this way.

As can be understood, these complementary 'side dishes' seems to have a tertiary level function because they are associated with a higher-capital experience; thus, it becomes a higher priority to reach them instead of eating (primarily) and socializing (secondarily) in order to attain prestige and capital-increase.

> "Extremely expensive but still you go there to say that you've been there. You eat only one dish there such as steak but you pass over the dessert; you retrench the amount you'll pay by skipping other options. After all, most of the money you pay already goes to its prestige. It's like buying an Adidas t-shirt; you pay mostly for the brand name." (E. K3.)

That's also why 28 interviewees mentioned that if they go not only to eat something but also to enjoy and have some quality time; taste may have a secondary importance after the top priorities of the popularity, elegance, and eliteness of the restaurant.

> "There are also some times I go there [steakhouses] as they are popular and elite even though I don't like the food there that much." (D. G.)

> "Meatball, burger etc. are already something I can find more easily. It is required that they offer a place with an ambience which can make us feel that eating meat is not an ordinary but an elite thing." (Ö. B.)

As is evident, neither meat itself nor its taste plays a primary role in people's motivations of preferring steakhouses. Popularity, eliteness of steakhouses, and the opportunity of feeling special at steakhouses seem to be the things that draw people there primarily.

> "Yes I went. For example, I went to such popular ones like, you know, Nusret, Günaydın. I didn't die for the meat but I might go there again as they are popular, to say that 'I am at Nusret'. Going there is like an additional value, a different feeling." (İ. B.)

> "More and more people who say 'I was also there newly' are going to steakhouses as they are popular, to show off others through steakhouses." (E. K1.)

All these findings which are lastly exemplified with 'feeling as if', point out to an exercise of specific identity performance; Bourdieu (1998) calls it "illusio". It is like the frequently-referred concept of deception but a deception with awareness, so it is not a complete deception or illusion. For this reason, this kind of an identity performance can also be called as a lived experience from a phenomenological perspective because a lived experience focuses on subjective perceptions about and interpretations of objective phenomena or events. In other words, consumers here perform such an identity by knowing that it is not 'real' per se, but what they pay attention to is not whether it is real or not. Through such a performance, consumers focus on the representations of their past or any probable future steakhouse

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experience and what they think they will attain from this experience rather than the reality or nature of the experience itself. To resemble it a game, people prefer to play it if they believe in it, if they are convinced of the yields to be acquired at the end. The act of joining the game, becoming wholly absorbed in it, believing in the award at the end, and believing it is worth playing is described as "illusio", or a lived experience with the focus on the subjective interpretations. Hence, whether intentionally or not, people try to adopt and imitate the characteristics of the habitus of higher classes. "Mundus vult decipi, ergo decipiatur"[5] (The world wants to be deceived, so let it be deceived); thanks to this anonymous quote, it gets easier to have a deeper idea on the 'illusion' mechanism of culture industry.

Bourdieu (1984) argues that bourgeoisie is not known for the richness of its people, but for their practices; and in short, all cultural experiences and choices are expressions of one's habitus. In that vein, interviewees frequently referred to going to steakhouses as an 'experience' in their answers; and through these 'experiences', they can practice this global concept and some parts of higher-SES capabilities even for a very short period of time. These do prove that clear-cut presumed boundaries among SES strata are actually fluid to be played with by lower strata, and such positioning is not something given once-and-for-all, but it is a dynamic process. Moreover, practicing the experiences of higher-SES seems to be a widely-exercised activity so as to increase already available capitals of the lower-SES 'beholders'. Nevertheless, these are still not enough to move upwards to higher-SES permanently because it is not sufficient to reach and experience high-SES practices; it is required to maintain them after reaching them. As the data suggests, as long as people can

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[5] For the origin of this quote, there are many different attributions; thus, it is considered anonymous.

rarely afford dining-out at steakhouses for only special occasions etc., and as long as they go back to their routine lives and habits which do not include upper-class activities such as dining-out at steakhouses, they cannot be upper-class permanently like the ones they aspire to be and feel.

Actually, it is an intentional strategy according to Adorno (1991), he argues that the fundamental law of culture industry is to make sure that consumers will not reach what they desire fully, and try to satisfy it incessantly with an eternal feeling of deprivation. Presenting people with something and preventing them from having it at the same time are the same just like the use of erotic scenes and connotations in, for example, ice-cream commercials; consumers are expected to buy that product with a belief to feel that much satisfaction implied. However, the promised pleasure is constantly delayed. One crucial principle of culture industry is to show that all consumer needs can be met by itself while adjusting these needs in a way to ensure that consumers will remain as consumers and loyal 'objects' of culture industry, which guarantees continuous consumption. Interestingly, many consumers seem to be aware of that, which is understood by their many claims including that they can feel only 'as if'. As Adorno (1991) argues, consciousness has now been replaced with conformance. This can be best exemplified by an analogy; most people are like fish whose only option is to be aware of the streams they swim through but cannot (or do not prefer to) live outside the system surrounding them.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

Through the data collected from 40 interviews, this thesis has sought answers to the following questions: "How are steakhouse concepts related to cosmopolitan meat consumption?", "How is the food, particularly meat, served at steakhouses regarded?", "What do the steakhouses provide other than serving food?", and "What are the similarities or differences between the impressions of those who have been to steakhouses and those who have not?"

In the search of answers, this thesis studied the relation of dining-out at steakhouse restaurants and eating as a value-laden tertiary activity from a culture analytic viewpoint. While observing the primary and secondary functions of eating which the existing literature already confirms, restaurants also have a social and cultural function in urban Turkish context. Accordingly, eating at steakhouses has been observed to be more commonly practiced as a cosmopolitan cultural phenomenon, i.e. a tertiary activity. At the intersection of globalization, culture, and cosmopolitanization, this tertiary activity includes such socioeconomic and cultural associations as high-SES experience, popularity, and western perception.

The study has focused on the place of culinary consumption in consumers' daily lives, and their perceptions about steakhouses. It has shown that these associations are mainly about the following three themes: i) expertise of steakhouse restaurants regarding their cooking, service, and personnel, ii) their western-connoting image regarding the ambience, décor, the food, and the profile of their clientele, and iii) socioeconomic status associations regarding consumers, location,

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and the food served there. These associations are interrelated; the expert image brings along the image of western, and they both are associated with high-SES standards. Common perception shows that such perceptions are reflected in décor, location, food served, advertisements, and clientele of steakhouses; and thus, they contribute to such positive associations as popularity and eliteness steakhouses are positioned to symbolize by culture industry. This set of positive associations functions as a symbolic capital for steakhouses which they sell apart from food; in return, consumers try to reach and experience that alluring symbolic capital in order to experience high-class practice. It has been understood that consumers are highly tend to see steakhouses as representations of aforementioned associations, thus a tool to increase their social, cultural, and symbolic capitals. Apparently, as the answers indicate, consumers tend to go to steakhouses as a performance of a particular high-class, high-capital identity they want to construct in their habitus.

In the end, it also argues that steakhouse is a metrosocial and glocal phenomenon of popular culture as it brings at least two cultures together (global western and local Turkish) and transforms common culinary and social practices regarding the consumption of food. Steakhouses are ideological and strategic instruments of culture industry in a broader context of cosmopolitanism, globalisation, and capitalism. They sell perceptions representing better life standards and high-level capitals. Theories here have supported the data by arguing that neoliberal enterprise culture born out of capitalism made consumers to feel the need to exceed themselves. Culture industry intentionally schematizes experience, and functions by providing opportunities for consumers to buy and enjoy the cultural item of steakhouse. In this context of culture industry, the ultimate aim is to create 'illusio'nary psychological needs which could be satisfied through the products

of capitalism in a way of constant consumerism. It has brought consumption to such a point that "we drifted from having a market economy to being a market society" (Sandel, 2012, p. 10).

It has also been understood that such a perception described above and promoted by culture industry has been 'talked into being' through the conversations of their producers, consumers, and any other third parties. In other words, this steakhouse image we have seen is incessantly reproduced in popular discourse. This makes it a reflexive process because, as observed, steakhouses are direct objects of cultural consumption but at the same time, they are also something people are enculturated into as a result of their consumption. Eventually, food perceptions and practices are reflections of consumers' capitals and habituses, and these perceptions and practices can be observed in the narratives of consumers.

There is a limitation to this study about methodology. In the initial design of this study, I also aimed to include the steakhouse owner or manager responses, and through an ethnographic study, in-act consumer responses regarding their motivations, and perceptions. Nonetheless, an ethnographic observation would have required a focus group of steakhouses, which requires a demanding timetable for each steakhouse brand, and for each branch and concept in addition to many other factors. Hence, these were not included in the scope of this study. The second limitation was about having official permissions from the brands. Although I tried to have the necessary permissions to be able to carry out the methodology planned in the first design, the legal departments of the steakhouse brands either did not respond positively or did not respond at all.

Therefore, for further research, interviews with in-act consumers, steakhouse owners and branch-managers regarding their motives, and perceptions can be additionally carried out to compare the findings with those of this study. Furthermore, the focus group of this study consists of the local urban residents in Istanbul; hence, foreign visitors in Istanbul who have visited steakhouses and the people who live in the foreign countries where Turkish steakhouse brands have branches can also be targeted with the same purpose of having an insight into their perceptions and reactions. As the data deepens, more tendencies, perceptions, and performances can be reached allowing for wider generalizations.

APPENDIX A

APPROVAL OF BOĞAZİÇİ UNIVERSITY-INAREK/SBB ETHICS

SUB-COMMITTEE (SOBETIK)

T.C.
BOĞAZİÇİ ÜNİVERSİTESİ
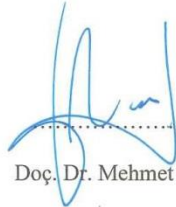**İnsan Araştırmaları Kurumsal Değerlendirme Alt Kurulu**
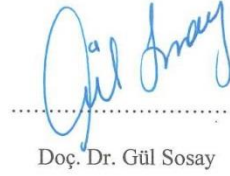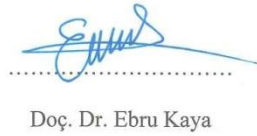
Sayı :

16 Mayıs 2018 — Sayı: 24

Erdem Akgün
Batı Dilleri ve Edebiyatı

Sayın Araştırmacı,

"The Cosmopolitanization of Culinary "Consumption": Steakhouses as Instances of Culture Industry" başlıklı projeniz ile ilgili olarak yaptığınız SBB-EAK 2017/75 sayılı başvuru İNAREK/SBB Etik Alt Kurulu tarafından 16 Mayıs 2018 tarihli toplantıda incelenmiş ve uygun bulunmuştur.

....
Doç. Dr. Mehmet Yiğit Gürdal

....
Doç. Dr. Gül Sosay

....
Doç. Dr. Ebru Kaya

....
Dr. Öğr. Üyesi İnci Ayhan

....
Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Bengü Börkan

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SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Do you dine out?

2. a. If yes, how often and in what kind of places?

   b. If no, is there any specific reason for that?

3. Do you think that eating at home and dining-out are different? If yes, in what respects?

4. What does dining-out mean to you, what kind of an activity is that do you think?

5. What do you expect from a place which is a restaurant?

6. What kinds of associations come to your mind when you hear the word 'steakhouse'? What do you think makes a restaurant have a steakhouse concept?

7. Have you ever been to a steakhouse?

8. If yes, which steakhouses and which branches specifically?

9. a. To the ones who have been to one, what did you eat there?

   b. To the ones who have not been to, what would you like to eat if you happen to go there?

10. a. To the ones who have already been to, would you like to go to a steakhouse again?

   b. To the ones who have not been to one yet, would you like to go to a steakhouse? Is there any specific steakhouse you would like to try?

11. a. If yes to the former question: If you want to go again, which steakhouse and which   branch - if any - specifically?

   b. If no to the former question: If you do not want to go to a steakhouse again, why?

12. There are different concept restaurants of steakhouse brands at various places such as burger, or meatball/gyro; what do you think about them?

13. a. To the ones who have been to a steakhouse, can you describe how your experience was?

   b. What kind of an experience do you think it would be if you go there?

14. What draws you to a steakhouse, what are they if any?

15. There are various advertisements of steakhouses on various platforms such as printed media and social media. Is there anything that has caught your attention or you find interesting and noteworthy to mention, can you remember any such details thereabout?

16. Do you think that all steakhouses are the same or different? Why, and in what ways?

APPENDIX C

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

(TURKISH)

1. Dışarıda yemek yiyor musunuz?

2. a. (Evet ise) Ne sıklıkta ve ne tür yerlerde?

   b. (Hayır ise) Belirli bir sebebi var mı?

3. Sizce yemeği dışarıda ve evde yemek arasında bir fark var mıdır, varsa ne yönde bir fark olabilir bu?

4. Dışarıda yemek yemeyi nasıl bir aktivite olarak görüyorsunuz?

5. Bir restorandan mekan olarak beklentileriniz nelerdir?

6. Steakhouse kelimesi size ne çağrıştırıyor? Sizce bir restoranı Steakhouse konseptli yapan ne(ler)dir?

7. Daha önce herhangi bir steakhouse konseptli restorana gittiniz mi?

8. (Evet ise) Hangi restoran ve varsa hangi şubesi/leri?

9. a. (Gitmiş olana) Gittiğinizde ne yediniz?

   b. (Henüz gitmemiş olana) Gittiğinizde ne yemek isterdiniz?

10. a. (Gitmiş olana) Yeniden gitmek ister miydiniz, neden?

    b. (Henüz gitmemiş olana) Gitmek ister miydiniz, neden? Gitmek istediğiniz belirli bir steakhouse var mı?

11. a. (Evet ise) Hangi steakhouse restoranına ve varsa hangi şubesine gitmek isterdiniz, neden?

    b. (Hayır ise) Neden?"

12. Steakhouse restoranlarının farklı mekanlarda farklı konseptleri var, burger veya köfte/döner ağırlıklı, bunlar hakkında ne düşünüyorsunuz?

13. a. (Gitmiş olana) Gittiğinizde nasıl bir deneyim yaşadınız?

    b. (Henüz gitmemiş olana) Bu steakhouse'lardan birine giderseniz nasıl bir deneyim olacağını bekliyorsunuz?

14. Sizi oraya çeken/çekebilecek şeyler var mı, varsa nelerdir?

15. Steakhouse'lara dair yazılı ve sosyal medya gibi farklı ortamlarda reklamlar var, bu reklamlarda dikkatinizi çeken veya öncekilerden hatırladığınız ögeler var mı? Varsa bu reklamlarda ilk dikkatinizi çeken veya aklınızda kalan şeyler nelerdir?

16. Sizce tüm Steakhouse konseptli restoranlar benzer midir, farklı mı? Neden ve açılardan?

The functions of the questions are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Perception-eliciting and Experience-eliciting Questions by Number

	PERCEPTION-ELICITING*	EXPERIENCE-ELICITING**
QUESTIONS #	2b, 3, 4, 5, 6, 10a, 10b, 11a, 11b, 12, 14, 15, 16	1, 2a, 7, 8, 9a, 9b, 13a
* related questions asked for both groups who have been to steakhouses and who have been not ** related questions asked for only the group who have been to steakhouses		

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