

PATTERNS OF EATING OUT IN CONTEMPORARY BEYOĞLU:
A NEW MIDDLE CLASS-ORIENTED APPROACH

SEZEN BAYRAK

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Sezen Bayrak

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"Patterns of Eating Out in Contemporary Beyoğlu: A New Middle Class-Oriented Approach," a thesis prepared by Sezen Bayrak in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Arts Degree from the Atatürk Institute for Modern Turkish History of Boğaziçi University.

This paper has been approved on 01 July 2011 by:

Prof. Dr. Zafer Toprak
(Thesis Advisor)

Assoc. Prof. Asım Karaömerlioğlu

Assoc. Prof. Nadir Özbek

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Title: Patterns of Eating Out in Contemporary Beyoğlu: A New Middle Class-Oriented Approach

This thesis explores the relationship of class and food consumption in contemporary urban life of Turkey within the frame of the new middle class and eating-out concepts. Focusing on certain restaurants, which have been analyzed as markers of social and cultural trends, in the historical and cosmopolitan district of Beyoğlu a qualitative research has been held instrumentalizing semi-structured in-depth interviews and participant observations as well as an internet-based survey of mainstream newspapers. This study shows how cultural capital manifests itself in displaying tastes and consumption practices and how food and eating out are significant parts of life style consumption contributing to within class differentiations. In the neoliberal restructuring process of Turkey after 1980 military coup, a new middle class or a professional class has gained the leading role in shaping the patterns of consumption by 2000s and it has been seen that the urban space is reshaped according to their needs and values. Differing from 1990s, it has been observed that cultural omnivorousness has replaced snobbery especially in food consumption and this has led to generating new forms of distinction.

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Başlık: Günümüz Beyoğlu'sunda Dışarda Yeme Alışkanlıkları: Yeni Orta Sınıf Yönelimli Yaklaşım

Bu tez günümüz kent yaşamında sınıf ve yemek tüketimi ilişkilerini yeni orta sınıf ve dışarıda yeme kavramları çerçevesinde incelemektedir. Tarihi ve kozmopolit Beyoğlu bölgesindeki, toplumsal ve kültürel trendlerin göstergeleri olarak analiz edilen belirli restoranlara odaklanarak, yarı-yapılandırılmış derinlemesine mülakatlar ve katılımcı gözlem metotlarının yanında anaakım gazetelerin internet bazlı araştırması kullanılarak kalitatif bir araştırma yapılmıştır. Bu çalışma kültürel sermayenin beğeni ve tüketim pratiklerinin sergilenmesinde nasıl zuhur ettiğini ve bunların yaşam tarzı tüketiminde sınıf içi farklılaşmalara nasıl katkıda bulunduğunu göstermektedir. 1980 askeri darbesinden sonar Türkiye'nin neoliberal yeniden yapılanması sürecinde, yeni orta sınıf ya da profesyonel sınıf 2000lerle birlikte tüketim örüntülerinin şekillenmesinde lider rolünü üstlenmiş ve kentsel mekânın bu sınıfın ihtiyaç ve değerleri doğrultusunda yeniden şekillendiği görülmüştür. 1990lardan farklı olarak, kültürel omnivorluğun özellikle yemek tüketiminde snopluğun yerini aldığı ve bunun yeni ayrışım formlarının ortaya çıkmasına yol açtığı gözlemlenmiştir.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

With a sociological concern about food as a consumption pattern, this thesis examines the relationship of class and food consumption in contemporary urban life in Turkey. In the realm of food consumption, the case of “eating-out” (in restaurants) will be the specific object of analysis. The study will involve the eating patterns and restaurants in Beyoğlu district of Istanbul, based on a similar approach Manuel Castell writes, “urban organization is not, a simple arrangement of spatial forms, but rather these forms are the expression of the processes of collective treatment of the daily consumption patterns of households.”¹

Hence, focusing on the restaurants is crucial in the sense that they have become important symbols of postmodern life itself, and they play an important role in social and cultural life that is perhaps revealing of deeper social trends.² Especially concerning eating patterns, Beyoğlu is the place where the oldest and the newest, the cheapest and the most expensive restaurants, ethnic cuisines, fusion cuisines and world cuisines, foreign coffee chains and local sweetshop chains, all coexist.

Although not much statistical research on dining-out and food consumption in the restaurant is available, in order to show the increasing significance of the subject of eating-out some data will be provided. The household budget survey held by

¹ Manuel Castells, *City, Class and Power* (St Martin’s Press: NY 1978), p.16.

² David Beriss and David Sutton, “Restaurants, Ideal Postmodern Institutions” in *The Restaurant’s Book: Ethnographies of Where We Eat* (New York: Berg, 2007), pp.1-3.

the Turkish Statistical Institute between 2002 and 2009 provides a relevant data on the consumption expenditures in Turkey.³ According to the results of the survey, expenditures on restaurants and hotels in 2009 constitute 5.5% of the total expenditures of urban households. As we look at the results ordered by income, it is seen that expenditures on restaurants and hotels increase significantly in direct proportion to the increase in income. On the other hand, the results arranged according to the types of main sources of income show that households depending on wages and salaries spend reasonably more amounts on restaurants and hotels than households with other types of main source of income, such as entrepreneurship income, rent, interest or dividends, income from retirement or other transfer incomes. In 2009, households depending on wages and salaries spent 6.9 % of their total expenditures, which is higher than all households depending on other sources of incomes varying from 2.5 to 3.5 points.

As Belasco writes, “the connection between identity and consumption gives food a central role in the creation of community, and we use our diet to convey images of public identity.”⁴ Thus, I will analyze how food consumption plays a role in contributing to the formation of a class identity in the contemporary urban life in Turkey, and in what ways class differentiation and distinctions are manifested. However, doing this analysis, I will contextualize it within the framework of Lash and Urry’s account of the “disorganized capitalism” as opposed to the accounts conceptualized as post-fordist regime of accumulation, information age or the post-industrial society.

³ Available from World Wide Web:
http://www.turkstat.gov.tr/VeriBilgi.do?tb_id=22&ust_id=7

⁴ Warren Belasco, *Food Nations Selling Taste in Consumer Society* (New York: Routledge 2002), p.2.

Parallel to Lash and Urry, I argue that the emergence and strengthening of a service class or a so-called new middle class, as a character of the disorganized capitalism's context, is central in the transformation of the social space and the patterns of consumption in urban life. Plus, eating out, in the context of Turkey is shaped not only according to the needs and demands of this class, but also serves as a mechanism contributing to the definition and redefinition of class roles and social status. In addition, although many people account that the increase in the levels of income and wealth in Turkish society has led to a democratization in consumption patterns in economic terms. I argue that as the accumulation of wealth has increased in society, cultural capital, in a Bourdieuan understanding, has become more crucial in order to create distinctions between and within economic classes, as patterns of consumption become ever more complicated and economic capital is no longer an adequate condition, but only a prerequisite. Cultural capital has become central in the formation of the upper class identity, and signs and visual images are the objects of consumption which contribute to this identity.

Methodology

This thesis makes use of a qualitative research technique. Semi-structured in-depth interviews with the owners and managers of important restaurants, chefs and gourmets who have the leading roles in directing these consumption patterns of eating-out were conducted. Interviews also were conducted with consumers who are mostly foodies. Participant observations were made in the restaurants, and an internet-based survey was made of news in the mainstream newspapers of Hürriyet, Milliyet, Sabah and Radikal, on food consumption and restaurants, and food and lifestyle writing dating back to the beginning the 2000s. Interviews with twenty

people were conducted in sessions varying from 40 to 90 minutes in length. Interviewees were chosen randomly and with snowball technique, especially the consumer side. All the interviewees on the consumer side were working in the service sector, in middle or upper rank managerial positions. All of the interviews except one were conducted in the workplaces of the interviewees. For the service provider side, this workplace was the related restaurant itself.

The Outline of the Thesis

In the theoretical and conceptual framework chapter Veblen's analysis of *The Theory of the Leisure Class* will be provided as a starting point. After discussing the relevance of Veblen to understand contemporary patterns of consumption, Bourdieu's conceptualization of cultural capital, which is the one of the most important contributions to the consumption sociology literature, will be subjected to further analysis. Following Bourdieu, the study will be contextualized within the new economic order drawing on Lash and Urry's analysis of "disorganized capitalism." The significance of Lash and Urry's work is their emphasis on the rising new middle class, or the service class, which will be the object of a further analysis in order to understand its specificities. Omnivorousness, as a concept deserving a closer examination, will be examined and discussed in terms of the debates on democracy and distinction. Authenticity and the command of knowledge will be discussed within the framework of cultural omnivorousness.

In the historical background chapter, the restructuring of the Turkish economy after the 1980 military coup and the rise of the consumer culture as well as a brief history of Beyoğlu will be given with specific references to the times in which

the district was populated by religious minorities, White Russians, functioned as a business center and was the home of cultural centers.

In the fourth chapter, the concern of the new middle class for pleasure and experience and how these concerns have produced and reproduced different kinds of spaces as museumized and “quotational” spaces, will be explored. Furthermore, the significance of cultural capital which contests the dominance of economic capital will be accentuated, as well as looking more closely to new distinction mechanisms of knowledge and cultural omnivorousness. Finally, how the understanding of eating out transformed in time in Turkey, from the perception as waste to taste and how the new middle classes’ relation to their bodies makes them exhibit a desire for the natural, healthy and organic will be examined.

CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Veblen and the Theory of the Leisure Class

One of the most valuable and inspiring works on consumption is *The Theory of Leisure Class* by Thorstein Veblen, first published in 1899. In this book, Veblen introduced some concepts such as *the leisure class*, *conspicuous consumption* and *pecuniary emulation*, all of which contributed highly to the literature on the criticism of consumption. In the beginning of his book, Veblen explains that the “leisure class is found in its best development at the higher stages of the barbarian culture, in which the distinction between classes is very rigorously observed, and the most striking differences between classes is seen in the employments proper to several classes.”⁵ According to Veblen, what differentiates the upper classes in such societies was that they were not engaged in any industrial occupations. Thus, employment patterns constitute a form of social hierarchy and being exempt from industrial work gives a class the highest position in the social order and reputability.

The leisure class is engaged in non-productive activities, and the more time they spend on such activities the more they institutionalize their status in the society. In other words, as Slater writes “status is measured by one’s distance or exemption

⁵ Thorstein Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class* (New York: New American Library, 1853), p.21.

from mundane, productive labor; consequently, the manner of consuming time and goods must demonstrate that distance.”⁶ Thus, *conspicuous leisure* and *conspicuous consumption* characterize the life of the leisure class. To Veblen, to the gentleman of leisure, the minimum required for subsistence and physical efficiency is never adequate, and the conspicuous consumption of valuable goods is a means of reputability.⁷

Veblen suggests that the conspicuous leisure and consumption executed by this class of people served the same end, that is, acquiring reputability; so long as the community is small and compact enough. However, he writes, “when the differentiation has gone farther and it becomes necessary to reach a wider human environment, consumption begins to hold over leisure as an ordinary means of decency,”⁸ although “leisure used to hold the first place at the start.”⁹

Furthermore, Veblen alleges that “the serviceability of consumption as a means of repute, as well as the insistence on it as an element of decency, is at its best in those portions of the community where the human contact of the individual is widest and the mobility of the population is greatest.”¹⁰ Hence, based on Veblen’s perspective, it could be said that in the larger, especially urban, societies of today, where the number of interactions of one person with others has reached its peak, consumption takes the upper hand over leisure and has become a more suitable tool for time in order to provide reputability and establish status. Therefore, as the

⁶ Don Slater, *Consumer Culture and Modernity* (UK: Polity Press, 1997), p.154.

⁷ Veblen, pp.64-65.

⁸ Ibid., p.71.

⁹ Ibid., p.74.

¹⁰ Ibid., p.72.

accumulation of capital and the level of income in a society increases, patterns of consumption become more determining in manifesting class positions.

Additionally, Veblen, making a significant point, also asserts that “as wealth accumulates, the leisure class develops further in function and structure, and there arises a differentiation within the class.”¹¹ Thus, the positions within the classes are not static, but subject to a constant redefinition. Moreover, he emphasizes that not only the positions within the classes, but also the positions of the classes vis-à-vis the others are demarcated vaguely. Veblen also speaks of the existence of a *vicarious leisure class*. Members of this class are the servants of the proper leisure class. The leisure of this class is derivative and contributes to the status of their masters’ in society. “The leisure of the servant is not his own leisure. So far as he is a servant in the full sense, and not at the same time a member of a lower order of the leisure class proper, his leisure normally passes under the guise of specialized service directed to the furtherance of his master’s fullness of life.”¹²

What Veblen says is that “The leisure class stands at the head of the social structure in point of reputability; and its manner of life and its standards of worth therefore afford the norm of reputability for the community. The observance of these standards, in some degree of approximation, becomes incumbent upon all classes lower in the scale.”¹³ In other words, the lower classes in the community attempt to keep up with these standards of worth set by the upper classes. This is called *pecuniary emulation* in Veblen’s work. This act of pecuniary emulation allows the lower classes to enjoy the fact that in a sense, they live similarly to the leisure class,

¹¹ Ibid., p.65.

¹² Ibid., p.56.

¹³ Ibid., p.70.

and the degree of approximation to the way the leisure class lives provides status and reputability to the lower classes. Veblen's conceptualization of *pecuniary emulation* makes a significant contribution to our understanding of contemporary patterns of consumption. However, his conceptualization implies a unidirectional imitation, in which only the lower classes emulate the tastes of the upper classes. The literature on *cultural omnivorousness*, on the other hand, which will be further examined in this chapter, necessarily contradicting Veblen's account, seems to be more valid for this contemporary analysis.

It would not be wrong to claim that Veblen assigned a higher position to the upper classes in setting the standards and norms of social life. However, as the form of capitalism changed, new classes emerged, as well as new standards.

Veblen's analysis is focused mostly on pecuniary conditions and material resources. What he omitted in his conceptualization of conspicuous consumption was an analysis distinguishing between the economic, social and cultural patterns of consumption. In that sense, Pierre Bourdieu filled the gap by differentiating between the economic, social and cultural forms of capital.

Cultural Capital and the Legacy of Bourdieu

The French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu developed the concept of cultural capital in order to address a problem that was expressed by him as, "it is impossible to account for the structure and functioning of the social world unless one reintroduces capital in all its forms and not solely in the one form recognized by

economic theory.”¹⁴ Therefore, he defines three different types of capital instead of an explanation, merely based on economic capital as follows:

Capital can present itself in three fundamental guises: as *economic capital*, which is immediately and directly convertible into money and may be institutionalized in the form of property rights; as *cultural capital*, which is convertible, on certain conditions, into economic capital and may be institutionalized in the form of educational qualifications; and as *social capital*, made up of social obligations (“connections”), which is convertible, in certain conditions, into economic capital and may be institutionalized in the form of a title of nobility.¹⁵

Thus, Bourdieu constructed a vertical and horizontal dimensional analysis of class.

The vertical dimension “runs from those who are best provided with both economic and cultural capital to those who are most deprived in both respects.”¹⁶ On the other

hand, the horizontal dimension concerns the distribution of the two forms of capital.

The segments of the classes differentiated from each other with the composition of

cultural and economic capital. In other words; “the complex interplay between

economic and cultural capital, gives rise to the emergence of different social

groups.”¹⁷ Thus, Bourdieu’s approach that suggests the differentiation of

concentration of different amounts of the two forms of capital seems better to explain

Veblen’s point of within-class differentiation for contemporary society. However,

consumption holds its significance with respect to this within class differentiation in

the works of both theoreticians.

¹⁴ Pierre Bourdieu, “The Forms of Capital,” in *Readings in Economic Sociology*, ed. Nicole Woolsey Biggart (UK: Blackwell Publishing 2002), p.280.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 281.

¹⁶ Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press 1984), p.114.

¹⁷ Mike Savage, James Barlow, Peter Dickens and Tony Fielding, *Property, Bureaucracy and Culture: Middle-Class Formation in Contemporary Britain* (London: Routledge, 1992), p.100.

On the other hand, cultural capital which deserves a more comprehensive explanation, is further analyzed by Pierre Bourdieu in three distinct forms.

Cultural Capital can exist in three forms: in the embodied state, i.e., in the form of long lasting dispositions of the mind and body; in the objectified state, in the form of cultural goods (pictures, books, dictionaries, instruments, machines, etc.), which are the trace or realization of theories or critiques of these theories, problematics, etc.; and in the institutionalized state, a form of objectification which must be set apart because, as will be seen in the case of educational qualifications, it confers entirely original properties on the cultural capital which it is presumed to guarantee.¹⁸

In contemporary societies cultural capital contests the dominance of economic capital through certain strategies of distinction.¹⁹ It can be claimed that cultural capital manifests itself as “cultivated dispositions” or taste, which mainly operate as a distinction mechanism. Michele Lamont comments that members of the “dominant class” share distinctive tastes and lifestyles that act as status markers and that these tastes are defined largely by cultivated dispositions and the ability to display an adequate command of high culture.²⁰ In this regard, consumption is instituted as an important field that cultural capital performs. Douglas Holt states that “although cultural capital is articulated in all social fields as an important status resource, it operates in consumption fields through a particular conversion into tastes and consumption practices.”²¹ Bourdieu, himself, summarizes all the discussions above in “Distinction” as follows:

¹⁸ Bourdieu, “The Forms of Capital”, p.282.

¹⁹ Diane Seymour, *The Social Construction of Taste in Culinary Taste: Consumer Behavior in the International Restaurant Sector*, edited by Donald Sloan.(UK: Elsevier Butterworth-Heinemann, 2004), p.5

²⁰ Michele Lamont, *Money, Morals, and Manners the Culture of the French and the American Upper-Middle Class* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), p.3

²¹ Douglas B. Holt, “Does Cultural Capital Structure American Consumption?” in *Readings in Economic Sociology*, edited by Nicole Woolsey Biggart (UK: Blackwell Publishing 2002), p.217

The dominant class constitutes a relatively autonomous space whose structure is defined by the distribution of economic and cultural capital among its members, each class fraction being characterized by a certain configuration of this distribution to which there corresponds a certain life-style, through the mediation of the habitus; that second, the distribution of these two types of capital among the fractions is symmetrically and inversely structured; and that third, the different inherited asset structures, together with social trajectory, command the habitus and the systematic choices it produces in all areas of practice, of which the choices commonly regarded as aesthetic are one dimension – then these structures should be found in the space of life-styles, i.e. In the different systems of properties in which the different systems of dispositions express themselves.”²²

Hence it is important to take Bourdieu’s contribution into consideration in the sense that his theoretical approach is highly useful in order to understand the differentiations between the segments of classes. Moreover, in an age in which the focus on consumption outshines the focus on production in class analysis, Bourdieu provides us with the necessary tools and concepts through differentiating between different forms of capital, to understand the contemporary class building and affiliating processes.

Speaking of the outshining of consumption, the new economic order that provided the ground for it deserves further attention. The conceptual framework for the contemporary economic order will be the focus of analysis in the following part.

From Organized to Disorganized Capitalism

What David Harvey termed as the shift from Fordism to a more flexible mode of accumulation in *The Condition of Post-Modernity*,²³ is subjected to a more detailed analysis by Scott Lash and John Urry. In *The End of Organized Capitalism*, Lash and Urry give an account of the transition from liberal capitalism to organized

²² Bourdieu, *Distinction*, p.260

²³ David Harvey, *Postmodernliğin Durumu* (İstanbul: Metis Yayınları 1990)

capitalism and through the breakdown of the latter in the 1970s, the emergence of a new stage called disorganized capitalism in the development of capitalism. Lash and Urry summarize their view of disorganized capitalism in the last part of the book as “the world of a ‘disorganized capitalism’ is one in which the "fixed, fast-frozen relations" of organized capitalist relations have been swept away. (...) All that is solid about organized capitalism, class, industry, cities, collectivity, nation-state, even the world, melts into air.”²⁴

Referring to fourteen points, a detailed comparison of the organized and disorganized capitalisms is made in the book. Organized capitalism, in Lash and Urry’s work, is characterized by the concentration and centralization of the industrial, banking and commercial capital; the growth of the separation of ownership from control; the growth of new sectors managerial scientific/technological intelligentsia; the growth of collective organizations in the labor market; the increasing inter-articulation between the state and the large monopolies; the expansion of empires and the overseas control of markets and production; changes in the politics and the state; ideological changes concerning the role of technical rationality; the concentration of industrial capitalist relations; the development of manufacturing industry as the dominant sector; the concentration of different industries within different regions; the growth of numbers employed in most plants; the growth and increased importance of large industrial cities; and a cultural-ideological configuration which can be termed ‘modernism.’²⁵

On the other hand; Lash and Urry pointed out that disorganized capitalism is characterized by the growth of a world market; the continued expansion of the

²⁴ Scott Lash and John Urry, *The End of Organized Capitalism* (UK: Blacwell Publishers 1987), pp. 312-3.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp.3-4.

number of white-collar worker and particularly of a distinctive service class; decline in the absolute and relative size of the core working class; decline in the importance and effectiveness of national-level collective bargaining procedures in the industrial relations; increasing independence of large monopolies from direct control and regulation by individual nation-states; the spread of capitalism into most Third World countries; decline of the salience and class character of political parties; increase in cultural fragmentation and pluralism; expansion in the number of nation-states implicated in capitalist production; decline in the absolute and relative numbers employed in manufacturing industry; new forms of spatial division of labor; decline in average plant size because of shifts in industrial structures; industrial cities begin to decline in size and their domination of regions; and the appearance and mass distribution of a cultural-ideological configuration of ‘postmodernism.’²⁶

Lash and Urry assessed that the move from Taylorism and Fordism to flexibilization is an integral part of the disorganization of contemporary capitalist societies. It is in particular a key component in the decentralization of contemporary industrial relations.²⁷

Therefore, Lash and Urry put special emphasis on the emergence and the role of the service class in disorganized capitalism. In *Economies of Signs and Space* they make it clear that to talk of services is to talk of information and symbols and of the increasing importance of both within many diverse kinds of post-industrial space. If the idea of Fordism summarizes the way people relate to space in the organized society, than the idea of service sector summarizes how people relate to the new

²⁶ Ibid., pp.5-7.

²⁷ Ibid., p.283.

space restructured by the global capitalism.²⁸ The main features of the service class for Lash and Urry are as follows:

1. It consists of those dominant positions or places within the social division of labor which does not principally involve the ownership of capital, land or buildings.
2. Those places are located within a set of interlocking social institutions that 'service' capital through meeting three functions: to conceptualize the labor process; to control the entry and exercise of labor-power within the workplace; and to orchestrate the non-household forms under which labor-power is produced and regulated.
3. Those places enjoy superior work and market situations: incumbents thus exercise authority within each institution; typically enjoy well defined 'careers' in which work and market situations improve side by side; and enjoy medium to high levels of trust and discretion often stemming from forms of professional control and closure.²⁹

Thus, the members of the service class do not own capital necessarily; however, they are related more closely to the capital owners than to the labor classes. The fact that they enjoy control over the labor classes enables the members of this class to differentiate themselves from the lower classes. Lash and Urry further analyze this class as follows:

4. Entry into such places is generally regulated by the differential possession of credentials, which are either organization-specific or general. Such credentials serve as the main demarcation between service class and 'deskilled white-collar workers', although changes occur in exactly where the demarcation is to be found.
5. The relative size, the power, and the composition (male/female, public/private) of the service class vary substantially, depending upon class conflicts between capital and labor; gender conflicts, particularly over attempts to professionalize/masculinize occupations; struggles to extend educational credentialism; attempts to 'professionalize' particular sets of work tasks: conflicts over the size, functions and organization of the state; sectoral changes in the national economy, and so on.

This service class, or new middle class, or the new professionals, have a central significance in order to understand the social organization of disorganized capitalism.

²⁸ Scott Lash and John Urry, *Economies of Signs and Space* (London: Sage Publications 1994), p. 222.

²⁹ Lash and Urry, *The End of Organized Capitalism*, p.162.

People belonging to this class, although it is also claimed that this is not a class with clear-cut boundaries but rather a gathering of a heterogenic social strata that shares a common feature of being vaguely positioned between the two poles of the basic conflict between capital and labor,³⁰ have been partly responsible for redrawing the boundaries of social division, political conflict and cultural experience.³¹ This new middle class of professionals has acquired the leading role in shaping the patterns of consumption. In disorganized capitalism, which is characterized by post-modernity, consumption increasingly has begun to be experienced through signs and images.³²

The New Middle Class and Its Specificities

Discussing a new middle class required an explanation of the old middle class, because the new middle class owes its newness to the existence of an older middle class. The traditional middle class is composed mainly of groups like farmers, craftsmen, trades people, civil servants, teachers and doctors. On the other hand, the rising global new middle class is composed of university graduates and relatively high waged, predominantly white collar and service sector workers (IT, banking, media etc.) workers.³³ This class is featured as the class that is achieved through education of the lower-middle class children.³⁴

Correspondingly, Ehrenreich portrays “the modern middle class as the descendant of an older gentry composed of independent farmers, small businessmen,

³⁰ Ali Şimşek, *Yeni Orta Sınıf* (İstanbul: L&M Yayınları, 2005) p.17.

³¹ Lash and Urry, *The End of Organized Capitalism*, p.195.

³² John Urry, *Consuming Places* (London: Routledge, 1995), p. 149.

³³ Şimşek, p.33.

³⁴ *Ibid*, p.18.

self-employed lawyers, doctors, and ministers.³⁵ She further stresses that education plays a significant role in ensuring that the people who belong to the middle class whose status do not depend on the ownership of capital and property, an economic and social status.³⁶ Pierre Bourdieu takes on a similar approach in emphasizing the centrality of education in the construction of cultural capital, and commented that “without entering into any detailed analysis, it must suffice to point out that academic qualifications are to cultural capital what money is to economic capital.”³⁷

Although he did not leave any detailed literature on the theorization of the middle class, Karl Marx also ascertained some features of these classes. In Marxian terms the middle class is the servant class which “lives not from capital but from revenue,”³⁸ and it is “a burden weighing heavily on the working class base and therefore increases the social security and power of the upper classes.”³⁹ Therefore he evaluated the middle classes as those that secured the position of the upper classes. Similarly, a certain amount of literature on the middle classes stated that although they do not own the means of production, the managers and professionals that are included in the white-collar sectors are the social groups that reproduce the relations of power and sovereignty understanding of the bourgeoisie because of their roles within the social division of labor.⁴⁰

³⁵ Barbara Ehrenreich, *Fear of Falling the Inner Life of the Middle Class* (New York: Pantheon, 1989), p.78.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p.12.

³⁷ David Chaney, *Lifestyles*, (London: Routledge, 1996), p.60.

³⁸ Karl Marx, *Grundrisse* (London: Penguin Books, 1973), p.401.

³⁹ Paul Walton, “Ideology and the Middle Class in Marx and Weber,” *Sociology* no: 5 (1971) pp. 389-394, p.392.

⁴⁰ Şimşek, p.15.

Furthermore, it is significant to remark that the new middle classes diverges both from the traditional middle classes and from the working classes in major terms. Rutz and Balkan accentuated that “the new middle class diverged from the core middle class, resembling a capitalist class more and more, while the core middle class, in turn, began to resemble the lower middle and upper working classes.”⁴¹ Mark Tomlinson proves this argument, at least in the realm of food consumption, with his study. In a survey with a sample of 7,265 households, Tomlinson provided data on social class, demographic composition, and income and food expenditure for one week and he applied discriminant analysis technique to see if any social groups could be identified by food consumption patterns.⁴² His results showed that:

The workers with authority are closer to the bourgeoisie, while the petite bourgeoisie are closer to the other workers. The petite bourgeoisie (which includes peasants) do appear to be closer to the workers, while the other sections of the middle class (authority) are more associated with the upper end of the social hierarchy, their scores are closer to the bourgeois scores on average.⁴³

In other words; it could be observed that the traditional middle classes experienced a proletarianization within the context of neo-liberalism. Likewise, Rutz and Balkan further stressed that “national middle classes are becoming more differentiated as a consequence of the new economy, new wealth and lifestyles that reflect the ideology of the global consumer culture and the significance of the emerging global new middle classes is that they represent a new historical phase of capitalist accumulation that differentiates them from the national upper middle classes of the past.”⁴⁴

⁴¹ Henry J. Rutz and Erol M. Balkan, *Reproducing Class: Education, Neoliberalism and the Rise of the New Middle Class in Istanbul* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2009), p.23.

⁴² Mark Tomlinson, “Do Distinct Class Preferences for Foods Exist? An Analysis of Class-based Tastes,” *British Food Journal*, 96 no. 7 (1994) pp. 11-17, p.12.

⁴³ Tomlinson, p.16.

⁴⁴ Rutz and Balkan, p.24.

Seymour writes that “the middle class habitus assumes the tone of conformity with the tastes of the dominant class to whose position they aspire and which enables them to distinguish themselves from the working class.”⁴⁵ In other words, the new middle classes are in an effort to distinguish themselves both from the core middle classes and the working classes mostly in terms of their tastes and lifestyle.

The shift from disorganized to organized capitalism (or from the fordist to post-fordist model of production, from modernity to post-modernity) led to a restructuring of the older types of identity construction. In the contemporary age, lifestyle and tastes are the new constructive elements of the individual’s identity. In this sense, what differentiates the new middle class from the traditional middle class is the emphasis on consumption rather than production within the definition of this middle class. Although consumption was central to the fordist era, which was the era of mass production and mass consumption, and although consumption performed as a mechanism of distinction, it took on the role of differentiation during the post-fordist era. In this context, the rise of the new middle classes and the growing significance attributed to the concepts of “taste” and “lifestyle” operated hand in hand.

Bourdieu states that the rise of the new middle classes based on the new service industries and white-collar jobs rather than more traditional professions transforms the social space of class relations. The new bourgeoisie or ‘the new taste-makers’ as Bourdieu called them, “reject the sobriety and abstinence of the old bourgeoisie ‘in favor of a hedonistic morality of consumption, based on credit, spending and enjoyment’ where people are judged ‘by their capacity for

⁴⁵ Diane Seymour, *The Social Construction of Taste in Culinary Taste: Consumer Behavior in the International Restaurant Sector*, edited by Donald Sloan (UK: Elsevier Butterworth-Heinemann, 2004), p.7.

consumption, their 'standard of living,' their lifestyle, as much as by their capacity for production."⁴⁶ Bourdieu further stresses that the new petit bourgeoisie who tend to work at the lower levels of the same industries, also invest in consumption and "the art of living", and have an approach to life based on "a morality of pleasure as duty" which values the "amusing, refined, stylish, artistic [and] imaginative."⁴⁷

The new middle classes attempt to assert their distinction not only by rejecting the values of working-class culture, but also by attempting to validate their tastes as legitimate tastes by rejecting the values of the old middle classes. However, the new petit bourgeoisie also are characterized by a far greater sense of anxiety than the new bourgeoisie: they seek to educate themselves in the art of lifestyle, but are never secure in the sense of having got things "right". These new classes aim to gain a sense of distinction through what Featherstone calls the "aestheticization of everyday life."⁴⁸ Featherstone further commented on the new middle classes saying that

The new middle classes (Burris, 1986), and in particular those sectors which Bourdieu (1984) has referred to as 'new cultural intermediaries', have a fascination for artists' and intellectuals' lifestyles and a general interest in the stylization of their lives. There is a lifestyle which focuses very much on identity, appearance, presentation of self, fashion design, decor; and considerable time and effort have to be expended in cultivating a sense of taste which is flexible, distinctive and capable of keeping abreast of the plethora of new styles, experiences and symbolic goods which consumer culture and the culture industries continue to generate.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ Bourdieu, *Distinction*, p.310.

⁴⁷ Bob Ashley, Joanne Hollows, Steve Jones and Ben Taylor, *Food and Cultural Studies* (NY: Routledge, 2004), p.67.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 68

⁴⁹ Mike Featherstone, *Consumer Culture and Post-Modernism*, (London: Sage, 2007), p.107.

Therefore, the middle classes became increasingly obsessed with their lifestyles and the stylish way of living, thus engaging in patterns of consumption continuously for the sake of differentiation. Featherstone also alleges that “rather than unreflexively adopting a lifestyle, through tradition or habit, the new heroes of consumer culture make lifestyle a life project and display their individuality and sense of style in the particularity of the assemblage of goods, clothes, practices, experiences, appearance and bodily dispositions they design together into a lifestyle.”⁵⁰

In this context, as discussed above, Lash and Urry comment that the idea of service sector summarizes how people relate to the new space restructured by global capitalism.⁵¹ The organization of the social space and the city has been led by these new middle classes and in accordance with their needs and “tastes.” David Bell emphasizes that the new middle classes, as we shall see, take on the crucial role of cultural intermediaries, identified by Bourdieu as the drivers of the system of distinction; “and the city is laid out before them, ripe for the tasting.”⁵² The way the middle classes relate to the city and the social space often is associated with the way tourists relate to places. MacCannell remarks that

The locus of sightseeing in the middle class is understandable in other than merely economic terms. It is the middle class that systematically scavenges the earth for new experiences to be woven into a collective, touristic version of other peoples and places. This effort of the international middle class to coordinate the differentiations of the world into a single ideology is intimately linked to its capacity to subordinate other peoples to its values, industry and future designs. The middle class is the most favored now

⁵⁰ Ibid., p.84.

⁵¹ Lash and Urry, *Economies of Signs and Space*, p. 222.

⁵² David Bell, “Taste and space: eating out in the city today” in *Culinary Taste: Consumer Behavior in the International Restaurant Sector*, edited by Donald Sloan (UK: Elsevier Butterworth-Heinemann, 2004), p.45.

because it has a transcendent consciousness. Tourism, I suggest, is an essential component of that consciousness.⁵³

Taking MacCannell's analysis of tourism for modern society one step further, Urry comments on the disorganized capitalism or the age of post-modernity as the end of tourism. In Urry's words,

If disorganized capitalism involves the predominance of culture, consumption, the global, the local and concern for the environment, then all these characterize contemporary travel and hospitality. Disorganized capitalism then seems to be the epoch in which, as tourism's specificity dissolves, so tourism comes to take over and organize much contemporary social and cultural experience. Disorganized capitalism then involves the 'end of tourism'. People are tourists most of the time whether they are literally mobile or only experience simulated mobility through the incredible fluidity of multiple signs and electronic images. The purchase of images has become extraordinarily widespread and means that the purchase and consumption of visual property is in no way confined to specific tourist practices.⁵⁴

Therefore, post-modern society restructured the way every individual relates to the space, and people became tourists in their own cities and environment, and every aspect of the city became aestheticized and constituted as an object of spectacle.

Gürbilek exemplified this situation through the transformation of Istanbul under the mayoralty of Bedrettin Dalan who was the mayor of Istanbul between 1984 and 1989. This was after the 1980 military coup which signified the end of the developmentalist economic policies in Turkey and marked the beginning of the era of post-fordism or disorganized capitalism. Gürbilek alleges that during the mayoralty of Dalan; he viewed, and therefore transformed, Istanbul as a space of display, and in addition, the inhabitants of the city began to view it as a space of spectacle.⁵⁵ During this transformation of both the city and its perception by the

⁵³ Dean MacCannell, *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class* (New York: Schocken Books, 1976), p.13.

⁵⁴ John Urry, *Consuming Places* (London: Routledge, 1995) p.148.

⁵⁵ Nurdan Gürbilek, *Vitrinde Yaşamak* (İstanbul: Metis, 1992), p.29.

people, what was expected from the inhabitants was to wait to be appreciated or to look to the city through the eyes of a tourist.⁵⁶

In her analysis, Gürbilek stresses that one of the major features of the 1980s was an increasing concern with the past, a process in which I claim that the touristification can be observed at its peak. In Gürbilek's terms, the past was an image that stimulated the present needs and fantasies, rather than a historical medium or atmosphere that emerged with its remoteness to today; therefore it can be consumed.⁵⁷ She evaluated that it was an understanding of freeing the images of their historical burden and making the past a mere quotation.⁵⁸ MacCannell contends that

The best indication of the final victory of modernity over other socio-cultural arrangements is not the disappearance of the non-modern world, but its artificial preservation and reconstruction in modern society. The separation of non-modern culture traits from their original contexts and their distribution as modern playthings are evident in the various social movements toward naturalism, so much a feature of modern societies: cults of folk music and medicine, adornment and behavior, peasant dress, Early American decor, efforts in short, to museumize the pre-modern.

Museumizing, the aesthetization of every aspect and authenticization, are all parts of the same process of the institutionalization of producing tourists out of contemporary individuals and altering the way the individual relates to space and life. Like many other big cities, Istanbul, especially the Beyoğlu district, has undergone a transformation consistent with this process, which indicated the organization of the social space constructed and reconstructed through the tools of aesthetization, authentication and museumizing, proper to the consumption of the middle classes. In that sense Mike Featherstone remarks that

⁵⁶ Ibid., p.30.

⁵⁷ Ibid., p.23.

⁵⁸ Ibid., p.24.

The process of gentrification is of interest because it not only points to the redevelopment of the cultural fabric of inner-city areas, it also provides a higher profile for groups within the new middle class who are in many guises the producers, carriers, consumers of lifestyles which entail the culturally sensitive 'stylization of life' and have developed dispositions which make them receptive to postmodern cultural goods and experiences.⁵⁹

Restaurants and patterns of eating out, which are the main objects of analysis of this thesis, are very crucial and central in this process. Taking Carol Counihan's statement that "food is a product and mirror of the organization of society on both the broadest and most intimate levels" Sherrie A. Inness writes that "the foods we eat or do not eat, who prepares them, and how they are served reveal a tremendous amount of information about how a society is structured; food is one of the most visible and omnipresent symbols of everything from class to race to age, and it provides a symbolic message of who we are and who we aspire to be."⁶⁰ However for the purpose of this thesis rather than the food, the restaurants and consumption patterns of food as a part of eating out will receive the focus. What Bell put forward is that "maps of restaurant locations tell us much more than stories of the land market or of happenstance: they reflect the territorialized taste cultures of interest groups with forms of power (especially cultural capital). Today, perhaps more than ever, the new middle class (or creative class) is at the heart of this process, in making and placing taste hierarchies."⁶¹ Food consumption practices can become a key way of making the dispositions of these new middle classes visible and operating as a means through which they practice distinction. These practices of food consumption are

⁵⁹ Mike Featherstone, *Consumer Culture and Post-Modernism*, (London: Sage, 2007), p.105.

⁶⁰ Sherrie A. Inness, *Cooking Lessons (The Politics of Gender and Food)*, edited by Sherrie A. Inness. (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield. 2001) , p. XII

⁶¹ David Bell, *Taste and Space: Eating Out in the City Today* in *Culinary Taste: Consumer Behavior in the International Restaurant Sector*, edited by Donald Sloan (UK: Elsevier Butterworth-Heinemann, 2004), pp.54-55

instrumentalized not only for distinction but also serve the constant search for the differentiation of the contemporary middle classes. As Lupton stresses, “the search for new taste sensations and eating experiences is considered a means of improving oneself, adding ‘value’ and a sense of excitement to life. (...) This is particularly the case for individuals who view food preparation and eating as aestheticized leisure activities rather than chores.”⁶²

According to Ashley, Bourdieu’s work makes it clear that in the patterns of food consumption class differences manifest themselves not only in directing what is eaten, but also in shaping dispositions towards food.⁶³ It is pointed out further that the new middle classes may innovate by searching out new exotic foodstuffs and transgressing the cultural boundaries of the edible and inedible. Lupton refers to this as, “a machismo of eating, an almost reverse food snobbery, in which the more repulsive the food, the more points are won for appearing astronomically brave and adventurous. In some ways, the ability to eat such foods represents the ultimate in self-control, demonstrating mastery over accepted norms and one’s own body in its very transgressive nature.”⁶⁴

Cultural Omnivorosity

Omnivorous as a word is defined in the Merriam-Webster dictionary, first, as feeding on both animal and vegetable substances and, second, as avidly taking in everything

⁶² Bob Ashley, Joanne Hollows, Steve Jones and Ben Taylor, *Food and Cultural Studies*, (NY: Routledge, 2004), p.68

⁶³ Ibid., p.69

⁶⁴ Ibid., p.69

as if devouring or consuming. The concept of cultural omnivore was first instrumentalized by Peterson in 1992 in order to deal with the anomaly that have occurred in the study that revealed the fact that upper class people with high social status, as opposed to the elite-models of cultural taste, were not reluctant to engage in activities that were in the realm of popular culture.⁶⁵ In this sense, this was evaluated as “developing a taste for everything.” Omnivorousness is considered, by Peterson and Simkus, as an aspect of the aesthetics of the elite status which is, “being redefined as the appreciation of all distinctive leisure activities and creative forms along with the appreciation of the classic fine arts.”⁶⁶ In this sense, in Peterson and Kern’s study in 1996, omnivorousness is perceived as a characteristic of the dominant class:

As highbrow snobbishness fits the needs of the earlier entrepreneurial upper-middle class, there also seems to be an elective affinity between today’s new business-administrative class and omnivorousness. But there is also a hint that it is a sign of greater tolerance and democratization: (...) it [omnivorousness] is antithetical to snobbishness, which is based fundamentally on rigid rules of exclusion. However, it is not ‘liking everything *indiscriminately*’, but ‘an *openness* to appreciating everything’.⁶⁷

To put it in other words, rather than adopting low-brow forms, omnivores seek to appreciate and critique them in the light of some knowledge of the genre.⁶⁸ Peterson and Kern also maintain that “omnivorous inclusion seems better adapted to an

⁶⁵ Tony Bennett, Mike Savage, Elizabeth Silva, Alan Warde, Modesto Gayo-Cal and David Wright, *Culture, Class, Distinction* (NY: Routledge, 2009), p.182

⁶⁶ Alan Warde, David Wright & Modesto Gayo-Cal, “Understanding Cultural Omnivorousness: Or, the Myth of the Cultural Omnivore”, *Cultural Sociology* (2007), 1; 143-164, p.145.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p.145.

⁶⁸ Alan Warde, Wendy Olsen & Lydia Martens “Consumption and the problem of variety: cultural omnivorousness, social distinction and dining out”, *Sociology*, 33(1) (1999), 105-27, p.107.

increasingly global world managed by those who make their way, in part, by showing respect for the cultural expressions of others, that omnivorousness is ‘better adapted’ to the late twentieth century, and that it has an elective affinity with a ‘new business and administrative class.’”⁶⁹ Therefore, resting on the previous studies, it would be appropriate to stress the strong relation between the rise of the new middle classes and the escalation of omnivorousness.

In another way, there is an intense emphasis on the democratic character of omnivorousness, which refers to the decline in snobbery as an exclusionary way of organization. Warde et al. express this type of argument, as a conclusion drawn by certain studies, by suggesting that class distinctions are waning rapidly, are comparatively harmless, and that “appreciation of a much wider variety of cultural genres –dubbed ‘omnivorousness’, is spreading, if somewhat unevenly, replacing snobbish attitudes with a comparatively benevolent and tolerant pluralism.”⁷⁰

One of the most significant theorists who wrote on the democratization and pluralistic character of the food and eating habits in contemporary society is Stephen Mennell. Mennell, from a developmentalist perspective, analyzes eating and taste in England and France from the middle ages to the present and has reached the conclusion that “underneath the many swirling cross-currents, the main trend has been towards diminishing contrasts and increasing varieties in food habits and culinary taste.”⁷¹ With his argument of “diminishing contrasts” and “increasing varieties”, Mennell denoted that the contrasts of the food and eating habits between different social groups or classes have weakened through out time. On the other

⁶⁹ Ibid., p.108.

⁷⁰ Ibid., p.107.

⁷¹ Stephen Mennell, *All Manners of Food* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1985), p.322.

hand, “increasing varieties” referred to the increase in the diversity of food and eating habits, and tastes, what Mennell called as the “culinary pluralism” in which there is no dominant culinary style.⁷² this approach is clarified by pointing out that “he does not argue that class differences have been eradicated but instead that hierarchies have ‘diminished but by no means disappeared’; nonetheless, by emphasizing historical change, he tends to downplay the idea that class differences in food consumption are still significant economic, social and cultural differences.”⁷³

Furthermore, Mennell attributes gastronomy a democratizing role, suggesting that since the nineteenth century by increasing the accessibility of the gastronomical standards for the public through being published, gastronomy has contributed to the democratization of taste.⁷⁴ Johnston and Baumann suspect the argument, since this idea of democratization seems to make it difficult to observe, “The persistence of status distinction and displays of cultural capital in gourmet culture.”⁷⁵ They further evaluated the situation as, “the broadening of the high-status culinary repertoire is part of a larger cultural trend” rather than as a sign for democratization.⁷⁶

On the contrary, Warde et al. further referred to a second type of argument on omnivorousness which suggests omnivorousness itself seems to be exclusionary, and a type of cultural symbolism, that displays a qualified cultural tolerance with a significant class basis. Johnston and Baumann assessed this more specifically by conveying that “the omnivorousness era appears to support a more inclusive and

⁷² Ashley et al., pp.63-64.

⁷³ Ibid., p.64.

⁷⁴ Mennell, pp.266-267.

⁷⁵ Jose´e Johnston and Shyon Baumann, “Democracy versus Distinction: A Study of Omnivorousness in Gourmet Food Writing,” *AJS* 113, no:1 (July 2007), pp. 165–204, p.169.

⁷⁶ Ibid., p.167.

democratic notion of what counts as good or prestigious culture, and to do away with the arbitrary and discriminatory standards of the traditional cultural hierarchy; however, omnivorousness seems to function as an alternative strategy to snobbery for generating status.”⁷⁷

In other words, they emphasized that it is not the fact that the omnivores are less eager to seek status, but the new discriminatory ways of acquiring status that are in operation. Resting on the large number of studies and theoreticians, it can be claimed that there is a general trend away from snobbish exclusion toward cultural eclecticism in high-status cultural groups, and high-status cultural consumption is “becoming increasingly diversified, inclusive, or omnivorous.”⁷⁸ Alan Warde perfectly articulates this situation as, “cultivated people distinguished themselves from others basically not by the exclusiveness of their taste but by its all-encompassing range.”⁷⁹

Omnivorousness had a transformative effect on contemporary food and eating patterns in the sense that with the rise of omnivorousness, not only a considerable number of new ethnic foods is incorporated in the menus of gourmet restaurants, but also the “comfort” foods of the working class are appropriated by the high-end cuisine.⁸⁰ Johnston and Baumann highlight this by illustrating the world’s only nine-star Michelin chef, who began making macaroni and cheese, clam chowder and chicken pot pie at his new restaurant in Manhattan. It is also emphasized that retro food and the food of the poor also have become objects of desire.

⁷⁷ Ibid., p.168.

⁷⁸ Ibid., p.167.

⁷⁹ J.Gronow and A.Warde (eds.) *Ordinary Consumption*, (London, Routledge, 2001), p.222.

⁸⁰ Johnston and Baumann, p.166.

Authenticization

The transformative effects of omnivorousness are examined by Johnston and Baumann with respect to two frames in action that are “authenticity” and “exoticism.” In order to be authentic the food may have either one or more of the four qualities, geographic specificity, simplicity, personal connections, and historicism. It is further asserted that this analysis contributes both to identify the specific discursive strategies that food writers use in order to socially construct authenticity, and to show that authenticity is employed to provide distinction without overt snobbery.⁸¹

The discursive strategies referred to above require further clarification. To begin with, geographic specificity refers to the emphasis on the food’s particular region or locality. Zukin expresses a similar view by stressing that as the distinctiveness of the original source is mobilized, consumers are attracted more and more.⁸² Simplicity, on the other hand, indicates food produced with non-industrial production techniques, on a small scale, handmade as well as the organic food. Personal connections refer to food associated with specific people in order to mark the artistry, and historicism hints at the stress on the historical tradition of a particular food. This is mostly related to the emergence of a “past” that is authenticized and becomes an object of consumption. These strategies of authenticity will be discussed further within the context of Beyoğlu.

⁸¹ Ibid., p.179.

⁸² Sharon Zukin, “Consuming Authenticity,” *Cultural Studies* 22, no: 5, 724-748, p.738.

Exoticism, as well as authenticity, is accentuated by Baumann and Johnstonby claiming that “the valuation of exoticism in food is part of a larger cultural valorization of exotic experiences.”⁸³ The unusualness and foreignness of the food, as well as exciting food that is the food that breaks the norms come out as the strategies of exoticizing. Sushi can be given as an example to food that breaks the norms, for many societies including Turkey. Johnston and Baumann recapitulate the discussion as, “when applied to food options as a whole, authenticity and exoticism are ways to valorize food that draw on deeper cultural values—the celebration of individuality, creativity, refinement, and professional expertise.”⁸⁴

At this point, it should be highlighted that authenticization is not used in exchange for authenticity, but its usage aims to stress the process of authenticization of things that are not inherently authentic. As Belasco asserts, “the idea of national cuisine is quite modern, even though the claim may seek to root itself in the assertions of tradition, cuisine, soul, terroir.”⁸⁵ He continues saying that “the various cuisines of authenticity, whether regional, ethnic, or national, have little organic relationship to indigenous culture or environment and derive mainly from a hodgepodge – or creolization – of alien dishes and myths.”⁸⁶

Sharon Zukin comments on authenticity as something fabricated based on the history of the area or the back story of the products, in order to be consumed.⁸⁷

Zukin deals with authenticity mostly in the realm of space rather than focusing

⁸³ Johnston and Baumann, p.188.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p.200.

⁸⁵ Warren Belasco, *Food Matters: Perspectives on an Emerging Field in Food Nation*, edited by Warren Belasco and Philip Scranton (New York: Routledge, 2002), p.12.

⁸⁶ Belasco, p.13

⁸⁷ Sharon Zukin, “Consuming Authenticity,” *Cultural Studies*, 22: 5, pp. 724-748, p.724.

directly on food. Being the middle class centered, she argues that diverse authenticities are endorsed by diverse spaces of consumption.⁸⁸ About this diversity, although it often seems to imply a plurality or a sense of inclusion, Zukin says that

Specific discourses, although they may aim at niche markets like gourmet foods, do not speak of divisive groupings by social class, income level, or race; they speak of tastes. But when we look closely at how a discourse of authenticity works in an urban setting _ a set of stores and restaurants on a shopping street, in a shopping center, or in the city as a whole _ we find that the consumption practices it caters to often produce exclusion.⁸⁹

Authenticization operates in a way that it enables the middle class to consume anything and everything, but still produce distinctions while talking about democracy and pluralism. Zukin claims that “an aesthetic appreciation of traditional ethnic products blend with the nostalgia for ‘authentic’ neighborhoods- traditional social spaces outside the standardized realm of mass consumption.”⁹⁰ Thus, anything ethnic, regional, local, or even working class can become an object of consumption for the middle classes after being exposed to the process of aesthetization and authenticization.

In the omnivorous era ,the rising new middle classes are enabled to “re-fashion and re-tool themselves through the use and association with tastes that were once associated with the working class and therefore the new middle classes taste for ‘trashy’ foods doesn’t dissolve the relationship between class and tastes but reaffirms their own distinction.”⁹¹ Yet, the new middle classes may also “consume the same foods as the classes from which they seek to distinguish themselves: it is the manner

⁸⁸ Zukin, p.734.

⁸⁹ Ibid., p.735.

⁹⁰ Ibid., pp. 735-6.

⁹¹ Bob Ashley, Joanne Hollows, Steve Jones and Ben Taylor, *Food and Cultural Studies* (NY: Routledge, 2004), p.69.

in which they consume them which can earn them a sense of distinction.”⁹² Thus, the cultural capital or the command of knowledge of what is consumed differentiates middle class consumption from that of the lower classes.

Command of Knowledge

In the age of neoliberalism in which the class conflicts have sharpened, economic capital or economic class has stopped to be a legitimate and visible source of establishing hierarchies and distinctions in the daily interactions of people. Knowledge, in our age, operates as a mechanism of distinction. Within the framework of omnivorousness, which has been discussed above, the command and display of knowledge rises as a valid source for the production and the reproduction of distinction. Erickson underlines that “cultural inequality is not so much a hierarchy of tastes, as it is a hierarchy of knowledge.”⁹³ Veblen explains the relation of knowledge and superiority as follows:

Aside from trophies, the most obvious signifier of distance from productive labor is a life of comfortable leisure and consumption, the conspicuous waste of time and of goods. Leisure, Veblen argues, is not indolence: it can be very busy indeed so long as the activities that fill it are non-productive. Hence, we have an elite culture which signals status superiority by demanding knowledge of anything so long as it does not ‘conduce directly to the furtherance of human life... the knowledge of the dead languages and the occult sciences; of correct spelling; of syntax and prosody; of the various forms of domestic music and other household art; of the latest proprieties of dress, furniture and equipage, of games, sports and fancy-bred animals, such as dogs and race-horses...’, all of which forms of taste and culture provide ‘serviceable evidence of an unproductive expenditure of time’.⁹⁴

⁹² Ibid., p.69.

⁹³ Bonnie Erickson, “Culture, Class and Connections,” *The American Journal of Sociology*, 102, no: 1 (July, 1996), pp. 217-251, p.219

⁹⁴ Veblen, p.47.

Therefore Veblen elucidates how knowledge contributes to the production and reproduction of hierarchies in a society. Erickson adopts an instrumental approach, and emphasizes that “forms of culture can be used to advantage in seeking a better class position or conducting class relationships.”⁹⁵ Accentuating the rise of the service class and its increasing importance in the contemporary economy, she states that higher class people, especially those in managerial positions, seem to engage more in cultural variety, and instrumentalize the knowledge of and familiarity with different genres of music, food, books, etc. Erickson explains this from an instrumental perspective, with the need of the owners’ and managers’ of the companies to engage with a variety of people from different class or ethnic origins, and she argues that the claim to high culture is less useful than the claim to cultural variety. Thus, this is evaluated as the convertibility of cultural capital to social capital by Erickson.

It can be said that engaging in cultural variety rather than merely to high-culture has emerged as a strategy of distinction. Johnston and Bauman express that “high status can be effectively signaled through knowledge of a wide variety of musical genres ranging, for example, from Appalachian bluegrass to Cuban music from the 1930s, in addition to knowledge about chamber music and Wagnerian opera.”⁹⁶ Featherstone put it that “yet for all the democratizing tendencies there are status differences. Those in the middle and upper reaches continue to use information about consumption goods to build bridges with like-minded people and close doors to exclude outsiders.”⁹⁷

⁹⁵ Erickson, p.219

⁹⁶ Johnston and Baumann, p.167

⁹⁷ Featherstone, p.108.

CHAPTER III

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Transformation of the Turkish Economy after 1980

The Turkish economy, which was characterized by import-substituting industrialization, protectionism and populist policies during the 1960s and the 1970s, went into a deep economic depression by the end of the 1970s. Thus, on 24 January 1980 a new economic program, known as the January 24 Decisions, was launched in order to overcome this economic depression. The January 24 Decisions, marked a historical moment of transition to a market-based economy in Turkey's economic and social history. With a military coup on 12 September 1980, this transition was guaranteed.

The new economic program mainly covered devaluations, an increase in the prices for the goods and services produced by the State Economic Enterprises, and the removal of the price controls. Korkut Boratav, who is one of the best-known Turkish economic historians, terms the decade after 1980 as “the counter attack of the capital.”⁹⁸ The liberalization of the import regime, the expansion of export incentives and subsidies, the removal of price controls and subventions on basic goods were some of the policies launched that initiated the transition from an inward-looking to outward-oriented economic regime.

⁹⁸ Korkut Boratav, *Türkiye İktisat Tarihi 1908-2005* (Ankara: İmge Kitabevi Yayınları, 2003), p.145.

Sermayenin karşı atağı.

Boratav writes that since the twentieth century economic history of Turkey has become the history of the development of capitalism in Turkey.⁹⁹ This economic transformation, doubtlessly, is accompanied by a social transformation that has ended up with the institutionalization of a bourgeois ideology, thanks to the TV and radios which came more and more under the influence of large capital owners.¹⁰⁰ Creating consumers was the first target of the ideology institutionalizing.¹⁰¹ The liberalization of the export regime allowed an intense inflow of luxurious consumption goods that fit the bourgeois ideology of differentiating through consumption. The counter-attack of the capital eventuated successfully. The period after 1989, when the military's custody of politics was abolished, to today, has witnessed the institutionalization of the sovereignty of finance capital.¹⁰²

Beyoğlu: A Brief History

With the restructuring of the Turkish economy after the military coup in 1980, the relation of the residents of city with the city also was restructured. City tours were organized in order to introduce the İstanbulites to the city in which they lived.¹⁰³ By that time, Pera had become the focus of the nostalgia and how to remember Beyoğlu was an issue of debate. For many writers, the history of Beyoğlu is the history of Turkey.

⁹⁹ Boratav, p.210.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, p.156.

¹⁰¹ Rıfat Bali, *Tarzı-Hayat'tan Life Style'a: Yeni Seçkinler, Yeni Mekanlar, Yeni Yaşamlar* (İstanbul:İletişim Yayınları, 2002), p.31.

¹⁰² Boratav, p.171.

¹⁰³ Bali, p.135.

Accounting for the history of Beyoğlu has always been a challenge in terms of locating it spatially and temporally. For many people, Beyoğlu is perceived as the area from Karaköy to Taksim Square. Today, Şenol writes, the district of “Beyoğlu in the province of İstanbul lies in the area between the west of Kasımpaşa Valley, which is the North of Golden Horn, and Dolmabahçe Valley; and borders Şişli and Beşiktaş.”¹⁰⁴ In everyday speech, however, Beyoğlu is most commonly referred as the area surrounding İstiklal Boulevard, and the neighborhoods of Cihangir, Şişhane and Galata are also thought as parts of it, although they mostly are referred to by their specific names.

Temporally speaking, Beyoğlu is said to have had only some vineyard houses in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and at the time the districts of Galata and Beyoğlu were given, respectively, to the Genoese and the *Frenks*,¹⁰⁵ who came for commercial activities.¹⁰⁶ In the seventeenth century, Beyoğlu emerged as a place of settlement in a European appearance, as the *Frenks* settled all along what was then called the *Grand Rue de Pera*, which is known as the İstiklal Boulevard today.¹⁰⁷ Although, there were still very few buildings in Beyoğlu together with some embassies, in the seventeenth century; it was in the eighteenth century that the

¹⁰⁴ Erkin Şenol, *Step By Step Pera-Galata-Samatya* (Ankara: Pozitif Matbaacılık 2006), p.199.

¹⁰⁵ *Frenk* was the name given to the Europeans, especially to the French by the Ottomans.

¹⁰⁶ Vedia Dökmeci and Hale Çıracı, *Tarihsel Gelişim Sürecinde Beyoğlu* (İstanbul: Türkiye Turing ve Otomobil Kurulu Yayınları, 1990), pp. 11-12.

¹⁰⁷ Zafer Toprak, “Beyoğlu’nda Batı Tarzı Yeni Hayat ve Tüketim Örüntüsü,” in *Beyoğlu’nun Dünü, Bugünü, Yarını* (presentation in the symposium book) (İstanbul: İKSV Yayınları 2008), p. 68*

* *Grand Rue de Pera*, which was renamed the *Cadde-i Kebir* before it took the name of İstiklal Street in the republican era, included Galip Dede Street between Tünel Square and Galata district. However İstiklal Street starts in Taksim Square and ends in Tünel Square today.

district started to expand into the side streets and the embassies located all along *Grand Rue de Pera* increased in number.¹⁰⁸ At the time, Beyoğlu is said to become the diplomatic and commercial center, located in the East, of the Europeans, and French in particular. İlber Ortaylı states that Beyoğlu was the Westernizing East or the Easternizing West.¹⁰⁹

During the nineteenth century, Beyoğlu has developed most. Çelik Gülersoy writes that after the 1870 fire, the took on a more European appearance with the reconstructions and until the beginning of the republican period in 1923 hotels, balls, cafés and operas marked the district.¹¹⁰ However, he assesses that with the departure of the *Frenks* after 1923, the European look, the operas, *café-chantants* and the balls decreased in number.¹¹¹

The past of Beyoğlu and revitalizing its marking features in the past have been a serious concern especially since the second half of the 1980s. Thus, discovering the real history of Beyoğlu has become a hot debate. For some, Beyoğlu was a place for civilized people, who wore clean and elegant clothes.¹¹² For others, on the other hand, Beyoğlu was never been a place of aristocrats, although there were aristocrat islands such as Tokatlıyan Hotel, Pera Palace and Markiz Patisserie.¹¹³ A columnist opposing the aristocrat imaginations of Beyoğlu commented that

¹⁰⁸ Dökmeci and Çıracı, pp. 15-25

¹⁰⁹ İlber Ortaylı, *İstanbul'dan Sayfalar* (İstanbul: İletişim, 1995), p.88

¹¹⁰ Çelik Gülersoy, *Beyoğlu'nda Gezerken* (İstanbul: İstanbul Kütüphanesi Yayınları 1990), p.21

¹¹¹ Ibid, p.30.

¹¹² Ayfer Bartu, "Eski Mahallelerin Sahibi Kim?" in *İstanbul: Küresel ile Yerel Arasında*, edited by Çağlar Keyder (İstanbul: Metis Yayınları, 1999), p.50.

¹¹³ Yüksel Baştuñç, *Dünden Bugüne Beyoğlu* (İstanbul: Yılmaz Yayınları, 1993), p.56.

In your dream Beyoğlu, there are no rascals, no vagabonds, no whores, no perverts, and no larrikin coffee houses or gambling places! Wasn't *Abanoz* Street a whorehouse? Were people selling books in *Ziba*? What was dealt on the corner of Taksim?"¹¹⁴

There has always been a struggle over how to construct Beyoğlu's past.

Özdemir Arkan points out that Beyoğlu's transformation is described in order to attack types of people who were unwanted.¹¹⁵ The beerhouses have always been there and, the patisseries have never been the only symbols of Beyoğlu. However, Ayfer Bartu states that Beyoğlu has a number of histories, but it is a place within all those histories.¹¹⁶

As a center of entertainment; eating and drinking have always had a significance place in Beyoğlu's history. One of the contributions to our original gastronomy is that to know the foreign cuisines and the appetite to taste them, and enjoy the curiosity and the inspiration they provided.¹¹⁷ Atilla Dorsay comments that Beyoğlu has been the center of the art and the practice of food, and educated many generations. Once upon a time, when İstanbul was İstanbul and Beyoğlu was Beyoğlu, doubtlessly, it was the "castle of gusto" of the city.¹¹⁸ What is eaten in

¹¹⁴ Hasan Pular, "Beyoğlu Gerçeği," *Milliyet*, March, 9 2009, retrieved in 28.04.2010 from <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/-/hasan-pular/yasam/yazardetay/09.03.2009/1068588/default.htm>

Sizin okuyup hayal ettiğiniz Beyoğlu'nu biz de yaşamadık, siz de... Yaşlarımız üç aşağı beş yukarı aynı... Sizin hayalinizdeki Beyoğlu'nda it yok, serseri yok, orospu yok, sapık yok, bitirim kahveleri, kumarhane yok! Abanoz sokağı kerhane değil miydi? Ziba da kitap mı satılırdı? Taksim'in köşesinde neyin alışverişi yapılırdı?

¹¹⁵ Özdemir Kaptan, *Beyoğlu Kısa Geçmişi Argosu* (İstanbul:İletişim 1989), pp.79-83.

¹¹⁶ Bartu, p. 58

Beyoğlunun bir çok tarihi vardır ve beyoğlu bu tarihler içinde bir yerdir.

¹¹⁷ Engin Akın, "Lokantalar, Eğlenceler" in *Beyoğlu'nun Dünü, Bugünü, Yarını* (presentation in the symposium book) (İstanbul: İKSV Yayınları 2008), p.43.

¹¹⁸ Atilla Dorsay, *Benim Beyoğlum* (İstanbul: Çağdaş Yayıncılık ve Basın Sanayi A.Ş. 1991), p.25.

Beyoğlu has always been important in the different imaginations of Turkey's history. The old patisseries are remembered as the non-Muslim landmarks in Beyoğlu, whereas the increase in the *lahmacuncus*¹¹⁹ or *birahanes*¹²⁰ are seen as the signs of the invasion of the city by rural people. Thus, looking at the eating places and trends in Beyoğlu tells a lot about the rising and falling trends and values in Turkey.

Beyoğlu, yemek sanatı ve pratiğinin de merkezi olmuş, sayısız kuşağı bu açıdan eğitmiştir. Bir zamanlar İstanbul'un İstanbul, Beyoğlu'nun da gerçekten Beyoğlu olduğu yıllarda, kuşkusuz ki burası kentin "ağız tadı şatosu" idi.

¹¹⁹ A *lahmacuncu* is the aselling *lahmacun*, a kind of thin pizza in Turkey, which is a South-eastern regional dish, usually made up of a round, thin piece of dough topped with minced meat.

¹²⁰ A *birahane* is a beerhouse.

CHAPTER IV

READING CONTEMPORARY BEYOĞLU IN TERMS OF EATING-OUT

Pleasure and Experience

The neoliberal economic restructuring that began in the 1980s in Turkey began to be institutionalized in the cultural realm by the mid-the 1990s and became visible in the 2000s. With the rise of the middle classes, middle class values came to be dominant in the cultural realm. Thus the considerable increase in the usage and repetition of the word *keyif* (pleasure) turned out to be one of the most significant examples representing the rise of the new middle class values and ideology.

Concurringly, a previous study by Alan Warde and Lydia Martens indicate pleasure as one of the most important reasons to eat out, and most of their respondents expressed that pleasure is an expectation which should be fulfilled. They stressed that “the social dimension of eating out is almost always important and would appear to be the most readily articulated source of pleasure.”¹²¹ Another previous study by Ashley et al. states that “eating out is a source of pleasure and a favored leisure pursuit for increasing numbers of people.”¹²² During the interviews conducted for this research, pleasure was a frequently repeated word when referring to the patterns of eating out, both on the restaurant and on the consumer side. Hande Bozdoğan (the owner of the Culinary Institute Istanbul) referred to the significance of pleasure as such:

¹²¹ Bob Ashley, Joanne Hollows, Steve Jones and Ben Taylor, *Food and Cultural Studies* (New York: Routledge, 2004), p.146.

¹²² Ibid, p.142

First of all, I am a person who never likes business meals. In my opinion, business and eating do not get along well. Eating is a pleasure. I do not like to eat while talking business and I am not aware of what I am eating. I would like to go to places, where I am interested in the food served, with small groups and chats. Therefore, I enjoy my meal and take pleasure.¹²³

Another restaurant owner, Fatih Arıman (the owner of Cezayir Restaurant), expressed his views very similarly:

I like to eat out at places, where the food is the predominant element, and I can relish the food. I prefer places without too much noise and clatter, since, I definitely see eating out as a pleasure.¹²⁴

One of the other interviewees, Defne Koryürek (Opinionated Palettes Slow Food İstanbul Convivium Leader) said;

Eating out for me is receiving and seeing good service, getting pleasure. It is not only feeding on, but being surprised, comprehending or realizing something new, at a place, with well-organized service, from which I derive pleasure.¹²⁵

Koryürek's expression overlaps with the findings of Campbell-Smith who observe that "pleasure in eating out was not achieved simply through the provision of adequately cooked acceptable food in sufficient quantity, but was affected by the decor, the atmosphere, the presentation of the food, the conduciveness of the service, the attractiveness of the serving staff, the opening and closing of the visit and so forth."¹²⁶

Likewise, my interviewees who were no service providers but consumers used similar expressions when they were asked what eating out meant to them, or

¹²³ Hande Bozdoğan, interview by the author, tape recording, İstanbul, Turkey, 12 February 2010.

¹²⁴ Fatih Arıman, interview by the author, tape recording, İstanbul, Turkey, 25 February 2010.

¹²⁵ Defne Koryürek, interview by the author, tape recording, İstanbul, Turkey, 22 April 2010.

¹²⁶ Alan Warde and Lydia Martens, *Eating Out: Social Differentiation, Consumption and Pleasure*, (Cambridge University Press, 2000), p.113.

depending on what factors they chose the places where they were going to eat out. Ferda stated that getting pleasure was significant to her,¹²⁷ where as Aliye put it that “eating is a pleasure.”¹²⁸ With a similar tendency, Gülден stated that she liked to eat at places where she can have her meal with pleasure.¹²⁹ Meeting these desires Defne (Marketing department manager of The House Café) stated that The House Café offers to its customers “an experience with pleasure,”¹³⁰ whereas İdris Neyiş (the Manager of Mid-Point Beyoğlu) expressed that Mid-Point targets epicurean guests and offers them a pleasant experience full of pleasure.¹³¹

Other interviewees provided much more detailed comments on the relationship of taking pleasure and eating out for them as in the follows,

The most important factor for me, to choose the place where I will eat, is that it should be a pleasant (*keyifli*) place. You know, what I am talking about is pleasure in general terms; not only the food, not only the place. Although I work flexible hours, I really work very hard, therefore eating-out is equivalent to taking pleasure for me.¹³²

On the other hand, noting that taking pleasure is not contingent upon economic resources but rather to the skills and equipment of the person, Derya remarked as the follows;

I like to take pleasure when I eat out. Eating is an activity that should be pleasant. Eating is not about just filling your stomach. It is a whole experience. Therefore, I like to be in pleasant restaurants: pleasant food, a

¹²⁷ Ferda (pseudonym), interview by the author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 10 May 2010.

¹²⁸ Aliye (pseudonym), interview by the author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 10 May 2010.

¹²⁹ Gülден (pseudonym), interview by the author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 21 May 2010.

¹³⁰ Defne, interview by the author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 25 February 2010.

¹³¹ İdris Neyiş, interview by the author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 25 February 2010.

¹³² Seda (pseudonym), interview by the author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 18 July 2010.

nice service, a good ambiance and atmosphere. But it does not always need to be an expensive place. That depends on what gives you pleasure at the time. It is sometimes a quality feta-cheese, a slice of fresh bread and some wine (...) I do not believe that it is about having a lot of money; it is about knowing how to derive pleasure from what. That does not happen with money alone, but I think this is about developing yourself.¹³³

Circumstantially, it should be accentuated that the introduction and increased usage of the word *keyif* deserve further attention. With the institutionalization of the middle class consumer culture in Turkey with the 2000s *keyif* has become a word that is frequently expressed. In the Turkish dictionaries *keyif*¹³⁴ exists as deriving pleasure from something, and that means liking something a lot, having fun, and delighting in something. Convenience, indifference and entertainment are meanings associated with pleasure when referring to people seeking pleasure. In the slang expression, pleasure (*keyif*) means hemp. Giving pleasure includes the meanings of providing joy and fuddling. Thus, as meanings of *keyif* written in the dictionary have shown; it is not an appropriate word for frequent usage.

Thus, it signifies a break in the perception of life, within the context of “stylization of life” as Bourdieu refers to it and “the art of life.” It can be observed that the new middle classes challenges the old ideology and ethic which presupposed the enjoyment of pleasure in private. However, thanks to the rising new middle class’ values and ideology, it now seems to be legitimate to pursue pleasure. Bourdieu discusses that

Whereas the old morality of duty, based on the opposition between pleasure and good, induces a generalized suspicion of the charming and attractive, a fear of pleasure and a relation to the body made up of "reserve," "modesty"

¹³³ Derya (pseudonym), interview by the author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 18 July 2010.

¹³⁴ In the TDK (Turkish Language Institution) dictionary *keyif* seem to have seven meanings. They are: 1. bodily well-being 2. liveliness, carefreeness 3. Being comfortable, peaceful and healthy 4. eagerness 5. the situation when alcoholic drinks or other drugs used 6. improper and irregular demand 7. hemp (slang expression).

and "restraint", and associates every satisfaction of the forbidden impulses with guilt, the new ethical avant-garde urges a morality of pleasure as a duty. This doctrine makes it a failure, a threat to self-esteem, not to 'have fun' (...) pleasure is not only permitted but demanded, on ethical as much as on scientific grounds. The fear of not getting enough pleasure, the logical outcome of the effort to overcome the fear of the pleasure, is combined with the search for self-expression and 'bodily expression' and for communication with others (relating- *échange*), even immersion in others (considered not as a group but as subjectivities in search of their identity); and the old personal ethic is thus rejected for a cult of personal health and psychological therapy.
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Taking into consideration that capitalist societies strongly emphasize a consumption that is based upon a romantic ethic, Campbell argues that “romanticism has provided that philosophy of 'recreation' necessary for a dynamic consumerism in which the search for pleasure is viewed as desirable in and of itself. Romanticism has produced the widespread taste for novelty which has ensured the ethical support for restless and continuously changing patterns of consumption.”¹³⁶

Together with pleasure, experience came out to be the object of frequent emphasis. Bell and Valentine refer to restaurant dining as “a total consumption package – not just food and drink but a whole ‘experience.’”¹³⁷ My interviewees commented on similar views. Mehmet Gürs (a celebrity chef and the owner of Mikla¹³⁸ Restaurant) said that eating at Mikla is a different experience that makes people feel special.¹³⁹ Abdullah Korun (one of the owners of Hacı Abdullah and the

¹³⁵ Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1984), p.367.

¹³⁶ Ashley et al., p.82.

¹³⁷ David Bell and Gill Valentine, *Consuming Geographies* (New York: Routledge, 1997), p.125

¹³⁸ *Mikla* Restaurant, which is located on the roof of Marmara Hotel Pera, is one of the most luxurious restaurants in Turkey that is accepted as the best fine dining restaurant in İstanbul by many “authorities.”

¹³⁹ Mehmet Gürs, interview by the author, tape recording, İstanbul, Turkey, 16 March 2010.

current manager of the restaurant) said, *Hacı* Abdullah provides people with an experience from Ottoman times through eating the Palace Cuisine in a space that hasn't changed since then.¹⁴⁰

In this context, it would be appropriate to bring in Lee's argument that "in particular, the rise of the themed restaurant aimed at niche markets; the compounding of food pleasures with other consumer activities; and the increased emphasis on 'experiential' rather than material commodities tie changes in restaurant culture to wider shifts in production and consumption."¹⁴¹ Thus, it can be said that with the rise of the service sector and the new middle class, the focus of consumption has started to be based more on experiences and images that contribute to the making of the self, rather than merely on commodities.

In the issue of experience, Slovenian philosopher and critical theorist Slavoj Žižek provides an inspiring approach by saying that

We do not buy the commodities either because of their benefits or because they are signs of status; we buy them to acquire the experience they provide, we buy them to make our lives full of pleasure and meaning (...) In *Total Recall*, the dystopia of Paul Verhoeven, a company offers us to install experiences of an ideal vacation to our minds, thus people do not need to go anywhere in reality, and acquiring the memories of the journey directly is much easier and cheaper. Another version of the same logic could be to experience the desired vacation virtually- why don't we seek for mere experience, instead of wandering around with reality, if the important thing is the experience itself?¹⁴²

¹⁴⁰ Abdullah Korun, interview by the author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 18 February 2010.

¹⁴¹ Ashley et al., p.143.

¹⁴² Slavoj Žižek, *1968* (İstanbul:Encore Yayınları 2008), p.15.

Malları ne yararlılıkları nedeniyle ne de statü simgeleri olmaları nedeniyle alırsınız, onları sundukları deneyimi elde etmek için alırsınız, onları yaşamımızı haz ve anlam dolu kılmak üzere alırsınız (...) Paul Verhoeven'in distopyası Total Recall'da (Gerçeğe Çağrı) bir şirket, beynimize ideal bir tatil anılarını yerleştirmeyi önerir – insanın gerçekten bir yere gitmesi gerekmez, yolculuğun anılarını doğrudan elde etmek çok daha kolay ve ucuzdur. Aynı mantığın başka bir versiyonu arzu edilen tatilin sanal gerçeklikte deneyimlemek olurdu-

Drawing upon Zizek's perspective, it can be claimed that the experience itself became more prominent than the process of building it. Thus, together with the middle class hunger for pleasure, novelty and experience; the social spaces came to be reorganized. In other words, the new middle class members approaching their lives as never ending projects, instrumentalize experiences to enrich their lives and contribute to their construction of the self; however, during this process the constructed experience itself came to be the focus of middle class hunger, and constructing the experience has lost its significance. The search for various experiences that are aimed to be converted into cultural capital, gives way to the production of different kinds of spaces serving this end. Two examples of spaces that are especially prominent in Beyoğlu will be analyzed in the following parts.

Museumized Spaces

In *The Person You Have Called Cannot Be Reached at the Moment: Representations of Life Styles in Turkey 1980-2005*, Zafer Yenal and Meltem Ahıska accentuate that as in the representation of the city of İstanbul, the significance of the symbolic economy that is blended with culture and consumption increases in the perception and the remembrance of the past.¹⁴³ In a similar way, throughout the research conducted it has been observed that there is a strong emphasis on the history and oldness of the food, the buildings that restaurants are located or the traditions.

asil önemli olan şey deneyim olduğuna göre, neden gerçeklik aracılığıyla dolanıp durmak yerine, sadece deneyimi aramayalım?

¹⁴³ Zafer Yenal and Meltem Ahıska, *Aradığınız Kişiyi Şu An Ulaşılamıyor: Türkiye'de Hayat Tarzı Temsilleri 1980-2005* (Osmanlı Bankası Yayınları: İstanbul 2006), p.304

İstanbul kentinin temsilinde olduğu kadar, geçmişin algılanmasında ve hatırlanmasında da kültür ve tüketimle harmanlanan sembolik ekonominin ağırlığı artıyor.

Baudrillard in *For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign* describes the taste for old things as “The Taste for the Bygone.” He claims that because the bygone object derives from the cultural baroque and its "aesthetic" value is a derived value, “the taste for the bygone is characterized by the desire to transcend the dimension of economic success, to consecrate a social success or a privileged position in a redundant, culturalized, symbolic sign. The bygone is, among other things, social success that seeks a legitimacy, a heredity, a ‘noble’ sanction.”¹⁴⁴ In other words, the increasing concern with old things is a symbolic and cultural indication of a claimed social status or a privileged position in order to go beyond displaying economic well-being. Frequent references to the oldness or to the antiquity of the restaurant, the food, the decoration or the building by the restaurant owners or the food and lifestyle writers, thus, institutes and reinstitutes the taste for old things as a legitimate way of asserting a high cultural capital.

However, using past or the oldness of certain objects in legitimating certain tastes is mostly manipulated. As Ayfer Bartu accentuates through instrumentalizing David Lowenthal’s approach in *The Past is a Foreign Country*; “Memory, history and the relics of earlier times shed light on the past. But the past they reveal is not simply what happened; It is in large measure a past of our own creation, moulded by selective erosion, oblivion and invention.”¹⁴⁵ Thus, as it will unfold in the following parts, the realm of eating out or the restaurants were not free of this reinvention of the past in consistency with certain aims. Three different restaurants that are

¹⁴⁴ Jean Baudrillard, *For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign* (Missouri: Telos Press, 1981), p.43

¹⁴⁵ Ayfer Bartu, “Eski Mahallelerin Sahibi Kim?” in *İstanbul: Küresel ile Yerel Arasında*, edited by Çağlar Keyder (İstanbul: Metis Yayınları, 1999), p.44.

maintaining to temporalities of Beyoğlu's past will be subjected to further exploration in the following.

Rejans and the White Russian Presence

Beyoğlu's nightlife, especially in the early republican period, is commonly associated with the White Russian phenomenon. After the 1917 October Revolution in Russia, many members of the White Army, defeated by the Red Army, fled to Turkey. Thus, as Jak Deleon puts it, the White Russians took the name after the White Army, which was the army of the Tsarist Russia. They were not a separate ethnic group nor related to the republic of Belarus (White Russia), which was one of the republics in USSR.¹⁴⁶ It is said that the White Russians were the most dominant group in Beyoğlu's nightlife in the 1940s and 1950s.¹⁴⁷ Jak Deleon describes the deep impact of the White Russians to İstanbul's night life as follows:

The White-Russian phenomenon was lived from 1918 until the 1940s. The time their presence was felt most were the years 1920-1924. In those years, Beyoğlu seemed to have been invaded by the White Russians. Cabarets on the main streets, and night-clubs in the back-alleys were opened, tables of the Russian restaurants were spilling over into the pavements, and the shows with songs and dances embellished the nights of İstanbul. While the old duchesses served vodka in the front side of Beyoğlu, women who had escaped from the Odessa and Kiev brothels were selling cocaine in the back side of Beyoğlu. The storm of *haraso*,¹⁴⁸ that glory and disgrace, were blended together stopped with the many of the White Russians getting visas to France, America and Argentina (...) Those who stayed in İstanbul were the ones invested, by keeping their powder dry, or married a Turk.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁶ Jak Deleon; *Beyoğlu'nda Beyaz Ruslar(1920-1990)* (Çelik Gülersoy Vakfı İstanbul Kütüphanesi Yayınları, İstanbul 1990), pp.10-11.

¹⁴⁷ Yüksel Baştuñ, *Düinden Bugüne Beyoğlu* (İstanbul: Yılmaz Yayınları, 1993), pp.54-55

¹⁴⁸ *Haraso* is a Russian word meaning good, charming and pretty.

¹⁴⁹ Jak Deleon, *Beyoğlu'nda Beyaz Ruslar(1920-1990)* (Çelik Gülersoy Vakfı İstanbul Kütüphanesi Yayınları, İstanbul 1990), p.12.

Thus, the White Russians in Beyoğlu in those years, contributed to the cuisine culture of İstanbul by opening many restaurants. Rejans was one of these many restaurants, which opened¹⁵⁰ in Olivo passage in the beginning of the 1930s.¹⁵¹ However, Rejans, together with Ayaspaşa Russian Restaurant (which was opened in 1943), are the only two restaurants survived until today. Jak Deleon portrayed Rejans as follows,

Just like Beyoğlu, Rejans is an idiosyncratic legend. Is there any journalist who stopped at a bar in the afternoon and did not have dinner at Rejans? Not only the journalists, but publicists to the building contractors, academics to the bureaucrats, is it possible to find any “expert of palate” who did not know Rejans, who did not taste the old culture in that giant hall? This old restaurant has an interesting environment, with its piano that no longer exists, with the young waiters who have replaced the formers, with women managers and the tourists who have heard Rejans’ reputation from various regions of the earth; it has a distinct attraction with its attentive service and diverse food repertoire) (...) Rejans was a “romantic” sunlamp that illuminated the pre-war İstanbul: It is said that Atatürk, frequently, visited this restaurant where former “Grand Dukes”, who have saved their necks (but not their wealth) from the Bolshevik regime, were working as headwaiters with their pure-white collars, squeaky shirts and ironed pants. Franz Von Papen, when he was the German Ambassador, dropped by once, and fell into the habit of having dinner at Rejans.¹⁵²

İstanbul’da Beyaz Rus olgusu 1918 yılından 1940’lara kadar yaşandı. Beyaz Rus’ların varlıklarını en çok duyumsattıkları yıllar 1920-1924 arasındır. Bu yıllarda Beyoğlu Beyaz Rus istilasına uğramıştı sanki. Ana caddeler üzerinde kabareler, arka sokaklarda pavyonlar açılıyor, Rus lokantalarının masaları kaldırımlara taşıyor, şarkılı ve danslı “show”lar İstanbul gecelerine renk katıyordu. Beyoğlu’nun ön yakasında eski düşesler votka sunarken, Beyoğlu’nun arka yakasında Odessa ve Kiev genelevlerinden kaçan kadınlar kokain pazarlıyordu Görkemle rezaletin harmanlandığı bu “haraşo” fırtınası, Beyaz Rus’ların çoğunun Fransa, Amerika ve Arjantin’e vize almasıyla duruldu (...) İstanbul’da kalanlarsa işlerini sağlam tutarak yatırım yapanlar ya da bir Türk’le evlenenlerdi.

¹⁵⁰ There is no definite information on the exact year Rejans was opened. Different sources indicate the dates of 1930, 1932 and 1934.

¹⁵¹ *Bir Beyoğlu Klasiği Rejans* (OMAŞ Ofset A.Ş.: İstanbul, 2000) , p.9.

¹⁵² Jak Deleon; *Beyoğlu’nda Beyaz Ruslar(1920-1990)* (Çelik Gülersoy Vakfı İstanbul Kütüphanesi Yayınları, İstanbul 1990), p.66.

Beyoğlu gibi “nevi şahsına münhasır” bir efsanedir Rejans. Akşamüstü bir barda soluklanıp yemeği Rejans’ta yemeyen var mıdır? Bırakın gazetecileri, reklamcısından “müteahhid”ine, öğretim üyesinden bürokratına Rejans’i tanımamış, o dev salonda eski bir kültürün tadına varmamış “ehl-i damak” bulmak mümkün mü? Artık olmayan piyanosu,

Furthermore, Rejans' customer profile is described by pointing that they were always distinguished people. In the 1940s-1950s Rejans' customers were foreign consulate members, the elite of İstanbul, rich minorities, and important government officials. However after the 1960's artists, writers, intellectuals, academics and university students frequented the place.¹⁵³ Özdemir Arkan comments on Rejans that it is a place of refined tastes and likes to hide in details and Rejans is resisting time, and reminds us that we are the heirs of the empire.¹⁵⁴

Supporting how all this history is instrumentalized to generate cultural capital and a basis for legitimate tastes, one of the interviewees commented on Rejans as follows;

Imagine you are eating in a place in which Atatürk also ate 70-80 years ago. There is this terrific culture in Rejans. It has an ambiance that you can not find anywhere else today. Who knows what important and intellectual conversations took place at those tables. The most awesome thing about Rejans is that you can experience something you have never lived. You can live the same experience that people lived there 60 or 70 years ago. There is the smell of the history in Rejans.¹⁵⁵

Hence, it can be seen that Rejans Restaurant mostly is associated and recalled for its history, not the food served. The owner of the restaurant, during the interview, made a strong emphasis on how the atmosphere, the decoration or the furniture of the

eskilerin yerini almış genç garsonları, hanım yöneticileri ve Rejans'ın ününü yeryüzünün yedi yöresinden duymuş olan turistleriyle ilginç bir ortamdır bu yaşlı lokanta; özenli servisi ve değişik yemek dağarcığıyla ayrı bir çekiciliği vardır(...) Savaş öncesi İstanbul'unu aydınlatan bir "romantik" ışıldaktır Rejans: Bolşevik rejiminden canını (ama malını değil) kurtarıp postu Türkiye'ye atan, yakası bembeyaz, gömleği tertemiz, pantolonu ütülü "Grand Dük" eskilerinin "şef garsonluk" yaptığı bu lokantaya Atatürk'ün sık sık geldiği söylenir. Franz von Papen Alman sefiriyken bir kez uğramış, pek beğenip alışkanlık edinmiş Rejans'ta akşam yemeği yemeyi.

¹⁵³ *Bir Beyoğlu Klasığı: Rejans* (OMAŞ Ofset A.Ş.: İstanbul, 2000) , pp.14-17.

¹⁵⁴ Özdemir Kaptan Arkan, *Rejans ve İstanbul Kültürü in Bir Beyoğlu Klasığı Rejans* (OMAŞ Ofset A.Ş.: İstanbul, 2000), pp.36-37.

¹⁵⁵ Leyla (pseudonym), interview by the author, tape recording, İstanbul, Turkey, 23 July 2010.

restaurant had been preserved as they were decades ago. The museumized space and the history of *Rejans* are frequently used to promote the restaurant apart from the distinctive food served. Today, *Rejans* is one of the restaurants in Beyoğlu that has a claim to providing its customers certain high-brow cultural capital that is grounded in history. Plus, an eating experience in *Rejans* is enhanced not only by the space that is museumized but asserted and reasserted with two books, music albums, and many booklets on the restaurant.

Hacı Abdullah

Hacı Abdullah restaurant, uses the motto of “a-century old tradition: since 1888”, and claims a history that dates back to 1888. In 1888, a restaurant named “Victoria” opened on the Karaköy Quay.¹⁵⁶ This restaurant was the first restaurant in the region opened by a Turk, opened on the initiative of the Ottoman Sultan Abdulhamid II. It served examples from the Turkish and the palace cuisine. The restaurant also sold alcoholic drinks with the permission of Abdulhamid II. Two years after its opening, the restaurant was renamed Abdullah Efendi Restaurant,¹⁵⁷ and in 1920¹⁵⁸ it moved to Rumeli Han on İstiklal Boulevard, Beyoğlu.¹⁵⁹ Abdullah Efendi Restaurant survived in Beyoğlu until 1968 and after that reopened in Emirgan and stayed there until 1993, when it was completely closed down.

¹⁵⁶ Feriha Büyükcünal, *Bir Zaman Tüneli: Beyoğlu* (Doğan Kitap, İstanbul 2006), p.141.

¹⁵⁷ Enis Berberoğlu, “Markayla marketin başarı öyküsü: Saffet Abdullah”, retrieved in August 2010, from <http://hurarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/goster/haber.aspx?id=183445&yazarid=6>

¹⁵⁸ On Hacı Abdullah Restaurant’s website, this date was indicated as 1915. However, due to the fact that there was some other missing information in this historical account, I found Feriha Büyükcünal’s account more reliable.

¹⁵⁹ Büyükcünal, p.142.

However, Hacı Salih, one of the apprentices of Abdullah Efendi, opened a restaurant with his own name “Hacı Salih” in Beyoğlu, carrying on the tradition of Akhism;¹⁶⁰ and this restaurant survived from master to apprentice.¹⁶¹ Hacı Salih, which was opened in 1940, moved to Hacı Abdullah’s present place in 1958 and was renamed as Hacı Abdullah in 1983. However, another account confirms that Hacı Salih moved to Anadolu Passage in 1984 and continued with the tradition from father to son. It is true that Hacı Abdullah comes from the tradition of Abdullah Efendi restaurant; however, it was not the sole claimant to this tradition. For commercial reasons the history has been reinvented.

In Hacı Abdullah Restaurant there is an attempt to create a full Ottoman experience. One of the most obvious examples of this can be observed in the interior design of the restaurant. The carnation needlework used on the furnishing were modeled from needlework on a caftan of Mehmed II (the conqueror), whereas the tulip needle works symbolizes the Tulip Period. *Çintemani*¹⁶² motifs, which are also used in the furnishing, date back a thousand year. Ottoman architectural characteristics were adopted in the restaurant. The miniatures on the walls for example, are identically reproductions of the original miniatures in the Surname part of the Topkapi Palace. Plus, the jars of jams and pickles that are exhibited all around the restaurant also can be seen as the markers of the preservation of the old and the museum-like impression. Correspondingly, one of the interviewees described *Hacı Abdullah Restaurant* as follows;

¹⁶⁰ Akhism is an organized brotherhood in Anatolia related to trade guilds.

¹⁶¹ Anonym, Hacı Abdullah Tarihi, retrieved in 19 August 2010 from <http://www.haciabdullah.com.tr/haci-abdullah-tarihi/>

¹⁶² A motif that is used in Turkish art.

Abdullah is a different place. Not only because the meals there taste good. When you go to Abdullah, you see an ambiance totally Ottoman: both the foods from palace cuisine and the place itself. But what is interesting in Abdullah is that when you go through its door you enter a completely different world. Consequently, Beyoğlu is a place that has a very European style. Whenever I eat at Abdullah (that is not very often), I always feel like I am eating in a museum. It is a different experience than usual for me.¹⁶³

Another interviewee made a detailed comment on the restaurant;

There is a very rich food culture coming from the Ottoman past. However, there are not many places it can be tasted. Because of that even if it is not as good as it was in the past, I like Hacı Abdullah. *Hünkar Beğendi*,¹⁶⁴ for example is one of my favorite dishes, and it is hard to find, nowadays, a good place to eat, because, it requires a serious effort to cook it, not many restaurants provide it, and many of the restaurants provide bad versions. I am no Ottoman fan, however, we have to admit that there is a huge culture there, and we don't have many places to continue these traditions. How many places offer this number of meals in their menu repertoires? There was Hacı Salih Restaurant, for example, which was closed a while ago. Hacı Abdullah is one of the very few representatives of this culture. It is important that a restaurant survive without changing for all these years. Even the atmosphere tells you something about the centuries old history of that cuisine. I like tasting modernized foods, too, but we need these places to experience the original. We have to know the original, I think, in order to take pleasure from the modernized versions.¹⁶⁵

Just like a museum, signs and objects that belong to different temporalities are brought together in the restaurant. Not only with the food, but also with the atmosphere the restaurant has a claim to represent the significant Ottoman culture, and provide its customers a portion of it. However, to this end, the history of the restaurant is modified. Once more, because history is seen as a legitimate basis for claiming to appeal high brow tastes and contributes to the building of cultural capital; the restaurant instrumentalizes the history in every possible way. Since, the claim on

¹⁶³ Seda (pseudonym), interview by the author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 18 July 2010.

¹⁶⁴ *Hünkar Beğendi*, a palatial dish from Ottoman cuisine, which means “the sultan/sovereign relished it”, that includes roasted eggplant puree with stewed meat.

¹⁶⁵ Murat (pseudonym), interview by the author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 22 May 2010.

the history and the museumized space allows the restaurant to offer the customers a distinct experience that other restaurants can not compete, the emphasis on the history can be evaluated in this perspective.

Saray Muhallebicisi¹⁶⁶

Saray Muhallebicisi is another significant example of a restaurant that claims a place through its history and traditional character in Beyoğlu. Saray's history is narrated on its website as,

During the 1860's, Kerem Çavuş together with his brothers opened up in Istanbul's Fındıklı district their first milk pudding establishment putting their "Sweet Secret" into operation and adding "Sweet excitement." This sweet excitement continued when years later his grandchild Hüseyin Topbaş in 1935 opened his first pudding shop in Kasımpaşa and later in 1949 the dream became a reality with the opening of Beyoğlu Saray on İstiklal Caddesi.¹⁶⁷

Saray is called as a republican period classic of Beyoğlu in its presentation.

However, its history is not an unchanged one. Although it started as a milk pudding store mostly reminiscent of the meeting place of the young couples in the 1950s and the next few decades; with the changing social structure and food culture in the 1980s, the restaurant began to integrate examples of fast-food like *döner*¹⁶⁸, meatballs or sausages and today Saray is a restaurant chain that has over ten restaurants in different parts of İstanbul. In their website, it can be seen that comments by some celebrities about Saray have been quoted. Some examples of these quotations are as follows:

"Saray Muhallebicisi is a tradition of İstanbul."

¹⁶⁶ A *muhallebici* is a place that sells *muhallebi* which can be translated as milk pudding.

¹⁶⁷ <http://www.saraymuhallebicisi.com/>

¹⁶⁸ *Döner* is tightly packed meat roasted on a large vertical spit.

“It took me 25 years back. Reminded me my middle-school years.”

“The real taste and quality that years could not change.”

“It’s a classic of Beyoğlu.”

“Saray Muhallebicisi is one of the symbols of old Istanbul.”

“I remember the rich taste of our rich culture and history.”

“A large accumulation of culture and a Turkish cultural monument in Beyoğlu.”¹⁶⁹

As can be observed, all the comments are related to the history of Saray and references emphasize its symbolic value in representing Beyoğlu’s past. Saray is referred to with the feelings of nostalgia for the past, and the past, especially Beyoğlu’s past, is praised through these references. Differing from Rejans and Hacı Abdullah, today Saray is not a brand that belongs merely to Beyoğlu. Yet, the association of Saray with Beyoğlu and frequent references to its history seem to be ways of attributing to it a kind of legitimacy in terms of tastes, a nobility and a value in terms of cultural capital.

Quotational Spaces

During the research, I realized that a reasonable number of restaurants utilized published or visual materials about themselves within their establishments. By published and visual materials, articles from the papers, the articles or reviews of the restaurant from certain magazines or websites, photographs of some celebrities who have visited these places or the photographs of the place itself are meant. These

¹⁶⁹ Retrieved in August 2010 from, <http://www.saraymuhallebicisi.com/>. (Respectively, comments are made by Deniz Baykal, Aşkın Nur Yengi, Cem Özer, Hamdi Alkan, Ahmet Bahadrlı, Uğur Dündar, Zülfü Livaneli and Hasan Celal Güzel.)

materials are either hung on walls (to specific parts or all around) or incorporated on the menus.

Furthermore, not only reviews or evaluations of journalists, gourmets or celebrities, but also the ordinary people's writings and notes about their experiences related to the restaurant either on the walls or some other places are exhibited. All of the referred materials are expressions of the experiences of some people about the related restaurants. Thus, I will call these restaurants which display the quoted expressions of some people, quotational spaces. With quotational spaces, I refer not to specific restaurants that are categorically distinct from others, but rather to a tendency of some restaurants to display and exhibit the experiences expressed as a part of the space.

One may take into consideration the fact that those reviews or photographs frequently are included on the websites of the same restaurants and are used as instruments of advertising. However, I claim that the case of displaying those materials within the restaurant is entirely different from displaying them outside it, in the sense that they do not aim to attract potential customers by legitimizing the good status of the restaurants, but they address people who have already become customers of the restaurant. The quotations are made from experiences built by certain people, yet displayed for people who have their chances to build their own experience.

Thus, the space is provided with ready-made experiences, to which the people who visit there are exposed concomitant with their own experience building process. Therefore, these spaces become places in which the experiences freely float. As Zizek remarks, why not seek for the experience itself, if it is the significant thing, in the first place? What I call quotational spaces provides the desired end to the person

in the search of experiences, overlapping with the touristification of the contemporary individual. The contemporary individual, in the search of experiences that are thought to differentiate one or “considered a means of improving oneself, adding ‘value’ and a sense of excitement to life,”¹⁷⁰ most of the time, is exposed to the floating experiences freed from the context in which they were built. Thus, carrying the service one step further, some restaurants not only provide food, ambiance or quality service to their customers in order to enable them build their own experiences but mere experience, itself, directly.

Walter Benjamin in “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction” states that “the authenticity of a thing is the essence of all that is transmissible from its beginning, ranging from its substantive duration to its testimony to the history which it has experienced.”¹⁷¹ Furthermore, Benjamin maintains that “the technique of reproduction detaches the reproduced object from the domain of tradition; by making many reproductions it substitutes a plurality of copies for a unique existence.”¹⁷² In this context, the practice of serving ready-made experiences results in the prevention of constructing the original ones, and it can be said that the replicas replace the authentic. Thus, many of those restaurants become their own reproductions.

Cultural Capital Contesting the Dominance of Economic Capital

¹⁷⁰ Bob Ashley, Joanne Hollows, Steve Jones and Ben Taylor, *Food and Cultural Studies*, (NY: Routledge, 2004), p.68

¹⁷¹ Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction." in *Illuminations*, edited by Walter Benjamin, Hannah Arendt (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World (1968) pp. 219-253, p.222.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 223.

Above, it was remarked that consumption, especially life-style consumption, has been instituted as a significant field that cultural capital performed in the contemporary age. Beginning with the 1990s and consolidating in the 2000s, eating-out, or food consumption, has been one of the most prevalent forms of life-style consumption patterns; and the realm of eating-out, at least discursively, has become increasingly related to cultural capital than it is to economic capital. The idea of crediting cultural capital, more than economic capital, manifested itself during my research. In almost all the interviews with the restaurant owners, the dignification of culture was a subject of discussion. The owner of Rejans Restaurant's narrative on the matter was as follows:

Certain things have changed since the first days of Rejans Restaurant. One of those things is that at the time money and the culture were held in the same hands. Now there is the opposite. You either have one or the other. Who has money has no culture and who has culture has no money. The people having both are very few in number. As Rejans, we kept the ones who have culture. (...) Rejans is not the place for the people who are in the upper income levels. (...) Anyhow, people who are culturally more enriched, live in closer areas like Beyoğlu, Tünel, Cihangir or Şişhane. (...) We think of ourself (referring to Rejans) as addressing the people with A plus culture. If there is a separation, it is that. There is no ethnic separation in our customer profile. What is in common in our customer profile is that they all have upper levels of culture, and they are more quality people in cultural terms.¹⁷³

Cezayir Restaurant's owner took a similar stand, and expressed his ideas as followed;

Our customer profile is mainly made up of people who have a good education, a reasonable amount of intellectual accumulation. They are basically members of the middle classes and upper middle classes. (...) I do not want people who go to fashionable and high-toned places to come to Cezayir Restaurant. I wish this place to become somewhere like Rejans Restaurant, which has a serious culinary and food culture. (...) I prefer customers with a good educational background rather than people who have money but do not know where to spend their money.¹⁷⁴

¹⁷³ Erdal Sezener, interview by the author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 26 February 2010.

¹⁷⁴ Fatih Arıman, interview by the author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 25 February 2010.

In the lifestyle and food writings, it is now more obvious that high cultural capital has started to be appreciated more than high economic capital devoid of cultural capital.

Because those writings target not only the rich, it can be seen in an article that they promotes a food festival, organized in fancy restaurants express that they offer refined tastes at reasonable prices.¹⁷⁵ This proved the fact that refined tastes are not seen as belonging to the upper classes in economic terms. Plus, in another newspaper article it is seen that there was concern for the distortion of Beyoğlu, which historically has been associated with higher cultural capital, by Etiler, which has been a popular place for entertainment, eating-out and nightlife, especially, in the 1990s that is mostly associated with higher economic capital and a limited amount of cultural capital, or the nouveau riche. As a life-style writer articulated after the opening of places like 360, that is one of the most luxurious fine dining restaurants/night clubs in İstanbul, in Beyoğlu, many discussions took place on whether the upper-class people (in monetary terms) coming to Beyoğlu, by car with drivers on İstiklal Boulevard that is closed to car traffic, will distort the historical texture of Beyoğlu or not.¹⁷⁶

Another manifestation of how cultural capital has contested the dominance of economic capital is seen in the food and life style writing was the increasing praises

¹⁷⁵ Bade Gürleyen, “Bir elimde kadeh, bir elimde çatal, damağımda Nişantaşı” *Milliyet*, November, 1 2009, retrieved in April, 27, from <<http://www.milliyet.com.tr/bir-elimde-kadeh--bir-elimde-catal--damaгимda-nisantasi/pazar/haberdetayarsiv/22.08.2010/1156673/default.htm>>

Çok Uygun fiyatlara çok rafine lezzetler sunacağız.

¹⁷⁶ Çağdaş Ertuna, “Etiler Beyoğlu’nu Bozar mı?” *Milliyet*, November, 28 2009, retrieved in April 28, 2010, from <<http://www.milliyet.com.tr/Yazar.aspx?aType=YazarDetay&ArticleID=1167294&AuthorID=168&Date=28.11.2009&b=ETILER,%20BEYOGLUNU%20BOZAR%20MI&a=%C3%87a%C4%9Fda%C5%9F%20Ertuna>>

for the chefs as the rising stars in the gastronomical realm. The escalating attention to celebrity chefs will be evaluated in the next part.

Chef Owners

By the 2000s, following the western trend of celebrity chefs increasing their media and public visibility and becoming media stars, chefs and restaurants owned by chefs have attracted significant attention in Turkey. Chefs and chef restaurants started to be eulogized by the media and the food and lifestyle writers, referring to the significance of them in contributing the development of gastronomical capital in İstanbul. Ahmet Örs, a food writer and a gourmet, highlighted this development as, “Turkish cooks who have very good culinary educations and who have worked in very good kitchens abroad have begun to return to our homeland and they are taking the lead in certain principle restaurants. These cooks are in search of making good food that carry their own signatures and reflect their philosophies.”¹⁷⁷

Another food writer, Deniz Erbil, expresses that he defends the chef owners of the restaurants instead of restaurants owned by investors and capital owners. He puts it as, “in modern countries not the investor bosses but the laborer chefs are in the authority, the owner of the restaurant is a chef.”¹⁷⁸ Very similarly, Vedat Milor, one

¹⁷⁷ Ahmet Örs, “Türk Gastronomi sahnesi renklenecek,” *Sabah*, March, 07 2010, retrieved in March 15, 2010, from <http://www.sabah.com.tr/Ekler/Pazar/Yazarlar/2010/03/07/turk_gastronomi_sahnesi_renklenec>

Sağlam aşçılık eğitimi almış, yurtdışında çok iyi mutfaklarda çalışmış Türk aşçılar ülkemize dönmeye başladılar ve belli başlı restoranların mutfaklarının başına geçtiler. Bu aşçılar kendi imzalarını taşıyan ve felsefelerini yansıtan iyi yemekler yapmanın peşindeler.

¹⁷⁸ Deniz Erbil, “Şefi ile anılan yeni bir mekan,” *Sabah*, January 30, 2010, retrieved in March 15, 2010, from <http://www.sabah.com.tr/Ekler/Cumartesi/Gurme/2010/01/30/sefin_adi_yemege_lezzet_kata>

of the most famous gourmets and food writers, accentuates the significance of chef owners, and differentiates between the traditional cook model and the contemporary chefs.¹⁷⁹ The food writers stressed the difference between cooks and chefs, and claimed that the traditional cooks are more artisans or craftsmen, whereas the modern chefs are more associated with being artists. This new type of chefs is different from what people are used to see on daytime television programs. The food and lifestyle writers praised the intelligence, high education, creativity and the cosmopolitan character of these new chefs. The chefs, whose capital was their talent and knowledge, were exalted as opposed to the owners of economic capital.

Mehmet Gürs, the executive chef and owner of Mikla Restaurant which is one of the best fine dining restaurants in İstanbul, is one of the most popular celebrity chefs in Turkey. Gürs is probably the second most successful chef owner in the restaurant business after Vedat Başaran, who opened Feriye Restaurant that serves updates of Ottoman- Turkish cuisine, after working as the lead chef of restaurant in Çırağan Hotel's (one of the most luxurious hotels in İstanbul) for years. However, Gürs, who is quite younger than Vedat Başaran, is representing a cultural and sociological transformation in Turkey. He was graduated from the reputable culinary school of Johnson and Wales University, and he is of both Finnish and Turkish origin. He has been described as the Jamie Oliver of Turkey, and has attracted a lot of interest with his own TV show in NTV, a serious news channel, and his good looking physical appearance.

Çağdaş ülkelerde, yatırımcı patronların değil emekçi şeflerin borusu ötüyor; restoranın sahibi aşçı.

¹⁷⁹ Vedat Milor, "Nihayet ciddi bir lokanta," *Milliyet*, April, 15 2010, retrieved in April 27, 2010, from <http://cadde.milliyet.com.tr/2010/04/15/YazarDetay/1225116/NiHAYET_CiDDi_BiR_LOKANTA>

After years of familiarity with the image of cook, on daytime TV shows, that were mostly of Anatolian origins, who were either the graduates of a local cookery school or housewives, Gürs was different, who lived in Scandinavia during his childhood, and who is fluent both in Turkish, Finnish, and English, is said to be “taking on Turkish food by blending Finnish smoke with Turkish flavor, or as he says fusion without confusion.”¹⁸⁰ Despite the snob, wannabe, eclectic and artificial connotations and after many years of unsuccessful examples of fusion cuisine in Turkey, especially during the 1990s, Gürs and other successful chefs are approved of as the representatives of modernized Turkish cuisine.

Mehmet Gürs, himself, was a member of the new middle class, whose capital is his education and cultural capital. His values are equivalent to the rising middle class values and ideology, just like other chef owners of the popular restaurants. Not an aristocrat, admires the relaxation of dining out and the loosening of the dress codes and other formal rules in fancy restaurants; and he considers this as a sign of democratization.¹⁸¹ Plus, he exhibits a good example of how he is a modernizer of Turkish food without being an orientalist in a television show in the US (Today’s Show in MSNBC), where he presents a variety of food from Ottoman and Anatolian Cuisine. While speaking in fluent English about the stories of the food on the table located in the middle of Sultanahmet Square, he turns to the person who is preparing the döner kebab, and asks the person to fill the bread with *döner* preferring a very natural street talk, but still polite, rather than choosing elegant words.¹⁸²

¹⁸⁰ Jeremy Saphiro, comment on “Mehmet Gürs,” May, 28 2010, accessed June, 26 2010 <<http://www.stirthebots.com/2008/05/mehmet-grs.html>>

¹⁸¹ Mehmet Gürs, interview by the author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 16 March 2010.

¹⁸² Mehmet Gürs’ exact expression was “*Usta, şuna bir döner doldursana!*”

The emphasis on the rise of the white collar workers and the business people Gürs put, during our interview is, thus, not coincidental. As the owner of one of the best and most-popular fine-dining restaurants in İstanbul, he repeatedly comments on the significance of the rise of business and white-collar workers in society and their contribution to the democratization of the realm of eating out.¹⁸³

Knowledge as a Source of Distinction Mechanism

Both throughout the interviews and the food and lifestyle writings it has been revealed that knowledge and expertise have become legitimate sources for distinction. The reactions to the TV program *Yemekteyiz* (the format adapted from American TV show “Come Dine with Me”) is a good example to see how knowledge on food and the cultural capital of people serve to be a distinction mechanism. Both the contestants and the people who watch accuse each other of being ignorant. Orhan Tekelioğlu has commented on the program in an article as follows,

The food culture of the contestants is extremely low; however, their self-confidence is at the top. They can easily evaluate food they have not tasted before, however, their criteria for evaluation is very simple: “it is not suitable for my palate!” Ok. But that palate may not be aware of that taste, although it is too late for that now. (...) Everybody presents himself/herself as a terrific gourmet and chef, you think that the basis of Turkish people’s food repertoire is not composed of food that they have learned from their mother, or, at best, food that they taste in the houses of close friends, relatives or friends. You will think that these people constantly eat at the most expensive restaurants of the city, and they are unaware of the *pideci* and the *köfteci* on the corner. As if they know all the food in the world and constantly eat it in their homes. They are going abroad in the holidays and learning world kitchen. But we realize that either the one who cooks or the ones eating are not aware of any of this. But they all pretend “as if they know” and pretend “as if they understand,” here is a common behavior reflex.¹⁸⁴

¹⁸³ Mehmet Gürs, interview by the author, tape recording, İstanbul, Turkey, 16 March 2010.

¹⁸⁴ Orhan Tekelioğlu, “Yemekteyiz ve iştahımız kaçıyor,” *Radikal*, December, 14 2008, retrieved in April, 29 2010, from <<http://www.radikal.com.tr/Radikal.aspx?aType=RadikalEklerDetay&ArticleID=912870&Date=24.03.2010&CategoryID=42>>

Moreover, in an interview with Vedat Başaran, he commented on the television show *Yemekteyiz* as follows, “Turkish people and all the people who live in Anatolia genetically have the gift to discover tastes. There is no chance that people can be this much uncouth and tasteless.”¹⁸⁵

Zukin accentuates that instead of production knowledge, the Passionate Shopper (a feature of the *New York* magazine in the US) needs craft knowledge: a sensory appreciation of a product’s qualities, a modest understanding of different production techniques, and the imagination to construct a product’s “back story” – a social narrative of the cultural tradition from which the product comes.¹⁸⁶ Concurringly, one of my interviewees commented as follows,

I think, what is significant is the knowledge on food. Speak of food culture again and again, however many of them think that it is to know Italian pasta, French *entrecôte* or *chateaubriand* steak (with a French accent), or Mexican *fajitas*. I know many people (mostly younger) who keep saying that they like

Yarışmacıların yemek kültürleri ise inanılmaz düzeyde düşük; buna mukabil, kendilerine olan güvenleri zirvede. Daha önce tatmadığı yemekleri kolayca değerlendirebiliyorlar, değerlendirme kriterleri ise çok yalın: “Damağıma uygun değil!” İyi de, o damak, o taddan, onun varyasyonlarında haberdar olmayabilir ama ne fayda. (...) herkes kendini müthiş bir gurmé ve chef gibi sunuyor, sanırsınız ki Türkiye insanının yemek repertuarının temeli evlerinde annelerinden öğrendikleri ya da olsa olsa yakın dost, akraba ya da ahabap evlerinde tattıklarından oluşmuyor. Sanırsınız ki, bu insanlar sürekli olarak şehrin en pahalı restoranlarında yemek yiyor, köşedeki pideci ya da köfteciden bihaberler. Sanki dünyanın tüm yemeklerini biliyor ve sürekli olarak evlerinde yiyorlar. Tatillerde de yurtdışına çıkıp dünya mutfağı öğreniyorlar. Ama fark ediyoruz ki, aslında ne yemeği yapanların bunlardan haberi var ne de yiyeceğinin. Ama hepsi “bilirmiş”, “anlarmış” gibi yapıyor, alın size ortak bir davranış refleksi!

¹⁸⁵ Funda Özkan, “Pornografiden daha tehlikeli, RTÜK 'Yemekteyiz'e kural getirmeli,” *Radikal*, January 16, 2010. retrieved in April, 20 2010, from <http://www.radikal.com.tr/Default.aspx?aType=RadikalYazarYazisi&ArticleID=974825&Yazar=FUNDA_ÖZKAN&Date=16.01.2010&CategoryID=101>

Türk insanının, Anadolu toprağında yaşayan tüm insanların genetik lezzet keşfetme yeteneği vardır. İnsanların bu kadar görgüsüz, lezzetsiz olma ihtimali yoktur.

¹⁸⁶ Sharon Zukin, *Point of purchase: how shopping changed American culture* (New York: Routledge, 2004), p. 183

Mexican food a lot. But they don't know the simplest thing that all the food they say they like as Mexican food is not Mexican food but they are Tex-Mex.¹⁸⁷ In our country, people like pontificating on food a lot. (...) I converse with many people on food, from my housekeeper to many friends, and I learn a lot of things especially about regional food and techniques. However, my overall idea is that people still have little knowledge.¹⁸⁸

By emphasizing the significance of media education on the subject, another had a similar narrative as,

I do much research (on food), because I find knowledge on food important. I think the TV programs of Vedat Milor or Mehmet Yaşın on television are really useful. Besides, I follow the newspapers. One learns a lot. But of course, one needs both reading and tasting for a full knowledge.¹⁸⁹

A significant example that proves how much people refrain from using socioeconomic terms in order to display distinctions; and concepts like knowledge and taste are instrumentalized to differentiate is in the following interviewee's narrative;

How fast some titles are given out, nowadays. Everyone is a gourmet. Certain things really have cheapened very much. To display a good taste for food, this gourmet word is in the spots. But when you look, how many people know about being a gourmet is open to question. Knowledge deficiency is at its maximum for our people. I passed the world cuisines, how much do we know about our local and regional cuisines? (...) People keep saying that we are a meat-loving nation, for example. How many people know what is proper to do from what part of an animal? People who understand neither cooking techniques and the best of the ingredients nor having no serious experience of food, declare themselves as gourmets by tasting a few different -in their opinion of course- food. (...) You have to read, you have to taste, and you need experience. That is the only way to know.¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁷ Tex-Mex Cuisine includes the foods that are cooked by the Mexicans who live in the US, and especially the Mexican cooks in Texas. Many popular Tex-Mex foods like *fajitas*, *burritos*, and *quesadillas* are mostly referred as Mexican food in Turkey.

¹⁸⁸ Derya (pseudonym), interview by the author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 18 July 2010

¹⁸⁹ Gülden (pseudonym), interview by the author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 21 May 2010.

¹⁹⁰ Can (pseudonym), interview by the author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 18 July 2010.

Thus, it can be said that there is a serious struggle for distinctions between classes and differentiation within classes over the command of knowledge and the display of this knowledge on food and eating culture. Especially, the new middle classes as the social climbers try to locate themselves within the higher levels of class.

Omnivorous Consumers: Constructing Alternative Mechanisms of Distinction

As was emphasized in the theoretical framework, cultural omnivorousness denotes “developing a taste for everything.” Although, it did not necessarily suggest “liking everything indiscriminately”, it signified “an openness to appreciating everything.” The concept of cultural omnivorousness is useful for the interpretation of the eating-out trends dominant especially in Beyoğlu, specifically with the 2000s.

Rifat Bali, in *Tarz-ı Hayat'tan Life-Style'a*, narrated how eating-out and food consumption have become important aspects of the life-styles of the new elites. Bali frames the class and the culture on the rise in the late 1980s and the early 1990s within luxury consumption with increasing visibility. The trends of eating out places are referred to as distinguished elite clubs, places purified of the common and lower classes were popular.¹⁹¹ Furthermore, he stated that luxury goods such as champagne, cigars, cognacs and caviars, and sushi as well as the French cuisine were the focus of upper class consumption. Snobbery, thus, marked the food consumption habits of the rising classes in the 1990s.

However, in the 2000s, a rise in the cultural omnivorousness as a trend in food and eating can be observed, which represents a change, when compared to the

¹⁹¹ Rifat Bali pp.127-129

trends of the late 1980s and 1990s. It can be said that by the 2000s, local, regional, traditional and even working class food started to be appreciated. Although, French cuisine which had symbolized good and refined taste for decades, or Far Eastern cuisine that have marked the 1990s' elite taste, did not lose their popularity, it can be argued that they ceased to be the mere sources of asserting good and refined tastes and food culture.

Looking at the food and lifestyle writings of today, it can be said to maintain that cultural omnivorousness is, literally, institutionalizing in the Turkey's gastronomical arena.

In a newspaper article with a heading "What is the Latest News from the Gourmet Worlds?"¹⁹² it is seen that restaurants with a cosmopolitan character including both the world cuisine and the local foods like *mantı* (Turkish Ravioli), *su böreği* (a *börek* made of layers of noodle-like pastry filled with cheese or meat), *zeytinyağlı sarma* (stuffed grape leaves with olive oil) in its menu ARE praised. Moreover, in the same article, a very small *köfte* (meatball) place, Köfteci Hüseyin, located in Beyoğlu, is suggested together with 360 Restaurant, which is one of the most luxurious restaurants in Beyoğlu, as well as Çiya restaurant, in Kadıköy, that serves food from the cuisine of south-eastern Anatolian region of Turkey.

In another article, a food writer expresses how he appreciates restaurants serving the local and regional food:

Together with the famous Far-Eastern restaurants opening branches in Turkey, our young food and drink sector, remembering the beauty and specialty of the local and regional food, is bringing the regional food to the big cities, instead of the *kebab* places and *balıkçıs* (fish restaurants) that we are used to see all around. Meals, cooked in a proper manner, from the

¹⁹² "Gurme alemlerinden son havadisler neler?" *Radikal*, July,5 2008, retrieved in April, 24 2010, from <http://www.radikal.com.tr/Default.aspx?aType=RadikalEklerDetay&CategoryID=41&ArticleID=886747&Date=05.07.2008>

regions of Gaziantep, Urfa, Bodrum and Ayvalık, which have differentiated and defined cuisines and food cultures, are very close to us. We can feel as if we go to Urfa one night, and to Shanghai in another.¹⁹³

Similarly, Vedat Milor, a famous gourmet and food writer, praises places like Kiva Han restaurant, in Galata, which serves food from the Black Sea region, as well as different cities of Turkey, like Antep, Tokat, Amasya, Aydın, Hatay and even Cyprus. He emphasizes that it is important to have restaurants like Kiva Han, in order not to lose our regional food.¹⁹⁴

Moreover, together with the increasing interest in the local and regional food of Anatolia, but different and less popular regional food of world began to be extolled in addition to the popular and prestigious cuisines of the world. Excitement and hunger for different food and cuisines are greater than ever. There is a huge increase in the interest to experience specialized restaurants that even, a restaurant serving Armenian style *mezes*¹⁹⁵ can be presented as a place of different experience by the food writers.¹⁹⁶

¹⁹³ Tarık Bayazıt, “Restoran Halleri,” *Radikal*, July,5 2008, retrieved in April, 29 2010, from <<http://www.radikal.com.tr/Radikal.aspx?aType=RadikalEklerDetay&ArticleID=886748&Date=21.07.2010&CategoryID=41>>

Dünyanın ismi bilindik Uzakdoğu restoranlarının İstanbul'a şube açmalarının yanında, genç yiyecek içecek sektörümüz yerel ve yöresel yemeğin güzelliğini-özelliğini hatırlayıp, büyük bir hızla her yerde görmeye alıştığımız geleneksel kebabçıların balıkçıların yerine yöresel yemekleri büyük şehirlere getirmekte. Gaziantep, Urfa, Bodrum, Ayvalık gibi yemek kültürü farklılaşmış ve tanımlanmış yörelerin adabına uygun yemekleri artık hemen yanımızda. Bir gece Urfa'ya ertesi gece Şanghay'a gitmiş hissedebiliriz artık kendimizi.

¹⁹⁴ “Yöresel yemeklerimizi kaybetmemek için Kiva Han gibi öncüler gerek,” *Milliyet*, February,21 2010, retrieved in April, 27 2010, from <<http://www.milliyet.com.tr/yoresel-yemeklerimizi-kaybetmemek-icin-kiva-han-gibi-onculer-gerek/vedat-milor/pazar/yazardetay/21.02.2010/1201777/default.htm>>

¹⁹⁵ *Mezes* are small portions of starters that are accompanied with alcohol, similar to Spanish *tapas*.

¹⁹⁶ Melis Çalapkulu, “Ermeni usulü mezede iddialı,” *Sabah*, May,29 2009, retrieved in April, 24 2010, from <http://www.sabah.com.tr/Cuma/2009/05/29/ermeni_usulu_mezede_iddiali>

Rediscovering the different regions and local foods of Anatolia and the integration of working class food in the category of natural and authentic has been a rising trend. Cafés serving simit (Turkish bagel), cheddar cheese from the city of Kars, or home-made jams can be given as some of the best places in Beyoğlu.¹⁹⁷ *Hamsili iç pilav* (Anchovy with garnished rice) a regional food peculiar to Black Sea region, can be central as a dinner in a newspaper article telling about a stylish and trendy night spent in Beyoğlu.¹⁹⁸

Simplicity in food and eating has become just as popular as the tendency to consume regional and traditional food. Trying to emphasize the significance of the simple and local tastes like cheese and watermelon, or ice-cream with melon produced in a non-industrial local shop; a life-style and food writer expresses her view:

Aren't you bored of those frilly tastes you see in magazines, those dishes with towers that you came across in the newspapers? Aren't you sick and tired of things that go onto the 'beds' of this and that covered with various types of sauces and "pretending to be" food? I am. I don't find them real or sincere.¹⁹⁹

Hence, omnivorous trend reinforced with the cosmopolitan character of Beyoğlu is cherished in consistency with the new middle class' love of diversifying their

¹⁹⁷ "Beyoğlu'nun en iyi mekanları" *Milliyet*, January, 7 2010, retrieved in April, 21 2010, from <http://cadde.milliyet.com.tr/2010/01/07/HaberDetay/1182839/BEYOGLU_NUN_EN_IYI_MEKANLARI>

¹⁹⁸ Çağdaş Ertuna, "Bir Beyoğlu Programı," *Milliyet Cadde*, December, 21 2008, retrieved in April, 26 2010, from <http://cadde.milliyet.com.tr/2010/07/02/YazarDetay/1030883/Bir_Beyoglu_programi>

¹⁹⁹ Nur Çintay A., "Sokağın tadı tuzu," *Radikal*, July, 7 2004, retrieved in February, 17 2010, from <<http://www.radikal.com.tr/haber.php?haberno=122975>>

Dergilerde gördüğünüz o fırırlı lezzetlerden, gazete eklerinde rastladığımız o kuleli tabaklardan sıkılmadınız mı? Onun bunun 'yatağına' giren, türlü çeşit sosa bulanıp 'gibi yapan' yemeklerden fenalık gelmedi mi? Bana geldi. Onları hiç sahici, samimi bulmuyorum.

experience. One of my interviewees articulated his tendency to omnivorous food consumption as follows:

Let me give an example. *Leb-i Derya* was one of my favorite places in the first years of its opening. (I am looking for more quality foods now if I will pay that amount of money) If you ask why, I can say that the place had many things I was looking for. There were not many places of that type in Beyoğlu, back then. It was a fine restaurant, and it was not a snob place, although it served fine and quality products. It was rather a relaxed environment, with many types of people and food. Plus, it was luckily in Beyoğlu, there were some places I like in Nişantaşı but I always thought that Nişantaşı was a fake place. Beyoğlu was always much more real in that sense. I remember I was smoking *nargile*²⁰⁰ and having a cocktail at the same time. I was having *fajita* for the dinner, which was something interesting for me 7-8 years ago; after that we were having beers, tequilas or cocktails for drink; and, at the end of the night we were having *dürüms* (wraps) or *kokoreçs*²⁰¹ before going home. Those never appear artificial in Beyoğlu, because Beyoğlu has them all. I always loved that variety. You can eat in Refik, or you can eat in Moreish and you can end your night with a soup and *pide* in Nizam, or have a few hamburgers in Kızılkayalar. That is Beyoğlu and that is who I am. I like being relaxed about such things.²⁰²

Leb-i Derya Restaurant was introduced by a newspaper to the readers with a huge emphasis on its cosmopolitan and omnivorous character, as follows,

Leb-i Derya emerged as a colorful place in which people from various backgrounds and income groups can come together. (...) This is a terrace restaurant in Beyoğlu, Kumbaracılar Street. Or it is an end of summer surprise for the İstanbulites with the basilicas scattered in the summer sun, with its wooden-linen texture and interesting food. It is a surprise, because, this restaurant being reminiscent of Nişantaşı Cafés with its elegant design, and of restaurants located at the Bosphorus with its view, never omits the eccentric mood of Beyoğlu with its Bohemian polish. Or we should put it that way; there is room for everyone in this terrace from serious dignified writers

²⁰⁰ A *nargile* is a traditional type of smoking pipe, in which the smoke is filtered through a water pipe before reaching the inhaler pipe

²⁰¹ *Kokoreç* is a Turkish dish made of seasoned, skewered lamb intestines and it is mostly found in street vendors or some specialized restaurants.

²⁰² Onur (pseudonym), interview by the author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 14 July 2010

to pop singers, from Zen Buddhists to the women of Nişantaşı, from Koreans to Africans.²⁰³

When Leb-i Derya was opened at the beginnings of the 2000s, it was one of the first places in Beyoğlu to attract more upper-class people. Even though this restaurant provided no food that was very special or original, it was original in the sense that it was one of the pioneers in Beyoğlu in praising the cosmopolitanism it offered. In spite of its eclectic character, the representation of this restaurant, in the article, is an important sign to show the turn at the beginning of the 2000s for Beyoğlu.

In addition, the interviewee's strong emphasis on the variety of restaurants and food that can be consumed in Beyoğlu is quite significant. Another interviewee made similar statements on her love of variety in food as follows:

Actually, I like a wide range of food. I am not sure which of them I like most. They are equally precious, I think. I like eating paella in Galata sometimes, and, you know, I also like to eat at a Thai restaurant. All are different sources of pleasure for me. (...) For example, I also have serious interest in the regional food of Anatolia. I like both Italian and Far Eastern food, but that doesn't mean only foreign cuisines are good. My family is originally from Malatya, so we were not eating risotto in our home when I was a child. (...) However, although I am from Malatya, I think I am more of an Aegean and Mediterranean cuisine type. I think food culture is this variety in a sense. It is not only to eat a steak with Café de Paris sauced. I believe that being cultured on food is being familiar with this richness and variety.²⁰⁴

(Funda, Age: 36)

²⁰³ Mehmet Kenan Kaya, "Beyoğlu denizle öpüşüyor," *Milliyet*, September, 8 2002, retrieved in May, 7 2010, from <<http://www.milliyet.com.tr/2002/09/08/pazar/paz05.html>>

Leb-i Derya, her kesimden, her gelir grubundan insanın bir araya geldiği çok renkli bir mekan olarak ortaya çıktı (...) Burası Beyoğlu-Kumbaracılar yokuşunda bir teras restorani. Ya da yaz güneşinde serpilmiş fesleğenleri, ahşap-keten dokusu ve ilginç yemekleriyle bir yaz sonu sürprizi İstanbullulara. Sürpriz çünkü şık mekan tasarımıyla Nişantaşı kafelerini, manzarasıyla Boğaz lokantalarını anımsatan bu mekan Beyoğlu'nun bohem cilasıyla "uçuk" bir ruh halini de eksik etmiyor üzerinden. Ya da şöyle söylemeli: Bu terasta ağır oturlu yazarlardan pop şarkıcılarına, Zen-Budistlerinden Nişantaşı kadınlarına, Korelilerden Afrikalılara herkese bir yer var.

²⁰⁴ Funda(pseudonym), interview by the author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 16 July 2010

Nevertheless, it can be said that the general trend both in the language of food and life style writings and my interviewees was to put a special emphasis on the significance of consuming a variety of food as well as the emphasis on the significance of the regional food of Anatolia. Consistently, modernized versions of Turkish food took the upper hand in Turkey's gastronomical arena. Many of the most popular fine dining restaurants in İstanbul have based their menus on Turkey's cuisines that are fused with different cooking techniques. Referring to a foreign fancy restaurant opened in İstanbul, a lifestyle writer expressed the superiority of a restaurant offering modernized examples of Turkish culinary as following:

They started with things like a big menu, weird decoration, drinks and foods that you can't pronounce their names, crabs, Australian crocodile, rain forest bird (I am totally making it up)(...) My point is that fortunately, these cool restaurants are opening in Turkey. Nice. The tastes of the world are coming to us, as well as, novelty and new cultures. Tasting develops, cultivation increases. But I wouldn't trade Changa for anything.²⁰⁵

Mehmet Yaşın, a gourmet and a food writer, informs us that Changa means mixture in the Swahili language spoken in the African continent and he further points out that this name is harmonious, as well as the menu, with the mixed customer profile of the restaurant including students with backpacks, foreigners visiting İstanbul, businessmen/women, and young people who tend to get older, who have tasted different flavors of the world and keeping to looking further for the best.²⁰⁶ Changa restaurant is located in a renovated art nouveau building like many other similar

²⁰⁵ Fem Güçlütürk, "Changa'yı diğerlerinden ayıran ne?" *Radikal Cumartesi*, September, 20 2008, retrieved April,29 2010, from <http://www.radikal.com.tr/Radikal.aspx?aType=RadikalEklerDetay&ArticleID=899347&Date=07.07.2010&CategoryID=41>

Koca mönü, acayip dekor, adımı telaffuz edemediğin içkiler, yemekler; yengeçler, yok Avustralya timsahı, yok yağmur ormanları kuşu (atıyorum tamamen) gibi mönülerle giriştiler işe. (...) İyi ki açılıyor bu havalı yerler. Güzel. Değişiklik, yeni kültürler, ayağımıza gelen dünya lezzetleri. Görgü artıyor, tat alma geliyor. Ama Changa'mı değişmem ben.

²⁰⁶ Mehmet Yaşın, *Lezzetli İstanbul* (İstanbul:Ekin Yayın, 2008), p.186.

restaurants. Most of the restaurants with a claim to novelty and renovation to Turkish cuisine prefer to settle in the art nouveau buildings of Beyoğlu.

The renovation of the old historical and mostly art nouveau buildings of Beyoğlu, brought together the transformation of the districts in which they are located. Meşrutiyet Street, together with Asmalı Mescit and Şişhane, is a good example of how a quarter of Beyoğlu has been transformed in line with the omnivorous trend in food and eating. Lowes maintained that “buildings are renovated to accommodate and host the new combination of leisure and consumption activities characteristic of intensive urban redevelopment.”²⁰⁷

Hence, the area from Galatasaray High School and Tünel Square seems to have become a place of attraction for the middle and upper-middle classes in the last years. Meşrutiyet Street, which is parallel to İstiklal Boulevard; Şişhane, which is the square at the end of Meşrutiyet Street; and, Asmalı Mescit, which is a small quarter between İstiklal Boulevard and Meşrutiyet Street, have been in a transformation for a few years, although the first two are relatively new compared to Asmalı Mescit. The historical buildings in the district, many of which were built in Art Nouveau style, are being renovated one by one, and the increasing popularity of the district is related strongly to the historical background of it. Meşrutiyet Street with places like the Great London Hotel and Pera Palace Hotel, which constituted great significance in İstanbul’s entertainment and night life 100-150 years before, and it continued to be an important center for İstanbul’s cultural and entertainment life until mid-1960s.

Today, the area’s revitalization is applauded by the life-style and food writers, with special emphasis on its cosmopolitan character by the luxurious and more

²⁰⁷ Mark Douglas Lowes, *Indy Dreams and Urban Nightmares: Speed Merchants, Spectacle, and the Struggle over Public Space in the World-Class City* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002), p.23.

modest restaurants of new Turkish cuisine, the old meyhanes in Asmalımescit, French and Italian restaurants as well as many ethnic and regional restaurants.²⁰⁸ Within the restructuring of the district, one of the best representatives of omnivorous tendencies in rise is Mikla Restaurant, which is located on the roof of five starred The Marmara Pera Hotel. Although a more detailed analysis of this restaurant exists in the following parts, it is necessary to advert to the omnivorous character of the restaurant. Mikla, being one of the most luxurious and high quality restaurants in İstanbul, has created a team in order to search throughout Anatolia for local tastes, products and producers. The owner, Mehmet Gürs, proudly has remarked that all but two ingredients used in Mikla are originated in Turkey, and added that very soon they would be changing the two with their alternatives which could be found in Anatolia.²⁰⁹ In effect, this indicates a change and redefinition of what is acceptable in terms of being luxurious and palatable, because, ten years before now the definition of luxurious mostly was associated with being foreign.

Cultural omnivorousness has been marking the 2000s as a trend on the rise. Thus for the present day the new middle class, that is educated, professional, substantially coming from a lower class background, and as a parallel development the spread of omnivorousness rather than snobbish attitudes towards food should be

²⁰⁸ Deniz Erbil, “Yemek de Bir Sanattır,” *Sabah*, January, 1 2010, <http://www.sabah.com.tr/Ekler/Cumartesi/Gurme/2010/01/16/yemek_de_bir_sanattir>

Pelin Çini, “Asmalımescit’te herkese eğlence var,” *Milliyet*, December, 21 2008, <<http://www.milliyet.com.tr/Pazar/HaberDetay.aspx?aType=HaberDetay&KategoriID=26&ArticleID=1030582&PAGE=1>>

Çağdaş Ertuna, “Eğlence Meşrutiyet’e kaydı,” *Milliyet*, November, 29 2009, <<http://www.milliyet.com.tr/Pazar/HaberDetay.aspx?aType=HaberDetay&ArticleID=1167307&Date=29.11.2009&Kategori= pazar&b=Eglence%20Mesrutiyete%20kaydi>>

A. Sami Özbudak, “Herkesin gözü Şişhane’de,” *Milliyet Cadde*, April, 8 2010, <<http://cadde.milliyet.com.tr/2010/09/11/HaberDetay/1222110/herkesin-gozu-sishane-de>>

²⁰⁹ Mehmet Gürs, interview by the author, tape recording, İstanbul, Turkey, 16 March 2010.

focused. The new middle class is one that realizes itself by consuming.

Omnivorousness as a trend helps to overcome the problem of snobbery. The food writers are not only writing on the most expensive, rare and luxurious food, but also many other types of ethnic regional or working class food. Thanks to omnivorousness, different classes are integrated to consumption of food not only as spectators, but they now take active roles and participate in the consumption.

Omnivorousness has turned into a solution to eliminate the snobbishness and to open the sphere of food consumption to more people. However, it has also become a new source of distinction; it has created new principles and standards to reinforce social inclusion and exclusion. No more high culture and snobbery. Thus, rather than eliminating the distinctions and hierarchies, it has changed their nature and produced new ones.

As a last point before closing this part, it should be underscored that Beyoğlu emerged as the perfect place that fit very well the requirements of this new middle class value, cultural omnivorousness, in the sense that Beyoğlu has historically incorporated a variety of international to local and regional cuisines, and from lower as well as middle and upper class restaurants, a cosmopolitan character, different ethnic and social groups. Particularly, the area from Galatasaray to Tünel has been remarkably suitable for the new middle class tastes and values, and now it is the best example of those by the neighboring restaurants that serving Osetian cuisine on one hand and Antakya cuisine on the other; an *esnaf lokantası* (a restaurant that is for the shopkeepers around) serving traditional Black Sea cuisine, or a *ciğerci* (liver seller) as well as Italian, French or Mexican restaurants side by side located one jump ahead of the *meyhanes*. Yet, the rallying of Beyoğlu within the last two decades gradually was not coincidental.

From Waste to Taste

As Ayfer Tunç narrates, in her book on the lifestyle and habits of the decade, the 1970s are recalled as the decade of sparingness, as a time when sparingness was a virtue, and ostentation was a shame.²¹⁰ Eating ready-made food was expensive and considered as waste. Not only for the working classes, but also for the middle classes, eating at a restaurant was not a very common practice. Most of the working people used to go to their homes or bring their lunches to the offices. Eating in a restaurant was, mostly, a sign of extravagance or wastefulness.²¹¹ Tunç expresses how people back in the 1970s ate out as,

It was very shameful for adults to eat something outside. Things that other people can see and emulate were eaten secretly (...) Most of the restaurants had curtains; and even if the person eating could be seen behind the net curtain, what was eaten was not seen.²¹²

Thus, it can be said that eating out was a rare occasion in the 1970s which was seen mostly as a waste, and it was contingent upon invisibility. Taking into consideration the fact that the new middle class that socially was rising consisted mostly of people who were children or teenagers; contrasting the 1970s to this decade's eating habits with today's gain a special importance.

²¹⁰ Ayfer Tunç, *Bir Maniniz Yoksa Anneler Size Gelecek: 70'li Yıllarda Hayatımız* (Yapı Kredi Yayınları: İstanbul, 2001), p.287.

²¹¹ Zafer Yenal and Meltem Ahıska, *Aradığınız Kişiyi Şu An Ulaşılamıyor: Türkiye'de Hayat Tarzı Temsilleri 1980-2005* (Osmanlı Bankası Yayınları: İstanbul 2006), p.385.

²¹² Ayfer Tunç, *Bir Maniniz Yoksa Anneler Size Gelecek: 70'li Yıllarda Hayatımız* (Yapı Kredi Yayınları: İstanbul, 2001), p.303.

Yetişkinlerin dışarda birşey yemeleri çok ayıptı. Başkalarının görüp özenebileceği şeyler gizlice yenir... Lokantaların büyük çoğunluğunda perde vardı. İnce tül perdenin ardından yemek yiyenler görülse de ne yedikleri görülmezdi.

Together with the transformation of the Turkish economy throughout the 1980s, a transition from a production to a consumption society also has occurred. Thus, the consumption societies that are more expressive are marked by the increasing expression of tastes. Tastes are the dispositions and signifiers of cultural capital. In the contemporary urban life of İstanbul, eating out has become a matter of displaying tastes, especially for the rising middle classes.

Accordingly, one of the interviewees asserted the significance of tastes to her with a strong emphasis as follows,

Food is not a matter of class or having a lot of money, if we put the very poor people to one side. You know what I mean. It is more about tastes and what you like. It is about your interest, about your knowledge. I do not deny the importance of money, of course. It is obvious that you should have a certain amount of money to eat at a restaurant or a café. But what I say is something else; it is about what you spend your money on, even if you have a limited amount. I know people who do not make a lot of money (by the way I am definitely not a rich person either) but they are still careful about what they pay for. What I mean is that if you have a taste for food and eating, a taste for experiencing different foods, you will spend your money on them. Maybe you will eat not that often but you can still experience. We are living in Turkey; this country is a heaven of food. Anyone can find fine and delicious food at low prices. But you can also choose to eat a couple of the same foods everyday even if you have enough money. I am not talking about very expensive food, but other than that it is more about your tastes but it is about having a lot of money.²¹³

However, as Michele Lamont writes, in *Money, Morals and Manners*, comparing the culture of the French and American middle classes, asserted that speaking of tastes is speaking of class and when we look at the differentiation within the same class, tastes are significant in determining your position in the social class. In other words; making distinctions on the basis of tastes and lifestyles is equivalent to making distinctions on the basis of class background.²¹⁴ Supportingly, Pierre Bourdieu states

²¹³ Aylin (pseudonym), interview by the author, tape recording, İstanbul, Turkey, 17 July 2010.

²¹⁴ Michele Lamont, *Money, Morals, and Manners the Culture of the French and the American Upper-Middle Class* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press,1999), p.103

that “taste classifies and it classifies the classifier.”²¹⁵ Furthermore, Bourdieu strongly emphasizes how tastes work as distinction mechanisms through negation of other tastes as follows,

Tastes (i.e. manifested preferences) are the practical affirmation of an inevitable difference. It is no accident that when they have to be justified, they are asserted purely negatively, by the refusal of other tastes. In matters of taste, more than anywhere else, all determination is negation; and tastes are perhaps first and foremost distastes, disgust provoked by horror or visceral intolerance (‘sick-making’) of the tastes of others (...) Aesthetic intolerance can be terribly violent. Aversion to different life-styles is perhaps one of the strongest barriers between the classes; class endogamy is evidence of this.²¹⁶

Furthermore, Michele Lamont expressed how tastes work as distinction mechanisms without openly speaking on socioeconomic signs,

Rejecting the Français Moyen means distancing oneself from “common” tastes, i.e., from the tastes common to the middle and working class. The fact that French individuals often celebrate refinement over “common” or “vulgar” behaviors or values constitutes a form of euphemized socioeconomic boundary, i.e., a way to take distance toward other classes under the guise of cultural rather than socioeconomic differences.²¹⁷

Thus speaking of tastes is not only about tastes and signs of cultural capital, but it is mostly about economic differences. The well known saying in Turkish meaning the tastes and the colors are not debatable, thus proves itself wrong in the lifestyle realm, because as the socioeconomic differences are less legitimate in distinctions at least openly, tastes that try to outclass other tastes have become the legitimate basis for asserting distinctions.

The Desire for Natural, Healthy and Organic

²¹⁵ Bourdieu, *Distinction*, p.6

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p.56

²¹⁷ Lamont, p.103

For the recent decades, issues related to health and healthy nutrition seems to occupy an important position with the rise in the concern for personal development and constructing the self both physically and psychologically. Displaying the tastes on eating habits is mostly a feature of the new middle classes, and the new middle class obsession with their body reveals. How to relate to their bodies has been a new middle class concern.

Bennett et al. have expressed it as, “In the management of the body – through eating, clothing, exercise and medication- individuals and social groups exhibit difference.”²¹⁸ They further stress that “in recent decades, body management techniques have become a very conspicuous aspect of self-presentation and have been served by the expansion of commercial service to deal with diet and health, physical training and cosmetic improvement to appearances.”²¹⁹ On the other hand, Bourdieu stresses on the fact that each class develops a different way relating to their own bodies;

Tastes in food also depend on the idea each class has of the body and of the effects of food on the body that is, on its strength, health and beauty; and on the categories it uses to evaluate these effects, some of which the different classes may rank in different ways. Thus, whereas the working classes are more attentive to the strength of the (male) body than its shape, and tend to go for products that are both cheap and nutritious, the professions prefer products that are tasty, health-giving, light and not fattening. Taste, a class culture turned into nature, that is, *embodied*, helps to shape the class body. It is an incorporated principle of classification which governs all forms of incorporation, choosing and modifying everything that the body ingests and digests and assimilates, physiologically and psychologically. It follows that the body is the most indisputable materialization of class taste, which it manifests in several ways. It does this first in the seemingly most natural features of the body, the dimensions (volume, height, weight) and shapes (round or square, stiff or supple, straight or curved) of its visible forms, which express in countless ways a whole relation to the body, i.e., a way of treating

²¹⁸ Tony Bennett, Mike Savage, Elizabeth Silva, Alan Warde, Modesto Gayo-Cal and David Wright, *Culture, Class, Distinction*, (NY: Routledge, 2009), p.152

²¹⁹ *Ibid*, p.153

it, caring for it, feeding it, maintaining it, which reveals the deepest dispositions of the habitus.²²⁰

Following Bourdieu's approach, it can be said that the new middle class like the other classes have developed its own approach while relating to their bodies and the concern for health and eating accordingly, have become a significant marker of their class positions. One of my interviewees commented on the issue of healthy eating as follows,

Do I care about health matters in eating? Yes, I think I do. Do I like this? I don't think I do. (Laughing) But I think it is important. Honestly, most of the time I enjoy high-calorie meals more than the food that is considered to be healthy. However, I have to be careful with my appearance. (...) In the business world it matters how you deal with your body and look. (...) Because of my job I eat out a lot, especially business lunches and dinners. You can't take your customers to hamburger or wrap places. Everybody (not only women) is careful about what they eat and whether it is healthy and light or not. You don't necessarily need to be on a diet. (...) I also know many of these people enjoy wraps, kebabs or pizzas more than some sort of steak with a fancy sauce and salad just like me, but god knows why we do not eat those foods in business meetings (laughs).²²¹

Drawing on the comments of the interviewee on healthy eating, it can be said that the work environment puts certain pressure upon the members some sort of pressure on their food choices. Savage et al. put it that "the trend-setting and rapidly emerging new petite bourgeoisie are typically uneasy with their bodies. They engage in extensive exercising as well as health foods. (...) They tend to be individualistic and hedonistic, the healthy body used as a form of display."²²²

Thus, in the case of what Onur has said, it can be said that healthy eating comes as a result of the class culture that is in the making, and it is not always the

²²⁰ Bourdieu, *Distinction*, p.190

²²¹ Onur (pseudonym), interview by the author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 14 July 2010

²²² Mike Savage, James Barlow, Peter Dickens and Tony Fielding, *Property, Bureaucracy and Culture: Middle-Class Formation in Contemporary Britain*, (Routledge: London, 1992), p.101

individual's choice. Although, Onur said he doesn't always like healthy eating, he feels a need to assert that he thinks it is important because in the new middle class culture that is in the making, healthy eating is approved to be a legitimate basis to claim a place in the class. Hence, in such within class socialization as Onur's case, the body is turned into an immediate tool to convey the message of class and "the body itself materializes the class taste."²²³

By making a different dimension of the issue more obvious, another interviewee referred to healthy eating as follows,

Of course, it is important to consume healthy foods for me. Nowadays, we are much more informed about what is healthy, what is beneficial for our health and what harms us, than before. Thus, we should be using this knowledge for our benefit. What differs us from ignorant people if we don't pay attention to our health and material well-being. You know this saying of 'we are what we eat', right? Then the equation is so simple: if you eat things that are high in harmful fats, additives and preservatives, you will never be healthy. That's why; I try to feed myself and my family with organic and natural foods that are nutritious and high in vitamins. For example, I try to consume high quality whole-grain bread, and I try buying organic vegetables and fruits in their seasons. (...) But, of course, I can't do it the whole time, though I try hard.²²⁴

In both Onur and Aliye's accounts, it can be seen that their expressions imply that sometimes there is a difference between what they eat and what is better for their health. Bell and Valentine refer to a study which found that people in the study were "using a language of religion, like; 'guilt, conscience, indulgence, gratification and deprivation' when expressing their eating behaviors, especially speaking about their guilty pleasures of eating unhealthy food."²²⁵ The study further demonstrated that the

²²³ Ibid, p.17

²²⁴ Aliye (pseudonym), interview by the author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 10 May 2010.

²²⁵ David Bell and Gill Valentine, *Consuming Geographies*, (New York: Routledge, 1997), p.47

respondents portrayed “health as something to be achieved, but also acknowledged that there was a difference between what they knew to be ‘good’ for them and their actual eating habits.”²²⁶

Not only healthy eating but also how to perform it turns out to be a discussion. Because the definition of healthy eating differs in time, how to perform it is also subject to frequent alteration. Bell and Valentine summarize this as follows,

The categorization of individual foodstuffs as ‘good’ or ‘bad’ for our health and physical development is a product of our culture. In some societies these definitions are linked to scarcity, concepts of ‘naturalness’, or ‘freshness’, designations of hot and cold and what constitutes a ‘proper meal’. (...) Historically, and certainly within post-war modern Western Societies, scientific advice about the merits and dangers of particular foods has fluctuated wildly. Potatoes, once regarded as unhealthy and fattening, are now recognized as an important dietary staple.²²⁷

However, this ambiguity in what is proper that is caused by the frequent changes in the realm of healthy eating, opens up a space for distinction within or among social classes through command of knowledge, as it can be observed in the subsequent account of the interviewee:

Frankly, I pay attention to healthy nutrition. But that doesn’t mean that I only eat salads or fruits, as many women do. If you are really knowledgeable about food, you also know that this is not the only way for healthy eating. Many women, reading popular woman’s magazines think that eating different kinds of salads is healthy nutrition. We should know that our body needs a variety of nutrients. Plus, it is not only about which food you consume, but things like; where the food comes from, whether you consume the vegetables and fruits in the right season or not, and how the food is cooked matters more. But it should also be emphasized that it is not just about money or eating some expensive food, either. You can eat the simplest thing and still be nourished healthy, if you are careful about the real food. I mean; you don’t necessarily need to eat some rare fruits or very expensive meat. If you seek for the true knowledge, instead of adopting some knowledge picked up here and there, and educate yourself, then you can really achieve healthy living.²²⁸

²²⁶Ibid, p.47

²²⁷ David Bell and Gill Valentine, *Consuming Geographies* (New York: Routledge, 1997), p.46

²²⁸ Leyla (pseudonym), interview by the author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 18 July 2010.

Barbara Ehrenreich, in her comprehensive study on the middle classes, has interpreted that “the middle class uses consumption to establish its status, especially relative to working class. Typically this has meant an emphasis on things “authentic,” “natural,” and frequently imported.²²⁹ However, she further stresses that health being the immediate rationale for the middle classes “it had become a nebulous metaphor for other distinctions and disguised a growing disdain for the white working class.”²³⁰ As it can be observed in the preceding account of the interviewee, concern for healthy eating is related not only to an individual’s lifestyle or choices, but it also performs as a mechanism for alleging a higher class position and distinction.

The interpretation of the findings of the research carried out by Kandel and Pelto manifested an aspect which is termed social revitalization, that is a process through which a cult or movement provides its followers with the means radically to restructure their cultural affiliations and ideological postures in order to lead a more satisfying way of life.²³¹ According to Kandel and Pelto, the ideologies of these revitalization cults may include metaphysical as well as dietary tenets.

Therefore, it can be claimed that the trend of healthy nutrition is a necessary component of ideological posture in the process of fulfilling the self and the identity construction of the new middle classes. Achieving the self in the search of satisfaction is a significant new middle class concern. However, adopting and

²²⁹ Barbara Ehrenreich, *Fear of Falling The Inner Life of the Middle Class* (New York: Pantheon, 1989), p.14.

²³⁰ Ibid, p.227.

²³¹ Alan Beadsworth and Teresa Keil, *Sociology on the Menu: an Invitation to the Study of Food and Society* (New York: Routledge, 1997), p.146.

displaying certain tastes and lifestyle in order to achieve the self, entail a degree of legitimacy. Thus, the new trends in healthy eating like consuming organic food, opposing industrial agriculture and a more ecological posture, today provides an enormous opportunity to the members of this new middle class adopting those tastes and posture to legitimize their position within class and creating distinctions.

As Paul Friedman puts, “a shift towards simplicity has led to a cuisine of authenticity in which quality, naturalness, seasonality and local ingredients are paramount and the style of preparation is designed to highlight the primary products.”²³² The accounts for the organic and natural products of the two interviewees are as follows;

I try to consume organic foods. Most of our agriculture (referring to Turkey) is seized by hormone-fed products and pesticides are commonly used. We were not aware of the damages of these 5-10 years ago. Now, it is hard to protect our health, therefore we should change our consumption habits.²³³

On the other hand, another interviewee with a different perspective narrated as follows,

I do not really believe in the organic products in Turkey. But I try to eat natural things. Plus, I think how the food is cooked is just as important. Buying organic products is not the only way for healthy nutrition. However, I eat at places that sell natural and fresh products. The aubergine may be organic but if you fry it is also harmful. I try to consume them in more simple forms, like steamed or boiled for example.²³⁴

Consuming organic food, for instance, enables one to feel like something bigger by providing an identity, a posture or an agency. Throughout the interviews, it was observed that people tended to refer consuming organic food with pride, unlike

²³² Paul Friedman, *Food: The History of Taste* (California: University of California Press, 2007), p.26.

²³³ Melike (pseudonym), interview by the author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 14 July 2010.

²³⁴ Ceren (pseudonym), interview by the author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 15 July 2010.

the guilt in expressing to consume unhealthy food. It could be said that people think that they contribute to their health, as well as supporting the producers and the agriculture, when they buy organic products, paying much more money. Yet, it can be seen how with certain patterns of food consumption, people convey certain messages of conscious and ideological posture as well as taste and how those play important roles in the institutionalization of class positions and distinctions.

The Slow Food Movement is a significant sign of the social revitalization in food and eating. In 1989 delegates from 15 countries started the Slow Food Movement, opposing the increasing trend of Fast Food. The manifesto of the Slow Food Movement, written by Falco Portinari, who was one of the founding members, declared that pleasure should be defended as opposed to the fast life, and pleasure is a right for everyone that should be preserved by protecting the heritage of food, tradition and culture, which are the causes of pleasure.²³⁵ The Movement, which is a grassroots organization, has over 1300 convivia around the world and more than 100,000 members.

As Bruce Pietrowski writes, the Slow Food Movement had three primary objectives in the beginning: the education of taste, pleasure and conviviality and, lastly, the Ark of Taste in order to defend eco-agriculture and craft production which was stated in a conference in 1996.²³⁶ However, the Slow Food Movement was accused of being elitist in its first years, because certain things it was defending, like pleasures of table or table manners as well as refined tastes and appreciation of food, were associated with cultural capital and the upper classes. On the other hand, the Slow Food Movement, today, has evolved into a community that is focused more on

²³⁵ http://www.slowfood.com/about_us/eng/philosophy.lasso

²³⁶ Bruce Pietrowski, "You Are What You Eat: The Social Economy of the Slow Food Movement" *Review of Social Economy*, 62:3, 2004, pp. 307-321, pp.311-315

defending biodiversity, developing networks between small-scale farmers, connecting producers and consumers as well as food and taste education,²³⁷ and has earned a significant legitimacy.

In Turkey, it was only in the 2000s that some slow food convivia were formed. Among other groups, the Opinionated Palates,²³⁸ which was born as a blog in 2004 and lead by Defne Koryürek, is probably the one that attracted the most attention. In their manifesto it is stated that the Opinionated Palates is, first, an “urban” group. The members of the group claims to be “co-producers” as well as “consumers.” Thus, they assert a certain amount of agency on the production side as conscious consumers. The members of the Opinionated Palates refuse to be called a group of gourmets, and accordingly the palates are not epicurean, but opinionated. The members of the group exhibit a social consciousness with their “activities that are producing solutions for the situation of falling apart from real food.”²³⁹ The group has held campaigns against the genetically modified organisms and has defended the prohibition of Genetically Modified Organisms.

The Opinionated Palates, or the Slow Food İstanbul convivium, is the one with the broadest participation in Turkey, and perhaps the one that has the most influence. Along with the prohibition of the GMO’s campaign the group held campaigns such as the Label Detectives Campaign, where they handed out small magnifier cards in order to enable people to read the unreadable labels on the products in the market and to differ for real food as they call it, the Don’t Let the

²³⁷ <http://www.slowfood.com/international/9/what-we-do>

²³⁸ Fikir Sahibi Damaklar

²³⁹ <http://www.fikirsahibidamaklar.org/>

Fikir sahibi damaklar , bu gerçek gıdadan ayrı düşme haline çözümler üreten aktiviteleri benimsedi.

*Lüfer*²⁴⁰ Go Extinct Campaign by inviting restaurants not to sell and the people not to consume *Lüfer*, a fish that are undersized, and created a petition in order to attract the government's attention for a new legislation in fishing policies. Furthermore, they organize activities such as excursions to small places to discover local and natural tastes such as water buffalo dairy farms, days to teach people to bake their own breads that are additive-free and natural.

The convivium leader, Defne Koryürek, describes their membership profile as urban, mostly with university or upper degrees in education. She says that they have lawyers, financial chief officers, architects or people working in large companies as managers or directors as well as cooks and restaurant owners in their groups. Although they have some university students and housewives, she commented that most of their group members are very busy with their work.²⁴¹

²⁴⁰ A type of fish that is similar to bluefish.

²⁴¹ Defne Koryürek, interview by the author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 22 April 2010.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

In the second chapter of this thesis the theoretical and conceptual framework was drawn, starting with Thorstein Veblen and his major work *The Theory of the Leisure Class*, which has been one of the first and most important works that examine the relationship of consumption and class, and how consumption is instrumentalized as a tool for class differentiations and hierarchies. Explaining concepts of “leisure class,” “conspicuous consumption,” and “pecuniary emulation” it has been addressed that Veblen mostly focuses on economic class.

However, Pierre Bourdieu, with his valuable work of *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste* makes a significant contribution to the literature of consumption and class relations by the distinguishing between three forms of capital that are economic, social and cultural capitals. As was addressed above, cultural capital is perhaps the one most crucial concept to understand the contemporary age, manifests itself as tastes and consumption practices, especially lifestyle consumption, and plays an important role in the within class differentiations.

Scott Lash and John Urry’s study examines the contextualization of the transformation of capitalist economy from organized to disorganized, and it has been seen that the rising service sector and the service class were crucial to the system of disorganized capitalism. The new middle class, or the professional class as other theoreticians named it, working in the service sector is defined as the leading class in shaping the patterns of consumption. Furthermore, the new middle class is identified with its specific features such as their education; not working on the production side

and in this sense, differing from the traditional or core middle classes; and realizing themselves through consumption. Thus, tastes and lifestyles are determined as important markers of the new middle classes, whereas the stylization and aesthetization of everyday life is stated as crucial. Relying on a Bourdieuan perspective they were identified as the new taste makers, and it was shown the urban space in city has been reshaped according to their needs and values.

Plus, cultural omnivorousness has been credited as marking feature of contemporary cultural practices, especially in the realms of food and eating out in İstanbul. Cultural omnivorousness is referred to as “developing a taste for everything.” However, as Peterson and Kern specify; it is “not liking everything indiscriminately but an openness to appreciating everything.” Although cultural omnivorousness is associated mostly with tolerant pluralism, the fall of snobbery and elements of democratization; it has been cleared how it is evaluated as exclusionary and a type of cultural symbolism by certain theorists. Hence, omnivorousness increases the concern for the authentic, local and regional. Nonetheless, it also has been conceptualized how displaying adequate knowledge or the command of knowledge provides other sources for distinction.

Having set a theoretical ground, in the latter chapter, the findings of the qualitative study have been provided. To summarize, it should be stated that one of the most important conclusion drawn from this study is that the issue of class is no longer spoken in terms of socioeconomic differences. More commonly, culture and cultural capital are referred when speaking of differentiation. Contributingly, cultural omnivorousness as a rising trend and value also helps to overcome the problem of snobbery, which is a more obvious manifestation of class distinctions.

As cultural capital came into more prominence, the members of the new middle class put greater effort to accumulate more of it. What is more is that cultural capital has been more about lifestyle consumption and experiential accumulation than it is about commodity consumption. In the process of the stylization of life, pleasure has become an important middle class value that is legitimate to pursue, which represents a significant break from the past.

Meanwhile, diversifying the experiences has become more of an issue for the new middle classes, and this has led to the reshaping and restructuring of the spaces according to the concerns and demands of the people. As was addressed in the former chapter, this has resulted in the production of different kinds of spaces that aim to fulfill the new middle class concern and enthusiasm for different experiences. Almost all the interviewees mentioned their concern for the history, past or tradition of the restaurants, food, or the building in where the restaurant is located; concern for regional, local or authentic food, and to the significance of healthy feeding, natural or organic products, even though some approved they may not be paying attention in every single meal; which of all has been affirmed as being legitimate and acceptable sources for higher cultural capital. Moreover, although mention of the word class was strictly refrained, there were serious effort to make comparisons with other groups and maintain differentiation and distinctions. Thus tastes and cultural capital or culture as used by the interviewees seem to be tools for referring to socioeconomic differences without actually expressing it.

Penultimately, knowledge and expertise on food and restaurants have emerged as legitimate tools for distinction, and manifestation of class differentiation. The constant display of knowledge seems to provide a distance, and a legitimate

basis for creating hierarchies with other classes, within the accepted dominance of cultural capital over economic capital.

Lastly, food and eating has never been and will never be free of class connotations. However, now, it seems being more about tastes than money. Tastes are the new markers for distinction, and food is one of the easiest and most suitable means to display tastes. On the other hand, with 2000s and mostly in the last few years, knowledge has revealed itself as the most important element in food consumption in order to create distinctions as well as tastes. With the contributions of the popular mainstream media organs, this seems to be established as a more and more widespread and legitimate fact contributing the creation and assertion of distinctions.

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