

# Turkish restaurants in London: An ethnographic study on representation of cultural identity through design

**Şebnem TİMUR ÖĞÜT**

*İstanbul Technical University, Faculty of Architecture, TURKEY*

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## **Abstract**

The aim of this study is to explore the ways in which the Turkish culinary culture is represented and reproduced in London. The emphasis is on the production and serving of food by various restaurants owned by Turkish immigrants, and its respective consumption by those outside the Turkish community.

The research is conducted as an ethnographic study and the method of gathering data involved making interviews with the owners, taking pictures of the restaurants to record the material culture of the places visually and conducting questionnaires to the consumers. While issues related to representation, culture and identity made explicit through visual and material forms were elaborated, the meanings attached or the ways that the different types of restaurants function in daily life were the subject of the study.

Restaurants are classified under three main categories, as indicated in the answers of the questionnaires, that are “traditional”, “modern” and “ordinary” Turkish Restaurants. These categories reflect ideas of “designed ethnicities”, “modernized traditions” and the concept of the “ordinary/ typical”. The ways in which these concepts are represented through visuality and design on the forms of material culture were the subject of discussion.

**Key Words:** *Identity, ethnography, design, material culture, Turkish restaurants*

## **Introduction**

Any study concerning a certain cuisine with an emphasis on nationality or region should begin by certain information regarding the historical roots of that specific area of inquiry. The reason for this is fairly simple. Food is mostly defined and determined geographically according to the climate, soil, know-how and other related socio-economic and cultural factors. To repeat a well-known example could be associating Mediterranean cuisine with olive oil and wine. Although this is the usual stance in approaching culinary culture, it is not among the aims of this study to deal with origins or authenticity. One of the primary questions motivating this research is: How is

Turkish culinary culture represented, reproduced or transformed in a foreign context like London (See Figure1)



**Figure 1.** Turkish culinary culture

### **Significance of London as a Metropolis**

London's myriad restaurants are not only a reflection of the cosmopolitan nature of the city but, more significantly, of its population's continually evolving interest in cuisines of all types and nationalities.

As a nation, the British have traditionally cultivated a magpie approach to food, happily incorporating everything from curries and kebabs to pizzas into the gamut of their national diet.

<http://www.timeout.com/london/rest/index.html>

London is not only important for being a cosmopolitan metropolis, in which multiple cultures, languages and cuisines inhabit, but also it is significant for requiring a representational relationship in the experience of the city from its dwellers. The guidebooks, showing the city maps and events of all sorts and of course the tube map are essential accessories of local or foreign inhabitants of the city. There is a tremendous effort involved in rewriting and reproducing the city under different headlines of: restaurants, bars, tourist

sites, bus routes, museums, recreational areas, parks, walking routes, spots of entertainment, etc... These various headings offered in the guide books give an impression of a total control over an abstract knowledge. This experience can be resembled to the classificatory order in the museums, dictated through architectural forms and displays that could be the metaphors of surfaces in a city: buildings, displays, passageways and an organized human traffic.

So, as an extension of this classification, before a certain place is visited in the city, it is experienced as a dot or a mark in a graphical representation. Among a well defined context, the abstract knowledge about the points that have been visited or not implies a certain control over the city. This is important, because anybody who wishes can reach to the information of what is being offered to them; as if reading a menu. Tourists and Londoners have this imaginary idea of the possibility to taste any culture whenever and wherever they want as the city provides a large diversity in different cuisines with an accompanying discourse and network of knowledge surrounding the whole restaurant scene. Every restaurant is located and marked on maps, tested and written about, even leaving no chance to experimentation and spontaneity. London is always ready for another slice of the world culture and cuisine. The thirst for the new does not seem to last and the taste gets even more sophisticated by the provided detail and increased knowledge of regionality.

This phenomenon is best illustrated by Cook, Crang and Thorpe (1999) who have worked as part of a research project called "Eating Places" funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) in Britain. The outcomes of their research can be read in their essay titled "Eating into Britishness: Multicultural Imaginaries and the Identity Politics of Food" in which they put forward "different forms of multicultural imaginaries within contemporary British culinary culture" that are: "a smorgasbord of culinary diversity, an imaginative re-localization of foods through an emphasis on culinary authenticity, the hybridization of cuisines and, circuitous geographies of flow and connection (Cook et.al 1999)." They argue that each of these categories working on other cultures -in the end- help out to construct a new contemporary Britishness. The frozen pack of "Döner Kebab Meat, Chips and Curry Sauce" with the slogan "just like from your local takeaway" is perfect in demonstrating diversity, hybridity, re-localization and connection all in one example (See Figure 2).



**Figure 2.** Diversity, hybridity, re-localization and connection all in one example

The context of the city as a domain of interaction, tension and relation is important in understanding London as a cosmopolitan metropolis and as a fair of the world cuisine. The heterogeneous population causing differences in material forms reflects itself in a multiple number of signs addressing their own consumers. In our case, the illuminated *döner kebab* icons of restaurants and pictures of Turkish *pide* of take-away shops on the streets (See Figure 3), along with the names of restaurants written mostly in Turkish create a “symbolic sense of community (Cohen 1985)” through language and visibility leading to a local experience in a global setting.



**Figure 3.** Illuminated döner kebab icons of restaurants

### **Turkish: Modern or “Full of Eastern Promise”?**

Apart from the signs that one faces while walking in the streets, one can observe different consumer goods that are packed forms of ethnic or culturally specific products in the British context.

For our purposes Cadbury’s chocolate covered, rose flavoured Turkish delight with the slogan: “Full of Eastern Promise” is significant. The target consumer group of Cadbury’s delights -which are said to be elderly people- seem to be looking for traces of the East. The use of the Eastern typeface, the picture showing the minarets of the mosque and the big name “Turkish” could be seen as indexical signs of a certain geography and time with all its social, cultural connotations. Eating something full of Eastern promise can be said to imply the prediction or expectation to “eat some part of that culture” too (hooks 2001). This is an example to a commodified cultural product, ruled by orientalism (See Figure 4) that has been produced for over 50 years which clearly demonstrates a way of consuming “Turkishness” in the British context.



**Figure 4.** *Orientalist cultural product*

This brings us to the question of what could be expected in terms of restaurants. The following quotes are descriptions of the decorative features of two different and rather contrasting restaurants in one of the famous Time Out magazines:

You could be forgiven for mistaking *Iznik* for a Turkish bazaar or souk. The place positively heaves with mirrors, tiles and antique pottery, and there are so many lamps hanging from the ceiling, you wonder how staff manage to cross the room without incident.....

.....  
We had hoped *Ozer* would have an exotic, harem-like atmosphere. Instead, this new ‘modern Ottoman’ restaurant just north of Regent Street, has a brash, 1980’s gloss that makes its anything but sensual. Modern and shiny, with red walls and lots of marble, the room reminded us of an upmarket airline terminal (Time Out 2001).....

These descriptions are important in reflecting the confusion or ambivalence regarding whether a Turkish restaurant should be oriental or occidental i.e.,



traditional or modern. When a place is decorated deprived of any cultural item, it is found to be “too modern” with an expectation of an oriental touch and similarly when it is orientally loaded then it is conceived to be a bazaar.

This ambivalent look is not only cast on the East by the West, this uncertainty is somehow immanent in the whole cultural atmosphere in Turkey, a confusion the roots of which could be exposed by an extensive discussion on the so-called ‘modernization project’ in Turkey, which I will not attempt to discuss in detail here. It suffices for my purposes here to say that the dilemma between being traditional or modern, the irresistible tension of living somewhere between the East and the West, are the realities that underlie many cultural forms in the country. Just like an Ottoman restaurant which looks like an airline terminal or a small bistro that could be confused with a Turkish bazaar: These two extreme examples demonstrate mental contradictions that find material reflections.



**Figure 5.** Modernized tradition “Savarona”

A culture has different faces, and it gains more complexity when it is experienced abroad. It is reconstructed, redefined and becomes even more fragmented and perceived within its new framework. This study will help to find out other possibilities for “Turkish restaurants” taking the argument out of the confining East-West, tradition-modernity debate.



**Figure 6.** Modernized tradition “Sofra”



**Figure 7.** Modernized tradition “Tas”

### Issues of classification

In terms of methodology, different Turkish restaurants in and around central London was the subject of the study. Interviews with the owners and questionnaires with customers were conducted in 10 restaurants, along with visual recordings. Although quite a number of restaurants were visited and investigated both through the internet, Time Out and other city guides; these were chosen to provide a diverse sample representing the most characteristic types of Turkish restaurants in London.

In the questionnaire handed out to customers, which they filled up after having finished their meals, mostly accompanying their tea, coffee or desserts, there was a question saying: “How would you describe this place to a friend?” Most of the informants used different kinds of adjectives to describe the restaurant. What is significant is that they depicted the places in their own words, they did not choose from a list. A classification of the restaurants is made based upon these adjectives:

**Table 1.** *Classification of the restaurants upon adjectives*

A. ‘Traditional Food’ in a Modern Turkish Restaurant	Savarona (Covent Garden) (Fig.5) Sofra (Covent Garden), (Fig.6) Tas (London Bridge), (Fig.7) Tike (Green Lanes), (Fig.8)
B. ‘Traditional Food’ in a Traditional/Authentic Restaurant	Angel Ocakbaşı (Angel) (Fig. 9) Gallipoli 1 (Islington), (Fig.10) Gallipoli 2 (Islington), (Fig.11) Tas Pide (New Globe Walk), (Fig.12)
C. Tasty Food with Good Prices in an “Ordinary Turkish Restaurant”:	Şömine (Green Lanes) (Fig.13) Yayla (Green Lanes), (Fig.14)

Assuming the first and second groups of restaurants are explaining themselves, the last group concerning the ordinary Turkish restaurants seems to deserve further elaboration. What is ordinary in an ordinary Turkish restaurant? Why is it named as “ordinary” by its foreign customers?





**Figure 8.** Modernized tradition “Tike”

#### **The Concept of the “Ordinary Turkish Restaurant”**

The concept of the “ordinary Turkish Restaurant” is the breaking point of the East-West dichotomy, by emerging from and being a part of everyday life. The motivation of the customers who have come to consume Turkish food is not to discover a new ethnic or exotic taste, but just to eat their lunch or dinners consisting of tasty food with reasonable prices.

Yayla Restaurant in Green Lanes that has been defined as a “typical and ordinary Turkish restaurant” is one of the 24 hour open places that is busy all day and night long. It will be a good example in demonstrating the concept. The characteristic of the place is that, first of all there is the stainless steel doner kebab stand combined with the display of hot food which can be seen from the outside of the restaurant as well. The big refrigerator in which raw meat and vegetables are displayed is an inseparable part of these restaurants. There is the service of takeaway and also tables and chairs to eat in. On the walls, there are framed paintings or pictures of pastoral scenes, like green fields, sheep or other images of the countryside. This is common to most of these places; the visual traces of an imaginary homeland which is green, beautiful and peaceful. To note, the situation is also similar in Turkey: people owning most of the kebab shops are immigrants to big cities in Turkey and the shop layout, typology and the materiality remains the same.



**Figure 9.** *Designed ethnicities “Angel Ocakbaşı”*

One significant characteristic of the “ordinary Turkish Restaurant” is the variety of international consumers. The consumers are simply from all around the world, an interestingly contrast situation to the locality of the restaurant. To give an illustrating example; on an ordinary Thursday evening, February 13, 2003 from 8:00-10:00 pm along with the Turkish speaking consumers and British people, the vast majority of the consumers in *Yayla* Restaurant were from Greece, South Africa, Iran, Albania, Croatia, Australia, Ireland, Tanzania, Germany, Hungary and Italy. Most of these people claim to come to *Yayla* not for touristic purposes; but they do visit the restaurant regularly as part of their everyday lives. They seem to enjoy it and say: “A very nice restaurant with delicious food which you can not find anywhere else in London”; “quality food, friendly service, yet good prices”; “big portions”; “typical Turkish restaurant.”



**Figure 10.** Designed ethnicities “Gallipoli I”



**Figure 11.** Designed ethnicities “Gallipoli II”





**Figure 12.** Designed ethnicities “Tas Pide”



**Figure 13.** Ordinary/typical Turkish “Şömine”

The production and consumption areas where the ordinary Turkish restaurants located are at certain neighbourhoods in which Turkish immigrants who have very few or no ability to speak English inhabit densely, like Hackney, Dalston or Green Lanes. When walked in the street, one can see that most of the shops' names, not only restaurants' but all sorts of commercial signs are written totally in Turkish, addressing Turkish-speaking consumers (See Figure 15).

In terms of the effect of the street signs of the restaurant, it could be argued that for certain neighbourhoods like Green Lanes, the restaurants with similar and identifiable typologies have a distinctive effect on the whole outlook of the street and consequently people's relationship or experience with each other as a community and towards the city as a whole. One of my informants, who own an *Ocakbasi* restaurant in Angel, says:

"Turks have vitalised some of the neighbourhoods that would be deserted or scary to go earlier. They hired or bought the shops, they opened restaurants. The pattern is such that, when somebody opens a restaurant or starts an off licence shop, another person thinks why not I can do the same and a similar kind of place is opened within the same region. And another person comes, and thinks the same, and another one, and another one... But in the end, what happens is that there is first a light of a certain place, and there becomes another light, and then the whole street is lit up and people start to come more often, the economy is vitalised and people are no longer afraid of these areas. Even Sainsbury's have started to open smaller branches to compete with the shops in these areas, according to the increasing profits they observe and want to take their own share."

He also notes that within the same street, there are 20 other restaurants, owned or run by Turkish people of which he finds it a significantly high number. The reasons for this depend on the character of these restaurants that are largely marked by the neighbourhood. They are located in places where there are retail shops supplying the raw material that is used for cooking; covering all sorts of stuff, from fresh fruit and vegetables to special ingredients, like spices, meat, pastry, etc.





**Figure 14.** Ordinary/typical Turkish “Yayla”

Even though they serve to a heterogeneous population consisting of people from different origins, these restaurants are important for immigrants in their relationship with urban life for several reasons:

Firstly, because the restaurant in the context of the city is a fairly important area of public sphere that defines a domain of interaction, tension and relation for the immigrants who try to continue some sort of a tradition in a foreign land.

Secondly, the existence of these restaurants with stereotypical similarities and frequencies in particular areas, help to form and reinforce a sense of community through language and signage. These spaces of symbolic constructions of community provide a full participation in a smaller simulacrum of the motherland within a foreign country that opens up an area of existence, belonging and reconstitution of identity that would otherwise be rather difficult if not impossible for them. It should be also noted that there are and should be other restaurants that would remain outside this classification.

Lastly, as these restaurants are not specially designed to be modern or traditional; they are also widely accepted by most of the inhabitants that are outside the Turkish community. “The ordinary Turkish restaurant” therefore becomes the “natural” and truly “authentic” meeting and feeding point of its global customers at certain neighborhoods of London.

## Politics of Display

“Eating is seldom merely about destination or purpose. Eating is largely about creation, self-creation, and about the production and reproduction of human life (Scapp and Seitz, 1998. 2)”

It can be argued that the basic elements that make up a restaurant are the processes and techniques of cooking, display and consumption. Each restaurant with its particular setting and design can be seen as a dressing, or a clothing shaped towards different marketing strategies centering on and around a wood oven, a charcoal or electrical grill. The politics of display is the determining factor in each restaurant. While up-market restaurants hide the process of cooking, or the raw meat, the cheaper ones are based on the visibility of the process or outcomes. Some up-market restaurants still prefer to show some part of the process, but with no display of raw meat involved. If read in terms of the basic Lévi-Straussian model of “the raw and the cooked” (Lévi-Strauss 1983), defining the difference between nature and culture, the display of the raw meat is one of the most influential factors in the perception of a certain restaurant.

In terms of the ordinary Turkish restaurants, first of all there is definitely the dominance of the display of raw meat and the burning coal in the heart of many of them and especially take-aways. The arrangement of red tomatoes put in contrast with green leaves, parsley or other types of green stuff like lettuce is common in most of them. There is this colour coding of the two opposites. The rawness of the meat, its redness is reinforced by one of the most unnatural plastic simulations of green leaves or sometimes plastic grapes. They are also tamed and culturized by being stuck on a piece of metal, namely the shish. Also, the meat is processed and cut into small pieces to be put on the shish ready to be cooked. The display of the raw material, including the vegetables and the sauces are usually positioned opposite the charcoal grill. It is the moment before the natural is turned into the cultural. It is the passageway where one can read the understatement that this place can be trusted because everything is fresh, ready to be cooked and all this is utterly visible.

The second point about the politics of display is related to a concept of home-making within the material culture of these restaurants. Apart from the contrast between the raw and the cooked, there is also an up and down hierarchy. Owing largely to its specific design, the refrigerator has a slimmer upper shelf and a broader base taking all the other stuff covered with a curved glass front. Most of the time, the upper shelf is the area of the display of various drinks. It serves as a place to show the variety of available drinks, but there is this unwritten but strictly obeyed norm of putting a square piece of napkin or alike underneath each bottle or can. I would like to combine this practice to another common practice of home decorating in Turkey. Women, make laces to cover every available surface, like on top of televisions, coffee tables, curtains for windows, bed covers, table cloths, even small ones to put inside saucers. This is part of the tradition of preparing a trousseau for a woman before getting married. It is both demonstrating the skills of the bride and also is a part of the home-making. So, quite similarly, the paper napkins take the place of laces, as they are available in the context of the restaurant.

Continuing some of the lines of my informants, they think that Turkish people do not have a tradition of restaurants, but they make home-food. In case of *Yayla* and others, to a certain extent it could be true. Given the fact that the existence of these restaurants and their importance in creating a sense of community among the immigrants, it could be argued that these places act like a kind of home within the public sphere. Especially *Somine* Restaurant in Dalston is a good example for this, because of the use of domestic furniture as if it was part of somebody's house, appropriating it with more than one purpose, combining the domestic function of containing and displaying with the public needs of the restaurant; or putting the enlarged photos of children on the wall, like in a family dining room. There is this feeling of using what is at hand, and arranging the whole elements according to that logic of articulation is at stake here: using the library to put the cutlery sets, the cash register or the music set (See Figure 13).



**Figure 15.** Commercial signs written totally in Turkish, addressing Turkish-speaking consumers

One more aspect regarding the politics of display is the display of the preparation of the food. In the *Somine* Restaurant, from noon till the evening, there are women making the *manti*, *gozleme* or the other dough related food. They work in a special platform like area inside the salon along with the consumers. They work with their ordinary clothes, as if they are doing it at their homes, not wearing special uniforms; or the platform is not neatly designed to turn them into an act of “staged authenticity (MacCannel 1973).”

One of the interesting observations about this phenomenon was of a customer who sat in front of the women who were working right behind him and he never took even a single glance to them preparing the *mantı* or seemed to have noticed what they were doing. May be he was there before that is why he was not interested in the process, but still it was so natural for him that there was nothing to be looked at.

It should be noted that the processes of home-making within the restaurant is quite different from home-making by home-cooking. Home-cooking while abroad also functions as part of the identity politics of food by continuing and preserving identity through daily practices of food to maintain ties to the homeland and to preserve a healthy diet (Harbottle 1996, Duruz 1999, Duruz 2001, Cook et.al. 2000). In our case, the women preparing the *mantı* are doing it exactly the same way if they did it at their homes. Here, the process of home cooking is turned into home making by being incorporated within the context of a restaurant.

### **Designed ethnicities, modernized traditions**

“...food as social semiotic is rich in nuance and possibility; simultaneously, it offers dense layers of cultural meaning and mobile surfaces for identity investment. As such, it hints at the means to capture not only the outlines of ‘proper’ geographies for social life, but also those ‘migrational’ or ‘plastic’ moments of identity formation when routes of difference are negotiated (Duruz 1999).”

As an example of our first category of ‘traditional food’ in a modern Turkish restaurant, the story of the *Tas* restaurants are twofold; both giving hints of the tradition/modernity dilemma, but they are also interesting in their order of opening. The modern *Tas* restaurant is first opened in Waterloo and due to its success another one was opened near London Bridge. The third one, with an authentic and traditional decoration was opened recently near Tate Modern. Why is this ordering of the authentic restaurant coming after the modern one important? To understand it let us have a look at Ayse Caglar’s work on *doner kebab* shops in Berlin. She explains that:

German Turks in the *doner* trade would prefer to be rid of [...] association of *doner kebab* with Turkishness, although in the past their strategy was to accentuate the Turkishness or exoticness of their product. Now they prefer to distract their customers’ attention from their ethnicity. In adopting new names for *doner*, Turkish *doner* imbiş owners try to pluck *doner* from its articulation and rearticulate it with a different set of connotations. They seek to use language and the image of modern technologies to dissociate *doner* from the web of connotations in which it is embedded (Caglar 1995).

Although *Tas* is not a *doner kebab* shop, it still provides a platform of comparison in terms of class identity. Of course, the German situation is rather different from London, in many respects, like the longer historical roots of Turkish population in Germany and the significance of the variety of ethnic food in London. Still, it is quite interesting to observe that while ethnicity, in Berlin is something to get rid of, in London, in the case of *Tas*, it becomes an advanced form of a restaurant chain, in terms of creating difference as a marketing strategy.

The process and mechanism of social mobility that Caglar mentions about the doner kebab shops in Berlin could work in a similar manner for our category of 'ordinary Turkish restaurant' in the London case. As these places (*Yayla* or *Şömine*) are not displaying a 'designed ethnicity,' or 'modernized tradition' unlike the rest, after some time, they could feel the need of a same sort of class mobility. As Caglar notes, the *doner kebab* shops do not change their names or images to increase the sales. On the contrary, they did it "in the beginning of the 1990's at a time when *doner kebab* was selling better than ever before. There was no apparent need for an image renewal (Caglar 1995)."

Apart from the ordinary Turkish restaurants in London, the places serving Turkish food in a modern setting are named under certain brands which consist of single Turkish words, without using the national mark of "Turkish" –as a distinctive term–, like *Sofra* and *Tas*. This could be seen as a brand creating strategy with the choice of single Turkish words; this situation is rather distinctive compared to other restaurant names usually preceded by the terms Italian, Chinese, etc. Most of the time, the quick perception during the passage through the streets is marked by the preference towards this accompanied nationality, rather than the name of the restaurant. In short, it can be argued that there is this certain invisibility of 'Turkish restaurants' in London due to this fact of the avoided use of the term Turkish.

### Conclusion

Mintz, in his book called *Tasting Food, Tasting Freedom* has a very interesting chapter titled "Cuisine: High, Low and Not at all" (1996). He argues that national cuisine is not possible, there could only be "regional" cuisines.

A national cuisine is a contradiction in terms; there can be regional cuisines, but not national cuisines. I think that for the most part, a national cuisine is simply a holistic artifice based on the foods of the people who live inside some political system, such as France and Spain. "Cuisine," more exactly defined, has to do with the ongoing foodways of a region, within which active discourse about food sustains both common understandings and reliable production of the foods in question. Haute cuisine, so called, is some sort of refinement of the aggregate foods, styles and dishes of a collection of regions, a skimming off of representative foods to create a cuisine that is national by virtue of being widely representative. Haute cuisine differs from cuisine by representing more than one region, by adding expensive substitutions in the foods themselves, and sometimes by acquiring international status. It is, like it or not, "restaurant food," of the sort that turns up in restaurants abroad, and in capital cities (Mintz 1996, 104).

Connected to the issues of national and regional cuisines, contrary to Mintz, Zubaida (2000) in his article "The National, Regional and Global Dimensions of Culinary Cultures of the Middle East" argues that the modern world consists of nation-states and they have to construct themselves in various ways and one very definite way is through the construction of a national



cuisine. He also points to the pressurized regional differences under the forces of globalization. In terms of Turkish restaurants, it should be stated that as Mintz also notes as one of the haute cuisines of the world (1996), the Turkish cuisine is a mixture of different regional cuisines. These different regional cuisines are transformed and represented as designed ethnicities or modernized traditions, whereas the perceived ordinary or typical Turkish restaurant dwells in certain neighbourhoods where dynamics of regionality continues to inhabit within a foreign metropolis.

To sum up, there could be various points to be highlighted that answers partly to our primary question of how Turkish culinary culture is represented, reproduced or transformed in a foreign context like London:

First of all there is no one Turkish cuisine; there are multiple identities and representations that are revealed through the material culture of the restaurants, especially in their interior design, furniture, decoration, tableware, menus, etc.

Secondly, there is a diversity in Turkish restaurants in London that are in the form of “designed ethnicities”, “modernized traditions” and “ordinary/typical”. While the first two can be said to be “designed” to create the desired effect, the last category implies a more “natural” setting.

Thirdly, politics of display and home making are among the significant characteristics of the ordinary/typical Turkish restaurants that reinforce the sense of community and identity.

Fourthly, the names of the Turkish restaurants consist mostly of single Turkish words that could be seen as part of a brand creating strategy, like *Sofra, Tas, Savarona, Tike, Gallipoli, etc.*

Last of all, despite the naming and except the places that are visually loaded with ‘designed Turkishness’, there is a certain invisibility of ‘modern’ Turkish restaurants outside the Turkish community.

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#### **Londra'daki Türk restoranları: Kültürel kimliğin tasarım yolu ile temsili üzerine etnografik bir çalışma**

Çalışmanın amacı Türk mutfak kültürünün Londra'da nasıl temsil edildiğini ve yeniden üretildiğini araştırmaktır. Türk göçmenler tarafından işletilen çeşitli restoranlarda yemeğin nasıl üretilip servis edildiği ve Türk komünitesi dışındaki bireyler tarafından nasıl tüketildiği çalışmanın ana eksenini oluşturmaktadır.

Araştırma etnografik bir çalışma olarak kurgulanmış ve veriler, restoran sahipleri ile görüşmeler yapılarak, restoranların maddi kültürünü görsel olarak belgeleyebilmek için fotoğraflar çekerek, tüketicilerle anket çalışması yapılarak toplanmıştır. Görsel ve maddi biçimler halinde kendilerini açık eden olgular temsil, kültür ve kimlik meseleleriyle ilişkili olarak ele alınırken, bu restoranlara yüklenen anlamlar ve/veya bu restoranların günlük hayatta nasıl işlev gördüğü çalışmanın konusunu oluşturmuştur.

Restoranlar anket sonuçlarına göre "geleneksel", "modern" ve "sıradan" Türk restoranları olmak üzere üç ana kategoriye ayrılmıştır. Bu kategoriler "tasarlanmış etnik kimlikler", "modernize edilmiş gelenekler" ve de "sıradan/tipik" kavramlarını yansıtacak şekilde birbirinden ayrılmıştır. Bu kavramların görsellik ve tasarım yoluyla maddi kültürün biçimlerine nasıl yansıdığı tartışılmıştır.