

# ‘Mediating Cultural Capital’ In-Between Dominant/Non-Dominant Cultural Capital: A Case of Mısırlı Ahmet

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## Abstract

The goal of this paper is to explain how musicians posit their music practices from ‘low’ status, which is defined by social disposition, to ‘high’ status. However, cultural signals, which cultural capital contains, can be gained by people to posit themselves from ‘lower’ status to ‘higher’ status. In this context, even though cultural capital represents high-status cultural signals, this concept is operated in ‘non-dominant’ groups as well as ‘dominant’ groups. In the circumstances, specific agents — who may be called cultural intermediaries — that have competence in both ‘low’ and ‘higher’ culture emerge in the process of mediating cultural capital. Thus, mediating cultural capital occurs in between ‘high’ and ‘low’ culture where reproduction of cultural capital can be seen through cultural intermediaries. In this context, Mısırlı Ahmet applies for mediating cultural capital to situate his music practice to ‘upper’ level by developing new techniques and playing wide range of music styles.

**Keywords:** Cultural Capital, Cultural Intermediaries, Mediating Cultural Capital, Mısırlı Ahmet, Darbuka.

## Baskın/Baskın Olmayan Kültürel Sermaye Arasında ‘Aracı Kültürel Sermaye’: Mısırlı Ahmet Örnek Olayı

### Özet

*Bu makalenin amacı müzisyenlerin kendi müzik pratiklerini toplumsal eğilim tarafından tanımlanan ‘düşük’ konumdan ‘yüksek’ statüye nasıl konumlandıklarını açıklamaktır. Bununla birlikte kültürel sermayenin içerdiği kültürel işaretler, insanlar tarafından kendilerini ‘düşük’ konumdan ‘yüksek’ konuma konumlandırmak için kazanılabilir. Bu bağlamda kültürel sermaye, yüksek statüdeki kültürel işaretleri temsil etmesine rağmen bu kavram baskın grupların yanı sıra baskın olmayan gruplarda da işletilir. Bu koşullar altında hem ‘düşük’ hem de ‘yüksek’ kültürde yeterliliklere sahip, kültür araçları olarak adlandırılacak belirli aktörler aracı kültürel sermaye sürecinde ortaya çıkarlar. Böylelikle aracı kültürel sermaye, yeniden üretimin kültür araçları sayesinde görülebildiği ‘yüksek’ ve ‘düşük’ kültürler arasında meydana gelir. Bu bağlamda, Mısırlı Ahmet yeni teknikler geliştirerek ve geniş aralıkta müzik tarzlarını icra ederek kendi müzik pratiğini ‘yüksek’ seviyeye konumlandırmak için aracı kültürel sermayeye başvurur.*

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Kültürel Sermaye, Kültür Araçları, Aracı Kültürel Sermaye, Mısırlı Ahmet, Darbuka.

## Introduction

Musicians utilize their cultural background to give meaning to popular music in the process of production and consumption. It's hard to analyze which resources are used by musicians in the globalization process as being more intensive with multiculturalism, people circulation across the globe and intercultural communication. However, these resources create one's cultural capital, which has been introduced by Pierre Bourdieu (1984). Bourdieu's theory of social reproduction and cultural capital has been well discussed in sociology and cultural studies in terms of social disposition and social dimensions, specifically to 'highbrow' culture and 'low' culture. According to Bourdieu, cultural capital can be observed in dominant groups and individuals who belong to the upper class in order to mark their high-status signals such as attitudes, tastes and style. In this sense, culture is considered an "elite" value. However, cultural capital can be found among lower classes as well (Dumais 2002: 44), and as Carter (2003) indicated, it can be distinguished as "dominant cultural capital", which is related to high-status culture and "non-dominant cultural capital", which belongs to lower status groups.

Using terms of 'lower' and 'upper' can be controversial from the researchers' perspective due to *ethnocentrism* and *cultural relativism*. Therefore, in this paper, the difference between "lower" and 'upper' position is determined by the discourse of case study. This paper investigates how musicians attempt to posit their music practices from 'lower' position to 'upper' status. Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital is operated in order to demonstrate status positing of musicians in terms of music elements, which are used in their music, discourse that shows their cultural resources, and musical tastes. Musicians create their music according to their cultural background, which also may be called cultural capital. Nevertheless, musicians as agents can be cultural intermediaries between these two kinds of status positing and seem to give new meaning to music through the repositioning of cultural status. Mısırlı (Egyptian) Ahmet, the case of this study, is chosen in this paper in order to explain this fact explicitly.

Mısırlı Ahmet (real name Ahmet Yıldırım) was born in Ankara in 1963. He learned to play the *darbuka* when he

was 17 in an *autodidact* manner. When he was 25 years old, he started to play the *clay darbuka*, which is practiced by Arabic technic. In order to improve himself in playing this instrument, he moved to Egypt to observe the music in its original site (Karaol and Doğrusöz, 2013: 2). In addition to Egypt, He went to France in order to learn new technical practices, and then he went to Spain to learn Flamenco Rhythm (Internet References, 01). Thus, the purpose of Galata Ritimhanesi (the Galata Rhythm House), which Mısırlı Ahmet founded in Istanbul, is to teach the *darbuka* through the acculturation process of Mısırlı Ahmet. The general idea is that Mısırlı Ahmet transfers his knowledge that he has obtained through the acculturation process to his students by mediating cultural capital due to situating the music practices from "lower" to "higher" status. Being interconnected with more than one culture allows him to situate *darbuka*, and rhythm section of music to upper level of music as he claims. However, Galata Ritimhanesi, where Mısırlı Ahmet teaches the *darbuka*, aims to blend diverse folkloric rhythms of Turkey with the universal dimension of music (Internet References, 02). By doing this, he posits one specific musical element locally in which he considers "lower" position, to the universal dimension in which he thinks local music must be placed in this 'higher' position. Mısırlı Ahmet, who has mediating cultural capital, undertakes the role of cultural intermediary in this situation.

In the first part of this paper, the concept of cultural capital is discussed as a theoretical framework. Bourdieu's theory of social reproduction consists of three concepts (cultural capital, habitus and field), and all of these concepts work together and are related to one other. Therefore, in order to understand the place of cultural capital in one's cultural practices, it is necessary to understand habitus and field as well. "Bourdieu introduced his notion of cultural capital to explain how individuals' access to certain cultural signals (such as attitudes, preferences, tastes and styles) either enables or limits their entry into high status social group, organizations or institutions" (Carter, 2003: 136,137). When we talk about positing cultural status to higher level in light of cultural capital, it is particularly linked to the concept of cultural intermediaries as individuals. Cultural intermediaries also attempt to

build a bridge between two cultures and may posit their music practices to a level that is considered more 'valuable'. Thus, mediating cultural capital steps in when we observe this issue in phenomena. In the second part of this article, information from the case study is analyzed in light of conceptual discussion. Information about the case study is collected by netnography, the process of collecting information through internet resources.

### **Cultural Capital as a Theoretical Framework**

In the 1960's, the concept of cultural capital was used in lectures (Gripsrud and others, 2011: 508), and thus, this concept got into the circulation of scientific works. Cultural capital is introduced in the theory of social reproduction and it stems from Bourdieu. However, "Although cultural capital is an important part of Bourdieu's theory of social reproduction, it is only one component of his theoretical framework. In *Distinction*, Bourdieu (1984) noted that capital, habitus and field all work together to generate practice or social action" (Dumais, 2002: 46). Therefore, understanding habitus and field plays an important role in comprehending the theory of social reproduction as a whole. At the same time it fills our understanding of cultural capital, which is used as the theoretical framework of this study.

People situate themselves to different groups and social organizations according to their cultural, social and economic status. In addition to that, they take action in daily life according to their status which is posited by ideas, habits, and culture which can be described in a broad term. Bourdieu's theoretical framework provides useful tools to demonstrate this fact in social divisions. Drawing the big picture of this complexity requires interworking of three concepts which are capital, habitus and field. For instance, according to Dumais (2002: 45), "studying cultural capital while ignoring habitus leaves Bourdieu's theoretical framework incomplete in its practical application. It is necessary to consider both one's resources (capital) and the orientation one has toward using those resources (habitus)". Before elaborating the concept of capital and cultural capital, to explain clearly concept of habitus and field drives us to understand the Bourdieu's theoretical framework as a whole.

"The concepts of field and habitus both derive from Bourdieu's engagements with earlier histories of their use in the relevant theoretical and scholarly literatures" (Bennett and others, 2011: 429). Nevertheless, Dumais (2002: 46) describes the habitus in this way:

Habitus is one's disposition, which influences the actions that one takes; it can even be manifested in one's physical demeanor, such as the way one carries oneself or walks. It is generated by one's place in the social structure; by internalizing the social structure and one's place in it, one comes to determine what is possible and what is not possible for one's life and develops aspirations and practices accordingly.

According to this description, habitus is related to taking action as physically in a field where "dominant and subordinate groups struggle for control over resources" (Dumais, 2002: 46). People have resources, which are called capital, and habitus is about using those resources visibly. The concept of habitus is also explained as "the whole of habits which are based on past experiences of people" (Erol, 2009: 237).

Bourdieu's book *Distinction* (1984) "constitutes his major contribution to the study of the dynamics of social divisions in contemporary society and their interrelationship with the formation of lifestyle" (Prieur and others, 2008: 46). In order to show social dimensions in social life, Bourdieu uses different apparatuses in his theory, and the concept of "capital" is the central notion of his theory. He treats the concept of capital in different ways to indicate social divisions more clearly such as social, cultural, economic and symbolic capital. All of these different types of capital refer to different resources of individuals have. Thus, "along with economic, social, and symbolic capital, cultural capital serves as a power resource or a way for groups to remain dominant or gain status" (Dumais, 2002: 46). Furthermore, as Erel (2010: 647) indicated, different forms of capital are interlinked with each other in Bourdieu's theory. Therefore, it is crucial not only to understand the concept of habitus and field which work with the concept of capital in Bourdieu's theory but also it is crucial to understand that one type of capital interacts with other types of capital which creates overlapped resources that one has.

Cultural capital “includes world views, linguistic codes, certain types of knowledge and material objects—such as books” (Reed- Danahay, 2005: 47). Those elements of cultural capital represent a high-status position. People can situate themselves to upper class by those elements and can also find “high status signals (attitudes, preferences, formal knowledge, behaviors, goals and credentials)” (Kingston, 2001: 89) in cultural capital. However, according to Bennett (2011: 430) having those features of cultural capital provides certain kinds of advantages in particular fields. He mentions that “concept of cultural capital is understood as a set of embodied capacities that is acquired as a socially transmitted inheritance” (2011: 430). Cultural capital, as a set of embodied capacities, appears in individuals’ cultural activities, which consist of learned attitude and behaviors. Therefore, we can say that cultural capital is also “socially transmitted inheritance” which can be learned as a culture. Thus, it is understandable to see that people can try to be related to ‘high’ culture in order to get higher status in social life as if they try to succeed in economic conditions in relation to economic capital. However, Kingston (2001: 89) indicates that “cultural capital is like money in that it can be saved, invested and used to obtain other resources (such as access to economic positions). It has this currency because its ‘signals’ are broadly accepted.” Cultural signals, which cultural capital contains, can be gained by people who situate themselves from ‘lower’ status to ‘higher’ status.

Thinking about ‘lower’ status is important in terms of cultural capital as well. According to Prieur, Roselund and Skjott-Lorsen (2008: 49), “competences within non-recognized cultural forms are not recognized as valuable in a market; they are inconvertible.” However, even in some situations competence is not enough to create cultural capital as Bourdieu (1995: 186) mentions. According to Bourdieu, “just as economic wealth cannot function as capital until it is linked to an economic apparatus, so cultural competence in its various forms cannot be constituted as cultural capital until it is inserted into the objective relations between system of economic production and the system producing the producers”. Also, Bourdieu doesn’t describe the cultural capital solely based on various apparatus, but he also

considers variable forms of cultural capital. He describes the cultural capital in three different forms.

According to Bourdieu, cultural capital exists in three forms: in an embodied state, i.e, as a long-lasting disposition of the individual’s mind and body; in an objectified state, when cultural capital is turned into cultural goods such as “pictures, books, dictionaries, instruments, machines, etc. (Bourdieu, 1986: 243); and in an institutionalized state, when the embodied cultural capital is recognized in the form of, say, an academic credential (as cited in Throsby, 1999: 4).

When both of the apparatus are linked to capital, and three forms of cultural capital occur at the same time, we would identify this as cultural capital. Nevertheless, we can observe embodied state, objectified state and institutionalized states in ‘lower’ status as well. In this case, different types of capital help to grasp this concept. Capital is a concept that gives “uncertain guide to researchers” (Kingston, 2001: 89). Even so, the concept of capital has been developed by researchers in order to link the facts in specific cases. In this sense, even though cultural capital represents high-status cultural signals, this concept is operated in ‘non-dominant’ groups as well as ‘dominant’ groups.

#### **Dominant and Non-Dominant Cultural Capital**

Carter (2003) speaks of the difference between dominant cultural capital and non-dominant cultural capital. He provides a useful distinction between those two kinds of cultural capital while considering the cultural capital of ‘low’- status cultures. As he indicated in the abstract of his article, “previous literature has failed to empirically demonstrate the conceptual distinction that social scientists make between ‘dominant’ and ‘non-dominant’ cultural capital” (2003: 36). This lack occurs in literature due to considering cultural capital as only in relation to high-status culture. From this point of view, Carter (2003) derives non-dominant cultural capital by taking account of the dominant cultural capital.

The term “dominant cultural capital” corresponds to Bourdieu’s conceptualization of powerful, high status cultural attributes, codes, and signals. Cultural capital

provides individuals with an ability to “walk the walk” and “talk the talk” of cultural power brokers in our society. Similarly, “non-dominant cultural capital” embodies a set of tastes, or schemes of appreciation and understandings, accorded to a tower status group, that include preferences for particular linguistic, musical, or interactional styles. Non-dominant cultural capital describes those resources used by lower status individuals to gain “authentic” cultural status positions within their respective communities (2003: 138).

It is remarkable that Carter (2003) mentions gaining “authentic” cultural status by non-dominant cultural capital. We can observe positing cultural status in this situation by resources which create non-dominant cultural capital of one who is considered as belonging to low culture. At the same time, understanding the meaning of “authentic” is significant in order to demonstrate the significance of non-dominant cultural capital.

According to Erol (2009: 204), the concept of authenticity is associated with being ‘real’, ‘genuine’, ‘essential’, ‘honest’, ‘sincere’ etc. in culture. People usually interrelate with those terms when they talk about traditions. In the context of music, according to Stokes (1997: 7) authenticity is a way of talking about music that differentiates between ‘us’ and ‘others’ (as cited in Erol, 2009: 207). People ask for their apparent cultural practices among others’ practices, and has value in their meaning. Thus, being “authentic” in cultural practice is referred to positing a cultural practice to a different status via cultural identity. Also, it occurs when individuals posit a cultural practice to a higher position in order to make this cultural practice of more value and gain power among other identities in terms of non-dominant cultural capital. In this case, specific agents who may be called cultural intermediaries who have competence in both ‘low’ and ‘higher’ culture emerge in the process of mediating cultural capital.

### **Cultural Intermediaries and Mediating Cultural Capital**

The process of reproducing culture may be seen as a central issue in mediating cultural capital which occurs between ‘low’ and ‘high’ culture. Cultural practitioners who are taking a role in both the production and consumption process of culture can be an agent in the process of media-

tion as well. Hence, I apply the concept of cultural intermediaries, which was introduced in order to demonstrate those kinds of cultural workers by Bourdieu (1984) in his book *Distinction*. “The term ‘cultural intermediaries’ was associated with Bourdieu’s comments on the “new petite bourgeoisie”, a new faction of middle-class workers that has grown in size and influence since the middle of twentieth century” (Negus 2002: 502). However, all occupational clusters cannot be thought of as cultural intermediaries. According to Bourdieu (1986: 359), cultural intermediaries refer to those engaged in “presentation and representation, providing symbolic goods and services” (as cited in Negus, 1999: 18), “work between the production and consumption of cultural goods but the discursive production of the intermediary is important as well” (Wright, 2005: 118). In this way, we can pursue the role of cultural intermediaries in culture industry due to their position in between production and consumption. However, according to Negus (2002: 503), “the central strength of the notion of cultural intermediaries is that it places an emphasis on those workers who come in-between creative artists and consumers (or, more generally, production and consumption)”. By the work of cultural intermediaries, “use values and exchange values, and seek to manage how these values are connected with people’s lives through the various techniques of persuasion and marketing and through the construction of markets are shaped” (Negus, 2002: 504). Despite the fact that those features of cultural intermediaries are in relation to activities that cultural intermediaries do, using or exchanging values is impossible without having a particular value in terms of either dominant cultural capital or non-dominant cultural capital.

The concept of cultural capital plays a crucial role in the work of workers who are characterized as cultural intermediaries. At the same time, cultural intermediaries have a crucial role in the reproduction of cultural capital as well (Wright, 2005: 109). A cultural intermediary might work between ‘high’ and ‘low’ culture.

In addition to cultural capital, mediating cultural capital occurs in between ‘high’ and ‘low’ culture where reproduction of cultural capital can be seen through cultural intermediaries. We can observe this changing status via re-



producing cultural capital in Wright's (2005) assertion. He asserts that cultural intermediaries are central to change of status such as when "high culture has become popular, 'high-pop'" (2005: 111).

In order for mediating cultural capital to come into sight, individuals who are mediating between 'high' and 'low' culture should have both dominant cultural capital and non-dominant cultural capital. For this reason, cultural intermediaries are more likely to have mediating cultural capital due to creative roles between those two statuses and their reflexivity. As Featherstone (1991: 44) indicates, cultural intermediaries have the ability to "transmit the intellectuals' life-style to a larger audience and collude with the intellectuals to legitimate new fields such as sport, fashion and popular music and popular culture" (as cited in Wright, 2005: 111).

### Mediating Cultural Capital and Popular Music

The value of popular culture is another controversial issue in terms of distinction between 'low' and 'high' culture for mediating cultural capital. We can observe this distinction in music as a culture as well. Popular music culture is well-discussed in regards to ideologies, production and reproduction, aesthetic and function of music in disciplines such as Cultural Studies, Ethnomusicology and Anthropology. The value of music, which is classified as classical, folk and popular music, in terms of 'low' and 'high' culture attempts to be determined in those disciplines. According to Bracket (1999: 19), "Art" music is related to a transcendent experience of music and requires a good education. "Folk" music is about an authentic experience of a community, and last but not least, "popular" music is formed by the music industry and its agents (as cited in Erol, 2009:208). Thus, "today, the music curriculum in many countries reflects developments in that includes a mixture of folk, traditional, popular, jazz, and classical music from all around the world" (Green, 2003:268).

The distinction between 'good' and 'bad' music is another crucial issue for musical value. Thus, this distinction drives us to understand the perception of music in terms of 'high' and 'low' culture as in relation to the consumption of music from the audience's side. "High cultural audiences thus assume the value of an art object is contained within

it; low cultural audiences assume that the value of an art object lies in what it can do for them" (Frith, 1998: 18). When individuals who are agents have those values and work in between 'low' and 'high' status, they apply mediating cultural capital, which includes both knowledge, ideas, cultural goods, and competences of 'low' and 'high' culture. From the observer's side, if people assume that the value of an art object is contained within it and also, at the same time, they care about what these objects can do for them, it can be referred to as mediating cultural capital that the audiences who consumes the music have.

We are able to see mediating cultural capital in practices of 'non-western cultural intermediaries' (Skov, 2002) clearly in terms of mediating between 'high' and 'low' via assumption that 'Western' culture is more valuable than 'Eastern' culture. Thus, Skov (2002: 553) indicates that "although role of non-western cultural intermediaries in culture industry are globalized, they are still Euro-Centric". In this context, cultural intermediaries "mediate between East and West, between the global and local" (Skov, 2002: 567). This competence of cultural intermediaries requires mediating cultural capital, which consists of both 'Western' and 'Eastern' values and sufficient knowledge of global and local values in order to mediate between these terms.

### Mediating In Popular Music: Mısırlı (Egyptian) Ahmet

Mısırlı (Egyptian) Ahmet, was born in Ankara in 1963. When he was 17 years old he learned to play the *darbuka* (goblet drum) in an *autodidactic* way. He moved to France after 1987 and he has continued his practice there. After his trip to France, he decided to move to Egypt, which he considers "the country of dreams where *darbuka* is performed as best in the world". He worked with several Egyptian musicians and he created a new, unique technique of playing the *darbuka*. This technique especially got attention through allowing artists to perform this musical instrument faster (Internet References, 03). After he moved to Istanbul, he played for record albums and became famous through his philosophy, solos, perception of rhythm and new technique that he discovered, and he was named 'Mısırlı Ahmet'. But, at the same time, he was named "Ahmed-I Turki" which means Turkish Ahmet in Egypt. Years later, he moved back to Egypt and practiced the *Deholla* (a large-sized *darbuka*)

at the Sinai Desert, and he created a technique to play the *Deholla* for the first time. He went to Spain and worked on the Flamenco after he went to the Sinai Desert, and he released two albums, which he worked on with Spanish, Israeli and Turkish musicians as well after a period of one year (Internet References, 04).

Mısırlı Ahmet expands his practice to different dimensions such as being willing to be related to Egypt in order to play the *darbuka* 'well', going to different countries such as Spain, and France in order to learn other cultures to gain value in his music practices, and working with musicians from other cultures. All of those decisions indicate that attempts at gaining value are in relation to cultural capital. However, we can see the difference between 'good' and 'bad' in his view as well, and this distinction is related to dominant/non-dominant cultural capital and, implicitly, mediating cultural capital.

Mısırlı Ahmet learned how to play the *darbuka* from CDs which he would listen to while working as a dish washer in Ankara. Also he points out that the *darbuka* wasn't popular and therefore he said "I'm a drum player" to others and he hid this. He played the *darbuka* for the first time in a wedding in Ankara and after that he consistently played in weddings (Internet References, 05). To hide being a *darbuka* player is an explicit sign that this musical instrument is considered as belonging to 'low' culture by social standing. We can see this in his discourse as well. He explains how rhythm players are underestimated by other musicians through the experience that he had at weddings by saying this:

Although we describe the rhythm and rhythm instruments as a second class and we don't see it as important as other instruments, rhythm exists in the core of our music. Look at the artists who get in touch with western. These artists give special meaning to rhythm in their music. But we underestimate the rhythm instruments. It depends on the people. No need to go further. The picture what we see in wedding saloon shows everything. Musician who plays *darbuka* stands up and collects the money in a kind of begging way. Have you ever seen that lead violinist or other violinists get up and collect the money? I will save *darbuka*

from being the Romany's (Gypsies) musical instrument. *Darbuka* players won't be underestimated anymore (Internet References, 06).

Mısırlı Ahmet talks about underestimated musical instruments in terms of 'low' and 'high' culture. In his opinion, rhythm instruments are not second class in the West and this view of him posits "west" as upper level. Thus, while saying, "I will save the *darbuka* from being the Romany's (Gypsies) musical instrument", he undertakes the role of mediating in order to posit the rhythm section of music to higher position that is considered belonging to the West. In this context, Mısırlı Ahmet is a non-Western cultural intermediary who works between the West and East, 'high' and 'low' culture. In this way, Mısırlı Ahmet applies for mediating cultural capital to posit his music practice to "upper" level by developing new techniques, playing a wide range of music styles.

Mısırlı Ahmet also says "I was consumed with listening Egyptian artists' CDs. They were awesome. What I will say new to them! So I started by saying "there is something, Ahmet, there is!" In this way I created a new technique. It's a milestone of *darbuka*. And then I developed this technique" (Internet References, 04). This discourse of him indicates the being in relation to 'authentic' culture, which he considers Egyptian music, stemming from his attempt to bring in value to the *darbuka*. Also, creating a new technique on the *darbuka* shows this fact explicitly.

He attended a music band that is called "Sharkiat" and arranged a tour that includes large part of Europe such as Estonia, France, Germany, Sweden, Austria, Italy and Middle East. When he came back to Turkey, he attended to a new band is called "Asia Minor". He founded Istanbul Rhythm band and they took to the stage in Istanbul Jazz Festival and Bahia Percussion Festival. SINAI which is a band he founded in 1999 in Egypt had a concert tour in Israel for two months and then they had some concerts in Spain as well. At the beginning of 2000, they made a record with Carlos Benavant who is a bass guitar player. Mısırlı Ahmet had a concert with percussion master Nana Vasconcelos in Turkey and he contributed to Anjelika Akbar's "Bach A L'Orientale"s project and he played for recording of

this project (Internet References, 03).

Mısırlı Ahmet, as one in an intercultural environments and working with musicians from different countries, creates a new status for the *darbuka* by playing a wide spectrum of music. Specifically, being related to jazz and performing this music with the *darbuka* gives an authentic meaning to his practice in order to gain value. However, Mısırlı Ahmet uses mainstream popular music to reach a larger audience.

Mısırlı Ahmet started to run the first *darbuka* school, Galata Ritimhanesi, in the Balat district of Istanbul in December 2007. Yet Mısırlı Ahmet doesn't consider this place a school but as a collective which produces rhythm (Internet References, 07). Galata Ritimhanesi may be referred to as a 'field' where habitus and cultural capital can be found. Thus, the experience of Mısırlı Ahmet that consists of his musical thought, practicing way, and the way in which he lived out his musical life is transferred to participants in this field. However, we can entitle this experience of Mısırlı Ahmet as mediating cultural capital due to the teaching method of Galata Ritimhanesi, which includes a new way of learning, with emphasis on improvisation. Hence, discourse of Mısırlı Ahmet indicates why Galata Ritimhanesi is not a school and how the teaching method of Galata Ritimhanesi makes it different from other schools:

Galata Ritimhanesi is not a school because it has not a teacher. Mısırlı Ahmet states that he is a "student who is willing to learn" at every turn. Then, one doesn't have anything neither to teach nor to learn if they claim that they know, they learned and they are done. Galata Ritimhanesi is not a school because the aim of school is making students to achieve the level of teacher. Intention of Mısırlı Ahmet is not to create his imitation or replica. Galata Ritimhanesi aims at nurture free, creative and assertive *darbuka* players who can express their feelings, interior and their own words by *darbuka*. Galata Ritimhanesi is not a school because there is no book, notebook, board or recorder (Internet References, 07).

In this teaching way, Mısırlı Ahmet creates his own method to convey his mediating cultural capital. We can

observe this fact by the program of Galata Ritimhanesi as well:

Practicing method of Galata Ritimhanesi comprises of the process which Mısırlı Ahmet has developed himself. Education of classic rhythm splits up into two categories. First one is teaching the rhythm by template of *düm-tek*. The second way is technique studying. However, education of classic rhythm which spirits away the creativity is not performed at Galata Ritimhanesi. Both advanced level of *darbuka* players and beginners play the same composition. Difference between advanced player and beginners is interpretation of compositions by practicing in the time. They proceed to practice compositions by adding one or two new rhythm sentences in every step (Internet References, 08).

The method of Galata Ritimhanesi, emphasizing the interpretation of compositions by learning new rhythm sections makes it different from the conventional technique of classic rhythm. Mısırlı Ahmet also posits his music practices to another level from the level of conventional technique of classic rhythm. He also situates his musical competences to higher position by mediating cultural capital as well. For instance, the 'Turkish Technique' which is well-known across the globe and the most difficult *darbuka* technique of Mısırlı Ahmet, is practiced in great detail at Galata Ritimhanesi. Therefore, both professional and amateur *darbuka* players around the world come to this place just to learn the technique of Mısırlı Ahmet through the method of *usta-çırak* (master-apprentice), which means learning the knowledge from the *Ustad* as face to face and studying together (Internet References, 09).

Galata Ritimhanesi also organizes rhythm and art camps every year and is attended by students of the ritimhanesi and *darbuka* players from other countries outside of Turkey. These camps are not limited to rhythm workshops but also include dance, creative drama, ceramic workshop, yoga, production of puppet and dyeing fabric workshop (Internet References, 10). The seventh year of this camp was held in 2014. For instance, the camp which was held in 2013 was attended by people from 16 countries, including Japan, Colombia, Azerbaijan, Russia, Germany, Belgium,



Austria and Lebanon (Internet References, 11). This art camp is a sample of 'field' where mediating cultural can be seen by tangible components, cultural goods, and making music in intercultural environment.

### Conclusion

Although there is an implication of the breakdown between 'high' and 'low' culture by cultural theorists in cultural studies, popular music can be applied to posit in between 'high' and 'low' status by discourse of musicians or audiences in the process of finding global market for cultural practices. In this context, dominant cultural capital and non-dominant cultural capital is derived from this distinction. Musicians can appeal both to 'high' and 'low' culture to reach a larger audience and make their music practices more 'valuable' in its context. In this sense, those musicians can be referred to cultural intermediaries who works in between 'high' and 'low' culture. They carry out task of cultural intermediaries by mediating cultural capital, which is a resource of 'high' and 'low' culture such as cultural goods, preferences and tastes.

Mısırlı Ahmet makes music practices in intercultural environments as by relating to musicians from different countries. In this context, Mısırlı Ahmet is a non-Western cultural intermediary who works between the West and East, 'high' and 'low' culture. In this way, Mısırlı Ahmet applies mediating cultural capital to posit his music practice to 'upper' level by developing new techniques and playing a wide range of music styles.

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