

Higher Education Inequality and Social Class Relation Analysis Based on Bourdieu's Cultural Reproduction Theory

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ABSTRACT

As an important means to promote social mobility, higher education plays an important role in maintaining social order, but inequality still exists in the process of its development. The inequality of higher education interacts with the social class structure. Based on Bourdieu's theory of culture reproduction as the analytical framework, this paper expounds the generation mechanism of higher education unfair and the inner link between social class differences, this paper discusses the higher education unfair social consequences, curing in cultural reproduction theory perspective to grasp higher education unfair and the relationship between the social classes.

Keywords: Higher education, Social class, Cultural reproduction

1. INTRODUCTION

Higher education plays a vital role in scientific research, talent training, promoting social progress and maintaining social stability. Higher education is also an effective path for the upward mobility of members of the bottom society. Some scholars define the education system as "the sum total of all organizational and habitual mechanisms that ensure the transmission of the culture inherited from the past from one generation to another."^[1] Although higher education in China plays an important role in the development and progress of the society, as an education system to promote social equity, there are still many unfair mechanisms within it. According to Bourdieu's theory of cultural reproduction, he believes that higher education plays an important role in cultural reproduction. However, it will not promote social mobility and mobility between classes, but will solidify the social class, to a certain extent, hinder the upward mobility of the lower members of the society, thus leading to the unreasonable social structure. Therefore, this paper analyzes the relationship between the unfairness of higher education and social class in order to grasp its intrinsic logic.

By exploring the relationship between inequality in higher education and social class, the analysis path and applicability of the theory of cultural reproduction in Chinese higher education can be expanded, and the

explanatory power of the theory of cultural reproduction in Chinese higher education can be strengthened. By analyzing the mechanism of the inequity and the solidification of the social class, some ideas are provided to improve the inequity of higher education in China.

2. THEORETICAL ANALYSIS OF CULTURAL REPRODUCTION

Bourdieu's theory of cultural reproduction was mainly formed in the 1960s and 1970s. Habits, capital, field and symbolic rights are the basic conceptual framework of this theory. To sum up, "cultural reproduction and social reproduction rely on the educational system to achieve". Bourdieu believes that the formation of cultural reproduction needs to go through two stages, that is, the early socialization process of the educated and the stage of school education.^[2] Cultural reproduction begins in the family field and develops in the field of education.

The theory of cultural reproduction, as a unique theoretical perspective, analyzes the mechanism of the formation and change of social structure and social class. It discusses how the educational system works together with the social structure and produces the social structure. In his opinion, social reproduction includes two stages. The first stage is to realize cultural

reproduction through education, which is the premise of social reproduction and also the root of the evil of education called by Bourdieu. On this basis, in the second stage, the educatees will occupy the social status and work positions comparable to their own cultural level, and realize the reproduction of social structure with the help of social status and professional status. The realization of these two stages is affected by class difference.

3. THE PERFORMANCE OF CLASS DIFFERENCES IN HIGHER EDUCATION

As an important mechanism to promote social mobility, higher education plays a vital role in the process of constructing social structure. Under the cover of symbolic rights, the nature of injustice is disguised as the illusion of "educational fairness". However, the unfair nature of higher education still exists in all stages of students' receiving higher education. Specifically, the unfair performance exists in the aspects of educational opportunities, educational processes and educational results of higher education between different classes.

First of all, there are differences in educational opportunities. There is an obvious difference in the entrance opportunities of higher education, which is mainly reflected in the difference in the enrollment rate. Enrollment rates for lower-middle class students are lower than those for upper-class families. In terms of basic education, the reality of choosing schools based on power and money has isolated the disadvantaged groups or the middle and lower class groups from high-quality educational resources. As a result, students from different social strata have different starting points when they enter higher education institutions.

Secondly, the differences in the process of education are mainly reflected in the quality of teaching, the allocation of educational resources and the status of students in school. The influence of social stratification on the process equity of higher education is different in different levels of colleges and universities. The higher the level of colleges and universities is, the greater the influence of social stratification on the process equity of higher education is, and the more dominant the children of dominant social classes are in the process of higher education. The lower the level of universities, the less or almost no influence of social stratification on the fairness of higher education process.

Finally, there are differences in educational outcomes, which are reflected in the social status and employment structure of children of different social classes. Education not only endows people with knowledge and life skills, but also is an important factor affecting social capital acquisition such as social status and authority. Bourdieu studied the academic achievement of college students and found that the

lower the class the students were from, the older they were at school and the slower they made academic progress. This will ultimately be reflected in the differences in their career achievements and social status. The children of the upper class are more likely to have higher career achievements, social status and social power than others.

4. THE MECHANISM OF HIGHER EDUCATION INEQUALITY: CLASS DIFFERENCE

Inequity in higher education is caused by a variety of factors. Based on the perspective of cultural reproduction theory, habitus, capital, field and symbolic power are all important factors for the generation of inequity. Bourdieu believes that cultural reproduction includes two stages. First, in the early socialization process, habitus, capital family field and so on play a greater role; Second, in the stage of school education, the field of education, the symbol of power and so on play a greater role. These factors not only lead to the generation of inequality in higher education but also promote the expansion and generation of social class difference. At the same time, the class difference enlarges the unfairness of higher education and becomes the inherent mechanism of unfairness.

4.1. Habit: The Basis of Mind and Behavior

Bourdieu believes that habitus is a system of ability habits and temperament developed by social subjects in the constantly evolving social environment, which represents a set of internalized ability and structural needs, as well as a system of ways of perception, thinking, appreciation and behavior.^[3] Rituals are family rituals have direct relation with different class, different families in the understanding of higher education and selection, choice of professional, show different attitude and behavior, Those who have grown up in the middle and upper classes are more likely to place higher education at the top of their list, think college course, learning motivation is more clear, However, students from the lower class have difficulty in understanding it rationally. I belong to the rural class, and many of my classmates never went to high school, let alone to college. Many students do not have the opportunities and resources to receive higher education, which directly leads to the unequal opportunities for higher education. The atmosphere of a specific circle deeply influences each generation, and members of every class continue their own unique culture and resources in their daily life and communication, which makes it difficult to achieve the breakthrough and flow of classes, and forms a cycle within a specific circle, in which the habit makes the cultural reproduction transfer between generations.

4.2. Capital: Physical Base

Capital includes cultural, economic and social capital. Among them, cultural capital is the self-induced factor, economic and social capital is the natural endowed factor, cultural capital is the main factor, and economic capital and social capital as the natural endowed factor jointly lead to the difference of cultural capital acquisition.

4.2.1. Cultural Capital

The acquisition of cultural capital comes from the early family education. Such early accumulation of cultural capital gradually divides in the learning process of school. With the support of school education, the differences of cultural accumulation will gradually expand. Therefore, the effect and durability of school education are closely related to individual family background and social background.^[4] The higher the family class of students is, the richer their cultural capital will be. They will further expand and enrich their cultural capital through education. However, for the middle and lower class families, students will receive less cultural capital from their families, and hard to gain the advantage of cultural capital in family education, school education is the main place to their accumulation of cultural capital. Due to the low starting point of receiving education, students from different classes are in an unfair state in the stage of higher education, and the difference of cultural capital from the unfair higher education will be passed on to their children to realize the class difference of cultural reproduction.

4.2.2. Economic Capital

Economic capital is the basic of maintaining the family functioning life elements, the difference of economic capital is the most easy to measure, so the difference of economic capital is one of the important standards to distinguish between different social strata, in under the condition of higher education at its own cost, to have more economic capital of upper class family children have more advantages in selecting school and professional. Therefore, the chances of having a better career after graduation are greater, making it possible to reproduce more economic capital.

4.2.3. Social Capital

Social capital refers to the social resources owned by individuals in the society, including occupational status, rights, interpersonal relations, etc. Research has found that the reason why many people with higher social status have higher social status is closely related to their own economic capital, social capital and other self-induced factors. According to Fei Xiaotong's theory of differential pattern, interpersonal relationship and social

understanding are important social characteristics, and social capital and social network dominate the future development of individuals to a large extent, and lead to inequality in higher education opportunities, processes and outcomes. At the same time, these more or less social capital will regenerate and produce new social capital through its function and pass it to the next generation, thus forms the social capital accumulation difference between different strata.

4.3. Field: The Foundation of Spatial Structure

A field refers to a network or configuration of objective relationships that exist between various positions.^[5]The educational field based on higher education is the structural basis of cultural reproduction, and the educational field can be divided into family field and school field.

4.3.1. Home Field

The family is the earliest socialization place for individuals, and the intergenerational transmission of cultural capital in the family field is realized in the process of mutual communication among family members. In the process of communication between family members, children are surrounded by the cultural atmosphere of the family and accept the words and deeds of their parents. The influence of parents on their children mainly comes from the aspects of parents' educational thought, education level and humanistic quality.^[6] The poor or rich cultural capital of parents' generation is passed on to their children in the family education field. Children of different social strata are influenced by different cultural capital at birth, which becomes the basis for receiving unfair higher education in the future. Meanwhile, it is also the source of cultural reproduction at different levels.

4.3.2. The School Field

The field of school education is the main field of cultural reproduction for individuals and the main place of the second stage of social reproduction. But institutions of higher learning are divided into different grades, influenced by the region and teachers and students. key construction has more than the average college education resources in colleges and universities. And higher social class families searching for ways to make their children into the key school, high class family owned capital makes their children get more education resources possible, this will make the reproduction level will still continue in all classes, and unfair cultural reproduction will in all levels of the last cycle.

4.4. Symbolic Power: Institutional Basis

The field of power plays a role through the policy system and virtually controls the distribution and possession of educational resources. When various behaviors and resources become separated from their potential material interests, these behaviors and resources acquire the symbolic power legitimacy.^[3] The field of power in the education system is a field that is seemingly fair but actually unequal in production, and its realization depends on symbolic violence. People have been in a specific institutional environment and symbolic right system for a long time, and symbolic violence makes people accustomed to the environment they are in. They take it for granted that some essential unfairness is covered up and legalized. Yet higher education is inherently unequal, and it produces more inequality through that inequality.

5. THE CONSEQUENCES OF INEQUITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION: CLASS SOLIDIFICATION

Higher education has brought about the solidification of social strata, which makes the social stratification structure appear new changes, which are embodied in the following three levels.

First, social stratification is intensifying. The difference of early cultural capital forms a bigger cultural capital difference through the unfairness of higher education, and then this cultural capital difference will further expand the differentiation between social classes through cultural reproduction. From the root, the advantages of different classes will be transformed into differences in economic capital, which will further lead to differences in the possession of educational resources, and finally the differences in cultural capital, which will further widen the gap between social classes.

Second, class intergenerational transmission. Unfairness of higher education makes each class resources have transitivity, advantage class by themselves with the social, economic and cultural capital to occupy more high quality education resources, and received a good higher education, and have the opportunity to choose high-income class, get a higher social status, and inferior class is difficult to have such an opportunity. Eventually, the accumulation of such advantages and the deepening of disadvantages will form a cycle of intergenerational transmission in the society.

Third, social mobility is slow. Inequality in higher education reduces the possibility of social mobility. The serious internalization of the current education field has led to the development and expansion of various tutoring agencies and interest classes, which will be

more conducive to students of high social class and make them more likely to stand out in the social competition, while students of low social class find it difficult to have more educational resources. The inequity of higher education makes it difficult to have children from poor families. It is more and more difficult for students at the lower level of society to change their fate by relying on higher education. The function of higher education to narrow social class differentiation is weakened, social mobility is slow, and the phenomenon of class solidification is serious.

6. CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

As an important means of promoting social mobility and adjusting stratum differentiation, higher education is closely related to social stratum. Under the culture reproduction theory Angle of view, habitus, capital, and the right field, symbols of class differences led to higher education unfair, class differentiation caused the unfairness of higher education, higher education unfair and to a certain extent, restrict the flow of the class and differentiation, so dedicated to promoting the fairness of higher education development, The researchers still need to work hard to improve its function of promoting social mobility and breaking down class differentiation. It is believed that with the joint efforts of scholars in various academic circles, the phenomenon of inequity in higher education will be analyzed and explained more deeply, and at the same time, it will continue to develop towards the direction of equity.

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