Analyzing the Social Mobility Function of Education from the Perspective of Cultural Capital

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ABSTRACT

Nowadays, social class mobility is slowing down and the class solidification is becoming more and more serious. Based on the existing research results, this paper re-examines the social mobility function of higher education in China from the perspective of cultural capital theory. By elaborating the relative concept concretely and explaining the relationship between them, analyzing the factors influencing the social mobility function of higher education at this stage and focusing on the increase of individual cultural capital. Then, it tries to explore the effective path to strengthen the social mobility function of higher education.

Keywords: Cultural Capital; Higher Education; Social Mobility

1 DEFINITION OF BASIC CONCEPT

1.1 The Concept of Cultural Capital

Boudreaux, a French sociologist, introduced the concept of "capital" into the study of culture and put forward the concept "cultural capital" for the first time in Capital formation. It refers to all tangible and intangible assets related to culture and cultural activities. In order to better explain the impact of cultural capital on social mobility function of higher education. In this paper, cultural capital is divided into macro and micro levels to discuss. The macro cultural capital mainly refers to the accumulation of family cultural capital. The micro-cultural capital mainly refers to the cultural capital contained in the individual.

1.2 The social mobility function of higher education

The social mobility refers to the movement of social members or groups from one position to another in the space of social relations. It can be divided into horizontal flow and vertical flow. The vertical flow is the transition between different classes and different social status; also it can be divided into upward flow and downward flow. The function of social mobility discussed in this paper mainly refers to the narrow sense of vertical upward flow. It means that the social members through professional higher education training and selection, improving their comprehensive quality and occupation competitiveness, and finally realizing the individual upward social mobility.

2 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE TWO BASIC CONCEPTS

First, by accumulating economic, social and even political capital of the family, the
macro-cultural capital affects the fairness of education’s starting and ending. It makes the higher education become the reproduction mechanism of the elite class. The superior class maximizes the intergenerational transmission of cultural activities so that their generations can maintain their advantage in many fields, which weakens the normal social mobility function of higher education. However the micro-cultural capital can offer more individual employment choice and professional competence, which promotes the effective function of the social mobility of higher education.

Then, the content delivery and value exertion of cultural capital ultimately depend on individual subjective initiative and the exertion of subjective initiative is closely related to higher education mobility function. The intergenerational transmission of advantaged class is unstable, and the conversion with other capital is non real-time, so the copy and upgrade of its advantaged macro cultural capital needs higher education platform; then furthermore striving to accumulate due to social mobility function of higher education, and make up for the lack of capital, so as to promote the accumulation and application of micro cultural capital.

3 CULTURAL CAPITAL FACTORS AFFECTING THE SOCIAL MOBILITY OF HIGHER EDUCATION AT THE PRESENT STAGE

3.1 The influence of macro social and cultural factors

(1) The social consciousness is traditional, mainly for the selection of elite schools, selection of "decent" occupations, imbalance between individual expertise and professional choice, so it is difficult to obtain the corresponding achievement and achieve individual class mobility.

(2) The educational system is unfair. Dividing areas to enter the nearest school, caused a phenomenon of school choice. The advantaged class by virtue of its strong capital excludes the disadvantaged children from quality education, and occupies the specially-recruited numbers of college entrance examination by virtue of the advantage. Family capital even relies on higher education to achieve the intergenerational transmission and optimization, which seriously affect the function of higher education social mobility.

3.2 The influence of the higher education factors

(1) Emphasizing theory and neglecting practice in curriculum setting of higher education. It is the key to the quality of higher education. At present, the credit setting of theory is more than practice. It is lack of flexibility so its eliciting is limited. Thus it cannot satisfy students’ diversification needs. This is not conducive to the profound cognition and value orientation of the individual, and at a disadvantage in the occupation choice and job promotion after graduation, so it is difficult to embody the function of higher education social mobility.

(2) The quality of graduates is difficult to meet the demand of the employment market. The reform progress is slow and the management is traditional in colleges, especially the university talent training objectives are disjoint with the employment market demand. And talent training objectives of different professions are similar and vague, lacking of clear orientation. In addition, 3 or 4 years' training process has made it difficult for our graduates to meet the market demand. The devaluation of college students has become a common understanding.

3.3 The influence of micro individual factors

(1) Lacking of knowledge accumulation and skills training. Contemporary college students are mostly the generation after 90s, they pay attention to personality preferences, lacking of spirit to study assiduously. And they require little to the accumulation of knowledge and skills training. The phenomenon of students playing mobile phones, sleeping or even truancy is common. Their theoretical knowledge and professional skills is not fine and lacking of strong
learning ability, so that they lack of competitiveness in the occupation choice and promotion, hardly to show their talents and break class limitation.

(2) Lacking of emotional management and cognitive ability. During the period of adjustment of social structure, the impetuous winds results in a decadent mental outlook for college students, who are busy with community and practice but not for study. They emphasis individual character and lacking of traditional Chinese culture, so a slight setback could make their emotions out of control. The complaint mood and negative attitude in the society is common. Most have no clear self-positioning, observation and judgment on the industry selection and career development trend. This will certainly affect the long-term value development of individuals.

4. STRATEGIES TO STRENGTHEN SOCIAL MOBILITY FUNCTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF CULTURAL CAPITAL

4.1 The macro social and cultural aspects, government should increase the policy guidance on publicity and improve relevant supporting mechanisms

(1) Strengthening ideological publicity to promote the integral transformation of traditional social concepts. Governments should step up ideological promotion on diversity, equality and cooperation, and strengthen publicity guidance such as supporting the development of vocational education or expanding social employment, making our social wider and more comfortable. The cultural environment and career choosing will achieve individuals’ utmost.

(2) Improving relevant supporting mechanisms to promote equal opportunity and resource allocation. The function of social mobility of higher education cannot be achieved without the improvement of relevant education system and employment system, such as the nearby entrance system, bonus point system of college entrance examination and the census register of employment restrictions. They all influence the equal distribution of educational resources and fair competition in employment opportunities.

4.2 On the middle perspective of higher education, closing to the demand of the market and improving the quality of talent training in an all-round way

(1) Explicating the target orientation of personnel training on the basis of employment market demand. Colleges should pay close attention to changes of employment market and combine with its actual development. Then guided by the goal, they should develop targeted training programs of cultivating talents to make these talents have more competitiveness and competency. Finally the basic functions of higher education: cultivate talents and serve the society can be realized, and it can also promote the orderly flow of social class.

(2) Promoting the reform of the curriculum system and improving the quality of personnel training in an all-round way. The higher education course is its main way to cultivate talents. So theory and practice learning time should be rationally allocated. Colleges should pay attention to the progress between courses and reduce duplication in course content. Therefore students can learn the utmost professional knowledge and skills in the limited learning time, and improve employability, such as interpersonal communication, expression.

4.3 On the micro individual quality aspect, changing the cognitive concept; increasing the amount of individual cultural capital possession

(1) Strengthening the accumulation of basic knowledge and skills training. The economic contribution rate of knowledge is becoming more and more prominent today. It is necessary to master the necessary professional knowledge and skills. While knowledge grasp is one of the fairest things which the students cannot cheat, they should always make correct attitude, be prudent, be serious to accumulate it, and constantly update the original knowledge structure to
form their own knowledge system and unique skills so that they can have the confidences and capabilities to win in the future employment competition. True skill and genuine knowledge is the core value.

(2) Strengthening the emotion management and thinking cognition and improving self-comprehensive strength. With economic transformation, industry iteration and emerging industry fluxing and refluxing, we must have the ability of synchronous evolution. Firstly, we should change the cognitive thinking. As the future world will not be a fixed state, continuous upgrading should be the norm of the future. We must have the basic consciousness and ability to adapt to the changes. Secondly, we must have actively value about the world and good attitudes, improving the abilities on emotion management, rational and stable cognitive state in the changing situation, in order to upgrade a better adaptability of learning and comprehensive strength for our own long-term development.

5. BRIEF SUMMARY

As the development of Internet technology, intelligent era has come. While competitiveness is more and more serious, there are also opportunities, which provident objective environment for substantial effective performance of social mobility function of higher education. And it is self-evident that cultural capital also influences on it. Only if the macro, middle perspective and micro factors combing to support it, the “fixed social status” can be gradually broken. By maximizing the value and potentiality of each individual, the whole social stratum can achieve a benign and orderly flow, so the power of higher education cannot be ignored. Of course, family cultural capital and workplace culture rules will also affect the effective development of social mobility in higher education. But this paper does not analyze them and they need further exploration.

REFERENCES