Comparing Theory of Bourdieu on Cultural Capital and Field and Theory of Nussbaum on Capabilities Approach to Understand Higher Education

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Abstract: This essay selects Bourdieu's field theory with cultural capital theory and Nussbaum's competence approach theory to perceive the issue of higher education. To address this issue, the essay is divided into the following parts: first, it outlines the current situation of higher education, discusses the relationship between higher education and social justice and the importance of this issue; second, it discusses in detail the key concepts of the above two theories and explores their relationship with higher education; finally, it compares the advantages and disadvantages of the two theories and concludes that Boudieu's theoretical framework has more possibilities of interpretation and can provide more explanatory power for higher education than Nussbaum's.

1.Introduction

This essay selects Bourdieu's field theory with cultural capital theory and Nussbaum's competence approach theory to perceive the issue of higher education. To address this issue, the essay is divided into the following parts: first, it outlines the current situation of higher education, discusses the relationship between higher education and social justice and the importance of this issue; second, it discusses in detail the key concepts of the above two theories and explores their relationship with higher education; finally, it compares the advantages and disadvantages of the two theories and concludes that Boudieu's theoretical framework has more possibilities of interpretation and can provide more explanatory power for higher education than Nussbaum's.

Freebody et al. (2019) [1] argue that social justice discourse is related to justice theory, but the two are not the same. Contemporary conceptions of social justice emerged in the early days of capitalism with the rise of social science disciplines and social reform movements in universities across Europe and North America, which recognized that poverty was not a natural phenomenon but a problem that required a human and social response. As Jackson (2005) [2] points out, social justice has a strong distributive meaning and aims to redistribute resources to the disadvantaged through the market. Social justice also includes a focus on equity of opportunity. After the 1990s, distributive justice gradually became one of the key topics of research in the field of Western economics. To mainstream Western economists, distributive justice refers to the equal allocation of resources in economic activities. In recent years, the issue of distributive justice has been

extended to various social benefits other than income, such as health care, social services and education.

It is well known that education is an important force for social change Firstly, education has the ability of changing the world [3]. According to Bell (2016) and Keddie (2012), educational experiences and outcomes are associated with employment rates, the physical and mental health, social and emotional relationships, and high risk variables such as financial or physical security are strongly associated. Education changes the way individuals or groups live their lives by shaping the characteristics they possess, which in turn determines the careers or jobs they are likely to hold in the future. Thus, there is a tendency to associate education with the economy rather than society. This also demonstrates the second important role of education - directly or indirectly - as a mechanism for social reproduction.

Zeichner (2009) points out that there are three basic types of theories about justice: firstly, theories that focus on the distribution of material goods and services (Rawls, 2001); secondly, basic theories about the social relations of individuals and groups within the mechanisms of life and work; and thirdly, theories that focus on both distributive and relational justice. Rowan (2019) points out that policies related to higher education focuses more on the first theory, i.e. the question of what kind of people are eligible and have access to higher education, whether higher education is a learning environment, whether the parameters needed are available after entering higher education, and whether students who enter higher education can afford the costs. At the same time, Rizvi (2009) argues that non-material resources such as respect, recognition, rights, and opportunities are equally important aspects of achieving justice in higher education, the reason being that injustice may be rooted in social

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patterns of representation, interpretation and communication.

2.Theory of Bourdieu on Field and Cultural Capital and Higher Education

2.1 Key Concepts and Theory

Bourdieu devoted his life to theoretically overcoming the dichotomies of objectivity and subjectivity, resistance and motivation, structuralism and phenomenology, an Albright that characterizes social theory. He argued that social structure determines the way people act, which in turn influences their social relations. Therefore, he emphasizes the need to establish a set of mechanisms or principles that can explain the behavior of actors so that we can better understand social phenomena. Bourdieu refers to the opposition between subjectivism and objectivism as the "mode of knowledge" and argues for the construction of a "theory of practice" by transcending the opposition between the two and maintaining the positive meaning of both (Freebody et al., 2019). Bourdieu's framework of knowledge is based on a reflective and critical analysis of the social sphere [4]. Reflective sociology requires practitioners to take on a methodological obligation to acknowledge and address their place in the social field as a whole, while the "sciences" are theorized as historically and socially constituted practices. Bourdieu's critical analysis is reflected in his lengthy analysis, in which he argues that scholars have failed to recognize that their overemphasis on academic language and disregard for ordinary language has created a gap between the logic of practice and the logic of the academic field [5]. There are three main modes of knowledge: intersubjectivity, the world of action, and inter-actor relations; inter-actor relations include four types: habitus, capital, culture, and power. The logic of practice refers to the ability to understand the context of one's own time, and the logic of the field is the reflexivity of knowledge. According to Webb et al. (2002), Bourdieu's self-reflexive thinking is a systematic exploration of the realm of ideas that can and cannot be thought. His theoretical views can be summarized in three key words. "habitus", capital and field.

Regarding the theory of "field", Bourdieu believes that social form is a complex collection of social fields in which various forms of power circulate [6]. Fields" are defined by specific types of resources owned by dominant agents and institutions. These resources are referred to here as "capital". People have different positions in the 'field' depending on the amount of capital they possess, and social actors use different resources - 'capital', 'habits' - to improve or maintain their position. Capital" can be divided into two categories: first, physical capital; second, relational capital. "Habit" refers to the characteristics of social actors and is a way of describing how social structures and histories are reflected in individuals - it is the set of personalities inherent in individuals that both reflect external social structures and influence how they perceive and behave in the world. It is a way of describing how personal structures and histories are embodied in individuals-it is the set of dispositions inherent in individuals that both reflect external social structures and influence the way individuals see and behave in the world [7]. According to Bourdieu (1995) [8], "habits" include "complete structures" (referring to the environment in which individuals live) and "constructed structures" (i.e., practices guided by habits). The "field" has a decisive role in the "habit": on the one hand, the "field" can influence the habit, and on the other hand, the habit can control the "field" in turn. " Field" determines "habit". Habits" dominate "field". The "field" and "habit" are mutually constraining relationships. Firstly, the "field" forms "habits", for example, students as students produce a series of habits under the rules of the school field; secondly, the relationship between people in the field constructs the field into a unified world of meaning, embodied as a "symbolic template", in which the same people produce a unified mental schema, unified thoughts and behaviors. The relative independence of each field varies according to the age of the field, the specific field and the national tradition [9]. The essence of "field" is a relational network of social relations, which determines various interactions between people. The formation of the "field" depends on two aspects: the conditions on the material level and the requirements on the spiritual and cultural level. The core of understanding the principles of field structure is the issue of autonomy. First, each field is a separate whole, relatively independent from the economic and political spheres of power, with its own unique structure and logic, and also exhibits the corresponding characteristics - the markers that produce unique values and achievements. Second, the field has two main forms of capital representing the principle of competitive hierarchy: the principle of autonomy principle - focusing on apparently boring activities: the principle of otherness - and the economic and political achievements of specific activities (Marton,2005).

2.2 Theory of Bourdieu and Higher Education

In his early works, Bourdieu examined various aspects of the French higher education process, developing a theory of practice based on the concept of cultural capital and extending it to concepts such as field, habitus, etc. [10]. Cultural capital is defined as cultural goods formed by education, including bodily forms - human dispositional tendencies; objectified forms - cultural goods, such as books; institutionalized forms -qualifications, etc. At the same time Bourdieu argues that cultural capital is an important part of class reproduction and that the privileged class, dominated by economic and cultural capital, concretizes and strengthens its dominance through educational practices [12]. Studies show that educational achievement is associated with wealth, literacy and social status [11]. Bourdieu argues that the educational system is related to the social context and the reproduction of economic privilege and related conditions. For example, children from families with good cultural backgrounds feel more comfortable in the school environment and are able to complete school tasks more easily. At the same time Bourdieu argues that schooling as a field is heavily

discriminatory and that students without relevant cultural capital are left behind in the overall schooling process. School teaching methods, curricula, and assessment methods widen the achievement gap between the two types of students. The achievement gap is the result of deeply rooted structural inequalities [13] [14]. It does not mean that all students from disadvantaged families underperform and do not have access to higher education, but rather that the number of students entering higher education is low.

After the early 1980s, Bourdieu modified his earlier views in two ways due to the rapid development of higher education in countries such as France. First, Bourdieu recognized that the autonomy of the field is relative and that the field is influenced by various external conditions. The nature of social change is a change in the relations of existing fields or the emergence of new fields. Second, Bourdieu emphasized the principle of conflict-based social reproduction and transformation. The field becomes the center of power struggle and not only the center of dominant capitals competing. As access to higher education increases, higher education market segmentation increases, with the public and faculty stratifying according to the amount of cultural capital they hold [15], confirming Bourdieu's view that cultural capital is an important link in the reproduction of class.

Bourdieu argues that in the field of higher education, dominant and subordinate agents in its hierarchy achieve specific goals for both sides in a competitive relationship. The positions of these agents (e.g., university presidents, academics, students) depend on the amount of capital owned [16]. According to Bourdieu (1991) [17], the field may contain other fields (subfields), i.e., the higher education field contains administrative subfields, academic subfields, and student subfields. Battie (2017) states that applicants with more cultural capital due to family habitus have more advantages than others. The role of the higher education system is to legitimize the privilege further by enabling this privileged class of applicants to pass through education and earn a degree.

3. Theory of Nussbaum on Capacities Approach and Higher Education

3.1 Key concepts and theory

Nussbaum's capability approach begins with the question of "what is a human being", which she sees as seemingly simple but actually very complex - the complexity of human life and struggle; at the same time, Nussbaum claims that the capability approach can help solve pressing human problems. Nussbaum claims that the capability approach can help solve pressing human problems and injustices, and that her theory focuses on altruism(Hedge & MacKenzie, 2012).

According to Sen (2009), the capability approach is an intellectual discipline that is extremely important in evaluating human achievement and freedom and can be used to assess whether a person can accomplish different things that are justified. The capability approach focuses on all aspects of people's lives, and Nussbaum (2011) [18]

identifies ten core human capabilities: life-the ability to die normally; body health-reproductive health, adequate nutrition, suitable shelter; bodily integrity-right to move, security; senses, imagination, thought-acquisition of knowledge and cultivation, free use of ideas; emotions; practical reason-good thoughts; subordination-benign social interaction, non-discrimination; other species-care for other species in the world; play; control over one's environment-right to participate in politics and to hold property, employment equality.

The capability approach is concerned with whether people are truly free to do these things, whether they may freely choose to do or not to do them, and whether they can be happy when they do. The capability approach asks questions about what people can really do; what kind of people they will become; what capabilities people have; what people actually achieve in terms of being and doing; and whether practices and institutions of practice, policies, are focused on developing human capabilities? -- Do people have the ability and freedom to choose to be who they want to be [18].

3.2 Theory of Nussbaum and Higher Education

Nussbaum's competency-based theory focuses on the development of human capabilities and the equality of individual rights and status, especially "how to extend equal civil rights, such as education, health, political rights and freedoms, to mental disabilities"; and "how to extend justice and dignified living conditions to all citizens of the world" (Zhu, 2016). This idea has informed his entire academic career and served as one of the basic starting points for his curricular reforms. However, due to the influence of the Western rationalist tradition, the concept of "competence-based" has not been fully realized in universities. As a logical starting point for his research, Nussbaum began to reflect on the change of university general education, and proposed an alternative theory based on competencies based on systematic reflection of existing social contract theories.

After an in-depth study of American institutions of higher education, Nussbaum proposed the following three visions for liberal arts education: first, to provide comprehensive training for all students; second, to teach students how to live; and third, to fulfill civic responsibilities and citizenship. However, some stakeholders in higher education place vocational skills education first and comprehensive human qualities second (Nussbaum, 2011). According to Nussbaum (2011), truly successful education produces people who treat all people equally, so the true purpose of university general education should be reconstructed in three ways. First, to help students build an open and inclusive, dynamic and creative environment in school that enables them to share knowledge with and participate in society at large. Second, students should be encouraged to become responsible learners. The first is to foster active critical thinking so that students find truth and fear in their reading rather than being confined to books; the second is to reflect deeply and move beyond passive "self-righteousness"; and the third is to respect a world different from their own

(Nussbaum, 1997). According to Nussbaum, the goal of university liberal education is to develop "global citizens" who understand each other. AmartyaSen emphasizes the importance of developing "global citizens" who are "imaginative, compassionate, and morally committed". The first step is to achieve the unity of knowledge, skills, and abilities. Secondly, to enable every member of society to acquire basic humanistic and ethical values, which is the ultimate goal of liberal education. Indicators of human life development and the quality of human life need to be measured and judged by various methods and indicators. Nussbaum was deeply influenced by the ideas of Anusbaum Sen, who believed that liberal education should aim at cultivating global citizens, abandoning traditional customs, emancipating the mind, dealing with things sensitively, and being a global citizen. According to Nussbaum (2011), the real purpose of liberal education is to develop free and autonomous citizens, and "we must and can promote understanding through liberal education; education that fails to meet this challenge is not truly 'liberal' education." The important function of a university liberal education is to enable students to grow up with a rich and meaningful life. First, to enable each student to become a collaborator in his or her own learning process. Second, it is important to give each student enough time to think and space to think independently. Finally, students should be allowed to think critically. One of these three is indispensable. In a sense, Nussbaum's call for change in general education in American universities is based on his educational philosophy: respect for each student's ability to make rational analysis and moral judgment, and respect for their ability to think and make moral choices. The freedom and imagination pursued by university liberal education is a respect for inner human consciousness and free expression. University liberal education plays an important role in promoting the exchange, creation and dissemination of knowledge and assumes the responsibility of listening to the opinions of an increasingly diverse group of students and scholars and enriching the exchange and collision of ideas.

Another key point of Nussbaum's competence approach theory is that people should not be forced to acquire competence but should be absolutely free. She believes that on the basis of a certain amount of knowledge an individual possesses, through his or her own efforts he or she can develop a particular competence that he or she possesses to the fullest, thus becoming a competence that can contribute to society. Therefore, in the case of higher education, people should have the freedom to choose whether or not to pursue higher education or develop their own abilities. However, this is not the case in practice. Higher education is unfair to students who have the ability to learn but lack financial or material support. On the other hand, the degree certification and workplace recognition that accompany higher education force many students to choose higher education, which is inconsistent with Nussbaum's freedom of choice of absolute ability.

4. Comparison of theory of Bourdieu and Nussbaum

4.1 Strengths and Weakness of Bourdieu' theory

4.1.1 Strength:

Firstly, the theory of Bourdieu makes higher education a specialized subject of study. Previous studies have tended to lean toward internalism and externalism. Internalism focuses on the study of components of higher education, such as specific institutions, practices; in terms of policy analysis, macro social issues are used as the context in which agents of the higher education field function. Externalism objectifies higher education as the embodiment of interests and emphasizes these interests as the central aspect of educational policy. Bourdieu's theoretical framework highlights the shortcomings shared by both approaches - higher education has a unique nature and power that cannot be studied solely as its components or reduced to other fields of social practice(Maton, 2005). According to Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992) [20], fields are defined the study of the field cannot be reduced to the agent's own intrinsic characteristics; in addition, the structure of the field is shaped by the relationship between the agent's positions, and the relationship between the positions cannot be reduced to interactions. Both intrinsicist and extrinsicist approaches conceive of social relations based on the interactions of the social elements(Maton, 2005). According to Bourdieu (1993), higher education is like a "prism" and the higher education field is a mediating environment of the overall field structure, which This environment translates broader pressures and thus, unlike the internal and externalist view, macro-social influences cannot be limited to the state of the environment.

Secondly, the concept of 'Field' and 'Capital' promotes Feminist Perspectives in Interpreting Higher Education. Allard (2005) [21] uses Bourdieu's field framework to examine the positioning of economically disadvantaged young women in various social arenas in Australia. Allard argues that a field perspective facilitates the analysis of the extent to which individuals deploy particular kinds of capital, the operation of power relations in different social spaces and the position of different forms of capital in particular arenas. At the same time Bourdieu's field of action discourages overly generational analysis of individuals achieving change and provides a method for the exploration of autonomy and initiative [22]. This facilitates a feminist interpretation of how social justice is achieved in higher education.

Thirdly, the theory of Bourdieu explains the intrinsic causes of inequity in higher education. The theory of cultural capital and field attributes the causes of inequity to differences in the amount of cultural capital accumulated, which becomes the main transformative force of class reproduction, and provides new ideas to explain the equity of higher education.

4.1.2 Weakness:

Does not adequately reflect the reduction of the boundaries of the existing social space fields. The researchers use the Bourdieu field principle of otherness to decipher changes in higher education practices during periods of rapid and significant change-i.e., the correlation between forces from outside the field and changes in the field's control [23]. According to Naidoo (2004) and Maton (2005), otherness is closely related to the expansion and diversity of higher education, which may lead to the coexistence of autonomy and otherness in the same domain. For example, higher education institutions in the South African region during 1985-1990 developed different strategies that reflected the degree of state control to which they were subject. According to Marginson (2008), Bourdieu conceptualizes a field as a social space that has clear boundaries, is predictable, and has a certain degree of independence. Appadurai (1996) [24] points out that global culture is fluid and structured; its structure is uneven, overlapping, separated, asynchronous, and contingent. For example, the lifelong learning system that a growing number of scholars are advocating to construct will undoubtedly break down the boundaries of higher education(Bathmaker, 2015).

4.2 Strengths and weakness of Nussbaum's theory

4.2.1 Strengths

Giving people a new way of assessing how they perceive their personal lives.

Pratab (2009) questions the practical significance of the capability approach for policy making and empirical evaluation, but the significance of the capability approach is to shift people's attention to public values that are not currently considered to be the most important, such as freedom, justice. It is a unique discourse or paradigm, a counter-theory to the dominant consciousness of society, poverty and prosperity. For this issue of higher education, the competency approach theory can assess students' personal lives in several competency dimensions.

4.2.2 Weakness

The capability approach is exceedingly individualistic. Individuals are inevitably part of the social environment, and thus the theory should recognize that agents are socially embedded and that each individual is connected to others in society, rather than isolated individuals(Robeyns, 2017). Furthermore, Nussbaum's theory is not an explanatory theory; the theory focuses on the freedom of competence acquisition and is not concerned with student achievement in higher education.

5. Comparison and Argument

Both Bourdieu and Nussbaum get theories to explain the status and impact of higher education. Bourdieu's theory is an explanatory theory and Nussbaum is an assessment tool.

Nussbaum assesses students' personal lives and personal choices from a competency perspective but does not focus on student achievement. The factors for student entry into higher education focus more on individual ability; whereas Bourdieu's theory comprehensively points out that multiple factors influence student performance and achievement from three theoretical threads: habitus, field, and capital. Cultural capital as an important link in the reproduction of class explains class entrenchment in a way that is different from political and economic factors. In addition, higher education is not entirely based on individual choice, and schooling cannot be completely fair, which is not the same as Nussbaum's vision. Finally, Bourdieu's theory is more systematic and has more research potential.

6. Conclusion

This essay uses Bourdieu's cultural capital theory and field theory as well as Nussbaum's capability theory to understand this issue in the context of higher education. Through comparison and discussion, it can be concluded that Bourdieu's and Nussbaum's theories have both strengths and weaknesses. In general, Bourdieu's theory can provide more explanatory power to the issue.

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