

The "Bridging Effect" of Parents' Network under the Framework of Bourdieu's Capital Theory -- The path of cultural capital's influence on college students' social integration

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Abstract. In today's Chinese society, the social integration of college students has been widely discussed, but the path of the "bridging effect" of parents' network affecting college students' social integration is not clear. This paper analyzes the impact of parents' cultural capital on College Students' social integration in three dimensions of employment, culture and psychology based on Bourdieu's cultural capital theory. The analysis shows that the parent network has the dual functions of "cohesion" and "connection", and plays a complementary role in the three integration dimensions of employment, culture and psychology, while college students can also actively activate the weak relationship in the home network to make up for the information homogeneity of the strong relationship. Based on this, this paper puts forward two suggestions: first, parents should balance the cohesion and connectivity of the network, and consciously introduce weak relationship resources. Second, policymakers should design compensatory intervention mechanisms, such as alumni mentoring programs, vocational social skills workshops, etc., to help students who lack cultural capital build alternative social networks to promote educational equity and social mobility.

1 Introduction

China's higher education is currently popular. According to the existing research results, social connection and sense of belonging have a protective effect on College Students' psychological adaptation and test pressure relief [1]. The degree of College Students' social integration is uneven. According to Bourdieu's capital theory, the cultural capital possessed by parents can fully affect the development of children [2]. Parents' cultural capital has a significant impact on their children's educational opportunities, career planning and social integration through family upbringing or intergenerational transmission through social networks. The "bridging effect" of parents' networks may be more critical than direct support within the family [3]. However, most of the current studies focus on parents' Academic Counseling, financial assistance, or values indoctrination to their children in the family, and pay less attention to how parents' networks transform cultural capital into opportunities

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available to their children. This path of action has not been fully revealed in the existing literature. This paper aims to take Bourdieu's capital theory as the core framework, integrate the existing empirical research, and analyze how cultural capital affects college students' social integration stage through the "bridging effect" of parents' network.

2 Concept definition and theoretical basis

2.1 Concept definition

Parent network refers to the relationship network formed by college students' parents and their extended social connections. This network not only includes strong relationships within the family, but also includes external contacts established by parents through work, social networking, interests, and other channels [3]. This network can not only play the role of shelter, but also extend its function through the bridging effect. In this paper, the bridging effect refers to the effect that parents use the part of their own social network that goes beyond the core circle of the family to provide help for their children's social integration stage. This effect is reflected in two aspects: one is the lack of information, which can provide children with scarce learning opportunities, employment information, or industry trends that cannot be obtained from public channels or within the family; the other is influence. Parents use the social influence in the network to provide internal promotion opportunities and help for their children's job hunting or promotion [4]. The essence of this connection is the pre or auxiliary condition of social integration. This study divides social integration into three dimensions: employment integration, cultural integration and psychological integration. Analyze the process that college students establish contact with the mainstream society in three aspects of employment, cultural adaptation and psychological identity during the transition from campus environment to social workplace environment [4].

2.2 Bourdieu's capital theory

Bourdieu divided capital into three basic forms: economic capital, social capital and cultural capital.

Economic capital refers to the material resources that can be directly converted into money or property rights, including income, real estate, financial assets and other forms of property. It is the most direct and explicit form of capital, which can be used to purchase educational services, living environment and other material conditions conducive to the development of children.

Social capital refers to the sum of the actual or potential resources that individuals can mobilize by virtue of the persistent social network they occupy. This kind of capital is embedded in social connections such as family relations, classmate networks and professional circles. The larger the network size and the richer the member resources, the more social capital individuals can mobilize.

Cultural capital is the core concept of Bourdieu's Sociology of education, which refers to the cultural resources obtained through family inheritance, school education and personal cultivation and recognized by the society. It has three forms: one is the physical form, such as knowledge, education, taste, and language ability. Second, objective forms, such as books, works of art, and other cultural objects. Third, institutionalized forms, such as diplomas and qualification certificates. For children, the cultural capital possessed by parents not only determines the cultural atmosphere of the family but also imperceptibly shapes their children's early experience and habits. The three kinds of capital are not isolated, but can be converted to each other. For example, economic capital can be used to purchase educational

resources and transform them into children's cultural capital. Cultural capital can also be used as a ticket to enter a specific social circle, thus accumulating social capital.

2.3 Theoretical mechanism: mutual transformation between cultural capital and social capital

Among the three capital forms defined by Bourdieu, this paper chooses the conversion mechanism between cultural capital and social capital as the basis for analyzing the "bridging effect" of parents' networks. The reason for this choice is that cultural capital determines the quality and boundary of parents' social network, which in turn serves as a transmission channel to transform cultural capital into information, opportunities and cultural adaptation resources available to children. It is in this process of "capital conversion" that the "bridging effect" of the parent network is realized.

The mutual transformation of cultural capital and social capital is reflected in two directions. First, cultural capital is the ticket to a specific social network. Individuals with similar cultural tastes, educational backgrounds and diplomas are more likely to attract each other and form relatively homogeneous social circles, which is a phenomenon described by the "homogeneity principle" [5]. This means that the higher the cultural capital stock of parents, the richer the social network they are in.

Second, social capital is an important channel to activate and transmit cultural capital. Parents' social networks are not only the path of information circulation, but also the place where cultural resources can be passed down between generations. This transformation process shows that cultural capital is not only transmitted vertically within the family, but also extends externally through the parents' social network, thus deeply affecting the social integration of college students in the three dimensions of employment, culture, and psychology.

To sum up, this paper takes the mutual transformation of cultural capital and social capital as the basic theoretical mechanism, to reveal the internal logic of the "bridging effect" of parents' network, and provide theoretical support for the later analysis of how parents' network affects college students' social integration.

3 "Bridging effect" between cultural capital and parent network

3.1 The decisive role of cultural capital on parents' network quality

According to the theory of cultural capital elaborated in the second part, the cultural capital owned by parents, whether it is specific cultivation taste, objective cultural goods, or an institutionalized education diploma, directly affects the composition of their social network [6]. Parents are more likely to enter the social circle with high homogeneity and practice the phenomenon described in the "homogeneity principle" [5]. Parents with the same educational background often establish contacts in networks such as University classmates and professional associations, and these network members themselves also have a high amount of cultural capital. At the same time, studies have found that the first generation of college students in their families' participation in activities related to cultural capital is relatively low, which, to some extent, supports Bourdieu's prediction of cultural reproduction theory for the first generation of college students that they are less involved in activities that contribute to academic achievement [7]. Therefore, the cultural capital stock of parents determines the scale of their social network and the richness of resources. Based on the parent network shaped by cultural capital, parents can play a "bridging effect" by using the weak relationship beyond the core circle of the family in the network to provide information and opportunities

for their children to cross the existing circle [4]. This effect is not a simple information transmission, but a specific path for cultural capital to transform into children's development resources through the intermediary role of the network.

Furthermore, the mutual transformation mechanism between cultural capital and social capital plays a key role here. For example, in the context of hierarchical solidification of higher education in South Korea, studying in the United States has become a strategy for the upper middle class to maintain class advantages - not only to acquire knowledge and skills, but also to accumulate cultural capital with global recognition, to gain a competitive advantage in the globalized academic and occupational market [8]. Parents' cultural capital not only helps them enter different social networks, but also these networks themselves become a channel to transmit cultural capital to their children.

3.2 "Bridging effect" of the parent network and its mechanism

Based on the parent network shaped by cultural capital, parents can play a "bridging effect" by using the weak relationship beyond the core circle of the family in the network to provide information and opportunities for their children to cross the existing circle [4]. This effect is not a simple information transmission, but a specific path for cultural capital to transform into children's development resources through the intermediary role of the network.

Specifically, the mechanism of "bridging effect" is reflected in two levels. First, information connectivity. Parents' networks with different cultural capital can obtain employment opportunities and industry trends through different channels [3]. For example, through the alumni network or professional social activities, parents can obtain internal recommendation information for their children. Second, influence connection. Key members of the parent network may directly or indirectly provide career referrals or mentors for their children, thereby lowering the threshold for their children to enter the new circle [4]. Both mechanisms depend on the connection function of the parent network; that is, there are weak relationships across different social groups within the network.

3.3 Dual functions of parent network: cohesion and connection

There are two functions within the parent network, namely "cohesion" and "connection" [3]. The "cohesion" function emphasizes the direct support within the family, such as emotional support, value shaping, and financial support, which is the cornerstone of children's development [1]. The "connection" function emphasizes the introduction of external resources to help children break through the existing circle. These two functions are equally important for social integration.

Although the two types of networks have different contribution paths to children's social integration, they are equally important. Therefore, it is clear that the connection ability of parents' network is an important mechanism for the reproduction of social stratification, and its root lies in the cultural capital owned by parents [3].

To sum up, based on the cultural capital theory in the second part, it can be clearly seen that parents' cultural capital determines their social network, and the "bridging effect" of social network is the key bridge connecting the internal support of family and the external social integration of children. This laid a theoretical foundation for the fourth part of this paper to discuss in detail the specific path of cultural capital affecting college students' social integration.

4 Suggestions on action path

Based on the above theory, it can sort out a clear path of action. The cultural capital owned by parents determines the quality of their social network, and then through the "bridging effect" of parents' network, it can deeply affect their children's social integration in employment, culture, psychology and other aspects.

4.1 Suggestions for students

Students from different backgrounds in urban and rural areas have no significant difference in academic achievement, but there are significant differences in social achievement, such as serving as student cadres, participating in community activities, etc. This difference is mainly due to the differences in family background and related cultural capital investment strategies [9]. When facing employment choice or cultural adaptation, many college students are used to relying on strong relationships within their families - the opinions of their parents and the care of their relatives, but often ignore the heterogeneous resources carried by those less close contacts in their parents' social circle. Students can consciously identify the candidates who may provide industry trends, internship opportunities, or career suggestions through the parent circle relationship.

Students should also realize that the strong and weak relationships in the parent network bear different functions: when they fall into self-doubt or identity anxiety, parents' unconditional trust is indeed the most important psychological support. However, when faced with specific career decisions or information blind spots, it is necessary to actively expand weak relationships and obtain heterogeneous information to effectively make up for the problem of information homogeneity in strong relationships. In short, students need to learn to flexibly switch between "strong relationship protection" and "weak relationship bridging".

4.2 Suggestions for parents

The Chinese family's parenting tradition emphasizes close guardianship, and parents are used to making arrangements and paving the way for their children's growth as much as possible. The study found that non-Chinese parents mainly rely on "bridging social capital" to establish contact with local parents to understand the education system, while Chinese parents rely more on "cohesive social capital" to exchange educational resources through WeChat and other platforms [10]. This "cohesion" function with a strong relationship as the core is of course, important. It is the cornerstone of children's emotional security. However, if the parent network only has the function of cohesion and no outward extension of "connection", information and opportunities are easy to circulate in the homogeneous circle, unable to open a real upward flow channel for children. Therefore, while giving emotional support, parents may wish to consciously introduce weak relationship resources to their children. This is not to ask parents to become utilitarian socialists, but to make some fine adjustments in daily life. For example, when chatting with your children, talk more about the career stories of different people in your circle of friends. More importantly, parents' support for their children should be adjusted according to their children's stage.

At the stage of job hunting, parents can play a more "bridging" role by providing information and referrals, but they should restrain the impulse to make decisions for their children and let their children exercise their judgment in real choices. When children enter the workplace for the first time, the role of parents can return to psychological support more, while maintaining the unobstructed channels of weak relationships, so that children can activate themselves when they need it. In addition, the accumulation of parents' own cultural capital will also indirectly expand the family's network vision. Whether participating in continuing education, industry exchanges, or maintaining the habit of reading and contacting multiple sources of information, these seemingly personal behaviors will eventually be

transformed into resources that children can perceive and mobilize through the family atmosphere and social networks.

4.3 Suggestions for policymakers and educational institutions

For those students from families with relatively poor cultural capital, the problem is not that they are unable to activate weak relationships, but that there is a lack of activating weak relationship resources in their parents' networks. This inequality of starting point cannot be solved by "advising students to be more active" or "advising parents to pay more attention". Some studies have found that even though students have acquired a large amount of cultural knowledge through specialized courses, there are significant differences in the institutional responses of different students when trying to use this capital. This discovery reveals that education inequity is not only a problem of capital holdings, but also a problem of the institutional recognition system [11]. This situation requires an institutionalized compensation mechanism [12]. Universities are the most direct actors. The alumni mentoring program is a path that has been proven to be effective in practice, for students from low-income families or the first generation of college students, matching alumni who have similar growth backgrounds but have achieved better social integration. The key to this matching is not to provide high-end job information but to demonstrate a feasible path that can be achieved from a similar starting point. This is far more powerful for students' self-efficacy than the general inspirational propaganda.

At present, the employment guidance in most colleges and universities is still focused on resume modification and simulated interviews, and there is little involved in social network construction skills such as "how to identify potential contacts", "how to conduct information interviews", "how to establish contacts in social occasions and effectively follow up". These are exactly the lessons that students who lack cultural capital need to make up for the most. Colleges and universities may consider including these contents in the compulsory module of employment guidance or providing them regularly in the form of workshops. The government and social organizations can also play a complementary role: providing paid internship subsidies for students from economically disadvantaged families can reduce the threshold for them to accept high-quality internship opportunities due to livelihood pressure. Cross-school and cross-industry social activities and industry mentor databases can build an institutionalized alternative network for students who do not have a home network to rely on. The ultimate goal of these measures is not to help students "climb the ladder", but to give those students who were excluded from the specific information circle the opportunity to complete the transition from campus to society under relatively fair conditions.

5 Conclusion

Based on Bourdieu's capital theory, this paper constructs a theoretical model that starts from parents' cultural capital and ultimately affects college students' social integration through the "bridging effect" of parents' network. It is clear that the cultural capital possessed by parents is an important condition for shaping a high-quality social network, and the "connection" function of the network can provide information and opportunities to cross circles, which is also the key for college students to succeed in the workplace, adapt to the new cultural rules, and self psychological identity. From this perspective, the focus of this paper has shifted from the direct support within the static family to the effective process of the dynamic and relational parent network. At present, Chinese society is undergoing a profound structural transformation. The popularization of higher education coexists with fierce competition in the employment market. Understanding the "bridging effect" of parents' network is not only helpful to understand the micro mechanism of social mobility, but also provides theoretical

enlightenment and practical entry point for thinking about how to build a more fair and supportive social integration environment for college students.

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