

# An Analysis of Educational Equity in the "School District Housing Fever" from the Perspective of Bourdieu's Capital Theory

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**Abstract:** China's school district housing policy has long been controversial. In the face of money and nepotism in school selection, the Chinese government has attempted to narrow the gap between schools by implementing policies such as "nearby enrolment" and "test-free" for entering primary and junior high schools, so that all students can attend school without discrimination and ultimately reduce inequality in education. However, the policy ignores the major premise that, in the case of unbalanced educational resources, parents will inevitably try to obtain the hukou, which is valued by the "nearby enrolment" policy, in order for their children to receive better education and have higher competitiveness in the future. In today's real estate market-oriented society, money is naturally the best standard to measure the value of real estate and even the hukou, and the concept of school district housing also came into being. Thus, the "nearby enrolment" policy does not achieve its original vision of reducing educational inequality, but to some extent strengthens the correlation between students' family capital and the educational resources they obtain. Therefore, from this perspective, this paper explores how to solve the phenomenon of housing fever in the school district and ensure the fairness of education from the perspective of Bourdieu's capital theory, and puts forward some optimization suggestions.

## 1. Introduction

Under the perspective of Bourdieu's capital theory, education fairness problems in the school district housing fever are increasingly prominent. From this theoretical perspective, many parents in production and life through the continuous improvement of cultural capital achieve their own economic capital, social capital, cultural capital and other aspects of the balance, so as to improve their own economic capital to a certain extent, enhance their economic status [1]. So, from this aspect, China's social economy is in a critical period of rapid development, different places in our country with the "school district housing fever", which is typical that some parents to let their children into key schools, and get good education resources by occupying a "good" school district house, increase investment. Through education to succeed, change a life, in order to change their economic status. Therefore, school district housing fever is a typical and favorable explanation of the Bourdieu's capital theory in real life. However, in recent years, the statement that "Noble can hardly come from a humble family anymore." has blocked some people who want to obtain certain economic capital and social capital through educational capital, which causes certain class solidification. In this aspect, from the perspective of Bourdieu's capital theory, ensuring that educational equity has not been fully realized in the current social development, leads to the weak correlation between educational capital and family economic capital. This paper is of great practical significance to explore the educational equity in school district housing fever from the perspective of Bourdieu's capital theory.

## 2. Capital Competition in School District Housing

The field concept in the perspective of Bourdieu Capital means as long as there is a field concept

in the development of human society, then there will be competition. With the development of human society, there are mainly three kinds of competition: economic capital, social capital and cultural capital. Economic capital is mainly land and labour force, social capital is mainly social prestige, and cultural capital is mainly educational opportunities, diplomas, etc. [2]. By analysing Bourdieu's theory, we find that cultural capital is the most important of the three capitals. In short, a person through education, change their own level of education and literacy, so as to be able to bring non-material capital effect, and ultimately continuously improve their own economic level, enhancing their social status and social prestige.

From the field concept, school district housing fever is a competition that happened in the educational capital. Through economic capital competing for cultural capital and spending "amount of money" to buy school district housing, people can obtain good cultural capital and lay a foundation for the change of social capital and economic capital in the later stage. It is also the exchange problem from the perspective of capital theory. The school district housing issue has shifted the competition for student academics in education to competition for capital. In practical terms, rich children have less pressure to survive, and they can enjoy quality educational resources by receiving financial support from their parents to buy a school district house. In contrast, the children of the working class and the children of the farmers not only face a heavy burden in life but also face a lack of financial support from their parents. Therefore, the "school district house fever" that has intensified due to the "nearby school" system has not only failed to solve the inequity in education but has also led to a greater degree of inequity in education.

### **3. Social Mobility under Competition for Educational Capital**

There is horizontal social mobility and vertical social mobility in a human productive life. Human beings compete for various kinds of capital in different fields, fundamentally to achieve social mobility at different levels and to different degrees. Of course, the competition for educational capital is also an important way to realize social mobility. Social mobility in the development of human society is mainly realized through two aspects: one is to realize social mobility with the help of certain specific social setting and social system; the other is to realize social mobility through participating in a certain rule of competition, through their own struggle and ability. School district housing fever, that is, by investing a certain amount of economic capital to obtain a good school district house, to achieve social mobility with the help of family economic conditions. Currently, a high degree is a key to the job market. The children of wealthy families can "easily" obtain education capital, and can better achieve upward social mobility, while the children of the grassroots, especially the peasants, cannot have enough wealth to buy good school district houses and therefore occupy a disadvantaged position in obtaining educational capital, so it is more difficult to achieve upward social mobility, which is more reflected in horizontal social mobility.

The "noble can no longer come from a humble family" is also reflected in the fact that families with low economic capital are unable to obtain good cultural capital, thus losing the opportunity to improve their economic and social capital, as a result, class solidification occurs. This is why in a competitive game, families without money lose the chance to participate in the game. The unbalance in economic capital is an attempt to be covered by educational capital. If we really want to change the current situation, and re-open the door for children from humble families, it is necessary to effectively suppress school district house fever. It is also a problem that must be overcome at present and in the future.

### **4. Optimization Suggestions to Alleviate "School District Housing Fever" from the Perspective of Bourdieu Capital Theory**

In terms of China's current social and economic development, in order to effectively alleviate school district housing fever, we should mainly be based on the Bourdieu's capital theory to fully mobilize social forces, government power and families to get more systematic support, which really cool "the school district housing fever", play a promoting role in ensuring education fair.

#### **4.1. Adjust Policies to Play a Guiding and Guaranteeing Role**

The school district housing fever is mainly due to the "nearby enrolment" policy proposed in education in China. Therefore, in order to alleviate the housing fever in the school district and ensure the fairness of education, it is necessary to actively adjust the nearby enrolment policy. It is under this awareness that the policy of "nearby enrolment" has been actively changed, replacing the school district housing through "zoning enrolment", so as to alleviate the phenomenon. In 2022, the Ministry of Education officially announced that the "zoning area" goes to school nearby or will be fully implemented in the nearest school area, which is undoubtedly excellent news for parents who struggle only to get an enrolment place for their children. This means that children will not lose better education opportunities because of not living in the school district house, which ensures education fairness to a certain extent. Through the investigation and analysis, many parents expressed "happy and praise" for the cancellation of the school district housing, so that their children will not lose at the starting line, but also reduce the burden on parents.

Taking the above policy as an example, in the current and future implementation, in order to ensure fair competition in the field, all localities should stand on the actual situation and improve the level of regional education as the basis, and need to form a more appropriate policy of "make the best of the situation". At the same time, on the basis of policy formation, it will be raised to the legal level, so as to give full play to the authority of policies and laws, so as to truly alleviate the housing fever in the school district and ensure the realization of education fairness.

For example, on April 24, 2021, Beijing Xicheng District issued Opinions on the Implementation of Compulsory Education Enrolment in 2021. It said that after July 31, 2020 families who buy a house and get the property ownership certificate will no longer apply for single primary school zoning, but change to multi-school zoning to enrol in school districts or adjacent school districts. Simply put, for example, if you want your child to go to a prestigious school, you only need to buy a school district house in the school district before enrolment. The multi-school zoning refers to the multiple schools to form a school district, so which school your child can go to in the school area is a completely random allocation model. This policy issued by Beijing is a strong change to alleviate the housing fever in school districts and has effective applicability.

#### **4.2. Implement the Teacher Rotation System to Realize the Balanced Allocation of Educational Resources**

From the perspective of Bourdieu's capital theory, in order to avoid more families from enhancing their economic status and realizing social mobility through acquiring cultural capital based on educational capital, it is necessary to realize the balanced allocation of educational resources. To avoid parents rushing headlong for educational resources, the focus is to adjust the teacher resources. In this regard, actively promoting the teacher rotation system can alleviate the phenomenon of "less supply and more demand", so as to ensure the balanced allocation of educational resources. First of all, excellent teacher resources are tilted to some schools. This aspect requires the help of local policies, and the government needs to positively adjust the distribution of teachers and strengthen teacher training and education for some weak schools in the region. Through the continuous improvement of the "three support and one assistance" incentive mechanism, to attract more highly educated, high-level personnel into the remote, weak schools to fill the teaching force, and constantly improve the level of the teaching force, optimize the structure of the teaching force. Secondly, upgrade the hardware conditions in some schools. Through the actual investigation, it is found that the improvement of hardware conditions will enhance the overall education level of the school to a certain extent, and even increase the popularity of the school among parents. Hence, the government sets special funds and increases financial support to continuously optimize the change in school hardware conditions. Through considerable hardware conditions constantly improve the attractiveness of schools and achieve a balanced distribution of educational resources. Finally, implement a teacher rotation system. A large part of what makes a prestigious school a prestigious school is the presence of prestigious teachers. Therefore, excellent teachers need to be encouraged to implement postings and a rotation system. The different rotations

of educational resources are achieved on the basis of continuous teacher rotation to ensure a balance of teacher resources. On July 20, 2022, at the annual consultation meeting held by the Beijing Municipal Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) on "further promoting the implementation of the 'double reduction' policy and building a good education ecology", the principal of the Beijing Municipal Education Commission said that all districts in the city will carry out teacher exchange and rotation after the start of the autumn school year in September 2022. The communication mainly includes three dimensions: headmaster exchange and rotation in the region, a balanced allocation of backbone teachers, and rotation of ordinary teachers on demand. It mainly includes two types: one is to improve the reform of urban school district (education group) and promote cross-school district (education group) exchange rotation; the second is to comprehensively promote the exchange rotation in the outer suburbs. Beijing energetically promotes the rotation system, and constantly improves the incentive mechanism and salary, so as to provide a strong guarantee for more teachers to successfully achieve the rotation role.

In this way, it is very important to fully promote the teacher rotation system, increase the encouragement, and sound protection, build a platform, and improve feedback and other aspects of implementation, to truly achieve a balanced tilt of teacher resources.

#### **4.3. Strengthen Publicity and Guide Parents to Achieve Reasonable Choices**

On an emotional level, it is understandable that parents want to get a good career for their children and achieve upward social mobility by attending a prestigious school, but on a rational level, the quality educational resources of a region or even the whole society are limited and cannot be achieved for everyone in the face of the huge demand for limited quality resources. Therefore, this requires parents to choose reasonably to achieve the most rational choice. At present, the internal logical correlation of nearby enrolment policy, school district housing and high-quality educational resources constitute a special formation mechanism of "school district housing fever". The "school district housing" born by the combination of education and real estate makes education bring more money symbols and invade educational equity. The deeper analysis of the cause of this problem is the parents' irrational pursuit of school district housing, which requires the government and society as well as families to achieve multifaceted cooperation, strengthen publicity and education, and guide parents to rationalize their choice through the correct value concept.

First, site visits and learning for efficient promotion. The current reason for the housing fever in the school district is large because parents do not understand some schools, and a large part of those so-called "elite schools" is hearsay or hyped. Therefore, facing such a phenomenon, some schools need the support of local governments and education departments to actively encourage or build a platform to support parents to visit schools and let students achieve a week of free experience and learning. This is a way to bring "strength" to some schools with weak student populations, thus alleviating the "school district housing fever". Secondly, the government should strengthen publicity and education to guide parents to choose schools reasonably. From the perspective of Bourdieu's Capital theory, the school district housing fever is a process in which some families replace economic capital with cultural capital. In order to effectively alleviate this phenomenon, we can guide parents to correctly balance the relationship between cultural capital and economic capital, and deal with it scientifically. This requires local governments and social organizations to strengthen publicity and education through special lectures to let parents fully realize the importance of reasonable school choices based on the actual situation.

#### **4.4. Reset the Rules of Competition and Reopening the Class Circulation**

Social mobility is one of the main purposes and ways of human production and life development. In the actual implementation process, in order to avoid the "gimmick" that some families want to achieve upward social mobility by replacing economic capital with cultural capital, the party and the government need to play the role of "escort", through the introduction of different policies and preferential policies to ensure the fairness of people's pursuit of living in social development, so that

"children no longer lose at the starting line" similar statements appear in people's lives. The government's optimization policy is the only way to convince parents and ensure the normal growth of our young children. The introduction of the double reduction policy has effectively relieved students' academic pressure while solving the worries of some families who want to rush to fight for school district housing and get better educational opportunities. It truly realizes the healthy cultivation of their own family children and the foundation for scientific and correct social mobility is laid. In this regard, it relies more on sponsored social mobility, that is, through the government and the relevant policies issued by the state to play an effective role in supporting resetting the rules for human social mobility, ensure the fairness of social mobility, to re-open the door of class mobility.

## **5. Conclusion**

To sum up, in the perspective of Bourdieu's capitalism, education as a "field" in the process of human social development will inevitably lead to competition in terms of cultural capital, economic capital and social capital. The phenomenon of school district fever is the result of this competition reaching a feverish state. To a certain extent, the school district housing fever leads to the lower-class people and certain working families cannot afford school district housing without good economic support, so these families cannot successfully replace their cultural capital with economic capital, and the class solidification will occur. Class mobility is the basis for a society to achieve healthy and normal development. Therefore, in order to effectively alleviate the school district housing fever, it is necessary to actively adjust policies, reset rules, strengthen publicity, and guide parents to make reasonable choices, so as to open up social mobility in the right way and achieve scientific access to capital.

## **References**

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