

Global Educational Capitalization and Resource Scarcity in Developing Countries: Implications for Class Solidification

Yuan Fang

1. School of International Relation, Jilin International Studies University, Changchun 130000, China
2. Universidad De Salamanca, Salamanca 37008, Spain

Abstract: This paper explores the effects of global education capitalization on resource scarcity in developing nations, exacerbating international class solidification. It focuses on unequal resource distribution, particularly in Western elite private education, hindering access for modest backgrounds. Soaring university costs burden financially constrained students. Drawing on Marxist theory and empirical data, it argues resource inequality intensifies social disparities. Case studies like the US highlight spending gaps, private market growth, and economic barriers to education and further illuminates the complexities of class mobility. The paper emphasizes that personal abilities, social capital, and educational opportunities play crucial roles in this process, but are often unfairly distributed. It underscores the need for policy interventions to address these inequalities, as the perpetuation of class structures through unequal educational outcomes threatens global prosperity, peace, and stability.

Keywords: Educational Capitalization; Class Solidification; Global Inequality

1. Introduction

Education, as a vital conduit for social mobility, necessitates fairness and equitable resource distribution. It serves as the cornerstone for individual aspirations and a pivotal pillar for societal stability and development. However, with the intensification of capitalism, cracks in the educational system have progressively widened, posing significant barriers to normal social class mobility.

Elite private education in Western societies exemplifies this phenomenon, where these institutions often boast superior educational resources, faculty, and alumni networks, functioning as a “safe haven” for the perpetuation of privileges among the aristocracy. In contrast, children from modest families, particularly those at the social bottom, are frequently excluded due to exorbitant tuition fees and stringent admission criteria, thereby limiting their access to quality education. Furthermore, the soaring cost of university tuition imposes a significant burden on talented yet financially constrained students, constraining their educational options and future prospects.

2. Literature Review

Within capitalist societies, education acts as a pivotal mechanism for resource distribution, significantly contributing to social inequality and class solidification. According to Marxist class theory, an individual’s social status and political consciousness are shaped by their role in the production process. In the capitalist system, capitalists dominate the allocation of educational resources through control over means of production and the labor market, further entrenching their class position. This unequal distribution of educational resources results in unequal educational opportunities, exacerbating social inequality and class solidification.

Recently, the issue of educational equity has garnered increasing societal attention, prompting scholars to delve into class solidification under capitalist educational systems from various angles. For instance, research indicates that uneven regional distribution and pronounced urban-rural disparities in educational resources are pivotal contributors to unequal educational opportunities (Li et al., 2020). Qin Shiya’s work, *The Century-Long Transformation of Capitalist Critical Theory: Traditions and Contemporaries—Developments in Foreign Marxism in 2023*, provides an insightful analysis of this issue, emphasizing the persistent danger of educational solidification, particularly evident in developing countries.

Class mobility within capitalist societies poses numerous challenges and opportunities. Personal abilities, social capital, and educational opportunities are crucial factors influencing class advancement. Individuals with advanced degrees, specialized skills, and extensive social networks enjoy a higher likelihood of securing quality job opportunities and promotions, facilitating class mobility. Moreover, societal insti-

tutions, cultural backgrounds, and policy environments significantly influence class mobility. For example, nations implementing proactive employment policies and social welfare systems offer increased educational opportunities and employment support to low-income groups, thereby fostering class advancement.

The complexity of class mobility has been extensively explored in various countries' research. Chinese scholars highlight that uneven distribution of educational resources, restrictions from the household registration system, as well as societal prejudices and discriminatory attitudes, collectively constitute major obstacles to class advancement (Zhang, 2018). Rural areas, despite government efforts to enhance education, still exhibit notable disparities in educational opportunities compared to urban areas (Ministry of Education Development Planning Department, 2020).

3. Educational Solidification under Capitalism

3.1 Uneven Distribution of Educational Resources

Within capitalist countries, the allocation of educational resources is markedly disparate. In the United States, the richest 10% of school districts spend almost ten times the amount spent by the poorest 10%, with a 3:1 spending ratio commonly observed within states. The private education system significantly contributes to the US economy, with the private K-12 school industry steadily growing at an annual rate of 2.1% between 2018 and 2023, reaching \$100.6 billion in 2023. Wealthy individuals provide abundant educational resources for their children through private education, premium tutoring, and international exchanges, while the impoverished and vulnerable face scarcity and low-quality education.

This capitalist-driven educational model carries inherent flaws. Since the 1960s, widespread dissatisfaction with limited educational progress globally reflects this issue. Studies such as the Coleman Report (Coleman et al., 1966) and Jencks' work (Jencks et al., 1972) underscore the decisive role of family backgrounds in academic achievement, emphasizing that students' future income and prospects are more constrained by their family backgrounds than educational interventions. This unequal distribution reinforces social class solidification, making it more difficult for disadvantaged groups to advance through education.

3.2 Inequality in Educational Opportunities

The influence of factors such as family background and socioeconomic status on individuals' access to high-quality educational opportunities cannot be overlooked. Research indicates that students from affluent families have distinct advantages in terms of access to education, learning resources, and faculty quality. They are more likely to receive early childhood education, participate in extracurricular activities, and obtain personalized tutoring, thereby excelling in academic performance and overall competence. Conversely, students from impoverished families may face disadvantages in the educational competition due to economic pressures, scarcity of learning resources, and insufficient family support. Furthermore, social factors such as race and gender also significantly impact educational opportunities. In certain countries and regions, ethnic minorities and females continue to encounter numerous challenges and discrimination within the education system, further exacerbating the phenomenon of unequal educational opportunities.

A recent survey conducted by Gallup and the Lumina Foundation reveals that economic barriers are the primary reason why American adults without college degrees have not pursued higher education. This survey, focusing on the state of higher education in the United States in 2023, found that for adults who have never attended college or failed to complete their studies to obtain a degree or certificate, the cost of degrees or certificates was the main reason for not enrolling, accounting for 55% of respondents. The second and third most cited reasons were economic affordability issues due to inflation, at 45%, and the need to work, at 38%. In terms of college enrollment rates, compared to 89% of students from wealthy families, only about 51% of low-income students enroll in college (Sinkevich, 2024).

3.3 Disparities in Educational Outcomes

Due to the unequal distribution of educational resources and the existence of inequality in educational opportunities, educational outcomes in capitalist societies exhibit significant class differences. Students from affluent backgrounds are more likely to attain higher ed-

education, enter high-paying professions, and accumulate more wealth and social capital. Conversely, students from impoverished backgrounds often only receive lower levels of education, engage in low-wage work, and become trapped in cycles of poverty. These class differences in educational outcomes are not only reflected at the individual level but also reinforce the solidification of social classes through intergenerational transmission. In a detailed analysis of how disparities in educational outcomes profoundly affect the solidification of social classes, the uneven distribution of educational resources and inequalities in opportunity acquisition constitute a core dimension of intergenerational class disparities.

The recent “Global Monitoring Report on Education Equity and Quality” published by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) emphasizes how disparities in educational outcomes span time dimensions, becoming a key factor in exacerbating social inequalities. The report points out that despite the increase in education access globally, significant gaps in education quality remain, particularly among low-income and disadvantaged groups. This inequality not only limits the full development of individual potential but also consolidates the solidification of social class structures through the intergenerational transmission of educational outcomes. Also in documentary “Seven Up!” and its subsequent series, through decades of tracking and filming, intuitively showcase the growth trajectories of 14 British children from different social backgrounds, from childhood to adulthood, profoundly revealing the central role of education in shaping individual destinies and maintaining or breaking class barriers. With its unique narrative approach, the documentary provides vivid case studies of disparities in educational outcomes and their generational impacts, corroborating sociologists’ insights into theories of educational inequality and class reproduction.

4. Conclusion

In the broad context of globalization, education serves as the cornerstone of social progress and the engine of national development, making its fairness and balanced allocation of resources particularly crucial. However, the trend of global education capitalization acts as a double-edged sword. While it brings unprecedented development opportunities for education, it also invisibly exacerbates the educational resource gap between developing and developed countries, thereby solidifying the international class structure.

Educational inequality is not merely a difference in individual destinies but also a microcosm of disparities in national strength and international status. It not only limits the potential realization and social mobility of people in developing countries but also hinders the process of global common prosperity, peace, and stability.

We must reexamine and address the challenges posed by global education capitalization from the perspective of global governance and a shared human destiny. This requires the international community to strengthen cooperation, jointly formulate and implement more equitable and reasonable policies for the allocation of educational resources, and ensure that every country and region receives educational support commensurate with its development needs. Simultaneously, it is necessary to promote educational innovation and technological advancements, enhance education quality and efficiency, and enable more people to benefit from high-quality education. The world anticipates a more just, inclusive, and sustainable global education system, where education becomes a powerful force for promoting global prosperity, narrowing international gaps, and achieving common development. This not only represents a return to the essence of education but also embodies a profound expectation for our shared human future.

References

- [1] Coleman, J., et al. (1966). *Equality of Educational Opportunity*. Washington, DC: National Center for Educational Statistics.
- [2] Jencks, C. (1972). *Inequality: A Reassessment of the Impact of Society and School*. Basic Books.
- [3] Lee, S. J., Zhang, W., & Ministry of Education Development Planning Department (China). (2018/2020). *A Study on Social Class Mobility in China / China’s Education Statistical Yearbook*. Sociological Research, 33(2), 123-138 / People’s Education Press.
- [4] Li, H., et al. (2020). The Current Situation and Challenges of Educational Equity in China. *Journal of Educational Research*, 35(4), 56-62.
- [5] Sachs, J. D. (2015). *The Age of Sustainable Development*. Columbia University Press.
- [6] UNESCO. (2019). *Global Education Monitoring Report 2019: Migration, Displacement and Education: Building Bridges, Not Walls*. Retrieved from UNESCO website.