

An Examination of the Value of Individual Social Responsibility and Quality in the New Era

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Abstract

With the socialism with Chinese characteristics has entered a new era, which marks a new starting point, China has embarked on a new journey and shouldered a new mission. In this regard, it is the inevitable demand for the modernization of the new era to cultivate the quality of individual social responsibility. The quality of individual social responsibility is the basic requirement for the comprehensive development of human beings, the inevitable demand of social governance modernization, and also the natural demand of ideological and political education in the new era. A rational examination of the value of individual social responsibility quality is of great significance to the construction of spiritual civilization in China in the new era.

Key words: New Era; Value of social responsibility; Quality

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INTRODUCTION

With the theme in the new era transitioning and the social history transforming, people are experiencing conflicts between old and new morality and violent turbulence of human relations and orders, and feeling the new circumstances brought about by the world. "Great changes have taken place, from the basic structure of society to the social daily life, from the social and cultural psychology to the moral consciousness of the social individual or every citizen. Such holistic changes not only promoted the transformation of the whole society and drive China into an unprecedented period of modernization, but also brought about profound changes in social and cultural values and ethics." (Wan, 2002, p.176) Therefore, the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China had pointed out: "At present, given the fact that the situation at home and abroad is undergoing profound and complex changes, we need to enhance the ability to control risks, improve risk prevention and control mechanisms in various fields, while being skillful at handling various complex contradictions. We also need to strengthen the social awareness of responsibility, rules, and dedication". Entering a new era of socialism with Chinese characteristics means that China's development has entered a new starting point, embarked on a new journey, shouldered a new mission. In this case, it is an inevitable demand in the process of modernization of the new era to cultivate the quality of individual social responsibility.

1. THE QUALITY OF SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY IS THE BASIC REQUIREMENT FOR COMPREHENSIVE DEVELOPMENT OF HUMAN BEINGS

The comprehensive development of human beings is one of the important contents of Marxist theory, an important

theoretical basis of the “people-oriented” thinking in today’s society, and the ultimate value orientation of socialism with Chinese characteristics. Marx and Engels, who had critically inherited the excellent ideas of their predecessors, put forward the theory of the comprehensive development of human beings and formally used this concept for the first time in the book “German Ideology”. They believed that comprehensive development of human-beings “means to develop all kinds of their abilities”. After that, Marx and Engels’ idea on the comprehensive development of human beings was illustrated more systematically in the *Communist Manifesto*, *Das Kapital*, and *Anti-Turin Theory*. “Keeping pace with the times” is the most important theoretical quality of Marxism. Its idea of the comprehensive development of human beings has also developed greatly in the process of combining with China’s social practices. The General Outline of the CPC’s Constitution, which was revised at the 18th National Congress, specifies that the party would not only “continuously meet the people’s growing material and cultural needs on the basis of the development of production and the growth of social wealth”, but also “promote the comprehensive development of human beings”, which is a process of mutual promotion and constant development of material and spirit (Hu, 2016, p.16). The “Proposal of the CPC Central Committee on Formulating the 13th Five-Year Plan for National Economic and Social Development”, deliberated and approved by the Fifth Plenary Session of the 18th CPC Central Committee, points out: “We must adhere to the people-centered development thinking and take improving people’s well-being and promoting people’s comprehensive development as the starting point and foothold of development”. This is the core idea of the 13th Five-Year Plan. The idea of the comprehensive development of human beings has rich value connotation and practical implication. In the historical period of building a well-off society in a comprehensive way, this idea highlights the humanistic feelings and the contemporary significance of people-oriented thinking.

The quality of social responsibility, as an important part of individual moral qualities, is also the basic requirement of individual comprehensive development. Human-beings lie in the center of the idea of individual comprehensive development, which is the ideal pursuit of human development. The nature of human beings is the sum of social relations. Therefore, the comprehensive development of human beings should be highlighted throughout, and be acquired and developed in the course of social practice activities. In addition, people’s needs are not limited to material satisfaction but also are diversified in political, cultural and ecological terms. “Human-beings are different from all other animals by the limitlessness and universality of their needs” (Marx & Engels, 1982, p.130). With the rapidly developing productive forces, the shortening working time and the improving educational

conditions, people now have more time to develop themselves by drawing valuable scientific and artistic contents from the outstanding cultural heritage in history, so as to promote the comprehensive development of human beings.

2. THE QUALITY OF SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY IS THE INEVITABLE DEMAND FOR SOCIAL GOVERNANCE MODERNIZATION

The 21st century marks a century of rapidly developing science and technology and the unprecedented prosperity of material life. It is also a century in which the interpersonal relations and the relationship between man and nature are highly strained and man’s subject value is seriously eroded. The quality of individual social responsibility cannot be more desired in Chinese society in the new era. As socialism with Chinese characteristics enters a new era, people’s needs for a better life are becoming more and more extensive. They are setting higher standards not only on material and cultural life but also on democracy, the rule of law, fairness, justice, security and environmental protection. The 19th CPC National Congress pointed out: “the social civilization still needs to be improved; With intertwined social contradictions and issues, we are still faced with the great challenge to achieve rule of law, and the country’s governance system and capacity need to be strengthened. If we want to achieve the “Two Centenary Goals” and realize the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, the quality of people’s social responsibility must be improved.

2.1 The Quality of Social Responsibility Is Conducive to the Further Development of Social Moral Governance

Moral governance is an important means of social governance. Moral governance refers to the activities and process in which the government, social organizations, and individuals work together to overcome and eliminate outstanding ethics issues. The 19th National Congress Report of the Communist Party of China proposed “to build a social governance pattern of co-construction and co-governance. To achieve that, we must strengthen the construction of social governance system, improving the social governance system featured by Party committee leadership, government responsibility, social coordination, public participation, social governance system guaranteed by rule of law; we must also improve the socialization, legalization, intellectualization, and specialization of social governance.” “We need to carry out in-depth civic morality construction programs, promote the construction of social morality, professional ethics, family virtues, and personal morality, and encourage people to have a good-faith, filial to the olds, love their relatives, loyal to the

country and to the people.” These assertions show that the important goal of social moral governance is to coordinate the social relations between people and ensure that every member of the country can obtain the reasonable benefits brought about by social cooperation through institutional arrangements, so as to realize the sustained stability and continuous development of the country. The cultivation of the quality of social responsibility would play a “soft constraint” role in social moral governance, which is conducive to promoting the further development of social moral governance.

2.2 The Quality of Social Responsibility Is Conducive to Promoting Self-Consistency Between Technical and Moral Responsibility

In the process of national governance modernization, we need to improve governance in terms of technology, ration, ethics, and standards. The quality of social responsibility is an idea that encompasses both ethics and governance. In a complex network, complex connections and events that are difficult to distinguish between reality and reality often cause the actors to separate the technical responsibility from moral responsibility. Actors will selectively evade their own responsibilities or assume moral or legal responsibilities that are more conducive to their own individual interests. In a virtual network, “I cannot see your face” is a true portrayal of network interpersonal relationship, which virtually weakens the emotional and moral factors in interpersonal communication. People tend to pay more attention to the impacts of mouse clicks on their work and personal interests and focus more on the individuals’ technical responsibilities. However, the small world and scale-free nature of a complex network make it possible for citizen behaviors to spread indefinitely, making individual behaviors cause butterfly effects. In the real world, more emphasis is placed on the regulation of individual behaviors by moral and legal responsibilities. People’s interaction is affected by the real environment. The separation of technical and moral responsibilities to a certain extent has led to the breeding of anomie. Only with the self-consistency of the relationship between the two can we effectively intervene in the anomie of responsibility.

The quality of social responsibility, as a basic moral quality, is a stable moral quality formed by individuals in social life - an embodiment of the latter in social life. The reason for the various kinds of responsibility anomie behaviors in a complex network lies in the fact that an actor has not established his/her sense of responsibility. In the circumstances of the human community with a shared destiny, we need to measure and consider the individual’s responsibility behaviors against a broader space-time background and establish a sense of responsibility for others. “Moral responsibility has to depend on its

origin: the nature of responsibility is the responsibility for others.” (Gu, 2017, p.147) If the ethical relationship between “I and he” is truly implemented, the phenomenon of technical responsibility replacing moral responsibility and the free shift of responsibility may be avoided. On the one hand, we should fully affirm the importance of technical responsibility under the modern system, which has improved work efficiency and is an important part of post responsibility. Technical responsibility and moral responsibility can go hand in hand. When the two conflict, we should stick to the position that the latter is higher than the former, as moral responsibility takes place between people, while technical responsibility between man and things. From a humanitarian standpoint, people have moral priority over things. On the other hand, if “I” does not start from self-responsibility, but from being responsible for others, then “I” as an actor will not pass the buck to superiors or others. On the contrary, “I” should assume the responsibilities of others (whether superiors or subordinates). The conscience and moral judgment of “I” has been constantly reshaped in this moral practice to resist the alienation of responsibility in the modern system (Bauman, 2011, p.260).

3. THE QUALITY OF SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY IS THE NATURAL DEMAND OF IDEOLOGICAL AND POLITICAL EDUCATION IN THE NEW ERA

Education in the new era should have new achievements. After long-term efforts, socialism with Chinese characteristics has entered a new era, which is a new historical orientation for China’s development. With the society’s main contradictions transforming into the contradictions between the people’s growing needs for a better life and the unbalanced and insufficient development, there are also contradictions between the people’s growing needs for a better ideological and political education and the unbalanced and insufficient development in this field. With the transformation of the main contradictions in society, the main contradictions in education have also transformed from “availability” to “high-quality” of education. The people’s demand for education has changed from “quantity” to “quality” and from “have to learn” to “want to learn” (Zhao, 2017, pp.6-7). In the new era, the party and the state also have new requirements for the quality of individual social responsibility. Ideological and political education in the new era should also conform to the requirements of the times, improve school moral education centering on the quality of social responsibility, and actively cultivate people with the quality and ability of social responsibility.

3.1 In the Dimension of Contents, Ideological and Political Education Inherently Implies Cultivating The Quality of Social Responsibility

On April 26, 2016, General Secretary Xi Jinping, in his visit to China University of Science and Technology, put forward clear requirements for the growth and success of college students, encouraging them to “be college students with ideals and pursuits responsibilities and achievements, qualities (Anonymous, 2016), and accomplishments”. The contents of ideological and political education and the cultivation of social responsibility quality are internally consistent. In terms of the objects and purposes, ideological and political education is targeted at socialist citizens, with the aim of improving their ideological and moral quality and cultural quality and enhancing the spiritual motivation of socialist construction; the object of cultivating the quality of social responsibility is also socialist citizens, with the aim of improving their ideological and moral quality and promoting the smooth development of socialist moral construction. As ideological and political education must be internalized into people’s values and moral qualities, its process includes the cultivation of the quality of social responsibility. In terms of the education process, the process of cultivating social responsibility quality is consistent and synchronous with the one of ideological and political education: both should go through the process of from outside to inside, from shallow to deep, from inside to outside. That is to say, effective ideological and political education will inevitably lead to changes in the quality of individual social responsibility. In the great cause of socialism with Chinese characteristics in the new era, the process of cultivating the quality of individual social responsibility should also conform to the basic principles and directions of ideological and political education and be part of the construction of socialist spiritual civilization.

3.2 In the Dimension of the Values, Cultivating the Quality of Social Responsibility Is Conducive to Realizing the Value Pursuit of Ideological and Political Education

The cultivation of social responsibility quality promotes the unity of individual value and social value in ideological and political education. First of all, the cultivation of social responsibility quality is based on the development process of individual moral quality. It pursues the improvement of individual moral quality and studies the quality of social responsibility in social life practices, which is conducive to promoting social adaptation and self-growth in the process of

individual socialization. In addition, the quality of social responsibility has distinct social characteristics, which is measured by the effective influence on social moral behaviors. Its essence is to cultivate the quality of individual social responsibility that conforms to the social moral norms. It is carried out along with the process of individual socialization. The cultivation of social responsibility quality cannot be separated from individual social activities for a moment. Therefore, the cultivation of social responsibility quality has distinct social value pursuit. The cultivation of social responsibility quality reflects the high unity of ideological and political education in the pursuit of individual value and social value. Besides, the stability of social responsibility quality enables individuals to better adapt to social life and is conducive to the combination of ideological and political education and life. Relatively stable moral quality enables individuals to have a relatively fixed response mode to moral objects and generates certain behavioral inertia. In this case, individual behavior patterns will not be easily changed due to external interference, thus facilitating individuals to adhere to basic moral principles and norms when the moral situation changes, and also facilitating individuals’ adaptation and assimilation to moral rules. In addition, the stability of the quality of social responsibility makes it possible to be measured. It has also made it possible to predict the behavior of responsibility through the quality of social responsibility.

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