

A Brief Discussion on the Social Responsibility of Journalists in the New Era (Postprint)

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Abstract

Journalists possess a strong sense of social responsibility. The competence of journalists stems from their personal character cultivation and sincere devotion to the journalistic cause. To be an outstanding journalist, one must harbor a genuine and profound sense of social responsibility, which enables adherence to professional ethics and the creation of excellent works characterized by truthful content, prominent themes, relevance to social hot spots, and deep resonance with the public. As the era advances, journalists—whether in China or across the entire world—must forever remain at the vanguard of the times, uphold a strong sense of social responsibility, and steadfastly continue along this path.

Full Text

Preamble

Journalists bear a profound sense of social responsibility, a quality derived from their personal integrity and genuine passion for the profession. To excel as a journalist, one must possess sincere and unwavering social responsibility to uphold professional ethics and produce outstanding work that is truthful, thematically compelling, socially relevant, and resonates deeply with the public. As times progress, both for China and the world at large, journalists must forever walk at the forefront of their era, maintaining a strong sense of social responsibility and steadfastly adhering to this path.

News is intimately connected to people's lives, originating from yet transcending everyday existence. It highlights hot-button social issues that provoke thoughtful consideration of their implications. News media should prioritize positive reporting, and as journalists, we must possess a sense of fairness and justice, dare to combat evil forces, and disseminate valuable information. Journalists serve as crucial conduits for news communication and witnesses to events, through which people learn about the policies of the Party and state, as well as major

and minor happenings in their communities and around the world. The arrival of a new era and globalized world, with increased contact between Chinese and foreign media and cultural integration, presents journalists with greater challenges, making the enhancement of social responsibility an urgent priority and key imperative.

We often applaud insightful reporting that demonstrates vision and depth, yet behind every word lies journalists' deep excavation of good leads and materials combined with a strong sense of social responsibility. A correct report can shift the direction of public opinion and play a decisive role in mobilizing the masses. Simultaneously, it can promote and disseminate positive energy, purifying the social discourse environment. When disasters strike, for instance, real-time in-depth reporting by relevant departments feeds back accurate information to government agencies and draws public attention and concern to events. Timely reporting helps the broad masses understand the truth and enables concerned parties to extend assistance when needed. This demonstrates the necessity of timely reporting, which unites people's hearts and fosters a harmonious, cohesive atmosphere.

Guiding correct public opinion orientation represents the most important manifestation of social responsibility in journalism. As the bridge connecting the Party and government with the news community and the eyes of the people, journalists must possess a strong sense of social responsibility to earn public trust. To become journalists trusted by both the Party and the people, one must have social responsibility. As a socialist undertaking, journalism has a distinct political character, serving the people, socialism, and the Party and government, making social responsibility an essential quality for journalists. Social responsibility in journalism refers to the duties that practitioners should undertake regarding the social function and significance of their professional conduct. Journalists should possess a strong sense of social responsibility, as their greatest value lies in maintaining social stability, peace, and unity through their words. At the Party's news and public opinion work symposium, General Secretary Xi Jinping, focusing on the Party's overall work, clearly defined requirements and proposed guidelines for doing a good job in Party news and public opinion work under new circumstances: "To shoulder this responsibility and mission, we must put political direction first, firmly uphold the principle of Party spirit, firmly uphold the Marxist view of journalism, firmly uphold the correct orientation of public opinion, and firmly uphold positive propaganda as the main approach."

From an overall perspective, news media should maintain a positive and healthy image. In China's socialist core values, if the main direction is not properly established, social responsibility naturally cannot be fulfilled, thereby negatively impacting news media. In modern society, some journalists even treat news work merely as a means to earn money, disregarding the negative social impact of their reports in pursuit of greater profits, catering to the public with vulgar content that causes significant social harm.

1. The Social Responsibility Journalists Should Possess

The most important manifestation of social responsibility in journalism is guiding correct public opinion. Journalists serve as the bridge connecting the Party and government with the news community and as the eyes of the people, so they must possess a strong sense of social responsibility to be worthy of public trust. To become journalists trusted by both the Party and the people, one must have social responsibility. As a socialist undertaking, journalism has a distinct political character, serving the people, socialism, and the Party and government, making social responsibility an essential quality for journalists. Social responsibility in journalism refers to the duties that practitioners should undertake regarding the social function and significance of their professional conduct. Journalists should possess a strong sense of social responsibility, as their greatest value lies in maintaining social stability, peace, and unity through their words. At the Party's news and public opinion work symposium, General Secretary Xi Jinping, focusing on the Party's overall work, clearly defined requirements and proposed guidelines for doing a good job in Party news and public 舆论 work under new circumstances: "To shoulder this responsibility and mission, we must put political direction first, firmly uphold the principle of Party spirit, firmly uphold the Marxist view of journalism, firmly uphold the correct orientation of public opinion, and firmly uphold positive propaganda as the main approach."

2. Manifestations of Lacking Social Responsibility Among Journalists

In recent years, some journalists have gradually lost their professional ethics and sense of social responsibility and mission in their pursuit of so-called public attention. They treat news writing as a means to profit, using news for transactions and pursuing hot topics to attract eyeballs. Some even exaggerate facts and create fake news out of nothing for program ratings and advertiser investment. In this materialistic era, entertainment programs emerge endlessly, causing many news reports to lose their necessary rigor and incorporate too many entertainment elements. In the information age, as the public's demand for news information increases, journalists' role becomes more prominent, and correspondingly, journalists must fulfill their social responsibilities more strictly.

At the macro level, news media should maintain a positive and healthy image. In China's socialist core values, if the main direction is not properly established, social responsibility naturally cannot be fulfilled, thereby negatively impacting news media. Some journalists in modern society even treat news work merely as a means to earn money, disregarding the negative social impact of their reports in pursuit of greater profits, catering to the public with vulgar content that causes significant social harm.

3. Effective Strategies for Strengthening Journalists' Social Responsibility

3.1 Guiding Correct Values

Values refer to a person's overall evaluation and perception of the significance and importance of surrounding objective matters, representing personal beliefs about what to pursue or avoid in life and the belief system for judging right from wrong. Values guide us in pursuing what we desire and govern all our thinking and actions. With the arrival of the information age, journalists' workload has gradually increased, and their influence in society continues to expand. Journalists should continuously study Marxist theory to improve their self-cultivation, establish correct news values, and thereby fulfill their mission, allowing correct values to play an important guiding role.

Correctly understanding the sacred profession of journalism is essential—it is a profession entrusted with high hopes by the people, a platform to speak for the masses, and the mouthpiece of the Party and government. News reporting must be rigorous, always constrained by professional ethics, adhering to professional standards, persisting in seeking truth from facts, and staying close to the people. Journalists must go among the masses to understand real problems, clearly recognize their responsibilities and missions, and have the courage to undertake these duties.

The responsibility of journalists is to serve the people and become the link between the masses and the state. Only by staying close to the people, expressing their voices, and having a clear understanding of their own role can journalists fully play their part. Therefore, in daily work, journalists should immerse themselves in people's daily lives, understand their thoughts and concepts, and to the greatest extent possible restore the true nature of reported events. They should understand the problems people face daily and use their position to help solve these issues.

Journalists need a deeper understanding of socialist core values to better report news. They should not only do their job well but also strengthen their thinking and quality, enhance their sense of social responsibility, establish correct values, and thus provide better service to the people. When reporting, journalists must ensure the authenticity of news information. Often, journalists only see the surface of what they report without digging deeper, resulting in news that lacks strong authenticity. Such unreliable information brings negative impacts to society and damages the authority of news media. Therefore, journalists should thoroughly excavate news information to ensure accuracy and authenticity, getting as close as possible to the facts and maximizing the restoration of what actually happened.

3.2 Improving Journalists' Moral Cultivation

Journalists' moral self-cultivation is also crucial. Being a principled person with moral cultivation is the most basic requirement for journalists. They must be strict with themselves, strengthen moral cultivation, maintain integrity, and consciously resist various risks and tests. They should achieve "attaining utmost emptiness and maintaining steadfast tranquility." In today's complex and tempting society, drawing nourishment from the *Tao Te Ching*, seeking wisdom, and building inner strength offers a broad path for journalists to enhance their moral cultivation.

In news dissemination, journalists must respect others, always consider people's rights and social welfare, and spread positive energy to the masses. Furthermore, journalists should enrich their professional knowledge and broaden their knowledge base. They must establish correct professional values, continuously improve their moral cultivation in practice, and fundamentally uphold the social and moral responsibility that journalists should have. On another level, journalists should arm their minds with Marxist ideology, uphold correct values as guidance, always remember that serving the people is fundamental, safeguard social stability and people's interests, adhere to professional ethics, and wholeheartedly serve the people.

When engaging in journalism, journalists should approach the profession with the correct attitude. Only with thorough understanding of the profession can they truly love and revere it. Journalism is inherently a demanding profession with a tough work process. Those engaged in it must gradually improve their moral cultivation and remedy their shortcomings, elevating from the basic social level to the national level to become new-era journalists with good moral standards.

3.3 Perfecting Legal Norms for Journalists

In addition to moral constraints, the state should also promulgate relevant laws and regulations for journalists. Legislation should target fake news, exaggerated and distorted reporting, and bribery leading to false reporting. As the saying goes, "nothing can be accomplished without norms." Establishing specific legal systems helps urge journalists to adhere to professional ethics and remember their social responsibilities. Concrete and comprehensive legal systems can greatly promote journalists' sense of social responsibility, encouraging them to maintain professional standards and report truthfully without falsification.

As journalists, they should uphold moral bottom lines, avoid breaking laws knowingly, shoulder their responsibilities, be accountable to society and themselves. Journalists must have a deeper understanding of socialist core values to better report news. They should not only do their job well but also strengthen their thinking and quality, enhance their sense of social responsibility, establish correct values, and thus provide better service to the people.

3.4 Establishing a Sound Public Supervision Mechanism

In addition to moral and legal constraints, the people should also strengthen supervision of journalists. As masters of the country, the people enjoy the right to supervise all state and social affairs. Establishing a sound public supervision mechanism can play a positive role in the development of journalism, enhancing journalists' enthusiasm and self-discipline. Relevant departments should establish public supervision agencies to give people a voice, imposing severe penalties on journalists who do not speak for the people, create fake news, are negligent in their duties, or lack social responsibility. Public supervision helps journalists exercise their duties, devote themselves wholeheartedly to serving the people, and spur themselves to remember their mission.

Amid vast amounts of information, we must resolutely eliminate fake news. The main reason for its emergence is the inadequacy of news supervision mechanisms, lack of proficiency in news reporting, and inability to discern news authenticity. Therefore, to gain more recognition from journalists, supervision mechanisms must be improved, correct values established, and authentic news information reported to the people. Given China's contemporary social environment, we must establish a sound news media supervision mechanism to constrain journalists. With supervision from both the state and the people—whose eyes are sharp—China's news media industry can receive better constraint and management. However, the premise of public supervision is that people should have certain legal awareness and know when they can use legal channels to report and supervise journalists' work. When people discover journalists using communication convenience to harm society, they can report to relevant departments, enabling better supervision and control of public opinion. This way, when journalists use their power to do things harmful to society, effective supervision and restraint can be achieved. A sound public supervision system is a highly effective means for journalists to strengthen their sense of social responsibility.

News is not just a simple report; it reflects existing problems in today's society. In this rapidly developing era, journalists represent not just a profession but also serve as spokespeople for social phenomena. Facing the broad masses, they must always remember their responsibilities and obligations when reporting, taking responsibility for their published reports and fulfilling their duties. They must understand the enormity of their responsibility, take positive reporting as fundamental, serve as a bridge between the Party and the people, and reflect social phenomena for the people. They should keep their responsibilities in mind, create a good public opinion environment for society, and promote further development of journalism. For media workers, only with correct values, a strong sense of social responsibility, noble thoughts, a healthy understanding of life and world views, and clear goals for self-development can they make news media work more professional and effective, better achieving the state's objectives and even exerting greater influence. Keeping journalists in a constant state of learning and raising their ideological awareness helps them remember their duties and missions. To better complete media work, good professional competence is

essential. Only with solid professional competence as the foundation can news media have better development prospects and resolutely eliminate fake news from the vast sea of information.

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Note: Figure translations are in progress. See original paper for figures.

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