

Analysis of the Concept of Social Responsibility Quality

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Abstract

Social responsibility is a quality required for an individual's attitude and lifestyle to create a better life in the new era. It reflects the unity of values and practices of the human nature and the way people exist in new times. Based on the Marxist view of responsibility, the paper analyzes the connotation of the concept, and further explores the relationship between this quality on the one hand and the sense of social responsibility and morality on the other hand.

Key words: Social responsibility quality; Marxist view of responsibility; Social responsibility; Moral quality

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Tested in the twists and turns of the long history time and again, social responsibility quality constantly experiences profound changes in theme, method and form; however, the pursuit of the connotations of responsibility, the mental quest of the ideal of responsibility and the grasp of responsible practice in reflection are the consistent, unflinching essence of social responsibility quality. Moreover, social responsibility quality is a new perspective to study responsibility and is a moral

trait in nature. Comprehending the concept of social responsibility quality correctly is the logical starting point of related studies. “The essence of the concept of social science does not consist in its logical form and subjective meaning, but lies in the objective history of creating and using it and social practice. Without recalling the objective history of creating and using this concept and an analysis of related social practices, people are unable to truly comprehend the concept of a social science and abundant thoughts it expresses” (Gu and Shi, 2006), said professor Gu Mingyuan. Besides, an understanding and analysis of the concept of social responsibility quality should also be built on the history, culture and social practice of the Chinese nation. Furthermore, the relations between it and related concepts are analyzed to grasp it in the whole network of concepts.

1. MARXIST VIEW ON RESPONSIBILITY AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY QUALITY

Responsibility quality is closely connected with social responsibility quality, and they have a general-individual relationship. The major difference between the two is their ambit. According to different objects, responsibility quality can be divided into different types, namely self-responsibility quality, social responsibility quality, responsibility quality to others, and responsibility quality to the world respectively. Some of these responsibility qualities involve social responsibility quality, while some do not. Only responsibility qualities that concern society can be called social responsibility quality. What is society? From the standpoint of Marxism, society is a product of the development of human interaction and it is a community where interrelated people live built on common human material production activities. Social existence is built on the production of material goods, and this is the greatest point distinguishing between human society and gregarious animals. A society

consists of two parts-economic base and superstructure. As human production activities advance, human will develop a production relation in accordance with the level of productive forces then, and a synthesis of production activities constitutes the socioeconomic base. "Political and legal relations, or morality, art and other political phenomena, and social ideology all are built on socioeconomic base and they are superstructures of society."¹ Marx's view on practice reveals the unity of the relationship between human and the world is embodied in human practice and survives and develops in a responsible and moral way. A discussion over human social responsibility quality should at first be based on Marxist view on responsibility and start to cognize human social responsibility quality from the perspective of the human manner of being and human essence with the standpoints, views and methods of historical materialism.

1.1 The Human Manner of Being and Human Social Responsibility

Human commonly exists in human society, natural society and historical society, hence, social, natural and historical conditions will influence human activity in life. In the final analysis, human should be put into the category of social being, whose precondition is the existence of a society. Marxism proposes that people should not only establish relations with nature but also establish relations with other people, or, human labor practice cannot be implemented. Human labor practice is based on mutual cooperation between different individuals in a society, so it is not a sole activity of a social individual. People and society gradually form a two-way interaction, as the emergence of society is based on human practice; compared with human practical activity, human society lays a foundation for human practical activity and meanwhile restricts the implementation of human practical activity. For an individual or a group, they not only simply exist in a specific social relation, but also play various roles, hence, they shoulder various kinds of responsibility. In 2012, the first Blue Book of Social Administration—Report on the Innovation of China's Social Administration issued by Chinese Academy of Social Sciences pointed out: "The development of modern civic consciousness of responsibility must make citizens take the initiative to play the role of the master in a country and a society when enjoying their rights, and rights and obligations have been always reciprocal." (Lian, 2012) Social responsibility is a social duty that members of society confirm they should shoulder according to social needs and personal ability. Besides, diversified human social life and essential human characteristics are both the premise of social responsibility.

¹ --(1984). *A concise dictionary of social sciences* (p.527). Shanghai: Shanghai Lexicographical Publishing House.

1.2 Human Free Choice and Human Social Responsibility

Human is an initiative being. A human being not only possesses the characteristics of objective being but also has the characteristics of species being, and they play an important role in the unification between human initiative and passivity. The purpose of human practice embodies the unification between human initiative and passivity, and it determines the purpose of human activity. The view about responsibility in Marxist ethics is closely connected with the scientific view of freedom. Humans make choices of moral behaviors when interacting with society, and a moral choice must have a certain precondition, which is freedom. People must shoulder their responsibility to society and to whom they cooperate or associate with in social relations, develop freely and independently with some "limitations", and form an interdependent and harmoniously coexistent interpersonal and social relations, achieving free and orderly development of themselves and society. (Cui, 2012) Individual responsibility should be the behaviors he or she choose with limited freedom and corresponding obligations, or, the evaluation of individual responsibility is prone to be influenced by the theory of absolute responsibility and the theory of absolute freedom, leading to the chaos and disorder of social life. "Moral trait is a high-level regulatory practical quality" (Yan, 2015).

Through the above analysis, the use of defining can offer a scientific description of the concept of social responsibility quality. This article argues that social responsibility quality refers to a quality of an individual who has cognitive skills in the social field and freedom of choice assuming a certain responsibility and completing corresponding tasks according to individual status and role activities based on his specific relationship with the society. This quality is mainly manifested as a legal trait and a moral trait. Social responsibility quality is an embodiment of responsibility quality in social life, and it is a stable moral trait of an individual developed in social life.

2. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY QUALITY AND SENSE OF SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

"Sense of social responsibility" is a frequently mentioned concept in both life and academic researches. In nature, it is a kind of emotional experience that highlights a subjective feeling. In previous studies, most studies on individual social responsibility concentrate on a sense of social responsibility of an individual rather than their social responsibility quality, as a result, the studies often will face the dilemma of knowing and practicing individual social responsibility. It is because the relations and differences between a sense of social responsibility

and social responsibility quality have not been clarified. Their relations lie in that a sense of social responsibility is a component of social responsibility quality, and their difference lies in that a sense of social responsibility (which is socially responsible emotion in nature) is just a part of social responsibility quality; besides a sense of social responsibility, social responsibility quality also includes socially responsible awareness, socially responsible will and socially responsible behavior. Modern Chinese Dictionary points out: "A sense of responsibility is a mood to consciously fulfill one's duty".² From the perspective of moral education, a sense of responsibility is an emotional experience of obligations that an individual assumes in the society and an awareness of an individual about whether he or she can complete moral tasks or satisfy moral requirements. In light of social essence, what a sense of responsibility reflects is human value, namely self-worth and social value. Psychologically, "a sense of responsibility refers to the emotional experience of an individual when making choices of behaviors for his or her obligations and comparing the outcome with inner requirements" (Ren, 2013). Hence, a sense of social responsibility can influence individual consciousness of responsibility in many ways.

As a moral trait with a cognitive basis governed by moral values, social responsibility quality is stable since formed. Its stability means people tend to behaviorally respond to the same social responsibility event in the same way in different social situations. The consistency of social responsibility quality refers to durability in the time dimension, namely social responsibility quality will remain relatively coherent after formed and before a higher level of social responsibility is formed. In the system of individual social responsibility quality, an individual always maintains existing social responsibility quality, and on the other hand, and gradually change some existing social responsibility quality due to new social requirements and experiences, making them acquire new characteristics, thus maintaining the continuity and adaptability of the quality. The reason why social responsibility quality is stable is that its formation is from internal needs of an individual at the root and it is a specific manifestation of moral values of an individual, whose needs are relatively stable, so moral values are relatively stable since incorporated into the value system of an individual. Secondly, as a system, social responsibility quality is a result of the interaction and stable relations between the characteristics of an object and various needs, habits, experiences and ideas of a subject. To change a part or a layer of social responsibility quality, one needs to change the entire or partial social responsibility quality system. To maintain mental balance

and stability, an individual will try to avoid this situation, which gives the individual an internal motivation to maintain social responsibility quality.

3. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY QUALITY AND MORAL TRAIT

Social responsibility quality is one of the moral traits and closely linked to moral traits, and its moral connotations are manifested in multiple aspects: At first, social responsibility quality is a fundamental moral trait. Social responsibility quality is an individual's self-awareness and behavior for his or her role obligations in a country and a society, a moral trait closely bound up with social development and an ideological basis for the unification of social individual spirit and material life; ideological development of a social individual should be based on social responsibility ability. Moreover, social responsibility quality also becomes a starting point for other moral traits and is manifested in all aspects of social life. A socially responsible individual not only will pay attention to his own physical and mental health and realize his personal value and social value, but also will be considerate and develop other moral traits, such as caring, righteousness, impartiality, and honesty. In modern social production, the more developed the productivity, the more refined the division of labor, hence, there is an increasing need for cooperation between responsible individuals to achieve various conditions for social development. Furthermore, social responsibility quality cannot be replaced by any knowledge or technology, nor by any other traits, as it is a fundamental moral trait and able to provide individual and social development with fundamental conditions. In addition, social responsibility quality must be based on an accurate understanding of social responsibility, and it consists of socially responsible ability and socially responsible emotion as well as socially responsible behavior. On this basis, social responsibility quality is a fundamental moral trait. Next, social responsibility quality is an internal moral trait. For an individual, social responsibility quality is a legal or moral quality developed by individual status or role and by assuming corresponding consequences, completing specific tasks or conducting some specific activities. Morally speaking, it is a manifestation of individual interior quality and more reflects an internalization of morals, moreover, it is an individual's conscious experience of life and choice rather than an obligation inflicted on people. Therefore, different from a code of conduct advocated by modern society which is characterized externality, objectiveness and compulsiveness, social responsibility quality refers to an individual's awareness and intuition of role obligations and is an internal moral trait.

² Editorial Office of Institute of Linguistics of Chinese Academy of Social Sciences CASS. *Modern Chinese Dictionary* (p.1574). Beijing: The Commercial Press.

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