

Emotional Editing and Public Understanding Bias in Short-Video News Communication

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Abstract: Short-video news has become an important way for the public to encounter news in everyday media use. Compared with traditional news reports, it depends more on quick visual impact, strong titles, background music, subtitles, and selected emotional moments. These forms can make public events more visible, but they may also change how users understand the event. This paper discusses emotional editing in short-video news communication and its possible influence on public understanding. It argues that emotional editing is not only a technical matter of video production. It also shapes the order in which users receive information: feeling often comes before context, and judgment may appear before enough facts are known. When conflict scenes, dramatic captions, and highly liked comments become the main entry points, complex public events may be simplified into emotional opposition. Based on the Chinese platform context, the paper further considers how algorithmic visibility, repeated reposting, and comment sections may strengthen this tendency. The aim is not to deny the value of short-video news, but to show that stronger visibility should be matched with clearer context and more responsible news presentation.

Keywords: short-video news; emotional editing; public understanding; context loss; platform communication; news fragmentation

1. Short-Video News as a Changing Form of News Communication

Short-video news has become a familiar way for many people to encounter public events. In the Chinese media environment, users may not always open a news website, watch a full television report, or read a complete article before knowing about an event. Many public issues first appear to them

through short-video platforms, social media feeds, reposted clips, or comment sections. News is no longer received only as a complete report. It often appears as a short scene, a few subtitles, a dramatic title, or a piece of video that has already been edited and circulated several times.

This change has altered the form of news communication. Traditional news reports usually rely on a relatively clear structure. They explain

what happened, who was involved, where the event took place, and what background should be known. Short-video news works in a different rhythm. It has to attract attention quickly. If the opening seconds do not hold the viewer, the user may simply swipe away. For this reason, short-video news often places the most striking part of an event at the beginning. A conflict scene, a crying face, a public argument, a rescue moment, or a sentence with strong emotion may become the first thing the audience sees.

This does not mean that short-video news has no value. It can make news easier to access and easier to spread. Some public issues gain attention precisely because a short video makes them visible. A long written report may not reach ordinary users, but a short video can enter their daily scrolling. It can bring local incidents, social disputes, public safety issues, and everyday injustices into wider discussion. In this sense, short-video news has lowered the threshold of public attention.

The difficulty lies in the way this attention is produced. Short-video news often appears in the same information flow as entertainment content, livestream clips, advertisements, personal stories, and lifestyle videos. News must compete with many other forms of content. This competition changes its expression. The news video may become faster, more direct, and more emotionally charged. Its purpose is not only to inform, but also to make users stop, watch, react, comment, and share.

This platform setting also changes the position of the audience. The user is often not prepared to receive news in a serious way. He or she may be scrolling for relaxation, but suddenly encounters a public event. The first reaction may be emotional rather than analytical. A short video may make the user feel anger, sympathy, shock, or curiosity before enough background information is given. The audience enters the event through feeling first, and understanding comes later, if it comes at all.

For this reason, short-video news should not be seen only as a shorter news format. It is a different communication form shaped by platform rhythm, visual attraction, algorithmic distribution, and user participation. Its influence does not come only from

what it reports, but also from how it organizes attention. The following discussion focuses on emotional editing because it is one of the most visible ways in which short-video news attracts users and shapes their understanding of public events.

2. Emotional Editing in Short-Video News

Emotional editing is a common feature of short-video news. It does not only mean adding sad music, using dramatic captions, or choosing an exaggerated title. More broadly, it refers to the way news materials are selected and arranged so that the emotional side of an event becomes especially visible. In short-video news, the audience may first see a crying person, a moment of conflict, a rescue scene, an angry sentence, or a sudden reversal. These moments are often easier to notice than background information, and they are also more likely to keep users watching.

This kind of editing is closely related to the basic rhythm of short-video platforms. A short video has limited time to attract attention. If the opening is too slow, the user may leave before the event is explained. For this reason, news clips often put the strongest emotional material at the front. The platform environment does not leave much space for gradual narration. It pushes news expression toward speed, intensity, and immediate reaction.

Emotional editing is not necessarily a distortion of news. Many public events do contain emotion. A violent incident may naturally produce anger. A rescue scene may naturally produce sympathy. A personal tragedy may naturally bring sadness. The problem appears when emotional moments become the main structure of the news, while the event background, factual order, and source information are placed in a weaker position. In that case, users may remember the feeling of the video more clearly than the event itself.

2.1 The Selection of Emotional Moments

The first step of emotional editing is the selection of emotional moments. Short-video news rarely presents an event from beginning to end. It usually

selects the part that is most likely to catch the eye. This part may be a quarrel, a fall, a cry, a public apology, a moment of violence, or a sentence that sounds unfair or shocking. Once this moment is placed at the beginning of the video, it becomes the audience's entry point into the whole event.

This selection is understandable in platform communication. A video needs to make users stop within a few seconds. A calm explanation of the event may be more complete, but it may not be strong enough to hold attention in an information flow. Emotional moments work faster. They do not require much background knowledge. A viewer can immediately feel that something is wrong, sad, unfair, dangerous, or worth discussing.

Yet this selection also changes the order of understanding. The audience may feel before they know. They may become angry before they understand the full process. They may feel sympathy before they know all parties involved. They may judge someone as guilty, weak, pitiful, or unreasonable before the event has been explained. In this way, the selected emotional moment does not simply represent the news. It begins to frame the news (Entman 52).

A common example can be found in public conflict videos. If the clip begins with one person shouting, pushing, crying, or apologizing, viewers may quickly form an impression of that person. But the earlier part of the event may not be shown. The later explanation may also be missing. The emotional moment is real, but it is still only one part of the event. When this part is treated as the whole story, public understanding can become narrow.

The same problem may appear in softer emotional stories. Some short videos do not rely on anger or conflict. They use warmth, suspense, kindness, or pity to attract attention. A story may begin with a touching scene or a question that invites users to participate. This can make the news more approachable, but it can also make audiences accept the narrative too quickly. When emotion creates trust before verification, the risk of misunderstanding also increases.

The selection of emotional moments therefore has two sides. It helps short-video news become visible, and it allows public events to enter everyday attention. But it also gives emotion a leading position in the process of understanding. Once the audience enters the event through a selected emotional fragment, later information may be read under the influence of that first feeling.

2.2 The Strengthening of Emotional Judgment

After emotional moments are selected, short-video news often strengthens them through editing. The emotional meaning of a scene may be enlarged by subtitles, background music, repeated shots, slow motion, close-up images, and contrast between different clips. These elements do not always add new facts, but they change how the audience feels about the facts (Powell et al. 1002). A scene that might have been understood as one part of an event can be turned into a strong emotional signal.

Subtitles are especially important in short-video news. Many users watch videos quickly, sometimes without sound, so subtitles often become the main guide for interpretation. A subtitle may summarize the event, highlight a conflict, or directly suggest a judgment. Words such as "shocking," "heartbreaking," "angry," "unexpected," or "finally exposed" can push users toward a certain emotional reading before they fully know what happened. The video may appear to be showing facts, but the caption has already framed the facts.

Background music can also shape judgment. Sad music may make a person appear more pitiful. Tense music may make a scene feel more dangerous. Fast rhythm may increase the sense of urgency. Music does not explain the event, but it gives the event an emotional direction. In some short-video news, users may first be moved by the sound and atmosphere, then accept the story that the video wants to tell.

Repeated shots and slow motion work in a similar way. When a conflict scene is played again and again, it feels more serious. When a person's expression is slowed down or enlarged, it seems to carry more meaning. A few seconds of action may

be stretched into the emotional center of the whole video. The audience is encouraged to look at the same moment repeatedly, while other parts of the event may receive little attention.

This strengthening of emotional judgment can make short-video news more powerful. It helps users quickly grasp the emotional tone of an event. It may also help some public issues gain attention when ordinary reporting is ignored. But it also brings a risk. Once the emotional tone is fixed too early, later information may become less important. Users may continue to defend their first impression even when more facts appear.

The issue is not that emotion should be removed from news. News about harm, injustice, disaster, or conflict naturally carries emotion. The real issue is whether editing leaves enough space for explanation. If subtitles, music, and repeated images only push one feeling, the audience may mistake emotional clarity for factual clarity. They may feel that they understand the event because they already know how to feel about it.

2.3 The Communicative Value and Risk of Emotional Editing

Emotional editing should not be understood only as a problem. In short-video news communication, emotion often helps an event become visible. Many public issues are first noticed because a video contains a strong scene, a moving moment, or a conflict that ordinary users can immediately understand. A long report may need time to explain the background, but a short video can bring the event into public view very quickly. In this sense, emotional editing can lower the threshold of attention.

Emotion also helps users enter public issues. Some social problems are distant from everyday experience. When short-video news shows a concrete person, a real voice, or a painful moment, the issue may become easier to feel. Sympathy, anger, and concern can push users to follow the event, discuss it, or ask for further explanation (Berger and Milkman 196). Without this emotional

entry, some local incidents or ordinary people's difficulties may remain unnoticed.

But the same feature also creates risk. Emotional editing may make users respond before they understand. A viewer may be moved by a sad scene, angered by a conflict, or shocked by a title, yet still know little about the full event. The emotional reaction comes fast, while factual understanding needs more time. If the video does not provide enough context, the audience may treat the first feeling as the final judgment.

This risk becomes more obvious when short-video news circulates across platforms. A clip may be reposted many times, and each repost may add new captions, music, comments, or interpretations. The event may gradually move away from the original source. What remains is not a full news report, but a stronger emotional version of it. Users may remember the anger, pity, or shock, but forget where the information came from and whether it has been verified.

The "Qin Lang lost homework in Paris" incident shows this problem from another side. The video did not rely on anger or violence. It used a warm and suspenseful story to invite public attention. Many users followed the narrative because it seemed kind, interesting, and emotionally harmless. Later, the event was reported as fabricated. This case shows that emotional editing can create trust as well as anger. When emotion comes before verification, even a soft story can mislead public understanding. The value of emotional editing therefore depends on how it is used. If emotion helps users notice a public issue and then leads them to fuller information, it can support communication. If emotion replaces background, source, and explanation, it may produce misunderstanding. Short-video news needs emotion, but emotion should not become the only path through which users know an event.

3. From Emotional Attention to Public Understanding Bias

Emotional editing first attracts attention, but attention is not the same as understanding. A short-video news clip may make users stop scrolling, feel

sympathy, become angry, or join a discussion. Yet these reactions do not mean that users have understood the full event. In many cases, what users receive first is not a complete account, but an emotional entrance (Papacharissi, "Affective Publics and Structures" 310). They see one scene, one sentence, one facial expression, or one conflict point. The event is already framed before its background is fully explained.

Public understanding bias appears in this gap between emotional attention and factual understanding. The audience may feel that they "know" the event because they have seen the video. But what they have seen may be only a selected moment. The time line, source of information, relation between different parties, and later clarification may remain unclear. In short-video news communication, this gap can easily become wider because the video form encourages quick reaction. Users are expected to like, comment, repost, or take a position almost immediately.

This does not mean that audiences are unable to think carefully. The problem is that the platform environment gives emotional cues earlier and more strongly than contextual cues. When the first impression is powerful enough, later information may be read under its influence. A correction, a longer report, or an official clarification may not receive the same level of attention as the first emotional clip. In this way, short-video news may not only report public events; it may also shape the path through which the public understands them.

3.1 The Simplification of Complex Events

Many public events are not simple. They may involve personal relations, institutional background, legal responsibility, economic pressure, public emotion, and platform participation. But when such events enter short-video news, they are often compressed into a simple structure. The audience is invited to see who should be blamed, who should be pitied, who is weak, who is strong, and who deserves moral support. This kind of structure is easy to spread because it gives users a quick position.

The simplification usually begins with the emotional label. A person may be framed as a victim, a wrongdoer, a betrayer, a hero, or a weak individual facing injustice. Once the label is accepted, later information is likely to be judged through it. Users may no longer ask what happened step by step. They may ask whether the new information supports the label they already believe. This is how a public event becomes smaller than itself. Its complexity is reduced to a moral opposition.

The "Fat Cat" incident offers a useful example. In its early online circulation, the event was often understood through strong emotional labels, such as a deeply devoted young man and a woman accused of exploiting him. This framing quickly produced sympathy, anger, and moral accusation. Later police information and media reports showed that the early online narrative was incomplete and had been shaped by selective disclosure and public opinion manipulation. The important point is not to retell the whole event, but to see how quickly a complex private relationship was turned into a simple public drama.

This kind of simplification is common in short-video news communication. A family conflict may become a story of absolute victimhood. A consumer dispute may become a battle between ordinary people and powerful institutions. A public safety incident may become a direct question of personal morality before technical or legal issues are explained. These simplified frames are not always false, but they are often incomplete. They make the event easier to feel, but not necessarily easier to understand.

The risk is that public judgment becomes faster than public knowledge. Users may take a position after seeing only the most emotional part of the event. Once many users take the same position, the simplified understanding becomes harder to correct. A more complete explanation may appear later, but it has to compete with the emotional certainty already formed. In this sense, emotional editing does not only simplify the video. It can simplify the public's way of thinking about the event.

3.2 The Replacement of Fact Order by Emotional Order

In a complete news report, the order of facts is important. The audience needs to know when the event happened, who was involved, what had happened before the visible conflict, what information has been verified, and what still remains uncertain. This order helps users understand the event step by step. Short-video news often works differently. It may not begin with the earliest fact or the most necessary background. It often begins with the most emotionally powerful moment.

This creates a replacement of fact order by emotional order. The video does not first ask what happened, but what can make users stop. The most shocking sentence, the most painful expression, the most intense argument, or the most dramatic reversal may be placed before the basic explanation. In this structure, users do not enter the event through time and evidence. They enter through anger, sympathy, fear, or curiosity.

This emotional order can strongly affect later understanding. Once users have formed a feeling about the event, later facts may be received in a selective way. Information that fits the first feeling is easier to accept. Information that weakens the first feeling may be ignored, doubted, or treated as an excuse. A user who has already felt anger may continue to search for proof of wrongdoing. A user who has already felt sympathy may resist information that complicates the victim image. The first emotion becomes a frame for later judgment.

The problem is especially clear when a public event is still developing. At an early stage, information is often incomplete. The identities of the parties, the cause of the conflict, and the responsibility involved may not yet be clear. But short-video clips can spread before these facts are confirmed. The audience may already have made moral judgments before official information, full reports, or follow-up explanations appear. When later clarification arrives, it may no longer have the same emotional strength as the first video.

The replacement of fact order by emotional order does not always come from deliberate manipulation. Sometimes it comes from the short-video form itself. A platform video has little time to build context. It must choose what comes first. But this formal pressure has real consequences. If the emotional peak always appears before the factual structure, public understanding may become unstable. Users may remember the feeling of the event more clearly than the event process.

This is why emotional editing needs to be examined carefully. Emotion can open the door to public attention, but it should not become the whole path of understanding. If short-video news gives emotion first and context later, the later context must be strong enough to correct or complete the first impression. Otherwise, the audience may mistake emotional order for factual order and treat a feeling-led narrative as a complete news account.

3.3 The Overgeneralization of Partial Images

Short-video news depends heavily on images. This gives it strong persuasive power. When users see a scene with their own eyes, they may feel that the event has already become clear. A short clip seems more direct than written description. It gives the audience a sense of presence. This is also why visual fragments can easily be overgeneralized. A few seconds of video may be taken as evidence of the whole event (Rodriguez and Dimitrova 55).

The problem is that images do not explain themselves. A clip may be real, but its meaning still depends on context. Who recorded it, what happened before it, what happened after it, whether the clip has been cut, and whether the caption is accurate all matter. If these elements are missing, the image may look clear while the event remains unclear. The audience may believe that the video has shown the truth, but it may have shown only a small part of it.

This overgeneralization often appears in conflict-related news. A user may see one person shouting, pushing, crying, or refusing to answer, and then use that moment to judge the whole person. A short expression may be treated as proof of guilt. A

sentence taken from a longer conversation may be read as the key to the event. In this process, the part replaces the whole. The emotional force of the image makes the missing context less visible.

The case of the woman falsely accused after picking up a delivery is a useful example. In that case, a real video fragment was connected with fabricated chat records and a false story about an affair. The visual material made the rumor seem believable because it gave users something to “see.” But the meaning attached to the image was not true. The image was real, while the narrative around it was false. This case shows that visual evidence can mislead when it is separated from its original context.

Short-video news may produce a similar risk even when there is no direct fabrication. A news clip may show a real moment, but if that moment is placed under an emotional title or edited into a dramatic sequence, users may draw conclusions beyond what the image can support. They may think they have understood the event because the image feels concrete. In fact, they may only have seen the most visible part.

The overgeneralization of partial images is difficult to correct because visual impressions are strong. Later written explanations or official clarifications may appear weaker than the first image. Users may continue to trust what they first saw, even when the interpretation of that image has been challenged. This is one reason why short-video news can create lasting public understanding bias. It gives the public a powerful fragment, but not always a full account.

3.4 The Influence of Comment Sections on Interpretation

In short-video news, the audience does not only watch the video. They also read the comments. For many users, the comment section has become part of the news experience. After watching a short clip, users often look at the most-liked comments to see how others understand the event. These comments may confirm their first impression, offer a sharper judgment, or give the event a more emotional direction. In this sense, the comment section is not

just a place for response. It also helps shape interpretation.

The influence of comments is especially strong when the video itself is short and incomplete. If the clip does not explain enough background, users may rely on comments to fill the gap. A high-liked comment may name the event as “unfair,” “heartbreaking,” “absurd,” or “deserved.” A sarcastic remark may make one party look ridiculous. A moral accusation may turn a complicated event into a clear judgment. These comments can become a second layer of framing after the video.

The order of comments also matters. Users usually see the most popular comments first, not the most careful ones. Comments that are emotional, humorous, angry, or morally strong are more likely to receive likes and replies. More balanced comments may be pushed down because they are slower, less exciting, or less suitable for quick agreement. As a result, the comment section may give users the impression that one emotional interpretation is already the public consensus.

This can further strengthen public understanding bias. A user may first be moved or angered by the video, then find similar feelings repeated in the comments. The video creates the first emotion, while the comment section confirms it. Once many users express the same feeling, the individual viewer may become more confident in that judgment. The event then appears easier to understand than it really is.

The comment section can also change the focus of the news. Sometimes users no longer discuss the original facts, but discuss a label, a sentence, a person’s appearance, a rumored background, or a moral position created in the comments. The meaning of the event begins to move away from the video itself. It is rebuilt through jokes, accusations, emotional slogans, and repeated phrases. In this process, public discussion may become active, but it may not become clearer.

This does not mean that comment sections are always harmful. They can provide missing information, point out doubts, correct misleading titles, and push media accounts to follow up. In

some public events, comments can also express legitimate concern and social supervision. The problem appears when emotional comments replace factual discussion. If users treat the most popular comments as the final explanation of the event, then public understanding may be shaped more by crowd reaction than by verified information.

For short-video news, the comment section should therefore be understood as part of the communication structure. It continues the editing process after the video has been posted. The video selects the emotional moment, while the comment section selects the dominant interpretation. Together, they may turn a public event into a fast-moving emotional narrative. This is why public understanding bias cannot be explained by video editing alone. It also grows in the interactive space around the video.

4. Platform Logic and the Repetition of Emotional News Frames

Emotional editing in short-video news is not only a matter of individual choice. It is also connected with the way platforms organize visibility (van Dijck et al.). On short-video platforms, news does not circulate in a stable news section only. It appears in recommendation feeds, hot lists, reposted clips, and account-based content flows. A public event may be presented by professional media, self-media accounts, local users, marketing accounts, and ordinary reposting users at the same time. In this process, the form of the news is repeatedly adjusted to fit platform attention.

This platform environment encourages emotional news frames. Videos that can quickly attract users, hold their attention, and trigger comments or reposts are more likely to gain visibility. Emotional frames are useful in this setting because they produce quick reactions (Berger and Milkman 196). Anger, sympathy, shock, curiosity, and moral judgment are all easier to express immediately than careful analysis. A user may not have time to read a long explanation, but may quickly like, comment, or repost after seeing a strong emotional scene.

The repetition of emotional frames does not mean every account intentionally distorts news. Many creators may simply follow what appears to work on the platform. If a conflict-based title gains more views, similar titles will be used again. If a crying face, a public apology, or a reversal scene brings more comments, these elements will be placed more prominently. Over time, emotional editing becomes not only a style, but also a practical strategy for survival in the platform environment.

4.1 Visibility Pressure in Platform News Communication

The first pressure comes from visibility. Short-video platforms contain a large amount of content, and most videos have only a few seconds to keep the audience. News content must compete with entertainment videos, celebrity gossip, livestream clips, product promotion, personal stories, and other forms of visual content. In such an environment, being accurate is not enough. A news video also has to be noticed.

This pressure changes how news is presented. A complete explanation may be important, but it may not be the most effective opening. A calm description may provide context, but it may not stop users from scrolling. This is why many short-video news clips begin with the strongest image, the most dramatic sentence, or the most emotionally charged moment. The logic is simple: attention must be gained before information can be delivered.

Visibility pressure also affects titles and captions. A title often needs to tell users why they should care within a very short time. Some titles use suspense, such as “what happened next surprised everyone.” Some use conflict, such as “the scene caused heated debate.” Some use moral judgment, suggesting that someone was wronged, exposed, punished, or misunderstood. These expressions may increase clicks and comments, but they can also narrow the way users enter the event.

The difficulty is that visibility and understanding do not always move in the same direction. What makes a video visible may not be what makes an event clear. Strong emotions, sharp labels, and dramatic

openings can bring traffic, but they may also push background information to the side. A video may succeed in attracting users, while failing to help them understand the full event.

This is especially important for public event communication. Public events often require patience, context, and follow-up information. But the platform environment rewards immediate reaction. The more a news video depends on quick visibility, the more likely it is to simplify the event into an emotional frame (Bucher). In this sense, emotional editing is not only a matter of expression. It is also a response to the pressure of being seen.

4.2 The Repeated Use of Emotional Frames

When certain emotional forms repeatedly bring attention, they may gradually become common frames in short-video news. A frame is not only a topic or a title. It is a way of making an event understandable. In short-video news, many public events are placed into familiar emotional frames, such as anger, pity, reversal, exposure, apology, punishment, or rescue. These frames help users know how to feel about the event very quickly.

The repeated use of emotional frames is easy to understand. Platforms reward content that can produce visible reactions. If a frame of anger brings more comments, similar anger-based expressions will appear in later videos. If a story of victimhood gains sympathy and reposts, later accounts may use the same structure. If a reversal title makes users wait until the end, more videos will be edited around reversal. In this way, emotional frames are not only used because they fit the event. They are also used because they fit the platform.

This repetition can make different events look similar. A labor dispute, a family conflict, a consumer complaint, a school incident, or a public safety issue may all be presented through the same emotional path: someone is wronged, someone is exposed, the public becomes angry, and the comment section asks for punishment. This structure is easy to follow, but it may weaken the specific background of each event. The audience

may become used to reading public issues through a ready-made emotional script.

The problem is not that anger, sympathy, or moral judgment has no value. In some cases, these emotions are reasonable responses to harm or injustice. The issue is that repeated emotional frames can become too quick and too fixed. Before the event is fully known, users may already know what role each person seems to play. One party becomes the victim, another becomes the offender, and the event becomes a moral story. Later facts may have to fit this frame, or they may be rejected by users who have already accepted the first version.

Repeated emotional frames may also change the expectations of news audiences. Users may begin to expect short-video news to be dramatic, conflict-based, or morally clear. A careful explanation may appear boring. A balanced report may be seen as weak. A public issue without strong emotion may fail to receive attention. This creates pressure on news producers and self-media accounts to continue using stronger emotional packaging.

In the long run, this repetition can narrow public understanding. Public events become easier to circulate, but harder to think through. Users may remember similar emotional patterns more than the actual facts of each case. Short-video news then becomes less a space for following public issues in detail and more a place where public emotion is repeatedly activated. This is how emotional frames move from editing choices to a broader communication logic.

4.3 The Circulation of Re-Edited News Fragments

Short-video news is often not fixed after it is first posted. A news clip may be downloaded, reposted, cut again, given a new title, paired with new music, or placed under a different account's interpretation. During this circulation, the event may move farther away from its original report. What users finally see may not be the first version of the news, but a re-edited fragment shaped by later attention and reaction.

This process is common in the Chinese platform environment. One public event may appear on

several platforms at the same time. Professional media may release a short report. Self-media accounts may cut out the most dramatic part. Marketing accounts may add stronger titles. Ordinary users may repost the clip with their own comments. Each layer of circulation adds something to the event. Sometimes it adds explanation, but sometimes it adds emotion, suspicion, or judgment. Re-edited fragments can make public events easier to spread. A long report may be too slow for platform circulation, while a short emotional clip can travel quickly. Users can understand its surface meaning without reading a full background. This is why fragments often become the most visible part of an event. A sentence, a gesture, a crying face, a moment of conflict, or a screenshot may represent the whole event in later discussion.

But re-editing also increases the risk of meaning shift. When a clip is separated from its original source, users may not know what was removed. When a new caption is added, the same image may carry a different meaning. When background music changes, the emotional direction of the clip may also change. A video that first appeared as a neutral record may later become an accusation, a joke, a moral warning, or a call for public anger.

The case of the woman falsely accused after picking up a delivery shows this risk clearly. A real video fragment was taken out of its ordinary context and connected with fabricated chat records and a false narrative. The image itself seemed to give the rumor visual support, even though the story attached to it was not true. This example reminds us that short visual fragments can gain persuasive power precisely because they look real. Once they circulate with new labels, their meaning may no longer belong to the original scene.

In short-video news, this problem may appear in less extreme forms as well. A public conflict clip may be reposted with a stronger title. A local dispute may be edited into a moral drama. A clarification may be cut in a way that supports only one side. These changes do not always create complete falsehoods, but they can gradually shift the public meaning of the event. The event is no longer understood

through a full report, but through a chain of fragments.

The circulation of re-edited news fragments therefore makes public understanding more unstable. Users may think they are seeing the same event, but different versions may guide them toward different conclusions. The platform does not only distribute news; it also allows news to be continuously re-shaped. In this sense, emotional editing does not end with the first video. It continues through reposting, cutting, captioning, commenting, and reinterpreting.

5. Toward More Contextual and Responsible Short-Video News Communication

Short-video news should not be rejected simply because it uses emotion. News communication has never been completely separated from emotion. Public anger, sympathy, fear, and concern may all become important forces in social discussion (Papacharissi, *Affective Publics*). In many cases, emotional attention helps an event enter public view. Some local issues, consumer disputes, public safety problems, or ordinary people's difficulties may be noticed precisely because a short video makes them visible. The problem is not that short-video news is emotional. The problem is that emotion may appear without enough context.

More responsible short-video news communication should begin with a basic recognition: visibility is not the same as understanding. A video may reach many users, but this does not mean that the event has been understood well. If users only remember the most shocking scene, the most touching sentence, or the most popular comment, the news may have gained traffic but lost part of its public value. Public communication needs attention, but it also needs explanation.

News producers can first improve the way context is provided. Even in a short video, some basic information should not be missing. The time, place, source, key parties, and verified facts should be made clear when possible. If the event is still developing, the video should also say what remains uncertain. This kind of explanation does not need to

be long, but it can prevent users from treating a fragment as the whole story.

The use of titles and captions also needs restraint. Strong titles may help users notice the news, but they should not replace factual description. Captions should not push a final judgment before the facts are clear. Words that suggest guilt, betrayal, moral failure, or public anger should be used carefully, especially when the event involves private disputes, minors, victims, or people who may later be proved innocent. A short-video news title can be attractive, but it should not lead users toward a conclusion that the report itself cannot support.

Platform design also matters. Short-video platforms are not only channels for news distribution. They shape what becomes visible and how users respond. For public event videos, platforms can provide clearer source labels, original report links, follow-up information, and correction reminders. When a video is repeatedly reposted or re-edited, users should have more ways to trace the earlier source. This would not remove emotion from short-video news, but it could reduce the risk that re-edited fragments become the only version users see.

Mainstream media have a special role in this process. When they enter short-video platforms, they need to adapt to the rhythm of short videos, but they should not simply follow the style of traffic-driven accounts. Their value lies not only in being

fast, but also in being able to verify, explain, and follow up. A short-video report by mainstream media can still be brief, but it should give users a clearer route from emotional attention to factual understanding.

Users also need a more cautious way of reading short-video news. A short clip can be a clue, but it is not always enough for judgment. A dramatic scene may show that something happened, but it may not show why it happened. A popular comment may express public feeling, but it may not explain the facts. Before forming a strong judgment, users need to ask whether they have seen the original source, whether the background is clear, and whether later clarification exists.

The direction of improvement is not to make short-video news slow, cold, or emotionless. That would not fit the medium itself. The more realistic goal is to let emotion and context appear together. Emotional editing can attract attention, but it should lead users toward fuller information rather than stop at emotional judgment. If short-video news can make public events visible while keeping basic context, it may still support public communication. If it relies only on fragments, labels, and emotional reaction, it may turn news from a process of understanding into a process of repeated emotional mobilization.

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