Social Criticism Ecosystem: A Positive Feedback Mechanism of the System

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Abstract

The role of social criticism is increasingly important in achieving high efficiency in managing a complex system, such as the system of science and technology policies and innovation in the context of social change. The author proposes the concept of the Social Criticism Ecosystem, consisting of four subjects: 1) Policy orientations and policies on social criticism; 2) Organizations conducting social criticism; 3) Entities receiving social criticism; and 4) Political, cultural, and social contexts in which social criticism activities take place. The effectiveness of social criticism on socio-economic development policy orientations, policies, programs, and projects depends significantly on the quality of the Social Criticism Ecosystem. Next, the author proposes a model in which the Social Criticism Ecosystem acts as a feedback mechanism in system theory to adjust the management system. Finally, to contribute to improving the effectiveness of the management policy system, the author proposes several solutions to enhance the quality of the subjects in the Social Criticism Ecosystem.

Keywords

Social Criticism System, Social Criticism, Policy

1. Introduction to Social Criticism System

Society is a collection of many interest groups. During the development process with social changes, conflicting interests among interest groups may arise, which, if not resolved, can lead to social discontent, and more critically, may lead to social tensions, even serving as a precursor to widespread crises. An effective solution to address the aforementioned conflicts is establishing a mechanism for dialogue, and social criticism to reconcile and balance interests

among relevant groups while creating consensus among management agencies, management subjects, and the social community.

"Social criticism contributes to the regeneration, and restoration of the previously disrupted equilibrium state, paving the way for the emergence of social consensus. When once society becomes consensual, it inherently creates new development premises for itself" (Ray of Light Magazine, 2012). Social consensus is a prerequisite for developing community resources, where members can easily interact with each other through sharing common beliefs and values.

Social criticism "is the activity of giving comments, evaluations, criticisms and recommendations on the suitability of the project content with the goals and conditions prescribed or the current situation" (Decision No. 14/2014/QD-TTg dated February 14 of Prime Minister, 2014), supplementing scientific arguments, and practical foundations objectively, contributing to perfecting policies, and enhancing effectiveness when applying policies to practical social life. Therefore, to promote the effectiveness of social criticism activities, it is necessary to clearly establish the roles, responsibilities, and capacities of social criticism subjects, and at the same time determine a clear relationship, forces, interactions between social criticism subjects and subjects receiving social criticism opinions as well as the influence of relevant parties on social criticism activities.

2. Framework for Analyzing the Social Criticism Mechanism (Ecosystem)

The effectiveness of social criticism activities crucially depends on the institutional environment (social criticism mechanisms) either facilitating or hindering social criticism. This institutional framework can be regarded as a *Social Criticism Ecosystem*, as it is a social system with organic relationships among the subjects of the social criticism mechanisms (elements of the system). From this, emerges a framework for analyzing the role of the social criticism ecosystem in influencing the effectiveness of social criticism activities.

The analysis framework consists of 2 models: 1) The feedback mechanism model of the social criticism ecosystem; and 2) The evaluation and improvement model of the social criticism ecosystem.

Figure 1 below illustrates the feedback mechanism of the system. Here, activities related to drafting policy documents (including policy orientations, policies, programs, projects on socio-economic development, science and technology, innovation, and so on) are considered part of the system, referred to as the policy document system. The policy document system impacts society to achieve sustainable development management goals in social consensus.

For the policy orientations and policies to be effectively implemented in society, meaning there is social consensus, the policy document system, according to system theory, must be adaptive. Adaptability here is ensured through a feedback mechanism. This feedback mechanism is implemented by a system of social criticism mechanisms referred to as the social criticism ecosystem.
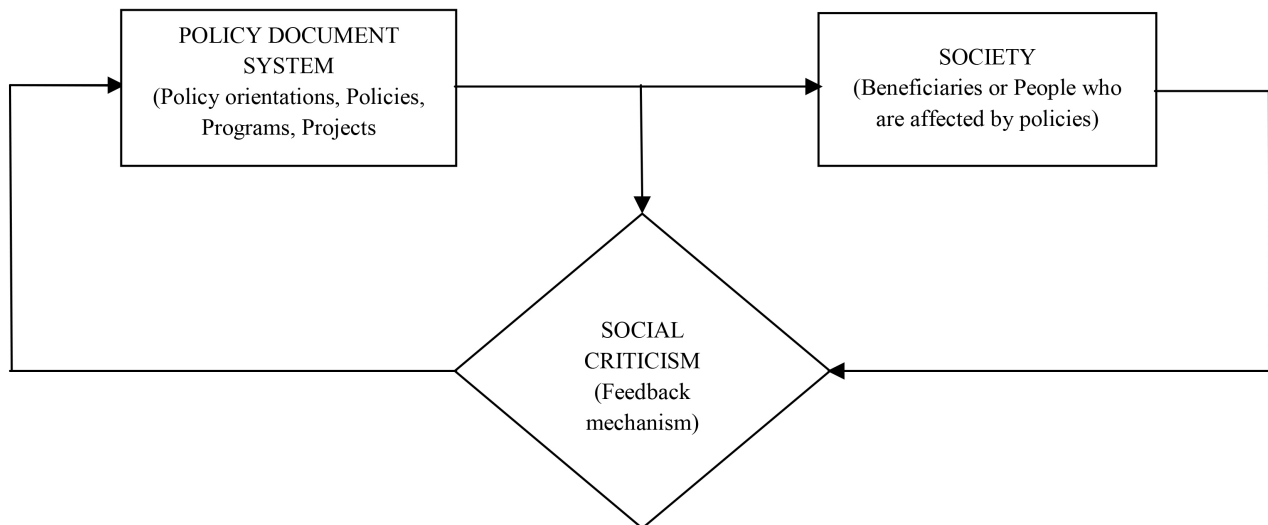
Figure 1. Social criticism ecosystem: Feedback mechanism of policy document system.

Therefore, in the model depicted in **Figure 1**, the social criticism ecosystem acts as a feedback tool (essentially counteracting) for the policy document system, aiming to adjust the policy document system so that its output goals are achieved effectively.

The question arises: how can the feedback tool, namely the social criticism ecosystem, fulfill the adjustment task mentioned, meaning enhancing the effectiveness of social criticism activities? The answer lies in the analysis of the second model, which is the social criticism ecosystem and the goal of enhancing the effectiveness of social criticism activities to ensure that the policy document system achieves social consensus goals.

The social criticism ecosystem creates the effectiveness of social criticism impacting the policy document system as depicted in **Figure 2**, consisting of 4 components: 1) Policy orientations and policies on social criticism; 2) Organizations conducting social criticism (Vietnam Fatherland Front, Vietnam Union of Science and Technology Associations, scientific and technological organizations); 3) Entities receiving social criticism (policy-making agencies); and 4) Political, cultural, and social contexts in which social criticism activities take place.

The components (elements) within the social criticism ecosystem in **Figure 2** are intimately and organically related to each other, with the crucial role of humans, whose outputs demonstrate the effectiveness of social criticism activities, impacting the policy document system. The roles and functions of the components within the social criticism ecosystem will be further analyzed next.

"Political, cultural and social contexts" affects all other components, especially "Policy orientations and policies on social criticism". For its part, "Policy orientations and policies on social criticism" decides whether the environment for social criticism activities would be a favorable one or not. "Organizations conducting social criticism" play a core role in social criticism activities. "Entities receiving social criticism" directly impacts the effectiveness of social criticism. If
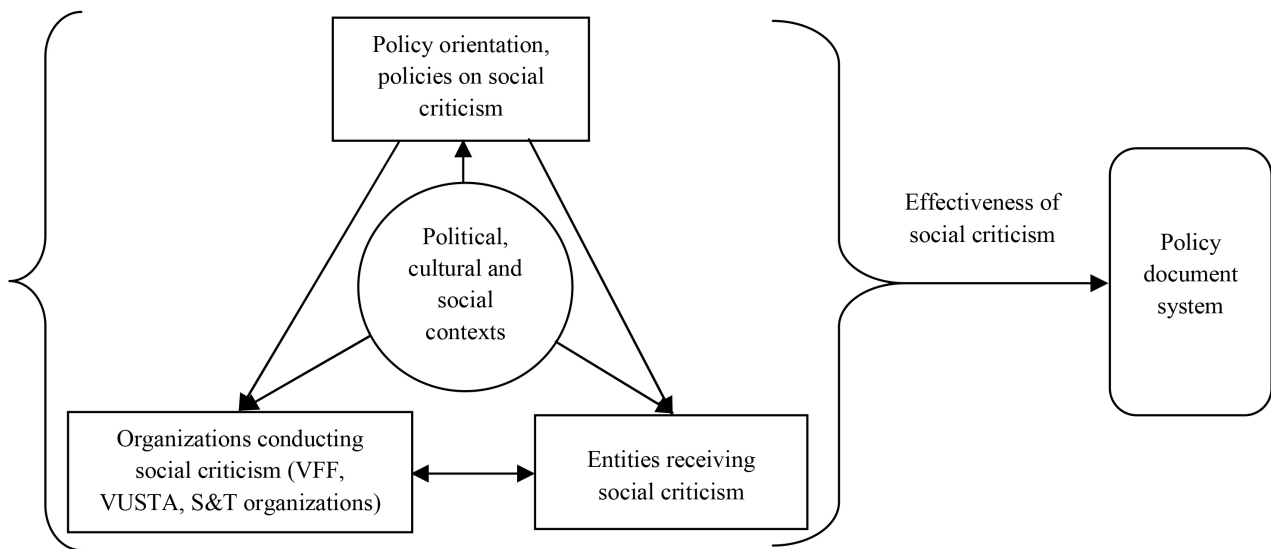
Figure 2. The structure of the social criticism ecosystem and the goal of effective social criticism.

organizations conduct positive social criticism but the results are not recognized, or vice versa, if the organizations conducting social criticism do not have sufficient qualifications or capacity to conduct social criticism, social criticism efficiency will be affected.

The concern, then, is what role each component in Vietnam's social criticism ecosystem plays.

3. Policy Orientations and Policies on Social Criticism

Social criticism was first officially recognized as a mission of the Vietnam Union of Science and Technology Associations in 1996 and of the Vietnamese Fatherland Front about 10 years later (2006). Before that time, the phrase "social criticism" was not used in any political reports at the Party Congresses in the period 1976-1996.

At the end of 1996, gave the guiding viewpoint "Promoting the socio-political role of the Vietnam Union of Science and Technology Associations at the Central and local level in popularizing Transforming and applying scientific knowledge to production and life, in scientific research, technology deployment and environmental protection, as well as in consulting, criticism and social assessment. The Party and State create favorable conditions for the activities of scientific and technical associations" (Resolution No. 02-NQ/TW dated December 24, of the Party Central Committee, 1996). It can be said that Resolution No. 02-NQ/TW is the Party's first resolution addressing the consulting, criticism, and social assessment activities of the Vietnam Union of Science and Technology Associations.

Social criticism is a need of society, a responsibility of scientific and technological intellectuals to contribute their efforts and intelligence in the process of building and developing the economy, society, science, and technology. And in-

novation. Social criticism activities are gradually receiving attention from the State and many documents have been issued to regulate this activity, thereby creating the necessary legal corridor to make social criticism activities increasingly convenient and attract more attention. This is also the place where the nation's scientific and technological knowledge is concentrated.

Decision No. 14/2014/QD-TTg dated February 14, 2014, of the Prime Minister on consulting, criticism, and social assessment activities of the Vietnam Union of Science and Technology Associations is a legal document. The full review refers to content related to social criticism, activities, in which stipulates the scope of adjustment and subjects of application; types of projects to collect social criticism opinions; requirements on the content of social criticism reports; processes and procedures for soliciting social criticism; responsibilities of agencies seeking social criticism; responsibilities of organizations conducting social criticism; financial mechanisms carry out social criticism.

4. Organizations Conducting Social Criticism

Organizations conducting social criticism have been stipulated in several Party and State documents. The Regulation on Social Supervision and Criticism promulgated together with Decision No. 217-QD/TW dated December 12, 2013, of the Politburo clearly defines the role of the Fatherland Front as a social critic. Vietnam and socio-political organizations, of which the Vietnam Union of Science and Technology Associations is a member of the Vietnam Fatherland Front.

In Decision No. 14/2014/QD-TTg dated February 14, 2014, the Prime Minister, identified the subject of social criticism as the Vietnam Union of Science and Technology Associations and its member associations. S&T organizations under the Vietnam Union of Science and Technology Associations carry out social criticism according to the organization and operation charter of the unit approved by the Vietnam Union of Science and Technology Associations.

Thus, social criticism is part of the task of consulting, criticism, and social assessment that has been established by the Party and State, and is an important task and a special strength of the intellectual team in the fields. Member associations and S & T organizations under the Vietnam Union of Science and Technology Associations. In recent years, there have been a series of important State documents establishing the leading position of the Vietnam Union of Science and Technology Associations in these activities, making the institution of social criticism increasingly important more and more perfected.

In fact, social criticism is people's criticism in which individuals and organizations can participate in social criticism according to the provisions of the Constitution and law. Organizations and individuals can participate in social criticism in the form of contributing opinions, comments, assessments, and recommendations directly or indirectly through conferences, seminars, and mass media competent authorities.

5. Entities Receiving Social Criticism

Entities that receive social criticism are competent units and even individuals with the function of planning or organizing the implementation of policies, programs, and projects; These are Leaders at all levels at the Central/local level; The National Assembly and its agencies, the Government and ministries/sectors, local authorities; agencies in charge of socio-economic development programs and projects.

The objects of social criticism are policies proposed and developed by policy-making agencies and departments in many different fields such as socio-economic, science and technology, education and training, health, and environment. Through receiving social criticism, policy-making agencies have information and data that have been analyzed, evaluated, argued, and made recommendations with a scientific basis. multi-dimensional to promptly adjust, supplement, or replace old policies with new policies that are more suitable to the realities of social life. Therefore, receiving social criticism plays an important role in the process of perfecting policies and laws.

In policymaking, depending on the content and impact of the policy, the policy-making agency can receive social criticism in appropriate forms. The direct form is to record and receive critical opinions through officially organized conferences to collect opinions, and public opinions of delegates and voters through press forums, media, and electronic information portals of authorities.

In addition, state agencies and competent individuals of state agencies can receive social criticism directly through discussion seminars, contribute opinions, and study independent documents. And directly receive written comments from organizations conducting social criticism activities. In the context of the 4.0 industrial revolution with the strong and rapid development of science and technology, social communication methods are also constantly changing, and forms of receiving and responding to social criticism also need to be adjusted. Adjusted and incorporated into legal regulations to be more consistent with new protocols, contributing to the perfection of policies, laws, and social criticism institutions.

6. Political, Social, and Cultural Contexts Affecting Social Criticism

In the feudal social models of ancient Vietnam, it can be observed that the state had established mechanisms for social criticism. The royal court appointed court advisors to advise the king when necessary, usually selecting individuals who were talented, virtuous, and straightforward; in this role, the court advisor acted as the counter-arguer, while the king played the role of receiving criticism. Throughout history, there were also cases where officials consistently demonstrated criticism actions at the royal court. Even after retirement, there were instances of retired officials presenting "criticism" to the royal court, such as in the petition "Thất trảm sớ" by Chu Van An.

In modern society and an open information environment, where democratic values and justice are highly regarded, there have been numerous forms of social criticism emerging, developing, and being encouraged by the state, forming a more distinct social criticism mechanism.

In a market economy society, various interest groups (economic, social, environmental, etc.) emerge to meet different development needs. Each interest group needs to reflect its concerns through policy layers. In this scenario, social criticism will undertake the function of providing strategic solutions, harmonizing between interest groups, and serving the nation's sustainable development efforts.

In our country's socially-oriented market economy, the prosperity of businesses and the increasing wealth, living standards, and quality of life of the people will ensure financial investment for scientific and technological activities, innovation in general, and social criticism activities in particular. Scientific and technological organizations may have more advantages in mobilizing financial resources not only from the state budget (through the Vietnam Fatherland Front, the Vietnam Union of Science and Technology Associations, and state agencies placing orders) but also from businesses to contribute to the process of refining policy orientations, the country's development policies and programs and projects as regulated by law.

During the construction of the socialist rule-of-law state and amid the context of international economic integration, scientific and technological organizations have had ample conditions to establish and operate. Many state regulations have allowed the establishment of scientific and technological organizations, research centers, non-public research institutes, and private universities, which are deployed in various fields. Participation in social criticism activities is also strictly regulated. For example, for scientific and technological organizations established by individuals, "if there is criticism regarding the Party's or the State's policy orientations and policies, it must be forwarded to the competent Party and State authorities. It cannot be publicly disclosed under the name or in connection with the name of the scientific and technological organization" (Decision No. 97/2009/QD-TTg dated July 24, 2009, of the Prime Minister, 2009).

Thus, the political, cultural, and social context, as well as different historical periods, will have different impacts on social criticism activities.

7. Effective Social Criticism Activities Will Contribute to Creating New Development Premises

The effectiveness of social criticism is achieved when high-quality social criticism opinions are timely submitted to the appropriate authority for social criticism, appropriately, and are feedback acknowledged, fully or partially, in the policy-making process, contributing to improving the quality of policy orientations, developing, policies, or programs and projects, aiming for social consensus. In general terms, social criticism is considered effective when the proposed policy orientations and policies are accepted and fully implemented by society,

leading to public satisfaction. Broadly speaking, the effectiveness of social criticism regarding policy orientations and policies is reflected in the atmosphere of social consensus.

Social criticism is a form of social feedback in addressing social issues. In the process of addressing social issues, timely, accurate, and comprehensive feedback from stakeholders, and entities affected by the proposed measures, is crucial. Social criticism opinions are considered of quality when they truly contribute scientific and practical foundations to develop and refine policies, programs, and projects. Positive social criticism serves the function of presenting arguments and scientific evidence, identifying legal gaps, practical issues, and social changes that managers may have overlooked, to providing suggestions for policy-making agencies to incorporate, amend, and improve policies, programs, and projects in practice.

The function of social criticism is manifested in viewpoints and reasoning that are truthful, objective, and scientifically grounded, with a spirit of constructive contribution aimed at refinement rather than refutation, denial, or invalidation. It aims to offer constructive insights rather than propagate prejudice or create societal divisions. It should not be exploited to negatively impact the interests of the nation or its people. To ensure this, competent State agencies and subjects conducting social criticism need to regularly review, evaluate, propose additions, and improve regulations for each component in the social criticism ecosystem aiming to create the most favorable institutional environment for organizations to effectively participate in social criticism in accordance with the law.

Thus, social criticism will also contribute to providing multiple perspectives from various angles, reflecting diverse aspects of the rights, duties, and responsibilities of individuals involved. The process of social criticism will also be a process of dialogue to find common ground among relevant parties, including the interests of the state and social management entities. When a society becomes consensus-oriented, the governance role of the socialist rule-of-law state is strengthened by its capacity and credibility, while society itself generates new development premises.

8. Conclusion

Along with the strong development of science and technology and innovation in modern society, many practical issues in Vietnam require the influence of management activities, necessitating systematic scientific management research to evaluate from various perspectives. The effectiveness of this impact largely depends on the contributions and sharing of management agencies, scientists, and other social strata. Therefore, research on social criticism, the social criticism framework associated with creating an environment for scientific and technological organizations to participate in social criticism activities, is part of management science and plays an important role in supplementing scientific and objective arguments to improve policy orientations, policies, programs, while also

creating consensus among management agencies, target groups, and the community, ensuring feasibility and effectiveness in policy implementation in social life, contributing to social progress.

The effectiveness of social criticism activities crucially depends on the institutional environment (the mechanisms) and whether they facilitate or hinder social criticism. The author views this institutional system as a social criticism ecosystem, illustrating the organic relationship between the subjects of the social criticism mechanism. From here, the author proposes a framework for analyzing the role of components within the social criticism ecosystem that impact the effectiveness of social criticism activities.

Analyzing and clarifying organizations responsible for conducting social criticism activities, emphasizing the role of the Vietnam Union of Science and Technology Associations, its member associations, and scientific and technological organizations established by the Vietnam Union of Science and Technology Associations according to legal regulations; specifying the entities receiving social criticism opinions as the National Assembly, the Government, ministries, sectors, and local authorities responsible for planning, appraising, issuing, and organizing the implementation of policies, laws, economic and social development programs and projects.

Analyzing the political, cultural, and social context (the feudal period, the period of industrialization, modernization, and international integration) all value and have established social criticism mechanisms in our country. However, different political, cultural, and social contexts have different effects on the effectiveness of social criticism activities.

Thus, perfecting the regulations for each component of the social criticism ecosystem will create positive feedback mechanisms to improve the quality of the policy document system when issued, contributing to making policy orientations, policies, programs, and projects for socio-economic development ensure feasibility when implemented in practical social life.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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