

Socialist Realism Sculptures : Reflecting Society And Culture In The Socialist Republic Of Vietnam

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Abstract

This study sought to investigate social and cultural reflections presented in socialist realism sculptures in the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. The sample of the study was selected by means of purposive sampling and the data was analyzed through structural functionalism, historicism, aesthetics, mythologies, and the reflection theory. The results showed that the sculptures portrayed five aspects of social reflections, including politics and governance, economy, family and lifestyles, education, and history, as well as four aspects of cultural reflections, such as clothing, tools, games and music, and values. Additionally, social reflections were more prevalent than cultural ones due to the inspiration for the sculptures being derived from stories of social and historical events, revolution and war, and Vietnamese lifestyles. The creation of the sculptures was also influenced by the communist party's policies, so the presented contents must be in line with its operation to ensure the same direction towards success.

Keywords sculptures, socialist realism, social and cultural reflections, the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

1. Introduction

Sculptures have been regarded as a prominent area of arts since the early periods of humankind. In art history, they have been given recognition and achieved highest aesthetic values. Sculptures are a particular form of arts in the area of visual arts, characterized by a three-dimensional shape, and are produced with a wide array of materials, such as clay, wood and metal, through different methods into human or animal figures, patterns or abstract figures (Royal Institute, 1998). In fact, sculptures are defined as humans' creations expressed through the manipulation of media to form a mass in a manner where skills and ideas are drawn on to convey beauty and form a complete dimension (Khumsingha, 2007). Additionally, they are a specific form of fine arts which entails creating forms or figures using plasticity materials. This artistic work encompasses molding, casting, carving and welding, is three-dimensional, exists in physical space and can be perceived through sight, commonly referred to as visual arts. Nevertheless, sculptures are unlike those works; their distinguishing feature lies in the fact that they are perceived through touch, hence referred to as plastic arts – a three-dimensional art. The so-called genre of arts may feature certain types of visual arts which rely on different materials to produce three-dimensional shapes as well (Soonpongsri, 2004). Similarly, sculptures are a form of artistic works produced through molding, carving, casting or any other methods to create a three-dimensional work of art with width, length, and depth or thickness. In fact, sculptures can be created with a variety of materials, such as stone, wood, clay, cement, brick, and metal. Sculptures can be simply put as an artistic work which is created into diverse patterns, can be perceived through sight and occupies physical space (Leesuwan, 1985). Briefly speaking, this form of art –

sculptures – is created by sculptors using physical space to form shapes with masses and in a three-dimension, including width, length and depth or thickness, by means of molding, carving, casting or any other approaches; it can be produced using a wide range of materials, such as cement, soil, wood, stone and steel, with the purpose of expressing aesthetics, sensations, or ideas as intended by the sculptors.

Socialist realism is a form of official arts among Socialist countries. It serves as a foundation and the purpose in creating artistic works in line with and the Marxist-Leninist ideologies and concepts of socialism. This genre of art is characterized by a realistic style and embodies the social reality in a manner which reflects different social aspects in people's daily life; it is simply a reflection of a sculptor's experiences, events, and stories in society. Socialist realism served as a fundamental theory and policy for creation of arts and literary works of the Soviet Union during the period 1932 – 1980s. In 1932, Andrei Zhdanov, a political theorist, overseeing the communist party's art and cultural policy proposed socialist realism to the first congress of the Union of Writers of the USSR, also referred to as the Union of Soviet Writers. His intention was that the so-called concept became a policy framework for creation of arts and literary works among the working class and was drawn on to establish the unity of ideas among socialist realism artists, poets, and writers (Suwangbutra, 2013). The concept was officially declared the style of arts in 1934 at the Union of Soviet Writers' first all-union congress in Moscow. The Union declared it to be practiced for other types of arts as well; in particular, socialist realism arts were declared the only accepted form of arts in the Soviet Union. This highlighted its primary objective to glorify stateness and acknowledge the greatness of the new social class, namely the working class. The prominent attributes of socialist realism lie in patriotism and commitment to the party and portray the class or the principle of serving the class, together with suitable ideologies which are accessible to the general

public or the principle of serving the people.

The Socialist Republic of Vietnam is the official name of Vietnam, a country in the Southeast Asia situated on the easternmost of the Indochinese Peninsula. It has a border to China in the north, Laos and Cambodia in the west, and Gulf of Tonkin in the east and south – the sea in the east is referred to as the east sea in Vietnamese. The country itself is, indeed, one of the Indochinese Peninsula countries with a long history of ancient customs, traditions, and cultures which have been inherited to the present. It is governed by socialism with a single political party, namely the Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV) which has the highest power in accordance with the Constitution. After the end of the Vietnam War, North Vietnam and South Vietnam were unified under the name “the Socialist Republic of Vietnam”. The Communist Party of Vietnam and the government have a reciprocal close relationship, and its political structure is under socialism.

Socialist realism sculptures have long been Vietnam’s most prominent form of art in the area of visual arts since 1945. In fact, they had achieved wide recognition in the country after the revolution in 1954 owing to their accessible and realistic styles; they were often created into iconic figures featuring Ho Chi Minh, revolutionary leaders, the working class, military, and historical events linked to the revolution. Vietnam’s socialist realism sculptures have been influenced by arts of other socialist states, and their styles have been particularly compatible with local aesthetics. Vietnam’s wars, indeed, influence the development of the socialist realism sculptures, given that a number of artists’ works primarily involve producing propaganda materials. Vietnam’s socialist realism sculptures portray the social reality tied to socialist political ideologies. Generally, they stress that such ideologies are suitable for the society since they have contributed to the greatness of the nation and to promoting the pride and respect for being part of the movement to fight for socialism. The primary goals are to

glorify stateness and rejoice the greatness of the working class who are the main force in building the country's state. Hence, the socialist realism sculptures have been well recognized and created as an instrument for propagation of political ideologies and agitation of the Vietnamese people.

From past to present, socialist realism sculptures in Vietnam have evolved over time with advancement of technologies and materials, along with distribution to large cities based on social and economic prosperity. Notwithstanding the fact that their development is in tandem with Vietnam, there has not been any studies in the area of arts which thoroughly examine history, the current state, and social and cultural reflections of Vietnam's socialist realism sculptures. Without such research, it would not be possible for people to learn the history and concepts for creating such artistic works. Additionally, analysis of the socialist realism sculptures could unveil significant events and livelihood among the Vietnamese in a manner which offers social and cultural reflections and contributes to historical knowledge, potentially cultivating a sense of appreciation for various events portrayed through the works of art.

As discussed above, it came to the researchers' realization that the socialist realism sculptures serve a significant role in conveying social and cultural reflections of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. Thus, the present study was conducted with the aim of exploring social and cultural reflections presented in the socialist realism sculptures in order to provide knowledge and foster understanding of society and culture of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

Objective of the study

The present study sought to examine social and cultural reflections presented in the socialist realism sculptures in the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

2. Materials and Methods

This study was conducted using qualitative research. The data were gleaned from a field study in order to investigate the current state as well as social and cultural reflections in the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. In particular, much emphasis was placed on describing the reflections through the socialist realism sculptures based on various concepts. The research methodology of the present study is detailed below.

1. The scope of the study: in terms of the contents, the present study aimed to analyze the socialist realism sculptures in the Socialist Republic of Vietnam during the years 1945 – 2017; particularly, it examined the history, concepts, styles, techniques, and artistic methods as well as interpreted different events and explored the social and cultural state, along with livelihood of the Vietnamese community which could influence the creation of those sculptures. Concerning the research sites, three areas were purposively chosen, including Hanoi, Hue, and Ho Chi Minh, based on the following criteria: being a capital city and a significant city with economic, political, social, and cultural development; being a place with a number of the socialist realism sculptures and with state agencies and private organizations, educational institutions and scholars as an expert, a worker, and a person associated with the socialist realism sculptures.

2. The samples of the study were chosen through purposive sampling. On the one hand, the sample was socialist realism sculptures in museums, public spaces, and educational institutions in the Socialist Republic of Vietnam which portrayed social and cultural reflections of the country, with a focus on three cities including Hanoi, Hue and Ho Chi Minh. On the other hand, the sample included the local people recruited in order to shed light on social and cultural reflections of the socialist realism sculptures in the country. In particular, three groups of the sample were selected by means of purposive sampling, namely key informants, casual informants, and general informants who

were the people residing in three cities: Hanoi, Hue, and Ho Chi Minh.

3. Three instruments were utilized for data collection. Specifically, a survey was employed to collect the preliminary data of the sites and places with people who were related to the socialist realism sculptures in the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, focusing on three cities as in Hanoi, Hue and Ho Chi Minh. In addition, an observation, including participant observation and non-participation observation, was used to observe the sample in those cities. Finally, interviews, namely structured interviews and unstructured interviews, were conducted with key informants, casual informants, and general informants equipped with knowledge about the history, styles, concepts, techniques, beliefs, traditions and rituals, the relation between the socialist realism sculptures and lifestyles.

4. The data were collected from documents and field studies. The researchers conducted field studies, so qualitative methods were employed for data collection, including a survey, an observation as in participant observation and non-participant observation, interviews in the form of structured interviews and unstructured interviews, a focus group discussion, accidental sampling, and oral history with involved persons.

5. The data obtained from document analysis and field studies were analyzed, thoroughly examined, classified into typologies based on the objective of the study, and summarized. Subsequently, they were analyzed through data triangulation in order to establish reliability of the data obtained from different sources. Moreover, three following methods of analysis were employed to draw a conclusion: 1) analytic induction which entailed interpreting the conclusion of the data in a tangible manner; 2) typological analysis, including a theory-based analysis and a non-theoretical based analysis which depended on the appropriateness of the data; 3) a comparative analysis which

compared sets of data based on events or phenomenon.

6. The results were summarized according to the objective of the study and were presented through descriptive analysis, along with images.

3. Results

In the analysis of social and cultural reflections presented in the socialist realism sculptures in the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, the conceptual frameworks of the following researchers, namely Intasuwan (2011), Madmai (2007), Phimkeeree (2005), Panpracha (2006), Ueangsae (2017), and Thoobucha (2021) were adapted as a guideline for the analysis. Based on the conclusion of issues in focus, Vietnam's five social reflections included politics and governance, economy, family and lifestyles, education, and history, while four cultural reflections encompassed clothing, tools, games and music, and values. Both social and cultural reflections are summarized based on the objective of the study below.

1. Social reflections concerned people and their relationships with each other based on the rationale and the relationship between different parts of people or between people, individuals and groups, and individuals and the environment. The socialist realism sculptures were closely intertwined with the society. In fact, the society influenced such sculptures in terms of the contents, concepts, styles, materials, as well as techniques and methods since artists being part of the society were inclined to draw on their experiences and emotions influenced by the society to create sculptures. Hence, sculptures served as a reflection of the society and livelihood of people in the society. Intasuwan (2011), Madmai (2007) and Phimkeeree (2005)'s conceptual frameworks were adapted as a guiding framework for the analysis of five social reflections, including politics and governance, economy, family and lifestyles, education, and history. The important social reflections are summarized below.

1.1 Concerning reflections on politics and

governance, the socialist realism sculptures reflected the socialist politics and governance. Vietnam is the reformist socialist or adopts Ho Chi Minh's socialism which adheres to its own policies of freedom at a domestic and an international level. Simultaneously, it adheres to the use of guerrilla-warfare tactics to defeat enemies, for they are appropriate to the nation's geographical features and budgets, as well as its military capabilities. Additionally, the reformist socialist intends to address the nation's economic issues by means of the socialist methods and mechanism without resorting to principles of Marxism, Leninism or Stalinism; this method is to establish equality among the citizens.

1.2 In terms of reflections on economy, it was found that the socialist realism sculptures provided a portrayal of occupations and livelihood among people in the society. In fact, economic reflections presented in the sculptures depicted the influence of economy on lifestyles. This could be attributed to the life of the society in a state of warfare, impoverishment, hardships, oppression, and inequality which caused unfairness in the society, thus impacting people's occupations and livelihood. Furthermore, the economic reflections expressed in the socialist realism sculptures illustrated the Vietnamese's occupations, including soldiers, laborers, farmers, teachers, students, local craftspeople, musicians, and hunters.

1.3 With regard to reflections on family and lifestyles, the socialist realism sculptures portrayed that the Vietnamese placed great emphasis on family and the relationship among family members. The society with a large family depicted the ties in the form of kinship, relatives, and intimacy. Seniority, such as respecting the older people, was given immense importance among the Vietnamese as well. Considering lifestyles, the socialist realism sculptures were found to represent the Vietnamese people's livelihood.

1.4 Regarding reflections on education, the socialist realism sculptures showed that the Vietnamese parents

placed high values on children or young people's education and instructional activities. It can be suggested that education served as an instrument in enhancing the Vietnamese's knowledge and abilities. The Vietnamese government focused on the development of innovations, technologies, and the workforce's skills, thereby contributing to the sustainable economic growth. It can be simply put that Vietnam's educational development was in sync with the development of the country itself.

1.5 It was also uncovered that the reflections on history in the socialist realism sculptures pertained to Vietnam's history. This could be explained by the reason that the sculptures were a reflection of its society and served as a means to recount its history. Evidently, the socialist realism sculptures revolved around the history of Vietnam's combat against its enemies, intruders, and colonies. Simply put, given that the emergence of its nationalism was primarily attributable to the invasion of other countries, Vietnam's sculptures were typically relative to the history of its combat. Therefore, the sculptures which reflected Vietnam's historical events particularly portrayed the invasion and the combat against other colonies.

2. Cultural reflections referred to reflections on people's livelihood in different eras and lifestyles determined and adhered by the masses or the society, including behavior, clothing, tools or facilities, traditions, thoughts, religions, and beliefs. The conceptual frameworks by Panpracha (2006), Ueangsae (2017), and Thoobucha (2021) were employed as a guiding framework for the analysis of four aspects of cultural reflections, namely clothing, tools, games and music, and values. The significant cultural reflections are summarized below.

2.1 Reflections on clothing portrayed the Vietnamese's clothing, including a national costume or an attire which represented the distinctiveness of the ethnicity and important occupations. Its national costume is Ao dai; dressing in such a costume not only depicted equality

among people in society but also served as a means to establish Vietnamese identity. The prominent cultural trait of dressing in its national costume illustrated the consequences of the war and its colonization by Western nations and represented the suffering and fighting to prevent recurrence of oppression or hardships.

2.2 In respect of reflections on games and music, it was found that both games and music presented in the socialist realism sculptures could reflect local music which brought enjoyment, warm relationships, and appreciation of local cultures. They served as a means to alleviate fatigue and work-induced stress. There were a wide range of music and games, such as chamber music, for example Ca Tru a music band of North Vietnam as in Hanoi, Ca Hue that of Central Vietnam as in Hue, and Nhạc Tai Tu that of South Vietnam as in Ho Chi Minh.

2.3 As for reflections on tools, the socialist realism sculptures depicted the use of tools, livelihood, facilities built by the Vietnamese from past to present, and devices for saving labor and facilitating the production process. Based on the analysis, many tools were identified, such as mortars, rice pounders, pots, bamboo baskets, firearms, axes, hoes, shovels, spears, crossbows, arrows, knives, harpoons, and swords.

2.4 With regard to reflections on values, the socialist realism sculptures conveyed different values, covering patriotism as a sense of devotion for the nation, bravery, sacrifice, harmony and pride in one's own race, reciprocal support or consolidation of efforts towards success, equality, embracing ethnic diversity, accepting differences in cultures and beliefs, willingness to adjust for peaceful co-existence, gratitude to the benefactors, perseverance which reflected struggles with hardships in life, and freedom and peace.

4. Conclusion

The results of the social and cultural reflections conveyed in the socialist realism sculptures in the Socialist Republic of Vietnam indicated that the socialist realism sculptures

served as a social and cultural instrument through which artists have employed to reflect the society from past to present. Such works of arts illustrated the social history of Vietnam during different periods, social and cultural attributes, events, stories, concepts, or phenomena. In particular, they provided five social reflections, including politics and governance, economy, family and lifestyles, education and history, along with four cultural reflections, namely clothing, tools, games and music, and values. These reflections were consistent with the social and cultural state and livelihood of people in the Socialist Republic of Vietnam during the period 1945 – 2017. Drawing on the analysis, it can be noticed that a plethora of the socialist realism sculptures were produced during the years 1975 – 1986; this can be attributed to the fact that the unification of North Vietnam and South Vietnam took place during such a period, so the nation needed to utilize a particular instrument to foster a sense of joint community among the Vietnamese. Consequently, the socialist realism sculptures were an optimal choice, resulting in the creation of such sculptures which presented social and cultural reflections inspired by contents, concepts, and stories from history, revolution, political strikes, nation-building, and the Vietnamese's livelihood. In addition, the creation of those works was influenced by the communist party's policies. The socialist realism sculptures served to propagandize its policies, practically being a political instrument to advocate its policies for the revolution, nation-building, the unification of the country, and economic and social development. Thus, the contents of the sculptures were in line with the party's operation to ensure the mutual goal and success, contributing to the emergence of the socialist realism sculptures which reflected the Socialist Republic of Vietnam's society and culture..

5. Discussion

Based on the analysis of social and cultural reflections presented in the socialist realism sculptures in the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, those sculptures provided five aspects of social reflections, including politics and governance, economy, family and lifestyles, education, and history and at the same time demonstrated four aspects of cultural ones,

namely clothing, tools, games and music, along with values. The sculptors clearly presented social and cultural reflections through the aesthetics of the socialist realism sculptures. In doing so, the discernible aesthetic value attributed to such artistic expressions lies in the presented styles and stories, which in turn enables the socialist realism sculptures to illustrate events during a specific period clearly.

Social reflections presented in the socialist realism sculptures featured five aspects: politics and governance, economy, family and lifestyles, education, and history. Specifically, the reflections on politics and governance revolved around the socialist politics and governance, for Vietnam itself is a reformist socialist and adopts Ho Chi Minh's socialism. This finding is akin to Nuchpiem (1994) asserting that based on the interpretation of the history of Vietnam's communist party, the adoption of combat based on Marx's and Lenin's theories stemmed from the evaluation of the nation's vain efforts to fight for sovereignty in the past, which lacked a proper direction as well as organizations which could have contributed to the victory. The communist leaders adapted this approach to suit the state and conditions of the nation. In addition, Chonchirdsin (2001) stated that the Vietnamese patriots or nationalists emerged since the 19th century when France established dominion over Vietnam since 1883 under the resistance movement. Later in the 20th century, the nationalists adopted nationalism and socialism ideologies. This is also in line with Jirakraisiri (1980) mentioning the definitions of socialism proposed by political philosophers. Specifically, Carl Landaeur stated that socialism is an economic system where ownership rights are attributed to the community for the purpose of distributing incomes, assets, opportunities, and economic power in an equal manner. Robert A. Dahl briefly described socialism as an economic system in which most essential activities are conducted by different organizations which are overseen by the state, while Austin Ranney stated that the goals of

socialism involve achieving equality, fairness, and ending the exploitation of the impoverished by the wealthy. The finding also showed that the reflections on economy concerned occupations and livelihood among people struggling for their survival in society. Those reflections embedded in the socialist realism sculptures highlighted that economic states were of paramount importance to people's lives. This corresponds to Sinlapadech's definition of economy (1996) that economy concerns management of fundamental factors to enable survival as well as other factors to promote a good quality of life. In the same manner, Madmai (2007) described economy as any activity involving production, distribution, and consumption of goods in the community. The results also demonstrated that reflections on family and lifestyles revolved around the Vietnamese's family and ways of life; the Vietnamese placed importance on family and the relationship among family members, along with respecting the older people. The reflections on lifestyles portrayed the Vietnamese's ways of life. This is in sync with Srichampa (2001)'s statement that the Vietnamese viewed parents as a main pillar of their children, considering that they are obliged to care for, educate, and expression affection to them. Hence, parents act as a framework or structure by which different aspects are defined. This finding is compliant with Tuan's concept (2014) which depicts the significance of the Vietnamese family and the distinctiveness of society which gives precedence to respecting the elderly or seniors, together with preserving family lifestyles as the nation's distinctive characteristic and cultural identity. In the same vein, Yannawut (2010) presented the subject of family in the Vietnamese's traditional perspective influenced by Confucianism and their traditional belief in placing importance on seniors and the relationship between family members. Additionally, reflections on education illustrated that the Vietnamese parents expressed their interest in the younger people's education and instructional activities, for

education served as an instrument in enhancing knowledge and abilities among people in society. This is consistent with Hongswan's notion (1990) that the majority of the Vietnamese hold that "Education can help develop people and in turn enable them to have a fulfilling life and achieve their goals". After children's birth, Vietnamese families will consider their education and simultaneously give importance to the families' financial since it is of great importance for supporting and providing their children with education. As for learning, the Vietnamese have been imbued with Marx's and Lenin's concepts, especially the one "Học học học. Học nữa, học mãi" meaning that learn and never stop learning. It is clear that such a notion has a significant influence on the Vietnamese's education since it is widely held that everyone needs to learn and the pursuit of knowledge is a lifelong journey. This is in line with Thongsawang's statement (2006) that society uses schools as an essential instrument in providing education on values, traditions, customs, and cultures as human heritage, as well as passing on the ancestors' occupations to students and young people. The finding revealed that the reflections on history were present since the socialist realism sculptures were Vietnam's reflection and served as an effective method for recounting its history. It can be seen that concepts, contents, and stories of the sculptures were relevant to the country's history and geography, together with combat against invaders and colonies. This is similar to Cong Thong Tin Dien Tu Chinh Phu (n.d.) who published the article 'Sơ lược lịch sử Việt Nam' revolving around Vietnam's history since the formation of the Vietnamese kingdom Dai Viet and the prolonged wars for 1474 years against different colonies, ranging from the Empire of China, the French colony, the Japanese colony, resistance against France and the United States to its victory and sovereignty these days. Specifically, Cong Thong Tin Dien Tu Chinh Phu published an article on the history during which Vietnam had been ruled by the Empire of China for 10 centuries; the prolonged rule

of the Empire influenced Vietnamese cultures, such as a political system, governance, religions and beliefs, language, and literature. Consequently, their cultures and lifestyles resembled those of China. The finding is also in line with Vien (2002) who presented the contents on the Vietnam's history, covering Vietnam in the past and contemporary Vietnam. The contents were relative to historical events which took place during wars and portrayed various dimensions of the nation's history, including politics, society, economy, education, and culture. Vietnamese history does not exclusively concern fighting, military and warfare, yet the adoption of socialism is the explanation for the nation's entire history. Furthermore, Sumit (2002) mentioned in her book Vietnamese history in detail which covers different periods of time, from prehistoric times to the early 1990s. In particular, the second chapter of the book concerned contemporary Vietnam, beginning from the year 1858 during which the country was invaded by the French colonist until it was unified again in 1975. The highlight of this chapter lies in its powerful use of information to portray people's lives in respect of social and economic dimensions, going beyond a realm of political conflicts and warfare between different sides of Vietnam and the great powers.

Additionally, five four aspects of cultural reflections presented in the socialist realism sculptures were identified, namely clothing, tools, games and music, as well as values. Particularly, reflections on clothing represented the Vietnamese's striking clothing which is its national costume Ao dai. Dressing in such an attire not only depicted equality of people in the society but also served as a tool in establishing Vietnam's identity. This finding is similar to Kitkamoltham's statement (2016) that the national costume "Ao dai" was a women's silk dress, featured an ankle-length hem, and was typically paired with silk pants worn underneath. It was used as a female student's uniform during the French colonial period, which contributed to the

wide popularity of dressing in Ao dai. Its design had been constantly adapted to the periods until the post-Vietnam war era. In the same way, Hornberger (2017) mentioned that previously, Ao dai featured a relatively loose design with an open collar which allowed the necklace to be clearly seen. Generally, the Vietnamese women dressed in Ao dai with a white slip underneath to absorb sweat since underwear was not available at that time, and its hem was relatively shorter, ending approximately 8 inches above the ankles. With the French colonization of Vietnam in 1930, the design of Ao dai was changed owing to the influence of the Western clothing style. Moreover, reflections on games and music illustrated local music which brought a sense of joy and contributed to warm relationships and pride in cultures of the local people. They helped relieve tiredness and work-related tension. This finding corresponds to Nitjaponpong (2009) stating that music is the product of human behavior, which is created based on values, attitudes, and beliefs of people in different cultures. Even though music typically features two parts including sound and culture, one part is not complete without the other. This extends to Vietnamese music; the creation of its music is rooted in Vietnamese values, attitudes, and beliefs, thus enabling the music to reflect long-established cultures. Vietnamese music typically features five musical instruments, namely *nhi*, *tranh*, *nguyet*, *ty*, and *tam*, which is considered a complete ensemble. In spite of their simplicity, these musical instruments can convey emotions in a manner which audiences are mesmerized. Similarly, Danpradit (1998) asserted that Vietnamese music has its own distinctive characteristics, for example *Dan Doc Huyen*, *Dan Bau*, *Dan Day*, or *Sinh Tien*, which have developed scales and singing and performing techniques from other cultures to create its own unique style of music. As stated by Soontorntanaphol (2014), Vietnamese music has a long history and is unique itself. Specifically, carved stone which depicted two or three musical instruments made of stone were discovered in the

central part of the nation, which could have dated back thousands of years. The important musical instrument is the bronze drum found in North Vietnam, which could have been derived from ancient musical instruments dating back 2,500 years. Other musical instruments used in Vietnam at the present are similar to those of neighboring Southeast Asian countries. The results also demonstrated that reflections on tools portrayed the use of tools in people's daily life, facilities, and devices in the past and present used by the Vietnamese people to save their labor and accelerate the production process. Many tools were presented in the socialist realism sculptures, for example mortars, rice pounders, pots, bamboo baskets, firearms, axes, hoes, shovels, spears, crossbows, arrows, knives, harpoons, and swords. This is in line with Voice of Vietnam the National Radio Broadcaster (2020) mentioning that in Vietnam, a rice-cooking competition (Thi Nấu Cơm) is held annually on 8 January in Làng Thị Cấm, Thủ Đô Hà Nội. A group of 10 members from each village take part in this competition and are required to prepare tools for cooking rice, such as a mortar, a pestle, a pot, and husk. They must assign different responsibilities to each member, which entail starting a fire, fetching water, pounding rice, and cooking rice. At the end of the competition, the committee offer rice to the deities and decide on the winner. In addition, the results revealed that reflections on values represented patriotism, bravery, sacrifice, harmony and pride in one's ethnicity, equality, appreciation of racial diversity, acceptance of differences in cultures and beliefs, gratitude to the benefactors, perseverance, and freedom and peace. As pointed out by Hongsuwan (2014), the establishment of equality to achieve fraternity is one of the Vietnam's socialist political ideologies. That entails portraying women as an agent of change with the ability to transform their communities. It is apparent that in Vietnamese society these days, women are experiencing changes in state policies which have been developed to promote gender equality and increased

political involvement. It can be concluded that the socialist realism sculptures in the Socialist Republic of Vietnam serve as a medium of presenting livelihood which clearly reflects the nation's society and cultures, thus contributing to people's increased understanding and appreciation of the culture. These social and cultural reflections hold great value in perpetuating the practice and preservation for future generations.

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