

Administration

There are three levels of administration below the central government: the provincial, municipal, and district levels. Each level has corresponding People's Councils whose members are elected directly.

The administrative regions of Vietnam consist of three self-governing municipalities: Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City, and Haiphong as well as 44 provinces and 1 special zone in the Vung Tau-Con Dao area. Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City are each administered by separate People's Committees responsible to the central government. Each province is also administered by a People's Committee, which is responsible to Hanoi.

The Vung Tau-Con Dao Special Zone has the same administrative status as the other provinces and municipalities under central authority. It was formed in 1980 as the supply base for oil and gas exploration and production on the continental shelf of south Vietnam.

Provincial governments represent an important source of power and play a major role formulating regional development strategies. The provinces are separated into districts which maintain between 100,000 and 200,000 people.

Hanoi

Hanoi is administered by the Hanoi People's Committee, but is also the capital city and home to the Communist Party. Hanoi has a population of approximately 3 million people and an average population density of 1,373 persons per km². It is the second largest urban centre after Ho Chi Minh City.

Hanoi is the commercial centre for heavy industry in Vietnam. The major industries are steel, machine tools, chemicals, fertilizer, cement, and paper. Many of the factories in the north are up to 30 years old and require overhauls and refurbishing.

By virtue of geography, history, and politics, Hanoi also reveals the difference between north and south Vietnam. Due to the Chinese influence over the Vietnamese in the north, and the fact that the north has been communist since 1954, Hanoi is more confucian, traditional, and disciplined, though this is becoming less pronounced. On the other hand, Ho Chi Minh City is relaxed, entrepreneurial, and liberal, influenced by the effects of French colonialism and the presence of Americans during the Vietnam War.