

Republic of Vietnam

Ethnicity in Republic of Vietnam

Group selection

The Republic of Vietnam came into being after the Geneva Conference in 1954, at which the country was divided into a northern communist (North Vietnam) and a non-communist southern zone (South Vietnam). Two ethnic groups have been coded as being politically relevant for the time during which the state of South Vietnam existed. The majority of the South Vietnamese were Kinh who constituted 78 percent of the population. They were regionally based and concentrated along the coastal areas of South Vietnam and in the urban centers. The Hoa constituted a group of ethnic Chinese in Vietnam settling in urban centers, most importantly Saigon (³⁷³⁵, p.108). Immigrating already from the 14th century onwards the last large wave of Hoa migrated to Vietnam from war-torn China in the 1940s. During the period under scrutiny they made up about one percent of the of the South Vietnamese population.

³⁷³⁵ [Rambo, 2003]

Power relations

Reflecting their demographic majority the Kinh held a "dominant" position within the South Vietnamese state. While most executive posts were held by members of the Kinh other groups were not systematically excluded from power (³⁷³⁶).

³⁷³⁶ [Jamieson, 1996]

The South Vietnamese government offered the Hoa Vietnamese citizenship in 1955. Hoa were well-integrated into the urban economy of South Vietnam. Yet their economic success caused a certain resentment among the Kinh majority (³⁷³⁷, p.32). For example, a governmental report from 1974 remarked that the Hoa controlled vital business sectors, such as food, real estate, wholesale and retail trading. Critics described their position even as a "state within a state". The South Vietnamese government of Ngo Dinh Diem (1955-63) used (ineffective) limited repressive measures against the Hoa, such as forced adoption of Vietnamese names (³⁷³⁸, p.290). After the breakdown of the South Vietnamese regime and the taking over of control by the Communists many Hoa left Vietnam for China or for other countries.

³⁷³⁷ [Khanh, 1993]

³⁷³⁸ [West, 2008]

Overall, the political position of the Hoa can be best described as a "powerless" minority. Despite the temporarily limited repressive policies by the South Vietnamese government coding them as "discriminated" could be hardly justified. There is no evidence for any

targeted and intentional discrimination policy pursued by the state.

Bibliography

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Political status of ethnic groups in Republic of Vietnam

From 1954 until 1975

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Kinh (Vietnamese)	0.781	DOMINANT
Hoa (Chinese)	0.01	POWERLESS



Figure 736: Political status of ethnic groups in Republic of Vietnam during 1954-1975.

Geographical coverage of ethnic groups in Republic of Vietnam

From 1954 until 1975



Figure 737: Map of ethnic groups in Republic of Vietnam during 1954-1975.

Group name		Area in km ²	Type
■	Kinh (Vietnamese)	71 721	Regionally based
	Hoa (Chinese)		Urban

Table 250: List of ethnic groups in Republic of Vietnam during 1954-1975.

Conflicts in Republic of Vietnam

Starting on 1955-04-29

Side A	Side B	Group name	Start	Claim	Recruitment	Support
Government of South Vietnam	FNL		1955-04-29			

Starting on 1965-12-30

Side A	Side B	Group name	Start	Claim	Recruitment	Support
Government of South Vietnam	Government of Vietnam (North Vietnam)		1965-12-30			