

PEOPLE'S WAR AND URBAN RESISTANCE IN SOUTHERN VIETNAM (1954 - 1975)

GUERRA POPULAR E RESISTÊNCIA URBANA NO SUL DO VIETNÃ (1954–1975)

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Abstract

Once a colonial outpost under French administration, the urban center later known as Southern Vietnam's political nucleus experienced a radical shift during the anti-American resistance war. From 1954 to 1975, this city evolved into a vibrant hub of revolutionary activity, where covert operations, ideological clashes, and mass mobilizations unfolded in the heart of enemy territory. Guided by the strategic leadership of the T4 City Party Committee, a complex web of student activists, underground cells, and urban commandos launched coordinated campaigns that destabilized the ruling regime and laid the groundwork for pivotal uprisings. Far from being a passive setting, the city's urban fabric was actively repurposed as a tool of resistance, symbolizing a battlefield embedded within the adversary's stronghold. This study investigates the city's tactical significance in the broader revolutionary struggle and considers its lasting influence on modern understandings of urban insurgency and political resistance.

Keyword: Urban Resistance. Revolutionary Warfare. Commando Networks. Anti-American Struggle.

Resumo

Outrora um posto colonial sob administração francesa, o centro urbano que mais tarde se tornaria o núcleo político do sul do Vietnã passou por uma transformação radical durante a guerra de resistência contra os Estados Unidos. De 1954 a 1975, essa cidade evoluiu para um vibrante centro de atividade revolucionária, onde operações secretas, confrontos ideológicos e mobilizações em massa ocorreram no coração do território inimigo. Sob a liderança estratégica do Comitê do Partido da Cidade T4, uma complexa rede de estudantes ativistas, células clandestinas e comandos urbanos lançou campanhas coordenadas que desestabilizaram o regime dominante e prepararam o terreno para levantes decisivos. Longe de ser um cenário passivo, o tecido urbano da cidade foi ativamente reaproveitado como ferramenta de resistência, simbolizando um campo de batalha incrustado no reduto do adversário. Este estudo investiga a importância tática da cidade na luta revolucionária mais ampla e considera sua influência duradoura sobre os entendimentos contemporâneos de insurgência urbana e resistência política.

Palavras-chave: Resistência Urbana. Guerra Revolucionária. Redes de Comandos. Luta Antiamericana.



1 INTRODUCTION

In the tapestry of Vietnam's urban history, few cities have played a more pivotal role than Sai Gon - Gia Dinh. Once molded by the administrative frameworks of French colonialism, this urban region gradually assumed the mantle of political leadership for the Southern regime, which operated under American patronage. Over the course of two turbulent decades, from 1954 to 1975, the city transitioned from a symbol of enemy authority into a dynamic arena of revolutionary resistance. It became a contested space where ideological battles, psychological operations, and underground military actions unfolded with intensity and precision.

The revolutionary struggle within this urban landscape took shape under conditions of strict surveillance and systemic control. Despite these constraints, networks of resistance adapted with remarkable ingenuity. They maneuvered through the city's spatial layers, defying conventional military logic and redefining the nature of warfare. Through these efforts, Sai Gon - Gia Dinh emerged not merely as a backdrop to conflict but as a nerve center for a new kind of people's war—one rooted in urban mobilization and clandestine coordination.

Although the city played a central role in the broader resistance movement, its image within historical scholarship remains surprisingly narrow. International studies often depict Saigon as the administrative heart of the Southern regime or as the final stage of victory in April 1975. Rarely do they explore the city's sustained contributions to revolutionary strategy. Academic attention has long gravitated toward rural theaters of war, such as Tri-Thien, the Central Highlands, and the Mekong Delta. In contrast, the urban dimension, especially the layered resistance within Sai Gon - Gia Dinh, has received limited analytical focus. This neglect is striking, given the city's complex spatial composition, its diverse social fabric, and the multiplicity of resistance tactics employed within its boundaries.

What made this city so uniquely suited to revolutionary transformation was the convergence of three distinct spatial zones. The first consisted of administrative and military institutions under the control of the Southern regime. The second encompassed densely populated neighborhoods, home to a wide spectrum of social classes and professions. The third operated beneath the surface: a concealed network of revolutionary actors who moved with agility and precision through the urban terrain. Within this triadic

structure, Saigon functioned simultaneously as a center of official power and a crucible of insurgent activity. It nurtured revolutionary movements and served as a launchpad for operations that reverberated across the South. The strategic importance of this positioning is evident in the orchestration of landmark events such as the Tet Offensive in 1968 and the Ho Chi Minh Campaign in 1975.

This article sets out to examine a fundamental question: How did a city shaped by colonial legacies evolve into a formidable base of revolutionary resistance in Southern Vietnam? To answer this, the study traces the socio-political and spatial transformations that unfolded between the Geneva Accords of 1954 and the complete liberation of the South in 1975. Rather than adhering to a linear chronology or focusing solely on battlefield engagements, the analysis draws from multiple disciplines. It integrates urban history, spatial theory, and revolutionary geopolitics to illuminate the multifaceted nature of resistance within the city.

The aim of this research is not only to reaffirm the strategic significance of Sai Gon - Gia Dinh but also to reposition the city within the broader discourse of people's war. By doing so, the article contributes to a more nuanced historiography of the Vietnam War and opens new avenues for inquiry in the emerging field of urban resistance studies. As global attention increasingly turns to asymmetric warfare and insurgency in urban environments, the case of Saigon offers valuable insights. It demonstrates how cities, especially in postcolonial contexts, can become engines of revolutionary change and laboratories of political transformation.

To explore these themes, the article is structured into five core sections. The first outlines the theoretical framework and reviews existing literature. The second investigates the spatial evolution of the city from colonial outpost to revolutionary base. The third focuses on the strategic role of Sai Gon - Gia Dinh as command centers for urban insurgency between 1960 and 1975. The fourth examines the city's liberation and the culmination of its wartime role. The final section reflects on the legacy of urban resistance and its implications for historical memory.

2 CONSTRUCTING URBAN RESISTANCE NETWORKS IN THE POST-GENEVA ERA

After the Geneva Accords were concluded in 1954, Sai Gon - Gia Dinh were swiftly transformed into the administrative and military nucleus of the Southern Republic of Vietnam, operating under the strategic umbrella of American influence. Yet beneath this new political identity, the city's spatial character remained deeply rooted in its colonial past. French urban planners had long envisioned Saigon as a showcase of European modernity, embedding within it a network of radial boulevards, civic squares, and administrative zones. This design, while intended to assert imperial control, inadvertently fostered a socially diverse urban fabric, encompassing elite villas, Chinese commercial enclaves, and peripheral working-class settlements. Christopher Goscha (2016) has noted how this colonial blueprint, though imposed, created a complex and layered cityscape that endured beyond the colonial era.

When French authorities withdrew, the Southern regime chose not to erase the colonial legacy but instead adapted it to serve the imperatives of Cold War geopolitics. Tran Van Giau, writing in 2006, observed that this continuity in spatial organization reinforced existing inequalities, as central districts like District 1 and parts of District 3 became bastions of state power and privilege, while outer zones such as District 4, Tan Binh, and Thu Duc were left to absorb waves of migrants and the urban poor. These marginalized areas, often neglected by official planning, gradually evolved into fertile ground for revolutionary ferment, a transformation that Edward Miller and David Biggs (2010) have explored in their respective studies.

The city's inherited infrastructure, its narrow alleys, canal systems, and informal markets, offered more than just physical shelter. They became conduits for resistance, enabling revolutionary actors to navigate the city discreetly and mobilize support under the radar of state surveillance. David Marr (2013) emphasized how these urban features were not merely exploited but reimagined as instruments of subversion, turning Saigon into a dynamic arena for political agitation and underground coordination. During the height of the conflict with the United States, Sai Gon - Gia Dinh functioned as a fragmented yet vital battleground. The revolutionary movement embedded itself within the city's chaotic spatial fabric, using its complexity to evade detection and sustain clandestine operations.

Strategic neighborhoods such as Xóm Cũi, Cây Quáo, and Phú Thọ Hòa emerged as critical nodes in this insurgent geography. These areas, characterized by limited policing and social neglect, formed logistical corridors that linked the urban core with rural hinterlands. The transportation arteries laid down during the colonial period, tramways, regional rail lines, and major roads like Tran Hung Dao and Le Van Duyet, were repurposed to facilitate the movement of personnel and materials. Marr (2013) underscores how these routes, originally designed for commerce and control, became lifelines for the resistance.

The juxtaposition of formal and informal spaces created a uniquely porous urban terrain. Government ministries stood beside alleyways, schools abutted street markets, and religious institutions operated in close proximity to political meeting points. This spatial intermingling allowed revolutionary agents to blend seamlessly into the rhythms of daily life. Cultural and religious landmarks, including Cho Lon, Ben Thanh Market, temples, churches, and Chinese assembly halls, became centers of political engagement and community solidarity. These sites played pivotal roles in landmark events such as the *Đông Khởi* uprising in 1960, the Buddhist protests of 1963, and the Tet Offensive of 1968.

The revolutionary strategy in Sai Gon - Gia Dinh was not confined to armed resistance. It was a multifaceted campaign that wove together political education, psychological operations, and grassroots mobilization. By leveraging the city's physical layout and its demographic heterogeneity, insurgents transformed the urban environment into a sustained front of struggle, challenging conventional notions of warfare and redefining the city as a contested space.

In the years that followed the Geneva Accords, as South Vietnam grappled with internal fragmentation and authoritarian consolidation, a revolutionary network quietly took shape within the interstices of the city. This network did not emerge from centralized command but from a convergence of historical memory, local initiative, and spatial opportunity. Drawing on the legacy of anti-colonial resistance and fueled by widespread discontent, the movement found resonance among students, laborers, intellectuals, and religious communities. It quickly adapted to the urban context, organizing itself into decentralized cells embedded in densely populated neighborhoods such as Bà Quáo, Bà Chiểu, and Cây Quáo. Tran Van Giau (2006) describes how these cells operated with a three-tiered structure that ensured both secrecy and coordination, engaging in activities

ranging from study circles and propaganda dissemination to labor mobilization, often supported by informal workers like pedicab drivers and street vendors.

The socio-spatial divide within the city proved instrumental in shaping the trajectory of resistance. While central districts concentrated wealth and authority, the peripheries were home to migrants from Central and Southwestern Vietnam, communities that had been systematically excluded from the benefits of urban development. Nguyen Van Chinh (2011) highlights how these groups, marginalized by the state, became natural allies of the revolutionary cause, offering both shelter and solidarity.

Simultaneously, mass organizations began to align with the goals of the resistance. Youth associations, student unions, Buddhist groups, factory workers, and small traders in Cho Lon participated in demonstrations demanding civil liberties, religious freedom, and improved living conditions. Public outrage over policies such as Decree 10/59, which permitted executions without trial, and student-led protests against political discrimination created semi-public arenas where revolutionary discourse could circulate. These developments fostered cross-class alliances and laid the groundwork for a broad-based political front that endured despite state repression.

The emergence of urban revolutionary bases between 1954 and 1960 was not the product of top-down directives but rather the outcome of a dynamic interplay between memory, space, and agency. In a city undergoing rapid modernization under foreign influence, the ability to operate discreetly within enemy territory became a defining feature of resistance. This form of struggle, deeply embedded in the lived experiences of the city's marginalized populations, was both adaptive and enduring.

3 THE URBAN STRUGGLE MOVEMENT CONTRIBUTED SIGNIFICANTLY TO THE ULTIMATE VICTORY OF THE PEOPLE'S WAR

In the broader tapestry of Vietnam's resistance against American intervention, the cities of Sai Gon - Gia Dinh emerged as more than administrative capitals of the Southern regime. They became the crucible of revolutionary transformation, where ideology, strategy, and grassroots mobilization converged in a dynamic urban battlefield. Beneath the surface of official governance, a clandestine infrastructure flourished, orchestrated by the Saigon-Gia Dinh City Party Committee, known as T4, under the strategic direction of the Central Office for South Vietnam (COSVN). This hidden apparatus redefined the

city not as a space to be defended or occupied, but as a front to be activated and weaponized.

The T4 Committee operated with remarkable agility. Its decentralized structure allowed revolutionary cells to embed themselves across districts, maintaining operational continuity even under intense surveillance. These cells engaged in a spectrum of activities, propaganda dissemination, political agitation, psychological warfare, and armed resistance, all calibrated to destabilize the regime and support rural offensives. As documented in internal reports from the Ho Chi Minh City Party Committee (1985, p.42), this flexible model was instrumental in sustaining revolutionary momentum within enemy-controlled zones.

COSVN, functioning as the highest decision-making body of the Communist Party in the South, played a pivotal role in shaping this urban strategy. It acted on behalf of both the Central Committee and the Politburo, directing personnel, resources, and logistics across the Southern front. The strategic importance of Sai Gon - Gia Dinh was repeatedly emphasized in party resolutions, including Resolution 15 (1959) and the Third Conference Resolution (1961), which formalized the “three-pronged offensive”, a synthesis of political, psychological, and military tactics (Le Duan, 1976, p.155; Central Office for South Vietnam, 1982, p.87).

As revolutionary activities intensified, the Southern regime, backed by American intelligence and military support, launched a comprehensive counterinsurgency campaign. Surveillance networks expanded rapidly. Police patrols, military units, and covert agents saturated the city, while neighborhood-level informant teams, known as “to dan pho,” monitored civilian behavior and reported suspicious activity. Nguyen Van Chinh (2011, p.128) describes these teams as the regime’s eyes and ears at the grassroots level. The United States, through its Central Intelligence Agency, worked closely with the Saigon Central Intelligence Office and the Metropolitan Police to identify and neutralize suspected members of the National Liberation Front. The Phoenix Program, introduced in 1968, marked a dramatic escalation. Tens of thousands were arrested, interrogated, or executed in an effort to dismantle the revolutionary infrastructure embedded in urban areas (Central Office for South Vietnam, 1982, p.205).

In parallel with these security operations, the regime pursued a pacification strategy that combined military sweeps with psychological warfare. Districts such as District 8, Thi Nghe, Ban Co, and Tan Son Nhi were subjected to frequent raids designed

to disrupt underground activities and relocate residents away from areas influenced by the resistance. Administrative measures, including the establishment of “strategic hamlets” and “consolidated communities,” were implemented in suburban zones. These policies were accompanied by strict identity checks and movement restrictions, aimed at isolating revolutionary cadres from their support base. Cultural engagement activities, public fairs, exhibitions, musical performances, were organized to distract and demobilize potential protest movements, especially among youth and workers.

Despite their scale and intensity, these counterstrategies revealed critical weaknesses. The Phoenix Program, while effective in targeting revolutionary networks, provoked widespread resentment due to its reliance on arbitrary arrests and extrajudicial killings. This backlash often strengthened public sympathy for the resistance. As noted in the Campaign Summary Committee’s post-Tet analysis (1979, p.135), revolutionary cells had developed flexible and decentralized structures that allowed them to recover quickly after each sweep. Psychological operations also struggled to gain traction, as many citizens perceived a stark contrast between official messaging and the realities of corruption, inequality, and repression under the Southern regime.

The Tet Offensive of 1968 marked a watershed moment in the urban revolutionary campaign. Under the strategic coordination of COSVN and the Regional Command, the Saigon–Gia Dinh Regional Committee orchestrated a series of simultaneous strikes on critical sites, including the Independence Palace, the Joint General Staff Headquarters, the U.S. Embassy, the Saigon Radio Station, and the Naval Command. These attacks delivered a psychological shock to both American forces and the Southern regime. Bowman (2005, p.213) recounts how the embassy attack, in particular, undermined the perception of American invulnerability and exposed the fragility of urban security.

Preparations for the offensive were carried out with exceptional precision and secrecy. Revolutionary forces moved large quantities of weapons and ammunition into the city using underground tunnels and disguised transport methods, including cargo shipments, boats, and construction vehicles. Pribbenow (2017, p.142) details how these logistical maneuvers enabled the surprise and scale of the offensive. At the same time, psychological operations mobilized support from diverse social groups, dockworkers, small traders, students, and religious communities, forming a resilient support network that amplified the campaign’s effectiveness.

The coordination between urban revolutionary units and main-force troops attacking from outside the city created a powerful strategic synergy. The offensive was launched on the eve of the Lunar New Year, catching the enemy off guard and overwhelming its ability to respond. Although intelligence reports had warned of possible attacks, the scale and simultaneity of the campaign exceeded expectations. Willbanks (2008, p.101) notes that the offensive reshaped global perceptions of the Vietnam War, while Hallin (1986, p.73) argues that it accelerated the path to negotiations at the Paris Peace Conference.

Though revolutionary forces suffered significant losses in the aftermath, their ability to organize and strike at the heart of enemy power demonstrated the potency of urban warfare. Sai Gon - Gia Dinh, once symbols of Southern authority, had been transformed into indispensable fronts that played a pivotal role in determining the course of the war. Their streets bore witness to a struggle that was as much about ideology and identity as it was about territory. Through strategic foresight, grassroots mobilization, and unyielding determination, the urban revolutionaries redefined the nature of warfare in Vietnam. They proved that even the most fortified urban centers could become engines of transformation.

As the long arc of Vietnam's revolutionary struggle approached its final bend in the spring of 1975, the country stood on the threshold of historic transformation. The Ho Chi Minh Campaign, launched in mid-April, was not simply a military operation, it was the culmination of decades of strategic vision, political resilience, and urban insurgency. Saigon-Gia Dinh, once the administrative heart of the Southern regime, had long been reimagined by revolutionaries as a battlefield in waiting. The campaign's conception was rooted in the belief that victory would not be achieved solely through rural offensives or conventional warfare, but through the synchronized activation of urban resistance networks that had been cultivated in secrecy and sacrifice since the earliest days of the anti-colonial movement.

Following a series of rapid and decisive victories in the Central Highlands, Hue, Da Nang, and Xuan Loc, the Politburo and the Central Military Commission recognized that the moment had arrived to strike directly at the core of enemy power. On April 14, 1975, the Politburo formally authorized the operation to liberate Saigon-Gia Dinh, naming it the Ho Chi Minh Campaign and outlining its guiding principles: act swiftly, strike boldly, and secure victory with certainty (Ministry of National Defense, 2005). This

directive was not issued in isolation, it was the product of accumulated experience, including lessons drawn from the Tet Offensive of 1968, which had demonstrated the psychological and strategic potency of coordinated urban action (Pribbenow, 2017).

The campaign's success hinged on the seamless integration of external military advances with internal urban uprisings. Revolutionary cells embedded throughout Saigon–Gia Dinh, under the leadership of the T4 City Party Committee, assumed critical roles in intelligence gathering, logistical coordination, and psychological operations. These networks, often operating from underground bunkers and safe houses, tracked enemy troop movements, identified strategic targets, and prepared safe routes for advancing forces. As Nguyen Van Chinh (2011) notes, the urban resistance functioned as a “rear front within the front,” enabling the People's Army to navigate the city's complex terrain with precision and speed.

Five major assault directions were organized to converge on the city. The eastern column, led by the 2nd Corps, crossed the Saigon Bridge and attacked the Joint General Staff Headquarters. From the northwest, the 3rd Corps and local forces captured Tan Son Nhat Airport and the Air Force Command. The western column, under the 4th Corps, entered through the Bay Hien intersection. Group 232 approached from the southeast, targeting the Naval Command and port facilities. Meanwhile, the 1st Corps, working in close coordination with urban commando units, seized the Independence Palace, the symbolic center of Southern authority (Willbanks, 2008). This multi-directional strategy created a ring of encirclement that left the regime with no viable path of retreat.

Civilian collaborators played an indispensable role in the campaign's execution. Dockworkers, students, small traders, and religious communities mobilized to support the advancing forces. Bridges were secured, barricades dismantled, and government buildings occupied before the arrival of main-force units. These actions reflected the doctrine of dual-front warfare, internal disruption paired with external assault, a strategy first tested in 1968 and now refined into a decisive formula (Graham, 2010). The speed and coordination of these efforts were remarkable. As Pribbenow (2017) recounts, urban commandos often cleared obstacles and guided troops to their objectives with a level of precision that stunned even seasoned military observers.

The psychological dimension of the campaign was equally significant. Radio broadcasts urging surrender, combined with the rapid collapse of defensive lines, led many ARVN units to disband without resistance. Fear, confusion, and disillusionment

spread rapidly among the ranks. Nguyen Van Chinh (2011) emphasizes that the psychological unraveling of the Saigon army preceded its physical defeat, as soldiers abandoned their posts and commanders lost control. Within forty-eight hours, the city had fallen. On the morning of April 30, tanks from the 2nd Corps breached the gates of the Independence Palace. President Duong Van Minh announced unconditional surrender, and the cabinet was taken into custody. The war in the South was over. The liberation of Saigon–Gia Dinh marked not only the end of armed conflict but the beginning of national reunification.

This moment carried profound historical weight. It closed a chapter that had begun with colonial aggression in 1858 and culminated in the defeat of American intervention. As Marr (2013) asserts, the victory completed the people’s democratic revolution and laid the foundation for a sovereign, unified Vietnam. Strategically, the campaign demonstrated the full maturity of people’s war theory. Earlier offensives had relied on mobility and surprise, but in Saigon–Gia Dinh, the strategy reached its most refined form. Revolutionary networks guided advancing forces, disrupted enemy infrastructure, and secured key positions before the arrival of main units. Civilian collaborators and urban commandos transformed the city into a battlefield of coordinated resistance.

Symbolically, the image of Liberation Army tanks entering the Independence Palace became a defining icon of victory. For years, Saigon had been a site of foreign occupation and internal unrest. The moment of liberation was a rupture in the narrative of domination, a reclaiming of space and sovereignty. As Scott (1990) eloquently puts it, such moments “reveal the hidden transcript of resistance,” bringing to light the quiet defiance that had long simmered beneath the surface.

Internationally, the fall of Saigon–Gia Dinh reverberated across continents. Halliday (1978) contends that this was the first time a revolutionary movement from the Global South had dismantled a military and political system built and sustained by the United States. Despite extensive American involvement, the Southern regime collapsed. This outcome reshaped strategic thinking in Washington and inspired liberation movements across Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Many observers likened the victory to Dien Bien Phu, viewing it as a symbolic defeat of global imperialism.

From a theoretical standpoint, the campaign underscored the strategic importance of urban terrain in revolutionary warfare. Cities, once seen as strongholds of state power, became arenas where political mobilization, psychological operations, and military

offensives converged. The experience of Saigon–Gia Dinh revealed how disciplined organization and popular support could overcome technological disadvantage. These insights remain relevant for contemporary studies of asymmetric conflict and urban insurgency.

Culturally, the city's transformation was profound. Renamed Ho Chi Minh City, it emerged as Vietnam's largest economic and cultural center, symbolizing the national aspiration for peace, unity, and development. Historical sites such as the War Remnants Museum, the Independence Palace, and preserved underground tunnels now serve as spaces of remembrance and education. As Lefebvre (1991) suggests, such spaces “anchor revolutionary memory in the rhythms of everyday life,” connecting past struggles with present aspirations.

In sum, the liberation of Saigon–Gia Dinh was a multidimensional triumph. It ended a war, unified a nation, and opened a new chapter of reconstruction. It affirmed the power of coordinated resistance, elevated the strategic role of urban space, and left a legacy that continues to shape Vietnam's journey toward sovereignty and renewal. The echoes of April 30, 1975, still resonate, not only in the monuments and museums of Ho Chi Minh City, but in the collective memory of a people who turned the tide of history.

4 CONCLUSION

The historical journey of Saigon and Gia Dinh, from colonial subjugation to revolutionary triumph, stands as a powerful testament to the enduring spirit and strategic ingenuity of Vietnam's struggle for national liberation. Once established to serve foreign domination, the city gradually transformed into a vibrant center of resistance, where political will, social resilience, and cultural identity converged in pursuit of freedom. Through decades of upheaval, Sai Gon - Gia Dinheolved into a decisive arena that not only reflected the broader trajectory of the revolution but also actively shaped the destiny of the nation.

The liberation of Saigon - Gia Dinh on April 30, 1975, was far more than a military victory. It was the culmination of a comprehensive strategy that combined large-scale armed offensives with persistent political and psychological struggle deep within enemy-controlled territory. This triumph was made possible by the convergence of strategic leadership, coordinated operations across multiple fronts, precise timing, and above all,

the unwavering determination of the people who reclaimed their city and transformed it into a revolutionary stronghold.

From a historical and political perspective, the Great Spring Victory brought an end to the war against the United States and achieved the long-sought reunification of North and South Vietnam. Saigon and Gia Dinh, once the administrative and military center of the opposing regime, were redefined as the driving force of a unified nation. This transformation extended beyond political realignment, it reimagined the structure, function, and identity of the urban space itself. From a city fractured by war and social division, Ho Chi Minh City emerged as a symbol of peace, development, and national integration.

Socially and culturally, the victory of April 30 awakened a collective spirit of unity and a shared aspiration to rebuild. Despite the immense challenges of postwar reconstruction, the city drew strength from its revolutionary legacy. Over time, Ho Chi Minh City affirmed its role as the country's leading center of economic vitality, cultural innovation, and scientific advancement. The revolutionary spirit lives on not only in historical landmarks and commemorative spaces but also in a deeply rooted value system shaped by perseverance, creativity, and national pride, values that continue to guide Vietnam's long-term development.

Theoretically, the liberation of Saigon - Gia Dinh illustrates the strategic significance of urban battlefields in revolutionary warfare. While earlier studies often emphasized rural insurgency, this case demonstrates that cities can become dynamic arenas where political mobilization, psychological operations, mass uprisings, and military offensives converge. The experience of Saigon - Gia Dinh offers valuable insights for contemporary research on asymmetric warfare and urban revolution in an increasingly complex global context.

In retrospect, Saigon - Gia Dinh were never merely strategic locations. They served as a mirror reflecting the core dynamics of Vietnam's revolutionary movement: the patient cultivation of grassroots support, the strategic coordination of diverse forms of struggle, and the mobilization of nationwide strength. The victory of April 30 was not an abrupt conclusion but the culmination of a long journey marked by sacrifice, ingenuity, and collective resilience. Today, Ho Chi Minh City carries within itself the legacy of a once-contested battlefield and the responsibility of leading the nation into a new era. Its

revolutionary past has become a source of spiritual energy, empowering the city to thrive amid globalization, integration, and international competition.

The story of Saigon - Gia Dinh, from colonial subjugation to national liberation, remains a heroic chapter in Vietnam's historical narrative. It stands as a lasting reminder of the values of independence, freedom, and unity that continue to illuminate the country's path forward.

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Authors' Contribution

Both authors contributed equally to the development of this article.

Data availability

All datasets relevant to this study's findings are fully available within the article.

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