Globalization has helped facilitate the interconnectedness between states, nonstate actors, and international institutions. It is this internationalism that has yielded opportunities for contentious politics to increasingly occur across and beyond national boundaries. This study examines how actors within the Vietnamese diaspora make transnational claims to overcome authoritarianism and build a democracy in the homeland since the Việt Nam War ended. In particular, I analyze how these claims are manifested in strategic campaigns and tactics of a transnational movement organization known as Việt Tân, which attempts to mobilize a network of support for political change.

The findings reveal an active involvement of individuals and groups abroad working together with activists in Việt Nam. I argue that diasporic communities attempt to influence politics in their place of origin through three strategic action fields: homeland politics, long-distance politics, and international politics. The political environment in each of these strategic action fields shapes the campaign strategies and tactics the activists employ to gain greater allies for the movement. Furthermore, the accomplishments and setbacks that occur in each of these arenas of contestation have a reverberating effect, producing opportunities and constraints for mobilizing activities in the other fields as well. From the analysis of contestation in these distinct terrains of transnational activism, the state is not always the dominant source of political power in relations to nonstate actors.