DOI: 10.14746/r.2017.2.10

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# The Internet as a space of freedom? The significance of virtual space for the opposition in the Russian Federation

**Abstract:** The Russian Federation has recently introduced several legislative regulations that limit operations of the opposition, especially of the extra-parliamentary opposition. At the same time, a significant proportion of opposition activity has moved to the Internet, which played an important role, providing an organizational tool and motivation for potential participants, for example during the 2011–2012 protests. The latest major social protests that took place in March 2017 were triggered by online publications on the corruption links of Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev. Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to answer the question of what role the Internet plays in modern Russia and what is its relevance for people and opposition organizations. At the same time, the restrictions on the functioning of opposition parties will also be analyzed, especially those that also have an impact on the virtual sphere. The considerations will be supplemented by an analysis of websites and other virtual initiatives that have been effectively taken up by opposition parties and have influenced the potential mobilization of the public around opposition ideas.

**Key words:** opposition in the Russian Federation, Alexei Navalny, Internet in Russia, anti-corruption protests, media in Russia

ass anti-government protests were staged in over eighty Russian cities in March 2017. Tens of thousands of Russians took to the streets to oppose corruption and abuse of power. A considerable majority of the protesters were young people (high school and university students) whose main communication channel informing them about the protests was the Internet. The same thing happened during the previous wave of protests at the turn of 2011 and 2012, and during other smaller protests staged for particular causes. After legitimate and free operations of opposition were curbed and the most popular means of mass communication—television—was monopolized by the authorities, opposition activity moved online. The coverage of protests, mobilization of their potential participants and documentation of repercussions from the authorities are

all available online in Russia.¹ The authorities continue their attempts at further curtailing of the opposition, including its online activities. This paper aims to analyze the legal barriers to opposition activity which have resulted in the opposition moving online with its operations. It will also examine what online activities are conducted by the opposition, what political significance they have and what response they stir from the authorities. The social reception of such activities will also be investigated, as will the involvement of Russian citizens in such forms of opposition activity. The outcome of this survey will answer the question of whether the Internet provides a free space that is of particular use to representatives of the Russian opposition in the conditions of limited potential of opposition entities to operate in the real world.

# Restrictions on opposition operations in Russia

The period of apparent liberalization towards the opposition which occurred after the post-election protests in winter 2011/2012 was followed by a process of the gradual implementation of legal restrictions to the operation of opposition entities in the Russian Federation. These regulations impede opposition activities either directly or indirectly, raise potential costs to be borne by citizens taking part in such activities (e.g. high fines and penalties) and form and reinforce the negative image of the opposition.

An example of such restrictive regulations was the law adopted in July 2012 by virtue of which defamation was again criminalized (whereas it was only an offence from November 2011) and penalized by high fines of up to 5 million roubles or forced labor (Rogoža, 2012b). Defamation is broadly defined as "dissemination of false information that violates the

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¹ As exemplified by the detailed coverage of protests posted almost in real time on the Медиазона website (e.g. coverage of protests staged in numerous Russian cities on October 7, 2017 – https://zona.media/chronicle/post-7), films shot during protests and streamed in real time via internet applications (e.g. coverage of the protests staged on March 26, 2017 using the Periscope application – https://www.periscope.tv/w/1YqKDXBlbZAKV), and articles documenting repressions of participants in the protests, posted on the website of the Memorial organization (as exemplified by a special subpage featuring information about people brought to justice for participating in the protests staged on the Bolotnaya Square on May 6, 2012 in Moscow – https://memohrc.org/ru/special-projects/delo-o-sobytiyah-na-bolotnoy-ploshchadi-6-maya-2012-goda).

honor or dignity of another person or undermines his or her reputation" (Уголовный, Art. 128.1)<sup>2</sup> – and high fines significantly raise the costs (financial among others) of criticisms made of authorities, thereby having a potential freezing effect.

Operations of opposition entities were further limited by new regulations on non-governmental organizations in Russia. Their operations in the Russian Federation were genuinely impeded by an amendment to the Law on non-profit organizations from July 2012. It introduced the notion of the "foreign agent" into Russian legislation, a term applied to NGOs that receive foreign donations. This amendment pertain to entities involved in political activities (including both actions of a political nature and those shaping public opinion) (Chawrylo, Domańska, 2015, p. 3). A direct outcome of these regulations is the requirement of NGOs to register (in a foreign agents register conducted by the Russian Ministry of Justice) and to mark all their publications and other products of their activities with a "foreign agent" label. Foreign agent organizations are subjected to additional detailed audits (in particular – financial) and obliged to publish reports on their activities more often. Failing to observe the above regulations may be punished with high fines, and in specific cases also incarceration of their representatives (Rosyjska Duma, 2012).

Several hundred NGOs have been audited since the new regulations were signed into law. Chawryło claims that they were to put on a show and be part of a campaign to discredit such organizations: "on several occasions, auditors were accompanied by a TV crew working for the pro-Kremlin NTW station unfavorably presenting the opposition and independent NGOs dealing with such crucial issues, in the view of the Kremlin, as human rights protection and election monitoring (e.g. Memorial, Golos)" (Chawryło, 2013). After such audits, in April 2016, there were 126 entities on the list of "foreign agents," including the Center for Social and Employee Rights in Moscow, the Human Rights Center in Kaliningrad, the Moscow School of Civil Education and the Institute for Forecasting and Resolving Social Conflicts in Nizhny Novgorod (Сведения реестра НКО). In 2014, the Golos Association,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Any expression of criticism of authorities or state officials may be deemed to "violate the honor, dignity, or reputation," while such criticism is the essence of opposition. Being aware of the considerable financial or political consequences of criticism may effectively discourage citizens from expressing such criticism or supporting criticism articulated by the opposition.

active in protecting the rights of voters, was forcibly inscribed on the ministerial list of foreign agents.<sup>3</sup>

The amendment to the Act on non-profit organizations which introduced the category of foreign agent has had a significant impact on the NGO sector in Russia. According to an independent Russian journalist and analyst, Grigoriy Ochotin, "we can conclude today that civil society has suffered enormous losses [as a result of changes made to the third sector –NK]. Dozens of organizations have ceased to exist, others had to give up foreign donations and considerably limit their activities, many have been paralyzed by self-censorship and they have given up publishing their reports and organizing public events" (Ochotin, 2016). In the conditions of deepening economic crisis, Russian society is gradually losing successive organizations which could fight for its rights. What is more, approached as a potential threat to stability of the system, NGOs cannot expect the authorities to relax their attitude in the immediate future.

After a wave of exhausting audits carried out in the entities deemed to be foreign agents in 2015, the Russian authorities adopted another legal act to curtail the operation of NGOs. On May 23, 2015, President Putin signed a Law on undesirable organizations which makes it possible to ban foreign and international organizations operating in the Russian Federation without trial (Путин подписал, 2015). The law allows prosecutors to declare an international or foreign organization undesirable if it presents a threat to Russia's constitutional order, its defense or security. Such organizations are forbidden by law to disseminate information in the media (including the Internet), or to set up new entities, while existing ones need to be carefully scrutinized. Additionally, persons working for such organizations may be punished by high fines, ranging from 5,000 to 100,000 roubles, and, in specific cases, imprisonment for up to six years (Путин подписал, 2015). The law allows the Russian authorities to block the bank accounts of undesirable organizations and to repress Russian organizations collaborating with them (which are required to report their activities) (Putin podpisał, 2015). The register conducted by the Russian Ministry of Justice shows that the law has an adverse impact mainly on

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> The Ministry of Justice of the Russian Federation was granted the possibility to compulsorily enter foreign agents on the list by the amendment to the Act on non-profit organizations signed in June 2014 by President V. Putin. The court decision is not required to be entered on the list. An organization may appeal from a decision to be included in the list (*Rosja. Golos*).

the entities fostering democracy and civil society.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, it will block the activities of those organizations that supported Russian opposition entities, or collaborated with them in ventures intended to support open and democratic society in Russia.

Restricting the public space for the free operation of opposition entities forced part of their activities to move to the Internet. In conditions where they were no longer able to present their views in the printed press or on TV,<sup>5</sup> they took advantage of the web as a potential space of freedom.

#### An 'Internet Russia' versus a 'television Russia'

The number of persons who use the Internet every day in the Russian Federation has increased over thirty times over the last dozen years or so. In 2000, only 3.1 million Russians used the Internet. Data from late March 2017 records over 103 million web users, who account for over 70% of the population in Russia (*Internet*, 2017). Common access to the Internet and the consequent surge in the number of web users have created grounds for

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> In May 2017, the following are listed as foreign and international NGOs whose activities are deemed undesirable in the Russian Federation: National Endowment for Democracy (which organizes democracy training), OSI Assistance Foundation (which supports democratic reforms, human rights, access to information and economic development), Open Society Foundation (which promotes democracy, human rights and open society), The U.S. Russia Foundation for Economic Advancement and the Rule of Law (which promotes the development of market economy in Russia) and National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (which supports enhanced efficiency of democratic institutions) (Перечень иностранных).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Russian media have undergone enormous changes since Vladimir Putin came into power. Initially, the changes primarily pertained to television. Established in 1993, the NTV station (Russian: *HTB*) was a source of a broad scope of information about corruption of authorities, crimes against humanity committed as part of so-called anti-terrorist operations in Chechnya and leading politicians' connections with secret services. This was before the first term of Vladimir Putin in presidential office. Over one year after he assumed power, this independent television station came under control of the authorities (or, to be more precise, of Gazprom which is among the greatest media owners in Russia). Importantly, state officials didn't make any special effort to hide the fact that the station had been taken over (Minister of Russian Press, Mikhail Lesin signed Protocol No. 6 which ensured that criminal proceedings against the main shareholder of NTV, Vladimir Gusinsky would be dropped in return for his giving the station up). Till today, there has been no other independent television with broad access to the audience in the Russian Federation (cf. Soldatov, Borogan, 2015; Adamowski, 2002).

the concept formulated as early as 2011 that there are two Russias – one on TV and the other one on the Internet (Kurczab-Redlich, 2011, pp. 6–7). The former encompasses a definite majority of people who limit themselves to watching TV to learn about the world, and whose "thinking is narrowed down to the information and opinions formulated by the Headquarters" (Kurczab-Redlich, 2011, p. 6). The other Russia is formed by over 70 million Russians (that was when the concept emerged, now we are talking about over 100 million) who browse through the Internet every day, selecting information on their own and producing content, thereby forming their own reality. The number of Russians who regularly use the Internet has increased by over 40% since the concept of two Russias was formed several years ago. Nevertheless, the group of people seeking socio-political news, or general knowledge about the world they live in on the Internet continues to be small. Only one third of Russians perceive the Internet as a source of information. In the opinion of Russian sociologist, Denis Volkov (Волков, 2017b), the reasons for this should be sought in limited Russian interest in developments in their country and abroad. Most people believe that they have no influence on reality, therefore they do not need information about it. Additionally, TV is most typically watched in Russia while doing something else, therefore Russians absorb the messages they hear in the background, whereas seeking information on the Internet has to be done on one's own, which requires effort and knowledge of sources.

Protests against the authorities and new legislation are staged primarily by the 'internet Russia' (although it comprises only a small proportion of the 100 million Internet users) for whom virtual space has offered an opportunity to launch activities that have gradually become political and transferred to reality. According to Rogoża (2012a, p. 1), "the web has become a kind of a school of civil behavior for Russians and a test-tube where social and political activity is developing. In the election period, activity went out of virtual reality and transformed into mass street protests." In the period which followed the 2012 mass protests the authorities resolved to curtail the space for free opposition activities, consequently a considerable part of such activities has moved online.

## The Internet as space for the opposition

Alexei Navalny is the main opposition figure conducting his activities online. He is a journalist, political activist and – until recently – the main coun-

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ter-candidate to Putin in the presidential elections in 2018.<sup>6</sup> His opposition activities on the Internet started in popular Russian blogs, where he would describe the examples of official corruption, negligence of the authorities and abuses of power. Currently, he is mainly committed to working for his own Anti-Corruption Foundation, which publishes its findings online (mainly on the navalny.com website). It was the documentary published online, "He Is Not Dimon To You" (Он вам не Димон),7 where Navalny talks about the corruption of Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev and the oligarchs, and about his concealed assets (villas, houses, yachts, pensions and vineyards), that sparked protests of many thousands of Russians in March 2017. The documentary has already been seen by over 22 million YouTube users (Навальный, 2017). The protest, in over 80 Russian cities, attracted tens of thousands of Russians (Strzelecki, Wiśniewska, Menkiszak, 2017). Importantly, the protests were not mentioned by the state-controlled television and their participants, including those in smaller towns in the peripheries, were mobilized solely online and through organizers' personal contacts. These were the first protests in Russia on such a large scale in more than five years.8 They evidenced how effective both the Foundation and Navalny himself are, making him a natural opposition leader. The scale of these protests confirms that even without access to television and printed press, the opposition can use the Internet, in particular social media, to mobilize Russian society to oppose abuse of power.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Navalny has been banned from running in the elections by a valid court sentence for embezzlement in the Kirovles company. The trial started several years ago (when the first mass protests were organized at the turn of 2011/2012). The first verdict was appealed to the European Court of Human Rights which found that Russia had breached Navalny's right to a fair trial and ruled to repeat the trial. The new trial resulted in Navalny's conviction (to charges of dishonesty) thereby eliminating him from running in the presidential elections (3yδob, 2017).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> The title of this documentary alludes to a nickname given to Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev by Russian writer and satirist Dmitry Bykov (in a dialogue written by Bykov, and highly popular online, Putin says to Medvedev: "Dimon, who are you but an ordinary boy?"). This nickname is extremely popular online, in particular among young Russians (Nieczypor, 2017).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Further protests against the corruption of the highest state officials were planned for June 12, 2017. Fearing that the number of participants would again be as high as in March, this time state authorities did not permit the protests to take place in the locations requested by the organizers, and suggested instead that they take place in suburban villages or peripheries of the largest towns. A majority of protests were organized without permission from the authorities. A total of tens of thousands of Russians protested in 140 Russian towns (Strzelecki, Domańska, 2017).

The protests staged in Moscow on May 14, 2017 were also organized online. Approximately 20,000 Muscovites opposed the plan to tear down five-story apartment buildings erected in the 1960s, and named khrushchevki (after Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev). The scale of the protest surprised even its organizers, who reported the planned participation of ca. 5,000 participants. Thus, the March protests were followed by other events, organized to protect apartment houses, to respect property rights and to fight potential corruption, which all evidence the observable mobilization of society (mainly in large cities) opposing the authorities, whether central or local. This has been achieved mainly by means of online communication.

After the authorities took control of the television and press, opposition media moved their activities to virtual space. The Dohzd (Russian: \$\mathcal{IO}\mathcal{PO}\mathcal{E}\mathcal{O}\text{} b\) television station, which used to be available to the general public, moved mainly online. Its problems with satellite and cable operators started in 2014, after it aired a program questioning the rationale of defending Leningrad during WWII and asking whether it would not have been justified to surrender the city and save millions of its inhabitants. First the authorities, and then Russian society, deemed these questions to be an "attempt at rehabilitation of Nazism." The repercussions which followed this program (numerous audits, regulations banning advertising on non-state television, and removal of the station from its premises) made this television available only to online subscribers (*Independent*, 2015; *Russia*, 2016). Importantly, Dozhd TV is believed to be the last independent station operating on the territory of the Russian Federation.

The news service Lenta.ru was another independent online medium. Its problems started in 2014 after it featured an interview with one of the leaders of the Ukraine Right Sector party (journalists working for Lenta. ru had earlier reliably covered the situation in Ukraine). The Russian au-

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> It is true that the vast majority of the buildings planned to be demolished are run-down, but they demand refurbishment rather than demolition, as planned by Moscow authorities. The opposition criticizes both the idea of tearing down buildings which currently accommodate over one million Russians, as well as the regulations providing for their residents to be moved to other parts of the city. According to critics, the plans to replace khrushchevki with new buildings are most profitable for construction companies and officials (there is high potential for corruption when contracting the construction of new buildings in lots located mainly in the center of Moscow) (Strzelecki, 2017).

thorities issued a warning (another warning would mean a court trial and closure of the medium) and Editor-in-Chief Galina Timchenko, who had been with the website since its beginnings, was fired (Kowalczyk, 2014). After the news service was taken over by persons related to the Russian authorities, Timchenko, alongside a group of Lenta.ru journalists, resolved to establish a new, independent news service in Riga, Latvia – Meduza.io. Available in two versions (Russian and English), it aims to inform Russians and all those interested in Russia about current domestic events, avoiding state propaganda. The Meduza.io website features news about the activities of the opposition, protests, reliable news about the Russian economy and about developments in Ukraine and the international position of Russia.

A small group of news services which cover the activities of the opposition and endeavor to provide reliable coverage of domestic and global events includes also Republic.ru (formerly slon.ru) and Colta. ru. The former website is an online magazine dealing with politics, economy and business. Its journalists analyze events in Russia and globally (the international section is quite huge) and reach two million Russians every month. Colta.ru is more of a socio-cultural online magazine financed through crowdfunding by its readers and friends. Published content includes interviews with so-called Russian volunteers fighting together with separatists in Donbas and extensive coverage of the anti-corruption protests organized by Navalny and ignored by state media.

This rather small number of independent online news services in Russian is supplemented by blogs (like Navalny's) which continue to enjoy popularity in Russia, and social media, which frequently serve the purpose of organizing opposition events, protests and informing about oppositionists being apprehended, searched and persecuted by the police (it is primarily thanks to messages posted on the VKontakte website that Russians learn about the scale of arrests following protests).

# Restricting opposition activity online

Having launched numerous restrictions on the activity of opposition entities (regulations from 2012–2013), the Russian authorities endeavored to curtail this activity online as well. To this end, the authorities take advantage of existing regulations aiming to block critical opinions about

authorities or try to introduce penalties for expressing such criticism. This can be exemplified by the considerable rise in the number of people convicted for what is named extremist activity. In congruity with the Russian penal code (Arts. 280–282) "public incitement of extremist acts" is punishable by imprisonment for up to four years, whereas "inciting hatred, enmity and humiliation of the dignity of a human person" is punishable by up to six years in prison (Уголовный, 1996). According to a report by the Center for Economic and Political Reforms in Moscow (Борьба, 2016), over the period from 2011–2015, the number of people convicted quadrupled, and more trials involved average Russians who had never taken part in any type of opposition activity before. The analysis of cases tried shows that, according to Russian courts, extremist activities include, for instance, questioning of the results of the Crimean referendum and criticism of the annexation of the peninsula by Russia, appealing (in social media) for support for Ukraine or criticism of Russian operations in Donbas. 10 The trials are publicized in Russian media, and the number of convictions is growing, which translates into more and more Russians giving up criticism of authorities, even on private profiles in social media and in private posts. By this token, the sense of general approval for the authorities rises.

The Russian authorities decided to respond to the growing popularity of Navalny's above-mentioned documentary. On May 31, 2017 a defamation case went to court, after one of the oligarchs accused of corruption in the documentary, Alisher Usmanov, sued the author. Having examined only the evidence provided by the plaintiff, the court (which refused to hear any of the witnesses indicated by Navalny or to examine any of the documents he had presented) ruled that the documentary be removed from the Internet ( $Cy\partial$ , 2017). Alexei Navalny announced that he would

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> In 2015, the president of a Tatar NGO Rafis Kashapov was found guilty of public calls to actions aimed at violation of the Russian Federation's territorial integrity and inciting hatred, enmity and humiliation of a human person. He was sentenced to three years in prison for posting articles critical of Russian operations in Donbas and presenting the attitude of Crimean Tatars to the annexation of the peninsula on his private profile on the VKontaktie website (*Tatarski*, 2015). On June 1, 2017, Director of a Ukrainian library in Moscow, Natalia Sharina was sentenced to 5 years in prison on charges of "disseminating extremist literature." Ukrainian books were found in her library, which were listed as extremist material only after the library was searched and the books impounded (Сулим, 2017). Human rights activists recognize Sharina as a person persecuted by the authorities for political reasons.

not remove the documentary. He treated the verdict and the publicity the case ensured as free advertising<sup>11</sup> of his documentary and of the protests planned for mid-June.

Charges of dissemination of extremist content or defamation are frequently used in the Russian Federation for the purpose of blocking content that the authorities find awkward for various reasons (accusations of corruption, relations between authority and oligarchs, criticism of Russian policy towards Ukraine or Syria, and so on). This impedes the activities of opposition entities because it limits the space of their activity, which has already been significantly curbed (for instance through regulations impeding their activities in the public space).

### Russian society and the Internet

The anti-corruption protests held in eighty cities across the whole of Russia in March 2017 for the first time involved a large group of very young citizens – high school students and freshers at universities. A vast majority of those who were detained and interviewed by the police turned out to be children of well-to-do educated Russians from the slowly emerging middle class in Russia (Волков, 2017а). These young people come from homes where political matters are discussed, and where young people receive a civil education independent from state indoctrination. They found information about the events online (nearly every protest had its own website and a dedicated event on social media). Importantly, they confirmed their virtual participation in reality, being physically present in the protests.

Surveys conducted by the independent Yuri Levada Analytical Center (Аналитический Центр Юрия Левады, Levada Center) show that young people, considerably more often than representatives of other age groups, use the Internet to learn about events in Russia and globally. In the youngest group of respondents (aged 18–24), 70% indicate the Internet as a source of information, whereas this proportion drops to ca.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> After the verdict to remove the documentary from Youtube was issued, a pornographic website PornHub offered to move it to its servers. Alexei Navalny did not accept their offer but suggested that PornHub produce a remake in a convention that would correspond to its profile, thereby allowing Russian citizens to learn about the corruption of authorities and violation of rights of Russian citizens presented in a lighter form (Представители, 2017).

10% in older groups. At the same time, older people seek information mainly on television (90%) which continues to be controlled by the authorities. The growing proportion of young people for whom the Internet is a source of information is accompanied by a drop in the number of those who regularly watch the most popular news service on Channel One. They account for only 45% of young Russians and for as much as 75% in general in Russia (Волков, 2017c). Although the youngest have not yet become the majority of protesters (albeit their numbers are growing) it is important that they commonly use the Internet and treat it as a source of information. This means that in a couple of years, when they are at the age when interest in political involvement rises considerably (in Russia this is the 25–30 age bracket – Волков, 2017c), they are going to have access to alternative sources of information, other than state television, and will therefore be in the group of potential participants in protests.

#### **Conclusions**

Post-election protests organized at the turn of 2011/2012 led the Russian authorities to introduce a number of regulations aimed at restricting the space available to opposition entities. The latter responded by transferring a considerable part of their activities online. This was accompanied by a significant growth in the numbers of people who regularly use the Internet. Young Russians point to the Internet as a source of information more often than to state-controlled television. An equally important factor is that very young people who were born and raised in Putin's Russia accounted for a large group of participants in the most recent protests in 2017. This means the opposition uses the Internet not only to be active online but also to mobilize society to support opposition demands. The most important aspect is that this mobilization was successfully transferred to reality, to the streets and squares of dozens of towns, where physical protests were organized. On the basis of the data presented in this paper, the question posed in the title can be answered in the affirmative. After a five-year break, the opposition, with Alexei Navalny at helm, uses the Internet as a space of freedom and builds its support and successfully converts online support into active participation in anti-government protests. Further protests are being organized now.

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# Internet jako przestrzeń wolności? Znaczenie przestrzeni wirtualnej dla funkcjonowania opozycji w Federacji Rosyjskiej

#### Streszczenie

W ostatnich latach w Federacji Rosyjskiej wprowadzono przynajmniej kilka regulacji legislacyjnych, które ograniczają funkcjonowanie opozycji, szczególnie tej pozaparlamentarnej. Jednocześnie, znaczna część aktywności opozycyjnej przeniosła się do internetu, który już wcześniej – np. w trakcie protestów z lat 2011–2012 – odegrał istotną rolę jako narzędzie organizacyjne oraz motywujące potencjalnych uczestników. Także ostatnie duże społeczne protesty, które miały miejsce w marcu 2017 r., wywołane zostały przez internetowe publikacje dotyczące korupcyjnych powiązań premiera Dmitrija Miedwiediewa. Dlatego też, celem artykułu jest odpowiedź na pytanie, jaką rolę we współczesnej Rosji odgrywa internet oraz jakie ma znaczenie dla osób oraz organizacji prowadzących działalność opozycyjną. Jednocześnie, analizie poddane zostaną również ograniczenia funkcjonowania podmiotów opozycyjnych, szczególnie te, które mają również wpływ na sferę wirtualną. Rozważania uzupełnione zostaną o analizę portali oraz innych wirtualnych inicjatyw, które zostały skutecznie podjęte przez podmioty opozycyjne oraz miały wpływ na ewentualną mobilizację społeczeństwa wokół opozycyjnych idei.

**Slowa kluczowe:** opozycja w Federacji Rosyjskiej, Aleksiej Nawalny, internet w Rosji, protesty antykorupcyjne, media w Rosji

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