

## THE "NEW" NON-SYSTEMIC OPPOSITION IN RUSSIA

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**Abstract.** *The article reveals the process of formation of the non-systemic opposition in Russia after 2010. It also presents the factors that distinguish a new non-systemic opposition from the traditional one.*

**Keywords:** *opposition, nonprofit organization, political technology, political technology, Internet*

Lately the oppositional public-political associations have been closely observed and analyzed that is connected with a public beginning of the non-systemic opposition which is to change government in Russia.

Nevertheless, initially attention was drawn to emergency of the oppositional leaders and then to the oppositional parties and public-political organizations. A special scientific interest is not only the preconditions of a new non-systemic opposition but also methods of its emerging as a real active oppositional force, its apogee impact and further its decrease with attempts to reform. Besides all mentioned above, there are ways and methods used to perform the oppositional activity to consider.

The political opposition has several definitions. Anna Tanova calls a political opposition an organized group of active individuals united by their awareness of common political interests, values and goals and who struggle with the reigning subject for the dominating status in the system of the government bodies [1]. By the topology the opposition can be systemic (parliament) and non-systemic (non-parliament). For Russia the institution of the political opposition is not a new phenomenon because it took its roots at the beginning of XX c., when having signed the Manifest of 17 October, 1905, the Tsar government admitted that there was a political opposition and institutionalized it [2]. However for the whole previous century the political opposition changed and now we observe a completely «new» non-systemic opposition.

New non-systemic opposition started its formation in 2011, when the meeting 10 October on the Bolotnaia square was the reference point though the non-systemic the same as systemic opposition had existed long before 2011[3].

As examples we can mention the most outstanding representatives of the non-systemic opposition before 2011:

1. Liberal Russia – the liberal Russian political party of the first half of 2000s financed by Boris Berezovsky;

2. Famous in 2000s the National-Bolshevik Party (NBP), on the basis of which another party the «Other Russia» acts headed by a well-known politician Eduard Lemonov ;

3. The Union of Right Forces (URF) is an officially registered electoral block and the liberal political party existed in the Russian Federation in 1999 — 2008. It must be noted that some well-known Russian oppositionists started their political career in the URF; among them are: Boris Nemtsov, Nikita Belykh, Irina Khakamada, Leonid Gozman and etc.

Basing on all said above, it is necessary to specify the term «new» opposition. This term includes in itself the opposition taking part in the political activity as in the state so as out of it as to change the political regime in Russia after 2010. Very outstanding representatives of this activity are such politicians as: Alexey Navalny, Boris Nemtsov , Mikhail Kasyanov, Mikhail Khodorkovsky, Garry Kasparov and etc. Some of them have taken part in the political activity since 90s but in this article we have studied only the mentioned period of time.

The main peculiarity of the «new» opposition is ways of performing the protest activity, to be more exact political campaigning and coordinating by means of the Internet and social networks (Facebook, Twitter, Vkontakte). Studying this topic it is necessary to specify that the activity model by means of the social networks was imported from the president electoral campaign in 2007-2008 in the USA. It was the Internet that gave a possibility to Barak Obama to win by the election results because via the Internet they collected financial aid for his electoral campaigning; the frameworks for discussions and communication with the candidate were created. A specific feature of the electoral campaign was the choice of the target audience. The accent of the whole campaign was done on the young

audience from 18 to 30 years old. The very same ways were used by the «new opposition» in its protest activity from 2011. It must be noted that every other oppositionist and the oppositional party had their account in the social nets with the help of which they used the classical political technologies (orange):

1. Desacralization of power. They regularly pasted the facts that demonstrated the managerial inability of the government and its moral dissipation.
2. They introduced into the mass minds and consolidated simple stereotypes answering the formula «who is not with us is against us». «People are against the criminal authorities».
3. They created and strongly integrated the external feature of «ours»: ribbons, color and etc.
4. To consolidate «ours» they introduced into minds the image of the «inevitable victory».
5. Long before the elections day subconsciously created the opinion that the elections would be falsified and the government would use the lowest ways to do so.
6. «Peaceful» protest against violations at the elections. There were meetings, tent camps [4].

Due to the use of those technologies exactly in the social nets the «new» opposition for a short period of time could gathered a large-scale protest movement in Russia during the period of 2011-2013 and later it was called «white ribbons» [5]. Taking into consideration these facts we should note that the total number of the Internet users in Russia in 2011 was 70 million people [6], and the auditorium of the «Vkontakte» - 34,3 million of active users, Facebook – 9,3 million people, Twitter - more than 1,85 million. [7]. Further on the number was growing. In connection with this we can say that leading the protest activity in the Internet and the social net was not only new but also a very successful way in Russia.

A separate role in the oppositional activity is played by the non-profit organizations or NPO that is organizations that had no financial benefit as the main goal of their activity and which did not distributed the profit between the members [8]. Most of the NPO engaged in the political activity on the territory of Russia were financed from abroad. But because of the act of the RF about the NPO («the act of the foreign agents») that came into force on 20 November, 2012 and the act about the register of unwelcome organizations signed on 23 May, 2015 by President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin half of the NPO refused such type of financing. Moreover, abiding by the latter act to be unwelcome can be recognized a foreign or international exceptionally non-governmental organization that is «a serious threat to the basic principles of the constitutional structure of the RF, the country's defense and safety of the state». The most well-known of the NPO in Russia are «Memorial», «Moscow Helsinki group», «For human rights», «Voice» and etc.

Summing up, we can say that researching the opposition in Russia is a complicated task that requires a detail analysis. The traditional definitions lose their explaining ability and cannot in their full degree serve as the basis for the classification. Introducing the term of the «new» opposition will allow not only defining exact time frames of the protest activity in Russia but also draw attention to the non-classical ways and methods of its realization that in future will give a possibility to study this phenomenon further on.

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