

## INFORMATION, COMMUNICATION AND KNOWLEDGE IN CONTEMPORARY POLITICS

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### DIGITAL RESISTANCE IN AUTHORITARIAN REALITIES AND TECHNOLOGIES OF POLITICAL CHANGES

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#### Abstract

The article aims to analyze technology's role in the development of political movements, along with singling out activism problems in countries with limited political freedoms. In particular, the emphasis is placed on using technologies for mobilization, information sharing, and resisting repression. For this purpose, comparativist and observational methods were used, allowing for a deeper investigation of the posed questions and obtaining a complete picture of contemporary political activism. The study showed that in the context of globalization, technology plays a crucial role in developing political movements, especially in countries with limited freedoms. The Internet, social media, mobile applications, and other digital tools have become essential in organizing protests and political campaigns. They allow activists to remain anonymous, share information efficiently, and coordinate actions, often bypassing censorship and repression. Digital technologies open new possibilities for strengthening movements by enabling activists to organize protests and oppose violations. However, the same tools also pose challenges for democracy and human rights, as authoritarian regimes exploit them to expand surveillance, block resources, monitor citizens, and violate privacy. The results highlight the need for further study of the balance between using technologies to support democratic processes and human rights and the threats they pose under authoritarianism. Comparing the effectiveness of technologies in countries with different political systems is a key direction for future research. This will help assess the impact of new technologies on mobilization and political freedom in various contexts. Special attention should be paid to emerging forms of activism, such as online protests and digital campaigns, which continue to reshape political landscapes and the very nature of activism, mobilization, and the fight for human rights today.

**Keywords:** technologies, authoritarian political regime, political movements, activism, political freedoms limitations, protest, resistance.

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## Introduction

In the modern world, technologies play a key role in developing political movements and political activism, especially in countries with limited political freedoms. This can be explained by changes in the tools of the interactions between citizens and political power, especially in cases where traditional forms of protests and resistance are being strictly controlled. Countries led by totalitarian and authoritarian regimes, where political freedoms are being severely restricted, became places where new technologies for mobilizing oppositional movements and fighting for human rights are being actively used (Simpson, 2020). In such terms, the role of the Internet, social media, mobile apps, and other digital instruments becomes critically important because these tools give activists and political movements the possibility to remain anonymous, share information, and coordinate their actions, often bypassing censorship and repressions (Henry, 2021). On the one hand, technologies create opportunities for the development of social movements in countries with limited freedoms, and on the other, they create new challenges for democracy and human rights, as authoritarian governments use the latest technologies to surveil, block Internet resources, monitor citizens, and violate privacy. The relevance of this topic lies in the necessity of analyzing how technologies can be both an instrument of resistance and an element of the controlled system that's being used by a state in order to enhance repression. For instance, in countries such as Iran, Russia, China, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and many others, where access to information is severely controlled, digital platforms provide an opportunity for activists to circumvent censorship and highlight human rights violations (Manal al-Sharif, 2017). As a result, digital technologies change not only the scale of protests but also the type of political struggle by allowing mobilizing millions of people and uniting them online.

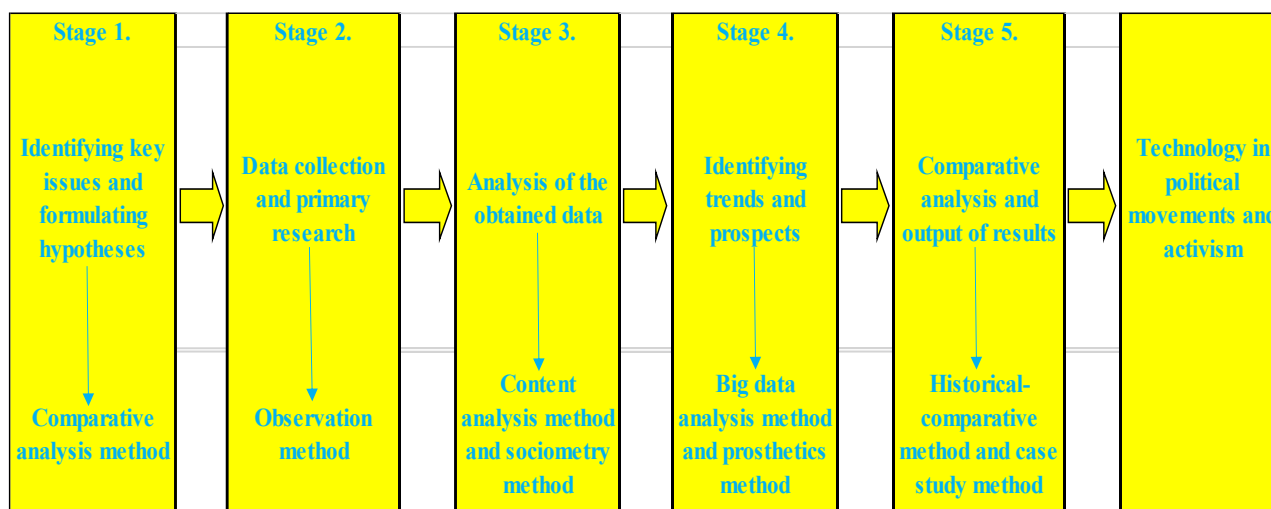
Nevertheless, at the same time, the increasing utilization of technologies in political activism demands acknowledging the risks related to the safety of data, protection against cyber threats, and possible consequences for citizens participating in protests. Using the new technologies has a two-sided effect: on the one hand, they let people be united while fighting for their rights and freedoms, and on the other, these technologies become potent tools for control and repression (Min, 2023). In this context, it is important to explore not only the positive potential of technologies in developing political activism but also the possible dangers associated with their use. It is also worth mentioning that since modern technologies help political movements and activism develop, the chosen research topic is relevant, especially in countries with limited political freedoms. It is crucial to understand how specific technologies, from mobile apps to cryptocurrencies, can be adapted to combat political repression in countries with limited political freedoms. The vast majority of current research is focused on large political campaigns, such as the Arab Spring or the protests in Belarus, but it is important to consider lesser-known examples of technology use in less popular contexts as well. Moreover, it is worth paying attention to how authoritarian regimes change their strategies, adapting to new technological challenges, which forces activists to constantly adapt their methods of struggle.

Thus, the chosen topic is not only relevant for scientific research but also important for practical recommendations on the use of technologies in conditions of political repression, as well as for the development of international support mechanisms for activists and human rights defenders who work under challenging conditions. It is also worth noting that the chosen research topic is constantly updated, which is connected with the realities of modern challenges and, therefore, requires a new level of scientific research.

## Materials and Methods

Various scientific and methodological tools were tested within the framework of the scientific research, on the basis of which the research vectors were formed, and the author's conclusions were substantiated. The stages of the research are schematically depicted in Figure 1.

Solving the tasks outlined in the research became possible, first of all, with the help of the comparative method, which is a powerful tool in the study of political movements and activism, especially when it comes to countries with limited political freedoms. Utilization of this method allows us to compare and analyze the way how various political movements and activism develop and adapt to repression. Studying authoritarian countries compared to democratic ones helps identify differences in protest strategies. For instance, it has been found that in countries with high levels of censorship, movements may choose non-violent actions or use masks for anonymity, while in other countries, they may use more aggressive forms of protest, taking into account the social and political situation, while actively mobilizing support through anonymous or closed channels of communication. Using this method, we analyzed how movements use online platforms to mobilize protests, compared to physical protests, which often face violence or bans in these countries.



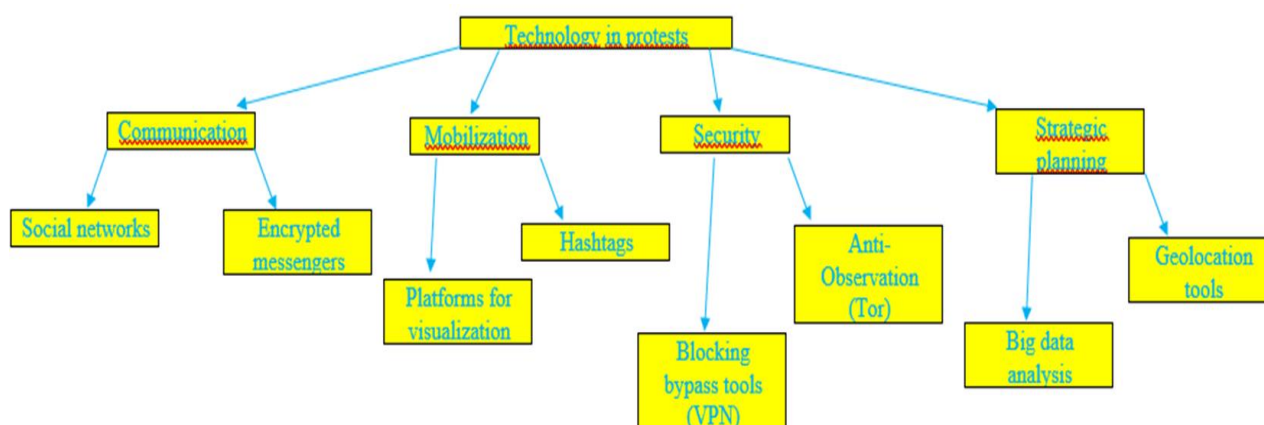
**Fig. 1. Stages of the research**

Comparing the efficiency of such platforms in different countries allows us to understand which technologies work better in conditions of censorship or persecution. The other crucially important notion is the level of cooperation between the movements and international organizations (e.g., the UN, Amnesty International, and the European Union) in the context of supporting human rights and combating repression. Consequently, the comparative method helps us better understand how political movements and activism in conditions of limited political freedoms adapt to specific conditions, choosing different strategies and tactics depending on the context. It is necessary not only to compare different countries but also to explore how technology, international connections, and mobilization mechanisms change the effectiveness of protest movements and activism in the long term.

The other helpful tool was the observation method, as it allows us to directly record changes in the behavior of social groups and organizations. For instance, in countries where actual gatherings are prohibited, platforms such as Twitter or Telegram are becoming the main tools for coordinating actions. Moreover, this method lets us observe the actions of governments that tried to restrict freedom on the Internet by blocking certain resources or disabling mobile communications. In China, for example, they imply “The Golden Shield Project” (i.e., “Great Firewall of China”), which limits access to international platforms. At the same time, activists in such countries use VPNs and other tools in order to avoid limitations. The following two content-analysis methods, in colocation with big data analysis, are powerful tools for investigating how technology facilitates the development of political movements and activism in countries with limited political freedoms. The content analysis method allows for systematically studying textual and visual information disseminated through digital platforms such as social networks, blogs, news sites, petitions, etc. While utilizing this method, we identified key themes, narratives, and emotional tones in activists’ messages that helped us understand their strategies, goals, and mobilization methods. Big data analysis allows us to work with enormous chunks of data that are being generated in real-time on digital platforms. This included analysis of website traffic, hashtags, social network mentions, and users’ geographic and temporal activity, which makes it possible to explore the dynamics of movements, identify key moments of protests, and their geographical spread. For instance, using these methods, we studied how certain events, such as arrests of activists or government policy decisions, prompted mass protests, as well as how themes and messages changed in the context of changing political situations. We also used the sociometry method for studying social relations and interactions between participants in political movements and identified key leaders and group structures in the context of using technology to mobilize protests. The case study method made it possible for us to study specific examples of political movements deeply and analyze their development, digital tools usage, and response to government repression through a detailed study of specific situations. The study includes a significant amount of empirical material that influenced the formation of the author’s conclusions and positions presented in the work. This study comprehensively reviews and cites thirty-one leading sources.

## Results

Informational technologies play a crucial role in the development of political movements and activism, especially in countries with limited political freedoms. They provide activists and civil society organizations with new opportunities to mobilize, organize protests, disseminate information, and resist authoritarian regimes. Let us review certain aspects of this problem separately. First of all, the Internet and social networks are important mobilization tools that contribute to the rapid dissemination of information today. Social media, such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Telegram, and other new platforms, help activists spread information about political events, human rights violations, or injustice in real-time. This allows them to organize mass protests and draw attention to critical issues, even when the state controls traditional means of communication (television, press) (Wood, 2022). The states of countries with limited freedom of speech often try to control or censor the information. Nevertheless, such tools as VPN or anonymous browsers (e.g., Tor) help to bypass censorship and access banned sites or publications, allowing citizens and activists to maintain their anonymity and stay connected (Castells, 2024). While studying the impact of technologies on the development of protest movements in authoritarian states, we can classify them by different types of technological support that have different effects on the organization, mobilization, and interaction of protesters. It can be depicted as a table that divides the technological tools by their functions. (Figure 2).



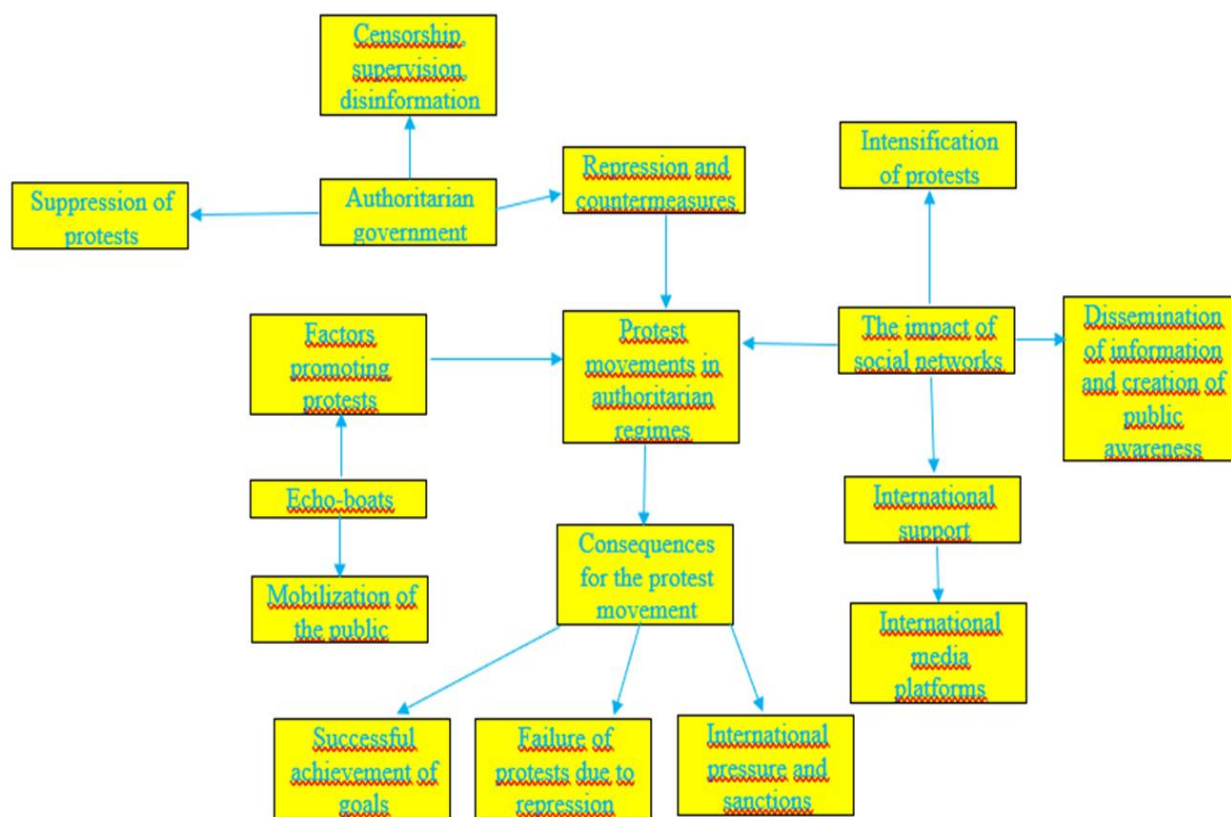
**Fig. 2. The role of technology in supporting protest movements in authoritarian states**

This table shows us how different technologies facilitate different aspects of protest movements in authoritarian states. It allows us to better understand how each element of the technology supports protest activities, from mobilization to ensuring the safety of protesters. Technologies are crucially important when it comes to effective organization, maintaining anonymity, and increasing influence at the international level. The role of social media can be traced in China, which still has strict censorship, and where the 2019 protests took place in Hong Kong, and millions of people went to the streets against a new extradition law, social media became the main channel for organizing mass protests. Obviously, the government used to control information actively by blocking websites and using “The Golden Shield Project” (i.e., “Great Firewall of China”). Nevertheless, activists used encrypted messengers such as Telegram and Signal to coordinate their actions. On top of that, symbols and hashtags, such as #StandWithHongKong, have become tools of global solidarity, drawing the attention of the international community to these events (Martin, 2024).

The government of China is implementing its own social networks nowadays as well (in particular, WeChat, through which user activity can be monitored). Despite that, activists still find ways to bypass censorship by creating new accounts, using VPNs to access banned platforms, or spreading information through numerous alternative channels (Pinghui, 2020). The same situation can be found in Russia, where Vladimir Putin and his government use strict censorship and repression against the opposition, the Internet has become an important tool for political struggle. One of the clear examples is the movement led by Alexey Navalny, who actively used YouTube and other social media in order to organize protests and disseminate investigations into corruption among high-ranking officials. In 2020, right after Navalny was poisoned,

his supporters used the Internet to spread information about his condition and call for protests. Despite numerous blockings of access to important resources, such as YouTube, through which live broadcasts of events were conducted, social networks remained an indispensable tool for coordinating protest movements. Telegram has become one of the most popular social platforms among Russians as it allows users to bypass blocking and protects them through encryption. Both activists who supported Navalny and his team kept using this messenger in order to exchange information, as well as to document human rights violations committed by authorities even after his death (Dollbaum, et al., 2021). In Russia, one of the most important aspects of using social networks after the death of Navalny was to counter state propaganda. Pro-Kremlin channels of information actively spread fake information, blaming protesters for crimes and riots, which endangers their safety. Consequently, the opposition and independent media actively use the Internet to expose falsifications and spread accurate information. A significant role in this case was played not only by traditional social networks but also by video hosting platforms through which it was possible to show the actual events that took place at the protests (Demydova, 2021).

A separate aspect of this issue lies in authoritarian regimes increasingly using information technology to control their citizens and primarily to suppress political activists. One of the most important aspects of this process is anonymity and protection of personal data. In authoritarian countries, where political freedom and rights are restricted, activists, human rights defenders, and other public figures opposing the political authorities often face persecution, violence, or illegal actions by government structures. In these conditions, personal data protection becomes a necessary element in the fight for the safety of activists (Meyer, 2014). Due to the development of digital technologies, online anonymity has become a key tool for protecting activists from persecution. Nevertheless, authoritarian governments use their own methods to surveil, monitor, and leak personal information. Internet-based data collection, telephone systems, and other technologies allow states to seamlessly track, identify, and prosecute activists. This increases the risk of people struggling for human rights or expressing critical views that directly threaten their safety (Figure 3).



**Fig. 3. Model of the influence of social networks and the Internet on protest movements in authoritarian states**

In this context, it is important to highlight the phenomenon of digital authoritarianism – the systematic use of digital technologies by states to monitor, control, censor, and suppress political activity. This concept encompasses a wide range of tools, including mass surveillance, big data analytics, artificial intelligence, online content filtering, and algorithmic management of public opinion (Al-Zaman, & Noman, 2024). China and Russia serve as illustrative examples of these practices. In China, advanced surveillance systems have been implemented, including social credit mechanisms and facial recognition technologies (Creemers, 2018). In Russia, the government has actively developed the infrastructure for a «sovereign internet», while digital tools have been used to suppress opposition and restrict dissent (Polyakova, & Meserole, 2020).

At the same time, it is necessary to distinguish the notion of unintentional digital authoritarianism, which arises when technologies introduced for modernization, efficiency, or security purposes are later used as tools of repression – even within formally democratic states. This refers to cases in which surveillance or censorship emerges not as part of an authoritarian agenda, but as a by-product of digital reforms or crisis-driven policies, such as those implemented after terrorist attacks or during pandemics (Hanisch, et al., 2023).

A separate form, necessary digital authoritarianism, refers to situations in which even democratic governments impose temporary digital restrictions during states of emergency, such as war, pandemics, or national crises, for the sake of public safety, stability, or information control. Although these measures are usually legitimized by the public as exceptional, scholars warn about the risks of their normalization and the gradual transformation of temporary decisions into permanent control mechanisms (Aradau, 2021).

These three types of digital authoritarianism – from intentional to unintentional and temporarily necessary – offer a deeper understanding of how state power is transformed in the digital era, and how even neutral or protective technologies can evolve into instruments of oppression.

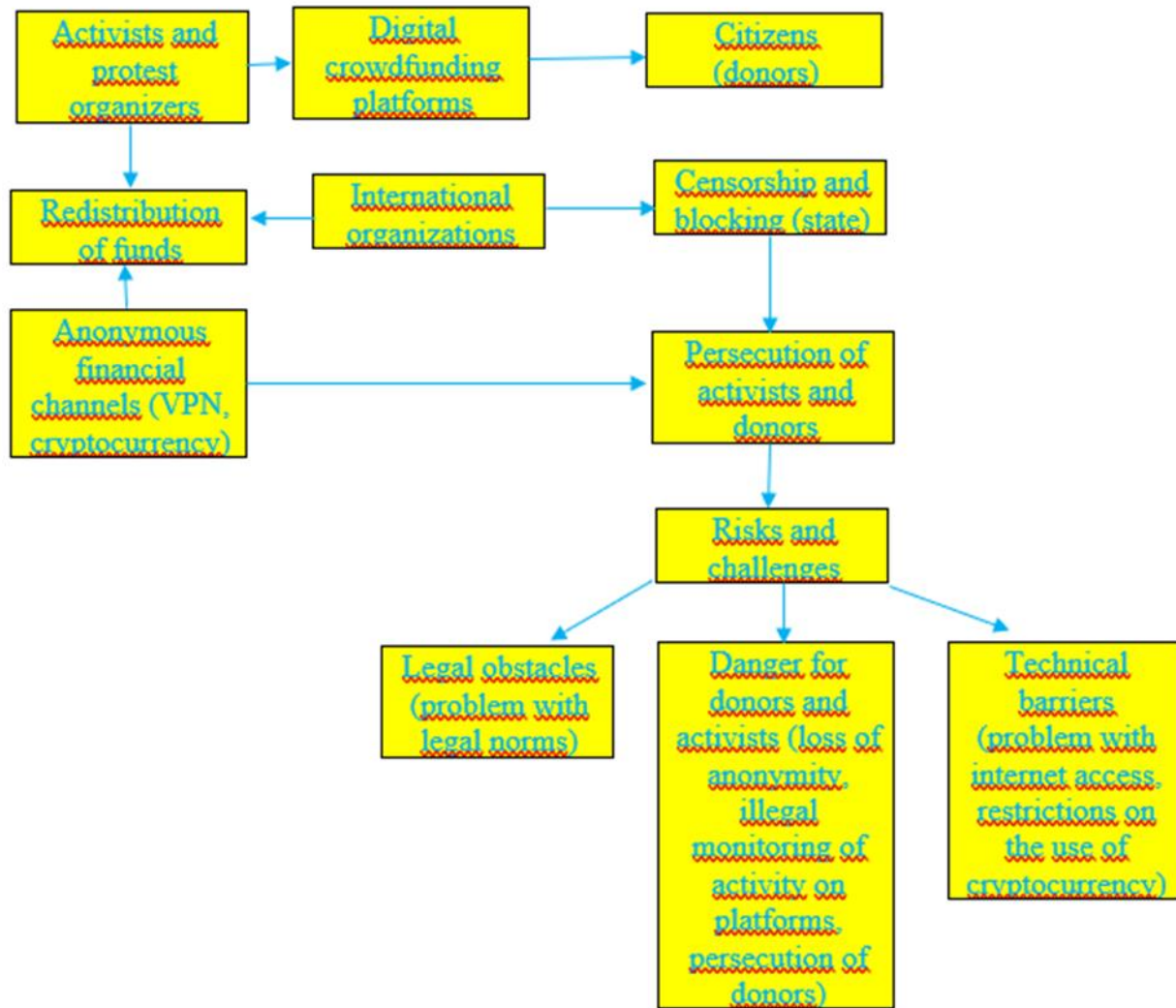
In these conditions, the protection of activists anonymity requires the usage of various technical and legal means. Message encryption, anonymous platforms, virtual private networks (VPNs), and other security tools have become essential for preserving personal information's privacy and protecting against repression. However, even these tools do not guarantee complete security, as authoritarian governments are constantly improving their methods of surveillance and data breaching (Howard, 2015). Despite numerous challenges, anonymity and data protection issues are critical to ensuring freedom of expression and protecting activists in such circumstances. Tools that help activists hide their locations and activities (especially by anonymizing Internet traffic or bypassing geographical blockings) allow them to actively counter surveillance by government agencies (Opp, 2022). One of the most vivid examples might be China's case. The government of China actively uses the technologies of surveillance, such as, for instance, the social credit system and facial recognition technology, to monitor citizens and harass activists (Liebman, & Curtis, 2015). The situation in Russia is worrying as well. After the beginning of the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022, the Russian government actively utilized technical means to track activists and block access to anonymous internet platforms such as VPNs. In 2021, Russian activists and journalists faced persecution after using anonymous tools to organize protests and spread information about repressions. In particular, the laws requiring user data storage in the Russian territory significantly facilitate access to activists' personal information for government structures. (Kulichkina, 2024). Turkey has also become an example of a country where the use of digital technologies to prosecute activists is a common practice. After the coup attempt in 2016, the government increased surveillance of citizens, including by tracking their online activities. In the anti-government protests in 2020, Turkish activists faced the blocking of anonymous communication channels and restrictions on access to VPNs. Human rights activists have reported numerous cases of persecution using data obtained through surveillance of Internet communications, as well as an increase in physical violence against protesters. In Egypt, after the fall of the regime of Hosni Mubarak, the Egyptian government started actively using technologies to surveil citizens (Sowers, 2016). It became apparent after the protests of 2019 when activists used anonymous platforms to organize protests. The Egyptian government has been actively blocking anonymous communication services and trying to gain access to personal data through mobile phones and online platforms (Books, 2019). In 2020, there were cases of prosecution of activists based on data obtained through monitoring of their activities on the Internet, including through social networks and messengers.

An important role in supporting protest movements is also played by digital platforms for fundraising and crowdfunding, especially in circumstances of restrictions on freedom of expression and repression observed in authoritarian states. Such platforms allow protest organizers and activists to receive financial support from the general public, which ensures the stability and development of movements, even under political pressure. In many cases, these tools become necessary to cover the expenses for organizing protest actions, providing legal assistance, supporting injured participants, and financing other activities related to activist

activities. (Way, 2023). One of the main aspects of crowdfunding the protest movements is the ability to mobilize resources directly from citizens who support the movement without relying on traditional funding channels that the state or large organizations may control. Fundraising via digital platforms allows the creation of transparent and rapid mechanisms to attract support, which is important when government structures may block or restrict other funding methods. It also allows donors to remain anonymous, particularly in countries with authoritarian regimes, where participation in protests leads to persecution (Castells, 2017). In some cases, crowdfunding activities become not only a way of financial support but also a means of drawing attention to socio-political problems, raising awareness of the struggle of activists and protest movements at the international level. Platforms that support crowdfunding campaigns provide the opportunity to create viral campaigns capable of uniting thousands of people around the world around a particular issue, which increases the effectiveness of protests and international pressure on governments. Additionally, digital fundraising platforms enable organizers of protest movements to respond quickly to unforeseen situations. For example, in cases of violent dispersal of protests or arrests of participants, a crowdfunding platform could become a leading source of raising funds for assistance or support for the families of the injured activists. In the circumstances of the digital economy, such platforms create new possibilities for mobility and efficient organization of protest actions while reducing physical and social barriers to attracting funding (Luhmann, et al., 2022).

Despite all the advantages of crowdfunding platforms being used by protest movements, they still face many challenges. The first aspect lies in controlling finances and the risks of government authorities blocking or censoring such platforms. It is known that in some authoritarian countries, their governments try to limit access to funding for opposition movements by blocking platforms or implementing digital surveillance of transactions. Apart from that, there are risks related to the probable leakage of the personal data of donors, which may lead to persecution or other forms of repression (Figure 3).

In general, the role of digital fundraising platforms in protest movements is to provide movements with financial independence, transparency, and rapid mobilization of resources to support their activities. Such platforms become an important tool in implementing protest initiatives; however, they require careful protection against possible attempts at control and censorship by state structures, especially in authoritarian countries, where the freedom of funding and organizing protests can be significantly limited. One of the most apparent examples of crowdfunding technologies and digital platforms being used might be Belarus, where, after the attempted falsification of the 2020 presidential election results, protest movements actively applied these technologies. Mobile platforms and social networks have become the main channels for organizing protests, and crowdfunding has made it possible to raise funds for the support of affected activists and legal aid (Onuch, & Sasse, 2022). Nevertheless, the government of Belarus blocked access to many financial platforms and digital services as a response to the protests, and as a result, it made the process of fundraising more difficult. Despite that, volunteers and international organizations continued their financial support through alternative platforms, which confirmed the importance of digital channels for protest movements in the country (Brodovskaya, et al., 2024). Hong Kong can also serve as an example of a case where crowdfunding played a significant role in the protests of 2019-2020 against a bill to amend the Fugitive Offenders Ordinance. Protesters used crowdfunding to raise funds for organizing protests, purchasing protective equipment from the police, and supporting victims (Martin, 2024). The Chinese government is also actively blocking access to such platforms and trying to deport individuals seen to be providing financial support to opposition movements. Yet, regardless of severe control, crowdfunding campaigns to support protests, particularly in Tibet and Xinjiang, often use international fundraising platforms to bypass censorship (Christian, 2020). Turkey has also become an example of the use of crowdfunding to fund protests, especially after the 2016 coup attempt. After that, the Turkish government tightened its control over information and finances, making it difficult for activists to access crowdfunding platforms. However, digital tools are still being used to raise funds, mainly to cover legal aid costs for protesters and their families (Burak, 2021). In Egypt, crowdfunding platforms have also become important for supporting protest movements since the 2011 revolution. However, following increased repression and control over information, the Egyptian government began to actively block funding to opposition groups and protest movements (Earl, et al., 2022). Nonetheless, the activists kept using anonymous channels to raise funds and support their initiatives, which shows the importance of such platforms in countries where repression makes it much more challenging to organize protests. All these examples illustrate how crowdfunding activities have become an important tool for protest movements, allowing them to mobilize resources in conditions of repression. Although many governments are trying to block or limit access to such platforms, digital technologies remain important for funding protest initiatives and supporting their participants in many countries with authoritarian regimes.



**Fig. 4. Digital platforms for crowdfunding in protest movements**

An important aspect of this problem is the role of technology in recording violations of human rights. With the help of mobile devices, activists can record repressions and violations of their rights, and then distribute these materials via the Internet. Video recordings and photographs can become a powerful tool for disclosing violence by the police or the military, as well as a mechanism to pressure governments (McQuiston, 2019). Documented crimes against protesters are posted on online platforms, allowing activists and human rights defenders to organize legal support for victims of political repression, contact international organizations for help, or create online petitions. For instance, when after the presidential elections in 2020, mass protests began in Belarus, they were brutally suppressed by the authorities, resulting in many activists suffering arrests, torture, and other forms of persecution. A well-known human rights defender and leader of the “Vyasna” center, Ales Bieliatskyi became one of the first to turn to international organizations for help, including Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch. Soon, human rights activists like U. Labkovich, V. Stefanovich, V. Sazonov S. Sysia, and the director of the Center for Legal Transformation “Lawtrend”, Olga Smolyanko, joined him. International organizations have publicly condemned the use of force against the protesters and demanded the release of political prisoners. Human rights activists have also actively appealed to the UN to take measures to protect human rights in Belarus (Minakov, 2021). The 2019–2020 Hong Kong protests against the bill to amend the Fugitive Offenders Ordinance also became the subject of international appeals, and protesters used digital platforms for fundraising and mobilizing support but also faced prosecution (Lily, 2020). One example is the activist, founder, and leader of the public movement Scholarism, Joshua Wong, who repeatedly sought support from international organizations such as Amnesty

International for support after being imprisoned in 2024. Wong also appealed to international governments and organizations, calling for sanctions against Chinese officials for human rights violations in Hong Kong (Martin, 2024). It is also worth mentioning Alaa Abd El-Fattah, who is an important symbol of resistance to the authoritarian regime not only in Egypt but also beyond its borders, and who also repeatedly appealed to the European Court of Human Rights, and his literary works, some of which were secretly transferred from prison and published in international media, became a powerful call for unity for all who fight for freedom of speech and human rights (Fishere, 2024). However, Alaa Abd El-Fattah's situation is just one of many similar stories. Thousands of less famous activists in Egypt are imprisoned simply for expressing their opinions on social media. By allegedly concerning national security, the government systematically restricts freedom of speech, the right to peaceful assembly, and the right to association. While Alaa Abd El-Fattah is imprisoned, his case is a poignant reminder of the risks facing those who choose to criticize the Egyptian regime. This imprisonment not only demonstrates the government's determination to suppress dissent but also inspires many to continue fighting for freedom. All these examples show how protesters and human rights activists constantly turn to international organizations for help and protection in the conditions of persecution that occur during the protest activities. It is important to note that international organizations such as Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, the European Court of Human Rights, as well as the United Nations have repeatedly become platforms for the protection of the rights of people who have become victims of political repression in authoritarian and semi-authoritarian countries (Tufekci, 2018).

Information technologies in conditions of limited political freedoms provide activists with new opportunities to fight for human rights and democratic values. They serve as tools for anonymous communication, mobilization, protection from persecution, fundraising, and global solidarity. At the same time, these technologies create new challenges for the political authorities regarding information control, citizens' rights protection, and data security.

### Discussion

The research showed that technologies have become important tools for developing political movements and activism in authoritarian regimes, providing new opportunities for organization, mobilization, and struggle for human rights in conditions of limited freedoms. As said before, in authoritarian states, where democratic institutions are weakened or entirely controlled by the government, new technologies allow activists to overcome the many restrictions imposed on freedom of expression, assembly, and association (Simpson, et al., 2020). One of the most important achievements of digital technologies in this context is its ability to empower activists to communicate and organize, even when physical access to traditional venues for protest or political discussion is limited. This point of view is also supported by Tim Wood (2022), who stated that different platforms, such as Twitter, Telegram, and Facebook, have become not only a means for the rapid dissemination of news but also important tools for organizing protest actions. For example, in the Belarusian protests of 2020, social networks became the primary channels for coordinating actions and interacting between protesters, despite government attempts to block access to the Internet and block these tools. These platforms have become not just a place for information exchange but also platforms for creating content that draws the attention of the world community to the situation in the country (Onuch, & Sasse, 2022).

Studies show that one of the most important features technology provides to activists in authoritarian countries is the ability to maintain anonymity and protect personal data. Surveillance systems in countries such as Russia, China, and Iran allow governments to access communications and monitor the online activity of their citizens. Accordingly, data protection technologies such as VPN, Tor, or other anonymization tools are becoming vital for activists to keep themselves safe. In this context, a conclusion made by Manuel Castells (Castells, 2024) seems to be totally accurate. He states that using such technologies allows not only to avoid monitoring by government structures but also provides an effective communication channel in conditions of censorship and repression.

Many scientists emphasize that new technologies open up access to new funding mechanisms for activists. In the conditions of severe economic sanctions and control by state bodies, crowdfunding has become one of the main sources of funding for lots of protest movements (Way, 2023). As stated by Niklas Luhmann (Luhmann, et al., 2022), platforms similar to GoFundMe or Patreon enable citizens from around the world to financially support opposition movements and political activists operating in countries with authoritarian regimes. Fundraising via these online platforms allows activists to bypass traditional financial channels that may be under government control or sanctions (Min, 2023). The point of view of the scientists

confirms the thesis of the authors regarding the importance of technologies for the development of political movements and activism in authoritarian regimes.

Censorship resistance is another important aspect where technologies are drastically important. Authoritarian regimes often long to limit access to information that's crucially important for their citizens, including information on human rights violations, protests, and political repressions (Henry, 2021). However, with the help of technologies such as anti-censorship tools, activists can bypass government blocks and continue publishing and sharing information through independent media platforms or specialized sites. For instance, during the protests caused by a fuel price increase in Iran, Iranian activists used censorship bypassing VPN services, which allowed them to maintain communication with international mass media and human rights organizations (Manal al-Sharif, 2017).

Scientists support the opinion of M. Lazarovych, O. Rudakevych, and others on digital technologies also allowing activists to create alternative media platforms that governments do not control. In authoritarian countries, where independent mass media are usually censored or banned, such platforms allow not only to cover events in real-time but also to generate analysis and investigations that sometimes cannot be published in state mass media. In these circumstances, independent journalists and activists use the newest platforms to create content that helps to draw attention to important social and political issues.

The other important tendency is that technologies allow activists to respond quickly to changes in the political landscape. In authoritarian countries, where changes happen rapidly and often are accompanied by repression, it is important to adapt protest strategies and change the direction of activity with the help of modern technologies (Zuboff, 2019). Mobile applications, chats, automated systems, and monitoring systems based on Artificial Intelligence allow getting and processing information instantly. This process facilitates the effective organization of protests and responses to political challenges (Martin, 2024).

Scientific research has proved that digital technologies facilitate international solidarity. In countries where all forms of protests are usually accompanied by violent suppression, support from the international community is essential (Pinghui, 2020). By using social media and digital platforms, activists can involve international organizations in defending their rights, which can put additional pressure on the government to change policies or stop repressions. The Internet also allows activists to receive worldwide support from other activists and public organizations. It helps them to create a network of solidarity and collective action (Opp, 2022). In general, technologies have become an indispensable tool in the struggle for human rights and democratic values in authoritarian regimes. Not only do they provide opportunities for organizing protests and mobilizing resources, but they also allow for security, bypassing censorship, and funding for opposition movements. In circumstances when traditional ways of resistance often face severe restrictions, technologies open up new opportunities to fight for justice and human rights.

## Conclusions

Technologies have become important for facilitating political movements in countries that restrict freedom of expression and civil rights. Social media, mobile applications, and other digital platforms allow activists to organize protest movements, mobilize support, quickly spread information, and overcome censorship. At the same time, these technologies create new challenges, especially in security, where activists may become victims of cyberattacks, government surveillance, or privacy violations. Authoritarian regimes adapt their strategies by using the most recent technologies for controlling civil movements, making activists constantly adapt their fighting methods. Despite these asperities, global digital networks and international support keep playing the most important role in supporting activism and helping to fight for human rights in conditions of political repression. Technologies provide new possibilities for empowering democracies but still require careful balancing between their use for democratic change and protection from potential threats. The technologies are important for changing the dynamics of political movements as well, especially in helping to create new forms of organization and interaction between activists. Different tools, such as VPN encryption, enable protestors to remain inconspicuous and safe, which is especially important in strict information control and repression conditions. At the same time, digital platforms allow individuals from different countries to unite in global movements, exchange experiences, and create international pressure on authoritarian regimes. However, using technologies has its drawbacks, such as a high risk of disinformation and information manipulations, which can undermine trust in political movements. Because of this, the technologies may not only broaden the possibilities for citizen mobilization and activism but also can create new challenges that need to be addressed at the strategic level of activists, human rights defenders, and international organizations.

Thus, on the one hand, technologies can create new opportunities for political activism, particularly by forming “digital platforms” for activists, for their interactions, for sharing resources and information, and for receiving support at the international level, giving them additional strength and visibility. On the other hand, technologies also cause the emergence of new forms of social control and manipulation. For instance, by utilizing big databases and Artificial intelligence algorithms, governments may not only surveil their citizens but also foresee and prevent protests using social forecasting strategies. Scientific debates on that topic have shown that the indicated questions need further and more specific research in a long-term perspective, which the authors of this article will continue to work on.

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