

Abstract

Research on state-led repression usually focuses on domestic politics. However, the ability of contemporary authoritarian regimes to influence the quality of life of their citizens rarely stops at the state border. Repressive regimes today are increasingly able to target their domestic opponents outside their own territory. Recently, therefore, scholars have increasingly interpreted the interaction of authoritarian states with their critically minded citizens in a transnational context. According to them, the focus of an authoritarian regime's control over a society remains internal, but the increasing number of cases of physical attacks, intimidation or silencing of opinionated competitors even after they have decided to go abroad has led scholars to think about transnational repression and transnational authoritarianism. This thesis examines the validity of their conclusions using the case of the Russian state's relationship with its critical citizens between 2014 and 2021, based on theories of transnationalism and totalitarianism. Early scholarly studies have shown that Russia punishes its citizens abroad through several different methods. This thesis focuses on recorded cases of physical violence, restrictions on movement and forced displacement, threats, surveillance, and information operations carried out against Russian expatriates who are critical of the Kremlin or who are perceived as a threat to the Russian regime. It also examines Russia's treatment of citizens abroad whom it considers to be an extension of its influence.