

# IPW LECTURES

## **Resistance Without Revolution. How to Understand ‚Opposition‘ in Authoritarian States. Lessons from Azerbaijan and Belarus**

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### **Abstract:**

In recent literature on post-Soviet electoral revolutions in places where attempts at regime change through popular protest did not succeed, opposition groups are often simply regarded as ‘failed’. The idea behind the project that will be in focus for this lecture was to go beyond the ‘successful’ vs. ‘failed’ narrative. Our in-depth study of the strategies and activities of oppositional actors in autocratic Belarus and Azerbaijan found opposition actors are maintained in a ‘ghetto’, often virtual, tightly managed by the ruling authorities. The opposition develops various tactics to engage with the outside, striving to reduce the ghetto walls. To this end our project proposes a typology of what we call oppositional ‘resistance models’: electoral, medial, lobbying and through education. The models highlight what makes ‘opposition’ in authoritarian states and are an important step towards a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon.