

IPW LECTURES

On Russia's war against Ukraine and epistemic imperialism

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Monday, 17 October 2022, 16:45h

Location: Hörsaal III NIG Erdgeschoß

Abstract

Many around the world were surprised by Russia's full-out war against Ukraine since February 2022. Just as many around the world, if not more, were surprised by Ukraine's – and Ukrainians' – resistance to Russian aggression. But they shouldn't have been surprised by either of the two: Just as Russia's invasion is perfectly in line with Russia's past conduct in Ukraine, in the broader region and in Russia itself, so Ukraine's civic resistance is very much in line with Ukrainians' past experiences of resistance to authoritarianism and civic mobilization in the face of an existential threat that Russia poses. This lecture exposes the epistemic imperialism that lies behind the 'predictions-that-did-not', starting with the labels we use for the events and the experts we entertain to comment about them.