

# Rechtskul- turen

Forum  
Transregionale  
Studien

Recht / im Kontext



## Rechts- kulturen Colloquium

Mon 8 Jul 2013  
18:00—20:00

*Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin,  
Juristische Fakultät,  
Room E25,  
Unter den Linden 9,  
10099 Berlin*

RECHTSKULTUREN —  
Confrontations Beyond Comparison  
[www.rechtskulturen.de](http://www.rechtskulturen.de)

## Between Integration and the Promotion of Difference: Ethno- religious Minorities under Imperial Rule

**Stefan B. Kirmse (RECHTSKULTUREN Fellow 2012/13)**  
**Comment: Bill Bowring (Birkbeck, University  
of London)**

**In his current research project “Law and Empire in Late Tsarist Russia”, Stefan Kirmse combines an investigation of law and law-enforcement with a study of central rule over a heterogeneous empire. Focusing on the central state’s dynamic relationship with its Muslim population, especially their use of courts, he exposes “minority policy” as a confusing set of ideas, proposals, and incoherent measures. These reflected an inherent tension in imperial rule insofar as different ethnic and religious groups experienced a whole spectrum of policies between increased efforts at legal and cultural homogenization and the promotion of difference.**

Stefan Kirmse examines court use by Muslim subjects of the Russian Empire as part of a plurality of legal orders and legal cultures. While arguing that ethnic and religious minorities were empowered by legal modernization and integrated into the institutional life of the Empire, he shows that various elements of discrimination remained. In so doing, he draws parallels with other imperial contexts and raises questions about the very notion of “minority”.