

# Rechtskul- turen

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## Rechts- kulturen Lecture

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7 p.m.

Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin,  
Großer Kolloquienraum,  
Wallotstraße 19, 14193 Berlin

Rechtskulturen —  
Confrontations Beyond  
Comparison

In cooperation with  
SIAS Summer Institute 2011/2012  
“Regulating the World Society:  
Law, Governance, and the Quest for  
Global Justice“

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forum-transregionale-studien.de](http://www.forum-transregionale-studien.de)

## Balakrishnan Rajagopal: Right to the City as a Human Right

### Limits and Promise

**The world is witnessing a massive shift from the rural to the urban, adding the equivalent of seven new Chicagos every year, most acutely in countries of the South such as India and China. For the first time in history, more than half of the world's population already lives in towns and cities.** But this process of change has also been deeply exclusionary, creating vast pockets of poverty, deepening inequality, enormous negative social and ecological impacts, and precarious living and work conditions for millions. Can we imagine the assertion of new rights by the excluded as a way to make this process of change less exclusionary and unsustainable? Drawing on Henri Lefebvre's notion of the “right to the city”, and inspired by the concrete social experiments of rights-making politics enacted at the intersection of States and social movements, a new language and approach of international human rights is needed for a world of global cities.

Professor Balakrishnan Rajagopal is Associate Professor of Law and Development and Director of the MIT Program on Human Rights & Justice, Center for International Studies at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge (Mass.). He is also Head of the International Development Group, Department of Urban Studies & Planning, at MIT. In 2011, he is a Fellow at the Institute for Advanced Studies at The Hebrew University in Jerusalem.

His recent works include: *International Law From Below: Development, Social Movements and Third World Resistance* (2003); *International Law and the Third World: Reshaping Justice* (Co-editor, 2008).