Preface

In 2017 the editors of this volume initiated a series of lectures at Queen Mary University of London on the methodological challenges of comparative disciplines, under the auspices and with the financial support of the Centre for Law and Society in a Global Context and the Institute for the Humanities and Social Sciences at this university.

The starting point were some specific challenges faced in comparative legal scholarship: What does ‘comparing’ in comparative law mean? Which methods could or should we use? As there are many comparative disciplines in the humanities and the social sciences, we hoped to find answers, or at least useful suggestions, from those disciplines. Hence, we wanted to confront comparative law with a number of other comparative disciplines, and their methodological problems and choices.

Between 8 March 2017 and 22 November 2018 the following lectures took place at the School of Law of Queen Mary University of London at its Mile End campus. All of the lecturers were invited because of their personal experience of doing comparative research.

1. ‘Introduction to the Lecture Series’ by Maurice Adams (Tilburg Law School, Tilburg University)
2. ‘Path dependency in the methodology of comparative disciplines’ by David Nelken (Dickson Poon School of Law, King’s College London)
3. ‘Methodology of Comparative Politics’ by Sean Hanley (School of Slavonic and East European Studies (SSEES), University College London) with a reply by Sionaidh Douglas-Scott (School of Law, Queen Mary University of London)
4. ‘Methods in Comparative Cultural Studies’ by Greta Olson (Giessen University) with a reply by Jacco Bomhoff (Department of Law, London School of Economics and Political Science)
5. ‘Comparative Religion Studies’ by Peter van der Veer (Max Planck Institute for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity, Göttingen)
6. ‘Comparative Anthropology’ by Katrin Seidel (Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology, Department of Legal Anthropology, Halle)
7. ‘Comparative Linguistics’ by David Adger (School of Languages, Linguistics and Film, Queen Mary University of London)

8. 'Comparative Literature' by Nazli Nikjamal (School of Languages, Linguistics and Film, Queen Mary University of London) with a reply for both comparative linguistics and literature by Geoffrey Samuel (Kent Law School, University of Kent, Canterbury)
9. 'Comparative Philosophy' by Ralph Weber (Basel University) with a reply by Peter Lindseth (University of Connecticut School of Law)
10. 'Comparative History' by Kjell Ake Modéer (Faculty of Law, Lund University)
11. 'Comparative Sociology' by Jean-Pascal Daloz (CNRS France, University of Strasbourg)
12. 'Comparative Economics' by Bob Hancké (European Institute, London School of Economics and Political Science) with a reply for comparative history, sociology and economics by Mathias Siems (Durham University; as from 2019 European University Institute, Florence)
13. 'Conclusions of the Lecture Series' by Mark Van Hoecke (School of Law, Queen Mary University of London)

Sessions were chaired by Roger Cotterrell (School of Law, Queen Mary University of London), Paula Giliker (Bristol University), Eric Heinze (School of Law, Queen Mary University of London) and Werner Menski (School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), London).

Some of the lecturers and participants in our series had the opportunity to write a chapter for this volume. Some other scholars joined us later. The perspective of the comparative lawyer was clearly present in our lecture series and still is in this volume, as a number of the authors (also) have a legal background. Nevertheless, the focus is also on methodological issues of comparative disciplines generally.

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We hope that this volume may be inspiring for scholars of any of the comparative disciplines dealt with.

Maurice Adams
Mark Van Hoecke
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