

DEBATES IN FAMILY LAW AROUND THE GLOBE  
AT THE DAWN OF THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY

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Prof. Katharina Boele-Woelki (Utrecht)

Prof. Frédérique Ferrand (Lyon)

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Prof. Maarit Jänterä-Jareborg (Uppsala)

Prof. Nigel Lowe (Cardiff)

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*Edited by*

Katharina BOELE-WOELKI

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Katharina Boele-Woelki (ed.)

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## PREFACE

In June 2008, the Utrecht Centre for European Research into Family Law (UCERF) organized an expert meeting of the authors of this volume. Upon the editor's invitation they had contributed to a special volume of the Utrecht Law Review dealing with comparative family law. All these contributions are compiled in this book. They address three issues that at the dawn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century have provoked passionate discussion. With regard to these issues legislative measures are being taken, judicial decisions vary also within singular jurisdictions, and arguments in legal literature are being exchanged. The topics concern:

- (1) (Compulsory) arrangements regarding children
- (2) Registration schemes for same-sex couples: new jurisdictions
- (3) The effectiveness of the *pater est* rule

The thematic contributions are preceded by two introductory articles. The historical introduction addresses the 'cultural constraints argument' which, according to a few legal scholars, prevents both spontaneous and the deliberate harmonization of family law. Is family law indeed embedded in unique national (legal) culture? What lessons can be learned from the past? The methodological introduction offers some general ideas as to how comparative family law is perceived and what it should entail, whereby a comparison is made between more recent developments in Europe and the United States of America. At the end a comparative synthesis of the discussions has been included.

The two-day expert meeting was positively evaluated. With no more than 30 participants it provided an excellent opportunity to really exchange and express ideas, opinions and concerns. The authors were all well prepared and familiar with the views of their colleagues as expressed in the respective contributions. In addition, the mix of experienced and young, but advanced family law experts, also turned out to be stimulating. All in all, the Utrecht debates on family law around the globe were successful from both a professional and a personal perspective.

Katharina Boele-Woelki  
Utrecht, December 2008



# LIST OF AUTHORS

*Antokolskaia, Masha*

Professor of Private Law, Faculty of Law, VU University, Amsterdam

*Blauwhoff, Richard J.*

LLM, MA, PhD Candidate at the Molengraaff Institute for Private Law, Utrecht University

*Boele-Woelki, Katharina*

Professor of Private International Law, Comparative Law and Family Law at the Molengraaff Institute for Private Law, Utrecht University, Chair of the Commission on European Family Law

*Bonini Baraldi, Matteo*

EU Research Adviser, Law, Political Sciences & Economics, Università di Bologna

*Curry-Sumner, Ian*

Senior University Lecturer and Researcher, Private International Law, Comparative Law and Family Law, UCERF and Molengraaff Institute for Private Law, Utrecht University

*Curry-Sumner, Scott*

University Lecturer, Common Law Systems, Private Law Department, Maastricht University

*Einhorn, Talia*

Professor of Law, Sha'arei Mishpat College of Law / Tel-Aviv University Faculty of Management

*Glennon, Theresa*

Professor of Law, Temple University Beasley School of Law, Philadelphia

*Granet, Frédérique*

Professor at the Robert Schuman University of Strasbourg, Director of the Department on Private Law in charge of the Master on Family Law

*Jeppesen de Boer, Christina G.*

University Lecturer and Researcher at the Molengraaff Institute for Private Law, Utrecht University

*Martins, Rosa*

Assistant Lecturer at the Family Law Centre, Faculty of Law, University of Coimbra

*Maxwell, Nancy G.*

Professor and Director of International Legal Programs, Washburn University School of Law, Topeka, Kansas

*Schrama, Wendy M.*

Senior University Lecturer and Researcher in Family Law at the Utrecht Centre for European Research into Family Law (UCERF) of the Molengraaff Institute for Private Law, Utrecht University

*Singer, Anna*

Associate Professor, Faculty of Law, Uppsala University, Uppsala

*Szeibert-Erdő, Orsolya*

Assistant Professor of Family Law, ELTE University of Budapest

*Vonk, Machteld*

University Lecturer and Researcher at the Molengraaff Institute for Private Law, Utrecht University

*De Vos, Pierre*

Professor of Constitutional Law, Law Faculty, University of the Western Cape, Bellville, Cape Town



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**COMPARATIVE SYNTHESIS**

**RESEARCH QUESTIONS IN FAMILY LAW DERIVED FROM A  
COMPARATIVE SYNTHESIS OF GENERAL TRENDS AND  
DEVELOPMENTS**

KATHARINA BOELE-WOELKI, BENTE BRAAT, IAN CURRY-SUMNER,  
CHRISTINA JEPPESEN DE BOER, PIA LOKIN, MACHTELD VONK, NORA  
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