

# Preface

*Facing the Limits of the Law* is the outcome of a research project that we launched in Spring 2005 at the Faculty of Law of the University of Leuven. We invited legal researchers and criminologists, trained in a diversity of (legal) disciplines, to share their respective research interests, to discuss their research topics, hypotheses, and results. Time, openness, and a change towards a more discursive research culture was needed, in order to break down the disciplinary walls that often separate legal researchers from each other and from criminologists.

Because common research involving a variety of legal fields and disciplines requires a common language and a common lens from which legal reality in all its diversity can be interpreted, we first developed a substantial working paper, subsequently commented on by the different contributors during a number of research seminars held in Leuven in 2005, and ultimately published (in Dutch, in *Rechtskundig Weekblad* 2005-2006, 1201-1217). “The Limits of the Law (Introduction)” presents a non-exhaustive typology of the limits of the law ‘from the inside out’, that is, starting from a broad understanding of the main functions and characteristics of late-modern law in the tradition of the rule of law. It offers a conceptual ‘umbrella’ and a common frame of reference from which the participants could borrow concepts and methodology, allowing them to compose a first abstract focusing on the types of limits of the law in their research field.

Subsequently, we organised a series of seminars during which the abstracts were collectively discussed by all the participants. The discussions helped participants in refining their research questions and methodology, but also in discovering that they were engaged in a common research enterprise. Then, during a research weekend in September 2006, all participants presented and discussed their draft papers on the limits of the law in their respective research fields. Afterwards, we summarised the comments and recommendations and communicated them to the contributors in order to finalise their individual papers.

It is important to stress that most of the chapters of *Facing the Limits of the Law* result from these series of intense closed and open research seminars held in Leuven, thereby guaranteeing integrated and peer-reviewed research. A few experts joined the project at a later stage.

Finally, we tried to do justice to the added value of each contribution to the project as a whole. When reading “Facing the Limits of the Law (Conclusion)”, the reader will discover how the separate chapters contributed impressively to refining and improving the conceptual framework within which the project was started.

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