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*Can you believe? Reasonable religious
accommodation in public educational
institutions – a conceptual analysis and
Dutch case study*



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*'What we seek,
We shall find,
What we flee from,
Flees from us.'*
R. W. EMERSON

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ABSTRACT

Religious diversity: a phenomenon with which liberal immigrant societies are faced in different societal layers, including, and maybe predominantly in educational settings. Given the latter's correlation with the personal development and identity of students in particular, and societal integration more general, how educational institutions accommodate religious diversity of students seems a question worthwhile of closer examination. To that end, the first part of the present dissertation consists of a conceptual-theoretical analysis of the notion of reasonable accommodation and its underpinning principles of material equality, the freedom of religion and inclusive education, thereby attempting to give an answer to the question: "*accommodating diversity in general, and educational religious diversity in particular: what, why, when and who?*" Given the dissertation's focus on public educational institutions, possible tensions between religious accommodation and the principle of state neutrality will also be examined. As an indispensable corollary to the first part, the second part concretises the former through practical illustrations from Dutch soil, in turn attempting to give an answer to the question: "*accommodating educational religious diversity: how?*". The present dissertation combines theory and practice, a *sine qua non* for an integral comprehension of the topical and heated debate on religious accommodation. Though the analysis is conducted mainly from a legal perspective, given the pervasive and inextricably connection between religious accommodation and fundamental societal questions, it is both unavoidable and inspiring that broader philosophical and sociological perspectives be included where needed.