

The Author

Dr. Rosemarie van den Breemer (1973) has a PhD from the Faculty of Theology at the University of Oslo and an MPhil and MA in comparative political science from the New School for Social Research, New York City. She is currently a postdoctoral fellow at VID Specialized University, Oslo, with a historical and comparative project on 'The Disability Family'.

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Providing a striking image of societal accommodation this book compares state responses to Muslim and humanist burial needs in three European countries. Such accommodation is typically understood in terms of national models. Van den Breemer, however, shows that policy responses in fact follow distinctive types of logic between the various levels of governance, and that material solutions matter as well. While indeed large legal and discursive national differences between states remain, in praxis they do the same. In a departure from this major finding, van den Breemer argues for a 'two-pronged strategy' in the study of state responses to diversity, one that oscillates between theory development and everyday empirical analysis. Thus, the volume outlines a methodologically more coherent research agenda for the comparative study of religion, secularism, society, and state.

Van den Breemer's fascinating study of the religious governance of cemeteries by secular state institutions proves that cemeteries have become a privileged site to observe empirically the various ways in which the accommodation of new diversity takes place in today's Western European societies.

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