

**Balancing Educational Freedom and State Governance: The Case of Cornelius Haga
Lyceum and Article 23 of the Dutch Constitution**

Master Thesis

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Abstract

This thesis explores the dynamic interplay between educational freedom and state governance within the Dutch educational system, focusing on the case of the Cornelius Haga Lyceum. Under Article 23 of the Dutch Constitution, the right to establish schools based on religious or philosophical beliefs is protected, fostering a diverse educational landscape. However, the Cornelius Haga Lyceum has become a focal point of controversy, facing allegations of extremist influences, financial mismanagement, and governance issues. These challenges have prompted significant public and governmental scrutiny, raising questions about the balance between institutional autonomy and the need for robust oversight to uphold democratic values and educational integrity. Through a thorough analysis of parliamentary records, motions, reports, and documents, this study highlights the complexities and tensions involved in implementing educational freedom in a pluralistic society. The findings emphasize the necessity of balancing autonomy with regulatory measures to safeguard educational quality and societal cohesion, contributing to ongoing debates on educational policy. This research offers valuable insights for policymakers, educators, and researchers navigating the evolving landscape of religious education in the Netherlands.

Key words: Cornelius Haga Lyceum, educational freedom, Artikel 23, policy, religious education

Introduction

“Islamic school undermines Dutch values, say officials” – this headline encapsulates the controversy that has surrounded the Cornelius Haga Lyceum since its inception. The Amsterdam-based Islamic secondary school has been at the center of a storm of legal battles and public scrutiny, accused of fostering extremist ideologies and financial mismanagement (Kouwenhoven & Holdert, 2019). This controversy highlights the broader tensions in Dutch society regarding the balance between educational freedom and state governance (Ministerie van Justitie en Veiligheid, 2019).

The establishment of Islamic schools in the Netherlands began in the early 1980s, following the growing Muslim immigrant population in the country. The first Islamic primary school, Al Maes, was founded in Rotterdam in 1988 (Driessen & Valkenberg, 2000). This was a significant development in the Dutch educational landscape, as it marked the beginning of formal Islamic education within the framework of the Dutch educational system. The number of Islamic schools has gradually increased over the years, reflecting the demographic changes and the demand from Muslim communities for education that aligns with their religious and cultural values. By the early 2000s, there were over 30 Islamic primary schools and a few secondary schools spread across the Netherlands (Driessen, 2006). These schools aim to provide quality education while incorporating Islamic teachings and values, adhering to the national curriculum alongside religious education.

The Cornelius Haga Lyceum, an Islamic secondary school in Amsterdam, was established in 2011 following the closure of the Islamic College Amsterdam (ICA). Since its inception, the school has faced numerous legal battles and public controversies. In 2019, the Dutch General Intelligence and Security Service (AIVD) released a report alleging that the school’s leaders were influenced by Salafist activists and had ties to the Caucasus Emirate, a

group linked to the Islamic State. This report sparked intense debates in the Dutch Parliament regarding the safety and integrity of education (Laemers, 2021).

Amsterdam Mayor Femke Halsema demanded the resignation of the school's board, and Education Minister Arie Slob threatened to withdraw the school's funding. The Education Inspectorate concluded that Salafism did not influence the school's curriculum but criticized the financial management and the board's connections with extremist individuals. In response, legislative initiatives were proposed, including the "Law on Expanding Administrative Enforcement Tools" and new citizenship education legislation to give the minister more authority to intervene in schools failing to meet citizenship education requirements (Laemers, 2021).

These debates highlighted the tension between educational freedom and government oversight, raising fundamental questions about balancing educational autonomy with state intervention. The Cornelius Haga Lyceum case is particularly significant as it illustrates how political and societal concerns about integration, security, and extremism influence the interpretation and application of educational freedom. The conflict demonstrates how constitutional guarantees of educational freedom can clash with the state's need to uphold democratic values and social cohesion, reflecting the protective power of Article 23 of the Dutch Constitution (Broeksteeg, 2015; Biesta, 2021).

Educational freedom is a cornerstone of the Dutch educational system, enshrined in Article 23 of the Dutch Constitution. Established in 1917, this principle guarantees the right to establish and maintain schools based on religious or philosophical convictions, ensuring equal state funding for both public and private institutions that meet certain educational standards (Biesta, 2021; Vermeulen, 2020).

The Dutch system of *bijzonder onderwijs* (religious schools) allows schools founded on specific religious or ideological principles to operate alongside public schools. These

include institutions affiliated with various religious denominations such as Protestant, Catholic, Islamic, and Jewish faiths, as well as those based on alternative pedagogical philosophies like Montessori and Waldorf education (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek, 2017). This dual system promotes a pluralistic educational landscape, enabling parents to choose schools that align with their beliefs and values, thus fostering a sense of community and belonging within diverse social groups (Broeksteeg, 2015; Glenn & De Groof, 2002).

Article 23 underscores the dual responsibility of the state: to respect educational freedom and to ensure educational quality and accessibility for all children. This involves setting and maintaining standards for teacher competence, the soundness of education, and the organization of educational institutions (Vermeulen, 2020). The government is tasked with a delicate balance: upholding the autonomy of schools while enforcing regulations that ensure a high standard of education for all students (Onderwijsraad, 2012).

The establishment of Article 23 reflects long-standing philosophical and ideological debates in Dutch society, dating back to the 19th century. The Education Act of 1806, influenced by Enlightenment ideals, aimed to promote civic virtues and national unity through secular public education. However, this secular approach met resistance from religious communities, particularly Catholics and orthodox Protestants, who argued that education could not be truly neutral (Janssens, 2012; De Gaay Fortman, 2011). This conflict, known as the “schoolstrijd” (school struggle), culminated in the 1917 constitutional revision, ensuring equal funding and recognition for religious schools (Janssens, 2012; Lijphart, 1975).

In contemporary times, the application of Article 23 has sparked debates about inclusivity and the regulation of religious education. Critics argue that religious schools like the Cornelius Haga Lyceum, an Islamic secondary school in Amsterdam, can create social segregation and may not always meet national educational standards or promote democratic values (Vermeulen, 2020; Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap, 2021). The

Cornelius Haga Lyceum faced allegations of promoting extremist ideologies and financial mismanagement, highlighting the challenges of balancing educational freedom with rigorous oversight (Laemers, 2021).

Debates also focus on the provision of state funding to religious schools. Some argue that public funds should not support institutions that may promote values contrary to societal norms and democratic principles (Vermeulen, 2020). There is ongoing discussion about whether state funding for these schools perpetuates social divisions and hinders the integration of minority communities. Conversely, proponents assert that financial parity is essential to uphold educational freedom, allowing parents to choose schools reflecting their convictions without financial constraints (De Vries, 2008). This financial support is seen as vital for maintaining a diverse and pluralistic educational landscape.

The Cornelius Haga Lyceum case underscores the broader issues associated with educational freedom in the Netherlands. While the school aims to provide education aligned with Islamic values, concerns about its adherence to Dutch educational standards and its impact on social integration have led to intense scrutiny. This situation exemplifies the delicate balance between respecting educational freedom and ensuring that all educational institutions contribute positively to Dutch society.

Globally, similar issues are evident. In the United States, debates about state funding for religious schools and the separation of church and state mirror these tensions. The *Zelman v. Simmons-Harris* case highlights the struggle to balance school choice with a secular education system (Glenn & De Groof, 2002). Belgium's educational landscape, characterized by state-funded religious schools, raises concerns about social segregation and integration (Merry & Driessen, 2016). The UK's Trojan Horse affair, involving schools accused of promoting extremist views, parallels the scrutiny faced by the Cornelius Haga Lyceum, emphasizing the need for rigorous oversight to ensure that educational institutions uphold

societal values (Jackson, 2003). Germany's model of integrating religious education within a state-regulated framework further illustrates a balanced approach to maintaining educational freedom while promoting democratic values and social integration (Bock, 2012).

The Cornelius Haga Lyceum case underscores the importance of policies that respect religious diversity while ensuring all schools contribute positively to social cohesion and democratic values. This thesis explores the intersection of educational freedom, as stated in Article 23 of the Dutch Constitution, and religious education, with a specific focus on the Cornelius Haga Lyceum. The study aims to provide a nuanced understanding of how the principles interact with the challenges and opportunities presented by religious education in a pluralistic society (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek, 2017). Analyzing political debates within the Tweede Kamer is particularly relevant for this topic because it is the primary legislative body responsible for representing public interests and holding the government accountable. The debates reflect a microcosm of national sentiment, capturing diverse perspectives and concerns regarding educational freedom and state governance. This is crucial in the case of the Cornelius Haga Lyceum, where the intersection of national security, religious freedom, and educational integrity requires careful balancing. Although societal perspectives on liberalism and communitarianism vary, these perspectives are represented in educational policymaking through the democratic system, providing crucial data in research into this topic. Examining these debates offers a clear view of how democratic processes influence policy and legislative frameworks for educational institutions in the Netherlands.

The central research question guiding this study is: how has the controversy surrounding the Cornelius Haga Lyceum challenged Article 23 of the Dutch Constitution and the principle of educational freedom? To address this research question, the study will delve into three sub-questions:

1. What are the main themes and standpoints in the parliamentary debates (records) regarding the Cornelius Haga Lyceum and Article 23?
2. What are the key policy positions and proposals in the parliamentary documents (e.g., motions, reports, committee findings) related to the Cornelius Haga Lyceum and Article 23?
3. How do the themes, policy positions, and insights from debates, motions and documents collectively portray the challenges to educational freedom in Article 23, in the context of the Cornelius Haga Lyceum controversy?

Theoretical framework

This theoretical framework explores various approaches to educational freedom and relates them to the Dutch educational system. The discussed theories and approaches, though sometimes conflicting, offer a broad perspective on educational freedom. This section aims to explain why these thinkers and traditions are considered and how their ideas contribute to a critical reflection on educational freedom in the Netherlands.

Educational freedom

Educational freedom, enshrined in Article 23 of the Dutch Constitution, represents the right to establish and maintain educational institutions based on religious or philosophical beliefs. This concept extends beyond mere institutional autonomy, encompassing broader philosophical dimensions that address the rights of individuals and communities to shape educational experiences according to their values (Berlin, 1969). At its core, the idea of freedom involves the absence of external constraints on individuals, allowing them to act according to their own will. In the context of education, freedom pertains to the autonomy of educators and learners to pursue and impart knowledge without undue interference. This notion aligns with Isaiah Berlin's distinction between *negative freedom*—the absence of obstacles to action—and *positive freedom*—the ability to act upon one's free will (Berlin, 1969). In educational settings, this dual concept of freedom translates to the liberty of educational institutions to design their curricula and the capacity of students to receive an education that aligns with their personal or communal values.

This dual nature of freedom underscores the importance of balancing autonomy with regulatory oversight to ensure quality and inclusivity within the educational system. The philosophical discourse on educational freedom is rich and multifaceted, drawing from various intellectual traditions. The aim of discussing various theoretical perspectives on educational freedom is to provide a comprehensive and critical examination of the underlying

principles and debates that shape this concept. By engaging with liberalism, communitarianism, and educational pluralism, this framework seeks to uncover the multifaceted nature of educational freedom and its implications for policy and practice in the Dutch context. These perspectives are particularly pertinent given the diverse and pluralistic nature of modern societies, where debates about educational freedom often intersect with issues of cultural diversity, social justice, and state intervention (Brighouse, 2006; Etzioni, 1995).

Liberalism and individual autonomy

Liberal theories of education emphasize individual autonomy and parental rights to choose educational paths for their children. This perspective, rooted in classical liberal thinkers such as John Locke and John Stuart Mill, advocates for minimal state interference in personal and educational matters, highlighting the freedom to pursue individual conceptions of the good life (Locke, 1693; Mill, 1859). Locke argued that education should develop a child's reason and moral sense, preparing them for independence and active citizenship, with parents, rather than the state, holding primary responsibility for their children's education. This idea aligns with negative liberty, defined as the absence of external constraints (Berlin, 1969).

Mill expanded on individual freedom, stressing its importance for personal development and social progress (Mill, 1859). He supported the "harm principle," where individuals are free to pursue their interests as long as they do not harm others. This principle supports the idea that educational institutions should respect individual autonomy, allowing parental and student choice (Mill, 1859; Gray, 1995). Mill's advocacy for diversity of thought and experimentation aligns closely with the idea of educational pluralism, where a variety of educational approaches are allowed to flourish (Gray, 1995).

In the context of education, liberalism promotes the idea that schools should provide a broad and neutral curriculum that allows students to explore various viewpoints and develop their own informed beliefs. This perspective supports the establishment of a wide range of educational institutions, from secular to religious, to cater to diverse parental preferences and student needs (Brighouse, 2006). Moreover, it implies that state intervention should be limited to ensuring basic educational standards and protecting the rights of children, rather than dictating the content or methods of education (Gutmann, 1999). Liberal educational theories also emphasize the importance of academic freedom, where teachers and students are free to engage in intellectual inquiry without undue interference. This freedom is seen as essential for fostering critical thinking and innovation, allowing educational institutions to serve as incubators for new ideas and perspectives (Nussbaum, 1997).

Liberalism supports various types of schools, including religious and cultural ones, reflecting its emphasis on individual choice (Brighouse, 2006). However, balancing parental rights with the state's responsibility to ensure quality education for all children is vital. Locke and Mill argued that parental control over education aligns with personal beliefs and values, opposing excessive state interference that could hinder individual growth and educational diversity (Locke, 1693; Mill, 1859).

However, critics argue that without adequate state oversight, educational freedom might lead to inequalities and the proliferation of educational institutions that do not meet broader societal goals of inclusivity and equal opportunity (Gutmann, 1999). There is also the concern that extreme emphasis on individual choice could undermine social cohesion and the collective good, as parents might prioritize personal or sectarian interests over common educational standards necessary for unity. Therefore, while liberalism offers a robust framework for understanding educational freedom, it necessitates a critical examination of its implications. The questions it raises about parental rights versus state responsibilities, the

balance between individual autonomy and social cohesion, and the potential risks of educational inequality and exclusion are essential for a nuanced and comprehensive analysis of educational freedom in any context, including the Netherlands.

Communitarianism and collective rights

Communitarianism's emphasis on community and collective rights raises important philosophical questions about balancing these with individual autonomy. Supporting community values can strengthen social cohesion, but it risks imposing dominant cultural norms on minority groups, potentially leading to marginalization. This tension is significant in the Dutch context, where the education system aims to balance individual freedoms with community values within a multicultural society.

Charles Taylor argues that modernity's focus on individual autonomy can erode communal bonds and belonging. He advocates for an education system that transmits community values and traditions, essential for developing a strong sense of self and moral orientation. In multicultural societies, education should support diverse cultural identities, creating curricula that reflect various histories and languages to foster pride and belonging (Taylor, 1991, 1994). Michael Sandel critiques liberalism's emphasis on individual autonomy, arguing it neglects social practices and communal relationships. Education should promote civic duty and communal responsibility to foster educational freedom that supports social cohesion (Sandel, 1982, 2009). Amitai Etzioni emphasizes balancing individual rights and social responsibilities. He advocates for education that fosters communal values and cooperation, promoting responsibility towards others and building cohesive societies. Schools should serve as community hubs, supporting educational freedom through both education and community activities (Etzioni, 1995, 2004).

Communitarian thinkers like Charles Taylor, Michael Sandel, and Amitai Etzioni argue that focusing solely on individual autonomy can erode communal bonds and belonging.

Taylor advocates for education systems that transmit community values and traditions, essential for developing a strong sense of self and moral orientation. This approach is relevant in multicultural societies but must ensure it does not compromise individual rights and freedoms. Critics argue that overemphasis on communal values might lead to conformity and suppress dissenting voices, hindering personal development and critical thinking (Gutmann, 1999). In the Netherlands, this could challenge accommodating diverse cultural and religious groups, risking alienation if community-specific values overshadow individual rights.

Sandel highlights the need for education to promote civic duty and communal responsibility to support social cohesion. This approach must balance social responsibility with protecting individual rights and maintaining inclusivity and diversity in education (Callan, 1997). For the Dutch case, fostering civic duty through education can support integration and social cohesion but must avoid marginalizing non-dominant cultural identities. Etzioni emphasizes balancing individual rights and social responsibilities, advocating for education that fosters communal values and cooperation. Schools should serve as community hubs, promoting social cooperation and addressing communal needs while ensuring all students receive equitable education that prepares them for both community participation and personal success (Strike, 2000; Kymlicka, 2001). In the Netherlands, schools must be inclusive spaces that reflect the country's diverse cultural fabric while promoting shared values and social cohesion.

Communitarianism's focus on community values and social cohesion has significant implications for religious education in the Netherlands. This approach supports developing schools that cater to specific religious, cultural, or philosophical communities, aligning education with these groups' values and traditions. Religious education thus plays a crucial role in maintaining and nurturing these community identities. However, balancing this emphasis with individual rights and freedoms is essential. Religious education institutions

must strive to be inclusive and equitable, providing quality education that respects both communal values and individual autonomy. This balance is crucial to prevent marginalization and ensure all students, regardless of background, have equal opportunities for personal and academic development.

In conclusion, communitarianism offers valuable insights into education's role in promoting social cohesion and community values. However, it requires critically balancing these goals with individual autonomy and rights. Ensuring that education systems, including religious education, are inclusive, equitable, and supportive of both personal and communal development is essential for fostering a cohesive and just society in the Netherlands.

Educational pluralism

Educational pluralism is grounded in the belief that a variety of educational options enhances freedom of choice for parents and students and promotes a more inclusive and responsive educational system. Key figures in the development of educational pluralism include scholars such as Charles Glenn, William Jeynes, and Ashley Berner.

Charles Glenn, in his work *The Myth of the Common School* (1988), argues for the recognition and support of diverse educational institutions to reflect the pluralistic nature of society. He contends that a common school model, which seeks to homogenize education, fails to respect the diversity of beliefs and values present in modern societies. Instead, Glenn advocates for a system where various types of schools can coexist, each reflecting different cultural, religious, or pedagogical approaches. William Jeynes has contributed significantly to the discussion on the benefits of religious and independent schools. In his research, Jeynes (2007) highlights how these schools often promote higher academic achievement and moral development. He argues that religious and independent schools provide unique environments that can cater to specific student needs, fostering both educational and personal growth.

Ashley Berner's *Pluralism and American Public Education* (2017) provides a comprehensive

analysis of how educational pluralism can be implemented in modern education systems. Berner emphasizes that educational pluralism does not merely mean the existence of different types of schools but requires a legal and financial framework that supports these schools equitably. She discusses various international models and how they successfully incorporate pluralism, suggesting that such systems can improve educational outcomes and social cohesion.

Educational pluralism promotes the establishment of diverse schools, catering to different religious, cultural, and pedagogical preferences. This diversity is seen as beneficial in fostering an inclusive society that respects and celebrates differences. However, this approach also raises several critical questions and potential challenges. One significant concern is the risk of educational fragmentation, where students from different backgrounds may have limited interaction with one another, potentially undermining social cohesion. Critics argue that without a common educational framework, the emphasis on diversity might lead to segregation and exacerbate social inequalities. Ensuring that all schools, regardless of their educational philosophy, meet basic educational standards and promote shared civic values is essential to mitigate these risks (Berger & Neuhaus, 1977).

In the Netherlands, educational pluralism supports the existence of a variety of schools. This diversity ensures that parents and students can choose schools that align with their values and beliefs. However, the Dutch experience also highlights the need for a balanced approach to ensure that educational pluralism does not compromise social cohesion and equal educational opportunities. The challenge lies in maintaining high educational standards across all types of schools while respecting their distinct identities. Policies must ensure that all schools provide quality education and foster a sense of shared citizenship and mutual respect among students from different backgrounds. By doing so, educational pluralism can contribute to a more inclusive and cohesive society, reflecting the values of

diversity and respect that are central to the Dutch educational ethos (Glenn, 1988; Jeynes, 2007; Berner, 2017).

In conclusion, educational pluralism offers a framework for understanding how diverse educational options can coexist and cater to the varied needs of society. However, it requires careful implementation to balance diversity with social cohesion and equal opportunity, ensuring that all students receive a quality education that prepares them for active and engaged citizenship.

By exploring these theories, this framework not only seeks to elucidate the complexities and tensions inherent in the concept of educational freedom but also aims to apply these insights to analyze and critique the Dutch educational system. This approach will facilitate a deeper understanding of how different philosophical traditions can inform and shape educational policies and practices, ultimately contributing to a more inclusive and equitable educational landscape.

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative research approach to comprehensively understand the intersection of Article 23 of the Dutch Constitution and the complex issues surrounding the Cornelius Haga Lyceum through an in-depth analysis of political debates and documents. The qualitative nature of this research is suitable for understanding the nuanced interactions between legal, educational, and societal factors involved in this case. The Cornelius Haga Lyceum serves as a focal point for this study due to its significant role in recent debates on educational freedom and state governance in the Netherlands. The school's controversy, involving allegations of fostering extremist ideologies and financial mismanagement, highlights broader societal tensions about the balance between educational autonomy and government intervention. By analyzing this specific case, the study aims to provide insights into how these issues challenge and shape the interpretation and application of educational freedom in Article 23.

Data collection

The data were collected from various sources to ensure a comprehensive and multifaceted view of the subject. Primary sources include parliamentary records and parliamentary documents related to the Cornelius Haga Lyceum, ensuring a clear distinction between spoken discourse and formal written communications. This distinction is crucial as parliamentary debates offer insights into immediate reactions and rhetorical strategies, while documents provide a more reflective and formalized account of policy positions (Smith, 2006).

The data collection period spanned from March 2019 to the most recent developments (May 2024), capturing the evolution of the issues at hand. The debates were centered around the alarming reports from the AIVD (General Intelligence and Security Service) about the Cornelius Haga Lyceum's alleged connections to jihadist influences. All sources were found

on the website of the *Tweede Kamer*, a public repository for parliamentary documents. Systematic searches were conducted using terms such as “Cornelius Haga Lyceum” and “Amsterdamse islamitische school.” Additionally, a snowball method was employed to identify further relevant documents, leading to a total of 45 sources, all of which are listed in Attachment 1.

To determine the suitability of a source, documents were assessed based on their relevance to the themes of educational freedom, state governance, religious education, allegations of extremism, and socio-political reactions. Sources that provided substantive information on these themes and contributed to understanding the case of the Cornelius Haga Lyceum were included. Documents that did not directly address these themes or were tangential to the central issues were excluded from the analysis.

Data analysis

The data were analyzed using thematic analysis, following Braun and Clarke’s (2006) method. This involved several steps: familiarization with the data by reading and re-reading the documents to gain a deep understanding of the content; systematically identifying and labeling significant features of the data across the entire dataset using qualitative data analysis software (ATLAS.ti); organizing initial codes into broader themes that capture patterns and relationships within the data; refining themes to ensure they accurately represent the data, verifying their relevance to the research question, and checking for consistency; clearly articulating the essence of each theme and generating a detailed analysis; and writing up the findings to present the themes in a coherent and insightful narrative. The analysis focused on themes such as *security concerns*, *legislative challenges*, *educational freedom*, *financial management*, and *political and ideological divides*.

The data distinguishes between parliamentary records and parliamentary documents to highlight the differences in content and context. Parliamentary records capture the rhetorical

strategies and immediate reactions of lawmakers during debates, reflecting the dynamic and often emotive discourse. In contrast, parliamentary documents, such as motions and reports, provide formal, reflective accounts of policy positions and legislative responses. This separation allows for a clearer analysis of the political discourse (records) and the legislative and regulatory measures (documents) addressing the issues surrounding the Cornelius Haga Lyceum, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the interplay between rhetoric and policy.

Validity and reliability

To ensure the validity and reliability of the research, several strategies were employed. Triangulation was utilized by using multiple data sources, including parliamentary records, official reports, court rulings, media articles, and stakeholder statements, to cross-verify information and enhance the credibility of the findings (Patton, 1999; Creswell & Miller, 2000).

Reflexivity was also engaged in, which involves continuous self-reflection to acknowledge and mitigate potential biases, thereby enhancing the credibility of the study (Finlay, 2002). For example, throughout the research process, I maintained a reflective journal where I noted my personal reactions to the data and considered how my background and perspectives might influence the interpretation of findings. This process included questioning my assumptions and seeking alternative explanations for the data to ensure a balanced and objective analysis.

Ethical considerations

Conducting research on educational freedom, especially regarding the sensitive case of the Cornelius Haga Lyceum, requires careful ethical consideration. This study utilized publicly accessible documents, such as parliamentary records, official reports, and motions, ensuring accurate representation to avoid misinterpretation.

As a researcher with a background in education and familiarity with Dutch educational policies, it is crucial to acknowledge my positionality and the potential biases that might influence the research, which may shape my interpretations and perspectives. To mitigate this, I engaged in continuous self-reflection throughout the research process. For example, I maintained reflective notes where I documented my personal reactions to the data, questioned my assumptions, and actively sought alternative explanations to ensure a balanced and objective analysis.

To maintain ethical neutrality and avoid the influence of rhetorical devices, the decision was made to focus solely on textual analysis, excluding visual content. This approach helps to avoid the potential bias introduced by visual rhetoric, such as gestures or emotional appeals, which can influence interpretation (Fairclough, 1995). By analyzing only written records of parliamentary debates, I aimed to ensure that the analysis was based on substantive content rather than on potentially manipulative visual elements.

Sensitivity to stakeholders, including students and school administrators of the Cornelius Haga Lyceum, and government officials, was paramount to ensure respect for their perspectives and to avoid causing harm. The analysis was conducted with the utmost care to accurately represent the views and experiences of all involved parties. Ensuring ethical conduct in research not only upholds the integrity of the study but also respects the dignity and rights of those whose lives are impacted by the findings.

By adopting these methodological and ethical considerations, this study aims to provide a rigorous and comprehensive analysis of how the Cornelius Haga Lyceum case challenges the principles enshrined in Article 23 of the Dutch Constitution, offering insights into the broader dynamics and developments in the Dutch educational landscape.

Results

This section presents the results of the thematic analysis of the parliamentary records, motions, parliamentary documents, and reports regarding the Cornelius Haga Lyceum. Each theme is explored in detail to understand the controversies and their broader implications for educational freedom and state oversight in the Netherlands. All the used sources can be found in Attachment 1.

Parliamentary records

The analysis of parliamentary records is critical for understanding the political discourse and legislative actions surrounding the Cornelius Haga Lyceum. This involved a detailed coding process, assigning a total of 45 codes focused on themes such as security concerns, legislative challenges, and political and ideological divides. The coding and thematic analysis followed the method of Braun and Clarke (2006), which involved identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns within the data.

Theme 1: Security concerns and government response

The key themes included radical influence and government intervention, with 10 and 8 codes respectively. Important codes such as *security threats*, *radical ideologies*, *government measures*, and *administrative non-cooperation* were crucial in identifying how parliamentarians perceived and responded to the security concerns at the Cornelius Haga Lyceum. The decision to discuss parliamentary records separately highlights the specific political discourse and legislative actions related to security concerns. This approach allows for a focused analysis of how political actors address immediate threats and the rationale behind their decisions. The choice to code these themes was driven by the prominence of security-related discussions and the detailed accounts of parliamentary responses to the alleged threats.

The parliamentary discussions focused on alarming reports from the General Intelligence and Security Service (AIVD) about the Lyceum's alleged connections to jihadist influences. Rudmer Heerema (VVD) emphasized the urgent need for government intervention, stating, "The influence of radical ideologies in our educational institutions is unacceptable. We must take decisive action to protect our children and society." Minister Slob (ChristenUnie) detailed the measures taken, including investigations into governance, financial practices, and educational quality, despite the administration's non-cooperation. He noted, "The school's administration has not been cooperative, which complicates our efforts to ensure the safety and quality of education provided." Parliamentarians like Kees van der Staaij (SGP) and Pieter Heerma (CDA) emphasized the broader implications for the Dutch educational system. Heerma argued, "Allowing any form of extremism to take root in our schools not only endangers the students but also undermines the values upon which our education system is built."

Other parliamentarians also voiced their concerns. Stieneke van der Graaf (ChristenUnie) pointed out, "Educational freedom is a fundamental right, but it must be exercised responsibly. We cannot allow it to be used as a cover for promoting extremism." Similarly, Lammert van Raan (PvdD) noted the need for vigilance, stating, "We must remain vigilant against any form of extremism infiltrating our schools. The safety of our children is paramount." Additionally, Pieter Heerma (CDA) underscored the importance of protecting the values of the Dutch educational system, arguing that any form of extremism not only endangers students but also undermines these core values.

The debates on security concerns at Cornelius Haga Lyceum highlight the tensions between liberalism and the necessity for state governance. While liberalism emphasizes individual autonomy and minimal state intervention, security issues reveal that inadequate oversight can lead to the proliferation of extremist ideologies. This conflicts with the need for

government intervention to safeguard the safety and integrity of education. The challenge lies in balancing respect for educational freedom with the imperative of national security, a balance that often proves difficult in this context.

Theme 2: Legislative and regulatory challenges

The key themes included legislative gaps and enforcement and oversight, with 7 and 6 codes respectively. Codes like *insufficient legislation*, *need for stronger laws*, *regulatory enforcement*, and *coordination among agencies* were significant in highlighting the challenges and proposed solutions within the legislative framework. By examining legislative challenges separately, the analysis emphasizes the structural and legal hurdles in addressing security issues within educational institutions. This separation underscores the need for legislative reforms and robust oversight mechanisms. The choice to focus on these themes was driven by the recurrent emphasis on legislative insufficiencies and the demand for improved enforcement in the parliamentary records.

The sufficiency of existing legislative frameworks to address issues at the Cornelius Haga Lyceum was hotly debated. Jasper van Dijk (SP) and Paul van Meenen (D66) highlighted the inadequacies of current laws, advocating for stronger legislative frameworks to handle institutions posing security threats effectively. Van Dijk stressed, “Our current legislative framework is insufficient to deal with institutions that pose a security threat. We need stronger laws to intervene effectively.” Van Meenen called for amendments to education acts, stating, “Educational freedom must be balanced with accountability. We cannot allow institutions to operate outside the bounds of safety and quality.” Effective enforcement and oversight were deemed crucial, with Gijs van Dijk (PvdA) emphasizing oversight’s importance, saying, “Having robust laws is only part of the solution. Effective oversight and enforcement are equally crucial to ensure compliance and to protect our educational standards.” Bente Becker (VVD) called for better coordination among government agencies

to monitor and respond to threats effectively. “To address these challenges comprehensively, we need improved coordination between the education inspectorate, intelligence services, and local authorities,” she stressed.

Jasper van Dijk (SP) emphasized, “Our current legislative framework is insufficient to deal with institutions that pose a security threat. We need stronger laws to intervene effectively.” Paul van Meenen (D66) advocated for amending education acts to balance educational freedom with accountability, stating, “Educational freedom must be balanced with accountability. We cannot allow institutions to operate outside the bounds of safety and quality.” Dilan Yesilgöz-Zegerius (VVD) highlighted the need for proactive legal tools, arguing, “We need the legal tools to act swiftly and decisively in cases where the safety of students and the integrity of our educational system are at risk.” Gijs van Dijk (PvdA) emphasized the importance of oversight and enforcement, saying, “Having robust laws is only part of the solution. Effective oversight and enforcement are equally crucial to ensure compliance and to protect our educational standards.” Bente Becker (VVD) stressed the need for better coordination among government agencies, stating, “To address these challenges comprehensively, we need improved coordination between the education inspectorate, intelligence services, and local authorities.”

The legislative and regulatory challenges demonstrate the friction between educational pluralism and the requirements for social cohesion and quality assurance. Educational pluralism advocates for a diverse range of schooling options, which can lead to fragmentation and varying educational standards. The necessity for robust legislative frameworks and effective regulatory measures conflicts with the pluralistic ideal of minimal interference, highlighting the difficulty in maintaining high educational standards and social cohesion without undermining diversity and autonomy.

Theme 3: Political and ideological divides

The key themes included suspicion towards Islamic schools and maintaining educational freedom, with 6 and 8 codes respectively. Codes such as *Islamic schools threat*, *educational freedom*, *state intervention*, and *parental choice* were pivotal in capturing the ideological divides within the parliamentary debates. Analyzing political and ideological divides independently highlights the broader societal and ideological implications of the Cornelius Haga Lyceum case. This approach reveals the tension between maintaining educational freedom and ensuring national security, offering insights into the diverse perspectives within the Parliament. The decision to focus on these themes was guided by the pronounced ideological differences and their impact on policy discourse.

The debates revealed significant ideological divides regarding Islamic schools and state regulatory responsibilities. Gidi Markuszower (PVV) expressed strong suspicion towards Islamic educational institutions, viewing them as threats to Dutch democratic values. He argued, “Islamic schools as it is currently practiced poses a direct threat to our democratic principles. We must take a firm stand against any form of education that seeks to undermine our way of life.” This stance was countered by Lisa Westerveld (GroenLinks) and Jasper van Dijk (SP), who stressed the importance of distinguishing specific issues from the broader context of Islamic schools. Westerveld argued, “We must ensure that our response is measured and does not unjustly target all Islamic schools. Educational freedom must be preserved, and we must not allow fear to drive our policies.”

Tunahan Kuzu (DENK) and Lammert van Raan (PvdD) defended the rights of religious schools and educational freedom as cornerstones of Dutch democracy. Kuzu noted, “Educational freedom is a fundamental right in our democracy. We must be careful not to undermine it in the name of security. All schools, including Islamic ones, should be judged by the same standards of safety and quality.” Other parliamentarians, such as Sjoerd Sjoerdsma (D66), emphasized the importance of parental choice, stating, “Parental choice is a

fundamental aspect of our education system. We must ensure that parents have the freedom to choose schools that align with their values, but this freedom must be balanced with the need for oversight and accountability.”

Dilan Yesilgöz-Zegerius (VVD) supported these calls for legislative change, highlighting the need for a more proactive stance. “We need the legal tools to act swiftly and decisively in cases where the safety of students and the integrity of our educational system are at risk.” This reflects a broader consensus on the need for legislative reform to address gaps in the current framework and to provide authorities with the means to ensure educational institutions meet safety and quality standards.

The political and ideological divides exposed in the debates reflect the inherent conflict between communitarian values and individual autonomy. Communitarianism emphasizes community values and social cohesion, potentially at the expense of individual rights. This perspective can lead to pressure for conformity and the marginalization of minority groups. The ideological differences regarding Islamic schools illustrate the challenge of balancing collective societal values with the protection of individual freedoms and parental choice, crucial for maintaining a pluralistic yet cohesive educational environment.

Parliamentary documents

The parliamentary documents on the Cornelius Haga Lyceum consist of various motions, governmental reports, and briefings that reflect legislative responses and proposals aimed at addressing challenges related to security concerns, governance and compliance issues, educational integrity, and financial management. A total of 74 codes were used to identify key themes.

Theme 1: Security concerns and legislative responses

The theme of radical influence, identified with 12 codes, captures discussions on jihadist threats and ideological influences within educational institutions. Legislative gaps,

highlighted by 8 codes, underscore the inadequacy of existing legislative frameworks and emphasize the need for reforms. Government intervention, represented by 10 codes, includes measures proposed to address security concerns, illustrating proactive steps taken by the government.

The frequent references to radical influences and legislative gaps in the parliamentary documents guided the thematic coding process. Radical influence was chosen as a key theme due to the repeated emphasis on the threat of jihadist ideologies within educational settings. Legislative gaps were highlighted to illustrate the insufficiencies in current laws, thus advocating for legislative reforms. Government intervention was emphasized to reflect the proactive measures being taken to ensure student safety and educational integrity. This thematic focus was chosen due to the recurring emphasis on these issues in the parliamentary documents, indicating their significance in the broader legislative discourse.

The documents highlight significant security concerns regarding radical influences within educational settings, specifically the Cornelius Haga Lyceum. The *Dreigingsbeeld Terrorisme Nederland* (DTN) report stresses, “Jihadist movements continue to pose a threat and there are concerns about the influence of these ideologies in educational institutions.” This underscores the persistent nature of such threats and the necessity of addressing them promptly. Minister Slob emphasized the need for stronger legislative tools, noting the inadequacy of current laws and the necessity for reforms to address serious mismanagement and security issues in schools effectively. He stated, “We need the legal tools to act swiftly and decisively in cases where the safety of students and the integrity of our educational system are at risk.” Parliamentary discussions show a consensus on the need for legislative changes to grant the government authority to close schools posing significant security risks. In response to questions from Jasper van Dijk (SP), Minister Slob underscored the need for legislative amendments to address severe mismanagement and security threats effectively.

Several motions submitted to the Dutch Parliament reflect these concerns. Jasper van Dijk (SP) proposed a motion emphasizing the necessity for legislative changes to enable the government to close schools facing severe mismanagement and security threats. His motion highlighted the request for the government to enable the closure of such schools. Similarly, Machiel de Graaf and Harm Beertema (PVV) presented a motion calling for the immediate closure of the Cornelius Haga Lyceum due to national security concerns, stressing the need for decisive action.

The documents on security concerns and legislative responses underscore the need for a balanced approach between liberal autonomy and state intervention. While liberalism values minimal state interference, the presence of extremist influences necessitates strong legislative responses to protect national security. This tension highlights the challenge of creating laws that respect educational freedom while ensuring that educational institutions do not become breeding grounds for extremism.

Theme 2: Strengthening oversight and regulatory measures

The theme of regulatory enforcement, identified with 9 codes, underscores the importance of immediate sanctions and effective oversight. Social safety, highlighted by 7 codes, emphasizes the need to broaden the concept to encompass all aspects of student welfare. The theme of public order, represented by 6 codes, reflects the necessity for comprehensive supervision in educational settings. Legal grounds, with 8 codes, illustrate the need for clear legal bases to act against schools compromising democratic values.

The frequent references to regulatory enforcement and social safety in the parliamentary documents guided the thematic coding process. Regulatory enforcement was chosen as a key theme due to the repeated emphasis on the need for immediate sanctions and effective oversight to maintain educational integrity. Social safety was highlighted to illustrate the necessity of expanding the board's duty of care to include broader social issues within

schools. Public order was selected to reflect the importance of comprehensive supervision in educational settings. Legal grounds were emphasized to demonstrate the need for robust legal frameworks to protect democratic values. The selection of these themes was influenced by the recurring emphasis on oversight and regulatory measures in the parliamentary documents, indicating their significance in the broader legislative discourse.

Several motions submitted to the Dutch Parliament highlight the necessity for improved regulatory measures. Paul van Meenen (D66) and Michel Rog (CDA) proposed a motion emphasizing the need for immediate sanctions when the education inspectorate is hindered. Their motion asserts that the government should impose all legally possible sanctions in such cases to maintain educational integrity. Lisa Westerveld (GroenLinks) proposed expanding the board's duty of care regarding social safety to address broader social issues within schools, aiming to create a comprehensive framework for social safety that considers all aspects of student welfare.

Roelof Bisschop (SGP) called for research into the scope of supervision over public order in education, emphasizing the need to evaluate and improve existing supervisory mechanisms. He proposed that the government investigate the statutory elaboration of supervision on public order in education to ensure that supervisory bodies have the necessary tools and authority to monitor and maintain public order effectively. Rudmer Heerema (VVD) proposed making the undermining of the rule of law a basis for terminating funding or closing a school, highlighting the need for clear legal grounds to act against schools that compromise the rule of law. This motion reflects the necessity for robust legal frameworks to protect democratic values in education.

The necessity for strengthened oversight and regulatory measures is also evident in various governmental reports and briefings. The *Verslag van de commissie voor de Inlichtingen- en Veiligheidsdiensten over haar werkzaamheden in 2018* details the oversight

activities of the intelligence and security services, underscoring the importance of robust supervisory mechanisms to counteract radical influences within educational institutions. This report emphasizes the need for enhanced coordination between intelligence agencies and educational regulators to ensure comprehensive oversight.

The *Verslag van een algemeen overleg, gehouden op 27 maart 2019, over Sociale veiligheid in het onderwijs* discusses the importance of social safety within educational settings, highlighting the need for expanded definitions to include issues such as discrimination and extremism. It underscores the role of school boards in ensuring a safe and inclusive environment for all students. The *Verslag van een wetgevingsoverleg, gehouden op 9 november 2020, over Burgerschapsopdracht aan scholen in het funderend onderwijs* focuses on the civic education mandate for schools, stressing the importance of teaching democratic values and citizenship. It calls for stronger regulatory frameworks to ensure that schools promote social cohesion and democratic principles.

The document *Zorgen ten aanzien van onderwijsinstelling in Amsterdam* outlines concerns regarding an educational institution in Amsterdam suspected of spreading antidemocratic views, calling for stringent oversight and regulatory measures to prevent the dissemination of such ideologies within the educational system.

Strengthening oversight and regulatory measures reveals the conflict between the ideals of educational pluralism and the practical needs of regulatory governance. Educational pluralism supports diverse educational approaches, yet this diversity can complicate the enforcement of consistent regulatory standards. The documents advocate for enhanced oversight and immediate sanctions for non-compliance, emphasizing the difficulty in balancing institutional autonomy with the need for stringent regulatory frameworks to ensure educational quality and safety.

Theme 3: Educational integrity and democratic values

The theme of educational integrity, identified with 10 codes, emphasizes maintaining high educational standards while promoting democratic values. Democratic principles, highlighted by 8 codes, underscore the necessity for schools to foster an inclusive environment and teach students about citizenship and social cohesion. Radical ideology prevention, represented by 7 codes, reflects the need for measures to ensure schools do not become platforms for spreading extremist views.

The frequent references to educational integrity and democratic values in the parliamentary documents guided the thematic coding process. Educational integrity was chosen due to the repeated emphasis on providing high-quality education while upholding democratic principles. Democratic principles were highlighted to illustrate the necessity of fostering an inclusive environment and teaching students about citizenship and social cohesion. Radical ideology prevention was selected to reflect the importance of implementing measures to prevent schools from becoming platforms for spreading extremist views. These themes were influenced by the recurring emphasis on educational integrity and democratic values, indicating their significance in the broader legislative discourse.

Several motions submitted to the Dutch Parliament underscore the necessity of promoting educational integrity and democratic values. Tunahan Kuzu (DENK) proposed a motion emphasizing the importance of protecting educational freedom while ensuring that schools adhere to democratic principles. Rudmer Heerema (VVD) advocated for stricter guidelines to prevent the spread of radical ideologies within schools, requesting the government introduce measures to ensure schools do not become platforms for spreading extremist views. These motions highlight a parliamentary consensus on the need for schools to embody and teach democratic values.

The Verslag van een wetgevingsoverleg, gehouden op 9 november 2020, over Burgerschapsopdracht aan scholen in het funderend onderwijs focuses on the civic education

mandate for schools. It stresses the importance of teaching democratic values and citizenship, calling for stronger regulatory frameworks to ensure schools fulfill their role in promoting social cohesion and democratic principles. Additionally, *the Verslag van een wetgevingsoverleg, gehouden op 12 november 2020, over Integratie en maatschappelijke samenhang* emphasizes the role of education in promoting integration and social cohesion. This document highlights the need for comprehensive oversight to ensure schools contribute positively to these goals and do not become breeding grounds for radical ideologies.

During a parliamentary question hour, concerns were raised about the influence of radical ideologies within educational institutions. Parliamentarians stressed the need for immediate and decisive action to prevent schools from becoming platforms for spreading extremist views, underscoring the importance of maintaining educational integrity and promoting democratic principles. The document *Zorgen ten aanzien van onderwijsinstelling in Amsterdam* outlines concerns regarding an educational institution in Amsterdam suspected of spreading antidemocratic views. It calls for stringent oversight and regulatory measures to prevent the dissemination of such ideologies, emphasizing the need for educational institutions to uphold democratic values and provide a safe and inclusive environment for all students.

Documents focusing on educational integrity and democratic values highlight the contradictions between the liberal emphasis on individual autonomy and the communitarian need for social cohesion and democratic principles. Ensuring that educational institutions promote democratic values and prevent the spread of radical ideologies is essential. However, this requirement can conflict with the liberal ideal of minimal state intervention, posing challenges in balancing educational freedom with the promotion of social cohesion and democratic integrity.

Theme 4: Financial management and accountability

The theme of financial mismanagement, identified with 10 codes, emphasizes the importance of addressing financial irregularities and ensuring the proper use of funds. Accountability measures, highlighted by 8 codes, underscore the necessity for stringent financial regulations and oversight mechanisms. Transparency, represented by 6 codes, reflects the need for clear and transparent financial reporting practices in educational institutions.

The frequent references to financial management and accountability in the parliamentary documents guided the thematic coding process. Financial mismanagement was chosen as a key theme due to the repeated emphasis on addressing financial irregularities and ensuring the proper use of funds. Accountability measures were highlighted to illustrate the necessity of stringent financial regulations and oversight mechanisms. Transparency was selected to reflect the importance of clear and transparent financial reporting practices. These themes were influenced by the recurring emphasis on financial management and accountability, indicating their significance in the broader legislative discourse.

Several motions submitted to the Dutch Parliament address financial management and accountability. Paul van Meenen (D66) and Michel Rog (CDA) emphasized the need for immediate financial oversight and sanctions in cases of mismanagement. Their motion called for strict penalties to ensure compliance with financial regulations. Rudmer Heerema (VVD) highlighted the necessity for clear legal grounds to act against schools involved in financial mismanagement, stressing the importance of terminating funding for schools that misuse public funds. These motions reflect a parliamentary focus on enforcing strict financial regulations to maintain the integrity and transparency of educational institutions.

Governmental reports and briefings further emphasize the need for stringent financial management and accountability. The *Verslag van de commissie voor de Inlichtingen- en Veiligheidsdiensten over haar werkzaamheden in 2018* discusses oversight activities related to

financial practices in educational institutions, highlighting the need for comprehensive financial audits and transparent reporting mechanisms. The *Verslag van een algemeen overleg, gehouden op 27 maart 2019, over Sociale veiligheid in het onderwijs* emphasizes robust financial controls to prevent misuse of funds, calling for enhanced oversight mechanisms to ensure compliance with financial regulations. The *Verslag van een wetgevingsoverleg, gehouden op 9 november 2020, over Burgerschapsoverdracht aan scholen in het funderend onderwijs* also addresses financial accountability, stressing the importance of financial integrity while promoting democratic values and citizenship education. The document *Zorgen ten aanzien van onderwijsinstelling in Amsterdam* outlines concerns regarding financial mismanagement, calling for stringent oversight to prevent misuse of public funds and ensure transparency.

Issues of financial management and accountability demonstrate the tensions between the liberal ideal of minimal state interference and the practical need for rigorous oversight. While liberalism supports the autonomy of educational institutions, financial mismanagement, such as that observed at Cornelius Haga Lyceum, necessitates stringent regulatory frameworks. Ensuring transparency and accountability conflicts with the principle of institutional autonomy, illustrating the complexities of safeguarding public funds and maintaining educational integrity within a liberal framework.

Reflective analysis

Article 23 of the Dutch Constitution, established in 1917, was framed within a liberal context, emphasizing individual freedoms and the rights of religious and philosophical groups to establish and maintain schools according to their convictions. This liberal interpretation of educational freedom was primarily concerned with ensuring minimal state interference in the educational choices of individuals and communities, reflecting a broader commitment to personal autonomy and parental rights in education. However, the case of the Cornelius Haga

Lyceum demonstrates how the contemporary application of educational freedom has evolved beyond this original liberal meaning. Today's interpretation must grapple with complex social, political, and security concerns that were not foreseen at the time of Article 23's inception. The liberal ideal of minimal interference is increasingly challenged by the need for state governance to address issues of social cohesion, integration, and national security.

Conclusion

The central research question guiding this study was: How has the controversy surrounding the Cornelius Haga Lyceum challenged Article 23 of the Dutch Constitution and the principle of educational freedom? To address this question, the study examined three sub-questions.

Main themes and standpoints in parliamentary debates

The first sub-question is: what are the main themes and standpoints in the parliamentary debates regarding the Cornelius Haga Lyceum and Article 23? The analysis of parliamentary debates revealed significant concerns about security, the adequacy of legislative frameworks, and ideological tensions surrounding Islamic schools.

Security concerns: parliamentarians emphasized the urgency of addressing security threats posed by potential radical influences within educational institutions. For instance, Rudmer Heerema (VVD) stressed the need for decisive government action to protect students and society from extremist ideologies.

Legislative challenges: there were calls for stronger legal frameworks to address threats posed by institutions like the Cornelius Haga Lyceum. Jasper van Dijk (SP) pointed out the inadequacies in existing laws, arguing for more robust legal measures.

Political and ideological divides: debates highlighted suspicion towards Islamic schools and the need to balance educational freedom with national security. Gidi Markuszower (PVV) expressed concerns about the potential threats posed by Islamic educational institutions to democratic principles.

Key policy positions and proposals in parliamentary documents

The second sub-question is: what are the key policy positions and proposals in the parliamentary documents related to the Cornelius Haga Lyceum and Article 23? The

parliamentary documents and motions reflected a consensus on the need for legislative reforms and enhanced oversight measures.

Strengthening oversight and regulatory measures: documents called for robust oversight mechanisms and immediate sanctions for non-compliance to maintain educational integrity. For example, Paul van Meenen (D66) and Michel Rog (CDA) proposed motions for immediate financial oversight and sanctions in cases of mismanagement to maintain educational integrity.

Ensuring educational integrity and democratic values: there was a clear emphasis on the need for schools to promote democratic principles and social cohesion, ensuring that educational institutions adhere to democratic values. Tunahan Kuzu (DENK) highlighted the need to balance educational freedom with security, ensuring that this freedom is not undermined.

Improving financial management and accountability: Financial mismanagement at the Cornelius Haga Lyceum prompted calls for stringent financial regulations and transparent reporting practices to ensure proper use of public funds. Roelof Bisschop (SGP) called for research into the scope of supervision over public order in education, emphasizing the need for better oversight mechanisms.

Evolution of educational freedom

The third sub-question was: how do the themes, policy positions, and insights from debates, motions and documents collectively portray the challenges to educational freedom in Article 23, in the context of the Cornelius Haga Lyceum controversy?

The evolution in the interpretation of educational freedom can be analyzed through the theoretical lenses of liberalism, communitarianism, and educational pluralism.

Historically, liberalism emphasized individual autonomy and parental rights, advocating for minimal state interference. However, as seen in the Cornelius Haga Lyceum case, this perspective must now accommodate the state's role in safeguarding public interests and preventing extremism within educational settings. Communitarianism highlights the importance of community values and social cohesion. The case demonstrates the need for educational institutions to contribute positively to societal integration and uphold communal values, aligning with communitarian principles that stress collective well-being alongside individual rights. Educational pluralism advocates for a diverse educational landscape argue for the coexistence of various educational philosophies and institutions. However, this pluralism must ensure that all schools, regardless of their ideological basis, adhere to fundamental democratic values and do not become isolated from the broader societal framework.

The Cornelius Haga Lyceum has faced allegations of promoting extremist ideologies and financial mismanagement. These controversies highlight the tension between maintaining the liberal principle of educational freedom and ensuring that educational institutions do not undermine societal values and national security. The Dutch General Intelligence and Security Service (AIVD) reported potential influences from Salafist activists and connections to extremist groups. This sparked debates about the extent to which the state should intervene in educational institutions to prevent the spread of radical ideologies. The liberal concept of freedom, which emphasizes minimal state interference, is at odds with the necessity for state action to ensure public safety and social order. In response to these security concerns, legislative measures such as the "Law on Expanding Administrative Enforcement Tools" and new citizenship education legislation have been proposed to give the government more authority to intervene in schools. This shift indicates a movement away from purely liberal principles towards a model that balances individual freedoms with collective security and

democratic values. The case has also underscored the need for schools to promote democratic principles and social cohesion. There is a growing expectation that educational institutions should not only provide quality education but also foster an inclusive environment that upholds societal norms and values. This reflects a more nuanced understanding of freedom, where individual and community rights are balanced with the state's responsibility to maintain a cohesive and democratic society.

The Cornelius Haga Lyceum case illustrates the dynamic nature of educational freedom, reflecting a shift from a purely liberal interpretation to one that integrates broader social, political, and security considerations. This case exemplifies how contemporary contexts necessitate a reinterpretation of freedom, balancing individual and community rights with the state's responsibility to ensure social cohesion and national security. Understanding this evolution is crucial for developing educational policies that respect diverse convictions while upholding democratic values and societal integrity.

Discussion

This section reflects on the research methodology and its implications, focusing on the internal validity and reliability of the findings, as well as the specific methodological approaches utilized.

Validity and reliability

The internal validity of this research is ensured through several methodological approaches, specifically enhanced through triangulation. Multiple data sources, including parliamentary records, official reports, court rulings, media articles, and stakeholder statements, were employed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the issues surrounding the Cornelius Haga Lyceum (Creswell & Miller, 2000). This triangulation method helped corroborate findings across different types of data, enhancing the accuracy and depth of the analysis (Creswell & Miller, 2000). Each data source provided unique insights that, when combined, offered a robust picture of the governance, compliance, security, and financial management issues at the school (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The research procedure was meticulously documented to ensure transparency and replicability. Detailed documentation of each step in the research process enhances the ability of outside researchers to follow and replicate the study (Yin, 2018). However, there are inherent limitations, such as potential biases in data interpretation and the dynamic nature of the ongoing legal and political developments surrounding the case.

Reliability was maintained by adopting consistent and systematic methods for data collection and analysis (Noble & Smith, 2015). This included detailed coding processes where themes related to governance and compliance were identified and consistently applied across all data sources. Reflexivity was also a crucial component, with the researcher continuously reflecting on their own biases and how these might affect the research outcomes (Finlay,

2002). For example, biases were identified and mitigated by keeping a reflexive journal throughout the research process.

Limitations

Despite the robust methodology, this research has several limitations. The study relied on publicly available documents, such as parliamentary records, motions, and reports. While these sources provided valuable insights, they may not capture the full scope of the issues surrounding the Cornelius Haga Lyceum. Confidential or unpublished materials could offer additional context and detail, particularly regarding sensitive governance and security matters.

Focusing on a single case study of the Cornelius Haga Lyceum limits the generalizability of the findings. The unique circumstances of this institution may not be entirely representative of other religious schools or educational settings. Comparative studies involving multiple schools could provide a broader understanding of the issues related to educational freedom and state governance.

The situation surrounding the Cornelius Haga Lyceum is dynamic, with ongoing legal and political developments. The research is based on data available up to a certain point in time, which means that new developments could alter the context and relevance of the findings. Although reflexivity was maintained throughout the research process, the potential for researcher bias cannot be eliminated. The interpretations and conclusions drawn from the data are influenced by the researcher's perspectives and experiences. The analysis of legislative and policy responses is limited to the available documents and records. There may be additional policy discussions or legislative actions not captured in the available data.

Implications

The issues identified at the Cornelius Haga Lyceum underscore the need for enhanced legislative frameworks to ensure that educational institutions comply with governance, financial, and security standards. Policymakers should consider implementing stricter

regulations and governance mechanisms to address administrative misconduct, financial mismanagement, and security threats. This includes granting more authority to the Education Inspectorate to enforce compliance and act against non-cooperative institutions.

The research highlights the importance of upholding democratic values and promoting social integration within schools. Educational policies should emphasize the necessity for all schools, including religious ones, to foster democratic principles and prevent the spread of extremist ideologies. This aligns with the broader commitment to maintaining the integrity of the educational system and ensuring that it contributes positively to societal cohesion.

While Article 23 of the Dutch Constitution guarantees educational freedom, this study demonstrates the necessity of balancing this freedom with adequate governance to safeguard educational quality and safety. The proposed framework, incorporating dimensions of freedom of establishment, regulatory balance, freedom of curriculum, and freedom of access, provides a comprehensive approach to navigating these complexities. This balance is crucial for protecting the rights of individuals to establish schools based on their beliefs while ensuring that these schools meet national standards and promote democratic values.

The implications of this research extend beyond the Cornelius Haga Lyceum, offering insights for other religious schools and educational institutions facing similar challenges. By addressing governance, security, educational integrity, and financial accountability, policymakers can develop more effective strategies to support a diverse yet cohesive educational landscape.

Suggestions for future research

An interesting aspect of this study is the attention given to religious schools based on their religious affiliations. For instance, while the Cornelius Haga Lyceum, an Islamic school, has been the subject of intense scrutiny and media coverage, similar issues in Christian schools often receive less attention (Vermeulen & Pasterkamp, 2019). There are Christian

schools that hold views against homosexuality and other topics that might be considered controversial, yet these institutions do not face the same level of public and governmental scrutiny (Koopman & Zondag, 2018). This discrepancy raises important questions about bias and consistency in the oversight of educational institutions. The selective focus on Muslim schools could be indicative of broader societal and political biases (Driessen, 2020).

Interestingly, the results show that Christian political parties often voice similar concerns regarding educational freedom and the right to maintain religious doctrines within their schools. These parties argue for the importance of religious education and the ability to uphold their values, which include positions on controversial issues like homosexuality (Vermeer, 2020). This alignment in rhetoric further highlights the need for a balanced and unbiased approach to educational oversight that respects the diversity of religious beliefs (Berger, 2014). This disparity warrants further discussion and investigation into how educational policies and oversight mechanisms are applied across different types of religious schools. The debate surrounding the Cornelius Haga Lyceum provides a valuable case study for understanding the complexities of educational freedom, state oversight, and societal values. However, extending this analysis to include other religious schools, such as Christian institutions, could offer a more comprehensive view of how different religious beliefs and practices are treated within the educational system (Bakker & Denessen, 2018).

In-depth qualitative research involving interviews with key stakeholders, such as educators, parents, students, and policymakers, can provide a richer understanding of the lived experiences and perspectives of those directly affected by educational policies. This method would capture the nuanced and complex realities that quantitative data might overlook (Charmaz, 2014; Creswell & Poth, 2017). Analyzing the impact of specific policy changes on religious schools can help determine the effectiveness of different regulatory approaches. This research can focus on evaluating the outcomes of implemented policies and identifying areas

for improvement to ensure that educational institutions adhere to standards while respecting educational freedom (Patton, 2002; Yin, 2018). Comparative studies between the Netherlands and other countries with similar provisions for educational freedom can offer valuable insights. Understanding how different nations balance educational freedom with state governance can highlight best practices and potential pitfalls, informing policy development in the Netherlands (Grace, 2003; Bray & Thomas, 1995).

By pursuing these research avenues, scholars can contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the complex interplay between educational freedom and state governance, ultimately informing more effective and equitable educational policies.

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Attachment 1

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Parliamentary records:

- 61^e vergadering. Dinsdag 12 maart 2019:
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- 63e vergadering: donderdag 14 maart 2019:
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Motions:

- Motie van de leden De Graaf en Beertema over sluiten van het Cornelius Haga Lyceum:
<https://www.tweedekamer.nl/kamerstukken/moties/detail?id=2019Z05172&did=2019D10780>
- Motie van de leden Jasper van Dijk en Kuiken over meteen ingrijpen als de onderwijsinspectie de toegang tot een school wordt ontzegd:
<https://www.tweedekamer.nl/kamerstukken/moties/detail?id=2019D10789&did=2019D10789>
- Motie van de leden Jasper van Dijk en Rudmer Heerema over ontslaan van bestuurders met antidemocratische en anti-integratieve opvattingen:
<https://www.tweedekamer.nl/kamerstukken/moties/detail?id=2019D10788&did=2019D10788>
- Motie van de leden Van Meenen en Rog over direct sancties bij hinderen van de Inspectie van het onderwijs:

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- Motie van het lid Bisschop over bekostigingssancties als jihadisten of terroristen invloed op de school uitoefenen:

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<https://www.tweedekamer.nl/kamerstukken/moties/detail?id=2019D10782&did=2019D10782>

- Motie van het lid Rudmer Heerema c.s. over mogelijkheden om de zorgelijke situatie op het Cornelius Haga Lyceum te beëindigen:

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- Motie van het lid Rudmer Heerema over ondermijning van de rechtsstaat als grond voor beëindiging van bekostiging of sluiting van een school:

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- Motie van het lid Van Meenen over een wet voor maatschappelijk verantwoordelijkheidsbesef:
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- Motie van het lid Westerveld c.s. over de uitspraak dat het bestuur zijn verantwoordelijkheid neemt en opstapt:
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- Motie van het lid Westerveld c.s. over de wettelijke bescherming van leerlingen tegen antidemocratisch gedachtegoed en extremisme:
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<https://www.tweedekamer.nl/kamerstukken/kamervragen/detail?id=2019Z06150&did=2019D20980>
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<https://www.tweedekamer.nl/kamerstukken/detail?id=2019D12632&did=2019D12632>
- Antwoord op vragen van het lid Rudmer Heerema over misstanden bij het Haga Lyceum:
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https://www.tweedekamer.nl/kamerstukken/brieven_regering/detail?id=2019D14809&did=2019D14809
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- Feitenrelaas inspectie:
<https://www.tweedekamer.nl/kamerstukken/detail?id=2019D12063&did=2019D12063>
- Verslag van de commissie voor de Inlichtingen- en Veiligheidsdiensten over haar werkzaamheden in 2018:
<https://www.tweedekamer.nl/kamerstukken/detail?id=2019Z07082&did=2019D14559>
- Verslag van een algemeen overleg, gehouden op 27 maart 2019, over Sociale veiligheid in het onderwijs:
<https://www.tweedekamer.nl/kamerstukken/commissieverslagen/detail?id=2018Z18029&did=2019D13419>
- Verslag van een wetgevingsoverleg, gehouden op 9 november 2020, over Burgerschapsopdracht aan scholen in het funderend onderwijs:
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