7 Debating intercultural integration in Belgium

From the Commission for Intercultural Dialogue to the Round Tables on Interculturalism

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Introduction

For over thirty years, questions related to cultural and religious diversity, in relation to the issue of integration and living together in broad terms, have become increasingly important in the public debates of Belgium. This growing attention became particularly evident during the last decade or so, through the establishment of two government commissions charged with examining ways of envisaging social cohesion in the context of an increasingly pluralistic Belgium, and formulating concrete recommendations in this regard. The first part of this chapter addresses the *Commission du Dialogue Interculturel* (Commission for Intercultural Dialogue/CID) that existed between 2004 and 2005, which gave way just three years later to *Les Assises de l'interculturalité* (The Round Tables on Interculturalism/RTI), whose work took place between 2009 and 2010 and is the subject of the second part of this chapter.[1]

The context of questions of cultural and religious diversity and of their integration into the political agenda actually started back in 1989, through the establishment of the Royal Commissariat for Immigrants.[2] Its creation specifically represented a response to the growing power of the extreme right-wing during the elections since the 1980s, in particular in Flanders with the nationalist party *Vlaams Belang* and the xenophobic discussions that it engendered.[3] The mission of this Commissariat consisted of analysing and defining a real policy for immigrants in Belgium, in relation to employment, education and housing matters. The perspective chosen to address integration issues was thus primarily socioeconomic: the two successive reports submitted by the Commissariat do not address multiculturalism or interculturalism, but mainly focus on the integration of 'immigrants', 'foreigners' or 'strangers' from an essentially material point of view.[4] The Commissariat also considered the definition of core values and common standards for citizens of Belgium, as well as the establishment of a policy against discrimination, as support for socioeconomic integration policies.[5]

Beginning in the 2000s, particularly in the context of a more sensitive social climate following the attacks of 11 September 2001, the focus moved to cultural

and religious dimensions of the challenges linked to integration and diversity, at the expense of socioeconomic aspects. This 'paradigm shift'[6] began in December 2002 through the organization of a Round Table by Guy Verhofstadt, the Prime Minister at the time, and Laurette Onkelinx, then Deputy Minister in charge of Equal Opportunity. They were aiming 'for mutual respect and "better living together"',[7] and for the reuniting – in addition to socioeconomic and civil society actors – of various representatives of religious and philosophical communities from around the country. This new approach would also influence the processes of the two commissions later established by the federal government, the Commission for Intercultural Dialogue (CID) and the Round Tables on Interculturalism (RTI).

Furthermore, it is important to emphasize that the manner in which issues of diversity have been treated in Belgian public debates, and addressed by public authorities of the country, is strongly linked to the institutional and sociopolitical evolution of the Belgian state over the last few decades. The specificity of the Belgian context can be considered on three levels.

First, the process of federalization that was initiated in the 1970s has been particularly defined by the transfer of a number of areas of expertise related to policies that fight discrimination, that relate to integration and that promote diversity within various federated entities of the nation – the Flemish Region, Wallonia and Brussels, as well as the Flemish, French-speaking and German-speaking communities. Consequently, one can note the gradual emergence of a dichotomy in how the respective authorities from the two larger linguistic communities (Flemish and French-speaking) envision and carry out their policies.[8] Since 2003, for example, we have observed the existence of a compulsory integration program in Flanders that includes citizenship and language courses for newcomers, in contrast to the optional nature of the integration process in the region of Brussels and, until recently, the utter lack of such a process in Wallonia.

Second, the sociopolitical evolution of Belgium has resulted in the affirmation of Belgium as a 'consociational democracy', based on the historical opposition between various pillars – notably linguistic and philosophical – that is, between Catholics and non-confessional organizations.[9] This pluralism *à la belge* has led to the formal recognition of these various communities – especially linguistic – within the political and institutional landscape of Belgium, and to the positive intervention of the state in favour of an equal representation of ideological tendencies within society at large. This approach is particularly evident in the public financing of religious groups, and the organization of religious or non-confessional moral education in public primary and secondary schools. Thus, the main challenge Belgium faces in this regard is to take into account this new cultural and religious diversity, alongside historically recognized forms of pluralism.

Finally, the difficulty in defining Belgian national identity has had implications with regard to integration and cultural diversity. How could Belgian society be in a position to propose a model for integration, when the country itself has been unable to internalize a foundation of common values for its citizens?[10] According

to philosopher Edouard Delruelle, the heated debates that have occurred in Belgium with regard to these questions of interculturalism are clearly linked to the identity crisis that traverses its landscape, between the French-speaking and Dutch-speaking communities.[11] In fact, as attested to by the processes and methods adopted by the CID and the RTI described hereafter, the spirit of compromise and a sense of pragmatism[12] – considered by many to be the veritable traits of Belgian identity – have greatly contributed to the debates and policy recommendations within these two citizen commissions, concerning the management of cultural and religious diversity in Belgian society. For each of the two following sections focusing on the CID and the RTI, a brief introduction will present the context and objectives assigned to the commission in question. From there, we will examine the content of the commission's report, as well as its reception in the Belgian public sphere. Finally, we will provide an analysis of the follow-up and implementation of the recommendations made by the commissions.

The Commission for Intercultural Dialogue (CID)

The CID was launched on 23 February 2004 as an initiative of the federal Minister of Social Integration, Equal Opportunity and Interculturalism – Maria Arena, whose successor, Christian Dupont, would ultimately receive the final report. In a polemic context marked by the assassination of film director Theo Van Gogh in the Netherlands, the controversy around religious signs and symbols in France, and the 'Rik Remmery' affair,[13] the commission represented a reaction to increasing racism, anti-Semitism and xenophobia. It was therefore important to propose an attitude of dialogue, rather than endorse the position taken by those who advocated banning the wearing of religious symbols in schools, particularly the Islamic veil.[14]

It should also be noted that one month prior to the launch of the CID, in January 2004, a *Commission des Sages* had been instituted at the behest of Antoine Duquesne, President of the liberal francophone party, *Mouvement Réformateur* (Reformist Movement), in order to examine the content of the democratic values that serve to connect Belgian society. The work of this committee would ultimately be incorporated with that of the CID, as was the case for the five members who composed it, including its president, political scientist and journalist Jacques Riflet. Furthermore, the work of the Stasi Commission in France, as well as the report it published in December 2003, were equally important in nourishing the debate on these issues in Belgium some months earlier.[15]

The commission, chaired by Honorary President of the Senate, Roger Lallemand, and Deputy of the European Parliament, Annemie Neyts, was initially composed of twenty-two members, but would grow to twenty-seven after the integration of the members of the *Commission des Sages*. It therefore came to include political representatives, senior officials in the field of education, academics and representatives of associations with experience in the domain of intercultural dialogue. The selection of the members rigorously respected the linguistic parity between the Dutch and the French. Roger Lallemand and Annemie Neyts,

both *Ministres d'État* (State Ministers), co-chaired the commission, while Édouard Delruelle, Professor of Political Philosophy at the University of Liège, and Rik Torfs, Professor of Canon Law at the Catholic University of Leuven, oversaw the drafting of the commission's findings, Delruelle ultimately assuming the larger share of the work. Note also the major role played by the Centre for Equal Opportunity, an independent public organization, throughout the work of the CID.

The primary goal was to facilitate dialogue with institutional representatives, representatives of religious and philosophical movements, field workers and experts in order to assess the intercultural relationships existing in Belgium.[16] A secondary objective of this endeavour was to identify concrete recommendations to promote living together, in the context of contemporary Belgian society and all its diversity. In the interest of receiving the maximum number of testimonials from field workers as well as observers faced with the issue of interculturalism, the CID devoted a large part of its mandate – perhaps too large in the eyes of some[17] – to conducting 100 hearings. Four working groups were involved in the 33 plenary sessions that were held after the official establishment of the CID. They respectively worked on the following topics: a) the basic principles of the operation of public services (equality, non-discrimination and neutrality) and their implementation in an intercultural context; b) citizenship as a remedy for the fear of the Other and isolationism; c) equality between men and women as an emancipatory value; and d) space for and recognition of the expression of religious affiliation. The CID had also committed to providing a comparative dimension to its work by organizing an analytical session to critique the experiences and models of integration of several neighbouring countries.[18] Throughout these sessions, 68 reference figures were interviewed, 24 working group meetings and round tables were organized, and 31 specific interviews were conducted. The aforementioned primary data was also complemented by 100 memoranda, orientation notes and the creation of a website whose purpose was to gather the opinions of citizens.[19] An interim report was submitted to Minister Christian Dupont on 8 December 2004 and the final report was published in May 2005.

Content of the CID report

The final report of the CID explicitly subscribes to a pluralist viewpoint that places co-operation, tolerance and the sharing of fundamental values from the Declaration of Human Rights above all else.[20] It affirms the multicultural character of Belgian society (p. 5), while founding its discourse on respect for cultural diversity and adopting a perspective that emphasizes the need to avoid reducing culture to religion, religion to Islam, and Islam to the headscarf issue (p. 7). This valorization of cultural diversity, understood in a broad sense, implies not only the acceptance of different cultural groups as part of Belgian society, but also their effective recognition.

At the heart of this position, we find a concept of culture as the basis of the personality of an individual. Culture is constitutive of the human personality, as

it produces the normative, intellectual and imaginary framework that conditions us to think, dream and act. It is therefore not something superficial that can be discarded. The recognition of cultural diversity thus requires understanding the extraordinarily complex nature of culture that exists via singular cultures and which is only incarnated in individuals. It would, however, be an error to assume fixed cultural identities, since these are the result of a combination of factors including, obviously, the personal background of the individual. The authors of the report affirm that the plural identities of many Belgian citizens deserve to be valorized (p. 29).

In the same way that the report advocates identity recognition of minority groups, it denounces all forms of cultural relativism that challenge the standards defining a democratic constitutional State. A cultural practice is not necessarily acceptable outright, and its valorization is conditional upon its full compliance with certain principles such as the equality of men and women, freedom of expression or the principle of progress through critical thinking and knowledge. Recognizing cultural diversity does not therefore signify having to accept the excesses of a community that confines individuals within its cultural particularities. While all individuals maintain the right to belong to a community, they also have the right to leave it if they so desire.

According to the CID, contemporary Belgian society has been tasked with the integration of this cultural pluralism, or:

> transforming the cultural diversity that has issued from waves of immigration into active pluralism; creating an institutional policy framework, but also establishing a social climate that allows those whose culture of origin is non-European to live as full citizens, while allowing Belgians of European origin to understand them and accept them as such.
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> (p. 27)

It is not a simple matter of being tolerant and open towards diversity; it is not the mere juxtaposition of valorized identities in the public sphere that permits their full integration into Belgian society. Successful integration entails engaging in a process that favours interaction, in which each person can be open to the other, in which encounters and dialogue between cultures are encouraged. It is specifically dialogue, interaction, cultural and social mixing, and knowledge and recognition of the other that defines the intercultural concept found in the report. The discourse of the CID rests on the capacity to accommodate the most diverse beliefs without, however, renouncing the democratic values that have made this dialogue possible. In order for this coalescence to occur, it is necessary to highlight the factors that serve to unite rather than those that are in opposition, to leave behind the model of assimilation implicitly present in certain integration policies and to be oriented towards a model that respects the singularity of each individual. For this reason, the recognition of members of cultural groups with a view to their social integration must necessarily be accompanied by the implementation of affirmative action policies in the areas of employment, public services and

social housing. These policies allow the passage from a legal approach based exclusively on formal equality to another, more just, model that takes substantive equality into account.[21] Thus, the precariousness of certain minority groups[22] calls for not only their cultural recognition, but also for an awareness of their economic realities.

This combination of identity recognition and the implementation of affirmative action policies promoting social and economic integration of cultural minorities, as well as joint respect for minorities but also for the values central to Belgian democratic culture, are at the heart of the recommendations proposed by the CID to the Belgian government. It is from this perspective that the commission proposes that the policies of integration (at the federal, community and regional levels) be re-examined on the basis of the logic of recognition promoted by the report. It recommends that an interpretative framework based on gender be implemented in all fields in order to assess the construction sequences of policy decisions regarding the equality of men and women; that sufficient public funding be provided to encourage the learning of national languages; and that discrimination, xenophobia and racism be vigorously opposed on both the repressive plane (in the application of laws) and on the preventive plane (in the battle against stereotypes and prejudice). The report also recommends that tax incentives be put in place to encourage the economic integration of cultural groups; that an inter-university observatory for the analysis of migration and cultural minorities, an interfaith institution and a Belgian institute of Islam be created; and that courses on the great religious and secular traditions, as well as an introduction to philosophical reasoning and civic education, be offered in the secondary education system.

With regard to the wearing of religious symbols at school, the commission maintained throughout the entire course of the hearings that the issue of the headscarf represented neither one of the most important nor one of the most recurrent concerns from the perspective of daily life.[23] Most of the members of the commission decided that they did not want to embark on the same path taken by France, especially since Belgium represents a different nation entirely – institutionally, constitutionally and historically.[24] Concerning the wearing of religious symbols by officials of the State, three positions emerged within the CID. The first advocates banning all religious symbols for all officials working in the civil service. The second proposes banning all religious symbols for officials in a relationship of power or authority over the public. The third recommends the complete absence of restrictions with regard to the wearing of religious symbols by public officials. The report goes on to express its ‘desire for evaluating the potential effects of the prohibition of any religious sign on the integration of women, especially in the public employment market’ (p. 56).

The CID also recommends ‘studying the possibility of choices for holidays’ (p. 77), emphasizing that holidays are important to individuals on a psychological and symbolic level. Even though some requests came from federal entities (communities and regions) to integrate certain holidays within the calendar, it was also deemed justifiable for cultural groups to demand some flexibility on the

part of the federal government in order to recognize public holidays they consider important. The report advocates that, wherever possible, significant days from the point of view of non-historical cultural groups be taken into account, whether at school or at work; and the CID finds it equally reasonable that cultural groups be able to request more flexibility. It nonetheless refrains from recommending the integration of these festivals in the official calendar of holidays:

> With no desire to interfere in the revision of the schedule of these mandatory days of rest that today contribute to the management of collective leisure time, or to enter into the debate about whether to expand the number of legal holidays, the commission nonetheless advocates that, inasmuch as possible, the holidays of cultural groups other than Northern European be taken into account during the organization of the annual schedule (be it at school or in the workplace).
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> (p. 78)

Ultimately, a Charter for Belgian Citizens, drafted by Édouard Delruelle, is proposed in the conclusion of the report. This charter informs citizens about their rights and responsibilities, as well as the fundamental norms and values of Belgium, and is based on the European Convention on Human Rights and the Constitution, and on specific rights and laws of Belgium (the right to euthanasia, gay marriage, abortion, etc.). Although without legal status, these rights and freedoms should not only be made available to newcomers, but also to all citizens of the country. The Charter serves as a sort of 'symbolic social contract' for Belgian society by setting out 'the cultural DNA of Belgium'.[25]

Reception of the CID report

Despite the limited amount of attention it received at the political level, there is a consensus that the report was well received in Belgium.[26] It is worth examining, however, some of the reviews that were sent to the commission by Felice Dassetto, founder of the Centre for the Study of Islam in the Contemporary World and Professor Emeritus of the Catholic University of Louvain. To a lesser extent, we should also consider comments made by the lawyers Hugues Dumont and Xavier Delgrange, the first of whom was a member of the CID.

In a text published in 2009,[27] Dassetto takes up certain criticisms that had already been addressed to the CID in an opinion piece, the title of which attracted a lot of attention: *Exorcisme interculturel* (Intercultural Exorcism). Basically, Dassetto considers that the commission was in reality a 'practice of exorcism' set up by the Belgian government to chase away the so-called demons that arise in connection with the Arab-Muslim community, even though these questions were not considered 'utterable' by the authors of the report. The professor also criticized that while the report discusses the idea of cultural dialogue generically, in fact it excludes certain European groups – Albanians, Spaniards, Greeks, Italians, Portuguese – as well as people from Latin America, Cambodia, China and

Pakistan. Furthermore, Dassetto points out that the report ignores the 'very difficult dialogue' between the Flemish and French-speaking communities;[28] consequently, the idea of intercultural dialogue became a euphemism, a 'denunciation of the shortcomings of a host society'.

With regard to the idea of 'cultural minority', the report was also criticized by Dassetto for being doubly vague: first, because in a plural society we can find many different types of minorities – homosexuals, artists, agnostics, Jews, Catholics, etc. – but also because Arab-Muslim cultural minorities are recognized to a greater extent in real life than the report suggests. This explains why the report would be quickly forgotten by public authorities, 'because its framing, its wording could only make a stillborn'.[29] Furthermore, if the discourse about the recognition of the report is 'inflated', it is because we find 'echoes of a certain communitarian philosophy imported from America' even while keeping in mind common values, and this transfer of community advocacy is simply inappropriate in the Belgian context.[30]

Dumont and Delgrange point out what they consider to be the weak points of the report, which can be characterized as setting a tone of 'deliberate modesty'. First, the report does not denounce the inconsistencies of Belgian public law in relation to progressive fragmentation, institutional reforms over the past decades, skills required for integration, the fight against discrimination, and diversity issues between federal and federated entities. According to them, these inconsistencies are obvious 'when we confront the federal code of nationality and the Flemish decree on civic integration programs for immigrants and "newcomers"' (*inburgering* can be translated as 'civic integration'). The report would also be characterized as being too timid regarding the issue of monitoring cults 'against the risks of theocratic excess'. It is also criticized for underestimating the spiritual dimension of intercultural dialogue, when it makes presumptuous statements about religion classes and proposes adding, or replacing a portion of them with a course in philosophy and the history of religious and secular traditions. Finally, the report is also considered to put too little emphasis on the responsibilities located within the Charter for Citizens that it has proposed.[31] Note, however, that while the authors mention these weak points in the report, they do not actually analyse them.

Follow-up and implementation of the CID report

Two months after the official presentation of the report, the Charter of Citizenship proposed by the CID was then presented – in a slightly revised version – to the federal government's Minister of Social Integration, Christian Dupont, in 2005. In August, the press announced that the Charter would be adopted and communicated to the communities, which would then be responsible for its distribution in schools and in public buildings in September.[32] Eight years later, however, Delruelle remarks that the Charter was never adopted:

> The various political parties and the different entities of the nation (federal state, regional) will never agree on the text itself. Here is something highly

> significant: we think we have a problem with the "other", while each of us also has problems with … ourselves, since "we" are unable to agree on a basic set of core values. If the moral basis of our geoculture is not solid, why would it be a surprise that ethnocultures within it have difficulties with integration? How does one integrate into a country that is disintegrating? The Commission for Intercultural Dialogue was thus a failure.[33]

In a more general manner, there appears to be a consensus that the CID had no impact at the political level, since political authorities were absorbed with other problems at the time.[34] This position seems to be at least partially supported by minister Maria Arena who, four years after the publication of the report, remarked that 'all of the recommendations have not yet been fully integrated in the various policies … Each level of authority [federal state, regions, communities, municipalities] has become aware of these recommendations and has established their priorities. Many things have not been accomplished, either because they were not prioritized, they were prioritized but lacked means, or simply because there was a lack of consensus.'[35]

One major difficulty with the follow-up for and implementation of the CID recommendations, apart from the fact that no monitoring system was proposed by the committee itself, is the fact that the commission was established by the federal government, without consultation or prior coordination with other – federated – entities of the country with respect to the actual objectives assigned to the commission. This approach showed itself to be inadequate from the time the report was submitted, when, despite the organization of an interministerial conference that brought together authorities from different levels of administrative power, no real co-operation in the choices for implementation of or follow-up on the CID recommendations occurred between these political entities.[36]

In contrast to the Round Tables on Interculturalism (as discussed below), we observe that the relationships between the various members of the CID remained largely positive throughout the course of their work, in spite of the diversity of mind-sets represented and the sometimes substantial disagreements, notably on the issue of wearing religious symbols. Henri Goldman, editor-in-chief of the journal *Politique*, considers that the 'over-representation of minority representatives' within the CID, in addition to the discrepancy between the ideological trends represented in the CID and the political currents that were dominant at the time in Belgium, had the unquestionable effect of creating an absence of initiative or implementation by political authorities with respect to the recommendations of the CID.[37]

The Round Tables on Interculturalism (RTI)

In 2008, the issue of immigrants in Belgium, along with concern about the Islamic headscarf in schools and public services, was once again the order of the day.[38] Following an agreement of the federal government on 18 March 2008 and on the initiative of Joëlle Milquet, the federal Deputy Prime Minister and

Minister of Employment and Equal Opportunity, another commission on diversity was established,[39] one explicitly designed as an extension of the CID.[40] In fact, it sought to revive the reflections of the 2005 commission that had resulted in few concrete outcomes. The idea was not only to improve the readability of the recommendations, but also to make them easier for political authorities to apply.[41]

The minister proposed four objectives to the steering committee of the RTI: 1) produce recommendations on various themes related to interculturalism; 2) organize forums for dialogue and citizen meetings across the country; 3) develop a communication policy at the national level to promote the success of integration, social mixing, richness of cultures and the development of talent, while trying to dispel stereotypes; and 4) enable field workers and public authorities to exchange best practices developed at local or broader levels.[42]

The steering committee was chaired by Marie-Claire Foblets, Professor at the Catholic University of Leuven, and Christine Kulakowski, Director of the Brussels Centre for Intercultural Action. The committee was initially composed of thirty experts – university professors, representatives of various associations and religious groups, lawyers, etc. – but only twenty-two would ultimately sign the final report.

In fact, from the very launch of the RTI, the composition of the steering committee provoked several controversies.[43] Some have denounced the existence of certain imbalances within the committee – that the CID could have avoided at the time – such as 'over-representation' of ethnic or religious minorities to the detriment of representatives of 'organized secularism' (who were subsequently invited into the committee) and actors of the socioeconomic world faced with concrete issues related to diversity management.[44] Daniël Cuypers, for example, asserts that by neglecting to include organizations representative of workers or employers, the steering committee – and, consequently, the report it produced – failed to effectively express the power relations present within Belgian society.[45] Moreover, some tension was felt within the steering committee itself, which led to several resignations during the process and the inclusion of two dissenting notes in the final report.[46]

The commission worked in subcommittees on six themes linked to intercultural issues: Education, Employment, Governance, Goods and Services (including Housing and Health), Community Life and Media. The reflection process was to be oriented around three points: the evaluation of the follow-up of the recommendations formulated by the CID; an overview of the core issues that had arisen since 2005 and any achievements made since then; and the formulation of recommendations, whether they represented new insights or continuations of the CID.[47] A sixth subcommittee was created in May 2010 to develop proposals regarding police action, the duty of remembrance and housing. On the basis of the reports developed by these commissions, writer and journalist Tom Naegels composed a first synthesis of the work.[48] In parallel, four research projects were ordered by the commission. The first was to study the status of research and public policies carried out since 2005 on topics of interest to the committee. The second was to

conduct a survey on the self-perception of cultural minorities with regard to their participation in Belgian society. A third group was mandated with conducting a study on cultural harmonization practices in the workplace. Finally, the task of the fourth was to examine the issue of state neutrality, particularly the wearing of religious symbols by public officials.

The approach chosen by the steering committee was 'bottom-up' in that it was based primarily on the conclusions reached at the various hearings that took place over the course of the preparation of the report and its recommendations.[49] This stated objective of citizen participation in the RTI's processes materialized via the support of local associations in the organization of citizen meetings and discussion forums, in the form of workshops, seminars and even cultural events across the country.[50] On 8 November 2010, after a year of work (September 2009 to September 2010 – a period much longer than the five months initially planned), the steering committee finally submitted its report to minister Milquet.

Content of the RTI report

In this section, while summarizing some key points of the RTI report, we will also compare it with certain aspects of the CID report. Several recommendations found in the RTI report match, either partially or totally, those proposed by the CID. As in the previous instance, the steering committee: a) highlights the situation of isolation and helplessness experienced by teachers who face difficult intercultural situations; and b) advocates the establishment of structural support as a means to help them better manage these situations (p. 34). Both also make recommendations promoting: the teaching of comparative religions and philosophies from the perspective of social sciences and humanities (p. 40); the integration of the history of peoples, migration and cultures into school curricula and library collections (p. 39); or the creation of a Museum of Immigration (p. 86). In certain cases, the second committee goes even further. For example, the CID advocates that Arabic and Turkish be offered as language options at school (as was already the case with Spanish and Italian), since they represent the native language of many young foreigners living in Belgium (p. 90). However, the RTI proposes the teaching of the 'standard' language of various countries of origin (p. 44) along with and in the same manner as existing language courses, such as national languages (Dutch, French, German). In this respect, both commissions emphasize the importance of mastering at least one of the official Belgian languages for the full integration of students not only at school, but also within Belgian society, while at the same time stressing the relevance of learning original languages. Both reports also concur regarding the need to promote the work of intercultural mediators[51] and on the importance of giving attention to two particular groups: youth issuing from immigration and women.

One noticeable difference between the two reports can be found in the wording of the recommendations, which are often more distinct and more concrete in the case of the RTI. In fact, while the CID proposes to 'evaluate' the eventual effects of banning all religious symbols in public services, the RTI steering committee

'recommends a general freedom for the wearing of religious signs, with the ban limited only to government officials vested with a function of authority' (p. 117). The CID also considers it undesirable to ban religious signs at school, but the RTI proposes: 'general freedom with regard to the wearing of religious symbols by pupils in the final three years of secondary education and the complete prohibition for the first three years of secondary school' (p. 117). The CID recommends 'studying the possibility of a choice for holidays', without making a concrete proposal, yet the RTI goes so far as to propose amending the calendar of legal holidays (p. 69).[52] Finally, whereas the CID recommends the implementation of 'incentive policies' to favour the integration of certain groups into the work force, but without actually imposing hiring quotas (p. 65), the RTI recommends 'that public authorities develop a quota system' for the recruitment of persons belonging to minorities (p. 117).

Reception of the RTI report

The publication of the RTI report in November 2009 saw a difference in the response of the academic world and that of the media and political spheres, to the conclusions and recommendations of the steering committee.[53] Although the reception of the RTI report was of a greater magnitude than that of the CID, the coverage was principally focused on the most controversial recommendations. The higher proportion of negative criticism in the press can be explained not only by the greater media coverage of the RTI, but also by the more definitive – and thus riskier – positions taken by the steering committee on sensitive subjects. Moreover, these somewhat superficial and partial analyses of the RTI's conclusions occurred at a time of political and social tension. Several months before the release of the report, the press had already echoed the criticism of some politicians and many members of the committee – some of whom had resigned – of the RTI's working practices. In addition, the release of the report came at a time when several governing bodies were intending to make clear decisions about the wearing of religious symbols in the public sphere, particularly the Islamic headscarf. It should also be noted that political interest in, and media impact on, the work of the RTI was much more modest in the Flemish part of the country.

Also, as our analysis has revealed, the RTI proposed solutions more explicit than those of the CID; these also elicited a greater number of reactions. This issue was commented on before the report was actually released. We should also add that for the RTI, the recommendations concerning the modification of the law on genocide denial[54] and the addition of legal holidays proved disastrous to public opinion. These issues, along with questions around 'reasonable accommodations',[55] would be the focus of vivid criticism, drawing suspicion that the report was a plea for communitarianism (see Chapter 1).[56]

With regard to the academic world, we do not have enough space in this chapter to examine each of the articles that have been written about the RTI, a commission that garnered much more attention than the CID and about which a

large volume was published in 2013.[57] Although various criticisms have been made about the content of the recommendations of the steering committee, the report is generally considered balanced. In particular, the working methodology behind this report is highlighted as an example of compromise. Some would even call it a compromise *à la belge*[58] that serves as proof of a 'structured and negotiated pragmatism',[59] evolving 'outside the media and political fields', as emphasized in the report itself (p. 15), and in this manner it constitutes 'the greatest triumph of the choices proposed by the steering committee'.[60] Some authors also point to the need to apply this search for compromise to the implementation of the RTI's recommendations.[61]

Authors such as Jean Baubérot have been interested in comparing the methodology and results of the RTI's work with that of the Stasi Report.[62] For Baubérot, the analyses conducted in Belgium and the recommendations 'resulted in an image of Belgium as having found a middle ground between British multiculturalism and the return to Jacobinism in France'.[63] The most representative case of this position can be found in the Belgian steering committee's recommendation to prohibit the wearing of religious symbols for the first three years of secondary school and to allow general freedom for the same in the final three years. This proposition was interpreted in a different way by Louis-Léon Christians, who considers it to be a technique of consensual resolution, 'preventing any binary approach involving winners and losers'.[64] Nadia Fadil, however, considers that this option seeks to reconcile two contrasting concerns among members of the commission: that of the group troubled about the social pressure that obliges Muslim girls to wear the veil and that of the group strongly defending freedom of religious practice.[65]

From a comparative perspective, Solange Lefebvre, one of the specialist members of the Bouchard–Taylor Commission, has provided a study of the RTI that examines the experiences of four societies that have produced similar reports – namely, Britain, France, Quebec and Australia.[66] Lefebvre concludes that adaptation to cultural and religious diversity in these contexts is a prerequisite sine qua non for social stability. Diversity must be seen as a cultural and economic asset. For this reason, the author salutes the path taken by the RTI: that of progressive work taking diversity into account, but tempered by the necessity to obtain the approval of all the experts united around the commission. From a multiculturalist perspective, Tariq Modood, an adviser for the Parekh commission, has described the report as reasonable and balanced. For Modood, the concepts of interculturalism employed by the RTI 'draw upon four distinct modes of integration. In so doing they create their own distinctive amalgam, something appropriate and timely for Belgium today'.[67]

Some authors have remarked that the RTI report did not include a well-developed chapter to explain its theoretical framework, as did the Bouchard–Taylor and Stasi Reports, particularly in relation to the understanding of interculturalism unique to the commission.[68] In seeking the principles on which the report rests, one must therefore watch for certain indications that are provided throughout its pages. In so doing, we come to discover that interculturalism is

presented as a social project aimed at responding to the multicultural nature of Belgian society; it would evoke 'interpersonal relationships, dialogue, interactions that are sometimes conflicting, as part of a joint project that allies unity and diversity, respect for identities and collective projects'.[69] Beyond this definition and other central principles (the equality of citizens, the fight against racism and xenophobia, and the equality of men and women), the report focuses more on concrete problems and solutions than on the definition of theoretical principles. We must remember, however, the report's admission that the commissioners were deeply divided regarding preferred values. The search for a consensus on concrete recommendations thus prevailed over the desire to sketch a global vision of the values to be fostered and the foundation on which to construct Belgian society.[70]

Nevertheless, the RTI report is based on at least two fundamental rules that Marie-Claire Foblets summarizes as follows:

> The first basic rule consists of the non-discrimination principle, which means maximum opportunities for participation for everyone who is a legal resident of the country. The second basic rule is that integration of newcomers and minorities into society should go hand in hand with due respect for a person's religious, ethnic and/or cultural identity.[71]

These two rules harmonize perfectly with the philosophy driving the CID report.[72] However, although the RTI report was specifically intended to be a continuation of the CID, and while the two reports have much in common, we observe that the theoretical frameworks that largely orient their respective discourses (whether such a framework has been explicitly presented or not) are not exactly the same. First, the RTI report insists less on the recognition of identities as such. It pleads for the recognition of the importance of native languages for students, by affirming that this represents a manner to recognize that these students 'are themselves' (p. 43). The report also recommends the acknowledgement of Belgium's colonial past, so that certain populations of youth issuing from immigration, notably sub-Saharan, 'can grow up in a country that recognizes this contentious history and expresses its regret and responsibility for these drastic events' (p. 86). It pleads for recognition of the problem of Métis children abandoned by Belgians in Africa (p. 85) and that skills acquired abroad be recognized in Belgium (p. 71). While many of these issues had already been addressed from the point of view of recognition in the CID report (p. 73, 88), we can also note that the latter report insists, more or less explicitly, on the necessity of recognizing difference (p. 5), cultural groups (p. 7, 45), expressions of religious belonging (p. 11), youth issuing from immigration (p. 37), plural identities (p. 38), cultural minorities (pp. 43–46), diversity (p. 65), particularities and cultural rights (pp. 44, 73). The same is also true with regard to affirmative action policies, to which the CID devotes a chapter and of which an explicit formulation is absent in the RTI report. With regard to economic issues which are very present in the CID report,[73] the issue is not directly treated in RTI since the

steering committee decided that this issue extends beyond the bounds of their subject (p. 23). This reason, among others, pushed one of the members, Edouard Delruelle, rapporteur of the preceding the CID, to compose a dissenting note in which he deplored the sidelining of the socioeconomic dimension of intercultural issues (p. 123) directly linked, according to the author, to the absence of actors from the socioeconomic world within the members of the RTI steering committee – the opposite of the CID.[74]

These differences are important because they suggest a clear divergence in theoretical choice. In effect, the approach of the RTI proves to be 'more pragmatic than conceptual',[75] whereas the CID seemed to be inspired by the political philosophy of Nancy Fraser, a philosophy that articulates recognition and economic distribution (and/or reorganization), without which, it claims, social actors are not able to interact with others as equals.[76]

Follow-up and implementation of the RTI report

The need for a political follow-up of the RTI's recommendations was expressed with urgency by the steering committee in its report; the ultimate recommendation specifically calls for the rapid establishment of a 'follow-up and evaluation mechanism … at each level of the state affected' (p. 120). Given the almost complete absence of follow-up on – and thus of impact by – the recommendations of the CID, some insisted from the start of the RTI on the necessity of an appropriate follow-up of the conclusions of this new commission, as well as on the counterproductive effects on democracy of once again resorting to this process of civic reflection without a proper follow-up or implementation.[77]

Yet, just days after the official launch of the RTI in September 2009, Minister Milquet of the Humanist Party saw two other French political parties effectively 'short circuit' the processes of the RTI, by launching their own set of legislative propositions regarding the wearing of religious symbols.

Nevertheless, as was the case after the work of the CID, an interministerial conference uniting federal and federated authorities was held on 18 March 2011, at which the minister requested each level of authority to ensure follow-up of the RTI report. This request, however, ultimately remained in the realm of wishful thinking since, at both the federal and federated levels, political authorities have been unable to pursue any real implementation of the recommendations. Three elements explain the failure to follow up on the RTI. The first relates to the political context around the presentation of the report, Belgium having been immersed in the longest governmental crisis in its history following the anticipated federal elections of April 2010.[78] The acting government of the time had another set of fundamental priorities, particularly the Belgian Presidency of the EU Council of Ministers. Second, according to philosopher François De Smet, it proved particularly difficult for the political representatives to take ownership of the recommendations which constitute, individually and collectively, the result of a compromise reached between experts.[79] Finally, as with the CID, the processes of the RTI correspond to an initiative of the federal government for which no

effective coordination with the regions and communities had been provided, so the governments did not ultimately feel obligated by the results.

Conclusion

Returning to the mandates giving to the CID and RTI – i.e. to make concrete proposals on issues of diversity and to establish a peaceful dialogue on the modalities of living together in an intercultural Belgium – we can draw a mixed picture of the results obtained at the end of these two processes of civic reflection. The first contribution of the two commissions, in the context of twenty-first century Belgian society, is no doubt the fostering of an open and peaceful debate, which brought together experts and actors from the field in a setting free from media pressure and political influence. We should also emphasize the citizen dimension of the two processes, mainly assured by the participation of civil society organizations active within the field of interculturalism or confronted with these issues in their work.

In contrast, the objective of achieving political and legislative recommendations proposing concrete solutions to intercultural issues does not seem to have been truly achieved. We could point out the accomplishment of the two commissions, particularly the RTI, in generating, in a spirit of compromise between the different positions represented, practical recommendations on the most difficult issues. However, it is clear that, in their implementation, the proposals made by both the CID and RTI suffered from a general lack of political follow-up.

The lack of implementation of the work and conclusions of the CID and RTI by the policy-makers of the country finds its origin in both the content of the recommendations in question and in the processes through which they were established. First, the formulation of these proposals, be they very broad or, inversely, very precise, has made it difficult to exactly measure the true influence they have had on diversity policy, as well as their literal implementation as specific public measures. Second, the composition of the committees, in addition to the decision-making processes which led to their recommendations, do not necessarily reflect the political and linguistic divisions inherent in the Belgian political landscape that, despite the willingness to see these divides become obsolete, exerts a significant influence over public decisions. Additionally, the reduced involvement of federated entities in the CID and RTI, as well as the generally more limited participation of the Dutch-speaking part of Belgian society, prevented the ensemble of policy-makers and the different levels of authority from feeling connected, in one way or another, to the recommendations relating to their skills. The plurality of approaches that continue to exist today across both sides of the linguistic borders of the country, with regard to diversity policy and integration, reflect the difficulty authorities have in finding a common ground on these issues in a political system that is regularly torn between the concerns of both linguistic communities.[80]

We can also consider the types of media and political repercussions associated with each of the reports. In the case of the CID, the minimal reception that the

report received in the press and among politicians was relatively positive, whereas the work of the RTI gave rise to a greater volume of media and political reactions, which were, at the same time, largely disapproving. The difference in the kind of treatment each report basically parallels the degree to which the recommendations were decided and concrete – more for the RTI and less for the CID. In addition, these often ideological and doctrinal positions on intercultural issues in the public debate contrasted with the pragmatic and consensual approaches that are usually adopted by people when they actually face these issues of diversity in their day-to-day lives.[81] This discrepancy probably illustrates the limits of the Belgian model in its capacity to compromise in order to resolve issues regarding interculturalism in the face of recurring ideological divisions and linguistic conflicts between the policy-makers of the country.

In any case, the resolution of issues linked to questions of cultural diversity and required integration, as treated in the first report by the Royal Commissariat of Immigrants in 1989, represents a long-term policy. Thus, the true value of these two exercises in civic reflection, the Commission for Intercultural Dialogue and the Round Tables on Interculturalism – even if they have today proved themselves to be undeniably limited in terms of their political consequences – lies in their stimulation of long-term public discussion of interculturalism in Belgium.

Notes

1 Roger Lallemand, Annemie Neyts *et al*. *Commission du Dialogue Interculturel: Rapport final et Livre des auditions* (Brussels: Ministère de l'Égalité des Chances, de l'Intégration sociale et de l'Interculturalité, 2005); Marie-Claire Foblets, Christine Kulakowski *et al*., *Les Assises de l'Interculturalité* (Brussels: Ministère de l'Emploi et de l'Égalité des Chances, 2010). These will be referred to as the CID report and the RTI report in the following notes.

2 Jean Marie Faux, 'De la société multiculturelle au dialogue interculturel: Étapes de la réflexion politique en Belgique', in *Documents d'analyse et de réflexion* (Brussels: Centre Avec, 2010), pp. 4–5; Bruno Vinikas, 'Des rapports et des politiques', *Agenda Interculturel* 288 (2010), pp. 10–12.

3 Gily Coene, 'Être féministe, ce n'est pas exclure! Le pragmatisme féministe dans le débat sur le multiculturalisme en Flandre', *Revue européenne des migrations internationales* 2 (2007): 81, http://remi.revues.org/4172; Felice Dassetto, 'Interculturalité en clair: Question en marge des "Assises de l'Interculturalité"', *Cismoc Papers on-line* (2009): p. 7, http://uclouvain.be/37051.html; Pascal Delwit and Jean-Michel De Waele, 'Partis et systèmes de partis en Belgique: 1830–1998', in *Gouverner la Belgique: Clivages et compromis dans une société complexe*, ed. Pascal Delwit, Jean-Michel De Waele and Paul Magnette (Paris: PUF, 1999), p. 146.

4 Faux, 'De la société multiculturelle au dialogue interculturel', p. 4.

5 Edouard Delruelle, 'Du "Commissariat Royal Aux Immigrés" Aux "Assises de l'Interculturalité": 20 ans de débats publics sur l'intégration', in *Les Assises de l'Interculturalité. The Round Tables on Interculturalism*, ed. Marie-Claire Foblets and Jean-Philippe Schreiber (Brussels: Larcier. 2013), p. 34.

6 Delruelle, 'Du "Commissariat Royal aux Immigrés" aux "Assises de l'Interculturalité"', p. 34.

7 Please note that all foreign language texts have been translated by the authors.

8 On this progressive dichotomy, see Ilke Adam, *Les entités fédérées belges et l'intégration des immigrés* (Brussels: Éditions de l'Université de Bruxelles, 2013).
9 Caroline Sägesser, 'A la recherche de bases communes', in *Les Assises de l'Interculturalité: The Round Tables on Interculturalism*, ed. Marie-Claire Foblets and Jean-Philippe Schreiber (Brussels: Larcier, 2013), p. 212.
10 Hassan Bousetta and Dirk Jacobs, 'Multiculturalism, Citizenship and Islam in Problematic Encounters in Belgium', in *Multiculturalism, Muslims and Citizenship: A European Approach*, ed. Tariq Modood, Anna Triandafyllidou and Ricard Zapata-Barrero (New York: Routledge, 2007).
11 Edouard Delruelle, 'Que le débat continue!' *Agenda Interculturel* 288 (2010), pp. 6–8. The opposing viewpoint of political scientist Vincent de Coorebyter should also be noted, according to which the absence of a strong national identity in a country such as Belgium has no real impact on its ability to integrate immigrants. Vincent de Coorebyter, 'Comment s'intégrer dans un pays qui se désintègre?' *Agenda interculturel* 292 (2011), pp. 4–6.
12 Bousetta and Jacobs, 'Multiculturalism, Citizenship and Islam in Problematic Encounters in Belgium', p. 24.
13 For a period of several months, Rik Vannieuwenhuyse suffered harassment from extremists for employing Naïma Amzil, a Muslim worker wearing a headscarf. Vannieuwenhuyse's factory was set on fire, people close to him were intimidated, products from his business were poisoned, revolver bullets were slipped into letters and a price of 250,000 euros was placed on his head. See the CID report, p. 9; Annick Hovine, 'L'autre Flandre', *La Libre Belgique*, 4 March 2005.
14 Hugues Dumont and Xavier Delgrange, 'Le principe de pluralisme face à la question du voile islamique en Belgique', *Droit et société* 68 (2008): p. 76.
15 Ibid., p. 87.
16 Coene, 'Être Féministe', p. 19.
17 This mandate has been described by some of the members as disproportionate: the members not only lacked sufficient time to reach a consensus, but they also missed the opportunity to take into account the contributions of the five members of the *Commission des Sages*. See Dumont and Delgrange, 'Le principe de pluralisme', p. 88.
18 Martine Vandemeulebroucke, 'La Commission du dialogue interculturel fait l'inventaire des réussites et échecs à l'étranger', *Le Soir,* 27 October 2004.
19 This consultation website is no longer accessible (www.dialogueinterculturel.be). See the CID report, p. 11.
20 Page numbers will be included in-text for sequences of citations from the same report.
21 That being said, the CID recognizes that this preoccupation vis-à-vis the uneven effects of legal equality has been taken into account by public authorities in Belgium, and that concrete actions have already been taken in this direction (p. 32).
22 The report prefers discussing 'cultural minorities' as opposed to 'ethnic minorities', the latter having a pejorative racial connotation. The idea of cultural minority in the report refers to certain populations who are in precarious economic situations and lack recognition in Belgian society. This awareness translates into 'a specifically cultural reality and a circumstance of inequality in relation to the dominant cultural model', the CID report, pp. 39–40.
23 The report avoided focusing on the issue of the headscarf, considering that the real challenges to integration issues lay elsewhere. Some authors have noted that the CID had been warned by one of its own members, the journalist Eddy Caekelberghs, 'against the trap that the Stasi report had fallen into a few months earlier, namely excessive media coverage on its proposal regarding this sole problem at the expense of all other suggestions'. Dumont and Delgrange, 'Le principe de pluralisme', p. 92.
24 In French-speaking Belgium, discretion was given to school principals, the great majority of whom banned the wearing of religious symbols. For the Flemish

community, the wearing of religious signs was banned by decree for schools within the public network, in contrast to schools within the free network, who maintained their autonomy over the matter. The question thus regards a comprehensive ban from above, by the relevant parliaments, in the image of France.

25 Delruelle, 'Du "Commissariat Royal aux Immigrés" aux "Assises de l'Interculturalité"', p. 35.
26 Dumont and Delgrange, 'Le principe de pluralisme', p. 95; the RTI report, p. 119.
27 Dassetto, 'Interculturalité en clair', pp. 1–17.
28 We should also note the willingness demonstrated by Co-chair, Annemie Neyts, at the launch of the CID, to reconcile the differing views between the Flemish and French on intercultural issues. See Christian Laporte, 'Le dialogue interculturel à mi-parcours', *Le Soir*, 27 April 2005.
29 Dassetto, 'Interculturalité en clair', pp. 10–11.
30 Felice Dassetto, 'Exorcisme interculturel', *La Libre Belgique*, 6 June 2005.
31 Dumont and Delgrange, 'Le principe de pluralisme', pp. 90–91.
32 Michelle Lamensch, 'Les douze commandements citoyens', *Le Soir*, 5 August 2005.
33 Delruelle, 'Du "Commissariat Royal aux Immigrés" aux "Assises de L'Interculturalité"', p. 36.
34 Faux, 'De la société multiculturelle au dialogue interculturel', p. 7.
35 Alexandre Ansay and Gaëlle Lanotte, 'Dialogue interculturel … les monologues du voisin? Entretien avec Maria Arena', *Agenda interculturel* 269/270 (2009), p. 2. We have observed support, since the beginning of the political response to the findings made by the CID, for the necessity to 'further support grassroots organizations' in their initiatives on intercultural questions through the funding of twenty 'local platforms for democracy', the CID report, p. 76.
36 Delruelle, 'Que le débat continue!', pp. 6–8; Dumont and Delgrange, 'Le principe de pluralisme', pp. 87–88.
37 Henri Goldman, 'Un progrès à condition que …' *Agenda Interculturel* 288 (2010), pp. 4–5.
38 Delruelle, 'Du "Commissariat Royal aux Immigrés" aux "Assises de L'Interculturalité"', p. 36.
39 Joëlle Milquet, 'Note de politique générale de la ministre de l'Emploi et de l'Égalité des chances', *Chambre des représentants*, Doc. 52 0995/016 (2008), pp. 16–17.
40 The RTI, p. 10.
41 Daniël Cuypers, 'Van multiculturaliteit naar interculturaliteit', *De Juristenkrant*, 9 March 2011, p. 13; Marie-Claire Foblets, 'In een democratie gaan alleen de compromisdenkers vooruit', *De Juristenkrant*, 23 February 2011, p. 8.
42 The CID report, p. 10; Christine Kulakowski, 'Assises de l'Interculturalité: objectifs, déroulement, positions de départ', *Cahiers du CIEP* 10 (2011), p. 8.
43 Hugues Dorzée, 'Diversité: le grand ratage', *Le Soir*, 11 May 2010.
44 Delruelle, 'Que le débat continue!', p. 6; Goldman, 'Un progrès à condition que', p. 5.
45 Cuypers, 'Van multiculturaliteit naar interculturaliteit', p. 13.
46 The CID report, pp. 122–126.
47 Kulakowski, 'Assises de l'Interculturalité: objectifs, déroulement, positions de départ', pp. 8–9.
48 The RTI report, pp. 13–15; ibid., p. 9.
49 Foblets, 'In een democratie gaan alleen', p. 8.
50 According to sociologist Stéphane Jonlet, if the goal of creating spaces for dialogue within the associations was certainly met, it nevertheless qualifies the scope of these meetings in terms of citizen participation. Stéphane Jonlet, 'Des Assises citoyennes?' *Agenda Interculturel*, 288 (2010), pp. 22–25.
51 The CID report, p. 85; the RTI report, p. 52.
52 Cuypers, 'Van multiculturaliteit naar interculturaliteit', p. 13.

53 Julie Ringelheim, 'Le Rapport des Assises: Une contribution nuancée au débat public', in *Les Assises de l'Interculturalité*, eds. Foblets and Schreiber, pp. 183–184.
54 The committee suggests 'removing the explicit reference to the genocide perpetrated by the German Nazi Party during the Second World War, in such a way that the reference can be applied to other genocides' (p. 85).
55 The recommendation calls for 'the examination of potential advantages and disadvantages' in order to broaden the concept of reasonable accommodation, to make it relevant to situations 'related to religious and philosophical convictions' (p. 118).
56 Christine Laurent, 'De bien étranges paravents', *Le Vif/L'Express*, 5 November 2010.
57 Little explicit academic reception can be noted for the two reports produced in Belgium. In this regard, the most significant effort can be located in the collective work edited by Foblets and Schreiber. In addition to this work, it is worth mentioning some other works on the topic of the commissions. A few articles portray the two reports as part of the journey of reflection on diversity in Belgium (Faux, 2010), linking them to the content of previous reports, while stressing differences in context and orientation (Dassetto, 2009). Other works refer to specific aspects of the commissions to review the policies and regulations concerning multicultural materials in Dutch-speaking Belgium, according to specific topics such as gender. This is the case for Gily Coene's text that addresses the objectives of the CID, of which she had been a member, and the position of the CID on the subject of wearing religious symbols by public officials (Coene, 2007). The issue of the headscarf also found its place in certain studies interested in, for example, the differences in the perspectives between the Stasi and CID reports with regard to the management of cultural and religious diversity (Coene and Longman, 2008).
58 Nathalie Caprioli, 'Interculturalité: quelles avancées?' *Agenda Interculturel* 288 (2010): p. 3; Goldman, 'Un progrès à condition que', p. 5.
59 Dassetto, 'Interculturalité en clair', p. 9.
60 Jean-Yves Carlier, 'Les Assises de l'Interculturalité: un modèle à suivre', in *Les Assises de L'interculturalité*, eds. Foblets and Schreiber, p. 153.
61 Marc Jacquemain, 'Assises de l'Interculturalité : où est la "pente glissante""?' in ibid., pp. 184–186; Sägesser, 'A la recherche de bases communes', in ibid., p. 209.
62 Jean Baubérot, 'Le rapport du Comité de Pilotage des Assises de l'Interculturalité et la Commission Stasi', in ibid., p. 89.
63 Ibid. Delruelle (2013) suggests that the recommendations of the RTI were strongly inspired by the multicultural Anglo-Saxon current, notably the Bouchard–Taylor Commission. Delruelle's observation is all the more intriguing since the Bouchard-Taylor Commission positioned itself as interculturalist, demarcating itself from Canadian multiculturalism. On the distinction between interculturalism and multiculturalism, see Nasar Meer and Tariq Modood, 'How does Interculturalism Contrast with Multiculturalism?' *Journal of Intercultural Studies* 33.2 (2011): pp. 1–22.
64 Louis-Léon Christians, 'Le nécessaire effort de diversité des modes de gestion du pluralisme', in *Les Assises de L'interculturalité*, eds Foblets and Schreiber, p. 159.
65 Nadia Fadil, 'Performing the Salat [Islamic Prayers] at Work: Secular and Pious Muslims Negotiating the Contours of the Public in Belgium', *Ethnicities* 13.6 (2013): pp. 1–22.
66 Solange Lefebvre, 'Faire de la diversité un atout. Un défi commun à plusieurs sociétés', in *Les Assises de L'interculturalité*, eds Foblets and Schreiber, pp. 73–91.
67 Tariq Modood, 'Four Modes of Integration', in ibid., p. 43.
68 Ringelheim, 'Le Rapport des Assises', p. 189. While fair, we should nonetheless consider that the final point of the introduction offers five preliminary starting positions, particularly in relation to interculturalism. See Kulakowski, 'Assises de l'Interculturalité', 2011.

69 The RTI report, 10.
70 Ringelheim, 'Le Rapport des Assises', p. 194.
71 Marie-Claire Foblets, 'Editorial', in *Les Assises De L'interculturalité*, ed. Marie-Claire Foblets and Jean-Philippe Schreiber, p. 19.
72 Both reports share a vision of interculturalism founded on encounter, dialogue, social diversity and respect for cultural and religious identities, even though both reports start with a minimum understanding of the notion of interculturalism rather than a formal definition.
73 Notice in passing that the actual definition of 'cultural minority' provided by the CID takes the economic insecurity of cultural groups into account. Furthermore, while the CID preferred to utilize the expression 'cultural minorities', the RTI report argues that the adjective 'cultural' does not adequately cover 'visible minorities', who are identifiable by their appearance or patronymic, independently of their cultures, and who are involved in the fight against discrimination. Similarly, there exist other people who define themselves primarily on the basis of their religion. The RTI steering committee chose the expression 'ethnic, cultural and/or religious minorities' in order to place the emphasis on the specific minority in question. See the RTI report, 26.
74 Delruelle, 'Que le débat continue!', p. 6.
75 Jacquemain, 'Assises de l'Interculturalité', p. 197.
76 Nancy Fraser, 'Rethinking Recognition', *The New Left Review* 3 (2000): pp. 107–120. Even though Fraser's name does not appear in the report itself, this does not negate the fact that we can find certain aspects of her philosophy within it. It is also telling that Delruelle, one of the editors of the CID report, also affirms the following elsewhere: 'on a philosophical level, what the Belgian case demonstrates is that we cannot afford not to think on the relationship between a policy of identity recognition and policy of social redistribution. In the debate between Axel Honneth, supporter of recognition policy and Nancy Fraser, supporter of social redistribution policy, it is not surprising that I chose the path advocated by Nancy Fraser.' Delruelle, 'Du "Commissariat Royal aux Immigrés" aux "Assises de L'Interculturalité"', p. 37.
77 François De Smet, 'Les Assises centrifuges d'une interculturalité résignée', in *Les Assises de L'interculturalité*, eds Foblets and Schreiber, p. 222.
78 Kulakowski, 'Assises de l'Interculturalité', p. 9.
79 De Smet, 'Les Assises centrifuges', p. 221.
80 Bousetta and Jacobs, 'Multiculturalism, Citizenship and Islam in Problematic Encounters in Belgium', p. 28.
81 Ibid., p. 34.