FROM COMPLEX DIVERSITY TO MULTILINGUAL CITIZENSHIP: CATALONIA AND BEYOND

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Abstract

The article advocates adoption of the principle of multilingual citizenship to overcome unjust hierarchical relations between language groups in the context of hegemonic nation-states. It first outlines a heuristic model contrasting language-as-an-option and language-as-a-ligature to reconstruct the logic of cultural integration in the (monolingual) nation-state. Second, it shows how the implementation of this model in practice has become inextricably intertwined with structures of nationalist domination. Third, it fleshes out the concept of complex linguistic diversity to substantiate the claim that the relationship between citizenship, linguistic diversity and multilingualism must be radically redefined to transcend the monist bias built into the model of the hegemonic nation-state. Fourth, this approach is applied to the context of contemporary Catalonia, which offers a laboratory-like environment for studying the challenges of complex diversity and assessing the potential of auto-centred multilingualism for underpinning the formation of communities made up of and for equal and diverse citizens.

Keywords: citizenship; multilingual citizenship; complex diversity; migration; minorities; minoritisation; multilingualism; nation-building; nationalism; Catalonia.

DE LA DIVERSITAT COMPLEXA A LA CIUTADANIA MULTILINGÜE: CATALUNYA I MÉS ENLLÀ

Resum

L'article defensa que s'ha d'adoptar el principi de la ciutadania multilingüe per superar les relacions jeràrquiques injustes que s'estableixen entre diferents grups lingüístics en el context dels estats nació hegemònics. En primer lloc, explica a grans trets un model heurístic que diferencia entre la llengua com a opció i la llengua com a lligam per refer la lògica de la integració cultural en l'estat nació (monolingüe). En segon lloc, mostra com l'aplicació d'aquest model a la pràctica ha quedat indestriablement lligada a les estructures de dominació nacionalista. En tercer lloc, desenvolupa el concepte de la diversitat lingüística complexa per fonamentar l'afirmació que la relació entre ciutadania, diversitat lingüística i multilingüisme s'ha de redefinir radicalment per superar el biaix monista inherent al model de l'estat nació hegemònic. En quart lloc, aquest enfocament s'aplica al context de la Catalunya contemporània, que té unes característiques semblants a les d'un laboratori que permeten estudiar els reptes de la diversitat complexa i avaluar el potencial del multilingüisme autocentrat per apuntalar la creació de comunitats formades per ciutadans diversos.

Paraules clau: ciutadania; ciutadania multilingüe; diversitat complexa; migració; minories; minorització; multilingüisme; construcció nacional; nacionalisme; Catalunya.

Contents

It is a truism to say that our societies are being rendered more diverse by new forms of mobility related with the migration of people as well as with the circulation of goods, services and ideas. Things tend towards the controversial, however, as soon as we begin to assess the empirical dimensions of this process. While, for some, diversity involves long overdue and benign changes – a greater variety of lifestyles, more opportunities for new cultural experiences – others perceive it as a symptom of major disruption, which ultimately threatens societal cohesion and the core of national identity. Diversity has allegedly become a salient political battlefield in virtually all Western-type democracies: old cleavages between left and right increasingly intermingle with new types of conflict that cut across former political divisions and confront the advocates of transnational openness with those who defend nationalism as a priority. Closely connected to the rise of populism, the battle has certainly become more intense over the last decades, but the issues at stake are not entirely new. The dialectic of inclusion and exclusion, of cultural emancipation and subordination, is inscribed in the history of political modernity and the formation of nation-states from the beginning.

The modern citizen is a nation-state citizen. To become a citizen implies a process of political socialisation that is not only mediated by language. The process also creates close bonds between civic identities and political cultures linked to one specific or, sometimes, a limited set of languages. In most cases, in the European context at any rate, citizenship emerged as a status that was achieved through, and sustained by, a monolingual institutional system. By establishing such a system, nation-states became machines of linguistic assimilation (Calvet, 1998), banning linguistic diversity from a public realm conceived of as culturally homogeneous. Where diversity survived, it did so in a hierarchical system in which the existence of minoritised groups rarely questioned this homogeneity as the dominant standard. How and to what extent is this situation altered by the interplay between old and new diversities? This is the question I will address in this article, arguing that the question under scrutiny strengthens the case of both "old" and "new" minorities for a multilingual reframing of citizenship. I will develop my argument in four steps. First, I will sketch out a heuristic model contrasting language-as-an-option and language-as-a-ligature to reconstruct the logic of cultural integration in the (monolingual) nation-state. Second, I will show how the implementation of this model in practice became inextricably intertwined with structures of nationalist domination. Moreover, the model character of the Western frame must be qualified in view of the experience of countries in the post-colonial South that point to a greater elasticity of the language-citizenship link. Third, I will introduce the concept of complex linguistic diversity to substantiate my claim that the relationship between citizenship, linguistic diversity and multilingualism must be radically redefined to overcome the monist and hegemonic bias built into the cultural model of the nation-state. Fourth, and finally, I will apply my approach to the context of contemporary Catalonia, which offers a laboratory-like environment in which to study the challenges of complex diversity and assess the potential of auto-centred multilingualism for underpinning the formation of communities made up of and for equal and diverse citizens.

1 Options, ligatures and linguistic diversity

Of the 5,000 to 7,000 languages estimated by linguists to be spoken in the early 21st century, 2,500 are considered endangered.[1] In many cases, such endangerment means that a language will disappear from the linguistic map. Language death has been a persistent phenomenon through the history of humanity. When we speak of ancient languages, we ultimately mean "dead" languages, although there are still small communities of people that speak Sanskrit or Latin today. In contrast with these two cases, we have hardly any evidence of most of the languages that have disappeared in the course of history.

When people "lose" their first or native language, they normally do not become speechless, but switch to another language to communicate with each other. For many sociologists working on immigration issues, language substitution across two to three generations of migrants was a recurrent phenomenon, which they observed with no great normative concern.[2] The observation even applies to some extent to modern approaches to the wrongs of colonialism, which for a long time did not pay much attention to the consequences of the enforced linguistic assimilation many indigenous communities suffered as they were incorporated into a

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1 See Moseley (2010) for detailed figures, and Crystal (2014, pp. 1-34) for a discussion of such figures.

2 See Kazal (1995) for the United States; for the European context, see Hogan-Brun et al. (2009).

settler state (Tully, 2008a, pp. 257-288). Applying a common frame to both cases is far-fetched; yet, in both cases, a far-reaching assimilation into the dominant language was seen as the price one had to pay for being "integrated" or "modernised". In contrast with the view of hard-core modernists, many anthropologists and linguists interpret the death of a language as a catastrophe. From their perspective, language death goes hand in hand with a loss of a substantial element of cultural diversity, a loss sometimes perceived as closely connected to the decline of ecological diversity (Mühlhäusler, 2011). Whether this is true or not is a question of intense debate among scholars and activists, but I cannot focus on this question here. There is another aspect, more relevant from the angle of political linguistics which I apply: whatever the aggregate consequences, for persons who are confronted with the extinction of their language, the experience does have traumatic dimensions.[3] This is so because the loss of the language is ultimately concomitant with the disappearance of the indigenous community undergoing the process. In the case of immigrant groups, the situation is different, as people who migrate are aware that they will have to adopt the language of the host society. That the German language no longer plays a prominent role in the United States, for instance, does not affect the continuity of German-speaking communities in Europe, from where millions of emigrants to the Americas originated in the 19th and well into the 20th century. There is little political leeway for the descendants of these emigrants to claim that their ancestors suffered grievances comparable to those that indigenous groups underwent – and still undergo – under colonialism. Nonetheless, the evidence we have at hand shows that language substitution in immigrant societies is frequently a cause of regret by those who have lost the linguistic connection with their ancestors (Portes & Hao, 2002).

These previous considerations are important for assessing the issues at stake when we seek to grasp why linguistic diversity is relevant politically. The question of language death is closely connected to key questions of human rights and human well-being. These are not just a function of appreciating the diversity of languages per se, of conceiving of linguistic diversity as an asset for achieving interculturally informed knowledge across groups, countries and world regions, and thereby maintaining epistemic pluralism. For the sake of not overburdening my argument in this article, I will leave such considerations aside.[4] Instead, I will concentrate on individual speakers, those who face the negative consequences most immediately when a language disappears or is substituted by another. Accordingly, my focus will be on the members of language groups who must deal with the dynamics of language contact, language conflict and language substitution under specific circumstances.[5] The commitment of the members of a particular language community to their "own" language will vary according to specific economic and socio-political factors.

On the one hand, members of both majority and minority groups experience language as an asset that creates links between their immediate lifeworld (their family, relatives and neighbourhood) and the more abstract realm of institutionalised social life (education, work and politics). These links relate individual to collective identities (and vice versa). In the increasingly interconnected world of modernity, on the other hand, the asset may have a limited communicative scope: for members of smaller language groups, the first language may not give full access to the multiple and highly differentiated institutional realms characteristic of modern societies. In the case of minoritised collectivities, the goal of achieving institutional completeness, to borrow the term coined by Breton (1964), is precisely a key objective of the struggle for linguistic equality. In a nutshell, regarding the linguistic realm, institutional completeness implies that speakers of a historically minoritised language change their previous status of subordination, pushing for the use of their own vernacular in domains where it has no significant presence, be it schools, the workplace or the media.

Regardless of its communicative "use value", any language still creates a strong *tie* between an individual and the lifeworld they feel attached to. In general, it is this tie dimension that substantiates the relevance of smaller and minoritised languages for their speakers. Having such a tie, however, does not mean that these speakers do not appreciate the role of other languages. Such appreciation may result from the simple fact that competence in the dominant language is necessary if cultural subordination is not to be linked to social marginalisation within the majority society. An additional and different aspect of becoming bi- or multilingual, not necessarily

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3 See, as a compelling example, the analysis of the case of the Nganasans, a small Finno-Ugric group in the West Siberian North, by Szeverényi and Wagner-Nagy (2011).

4 For an assessment of indigenous studies as a means for overcoming epistemic injustice, see Koskinen and Rolin (2019).

5 The following paragraphs draw on Kraus (2018, pp. 94-98).

connected to minority status, is the acquisition of a language that is a lingua franca, i.e., a language that opens a virtually unbounded range of opportunities for learning and communicating. Competence in a lingua franca thus opens the *gate* to a universal *koiné* that transcends the epistemic borders particular communities may have. The key point to make in this context is that the attitudes people adopt towards languages and multilingualism in a specific setting largely reflect the social and political framing of the interplay between the gate dimensions and the tie dimensions that are linked to specific linguistic repertoires.[6] As I will show in the next section, the main force in defining such framing parameters has been the nation-state. Before addressing the topic of language and nationalism, however, I will use the tie- and the gate-dimension to briefly elucidate the political significance of linguistic diversity in more general terms.

In his approach to the key determinants of societal integration under conditions of modernity, the German-British sociologist Ralf Dahrendorf (1979, p. 30) introduced the conceptual distinction of options and ligatures: "Options are possibilities of choice"; they offer people "structural opportunities for choice" by creating the necessary template for individual decisions. Ligatures, in contrast, "are allegiances; one might call them bonds or linkages as well". Dahrendorf (1979, p. 31) further elaborates: "Perhaps it could be said that as choices are the subjective side of options, so linkages, or bonds, are that of ligatures. (…) Ligatures create bonds and thus the foundations of action; options require choices and are thus open for the future". In this approach, options and ligatures structure the "life chances" of individuals in contemporary societies. Life chances are best understood as a function of the mix of options and ligatures, a mix that is crucial if we are to realise our potential as human beings. This relational aspect must be emphasised, as only the combination of the two elements makes for a meaningful social life: "A maximum of options is not by itself a maximum of life chances, nor is a minimum of options the only minimum of life chances. Ligatures without options are oppressive, whereas options without bonds are meaningless." (Dahrendorf, 1979, p. 31) Accordingly, the relationship of options and ligatures should not be considered a zero-sum, but rather a complementary relationship.

It is easily detectable that Dahrendorf was a major representative of social liberalism, a current of thought that in recent decades has been superseded by neoliberalism. Both strands of liberalism share an emphasis on individualism and freedom, which is patent in the importance Dahrendorf places on options. Yet his view diverges from the neoliberal school by acknowledging the irreducibly social, i.e., the meta-individual embeddedness of individual freedom. Even so, his theory, as a liberal theory, may be criticised for paying insufficient attention to the structural constraints – of domination, of exploitation – that affect this very embeddedness and constrain the degrees of freedom available for individuals from different social groups. Such constraints have also played a critical role in the political management of linguistic diversity by nation-states, as will be shown shortly.

Nonetheless, understanding life chances as a function of options and ligatures offers a basic conceptual tool kit for analysing the dynamics of integration (and disintegration) in modern societies. Moreover, in a more specific sense, the frame can also be used for approaching the issue of linguistic diversity in the context of these dynamics. First, it seems obvious that the more we focus on the importance of language as a social tie, as a ligature, the stronger our commitment to protecting linguistic diversity will be. Languages labelled as "minority", "smaller", or "lesser-used" languages may have a more limited lingua franca potential than "national" languages, especially those that become so-called "world" languages, such as English, Spanish and French. However, languages with comparatively low numbers of speakers, such as Sámi, represent a universe of culturally and historically mediated cultural experience that individuals must be able to rely on if they are to have meaningful choices in their effort at interpreting the world. According to the same logic, for people who belong to communities whose languages are disappearing, the loss of the native tongue does not just mean less diversity, but also amounts to a loss of ligatures. The situation of many indigenous groups that were forced to assimilate into the structures of colonial societies evidences the massive costs of losing ligatures without corresponding gains in options. Members of minoritised collectivities are culturally uprooted. Without the possibility of dealing with the dominant culture – which is a culture of domination – on their own terms, they are deprived of the most basic resources for self-determination, both at the individual and the collective level. In short, if our freedom as human beings is contingent upon meaningful combinations of

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6 See May (2012, pp. 206-244) for an overview of majority and minority approaches to such framing in modern education.

options and ligatures, it is hard to see how such meaningfulness can be secured without acknowledging the diversity of linguistic attachments.

Second, we may use the conceptual approach to reach a better understanding of the close connection that the European nation-states managed to establish between linguistic identity and citizenship in the 19th and 20th centuries. Nation-state formation went largely hand in hand with the linguistic homogenisation of the citizenry. This homogenisation ultimately aimed at producing a strong overlap of options and ligatures in the process of construction of citizens' linguistic identities through mass education and nationalisation policies. As Ernest Gellner (1983) has cogently argued, language standardisation was in many respects a by-effect of modernisation, triggered by the functional imperatives of industrial capitalism, as the making of a national labour market required generalised knowledge of a common language. Hence, professional and linguistic options tend to converge. However, it would be short-sighted to reduce the force of nationalism to its functional dimensions. It is obviously also related to the view that the common language was, at the same time, the emotional template for articulating the national community. To different degrees, and in different combinations, the mobilisation of these communities in Europe thus was paralleled by the consolidation of identity patterns that blended functional necessities and affective bonds.[7]

Ultimately, one can even argue that the pivotal role of language as a medium of socio-political integration was based on its potential for a peculiar combination of options and ligatures, which was the "blending" of the functional and affective dimensions of language. The peasants who became Frenchmen, to paraphrase Weber (1979), experienced national integration not just as a process aimed at their instrumentalization for the sake of creating a homogeneous nation-state and capitalist market, but as their joining a community of equal citizens. This is the very basis of the Jacobin-republican myth adopted in different ways by nation-builders all over Europe and other parts of the world, be it Spain or Turkey. Yet the political appeal of national citizenship could never completely obfuscate its problematic, "dark" core (Mann, 2004). As the Spanish and Turkish examples show, the success story of the modern nation-state was based on narratives that often omitted the hegemonic intentions of rulers and dominant sectors who had initiated the allegedly modernising nationalist projects. The ideological aspects of these projects soon became patent in the manifold conflicts to emerge from the mobilisation of cultural groups that had been pushed outside the national core and refused equal recognition. These groups, the collateral victims of nation-state building, and categorised as "minorities" in the language of contemporary law and politics, did not enjoy the hegemonic blend, but rather experienced linguistic integration as domination. Still, the blend left a deep impact on modernity's political map, especially in the European context, where the nation-state is generally conceived of as a monolingual state. Although several countries apply minority and linguistic autonomy provisions, a clear majority of member states of the European Union (EU) are officially monolingual and do not acknowledge the patterns of linguistic differentiation of a diverse citizenry.

In sum, the options-ligatures mix prevalent in modern nation-states is a highly biased mix. It institutionalises a majority-minorities logic that ultimately relegates the members of minoritised collectivities to a subordinate cultural status (Kraus, 2015). Accordingly, superseding the cultural legacies of the age of nationalist state-building by creating institutional spaces that combine multilingual repertoires and civic identity patterns that are inclusive and open in non-hegemonic ways implies a major break with the dominant paradigm. In the conceptual language introduced in the previous paragraphs, such a break would aim to generalise multilingual repertoires by applying criteria that allow people to open linguistic gates as well as secure linguistic ties. As linguistic identities are alterable and complementary by nature, people have the potential to develop multilingual repertoires. At the same time, as sketched out above, this very alterability is what makes for the highly political nature of any operation that defines what are the key aspects of gate-opening and tie-securing with respect to the status of different languages; or, to be more precise, that defines the status of speakers of different languages. Such an operation would be quite different for a speaker of English in the United States compared to a speaker of Kurdish in Turkey, for instance. What we consider to be options and what we consider to be ligatures is ultimately a function of power relations and politics, which involve conflict. Promoting multilingualism must therefore not be seen as a formula to overcome conflict, but rather as a strategy to frame

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7 See Weber (1979) for a seminal case study of rural France in the first five decades of the Third Republic.

conflict, adopting a more balanced and equitable logic than that of the hegemonic amalgamating of options and ligatures in the monolingual nation-state.

2 Mobility, inclusion and citizenship

As a key attribute of the modern nation-state, citizenship provides individuals with civil, political and social rights; membership of a political community is thereby connected to a generalised set of inclusion mechanisms (Marshall, 1950). All these mechanisms involve communication. We require linguistic competence to protect our privacy against state abuses. The right to education requires the regulation of language use in the educational system. Moreover, language is highly relevant for all activities that sustain collective will formation and decision-making, such as the electoral and voting process. Modern states typically assign official status to a single language or a limited set of languages, or at least regulate public use of the state language, even if the language receives no explicit mention in the constitution (neither Germany nor the United States, for instance, mention an official language in their constitutional text). Historical political sociology has shown how most European nation-states were formed through protracted efforts of cultural homogenisation that were controlled by dominant groups. The creation and institutionalisation of a common language was a central aspect of standardisation. On the one hand, this was a requirement for building an effective administration; on the other, public use of the common language would strengthen the collective bonds between members of the political community (Rokkan, 1999). In other words, linguistic standardisation meant the blending of instrumental and affective patterns of collective identity according to the logic described above.

The linking of citizenship and schooling to a de jure or de facto official language made the acquisition of a common linguistic repertoire a necessary component of citizens' cognitive and professional qualifications. As described in the previous section, it combined functional imperatives with emotional motives. It seems hardly an exaggeration to argue that the very success of the language policies introduced by European nation-states depended on their ability to sustain the interlocking of functional requirements, socio-economic mobility opportunities and symbolic inclusion mechanisms in the process of laying the foundations of their citizens' linguistic identity. Mobility and inclusion in the nation-state ultimately came to mean mobility and inclusion in and through a language. The "rights revolution" (Ignatieff, 2000) observable in Western-type democracies in the second half of the 20th century meant that many countries, confronted with the mobilisation of collectivities whose access to citizenship rights had remained constrained due to the hegemonic legacies inscribed into their citizenship regimes, acknowledged that the nation-state approach entailed deep status inequalities between majority citizens and the members of non-dominant groups. The successive granting of linguistic minority rights – which apply at different levels and to different degrees – was intended to reduce these inequalities. Notwithstanding the legal advances of that period, it must not be forgotten that the bulk of Western democracies began to introduce language rights for minoritised groups only after a long historical period of cultural and linguistic homogenisation that involved a sharp hierarchisation of dominant and non-dominant languages (May, 2012, p. 7). Reorganising schools, media and public communication in a way that leads to a clear break with a historically entrenched relation of hierarchy is an arduous task faced with many practical and ideological obstacles, as even relatively successful cases such as the Basque Country and Catalonia show.

Citizenship status relates to state membership and the set of legal entitlements that come with this membership. It is not directly connected to an attachment to a national community, even if in everyday English language the terms "citizen" and "national" are frequently conflated. Nevertheless, the subjective feeling of solidarity shared by those that identify with a particular nation rather than with members of other national collectivities (Weber, 1980, p. 528) has been a powerful political motive in the rise of modern citizenship. It has fuelled bottom-up mobilisations of peoples striving for their emancipation from imperial rule, but it has also been instrumentalised by old and new dominant groups to sustain their privileged position, appeasing those dominated by appealing to the common cause of the nation. During the transition from oligarchic systems of rule to democratic mass politics, nation-building has tended to make political and cultural borders congruent. Language – and characteristically, one language – thus became a decisive factor of socio-political integration, making for a relationship of complementarity between civic inclusion on the one hand and social and geographical mobility on the other (Kraus & Frank, 2022, pp. 135-136). The linguistic dimension of citizenship responds to the

functional requirements of a capitalist economy, substantiates the link between individuals and state authorities, and binds these individuals horizontally through the communicative web of a specific political culture.

In the Western imaginary, nationalism had a major impact on the general view of the relationship between language and political identity. In particular, the history of modern Europe shows how emerging linguistic majority standards became a key element in the cognitive repertoire to be mastered by the "standard citizen". Most European states establish a close semantic association between a language and their territory in their very names: Spain/Spanish, Romania/Romanian, Sweden/Swedish, etc., thereby concealing that, historically and up to the present day, the primary language of significant parts of their citizenry is not the official standard language. The idea of a "national" language seems to be deeply inscribed in the political DNA of modern Europe. While nationalism has certainly not been a historical phenomenon circumscribed to Europe or the regions of the world we today call the "global North", it is less clear that the language-citizenship link in Africa, Asia and Latin America can be grasped with an analytic lens that prioritises the European vis-à-vis other experiences. It is obvious that language issues are intrinsically linked to the struggle of indigenous communities in the Americas, and to the group conflicts observable in an African country such as Cameroon, to give but two examples. But it is less clear that the mix of cultural and political identity components we find along colonial and post-colonial trajectories reflects patterns equal to those that are characteristic of European history. An important factor in this regard is the very legacy of centuries of colonial rule, which has assigned the languages of the colonisers – Spanish, French and English – a lasting hegemonic role in large areas of the "global South". Moreover, many states of the area have remarkably higher levels of linguistic variety and fragmentation than their European counterparts. At the same time, the number of endogenous vernaculars that have attained a consolidated position as a national standard seems to be comparatively lower.

In a nutshell, the options-ligatures blend that shaped the patterns of citizenship and paved the way for national monolingualism in the North has not been adopted as a prevalent formula in the Global South.[8] Roughly two thirds of the 200 sovereign states that exist at present are usually filed under this vast geographical category, and it would be absurd to pretend that they share a common language policy profile. Still, their social reality is characterised by high levels of linguistic diversity, which accentuates the relevance of the linguistic dimensions of citizenship. An important number of countries have made considerable efforts to reconcile the colonial and post-colonial elements of their socio-cultural profile, and find a balance between the need to create a shared communicative space while respecting linguistic diversity. India may be the most prominent example in this regard.

Since independence, India has been strongly marked by the manifold tensions between the project of building a democratic state-nation and the commitment to preserving a culturally and linguistically deeply diverse heritage (Stepan et al., 2011). In practice, the country has institutionalised a complicated co-existence of Hindi and English as official languages of the Indian federation, in which the officiality of English has a de facto rather than a de jure basis. At the same time, approximately two dozen scheduled languages (including Bengali, Punjabi, Urdu, Tamil and Telugu) have official status as regional languages. In everyday politics, issues of language rights are closely connected with citizenship issues, which gives rise to intense conflicts at the regional level, as well as between the Union and several states. In the past two decades, these issues have been increasing due to the rise of Hindu nationalism, whose goal is to strengthen the position of Hindi by making it the hegemonic national language (Chandra, 2019). This would ultimately jeopardise what is left of the Gandhian plan to find an innovative path to making political unity and cultural diversity compatible beyond Western models of integration, moving India, somewhat paradoxically, closer towards such models, 75 years after independence.

South America is a continent that offers a very compact linguistic profile if we look at it superficially, taking the dominance of Spanish and Portuguese in all but one or two states as a given. Yet this dominance conceals the ongoing presence of hundreds of indigenous languages in its territory. In a different way than India, Bolivia is an interesting example for how the goal of empowering indigenous communities has triggered a new politics of language, reshaping the language-citizenship link. In the 2009 Constitution, the Andean republic is defined as a democratic and intercultural state. The document affirms the existence of one Bolivian nation, but also

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8 For what follows, see Kraus (2024, pp. 106-108).

says that this nation is a compound of several dozen indigenous nations and groups. Thirty-six indigenous languages are assigned official status alongside Spanish in Article 5 of the constitutional text. A similar trend has been observed in Peru and Ecuador, although the results remain less far-reaching in these two countries thus far (Albó, 2008; Madrid, 2019). In Chile and Colombia, the issues of indigeneity and post-colonial multilingualism have become relatively salient on the political agenda as well. At this point, there is nothing to indicate that the political recognition of indigenous languages is substantially altering colonial hierarchies and endangering the hegemonic position of Spanish in the Andean region. Nevertheless, in spite of the large gap between constitutional norm-setting and the materialisation of norms in socio-political reality, the new commitment to linguistic pluralism involves a major transformation of citizenship in countries shaped by the intermingling of socio-cultural domination and socio-economic exploitation of the indigenous population.

The evidence just offered is hardly more than anecdotal, but the cases of India and Bolivia show that the link between linguistic attachments and citizenship is more variable than the European master narrative suggests. The one language – one nation – one state approach prevalent in the West contributes little to understanding the trajectories of deeply diverse societies. It should not be concluded, however, that language plays a mere secondary role in the framing of citizenship in the South. Although the Southern perspective offers an important corrective to a reductionist language nationalism, it offers few reasons to discard the impact of language on the framing of citizenship. We may well question the monistic *one* language-*one* identity logic. Yet this should not lead us to misperceive and underestimate the role of language(s) when it comes to creating nested and intersecting communities of citizens under conditions of diversity. We may be critical of the homogenising consequences of modernity, but must remain aware of the sweeping historical force of the options-cum-ligatures mix represented by the nation-state, which remains a key aspect for understanding the monolingual bias of modern citizenship. At the same time, it is obvious that language, belonging and citizenship became linked through dynamics that have little to do with language per se, but rather with politics. This implies that the link is a product of historical contingency. It does relate language and citizenship, but not in terms of a one-to-one correspondence, as examples such as Switzerland (several languages, but a strong common identity) or Latin America (one language, no such identity) evidence. In contrast with one of the axioms of the age of nationalism, there is no direct connection between a shared feeling of nationality and speaking a single common language.[9] But this is not to say that the relationship between language and political identity has a completely arbitrary character. To adopt a term used by Max Weber (1984, p. 77) for analytic purposes, we might speak of "elective affinities" (*Wahlverwandtschaften*) between linguistic and national identifications: while citizenship has a clear linguistic dimension, linguistic bonds in modern societies can hardly be sustained without citizenship rights. But elective affinities do not obey a one-directional logic. The language-citizenship-link materialises in varying institutional arrangements that are subject to continuous contestation and political change.

3 Complex linguistic diversity

It is precisely this dynamic of contestation and change that calls for a conceptualisation capable of eluding the simplistic categorisations that ultimately reproduce established power relations. In the modern nation-state system, in the ethnic relations and nationalism field of study, three primary groups are distinguished, each representing a particular layer of diversity in a hierarchic order (Kraus, 2012, pp. 9-11):

The first group are the *majorities*, whose identities are institutionalised and reproduced in the system of discrete nation-states. They constitute the "titular" nation, whose name is identical to the name of the state, as the term that originated in Eastern Europe puts it. The different colours on the political maps of modern Europe stand for these majorities, thereby visually normalising their identities, which set the standard against which other identities are assessed. The standard citizen is the majority citizen. Although majority identities are as constructed as any other collective identity, their historical entrenchment – in public education systems, state institutions and media – gives them a political stability that minority groups lack.

Old minorities constitute the second layer of diversity. They have an "autochthonous" origin and tend to be territorially concentrated in the peripheries of the state whose very formation minoritised them, i.e.,

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9 See John Stuart Mill (1972 [1861], p. 392) as a classical reference.

turned them into a minority, as with the Sámi in Northern Europe or the Basques in France and Spain. Their incorporation into the majority state typically was highly conflictual and is the cause of ongoing grievances that are the basis for demands for autonomy provisions and, in some cases, unrestricted self-determination. The corresponding sovereignty claims justified by historical entitlement have a defensive character and aim to secure the reproduction of a particular identity threatened by majority domination.

The third group are *new minorities*. Their emergence reflects the intensification of immigration to Europe since the 1950s, which has led to far-reaching demographic transformations, with collectivities such as the "German Turks" or the *Beurs* – the descendants of North African migrants in France – having become a typical cultural marker of their respective host countries. These collectivities do not claim a homeland of their own within the state, as "historical" minorities do. Where they raise collective demands, their primary intention is not to protect a specific group identity, but rather to achieve higher levels of social and economic equality.

From the "standard" perspective prevalent in contemporary liberal nation-states, the three layers sketched out here are not only a manifestation of socio-cultural differentiation, but also expressions of a diversity that deserves protection. However, this protection does not question the hierarchical structures of the nation-state. Thus, the protection also has a hierarchical character, reserving the exercise of "full" cultural sovereignty to majorities, granting "some" level of autonomy to old minorities, and providing new minorities with a variable minimum of rights intended to defend them against open discrimination and facilitate their integration. The standard perspective thereby takes the outcome of nation-building processes for granted and involves applying a logic of differentiated recognition (Kymlicka, 1995, pp. 26-33). Accordingly, introducing minority rights does not imply a clear departure from the principles of citizenship associated with hegemonic nation-building. Putting it very bluntly, the purpose of minority provisions is not to end this hegemony, but rather to alleviate its ill effects for minority groups. At the same time, the standard perspective operates with the frame of a *simple diversity*: diversity is structured according to criteria that define a clear-cut hierarchy between the layers incorporated into an institutional order composed of dominant majorities, "autochthonous" minorities and immigrant groups. Simple diversity corresponds to a static view of identity formation, which links the three layers to discrete and stable patterns of collective identification.

The concept of *complex diversity* aims to challenge the standard perspective on primarily sociological grounds. It questions the monist bias built into the model of the nation-state, which is a bias that connects citizens and cultural identities according to a one-dimensional logic and results in a political architecture that arranges discrete building blocks of diversity in a vertical way. To overcome such bias, it is necessary to focus on the dynamic interlocking of politics and culture, and to emphasise the impact of migration, transnationalism and Europeanisation on the framing of identity patterns and majority-minority relations. In other words, the processes connected with the emergence of the third identity layer not only imply a quantitative plus of diversity in our societies; they also impact on the frame of producing and reproducing cultural hegemony in nation-states. The sociological questioning of the standard perspective therefore also has normative implications that I will briefly address in the final section.

Complex diversity refers to a social and political constellation in which diversity has become fluid and multidimensional, not just because diversity has become more visible and pervasive due to the incorporation of new layers. More relevant is that the single building blocks of diversity have also become more heterogenous and permeable in terms of their internal composition, ultimately rendering such terms as layer or block obsolete.[10] Think, for instance, of neighbourhoods such as Kreuzberg in Berlin, where the very meaning of identity markers such as "Turkish", "Kurdish" or "German" is a matter of continuous disputes and negotiations. This phenomenon is not only observable at the level of interaction between groups, but also affects individual citizens, whose sense of belonging cannot be adequately articulated as a function of identifying with a reified cultural block. A second example may capture even more compellingly the reality of complex diversity: a Spanish citizen of North-African origin residing in Barcelona could be a Muslim woman; speak Catalan, Arabic, and Amazigh in addition to Spanish; and be a supporter of the cause of Catalan independence. To reduce her identity to one of the three layers of "simple" diversity would appear to be a futile sociological

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10 Kraus (2012, pp. 12-13); the complex diversity perspective thereby departs from Kymlicka's (1995) multiculturalism, even if both perspectives ultimately entail converging political implications when it comes to dealing with the interplay of diverse identities (see Kymlicka, 2011, for a re-elaboration of his initial position on multiculturalism and multinationalism).

exercise. The observation is also pertinent if we wish to adequately grasp her linguistic affiliations and loyalties.

Both examples indicate the relevance of the concept of complex diversity in the study of the politics of citizenship, linguistic diversity and multilingualism. The most promising settings for scrutiny – in terms of the intricate heuristic opportunities they offer – seem those that resemble the Catalan case, which offers laboratory-like constellations where the traditional interplay of diversity patterns once constitutive of autochthonous linguistic majority and minority groups has been modified by new elements of linguistic heterogeneity. In the Catalan-Spanish-Amazigh-Arabic example, the historical dialectic of dominant and minoritised language intermingles with the relationship between Amazigh and Arabic, which replicates the majority-minority conflict at a different level. Among the new elements of heterogeneity in cases such as Barcelona (and Berlin), global or trans-European English has assumed a prominent position as the language of digital nomads and other professional elites. In contrast with the North African woman, these immigrants enjoy the privilege of being able to stick to a monolingual (i.e., English) repertoire in virtually any European capital.[11] The laboratory-like constellations are thus characterised by the parallel use of autochthonous languages linked to either a majority or a historically minoritised group, immigrant languages and a lingua franca (which, depending on the specific context, may be identical to one of the autochthonous or immigrant languages). Such constellations are brought about by new forms of mobility (Grin et al., 2018), which to different degrees involve the decoupling of actual cultural practices from a uniform territorial base of identity construction.

In this respect, European conurbations seem to resuscitate sociolinguistic configurations that recall the medieval past. This entails the risk of reinstalling structures that generate an overlap of linguistic differentiation and class, creating segments that hardly communicate with each other, so that the social and cultural division of labour is mutually reinforced, as in medieval towns (Geary, 2001, p. 40). Once again taking the case of Barcelona, we find anglophone "expats" occupying the higher professional ranks, immigrants from Morocco and Pakistan who remain attached to their languages of origin, and in between the traditional segments of the local middle and working class, who use Spanish or Catalan as their preferential language. Such a configuration poses great challenges to the upholding of a common democratic public sphere. On the other hand, the example of the North African woman shows that complex diversity may also produce new identities that work against sociocultural segmentation through the acquisition of functional multilingual repertoires by significant portions of the citizenry.

It is an empirical question whether, and in which direction, complex diversity is transforming the language-citizenship link, creating spaces that represent a clear break with the monist rigidity of the nation-state, without implying a return to a hierarchic segmentation of the neo-feudal kind. To address the question from the perspective fleshed out in this contribution, the best cases to study might not be the global cities typically under scrutiny when it comes to portraying "super-diversity" (Vertovec, 2007), such as Paris, New York and London. The scholarly literature that popularised the term often suggests a hypertrophy of all kinds of identities in a way that discards the socio-political factors that structure different layers of diversity and their interrelation, according to historically specific relations of power. As I have argued, these factors work in a direction that does not lead to a spontaneous and equal articulation of all kinds of diversity. Sociolinguistic accounts of superdiversity tend to stress the individualism and unbound hybridity of the language practices they describe, while omitting how the broader social and political context governs such practices (May, 2022, p. 132). Complex diversity, in contrast, assumes that the hierarchies of the past continue to reverberate in the interplay of the linguistic dynamic on the *micro* level and the power structures on the *macro* level, even if the hierarchies may increasingly be subject to contestation. In contrast with the celebration of an individualised hybridity, it acknowledges the irreducibly social dimensions of language as templates for contexts of praxis, which communities of speakers of minoritised languages rely on to effectively challenge the structures of domination in nation-states. To assess constellations of this kind, locations such as Brussels, Helsinki and Luxembourg City, as well as the already mentioned Barcelona, which represent a remarkably complex intertwining of old and new patterns of linguistic differentiation,[12] offer a richer setting than fashionable global

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11 For Barcelona, see Serra (2023).

12 See Kraus (2011), Kraus et al. (2021), and Kraus and Frank (2022) for exploratory comparative work along these lines.

capitals such as London or New York, where diversity may be ubiquitous, yet in a de-politicised form that rarely challenges the dominance of monolingualism.

4 Multilingual citizenship as auto-centred multilingualism: the Catalan laboratory

To illustrate this claim and substantiate the analytic potential of complex diversity for coming to grips with the dilemmas involved in the interplay of mobility, inclusion and linguistic diversity, I will end this article by focusing on the Catalan case, which offers laboratory-like conditions for fleshing out such dilemmas, as mentioned in the previous section. For a long time, Catalonia has been a privileged object of study in sociolinguistics and language politics, due to the salience of language revitalisation on its political agenda. Since the 19th century *Renaixença* – the reawakening of Catalan national identity – the situation in the north-eastern periphery has been characterised by a conflictual bilingualism of Spanish and Catalan. In a nutshell, the minoritisation of Catalan was the result of the penetration of Spanish into Catalan territory due to, initially, a protracted period of imperial rule orchestrated from the centre (Madrid); and later, in the 20th century, exposure to authoritarian nation-building (Linz, 1973). At the same time, in comparison with the bulk of Europe's minoritised languages, Catalan is an atypical case because of its relative demographic strength – around 10 million speakers in all territories where it is the vernacular – and its prominent role in education, politics and the media, especially in the *Principat*, as the Autonomous Community of Catalonia is also known.[13]

Following Spain's transition to democracy and the restitution of Catalan autonomy in the late 1970s, language policy implemented under successive moderate-nationalist governments has sought to achieve equal public status for Catalan – officially considered the *llengua pròpia* (Catalonia's "own" language) – vis-à-vis Castilian/Spanish. This aim was the backbone of an extensive policy campaign devoted to "language normalisation",[14] a campaign that with hindsight can be regarded as largely successful, as a large majority of citizens educated in Catalonia are proficient in Catalan (as they are in Spanish). One can argue that one of the major effects of this normalisation was the linguistic integration of the children and grand-children of the millions of Spanish speakers who moved to Catalonia from Andalusia and other regions during the economic boom years of the 1960s; this was certainly no minor achievement, as Catalan had been effectively banned from schools and other public institutions from the end of the Civil War in 1939 until the end of the Francoist dictatorship in 1975.

In the post-Francoist period, and especially since the 1990s, Catalonia has once again become a pole attracting successive waves of immigration. The bulk of these immigrants no longer originate from other parts of Spain, but from Eastern Europe and the global South. The figures are impressive even by Western European standards: of Catalonia's 7.8 million inhabitants in 2021, 1.65 million were born in other parts of Spain, and 1.18 million were born abroad; they and their direct descendants make up two-thirds of the roughly 8 million people living in Catalonia today (Rius, 2024). In terms of linguistic competence in Catalan and Spanish in the city of Barcelona, the overall picture provides the following numbers: while the proportion of "native" speakers of Spanish is 56.0%, Catalan is the first language of 26.5% of the population, with 3.3% reporting Catalan and Spanish as their first languages. Finally, a significant 12.5% report another language as their first language. With respect to levels of knowledge, 93.4% of the population indicate that they understand Catalan; 85.3% can also read it, 78.7% can also speak it, and 60.6% can also write it. Knowledge of Spanish borders 100%: 99.9% of respondents understand it, 99.7% can speak it, 99.0% can read it, and 98.5% can write it.[15] In view of such figures, it is hardly an exaggeration to conclude that the main challenge Catalonia's language policy faced in the last two decades was responding to a level of immigration that was not only massive, but also highly differentiated in terms of the immigrants' languages of origin. And thus we enter the realm of complex diversity.

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13 I am omitting the Balearic Islands and the Valencian region, which have specific sociolinguistic profiles.

14 The main purpose of the campaign, launched in the 1980s, was to achieve a "normal" position for Catalan vis-à-vis Spanish by reaching comparable levels in the social use of the two languages (Direcció General de Política Lingüística, Generalitat de Catalunya, 2014).

15 See Kraus and Frank (2022, p. 137); the numbers are taken from language surveys conducted on behalf of the government of Catalonia in 2018.

Let me further disaggregate Barcelona's linguistic landscape and focus on its new aspects. Until the early 2010s, about 40% of the incomers were Spanish speakers from Central and South America, which, on the one hand, implied no substantial change to the bilingual profile adopted by the city in the 20th century. On the other hand, the traditional parameters of language conflict were altered nonetheless, as it can hardly be argued that the immigration of Latin Americans reflected a dynamic of "Hispanisation" in connection with the imposition of language hierarchies by Spanish authoritarian nationalism. Moreover, languages other than Spanish and Catalan have been gaining weight: Urdu, Chinese, Arabic, Romanian and Tagalog are spoken by sizeable segments of the urban population, not to mention the presence of many smaller language communities that speak Azeri, Russian, Punjabi or Hindi (Kraus & Frank, 2022, p. 138; Serra 2024, pp. 16-17). A final element to be added to an ever more diverse scene is the irruption of global English; not only as the language of well-off expats, but as a medium of instruction in Catalan higher education. Thus, at the publicly run Pompeu Fabra University, almost 60% of master's programmes in 2015-16 were in English (Branchadell & Kraus, 2019, p. 424).

It must be stressed, once again, that these numbers should not be interpreted as sheer manifestations of a post-modern cultural exuberance, as a hybrid flourishing of linguistic super-diversity. Rather, they must be related to a political frame still deeply marked by entrenched power relations and linguistic hierarchies. At the same time, this frame can no longer be assessed by applying analytic standards based on the notion of simple diversity. In the Catalan context, complex diversity has given rise to new communicative practices, introduced by immigrants, that modify patterns of identification built around the Spanish-Catalan poles, thereby nurturing an opening of national identities towards the transnational. However, the opposite tendency could also be observed, especially in the years of the rise of Catalan sovereigntism until the independence bid of 2017: in this process, the socio-political forces in conflict with the Spanish state made major efforts to attract the support of immigrant groups to their cause. The resulting picture is no individualising-cosmopolitan patchwork, in which all "hard" cultural identities become diluted. Rather, complex diversity fuels new forms of conflict, even if old identities are transformed. Understanding diversity as multi-dimensional and fluid is a necessary step if we are to avoid essentialist simplifications of the relationship between language and culture, as well as between groups. But de-essentialising must not be confused with ignoring the great social relevance of language – in the singular and in the plural – for any reflective identity politics beyond notions of freedom that ultimately detach individual options from the social bond (Kraus, 2012, pp. 17-18).

At the level of official political discourse, the transition from autonomism to independentism in Catalonia was preceded by a successive substitution of the *llengua pròpia* with the *llengua comuna* concept (Branchadell & Kraus, 2019, p. 437). This meant emphasising the role of Catalan as the language of common public communication, gradually leaving aside the essentialising connotations of an "own" language that had originally constituted the symbolic core of Catalan identity (Llobera, 1983). In more general terms, the transition can be understood as a transition from a nationalist to a republican view of the language issue. For the guardians of the "essence" of identity, language was the privileged battleground of the Catalan cause. From a republican perspective, the struggle for Catalan is rather a struggle for tearing down the deeply entrenched structures of domination of a nation-state unable to overcome its pre-democratic roots (Kraus, 2021, pp. 10-11).

To use the terminology introduced at the beginning of this article, this approach must confront two major tasks, both of which must be seen in connection with the challenges of complex diversity. First, it must ensure that territorial linguistic bonds – the ligatures of a particular cultural community – are maintained, while also being aware of the importance of the availability of linguistic options, which are typically associated with a transnational lingua franca. Second, however, it must counterbalance the elements of domination that frame the perception of the options and ligatures present in a system of nation-states built on a biased and unjust cultural hegemony. In other words, it must realise that, for the average English-speaking citizen in London and, for that matter, the average Spanish-speaking citizen in Madrid, the tension between the "utilitarian" and the "communitarian" elements of their linguistic repertoire has a completely different character than for speakers of minoritised languages, whose initial language has been systematically devalued, which is exactly what having been minoritised means. Returning to the Catalan immigrant with North African roots one last time: the choices she will make when it comes to prioritising a lingua franca such as English, Spanish or Arabic, or a ligatures-related language such as Catalan or Amazigh, as she works out her linguistic repertoire, are not "innocent" choices, choices made as if languages were not linked to power structures. As argued

previously, the very framing of what ultimately constitutes an option and what constitutes a ligature reflects these power structures.

Tackling the two tasks under conditions of complex diversity should benefit from the fact that multilingualism is a positive-sum game, to put it in blunt utilitarian terms. There may well be a complementary relationship between a ligature language and an option language. As the examples taken from the South show, the historical anomaly is not the multilingual but the monolingual citizen. The case for conceiving of the citizen of the 21st century as a multilingual citizen is a very strong case. But multilingualism is not a panacea that can be applied evenly all over the world, in abstraction from the historicity and politics that favour some option-ligature mixes to the detriment of others.[16] Complex diversity calls for linking the political and social dimensions of citizenship to the linguistic dimension, which in most cases will be a multilingual dimension. The argument sketched out thus far should have made clear that this dimension must be a radically contextual dimension, in response to the forms of complexity that make societies diverse in different ways. These differences should be addressed, not just by mechanically adopting the majority standard, but precisely by moving in the opposite direction and looking for inspiration in contexts that creatively "deviate" from this standard, such as is the case in Catalonia as well as in many other parts of the world that show potential for developing alternative standards.

Such alternative standards will ultimately entail contextually adopting the idea of auto-centred multilingualism (Kraus et al., 2021, pp. 463-464; Kraus, 2024, pp. 109-110). Auto-centred multilingualism fosters the acquisition of multilingual repertoires as templates for sound processes of citizenization under conditions of complex diversity. However, these templates will vary according to the necessities of diverse political communities. Thus, in the Catalan case, the lingua franca option in the language mix is obviously not only represented by English, allegedly the definitive global lingua franca, but also by Spanish, whose lingua franca function stretches well beyond the Iberian Peninsula, as it is a communicative bridge between Spain and the ever-growing universe of Spanish speakers in the Americas. Regarding the external communication aspect of *multi*lingualism, it would be absurd to discard this bridge function. But the relationship of the *multi* with the *auto* also has elements of tension. Thus, in the sphere of internal communication, dealing with diversity must not ignore historic grievances and the subordination of Catalan to the dominant language, a language deliberately instrumentalised by successive regimes of an authoritarian and centralist state. The objective of compensating for the consequences of long periods of repression and minoritisation is precisely what justifies the policies adopted to positively discriminate Catalan in some areas of the public sphere. Finally, when balancing the *multi* and the *auto*, the ongoing demolinguistic transformation of the citizenry should not be ignored, so that multilingual profiles can be developed in ways that give the "new" Catalans the possibility to maintain communicative links with the countries their parents or grandparents originated from.

Multilingualism should therefore not be conceived of as a mere "utilitarian" strategy that would give main priority to "dominant" languages such as Spanish and English. It is true that it would be politically counter-productive to discard the importance of the language-as-an-option criterion when it comes to elaborating viable multilingual repertoires. Thus, Spanish is not only the "initial"[17] language of many Catalan citizens, including a great number of recent immigrants from Latin America; it also has significant value as an asset of transnational communication beyond Catalonia and Spain. Acknowledging this, however, must not entail the marginalisation of immigrant languages other than Spanish (or English) in the political attempt at balancing *multi* and *auto*. A community of complexly diverse citizens is not just a community of linguistic option maximisers, where languages are reduced to their instrumental functions. It is a community in which ligatures rank high precisely because they sustain common civic bonds. Hence, as we have seen, reconciling options and ligatures involves difficult choices both at the individual and at the collective level: choices between options and ligatures on the one hand; and between different options, as well as between different ligatures, on the other. A practicable multilingual curriculum must not be fraught with too many good intentions. However, it must aim to transcend the multiple forms of cultural domination inherent to the global economic market and a system in which the monist nation-state prevails (Tully, 2008b).

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16 These one-dimensional approaches often interpret multilingualism as a conglomerate of monolingualisms, with some leeway for minority provisions and English as a common complement; see Laitin (1997) as an example focusing on the context of contemporary Europe.

17 *Llengua inicia*l is the term used in official Catalan language surveys to denote the "first" language.

5 Conclusion

Auto-centred multilingualism is a political concept that aims to find democratic responses to the manifold challenges of complex linguistic diversity. It must not be taken as an evenly applicable, catch-all formula in abstraction from the contextual factors that unavoidably link diversity to inequality and politics. Adopting the concept implies an approach to linguistic diversity that understands multilingual competence, not just as a functional requirement, but also – and especially – as an asset for overcoming domination. It seems clear that this requires a political will that does not automatically materialise due to the sheer empirical existence of complex diversity. At present (in early 2024), cases such as Catalonia and the Basque Country, with a strong presence of culturally progressive political forces, are coming closer to developing such an agenda[18] than Flanders or South Tyrol, where more traditional and increasingly populist views of identity politics prevail.

Moreover, auto-centred multilingualism should not be understood as an approach restricted to Catalonia and other cases that allegedly represent some of the most pronounced forms of complex diversity. As pointed out above, these cases do deserve particular attention as they offer examples of particularly striking levels of cultural complexity and the politics associated with it. Nonetheless, as I also observed when referring to the case of Berlin, complex diversity, with its context-specific manifestations, has become a ubiquitous phenomenon in European societies, in spite of the protracted striving for homogenisation connected with the expansion of capitalism and the formation of the nation-state, the two main axes of what mainstream historical narratives considered to be "modernisation" (Therborn, 1995, pp. 34-54). Accordingly, auto-centred multilingualism must not be seen as an exceptional instrument limited to "minority" settings such as Catalonia, but rather as a strategy for reducing tension between options and ligatures in a way that breaks with the hegemonic model of the nation-state. Such a break with hegemonic nationalism includes its liberal variants (Miller, 1995; Tamir, 1993), which are prepared to concede special rights to minorities, but nonetheless remain committed to reproducing a majority-minority dichotomy that ultimately reflects the structures of cultural domination (Kraus, 2015). In contrast, auto-centred multilingualism precisely aims to overcome the legacies of minoritisation by blurring the line between majorities and minorities through the non-hierarchic generalisation of complementary multilingual repertoires.

Auto-centred multilingualism is not a formula envisaged to end language conflict. Its purpose is rather to reframe conflict in a way that opens spaces for conceiving of citizenship beyond the model of the hegemonic nation-state. Still, civic struggles over the appropriate combination of linguistic options and linguistic ligatures remain unavoidable, unless diversity is reduced to the realm of the hybrid yet politically toothless neoliberal individual, for whom identity is not a political challenge, but merely a consumptive good. Coping with the manifold tensions between democracy, diversity and inequality means nothing but conflict. It should not be articulated under conditions of cultural domination, but as a conflict between citizens who are equally free at the individual and collective levels. Auto-centred multilingualism may serve as an asset for resisting the pressures of a homogenising globalism on both levels. At the same time, however, it is an asset that has nothing in common with the reactionary cultural identitarianism propagated by the populist right.[19] On the contrary, its aim is to reinvigorate local languages as a template for a collective emancipation freed of all ethnicist connotations: the "auto" requires the "multi" as much as the "multi" requires the "auto". In this sense, setting the foundations of multilingual citizenship may well be a decisive step in the direction of a politics of diversity that breaks with the forms of domination still prevalent in a world of nation-states.

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18 For tentative assessments of the Catalan record, see Branchadell and Kraus (2019) and Kraus et al. (2021); for a practitioner's view of the Basque situation that overlaps with some of the arguments of this paper, see Baztarrika (2009).

19 In the case of Spain, the nationalist right – represented by Vox, but also by important sectors of the Partido Popular − advocates a language policy that aims to reaffirm the unfettered hegemony of Castilian/Spanish, which it considers to be the cultural backbone of a homogeneous Spanish nation anchored in an allegedly glorious imperial past (Balinhas, 2020; Villacañas, 2019).

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