

ARTICLE

Governing complex linguistic diversity in Barcelona, Luxembourg and Riga

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Abstract

Contemporary migration has entailed the emergence of new forms of multilingualism in many European cities. The article uses the concept of complex diversity to analyse this dynamic. The concept points at settings where historical forms of multilingualism and more recent patterns of linguistic heterogeneity interact in ways that lead to particularly rich cultural configurations. The authors assess how local authorities deal with multilingualism in three cities that represent 'most complex' cases of diversity politics: Barcelona, Luxembourg and Riga. The focus is on policies related to public communication and on the approaches adopted to promote social and political inclusion in ever more multilingual urban environments. In normative terms, the article concludes that political responses to complex diversity should aim both at overcoming linguistic status inequalities based on historical structures of domination and at creating common spaces of communication for diverse citizens.

KEYWORDS

Barcelona, complex diversity, language politics, Luxembourg, migration, multilingualism, nationalism, Riga

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1 | INTRODUCTION

Research on nationalism has widely shown that the historical dynamics driving the formation of modern states triggered a massive wave of cultural homogenisation (Anderson, 2016; Mann, 2004; Rokkan, 1999). The trend was particularly powerful in the context of Europe, whose contemporary political map shows a number of territorial units generally conceived of as nation-states. On the one hand, these discrete units constitute a mosaic of elements each of which is considered to be culturally distinct vis-à-vis the other elements, that is, from an *external* perspective. On the other hand, the singular elements tend to represent themselves as being basically uniform with regard to their *internal* cultural profile. Possibly, the clearest symptom of this representation of internal uniformity is the fact that—with only very few exceptions, and in sharp contrast with other regions of the world—the official denominations of most European states refer to one dominant language. Rarely did this way of representing uniformity actually match sociolinguistic reality, and up to the present, several European nation-states contain substantial portions of linguistically not fully assimilated citizens, so-called 'linguistic minorities'. Nevertheless, there is a clear historical affinity between the standard version of the nation-state in Europe and a notorious—and often enough oppressive—monolingualism (Kraus, 2018).

Over the last few decades, this standard version has come under an increasing pressure, a pressure that to a great extent reflects the impact of major structural changes linked to migration and transnationalism on Europe's cultural and linguistic scenery. To capture the thrust of these changes in general terms, we may speak of a transition from 'simple' to 'complex' diversity. In the age of *simple* diversity, national states and societies were based on clear differentiating lines between the layers of diversity they had incorporated. At the same time, these layers were ranked according to a hierarchical logic that distinguished between dominant majorities, old (autochthonous) minorities and 'new' (immigrant) minorities. *Complex* diversity, in contrast, characterises settings where historical forms of multilingualism and more recent patterns of linguistic heterogeneity interact in new ways, leading to particularly rich cultural configurations. This does not only imply that new layers have to be added; the layers themselves become more fluid, internally differentiated, and they ultimately intermingle.¹

This article assesses the consequences of complex diversity in the field of multilingualism and its politics. It offers a first explorative study of how linguistic diversity, old and new, is governed in three urban settings that can be considered 'most complex' cases. At this stage, we do not aim to present conclusive evidence regarding what can be learned from these settings in order to develop a more general productive approach for dealing with linguistic diversity. Our main intention is to give a comprehensive account of how our cases have responded to recent sociolinguistic transformations—the transition to 'complexity'—in terms of politics and policies. More specifically, our goal is twofold. On the one hand, we want to empirically assess how cities are responding to the needs of an increasingly mobile population and the linguistic consequences attached to these needs. On the other hand, we want to explore to what extent the responses given are 'inclusive' in the sense of promoting/protecting the local language(s) as a way of integration and participation into the cities' social, political, economic and cultural life.

Let us state very clearly that this paper has, in the first place, a descriptive focus. We intend to offer a 'thick' picture of the interplay of multilingualism and institutional responses to it in three cities—Riga, Luxembourg and Barcelona—that respectively stand for distinct cultural and political areas of Europe. At the same time, however, our agenda is, first, motivated by purposes that go way beyond 'mere' description. If we want to understand the changing mechanisms that link language to collective identity (and vice versa), our three cases are of major interest, as they tell us considerably more about the intricate interaction of language and politics today than those examples dominating the theoretical debates about diversity and globalisation, which typically are places such as New York, Los Angeles, London, Paris or Tokyo. Linguistic diversity may well be a ubiquitous phenomenon in these places too, but in none of these cases does it involve the great potential for politicisation it has in the capitals of Latvia, Luxembourg and Catalonia. Accordingly, our claim is that a systematic comparison of our three cities, however descriptive, will serve as an important corrective to the conceptual discourse that has become increasingly fashionable in applied linguistics in its dealing with language and identity politics. Thus, regardless of the role an alleged linguistic 'superdiversity' may be

assigned for the articulation of people's identities (Blommaert & Rampton, 2011), and in contrast with the highlighting of the impact of new linguistic practices vis-à-vis globalisation (Blommaert, 2010; Wright, 2016),² we show that the legacy of nationalism, with its entrenched hierarchies and concomitant struggles for equal recognition, continues to be alive and kicking in the realm of 'real' language politics. This empirical claim leads us, second, to the normative conclusion that, on the terrain of language, political responses to complex diversity should not be guided by ideological recipes reflecting the odd alliance of neoliberals and postmodernists, both celebrating—albeit from different angles—the dissolution of collective agency in a 'super-diverse' and 'globalising' identity supermarket of sorts. What is required are rather responses that aim both at overcoming linguistic status inequalities based on historical structures of domination and at creating common spaces of communication for diverse citizens.

In the following sections, we will first show how the concept of complex diversity has guided our case selection. We then develop a grid in order to assess the local governance of linguistic diversity in the three cities of Barcelona, Luxembourg City and Riga. We conceive of language policy as being implemented in a multilevel system which comprises the supranational, the national, the subnational/regional and the local level, distinguishing between different goals of language policy at the respective levels. For our analysis, we have chosen those policies which have an effect on communication in public institutions and thereby—directly or indirectly—on all linguistic groups in a given urban setting; such policies affect the domains of language status attribution, acquisition planning and translation and interpreting in public service provision (Lambert, 1999: 3–5). We conclude the article by discussing the approaches to governing linguistic diversity adopted by the three cities in light of the task of securing sociopolitical inclusion in societies which are becoming more and more multilingual. We argue that context-specific policies, which acknowledge the need of finding a balance between a city's or region's linguistic heritage and the emergence of new language groups in a given society, bear great significance for achieving a more inclusive society.

2 | THREE CASES OF COMPLEX DIVERSITY

Contemporary migration is changing established linguistic patterns and leading to the emergence of complex new forms of multilingualism all over the world, whose imprint becomes most salient in urban settings. From a systematic perspective, in Europe, the locations that offer the best entry points for assessing what diversity means in terms of its concrete sociopolitical consequences are probably not so much 'global' capitals such as London or Paris, but rather cities which belong to the small group of urban centres that, for different reasons, were able to 'resist' the homogenising impact of nation-state formation. In these cities, persistent historical forms of multilingualism and more recent patterns of linguistic heterogeneity interact in ways that lead to particularly rich configurations of cultural complexity (Kraus, 2011). The emergence of such settings is caused by forms of mobility connected to a dynamic of transnationalisation that entails an uncoupling of territorially based identities and cultural practices (Sassen, 2008). The push towards 'complex' diversity not only implies that our societies have become more diverse due to higher mobility rates (across and beyond Europe) and the successive incorporation of new layers of diversity. Even more important, by working with the concept of complex diversity, we aim at grasping the peculiar features of socio-political constellations in which the very identities built around specific (majority or minority) diversity layers are becoming increasingly fluid, multidimensional and heterogeneous, too. Accordingly, the interplay of 'old' and 'new' forms of heterogeneity has been the rationale for the selection of cities in the comparative research presented in this paper. We assume that Barcelona, Luxembourg and Riga represent, respectively, 'most complex' locations for studying the politics of multilingualism in present-day Europe. In other words, the management of complexity in these three almost laboratory-like, yet 'real' cases may offer valuable insights for understanding the political impact of the structural challenges associated with new manifestations of cultural diversity.

The tables below give a first rough overview of language repertoires and language use in our three cities, where, quite obviously, many citizens use more than one language in their everyday communication. Historically, the

TABLE 1 Language repertoires of the population

a. The initial languages of the adult population over 15 years old in Catalonia. A general overview						
Language	Speakers (initial language, in thousands)					Percentage (%)
Spanish	3,336.0					52.7
Catalan	2,010.4					31.5
Both Spanish and Catalan	176.4					2.8
Arabic	140.3					2.2
Romanian	70.5					1.1
Galician	49.0					0.8
French	36.0					0.6
Tamazight	34.4					0.5
Russian	31.0					0.5
Portuguese	29.5					0.5
Italian	28.7					0.4
Chinese	27.32					0.4
English	23.9					0.4
Aranese	2.6					0.0
Other languages	197.9					3.1
Other language combinations	56.2					0.9
Not known	89.8					1.4
TOTAL	6,386.6					100.0
b: Language repertoires of the population of Luxembourg (survey data available only on country-level)						
French	Luxembourgish	German	English	Portuguese	Italian	Other
95%	80%	75%	60%	20%	16%	17%
c: Language repertoires of the population of Riga						
Latvian	Russian					English
79.1%	97%					40.5%

Source: Generalitat de Catalunya (2019a; Survey on the Language Use of the Population 2018).

Source: Fehlen (2009: 81; Survey BaleineBis 2008, $N = 2,795$).

Source: SKDS (2014: 56; $N = 801$; aggregated answers 'As first language', 'Very well' and 'Without major problems').

'standard' lingua franca people from different linguistic backgrounds would use would have been Spanish in Barcelona and Russian in Riga, but Catalan and Latvian, respectively, have made major advances into the field of formerly nonnative speakers. Multilingualism in Luxembourg City is even more pronounced, and we may assume that here the bulk of people employ two languages or more in daily encounters (Tables 1 and 2).

Before giving more specific accounts of the sociolinguistic situation in the three cities, we think it is in order to point out some key features which they have in common, as these add up to a promising comparative frame:

- Barcelona, Luxembourg and Riga each stand for a well-entrenched multilingual legacy that has deep historical roots. This *endogenous* multilingual patrimony has been a recurrent subject of political conflicts that stretch into the present. In a nutshell, we can argue that the conflicts have turned around the status of the local languages—Catalan, Luxembourgish and Latvian—, marked over centuries by diglossia and the subordinate status of these

TABLE 2 Languages used at work by the population

a: Catalonia (information only available for Catalonia)						
Only Catalan	Only Spanish	Catalan and Spanish		Other languages		
30.4%	39.2%	20.2%		6.1%		
b: Luxembourg City (2011)						
French	Luxembourgish	English	German	Portuguese	Italian	Other
75.7%	56.1%	46.1%	38.3%	10%	6.2%	10.3%
c: Riga						
Latvian	Russian	Latvian and Russian			Other	
26.8%	15%	54.2%			1.5%	

Source: Generalitat de Catalunya (2019a; Survey on the Language Use of the Population 2018).

Source: STATEC (2011).

Source: SKDS (2014: 55; $N = 801$; missing percentage up to 100: answer = hard to tell).

languages vis-à-vis the dominant languages (Spanish, German/French and German/Russian).³ Accordingly, in the recent past, language policies in the three cities have been shaped by attempts at strengthening the knowledge and use of the formerly subordinate autochthonous languages.

- In addition to their endogenous multilingual legacy, and to varying degrees, the three cities have been incorporating new *exogenous* layers of linguistic diversity. In the case of our two West European cities, the main cause leading to a new kind of heterogeneity has been the massive influx of immigrants, observable since approximately the 1950s in Luxembourg, and since approximately 1995 in Barcelona. Comparatively speaking, the quantitative impact of immigration remains much less significant in the capital of Latvia since independence. Still, one can argue that exogenous language diversification is experienced in Riga as well, if only through the irruption of English as the *de facto* communicative vehicle of Europeanisation and global affairs. This irruption is as remarkable in the two other cities under scrutiny in our paper.
- Our three cases offer alternative narratives to the history of the larger European states built upon a 'grand' national political centre, be it Madrid, Paris or London. While Barcelona so far lacks the political glories of a capital city and 'only' represents a European region, although certainly a strong one, Luxembourg and Riga are capitals of 'small' states. By intertwining historical with new layers of diversity, each of the three cities exemplifies a peculiar historical path that differs from the standard pattern of integration in a Europe whose general tendency was to blend political modernisation and cultural homogenisation.⁴
- A fourth common element is that our three cities lack genuine autonomy for designing local language regimes. In spite of their representing sociolinguistic settings that tend to be considerably more complex than what can be observed at the aggregate levels of states or regions, local language policies are basically subject to the prerogatives of national/regional authorities in the field of language legislation. The cities may have, however, some leeway in implementing this legislation. As we will show, local authorities do not only use this leeway but also tend to stretch their formal competences with the purpose of accommodating linguistic diversity when providing public services. The resulting gaps between *de jure* frameworks and *de facto* provisions are analysed in the sections below.

All in all, then, our case selection reflects some substantial similarities Barcelona, Luxembourg and Riga share with regard to the complexity that reverberates in their politics of language. However, each of our cases has important specific features that have to be taken into consideration as well in any attempt at putting forward a generalising account of our comparative exercise:

- In the case of *Barcelona*, language politics and policies are at present heavily affected by the intense conflict between Catalan authorities and the Spanish state. The turn from autonomism to independentism in Catalonia's politics is having important consequences for how the link between language and identity is being framed by a secessionist movement whose main actors are well aware that support for independence critically depends on their acceptance of Catalonia's and, by extension, Barcelona's linguistic complexity (Kraus, 2015).
- In the case of *Luxembourg*, multilingualism has for a long time been deeply entrenched in the sociolinguistic scenery. Not only are the state of Luxembourg and its capital officially trilingual (French, German and Luxembourgish). In comparison with the cases of Catalan and Latvian, the standardisation of the autochthonous language, Luxembourgish, is fairly recent. Moreover, the situation in Luxembourg City is characterised by a strikingly high percentage of immigrant population, as well as an increasingly strong presence of English in everyday life, making this case particularly complex, at any rate in linguistic terms (Fehlen & Heinz, 2016).
- In the case of *Riga*, finally, it has to be highlighted that the city is officially monolingual, as the state of Latvia as a whole is. In spite of this sharp difference between the Baltic capital and the other two cities in our sample, we think that this de jure monolingualism is to a great extent compensated by the de facto weight of Russian, which is spoken by a majority of Riga's citizenry (Kibermane & KJava, 2016). In addition to this, language conflict in Latvia/Riga has a strong geopolitical dimension, even more so in the current context of growing tensions between Russia and the community of Western states.
- Finally, one feature that *Riga* and *Barcelona* have in common, but which is absent in *Luxembourg*, is that important elements of a diglossic situation that has persisted into the present can be attributed to the 'imperial' or 'quasi-imperial' imposition of Russian and Spanish as dominant languages in former times. Against the background of what is perceived as a past injustice, there is a relatively broad consensus among political actors and in civil society that the autochthonous languages should benefit to some degree of positive discrimination in the public domain (see Druviete, 2002, for the Latvian context and May, 2011, for Catalonia).

We will now give a more thorough account of the endogenous and exogenous multilingualism in the three cities.

3 | MULTILINGUALISM IN BARCELONA, LUXEMBOURG CITY AND RIGA

In the next paragraphs, we examine the patterns of endogenous multilingualism—in each of the three cases an important feature of the sociolinguistic map—in more detail. We then show how new elements, linked to immigration and to the growing importance of English, add to the inherited multilingual background.

Endogenous multilingualism in Barcelona, Luxembourg City and Riga is characterised by the interplay between the autochthonous languages of Catalonia, Luxembourg and Latvia, which have been revitalised after a history of oppression, and the official languages imposed by authoritarian regimes or occupying powers in the past. The census and survey data available for the three cases are not directly comparable. We will extrapolate from the data available on initial or first languages (in the cases of Barcelona and Riga) and on languages spoken at home (in the case of Luxembourg) as well as language repertoires (in the cases of Luxembourg and Riga) to give an account of how linguistic diversity shapes the respective sociolinguistic setting. While each city represents a unique historical trajectory, nation-building dynamics and periods of repression and/or occupation have led in all three cases to entrenched, and often conflictual, multilingual constellations.

Barcelona is the officially bilingual (Catalan-Spanish) capital of an officially trilingual region, Catalonia (Catalan, Occitan and Spanish). The city replicates the regional Statute of Autonomy as it considers Catalan the city's 'own language', giving it a special symbolic position vis-à-vis Spanish. Nevertheless, from a sociolinguistic point of view, Catalan is still in a weaker position vis-à-vis Spanish: while 56.0% of the population in Barcelona consider Spanish as their initial language, the figure goes down to 26.5% for Catalan, whereas 3.3% claim that both languages are their

initial languages; 11.5% of the population indicate a language other than Spanish or Catalan (Generalitat de Catalunya, 2020).

As the capital of an officially trilingual country, with Luxembourgish, German and French being the official languages, Luxembourg City is also characterised by a history of endogenous multilingualism. Beyond this *de jure* trilingualism, actual language use in the city is shaped by patterns of much more complex language diversity. Data from the 2011 census show an important heterogeneity in the languages used at home by the city population, the five most spoken languages being Luxembourgish (31.7%), French (31.6%), Portuguese (13.1%), English (10.5%) and German (9.6%; STATEC, 2011).

Endogenous multilingualism in Riga is marked by a dominance of Russian and Latvian. Today, Latvia is *de jure* a monolingual country, Latvian being the only official language. However, in the capital of Latvia, Riga, less than half of the population (43%) speak Latvian as first language. Russian is the first language for 53.5% of the population whereas the remaining 3.5% consider another language their first language (Centrālā statistikas pārvalde, 2017). Data on the city population's language repertoire indicate that Russian is still often used as *lingua franca* between the two big linguistic groups. In a survey among 801 inhabitants of Riga, aged 18 to 74, almost all respondents (97%) consider their Russian skills to be very good. Latvian comes next, with 79.1% of the respondents stating that they speak Latvian fluently (SKDS, 2014: 57).

In all three cities, processes of social transformation have contributed to adding a layer of exogenous linguistic diversity to a historically entrenched multilingualism. In Barcelona, the increase of immigration at the beginning of this century has entailed new forms of linguistic diversity. The city has gone from having a migration figure of 6.3% in 2001 to almost 18.5% in 2018 (Ajuntament de Barcelona, 2018: 9). As shown above, almost 12% of the population speak an initial language other than Catalan or Spanish. To this, we must add an increasing presence of English as a language at work and, most remarkably, in higher education, where English is gaining ground as a language of instruction, especially in master's degrees and PhD's.⁵

In Luxembourg City, different waves of migration have added a stratum of exogenous linguistic diversity to the city's sociolinguistic scenery since the 1950s. Especially Portuguese and, to a lesser extent, Italian have become important languages in addition to Luxembourgish, French and German. A more recent influx of immigrants to the city has led to a high percentage of people speaking English at home (11%) as well as of people with a home language other than the above-mentioned five most frequent languages (14%; STATEC, 2011). Luxembourg City counts an extremely high proportion of foreign residents: At the beginning of 2019, only 29.4% of the city's 119,214 inhabitants held Luxembourgish citizenship, while 70.6% were first- or second-generation migrants. Survey data on the language repertoires of the country's population show the high degree of individual multilingualism—which can be expected to be less centred on the three official languages in Luxembourg City.

In Riga, the number of immigrants is much lower than in Barcelona or Luxembourg City. Recent changes of the sociolinguistic scenery mainly reflect a small influx of Russian-speaking labour migrants and to, a lesser extent, the impact of reforms in higher education and tourism. Latvian and Russian remain central in all these contexts. English and German, while being far less important numerically, play a noteworthy role in higher education (Centrālā statistikas pārvalde, 2020; Izglītības un zinātnes ministrija, 2018: 69–71). A growing share of the population in Riga reports very good or good skills in English. In 2014, English ranked third after Russian and Latvian, being spoken on a very good or good level by 40.5% of the city population (SKDS, 2014: 56).

A comparison between Barcelona, Luxembourg and Riga shows that we find not only a historically entrenched linguistic diversity in these cities but also new elements of linguistic heterogeneity. Especially notorious is the high level of individual multilingualism in Luxembourg City, which is less prevalent in Barcelona and Riga. In the case of Barcelona, immigrant languages, as well as English, are increasingly audible and visible languages in the public sphere, whereas in Riga, English is adding up to the Russian–Latvian bilingual scenery in fewer domains and to a lesser extent.

While the sociolinguistic changes linked to migration in Barcelona and Luxembourg City show some similar patterns, developments in Riga follow a different trajectory. Since the late 1990s in the case of Barcelona, and

the 1960s in the case of Luxembourg City, both cities have experienced a remarkably high influx of foreign immigrants from a wide range of different origins (Climent-Ferrando, 2013; Willems & Milmeister, 2008). In the case of Riga, we find much lower numbers of immigrants (OECD, 2016). However, the influence of migration on the bilingual scenery of the city through high numbers of Russian speaking migrants is comparable to the situation in Barcelona. Russian is still widely used in trade, transport and tourism and, together with English, one of the main languages of higher education next to Latvian (Izglītības un zinātnes ministrija, 2018: 69–71; Valdmanis, 2016: 79). In Barcelona, immigrants—many of whom come from Latin American countries—tend to adopt Spanish as the language with more international prestige speakers (Climent-Ferrando, 2013). In Luxembourg, migration has at the same time contributed to strengthening the position of both French and English as potential *linguae francae* and entailed increased linguistic heterogeneity, with almost one in five people speaking a language other than the five most spoken languages: Luxembourgish, English, French, German and Portuguese (STATEC, 2011).

We will now show how, in the political realm, the historic legacies of conflictual multilingualism clash with new challenges of managing linguistic diversity.

4 | INSTITUTIONAL STRATEGIES FOR DEALING WITH LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY

In this section, we move from the analysis of sociolinguistic background conditions to the political strategies linguistic diversity is being dealt with in our three cases. Governance of linguistic diversity is a multilayered undertaking, as language policies at the local level are implemented within a framework of national and regional legislation. We will concentrate on the national and municipal levels. Language policies adopted at the national level can enable municipalities to implement local language policies or rather constrain the development of local language regimes which would include alternative approaches to the national legislation. To assess the strategies used by local bodies in their tackling linguistic diversity, we focus on policies concerning communication in public institutions. These policies affect all persons sharing a particular urban environment, irrespective of their linguistic background, and typically pursue at least one of the following three goals (Skrandies, 2016):

- attribution of official status to languages of the domestic linguistic groups,
- management of language teaching within the public educational system,
- provision of public service translation and interpreting.

It is important to note that only in the third area local authorities might have the political competence to draft their own language policies. The first set of language policies defining the public use and the status of languages is decided at national level and taken up by municipal authorities. As to the second set of policy measures, the incorporation of foreign languages into school curricula is most often regulated by the department of education at the level of the state (or the region in some federal states). In the third policy—the provision of public services in several languages—local governments may have the competence to adopt multilingual policies and overcome communication barriers with their residents as long as these measures do not interfere with the legal statuses of the different languages.

We use the distinction between these three areas as a grid for our analysis of the state and regional language legislation in our three cases. We will first compare the legislation in place regarding the public use and status of languages and the legislation targeted at acquisition. Then, we will assess how the cities govern linguistic diversity within—and, in some cases, beyond—the respective national and regional legislative frameworks when it comes to communicating with the citizens and ensuring accessible public services. With regard to this third category of policies, we concentrate on the communication between local authorities and citizens.

5 | STATUS AND ACQUISITION PLANNING THROUGH STATE AND REGIONAL LANGUAGE LEGISLATION

5.1 | Barcelona

Barcelona, the capital of the Autonomous Community of Catalonia, is an officially bilingual city (Catalan–Spanish), where Catalan is also defined as Barcelona's 'own language' as opposed to Spanish, which is 'only' granted the status of 'official language'. This approach to the official consideration of the languages of Barcelona is derived from the Statute of Autonomy of Catalonia of 2006, which considers both Spanish and Catalan as equally official languages but provides Catalan a higher symbolic position by defining it as Catalonia's 'own language'. The highest linguistic legal provision, however, comes from the Spanish Constitution, which states in Article 3 that Spanish is *the* official language in Spain and, as a secondary clause, states that 'the other Spanish languages will also be official in their respective Autonomous Communities according to their Statute' (Article 3).

The concept of 'own language' in the Statute of Autonomy of Catalonia has allowed to legally and politically prioritise Catalan over Spanish as a way to compensate for the long periods of prosecution of the vernacular by the central state. This approach, however, has generated some animosity, especially on the right wing of the political spectrum, where there is concern about the questioning of the hegemonic status which Spanish has enjoyed for centuries all over Spain by mobilised peripheries with distinct linguistic features (Kraus, 2011: 31).

The consequences of recent migration patterns have been a source of concern for its effects on the Catalan language. Immigration was perceived not only with hopes and expectations for Catalonia's social and economic future but also with fear in terms of the preservation and consolidation of the political, cultural and linguistic specificities of Catalonia. Still, political discourse and policy action initiated to promote Catalan among the newcomers has emphasised the importance of respecting the diversity derived from the recent wave of immigration, as can be seen in all immigration plans approved by the Government of Catalonia (Generalitat de Catalunya, 2017, 2019b). While the compulsory education system already reestablished Catalan as a medium of instruction and Spanish is taught as a subject—guaranteeing full bilingualism at the end of compulsory schooling—several programmes aimed at promoting migrant languages have also been put in place. These programmes are run by the Government of Catalonia's Department of Education and include mother tongue instruction as an extracurricular activity in the education system.⁶ Children with immigrant background can learn as many as nine different languages, the main ones being Moroccan–Arabic, Chinese and Romanian. Despite being open to all school pupils, these courses are attended basically by children of immigrant origin.

5.2 | Luxembourg City

In Luxembourg, language legislation is in principle decided upon at state level, but explicit language policy measures are scarce. With the exception of the 1984 language regime law, language use is hardly governed. According to the provisions of this law, Luxembourgish is the national language and 'French, German or Luxembourgish may be used' in administrative and judicial matters (Service Central de Législation, 1984: 196–7). Citizens have the right to use any of these three languages when addressing requests to the administration, and civil servants have the obligation to respond 'as far as possible' in the language used in the citizens' request. Legislative documents, however, are written only in French, and on the judicial level, only the French language text is deemed authentic for all levels of public administration. In spite of the *de jure* trilingualism, the Luxembourgish language plays a central role in the field of politics, on the national, and even more so, on the local level, to the extent that one may speak of a *de facto* 'political monolingualism' (García, 2014a, 2014b). While in the Luxembourgish Parliament language use is formally free, the use of Luxembourgish clearly predominates, and electoral legislation stipulates that municipal council meetings should be held in Luxembourgish. City councillors have the right to use French or

German, but they are not entitled to request the translation of written documents or interpreters' services (Service Central de Législation, 2011: 253).

The official trilingualism is reproduced through education policies decided at the national level, which determine the language of instruction and language learning curricula in public schools. While French and Luxembourgish have recently been introduced as languages of teaching in kindergarten and the use of both languages was made compulsory for state-funded day-care, German is the sole language of alphabetisation for all pupils and the main language of teaching in primary and lower secondary education (Weber & Horner, 2012). Pupils learn French from the beginning of primary school, whereas the teaching of Luxembourgish is limited to a weekly one-hour lesson during the first 4 years of primary school and the first year of secondary school. English is taught only as third language at the beginning of secondary schooling, while Portuguese, Italian and Spanish play a marginal role as optional fourth languages. The relatively late start of English teaching and the low diversity of the languages taught are a direct consequence of the priority given to the teaching of the country's official languages and the functioning of a trilingual regime (Garcia, 2017). This language teaching system was originally designed to cater to the needs of pupils with Luxembourgish mother tongue who, given the limited linguistic distance between the two languages, could learn German very easily (Maurer-Hetto, 2009, 73–4). For children with a different mother tongue, however, alphabetisation in German represents a major obstacle and leads to achievement gaps between pupils with a Luxembourgish and those with a migration background. The introduction of an English-language schooling offer taken in charge by public state-funded schools since 2017–2018 has been one response to the perceived need to diversify schooling options on both primary and secondary level.

Since 2015, claims in favour of a more systematic teaching of Luxembourgish and of giving precedence to Luxembourgish as first language of administration have gained momentum and led the government in March 2016 to adopt a 'strategic plan for the promotion of the Luxembourgish language', including 40 overall largely symbolic measures, without calling into question existing language regulations. A cleavage appears to be emerging between 'ordinary citizens' claiming an increased recognition of Luxembourgish and elites attached to the traditional multilingualism (Garcia, 2017).

5.3 | Riga

In Latvia, the main language policy competences are at the national level. The legal background of language policy is anchored in the Constitution, which stipulates that Latvian is the only official language and which gives the state responsibilities to guarantee the use and preservation of the language (Preamble and Articles 4, 18). Moreover, the Constitution states in Article 114: 'Persons belonging to ethnic minorities have the right to preserve and develop their language and their ethnic and cultural identity'. Several laws comprise regulations pertaining to the status of Latvian and the rights of minority language speakers—who in the drafting and implementation processes of minority policies are referred to as those persons who were already in Latvia during the first period of independence and their descendants—as well as to the bodies ensuring the implementation and compliance with the laws: the Official Language Law (Saeima, 1999), the Education Law (Saeima, 1998) and the Citizenship Law (Saeima, 1994).

An analysis of language legislation shows that the twofold aim of language policy, support of the 'state language' (i.e., Latvian), and guaranteeing minority language rights, occurs throughout the documents. However, the second aim is not a state responsibility (Saeima, 1999, Section 24 (2)).⁷ The main element of Latvia's minority rights regime is the possibility to acquire primary and secondary education in the minority language as language of instruction. After regaining independence, Latvia maintained the two-stream education system with Latvian and minority (mostly Russian) schools which was already in place during the first period of Latvia's independence and during Soviet times. However, the share of subjects which can be taught in the minority language has been reduced gradually. By 2021, secondary education has to be completely in Latvian (Saeima, 1998, Transitional Provisions, Section 9).

5.3.1 | State and regional language legislation as constraint for local language policy

The three cases compared show a firm determination to legislate towards the protection and promotion of the autochthonous language that has often been in a minority position for historical-political reasons: legislation on Catalan, Luxembourgish and Latvian legislation is passed at the state/regional level and has to be applied at the city level. One aspect that must be highlighted when comparing the three cases is that whereas Luxembourg and Barcelona (and Catalonia) are considered officially multilingual/bilingual territories, Latvia has focused its legislative action on the creation of a language policy aimed primarily at protecting the Latvian language, with no explicit legislative framework for Russian, the language considered as the first language by almost half of the population.

In all three cases, the legislative framework assigns the historical/autochthonous language a symbolically higher position: Luxembourg considers German, French and Luxembourgish as its three official languages but refers to Luxembourgish as the 'national' language. The Catalan case is similar, as Spanish and Catalan are co-official, but only Catalan is considered as Catalonia's 'own' language. Latvian is the only official language in Latvia, while Russian has been given the status of a 'minority' language along with several other minority languages. The education systems play a key role in the promotion of the 'autochthonous' languages. Catalonia and Latvia prioritise Catalan and Latvian as the respective medium of instruction in compulsory schooling, while guaranteeing knowledge and instruction of Spanish and, to a much lesser extent, Russian. The case of Luxembourg presents a different pattern. Despite being considered *the* national language, Luxembourgish is not the medium of instruction in compulsory school and is taught rather symbolically. It can therefore be claimed that the higher symbolic support for Luxembourgish—being the national language of Luxembourg—does not translate into concrete support in the education sphere, where German is used as the main medium of instruction.

As we observed previously, the *de jure* provisions are just one side of the coin. Especially in Barcelona and Riga, in recent years, local governments have chosen strategies which to some extent depart from the policies designed at higher institutional levels. Barcelona has introduced, however hesitantly, a multilingual policy line that places some emphasis on immigrants' languages *vis-à-vis* Catalan. In Riga, Russian channels have been made available in the communication between citizens and the local government. In Luxembourg, in contrast, although local authorities acknowledge the importance of paying greater attention to the stark linguistic diversity of the urban population, such declarations have thus far only had little impact at the policy level.

5.4 | Barcelona

The regional legislative framework has allowed for the development of a language policy at local level, with the goal of ensuring the everyday presence and use of Catalan in official municipal communication (Generalitat de Catalunya, 1983). The definition of Catalan as Catalonia's *own language* has also been replicated at local level, which has served to make Catalan the habitual language in the daily communication with citizens. It is the Regulation on the Use of Catalan at the Barcelona City Council of 13th of February 2010 (Ajuntament de Barcelona, 2010), which sets the use of Catalan and other languages at city level. This regulation opens *de facto* the door for the inclusion of other languages in communication with citizens, as stipulated in article 14 of the Regulation. This clause has allowed the possibility to use languages such as Arabic, Tagalog and Urdu in a multiplicity of contexts such as in intercultural mediation, official notifications and announcements by the Barcelona City Council, as well as the provision of language classes.

The different districts within the city have sufficient autonomy to decide the language to be used in communication with citizens revolving around issues related to the neighbourhood. However, the *de facto* presence of immigrant languages is far from being systematic, as it is decided at neighbourhood level, depending on the needs detected there (number of foreigners residing in the neighbourhood, main languages and countries of origin, etc.). To

give a concrete example: The city of Barcelona offers language courses in Urdu, Arabic and Bengali to children of immigrants in those neighbourhoods with higher presence of the respective communities (Ajuntament de Barcelona, 2019).

The official recognition of exogenous sources of multilingualism, however, is still unsystematic. The 2010 Barcelona City Regulation states that languages other than Catalan and Spanish can be used but must be accompanied by the corresponding version in Catalan. The Regulation does not mention Spanish. The legal language conflict over the prioritisation of Catalan over Spanish in the Statute of Autonomy of Catalonia in 2006 has thus also left its imprint at the local level. The Barcelona 2010 Regulation considered Catalan the *preferential* language of the city, a definition that was taken to Court by the People's Party (PP), the same political party that took the Catalan Statute to Court, alleging that the word 'preferential' was a discrimination against Spanish. After 2 years of legal Court battles between the PP and the City Council (Tribunal Superior de Justícia de Catalunya, 2012), the Supreme Court ruled in 2012 that the term preferential had to be removed from the 2010 Regulation, on the grounds that the term had to be removed from the Catalan Statute of Autonomy as well. This legal conflict has revealed, once again, the unresolved tensions about the legislative framework over language in Catalonia. The tensions regarding the official status of Catalan vis-à-vis Spanish in the politics of Catalonia are thus replicated at city level.

5.5 | Luxembourg City

While the city of Luxembourg does not have an official language policy, it adopted a new visual identity under the slogan of 'Multiplicity' in 2011. In this regard, the city seeks to present itself as a multilingual and cosmopolitan capital. The city website—which ironically was available only in French until June 2019—states:

The city has three official languages: German, French and Luxembourgish. To this must be added the languages of the foreign residents, 15% of whom are Portuguese. Publications and other means of communication are consequently as a matter of principle at least bilingual (French/German), or even quadrilingual (French, German, English, Portuguese). The increasing number of foreign persons coming to live in Luxembourg contributes to the development and the dynamism of the city. This way, visitors, residents and employees make Luxembourg a cosmopolitan and polyglot city. (Ville de Luxembourg, 2019)

The city's de facto language policy is mainly part of a branding strategy for positioning Luxembourg City on the European and global economic market. In the 'Multiplicity' communications campaign, the multilingualism of the population is used as a unique selling point of Luxembourg City as business location, based on the following arguments: 'the high linguistic ability of the workforce is an important advantage for businesses locating here, especially in this communication age' (Ville de Luxembourg, 2016, 23–4). This positioning has become more salient in the context of the Brexit debate, with the expected relocation of different branches of the financial sector from London to Luxembourg.

Certain municipal publications, such as for instance brochures with information on the school system, are indeed available in the four languages mentioned above. Interestingly, on other occasions, the city language policy deviates from the de jure French/German/Luxembourgish trilingualism and uses French/English bilingualism instead: The city of Luxembourg's official magazine 'City' is thus published in French and English only. The push for the introduction of Luxembourgish in public communication and in the provision of social services is thus largely symbolic and is not met by the practical implementation of a quadrilingual communication strategy.

The provision of information online is mirroring the largely symbolic but not implemented multilingual strategy. Available in French only for a long time, the portal of the city of Luxembourg⁸ has finally been made available also in English and German just recently in June 2019, following the model of the administrative online portal of the

Luxembourgish state,⁹ which is available in French, German and English. Luxembourgish, however, remains absent from the online presence of both Luxembourg City and the Luxembourgish state, despite its status as 'national language'.

5.6 | Riga

While the city does not have a formal language policy competence, it de facto adopts language policy measures deviating from national legislation. The Language Law stipulates that discussions at City Council meetings and all documents submitted for consideration to the Council have to be in Latvian (Saeima, 1999, Article 7(1); Rīgas pašvaldības portāls, 2011). Nonetheless, the council has reintroduced Russian into a great deal of its public communication strategies. In the current policy programme at municipal level on improving the integration of the local society, the Riga Society Integration Plan of 2014, the City Council identifies several issues related to linguistic diversity. One of these concerns the communication between citizens of Riga and the City Council. The plan underlines the Council's task to ensure equal access to information irrespective of an individual's linguistic background. The document states that public communication channels developed 'historically [as] two information spaces (mass media in Latvian and Russian)' and emphasises that the City Council still uses both channels to inform the public about decisions, important events and services available through social media (Rīgas dome, 2012: 21, own translation).

The aims and representations of the language situation in Riga are in line with statements of the main political actors in Riga.¹⁰ Representatives of the Russian-speaking minority have kept a key position in the city since independence. Concord, a party supported by the bulk of Russian-speaking voters, is well entrenched in local political structures. The party is very popular among Russian speakers, who are the main target of its political campaigns (Ijabs & Rechmann, 2014). In addition, from the year 2009 until 2019, a member of the Russian-speaking community, Nils Ušakovs, was deputy mayor. In an interview, Ušakovs expressed the need to protect linguistic minorities in a more liberal way, arguing that it was especially important that citizens could communicate with the municipal authorities in Russian and in Latvian (Richter, 2016).

What possibilities does the City Council have to implement this view? Municipal institutions do not have any competences in the sphere of language policy. They can establish some priorities where they hold the competence: Organising language classes for adult members of linguistic minorities and making sure that the minority schools have enough financial means to operate. The integration of immigrants, which includes language courses and access to education, mainly falls within the municipal competences as well (Rīgas dome, 2012: 11). Riga is very active in the field of language classes compared to the other municipalities in Latvia (Council of Europe, 2016: 53) With regard to education, the municipality estimates the necessary budget and allocates resources, for example, for teaching subsidies (Education Law Section 17). In Riga, the minority educational programmes in schools have to be approved by the Riga City Council's Education, Culture and Sports Department (Izglītības un zinātnes ministrija, 2012). In the past, the local government in Riga has always adopted a favourable position towards minority education (Cianetti, 2014: 991).

Thus, within its limited political margins, the Riga City Council has been especially active compared to the other major cities in Latvia. Moreover, some actions connected to the goals laid down in the Riga Integration Plan go against the general line of the national actors in what regards the limitation of the use of Russian in public. Presently, the Riga City Council pursues the aim of introducing Russian and English in the communication with citizens, for example, in the context of providing public services (Rīgas domes informatīvais portāls, 2017). Among the recent actions of the City Council is the restructuring of the main information web portal of the city, which had been available in Latvian and English until 2016 and is only available in Latvian and Russian since January 2017.¹¹ The municipality informs about administrative procedures in Latvian, the English section is purely informative and not up-to-date, the Russian sections redirect to the Latvian pages.¹²

In public discourse, there is a cleavage between those who call for the protection of the Latvian language and those who demand linguistic human rights for the Russian speakers (Pavlenko, 2011). The latter contest the limitation of mother tongue schooling for linguistic minorities and the lack of explicit language rights for sectors such as health care. The Language Law stipulates that employees, officials or members of organisations have to speak Latvian and provide information in Latvian 'if their activities affect the lawful interests of the public (public security, health, morality, health care, protection of consumer rights and employment rights, safety at the work place and public administration supervision)' (Saeima, 1999, Sections 6 and 8).

All in all, the demand for a Russian–Latvian public sphere is mainly part of the political debates between the national government and the 'Concord' party, which has led Riga's City Council from 2009 to 2019. When it comes to the provision of social services or the offer to conduct administrative procedures in Russian, the City Council has no systematic bilingual strategy. English plays a far less important role; the largest part of the information available in English is targeted at tourists and entrepreneurs rather than at Riga's foreign population.

5.6.1 | De facto language policies implemented at the city level

The three cases show a trend towards a flexible framework that recognises and, in some cases, supports a more multilingual public sphere. While all three cities recognise the existence of languages other than the official languages, they do so at varying degrees. It is the city of Luxembourg which recognises, supports and even considers the languages brought by newcomers as an asset to the development and dynamism of the city. However, our analysis of public services provided in other languages than French and English has revealed that information or services in Luxembourgish and Portuguese are not systematically included. The case of Barcelona is slightly less explicit on the promotion of multilingualism. The city acknowledges the diversity of origins of the population and considers the need to make efforts at municipal level to facilitate communication in the language(s) of residents. It does so by publishing specific messages addressed to residents of migrant background in the mother tongue of the main language groups present in the city. The city of Riga, currently governed by a party that strongly represents the interests of the Russian-speaking population, has adopted an approach which is recognising and supporting Russian as a language spoken by the city population. However, Latvian is still the dominant language regarding the information provided by the municipality. The use of English in information material targeted at inhabitants of the city is much less frequent in Riga than in the other two cities.

It can be claimed that the rigidity of the legislative framework, which aims at protecting and promoting the historical/endogenous languages—with emphasis on the minority language—becomes more flexible when it comes to managing the de facto exogenous multilingualism. Cities are closer to the citizens than regions/states—which often legislate in highly symbolic terms and tend to use language for identity and nation-building purposes. The approach followed by the three cities on how to manage real multilingualism seems to confirm Favell's postulates that '[c]ities are the arena where the newest and sharpest developments are first observed, and where there is a degree of cross-national convergence on both policy problems and policy solutions, that belies many of the differences reflected in national ideological debates' (Favell, 2001: XIX). This can lead to the promotion of a linguistically diverse public sphere, as in the case of Barcelona, a neglect of the national language at the local level, as observed in the case of Luxembourg, or the politicisation of a minority language as vehicle in a larger ethno-political conflict, as in the case of Riga.

6 | CONCLUSION

Manifestations of complex diversity have become most salient in urban settings where historical forms of multilingualism and new elements of linguistic heterogeneity intertwine. The three cities analysed are all confronted with

the challenge of dealing with complex linguistic diversity: they share a history of language conflict and endogenous multilingualism and are now confronting new forms of linguistic differentiation, brought about by immigration and the growing importance of English. Given the particular challenges stemming from this sociolinguistic scenery and the language policies required for tackling these challenges, cities, which have anyway been attracting newcomers for centuries, appear today even more than before as the key sites for formulating institutional responses to a complexity that may be linguistically, ethnically or religiously grounded.

Our analysis shows that approaches to managing linguistic diversity vary considerably between our three cases, as each approach reflects the specific patterns of language use and the language repertoires of the citizens. While the citizens of Luxembourg City stand out in terms of their individual levels of multilingual competence, Barcelona and Riga are still characterised by an asymmetrical bilingualism with Catalan and Latvian being less spoken than Spanish and Russian. Besides the sociolinguistic situation, the historical legacy of endogenous multilingualism continues to shape policy approaches in all three cases: especially in Barcelona and Riga, current language policy debates are still engaging with narratives dealing with the oppression of the autochthonous languages in the past.

The analysis of the three cities thus shows that in order to deal with complex linguistic diversity, the peculiarities of the interplay of endogenous and exogenous multilingualism in each setting has to be carefully assessed. In this respect, we think that the concept of 'auto-centred multilingualism' offers a useful point of departure for designing policies that contribute to finding a balance between the linguistic heritage and the emergence of new language groups in the urban society. We borrow the term 'auto-centred multilingualism' from Rafael Castelló, who has used it as a programmatic phrase for delineating the linguistic framework of higher education in the Autonomous Community of València, yet assign it a somewhat different meaning, which overlaps with the concept of 'converging multilingualism' introduced by Kraus (2008: 176–9). In a nutshell, the two terms aim at coming to grips with the same phenomenon, that is, the interplay of multilingualism with the emergence of new forms of diversity, yet focus on two dimensions of this phenomenon. *Convergence* refers to the importance of defining a political balance between the protection of diversity and a communicative pragmatism that prioritises the dynamic of *external* communication; in the case of Catalonia, for instance, such a converging approach should not only be based on English, but the on the proximity Catalan has to other Romance languages. *Auto-centredness*, on the other hand, rather points to the context of *internal* communication, which—if we remain in the same cultural and geographic area—implies that diversity-sensitive multilingualism policies must not abstract from the fact that Catalan/Valencian, irrespective of its co-officiality, for historical and structural reasons is in a weaker sociolinguistic position than Spanish, which may well justify applying policies of positive discrimination towards the vernacular.

Auto-centred multilingualism thereby calls for context-specific policies that acknowledge historic minority languages as well as the social reality of contemporary urban societies, which entails both new language requirements in globalising job markets and diversifying immigrant communities. Policies based on the principle of auto-centred multilingualism seek to find a balance between the promotion of autochthonous languages, whose command continues to be a central prerequisite for social inclusion at the local, regional and national level, and the recognition of migrants' languages. In other words, the concept of auto-centred multilingualism takes into consideration the cultural and linguistic complexity of a specific setting in order to tailor language policies in an equitable way. Basing the concept on the principle of equity rather than equality between the languages present in a specific context does not imply assigning a formally equal treatment to all languages. It rather includes implementing specific measures targeted towards the promotion of the more disadvantaged language(s), which typically are languages that have historically been minoritised through political domination (Kraus, Garcia, Frank, & Climent-Ferrando, 2018: 88–9).

The successful implementation of 'auto-centred multilingualism' requires adopting a 'civic' (rather than an 'ethnic') approach to multilingualism. Building a common public sphere under conditions of cultural complexity can only be based on civic conceptions of being part of a shared social and political space. However, this common space must not lean on the Jacobine fallacy that conflates commonality and uniformity, but conceive of equality and inclusion in ways that are diversity-sensitive. From this perspective, we call for further analyses of micro strategies for coping

with multilingual environments, in particular with regard to individual identity-building and its interlocking—which may be complementary or conflictual—with established patterns of collective identity. In this respect, the political acceptance and promotion of genuinely ‘new’ multilingual identities might be the main condition for tackling the trade-off between mobility and inclusion in complex urban settings.

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ENDNOTES

- ¹ For a full elaboration of the concept of complex diversity, see Kraus (2012).
- ² In a more general vein, Grin (2018) offers a sober critique of ‘some fashionable terms in multilingualism research’.
- ³ In Barcelona and Riga, before the reestablishment of autonomy (Catalonia 1980) or independence (Latvia 1991), this situation was only interrupted or reversed by brief intervals in the interwar period. For a general discussion of the concept of diglossia, see Fishman (1967).
- ⁴ Compare Rokkan (1999) and Therborn (1995) for complementary interpretations of this tendency.
- ⁵ See Catalonia's Yearly Language Policy Report. Available at https://llengua.gencat.cat/ca/direccio_general_politica_linguistica/informe_de_politica_linguistica/language-policy-report/.
- ⁶ The programme is called “Llengües d'origen” [Languages of origin]. For a full account, see <http://xtec.gencat.cat/ca/projectes/plurilinguisme/llengues-gestio/origen/>.
- ⁷ See Järve (2003) for a comparison of Estonian, Lithuanian and Latvian language legislation, which remains altogether vague with regard to the steps taken to safeguard the use of minority languages).
- ⁸ <https://www.vdl.lu/>.
- ⁹ <https://www.guichet.lu>.
- ¹⁰ Compare Cianetti (2019; 101–128) for a discussion of local government as a key channel for the inclusion of minorities.
- ¹¹ <https://www.riga.lv/lv>.
- ¹² <https://pasvaldiba.riga.lv/LV/Channels>.

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