Multilingual selves, multilingual learners in global language learning landscapes

A) RATIONALE FOR THE PROJECT
The majority of the world’s population is multilingual; most language learners engage or have engaged in learning several languages. Despite this, we know little about how learner attitude and motivation differ according to specific target languages, and these relate to language status, learner experiences, and language and education policy. Until recently, dominant motivational conceptualizations in language learning (Dörnyei 2009) neglected notions of plurilingual Ideal Selves, and dynamic interactions of educational, linguistic and socio-political influences on learner motivation (MacIntyre et al 2009; Ushioda 2015). In an increasingly globalised world of shifting status of languages (including -but not limited to- English) (LoBianco 2014), it is increasingly important to improve our contextualised understanding of language learner motivation if we are to develop pedagogies that support language-specific learner motivation.

B) REFERENCES THAT SHOULD BE READ (if you do not have access to these, please email me)

C) RESEARCH AIMS / QUESTIONS
The following are some possible research questions that fit this topic; others are possible, but all questions must fit the overall topic described in A. All dissertations projects are expected to gather new empirical insights, and contribute to our conceptual understanding of plurilingual motivation and plurilingual selves.

● How does language learning motivation in the same context (country, school sector, proficiency, age...) differ with target language? In what way might Visions of Self differ?
● How do target-language specific motivation, learning outcomes, and visions of plurilingual selves interrelate?
● How do visions of Self relate to status of target languages, and education policies and practices teaching these languages?
• How do ‘reactance’ or ‘rebellious’ visions of self relate to status of the target language, and context of learning? Do learners with such stances display them with different target languages?
• (How) Can we encourage positive cross-fertilization of Visions of Self from one target language to another?

D) METHODS
Under this topic, a variety of methods and designs are possible. For instance, regarding European comparative studies, it would be desirable to compare target-specific motivational orientations in one or more countries, including participants studying the same target languages. Studies investigating the relation between language education policy, policy discourses, and learner motivation are also invited. Regarding data type, large scale design, mixed methods, using questionnaires, interviews and observations are invited.