

**The third-spaces and the politics of belonging:
Francophone immigration to Francophone minority communities in Canada**

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For over 20 years, the Canadian government has encouraged Francophone immigration to back up the vitality of Francophone minority communities (FMCs). Considering their minority context, the FMCs must embrace the growing demographic diversity, but also ensure cohesion by addressing various barriers to inclusion. Our research questions are the following: To what extent are Francophone community spaces used to support (or limit) the participation of Francophone immigrants? How can practices and dynamics of these spaces contribute to shaping the politics of belonging within FMCs? We will use the concept of “third-space” (Soja, 1998) to analyze the significance of FMCs and their community spaces in the inclusion of Francophone immigrants. In doing so, our research addresses the “politics of belonging” (Yuval-Davis, 2006) at the local level. Two studies are considered: A critical ethnography carried out in Vancouver and a case study of four cities (Vancouver, Winnipeg, Ottawa and Moncton). The results address two central themes touching upon spatial dimensions of the politics of belonging. First, we describe the mediums that ease social participation within FMCs. Then, we analyze the perceived role of Francophone spaces in supporting community cohesion. The results demonstrate that FMCs and their spaces play an intermediate or in-between role compared to the dominant Anglophone group and the ethnocultural communities of the participants, which thus support their inclusion into Canadian society. In conclusion, FMCs represent a “third-space”, a unique hybrid mix composed with dominant and subordinate positions, which enables sharpening the conceptualization of the notion.