The Negotiation of Belonging in San Francisco's Public Space: Discursive Constructions of Sanctuary Cities

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Abstract

Since the mid-1980s, San Francisco has been among the so-called 'sanctuary cities' in the United States and allows undocumented migrants to make use of public services without any fear of deportation. The policy is an outcome of discourses concerning how to deal with social diversity, especially in regard to citizenship status in the context of the movements of refugees from Central America in the 1970s and 1980s. Due to the current political climate in the U.S. and some measures taken by its federal government, sanctuary cities are under pressure. Against this backdrop, the San Francisco Arts Commission launched a campaign with the aim to reflect the status of San Francisco as a sanctuary city; the campaign includes a variety of events and exhibitions, among them a poster series by artist Rodney Ewing. This article analyses San Francisco as an example for how cities represent themselves in the field of culture. It addresses questions of belonging, the dialectics of homogenization and heterogenization and the role of social inequalities in discourses on sanctuary cities.

Keywords: Sanctuary Cities, United States, Citizenship, Migration, Belonging, Politics of Belonging, Social Inequalities, Intersectionality, Cultural Representation

Introduction

Cities use cultural production to represent themselves and support strategies of urban marketing against the backdrop of globalisation. In the United States, for example, beginning in the 20th century, multicultural festivals served to celebrate the multi-ethnic population of immigrants as an enrichment to society (e.g.: Welz 2007). Although the inclusive ideal of a country that is generally open towards migrants was always up against often racist discourses and practices, as many studies have shown (in regard to migrants from Asia, e.g., Chang 1991; generally: Portes and Rumbaut 1996), current developments reveal fundamental differences in the discursive framing of migration. Belonging becomes a highly controversial subject and this is reflected in cultural production. One example that has gained increasing attention within media and political debates are so called sanctuary cities:

cities which refuse control the residency status of its inhabitants, do not enforce national immigration law and do not cooperate with immigration authorities on the national level (Kaufmann 2019). Research often focuses on legal dimensions, crime and security (Villazor 2010, Gonzalez, Collingwood et al. 2017, Wong 2017) or the development of sanctuary cities and the actors involved (Mancina 2016, Sarmiento 2017). This paper provides a different approach and analyses cultural representation. Hall notes that "representation connects meaning and language to culture" (Hall 1997: 15), which is an important factor of the politics of belonging (Yuval-Davis 2011). To investigate the political projects of belonging associated with current debates on sanctuary cities in the United States, this paper analyses discursive representations in San Francisco's public sphere in 2018, especially a cam-

paign launched by San Francisco Arts Commission (SFAC) on the topic. It focuses on a poster series named 'Human Beings: A Sanctuary City' by artist Rodney Ewing as an example for how immigration is narrated in cultural production.

Debates on the topic in the United States are polarized: The Trump administration and its supporters framed sanctuary policies as a threat to national security and public safety. Therefore, in January of 2017, federal order 13768 was released to limit federal funding for sanctuary cities (White House 2017). On the contrary, human rights activists, civil society organizations and representatives of local administration regard the inclusion of migrants as a basis for a safety in the urban space. Supported by research which states that crime rates are lower in counties with sanctuary legislation (e.g. Wong 2017) or that there is no correlation between crime and sanctuary policies (Gonzalez, Collingwood et al. 2017) they argue that sanctuary cities positively impact all residents. The differences with regard to the debate on security and migration are linked to different policies of belonging. This article focuses on San Francisco as an example of a city that introduced sanctuary legislation relatively early. It opposed federal policies in regard to sanctuary legislation and gained wider attention within current political debates. The paper elucidates how San Francisco represents itself as a sanctuary city in order to identify the discursive framework to negotiate current questions of belonging, migration and the politics of belonging in the United States.

The argument begins with a short overview on the history of sanctuary cities in the United States, and follows with a discussion of Americanness as a result of what Nira Yuval-Davis (2011) calls 'the politics of belonging'. Ethnoheterogenesis (EHG) (Tiesler 2017, 2018) is a helpful concept to analyse Americanness, as it points towards processes of homogenization and heterogenization in narratives of migration, diversity and citizenship. The paper analyses the empirical example, drawing on methods from image analyses (Bohnsack 2014) and the sociology of knowledge approach

to discourse analysis (SKAD) (Keller 2005). It concludes with an outline of the main results which will be related to questions of power within U.S. society.

The Context: Sanctuary Cities in the United States

The history of sanctuary cities in the United States dates back to the 1980s when national debates arose in solidarity with refugees fleeing from the civil wars and dictatorships in El Salvador and Guatemala. U.S. authorities did not approve refugee status for over 90% of these cases, causing social movements in the United States to rise up and form public protests. The actors were mainly members of churches who placed the refugees in so-called „public sanctuaries": some supported migrant women crossing the U.S. border into Mexico, and others published stories of migrant women in an effort to put pressure on the authorities. The main aims of this activism were to stop U.S. participation in the civil wars in Central America and of deportations to these countries. In San Francisco this movement was strong, not least because it succeeded in involving local authorities and winning allies in the city administration. In the mid-1980s, "sanctuary" was institutionalized, reflecting a discourse within the municipal government that acknowledged the diversity of inhabitants in regard to citizenship status (Mancina 2016). Central documents that are considered authoritative for San Francisco are the 'City of Refuge Resolution' of 1985 and the 'City of Refuge Order' of 1989. Today the principles represented therein can be found in the city's administrative code. Among other things, it stipulates that the city and district of San Francisco are a 'City and County of Refuge' and that city employees are not permitted to inquire about the residence status of individuals or refer them to the federal authorities without special reasons (City and County of San Francisco 2019).

Although the political debate and documents such as order 13768 indicate that sanctuary cities can easily be identified, literature shows that

definitions have their own set of problems: While in some cases sanctuary legislation is adopted in the administrative code in other cities, practices like e.g. a lack of enforcement are established without a formalized policy or resolution. Furthermore, the content and the ideological background of sanctuary policies varies (Gonzalez, Collingwood et al. 2017: 6). In order to compare different cities, the authors suggest the following working definition of sanctuary cities:

> "(…) a city or police department that has passed a resolution or ordinance expressly forbidding city or law enforcement officials from inquiring into immigration status and/or cooperation with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)" (Gonzalez, Collingwood et al. 2017: 2).

Although the definition is broad, it points to a central aspect of sanctuary policies: The refusal of cooperating with federal authorities that sanctuary policies often involve, which can be regarded as an area of conflict between local administrations and the federal state. The discursive connection between immigration and security is therefore strong: Opponents of sanctuary cities define migrants without legal documents as a threat to public security and sometimes associate them with criminal actions. Advocates, on the other hand, argue that trust between public authorities and the inhabitants of a city forms the foundation for creating security, as it enhances cooperation, such as with the police force. According to these accounts, people who fear deportation are less likely to collaborate with the police or report a crime. Examples of these different points of view can be found in the lawsuit between the city and county of San Francisco and the federal government on order 13768 that followed the order by the White House, as documents show (Walsh 2017; White House 2017). It is one example of the nationwide discourse on the legitimacy of sanctuary legislation on the local level.

Forms of articulating a position within these conflicts can be identified in a range of projects implemented by the San Francisco Arts Commission (SFAC) that is funded by the city. They were aiming to respond to 'what it means to be a Sanctuary City in today's political climate' (SFAC 2018a) – a sentence which alludes to the social conflicts on immigration within the United States. In 2018, SFAC organised and funded an exhibition, public discussions and two poster series shown on Market Street in the city centre. The following section analyses the poster series 'Human Beings: A Sanctuary City' as an example of a specific subject position within discourses on immigration in the United States. These discourses refer to constructions of Americanness as something that is rooted in universalist values of equality, thereby legitimizing sanctuary legislation as an answer to strict immigration legislation.

Americanness and the Politics of Belonging

Americanness is an outcome of 'the politics of belonging' (Yuval-Davis 2011), which is connected to what Anderson has called 'imagined communities' (Anderson 1996). Studies on the negotiation of belonging in the United States, for example, point to its links to social constructions of place and power relations within society (Nelson and Hiemstra 2008), the conceptualization of American national identity as a social identity that involves the construction and valuation of membership (Schildkraut 2011: 5) and to the use of symbols to negotiate meanings of citizenship and the nation (Wood 2014). These aspects of constructing Americanness play a role in current debates on how to deal with immigration. Yuval-Davis differentiates between belonging as a concept connected to 'an emotional (or even ontological) attachment, about feeling "at home"' which entails a positive perception of the future and the feeling of being safe (Yuval-Davis 2011: 10) and political projects of belonging:

> "The politics of belonging comprise specific political projects aimed at constructing belonging to particular collectivity/ies which are themselves being constructed in these projects in very specific ways and in very specific boundaries" (Yuval-Davis 2011: 10).

From this point of view, the ways of negotiating Americanness within society are a result and a manifestation of current political projects of belonging that are connected to different visions of national membership. The discourses evolving around sanctuary cities comprise important parts of the politics of belonging as they serve to construct a certain (and sometimes opposing) knowledge about undocumented immigrants, thereby legitimizing measures to either integrate them or to legitimize deportation and refugee detention. In the United States this process has its own set of difficulties, as direct or mediated experiences of migration are deeply embedded in constructions of Americanness, as Friedman (1991) points out. In his account the concept refers to a different set of beliefs about what it means to be American, about normative values, history and multiculturalism. Migration histories are used by politicians, such as the 1988 presidential campaign when both candidates identified themselves as descendants of immigrants who were ultimately successful in climbing the social ladder (Friedman 1991). This strategy can be interpreted as a way to respond to an assumption that is shared by many Americans who think of immigrants as a hardworking group (Schildkraut 2011: 160ff) and maintain a generally social positive social valuation of work. Friedmann describes Americanness mainly as a category of self-ascription that involves a certain type of value orientation and is constructed within processes of cultural production (Friedman 1991).

Beyond this definition, there is another important aspect of Americanness in this context, as it is closely connected to debates on sanctuary cities. For the period after 9/11 Weber observes a tendency to link Americanness to questions of security: an idealized image of unity is confronted with dichotomous distinctions between "safe" or "unsafe" citizens or "safe" and "unsafe" forms of Americanness (Weber 2013). To be marked as 'safe' or 'unsafe' in this regard becomes an aspect of belonging and Americanness itself proves to be a form of belonging that oscillates between the ideal of homogenization and constant pro-

cesses of constructing otherness and internal differentiation. The contradiction between heterogenization and homogenization and especially the assumption that there are 'unsafe forms of Americanness' refers to different groups of the population[1] – one of them being undocumented migrants (e.g. Weber 2013, Gonzalez, Collingwood et al. 2017). It shows that the reference to Americanness as a nation of immigrants is contradicted by processes of securitization and serves to understand how this is used within struggles about citizenship rights (Weber 2013).

The concept of ethnohetergenesis (EHG) gestures to processes of homogenization and heterogenization within the negotiation of belonging (Tiesler 2017, 2018), which is useful when considering Americanness as an outcome of current politics of belonging. EHG refers to the study of migrants and their descendants 'wherein conceptual debates on self-perception, modes of belonging, group formation and collective subjectivities continue to be at the core of theoretical considerations' (Tiesler 2018). The author frames inclusion and exclusion as dialectical processes and argues that in order to avoid – what she calls – the "identity-jargon" (Tiesler 2018: 215):

> "[…] the EHG concept suggests perceiving individuals and their subjective experiences, preferences and unique webs of group affiliations (Simmel) as non-identical with others despite possible common ethnic affiliation and ascriptions to macro groups. Above all, as an analytical framework, EHG considers ethnic membership as *one among many* membership roles." (Tiesler 2018: 215)

Tiesler emphasises the diversity of group affiliations at the micro level, especially in the context of migration and the connection to both the homogenizing and heterogenizing tendencies in constructing belonging. The representations analysed in this article reflect this contradiction. They can be regarded as a means to negotiate

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[1] The author refers e.g. to a deserter who now lives in Canada and a member of a group of native Americans who regularly cross the border to Mexico to visit relatives. (Weber 2013)

what it means to be American today, thereby homogenizing the group of people that is represented in the images. On the other hand, the reference to individual narratives involves the effect of heterogenization as it shows that affiliations are diverse. To grasp this variety and the multilevel character of these social processes it is useful to take up an intersectional perspective, as ethnic ascriptions are often closely linked to other categories, among them class, gender and citizenship.

Negotiating Belonging Within Narratives on Migration: The SFAC Campaign

The empirical basis for this paper is a series of events and exhibitions by SFAC in cooperation with the Office of Community Engagement and Immigrant Affairs (OCEIA) in 2017 and 2018. Among the events in the context of the SFAC campaign was an exhibition called "With Liberty and Justice for Some" (SFAC 2017), a documentary on the topic followed by a public discussion with representatives of refugees, activists and public officials (SFAC 2018b) and different smaller actions in public space: the "Sanctuary Print Shop" (SFAC 2018d) by Sergio de la Torre and Chris Treggiari which has been shown in different art museums in the country and two "Market Street Poster Series" on the topic: the first by Miguel Arzabe (SFAC 2018a) and the second by Rodney Ewing. The latter will build up the empirical focus of the paper and serve as an example for how diversity and belonging are framed within these discourses.

According to Tom DeCaigny, San Francisco's director of cultural affairs, the campaign aimed to 'reflect the complexity and diversity of experience of those impacted by our countries immigration policies' (SFAC 2018b). Against the backdrop of new forms of representing urbanity in the context of globalization, the intent to reflect cultural diversity within the campaign can be regarded as a strategy of cultural policies that makes use of cultural symbols as a form of city marketing. This is often in connection to processes of gentrification which are regularly criticized as driving fac-

tors of economic inequality (Welz 2007: 229-231). In light of the current political debates in the United States, another aspect is emphasized by the city administration (e.g. SFAC 2018a) and by the artist (Ewing 2019): As sanctuary cities were threatened by the Trump administration and became a symbol for competing political projects of belonging in the U.S., a need has arisen to produce a specific kind of legitimate knowledge on the topic. In this way, the SFAC campaign is not only a form of city marketing that seeks to represent an image of an inclusive and diverse city, but a way of producing knowledge to challenge narratives that, for example, connect immigration to crime. The art analyzed here cannot, therefore, be regarded as a kind of authentic experience of immigrants. This does count for the statements on the posters, too, as they are up part of the artwork.

The poster series 'Human Beings: A Sanctuary City' reflects the interplay and politics of belonging and exclusion in the experiences of undocumented immigrants. The images' symbolic language and the different layers of meaning represent the complexity of experiences and the contradictions undocumented individuals face. The series includes six motifs by Rodney Ewing, a San Francisco-based artist whose work addresses current debates on issues such as race relations, religion and politics. He identifies himself as someone who aims to 'create a platform that moves us past alliances, and begins a dialogue that informs, questions, and in some cases even satires our divisive issues' (Ewing 2019). In this way, he positions himself as a someone who is willing to participate in public debates. Therefore, these posters are analysed not solely as pieces of art but as representations within the discourses on immigration outlined above. Furthermore, this particular poster series differs from other events within the campaign; the artist connected personal accounts of migrants (represented in short citations) with a symbolic language that refers to Americanness, nationality in general, experiences of and during migration and life in America, as well as in the sending countries

of migrants. It thus provides an example for a subject position within discourses on sanctuary cities which stresses migrants' experiences on the micro level in order to connect them to structural inequalities within American society. This strategy is not unusual, as it can be seen in the exhibition "Sanctuary City: With Liberty and Justice for Some" (SFAC 2018c), which was also displayed in 2018, as well as the exhibition on the history of Angel Island (which was used as a detention centre for immigrants between 1910 and 1940). These exhibitions utilize similar techniques to address immigration. For example, the Angel Island exhibit focused on the history of a place as a starting point to reflect on the topic of immigration. Its emphasis differs from what is outlined above, yet the aims are comparable: the goal is to encourage reflection on immigration and diversity as it applies to the present (Angel Island Immigration Station Foundation 2020).

The motifs of Ewings' posters vary in colour and composition but their use of symbolic language renders them a cohesive body of work. The posters contain four layers: grey and white clouds are in the background (1) covered by transparent colour fields (2), administrative forms of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security or fingerprint cards used when entering the border of the United States, and the image of a person's eyes (3), and a citation in the front (4). Due to blackened parts in the forms at the centre level, the citations are not always entirely readable, though the majority can be identified. The different layers of the images create a representation that cannot be grasped immediately. Texts which include up to 316 words (such as one poster, Indentured) assist the viewer to interpret the body of work.

As part of the "Market Street Posters Series" by SFAC which regularly displays art to the public, the posters are located at places where people are waiting, especially at bus stops. Market Street builds one of the central axes of San Francisco leading from the northeast to the southwest of the city centre. Its importance as a central location is emphasised by the fact that many bus lines and other forms of public transportation cross it, transporting high numbers of people – locals, tourists and business travellers – to different places in the city. The central location underlines that the perspectives presented in the Market Street Poster Series is promoted by the administration. One level of meaning lies in the visual representation of the images, which will be depicted in the following paragraph.

Narrating Immigration as Visual Image: Images as Representations of Sanctuary Cities

Images build up one level of the social construction of reality: They refer to incorporated knowledge and follow their own logic. To acknowledge this 'inherent logic of the image' (Bohnsack 2014), the section deals with the formal design of the posters. Although this paper will not analyse the images comprehensively, it will provide a short overview and interpretation of the posters' composition. These images form one important part of this specific discourse on sanctuary cities, as they are the first and sometimes the only thing the spectator looks at before eventually reading the written text. Therefore an analysis of the contents of the texts will demonstrate the similarities and contradictions between a visual representation of 'responding to the theme of San Francisco as a Sanctuary City', as stated in a short text at the bottom of the posters.

Since the pictures are collages, their composition and the relation between the different visual elements differ from other forms of images. They can be broadly divided into four different layers of analysis, starting with the background and then moving towards the text in the front. Every picture involves a pattern of dark and light fields that can be interpreted as clouds in the background. The second layer offers the most variation, as it contains a different allocation of coloured fields and colours for each poster. They use up to three colours; among them are shades of blue, red and white (A Gracious Man, ½ Immigrant) or dark green, red and white (Home for the Brave), blue and white (Sombra), yellow and blue (The Outsider), and green and white with a

metallic band in the upper section of the image (Indentured). The colour fields allow associations to flags, e.g., in the cases of the blue and white flag from Nicaragua (Sombra), the blue and yellow flag from Ukraine (The Outsider) and the use of the colours blue, white and red that can be associated with the U.S. flag and indicate that the persons are born in the United States. The third level contains written words and fingerprints that can easily be identified as governmental immigration documents. In the front the audience can identify written text and observe a person's gaze.

Combining different levels of depiction, the posters form a collage that connects various and sometimes contradictious meanings. While the grey and white clouds in the back of the image mainly create common ground for the whole representation and can arouse various, mostly homogenizing associations, the colours of flags in connection to the immigration documents on the third level can be interpreted as indicating immigration as a process that is strongly shaped by national governments. The flags, however, are abstract and require a closer look to identify them. Belonging, in this regard, mainly refers to national symbols: America is represented as an administrative regulative body that identifies and categorizes people. The gaze of the individuals in the front of each poster indicates that the accounts are connected to real people. It is apparent that every picture shows a different person though their identities, yet they remain largely unknown and unrecognizable. Interestingly, this opens up spaces for contradictory interpretations: on the one hand, it is a form of de-individualization – as only a small part of the face is visible – or conversely, it is a means to individualize the accounts of people whose eyes are made visible to the audience. In dependency to the connection to other symbols – namely the written passages (stressing the individual) or the governmental forms (stressing the shared experience), this form of pictures involves both – heterogenizing and homogenizing tendencies: Generally the negotiation of belonging is visually

shaped by different identifications and ascriptions that are only partly by choice. The complexity of the structure evokes a diversity of possible associations: For example, the facial features can be interpreted as representing the people who are speaking in the written texts. They can thus be interpreted as either individualizing or de-individualizing, depending on the connection to other symbols like governmental forms or written statements. If the images are interpreted as representations for immigration, the process appears as complex and in many ways guided by regulating practices, symbolized by the governmental forms that are used at border checkpoints and other places that serve to register migrants. This narrative is underlined in the written passages in the front of the pictures. The next paragraph analyses the posters' contents and aims to broaden the picture on homogenization and heterogenization. It raises the question of how far belonging is connected to Americanness.

Narratives of Immigration and the Negotiation of Belonging

In the last paragraph it was stated that the visual representation creates forms of belonging by referencing flags as national symbols and America as an administrative body that identifies and categorizes people at its borders. The relative homogeneity of immigration forms and documents is contradicted by the diversity of narratives that are presented in the written texts on the front of the images. They build up the central focus point and are – compared to the abstract symbolic language of the visual representation – immediately approachable for the reader. The statements refer to what it means to migrate and live in the United States. They include reflections on politics as well as current discourses in society. Furthermore, they indicate what kinds of conflicts migrants have to deal with in terms of belonging. As references to current political debates remain implicit, knowledge about the political context of the art is crucial for the process of interpretation and is expected from the audience.

The written passages present very different stories about immigration and belonging, although some motifs are repeated in the different statements. They draw a very diverse image of migrants in the United States. The text consists of a heading and a quote formulated in first person. A look at the headings themselves gives a first impression on the content of the passages. The posters are titled 'Sombra', 'Indentured', 'A Gracious Man', 'The Outsider', '½ Immigrant' and 'Home for the Brave'. The texts themselves remain relatively short but include references to countries of origin (The Outsider), affections towards American society (1/2 Immigrant) or language (A Gracious Man). In the cases that refer to the experience of migration, it is narrated as difficult and not necessarily chosen:

> "[…] Going to school was becoming difficult, so one day my Mom called and said it was time to go. […] I did not want to leave my great grandmother, but sometimes you have to do something you don't want for your own good. I eventually ended up in a refugee center trying to come to the United States. It took me 53 days to get out that place and arrive in San Francisco. In that place, I forgot that men don't cry; in that place I cried almost every day in private" (Sombra).

As the audience does not know what happened during the stay in a refugee centre, the citation is a good example of how the statements in the poster series leave room for interpretation. What can be safely deduced is that migration and the ways of regulating it by the government can be a negative experience. In the poster series this does not only count for the process of moving to the United States but for the cases in which people try to obtain permanent residency, a process that is described by one person as 'doing time, and waiting to become legal' (Indentured). The experience of being undocumented and vulnerable appears here as something that affects the everyday life of migrants and their feeling of belonging in many ways, as it limits the life chances of people, who have to fear deportation: 'My family was constantly […] worried that any misstep would send us back' (The Outsider). This daily situation, the audience learns, has

huge impact on the ways people relate to living in America. This narrative is supported by the literature on the topic: In his study on the coming-of-age of young undocumented persons in Los Angeles (also a sanctuary city) Roberto Gonzalez shows how especially those who enter the United States as young children are forced to navigate a complex terrain of belonging and exclusion: they grow up as Americans but the older they get the more important becomes their undocumented status as e.g. job opportunities are restricted. The author concludes that the experience of being undocumented cannot be regarded as a process that starts with crossing the border, but "continues as they navigate life in the shadows" and (at least for the next generation) eventually leads to assimilation and a citizenship status but as a *condition* that shapes the life of migrants substantially (Gonzalez 2016: xix-xxi).

Another dimension which is stressed in the poster series focuses on the expectations which are connected to migration and can include the pursuit of economic opportunities:

> "I came to the United States with the plan to make and save money faster than I could at home. I'm still with this dream. But here, my dreams changed for other things: like to build a restaurant back home for my mother. I want to have money in my savings for old age. To be here, my dream is to return to my country, and see my people, my family. I have not seen my mother since I was 9 years old" (Home for the Brave).

It is not mentioned which country is called 'home', but this short passage shows that migration can be a strategy to support the family. It points to global inequalities and transnational family ties and their role in the ways belonging is constructed. Families are often described as a key factor for migration, as either relatives made or influenced the decision to immigrate (Sombra), going back to the family is described as the ultimate aim (Home for the Brave) or parenthood involves expectations of 'rais(ing) a good person out of my kid' (A Gracious Man). Raising a child can be challenging, as demonstrated in the following citation:

"Since I have been here I have always held a sepa-
rate account with enough money in it for a one-
way ticket home if I felt that the tide is turning
against immigrants. I would leave if democracy
were starting to fail, or saw signs that groups were
being targeted. These are the things I worry about.
But at the same time I am excited about registering
to vote and getting involved in local and national
politics. I am concerned about how my daughter
will navigate her existence here because of her be-
ing 1st generation, mixed-race, and mixed religion.
I worry that I will not be equipped to help her with
these things" (Intendured).

What is presented here is interesting on different
levels. The reference to democratic involvement
points to the narrative that immigrants are will-
ing to contribute (Schildkraut 2011: 160 ff.). The
feeling that society does not accept immigrants is
underlined by the reference to the daughter who,
in many ways, corresponds to ideals of assimila-
tion to American society. The worry of not being
accepted as belonging to American society can
be found repeatedly in the passages (e.g., Inden-
tured, ½ Immigrant, The Outsider).

Language constitutes another crucial aspect
of heterogenization. The next passage shows it
can be connected to differences in the treatment
of migrants. Three of six passages mention lan-
guage skills as something that opens up opportu-
nities r narrows them down.

"I was lucky, because I studied English as a first lan-
guage when I was in Pakistan, so my treatment was
much different from my husband's, who did not
speak English when he arrived. His experience was
much more raw. So, within the immigrant commu-
nity immigration is not a monolithic experience"
(Indentured).

Social inequalities can play a role when it comes
to negotiating belonging, as the citation high-
lights. They are in a relation to subject positions
e.g. when someone acts as a mediator. In one
statement the person is described as "the con-
duct between Spanish-only speakers and those
who don't speak Spanish" (A Gracious Man). In
these ways, language builds up an important
factor in the process of negotiating subject posi-
tions, but does not create unlimited opportuni-

ties of being accepted as an American. The third
mention of language in the poster series indi-
cates this assessment:

"I feel like a ½ American because I acknowledge
that I will always be seen as Chinese first and not
'American' no matter how I speak or where I work"
(½ Immigrant).

This reference does not describe family ties or
migration history as the deciding reason for feel-
ing only partly American, but points to ascrip-
tions by others. Although there are references
to patriotism and democracy (see below), being
raised in the United States (as the colours of the
image indicate), committing to general values
and being able to speak English do not automati-
cally create belonging. As these citations show,
the subject positions taken up within discourses
on Americanness stand in relation to language
skills but are not limited to them.

Homogenizing tendencies on the process of
migration involve both the framing as a difficult
process accompanied by fears of deportation,
long periods of waiting and concrete encoun-
ters with authorities and as an individual chance
to earn money, support the family or to realize
one's dreams. Although the persons live, study or
work in the United States, and two of them men-
tion raising children there, the process does not
seem entirely completed in some cases because
of the lack of permanent residence status. In
regard to questions of belonging, the accounts
reflect a feeling of alienation towards U.S.-soci-
ety although some articulate a wish to overcome
this. Belonging is related to language, although
language skills do not automatically create a feel-
ing of being perceived as American for everybody.
Heterogenization, on the other hand, occurs in
the individual accounts of people that are speak-
ing in the passages. They build up a basis for what
can be regarded as diversity within the city and
reflect tendencies of social inequality between
different migrants and migrant groups as well
as between migrants and non-migrants. Being
a sanctuary city in the accounts means to stress
and accept the existence of diversity. Criticism
of official politics of migration and belonging

are only indicated in the accounts of individual people.

Americanness, Belonging and Sanctuary Cities

The statements draw a contradictious image of Americanness: while democracy is presented as something valued by immigrants, other statements raise questions in patriotism and citizenship:

> "With the current administration, I have had to re-evaluate what it means to be American and a patriot. It has occurred to me that even as a ½ immigrant, I fully believe in the basic tenets of Democracy, and I feel responsibility to uphold the values this country represents. It's frustrating to me that people are twisting these ideals to promote their own agenda." (½ Immigrant)

The commitment to value orientation confirms what Friedman noted in his analysis of Hollywood movies – the idea of transcending of ethnic boundaries in the light of values that are constructed as 'American'. On the other hand, the audience learns that the current situation results in a reassessment of belonging. The questions of Americanness presented here go beyond the topic of migration and point to current political developments and the ways people deal with them on the individual level. In this way, the section creates a narrative that opens up spaces for identification for immigrants and everyone perceived as such by others but also for groups that are critical towards the current government. Belonging and citizenship are closely connected, not only because a lack of citizenship status affects perceptions of belonging (see above) but also because the group that identifies with the position of 're-evaluating what it means to be American' is not restricted to migrants. Connecting self-perception to the ascriptions by others shows how belonging fundamentally

The emphasis on democracy and patriotism is contradicted by the use of symbolic language in the written passages. Symbols of Americanness are often associated with a different meaning and seem to symbolize the hardships of migration:

> '[…] it's funny because you come here to the land of the free for the opportunities, but after a certain amount of time it feels more like bondage or indentured servitude' (Indentured).

Other statements cite variations of referring to the United States but transform the meaning: One of the poster titles e.g. is 'Home for the Brave' referring to the phrase 'Home of the Brave' in the national anthem. In effect this reformulation underlines how profoundly belonging is something that people strive for but cannot access. What it means to be a sanctuary city is not explicitly thematised. The intention of this approach is described by the artist Rodney Ewing who comments on the series:

> "My goal for this project is to move this discussion of immigration from being monolithic, to one that is as complex and nuanced as the people reflected in this art work" (Ewing 2019).

The complexity of the collages as well as the individual accounts of people reflect his attempt to individualize narratives on migration and belonging. On the other hand, it can be stated that this focus on individuality is not entirely realized: The homogenizing tendencies within the pictures and the texts transport another message as they refer to the United States and claim belonging despite current political tendencies against migration. Being a sanctuary city is represented as a city that actively acknowledges diversity independent of the citizenship status of persons. The hardships of migration are repeatedly stressed in the accounts and there are different examples of criticism towards U.S. authorities. While the need for opposition against current discourses that claim Americanness only for non-immigrants or 'good immigrants' is explicitly stressed mainly by the artist himself, the accounts in the poster series are mainly articulating worries about current social developments. Although the collages draw on the same set of symbolic language, the focus lies on the heterogeneity of experiences and their limitations.

Conclusion

For undocumented migrants, living in a sanctuary city is connected to experiences of inclusion and exclusion, which are parts of political projects of belonging. In many ways, these experiences are linked to power relations within the United States. The poster series by Rodney Ewing develops this topic and conveys that experiences of migration are diverse and full of contradictions. The campaign can be regarded as an example for how the city of San Francisco presents itself in the cultural sphere. As shown in the literature, connections between city marketing and culture can serve to add symbolic value to city space (Welz 2007). Ewing's art is presented as a direct response to political and social conflicts on immigration and sanctuary cities. This paper therefore argues that, in this case, the body of work is furthermore a strategy to represent certain forms of knowledge on migration to legitimize the city's political position as a sanctuary city. Because the posters include different semiotic levels, they are able to convey a more nuanced rendering of the issue than a written text could. In fact, they create different layers of meaning and connect tendencies of homogenization to heterogenization; they thereby frame not only migration but – what is more important here – repeatedly refer to belonging and representations of Americanness.

To analyse these processes, this article referenced the analytical framework provided by Yuval-Davis on belonging and the politics of belonging (2011) and connected it to Tieslers concept of EHG (2017, 2018) as it serves to identify tendencies of homogenization and heterogenization within processes of negotiating belonging and points to the interplay of different membership roles that constitute belonging and can be contradictory. The analysis showed how homogenization and heterogenzitation are proceeding simultaneously while referring to different modes of belonging. Nationality is represented mainly in respect to the United States, and the sending countries of immigrants are indicated by the use of certain colour schemes that

can be interpreted as flags. The relation to the United States, though, remains full of contradictions: while democracy is presented as valued by immigrants and economic opportunities as a driving factor for migration, the political conflicts manifested in immigration legislation and the social climate appear as a threat to immigrants. Overall the posters convey that many regard America as a land which opens up opportunities, but that these ideals are under threat. Other membership roles are emphasised, too: the family is especially represented as a driving factor of immigration and living without legal status. The narratives of families that need to be supported or the challenges of raising children in the current situation point to social inequalities both within the United States and globally. Immigration in these accounts is narrated as motivated e.g. by the responsibility to provide for others and not as individual choice.

What is not addressed are the problems sanctuary cities involve and this may be due to the function of the campaign in terms of taking up and legitimate a certain position in the discourse on immigration. While undocumented migrants gain new possibilities to participate in the social life of a sanctuary city, they remain in a highly insecure legal status that restricts many aspects of their life, e.g. education and work opportunities. For immigrants without a legal status, citizenship rights are not fully accessible and this affects their sense of belonging as studies show (Gonzalez 2016) and the posters indicate. Sanctuary cities – one can conclude – are not a solution but, at best, are a way to deal with problems that actually need to be dealt with more substantial reforms of the current legislation. Another aspect which could not be discussed here are the ongoing debates on gentrification and the increase of population groups which cannot afford living in the city anymore (Zuk and Chapple 2015). Given that immigrants are affected disproportionately by these developments (Sarmiento 2017) the representation as an inclusive city seems to build up a contradiction to these developments. But as literature indicates that representations of mul-

ticulturalism in the cultural production of cities often serve as a means to increase the symbolic and ultimately the economic value of city space (Welz 2007) gentrification could be regarded as an accepted effect or even as intended outcome rather than something which stands in conflict to these forms of cultural production. San Francisco, from this point of view, represents itself as a sanctuary city not for the sake of inclusion but draws on discourses on inclusion as a strategy for economic development.

Immigrants in the United States build up a largely heterogenous group being far away from the perception of a common history. What the posters show, nevertheless, is a common fate in the current political and social situation. Immigrants are presented not only as a group of people who find themselves in a status of legal insecurity but who often feel alienated in a society full of contradictions: The opportunities in regard to economic advancement and political participation are contrasted by experiences of not belonging as belonging is constantly challenged on the level of discourse and due to a lack of permanent citizenship status. These processes reflect the complexity to navigate a field that connects belonging to a variety of social inequalities which work in diverse ways and are intersectionally linked.

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